3. THE DEEDS OF THE BISHOPS OF HALBERSTADT

Germans played an important, albeit subsidiary, role in a crusade that was largely a northern French and Venetian undertaking and whose army was under the command of Boniface of Montferrat, a marquis from Italy’s Piedmont.¹ Like the author of the DC, most of the crusade’s German members, such as Count Berthold of Katzenellenbogen² and Abbot Martin of Pairis,³ came from the western lands of the Upper and Middle Rhine; the German east produced only one notable leader, Conrad of Krosigk, bishop of Halberstadt in Saxony, the highest ranking German cleric to travel with the army, and the source for and central character within the Anonymous of Halberstadt’s crusade story.⁴

Although Germans could not have formed more than ten percent of the crusade host, they produced three of the crusade’s more valuable second-rank sources: the already-noted Hystoria Constantinopolitana and Devastatio Constantinopolitana, as well as the Anonymous of Halberstadt’s account. This last-mentioned work comprises a major portion of the final pages of the Gesta episcoporum Halberstadiensium (hereafter GeH), or The Deeds of the Bishops of Halberstadt.⁵

¹ Longnon, Compagnons, 242-250, deals with known crusaders from the empire’s Germanic lands.
² We know almost nothing about Count Berthold’s involvement in the crusade. He is mentioned in passing in Villehardouin, Conquête, 1:74 and 2:86, secs. 74 and 279; the DC; and possibly in Gunther of Pairis’s HC (Orth, 154; Andrea, Capture, 105 and 170, note 211). Longnon, Compagnons, 244-245.
³ The hero of Gunther of Pairis’s HC; Longnon, Compagnons, 249-250.
⁴ Andrea, “Conrad,” 11-91, studies the life and career of this man before, during, and after his tenure as bishop of Halberstadt.
⁵ The GeH is edited by Ludwig Weiland in the MGH SS., 23:73-123. The portions translated here appear on pages 116-121. Paul Riant, Exuviae, 1:10-21, excerpted parts of the Anonymous’s account, beginning with the rubric “The Pilgrimage to Greece” and continuing down through the description of the relics and other treasures that Conrad brought back to Halberstadt. Riant titled the excerpt De peregrinatione in Greciam et adventu reliquiarum de Grecia libellus (The Little Book on the Pilgrimage to Greece and the Arrival of Relics from Greece) and argued that this little book is complete in itself and should, therefore, be separated from the rest of the GeH: 1:lv. I disagree. This crusade account
The *GeH* traces the fortunes of the bishops of Halberstadt from 780 to 1209. The last quarter of the chronicle covers the troubled pontificates of Bishop Gardolf (r. 1193-1201) and his kinsman and successor Conrad of Krosigk (r. 1202-1208), and of the two, Bishop Conrad plays the larger role. Several pieces of evidence point to the inescapable conclusion that this last segment of the *GeH* that deals with Gardolf and Conrad was composed in or around 1209\(^6\) as a single entity by a single author and under the direction and possibly even the supervision of the retired Conrad of Krosigk. This evidence includes several glaring chronological errors regarding well-known events in the pontificate of Bishop Gardolf,\(^7\) the prominence of Bishop Conrad’s role in these final pages, the overall apologetical nature of this segment of the *GeH*, insofar as it is a defense of Conrad’s actions as bishop, and the abrupt manner in which the chronicle ends once Conrad has retired into a monastery and his successor has been chosen.

We know nothing about the anonymous chronicler whom Bishop Conrad had chosen to tell his story and that of his predecessor. All we can say is that, judging by his literary style, the author had benefited from a good education. It also appears likely that he was a cleric and was associated with the cathedral of Halberstadt. Whoever he was, the Anonymous of Halberstadt did not focus on the crusade *per se*. Rather, the crusade provided him with a convenient background against which to place his main characters—Bishop Conrad and the sacred relics he brought back from the East.

The major purpose of the anonymous chronicler’s labors was to create an *apologia* for Bishop Conrad of Krosigk, who ended a troubled seven-year pontificate by seeking sanctuary in the Cistercian monastery of Sittichenbach, despite the refusal of two papal legates to grant him license to do so.\(^8\) As such, the unnamed author consistently and coherently develops the theme throughout his story that Bishop Conrad is a righteous individual whose acts of conscience often result in his unwarranted persecution.\(^9\)

---

\(^{6}\) On this work’s date of composition, see Andrea, “Conrad,” 63, note 220, and “Cistercian,” 32, note 124.

\(^{7}\) Andrea, “Conrad,” 17, note 29, and 24-25, note 63.

\(^{8}\) Ibid., 60-63.

\(^{9}\) Andrea, “Conrad,” 63-69, and “Cistercian,” 32-34.