

# **Damietta in the Low Countries: the legend and the facts. Dutch research in Latin and Arabic sources**

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## **Introduction**

The Low Countries have a special relation with the fifth crusade which culminated in the siege and capture of Damietta. In the city of Haarlem, the St. Bavo Church has a set of small bells that sound every night to keep the memory alive, and in the city of Gouda another church is proud of the stained glass window that shows the capture of Damietta. This article will make clear how this came to happen, and in which way this event contributed to the formation of a local and national identity. The role the inhabitants of the Low Countries played in the crusade and the effect it had in their homeland are recorded in unique Latin sources that since long have been cherished and studied. The results of the research Dutch historians devoted to this crusade and its sources have not always reached the international forum, because they were written in Dutch. Purpose of this article is also to focus on them and their work. The Arabic sources for that crusade have attracted, early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the attention of a Dutch Arabist, no doubt because of the legend that was part of the historical curriculum. The last part of this article is devoted to his work and to some of these sources: two works by al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Khaldūn's *Kitāb al-ʿIbar*.

## **The crusade in a nutshell**

First a short survey of the crusade.<sup>2</sup> In 1215 pope Innocentius III had convened the fourth Lateran council in which was taken the decision to undertake another crusade, after the failure of the fourth that had resulted in the pillage of Constantinople. To propagate the crusade, groups of clerics traveled around, persuading people to take the cross, pacifying quarreling parties and collecting money for the expedition. In Frisia this was done by a delegation led by Oliver of Cologne. The pope had encouraged participation of the Frisians because he needed their ships, not to be dependent again on the Venetians, and for reputation they had as fierce fighters.<sup>3</sup> After extended preparations, about 200 ships<sup>4</sup> from the Rhine area, Frisia and Holland met in the beginning of June 1217 in southern England, then circumnavigated the Iberian peninsula. A section of the fleet stopped to conquer and loot a muslim city, Alcácer do Sal, in Portugal, but the Frisians sailed further, up the eastcoast of Spain, failed to anchor in Barcelona and Marseille, and spent the winter on the Italian coast.<sup>5</sup> In the next spring they arrived off Acre and met crusaders from other countries. After a couple of short raids in Palestine, the fleet sailed to Egypt. Probably that had been decided already during the Lateran council. The idea was to put pressure on the Ayyūbid sultan of Egypt, al-ʿĀdil at the time, to prevent him to attack the last crusader settlements in Palestine. The idea of conquering Jerusalem had been abandoned for the moment, the whole idea of crusading had changed into a more spiritual than physical effort.<sup>6</sup> The crusaders sailed up the Nile to the strong city of Damietta, and camped opposite it on the westbank.<sup>7</sup> The city was defended by a solid tower in the river, connected to the shore by a chain. After the crusaders had broken the chain, they conquered the tower using a movable tower built on several ships, designed by Oliver of Cologne. That was done by a mixed crew, not only Frisians whose heroism however was highlighted. Finally, after a long dramatic siege that resulted in famine and diseases, they conquered the city in November 1219. That was not only thanks to the efforts of the

crusaders, decisive was that the Ayyūbid sultans who had succeeded sultan al-Ḳāmil were preoccupied with two other problems: the revolt against sultan al-Ḳāmil in Egypt and the threat of the Mongols. The revolt had caused the temporary withdrawal of the Egyptian troops, which allowed the crusaders to cross the river and encircle the city, cutting off its food supply. The crusaders took over and fortified the city, and then made the crucial mistake to leave it and pitch camp outside the city to confront the army of al-Ḳāmil. But that they finally lost it was again not only their fault: they were surprised by the flooding of the Nile, the effect of which was aggravated by the Egyptians who opened several locks of the irrigation system. The crusaders were trapped in the mud and the water and ran out of food, and the only narrow path out left them at the mercy of the Egyptians. When they had taken control over the city, they had offered to hand it over against surrender of Jerusalem, most of the Holy Land and compensation for the destruction of the walls of Jerusalem. But in these circumstances, in August 1221, they had no choice but to surrender Damietta without any compensation in order to obtain a safe-conduct.

### The Latin sources

The role of the Frisians in the crusade is well documented in three interrelated Latin sources that together give an insight into the conditions of their participation and into the effect the expedition had in their homecountry.<sup>8</sup>

I A most fascinating source is the Bloemhof Chronicle, the nameless Latin chronicle of the monastery Bloemhof in Wittewierum. Wittewierum is a tiny village in the present-day province of Groningen, but at that time in the territorial space of Frisia. The chronicle is well known, since the first edition in 1699 it has had several editions. In 1991, a bilingual edition appeared, the Latin text with a Dutch translation. That edition was initiated by the late professor H.P.H. Jansen and was finished by his pupil Antheun Janse. This modern edition of the chronicle consists of three parts. The first part is a collection of papers of Emo, the first abbot of the monastery who died in 1237. It was most likely put together by his successor abbot Menko. It contains a report, written by an acquaintance of abbot Emo, of the first episode of the crusade, ending with the adventures in Portugal. The sequel of the expedition is missing, most probably because it might have been an oral report. Abbot Menko (who died in 1267) continued the work. The oldest extant manuscript, containing the first two parts, is in Menko's handwriting. Menko's part contains much information about international politics – these were the days of Frederick II - and later crusades, based on letters sent by the pope or the head of the congregation. The third part is the abridged version of an otherwise lost anonymous continuation, only found in a much later codex.<sup>9</sup> The only allusion to crusading in it is the so-called Cedar prophecy about the loss of Tripoli and Acre.<sup>10</sup>

II The history of the fifth crusade after the arrival in Acre, that is absent from the Bloemhof Chronicle, is extremely well documented in the *Historia Damiatina* by eyewitness Oliver of Paderborn, also known as Scholaster Oliver of Cologne. It was already known and much cited before it was edited by Hoogeweg in 1894, together with all his other writings.<sup>11</sup> In 1948 an English translation has been published by John J. Gavigan: *The Capture of Damietta*.<sup>12</sup>

Concerning the relation between Emo and Oliver, Emo might have met Oliver (whose place of birth and social background are not known, but he was most likely of German descent) in the time they were both studying in Paris, but that is only guesswork.<sup>13</sup> If they met during Oliver's crusade propaganda tour is not known, Emo did not report it in the chronicle, and he did not mention the vision of crosses in the clouds during that tour that Oliver mentions in his *Historia Damiatina*.<sup>14</sup> But it is certain that Oliver visited Bloemhof in 1224, when he was back from the crusade, and then met Emo and Menko.<sup>15</sup> Oliver pays much attention to the contribution of the Frisians (the inhabitants of Holland included) and Germans, and is

surprisingly well informed about the situation in Egypt. He got much knowledge about what happened there by making use of interpreters, he obtained in this way also knowledge of books and prophecies in Arabic, and of the situation of the many branches of Christianity in the Middle East.

III Caesarius von Heisterbach's contribution to history was a large collection of miracle stories of all kinds. He was no Frisian either, but a German monk in the Cistercian monastery of Heisterbach near Königswinter. He was tutor of the novices of his monastery, and he collected the miracle stories for use as exempla in his instruction. He accompanied his own abbot several times on inspection tours of the Frisian monasteries of his order and did not miss the opportunity to collect stories told in this region.<sup>16</sup> He published five books that contain collections of Latin exempla, but he did not collect them in one volume. The Dutch historian Jaap van Moolenbroek selected and translated 61 of these exempla connected with the Low Countries and published them with extensive commentaries in his book: *Mirakels historisch. De exempels van Caesarius van Heisterbach over Nederland en Nederlanders*.<sup>17</sup> Of these stories ca 15 were related to crusading, half of them to the fifth crusade. One of these tells the miracle of the crosses in the clouds as reported by Oliver of Cologne, with whom he was acquainted and of whose activities as crusade propagandist he was aware. The miracle stories reflect the impact on society of the taking of the cross by so many people and the problems and conflicts that resulted.

### **The Frisians and the crusade**

A short description of Frisia will contribute to the understanding of the role of the Frisians in the crusade.<sup>18</sup> In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Frisia, consisting of the present-day provinces of Friesland and Groningen (and of the German province of Ost-Friesland), was a free region within the Holy Roman Empire, a self-governing community without a sovereign ruler and with its own juridical system.<sup>19</sup> The landowners and farmers lived in manors and villages. There was only one town, Groningen, a bishop's see. This population, of more than average height and of fierce appearance, was inclined to fighting, resulting in many feuds. They lived in a landscape that can best be characterised as wetlands, only insufficiently protected by dikes, regularly exposed to flooding. Hans Mol, specialist of Frisian history, explained in his article 'Frisian fighters and the crusades' that in this wet country the use of horses for fighting was impossible, consequently the landowners were not horsemen but infantrymen with as special weapon a very long spear with a fork or tripod at the bottom for use as a pole for hopping over ditches, useful in their wet country. It may have served them well in the Nile delta. What concerns the ecclesiastical situation, it was divided among several bishoprics. The many surviving small romanesque churches suggest a well-to-do population. Besides the Premonstratensian monastery of Bloemhof, there were Cistercian, Dominican and Benedictine monasteries, all belonging to orders with a centralised organization.<sup>20</sup> These widespread networks of religious institutions gave the catholic church influence in the most remote parts of society, and the general meeting of the abbots once a year provided the clergy with much information. The chronicles testify of an educated class of importance.

Mol considered it plausible that the Frisians indeed prepared the planned 80 ships, so-called koggen, for the crusade. That must have been a substantial part of their fleet. These ships were developed for sailing the undeepest coast waters in the north and cannot have been very large. There might have been a vague knowledge of Mediterranean conditions, as Frisian ships had participated in earlier crusades. How many ships got lost in this expedition has not been reported, but some crusaders returned on foreign ships. The crew a ship needed is estimated at about 20 men, how many fighters they could take is not known, but a total of a

100 men per ship seems acceptable. The cargo they took is not recorded, but they must have carried weapons and provisions of food, may be material for tents and the construction of siege engines. From the preparations for a later crusade (1269) is known what equipment was considered necessary: each crusader must bring 7 marks of silver, the appropriate clothing, 6 pitchers of butter, one ham of porc, one sirloin of beef and half a measure of flour.<sup>21</sup>

The number of fighters is estimated by Oliver (in a letter) at 13,000, but that is probably too high. If we accept 80 fighters in 80 ships, the total would have been 6,400, about half of Oliver's number. But even that is substantial. At the end of his *Historia Damiatina*, Oliver gave a survey of what the Frisians did. In the translation of Gavigan: "[that (...) nation (..) attacked Damietta with great courage (...); by the fleet of ships which it brought, the camp of the faithful was supplied with food and weapons, the tower of the river was captured, the crossing to the opposite bank was organized, the upper and lower bridges were built, the watchtower of Turo was constructed, the walls of the rampart were fortified."<sup>22</sup> The crews of the ships might have assisted the fighters with their professional skills, as carpenters or masons for instance.<sup>23</sup>

The question is justified what for Frisia were the consequences of the absence of so many ships and so many men? In 1219, after the very severe Marcellus-flood and before the return of the crusaders, Emo complained of bad times and high prices for food.<sup>24</sup> It is conceivable that the control of dikes, rescue of victims and repair of damage done by the flood have suffered from lack of man-power. In 1272, after another flood and a period of drought, there was a shortage of food, famine threatened, and it was impossible to buy food from other regions because the crusaders (on another crusade) had taken all the silvermoney with them.<sup>25</sup> Antheun Janse investigated another problem.<sup>26</sup> Innocentius III introduced a new policy: he permitted everyone to take the vow, or to donate money instead in order to profit from the indulgences promised to crusaders. That encouraged participation in crusading and stimulated the raising of funds. But how could unsuitable people be prevented to join the expedition? Not everyone who had promised to take the cross did that of his free will, was able to keep his vow or was willing to pay money instead. Those persons had to be subjected to judicial coercion. Women were discouraged to undertake the voyage but could donate money instead, although some ignored that advice and did go. That is reflected in the miracle stories of Caesarius of Heisterbach, and it left traces in Emo's writings, as shown by Janse.

### **The legend of the taking of Damietta**

First the historical facts about the taking of Damietta by the crusaders of Haarlem. Count William I of Holland had, in his youth accompanied his father count Floris III in the ill-fated crusade of Frederick Barbarossa. After the death of Barbarossa and of his father in 1190, he continued fighting for five more years and then returned to Holland. After the death of his father and of his elder brother Dirk VII, he was not smoothly accepted as ruler of his county. He had a rival who persuaded the pope to excommunicate him, although he had done nothing to deserve that. To undo this excommunication he participated in the fifth crusade, and despite the excommunication he functioned as one of the leaders of the northern contingent. His earlier experience of crusading had given him the necessary expertise. He participated in the siege of Damietta, was even praised by Oliver of Cologne, but soon after it was taken he went home and died a few years later.<sup>27</sup>

But the legend has a different version. When Frederick Barbarossa besieged the seaport town of Damietta, the youngster Willem, son of the ruling count of Holland, and the citizens of Haarlem broke the chain connecting the tower of Damietta with the shore by sailing against it with a ship fitted out with a big saw along the bottom and the bow. After which heroic deed

the town could be taken. The citizens of Haarlem were remunerated with attributes for the coat of arms of their city: they received a sword from the emperor, and a cross from the patriarch of Jerusalem.

Jaap van Moolenbroek wrote an extensive article to trace the origins of this story.<sup>28</sup> According to him, it has been constructed at the end of the fourteenth century, without knowledge of what really happened, but on the basis of an inaccurate reading of earlier chronicles. For instance the prestigious *Chronographia*, written around 1346 by Johannes de Beke, who laid the basis of the story of the crusades in Dutch historiography.<sup>29</sup> The purpose of the legend was to explain the new coat of arms of the city of Haarlem, which shows a sword, a cross and four stars.

At the end of the sixteenth century, when under the influence of the revolt against the Spanish domination the patriotism of the inhabitants of the Low Countries awoke, the citizens of Haarlem remembered their heroic past. That was expressed by Nicolaes Jansz. Clock in an etching made in 1595 that visualized the breaking of the chain of Damietta as until recently told in the historybooks. Van Moolenbroek used it as illustration of his article. About the same time the citizens of Haarlem exported their pride to the city of Gouda, where a wonderful stained glass window in the St. Janskerk donated by them still commemorates their heroism. It was made in 1596 by the glass-painter Willem Thibaut, a co-citizen, and was most likely designed by himself as he was an accomplished draughtsman.<sup>30</sup> It was inspired by the same story as the etching by Clock, but resembles it only vaguely.

Other material reminders in Haarlem are the so-called Damiaatjes, a set of small bells in the St. Bavokerk that can be heard ringing every evening. In the townhall of the city a painting of the event by Cornelis Claesz. van Wieringen (1576-1633) and a tapestry that is a woven copy of the painting are exhibited, reminding the citizens of their glorious past.

### **The crusade and the development of a national identity**

In the nineteenth century, after the fall of the Republic of the Seven United Provinces, the episode of the Batavian Republic, the French occupation, the foundation of the kingdom of the Netherlands in 1813 and the end of the unhappy union with Belgium in 1839, the country in its new borders had to construct a new national feeling. The Dutch protestant ex-minister and journalist Conrad Busken Huet contributed to this development by the publication in 1882 of *Het land van Rembrand* (Rembrand's country), a study about the seventeenth century, the Dutch Golden Age.<sup>31</sup> That was rather late, and it was not meant to propagate nationalism. As introduction, he wrote four chapters about the preceding centuries, one for each century and each one, as the main body of the book, connected with a person that he considered as characteristic for the age. That he devoted three of these chapters to the Middle Ages, and one of them mainly to the crusades, even admiring the unselfish zeal of the crusaders, was rather uncommon in a country that was dominated by protestants. Dutch history writing used to begin with the War of Independence, the so-called Eighty Years War, and neglected the catholic Middle Ages, as Peter Raedts recently explained in his *De ontdekking van de Middeleeuwen* (The discovery of the Middle Ages).<sup>32</sup> Although he was no historian by training, Busken Huet followed the international developments in the historical profession and was well informed about the latest publications and editions of sources. These chapters are sophisticated essays, comparing all kind of events in Europe and containing references to many older and newer publications. His intention was to show how the identity of the Low Countries fitted in the European space. He chose the following persons as label of the centuries: Oliver of Cologne, author of the *Historia Damiatina*, for the thirteenth century; count Jan of Blois, a distant relative and trusted confidant of count Albrecht of Holland, and the embodiment of the perfect knight, for the fourteenth century; Thomas à Kempis, author of

the *Imitatio Christi* and representative of the Modern Devotion, a reform movement inside the Catholic church, for the fifteenth century; and of course Erasmus for the sixteenth century, the bridge between the Middle Ages and the Golden Age. Although not all of them were born in the Netherlands, they had in common that they played an important role in the formation of the identity of the country.

To return to that first chapter, Busken Huet had reasons to choose Oliver of Cologne as the pivot around which he constructed his story. He was, with abbot Emo, the main source for the Damietta crusade that he presented as the principal event, with the consideration that it is the oldest documented North Netherlandish maritime enterprise, as the *Historia Damiatina* is the first example of a successful Dutch literary genre: the book of travels.<sup>33</sup> But the legend of the breaking of the chain he left out, patriotism was not his subject.

### The Arabic sources

Busken Huet presented in this chapter about Oliver of Cologne also a publication related to the *Historia Damiatina*, the edition and translation of a text by al-Maqrīzī about Damietta by the late professor of Arabic in Leyden H.A. Hamaker.<sup>34</sup> Hamaker does not have the same reputation as the famous later Arabists Dozy, De Goeje or Snoeck Hurgronje, mainly because he died in 1835 at a young age, leaving many projects unfinished.<sup>35</sup> In 1824 he published a booklet in which he edited, from manuscripts preserved in the Oriental collection of the Leyden University Library, a fragment of the description of Egypt by al-Maqrīzī about Damietta that contained its capture and loss (or better, from the Arabic standpoint, its loss and recapture). He added a translation and copious notes in Latin.<sup>36</sup> His idea was, that a comparison between Latin, Greek and Arabic sources could contribute to a better understanding of the Middle Ages. He had presented that idea already in his inaugural lecture for the Academy of Franeker in Friesland, where he earlier had held a chair. He was inspired by the work on the crusades of the French historian Michaud, who cited many Arabic sources and had convinced him that for the interpretation of the Latin sources on the crusades they were even crucial. About the capture of Damietta, many Latin sources were available, but Hamaker considered the work of Oliver of Cologne as the best description of the fifth crusade (in his time counted as the sixth), and chose al-Maqrīzī's description to compare it with, a late source but so far unnoted. Hamaker did not mention the title of al-Maqrīzī's work, he called it the description of Egypt. The signatures of the manuscripts he used led to the title: *Al-mawā'iz wa 'l-i'tibār fi dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa 'l-āthār*, mostly quoted as *Al-Khiṭaṭ*.<sup>37</sup> In Hamaker's selection the capture of Damietta is at the end, the description starts in the eighth century.

As al-Maqrīzī had reported the capture of Damietta also in the *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma'rifati duwal al-mulūk*, and as I had studied that work already, it was a logical step to compare the texts by translating them both. In which order al-Maqrīzī wrote the two books is unclear, they were always work in progress, dossiers to which he added new material when it came to his knowledge. Al-Maqrīzī is of course no original source, he wrote in the early fifteenth century and took his information from earlier sources. Hamaker considered al-Nuwayrī as basic and used him to control al-Maqrīzī.<sup>38</sup> As Ibn Khaldūn also devoted several pages in the slightly older *Kitāb al-ibar* to the same events, the next step was to extend the comparison to this work.<sup>39</sup> The texts of al-Maqrīzī's *Khiṭaṭ* and the *Kitāb al-sulūk* are sometimes word for word identical, sometimes they express the same meaning in slightly different words. The *Kitāb al-sulūk* is the longer of the two. Ibn Khaldūn's text, based on the same sources, turned out to be more concise and analytic, with a broader view on the background than al-Maqrīzī's.

Hamaker was right: the Arabic sources fill the gaps in the Latin sources, but the reverse is also true. Why the Egyptians left their camp and so facilitated the encirclement of Damietta by the crusaders is a mystery to the Latin sources, al-Maqrīzī explains the problems of the Egyptians with the succession of the late al-ʿĀdil in detail. Concerning the desperate situation of the crusaders in their flooded camp al-Maqrīzī’s observation that the ‘Franks’ had no knowledge of the way the Nile behaved was certainly correct, but Oliver of Cologne is of course better informed about their situation. He in his turn was aware of the miserable circumstances within the besieged city, that was starved and suffered from diseases. The similarities between Oliver’s and al-Maqrīzī’s texts are striking, the differences are insignificant. But in one point they have opposite conclusions. Oliver is of the opinion that the capture by the crusaders, after the fierce fighting with the remainder of the garrison, was peaceful. The city was pillaged, but without violence. Ibn Khaldūn is of the same opinion, but al-Maqrīzī reports a massive slaughter. Who told the truth cannot be decided. But as the troops of the sultan had abandoned their camp and did not defend the city, Oliver and Ibn Khaldūn were probably nearer to the truth.<sup>40</sup> But all three authors agree that many inhabitants found the death, from famine and diseases.

### **Poems in the *Kitāb al-sulūk***

The *Kitāb al-sulūk*, in addition to being longer, has a more emotional flavour than the *Khiṭaṭ*, mainly by the insertion of poems. Here follow a few fragments of these poems, that demonstrate the strong impression that this unprecedented attack on Egypt has made.

First a poem directed by al-Kāmil, ruler of Egypt, to his brothers in Syria, al-Muʿazzam ʿIsā and al-Ashraf Mūsā, a desperate call to the messenger to get help for Damietta:

Spur on your camel to cross the desert and undergo  
The hardships and trials of traveling  
And cover the stages as fast as you can and don’t stop  
Save at the door of al-Mālik al-Ashraf<sup>41</sup>

Among the inhabitants of Damietta was emir Jamāl al-dīn al-Kanāni. He wrote the following verses that he transferred to al-Malik al-Kāmil on an arrow-head:

I complain to you about an evil enemy, I watched  
What I cannot tell you in person  
The road to the land is barred from it  
By all his knights and his horses  
And his obvious domination of its towers  
The strength of his fleet on the river helps him<sup>42</sup>

To conclude this survey an interesting report about a social evening in al-Mansūra organized by al-Kāmil for his brothers Mūsā and ʿIsā to celebrate the surrender of Damietta. In a way it sketches a portrait of the brothers, who were not always on good terms:

Al-Ashraf ordered his slavegirl Sitt al-Fajr to sing, accompanied by her lute:

When the Pharaoh of ʿAkkā tyrannized with injustice  
And came to Egypt to make havoc on the land  
Mūsā came to them with his stick in his hand

And drowned one after the other in the open sea

Al-Ashraf applauded and said to her: “Once more!” But this grieved al-Malik al-Kāmil and he ordered her to be silent. And he said to his slavegirl: “Your turn!” And she sang with her lute:

Oh folk of unbelievers, be on the alert to observe  
What in our time once more has happened  
Servants of ʿIsā (Jesus), ʿIsā and his folk  
And Mūsā together come to the rescue of Muḥammad

Al-Kāmil admired her and ordered to give her 500 dinars, and to give the slavegirl of his brother al-Ashraf also 500 dinars. Then the qāḍī al-Ajl Hibat Allāh ibn Muḥāsīn, the qāḍī of Ghazza who was in their company, stood erect and recited:

The God of the creation gave a victory to us  
An obvious escape, a favour and restoration of power  
The face of destiny became radiant instead of gloomy  
The face of unbelief became black of injustice  
When the tyrant dominated the seas with his people  
Worldwide and the ships turned them into foam  
Somebody rose and pulled out, for this belief, his determination  
As smooth as he pulled the bare sword out of its sheath  
You did not see of them all but knocked down corpses  
That were buried or you saw them in chains //  
All living beings on the earth called out, raising  
Their voices in East and West and sang:  
Servants of ʿIsā (Jesus), ʿIsā and his folk  
And Mūsā together come to the rescue of Muḥammad<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Full name: Th. M. Koornwinder-Wijntjes.

<sup>2</sup> For the history of this crusade, see: Th.C. van Cleve, “The Fifth Crusade”, in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. Kenneth M. Setton, vol. II, *The later crusades 1189-1311*, eds. Robert Lee Wolff and Harry W. Hazard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), pp. 377-428. Hans Eberhard Mayer, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, Urban Bücher 89, 1965), pp. 191-203. James M. Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade 1213-1221* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986).



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<sup>3</sup> J.A.Mol, “Friese krijgers en de kruistochten”, *Jaarboek voor Middeleeuwse Geschiedenis* 4 (2001): 86-117; also in English: J.A.Mol, “Frisian fighters and the crusades”, *Crusades* 1 (2002): 89-101.

<sup>4</sup> Mol, “Frisian fighters”; Mol based the number of ships on: J.J.van Moolenbroek, “Driehundert Schiffe für das Heilige Land. Olivier von Köln und die Kreuzzugskampagne der Jahre 1213-1217”, *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 201 (1998):19- 44. Also published in Dutch: “Driehonderd schepen voor het Heilige Land. Olivier van Keulen en de kruistocht campagne van 1213-1217”, *Wonderen van alledag* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2006): 129-154.

<sup>5</sup> Herbert Brassat, *Die Teilnahme der Friesen an den Kreuzzügen ultra mare vornehmlich im 12. Jahrhundert*, PhD Thesis, Freie Universität Berlin, 1970. At the end of the book, pp. 139-150, is a survey of the participation of the Frisians in the fifth crusade, but without documentation.

<sup>6</sup> Powell, *Anatomy*,19.

<sup>7</sup> About the problems of navigating in the mouths of the Nile, John P.Cooper, “‘Fear God; Fear the Bogaze’: The Nile Mouths and the Navigational Landscape of the Medieval Nile Delta, Egypt”, *Al-Masāq* 24 (2012) 1: 53-73.

<sup>8</sup> Other related Latin sources exist, see: Reinhold Röhrich, *Quinti Belli Sacri Scriptorum Minores* (Geneva, 1879) also a collection of shorter fragments, often from much later sources: Reinhold Röhrich, *Testimonia minora de quinto bello sacro e chronicis occidentalibus* (Geneva,1882). They are used here only in support of the three selected ones.

<sup>9</sup> Two manuscripts are extant, the so called Groningen codex, written before 1267 (the codex written by Menko), and the Frisian codex, a post medieval copy. The chronicle has been edited several times, for the first time in 1699 by A. Matthaëus, famous Dutch collector and editor of sources. Again in 1725 in St. Dié, in 1866 by the Historisch Genootschap in Utrecht, and in 1876 in the series *Scriptorum* of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. The fragment about the crusade is published under the title *De itinere Frisonum* in Röhrich, *Quinti belli*, pp. 57-70, preceded by a similar story, *Gesta crucigenorum Rhenanorum*, pp. 27-5. For a complete survey see the definitive edition: *Kroniek van het klooster Bloemhof te Wittewierum*. Inleiding, editie en vertaling H.P.H. Jansen (posthumous) and A. Janse [Middeleeuwse Studies en Bronnen XX] (Hilversum: Verloren, 1991). Professor Jansen served a term as professor of Medieval History at the University of Groningen before he got the same position in Leyden. In Groningen he presumably discovered this chronicle that became a lifelong fascination.

A sample of two pages of the crusade report, fol. 7<sup>vo</sup> and fol. 8<sup>ro</sup> of hs. 1116 of the Library of the University of Groningen (the Menko-codex) is reproduced in J.L.van der Gouw, *Oud schrift in Nederland. Een leerboek voor de student*. (Tweede herziene druk, Alphen aan den Rijn: Canaletto, 1980), nr. 142 (with transcription).

<sup>10</sup> It is inserted under the year 1287, *Kroniek Bloemhof*, 480-2 Latin, 481-3 translation. See the introduction p. XXXVII, with a reference to Robert E. Lerner, *The Powers of Prophecy. The Cedar of Lebanon Vision from the Mongol onslaught to the dawn of the Enlightenment*. (Berkeley etc.: University of California Press, 1983). A critical review of this book by J. van Herwaarden, “Van Tripoli tot Wittewierum”, *Theoretische Geschiedenis* 14 (1987), 103-108.

<sup>11</sup> O. Hoogeweg, *Die Schriften des Kölner Domscholasters, spätern Bischofs von Paderborn und Kardinal-Bischofs von S. Sabina Oliverus* (Tübingen: Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart CCII, 1894).

<sup>12</sup> *The Capture of Damietta by Oliver of Paderborn*, Transl. John J. Gavigan ( Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1948).

<sup>13</sup> *Kroniek Bloemhof*, Introduction p. X.

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<sup>14</sup> J.J. van Moolenbroek, “Signs in the heavens in Groningen and Friesland in 1214. Oliver of Cologne and crusading propaganda”, *Journal of Medieval History* 13 (1987): 251-272.

<sup>15</sup> *Kroniek Bloemhof*, 162-3.

<sup>16</sup> J.J. van Moolenbroek, “Caesarius van Heisterbach op reis in Friesland en Groningen. De *Dialogus Miraculorum* (1219-1223) als historische bron”, *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 98 (1985): 513-539.

<sup>17</sup> Jaap van Moolenbroek, *Mirakels historisch. De exempels van Caesarius van Heisterbach over Nederland en Nederlanders*. (Hilversum: Verloren, 1999). That is of course, as the author is well aware of, an anachronistic title, because the Netherlands as a nation were only a much later invention or creation.

<sup>18</sup> Much of this section is based on Mol’s article on the Frisian fighters.

<sup>19</sup> The organisation of Frisia was an exception in the Low Countries, it had no feudal system and an original juridical organisation, as explained in Robert Fruin, *Geschiedenis der Staatsinstellingen in Nederland tot den val der Republiek*, ed. H.T.Colenbrander. (’s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1922 tweede druk), pp. 96-99.

<sup>20</sup> See the map of the ecclesiastical situation in the *De Bosatlas van de geschiedenis van Nederland*, (Groningen: Noordhoff Atlasproducties, 2011), p. 119-120 and the map of the religious houses in Moolenbroek, *Mirakels Historisch*, 239.

<sup>21</sup> *Kroniek Bloemhof*, 424-5

<sup>22</sup> *Capture of Damietta*, 92.

<sup>23</sup> Mention is made of the construction of ships during the siege of Damietta. That could have been done by these skilled workers, but as wood could hardly be obtained in the delta, they could only have used wood that they had brought with them or from ships that were too damaged for further use. They could also have built catapults or mangonels, and may be platforms or pontoons to ferry fighters with those engines over the river for attacks on the Egyptian camp.

<sup>24</sup> *Kroniek Bloemhof*, pp. 110-1, 306-7.

<sup>25</sup> *Kroniek Bloemhof*, pp. 448-9.

<sup>26</sup> Antheun Janse, “Onwillig, ongeschikt en ongewenst. Onverwachte kruisvaarders in de dertiende-eeuwse *Kroniek van Bloemhof*”, *Leidschrift* 27 (2012) 3: 41-56. (Unwilling, unfit and unwanted. Unexpected crusaders in the 13th century *Kroniek van Bloemhof*.)

<sup>27</sup> For biographies of the counts of Holland see: D.E.H. de Boer & E.H.P. Cordfunke, *Graven van Holland. Middeleeuwse vorsten in woord en beeld (880-1580)*, (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2010); Count Floris III (1157-1190), his son Count Dirk VII (1190-1203) and his younger son Willem I (1203-1222) with their portraits on pp. 56-72. For a study of the (fictitious) portraits of the counts, see: *De Haarlemse gravenportretten. Hollandse geschiedenis in woord en beeld*, ed. Wim van Anrooy [Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen XLIX] (Hilversum: Verloren, 1997). For a popular illustrated article on the crusade, without documentation, see: Frank Tang, “Zo snel mogelijk weer naar huis. De kruistocht van Graaf Willem I, 1217-1219”, *Geschiedenis Magazine* 48 (2013) 1: 52-56.

<sup>28</sup> Jaap van Moolenbroek, “De ketting van Damietta, een Haarlems zaagschip en Willem I van Holland. Over de wording en standaardisering van een kruistochtmythe”, *Jaarboek voor Middeleeuwse Geschiedenis* 14 (2011): 113-149. The etching by Clock on p. 114.

<sup>29</sup> *Chronographia Johannis de Beke*, ed. H. Bruch [Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën, Grote Serie 143], (’s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), caput 58b.

<sup>30</sup> V.Pijls et alii, *De Goudse glazen belicht* (Gouda: ca 1992), glas nr. 2.

<sup>31</sup> C[onra]d Busken Huet, *Het land van Rembrand. Studien over de Noordnederlandsche beschaving in de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: 1882; many reprints, even in the cheap pocketbook series Prismaboeken nr. 100-101, Utrecht: Het Spectrum, undated (in the fifties of

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the 20<sup>th</sup> century) and without the notes). The spelling *Rembrand* was deliberate, it is no mistake. For the description of Busken Huet's career see: Olf Praamstra, *Busken Huet. Een biografie* (Amsterdam: Sun, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> Peter Raedts, *De ontdekking van de Middeleeuwen. Geschiedenis van een illusie*. (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 2011). The title is an allusion to a novel by the Dutch author Harry Mulisch, *The discovery of heaven*.

<sup>33</sup> Jaap van Moolenbroek analysed this chapter very profoundly in his article: "Schandelijk maar schoon. Conrad Busken Huet in *Het land van Rembrand* over de Nederlanders en de kruistocht naar Damietta in 1217", *Leidschrift* 27 (2012) 3: 57-74. The motivation of the choice of Oliver of Cologne is in *Land van Rembrand* book 1 chapter I.

<sup>34</sup> *Land van Rembrand* book 1 chapter II.

<sup>35</sup> A short biography in *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek* vol. 3: 533-4 s.v. Hamaker, Hendrik Arent. See also Arnoud Vrolijk and Richard van Leeuwen, *Voortreffelijk en Waardig. 400 jaar Arabische studies in Nederland* (Leiden: Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, 2013), p. 82; earlier published in: Richard van Leeuwen & Arnoud Vrolijk, "Een eigenzinnige polemist. Reinhart Dozy (1820-1883)" (that is part 7 of the series: Oriëntalistiek in de Lage landen), *Zemzem. Tijdschrift over het Midden-Oosten, Noord-Afrika en islam* 6 (2010) 1: 40-51; characteristic of Hamaker on p. 47. Hamaker will be subject of a thesis by drs H.W.Schut, who got NWO funding for it starting in 2013.

<sup>36</sup> H.A.Hamaker, *Takyoddini Ahmedis al-Makrizii Narratio de expeditionibus, a Graecis Francisque adversus Dimyatham, ab A.C. 708 ad 1221 susceptis* (Amsterdam: Pieper et Ipenbuur, 1824). Text edition on pp. 11-31.

<sup>37</sup> See the old library catalogue by: P.Voorhoeve, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Leiden and other collections in the Netherlands* (Leiden: Bibliotheca Universitatis Leidensis, 1957), p. 205: UBL Or. 276, 371 and 372a, Taqī al-dīn al-Maqrīzī, *Al-mawā'iz wa 'l-i<sup>ʿ</sup>tibār fi dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa 'l-āthār*. I did not use a modern edition, but translated Hamaker's edition, in order to understand what Busken Huet could know.

<sup>38</sup> For other Arabic sources see: *Arab Historians of the Crusades*. Selected and translated from the Arabic sources by Francesco Gabrieli (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969; (Originally published in Italian in 1957). He chose for the fifth crusade the works of Ibn al-Athīr and Ibn Wasil.

<sup>39</sup> Editions of Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-<sup>ʿ</sup>ibar: Tārīkh al-<sup>ʿ</sup>allāmati Ibn Khaldūn*, vols. I-VII (Cairo: Būlāq, 1867; *idem* Bayrūt: Dār al-kitāb al-Lubnāniyya, 1968), ed. Būlāq vol.V, pp. 344-345, 349-350; ed. Bayrut 1968 vol. V, pp. 748-752, 758-761. Edition of Taqī al-dīn al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma<sup>ʿ</sup>rifati duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad <sup>ʿ</sup>Abd al-Qādir <sup>ʿ</sup>Aṭā, vols. I-VIII (Bayrūt: Dār al-kutub al-<sup>ʿ</sup>ilmiyya, 1997), vol. I, pp. 309-332.

<sup>40</sup> Busken Huet made that point already, following Hamaker, in *Land van Rembrand* Book 1 chapter X.

<sup>41</sup> *Kitāb al-sulūk*, vol. I, 315, part of the poem.

<sup>42</sup> *Kitāb al-sulūk*, vol. I, 316, part of the poem.

<sup>43</sup> *Kitāb al-sulūk*, vol. I, 329-330. A translation in German of the first short poem in Mayer, *Kreuzzüge*, p. 203, but without reference to the source.