

Communal Italy and Crusading, between Participation and Regional Warfare Suppression, in the Age of Frederick II

Abstract

There is surprisingly scarce scholarly literature on the interaction between Communal Italy, taken as a whole, and the crusades, and the impact that such interaction had on the communes. This study investigates the participation of the cities in the Po Valley in the crusades to the Holy Land and their connections with instances of regional warfare suppression at the time of Emperor Frederick II. It argues that, despite inconsistent levels of participation, the crusades acquired a new, pervasive and growing presence in the political life and culture of Communal Italy in that period. One of the manifestations of that presence was the key role that the crusades played in four of the most important regional truces of the first half of the thirteenth century. Those episodes could be associated with the Lombard League or forms of regional collective cooperation that mimicked some of its functions. While the crusades focused on the Holy Land and acted as a catalyst to suppress warfare and promote cooperation in the first quarter of the century, this element was gradually lost in the second quarter. After Frederick II's imperial coronation, participation in crusades to the Middle East declined dramatically, crusading was increasingly weaponised within the region as a tool for factional strife, and Communal Italy itself ultimately became a new crusading theatre.

Both Communal Italy and the crusades came of age and reached maturity between the late twelfth century and the first half of the thirteenth.¹ The Peace of Constance of 1183

1 On the Third Crusade: Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades. A History*, London 2014, p. 163. Cf. also Christopher Tyerman, *The World of the Crusades. An Illustrated History*, New Haven-London 2019, pp. 185–233. On the Peace of Constance: Daniel Waley/Trevor Dean, *The Italian City Republics*, Abingdon-New York 2022, p. 33; cf. also Gianluca Raccagni, *When the Emperor submitted to his Rebellious Subjects. A Neglected and Innovative Legal Account of the Peace of Constance*, in: *The English Historical Review* 131 (2016), pp. 519–539.

and the fall of Jerusalem of 1187 played catalytic roles in those developments and were chronologically very close, which is the reason why they are the starting points of this study. Its aim is to investigate how Communal Italy and the crusades interacted with one another by focusing on the correlated issues of participation to crusades and their use for regional warfare suppression within Communal Italy. The endpoint will be the death of Emperor Frederick II in 1250, who was born in 1194, in the wake of the two above-mentioned events, and whose reign, as argued here, was a watershed for the themes of this study. The geographical remit is the interior of the Po Valley, the whole of which medieval sources called Lombardy, while that term only refers to a portion of it now. This study will follow that medieval usage. Lombardy was a core segment of Communal Italy as well as a recognizable geopolitical area within it. Indeed, it featured instances of regional collegial activity that, as we shall see, had connections with crusading.

The decision to focus on the interior of Communal Italy also derives from notable gaps in the existing scholarly literature. There is an abundance of studies on the Italian maritime republics (such as Venice, Pisa, and Genoa) and the crusades, to the extent that, within Crusader Studies, Communal Italy essentially identifies with them alone.² That is justified by the crucial role that the maritime republics played in the crusades, but they have monopolised scholarly attention to the detriment of the rest of Communal Italy. Indeed, there is surprisingly little secondary literature on the interaction between the Lombard interior and the crusades, and no relevant assessment that covers the whole area, let alone the whole of Communal Italy, across multiple crusades.³ It can be argued, however, that the cities of the interior were more representative of Communal Italy as a whole than their maritime brethren were. The city communes of the interior were more numerous by an order of more than ten to one, and they had local or at best regional preoccupations and spheres of activity when compared to the Mediterranean-wide ones of the leading maritime cities. The crusades were some of the rare occasions in which chronicles produced in the Lombard interior reported non-local or non-regional matters. Conversely, maritime cities such as Venice and Genoa usually kept some distance from the above-mentioned regional collegial activities. Finally, Communal Italy has been considered only in passing in examinations of the impact of crusading on peace-making within Western Europe, and only for conflicts with emperors rather than for inter-city

2 Cf., for example, the section on the Italian city republics in Peter Lock, *The Routledge Companion to the Crusades*, Abingdon-New York 2006 (Routledge Companions to History), pp. 382–390.

3 For medieval Italy in general: Antonio Musarra (Ed.), *Gli italiani e la Terrasanta*, Firenze 2014 (mediEVI 7).

relations.⁴ Likewise, the literature on inter-city relations within Communal Italy has generally overlooked crusading.⁵

This study is divided into two sections. The first one tracks Lombard participation in the crusades to the Holy Land between the Peace of Constance and the death of Frederick II. The second section will discuss how that participation was connected to instances of regional warfare suppression. The conclusions will bring the two strands together. Communal Italy engaged with other crusading theatres in this period too, such as Frankish Greece, for example, and it became a crusading theatre itself in 1240. Yet the former will not be discussed here because it does not play a key role in the present analysis, while I have examined the latter in other publications.⁶

1 Participation

As demonstrated below, crusading played a pervasive role in the “*Negotium Lombardie*”, which is how medieval sources called the dispute between Frederick II and the so-called second Lombard League that raged from 1226 to 1250. On the contrary, crusading did not feature in the similar conflict that Frederick I Barbarossa fought with the so-called first Lombard League between 1167 and 1183.⁷ The latter took place during the forty-year hiatus between the Second Crusade and the Third Crusade, when only relatively minor expeditions to the Holy Land took place.⁸ Numbering crusades is a modern and

4 For crusading and peace-making: Björn Weiler, *The Negotium Terrae Sanctae in the Political Discourse of Latin Christendom, 1215–1311*, in: *The International History Review* 25 (2003), pp. 1–36.

5 Massimo Vallerani, *I rapporti intercittadini nella regione lombarda tra XII e XIII secolo*, in: Gabriella Rossetti (Ed.), *Legislazione e prassi istituzionale nell’Europa medievale*, Naples 2001 (*Europa mediterranea. Quaderni* 15), pp. 221–291.

6 Gianluca Raccagni, *The Crusade against Frederick II. A Neglected Piece of Evidence*, in: *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 67 (2016), pp. 721–740, here pp. 723–725. Cf. also id., *Crusades within Northern Italy in the Thirteenth Century*, in: id./Mike Carr/Nikolaos G. Chrissis (Eds.), *Crusading Against Christians in the Middle Ages*, Cham 2024, pp. 81–113.

7 Gianluca Raccagni, *The Lombard League, 1167–1225*, Oxford 2010, pp. 124–146.

8 Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *Alexander III and the Crusades*, in: Anne J. Duggan/Peter D. Clarke (Eds.), *Pope Alexander III (1159–81). The Art of Survival*, Farnham 2012 (*Church, Faith and Culture in the Medieval West*), pp. 341–363.

somewhat arbitrary convention, but the period after the fiasco of the Second Crusade in 1149 was indeed one of relatively low crusading intensity.⁹

The shock caused by Saladin's conquest of Jerusalem in 1187 abruptly revived enthusiasm for crusading, which persisted for several decades.¹⁰ Many Lombards took the cross in the wake of that event, but, despite the fact that the conflict between Barbarossa and the League had ended, they did not travel to the Holy Land with the emperor's large expedition by land.¹¹ Lombard participants rather took the sea route and were among the first to arrive in the Holy Land from the West. There were several scattered departures from Northern Italy, and Archbishop Gerard of Ravenna, who was papal legate and had preached the crusade in Northern Italy, led the earliest substantial one, arriving in the Holy Land in 1189.¹² Another large group of more than five hundred knights and lay high echelons of Lombard society arrived later that year.¹³ The maritime republics generally served as conduits, but at Cremona, which is at the centre of the Po Valley but connected to the Adriatic Sea through the River Po, a vessel was built specifically for the crusade and reached the Holy Land full of people and materials.¹⁴

We have fragmentary evidence regarding Lombard participation in the Third Crusade, which does not allow ascertaining whether local communal governments were involved in that, but Cremonese sources suggest that it could take the form of civic collective endeavours. Referring to the above-mentioned Cremonese vessel, the contemporary Bishop Sicard of Cremona called it "buza Cremone" (the *buza* was a typology of cargo vessel) and wrote that "we made it to be manufactured" for the crusade.¹⁵ While he, as bishop, was probably involved in that, it is more likely that Sicard meant that the

9 Christopher Tyerman, Were there any Crusades in the Twelfth Century?, in: *The English Historical Review* 110 (1993), pp. 553–577; Giles Constable, *Crusaders and Crusading in the Twelfth Century*, Farnham 2008.

10 Tyerman, *World* (see note 1), pp. 185–233.

11 Franco Cardini, *Gli italiani e la crociata di Federico*, in: *BISI* 96 (1990), pp. 261–281.

12 *Cronica Fratris Salimbene de Adam*, ed. by Giuseppe Scalia, Turnhout 1998 (*Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis* 125–125A), pp. 12–13.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

14 *Sicardi Episcopi Cremonensis Cronica*, ed. by Oswald Holder-Egger, Hannover 1903 (*MGH SS* 31), pp. 22–181, here p. 169: "Anno vero Domini MCLXXXVIII buzam Cremone, quam fecimus fabricari, ultra mare pro terre subventionem personis et rebus misimus honoratam".

15 *Ibid.*

vessel belonged to the Cremonese community as a whole. Other local sources reporting that episode associated the vessel with the city but overlooked the bishop.¹⁶

Indeed, Sicard did not join the Third Crusade, but other bishops did, such as those of Verona and Faenza, who probably led their fellow citizens. There was certainly a Veronese military contingent that travelled with its bishop, but no reliable details are available about it.¹⁷ According to a local contemporary chronicle, the bishop of Faenza “hastened to recover the Holy Land with two hundred citizens of Faenza” – a large but not unreasonable number of crusaders for a relatively small town to send beyond the sea – and all the members of that expedition died during it.¹⁸ Faenza belonged to the archdiocese of Ravenna, whose archbishop, Gerard, also died during the crusade, in 1190, after acting as one of the leaders of its early phase.¹⁹

The “Chronicon Faventinum” recorded with surprising care local participation in military events beyond the region surrounding Faenza, and they generally featured far less participants than the Third Crusade despite taking place in locations that were much closer than the Holy Land. For example, ten knights joined Otto of Brunswick’s imperial coronation journey to Rome in 1209, and eight knights followed him when he campaigned in southern Italy in 1210.²⁰ As discussed below, there were Faentines at the Fifth Crusade, but we do not have an overall number for that. The participation of twenty-seven Faentine knights to the War of the Keys in 1229, which also took place in Southern Italy, is the closest example to that of the Third Crusade, when the attendants of those knights are considered too.²¹ Yet again, as we shall see, those knights were probably originally intended for the Sixth Crusade.

The Third Crusade was unfinished business because it partly restored the Kingdom of Jerusalem but did not recover the Holy City. That led to several expeditions in the

16 *Annales Cremonenses*, ed. by Oswald Holder-Egger, Hannover 1903 (MGH SS 31), pp. 1–21, here p. 7; *Cronica Fratris Salimbene* (see note 12), p. 8.

17 Lorenzo Tacchella, *Il cardinale Adelardo vescovo di Verona e la terza crociata*, in: *Atti e Memorie dell’Accademia di Agricoltura, Scienze e Lettere di Verona 166* (1991), pp. 229–238.

18 *Chronicon Faventinum*, ed. by Gioacchino Rossini, Bologna 1936–1939 (RIS² 28,1), p. 108: “Episcopus Faventinus cum CC civibus Favencie ad terram Sanctissimam perrexit recuperandam”.

19 John D. Hosler, *The Siege of Acre, 1189–1191. Saladin, Richard the Lionheart, and the Battle that Decided the Third Crusade*, New Haven 2018, pp. 19–29.

20 *Chronicon Faventinum* (see note 18), pp. 110, 124.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 156, 158. For the Third Crusade the “Chronicon Faventinum” reported the number of citizens (*cives*) who joined it, which seemingly included knights, but for the other entries it reported only numbers of knights (*milites*), and knights usually travelled with attendants.

subsequent decades, with at least one major expedition per decade until the middle of the thirteenth century.²² Yet the level of Lombard participation in the Third Crusade remained unmatched until the Fifth Crusade, which took place nearly thirty years later.

For example, in 1197 Emperor Henry VI organised a large expedition to the Holy Land now generally known as The German Crusade.²³ He had a relatively strong presence and following in Lombardy.²⁴ Yet the region does not seem to have provided any noticeable contribution to Henry's crusade. Lombard chronicles generally ignored it, Giovanni Codagnello from Piacenza being an exception to that. His account justifies the modern name of that expedition because it states that the emperor gathered a vast army in Germany, but it does not report any Lombard involvement in it, despite the fact that the crusading host crossed the region on its way to Southern Italy.²⁵

Most of the participants in the Fourth Crusade, which was launched in 1198, also crossed Lombardy, this time to gather in Venice in 1202. Despite a rather effective general regional truce examined below, this crusade does not seem to have been as popular in urban centres as the Third Crusade had been. Evidence of Lombard participation is largely confined to the Marquis of Montferrat and other territorial lords from the eastern part of the region (such as the Biandrate, Pallavicino, and Da Canossa families), plus the Venetians.²⁶ Several Lombard city chronicles mentioned the conquest of Constantinople, but they did not report any fellow citizen being involved in that.²⁷ An exception to that is the work by Salimbene de Adam, who attested how his father Guido, a citizen of Parma, joined the crusade alongside other Lombards.²⁸ The latter might refer to the above-mentioned territorial lords (and the Pallavicino were geographically very close to

22 Norman Housley, *The Thirteenth-Century Crusades in the Mediterranean*, in: David Abulafia (Ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 5: c. 1198 – c. 1300, Cambridge 1999, pp. 569–589.

23 Graham Loud, *The German Crusade of 1197–1198*, in: *Crusades 13* (2014), pp. 143–172; Claudia Naumann, *Der Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI.*, Frankfurt a. M. 1994.

24 Raccagni, *Lombard League* (see note 7), pp. 124–146.

25 Iohannis Codagnelli *Annales Placentini*, ed. by Oswald Holder-Egger, Hannover 1901 (MGH SS rer. Germ. 23), p. 22.

26 Jean Longnon, *Les compagnons de Villehardouin. Recherches sur les croisés de la quatrième croisade*, Geneva 1978 (*École Pratique des Hautes Études, Sciences Historiques et Philologiques* 5; *Hautes Études Médiévales et Modernes* 30), pp. 227–241.

27 Cf., for example, Iohannis Codagnelli *Annales Placentini* (see note 25), p. 30; Sicardi *Episcopi Cremonensis Cronica* (see note 14), p. 178; *Annales Cremonenses* (see note 16), p. 11; *Chronicon Faventinum* (see note 18), p. 101.

28 *Cronica Fratris Salimbene* (see note 12), p. 37.

Parma), but we also know that Gerardo Rangoni, who later became podestà of Modena, received a fief in the Latin Empire of Constantinople in recognition of his participation in its conquest.²⁹ No positive connections have been established between the mosaics on the conquest of Constantinople laid down in Ravenna in 1213 – its earliest surviving visual representation – and local participation in that event. They were probably rather connected to its broader memory and its uses for crusading purposes in the second decade of the thirteenth century.³⁰

Sicard of Cremona's chronicle can be used for a comparison between the popularity of the Third Crusade and that of the Fourth Crusade in Lombardy. He joined the Fourth Crusade but seemingly as a papal legate rather than as an urban leader, as it had been the case with the bishops of Verona and Faenza during the Third Crusade.³¹ Indeed, contrary to the Third Crusade, for the fourth one, Sicard did not cite any contribution from his city, and only mentioned Venice and Montferrat among the Italian participants.³² Other Cremonese annals portrayed the conquest of Constantinople as a French and Venetian affair, but did not report any Cremonese involvement in that, even though they attested how, in its wake, many Cremonese assisted in consolidating the conquest (possibly prompted by their bishop) by emigrating there.³³

Fatigue caused by the recent large participation in the Third Crusade might have played a role in the lower popularity of the fourth one. That was probably especially the case in areas that had suffered horrendous losses during it, such as those reported for Faenza, for example. As for the Cremonese sources, the "Chronicon Faventinum" mentioned the fall of Constantinople but did not report any person from Faenza taking part in that.³⁴ We have evidence, instead, of Faentines joining the Fifth Crusade, including

29 Antonio Carile, *Alle origini dell'Impero d'Oriente. Analisi quantitativa dell'esercito crociato e ripartizione dei feudi*, in: *Nuova Rivista Storica* 56 (1972), pp. 285–314, here pp. 307–308.

30 Michael Angold, *A Papal Version of the Fourth Crusade. The Mosaics of San Giovanni Evangelista at Ravenna*, in: *Speculum* 94 (2019), pp. 1006–1032.

31 Edward Coleman, *Sicard of Cremona as Legate of Innocent III in Lombardy*, in: Andrea Sommerlechner (Ed.), *Innocenzo III. Urbs et Orbis. Atti del Congresso internazionale (Roma 9–15 settembre 1998)*, 2 vols., Roma 2003 (*Nuovi studi storici* 55), vol. 2, pp. 929–953.

32 *Sicardi Episcopi Cremonensis Cronica* (see note 14), p. 177.

33 *Annales Cremonenses* (see note 16), p. 11: "Quorum tempore Francieni et Venetiani ceperunt Constantinopolium. Et eodem anno ultra mille de hominibus Cremonensibus iverunt Constantinopolium causa retinendi terram".

34 *Chronicon Faventinum* (see note 18), p. 101.

their bishop, who died during the crusade as his predecessor had done during the Third Crusade.³⁵

Indeed, there was an abundant Lombard participation at the time of the Fifth Crusade, which took place between 1217 and 1221 (even if its origins went back to 1213). James Powell's detailed analysis attests numerous northern Italians who took the cross from urban centres. By far the largest group was from Bologna (which might be due to the chance survival of evidence), but others also came from Faenza, Modena, Reggio Emilia, Ravenna, Ferrara, Cremona, Cesena, Padua, Parma, and Piacenza.³⁶ Several northern Italian bishops also travelled to Egypt, such as those of Concordia, Brescia, Trento, Mantua, Reggio Emilia, Faenza, Bologna, and the Archbishop of Milan.³⁷ Those Lombard participants generally arrived in 1219 or 1220. The legate mission of Ugolinus of Ostia of 1216–1219 (the future Pope Gregory IX), who preached the crusade in Lombardy and, as discussed below, managed to arrange a general truce there, greatly contributed to the popularity of the campaign.³⁸ Ugolinus returned to Lombardy in 1221, when many cities pledged troops in May and June for what would appear to be a new Lombard wave of participants to the Fifth Crusade, which, however, failed at the end of that summer.³⁹

For the Fifth Crusade, we finally have evidence regarding the involvement and role of communal governments in a crusade, which seems to have been limited to the provision of financial support. For example, at the time of the second wave organised by Ugolinus, we have pledges by representatives of communal governments for around one hundred knights, with contributions from individual cities that seemingly varied according to their size and means. The Commune of Milan, for example, which was the largest city in the region, pledged to cover all expenses for twenty-five 'well prepared' knights for one year.⁴⁰ The other communes pledged less than half of that, and some of them just a handful of

35 James M. Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade, 1213–1221*, Philadelphia 1986 (The Middle Ages), pp. 213, 241.

36 *Ibid.*, pp. 209–258.

37 Luigi Russo, 'Episcopato italiano e „quinta crociata“. Il caso di Enrico di Mantova', in: Arturo Calzona/Glauco Maria Cantarella, *Dalla res publica al comune. Uomini, istituzioni, pietre dal XII al XIII secolo*, Verona 2016 (Bonae artes 3), pp. 129–142.

38 Christine Thouzellier, 'La légation en Lombardie du cardinal Hugolin (1221). Un épisode de la cinquième croisade', in: *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 45 (1950), pp. 508–542.

39 Guido Levi, *Registri dei Cardinali Ugolino d'Ostia e Ottaviano degli Ubaldini*, Roma 1890 (FIS 8), pp. 19–24.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

knights: Brescia, Padua, Treviso, Ferrara, and Bologna pledged ten knights each; Vercelli six; Reggio Emilia and Modena five; Lodi four; Novara three.⁴¹ The Commune of Verona offered financial subsidies to its crusaders, instead, in the form of one hundred and sixty *libras veronensium* for knights, and twenty for foot soldiers.⁴² The Commune of Bologna had done the same in 1214, whose record indicated Venice as the most likely point of departure for the Holy Land.⁴³ In other cases, communal governments focused on covering travel expenses of what would appear to be spontaneous associations of locals who had taken the cross.⁴⁴ We do not know how those knights were selected or organised and there is no reference to communes' officials leading or accompanying them, as, for example, was the case for a maritime city like Genoa at the time of the Third Crusade.⁴⁵

The Fifth Crusade was a failure and bled into the Sixth one. Frederick II led it and finally launched it in 1228 after troubled preparations (he had originally taken the cross in 1215).⁴⁶ By then, however, the "Negotium Lombardie" had started in 1226, which considerably influenced, but also complicated any Lombard engagement with the crusades.⁴⁷ For example, Honorius III's arbitration in the first stage of the "Negotium Lombardie" in 1227 committed the Lombard League to provide four hundred knights for Frederick's forthcoming crusade.⁴⁸ That was roughly equivalent to one of the three above-mentioned Lombard waves at the time of the Third Crusade. The contribution from the numerous Lombard cities that supported the emperor should probably be added to that, but this study has not found any specific evidence for it. In any case, in the end, the contribution by the Lombard League to Frederick's crusade was minimal, if it materialised at all, as remarked by the annals of the pro-imperial city of Cremona.⁴⁹ First, the Lombard League

41 Ibid., pp. 20–24.

42 Ibid., p. 21.

43 Ludovico Savioli, *Annali Bolognesi*, Bassano 1784, vol. 2, pp. 355–356.

44 *Chronicon Mutinense Iohannis de Bazano*, ed. by Tommaso Casini, Bologna 1917 (RIS² 15,4), p. 13.

45 At the time of the Third Crusade the first Genoese fleet was led by Guido Spinola, who was an acting consul: Merav Mack, *A Genoese Perspective of the Third Crusade*, in: *Crusades 10* (2011), pp. 45–32, here p. 49.

46 Wolfgang Stürner, *Der Kreuzzug Kaiser Friedrichs II*, in: Karl-Heinz Ruesch (Ed.), *Stauferzeit – Zeit der Kreuzzüge*, Göttingen 2011 (*Schriften zur staufischen Geschichte und Kunst* 29), pp. 144–157.

47 Giovanni Chiodi, *Istituzioni e attività della seconda Lega Lombarda (1226–1235)*, in: *Studi di storia del diritto*, Milan 1996, pp. 215–248.

48 *MGH Epp. saec. XIII*, vol. 1, ed. by Carl Rodenberg, Berlin 1883, nos. 327–332, pp. 246–251.

49 *Annales Cremonenses* (see note 16), p. 15: "quod minime obserbaverunt".

delayed as much as possible its ratification of the papal arbitration⁵⁰. Then, it took action together with the Papacy against Frederick II while he was in the Holy Land.

Indeed, during the Sixth Crusade, the Lombard League provided considerable troops for a papal invasion of Southern Italy (which at that time was the core of Frederick's dominions) now known as the War of the Keys. The latter was essentially a quasi-crusade, which included participants and the use of tithes from across Europe, and even the offer of plenary indulgences, which Pope Gregory IX made when the invasion started to falter.⁵¹ Yet the pope did not use the symbolism of the cross on that occasion, and he did not openly equate the War of the Keys to the liberation of the Holy Land, as was usually the case with full internal crusades. It is possible that the League used for the War of the Keys the resources originally meant for the Sixth Crusade because the amount of troops provided for the former is broadly comparable to what had been pledged for the latter, that is, five hundred knights.⁵² A papal letter included in the "Dictamina Rhetorica" of the Bolognese Guido Faba suggests that the overall contribution by the League was negotiated between Pope Gregory IX, the rectors of the League, and its members, while, according to Giovanni Codagnello of Piacenza, representatives of the League advised the Pope in Rome in the lead up to the invasion.⁵³

After some initial success, the papal invasion of Southern Italy crumbled when Frederick returned from the Holy Land in the summer of 1229, and pope and emperor reached a settlement known as Peace of San Germano in 1230. Militarily, the War of the Keys was a disaster for the Papacy, but the Peace of San Germano merely restored the status quo ante.⁵⁴ At the same time, despite some tensions between the League and Gregory IX during the campaign, the War of the Keys sealed their alliance.⁵⁵ That was despite the fact that the pope continued to mediate the "Negotium Lombardie" in the following years until the start of his own conflict with the emperor, which became a crusade itself in 1240.

50 MGH Epp. saec. XIII (see note 48), no. 340, p. 258; no. 342, pp. 259–260; no. 345, p. 263; no. 344, p. 262; no. 249–254, pp. 265–269.

51 Graham Loud, 'The Papal Crusade' against Frederick II in 1228–30, in: Michel Balard (Ed.), *La Papauté et les croisades / The Papacy and the Crusades*, London 2011 (Crusades. Subsidia 3), pp. 91–103.

52 Raccagni, *Crusade* (see note 6), pp. 723–725.

53 Ibid.

54 MGH Const. 2, ed. by Ludwig Weiland, Hannover 1896, nos. 126–149, pp. 170–184.

55 Chiodi, *Istituzioni* (see note 47).

The last two major crusades to the Holy Land of Frederick's time, that is, the so-called Barons' Crusade of 1239–1241 and Louis IX's Seventh Crusade of 1248–1254, did not feature any significant contribution from the cities of the Lombard interior. Once again, the Sixth Crusade was considered unfinished business, and preparations were soon underway for a new major expedition.⁵⁶ As we shall see below, a new papal arbitration of the "Negotium Lombardie" from 1233 committed the League to provide five hundred knights for the new crusade, which, once again, did not materialise. In the end, the crusade mainly featured participants led by English and French magnates and by the King of Navarre.⁵⁷ They achieved territorial gains in the Holy Land, while another branch went to the aid of the Latin Empire of Constantinople.⁵⁸ Likewise, the so-called Seventh Crusade was mostly a French affair led by King Louis IX, which bypassed the Italian peninsula (albeit with the support of Genoese ships) and failed in a similar way as the Fifth Crusade had done in Egypt.⁵⁹

The lack of Lombard engagement with those two crusades was probably caused by the fact that, by the time the Barons' crusade went underway, the "Negotium Lombardie" had descended into an open, bitter, and chronic state of war, which largely continued until Frederick's death in 1250. Amidst the general conflict, insecurity, and countless episodes of relatively low-level warfare, there were several large military confrontations in Northern Italy during the preparation and delivery of the Barons' crusade, and then during those of the Seventh Crusade. They included the imperial victory at the Battle of Cortenuova of 1237, which crippled the Lombard League, followed by the imperial siege of Brescia in 1238, whose failure meant the survival of the Lombard opposition against the emperor despite the fact that the besiegers included troops from across Frederick's lands as well as contingents from sympathetic European and Mediterranean rulers.⁶⁰ In 1240, there was the fall of the pro-imperial city of Ferrara, whose siege saw participants from across the region, which was followed by an extensive imperial counter-campaign that lasted for a couple of years.⁶¹ After the Council of Lyon of 1245, the momentous failure of the imperial siege of Parma of 1248 provoked continued clashes in Lombardy,

56 Michael Lower, *The Barons' Crusade. A Call to Arms and its Consequences*, Philadelphia 2005 (*The Middle Ages*), pp. 13–36.

57 *Ibid.*, pp. 37–57.

58 *Ibid.*, pp. 149–177.

59 *On the Seventh Crusade*: Carole Smith, *Crusading in the Age of Joinville*, London 2017.

60 Paolo Grillo, *Velut leena rugiens. Brescia assediata da Federico II*, in: *RM Rivista* 7 (2007), pp. 1–23 (URL: <https://serena.sharepress.it/index.php/rm/article/view/urn:nbn:it:unina-3150;10.12.2025>).

61 Raccagni, *Crusade* (see note 6), p. 731.

which led to another large defeat of the pro-imperial front at Fossalta in 1249.⁶² To those military events, widespread factional strife within the Lombard cities should be added. It reached unprecedented proportions in the late 1230s and in the 1240s, which produced a considerable displacement of people. Those exiles, however, continued fighting in that war (by taking advantage of regional networks of support) as opposed to moving outside Lombardy (by taking advantage of crusading elsewhere, for example).⁶³

In the 1230s Pope Gregory IX openly complained of how warfare in Northern Italy was hindering the crusades by hampering recruitment.⁶⁴ The situation then worsened when the Papacy joined the conflict against Frederick II after his excommunication in 1239. The Annals of Genoa described that as a “guerra maxima” between Empire and Papacy, of which Lombardy was the epicentre.⁶⁵ That not only hindered Italian recruitment for crusades but also exerted a gravitational pull on crusaders originally directed elsewhere. For example, the English participants in the Barons’ Crusade openly refused to be sent to shed Christian blood in Italy, while in 1240 and 1241 there is evidence of Polish crusaders bound to the Holy Land who were redirected to Italy.⁶⁶

Starting from 1240 Gregory IX could commute crusader vows to fight in Italy because Lombardy had become a crusading theatre in its own right, including the offer of indulgences that were equated to those to the Holy Land.⁶⁷ Innocent IV renewed it in 1246, and the conflict continued until Frederick’s death in 1250. I have argued elsewhere that scholarship has considerably underestimated the extent and impact of the crusade against Frederick II. For example, secondary literature generally overlooked the crusader status of the siege of Ferrara of 1240, but in the second half of the century, the Venetians paraded it as part of their crusading pedigree alongside episodes in the Holy Land and

62 Id., *Tra Lega Lombarda e pars Ecclesie. L’evoluzione della seconda Lega Lombarda e la leadership dei legati papali negli anni a cavallo della morte di Federico II (1139–1259)*, in: *Società e Storia* 136 (2012), pp. 249–275.

63 Giuliano Milani, *L’esclusione dal comune. Conflitti e bandi politici a Bologna e in altre città italiane tra XII e XIV secolo*, Roma 2003 (*Nuovi studi storici* 63), pp. 73–121.

64 Lower, *The Barons’ crusade* (see note 56), p. 41.

65 *Annali genovesi di Caffaro e de’ suoi continuatori*, vol. 3: *Dal MCCXXV al MCCL*, ed. by Cesare Imperiale di Sant’Angelo, Roma 1923 (*FIS* 13), p. 124.

66 Matthew Paris, *Chronica Maiora*, ed. by Felix Liebermann, Hannover 1888 (*MGH SS* 28), pp. 107–389, here p. 179; Mikolaj Gladysz, *The Forgotten Crusaders. Poland and the Crusader Movement in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, Leiden 2012 (*The Northern World* 56), p. 255.

67 Raccagni, *Crusade* (see note 6), pp. 728–730.

the Byzantine world.⁶⁸ Likewise, the crusade against Frederick galvanized the members of the Lombard League and other Lombard papal supporters, while very little or no evidence of criticism can be found against it in local chronicles.⁶⁹ It is very difficult to gauge, however, how many took the cross against Frederick and his supporters. That derives from limited surviving sources and epistemological issues related to those, but also from grey areas between what fully belonged to the crusade and what did not. While the whole conflict took an intense religious outlook between 1239 and 1250, which had a strong, momentous, and long-lasting impact upon factional strife and factional structures in the region, only some episodes and participants to that conflict seem to have taken full crusader status under a very selective papal approach.⁷⁰ The Lombard League, for example, essentially became a para-crusading regional association.⁷¹

2 Crusading and Warfare Suppression within Northern Italy

Sicard of Cremona recounted that Barbarossa left Italy in a state of peace both with him and with itself when the emperor travelled to Germany to prepare for the Third Crusade in 1188.⁷² The late 1180s were indeed a relatively peaceful period for Lombardy, when compared to the previous years or the following decade. The Peace of Venice of 1177 and the Peace of Constance of 1183 had ended Barbarossa's conflict with Pope Alexander III and the Lombard League respectively. Relations between the League and the Empire were also uncharacteristically good: for example, the chronicle of Faenza reported how the members of the League sent representatives to the marriage and coronation ceremony of Frederick's son, Henry, which took place at Milan (the former *bête noire* of the emperor) in 1186.⁷³ There was some warfare between the Lombard cities and tensions with the emperor, but those were endemic and do not seem to have been especially intense in that period.⁷⁴ From 1188 we have evidence of the involvement of the Lombard League

68 Ibid., pp. 731–732.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid., pp. 736–740.

71 Raccagni, *Tra Lega Lombarda* (see note 62).

72 Sicardi *Episcopi Cremonensis Cronica* (see note 14), p. 168: “Imperator igitur victoriosus Italiam sibi et inter se pacatam relinquens, in Alamaniam rediens, signaculo communit”.

73 *Chronicon Faventinum* (see note 18), p. 110.

74 Raccagni, *Lombard League* (see note 7), pp. 147–170.

in mediating two disputes between cities that had wider regional ramifications.⁷⁵ That year is the one for which we have the most evidence regarding that kind of activity by the League after the Peace of Constance, and it was also the year in which the Lombards were preparing for the Third Crusade. Yet those might be coincidences, and there are no references to the crusade in the surviving sources on those two disputes, although that does not necessarily exclude connections. There does not seem to have been any formal general crusader truce at that time either, as it was later the case for the Fifth Crusade.

The situation was very different at the time of the Fourth Crusade, when the whole of Italy, both in the north and in the south, was in turmoil during the power vacuum left by the death of Emperor Henry VI in 1197, with the next imperial coronation taking place only in 1209. When Innocent III launched the Fourth Crusade, a vast regional conflict was being fought that involved at least eighteen Lombard cities.⁷⁶ According to the “*Gesta Innocentii III*”, the region had become something like ‘a nursery of discord’ (“*dissensionis seminarium pariebat*”) because of the rivalry between Milan and Pavia, which led two vast regional coalitions.⁷⁷

However, that Lombard turmoil ended in 1202, when Sicard of Cremona reported that a pan-Lombard five-year truce was reached, which he compared to a quasi-jubilee, and which he linked to the crossing of the sea by many pilgrims.⁷⁸ The latter obviously referred to the Fourth Crusade, whose main host crossed Lombardy to gather in Venice in that year. Sicard was as close to those events as possible. He was directly involved in the negotiations of that truce: Innocent III entrusted Prior Martinus of Camaldoli with bringing peace to Lombardy around 1201, and Martinus worked together with the highest prelates of the cities that led the warring factions, that is, the Archbishop of Milan and Sicard of Cremona (which was the co-lead of the Pavian alliance).⁷⁹ Furthermore, Sicard also took the cross himself and travelled with the main host of the Fourth Crusade.⁸⁰ Other sources attesting that truce do not formally connect it with the crusade, but they

75 Ibid., pp. 61–62.

76 Ibid., p. 179.

77 *Gesta Innocentii Pape III*, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne, Paris 1855 (*Patrologia Latina* 214), c. cxxviii.

78 *Sicardi Episcopi Cremonensis Cronica* (see note 14), p. 177: “*Quo anno quasi iubileo fere in tota Lombardia treugue vinculantur in lustro. In quo lustro maximus fuit motus peregrinorum euntium ultra mare*”.

79 Coleman, *Sicard of Cremona* (see note 31), pp. 940–942.

80 Ibid.

are more problematic than Sicard's account and not as close to those events as he was.⁸¹ Indeed, the chronological and geographical concomitance with the crusade, as well as the involvement of the Papacy in the peace negotiations, could hardly be coincidences. After all, Innocent III attempted reconciliations in preparation for the crusade in other parts of Europe, even if he does not seem to have enacted a formal general crusader truce as was later the case with the Fifth Crusade.⁸²

In all likelihood, therefore, the Fourth Crusade played a significant if not key role in the Lombard general truce of 1202, and while the latter might not have boosted participation in the crusade, it was remarkably effective in suppressing inter-city warfare for a significant time. Starting from 1202, inter-city warfare largely disappeared from the entries of Lombard chronicles for several years, during which period they generally rather only mentioned the conquest of Constantinople in 1204 and elections of officials, while inter-city warfare had largely dominated entries from the late 1190s until 1202.⁸³

Moreover, in 1202 the Lombard cities also intervened collectively to manage the transit of the main crusader host through their region on its way to Venice. According to the eyewitness account of the anonymous "Devastatio Constantinopolitana", the Lombards ("Lombardi") discussed ("habito consilio") how to handle that situation and issued an edict ("edictum fecerunt") prohibiting hospitality to the crusaders for more than one

81 Iohannis Codagnelli Annales Placentini (see note 25), p. 30. Codagnello, however, completely ignored the Fourth Crusade, including the conquest of Constantinople, and regarding that truce he only reported what appears to have been a preliminary agreement from September 1201. That was followed by many others until the summer of 1202, while fighting continued, which means that Sicard was correct in placing the real beginning of the truce in 1202: Raccagni, Lombard League (see note 7), p. 179. Genoese contemporary annals also focus on the earliest phases of the settlement, rather than its final outcome: Ogerii Panis Annales, ed. by Georg H. Pertz, Hannover 1863 (MGH SS 18), pp. 115–142, here p. 119. As it might be expected, the Cremonese annals are closer to Sicard: Annales Cremonenses (see note 16), p. 11: "Quorum tempore tregua facta fuit undique, et capti inde relaxati".

82 John C. Moore, Pope Innocent III (1160/61–1216). To Root Up and to Plant, Leiden 2003, pp. 50–76.

83 Cf., for example the annals ed. by Georg H. Pertz in MGH SS 18, Hannover 1863: Annales Mediolanenses Minores, pp. 388, 391, 398, 401; Annales Placentini Gibellini, p. 468; Annales Ferrarienses, p. 663; Annales Parmenses Miores, pp. 665–666; Annales Bergomates, p. 809; Annales Brixianenses, p. 816. Cf. also the annals edited by Georg H. Pertz in MGH SS 19, Hannover 1866: Annales Veronenses, p. 6; Annales Mantuani, p. 20; the annals edited by Oswald Holder-Egger in MGH SS 31, Hannover 1903; Annales Cremonenses, pp. 11–12; Sicardi Episcopi Cronica, pp. 177–179; Alberti Milioli Notarii Regni Liber de Temporibus, pp. 455–457. Other annals consulted for this study comprise the following ones: Iohannis Codagnelli Annales Placentini (see note 25), pp. 30–33; Chronicon Faventinum (see note 18), pp. 109–112.

night and to sell provisions to them, with the result that “the Lombards hurried the pilgrims along from city to city”⁸⁴. Interestingly, in that same year, the Genoese annals mentioned another instance of Lombard collective action that equally regarded travel arrangements, which this time concerned tolls on a route to Genoa that were seemingly unrelated to the crusade.⁸⁵ Those episodes might have been connected to the Lombard League, whose rectors were involved in negotiating a dispute between the cities Mantua and Ravenna only a couple of years before that, in 1199.⁸⁶ Yet between 1200 and 1226 the League was on the decline and mostly inactive. That was possibly a result of the imperial vacancy, which removed imperial threats, but also of the divisions sown by the bitter regional wars of the turn of the century and of the growing identification of the League with the Milanese regional block, which alienated many cities.⁸⁷ In the first quarter of the thirteenth century, we have only one unquestionable surviving example of the League’s activity. It is a renewal of its oath of association in 1208, which took place at Milan and has the appearance of a failed attempt at rebooting the association, comprising as it did only five cities – less than half those of the renewal of 1195.⁸⁸

In other words, it is unlikely that the Lombard League had the capacity or political capital to enact a truly pan-Lombard edict in 1202. The general truce of that year might have given the League a temporary boost, but it is also possible, and perhaps more likely, that that edict was the output of some form of collective management structure attached to the truce itself. If that truce was connected to the transit of the crusaders, it is reasonable to assume that it also served to coordinate the local response to it, with the “*Devastatio*” hinting that it was perceived as troublesome, along with other cases that were deemed of relevance. There are similar cases of committees attached to regional truces before and after 1202. For example, the Peace of Venice of 1177 comprised the formation of a college of truce-keepers (“*treguani*”), and something similar later applied to the regional truce of 1218 linked to the Fifth Crusade, as examined below.⁸⁹ In that case, the pan-Lombard

84 Alfred J. Andrea, *The “Devastatio Constantinopolitana”, A Special Perspective on the Fourth Crusade. An Analysis, New Edition, and Translation*, in: *Historical Reflections* 19 (1993), pp. 109–149, here p. 132: “*Hic ergo exercitus cum de diversis mundi partibus in Longobardia colligeretur, Longobardi habito consilio edictum fecerunt, ne quis peregrinum hospitaretur amplius quam per unam noctem, et ne eis victualia venderentur; et persecuti sunt eos de civitatem in civitatem*”.

85 Ogerii Panis *Annales* (see note 81), p. 119.

86 Raccagni, *Lombard League* (see note 7), p. 165.

87 *Ibid.*, pp. 171–198.

88 *Ibid.*

89 *Ibid.*, p. 101.

truce of 1202 possibly provided a temporary opportunity to replicate some of the original functions that were lost to the Lombard League. After all, the League was born in the late 1160s as a pan-Lombard regional peace association, whose range of activities went beyond the defence of Lombard interests vis-à-vis the emperor and could comprise issues related to regional movement and trade.⁹⁰ As we will see, the crusade-related truces of 1218 and 1233 also displayed some of these features.

References to inter-city warfare between roughly the same regional blocks of the beginning of the century picked up again in the second decade of the thirteenth century, and it soon engulfed almost the whole region again, reaching a peak with the Battle of Zibello, near Parma, of June 1218. Lombard chronicles described it as ‘a great battle among the Lombards’ (“prelium magnum inter Lombardos”) and named fifteen cities taking part in it, plus ‘many others’ (“multi alii”).⁹¹ In that case, warfare initially defied the formal crusader truce enacted at the Fourth Lateran council, and that was the specific justification that Pope Honorius III used in July 1218 to punish Milan and its allies with excommunications and interdicts, which the pope demanded the Lombard bishops to advertise across the region.⁹²

By the end of 1218, a new Lombard general peace and concord (“pax et concordia totius provincie Lombardie”) was reached under the leadership of the papal legate Ugolinus of Ostia, which included the appointment of a collegial commission of representatives of the warring parties whose scope was to assess disputes and queries.⁹³ Once again, this pan-Lombard arrangement probably replicated some of the original functions of the League (which early sources had equally described as a Lombard *pax* or *concordia*) without the baggage of its identification with the Milanese faction.⁹⁴ The records of two treaties between Lombard cities survive from 1218 and 1220 that pledged allegiance to the oath of the *Societas Lombardie*, which was the Latin name of the Lombard League.⁹⁵ Yet the League had been inoperative for almost twenty years, those cities were traditional opponents of those that had taken part in its transient renewal of 1208, and no similar clauses can be found in other treaties between 1208 and 1218. It is therefore likely that

90 Ibid., pp. 119–122.

91 Chronicon Faventinum (see note 18), p. 120; Iohannis Codagnelli Annales Placentini (see note 25), pp. 65–68. For an assessment of the battle: Raccagni, Lombard League (see note 7), pp. 180–181.

92 Acta Imperii selecta, ed. by Johann F. Böhmer, Innsbruck 1866, no. 936, pp. 644–645.

93 Ibid., nos. 940–942, pp. 649–653.

94 Raccagni, Lombard League (see note 7), pp. 55–80.

95 Ibid., pp. 177–178.

the *Societas Lombardie* mentioned in those two treaties did not refer to the old Lombard League but to the pan-Lombard truce of 1218. In a similar way, Rolandino of Padua reported the breaking of a pan-Lombard (and, as we shall see, equally crusade-related) truce in 1236 by using the term *Societas Lombardie* to refer both to that truce and to one of the two parties involved in it, which was the Lombard League rebooted in 1226.⁹⁶

The crusade was certainly not the only drive behind this second pan-Lombard truce, another leading one being the planned coronation of Frederick II at Rome, for example, which took place in 1220.⁹⁷ Yet, as mentioned above, Ugolinus was charged with organising the Fifth Crusade in Lombardy when he negotiated that pan-Lombard agreement, and, as we have seen, the pre-existing general crusader truce was utilized to justify it. The truce proved effective: once again chronicles testify a collapse of references to inter-city warfare until the second half of the 1220s.⁹⁸ Moreover, this time there was abundant participation in the crusade from the Lombard cities too.

The Holy Land then featured prominently, and consistently, in the “*Negotium Lombardie*”, starting from its very inception. In many ways, the “*Negotium*” was a continuation of the regional conflicts of the first quarter of the century, because the coalition led by Cremona and Pavia supported Frederick against Milan and its allies, which, on the contrary, revived the Lombard League.⁹⁹ The opening shot of the dispute, that is, the imperial diet that Frederick called at Cremona in 1226, included in its agenda the preparation for the Sixth Crusade along with the restoration of imperial rights in Northern Italy.¹⁰⁰ That effectively bound the two themes together and represented a turning point

96 Rolandini Patavini Cronica, ed. by Antonio Bonardi, Città di Castello 1908 (RIS² 8,1), p. 48: “*Rupta sunt illo tempore sacramenta societatis de Lonbardia, in qua longo tempore steterant due partes. Hee namque civitates erant in parte imperatoris ... In contraria vero parte, que dicebatur societas Lonbardie*”.

97 Ibid.

98 Cf. for example the annals edited by Georg H. Pertz in MGH SS 18, Hannover 1863: *Annales Mediolanenses Minores*, pp. 389, 391, 399, 401; *Annales Placentini Gibellini*, p. 469; *Annales Parmenses Maiores*, p. 667; *Annales Bergomates*, p. 809; *Annales Brixienses*, p. 818. Cf. also the annals edited by Georg H. Pertz in MGH SS 19, Hannover 1866: *Annales Veronenses*, p. 6; *Annales Mantuani*, p. 21; the annals edited by Oswald Holder-Egger in MGH SS 31, Hannover 1903: *Annales Cremonenses*, p. 14; Alberti Milioli Notarii Regini Liber de Temporibus, pp. 504–505. Other annals consulted comprise the following ones: Iohannis Codagnelli *Annales Placentini* (see note 25), pp. 68–72; *Chronicon Faventinum* (see note 18), pp. 140–150.

99 Chiodi, *Istituzioni* (see note 47), pp. 100–109.

100 MGH Const. 2 (see note 54), no. 103, p. 644; no. 105, pp. 132–133; no. 107, pp. 136–140.

in the political weaponization of crusading in the region.¹⁰¹ When the League organised a blockade that caused that diet to fail, Frederick accused its members of disrupting the preparation for the crusade, even though it was clear that the League rather objected to the discussion of imperial rights in the region.¹⁰²

Rather than punishing the League for that alleged disruption, Pope Honorius III used the preparation for the crusade as the justification for his own involvement in providing arbitration for the “*Negotium Lombardie*” in 1227, resulting in an agreement that both parties ratified.¹⁰³ As we have seen, that arbitration committed the League to provide military forces for the forthcoming crusade. Honorius’ arbitration had a regional dimension too, in the fashion of the two crusade-related truces of the first quarter of the century, because it also involved Frederick’s Lombard supporters.¹⁰⁴ The truce successfully prevented open warfare between the parties despite the very tense situation, but it was short-lived, because the War of the Keys of 1229 and the concomitant rise of widespread warfare among the Lombard cities nullified it.

There were no references to crusading in the Peace of San Germano of 1230, which ended the War of the Keys, but that was probably because the so-called Sixth Crusade had just ended by returning Jerusalem to Christian rule, albeit in a very tenuous and controversial way. Yet crusading resurfaced in the next rounds of the “*Negotium Lombardie*” of the early 1230s in ways that essentially mirrored the situation at the time of the Sixth Crusade. Once again, Frederick accused the League of hindering the preparation for the next crusade, and, once again, the new papal arbitration committed the League to provide troops for it, which, once again, came to nothing.¹⁰⁵ That papal arbitration was finalised in June 1233, just before Gregory IX decreed a general truce aimed at supporting the preparation for what became the Barons’ Crusade in 1234.¹⁰⁶ Likewise, the papal legates whom Gregory IX sent subsequently to deal with the “*Negotium Lombardie*” were entrusted with preparing the crusade too, which the pope indicated as their prin-

101 Raccagni, *Crusades* (see note 6).

102 Chiodi, *Istituzioni* (see note 47), pp. 215–230.

103 MGH Epp. saec. XIII (see note 48), nos. 327–332, pp. 246–251, esp. no. 327, pp. 246–247: “Nos attendentes quod res, nisi obsisteretur principiis, videbatur altius progressura et preter difficultates alias allatura impedimentum negotio Terre Sancte, pro quo est tanto tempore laboratum, dignum duximus interponere partes nostras”.

104 *Ibid.*

105 MGH Const. 2 (see note 54), no. 252, p. 166.

106 Lower, *The Barons’ Crusade* (see note 56), pp. 13–36.

cipal task.¹⁰⁷ Once again, the truce that came with the papal arbitration had a regional dimension that followed the framework of the truces of the first quarter of the century, but it did not last as long as they did. It is to the outcome of that papal arbitration that Rolandino of Padua probably referred when he attested the above-mentioned breaking of a pan Lombard-oath in 1236, on the eve of the Battle of Cortenuova.¹⁰⁸ In that same passage, Rolandino acknowledged that the two opposing Lombard regional blocks had existed for a very long time.

Crusading to the Holy Land continued to be a leading argument in attempts to foster dialogue and to prevent or suppress warfare for the rest of Frederick's reign, but those attempts were largely ineffectual after Frederick II decided to solve the "Negotium Lombardie" militarily from around the middle of the 1230s.¹⁰⁹ On the contrary, the weaponization of crusading in the region reached its peak when Frederick II portrayed his conflict with the League as a lay quasi-crusade in the late 1230s, and then with Pope Gregory IX's launch of the crusade against Frederick and his supporters in 1240, which Innocent IV revived in 1246.¹¹⁰

3 Conclusions

When the two sections of this study are compared, the pivotal role that Frederick's reign played in the themes of this study becomes apparent. Crusading was relatively neglected in Lombardy in the decades after the end of the Second Crusade in 1149, but the fall of Jerusalem in 1187 ignited a robust reengagement with it that lasted for several decades. With a major expedition to the Holy Land launched in each decade until the middle of the thirteenth century, crusading acquired a consistent, pervasive, and evolving presence within Lombard society and politics in that period. Some of the leading manifestations of that included participation in crusades, which reached its peak during the Third Crusade

107 MGH Epp. saec. XIII (see note 48), no. 693, pp. 589–591; no. 699, pp. 594–596; no. 704, pp. 605–606.

108 Rolandini Patavini Cronica (see note 96), p. 48.

109 Weiler, *The Negotium Terrae Sanctae* (see note 4), pp. 18–19, 34.

110 For the sacralisation of the conflict by Frederick II: Massimo Vallerani, *Le città lombarde tra Impero e Papato (1226–1250)*, in: id./Giancarlo Andenna/Renato Bordone/Francesco Somaini (Eds.), *Comuni e signorie nell'Italia settentrionale. La Lombardia, Torino 1998 (Storia d'Italia 6)*, pp. 455–480, here pp. 463–465. For the use of the crusade by Gregory IX and Innocent IV: Raccagni, *Crusade* (see note 6). For a broader discussion of the weaponization of crusading in that century cf. Raccagni, *Crusades* (see note 101).

and the Fifth Crusade, and the role that crusades played in instigating a series of regional truces.

Within Lombardy, crusades acted as catalysts for pan-Lombard truces in 1202 and 1218. Those were the most significant attempts at warfare suppression of the first quarter of the thirteenth century, and they had considerable and relatively lasting successes. Primary sources used the term ‘truce’ (*tregua*) for the first episode and ‘peace’ (*pax*) for the second one, but this study used the term ‘truce’ and ‘warfare suppression’ for both because they did not forestall the regular recurrence of warfare along similar lines and among roughly the same warring parties. The same later applied to the two similar truces of the “*Negotium Lombardie*” of 1227 and 1233, which were much shorter-lived. Nonetheless, the significance of those truces should not be underestimated. While warfare was endemic across Lombardy, its intensity was by no means consistent. In the first quarter of the century, it reached the lowest regional intensity in the years (between five and ten) after those two crusades-related truces, and the highest intensity in the years that preceded them. Moreover, those truces were connected to episodes of collective collaboration between the warring parties that seem to have replicated some of the original functions of Lombard League. While the League had partially lost its *super partes* credentials in Lombard politics when Milan acquired its leadership, crusading provided a shared platform that fostered dialogue and cooperation between entrenched rivals.

The crusades-related regional truces of the first quarter of the century were instigated by the Papacy. Innocent III promoted the first one and Honorius III the second (although he referred for that to the Fourth Lateran council) via envoys sent to the region. The Lombard cities did not fall in line immediately, and that was especially the case with the second truce, which was supported with the use of excommunications and interdicts justified by the need to prepare for the crusade. Those truces, however, were not consistently successful in boosting participation to crusades. The Fourth Crusade is a good example of low engagement from the Lombard cities despite the reaching of a very effective and lasting truce, but fatigue caused by the recent Third Crusade might have played a role in that. Bountiful participation in the Fifth Crusade, on the other hand, followed the truce of 1218.

Regarding the organisation of the crusade, what catches the eye is the leadership that bishops often played in the crusading efforts of their cities until the Fifth Crusade, with several of them joining the crusaders. While participation could take the shape of coordinated civic endeavours, there is no evidence of officials or representatives of communal governments travelling with the crusaders, although communal governments could offer small contingents of knights or financial support for local *crucesignati*. For the Sixth Crusade and the Barons’ Crusade the Lombard League was meant to provide troops, probably by coordinating its members, but that came to nothing.

Frederick's reign then altered dramatically how the Lombard cities engaged with the crusades and the impact of the latter on Lombard politics. Participation in crusades to the Holy Land largely ceased. Preparation for those crusades continued to be used as an argument to foster dialogue between warring parties, but that gradually became ineffectual in suppressing warfare. On the contrary, the weaponization of crusading gradually prevailed, which eventually made Lombardy itself a new crusading theatre amidst unprecedented levels of factional strife among and within the Lombard cities¹¹¹. While in the first quarter of the century crusading focused on the Holy Land and was used to promote unity, in the second quarter of the century, after Frederick's coronation, crusading became a factional tool that helped fuelling conflicts within Lombardy itself.

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111 For tracking the level of factional strife within the region: Milani, *Esclusione* (see note 63), pp. 145–204. For its connection with crusading within Lombardy in the 1240s: Raccagni, *Crusade* (see note 6), pp. 736–739.