

PREACHING  
THE CRUSADES

*Mendicant friars and the cross  
in the thirteenth century*

CHRISTOPH T. MAIER

*University of Zürich*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge  
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP  
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211 USA  
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

© Cambridge University Press 1994

First published 1994

Reprinted 1995

First paperback edition published 1998

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data*

Maier, Christoph T.

Preaching the Crusades : mendicant friars and the Cross in the  
thirteenth century / Christoph T. Maier.

p. cm. — (Cambridge studies in medieval life and thought :  
4th ser., 28)

Based on the author's thesis (Ph. D.)—University of London, 1990.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-521-45246-5

1. Friars—Europe—History. 2. Crusades—Later, 13th, 14th, and  
15th centuries. 3. Preaching—History—20th Century. I. Title.  
II. Series

BX2820 M33 1994

270.5—dc20 93-32162 CIP

ISBN 0 521 45246 5 (hardback)

ISBN 0 521 63873 9 (paperback)

Transferred to digital printing 2003

## CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	page viii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	ix
Introduction	I
1 The founder saints and the crusades	8
2 Pope Gregory IX and the early friars	20
3 Papal crusade propaganda and the friars	32
Gregory IX	32
Innocent IV	62
The later thirteenth century	79
4 The organization of the preaching of the cross in the provinces of the mendicant orders	96
5 Friars, crusade sermons, and preaching aids	111
6 The friars and the financing of the crusades	123
7 The friars and the redemption of crusade vows	135
Conclusion	161
Appendix 1 The crusade against the Drenther and the Establishment of the Dominican Inquisition in Germany	167
Appendix 2 A list of thirteenth century sermons and exempla for the recruitment of crusaders	170
<i>Bibliography</i>	175
<i>Index</i>	191

## INTRODUCTION

During the first half of the thirteenth century, the crusade was transformed into a most sophisticated institution. By developing such aspects as recruitment, finance, liturgy, and the legal rights and duties of crusaders the Roman Curia managed to make the crusade an immensely versatile, and a potentially effective, instrument of papal politics. As a devotional activity and an expression of aggressive religious power, the crusade had kept its original momentum throughout the twelfth century, despite the set-backs in the Holy Land in the 1180s. In fact, the crusading movement was more vigorous than ever during the early 1200s. It imposed its might against the main rival of the Roman Church within Christendom by conquering Constantinople, it now fully expanded its scope into warfare against heretics and enemies of the papacy, and it achieved one of its greatest successes by defeating the Spanish Muslims in the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212. The problems facing the crusading movement at the beginning of the thirteenth century were problems of growth and expansion. There was no lack of enthusiasm, nor was there an absence of opportunity and initiative, to transform crusading zeal into positive action. And yet, the flag-ship of the crusading movement, the *negotium Terrae Sanctae*, was in dire straits. The Third Crusade had failed dismally; few elements of the Fourth Crusade ever reached Palestine. Out of this period of recurring frustration with regard to crusading efforts in the East, concerns about the nature and practice of the *negotium crucis* were bound to arise.

The success or failure of the crusade was not considered ultimately to be in the hands of its participants. The Christian defeat at the battle of Hattin in 1187 was seen as God's punishment for the sins of the wider Christian community, in the same way as the victory of Las Navas de Tolosa was viewed as having been engineered by divine will. Similarly the spiritual benefits gained by the crusader did not depend on the outcome of a campaign. The

## *Preaching the crusades*

crusader was a pilgrim for the good of his own soul, and a disastrous crusade was still able to provide the individual participant with a plenary indulgence. Nevertheless, the victories of the Muslims over the Christian forces were bound to cause serious concern. If Christ, as it were, gave up his patrimony, the Holy Land, to the non-believers as a sign of disapproval of the ways of his own people, how great must be the guilt of the Christian community! The crusade was a serious issue, not only because it played a role in the territorial defence and expansion of Christendom, but also because it reflected the moral constitution of Christian society as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

The imagination and the political will of Pope Innocent III were responsible for most of the changes which the crusading movement underwent as it entered its second century.<sup>2</sup> Although he was under no illusion that reforming the movement could in any way influence God's final judgement of the crusade, Innocent III was convinced that Christians were obliged by virtue of their faith to form a society organized for the defence of its religion on all fronts. This meant, among other things, creating the best conditions humanly possible for the *negotium crucis*. Innocent institutionalized such features as the redemption and commutation of crusading vows, the right to partial indulgences for material help, money collection, taxation, and a whole range of liturgical practices for the crusade. His aim was to control the crusade centrally so as to make it more effective. Since several crusades were often operating at the same time, there had to be a central agency to distribute men and money according to the most urgent needs. These resources were not only limited, but dispersed, due to the international character of the *negotium crucis*. The Roman Curia was the natural agency to take over the coordination. Only the Roman pontiff, as the head and governor of the church and as the spiritual leader of Christian society, could call for a crusade, only he could issue the indulgences and privileges pertaining to the *negotium crucis*;<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a general survey of crusading activities at the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries, see J.S.C. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades. A Short History* (London 1987), 109-45.

<sup>2</sup> H. Roscher, *Papst Innocenz III. und die Kreuzzüge* (Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 21; Göttingen 1969), *passim*, esp. 260-91; J.A. Brundage, *Canon Law and the Crusader* (Madison 1969), *passim*, esp. 69-70, 162-3, 185-6; Riley-Smith, *Crusades*, 119-20.

<sup>3</sup> F.H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge studies in medieval life and thought (third series), 8; Cambridge 1975), 112-26, 195-212, *passim*.

## Introduction

besides, the Roman Curia was the only organization that spanned the whole of Europe. Innocent III also wanted to streamline crusading armies by reducing non-combatant elements to the bare minimum, to provide sufficient finance, and to allow crusaders to be employed wherever it was considered most necessary at any one period. At the same time the home front was to provide the moral back-up for the crusade by prayers, processions, and other intercessory practices. The bulk of these measures were incorporated into the statutes of the Fourth Lateran Council, and it was from there that all later thirteenth-century crusade bulls took their inspiration.<sup>4</sup> The re-shaping of the crusading movement in the early thirteenth century thus became part of a much wider reform programme, which embraced most areas of Christian society.<sup>5</sup>

Innocent III died shortly after the Fourth Lateran Council and was thus unable to see his high-flown, but as yet unfinished, plans through to working practice. His successor, Honorius III, was an able administrator and an unpretentious but faithful follower of the politics of his predecessor. He tried to translate Innocent's ideas regarding the crusade into reality as best as he could.<sup>6</sup> But the issue was not only a question of the right intention and political will. What was needed to implement these changes was an organizational structure to carry the message to the people of Europe. Following tradition, Honorius used the existing channels of crusading propaganda, the local church hierarchy, and papal legates. While the diocesan hierarchy theoretically ensured the widest possible distribution of crusading propaganda, the local clergy was not reliable. Bound by local political and social ties, the bishops and their subordinates were not always willing to comply with orders coming from Rome, which were often viewed as unwelcome outside interference in local matters. There was also no uniform level of education among diocesan clerics. Training in canon law and proficiency in preaching were accidental rather than essential to appointments within the local church, and the availability of properly trained clerics in any one diocese depended to a great extent on the outlook of the particular bishop.<sup>7</sup> For these reasons, the Curia always relied on a number of individuals to preach the

<sup>4</sup> *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, ed. J. Alberigo et al. (Basel 1962), 227–71, esp. 267–71.

<sup>5</sup> C. Morris, *The Papal Monarchy. The Western Church from 1050–1250* (Oxford 1989), 417–51. <sup>6</sup> Roscher, *Innocenz III.*, 292–6.

<sup>7</sup> Morris, *Papal Monarchy*, 205–36, 527–41.

## *Preaching the crusades*

cross alongside the diocesan clergy. These were specially selected clerics, usually closely connected with the Curia by previous service as papal agents and chosen for their abilities with regard to the specific task of their mission.<sup>8</sup> Individual propagandists like Bernard of Clairvaux, Fulk of Neuilly, and Oliver of Cologne all had a great impact on the crusading movement and became legendary figures. Their success made it clear that crusading propaganda depended as much on the quality of the preachers as on their overall number. But the areas of operation of individual propagandists were limited and their impact was therefore confined. One way of getting round some of these problems was the use of members of exempt religious orders, especially the Cistercians, whose interest in the *negotium crucis* went back to the days of Bernard of Clairvaux. Their order had the advantage of being organized in a hierarchical structure which was independent of the diocesan administration. But despite the fact that learning and preaching were values fostered by the Cistercians, their readiness to apply these abilities outside the abbey was often limited, because in essence the Cistercians regarded themselves as a monastic and contemplative order.<sup>9</sup>

The solution to ensuring effective crusading propaganda was finally provided by Honorius III's successor, Gregory IX, who employed the mendicant friars: first, from 1230, the Dominicans for the Baltic crusade, then both the Franciscans and the Dominicans for the Holy Land crusade in the mid 1230s. The Franciscans and the Dominicans were members of the first religious orders whose main aim was preaching and they were systematically trained as preachers.<sup>10</sup> The mendicant orders were also organized in a strict hierarchy with provinces throughout Europe under a master- or minister-general and governed by an annual general

<sup>8</sup> P.B. Pixton, 'Die Anwerbung des Heeres Christi: Prediger des Fünften Kreuzzuges in Deutschland', *Deutsches Archiv für die Erforschung des Mittelalters*, xxxiv (1978), 166–91, here 167–72; H. Hoogeweg, 'Die Kreuzpredigt des Jahres 1224 in Deutschland mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Erzdiözese Köln', *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, iv (1890), 54–74; J.M. Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade, 1213–1221* (Philadelphia 1986), 67–87.

<sup>9</sup> L. Schmugge, 'Zisterzienser, Kreuzzug und Heidenkrieg', *Die Zisterzienser. Ordensleben zwischen Ideal und Wirklichkeit*, ed. K. Elm et al. (Schriften des Rheinischen Museumsamtes 10; Cologne 1980), 57–68; E. Siberry, *Criticism of Crusading 1095–1274* (Oxford 1985), 191, n. 12.

<sup>10</sup> D. Berg, *Armut und Wissenschaft. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Studienwesens der Bettelorden im 13. Jahrhundert* (Bochumer Historische Studien 15; Düsseldorf 1977); J.-P. Renard, *La formation et la désignation des Prédicateurs au début de l'ordre des Prêcheurs 1215–1237* (Freiburg i.Ue. 1977).

## Introduction

chapter. Strict obedience bound the local divisions within the hierarchical structure. Compared with the Cistercians, mobility within the mendicant orders was considerable, since the principle of the *stabilitas loci* of the old-type religious orders was not part of their rules. This theoretically made the friars an ideal instrument for the controlled spread of propaganda over vast geographical areas. The mendicant friars' role as crusade propagandists has never been fully acknowledged. Until recently historians of the mendicant orders or the crusades at best described this role as marginal.<sup>11</sup> This was mainly due to a lack of interest in the issue, rather than an absence of relevant sources. Indeed, in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries sporadic articles about individual friars and the publication of specific sources had pointed at the central role the mendicants played as crusade preachers.<sup>12</sup> But thereafter, with the exception of the studies by William Lunt, Valmar Cramer, and Jose Goñi-Gaztambide, which mention the friars' preaching of the cross *en passant*, the topic was dead for several decades.<sup>13</sup> Interest in the mendicant friars as preachers of the cross was not revived until the mid 1970s, with an article on Gilbert of Tournai by Franco Cardini.<sup>14</sup> Shortly thereafter, John Freed's study of the German friars in the thirteenth century for the first time gave an idea of the mendicants' central role as propagandists for the Baltic crusade and the anti-heretical and anti-Hohenstaufen crusades in Germany.<sup>15</sup> Around the same time, Richard Spence, in

<sup>11</sup> E.g., J.H.R. Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order from its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford 1968), 300–2. Moorman misdated the first use of Franciscan friars as crusade preachers by following Wadding who ascribed the bull *Rahel suum videns* to 1227 rather than its actual date 1234. See below, 35.

<sup>12</sup> A. Rother, 'Johannes Teutonicus (von Wildeshausen). Vierter General des Dominikanerordens', *Römische Quartalschrift für Christliche Alterthumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte*, ix (1895), 139–70; F.M. Delorme, 'Bulle d'Innocent IV pour la croisade (6 février 1245)', *AFH*, vi (1913), 386–9; Delorme, 'Bulle d'Innocent IV en faveur de l'empire latin de Constantinople', *AFH*, viii (1915), 307–10; Delorme, 'De praedicatione cruciatae saec. XIII per fratres minores', *AFH*, ix (1916), 99–117; Delorme, 'Trois bulles à frère Hugues de Turenne', *AFH*, xviii (1925), 291–5; A. Van den Wyngaert, 'Frère Guillaume de Cordelle O.F.M.', *La France Franciscaine*, iv (1921), 52–71.

<sup>13</sup> W.E. Lunt, *Financial Relations of the Papacy with England to 1321* (Studies in Anglo-Papal Relations during the Middle Ages 1; Cambridge, Mass. 1939); V. Cramer, *Albert der Grosse als päpstlicher Kreuzzugs-Legat für Deutschland 1263/64 und die Kreuzzugsbestrebungen Urbans IV* (Palästina-Hefte des Deutschen Vereins vom Heiligen Lande 7, 8; Cologne 1933); J. Goñi-Gaztambide, *Historia de la Bula de la Cruzada en España* (Victoriensia 4; Vitoria 1958).

<sup>14</sup> F. Cardini, 'Gilberto di Tournai. Un Francescano Predicatore della Crociata', *Studi Francescani*, lxxii (1975), 31–48.

<sup>15</sup> J.B. Freed, *The Friars and German Society in the Thirteenth Century* (The Medieval Academy of America Publications 86; Cambridge, Mass. 1977), 65–9, 91–3, 138–61, *passim*.

## *Preaching the crusades*

an unpublished Ph.D. thesis, described that same role for the crusades between 1227 and 1241 in general.<sup>16</sup> Since then, historians of the crusades have taken the friars' preaching of the cross more seriously.<sup>17</sup> Norman Housley systematically assessed the mendicants' importance as agents within the papal propaganda machinery for the Italian crusades.<sup>18</sup> Simon Lloyd and Christopher Tyerman made it clear that the mendicants were part of the regular crusade preaching force in England in the thirteenth century,<sup>19</sup> while Barrie Cook, in an unpublished Ph.D. thesis, described the importance of mendicant crusade preachers for the transmission of knowledge about the Holy Land through Europe between 1271 and 1314.<sup>20</sup> Many other studies on various aspects of the crusades now mention their role as crusade propagandists, without, however, dwelling on it at any length.<sup>21</sup>

This study intends to look at mendicant crusade preaching in its own right. It investigates the preaching of the cross by members of the two major orders of mendicant friars, the Dominicans and the Franciscans, throughout Europe between the pontificates of Gregory IX and Nicholas IV. Its overall aim is to chronicle and analyse this activity and to assess its importance for the crusading movement. The scope of the study in terms of subject matter is

<sup>16</sup> R.T. Spence, 'Pope Gregory IX and the Crusade' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis; Syracuse University 1978).

<sup>17</sup> C. Schmitt, 'Der Anteil der Franziskaner an den Kreuzzügen (13.-15.Jh.)', *800 Jahre Franz von Assisi. Franziskanische Kunst und Kultur des Mittelalters. Niederösterreichische Landesausstellung Krems-Stein*, ed. Amt der Niederösterreichischen Regierung (Kulturabteilung) (Katalog des Niederösterreichischen Landesmuseums. Neue Folge 122; Vienna 1982), 213-20.

<sup>18</sup> N. Housley, *The Italian Crusades. The Papal-Angevin Alliance and the Crusades against Christian Lay Powers 1254-1343* (Oxford 1982), 111-44 *passim*.

<sup>19</sup> S.D. Lloyd, *English Society and the Crusade 1216-1307* (Oxford 1988), 8-41 *passim*; C. Tyerman, *England and the Crusades 1095-1588* (Chicago and London 1988), 152-86 *passim*.

<sup>20</sup> B.J. Cook, 'The Transmission of Knowledge about the Holy Land through Europe 1271-1314', 2 vols. (unpublished Ph.D. thesis; Manchester University 1985).

<sup>21</sup> M. Purcell, *Papal Crusading Policy. The Chief Instruments of Papal Crusading Policy and Crusade to the Holy Land from the Loss of Jerusalem to the Fall of Acre 1244-1291* (Leiden 1975); E. Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades, The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier 1100-1525* (London and Basingstoke 1980); N. Housley, 'Politics and Heresy in Italy: Antihetical Crusades, Orders and Confraternities, 1200-1500', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, liii (1982), 193-208; Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades 1305-1378* (Oxford 1986); E. Siberry, 'Missionaries and Crusaders, 1095-1274: Opponents or Allies', *Studies in Church History*, xx (1983), 103-10; Sibery, *Criticism*; B.Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission. European Approaches toward the Muslims* (Princeton 1984); A. Macquarrie, *Scotland and the Crusades 1095-1560* (Edinburgh 1985); Riley-Smith, *Crusades*; P.J. Cole, *The Preaching of the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1095-1270* (Medieval Academy Books 98; Cambridge, Mass. 1991).

## Introduction

determined by the available source material. Since most information for the friars' preaching of the cross comes from papal correspondence, the major part of the present work is concerned with the way in which the papacy used the mendicant friars as part of the propaganda machinery for the crusades. Papal letters have survived in most European archives. Their number is, of course, subject to chance preservation, and knowledge of them is limited by the extent and quality of archival material published. The papal registers, that is the record of letters leaving the Curia, form a more comprehensive collection, although these, likewise, have not survived in their entirety. Nor do the registers contain all papal letters. In fact, on average, only one in five was registered. There was also no consistency as to whether letters were registered before or after correction, from the final version or the draft copy. So far scholars have failed to understand how exactly, and to what end, the registers were kept.<sup>22</sup> Other evidence stems from narrative sources, mainly chronicles and annals. Their authors, however, usually reported only isolated snippets of information. Crusading propaganda as such was not the stuff of chronicles or of other narrative accounts of the period. It is, therefore, worth remembering that, like all medieval records, our sources can only tell part of the story. Taken together, however, the registers, the surviving copies of papal letters, and the information gathered from narrative sources probably project a fairly representative and more or less accurate overall picture of the chronology, the geography, and the nature of the mendicants' involvement in the propaganda for the *negotium crucis*.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> O. Hageneder, 'Die päpstlichen Register des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts.', *Annali della Scuola speciale per archivisti e bibliotecari dell'Università di Roma*, xii (1972), 45-76; R.C. Van Caenegem, *Guide to the Sources of Medieval History* (Europe in the Middle Ages Selected Studies 2; Amsterdam, New York, Oxford 1978), 81, 212-17.

<sup>23</sup> Papal letters have in many cases been edited in several collections of sources. Reference is made to the most accurate and/or most accessible editions only. Where applicable, the entries in the papal registers are added.