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The Lords of Zimmern, Baldwin I of Jerusalem, and a Crusader's Ghost: The Uses of a Distant Crusading Past in an Early Modern Family Chronicle

Alan V. Murray

In her biography of Baldwin I of Jerusalem (1100-1118), Susan Edgington concluded that the king 'was indubitably the right man at the right time'. While recognising that it is impossible to say whether he was primarily driven by personal ambition, dynastic loyalty or crusading piety, she stressed that Baldwin possessed the range of qualities necessary to preserve and expand the tiny and fragile kingdom that he inherited from his brother Godfrey of Bouillon in the summer of 1100.¹ Of course, Baldwin did not do this all by himself, and much modern historical research has stressed the importance of the personal networks and connections that enabled rulers to function in their responsibilities and carry out their policies. In resisting attacks from Egypt and Damascus, conquering the cities of the Palestinian coast, and seeing off the ambitions of both Daibert of Pisa, patriarch of Jerusalem, and Tancred, prince of Galilee, Baldwin relied to a large extent on men who had been vassals or allies of the Ardennes-Boulogne family in Europe, or had developed ties with him and his brothers Godfrey and Eustace III of Boulogne in the course of the First Crusade.²

Our knowledge of the names and origins of such men is largely due to the evidence of the Rhineland chronicler Albert of Aachen, and historians of the crusades owe a great debt to Susan Edgington for her superb edition and translation of his *Historia Ierosolimitana*.³ It is thus surprising that a source written in the third quarter of the sixteenth century gives information on a companion of Baldwin who is not mentioned by any other source, and with considerably more detail than any of those described by Albert of Aachen. The Early New High German *Chronicle of Zimmern* relates a story of one Friedrich of Zimmern, who served Baldwin after the death of Godfrey of Bouillon in 1100:

[...] the pious, worthy prince reigned for only one year. In his place was chosen Duke Baldwin, his brother. He reigned for eighteen years. Sir Friedrich of Zimmern remained with him for several years. But when Bohemund of Apulia, duke of Antioch, decided to take ship to France, this Friedrich of Zimmern, who had never intended to remain in the country, took leave, with the intention of travelling with this prince to France and then on to Germany. This he did, but he did not remain there for long, as shall be related later.⁴

¹ Susan B. Edgington, *Baldwin I of Jerusalem, 1100-1118* (London, 2019), p. 187.

² Alan V. Murray, 'The Origins of the Frankish Nobility of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1100-1118', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 4 (1989), 281-300; Murray, 'The Army of Godfrey of Bouillon, 1096-1099: Structure and Dynamics of a Contingent on the First Crusade', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire / Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis* 70 (1992), 301-29; Murray, *The Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Dynastic History, 1099-1125* (Oxford, 2000).

³ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana: History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, ed. and trans. Susan B. Edgington (Oxford, 2007).

⁴ *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern*, ed. Hansmartin Decker-Hauff, Arne Holtorf, Sönke Lorenz and Rudolf Seigel, 3 vols (Konstanz, 1964-72), 1: 79: *Aber der from, theur fürst regiert nu ain jar. An sein stat ward erwelt herzog Balduinus, sein brueder; der regiert achtzehen jar. Bei im blibe herr Fridenreich von Zimbern etliche jar. Nachdem aber Boemundus von Apulia, herzog zu Antiochia, im fürgenomen, in Frankreich zu schiffen, nam gedachter herr Friderich von Zimbern, der nie des willens gewest, in dem land zu beleiben, urlob, der mainung, mit dem gedachten fürsten in Frankreich und volgents widerumb haim in teutsche land zu ziehen. Dem also nachkam, aber nicht lang beharren thete, wie hernach volgen wurd.* All translations from Early New High German are by the author.

The chronicle then goes on to explain that after spending some time in Germany, Friedrich became discontented; he travelled to Genoa along with other crusaders and sailed to the Holy Land, where he joined King Baldwin I in besieging the port of Acre. After the capture of the city he again took service with the king, and remained in the East until his death, which the chronicle dates to the reign of Baldwin II.⁵

Bohemund of Antioch sailed to Italy in 1105 and travelled on to France the following year to seek support for his enterprise. It was not until October 1107 that he crossed the Adriatic Sea and besieged the Byzantine city of Dyrrachion (mod. Durrës, Albania); the campaign ended in humiliating failure in September 1108.⁶ Jonathan Riley-Smith thought that Friedrich probably returned to Palestine in 1109.⁷ The chronicle itself dates his arrival in Acre to 1106, but as the city had already been taken by Baldwin I and his allies in 1104, then Friedrich could not have joined the king at the siege *after* returning from Europe to the East, as it claims.⁸ This is only one aspect of the chronicle's account that is problematic, and this essay will argue that Friedrich's supposed pilgrimage and service to Baldwin I of Jerusalem were in fact an invention of the chronicle's author; it will go on to investigate the purpose of the entire episode in the context of the history of a sixteenth-century German noble family.

The *Chronicle of Zimmern* and its Author

The *Chronicle of Zimmern* was composed by the German nobleman Froben Christoph, count of Zimmern (1519-1566) in Upper Swabia. As a young man he studied at the universities of Strasbourg, Bourges, Louvain, Angers and Tours, and around 1540 wrote a Latin history of his family, entitled *Liber rerum Cimbriacarum*.⁹ The chronicle, by contrast, was a later and much longer work in Early New High German, surviving in two manuscript copies. Froben Christoph had access to an impressive library built up by his grandfather, Johann Werner the Elder (1455-1495), and he was also able to make extensive use of historical materials compiled by his uncle, the jurist and antiquarian Wilhelm Werner von Zimmern (1485-1575), who was a historian in his own right.¹⁰ In particular, he drew on the so-called *Heiratenbuch* written by his uncle, which recorded the historical marriages of several Swabian dynasties.¹¹ On the death of the last count of Zimmern in 1594 the library passed to the counts of Helfenstein and later to the princes of

⁵ *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern*, 1: 79-82.

⁶ Brett Edward Whalen, 'God's Will or Not? Bohemond's Campaign against the Byzantine Empire (1105-1108)', in *Crusades – Medieval Worlds in Conflict*, ed. Thomas F. Madden, James L. Naus and Vincent Ryan (Farnham, 2010), pp. 111-25.

⁷ Jonathan Riley-Smith, 'The Motives of the Earliest Crusaders and the Settlement of Latin Palestine, 1095-1100', *English Historical Review* 98 (1983), 721-36 (here 725).

⁸ Susan B. Edgington, 'The Capture of Acre, 1104, and Baldwin I's Conquest of the Littoral', in *Acre and Its Falls: Studies in the History of a Crusader City*, ed. John France (Leiden, 2018), pp. 13-29.

⁹ Beat Rudolf Jenny, *Graf Froben Christoph von Zimmern: Geschichtsschreiber – Erzähler – Dynast* (Konstanz, 1959); Erica Bastress-Dukehart, *The Zimmern Chronicle: Nobility, Memory, and Self-Representation in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Aldershot, 2002).

¹⁰ Wolfgang Achnitz, 'Die poeten und alten historien hat er gewist. Die Bibliothek des Johann Werner von Zimmern als Paradigma der Literaturgeschichtsschreibung', in *Literatur – Geschichte – Literaturgeschichte: Beiträge zur mediävistischen Literaturwissenschaft. Festschrift für Volker Honemann zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Nine Miedema and Rudolf Suntrup (Frankfurt am Main, 2003), pp. 315-33; Felix Heinzer, 'Handschrift und Druck im Œuvre der Grafen Wilhelm Werner und Frohen Christoph von Zimmern', in *Die Gleichzeitigkeit von Handschrift und Buchdruck*, ed. Gerd Dicke (Wiesbaden, 2003), pp. 141-66.

¹¹ Rolf Götz, *Wege und Irrwege frühneuzeitlicher Historiographie: Genealogisches Sammeln zu einer Stammfolge der Herzöge von Teck im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Ostfildern, 2007), pp. 67-94.

Fürstenberg. When most of the Fürstenberg library at Donaueschingen was sold in 1993, the two manuscripts of the chronicle were acquired by the state of Baden-Württemberg.¹²

By the time of Froben Christoph the family inheritance comprised lands around the eponymous castle of Herrenzimmern (Landkreis Rottweil), the newer residence of Wildenstein on the Danube, and the town of Meßkirch (both in Landkreis Sigmaringen).¹³ Both the count and his uncle believed that their ancestors had held more extensive lands than in their own time, and were also convinced that their family had once held a more exalted status than that of free lords (*Freiherren*), which was their rank before Emperor Charles V raised the lordship to the rank of a county in 1538.¹⁴ The chronicle consists primarily of narrative history featuring members of the family, interspersed with personal anecdotes, literary digressions and episodes reminiscent of the genre known as *Schwank* (farcical tale), but its central thread is the idea of *Herkomen* (literally 'origin'), that is the ancestry of the family. An important part of this ancestry concerns the marriages made by members of the family, especially if they involved dynasties of a higher rank, and such connections were commemorated with displays of linked coats of arms (known in German as *Allianzwappen*) showing the arms of Zimmern family (a golden lion rampant holding an axe, on a blue field) together with the arms of a marriage partner. Such displays are to be found on the pages of the chronicle and also on the walls of the castle of Wildenstein.¹⁵

It was common for medieval princely dynasties to trace their origins back to distinguished ancestors in antiquity, and Carolingian, Roman or Trojan ancestry were claimed by many.¹⁶ Froben Christoph, however, claimed a unique and distant heritage. He identified the lords of Zimmern as descendants of the Cimbri, a Germanic tribe originally living on the Jutland peninsula. The historical Cimbri migrated south and invaded Italy in the period 113-101 BC, but were ultimately defeated by the forces of the Roman Republic under the general (and seven-times consul) Gaius Marius.¹⁷ The count dutifully provided an account of the tribe's migrations deriving from the accounts of ancient Roman historians, but went on to make the original claim that some remnants of the defeated Cimbri retreated north of the Alps and settled around the River Neckar in Upper Swabia. He claimed that their leaders, who held the rank of dukes, belonged to his distant ancestors, and bestowed numerous fiefs on their followers in Upper Swabia.¹⁸

¹² Now designated as MSS. Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod.Don.580 (the final revised version copied out by Froben Christoph's secretary Hans Müller, bound as two separate volumes), and Cod.Don.581 (an earlier version with annotations by Froben Christoph himself).

¹³ German placenames relating to the main discussion are located according to their respective *Kreis* (local authority division) within the modern states of Baden-Württemberg or Bavaria.

¹⁴ *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern*, 1: 43-44, 3: 126-29.

¹⁵ Volker Trugenberger, 'Wappen auf der zimmerischen Burg Wildenstein als Zeugnisse adligen Familienbewußtseins im 16. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 147 (1999), 339-62.

¹⁶ Gerd Althoff, 'Genealogische und andere Fiktionen in mittelalterlicher Historiographie', in *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, ed. Wolfram Setz, 4 vols (Hannover, 1988), 1: 417-41; Arnold Angenendt, 'Der eine Adam und die vielen Stammväter. Idee und Wirklichkeit der Origo Gentis im Mittelalter', in *Herkunft und Ursprung: Historische und mythische Formen der Legitimation*, ed. Peter Wunderli (Sigmaringen, 1994), pp. 27-52; Klaus Schreiner, 'Religiöse, historische und rechtliche Legitimation spätmittelalterlicher Adelsherrschaft', in *Nobilitas: Funktion und Repräsentation des Adels in Alteuropa*, ed. Otto Gerhard Oexle and Werner Paravicini (Göttingen, 1997), pp. 376-430.

¹⁷ Emmelienne Demougeot, 'L'invasion des Cimbres-Teutons-Ambrons et les Romains', *Latomus* 37 (1978), 910-38; Christian Liebhardt, *Der Zug der Kimbern und Teutonen: Hintergründe, Ablauf und Rückschlüsse* (Saarbrücken, 2013).

¹⁸ *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern*, 1: 36-38.

The Lords of Zimmern and the First Crusade

Froben Christoph of Zimmern was keen to associate his ancestors as closely as possible with the Holy Roman emperors and kings of Germany as well as major historical events such as the crusades. In one extended episode, the chronicle tells how the brothers Friedrich, Konrad and Albrecht of Zimmern joined the First Crusade in 1096 along with numerous lords and knights from Swabia and the Rhineland. However, at Nicaea this German contingent was defeated by the Turks and Konrad and Albrecht were killed. Friedrich and a handful of other survivors supposedly took service with King Baldwin I of Jerusalem, as outlined above.¹⁹ This entire episode was unknown to modern historians of the crusades until the first edition of the chronicle was published in 1869 by Karl August Barack (1827-1900), librarian of the Fürstenberg library in Donaueschingen.²⁰ The great German historian Reinhold Röhricht (1842-1905) seized on its information and included all of the names from the Zimmern account in his catalogue of German crusaders, published in 1876. After a second edition appeared in 1881-82, it came to the attention of Heinrich Hagenmeyer (1834-1915), who published a study of the crusade episode, together with its Early New High German text and a French translation.²¹

The reputations of Röhricht and Hagenmeyer ensured that the Zimmern account of the First Crusade was widely disseminated, and up to the final decade of the twentieth century the chronicle's evidence was accepted as genuine and cited in many histories of the crusades.²² However, more recent research on the chronicle and the sources it claims to have used has revealed that the crusade narrative is in fact an elaborate confection in which numerous anachronistic or invented names of German dukes, counts and lords are woven into a narrative framework derived from the chronicles of Robert the Monk and William of Tyre.²³ Thus the famous Emicho who is mentioned by Albert of Aachen as a persecutor of Jews in the year 1096

¹⁹ *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern*, 1: 74-85.

²⁰ *Zimmerische Chronik*, ed. Karl August Barack, 4 vols (Tübingen, 1869); Reinhold Röhricht, 'Die Deutschen auf den Kreuzzügen', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 7 (1876), 125-74.

²¹ *Zimmerische Chronik*, ed. Barack, 2nd edn (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1881-82); Heinrich Hagenmeyer, 'Etude sur la Chronique de Zimmern: Renseignements qu'elle a fournis sur la Première Croisade', *Archives de l'Orient latin* 2 (1884), 20-36.

²² Reinhold Röhricht, *Geschichte des Ersten Kreuzzuges* (Innsbruck, 1901), pp. 55-58; Frederick Duncalf, 'The Peasants' Crusade', *American Historical Review* 26 (1921), 440-53; Ferdinand Chalandon, *Histoire de la Première Croisade jusqu'à l'élection de Godefroid de Bouillon* (Paris, 1925), pp. 75-116; René Grousset, *Histoire des croisades et du royaume franc de Jérusalem*, 3 vols (Paris, 1934-36), 1: 5-9; Francesco Cognasso, *La genesi delle crociate* (Torino, 1934), p. 117; Steven Runciman, *History of the Crusades*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1951-54), 1: 121-22, 131-32; Adolf Waas, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge*, 2 vols (Freiburg, 1956), 1: 119-21; Riley-Smith, 'The Motives of the Earliest Crusaders'; Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London, 1986), pp. 50-51; Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders, 1095-1131* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 197, 228; Jean Flori, *La Première Croisade: L'Occident chrétien contre l'Islam* (Paris, 1992), p. 49; Jean Richard, *Histoire des croisades* (Paris, 1996), pp. 41-42.

²³ For detailed analysis of the crusade account and its putative sources, see Alan V. Murray, 'The Chronicle of Zimmern as a Source for the First Crusade: The Evidence of MS Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Don. 580', in *The First Crusade: Origins and Impact*, ed. Jonathan Phillips (Manchester, 1997), pp. 78-106 (with English translation of the account of the crusade from the chronicle); Murray, 'Hochmittelalterlicher Kreuzzug als frühneuzeitliche Adelslegitimation: Die schwäbisch-rheinländischen Teilnehmer des Ersten Kreuzzugs in der Chronik des Grafen Froben Christoph von Zimmern', in *Herrschaft und Legitimation: Hochmittelalterlicher Adel in Südwestdeutschland*, ed. Sönke Lorenz and Stephan Molitor (Leinfelden-Echterdingen, 2002), pp. 171-85.

was actually a count of Flonheim in the Nahegau on the middle Rhine, rather than a count of Leiningen as claimed in the chronicle.²⁴

As we have seen, the chronicle relates that Friedrich of Zimmern went back to the West with Bohemund of Antioch, and this episode gives an interesting twist to the entire story. It records that Friedrich became bored and discontented in Germany, and resolved to return to the Holy Land. He arranged a meeting with his father, Gottfried the Elder, and his two surviving brothers, Gottfried the Younger and Wilhelm, and demanded a share of the family's lands. He was given the lordship of Rosenfeld (Zollern-Alb-Kreis) together with the castles of Harthausen and Tiefenberg. Friedrich wished to travel with a substantial company, and ruthlessly extorted money from the serfs (*aigen leuten*) in order to finance the journey; his noble followers and their retainers were no less active in aiding him in his exactions. Finally – and without the knowledge of his brothers – Friedrich of Zimmern sold the lordship of Rosenfeld with its villages and appurtenances to Friedrich, duke of Teck, a decision which we are told was subsequently to cause great strife between the dukes of Teck and the lords of Zimmern.²⁵

The chronicle continues with an account of Friedrich of Zimmern's return to the Holy Land. He joined King Baldwin I at the siege of Acre, but he was wounded and all of his company were killed. He withdrew to Caesarea, where he was looked after by a German knight named only as *ainer von Horn*, but despite recovering from his wounds, he was for a long time downcast, lamenting the loss of the good friends and faithful servants he had brought with him from Germany. Eventually he told his story to a priest, who asked how he had come by the wealth that had enabled him to support such a splendid company. He confessed how he had taxed and robbed the poor subjects of his father and brothers, and finally sold off his inheritance to the disadvantage of the family. The priest said that while he may have thought he was justified in doing these things in order to fight the heathens, God would require eternal punishment unless he showed repentance for his deeds. Thereupon Friedrich vowed to change his life for the better, and remained in royal service, dying in the reign of Baldwin II.²⁶

One wonders how, if Friedrich died in Outremer, such extensive information about him could have been communicated to his family in Germany and preserved until it was incorporated in the chronicle over four centuries later. The nature and level of detail given do not really conform with accounts of crusaders from typical twelfth-century sources. Friedrich's death seems to mark the end of the story of the lords of Zimmern on the First Crusade, but Hagenmeyer and those historians who used his study of the chronicle failed to notice that the crusader again features in an extended episode later in the narrative.

The Fearless Knight and the Silent Company

This episode concerns one Albrecht of Zimmern, named by the chronicle as eldest son of Gottfried the Younger and Elisabeth of Teck, and thus a nephew of Friedrich the supposed

²⁴ Ingo Toussaint, *Die Grafen von Leiningen: Studien zur leiningischen Genealogie und Territorialgeschichte bis zur Teilung von 1317/1318* (Sigmaringen, 1982); Hannes Möhring, 'Graf Emicho und die Judenverfolgungen von 1096', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 56 (1992), 97-111. The crusader supposedly named as 'Emicho of Leiningen' has gained a wide currency, being found in many modern histories of the crusade which make no mention of the Zimmern chronicle.

²⁵ *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern*, 1: 80-81: *Sein hofgesind vom adl und andere, der er nit wenig von wegen seiner rais bei ihm het, denen auch sein anschlag unverborgen, dieweil sie mit im aus dem land ziehen wolten, halfen im darzu nach allem irem vermögen.*

²⁶ *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern*, 1: 81-82.

crusader.²⁷ Albrecht often spent time at the court of the duke of Swabia, who according to the dating of Albrecht's marriage (1127), must be identified as Friedrich II 'the One-Eyed' (1090-1147), the father of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. On one occasion when he was at court, Albrecht went to visit Erkingen, count of Magenheim in the Zabergäu district (Landkreis Heilbronn), and together they went hunting in the forest of Stromberg, a large wooded area north of the River Zaber. On sighting a particularly fine stag, Albrecht rode off and became separated from his companions. In a part of the forest that he did not recognise he encountered 'a man of grave and terrible appearance' (*ain man gar in ernstlicher und forchtlicher gestalt*), who told Albrecht that he had been ordered there by God to reveal an adventure such as he had never seen before. Although Albrecht was a fearless knight he was at first frightened, but was reassured when he heard the apparition talk of God. He followed on until they both emerged from the forest, where Albrecht saw a splendid castle such as he had never seen in all his days. The story describes his entry to the castle:

When they arrived at the castle, they encountered many people – squires and servants, all of them silent – who took his horse. He who had come with him said that Sir Albrecht should not wonder at the silence; he should talk with no one but him and should be quick to do what he told him. They then entered the castle. Albrecht was led into a beautiful, large hall, where a knight was sitting at table with his retinue, all of whom rose at his approach, bowing their heads as if they wished to welcome him and do him honour. They then sat down as if to eat and drink. Sir Albrecht stood there with his sword, which he kept in his hand and refused to put aside; he looked at the costly board and the food upon it, but was amazed at how everyone remained silent. When Sir Albrecht had stood there for some time, observing everything to his content, and seeing how the seated knight and his retinue went on eating without taking further notice of him, he who had first led him to the castle told him to bow to the knight and his retinue, leave the castle and then allow himself be led away. When this was done, and the knight and his entire company stood up and bowed to Sir Albrecht as they had first done, he led him out of the door, where those who had taken his horse now held it towards him in silence, and then went back into the castle.²⁸

Sir Albrecht returned to the forest with his mysterious companion, who is now described as a ghost (*gaist*). Albrecht said that it was the greatest marvel he had seen or heard, and asked for its meaning to be explained. The ghost replied:

²⁷ *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern*, 1: 89-91.

²⁸ *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern*, 1: 92: *Als sie nun zu dem schloß komen, begegneten inen vil leut, als knecht und diener, alle stillschweigent, die im sein pferdt entpfingent. Der erst, so im anfang mit im komen, sagt, er bedörfte sich des schweigens nit verwundern, mit niemandts auch nit reden, dann mit im, und kegklich tun, was er in hieß. Hiemit kamen sie in das schloß; da ward er gefüert in ain schönen, weiten saal, da saß ain herr mit seinem hofgesind zu tisch, welcher alsbald mit denen selbigen allen gegen herrn Albrechten aufstund, naigten sich mit iren heuptern, als ob sie in wolten empfangen und ere erpieten; sazten sich darnach widerumb nider, als ob sie essent und trünten. Herr Albrecht stund also mit seinem schwert, das er in seinen henden hielt und in kainen weg von im nit lassen wolt, besahe, wie ain costliche credenz, essentragen und anders da was, doch alles so stillschweigend, das er sich dessen höchlich verwunderte. Als er nu ain gute zeit alda gestanden alle ding nach notturft besichtiget, auch der sitzendt herr sampt seinem hofgesind für sich aßent und sich niemandts sein weiter, dann wie gehört, annam, saget der, so im anfangklichs bekommen und in das schlos gefüert, er sollte gegen dem herrn und seinem hofgesind mit dem haupt naigen, dann er in widerumb hinaus und von dannen füeren wolt. Nachdem nun solichs beschehen und der herr, auch alles sein gesünd im mit aufsten und dem hauptnaigen widerumb eer beweisent, wie im anfang, als er erstlichs komen, geschehen, füert er widerumb für das tor, da alsbald die, so im vormals sein pferdt empfangen, es widerumb darsaltent und im stillschweigent aufhaltent, darnach widerumb das schlos giengent.*

‘The knight whom you saw there was your father’s brother; Sir Friedrich of Zimmern, a pious, Christian knight, who fought against the heathens. But I and the others who you saw there were his servants and retinue while he was alive; we suffer the greatest, most unspeakable punishment, which cannot be expressed in words, for the reason that while he was alive he severely taxed the poor, and that which he unjustly extracted from them he took to use against the heathens. We all counselled him and helped in doing this injustice, and for this we must all suffer until God has been satisfied. This has been shown to you by God so that you will know to avoid this and other sins and change your life for the better’.²⁹

The ghost pointed out the path that Albrecht should take through the forest, but said that he should first turn around and see how, where there had once been pleasure, this was now transformed into grief and misery. He then disappeared. Albrecht turned around as instructed, to find that the castle, too, had vanished; where there had once been a scene of beauty, he saw only fire, stinking brimstone and pitch, and the noise of terrible shrieking and wailing. The story goes on:

He turned again to the direction which the ghost had shown him, and soon came once more to Duke Friedrich and Count Erkingen, who hardly recognised him because of the change in him. For his hair and beard were quite white, although he was not so old, which caused them to wonder. But after he explained to them what had happened to him, beginning with the stag, and then the ghost in human form, and how he had led him, and what great fear and distress he had seen, they were even more amazed and were seized by a great fear, and rode, full of melancholy, back to Magenheim. Sir Albrecht asked Count Erkingen of Magenheim for permission to build a church, since the adventure had occurred in his county. Not only did Count Erkingen agree, but with the agreement of his wife, he began to advise and assist in building a nunnery so that God might be praised and honoured for ever. No less did Duke Friedrich of Swabia graciously provide them with assistance and resources for the construction of the house of God.³⁰

Froben Christoph of Zimmern concluded his account by stating that the events described had occurred in the year 1134; he had learned the tale from one Konrad von Mansbach, a knight in

²⁹ *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern*, 1: 93: ‘Der herr, den du da gesehen hast, ist deines herrn vatters brueder gewesen, herr Fridenreich von Zimbern, ain cristenlicher, fromer herr, der vil wider die ungleubigen gestritten hat; aber ich und die andern, so du gesehen, sein seine diener und sein anhang bei seinem leben gewesen und leiden die allergrößesten, unseglichsten pin, die mit worten nit mag ausgesprochen werden, umb des willen, das er in seinem leben die armen leut gar hart geschetzet, denselbigen das ir unbilllichen, etlichen gewaltigerweis abgenommen und dasselbig wider die ungleübigen gebracht hat. Darzu haben wir im all geraten und geholfen, indem mir größlichen unrecht gethon, und müeßen alle darumb leiden, so lang, bis Got ain benüegen hat. Dises alles hastu umb Gott verdienet, dir zu wissen gethon werden, dich vor diser, auch andern sünden zu hüeten und dein leben zu pessern’.

³⁰ *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern*, 1: 93-94: Nichts desterweniger kerte er sich der gegne zu, die im der gaist gewisen, und kam in kurzer zeit widerumb zu herzog Fridenreichen und grave Erchingern, von denen er nicht leichtlich möcht erkennt werden in ansehung seiner schnellen und kurzen verenderung; dann sein haar und bart, wiewol er der jaren nit so alt, ganz weis worden, darab sie ain gros verwundern heten. Nachdem er inen aber anzaigt die ursach und was im dieweil begenet, anfengklichs mit dem hirß, darnach mit dem gaist in mentschlicher gestalt, wie er in gefüert und was großer angst und not er darnach gesehen, heten sie noch mer verwundern, emphiengen darab ain große forcht, ritten alsbald mit schwermüetigkait widerumb auf Monhaim. Herr Albrecht suchet grave Erchingern von Monhaim gar ernstlich an, dieweil im dise abentheur in seiner grafschatz begegnet, das im vergonnte, der enden ain kirchen zu pawen, welches grave Erchinger nit allain gütlich bewilliget, sonder mit gehelle seines gemahels begab er sich hierin zu raten und zu helfen, das da ain frawencloster gepawen, darin Gott ewiglich gelopt und geert wurde. Nit weniger bewilliget sich herzog Fridenreich von Schwaben, inen baiden gnediglichen hilf und steur zu thon, damit das gotzhaus fürderlich erbawt wurde.

the service of Wilhelm, landgrave of Hessen, who had read it in an ancient book. The name of the landgrave might relate to several different rulers. Possible candidates are Wilhelm I of Lower Hessen (ruled 1471-1493), Wilhelm III of Upper Hessen (ruled 1483-1500) or Wilhelm II of Lower Hessen (ruled 1493-1509), who succeeded to Upper Hessen in 1500. However, this supposition tells us nothing about the nature of the book, or how much Froben Christoph may have elaborated on the story, assuming, of course, that it ever existed.

The story has a parallel transmission in a remarkable work of art known as the Zimmern Anamorphosis (in German, Zimmernsche Anamorphose), dating from around 1535. It is a large wooden cabinet, measuring 79 × 115.5 × 14 cm, which is decorated with a number of painted images.³¹ Some of these are shown normally, but others are distorted according to the artistic principle known as anamorphosis. This means that an image is painted so that it is unrecognisable to normal view and only appears correctly when viewed from one particular position or angle. Probably the most widely known example of anamorphosis is in the painting known as 'The Ambassadors' by Hans Holbein the Younger (1497/1498-1543), showing two diplomats sent by King Francis I of France to the court of Henry VIII of England. At the bottom of the canvas is an elongated shape, which when viewed from the correct angle is visible as a skull, functioning as a symbol of the idea of *memento mori*.³²

Viewed from points to the extreme left or right, the Zimmern Anamorphosis reveals portraits whose accompanying inscriptions identify them as Wilhelm Werner of Zimmern and his second wife, Amalia of Leuchtenberg. Equally significant is a series of miniatures which can be seen in normal view, spread over several of the fields. These show a young knight hunting in a forest, his encounter with a ghostly figure and his return, where he is shown as a man with grey hair and beard. The final scene shows the construction of a convent. The whole sequence is very clearly meant to represent the story of Albrecht of Zimmern's ghostly encounter in the forest, as told in the chronicle.³³

Although the pictorial narrative only shows some of the points of the story, the elaborate detail in the chronicle reveals that the silent company were the ghosts of Friedrich of Zimmern and his retinue of crusaders. Medieval folk and literary tradition knew of a phenomenon now classed as a revenant: that is, the ghost of a deceased person which returns to the material world in order to give warnings, to seek redress for wrongs done to them, or to ask forgiveness for wrongs they had themselves done in life. The influence of the church meant that many ghost stories were imbued with Christian interpretations, with revenants testifying to the pains of purgatory that they had to endure in expiation of their sins.³⁴ The story of the ghostly Friedrich of Zimmern and his silent retinue, condemned to suffer punishment in the afterlife, clearly fits this pattern. The forest setting has other literary associations. In many of the works of Arthurian literature, such as those by Hartmann von Aue, Wolfram von Eschenbach and others, a common theme is that of a knight travelling on his own through forested countryside, and encountering various marvels and

³¹ Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, W1717.

³² London, National Gallery, NG1314.

³³ Thomas Eser, *Schiefe Bilder: Die Zimmernsche Anamorphose und andere Augenspiele aus den Sammlungen des Germanischen Nationalmuseums* (Nürnberg, 1998), pp. 31-39.

³⁴ Nancy Caciola, 'Wraiths, Revenants and Ritual in Medieval Culture', *Past and Present* 152 (1996), 3-45; Romedio Schmitz-Esser, 'The Revenge of the Dead: Feud, Law Enforcement and the Untameable', *Acta Histriae* 25 (2017), 121-30; Christian Livermore, *When the Dead Rise: Narratives of the Revenant, from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2021).

challenges. The use of the word ‘adventure’ (*abenteuer*) to describe the episode is also suggestive of such literary parallels.

The encounter with the silent company fulfils the narrative function of communicating the sins of Friedrich of Zimmern to his nephew Albrecht, who is the heir to the line. Yet one might question whether years spent in Purgatory were considered to be a just punishment for a man who had fought in the First Crusade and ended his days in the defence of the Holy Land. I would argue that the real point of the story of the ghostly apparition was Friedrich’s alienation of the lordship of Rosenfeld, which was lost to the family for ever. The story of his punishment in the next world serves as an admonition to subsequent generations to keep the family inheritance together. Yet there are problems in the Zimmern claims. To the best of our knowledge, the town of Rosenfeld was founded in the mid-thirteenth century by one of the dukes of Teck – probably Ludwig I (d. 1283) – and remained in their possession until it was sold by Duke Simon I and his brothers to the count of Württemberg in 1306.³⁵

Confusions of Chronology

We can thus assume that by the time that Wilhelm Werner commissioned the Zimmern Anamorphosis, the story of the supernatural encounter by one of his ancestors was a fixed part of the family tradition. However, as it is a purely pictorial source we cannot know whether the tale was originally connected with the First Crusade. It would seem that it was Froben Christoph who took it along with other pieces of information collected by his uncle, and incorporated the story of Friedrich of Zimmern into an extended and considerably more detailed account of the crusade and the earliest years of the kingdom of Jerusalem. This can be seen from some mismatched detail. The chronicle states that Gottfried the Younger, brother of the crusader Friedrich of Zimmern, was married to one Elisabeth, daughter of a Friedrich, duke of Teck. It has previously claimed that the leader of the South Germans in the crusade was Walther, duke of Teck, but no attempt is made to explain how these two dukes were related to each other. In fact Walther of Teck can be shown to be an artful reinvention of the French crusader Walter Sans-Avoir, who acted as military commander of the army led by Peter the Hermit and was killed in battle with the Turks of Nicaea in 1097.³⁶

But there are also problems with other identifications and datings. The marriage of Gottfried the Younger and Elisabeth of Teck is recorded in the *Heiratenbuch* of Wilhelm Werner; in the chronicle it is dated to some time before 1083, but this chronology is not sustainable as the mention of a duchy of Teck is a century too early.³⁷ The duchy was formed as a result of a division of the duchy of Zähringen on the death of Duke Berthold IV in 1186. The duke’s son Berthold V inherited the Zähringen title and most of the family lands in the south-west of Swabia around Freiburg im Breisgau, Breisach, Fribourg and Zürich, but substantial portions were given to Berthold IV’s two brothers, Adalbert and Hugo. Adalbert was assigned a conglomeration of lordships and allods around the towns of Kirchheim and Owen (both in Landkreis Esslingen) and

³⁵ Karl-Otto Bull, ‘Die württembergischen Amtsstädte am oberen Neckar und ihre Vermögensverhältnisse vom 15. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert’, in *Zwischen Schwarzwald und Schwäbischer Alb: Das Land am oberen Neckar*, ed. Franz Quarthal (Sigmaringen, 1984), pp. 469–82; Götz, *Wege und Irrwege frühneuzeitlicher Historiographie*, pp. 200, 205.

³⁶ Alan V. Murray, ‘Walther Duke of Teck: The Invention of a German Hero of the First Crusade’, *Medieval Prosopography* 19 (1998), 35–54; Murray, ‘Deutsche Anführer beim Ersten Kreuzzug in der Geschichtsschreibung der Frühen Neuzeit. Zur Kreuzzugsdarstellung der Zimmerischen Chronik’, *Zeitschrift für württembergische Landesgeschichte* 61 (2002), 145–57.

³⁷ *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern*, 1: 71, 90; Götz, *Wege und Irrwege frühneuzeitlicher Historiographie*, p. 71.

Oberndorf am Neckar (Landkreis Rottweil), and from 1188 began to use the title duke of Teck, from the name of his principal castle above Owen. On the death of Duke Ludwig I in 1283 the Teck domains were divided between his grandson Hermann I (d. 1313/1314) and his brother Konrad II (d. 1292), who became the ancestors of two separate lineages respectively associated with Oberndorf and Owen-Mindelheim.³⁸

The name Friedrich is unknown in any branch of the Teck family before the very end of the thirteenth century, so it seems that any marriage with a lord of Zimmern cannot have occurred until well over a century after the date posited in the chronicle. Indeed, Froben Christoph's own information is inconsistent. He twice describes the three Zimmern crusaders as Elisabeth's brothers-in-law, but when recounting the sale of Rosenfeld he refers to Friedrich of Teck (previously named as her father) as the brother-in-law (*swager*) of Friedrich of Zimmern.³⁹ There are other examples where it can be shown that the count either mistakenly – or wilfully – misinterpreted various kinds of evidence, usually to give it a greater antiquity than it really had. Thus he claims that a duke of Teck was elected as 'Roman emperor' (i.e. king of the Romans) after the death of Emperor Lothar III in 1137. As evidence he adduces the heraldry on the duke's tomb in the church of St Mary in Owen; in fact the burial was that of Duke Konrad II, who was put forward as a candidate for the German throne by a pro-Habsburg party among the princes in 1292.⁴⁰

The chronology is also problematic in the case of Friedrich of Zimmern's nephew. The chronicle describes how in 1127 Albrecht, the son of Gottfried the Younger, married Beatrix, duchess of Urslingen (now Irslingen, Landkreis Rottweil), who bore him two sons and two daughters.⁴¹ The lords of Urslingen belonged to a Swabian dynasty which prospered in the service of the Staufien monarchy in its attempts to assert control over the kingdom of Italy. Around 1174 Emperor Frederick Barbarossa raised Konrad I, lord of Urslingen, to the dignity of duke of Spoleto and count of Assisi, but his descendants were unable to maintain their position in Italy and returned to their German possessions. From the later twelfth century they styled themselves as dukes of Urslingen, although their ducal title actually derived from Spoleto. It was thus impossible that a lord of Zimmern could have married the daughter of a duke of Urslingen in 1127. In fact, the most plausible connection between the two families probably dated from the time of Konrad VI, duke of Urslingen (died 1341/1342), who married a daughter of Werner of Zimmern and Agnes of Falkenstein. This supposition is reinforced by the fact that Konrad VI's own son, Duke Rainald V, married one Beatrix, daughter of Hermann II, duke of Teck (d. after 1324) from the Oberndorf line. Thus by the mid-fourteenth century there were marriages connecting the Teck, Zimmern and Urslingen families, which are more plausible than those posited for the early twelfth century in the chronicle.⁴² By contrast, the constellation of persons connected with the

³⁸ Hartmut Heinemann, 'Das Erbe der Zähringer', in *Die Zähringer: Schweizer Vorträge und neue Forschungen*, ed. Karl Schmid (Sigmaringen, 1990), pp. 215-65; Rolf Götz, *Die Herzöge von Teck: Herzöge ohne Herzogtum* (Kirchheim unter Teck, 2009), pp. 11-18.

³⁹ *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern*, 1: 82-83. This chronology also casts doubt on a tapestry which Froben Christoph claims was woven by Elisabeth, duchess of Teck, the wife of Gottfried the Younger, brother of the three Zimmern crusaders. It showed 'the entire history of the expedition to Jerusalem' (*die ganz historia des zugs geen Jerusalem*), and was supposedly still extant in the monastery of Alpirsbach in the Black Forest in 1520, but it was destroyed in the Peasants' War (*in der beurischen auffruhr*) in 1525 (1: 90). If the tapestry was woven by a lady from the Teck lineage, it could not have dated from the early twelfth century.

⁴⁰ *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern*, 1: 71; Rolf Götz, 'Herzog Konrad von Teck und die Königswahl von 1292', *Zeitschrift für württembergische Landesgeschichte* 53 (1994), 27-40; Götz, *Die Herzöge von Teck*, pp. 23-27.

⁴¹ *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern*, 1: 91-92.

⁴² Klaus Schübring, *Die Herzöge von Urslingen: Studien zu ihrer Besitz-, Sozial- und Familiengeschichte mit Regesten* (Stuttgart, 1974), pp. 19-31, 300-4; Götz, *Die Herzöge von Teck*, p. 35.

First Crusade and the dating ascribed to them raise doubts about the entire account; they are fundamental to the absolute chronology of events described in the chronicle, but they cannot be reconciled with the known and better documented histories of the dukes of Teck and Urslingen.

Conclusions

Family history was especially important to the noble lineages of southern Germany in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, at a time when many Swabian dynasties were under both economic and political pressure.⁴³ The dukes of Teck, who figure so prominently throughout the chronicle, stood as a prime example. After the division of the duchy in 1283 the lands of both lines were progressively sold off or mortgaged. The Oberndorf line died out in the male line in 1363. On the death of the last duke, Ulrich III (d. 1432) the Owen line possessed little more than the lordship of Mindelheim (Landkreis Unterallgäu).⁴⁴ Families like the dukes of Teck and the Zimmerns themselves came under ever greater pressure from wealthier and more powerful polities. The dukes of Bavaria, the counts of Württemberg, the margraves of Baden, the Habsburgs and the imperial free cities were often able to buy up lands or assert control over lesser towns and lordships. With diminishing financial resources and often expensive lifestyles, some dynasts resorted to taking service with wealthier lords as administrators.⁴⁵ Thus Friedrich III of Teck (d. 1392) variously served the Habsburgs, the Luxembourgs, the dukes of Bavaria and the city of Augsburg. Wilhelm Werner of Zimmern himself made a career as jurist, presiding over imperial courts at Rottweil and Speyer.⁴⁶

For the princely and noble families of late medieval and early modern Germany, ancestry and evidence of ancient distinction constituted important social capital in competition for offices, privileges and advantageous marriages.⁴⁷ The story of Albrecht of Zimmern and his ghostly encounter in the Stromberg Forest served as a warning to Froben Christoph's family to maintain the family inheritance and avoid alienations, such as they clearly believed had occurred in the case of Rosenfeld. It also gave them an honourable status as founders of the convent of Frauenzimmern, at the same time explaining the name of a place which was situated far from similarly named settlements which they thought had once belonged to a more extensive county of Zimmern. But most of all, by connecting these events with Friedrich of Zimmern, supposed crusader and follower of Baldwin I of Jerusalem, it gave their distant ancestors a place of honour in *der aller größest heerzug wider die ungleübigen*: 'the greatest of all expeditions against the heathen'.⁴⁸

⁴³ Gerhard Wolf, *Von der Chronik zum Weltbuch: Sinn und Anspruch südwestdeutscher Hauschroniken am Ausgang des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 2002).

⁴⁴ Götz, *Die Herzöge von Teck*, pp. 75-91.

⁴⁵ Hillay Zamora, 'Princely State-Making and the "Crisis of the Aristocracy" in Late Medieval Germany', *Past and Present* 153 (1996) 37-63.

⁴⁶ Götz, *Wege und Irrwege frühneuzeitlicher Historiographie*, pp. 74-75.

⁴⁷ Werner Paravicini, 'Interesse am Adel', in *Nobilitas*, pp. 9-25.

⁴⁸ *Die Chronik der Grafen von Zimmern*, 1: 74.