Nicholas IV Encyclopedia Article

Nicholas IV

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1227-1292

Italian pope (born Girolamo Masci) who sent missionaries around the world, and received Rabban Bar Sauma (c. 1220-1294) from China. The first Franciscan pope, Nicholas was elected in 1288. Three years later, when the last crusader stronghold at Acre fell, he attempted unsuccessfully to organize a new crusade. Around this time, the Nestorian priest Bar Sauma arrived, and the two men joined in a second unsuccessful effort to launch a holy war against the Muslims. Nicholas sent missionaries to the Bulgars, Ethiopians, Tatars, and Chinese, the most celebrated of these being Giovanni da Montecorvino (1246-1328), who established the Catholic mission in Peking.