

8 ‘Italy and her [German] Invaders’

Otto III's and Frederick Barbarossa's Early Tours of Italy –
Pomp, Generosity and Ferocity

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Abstract

Otto III (r. 995-1002) and Frederick I (Barbarossa, r. 1152-1190) made several visits to Italy. Each came as king on the first visit and emperor on the second. The two rulers enacted and endorsed what we would consider today to be abhorrent acts of violence, during their second tours especially. This chapter examines the legitimacy of those acts in the context of the times, especially focusing on how the two rulers chose to present themselves – in action, in appearance and in written works. How their contemporary biographers portrayed them forms an important part of the narrative.

Keywords: Otto III, Frederick I, political violence, papacy, medieval Italy, Rome

Introduction

Milan, having tyrannised over the neighbouring town of Lodi, came in for a terrible siege from the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, and having been forced by famine to capitulate [...] [in] 1162, was destroyed by the imperialists; but the town was soon rebuilt by the famous Lombard League, and the Milanese avenged their losses by the victory of Legnano.¹

¹ Hare, *Cities of Northern and Central Italy*, p. 120. I thank the Medieval and Early Modern Centre, The University of Sydney, Dr Lynette Olson, Professor Dexter Hoyos, Christopher Heath and Robert Houghton for support in the writing of this paper.

For many centuries, and even nowadays, the sun, the wine and general lure of Italy have proven distracting, and at times fatal, to a succession of travellers and invading armies, particularly from the north.² When I say 'from the north', I mean movement from the Germanic lands south across the Alps. For centuries kings and emperors crossed the Alps, descending south to the kingdom of Italy to parade, cajole and conquer with a display of pomp, generosity and cruelty. Their subjects in turn responded with subservience, cunning and revolt. The activities and the self-representation of two rulers, crowned at Aachen 170 years apart, serve as case studies. The first is Otto III, crowned King in 983.³ The second is Frederick I (also known as Frederick Barbarossa), crowned and anointed King in 1152.⁴ At that time to rule meant to travel. The reigns of Otto III and of Frederick Barbarossa were one long royal progress for both of them. When they did travel south of the Alps, was this different?

In this chapter I present and contrast two expeditions by Otto III to Italy, the first in 996 and the second in 997/998, with the first and second tours to Italy by Frederick in 1154/55 and 1158/1162.⁵ They had two aims in common: to restore papal power in Rome and to gain the imperial crown.⁶ Pope Gregory V complied with the imperial coronation of Otto III in 996, and Pope Hadrian IV similarly obliged for Frederick in 1155. Barbarossa's other goal was to launch a campaign against King William I of Sicily.⁷ Several examples of ritualistic behaviour arguably help us to understand

2 Bullough, *Italy and Her Invaders*, p. 3.

3 In May 983 King Otto II arranged for his son to be crowned joint king at Verona. The second coronation of Otto III (980-1002) at Aachen on Christmas Day 983 was an acknowledgement by the leading men that they confirmed his right to succession.

4 Frederick I Barbarossa was born in 1122 to Judith, daughter of Henry IX, Duke of Bavaria, and Duke Frederick II of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. He died on 10 June 1190 in the Saleph River while on crusade to the Holy Land: Munz, *Frederick Barbarossa*, p. 141. See also K. Leyser, 'Frederick Barbarossa', p. 141.

5 For Europe between the tenth and twelfth centuries see the following selection: for an overview of the historiography, see Eldevik, *Episcopal Power*, pp. 1-28; for Europe broadly, see Reynolds, *Kingdoms* and Bisson, *Crisis*; for Germany, see Weinfurter, *The Salian Century*.

6 Munz, *Frederick Barbarossa*, p. 64. For the concept and desirability of the imperial crown, see for example Jones, Mauntel and Oschema, 'Controversial Terminology', especially pp. 235-241.

7 King William I of Sicily (r. 1154-66). Frederick Barbarossa's uncle, King Conrad III (r. 1138-1152) (never crowned emperor), on the way home from the second crusade had made a treaty with the Byzantine emperor Manuel Comnenus (whether by force or by intention is unclear), 'to destroy the power of the Norman kings of Sicily': Munz, *Frederick Barbarossa*, p. 63. During Conrad's reign, King Roger II of Sicily (r. 1130-1154) attacked Byzantine territories, expanded his influence on the mainland of Italy and refused to recognize the German king: Houben, *Roger II*, pp. 89-94, 97.

better some of the motives of rulers within their historical context as Otto III and Frederick sought to control their subjects and to report their own perceived achievements. However, before I can do that, I need to frame the discussion within three headings – a ceremony, an event and entitlements. These are the ceremony of *adventus*, the legacy of Pippin and the rights of the king in Italy.

Imperial Consciousness

Adventus

The first matter of interest concerns the interactions of rulers with the popes. There existed a long tradition of official welcomes for rulers by the pontif. The *adventus* arose from a ceremony originating in ancient Rome, during which an emperor was formally welcomed into a city either while undertaking a progress or after a military campaign, often (but not always) into Rome and later into Constantinople.⁸ Later medieval kings continued this tradition. The *Anonymous Valesianus* text reports that in 500 'King Theodoric (who held Arian beliefs) went to Rome and met Saint Peter with as much reverence as if he himself were a Catholic.'⁹ Pope Symmachus,

8 B. C. Ewald and C. F. Noreña, 'Introduction', in *The Emperor and Rome*, pp. 40–42. I have included here the witty words of Professor Hoyos about the portrayal of the emperors Galerius and Vespasian in two ancient sculptures, each of which celebrates an *adventus*. About an arch set up by the emperor Galerius (305–311) at Thessalonica he writes: 'I thought it must be late antique because of its rather ratty style [...]. When an emperor returned to Rome or a later capital (Galerius was perhaps heading for Nicomedia or Milan, or maybe this represents merely his passing through Thessalonica), he made a triumphal entry, with the Senate and other notables plus throngs of plebs coming out to greet him. There is a famous though fragmentary sculpture relief of the *adventus* of Vespasian in 70 CE, discovered sometime in the XXth-century during excavations on the Capitoline. Galerius is rather uncomfortably teetering on a highbacked chair: in earlier times the emperor showed his civil spirit by walking or maybe sitting in a litter, but the IVth-century ones were all army despots.' Associate Professor Dexter Hoyos, pers. comm. 30 May 2015.

9 Theodoric became king of the Ostrogoths (r. 474–526) and king of Italy (r. 493–526). Ammianus Marcellinus, *History*, trans. Rolfe, 9.65, pp. 548–551. Arianism is the belief that Christ had a divine nature but had been created by the Father and was, therefore, 'inferior' to the Father, not co-eternal with the Father and not of the same substance as the Father. In contrast the Catholic (orthodox) view considers Christ as divine as the Father is divine and of the same substance as the Father and co-eternal with the Father. The *Council of Nicaea* in 325 and the *First Council of Constantinople* in 381 declared Arianism a heresy. Although Arius was a Roman, his heresy spread widely especially among the barbarians from the north. It persisted long after its condemnation, particularly among the Ostrogoths. Dunn, 'Reception of the First Council of

the senate and the Roman people honoured him by coming to meet him outside Rome. The Carolingians set great store by protocol in either imitating or adjusting those ancient practices as did their followers, Otto III and Barbarossa: they used the *adventus* not only as a chronological event but also as a remembered event of deep significance.¹⁰ Otto III and Frederick Barbarossa were acutely aware of these traditions; their actions, discussed further below, reflect the norms, albeit that they were not always explicitly articulated. The *adventus* and the proper enactment of other rituals were used extensively to resolve conflicts between kings and rebels.

The Legacy of Pippin

The second matter of interest concerns the influence on Otto III and Barbarossa of the actions of the Frankish King Pippin, father of Charlemagne. According to the papal chronicle, when the dismounted King met the papal cortège in Francia in 754, he acted as a groom to Pope Stephen II. Pippin performed the menial service of holding the stirrup for the Pope to mount, kissed the stirrup, and led the Pope's steed with his papal rider to the palace at Ponthion in Champagne. Pippin swore that he would be at the behest of the Pope and promised that he would restore 'the rights and territories of the republic'.¹¹ Pippin acted in this way as a mark of humility. Future popes set great store by his actions.¹² Ritual processes came into play with Otto III and Frederick Barbarossa and their respective popes during the rulers' early sojourns in Italy.

Rights of the King in Italy

Third, and finally, the rights of the king in Italy were in flux. In the tenth century the bishops had been entrusted with the powers by the kings/emperors to administer justice when in Italy. In the twelfth century Otto of

Nicaea'; Kaylor, 'Introduction: The Times, Life, and Work of Boethius', p. 20; Matthews, 'Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius', p. 31; Wallace-Hadrill, 'Gothia and Romania', pp. 25-48.

¹⁰ Warner, 'Ritual and Memory', pp. 255-83, especially pp. 282-283. For discussion of the 'rules of play' see G. Althoff, 'Demonstration', pp. 27-50. See also Warner, 'Rituals, Kingship', pp. 1209-20; Barrow, 'Playing by the Rules', p. 393.

¹¹ Partner, *The Lands of St Peter*, 1972, pp. 19-20.

¹² For insight, even though he is an early commentator, see Henderson, *History of Germany*, p. 51. However, Freed contradicts Henderson, stating that the monarch's leading the pope's horse was not unusual, but holding the stirrup was a more recent invention, later than 1131: Freed, *Frederick Barbarossa*, p. 143.

Freising confirmed the royal prerogative of the ruler to administer justice when in Italy. Certain of those rights were bestowed upon other authorities in the absence of the sovereign, not necessarily upon the bishops.¹³

Descent into Italy, Perceptions and Consequences: Otto III

The relevant events of Otto III's first and second journeys to Italy are the following. In 996 at the request of Pope John XV for his help in suppressing the rebellion led by the Roman noble Crescentius, King Otto III made his first descent from Germany through the Brenner Pass into Italy.¹⁴ He travelled through Verona to Pavia where he was declared king of Lombardy. He continued down the River Po to Ravenna and then to Rome. By the time Otto reached the Holy City, Pope John XV had died. Otto took advantage of the situation to nominate and then to install his cousin Brun as pope to gain greater control over the papacy. The ruler's patronage of relatives encouraged harmonious interactions between the Holy See and the empire.¹⁵

On 21 May the new Pope Gregory V in his turn crowned Otto III Emperor in St Peters. Four days later Otto and Gregory jointly chaired a synod that was also a judicial court. Their aim was to compel the prefect of Rome, Crescentius, and his Roman followers to give an account of their doings.¹⁶ Otto and his court were well aware of the attempts by Crescentius to control the popes. For his defiance Otto sentenced Crescentius to exile but then pardoned him at Pope Gregory's intercession. The clemency towards Crescentius was designed to put the Roman noble in debt to Otto and the pope, with the expectation of compelling his good behaviour.¹⁷ Crescentius

13 Mierow, *Deeds*, p. 129.

14 Otto III was King from the age of three on the unexpected death of his father Otto II in 983. Although all diplomata and activities were undertaken in the name of the under-age king, in practice his mother, Empress Theophanu, his grandmother, Empress Adelheid, and his aunt, Abbess Mathilda of Quedlinburg, ruled the empire for him at various times until he came of age in 994 (r. 983/994-1002): Nash, *Empress Adelheid and Countess Matilda*, pp. 99, 102-103, 145-146, 149, 174, 178.

15 Brun was the son of Duke Otto of Carinthia and Liudgard, whose mother was the daughter of Emperor Otto I and his first wife Edith. Otto III was the grandson of Otto I and his second wife Adelheid. Therefore, Brun and Otto III were what we would call second cousins. Kelly, *Oxford Dictionary of Popes*, s.v. 'Gregory V'; Leyser, *Rule*, betw. pp. 91 and 92.

16 The 'Crescentius' family were notorious for disruption and interference in papal affairs. See, for example, the letter from Gerbert of Aurillac referring to the usurpation, imprisonment and death of Pope John XIV in 984 at the instigation of the Crescentii. Gerbert of Aurillac, *Epistolae*, ep. 40, pp. 68-69, trans. Lattin, *Letters*, letter 47, pp. 87-89.

17 Althoff, *Otto III*, pp. 61-62.

was dispossessed of his title of *patricius*, but Otto granted him permission to live in retirement at Rome. Gerd Althoff proposes that here appeared 'an amicable resolution of a conflict mediated through the pope, and a ruler's clemency brought into play in place of justice'.¹⁸ Otto returned to Germany, having, as he thought, satisfactorily resolved the dispute by publicly performing the royal rituals of negotiation and peace-making.

In the early northern winter of 997 Otto III, now Emperor of the Romans with the power and status that the title implied, again ventured into Italy with his army. Otto celebrated Christmas in Pavia, held courts of justice there and in Cremona, found time to visit Ravenna and issued charters in favour of Italians from the various towns.¹⁹ By the middle of February Otto was on his way to Rome on an expedition of revenge to punish the same prefect Crescentius for driving Pope Gregory V out of Rome and for appointing the audacious Johannes Philagathos as pope. Gregory, still publicly acknowledged as pope by all in Italy, called a synod and excommunicated Crescentius.²⁰ Before the Emperor's arrival, the prefect sought refuge in the Castel Sant'Angelo and the antipope fled from Rome to a garrisoned tower; both locations proved vulnerable to Otto's army.

Arriving at Rome, Otto celebrated the Resurrection of the Lord.²¹ A week later, after Whitsunday, Otto ordered the siege of Castel Sant'Angelo.²² On their capture both men were subject to brutal treatment. On the Emperor's order, Prefect Crescentius was beheaded on the battlements of Castel Sant'Angelo, his body thrown off, and then his remains retrieved and hung upside down on the Monte Mario along with twelve of his associates.²³ The anti-pope Philagathos suffered no gentler fate. His eyes, nose, and tongue were removed. He was brought back to Rome where a synod formally deposed him. In accordance with the rituals of defrocking, the papal robes were stripped from his body, thereby legitimising his removal. Philagathos was led through the streets in public disgrace, sitting back-to-front on a donkey and holding its tail as reins. The punishment of the miscreant by placing him

18 Ibid., p. 80.

19 Otto III, *Diplomata*, nos 263-275, s.aa 997-998; Althoff, *Otto III*, p. 72.

20 Althoff, *Otto III*, p. 62.

21 17 April.

22 Now known as Whitsunday, White Sunday originally took its name from the white clothing of the newly baptized. We do not know if the number twelve is significant. However, that number, in matching the number of the disciples of Jesus, is likely to have meaning, as noted by Robert Houghton.

23 Monte Mario is a hill of about five hundred feet high situated on the Tiber about two miles/five kilometres from Rome: Mierow, *Deeds*, p. 150n73.

or her backwards on a donkey originated as a pre-Christian trope, denoting foolish behaviour contrary to the will of the ruler.²⁴ Nevertheless Otto III may also have been presenting an inverse Jesus trope.²⁵ The Emperor's original negotiations and display of *clementia* had not succeeded: this time he expressed his ire.²⁶ When he carried out these actions Otto was about 18 years of age, just three years into his majority. Otto III's actions provide the basic information for the first case study of ritual, violence and punishment which will be examined.

Contemporary Views of Otto III's First Two Tours of Italy

In analysing Otto's punishment of the actions of Crescentius and Philagathos on his second tour to Italy, we need to be aware of certain motifs and rituals prominent in the early Middle Ages. The reputed prostration by Crescentius in front of the emperor as a gesture of submission would normally require the emperor to show mercy. However, Crescentius had flouted protocol in a serious way in that the prostration was carried out without prior agreement.²⁷ Consequently Otto III determined that the punishment of his two enemies should be public and aggressive, although to modern sensibilities, mutilation and humiliation were inflicted in especially gruesome ways.²⁸ Did Otto III conform to the mores of the late tenth century or not?

Some thought that Otto punished the two men unjustly. The venerable hermit St Nilo of Grottaferrata reproached Otto III and Gregory V for their brutal treatment of Philagathos.²⁹ The author of the *Annals of Quedlinburg* poured scorn on Philagathos and defended the emperor's right to punish him but was still unhappy with his mutilation.³⁰ In contrast Bishop Thietmar of Merseburg believed that the two men deserved Otto's chastisement. Crescentius had defied Otto once and Otto had forgiven him. If the

24 For these events, see Gerbert of Aurillac, *Epistolae*, ep. 220, p. 261, trans. Lattin, *Letters*, letter 225, pp. 288-9; AQ, sub anni 997, 998, pp. 495-499; Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon*, 4.30, p. 146, trans. Warner, *Ottoman Germany*, pp. 172-74; Althoff, *Otto III*, pp. 72-73, 79; Müller-Mertens, 'The Ottonians', p. 258; J. Shepard, 'Byzantium's Overlapping Circles', p. 49.

25 The idea of a reverse Jesus trope was suggested to me by Robert Houghton.

26 For *ira* versus *malevolentia*, especially in the Angevin kingdom at a slightly later period, see Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship*, pp. 87-109, esp. pp. 96-9.

27 Althoff, *Otto III*, pp. 17, 33, 75. For an overview of the importance of ritual, see Koziol, *Begging Pardon*, pp. 146, 233.

28 Otto III's wilful actions had been demonstrated from an early age. Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon*, 4.15, p. 130.

29 *Vita s. Nili*, chs 90, 91, pp. 616-17.

30 AQ, s.a. 998, p. 498.

prostration by Crescentius in front of the emperor had been impromptu, then an opportunity for reconciliation would no longer exist under the rules of forgiveness and pardon at that time. Otto's ire was just and its expression through rightful punishment was the only action available to him on this second transgression. Crescentius deserved death in a very public way. Indeed, Otto showed *clementia* to Philagathos by commuting his death sentence to blinding.³¹ Although it was an act of mutilation, blinding and punishment by riding backwards had a long tradition, and was a punishment was framed within strict guidelines. Nevertheless, the abhorrence shown by some contemporaries may indicate something beyond the norm in this case and an uncertainty among the various protagonists.³² I now turn to the second case study before undertaking a final analysis.

Frederick Barbarossa

Our second case study relates to the first two journeys to Italy of Frederick I Barbarossa of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. He undertook six expeditions to Italy in total and spent sixteen of the thirty-eight years of his reign there.³³ I deal initially with his first tour to set the scene for his second tour, whose most striking result was his sack of Milan. The official history of Frederick by his uncle, Otto of Freising, favours his nephew. At the outset Frederick's first visit may seem a reasonably straightforward procession throughout the kingdom of Italy. Frederick and his army left Augsburg in October 1154, progressed south through the Alps, heard complaints on the plain at Roncaglia, razed the town of Tortona, whose residents supported the recalcitrant Milanese, was crowned king of Italy with the Iron Crown of Lombardy at Pavia, arrived in Rome, was crowned emperor by the pope, and returned north a year later. The above summary records the basic

31 Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon*, 4.30, p. 146. See also Warner, *Ottonian Germany*, 4.30, pp. 172–74.

32 For a discussion of the contemporary views of Otto III's behaviour and the debate over whether Otto showed righteous anger and acted justly or showed unjustified anger and acted cruelly, see the more detailed analysis in Nash, 'Reality and Ritual', pp. 265–66. For more about blinding as either a punishment or a sign of the king's mercy in the Middle Ages, see Althoff, 'Königsherrschaft', pp. 70–72, 75–81, 221–232.

33 Frederick I (r. 1152–1190). For the main sources for Frederick Barbarossa, see Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*; *Carmen de gestis Frederici I*, trans. T. Carson, *Barbarossa in Italy*. See also Otto Morena, *Historia Frederici I*, 7.1–7.129. For Barbarossa as meaning 'red beard', see Canduci, *Triumph*, p. 261. For an overview of Frederick's first two tours, the focus of this chapter, see Fuhrmann, *Germany*, pp. 142–49.

facts. Frederick had subdued northern Italy and returned home, apparently satisfied with his actions and accomplishments.

Barbarossa in Italy, According To Otto of Freising

A contemporary gilded bronze bust of Frederick Barbarossa is reputed to be a good likeness.³⁴ According to Otto of Freising, Barbarossa wore his hair short 'out of respect for the empire';³⁵ Frederick consciously adopted a visual persona to present himself as a Roman emperor.³⁶

According to Otto of Freising, a more detailed outline of Barbarossa's tour through northern Italy is of value for understanding the viewpoint from which Otto writes and to comprehend Frederick's later actions, especially as it provides motives for his anger against Milan. I will start with Frederick's arrival at Roncaglia. Frederick stayed for five days (30 November–6 December 1154) and held a diet there 'with the princes, consuls, and elders of almost all the cities.'³⁷ The King also heard complaints. The consuls of Milan were expected to guide Frederick as he passed through the Milanese territory and to arrange suitable places for encampments for the King and his army.³⁸

After Frederick left Roncaglia he pitched camp in the territory of the Milanese. Frederick became angry about three things: first the consuls conducted Frederick through wastelands where the army were not able to obtain any provisions; secondly a heavy downpour of rain exacerbated the army's discomfit; and thirdly Frederick was insulted by the destitution of the cities destroyed by the Milanese, which had not been rebuilt. They 'were even trying to bribe and to corrupt his noble and hitherto untarnished spirit to acquiesce in their iniquity.'³⁹ Frederick advanced to the Ticino River where

34 Frederick Barbarossa, gilded bronze head, c.1160, used as a reliquary in Cappenberg Abbey, Stiftskirche Cappenberg, D 59379 Selm. See image in L. Olson, *Early Middle Ages*, illus. 34, p. 201.

35 '[P]ro reverentia imperii', Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 4.86, p. 708, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, p. 331. Sidonius Apollinaris, when he writes '*sicut mos gentis est*' ('according to national fashion'), is referring to Theoderic II, King of the Visigoths (r. 453–466), as noted by Anderson in Sidonius Apollinaris, *Poems and Letters*, vol. 1, letter 2, 1–2, pp. 334–337. Lynette Olson suspects that Rahewin mistakenly believed that Sidonius Apollinaris meant Theoderic the Ostrogoth, because the latter was far better known throughout the Middle Ages: pers. comm., 28 May 2017.

36 A fine concise summary contributed by Robert Houghton.

37 '[U]t principe adveniente plurime civitates, oppida, castella', Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.16, p. 312, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, p. 129.

38 Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.16, p. 314. See in Mierow, *Deeds*, pp. 130–31.

39 '[E]tiam ad iniquitatis illorum assensum ipsius nobilem et incorruptum hactenus animum pecunia inclinare ac corrumpere satagebant': Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.18, p. 314, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, p. 131.

he seized two wooden bridges, which the Milanese had built to attack Pavia and Novara, crossed them with his army and then burnt them. Frederick and his men celebrated Christmas in the camp with great rejoicing about their victories.⁴⁰ It was fitting to celebrate his joy during that important Christian feast. The King's victories confirmed him in God's favour.

At the beginning of 1155 Frederick proceeded through Vercelli and Turin, crossed the Po there, and marched towards Pavia. On his way there Frederick burned the two towns of Chieri and Asti and conquered Tortona, an ally of Milan. Frederick began the siege of Milan in February 1155 after Ash Wednesday in the first week of Lent, at the beginning of the period of penance, and ended between 10 and 16 April, when the citizens surrendered.⁴¹ According to Otto of Freising,

[A]fter the victory was won, the king was invited by the people of Pavia to their city, that they might give him a triumph [*triumphum*]. And there, on the Sunday on which the *Iubilate* is sung, in the church of St. Michael, on the site of the ancient palace of the Lombard kings, he was crowned with much rejoicing on the part of the citizens.⁴²

Here Otto of Freising and Barbarossa linked the very Roman imperial tradition of the triumph with Lombard custom.⁴³ Barbarossa was reputedly crowned at the Lombard palace at Pavia with the Iron Crown of the Lombards, the traditional crown of the kings of Italy since its association with Theodelinda (c.570-628), Queen of the Lombards. She married the Lombard King Authari (r. 584-590) and on his death in 590 gave advice on the selection of the next king, Agilulf (r. 590-616), whom she took as her second husband.⁴⁴ Barbarossa stayed three days at Pavia 'with great joy

40 Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.18-2.19, pp. 314-316, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, pp. 131-32.

41 Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.20-2.23, 2.27, pp. 326, 334-36, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, pp. 132-36, 141-42.

42 '*Peracta victoria rex a Papiensibus ad ipsorum civitatem triumphum sibi exhibituris invitatur, ibique ea dominica qua Iubilate canitur in ecclesia sancti Michaelis, ubi antiquum regum Longobardorum palatium fuit, cum multo civium tripudio coronatur*', Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.29, p. 336, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, p. 142. According to Schmale, the most probable date for the coronation was Sunday, 24 April: Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, p. 337n69.

43 I am indebted here to Robert Houghton for noting the melding of the two traditions at that time.

44 Paul the Deacon, *Historia*, 3.30, 3.35, 4.8-4.9, trans. Foulke, *History*, 3.30, pp. 137-141; 3.35, pp. 149-150; 4.8-4.9, pp. 155-157. See also Bárány, *Die eiserne*; Skinner, pp. 55-58; Wood, *Modern Origins*, p. 124.

and large outlay on the part of the city.⁴⁵ Frederick bypassed Piacenza, celebrated Whitsunday near Bologna on 15 May, crossed the Appennines, and travelled through Tuscany. He instructed the Pisans to fit out ships against William of Sicily.

Otto of Freising describes with great enthusiasm Frederick's approach to St Peter's in preparation for his imperial coronation:

After the sun had risen, and at the end of the first hour, Pope Hadrian led the way with the cardinals and the clergy and awaited the prince's arrival on the steps; the latter broke camp and fully armed descended the slope of Monte Mario with his men and entered the Leonine city.⁴⁶

The descent from the Monte Mario of Frederick and his troops in full armour displayed his power in action and right of conquest. Otto of Freising, recalling the Song of Songs and Maccabees, reports that the soldiers marching in order were '[t]errible as an army with banners [...]. The sun shone upon the shields of gold, and the mountains glowed [in their reflection].'⁴⁷ Otto of Freising then describes the meeting between Frederick and Pope Hadrian.

[T]he prince, coming to the steps of the church, was received with all honour by the supreme pontiff and led to the tomb [...] of the blessed Peter. [A]fter the solemnities of the Mass had been celebrated by the pope himself, the king [...] received the crown of the empire [...]. All who were present acclaimed him with great joy, and glorified God'.⁴⁸

According to Otto of Freising the pope led the emperor to the church, following in the tradition of Pippin and Pope Stephen II. Not all those present were enamoured with the imperial coronation. It was necessary to guard

45 '[C]um magna civitatis letitia et impensa', Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.29, pp. 336-38, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, 2.27, p. 142.

46 'Sole orto, transacta iam prima hora, precedente cum cardinalibus et clericis summo pontifice Adriano eiusque adventum in gradibus prestolante, rex castra movens, armatus cum suis per declivum montis Gaudii descendens, ea porta [...] Leoninam urbem [...] intravit', Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.34, p. 352, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, p. 150. Mierow confirms that 'declivum montis Gaudii' is indeed the slope of Monte Mario. That slope is the same Monte Mario from which the remains of Crescentius and his companions were displayed on Otto III's second journey to Italy.

47 'Terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinate' (Song of Solomon 6.4); 'Refulsit sol in clipeos aureos, et resplenduerunt montes ab eis' (I Maccabees 6:39). See Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.34, p. 352, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, p. 150.

48 Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.34, p. 354, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, p. 150.

the entrance to Rome so that 'the rejoicing over the ceremony might not be interrupted by the frenzied population.' Frederick, now emperor, 'wearing the crown and mounted upon [a horse covered with elaborately decorated fittings] [...], rode alone, [everyone else] [...] going on foot.'⁴⁹

The Roman population was enraged because, among other matters, Frederick had received the imperial crown without their assent and ordered the execution of Arnold of Brescia, a monk who preached against the power of the church.⁵⁰ Frederick and his men spent the rest of his coronation day fighting the citizens of Rome. According to Otto of Freising almost one thousand Romans were killed, six hundred taken captive, and many wounded.⁵¹ Otto counted the day's work a magnificent triumph. Shortly afterwards several of Frederick's men fell sick, probably from malaria. Many could not continue. The emperor returned home through Spoleto, Verona, Trento, Bolzano, and Brixen in September 1155.⁵²

What Really Happened on Barbarossa's First Tour of Italy

How successful was Frederick's first visit into Italy? Not as effective as his uncle generally presents. From one point of view Frederick could be considered to have taken a measured approach. The king had intended to pass through Lombardy and concentrate on his proposed coronation as Emperor by the pope and to do battle with the King of Sicily. When events forced him to deal with the Milanese, he prudently by-passed Milan itself, keeping as far west as he could so that he eventually crossed the river Po near Turin. After the citizens of Chieri and Asti vacated the towns, Frederick and the army looted and then destroyed them. He retraced his steps and wisely chose to lay siege to Tortona, an ally of Milan, instead of Milan itself.⁵³

However, the attempt to reduce Lombardy had utterly failed. The choice of Tortona rather than Milan, as an example to the Lombard towns, could be seen as a sign of weakness in the *imperium* because the destruction of only Tortona after two months of siege was a very limited victory. The actual opponent, Milan, was little affected. Frederick turned southwards and avoided Piacenza, without a complete loss of face. He had spent too long at Tortona; he no longer had time to settle accounts with the Normans on

49 Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.34, p. 354, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, pp. 150-51

50 Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.30, pp. 338-42, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, p. 143-44.

51 Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.33, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, p. 151.

52 Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.33, 2.35, 2.37, 2.40, 2.43, pp. 354, 358-360, 362-364, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, pp. 151-54, 155, 159.

53 Munz, *Frederick Barbarossa*, pp. 73-75.

this expedition. He left behind a Milan 'untouched, powerful, and in full opposition'.⁵⁴ Even Otto of Freising could not avoid reporting that Frederick was forced to compensate the bishops of Trento and Brixen for the ravages that his army had inflicted on 'certain holy places' during his descent into Italy.⁵⁵ The only victor appeared to be King William of Sicily.

My assessment is that Frederick behaved both angrily and prudently. He spent too long at Tortona on a pointless task. However, he then avoided Milan which the number of his troops and the restricted timeframe meant he could not conquer. He wisely avoided Milan and advanced to Pavia. Barbarossa primed his chronicler, Otto of Freising, to present a more flattering view of events. Frederick's second tour of Italy, like Otto III's, became a revenge expedition.

What Really Happened on Barbarossa's Second Tour of Italy

The detailed examination of Frederick's first visit in this chapter laid the groundwork for a review of his treatment of Milan during his second visit to Italy, when he destroyed a large part of Milan. Recall that his first visit and all that befell him at that time laid the groundwork for his attitudes and actions in his second visit. After a long siege against Milan that he initiated in the spring of 1161, Frederick began to gain the upper hand. When the citizens were stretched to breaking point, the Emperor sent six of the captured Milanese back to their city after certain mutilations. Five of these he blinded, the sixth lost his nose but retained his eyes and was able to lead his compatriots to Milan – as a warning to the citizens there. In March 1162 Barbarossa systematically demolished much of the city within a week of its surrender, leaving part of the ancient metropolis standing.⁵⁶

Certain Lombard cities, including Lodi, Cremona, and Pavia, long-time enemies of Milan, remained faithful to Frederick.⁵⁷ Despite the ravages by the Emperor and his allies the 'Milanese side' and the 'Barbarossa side' managed to come together soon afterwards in 1176 to sign the pacts of the

54 Mierow, *Deeds*, p. 142n53. See also Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.30, p. 338n72.

55 '[P]er quosdam religiosos', Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.12, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, pp. 124-25.

56 Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 3.33-3.52, pp. 464-502, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, pp. 206-25. See also Munz, *Frederick Barbarossa*, pp. 181-83; M. Pacaut, *Frederick Barbarossa*, pp. 99-100. For memories of the destruction of Milan over the centuries, see the essays written from German and Italian viewpoints in Silanos and Sprenger (eds.), *La distruzione*.

57 Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 3.51, 4.7, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, 4.7, pp. 222-23, 238. See also Munz, *Frederick Barbarossa*, pp. 184-185.

Lombard League, a treaty that was effective only in the short term because the cities, bishops and local nobles came to realise that their accumulated and long-standing rights were being eroded.⁵⁸

A brief discussion of the siege and its aftermath is salutary. The Emperor met delegations from the city at Lodi, who asked for pardon. He allowed the residents to leave before the destruction of their city, showing that he was willing to spare repentant citizens. He allocated them places to live outside of but close to Milan, albeit that these were unfortified.⁵⁹ Those events demonstrate that Frederick was willing to show mercy if his subjects obeyed him and showed proper remorse. That is, although he acted cruelly and imposed heavy penalties he did not intend to destroy the citizens. I now return to examine the ceremony of *adventus*, the legacy of Pippin and the rights of the king in Italy under Frederick Barbarossa.

Imperial Consciousness Remade

Adventus Rearranged and the Legacy of Pippin Questioned

Four hundred years after Pippin's submission to Pope Stephen II by leading his horse, King Frederick and Pope Hadrian replicated a similar display that did not proceed so smoothly. Otto of Freising omitted the episode. King Frederick received Pope Hadrian IV at the royal tent on the day scheduled for the king's coronation (17 June 1155). After kissing the pope's feet, Frederick expected to receive the traditional kiss of peace. However, Frederick had declined to hold the Pope's stirrup (or possibly held the left instead of the right stirrup) while leading him to the tent. Hadrian refused to give him the kiss until that protocol had been followed. Frederick hesitated, and Hadrian withdrew.⁶⁰ Do we see here a shift in the relationship between the ruler and the pope at this interchange, as David Warner suggests, that is, the pope considered that the emperor had become the pope's vassal rather than demonstrating a simple matter of humility?⁶¹ Eventually Frederick held the stirrup, and the pope returned the kiss. The next day Frederick's

⁵⁸ Mierow, *Deeds*, p. 238.

⁵⁹ Munz, *Frederick Barbarossa*, pp. 181–83; Pacaut, *Frederick Barbarossa*, pp. 99–100.

⁶⁰ Otto of Freising omits this initial set-back for Frederick: Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 2.34, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, pp. 150–51. The following early source gives a good summary: Comyn, *History*, p. 231. See also Freed, *Frederick Barbarossa*, pp. 141–144.

⁶¹ Warner, 'Rituals, Kingship', p. 1211.

coronation proceeded, and the pope and the king moved forward to the Vatican.⁶² Harmony was restored, at least on that occasion.

The Rights of the King in Italy Overturned

A further significant change had taken place since the time of Otto III regarding the rights of the king in Italy. By the middle of the twelfth century the towns of Lombardy had usurped them. Frederick did not object to this during his first visit to Italy. His objection arose later. Otto of Freising explains that when the king banned the Milanese in 1155, he took from them all but one of the rights that they had exercised to that date. Those rights included coining, levying customs, and exercising general secular jurisdiction. Barbarossa removed the right to mint from the Milanese and bestowed it on the Cremonese. During those long periods in which the king-emperor was not in Italy, the use of those rights was vested in other authorities.⁶³ Rahewin, the Continuator of Otto of Freising's *Gesta*, specified the emperor's '*regalia*' as Barbarossa's authority over:

[D]ukedoms, marches, counties, consulates, mints, market tolls, forage tax, wagon tolls, gate tolls, transit tolls, mills, fisheries, bridges, all the use accruing from running water, and the payment of an annual tax, not only on the land, but also on their own persons.⁶⁴

Frederick could also appoint officials. The use of the *regalia* by the Milanese had not been illegal on Frederick's first visit to Italy, but the people had been 'disloyal to the emperor and had to be punished'.⁶⁵

The rights of the kings in Italy changed between Otto III's and Frederick Barbarossa's sojourns. Suffice it to say that whereas Otto III entrusted his bishops with the right to administer justice and to appoint to offices when he was absent from Italy, Frederick withdrew those rights at the time of his second tour to Italy.

On his second visit Frederick put forward a much more extensive understanding of the *regalia*. In his changed view, an 'extensive range

62 Comyn, *History*, p. 231.

63 Koeppler, 'Frederick Barbarossa', 577-607, p. 582.

64 '[D]ucatus, marchias, comitatus, consulates, monetas, thelonea, fodrum, vectigalia, portus, pedatica, molendina, piscarias, pontes omnemque utilitatem ex decursu fluminum provenientem, nec de terra tantum verum etiam de suis propriis capitibus census annui redditionem', Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 4.7, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, p. 238.

65 Koeppler, 'Frederick Barbarossa', p. 582. See also Munz, *Frederick Barbarossa*, p. 70.

of jurisdictional and fiscal rights attached to the imperial crown. With the backing of the Roman lawyers at Bologna, they were given a wide interpretation at the second diet of Roncaglia in 1158, and virtually all civil administration was deemed to be derived from, and [...] subject to, imperial authority.⁶⁶ The changes in society of the eleventh century were noted by Archbishop Eberhard of Bamberg (d. 1170), looking back from a later generation, who recognised as novel the Emperor's interpretation of his *regalia*. He looked back nostalgically to the tenth century when the rights of the Ottos as king-emperors were undoubtedly accepted:

The records of another time are consulted, the imperial titles are read perhaps in the form which suited that age and the goodness as well as the simplicity of those times [...]. But now all things are changed.⁶⁷

Pope Hadrian IV sent the four cardinals who were most likely to receive a sympathetic hearing to Frederick to present the church's point of view, 'in the (probably forlorn) hope that some accommodation could be reached without abandoning the whole Italian church to the emperor's interpretation of his *regalia*', but they were not able to heal the breach at that time.⁶⁸ Barbarossa had to confront circumstances that Otto III had well under his control. Otto III could declare a *renovatio imperii Romanorum* ('revival of the Roman empire') in a charter issued from Rome on 28 April 998.⁶⁹ In addition Otto III had been able to appoint a pope in harmony with his aims and activities (Pope Sylvester II) and he was secure in the feudal rights that were owed to him as king/emperor.

Frederick's situation was not nearly as secure. At the second Diet of Roncaglia in 1158 he had to re-enact the rights that he had initially enacted at the first Diet of Roncaglia in 1154, thereby showing that they were still not secured. Although Frederick issued constitutions after Roncaglia (1158), in reiterating those rights his concerns were only briefly allayed. A compromise between Frederick and the cities of the Lombard League was only finally

66 A. J. Duggan, '*Totius christianitatis caput*', pp. 135-36. For background to the events at Roncaglia at the second diet, see B. S. Pullan, ed., *Sources*, pp. 179-185.

67 '*Annales quandoque revolvuntur, apices imperiales recitantur forte in ea forma, quae illi etati et tam bonitati quam simplicitati temporum illorum competeat [...]. Nunc vero mutata sunt omnia*', Otto von Freising and Rahewin, *Cronica*, 4.22, pp. 560-62, trans. Mierow, *Deeds*, 4.22, p. 257.

68 Duggan, '*Totius christianitatis caput*', p. 135. The cardinals were Octavian of Cecilia, Henry of SS. Nereo e Achilleo, William of S. Pietro in Vincoli and Guido of Crema: *ibid.* pp. 135-36.

69 Otto III, *Diplomata*, no. 285, p. 710.

reached in June 1183 at the Peace of Konstanz, which specified the privileges of the emperor and his subjects.⁷⁰

Conclusion

Otto III delivered his final speech to the Romans from the top of one of the towers at Rome. Lamenting the failure of his revived Roman empire (*renovatio imperii Romanorum*), the emperor delivered the following speech as reported by the tenth-century German chronicler Thangmar:⁷¹

Are you not my Romans? Because of you, I abandoned my homeland and kin. For love of you, I cast off my Saxons and all of the Germans, my own blood. I led you to distant regions of our empire, where your fathers never set foot, even when they held the world in subjection. All of this, that I might spread your name and glory to the ends of the earth. I adopted you as sons and favoured you above all others. For your sake, as you were placed above everyone else, I was universally hated and resented.⁷²

Thangmar appears to be presenting Otto as a saviour of Rome somewhat in the manner of some long-past Roman emperor, who claimed to have saved

⁷⁰ Pullan, ed., *Sources*, pp. 179, 183–90.

⁷¹ Thangmar may have had access to now lost accounts of the reported speeches from Roman history that exhorted the Roman people (for example Augustus or Aurelian in the later third century), Hoyos, pers. comm. 4 October 2018. See also the speech that Livy attributes to Scipio, in which Scipio rails against the ungratefulness of the Romans: 'Tribunes of the plebs, and you, Quirites, this is the anniversary of the day on which I fought with success and good fortune a pitched battle against Hannibal and the Carthaginians. It is therefore only right and fitting that on this day all pleas and actions should be suspended. I am going at once to the Capitol and the Citadel to make my devotions to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, and Juno and Minerva and all the other tutelary deities of the Capitol and the Citadel, and to offer up thanksgivings to them for having given me as on this day the wisdom and the strength to do the Republic exceptional service. Those of you, Quirites, who are at liberty to do so, come with me. You have always from my seventeenth year down to this period of my old age advanced me to honours before I was of the age for them, and I have always forestalled your honours by my services; then pray now to the gods that you may always have leaders like me.' Livy, *History*, 38.51.

⁷² 'Vosne estis mei Romani? Propter vos quidem meam patriam propinquos quoque reliqui. Amore vestro meos Saxones et cunctos Theotiscos, sanguinem meum, proieci; vos in remotas partes nostri imperii adduxi, quo patres vestri, cum Orbem ditone premerent, numquam pedem posuerunt; scilicet ut nomen vestrum et gloriam ad fines usque dilatarem; vos filios adoptavi, vos cunctis praetuli. Causa vestra, dum vos omnibus proposui, universorum in me invidiam et odium commovi.' Thangmar, *Vita Bernwardi*, p. 770, trans. D. A. Warner, 'Ideals', p. 17.

Rome. What Otto might have intended by the phrase *renovatio imperii Romanorum* has been the subject of much debate.⁷³ The same charter in which the phrase occurs also records the decapitation and hanging of Crescentius. It is reasonable to conclude that Otto connected the phrase with his victory over Crescentius.

Other emperors, including Frederick Barbarossa one hundred and fifty years later, could not conceive of 'identification with the degenerates, who inhabited the holy city'.⁷⁴ A quotation from David Warner about Otto III can be applied equally well to Frederick:

Whatever may remain of *Renovatio* [...], one might argue that nothing would have more clearly bound Otto to his Roman predecessors than those occasions when, in the manner of an ancient triumph, he trampled his enemy in the dust rather than forgiving him.⁷⁵

Otto III and Frederick had this in common: their politics were characterised by a combination of rebelliousness and insecurity. Otto and Frederick knew that their only title to rule over Italy was based on their conquest of the kingdom, which was never an ongoing certainty.⁷⁶ Warner reminds us of the image from the early sixth century on the *Barberini Diptych* 'of a mounted emperor looming over barbarians, crouched in supplication below him'.⁷⁷ Although *clementia* was an ancient Roman virtue adopted by sacral Christian kings and in theory upheld by Otto III and Frederick Barbarossa, 'the ritualised triumphs of Roman Antiquity' still held sway.⁷⁸

The actions of Otto III and Frederick Barbarossa in their early tours of Italy were vindictive and cruel and they may have committed homicide. However, they did not seek to destroy their people and their culture. The emperors wanted subjects who would obey and revere them. When their followers failed in those two matters, the rulers did horrifying things to them.

73 Warner, 'Ideals', p. 16; Warner, *Ottonian Germany*, pp. 12–13.

74 Godman, *Transmontani*, p. 213.

75 Warner, 'Ideals', p. 18.

76 Godman, *Transmontani*, p. 213. See also Wickham, 'Getting Justice', pp. 103–7.

77 Warner, 'Ideals', p. 18. See also M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory*.

78 Warner, 'Ideals', p. 18.

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