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The German Crusade of 1197-98

G.A. Loud

University of Leeds
g.a.loud@leeds.ac.uk

Abstract

This article reconsiders the significance of the German Crusade of 1197-8, often dismissed as a very minor episode in the history of the Crusading movement. It examines the results of the expedition and some of the problems which dogged it on its arrival in the east, and which eventually led its abandonment, especially the relations of the Crusaders with the Franks of Outremer. However, this study devotes most attention to the process of calling the Crusade, and to its composition and recruitment, placing this within the context of late twelfth-century Germany. Despite political problems which hampered its recruitment, the eventual expedition was on a considerable scale, and probably not much smaller than that led by Frederick Barbarossa in 1189-90. The genesis of the expedition also throws a revealing light on Staufen rule over Germany, and in particular on the relations of the emperor with his princely subjects, especially *in its interaction with Henry VI's plans for securing the succession for his dynasty*. The author also suggests that the Crusade was far more significant to the policy of Henry VI than has hitherto been realised.

The German Crusade of 1197-98 has been largely ignored by Anglophone historians, or regarded at best as little more than a minor incident in the aftermath of the Third Crusade. Admittedly, like so many other crusading expeditions, it was in the end something of a damp squib, concluding in confusion and ignominious retreat in the face of an aroused and at least temporarily united Islam, and with most of the participants returning in haste to their homeland in the wake of the death of the Emperor Henry VI. Yet contemporaries did not necessarily agree, considering it to be on a par with the earlier expeditions of Frederick Barbarossa and Richard the Lionheart.¹ And one might suggest that, even in terms of the

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¹ This would seem to be the sense of Otto of St. Blasien's description of it as the "third overseas expedition." Arnold of Lübeck called it a second pilgrimage, after the first of the Emperor Frederick, while to William of Newburgh it was "the second expedition to Syria of the German and Italian races": Ottonis de Sancto Blasio

Holy Land, it was by no means unimportant, for the recovery of Beirut was a considerable success; and while this was apparently counter-balanced by the loss of Jaffa to al-Ādil in September 1197 – shortly before the main body of crusaders arrived in the Holy Land – this was only a temporary set-back, since Jaffa was subsequently regained through diplomacy in 1204.² In addition, it was while the German crusaders were in the East that the Teutonic Knights were formally constituted as a military monastic order, at Acre in March 1198.³

The recapture of Beirut in November 1197 continued the process begun by the Third Crusade whereby the embattled Christian states in the East were once again established on a viable footing, even if on a significantly smaller scale than before the disaster of 1187. By itself the success at Beirut did not completely solve the problem that the crusader states at the end of the twelfth century comprised a series of coastal enclaves, separated one from another, rather than one continuous, even if narrow, strip of territory. Admittedly the more-or-less simultaneous recapture of Gibelet [Jubail], by the local Franks, once again linked the territory of Beirut with the county of Tripoli,⁴ while Bohemond III's recapture of Lattakiah [Laodicea] regained an important stronghold in the south of the principality of Antioch.⁵ However, between Lattakiah and the county of Tripoli lay Jabala, which remained in Muslim hands, while Beirut was separated from the rest of the kingdom of Jerusalem by Sidon and its territory, which the Franks only regained in 1227.⁶ Thus when Jacques de Vitry, the new bishop of Acre, wished to travel northwards to Beirut and from there on to the county of Tripoli early in 1217 he was able to traverse the territory of Sidon only with a large military escort.⁷ Here the failure of the German Crusade properly to follow up its success at Beirut was a serious setback, especially given the high hopes with which it had been invested at the time. Indeed, the Duke of Brabant, who several sources suggest was chosen as the acting

Chronica, ed. Adolf Hofmeister, MGH SRG (Hanover, 1912), 66; Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum, ed. Johann M. Lappenberg, MGH SRG (Hanover, 1868), 195; *Historia Regum Anglorum*, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, ed. Richard Howlett, RS 82, 4 vols. (London, 1884-90), 2:487. One modern historian who has viewed this crusade as a more significant endeavour is Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (London, 2006), 488-94.

² *Resumé de l'histoire des croisades tiré des Annales d'Abou 'l-Fedâ*, in RHC Or, 1:83.

³ *De Primordiis Ordinis Theutonici Narratio*, in *Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum*, ed. Theodor Hirsch, Max Töppen and Ernst Strehlke (Leipzig, 1861), 1:220-25.

⁴ *Chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard le Trésorier*, ed. M. L. de Mas Latrie (Paris, 1871), 305.

⁵ Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum, V.27, p. 204.

⁶ For Jabala: *Chronique d'Ernoul et Bernard le Trésorier*, 341; for Sidon: *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi'l-Ta'rikh*, Part 3. The Years 589-629/1193-1231: The Ayyubids after Saladin and the Mongol Menace, trans. Donald S. Richards (Farnham, 2008), 290. The Franks and Muslims had earlier in 1204 agreed to share the revenues from Sidon: *ibid.*, 79.

⁷ *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens (Leiden, 1960), 79-97, no. 2, at 91-92. A few years earlier Willibrand of Oldenburg noted that the city's walls had been destroyed, but Muslims were in the majority among its few inhabitants, Denys Pringle, "Willibrand of Oldenburg's Journey to Syria, Lesser Armenia, Cyprus and the Holy Land (1211-12): A New Edition," *Crusades* 11 (2012): 118 (ch.4).

military commander of the expedition (at least until the arrival of the emperor), could even write home late in 1197 that: “we hope that the holy city of Jerusalem will be captured in a little while; for the Saracens, knowing that our army is united and strong, never dare to put in an appearance.” In the event, such optimism proved to be sadly unfounded; and even in this letter, the duke continued in a more realistic frame of mind to request the recipient, the archbishop of Cologne, to force those within his province who had not yet done so to fulfil their vows, which certainly hints at one reason why the expedition did not in the end achieve greater success.⁸ Similarly, in the first few days of February 1198, soon after his election as pope, Innocent III wrote to the duke and the other leaders of the crusade, urging them to continue the good fight and not to contravene their vow by abandoning the Holy Land, but to “smite the Philistines.”⁹ But within not much more than a fortnight of this letter being written, and long before they could have received it, the Germans raised the siege of Toron, which had at one point seemed about to succeed, and retreated in haste and confusion, short of food and hampered by torrential rain, back to Tyre, and thence to Acre, from which they started to sail for home relatively soon afterwards. A few may indeed already have departed earlier, for the duke of Bavaria is known to have been back in Germany at this time (March 1198).¹⁰ Peace was once again concluded with the Muslims in June 1198, by which time many of the German crusaders had already returned home.¹¹

Opportunities were undoubtedly missed during the course of the expedition, which, had they been exploited, might well have led to a more effective consolidation of Christian territory in the northern part of the kingdom of Jerusalem. According to Arnold of Lübeck, who provided the most detailed contemporary account of the crusade, the army had found Sidon abandoned as it marched north towards Beirut, but after doing what damage they could the troops marched on and left it deserted. (Al-Ādil subsequently had his forces carry out further destruction there, and it was to be thirty years before the Franks finally re-occupied

⁸ *Chronica Regia Coloniensis*, ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SRG (Hanover, 1880), 161. For Henry as the military commander: *Baldwini Ninovensium Chronicon*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SS 25 (Hanover, 1880), 538. According to the Eracles continuation of William of Tyre, the Count Palatine Henry was the marshal of the army and the Duke of Brabant the “master justiciar”: *La continuation de Guillaume de Tyr (1184-1197)*, ed. M. R. Morgan (Paris, 1982), 187 [English translation in Peter W. Edbury, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade* (Aldershot, 1996), 140].

⁹ *Die Register Innocenz' III. 1 Pontifikatsjahr 1198/1199*, ed. O. Hageneder and A. Haidacher (Graz and Cologne, 1964), no. 13, pp. 21-22.

¹⁰ He was one of those who elected Philip of Swabia king on 6 or 8 March 1198: *Otonis de Sancto Blasio Chronica*, 72-73; *Regesta Imperii* [online edition (www.regesta-imperii.de)], Philip, no. 15a.

¹¹ Claudia Naumann, *Der Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI.* (Frankfurt am Main, 1994), 199-204. Bishop Conrad of Hildesheim was, for example, back in Germany on 21 May, although he had still been at Acre in early March. Waleran of Limburg had returned by 18 June, and Bishop Berthold of Naumburg by 25 July. Duke Frederick of Austria died while still in the Holy Land on 15 April.

and rebuilt the town.¹²) In addition, nearly all the contemporary accounts agree that the Germans could have captured the castle of Toron, which was on the verge of surrender after some two months' siege, but the failure to agree terms with the Muslim garrison led the latter to renew their resistance, until the arrival of a relieving army from Egypt led the crusaders to withdraw. And as both Arnold of Lübeck and the author of this section of the *Estoire d'Eracles* noted, had Toron been captured, then it was probable that Beaufort and other castles nearby might also have been secured.¹³

Furthermore, the unity about which Duke Henry of Brabant boasted in his letter to Adolf of Cologne seems to have been conspicuously absent. Arnold suggests that most of the army's leaders concurred in granting the garrison of Toron their lives in return for the surrender of the castle and the Christian captives held there; but there was certainly a faction in the army which wished to storm the castle and massacre the Muslims.

“If we violently attack these men,” they said, “we shall have nobody willing to resist us in future, since the overthrow of this most strong castle will strike abject fear into them – it will reverberate in the ears of all those who seek to resist us.”¹⁴

The subsequent delays and their worries as to whether the Christians were going to keep their word, as well as the obvious signs of dissension in the crusade ranks, encouraged the hitherto demoralised garrison to fight on, even at the expense of the hostages they had given the Christians.

Arnold, who was notably well-informed, and writing no later than ca. 1209, but was not an eye-witness, was studiously vague as to quite who wanted to put the Muslims of Toron to the sword, although the implication of his account is that there was pressure for this from the rank-and-file, which led to skirmishes with the garrison even while peace negotiations were taking place. The author of the *Estoire d'Eracles*, meanwhile, while broadly corroborating Arnold's account, was critical of the intransigence of the Germans as a whole, who he claimed, far from taking advantage of the surrender offer, and especially the chance

¹² Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir, 3:29, and 290.

¹³ Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum, V.28, p. 208; Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr, 195-97 [trans. Edbury, *Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, 144-45]. Peter Edbury has recently argued, in a series of as yet unpublished papers, that at least in their current form, the various versions of the *Estoire d'Eracles*, are relatively late, from shortly before 1250. However, given the amount of circumstantial detail therein, and the fact that the account of the 1197-98 crusade in *Eracles* is considerably more detailed than that in the (allegedly earlier) *Chronique d'Ernoul*, one might well consider that the continuation was based upon older, and perhaps relatively contemporary, sources. But until the publication of the new edition of the continuation by Edbury and his team at Cardiff the whole issue must remain conjectural.

¹⁴ Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum, V.28, p. 208.

to recover Christian captives, became “puffed up by pride” and demanded unconditional surrender. They relied, this author concluded, too much on an inflated opinion of their own strength, while the Muslims feared the Germans’ “cruelty.” It may be that the Eracles author simplified the issue, omitting that there was disagreement among the Germans, although he suggested (as did Arnold) that the imperial chancellor Bishop Conrad of Hildesheim, the political leader of the expedition, was willing to accept a surrender on terms. But he certainly implied disapproval of German intransigence from the Franks of the East, a view which was made explicit in the so-called *Historia Brevis*, an anonymous tract from the Holy Land incorporated into the Swabian history of Burchard of Ursberg.¹⁵ However, in describing the siege of Toron, the Muslim chronicler Ibn al-Athir went considerably further than the western accounts. He said that the local Franks warned the garrison that the chancellor had no intention of keeping his word, and urged them to resist if they wished to save their lives.¹⁶

Whatever the exact truth of the events at Toron, and it would seem that, as with other notable reverses in the East (like the siege of Damascus in 1148) various lurid rumours were circulating in the West as to who was responsible for the failure – including that the Templars and others had connived with the Muslims to bribe Conrad of Hildesheim to withdraw – there would appear to have been considerable tensions between the native Franks and the German crusaders; and that these left their mark on how the crusade was remembered. Otto of St. Blasien, who recounted the tale of the Templars’ corruption (admittedly hardly the most reliable of contemporary chroniclers), went so far as to allege that the inhabitants of the Holy Land became so afraid of the Germans, and so suspicious of their zeal in upholding their vows and fighting for the faith, that they plotted with the Muslims to kill them, and it was while engaged in discussions of this sort that Henry of Champagne fell to his death, which accident was appropriate Divine punishment for his treachery. (Here, as elsewhere in his chronicle, Otto played fast and loose with the chronology, for he suggested that this happened after the siege of Toron, which in fact only commenced nearly two months after Count Henry’s death.) Otto also claimed, somewhat more plausibly, that the German crusaders disapproved of the “way of life” of the military orders and the barons of the kingdom, and

¹⁵ Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr, 195-97 [trans. Edbury, *Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, 144-45]. Burchardi Praepositi Urspergensis Chronicon, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger and Bernhard von Simson, MGH SRG (Hanover, 1916), 73. The *Historia Brevis* described the Germans as “warlike, cruel, careless of expense, and shrewd, considering what they wanted to be right, invincible with their swords, trusting in nobody except people of their own race.”

¹⁶ Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir, 3: 30.

were suspicious of the locals' trade with the Muslims and "secret friendship" with them.¹⁷ Here, of course, we have the classic contrast between the wish of newcomers to the Holy Land to fight the Muslims and the realisation by the locals that a *modus vivendi* with their Muslim neighbours was necessary if the enfeebled crusader states were going to survive.

The Eracles chronicler adds further detail to our understanding of these tensions. When the Germans first arrived at Acre, they maltreated the inhabitants, seizing lodgings and forcibly ejecting those who lived there. Indeed, this author suggested that a military clash was only averted when the Germans agreed to move out of the city and set up camp outside (it was probably some knowledge of these incidents that lay behind the more lurid and unlikely account of Otto of St. Blasien). Subsequently the Eracles author accused the Germans of cowardice, in that their leaders were prepared to flee and leave the rank-and-file to their fate when a raid from Acre ran into overwhelming Muslim forces. The Christians were saved, we are told, only by the wise advice and steadfastness of Hugh of Tiberias. And while the Eracles chronicler laid the blame for the loss of Jaffa on the actions (or rather inaction) of the Cypriot baron Reynald Barlais, whom as an erstwhile supporter of Guy de Lusignan he (or rather his earlier source) had good reason to dislike, rather than on the Germans; some other accounts from the West blamed Waleran of Limburg, one of the earliest crusaders to arrive, for prematurely breaking the truce with the Muslims, before the main body of the crusaders had arrived.¹⁸

There is thus abundant evidence pointing to dispute between the Germans and the Franks of the East, and also perhaps suggesting internal tensions within the crusade itself, something to which previous quarrels between the participants in Germany may conceivably have contributed.¹⁹ One could, of course, examine the course and consequences of the crusade, and the events in the East, in considerably greater depth but, since there is a careful analytical account of the crusade available (at least to those who read German) by Claudia Naumann,²⁰ it would seem more useful here to take another approach. What has been said so

¹⁷ Ottonis de Sancto Blasio *Chronica*, 67-68; the story that Conrad of Hildesheim had been bribed also occurs in the Thuringian *Cronica Reinhardsbrunnensis*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SS 30.1 (Hanover 1896) 562.

¹⁸ Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr, 187-91 [trans. Edbury, *Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, 140-42]. Reineri *Annales*, ed. L.C. Bethmann MGH SS 16 (Hanover 1859), 653 [from Liège]; *Chronica Rogeri de Hoveden*, ed. William Stubbs, 4 vols., RS 51 (London, 1868-71), 4:25-26. The *Chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard le Trésorier*, 306-07, blamed the fall of Jaffa on the death of Henry of Champagne, although the town had already fallen before his death on 10 September: Naumann, *Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI.*, 173-74.

¹⁹ For example, between the Count Palatine Henry and Count Adolf of Holstein, an old enemy of his family: Arnoldi *Chronica Slavorum*, V.7, p. 154; as well as between the Archbishop of Mainz and the Landgrave of Thuringia in 1193: *Cronica Reinhardsbrunnensis*, MGH SS, 30.1:552-53, although these two seem to have been reconciled thereafter.

²⁰ Naumann, *Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI.*, esp. 130-210.

far should be viewed as no more than preliminary remarks. Let us, therefore, leave aside the impact of the 1197-98 crusade in the Holy Land, and devote the remainder of this paper rather to the crusade within its German context. For analysis of the recruitment and composition of the expedition, as well as of the political circumstances surrounding this, reveals a great deal, both about Staufen Germany at the end of the twelfth century, and concerning the significance of the crusade within German society at that time. And within the latter context, one needs to make an express comparison between the crusade of 1197 and the earlier crusade of Frederick Barbarossa, which had for a time promised so much, before coming to grief at Antioch in the summer of 1190.

The Emperor Henry VI apparently took the cross, in secret, on Good Friday (31 March) 1195, while he was at Bari in southern Italy, three months after his coronation as king of Sicily. While not as yet (seemingly) revealing his own intentions, he had the expedition to the Holy Land publicly announced on Easter Sunday. Ten days later, he sent out a circular letter, or series of letters, to the prelates of Germany informing them of the expedition, telling them that he would send 1,500 knights to the East at his own expense, for one year, each to be accompanied by two sergeants, and with generous financial and logistical support – each knight would receive 30 ounces of gold as well as food. He asked the German bishops and abbots to procure volunteers. If we are to believe the generally well-informed Marbach annalist, writing not long after the event from one of the Staufen heartlands in Alsace, it was Henry who requested Pope Celestine III to despatch two cardinals to Germany to preach the crusade, which Celestine duly did, notwithstanding his often difficult relations with the emperor. He announced this legation on 1 August 1195, ordering the prelates of Germany to preach the crusade.²¹ Henry, meanwhile, after spending Easter at Bari, set off northwards on his way back to Germany by relatively slow stages along the Adriatic coast, crossing the Alps in mid to late June and reaching Frankfurt by 8 July.²² Towards the end of the year he held two major councils, one at Gelnhausen in late October, attended by the nobles of Saxony and Thuringia, where cardinal John of Salerno preached the crusade; and a second one at Worms

²¹ Henry's letter: *Chronica Regia Coloniensis*, 157 (sent from Trani, 12 April 1195). Celestine's letter: *Urkundenbuch des Hochstifts Hildesheim und seiner Bischöfe*, ed. K. Janicke, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1896), 1:483-85 no. 510. *Annales Marbacenses*, ed. H. Bloch, MGH SRG (Hanover, 1907), 65-66, supported by *Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr*, 187 [trans. Edbury, *Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, 139]. For the pope, see Peter Edbury, "Celestine III, the Crusade and the Latin East," in *Pope Celestine III (1191-1198): Diplomat and Pastor*, ed. John Doran and Damian J. Smith (Farnham, 2008), 129-43, especially 132-34, and see also below, note 85.

²² *Regesten des Kaiserreiches unter Heinrich VI. 1165-(1190)-1197*, ed. Gerhard Baaken, after J.F. Böhmer *Regesta Imperii IV.3* (Cologne, 1972) [henceforth *Reg. Henry VI*], no. 462.

in the Rhineland in early December, where the other cardinal, Peter of Piacenza, preached.²³ They were assisted in this recruitment especially by Archbishop Conrad of Mainz. One contemporary waxed lyrically, if rather unconvincingly, about the enthusiasm that greeted this call for a renewed crusade:

All without exception heard this encouragement both avidly and devotedly, so that nobody was held back by love for their dear ones or their possessions; not the father because of his wife and children, nor duke, margrave or count was mindful for the glory of his land. No archbishop, bishop, prior, nor any sort of cleric, nor layman, was so attached to or mindful of “their pleasant houses” [Micah, 2:9] that they could be prevented from undertaking this road of pilgrimage.²⁴

The most detailed list of those who took the cross at the two councils late in 1195, or immediately thereafter, once again provided by the Marbach annalist, is however impressive. According to this account those who took the vow included two archbishops (Mainz and Bremen), seven bishops, five dukes and the son of another, the count palatine of the Rhine, the landgrave of Thuringia, the margraves of Brandenburg and Meissen, both of these along with one of their brothers, a dozen named counts and the sons of two more, “along with a great host of others, both clerical and lay.”²⁵ Other sources confirm many of the names on this list and add a few more who either then or subsequently took the cross, including at least

²³ For the careers of the two cardinals: Werner Maleczek, *Papst und Kardinalskolleg von 1191 bis 1216* (Vienna, 1984), 85-86, 107-09.

²⁴ “*Historia de Expeditione Friderici*,” in *Quellen zur Geschichte des Kreuzzugs Kaiser Friedrichs I*, ed. A. Chroust, MGH SRG (Berlin, 1928), 111. The later part of this source would appear to have been written before the death of Henry VI. The translation is from G. A. Loud, *The Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa: The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick and Related Texts* (Farnham, 2010), 131-32.

²⁵ *Annales Marbacenses*, 66-67: “Before the feast of All Saints, the emperor held a general meeting at Gelnhausen with all the leading men of Saxony and Thuringia, and after the preaching of Cardinal John almost all the princes of these regions took the cross. Afterwards Cardinal Peter preached on the feast of St. Nicholas at Worms, and other princes and almost all the barons (*proceres*) from Swabia and elsewhere took the cross, either now or at other moments. The names of these were [as follows]: Conrad, [Arch]bishop of Mainz, the archbishop of Bremen, the bishop of Halberstadt, the bishop of Verden, the bishop of Hildesheim, who was the chancellor, the bishop of Zeitz, the bishop of Regensburg, the bishop of Passau, the bishop of Prague, who was [also] the duke of Bohemia, Abbot Manegold of Tegernsee, the duke of Merania and his son, the duke of Austria, the duke of Carinthia, the duke of Louvain, the son of the duke of Limburg, the count palatine of the Rhine, the landgrave of Thuringia, the margrave of Brandenburg and his brother, the margrave of Landsberg and his brother, the margrave of Meissen, the son of the landgrave of Habsburg, the count of Oettingen, the count of Bogen, the count of Ortenberg, the count of Schaumburg, the count of Querfurt, the count of Mansfeld, the count of Lauterberg, the count of Käfernberg with his two sons, two sons of the count of Daun, the count of Beichlingen and his brother the count of Beilstein, the count of Wartenburg, and the count of Wertheim. There were also many others among the princes, counts, barons and nobles, whose names we have omitted to write down, who were signed with the cross, along with a great host of [other] men both clerical and lay.” Cf. for confirmation of those talking the cross at Gelnhausen: “*Chronica S. Petri Erfordensis Moderna*,” in *Monumenta Erphesfurtensia*, Saec XII, XIII, XIV, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH SRG (Hanover, 1899), 198, and the most important figures were also listed in the “*Historia de Expeditione Friderici*,” 112.

one imperial prince, Duke Bernhard of Saxony, as well as Archbishop Adolf of Cologne, although, if either of these actually did take crusading vows, he did not fulfil them.²⁶

In scale, therefore, the initial recruitment for the new crusade was slightly smaller but not far short of that for Barbarossa's expedition of 1189, in which some dozen bishops, two dukes, two margraves and 26 counts had taken part, as well as the duke of Austria and the landgrave of Thuringia who had travelled separately by sea.²⁷ Although the number of counts to pledge themselves in 1195 was only half that of 1189, the recruitment among the major princes of the empire was actually considerably greater than for the previous expedition. But, of course, the difference was that in 1189 all these prelates and nobles actually took part in the expedition, and only a relatively few others who had vowed to go in the end failed to do so, while in the event several of the most important men who took the crusade vow in 1195 failed to fulfil it. These included two of the most prominent participants in Barbarossa's crusade, Bishop Herman of Münster and Duke Berthold of Merania. Duke Berthold, one of the heroes of the 1189-90 expedition, and whose family were close allies of the Staufer, was still in Germany in October 1197, while Bishop Herman was one of those trying to negotiate between the supporters of the rival claimants to the throne in February-March 1198.²⁸ Bernhard of Saxony was also in Germany over the winter of 1197-98; he was present at the initial meeting of the German princes to discuss the choice of a new king at Andernach (where there are hints that his own candidature for the throne was briefly mooted) at the end of 1197, at the subsequent meeting of the Saxon princes at Erfurt, and at the formal election of Philip of Swabia as king at Ichterhausen in Thuringia in early March 1198. Meanwhile, Archbishop Adolf of Cologne, who can be clearly attested in Germany after the crusade had set off, was the moving force behind the opponents of the Staufer from as soon as the news of Henry VI's death reached Germany. He summoned an initial meeting at Cologne on 1st March 1198, and was responsible for the eventual election of Otto of Brunswick as king in

²⁶ These cases must remain doubtful; the *Continuatio Admuntensis*, ed Wilhelm Wattenbach, MGH SS 9 (Hanover 1851), 587, named the duke and Archbishop Philip [sic] of Cologne as being among those who took the cross in the councils of late 1195. Was this simply a mistake on the author's part? On the other hand, the contemporary French historian Robert of Auxerre also named the duke of Saxony as one of the leading figures in the crusade recruitment: *Roberti Canonici S. Mariani Autissiodorensis Chronicon*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SS 26 (Hanover 1882), 257. Theodor Toeche, *Kaiser Heinrich VI* (Leipzig, 1867), 389, suggested that Archbishop Ludolf of Magdeburg also took the cross, but this seems to have been derived solely from his known presence at the Gelnhausen council, for which see: *Reg. Henry VI*, nos. 478, 482. He was present at Philip's election in March 1198, and was thus unlikely to have joined the crusade. He was not among those named as having taken the cross.

²⁷ Loud, *The Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa*, 47-57. Tyerman, *God's War*, 491, draws attention to the considerable size of the 1197 expedition.

²⁸ *Monumenta Historica Ducatus Carinthiae*, ed. A. von Jaksch, 4 vols. (Klagenfurt, 1896-1906), 1:271-73, no. 269; *Chronica Regia Coloniensis*, 162, recension II.

June 1198.²⁹ Duke Bernhard's nephew, Margrave Otto of Brandenburg, was another who failed to fulfil his vow, for he too can be attested in Germany while the expedition was in the East, in November 1197, although unlike some of the others he was apparently granted formal dispensation from his vows by the pope.³⁰ None of these princes can therefore have taken any part in the crusade.

In some cases there were good reasons for the failure to participate. Duke Ulrich of Carinthia apparently set off, but then fell ill and received dispensation from his vows. This suggests that whatever his illness was, it was serious, since he was a young man, not much more than twenty, and thus seemingly an obviously suitable recruit for the crusade.³¹ (He died in August 1202, aged about twenty-six, and since for several years before that his younger brother had been acting alongside him as co-ruler of the duchy, this illness may therefore have marked the beginning of a long-term crisis in his health).³² The Bavarian Count Albrecht of Bogen was another who was granted dispensation, but since he died on 19th December 1197 it is probable that this too was on grounds of ill-health, even though aged thirty-two he was also still relatively young and – according to the historian of Niederaltaich, a monastery of which he was the advocate – “a fierce and warlike man” (*Homo ferus et bellicosus*).³³ Henry Bretislaw, the Bishop of Prague from the ruling Přemyslid dynasty, whom the emperor was promoting as his candidate to be duke of Bohemia, and who was another who had taken the cross at Worms in December 1195, was apparently delayed by his political problems, but still intended to go – although another and perhaps better informed source claimed that he secured a dispensation. Nevertheless, he died in June 1197, so that, if he did request a dispensation, this too was probably because of his health.³⁴ However, two

²⁹ *Chronica Regia Coloniensis*, 162, recension I. For Adolf in Germany during this period: *Urkundenbuch für die Geschichte des Niederrheins*, ed. Theodor J. Lacomblet, 4 vols. (Düsseldorf, 1840-58), 1:387-92, no. 555-61.

³⁰ *Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum*, V.25, p. 195.

³¹ Reinhold Röhrich, *Die Deutschen im Heiligen Lande* (c. 650-1291) (Innsbruck, 1894), 85; Naumann, *Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI*, 258.

³² For his death on 10 August 1202, *MGH Necrologia Germaniae*, 2. *Diocesis Salisburgensis*, ed. S. Herzberg-Fränkell (Berlin, 1904), 335, 420. For Bernhard as co-ruler, *Monumenta Historica Ducatus Carinthiae*, 3:578-89 no. 1481 (March 1199), 581-82 no. 1491 (April 1200); earlier charters before 1196 were issued only in Ulrich's name, e.g. *ibid.*, 541 no. 1412, 556-67 no. 1436.

³³ The monks disliked him because of his exploitation of the abbey and alienation of its property: *De Advocatis Altahensibus*, ed. P. Jaffé, *MGH SS* (Hanover, 1861), 17:373-74. For the dates of his birth and death: *Monumenta Boica* 14 (Munich, 1784), 34, 107, from the archives of the Augustinian canons of Windberg. Cf. *MGH Necrologiae Germaniae*, 3. *Dioceses Brixinensis, Frisingensis, Ratisbonensis*, ed. F. L. Baumann (Berlin, 1905), 240, 404. Naumann, *Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI*, 257. His widow Ludmilla subsequently married his former enemy Duke Ludwig of Bavaria.

³⁴ “*Historia de Expeditione Friderici*,” 112-13; *Continuatio Gerlaci Abbatis Milovicensis* [to the annals of Vincent of Prague], ed. Wilhelm Wattenbach, *MGH SS* 17 (Hanover 1861), 706-08. Naumann, *Kreuzzug Kaiser*

Thuringian nobles, Meinhard of Mühlberg and Poppo of Wasungen, who departed on their way to the East and then turned back, either (we are told) deterred by the expense or fearful of the perils of the unaccustomed sea voyage, incurred the scorn of the contemporary historian of the landgraves of Thuringia, who said that they acted “effeminately and disgracefully” (effeminate ac turpiter). This author was writing in the consciousness that his protagonist, Landgrave Herman, was one of those who had fulfilled his vow.³⁵

It also appears that after the initial burst of recruitment, under the emperor’s direct supervision, there was a considerable cooling of enthusiasm. The reasons for this were in part – perhaps in large part – political. The emperor, who had finally, after eight years of marriage, been presented with a son on 26 December 1194 (a day after his coronation as king of Sicily) was naturally anxious to secure the succession – particularly if it was his intention actually to take part in the crusade in person. (One should note that Conrad III had taken similar precautions in 1147 and Barbarossa in 1188 before his crusade).³⁶ Henry may initially have sought simply to have his baby son elected as king (much as he himself had been elected at the age of three in 1169), something to which most of the princes were prepared to assent.³⁷ However, perhaps encouraged by their apparent malleability, the emperor soon decided on a more ambitious plan, for in another council, the third within a few months, held at Mainz in February or in the first few days of March 1196, he sought the approval of the princes for the German monarchy to be vested hereditarily in the Staufer family. This was, as the Marbach annalist described it “a new decree that was unknown to the Roman kingdom” – that Henry now sought to introduce it may also have been influenced by his recent takeover of the hereditary Sicilian monarchy.³⁸ Although the Staufer had now been ruling for almost sixty years, and Henry was the third successive monarch from that family, his intention to confirm their authority in perpetuity was distinctly unwelcome, and the Mainz court was anyway not well-attended. Those who were there asked for a delay for consultation. A month later Henry tried again, holding a further council at Würzburg, which did consent to his plan, albeit reluctantly, and in the face of intense pressure from the emperor. As the

Heinrichs VI, 257. Bishop Henry was a grandson of Duke Vladislav I (d. 1125): Toeche, *Kaiser Heinrich VI*, 241.

³⁵ *Cronica Reinhardsbrunnensis*, MGH SS, 30.1:559.

³⁶ Rudolf Hiestand, ‘Kingship and Crusade in Twelfth-Century Germany’, in *England and Germany in the High Middle Ages: In Honour of Karl J. Leyser*, ed. Alfred Haverkamp and Hanna Vollrath (Oxford, 1996), 253-55.

³⁷ *Annales Marbacenses*, 67. For Henry’s election in June 1169, see Ulrich Schmidt, *Königswahl und Thronfolge im 12. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, 1987), 180-82, and the sources there cited.

³⁸ *Annales Marbacenses*, 68. The Liège annalist expressly related this scheme to the conquest of Sicily: *Reineri Annales*, MGH SS, 16.652. The literature on the so-called *Erbreichsplan* is vast, but see especially Peter Csendes, *Heinrich VI* (Darmstadt, 1993), 171-78; Naumann, *Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI*, 106-19; and (in more detail) Schmidt, *Königswahl und Thronfolge*, 225-60.

Reinhardsbrunner chronicler noted, many of those who did agree did so out of fear or under protest. One should note, however, that there was use of carrot as well as stick to secure this consent; in particular, Henry offered to those who were about to set off on crusade that in the absence of male heirs, they could leave their hereditary properties to a daughter or collateral heir. This was particularly significant to two of those who had previously taken the cross: Duke Henry of Brabant and Landgrave Herman of Thuringia, neither of whom at this time had a son.³⁹ He also offered to surrender his regalian right to the personal goods of deceased prelates, in a bid to secure the support of the episcopate for his scheme.⁴⁰

Notwithstanding these concessions, the fragility of the Würzburg agreement soon became clear, and once Henry had set off once again for Italy – he crossed the Alps in mid-July, probably by the Mont-Cenis pass – opposition became overt.⁴¹ The Saxon nobles met at Merseburg soon after his departure and made their hostility clear, in alliance with, or encouraged by, Archbishop Conrad of Mainz, who had not only taken the cross himself but had probably already been designated as the papal legate for the expedition, and who had hitherto taken a prominent part in the recruitment campaign.⁴² At least three of those who had taken the cross were present at this meeting: Landgrave Herman of Thuringia, Duke Berthold of Merania and Bishop Berthold of Naumburg – all of whom had previously been closely connected with the Staufer; Herman, indeed, was the emperor's first cousin.⁴³ While we have no evidence for their individual views, their presence at such an assembly was surely an ominous sign. Perhaps at the same time Archbishop Adolf of Cologne, another who may have taken the cross, emerged as a public opponent of the plan.⁴⁴

In the end, some months later, Henry was forced to give way and abandon his plan for the formal installation of a hereditary monarchy, in return for the princes' agreement that they

³⁹ *Chronica Reinhardsbrunnensis*, MGH SS, 30.1:556. Herman of Thuringia eventually had a son, Ludwig, in 1200 (*ibid.*, 563), while Henry of Brabant, who had four daughters, only finally sired a son in 1207: Naumann, *Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI*, 111.

⁴⁰ “*Historia de Expeditione Friderici*,” 113-14.

⁴¹ Henry was at Besançon from 6th to 10th July; he is next attested at Turin on 25 July: Reg. Henry VI, nos. 529-34.

⁴² For his use of the legatine title in May/June 1196, *Mainzer Urkundenbuch*, 2. Die Urkunden seit dem Tode Erzbischof Adalberts I (1137) bis zum Tode Erzbischofs Konrads (1200), Teil II, 1176-1200, ed. Peter Acht (Darmstadt, 1978), 1042 no. 640.

⁴³ *The Gesta Episcoporum Halberstadensium*, MGH SS (Hanover, 1874), 23:111, accused Archbishop Conrad of conspiring with the Saxons against the emperor. The meeting is known about from a charter of Bishop Berthold of Naumburg, dated 7 August 1196, confirming a sale by his chapter to the monks of Walkenried, but witnessed by two other bishops, the duke of Merania, Landgrave Hermann, Margrave Conrad of Lausitz, and other nobles, who we are told were meeting “*pro negotiis imperii*”: *Origines Guelficae* 3, ed. Christian Ludwig Scheidt (Hanover, 1752), 562-63 no. 96. Schmidt, *Königswahl und Thronfolge*, 244; Naumann, *Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI*, 115-16.

⁴⁴ *Chronica Regia Coloniensis*, 159.

would elect his infant son as king: a compromise in which Archbishop Conrad seems to have played a major part.⁴⁵ As it turned out, and given Henry's own premature and unexpected death little more than a year later, this political setback was of extraordinary long-term significance for the destiny of the German monarchy. But what we should note here is the effect that this political wrangling seems to have had on the preparations for the forthcoming crusade. Not long after his arrival in Italy, the emperor despatched one of his closest confidants, Gebhard of Querfurt, the Burgrave of Magdeburg, to urge the participants to speed up their preparations. Gebhard was instructed, in particular, to remind Herman of Thuringia of his obligations, but he achieved little. The landgrave, we are told, said (in effect) that he would depart when he was good and ready and not before. The other princes agreed with him. Furthermore, the emperor caused further annoyance ("lasting irritation," according to the *Reinhardsbrunner Chronicle*) by another message urging the plan for hereditary succession, which he had clearly not as yet abandoned.⁴⁶

But there were other factors at work as well. The expense of the journey was beginning to hit home, and (again we are told this by the *Reinhardsbrunner* chronicler) this was affecting the princes as well as lesser men. Those who had taken part in the invasion of Sicily in 1194-95 had already faced heavy expenditure, which they had not recouped.⁴⁷ Nor were the economic conditions propitious. The autumn of 1195 had been a time of heavy rains and poor harvest, and the summer of 1196 was no better. Prices were high, and the winter of 1196/7 saw real famine. A contemporary Liège annalist claimed that, "a multitude of the poor died of hunger." The shortages continued into the summer of 1197, with prices even higher than before.⁴⁸ We cannot be certain that these conditions affected the whole of the Reich – our most detailed evidence for the agrarian crisis comes largely from Lotharingia. Nevertheless, food shortages were also recorded in Swabia and Austria, and one contemporary source reported famine throughout Germany.⁴⁹ Furthermore, similar travails were affecting both France and England, and even Rome, at this same time – the shortages

⁴⁵ *Annales Marbacenses*, 69.

⁴⁶ *Cronica Reinhardsbrunnensis*, MGH SS, 30.1:556-57. This meeting probably took place in early October 1196, Smidt, *Königswahl und Thronfolge*, 251.

⁴⁷ "Historia de Expeditione Friderici," 110.

⁴⁸ *Reineri Annales*, MGH SS, 16:653.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Chronica Regia Coloniensis*, 159; *Baldwini Ninovensium Chronicon*, MGH SS, 25:538, ad. an. 1196; *Annales Mellicences*, MGH SS, 9:506, ad. an. 1195: "Terra ista pestilentia et incendio et inundatione aquarum miserabiliter humiliatur"; *Continuatio Cremifanensis*, MGH SS, 9:549, ad. an. 1197: "tota annona et sterilitas magni in diversiis mundis partibus"; *Annales Ottenburani Minores*, MGH SS, 17:316-17 (general famine throughout the kingdom).

there prompted Celestine III to ask the emperor to have grain sent to the Eternal City.⁵⁰ While it is possible that landowners who received income through rents in kind might have profited from high prices, it appears more probable that they too were affected by falling yields; and, anyway, by this period most German lords relied on monetary rents and renders for the majority of their income.⁵¹ It seems clear, therefore, that this dearth must have exacerbated the expense and difficulty of preparing for the crusade.

Nevertheless, despite the problems and delays, and for all the various high profile defections, the expedition did eventually commence, albeit in fits and starts rather than as one unified operation. Probably the first to set off was Archbishop Conrad of Mainz, accompanied by a large number of Franconians, who must have crossed the Alps around Christmas, and who arrived in Rome at the end of January 1197. His role as legate, and the diplomatic missions with which he had been entrusted by the emperor, may well have encouraged his early departure.⁵² He and his contingent probably sailed east in early April – the abbots of Michaelbeuren and Wörth drowned in a shipwreck in the Mediterranean on 9 April, and it would seem that they had been among those who accompanied Conrad.⁵³ Other early departures included those of Counts Dietrich of Weissenfels and Waleran of Limburg – the former seems to have left home no later than about February, while Count Waleran certainly arrived in the Holy Land before the main body of crusaders got there in late September, while at least a few of the German peregrini had reached Sicily in time to assist the emperor suppressing the Sicilian rebellion in May of that year.⁵⁴ Others took considerably longer to set off: the bishop of Regensburg left only on 27 April, while Bishop Gardolf of Halberstadt had not yet departed on 3 May, although he must have set off very soon afterwards since he took part in the dedication of the church of St. Nicholas at Bari on 22 June.⁵⁵ Most of the others must also have left at about the same time, or only a little later. Thus Duke Ludwig of Bavaria was with the emperor in Sicily on 2 July, and Duke Frederick of Austria and Count Otto of Henneberg a week later. By the end of the month they had been

⁵⁰ William of Newburgh, *Historia Rerum Anglicarum*, V.17, 26, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, 2:460, 484. For Rome: *Epistolae Pontificum Romanorum Ineditae*, ed. S. Löwenfeld (Leipzig, 1885), 263-65.

⁵¹ Benjamin Arnold, *Power and Property in Medieval Germany* (Oxford, 2004), 35-46.

⁵² Naumann, *Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI*, 87, 133.

⁵³ *Continuatio Cremifanense*, MGH SS, 9:549. Naumann, *Kreuzzug Heinrichs VI*, 169.

⁵⁴ *Annales Marbacenses*, 69, although this passage lays emphasis on how few men the emperor had with him: “*coadunatis paucis tam de suis quam de peregrinis.*” For Dietrich, see below note 110; for Waleran, above note 18.

⁵⁵ *Annales Ratisponenses*, MGH SS, 17:590; *Urkundenbuch des Hochstifts Halberstadt*, ed. Gustav Schmidt (Leipzig, 1883), 1:340-41 no. 379; *Gesta Episcoporum Halberstadensium*, ed. Ludwig Weiland, MGH SS 23 (Hanover 1874), 112. The date of this ceremony is recorded by an inscription, Gerardo Cioffari, *Storia di S. Nicola di Bari*, 1. *L'Epoca normanno sveva* (Bari, 1984), 186.

joined by the bishops of Passau and Verden and the margrave of Landsberg.⁵⁶ All of these, it should be noted, travelled to southern Italy, there to take ship for the Holy Land. According to the (possibly Austrian) continuator of the principal account of his father's crusade, Henry's decision to launch his expedition from southern Italy by sea had been taken on "the advice of the princes," and because, with southern Italy under his rule, this was "easier and more practical" than the land route used by previous German expeditions.⁵⁷ The south Italian kingdom provided not only suitable ports but shipping and above all money for the crusade. It seems probable that the imperial chancellor Bishop Conrad of Hildesheim, who had been sent as governor to the kingdom of Sicily early in 1196, had spent much of the previous year making preparations for the expedition.⁵⁸ On the other hand, a large contingent from northern Germany, including the archbishop of Bremen, the duke of Brabant and the new count palatine of the Rhine, Henry of Brunswick, preferred to travel all the way by sea – these only departed in mid-May, and stopped at Lisbon in mid-June, before reaching Sicily early in August.⁵⁹ The combined forces left Messina on 1 September and arrived at Acre three weeks later.⁶⁰ By this time, however, the emperor himself was already ill, and even had he wished to do so, was in no fit state to accompany them.⁶¹

Despite the problems of its genesis, the crusade of 1197 was therefore still a significant and large-scale operation. But how large the expedition actually was is a good question. We can clearly dismiss Arnold of Lübeck's claim that the whole army was 60,000 strong as fantasy – he simply meant that it was a large force.⁶² However, the Eracles chronicler estimated that there were 4,000 knights, and "so many footsoldiers and sergeants

⁵⁶ Reg. Henry VI, nos. 598-99, 602 [Dione Clementi, "Calendar of the Diplomas of the Hohenstaufen Emperor Henry VI concerning the Kingdom of Sicily," *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 35 (1955): nos. 117-18, 121].

⁵⁷ "Historia de expeditione Friderici," 113.

⁵⁸ German sources lay a lot of emphasis on the extraordinary wealth found in the Sicilian royal treasury, notably Arnoldi *Chronica Slavorum*, V.20, pp. 184-85. The Sicilian fleet may well have been badly damaged during Richard I's conflict with King Tancred at Messina in the winter of 1190-91, as is argued by Charles Stanton, *Norman Naval Operations in the Mediterranean* (Woodbridge, 2011), 164-65; but Robert of Auxerre reported large-scale preparation of shipping "along the shores of Apulia and Sicily" before the crusade set off: *Chronicon*, MGH SS, 26:257-58. Cf. *Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr*, 181: "Et l'empereur meismes fist faire grant apareillement en Pulle de navie et de vitailles." The south Italian sources reveal little about this, although in March 1197 Bishop Conrad agreed to exempt the men of St. Nicholas, Bari, from galley service – which he had hitherto clearly been trying to enforce: *Codice diplomatico barese*, 6. *Le pergamene di S. Nicola di Bari. Periodo svevo (1195-1266)*, ed. Francesco Nitti di Vito (Bari, 1902), 8-9 no. 3.

⁵⁹ Naumann, *Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI*, 140-41.

⁶⁰ Arnoldi *Chronica Slavorum*, V.26, p. 198.

⁶¹ According to the *Annales Marbacenses*, 70, he fell ill around the feast of St. Sixtus (6 August).

⁶² Arnoldi *Chronica Slavorum*, V.26, p. 198.

that they could not be counted.”⁶³ It will be remembered that Henry’s original plan, in April 1195, had been to send 1,500 knights and 3,000 sergeants, although it is probable that in the end recruitment exceeded this plan. The contingent which had sailed from north Germany by sea arrived at Messina in July or August 1197 in 44 ships.⁶⁴ If each carried on average 60-70 passengers, which other sources suggest is not unlikely,⁶⁵ this would imply that the north German force alone comprised something approaching 3,000 men, and this contingent would seem to have been considerably smaller than the main body who had travelled south by land to the kingdom of Sicily. The emperor himself allegedly contributed 500 paid knights (*stipendiarii milites*) to the force which set off from Sicily.⁶⁶ Claudia Naumann has suggested that the combined forces of the army may have totalled some 2,500 knights, and a total force of about 16,000.⁶⁷ Again, this last figure is probably too high, given that the best estimate for Barbarossa’s 1189 expedition suggests that this had in total between 12,000 and 15,000 participants, including about 3,000 knights,⁶⁸ and a comparison of the known major participants would suggest that the earlier expedition was somewhat larger than that of 1197. By way of further comparison, Frederick Barbarossa had some 1,800 knights with him on his first Italian expedition of 1154/5.⁶⁹ We should also remember how large followings individual princes could sometimes muster for such expeditions.⁷⁰ Hence, given the number of princes, bishops and counts who did take part in the 1197 expedition, accompanied, so we are told, by “every noble, ministerialis and ordinary knight whom they could enlist in their following,”⁷¹ it may not have been that much smaller than the earlier crusade of Frederick Barbarossa. Furthermore, in addition to the princes and nobles and their immediate following, we can often forget about those lesser men, not part of noble households or *clientelia*, who also took part, through piety, peer pressure or enthusiasm. According to the chronicler Arnold some 400 men from Lübeck joined the expedition, and at the siege of Toron a key role was played by a contingent of silver miners from the Harz Mountains, who used their expertise to

⁶³ Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr, 187 [trans. Edbury, *Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, 139]. Cf. *Chronique d’Ernoul et Bernard le Trésorier*, 304: 4000 knights and a very large force of infantry.

⁶⁴ *Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum*, V.26, p. 198.

⁶⁵ Loud, *Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa*, 203.

⁶⁶ *Otonis de Sancto Blasio Chronica*, 64.

⁶⁷ Naumann, *Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrich VI*, 156-59.

⁶⁸ Ekkehard Eickhoff, *Friedrich Barbarossa im Orient. Kreuzzug und Tod Friedrichs I.* (Tübingen, 1977), 47.

⁶⁹ Otto von Freising und Rahewin, *Die Taten Friedrichs*, ed. F-J. Schmale (Darmstadt, 1965), 88-89.

⁷⁰ Thus Archbishop Christian of Mainz had recruited 500 knights and 800 sergeants for Barbarossa’s Italian expedition of 1167: *Otonis de Sancto Blasio Chronica*, 23. Would his successor Conrad’s following on the crusade have been much if any smaller? Landgrave Ludwig II of Thuringia was alleged also to have led 500 knights on the Italian expedition of 1161: *Das Geschichtswerk des Otto Morena und seiner Fortsetzer*, ed. Ferdinand Güterbock, MGH SRG (Berlin, 1930), 147. Cf. on this issue, Benjamin Arnold, *German Knighthood 1050-1300* (Oxford, 1985), 19-20, 23.

⁷¹ “*Historia de Expeditione Friderici*,” 112.

undermine the walls.⁷² However, as in previous expeditions, there were also volunteers who lacked the resources and capability to contribute militarily, and whose participation was discouraged.⁷³

While the motives of the rank and file must, in the last resort, remain obscure, analysis of the more prominent figures reveals a considerable amount both as to why men may have gone on the expedition, and of how political ramifications within the Reich may have impacted upon the crusade. Why indeed did German princes and nobles enlist in 1195 and thereafter?

Virtually all the extant sources make clear that the crusade was a personal project of Henry VI and something very dear to the emperor's heart. In the words of the continuator of the principal account of his father's expedition: he "burned with an inner desire to come to the aid of the knighthood of Christ."⁷⁴ It was hardly surprising, therefore, that several of the expedition's leaders had close connections with the emperor. This was particularly the case with some of the bishops, and reflected the fact that even at this relatively late date the Staufen emperors still exercised a very considerable influence over the Church in Germany. Four of the bishops who took part, all from sees in north Germany, had previously been court chaplains: Gardolf of Halberstadt, Conrad of Hildesheim, Berthold of Naumburg and Rudolf of Verden. Conrad was the brother of Gebhard of Querfurt, whom the emperor had sent back to Germany to hasten preparations for the expedition in the autumn of 1196. He had been a royal chaplain from 1188 and soon after his election as bishop in 1194 Henry had appointed him as his chancellor. In the early months of 1196 he had acted as the emperor's legate and de facto governor of the kingdom of Sicily, and was one of the emperor's closest and most trusted advisors. After the emperor's death he continued to act as chancellor for his brother Philip and was one of the latter's most active supporters in Germany. The rival king, Otto of Brunswick, was so enraged by his opposition that he denounced him to the pope as "a scandalous person," unfit to be a bishop.⁷⁵ Gardolf of Halberstadt was a relative (consanguineus) of Conrad – although we do not know exactly how – and much favoured by Henry VI. According to the bishop's biographer:

⁷² Arnoldi *Chronica Slavorum*, V.25, 28, pp. 195, 205-06.

⁷³ The *Cronica Reinhardsbrunnensis*, 555, had a story of a beggar at Höxter (Westphalia) to whom Cardinal John of Salerno reluctantly gave the cross, having at first refused him because of his poverty.

⁷⁴ "Historia de Expeditione Friderici," 112.

⁷⁵ Ingeborg Seltmann, *Heinrich VI. Herrschaftspraxis und Umgebung* (Erlangen, 1983), 147-54; Bernd Schütte, *König Philipp von Schwaben. Itinerar, Urkundenvergabe, Hof*, MGH *Schriften* 51 (Hanover, 2002), 497-501; Enno Bünz, "Eiferer der Gerechtigkeit" oder "schändliche Person"? Konrad von Querfurt, ein Reichsbischof der Stauferzeit (1194-1202)," in *Konrad von Querfurt und die Zeit der Staufer*, ed. Johanna Rudolph (Querfurt, 2003), 10-31, especially 27.

he found such grace and favour in the eyes of the Emperor Henry ... that when he was elected and went to the emperor to receive his regalia, his election was welcomed and accepted, and the emperor promised that he would always benefit the church of Halberstadt and grant it imperial patronage.⁷⁶

He regularly attended Henry's court when the emperor was in Germany, and at the Würzburg diet in the spring of 1196, at which the issue of the succession came to a head, the emperor granted him a privilege confirming the rights of his church and freeing the merchants of Halberstadt from tolls in all royal markets.⁷⁷ But while Gardolf was clearly an imperial supporter, this was not just because of imperial favour to him personally. During the conflict between the emperor's father and Duke Henry the Lion of Saxony in 1179, the cathedral and much of the town of Halberstadt had been burned down by the duke's troops, with heavy loss of life, and Gardolf's predecessor Bishop Ulrich had been taken prisoner.⁷⁸ The cathedral was only rededicated by Gardolf in 1195, and the bishop also took advantage of Duke Henry's death in that year to recover an important castle which the latter had seized from the see in 1179.⁷⁹ As bishop of this particular see, Gardolf thus had every reason to look to the emperor for support against the Welf family; and even more so since he had been a member of the chapter, as well as a royal chaplain, before his election. Rudolf of Verden was another important royal supporter in a part of north Germany otherwise dominated by the Welfs. He had been an imperial chaplain and chancery notary under Barbarossa, and had been one of the young King Henry's following in Italy in 1186-87.⁸⁰ The emperor made a donation to his church in November 1192 as a reward for the bishop's good service to him and his father, and at the Würzburg diet of March 1196 he freed his see from exactions previously levied on it by Archbishop Hartwig of Bremen.⁸¹ All four of these bishops were later to be subscribers to the letter of the German princes to Innocent III asking him to accept Philip of Swabia as king in

⁷⁶ *Gesta Episcoporum Halberstadensium*, MGH SS, 23:110-11, and *ibid.*, 113 for his relationship to Conrad. Gardolf was present at Henry's court at Würzburg as *electus* on 2nd January 1193; by 28 February of that year he had received consecration: *Reg. Henry VI*, nos. 330, 336. For his earlier career, Schütte, *König Philipp von Schwaben*, 455.

⁷⁷ *Reg. Henry VI*, no. 503.

⁷⁸ *Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum*, II.14-15, pp. 52-55. It was claimed that more than 1000 men, and three canons of the cathedral died during the sack: *Annales Pegavenses*, MGH SS, 16:262-63; *Annales Stederbergenses*, *ibid.*, 213.

⁷⁹ *Gesta Episcoporum Halberstadensium*, 111.

⁸⁰ *Reg. Henry VI*, nos. 5d-e, 6-7, 9, 14-16, 19, 22-24, 27-28, 31, 33, 35, 42-43, 46-47. For his background and career, *Die Urkunden Friedrichs I*, ed. Heinrich Appelt, 5 vols., MGH *Diplomatum Regum et Imperatorum Germanie* 10 (Hanover, 1975-90), vol. 5 *Einleitung, Verzeichnisse*, 24; Seltmann, *Heinrich VI*, 77-79, 91; Schütte, *König Philipp von Schwaben*, 541.

⁸¹ *Reg. Henry VI*, nos. 264, 501.

May 1199.⁸² Berthold (II) of Naumburg eventually chose, or was forced, to resign his see, in 1206, because of his support for King Philip.⁸³

Of the other bishops, Wolfger of Passau was also a loyal supporter of the Staufer. He regularly attended the emperor's court,⁸⁴ had taken part in the later stages of the Sicilian expedition of 1194-95, and the emperor had sent him as his envoy to the papal court during the early months of 1195, a mission that may well have been linked with the plans for a new crusade.⁸⁵ He was a warlike prelate who was later to be one of the most active partisans of Philip of Swabia, and was a key figure in the latter's efforts to secure papal recognition throughout his reign.⁸⁶ And as we have already noted, the emperor supported Bishop Henry of Prague as his candidate for the disputed duchy of Bohemia: this after the bishop had spent the last two months of 1192 at the imperial court. (He made a further visit – this time as “duke and bishop” – early in 1194.)⁸⁷

There were also several among the lay participants in the crusade who were allies and connections of the Staufer. The Wittelsbach dukes of Bavaria had acquired their dignity from Frederick Barbarossa in 1180 after the fall of Henry the Lion, and Duke Ludwig had taken part in the invasion of southern Italy in 1194.⁸⁸ He was subsequently to be one of those who elected Philip of Swabia as king of Germany in 1198. The Babenberg dukes of Austria were cousins of the Staufer. Duke Frederick's father, Leopold, had handed Richard I of England over to the emperor in 1193, while his uncle Henry of Mödling, had taken part in the

⁸² *Regestum Innocentii III Papae super Negotio Romani Imperii*, ed. F. Kempf (Rome, 1947), 33-38 no. 14.

⁸³ Schütte, *König Philipp von Schwaben*, 430-31.

⁸⁴ Thus he was with Henry at Nordhausen in December 1192, Regensburg in January and at Speyer in March 1193: Reg. Henry VI, nos. 269, 272, 277, 283, 285-86

⁸⁵ Gerhard Baaken, “Die Verhandlungen zwischen Heinrich VI. und Coelestin III. in den Jahren 1195-1197,” *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 27 (1971): 479-80, who suggests that Henry's decision to announce the crusade had been communicated in advance to Celestine III. Wolfger had returned by Easter 1195, when he was with the emperor at Bari, and he was also with him at Ascoli Piceno in early May: Reg. Henry VI, nos. 413, 418-19, 434, 436 [Clementi, “Calendar,” nos. 65-66, 84]. *Chronicon Magni Presbiteris Continuatio*, ed. Wilhelm Wattenbach, MGH SS 17 (Hanover 1861), 523. Naumann, *Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI*, 77.

⁸⁶ He led Philip's embassy to the papal court in the winter of 1207/8: *Regestum Innocentii III Papae super Negotio Romani Imperii*, 330-32, no. 140. For his warlike propensities, *Chronicon Magni Presbiteris Continuatio*, 525, describing his conflict with Count Henry of Ortenburg in 1199, in which according to the chronicler “almost the whole of the province of Bavaria” was laid waste.

⁸⁷ Reg. Henry VI, nos. 257, 260-61, 265-66, 330-31, 339. Henry as bishop already enjoyed excellent relations with Frederick Barbarossa, who in 1187 had decreed that he and his see should be directly subject to the emperor and freed from all subjection to the then duke, Frederick, Hartmut Hoffmann, “Böhmen und das deutsche Reich im Hohen Mittelalter,” *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands* 18 (1969): 1-62, at 57. As Hoffmann argues, this episode should be seen within the context of Bohemia's growing integration within the Reich during the twelfth century. See also Martin Wihoda, *Die Sizilischen Goldenen Bullen von 1212. Kaiser Friedrichs II. Privilegien für die Přemysliden in Erinnerungsdiskurs* (Vienna, 2012), 131-33.

⁸⁸ Reg. Henry VI, nos. 357-58, 362-64, 375-77, 379-80 [Clementi, “Calendar,” nos. 22-23, 25: it should be noted here that Clementi's register only lists documents directly dealing with the kingdom of Sicily, and is less comprehensive than that of Baaken].

unsuccessful south Italian expedition of 1191.⁸⁹ Waleran of Limburg was another who was an active supporter of Philip of Swabia in 1198, although he later changed sides. Henry VI had enlisted this family as allies when he had appointed Waleran's brother Simon as bishop of Liège in 1194.⁹⁰ Among lesser but still important figures, Count Gunther (III) of Käfernberg, from Thuringia, had also been with the emperor in southern Italy in 1191, and accompanied him once again to Italy in 1196, although it is possible that he may have died before he fulfilled his vow.⁹¹ Rudolf, the only son of Count Albrecht of Habsburg, was a cousin of the emperor, through his mother, and his family had been loyal supporters and considerably favoured by the Staufer. His grandfather Werner had died during the disastrous Roman expedition of 1167, and Barbarossa had allowed his father to succeed to the lands and title of his relatives, the counts of Lenzburg, the last of whom had died in 1172, and had later appointed Albrecht as landgrave of Alsace.⁹² Count Adolf III of Holstein, who was expressly described by Arnold of Lübeck as being among the *amici imperatoris*, was one of the dynasty's principal allies in northern Germany.⁹³ His desertion of Henry the Lion had played a crucial role in the duke's downfall in 1180, from which he had profited considerably; and his lands had been attacked by the ex-duke while he was absent on the Third Crusade, something about which Adolf had complained to the emperor.⁹⁴ He had also been holding some of the lands of the see of Bremen on imperial orders, or at least with the emperor's permission, for which Adolf had been excommunicated by Archbishop Hartwig. The emperor eventually brokered a peace in October 1195, shortly before both count and archbishop took the cross, which allowed the count to keep a substantial share of the disputed county of Stade.⁹⁵ Another who might be included in this group was Count Albrecht of Bogen, who took the cross in 1195 even if he did not fulfil his vow. He had taken part in the 1194 invasion of the kingdom of Sicily, although, or perhaps because, he was apparently in disfavour. (This may have been the result of a recent and bloody local conflict with Duke

⁸⁹ Reg. Henry VI, nos. 138, 144, 147, 152-53, 158, 162 [Clementi, "Calendar," nos. 2, 4, 7, 13]; "Historia de Expeditione Friderici," 95.

⁹⁰ Burchardi Chronicon, 82; Chronica Regia Coloniensis, 156, 164, 175.

⁹¹ Reg. Henry VI, nos. 155-56, 162, 542-43, 551, 579 [Clementi, "Calendar," nos. 7-8, 13, 99]. He was last attested at Gioia in Apulia on 15 January 1197: Naumann, *Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI*, 251.

⁹² Die Regesten der Grafen von Habsburg bis 1281, ed. Harold Steinacker (Innsbruck 1905), nos. 70, 72, 75; Ottonis de Sancto Blasio Chronica, 29. Albrecht was landgrave before 1187, and was so styled, "comes provincialis," by the *Annales Marbacenses*, 66, in 1195.

⁹³ Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum, V.17, p. 172.

⁹⁴ Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum, II.13, 16, 21, V.7, pp. 51-52, 55-57, 65, 153.

⁹⁵ Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum, V.22, pp. 186-87; Reg. Henry VI, no. 477: full text in *Hamburgisches Urkundenbuch*, ed. Johann M. Lappenberg (Hamburg 1842), 270-71, no. 307.

Ludwig of Bavaria.) However, Albrecht had been swiftly restored to the emperor's grace when he brought him the news of his son's birth.⁹⁶

A more surprising figure who might be considered as an imperial connection was Henry, count palatine of the Rhine, who was the eldest son of the displaced Henry the Lion. But while his father had never been fully reconciled to his humiliation in 1180, the younger Henry seems to have been working his way back into favour with Henry VI, and perhaps the emperor was trying to extend an olive branch to the Welfs, offering the younger Henry a chance to recover his grace and – if not his father's duchies and the lands confiscated in 1180, which were gone beyond recall – at least a place among the Reichsfürsten once again. The younger Henry had taken part in both the 1191 and 1194 south Italian expeditions, and late in 1193 he had married Agnes, the daughter and heir of Conrad, count palatine of the Rhine, the half-brother of Frederick Barbarossa – a union which the emperor had at first opposed, but to which he had relatively quickly been persuaded to give his sanction in return for the Welf's participation in the 1194 expedition.⁹⁷ Henry duly succeeded to Count Conrad's lordship and princely position on the latter's death in November 1195, very shortly after he too had taken the cross.⁹⁸ Admittedly, this case is ambiguous, and Count Henry's return to favour had not been easy – he may well have been taken to Italy in 1190/1 as a hostage for his father's good behaviour; at that stage the emperor was still very suspicious of him, and he seems to have abandoned this first expedition and returned home as soon as he could.⁹⁹ Furthermore the emperor's consent to his marriage had initially been reluctant – one pro-Welf source suggested that he would have preferred to marry the heiress to Duke Ludwig of Bavaria.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, even after his succession to the palatinate, the count still claimed to be the rightful duke of Saxony, which can hardly have been to the emperor's taste.¹⁰¹ But he cannot have succeeded to his father-in-law's lordship without the emperor's consent – and one may wonder whether his participation in the crusade was the *quid pro quo* for this. Certainly, at his first public appearance at the imperial court as count palatine, at Würzburg in April 1196,

⁹⁶ *Hermani Altahensis Annales*, MGH SS, 17:385. For the conflict with Duke Ludwig ca. 1193: *De Advocatis Altahensibus*, *ibid.*, 374.

⁹⁷ *Annales Stederbergenses*, MGH SS, 16:227-29. Henry and his father-in-law both witnessed an imperial charter on 29 January 1194: Reg. Henry VI, no. 332; so one may presume that the emperor had become reconciled to the marriage by then, Seltmann, *Heinrich VI*, 170.

⁹⁸ Bernd Schneidmüller, *Die Welfen. Herrschaft und Erinnerung* (Stuttgart, 2000), 236-38. Henry attended the Gelhausen diet in October 1195, which was presumably where he received the cross: Reg. Henry VI, no. 482.

⁹⁹ *Annales Stederbergenses*, MGH SS, 16 :222; *Annales Stadenses*, *ibid.*, 352. For his involvement in the Italian expeditions, see also *Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum*, V.20, p. 183; Reg. Henry VI, nos. 138, 148, 368, 377 [Clementi, "Calendar," nos. 2, 23].

¹⁰⁰ *Hugonis et Honorii Chronicorum Continuationes Weingartenses*, ed. Ludwig Weiland, MGH SS 21 (Hanover 1869), 479.

¹⁰¹ *Württembergische Urkundenbuch 2* (Stuttgart, 1858), 312 no. 494.

he was accompanied by several other future crusaders: the archbishop of Bremen, the bishops of Verden and Naumburg, the duke of Bavaria, the landgrave of Thuringia and Margrave Conrad of Landsberg.¹⁰²

All of these allies, protégés and connections of the imperial family may well therefore have been influenced by the emperor to undertake the crusade. We cannot, of course, assume that this was the case for all those who went on the expedition; similarly in the Crusade of 1189-90, there were some leading men with close links to the emperor, but others who would appear to have had little or no contact with the imperial court.¹⁰³ And one of the most important figures among the 1197 crusaders was someone who had previously been very definitely out of favour and at odds with the emperor, Archbishop Hartwig II of Bremen. Hartwig, who unusually for a German prelate came from a ministerial family, had previously been a chaplain of Henry the Lion, who had been very pleased with his election as archbishop. Henry VI, however, had been reluctant to accept him as archbishop, had forced him into exile for a year in 1190-91, and had subsequently in 1192 taken advantage of a rift between Hartwig and the canons of Bremen to support a rival candidate for the see put forward by the chapter, Bishop Waldemar of Schleswig, a cousin of the king of Denmark. The emperor had only reluctantly been persuaded to accept Hartwig once again through a compromise negotiated by the archbishop of Cologne in 1194, after Bishop Waldemar had been imprisoned by Knut VI.¹⁰⁴ Thereafter Hartwig seems to have been restored to favour, a peace was settled with the count of Holstein, and the archbishop was with the emperor at Gelnhausen in March and Würzburg in April 1196.¹⁰⁵ But interestingly, although he was one of those recorded as taking the cross at the end of 1195, he may not have attended in person either the Gelnhausen or the Worms diets where the major recruitment took place. In the event, Hartwig went to the Holy Land by sea in 1197, stopping en route in Portugal.¹⁰⁶ While this may have been simply a matter of convenience or choice – a contingent was going by sea anyway, and travelling from north Germany to the Alps would have added at least a month to

¹⁰² Reg. Henry VI, nos. 503-04. Andrea Briechele, *Heinrich von Braunschweig. Bilder eines welfischen Fürsten in der Umbruchszeit des späten 12. und frühen 13. Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg, 2012), especially 36-50 for his marriage to Agnes, although she does not discuss the crusade in this context.

¹⁰³ Loud, *Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa*, 23-24.

¹⁰⁴ Arnoldi *Chronica Slavorum*, V.21, pp. 185-86. Hans-Joachim Freytag, "Der Nordosten des Reiches nach dem Sturz Heinrichs des Löwen. Bischof Waldemar von Schleswig und das Erzbistum Bremen (1192/93)," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 25 (1969): 471-530. Bishop Waldemar was a son of King Knut V of Denmark, who had been murdered in 1157, and was thus potentially a rival claimant to the Danish throne. He was to remain in prison until 1206.

¹⁰⁵ Reg. Henry VI, nos. 477, 500, 502-03.

¹⁰⁶ *Annales Stadenses*, MGH SS, 16:353.

the journey¹⁰⁷ – one wonders whether he may have wanted to distance himself from the emperor and those more closely associated with him, at least until the later stages of the expedition, for there was apparently some argument about the choice of route, “with the Saxons reluctant to follow the emperor.”¹⁰⁸ Hartwig was accompanied on the sea voyage by another man who had little cause to love Henry VI: Duke Henry of Brabant, the assassination of whose brother Albert, Bishop of Liège, in 1192, was widely rumoured to have been on the emperor’s orders; certainly, the emperor had done nothing to punish the murderers, and his guilt was widely suspected.¹⁰⁹ That the Count Palatine Henry accompanied them on the sea route may indeed suggest that his reconciliation with the emperor had been fairly superficial, although we should also remember his and his family’s long-standing links with the archbishop. Finally, another important person who was at odds with the emperor may have left with the advance party, or very soon afterwards. Count Dietrich of Weissenfels was the younger half-brother of Margrave Albrecht of Meissen, who had died in June 1195. The emperor, who had suffered from a good deal of trouble with the Wettins, refused to allow him to succeed to the march, which he took into his own hands. Dietrich was last recorded in Germany in January 1197, when he announced his imminent departure “to fight for the cross,” and he was still in Acre in March 1198, when he was one of those present at the creation of the Teutonic Order.¹¹⁰

However, with Archbishop Hartwig’s involvement in the crusade, another factor had probably played its part. He had taken the cross before the Third Crusade, but we have no evidence that he actually went – indeed, while it was going on he was in exile in England – and hence in 1195 he may well have been anxious to redeem a long-delayed vow.¹¹¹ And for many of those who took part in the expedition of 1197-98 links with the previous crusade or family connections with the Holy Land may have been just as, if not more, important than any encouragement or pressure from the emperor. Several of the participants in 1197 had

¹⁰⁷ *Descriptio Theutoniae*, ed. Philipp Jaffé, MGH SS 17:238.

¹⁰⁸ “*Historia de Expeditione Friderici*,” 113: “Saxonibus renitentibus sequi imperatorem.”

¹⁰⁹ Raymond H. Schmandt, “The Election and Assassination of Albert of Louvain, Bishop of Liège, 1191-92,” *Speculum* 42 (1967): 639-60.

¹¹⁰ *Codex Diplomaticus Saxoniae Regiae*, 1.3 Urkunden der Markgrafen von Meissen 1196-1234, ed. Otto Posse (Leipzig, 1898), 13-14 no. 14; *De Primordiis Ordinis Theutonici Narratio*, 224, which describes him as margrave of Meissen, a usage which suggests that this text was written somewhat later than the events it describes. Cf. *Chronicon Montis Sereni*, ed. Ernst Ehrenfeuchter, MGH SS, 23:166, which suggests that Dietrich was already overseas when his brother died, which cannot have been correct. He was back in Germany by November 1198: *Urkunden der Markgrafen 1196-1234*, 29-30 no. 31. For the context: Jorg Rogge, *Die Wettiner. Aufstieg einer Dynastie im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 2009), 47-49.

¹¹¹ For his exile, *Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum*, V.3, p. 150; Freytag, “Der Nordosten des Reiches,” 497. It must have been shortly before his departure in May 1196 that he consecrated the Cistercian Berthold as the second bishop of Livonia: *Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum*, V.30, p. 214; *Annales Stadenses*, ad. an. 1195, MGH SS, 16:352; *Henrici Livoniae Chronicon*, ed. Leonid Arbusow and Albrecht Bauer, MGH SRG (Hanover, 1955), 8.

already taken part in the earlier expedition, notably Bishop Conrad of Regensburg, Count Adolf of Holstein, Count Henry of Oldenburg, who died during the second expedition,¹¹² and Bernhard of Horstmar, a Westphalian noble who, along with Count Adolf, distinguished himself in the fighting outside Beirut.¹¹³ Count Adolf had returned very speedily from the earlier expedition, probably because of fears for the safety of his lands in his absence, and may therefore have regarded the crusade as unfinished business.¹¹⁴ Others followed in the footsteps of close relatives. Herman of Thuringia had succeeded his elder brother Ludwig, who had died at Acre during the Third Crusade.¹¹⁵ Burchard of Querfurt, the brother of Gebhardt and Bishop Conrad of Hildesheim, had also perished on that expedition, as had the father of Count Otto of Henneberg – this last from an important noble family on the border between Franconia and Thuringia who had been loyal supporters of the Stauffer.¹¹⁶ Count Ludwig (II) of Oettingen (in Swabia), who took the cross in 1195, was following his brother Conrad, who had gone on Barbarossa's crusade, although in Ludwig's case we have no clear evidence that he actually fulfilled his vow. (He had also been in Italy with Henry VI during at least the later stages of the 1191 expedition.)¹¹⁷

Two of the most important leaders of the crusade may well have been seeking to atone for the sins, of omission or commission, of their fathers. Duke Godfrey of Brabant, who died in 1190, had been one of those who had vowed to go on crusade in 1188 but had failed to do so.¹¹⁸ Was his son Henry now going in his place? Furthermore, the latter's murdered brother Albert had also taken the cross, but had never gone.¹¹⁹ Much more explicit was the motivation of Duke Frederick of Austria, whose father Leopold had only been freed from excommunication on his deathbed, as a consequence of his role in the imprisonment and ransom of Richard the Lionheart. Frederick, we are told, intended to go on crusade "for the salvation of his father's soul."¹²⁰ One might also note that among the others who had failed to fulfil their vow in 1189-90 had been Duke Henry of Limburg and his sons Henry and Waleran, who had, wrote Gilbert of Mons, "tossed this aside quickly and caused many evils

¹¹² "Historia de Expeditione Friderici," 18, 20; *Historia Monasterii Rastadensis*, MGH SS, 25:512; cf. *Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum*, IV.15, p. 141. Naumann, *Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI*, 238.

¹¹³ *Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum*, V.27, p. 201. Röhrich, *Die Deutschen im Heiligen Lande*, 63-64.

¹¹⁴ He had returned to Germany by 24 December 1190, *Hamburgisches Urkundenbuch*, 258-59 no. 292; cf. *Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum*, V.7, p. 153.

¹¹⁵ *Cronica Reinhardsbrunnensis*, MGH SS, 30.1:546-47.

¹¹⁶ *Cronica Reinhardsbrunnensis*, 545; *Monumenta Erphesfurtensia*, 196.

¹¹⁷ "Historia de Expeditione Friderici," 19, 77; *Annales Marbacenses*, 66. Reg. Henry VI, nos. 174-76, 178, 191

¹¹⁸ "Historia de Expeditione Friderici," 23.

¹¹⁹ *Le Chronique de Gislebert de Mons*, ed. Léon Vanderkindere (Brussels 1904), 206.

¹²⁰ *Otonis de Sancto Blasio Chronica*, 67.

and wars throughout the empire.”¹²¹ Waleran was one of the first to reach the Holy Land in 1197. Otto of Henneberg, bishop of Speyer, whose nephew Count Otto took part in the 1197 expedition, was another who had earlier failed to fulfil his vows.¹²² Again, one wonders whether this may have been a possible influence on his relative.

For some, indeed, a family connection with the Holy Land, either by pilgrimage or crusade, had existed for several generations, as for example with the Welfs, the family of the Count Palatine Henry. His ancestor Welf IV had died in Cyprus on his way back from the 1101 crusade, his great-uncle Conrad, a cleric, had died in southern Italy while on his way to Jerusalem ca. 1150, his uncle Welf VI had taken part in the Second Crusade, while his father had made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1172.¹²³ Duke Frederick of Austria’s grandfather and great-uncle had taken part in the Second Crusade, while his father had gone to Jerusalem as a pilgrim in 1182 and been one of the leaders of the Third Crusade. While his primary motivation was undoubtedly concern for his father’s soul, the duke was also upholding family tradition.¹²⁴

In addition, we should note the influence on others, not just of the emperor, but of the leaders of the expedition. These were, of course, accompanied by their own military households, about whom we are, with rare exceptions, sadly ill-informed.¹²⁵ But some of the most important figures also exercised a conspicuous influence on other lords. In particular, there was Archbishop Conrad of Mainz, whom we know to have been actively involved in preaching the crusade – one source suggests he was a much more effective preacher than the Italian cardinals because he used the vernacular rather than Latin.¹²⁶ He set off, probably in December 1196, “with many inhabitants of Franconia and the Rhineland,”¹²⁷ and appears to have acted as a leader to the nobles of Franconia, for example Count Werner of Wittgenstein,

¹²¹ *Chronique de Gislebert de Mons*, 207.

¹²² “*Historia de Expeditione Friderici*,” 23. Duke Henry (III) of Limburg, however, remained in Germany in 1197, and there is no suggestion that he took the cross again: *Urkundenbuch für die Geschichte des Niederrheins*, 1, nos. 557-59. He was an early supporter of Otto IV: *ibid.*, 1:392-93 nos. 562-63.

¹²³ *Frutolfs und Ekkehard's Chroniken und die anonyme Kaiserchronik*, ed. F.-J. Schmale and I. Schmale-Ott, *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters*, Freiherr von Stein Gedächtnisausgabe, 15 (Darmstadt, 1972), 170; *Historia Welforum Weingartensis*, ed. E. König, *Schwäbische Chroniken der Stauferzeit 1*, 2nd ed. (Sigmaringen, 1978), 22, 26-28, 54, 66.

¹²⁴ His brother Leopold VI was later to take part in the Albigensian Crusade, the 1212 campaign in Spain and the Fifth Crusade: Georg Scheibelreiter, *Die Babenberger. Reichsfürsten und Landesherren* (Vienna, 2010), 244, 247-52, 286-90. And while Count Albrecht of Bogen never reached the Holy Land in 1197, two of his sons accompanied Duke Leopold on the Fifth Crusade: Röhrich, *Die Deutschen im Heiligen Lande*, 100.

¹²⁵ One of the few about whose followers we do know something is Bishop Conrad of Regensburg, but those named as accompanying him by the *Annales Ratisponenses*, MGH SS, 17:590, were clerics.

¹²⁶ *Cronica Reinhard'sbrunnensis*, MGH 30.1:554-55.

¹²⁷ *Continuatio Garstensis*, MGH, 16:594-95; cf. “*Chronica S. Petri Erfordensis Moderna*,” 198: “*multis sibi signatis sociatis.*”

who was a regular witness of the archbishop's charters in the years before the crusade and seems to have travelled to the East with him;¹²⁸ and probably also Count Poppo of Wertheim, who witnessed charters of Conrad at Mainz in August 1195 and November 1196.¹²⁹ (We should note, however, that Count Poppo had also taken part in the expedition to Italy in 1191.)¹³⁰ Lambert and Ernst, the two sons of the count of Gleichen in Thuringia, who were among those who took the cross at the end of 1195 were frequent witnesses of the charters of Archbishop Conrad during 1195/6, and may well also have accompanied him on the expedition.¹³¹ Frederick of Austria was, hardly surprisingly, accompanied by several nobles from his duchy, including Otto of Ramsberg, who had earlier taken part in Barbarossa's crusade, and who witnessed a charter of the duke on 26 April 1197 (for the soul of Duke Leopold) just before the latter's departure;¹³² and Conrad of Aspern, who "being about to go to Jerusalem" received a substantial sum of money from the canons of Klosterneuburg in return for abandoning his claim to a property that his father had given to the house, this being done in the presence of Duke Frederick.¹³³ No doubt this financed his journey. Similarly, an Austrian ministerialis, Otto of Puchberg, mortgaged two properties to Klosterneuburg "for his soul" before he set out for Jerusalem, though with the proviso that he could redeem them on his return. His brother Hugo had accompanied Duke Leopold on crusade in 1190 and died in the Holy Land.¹³⁴ Otto was presumably also part of Duke Frederick's entourage.

The last group who should be considered is those who were in direct attendance upon the Emperor Henry in Sicily in 1197, either as members of his household or nobles who had been with him since his entry into Italy the previous summer. Henry's following when he entered Italy in July 1196 had been a small one, and it did not increase significantly until the arrival of the main body of the crusaders in the kingdom of Sicily, in (probably) June 1197.¹³⁵ Those who accompanied him throughout this period included Conrad of Urslingen, duke of Spoleto, Count Albrecht of Spanheim, who came from Swabia, a Franconian free noble

¹²⁸ Mainzer Urkundenbuch 2.2, nos. 606, 617, 637-38, 640, 645.

¹²⁹ Mainzer Urkundenbuch 2.2, nos. 623, 655-56.

¹³⁰ Reg. Henry VI, nos. 174-78, 183-84, 191.

¹³¹ Mainzer Urkundenbuch 2.2, nos. 618-19, 652-54, 669.

¹³² "Historia de Expeditione Friderici," 21; Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Babenberger in Österreich, 1. Die Siegelurkunden der Babenberger bis 1215, ed. Heinrich Fichtenau and Erich Zöllner (Vienna, 1950), 134-35 no. 100.

¹³³ Codex Traditionum Ecclesiae Collegiatae Claustroneoburgensis, ed M. Fischer, Fontes Rerum Austriacarum II.4 (Vienna, 1851), 98, no. 149. Conrad also witnessed a privilege of Duke Frederick for the nuns of Erla in September 1196, and he survived the crusade: Urkundenbuch der Babenberger, 1:132 no. 98, and no. 149.

¹³⁴ Codex Traditionum ... Claustroneoburgensis, 99, no. 453. "Historia de Expeditione Friderici," 97.

¹³⁵ Annales Marbacenses, 67.

(Arnold of Hornberg),¹³⁶ several of the imperial ministeriales on whom Henry heavily depended, notably his marshal Henry of Kalden and butler Henry of Kaiserslautern, as well as the former ministerialis, and the emperor's right-hand man, Markward of Annweiler, duke of Ravenna.¹³⁷ This was very much the emperor's inner circle – Henry of Kalden and Markward had been part of the emperor's household since his youth – and all of these men had taken part in the conquest of the kingdom of Sicily in 1194.¹³⁸ Henry and Markward were shown alongside the emperor and the chancellor Conrad in one of the illustrations to Peter of Eboli's poem celebrating that conquest.¹³⁹ These men were also key figures in his diplomacy. Markward and Arnold acted as his representatives with the Pisan naval squadron that took part in the 1194 invasion.¹⁴⁰ Conrad of Spoleto was entrusted with an embassy to the papal curia early in 1197 – he may also have been accompanied by Markward.¹⁴¹ Henry of Kalden was sent as the emperor's envoy to Constantinople over the winter of 1196/7, had returned to Sicily by May 1197, where he and Markward had played a leading role in the suppression of the revolt which had broken out on the island, but he then set off for Syria, presumably with the main body of the crusaders at the beginning of September.¹⁴² The others remained with the emperor in Sicily until his death at Messina on 28 September: Conrad of Spoleto, Markward and Count Albrecht all witnessed privileges granted in the days immediately before his death. (Albrecht also received a fief in Germany as a reward for his services.)¹⁴³ By this time they had also been joined by Bishop Hartwig of Eichstätt, a prelate who had not hitherto been noted as taking the cross, but had probably come south accompanying the main army of crusaders, for he was first attested in Sicily on 3 August. However, unlike them, he

¹³⁶ His principal castle was near Neckarzimmern, in the district of Mosbach, today in the northern part of Baden-Württemberg.

¹³⁷ Innocent III's biographer said that Henry "favoured him above all his other familiares": *Gesta Innocentii III* ch. 9, PL 214, col. 23.

¹³⁸ Arnold, *German Knighthood 1050-1300*, 214-16; Thomas Ertl, *Studien zum Kanzlei- und Urkundenwesen Kaiser Heinrichs VI.* (Vienna, 2002), 88. For Markward, Thomas C. Van Cleve, *Markward of Anweiler and the Sicilian Regency* (Princeton, 1937), is still useful: see 17-34 for his early career; also Karl Bosl, *Der Reichsministerialität der Salier und Staufer*, MGH *Schriften* 10 (Stuttgart, 1951), 228-30, 588-98; and Seltmann, *Heinrich VI*, 134-39. Both Markward and Henry of Kalden can be attested in Henry VI's entourage from the autumn of 1185: *Reg. Henry VI*, nos. 4b, 5.

¹³⁹ Petrus de Ebulo, *Liber ad Honorem Augusti*. Codex 120 II der Burgerbibliothek Bern. *Eine Bilderchronik der Stauferzeit*, ed. Theo Kölzer and Marlis Stähli (Sigmaringen, 1994), 243.

¹⁴⁰ *Reg. Henry VI*, no. 378 [Clementi, "Calendar," no. 24].

¹⁴¹ Baaken, "Die Verhandlungen zwischen Heinrich VI. und Coelestin III," 475-76.

¹⁴² For the revolt, see especially *Annales Marbacenses*, 69-70. The last time Henry can be attested in Sicily with the emperor was on 3 August, when he received a grant of various fiefs and properties in Germany as a reward for his loyal service against the Sicilian rebels: *Reg. Henry VI*, no. 605 [Clementi, "Calendar," no. 124]. His presence in the East was noted by Burchard of Ursberg, *Chronicon*, 74; and he was one of those who witnessed the conversion of the Hospital to a knightly order at Acre, on 5th March 1198. For his career: Seltmann, *Heinrich VI*, 140-46.

¹⁴³ *Reg. Henry VI*, no. 609 [Clementi, "Calendar," no. 128], 12 September 1197.

did not sail to the East at the beginning of September, since he was still in Messina on 24th September, a few days before the emperor's death.¹⁴⁴

The presence of this group may shed some light on the intentions of Henry himself, which were cut short by his premature death at the age of only thirty-two. Both Arnold of Lübeck and the well-informed Marbach annalist made clear that when Henry first mooted the new crusade, he did not himself publicly take the cross, although the Marbach annalist claimed that he had done so in private, and Arnold that he was “spiritually signed”. The Marbach annalist claimed that he would have announced his taking of the cross had the princes agreed to choose his son as king before he left Germany, and that subsequently he wanted to receive the cross from the pope, if the latter agreed to anoint his son as king, but the latter refused, and the emperor went off into the kingdom of Sicily “in a very bad temper” (this would have been in November 1196).¹⁴⁵ He would seem from this account, therefore, still not to have publicly pledged to go on crusade himself. The *Estoire d'Eracles* alleged that Henry told the pope

that he would give supplies and shipping to all those who wanted to help in the conquest of the kingdom of Jerusalem so that it would cost them nothing, and that he himself would never leave the Regno until the kingdom of Jerusalem had been conquered.¹⁴⁶

This surely implies that the emperor had never intended himself to go on crusade, although we must remember that this account was written some time after the event, and represents the light of hindsight, from the viewpoint of Frankish Syria. Modern historians have nonetheless tended to follow this view.¹⁴⁷ However, the Reinhardsbrunner chronicler suggests that, at least towards the end of 1196, Henry was in fact keeping an open mind on the issue. As part of his attempt to repair his relations with the German princes and to secure their consent to Frederick's election, he sent a letter which was read out at a meeting at Frankfurt, in which he said that he had taken the cross, but offered to be guided by the princes' decision as to whether he should lead the forthcoming crusade in person or remain in the kingdom of Sicily to provide logistical support for the expedition, adding that “he promised that he would do

¹⁴⁴ Reg. Henry VI, nos. 605, 610 [Clementi, “Calendar,” nos. 124, 130].

¹⁴⁵ *Annales Marbacenses*, 67-68. Baaken, “Die Verhandlungen zwischen Heinrich VI. und Coelestin III,” 505.

¹⁴⁶ Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr, 187 [trans. Edbury, *Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, 139].

¹⁴⁷ Naumann, *Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI*, 195-96.

not what was more convenient for himself but rather what seemed to everyone the more useful [course of action].”¹⁴⁸

Here, of course, Henry was trying to appear emollient, and such a diplomatic offer does not give any guidance as to which option he may actually have preferred: it does, however, suggest that by this stage he had publically taken the cross, and was at least contemplating leading the crusade in person. Furthermore, the backgrounds of the men closest to Henry in his last months might well imply that the emperor would have preferred to lead the expedition. Both Markward of Annweiler and Henry of Kalden had taken part in and, indeed, played prominent roles during Barbarossa’s crusade.¹⁴⁹ Arnold of Hornberg had also been on the 1189-90 expedition, and (although not mentioned in the Marbach account) had been present at the councils of Gelnhausen and Worms in 1195, which had been at the centre of crusading recruitment.¹⁵⁰ Albrecht of Spanheim had also attended the Gelnhausen diet, and two of his brothers had taken part in Barbarossa’s expedition to the East.¹⁵¹ Markward, Henry of Kalden, Conrad of Urslingen, Arnold of Hornberg and Albrecht of Spanheim had all been with Henry in Apulia in April 1195 when he had first announced the crusade, and (probably) privately taken the cross.¹⁵² Bishop Hartwig’s brother, Count Gebhardt of Dollnstein, had also been a member of Barbarossa’s crusade, although he was one of those participants who had returned quite early from that enterprise, for he also participated in the invasion of southern Italy in 1191.¹⁵³ And another who joined Henry in the last few months of his life and remained with him to the end was his cousin William, margrave of Montferrat, the brother of Conrad, the hero of the siege of Tyre.¹⁵⁴ These crusading links among the group of councillors who accompanied Henry in Sicily during 1197 might indeed suggest that he intended to go east himself, had not first the suppression of the Sicilian rebellion that summer, and then his own demise, prevented this. As the Eracles author said at another point in his account,

¹⁴⁸ *Cronica Reinharsbrunnensis*, MGH SS 30.1:558: “Non quod ipsi commodius, sed quod universis videretur utilius se per omnia facturum pollicetur.”

¹⁴⁹ “*Historia de Expeditione Friderici*,” 45, 54-55, 61, 64, 71, 81. Van Cleve, Markward, 32-34.

¹⁵⁰ “*Historia de Expeditione Friderici*,” 22; Reg. Henry VI, nos. 477-78, 480, 482, 487.

¹⁵¹ Reg. Henry VI, no. 482. “*Historia de Expeditione Friderici*,” 19; Loud, *The Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa*, 49-50.

¹⁵² Reg. Henry VI, nos. 412-13, 416, 422, 426-34.

¹⁵³ “*Historia de Expeditione Friderici*,” 20. He was with Henry at Pisa on 1 March 1191: Reg. Henry VI, no. 138; cf. *ibid.*, nos. 152-53, 155-57, 162.

¹⁵⁴ Reg. Henry VI, nos. 596, 605, 609, 613 [Clementi, “*Calendar*,” nos. 115, 124, 128, 133]. His brother Boniface had taken part in the conquest of 1194 and remained with Henry for several months until the emperor left the kingdom in April 1195: *ibid.*, nos. 387, 389, 394-95, 403-04, 412-13, 416, 422, 426, 428, 430-31.

calling to mind the good work that the emperor Frederick had begun, but had not been able to finish. He would gladly have accomplished them (it?) himself, had not God required of him his life.¹⁵⁵

Furthermore, another crucial and hitherto-neglected piece of evidence also points to Henry intending personally to take the lead in the expedition, or at least to a well-informed contemporary believing that he would. Towards the end of his long and sycophantic poem glorifying the emperor and celebrating his conquest of the kingdom of Sicily, and which was apparently finished early in 1197 and intended for presentation to the emperor, the south Italian Peter of Eboli inserted an acrostic predicting future victories that he would achieve. Peter concluded this verse by saying:

When confronting no enemy, he will pitch his camp with Jove,
Victorious when Sion is cleansed, David's citadel redeemed,
Sicily he will seek again, to wield the golden sceptre of Rome.¹⁵⁶

Not only this, but Peter went on to describe the decoration of an imperial palace. Whether this was anything other than the product of his imagination is a good question. But, according to Peter, one of the rooms of this palace was decorated with frescoes showing scenes from the crusade of Emperor Frederick, described as *fervidus in Christo miles*.¹⁵⁷ Even if these palace decorations never actually existed, Peter's poem points to the importance of the crusade within the court circle, and shows that someone who was at least on the fringes of that circle believed that Henry intended to lead the expedition in person.

We tend to view Henry VI's involvement in the eastern Mediterranean as an essentially political engagement, with the emperor keen to vaunt his imperial pretensions by granting crowns to, and securing overlordship of, Cyprus and Armenia, and perhaps seeking similarly to subordinate the Byzantine empire, as was suggested by Otto of St. Blasien, who claimed grandiloquently that:

¹⁵⁵ Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr, 181 [trans. Edbury, *Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, 136].

¹⁵⁶ *Liber ad Honorem Augusti*, ed. Kölzer and Stähli, 217, lines 1467-69 [also in *Liber ad Honorem Augusti di Pietro da Eboli*, ed. G. B. Siragusa, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia* (Rome, 1906), 103]: "Cum non hostis erit, sua ponet cum Iove castra. Vicerit ut mundum Syon, David arce redempta, Siciliam repetens, Rome reget aurea scepra." The translation above is taken from: *Book in Honor of Augustus (Liber ad Honorem Augusti)*, by Pietro da Eboli, trans. Gwenyth Hood (Tempe, Arizona, 2012), 321.

¹⁵⁷ *Liber ad Honorem Augusti*, ed. Kölzer and Stähli, 233, lines 1580-1605 (quote from line 1583) [ed. Siragusa, 109-11]. I am grateful to Sebastian Brenninger (Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität, München), for reminding me about this passage.

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.¹⁵⁸

Yet one should remember that the groundwork for a relationship with Armenia had been laid during Barbarossa's crusade, or perhaps even before that; that the initiative for the recognition of the Cypriot crown came seemingly from Aimery de Lusignan, not Henry;¹⁵⁹ and that his concern with Byzantium was rather to secure financial, naval and logistical assistance for his crusade than to enforce any lordship over it, let alone to conquer the empire as Otto of St. Blasien's overwrought imagination and the other highly-coloured accounts of Henry of Kalden's embassy suggested.¹⁶⁰ We also may underestimate quite how strong an influence the crusading ethic was at the Staufen court: certainly vernacular poetry associated with the court circle (even if hard to date) suggests that these ideals were deeply imbued, both in terms of religious endeavour and as service to God by his Christian vassals.¹⁶¹ We should also note the emperor's considerable patronage of the (admittedly as yet un-militarised) Teutonic Order during the last months of his life.¹⁶² It is thus time that we take a cooler view of Henry VI's imperial ambitions, and instead bring Henry the crusader into the foreground of our analysis.

¹⁵⁸ Ottonis de Sancto Blasio Chronica, 71.

¹⁵⁹ *Annales Marbacenses*, 67. Naumann, *Kreuzzug Kaiser Heinrichs VI*, 39-46; Loud, *The Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa*, 17-18; Edbury, "Celestine III, the Crusade and the Latin East," 141-42.

¹⁶⁰ Jonathan Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades* (London, 2003), 148-49. For the embassy, *Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr*, 180-85 [trans. Edbury, *Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, 137-39]; *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*, trans. Henry Magoulias (Detroit, 1984), 261-62.

¹⁶¹ W. H. Jackson, *Chivalry in Twelfth-Century Germany: The Works of Hartmann von Aue* (Cambridge, 1994), 182-93.

¹⁶² *Reg. Henry VI*, nos. 593, 601, 709, 727. Kristjan Toomaspoeg, *Les Teutoniques en Sicile (1197-1492)* (Rome, 2003), 29-34.