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Sustaining Crusader Ardor: Eudes of Châteauroux's Memorial Sermons for Count Robert of Artois

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Abstract: Papal legates who appealed to potential crusaders by preaching also tried to explain to soldiers and commanders the many defeats the Christian armies endured, even though they were carrying out what they asserted to be God's wishes. This article examines two memorial sermons preached by the legate, Eudes of Châteauroux, after the failure of the crusade of King Louis IX (r. 1226–1270), during which the ruler's brother, Count Robert of Artois, died in battle at the Egyptian town of Mansourah.

Keywords: crusades; sermons; papal legates; French monarchy; Louis IX

Scholars have long been attentive to the fact that the popes designated legates to help coordinate the crusades and to serve as advisers (sometimes almost as overseers) of the lay military leaders of the expeditions (Alberzoni and Montaubin 2014). Yet, legates bore many additional burdens, and recent historians, such as Pascal Montaubin, have sharply encouraged their colleagues to deal more comprehensively with the various roles these churchmen played (Montaubin 2015, pp. 11, 13). One aspect of their work, an aspect whose importance scholars ought not to underestimate, was their contribution to explaining to soldiers and commanders on crusade the many defeats the Christian armies endured, even though they were carrying out what they asserted to be God's wishes. To explore this issue, this paper, following up on some of the findings of previous historians, looks closely at two anniversary sermons preached by the legate, Eudes of Châteauroux (Cole et al. 1990, pp. 227–39). Eudes delivered these memorial homilies a year after the failure of the crusade of King Louis IX (r. 1226–1270), on which the ruler's brother, Count Robert of Artois, died in battle at the Egyptian town of Mansourah.

Following a serious illness in December of 1244, from which the king recovered owing to, as he believed, the grace of God and the intermeditation of relics of the Passion of Christ brought to France a few years earlier, he commenced preparations to go on crusade as a thank-offering (Paris 1877, IV, 397; Le Goff 1996, pp. 157–62). Preparations were extensive and time-consuming, including, as they did, raising money, outfitting an army, securing sea transport out of radically expanded port facilities on the Mediterranean coast at Aigues-Mortes (modern *département* of Gard) and sending supplies ahead to the initial disembarkation point, the Frankish-ruled island kingdom of Cyprus (Jordan 1979, pp. 65–102; Richard 1983, pp. 181–204). The whole undertaking took him three and one-half years, but Louis IX finally departed France in April of 1248.

He spent much of the year in Cyprus where preparations continued. These included making diplomatic arrangements with Eastern Mediterranean powers, outfitting landing craft for the invasion of Egypt, which would serve as the initial theater of war, and coordinating his army with volunteers from other European realms who arrived to join him in the planned expedition (Jordan 1979, pp. 76–77, 125; Richard 1983, pp. 209–16). The arriving troops helped make up for losses from disease (Richard 1983, p. 210). The specific target was the fortress city of Damietta, which guarded the approaches to the Nile Delta and was a formidable stronghold. Damietta had briefly been in Christian hands in an earlier crusade, the Fifth (1219–1221). The crusaders had captured it after a long (eighteen-month)



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and often disheartening siege, but they were not able to retain it (Powell 1986, pp. 138–91). The military reversal was a shock: “Where now,” a lament intoned, “is the honor of the church and the flower of Christian knighthood?” (Powell 1986, pp. 195–96).

Louis IX’s later assault on the city remained a reasonable strategy, as it had been for the earlier expedition. A successful attack would also serve as recompense for the humiliation of thirty years before. In the event, the overwhelming force the crusaders brought to bear on Damietta in 1249 led to the rapid fall of the city. The fleet sighted the fortifications on 4 June, landed troops the next day and took complete control of the city on 6 June (Richard 1983, pp. 218–19). The swiftness suggested that the course of events was going to be different from that of three decades before. God, believers agreed, was signaling that He favored their cause. The victors, commanded in person by the king, immediately began the process of remaking the city into a Christian space, including the transformation of the Great Mosque, through purification liturgies, into the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of lesser mosques into additional Christian churches (Cassidy-Welch 2018, pp. 203–6).

The euphoria in France when the news of the victory reached the country was enormous. The Low Country Dominican author, Gilles of Lessines, who studied in Paris, testified to this euphoria when he used Damietta’s capture as a reference point in his treatise on chronology, the “Summa de temporibus.” It was a date worth remembering (Gilles of Lessines n.d., fol. 24 v.; Nothaft 2020, p. 336). The enthusiasm of the polymath scholastic and university master, John of Garland, an immigrant from England who lived in and much preferred France, was boundless (Paetow 1910; Paetow 1927; Jordan 2022, pp. 478–95). Earlier, this churchman’s general ardor for crusading manifested itself, among other ways, in the composition of a model exhortation for recruiting warriors (John of Garland 1974, pp. 68–73). The news about Damietta’s fall to Louis IX’s army intoxicated him. Although he was not an observer to what happened, he imagined the scene in his characteristically classicizing manner: “the forces [banners, *vexilla*] of the Cross hastening to land and a camp being built, and the joy that ensued. Victory [*Palma*] came quickly” (John of Garland 2019, pp. 370–71). The chronicler known as the Minstrel of Reims, also not an eyewitness, heard that onlookers “gasp[ed] in astonishment” at the king’s leadership in battle and at how his army raised the French victory cry, *Montjoie!* (Minstrel of Reims 2022, p. 158).

Euphoria extended to the kingdom of England. As David Carpenter has described it, the news of Damietta’s fall arrived at the court of King Henry III (r. 1216–1272) through his archbishop of Canterbury, Boniface of Savoy, who had heard of the success while on the continent and, after returning to Britain, hurried to the king’s presence to share the good tidings (Carpenter 2020, p. 515). Carpenter cites the chronicler of the Hertfordshire monastery of Saint Albans, Matthew Paris, on the glorious achievement of the Most Christian King of France. He quotes Queen Blanche of Castile, Louis IX’s mother, as well, who wrote a touching letter to Henry III, “since we know,” she explained, “that you will be overjoyed at what makes for the profit and honour of Christendom.” To Blanche, the outcome—the victory—was what “our Lord Jesus Christ, to the exaltation of the Christian faith and of his name, has thought worthy to bring about through the king, our dearest son.”

The next phase in the crusade, also mirroring events of thirty years earlier, came after a substantial delay of eight months in Damietta for the arrival of reinforcements and for the attenuation of the Nile’s floodwaters (Richard 1983, pp. 219–22). In Europe, rumors already circulated that Emperor Frederick II (d. 13 December 1250), despite public expressions of support for the king’s crusade, was actually, out of hatred for the papacy, trying to subvert the expedition, even to the point of making known Louis IX’s strategic plans to the Egyptian sultan. The extent of the accusations grew increasingly serious over time (Jordan 1979, pp. 29–30). In February 1250, the king finally led his army in a thrust in the general direction of Cairo. Unfortunately for the crusaders, advance troops under the captaincy of Louis’s brother, Count Robert of Artois, met disaster at the fortress town of Mansourah (8–11 February), the ramifications of which affected the entire Christian force, ultimately leading to widespread crusader casualties and on 6 April the capture of the king and of

the remainder of his troops, all of which brought an abrupt end to the euphoria. So, John of Garland stated the following: “Oh pain, oh death, worse than pain, troubled death, on account of which my righteous indignation, conjoined with tears, inspires elegies!” (John of Garland 2019, pp. 382–83). Just so, the Minstrel of Reims reported the king’s reaction to news of his brother’s death “along with all the knights who were with him”: “he paused for [a] moment, sighed deeply, and said, ‘If he is dead, God forgive him his sins, and so, too, all the others!’” (Minstrel of Reims 2022, p. 162).

As in all adulterous generations, as the Gospel of Matthew reminds us, some sought signs, *ex post facto*, that the expedition had been doomed from the beginning. Two speculations stand out. In the earlier, John of Garland’s, the learned professor wondered with his usual rhetorical flourishes (repetition being the one highlighted here) whether the name of the port from which the king and his army departed, Aigues-Mortes (“Dead-Waters”), portended the deaths of so many. “It was Aigues-Mortes, its name redolent of *death* and *deathly* omen, which despatched the French to seek the *death* of the Egyptian race. ‘Which nation met with *death*?’” (John of Garland 2019, pp. 364–65). Earlier in his career (1229–1232), John had taught in the southern city of Toulouse (John of Garland 2019, p. 24). Perhaps he had heard of the little Mediterranean fishing village with the unsavory name that later became the crusader port. Maybe he wondered why the villagers or their lord chose the name and not something like Aigues-Vives, “Living-Waters,” which graced two other villages in the same general area (the modern *départements* of Gard and Hérault). John of Garland was sensitive to toponyms. His hometown in England, the site of his birth, Ginge (now in Oxfordshire, then in Berkshire) was a homophone in Middle English of one of the words for privy; so, he changed his name from John of Privy-Town to John of Garland after the Parisian neighborhood where he lived most of his adult life (Jordan 2022, p. 492). Aigues-Mortes’s inhabitants would have liked a new toponym, too. They called Dead-Waters “a horrible and odious name” in a thirteenth-century petition to the crown (Jordan 1979, p. 72). After eight hundred years, they still bear the burden of the name.

Jean de Joinville, the seneschal of Champagne and the author of the other speculation, wrote it down much later, but he could have thought it at the time of the defeat, for the Egyptians had captured him along with his beloved friend, the king, during the campaign. Louis IX’s birth, according to Jean, took place on Saint Mark’s feast day, 25 April 1214 (Bird 2018, p. 159). Known in France as “Black Cross Day,” it acquired the name from the custom of carrying liturgical crosses of that color in rogation processions. Yet, to Jean this was “a form of prophecy of the great number of people who died in the course of his [Louis’s] two crusades both the first in Egypt and the second, during which he himself died at Carthage. There was,” he added, “great mourning in this world and great joy in Paradise for those who died as true crusaders in the course of these two pilgrimages” (de Joinville 1995, pp. 186–87; John of Joinville 2008, p. 163).

Inevitable or not, the similarity of the outcome of Louis IX’s undertaking to that of the Fifth Crusade went further. It did not cease with kindred expressions of grief. In geopolitical terms, control of Damietta returned once more to Muslim hands. “Having given Damietta,” John of Garland wrote, “Fortune took it back” (John of Garland 2019, pp. 372–73; Paetow 1928, p. 220; Richard 1983, pp. 205–41). Or, in the words of the Minstrel of Reims, “So Damietta was emptied and handed back to the Saracens” (Minstrel of Reims 2022, p. 164). This repetition of history had a profoundly unsettling and terribly long-lasting effect in Christendom (Linder 1995, p. 155; Cassidy-Welch 2011, pp. 107–23; Cassidy-Welch 2014, pp. 346–60). Yet, given the prominence of the French in the crusades, commentators ruminated in particular on what *their* losses signified. These ruminations, saturated with considerations on achieving propitiation and atonement, developed into a virtual genre in the literature produced in France (Hélary 2010, pp. 190–92). Moreover, the genre expanded over the next century to include attempts to understand the French role in later debacles both in the crusades and in other venues (Hélary 2010, pp. 185–200). The French clung nonetheless to hope, to nostalgia for the intervals of joy when Damietta had been under Christian control, as Megan Cassidy-Welch has demonstrated. This sentiment

persisted long in the collective memory of the Catholic faithful in France (Cassidy-Welch 2018, pp. 196, 207–8). The Muslim victors were determined not to press their luck and sometime in the future have to recover Damietta a third time, for “only a short time later, the sultans had the city razed and destroyed, because a spell had predicted that Christians would otherwise capture it again” (Minstrel of Reims 2022, p. 164; Richard 1983, p. 573).

Released on paying his ransom, which was Damietta itself, and that of his troops in cash, Louis IX departed for Acre. The king and the remnant of his army were literally in tatters as they walked down the gangplanks on their arrival in Acre after their month-long captivity. The king had himself and the men re-outfitted as best he could (Minstrel of Reims 2022, p. 165; Emanuel 2018, p. 119). Recollection of the disasters persisted in and went beyond crusader circles, even as rumors reached Acre that Frederick II’s agents had been working behind the scenes, while the king was in captivity, to prevent his release (Jordan 1979, pp. 29–30). Some crusaders, including the king’s two surviving brothers, returned home (Richard 1983, p. 238–41; Jordan 1979, pp. 112–13). Others decided to stay with Louis IX who took up residence in the port and set himself the task of improving the defenses of what was left of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and doing good works. This included proselytizing pagan refugees flooding the city from the Mongol incursions, doing the same with regard to sick and injured Muslim civilians as well as with Muslim prisoners of war, and interring the unburied corpses of fallen crusaders in the battle of Sidon of 1253 (Richard 1983, pp. 242–54; Jordan 2019, pp. 37–51).

Jean de Joinville noted that the king in dealing with the putrefying corpses at Sidon did not hold his nose (de Joinville 1995, pp. 492–93; John of Joinville 2008, p. 91). Recently, archeologists excavated the cemetery where the interment took place (Mikulski 2021). “All the bodies were of teenage or adult males” with “many weapon injuries on the bones”—“a high number of unhealed blade wounds, as well as wounds caused by other weapons capable of applying blunt force. In some cases,” the co-author of the archeological report, Dr. Richard Mikulski, noted in a follow-up interview to the excavations, “the wounds on the back of the skeletons suggested that the soldiers were struck down as they were trying to flee, while in other cases, based on a high concentration of blade injuries on the necks, experts believe the men were executed by decapitation.” He went on to note that “[t]he way the body parts were positioned suggests that they had been left to decompose on the surface” (Tercatin 2021). Decency demanded the crusaders memorialize these and similar extraordinary events. The process started in the Holy Land, with the king leading the way, and continued apace in France, where he and other former crusaders endowed thousands of requiem masses for the fallen (Wallon 1875, II, 487; de Laborde 1875, III, nos. 4469, 4484 and 4556). This brings us to the anniversary sermons of the papal legate, Eudes of Châteauroux.

Eudes of Châteauroux was probably born between 1185 and 1190 in the town from which he took his name (Charansonnet 2000, pp. 10–11). He was a scion of a family that produced several remarkable churchmen, including his brother, Hugues, bishop of Poitiers from 1259 to 1271 (Matz and Tonnerre 2017, p. 265). Eudes became a master of theology at the University of Paris in the late 1220s and achieved an extraordinary reputation as a preacher, at a time when there was an explosive production of sermons in northern France (Charansonnet 2000, pp. 6–10). He appreciated his own preaching, in particular, a fact demonstrated by his personal and assiduous collection of his homilies, of which more than 1000 survive on themes related to the university, the conditions and devotions of the Church, and issues of interest to the political authorities of the French realm (Charansonnet 2000, pp. 6–7, 20–23). Under the rubric of this last theme were his homilies on the relics of the Passion that Louis IX had purchased from the Latin ruler of Constantinople (Charansonnet 2000, pp. 14, 18–19; Charansonnet and Morenzoni 2007, pp. 61–99).

Eudes of Châteauroux was also a fervent partisan of the French monarchy and its defense of orthodox Catholicism, as in his support for the Albigensian Crusade (Charansonnet 2000, p. 17). He gloried in the sacrality of the monarchy, which he associated in part with the crown’s possession of the Passion relics. He joyfully attended and preached at the

consecration of their monumental reliquary home, the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris (Charansonnet and Morenzoni 2007, p. 73; Iozzelli 1994, p. 33). As cardinal (from 1244) and papal legate in France, Eudes fervently preached and solemnized Louis IX's first crusade and enthusiastically supported his king's contemporary condemnation of the Talmud to the flames (Charansonnet and Morenzoni 2007, p. 73; Charansonnet 2000, pp. 24–26; Maier 1994, p. 62; Iozzelli 1994, p. 33). He did so in the latter case, because he shared, along with other deprecators of the Talmud, the opinion that its stories were fables that distorted or out-and-out contradicted biblical (Old Testament) truths (Jordan 1989, pp. 137–41). Certain apostates from Judaism and Christian deprecators of the Talmud also regarded certain passages of the text as slurs of Jesus and the Virgin Mary and refused to credit the rabbis' persistent denial of the truth of the accusation (Jordan 1992, pp. 61–76). In fine, rabbis who conveyed the Talmud's teachings to their congregations were leading contemporary Jews astray.

Overall, Eudes's attitude fits in well with the notion that the End Times along with mass conversion, which had the potential to save the Jews, were on the horizon. Of course, the Jews' liberation from the Talmud had, at least potentially, an important role to play in facilitating their reception of baptism. On crusade, itself a manifestation of eschatological fervor, Eudes expended a good deal of effort in the conversion of other non-Christians, "proselytizing and baptizing Saracen slaves and captives" (Bird 2004, p. 32). As a member of the king's circle, he equated baptism with manumission and necessarily had to satisfy the owners of the slaves whom he christened by paying them a great deal of money in compensation (Jordan 2019, p. 39).

Although Eudes escaped capture by being in Damietta at the time of Louis's defeat, he spent almost the entirety of the crusade in the king's entourage dealing with religious matters and ecclesiastical politics, thus continuing his longstanding role as an intimate royal counselor (Charansonnet 2000, pp. 26, 33–34). Not a day went by, it seems, on which he failed to exert himself on behalf of the crusade, especially through his impassioned and charismatic sermonizing (Charansonnet and Morenzoni 2007, pp. 81–91). The overarching themes of the corpus of his sermons were the centrality of moral reform, spiritual renewal and the defense of the Catholic faith. He continued to emphasize these sentiments until his death in his eighties in 1273 (Charansonnet 2000, pp. 26–37).

The two sermons of Eudes to which we now turn our attention were homilies for Louis IX's brother, Count Robert of Artois, "and the other nobles," who perished at Mansourah. There is no absolute consensus (Cole et al. 1990, pp. 230–31), but the legate probably preached them in Acre on the first anniversary of the battle. That is to say, he did so when the losses were uppermost in the crusaders' minds and equally poignant for friends and family of the deceased still in the East, who, even if they had not participated in combat, could readily observe the grief on the faces of the survivors among the worshippers. From internal evidence, I would argue that the venue for one was the royal chapel where Louis IX attended worship services in Acre (Cole et al. 1990, p. 231). The venue for the other was likely a nearby monastery (Rubin 2018, p. 192). Eudes would have preached them the same day, but to different audiences, an important point, as we shall see. Penny Cole edited the sermons (Cole 1991, pp. 235–43). The rubric, *in anniversario Roberti . . . et aliorum nobilium*, may suggest that the preacher intended his remarks to apply solely to the fallen aristocrats, but this could be the scribe's addition. Alternatively, *nobiles* may refer not to legal status but to the implicit character of the crusaders as holy warriors, irrespective of rank, gesturing thereby to the medieval aphorism, "noble by birth but more noble in character" (cf. Dalarun 2023, p. 190). I shall also return to this issue later.

Memorial sermons are quite different from exhortations preached in Europe to stimulate recruitment (Cole et al. 1990, pp. 231–33). The latter often, as Christoph Maier has demonstrated, borrowed themes from papal letters, emphasizing the authority of the legates and other licensed clergy to bestow crusader privileges on those whom they wanted to enlist (Maier 2018, pp. 333–46). Rather, as Jeanine Horowitz has observed for the thirteenth century, as the travails of crusading multiplied, preachers increased their resort

to and reliance on exempla in their sermons. Specifically, clergy from a wide spectrum of orders, including Cistercians and friars, incorporated stories into their sermons that drew on or spoke to folk beliefs (popular wisdom) that the audience would find supportive of continuing the difficult struggles in which they were already engaged (Horowitz 1997, pp. 367–94). The body of exempla available to preachers was immense in the period. Christoph Maier published a partial list in 1994 that highlights the variety of themes, among which one finds stories of battlefield encounters, almost preternatural zeal and, of course, the clarion call for the warrior to hold fast to his honor (Maier 1994, pp. 172–74). However restrictive the canon law and theology of martyrdom were, with their emphasis on passive suffering, already during the First Crusade soldiers and their supporters more and more stridently came to include honorable deaths in just wars as martyrdoms as well (Morris 1993, pp. 93–104; Cole et al. 1990, pp. 236–37). By Louis IX's time, such beliefs were ubiquitous (Smith 2011, pp. 105–6).

Eudes imbues his homilies with, along with other conceits, repeated evocations of French honor (Cole et al. 1990, pp. 233–39). Let us begin with the sermon preached in the royal chapel. One would expect that allusions to the relics of the Passion in the sermons would bring to mind the exceptional piety of the French, considering Louis IX's purchase of the relics and Eudes's well-documented pre-crusade appreciation of them (Charansonnet and Morenzoni 2007, p. 88; Gaposchkin 2017, p. 125). However, even the Old and New Testament parallels highlighted in the sermons, which have been remarked by other scholars (Charansonnet and Morenzoni 2007, p. 8), are, as it were, refracted through a French not only crusader lens. "As David had a reason for lamenting" the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, "we especially of the kingdom of France, whose kings are consistently pious [*consueverunt pii esse*] like David," the preacher added, have a similar reason to mourn. Also "David fought [*debellavit*] Goliath and indeed many others," as the French "go to war [*debellare*] against the enemies of the church" (Cole 1991, p. 235).

Moreover, "the French are accustomed [*Gallici . . . consueverunt*] to be first in fighting the enemies of the Christian faith." In this, the French were like Judah, *de eis, id est, de Gallicis, illud quod dicitur de Iuda*. As the ancient Jews fought on behalf of the hand (*manus*) of God, the French put their lives on the line on behalf of the Lord's hand, *manus Domini pro Gallicis*. "The victories that the French have had against the enemies of the Christian faith, they have had with divine assistance" (Cole 1991, p. 235). Then, to conclude this extraordinary opening to his sermon, Eudes added a grim reminder. Again comparing the contemporary situation of the French ruler to David's mourning the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, he declared that "the king of France and the noble ones of his realm and all the people as well as all Christians had reason to mourn. For on account of the sins of the Christian people that most zealous knight, Robert, count of Artois, son of the king of France, as well as many noblemen of the same kingdom fell in war and were slain by the impious Saracens." "Lamentation [*planctus*] ought to be imparted to their posterity . . . —for them and for us" (Cole 1991, pp. 235–36).

Nothing on earth happened without a reason, Eudes reminded his listeners, citing Job 5: 6. God permitted the slaughter and thereby the increase in the number of widows and orphans, even though He knew the crusaders had made a laborious journey and expended great treasure for His cause. For His honor. For the expansion of His worship. Yet, God let the "vile enemies of the Christian faith and spawn of the devil" inflict these degradations. Such things happened in ancient times as well, and Eudes marshaled example after example (Cole 1991, p. 236). He did, however, anticipate an objection. The crusaders fought a just and holy war, "intending to recover land which the impious Saracens stole [*abstulerant*] from the Christians." Why then (*quo modo*) should the crusaders have had to suffer such indignity? How could one explain such failure? Christians' sin was the answer (Cole et al. 1990, pp. 229–30, 233–39). It was a familiar trope (Siberry 1985, pp. 69–108). "The Lord permitted this to take place to show the Christian people how gravely they had offended Him and how gravely they had sinned against Him" (Cole 1991, pp. 236–37). He likened their sin to that of the first parents (*sicut primis parentibus*) in Paradise. From that beginning,

it became inevitable that innocents from Abel to the Son of God would be victims of murder at impious hands. Emphasizing the point, he quoted the Gospel of Luke 23: 28 and 31. “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me; but weep for yourselves, and for your children . . . For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?” (Cole 1991, p. 237).

The attentive reader will notice that as Eudes continued with something like multiple riffs on these themes, the use of words for France, the French, and the king of France was temporarily in abeyance. The crusaders were innocents. What commenced as a vague general indictment of Christians’ sins—or what could be read (or heard) that way—transmogrified into a binary between the minor sins of the holy warriors and the major ones of other Christians. The Lord loved the crusaders (in analogy with His only begotten Son) though, as in Jacob’s relationship with his son Joseph, who suffered slavery in Egypt at his brothers’ hands, God endured the torment of His Son by His brothers, the Jews (Cole 1991, p. 238). The analogy between Egyptian slavery and Louis IX’s recent captivity in Egypt—and, of course, Joseph’s ultimate redemption and the king’s expectations for a future crusade—became a subsequent theme in royal panegyrics, most especially in the Psalter of Saint Louis (Jordan 1980, pp. 65–91).

Later in the sermon, toward the very end, Eudes spoke of the exhilarating victory at Damietta—supported by the crusaders’ good behavior, devotion, purity of faith, fervor of love, generosity, sexual continence and compassion for the vulnerable, *honesta conversatio, devotio, fidei puritas, fervor dilectionis, liberalitatis effusio, munditia castitatis, compassio miserorum* (Cole 1991, p. 239). The implication was that the full extent and depth of the sins of non-crusaders had not manifested themselves by the time of the victory at Damietta. Would Eudes’ listeners’ minds have wandered back to the many months while the crusaders waited to set out from Damietta to Cairo? Would the congregants have recalled reports that Christians, in particular those favorable to Emperor Frederick II in his struggles with the popes, had tried to subvert Louis IX’s crusade? The legate was known as a strong supporter of the papacy’s vilification of and aggressive policies toward the emperor (Charansonnet 2000, p. 22). It would have been hard to avoid the supposition that the failure at Mansourah was a necessary manifestation of God’s righteous anger at would-be Christians’ betrayals, even without Eudes naming names in his sermon. The point he explicitly stressed was that the gratifying goodness of the crusaders made the mourning, the lamentation, all the more difficult to endure. True, his listeners were made more aware of the reality of their own sins. Yet, for those who fell on the battlefield, even if they died in fear and uncertainty, he reminded the congregants, there was a special kind of victory as that “the Lord might welcome them and bring them to eternal rest,” *Dominus eis indulgeat et ad requiem sempiternam eos erducat* (Cole 1991, p. 239).

The sermon Eudes preached before monks on the same day is of lesser interest to the themes of this paper. Nevertheless, there are two or three matters worth pointing out. Presumably, the audience was smaller, more exclusive. The “nobles” in attendance were probably from legally noble families, not simply noble in character. This may explain why the legate provides a small catalogue of the names of the fallen. My presumption is also that relatives or intimate friends of these people were among the worshippers in attendance. Of course, Eudes mentioned Louis IX’s brother, Robert, count of Artois and son of King Louis VIII of France, as he had in the royal chapel homily. He added “Ralph, the count of Coincy, Roger, lord of Rousset, Lord Robert of Courtenay and many other nobles” (Cole 1991, p. 242). Once again, the use of the word nobles in the list in this particular sermon suggests the restricted legal sense of the term. Moreover, Eudes flattered the audience of aristocrats in a way he avoided in the chapel of the notably humble king. He referred to their lost relatives and friends as “almost the whole flower of the Christian host who had been with the most Christian king of the Franks, Louis, son of Louis, son of Philip” (Cole 1991, p. 242). The “flower of the Christian host” may echo the lament on the failure of the Fifth Crusade quoted early in this essay and is quite appropriate. However, if Louis IX were in the audience, the royal genealogy would feel out of place. In fact, I do not believe

he was present, for what the genealogy spoke to was the lineage-loving sentiments of the aristocracy. Eudes added that this noble host was “cut down [*iugulatus*] by the swords of the impious Saracens” (Cole 1991, p. 242). The metaphor, flower of the nobility, had its counterpart in the blooms cut off at the neck *iugulatus* from *iugulum*, throat.

Still another aristocratic turn in this homily is the distinction Eudes drew between the noble host and others in the army, who may have died frightened and unsure of their fate. His tenderness toward them in the sermon given at the royal chapel where the king would have been present is noticeably absent from the monastic sermon. There he was much less forgiving: “Many,” implicitly but emphatically *not* of the noble lineages he praised, who “were weak in the faith . . . apostatized; others blasphemed God who had permitted this to happen to them,” *Multi debiles in fide . . . apostataverunt; alii Deum blasphemaverunt qui hoc permisit fieri* (Cole 1991, p. 242). The final blessing reinforces the perception that Eudes was bestowing praise uniquely on the aristocrats. For we should not mourn for them, specifically the “aforesaid nobles,” *nobiles antedictos*, in the common way but for ourselves who would have been unworthy to endure what they endured, *non digni fuimus talia sustinere qualia ipsi sustinuerunt*. Then he besought the Lord to cleanse the fallen aristocrats of whatever sins they had committed, presumably very few, and to welcome them into eternal rest, *Dominu(s) ut ipsis indulgeat et ipsos ad requiem eternam perducat*. Eudes also, quite unlike the sermon preached in the royal chapel, implored God to bring his audience of monks and aristocrats to share in the noble crusaders’ glory and reward in heaven, *et nos faciat participes glorie eorum et remunerationis* (Cole 1991, p. 243).

Despite the differences between the two sermons, however, both spoke, if in contrasting registers, to the need to memorialize the grievous losses the crusaders had suffered. Both found inspiration and a form of explanation from the marshaling of examples from the scriptures. Both located the root cause of the disaster in the sins of Christians, but seem to have implied that no matter how sinful the individual crusaders were, it was the sinfulness of Christian society writ large that doomed the expedition. One sermon, that which Eudes preached in the royal chapel, hinted at locating the worst sin in the behind-the-scenes treachery rumormongers attributed to partisans of Frederick II. Finally, both sermons remained scrupulously confident that the crusades were just wars and that the time would surely come when Christian soldiers would turn the tables on their Muslim adversaries. Eudes was wrong about this, but his rhetoric helped sustain the hope and, one must add, contributed to the flood of sermons, poetry, song and inspiring tales of ancestral heroes that continued to motivate generations of men—young and old—to go off to war and to their deaths in faraway lands on the edge of Latin Christendom.

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