

### The Deeds of the Bishops of Utrecht, 1212-27

*This account was drawn up in 1232 on the instructions of Bishop Willibrand of Utrecht, in the wake of the disastrous conflict that had led to the death of his predecessor five years earlier. It was written by a notary or chaplain of the bishop, and described the pontificates of his predecessors from 1139 onwards. The text provides important evidence for the instability of one of the more peripheral regions of the empire in the early thirteenth century. It should be remembered when reading this account that the bishop of Utrecht enjoyed considerable secular authority, largely as a consequence of past imperial grants.<sup>1</sup> One issue of style should also be noted: the author often employs the 'historic present' tense, which reads oddly in English, and has here usually been rendered as a past tense.*

*Translated from Gesta Episcoporum Traiectensium, MGH SS xxiii.409-16, cc. 17-27.*

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(17) **Bishop Otto I.** After the burial of Bishop Dietrich at Utrecht,<sup>2</sup> all at the church of Utrecht turned their minds to the election of a successor. Count Gebhard of Geldern, son of Otto, and Count William of Holland, the brother of Count Dietrich, arrived there with a great following. They brought with them Archbishop Adolf of Cologne, and the fleshly brothers Bishops Otto of Münster and Gerhard of Osnabrück, and a vast number of other nobles.<sup>3</sup> They obtained through their prayers that Otto, the first of that name, provost of Xanten, the brother of the count of Geldern, whose sister was married to the count of Holland, should be elected by all to the bishopric. He was a promising youth, eighteen years old, tall and handsome of body, dignified in conversation and behaviour, who was from the start so very shrewd in secular affairs, and especially in legal matters, that he was not unworthily loved by everyone. And because of the forces of the aforesaid counts, he was also feared, so that right after his first entry the *ministeriales* of the church restored without delay the money and

<sup>1</sup> E.g. when Henry IV gave the bishop the county of Stavoren, confiscated from Margrave Ekbart, in October 1077, *Dipl. Henry IV*, pp. 394-5 no. 301.

<sup>2</sup> Dietrich was bishop 1201-12. He died on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1212.

<sup>3</sup> Otto, Bishop of Münster 1203-18, who died on the Fifth Crusade, and Gerhard, Bishop of Osnabrück 1192-1216, subsequently archbishop of Bremen (d. 1219) were the sons of Count Henry I of Oldenburg-Wildhausen (d. 1167). Their mother came from the family of the counts of Geldern, and was an aunt of Gerhard III, Count of Geldern 1207-29.

foodstuffs that they had wickedly seized on the death of his predecessor, with substantial reparations and to their own confusion. He ruled the church most peacefully for two and a half years, while all who were subject to it were tranquil. But while he was planning to go to Rome to obtain a dispensation because he was under age, he was struck down by a deadly fever at Voerthusen, near Eltern, through which, after he had had his will drawn up and disposed of his property, alas, he paid the debt of all flesh. From there his brother the count and his mother the countess brought him back to Utrecht, where he was buried with appropriate honours in the church of St. Martin amid the great lamentation of all the people, in the year 1215. The time of this elect, who died while still a deacon, was peaceful and most happy. For he found the entire bishopric excellently furnished with land and in no way mortgaged, as his prudent predecessor had left it. He ruled powerfully and effectively as ruler over the castle of Coevorden and its lords Rudolf and Frederick, all the people of Drente and the whole city of Groningen, which was at that time most wealthy, being content with those rights through which Bishop Dietrich had carefully exercised his authority after the death of Bishop Baldwin.<sup>4</sup>

**(18) Bishop Otto II.** Therefore the aforesaid counts, who were not a little upset by the death of their lord, gathered at Utrecht, and they decided upon and set their minds on the promotion of the lord Otto, provost of the cathedral, being persuaded to this by the latter's brother, lord Herman of Lippe. The latter was a wise and shrewd man, and he cunningly influenced them through the counsellors, claiming that they could and ought to control such a bishop, since he was an outsider [*alienigena*]. But thanks to the courage of that bishop, the upshot of this proved quite different. Thus, on their urgings, Otto II, chief provost [*maior prepositus*] of Utrecht, the brother of Herman of Lippe, son of the sister of Bishop Dietrich, was elected bishop in the year of the Lord 1215.<sup>5</sup> As the new lord and elect, he immediately received the *regalia* from the Emperor Frederick, the second of this name, and episcopal blessing with the

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<sup>4</sup> Baldwin was bishop 1178-96.

<sup>5</sup> They were among the the sons of Bernhard II, lord of Lippe, who resigned his lordship c. 1200 to enter the Church, and died as Bishop of Selonia (in Latvia) in 1224, and Heilwig, daughter of Count Otto of Hochstaden. Among their siblings were Gerhard, Archbishop of Bremen 1219-58 and Bernhard, Bishop of Paderborn 1228-47.

permission of the archbishop of Cologne, at Frankfurt. <sup>6</sup> He found the church free from all debt, the bishopric rich and well-furnished, and the episcopal revenues paid in full and most promptly, free from all yoke. Hence he started his rule most prosperously, as a powerful and wise man, and most patient and modest; but his later rule was very different from what happened at first, since afterwards he expended both his and others' property on wars, and especially civil and internecine conflicts.

**(19) About this same bishop and various other things.** Most serious discord arose among the *ministeriales* of the church in the land of Hengelo [*Volhenho*], which he finally settled with great effort and expense. For he entered that land with a numerous company; he burned the property of nearly all the knights, and thus tamed them, because due fear and reverence for their lord was not without merit drummed into the rest. Not long afterwards he journeyed to the Holy Land as a crusader [*cruce signatus*]. He entrusted the entire bishopric to his brother Herman of Lippe, who ruled it carefully, preserved it in peace and restored it to his lord and brother, having looked after it pretty well, when the latter returned from his pilgrimage after a year and a half. But it had rejoiced in peace for only a brief time when new discord arose, between the bishop and the count of Geldern, his promoter. This was for various reasons, but especially because of the toll through which the count unjustly and cruelly impoverished the men of the bishop at Lobet. While attempts were being made to settle these disputes through an agreement, he incurred heavy and intolerable expenses in various meetings of the princes. The matter finally seemed to have been settled by Engelbert, the then archbishop of Cologne. <sup>7</sup> But it was not so, for while the count pretended friendship, he so stirred up the *ministeriales* of the church in Zallant and near the [River] Vecht by secret insinuations that they conspired with all the people in Zallant and cruelly plotted against their lord, [intending] to drive out him and his bailiffs. They alleged serious complaints against him, namely that the horses of the bishop were lodged on their property twice a year when this obligation was not owed, something that none of the [previous] bishops had ever claimed. The bishop was greatly annoyed by this improper conspiracy. Since he was unable to restrain them from their evil plan, despite many warnings from the knights of Utrecht, he

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<sup>6</sup> Frederick II was at Frankfurt on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1215. The investiture of the bishop with the *regalia*, the temporal property and rights of the see held from the crown, followed the procedure laid down by the Concordat of Worms between Henry V and Pope Calixtus II in 1122.

<sup>7</sup> Engelbert, Archbishop of Cologne 1216-25.

gathered an army. His brother Herman and Bishop Dietrich of Münster joined this in [the territory of] Deventer with a fine force of knights.<sup>8</sup> The bishop now delayed no longer, but undauntedly invaded Zallant, whose people he found gathered behind walls and ramparts at Herkelo. He attacked, fought and defeated them, killing a few but capturing a great many. And although the whole land was at this time subject to flooding, his knights, however, struggled through these dangerous waters and bravely attacked three castles in that land. Two of them, both of which were called Voerst, he captured and razed to the ground; the third one, Buchorst, he burned down apart from the keep.<sup>9</sup> This was deserved, since the lords of these castles, namely Dietrich of Buchorst and the two Hermans of Voerst, had been the ringleaders and inspiration of this great evil. And so all the knights of this province fled from their seats and homes, and he sternly ordered his horses to be stabled in their property. He punished the people for their wilfulness with a fine, and thus he returned victorious to Deventer, where he bade his allies farewell. Strengthened and taking comfort from this victory his success, he would have taken wise and energetic steps for the future administration of his property and the peace of the church, if the aforesaid count had not maintained these accursed and exiled *ministeriales* in Zutphen against their own lord. For the madness of the count grew to such an extent that he spent the whole of the following summer preparing substantial forces to exact revenge for what had been done. The lord bishop [meanwhile] strove to defend his property in every way he could. He secured [a promise of] aid from Joanna, Countess of Flanders, who was then ruling the whole of that county because of the imprisonment of her cousin Ferrand, and his church made a sworn alliance with the duke of Brabant.<sup>10</sup> But they indeed paid scant heed to the oaths they had made, for they never came to the assistance of the bishop.

**(20) Again, about the same bishop and various other things.** When summer comes, war breaks out here; friends, relations and allies are summoned, knights are mustered in return for pay, a large number of carts and ships are prepared to carry supplies, and two mighty hostile armies hasten towards each other, pitching camp on

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<sup>8</sup> Dietrich [III] of Isenburg, Bishop of Münster 1218-26.

<sup>9</sup> Voerst is between the River Ijssel and the town of Zwolle, Buchorst very near the Ijssel between Kampen and Hatten. The lords of Buchorst had formerly held Zallant from the bishop as his advocates.

<sup>10</sup> Count Ferrand of Flanders had been captured by King Philip of France at the battle of Bouvines in 1214, and was not released until 1226. The duke of Brabant was Henry I, duke 1190-1235.

either side of the Honneke [stream].<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that Archbishop Gerhard of Bremen had come to the help of his fleshly brother the lord of Utrecht with many armed men.<sup>12</sup> Also present there were Bishop Dietrich of Münster, lord Herman of Lippe and many other nobles, whose forces when combined were estimated to number more than a thousand knights. They also had a great many brave and undaunted men-at-arms [*armigeri*]. And so these three princes were united in the aforesaid place, awaiting the outbreak of hostilities and the attack of the count. But the strength of the other side far exceeded their own. For apart from a vast number of men-at-arms, two thousand picked knights were present there with the count. He had too many nobles and valiant captains and counts with him, among the most important of whom was Duke Waleran and Count Henry of Sayn,<sup>13</sup> who were followed by virtually all the knighthood of the Rhineland, mainly through the order and wish, so it is said, of Engelbert, lord Archbishop of Cologne. Although he was not personally present to attack his suffragan, a man who was bound to him on oath, however he so aided and daily strengthened the party of the count, who was the son of his maternal uncle, by those whom he secretly sent that the bishop and his men were forced to flee to Deventer.

**(21) Again, about the same bishop.** While these events were taking place, a serious battle was fought between the men of the bishop, that is the knights of Utrecht, and those of Velua. The latter were put to flight, and shamefully abandoned the land of the count that had been entrusted to them to guard. And lest any corner of the bishopric remain untouched and avoided destruction, Florenz the younger, now Count of Holland since his father William had died, the son of the sister of Count Gerhard of Geldern,<sup>14</sup> was now persuaded by his uncle to sail up the Lek with a large number of ships and invade the bishopric from the west, and he burned the bishop's house and the whole village of Gein. So these powerful counts and that unfaithful group of *ministeriales* from the Trans Ijssel region harassed their lord from every side with plunder and arson. But suddenly, and quite unexpectedly, the tumult of this conflict was laid to rest by a lengthy truce, and since during this time Archbishop

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<sup>11</sup> Known today as the Schipbeek, a stream that flows into the Ijssel just outside Deventer.

<sup>12</sup> Gerhard [II] of Lippe, Archbishop of Bremen 1219-58.

<sup>13</sup> Waleran IV, Duke of Limburg 1221-6; Henry III, Count of Sayn 1202-46/7, for whose long and adventurous career, see Joachim J. Halbekann, *Die älteren Grafen von Sayn* (Wiesbaden 1997), pp. 67-105. Sayn is near Koblenz in the Rhineland.

<sup>14</sup> Count Florenz IV of Holland, whose father Count William had died in 1223.

Engelbert of Cologne of good memory was wickedly murdered, <sup>15</sup> and he will be awarded the crown of a martyr, Bishop Conrad of Porto, then the legate of the Apostolic See, involved himself in the dispute and, thanks be to God, brought it fully to an end. <sup>16</sup>

**(22) The agreement made between the bishop and the counts.** Amid all this, one should note that it happened that the count of Geldern had a great following in Zalland, and he possessed a rich advocacy over the property and dependants [*litones*] of the church of Essen. And although he infeudated these to his vassals, he lamented, however, that they were impoverished by the bailiffs of the lord bishop and their intolerable jurisdictional claims. And, to speak truthfully, this was the reason why the count had made an alliance with the mutinous *ministeriales* of this land. But these *ministeriales* soon deserted the count, and with some difficulty recovered the grace of their lord, albeit along with great dishonour. Hence the count felt that he had been tricked by these *ministeriales*, and he was also less powerful after the death of his lord and kinsman the lord Archbishop Englebert of Cologne. On the advice of Conrad, Bishop of Porto, [also] his kinsman and the then legate of the Apostolic See, he came to an agreement with the bishop and his church; [the terms of which were] that he hand over to St. Martin all the land that he had in Zallant, for which he received in exchange allodial property in Elst and all the dependants belonging to it, and an allod in Odelenberg, and money beyond counting. <sup>17</sup> The bishop kept for himself and his church the provostships [*praepositurae*], vassals and *ministeriales* in these places. Similarly the count of Holland received 800 pounds for those men who are called *ministeriales* in Holland. And so the lord bishop gained a lasting peace for himself and his successors, and because of this left a most worthy reputation behind him because of this action. This is shown by the various privileges of the said counts, which were carefully drafted, and in which they pledged themselves not only to an unbreakable peace, but to provide help in perpetuity to the church against all comers.

**(23) The origin of the crisis and factional dispute.** Once these matters had all been happily settled, the land was at peace and this now led everyone to rejoice. [But,]

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<sup>15</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> November 1225.

<sup>16</sup> Conrad of Urach, Cardinal Bishop of Porto 1219-27, who had earlier been legate in southern France.

<sup>17</sup> Later, in c. 27, our author says that the payment to the count was 2000 pounds. Elst is between Arnhem and Nijmegen.

astoundingly and unexpectedly, this peace was disrupted by civil and intestine sedition, which not only submerged the bishopric in further miseries but, astonishing to say, cruelly swallowed up the bishop, a number of nobles and many knights and men-at-arms. It is not without grief that I therefore describe to you the way in which this evil unfolded. Rudolf of Coevorden and his brother Frederick, with Menzo of Gravesdorp and his son Henry, had [up to now] remained loyal to their lord the bishop through thick and thin throughout all the events and conflicts described above, but at last they showed their teeth to him like dogs, when they ravaged his property with fire and slaughter. It happened because they became involved in a civil conflict in Groningen. For the burgrave [*praefectus*] of that town, Ekbert, and his relatives were in bitter dispute with the men of Groningen, who were wealthy and powerful. Finally, he fought a battle with them in the midst of the town, and having defeated them, prepared with his men to consolidate his victory. The men of Groningen strengthened themselves against him with [the help of] the men of Coevorden, and they attacked the house of the burgrave, seeking his exile or even his death because of his guilt. When the lord bishop learned of these events, and that matters were growing still more serious, he went down to Groningen, and summoning both parties he insisted, warned, begged and ordered them to abide by his advice and instructions concerning this discord. The leaders and more important men then swore to [obey] this plea in front of all the people. But the party of the men of Groningen shamefully did not observe their oath, on the advice of Rudolf of Coevorden who in his pride publicly contradicted the advice and decree of the lord bishop, which he had honestly and properly promulgated there with the agreement of many sensible men.

**(24) More about this same factional dispute.** The bishop thus withdrew with the problem having not been settled; however, he ordered a truce between the [two] parties to be observed until his return. In the meanwhile Ekbert and his relatives began to build a castle at Glimmen,<sup>18</sup> claiming that in doing this he was not violating the terms of the truce, since the castle and township lay under his jurisdiction. But Rudolf hastened there with the men of Drente and entirely destroyed it, and he also laid hands on and captured there all the kin [*parentela*] of Ekbert, and when the burgrave fled from the town he pursued him unceasingly. After being deprived of his

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<sup>18</sup> On the River Aha, near Groningen.

home, property, relations and friends, Ekbert fled to Frisia. There he begged, and offered money to, his friends, the sons of his father-in-law and various other powerful people, asking them to attack the town [of Groningen]. He launched heavy and deadly attacks upon it. He kept up the pressure, persevered and conquered it — he took the town and threw many of his enemies into prison. The Frisians depopulated the town, and burned down all but a few houses. But the people of Coevorden escaped from this great danger. Ekbert immediately redeemed his blood relations, in exchange for those captives he had taken in his victory. After recovering them, he showed himself to be a man remarkable for his great courage, and fortified the church of St. Walburga as a castle. His plan was to defend the rest of the town, largely destroyed and empty of inhabitants, with only a few men. Day by day he resettled those citizens who favoured him, while expelling the rest. On the other side, his enemies made speedy preparations, together with the men of Drente and Coevorden, to recover the town, sparing none of their overwhelming resources of money and equipment. And so the hazard of war was once again awaited.

‘What madman, O citizens, is there who would be carried away with such riot?’<sup>19</sup>

**(25) The preparations for battle and the martyrdom of the bishop.** On hearing of this, the lord bishop was very pleased by the victory of Ekbert, since he had found him always to be obedient and useful to him. Hence he involved himself in the conflict, taking the side of Ekbert against the men of Groningen and Coevorden. Since they had already been present at the destruction of the castle, the men of Drente most presumptuously and foolishly joined the people of Coevorden in the fighting, and so began to be victims of the subsequent evils. The bishop therefore sent in haste knights and men-at-arms to assist in the defence of the town of Groningen, and he stationed all the knights of Zallant at Ommen, to prevent the men of Coevorden invading the land of the bishopric, and also [hoping] that they would not dare to take part in the siege of Groningen on account of [the threat from] this army. But Rudolf manfully attacked the men of Zallant with only a few troops. He defeated them and put them to flight like women, and plundered the whole of Ommen. The men of Drente gained

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<sup>19</sup> Lucan, *Pharsalia*,



great boldness from this victory, ardently following as one Rudolf of Coevorden with all their people, who went on in advance of the others with the great army that he had [now] mustered, from Steinfurt, Dalen, Loen and Goor. The men of Groningen flocked [to join] all these people, along with many Frisians whom they had recruited either in response to their pleas or for money. And so, united into one army, they launched a great assault on the town of Gronigen, which was defended by only a few men. And it appeared to them that there was no doubt they would be victorious, since they had surrounded the town with their siege castles on every side, and it was burned, desolate, open and emptied of its citizens, with but few defenders. But Ekbert and the knights whom the bishop had sent there resisted the attackers most valiantly. This long and remarkable siege of the town and of his knights so moved the bishop that he summoned knights and men-at-arms from every part of his bishopric, forced all the people to march out with their weapons, and begged aid from his relatives, neighbours and all his friends, using prayers, promises and gifts. He received the help in person of Count Gerhard of Geldern, who had recently become his friend. The count of Holland and the count of Cleves sent a strong force to him; <sup>20</sup> many honourable and wealthy knights came from Cologne and from the bishopric of Münster, among whom Bernhard of Horstmar, Bodekin, Count of Bentheim and Rainald de Rose were the most prominent. <sup>21</sup> Other nobles were too numerous to count; and undoubtedly they included some nobles, *ministeriales*, and other knights who were now unused to arms, but people of all sorts flocked [to join] this army, quite contrary to custom, to such an extent that it may not be unreasonable to fear that they had been assembled through some predetermined plan of God consigning them all to death and damnation. The lord bishop welcomed them all at Ommen with a most happy face and joyous heart, and he led them to where now the castle of Hardenberg is situated, on to Nyensted, and then to [Grams]Bergen; and finally they pitched their tents at Anen in a mournful and accursed place. A large number of ships followed them, carrying food, siege engines and catapults, and other weapons of war in great quantities along the Vechta. This equipment exceeded by far the costs of all his [other] campaigns.

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<sup>20</sup> Dietrich V, Count of Cleves 1193-1260.

<sup>21</sup> Bodekin (Baldwin), Count of Bentheim (near Osnabrück), son of Count Otto, was a cousin of the counts of Holland, and a nephew of the former bishop Baldwin.

On hearing of this, Rudolf lifted the siege, and took station against his lord with all his men at Coevorden, with a marsh at least half a mile wide, deep and very wet but without trees or shrubs, laying between him and the army [of the bishop]. Attempts were made to broker a peace, but they came to nothing. Rudolf and his brothers Frederick and Gottfried, Menzo and Henry of Gravesdorp, and all the other knights of Coeveroden were outlawed, and deprived of their property by due legal sentence. But they were not dismayed by this, and challenged their lord to battle. Finally, on the day of St. Pantaleon, on the advice of the wise, but not wisely, the bishop armed himself and mustered his whole army, which was by now so large that it excited due admiration from all.<sup>22</sup> He encouraged them through [his] indulgence, he preached, he proclaimed his right and that of the church, and after giving them his blessing he marched with them all to the marsh. Lord Rudolf of Gore, as was his right, was guarding the banner of St. Martin. The bishop, the counts and all his other men, happy and apparently confident of victory, followed, spread out and in poor order. So he came to the place of death, or rather martyrdom. The battle then commenced. Our men who were in the front of the battle line marching against the enemy immediately began to sink into the deadly, stinking marsh, and finally, because of the weight of their armour, they were completely submerged. The men of Drente showered them with arrows and spears from on high and set about them savagely with their swords in hand to hand combat, slaughtering them like cattle. After this disastrous beginning, such fear gripped our men that the whole of that wretched army, scattered far and wide in the marsh, were filled with panic and shame, and they were forced into a deadly flight, so that many, through running too fast and from the heat, for that day was far warmer than was normal, were drowned in the endless and foul waters of the swamp – they were, extraordinary as it is to say, submerged in shame. The enemy pursued them as if they were not men but ravening beasts; they found those who had fallen exhausted and robbed, stripped and slew them. And lest anything be lacking from their cruelty, they plundered the bishop whom they had captured, scalped him sliced away his flesh with their swords, cut his throat with their knives, and inflicted all sorts of wounds on him as punishment. Finally they trampled upon his helpless fleshly body and dropped it into the marsh, but they sent his soul to God and St. Martin, crowned by this great martyrdom.

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<sup>22</sup> 28<sup>th</sup> July 1227.

These butchers were so exhausted by the slaughter that they brought the count of Geldern, Gilbert of Amstelle,<sup>23</sup> and many others who were sorely wounded and close to death as prisoners, barely alive, into the castle. Among these was lord Dietrich, provost of Deventer and Elburg,<sup>24</sup> the brother of the lord bishop, a wise and frugal man, who had the best interests of his churches at heart. He had suffered a serious head wound, from which he died. He was buried at Deventer. Rudolf and his men, meanwhile, were far from content with this massacre – they mounted their horses and pursued the ships and fleeing men along the bank of the Vechta all day until nightfall, capturing many, and taking and killing others. And so, wet and barely satiated with the blood of many noble and innocent men, they returned that night to their captives. And one should note that the women of this land were, if they could be, even more savage than the men in killing our wretched people.

This was the most dreadful day of all our days, on which so many noblemen, picked knights and the best men-at-arms of our nation, nearly four hundred in all, perished with the bishop, finding their deaths sinking into the marsh, slaughtered by peasants and women.<sup>25</sup> Among those who died was Bernhard of Horstmar, a man who was most celebrated from his youth for his many estimable qualities, esteemed above all [others] by several popes and four emperors whom he had served. He was ready in counsel, generous, handsome and tall, brave but a man of good sense. His chivalry and bravery were praised by King Richard of England, whom he served in many campaigns, and even when he arrested him in Austria;<sup>26</sup> by King Philip of France, when he captured him during the war against the Emperor Otto; and particularly by the Saracens and their Sultan Saladin, on whom during the siege of Acre he constantly inflicted many wounds and to whom he did great damage, more than anyone else. O blind Fortune, who saved such a man from so many deadly perils on land and sea, and then allowed him to perish in such a ghastly place and at the

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<sup>23</sup> now Amsterdam.

<sup>24</sup> Elburg is on the coast of the Zuider Zee, 20 km. SW of Zwolle.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. the *Annales Stadenses*, ad. an. 1227, MGH SS. xvi.359: more than two hundred knights and sons of knights perished.

<sup>26</sup> The implication of this may be that he took service with Richard after the latter's release from captivity in 1194, although he may have already served alongside him at the siege of Acre in 1191. Bernhard also distinguished himself on the German Crusade of 1197, Arnold of Lübeck, *Chronica Slavorum*, ed. J.M. Lappenberg (MGH SRG, Hanover 1868), V.27, p. 201.

hands of such horrible people, without any defence. To speak truly, there was nobody who was his equal in all Swabia and Germany [*Alemannia et Theotonia*]. Hence the whole world not unworthily lamented and bewailed his miserable death. I would list each of the other distinguished knights for you by name, if I did not think that I would prefer to cry over them than describe them. But you should know this in truth, that the knighthood of Utrecht, respectable in their persons, and notable for courtliness, courage and all the good qualities in which that land customarily abounded, lamentably came to the end of its days in that accursed marsh. And lord Otto, twenty-eighth bishop of Utrecht, was thus slain, and his body was brought back by his men and amid great lamentation buried at the church of St. Martin in Utrecht, next to the tomb of his uncle Bishop Dietrich, in the year of our Lord 1227.

**(26) A recapitulation of the above.** With regard to what has been said above, I remember how on his first entry [into the see] the lord bishop Otto, the second of this name, visited every corner of his bishopric and found it endowed to overflowing with all sorts of land. Clerics, knights and those of the cloister had an abundance of all the things they needed; the cities, towns and villages rejoiced in peace and had plentiful resources; dependants and peasants [*litones et coloni*] received back their labour one hundred fold. He ruled for a little while effectively and fairly over all these. Since, indeed, the judgements of God are hidden, all of these circumstances were totally altered during his time, and they were reduced to great poverty. First, through the war begun at Hengelo he incurred great expense and exposed the whole of that fine land to devastation. Secondly, as a consequence of the discord that arose in Zallant, he squandered indiscriminately all the benefits of the lands lying beyond the Ijssel. Third, the serious dispute that the counts of Geldern and Holland had with him gave rise to incomparably greater expense than all those that went before. Fourthly, there was the war in which he died, and he dragged with him into death and destruction [both] his men and what was left of the bishopric, and its character and reputation, while all the rights of the see were torn away, from east to west and south to north. And amid all this, what is especially worthy of memory is that he gave to Count Gerhard of Geldern 2000 pounds for the men whom he had in Zallant, and to his nephew Count Florenz of Holland he gave 800 pounds for certain *ministeriales* known as the ‘men of Holland’. From this it can be deduced what one could [obtain] from our land before these times. Nobody is in any doubt that Otto left the bishopric

to his successor very poor and the church greatly burdened with debts, its land stripped of all its wealth, the knights poor, prisoners or half-dead, the people wretched and reduced in number, the cities, towns and villages complaining about the loss of their property and the deaths of their citizens, so that throughout the length and breadth of the bishopric nothing was heard except weeping and wailing. Moreover, all these things happened to us because of his faults. It is to be noted that he ruled the church of Utrecht for thirteen years.

**(27) Bishop Wilbrandus.** Therefore, after it had been deprived of its shepherd in the year 1227, the whole church was summoned to elect a new lord, and the day for the election was fixed, to which, as was customary, all should attend. But on the first two days it was more pleasing to all who were there to lament, groan and weep rather than to make an election, since the brutal slaughter inflicted by the men of Coevorden and Drente of the bishop and so many nobles, knights and *ministeriales* of the church had been on a scale quite unheard of in our time. To all these lamentations the count of Geldern and Gilbert of Amstelle added new grief, for half-dead and suffering from cruel wounds they were placed in biers in the manner of the dead in the middle of the crowd in the chapter house. Raising their hands, they lamented, exclaimed, implored, displayed their wounds, begged, gave counsel and [eventually] obtained general agreement to the choice of lord Wilbrandus, then Bishop of the church of Paderborn, for the postulation of whom reputable envoys were to be sent to the Curia and to the lord pope.<sup>27</sup> Also on that day, the counts who were there, and the priors, *ministeriales*, both poor and rich, swore together with one mind to revenge the blood that had been shed, something which indeed later, to speak truthfully, they observed poorly. And one should note that the aforesaid bishop was a close blood relation of the count of Geldern, and of the count of Holland who was also present at this election. It was also of note to the church of Utrecht that the majority of the chapter had previously, not long earlier, chosen him as its chief provost. He was then also provost of Zutphen, and he had held the chief provostship of Hildesheim for six years, from which he had been called to the bishopric of Paderborn, and he seemed thus to

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<sup>27</sup> Since he was already a bishop, canonically only the pope could sanction his translation from one see to another.

go from strength to strength.<sup>28</sup> The church hoped that, given his background, he would be the more competent to exact revenge for these great wrongs [that it had suffered], both because of the power of the said counts and his other relations, since he was noble, the brother of the count of Oldenburg, and [also] because of his great experience of war and in the performance of temporal duties. For he had worked for some years in Apulia, Calabria and Sicily on the imperial business of the Emperor Frederick, the second of this name. He had twice crossed the sea, where he had served God in various labours and wars. He was [also] known and acceptable to Pope Gregory IX. Because of the delay of the envoys from Utrecht, he went to the pope in person. There he was seen, heard and acknowledged, and on the advice of all the cardinals he was admitted by postulation to the church of Utrecht, and he was taken from Paderborn and translated to Utrecht, and after receiving the Apostolic blessing he returned to his homeland. Along the way, he received the *regalia* from the emperor's son, who had then been elected and consecrated as king, at Werden.<sup>29</sup> From there he went to Cologne, where making himself known to the archbishop of that church<sup>30</sup> he rendered the proper obedience, and he then set off for Utrecht. But it should be noted that a year had already passed before the new bishop arrived in his church.

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<sup>28</sup> He was provost at Hildesheim from 1219, and chosen as bishop of Paderborn in 1225. Wilbrandus was the son of Count Henry II of Oldenburg-Wildhausen, and thus a nephew of Bishops Otto of Münster and Gerhard of Oldenburg, and a cousin of the count of Geldern.

<sup>29</sup> Henry (VII), eldest son of Frederick II (b. 1211), elected king of Germany at Frankfurt in April 1220.

<sup>30</sup> Henry [I] of Mülnarken, Archbishop of Cologne 1225-39.