



4. The Near East during the Third Crusade, 1189–1192 (Map by the University of Wisconsin Cartographic Laboratory)

III

THE CRUSADES OF FREDERICK BARBAROSSA AND HENRY VI

Saladin's reconquest of Syria and Palestine found the Christian world still unable to cooperate. For over a century it had been officially divided into western Roman Catholic and eastern Greek Orthodox halves which increasingly looked upon each other with deep suspicion and distrust, and even with actual hatred. Had these two divisions of the Christian world concerted their efforts, after

The Latin sources for the history of Frederick Barbarossa's crusade — the so-called Ansbert's *Historia de expeditione Friderici imperatoris*, *Historia peregrinorum*, *Epistola de morte Friderici imperatoris*, and *Narratio itineris navalis ad Terram Sanctam* — have been edited with an important introduction by Anton Chroust in the *MGH, SS.*, n.s., V (Berlin, 1928). In this introduction, as well as in his monograph *Tageno, Ansbert, und die Historia peregrinorum* (Graz, 1892), Chroust discusses the interdependence among the *Historia* of "Ansbert", the chronicle of Magnus of Reichersberg (*MGH, SS.*, XVII, 476-528), and what is supposed to have been a diary of the crusade written by Tageno, a member of the cathedral chapter of Passau. Supplementary details of the crusade are to be found in the chronicle of the Slavs by Arnold of Lübeck (*MGH, SS.*, XXI) and the chronicle of Otto of St. Blaise (*Scriptores . . . in usum scholarum*, ed A. Hofmeister, 1912), among others. Pertinent quotations from the most valuable of these sources, "Ansbert", have been incorporated in this chapter; the translation used, with occasional modifications, is an unpublished one by Chester E. Wilcox, to be found in typescript in the library of the University of Nebraska. Identification of persons and places rests largely on Chroust's excellent notes.

The chief Greek sources for the crusade is the history of Nicetas Choniates (*CSHB*, Bonn, 1835; also *RHC, Grecs*, I, 319-337). Other materials useful in writing the part of this chapter concerning Barbarossa include: Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, III (Cambridge, 1954), 10-17; A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* (Madison, 1952); A. L. Poole in chapters XII and XIV of the *Cambridge Medieval History*, V (1926); Z. N. Brooke, *History of Europe from 911 to 1198* (London, 1938); Louis Bréhier, *L'Église et l'orient au moyen-âge: Les Croisades* (Paris, 1928); René Grousset, *Histoire des croisades et du royaume franc de Jérusalem*, III (Paris, 1936); Karl Fischer, *Geschichte des Kreuzzugs Kaiser Friedrichs I.* (Leipzig, 1870); W. von Giesebrecht (ed. and continued by Bernhard von Simson), *Geschichte der deutschen Kaiserzeit*, VI: *Die letzten Zeiten Kaiser Friedrichs des Rotbarts* (Berlin, 1895); Hans Prutz, *Kaiser Friedrich I.*, III: 1177-1190 (Danzig, 1874); S. O. Riezler, "Der Kreuzzug Friedrichs I.," *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte*, X (1870), 1-149; and two articles by Karl Zimmert in the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*: "Der Friede zu Adrianopel (Februar 1190)," XI (1902), 302-320, and "Der deutsch-byzantinische Konflikt vom Juli 1189 bis Februar 1190," XII (1903), 42-77.

For Henry VI's crusade: J. Haller, "Kaiser Heinrich VI.," *Hist. Zeitschr.*, CXIII (ser. 3, XVII; 1914), 473-504; W. Leonhardt, *Der Kreuzzugsplan Kaiser Heinrichs VI.* (Leipzig, 1913); Th. Toeche, *Kaiser Heinrich VI.* (Leipzig, 1867); and E. Traub, *Der Kreuzzugsplan Kaiser Heinrich's VI. in Zusammenhang mit der Politik der Jahren 1195-97* (Jena, 1910).

Saladin's conquests, to meet the Moslem challenge as they had done before, it is more than likely that the kingdom of Jerusalem could have been easily reestablished. Yet such an easy disposition of what was regarded as the Moslem peril was impossible for this age. Not only was there no attempt to come to any agreement of this kind, but Isaac II Angelus, the feeble, tricky, and irresponsible occupant of the tottering eastern throne, by an alliance with Saladin among other things, prodded the aggressive princes of the west to think of the destruction of the Byzantine state. The chief result of the German participation in the Third Crusade was thus the overthrow of the Byzantine empire by the Fourth. The latter was, to be sure, the work of Venetians and Frenchmen, but the experience of the Germans under Frederick Barbarossa and Henry VI had demonstrated the possibility of removing the Byzantine obstacle to western designs.

Nor was western Christendom, any more than Christendom as a whole, prepared at this moment of crisis to act in concord. Any crusade undertaken by the Germans had to fit into Hohenstaufen plans to strengthen and enlarge the empire. The emperors found in the papacy, which was a constant promoter of the crusade to the east, a steady opponent of their imperial plans. The papacy did, indeed, succeed in limiting Barbarossa's Italian ambitions, but it was unable to prevent Henry VI's acquisition of the Norman kingdom of southern Italy and Sicily. Both men undertook to lead crusades partly in the hope of softening papal opposition to their domestic policies. The popes, however reluctant to support any project calculated to increase the material resources of the Hohenstaufens, could not withhold official approval from a movement so likely to enhance their own spiritual power. Except, however, for initial support in arousing enthusiasm for the proposed crusades, they left the monarchs free to organize and manage them as they saw fit. These crusades may accordingly be considered imperial in character, aimed at justifying the predominance of the German empire in Europe by solving the Moslem problem. They did nothing to allay the long struggle between the western church and the empire. On the contrary, by transferring leadership to the latter and emphasizing the secular aspects of the crusading movement, they heightened the tension.

The political organization of central and western Europe prevented close coöperation among the monarchs. The kings of France and England were at odds over the Angevin empire, and neither could leave on a crusade while the other was determined to continue

the struggle, or stay long in the east while the other was at home. Nor was the Saxon Henry the Lion a person to leave unwatched in Germany while the emperor went off on a holy mission. Thus no serious efforts were made by the three monarchs to work out concerted plans. There can be little doubt, moreover, that the English and French monarchs resented the assumption of crusading leadership by Frederick. What might have been a successful recapture of the holy places by a combined west operating as a unit was thwarted by those animosities, imperial and papal, monarchical and feudal, which, in however modified form, continued to hamper western unity.

When the news of Saladin's offensive began to filter into Italy, Germany, France, and England, the papacy undertook to direct and stimulate the emotions aroused. Gregory VIII sent Henry, cardinal-bishop of Albano, with papal letters, despite his ignorance of French and German, into France and the Rhinelands. That the Lord would have permitted his church to suffer so horribly at the hands of infidel enemies could be explained, in papal eyes, only by the overpowering sins of the faithful. A successful crusade therefore could be undertaken only by those who had corrected their "sins by voluntary chastisement" and turned "through penitence and works of piety to the Lord. . . . To those who with contrite heart and humbled spirit undertake the labor of this journey, and depart in sorrow for their sins and in the true faith, we promise full pardon for their offenses and eternal life." A pilgrimage to be made by penitents was to avoid all show. Let them not go "in expensive clothes or with dogs or birds or other things which seem rather to supply delight and wantonness than to serve necessary uses. Let them go rather with modest equipment and dress, in which they seem to be doing penance rather than to be striving after vain glory."¹ The cardinal himself in summoning the German lay and ecclesiastical nobility to attend Barbarossa's "court of Christ" (*curia Christi*) at Mainz on March 27, 1188, reiterated the papal injunctions. "We think that all of you, after all idleness, all curiosity, and temporal glory have been put aside, should be enjoined to try to be present at the court of Jesus Christ with becoming seriousness and modesty. Let all be so inflamed by the fire of love and obedience to exalt the Christian name, that dress and deportment confess the faith which our tongue professes."²

¹ This letter is given in Ansbert's *Historia de expeditione Friderici imperatoris* (ed. Anton Chroust, *MGH, SS.*, n.s., V) pp. 6-10. (All the references to Ansbert which follow are to this edition.)

² *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

By this time the German aristocracy had been somewhat aroused. The response to the preaching of the cardinal-legate's representatives at the diet of Strassburg in December of the previous year had not been notable until supplemented by bishop Henry of Strassburg's more adequate rhetoric. Meanwhile, moreover, the "elegant eloquence" of bishop Godfrey of Würzburg had led to a numerous response when the pressure of public opinion had reached the point where "no one in all Germany . . . was considered of any manly steadfastness at all, who was seen without the saving sign, and who would not join the comradeship of the crusaders."³

The movement had been promoted from the first by Barbarossa. It is not likely that the old emperor (he was now close to seventy) had much more in mind than to bring his long and arduous career to a heroic climax, "the good consummation of his virtues", as the chronicler puts it. He, no less than others, knew that he might pay with his life. He had been with Conrad III on the first attempt of the Germans to make their mark in the east. The opportunity now presented itself to redeem that disaster and to complement the successes of the empire in Italy, however limited, with a supreme effort on behalf of western Christendom. No matter how annoyed he may have been over the attempts of Manuel, the late Byzantine emperor, to thwart his Italian ambitions, these had come to naught and were now past. The predicament in which the Byzantine empire found itself at the moment might be tempting to one politically over-ambitious. But to Frederick it meant only that, if properly utilized, the German pilgrimage to the east could be facilitated. There is accordingly no good reason to disagree with the admiring estimate of the official reporter of his crusade. "Neither the weakening limbs of venerable old age, nor the long toils of veteran military service . . . nor the abundance of riches or pleasures, nor the great affairs of state, . . . nor his fondness for his dearest sons could deter him from the long and hard road of holy pilgrimage. A glorious old man, by his own example he inspired all the young men to fight for Christ."

With tears of joy Frederick took the cross at "Christ's court" amidst a weeping multitude. Thousands upon thousands followed him in this — perhaps as many as thirteen thousand in all. The date of departure from Germany was set for April 23, 1189, St. George's day. It was necessary, meanwhile, to pacify Germany and prepare diplomatically for the march. The stubborn archbishop Philip of Cologne had made his peace at Mainz. Henry the Lion, given the

³ Ansbert, p. 15, lines 7-10.

alternative of going along at the emperor's expense or going into exile for three years, chose the latter and went to England. Cardinal Conrad, the archbishop of Mainz, went to negotiate with king Bela III of Hungary for passage through that country. It is likely that letters were sent to the "grand župan" (ruler) of Serbia, Stephen Nemanya, and his brothers. An embassy set off to arrange with Isaac Angelus for passage through Byzantine territory. Godfrey of Wiesenbach was sent to Kilij Arslan II, the Selchükid sultan at Iconium (Konya), and Henry of Dietz was dispatched to Saladin himself, threatening war within a year if the holy places were not surrendered. Despite all the difficulties involved in the land route, difficulties which the emperor himself had experienced, he must have felt that it would be simpler to remove them by negotiation than to arrange for the transport by sea of a large German army that might find no Christian port at which to land.

Saladin scornfully rejected the emperor's ultimatum, and set about arranging an alliance with the Byzantine emperor that would harass the German progress through Greek lands. Other embassies came to Germany to meet Frederick at the diet at Nuremberg in late December 1188. The Serbian embassy announced that Nish would be put in readiness for his arrival. The news of the prospective invasion of the east by a powerful Germany army had made a deep impression. The large embassy of Kilij Arslan, one thousand men and five hundred horse according to some German reports, promised the emperor that no obstacles would be put in the way of his march through Selchükid territory in Asia Minor. The Byzantine embassy, led by the chancellor John Ducas, was more cautious and frank. To Frederick it was explained that Isaac, "from the time when the idea of an expedition to Jerusalem had become generally known," had suspected that "not only the emperor but also the king of France would lead a hostile invasion into his realm."⁴ Unless Barbarossa could remove these fears, it would be necessary for Byzantium to refuse to allow the Germans to go through the passes of Bulgaria and indeed "in all ways" to oppose them.

This appeared reasonable to Frederick, and three distinguished German princes, bishop Godfrey of Würzburg, the emperor's son Frederick, duke of Swabia, and Leopold of Babenberg, duke of Austria, swore before the Greeks to the pacific intentions of the German crusaders. Thereupon the Greek envoys, "vowed by the

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15, lines 24-28. For Byzantium under Isaac II Angelus, see below, chapter IV, pp. 146-149.

holy gospels, on behalf of their lord the king and of all the princes of Greece, true and steadfast friendship for the lord emperor and the whole army of Christ." It was agreed that the Greeks would give the crusaders guides through Byzantine territory, furnish them with food and supplies at regular markets, and provide transportation across the straits to Asia Minor. To impress the Greek envoys the more, the three German princes "vowed again that as long as the Greeks kept the agreement to which they had sworn, the entrance of our men into their land would be peaceful and quiet." To supervise the preparations for the reception of the crusading army, a German embassy was sent ahead to Constantinople consisting of the bishop Hermann of Münster, count Rupert of Nassau, his kinsman count Walram, Henry of Dietz, and the imperial chamberlain, Markward of Neuenburg. Knowing what happened to these promises and to these envoys, Ansbert cannot help but remark of the Greeks at this point in his chronicle, "They lied . . . nothing they vowed did they afterwards perform. . . . Neither the prudent emperor nor the simple and faithful legates knew 'that they were being sent as sheep in the midst of wolves'."⁵

On St. George's day, April 23, 1189, the crusaders gathered for a diet at Regensburg (Ratisbon) at which final arrangements were made. On the 11th of May the German army, said to have been some one hundred thousand strong and with a core of twenty thousand knights, set out on their crusade with purses bulging with money, the emperor and a small number by boat, and the rest along the banks of the Danube. In this stately procession were the leaders of the German church and the German aristocracy. Headed by the two Fredericks, father and son, there came from the church the bishops of Liège, Würzburg, Passau, Regensburg, Basel, Meissen, and Osnabrück, to whom were added later the archbishop of Tarentaise and the bishop of Toul. The only abbot to come was Isenric of Admont. The leaders among the aristocracy were Berthold, the duke of Dalmatia and Meran (Croatia) and margrave of Istria, the margraves of Vohburg and Baden, count Florent III of Holland and the counts of Sayn, Sponheim, Cuyk, Wied, Berg, Saarbrücken, Abenberg, and Henneberg. From Swabia came the counts of Öttingen, Kyburg, Dillingen, Nimburg, and Vöhringen; from Bavaria, the counts of Dollnstein, Liebenau, Dornberg, and Falkenstein; from Saxony, count Adolf of Schaumburg and Holstein, and the counts of Oldenburg, Hallermund, and Wöltin-

⁵ Ansbert, p. 16, lines 12-14, 25-27.

gerode. The burggrave of Magdeburg was there, and Frederick of Berg, the advocate (*Vogt*) of Passau and of the monastery of Melk. Burgers of Metz joined later with the many "ministerials and other chosen knights" to form this *terribilis et ordinata acies*. There were backsliders of course who did not keep their vows, or who went later. From the German point of view Philip of France and Henry of England were the chief of these, but they numbered also count Philip of Flanders, dukes Conrad Otto of Bohemia and Moravia, Godfrey of Lower Lorraine, and Henry of Limburg, the bishops of Speyer and Cambrai, and several counts, among others. There were some who chose to go by sea rather than land, preferring the "short voyage which reduced the element of fear from hostile pagans" and "lazily" awaiting "the arrival of our forces in one of the cities left to the Christians".

The spirit of this army as it got on its way was tough. In the course of the march it was purged of unwelcome elements and given a fairly tight organization. When the inhabitants of Mauthausen, "with novel and haughty pride, demanded an unaccustomed toll of the passing pilgrims of Christ, even though crusaders," the emperor set fire to their village. At Vienna some five hundred prostitutes, thieves, and wastrels were sent back to Germany. At the first major halt of the whole army near Pressburg (Bratislava) it became evident that some body of regulations would have to be set up to restrain "so great a multitude of sometimes licentious and insolent knights and servingmen". These regulations, drawn up in council, were sworn to by the whole army, and judges appointed to enforce them. The hands of some bullies were cut off and the heads of some thieves rolled.

At Nish the army was divided into four divisions "so that whenever the enemy should attack, they would not find Christ's knights unprepared and in disorder." The first division was composed of the troops of duke Frederick of Swabia, bishop Conrad of Regensburg, margraves Berthold of Vohburg and Hermann of Baden, and five Swabian and four Bavarian counts. Its standard-bearer was count Berthold of Nimburg. The second was the Bohemian and Hungarian division, each group with its own standard-bearer. The third division was composed of the troops of duke Berthold of Dalmatia and of the bishops of Würzburg, Liège, Passau, Münster, Basel, and Osnabrück; the duke himself bore the banner. The fourth was the imperial division drawn from the emperor's own men and including the archbishop of Tarentaise, the bishop of Meissen, count Florent of Holland, and some sixteen

remaining counts. Count Rupert of Nassau was made their standard-bearer *in absentia*. A fifth division was formed at Philippopolis of foot-soldiers and the sturdier serving-men. Here, too, the army was given a tighter judicial organization. The emperor divided the army into units of fifty, for each of which was appointed a judge for civil and military cases, with reservation only of the jurisdiction of the imperial marshal. Frederick also chose here a council of sixty men (later reduced to sixteen) to advise him in military matters.

The five weeks' march through Hungary was calculated to inspire in the hearts of the crusaders great hopes for an easy, pleasant journey all the way to their goal. It was to impress them also with the proper way in which foreign monarchs should receive the German "army of the Lord". Bela III had sent forward his ambassadors to greet the crusaders at Pressburg, and on June 4 he, together with his queen, received Frederick personally in the neighborhood of Gran (Esztergom). Queen Margaret presented the emperor with a magnificent and roomy tent. The king entertained him for two days "on his rather extensive private hunting preserve situated on an island in the Danube". The expedition was provided with ships, wagons laden with supplies, and three camels. It was quartered in luxuriant pasture. In Gran itself houses stuffed with provisions were set aside for the poor pilgrims. Bela had commanded the towns and bishoprics to receive the emperor with great ceremony. When, in comparison with what they had to endure elsewhere, the crusaders thought back on the passage through Hungary, these seemed halcyon weeks. "We passed through . . . in the greatest tranquillity and with the air smiling upon us with much more than usual mildness and agreeableness. Indeed, the gnats, gadflies, insects, and snakes, which seriously disturb those making a journey on horses in the summertime in Hungary, not only did not hurt us or the animals, but were rarely even seen by us."⁶ The only unpleasant thing the Germans resented about their Hungarian experience was the extremely unfavorable rate of exchange.

A shocking contrast came with the entrance into Byzantine territory at Branits on July 2. No better short account of the incidents of the subsequent march through Bulgarian territory to Philippopolis (Plovdiv), and no better commentary upon the German reaction to these, can be had than in the letter which Frederick sent back on November 16 to his son Henry VI: "As soon as we reached the borders of our imperial brother, the emperor

⁶ Ansbert, p. 27, lines 2-7.

of Constantinople," Frederick wrote, "we suffered no small loss in robbery of goods and killing of our men; and this is known without doubt to have been instigated by the emperor himself. Certain bandits and bowmen, lurking in the thorn thickets near the public highway, continued to surprise and harass with poisoned arrows a great many of our men who were unarmed and proceeding incautiously. . . . They were [however] completely surrounded by our *balistarii* and knights and . . . paid the just penalty for their deserts; in one day and on one gallows thirty-two of them, suspended like wolves, shamefully ended their lives. Nonetheless the remaining criminals followed at our side and molested us with nocturnal theft . . . through all of the Bulgarian forests. Yet our army in turn dreadfully tortured great numbers of them with various kinds of torments.

"The . . . emperor of Constantinople [moreover] did not hesitate not only to break every vow he is known to have made on his own life and soul, through his chancellor, at Nuremberg, but also under threat of punishment to take from us the opportunity to exchange money and to buy and sell. He also ordered the defiles of the roads to be blocked by cutting down trees and rolling huge rocks in the way, and commanded certain ancient passes, the fortifications of which had been ruined with age . . . to be fortified with war-towers and bulwarks, in order, contrary to the honor of God and of the holy, living cross, to destroy us and all Christians. We, however, relying on the help of heaven, set fire to the Greeks' machines, and reduced their wood and stones to coals and ashes. And so, by the grace of God, we went through all the passes victoriously and, stuffed with all good things, arrived at the plain of Circuiz [Pazarjik?]. We thus spent six weeks in a rather toilsome traverse of Bulgaria.

"Setting out thence again, we occupied Philippopolis, . . . a place very well defended by natural site and the hand of man and very rich, but utterly deserted. And behold, on the following day, we received letters from the emperor of Constantinople that, written with great pomp, sang equally of threats, flattery, and craft. At that time, moreover, we were first fully informed of the captivity of our legates, namely of the bishop of Münster, count Rupert, and Markward the chamberlain, whom the . . . emperor, while we were still in Hungary, . . . ordered to be taken. Unmindful of his reputation, and contrary to the law of all nations regarding legates, he had them shamefully stripped and thrown into prison. When they heard such reports the whole army of the cross became enraged,

and took, shortly, to the uninterrupted ravaging and occupation of cities, castles, and villages until [finally] the emperor . . . indicated to us by the tenor of his letters that the ambassadors . . . would return to us with great honor. In the end, however, after many embassies and diplomatic evasions, he craftily maintained the guile he had long since conceived against Our Benevolence, by prolonging our passage until the harshness of winter. In this spirit, when he returned our envoys . . . as if he had done a good turn, he kept more than two thousand marks of their money and went on promising a safe passage, an abundance of boats, a good market, and the usual money-exchange. As the familiar proverb says, however, 'the burnt child dreads the fire', we have no further faith in Greek vows and pretensions, and so have decided to winter in Philippopolis. . . . The duke of Swabia, the brother of Your Sublimity, is going to stay with a great part of the army in . . . Berrhoea [Stara Zagora] . . . until the mildness of spring destroys the harsh winter air.

"Since then we cannot cross the Arm of St. George unless we get from the emperor . . . very select . . . hostages and unless we subject all Romania [the Byzantine empire] to our rule, we strongly urge and request Your Prudent Royal Nobility to send suitable envoys . . . to Genoa, Venice, Ancona, and Pisa, and to other places, for a squadron of galleys and smaller vessels, in order that, meeting us at Constantinople around the middle of March, they may besiege the city by sea and we by land. We advise Your Royal Discretion, furthermore, . . . to collect immediately all the outstanding money which is owed us in different places, and have it deposited in the house of Bernard, our Venetian agent. In this way . . . let it be transferred to Tyre, since you know it will be very necessary to us on account of the unexpected delay we are about to endure. . . .

"We affectionately request Your Royal Benevolence . . . to get monks with never-failing vigilance to pour forth prayer to God for us. We . . . advise you also to take heed that the royal hand lay hold of judgment, and the zeal of the royal dignity glow against criminals, for especially by this service will you secure the grace of God and the favor of the people. Do not neglect, moreover, to write the lord pope to send some monks to the various provinces to exhort the people of God against the enemies of the cross, and especially against the Greeks. For in the presence of our envoys, the bishop of Münster and his colleagues, the patriarch of Constantinople publicly proclaimed [in the church of Hagia Sophia], that any

Greek who killed one hundred pilgrims, even if he were charged with murdering ten Greeks, would secure a pardon. . . . We have already spent twelve weeks at Philippopolis. From Philippopolis to Constantinople no inhabitant of city or fort is to be found.”⁷

From this letter it is obvious that the march through Bulgaria and Thrace succeeded in so building up German fury against the Greeks that Frederick planned the capture of Constantinople, and, to promote it in the west, asked for a papal campaign of hatred against Byzantium. If one accepts Frederick's account at its face value the responsibility for this wholly unnecessary exacerbation of German sentiment must be put upon the feeble judgment and puerile diplomatic machinations of a caged emperor, Isaac Angelus, who, without material means to retrieve the fortunes of a contracting empire, thought to frighten the Germans into making profitable concessions in the east by harassing their march and allying himself with the supreme enemy of western Christendom, Saladin himself. It is, however, conceivable that some, at least, of the attacks upon the crusader forces came from Balkan brigands. The writ of Constantinople no longer ran unchallenged in this area; witness the major rebellion of Vlachs and Bulgars that had exploded only three years before, and was still unquelled. It may have been impossible for Isaac to carry out the provisions of the treaty which his chancellor had made with Frederick at Nuremberg — to supply guides, provisions, and transportation across the straits. Had he done so, however, he might have delivered his potential western enemies into the hands of the Selchukid Turks with dispatch.

Barbarossa had no aggressive intentions against Byzantium, as Isaac had every reason to know from his conduct. Indeed the German emperor, bent upon a crusade to the east and not upon a hazardous political adventure, went out of his way, in the face of what appeared to be outrageous provocation and at great cost to the crusading army, to deal coolly with the impossible demands of his imperial colleague. Even if Isaac's fear of German aggression had been well founded, it was madness to stimulate rather than attempt to divert it, at a moment when Frederick was in direct touch with the Serbian and Bulgarian rebels. No Byzantine army could resist the German army if the petty diplomatic trickery of a despot failed to scare the untutored western barbarians into submission. It was irresponsible and callous to turn his subjects over to plunder and finally to an occupation. Indeed in provoking his own people, and in arousing the hatred and contempt of the German empire, and,

⁷ This letter is in *Ansbert*, pp. 40-43.

moreover, in offending the aroused crusading spirit of the west, Isaac was preparing, in ways it is difficult to measure, doom for his state.

The succession of incidents which raised the German fury to a pitch was as follows. As soon as crusaders had entered Byzantine territory at Branits on July 2, without any formal welcome from Constantinople, the Byzantine governor "diverted us from . . . the public highway and . . . by command of his lord the emperor of Greece . . . blocked the rocky and non-public road to which he had led us". The "little double-dealing" Greeks were not able to prevent the opening of this road. As the army advanced through the Bulgarian forest on July 11 they encountered the ambushes of "puny Greeks, Bulgars, Serbs, and half-civilized Vlachs. . . . Many of them, when seized, confessed that they had been forced to do these things by order of the duke of Branits, and chiefly because of an edict of the Greek emperor. . . . Day after day occurred the rout and murder of foragers, and robbery by bandits who made sallies from the Greek side and incessantly stole horses and pillaged the carts which were proceeding without military escort."⁸

Without preparing carefully for the arrival of the German army except for an edict, unenforced, indicating that it was to be provided with facilities to purchase supplies and exchange money, Isaac had gone off to Philadelphia (Alashehir) to deal with the rebel Theodore Mancaphas. The German embassy to Constantinople was thus obliged to wait outside the city until he returned. When he did return and learned, as he had every reason to expect, of the arrival of Germans in Byzantine territory, he ordered his chancellor and other officials to act as guides for the German army. His arrest and imprisonment of the German embassy late in June gave him hostages to guarantee the behavior of the crusading army. Under these circumstances his subordinates drew their own conclusions, and Isaac himself was apparently content to let matters take their course. A homeward-bound Hungarian envoy explained to Frederick that Isaac had had to go to Philadelphia and that, accordingly, he should not "wonder over the fact that he had not yet been greeted or honored by any envoys." At the same time an envoy of that Greek chancellor who should have been conducting Frederick's army on its way asserted that Isaac was "much surprised that Frederick had not yet notified him by accredited envoys of his approach and that of the army, so that he might have greeted him

⁸ Ansbert, pp. 27-28.

and the army more carefully by a splendid reception of his own men and the preparation of a good market." Ambassadors would be awaiting him in Sofia. Instead Frederick was greeted at Nish by an embassy from Alexius, a cousin of Isaac's, who blamed the Greek treatment of the Germans upon the duke of Branits, who "had been much at fault in not guiding them reliably, and in not rendering . . . the service . . . agreed upon." Henceforward "adequate guides and a market all through Greece" would be furnished provided that Frederick and his army "entered peacefully". Frederick was warned that at Sofia he would find a Greek army guarding the passes into Thrace, not against the Germans but against the counts of Serbia, the invaders of Byzantine territory. "Hence no suspicion of warlike intent should be harbored against him [Isaac] or the Greeks." "In all, however, that he [Alexius] or the chancellor of the emperor of Constantinople said, they mouthed one thing and meant another."

Meanwhile at Nish on July 27 Frederick and the leaders of the army received Stephen Nemanya, the "grand župan" of Serbia, and the leader of the Serbs' rebellion against Byzantium, together with his two brothers. The Serb leaders were determined to take full advantage of Frederick's passage to make secure their rebellion. They loaded him and the leaders of the army closest to him with a wide variety of gifts: wine, grain, sheep, cattle, "a tame boar, and three live stags, likewise tame". The Serb counts offered an alliance to Frederick "to help the present expedition, and in particular against the emperor of Greece, should he happen to resist the army of Christ." They were willing moreover to become the vassals of Frederick for the Byzantine territory they had recently conquered and "to receive that very land . . . from the hand of the emperor of the Romans himself".⁹ This must have been an altogether pleasant prospect for Frederick and his crusading chiefs at a moment when it seemed likely that Byzantine opposition might obstruct their march.

Yet the Hohenstaufen emperor was not ready at the moment to ally himself with rebels and thus force the hand of Isaac. He did "not want," the chronicler says, "by means of a war against someone else, to alter or abandon the proposed march against the invaders of the Holy Sepulcher." Nor did he, of course, wish to preclude a possible use of the Serbs for the future. He replied therefore "to those counts in a kindly manner. He said that for the love of Christ he had undertaken a toilsome pilgrimage against the oppressors of

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30, lines 7-27.

the land of Jerusalem, and that he was not, out of pride, or any ambition, designing evil against any Christian king whatever, including the king of Greece. This, however, was only on the condition that he [Isaac] supply for the army trustworthy guidance and an adequate market, as he had repeatedly promised. Should this not be the case . . . he was prepared to fight against false Christians who waylay the pilgrims of Christ, as well as against pagans, and would make his way with his men by the sword."¹⁰ Frederick could count if need be upon the support, not only of the Serbs, but also of their rebel allies against Byzantium, the Bulgars and Vlachs led by Asen and his brother Peter, who likewise "with letters and envoys, influenced his majesty in his favor by proper deference and the promise of loyal aid against his enemies."

The march from Nish to Sofia, where the army arrived on August 13, was a repetition of the one from Branits to Nish. Greek hostility had already increased the retaliatory German pillage of the countryside to such an extent that, at Nish, Frederick had had to take steps to halt it. But the army, newly organized in its four divisions, continued to be harassed "through the rough and wild paths of the forests" by "ambushes and raids of enemy Greeks and Vlachs, instigated, as is known, by Isaac, the emperor of the Greeks." The column of duke Berthold was attacked by "the bandits. . . . They immediately engaged them like men, and cut down more than forty in a great slaughter. We saw twenty-four of them, who had been tied to the tails of horses and brought back to camp, hung on one gibbet, like wolves, head downwards." Frederick of Berg, the advocate, became expert in shooting snipers out of the trees. "He then fastened [them] to the [trees] more firmly than [they] had hitherto clung to [them], but with a noose." Young Frederick, the emperor's son, "executed by disgraceful hanging" a great many of the Bulgarian bandits he had taken. German knights were stimulated to heroic feats by such opportunities. "It happened that a certain knight who was so sick that he had been carried in a litter for a long time, found when the bandits broke out, that his spirit was renewed. . . . He boldly sprang from his bed, and, fighting manfully, gave one of them to the edge of the sword and turned the rest to flight; yet as soon as they scattered in flight his pain returned and again he lay down on his bed." But despite the German resistance, "the culprits . . . followed beside us over the mountain-slopes and plagued us by nocturnal pillage, through the whole of the Bulgarian forest." When, moreover, the

¹⁰ Ansbert, pp. 30-31.

army arrived at Sofia, it was found "empty and destitute of every satisfaction for human wants. The tricks and perjury of the Greek emperor and his men then began to be clearly evident. The perjured emperor had ordered the market and money-exchange, which had been promised under oath, withdrawn, under threat of punishment. In addition, there were no signs of the meeting which not only John [Ducas], his chancellor, but also . . . Alexius, had, a short time ago, promised to the lord emperor. . . . By order of the emperor . . . in order to slaughter the pilgrims of Christ and to dishonor God, [they] had, by renewing its war-towers and defenses, strengthened the ancient pass of St. Basil."¹¹

With the threat of force Frederick obliged the Byzantine army to withdraw from before the last Bulgarian pass, "blocked up by treacherous Greek craft", leading into the Maritsa valley. "On 20 August, after burning the machines of the Greeks, we issued from those manifold and detestable defiles." On August 24 they approached Philippopolis, "empty and abandoned by the Greeks for fear of us". On the following day Frederick "received letters from the Greek emperor Isaac, full of pride and arrogance and absolutely refusing us passage. . . ." At the same time Frederick learned of the arrest of his envoys in Constantinople. "For the emperor Isaac — in a new and unprecedented crime, one contrary to the law and usage of all nations, not only of those which fight for the Christian religion, but even of barbarian ones — had delivered those sent to him for the sake of peace and friendship to prison, after stripping them of effects and goods and insulting them in various ways. He did this to the dishonor of the army of the holy cross and of all Christianity, since he desired to offer this favor to his friend and confederate Saladin . . . the enemy of the cross and of all Christians. The whole army was enraged because of this and thenceforward freely pillaged the property of Greeks and ruined what was left."¹² On August 26 Philippopolis was occupied.

In a letter of August 25 Isaac had refused passage across the Dardanelles until Frederick sent hostages to Constantinople and promised to surrender to Byzantium one half of whatever conquests should be made in Syria. The German emperor, however, had no intention of dealing further with the Greeks until his arrested ambassadors were returned. He now regarded himself as freed from the obligations of the agreement made at Nuremberg. The only way in which Isaac's hand could be forced, Frederick decided, was by war and plunder, and immediately after their entrance into

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-37.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

Philippopolis, the German army began to occupy the surrounding territory. "We gathered the grape-harvest of that country, pressing out the grapes; we took fruits from artificial caves, and everyone stored up enough for the quarters to which he had been assigned." The emperor indeed "would have occupied all Macedonia if the cause of the Crucified . . . had not held him back." For the time being, duke Frederick of Swabia, after defeating a Byzantine army stationed near Philippopolis, was permitted, "according to the plan determined on by the emperor and the princes," together with duke Berthold of Dalmatia and the greater part of the army "to assault the exceedingly rich city called Berrhoea." It was easily taken. "When our men were in possession of the city they found grain and barley, meal, wine, cattle, and sheep in great abundance and gathered a supply of various garments." The imperial marshal, Henry of Kalden, took "Scribention" (Sopot?). The marshal of the bishop of Passau took "Brandoveus" (Voden). "The strong city called Pernis [Petrich] surrendered unconditionally. . . . Thus in a short time the army of Christ and of the holy cross secured the three above-mentioned cities and about ten castles."¹³

The negotiations between Frederick and Stephen Nemanya, and the Vlach brothers Asen and Peter, together with the actual occupation of Byzantine territory by the German army, at length made an impression upon emperor Isaac. It was not until late October, however, that he decided to release the German ambassadors, and proceed with further negotiations concerning the advance of the German army. The delay only served to intensify German suspicions. It seemed to them obviously deliberate, and meant, in the interest of Saladin, to postpone the German crossing of the straits "until hard winter was upon them". It was calculated, they believed, to provide time for Isaac to prepare plans for the destruction of the German army as it crossed the Dardanelles. For the Germans had heard that Isaac, "thinking us ignorant and unsuspecting", had prepared his Turks and Kumans "to lay three ambushes for us as we crossed the straits". The army was first to be divided for the crossing on the specious plea that the lack of boats made this necessary. "When a part of the army had crossed, attacks were to be made from both the European and Asiatic sides," and finally "while rowing on the sea it was to be surrounded by the galleys of these same enemies and given to slaughter."¹⁴

The return of the ambassadors on October 28, accompanied by an impressive Byzantine mission, did nothing at all to allay these

¹³ Ansbert, pp. 44-45.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 48, lines 8-15.

suspicious. It only strengthened the position of those in the army who were anxious to continue the war, to attack Constantinople itself, and to be done once and for all with the infuriating tactics of hypocritical Greeks. The German envoys were received with tears of joy by the whole German army. "Even the emperor could not restrain himself from tears." On the following day they were permitted to tell "to the assembled princes, clergy, and knights, the pitifully sad story of how they were shamefully taken prisoner, robbed, starved, mocked, and insulted in various ways." Isaac had had the effrontery to give their stallions to the envoys of Saladin, then in Constantinople. Nicetas, patriarch of Constantinople, "that pseudo-apostle", had called the crusaders "dogs" in one of his sermons, and had made the inflammatory offer of absolution for their wholesale murder, as later reported by Frederick to Henry in the letter already quoted.¹⁵

The Byzantine embassy, deliberately snubbed by the Germans, had been kept from coming to any agreement by its instructions to raise the question of protocol. The Germans, indeed, after all that had happened could not believe their ears when the Byzantine chancellor, the head of the delegation, began to read the letter of Isaac demanding further German hostages, and, in order to facilitate a speedy continuance of the German march, promising the "provision of a market and the passage of the Hellespont [Dardanelles] between the cities of Abydus and Sestus". "For that contemptible Greek, with his usual pride, lyingly proclaimed himself to be the 'emperor of the Romans', and our most serene august lord himself to be not emperor of the Romans but only 'king of Alaman-nia' [Germany]." This was too much even for Frederick. He sprang to his feet and instructed the Byzantine envoys in the western view of the history of the Roman empire. "It is greatly to be wondered at," he said, "why my brother, your lord and emperor . . . should usurp this futile and undeserved title, and should glory foolishly in an honor which is, by all odds, not his, for clearly he understands that I am 'Frederick the ever-august emperor of the Romans' both in name and in fact." He then spoke his mind upon how Isaac had "robbed my faithful envoys, noblemen, Christ's pilgrims and crusaders, of their property, taken them prisoner and jailed them, tormented them with hunger, and insulted them in various ways. . . . Unless," he concluded, "he restores what he took from my envoys, and makes suitable satisfaction for the injury he put upon them without cause, and unless in his letter

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

he salutes me with due respect by the name of Roman emperor, and unless, by means of very select hostages, he guarantees me a fair market and money-exchange, and a secure passage over the sea which is called the Arm of St. George, he may henceforth by no means presume to send me either envoys or letters. Let him know that I, in reliance upon divine love, will unhesitatingly cut my way through with the sword."¹⁶

In subsequent correspondence the matter of title was satisfactorily settled. In a following letter Isaac got to the point of calling Frederick "the most excellent emperor of Alamannia", and finally in a third "the most noble emperor of ancient Rome", but the new demands of Frederick for very select hostages to guarantee for the future the fulfilment of the agreement of Nuremberg enraged him with the knowledge that the surrender of the German envoys had brought him nothing in return.

Meanwhile, in the absence of a settlement, the German army decided to set up winter quarters in Adrianople, and to continue the war against the Byzantines by an occupation of Thrace up to the very walls of Constantinople. Indeed, in the weeks preceding his letter home (November 16) Frederick surrendered to the demands of the war party in the army, led by duke Berthold of Dalmatia, demanding an attack on Constantinople. Yet he seemed to think that Isaac might come to his senses and make possible, for the spring of 1190, a passage of the straits. Frederick was certainly well aware of the difficulties of an attack upon Constantinople. The death of William II of Norman Italy and Sicily, as we saw in an earlier chapter, would make it unlikely that help could come from that quarter for a long time. Venice, an ally of Isaac, could be counted on for nothing more than neutrality. The rivalry between Genoa and Pisa could hardly be quieted by a projected attack on Constantinople by the Germans. It was not to be expected that the papacy would launch a campaign against the Byzantines in the west, merely because Barbarossa and Henry VI wanted it. And if, despite these difficulties, it should come to an attack upon Constantinople, and this was to be successful, it would be difficult to prevent the crusade from stopping here. Frederick preferred to get on with the crusade. An attack on Constantinople, for him at least, was a last resort after all else had failed.

Leaving the bishops of Liège, Passau, Münster, and Toul and the archbishop of Tarentaise behind to hold Philippopolis, the main

¹⁶ Ansbert, pp. 49-50.

army left for Adrianople on November 5, and occupied the abandoned city on November 22. Meanwhile bishop Conrad of Regensburg took Probaton and "was quick to gather there for himself and for his companions an abundance of all necessities." On November 24 duke Frederick of Swabia took Demotica, "a very well fortified city. . . . All those, however, [except small children and women] who were found in the town were butchered by the sword to a number reckoned at more than one thousand five hundred. . . . Certain of our knights recognized in the loot from the city the three horses which robbers had forcefully taken from them in Bulgaria."¹⁷ Indeed, on his roundabout way from Philippopolis to Adrianople, the duke had "made a steady progress through Macedonia and took the city of Culos [Chelebi köy] with two others whose names are not remembered." Boldly going on from there, he reached the sea "and attacked the rich city called Menas [Enos]. When the citizens escaped from it in boats, he took . . . fabulous booty." Subsequently the duke attacked from Adrianople Arcadiopolis, and "found it as empty of warriors as of the necessities of life. Some of our men nevertheless found wine and grain there which they carried back to their fellows." More or less constant fighting with Byzantine forces took place until the territory to the very walls of Constantinople was occupied. Dense forest areas had to be cleared. Regular engagements with Isaac's Vlach and Kuman mercenaries were carried out. "Bohemians [better trained for war and pillage than the others] came together with some others from the army who were seeking necessary provisions for themselves, to a certain seacoast city. There they seized more than enough horses and mules, wine, and grain, and all sorts of desirable things." From an "almost inaccessible swamp, to which a not inconsiderable crowd of the enemy had fled with all their possessions," they carried a notable booty. A column of the bishop of Würzburg and of the counts of Salm, Wied, and Sponheim "captured two cities in the direction of Vlach territory. . . . A third was taken by assault — more than five thousand were killed in a great massacre. One of these cities was given to the flames. . . . The second column, of the count of Abenberg and the advocate Frederick of Berg, always a very dangerous one, . . . turned southwards, inflicted a pitiable slaughter upon the enemy, and brought back abundant booty."

The troops of the bishops at Philippopolis were also active in the neighborhood, and they were joined by the twelve hundred men

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

who, together with duke Berthold, count Florent of Holland, and Frederick of Berg, were sent from Adrianople on December 7 to bring the garrison at Philippopolis to Adrianople. Duke Berthold had to rescue the troops of bishop Dietpold of Passau at "Bacon" (Batkun). The advocate "invaded a rich region called Vlachia, not far distant from Thessalonica. Here he killed a few rebels and found a greater store of supplies than his men could carry back. . . . The bishop of Passau and the duke of Dalmatia followed with an armed band, subdued the land, and loaded their men with pillage taken from the enemy."

The incidents of battle kept the German animosity toward the Byzantines at white heat and stimulated their plundering zeal. In the course of the slaughter at Demotica, and of the capture of the castle of "Nikiz" (at Hafsa), the Germans were convinced that the Byzantines were attempting to undo them with poisoned wine and that, at least in the neighborhood of Nikiz, "which with all the surrounding region is known to serve the emperor at Constantinople in the making of toxics and poisons", this was done upon imperial orders. The strong constitutions of the Germans preserved them from this treachery. "That same wine" which, when forced down the throat of the recalcitrant Greek, caused him to turn pale, foam at the mouth, and wildly roll his eyes, "hardly so much as intoxicated some of our men. . . . Lo, in the ten plagues of Egypt the waters of Egypt became thick blood for the Egyptians, but clear waters for the Hebrews. And now, by no less of a miracle, the wine of the Greeks, steeped in poison and prepared for the destruction of our men, was deadly for the Greeks, but a healthy drink for our men. Our men now knew that from the time they entered Bulgaria, poison had very often been prepared for us."¹⁸ Nor were the Germans able to take with equanimity the taunting posters which Byzantine artists had painted in churches and public buildings. "When they visited in force the region called Graditz, they found in the pictures of churches and other buildings, Greeks astride the necks of pilgrims, and, as if they were enemies, restraining them with bridles. Our men, enraged at this, set the churches and other buildings on fire, killed very many people with their swords, devastated that whole land, and took huge amounts of booty."¹⁹ Indeed because "the excitement of our people toward the Greeks was fanned to a higher pitch day by day", the pillaging increased. In fact, "the entire army was swamped with the booty of these enemy Greeks. . . . Greed ruled at that time in the hearts of many as a result of the

¹⁸ Ansbert, pp. 54-55.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 56, lines 14-19.

excess of pillage and murder." Obviously, there was some cause for Byzantine fear of the German advance toward Constantinople.

At Philippopolis and Adrianople, "under cover of the freedom necessary to bring together provisions, there crept into almost everybody the general abuse of pillaging more than the necessary things."²⁰ The prolonged stay at Philippopolis and Adrianople further relaxed the discipline of the army. "Many lacked that good faith and harmony which formerly flourished in the army of Christ", and steps had to be taken to correct the excessive fraternization with native women. "For, to be specific, they publicly stripped both the men and the women, tied their hands behind their backs, tied a rope about their loins, and led them around through the whole city. . . . They finally in the very cold of winter immersed them several times in the river which flows by, and dismissed them with proper scoffing and mockery."²¹ When the Germans left Philippopolis for Adrianople, "to show their hatred of the Greeks, they utterly destroyed that city by fire. Some of them, moreover, on the march forward turned aside to the city of Berrhoea, and after collecting all the booty they wanted, gave it to the avenging flames."

While at Adrianople Frederick attempted through duke Berthold to renew diplomatic contact with Stephen Nemanya, "about sending an army to help us if perchance war should be declared against Constantinople". When the duke finally arrived in Adrianople on January 21, 1190, he presented to Frederick an embassy of the "grand župan", and was charged with carrying the negotiations with the Serbs to completion. Meanwhile, too, the Vlach Peter "urgently requested Frederick to make him emperor . . . and to place on his head the imperial crown of the kingdom of Greece. He steadfastly asserted that, at the beginning of spring, he would send forty thousand Vlachs and Kumans . . . against Constantinople. The emperor preferred to hold their offer in reserve while maintaining Peter's good will."²² These negotiations and the continuance of the war led to the further exchange of envoys between Frederick and Isaac Angelus on the basis of the agreement at Nuremberg, and the furnishing of select hostages by the Byzantines, for "the Greek emperor saw his land and cities unable to resist, and furthermore laid waste by our men." By December 24 negotiations had proceeded to the point where definite terms were being discussed. But at the last moment, the Byzantine envoys, with what the Germans regarded as "their usual shifting and inconstancy, shrank from the promised conditions and rejected the terms of certain

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 60, lines 12-20.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 58, lines 12-20.

articles." The negotiations were broken off immediately, and "the envoys of the Greek emperor were sent back home with a threat of further war. Thereafter the indignation of our men toward the Greeks boiled up more and more."

Isaac thereafter again capitulated, and on January 21, 1190, his embassy arrived in Adrianople ready to carry out the terms of Nuremberg, and "to give most noble hostages to show his good faith in this promise, and to assure its performance." Frederick sent back with this legation to Constantinople "count Berthold of Tuscany, Markward of Anweiler, the lord high steward, and Markward of Neuenburg, the chamberlain . . . to investigate carefully the truth of the promises, and if they found them assuredly true, to act as plenipotentiaries in negotiating conditions of peace."²³ On February 14 these German and Byzantine envoys returned to Adrianople with the specific terms of a treaty of peace, whose chief provisions were: (1) Isaac renounced all claims to indemnity for the losses suffered from the crusading army in Macedonia and Thrace. (2) "For the crossing, either at Gallipoli or between Sestus and Abydus, he shall furnish enough ships to transport the glorious army of Christ . . ."; Frederick in turn promised to do no further damage in any part of the Byzantine empire, and not to prevent any ships from going on to Constantinople. (3) During the crossing all Byzantine galleys "stationed between Abydus and Constantinople" were to remain "motionless on the beaches". (4) The Byzantine army was to keep a "four days' march away from the army of Christ and of the emperor of the Romans, for as long as the latter shall be in the land of the former". (5) "In order that he may rest his expedition" Frederick was to be given "two cities near the shore, here and on the other side". (6) "To assure the good faith of these promises, Isaac . . . shall give the lord emperor eighteen very select hostages of royal blood, and of the rank of duke" (the more important of these are named). (7) In case provisions were not supplied the army, it was to be free to act on its own behalf except that no land is to be transferred "to any heathen ruler". (8) "The emperor of Constantinople was to be indulgent with all the Greeks, Armenians, and Latins who have followed and served the most serene emperor of the Romans". (9) Exchange rates for money were fixed. (10) Markets were to be provided the German army: "The inhabitants shall sell to it at as fair a price as they would be bound to sell to Isaac". (11) "The emperor of Constantinople shall act as the lord emperor of the

²³ Ansbert, p. 61, lines 3-10.

Romans shall advise with respect to the possessions which the bishop of Münster, count Rupert, and their companions lost at Constantinople". (12) All Latins, whether pilgrims or merchants, "captured on land or sea from the time hostilities began", were to be released. The treaty was to be ratified by five hundred distinguished Greeks in Hagia Sophia, in the presence of the patriarch, who was to sign the treaty himself. On the German side it was to be guaranteed by the oaths of five hundred knights.²⁴

On these moderate terms did Isaac prevent an attack upon his capital, and Frederick hasten the march of his crusaders. To the German chronicler the treaty is a diplomatic victory for Frederick. "This emperor [Isaac] who foolishly boasted that all Christ's pilgrims were caught in his net, and . . . by lying and empty excuses utterly refused passage to the army of the living cross, now, after his land had been monstrously devastated and his forces horribly massacred, put aside his usual pride. . . . Wishing to take thought for the only part of Bulgaria left him, and then for Constantinople, he sought peace. For the whole army of Christ longed to take Constantinople by storm. . . . The most pious emperor of the Romans, however unwillingly, . . . had . . . made ready ships and galleys from Italy, Apulia, and the maritime provinces. He had also in readiness an army of more than sixty thousand Serb and Vlach auxiliaries."²⁵

There was now no reason why the German army should not get on its way. After Frederick had refused to intervene in the conflict between Constantinople and Peter's Vlachs, the army moved southward from Adrianople on March 1, headed by duke Frederick and his Swabians and Bavarians. On March 21 they arrived at Gallipoli. Here was found a Venetian ship which had, despite warning, sought to escape the demands of Frederick and his army by sailing on to Constantinople, "as if to seek greater gain there". But a storm had driven them back to Gallipoli where they were obliged to sell their wares to the crusaders. In response to his previous orders to the regent Henry in Germany, there appeared also "envoys of the Pisans . . . greeting the lord emperor with a due profession of subjection and fealty, and earnestly inquiring how he and the army were." What was more to the point, they offered him "ships and galleys with which to besiege Constantinople."²⁶ From the 22nd to

²⁴ The terms of the treaty are given by Ansbert, pp. 64-66. For this whole affair as it appeared to the Byzantines, see below, chapter IV, pp. 147-148.

²⁵ Ansbert, p. 68, lines 27-34.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71, lines 13-17.

the 24th, duke Frederick crossed with his division. Rain on Easter Sunday, the 25th, made it possible for the army to attend religious services rather than to "labor exclusively in the work of crossing the straits". On the following three days the rest of the army crossed, "in joy and exultation". Barbarossa himself crossed on the 28th, "with the last of his troops, screened by five war-galleys and by other vessels, while the Greeks sounded their trumpets on the sea and on the shore. . . . We were now translated from the west into the east . . . from Europe into Asia."

In spite of the treaty of Adrianople, the march through mountainous Byzantine territory in Asia Minor to the Selchükid border was not altogether peaceful. Once again, this seemed pure treachery to the crusaders. Once again, it is possible that they failed to realize the feebleness of the Byzantine central government, and the conditions of near-anarchy prevailing in Asia Minor, as in the Balkans. "With their accustomed treachery the Greeks violated the peace pact, and day after day harassed the more careless of our men, killed some who were not armed, and stole the goods of those who were killed."²⁷ Bad feeling between Byzantines and Latins at Philadelphia almost led to the destruction of the city by the Latins, who found no provisions and supplies awaiting them. They had "hoped for good merchandise from the governor and citizens of Philadelphia", but "those citizens, from a certain rash scorn, not only did not supply the promised provisions and merchandise, but certain more imprudent ones even ventured to bait our men with haughty words" and isolated skirmishes arose.²⁸ The brawls were settled by negotiation between Frederick and the governor of the city, who reminded the emperor "that all Christians ought to be moved with mercy for the aforementioned city, seeing that it, old and alone, had till now resisted the neighboring Turks and other peoples, and thus was guarding the cultivation and honor of Christian doctrine. . . . On that account, he said, we should all incur greater fault for destroying this city than for destroying Philippopolis and Adrianople." The army left Philadelphia on April 22 with citizens of Philadelphia attacking its rear, and on the following day "the Turks attacked the extreme van of the lord emperor's army". On the 25th "we passed the ruined city of Hierapolis. . . . Through a very pleasant valley, rich with licorice, cardamon, myrtle, figs, and other species of plants, we entered the territory of the Turks."

The Selchükids no less than the Byzantines were prepared to

²⁷ Ansbert, p. 72, lines 17-19.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 73, lines 14-20.

make the most of the passage of these westerners through their land. Godfrey of Wiesenbach had appeared with an embassy from Kilij Arslan before the Germans had left Adrianople, and through this embassy the sultan had promised "the very best market throughout his land." In fact, however, the old sultan had already divided his domain among his sons, the eldest of whom, Quṭb-ad-Dīn Malik-Shāh, had imprisoned his father and seized Iconium.²⁹ Quṭb-ad-Dīn had also sent an envoy to Adrianople bearing letters in which he "likewise asserted steadfastly that he would follow him [Frederick] with devotion and loyal obedience." The Germans subsequently concluded that this envoy "sang so guilefully in order to hurt and deceive the most faithful emperor and overthrow the innocent Christian army, and the Lord's Christian people, who were in exile for the love of His passion."

The march across the mountainous terrain to Iconium (April 28–May 18) was the most difficult, costly, and trying of the whole journey. Often without food and drink for men and horses, subject to constant flank attacks from the fleet Turkish cavalry, traversing hazardous and unknown territory, the army straggled before the capital city after having suffered tremendous losses in men and beasts. Avoiding the pass of Myriokephalon, where a large Turkish army had gathered, the pilgrims were caught on a "very rough and lofty mountain that only mountain-goats could traverse" and suffered from ambush and falling stones. On May 6 they lost their minnesinger, Frederick of Hausen, the "special comfort of the army."³⁰ On the 7th near Philomelium (Akshehir), the dukes of Swabia and Dalmatia inflicted a serious defeat upon the enemy that cost the Turks, it was said, 4,174 men. By the 8th, the dearth of supplies had grown so great that prices had risen to a forbidding height, and the "flesh of horses and mules was bought as a delicacy". Desertions to the enemy also began. "Some of the foot-soldiers, who were exhausted by labor, by hunger and sickness, and about to die, when they could not by any means keep up with the army", cast "themselves down to the ground in the form of a cross", and "awaited imminent death in the name of the Lord. These, when we were not far off, were made Christ's martyrs by being beheaded by the enemy who were following us." On Pentecost (May 13) "the Lord spared us from attacks of the evil Turks. Banquets of the festival consisted of cooked hides of cattle and horses, though the richer ones had horse meat. . . . Small quantities of meal, if there

²⁹ For details on Selchūkid affairs, see below, chapter XIX, pp. 680–681.

³⁰ Ansbart, p. 79, lines 4–5: "speciale solatium exercitus".

was any in the army, were guarded like gold and hidden away." On the following day, "with the help of St. George", Frederick himself met and routed the main Turkish army. The "great king was knocked from his horse by a knight, and one of his barons had his right arm, together with the sleeve of the corselet, cut off by the blow of a sword." To one Turkish emir this was the victory of "seven thousand white-clad horsemen sitting on white horses . . . who very roughly cut us all down with the lances they carried." On the eve of that day they "pitched camp, though without water or grass. As a result uncounted numbers of beasts of burden perished", and "the men too were dry with excessive thirst. . . . On the next morning, like wanderers about to die, we went on wretchedly, with some drinking their own urine, some the blood of horses, others chewing horse manure for the moisture, many chewing a cud of tufts of grass."³¹

For the attack on Iconium, which the Germans felt they must take to secure their march, they rallied themselves, after Frederick had rejected an offer of the Turks to allow them to pass and to supply them with provisions for "three hundred pounds of gold and the land of the Armenians". "Rather than making a royal highway with gold and silver," Frederick had said, "with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose knights we are, the road will have to be opened with iron."³² On the 17th the German army camped in the "garden and pleasure ground of the sultan" outside the city limits. On the following morning the army was divided into two groups, one under the duke of Swabia and the other under the emperor. The former was to attack Iconium while Barbarossa remained outside the city.³³

In view of the condition of the German army the assault proceeded with unusual ease. On the way to the city the advancing troops of duke Frederick met the German envoy to the Turks, Godfrey of Wiesenbach, and were told that "God has given this city and the land into your hands." The old sultan, who with his army had fled the first sight of the German troops, took refuge in the fortress which rose above the city and into which "almost all the citizens of the city, both rich and poor, withdrew, carrying with them an infinite store of gold and silver and a great abundance of provisions." Duke Frederick took the first gate of the city by assault, beat down the Turkish resistance, and advanced to the

³¹ Ansberr, pp. 80-83.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 83, lines 20-22.

³³ The account of the siege is given in Ansberr, pp. 84-86.

walls of the fortress. There was a general massacre of those found in the city ("he took the city and killed the citizens").

Meanwhile, unaware of his son's victory, the emperor Frederick and his troops outside the city were surrounded by Turkish contingents. The situation at first appeared hopeless. The clergy "offering themselves as a living sacrifice to the high priest . . . put their stoles about their necks." Frederick himself, "that glorious emperor of the Romans . . . whose like the whole world could not find", stood in the midst of the troops knowing full well that their doom was impending. He is reported to have said to them with grave concern that he would gladly lose his own head if only they "could come as a whole to Antioch", and to have urged them: "But why do we tarry, of what are we afraid? Christ reigns. Christ conquers. Christ commands," and "leading his men like a lion was first to spring upon the enemy", and "so put them to flight that not one of them raised his hand against him. . . . If the weakness of the knights, who languished from hunger, had not stood in the way, the fortress itself would have been taken by storm that night. The knights, however, had labored for about fourteen days under unbelievable and unheard-of want and hunger." Thereupon Frederick and his troops joined his son and the troops in the city. "There the madness of our stomachs was somewhat soothed by spoils of the enemy." There was not only wheat and barley, but also gold and silver, jewels, and purple cloth to a reckoning of more than one hundred thousand marks. There was also the satisfaction of capturing the dowry of Saladin's niece in the sultan's palace.³⁴

Frederick was as anxious to get beyond Iconium as he had been to get beyond Adrianople. Proposals of peace from Kilij Arslan and his son were quickly entertained, and it was arranged upon the reception of twenty distinguished Turkish hostages and the provision of adequate supplies. The Germans left Iconium on the 23rd, pitched camp near the garden and pleasure-ground of the sultan, and spent three days supplying themselves at the market set up there, purchasing some six thousand horses and mules, bread and meat, butter and cheeses. By the 26th they were on their way again, and only the threat to execute the hostages kept the army from being harassed again by "wild Turks". On May 30 they arrived at Laranda (Karaman), "a beautiful city which divides Cilicia, that is, Armenia, from Lycaonia".³⁵

³⁴ Ansbert, p. 86, lines 26-30. Saladin's niece, daughter of al-'Ādil, was believed by the crusaders and chroniclers to be his daughter. She was the wife of Kai-Qobād (I).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 88, lines 26-27.

The German army was in Christian territory at last. The chief obstacles to their arriving at their goal had now been surmounted. When Ansbert compares his meager account of the journey through Anatolia with what more gifted authors might have written, he excuses himself with the thought that even they would have been unequal to it. "For I think that if faced with an adequate and full description of such great labor, the famous Homer, or the eloquent Lucan, or the bard of Mantua himself, would as if speechless have placed a finger on his mouth." Here they were greeted by friendly local princes and envoys of the Roupénid prince of Armenia, Leon II.

Yet the bitterest disappointment still faced them. The mountainous approach across the Taurus range to the valley of the "Saleph" river (Calycadnus) was very difficult, and to avoid it Frederick, following the advice of local guides, sought a more circuitous and also difficult route. He arrived at the stream while the main army was still straggling over the mountain passes "in the summer sun and the boiling heat. . . . He tried," Ansbert says, "to swim the channel of the Saleph river, a very rapid one," in order to cool himself off and "to detour the jagged mountains. . . . In spite of everyone's attempt to dissuade him, he entered the water, and, submerged in a whirlpool, he who had often avoided great dangers miserably perished." When "other nobles near him hastened to help him, . . . they were too late. . . . They then took him out and brought him to the bank. Everyone was upset by his death and struck with such violent grief that . . . some ended their lives with him, but others in despair and, as it were, seeing that God had no care of them, renounced the Christian faith and went over to the heathen. The death of such a prince warranted the lamentation and immoderate grief which took possession of everyone's heart."³⁶

The death of the emperor (June 10, 1190) turned the German crusade into something like a funeral procession, breaking its spirit and its unity. A western army, the news of whose approach had terrified Saladin and which, together with powerful English and French armies, was calculated to break his power, was now rendered progressively impotent. From the day it had set out from Regensburg until after the victory at Iconium it had lost something like sixty thousand men. If duke Frederick, its newly elected leader,

³⁶ The account of Frederick's drowning is in Ansbert, pp. 91, lines 20-36, and 92, lines 1-9.

could have preserved the morale and unity of those who were left, it still might have made its mark upon the east. As it was, a few left immediately for home from Cilician ports. The rest of the army divided into three groups, one going from Tarsus to Tripoli by sea, a second with duke Frederick to Antioch by sea, and a third overland to Antioch. Frederick reached Antioch on June 21 and was joined by the land force, which had lost many men. Here "after such great labors, lack of food, and torments of hunger, they wanted to rest and recoup themselves", when plague struck them. It carried away bishops Godfrey of Würzburg and Martin of Meissen, margrave Hermann of Baden, burgrave Burkhard of Magdeburg, counts Florent of Holland, Poppo of Henneberg, and Wilbrand of Hallermund, and the advocate Frederick of Berg. Duke Frederick, tempted by a career of conquest in northern Syria, did not start for Acre until late August. He moved first down the coast to Tripoli, and from Tripoli to Tyre, where count Adolf of Holstein took ship for Germany to defend his lands against Henry the Lion. Early in October Frederick arrived at Acre.

In September some Germans who had preferred the sea route from the west arrived at Acre — Frisians and Flemings under James of Avesnes and a group of Saxon nobles including counts Otto of Guelders and Henry of Altenburg. The fleet of sixty ships which had left Cologne in February 1189, and had gathered up Netherlanders and English on the way, had been stranded in Portugal fighting for its king. Landgrave Louis of Thuringia, sailing from Brindisi to Tyre, had also reached Acre, but left for home, critically ill, in October and died en route.

Frederick's troops, decimated further by Moslem attack on the way from Antioch to Tripoli, and depleted by shipwreck, were unable to exert any great effort before Acre. Death and disease still further reduced German manpower to a pitiful remnant of what had been its strength even after Iconium. "One . . . could believe that human affairs had at that time come to an end. . . . Unprecedented destruction and pestilence laid everybody low, without exception, so that they who did not die at Antioch, when they sought a postponement of their death and sailed in their sickness to Acre, died there; and those who, though sick, stayed to besiege that city, were taken with a like death." Bishop Dietpold of Passau went in November, together with his canons and clerics. Duke Frederick of Swabia died on January 20, 1191, and was buried in the cemetery of the German Hospital, a foundation of burghers from Bremen and Lübeck which the duke had maintained and which was soon

to become the home of the Teutonic Knights. "Since the deaths of the other princes occurred so thick and fast, and fatal day piled upon fatal day, we could by no means note their dates."³⁷

After Frederick's death the remaining Germans put themselves under Conrad of Montferrat, and by the time of duke Leopold of Austria's arrival in the spring of 1191 had for the most part embarked for Germany. With the arrival of the French and English armies under Philip and Richard, Leopold's part in the siege of Acre was but a small one. Only a few Germans were present to witness the fall of the city.³⁸ Leopold himself set out for home in November or December 1191, smarting under the treatment he and the Germans had received from Richard, and quite ready to coöperate with Richard's enemies, Henry VI and Philip Augustus, in taking full advantage of Richard's capture after his forced landing on the Istrian coast.

As a young man of twenty-three Henry VI had been entrusted with the governance of the empire while Frederick Barbarossa went off on the crusade that ended in his death. He was thus intimately acquainted with the hopes that had led his aged father to undertake such a hazardous mission, and with the ambitions that had lured the German aristocracy, lay and ecclesiastical, to follow him in such great numbers. He had been kept informed of the progress of the march to the Dardanelles, and had been made responsible for the execution in the west of Frederick's plans to organize a crusade against the Byzantine empire in case Isaac Angelus persisted in his efforts to block the advance of the German army. He must have shared the angry resentment of his father, and may even have attributed to the eastern emperor the ultimate responsibility for Barbarossa's death. This resentment was kept burning by the individual reports of those who managed to survive the expedition.

Henry knew also of the precarious position of the Byzantine state, of the readiness of Serbs and Bulgars to attack it from the European side, and of its inability to deal with those Selchükids of Iconium whom even an enfeebled and decimated German army had managed to dispose of with comparative ease. If the huge effort of his father's campaign were not to be wholly in vain, it would have to be repeated and the mistakes previously made avoided. Of the desire of the German aristocracy for a speedy renewal of the effort

³⁷ The events after Frederick's death are narrated by Ansbert, pp. 92-93, and in *Chronicon Magni presbiteri*, ad ann. 1190-1191 (*MGH, SS.*, XVII), pp. 516-518.

³⁸ For the siege of Acre, see above, chapter II, pp. 53, 65-69.

he was well aware. The civil wars between Saladin's sons and their uncle al-'Ādil Saif-ad-Dīn ("Saphadin"), the sultan of Egypt, were an added inducement.³⁹ Whether the campaign would be a war of revenge against the Byzantine state depended, first, upon the conduct of the eastern emperor with respect to this second German effort, and second, upon circumstances within the empire at home. Constantinople had reason to be more fearful of a crusade led by Henry VI than of those led by Conrad III or Barbarossa. And the young Henry knew from the history of the negotiations between his father and Isaac that it was only necessary to be firm to get what he wanted. In any case the Hohenstaufen plans for the integration of Italy and Germany into a strong central European state must not be upset by attempting the impossible in either the Byzantine or the Moslem east. In this respect there is no reason to suppose that Henry was any less wise than his father.

When the news of Barbarossa's death reached him, Henry was already faced with the problem of conquering his wife Constance's inheritance, the Norman kingdom of southern Italy and Sicily. His first effort failed before Naples. By 1195 his second effort, financed by Richard's ransom, had succeeded. Meanwhile the birth of a son at Iesi opened to him the prospect of transforming the German empire into a hereditary monarchy similar to the monarchies of the west. In exchange for papal support of this important step Henry was ready to offer his personal leadership of a crusade. These plans, however, were thwarted by the opposition of archbishop Adolf of Cologne, and the ultimate refusal of the papacy to consider the coronation of his son Frederick. Henry knew only too well how difficult it would be to reconcile the inhabitants of the Norman kingdom to their new German master, or to render the papacy content with German possession of a kingdom which had long been a papal fief. Now that the truce in the east with Saladin had expired, a successful crusade might accomplish many desirable ends, even without Henry's personal direction. It would strengthen the position of the emperor among the German nobility, lay and ecclesiastical. It would enhance the dignity of the empire in Europe. It might restore the relations of papacy and empire to some kind of harmony, and this might, in turn, facilitate the pacification of the newly acquired Norman kingdom of Sicily. Thus, if carefully prepared and managed, the resumption of his father's effort to restore the kingdom of Jerusalem would almost certainly contribute to the solidification of the German empire.

³⁹ On Aiyūbid affairs, see below, chapter XX, pp. 693-695.

Postponing any announcement of his personal leadership of the crusade until it was clear that circumstances would permit of his going, Henry received the cross privately from bishop John of Sutri in Easter week of 1195. This was followed in the diet at Bari on Easter day with a public imperial summons to the crusade. At about the same time Henry announced his own special contribution to the expedition. He was ready to supply a force of three thousand paid mounted troops, half knights and half squires, for the duration of a year. This meant that to the German knights who followed their lords from beyond the Alps would be given a hard central core of mercenary troops under imperial officers. In June Henry left for Germany to promote the recruitment of the German nobility. There soon followed papal legates to inaugurate the preaching of the crusade. By early August pope Celestine III called upon the German clergy to preach the new crusade. Yet Henry's own illness postponed the organization of the movement, and it was, accordingly, not until the fall and early winter that the growing enthusiasm could be organized in formal meetings of the princes.

Before leaving Italy for Germany Henry had made his first *démarche* upon Constantinople preliminary to the organization of the crusading army. It was quite evidently meant to forestall any Byzantine attempts to interfere with the organization of the crusade, and to inform Isaac moreover that the Byzantine empire was expected to contribute to rather than obstruct the expedition. As the new king of the former Norman kingdom of southern Italy and Sicily, Henry demanded the "return" of the Balkan territory which king William II had formerly conquered, from Durazzo (Dyrrachium) to Thessalonica.⁴⁰ He demanded compensation for damages suffered by his father while in Byzantine territory en route to Palestine. He asked, moreover, that a Byzantine fleet support his own crusade to Palestine. Before negotiations over these demands could be completed, the incompetent Isaac had been deposed and blinded by his brother Alexius III (April 8, 1195).⁴¹

Possibilities for further pressure upon the Byzantine empire, for further support of the new crusade, and for an extension of German political influence in the eastern Mediterranean became evident at the diet of Gelnhausen in October 1195, when envoys of Aimery of Lusignan, the new ruler of Cyprus, arrived, offering to do homage to Henry and hold Cyprus as a fief, and requesting that Henry crown him king. Henry accepted homage from one of the

⁴⁰ See above, chapter I, pp. 36-37.

⁴¹ On Alexius III, see below, chapter IV, pp. 148-150.

envoys, and promised to crown Aimery personally at a subsequent date. Meanwhile he entrusted the archbishops of Trani and Brindisi with the mission of taking to Aimery on his behalf the symbol of investiture, a golden scepter. A similar request from Leon II of Cilician Armenia must have revealed to Henry again the great impression his impending arrival in the east was making there. He may well have thought of renewing the ties which his father had maintained with the new Serbian and Bulgarian dynasties. The precarious position in which this encirclement would put the Byzantine emperor must have been clear to him. A successful crusade would sink a large German anchor in Syria and Palestine.

Henry maintained the pressure upon Constantinople by demanding from Alexius III Angelus tribute sufficient to pay for the mercenary troops he had promised to contribute to the crusading army. The original sum demanded (five thousand gold pounds) was reduced after negotiation to one thousand six hundred talents, and Alexius was obliged to institute a very unpopular special tax, the "Alamanikon" (*Ἀλαμανικόν*) or "German levy", to meet the demand. From this levy Constantinople escaped only at the death of the German emperor. Even before this, Henry had arranged for the marriage of Irene, the daughter of the blinded Isaac, to his brother Philip of Swabia (May 25, 1197). She was the widow of Roger, the son of Tancred of Lecce, who had been the last Norman king of the Italian south.⁴² Henry had found her in Palermo after his ruthless crushing of the 1194 revolt. It was rumored in the west that Isaac had agreed to accept the pair as his heirs to the Byzantine throne. In any case, the man who was browbeating Alexius III into support of a western crusading venture had now, like Robert Guiscard and William II before him, acquired a Byzantine pretender, and could pose as the defender of the rights of Isaac's children. The setting was thus prepared for the later intervention of Philip of Swabia in the counsels of the leaders of the Fourth Crusade.⁴³

Meanwhile, at the diet of Gelnhausen (October 1195), and in December at Worms, German princes had been enrolling for the crusade. At Worms, Henry sat for hours in the cathedral together with the papal legate receiving crusading oaths. At the diet of Würzburg (March 1196), the German arrangements were completed. The date of departure from Germany was set finally, after Henry's return to Italy, for Christmas 1196. The large and impressive band of German princes, more than the equal of those who

⁴² On Tancred, see above, chapter I, pp. 39-41.

⁴³ On Philip of Swabia and the Fourth Crusade, see below, chapter V, pp. 166-173.

responded to Barbarossa's call, was led by Conrad of Wittelsbach, archbishop of Mainz; archbishop Hartwig of Bremen; the chancellor of the empire, Conrad of Querfurt, newly elected bishop of Hildesheim; and the bishops of Halberstadt, Verden, Naumburg and Zeitz, Münster (who later backed out), Regensburg, Passau, Prague, and Toul. Among the leading laymen who went were duke Henry of Brabant, the count-palatine of the Rhine, Henry of Brunswick, duke Frederick of Austria, duke Berthold of Dalmatia, duke Ulrich of Carinthia, landgrave Hermann of Thuringia, the margraves of Landsberg and Meissen, and many counts. Led by the archbishop of Mainz, the majority managed to leave near the appointed time for the carefully prepared harbors of southern Italy and Sicily. To the Italians they seemed like ravaging wolves descending upon the countryside, about to join with an imperial mercenary army which could hardly be said to be fighting for a heavenly cause.

They began to arrive in southern Italy just as a serious revolt against Henry's hard regime in the south was gathering momentum. Some thought they had been called south to quell the unrest, and indeed some did help to quell it. But though Henry abandoned all thought of leading the crusade personally, he did not allow his critical political position to interfere with its progress. From March 1197 onwards, ships laden with German crusaders were leaving southern ports. By August the contingent from the Rhinelands and Saxony led by Henry of Brunswick and the archbishop of Bremen arrived in Messina with forty-four ships, after having stopped in Norway, England, and Portugal. These, together with those German princes and imperial troops who had not yet sailed, left Messina for Acre in early September under the command of the imperial chancellor Conrad of Querfurt and Henry of Kalden. Arnold of Lübeck estimates their number at sixty thousand, including four hundred burghers from Lübeck. Henry's fifteen hundred knights with their attendants, and his fifteen hundred squires formed a nucleus of six thousand men. On September 22 the main German fleet arrived in Acre. A part of the fleet under the chancellor stopped at Cyprus to crown Aimery of Lusignan and receive his homage.⁴⁴

On September 28, 1197, one of Henry's frequent fevers caused his death at Messina. Vague rumors of the emperor's death reached the German army in Beirut, and it was confirmed as they were besieging a Turkish stronghold at Toron outside of Tyre. The

⁴⁴ On Cyprus under the Lusignan kings, see below, chapter XVII.

German arrival in Acre had been none too well received by the French, who thought at one moment of driving the Germans out of the city because of their violent occupation of the houses of Acre citizens. When once the Germans had accomplished their opening skirmishes and plundering raids upon the Moslems, they united under duke Henry of Brabant for a campaign based on Tyre, designed to bring the Syrian coast into Christian hands, to clear out a nest of pirates from Beirut, and to link the kingdom with the county of Tripoli.⁴⁵ After occupying abandoned and destroyed Sidon, the Germans on the 24th of October advanced upon Beirut, which too had been abandoned and largely destroyed. They utilized the stay at Beirut to promote the candidacy of the German vassal, king Aimery of Cyprus, for the crown of Jerusalem. Their success was a decisive recognition of German strength in the east. As they moved away from the coast to clear the interior, they were blocked for months before the stronghold of Toron.

Confirmation of the news of Henry VI's death led immediately to the defection of the imperial chancellor, Conrad of Querfurt, and before the end of the summer of 1198 most of the principal German nobles had left for home to protect their interests in the raging civil war. Indeed, on July 1, 1198, a truce was made with al-'Adil, who abandoned Beirut to the kingdom. The archbishop of Mainz, before his departure early in 1198, crowned prince Leon II as the first Roupnid king of Armenia.⁴⁶

The German participation in these crusades ended in the double anticlimax of the deaths of the two leaders, Frederick Barbarossa on June 10, 1190, and Henry VI on September 28, 1197. The whole strenuous effort to retrieve the dismal failure of Conrad III on the Second Crusade⁴⁷ ended in frustration and tragic disaster. This setback at a time when it seemed that the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation was to be raised to its height served to remind the German aristocracy of the real crusade it had left behind when it marched to the east: the crusade against the trans-Elbean Slavs. Early efforts to subject and Christianize these peoples had culminated in the abortive and absurd Slavic crusade of 1147. Since that time such men as Adolf of Holstein and Henry the Lion had made notable progress in bringing the area under control. Beyond it lay the homes of the primitive, pagan Prussians, Lithuanians, Livs,

⁴⁵ On the situation in the Latin states at this time see below, chapter XV, pp. 528-530.

⁴⁶ On the kingdom of Cilician Armenia see below, chapter XVIII, pp. 645-659.

⁴⁷ On the Second Crusade see volume I of this work, chapter XV.

Letts, and Estonians, and the schismatic Russians. Here was a more practicable prospect than any offered by the Near East. Out of the needs of those Germans who managed to get to Palestine arose the institution which was to incorporate the frustrated energies of the German aristocracy and merchants — the Teutonic Knights.⁴⁸ It is thus that the German failures in the eastern Mediterranean prepared not only for the destruction of the Byzantine empire, but also for the building of a new German colonial empire on the Baltic.

⁴⁸ On German crusades against the Baltic pagans, see the chapter in volume III of this work (in preparation).