

Vanja Burić

**REACTION TO THE SIEGE OF ZADAR IN WESTERN
CHRISTENDOM**

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

Central European University

Budapest

May 2015

REACTION TO THE SIEGE OF ZADAR IN WESTERN CHRISTENDOM

by

Vanja Burić

(Croatia)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

Chair, Examination Committee

Thesis Supervisor

Examiner

Examiner

Budapest
May 2015

REACTION TO THE SIEGE OF ZADAR IN WESTERN CHRISTENDOM

by

Vanja Burić

(Croatia)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

External Reader

Budapest
May 2015

REACTION TO THE SIEGE OF ZADAR IN WESTERN CHRISTENDOM

by

Vanja Burić

(Croatia)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

External Supervisor

Budapest
May 2015

I, the undersigned, **Vanja Burić**, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 20th May 2015

Signature

Abstract

Liberating the Holy Land during the Fourth Crusade was supposed to be the crowning achievement of the impressive political and ecclesiastical career of Pope Innocent III. However, affected by financial issues on the way, the Crusading army agreed to help the Venetians retake the Christian city of Zadar on the eastern shore of the Adriatic, in exchange for transport. The attack set a precedent for Crusaders attacking Catholics, but the thesis hypothesised that, similarly to its relative neglect in historiography, the reaction to the Zadar incident in Western Christendom did not have the effect it should have had. Subsequent analysis of primary sources has shown that, despite some strong reactions, the hypothesis was mostly correct. Overshadowed by the later conquest of Constantinople, Zadar, and the infamous precedent it set, fell into obscurity.

Acknowledgements

Dedicated to my family.

Table of contents

Chapter 1 - Introduction	1
1.1. Methodology and the primary sources used in this work	2
1.2. Current research and my contribution to the topic	6
Chapter 2 - A road to war	8
2.1. Innocent III and the formation of the Fourth Crusade	8
2.2. Venice and Zadar	12
2.3. Zadar in crosshairs of the crusaders	18
2.4. Conclusion to the second chapter	23
Chapter 3 - Aftermath of the Siege of Zadar: the reactions	25
3.1 Diplomatic reaction	26
3.2. Political reaction	34
3.3 Final analysis	43
Chapter 4 – Conclusion or “the road to Constantinople”	50
Bibliography	53
Primary sources	53
Secondary literature	54
Appendices	57

List of Illustrations

Figure 1 Map depicting the splitting of the armies of the Fourth Crusade after the Siege of Zadar.....	57
Figure 2 Depiction of the Crusaders' fleet on the walls of the church of San Giovanni Evangelista in Ravenna.	58
Figure 3 Depiction of the Crusaders' fleet on the walls of the church of San Giovanni Evangelista in Ravenna.	59
Figure 4 The Siege of Zadar as depicted on the walls of the church of San Giovanni Evangelista in Ravenna.	60
Figure 5 Bronze horses sculpture looted by the Venetians from Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade.	61

Chapter 1 - Introduction

In October 1202 the fleet carrying armies of the Fourth Crusade sailed from Venice to retake the Holy City of Jerusalem. Despite the glorious display of the fleet, described by contemporaries, at 15 000 men the Crusading army was significantly smaller than the predicted total of 35 000 soldiers. This disparity meant that the crusaders were unable to pay the Venetians for transport. Trying to salvage the expedition the crusaders made a deal with the Venetians: they were going to help them conquer Zadar¹ on the eastern shore of the Adriatic in return for transport to the Holy Land. Despite hesitation from the French troops and the Pope's repeated warnings that they would be excommunicated if they proceed with the attack, the crusaders sacked Zadar on 24 November 1202. The events that transpired in Zadar would be no different than any other similar crusader conflict during the violent medieval period had it not been for the fact Zadar was a Christian city, under the rule of King Emeric of Hungary. To make matters worse Emeric too took the cross, which put his lands under direct papal protection. Pope Innocent III, one of the most influential men in Europe at that time, was furious with the crusaders. His reaction was not surprising considering he was the main architect of the war and he went to great lengths to make it happen. Diplomatic relations with Hungary were also severely damaged: King Emeric accused the crusaders of backstabbing and refused to participate in the Crusade. But the question remains did the attack on a Catholic city by the Crusaders elicit a reaction, except for the fury of the two men, in the Western Christendom, either in terms of diplomacy or political decisions? And did Innocent's and Emeric's reactions at any point surpass pure rhetoric? This thesis argues the reaction in the Western Christendom was lacking, considering the implications of the event. The questions posed here will be examined by analysing primary sources, as well as the

¹The English literature uses the Italian version of the city name (Zara). On the suggestion of my supervisors in this thesis I will use the modern Croatian version of the name (Zadar) and the demonym Zadrans.

background of economic and political connections between the involved parties. Fortunately, a lot of primary sources relevant to the Fourth Crusade, both eyewitness and indirect, have survived. The next subchapter will describe those sources in more detail, and present the methodology used in their analysis. Subsequent subchapters will present the state of current research on the Siege of Zadar, both in Croatia and abroad and the contribution I expect to make to the topic.

1.1. Methodology and the primary sources used in this work

To answer the question posed by this thesis and determine how Western Christians of medieval Europe perceived and reacted to one of the many violent events from their turbulent everyday is not an easy task. One of the main difficulties of answering such a question is determining the severity of a reaction from today's standpoint. What is considered appropriate today might not have been considered appropriate in the Middle Ages and vice versa. One of the examples would be solving disputes in trials by combat, which were an accepted practice in the medieval period, but which have no place in modern legal practices. Before giving a modern interpretation of the reaction the position of the contemporaries has to be firmly established. The only way to reconstruct the chain of events is through surviving personal correspondence and chronicles. Those primary sources will be analysed to find one or more of the following elements: 1 The author(s) giving their opinion on the event. 2 The author(s) mentioning how the event was perceived among others at the time. 3 The author(s) directly mentioning the reaction which ensued after the event in question 4 Drawing conclusions about the reaction from the description of the events after the siege. Fortunately surviving accounts from the period of the Fourth Crusade are diverse: they include eyewitness and non-eyewitness sources, personal letters, chronicles, ecclesiastical and secular sources, notes of nobles in the leadership of the army, as well as views of ordinary soldiers. Analysing or even giving a thorough overview of all the available primary sources on the Fourth Crusade would

merit a separate thesis. Some of the sources completely (“Count Hugh of Saint Pol’s Report to the West”) or almost completely (“The Anonymous of Soissons”) pass over the Siege of Zadar. It would take a significant deal of research to ascertain if this had some special meaning, or they did not perceive the siege as important. Not surprisingly, most of the sources do overlap significantly, but several which stand out in their importance will be commented upon in this subchapter. They are two of the most important chronicles related to the Fourth Crusade - Geoffrey de Villehardouin’s “Conquest of Constantinople”, Robert of Clari’s chronicle of the same name, and personal correspondence of pope Innocent III compiled in his biography by an anonymous author “The Deeds of Pope Innocent III.” Those sources were singled out for several reasons: 1 Due to their detailed coverage of the Fourth Crusade they are considered the most authoritative accounts 2 Clari’s and Villehardouin’s work specifically present two very distinctive viewpoints of a crusade - that of an ordinary soldier (Clari) and one of the leaders of the crusade (Villehardouin) 3 Both the chronicles and Innocent’s letters give insight into personal thoughts of key people involved in the events.

With its detailed, eyewitness account of the Fourth Crusade, as seen from the position of the high-ranking officials, Villehardouin’s “Conquest of Constantinople” could be perceived as an “official” record of the expedition.² The exact dating of the work is unknown, but it was probably written soon after the end of the Crusade, between 1206 and 1207.³ Despite receiving some criticism for presenting an apologetic version of the Crusade there is no doubt Villehardouin’s work is coherent and abundant in many important details.⁴ In addition to being personally present when many of the events depicted occurred, the precision of the work indicates Villehardouin had used notes, or possibly even had copies of various relevant

² Donald E. Queller and Irene B. Katele, “Attitudes Towards the Venetians in the Fourth Crusade: The Western Sources“, *The International History Review* Vol. 4, No. 1 (1982), 9. Accessed 12 December 2014. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40105791> .

³ Queller and Katele: “The Western Sources“, 9.

⁴ Ibid.

documents during writing.⁵ Comparison of his work with the extant documents from the period shows few if any discrepancies, which could not have been a coincidence.⁶ The section which deals with the Siege of Zadar is not only useful for his description of the attack and its aftermath, but also for his personal opinion of the crusaders who refused to participate in the siege, or who deserted afterwards. There are many extant copies of Villehardouin's work, which would indicate it was considered important enough to be copied and kept in libraries throughout the centuries.

Robert of Clari's chronicle is in many ways the complete opposite of its namesake. The work was originally written down by a scribe, as dictated by Clari who was illiterate, most likely no later than 1216.⁷ Through history it did not receive the attention it certainly merited and the first print of the work appeared only in 1924.⁸ It seems that overlooking Clari's account was a systematic problem over the years, as only one manuscript of the chronicle survived to this day. It was copied, along with several other French manuscripts, in a 128 leaves long vellum book, preserved in the library of the Benedictine monastery of Corbie.⁹ Clari's chronicle, covering 28 bifolios, appears to have been included in the book only because the scribe was keen to use the remaining quires of expensive vellum, not because it was considered important.¹⁰ The fact Clari's chronicle was preserved almost as an accident is in stark contrast with its importance for the narrative of the Fourth Crusade. While the contemporaries might have thought that the account of an ordinary soldier was less important or worthy than that of the barons, today it offers a very valuable glimpse in the world of the ordinary soldiers. Of special note for the thesis are Clari's comments on the dynamic between the Venetian and French participants of the crusade because it helps to establish motivations

⁵ Queller and Katele: "The Western Sources", 10.

⁶ Queller and Katele: "The Western Sources", 9-10.

⁷ Geoffroi de Villehardouin and Jean de Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, trans. Frank T. Marzials (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1958). 7.

⁸ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, foreword.

⁹ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 7.

¹⁰ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 8.

for the events that transpired.¹¹ Modern historiography considers it a complementary work to Villehardouin, as it confirms most of his writing, even in details.¹²

“The Deeds of Pope Innocent III” is essentially a biography of the Pope. It is believed the work was written in the years between 1204 and 1209, by an anonymous cleric.¹³ The biography covers only the first eleven years of Innocent's pontificate and is unfinished.¹⁴ From the way it was written it is clear the author knew the pope, most likely personally and was knowledgeable about the Church affairs.¹⁵ But the most important element of “The Deeds of Pope Innocent III” is the inclusion of letters from papal registers which provide insight in the thoughts of both the pope and various crusading leaders. This makes it possible to analyse the Fourth Crusade from various viewpoints. Also of note is the fact the anonymous author sometimes provides valuable personal insight on the pope's reaction to various events, including the siege of Zadar.

When primary sources used in writing this thesis were quoted verbatim, both the Latin critical edition (in the footnotes) and modern English translation (in the body of the text) were used. If the work was used in writing, but not quoted, only the English edition was referenced. In addition to the three works presented above other primary sources were used as well. To avoid repetition they are going to be referenced separately only when they offer a different viewpoint or present some new piece of information. If not, they will simply be listed in the footnotes as an additional reference, preceded by “see also in”.

¹¹ Queller and Katele: “The Western Sources“, 16.

¹² Queller and Katele: “The Western Sources“, 15.

¹³ James M. Powell trans., *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III*, (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), xi.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Powell, *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III*, xiii.

1.2. Current research and my contribution to the topic

Numerous articles and books have been written on the topic of the Fourth Crusade over the years. The siege of Constantinople marked the end of an era of independent Byzantine rule which was too important and too interesting an event to be neglected. However, most of the works related to the Fourth Crusade assign only a secondary role to the diversion to, and the siege of, Zadar, in favour of the later siege of Constantinople. Most major works that deal with the Fourth Crusade mention Zadar, but do not focus solely on it. In many ways Zadar is presented only as a footnote in the bigger story of the fall of Constantinople. Even in Croatia (of which Zadar is a part now) and Hungary (whose rule Zadar recognized in the 13th century) the research on Zadar is not as extensive as could be expected. In Croatia the attack on Zadar is regularly taught in schools, where it is presented as an important event. Despite this there are, surprisingly, no major works on the topic. As somebody who attended history classes in Croatian schools, both as a pupil and a teacher trainee, this was an unacceptable state of affairs and it encouraged me to research this topic. I felt the topic would benefit from changing the viewpoint and putting Zadar in the centre of research. As mentioned, Constantinople is the main focus of most works on the Fourth Crusade, which is understandable considering the importance and size of the city. However, this is justified only from a populist point of view and not from a historical one: Zadar, not Constantinople, was the historical precedent of Crusaders attacking Catholics. Zadar was the place from which the whole Fourth Crusade went south (literally and figuratively speaking). Even more intriguingly, to the Crusaders the reaction to the attack on Zadar could have been an indication of what they could expect in the future, a sort of a test run for Constantinople. The severity of the reaction to the Siege of Zadar could have been the deciding factor in their decision making. Even more than that, if there was no diversion and the Siege of Zadar perhaps there would be no Conquest of Constantinople. This would make for a very different

history indeed. I believe this emphasizes the importance of Zadar in the Fourth Crusade, and for those reasons this thesis will focus on Zadar exclusively. The hypothesis of the thesis is that, similarly to its later neglect in historiography, the reaction to the Zadar incident in Western Christendom did not have the effect it should have had considering the implications of Crusaders killing fellow Catholics. The main goal of the thesis was to analyse the reactions and either confirm or refute that hypothesis. However, before proceeding with the analysis the whole chain of events that led to siege of Zadar has to be established first. To clarify the complex history of the crusades and political antagonism between Zadar and Venice the second chapter will therefore present the background to the Siege of Zadar including a brief history of the Fourth Crusade. The third chapter will then analyse primary sources to establish various reactions which followed and provide a final analysis.

Chapter 2 - A road to war

No historical event can be analyzed separately from the extensive underlying web of economic and political motives, and the Fourth Crusade is no different in this respect. It was precisely this combination of scheming and intertwined interests which led to one of the most controversial episodes of the Fourth Crusade: the diversion to the city of Zadar on the Adriatic coast. This chapter will therefore describe the events which led to the Siege of Zadar in November 1202. The first subchapter will deal with the period from the Pope Innocent III's call for a crusade in 1198 through the early preparations for a Crusade, until the beginning of Venice's involvement. The second subchapter will start with the history of Venetian-Zadran relations up to the attack on Zadar in 1202. The third subchapter will describe the actual attack as presented in contemporary sources. The main objective of this chapter is twofold: 1. To examine in detail key figures involved in the Fourth Crusade in general, and the Siege of Zadar in particular 2. To establish the state of political relations between the countries involved in this conflict. This analysis will not only clarify how the attack on Zadar came about in the first place, but will also be crucial for the explanation of the Western Christendom's reaction to the attack, or its absence.

2.1. Innocent III and the formation of the Fourth Crusade

The conditions in late twelfth-century Europe were as far from conducive to a successful intercontinental military expedition as possible. England and France were at war from the time the French captured King Richard the Lionheart during his return from the Third Crusade in 1194,¹⁶ despite being obligated to provide safe passage for all men who took the Cross. Conflict for the throne of the Holy Roman Empire between Otto of Brunswick and

¹⁶ Donald Queller and Thomas Madden, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 1.

Philip of Swabia was in full swing and it brought German lands to the brink of civil war.¹⁷ The power vacuum left in the political structure of Europe after the death of Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI was deeply felt.¹⁸ None of the European rulers managed to establish themselves as a strong and clearly defined leadership figure. But this was set to change with the election of a young cardinal Lotario dei Conti di Segni to papacy under the name Innocent III.¹⁹

Only thirty-seven when elected pope in 1198, Innocent was much younger, much more energetic and determined than previous popes. His predecessor, Celestin III, was over ninety years old at the time of his death, and was more concerned with protecting papal possessions and influence than expanding the power of papacy.²⁰ Immediately after assuming papacy it became clear that Innocent was a different kind of ruler. He expanded papal power aggressively, not only in the ideological sense but also through his actions. He founded the Papal State in Italy;²¹ he interfered in the German succession struggle,²² and submitted England to his will²³. Innocent was well known for his persistence in intervening in conflicts between secular rulers. In one such move he ordered King Philip of France and Richard of England to stop all hostilities between their countries. Innocent threatened he will use his significant influence as pope to make them keep peace.²⁴ There is no doubt that Innocent used ecclesiastical penalties to the advantage of the Church very successfully. However the event

¹⁷ Brian A. Pavlac, "Emperor Henry VI (1191-1197) and the Papacy: Similarities with Innocent III's Temporal Policies," in *Pope Innocent III and his World*, ed. John C. Moore (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 255-69.

¹⁸ Pavlac, "Emperor Henry VI."

¹⁹ Pavlac, "Emperor Henry VI.", 263.

²⁰ Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 480.

²¹ Pavlac, "Emperor Henry VI.", 265.

²² Ibid.

²³ Pavlac, "Emperor Henry VI," 267.

²⁴ Carlyle, Alexander J. & Robert W. Carlyle. "Judged by God Alone", in *Innocent III: Vicar of Christ or Lord of the World?*, ed. James M. Powell (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 42,43.

he was preparing for his whole pontificate, which was supposed to test his influence to the limit, was the great crusade to liberate the Holy Land. His motives for starting the crusade are a matter of debate among modern historians, but regardless of the motive, the Crusade soon became his pet project. Of course, after Urban II called for the first crusade in Clermont, popes were nominally at the forefront of the Holy War, but Innocent's idea of a Holy War was far more personal than Urban's. Among many other plans he intended to reassume leadership of the Holy War and put the whole expedition under his direct control through papal legates.²⁵ Despite his influence, this was an ambitious plan and Innocent wasted no time: a call for the crusade was issued in August of 1198 and a general tax for the clergy was introduced to finance the war. All clergymen were required to give up a fortieth of their revenue for the cause; Innocent taxed the cardinals too and even himself.²⁶ Taxes were imposed in the secular domain too, whereby all towns and barons were requested to provide enough men for the two-year campaign in the east.²⁷ Despite Innocent's best intentions the war was some six months behind schedule already at the beginning. The real enlistment for the crusading army began in France in 1199, at the eve of the new century, six months after the expedition was originally supposed to sail.²⁸ But the problems for the Fourth Crusade did not stop there.

At the beginning the Fourth Crusade was a markedly French affair. This could partly be explained by the preaching efforts that begun in France at the end of the twelfth century. Charismatic preacher Fulk of Neuilly managed to incite religious fervour and win the hearts and minds of ordinary populace.²⁹ Innocent's personal representative, legate Peter Capuano, also travelled to France where he promised to grant indulgence for all sins to men who were

²⁵ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 1. Tyerman, *God's War*, 497.

²⁶ Ibid. See also: Kenneth Setton, ed., *A History of the Crusades*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962),

²⁷ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 1.

²⁸ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 3.

²⁹ Geoffroi de Villehardouin and Jean de Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, trans. Frank T. Marzials (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1958), 1. See also Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 2-3.

ready to join the crusade.³⁰ The other reason for French predominance was the leadership of the crusades. In 1199, at Ecry-sur-Aisne Count Thibaut of Champagne and his cousin Count Louis of Blois became the first distinguished nobles that committed themselves to the crusade.³¹ This move was not a coincidence: Thibaut and Louis were nephews of Richard the Lionheart, himself a crusader, and Thibaut's brother Henry II participated in the earlier crusades and died in the Levant in 1197.³² There is evidence that Louis accompanied his father Thibaut the Good during the Third Crusade.³³ Their commitment undoubtedly inspired other French noblemen to take up the cross and join the crusade. Another reason for the rapid spread of crusader vows was a web of family relations between nobles.³⁴ When Baldwin of Flanders took the cross in 1200, his decision was no doubt encouraged by the fact that his wife was the sister of Thibaut of Champagne. Soon afterwards their cousins also followed Baldwin's move. Since a significant number of distinguished French knights and lords took up the cross so early during the preparations they formed the nucleus of the future leadership of the crusading armies. Even after Thibaut's premature death in 1201 and the election of an Italian, Boniface of Montferrat, as the leader of the Crusade the situation did not change significantly.³⁵

As the crusading army finally started to take shape the question of the primary target of the crusade arose. Of course, the ultimate goal had always been the liberation of the Holy Land, but there were different opinions on how to achieve this goal. Even though preaching for the crusades exclusively used the image of the liberation of Jerusalem to entice people, the idea

³⁰ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 2-3.

³¹ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 1, Jonathan Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 48.

³² Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 5.

³³ Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 48.

³⁴ A quick glance on the partial list of nobles mentioned in Villehardouin's account of the expedition reveals that most names are preceded by "and his brother(s)", or "and his nephew(s)" Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 3.

³⁵ Tyerman, *God's War*, 517.

behind closed doors was to attack through Egypt.³⁶ Military doctrine of the time maintained that an indirect attack would be more successful in recapturing the Holy Land from the Muslims. If the already weakened Egypt fell under their control, the crusaders could cut Muslim lines of communication in half and gain an enormous advantage.³⁷ But the more pressing question leaders of the crusade had, after the expedition started to move from theory to reality, was finding the means to transport the planned huge army to its destination. At this stage of planning Venice, another key player, entered the story.

2.2. Venice and Zadar

Valuable experiences from the first three crusades had shown that a land route towards the Holy Land was not suitable for the Crusades.³⁸ It was long and arduous, and the exhaustion from the ordeal significantly lowered morale and the combat effectiveness of the troops. Transport by sea was, therefore, seen as the only viable alternative. After assembling at Compiègne in 1200 the counts and barons in charge of the crusade decided to elect six envoys which were to be tasked to “settle such matters as need settlement”.³⁹ The envoys elected were Geoffrey of Villehardouin, Miles the Brabant, Conon of Bethune, Alard Maquereau, John of Friaise and Walter of Gaudonville.⁴⁰ At the time the primary task of this group was to arrange the transport of the army to the Holy Land. The envoys were given broad discretionary power to reach the best deal possible. The size of the planned army meant that transport was possible to be managed only by the most developed maritime nations. Italian cities Genoa and Pisa were both big ports previously used by the Crusaders, but by the beginning of the thirteenth century the greatest maritime, commercial and colonial power in

³⁶ Tyerman, *God's War*, 510-511.

³⁷ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 15-16.

³⁸ Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, 161; Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 6.

³⁹ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 4. In the original “(...) (...) que il poroient trover, et dronoietn plain pooir a aus de faires toutes choses” Geoffroi de Villehardouin, *La Conquete de Constantinople*, trans. M. Natalis de Wailly (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1872).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Europe was Venice.⁴¹ Venetian power was projected across the Mediterranean and beyond with the help of a powerful naval establishment and merchant fleet.⁴² The Venetians were not strangers to Byzantium or the Muslim world either. Despite some clashes with Constantinople the relationship between the two cities remained good. After the year 1082, when they helped Alexius I against Robert Guiscard, Venice enjoyed special relationship with Byzantium which included complete exemption from taxes within the Byzantine Empire.⁴³ All those trade connections and benefits meant that by the 13th century the Venetian trading networks extended to Muslim North Africa, Asia Minor and the Levant, making them a perfect choice for the crusaders' needs.

Upon arriving to Venice, the aforementioned six envoys were introduced to Doge Enrico Dandolo. Despite his blindness, Dandolo, elected to the position of doge in 1192, was probably one of the greatest Venetian rulers.⁴⁴ His age at the time of the Fourth Crusade is disputed, but it is certain he was more than eighty years old.⁴⁵ As described by Geoffrey of Villehardouin in his "Conquest of Constantinople" the envoys said to Dandolo:

Sire, we come to thee on the part of the high barons of France, who have taken the sign of the cross to avenge the shame done to Jesus Christ, and to reconquer Jerusalem, if so be that God will suffer it. And because they know that no people have such great power to help them as you and your people, therefore we pray you by God that you take pity on the land oversea, and the shame of Christ, and use diligence that our lords have ships for transport and battle,⁴⁶

Despite the appeal to the Venetians' piousness in helping the Holy Land there was no doubt that the proposal was viewed largely as a business deal by both parties. It is important to note

⁴¹ Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, 161.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, 162. Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 56-57.

⁴⁴ Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, 162.

⁴⁵ Ibid. More on his age controversy in Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 9.

⁴⁶ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 5. In the original "Sire, nous sommes venus à toi de la part des hauts barons de France qui ont pris le signe de la croix pour venger la honte de Jésus-Christ et reconquérir Jérusalem, si Dieu le veut souffrir. Et parce qu'ils savent que nulles gens n'ont aussi grant pouvoir de les aider que vous et vos gens, ils vous prient que pour Dieu vous ayez pitié de la Terre d'outre-mer et de la honte de Jésus-Christ, et que vous vouliez travailler à ce qu'ils puissent avoir navires de transport de guerre" Villehardouin, *La conquete de Constantinople*.

that, due to its scope, the deal proposed by the representatives of the crusading army was not seen as an ordinary contract, it was a matter of Venetian state policy.⁴⁷ Doge Dandolo himself said to the envoys that they should “marvel not if the term [for giving the Venetian answer to the proposal] be long, for it is meet that so great a matter be fully pondered.”⁴⁸ After several weeks of negotiations the Venetians accepted the proposal, under the condition that they enter the agreement as equal partners in the expedition.⁴⁹ In addition to supplying transport ships to carry 4500 knights and their horses, 9000 squires, 20,000 common foot soldiers, combat gear and provisions, they would participate in the crusade with their own men.⁵⁰ The price for transport itself was 94 000 marks in silver, which was to be paid in instalments, and in exchange for their participation they were to be given a part of the looted goods.⁵¹ The contract was signed by the envoys and confirmed on a public mass held in front of ten thousand people assembled in St. Mark’s Square. A copy of the contract was sent to Innocent III for official confirmation.⁵² Up to this point the crusade was developing according to plan, if somewhat behind schedule. The signing of the contract meant that the first phase was over: the crusade was announced, its leaders were elected and the fleet which was to transport the crusading army was contracted. However, real problems were to begin in the second phase. The curse of the crusaders and the source of all their later problems, which eventually ruined the Fourth Crusade, stemmed from the fact that the crusaders significantly overestimated their army.⁵³ The proposed number of over thirty thousand crusaders was not unrealistic in itself. In

⁴⁷ Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, 161.

⁴⁸ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 6.

⁴⁹ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 163.

⁵⁰ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 6. See also Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 62.

⁵¹ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 162-63.

⁵² Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, 163.

⁵³ Thomas F. Madden, "Vows and Contracts in the Fourth Crusade: The Treaty of Zara and the Attack on Constantinople in 1204", *The International History Review*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (1993), 441, Chris Breyer, "Culpability and Concealed Motives: An Analysis of the Parties Involved in the Diversion of the Fourth Crusade" (Senior Seminar Thesis Papers, Western Oregon University, 2007). https://www.wou.edu/las/socsci/history/senior_seminar_papers/2007/thesis07/Chris%20Breyer.pdf. Accessed May 19th 2015, Donald E. Queller, et.al., "The Fourth Crusade: The Neglected Majority", *Speculum*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (1974), 442.

comparison, the First Crusade comprised of estimated 57000 soldiers and the Third Crusade involved as many as 100 000 soldiers.⁵⁴ The real problem was that the crusaders' numbers were based on estimation, rather than on the actual number of people enlisted by the time the contract with Venice was signed. Since the actual number of the crusaders turned out to be barely half the figure predicted they did not have enough money to pay which created huge problems for everybody, not least for Venice.⁵⁵ Some historians claim that the diversion to Zadar had been planned beforehand by the Venetians. While this is certainly not completely impossible there is no real evidence that there ever was such a scheme. In addition, this theory does not take into consideration the high risk that Venice undertook by agreeing to participate in the crusade. Under the obligations of the contract, the Venetians started to enlist all available merchant ships and build several new vessels suitable for carrying such a large army with their equipment.⁵⁶ In order to concentrate all available resources on building the fleet Doge Dandolo suspended Venetian commerce for eighteen months.⁵⁷ This was an extremely risky move for a state whose main source of income was trade.⁵⁸ In addition to shipbuilding activity, the Venetians had to make sure that all necessary provisions for the voyage to Egypt were included in the preparations, as were the crews who manned the ships.⁵⁹ The extent of preparations was immense, and Venice was under severe economic pressure for over a year. Under these conditions the failure of the Crusade in any way could have possibly meant the failure of the Venetian state as well. By the date set as a beginning of the crusade only around 11 000 crusaders arrived to the gathering point in Venice, the rest found alternative means of

⁵⁴ Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 66

⁵⁵ Nada Klaić and Ivo Petricoli, *Zadar u srednjem vijeku do 1409.*, (Zadar: Filozofski fakultet, 1976), 176.

⁵⁶ Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, 163.

⁵⁷ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 17. Thomas F. Madden "The Venetian Version of the Fourth Crusade: Memory and the Conquest of Constantinople in Medieval Venice", *Speculum*, vol. 87, no. 2 (2012). 312.

⁵⁸ Jonathan Phillips likened the risk that the Venetians took to a modern airline company ceasing all flights for a year in order to serve only one client. Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 61.

⁵⁹ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 17.

transportation to the Holy Land. The cost of transport per individual crusader was calculated with the figure of 35 000 soldiers in mind, which meant that the crusaders did not have enough funds to pay for the transport and reimbursement to the Venetians for the fleet they assembled. In the event of insolvency, the crusade faced an undignified end before it even started and Venice faced the grim prospect of economic ruin. But economic troubles were not the only thing looming over Venice in 1202. For the first time a huge foreign army was in their city, with nothing to do at the time but wait. Dandolo knew this was very dangerous and that the impoverished crusaders could soon turn to looting or worse.⁶⁰ The Venetians had to figure out a solution to this conundrum very quickly.

Dandolo's answer seemed to be simple and effective. His idea was that in return for Venice's services the crusaders would help them retake Zadar, one of their recalcitrant ports on the eastern shore of the Adriatic.⁶¹ It is highly unlikely that the Venetians planned to destroy the city at that point, or even attack it. On the contrary, it was in the interest of Venice to keep it intact and use it for its own purposes. As mentioned before, whether the attack on Zadar was pre-planned cannot be established with certainty, but it is unlikely. The fact, however, remains that Venice had a long history with the city and their relationship was complex. Throughout the history, the tumultuous east coast of the Adriatic often changed hands between Venice and the Hungarian kingdom. Due to its good strategic position in the Adriatic Sea, Zadar was one of the most important ports for Venetian transport. However, the Venetians' biggest problem was not that Zadar was not always under their control, but that Zadar actively opposed them. Zadranians were known as pirates who attacked shipping routes in the Adriatic, the sea Venetians considered to be their own sea.⁶² Not only did this disrupt lucrative trade routes to

⁶⁰ Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 102.

⁶¹ "The Anonymous of Soissons" in *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, ed. Alfred Andrea, (Leiden-Boston: Brill 2008), 248. Madden "The Venetian Version of the Fourth Crusade", 312. Klaić and Petricoli, *Zadar u srednjem vijeku*, 176.

⁶² Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 56-57.

and from Venice, it also represented a severe blow to the Venetian reputation at home and abroad. In the twelfth century Zadar often shifted its allegiance, which was repeated in the year of 1180, when the city threw off Venetian control once again.⁶³ Since Venice at the time had to concentrate on its problematic relationship with Byzantium they had no time for the local issue of Zadar.⁶⁴ However, in 1187, as soon as Venice sorted their problems with Byzantium, they again went about recapturing Zadar. Even before this first Venetian attempt to recapture Zadar had begun, Zadrans realised they would not be able to oppose the full might of their western neighbour for long, so they turned to Hungary for help. Hoping to preserve their autonomy they asked Hungarian King Béla III for military and political support.⁶⁵ Béla responded favourably and, in turn, the city agreed to nominally recognise Hungarian kings as their rulers. But the other reason for the failure of the Venetian attempt of 1187 is more important in the context of this thesis. Soon after the Venetian attack on Zadar had begun, it was cut short by the order of Pope Gregory VIII, who ordered Venice to stop and concentrate on the preparations for the Third Crusade which was already underway at the time.⁶⁶ It is possible that this act convinced Zadrans of the power of papal protection. Such a precedent might have led Zadrans to believe something similar would happen during the events of 1202. If so, the belief and trust in the influence of the pope turned out to have been misplaced. Another Venetian attack on Zadar happened soon after Enrico Dandolo was elected Doge in 1192. Despite the best Venetian efforts they once again failed to take over the city. At the dawn of the Fourth Crusade, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, all Istrian and Dalmatian towns recognized the rule of Venice. With their semi-autonomous status and recognition of the rule of king Emeric of Hungary, Zadar was the only exception in the very heart of Venetian power. This position was not destined to be a lasting one.

⁶³ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 57.

⁶⁴ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 57, Klaić and Petricoli, *Zadar u srednjem vijeku*, 175.

⁶⁵ Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 111.

⁶⁶ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 57.

As the crusading army gathered in Venice the leadership of the crusade faced the prospect of the whole expedition failing before it even started. Even after spending their own money and in some instances borrowing additional sums, nobles were unable to gather enough to settle their debt. The situation of the crusading army which was essentially stranded on the Venetian Island of Lido without enough provisions was getting worse by the day, as the anonymous author of “Devastatio Constantinopolitana” witnesses:

As often as it pleased the Venetians, they decreed that no one release any of the pilgrims from the aforementioned island. Consequently the pilgrims, almost like captives, were dominated by them in all respects. Moreover, a great fear developed among the commons. Therefore, many returned home; many others flocked into Apulia to other ports and crossed the sea. A minority remained in Venice, among whom an unusual mortality rate now arose. The result was that the dead could barely be buried by the living.⁶⁷

As the crusading army had no ships it depended on the Venetians for securing transport of men and supplies to and from the island. The excerpt from “Devastatio Constantinopolitana” shows that the Venetians were not always forthcoming. Their behaviour was unpopular among the crusaders, but the Venetians were in no position to waiver the costs. Tensions between the Venetians and the rest of the crusading army started to rise sharply as diseases and hunger appeared on Lido.⁶⁸ The decision had to be made – the Crusaders were going to help Venetians to reclaim Zadar.

2.3. Zadar in crosshairs of the crusaders

This subchapter will briefly describe the Siege of Zadar as recounted by the eyewitness sources. It will present a purely descriptive overview of the event, which will serve as a basis for the analysis in subsequent chapters. The reconstruction presented here is based primarily

⁶⁷ “Devastatio Constantinopolitana” in *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, ed. Alfred Andrea, (Leiden-Boston: Brill 2008), 214. In the original: “Quocienscumque Venetis placuit, preceperunt ut nullus de prefata insula extraheret aliquem peregrinorum, et quasi captivis per omnia eis dominantur. Crevit autem timor magnus in populo. Unde multi in patriam redierunt; multi in Apuliam ad alios portus cucurrerunt et transfretaverunt; minima pars ibi remansit, inter quos adhuc mortalitas mirabilis, ita ut a vivis vix possent mortui sepeliri.” “Devastatio Constantinopolitana” (latin) in *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*. See also Breyer, “Culpability and Concealed Motives” 15.

⁶⁸ See also Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 107.

on the most detailed Clari's and Villehardouin's chronicles, with additional eyewitness accounts used as a supplement when deemed necessary, or revealing in some way.

After months of delay in early October 1202 the Venetian fleet carrying the crusading army finally departed for Trieste, Muggia, Piran and Pula.⁶⁹ Stopping at all those ports had a practical as well as propaganda purpose: ships had to stop from time to time to take water and additional men who owed military service to Venice.⁷⁰ It was not unusual for a country to stabilise their territory before big expeditions, especially if a major part of the fighting force would leave the country.⁷¹ On the propaganda side, the Venetians wanted to establish dominance over their vassal cities before leaving for the crusade.⁷² And if the eye-witness accounts are to be believed the Venetians achieved this with sheer size. The fleet they built for the crusaders was described as one of the most impressive fleets ever built by that time (see the contemporary depiction of the fleet in the Appendices).⁷³ Geoffrey of Villehardouin wrote down his impressions of the fleet in his chronicle "The Conquest of Constantinople":

Ah, God! What fine war-horses were put therein (...) Be it known to you that the vessels carried more than three hundred petraries and mangonels, and all such engines as are needed for the taking of cities, in great plenty. Never did finer fleet sail from any port.⁷⁴

Robert de Clari's account of the Fourth Crusade mirrors de Villehardouin's opinion:

It was the finest thing to see that has ever been since the beginning of the world. (...) When they were on that sea and had spread their sails and had their banners set high on the poops of the ships and their ensigns, it seemed indeed as if the sea were all a-tremble and all on fire with the ships they were sailing and the great joy they were making.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 114.

⁷⁰ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 71; Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 114.

⁷¹ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 78.

⁷² Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 114.

⁷³ Klaić and Petricoli, *Zadar u srednjem vijeku*, 177.

⁷⁴ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 19. In the original "Ah! Dieu, que de bons destriers y furent mis! Et sachez qu'ils portèrent dans les nefes des pierriers et des mangoneaux jusqu' a trois cents et plus, et tous les engins qui servent a grant plente. Ne onques plus bels estoires ne parti de nul port..." Villehardouin, *La conquete de Constantinople*, 43-44.

⁷⁵ Robert de Clari, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, trans. Edgar Holmes McNeal, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), 42-43. In the original: "(...)que ch'estoit le plus bele cose a eswarder qui fust tres le commencement du monde (...)Quant il furent en chele mer et il eurent tendu leur voiles et leur banieres mises

Regarding the actual size of the fleet there are several eye-witness accounts and they are, with the exception of some minor differences, remarkably consistent. The “*Devastatio Constantinopolitana*” gives the figure of two hundred and two ships, while Hugh of Saint Pol lists a similar number of two hundred vessels.⁷⁶ Some of the ships in the fleet were war galleys, but most were horse and soldier transports containing the bulk of the army.⁷⁷ All Venetian vassals on the eastern shore of the Adriatic, from Trieste to Pula, were amazed by their show of power and splendour so they complied quickly.⁷⁸ As soon as the fleet reached Zadar, however, the reception was much colder, and it was clear that the city was not going to submit as easily.⁷⁹ At first Zadrans were resolute, they were going to fight despite the clear superiority of the Crusading army.⁸⁰ Zadar was an ancient Roman city which still boasted high walls and strong defensive towers which could have given them a fighting chance.⁸¹ It is possible they also counted on the help from the Hungarian king, or they still believed that, as Christians, they are safe from the Crusaders’ attack. They hung banners with the cross on the wall to appeal on the religious feelings of the crusaders, or perhaps to remind them of the papal protection the city enjoyed. However, after the crusaders started to unload war horses and extensive siege equipment on the shore near Zadar their resolution must have been shaken.⁸² At that point the whole thing was just a game of nerves, a game which the Zadrans

haut as castiaus des nes et leur enseingnes, si sanla bien que le mers formiast toute et qu'ele fust toute enbrasee des nes qu'il menoient et de la grant goie qu'il demenoient.” Robert de Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, ed. Philippe Lauer, (Paris: Champion, 1924), electronic transcription, accessed 20 April 2015, <http://txm.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr/bfm/pdf/clari.pdf>. See also “*Devastatio Constantinopolitana*”, 214-215.

⁷⁶ “*Devastatio Constantinopolitana*”, 214. , See also “Count Hugh Of Saint Pol's Report to the West” in *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, ed. Alfred Andrea, (Leiden-Boston: Brill 2008). See also Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 68.

⁷⁷ Ibid. 69.

⁷⁸ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 72, Tyerman, *God's War*, 528.

⁷⁹ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 73

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid. See also Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 115.

eventually lost. De Villehardouin recounts how the representatives of the city were sent to Doge Dandolo with a surrender offer⁸³:

On the day following the feast of St. Martin [12th November], certain of the people of Zara came forth, and spoke to the Doge of Venice who was in his pavilion, and said to him that they would yield up the city and all their goods- their lives being spared- to his mercy. And the Doge replied that he would not accept these conditions, nor any conditions, save by consent of the counts and barons, with whom he would go and confer.⁸⁴

The fact that the Doge did not accept surrender immediately turned out to be a fateful mistake. It is not entirely clear why he decided to confer with other leaders of the crusade; it is possible he simply got a certain deal of satisfaction out of leaving the representatives of Zadar to wait in fear for their lives. It is also possible he simply did not want to make any decisions without his allies, as a sign of respect towards them, or the attempt to keep the leadership of the crusade united. There was a lot of fraction between the Venetians and the rest of the crusaders ever since the crusading army was left isolated on the Island of Lido, before the agreement on paying for the transport were reached. In any case, Dandolo's action enabled another rift within the army, between the Venetians and part of the French group, to appear. A group of French nobles, led by Simon de Montfort, was unhappy with the direction of the crusade and the Venetians' growing role in its leadership.⁸⁵ Without consulting with anybody they entered the tent where the Zadrar representatives were waiting while the Doge was away and advised them to resist the attack.⁸⁶ Even more than that, they convinced them that the French part of the army would never attack a Christian city and that the Doge was undoubtedly bluffing.⁸⁷ The representatives took Montfort words as a sign he was speaking

⁸³Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 20, see more in Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 115 and Klaić and Petricoli, *Zadar u srednjem vijeku*, 178.

⁸⁴Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 20. In the original: “ Le lendemain de la Saint-Martin (12 novembre 1202) sortirent des gens de jadres, et ils vinrent parler au doge de Venise qui etait en son pavillon, et lui dirent qu'ils lui rendraient la cite et tous leurs biens (leurs personnes sauves) en sa merci. Et le doge dit qu'il ne prendrait pas cet accord ni un autre, sinon par le conseil des comtes et des barons, et qu'il leur en irait parler. Villehardouin, *La conquete de Constantinople*. Villehardouin, *La Conquete de Constantinople*, 47.

⁸⁵Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 74.

⁸⁶Ibid. Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, 173-174.

⁸⁷Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 116, see more in Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*.

for the whole crusading army and left the negotiating tent.⁸⁸ When the Doge returned from his meeting and heard what happened he was furious. His reaction is understandable, since the city almost surrendered before, a course of action which was increasingly unlikely after Montfort's intervention. At that point one of Montfort's allies, Abbot Guy of Vaux-de-Cernay, stepped forward holding a papal letter in which Innocent III forbade any attack on Christians and said "Lords, I forbid you, on the part of the Pope of Rome, to attack this city; for those within it are Christians, and you are pilgrims."⁸⁹ This appeal combined with the fact Zadar's easy surrender was foiled apparently angered members of the Venetian leadership so much that they tried to kill Vaux-de-Cernay on the spot.⁹⁰ Even though bloodshed among crusaders was avoided in the last minute the incident was a serious crack in the foundations of the crusade.⁹¹ Still, the siege continued, with the exception of Montfort's men and some of his allies. Convinced by Montfort's strong stance Zadrans believed to the last moment that the crusaders would not really attack. The account of the attack itself is usually brief in the primary sources. Clari simply mentions that the city was besieged until they surrendered. De Villehardouin and the "Devastatio Constantinopolitana" go into more detail and mention attacks from both water and land which lasted for five days, before the city walls were undermined.⁹² Digging a mine to undermine the wall was the straw that broke the camel's back and forced Zadrans to offer a complete surrender, on the condition that all lives should be spared.⁹³ Despite the city representatives asking for mercy the customs of medieval warfare dictated that a defeated party who refused an initial offer of surrender had no rights.⁹⁴ The crusaders entered the city and pillaged it. It seems the city suffered significant damage in

⁸⁸Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 116.

⁸⁹Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 21-22, See also Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 75, Alfred J. Andrea and Ilona. Motsiff. "Pope Innocent III and the Diversion of the Fourth Crusade Army to Zara." *Byzantinoslavica* 33 (1972).

⁹⁰Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 117, Tyerman, *God's War*, 529.

⁹¹Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 117.

⁹²Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 21, "Devastatio Constantinopolitana" 215. See also Klaić and Petricoli, *Zadar u srednjem vijeku*, 178.

⁹³Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 21. See also Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 119-20.

⁹⁴ Christopher Gravett, *Medieval Siege Warfare*, (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2000), 18.

addition to being pillaged. In his chronicle “*Historia Salonitana*”, Thomas of Spalato describes the aftermath of the attack in the following words:

All at once, however there followed a disaster of such great mortality that not enough persons remained alive and well in the city to bury the dead. The corpses of the victims lay unburied in their houses and churches; the unfortunate citizens did not know which rather to attend to, their duties to their fellow citizens and the city or their duties to the dead. (...) [The Venetians] demolished all the encircling walls and towers and every single house inside, leaving nothing but the churches standing.⁹⁵

Queller and Madden accuse Thomas that his dead bodies have “more the odour of literary convention than of decaying flesh”, but there is no doubt that the takeover of the city was not entirely peaceful, despite the city surrendering in the end.⁹⁶ “*Devastatio Constantinopolitana*” notes that the city was looted without mercy.⁹⁷ In one of his letters to the crusaders Innocent, who was certainly more informed than Thomas, accuses the crusaders that they “knocked down the walls of this same city in your sight, they despoiled churches.”⁹⁸ Villehardouin confirms that the Venetians destroyed the city before leaving on 7 April 1203.⁹⁹ Regardless whether significant damage was done in the attack, there were certainly casualties. Also, the political impact of the attack and all the implications it carried were substantial. The crusaders have done their deed, now they had to wait for the repercussions.

2.4. Conclusion to the second chapter

The road from the planning of the Fourth Crusade to its shaky start has been a long one, and its problems only multiplied after that. This chapter has shown that it is more than likely that

⁹⁵ In the original: “E vestigio autem subsequuta est clades nimie mortalitatis ita, ut non tot vivi et sani in civitate restarent, qui sufficerent mortuos sepelire. Iacebant miserorum cadavera in domibus et in ecclesiis inhumata, nesciebant miserandi cives, quid potius, funerea an publica officia, procurarent. (...) Dirrurent enim omnes muros eius et turres per circuitum et universas domos intrinsecus, nil nisi solas ecclesias relinquentes.” Thomas of Spalato, *Historia Salonitanorum Atque Spalatinorum Pontificum/History of the Bishops of Salona and Split*, ed. and trans. Damir Karbić et al. (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), 145-147.

⁹⁶ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 77.

⁹⁷ “*Devastatio Constantinopolitana*” 215

⁹⁸ Reg. 5:160 (161) as quoted in Andrea, *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 44. In the original: “Veneti ergo in oculis vestries subverterunt muros civitatis ejusdem, spoliaverunt ecclesias (...)” Innocent III, “*Innocenti III Romani Pontificis Regestorum Sive Epistolarum, Liber Quinus*” in *Patrologia Latina*, 1180.

⁹⁹ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 27. See also “*Devastatio Constantinopolitana*” 216.

the attack on Zadar was not pre-planned conspiracy, but rather an almost desperate action which arose from a combination of factors. This also means that there were inevitably differing opinions on the attack even among the crusaders themselves. Of course, the medieval warfare was never an example of chivalry it is sometimes purported to be, and sacrilegious behaviour could have been expected in times of war, but the fact that Zadar was a Christian city under the protectorate of a king who took the cross was certainly more than a small deviation from the righteous path for the Crusaders. The attack opened many questions regarding the feelings of the Crusaders about the morality of what they were doing. Was Montfort's action in trying to prevent the attack done out of spite because he had only an insignificant role in the Crusade? Or was there a nobler motive behind it? The next chapter will try to answer these and other questions and analyse the reaction to the events described above.

Chapter 3 - Aftermath of the Siege of Zadar: the reactions

Before continuing with the analysis several technical questions have to be resolved in order to fully understand the terminology used in this chapter. The label 'Western Christendom' used in the title was chosen as a broad frame for the research, as the reactions from the Muslim world or even non-Catholic Christians would be far less relevant for the question at hand. Coping with the idea of the Crusading army on God's task mercilessly killing Christians and pillaging their city could not have had the same impact on Muslims as it undoubtedly had on Christians of Western Europe. In order to narrow the scope of this inquiry, the thesis will discuss the reactions of the immediate participants in the Fourth Crusade. This second limitation grows naturally from the fact that the participants had most reasons to react in the first place.

One of the most important and complicated issues in analyzing the reaction to the siege of Zadar is the technical question of what exactly constitutes a reaction. The answer to this question will serve as clear criteria for the nature of facts collected from primary sources. This thesis has two main strands: The main focus is political reaction, more precisely, the political decisions made by the involved parties after the attack which directly affected the situation on the ground. King Emeric's decision not to contribute soldiers to the crusade as a response to the attack on Zadar is an example for one such move. The secondary focus is diplomatic reaction, more precisely, diplomatic action which was manifested mostly or only by strongly worded letters or rebukes, but which did not necessarily significantly change things on the ground. Crusaders sending envoys to Rome to plead for forgiveness from the pope after the attack on Zadar is an example for such action, which had no significant real effect in the course of the crusades. Of course, any diplomatic action is by definition political, but the terms, as defined here, will be used for the sake of simplicity. Unfortunately, some actions do

not fall neatly into the two categories; the pope's excommunication of the crusaders, for example, cannot be viewed as a purely diplomatic action since excommunication in the medieval period was more than just a spiritual punishment, and carried a strong burden which could have affected the course of the crusade. To solve this problem the thesis will use a three-pronged approach to the matter in question. The first of the next three subchapters will deal with predominantly diplomatic reaction, since it was more immediate and more visible than political reaction. The second subchapter will analyse the predominantly political reaction if any. The third subchapter will combine findings from the previous two subchapters and put them in perspective to determine the overall significance of the reaction.

3.1 Diplomatic reaction

As pointed out in chapter two, there is no evidence that the attack on Zadar was pre-meditated by the Venetians and the Crusaders in some kind of a conspiracy. However, the decision for such an important diversion of the crusade did not appear moments after landing at Zadar either, and the gap between hatching the idea and the actual attack left enough time for the rumours to spread. The plan was supposed to be a secret, known only to the leadership of the crusade, but such plans were difficult to conceal from the troops for a long time.¹⁰⁰ Also, spies were often used already in the medieval world, so even citizens of Zadar learned of the plan beforehand.¹⁰¹ This is an important piece of information because, even if the focus of this thesis is on the *reaction* to the attack, the first seeds of that reaction were visible in the response to the very idea of such an act. It is revealing to note diplomatic manoeuvring and actions before the Siege of Zara, and compare them with the reactions in the aftermath.

¹⁰⁰Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 114. See also Breyer, "Culpability and Concealed Motives", 19.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

From the primary sources there are many indications that the idea was a controversial one and very unpopular, especially among the rank and file of the army.¹⁰² Reaction of the common soldiers should, of course, not be taken as the official policy of their superiors, but it is indicative of the general feelings towards the idea present at that time. In “*Hystoria Constantinopolitana*” Gunther of Pairis tells about widespread disaffection in the army on all levels, after the rumours of the impending invasion on Zadar started to circulate among soldiers.¹⁰³ Gunther confirms the problem of attacking Catholics was discussed at length among the leaders of the army:

(...) this proposition [attacking Zadar] seemed both beastly and impious to our God-fearing princes, because Zadar was a Christian city belonging to the king of Hungary, who had himself assumed the Cross and, according to tradition, enjoyed papal protection of his person and possessions. (...) As a result, a good deal of time passed in dissentious argument. They clearly considered this affair utterly detestable and unlawful for Christians- soldiers of the Cross of Christ- to visit the fury of slaughter, rapine, and arson upon fellow Christians.¹⁰⁴

Obviously attacking Christians was seen by many crusaders as sinful and repulsive, and not taken lightly. The fears were even more accentuated by the fact Zadar was under papal protection as a land under king Emeric's rule.¹⁰⁵ Villehardouin's stance towards the issue is more apologetic. He admits the agreement with Venice to help them capture Zadar was contested by some, but waves those objections off claiming, not for the last time, they only wished to see the army broken up.¹⁰⁶ In fact the host did show signs of slowly breaking up, even before the actual attack. Some poorer crusaders had to return home because they did not have the provisions for the slowly dragging crusade.¹⁰⁷ Others, however, were more concerned (Gunther of Pairis even describes it as “frightened to the point of terror”) with the

¹⁰² Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, xv.

¹⁰³ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 61.

¹⁰⁴ Gunther of Pairis, *The Capture of Constantinople: The Hystoria Constantinopolitana*, Alfred J. Andrea ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 77-78.

¹⁰⁵ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 61-62, 74.

¹⁰⁶ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 16.

¹⁰⁷ Gunther of Pairis, *Hystoria Constantinopolitana*, 78.

possible reaction to them committing such a sin.¹⁰⁸ Regarding this fear it is interesting to recount the behaviour of Abbot Martin of Pairis, preacher from a Cistercian order, here. He was so against the expedition proceeding with the attack on Zadar that he asked papal legate Capuano to relieve him of the crusaders' vow, a request which Capuano promptly rejected.¹⁰⁹ Even more indicative is the decision of Boniface of Montferrat, the leader of the Crusade, who wisely chose not to sail immediately with the fleet (possibly concerned with the controversial decision to besiege Zadar).¹¹⁰ Pope Innocent III himself was thoroughly opposed to the idea of an attack. His stance might seem obvious, but this is not necessarily the case. The attack on Zadar was a precedent in the history of the crusades as it was the first time Catholic city had been attacked by the crusaders, but it must be noted that crusades had history of being used for various nefarious purposes.¹¹¹ Neither Innocent III, nor contemporary European secular rulers tended to balk at the idea of attacking recalcitrant domains of their own countries.¹¹² At one point Innocent even considered diverting the Fourth Crusade itself to Sicily, in an attempt to strengthen the position of the Papal State there.¹¹³ The plan was eventually abandoned, but the existence of such ideas must be taken into account when analysing reactions to the Zadar incident. From the beginning of the Fourth Crusade it was obvious that Innocent's policy was to preserve the expedition in any way, mostly by adapting to various adverse circumstances.¹¹⁴ What mattered to him was the bigger picture, which in this case was liberating the Holy Land. Despite that, Innocent could have never supported the attack on Zadar, at least not publically.¹¹⁵ After he learned about the impending attack from his representative in the crusading army Peter Capuano, Innocent

¹⁰⁸ Gunther of Pairis, *Hystoria Constantinopolitana*, 78.

¹⁰⁹ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 16.

¹¹⁰ Tyerman, *God's War*, 528.

¹¹¹ Crusaders did attack non-Catholic Christian cities in the east during previous expeditions. Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 112.

¹¹² Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 58.

¹¹³ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid* 65.

found himself in a precarious position.¹¹⁶ If the army had not left from Venice soon, no matter to which destination, it was likely the whole crusading experiment would have failed; something which Innocent was very determined to prevent. However, traditionally the pope was guaranteeing spiritual and material safety for all those who took the cross. If he condoned the attack on a city he was, by extension, protecting that would mean breaking his word, which would not only bring into question the Fourth Crusade, but all the possible future expeditions. Who would accept the guarantees of the pope in the future and leave for the crusade and leave their lands vulnerable? Would this also bring in question the promise of absolution of sins given by the pope? Those questions had a potential to completely destroy papal credibility and with it Innocent's powerful influence. Innocent decided to send a strongly worded letter in which he explicitly warned the Crusaders from attacking Zadar, under the threat of excommunication.¹¹⁷ Unfortunately the letter itself is now lost, but parts of its context can be reconstructed from latter correspondence with the crusaders. In one of the letters sent after the Siege of Zadar he obviously refers to this previous letter:

[We have taken] care to prohibit you strictly from attempting to invade or violate the lands of Christians unless either they wickedly impede your journey or another just or necessary cause should, perhaps, arise that would allow you to act otherwise in accordance with the guidance offered by our legate, this should have deterred you from such a very wicked plan.¹¹⁸

It has been claimed that the letter was written just for show and Innocent sent it knowing that the letter will not reach the crusading army in time.¹¹⁹ It was proposed the letter was written so he could keep his hands clean after the attack, but there is no evidence to believe that.¹²⁰ On the contrary the letter did arrive on time, just as the army was encamped before Zara and

¹¹⁶Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 114.

¹¹⁷ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 65, Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, 173.

¹¹⁸ Reg. 5:160 (161) as quoted in Andrea, *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 43. In the original: "(...) quae vobis curavit districtius inhibere ne terras Christianorum invadere vel laedere tentaaretis, nisi vel ipsi vestrum iter nequiter impedirent, vel alia causa justa vel necessaria forsitan occurreret, propter quam aliud agere, accedente consilio legati, possetis." Innocent III, "Innocenti III Romani Pontificis Regestorum Sive Epistolarum, Liber Quinus" in *Patrologia Latina*, 1178.
http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/01_01_Magisterium_Paparum.html. Accessed May 16th 2015.

¹¹⁹ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 65.

¹²⁰ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 65, 74.

was in the possession of Abbot Guy of Vaux-de-Cernay. Contrary to theories letter was simply pro forma it had caused significant problems for the crusaders. The discussion and rift it caused among the leadership of the crusades were described in more detail in chapter two, here it is sufficient to reiterate only that prior to the attack opinion on how to proceed were divided. It is reasonable to expect this rift would have widened after the attack.

It did not take long before Innocent III was informed that his orders and warnings were ignored and Zadar fell to Venetian and French forces in November 1202.¹²¹ His first written reaction was indicative, and followed broadly the same lines as his previous warnings, as can be seen from the following introduction to the letter Reg. 5:160 (161)¹²²

To the counts, barons, and all the crusaders without greeting (...) We sorrow not a little and we are disturbed that in those instances in which we have been accustomed to grant the grace of remission and to offer the promise of an increase in eternal recompense, now (and we do not say this without a good deal of grief) we are compelled to deny the consolation of our salutation and the protection of an Apostolic blessing. For behold, your gold has turned to base metal and your silver has almost completely rusted since, departing from the purity of your plan and turning aside from the path onto the impassable road, you have, so to speak, withdrawn your hand from the plough and looked backward with Lot's wife.¹²³

The full implications of the letter may not be clear from a brief glance. Letters and especially diplomatic letters always contained salutation at the beginning- a polite greeting formula. At the beginning of Innocent's letter the formula is not only missing, he is actively negating it ("without greeting (...) deny the consolation of our salutation").¹²⁴ This epistolary phrase is the equivalent of a diplomatic "slap in the face" and it was intended to convey how furious the pope was with the crusaders disobeying him. Another interesting element is the fact that this

¹²¹Powell, *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III*, 140 Andrea, *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 40.

¹²² Andrea, *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 39.

¹²³ Reg. 5:160 (161) as quoted in Andrea, *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 39. In the original: "Comitibus, baronibus et aliis cruce signatis (sine salutatione) (...) Dolemus non modicum et movemur quod iis quibus remissionis impendere gratiam solebamus et aeternae polliceri retributionis augmentum, nunc, quod sine moerore multo non dicimus, nostrae salutationis alloquium et apostolicae benedictionis praesidium cogimur denegare. Ecce etenim aurum versum est in scoriam et pene penitus aeruginavit argentum, cum a puritate vestri propositi recedentes et in invium declinantes a via, quasi manum tetraxistis ab aratro et retrorsum cum Loth conjuge respexistis." Innocenti III Romani Pontificis Regestorum Sive Epistolarum, Liber quintus, 1178-1180.

¹²⁴ Queller and Katele: "The Western Sources", 23.

letter (Register number 5:160(161)) was only a draft and another, similar letter, was actually sent to the crusaders.¹²⁵ The anonymous author of “The Deeds of Pope Innocent III” included this draft, rather than the actual letter because it “clearly shows the extent of his anger regarding the way they went about destroying.”¹²⁶ Part of the problem was undoubtedly connected with the crusaders disobeying him, but the fact that they attacked Christians and, more specifically, a kingdom under his protectorate played an important role in defining his reaction. This is emphasized several times in the letters he sent to the crusaders:

Whenever the citizens wished to submit, along with the Venetians, to your judgment (and not even in this could they find any mercy in you), they hung images of the Cross around the walls. But you attacked the city and the citizens to the not insubstantial injury of the Crucified One.

(...)Satan (...) the seducer of the whole world caused you to make war against your brothers and to unfurl your battle standards initially against people of the Faith¹²⁷

Innocent’s sincerity regarding the whole incident has been questioned by some historians. According to them he might have secretly been pleased with the result at Zadar, which was a rising centre of heresy. However, there is no evidence whatsoever that he did not mean the things he wrote. The crusaders disobeyed his direct orders, attacked a Christian city and, perhaps worst of all, jeopardized the crusade he was planning for so long. In fact, perhaps the only person who had more reasons to be angry than him, was the king of Hungary. Despite Venetian pretensions to the whole eastern coast of the Adriatic, Zadar formally recognised Hungarian rule, and Emeric considered it “his” city. As soon as he learned about the attack Emeric sent messengers to the crusaders to reproach them for the abominable crime they have

¹²⁵ Andrea *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 40- 41.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Reg. 5:160 (161) as quoted in Andrea *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 42. In the original: Cumque cives subire cum Venetis iudicium nostrum vellent, nec in hoc etiam apud vos potuissent misericordiam invenire, circa muros suos Crucis imagines suspenderunt. Sed vos in injuriam Crucifixi non minus civitatem impugnastis et cives, sed eos ad deditionem violenta dextera coegistis. Satanas, qui seducit universum orbem (...) contra fratres vestros bellum movere vos fecit et signa vestra primum contra fideles populos explicare. Innocenti III Romani Pontificis Regestorum Sive Epistolarum, Liber quintus, 1178-1179.

done.¹²⁸ According to him he took up the cross with good intentions only to be back stabbed by his brother in arms. If the crusaders wanted to spend winter in the city they should have asked for his permission. Emeric asked the pope to protect him as was his duty as a guarantee of safety for those who took the cross.¹²⁹ Innocent was put in an awkward position: to protect Emeric, as was his duty and risk the collapse of the crusade? Or should he ignore Emeric's plea and do significant damage to the papal reputation and, perhaps, hurt the crusade (and future crusades) even more.

Innocent was not the only one in an awkward position. There is no doubt that the crusaders were aware from the beginning that the attack is not going to pass without consequences. Even if they were not the pope's letter and Montfort's reaction must have been a warning. Their reaction could be best described as "damage control"; immediately after the attack the crusaders sent envoys to Rome to ask for forgiveness seeing the pope "had taken the capture of Zadar in evil part" as de Villehardouin himself admitted.¹³⁰ Four men were elected to travel to Rome: two knights (John of Friaize and Robert of Boves) and two priests (Nevelon, Bishop of Soissons and Master John of Noyon). It is interesting that De Villehardouin notes Robert of Boves "executed his office as badly as he could, and perjured himself" because he abandoned the embassy and continued to Syria along with some other crusaders. There were many defections immediately before the attack on Zadar and afterwards, but they will be discussed in the next subchapter. The remainder of the envoys eventually reached Rome where they could present their case to the Pope. The basis for their defence can be summed from de Villehardouin's recollection of their message to the pope:

The barons cry mercy to you for the capture of Zadar, for they acted as people who could do no better, owing to the default of those who had gone to

¹²⁸ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 80.

¹²⁹ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 81.

¹³⁰ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 26.

other ports, and because, had they not acted as they did, they could not have held the host together.¹³¹

In essence, they tried to put the whole blame to crusaders who used means of travel other than the Venetian fleet to reach the Holy Land. In their mind they were the reason the crusading army was unable to pay for transport, which forced them to participate in the attack on Zadar. The rest of the papal correspondence with the crusaders is the subject of the next chapter, because it concerns his decision to excommunicate the host, which would have had much more than just a diplomatic impact. The same could not be said for Innocent's correspondence with the French king Phillip. Disturbed by continued hostilities between France and England he sent both him and king John a letter in which he scolds them and warns them that this divisions only strengthen the Saracens' resolve.¹³² The letters to both kings are identical save for one paragraph in a letter to Phillip in which Innocent touches upon the subject of Zadar.¹³³ This is not unusual considering a big part of the army was French, but it is interesting to see he lodged an official complaint regarding the behaviour of the French crusaders:

This is all the more so when the French princes [of the crusade], regarding whom we lodge a complaint before the Divine Majesty and Your Highness, retreating from their worthy purpose, have turned their weapons against Christians in defiance of our prohibition. So far they have given no thought as to how they might redeem themselves, but they have planned to try worse things than what they did earlier (so it has been brought to our attention).¹³⁴

Unfortunately it does not seem anything meaningful resulted from this complaint made by Innocent. On the contrary, Phillip later encouraged crusaders to help his brother-in-law,

¹³¹Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 26. In the original: "Les barons vous crient merci pour la prise de Jadres; car ils firent comme gens qui mieux ne pouvaient faire, par la faute de ceux qui etaientalles aux autres ports, et parce qu'autrement ils ne pouvaient tenir l'armee ensemble. Et sur ce, ils vous mandent comme a leur bon pere, que vous leur fassiez votre commandement qu'ils sont pretsa suivre. "Villehardouin, *La conquete de Constantinople* 61.

¹³² Alfred Andrea *Sources for the Fourth Crusade* , 53.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴Reg. 6:68 as quoted in Alfred Andrea *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 54. In the original: "(...) Praesertium, cum principes Galliciani, de quibus apud majestatem divinam et tuam serenitatem querelam deponimus, a bono proposito recedentes, contra prohibitionem nostrum in Christianos converterint arma sua, nec adhuc adjiciant ut resurgent, sed pejora prioribus, sicut nostris et auribus intimatum, proposeuriut attentari. " Innocenti III Romani Pontificis Regestorum Sive Epistolarum, Liber sextus, 65.

Alexius in his schemes.¹³⁵ This help later led to the crusaders helping Alexius in taking over the Byzantine throne, and ultimately to the Siege of Constantinople. The only real reaction from the French, that of Simon de Montfort and his followers, was done individually, without any input from the French king. The next subchapter will discuss this and Innocent's attempt to excommunicate the crusaders.

3.2. Political reaction

One of the biggest problems Fourth Crusade faced was the widespread desertion. From the very beginning many crusaders decided not to use Venice for transport at all, but others abandoned the host en route to find an alternative transport to the Holy Land.¹³⁶ The crusade leaders thought the reaction of the rank and file of the host to the planned diversion to Zadar would be very negative so they did not reveal it until they were already encamped before the city.¹³⁷ Their fears were not unfounded, because after the controversial diversion and attack on Zadar, desertions became such a widespread problem¹³⁸ that lords had to make a show to stop them.¹³⁹ According to Villehardouin, Marquis of Montferrat spoke to other barons and told them that

These people depart from us, after so many who have departed from us aforetime. Our host is doomed, and we shall make no conquest. Let us go to them, and fall at their feet, and cry to them for mercy, and for God's sake to have compassion upon themselves and upon us, and not to dishonour themselves, and ravish from us the deliverance of the land oversea.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ "Devastatio Constantinopolitana" 216.

¹³⁶ For a detailed overview of all the crusaders who decided not to join the rest of the army in Venice see E. Queller, et.al. "The Fourth Crusade: The Neglected Majority", 441-465. See also Madden, "Vows and Contracts in the Fourth Crusade", 442.

¹³⁷ Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 110. Tyerman, *God's War*, 530.

¹³⁸ Tyerman, *God's War*, 531.

¹³⁹ Madden, "Vows and Contracts in the Fourth Crusade", 442.

¹⁴⁰ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades* 28-29. In the original: "Si ces gens se separent de nous, apres ceux qui s'en sont par maintes fois separees, notre armee sera ruinee, et nous ne pourrons faire nulle conquete. Majs allons a eux et tombons a leurs pieds, et leur crions merci; que por Dieu ils aient pitie d'eux et de nous, et qu'ils ne se deshonent pas, et qu'ils ne nous enlevent pas la delivrance d'outremer." Villehardouin, *La conquete de Constantinople* 67. See also Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 110.

After they performed the described display of humility the rest of the host decided not to depart, on the condition ships take them to Syria within fifteen days. Villehardouin accuses everybody who left of being a traitor and again describes them as “those who wished to break the host and had aforetime been hostile to it...”¹⁴¹ It is very likely the part about crusaders who were previously hostile to the host refers specifically to Simon de Montfort and his supporters. The division they caused among crusaders was already mentioned in the second chapter, but the implications of their actions were not analysed. And Montfort’s reaction could certainly be considered a major influence on the development of the crusade. More than just opposing the proposed diversion to Zadar, he and a handful of other nobles actively sought to prevent the attack. Even though their intervention in the negotiating process only worsened the situation there is no evidence that it was done in bad faith, especially since Montfort’s actions were very consistent even after the failed negotiations. He refused to participate in the attack itself, putting the rest of the French troops in an embarrassing position. Since they gave their word to the doge they were committed, and in no position to refuse the attack. Despite being in minority, Montfort’s party decided to withdraw from the camp in order to disassociate themselves from the attack.¹⁴² After Zadar was finally captured five days later Montfort's party left the host altogether. They were not the only ones; Villehardouin testifies that after the successful takeover of Zadar

Many of the lesser folks escaped in the vessels of the merchants. In one ship escaped wellnigh five hundred and they were all drowned and so lost. Another company escaped by land, and thought to pass through Sclavonia; and the peasants of that land fell upon them, and killed many (...) thus did the host go greatly dwindling day by day.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 28.

¹⁴² Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 76.

¹⁴³ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 25. In the original: “Beaucoup d’entre des menus se sauverent sur les nefes des marchands. En une nef il s’en sauva bien cinq cents; et ils se noyerent tous et furent perdus. Une autre compagnie se sauva par terre, et pensa s’en aller par l’Esclavonie; et les paysans de la terre les assaillirent et en occirent beaucoup (...) Ainsi s’en allait l’armee en diminuant fortement chaque jour.” Villehardouin, *La Conquete de Constantinople*, 57.

It is interesting Villehardouin emphasizes all the deserters died (probably implying God punished them for not being loyal) and brands them traitors, but desertions were too widespread to be explained as simple disloyalty. Group desertions were not limited to common soldiers or minor nobles, higher nobility also fled en masse in some cases. Apart from Montfort Villehardouin lists many names, such as Renauld of Monmirail, Hervee of Chatel, his nephew William, John of Frouville, his brother Peter, and others.¹⁴⁴ Apparently a German crusader named Garnier of Borland was so dissatisfied with the course the crusade was taking he escaped in a merchant vessel.¹⁴⁵ Just like in the beginning, during the recruitment for the crusade, family relations between crusaders caused a chain reaction. De Villehardouin's accusations of treason were in great deal just a justification on his part; there is no doubt the attack on Zadar was one of the major points of disagreement. Montfort was adamant about his reasons for not participating in the attack and later leaving the host altogether proclaiming "I have not come here to destroy Christians".¹⁴⁶ At least some of the other nobles must have echoed his sentiments, even if there is no written record about it. So when the crusaders left for Corfu in early 1203, after wintering at Zadar, Montfort and his group had chosen to remain behind. The choice of their next destination is more telling than their refusal to continue with the host. They went to Hungary and joined king Emeric, the very man whose lands the crusaders attacked.¹⁴⁷ It was a practical move as well as an unambiguous message. The decision of Montfort and his colleagues to leave was no small matter for the rest of the crusaders. Villehardouin testifies that it was a "great misfortune to the host, and to such as left it a great disgrace."¹⁴⁸ In the light of the rapidly deteriorating situation it is no wonder the crusaders hurriedly sent an embassy to Rome to mollify the pope.

¹⁴⁴ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 25.

¹⁴⁵ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 25.

¹⁴⁶ Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 117. See also Tyerman, *God's War*, 529.

¹⁴⁷ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 27. Robert de Clari, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, 44.

¹⁴⁸ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 27.

The Venetians did not send a representative, expressing they have done nothing wrong and, thus, had nothing to answer for.¹⁴⁹

At this point the possible danger posed by the papal decision has to be explained in more detail. It must be emphasized that the pope's excommunicating the crusaders was much more than just a diplomatic slap in the face it appears to be. In classical canon law excommunication was the most serious sanction the Church had against people who disobeyed its laws. This had implications on the crusade on various levels. In spiritual terms it was described as "handing a person over to the Devil."¹⁵⁰ If excommunicated, the crusaders would be cut from the sacraments and be sentenced to the afterlife in hell.¹⁵¹ But it was not just a spiritual punishment; it isolated the excommunicatee off from other Christians. For crusaders who joined the crusade to be absolved of sins it meant that they would lose the indulgence and other crusader privileges.¹⁵² Excommunication, thus, countervailed one of the primary purposes for joining.¹⁵³ If Innocent decided to proceed with his threat there is no doubt the effect would have been devastating. Even if most of the crusaders decided to repent and were absolved, the host could not act as a crusading force if (the Venetian) half of the host was still excommunicated. Moreover, without the Venetian half there would be no fleet to travel on. The crusade would be over in no uncertain terms. There is no doubt this chain of events did not happen and the crusade continued. However, it would be a mistake to take this as a conformation there was no reaction on Innocent's part. From the finishing lines of his letter to the crusaders (reg. number 5:160 (161)) it is clear he considered the crusaders to be excommunicated automatically after they disobeyed his direct orders:

(...) we admonish all of you and exhort you more intently, and we command you through this Apostolic letter, and we strictly order under the threat of anathema

¹⁴⁹ Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 121.

¹⁵⁰ Richard. H. Helmholz, "Excommunication in Twelfth Century England", *11 Journal of Law and Religion* 235 (1994).

¹⁵¹ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 75. Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 125.

¹⁵² Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 75.

¹⁵³ Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 125.

that you neither destroy Zara any more than it has been destroyed up to this point nor cause it to be destroyed (or permit it, insofar as it is in your power). Rather, arrange to restore to the envoys of that same king all that has been taken. Moreover, you should realize that you lie under the sentence of excommunication and cannot share in the grant of remission promised you. Issued at the Lateran.¹⁵⁴

It should be noted Innocent did not threaten them with excommunication here; on the contrary, the crusaders were automatically excommunicated by their sinful act. He was simply warning them they could be subjected to the more formal and severe version of excommunication- anathema.¹⁵⁵ It was clear that, by the time this letter was sent, Innocent decided to commit himself to this course of action, knowing full well what the consequences would be. His action had all markings of a serious response to Zadar diversion, rather than just putting a show for the king of Hungary. The main reason his decisions were ultimately ineffective lies within the leadership of the crusade, rather than with Innocent.

Robert de Clari makes it evident that the leaders were concerned about the possible backlash of their disobedience from the start:

The high men of the crusaders and the Venetians talked together about the excommunication that had been laid upon them because of the city which they had taken, until they agreed together to send to Rome to be absolved.¹⁵⁶

They were convinced that they had no choice with Zadar issue and that their action merited papal forgiveness. In consultations with the prelates in the host they received “field” absolution. Sending representatives to Rome was only supposed to confirm that the ban of excommunication has been legally lifted.¹⁵⁷ In the meantime they decided to keep the contents of the pope’s letter a secret from the rest of the host. Upon arriving to Rome, the envoys presented their case to the

¹⁵⁴ Reg. 5:160 (161) as quoted by Andrea, *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 44-45. In the original: " (...) universitatem vestram monemus et exhortamur attentius et per apostolic vobis scripta mandamus et sub interminatione anathematis districte praecipimus quatenus Jaderam, nec destruatis amplius quam hactenus est destructa, nec destrui faciatis, aut quantum in vobis fuerit permittatis, sed nuntiis regis ejusdem ablata omnia restituere procuretis. Alioquin, vos excommunicationis sententiae subjacere noveritis et a promissa vobis venia remissionis immunes. 1179

¹⁵⁵ Andrea *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 44.

¹⁵⁶ Robert de Clari, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, 44-45. In the original “Après li haut home croisie et li Venecien parlerent ens nalle de l’eskemeniement don’t il furent eskemenie, de le vile qu’il avoient prise, tant qu’il se consellierent tr’aus qu’il envoierent a Rome pour ester assous. Robert de Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, 10.

¹⁵⁷ Andrea *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 40.

pope. This seems to have had some effect at first. Even though Innocent's next letter to the crusaders still explicitly states "without greeting" at the beginning it had a much conciliatory tone. In it he established a simple process through which the crusaders could repent and be readmitted to communion with the Church.¹⁵⁸ However, even there he insists that, in addition to repenting, they must pay damages to the king of Hungary.

Although we have been troubled not a little regarding this, nevertheless, we rejoice in the Lord that you recognize your guilt and you propose to expiate it by penance, as our venerable brother, the bishop of Soissons, and the others who came with him from your camp humbly intimated to us. Although, when in our presence, they minimized your deviation, still they did not wish to obstinately excuse it away because they could not. (...) Therefore, we instruct all of you and exhort in the name of the Lord and order through this Apostolic letter that you humbly beseech the aforementioned king of Hungary that, out of his innate regal clemency, he deign, for God and because of God, to show mercy to you for the offense you committed against him.¹⁵⁹

Crusaders' representatives decided they will uphold their part of the deal, including admitting guilt and taking an oath that they are going to render satisfaction to the king of Hungary.¹⁶⁰ The only problem was the behaviour of the Venetians. When Innocent learned the Venetians showed no sign of remorse and refused to repent even after his offer he anathematized them officially. Again, his decision did not remain an empty threat, because the bull with anathema was immediately dispatched to Zadar through Cardinal Peter's nuncio. He arrived at Zadar on 20 April 1203 and presented the bull to the crusaders' representatives.¹⁶¹ And just like the excommunication order the leadership of the crusades ignored Innocent's decision and never publically revealed the existence of the bull to the host. Regarding this, papal registers contain a letter dated April 1203 (reg. 6:100) written by Boniface of Montferat. The leader of the

¹⁵⁸ Andrea *Sources for the Fourth Crusade* 45-48.

¹⁵⁹ Reg. 5:160(161) as quoted in Andrea *Sources for the Fourth Crusade* 45-48. In the original: "Licet autem super hoc fuerimus non modicum conturbati, gaudemus tamen in Domino quod culpam vestram cognoscitis et eam proponitis per poenitentiam expiare, sicut venerabilis frater noster Suessioniensis episcopus, et alii qui venerunt cum eo, ex parte vestra nobis humiliter intimarunt, qui etsi vestrum apud nos extenuarint excessum, noluerunt tamen, quia nec poterant (...) Monemus igitur universitatem vestram et exhortamur in Domino, et per apostolica scripta mandamus quatenus praedicto regis Hungariae humiliter supplicetis ut de innata sibi regali clementia super offensa quam commisistis in eum, pro Deo et propter Deum vobis dignetur misericordiam exhibere." 1182

¹⁶⁰ Andrea *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 54-55.

¹⁶¹ Andrea, *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 49, Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, 175.

Crusade did not arrive to Zadar before it was attacked, so he was excluded from the ban of excommunication. However, in agreement with other leaders of the crusade, he participated in the decision not to disclose the existence of the anathema bull against the Venetians. In the letter he tried to explain the logic behind his actions:

Mindful (indeed, knowing it for a fact) that in no way could that letter be presented at this time and place, lest our army be immediately dissolved and the fleet disbanded, and remembering your advice that much must be concealed at this time and place if the Venetians should aspire to dissolve the fleet, in consideration of divine love and also out of reverence for the Apostolic See, from which the fleet had its origin and afterwards its support, I received advice to suppress that letter for the time being, until I might obtain by way of command your mandate and advice once again.¹⁶²

In the remainder of the text he assures Innocent that they are, of course, ready to listen to his every command and that he (Innocent) would no doubt be happier if they are careful now and save the crusade, than if they destroy it by revealing the existence of the anathema.¹⁶³ Here Montferrat puts words in Innocent mouths, or rather, ideas in his mind. It is unlikely Innocent would not have thought about the effect of his decisions, but Montferrat is the one trying to protect the Venetians from papal retribution and continue with the crusade.¹⁶⁴ Besides Montferrat's suggestion, there is no indication Innocent did not mean what had written. If Innocent stopped at threats it would be possible to consider he was putting up a show; however an experienced and cunning politician of Innocent's rank would have never sent a written document with such an explosive content if he was not sure in his decision. The Venetian behaviour may seem particularly irritating here; especially considering all the effort others made in trying to shield them from consequences of their acts. It is not surprising that many conspiracy theories arose regarding their possible pre-planned capture of Zadar. After all, the Venetians obviously profited most from the diversion and continued to act

¹⁶² Andrea, *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 58-59.

¹⁶³ Andrea, *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 58-59.

¹⁶⁴ Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, 175.

unperturbed after it.¹⁶⁵ Such disobedience of the papacy was atypical for the Venetians. They also had a long and distinguished history with the crusades, which went back to the First Crusade when Doge Vitale Micheli commanded a Venetian crusade fleet.¹⁶⁶ Their behaviour seems even more perplexing considering Innocent was ready to forgive all their sins if the Venetians repented (“Therefore, if the Venetians might be induced to render satisfaction and should merit the benefit of absolution, you may with a clear conscience sail with them and fight the Lord's battle.”¹⁶⁷). Unfortunately, although Venetians were a large part of the crusading force, there are no Venetian memoirs from the time of the Fourth Crusade.¹⁶⁸ However, there is enough information from the primary sources which can be used to put their behaviour in perspective. The Venetians did not think they were doing anything wrong. Their religious devotion should not be questioned, but under the circumstances (i.e. the survival of Venice depended on the success in the Crusade) they decided to put their interests above all else.¹⁶⁹ The oldest Venetian source from the Fourth Crusade is Enrico Dandolo's letter to Innocent III from 1204. Two excerpts from this letter, which are most relevant for this thesis, are below:

To the venerable Father in Christ and Lord, Innocent, Supreme Pontiff of the Holy Roman Church by the grace of God, Enrico Dandolo, doge of Dalmatia and Croatia, your humble and faithful man at your service with all devotion. (...) Inasmuch as it was criminally rebellious toward me and the Venetians for a long while by reason of its betrayal of a sworn oath, I justly (so I judged) took vengeance on the city and citizens, according to the custom of mutual enemies. Indeed, because, as was rumored, it was under your protection, which I did not for that reason believe because I do not think that you or your predecessors would

¹⁶⁵ As Thomas Madden asserts in his article: “There can be no doubt that the Fourth Crusade remained an important event to medieval and early modern Venetians. In addition to decorating the Great Council chamber with its scenes, they had filled the central civic and religious spaces of San Marco with its spoils. Its prominent depiction in the Great Council chamber seems out of place only because it appears to contradict a program that highlights Venice’s good relations with popes, kings, and other important leaders, as well as Venetian religious devotion.” Thomas F. Madden, “The Venetian Version of the Fourth Crusade: Memory and the Conquest of Constantinople in Medieval Venice,” *Speculum*, Vol. 87, No. 2 (2012): 311-344, accessed February 28, 2010, DOI: 10.2307/23488041.

¹⁶⁶ Madden, “The Venetian Version of the Fourth Crusade,” 314.

¹⁶⁷ Alfred Andrea *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 45-48.

¹⁶⁸ Madden, “The Venetian Version of the Fourth Crusade,” 313.

¹⁶⁹ Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 125.

protect those who only assume the Cross in order to wear it, not even to complete the journey for which pilgrims normally assume the Cross but to acquire the possessions of another and to criminally hold them.¹⁷⁰

From Venetian perspective the Crusaders had to stay somewhere during the winter and Zadran refused them. This refusal put the crusade in jeopardy, which was inexcusable. The Crusading army decided that the attack on Zadar would be much lesser an evil than breaking the crusading vow before they achieved their goal. Moreover, the Venetians considered Zadar to be their city, which is perhaps subtly emphasized when Dandolo titles himself doge of Dalmatia and Croatia in the introduction of the letter. In the end, whatever the objections were, Zadar was destroyed and there was no way of undoing that particular action. The difficult choice was between continuing with the crusade, or dissolving it.

After years of building the image of an all powerful papacy, whose authority extended to the secular domain, the diversion to Zadar revealed imitations to the Innocent's rule for the first time. He could call a crusade and direct its preaching, but did not have a direct control over matters once it started. The realisation of his every command depended on secular rulers (in this case on the leaders of the crusade) obeying them, which they did not.¹⁷¹ Even the legates he assigned to the crusading army as his personal representatives could not help him control the expedition since the Venetians refused to accept legate Capuano as an official representative. This realisation must have come as a shock to Innocent, considering he was used to controlling the situation. After this unpleasant reminder of limitations to his authority Innocent was much more careful to tread.¹⁷² In the end there was not much he could have done but go with the flow and hope for the best result.

¹⁷⁰ Andrea *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 128-130.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Andrea, *Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 126.

3.3 Final analysis

The goal of the thesis as stated at the beginning was to ascertain if the precedent of the Crusaders attacking a Catholic city elicited a reaction from Western Christendom, and what was that reaction, either in terms of diplomacy or political decisions. The focus was mainly on Western Christendom which was represented by the direct and indirect participants in the events of the Fourth Crusade. Previous two subchapters analysed various primary sources, from chronicles to personal correspondence, and revealed the diversity of diplomatic correspondence and political manoeuvring that happened before and after the siege and ultimate destruction of Zadar. In many ways the answer to the central question of the thesis mirrors the complexity of those reactions. At this point it could be said with a great degree of certainty that the reaction to the Siege of Zadar was not as strong as could have been expected after such a major incident. Attacking and pillaging a Christian city under the protection of the Pope, despite explicit orders from said Pope not to do it, violated the very essence of what a Crusade should be. It could and should have created a much bigger stir. However, there were many elements which led to such an outcome and it would be too simplistic to suggest this was just a lack of interest for a blatant attack on Christianity.

Perhaps the strongest reaction both diplomatically and politically was from Emeric, the king of Hungary whose land was attacked. He immediately sent a letter of protest to both the crusaders and the pope and, more importantly, decided to withdraw from his crusaders' vow. If Emeric was not in constant conflict with his brother Andrew for the throne, it is possible the incident would have brought to an armed conflict with the crusaders. Villehardouin describes the host's wintering at Zadar with the words "thus did the host sojourn at Zadar all that winter (1202-1203) in the face of the king of Hungary"¹⁷³ which implies the crusaders were very aware of the enmity which surrounded them. Major conflicts were avoided but eyewitness

¹⁷³ Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, 24.

accounts also describe some of the crusaders deserting the host and getting killed by the locals. As previously stated some of this was probably propaganda, implying this was God's punishment for desertion, but it is probably indicative of hostility of the native population. Still, even the severity of Emeric's reaction might actually be less than it seems. He had no intention to leave Hungary for the Crusade, because he was in the middle of the war for the throne with his brother Andrew. In fact his taking up the cross was only a strategy which was supposed to paint him in a good light in front of Innocent.¹⁷⁴ When the time to leave Hungary came, he would have risked the throne if he left, and was actively trying to get the pope relieve him of his vow.¹⁷⁵ I have no doubt he was genuinely angry Zadar was attacked, but his decision to give up on the crusade must be looked at in a different light considering the background. Just like taking the cross, appealing to the pope because of the crusaders attacking people who hung the cross on the walls was a strategy to gain Innocent's support.

Of course, Innocent as a pope could never have condoned the attack on Zadar. To do this would be a disturbing precedent. He had little choice but condemned the attack. How much of his reaction was just from show? The proposition Innocent secretly wasn't disappointed with the prospect of the attack on Zadar at all, may seem as a strange attitude of a pope in regards to a Christian city. However Zadar had for some time been one of the centres of Bogumil heresy.¹⁷⁶ Innocent considered the heresy a danger and invested a lot of effort in trying to contain it. Even before the crusade has started he tried to persuade king Emeric to fight this heresy, but had little luck. Emeric was too preoccupied with waging wars to save his throne to consider anything else. It is indicative that only two days before Zadar was attacked Innocent again sent a letter to Emeric, in which he accuses him of delaying dealing with the heretics.¹⁷⁷ Venice, which was firmly in the papal camp, taking control of Zadar might have seemed like

¹⁷⁴ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 80.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 65.

¹⁷⁷ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 65.

a tempting idea indeed. There is no doubt Dandolo had intentions of dealing with some of his enemies after Zadar was taken, any heretics might have shared their destiny as a favour to the pope. Another potential reason for Innocent secretly supporting the attack was his efforts to bring Bulgaria (and its church) under the control of Rome. Since the relationship between Bulgaria and Hungary was less than cordial the destruction of Zadar could have had a positive effect in Bulgaria.¹⁷⁸ Those theories are compelling and merit further research; however I think it is unlikely Innocent's reaction was anything other than genuine. Claiming Innocent's reaction was neither forceful nor effective and concluding from that that it wasn't serious is a mistake. His position on the diplomacy level was very strong, even deliberately insulting to a point (considering several letters explicitly stating without greeting, calling the Venetians thieves more or less openly). It is true that on the political level, he did essentially nothing in the end. As stated at the beginning of this chapter concrete political reaction was particularly interesting for this thesis, and in Innocent's case it was severely lacking. This could be taken as lack of seriousness in implementing his threats. However, when all the separate elements (diplomatic action, political moves, and the tone of communication) are taken together I believe there is more than enough evidence that Innocent's plans were foiled by the crusaders themselves, and that his lack of reaction was a consequence of his diminishing authority over the crusade, rather than by design. In the end Innocent's chief enemy was his own pride. As historian Chris Breyer succinctly put it:

[Innocent's] hubris is shown most by Innocent's belief that the French nobility leading the crusading army would honor his papal mandates. In truth, many did, but he seemed to believe that they would all honor his past decisions, simply because of the office he held, [and] he felt that although he was miles away, his commands would be obeyed despite any coercion from the Venetians or anyone else.¹⁷⁹

In the end perhaps the opinion of Peter of Capuano is closest to the truth. He said Innocent could not condone the attack but he could overlook it if the alternative was the disintegration

¹⁷⁸ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 66

¹⁷⁹ Breyer, „Culpability and Concealed Motives“, 23.

of the crusade.¹⁸⁰ Despite his later frosty relationship with the Venetians, as a direct result of their actions in Zadar (and later Constantinople), this is in essence what Innocent did. One, comparatively small, evil was accepted, for greater good. Such a turn of events is unsurprising considering Innocent did not only perform the role of the pope, but also that of a very prominent and powerful politician. He had to balance his decisions carefully and could not afford the luxury of following his ideals (whether political or religious).

When all the reactions are summed up it seems Simon of Montfort and several of his supporters (such as Robert of Boves) represent perhaps the most serious display of both political and diplomatic reaction to the Zadar incident. Unlike the Pope they had more freedom in expressing their opinion, and I believe their actions and words can be taken at face value. Montfort was the most vocal and consistent voice in the opposition to the attack from the very beginning. He tried to stop it, and came close to fracturing the whole crusade. In the end, when his efforts had failed, he refused to participate in the siege and withdrew. He was clear the main reason for that was that the city was Christian. It was suggested his decision might have been the result of not having a big enough role in the crusade and from resentment towards the Venetians.¹⁸¹ It is unknown to which extent those issues bothered him, but I do not believe it is likely they were the main trigger of his actions. There is no doubt he was not entirely happy with his position, (that other crusaders did not even notice he was not at the consultations with Dandolo before the attack on Zadar is indicative) but as Queller and Madden said in *The Fourth Crusade* if he had expected the host would turn to him for leadership he was mistaken.¹⁸² In fact I do not think he was expecting anything of the sort to happen. He took a great risk by opposing the attack and later joining the king of Hungary. It is not likely he would have endangered the crusade, or his position, just for the chance of getting

¹⁸⁰ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 63.

¹⁸¹ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 74.

¹⁸² Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 76.

more influence (which was, as shown, an unlikely proposition anyway). His decisions were consistent before, during and after attack. His reaction remains perhaps one of the most sincere and significant ones in the whole affair. This is much more than could be said for French king Phillip. He was scolded for his behaviour by Innocent in one of his letter. Since the French comprised half of the crusading army Innocent considered them to be responsible for not stopping the Venetians (whom he considered to be the instigators of the whole affair). However Phillip was more concerned with continuing hostilities between him and the king of England to take a side in the whole matter. In the end the Western European kingdoms did not seem to do more than just to acknowledge the event.

In modern historiography on the Fourth Crusade the role of the villain often went to Venice. As historians Queller and Day put it “While the northern crusader is usually portrayed as driven by sublime motives of self-sacrifice and even martyrdom, the Venetian is pictured as a greedy opportunist whose sole consideration was profit.”¹⁸³ One of the reasons for this vilification is the absence of Venetian chronicles from the Fourth Crusade which could have brought diversity in the narrative of the Fourth Crusade. However, all Venetian actions before and during the Siege of Zadar and reactions to the fallout of the event have to be objectively seen from their viewpoint. For them Zadar was a strategic port on the eastern shore of the Adriatic, not only because of the trade going through it, but as a supply of the Dalmatian oak which was a key for the Venetian shipbuilding industry¹⁸⁴. Ever since the city repelled the Venetian control it represented competition and increasing piracy became a security risk at the same time. For any state which was ready to embark on a prolonged military expedition far away from the homeland such risk was unacceptable. But this was not a simple move of an imperialistic colonial power; the Venetians thought Zadar to be their domain, taken over by

¹⁸³ Donald E. Queller and Gerald W. Day, “Some Arguments in Defense of the Venetians on the Fourth Crusade”, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 81, No. 4 (1976), 718.

¹⁸⁴ Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade*, 111.

the king of Hungary. Nothing illustrates the positive association of Venice to the Fourth Crusade as its depictions in Venetian art. Among other important events of Venetian history depicted on the walls of the *Sala del Maggior Consiglio* (Great Council Chamber) in the Palace of the Doges, one wall was dedicated to the eight paintings depicting the events of the Fourth Crusade¹⁸⁵ Similar depictions can also be found on the walls of a church of San Giovanni Evangelista in Ravenna (see Appendix)¹⁸⁶ Perhaps the most visible relics of the Fourth Crusade are the famous bronze horses displayed on the Church of Saint Mark in Venice, taken from the Constantinople's hippodrome during the Fourth Crusade.¹⁸⁷ The decision to remind visitors with those events is surprising only because the Fourth Crusade is usually presented in a negative, black and white light in modern historiography.¹⁸⁸ But for Dandolo there was no need for shocked reaction, everything they have done was just in the eyes of God and men:

Inasmuch as it was criminally rebellious toward me and the Venetians for a long while by reason of its betrayal of a sworn oath, I justly (so I judged) took vengeance on the city and citizens, according to the custom of mutual enemies.¹⁸⁹

I do not believe this very simply the words of a man trying to justify himself knowing he is guilty and fearing punishment. After all the Venetians endured their silent excommunication for years after the Siege of Zadar. Dandolo's words, by accident or (probably by) design, mirror St. Augustin's ideas on the just war:

Warfare usually called just which avenge wrongs, when a nation or a state has to be punished for refusing to make amends for unlawful deeds done by its citizens, or to restore what has been wrongfully carried off.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁵ Thomas F. Madden, "The Venetian Version of the Fourth Crusade: Memory and the Conquest of Constantinople in Medieval Venice," *Speculum*, Vol. 87, No. 2 (2012): 311-344, accessed February 28, 2010, DOI: 10.2307/23488041.

313

¹⁸⁶ Madden, "The Venetian Version of the Fourth Crusade."

¹⁸⁷ The horses are copies now, the originals are kept inside the church to prevent damage.

¹⁸⁸ Madden, "The Venetian Version of the Fourth Crusade" 314

¹⁸⁹ Andrea *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, 129.

¹⁹⁰ Raymond H. Schmandt. The Fourth Crusade and the Just-War Theory Raymond H. Schmandt. *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (Apr., 1975): 195. Accessed December 7, 2014. Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25019674>.

While not it this does not relinquish the Venetians from their responsibilities it help in viewing their action in a more benevolent light.

In all the talk about various actors in the Crusade the rank and file, which was the base of the crusading army, is often neglected. They were undoubtedly important, since the nobles itself would be in no position to mount an attack without them. Unfortunately, there are no “people's chronicle” which would enable them to offer their point of view. The closest written record that could represent the majority of the soldier would be Clari's work. Based on his report and commentaries from other chronicles the reaction of the rank and file seems to have been negative. They were afraid for their spiritual and mortal lives, hesitating to attack their fellow Christians and sometimes deserted as a result. Unfortunately, their reaction is irrelevant in the political terms, and in the end most did obey the will of the nobles and listened to the promises of absolution given by the priests who were travelling in the host.

Chapter 4 – Conclusion or “the road to Constantinople”

The goal of this thesis was to analyse the reaction of Western Christendom to the events of the infamous Fourth Crusade by shifting the focus from Constantinople to Zadar. It was postulated that, despite its relative obscurity, the Siege of Zadar was a much more definitive event in history than latter Siege of Constantinople. As defined in the introduction, the main hypothesis was that the reaction to the Siege of Zadar, was underwhelming considering the important precedent it set. Subsequent analysis of primary sources has shown that the hypothesis was mostly correct. Of course, the complexity of the events meant that question of Zadar had to be put in a wider context in order to be assessed more objectively.

As envisioned by Innocent III at the beginning of the expedition, the chain of command of the crusading army was supposed to go directly to him, through papal legates.¹⁹¹ However with papal legates being neither constantly present with the army, nor accepted by everyone there was a distinctive lack of ecclesiastical lead and the crusade turned out to be a very secular affair.¹⁹² Without such firm central authority, the crusade wandered and eventually fell victim to individual political influences within the army. The leadership was so secretive with its plans that soldiers didn't even know that their primary target was Egypt, not directly the Holy Land as was announced.¹⁹³ With this in mind the confusion of the army at Zadar is not particularly surprising. The diversion to Zadar (and later to Constantinople) was more a pragmatic and opportunistic seizing of the conditions, than a pre-planned conspiracy against the king of Hungary.¹⁹⁴ There is little doubt that the Venetians sincerely believed they were waging a just war and that there was no reason to reproach them. Their reaction post attack as

¹⁹¹ Tyerman, *God's War*, 497.

¹⁹² Tyerman, *God's War*, 529.

¹⁹³ Tyerman, *God's War*, 520-521.

¹⁹⁴ Tyerman, *God's War*, 531—532.

well as depiction of the Fourth Crusade in the 13th century and later was consistent with that. The reaction of the rest of the crusading army has been much more diverse. Some, like Montfort, either true to their ideals or afraid of the consequences, left the army before the attack. High barons who were leading the crusade were pressured by the contract they signed with the Venetians and which they could not hope to repay in some other way. They too tried to justify their actions using the same arguments as the Venetians and adding their reactions were a necessity rather than choice- either attack Zadar or destroy the crusade and loose face.¹⁹⁵ It could be argued that among the crusaders the excuses were more a matter of trying to defend themselves after the sinful act, than sincere conviction coming from the Venetian camp. For the majority of the rank and file in the army their passive acceptance of the events was a combination of their learned acceptance of orders coming from higher command structures and financial incentives for mercenaries.¹⁹⁶ King Emeric of Hungary was understandably furious for what he perceived as backstabbing, but monarch of faraway Britain and France were more preoccupied with their wars than with a relatively small city on the Adriatic coast. Innocent III was furious as he watched the Crusade he planned for so long break down into interreligious killing almost before his eyes. There is no doubt his decision to excommunicate the crusaders was serious and would have many consequences had he had the power to implement it. However, the autonomy of the crusading leaders and sheer inertia helped the crusaders to escape more or less unscathed, in spiritual, diplomatic and political terms.

In the end the destruction of Zadar was only a vision of things to come. If its destruction was the beginning of departure of the Crusade from its planned route, the siege and eventual takeover of Constantinople was its spectacular finish. The influence of Constantinople is visible from all the books and chronicles dealing with the Fourth Crusade-they almost

¹⁹⁵ Tyerman, *God's War*, 530.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

exclusively contain the name of the city in its titles. Constantinople was a great city, the last remnant of the great Roman civilization and it is not surprising it received the biggest attention from the contemporaries and chronicles alike. Overshadowed by the tragedy of Constantinople, Zadar fell in obscurity and anonymity.

Bibliography

Primary sources

“Count Hugh Of Saint Pol's Report to the West” in *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, ed. Alfred Andrea, (Leiden-Boston: Brill 2008).

“The Anonymous of Soissons” in *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, ed. Alfred Andrea, (Leiden-Boston: Brill 2008).

“Devastatio Constantinopolitana” in *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, ed. Alfred Andrea, (Leiden-Boston: Brill 2008).

Geoffroi de Villehardouin, *La Conquete de Constantinople*, trans. M. Natalis de Wailly (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1872).

Geoffroi de Villehardouin and Jean de Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, trans. Frank T. Marzials (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1958).

Gunther of Pairis, *The Capture of Constantinople: The Hystoria Constantinopolitana*, ed. Alfred J. Andrea (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

Innocent III. “Innocenti III Romani Pontificis Regestorum Sive Epistolarum, Liber Quinus” in *Patrologia Latina*.

http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/01_01_Magisterium_Paparum.html.

Accessed May 16th 2015.

James M. Powell trans. *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III*, (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007)

Robert de Clari. *La Conquête de Constantinople*, ed. Philippe Lauer, (Paris: Champion, 1924), electronic transcription, accessed 20 April 2015, <http://txm.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr/bfm/pdf/clari.pdf>.

_____. *The Conquest of Constantinople*, trans. Edgar Holmes McNeal, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969).

Secondary literature

Alfred Andrea ed. *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, (Leiden-Boston: Brill 2008).

_____ and Ilona. Motsiff. "Pope Innocent III and the Diversion of the Fourth Crusade Army to Zara." *Byzantinoslavica* 33 (1972), 6-25.

Brian A. Pavlac, "Emperor Henry VI (1191-1197) and the Papacy: Similarities with Innocent III's Temporal Policies," in *Pope Innocent III and his World*, ed. John C. Moore (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 255-69.

Carlyle, Alexander J. & Robert W. Carlyle. "Judged by God Alone", in *Innocent III: Vicar of Christ or Lord of the World?*, ed. James M. Powell (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1994).

Chris Breyer, "Culpability and Concealed Motives: An Analysis of the Parties Involved in the Diversion of the Fourth Crusade" (Senior Seminar Thesis Papers, Western Oregon University, 2007). https://www.wou.edu/las/socsci/history/senior_seminar_papers/2007/thesis07/Chris%20Breyer.pdf. Accessed May 19th 2015.

Christopher Gravett, *Medieval Siege Warfare*, (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2000).

Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

Donald E. Queller and Irene B. Katele, "Attitudes Towards the Venetians in the Fourth Crusade: The Western Sources", *The International History Review* Vol. 4, No. 1 (1982), Accessed 12 December 2014. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40105791>.

_____, Thomas K. Compton and Donald A. Campbell, "The Fourth Crusade: The Neglected Majority", *Speculum*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (1974), 441-465.

_____ and Thomas Madden, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

Jonathan Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005).

Kenneth Setton, ed., *A History of the Crusades*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962).

Nada Klaić and Ivo Petricoli, *Zadar u srednjem vijeku do 1409.*, (Zadar: Filozofski fakultet, 1976),

Raymond H. Schmandt. "The Fourth Crusade and the Just-War Theory." *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (Apr., 1975): 195. Accessed December 7, 2014. Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25019674>

Richard. H. Helmholz. "Excommunication in Twelfth Century England. " *Journal of Law and Religion* (1994).

Thomas F. Madden. "Vows and Contracts in the Fourth Crusade: The Treaty of Zara and the Attack on Constantinople in 1204", *The International History Review*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (1993).

_____. “ The Venetian Version of the Fourth Crusade: Memory and the Conquest of Constantinople in Medieval Venice.” *Speculum*, Vol. 87, No. 2 (2012), 311-344.

Appendices



Figure 1 Map depicting the splitting of the armies of the Fourth Crusade after the Siege of Zadar.



Figure 2 Depiction of the Crusaders' fleet on the walls of the church of San Giovanni Evangelista in Ravenna.



Figure 3 Depiction of the Crusaders' fleet on the walls of the church of San Giovanni Evangelista in Ravenna.



Figure 4 The Siege of Zadar as depicted on the walls of the church of San Giovanni Evangelista in Ravenna.



Figure 5 Bronze horses sculpture looted by the Venetians from Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade.