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The Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa

The History of the Expedition of
the Emperor Frederick and Related Texts

Translated by
G. A. Loud



Crusade Texts in Translation 19

CRUSADE TEXTS IN TRANSLATION

Volume 19

About the volume

This is the first English translation of the main contemporary accounts of the Crusade and death of the German Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa (ruled 1152-90). The main text here, the 'History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick', was written soon after the events described, and is a crucial, and much under-used source for the Third Crusade. It narrates the preparations and recruitment for the Crusade, and the Crusade itself: the journey through the Balkans and the gruelling march through Asia Minor, beset by Turkish attack, until its arrival at Antioch on 21st July 1190, eleven days after the emperor had drowned while crossing a river in Cilician Armenia. The 'History' gives a vivid account of the sufferings of the German army as it traversed Asia Minor and appears to be, or to be based upon an eyewitness record, cast in the form of (often) a daily memoir. A number of subsidiary texts also translated illustrate and expand this main account, and place the crusade in context.

About the translator

G. A. Loud is Professor of Medieval Italian History at the University of Leeds, UK

*To my wife, and to the memory of
Thomas Wiedemann (1950–2001)*

THE CRUSADE OF FREDERICK BARBAROSSA

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The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick
and Related Texts

Translated by

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University of Leeds, UK

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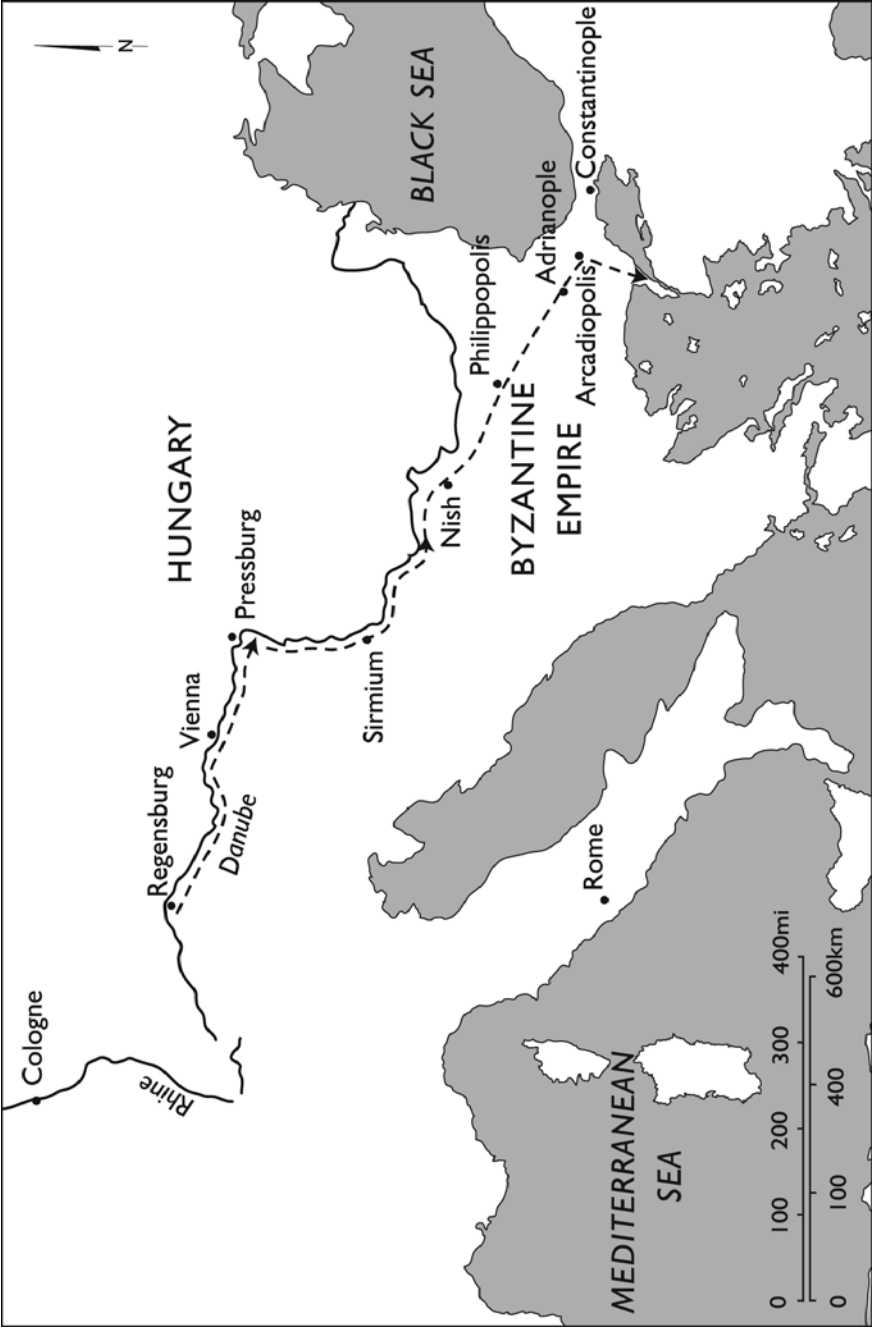
Preface

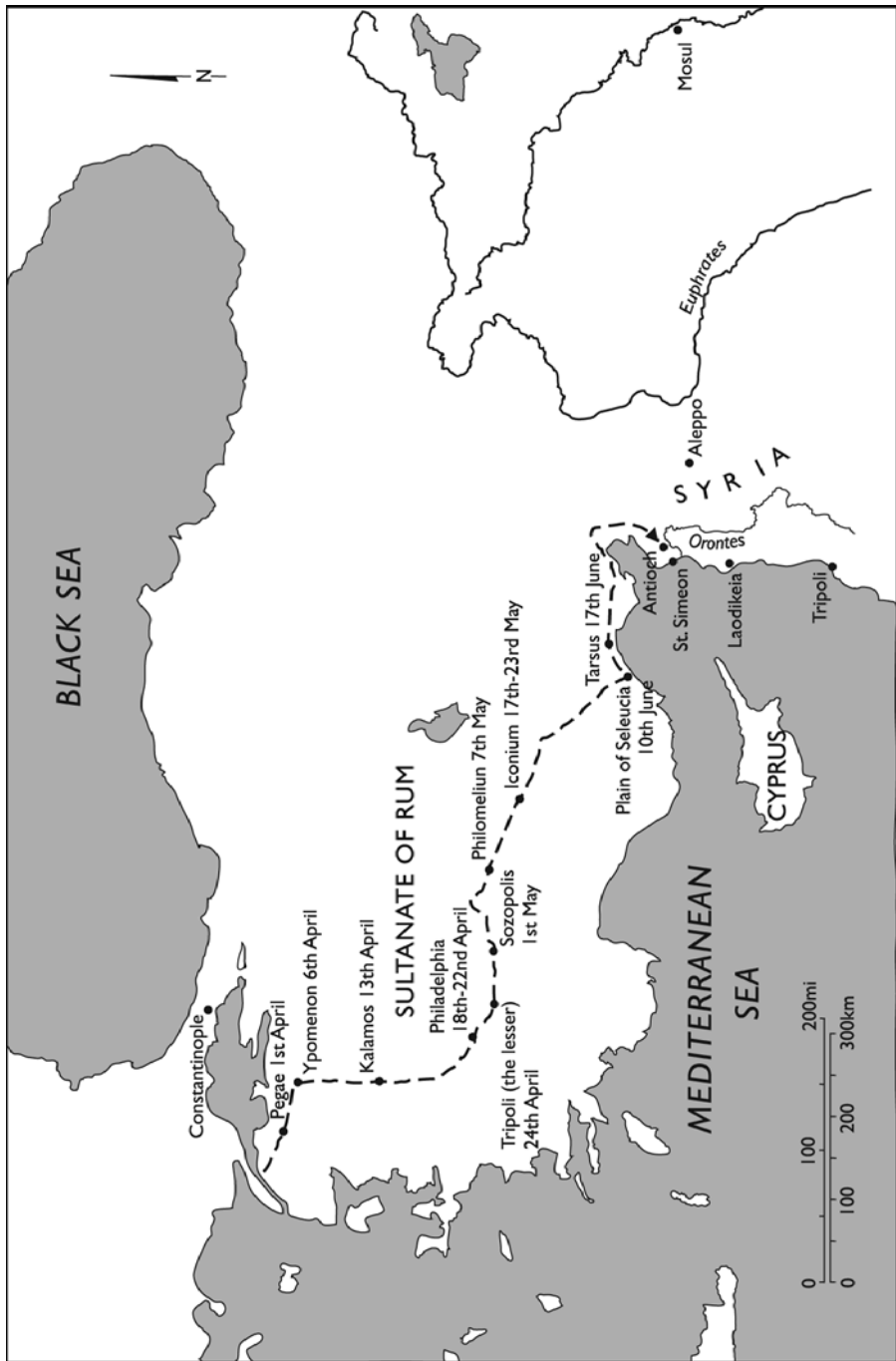
From the time of Sir Walter Scott onwards, discussion of the Third Crusade of 1189-92 has tended to focus on Richard the Lionheart and the Anglo-Norman Crusade. Much more recently, the publication of English translations of primary sources in this same series by Peter Edbury and Helen Nicholson has allowed students also to study the siege of Acre in depth from its beginnings in the autumn of 1189. In comparison, the German expedition led by the Emperor Frederick I, which in contrast to those of the kings of France and England took the 'traditional' overland route through the Balkans and Asia Minor, has been neglected, despite its great intrinsic interest. The death of the emperor, drowned while crossing, or bathing in, a river in Armenia, tends to be seen as rendering the expedition a fiasco, although it is argued here that this was very far from being the case. My own interest in this subject has stemmed directly from my teaching in the University of Leeds of both Crusader history and more recently that of medieval Germany. It has been the latter, in particular, which has encouraged me to investigate the sources and the background to Frederick's expedition, and my thanks must go to the students who over the last three years have taken what was a pretty experimental module. A number of others have made substantial contributions to this project. My publisher John Smedley encouraged me to turn the brief extracts that I had translated for my students into a book, and one of the series editors, Bernard Hamilton, has read and commented on the entire manuscript, some of it more than once. Professor John Davies of the University of Liverpool helped me with the translation of some of the more problematic passages in the *Historia de Expeditione*, during what was otherwise an entirely social occasion. I have also benefited from extensive help from two of my colleagues at Leeds, Alan Murray and Ian Moxon, both of whom have shown that (contrary to popular stereotypes) Scots can be the most generous of friends. Alan has shared his knowledge of Crusader and German history, and of German geography, and has furnished me with copies of his articles and copious bibliographical advice. Both he and Ian have also read drafts of the introduction. Ian meanwhile has done his best to remedy the defects of my classical education. Time and again he has abandoned whatever he was then doing to assist me with Latin passages where I was hopelessly confused or in error. I hope that he will forgive some of my more free or colloquial renditions, painful as they must be to his austere respect for the Latin language. I have striven to render these translations as accurate as possible, but any translator must tread a fine line between accuracy and intelligibility. Similarly, I have tried to be consistent with regard to place and personal names, but when in doubt have tended to use the forms most familiar to Anglophone readers. Needless to say, none of those named above bear

any responsibility for any flaws in the finished product; although without their assistance there would have been far more than there now are.

Finally there are the two dedicatees of this book. My wife Kate has helped with the maps and genealogical charts, and coped with the fallout from the expiry of my laptop halfway through the writing of this book, as well as patiently suffering my obsession with the distant past interfering with matters domestic. The other dedicatee, my former collaborator and close friend Thomas Wiedemann, is sadly no longer here to read this. A brilliant classicist who died far too young, he would have particularly encouraged my new concern with the history of the country where he was born, not least because his father had as a student gone to the lectures of the great Heidelberg medievalist Karl Hampe, the historian of the Salian and Staufan emperors. Thomas's last gift to me, his father's copy of one of the most famous works of medieval German history, Kantorowicz's *Friedrich der Zweite*, sits on my bookshelf as I write these words.

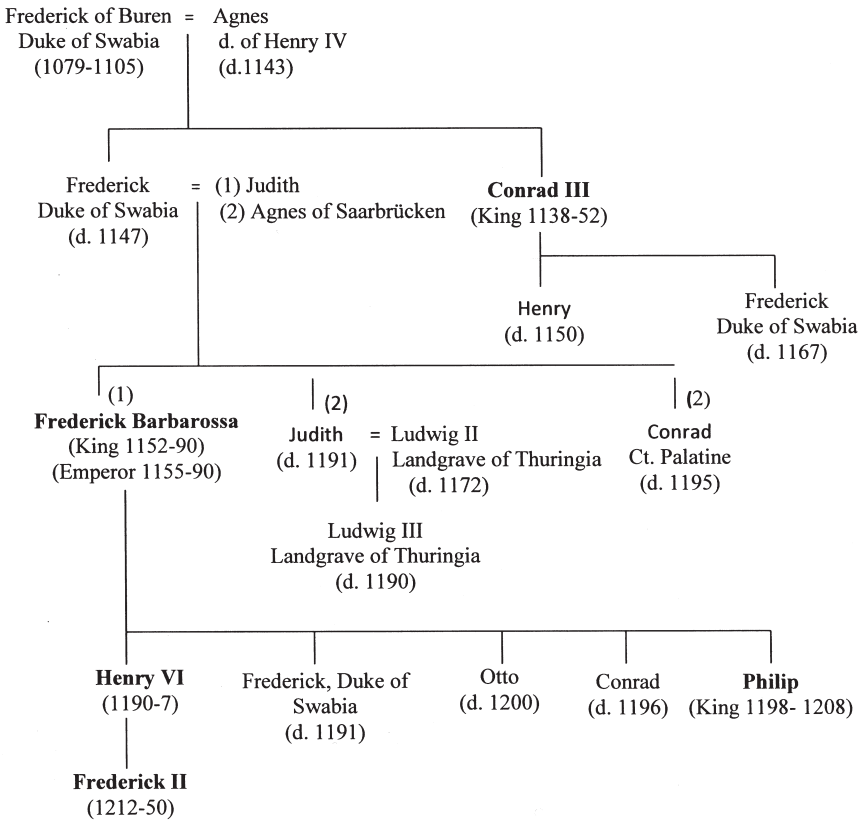
Leeds and Lyme Regis, September 2009.



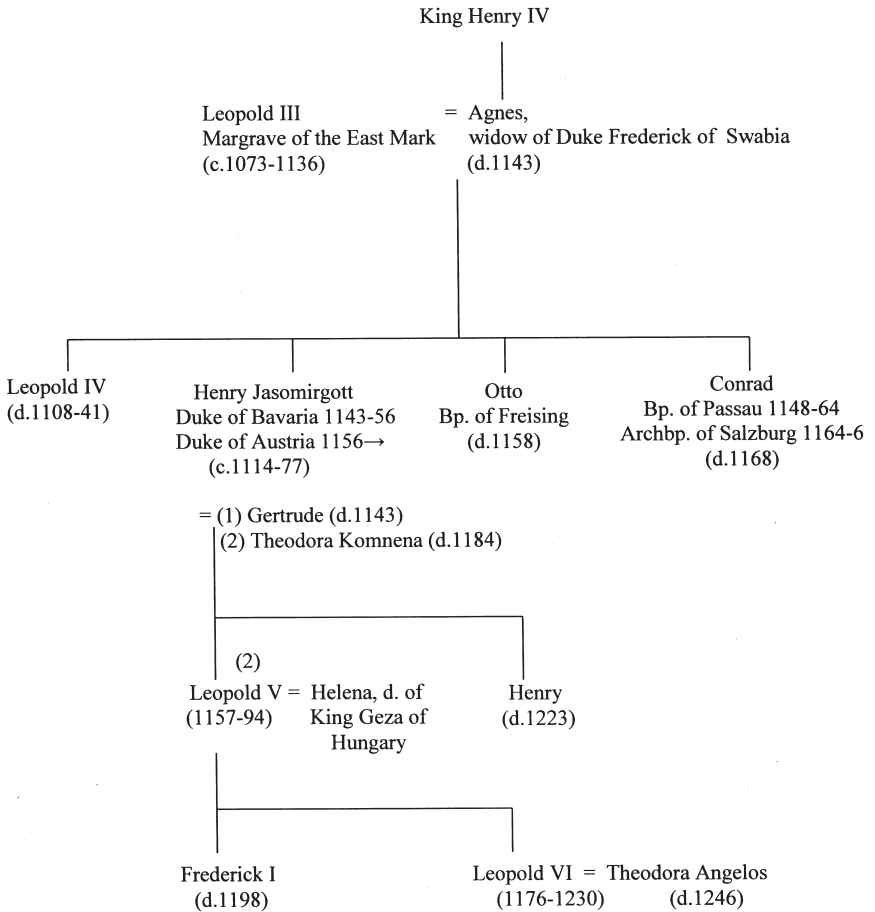


Genealogical Charts

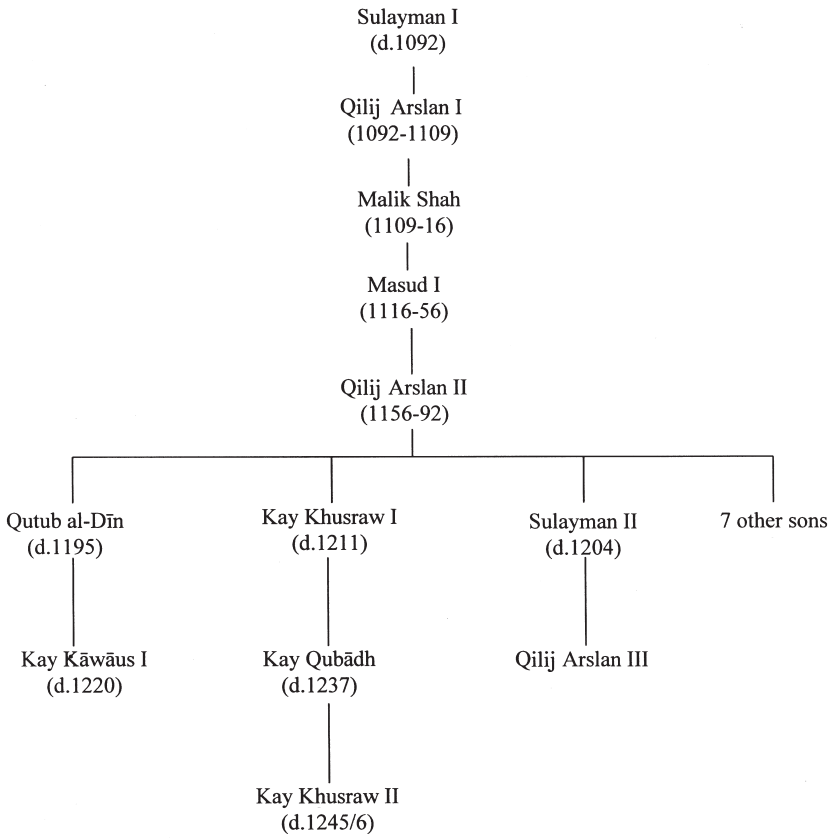
The Staufen Imperial Family



The Babenberger Dukes of Austria



The Seljuk Sultans of Iconium



Abbreviations

- Clementi, ‘Calendar’ D.R. 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), 86–225.
- Dipl. Fred. I* *Die Urkunden Friedrichs I*, ed. Heinrich Appelt (5 vols, MGH Diplomatum Regum et Imperatorum Germaniae, x, Hannover 1975–90).
- Itinerarium Peregrinorum* *Itinerarium Peregrinorum*, in Hans Eberhard Mayer, *Das Itinerarium Peregrinorum. Eine zeitgenössische englische Chronik zum dritten Kreuzzug in ursprünglicher Gestalt* (MGH Schriften 18: Stuttgart 1962), pp. 243–357.
- Mainzer Urkundenbuch* ii(2) *Mainzer Urkundenbuch ii Die Urkunden seit dem Tode Erzbischof Adalberts I (1137) bis zum Tode Erzbischofs Konrads (1200), Teil II, 1176–1200*, ed. Peter Acht (Darmstadt 1978).
- MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historica, following the usual conventions (SRG = *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum*; SS = *Scriptores*, etc.).
- Quellen* *Quellen zur Geschichte des Kreuzzuges Kaiser Friedrichs I.*, ed. Anton Chroust (MGH SRG, n.s. V, Berlin 1928).
- Reg. Henry VI* *Die Regesten des Kaiserreiches unter Heinrich VI. 1165–(1190)–1197*, ed. Gerhard Baaken, after J.F. Böhmer (*Regesta Imperii* IV(3), Cologne 1972).
- Urkunden HL* *Die Urkunden Heinrichs des Löwen, Herzogs von Sachsen und Bayern*, ed. Karl Jordan (MGH, Weimar 1949).
- Urkundenbuch für Niederrheins* *Urkundenbuch für die Geschichte des Niederrheins*, ed. Theodor J. Lacomblet (4 vols, Düsseldorf 1840–58).

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Introduction

Although the Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa has been, to some extent anyway, neglected by Anglophone historians, the contemporary sources for that expedition are surprisingly full. We are indeed much better informed, especially from German sources, about this expedition to assist the Holy Land than we are about the corresponding one led by Frederick's uncle, Conrad III, some 40 years earlier, in which the later Emperor Frederick had taken part as a young man.¹ However, all three of the principal contemporary sources describing Barbarossa's Crusade must be treated with some caution. Neither their composition nor their transmission is entirely straightforward, and the interrelationship between the three texts is complex. In this respect, the German sources for the Third Crusade resemble the equally complex and interrelated Anglo-Norman texts that describe this same Crusade.

The longest, richest and most important of these three sources is the *Historia de Expeditione Friderici Imperatoris*. This is a strictly contemporary text, completed c. 1200 at the latest, and quite possibly earlier. Parts of this account survive in two very early manuscripts, one written at the Benedictine monastery of St Lamprecht in Styria c. 1200, the other at the Praemonstratensian abbey of Mühlhausen in Bohemia (now Milevsko in the Czech Republic), probably before 1221. Unfortunately, neither of these manuscripts is complete; indeed, the Styrian one contains only about a third of the text, while the Mühlhausen one, although fuller, still has substantial omissions. We are dependent for our knowledge of the complete text, or at least as complete a text as now survives, on two copies made in Moravia, presumably from a different archetype, during the mid-eighteenth century under the supervision of Josef Bonaventura Piter (1708–

¹ The most detailed modern account is by Ekkehard Eickhoff, *Friedrich Barbarossa im Orient. Kreuzzug und Tod Friedrichs I.* (Tübingen 1977). This is particularly useful for its careful analysis of the route followed by the expedition. There is also a full and interesting discussion, especially valuable for the preparations for the expedition, by Rudolf Hiestand, “*Precipua tocius christianismi columpna*”. Barbarossa und der Kreuzzug’, in *Friedrich Barbarossa. Handlungsspielräume und Wirkungsweisen des Staufischen Kaisers*, ed. Alfred Haverkamp (Vorträge und Forschungen 40: Sigmaringen 1992), pp. 51–108. By contrast, Edgar N. Johnson, ‘The Crusades of Frederick Barbarossa and Henry VI’, in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. Kenneth Setton, ii *The Later Crusades, 1189–1311*, ed. R.L. Wolff and H.W. Hazard (Madison 1969), 87–122, offers little more than a summary and paraphrase of the *Historia de Expeditione*. For a more general context, see 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), pp. 235–65.

64), noted antiquarian and Abbot successively of the monasteries of Brewnov and Raigern (now Rajhrad, not far from Brno). One of these manuscripts indeed has corrections in the abbot's own hand.²

The authorship of this account is similarly problematic, and more so than might seem at first sight. The Mühlhausen manuscript has a title heading, written by Gerlach, Abbot of that monastery 1187–1221, which describes the text as ‘The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick, written by an Austrian cleric who was present on this same’.³ A later thirteenth-century hand has then added ‘called Ansbert’ (*nomine Ansberte*). But while some later historians have accepted this identification, and identified the author of the *Historia de Expeditione* as Ansbert, this identification cannot be unequivocally accepted. One might in default of other evidence still be cautious in following such a later, even if only somewhat later, attribution, but this is not the principal reason why one should be sceptical. More to the point, the *Historia de Expeditione* is undoubtedly a composite text, which is the work of more than one author. The bulk of the History is indeed a contemporary, and at first sight an eyewitness account of the Crusading expedition of 1189–90, after a brief preface describing the fall of Jerusalem and the calling of the Crusade. But appended to this is an account (only a quarter as long) of the later consequences and ramifications of the Crusading expedition as these affected the German empire. These include the attempts of Barbarossa's son and successor the Emperor Henry VI to conquer the kingdom of Sicily, ultimately successful in December 1194; the capture and subsequent ransoming and liberation of Richard the Lionheart; the death of Duke Leopold of Austria after a riding accident, also in December 1194; and the various plans made by Henry VI for a new expedition to the east. The work concludes with a brief account of his attempts to transform Germany into a hereditary monarchy; the last event mentioned is his departure for Italy in the summer of 1196. This section would appear to have been finished before Henry's sudden death in September 1197: he is throughout referred to as though still alive.

Not only is the focus of these two parts very different, but they are also embellished in subtly different styles at the ends of phrases, and especially of sentences, with one or another of the main accentual *clausulae* that became fashionable during the twelfth century, and that were known to contemporaries as the *cursor*. More than half of the account of the Crusade itself employs the *cursor velox* style (seven syllable units, stress on first, fourth and sixth syllables, thus óoo ll óóóo) and just under 30 percent the so-called *tritrochaeus* or *cursor trispondaicus* rhythm (six syllable units, stress on first and fifth syllables: óoo ll oóo). However, in the later part, these proportions are more or less exactly

² *Quellen zur Geschichte des Kreuzzuges Kaiser Friedrichs I.*, ed. Anton Chroust (MGH SRG, n.s. 5, Berlin 1928; reprint Munich 1989), pp. ix–xiv.

³ Gerlach quoted a few brief passages from the *Historia de Expeditione* in his continuation of the annals of Vincent of Prague, *Continuatio Gerlaci Abbatis Milovicensis*, MGH SS xvii.706.

reversed. Matters are admittedly further complicated by two small sections: the page of introduction, which relies far more than the rest of the text on the *cursus tardus* (six syllable units, stress on first and fourth syllables: óoo ll óoo), and the brief account of the death of the Emperor Frederick, which like the later section relies primarily on the *tritrochaeus*.⁴ Whatever quibbles one might make as to the exact significance of these stylistic details, the conclusion is clear: these variations in the prosody surely point to more than one authorial hand at work. The *Historia de Expeditione* would thus appear to be based upon, or a combination of, different works, and not necessarily all written at the same time. And as for the ‘certain Austrian cleric’, whether or not he be called Ansbert, one should note that while a letter to Duke Leopold of Austria was included at the start of the *Historia*, in the account of the Crusade itself the duke was only mentioned once, and that not by name, for although he had taken the Cross he did not accompany the main expedition. Indeed, this account said nothing at all about the expedition’s brief stay in Vienna, whereas the later *Historia Peregrinorum* praised Duke Leopold’s generosity there.⁵ However, in the last part of the *Historia de Expeditione*, Leopold played a central role, and indeed was to a considerable extent the hero of this section. Thus, if ‘a certain Austrian cleric’ may have put the text, as it now stands, together, he almost certainly only wrote the last part, which one is tempted to style ‘the appendix’, himself.

Not only this, but behind a significant part of the text, the narrative of the Crusade once it had crossed into Asia Minor, there lies another, and even more strictly contemporary, account, by one who did indeed participate in the Crusade. The narrative of the *Historia de Expeditione* draws heavily upon a record of the Crusade, described as a *memoria*, but which is effectively a diary, written by a Bavarian cleric, Tageno, dean of the cathedral of Passau, who took part in the expedition and who died at Tripoli in the autumn of 1190 (his death was noted in passing in the later text).⁶ For a substantial section, covering the three and a half weeks until the eve of the death of the Emperor Frederick (16 May to 9 June 1190), the *Historia de Expeditione* copies the diary of Tageno more or less verbatim.⁷

However, the relationship between the ‘diary’ of Tageno and the *Historia de Expeditione* is, in fact, more complicated than this brief summary suggests.

⁴ *Quellen*, pp. xix–xxi.

⁵ *Quellen*, p. 130 [and see below, p. 147].

⁶ Below, p. 118. Tageno became dean of Passau in 1187, having previously been a minor member of the clergy of the cathedral, *Die Regesten der Bischöfe von Passau i 731–1206*, ed. Egon Boshof and Franz-Reiner Erkens (Munich 1992), 273–4 no. 893 (July 1183), 278–9 no. 915 (1172 x 1187), 279 no. 916.

⁷ Ferdinand Güterbock, ‘Il Diario di Tageno e altre fonti della terza Crociata’, *Bullettino dell’Istituto Storico Italiano per le Medio Evo* 55 (1941), 223–69; here at 254–60. The early pages of Güterbock’s study conveniently summarise the arguments of an older generation of German-language study of these texts.

First, Tageno's diary does not survive as an independent text, but as a series of insertions in the chronicle of Magnus of Reichersberg, which was probably compiled contemporaneously, and certainly before the death of Magnus in 1195.⁸ Magnus recorded that a copy of this text had been sent back to him from the Holy Land. Second, although the sections within the chronicle of Magnus that were derived from Tageno's narrative appear to be readily identifiable, it is by no means clear that the text reproduced there corresponds exactly with what Tageno originally wrote. For one thing, the account of the Crusaders' activities is sometimes, although not invariably, presented in the third person. Hence, while, for example, on 13 May 1190 'when it was the holy day of Pentecost, God spared us' (*pepercit nobis Deus*), earlier, at the end of March, we read that 'they set off on their journey with pack animals, and for two days they had an extremely difficult march, beset by shortage' (*cum sagmis aggressi sunt et per duas dies valde laboriosam et penuriosam viam habuerunt*). It is possible that Tageno cast some of his account in the third person, but it is more probable that Magnus, writing from his monastery in Bavaria, altered the text, particularly since the *Historia de Expeditione* consistently used the first person 'we', including in the long section where Tageno's account was plagiarised without significant change apart from this.

Furthermore, this may not be the only way in which the text that Magnus copied of Tageno's diary may have been altered, for it has been plausibly suggested that not only did he draw on the dean's narrative but he also used the *Historia de Expeditione*, although in an earlier redaction than the one now extant.⁹ Three conclusions may therefore be derived from this. First, the text of Tageno's diary, as we now possess it transmitted by Magnus, is corrupt and some way from the original; second, the close correspondence between the narratives of Tageno and the *Historia* may not simply be due to the author of the latter using, and frequently plagiarising the former; and, finally, the first draft of the main part of the *Historia de Expeditione* must date from before 1195, even though the appendix section clearly does not. That Tageno's original text was some way from what was reproduced by Magnus is also suggested by the survival of a variant version in the work of an early sixteenth-century humanist, Aventinus, although it is a good question how far the differences between this and the version of Magnus were due to the original text or to the humanist himself. That these differences are more matters of style than substance suggests the latter. Furthermore, was

⁸ *Chronicon Magni Presbiteri*, ed. Wilhelm Wattenbach, MGH SS xvii.509–17 [full text of this work, MGH SS xvii.476–523]. Reichersberg was a house of Augustinian canons in the diocese of Salzburg. The death of Magnus is recorded at the start of a continuation to his chronicle, *ibid.*, 523.

⁹ Güterbock, 'Il Diario di Tageno', 248–52.

Aventinus using Tageno's original text at all, or a version (perhaps different from the one we now possess) of the Reichersberg chronicle?¹⁰

One should not, therefore, exaggerate the indebtedness of the *Historia de Expeditione* to Tageno. Indeed, the two narratives of the earlier stages of the Crusade, until the crossing of the Bosphorus, are independent, and much of Magnus's account of the earlier part of the expedition's time in the Balkans actually comprises the text of a letter from Bishop Diepold of Passau, which is not reproduced or used by the author of the *Historia*. It was only when describing the events from 29 March 1190, when the German army began its march on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus, that the latter began to use Tageno's diary.¹¹ Even then, to begin with the two accounts are not identical; it was only from mid-May, for a period of just over three weeks, that the texts we now possess of Tageno–Magnus and the *Historia de Expeditione* are all but the same, and, as has been suggested above, this may represent a two-way process.

This limited use of the diary of Tageno also points to a further aspect of the composition of the *Historia de Expeditione*. While there is a clear distinction between the main text and the subsequent appendix, the former is itself a composite text. Apart from the stylistic contrasts between the preface, the account of the emperor's death and the rest of the main text (discussed above), which may or may not be significant, this main part of the text would seem to fall into four distinct sections. First, there is the news of the fall of Jerusalem and the calling of the Crusade, which relies to a considerable extent on documents incorporated within it, above all Gregory VIII's bull *Audita Tremendi*, but including also a widely distributed letter to the Master of the Italian Hospitallers Archembald describing the battle of Hattin, also copied by Magnus,¹² and another letter from Hermenger, the steward (*provisor*) of the Hospital at Jerusalem, to the Duke of Austria, dating from August or September 1188, describing Saladin's further conquests of that year, principally in northern Syria. But, in addition, Chroust, the modern (1928) editor of the text, suggests that the account of the expedition itself is divided into three distinct sections of unequal length: (1) from the departure of the Crusade in May 1189 until the middle of November in that year; (2) from the arrival of the army in Adrianople on 22 November 1189 until the crossing of the Bosphorus at Easter 1190; and (3) from the army setting out into Asia Minor until the death of the emperor in June. The first section concluded with the emperor sending back envoys with news to his son and designated successor

¹⁰ Güterbock, 'Il Diario di Tageno', 225–30. The work of Aventinus, now extremely rare, and which I have not used directly, was first published in 1522.

¹¹ *Quellen*, pp. lviii–lxiii; Güterbock, 'Il Diario di Tageno', 234–6.

¹² *Chronicon Magni Presbiteri*, MGH SS xvii.508–9. Magnus also included the text of an even more widely distributed letter, from Terricus, the preceptor of the Temple, one of the survivors of Hattin, copied by, among others, Roger of Howden (not included here, but translated by Malcolm Barber, *The New Knighthood. A History of the Order of the Temple* (Cambridge 1994), pp. 115–16).

Henry VI and to the King of Hungary, and indeed may have been based on a version of the newsletter (if such it was) sent back to Germany then (clearly this must have been considerably fuller than the text of the letter from Frederick to Henry which is reproduced in the ‘history’). The second section may also have been based upon a similar contemporary report: certainly, as Chroust suggested, the reference to Tokili, the envoy of the Sultan of Iconium, as ‘a wise and sensible man, who according to human judgment feared the Lord’, was surely not written after the end of April 1190, when despite the previous negotiations for a peaceful passage through the sultan’s lands, the Crusader army came under heavy attack from the Turks – in the words of the *Historia*, ‘The Turks showed themselves not as friends, but as most savage enemies.’¹³ The Pisan envoys (from a traditionally pro-imperial city), with whom the emperor had been in contact while his army waited to cross from Gallipoli, would have been one obvious means of sending a further report back to Germany. Furthermore, there is a near-contemporary reference to such a report being sent back to Henry VI after the crossing of the Bosphorus.¹⁴ In addition, it was only in the third section that the *Historia de Expeditione* depended upon the diary of Tageno, suggesting therefore that this was compiled separately. Subsequently, the compiler of the *Historia*, or of the main part of that account (as opposed to the ‘appendix’), stitched together these various separate sections and reworked them.¹⁵ But that they were reworked is clear, both because of the stylistic unity of the *cursus* employed throughout the account of the expedition’s progress, and through a number of retrospective references that reveal some element of hindsight. While some of these, such as the critical remarks about as yet unsuspected Greek treachery, may stem from the reports sent back from the expedition itself, others would seem to be later insertions. Thus, for example, during the account of the preparations of the Crusade, Bishop Gottfried of Würzburg was described as ‘a man of noble birth, who was at this time (*tunc temporis*) most highly regarded for his knowledge of letters and his eloquent speech’. Chroust suggested, surely rightly, that this was only written after the bishop’s death in July 1190.¹⁶ One might also point to the quotation, during the first section of the account of the expedition proper, of a passage from the work of Otto of Freising, to describe the Hellespont, as a clear example of later reworking.¹⁷ On the other hand, such reworking was by no means comprehensive: thus, after listing those who took part in the expedition, the account continued to mention disparagingly those who ‘violated their vow’

¹³ *Quellen*, p. xlii. See below, pp. 92, 100.

¹⁴ *Chronicon Montis Sereni*, MGH SS xxiii.161 (from the Saxon monastery of Lauterberg). For the continued significance of newsletters as sources for medieval chroniclers, see John Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford 1986), pp. 229–30.

¹⁵ *Quellen*, pp. xxvi–lvii.

¹⁶ *Quellen*, pp. xxvii. See below, pp. 43–4.

¹⁷ *Quellen*, pp. xxxvi, 48. See below, pp. 76–7.