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Salvation and the Albigensian Crusade: Pope Innocent III and the Plenary Indulgence

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In 1208 Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) authorised the Albigensian Crusade against Cathar heretics in the south of France. This crusade was to dominate French politics until the Peace of Paris of 1229. By means of the crusade, the Capetian Monarchy would amass southern French territory and consolidate its power. Crusading contributed significantly to the emergence of France as a nation state in the thirteenth century.

Popes played a large, if unwitting, part in this gradual process of state building. A desire to involve the kings of France in southern French politics stemmed from a firmly held conviction that the secular powers should aid the Church in the fight against heresy. Popes also came to believe that the Church in the Midi was better protected by the security of the Crown than by magnates, whose internal feuding had led to insecurity and lawlessness. The Capetian kings used this belief to their own advantage. In particular the pontificate of Innocent III (1198-1216) was pivotal for the involvement of the French monarchs in southern politics. Philip II Augustus (1165-1223) did not respond to the pope's call to crusade, but his son Louis VIII (1187-1226) took note of Innocent's successor, Honorius III (1216-1227). So Innocent set in motion a chain of events which would eventually lead to the enlargement of the French kingdom. The Albigensian Crusade became one important method of Capetian state building.

Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay's *Historia Albigensis* is one of the most detailed contemporary accounts we possess for this crusade. According to Peter, despite initial enthusiasm for the campaign in 1209, by 1210 papal legates were expressing disappointment at the lack of enthusiasm shown by the Christian faithful to continue the fight against heresy. So great was the legates' concern that they decided that they should clarify the very generous terms by which crusaders might receive an indulgence - a special spiritual privilege - for taking part in military campaigns:¹

Indeed the papal legates, aware that most of the crusaders were somewhat lukewarm in their enthusiasm for the campaign and perpetually anxious to go home, had laid it down that the indulgence promised to the crusaders by the pope would not be granted to anyone who failed to complete at least one period of forty days in the service of Jesus Christ.²

If Peter is recording events correctly - and we have no particular reason to doubt the veracity of his account of legatine activity - the legates promised the same plenary indulgence for the campaign against heresy as popes traditionally granted for taking part in a crusade against Muslims in the Holy Land. This consisted of a promise to remit all temporal punishment for sin so that no expiation was required in Purgatory.

What did this promise of remission of temporal punishment mean in theological terms? According to traditional Catholic teaching, even after a sin is repented and forgiven in Confession, its effects, referred to as the temporal punishment owed to sin, remain on the soul of the sinner. Men and women who still bear these effects on their soul when they die must be cleansed in Purgatory before they can be deemed worthy to enter heaven. In accordance with this doctrine, the medieval Church devised a carefully-planned system for removing these effects both for the living and the dead. It pronounced that since certain good works were equivalent to performing a certain number of days of public penance, Christians might thereby gain a partial indulgence for their sins. And it declared that some works were so meritorious that they remitted not just some but all temporal punishment owed for sin. This was the plenary indulgence which in 1204 Innocent III had granted to those who participated in the Fourth Crusade. From 1208 he also granted it to those who took part in crusading against heretics in the south of France.

As we see from Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay's account, a particularly striking feature of the legates' pronouncement in 1210 was that crusaders might gain this great spiritual privilege for a mere forty days' fighting - in other words for just under six weeks of military service.³ By contrast, we have no extant evidence from either papal letters or other contemporary chroniclers that papal legates had ever stipulated a time period which crusaders would have to spend in the Holy Land to secure this plenary indulgence. Indeed it seems probable that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries most crusaders who journeyed to the East expected to campaign for a much longer period than a mere forty days.

What rationale lay behind the time stipulation of Innocent's legates in 1210? They may have hoped that a period of forty days would remind crusaders of the forty days of Lent, thereby emphasising the penitential aspects of crusading. The length of time probably also reflected the period for which lords traditionally asked vassals for military service.⁴ The latter explanation would suggest that the

legates' declaration was not just motivated by piety, but pragmatic. It was part of a concerted effort to ensure that crusaders completed an adequate amount of service and did not desert Simon de Montfort, the leader of the crusade, in the middle of a campaign. This interpretation also fits with what we learn from Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay about Simon's campaigns in the south of France. Despite an initial flurry of crusade enthusiasm, Simon was constantly short of men and from very early on in his campaigns had to employ mercenaries to ensure an adequate fighting force.

These were the short-term motivations for the legates' startling promise in 1210 to grant a plenary indulgence to those who took the Cross for a mere forty days' fighting. Yet the pronouncement also had long-term consequences for the European crusading movement because it had a great effect on how the Albigensian Crusade was generally perceived. This was particularly the case since crusading against heretics, rather than against the traditional Muslim foe, was a new departure for western Christians.

Furthermore, the pronouncement raises a number of important questions about the nature of papal involvement in crusading in the south of France. Popes had never specified a time limit for fighting against Muslims in the East. By promising the plenary indulgence for only forty days' of fighting against heretics, was the papacy deliberately encouraging contemporaries to regard crusading in the south of France as more important than crusading in the Holy Land? Were the legates acting on their own initiative in 1210, or on Innocent III's direct orders? Did Innocent regard crusading in the south of France as more meritorious than crusading in the East? Did he deliberately prioritise some crusades more than others and if so, why? Were Innocent's decisions based on pragmatism - in other words were they reactive to circumstances - or did he have an overriding vision of a theoretical hierarchy of crusades?

Such questions can best be answered by an in-depth analysis of those letters of Innocent III to the south of France in which he granted the plenary indulgence. These letters reveal that during the early years of his pontificate his plans for military action against heretics developed slowly, but surely.⁵ In 1198 Innocent despatched 'Cum unus Dominus', a letter to the archbishop of Aix-en-Provence and his suffragans in which he encouraged all Christians in their dioceses to 'gird themselves' against heretics ('contra hereticos accingantur') and to aid his legates Rainier and Guy in the Church's struggle against heresy.⁶ In 'Inter cetera que', another letter of the same year to the archbishop of Auch, he employed to great advantage the traditional image of the Two Swords, the temporal and the spiritual. This theory of the relation between spiritual and temporal power, propounded in the fifth century by Pope Gelasius I (492-496), featured regularly in the discussions of medieval churchmen and, among others, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153). In the *De Consideratione*, Bernard had argued that the temporal sword existed to be wielded for the good of the Church.⁷ Following his interpretation, Innocent

emphasised that the Church had the authority to demand that secular authorities coerce heretics and their supporters.⁸

In both 'Cum unus Dominus' and in another letter of 1198, 'Cum ad capiendas', which addressed a much wider audience of archbishops, bishops, prelates, magnates and the faithful Christians of France, Innocent urged all to aid his legates in their work against heresy:

[F]or (all) those who for the preservation of the Christian faith at such a critical moment which threatens the Church, shall have helped these men faithfully and devotedly we concede that indulgence for their sins which we grant as an indulgence to those visiting the thresholds of Blessed Peter and James.⁹

'The thresholds of Blessed Peter and James' referred to Rome and Compostela, two epicentres of medieval pilgrimage. It is clear, therefore, that from 1198 - the very first year of his pontificate - Innocent granted the same indulgence to those who aided his legates in France against heresy as to those who made a pilgrimage to these great centres.

A few years later Innocent again invoked the Theory of the Two Swords in relation to heresy in the south of France. Continuing concern about heretics prompted him to send two further letters, 'Ad sponsae suae' (1204) and 'Ne populus Israel' (1205), to King Philip II Augustus of France. By this time Innocent's aims were much more specific: he was now not only encouraging the king himself to oppose heretics and their supporters, but specifically advocating doing so by the use of force.¹⁰

These letters deserve close attention. In 'Ad sponsae suae' (1204) Innocent called on Philip and his son Louis, as well as the nobles of France, to proscribe heretics and confiscate their goods.¹¹ He promised that in return for military assistance for his legates the king would obtain that same mercy for his sins as he granted to those crusading in the East:

Thus may your Royal Greatness assist you also with our dear sons ...the Cistercian abbot, and Peter and Ralph monks of Fontfroide, legates of the Apostolic See, whom we destine specially to this, that the material sword may be sanctioned to supply the defect of the spiritual sword, and you, besides the temporal glory which you will attain from so pious and praiseworthy a work, may obtain that pardon for sins, which we grant as an indulgence for those crossing the sea to bring aid to the Holy Land.¹²

Similar sentiments were repeated in yet another letter of 1204, 'Etsi nostra navicula', in which the pope urged his legates to impress upon the king, his son

Louis, and the French nobility that they should proscribe heretics and confiscate their goods in return for the remission of their sins. He again emphasised that they would gain the same indulgence as granted to those crusading in the East:¹³

...and enjoining them for the remission of their sins, since we want those who faithfully shall have laboured against the heretics to rejoice in the same indulgence as we grant as an indulgence for those crossing the sea for the aid of the Holy Land.¹⁴

'Ne populus Israel' (1205) was written in a similar vein. Innocent again called on the king and his son Louis, as well as the leading men of France, to proscribe heretics and confiscate their goods.¹⁵ Once more he urged the king to give military assistance to his legates and promised the same indulgence as for crusading in the East:

But so that the defect of the spiritual sword may receive a supplement through the material (sword), let your Kingly Sublimity powerfully show help and favour to the aforementioned legates, so that besides gaining glory and honour among men from so commendable a work, you may deserve to obtain that pardon for sins which we have offered to be granted as an indulgence for all going to bring aid to the Holy Land.¹⁶

These letters leave us in no doubt that Innocent hoped to persuade the king of France to use his authority and influence as suzerain to compel southern-French magnates, who at least nominally owed him allegiance, to implement harsh measures against heretics in areas under their control. He threatened that, if any of the magnates should refuse to expel heretics from their territories or receive or favour them in any way, their goods would be confiscated and their lands made part of the king's domain. It is clear that by 1205 Innocent hoped for co-operation between the Church and secular authorities to stamp out heresy in the south of France and was ready to support military means when necessary.

In all of these letters Innocent used traditional military expressions and metaphors to foster the Church's struggle against heresy. Yet there was a substantial change in policy between 1198 and 1204. Whereas in 1198 the pope merely granted those who aided his legates the same indulgence as he granted to pilgrims going to Rome or Compostela, in 1204 and 1205 he promised the king of France the same plenary indulgence for acting forcefully against heretics as granted for crusading in the Holy Land. This indicates that between 1198 and 1204 his concern about heresy had grown significantly. By 1204 he had come to believe that force, not just the gentle methods of preaching and teaching, was essential. Nevertheless, despite these promises of the plenary indulgence in 1204 and 1205 in return for the king's military intervention, he did not yet envisage personally

authorising an army to invade the lands of the king of France's vassals and to take vows to fight in the name of the Church. In other words he still at this point had no plans for a crusade.¹⁷

Yet Innocent's plans began to change as he became increasingly convinced that military action was not just desirable but essential. Two years later, in 1207, he issued '*Inveterata pravitatis haereticae*', a letter sent not only to Philip Augustus, but collectively to the counts, barons, knights and all the Christian faithful in the kingdom of France, as well as separately to other French magnates such as the duke of Burgundy.¹⁸ He now offered the plenary indulgence to all those who would take up arms to fight against heretics in the area of Toulouse:

Moreover we wish that all the goods of these heretics should be made public property, and both for you or for the one working in your person, or for the one expending the necessary help, and for the men of your land, who shall have taken up weapons against the perfidious in order to subdue them, let that remission of sins be effective which we have proclaimed is to be granted as an indulgence for those who work for the aid of the Holy Land...¹⁹

It is significant that this letter, calling on the Christian faithful throughout the whole of France to take part in a military campaign against Cathar heretics on behalf of the Church, was addressed to the widest audience thus far.

Innocent repeated his call the following year, in 1208. He was furious at the recent murder of his legate Peter of Castelnau, and believed Raymond VI of Toulouse (1156-1222) was responsible. His letter '*Ne nos ejus*', addressed to the southern archbishops of Narbonne, Arles, Embrun, Aix-en-Provence and Vienne and their suffragans, again promised an indulgence of the remission of their sins for all those who should fight against heretics:²⁰

But for those who, inflamed with zeal for the orthodox faith to vindicate just blood, which ceases not to clamour from earth to heaven until the God of Vengeances shall descend upon the earth, should manfully gird themselves against pestilential persons of this kind who at the same time together fight both peace and truth, you may securely promise the remission of their sins conceded by God and by His vicar, that a labour of this kind for the performance of the work may be sufficient for them on behalf of those offences for which they shall have obtained contrition of heart and true oral confession to the true God.²¹

And in '*Etsi nostri navicula*', also of 1208, he ordered bishop Ralph of Couserans and his legates Hugh-Raymond of Riez and Arnald Amalric to urge Philip

Augustus, his son Louis, the king's counts, viscounts, barons and indeed all other faithful Christians living in France to labour against heretics. The letter stated:²²

...and enjoining them for the remission of their sins, since we want those who faithfully shall have laboured against the heretics to rejoice in the same indulgence as we grant as an indulgence for those crossing the sea for the aid of the Holy Land...

These words were exactly those which Innocent had used in 'Etsi nostri navicula' of 1204. Yet there was an important difference. In these letters of 1207 and 1208 the pope was not merely urging the king of France and his nobles to use force to deal with heretics - as in 1204 and 1205. He was now making a direct appeal to all faithful Christians to take the Cross.²³ Now in 1207 and 1208 Innocent finally envisaged a crusade.

Since it promised the plenary indulgence for crusading in the south of France, 'Etsi nostri navicula' (1208) was a significant milestone in the development of papal crusading policy. It was also significant for the crusading movement as a whole because Innocent made a point of emphasising that those who had taken the vow to go on crusade to the East should not be prevented from doing so by the campaign against heresy:

...provided that those who, having vowed themselves to aid the Holy Land, may follow through their vow faithfully, nor should the devotion of those wanting and being able to set out to the aid of that land be impeded through this...²⁴

Clearly by 1208 Innocent was expecting and indeed encouraging men to crusade *both* to the Holy Land *and* to the south of France. He was therefore calling for crusades on two fronts simultaneously.

After 1208 Innocent continued to repeat his grant of spiritual rewards to those who had taken vows to crusade in the south, regularly describing them in his correspondence as 'signed with the Cross' ('crucesignati'). The Albigensian Crusade continued for a number of years. But in the autumn of 1212, Peter II of Aragon (1178-1213), overlord of Raymond VI of Toulouse and angered by the activities of the crusaders, appealed to Rome for an end to hostilities.²⁵ By this point Peter's appeal was welcome news to the pope who was now determined to launch a major new crusade to the Holy Land and was directing all his energies towards the Fifth Crusade.

In January 1213 Innocent wrote to Arnald Amalric, legate in the south of France, urging him to conclude a peace and end hostilities.²⁶ But he was soon persuaded yet again to modify his position. In 1213 the Council of Lavaur, a local gathering of southern French prelates which had responded unfavourably to Peter

of Aragon's plans for a peace settlement and which had the backing of many of the clergy and of the papal legates, begged Innocent not to call off the crusade.²⁷ Innocent was persuaded by their arguments. When in April he issued a general letter to the Christian faithful of Europe, 'Quia maior', which called for the Albigensian Crusade to be scaled down so as to concentrate on recruiting men for the Holy Land, he emphasised as a concession to the southern French clergy that he would still allow men from the south of France to take the Cross and receive the crusade indulgence:²⁸ 'We concede, however, that the remission of sins and the indulgences should remain for the people of the south of France'.²⁹

Furthermore, a month later in another letter, 'Is in cuius', he threatened Peter of Aragon that should the people of Toulouse persist in their heretical errors he intended formally to renew his promise of the crusade indulgence and make a general call for a new force of crusaders:³⁰

But we do not want to hide from your Excellency that if the Toulousains and the nobles often mentioned should still also think to persist in their error, through the renewal of indulgences we will enjoin crusaders and other faithful people to stir themselves up so that, rising up to extirpate such a pest and trusting to divine help...they may go forward in the name of the Lord God of Hosts.³¹

And again a year later (1214), in yet another letter 'Etsi Tolosanorum excessus', he ordered Peter of Benevento, his newly appointed legate to the south of France, to incite 'crucesignati' and other Christian faithful to fight against heresy, offering the same incentive of the plenary indulgence.³²

This examination of Innocent's correspondence reveals that in none of his letters to the south of France did the pope ever refer to a grant of the plenary indulgence for a mere forty days' fighting. Nor indeed did he make any type of formal time stipulation. His letters emphasised no more than that the indulgence granted for crusading in the south of France was the same as that which the papacy had traditionally granted for crusading to the Holy Land - in other words that it was plenary. It is clear that in 1210 Innocent's legates were acting on their own initiative, not on the pope's direct orders, in promising the plenary indulgence for only forty days' fighting.

Yet although legates acted on their own initiative in 1210, the question still remains as to Innocent's vision of the status of crusading in the south of France in relation to crusading in the Holy Land. Problems abound for historians attempting to discern the workings of any pope's mind through analysis of his formal correspondence, not least because of the complex question of the composition of letters at the papal curia. Nevertheless, a detailed study of the language of Innocent's letters can shed some light. It is striking how remarkably similar his language is to that used to encourage the Christian faithful to embark

on crusades against Muslim enemies in the East. Indeed it was his deliberate policy to employ the same terminology in letters to the south of France as he and his predecessors used in their calls for crusades to the Holy Land.

In correspondence both to the south of France and to the East Innocent emphasised that crusades were defensive operations. The crucial difference in rhetoric was that rather than defending the places of Christ's Passion and Resurrection in the Holy Land, crusaders in the south of France were defending Christianity itself. Innocent's correspondence referred to those labouring against heresy, whether by preaching or subsequently by campaigning, as 'soldiers of Christ' ('Christi milites' or 'milites pro Christo'),³³ and recruits of a Christian army.³⁴ They were girded against those who perverted the Catholic faith,³⁵ and armed against its subverters.³⁶ Innocent's letters are replete with phrases such as 'the protection of the Christian knighthood' ('praesidia militiae Christianae'),³⁷ 'the defence of faith' ('Fidei defensio concessa'). They emphasised the need to defend 'the honour of the Holy Trinity' ('ut defensuri Sanctae Trinitatis honorem') - a specific reference to Catharism which denied the doctrine of the Trinity.³⁸ They frequently evoked the need for the defence and protection of Christianity itself.³⁹ Heretics were 'those who attacked the Catholic faith' ('impugnatores catholice fidei')⁴⁰ and wrongly 'fought like sons against their mother' ('pugnant quam filii contra matrem').⁴¹ By contrast, the crusaders were called on to persevere in protecting the south of France.⁴² Simon de Montfort was a 'defender of the Catholic Faith' ('catholice fidei defensor'),⁴³ the Albigensian Crusade itself a 'defence of the faith' ('fidei defensio').⁴⁴ As we have seen, Innocent deliberately used the language of defence - which popes regularly employed, and especially in the context of crusades against Muslims - to justify his authorisation of crusades against heresy. His intent was to emphasise that just as the Holy Land needed defending against Muslims, so the Christian faith itself needed defending against heretics.

Other similarities in the language used of crusades to the Holy Land and to the south of France abound. Innocent's letters described the Albigensian Crusade as 'the business of the Christian faith' ('fidei Christianae negotium'⁴⁵ / 'negotium fidei')⁴⁶, a 'pious work' ('pietatis opus'),⁴⁷ and a 'holy contest' ('ad agonem sanctae pugnae').⁴⁸ Crusaders were those who had chosen 'to take up the sign of the living Cross' ('vivificae crucis characteram assumpserunt').⁴⁹ And the pope called on those wishing to fight to avenge 'the injury done to Christ' ('injuria Jesu Christi'). - another phrase frequently employed in letters calling for crusades to the East.⁵⁰ Innocent was fully aware that since Urban II (1088-1099) had called for the First Crusade in 1095, the charge that Muslims in the Holy Land had injured Christ by their occupation of the places of His life and Passion had been effective in encouraging crusaders to embark for the Holy Land. He used the same idea to promote a crusade against heretics, employing the traditional Christian idea of the Church as Christ's body - derived from St Paul's doctrine of the mystical body of

Christ (*Ephesians 5:29*) - to emphasise that in the south of France the Church itself must be protected.

Linguistic parallels of this sort reveal that Innocent regarded the two crusades as essentially similar enterprises. He hoped that the recipients of his letters would directly compare crusades against heretics with crusades against Muslims. Yet he also realised that, despite the traditional teachings of the Church on the dangers posed by heretics, the Albigensian Crusade lacked the prestige of a crusade to the Holy Land in the popular imagination. He therefore employed 'traditional' crusading rhetoric with the hope of building and maintaining enthusiasm for a holy war in France.

Furthermore, Innocent's frequent mention of the Holy Land when granting the crusading indulgence for France reveals a desire to make clear to all Christians that the Holy Land was the standard against which all other crusades, including the Albigensian Crusade, should be measured.⁵¹ Allusions to the Holy Land might be direct as in the general letters 'Quia maior' (1213) calling for the Fifth Crusade and 'Cum iam captis' (1213) calling for the Albigensian Crusade to be scaled down in favour of crusading to the East.⁵² Or they might be indirect, as in 'Si tua regalis' of 1208 where Innocent directly compared heretics with Muslims and declared them morally worse than Muslims because they were more securely entrenched ('securius') in Christian society.⁵³ Such remarks followed the traditional rhetoric of prominent spokesmen of the Church. Bernard of Clairvaux had claimed that the heathen who openly combated the faithful were less dangerous to the Church than insidious 'internal' heretics, while Peter the Venerable (1092-1156) believed that heathens were not only less pernicious but also less responsible than such 'internal' enemies.⁵⁴ *Causae 23* and *24* of Gratian's *Decretum* emphasised that the Church's struggle against heretics was more important than wars against heathens or infidels since their 'internal' position in Christian society meant that they posed a more insidious threat.⁵⁵

In marked contrast to such twelfth-century references and allusions to the Holy Land, Innocent's correspondence to the south of France mentioned crusades in Spain only once. His letter 'Etsi rescandae sint' of 1213 emphasised his wish that Raymond of Toulouse, who was constantly accused by the Church of heresy and of giving succour to heretics, do penance for his sins either by fighting overseas in the Holy Land or in Spain: 'Whether to go overseas, or to Spain, to the frontiers, to fight against the perfidy of the Muslim people.'⁵⁶ Even here by referring to 'the crusade overseas' - i.e. the Holy Land crusade - first, the pope was stressing its importance - a practice mirrored in contemporary conciliar legislation.⁵⁷ Indeed, rather than declaring that the indulgence for fighting in the south of France was the same as that for those campaigning in Spain or the Baltic, Innocent's letters always deliberately identified the indulgence for the Albigensian Crusade as the same as that for crusading in the Holy Land.⁵⁸

Such emphasis on the Holy Land crusade is apparent throughout Innocent's correspondence. Despite his undoubted enthusiasm for campaigns in Spain and the Baltic, he never called for the Albigensian Crusade to be ended or even curtailed in order that Europe's military resources might be concentrated solely on these areas.⁵⁹ By contrast he called for both the Spanish and Albigensian Crusades to be halted in 1213 to concentrate on a new crusade in the Holy Land.⁶⁰ As we have seen, in 'Etsi resecaendae sint' (1213) he expressed his desire for Raymond of Toulouse go to the Holy Land or Spain to atone for his sins. Nevertheless, he made no similar calls for Christians in the Levant or Spain to fight in France. Innocent clearly believed that recipients of his letters were more likely to be inspired by comparisons with crusades to the Holy Land than by comparisons with crusades elsewhere.

Yet despite this emphasis on the Holy Land crusade, by granting the same indulgence for a crusade against heretics as for crusading to the East, Innocent seemed to identify the Albigensian Crusade as equally important.⁶¹ Again, here an in-depth analysis of his letters to the south of France is invaluable. In 'Etsi nostri navicula' (1208) Innocent clearly stated:

...we want those who shall have faithfully laboured against heretics to rejoice in the same indulgence as we grant for those crossing the sea for the aid of the Holy Land, provided that those who have made vows to aid the Holy Land shall follow through their vow faithfully and that the devotion of those who are willing and able to set out for the succour of that land (the Holy Land) should not be impeded for this reason...so that thus usefully it may be ensured that neither be gravely diminished by the other.⁶²

This determination that the Albigensian Crusade and the crusade to the Holy Land should not impede each other might suggest that Innocent regarded the two as equally important. It would seem that his policy was only to give priority to the Holy Land when he was satisfied that there had been sufficient military success against the Cathars. Certainly his letter 'Cum iam captis' gave as his reason for ending the Crusade that 'through the grace of God the business of the Faith (in the south of France) had sufficiently prospered' - a claim which he repeated in 'Quia maior' (1213) where he insisted that the Albigensian Crusade, as also crusading in Spain, was to be shut down in favour of the new project.⁶³ The business of combating heresy in the south of France had sufficiently prospered and there was therefore no longer an urgent need for crusading there:⁶⁴

And for the same reason we cancel the remission of sins and the indulgences which were hitherto conceded by us for those setting out to Spain to fight against the Moors or to the south of France to fight against the heretics...

It is therefore tempting to conclude that Innocent did regard the two crusades as equally important.

Yet there are problems with this interpretation of the pope's thoughts. Both 'Cum iam captis' and 'Quia maior' were issued in 1213, the year in which Peter of Aragon was killed by Simon de Montfort at the Battle of Muret and Innocent, having decided to launch the Fifth Crusade, authorised its preaching. By emphasising the importance of the Holy Land and those who had already taken vows to go there, Innocent showed that at least in 1213 he was primarily interested in a crusade to the East. This is confirmed by the fact that when writing to Arnald Amalric in the same year, he declared that all energies should now be concentrated on the proposed Eastern venture: 'So that...in as much as we will be less occupied by other matters, we may exert ourselves the more effectively against the unbelief of the Saracen people.'⁶⁵

It seems that he had decided to scale down the Albigensian Crusade precisely so that it would not be a distraction. It is highly probable therefore, that, whether or not Innocent privately believed that the Albigensian Crusade had achieved its objectives, he claimed success in 1213 so that faithful Christians should concentrate their attention on the new Eastern project. Yet between 1207 and 1216 Innocent was subjected to conflicting information and pressure as to the relative importance of combating the counts of Toulouse and events in the East. In response he emphasised the danger posed by both heretics and Muslims, changing his language to suit the immediate political circumstances.

Furthermore, analysis of his correspondence shows that Innocent never forgot about the liberation of the Holy Land and that throughout his pontificate he remained completely committed to crusades to the East. This is strikingly evident in the letter 'Quod iuxta verbum' (1213), written in response to a letter from the dean of Speyer. Here he (uniquely) affirmed that a crusade to the Holy Land was of greater merit than crusading against heretics in the south of France:

...concerning those who, having taken up the sign of the Cross, have proposed to set out to the south of France against the heretics...we give the advice that such men should be zealously persuaded to take on the labour of the journey to Jerusalem, because it is agreed to be of greater merit...⁶⁶

It is, however, extremely difficult to decide from this letter alone whether Innocent thought in absolute terms that the Holy Land crusade was of greater merit, or whether he merely wished to persuade the dean of Speyer that it was more significant at this particular time.⁶⁷ Certainly he was making clear that in 1213 at least the Fifth Crusade was his first priority.

Indeed the interpretation that Innocent gave priority to the Holy Land throughout his pontificate is not only suggested by this letter of 1213 when he was beginning to be actively engaged in launching the Fifth Crusade; it is also implied in his much earlier correspondence. In 'Inveterata pravitatis haereticæ' (1207) Innocent had emphasised to Philip Augustus that he would grant him and his soldiers the same remission of sins if they should fight against heretics as for those crusading in the East. Yet he had also made clear that they must constantly bear in mind the pressing needs of the Holy Land and ensure that military activities against heretics did not prevent its aid.⁶⁸ So not just in 1213, but throughout his pontificate, Innocent was driven by the idea of recovering the Holy Land. The diversion of the Fourth Crusade to Constantinople in 1204 only redoubled his resolve to ensure that the Fifth Crusade should achieve its objectives. One major reason for calling the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 was to ensure the smooth running of the new Crusade.

Continuing calls for crusades to the East, combined with the increasing frequency with which popes subsequent to Innocent called for crusades within Europe, meant that they were faced with difficult choices as to which crusade should be given precedence at any particular time. Although thirteenth-century popes never directly expressed to the faithful an idea of the varying importance of different types of crusades, their correspondence makes clear that they had different priorities at different times. By calling for the Albigensian Crusade midway through his pontificate and promising the same plenary indulgence as for crusading to the Holy Land, Innocent sent a clear signal to Christians throughout Europe of the importance of taking action against heretics. His immediate message when authorising the Albigensian Crusade was that he regarded a crusade against heretics in the south of France to be as important as crusading against Muslims in the East. Later in his pontificate, however, enthusiasm for the Fifth Crusade altered his priorities - and perhaps revealed his deepest thoughts - to the extent that in 1213 he could even declare the Holy Land crusade more meritorious than the crusade against heretics.

In conclusion, we return to our original questions. Did Innocent III rank crusades in terms of their importance? And if so, how did he envisage this ranking? Analysis of his correspondence shows that Innocent never categorically pronounced an 'official' crusade hierarchy. Yet the language of his letters and the grant of the plenary indulgence strongly suggest that the crusade against heresy was at least as important to him as crusades to Spain and the Baltic and that sometimes it was even as important as crusades to the Holy Land. Innocent did indeed have a vision of a hierarchy of crusades.

This does not imply, however, that Innocent III believed that there was a difference between crusades in terms of penitential worth. From Innocent's pontificate onwards the crusading indulgence was always described in papal correspondence identically for all crusades, whether to the East or within Europe

- it proposed full remission of their sins for those who take the Cross. In other words, although Innocent formed in his mind a hierarchy of crusades in terms of importance at different times to suit various needs, there was never a papal hierarchy of penitential merit for different crusades. Innocent's declaration in 1213 to the dean of Speyer that the Holy Land crusade was of more merit than crusading in the south of France was exceptional: an instance of the pope's extreme zeal to see the Fifth Crusade succeed where its predecessor had failed.⁶⁹

There is no doubt that the grant of the plenary indulgence for crusading in the south of France was a religiously motivated act. Yet it had long term political implications which at the outset neither the popes nor the French monarchy could have foreseen. It alerted the attention of western European Christians to the geographical, social and political situation of the south of France. It sent crusaders from all over Europe to take part in a new crusade against heresy. The eventual annexation of the south of France to the Crown laid the foundations for the formation of the French nation state. The study of papal letters, as much as the works of chroniclers such as Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay, is therefore vital in enabling the historian to understand the wider context of European state building in the thirteenth century.

Notes

¹ Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay, *Petri Vallium Sarnaii monachi hystoria Albigensis* 1, ed. P. Guébin, E. Lyon (Paris, 1926), p. 187.

² '...ordinatum suiquidem erat a sedis apostolicae legatis, eo quod plurimi de pregrinis tepidi errant, et semper ad propria suspirantes, quod nullus consequerentur indulgentiam, quam cruce signatis fecerat dominus papa, qui in servitio Jesu Christi, unam adminus non completeret quadragesimam'; Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay, *The History of the Albigensian Crusade*, trans. W.A. Sibly and M.D. Sibly (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1998), p.97.

³ Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay described crusaders as having completed their period of service in at least seven different places in his chronicle; see Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay, *Petri Vallium Sarnaii monachi hystoria Albigensis* 1, p.187; Vol. 2, p.27, p.122, p.125, p.142, p.210, pp.288-91. This indulgence for only forty days fighting was also discussed by other contemporary chroniclers. See William of Tudela, *La Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise*, ed. and trans. E. Martin-Chabot, 3 vols (Paris, 1931-1961), Vol. 1, pp.52-3; pp.280-1; William of Puylaurens, *Chronique 1203-1275: Chronica magistri Guillelmi de Podio-Laurentii*, ed. and trans. J. Duvernoy (Paris, 1976), pp.72-3; 'Roberti Autisiodorensis Chronici Continuatio II', ed O. Holder-Egger *MGHS* 26 (Hannover, 1862), p.283; For the significance of the forty-day service period see Claire Dutton, 'Aspects of the Institutional History of the Albigensian Crusades, 1198-1229' (Ph.D. dissertation, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, University of London, 1993), pp.211-18; Laurence Marvin, 'Thirty-Nine Days and a Wake-up: The Impact of the Indulgence and Forty Days Service on the Albigensian Crusade, 1209-1218', *The Historian*, 65, No. 1 (2002) 75-94.

⁴ See, for example, an early discussion of this in Nikolaus Paulus, *Geschichte des Ablasses im Mittelalter vom Ursprunge bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Vol. 1 (Paderborn, 1922), p. 208. They may also have hoped that a period of forty days would remind crusaders of the forty days of Lent and therefore emphasise the penitential aspects of crusading. For more recent discussions of the length of military service see John Beeler, *Warfare in Feudal Europe, 730-1200* (Ithaca, London, 1971), pp.29-30; Philip Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, trans. M. Jones (Oxford, 1984), p.79, 82; Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford, 1994), pp.308-9; Marvin, 'Thirty-Nine Days and a Wake-up', 86.

⁵ For the influence of Peter the Chanter's circle in Paris on the formulation of the crusade indulgence as granted by Innocent III see Jessalynn Bird, 'Innocent III, Peter the Chanter's Circle, and the Crusade Indulgence: Theory, Implementation and Aftermath', in A. Sommerlechner, *Innocenzo III: Urbs et Orbis: atti del Congresso internazionale, Roma, 9-15 Settembre 1998* (Rome, 2003), pp. 503-27.

⁶ Innocent III, 'Cum unus Dominus' (21 April 1198), *Die Register Innocenz' III, Publikationen des Österreichischen Kulturinstituts in Rom*, ed. O. Hageneder, H. Haidacher A. Strnad 8 vols in 11 (Graz, Vienna, Cologne, 1964 - (2004), Vol. 1, p. 137.

⁷ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration: Advice to a Pope: (De Consideratione)*, trans. J.D. Anderson, E.T. Kennan (Kalamazoo, MI, 1976), pp. 117-18.

⁸ Innocent III, 'Inter cetera que' (1 April 1198), *Die Register Innocenz' III*, 1, pp. 119-20.

⁹ '...illis qui pro conversatione fidei christianae in tanto discrimine quod Ecclesiae imminet, ipsi astiterint fideliter et devote, illam peccatorum suorum indulgentiam concedentes, quam beati Petri vel Jacobi limina visitantibus indulgemus.'; Innocent III, 'Cum unus Dominus', p. 137; 'Omnibus autem qui pro conservatione fidei Christianae in tanto discrimine quod Ecclesiae imminet, ipsi astiterint fideliter et devote, illam peccatorum suorum concedimus indulgentiam, quam beati Petri vel Jacobi limina visitantibus indulgemus.'; 'Cum ad capiendas' (13 May 1198), *Die Register Innocenz' III*, 1, p. 235.

¹⁰ Innocent III, 'Ad sponse sue' (28 May 1204), *Die Register Innocenz III*, 7, pp. 127-9; 'Ne populus Israel' (7 Feb. 1205), *Die Register Innocenz' III*, 7, pp. 372-4.

¹¹ Innocent III, 'Ad sponse sue', pp. 127-9.

¹² '...sic assistat regia magnitudo, ut gladii spiritualis defectum materialis supplere gladiis comprobetur, et tu, pareter gloriam temporalem, quam ex tam pio et laudabili opera conuequeris, eam obtineas veniam peccatorum, quam in terrae sanctae subsidium transfretantibus indulgemus.'; Innocent III, 'Ad sponse sue', p. 129.

¹³ Innocent III, 'Etsi nostri navicula' (31 May 1204), *Die Register Innocenz' III*, 7, pp. 122-6.

¹⁴ '...et injungentes eis, in remissionem omnium peccatorum; cum illos, qui contra haereticos fideliter laborarint, eadem indulgentia gaudere velimus, quam in Terrae sanctae subsidium transfretantibus indulgemus.'; Innocent III, 'Etsi nostri navicula', p. 125.

¹⁵ Innocent III, 'Ne populus Israel', pp. 372-4.

¹⁶ 'Ut autem defectus gladii spiritualis per materialem accipiat supplementum, memoratis legatis tua regalis sublimitas auxilium potenter exhibeat et favorem, ut, praeter hoc, quod ex tam commendabili opera apud homines consequeris gloriam et honorem, eam obtinere peccatorum veniam merearis, quam euntibus in terrae sanctae subsidium duximus indulgendam.'; Innocent III, 'Ne populus Israel', p. 374.

¹⁷ For recent historians who have adopted this view see William Sibly and Michael Sibly, *The History of the Albigensian Crusade*, p. 316, note 3.

¹⁸ Innocent III, 'Inveterata pravitatis haereticae' (17 Nov. 1207), *Die Register Innocenz' III*, 10, pp. 254-7.

¹⁹ 'Volumus insuper ut ipsorum haeticorum bona omnia publicentur, et tam tibi vel in persona propria laboranti, vel necessarium auxilium impendenti, quam hominibus terrae tuae, qui contra perfidos arma susceperint expugnandos, illa valeat remissio peccatorum quam his qui laborant pro terrae sanctae subsidio duximus indulgendam;...'; Innocent III, 'Inveterata pravitiatis haeticae', p. 256.

²⁰ Innocent III, 'Ne nos ejus' (10 March 1208), *PL* 215, cols 1354-8.

²¹ Innocent III, 'Illis autem qui orthodoxae fidei zelo succensi ad vindicandum sanguinem justum, qui de terra clamare non cessat ad coelum, donec ad confundendum subversos et subversores de coelo descendat ad terram Dominus ultionum, viriliter se accinxerint adversus hujusmodi pestilentes, qui simul in unum et pacem et veritatem impugnant, suroum remissionem peccaminum a Deo ejusque vicario secure promittatis indultam, et eis labor hujusmodi ad operas satisfactionem sufficiat super illis offensis pro quibus cordis contritionem et oris confessionem veram obtulerint vero Deo.'; 'Ne nos ejus', col. 1356.

²² '...et injungentes eis, in remissionem omnium peccatorum, cum illos, qui contra hereticos fideliter laborarint, eadem indulgentia gaudere velimus quam in terra sancta subsidium transfretantibus indulgemus,...'; Innocent III, 'Etsi nostri navicula', (28 March 1208), p. 319.

²³ Jean Simonde de Sismondi, *History of the Crusades against the Albigenses in the Thirteenth Century* (London, 1826). pp. 11-14. For crusade sermons encouraging the crusade against the Albigensians see Christoph Maier, *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 170-1.

²⁴ '...ita dumtaxat ut hii, qui se ad terre sancta subsidium devoverunt, votum suum fideliter prosequantur nec per hoc impediatur devotion in ehusdem terre succursum volentium et valentium proficisci,...'; Innocent III, 'Etsi nostri navicula', (28 March 1208), p. 319.

²⁵ Pierre Belperron, *La Croisade contre les Albigeois et l'union du Languedoc à la France (1209-1249)*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1945), pp. 255-8.

²⁶ Innocent III, 'Cum jam captis' (15 Jan. 1213), *PL* 216, cols 744-5; 'Ex parte charissimi' (17 Jan. 1213), *PL* 216, cols 741-3; For a comprehensive description of the complex political and diplomatic manoeuvrings of 1213 see Michel Roquebert, *l'Épopée cathare 1213-1216: Vol. 2: Muret ou la dépossession* (Toulouse, 1970), pp. 89-105.

²⁷ Peter II of Aragon, 'Petitiones et preces' (18 Jan. 1213), *PL* 216, cols 840-3; Council of Lavaur, 'Ad agendas paternitatis' (21 Jan. 1213), *PL* 216, cols 836-9; Letters of prelates and in particular Bishop William of Lavaur, 'Ad agendas paternitatis' (end Jan. 1213), *PL* 216, col. 839; Archbishop Bermond of Aix, 'Compendiosa narratione beatitudinis' (end Jan. 1213), *PL* 216, col. 844; Bishop Bertrand of Bourges, 'Cum ineffabili Dei' (end Jan. 1213), *PL* 216, cols 843-4; Hugh Raymond and Thedisius, 'Sanctitati vestrae insinuatione' (Jan. 1213), *PL* 216, cols 833-5; Council of Orange, 'Utinam infallibiliter et' (20 Feb. 1213), *PL* 216, cols 835-6. See Belperron, *La Croisade contre les Albigeois et l'union de Languedoc à la France (1209-1249)*, pp. 258-9; Innocent III, 'Illustri et dilecto' (18 Jan. 1213), *PL* 216, col. 840; 'Sanctissimo in Christo' (21 Jan. 1213), *PL* 216, cols 836-9; 'Sanctissimo in Christo' (end Jan. 1213), *PL* 216, col. 839; 'Sanctissimo in Christo' (end Jan. 1213), *PL* 216, col. 843; 'Sanctissimo in Christo' (end Jan. 1213), *PL* 216, col. 844; 'Sanctissimo patri' (20 Feb. 1213), *PL* 216, cols 835-6.

²⁸ Innocent III, 'Quia major nunc' (19-29 April 1213), *Studien zum Register Innocenz' III*, ed. G. Tangl (Weimar, 1929), pp. 88-97.

²⁹ 'Concedimus tame nut hujusmodi remissiones et indulgentiae apud provinciales remaneant...'; Innocent III, 'Quia major nunc', p. 94.

³⁰ Innocent III, 'Is in cujus' (21 May 1213), *PL* 216, cols 849-52.

³¹ Innocent III, 'Illud autem excellentiam tuam volumes non latere, quod si Tolosani ac nobiles saepedicti adhuc quoque in errore suo duxerint, persistendum, nos per indulgentias innovates

crucesignatos et fideles alios praecipimus excitari ut ad extirpandam pestem hujusmodi divino freti auxilio insurgentes,...procedant in nomini Domini Sabaoth.'; 'Is in cuius', col. 851.

²² Innocent III, 'Etsi Tolosanorum excessus' (25 Jan. 1214), *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France* 19, pp. 589-90.

²³ For example, Innocent III, 'Ne nos ejus', col. 1355; 'Si tua regalis' (10 March 1208), *PL* 215, col. 1358; 'Rem crudelem audivimus' (10 March 1208), *PL* 215, col. 1359; 'Benedicti vos in' (3 Feb. 1209), *PL* 215, col. 1546.

²⁴ Innocent III, 'Benedicti vos in', col. 1546.

²⁵ For example, Innocent III, 'Fovere catholicos nobis' (17 Dec. 1210), *Layettes du trésor des chartes* 1, ed. A. Teulet et al., (Paris, 1863), 1, p. 360.

²⁶ Innocent III, 'Habuisse bajulos Dominici' (28 June 1210), *PL* 216, col. 283.

²⁷ Innocent III, 'Ut contra crudelissimos' (9 Oct. 1208), *PL* 215, col. 1469.

²⁸ Innocent III, 'Ut contra crudelissimos', cols 1469-70.

²⁹ Innocent III, 'Habuisse bajulos Dominici', col. 283.

³⁰ For example, Innocent III, 'Gaudemus in Domino' (27 July 1209), *Layettes du trésor des chartes* 1, p. 413; 'Cum oculos nostre' (2 April 1215), *Layettes du trésor des chartes* 1, p. 416.

³¹ Innocent III, 'Ne populus Israel', p. 374.

³² Innocent III, 'Devotionam vestram dignis' (13 Nov. 1209), *PL* 216, col. 156.

³³ Innocent III, 'Gaudemus in Domino', p. 413.

³⁴ For example, Innocent III, 'Habuisse bajulos Dominici', col. 283.

³⁵ For example, Innocent III, 'Ut hi qui' (27 June 1210), *PL* 216, col. 283. See Raymonde Foreville, 'Innocent III et la Croisade contre les Albigeois', *Paix de Dieu et guerre sainte en Languedoc au XIIIe siècle*, Cahiers de Fanjeaux 4 (Toulouse, 1969), pp. 184-217 at p. 192.

³⁶ For example, Innocent III, 'Cum jam captis' (15 Jan. 1213), *PL* 216, col. 744.

³⁷ For example, Innocent III, 'Litteras tuas paterna', col. 174.

³⁸ Innocent III, 'Religiosa fides et' (3 Feb. 1209), *PL* 215, col. 1545.

³⁹ Innocent III, 'Ut hi qui', col. 283.

⁴⁰ Innocent III, 'Inveterata pravitatis haereticae', p. 256. For this phrase in a letter of Innocent III's concerned with the East see, for example, 'Post miserabile Hierusolymitanae' (15 August 1198), *Die Register Innocenz' III* 1, p. 499.

⁴¹ For example, Innocent III, 'Inveterata pravitatis haereticae', pp. 254-7.

⁴² Innocent III, 'Quia maior nunc', pp. 88-97; 'Si tua regalis', cols 1358-9; 'Cum jam captis', cols 744-5.

⁴³ Innocent III, 'Si tua regalis', col. 1359. See Foreville, 'Innocent III et la Croisade des Albigeois', p. 191.

⁴⁴ The idea that heretics were more dangerous to the Church than 'external' enemies goes back at least as far as St Augustine. See, for example, Bernard of Clairvaux, 'De Consideratione' 1, *Sancti Bernardi opera* (1957-78), Vol. 3, ed. J. Leclercq, C.H. Talbot, H.M. Rochais, pp. 393-410; Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Sermo 65', *Sancti Bernardi opera* 2, ed. Leclercq, Talbot, Rochais, p. 177; Peter the Venerable, *The Letters of Peter the Venerable* 1, ed. G. Constable, Harvard Historical Studies 78 (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), pp. 407-11.

⁴⁵ *Gratian*, cols 889-1006. See Yves Dossat, 'La Croisade Albigeoise vue par les chroniqueurs', *Paix de Dieu et guerre sainte en Languedoc au XIIIe siècle*, Cahiers de Fanjeaux 4 (Toulouse, 1969), pp. 221-59 at p. 221.

⁴⁶ '...sive quod partes adeat transmarinas, sive quod sit in Hispania circa frontariam contra gentis perfidiam Saracena.'; Innocent III, 'Etsi rescandae sint' (18 Jan. 1213), *PL* 216, col. 740.

⁵⁷ For example, for the Council of Montpellier (1195) see *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. G. D. Mansi, 55 vols (Florence, Venice, Paris, 1759-1962, Vol. 22, cols 667-72.

⁵⁸ Innocent III, 'Etsi nostri navicula', pp. 317-19.

⁵⁹ Innocent's delight at Alphonso of Castile's victory at Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212 was recorded in his letter; see Innocent III, 'Protector in se' (July 1212), *PL* 216, cols 703-4.

⁶⁰ Innocent III, 'Cum jam captis', cols 744-5; 'Quia major nunc', pp. 88-97.

⁶¹ For example, Innocent III, 'Etsi nostri navicula', pp. 317-19. The proclamation of Lateran IV which granted the same crusading indulgence for those who took up the cross against the Cathar heretics as for those who aided the Holy Land confirms this. See *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Vol. 1: Nicaea I to Lateran V*, ed. N. P. Tanner (London, 1990), p. 234.

⁶² '...cum illos, qui contra haereticos fideliter laborarint, eadem indulgentia gaudere velimus quam in terre sancte subsidium transfretantibus indulgemus, ita dumtaxat ut hi, qui se ad terre sancta subsidium devoverunt, votum suum fideliter prosequantur nec per hoc impediatur devotio in ejusdem terre succursum volentium et valentium proficisci, cum circa utriusque necessitatis articulum ea sit discretio adhibenda ut sic utiliter provideatur utrique quod neutri per alteram graviter derogetur.'; Innocent III, 'Etsi nostri navicula', p. 319.

⁶³ Innocent III, 'Cum jam captis', cols 744-5; 'Quia major nunc', pp. 88-97. See Foreville, 'Innocent III et la Croisade des Albigeois', p. 212.

⁶⁴ 'Et propter eandem causam remissiones et indulgentias hactenus a nobis concessas procedentibus in Hispaniam contra Mauros vel contra haereticos in Provinciam revocamus...'; Innocent III, 'Quia major nunc', p. 94.

⁶⁵ '...ut...contra Sarecenae gentis perfidiam tanto efficacius intendamus quanto minus erimus aliis occupati...'; Innocent III, 'Cum jam captis', col. 745.

⁶⁶ '...de iis qui suscepto cruce signaculo proposuerunt contra haereticos in provinciam proficisci, necdum suum fuerunt exsecuti propositum, respondemus ut tales ad assumendum itineris Hierosolymitani laborem sedulo inducantur, cum illum majoris meriti esse constet...'; Innocent III, 'Quod juxta verbum' (9 Sept. 1213), *PL* 216, col. 905; the Latin is 'cum illum majoris meriti esse constet'.

⁶⁷ For the ongoing debate on the relative importance of different crusades see Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades, 1274-1580: From Lyons to Alcazar* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 1-6.

⁶⁸ Innocent III, 'Inveterata pravitate haereticae', pp. 254-7. For a discussion of earlier popes' views of a 'hierarchy' of crusades see Rebecca Rist, *The Papacy and Crusading in Europe, 1198-1245* (Continuum, 2009).

⁶⁹ Or did Innocent III's notaries at the curia falsely represent this extreme zeal? It is possible that in expressing his wishes those assigned with the task of composing his letters at the curia overstated Innocent's case and misrepresented his standard position. This possibility raises a host of further questions concerning the composition of papal letters and the extent to which the pope's own voice can be discerned from his correspondence.