

CRUSADERS' MOTIVATIONS AND CHIVALRIC CONSCIOUSNESS: FRENCH CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LATER CRUSADES

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In Quest of a Crusading Spirit

After the loss of Acre in 1291, the last Christian bastion in Palestine, the Christians launched no more military expeditions to Palestine. However, the crusading idea did not lose its attractiveness in the West and the recovery of the Holy Land remained a prominent idea in crusading theory. Military crusading activity following the fall of Acre moved from the Holy Land to the lands of the Baltic pagans, Moors, Mamluks, and Turks.

At the end of the fourteenth century France was preoccupied with the Great Schism, the Hundred Years' War, and an unstable internal situation caused by the acute madness of King Charles VI. At this time, however, the duke of Bourbon launched the Mahdia crusade in 1390; the most important large-scale crusade of this time took place to Nicopolis in 1396; and every year a great number of knights left the country for Prussia in pursuit of religious battles.

The crusade was an enterprise of contrasting patterns. It was always perceived in general as an occupation honorable to God. However, certain expeditions and general weaknesses of the crusaders' military organization were a constant subject of criticism not only in the works of clerics (Michel Pintoin, Honoré Bonet), but also in the treatises written by authors with a lay background (Philippe de Mézières, Jean Froissart). At the same time, knights perceived the crusades as an individual activity; they were supposed to combine crusading with service to their lord or their country. Financing crusading campaigns was generally the knights' responsibility, although sometimes this was covered by donations from generous lords. Despite all the difficulties attending crusading campaigns, they still tended to be a popular type of "pastime" among knights.

In this article I will try to establish the crusaders' motivations in choosing this kind of activity despite all the difficulties connected with it. I will investigate whether the French crusading campaigns of the end of the fourteenth century were determined by a special kind of crusaders' group consciousness and whether

one may actually speak about a particular “crusader identity” or whether a better covering term might be “crusader consciousness.”¹

First I describe how critics of crusading expressed their opinions in contemporary sources (treatises, chronicles, knightly biographies). Second, I address questions concerning the individual responsibilities of a knight willing to participate in a crusade. The third part presents a model of social interactions among crusaders, where I will try to define individual and social motivations that could have influenced the decision of a knight to leave on a crusade.

French crusading theory of the end of the fourteenth century is generally a well researched subject. A considerable number of studies have been dedicated to one of the most prominent preachers of crusade of his times – Philippe de Mézières.² Alphonse Dupront researched the crusading ideas of Honoré Bonet, Philippe de Mézières, and Eustache Deschamps.³ A large part of this topic has been studied in the context of the Great Schism.⁴ Therefore, in this article I will consider only critics of the crusades.

Individual knightly contributions to the later crusades have been studied by several scholars. Werner Paravicini has authored a fundamental three-volume work on the expeditions to Prussia.⁵ Maurice Keen and Anthony Luttrell have studied the participation of English knights in crusading campaigns in the light of Chaucer’s Knight.⁶ Jacques Paviot has researched the contribution of

¹ This article is based on my MA thesis, “Theory, Practice, and Chivalric Identity: French Contributions to the Later Crusades,” Central European University (Budapest, 2009).

² The most important contributions are: Nicolae Iorga, *Philippe de Mézières, et la Croisade au XIV^e siècle* (Paris: É. Bouillon, 1895); *Le Songe du vieil pèlerin*, ed. George W. Coopland, 2 vols (London: CUP, 1969); Philippe de Mézières, *Letter to Richard II: A Plea Made in 1395 for Peace between England and France*, ed. George W. Coopland (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1975); Philippe de Mézières, *Une épître lamentable et consolatoire adressée en 1397 à Philippe le Hardi, duc de Bourgogne, sur la défaite de Nicopolis (1396)*, ed. Philippe Contamine and Jacques Paviot (Paris: Société de l’histoire de France, 2008).

³ Alphonse Dupront, *Le mythe de croisade* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), vol. 1, 212–217, 220–225, 256–298.

⁴ Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints and Visionaries of the Great Schism, 1378–1417* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2006).

⁵ Werner Paravicini, *Die Preussenreisen des Europäischen Adels* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1989–1994).

⁶ Anthony Luttrell, “Chaucer’s Knight and Holy War” (in press); Maurice Keen, “Chaucer’s Knight, the English Aristocracy and the Crusade,” in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Vincent Scattergood (London: Duckworth, 1983), 49–61; Idem, “Chaucer and Chivalry Revisited,” in *Armies, Chivalry, and Warfare in Medieval England and France*, ed. Matthew Strickland (Stamford: Paul Watkins Press, 1998), 1–12.

the Burgundian knights to the crusading campaigns of the fourteenth century⁷ and, based on his material, questioned the role of knightly ideals in the desire of knights to join the crusades.⁸

The best-studied individual French crusaders of the end of the fourteenth century are Marshal of France Jean II le Meingre Boucicaut;⁹ Enguerrand de Coucy, Edward III's son-in-law;¹⁰ Jean de Chateaumorand;¹¹ and Philippe d'Artois, cousin of Charles VI of France.¹² I believe that studies in this field of research will be furthered with a case study of the state of crusading ideas, crusading practice, and crusaders' motivations in France at the end of the fourteenth century. This work is a contribution to the study of group identity in the Middle Ages. I believe that group consciousness is an important element of constructing history and needs to be studied comparatively using examples of various institutions and enterprises. Crusades are excellent material for such an analysis.

Critics of Crusades

Crusading was always perceived as an expedition viewed favorably by God. Late medieval crusading theory distinguished two types: *passagium generale* and *passagium particulare*. The "ideal" crusade was meant to be general, that is, to involve all Christian rulers, and its major aim was the recovery of the Holy Land. *Passagium particulare* referred to a small expedition which was often locally or nationally

⁷ Jacques Paviot, "La croisade bourguignonne aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles: un idéal chevaleresque?" *Francia* 33, No. 1 (2006): 33–68.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ Joseph Delaville le Roulx, *La France en Orient au XIV^e siècle. Expéditions du Maréchal Boucicaut*, 2 vols (Paris: Thorin, 1886); Denis Lalande, *Jean II Meingre, dit Boucicaut (1366–1421). Etude d'une biographie héroïque* (Geneva: Droz, 1988); Norman Housley, "One Man and his Wars: The Depiction of Warfare by Marshal Boucicaut's Biographer," *Journal of Medieval Studies* 29 (2003): 27–40.

¹⁰ Jacques Paviot, "Noblesse et la Croisade à la fin du Moyen Âge," *Cahiers des recherches médiévales* 13 (2006): 69–84; Barbara Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century* (London: Macmillan, 1978).

¹¹ Gustav Schlumberger, "Jean de Chateaumorand: un des principaux héros français des arrière-croisades en Orient à la fin du XIV^e siècle et à l'aurore du XV^e," *Byzance et Croisade* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1927), 282–326.

¹² Émilie Lebailly, "Le connétable d'Eu et son circle nobiliaire," *Cahiers des recherches médiévales* 13 (2006): 41–52.

organized and which was usually perceived as preparation for the final recovery of the Holy Land.¹³

Despite the general praise of the idea of a crusade, however, the ideologists of the crusade produced an extensive critique of the knighthood participating in the crusades in general and of certain crusades in particular. One even encounters the explicit discouragement of the *passagium particulare*. Honoré Bonnet's work urges abandoning the passages of a small company undertaken by a king because they would only bring blame on the Christians and there would be a great risk of oppressing the Catholic faith rather than propagating it.¹⁴ It is clear that the crusaders themselves provided the material for such critiques. The general criticism of the crusaders was part of the stream of contemporary knightly critiques. They were usually accused of lacking military skill, effeminacy, and poor organization on the battlefield.

The crusade of Nicopolis was the central event in the crusading activity at the end of the fourteenth century and it was widely criticized in the sources. An express aversion to crusaders runs through Michel Pintoin's account of the battle of Nicopolis. First, he accuses the knights of not listening to the advice of ecclesiastical men concerning their way of life at war.¹⁵ Secondly, he blames them for their pride and the constant pursuit of honor, which deprived them of military rationality. He even states that due to their vices the crusaders were unworthy of mercy and therefore the masses which were celebrated for them in Paris in their absence, according to the instructions of the king, did not reach the God of Mercy.¹⁶ According to Michel Pintoin, the defeat of the Christians was a celestial vengeance for the numerous crimes of the Christian army and requital for their reluctance to listen to any advice except that of youngsters.¹⁷

Pintoin strongly criticizes the crusaders for the massacre of the Greek population of the city of Rahowa and for the execution of nearly a thousand prisoners. *La Chronique de Saint-Denis* as well as *Le Livre des Fais* reports that the Christian army took around a thousand citizens of noble origin from Rahowa as prisoners. The Christians presumably wanted to profit from the ransom which

¹³ Sylvia Schein, *Fideles Crucis. The Papacy, the West, and the Recovery of the Holy Land, 1274–1314* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 16–19.

¹⁴ *The Tree of Battles*, ed. George W. Coopland (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1949), 127.

¹⁵ *La Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denis*, ed. L. Bellaguet, 6 vols (Paris: Crapelet, 1839–1852), vol. 2, 484.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 496.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 510.

they hoped to receive for these noble captives,¹⁸ but the imminent approach of the Turkish army to their camp near Nicopolis changed their plans. They decided to execute the prisoners, probably because they feared that the captives would side with the Turks. *Le Livre des Fais* passes over this episode of the Nicopolis crusade in silence, while *La Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denis* explicitly states what happened.¹⁹

Jean Froissart also criticizes the excessive pride of the Frenchmen on the battlefield at Nicopolis, who did not listen to the wise advice of the king of Hungary and therefore “became the reason for the deplorable loss, which was the greatest since the battle of Roncevalles, where twelve peers of France died...”²⁰ Jean Froissart criticizes not only the crusade of Nicopolis, but the crusaders of other campaigns as well for their lack of spiritual devotion. He speaks about the son of Philippe de Valois, Jean II le Bon, who took the Cross in 1363 at the great desire of the king of Cyprus, who was traveling through Europe seeking aid against the Turks. According to Froissart, Jean made this decision, first, because he wanted to repeat his father’s heroic deed and, second, in order to remove from his kingdom all the men at arms “who pillaged and robbed his subjects without any shadow of right and to save their souls.”²¹

The account of Boucicaut’s biographer of the battle of Nicopolis is completely different from other critiques found in contemporary sources. This seems to have been an attempt to restore the chivalric reputation and, mainly, the reputation of the marshal of France, Boucicaut, who was one of the chief army commanders during the expedition. The author presents the battle of Nicopolis to his readers as a collection of separate examples of knightly courage, ending with extensive reasoning on the qualities of French chivalry, which surpassed all other nations in its qualities and lost battles only “because of treason or because of the faults of their chiefs or of those who had to conduct them.”²²

Boucicaut’s biography represents a separate tradition among contemporary crusader critiques and, in my opinion, can be seen as an expression of a certain crusader consciousness. The fact that neither crusade critiques nor the difficulties that arose from participating in crusading campaigns discouraged the knights

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 494.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 510.

²⁰ Jean Froissart, *Œuvres de Jean Froissart. Les Chroniques*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove (Brussels: Comptoir Universel d’Imprimerie et de Librairie Victor Devaux, 1872), vol. 14, 475.

²¹ Jean Froissart, *Œuvres de Jean Froissart. Les Chroniques*, vol. 6, 372.

²² *Le Livre des Fais du Sage Roy Charles*, ed. M. Petitot (Paris: Foucault, 1825), 107–108.

from fighting unbelievers can be regarded as evidence for the existence of a certain kind of crusader identity.

Participating in a Crusade

The crusades were perceived as the individual activity of knights. Financing crusading campaigns was generally the knights' responsibility, although sometimes generous lords made donations. The crusading knights at Nicopolis (1396) were financed to some extent by the duke of Burgundy, but mostly by themselves. According to Jean Froissart, the duke of Burgundy asked noblemen to join his crusade at their own expense or, if they were not willing to join the crusade, to donate something toward the organization of the crusade. Thus, old knights donated sums of money and young knights joined the expedition.²³ According to *Le Livre des Fais*, everyone went on the crusade at his own expense except knights and esquires who accompanied higher-ranking warriors.²⁴ Boucicaut's biographer reports that the marshal took with him seventy *gentilshommes*, among whom fifteen were knights of his parents.²⁵ Some crusaders received donations from the organizer of the crusade, the duke of Burgundy, Philippe le Hardi, before their departure and upon their arrival.²⁶

Funding an expedition to Prussia was also the knight's responsibility, although in some cases generous noblemen supplied them with resources. According to Cabaret d'Orville, in 1384 Luis de Bourbon, with his closest entourage of knights, went to Savoy to visit his sister. Before he returned from Savoy to Paris several knights asked him for permission to spend the winter of 1385 abroad, in Prussia, as "many knights from different countries were going there,"²⁷ promising to come back shortly after Easter. "Do you have money?" asked the duke of Bourbon. The knights answered him that the duke of Anjou had already given them transport and money before the departure.²⁸

The limitations on knights allowed to take part in the expedition suggests that the king was preoccupied with the rational use of warriors in state affairs such as the Hundred Years' War and desired to limit their crusading ardor. Charles VI did not allow Jean Boucicaut to join the Mahdia expedition, which

²³ Jean Froissart, *Œuvres de Jean Froissart. Les Chroniques*, vol. 15, 447–448.

²⁴ *Le Livre des Fais*, 91.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ Jacques Paviot, "La Croisade bourguignonne aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles," 46–54.

²⁷ *La Chronique du bon Duc Loys de Bourbon*, ed. A.-M. Chazaud (Paris: Renouard, 1876), 63.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

disappointed the marshal.²⁹ However, Boucicaut soon received permission to join the crusade to the Baltic lands, which the king may have regarded as a less dangerous enterprise. But the story does not end there, because while waiting for the beginning of the campaign in Prussia, the king sent Boucicaut messages urging him to come back to Paris for another expedition. Boucicaut, not daring to disobey, prepared himself for the journey, but was suddenly stopped by another message allowing him to continue his campaign in Prussia. Boucicaut's obedience to the king's orders shows that the king's service took priority over crusading. However, as Norman Housley has suggested, this episode shows the tension that existed between the king's service crusading activity, which was regarded in a way as individual.³⁰ The example of Boucicaut shows that it was hard, although still possible, to combine these two types of military service.

The number of knights traveling to Prussia increased during the peaceful periods of the Hundred Years' War. According to Christopher Tyerman, the highest peaks of crusading activity in Prussia followed the truces and peaces of the Hundred Years' War, notably in 1347–1352, 1362–1368, and 1390–1398.³¹ This pattern suggests that the involvement of Western knights in crusading campaigns in the Baltic lands depended greatly on the level of their occupation with home affairs.

A knight willing to participate in a crusade was supposed to ask special permission from his master to leave the country – *congié*. Upon receiving the permission the knight became officially free from service to his master and could offer himself in the service of other noblemen. Thus, Boucicaut and Renaud du Roy took *congié* from the duke of Bourbon and went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. They traveled to Venice, from where they traveled to Constantinople. They stayed in Constantinople for Lent, waiting for permission from Sultan Murad I to make their pilgrimage on his territory. Murad I organized a solemn reception for the knights at his court and in return Boucicaut and Renaud offered to join him if he should decide to fight the Saracens. Murad accepted their proposal and they stayed at his court,³² but he did not lead any wars against the Saracens then and soon the knights left. Shortly after this episode they arrived at the court of the king of Hungary and stayed there for three months. Probably during this period

²⁹ *Le Livre des Fais*, 74.

³⁰ Norman Housley, "One Man and his Wars."

³¹ Christopher Tyerman, *England and the Crusades, 1095–1588* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 268.

³² *Le Livre des Fais*, 61–62.

they were considered his knights, because Boucicaut's biographer indicates that upon their departure they received *congié* from him.³³

This material suggests that crusading bore a strong individual character. Being performed at a knight's own responsibility, even though with a hope of receiving a reward in the form of a donation or part of the booty, they were perceived as activities beyond service to their lord or country. Individual knightly interests bound French noblemen together in such enterprises and seem to have defined a group consciousness of a cosmopolitan military elite seeking adventure, entertainment, experience, and honor.

Crusades as Social Interaction among Knights

For a French knight at the end of the fourteenth century the common crusading destinations were the lands of the Baltic pagans, Moors, Mamluks, and Turks. The campaigns in Prussia were the most popular among the knights, as they went on constantly and were easy to access.

Expeditions to Prussia were a unique experience for the European chivalry, because the Teutonic knights had developed, in Christopher Tyerman's expression, "a knightly package tour," which included feasting, hunting, military action, and a system of prizes for the most successful combatants.³⁴ In only a matter of several weeks spent in Prussia, knights could participate in a military campaign and a feast, and then return home with honor, reputation, and spiritual reward.

The most frequent explanations in the primary sources for joining a Baltic crusade are a knight's boredom and the lack of occupation at home. The duke of Guerles, in order "to employ his time, while he did not know what to do at home, went to Prussia."³⁵ The same story is told by the anonymous author of *Le Livre des Fais*. When all the elite of the French army went on the Mahdia Crusade in 1390, leaving Boucicaut in Paris as the king had not allowed him to join, he became upset and unwilling to stay at court and left France as soon as possible in order to join a crusade in Prussia;³⁶ another time he left France for Prussia because "it seemed to him that he was no longer needed in France on the battlefield."³⁷

³³ Ibidem, 62.

³⁴ Christopher Tyerman, *England and the Crusades, 1095–1588*, 267.

³⁵ Jean Froissart, *Les Chroniques du Sire Jean Froissart*, ed. J. A. C. Buchon (Paris: Société du Panthéon Littéraire, 1803), vol. 2, 751.

³⁶ *Le Livre des Fais*, 74.

³⁷ Ibidem, 42.

Another important matter for crusaders was a hearty welcome. The crusaders usually enjoyed their stay at the grand master's of Prussia; this is attested by the fact that crusaders often went there several times during their careers. One of these knights was Jean Boucicaut. In a seven-year period, from 1384 to 1391, he went to Prussia three times and planned one more expedition, but decided to postpone it.³⁸ The duke of Guerles went to Prussia twice, in 1386 and in 1388. The count d'Eu traveled to Prussia at least twice, in 1385 and 1386.³⁹

The warm welcome played an important role elsewhere besides the crusades undertaken in Prussia. *Le Livre des Fais* testifies that one of the reasons for Philippe d'Artois to launch a crusade to Hungary was the fact that he had already been at the court of King Sigismund once and his stay there had pleased him so much that he decided to join the king of Hungary in his crusade against the Ottomans.⁴⁰

When the welcome was less hearty than the crusaders expected, they usually left the battle. Henry Lancaster traveled to Prussia in 1390–1391 and returned there in 1392. According to John Capgrave, having arrived, “when he found out that the reception which was given to him by the lords of the country was not as friendly as he had wished, he left them and proceeded to Venice, and from thence to Jerusalem.”⁴¹ Froissart relates another episode in his *Chronicles*. In 1388 the duke of Guerles planned a crusade to Prussia. On his way, he was captured by Wenceslas, duke of Pomerania; he was released from captivity only with the help of the Grand Master of Prussia, Conrad Zoellner von Rotenstein. This incident made the duke of Guerles so “melancholic” that he decided not to stay in Königsberg and left.⁴²

Crusading was a matter of prestige. It required vast expense to exhibit a crusader's wealth and status. A well-known example of this kind of representation can be found in the *La Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denis*. According to this chronicle, during fifteen days spent under the walls of Nicopolis before the battle, crusaders visited each other daily and exchanged courtesies. They always appeared in new embroidered robes with sleeves of “unbearable length” and wore shoes with pointed toes two feet long and sometimes more; their tables were full of the

³⁸ *Ibidem*, 63.

³⁹ *La Chronique des quatre premiers Valois (1327–1393)*, ed. Simeon Luce (Paris: Société de l'histoire de France, 1862), 313.

⁴⁰ *Le Livre des Fais*, 88–89.

⁴¹ John Capgrave, *History of the Illustrious Henries*, ed. Francis Charles Hingeston (London: Longman and Roberts, 1858), 104.

⁴² Jean Froissart, *Les Chroniques du Sire Jean Froissart*, vol. 2, 751–753.

rarest wines and foods.⁴³ In the camp there were women and girls of ill repute, with whom many of them committed “all sorts of adultery and libertinism” and some of them spent whole nights in debauchery and playing at dice.⁴⁴

The knights presumably were allied in friends’ circles when going on crusades. From time to time small groups of crusaders going from one expedition to another are mentioned in the sources. Below I will give several examples of such relationships of Marshal Jean Boucicaut selected from his biography, *Le Livre des Fais*.

Jean Boucicaut and Renaud de Roie, mentioned together several times in the sources, formed a small group. The first time, they appear together in Poitou guarding the frontier during the winter of 1385–1386. To procure provisions they were making raids on nearby villages together with other knights.⁴⁵ In 1390 Jean Boucicaut, Renaud de Roie, and Jean de Sempy organized the famous jousts of St. Inglebert near Calais. In the third mention Renaud de Roie and Jean Boucicaut appear together on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in November 1388. Renaud accompanied Boucicaut to Hungary, where he left him. The last time Renaud and Boucicaut met was at the battle of Nicopolis in 1396, where Renaud du Roie died.

Philippe d’Eu, Enguerrand de Coucy, and Henry de Bar, known to Boucicaut from his adolescent years spent at the court of the dauphin, the future King Charles VI, and through the Order of *Baboune* to which Boucicaut and his brother also belonged,⁴⁶ probably likewise represented another small group of knights. On their departure to the Mahdia Crusade in 1390 Eustache Deschamps composed a comic poem about their wives waiting for them to return from the crusade.⁴⁷ Henry de Bar, married to the daughter of Sire de Coucy, died on the battlefield at Nicopolis in 1396; Enguerrand de Coucy died at Mikalidsch on 18 February 1397.⁴⁸

Jean Chateumorand (1352–1429), chamberlain of the duke of Bourbon, was one of Boucicaut’s most devoted friends. They are mentioned together for the first time in Prussia in January and February 1385.⁴⁹ In 1385–1386 they

⁴³ *La Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denis*, vol. 2, 498.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁵ *Le Livre des Fais*, 47–49; *Chronique du bon Duc Loys de Bourbon*, 154–157.

⁴⁶ *Œuvres complètes d’Eustache Deschamps*, ed. Gaston Raynaud (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1903), vol. 5, Ballade 927 “Sur l’ordre de la Baboune,” 134.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, Ballade 769 “Sur l’expédition de Barbarie,” vol. 4, 266–267.

⁴⁸ “Index des noms propres,” *Le Livre des Fais*.

⁴⁹ *Le Livre des Fais*, 40; *La Chronique du bon Duc Loys de Bourbon*, 62–64.

spent the winter in Poitou guarding the frontier together with Renaud du Roy, mentioned above, and other knights. They survived the battle of Nicopolis and Chateamorand participated under Boucicaut's command in the expedition against the Turks in aid of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaeologos in 1399.⁵⁰ In 1401 Chateamorand became one of the thirteen members of the Order of the White Lady on the Green Field, founded by Boucicaut.⁵¹ Relationships established during the crusades seem to have been long-lasting. Thus, Froissart reports that when Wautier de Zelles, sire de Balastre, died in 1387, the duke of Guerles was distressed because a year before they had been together in Prussia on a crusade.⁵²

One can assume that crusading played an important role in social promotion. One such example can be found in *Le Livre des Fais*. In the winter of 1387–1388, Philippe d'Eu, cousin of King Charles VI, went on a crusade to Prussia⁵³ and afterwards on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where he met Jean Boucicaut. Boucicaut's pilgrimage was already coming to an end when he accidentally heard that the sultan of Egypt had arrested Philippe d'Eu in Damascus. Boucicaut decided to join the count of Eu despite the fact that he had to leave his ship full of provisions for the crusade in Prussia. Instead of crusading with his friend Renaud de Roye, Boucicaut preferred to stay four months in captivity with Philippe, relative of Charles VI.⁵⁴ In captivity along with the companions of Philippe d'Eu, Jean de Cresque, and the seneschal d'Eu, they composed *Les Cent Ballades*⁵⁵ – a poem about pure love and devotion. After their return to France, Boucicaut's prowess was communicated to the king and he was promoted.⁵⁶

Crusading – an Enterprise of Contrasts?

At the end of the fourteenth century crusading was praised in general, but the *passagium particulare* was criticized in particular. The campaign of Nicopolis (1396) made the weaknesses of the French crusading army obvious and gave rise to an extensive critique of French knighthood. For a successful knight it was hard to combine crusading activity with service to his lord or to his country. Crusades were to some extent business enterprises, in most cases not compensated, which

⁵⁰ *Le Livre des Fais*, 133–147; *La Chronique du religieux de Saint-Denis*, vol. 2, 558–564.

⁵¹ *Le Livre des Fais*, 150–171.

⁵² *Les Chroniques du Sire Jean Froissart*, vol. 2, 711.

⁵³ Werner Paravicini, *Die Preussenreisen des Europäischen Adels*, vol. 1, 98.

⁵⁴ *Le Livre des Fais*, 61–64; Delaville le Roulx, *La France en Orient*, vol.1, 159–165.

⁵⁵ *Les Cent Ballades*, ed. Gaston Raynaud (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1905).

⁵⁶ *Le Livre des Fais*, 64.

needed investment. Despite financial exigencies, French crusaders contributed much to the crusading campaigns of the Late Middle Ages. Crusades were not only associated with travel and military expense; they were also supposed to be a demonstration of knightly wealth. At the end of the fourteenth century crusading was a matter of prestige. The crusaders were not provincial gentry lacking an occupation at home. Most of them were outstanding warriors with significant military experience, occupying excellent offices and acknowledged at the European courts. French crusading knights constituted a cosmopolitan chivalric elite along with the knights from England, Germany, Italy, and other regions.

In summary, I have shown that several motives influenced crusaders: Crusading was an honorable expedition as a confirmation of knightly reputation and as a religious exercise. Crusading campaigns played an important role in social interaction among knights along with the participation in the orders, jousts, and tournaments which constituted the activities of noblemen at court. Knights were motivated by the entertainment aspects and social features of the crusades. Thus, crusades were one of the structural elements of knightly identity. Based on the results of this study one cannot speak of a special crusader identity, but about a certain group consciousness among crusaders which was an indispensable part of the identity of late medieval knights.