PETRUS VENERABILIS
1156-1956

STUDIES AND TEXTS COMMEMORATING
THE EIGHTH CENTENARY OF HIS DEATH

edited by

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At first glance Peter the Venerable seems to have little relationship to the crusades, although he belongs to the most stimulating period of their development. His name does not appear with those of St. Bernard, Eugenius III, Louis VII, and Suger in the crusading annals of his time, and later historians have often considered him to have been out of sympathy with the movement. This interpretation has stemmed in part from Peter the Venerable's inability to attend the Assembly of Chartres in 1150. Since this meeting has often been placed erroneously in 1146, the Abbot of Cluny has been described as so disinterested in the Second Crusade from the outset that he avoided participation in the plans connected with it. Moreover, his reasons for not attending have been considered slender. On the other hand, Peter the Venerable's interest in studying and refuting Jewish and Moslem dogmas has been interpreted as a tacit criticism of the crusading practice of subduing or exterminating non-Christians.

The purposes of this essay are to show that Peter the Venerable was consistently sympathetic to the crusade throughout his life, and

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2 This mistake has been pointed out also by J. Bouton, *Bernard et l'ordre de Cluny*, in *Bernard de Clairvaux*, Paris, 1953, p. 214, n. 85.

that he participated in the preparations for the Second Crusade and the attempt to launch a third crusade as much as his other ecclesiastical responsibilities and his status as a monk allowed. Material comes in the main from his correspondence, his sermon *De laude Dominici sepulchri*, and his writings about the Saracens and the Jews. 

Recent scholarship on the Second Crusade, and on St. Bernard in particular, has been extremely helpful in determining the context in which these writings should be considered. Since many of Peter the Venerable's works have not been dated, however, it is always difficult to establish an itinerary for him. The period surrounding the Second Crusade is no exception. Until a more definitive study and edition of his writings appears, the actual circumstances of his involvement will remain somewhat vague, and must be supplemented to a rather larger extent than usual by the views and attitudes which he expressed. Therefore this discussion has been planned more as a point of departure than as a definitive treatment of Peter the Venerable's relation to the crusades.

Within these limitations I have tried to reconstruct Peter the Venerable's pertinent activities from the end of 1145 to mid-June 1147, and from 1149 to 1151. We know that at the end of 1145, after the fall of Edessa, Eugenius III received appeals for Western aid from the East, and that in December he issued his first crusading

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bull, *Quantum Praedecessores*. Louis VII of France also became interested in the appeals and, during his Christmas court at Bourges, advocated an expedition to the East. When the response to his plan proved disappointing, Louis decided to consider the matter again at Easter, and in the early months of 1146 he sent messengers to the Pope. Eugenius encouraged French participation in the crusade, appointed Bernard of Clairvaux as the official preacher of the holy war, and re-issued *Quantum Praedecessores* on March 1.

During this important period, Peter the Venerable was also at the Papal curia. As he wrote to Roger of Sicily, he remained there “aliquantis hebdomadibus”, transacting “innumeris pene Cluniacensis Ecclesiae negotiis” before being called back to Cluny. Bulls issued on January 16, February 15, and March 1 indicate that his visit probably lasted until early March, and thus paralleled the negotiations concerning the launching of the crusade. An eminent French ecclesiastic of Peter’s stature could hardly have remained unaware of and uninvolved in these matters.

It is not too difficult to establish Peter the Venerable’s attitude to the crusading idea up to this time. Born in 1094, he must have heard from early childhood the triumphant story of the Christian conquest of Jerusalem and the founding of the Latin kingdoms in the East. His correspondence reflects his deep interest in the topic. In a letter to the monks in the Cluniac monastery on Mount Tabor, he spoke of the First Crusade in the glowing terms of a contemporary who believed in the divine mission of his countrymen:

> This grace was conferred in your time and ours on Gaul, which, before all the other parts of the world; before all the peoples and nations of the world, was chosen [as the instrument] by which the holy places of man’s redemption should be snatched from the yoke of the wicked, should be restored to liberty and, after being inaccessible for almost fifty years because the wicked prevented us, now were made accessible, were made open to all the believers in the world.

He felt the romantic quality of the journey to far-away places, away from the familiar comforts and pleasures of home, for the sake

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of Jesus. To the Emperor John Comnenus he mentioned the sacrifice which the crusaders made "for the love of the Lord Christ". "Having left behind great cities, wealth, family, and a rich native land... [they] bought the places of human redemption for no other price than their own blood". He was later to define the crusaders' sacrifice still further in relation to Christ's sacrifice: "In offering your souls for the Sepulchre of your Saviour, in sacrificing your bodies, you did not pay back anything worthy at all of equaling the very great gifts bestowed on you by Him, but you indicated that you wished to".

Peter the Venerable had understood for some time that the danger to the Holy Land had not ceased with the First Crusade. He complimented Sigurd of Norway for his expedition to the East in 1107 when, with warlike strength on land and sea, he stopped the enemies of the Cross of Christ from dominating the faithful, and he wished the Norwegian equal success in the new venture which he was preparing against the infidels about 1130. The Templars, who were "the permanent crusaders", also attracted the respect and admiration of Peter the Venerable. As he told their Master, he had always cherished and venerated them with special and unique affection "a primordio institutionis vestrae, quae cum meo tempore exorta fuerit velut rutilum novi sideris jubaverunt mundo illuxisse et miratus pariter et laetatus sum". He called John Comnenus a barrier against the infidels, expressing thanks that he had been able to repel the pagans and encouraging him to persist in this. Peter the Venerable also asked John to show good faith and nobility towards the King of Jerusalem, the Prince of Antioch, and all the Franks in the Holy Land, pointing out that they deserved good treatment from the Emperor since they defended the places of human redemption unremittingly, at their own peril. "Out of love for the same Christ [whom they worship], sustain them, cherish them, support them, lest the things obtained by such great zeal for the faith and by such great efforts perish". He further recommended cooperation since the Latin Kingdoms were in effect a buffer state for Greece.

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13 Bk. VI, Ep. XXVI, col. 434.
"Just as you blunt the attacks [of the pagans] from the North, they, too, blunt attacks from the East." 14.

There is little doubt, however, that Peter the Venerable considered the crusade as the sphere of, and means of salvation for, the layman; in general he thought that monks and clerics should stay at home, working out the salvation which was already within their grasp and looking after the souls entrusted to their care. He apparently agreed with St. Bernard's judgment that retreat in the cloister was as agreeable to God as a voyage to the Holy Land, and that knights in combat were more useful there than monks singing or lamenting 15. Because of the temptations on the journey, only clerics of proven piety and edifying life could contribute to the spiritual needs of the crusaders without abandoning their own salvation.

Peter the Venerable's study of the Moslems seems not to have estranged him from the crusade or caused him to give mere lip service to it. His unique and monumental project of having the Koran and other Arabic writings translated as source material for a refutation of the "Saracen heresy" had been completed in 1143; after St. Bernard had refused to undertake the refutation, he had begun work on it himself 16. In this work he seems, however, to have had in mind a long-range plan to strengthen Christian resistance to Moslem doctrine rather than an organized missionary program. Thus his first purpose was probably to forge a useful weapon for Christians to use in future ideological conflicts with the Saracens, and to retain it for the preservation of easily influenced Christians who might be tempted to embrace Mohammedanism 17. Since the Liber contra sectam Saracenorum is addressed to the Moslems and is couched in friendly terms 18, we can only conclude that he also hoped to win some converts to Christianity, or at any rate to indicate to the Moslems that the way to salvation lay open to them. Yet the treatise was never translated into Arabic or implemented in any way 19.

16 Cf. D'ALVERNY, loc. cit.; KRITZECK, loc. cit.; DÉRUMAUX, loc. cit.

The thorough and thought-provoking work of the first two authors mentioned has greatly enriched the literature about Peter the Venerable.

17 Bk. IV, Ep. XVII, col. 343.
18 P.L., 189, cols. 673-719.
19 KRITZECK, p. 300.
Therefore, however much we admire Peter the Venerable for his far-sighted efforts to find out and disclose the facts about Mohammedanism and for his expressed interest in converting the Moslems, we must concede that there is no evidence to indicate that this ideal alienated him from the crusade. His attitude to the Moslems in works not addressed to them was surprisingly conventional. The answer to this apparent anomaly seems to lie in the nature of the crusade itself. It was partly a defensive war waged in order to preserve access to the holy places from which Christianity had sprung; partly a means of salvation for many who otherwise would not have been saved; and, as formulated by Eugenius and St. Bernard, it did not exclude the possibility of conversion for the unbelievers. Odo of Deuil quotes the more peaceful party in the French army (probably led by the papal legates) as enumerating the Pope’s instructions to the crusaders: “to visit the Holy Sepulchre and to wipe out our sins with the blood or the conversion of the infidels.”

In his letter on the Wendish crusade, St. Bernard gave similar aims: “ad delendas penitus aut certe convertendas nationes illas.” Like most of his contemporaries, then, Peter the Venerable was attracted by the aims and possibilities of the crusade.

As was true of Abbot Hugh in the First Crusade, Peter the Venerable’s role was to be one of encouragement and advice rather than of direct participation. He considered that his first duty was to work for the good of his monks and for Cluny; the rest of his work in and for the church was subordinate to that. Even so, his influence in matters outside his monastery should not be underestimated.

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20 ODO OF DEUIL, De Projectione Ludovici VII in Orientem, ed. and trans. V. BERRY, New York, 1948, p. 70.
22 LECLERCQ, op. cit., p. 347.
one has ever questioned the efficacy of his part in helping to heal
the schism of 1130-38, for example; yet in speaking of his activities to
Pope Innocent, Peter indicated that they had had limits: "I have
not ceased to fight with gauntlet in hand as far as my strength and my
office have permitted". After acknowledging these conditions, he
described his methods: "Kings and princes, nobles and villains, great
and small, all those in a word who were connected in friendship with
me or the church of Cluny, I have worked to bring to the feet of your
Majesty, be it through myself or through others, in writing or giving
orders, in employing turn and turn about threats and caresses". It
seems likely that he used similar techniques in connection with the
crusade.

We do not know whether Peter the Venerable was at Vézelay
when St. Bernard began the official preaching of the crusade. There
is some possibility that he was. The Historia Vizeliacensis Monasterii
states that negotiations took place at this time between the Abbot
of Vézelay, which was a dependency of Cluny, and the Count of
Nevers, who was trying to make the abbot answerable in the secular
courts. Even if he were not there, however, Cluny had a share
in the great undertaking. In addition to the fact that the meeting
was held at Vézelay, one of St. Bernard's assistants was Alberic,
the Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia, a Cluniac monk who served as apos-
tolic legate to Jerusalem. It seems likely, moreover, that Alberic
may have travelled from Italy to France with Peter the Venerable
or have broken his journey at Cluny.

During the next year, as enthusiasm for the crusade spread
quickly, preparations were made on all sides; armed forces were
mustered, finances garnered in, and affairs generally set in order.
Perhaps Peter the Venerable's letters to the King and to the Patriarch
of Jerusalem were composed at this period. Whether they were or
not, they include many remarks about the war against the Moslems
which contain valuable information about his attitude. He describes,
for example, Christ's plan for priests and kings: "just as Christ in

24 Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France, XV, ed. M. Bouquet
et al., Paris, 1878, p. 319. Pignot, III, p. 321 is wrong in stating that neither
Pons, Abbot of Vézelay, nor Peter the Venerable was present at this time.
25 Cf. Bk. II, Ep. XLVIII, col. 271, addressed to Alberic when he was
appointed legate to Jerusalem.
his priests daily triumphs over the Devil and his angels, thus in the Christian kings he may bring back frequent trophies of victory over the pagans". In no uncertain terms he states the attitude which must be taken against the unbelievers:

The rod of justice would be the rod of your realm, so that you may cherish justice and hate injustice; so that you may rule with a rod of iron the enemies of the Cross of Christ and of the Christian name, the Turks, I say, and the Saracens, the Persians and the Arabs, and whatever barbarians there are who oppose themselves to their own salvation, and so that you may destroy them with a powerful right hand, like a vessel of clay.  

Then he turns to the assistance which he himself can give to the King of Jerusalem: “quia armis non possumus, animis prosequimur, quia gladio non valemus, precibus, ut possumus, bellicos sudores vestros juvare satagimus”. To the Patriarch he adds that his monastic vow prevents him from actually coming to the Holy Land; therefore he asks the Patriarch to act in his stead: “pro nobis omnibus ipsi assistatis, et vices nostras quod communis jubet charitas suppleatis”.

Of particular interest is a letter written to Louis VII in 1146; it may be the answer to a royal request for help in the crusade. In it the abbot praises the king unreservedly for his unselfish and devout undertaking. He felt that ancient times and ancient miracles were being renewed in the 12th century, that God was directing Louis against the Saracens as he had sent Moses against the Amorites and Joshua against the Canaanites. But he pointed out the superiority of his sovereign; while the Hebrew kings were working for God and themselves, Louis was working for God alone, and would receive the reward for his sacrifice in Heaven. He recognized that the other crusaders also are leaving behind honors, wealth, pleasures, their native land, and relatives. They chose “to follow their Christ, to toil for Him, fight for Him, die for Him, live for Him”.

Here again the difference between the activities of the Christian layman and the Christian churchman are clear. Before painting the role of king and crusaders in glowing colors, Peter the Venerable indicated how he could help the expedition. “Although I am not

28 Bk. IV, Ep. XXXVI, cols. 366-68.
able to accompany the army of the Eternal King, which is going to foreign parts... I desire to follow it with as much and whatever kind of prayer, advice, and aid I can”. The “aid” which he mentions may well refer to money support, since an extension of the feudal “aid” was likely used in collecting funds for extraordinary expenses like the crusade. In this instance Peter the Venerable’s advice dealt with finance. Instead of heavy demands on the Christians, he recommended a special levy on the Jews as a means of raising money and punishing blasphemers at one and the same time. This suggestion is more moderate than it first appears. During 1146 the Cistercian monk Radulph, carried away by the strong emotions current against unbelievers, preached against the Jews as well as the Moslems in France and the Rhineland, with the result that many Jews were killed. St. Bernard and other clerics opposed this development strongly, asserting that God wanted the Jews to be scattered over the face of the earth until the time for their salvation. Peter the Venerable also held this view, and said that he did not write “ut regalem vel christianum gladium in necem nefandorum illorum exacuem”. Before his work on Moslem beliefs, he had carefully studied the Talmud and had written the first part of his Tractatus adversos Judaeos, exposing the error of what he termed “the Jewish heresy” and exhorting the Jews to accept Christ. As in the case of the Moslems, however, his desire to convert the Jews, and the efforts which he made to appeal to them in his treatise, did not make him conciliatory in general dealings with Jews who had not been converted. He then advocated that instead of being slaughtered they should be punished in a way befitting their wickedness. His bitter condemnation of the Jews for usury and for handling goods stolen from churches leaves us in no doubt that the “wickedness” was not solely confined to religious errors like the rejection of Christ, although both usury and stolen ecclesiastical property had religious overtones. Peter the Venerable demanded, “What would be more just than that they should be deprived of those things which they gained from fraud, the things which have been stolen wickedly as if by thieves and,

30 P. L. 189, cols. 507-659.
what is worse, carried off by bold men who, up to now, have not been punished?'' This plan had a certain neatness resulting from the combination of having one group of unbelievers aid the Christians against another group. Peter summed it up: "so that the boldness of the infidel Saracens may be combatted by the right hands of the Christians, aided by the money of the blaspheming Jews". It would be interesting to know whether or not Louis acted upon the plan.

The letter to Louis VII clearly shows that Peter the Venerable was concerned about the royal plans for financing the crusade. He also participated in many smaller transactions between Cluny and her daughter houses and individual crusaders. Typical of these was the occasion when Prior Brocard of Souvigny, in the presence of Peter the Venerable, lent 500 marks to Archembaud of Bourbon for crusading expenses.

Although Peter the Venerable showed the concern of an administrator for the practical side of the crusade, he also thought a great deal about the spiritual matters connected with it, and his advice on these points was valued very much. We have already seen that in general he did not encourage the participation of churchmen in the crusade. His standards of conduct for those who did go were very high, as is shown in a letter to Theobald, Abbot of St. Columba in Sens. After taking the cross at Vézelay, Theobald had asked Peter the Venerable, among other things, how he might become "robustior et ad tolerandos terra marique Hierosolymitanae vitae labores promptior". Peter recommended pure intention and the testimony of the conscience as guides. Protesting that it was absurd to point out such pitfalls to a man of Theobald's calibre, he enumerated the spiritual obstacles which a cleric might encounter on the crusade: lightness of mind, instability, and curiosity. He also said:

One must beware in connection with spoils taken perhaps from conquered enemies, lest hope of profit creep in and avarice, and no longer devotion any more, compel the servant of God to wander here and there, after putting aside his care for the souls committed to him. One must see that love of vain praise should not touch the inmost parts of the heart, so that a monk or abbot appear as a knight or a warrior, contrary to his plan or the order to which he belongs.

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31 P. L., 189, col. 10.
33 Gesta Ludovici, RHGF, XII, p. 200.
Despite these warnings, the letter is not at all censorious. Peter the Venerable closed by asking Theobald to help him by his good works, his hardships on the journey, and especially by remembering him in his prayers at the Holy Sepulchre.

The same stress on intention and good works appeared in Peter's letter to the Cluniac monks at Mount Tabor, most or all of whom had originally come from the West. He cautioned them "to consider the intention which they had when going from here to there. And let them consider what intention they have now, because, according to the sentiment of a pagan, but wise man [Horace] 'They who rush across the sea change the sky but not their mind'". He underlined the primary importance of good works in their life: "Work to be holy ... because it is not holy places, but holy works which give salvation." 34

A letter which probably can be dated 1146-47, when the crusading fever reached its height, points out that the holy expedition should not be undertaken at the cost of fulfilling promises to take monastic vows. Peter the Venerable addressed Hugh of Chalons 35, who had already vowed to become a Cluniac on a fixed day and was now reported to be contemplating the pilgrimage to Jerusalem instead. He imagined Hugh asking, as so many people did at that time, "What life, what work, what conversion can be compared with the Sepulchre of the Lord? What could a man do which would be equal in value to going there?". The abbot's reply was that lesser benefits can be given up for greater ones, but that equal or greater benefits ought never to be exchanged for lesser ones. "Certainly it is better to serve God forever in humility and poverty than to accomplish the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in pride and luxury. Whence, even if it is good to visit Jerusalem where the feet of the Lord stood, it is far better to long for Heaven, where He can be seen face to face". Employing a favorite theme, he warned Hugh to examine the real meaning of his action and to beware of seriously displeasing the Lord by his hasty effort to please Him. Peter the Venerable asked Hugh to return with the bearer of the letter for further discussion of his future; and we are not surprised to learn from the Vita altera that Hugh yielded to the abbot's reasoning and became a monk 36.

36 P. L., 189, col. 34.
We have further definite evidence from the spring of 1147 that Peter the Venerable was closely connected with the crusading plans. Eugenius visited Cluny on March 26, before going to Paris, where the army of Louis VII was soon to gather. Among those with him were two former Cluniac monks, Alberic the Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia, who had been at Vézelay the year before, and Ymar, Cardinal-Bishop of Tusculum. When they had finished their stay, Peter the Venerable accompanied them to Dijon on April 30, where Louis VII and messengers from Conrad of Germany were awaiting the Pope. Here Eugenius learned the latest news about the two largest crusading armies. Of special interest was the Saxon plan for a crusade against the Wends, which was intended to take place at the same time as the crusade to the East. After conferring on various matters for almost a week, the papal party went to Clairvaux. Then with St. Bernard also in attendance, they proceeded to Troyes, where the Pope issued the bull authorizing the Wendish Crusade, and then by way of Provins and Meaux to Paris. There, amid scenes of great fervor and excitement, the Pope celebrated Easter at St. Denis on April 20. The following day he dedicated an altar in the church of Montmartre, with St. Bernard and Peter the Venerable assisting him. Between April 24 and June 12, Eugenius held the Council of Paris where, in addition to other business, suitable arrangements for the crusade were confirmed and irregularities corrected. Peter the Venerable attended the Council, and with St. Bernard, Suger and others must have added his advice, practical and spiritual, to the deliberations.

It appears likely to me that Peter the Venerable's sermon, De laude Dominici sepulchri, was delivered during this stay in Paris. Peter indicates that he composed it well on in his career. In tone

87 J.-L. nos. 9011-12; H. Gleber, Pапst Eugen III, Jena, 1936, p. 51; Pignot, op. cit., III, p. 334.
89 On the Council of Paris, see Gleber, op. cit., pp. 63-72; OdO, op. cit., p. 16.
40 J.-L., no. 9061, May 29, 1147: "Petro, abbatii Cluniacensi, et eius successoribus tribuit abbatiam Balmensem in prioratum mutandam". See also nos. 9062, 9063.
41 "Non parvum enim ... tempus effluxit, ex quo in laudem divini sepulchri se effundere animus aestuat... Hoc quia commissi munus offici
it seems to belong to the enthusiastic era preceding the Second Crusade; the references to the Mohammedans and Jews also seem typical of this period. Peter was addressing a large gathering of people. He called them "fratres karissimi", "fratres", "karissimi", and he mentioned their interest in spiritual matters: "you... who are intent upon sacred things, you who are zealous about divine meditation, you who give constant attention to the word of God, whose bread and meat is not so much earthly bread ... (as) the bread of the angels". Although usually associated with monks, these terms would also be suitable to the pilgrims, whom he mentioned as being drawn by the hope of salvation to the Holy Sepulchre. Furthermore, the sermon is couched in terms that would encourage a desire for pilgrimage, an aim which we know that Peter the Venerable did not foster in his monks.

The theme of the sermon would, of course, have been of great topical interest in 1147. Peter the Venerable described the reasons for the Christian's special veneration of the Sepulchre, and explained that the tomb was holier than other places because of prophecies and special angelic witness. The Holy Land had been inhabited by pious men from the beginning, and so had been sanctified to receive Christ, the consummation of the law and the prophets, Who by His sacrifice had closed Hell and prepared an access to Heaven for men. Peter then exhorted his hearers to devote everything to Christ and to receive Him within themselves as the Sepulchre had done. He reminded them that the Sepulchre will be glorious before all people, and that the Cross is the sign of hope for all people. Even though some of the Jews had been repulsed from salvation by their many misdeeds, and some of the nations had been excluded because they rejected the grace of God and permitted themselves to be led astray by wicked Mohammed, they still had an opportunity to be saved. As in the treatises against the Jews and the Moslems, this appears to be a long-range view of conversion. The materials are present in the world if the infidels wish to avail themselves of them. Peter the Venerable apostrophized the men of the First Crusade, when "Gauls and German, Dacians and Noricians, fierce in valor and barbaric, some

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hactenus impedivit, ... ad solvendum tamen diuturni affectus debitum, ut poterit accingatur" (P. 232).
journeying by land and some by sea, in laborious and bloody battle, but with outstanding victory, wrested that sacred place from the yoke of the Persians and Arabs" in order to be freed from sins and Hell. "You went not as enemies, but as His creations, as servants, as redeemed men; with pious swords you cleansed this place and habitation of heavenly purity from the defilements of the wicked, and you made it impossible for evil men to prevent His chosen sons from coming to their Father's tomb". By these sacrifices the crusaders, like the prophets and the angels, had declared that the Holy Sepulchre was more glorious than all earthly habitations. Another proof of its unique distinction was the contemporary miracle of the divine fire which burned there each year on Easter eve. "This miracle has been granted to our times, and can fully take the place of all those other miracles [of ancient times]"; "thus You pronounce that the sacrifices, prayers, and vows of your Christians are pleasing to You". "And because the wicked enemies of Your Christ scorn His death more than His other humble works, You show in what great shadows of folly they are held by adorning the Sepulchre of His death by the miracle of such great light". Peter closed his sermon with the petition that Jesus incline His loving ears to the prayers of those going to the Sepulchre, and also of those who, though not going, venerate Him in His Sepulchre and are joined by good will to it; and he asked Him to grant them peace and salvation. "Hasten, lest weighed down by the Devil, by sins, or by the world, they be cheated of what they looked forward to". "Thou Who hast been made 'the way' for those who are pressing forward in this pilgrimage towards their native land, because of the humility of the flesh which Thou put on, appear to them through the majesty of divine power as truth and life eternal".

On June 12, Louis VII attended a final religious service in St. Denis. In the presence of great crowds, he kissed the reliquary of his patron saint, which Eugenius and Suger brought from the high altar. Then Suger gave into his keeping the oriflamme, the holy

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43 P. 246.
44 P. 247.
45 P. 248.
46 P. 251.
47 P. 252.
48 P. 254.
banner of St. Denis, and Eugenius blessed him and bestowed on him a pilgrim's wallet. Thus equipped for the journey which had been embraced with such enthusiasm by Western Christendom, the royal pilgrim is pictured by Odo of Deuil as departing "accompanied by the tears and prayers of all" 49. We can be sure that Peter of Cluny, having given what advice, aid, and prayers he could during the preparations for the journey, now continued to follow the crusade with his prayers.

It is not necessary here to follow in detail the misfortunes of the Second Crusade. After Conrad III and Louis VII had both suffered crushing reverses in Asia Minor in the winter of 1147-48, they joined forces in Jerusalem, with some of the leaders of the Latin kingdoms and the Templars, for a siege of Damascus. This undertaking ended in failure, too; and when the expedition planned against Ascalon did not materialize, Conrad decided to return home by way of Constantinople. At this time he reaffirmed his alliance with Manuel Comnenus in opposition to Roger of Sicily, Geisa of Hungary, and Duke Welf. Louis VII lingered on in the Holy Land painfully aware of the damage which the dissipation of the crusading armies had done to the reputation of the Christians in the East, but powerless to repair it. When pressed to return to France, he replied that he had agreed to stay on until Easter of 1149, and to help as he could because of the precarious situation of the Holy Land and the almost daily raids of the Moslems 50.

Unlike Conrad, Louis did not return to his home by way of Constantinople. The anti-Greek party in the French army, centred about Godfrey, Bishop of Langres, had gained much ground during the crusade, and attributed their defeat in Asia Minor in large part to "Byzantine treachery" and collaboration between the Greeks and the Turks. They also regretted very much that they had not accepted Roger of Sicily's offer to go to the East through Sicily rather than overland through Greece. Consequently Louis sailed from the Holy Land on a Sicilian vessel; after almost being captured by the Byzantine fleet, he managed to land in Calabria in late July, 1149. While he waited for his wife Eleanor, who had been detained by the Greeks, he received constant letters and messengers from Roger, and

49 Odo, op. cit., pp. 16, 18.
eventually had a very pleasant meeting with him. We can be sure that Louis told Roger of the great need for aid in Palestine — greater even than had been true in 1146; and Roger, on the other hand, must have encouraged the French in their resentment and enmity towards the Greeks. After leaving Sicily, Louis went to the papal curia and spent two days with Eugenius; again the crusade and the situation in the East must have been under discussion. Louis’ next important stop was Cluny, where Suger was waiting to greet him and to exchange information about the period of almost two and a half years which had elapsed since Louis set forth from St. Denis bearing the oriflamme and the pilgrim’s wallet. I have found no mention of Peter the Venerable’s presence at this reunion; but his subsequent actions ally him very closely with the anti-Greek party, which mingled concern for the Holy Land with a desire for revenge on the Greeks.

Not long afterwards, the Abbot of Cluny wrote to Roger of Sicily, who had been a generous friend for many years. After expressing sympathy to Roger on the death of his sons, he turned to political matters, and particularly to the crusade. Peter told Roger that he was grieved by the hostility between Conrad and the Sicilian king. “For not only I, but many others, feel that that discord is an obstacle to the Latin kingdoms and the propagation of the Christian faith”. Although Roger had been able to aid the Church in combating the Saracens in Sicily and North Africa, “far greater [advantages] would come if firm peace and concord united you and the aforesaid king”. He then revealed that he hoped that Roger would help by taking vengeance on the Greeks:

And there is something else which far more kindles our hearts and the hearts of nearly all of our Gauls to love and seek peace between you, namely that most wicked, unheard of and lamentable treachery done by the Greeks and their wicked king to our pilgrims, i. e. the army of the living God. For to speak according to what I see in my mind, if it be necessary, as far as can befit a monk I would not refuse to die if the justice of God would deign to avenge the death of such great and such noble men, nay rather the flower of almost all Gaul and Germany, which was destroyed by trickery. But I see no Christian prince under heaven by whom this very holy work, so desirable on earth and in heaven, could be fulfilled as well, as fittingly, and

52 Ep. Ludovici, ibid., p. 519.
54 Bk. VI, Ep. XVI, col. 424.
as efficiently as by you; for by the grace of God (I do not say this out of adulation), according to what I conjecture from your past and from the words of many, you are both wiser in intellect than other princes for performing this great good, and richer in resources, and more practiced in strength and, furthermore, closer in very position. Therefore, rise up, good prince (I say this in my words, but not only because of my prayers, but also because of the prayers of all), rise up to aid the people of God; be zealous like the Maccabees for the law of God; avenge the many insults, the many injuries, the many deaths, the great amount of the blood of the army of God which was spilled so wickedly.

Anxious for action on this plan, Peter the Venerable offered to approach Conrad on the subject of peace with Roger "with all the zeal, all the powers, all the assistance which I have".

This impassioned letter was not written by a man who had lost interest in the crusade. Although feelings about the Greeks were uppermost, they were caused by his disappointment at the failure of the expedition. Thus he did not flinch at the thought of taking armed vengeance on other Christians in order to advance the purpose of the crusade. Probably he would have felt this way about any nation which obstructed the will of God as embodied in the holy war; but it is more than likely that the Bishop of Langres, Odo of Deuil, and others had influenced him by their views of the Greeks as false Christians. Godfrey of Langres had said, when the French army first reached Constantinople, that that city was Christian in name only; and Odo had observed that, if Manuel had been a Christian, he would have been under obligation to serve God without making demands on the crusaders for himself.

When Peter the Venerable wrote to Roger, he was not acting alone on a sudden impulse, but, as he indicated, was part of a definite group. Conrad received various overtures. Theodowin, the Cardinal-Bishop of Santa Rufina, the papal legate attached to the German army on the crusade, wrote to the German emperor on this subject after his return from Jerusalem by way of Sicily. St. Bernard also sent a letter in which he praised Roger as useful for many enterprises and necessary to the Catholic Church. Indicating that Roger

\[55\] Odo, _op. cit._, p. 68.

\[56\] _Ibid._, p. 80. Cf. also Peter the Venerable's letter to Eevrard, Master of the Templars, for another instance of advocating the use of force against wicked Christians (Bk. VI, _Ep. XXVI_, cols. 435-36).
would be even more useful in the future if he were not prevented by the power and might of Conrad, St. Bernard likewise offered to act to establish peace and concord between the two. Early in 1150, Guido the Papal Chancellor informed the German court that the Pope and the curia were disturbed by the rumor that Conrad had confirmed a treaty with Manuel which was likely to afflict and disturb the holy Roman Church. He enjoined and exhorted Wibald to check the rise of a disturbance of this kind; and Wibald was able to reply that as the result of "longa cohabitatione et assidua collocutione" he had been able to instill in Conrad some humility and feeling of obedience towards the Pope. In defence of his sovereign, he explained that Conrad was not bound by treaty against the Papacy, but had been corrupted somewhat by the pride and disobedience of the Greeks. Nevertheless, Wibald ended on a cautioning note. He said that he did not wish to assent to the plan to make peace between Conrad and Roger, or to advise Conrad, until he knew more certainly what Eugenius wished. Then he pointed out that the Roman Senators had been writing harsh letters about Eugenius to Conrad, and he warned that requests from Conrad should be carried out by the curia. The implications of Wibald's last remarks probably did much to influence Eugenius in taking a neutral stand as far as an attack on Greece led by Roger of Sicily was concerned. Roger had never been a papal favorite. Moreover, the Pope was very anxious for Conrad's support against the Romans, and certainly did not wish to bear the brunt of a German-Greek coalition because of being drawn into the opposing Franco-Sicilian one. Thus the project which Peter the Venerable, St. Bernard, and others were advocating as a means of recovering the losses of the Second Crusade, did not gain papal support.

In the meantime very bad news had come from the East. Raymond of Antioch and many of his men had been killed in battle, and much Antiochene territory had been captured by the Moslems. As a result, the King of Jerusalem and the Templars had had to take their forces to Antioch in order to save the city. The Seneschal of the Templars wrote to Everard, the Master of the Temple, who had returned to France with Louis VII:

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67 Information about the letters from Theodowin, St. Bernard, and Guido comes from Wibald, Ep. CCXXV, cols. 1311-12, P.L. 189.
We are hard-pressed on every side because of lack of knights, serjeants, and money... Return quickly with arms and money, knights and serjeants, so that, with God willing, we can help our mother, the Eastern church... Especially announce the loss of the land to the Pope and the king of France and personages of the Church and the princes, warning them to aid their desolate mother, either by their presence or by moneys.

To many, the grave danger of Antioch called for another full-scale crusading effort. Suger of St. Denis, in particular, threw himself into the attempts to muster aid to the East as he had never done in 1146; and St. Bernard stepped forward once more. In Lent Suger wrote to Peter the Venerable telling him of a meeting held at Laon by the king and the great nobles on the subject of sending aid to the East. He then invited Peter to attend another council, to be held at Chartres on the third Sunday after Easter (May 7); it was called in order "to pledge ourselves as a wall for the house of God, and to plan to make provision [to remedy] this very great and almost inconsolable grief and, with the mercy of God preceding and following us, to aid [the undertaking] in any way we can, lest the faith be destroyed in those very sacred places from which it was sent to us".

St. Bernard also appealed to the Abbot of Cluny to come to the meeting as the voice of authority of the holy Church of Cluny, which you govern because God so disposes, and as the [expression of] the wisdom and grace which He gave to you to use for your neighbors and for His honor. Peter the Venerable was not able to attend the Council of Chartres. He explained to both Suger and St. Bernard that, before he had known about their meeting, he had called a large assembly of the priors of Cluny for the very same day in order to discuss "an unavoidable matter". This matter was the very important subject of reforms at Cluny, on which he had been working for some time. Even so Peter was extremely careful to indicate his interest in the meeting at Chartres. To Suger he said, "I grieve, and I grieve more than I can say, that I cannot be present at the holy meeting... Believe a close friend, believe one who speaks the truth, that I truly wish [to come] and am not able..." Once more he recalled the

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58 Epistola A. Dapiferi Militiae Templi, RHGF, XV, pp. 540-41.
59 Ibid., p. 523.
61 Bk. VI, Ep. XVIII, XX.
crusading motifs which appear over and over again in his writings. He called the Council of Chartres holy, because "no one is seeking his own enrichment, ... no one is seeking the things that belong to him, but instead is seeking what belongs to Jesus Christ". In a manner which is certainly equal in warmth to his remarks in 1146-47, he described the subject under discussion as the greatest of all subjects:

For isn't it the greatest of all matters to provide and to see that the Holy Land should not be given to dogs? lest the places where stood the feet of Him Who brought salvation into the midst of the earth should again be trampled by the feet of the wicked? lest royal Jerusalem, consecrated by the prophets, the apostles, the very Saviour of all, lest Antioch, that noble metropolis of all Syria, should be subjected again to blasphemous and wicked men? lest the very Cross of salvation, now besieged by the wicked, as it is said, should be seized ...? lest the very Sepulchre of the Lord, which up to now ... was the glory of the entire world, should per-chance be destroyed completely, as they are accustomed to threaten?

Peter the Venerable expressed still other reasons for his concern for the Holy Land to St. Bernard:

Whom would it not move if by chance that holy land, snatched forth from the yoke of the wicked by the exertions of our fathers, by the shedding of so much Christian blood not long ago, should be subdued again to the wicked and blasphemous? Whom would it not move if so salutary a journey for penitent sinners, which, as it is fitting to believe, now for fifty years has saved innumerable thousands of pilgrims from Hell and restored them to Heaven, should be closed off because the Saracens stand in the way as a barrier?

He insisted, as he had already done to Suger, that his reason for not coming to Chartres was not perfunctory. "I say, and again I say, lest you be displeased at this or think that I speak deceitfully, that not only in speaking to you but always I beware of deceit". He reaffirmed his deep interest in the crusading project: "For not only would I come to Chartres because of this very important business, but I would not hesitate in any way to go even to that Jerusalem about which we are thinking, if the needs of the church entrusted to me permitted". Peter the Venerable closed by offering his assistance, even though he could not be present at Chartres. "If then it should happen that another meeting would be held at another time, either in our district or yours, unless once more an unavoidable reason would stand in the way, Your Reverence knows that I would come willingly and, whether I attend a meeting or not, would offer aid
for such a great undertaking as far as my powers allow”. Seen in relation to the rest of Peter’s career, these reasons for not attending the meeting sound adequate enough, and his offers of subsequent aid underline his sincerity.

In general, however, the idea of a new crusade was not receiving support. On April 25, less than two weeks before the Council of Chartres, Eugenius wrote cautiously to Suger:

The immense work of piety which divine mercy has inspired in our very dear son Louis, illustrious King of the Franks, makes us very anxious. For, recalling both the serious diminution of the Christian name which the Church of God has sustained in our times and the recent outpouring of the blood of so many men, we are smitten with great fear, and an inconsolable grief is renewed. But the devotion of our aforesaid son, and the love divinely inspired, mitigate the grief a little and permit us the hope of consolation. Thus, therefore, hope and fear disturb us a great deal, suspended as we are between the two.

Mindful of the disturbed political situation which had developed as an aftermath of the Second Crusade both in the East and the West, Eugenius did not wish to authorize a rash or visionary undertaking which might jeopardize the status of the Church. His attitude of careful realism is in direct contrast with that of Louis VII and the French clerics, including Peter the Venerable. Nevertheless the Pope did give Suger permission to decide whether the expedition was practical or not.

But, lest so great a work be hindered because of us, we commend to your wisdom by this present letter that you carefully and studiously examine the hearts of our aforesaid son, the king, and the barons and others; and if you know that they are ready for such a difficult undertaking, you may securely promise our advice and aid, as much as it is possible for us to give, and the remission of sins, just as is contained in our other letters; and if we have been reassured about their constancy and the devotion of their faith, having put our fear aside, we will give them our powers and aid in whatever ways we can, with divine mercy favoring us.

From the meeting at Chartres St. Bernard reported to Peter the Venerable that the princes were lukewarm about the plan. Still undaunted, however, he announced a new meeting, to be held at Compiègne on July 15, and summoned the Abbot of Cluny to attend.

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42 RHGF, XV, p. 457.
43 J. SATABIN, Une lettre inédite de Saint Bernard, in Études religieuses et philosophiques LXII (1894), pp. 322-23.
St. Bernard did not mention to Peter the Venerable that he had been chosen to act as leader for the crusade. He begged the Pope not to confirm this choice because of his bodily weakness and lack of skill in warfare, and because it did not suit his monastic profession. St. Bernard also tried to stir the Pope himself to lead the crusade**, but Eugenius seems to have assented to the appointment of St. Bernard**. From that time on, the situation disintegrated rapidly. The meeting at Compiègne seems never to have taken place. Suger then seems to have decided to carry on the expedition in a diminished form by sending funds and troops to the East through the Templars. Before a great deal could be accomplished, however, he fell ill and died on January 13, 1151, hopeful to the last that his plans would be fulfilled**.

Thus, for a great variety of reasons, many of them directly resulting from the Second Crusade, a third crusade did not take place at that time. We cannot consider, however, that in 1149-51 Peter the Venerable had lost his interest in the crusades. He certainly participated in the plan of securing Roger as an instrument of vengeance on the Greeks, whom he considered responsible for the failure of the Second Crusade. Later he promised to support the efforts which were being made in France to initiate another crusade. As we look back over his life, we find that his essential attitude to the crusade had not changed over the years. In its ideal meaning as an unselfish, sacrificial journey to faraway lands to combat the enemies which were threatening the shrines of the Christian faith, the crusade attracted his admiration and support. Therefore he had entered into the preparations for the Second Crusade and the attempts to launch a third crusade as much as his other responsibilities would allow. Undoubtedly, however, some disillusionment and modification had crept in. To the wicked foes of the Church were now added the false Christians, especially the Greeks; and the splendid pride which he had felt in his countrymen and his era were no longer in the foreground. For him, as for many of his contemporaries, the Second Crusade and its aftermath had disclosed complexities in East and West which had not been suspected before.

** RHGF, XV, pp. 615-16.
**5 Ibid., p. 459.