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IMAGES OF THE EMPEROR FREDERICK II IN THE UNIVERSAL CHRONICLE OF JANSEN ENIKEL.

by Graeme Dunphy - Stirling and Regensburg

The death of the Emperor Frederick II in 1250 marked a turning point in German affairs.¹ When in 1212 the young King of Sicily had taken Germany by storm, driving north his Welf rival Otto IV of Brunswick and securing the support of the German princes, it had seemed that a new golden age had begun. Walther von der Vogelweide at last received his *lêhen*, and praised his new patron as *der edel künec, der milte künec*. In Aachen a crusade was proclaimed for the liberation of Jerusalem. Comparisons were made with the Emperor's grandfather, Frederick Barbarossa. The house of Hohenstaufen was again in the ascendancy. But these high expectations were always unrealistic. Frederick's crusading vows became a thorn in his flesh; his enemies held him to them, but obstructed him as he sought to fulfil them. Much of his energy was taken up in a dual struggle against insurgency in his restive Lombard states, and against the bitter invective of the papal propagandists. Although Innocent III had been the prime sponsor of the young Emperor, Honorius III became alarmed at the prospect of a union of the crowns of Sicily and the Empire, and Gregory IX and Innocent IV became determined to break the power of the Hohenstaufen dynasty once and for all. The popes did not have it all their own way. For the most part, the German princes remained loyal, pleased to have an emperor who interfered so little in their affairs. Frederick's policy of diplomacy and compromise attracted more sympathy than that of the Pope who refused to meet and treat with him. His early death, however, left his son Conrad IV in a weak position from which he was unable to recover, and within twenty years the last Hohenstaufen ruler was deposed.

The impact of these events on the intellectual climate in Germany was immense. After Frederick's death, there was an upsurge in apocalyptic preaching, and much of the literature of the period was diffused with a sense of nostalgia. It is in this light that we must read the account of the life of Frederick II which is offered by the Viennese patrician, Jansen Enikel.² Enikel's Universal Chronicle ('Weltchronik') recounts the history of the world from Adam to Frederick. It was written about

¹ Thomas Curtis van Cleve, *The Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen: Immutator Mundi*, Oxford 1972; David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor*, London 1988.

² Text and commentary: Strauch, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Deutsche Chroniken III*, 1900.

1272,³ just four years after the death of Conradin, the last of the Staufen line. Enikel was probably born in the 1230s, and his own life-span exactly coincided with the years of Hohenstaufen decline. His account of Frederick's life has limited value as history, but casts an interesting sidelight on the confusion of impressions which had gathered in popular lore. In keeping with the rest of his chronicle, it is anecdotal, falling naturally into ten sections of differing lengths, most of which are to some extent self-contained units. Together, these fill over thirteen hundred lines, making Frederick Enikel's most comprehensively treated post-biblical protagonist; only Moses and David are dealt with at greater length.

1. Frederick becomes Emperor (27653-28002).

The dazzling display of daring and diplomacy by which the young King Frederick suddenly appeared in Germany to claim his throne captured the romantic imagination. Riding north from Italy in 1212 to receive the German crown which had been offered to him, Frederick was almost captured by pro-Welf Milanese troops, and escaped only by mounting an unsaddled horse and swimming a river. He reached Constance just three hours before Otto and persuaded its citizens to fortify the bridge against the Welf emperor. There he gathered support, and was soon strong enough to take to the field. Within weeks, Otto had withdrawn to Cologne. Frederick was crowned in 1215.

Without doubt, the events of 1212 make exciting reading. As Jansen Enikel tells the tale, however, it is the Duke of Austria who takes most of the credit. Enikel's version may be summarized thus:

Otto loved Gold. Duke Leopold of Austria came to him with a gift of 200 Marks, but the Emperor wanted more. After an angry exchange, Leopold returned to Austria. He sent his retainer Anselm of Justingen to fetch the child-emperor Frederick. Anselm brought the boy to Austria in a basket on his back. Duke Leopold now gave Frederick 400 Marks. The Duke of Bavaria joined them, and they formed an army.⁴ Otto came against them, and the two armies camped on opposite sides of a stream.⁵ Otto's spies told him the

³ Leopold Hellmuth, "Zur Entstehungszeit der Weltchronik des Jans Enikel", in: *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur mit Geographie* 29 (1985). Previously, scholars had assumed a slightly later date, usually around 1280.

⁴ Enikel writes: *ein schoenez her, / daz fuort er mit im zuo dem mer* (27771f). If the reference is to the North Sea, it could mean that Frederick led his army triumphantly northwards, but it could equally refer to the Mediterranean, as there is a confusing mention of Apulia in 27779. There appears to be an inference that the army first went south, but 27923 makes it clear that the battle did not take place there. It is difficult to know exactly how Enikel intends us to understand this.

⁵ Liebertz-Grün links the scene with the Battle of Bouvines, but the confrontation at Constance is closer, even though in the end no battle actually took place there. See: Ursula Liebertz-Grün, *Das andere Mittelalter. Erzählte Geschichtserkenntnis um*

size of the German army, and he believed he could defeat it. However, while Otto was riding with the Abbot of Fulda, the Abbot's horse bit Otto's. Otto scolded the Abbot, who, offended, went over to Frederick's side, taking the bishops with him. This tipped the balance. When the Germans crossed to engage the enemy in battle, they won, and Otto withdrew to his castle.⁶ However, many of the princes still did not wish to elect Frederick as Emperor, and there was a controversy. Frederick came with an army to the palace where they were meeting, and compelled them by force of arms.

In this account we can recognize much of the action as we know it from other sources. In particular, the danger of Frederick's journey north, the position of the armies on opposite sides of the water at Constance, the growing support for Frederick, including decisive support from the Church, and Otto's sudden withdrawal to Cologne. That Enikel should achieve this degree of accuracy in describing events twenty years before his birth is interesting, and points to a written source. More interesting still are those details in which the narrative differs from the actual events.

The most striking element of Enikel's account is the role of Duke Leopold VI, the Glorious. Leopold's defection from Otto in 1211 is known; he had attended Otto's court in February 1209, but did not join him on the subsequent journey to Italy on which Otto was excommunicated for his attack on Frederick's Sicily. Leopold resented the sums of money which Otto was demanding to finance his campaign, and in September 1211 he joined a meeting of princes at Nuremberg, where Frederick was elected as king and invited to come to Germany.⁷ Enikel is therefore correct in making money an issue in Leopold's breach with Otto, and he is correct to show Leopold as one of the figures involved in Frederick's election, but he overstates the case when he would have us believe that Leopold acted unilaterally, with the other princes joining him later. A crucial innovation of Enikel's here is to make Anselm of Justingen a *diensman* of Leopold. Anselm was an important negotiator for the German anti-Welf faction. In 1212 he travelled to Palermo with the offer of the imperial crown⁸, and in that sense it might be said that he "brought" Frederick to Germany. But Anselm was Swabian, not Austrian. The idea that he was Leopold's retainer would have sounded credible, however, in view of the fact that he later sought protection from Leopold's successor.⁹

1300. Studien zu Ottokar von Steiermark, Jans Enikel, Seifried Helbling, Munich 1984; (= Forschungen zur Geschichte der älteren deutschen Literatur 5), p. 97.

⁶ The *burc* (27919) could be Brunswick, as Strauch (note 2) imagines (p. 554, nt.2), but since the reference is to the immediate aftermath of the battle, Cologne is more likely.

⁷ A.W.A.Leeper, A History of Medieval Austria, Oxford 1941, p.296.

⁸ Van Cleve (note 1), pp.75, 79.

⁹ Van Cleve (note 1), p. 393.

The detail that Anselm carried Frederick to Austria in a basket (*krehse*, 27758) is rather appealing.¹⁰ In 1212, Frederick was seventeen years of age. This made him young enough to attract the epithet *puer Apuliae*, which he encouraged, as it lent romance to his cause. There is some evidence to suggest that in the years 1212-15 he styled himself as a new Charlemagne¹¹, a figure of destiny, and the image of the victorious boy-king fitted with this. Enikel, however, exaggerates this, making him a small child who can be carried in a basket on a man's back. It is interesting that the Bavarian continuation of the 'Kaiserchronik'¹² speaks several times of *daz chint von Pülle* (442 etc.), but still regards him as old enough to be an active participant:

der chaiser [= Otto] hete groezer chraft,
doch wart daz chint sigehaft. (447f.)

Enikel's version adds its own layer of romance, by heightening the sense that the journey was a dangerous one with the child being smuggled through enemy lines, but it also has the effect of taking away from Frederick any claim that he personally effected a brilliant campaign. That Anselm is supposed have taken the child to Austria, when in fact Frederick's route was much further west, is also significant. The young Emperor is to be seen as the beneficiary of the patronage of the Duke of Austria.

The characterization of Otto is interesting. Walther also thought him mean. The 200 Marks which Leopold brought him was not a vast amount of money for a prince (Frederick was given 20,000 Marks when he met with Louis, son of Philip of France¹³), but the actual sum involved is not important. When the two men argue, we are to understand that Otto is motivated by greed, whereas Leopold is motivated by honour. Less than 100 lines later Enikel has Leopold give 400 Marks, twice the amount, to Frederick, from which we understand that Leopold could, and indeed very well might have offered Otto more, if only the Emperor had not caused him offence.¹⁴ Otto is being used here as a foil against which Leopold appears virtuous. A similar character defect can be seen in Otto's confrontation with the Abbot of Fulda.

The story of the Abbot's horse raises another dimension which will become important, namely Frederick's relationship with the Church. It is indeed correct that the young Emperor relied heavily on the support

¹⁰ Strauch (note 2) offers some parallels; Enikel has the basket from his source. Strauch, p.550, nt.1.

¹¹ Abulafia (note 1), p.120.

¹² Added to the 'Kaiserchronik', probably in Regensburg in the mid 1260s, it devotes nearly 400 lines to Frederick II, and offers an interesting point of comparison with Enikel. MGH dt. Chron. I, p.393ff.

¹³ Abulafia (note 1), p. 119.

¹⁴ As Liebertz-Grün (note 5) has pointed out (p.97) the story also disguises the fact that Leopold extracted considerable sums from Frederick as the price of his loyalty.

of the German churchmen; in particular, the defection of the Bishop of Constance at the decisive moment was of the greatest significance. Abbot Henry III of Fulda was one of the many who supported first Otto, then Frederick. But this has to be seen in the context of the good relations which Frederick had with the Church anyway. He had, after all, travelled to Germany with the blessing of the Pope, whereas Otto was excommunicate. Frederick was the Church's champion, and when the Pope's choice was transferred to him from Otto, it was natural that the German bishops should also switch their allegiance. By the time Enikel came to write his chronicle, however, Frederick had fallen out of favour, and all this was forgotten. Instead, Enikel tells us that the support of the bishops came to Frederick by default.

The last element in this section, regarding the election, is puzzling. The image of Frederick hammering at the palace gate and intimidating the electoral princes with his troops tallies neither with Enikel's tale, in which he is a helpless child, nor with history, which records that Frederick was already elected before he ever left Sicily. Strauch suggests that this is a snippet from the life of Frederick's grandfather, Barbarossa, which Enikel has incorporated by mistake. (Barbarossa does not receive separate attention in Enikel's chronicle.) However, the story does not fit with the events of Barbarossa's election either. Barbarossa had a Welf mother and a Staufen father, and his accession was acclaimed from all sides as the best compromise available.¹⁵ Strauch's comment that the events of Barbarossa's election were perhaps not as amicable as historians have imagined, and that Enikel may offer a rare insight into this, rather begs the question.¹⁶ If Enikel could confuse the two emperors, how can he be taken seriously as a witness? The fact that Strauch can point to another late source, the 'Chronicon rhythmicum Austriacum' (c.1270), which records that Barbarossa won his election *per astuciam et magnam violenciam*, is not enough to confirm his view. It would be safer simply to say that Enikel has drawn an incongruous detail from an unknown source. The important point for our present study is that, wherever the story comes from, the effect of linking it to Frederick II is to show him as an emperor who ruled by force.

One interesting feature in the election narrative is that Enikel has the princes address the Emperor as *herr her Fridrich* (27976). Enikel uses this peculiar double title four times in all, and in three of these occurrences we find the same rather strange convention of doubling the letter R in the first *herr*, but not in the repetition¹⁷. What is significant

¹⁵ Peter Munz, *Friedrich Barbarossa: a Study in Medieval Politics*, London 1969, p.44ff.

¹⁶ Strauch (note 2), p.554, nt.3.

¹⁷ The same double title, *her, her künec* is found in Seifried Helbling (XV.779, etc). The spelling *herr her* is attested in a minority MS tradition. Editions: Karajan, *ZfdA* 4 (1844); Seemüller, Halle, 1886.

is the stature of the other three characters who receive the title: Menelaus (15649), Priamus (16839) and Racvan (14819); two Greek heroes and an *abgot* ! An equivalent female title also appears, used only of Greek goddesses: *frou frou Junô* (13951). For Frederick to be given the distinction of being the only figure outside the Trojan-war narrative to be so addressed may be deemed high praise indeed.

2. Frederick's first excommunication (28003-28036).

Frederick was the Church's champion for only a very short time. When Innocent III died in 1216, Frederick found his successor, Honorius III, far less sympathetic. Two issues in particular caused friction between them. One was the Pope's support for the rebel cities of Lombardy. The other was the fear that Frederick would attempt permanently to merge the Kingdom of Sicily with the Empire. But it was Gregory IX who brought the conflict to a head. He was a firm believer in the absolute sovereignty of the Papacy, and did not incline to negotiation or compromise. As soon as he was installed in 1227, he hatched a plan to wrest Sicily from the Hohenstaufen altogether. Frederick must be compelled to fulfil his vow to lead a crusade to the Holy Land, and in his absence, papal armies would invade his southern realm. Frederick was given an ultimatum; he must leave on his crusade that very year. When a sudden illness made this impossible, he was excommunicated. Frederick now had no option; as soon as he was well, he fortified Sicily as best he could, and left for the East. There he gave the most remarkable demonstration of his skills as a diplomat. Jerusalem was liberated without a battle being fought, and the Emperor was back on Italian soil before the papal armies had penetrated far into his territory. The "War of the Keys" had failed, and the Pope was forced to come to terms. The ban of excommunication was lifted in 1230. Enikel's narrative proceeds as follows:

When Frederick grew in strength, he drove the Pope from Rome, and all his bishops and cardinals with him. I do not know how it came about that Frederick was excommunicated, but this I do know: they were arguing about Sicily. The Pope wanted to take it, the Emperor wanted to stop him. Frederick butchered the Pope's men, priests had their tonsure cut, monks were killed and skinned.

This short passage is extremely important, for here, an agenda which has already been hinted at is made explicit. Frederick is to be seen as an enemy of the Church. In setting the context, Enikel's profession of ignorance is particularly effective. The ostensible reason for the excommunication is dismissed; the real issue was Sicily. However, in other details, what Enikel presents here is very much what the Papal propagandists would have wished. The Pope's flight from Rome is placed at the beginning, to imply (falsely) that Frederick was the aggressor in the first instance; in fact, it was not until 1244 that Gregory left Rome and set up court in Lyons. No mention is made of

Frederick's crusade¹⁸; the Church disparaged it because its successes were not won in battle. A series of atrocities are detailed; Frederick was frequently accused of harrying the Church, especially in Sicily, and towards the end of his life these stories became more extravagant, but there is no evidence that there was ever any truth behind them. The position adopted here stands in stark contrast to that of the Bavarian continuation of the 'Kaiserchronik', which puts the Church's hostility down to jealousy:

Die pfaffen wurden im gehaz,
si enwesten selbe umbe waz
wan daz er was ain frumer man. (785ff)

Frederick's crusade is described with approval:

daz hailic grab er wider gewan
dâ von den lîp verlos nie man (555f)

The comparison with the 'Kaiserchronik' makes it clear how partisan this section of Enikel's account really is.

3. Frederick and the assassins (28037-28104).

Enikel now enlarges upon Frederick's supposed reputation for brutality. He writes:

Frederick kept assassins [*stecher*], so that he would have revenge on his enemies. Princes and paupers alike were murdered. His method was to take two-year old boys and keep them in an underground room where they never saw the light of day. The children grew up thinking that he was God. They were told about the beauties of the world, and longed to see them. When Frederick wanted someone killed, he would bring a couple of the young men out and show them the sunlight. [*In one manuscript* : They were shown a beautiful garden.] When he promised not to send them underground again, they gladly did his bidding.

The story of the assassins is the only part of Enikel's material on Frederick to have received thorough scholarly attention. Hellmuth¹⁹ notes the close similarity between this material and the story of the Old Man of the Mountain which Marco Polo brought back from northern Persia several decades later. Loose parallels exist with a whole complex of narratives which have their origins in the Muslim sect of the *Nizārī Ismāʿīlīyah*, the Order of Assassins, who regularly disposed of prominent opponents by knife attacks. In Enikel's version, the religious

¹⁸ In the continuation of the 'Weltchronik' known as *Anhang II* (Strauch pp.577-96), a late addition possibly by Enikel himself, there is a prose insert which refers obliquely to the crusade (p.583): *Chaiser Fridreic wart verpannen von dem pabst Gregorio und ward über mer gesant von Christ gepürd tausent zwai hundert und acht und zwainczk jar.*

¹⁹ Leopold Hellmuth, *Die Assassinenlegende in der österreichischen Geschichtsdichtung des Mittelalters* (= Archiv für österreichische Geschichte Band 134), Vienna 1988.

motivation of the *Ismāʿīlī* is lost, but elements of their teaching are to be found. The garden which inspires Enikel's *stecher* is drawn from the Koran's description of Paradise, and links with the sect's belief that any of its members who died in the act of killing an enemy would enjoy the delights of Paradise at once. Likewise, the suggestion that the Emperor is divine can be traced back to a claim which was made about the Imam. However, when the story is taken out of its Islamic context, these details lose much of their power, and a new motivation is required to make the *stecher* at all plausible. Marco Polo handles this by means of an elaborate deception in which young men are drugged and made to think they have already died and entered Heaven. Enikel introduces the idea of children being raised specially for the task.

The most distinctive feature of Enikel's version is his casting of Frederick II in the role of the Imam. There are three possible points of contact which might explain this. The first is that Frederick on his crusade had dealings with the *Nizārī Ismāʿīlīyah*, and this together with the strong Muslim presence in the Sicilian court and his use of a Saracen bodyguard made it likely that he should be drawn into association with material of Islamic origin. Secondly, it is known that a story already existed in which Frederick was supposed to have had children raised underground, as part of an experiment to discover what language they would speak.²⁰ If Enikel brought these two traditions together, this in itself would explain how Frederick became associated with the Assassins. But thirdly, Frederick had been accused of being involved in an attempt on the life of the Duke of Bavaria, as one late 'Weltchronik' manuscript records.²¹ Enikel does not make any explicit value judgment in this story, but he leaves us with the impression of an Emperor who is brutal and unscrupulous. The suggestion that Frederick allowed the young men to think of him as God (28059; cf. also 28638) is, when placed in a Christian context, a blasphemy. Once again, Enikel presents a picture which accords with the Church's position. And yet, there is an ambivalence about this, for the section opens with lines which seem incongruous:

Nû merket, keiser Fridrîch,
des frümkeit was niht gelîch -
wan unzuht muost in vlihen -,
er hiez stecher ziehen... (28037ff)

No doubt this is a set-piece, thoughtlessly used, for more than once Enikel rhymes *Fridrîch* with *gelîch*, but one cannot help feeling that Pope Innocent's propagandists would not have allowed such lines to slip into their texts unnoticed. In essence, this is a story told against Frederick, but Enikel has blunted its cutting edge.

²⁰ Salimbene de Adam, *Cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Scalia (= *Scrittori d'Italia* 232-3), Bari 1966, p.510.

²¹ *Anhang II* 819-74; Hellmuth (note 19), pp.137ff.

4. Frederick's medical experiment (28105-28204).

A similar impression of Frederick is conveyed by the next bloodthirsty episode, which Enikel, it must be admitted, tells with relish, and with no hint of disapproval.

Frederick took three condemned prisoners and tried an experiment on them. His doctors had been arguing about whether a person digests his food best while sleeping, riding or walking. Determined to find out, Frederick starved the men for three days, and then made them eat some unpalatable food. One was then given a drink which made him sleep for three days. Another was made to run to Bern. He dropped dead. The third was made to ride a horse till he too died. All three stomachs were cut open, and the sleeping man was found to have digested the food best.

Twice in the course of this short narrative Enikel uses the formula *nâch des buoches sag*, and a written source is to be assumed. A similar account is found in the 'Cronica' of Salimbene of Parma, begun in 1282:

Sexta curiositas et superstitio Friderici, sicut in alia cronica posui, fuit quia optime pavit in quodam prandio duos homines, quorum unum misit ad dormiendum, alium vero ad venandum, et sequenti sero fecit eos exenterari coram se, volens cognoscere quis melius digessisset. Et iudicatum est a medicis quod is qui dormierat digestionem melius celebrasset.²²

The appearance of this story in both Vienna and Italy is best explained by a shared source document. Enikel's version is, of course, much fuller; the doctors' dispute, the use of condemned prisoners, the three-day fast, the destination Bern and the introduction of a third victim are all typical features of Enikel's own narrative technique.

Salimbene also has a story in which Frederick sealed a man in a barrel and waited until he suffocated in order to learn whether the soul could be seen leaving the barrel when the man died:

Porro alias superstitiones ... habuit Fridericus ... ut de homine quem vivum includebat in vegete, donec ibi moreretur, volens per hoc demonstrare quod anima totaliter deperiret.²³

Clearly Enikel's anecdote is part of a far wider tradition.

The question of what value judgment may be contained in these stories is ambiguous. For Salimbene, the cruel medical experiments were clearly just one more example of the brutality which typified Frederick's reign. Salimbene is known to have written with the intention of discrediting Frederick. Near the beginning of his chronicle he makes his position clear:

Ipse vero Fridericus fuit homo pestifer et maledictus, scismaticus, hereticus et epycurus, corrumpens universam terram, quia in

²² Salimbene (note 20), p.515.

²³ Salimbene (note 20), p.512; Abulafia (note 1), p.260.

civitatibus Ytalie semen divisionis et discordie seminavit, quod usque hodie durat.²⁴

This was partly because he took the side of popes against emperors, but partly also because of his own local patriotism:

Et eodem anno, cum esset obsessa *civitas mea* [= Parma] a Friderico deposito...²⁵

By contrast, when Enikel borrows the same material he brings to it what is almost a tone of admiration. For these spurious stories do contain a grain of truth in that they testify to Frederick's very lively interest in all kinds of scientific knowledge. Stories abound of how he observed the natural world and debated its character with philosophers, and it is to these that Enikel points in his closing lines:

Dannoch der keiser niht enlie,
manic wunder er begie.
nâch maniger hand dingen,
nâch witzzen begund er ringen.
des gewan er vünt genuoc.
er wart an mangel dingen kluoc. (28199ff)

The gratuitous cruelty which is involved in the medical experiments is clearly more in keeping with Gregory's black propaganda than with Frederick's enquiring mind. Enikel has adopted material which was originally designed to show Frederick in a bad light. But Enikel himself passes no such judgment.

5. Frederick and Frederick of Antfurt (28205-28532).

Enikel's next anecdote is of limited relevance, since the Emperor is not an active participant.

One of Frederick's knights, Frederick of Antfurt, wooed a certain *grævinne* for three years. Hoping to deter him, she said she would sleep with him only if he demonstrated his prowess by entering a tournament without armour and in a woman's shirt. To her dismay, he accepted the challenge. He was run through, but recovered from his wound after a year. Now he demanded his due. Trapped by her own words, she begged him to grant her some other way to keep her honour. Finally he agreed to release her from her promise if she appeared in church wearing nothing but the blood-stained shirt.

This is one of a number of passages in Enikel's work which reflect the ethos both of the *Minne*-cult and of the courtly epic. A parallel is known in Old French.²⁶ Its significance for our present study is restricted to the person of Frederick of Antfurt himself. A knight of that name is known to history, but he was a contemporary of Barbarossa, which raises for a second time the possibility that Enikel is confusing

²⁴ Salimbene (note 20), p.23.

²⁵ Salimbene (note 20), p.75, my italics.

²⁶ Strauch (note 2), p.560, nt.3.

the two emperors. However, since the material here is clearly fictional, any attempt to link it with a historically attested figure will be tentative.

6. Frederick and Frederick of Austria (28533-28662).²⁷

Leopold's successor as Duke of Austria, confusingly also a Frederick II, was known as Frederick the Warlike. According to Enikel, these two Fredericks had a healthy respect for each other.

The Emperor called the princes to court, and invited Frederick of Austria to eat with him; the Duke refused, being too proud to eat another man's bread. So the Emperor ordered that no-one be permitted to sell him any firewood. The Duke tried to buy a house, but this was also forbidden. Finally, he bought large quantities of nuts and used the shells for burning. The Emperor was so impressed by the Duke's ingenuity that he lifted his sanction.

Duke Frederick now asked the Emperor to let him see the assassins. The Emperor took him to the top of a tall tower, and two assassins were presented. The Emperor told one to jump to his death, and he did so. The second was given the same order, and would have jumped if the Emperor had not held him back at the last moment. The Duke was so impressed by the obedience which the Emperor could command that he declared no ruler could be more powerful.

The picture of the Emperor Frederick in this passage is more positive than in earlier ones. For example, when the Duke refused to eat at his table, we are told that he answered wisely, *mit sin* (28561). And indeed, the punishment was appropriate to the crime. The Duke had scorned the Emperor's hospitality with the haughty words:

daz stüend eim fürsten niht gelich,
daz ich iur brôt ezzen solt.

war zuo solt dann mîn golt? (28558ff)

The Emperor's response was intended to show him that his gold had no value anyway if he couldn't use it. Without the Emperor's goodwill he would have no fire on which to cook his food. This astute judgement was followed by a second. The Duke tried to buy a house (presumably to strip it of its timbers) but the Emperor was alert enough to prevent this. However, after the ploy with the nutshells, the Emperor had the magnanimity to acknowledge his resourcefulness, and to reward it. The Duke's reward was not only that the injunction was lifted, but also that he was granted a special favour, a chance to see the assassins. The significance of the assassins for our view of the Emperor has already been discussed, and their reappearance at this point adds little to the picture. But it is worth noting that the second assassin is spared, reflecting perhaps a milder side to the story. Frederick is here portrayed as an emperor who knew how to wield power firmly and

²⁷ Repeated almost verbatim in Enikel's 'Fürstenbuch' (2467-2695) as part of a two thousand line section on Duke Frederick. For this, see Liebertz-Grün (note 5), pp.78ff.

appropriately, yet was able to balance this with generosity to those who earned his respect.

The material which Enikel offers here on the conflict between Duke Frederick and Emperor Frederick compares interestingly with his earlier account of the conflict between Duke Leopold and Emperor Otto. In both stories, the duke withdraws from the imperial court after a courageous defence of his own honour. In both, gold is at issue, and in both, the duke is shown to have ample money, but to lay greater store by his pride. The two dukes are presented as being of very similar mettle, but the two conflicts have different results because of the quite different characters of the emperors involved.

The two anecdotes which make up this section are clearly parallel. In the first, Duke Frederick's actions win the admiration of the Emperor, who declares:

... wâfen, wie ein man
diser ist von Oesterrich! (28602f)

In the second, the Emperor wins the admiration of the Duke:

herr, ich sag iu sicherlîch,
iu mac dhein fûrst vor gestân,
oder sîn leben muoz zergân. (28660ff)

We are to believe that, as a result of their initial conflict, the two Fredericks came to hold each other in high esteem. This, perhaps, is the point at which these anecdotes touch upon a political agenda. For in fact, relations were strained; Duke Frederick repeatedly defied the imperial authority and had to flee Vienna when he was temporarily deposed in 1236.²⁸ Enikel's stories may be regarded, then, as an attempt to fill the vacuum left by his diplomatic silence on the real relationship of Duke and Emperor. A passage in the 'Fürstenbuch' may be understood in a similar way. There we are told that Duke Frederick seduced a patrician's daughter, Brünhild, and had to leave the city to escape the wrath of the townsfolk (F.2319-2400).²⁹ Presumably Enikel tells this story in order to give an alternative account of the Duke's absence in the time after 1236.³⁰ In both cases, a fictional account avoids the need to tell an unpleasant truth.

²⁸ Van Cleve (note 1), pp.392ff. Enikel, or a later hand, records this in a prose insert in *Anhang II* (p.583): *Do cham chaiser Fridreich gein Wienn und nam herzogen Fridreich seineu recht aus genommen der Neunstat und Starhenberckch und Medlich. von christ gep. täusent zwai hundert und acht und dreisk jar.*

²⁹ Liebertz-Grün (note 5), pp.81f.

³⁰ If, however, as Ashcroft argues, a failure in affairs of the heart is a metaphor for a failure of politics, the Brünhild story may be regarded as a kind of code for the actual event. Enikel rather gives the game away by following it with a short passage which mentions almost in passing that imperial armies were in the neighbourhood of Vienna at the time (F.2401ff). He would have us believe that the Duke sent the imperial troops retreating in disarray, and was then reconciled to his citizens in Vienna. See: Jeffrey Ashcroft, "Fürstlicher Sex-Appel. Politisierung der Minne bei

7. Frederick's second excommunication (28663-28690).³¹

Frederick was excommunicated twice, in 1227 and in 1245. Since Enikel twice tells of his excommunication it is apparent that he knew of both events and tried to distinguish them. But whereas the earlier account clearly relates to 1227, the second appears to merge elements of the two.

The Pope excommunicated Frederick on a charge of heresy, and forbade him to be emperor. Frederick was not unduly concerned about this, but the Duke of Austria felt sorry for him, and rode to Apulia to reconcile the two sides. Pope Gregory then granted a special status to Austria and Styria, that for seven years none of their people could be excommunicated. [*Prose* : This was in 1230.]

Both the name of the Pope and the date of the lifting of the ban are correct for the 1227 excommunication; but the detail that the Pope tried to depose Frederick applies to the time after 1245. Popes had always claimed that since they crowned emperors they could also depose them, but Innocent IV was the first to attempt to do so.

Two trends can be seen in this passage. The first is a marked reluctance to enter into the ecclesiastical attack on the Emperor. In the earlier excommunication passage, Enikel appeared to believe the scurrilous stories of Frederick's maltreatment of priests. This time, however, the use of the subjunctive distances him from what he reports: *er wär ein ketzerlicher man* (28671). There is no hint here of the wild invective which emanated from Innocent IV's curia. No atrocities are listed, there are no accusations of tyranny or immorality; just this one mention of heresy, in *oratio obliqua*.

The second trend is, once again, the Austrian interest. Both the reconciling role of the Duke and the privilege of immunity from excommunication are intended to show Austria as a major player in the affairs of the Empire. Duke Leopold did indeed play a role in the diplomacy of 1230³², but the privilege was more limited than Enikel suggests, and was granted on a different occasion.³³

Tannhäuser und Jansen Enikel", in: Ashcroft (ed) *Liebe in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*, London 1987, pp.91-106.

³¹ The first part of this section reappears in the 'Fürstenbuch' (28663-75 = F.2597-610).

³² Friedrich Hausmann, "Österreich unter den letzten Babenberger", in: Erich Zöllner (Ed), *Das babenbergische Österreich*, Vienna, 1987, p.61. Enikel erroneously associates these events with Duke Frederick; in the 'Weltchronik' this is implicit in the order of the narratives, but the parallel text in the 'Fürstenbuch' makes it explicit (F.2610).

³³ Hausmann (note 32), pp.59f. In 1219 Leopold was granted the privilege that he personally could not be placed under the ban by any bishop without the Pope's consent.

8. Frederick and the Venetians (28691-28848).

The instability of the north Italian city-states was a constant source of difficulties for medieval emperors. At several points in his career, Frederick had to conduct campaigns against rebel cities, principally against Milan. This major area of conflict is reflected in only one passage in Enikel's chronicle.

Venice refused to submit, so Frederick laid siege. Soon the city had no corn. In a skirmish at sea, Frederick captured the son of the Doge of Venice, and six other Venetians with him. The lad was imprisoned for three days without food, and was then brought to the Emperor's table. While Frederick ate the best of food, silver and gold was laid before the captive; six successive "courses" were produced, until at last he admitted that money which he could not spend had no value to him when he was hungry.³⁴ As the city still refused to submit, the Doge's son was suspended in a bag from a siege engine within sight of the city walls. He was fed bread and cheese so that he would live longer, and he hung swaying in the wind until he eventually died. Frederick then executed the other six captives.

Thematic connections between this and earlier stories are obvious. Once again, we have Frederick's wealthiest subjects asserting their independence, believing that they are well able to supply their own tables. Once again we have Frederick playing the part of the astute ruler who impresses upon them the insight that there is no security in gold for those who flout his authority. Unlike the Duke of Austria, the young Venetian finds no way to evade the lesson. A three-day enforced fast has already appeared in the story of the medical experiment. The interplay of the themes of food and gold is a leitmotif running through this series of anecdotes. Notwithstanding the execution of the captives (which was normal in medieval warfare and therefore cannot be compared with the acts of brutality which are ascribed to Frederick elsewhere) the image of the Emperor is once again a positive one; he is sophisticated, intelligent and above all effective.

Recognizable historical events underlie only part of this story. Frederick banned the export of corn from Sicily to Venice because of the city's part in a conspiracy against him. In 1240 he seems to have seized a number of Venetian ships, and the Venetians responded with an attack on some towns in Apulia. Frederick then executed the son of the Doge of Venice, Pietro Tiepolo, who had been captured in a different skirmish at Cortenuova in 1237³⁵, and left the body hanging from a tower at Trani in Apulia as a grim warning to his enemies. Thus Enikel's narrative touches on reality at three points: the corn embargo, the skirmish at sea, and the hanging of the doge's son. Enikel is however mistaken in treating Venice as a rebel city, since the Venetians did

³⁴ Appropriately, one of the courses was a bowl of *Venedigær* (28768).

³⁵ Van Cleve (note 1), p.406. Abulafia (note 1), pp.303ff.

not owe allegiance to the empire in the first place. Frederick never besieged Venice. One wonders whether Enikel's account has been influenced by events at Brescia in 1238. There, in the course of a protracted siege, prisoners were tied to siege engines outside the city to deter catapult attacks, and indeed, the Brescians responded by lowering captured imperial soldiers from the city walls.³⁶ Possibly it was a memory of these scenes which motivated Enikel to transfer the hanging of Tiepolo from Trani to a siege at Venice. As for the meal of precious metals, it is likely that this is imported from some completely different source.³⁷ A comparison with the Midas legend is suggestive. Midas too went hungry, and the moral is the same.

9. Frederick and the falcon hunt (28849-28944).

Frederick saw white falcons coming out of a cave and guessed that there must be a nest. He wanted the chicks, to raise them for hunting, but none of his men would get them as the cave was full of snakes. A condemned thief agreed to take the risk in return for his freedom. He was let down on a rope, and returned with the falcons. But his hair had turned grey.

This harmless little anecdote would have been understood to show Frederick in a positive light, as a king who pursued the sport of kings. It was of course well-known that Frederick was fanatical about falconry. In 1247 he suffered a humiliating defeat at Victoria because he and his top staff had gone hunting when they should have been besieging Parma.³⁸ He wrote a learned book on the subject, 'De arte venandi cum avibus'.³⁹

10. Frederick's disappearance (28945-28958).

The life of the Emperor Frederick, and indeed Enikel's whole chronicle, is now brought to a close with a 14-line epilogue raising tantalizing questions about his death.

After this the Emperor disappeared, and no-one knew whether he had died or not. The dispute is still continuing in Italy. Some say he is dead and buried, others that he is still at large in the world. For my own part, I don't know who is right.

The theme of the king who lies sleeping and will some day return is a very common one in literature. In the case of Frederick II, there was supposed to have been a sybilline prophecy:

³⁶ Abulafia (note 1), p.309.

³⁷ Francis Lee Utley ("Noah's Ham and Jansen Enikel", in: *Germanic Review* 16, 1941, pp. 241-249) has shown with respect to a different part of Enikel's chronicle that this was precisely the way in which he assembled material from disparate sources.

³⁸ Abulafia (note 1), p.397f.

³⁹ Abulafia (note 1), p.267ff.

Sonabit et in populis: "Vivit" et "Non vivit".⁴⁰

The 'Sächsische Weltchronik'⁴¹ also knows this tradition:

Bi den tiden segede men, dat storve keiser Vrederic; en del volkes segede, he levede; de twivel warede lange tit (§ 399).

The interpretation of this legend took two quite distinct forms. The hostile form saw Frederick as the Antichrist. This originated with the Joachites, hence Enikel's reference to Italy. In their apocalyptic preaching, the reign of Frederick heralded the end-times. However, his death came too soon to tally with their calculations of the date of the end of the world. So, they concluded that he couldn't really be dead. The favourable form of the legend, saw him as the conquering hero, like Barbarossa, like Charlemagne. He would return and bring a Hohenstaufen revival, punishing a worldly Church and ushering in a new age of peace and prosperity. Enikel declines to speculate himself, but there is clearly no hint of the Antichrist in his closing lines. If he really is open to the possibility of Frederick's return, it is the conquering hero whom he has in mind.

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A number of concluding observations may be made. Hellmuth divides Enikel's Frederick-material into two types: *Historische Erzählungen* and *Biographische Anekdoten*.⁴² For a literary study, this distinction is rather arbitrary; Enikel himself would certainly not have recognized it. But it is true that an awareness of historical events is more important for our analysis of some of the stories than for others. Where Enikel presents recognizable historical events, he does so with a reasonable degree of accuracy. He is aware of the principal events of the period, the roles of the major players, and to some extent even the motivation behind their actions, although he does not attempt to assess the significance of events; he tells stories, he does not interpret them. Confusions do occur, but not enough to justify the verdict that the narrative is unhistorical. In particular, Strauch is unfair to say that the two emperors Frederick are "mehrfach ... zu einer Persönlichkeit verschmolzen".⁴³ There are only two examples of this, Frederick's election and the knight of Antfurt, and as we have seen, both of these are questionable, while the latter does not in any case impinge on the biography of the Emperor himself. For the most part, when Enikel's account is at variance with the actual course of events, we are left with the impression that we are dealing not with errors, but with a

⁴⁰ Salimbene (note 20), p.251. Discussed in Abulafia (note 1), p.432f, Munz (note 15), p.3ff. Salimbene himself, though he accepted Joachite teaching, rejected the notion of Frederick's return; but he had the benefit of an extra decade's hindsight.

⁴¹ MGH dt. Chron. II.

⁴² Hellmuth (note 19), pp.12-14

⁴³ Strauch (note 2), p.554, nt.3.

consciously partisan slanting of the narrative, and here the *Historische Erzählungen* and the *Biographische Anekdoten* are equally important to us, since they offer the same kinds of value judgments. A political programme is very obviously present in the defence of the Austrian interest,⁴⁴ particularly in the roles which are given to the Austrian dukes.⁴⁵ While it is very likely that some of Enikel's sources already contained a pro-Austrian bias, he must surely have prosecuted this consciously himself. By contrast, however, the images of Frederick II are confused. On the one hand, there are elements of a very positive picture of Frederick. He is intelligent, has a sense of what is appropriate. This is in keeping with our impression of the historical Frederick, who is usually regarded as having been reasonably enlightened.⁴⁶ On the other hand, a negative view of the Emperor is also present, in particular when he is seen persecuting the Church and ruling by terror. This clearly fits with the propaganda campaign which was directed against him by the Church in the last years of his life. Taking all Enikel's material together, it is hard to imagine a consistent agenda here. A further difficulty lies in the fact that the picture of Frederick seems to change half-way through. Of the ten sections into which we have divided the material, the first four present him in a predominantly negative light; this begins subtly, with him being robbed of the credit for his conquest, and becomes progressively stronger, culminating in the brutality of the medical experiment. In section five, however, Frederick himself is temporarily forgotten, and when he re-appears, it is in a more favourable guise. Sections six, eight and nine show him at his best, and the brief final section on his disappearance reflects a fond nostalgia. This division of the material into two parts, the first generally negative and the second mostly positive, is particularly striking if we compare the two excommunication accounts.

Conflicting source materials go a long way towards explaining this phenomenon. There can be little doubt that the medical experiment must come ultimately from an Italian source hostile to Frederick, whereas the interchange with Frederick of Austria rests on a different, local source.

⁴⁴ A similar local patriotism is to be found in the Bavarian continuation of the 'Kaiserchronik' which gives some prominence to Frederick's connections with the city of Regensburg.

⁴⁵ Liebertz-Grün (note 5) has written extensively on Enikel's treatment of Austrian history, which to some extent overlaps with the material studied here. She points out that, as Enikel's readership was the Viennese Patrician class, which was sometimes in conflict with its ruler, defending the Austrian interest did not always mean praising the duke. But frequently it did.

⁴⁶ The view of Frederick as an enlightened emperor, even as a Renaissance man before his time, stems from his love of learning, his preference for diplomacy rather than force of arms, his remarkable patience in his dealings with the Papacy, and his liberal view of religious minorities. Abulafia (note 1) argues that most of this has more to do with political pragmatism than an enlightened philosophy, but the fact remains that his life left such an interpretation open.

Generalizing from this, we may surmise that in the earlier sections Enikel was leaning more heavily on sources reflecting the official Church position, whereas in the later sections his dominant source material looked more favourably on the Hohenstaufen. The fact that certain motifs, most importantly the assassins, appear both before and after the neutral, central section five need not trouble us unduly, as we are not speaking of a slavish adherence first to one source and then to the other. Enikel worked with a multiplicity of sources, both written and oral, he selected and re-arranged them, he brought his own sense of humour to bear upon them. But clearly, in any passage there is likely to be one source which is dominant, and the differing political programmes of the sources are left to shine through.

One question remains to be asked about Enikel's presentation of Frederick. Why does he conclude his work at this point, and omit any account of Frederick's successors? Why should a Universal Chronicle end in the year 1250? In the papal catalogue which Enikel inserts into the chronicle at an earlier stage, he gives a list of popes which continues to 1272. Why does he not do the same with the narrative itself? And why does the Bavarian continuation of the 'Kaiserchronik' end in the same year?⁴⁷ The theological and historiographical schema underlying chronicles of this type is a model in which history is a linear process running from creation to the last days. Enikel begins with Adam, and we would expect him to continue right up until his own time, and end by pointing to the eschaton. Instead, he stops suddenly and without comment at a point twenty-two years prior to his date of writing.⁴⁸ Obviously, we have to see this in terms of the fact that those twenty-two years had not been good years for Austria. After Frederick's death, the Hohenstaufen emperors had been weak, and the line had finally died out in 1268. The last Babenberg Duke had died in 1246, and Ottokar II of Bohemia was now overlord of Austria. Enikel could not have known that a new stability would emerge when the Habsburgs were established in Vienna in 1278. In 1272 the world seemed to be falling apart. And so Enikel simply draws a veil over these years by ending his narrative at the end of a golden age.⁴⁹ But something more. By leaving us with the question of Frederick's possible return still hanging in the air, Enikel does indeed suggest that the end-times are near. Enikel is a story-teller, not a theologian, and we

⁴⁷ It closes with the words *in Pülle verschiet chaiser Friderich. I wê, wenne wirt uns sîn gelich?! (799f).*

⁴⁸ Even if *Anhang II* does prove to be by Enikel, this does not alter matters, as it is clearly an afterthought, not part of the structure, and it contains only additional material relating to the period before 1250.

⁴⁹ A modern parallel might be Richard Benz's history of Heidelberg (Heidelberg, Schicksal und Geist, Sigmaringen 1961). Benz begins in prehistory and ends in the early twentieth century. He does not continue to the year of writing, because the intervening decades saw too much destruction in the city which he loved.

would not expect him to explore the idea far. But in a sense, Frederick is for him, as for a number of other historians of the period, an eschatological figure. The year 1250 was "the end of history".⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Martin Haeusler, *Das Ende der Geschichte in der mittelalterlichen Weltchronistik*, Cologne/Vienna 1980, p.99.