

The Chronicle of Otto of St. Blasien 1184-98

This chronicle, one of the main sources for German history at the end of the twelfth century, was written c. 1209-10, and intended as a continuation to the Chronicle of Bishop Otto of Freising, from which the author frequently quoted. The attribution to Otto of St. Blasien comes in a fifteenth-century manuscript, one of only four medieval manuscripts known. The strong Swabian bias of the text supports this attribution. Its presumed author, Otto, subsequently became abbot of the monastery of St. Blasien (in the Black Forest) in 1222, but died a year later. The account of German history at this period is generally favourable to the Staufen, or perhaps more accurately to the imperial authority, irrespective of who wielded it; hence the view of Otto IV as ruler in 1208/9 is similarly favourable to that of the earlier Staufen emperors. Otto of Sankt Blasien was particularly interested in the Third Crusade, but he also provided quite a lengthy, if not always entirely accurate, account of Henry VI's conquest of the kingdom of Sicily, and showed an interest in Parisian theological study in his own time. One should, however, note that dates are sometimes given a year in arrears, and that a number of important events have been misplaced. Indeed, despite the chronicle's annalistic format, Otto's chronology is often very dubious. Thus the treaty of Konstanz was recorded two years after the event, while Count Richard of Acerra was in fact only captured and executed in 1196, and the account of the brutal repression of conspiracy on Sicily, which Otto suggests took place immediately after the conquest, refers to events which actually took place in 1197. Otto also conflated the conquest of 1194 and the subsequent German Crusade of 1197, of which he left a vivid, if often disapproving, account. Nevertheless, despite such chronological uncertainty, this is an important and often informative source concerning Germany at the end of the twelfth century.

The passages below have been translated by G.A. Loud from Ottonis de Sancto Blasio Chronica, ed. A. Hofmeister (MGH Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum, Hanover 1912), pp. 37-74; chapters 26-46. [It should be noted that the more recent edition, by F-J. Schmale, Die Chronik Ottos von St. Blasien und die Marbacher Annalen (Ausgewählte Quellen zur Deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters 17, Darmstadt 1998) reproduces the Latin text from the edition of Hofmeister, albeit with a German translation and improved notes appended].

(26) In the year from the Lord's Incarnation 1184, after subduing all the storms of war in Germany, the Emperor Frederick held a general court at Mainz during Pentecost with all the great men of the realm present, and there he arranged for his sons, King Henry and Duke Frederick of the Swabians to be dubbed by the sword and arms to be conferred upon them. All the princes of the empire were gathered at this court, from the Franks, the Germans, the Slavs, and the Italians, 'from Illyria to Spain'.¹ Nobles from neighbouring kingdoms also came at the invitation of the emperor, and an extraordinary multitude of men from different regions and speaking different languages was gathered there. A palace with a most spacious chapel was built out of wood for the use of the emperor on the plain outside the city, and houses for the princes were erected on a noble scale round about it, with each of them energetically competing to emphasise their rank through a costly display. Indeed the whole plain was filled with a very large number of tents in different colours, as if a great city had been set up there. Nothing was lacking here in any display of wretched worldly glory, whether it be in abundance of victuals, variety of clothing, the equipage of horses, or delightful spectacles, which conspicuous consumption appeared to the sons of the world in their own time as good sense, but 'the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God'.² This was shown through a clear demonstration of Divine power that gave a portent for the future. For as night grew dark a most mighty wind arose from the west and completely overthrew the chapel next to the royal palace and many other buildings. Those inside were convulsed with fear and barely escaped with their lives, for it rendered them all so irresolute that they could hardly move. Wise men did not consider this a good omen, rather it was in every way unwelcome to them. The holy day was solemnly celebrated in early morning with great joy, and choice and most sumptuous banquets were then gloriously held. On the second day, after a solemn mass had been celebrated in the morning, the emperor's sons, king Henry and Duke Frederick, were girded with their arms and received the belt of knighthood, and a tournament was keenly contested. The emperor dealt with various affairs of state, and on the fourth day everyone joyfully returned home.³

¹ Cf. Otto of Freising, *Chronicle*, V.32.

² *I Corinthians*, 3:19.

³ Pentecost in 1184 was on 20th May, the emperor's sons were knighted on the 21st, and the storm that wrecked the camp took place on the afternoon (not the evening) of 22nd May.

(27) In the year from the Lord's Incarnation 1185, Pope Lucius departed this life and Urban III succeeded him, as the 183rd in the line of popes. The Empress Beatrice died in this same year, and she was buried in state after a royal funeral in the city of Speyer, in the presence of her son King Henry. ⁴ Around this same time, at Pentecost, the Emperor Frederick held a general court at Konstanz, where the envoys of the Milanese and of all the cities of Italy that had previously been in rebellion against him of their own free will proffered their subjection to him, offering their civic banners and golden keys as tokens of their surrender. He received them, granted them pardon and his imperial grace, and sent them back to their homeland joyfully bring tidings of peace. ⁵

(28) In the year from the Lord's Incarnation 1186, the Emperor Frederick sent envoys to King William of Sicily, son of King Roger, and arranged for his sister to be betrothed to his son King Henry, and because of this the kingdom of Sicily, with the duchy of Apulia and the Principality of Capua was assigned to King Henry as a dower by his father-in-law [*sic*] after his death. ⁶ In receiving this he recovered for the Roman Empire what had, after the death of the late Emperor Lothar, been taken away from the empire by Roger when he had captured Pope Innocent and extorted the name of king from him. So he entered Italy by the 'sixth route' with a great number of the princes. The Milanese requested him to celebrate the marriage of his son at Milan as a sign of the recovery of his imperial grace. He agreed to this so that he might confirm their loyalty to the empire (for they had suffered considerably at the hands of his forces). He summoned all the barons of Italy to a general court at Milan, and princes flocked to this court from both north of the Alps and from all over Italy: Tuscany, Campania, Apulia and Sicily. They went forth with the emperor and the bridegroom to receive Henry's fiancée, William's daughter, with the most magnificent splendour and royal pageantry, and the marriage was performed with great pomp and circumstance. ⁷ At this court the Italians were fully restored to the emperor's grace, and, after having reconfirmed the peace, an amnesty was granted, namely that a general and permanent pardon for former crimes was laid down. The emperor delighted in

⁴ Beatrice died on 15th November 1184; Pope Lucius on 25th November 1185.

⁵ This is one of several chronological errors in Otto's account. The Peace of Konstanz was actually concluded in June 1183.

⁶ Constance was actually William II's aunt, although she was about a year younger than him, being born shortly after her father's death in the early months of 1154.

⁷ 27th January 1186.

the many proofs of their obedience, and when the court was finished everyone returned joyfully to their homes while he, his son and the latter's wife went north of the Alps. Thus, as is read of Theodoric, King of the Goths, all the neighbouring kings were linked to the Emperor Frederick, either by relationship, alliance or submission, and under his rule the prestige of the empire was enhanced in all sorts of ways. For he was allied with the king of France, the daughter [*sic*] of the king of Sicily was married to his son, he had the most devoted service of the king of the Hungarians, and he had arranged the betrothal of the daughter of the king of the Spaniards to his other son Conrad, although this marriage was never concluded.⁸ Furthermore, some time earlier at a court held at Dol, near Besançon, he had granted a crown to the king of the Danes, who held his kingdom in homage to him, and he had raised the duke of Bohemia to royal rank, giving him a crown and granting him the rights and name of a king.⁹

(29) At this time Baldwin, King of the people of Jerusalem, died, leaving as heir to the kingdom a nubile daughter – for he lacked a son.¹⁰ Through sin it was ‘divided against itself’ and rightly ‘brought to desolation’,¹¹ and it was trampled underfoot by the pagans, since no good had come from rule being in the hands of a woman.¹² For each of the great men (*principes*) of the kingdom was eager to rule it, and sought to marry the girl and obtain the hereditary kingdom with her, if he lacked a wife, or if he was already married to join her to his son, or if lacking a son to marry her to a near relative. For this reason great hatred arose among them, which brought the kingdom to disaster. She herself, spurning the native inhabitants, and chose rather Count Guy of Ascalon, a foreigner of handsome appearance and notable for his manly courage; and with the approval of the patriarch and the knights of the Temple she married him and conferred the kingdom upon him. The rest of the magnates were greatly annoyed by this, and in particular the Count of Tripoli, who thought it unworthy to recognise him as king, since he was a stranger. After receiving a bribe, he invited the Saracens into the kingdom, and he betrayed various castles and towns to them as he strove to obtain Jerusalem. Those who had often brought

⁸ Conrad was betrothed to Berengaria, daughter of Alfonso VIII of Castile, in 1188, but the betrothal was broken off at some stage before 1193.

⁹ Frederick acknowledged the royal status of Wladislaw II of Bohemia (1140-72) in January 1158, and similarly that of Waldemar I of Denmark (1157-82) in late 1162.

¹⁰ Otto's account was inaccurate in several respects, not least that Queen Sybilla was Baldwin IV's sister, not his daughter, and she married Guy de Lusignan in 1180, some years before her brother's death.

¹¹ *Luke*, 11: 17.

¹² Cf. *Judith*, 16: 7, and Otto of Freising, *Chronica*, V.29, p. 255.

banditry to the kingdom gained the support through bribery of some of the knights of the Temple, as well as some of the greater men of the kingdom, to prevent them resisting by force those who were ‘exercising banditry’,¹³ and by so dissimulating they very quickly obtained for themselves a great part of the region.

(30) In the year from the Lord’s Incarnation 1187, Saladin, the king of the Saracens, who was living at Damascus, took notice of the most wicked conduct of the Christians, and considering them to be riddled with discord, envy and avarice decided that this was a suitable moment to set about gaining all of Syria and Palestine. He raised a vast army of Saracens drawn from the entire east and engaged in battle against the Christians. He ravaged the whole of Palestine with fire and sword, and stormed many castles and towns, killing or capturing the Christians there, and importing Saracens to live there. Hence the king of the people of Jerusalem, as well as Prince Rainald of Antioch and other magnates among the Christians raised a great army, and with the Cross of the Lord preceding the army they hastened to meet Saladin and do battle with him. They were defeated by him, many Christian warriors were killed and, O horror, the Cross of the Lord was captured. The Christians were put to flight; the king and the most illustrious Prince Rainald, along with many other Christians were captured and taken to Damascus, where this same king and the aforesaid prince were beheaded for confessing the true faith.¹⁴

Made bold by this victory, the pagans ravaged the whole region, and captured or destroyed all the towns of the Christians apart from Tyre, Sidon, Tripoli and Antioch, and a few other towns and very strong and impregnable castles.¹⁵ Acre had already been captured. It is a port and had formerly been, and is [now] ‘a unique and special refuge of the Christians’.¹⁶ They laid siege to Jerusalem, and after destroying the churches round about, notably Bethlehem and that on the Mount of Olives, and many others [too], finally the Christians were forced to leave by an agreement, and Jerusalem was captured. The holy places of our redemption were profaned by

¹³ Cf. *Judges*, 9: 25.

¹⁴ The inaccuracies in the above account are obvious, not least in that Rainald of Châtillon was executed on the evening of the Battle of Hattin, while far from being put to death Guy de Lusignan was later ransomed and died on Cyprus in 1194. In this section Otto employs the ‘historic present’, which has here been rendered as a past tense.

¹⁵ In fact Sidon surrendered to Saladin on 29th July 1187, though Otto was correct with regard to the other three cities named.

the pagans who now lived there. I consider that one ought not to pass over in silence an incident that occurred while Jerusalem was under siege. The pagans attacked and captured one of the towers, killing many Christians, and Saladin's banner was raised there. As a result the citizens grew desperate and ceased to defend the rest of the walls, and that very same day the city was about to fall, with its people facing extermination 'with the edge of the sword'.¹⁷ Seeing this, a certain German knight, 'summoning audacity from desperation',¹⁸ encouraged those around him and making a valiant attack on the enemy stormed the tower. The pagans within it were slain, and he cut down the staff of Saladin's banner and threw the standard into the mud. By doing this he restored the confidence of the citizens, and he brought them back to defend the walls as quickly as possible. After the city was surrendered on terms, as was mentioned, the pagans did respect the Sepulchre of the Lord, though [only] 'for the sake of profit'.¹⁹ This lamentable desolation of the Holy Land took place in the year from the Lord's Incarnation 1187, in the eighty-eighth year from the coming of the Franks, when that same land was liberated from the pagans by Duke Godfrey. And so Saladin overcame Palestine and wretchedly undermined the Church beyond the sea, and that region has now for many years been groaning under its subjection by the pagans.

In this same year Pope Urban died, and Gregory VIII succeeded, the 174th in line. When he received the awful news of the destruction of the land beyond the seas, he imposed penance on the whole Church to placate God, and he sent out cardinal bishops and priests as legates to all the lands subject to the Church on this side of the sea, lamenting the disaster with paternal affection, and informing the sons of mother Church that, 'mindful of the breasts'²⁰ through whose milk the ancient church in Jerusalem was nourished, they should bring help to their suffering mother. He strengthened their manly resolve, and called them to witness, by receiving the Cross in remission of sins. He manfully encouraged them through the word of preaching, that they bring glory to themselves as servants of the Cross, and avenge the disgrace of the Cross,

¹⁶ Cf. Otto of Freising, *Chronica*, VII.30, p. 357, where a very similar phrase was applied to Edessa, when Otto described its capture.

¹⁷ *Exodus*, 17: 13.

¹⁸ *Gesta Francorum*, II.23, which in turn followed the translation by Hegesippus of Josephus, *De Bello Iudiaco*, III.9.

¹⁹ Otto of Freising, *Chronica*, VII.2, p. 310, describing Jerusalem before 1099, though Otto himself copied this passage from Ekkehard of Aura.

²⁰ *Song of Solomon*, 1: 3 (Vulgate).

which was being held captive by the pagans, in praise and glorification of Him who was crucified.

(31) In the year from the Lord's Incarnation 1188, the Emperor Frederick celebrated a general court at Mainz in the middle of Lent, and there, with the storms of war quieted over the whole of Germany and peace everywhere regained he dealt with matters of state. Legates of the Apostolic See came to this meeting, where in the name of the lord pope and the whole Church they lamented the destruction of the Church overseas, which they made known both orally and through written documents, and they requested the protection of the Roman Empire for its assistance. After consultation the emperor pledged himself to bring aid, and he and his son Frederick, Duke of the Swabians, received the Cross of pilgrimage in remission of their sins. He announced publically that he would avenge the injury to the Cross, and he inspired many of the magnates of the kingdom, along with a multitude of others of various classes and ages, to follow his example and enlist in this same matter. After this had taken place at the court the cardinals went out to preach in different parts of the empire and they urged and persuaded many to 'leave father and mother, wife and children and lands' in the name of Christ, and 'take up his cross and follow' him on the expedition overseas, and they gathered an innumerable army.²¹ The emperor informed them all that the time for departure would be May of the next year. The poor were [each] at least to possess three marks for their expenses, the richer were to gather funds as best they could. He forbade under pain of anathema the needy, who had less than three marks in weight, from undertaking the journey, for he did not wish the army to be hampered by a crowd of unsuitable people.

While these events were taking place in the Roman empire, the pope sent cardinals from his side to Louis [*sic*], the King of the French, and Richard, King of the English, encouraging them to take the Cross and undertake the same endeavour, and he enlisted many people from the aforesaid kingdoms in this same knighthood.²²

²¹ *Mark*, 10:29 and 8: 34; *Matthew*, 16: 24.

²² Kings Philip of France and Henry II of England took the Cross in January 1188; Richard only became king on the death of his father on 6th July 1189.

At this time the men of Cologne devoted all their efforts and resources to the fortification of their city and surrounded it with a most formidable wall. This roused the suspicions of the emperor and was displeasing to him. He threatened them with punishment unless they demolished their fortifications, and fear of him forced them to breach the wall in four places.

In these days envoys of the Sultan or King of Iconium came to the emperor to renew their treaty, although this was a piece of deceit, and on behalf of their lord they offered him free passage all the way through Cilicia to his army, provided that he came in peace.²³ For through Cilicia the emperor and his army would have been able to cross the land of the Sultan, whose capital was Iconium, and thus the pagans, fearful for their own land, preferred to seek peace by treaty rather war, although events turned out very different from what was hoped.

(32) In the year from the Lord's Incarnation 1189, the Emperor Frederick celebrated his general court at Pentecost at Pressburg in the march of Hungary, where he mustered the army of pilgrims for the warfare of Christ, after handing over the *regalia* to his son King Henry. He divided the income from his estates among his sons, along with the rights attached to them, as he saw fit. After thus appropriately settling all his affairs, he said farewell and led his army towards the east, to fight against Saladin, the King of the Saracens and all the enemies of the Cross of Christ. He was accompanied by his son of the same name, the duke of Swabia, the margrave of Meissen with the Saxons,²⁴ and many other princes and bishops, along with a most numerous army, equipped with everything that was needed for war. As he marched through Hungary, he was generously provided with many gifts by the king of Hungary, who also furnished the army with foodstuffs: quantities of flour, wine and meat. He crossed into Bulgaria, but there the inhabitants denied him 'the king's high way',²⁵ and he took it by force. A host of those who fought against him were killed, and he had many of those who were captured hanged from the trees on either side of the highway. Thus he showed that he was visiting the Sepulchre of the Lord not with the wallet and staff but with lance and sword, and so after crossing Bulgaria he passed into Greece. The Greeks behaved even worse than the Bulgarians, refusing the army the supplies needed for life, for on the order of the Emperor of Constantinople they denied the

²³ Cf. *Genesis*, 42: 11.

²⁴ Perhaps Dietrich, the brother of Margrave Albrecht, who later succeeded him as margrave (1195-1221).

²⁵ *Numbers*, 21: 22.

knights of the Holy Sepulchre a free market to buy foodstuffs, and took refuge in their fortresses, taking with them everything from the surrounding areas. Caesar was annoyed to suffer such treatment from Christians, and gave the army permission to plunder, and issued an edict to treat the Greeks as if they were pagans, for so they had shown themselves by their actions. As a result the army was let loose, and it captured the very rich city of Philippopolis by storm, and after obtaining extensive booty destroyed it. He similarly stormed the very strong fortress of Demotika, and the terror that this induced led many castles and towns of the Greeks to surrender to him. By conquering this wealthy province and giving it over to plunder, he forced the rest of the Greeks to allow him an unopposed passage. These events took place towards the end of the month of August. The emperor then summoned the princes and on their advice decided to spend the winter in Greece, and after making all the land round about subject to himself he fortified a mountain that was difficult of access for the safe-keeping of his army. He called it *Chunigsberg* in the German language. There he remained in security ‘against the face’ of the city of Constantinople,²⁶ having all the supplies that were needed by the army brought there from the neighbouring towns. He overcome Greek cunning through Roman power and German resolution, and he remained there throughout the winter until Easter of the following year, while the Greeks and their emperor ‘fled from before his face’.²⁷

(33) In the year from the Lord’s Incarnation 1190 Pope Clement III died, and Celestine III succeeded him, the 175th in line.²⁸

In this same year Duke Leopold of Austria and the army of the men of Cologne, along with many others from the Lower Rhineland, after receiving the Cross, set sail from Brindisi and travelled to Acre, where King Richard of the English and King Louis [sic] of the French had previously arrived with a well-equipped force. They joined the Pisans, who with an Italian army were already besieging the city, and attacked it with all their forces, while Saladin devoted all his efforts to bringing help to those besieged.

²⁶ *I Maccabees*, 16: 6. Frederick spent the winter of 1189-90 at Adrianople, c. 150 km. from Constantinople.

²⁷ Cf. *Psalm*, 88: 24 (Vulgate), 89: 23 (AV)

²⁸ Celestine was elected on 30th March 1191; Clement III died a few days earlier.

In this same year King Henry, son of the Emperor Frederick, raised an army, crossed the Alps and entered Italy. Reaching the City, he was gloriously received by Pope Celestine, and on the holy day of Easter he and his wife were crowned by the pope, with the acclamation of all the Romans, and his name was entered as the 95th emperor from Augustus.²⁹ He gained the agreement of the Romans by satisfying their avarice with extravagant bribes, and he promised to hand over to them the castle of Tusculo, which had formerly stood as a bastion of the empire against all their attacks; by doing this he in no small way dishonoured the empire. The Romans immediately poured forth from the City, and on Good Friday they utterly destroyed the castle, overthrowing its walls and towers, and afterwards consuming it by fire. This was done in revenge for the defeat that they had sustained at the hands of [Arch]bishop Christian of Mainz in a former war.³⁰

Meanwhile the Emperor of Constantinople, being unable to resist the power of the Caesar Frederick, made satisfaction to him for what had previously occurred, and when peace had been agreed, he provided the army with a plethora of foodstuffs and restored good relations. After they had been reconciled and the emperor had concluded a treaty, ships were prepared with great care, and after Easter he and his army crossed the Hellespont.

(34) Thus while Henry was being numbered among the western emperors, the Emperor Frederick marched eastwards with the troops of the Germans, and he and his army entered Asia. His march went well for a time, and everyone throughout Romania was obedient to his will.

However, the Sultan or king of Iconium broke the treaty. Approaching the emperor with his army, he had the foodstuffs and other supplies throughout Cilicia taken into the fortresses, and he refused to allow a market for the army, behaving most treacherously like a ‘barbarian or Scythian’.³¹ As a consequence a great famine broke out in the army, and forced them to eat many of the mules, asses and horses, food to which they were unaccustomed. Furthermore, the rear columns and foragers of the Christian army were harassed by frequent raids from the pagan troops hanging on their flanks and acting like bandits. They killed a number of our men. They

²⁹ The imperial coronation actually took place on Easter Monday, 15th April 1191.

³⁰ In 1167, described by Otto in c. 20.

³¹ *Colossians*, 3: 11.

very often revealed themselves drawn up in ordered ranks on horseback as though ready to do battle with our men, but then retreated for they refused to come to close quarters. Despite this harassment and the shortage of food and everything else under which the army was labouring, the emperor kept to his peace treaty with the Sultan and prevented the army from ravaging and plundering, for he believed that what was being done was either without the Sultan's knowledge or against his wishes. But once he was informed by his scouts that these actions were committed on the direct order of the Sultan, and that the latter had thus betrayed him, he was enraged and declaring the Sultan to be a public enemy he allowed the army to take revenge by giving over Cilicia, Pamphylia and Phrygia to slaughter and destruction, ravaging everywhere by fire and sword, while the pagans, although they appeared ready for battle, invariably took flight. This plundering restored the army, and the emperor now directed his march towards Iconium, the Sultan's capital and the principal city of Cilicia, upon which he launched an attack with unheard of speed. This city had a very large population; furthermore it was most strongly fortified with strong walls and high towers, had an impregnable citadel situated in its midst, and had been stocked with all the supplies needed to undergo a siege, while all the region round about had been stripped bare of foodstuffs, so that when the emperor arrived there he would be unable to sustain his troops for any length of time. But through God's help matters turned out quite differently to what the pagans had hoped. For before the third hour of the day the emperor launched a surprise and very heavy attack, many of the pagan warriors were killed, and by the ninth hour he had forced his way into the city. Vast numbers of all ages and both genders were slaughtered 'with the edge of the sword'.³² The Sultan-king and his nobles fled to the citadel. Having gained control of the city, that very same day he laid siege to the citadel. Seeing that the forces of the Germans were utterly victorious, that they had the support of Divine power, and that all those who resisted them suffered instant death and awful slaughter, the Sultan learned from this dangerous trial that he had to surrender. He sought a truce from the emperor, and in a spirit of belated penitence asked that he might be allowed to speak to him. This being granted, he came down from the citadel with his men and surrendered to the emperor. He gave hostages and was reconciled to him – and the city of Iconium and his kingdom was restored to him.³³

³² *I Samuel*, 22: 19.

³³ The *Historia de Expeditione Friderici* and other accounts suggest that the negotiations were carried on through envoys, and that Frederick and Qilij-Arslan did not in fact meet in person.

(35) After this had taken place, and with the army enjoying rich spoils, the emperor struck camp and left Iconium in triumph. The princes of the Armenians ‘flowed from everywhere to him’,³⁴ and in particular Leo, the most noble prince of the Christians of this area, who lived in the mountains. They received him joyfully, and they rendered him proper thanks for his arrival and for the defeat of the pagans, and he set off with great rejoicing and glory towards Tarsus, which is notable as the birthplace of the Apostle Paul. For ‘the Land was silent in his sight’.³⁵ But ‘God is terrible in his doing towards the children of Men’, while ‘the set time’ had not yet ‘come to have mercy upon Sion’.³⁶ The Emperor Frederick had showed himself to be a most strong anchor for the bark of Peter, but after so many and great successes, the rope of our hope now broke, and God did not allow this bark, shaken and flogged in the midst of the storms of this world, yet to be rendered pure. For as the mighty Caesar Frederick marched near Tarsus, he entered a certain river, through which part of the army had already crossed, in the hope of cooling down, for it was extremely hot and he was a good swimmer. But the sudden cold extinguished his natural heat and he was drowned, and this emperor who was victorious on land and sea ended his life with a wretched death. It is said by some that this happened in the River Cydnus, in which Alexander the Great had done something similar, but not at the expense of his life. For the Cydnus is very near to Tarsus.³⁷ He died in the thirty-eighth year of his reign, and his thirty-fifth as emperor, in the year from the Lord’s Incarnation 1190. The entire army of the Christians was irremediably downcast by his death and fell into heartfelt lamentation, for if the emperor had lived he would have made the whole of the east fear him. His intestines and the rest of his flesh were buried at Tarsus, while his bones were brought to Antioch, where they were most solemnly interred with royal ceremonial.

Then his son Frederick, Duke of the Swabians, the noble heir of his father,³⁸ the glory of the Christian army and its only hope, generously distributed his father’s treasure to the army, consoled his troops who were prostrated by grief, restored it and led it from that fatal place, and led it unscathed to Antioch. But there, with its head already cut off by the death of the emperor,

³⁴ *Daniel*, 13.4 (Vulgate).

³⁵ *I Maccabees*, 1: 3, and 11.52.

³⁶ *Psalms*, 65:5, 101: 14 (Vulgate); 66:5, 102: 14 (AV).

³⁷ This story was taken from Orosius, but Frederick drowned in the River Saleph (Calycadnus), not the Cydnus.

³⁸ Cf. Otto of Freising, *Chronicon*, VI.19, p. 280.

plague immediately spread through its whole body. Both rich and poor fell prey as one to this disease, and the greater part of the army was consumed by unlucky death and was buried in Antioch and the regions round about. With almost all of this great army unexpectedly destroyed through Heavenly judgement, Duke Frederick led the rest to join the other Christians who were striving to besiege Acre, and was ceremoniously welcomed by them. But after he had been there only a little while, he was struck down by fever and taken off by premature death. He was buried there amid great lamentation. So that noble and renowned imperial valour both of father and son, the hope of the entire Church, ‘melted away as waters which run continually’,³⁹ so that the lamentation of Jeremiah can appropriately be used for this calamity, where he bewails in his Threnodies the sons of Sion, for these sons of Sion are now the pilgrims to the Sepulchre of the Lord. He says: ‘The precious sons of Sion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter?’⁴⁰ For if they had lived, and with their army, prepared with such care and arrayed with such valour, had joined the forces at Acre to form one body, what people, what region, what king, however brave, or even the power of the many kings of the east, would have been able to resist the power of Italy, the ardour and knowledge of war of France, and above all the courage and endurance of Germany and the indomitable leader of its kingdom? But ‘there is no wisdom, nor counsel nor understanding against the Lord’.⁴¹ ‘Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain’.⁴² Thus ‘Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Sion’, O Lord, when and how and by whom You wish, and when ‘the time to favour her is come’.⁴³ Since, if it should be made free by human valour, with Your permission, Frederick would have obtained the title of victory. Therefore since, in accordance with Your will, he has given this sacrifice of his blood in honour of the Holy Sepulchre and Your Holy Cross, would that the sacrifice of his life as a pilgrim has pleased You, and You have deigned to associate his soul with the spirits of the blessed in the Celestial Jerusalem. Amen.

(36) So Acre was besieged by the Christians, under the command of the kings of the French and English, Duke Leopold and the rest of the princes. It was fiercely attacked from land and sea

³⁹ *Psalm*, 57:8 (Vulgate), 58: 7 (AV).

⁴⁰ *Lamentations*, 4: 2.

⁴¹ *Proverbs*, 21: 30.

⁴² *Psalm*, 126.1 (Vulgate), 127: 1 (AV).

by all sorts of war engines, catapults and trebuchets. The Pisans, Genoese and Venetians, attacked from the ocean, since they were accustomed to ships and to ‘do business on great waters’.⁴⁴ Meanwhile the king of the French received an ill-omened messenger informing him that his own kingdom had been invaded, and so he abandoned the siege, and left along with many others, loving rather an earthly than the heavenly kingdom. He crossed the sea and went home via Apulia. But the admirable king of England, Duke Leopold and the remaining mighty warriors putting their hands to the Lord’s plough and did not look back⁴⁵ until they had rendered the territory of Acre fruitful with the corpses of the pagans.

Saladin, however, devoted every effort to rescue those who were in Acre. He mustered his army and tried to break the siege by the Christians. But on hearing of Saladin’s arrival the Christians surrounded themselves with two very broad and very deep ditches, having two gates built above the moat to allow them to make sorties, if chance presented itself, and to bring in foostuffs from round about to continue the siege. Therefore, after raising a very powerful army, Saladin led his troops against Acre, and besieged the Christians who were [themselves] besieging the city. He established a castle on a certain hill not far from the city, which allowed the citizens to send a smoke signal to him when they were attacked by the Christians. Thus he assisted them from outside, and he attacked the Christians with arrows, bolts and all sorts of missiles. The Christians, however, often drew up their columns and advanced outside the ditches, wishing to fight him in open combat, but he always retreated and declined battle. Finally, despite Saladin’s presence they attacked the city with all their forces and stormed it. They slaughtered all the pagans, both men and women, whatever their age or condition, with the edge of the sword, while Saladin was watching. He retired, grief-stricken. A few of the more important people were kept as prisoners.⁴⁶

Once the city was captured, the king of the English ordered his banner to be raised on a tower as a sign of triumph, quite arrogantly claiming responsibility for the victory for himself alone. It was for this reason that as he was passing through the city and saw the banner of Duke

⁴³ *Psalm*, 101. 14 (Vulgate), 102.13 (AV).

⁴⁴ *Psalm*, 106: 23 (Vulgate), 107:23 (AV).

⁴⁵ Cf. *Luke*, 9: 62.

Leopold flying from a tower that the latter had taken with his men, knowing that it was not his own, he asked whose it was. He was told that it belonged to Duke Leopold of the Austrians, and that the latter had taken possession of that part of the city. On learning this, he became extremely angry, and he ordered that the banner be thrown down from the tower and trodden into the mud. Furthermore he added further injury by insulting the duke verbally. In addition, he excited the hatred of everyone there against him by distributing most of the booty that had been acquired through the efforts of everyone to his own men, thus depriving the rest [of their fair share]. For since he was the outstanding soldier among them all, he wished to arrange everything in accordance with his wishes and despised the other princes. However, these events led the German and Italian knights to become totally exasperated with the king, and they would have ‘withstood him to his face’,⁴⁷ had not this been prevented by the authority of the knights of the Temple. However, detesting English dishonesty and refusing to be subject to the king of the English, they boarded their ships and went home, along with Duke Leopold. The king and his men remained there further, fighting every day with the pagans.

The citizens of Jerusalem and all those who had escaped from the pagans from the other towns and villages congregated in Acre, and fortifying that town with great care they established it as a bastion for the Christian army and a seat of battle against the pagans. They divided it up among various authorities, providing quarters for the Templars, Hospitallers and the canons of the Lord’s Sepulchre with a seat for the Patriarch, and they often marched out with the army to fight with the pagans. They recovered many of the cities and castles that they had lost, and resisted the pagans manfully. As the king of the English was going home, they chose Count Henry of Champagne as king, giving him the widow of King Guy, and so, having mustered, ‘growing by number every day’ and ‘they fought the Lord’s battles joyfully’,⁴⁸ and many from the lands this side of the sea sailed together to their help.

But these words are enough on this subject, so let our pen return to our empire.

⁴⁶ In fact Acre surrendered in July 1191; most of the prisoners were massacred over a month later, after Richard I failed to come to an agreement with Saladin.

⁴⁷ *Galatians*, 2: 11.

⁴⁸ *I Maccabees*, 3: 2.

(37) In the year from the Lord's Incarnation 1190 [*sic*] the Emperor Henry and his wife were, and has previously been described, crowned by Pope Celestine.⁴⁹ Then, desiring to take possession of Apulia and Sicily after the death of William, and taking her with him, he led his army into the Campania, where he found the whole country in rebellion against him. For on William's death a relative of his, descended from Roger, a man called Tancred, had with the consent of all the barons and cities of Sicily tyrannously set up his own government in that land, which has from antiquity been the mother of tyrants, seizing the name of king and violently resisting the emperor. While he lived he steadfastly deprived him of his wife's inheritance. The emperor thus laid siege to the rebellious city of Naples in the Campania, ravaging all the land round about with fire and sword. During his return from his expedition across the sea the King of France came to him and made an alliance, then honourably taking his leave he went back to France. With his army attacked by pestilence and having gained no advantage, the emperor planned [himself] to return home. It was then that the empress was captured by some of the barons of Apulia who were related to her, and was held for a time in captivity under extremely careful guard. With this lamentable beginning the emperor despaired of obtaining Apulia, and he returned across the Alps, to await better times in future; first however he complained to the pope about his wife's imprisonment. The pope was angered by those who had presumed to do this and laid an anathema upon them, placing the whole land under interdict, and forcing the release of the empress from her captivity. Afterwards she returned north of the Alps and was restored to the emperor, who filled with indignation looked forward to the day when he could take his revenge. On his return north of the Alps the Emperor Henry granted the duchy of Swabia to his brother Conrad. This Conrad was a man of fierce and coarse nature, although quite generous at heart, but on that account seeking after great things and always committing crimes, so he spread fear among people near and far.

(38) At this time, namely in the year 1191 [*sic*], King Richard of the English was returning through Hungary from the expedition overseas, and accompanied by only a small escort he entered the lands of Duke Leopold. Remembering the injuries that he had inflicted upon this same duke at Acre, he was much afraid of him, and so he abandoned his royal state, wishing to cross his lands speedily and secretly, in the guise of an ordinary person. Needing to eat, he

⁴⁹ See above, c. 33.

turned aside to a little inn near Vienna, having sent away all but a few companions. To avoid being recognised, he busied himself in work fitting for servants, and was himself helping to cook chickens, turning the spit with his own hand, but he forgot that he was wearing a valuable ring on his finger. By chance a man from the duke's household, who had been with him at Acre and had seen and taken note of the king there, happened to leave the city and entered the tavern that was distinguished by its royal cook. He spotted the ring and recognised him. Concealing this knowledge, he hastened back to the city and informed the duke, who happened to be there, of the king's presence – which news made the duke extremely happy. So the duke and a large band of knights immediately mounted their horses and hastened there, and he arrested the king as the latter was holding a roasted chicken in his hand. Mocking him for the menial work with which he had been busy, he took him back to the city, and kept him under the strictest guard, thus with a fitting reward 'repaying him as he deserved'.⁵⁰ However, many people criticised the duke for this deed, thinking it to be sacrilege to have done this to one who was a pilgrim to the Holy Sepulchre, and were in haste to denounce him – although this disapproval was of little benefit to the captive king.

Hearing of the capture of the king of the English, the emperor sent envoys to the duke, ordering him to hand over the king, and once the latter had been handed over at Worms, he ordered him to be taken away and laden with chains, treating him thus to make him wish to be ransomed.⁵¹ Many of the leading men of his realm arrived to visit him, and they brought all sorts of treasure for their lord.

Duke Leopold was however excommunicated by the pope for his capture of the pilgrim king. This was to prevent anybody else similarly daring to kidnap pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre and discouraging them from going to help the church overseas. Finally, after giving some thousands of measures of gold and silver from his ransom to the emperor, and more gold and silver to Duke Leopold to secure his agreement, and confirming on oath that he would live in peace and be reconciled with them, he was released from captivity and, with this payment, returned to his homeland. I shall not describe the huge weight of precious metal that the ransom

⁵⁰ *Esther*, 16:18 (Vulgate). The king's arrest took place on 21st December 1192.

⁵¹ Richard was held prisoner at the castle of Trifels: Otto referred to the court held at Worms in June 1193, where the terms of the ransom were agreed.

provided, lest anyone should consider it so incredible as to be a falsehood. One ought however to know that the contents of the treasuries of all the churches of England were brought together, and the ransom was for the most part composed of chalices, crosses and other sorts of ecclesiastical valuables. After receiving this huge sum the emperor gave generous gifts to his knights, and sent a large army of paid troops to Apulia under the command of the steward Markward of Anweiler and Bertold of Königsberg, and through their efforts many castles and cities surrendered to him. Berthold was killed there, being hit by a missile from a catapult. Tancred having in the meanwhile died, the leading men of that land conspired together against the emperor, refused to surrender and drove all the German foreigners from their cities.

(39) In the year from the Lord's Incarnation 1193 [*sic*] many pilgrims from the lands this side of the sea took the cross and looked to the Church for help with their passage. In this same year the emperor Henry raised an army, crossed the Alps by the 'second route', ⁵² passed though [northern] Italy and Tuscany and invaded Campania. During this march Richard of Acerra a very powerful count, was captured by Diepold of Roggatart [*Rocca d'Arce?*] and was handed over to the emperor at Capua. The latter rightly loathed him because of the capture of the empress, and he had him hanged from a gallows with his head downwards.

Then he either attacked and destroyed, or received the surrender of, all the cities of Campania and Apulia. Burning with anger, he stormed Salerno, Barletta, Bari and many other very strong cities and there seized vast plunder; nor was there any city or fortress which could resist his attack. The army of pilgrims which was preparing for the expedition across the sea crossed the Alps with him and marched along with him for a while, greatly reinforcing his troops. After imposing his rule over all of Apulia and Campania, he marched with his troops into Calabria, plundering that province and then crossed over to Sicily. He sent the marshal, Henry of Kalden, to carry the war into the area round Catania, where without delay he encountered and attacked the powerful army which had been drawn up there ready for battle by the leading men of that land. He gained the victory, and a huge number of men were killed. He pursued the fugitives into the city and stormed it. The bishop, who had been a leader of the rebellion, and many noblemen were captured, and the city was set of fire. The marshal did not

⁵² The Splügen Pass between Chur and Chiavenna.

spare its churches, and he set fire to and tragically destroyed the church of St. Agatha, killing a great multitude of all ages, both men and women, who had taken refuge there. He then returned in triumph to the emperor, bringing his noble prisoners with him.⁵³

The [Sicilian] nobles were absolutely desperate, and treacherously plotted to murder the emperor. In order to fulfil this plan, they surrendered themselves and all their property into his power. The emperor received their pledges of loyalty and treated them decently, and he escaped their plots, albeit only just. Once he had realised their deceit, he decided to overcome their plot by one of his own, even though it was dishonourable to punish treachery by treachery. Hence he summoned the known conspirators, and they (little suspecting) gathered at this court. They were all arrested and thrown into prison where he had them put painfully to death with hideous tortures. He deprived the archbishop Margaritus, one of the country's most powerful barons, and Count Richard, a man of great leaning, of their eyes. He had one person convicted of treason skinned alive, and he ordered that a man who aspired to the royal crown should have a crown fixed to him by iron nails.⁵⁴ He had some people tied to a stake, surrounded by a pyre and cruelly put to death by burning, and others fastened to the ground with stakes through their bodies. By the actions he struck fear into all the nations round about, not only on this side of the ocean but on the other side as well; all were absolutely terrified by his severity.

(40) In the year from the Lord's Incarnation 1194 the emperor directed his forces against the city of Palermo on the far side of Sicily, which was not only the site of the capital and archbishopric of Sicily but was also the place where its kings' treasury was up to this time stored. After setting up [siege] castles facing it, it was his intention to storm the city. He ordered his troops to break into the great royal garden, which was surrounded on all sides by a wall and filled in a charming way with all sorts of beasts – these animals were consumed to supply his army. The citizens were greatly afraid of the emperor's anger and without a fight held out their hands in surrender, seeking peace terms and offering to surrender themselves and all their property. He agreed to this, the city was surrendered and he received them back into his

⁵³ This account appears to confuse what happened in 1194 with the later rebellion in 1197, after which we know that the Bishop of Catania, Roger Orbus (Bishop 1195-1206), was imprisoned and his brother blinded.

grace. Imperial banners were displayed on all the towers, and on the appointed day the emperor, in full regalia, was welcomed by the citizens in a procession. He allowed his army to take its leisure in all sorts of pleasant activities and, free from care, to enjoy the extraordinarily rich booty; meanwhile he took pleasure in all sorts of splendid shows and entertainments on the parade ground.

Finally, the whole city was prepared for his triumphal entry, decorated with great expense and labour by the citizens, filled with carpets and garlands of all sorts of flowers, valuable decorations, the squares both inside and outside the city permeated by the smell of frankincense and myrrh and other expensive scents. The emperor and his army remained some way outside the city, and so the citizens went out in groups arranged according the differences of rank, class and age, the nobles in their own party, the older men in order of age, and the younger and stronger, then the young people not yet old enough to grow beards or to serve in war, adorned with every sort of clothing and trappings for their horses. They went to meet the emperor in the order of their rank, each and every one of them applauding in time with the music from the various instruments. The emperor meanwhile, with no small effort, drew up his army in the proper military manner. He absolutely forbade all indiscipline among the Germans, threatening that those who disobeyed him would have their hands cut off. He paraded his troops with their armour glittering superbly, slowly marching two by two along the road towards the city. He himself then made a glorious state entry into the city, followed by the princes, with everyone properly acclaiming him with the *laudes*; and when the crowd who stood in the squares saw the emperor then, as is the custom of that land, they prostrated themselves face downwards on the ground in front of him. So he was received as king and established his peace. He was given many gifts by the citizens, most excellent horses with golden saddles, and reins and trappings and other things of gold, silver, silk and jewels, with all of which he generously rewarded his army. First he gave royal gifts to the princes, then he showed himself most generous to the knights who deserved reward, and thus he bound all of them in a variety of ways to his service.

⁵⁴ The latter may have been Jordan Lupinus, Count of Bovino. These executions probably took place in June 1197, and Margaritus of Brindisi, the former commander of the Sicilian fleet, and Count Richard of Ajello, who had been prisoners since Christmas 1194, were blinded shortly afterwards.

A huge sum of gold and silver was then discovered in the royal treasury which he sent to the public treasury at Trifels and from this he greatly enriched a number of other imperial palaces. For he found there the riches of Apulia, Calabria and Sicily, lands which are very rich in metals, a glorious collection of precious stones and all sorts of gems. He also took with this infinite treasure Tancred's wife, daughter and son, and the latter's fiancée, the daughter of the emperor of Constantinople, and bringing the captive nobles with him, he celebrated a wonderful victory. Thus after having conquered Samnium, Apulia and Calabria, Henry, that most warlike of emperors, reduced all of Sicily and Sardinia to obedience. He dismissed the army of pilgrims, honouring it with many gifts, and despatched with it from his own forces to help the Church across the sea five hundred stipendiary knights, paid for from the public treasury. These sailed from Siponto and Brindisi across the Mediterranean and landed at Acre where they were joyfully received by the Christians. With their help the Christians recovered many castles and, after both sides had met in a number of battles and the Christians had invariably been victorious, they forced the pagans to ask for peace. As a result, when the peace was concluded, the pagans energetically fortified the cities and castles which they held, and above all Jerusalem, which they rendered impregnable, surrounding it with a double wall and very deep ditches, and building an antemural [fortification]. They granted safe-conduct to Christians wishing to see the Lord's Sepulchre, but the pope forbade anyone to take advantage of this favour, lest the pagans profit from the gifts of the Christians, and bound those who transgressed his prohibition with the bond of anathema. ...

[A paragraph was here inserted, quite unconnected with what went before, concerning the leading Parisian scholars of the day].

(41) The year from the Lord's Incarnation 1195. The Emperor Henry went to Taranto where there were ships laden with an abundance of every sort of provision which had been sent across the sea by the army of the Christians. He decided to send the noble captives back to Germany, sending them before him to await his triumphant return, and he ordered them to be guarded at suitable places. He ordered that the son of King Tancred, who was just a boy, be brought to Regensburg and deprived of his eyes, and then consigned to perpetual captivity in the castle of

Amiso.⁵⁵ When he came to adulthood, he abandoned transitory matters and, so it is said, sought those eternal with good works, eager for Heaven since he was unable to attend to earthly affairs. For having been forcibly removed from the active life, he studied the contemplative, which is the more meritorious.⁵⁶ The emperor betrothed his fiancée, the daughter of the emperor of Constantinople, to his brother Philip, and sent the Apulian queen, Tancred's wife, whose name was Sibilila, and her daughter under guard to the nunnery of Hohenburg in Alsace. He despatched the archpirate Margaritus and Count Richard, the empress's [*sic*] relative, who had, as said, been deprived of their eyes, to be held in perpetual chains at Trifels.⁵⁷ And so, completely victorious both by land and sea, the mighty emperor returned home to Germany.

Duke Welf died. Also, Leopold, duke of the east [*dux Orientalis*], suffered a wound in his shin, and because of the unbearable pain his lower leg was cut off, but his illness grew worse and he finished his life painfully. At this same time the aforesaid King Richard of England was killed by an arrow while besieging a castle, and his brother John succeeded him as king.⁵⁸

(42) In these days a third overseas expedition was organized that encouraged many princes from our lands, along with a lot of other people, to make the journey to Jerusalem.⁵⁹ Conrad, the venerable archbishop of Mainz and the chancellor Conrad, bishop of Würzburg, both men of distinction, acted as their leaders. Among those on this expedition were Duke Frederick of Austria, the son of Leopold, intending to do this for the remission of his father's soul. He died on the way, but it is to be hoped suffered only a temporal death, not that of the soul.⁶⁰ His brother Leopold succeeded him as duke. Furthermore Henry, Count Palatine of the Rhine, the son of

⁵⁵ Probably Hohenems, in the Voralberg.

⁵⁶ However, the *Gesta Innocentii Papae Tertiae*, c. 25, MPL ccxiv, col. xlvii, (written c. 1210) said that he died while still a child. He may still have been alive in May 1202, when his arrest was mentioned by the pope in a circular letter to the people of Sicily, with no reference to him being deceased, *Die Register Innocenz' III. 5 Pontifikatsjahr 1202/3*, ed. O. Hageneder *et alii* (Vienna 1993), pp. 67-70 no. 37, at p. 68.

⁵⁷ Here Otto has confused Count Richard of Ajello with Queen Sibilila's brother, Count Richard of Acerra, who was put to death in 1196, and whose execution he had mentioned earlier. Furthermore Tancred and Sibilila had three daughters who were sent with her to Germany, and subsequently released after Henry's death.

⁵⁸ Otto here conflates the death of various prominent persons over a period of several years. Welf VI died on 15th December 1191. Duke Leopold V of Austria died on 31st December 1194, after being injured in a riding accident, and Richard I died on 6th April 1199, while besieging the castle of Chalus in the Limousin.

⁵⁹ Here Otto inserts an account of the 1197/8 Crusade, which ought by rights to appear later in his narrative.

⁶⁰ He died on 16th April 1198; his remains were brought back to Austria and buried next to his father at Heiligenkreuz.

Duke Henry of Saxony, maternal nephew to the king of England and brother of the Emperor Otto, along with the duke of Brabant and Louvain,⁶¹ and many other distinguished barons, took the Cross with a strong following, and desiring to follow Christ⁶² they sailed to the help of the Church across the sea, where they found many men from the first expedition. They joined together and attacked the pagans, ravaging much of their land daily with fire and sword, and recovering some of it. They besieged the castle of Toron, which was most strongly fortified, both by nature and man-made defences. They would have captured this, had not ‘the holy hunger for gold’⁶³ weighed more in the minds of some people than desire for Christ. For, so it is said, certain of the knights of the Temple had been bribed by the pagans, and they and a few others persuaded the chancellor Conrad, who was taking a leading part in this siege, to raise the siege in return for a most weighty sum of gold. Hence they withdrew, and so because of this castle Christ was sold to the pagans, as he had once been to the Jews. Nor did they gain any benefit from the treasure that had thus been gained, just as Judas did not from the thirty pieces of silver. For these men who had been corrupted by money were bribed by the pagans with counterfeit gold, actually base metal the surface of which was gold-coloured, and for this they received ‘an everlasting reproach’.⁶⁴ Furthermore, if this castle had been captured and remained in Christian hands it would have greatly diminished the power of the pagans in that region. Nor was this left without vengeance. Would that this was like the paternal scourge,⁶⁵ but Divine severity did not allow this to go unpunished. For as soon as this same Conrad the chancellor had gone home, crossing the vastness of the sea and returning to his see of Würzburg, then he conspired against the kingdom. He built a castle on the Sankt Maria Berg in that city and came out in open rebellion, and much of the property of his church was laid waste. He was then murdered by some of the *ministeriales* of that church, whom he had waged war against and gravely injured, and he was buried in that same church.⁶⁶ However, it is said of him that various marks of flagellation were found on his body, through which his penitence and austere way of life were shown.

⁶¹ Henry I, Duke of Brabant 1190-1235.

⁶² Cf. *Matthew*, 16: 24: ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me’.

⁶³ Vergil, *Aeniad*, III.57.

⁶⁴ *Jeremiah*, 23: 40.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Hebrews*, 12: 6: ‘the Lord ... scourgeth every son whom he receiveth’.

⁶⁶ Bishop Conrad was murdered on 29th October 1202 by Heinrich and Bodo of Ravensburg, the nephews of the imperial marshal Heinrich of Kalden; see *Chronicon Montis Sereni* (Lauterberg), MGH SS xxiii.170

But let us return to the matter in hand. The army of the pilgrims at Acre was so shocked by the way of life of the Templars, Hospitallers and the other barons of that land, and greatly disliked their trade with, and the way in which they were, to some extent anyway, secretly friendly with, the pagans, and so they cast off their authority and guidance, and began to act independently under their own leadership. They had many fights with the pagans, both in open battle and in raids, in which they were usually victorious, and they strove to perform great deeds. When the people of that land saw that the army of the pilgrims fighting so fiercely and prospering in the fulfilment of their vow, they grew more afraid of their diligence than of the evil intentions of the pagans, and (so we have heard from those who were present on this expedition) they started to plot and formed a conspiracy with the pagans to kill them all by craft. For they were afraid that, if the pilgrims prevailed over the pagans, they would drive them out of their homeland and forcibly seize it for themselves, and it was for this reason that they plotted to kill or enslave them. For ‘seeking their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s’,⁶⁷ they were happy to remain in the coastal region, which is extremely fertile, because of its overflowing fruitfulness, and held Jerusalem and the Sepulchre of the Lord to be of little value. Hence, for a long time great armies have accomplished little, and ‘Jerusalem will be trodden down by the gentiles’.⁶⁸ Thus it was that King Henry was standing with his associates in the window of a most high tower at Acre and, so it is said, was discussing with them how with the help of the pagans he might arrange the death of the pilgrims, when he was exposed to Divine judgement, into which ‘it is a fearful thing to fall’,⁶⁹ and through the wish of God he fell from the window in which he sat leaning out so carelessly. With his body smashed to pieces, he gave up the ghost; thus ‘the counsel of the froward carried headlong’,⁷⁰ and the plot they had arranged miscarried.

(43) In these days the Emperor Henry designated his son Frederick to be king after him, even though the latter was still an infant, and then raised an army and entered Italy by the ‘third way’. Crossing the mountains, he arranged everything in Tuscany and the Campagna as he saw fit, and then went to Apulia and Calabria, where he [also] made his power felt. He now directed his

⁶⁷ *Philippians*, 2: 21.

⁶⁸ *Luke*, 21: 24.

⁶⁹ *Hebrews*, 10: 31.

⁷⁰ *Job*, 5: 13. Henry of Champagne died on 10th September 1197: despite what Otto says he was never formally crowned King of Jerusalem.

intention towards gaining Constantinople and the Greek Empire. He was aware that the land of the Greeks had been ruined by civil war and fraternal dispute over the imperial throne, and wishing to make this subject to the Roman Empire he turned his keen intelligence to seeing how this could be done. Meanwhile the Greek emperor sent envoys to him seeking his help against his own brother. After taking advice, he used the money of the Greeks to enlist volunteer knights, whom he sent out there together, entrusting their safety in this matter to fortune. Many people set off on this expedition in hope of gain, and sailed to Greece to offer their help there, hoping that they would receive generous reward for this.⁷¹ Meanwhile the emperor of the Greeks was captured by his brother, deprived of his eyes and held under strict guard, while the latter took over the imperial throne and the city of Constantinople. He summoned the German knights and generously received them into his imperial grace, and with their help his cause prospered and he gained rule over the Greeks, even though the son of the blinded man did his best to resist him. As we recounted above, the daughter of this blind king had been betrothed to the son of Tancred. The Emperor Henry discovered her at Palermo, and betrothed her to his brother Philip; and as a result this same blind emperor had in his desperation adopted Philip and his daughter as the heirs to the kingdom that had been stolen by his brother, for he fervently hoped that the consequence of this would be the support of the emperor.

While this was taking place at Constantinople, the Emperor Henry remained in Sicily and disposed of imperial business in these regions as he saw fit, appointing judges for [different] regions, granting rights for the towns and promulgating laws for those who held positions of power. Furthermore ‘he laid a tribute on the land and on the isles of the sea’,⁷² and spread forth his imperial rule, as his fleet sailed the sea with well-furnished ships and refurbished galleys.

(44) In the year from the Lord’s Incarnation 1196, on the death of his brother Conrad, the Emperor Henry granted the duchy of Swabia to his brother Philip, to whom he had given as wife the daughter of the emperor of Constantinople, and who had in the meantime stayed in Sicily

⁷¹ Only Otto records that Henry VI had hostile intentions towards the Byzantine Empire, and it is more probable that the envoys he sent to Constantinople were seeking support for his forthcoming expedition to the Holy Land, and perhaps especially naval support. Furthermore, if the Byzantines were seeking German mercenaries, this was probably to assist them against the Bulgarians. Claudia Naumann, *Der Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI.* (Frankfurt 1994), pp. 95-105.

⁷² *Esther*, 10: 1.

with him. He [now] despatched him and his bride to Germany. After his arrival in Swabia, Philip was knighted at Pentecost in the city of Augsburg and celebrated his marriage in magnificent style at a place called Gunzinech, which is called by some ‘the assembly of the laws’. Afterwards, on the emperor’s summons, he gathered knights, crossed the Alps and returned to him in Sicily, entrusting his affairs throughout the duchy to Bishop Diethelm of Konstanz.⁷³

(45) In the year from the Lord’s Incarnation 1197, after making the enemies of the empire subject to him wherever they were and at the height of his power on land and sea, the Emperor Henry was cut down by premature death while he was in the far reaches of Sicily. His death was a disaster for the race of the Teutons and all the people of Germany, since he had rendered them distinguished through the riches of other lands, had made all the nations round about fear them through their warlike courage, and shown them to be undoubtedly more eminent than other races. Had he not been cut down by death, he would through his courage and energy have restored the honour of the empire to its ancient height.⁷⁴ However he died at Messina in Sicily, and was buried there in royal state amid the sincere lamentation of his whole army, leaving a son who was four years old.⁷⁵

After his death Duke Philip of Swabia returned home, avoiding the ambushes of the people of these regions amidst great danger. For, as has been described, he had previously been summoned there by the emperor. The reason for this was that he might take the latter’s son from Apulia to Germany, where after his election as king by the princes he might be anointed by the [arch]bishop of Cologne, as is customary. For on setting out for Italy, the emperor had designated his son to be king after him, with the consent of all the princes apart from the bishop of Cologne.⁷⁶ The latter later changed his mind, and on the persuasion of the other princes reluctantly agreed and acclaimed the boy as king. After dealing with this matter Duke Philip set out for Italy. but when he had arrived at Rome he heard of the death of the emperor,⁷⁷ and immediately returned [north] through Tuscany and [northern] Italy, where he was threatened by

⁷³ Diethelm, Bishop of Konstanz 1190-1206.

⁷⁴ Cf. Otto of Freising, *Chronica*, VII.20, p. 339.

⁷⁵ Henry VI died at Messina on 28th September 1197, aged 32. His son Frederick was then just short of his thrid birthday.

⁷⁶ Adolf, Archbishop of Cologne 1194-1205.

⁷⁷ Other sources suggest that this was at Montefiaschone in Umbria.

ambush from various people and barely managed to escape. Thus the project (*negotium*) remained incomplete, and the boy stayed in Sicily with his mother.

At this time the inhabitants of these same regions, that is of Apulia, Calabria and Sicily, were roused to the most bitter hatred against the German race by the memory of the injuries that they had sustained at the hands of the Emperor Henry, and insofar as they could they took revenge for the harm that they had suffered. For this reason they inflicted all sorts of injuries on the many pilgrims of the German race who were returning home through these lands from the expedition overseas, and who were unaware of the death of the emperor. Nobody travelling through was allowed to escape unscathed if they were unarmed or unless they were part of a large group, and this hatred persisted for a long time.

(46) In the year from the Lord's Incarnation 1198, Pope Celestine died and Innocent III was chosen in his place. After the death of his brother the Emperor Henry, Duke Philip of Swabia returned from Tuscany to Germany, where he made every effort to persuade the princes to confirm their earlier election of the emperor's son. The eastern princes, namely the Duke of Bavaria and Duke Bernhard of Saxony, with the other barons, the [arch]bishops of Magdeburg and Salzburg and the rest of the eastern bishops, appointed a day for a meeting at a vill called Arnisperc in Thuringia.⁷⁸ Duke Philip arrived there with the others whom we mentioned above, and after some discussion they decided to elect him as the 'defender of the empire', until his nephew, the son of the emperor, who had previously been elected [as king], both by them and by the other princes, should come to Germany. But after the meeting had concluded, they went to the town of Mühlhausen, where they elected Philip as king, and after promising to be subject to him they went home.

However, the Archbishops of Cologne and Trier, certain other bishops, and Henry, Count Palatine of the Rhine, along with the other barons of those regions met together, and declaring the election of the emperor's son to be void they summoned Duke Berthold of Zähringen,

⁷⁸ Probably Ichtshausen, near Arnstadt, and south of Erfurt. The figures mentioned by name were Ludwig I of Wittelsbach, Duke of Bavaria 1183-1231; Bernhardt of Anhalt, Duke of Saxony 1180-1212; Luidolf, Archbishop of Magdeburg 1192-1205; Adalbert (III), Archbishop of Salzburg 1168-74, 1183-1200.

wishing to elect him as king.⁷⁹ But when he arrived at Cologne on the day appointed, he was persuaded by his counsellors not to allow them to elect him, both because of the opposition of the eastern princes and owing to the previous election of the emperor's son; he promised [however] that he would think the matter over. He therefore left them, offering hostages and promising that he would return on a day they had chosen. When he did not return nor provide the hostages, they forced him to give [these] hostages for the money that he had promised as part of the agreement, and they sent Count Emicho of Leiningen with a summons to Otto, the son of Henry, the former Duke of Bavaria.⁸⁰ On the latter's arrival, they chose him as king, with the agreement of certain townsmen of this region. So therefore with princes of the kingdom divided against each other the kingdom north of the Alps was brought to desolation.⁸¹ For the princes who had not been present at the elections of the kings afterwards pledged themselves to one or the other of them. Duke Leopold of Austria, the Duke of Bohemia, the Landgrave of Thuringia and Berthold of Zähringen supported Philip, while the Duke of Brabant and certain others pledged themselves to Otto.⁸²

Both kings thus strove to obtain the throne for themselves, and they steadfastly continued this civil war for almost twelve years. Philip held the imperial regalia, which had been given to him by the Emperor Henry his brother, and all the latter's treasure, as well as gaining the estates and possessions of his other brothers, the richest of princes, whose sole heir he was. He won over to his side those favouring Otto, some through threats, others by promises and gifts, and he launched countless and frequent expeditions against Otto, attacking towns and castles in all sorts of places, and forcing rebels everywhere to submit to him. Otto relied on the help of his brother the Count Palatine Henry and the men of Cologne, and steadfastly resisted the attacks of Philip. He was brought to the royal city of Aachen, where he was anointed as king by the [arch]bishop of Cologne, with the assistance of that of Trier, who possessed the traditional right to do this, and

⁷⁹ John (I), Archbishop of Trier 1189-1212; and Berthold V, the last Duke of Zähringen, 1186-1218. However, the mention of Henry, Count Palatine of the Rhine 1195-1213, was a mistake, since in the early months of 1198 he was still in Palestine.

⁸⁰ Otto was at this time in the Anglo-Norman kingdom, as a client of his uncle King Richard I. Emicho (III), Count of Leiningen (Bavaria).

⁸¹ Cf. *Matthew*, 12: 25.

⁸² Leopold VI, Duke of Austria 1198-1230; Ottokar I, duke of Bohemia from 1197, whom Philip subsequently recognised as king (died 1230); Herman I, Landgrave of Thuringia 1190-1217; and Henry I, Duke of Brabant 1193-1235.

even if he did not rejoice in the possession of the regalia, he now held the rank and rights of king.