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THE BYZANTINES AND SALADIN, 1185-1192: OPPONENTS OF THE THIRD CRUSADE

By CHARLES M. BRAND

ON the eve of the Third Crusade the chief Christian state in the East joined with Saladin, sultan of Egypt and Syria, to further their common interests, which involved opposition to the Latins in the Holy Land. To the West this conjunction appeared to be a violation of the tie of religion and a break with tradition, because from the moment of the irruption of Mohammed's followers from the Arabian peninsula warfare between Byzantines and Muslims had been almost continuous. In the eleventh century the Muslim Seljuks deprived the Eastern Empire of much of Anatolia. After the First Crusade Byzantium co-operated with the Westerners in the hope of establishing a protectorate over the crusader states in Syria and securing aid against the persistent Muslim encroachment upon its eastern frontiers. Yet Andronicus, last of the Comneni, and Isaac Angelus, his successor, reversed this policy, allied themselves with the crusaders' mightiest opponent, and even strove to eliminate Latin power from the Orient.

This rapprochement of ancient enemies was facilitated by some recent personal relationships and dictated by political necessity. Once, as an exile, Andronicus fled to Damascus and Baghdad, where he was befriended by Nur-ed-Din, Saladin's predecessor. Later Alexius Angelus and his younger brother Isaac, refugees from Andronicus' tyranny, were guests at Saladin's court; Alexius was still there when Isaac was raised to the throne by the Constantinopolitan mob. These rulers, accordingly, knew Muslim leaders and Muslim power.

In 1185 the Byzantines and Saladin were threatened by the same enemies, both Christian and Muslim. Saladin was confronted by the crusader states wedged between the two parts of his dominions. Cyprus, which had rebelled under Isaac Comnenus, was a potential adherent to the Latin cause, which would weight the balance significantly against Saladin; the Byzantines naturally hoped to recover this former province. In 1176 the decisive victory of the Seljuks at Myriokephalon gave them a firm hold on central Anatolia, where they posed a dangerous threat both to the Byzantine possessions on the Aegean and to Saladin's in northern Syria. Like Saladin, the Byzantines had much to fear from the West, and talk of crusades stirred unhappy memories of their experiences

with earlier ones. The efforts of Manuel Comnenus to recover lost provinces in Italy had alienated the Western Empire, the Norman kingdom of Sicily, and Venice with its powerful fleet. In 1182 the great massacre of resident Italians in Constantinople aggrieved Genoa and Pisa, whose citizens were the chief sufferers; they naturally thought of vengeance. All of these powers were spurred on by fugitives from the tyranny of Andronicus, especially members of the aristocracy and great landowning class. The king of Hungary struck across the Danube as far as Sofia. In 1185 William II of Sicily sent his armies across the Adriatic, accompanied by a Comnenus claimant for the throne who roused the prospect of revolt in his behalf. The Norman army captured and sacked Thessalonica, the empire's second city, and advanced on the capital itself. Beset on all sides and under the immediate pressure of this invasion and threatened rebellion, Andronicus turned to Saladin, hoping for tangible aid.¹

In June 1185, accordingly, Andronicus sent an embassy to Saladin to recall their former friendship and to propose an alliance. Because Andronicus was emperor, Saladin was to do homage and render assistance whenever requested. Palestine would be conquered and divided, with the Byzantines receiving Jerusalem and the maritime cities except Ascalon. Asia Minor, if taken, would belong to the Eastern Empire, as far as Antioch and Armenia. In return for such assistance and territory, Andronicus doubtless promised aid to the Saracens in their struggle with the Latins of Syria. Saladin's exact response to these suggestions is unknown, but would seem to have been generally favorable; probably all territorial concessions were made dependent on the Byzantines' performance of their part of the treaty. Before Saladin's reply reached Constantinople, however, Andronicus was overthrown (12 September 1185) by a populace resentful over his failures in the Norman war.²

The demand of Andronicus, "that because he was emperor, he [Saladin] should do him homage,"³ must have seemed both ridiculous and unacceptable to the ruler of Egypt and Syria. The weakness of the empire at that moment was everywhere manifest; not only were the Normans at Thessalonica, but also the Aegean was harried by Latin corsairs, Cyprus was in open and successful revolt, and the Turks and Hungarians were raiding across the frontiers. Saladin's power,

¹ For background on Andronicus' reign, see: Francesco Cognasso, "Parti politici e lotte dinastiche in Bisanzio alla morte di Manuele Commeno," *Memorie della Reale Accademia delle scienze di Torino*, 2nd Ser., LXII [Part 2] (1912), 213–317; John Danstrup, "Recherches critiques sur Andronicos I^{er}," *Vetenskaps-Societeten i Lund, Årsbok (Yearbook of the New Society of Letters at Lund)*, 1944, pp. 69–101.

² The sole source for Andronicus' embassy to Saladin (Franz Dölger, ed., *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reichs von 565–1453*, Corpus der griechischen Urkunden des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit, Reihe A, Abt. 1 [Munich and Berlin, 1924–1960], No. 1563) is the anonymous letter from the East in Magnus Presbyterus Reicherspergensis, *Chronica collecta a Magno presbytero—1195*, W. Wattenbach, ed., MGH SS, xvii (Hanover, 1861), 511 (Reinhold Röhricht, ed., *Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani MXCVII–MCCXCI* [Innsbruck, 1893–1904], No. 688). The question of the authenticity of this letter is discussed in the Appendix to this article. See also Reinhold Röhricht, *Geschichte des Königreichs Jerusalem, 1100–1291* (Innsbruck, 1898), pp. 493–494; Cognasso, "Partiti pol.," *loc. cit.*, pp. 296–297; Claude Cahen, *La Syrie du Nord à l'époque des croisades et la principauté franque d'Antioche* (Paris, 1940), pp. 424–425; Danstrup, "Andronicos I^{er}," *loc. cit.*, p. 96, n. 119.

³ Magnus, *Chron.*, p. 511.

on the other hand, was expanding, and his imminent triumph over the crusader states was perceptible to all. The subordination of the Arab world to the Byzantine, at this point, was unthinkable; yet the demand for it represented a traditional Byzantine view that for the emperor, God's earthly representative, to treat with anyone else on a basis of equality was inconceivable. That Andronicus was indulging in more than a rhetorical flourish is shown by his demand for Jerusalem and the coast of Palestine. Saladin apparently rejected the Byzantine claim to suzerainty.

Saladin's response to Andronicus was received by the new emperor, Isaac II Angelus, who, with the Normans threatening the capital itself, was delighted to find an ally. He confirmed the treaty (presumably as revised by Saladin) in a chrysobull and summoned his brother Alexius back from Saladin's court.⁴

Alexius Angelus was still a guest of the sultan, as Isaac had formerly been. When, about 1186, Isaac recalled his brother, he set out, but as rumor of the Byzantine-Muslim alliance had already reached the crusader states, when he was passing through Acre the count of Tripoli seized and imprisoned him. During his confinement the Pisans assisted him with loans, which he later neglected to repay.⁵ On learning of this action, Isaac wrote to Saladin urging him to attack the

⁴ Magnus, *Chron.*, p. 511. Dölger, *Regesten*, No. 1579, dates this treaty to late 1187 (after the fall of Jerusalem), but the letter in Magnus, *Chron.*, pp. 511–512, makes a clear distinction between the two embassies.

⁵ The only detailed account of Isaac and Alexius' sojourn with Saladin is the letter in Magnus, *Chron.*, p. 511–512; the Pisans' loans are mentioned in Isaac's chrysobull to Pisa (February 1192), in Giuseppe Müller, ed., *Documenti sulle relazioni delle città toscane coll' Oriente cristiano e coi Turchi fino all' anno MDXXXI* (Florence, 1879), p. 41, 50 (Dölger, *Regesten*, No. 1607); Alexius' presence in Syria is also attested by: Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, Immanuel Bekker, ed., *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn, 1835), p. 703; Geoffroi de Villehardouin, *Conquête de Constantinople*, ed. Natalis de Wailly, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1882), p. 40; *idem*, ed. Edmond Faral (Paris, 1938–1939), I, 70; Robert de Clari, *La conquête de Constantinople*, ed. Philippe Lauer (Paris, 1924), p. 21, 28–29. Evidence for Isaac's visit to Syria is contained in John Kamateros, "Ἀδελφός ἀναγνωσθεὶς συνήθως ἐν τῇ ἐορτῇ τῶν φώτων τοῦ σοφωτάτου ῥήτορος καὶ ὑπερίμου κυροῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Καματηροῦ," W. Regel, ed., *Fontes Rerum Byzantinorum*, I (St Petersburg, 1892–1917), 250–252, which relates how Isaac fled from Andronicus through inhabited cities, desert places, and mountains torn by chasms (evidently the Taurus), how God made all smooth before him, and how he had a vision of Jacob's ladder while asleep in Harran (whose name, the orator declares, might be rendered "on the earth or on the ground" *loc. cit.*, p. 252). Harran is a town in Syria, near Edessa, on a route which might be used by one wishing to avoid Armenia and the Latin territories. This speech, which alludes to Andronicus' downfall and the defeat of the Normans, was probably delivered on 6 January 1186; the analysis of the part of the oration here referred to in Max Bachmann, *Die Rede des Joannes Syropoulos an den Kaiser Isaak II. Angelos (1185–1195) (Text und Kommentar) nebst Beiträgen zur Geschichte des Kaisers aus zeitgenössischen rhetorischen Quellen* (Munich, 1935), pp. 43–46, omits the reference to Harran and apparently misconstrues this part of the speech: Isaac's flight across Constantinople (11 September 1185) would hardly be described in these terms. Isaac must have been in Syria during the early part of 1183 (he was at Nicaea, leading a revolt against Andronicus, by September 1183); see Nicetas, *Hist.*, pp. 345, 349. On Isaac and Alexius in Syria, see also Wilhelm Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au Moyen-Age*, trans. Furcy Raynaud, I (Leipzig, 1885), 230, n. 2; Francesco Cognasso, "Un imperatore bizantino della decadenza: Isacco II Angelo," *Bessarione*, xxxi (1915), 257. V. Laurent, "Rome et Byzance sous le pontificat de Célestin III (1191–1198)," *Echos d'Orient*, xxxix (1940–1942), 49, 57, argues that Isaac's residence in Syria was the basis of his alliance with the Muslims; there is no evidence, however, for his view that the alliance persisted under Alexius III and caused hesitations in the papacy's dealings with that emperor.

Latin states in order to secure Alexius' release. In the spring of 1187 the Byzantines sent a fleet to attack Cyprus. In the Holy Land, this armada was interpreted as naval support for Saladin's offensive, but the Byzantine forces were defeated on Cyprus by Isaac Comnenus and the fleet was routed by the Sicilian Admiral Margaritone. In the meantime Saladin, motivated by Latin injuries rather than by Isaac's encouragements, attacked the kingdom of Jerusalem, capturing the capital and most of the coastal cities. At the fall of Acre, Alexius Angelus was released from his prison and returned to Constantinople on a Genoese ship; in 1201 he had still not paid his fare.⁶

In one respect Isaac Angelus' friendship may have furthered Saladin's conquest of the Holy Land. The early surrender of Jerusalem was brought about by the knowledge that, out of hatred for the Latins, the Greek Orthodox residents (in Syria commonly called Melkites) were ready to betray the city. The Muslim ruler was in communication with them through one of his aides, Joseph Batit, a Melkite born in Jerusalem, who arranged for the opening of the gates by his co-religionists. The Latin leaders, aware of the Melkites' disaffection, and perhaps of the plot itself, made haste to yield the city. There is no known or necessary connection between Isaac Angelus and the Melkites' actions, but it may be noted that Saladin's alliance with the Byzantines involved the conversion of the existing Latin churches in the Holy Land to the Greek rite; the Melkites of Jerusalem were more than likely to be informed of Saladin's promise and they clearly had no love for their Frankish neighbors.⁷

Saladin, rejoicing in his successes over the crusaders, sent Isaac an embassy to announce his good fortune. As was customary in oriental diplomacy, the ambassadors brought splendid gifts for the Byzantine emperor: an elephant, fifty Turkish saddles, a jar of balsam, a hundred Turkish bows with quivers and arrows, a hundred captive Byzantines from Greece, a thousand and fifty Turkish or Turkoman horses, and a quantity of valuable spices. Isaac was delighted with the news and the gifts, housed the envoys in a splendid palace in the center of Con-

⁶ Magnus, *Chron.*, pp. 511–512; Nicetas, *Hist.*, pp. 483–485; Isidoro La Lumia, *Storie siciliane*, I (Palermo, 1881), 535–537; Ferdinand Chalandon, *Histoire de la domination normande en Italie et en Sicile* (Paris, 1907; reprinted New York, 1960), II, 415; Cognasso, "Isacco II," *loc. cit.*, pp. 255, 257–258. The Genoese ship is mentioned in the instructions of 4 May 1201 to the Genoese envoys, in Angelo Sanguineti and Gerolamo Bertolotto, ed., "Nuovo serie di documenti sulle relazioni di Genova coll' Impero bizantino," *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, xxviii (1896–1898), 471 (see the textual emendation by Cognasso, "Isacco II," *loc. cit.*, p. 257, n. 5).

⁷ This information comes from an anonymous *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria* (*Siyar-al-abd-al-Batarikah*, contained in Paris. MS. ar. 302), which has been partially published in translation in the notes to Edgar Blochet's "Histoire d'Egypte de Makrizi," *Revue de l'Orient Latin*, ix (1902), 29, n. 3 (p. 30 for the cited material) — the separate publication (Paris, 1908) is not available to me —, and in less complete form in Joseph T. Reinaud, ed., *Extraits des historiens arabes*, which forms Vol. IV of Joseph Michaud, ed., *Bibliothèque des Croisades* (Paris, 1829), p. 207, n. 1. On the author, an early thirteenth-century Jacobite Arab who is markedly favorable to Saladin, see Reinaud, p. xxii. See also René Grousset, *Histoire des Croisades et du Royaume franc de Jérusalem*, II (Paris, 1935), 811–812. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge, I (London, 1932), 327, testifies that soon after the conquest of Jerusalem, Saladin let the Greek Patriarch administer the church.

stantinople, and renewed the alliance. He was particularly gratified by his brother's release from the crusaders' prison.⁸

Isaac replied to Saladin with a similar display of splendid gifts: four hundred breastplates, four thousand iron lances, five thousand swords (all of which arms he had taken in his defeat of William II's invading army), twelve samite cloths, two golden cups, two imperial robes, and three hundred beaver pelts; he made gifts of samite and imperial vestments to Saladin's brother and three sons. Most important of all, however, the envoys Sovestot (Sebastos?), Aspion, and the aged Arabic interpreter Constantius brought the sultan a gold crown and Isaac's declaration: "I send you this because in my opinion you now are and shall be rightfully a king, with my assistance and God willing,"⁹ a symbol and words whereby (however unrealistically) the emperor sought to make evident his suzerainty over Saladin.

The envoys sailed to Acre, where on 6 January 1188 Saladin, abandoning the siege of Tyre, held a full court for them and in the presence of his sons, nobles, and officials confirmed anew the alliance. The messengers were especially eloquent in thanking Saladin for releasing Alexius Angelus: "Through you he has been saved and freed from the hands of the Latins, who held him in prison on your account."¹⁰ Saladin inquired of the envoys concerning conditions in the empire, the war with the Vlachs, and the wars of other (evidently Western) rulers. The most important news which the Byzantines brought was that a new crusade was being summoned in the West to rescue the Holy Sepulchre.¹¹

After some delay, during which Saladin probably received confirmation from elsewhere of the gathering of the Third Crusade, he determined to bind Isaac more closely to him in order to secure his support against any part of the crusade which might pass through the empire. He therefore sent back the Byzantine embassy, together with his own ambassadors charged to negotiate such an agreement. His gifts were more numerous than before: twenty Latin chargers, large boxes of gems and balsam, three hundred strings of jewels, a chest full of aloes, a hundred musk-sacs, twenty thousand bezants, a baby elephant, a musk-deer, an ostrich, five leopards, thirty quintals of pepper, numerous other spices, a huge silver jar of poisoned wine, and great quantities of poisoned flour and grain. These allegedly deadly foods (one whiff of the wine was said to have slain a Latin

⁸ Magnus, *Chron.*, pp. 511–512; Dölger, *Regesten*, No. 1579 (see above, n. 4).

⁹ Magnus, *Chron.*, p. 512.

¹⁰ Magnus, *Chron.*, p. 512.

¹¹ Abd al-Rahmen ibn Isma'il, called Abu Šamah, *Le livre des deux jardins: Histoire des deux règnes, celui de Nour ed-Dîn et celui de Salah ed-Dîn* (A.-C. Barbier de Meynard, ed. and tr.), RHC HOR, IV (Paris, 1898), 389, quotes a letter of al-Fadil, Saladin's minister, to Seif al-Islam in Yemen, dated 584 A.H. (1188–89), reporting the receipt of news from the ruler of Constantinople, from Alexandria, and from North Africa concerning the gathering crusade. There is no reason to suppose a further embassy from Isaac to bring Saladin this news (as does Dölger, *Regesten*, No. 1584, dated about late 1188—by which time Saladin would have received plentiful news of this impending development), but such a Byzantine embassy is not out of the question. Dölger's only evidence is the letter of al-Fadil, cited above.

prisoner on whom it was tested) were apparently for distribution to Western crusaders passing through Byzantine lands; the chronicles of Frederick Barbarossa's crusade contain a number of stories concerning Byzantine attempts to destroy the Germans by such means.¹²

Among Saladin's gifts on this occasion also was a *maumeria*, which the emperor was to set up and cause to be venerated for the honor of the Saracens, as he had promised. The Latin word *maumeria* is clearly a rendering of the French *Mahomerie*, something connected with the Muslim religion; it seems to have been a *minbar* or pulpit with steps leading up to it. Throughout the ensuing negotiations with Isaac, Saladin's concern for maintenance of Islamic worship and the fittings of the mosque in Constantinople was manifest, as a counterpart to Isaac's desire to have the Greek rite practiced in the churches of the Holy Land. On this occasion, however, Saladin's pulpit did not reach Constantinople; the Genoese captured the ship taking this so-called "idol" to the Byzantine capital, and brought it to Tyre. Because the pulpit formed a concrete piece of evidence for the alliance between the emperor and the sultan, Conrad of Montferrat (who ruled in Tyre) circulated an announcement of its capture throughout Europe, and an embassy sent by Philip II of France to Constantinople incorporated the news in an information bulletin designed to encourage recruitment for the forthcoming crusade. In the autumn of 1188 Isaac's opposition to the crusade became public knowledge in Western Europe.¹³

By 20 September 1188, when Conrad of Montferrat wrote his letter reporting the pulpit's capture, he was sufficiently well-informed to be able to outline the principal provisions of the alliance. Saladin had turned over all churches in conquered Palestine to the Orthodox, and Isaac was to accept Saladin's form of Muslim worship in the Constantinopolitan mosque. In connection with the siege of Antioch, Isaac was to send a hundred galleys to assist Saladin, so Conrad declared; this allegation may reflect a real promise of naval assistance, or be a

¹² Magnus, *Chron.*, p. 512; on the alleged attempts to poison Barbarossa's troops, see Ansbert, *Historia de expeditione Friderici imperatoris*, ed. A. Chroust, in *Quellen zur Geschichte des Kreuzzuges Kaiser Friedrichs I.*, MGH SSRG, N.S., v (Berlin, 1928), 54-55, and *Historia peregrinorum*, A. Chroust, ed., *loc. cit.*, pp. 146-147.

¹³ The anonymous letter in Magnus, *Chron.*, p. 512; Conrad of Montferrat's letter (20 September 1188) to Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury, in Roger of Wendover, *Liber qui dicitur Flores historiarum*, ed. Henry G. Hewlett, Rolls Series (London, 1886-1889), I, 153; the French embassy's report (autumn 1188), in Benedict of Peterborough, *Gesta regis Henrici*, ed. William Stubbs, Rolls Series (London, 1867), II, 52, as corrected by the version included in Ralph of Diceto, *Opera historica*, ed. William Stubbs, Rolls Series, II (London, 1876), 60, which reads "Januensibus" for Benedict's "Veniensibus."

The identity of the "maumeria" sent by Saladin and the "idolum" taken by the Genoese before 20 September 1188 rests on the fact that Saladin had to dispatch another religious embassy with a pulpit in the summer of 1189. The identification of the "maumeria" as a *minbar* or pulpit was made by Röhrich, *Königreich Jerusalem*, p. 496, n. 2 (he does, however, confuse this capture with the piracy of Guglielmo Grasso in 1192). The statement that this was a picture of Saladin, made by S. O. Riezler, "Der Kreuzzug Kaiser Friedrichs I.," *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte*, x (1870), 35, n. 4, is clearly incorrect. On the shape of the pulpit, see E. Diez, "Minbar," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, III (Leiden and London, 1936), 499-500.

mere recollection of the Byzantine fleet sent against Cyprus in 1187. To Saladin, however, opposition to the impending Third Crusade was vital: not only did Isaac, at his behest, seize and imprison Latins in Constantinople who took the Cross, but he also agreed to oppose any army which tried to pass through his dominions. In return Saladin promised to give him the entire Holy Land, a prize for which the Byzantines had struggled throughout the twelfth century, and for which Andronicus had also negotiated. The French embassy's report from Constantinople, written shortly after Conrad's letter, was able to add that the Muslim envoys were received in the emperor's palace with more honor than was accorded anyone else. The embassy also asserted that on the very day their messenger set out, Isaac ordered the expulsion of all Latins from the empire; if this proclamation, which is unconfirmed elsewhere, actually was issued, it was shortly rescinded or modified, for during the Third Crusade the presence of Venetian traders, Frankish mercenaries, and Latin civil servants in the Eastern Empire is well attested. Yet by imprisoning would-be crusaders in Constantinople, Isaac openly committed himself to a policy of hostility to the Western effort to recover Jerusalem.¹⁴

Whether the final terms of the military alliance were concluded by the embassy Saladin sent in 1188, or by one the following year, cannot be precisely determined. Emissaries of the Saracen ruler were in Constantinople in June 1189, at the moment of crisis in Isaac's relations with Frederick Barbarossa. When in 1188 the German emperor decided to participate in the Third Crusade, he announced to Isaac his intention of passing through the Byzantine Empire on the way to Syria. Isaac's envoys agreed to allow his passage, furnish markets for the crusaders, and make provision for transport across the Straits; at no time, however, did they ask for hostages to ensure the good behavior of the Germans. This omission, contrary to previous Byzantine practice, suggests that even then Isaac was meditating hostile action. Not only was he already deeply committed to Saladin, but he also feared lest Barbarossa's forces attack his capital to avenge the numerous affronts Manuel had offered their master and also the Latin Massacre of 1182. Shortly before Barbarossa set out (11 May 1189), he despatched the bishop of Münster with other leading German magnates to announce to Isaac his forthcoming arrival in Constantinople. About the middle of June, this embassy arrived and soon was imprisoned, probably at the insistence of Saladin's representatives; in any case, the envoys' horses and other possessions were given to the Saracens. By unlawfully seizing ambassadors, Isaac definitively committed himself against Barbarossa and his crusade.¹⁵

¹⁴ Benedict of Peterborough, *Gesta regis Henrici*, II, 51-53; Roger of Wendover, *Flores*, I, 153-154; Röhrich, *Regesta*, Nos. 676 and 688.

¹⁵ Ansbert, *Hist.*, pp. 15-16; *Hist. peregrinorum*, pp. 129-130; Bishop Dietpold of Passau's letter in Magnus, *Chron.*, p. 510. See also: Cognasso, "Isacco II," *loc. cit.*, pp. 260-263; K. Zimmert, "Der deutsch-byzantinische Konflikt vom Juli 1189 bis Februar 1190," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XII (1903), 43-44.

A later Genoese source, the instructions issued in 1201 to Ottobono della Croce, in Sanguinetti and Bertolotto, "Doc. gen.," *loc. cit.*, pp. 472-473, refers to the transportation of an embassy of Saladin to

At the same moment that Isaac seized the bishop of Münster's embassy, he sent envoys to Saladin, evidently to confirm the alliance; they reached him in August–September 1189 at Merj 'Ayun in Syria. In addition to the terms already known to the Latins, a clause regarding a joint attack on Cyprus was included at this time or not long afterwards. It is probable that a future Byzantine subjugation of the sultanate of Rum (and perhaps even of Cilician Armenia and Antioch) was envisaged, since Isaac would scarcely have exposed himself to the certain ravages of the crusading army without specific promises of substantial territorial compensation. Saladin, who greatly feared Barbarossa, would have had no hesitation in giving away someone else's territory in return for the destruction of the German army. The Byzantines also invited Saladin to send a new religious embassy, in place of the one captured by the Genoese, to inaugurate the *khotba* (Muslim invocation) in the name of the Abbasid caliph at the mosque in Constantinople. Saladin was naturally eager to comply, and so, in addition to an ambassador, sent an imam, a pulpit, and several muezzins and readers of the Koran. They were well received, and the first *khotba* took place in the presence of a crowd of Muslim merchants and travellers.¹⁶

When Isaac's envoy died in Syria, probably during the latter part of the summer of 1189, he sent another to complete the negotiations. Isaac hoped to secure military assistance from Saladin, for Frederick Barbarossa was experiencing little difficulty in handling the Byzantine forces which opposed him, and the emperor thought news of these events would already be reaching Syria. Guerrilla opposition had harassed the German emperor from the moment he entered the Byzantine Empire at Branitchevo. Between Nish and Sofia he drove a Byzantine army from its fortifications; near Philippopolis he again defeated Isaac's forces. Having obtained definite information of the captivity of the bishop of Münster's embassy, Barbarossa undertook to compel its release by devastating Thrace from Enos to Thessalonica. Although the bishop and his companions were freed (about 20 October 1189), Isaac remained true to Saladin and refused to allow the Germans passage to Asia; in mid-November he wrote them that Thrace was a deathtrap from which they could never escape. Frederick thereupon ex-

Constantinople, which may well have been the embassy of 1188 or 1189, by a ship belonging to Symon Musonus. In Constantinople the court seized 3000 hyperpers from him, and the Great Logothete and Sebastos Comanus (Comnenus? Chumnos?) threw him in prison. He was only released by giving his brother and nephew as hostages; they died of privations in prison. Meanwhile, the court forced him to carry some Hungarians overseas (*i.e.*, to the Holy Land), for which service the treasurer promised him thirteen hundred hyperpers, of which he received only six hundred petty bezants. The circumstance that Symon had to transport Hungarians (with whose king Isaac was allied by marriage and by policy) to the Holy Land suggests a date during the Third Crusade, and Saladin is not known to have sent any full-scale embassy to Constantinople between the religious one of August–September 1189 and the one destroyed by pirates in 1192. The reason for Symon Musonus' sufferings is not clear; was he held responsible for allowing the capture of the pulpit in 1188?

¹⁶ On the treaty and Isaac's embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, Nos. 1591 and 1593. On the arrival of the embassy and Saladin's religious embassy, see Baha ad-Din ibn Šaddad [Bohadin], *The Life of Saladin*, trans. C. R. Conder, Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, No. 32 (London, 1897), pp. 198–199; Abu Šamah, *Livre des deux jardins*, pp. 471–472, who misdates the events to 1190; the genuineness of the clause respecting Cyprus is shown by al-Fadil's reference to it, quoted *ibid.*, p. 510.

tended his raids, seized Adrianople, and even planned a siege of Constantinople. Not until February 1190 did the Byzantine emperor finally give up hope of Saracen aid, admit defeat, and agree to the Treaty of Adrianople, which granted Frederick markets, passage to Asia Minor, and hostages to ensure Byzantine good behavior.¹⁷

In the light of Frederick's successes, Isaac's letter of about December 1189 carried by the replacement for the deceased envoy to Saladin, who was then at the siege of Acre, appeared a mixture of self-pity, bravado, and pleas for concrete acts on Saladin's part. A text of this letter, undoubtedly genuine and accompanied by a description of its appearance, has survived in a biography of Saladin by one of his companions; it vividly reveals Isaac's misgivings at a crucial moment of the alliance:

This envoy brought a letter about the matter under consideration. We will describe this document, and give a copy of the translation. It was written in wide lines, but narrower than in the writing of Baghdad. The translation on both back and front was in the second section; between the two the seal had been affixed. This seal was of gold, and had been stamped with a portrait of the King just as wax is impressed with a seal; it weighed fifteen dinars. The two sections of the letter ran as follows:

"From Aisākīūs [Isaac] the King, servant of the Messiah, crowned by the grace of God, ever glorious and victorious *Afghakūs* [imperial], ruling in the name of God, the invincible conqueror, the autocrat of the Greeks, Angelos, to His Excellency the Sultan of Egypt, Salāh ed-Dīn, sincere affection and friendship.

"The letter written by Your Excellency to My Empire [Byzantine diplomatic form, equivalent to "Our Majesty"] has been safely received. We have perused it, and have been informed thereby of the death of our ambassador. This has occasioned us great grief, more especially because he died in a strange land, leaving unfinished the business with which My Empire had charged him, and on which he was to confer with Your Excellency. Your Excellency doubtless intends sending us an ambassador to inform our Empire of the decision that has been made relative to the business with the arrangement of which we charged our late ambassador. The property he has left, or which may be recovered after his death, must be sent to My Empire, that it may be given to his children and relatives.

"I cannot believe that Your Excellency will give ear to malicious reports of the march of the Germans through my dominions; it is not surprising that my enemies should propagate lies to serve their own ends. If you wish to know the truth, I will tell you. They suffered themselves more hardship and fatigue than they inflicted on my peasant population. Their losses in money, horses and men were considerable; they lost a great number of soldiers, and it was with great difficulty that they escaped my brave troops. They were so exhausted that they cannot reach your dominions; and even if they should succeed in reaching them, they could be of no assistance to their fellows, nor could they inflict any injury on Your Excellency. Considering these things, I am much astonished that you have forgotten our former [good] relations, and that you have not communicated any of your plans and projects to My Empire. It seems to My Empire, that the only result of my friendship with you has been to draw down upon me the hatred of the Franks and of all their kind. Your Excellency must fulfil the intention, announced in your letter, of sending me an ambassador to inform me of the decision in the business upon which I have cor-

¹⁷ On the death of Isaac's envoy, and the sending of a replacement, see Bohadin, *Life of Saladin*, pp. 199–201 (Dölger, *Regesten*, No. 1601). Frederick's successes are described in Bishop Dietpold's letter in Magnus, *Chron.*, pp. 509–510; Ansbart, *Hist.*, pp. 27–64; *Hist. peregrinorum*, pp. 131–149; Nicetas, *Hist.*, pp. 526–529, 533–536. See also Cognasso, "Isacco II," *loc. cit.*, pp. 253–269; Riezler, "Kreuzzug," *loc. cit.*, pp. 28–53; Zimmert, "Deutsch-byz. Konflikt," *loc. cit.*, pp. 43–72.

responded with you for a long time past. Let this be done as soon as possible. I pray that the coming of the Germans, of which you have heard so many reports, may not weigh heavily on your hearts; the plans and purposes they entertain will work their own confusion. Written in the year 1501 [of the Seleucid era, equivalent to 1 September 1189-31 August 1190]."¹⁸

The querulous, frustrated tone of the letter, the repeated demands for a clear definition of Saladin's aims, the contradictory statements on whether the crusaders would succeed in reaching Syria, all betray Isaac's consciousness of his failure to destroy Barbarossa and his bitterness over Saladin's procrastination.

In February-April 1190, at the very moment he was making peace with Frederick and allowing him to cross the Straits, Isaac wrote again reminding Saladin that he had re-established public prayer in the name of the Abbasid caliph in the mosque of Constantinople and affirming anew his friendship for the Muslims. He also explained that he had been forced to allow Frederick to pass, but declared that the German emperor and his army would be in no condition to fight when they did reach Syria alive:

He has experienced every type of deception on the way; the sufferings he has endured and the shortage of his supplies have weakened and troubled him. He will not reach your country in any shape useful to himself or his army; he will find his grave there without being able to return and will fall victim to his own trap.¹⁹

Isaac repeated that he had done everything possible to destroy Barbarossa's army, and again pleaded with Saladin to send him an envoy with replies to the Byzantine requests. According to Saladin's secretary, Imad ed-Din, the sultan was favorably impressed and took action in accord with Isaac's desires; this probably means only that Saladin sent another embassy to Constantinople.²⁰

Frederick Barbarossa, in the meantime, left the Byzantine Empire and marched through Asia Minor to Iconium, capital of the sultanate of Rum. This city, whose walls had withstood Manuel Comnenus, he stormed without difficulty—an achievement which must have shown to Saladin that Isaac Angelus' alleged decimation of the crusader army was largely fictitious. Frederick's own estimate of his losses in Thrace, somewhat over a hundred men up to 18 November 1189, after extensive guerrilla warfare, raids on Byzantine towns, and two engagements with Isaac's army, shows that Isaac had achieved little of his plan to destroy the crusaders; Barbarossa did, however, admit that his horses had been reduced in number. The ineffectiveness of Isaac's attacks on the German crusad-

¹⁸ Bohadin, *Life of Saladin*, pp. 199-201 (Dölger, *Regesten*, No. 1601); the paragraphing is mine. The genuineness of this letter is beyond doubt; not only is the description of the letter convincing and the salutation characteristic (cf. for example Isaac's letter of November 1192 in Sanguinetti and Bertolotto, "Doc. gen.," *loc. cit.*, p. 448), but the words and tone are pure Isaac Angelus. The Seleucid era was probably used in the dating clause as a system common to both cultures, without offensive religious connotations.

¹⁹ Isaac's letter (Dölger, *Regesten*, No. 1604) is quoted thus by Imad ed-Din, Saladin's secretary, in a fragment given by Abu Šamah, *Livre des deux jardins*, pp. 470-471. The alleged content of the other parts of this letter show it to have been different from the previous one, of about December 1189: Dölger, *Regesten*, No. 1601.

²⁰ Abu Šamah, *Livre des deux jardins*, pp. 470-471.

ers was made known to Saladin by reports of their progress through Asia Minor; the most notable of these bulletins was a letter from Basil, bishop of Ani and catholicos of Armenia, an Arsacid who favored Saladin out of hatred for the pro-Latin Roupenids of Cilician Armenia. The bishop gave an exaggerated account of the strength, discipline, and endurance of the Germans, and the Arabic historians of the period reflect the dread which Barbarossa's advance produced in their camp. In June 1190 Frederick drowned at the border of the Roupenid territory, and his army broke up almost immediately; Saladin, though, already knew enough to evaluate Isaac's deeds at their real worth. When, in the early summer of 1190, Isaac sent him word of Barbarossa's passage across the Straits and sufferings in Anatolia at the hands of the nomadic Turkomans who inhabited the fringes of the sultanate of Rum, Saladin did not even reply.²¹

In the summer of 1191 Isaac again sent Saladin a messenger equipped with gifts, a letter, and a verbal message; he was received by Saladin's brother, al-Adil. Saladin's foreign minister, al-Fadil, has preserved a résumé of the Byzantine statement. Isaac boasted that he had rejected repeated Western demands for assistance, declared that he had closed the passes and put his fortresses on guard against the crusaders, and alleged that he had excused to the Latins his failure to participate in the crusade by claiming that the ravages of pestilence and lack of supplies rendered postponement necessary. Al-Fadil then makes an appraisal of Isaac's motives and achievements which may represent a summary of al-Adil's reply. The Byzantine emperor, he declares, merely wished to defend his own lands against the crusaders, while pretending to act in the Muslims' interests. As to the patriarchate of Jerusalem, which now depended on him, Isaac was said to have told the Latins that his control lasted only until the Western ruler gave it to one of his own followers. By this excuse, Isaac had allegedly kept the Latins away from his own person, especially after Muslim prayer in the name of the Abbasid caliph had been established at Constantinople. Finally, according to al-Fadil, Saladin rejected all Byzantine requests which might damage the cause of Islam, a statement which suggests that the Byzantine emperor had again desired Saladin to give him control of the Holy Land or join in an attack on Iconium.²²

The emperor, although once more beginning to seek allies in the West because of the growing strength of Henry VI of Hohenstaufen, did not yet despair entirely of the fulfillment of Saladin's promises. On 15 May 1192 an ambassador from Constantinople reached Jerusalem and two days later was admitted to Saladin's presence. His requests were a repetition of the clauses of the treaty

²¹ On Frederick's advance and death, see Ansbart, *Hist.*, pp. 76–92; *Hist. peregrinorum*, pp. 155–172; Riezler, "Kreuzzug," *loc. cit.*, pp. 55–70. On Manuel I's attack on Iconium, see Ferdinand Chalandon, *Jean II Comnène (1118–1143) et Manuel I Comnène (1143–1180)* (Paris, 1912; reprinted New York, 1960), pp. 250–255. Frederick's losses are reported in a letter (Philippopolis, 18 November 1189) to Henry VI, in Ansbart, *Hist.*, p. 43. For reports on Barbarossa's progress, see Bohadin, *Life of Saladin*, pp. 170–171, 182–189 (including the Armenian Catholicos' letter), 198. On Isaac's letter, which is not mentioned by Dölger, and the date of which can only be conjectured, see the report of Imad ed-Din, quoted in Abu Šamah, *Livre des deux jardins*, pp. 437–438.

²² This embassy, Abu Šamah, *Livre des deux jardins*, pp. 508–509, is not mentioned by Dölger; Röhrich, *Königreich Jerusalem*, p. 497, n. 2, dates it summer 1191, on the basis of context.

alleged to have formerly existed; they included demands for the True Cross (that is, the fragments which Saladin had captured), for Orthodox possession of the churches of Jerusalem (which Saladin meditated yielding to Latin clergy as part of the price of Richard the Lion-Hearted's departure), for an offensive and defensive alliance between the two powers, and for a joint naval expedition against Cyprus. Although Saladin allegedly refused all these terms (actually, he may have given the envoy a piece of the True Cross), he despatched Ibn al-Bezzay, an Egyptian, as ambassador to Constantinople, to return with the Byzantine.²³

As usual, Saladin sent rich gifts with his representative; these included horses, wild and tame animals from Egypt and Libya, aloe wood, balsam, and twenty-seven golden horse-trappings studded with gems and pearls. Isaac later evaluated these presents at 6675 hyperpers. In the late summer or early autumn the Byzantine and Saracen envoys sailed for Constantinople on a Venetian ship belonging to a certain Pordano. At sea, evidently near Rhodes, the vessel fell in with a fleet of Genoese and Pisan corsairs under the command of Guglielmo Grasso, who was rapidly making himself the terror of the region. The Venetian ship was pillaged, and Isaac's and Saladin's emissaries were all put to death. At this time, according to a later story, a Pisan named Forte seized the fragment of the True Cross which Saladin's envoys were carrying; he took it to the Pisan fortress of Bonifacio, on the coast of Corsica, where it was captured by the Genoese in 1195 and added to the relics treasured by the city. In November 1192 Isaac complained to Genoa and Pisa about this and other piratical outrages, and from Genoa he appears to have obtained some compensation for the financial losses he had sustained. The Byzantine emperor's relations with Saladin, however, were terminated by this event. Saladin was disillusioned with Isaac's military capabilities, while Isaac finally realized that Saladin was too distant to protect him from the Latins. By the time of Saladin's death in 1193 Isaac Angelus had reversed his policy and formed alliances with Genoa and Pisa, the pope, and the Sicilian Normans, which he hoped would relieve him of his former dependence upon the Muslims.²⁴

From 1185 to 1192 the alliance with Saladin was the cornerstone of Byzantine foreign policy. In the face of the hostility of Normans, Pisans, Genoese, the Ger-

²³ Bohadin, *Life of Saladin*, pp. 334–335 (Dölger, *Regesten*, No. 1608); Cognasso, "Isacco II," *loc. cit.*, pp. 275–276; Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, III (Cambridge, England, 1954), 63, 73–74.

²⁴ Isaac retails the story of Grasso's attack in three different places: the letters of complaint to Genoa and Pisa (Sanguineti and Bertolotto, "Doc. gen.," *loc. cit.*, pp. 448–453; Müller, *Doc. tosc.*, p. 66), and the 1193 chrysobull to Genoa (Sanguineti and Bertolotto, "Doc. gen.," *loc. cit.*, pp. 454–464) (Dölger, *Regesten*, Nos 1612, 1616, and 1618). The story of Forte is in *Regni iherosolymitani brevis historia*, ed. Luigi Tommaso Belgrano, *Annali genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi continuatori dal MXCIX al MCCXCII*, I [Fonti per la storia d'Italia, pubblicate dall' Istituto storico italiano, XI] (Genoa, 1890), 140–141; see J. K. Fotheringham, "Genoa and the Fourth Crusade," *English Historical Review*, xxv (1910), 28–29. A. Frolov, *Recherches sur la déviation de la IV^e Croisade vers Constantinople* (Paris, 1955), p. 68, in his survey of the histories of various fragments of the True Cross, mentions that Isaac's 1192 embassy requested it from Saladin, but does not include the story of Forte.

man emperor, and the pope, the Eastern Empire leaned on the expanding Islamic power in Syria and Egypt. Isaac Angelus, in particular, derived a sense of confidence and security from it which ultimately led him into difficulties. His hostility to Barbarossa sprang largely from this cause; in order to fulfil his part of the treaty, he had to oppose any crusading army which entered the Byzantine domains. The rewards promised were goals Andronicus and the earlier Comneni had striven for, namely, recovery of rebellious Cyprus, repossession of the Holy Land, and re-establishment of the tenth century boundaries in Asia Minor. The failure of the alliance with Saladin forced a complete reversal of policy in the form of a rapprochement with the smaller Western powers in order to counter the growing ambitions of Henry VI.

That the alliance had any great effect on the course of events in the Levant appears doubtful. Isaac's relations with the Melkites may have speeded the surrender of Jerusalem, but the city was in no condition to hold out against the overwhelming force of the Muslims. Had Barbarossa's crusade actually reached the Holy Land in full strength and with undiminished discipline, it might have materially altered the situation, but its destruction was by no means the work of Isaac. His strongest attacks amounted to little more than pinpricks, and the crusaders suffered more from the terrain and climate than from the emperor. The Byzantines derived little tangible benefit from their alliance with Saladin; although some of the churches of the Holy Land came into the possession of the Orthodox, Cyprus, captured by the Latins, became an ally of Saladin before his death, and Iconium remained in Muslim hands. Isaac's alliance with Saladin, although fateful for the empire, altered little the situation in the Orient.

The evil effects of the tie with the Muslims on Byzantium's reputation were more enduring. The Latins of Syria were frankly alarmed at such a conjunction, and sought to stigmatize it throughout Europe. Frederick Barbarossa, while in Thrace, even instructed his son to urge the pope to preach a crusade against the Byzantines. The preference of Richard the Lion-Hearted, Philip Augustus, and later crusades for the sea-route is not unconnected with Isaac's relations with the enemies of the Cross. Recollection of this policy surely influenced the men of the Fourth Crusade, and it had certainly served to discredit the Eastern Empire. Throughout the twelfth century, at the time of the crusades of 1101, during Bohemond's conflict with Alexius Comnenus, and after the Second Crusade, charges of Byzantine complicity with the Muslims had been levelled; in the present instance they were justified.²⁵

²⁵ For the alarm of the Syrian Latins, see the anonymous letter from the East, Conrad of Montferrat's letter to Baldwin of Canterbury, and the French embassy's report, all frequently cited above. Frederick Barbarossa's appeal for a crusade is contained in his letter of 18 November 1189 to Henry VI, in Ansbart, *Hist.*, pp. 42–43. For Western knowledge of Isaac's alliance with Saladin, see, in addition to the sources for Barbarossa's crusade: *Continuatio weingartensis Chronici Hugonis a Sancto Victore*, ed. Ludwig Weiland, in *Monumenta Welforum antiqua* (SSRG in usum scholarum) (Hanover, 1869), p. 53; William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum anglicarum*, ed. Richard Howlett, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, Rolls Series, 1 (London, 1884), 326; Richard of London, *Itinerarium peregrinorum et gesta regis Ricardi*, ed. William Stubbs, in *Chronicles and Memorials of the Reign of Richard I*, Rolls Series, 1 (London, 1864), 46; Ralph Niger, *Chronica*, ed. Robert

The alliance produced a visible reduction in the empire's prestige and self-esteem. In the realm of political theory, Byzantium had scarcely admitted any nation to be its equal since the demise of Sassanid Persia; because the Roman Empire was God's chosen vehicle for the Christianization and governance of the world, no state could or should approach it except as a humble suppliant. While seeking the friendship of Saladin, the Byzantine emperors sought to perpetuate this image, as when Andronicus demanded Saladin's homage and Isaac sent a crown with a declaration intended to convey the idea that Byzantium retained the right of granting or withholding all legitimate titles. When Saladin ignored or repulsed these moves, the realities of the situation soon forced Byzantium into a decidedly subordinate position, for it was clearly the weaker partner. Isaac was forced to accept the humiliating devastation inflicted by the German crusaders in the hope that Saladin would eventually reward him for his loyal service. No reconciliation between Byzantine pretensions and the facts of politics was attempted; the claim to supremacy was quietly dropped as Andronicus' bluster subsided into Isaac's whine. The Byzantine historian, Nicetas Choniates, a high government official who could scarcely have been ignorant of something that was public knowledge in the West, never mentions the alliance with Saladin.²⁶

In the end, the alliance between ancient enemies against the Latin interloper failed; Saladin was too distant to protect Isaac Angelus from his foes, and the Byzantines were in no condition to offer serious resistance to crusaders. The Muslim estimate of the value of the alliance is bluntly stated in a letter of al-Fadil, written while Guy of Cyprus was an ally of Saladin:

You should attribute no importance to our negotiations with the ruler of Constantinople in regard to the aid we ought to lend him against Cyprus, for we promised it only when the country was in our enemies' hands. In truth, the Greek king has never succeeded in his enterprises; we gain nothing from his friendship, and need fear nothing from his enmity.²⁷

Isaac's own appraisal was even gloomier: "It seems to My Empire, that the only result of my friendship with you has been to draw down upon me the hatred of the Franks and of all their kind."²⁸ The alliance with Saladin added much to the rising Western hostility for Byzantium which culminated in the diversion of the Fourth Crusade and the Latin capture of Constantinople. Isaac's acceptance of

Anstruther, Caxton Society Publications (London, 1851), p. 97; *Chronica regia coloniensis (Annales maximi colonienses)*, ed. Georg Waitz, SSRG in usum scholarum (Hanover, 1880), p. 147; *Regni iher. hist. brevis*, pp. 140–141; *Chronicon Montis Sereni*, ed. Ernst Ehrenfeuchter, MGH SS, xxiii (Hanover, 1874), 161.

²⁶ The only mention by Nicetas is an indirect quotation of what the Germans were saying about Isaac's conduct; in describing his own peace-making activities during the conflict with Barbarossa in Thrace, he says: "And we ourselves returning [to Constantinople] a little later related everything, declaring that the Germans said there was no difference between the faithful Emperor of the Romans' ignoring the treaties of the western Christians and his making a treaty with the ruler of the Saracens . . ." (Nicetas, *Hist.*, p. 536). Even this statement treats the alliance with Saladin as a hypothetical alternative.

²⁷ Abu Šamah, *Livre des deux jardins*, p. 510.

²⁸ Bohadin, *Life of Saladin*, p. 201.

the necessity of playing a subordinate role in an alliance prepared the way for the once great empire's ultimate position as a minor power in the Eastern Mediterranean.

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APPENDIX

The question of the origin and reliability of the anonymous letter in Magnus deserves consideration. It has no address and perhaps began with other matters; it breaks off abruptly, after a mention of Saladin's determination to do something about the forthcoming Third Crusade and his embassy and gifts to Isaac, but without describing any of the terms Saladin proposed at this time. Magnus has interpolated this letter (with the notation: "Ut autem ordo historiae de qua agimus, ad notitiam posterorum manifestius perducatur, placuit hic interponere litteras eandem historiam continentes, scriptas siquidem in ultramarinis partibus et missas in partes nostras, sicque ad nos perlatas." Magnus, *Chron.*, pp. 510–511) after a narration of Barbarossa's difficulties in the Balkan peninsula, evidently with the purpose of explaining the Byzantine attacks, although the letter itself never reaches the point of making precise the agreement between Isaac and Saladin whereby Isaac undertook to destroy the crusade.

The last events mentioned in the letter occurred, apparently, in the summer of 1188; many of the same facts are mentioned in Conrad of Montferrat's letter of 20 September 1188 to Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury, in Roger of Wendover, *Flores*, I, 153–154 (Röhricht, *Regesta*, No. 676), part of which is repeated verbatim in the report of the French embassy to Constantinople (commonly dated between September and November 1188), in Benedict of Peterborough, *Gesta regis Henrici*, II, 51–53 (mentioned by Röhricht, *Regesta*, under No. 688). Before coming to Palestine, Conrad of Montferrat had lived at Constantinople (spring and early summer 1187), as brother-in-law of the emperor Isaac, so that he had every opportunity of learning of Isaac's relations with Saladin. Among the other possible sources of his information, the writer of the anonymous letter mentions one: in 1186 the count of Tripoli and prince of Antioch learned of the alliance of Isaac and Saladin "a fidelibus suis et quibusdam Sarracenis nobilioribus, quorum consanguineos Saladinus suffocaverat" (Magnus, *Chron.*, p. 511). In addition, Conrad's letter (Roger of Wendover, *Flores*, I, 153) reports that the Mahomerie (*i.e.*, mosque-pulpit: see n. 13, above) sent by Saladin to Constantinople in 1188 and mentioned in the concluding sentence of the anonymous letter was captured by the Genoese at sea and brought to Tyre: probably much of the writer's precise information derived from captives taken on this occasion.

The letter's author was noticeably proud of the defense made at Tyre against Saladin: "Saladinus victus ignominiose ante Tyrum" (Magnus, *Chron.*, p. 512). The probable correctness of the gift lists in the anonymous letter is shown by the similar list of those sent Isaac in 1192 by Saladin, as stated in Isaac's complaint to the Genoese (November 1192), in Sanguineti and Bertolotto, "Doc. gen.," *loc. cit.*, p. 448–453 (Dölger, *Regesten*, No. 1612). These factors, together with the degree of precise detail contained therein, suggest that the anonymous letter is a genuine product of the late summer or fall 1188, from Conrad or his circle at Tyre. That Magnus omitted something at the end also seems likely.

On the subject of this letter, see Riezler, "Kreuzzug," *loc. cit.*, p. 36, n. 8; Reinhold Röhricht, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kreuzzüge*, II (Berlin, 1878), 190–192; the same author's *Königreich Jerusalem*, p. 494, n. 1; Cognasso, "Isacco II," *loc. cit.*, p. 256, n. 4, and p. 257, n. 1–5.