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The Capture of a General Council, 1241

THE circumstances relating to the capture of a general council by the emperor Frederick II are of considerable interest and importance, and have been related by historians with so many inaccuracies (and not of detail only), that it seems worth while to give an account of them founded simply upon the original authorities, with such corrections of the current mis-statements as may seem desirable.

The events to be considered belong to the years 1240 and 1241. Frederick II, excommunicated by Gregory IX on Palm Sunday of the year 1239, really for his successes against the Lombard cities, though other reasons in plenty were officially assigned, continued his operations in Lombardy for the remainder of that year. Then, after keeping Christmas at Pisa, where his excommunication was ignored, he proceeded early in 1240 to invade the dominions of the pope, reasonably regarding the publication of the ban as a declaration of war. The chief cities of Tuscany either opened their gates to the emperor or were speedily captured, and he wrote that he had been received there with great popular enthusiasm. Thence he advanced through the more undisputed part of the papal territory towards Rome, receiving on his way the submission of the towns, 'resuming them to the empire' according to the current phrase, and expressing a confidence which he could hardly have felt, that he would happily enter Rome amid the acclamations of his faithful people.¹ If he expected this, he took too little account of the easily moved devotion of the Romans and of the heads of St. Peter and St. Paul, which, after having figured

¹ Letter of Frederick from Viterbo in February 1240: Huillard-Bréholles, *Historia Diplomatica Friderici II*, v. 762. I shall make my references, wherever possible, to this magnificent collection of documents.

upon the seals both of the papacy and the empire,² now decisively took the side of the former. The pope, who on 22 Feb. transferred these precious relics in solemn procession from the Lateran to St. Peter's, was able to boast that (with the prospect before their eyes of a general indulgence) nearly the whole population took the cross for a crusade against Frederick, including those who (bribed, of course) had at first shouted for the emperor.³ To quote the words of M. Huillard-Bréholles,⁴

It may be said that on that day the populace of Rome saved the temporal power of the popes. This populace had no idea then of the importance which its unreserved alliance with an emperor who was at heart Italian would have had for the national development. Frederick II reigning in the Capitol, with Gregory IX reduced to the Vatican, would have meant the unity of Italy proclaimed by the Ghibelline party. The impression of the moment and the force of religious exaltation prevailed over regard for the future and the demands of policy.

The emperor gave up the attempt upon Rome, issued the summons for a parliament of the kingdom of Sicily to be held at Foggia on Palm Sunday,⁵ and proceeded thither himself in April.

The pope had met with no encouragement either in France or Germany of his attempts to procure the election of a new emperor; on the contrary, he received during the months of April and May many letters from the princes and bishops of Germany urging him to make peace with Frederick, and commending to him the mediation of Conrad of Thuringia, master of the Teutonic order.⁶ Negotiations for peace were in fact begun on the initiation of the pope, and although Frederick in a letter written to his son Conrad declared that he would not stop short until he had humbled the pride and chastised the offences of his enemy,⁷ yet in June he evidently

² The seal of the emperor Henry VI had upon it the design of a basilica, supposed by M. Huillard-Bréholles to be that of St. John Lateran, with a pair of heads over the door; *Hist. Dipl.* introd. p. cviii.

³ It is curious to compare the account given of this affair by Frederick in his letters to Henry III of England and the other princes (*Hist. Dipl.* v. 845): speaking of the pope he says: *timore terribili licet juste perterritus, cum per seram poenitentiam sibi non crederet posse consulere, in profundum desperationis immersus ac viribus propriis omnino diffusus, Romano populo clamante nostrum ad urbem accessum, garsones quosdam et vetulas necnon et paucos admodum conductivos milites veris praeter solitum effusus lacrymis exoravit, ut contra nos crucem assumerent, in sua praedicatione mentitus quod nos ad eversionem Romanae ecclesiae ac violationem sacrarum reliquiarum beatissimorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli procedere nitebamur.*

⁴ *Vie et correspondance de Pierre de la Vigne*, p. 181.

⁵ Letters were issued from Viterbo to the chief officers of the kingdom, and also to the principal towns. The latter were to send each two representatives, an indication that the constitutional regulations in this matter were not always strictly adhered to; but this was an extraordinary summons; the ordinary meetings of parliament were on 1 March and 1 Nov.

⁶ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 985. Conrad died, however, shortly after his arrival in Rome.

⁷ *Ib.* v. 1003.

thought that peace or at least a truce was assured. On 18 July, however, he wrote that the negotiations had been broken off because the pope insisted on the Lombards being included in the treaty, whereby (according to the emperor) he made a scandalous avowal of that which he had hitherto denied, namely that he regarded the cause of those rebels and heretics as his own, and that he had been moved to the sentence of excommunication not by the reasons officially stated, but by partisan favour for the enemies of the emperor. The same absence of good faith had been shown in the conduct of the legate Gregory of Montelongo, who had personally led the army of the Milanese, and in the treachery which this same legate had practised or authorised towards Salinguerra at Ferrara.⁸

The pope found himself driven to extremities. He had desired to obtain a truce until the Easter of the next year, with the intention of calling a general council in the mean time for settlement of the differences between the papacy and the empire. He was resolved, however, not to abandon the cause of the Lombard cities, with which he felt that his own was bound up; and he now determined upon the dangerous step of summoning the council without arranging for a truce. Accordingly on 9 Aug. letters were issued addressed to the princes and prelates of Christendom, summoning them to appear in Rome, the former by envoys and the latter in person, at Easter of the ensuing year, to consult about grave matters affecting the church. It is urged against Frederick that he had no right to object to this step; and it is undoubtedly true that the emperor had after his excommunication appealed to a general council. In his encyclical of 20 April 1239,⁹ he had said:

Let it not, therefore, be a cause of marvel to the church, to the kings and princes, or to the nations of Christendom that we cannot respect the sentence of such a judge, . . . and in order that all the heads of Christendom may perceive the rectitude of our purpose and that it is not for the stirring up of hatred but for a most just cause that the Roman emperor is moved against the Roman pontiff . . . by our letters and envoys we adjure the cardinals of the holy Roman church by the blood of Jesus Christ, calling upon the judgment of God, that they summon a general

⁸ The story told by Matthew Paris of the pope's quarrel with Cardinal Colonna on this occasion, which is adopted by Raumer (*Geschichte der Hohenstaufen*, iv. 21), and after him by Milman, must be rejected, as also his account of the pope's motives throughout the transaction (pp. 365, 366, ed. 1844). It is clear that no truce was made by the pope, and according to Richard of San Germano (Murat. vii. 1045) the breach between the pope and Cardinal Colonna occurred in January 1241. The accuracy of this last chronicler, especially in notes of time, and his presence on the scene of action, makes his testimony almost decisive. Moreover, to judge by the letter from the emperor to Cardinal Colonna in *Hist. Dipl.* v. 1157, the difference seems to have turned upon questions which concerned the general relations of the empire and the papacy.

⁹ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 304 &c.

council of the prelates and other faithful followers of Christ, calling to it envoys from us and from the other princes, in whose presence we ourselves in person are prepared to set forth and to prove all that we have said.

That he actually did take steps to have a council summoned by the cardinals is sufficiently proved, though it has not been always noticed by historians. In the letter in which he explains to the princes the grounds of his hostile proceedings against the territory of the pope,¹⁰ he says with reference to the excommunication :

We, however, holding this his manner of proceeding to be hasty and unjust, sent letters and envoys to his brethren (*i.e.* the cardinals) desiring that a general council might be summoned, in which we engaged that we would prove by arguments clearer than light the iniquity of the corrupt judge, the justice of our empire, and our own innocence. Upon which not only was no account made of our plea, but, contrary to the law of nations, which forbids the violation of envoys and messengers, he who writes himself as bishop and servant of the servants of God ordered our envoys aforesaid, being bishops, to be thrust into the foulest prison.

The fact that Frederick attempted to call a council through the cardinals is mentioned also in his letter of 13 Sept. and confirmed by Matthew Paris,¹¹ who, however, fails to appreciate the difference between the council desired by Frederick and that summoned by the pope, and consequently accuses the emperor of inconsistency. Frederick again refers to the matter in a letter to the king of France¹² written at the end of the year 1240 :

He prevented the assembly which was awaited by us for setting forth our pleas of innocence : therefore it is no wonder that we do not suffer the council to meet, to which, omitting our adherents, he has summoned the rebels against the empire and our capital foes, as our former letter brought to your knowledge.

The proceeding of the emperor seems, indeed, to have been in equity more correct than that of the pope ; for clearly the council which was to decide the quarrel should have been summoned by the cardinals rather than by one of the contending parties ; and the outrage on Frederick's messengers might seem to justify measures of retaliation. In any case it is quite out of place to charge the emperor with inconsistency because he endeavoured to hinder the meeting of the council summoned by the pope, with whom he was still at war. In a letter addressed to some of the cardinals,¹³ he expressed his suspicions of the real object of this assembly ; and whatever may be its object (he says) it is clearly not summoned for peace but for war, seeing that it is not called by the cardinals, nor are the persons summoned to be freely chosen,

¹⁰ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 843.

¹² *Ib.* v. 1076.

¹¹ P. 358.

¹³ *Ib.* v. 1028.

but it is called by the chief enemy of the emperor, and others of his bitterest enemies are among those summoned. Surely peace ought to have been made first, before a council was called together. On 13 Sept. from his camp before Faenza the emperor sent out an encyclical protesting formally against it.¹⁴ After referring to the history of the quarrel and to his own attempt to summon a council, he says that everything now tended to show that this step taken by the pope was not for peace but for war, and more especially the fact that so many of the personal enemies of the emperor, the count of Provence, the doge of Venice, the marquis of Este, the count of St. Boniface, Alberic da Romano, Paul Traversaria, Biaquino and Guccello da Camino, men who had conspired with the pope against his life, were expressly summoned.

We shall not permit a council to be summoned by him while the present discord lasts between us, seeing that he is a public enemy of the empire . . . and to all who have been summoned we refuse safe passage for persons or goods through the whole land subject to our jurisdiction. Wherefore we pray you to make it known to all prelates of your kingdom that none must attempt to go to the council trusting in our protection; for although we would willingly show regard to the subjects of your kingdom for the special love which we have towards you, yet it would not become us to endure the presumption of those who rashly disregarding our prohibition should attempt to obey the summons of our enemy.

Matthew Paris adds¹⁵ that the emperor made a special objection against the English taking part in the council on the ground that the king and the prelates of England were sworn subjects of the pope, a taunt to which Henry III had fairly exposed himself,¹⁶ and that the large sums collected in England for the pope proved that they could be no impartial judges of the dispute.

It would seem that on this question the public opinion of Europe was not unfavourable to the emperor, who was thought to have been harshly treated in the matter of the excommunication, and who had created a good impression by his letter of 25 April¹⁷ to Henry III and the other princes with regard to the state of things in the east. In this letter he expressed regret for the defeat sustained by certain crusaders near Gaza on 13 Nov. of the preceding year, pointing out that he had warned them against attempting anything at present, but unfortunately, owing to the attitude of the pope, he had now no influence on the conduct of affairs. He desired either

¹⁴ *Ib.* v. 1037 (from Pet. Vin. i. 34).

¹⁵ Matt. Paris, p. 368.

¹⁶ When Frederick complained (about February 1240) that his brother-in-law, the king of England, had allowed him to be 'so horribly and unjustly excommunicated' in his Christian land, and demanded the expulsion of the legate, who was collecting money against the emperor, Henry replied that he ought to obey the pope, who was his liege lord, rather than any other prince *et sic se excusando turpiter accusavit*. Matt. Paris, p. 354.

¹⁷ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 921, from Matt. Paris.

to go thither himself or to send his son, but this was impossible while affairs were still so unsettled in Italy; and meanwhile it was most imprudent to break the existing truce and endanger the lives of the Christians in the Holy Land. If the former sultan were still alive, his friendship with the emperor would have made him willing to release the prisoners; as it was he pledged himself to endeavour to obtain their release from the present sultan. This letter was probably enough a diplomatic move, but people were struck by the contrast between the emperor who desired to take up the cause of Christendom in the east and to defend his kingdom of Jerusalem against the infidels, and the pope who was proclaiming a crusade for ambitious ends (as it seemed) against the temporal head of Christendom, and was dispensing from their vows those who had engaged themselves to go to Palestine, on condition that they gave money or help against Frederick.¹⁸ It is clear that the pope was disturbed by the effect of the various influences which were at work against the council, and in October he wrote letters specially urging the bishops and some others¹⁹ to obey the summons to the council and to disregard the threats of the emperor.²⁰ At the same time (13 Oct.) he wrote to his chaplain, Gregory of Romagna,²¹ bidding him make arrangements with all secrecy at Genoa for the preparation of a sufficient fleet to convoy the prelates, since the ways by land were closed by the emperor.

Of late (he writes), for various difficult matters concerning the Roman church we thought it good to summon to our presence at the feast of the resurrection of the Lord next ensuing the prelates of the churches and envoys from the kings and princes. But since Frederick, called emperor, the adversary of God and of the church, endeavours to hinder the summons, therefore we command, &c.

Such is the style even of a confidential letter. The commands were that the legate with the assistance of the bearer of the letter, a Cistercian monk, should make what arrangements he could at

¹⁸ Matt. Paris, pp. 354, 359. He says that in England many were *compelled* to redeem their vows, and that it caused great scandal.

¹⁹ E.g. Alberic da Romano, *Hist. Dipl.* v. 1053.

²⁰ Matt. Paris describes the painful state of mind of the prelates, who felt themselves between Scylla and Charybdis, and who found the letters of the pope rather poor comfort (p. 374). The encouragement seems to have been constantly repeated, for the historian says of them afterwards, *qui cum timerent minas Imperatoris si transfretarent, frequenter epistolas et nuntios a domino Papa receperunt consolatorias et admonitorias, ut non omitterent navigando ad Concilium properare.*

²¹ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 1053. Most historians (notably Raumer and Milman) have confused Gregory of Romagna, legate at Genoa, with Gregory of Montelongo, legate at Milan. If any proof were needed that they are different persons, it would be supplied by Frederick's letter written in May 1241, in which both are mentioned (*Hist. Dipl.* v. 1126). To the one the pope writes as *G. de Monte Longo, subdiacono et notario nostro*, to the other *G. de Romania subdiacono et capellano nostro*. They were not cardinals.

Genoa for the hire of an armed fleet from the government of the republic, taking care above all that no news of it should reach the ears of the emperor or his adherents. Letters were sent also to the podestà of Genoa to facilitate the negotiations, and to the legates in France and England, James, cardinal-bishop of Preneste, and Otho, cardinal-deacon of S. Nicholas in carcere Tulliano, to bid them make the required payments out of the large sums which they had collected against the emperor. The instructions of the Cistercian monk were that he should use all diligence to induce the Genoese to accept a moderate sum of money, 'and whereas the Genoese, as we know by experience, are accustomed to let out an armed galley for two hundred pounds Genoese²² a month, you will endeavour to have them for less.' The legate writes in the early part of December²³ that he has concluded the bargain, though with great difficulty, arising from the opposition of some without whose consent it could not be made. He appends the details of the contract, which are interesting but apparently incomplete. It seems clear that the Genoese drove rather a hard bargain with the church, and they insisted upon the payment beforehand of two months' hire.

During this period there is no doubt that the Dominican and Franciscan friars, whose founders had both been canonised by Gregory IX, were of the greatest service to the papal cause, and were employed in secret missions and intrigues of all kinds against the emperor. Frederick was very sensible of this, and in the month of November he expelled the friars of those orders from the kingdom of Sicily, allowing two only to remain in each of their houses, and these must be natives of the realm.²⁴ Shortly afterwards he wrote to the head of the Dominicans in Paris²⁵ professing friendly intentions towards the order, and asking that certain brethren might be restrained from going about with letters and embassies against the emperor, now that 'the Roman pontiff has found out this new way of calling together the rebels against the empire and our enemies from all parts under pretext of a council, so that having them present he may confirm them in their rebellion and open a wider road for scandal.' This was the light in which the project of a council presented itself to the emperor, and he was not disposed therefore to be remiss in his measures of prevention. On the alleged ground that the council would be a source of scandal and discord, and dangerous to established governments, he proclaimed to all faithful subjects of the empire that they should 'hinder, disturb, and detain, both in person and property, all

²² The *libra Januensis* was at this time rather less than a third of the mark in value. The legate exchanged 1,000 marks for 3,550 pounds Genoese.

²³ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 1061.

²⁴ Rich. of San Germano (Murat.), vii. 1045.

²⁵ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 1098.

prelates, archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, and heads or ministers of any religious order,' who should pass through their land to go to the court of Rome, whether they should go by sea or by land, privately or publicly, and that they should absolutely refuse them passage both by sea and by land.²⁶ To stimulate their loyalty the proclamation gave them free leave to capture any such persons and to appropriate their goods. Meanwhile ships were ordered to be prepared in all the seaports of the kingdom.²⁷

'Which when the pope heard,' says Matthew Paris, 'he multiplied upon him maledictions and heaped up excommunications;' but Frederick was by this time somewhat hardened against weapons of this sort, and there was much more need to multiply letters of exhortation to the trembling prelates. These were in a grievous strait. The power and the unscrupulousness of the emperor made the journey terrible to them, while the exhortations of the pope by letter and of his legates in person hardly left them a way of escape. The English prelates especially stood aloof, and watched the event with justifiable caution.²⁸ A letter written perhaps by one who meant to stay away himself, and desired to prevent others from going,²⁹ was widely circulated towards the end of the year 1240. In this there are set forth with considerable force and eloquence some of the inconveniences which may reasonably be looked for by those who are over-zealous in their loyalty to their spiritual chief, and the description of the horrors of a sea voyage is evidently written by one who has experienced them: 'The dangers upon the sea are these: indigestible biscuit, wine spoilt by the continual motion of the sea, water which breeds worms and infects with its poison everything with which it is mingled, such as cannot be drunk except with closed eyes and teeth, and with utter disgust.' Then there are storms which raise waves mountain high, and cast the ship away upon barbarous coasts; there are rocks upon which the ship may strike at any moment, or the masts, sails, and oars may be torn away by the wind and waves, and the ship left to drift helpless. Pirates may capture them, winds may drive them away from the port which they are just entering, and keep them at sea till all the provisions are consumed, and they perish of hunger and thirst.

Moreover, there is on the sea a certain intolerable abomination which none can escape or endure; for whereas our nature cannot well suffer

²⁶ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 1089.

²⁷ *Rich. of S. Germ.* (Murat.), vii. 1045.

²⁸ *Matt. Paris*, p. 374.

²⁹ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 1077. Raumer (followed as usual by Milman) ascribes this letter to Pier della Vigna. The absurdity to every attentive reader of it, not only because of the expressions used about the emperor, but still more because of the absence from it of all official style. It might easily be proved that Milman in the *History of Latin Christianity* followed Raumer during this period without verifying his citations.

sudden changes, by reason of change of air and food, and the continual motion, the stomach is provoked to vomit, and that which it took in with loathing it vomits forth with pain. . . . And since the ship though small is the receptacle of many persons, there is no distinction of places for the multitude of those whom it contains, and one lies close by the side of another suffering the various forms of the disorder.

Consequently all sense of decency is lost, and the most disgusting abominations occur. The traveller thus perishes miserably and is cast out into the sea even before he is dead, or the infection of the foul air is such that if he does not die on the sea he carries with him to the land a mortal disease. There follows a lively description of the power of the emperor, and of his merciless severity; he is 'pitiless, full of fury, without natural affection, false in words and deeds, given to vices, without devotion to God, in cruelty a second Herod, in impiety another Nero.' Possessing all the ports of the sea except Genoa, he will either capture them on the sea, or take them prisoner when they come into port, or bribe the sailors of their fleet to deliver them up, 'since he is a man of eminent sagacity and cunning,' and then what have they to expect from a man who keeps his own son in prison, and disdains to show him any pity? (It is certain that this kind of language did not go forth from Frederick's chancellery: it expresses no doubt the popular feeling about the emperor in ecclesiastical circles.) After this comes the description of the dangers of the city of Rome, *urbis inurbana pericula*, which is quoted by Raumer.

If they succeed in reaching Rome they will be even worse off than before. There will be intolerable heat, foul water, coarse, unwholesome food, a thick atmosphere, swarms of mosquitoes, multitudes of scorpions, and a race of men who are dirty, disgusting, and frantic, while underneath the city there are caves full of enormous reptiles which exhale a pestilent vapour. Finally, if they survive all this, there remain the dangers of the return journey. And all for what? That the pope may make them his instruments, and employ them not for the good of the church, but for the ends of his policy.

This letter has no official character, but it is valuable as an index of the state of mind in which many probably were. How many prelates obeyed the summons it is impossible to say, but a considerable number from France and Spain, with a few perhaps from England,³⁰ were gathered by the legates at Nice in the month of March 1241, and a Genoese fleet arrived there to convey them to Genoa. To some the fleet seemed insufficient for their safety,

³⁰ If any English prelates of note came over with the legate, they must have turned back on the way or from Nice, for we hear nothing of them afterwards. There was an envoy from the king of England, John of Lexington, and his brother the abbot of Savigny; but, to judge from Matt. Paris, the papal cause had become very unpopular with all classes in England. He says that no one was sorry except the king when the legate departed (p. 371).

and many turned back upon this pretext, sending only proctors to represent them.³¹ Those that chose to embark were brought to Genoa and lodged in the archbishop's palace, and thither came also the legate Gregory of Romagna with other prelates and with envoys from the Lombard cities who were at war with the emperor. An embassy from the Pisans had already, on behalf of the emperor, endeavoured to persuade the Genoese not to keep their bargain with the pope, but without effect.³² The emperor therefore changed his tactics, and sending envoys to Genoa³³ he signified to the prelates there assembled that he was prepared to grant them a safe passage to Rome, provided that they would go by land instead of by sea; and if they did not trust his promise, they might devise a form of security for themselves, to which he would agree. His desire was that they should have a personal interview with him, before they proceeded to the council, in order that he might fully explain his case to them, after which he would leave them to judge of it freely. He complained of the persecution which he had suffered from the pope in such feeling terms that the hearers were almost moved to tears. He had been condemned as a heretic, though unconvicted of heresy; he had been excommunicated and called an enemy of the Christian faith; his name and fame had been blackened. He had desired a council, but not one like this, to which his open enemies were specially summoned: it would be unreasonable to expect him to commit the decision to the judgment of his enemies. He would gladly have come himself to see them, but various reasons prevented him; among others, the hostility of the Genoese, *quibus noluit nisi in forti manu appropinquare*. The prelates, however, encouraged by the pope's assurances, replied, *Non est fides adhibenda cavillatoriis dictis excommunicati*, and refused to accept his proposal.

On 25 March, Frederick wrote secretly to his chief adherents in Genoa,³⁴ to inform them that he was sending Marino di Ebulis and Oberto Pallavicini to invade the Genoese territory from the north and west respectively.³⁵ This letter was intercepted, and either in consequence of this or of other intrigues the leading Ghibellines were driven out of Genoa and outlawed.³⁶ The Genoese meanwhile

³¹ Bartolomeo, ann. 1241. Bartolomeo is the Genoese official annalist of the period one of the successors of Caffaro.

³² Bartol. ann. 1241. The long speeches which Foglietta (*Historiae Genuensium*, ff. 68, 69) puts into the mouth of these envoys, and the reply of the Genoese, are doubtless of his own invention.

³³ Matt. Paris, p. 380. I see no reason to doubt this. Probably Matt. Paris had it from an English prelate who was present.

³⁴ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 1108.

³⁵ The former was a *Papia superius vicarius*, and the latter *vicarius in Lunegiana*. Pallavicini had made an attempt upon Genoese territory in November of the year before (Bartol. ann. 1240).

³⁶ See the full account of these events in Bartolomeo.

boasted loudly of their power to deal with any naval force which the emperor might send to intercept them, and jested at the fears of the prelates,³⁷ who embarked at length with some justifiable apprehensions. As to the number of the Genoese ships, the statements are conflicting, but there were probably at least thirty-two armed galleys and galeasses, with one or more sent by the count of Provence, and a certain number, perhaps a considerable number, of other ships and boats for transport.³⁸ The commander of them was Giacobbo Malocello,³⁹ of a family which was just rising to importance, a member of which fifty years later gave his name to the island of Lancerotto in the Canaries. The fleet left Genoa on St. Mark's day, 25 April, with great rejoicing and blowing of trumpets; but at first they went only as far as Porto Fino, some six miles off, where they waited a day or two for news of the enemy and then proceeded to Levanto; here they heard news of Pallavicini, who was attacking Zolasco, and the crews of the galleys desired to land and oppose him, but were hindered from doing so by the cardinals.⁴⁰ Finally having reached Porto Venere, they heard that the emperor had sent a fleet of twenty-seven galleys to join the Pisan ships, which amounted to forty large and small, and that the combined fleets were preparing to intercept their passage. Enzo was with

³⁷ *Multiplicabant loqui sublimia, asserentes vires adversantium nullatenus sibi formidabiles; meticulosos et pusillimos praelatos et literatos appellantes.* Matt. Paris, p. 380.

³⁸ The Genoese annalist says 27 galleys, whereas the fleet sent to Nice (which would naturally be smaller) is set down as 30 galleys and galeasses (i.e. *tavidac*, carrying less than half the number of men required for a galley). Other authorities referred to by Foglietta, f. 70, made the total number 60, including vessels of transport: *bien lx. vessiax armés*, says the continuation of William of Tyre (Martène et Durand, *Coll. Ampliss.* v. 719). The friar who writes to the bishop of Brescia (*Hist. Dipl.* v. 1146) says 33 galleys. By the contract with the legate, the number of armed vessels was to be 32, half galleys and the rest galeasses. The pope writing on 15 March (*Hist. Dipl.* v. 1106) had warned the legate that this would not be sufficient, but he afterwards complains that his warnings have not been heeded (Raynald, *Ann. Eccl.* 1241, § lxviii.). Possibly galleys were substituted for galeasses in whole or in part. The presence of a certain number of lighter vessels and of a galley sent by the count of Provence is mentioned in the letter of the Genoese to the pope (Rayn. 1241, § lx.). If the statement in this letter is correct, that seven galleys returned, we may reckon up the galleys (and galeasses) thus: 3 sunk, 22 captured, 7 escaped, total 32.

³⁹ Singularly enough the names of the commanders on both sides have been very generally mistaken. Villani says that the Genoese admiral was Guglielmo Obriachi, and plays upon his name thus: *Messere Guglielmo Obriachi, ch' era col nome il fatto, et huomo grosso di testa e di poco senno, non volle seguire il detto consiglio.* This is copied by most of the modern historians. 'The Genoese admiral,' says Milman, 'who had the ill-omened name Ubbriaco, the drunkard, was too proud or too negligent &c.' (vi. 219). And yet it is quite certain from Genoese sources (e.g. Bartol. ann. 1241) that the admiral was Giacobbo Malocello (or Marocello), though Guglielmo Embriaco (il Negro), who is evidently referred to by Villani, was present with the fleet. This travesty of the name Embriaco, the most famous name in the early history of the republic, may be excusable in a Florentine annalist, but hardly in a modern historian.

⁴⁰ Bartol. ann. 1241.

the imperial ships,⁴¹ but the actual commander of these was Andreolo son of Ansaldo de' Mari,⁴² while the Pisans were under Ugo Buzzacherini. The alarmed prelates desired their admiral to hold his course outside the island of Corsica, so as to avoid the enemy, but he contemptuously refused, and left Porto Venere without waiting for the reinforcement of eight galleys which was being sent after him from Genoa.⁴³

The exact course which he took is uncertain; but we may be tolerably sure that, with all his rashness, he would not choose to sail close by Porto Pisano, where the imperial fleet was supposed to be. This consideration alone would suffice to throw doubt on the statement, repeated by all modern historians, that the encounter of the fleets took place near the island of Meloria opposite Porto Pisano, where the Pisans were defeated by the Genoese in 1284. This mistake, like that already noticed in connexion with the name of the Genoese admiral, seems to be originally due to the Florentine Giovanni Villani, who, however, does not say that the fight took place near Meloria, but 'between Porto Pisano and Corsica,' a sufficiently vague expression, and adds that many of the prisoners were thrown into the sea and drowned near the rock or islet called Meloria off Porto Pisano; he further remarks that the place where the prisoners were drowned was afterwards signalised by the great defeat of the Pisans.⁴⁴ This remark is improved by Foglietta into a speech delivered by Oberto d'Oria, commander of the Genoese at the battle of Meloria in 1284, in which he reminds his men of the defeat suffered in that place, which they had to avenge. This speech, which was apparently invented by Foglietta,⁴⁵ has not only been accepted as a fact by historians, but

⁴¹ He was *totius Italiae legatus*, that is from the Alps to the northern borders of the kingdom of Sicily.

⁴² Niccolini Spinola, the admiral of the kingdom of Sicily, had died towards the end of 1240, and Frederick had appointed Ansaldo de' Mari to his place, who secretly left Genoa and entered into the service of the emperor with his son. On this occasion his place was taken by his son. Matt. Paris says that the commander of the imperial fleet was Stollius, a famous pirate, *Stollius pyratarum peritissimus*, and for some time I was unable to imagine where he had found this name. It occurs to me now that his mistake arose from misunderstanding a passage in Frederick's letter announcing his victory, in which, according to the version given by Matt. Paris, he says: *nostram diu ante praevisam classem convenire fecimus ad Pisam, victoriosum galearum stolum praepoentes*. He seems to have misunderstood *praepoentes*, and taken *stolum*, 'fleet,' as a proper name: 'setting the victorious Stollius to command our galleys.' The sentence is given differently by Rymer (*Foedera*, i. 1. 138), where we read: *nostrarum diu ante praevisarum convenire fecimus apud Pisas victoriosum galearum stolum*, and I suspect that the copy used by Matt. Paris had been conjecturally emended. First perhaps *nostram* and *praevisam* were written by mistake for *nostrarum* and *praevisarum* (abbreviated), and then *classem* and *praepoentes* may have been inserted to improve the sense.

⁴³ Bartol. ann. 1241.

⁴⁴ Villani in Muratori, xiii. 167.

⁴⁵ Neither the Genoese annalist, who at that time was one of the d'Oria family, nor any other contemporary authority says anything about a speech. Foglietta was

also regarded as conclusive evidence that the encounter of the Genoese with the imperialists in 1241 took place near Meloria. There is no doubt that the battle actually took place near the island of Giglio,⁴⁶ about ninety miles distant from Porto Pisano, where the imperialist fleet, which had been coasting along, meaning to intercept them when they should attempt to enter a port, was sighted on Friday, May 3, in such a position that it was impossible to avoid their attack. The unhappy prelates, who had been at sea more than a week and were hoping for a speedy arrival, now saw their worst fears about to be realised. In number of fighting vessels the Genoese were hopelessly inferior to the enemy, and the load of passengers and baggage which they carried was a great impediment in fighting. The Genoese in their official letter to the pope boast of having captured and sunk three galleys of the enemy in advance of the rest, the crews of which they beheaded or drowned. This may be so, but no such incident is mentioned in any other account of the battle. The authorities on the other side do indeed speak of three galleys having been sunk, but they are Genoese,⁴⁷ and the Genoese annalist makes no mention of any galleys sunk on either side. It seems probable that very little resistance was attempted, for by much the greater number of the Genoese galleys were captured with crews and passengers, and those that escaped, either five or seven, with a number of smaller craft, about which perhaps the enemy did not trouble themselves, brought back no definite news to Genoa of the fate of their companions. A week after the battle the Genoese were still under the delusion that four only of their ships had been captured, and that the rest were merely dispersed and would come in later.⁴⁸ This looks like a rather precipitate flight, especially as the admiral's ship was among those that escaped. In any case twenty-two Genoese galleys fell into the hands of the enemy, sixteen taken by the imperial ships and six by the Pisans,⁴⁹ with contents which were of enormous importance to

an excellent Latinist, who, after the example of Livy, would compose speeches when occasion served. As a trustworthy historian, he is not to be compared to Gius-tiniani.

⁴⁶ Bartol. ann. 1241 says, *in aquis Pisanorum supra Zigium*: a Dominican friar on the side of the emperor, writing to the bishop and canons of Brescia (*Hist. Dipl.* v. 1146), says, *inter insulam Cyliti et montem Chrystoliensis* (i.e. Giglio and Monte Cristo): Nicolaus de Curbio (Muratori, *Scr. Rer. Ital.* iii. 592) says, *juxta insulas quae vulgo vocantur Gilium et Planosa*: and the Sienese chronicle, cited by Muratori, xv. 26 (note), has *inter montem Christi et Montem Argentarium in mari prope Grossetum* (the island of Giglio lies exactly between Monte Cristo and Monte Argentario, and belongs now to the province of Grosseto, which was then under the dominion of Siena). Neither Matt. Paris nor Richard of San Germano mentions any definite place. Ptolomaeus of Lucca (Murat. xi. 1281) says, *apud Meloram*, adding an allusion to the events of 1284, but he is neither contemporary nor accurate (for example, he supposes Innocent IV to have been pope at the time of the battle).

⁴⁷ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 1125, 1127, 1146.

⁴⁸ Rayn. *Ann. Eccl.* 1241, § lx.

⁴⁹ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 1127.

the emperor. Among the prisoners were all the three legates (two of them being cardinals), the archbishops of Rouen, Bordeaux and Auch, the bishops of Carcassonne, Agde, Nismes, Tortona, Asti and Pavia, the abbots of Citeaux, Clairvaux, Clugny, Fécamp and others, the envoys from Milan, Brescia, Piacenza, Genoa and perhaps Bologna, the proctors who represented many other prelates who had stayed at home or turned back, and a number of attendant clergy and monks, besides fully four thousand Genoese. The archbishop of Besançon was drowned either by accident or mistake. On the other hand the Spanish prelates and some others escaped, including the archbishops of St. James of Compostella, Braga, Arles and Tarragona, and the bishops of Salamanca, Astorga, Oporto, Orense, and Plasencia, also the abbot of Savigny,⁵⁰ an Englishman (with difficulty saved by the good knight his brother, Sir John of Lexington, who was envoy from the king of England), and a few of the proctors and attendants.⁵¹

Many of the prisoners seem to have been put to death during the battle, for the Genoese in their letter to the pope complain bitterly of their enemies' barbarity in this respect,⁵² having boasted just before (perhaps falsely) of precisely similar conduct. But this was probably not all. It was quite in accordance with the customs of the time that prisoners taken in battle should be put to death in cold blood afterwards, and we may easily believe the statement of the chronicler⁵³ that many of the Genoese prisoners were drowned after the battle, owing to the fear which their number inspired. Possibly the tragedy may have been re-enacted before entering port, for the idea which connected Meloria with the battle appears primarily to be bound up with the report of a slaughter of this kind there perpetrated. It is possible that some of the prisoners may have been thrown into the sea, but it is not likely that any ecclesiastics of consequence lost their lives in this way. However, the sufferings of the clerical prisoners must have been very considerable. The letter from three of the French abbots to

⁵⁰ *Abbas Savianensis*, Matt. Paris, p. 380. Perhaps it was from him that Matt. Paris had his information.

⁵¹ For the names of those who were taken or escaped, the best authorities are the letter to the pope from the archbishops of Arles and Tarragona and several others who escaped, dated Genoa, 10 May 1241 (*Hist. Dipl.* v. 1120); the letter of some of the captured abbots to the abbot of Savigny (*Hist. Dipl.* v. 1121); and the letters of the pope to the imprisoned prelates (*Hist. Dipl.* v. 1126, and Rayn. 1241, § lxxi.). The *episcopus Placentinus* would be the bishop of Plasencia in Spain, not of Piacenza in Italy, of whom it might fairly be said that he had no business in this galley.

⁵² *Dei timore, et naturali lege, et honore crucifixi et sponsae suae pie matris vilipensis . . . tanquam carnefices et tyranni sanctorum patrum innocentem et aliorum conducentium eos sanguinem effuderunt, corpora ipsorum tam in mari quam in lignis morte tyrannico trucidantes.*

⁵³ Rich. of S. Germano, p. 1046

their brother of Savignac⁵⁴ reports that the sailors stripped them of everything without mercy, and brought them to Pisa *nudos et discalceatos* after a week of suffering on board the ships.⁵⁵ Thence (they said) all the chief ecclesiastics, except the legate of England and the archbishop of Rouen, had been transferred to the castle of San Miniato: their attendants, priests, monks, and lay brethren, remaining at Pisa. At San Miniato the two legates, two archbishops, six bishops and two abbots were kept in chains, with many priests and others. They themselves (the abbots of Citeaux, Clairvaux and Pietas Dei) were still unchained, but expected soon to share the fate of the rest. They request that the monks and others who came with them may if possible be recovered, that their monasteries may be encouraged to be careful in observance, and that special prayers may be offered for themselves. A postscript adds that the legate of England and the archbishop of Rouen have now been brought from Pisa to San Miniato.

How long the prisoners were kept there does not appear; but they were soon transferred by sea to Naples⁵⁶ under orders from the emperor, to whom Enzo had sent for instructions. Matthew Paris gives a pitiable account of their sufferings at sea and in prison:⁵⁷

While on the voyage they sat crowded together in oppression and bonds, and there came upon them intolerable heat with flies swarming round them and stinging them like scorpions; and so, tormented with hunger and thirst, and subject to the violence of the ruffianly and piratical sailors, they endured a protracted martyrdom for their obedience. The prison, therefore, when they arrived seemed to them a welcome place of rest, and the more delicate of them suffered great exhaustion and illness, of which several died, leaving the misery of this world and winning the palm of martyrdom.

At Naples they were imprisoned for a time all together in a castle near the city, where they 'lay heaped together like pigs,'⁵⁸ until they were distributed in various prisons throughout the kingdom. All suffered much, but the bishop of Praeneste, who had been legate in France, was dealt with more severely than the rest,⁵⁹ doubtless because of the emperor's strong personal feeling against him. Frederick cannot be acquitted of ungenerous harshness to his illustrious prisoners. It is evident, however, that his exasperation against his ecclesiastical enemies was extreme. The letters in which he announces his success to the king of England and to other

⁵⁴ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 1121.

⁵⁵ *Post multas tribulationes marinas quas per septimanarum circulum sustinuimus.* This of itself is enough to prove that the battle was not fought at Meloria.

⁵⁶ Rich. of San Germ. p. 1046.

⁵⁷ P. 381.

⁵⁸ Description by Thomas, chaplain of Cardinal Rainier, quoted in a manuscript of Matt. Paris.

⁵⁹ Matt. Paris, p. 381.

princes⁶⁰ represent the capture of the prelates, and especially of the bishop of Praeneste,⁶¹ as a solemn judgment of God.

The pope meanwhile had received letters both from the republic of Genoa⁶² and from some of the prelates who had escaped,⁶³ written from Genoa a week after the catastrophe. The Genoese authorities display considerable apprehension of the pope's anger, and endeavour to make the best of the disaster. Their fleet was peacefully voyaging along, they say, when a body of Pisans and Sicilians, enemies of God and of men, set upon them (one would think from this that they had never heard of the fleet collected to stop them), and though the Genoese fought valiantly (sinking three galleys), yet the enemy by the permission of heaven prevailed. By the grace of Jesus Christ the small vessels escaped, and also seven galleys with many of the prelates have returned safely. They *hear* that the bishop of Praeneste has also escaped, and hope it may be true; also they think that other galleys will come in; *four*, however, they know have been captured. They express great sorrow and much devotion to the Holy See, inviting the pope to come to Genoa, and promising to exert all their strength to avenge the defeat. In the letter which presumably accompanied theirs, from the bishops, a postscript is added, by the suggestion it may be supposed of the authorities, testifying to the zeal and fidelity of the Genoese—for the future. The vexation of the pope at the frustration of his plans (for after this the council was no more thought of) must have been very great, and all the more because he had written strongly to the legate at Genoa in March⁶⁴ to warn him that the fleet prepared was insufficient, and to bid him take every precaution and provide too many ships rather than too few. In the first letter which he writes to the prelates in prison,⁶⁵ dated June 14, he displays some natural irritation against Gregory for not having paid attention to his warnings.⁶⁶ He praises the prelates for their obedience to his summons, and consoles them in their sufferings; but neither the one nor the other letter⁶⁷ which he wrote to them contained much solid comfort; for while praising their devotion and encouraging them to constancy, he says no word about peace with the victor.

⁶⁰ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 1125.

⁶¹ *Prenestinus episcopus, nostri honoris et nominis obtrectator, qui rapacem lupum sub ovina pelle tegens, &c.*

⁶² Rayn. ann. 1241, §§ lx.—lxiii.

⁶³ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 1120 (from Raynald. § lviii.).

⁶⁴ *Ib.* v. 1106.

⁶⁵ *Ib.* v. 1136 (from Raynald. § lxviii.).

⁶⁶ *Debet deplorari quod G. de Romania, informatus per literas nostras de partis adversae potentia, tot cum potuerit juxta mandatum nostrum galeas non habuit quod hostium elisis insultibus transitus vester Christo praevio ab omni discrimine fieret expeditus.* Milman's reference to this, 'The pope expressed great anger against the Cardinal Gregory of Montelongo for not having' &c. is almost as inaccurate as it can be. The anger expressed is not great; the person referred to is not Gregory of Montelongo, but Gregory of Romagna, and neither of the two was a cardinal.

⁶⁷ Rayn. § lxxi.

Frederick had turned aside from Bologna⁶⁸ on hearing the news of the capture, and directed his march at once towards Rome. On June 20 he wrote to the senate of Rome⁶⁹ expressing a desire to settle his quarrel with the pope without delay, in order that he might turn his attention to the Tartars, who were now threatening western Europe,⁷⁰ and on July 3 he sent his well-known and interesting circular to the princes of Christendom on the subject of the Tartars and their invasion.⁷¹ Some negotiations for peace were carried on with the pope, who now perhaps showed signs of yielding. To hasten the progress of these, Frederick came round to the south of the city, and in August, after capturing Tivoli, he established his head-quarters at Grotta Ferrata. The aged pope,⁷² shut up within the city in the time of the greatest heat, fell ill, and on Aug. 21 died, leaving the temporal power practically destroyed by the policy to which he had so obstinately clung, but to the end unshaken in his determination, and convinced that the storm-tossed bark of St. Peter would ultimately emerge from the danger. The letters which summoned the council had been dated from Grotta Ferrata in August 1240, and now in August 1241 the emperor was writing from the very same place⁷³ announcing to Christendom that the divine judgment had struck down his enemy within the limits of the imperial month. Notwithstanding the many injuries which he had received, he was sorry, he said, that Gregory had died before peace was concluded between the Roman empire and the church his mother. He trusted, however, that a pope might now be raised up who would be disposed to give to the world the blessing of peace; and if the successor of Gregory IX should be such a one as this, he would desire above all things to defend and support him.

G. C. MACAULAY.

⁶⁸ Faenza had capitulated on April 13.

⁶⁹ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 1139.

⁷⁰ As soon as the quarrel was ended by the death of Gregory, he sent Enzo with a large portion of his army to assist Conrad in Germany.

⁷¹ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 1148.

⁷² The pope was old, no doubt, but hardly so old as is commonly thought. He was nephew of Innocent III, who was born in 1161. If Gregory at the time of his accession to the papacy in 1227 was eighty years old (as is commonly said), he was born in 1147, and was fourteen years older than his uncle, which is extremely unlikely, to say the least of it.

⁷³ *Hist. Dipl.* v. 1165.