

A Crusader in the Twelfth-Century Imperial Court Chapel: Identifying Albert of Aachen as Albert of Sponheim*

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Abstract:

Albert of Aachen has remained a mystery since his discovery in the 1580s. I identify him with Albert of Sponheim, a key chaplain and notary at the courts of Conrad III and Frederick Barbarossa. This identification rests on his Aachen connections, his relationship with imperial chancellor Adalbert of Saarbrücken and ties to Burgundian aristocracy, and remarkable similarities in writing style. The distinctive diplomatic phrases Albert of Aachen employs—borrowed from Gottschalk of Aachen (chief propagandist of Emperor Henry IV)—match those reintroduced by Albert of Sponheim in the mid-twelfth-century imperial chancery. I argue these two Alberts were the same person. Additionally, I propose Albert authored Aachen's forged foundation charter, which aligns with both the crusade historian and later imperial notary in perspective and stylistic approach. Thus, rather than an unknown Albert who wrote briefly early in the twelfth century before vanishing, we can trace the career of an accomplished historian, notary and diplomat whose connections enabled his extensive writing.

Keywords: Albert of Aachen, Albert of Sponheim, Aachen, imperial court chapel, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, First Crusade

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Ever since Albert of Aachen's lengthy and detailed history of the First Crusade, the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, appeared in print in 1584, Albert has remained a cipher.¹ David Hoerschel first attributed the name 'Albert of Aachen' to the chronicle in 1610, in his edition of Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*.² He is still sometimes referred to as Albert of Aix, reflecting the old idea

* I have tested my Albertian hypothesis on many scholars, and I am grateful to all of them: Nora Berend, John Arnold, Bernd Schneidmüller, Lars Kjær, Myra Bom, Cecilia Gaposchkin, Len Scales, Allan Murray, Fiona Griffiths and Manuel Kamenzin have all heard and commented on this paper in some of its key stages, and their advice has been fundamental to improving the paper time and again. Most notably, I would like to thank the attendees of the Crusades and Latin East seminar at the Institute of Historical Research (London) on 27 November 2023, who critically, but helpfully commented on my work. I would especially like to thank Susan Edgington for corresponding with me and debating various Albertian questions, strewing helpful hints all along the way.

¹ *Chronicon Hierosolymitanum, Id est, De bello sacro historia, exposita libris XII. & nunc primum in lucem edita*, ed. Reiner Reineccius (Helmstedt, 1584).

² Anna Komnene, *Alexiados libri VIII, ab Anna Comnena de rebus a patre gestis scripti*, ed. David Hoeschel (Augsburg, 1610), [unnumbered introductory pages: VIII].

that the adjective *Aquensis* (Albert's name appears as: 'Adalb(er)tus, canonicus et custos Aquensis ecclesie') meant Aix-en-Provence and not Aix-la-Chapelle, or Aachen. The question of which *Aquae* Albert belonged to was solved successfully by Cornelius Peter Bock already in 1843,³ but this is also the extent of our knowledge about Albert as a historical figure, as opposed to Albert the crusade historian. In this article, I propose to identify the Aquensian Albert with another well-known Aquensian Albert, showing that, while other candidates can be found, they are extremely unlikely to be identified with the crusade author.

Albert's identity matters significantly beyond crusade history or Holy Roman Empire scholarship. By demonstrating these fields share a major figure from the twelfth-century intellectual and political elite, I aim to reconnect two scholarly traditions that have hitherto largely ignored one other. German scholarship has traditionally marginalized crusade studies, despite significant contributions from scholars like Reinhold Röhricht and Hans Eberhard Mayer. Even major biographies of crusading emperors, including Frederick Barbarossa, barely address their crusades; notably, the only monograph on his Third Crusade participation came from scholar-diplomat Ekkehard Eickhoff.⁴ By revealing that Albert of Sponheim, who introduced the phrase 'sacrum imperium' into imperial terminology was central to crusading's intellectual development, I seek to reunify source material fragmented by nineteenth-century nationalist scholarship and its enduring academic consequences. Moreover, if a prominent crusade chronicler was simultaneously among the Empire's foremost political advisers and a crusader himself, then the Empire's intellectual history requires substantial revision.

The present contribution will not, however, settle the matter definitively, primarily because the extant evidence is too large to be covered within the scope of a single article. I intend to treat the Albertian questions in full in my book-length study of Aachen and the imperial court chapel and chancery of the twelfth century. The problem is easy to explain but hard to correct: little to nothing is known about the internal life of twelfth-century Aachen, the home of Albert the crusade historian. Apart from one brief overview article on Aachen's historiography until the French Revolution,⁵ no study covers the many extremely badly known and even less well understood narrative sources for Aachen's history. Without an extensive

³ Cornelius Peter Bock, 'Albertus Aquensis', *Niederrheinisches Jahrbuch für Geschichte, Kunst und Poesie* 1 (1843): 42–101.

⁴ Ekkehard Eickhoff, *Friedrich Barbarossa im Orient. Kreuzzug und Tod Friedrichs I.* (Tübingen, 1977).

⁵ Erich Meuthen, 'Aachen in der Geschichtsschreibung (bis 1800)', in *Speculum historiale. Geschichte im Spiegel von Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsdeutung. Festschrift Johannes Spörl*, ed. Clemens Bauer, Laetitia Boehm, and Max Müller (Freiburg, 1965), 375–92.

investigation into this impressively large, deeply Carolingian and staunchly imperial context, it is impossible for scholars to appreciate any single building block in the edifice, including Albert of Aachen.

Beyond Aachen the physical place, however, one must take into consideration a much larger and perhaps even more mysterious entity, the imperial court chapel. In 1985, Rainer Maria Herkenrath, the ablest and most productive of the diplomatists working on the edition of Frederick Barbarossa's diplomata since the 1950s, declared that not enough material has been gathered for an overview of the court chapel to be written.⁶ With this proclamation, scholars gave up on trying to solve the great puzzle of the internal operations and functions of the imperial court, even when Friedrich Hausmann, Josef Fleckenstein, and Wolfgang Petke paved the way, when they systematically analysed the periods 751–1056 and 1106–52.⁷ Fleckenstein and Timothy Reuter sparred over the question of what the court chapel's role was, but the debate ended without a resolution.⁸ In 2022 I began preparing a book, which will continue where previous scholars left off working on the court chapel and chancery, but also offer a revision of how the system operated – and through whom.

This article can only offer a glimpse into the vast background for one of the most eminent crusade narratives, especially as Albert's *Historia Ierosolimitana* is by far the longest and most detailed account of the First Crusade, a seminal event in European history. Who the author was matters a great deal, as do his politics, his religious views, his familial and personal relationships, his career – in a word, his biography. By demonstrating that the best candidate to be identified as Albert of Aachen is Albert of Sponheim, I also intend to show that the imperial court chapel and its network should interest crusade historians a great deal more than it has, for the German emperors' ties to the crusading world and to particular crusade expeditions were much stronger than is commonly thought, both in crusade studies and in the classical *Reichsgeschichte*.

⁶ Rainer Maria Herkenrath, *Die Reichskanzlei in den Jahren 1181 bis 1190* (Vienna, 1985), 29.

⁷ Friedrich Hausmann, *Reichskanzlei und Hofkapelle unter Heinrich V. und Konrad III* (Stuttgart, 1956); Josef Fleckenstein, *Die Hofkapelle der deutschen Könige*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1959–66); Wolfgang Petke, *Kanzlei, Kapelle und königliche Kurie unter Lothar III. (1125 – 1137)* (Cologne, 1985).

⁸ Josef Fleckenstein, 'Zum Begriff der ottonisch-salischen Reichskirche', in *Geschichte, Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft. Festschrift für Clemens Bauer zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Erich Hassinger, J. Heinz Müller, and Hugo Ott (Berlin, 1974), 61–71; Timothy Reuter, 'The "Imperial Church System" of the Ottonian and Salian Rulers: A Reconsideration', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 33 (1982): 347–74; Josef Fleckenstein, 'Problematik und Gestalt der ottonisch-salischen Reichskirche', in *Reich und Kirche vor dem Investiturstreit. Vorträge beim wissenschaftlichen Kolloquium aus Anlaß des 80. Geburtstags von Gerd Tellenbach*, ed. Karl Schmid (Sigmaringen, 1985), 83–98.

Which Albert of Aachen? The candidates for identification

Before attempting such an identification, one must address the view of Susan Edgington, who edited and translated Albert's chronicle, and spent decades working on him, that it is impossible to do so, especially as her conclusions are the most recent and the best supported by the evidence. In my opinion, a more complex methodology can succeed where previous attempts at identification have failed. This would require one to look at style, vocabulary, family relations, court chapel and chancery connections and other networks, and differences from William of Tyre's narrative, and to find an Aquensian who would fit the details that one can mine out of Albert's long crusade chronicle. That is to say: in order to have a chance at identifying our author, we must gather as much information as possible regarding what makes him so particular, even unique, among the historians of the First Crusade. Many may spring to mind immediately, but let us start with the author's name.

The name Albert, 'custos' of Aachen, only appears in one manuscript: Edginton's E = Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, MS 102 (Liège, s. XII^{med}), which was originally written around 1140, but the first part of it was rewritten around 1200. Unfortunately, the naming of Albert occurs precisely in the later section. Edgington concludes that this makes the identification uncertain and perhaps impossible. This, however, is not so: as the manuscript's new text does not obviously deviate from the old redaction, one can conclude that it was copied either from the same exemplar or from a closely related manuscript.⁹ Curiously, such an exemplar or a copy of it has never been found, nor has an Aquensian copy of Albert's text ever surfaced. The question, then, is one of possibilities: did the early thirteenth century copyist introduce a new name to the old text, or did he copy it from an earlier manuscript? And if he copied the line, whence did he copy it?

For this one must, indubitably, turn to the relationship of manuscript E to Aachen, the supposed point of origin for the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. Manuscript E comes from Liège, the centre of the diocese that contains Aachen, and the two cities are only 45 kilometres apart. One also ought to consider the oversight that the diocesan bishop of Liège had over Aachen, and that the Aquensian canons, especially those from Charlemagne's Marienstift, often held prebends in Liège's cathedral and other convents, and they frequently attended Liège's schools,

⁹ Edgington does not directly state why this should be the case, but one can judge as much from the variants that E3 (the later hand in manuscript E) preserves, as opposed to the rest of the manuscript transmission.

where the famous Rupert of Deutz taught around 1115.¹⁰ As such, local knowledge and tradition about the crusade author could have been handed down easily, either in Liège or in Aachen, even if the manuscripts we have do not contain it.

However, one has to go beyond structures and likelihoods. In 1843, Bock proposed that an Aquensian custos Albert from the 1180s was the author of the crusade history.¹¹ This cannot be true, as Albert notes in his prologue to the *Historia Ierosolimitana* that he was writing down what he perceived ‘auditu et relatione’ (‘through hearing and reporting’) by returning crusaders.¹² This is commonly read to mean that Albert must have been a contemporary of the First Crusade (1095–99) or,¹³ if one interprets the expedition he mentions in the prologue to mean the whole crusade movement, and not just the undertaking up to Jerusalem’s capture in 1099, then he ought to have been a contemporary of the events of 1095–1119 at least in part. While Edgington has postulated that Albert was born around 1080 and that it is possibly his clerical vocation that prevented him from taking a crusading vow, that remains in the realm of conjecture.¹⁴

Moreover, one cannot prove that he collected the stories of the returning crusaders around 1099–1102, which is necessary for Edgington’s other suggestion, that Albert perhaps finished his narrative at VI, 54 – that is, just as the first crusaders left the now Christian city of Jerusalem.¹⁵ This, Edgington notes, would explain why William of Tyre is close to Albert’s narrative up to this point but no further. Yet, there are three other ways to explain this. First, someone might have copied Albert’s voluminous text only up to that point and decided that the rest was of no interest, and William then used such a manuscript. Or someone could even have redacted Albert’s text, which would explain why Albert and William often differ on key points, from dating and chronology to facts. Knoch’s parallel listing of discrepancies between Albert and William will have to suffice the curious reader for now.¹⁶ This has not been addressed by scholars until now, and remains a *desideratum*.

¹⁰ Jean-Louis Kupper, *Liège et l’église impériale XIe-XIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1981), 381.

¹¹ Bock, ‘Albertus Aquensis’, 60–2, 73, 78.

¹² AA, I.1, at 2.

¹³ I would like to thank Christoph T. Maier, for noting that this is not necessarily true since the author could also have fed on oral traditions spanning generations.

¹⁴ AA, XXIII–XXIV.

¹⁵ AA, XXV.

¹⁶ Peter Knoch, *Studien zu Albert von Aachen: Der erste Kreuzzug in der deutschen Chronistik* (Stuttgart, 1966), 152–211.

Knoch's solution, which is our third option, was to invoke Bernhard Kugler's old hypothesis that Albert and William used a common Lotharingian chronicle to cover the period up to late 1099.¹⁷ Edgington has dismissed this as unlikely, but has not reconciled the many differences between the two authors.¹⁸ However, as noted already, Albert openly invokes both his oral *and* written sources at the beginning of his account of the First Crusade.¹⁹ Edgington has shown that Albert almost certainly listened to a version of the *Chanson d'Antioche* that was contemporary to the First Crusade, but which we have only in a redaction from the 1180s by Richard of Graindor, and not in the original of Richard le Pélerin.²⁰ Leaving aside the many tales that Albert is the sole authority for, one is left with a significant body of similarities – but also dissimilarities – between him and William. These can best be explained by the existence of a terse Lotharingian chronicle, whose account each author tempered with the other evidence at his disposal. Albert consulted returning crusaders, while William consulted written documents and perhaps inquired among his elders.

But even were one not to believe in the existence of the Lotharingian chronicle, there is no evidence in favour of Albert having written the *Historia Ierosolimitana* around 1102. If anything, his narrative flows continuously at least until 1111, if not 1119. One may wonder at this assertion because of the serious disparities between the volume of information Albert provides about the periods 1095–99 (books I–VI), 1099–1111 (books VII–XI) and 1111–19 (book XII), but this can easily be linked to either Albert's interest in the Lotharingian participation in the crusade, or to his contacts and providers of information. It is hard to ignore Albert's praise of Godfrey of Bouillon and Baldwin I of Hainaut, the two brothers who, having descended from the dukes of Lotharingia, ruled the kingdom of Jerusalem. Even more to the point, a final panegyric to both occurs at the end of book XII, which shows that Albert did not forget Duke Godfrey two decades after his passing.²¹ Thus, there is no need to suppose that his account of the First Crusade was written immediately after it. Albert's known chronological deviations from the rest of crusade authors can be understood more easily if one accepts that he wrote his history later, as it would allow for more corruption of the original information, which would have been accessible at least to the crusade participants among the chroniclers.

¹⁷ Bernhard Kugler, *Albert von Aachen* (Stuttgart, 1885), *passim*, but especially 410, where Kugler makes the case that the Lotharingian chronicle went up to 1119; Knoch, *Studien zu Albert von Aachen*, 29–63.

¹⁸ AA, XXVI.

¹⁹ AA, I.1, at 2.

²⁰ Susan B. Edgington, 'Albert of Aachen and the *Chansons de Geste*', in *The Crusades and Their Sources: Essays Presented to Bernard Hamilton*, ed. John France and William G. Zajac (London, 1998), 23–37.

²¹ AA, XII.29–30, at 870–4.

Moreover, it is much more likely that Albert did, in fact, use the lost Lotharingian chronicle while writing his own Lotharingian-centered history of the crusade, but he did so years after 1099, as his narrative focus never really leaves Godfrey and Baldwin. One can easily see that the two halves of Albert's work do not fit together perfectly, but the solution to the problem is not to postulate several writing phases by the same man. Rather, it seems that Albert tried to integrate the earlier chronicle into his own completionist narrative. That this led to redacting mistakes is no surprise.²² The *terminus post quem* for the writing of the *Historia Ierosolimitana* thus ought to be set to 1119.

The *terminus ante quem* is less fraught. Edgington noted that the catalogue of Egmond Abbey, north of Amsterdam, is the earliest source to mention Albert's history. As this dates to between 1128 and 1130,²³ Albert must have written between 1119 and 1130. Had he begun much earlier, one ought to expect that he would have collated much more material for the last book, though this is not necessary, as he may have wanted to stop with the death of the second Lotharingian king of Jerusalem. Thus, the Albert we are looking for needs to have been active in Aachen within that timeframe.

Before the search itself begins, one has to address one final *caveat*: are we certain that the author was called Albert? As Edgington notes, Aachen contained the convent of St. Adalbert, which means that its sons were almost certainly called Albert / Adalbert (the younger and the older variants of the same name, respectively) more than was typical elsewhere.²⁴ The Eberbach manuscript from the mid-twelfth century even mentions that 'the author of this book is called Gunfridus' ('auctor huius libri vocatur Gunfridus') and, a while later, that 'he is called Godefridus' ('nominatur Godefridus').²⁵ Thus, one could argue that this manuscript names the author, even if 'huius libri' may mean just this particular volume, and 'auctor' does not necessarily mean author in our sense, or even the scribe that copied it, but perhaps just the person that had the copy made. The Liège manuscript, dating to around 1140, but rewritten around 1200, contains the phrase: 'Incipit hystoria Iherosolimitane expeditionis, edita ab adalb(er)to, canonico et custode aquensis Ecclesie' ('Here begins the history of the Jerusalemite expedition, published [*or*: brought forth] by Adalbert, canon and custos of the

²² See, for example, the different datings that Albert and William give for the crusaders' arrival before Antioch (Albert: Wednesday; William: 18 October) or for Kerboga's siege of Edessa (Albert: three days; William: three weeks). Examples in Knoch, *Studien zu Albert von Aachen*, 172 and 180.

²³ AA, XXV.

²⁴ AA, XXIII.

²⁵ AA, XXXVIII.

Aquensian church').²⁶ Even if one accepts the manuscript from Liège as coeval to that from Eberbach, one must acknowledge that neither of these incontrovertibly denotes the author. Just as 'auctor' can mean the copyist (or possibly the patron) in the latter case, so can 'edere' in the former. We would thus be at a stalemate, were it not for the added 'canonico et custode aquensis Ecclesie', which at least indicates a canon of Aachen's Marienstift, the confirmed home of the author.²⁷ Based on these pieces of evidence, our author *may* be an Aquensian Albert, but this is not necessarily true.

Several Alberts appear in early to mid-twelfth-century Aachen. The first is Adalbert of Saarbrücken, the later archbishop of Mainz (1111–37), who in 1108 appears as the Marienstift's provost.²⁸ He must be ruled out as a candidate because of his high office in 1108, and his even higher office thereafter. Moreover, Adalbert is first mentioned on 14 February 1106 as the imperial chancellor, and as provost of St. Cyriakus in Neuhausen near Worms at an unspecified date in 1106, which means that he cannot have been the custos of Aachen by that point. Additionally, Adalbert's family was connected to Mainz, Worms, Lorsch and Speyer, that is, the northern Upper Rhineland. His brother, Friedrich, was the first count of Saarbrücken near Metz, and it seems that the family originated from this region.²⁹ While this region is of great interest to Albert of Aachen, no Burgundian connection can be identified in his life, which is quite important (as we will see below). Adalbert is very unlikely to be the crusade historian Albert of Aachen. Had he been that man, we would not be looking for a 'custos', but at least for a 'praepositus Aquensis' in any transmission of the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, as that would have been his last and most significant Aquensian office, if not the only one he ever held. Finally, Adalbert of Saarbrücken was imprisoned without trial by Henry V in 1112, and only released in 1115, so he had little love for the emperor either then or

²⁶ Knoch, *Studien zu Albert von Aachen*, 16.

²⁷ It is not necessary to mention the Marienstift together with 'Aquensis', as contemporary sources saw that as a given. There is but one exception to this rule, when the provost of St. Adalbert is referred to as 'Aquensis' without further qualifications: *Conradi III. et filii eius Heinrici diplomata*, ed. Friedrich Hausmann, MGH DD 9 (Hanover, 1969), Doc. 78, at 139: 'Richerus prepositus Aquensis'. When this same Provost Richer of St. Adalbert gave a charter in 1173, he styled himself and his dean as 'Ego Richerus dei gratia ecclesie sancti Adalberti humilis <prepositus> et Everelmus decanus' in the intitulatio, while the witness list noted them as 'Richerus ipsius ecclesie prepositus, Everelmus decanus'. Two canons of the Marienkirche follow a long list of Adalbertian canons: 'Werenbertus Aquensis magister, Waleramnus ibidem decanus'. To be found in: *Aachener Urkunden 1101–1250*, ed. Erich Meuthen (Bonn, 1972), Doc. 170, at 415, ll. 1–3, and 416, ll. 18–23. Thus, even within their own institution, the canons of St. Adalbert would term the canons of St. Mary as 'Aquenses', the Aquensians.

²⁸ *Aachener Urkunden 1101–1250*, Doc. 20 at 167, l. 2: 'Albertus prepositus Aquensis ecclesie et cancellarius regis'.

²⁹ Stephanie Haarländer, 'Die Mainzer Kirche in der Stauferzeit (1122–1249)', in *Handbuch der Mainzer Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 1, *Christliche Antike und Mittelalter*, pt. 1, ed. Friedhelm Jürgensmeier (Würzburg, 2000), 290–1.

after 1119: he would not have called Henry's capture of Paschal II in 1111 as having been done 'powerfully and gloriously' ('potenter et gloriose').³⁰ Nor would he, a scion of a comital family from the Upper Rhine, have used a mixed Franco-German Latin, as was typical of the region around Aachen and Liège.

An Albert is mentioned in local Aquensian charters in 1134 and 1158.³¹ The Albert in the entry of 1158 cannot be identified with Albert of Sponheim, Aachen's provost of 1153–58/9, because this man was only a canon. Therefore, the Marienstift had at least two Alberts at this point. But who were they? And was either of the two the 'Adelbertus' of 1134? This can be easily resolved by a method that Erich Meuthen, Aachen's archivist, never used in his works. Namely, medieval charter witnesses are usually arranged in a hierarchical fashion in descending order. Usually, one can find the clergy coming ahead of the laity, though magnates could come before less important clergy, but not prelates. In an abbey or a convent, however, one would also follow the order of seniority, that is, the time spent at the institution, or one would assign a higher position to someone holding an important office. This was usually the provost and the dean, but other conventual officers, such as the cantor, custos, camerarius, cellerarius and others could be assigned one as well. Aachen fits this pattern quite neatly, though not all offices are treated as special dignities.³²

It is important that the 'Adelbertus' of 1134 appears in the witness list as the tenth named canon, and the twelfth member of the convent overall.³³ This would make him a young or at least junior (but not too junior!) member of the convent, especially as twelfth-century Aquensian documents almost never name more than the provost, the dean and only a few canons – whereas this document cites fifteen of them.³⁴ Indeed, the only charter before 1134 to provide a witness list dates to 1108, and the next charter to contain one is the 1158 document.³⁵ Moreover, we do not even know for certain who the provosts were in the periods 1104–08, 1108–12, 1122–29, 1167–73 (provosts appear in 1167, 1170, 1173, but are mentioned only once, so the length of their tenures is uncertain), 1177–80, 1185–89, 1194–97).³⁶ Therefore, as the 1134 charter is the only document of the period between 1100 and 1150

³⁰ AA, XI.48, at 824.

³¹ *Aachener Urkunden 1101–1250*, Doc. 24 at 175, l. 32 (Adelbertus), and Doc. 30 at 195, l. 35 (Albertus).

³² A partial prosopography of Aachen's Marienstift, in Peter Offergeld, 'Die persönliche Zusammensetzung des alten Aachener Stiftskapitels bis 1614' (PhD thesis, RWTH Aachen University, 1974).

³³ *Aachener Urkunden 1101–1250*, Doc. 24, at 175.

³⁴ Several twelfth-century charters name so many witnesses, but this is the first such example.

³⁵ *Aachener Urkunden 1101–1250*, Doc. 20, at 167, and Doc. 30, at 195.

³⁶ Erich Meuthen, 'Die Aachener Pröpste bis zum Ende der Stauferzeit', *Zeitschrift des Aachener Geschichtsvereins* 78 (1966/67): 23–53.

to mention a canon Albert (and not a provost Albert), this ‘Adelbertus’ remains as the best candidate for our crusade historian. Naturally, this is only true if the name Albert is really that of the author, a matter which I will discuss further below. For now, let us take this possibility seriously.

By 1158 this Albert would have achieved a higher position in the list as the 24 intervening years would elevate him in the order of seniority, but, oddly, in a list that includes the dean and sixteen canons, an Albert appears as the thirteenth canon, and fourteenth overall. This would make the Albert of 1158 a junior member of the convent, who cannot have been a member in 1134.³⁷ In 1179, an Albert was custos of Aachen, and he was listed third among ten canons, and fourth overall.³⁸ It is likely that this is the same man as the Albert of 1158, as 21 years was a sufficient period of time for his rise in the ranks to have occurred. The same man must have then become the ‘vicedominus’, or the dean’s representative, in the years 1180–85, judging by his placement before another Albert, who held the lower office of ‘camerarius’. This second man then appears in the sources until 1192, and finally in 1200 as cantor.³⁹ Therefore, the custos Albert of the 1180s would almost fit the Liège manuscript’s copying around 1200, but he cannot have been the author of the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. If, however, the ‘edita’ in the line ‘Incipit hystoria Iherosolimitane expeditionis, edita ab adalb(er)to, canonico et custode aquensis Ecclesie’ is taken to mean ‘given’ (to the copyist), then the circle could close here: custos Albert gave a member of the chapter of Liège Cathedral the Aquensian manuscript (perhaps the autograph) to have it copied. In this case, the note is no older than the rewriting of manuscript E, nor should one read more into it. If one is to continue with the idea of custos Albert as the author of the text, two candidates are left: the Albert of 1134 and the provost of 1153–58/9, Albert of Sponheim. As I will show below, these two are one and the same person.

In 1966, Peter Knoch briefly entertained the idea that Albert of Sponheim, whose career in the imperial chancery was not fully known at the time, was the famous Aquensian historian.⁴⁰ Ferdinand Ehlen proposed as much in 1904, when it was only known that he was provost of Aachen in the 1150s.⁴¹ Rainer Maria Herkenrath had already dismissed the idea in

³⁷ *Aachener Urkunden 1101–1250*, Doc. 30, at 195.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Doc. 203, at 472, l. 56: ‘Alberti custodis’.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Doc. 39, at 219, l. 36 (Albertus vicedominus, Albertus camerarius); Doc. 40, at 220, l. 24 (Albertus vicedominus).

⁴⁰ Knoch, *Studien zu Albert von Aachen*, 65, n. 7.

⁴¹ Ferdinand Ehlen, *Die Prämonstratenser-Abtei Knechtsteden. Geschichte und Urkunden-Buch* (Cologne, 1904)

1964.⁴² As Erich Meuthen immediately noted in reply to Knoch, and as Dietrich Lohrmann recently reiterated, the middle of three surviving medieval necrologies of Aachen notes the anniversary of a deacon and custos Albert on 18 January, while the necrology of Cologne Cathedral names Albert of Sponheim on 26 February, so they are clearly separate.⁴³ Both historians concluded that this renders the proposed identification impossible. Additionally, the manuscript tradition of the *Historia Ierosolimitana* names only a canon and a custos, and not a provost. Had the author achieved a higher office, certainly at least the copies made in the region of his convent would note such a detail. As they do not, it would seem that the two men cannot have been identical.

However, that argument is not as strong as it seems. Namely, it is founded on two false assumptions. The first one is that there was only one custos Albert, so that he could be easily identified in the sources. The second is that the Albert mentioned in the middle necrology is the historian. Both of these are, in fact, wrong. Firstly, the custos Albert from the 1180s cannot have been the 1120s author, as shown above. Therefore, at least one other twelfth-century Aquensian custos Albert must have existed (as previously: if the manuscript E entry means the author). Secondly, Lohrmann argued that the necrology entry of the custos Albert showed that he was a twelfth-century person, as he is located between Rudolf of Erkelenz, who is probably the same person as mentioned by Conrad III in 1147, and a judge Heribert, who is probably the same person as one named in 1100 and 1108 in Aquensian sources.⁴⁴ However, Lohrmann ignores that the middle necrology (between 1243 and 1261) was copied from the old necrology (to be found in the chapter book: Bonn, Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. S. 1559, dating to around 1174, and perhaps continued until the middle necrology was compiled) in an erratic way, so that entries were edited, left out, reorganised, or even taken over in a completely jumbled order. The only certainty is that the entries from the mid-thirteenth century were written down first, after which the old necrology's entries were copied. New entries followed upon those.⁴⁵ Therefore, the custos Albert, who is mentioned on 18 January, does not have to belong to the early twelfth century. Indeed, since he is the only custos Albert mentioned in the middle

⁴² Rainer Maria Herkenrath, 'Zur Lebensgeschichte des frühstauischen Notars Albert', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 20 (1964): 562–7, at 567.

⁴³ Eduard Teichmann, 'Das älteste Aachener Totenbuch', *Zeitschrift des Aachener Geschichtsvereins* 38 (1916): 18 January, at 52 (custos Albert), and Meuthen, 'Die Aachener Pröpste', 36 (provost Albert); Dietrich Lohrmann, 'Albert von Aachen und die Judenpogrome des Jahres 1096', *Zeitschrift des Aachener Geschichtsvereins* 100 (1995/96): 129–37.

⁴⁴ Lohrmann, 'Albert von Aachen', 130–1.

⁴⁵ Albert Huyskens, 'Ein Vergleich zwischen den beiden ältesten Nekrologien des Aachener Münsters', *Zeitschrift des Aachener Geschichtsvereins* 47 (1925): 286–8.

necrology at all, it stands to reason that he is the 1180s custos, whose job it would have been to keep up the necrology until he died.

This opens up the next problem: why was the author of the *Historia Ierosolimitana* not mentioned in Aachen's necrologies? It is thought that Albert of Sponheim, as already stated, has been recorded in a necrology from Cologne Cathedral as a priest and as Aachen's provost on 26 February, but Matthias Untermann disputes this on the grounds that a necrology from Cologne would have cited Albert's Cologne offices instead of or in addition to his Aquensian functions, which it does not.⁴⁶ However, Albert's loss of status in Cologne in 1156 is a special case: as dean and then provost of the cathedral, Albert chose to support the losing candidate in the archepiscopal election that year, Gerhard of Are, provost of St. Cassius and Florentius in Bonn. Gerhard's party were the priors of the Church of Cologne, a unique institution where the provost and dean of the cathedral plus the provosts of the city's convents aspired to be the sole electors of the archbishop. For a while the convents' deans counted as well, as did the abbots of urban abbeys, but also the provosts of Bonn and Xanten, and even Soest. In 1156, for the first time in a century, the cathedral canons voted on their own and elected Frederick II of Berg (1156–58) as archbishop. Their success came through the intervention of Frederick Barbarossa, but another century would pass before they would win out against the priors.⁴⁷ It seems that either the new archbishop, Frederick II, or the cathedral canons found a way to sack Albert, the cathedral provost, as a form of retaliation for his siding with the priors against them. In these circumstances, it is no wonder that his Cologne offices were erased from memory: he was the enemy's commander-in-chief, so to say, and he was remembered for the title he held at the end of his life, not earlier. Or, differently, his Aquensian title may have been high praise. It is impossible to determine which of the two is true, for he is the only person named in the necrology with a title from Aachen.

His disappearance from Aachen can be explained in a similar way. In 1158 or 1159, Albert of Sponheim resigned his provostship of Aachen and moved to the Premonstratensian abbey of Knechtsteden near Cologne, which his supposed uncle, Hugo of Sponheim, another provost of Aachen, founded around 1130 as the family mausoleum. Albert expended enormous sums, 1500 silver marks during his lifetime and another 500 marks upon his death, on the abbey, whose construction he completed, and in front of whose main altar he was buried. The

⁴⁶ Theodor Joseph Lacomblet, ed., *Archiv für die Geschichte des Niederrheins*, vol. 2 (Düsseldorf, 1857), 11: 'Albertus presbiter Aquensis prepositus'; Matthias Untermann, 'Zur frühen Geschichte und Baugeschichte des Prämonstratenserstifts Knechtsteden bei Köln', *Jahrbuch der rheinischen Denkmalpflege* 33 (1989): 167, n. 34.

⁴⁷ Manfred Groten, *Priorenkolleg und Domkapitel von Köln im Hohen Mittelalter* (Bonn, 1980), 120–2.

western wall even contains a fresco image of him prostrated before Christ in majesty with the (reliably reconstructed) inscription ‘Albertus Aquensis praepositus’.⁴⁸ Since Albert moved from Aachen to his new institution, Knechtsteden, and apparently left his vast resources to it, it would appear that he left nothing to Aachen’s Marienstift, and was thus forgotten, especially as he was not buried there. Others would pray for his soul.

One also has to note that several other Aquensian provosts of the twelfth century are missing from the necrology. Gottschalk of Aachen (provost of Aachen 1098–1106?), Hugo of Sponheim (provost of Aachen 1129–37, archbishop of Cologne 1137), Arnold of Selehofen (provost of Aachen 1138–53, archbishop of Mainz 1153–60), Heribert (provost of Aachen 1159–63, archbishop of Besançon 1163–70), Philip of Swabia (provost of Aachen 1189–90, 1191–93, then duke of Swabia, then also Tuscany, then king of the Romans until his murder in 1208) are the only provosts mentioned in the necrology.⁴⁹ Thus, only five out of sixteen provosts were commemorated by the canons. The eminent careers, dazzling court connections and family backgrounds of the provosts were not enough to win over the canons, which means that Albert of Sponheim was no exception – he was the rule.

If Albert of Sponheim had been the *custos* of Aachen in 1134, he must have lost that title before 1140, when a certain Conrad held the office.⁵⁰ As the Egmont catalogue of 1128–30 does not refer to Albert at all, but manuscript E from Liège from about 1140 (but rewritten about 1200 on the basis of the same exemplar or a closely related manuscript) does, it is more likely that he held the office in the mid- or late 1130s rather than earlier. This fits the career of Albert of Sponheim perfectly: he held the provostship of Aachen from 1153 to 1158/9, but he served as an imperial chaplain and notary from 1139 until April 1158. *Custos* Conrad’s appearance, then, allows for – but does not prove – the identification of the two Alberts, as one disappears from Aachen just as the other enters imperial service. One cannot, in fact, prove that the ‘Adelbertus’ of 1134 was the *custos*. His place among the junior members would only reflect that the witness list ordered the canons according to seniority of tenure, not of office, but, yet again, this is not proof.

⁴⁸ Carola Fey, *Die Begräbnisse der Grafen von Sponheim. Untersuchungen zur Sepulkralkultur des mittelalterlichen Adels* (Mainz, 2003), 144–9, 232–4.

⁴⁹ Teichmann, ‘Das älteste Aachener Totenbuch’, in chronological order: Gottschalk of Aachen (24 November, at 137–8), Hugo of Sponheim (1 July, at 100), Arnold of Selehofen (25 June, at 99), Heribert (10 September, at 118), Philip of Swabia (21 June, at 97).

⁵⁰ *Aachener Urkunden 1101–1250*, Doc. 43, at 226, l. 27 (Albertus camerarius); Doc. 45, at 230, l. 35 (Albertus); Doc. 204, at 472, l. 24.

Albert of Aachen's network: Aachen, the Upper Rhine, Burgundy and the imperial court chapel

One cannot simply connect the dots between Albert of Aachen and Albert of Sponheim. The chief impediment is that little is known about the former, and the latter does not immediately stand out as the likeliest of men to have written a crusade history. And yet, there are significant reasons to believe that these two are the same person. First, the networks of Albert of Aachen and Albert of Sponheim overlap significantly and, second, their styles are roughly identical, with allowances being made for the differences between genres. The way a historian writes about the near past and the way an imperial notary drafts charters, letters and mandates are, on the surface, entirely different.

Albert of Aachen was possibly the *custos* of Aachen's Marienstift, the premier imperial convent in all the Holy Roman Empire. It was populated by the scions of the great families, and these often ascended to higher offices across the Empire. In the twelfth century, the provosts of Aachen came from the families of the counts of Saarbrücken (Adalbert, 1108–10/1), the counts of Sponheim (Hugo, 1129–37, and his nephew Albert, 1153–58/9), the ministerial family of Selehofen (Arnold, 1138–53), the counts of Andechs (Otto, 1164–66 and again 1174–77), the counts of Spitzenberg (Gottfried, 1180–85), the imperial dynasty itself (Philip of Swabia, 1189–90, 1191–93), the Swabian counts of Berg (Henry, 1191), the lords of Querfurt, who were the burgraves of the cathedral city of Magdeburg (Conrad, 1194, and his brother, Wilhelm, 1197–1213), as well as the counts of Sayn (Bruno, 1198–1204?, served as rival provost, later archbishop of Cologne).

Little is known about the canons themselves in this period, but there is a clear preponderance of Mainzer families from 1108 to 1159, as the Saarbrückens, the Rhenish Sponheimers (there is a related but separate Carinthian line), and the Selehofens all concentrated their lands around the archepiscopal city of Mainz. Otto of Andechs was, notably, a second cousin of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa – and related to Albert of Sponheim via the Carinthian Sponheimers, whom Albert visited remarkably often in his role as imperial notary. Gottfried of Spitzenberg and Henry of Berg appear to have been members of Barbarossa's Swabian elite, that is, from the emperor's homeland and his own personal duchy. That Philip of Swabia, the only emperor's son to follow the clerical path in the entire twelfth century, held the post of Aachen's provost only underscores the position's importance.

The Querfurt brothers ascended to Aachen's provostship through imperial service, it would seem, though they did have a grandmother from the Are comital family, who by now jostled over the archbishopric of Cologne with the comital family of the Rhenish Bergrs (unrelated to the Swabian Bergrs). Unsurprisingly, the only antiprovost of Aachen, Bruno of Sayn, belonged to a comital family allied with the Rhenish Bergrs against the Are family. Thus, after the Mainzer period (1108–59), Aachen fell into the hands of the Andechs, a family related to both Barbarossa and the Sponheimers. After Otto's tenure, however, a series of Swabian provosts ensued (Gottfried, Philip, Henry, Philip again), before the Magdeburger burggrafs took over, clearly as imperial favourites. They were opposed by a member of the Colognese lobby, Bruno. This is not to say that Colognese politics had no influence on Aachen before: Hugo of Sponheim was also dean of Cologne Cathedral, and briefly also archbishop. His nephew, Albert, was dean and then provost of Cologne Cathedral before his fall from grace.

In the twelfth century alone, the Marienstift's canons became bishops of Cambrai (1114), Brixen (1166), Bamberg (1177), Regensburg (1185), Würzburg (1186, 1190, 1191 and 1198), Worms (1191), Hildesheim (1194) and possibly Speyer (1123) and Osnabrück (1173), but also archbishops of Mainz (1111 and 1153), Cologne (1137), Besançon (1162) and Trier (1169).⁵¹ Other German bishops may have been canons of Aachen, but already the verifiable list is impressive and shows a wide range of bishops from the provinces of Mainz and Cologne to have been Aquensian, and the same is true also for some in the provinces of Besançon, Trier and Salzburg. The provinces of Magdeburg and Hamburg-Bremen are the only ones with no such Aquensian connection in this century.

This reflects the network of Albert of Aachen's informants extremely well. These can be perceived by accounting for all the episodes for which Albert is the sole authority, and then considering the regional affiliation of those involved. In addition to the commonly known leaders of the First Crusade, Albert mentions only a few Bavarians and Swabians, but a host of Lotharingians, as well a contingent of Burgundians.⁵² He ignores Austrians and Saxons. While this certainly reflects the real composition of the crusading army, Albert is the perfect example of how an author selects material in accordance with his worldview and range of contacts, as he focuses on the Germans and Lotharingians, while the other chroniclers prefer the north or south French contingents. But what is truly odd, and has gone unnoticed, is that Albert

⁵¹ See the best published list in Meuthen, 'Die Aachener Pröpste', 5-95, especially 23–59. This footnote covers the preceding three paragraphs.

⁵² A full list will appear in my aforementioned book-length study.

mentions few lower Lotharingians, while his upper Lotharingians are very numerous. In plain words: for a man from Aachen, Albert mentions only one Aquensian (the otherwise unattested canon Giselbert),⁵³ and several men from the retinue of Godfrey of Bouillon, but few others.⁵⁴ He has little to say about the anti-Jewish violence in Cologne, where it happened first (and much closer to Aachen), while he details the corresponding events in the city of Mainz at length, even though the two incidents seem to have been roughly similar.⁵⁵ Albert also knows the story of a nun from St. Irminen in Trier, who had been abducted by a Turk who took her as his wife, and who was liberated by the Christians in Antioch.⁵⁶ He similarly knows the tale of an archdeacon, Louis of Toul, whose diocese was a suffragan of the province of Trier.⁵⁷ These personal histories, which are often unrelated to the crusade's military actions and which no other author mentions, show clearly where Albert's best informants were: in the region between Mainz and Trier.

A third focus of Albert's, after the upper and lower Lotharingian ones, is on Burgundy. Scholars have so far passed over in silence how often Albert provides otherwise unattested Burgundian evidence. The single best example is that of Florina of Burgundy, who went on a pilgrimage with her fiancé, Prince Sven of Denmark, so that they could get married in Jerusalem. The Turks captured and killed them, putting a stop to their romantic undertaking.⁵⁸ Interestingly, William of Tyre tells the tale of Prince Sven, but not that of Florina.⁵⁹ So far both persons have been considered spurious, but historians have overlooked that Albert seems to have known Florina's family quite well, as he focuses quite strongly on Bertrand of Toulouse, the husband of Florina's sister Helie, daughter of Duke Odo I of Burgundy (1079–1102), in book XI.⁶⁰ It would be bizarre if Albert knew the family history well, but suddenly invented a crusading daughter who was engaged to a non-existent Danish prince – and even more so as Albert incorrectly calls the Norwegian king Sigurd Magnusson (1103–30), also known as Sigurd the Crusader, by his father's name, whereas other crusade historians do not make the same mistake.⁶¹ Thus, one cannot argue that Albert had access to a better Scandinavian source than other crusade authors. What he did have was a Burgundian connection.

⁵³ AA, VI.36, at 448.

⁵⁴ AA, VI.25, at 436: Baldric, Adelolf and Stabelo.

⁵⁵ AA, I.26–8, at 50–2.

⁵⁶ AA, II.37, at 126.

⁵⁷ AA, III.53, at 220–2.

⁵⁸ AA, III.54, at 222–4.

⁵⁹ WT, vol. 1, IV.20, at 261–2.

⁶⁰ AA, XI.3–40, at 776–816; Albert also knows Bertrand's son, Pons of Tripoli: AA, XII.19, at 854.

⁶¹ AA, XI.26, at 798, and XI.30–1, at 802–4.

Albert of Aachen also knows Welf V (the identification is not entirely certain), who he says was born in the kingdom of Burgundy,⁶² but also his father, Welf IV, who died on Cyprus after having completed his pilgrimage to Jerusalem.⁶³ William of Tyre knows of the former, but not the latter.⁶⁴ Albert, moreover, explicitly mentions that Welf IV travelled with Rainald II of Burgundy (1061–1097/1102), whereas more crusade historians know Rainald's brother, Stephen I of Burgundy (1065–1102). This is important, because Stephen's daughter Clemence/Margaret married Guigues IV of Albon, whose son Guigues V (1142–62) received a charter where Albert of Sponheim served as his witness, while he otherwise does not witness charters in this period.⁶⁵ Rainer Maria Herkenrath explained this oddity through the Sponheimer's family relations with the Burgundian dukes and counts. Moreover, Stephen I's son, Rainald III, later sired a daughter, Beatrix of Burgundy, who in 1156 married Frederick Barbarossa, thus making Albert of Sponheim a relative of both the Byzantine and German emperors.⁶⁶ If one compares the crusade historian's and the notary's networks, however, one immediately notices that Stephen I and Rainald II of Burgundy were brothers of Albert of Sponheim's great-grandmother, Ermentrude. And since Albert of Aachen is the single best source for the crusade of 1101–02, it is a matter of some importance to determine why exactly he narrates the failure in such detail. If the crusade historian and the Sponheimer were one and the same person, the problem is resolved: the family network of the latter explains the Burgundian connections that neither Aachen nor Adalbert of Saarbrücken seem to have had.

Thus, whoever Albert of Aachen was, his network was not just Aquensian, but upper Lotharingian and Burgundian, too. If one compares this to the list of Aquensian canons who became bishops in the early to mid-twelfth century, one can notice a complete overlap: Cambrai, Cologne, Mainz and possibly Speyer, and somewhat later also Trier and Besançon were tied to the Aquensian network. This covers literally every part of the region that Albert knew well.

But one Aquensian connection stands clearly above the rest as Albert's informant: Adalbert of Saarbrücken, provost of Aachen (1108–11?), imperial chancellor (1106–11) and archbishop of Mainz (1111–37), who started out as Henry V's (1106–25) closest adviser, only

⁶² AA, III.10, at 154.

⁶³ AA, VIII.43, at 632.

⁶⁴ WT vol. 1, III, index, at 196; III.21, at 223–4.

⁶⁵ *Friderici I. diplomata*, I, 1152–1158, ed. Heinrich Appelt, MGH DD 10, 5 vols (Hanover, 1975–90), Doc. 97, at 164 (13 January 1155). See also Herkenrath, 'Der frühstauische Notar Albert von Sponheim', 92.

⁶⁶ Herkenrath, 'Der frühstauische Notar Albert von Sponheim', 92–5.

to become his most bitter enemy and a major leader of the opposition in 1112, when he was imprisoned without trial until he was released in 1115.⁶⁷ As a son of Count Siegbert II of Saarbrücken (1080–1105), whose base of operations was near Trier, Adalbert is the ideal connection between Aachen, Mainz and Trier precisely during the years when Albert was well informed.

But there is more than meets the eye here: Adalbert was not the first provost of Aachen to work in the imperial chancery. That is, connections to the style of imperial charters, which the crusade historian clearly shows, are not unexpected in Aachen, even if scholars have never considered the matter. In fact, his predecessor was none other than the famous Gottschalk of Aachen (1098–1106?), who appears in the MGH edition of Henry IV's diplomata as the innovative 'Adalbero C'.⁶⁸ This is an important link because Albert of Aachen has puzzled scholars in many ways, but also for the strange dating style that he used: 'Anno Dominicae Incarnationis millesimo nonagesimo quinto, indictione quarta, Henrico, quarto rege ac tertio imperatore Romanorum Augusto, anno regni sui quadragesimo tertio, imperii vero decimo tertio, [...]' ('In the 1095th year of the Lord's Incarnation, during the fourth indiction, while Henry, the fourth as king and the third as the august emperor of the Romans, was in his forty-third year of kingship, but in the thirteenth year of his emperorship, [...]').⁶⁹ As no diplomatist has ever considered Albert, it has passed unnoticed that this style was developed by Gottschalk between 1084 (Henry IV's imperial coronation) and 1089 (Henry's final Saxon war and his marriage to Praxedis of Kiev), when the 'augustus' part was added to the rest.⁷⁰ Gottschalk was almost alone in using that style, but a notary from Liège and (very sporadically) the imperial notary 'Humbert A' adopted it under his influence.⁷¹

The finest example can be found in D HIV 470a, a charter drafted by Gottschalk for the convent of Saint-Jacques in Liège in Aachen on 1 June 1101: 'Anno dominice incarnationis

⁶⁷ Hausmann, *Reichskanzlei und Hofkapelle*, 8–43; Petke, *Kanzlei, Kapelle und königliche Kurie*, 269–302.

⁶⁸ 'Adalbero C' is the cipher used by the MGH editors to denote that the notary in question is the third to appear during the tenure of the Adalbero of Metz as chancellor (6 October 1069 – 22 July 1076).

⁶⁹ AA, I, 6, at 8.

⁷⁰ *Heinrici IV. diplomata*, II, 1077–1106, eds. Dietrich von Gladiß and Alfred Gawlik, MGH DD 6, 3 vols (Berlin, 1941–78), Doc. 363, at 484 (17 June 1084), and Doc. 408, at 540 (22 November 1089, drafted by a monk from Stavelot, while Humbert A copied the eschatocol).

⁷¹ *Heinrici IV. diplomata*, II, 1077–1106, Doc. 418, at 558 (5 May 1091, drafted and copied by Adalbero C = Gottschalk of Aachen); Doc. 424, at 570 (2 September 1091, eschatocol drafted and copied by Humbert A); Doc. 454, at 614 (15 May 1097, Adalbero C added the chrismon to an unknown scribe's text); Doc. 470a, at 639 (1 June 1101, drafted by Adalbero C); Doc. 471, at 641 (3 August 1101, drafted by Adalbero C, but copied by the same Liègeois scribe as Doc. 470); Doc. 473, at 644 (11 February 1102, drafted by Adalbero C, copied by the same Liègeois scribe as Docs. 470–471); Doc. 479, at 654 (15 July 1103, copied by the same Liègeois scribe as Docs. 470–471 and 473).

MCoIo, indictione VIII, anno autem domni Heinrici tercii Romanorum imperatoris augusti ordinationis XLVIIIo, regni XLVIo, imperii vero XVIII, data kal. iunii; actum Aquisgrani' ('In the 1101st year of the Lord's Incarnation, during the ninth indiction, and also in the forty-eighth year since the ordination of Lord Henry, third august emperor of the Romans, in the forty-sixth year of his kingship, but in the eighteenth year of his emperorship, given on the calends of June. Done in Aachen.').⁷² As the Aquensian provost drafted this in Aachen itself, the chance of Albert of Aachen adopting this style from anyone else is extremely small, especially as no notary of Henry V continued its use. The next notary to adopt this style was Albert of Sponheim in favour of Frederick Barbarossa in 1155–58, after his imperial coronation. Other notaries occasionally followed Albert's lead, but the dating type was typical only for his last years in the chancery.⁷³ To note: Albert's dating was seen as so unique that it is the sole element that distinguishes his work from that of his pupil, the hereto unidentified notary 'Rainald C'.⁷⁴ Thus, once again Albert of Aachen is connected to Albert of Sponheim. But he is also connected to someone unexpected: the chief propagandist of the Henricians, Gottschalk of Aachen.

This is easy to contextualise. Albert of Aachen openly called Henry IV 'Henricus, quartus rex ac tertius imperator Romanorum Augustus', which is typical for medievalists today, but at the time showed acceptance of Henry IV's coronation by Antipope Clement III (1084–1100), which Gregorians often did not accept.⁷⁵ Albert uses the style 'Emperor Henry III' on multiple occasions, so one cannot treat that as a slip.⁷⁶ Moreover, Albert sided with the imperial party on the most controversial decision of the entire Investiture Controversy, the arrest of Pope Paschal II by Henry V in April 1111. To quote: 'tempore quo Heinricus quintus rex, imperator quartus Rome, plurimos sibi hostili resistentes impetu in ore gladii crudeliter edomuit, regnum et imperium ex hereditario iure antecessorum potenter et gloriose retinuit' ('In the time when Henry, fifth as king, and fourth as emperor of Rome, cruelly subjugated with the edge of his

⁷² *Heinrici IV. diplomata*, II, 1077–1106, Doc. 470a, at 639.

⁷³ *Friderici I. diplomata*, I, 1152–1158, Doc. 128, at 216 (27 November 1155, drafted by Albert of Sponheim, copied by the recipient's scribe); Doc. 132, at (8 January 1156, drafted by Albert, copied by his assistant Arnold II E); Doc. 133, at 225 (25 January 1156, drafted by Albert, copied by Arnold II E); Doc. 140, at 236 (13 June 1156, drafted by Albert); Doc. 150, at 254 (17 September 1156, draft influenced by Albert); Doc. 171, at 292 (23 June 1157, drafted by Albert, copied by his pupil Rainald C); Doc. 173, at 295 (4 July 1157, drafted by Albert, copied by the Würzburg scribe Heinrich); Doc. 194, at 326 (around 18 November 1157, drafted and copied by the chaplain and canon of Aachen, Heribert); Docs. 208a–210, at 349, 351 and 353 (16 March 1158, drafted by Albert, copied by Zeizolf B); Docs. 213–4, at 357 and 359 (22 April 1158, draft influenced by Albert, copied by an outsider). This is Albert's last documented appearance at court. Thereafter this style of *datatio* was used by others, albeit only occasionally.

⁷⁴ Josef Riedmann, 'Studien über die Reichskanzlei unter Friedrich Barbarossa in den Jahren 1156–1166', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 75 (1967): 337.

⁷⁵ AA, I.6, at 8.

⁷⁶ AA, III.46, at 208–10; V.13, at 354; VIII.8, at 592; VIII.15, at 604; VIII.34, at 624; X.39, at 754.

sword the many who resisted him, and [thus] he powerfully and gloriously retained the kingship and the emperorship that were his by hereditary right of his ancestors’).⁷⁷ Not only did Albert consider that to have been done *powerfully*, but even *gloriously*. Even some Henricians would not have taken such a hard line.

This is important because it gives us an insight into Albert’s politics. Thus, Albert attributed the start of the First Crusade to Peter the Hermit, which is very much a deliberate choice of argument. While this is not untrue, Albert manages to minimise the role of Pope Urban II to an extent that is distinctly odd – unless he were a Henrician.⁷⁸ Which leads us to the next question: did Albert run out of information after 1111 because of the intensifying conflicts between the Henricians and the opposition? The fall of Adalbert of Saarbrücken in early 1112 solidifies that conclusion, as it seems that all the information that Albert had after that was only the essential history of the Holy Land.

More evidence can be brought in to support this hypothesis. Thomas Asbridge noted that Albert gives a strange burst of information for Antioch in 1109–11.⁷⁹ As Albert faithfully follows the career of Bertrand of Toulouse in the Orient, but fails to record his death in 1112, one can conclude that this is where his network gave out.⁸⁰ Additionally, Stephen J. Spencer has recently shown that Albert and the *Gesta Francorum* share many particular details for the fall of Antioch in 2–3 June 1098, which shows yet again that Albert was collating information from as many sources as he could find.⁸¹

But one can go even further: Albert is the best source not just for the failed crusade of 1101–02, but especially for the Lombard contingent on it. Whereas the other Latin chroniclers mention Count Albert of Biandrate, a vassal of the archbishop of Milan, and Anna Komnene mentions him and his brother Guido, only Albert mentions Count Albert’s nephew, Otto Altaspada.⁸² Albert also mentions the Biandrate family on several other occasions that are not known to any other source,⁸³ and he even cites the Milanese Saint Ambrose appearing in a

⁷⁷ AA, XI.48, at 824. Henry V is awarded his ‘quintus’ also at X.41, at 754. My translation mostly follows that of Edgington at AA, XI.48, at 825, but with a few corrections to preserve the style of Albert’s dating clause.

⁷⁸ AA, I.2–6, at 2–8.

⁷⁹ Thomas S. Asbridge, *The Creation of the Principality of Antioch, 1098–1130* (Woodbridge, 2000), 9.

⁸⁰ AA, XI.3–40, at 776–816.

⁸¹ Stephen J. Spencer, ‘Albert of Aachen, the *Gesta Francorum*, and the Fall of Antioch: A Reflection on the Textual Independence of Albert’s *Historia Ierosolimitana*’, in *Chronicle, Crusade, and the Latin East: Essays in Honour of Susan B. Edgington*, ed. Andrew D. Buck and Thomas W. Smith (Turnhout, 2022), 71–88.

⁸² AA, VIII.1, at 586.

⁸³ AA, VIII.5, at 590–2; VIII.15, at 606; VIII.41, at 630; IX.1, at 638; IX.21, at 664; IX.30, at 674. These are only the mentions that include the ‘of Biandrate’ addition.

vision in Antioch in 1097–98.⁸⁴ As no direct Aquensian-Italian connection could be traced for this period, one has to turn to the imperial chancery for evidence. Indeed, the counts of Biandrate appear exactly where one would expect: in the retinue of Henry V in April 1111, just as he ‘powerfully and gloriously’ took his imperial birthright from the pope, to quote Albert.⁸⁵

Once again our Aquensian chronicler seems to have been informed by the court connections of Adalbert of Saarbrücken. His fall in 1112 ended Albert’s flow of information. But one can go further: Albert may even have participated personally on the Henrician expedition of 1111 as a member of the imperial retinue, and have gathered information on his own. This may seem to contradict his junior position in Aachen in 1134 (if this is him), but that is not the case. Juniority of tenure would only mean that Albert would have joined Aachen’s Marienstift after having served elsewhere. As he was from the region of Mainz, and Caesarius of Heisterbach calls him ‘natione Suevus’ (‘by nationality a Swabian’) on the authority of Albert’s own nephew, Cantor Conrad of St. Andreas in Cologne,⁸⁶ Albert’s very presence in Aachen is not self-explanatory. And yet: his uncle, Hugo of Sponheim, was dean of Cologne Cathedral and provost of Aachen in 1129–37, and possibly earlier, as no provost of Aachen is mentioned between 1122 and 1129. Since Hugo was the first Sponheimer to be recorded in Lower Lotharingia at all (unless Frederick I of Schwarzenburg was a member, see below), it is very likely that he recruited his young nephew during his tenure, which would explain his juniority in 1134.⁸⁷ Moreover, as the imperial court chapel and the Aquensian Marienstift’s personnel were so deeply connected (as explained above), it is easy to see how a member of one institution would be rewarded with a position in the other. Finally, already Adalbert of Saarbrücken represented the Mainz-Aachen link in 1108, and perhaps as soon as 1106. Therefore, Albert’s personal participation on the campaign is possible and both options ought to be considered, especially as Albert is the only source to mention Henry IV’s marshal, Conrad, both as a participant on the crusade of 1101–02, and as an imperial agent in divided Italy around 1107.⁸⁸ Marshal Conrad’s absence from all other texts is not as strange as one could think, as witness lists in imperial charters were not yet common, nor did they include the

⁸⁴ AA, IV.38, at 308. This would perhaps be of no interest on its own, but with the other Lombard connections of both Albert of Aachen and Albert of Sponheim, it adds to the evidence.

⁸⁵ Matthias Thiel, unpublished and untitled manuscript of the MGH edition of the charters of Henry V (1106–25), Docs. 70–71, 75 = pp. 70:9, 71:3, 75:2. Kindly shown to me by Gerhard Lubich, who is preparing the *Regesta Imperii* volumes on Henry V.

⁸⁶ Groten, *Priorenkolleg und Domkapitel*, 243.

⁸⁷ Meuthen, ‘Die Aachener Pröpste’, 28–9.

⁸⁸ AA, X.41, at 754.

officers of the imperial court. But it is possible that this unknown man was Albert's personal source.

Which leaves the Burgundian circle. According to Verena Türck, who focused on the period of Frederick Barbarossa (1152–90), neither Henry IV nor Henry V ever visited Burgundy, and only the former gave a few charters for Burgundian recipients. Moreover, the Burgundian bishops were among the Gregorian opposition to the Salian emperors.⁸⁹ Yet, this is simply not true. Türck overlooks that Gerold/Giroud of Faucigny, bishop of Lausanne (1103 – between 1126 and 1134), was the only Burgundian bishop to stand by Henry V when Guy of Vienne, the future Pope Callixtus, excommunicated the emperor at the synod of Tournus in August 1115, and that Gerold had already festively welcomed Henry to Lausanne in August 1110. Moreover, Gerold took part in the pre-negotiations for the end of the Investiture Controversy in Strasbourg in August 1119, though it seems he did not continue on northwards to the final meeting at Mouzon.⁹⁰ The east-Burgundian bishop's singular position was well-rewarded: Gerold held the imperial chancellorship for Burgundy from August/September 1119 until Henry V's death in May 1125.⁹¹ That is to say, Henry V always had a Burgundian connection at court almost from the start of his reign. Finally, Henry demanded between August 1115 and January 1116 that Bishop Gerold of Lausanne, Count Rainald III of Burgundy and his mother Beatrix, and other vassals of the archepiscopal Church of Besançon act against the enemy of apostolic and imperial authority, Guy of Vienne.⁹²

Lothar III (1125–37) first appointed a rector for Burgundy, but only Conrad III (1138–52) gave out charters for Burgundian recipients.⁹³ More importantly, already from the start these were often drafted and copied by Albert of Sponheim, whom the charters term a canon of Cologne Cathedral.⁹⁴ After all, his documented career in Aachen only begins in 1153, unless one can prove that he is the (custos) Adalbert = Albert of 1134. However, Albert of Sponheim would be the ideal candidate for an identification with Albert of Aachen. He was connected to Aachen and Cologne by his offices and by those of his uncle, Hugo of Sponheim (provost of Aachen and dean of Cologne Cathedral 1129–37, archbishop of Cologne 1137), and his family

⁸⁹ Verena Türck, *Beherrschter Raum und anerkannte Herrschaft: Friedrich I. Barbarossa und das Königreich Burgund* (Ostfildern, 2013), 65–6.

⁹⁰ Jean-Daniel Morerod, *Genèse d'une principauté épiscopale: la politique des évêques de Lausanne (IXe-XIVe siècle)* (Lausanne, 2000), 133–9.

⁹¹ Hausmann, *Reichskanzlei und Hofkapelle*, 62–3.

⁹² Thiel, unpublished and untitled manuscript of the MGH edition of the charters of Henry V (1106–25), Doc. 151, at 151:1–4 (see note 85 above).

⁹³ Türck, *Beherrschter Raum und anerkannte Herrschaft*, 66–7.

⁹⁴ Hausmann, *Reichskanzlei und Hofkapelle*, 279–92.

possessions centred around Mainz and Trier. He had many Burgundian relatives through his great-grandmother Ermentrude, including her brother Guy of Vienne/Pope Callixtus II, her nephew Count Rainald III of Burgundy, and his daughter, the future empress, Beatrix of Burgundy.⁹⁵ Thus, Albert was no stranger to Burgundian affairs.

Indeed, if one takes Albert of Aachen's Burgundian connection into account, as well as his Aquensian *datatio* type, and how Adalbert of Saarbrücken's imprisonment broke the ebullient flow of information he was gathering about the Holy Land, one is left with one final piece of puzzle within the *Historia Ierosolimitana* itself – namely, why does the text conclude so abruptly after the mention of a Christian-Muslim conflict on Easter, 30 March 1119?⁹⁶ The news would have travelled to Germany for at least a month or two, meaning that it would have arrived in Aachen by June 1119. This roughly coincides with a moment of paramount importance in the Empire: the meeting of Mouzon, where Henry V and the delegates of Callixtus II attempted to negotiate an end to the Investiture Controversy in October 1119. This event could not have but excited Latin Christendom, even as the proposed changes that the papal party proposed failed and the strife continued. And even more precisely: this would have coincided with the pre-negotiations in Strasbourg in September 1119, where the Aquensian notary Henry first appears in imperial service.⁹⁷

Moreover, Adalbert of Saarbrücken reappeared at court during the negotiations at Mouzon a month later, so two Aquensians with court connections were now present. Yet, neither of these two can be suspected of authoring the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. Adalbert's style, as preserved in three letters that he had drafted in the name of Henry V in 1107 and 1110, and a personal letter that he wrote to Otto I of Bamberg in 1110, does not match the crusade chronicle at all.⁹⁸ The notary Henry, who worked for Emperor Henry V from 1119 to 1125, and who is the author of the only charter from the era of Conrad III's antikingship (1128–35), disappears from historical record after finalising the copying of the last mentioned document in July 1129.⁹⁹ Yet he, too, cannot possibly be identical to Albert of Aachen, for while Albert's *datatio* is supremely Henrician, the notary Henry radically altered and simplified its form, finally departing from the old Carolingian structure inherited by German imperial charters. As

⁹⁵ Herkenrath, 'Der frühstauische Notar Albert von Sponheim', 92–3, 95.

⁹⁶ AA, XII.33, at 880.

⁹⁷ Hausmann, *Reichskanzlei und Hofkapelle*, 78.

⁹⁸ See Matthias Thiel, *Studien zu den Urkunden Heinrichs V.* (Wiesbaden, 2017), 87, f. 2 to appear as Docs. 22, *51, 53 and 55 in the upcoming edition (see note 85 above).

⁹⁹ Hausmann, *Reichskanzlei und Hofkapelle*, 73–9.

Matthias Thiel notes, Albert of Sponheim, our candidate for the crusade chronicle's authorship, would reverse the course, but in doing so he configured a strange new type.¹⁰⁰ Thiel did not notice the Aquensian tradition at play, nor did he pick up on the 'regnante' / 'imperante' distinction that is the centrepiece of Albert's elegantly pompous style.

The reader will have noticed the slight discrepancy between the dates: even if news from Outremer came in June 1119, Albert could have supplemented his knowledge by October, when the negotiations at Mouzon and the council of Reims took place, or by November, by which point the emperor intervened in the election of the bishop of Liège, granted a charter in Maastricht, and then visited Aachen to negotiate a settlement with archbishop of Cologne, Frederick I of Schwarzenburg, who had joined the opposition in 1114.¹⁰¹ It is possible, but not proven, that Archbishop Frederick was the son of Richardis of Sponheim, a member of the Carinthian Sponheimers with whom Albert of Sponheim often collaborated in later years.¹⁰² One may suspect that Albert's *Historia Ierosolimitana* was completed at this precise moment. However, the author would have obtained new information gathered from the papal-imperial consultations, which he almost certainly would have written down, so this ought to be dismissed as a possibility. The importance, however, of this imperial visit was that the court's itinerary had to be prepared months in advance. This is to say, one knew that Henry V would come to Aachen even before the negotiations began in Strasbourg in September. Even more pertinently, such a sojourn had to be planned by both the courtly and the local parties. Indeed, had the pope and the emperor come to an agreement, which seemed very likely after the successful pre-agreement at Strasbourg, this would have been Henry V's grand homecoming to Aachen, the fount of the Empire, where he could have celebrated his success surrounded by Carolingian grandeur. And as we can tell that the Aquensian notary Henry joined the court on the Upper Rhine in late summer, one ought to consider that the Aquensian crusade chronicler did the same thing, or that he was otherwise employed in preparations, so that he never quite wrote an ending for his work. The finale rounds up book XII numerologically with 33 chapters, which is a sign of Christ's years, but that is all that the chronicler could muster. Apparently, the verbose Albert had a deadline to meet, and this was somehow related to the false finale of the Investiture Controversy.

¹⁰⁰ Thiel, *Studien zu den Urkunden*, 3–6, 11–2, 20–2.

¹⁰¹ Gerhard Lubich, *Heinrich V. Der letzte Salierkaiser* (Freiburg, 2024), 258–63.

¹⁰² Friedrich Hausmann, 'Die Grafen von Ortenburg und ihre Vorfahren im Mannesstamm, die Spanheimer, in Kärnten, Sachsen und Bayern, sowie deren Nebenlinien. Ein genealogischer Überblick', *Ostbairische Grenzmarken* 36 (1994): 13.

Finally, one other thing changed in early 1119: Guy of Vienne became Pope Callixtus II. If, as I propose, Albert of Aachen and Albert of Sponheim are the same man, then it is impossible that the crusade historian could have ignored his relation's rise to the papal office. He may have been a hardline Henrician previously, but it is hard to imagine that the imperial court would not have called upon Albert of Sponheim to serve in some minor role during the negotiations. If Frederick I of Schwarzenburg was indeed related to the Sponheimers, then it would be extremely unlikely that young Albert would not have been involved in preparing a settlement between the emperor and the archbishop. His entry into service at the imperial court, even if it was of a passing nature, would have been just the right thing to start off a brilliant career, such as that which we can trace fully from 1139 (as will be examined below).

But before discussing Albert of Sponheim's life in service of the Empire, one ought to note that, to positively identify the imperial chaplain and notary Albert of Sponheim as the crusade historian Albert of Aachen one needs more than this constellation of very fitting circumstances. Yet, the scope of an article allows only the main argument to be laid out along with some examples, rather than a detailed presentation of the full evidence. As very few documents from early twelfth-century Aachen have survived, and not all exist in the original, one cannot find an example of Albert of Sponheim's handwriting in any document from Aachen. This leaves stylistic analysis as the one and only method of proving – or disproving – the identity of the *three* Alberts, for to prove that Albert of Sponheim wrote the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, one also needs to prove that he was the author and custos Albert mentioned in manuscript E, who would have been in charge of the Marienstift's books and charters – which fits the crusade author perfectly. If one dismisses the custos Albert of Aachen as a later interpolation not referring to the author, one is still left with the need to prove that Albert of Sponheim had an Aquensian position at the time of the chronicle's writing. As I will show, his style, even as it appears in a letter from 1142 (discussed below), cannot stem but from the region of Aachen and Liège, and a count's son from Mainz could have learned that only if he had been educated in one of the two places from an early age. And the Adalbert mentioned in 1134 would fit these dates, even if proof of his connection to our other Alberts, the crusade historian and the imperial chaplain, is lacking.

The style(s) of Albert of Aachen and Albert of Sponheim

The critical piece of evidence for the identification of Albert of Aachen with Albert of Sponheim is the latter's stellar beginning in the chancery, where he rose more quickly than almost any other known notary. He is mentioned only from 1139, but already in 1140 he was sent in the capacity of an imperial chaplain and emissary to the Byzantine emperor, John II Komnenos. The letter he carried on that occasion has not been preserved. Having returned in 1141, he left in April 1142 together with Bishop Embricho of Würzburg (1127–46) to visit the Constantinopolitan court once more. The letter from this legation has been preserved, and is attributed to Albert of Sponheim. After his return to Germany, Albert of Sponheim purportedly authored the 1145 letter for yet another embassy to Byzantium, on which he did not, however, participate. He set out with Conrad III on the Second Crusade (1147–49) and led the itinerant royal chancery until the king's return to Germany. From then on, he was Conrad III's and Frederick I's expert for papal affairs. For such an outstanding service, Albert was awarded the provostship of Aachen, the highest clerical office in Germany after that of a bishop or an abbot.¹⁰³

It would have been utterly impossible for an unknown person to have been sent on two Byzantine embassies and taken as the main notary on the Second Crusade after but a year of service. Whoever Albert of Sponheim was, he was well-known to the court, even though he did not participate in the workings of the chapel or chancery of Lothar III (1125–37), as not a single chaplain seems to have transferred his loyalties from the Saxon to the Swabian king. One can speculate: was Albert among the retinue of the antiking, Conrad III (1127–35, later king 1138–52)? This is not impossible, as the antiking inherited the late Salian court chapel's personnel.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, Albert's uncle Hugo of Sponheim, however, sided with Lothar III, albeit not in any significant way until after the civil war was resolved, as did Adalbert of

¹⁰³ Hausmann, *Reichskanzlei und Hofkapelle*, 279–92; Herkenrath, 'Zur Lebensgeschichte'; Herkenrath, 'Der frühstaufische Notar Albert von Sponheim', 73–98. That the provostship of Aachen was esteemed so highly can be seen in imperial charters' witness lists, where he follows bishops and abbots, but precedes the other provosts. For an excellent example, see *Friderici I. diplomata*, I, 1152–1158, Doc. 156, at 269: 'iussimus adhibitis idoneis testibus, quorum nomina hec sunt: Heinricus Tullensis episcopus, Albertus Virdvnensis episcopus, Retherus Prumiensis abbas, Gerardus Esternacensis abbas, Berdoldus abbas sancti Eucharii, Ludewicus abbas de sancta Maria, Godefridus abbas sancti Martini, Gregorius abbas de Toleia, Adelhelmus abbas de Medio Lacu, Folmarus abbas de Ruthela, Richardus abbas de Sprengersbach, **Alberdus prepositus Aquensis**, Godefridus prepositus maioris ecclesie, Rudolfus decanus, Alexander archidiaconus, Cunradus prepositus sancti Paulini, Buovo prepositus sancti Castoris, Rubertus prepositus de Palaciolo, Sigeherus abbas de sancto Maximino, Cuonradus palatinus comes Rheni et advocatus ecclesie, Matheus dux Lotharinge, Fridericus dux Sueuorum filius Cunradi regis, Heinricus de Limburc, [...]'. Here Albert of Sponheim as provost of Aachen follows the abbots, but precedes even the cathedral provost of Trier in a charter for Archbishop Hillin of Trier, which was promulgated in Trier itself on 6 January 1157. The abbot of St. Maximin closes the list of ecclesiastics, for some reason, but this is an exception.

¹⁰⁴ Hausmann, *Reichskanzlei und Hofkapelle*, 7, 73–9, 86, 93, 135–6.

Saarbrücken. Contrary to long-held views, Petke showed that Adalbert did not dominate the court of Lothar III: in fact, he retreated to his city of Mainz and left the running of the court chapel to the emperor's Saxon chaplains, who were most loyal to Lothar.¹⁰⁵ On the whole, the likeliest explanation is that Albert is the Aquensian Adelbertus of 1134, and that he became close to the future king Conrad III (now Duke Conrad of Franconia) on Lothar III's 1136–37 Italian campaign, where Conrad served as the emperor's standard-bearer, having been reconciled to his rival's rule. It is at the zenith of this expedition in Bari, in June 1137, that Hugo of Sponheim was made archbishop of Cologne after the previous incumbent, Bruno II of Cologne, died. As fate would have it, Hugo died in Melfi within a month.¹⁰⁶ But his nephew, Albert, was by now almost certainly entrenched in Aachen, Cologne and the imperial court, as his brilliant appearance in the delegation to Byzantium shows. He may even have been the crusade historian, who possibly entered imperial service already in 1119. Just because this Moguntine Albert's Latin was Aquensian does not mean that he automatically has to be both the Adelbertus of 1134 and Albert of Aachen.

But Albert of Sponheim was also a relative of Bertha of Sulzbach, that is, the future Empress Irene of Byzantium, the bride-to-be of Manuel Komnenos.¹⁰⁷ Thus, Albert was sent to Constantinople in 1140 and 1142, he drafted the letters for the Byzantine emperor in 1142 and 1145, and he passed through Byzantium in 1147–49 during the Second Crusade. In the course of this expedition, he must have been among the chief negotiators of the German-Byzantine alliance, as documented in the Treaty of Thessaloniki (1149). As I have shown in my book on the sacralisation of the Empire, Albert would also introduce the phrase 'sacrum imperium' in the imperial chancery in 1157, which his followers would often use. The inspiration for such a change was easily found in Byzantium.¹⁰⁸ And indeed, as Wibald of Stavelot, the other great imperial diplomat of the era commented, Conrad III returned from the East 'somewhat corrupted by the arrogance of the Greeks' ('fastu et inobedientia Grecorum aliquantulum corrupto').¹⁰⁹ Albert appears to have been among the corrupted.

¹⁰⁵ Petke, *Kanzlei, Kapelle und königliche Kurie*, especially 269–302.

¹⁰⁶ Wolfgang Petke, *Die Regesten des Kaiserreiches unter Lothar III., 1125(1075)–1137*, Regesta imperii (Vienna, 1994), Nr. 494, at 320–2, Nr. 585, at 371–3, and Nr. 593, at 375–6.

¹⁰⁷ Hausmann, 'Die Grafen von Ortenburg', 16. Bertha's sister married the Sponheimer Marquis Engelbert III of Istria in 1140.

¹⁰⁸ Vedran Sulovsky, *Making the Holy Roman Empire Holy: Frederick Barbarossa, Saint Charlemagne and the sacrum imperium* (Cambridge, 2024), 32.

¹⁰⁹ Wibald of Stavelot, *Das Briefbuch Abt Wibalds von Stablo und Corvey*, ed. Martina Hartmann, 3 vols. (Hanover, 2012), 2: Ep. 223, at 478.

But more can be found in the letters to John II and Manuel Komnenos of 1142 and 1145. Hausmann has ascribed both to Albert in the MGH edition of 1969, but if one inspects his commentary, one is surprised by his reasoning: the style is not very similar to that of Albert of Sponheim, but Albert is certainly the chaplain who was sent to Constantinople, so he is the most likely author of the letters.¹¹⁰ Obviously, his claim cannot stand on its own, and the attribution ought to be tested.

One can easily deliver proof that Albert of Sponheim drafted the letter by looking at the peoples mentioned. Apart from the *intitulatio* and *inscriptio*, which name Conrad, king of the Romans, and the Constantinopolitan emperor John, ethnonyms appear fifteen times on eight separate occasions, which far surpasses any other document of Conrad III or Frederick Barbarossa, which usually avoid these terms altogether. The attention paid to nations here is astonishing, and clearly serves a special purpose. Whether the lost Byzantine letter to which this is a reply contained anything similar cannot be determined, but one can suspect that even if it were not replete with ethnonyms, it would have contained references to the two Romes, the old and the new. This is the best place to start: Conrad states in this letter that ‘your new Rome is both called and is a daughter of our Roman republic’ (*‘nostrae Romanae rei publicae vestram novam Romam et dici et fore filiam’*), thus indicating his own superior status. He then turns to denigrating the Sicilian Normans when he mentions their opposition as ‘whether Norman, or Sicilian, or someone else’ (*‘sive Normannus sive Siculus sive quis alter’*) thus showing contempt for them. These supposedly barely notable people are opposed to ‘the Roman empire and magnificence’ (*‘imperium et magnificentiam Romanam’*). Conrad then extols his own empire as one to which France, Spain, England, and Denmark send legations every day, thus stressing the Empire’s centrality. Furthermore, he adds the pope, Apulia, Italy and Langobardy (not a synonym with today’s Lombardy) to the list, thus delineating the entire Cisalpine region as belonging to the Empire.

After a brief mention of the Rus, the two most important lines follow. The first is: ‘*Militibus quoque imperii nostri Alemannis scilicet, qui apud te sunt*’ (‘of the knights of our Empire, meaning the Alemanni, who are with you’), and the next: ‘*ut hominibus imperii nostri Teutonicis videlicet, qui Constantinopoli morantur*’ (‘so that the men of our Empire, that is the Germans, who are residing in Constantinople’).¹¹¹ The ‘*milites*’ become ‘*homines*’; ‘*imperii nostri*’ stays the same; ‘*Alemannis*’ becomes ‘*Teutonicis*’; ‘*scilicet*’ becomes ‘*videlicet*’; ‘*qui*

¹¹⁰ *Conradi III. et filii eius Heinrici diplomata*, Doc. 69, at 121–2, and Doc. 126, at 226–7.

¹¹¹ *Conradi III. et filii eius Heinrici diplomata*, Doc. 69, at 122–3.

aput te sunt' becomes 'qui Constantinopoli morantur'. The same thing is stated twice in the same grammatical construction, with only the words exchanged for synonyms, especially the names of peoples. As I will show below, this is a key element of style in the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, but also in a crucial Aquensian forgery of the era.

To prove that Albert of Sponheim drafted the letters to the Byzantines in 1142 and 1145, one has to look at the charters of Conrad III, as only those drafted by two different men (Wibald and Albert) employ ethnonyms of the Germans in some form or another. Famously, the Germans did not have a fixed name for a long time, and it was only in the period of the Investiture Controversy that the Italian Gregory VII influenced his supporters in Germany politically and linguistically to start using 'Teutonicus' to denote their people. The term was finally adopted by the first non-Gregorians in Germany in the 1110s, according to Eckhart Müller-Mertens.¹¹² Yet, it was still rarely used, especially in the imperial chancery, which clung to conservative modes of expression more than most institutions. The exceptions within the chancery are significant: they are Albert of Sponheim and Wibald of Stavelot, the two preeminent notaries and diplomats, who are special because their Latin belongs to the Liègeois type, that is, a mixed Franco-German style, which explains why they differ so much from the rest of the court's literati. When it comes to the people, only Albert uses 'Alemanni' once and 'Teutonici' twice. No other notary of the period 1138–52 does that. When it comes to Germany as a land, things change. Wibald uses 'ad partes Alamannie' twice when writing to the Byzantine empress, Irene, the sister-in-law of Conrad III. He uses 'Germanië et Gallië' twice as an ecclesiastical term for Lotharingia. He also mentions 'totius Germanië' when writing to Pope Eugene III.¹¹³ This investigation can be extended to other names and terms, but this will have to be delivered in full elsewhere due to space constraints. One can thus conclude that Albert of Sponheim is the author of these letters because his style is the most similar to that of the letters, but also because he was their carrier. Finally, he seems to have been visiting his relative, the Byzantine empress, after he had first escorted her to her husband.

The iterative variation of national names, however, is also very much like Albert of Aachen's many lists in the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, but also like the two lists of peoples in the

¹¹² Eckhard Müller-Mertens, *Regnum Teutonicum* (Berlin, 1970), 390–1.

¹¹³ *Conradi III. et filii eius Heinrichi diplomata*, Doc. 229, at 405–6 (drafted by Wibald for Empress Irene, uses 'ad partes Alamannie' twice); Doc. 252, at 439 (drafted by Wibald for Pope Eugene III, uses 'Germanië et Gallië'); Doc. 264, at 457 (drafted by Wibald, uses 'Germanië et Gallië'); Doc. 8 (Henry Berengar), at 529 (drafted by Wibald and the notary Heinrich for Pope Eugene III, uses 'totius Germanië'). The documents Albert drafted are for John II (Doc. 69, at 123) and Manuel Komnenos (Doc. 126, at 228).

false foundation charter of Charlemagne for Aachen, which I have dated to between 1125 and 1127.¹¹⁴ Such a forgery could easily have been prepared by an Aquensian custos, perhaps someone related to Provost Hugo of Sponheim (1129 or earlier – 1137), that is, Albert of Sponheim.

This charter, called the Karlsdekret, has a unique enumeration of peoples that form Charlemagne's nations list when he convoked the council in Aachen: 'Deinde, prout cunctis placuit prudentioribus regni nostri, legem Saxonum, Noricorum, Suevorum, Francorum Ribuariorum, Salicorum, sicut mos et potestas imperatorum est et omnium antecessorum meorum semper fuit, distinxi' ('Afterwards, as it pleased the more prudent men of our realm, I marked out the law of the Saxons, the Norici, the Swabians, the Ripuarian Franks, the Salians, according to custom and to the power of emperors and all my ancestors').¹¹⁵ The second time peoples are listed in the forgery, they are those of Italy, Saxony, Bavaria, Alemannia, East and West Francia. The differences are a telling sign of the author's capacity for variation. The first trick was to use the names of lands, and not peoples so as to mask their identity. It is noticeable that Italy was added to the original list, as removing it leads to the first list being repeated: first come the Saxons, then come the Norici, now called Bavarians, then the Swabians – here as the Alemanni, and finally the two Frankish peoples appear as East Franks and West Franks. Unsurprisingly, the Franks, too, have only changed names, but not their position within the list: the Franconians, who were previously called the Ripuarian Franks and were listed penultimately, were east of the Lotharingians, who were formerly termed the Salian Franks and who concluded the list. Therefore, the lists are identical, but the author's wish to enhance Charlemagne's style led him to overelaborate. The reason for Italy's appearance is clear: the first list is that of peoples whose laws Charlemagne codified, whereas the second is that of lands whence the participants of his council of Aachen came from. It is also important to note that the forged charter's Charlemagne proclaims Aachen to be the 'capital of all Gaul on the far side of the Alps', thus making use of a name which few Germans would use for Germany in the twelfth century.

All of this fits only one other author of the twelfth century: Albert of Aachen. Whereas other learned men could have known such terms and some certainly did, it is crucial to note that they did not use them, especially in texts regarding their present day and age. At the beginning of Book II, as Albert narrates the crusaders crossing from Austria into Hungary, he

¹¹⁴ Sulovsky, *Making the Holy Roman Empire Holy*, 125–37.

¹¹⁵ *Aachener Urkunden 1101–1250*, Doc. 1, at 113.

notes that they reached Tulln (40 km west of Vienna), and that the nearby Leitha river constitutes the border of the kingdom of Gaul ('ubi fluvius Lintax regnum Gallie terminat et dividit').¹¹⁶ While his 'Galli' and 'Gallia' usually mean Frenchmen and France, here 'Gallia' clearly refers to the old kingdom of the Franks, just as Pseudo-Charlemagne states in the Karlsdekret. This unique feature in two early twelfth-century Aquensian texts cannot be ignored, especially as it never appears elsewhere in Germany under any circumstances during this period. Moreover, there are four instances where Albert lists German peoples, and these warrant a closer inspection. These are, in order:

Godefridus dux super ripam fluminis, portam unam civitatis cum universis millibus **Lotharingis, Saxonibus, Alemannis, Bawaris** gladio saevissimis obsidet. (Duke Godfrey besieged one gate of the town on the bank of the river, with countless thousands of **Lotharingians, Saxons, Alemanni, Bavarians**, murderously fierce.)¹¹⁷

Dux Godefridus cum **Teutonicis, Alemanis, Bawaris, Saxonibus, Lotharingis**, ex duobus millibus equitum et peditum suam aciem composuit, quorum manus et gladius solet esse saevissimus in cervicibus inimicorum. (Duke Godfrey made up his battle division from two thousand cavalry and infantry, with **Germans, Alemanni, Bavarians, Saxons, and Lotharingians**, and their hand and sword was accustomed to be most fierce on the necks of the enemy.)¹¹⁸

Unde festinus in faciem adversariorum cum **Alemanis, Bawaris, Saxonibus, Lotharingis, Teutonicis, et Romanis**, qui in sua erant acie, advolat in vexillis ostreis variis et decoris, ut vires gentilium repelleret, et in angustia positus subveniret. (Whereupon he rapidly sped against the adversaries with the **Alemanni, Bavarians, Saxons, Lotharingians, Germans, and Romans** who were in his division, bearing purple banners differently decorated, in order to repulse the forces of the gentiles and to assist the troops who were in difficulties.)¹¹⁹

Conradus vero, stabularius imperatoris Henrici III **Alemanos, Saxones, Bojoarios, Lotharingos et universos Teutonicos** in aciem sibi ascivit. Episcopus Lauduni, Engelradus, Milo, Wido, Hugo, Bardolfus de Breis, Walbertus de civitate Lauduni, omnes hi ex manu **Francigenarum** aciem ordinaverunt. (Conrad, indeed, Emperor Henry III's constable, appropriated **Alemanni, Saxons, Boioarians, Lotharingians, and all Germans** into his division. The bishop of Laon, Engelrand, Miles, Guy, Hugh Bardulf of Broys, Walbert from the city of Laon: all of these organized a battle division from the host of **French soldiers**.)¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ AA, II.1, at 62.

¹¹⁷ AA, III.39, at 200, translation at 201. Edgington's translation incorrectly simplifies the Alemanni into Swabians (this applies for the following three footnotes as well).

¹¹⁸ AA, IV.47, at 322, translation at 323.

¹¹⁹ AA, IV.51, at 328, translation at 329.

¹²⁰ AA, VIII.15, at 604–6, translation at 605–7. Edgington's translation incorrectly simplifies the Alemanni into Swabians and Frenchmen into Franks, but also does not account for the deliberately and profoundly archaic *Boioarii*, a form used by – to my knowledge – only Albert of Aachen and Ekkehard of Aura in the twelfth century.

The examples are found in books III, IV and VIII, that is, in those where a German contingent is mentioned during the First Crusade, or during the crusade of 1101–02. As there were no German crusaders of note after that, they do not figure in the last books. However, this is no argument against Albert’s single authorship, or against the drafting of the history in one go.

In each of the four cases Albert lists the Alemanni, Saxons, Bavarians and Lotharingians, with the Lotharingians appearing before or after the other three, but the main triad is never broken, though its internal order can vary. The Teutons, too, appear either before or after the core triad, and the Romans appear at the very end the one time they are mentioned. It appears that in the *Historia Ierosolimitana* the ‘Teutonici’ had to take the place of the ‘Franci’ because that term was already used for the French (even though Albert used ‘Francigenae’, too), and the Franconians had to be referred to by a different name.

There are two more general linguistic points that Albert and the Karlsdekret agree upon. Firstly, both use an extreme number of parallelisms based on the formula *X et Y*.¹²¹ Secondly, scholars have found it hard to pinpoint the native tongue of either Albert or of the Karlsdekret’s author. This is, however, rather typical of Aachen in many ways: it is the very border of France and Germany in a political and cultural sense. As a case in point, one may think of Dom Hesbert’s evaluation of manuscript G 13, the earliest antiphonale of the Marienstift that is dated to between 1165 and around 1200, where the musicologist determined that it is often the only German manuscript containing otherwise extremely popular French chants.¹²² This can be confirmed by one look at Albert’s naming conventions for the peoples he mentions. His Frenchmen can be ‘Franci’ or even ‘Galli’, as in French Latin, but also ‘Francigenae’, as in German Latin, while his Swabians are ‘Alemanni’ as in the French variant. The Karlsdekret uses both ‘Suevi’ and ‘Alemanni’, thus conforming to both variants, but the country of Francia is called ‘Gallia’ according to the French manner, even if the peoples enumerated belong to the German sphere.

Several rarely used phrases appear in the forgery and in the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. For example, the ‘vepres et frutices’ (‘thornbushes and shrubs’) from Suetonius’ life of Nero, which the Karlsdekret uses, turn up in the *Historia* as ‘vepres et frutecta’.¹²³ Were Albert not

¹²¹ AA, XXVIII–XXIX.

¹²² René-Jean Hesbert, *Le prosaire d’Aix-la-Chapelle. Manuscrit 13 du chapitre d’Aix-la-Chapelle (XIIIe siècle, début)* (Rouen, 1961), 9, 21–31, 35, 47–9, 69–80.

¹²³ AA, III.63, at 238.

a little-known Aquensian canon from the early twelfth century, that is, someone who fits all the traits of Albert of Aachen, one could call it a coincidence. In this case, however, further analysis is warranted. A search of the *Corpus Corporum* database shows that Albert and the Karlsdekret share several unique word choices that no other source until the twelfth century does. Firstly, the Karlsdekret uses: ‘a diversis terris et regnis et precipue Grecorum collegi’ (‘I collected [these] from diverse lands and realms, and principally from those of the Greeks’). Albert employs it twice. The first time he uses it as: ‘ex diversis regnis et terris scilicet e regno Franciae, Angliae, Flandriae, Lotharingiae gens copiosa et innumerabilis Christianorum [...]’ (‘from different kingdoms and lands including, of course, France, England, Flanders, and Lotharingia, a great and countless host of Christians [...]').¹²⁴ The second time it appears as: ‘Hii, collectione navium e diversis terris et regnis contracta, scilicet ab Antwerpia, Tyla, Frisia, Flandria [...]’ (‘These people assembled ships drawn from different kingdoms and lands, namely from Antwerp, Tiel, Frisia, and Flanders’).¹²⁵ The key ‘diversis terris et regnis’ is replicated exactly once, and in an inverted word order the other time. In both cases Albert couples it with ‘e / ex’, and not ‘a’, but that is less important. In one case Albert lists peoples, in the other he lists lands after this phrase. A search of his texts finds several uses of ‘regnis et terris’, the same phrase in a different order, as well. The examples can be multiplied, but this should suffice to show that the style of the author is identical. Moreover, Albert of Sponheim is close to both the styles of the *Historia Ierosolimitana* and the Karlsdekret, but is much more formalistic, as is typical for an imperial notary.

A final example would be useful: Albert of Aachen unexpectedly notes that Henry V took from the pope the ‘regnum et imperium ex hereditario iure antecessorum potenter et gloriose’ (‘he powerfully and gloriously retained the kingdom and empire that were his by hereditary right of his ancestors’).¹²⁶ This is identical to the central claim of the Aquensian Karlsdekret: ‘ut in templo eodem regia sedes locaretur et locus regalis et caput Gallie trans Alpes haberetur ac in ipsa sedes reges successores **et heredes** regni iniciarentur et sic iniciati **iure** dehinc imperatoriam maiestatem Rome sine ulla interdictione planius assequerentur’ (‘so that in the same temple the royal seat be located, and it be held as the royal town and head of Gaul over the Alps, and that in the same seat kings be ordained successors and **heirs** to the kingdom, and thus ordained **by right** then to easily attain the imperial majesty in Rome without

¹²⁴ AA, I.25, at 48, translation at 49.

¹²⁵ AA, VI.55, at 478, translation at 479.

¹²⁶ AA, XI.48, 824, translation at 825.

any prohibition’).¹²⁷ Albert of Sponheim uses ‘hereditario iure’ in D FI 128 from 27 November 1155, but otherwise it is the notaries of the Aquensian group who use it most often.¹²⁸ Thus, every single piece of evidence points to Albert of Sponheim as the author of the Karlsdekret, but also of the crusade chronicle.

Conclusion

To conclude, the *custos* Albert of Aachen can be identified as the author of the forged Karlsdekret (between 1125 and 1127) and as Albert of Sponheim, the leading imperial chaplain and notary of the period 1139–58/9. Stylistic and biographical traits unite the three wherever the evidence is sufficient for a comparison to be made. The name Albert fits, the institutional networks of early twelfth-century Aachen overlap, the Burgundian connections of Albert of Sponheim match Albert of Aachen’s circle, their intensely pro-imperial stance is identical, as is the mixed Franco-German Latin. Both use the Aquensian-only *datatio* type of Gottschalk of Aachen, and both Alberts and the Karlsdekret show a particular interest in the Christian Orient. Finally, all three show a masterful use of tautology, the art of saying the same thing twice. Albert of Sponheim’s two lines about the Germans in Constantinople, the Karlsdekret’s two lists of German peoples, Albert of Aachen’s constant use of the hendiadystic *X et Y* form, where the two nouns, verbs or adjectives are virtually identical – all of these would be mistakes to a classical Latinist, but they work on a simple level. And one cannot forget that Albert employs this trope profusely across the entirety of his very long crusade history. As such, our author, forger and diplomat – if, indeed, he is one and the same person, as is argued here – has a remarkably consistent writing style across different works and genres.

It is difficult to fully appreciate what the identification of the two Alberts would mean for scholarship. For historians of Germany, the result would be a dazzling reversal of the long-standing tradition to treat crusading sources as being of secondary or even tertiary relevance to imperial history. If the premier court chaplain of his age, Albert of Sponheim, were both a participant in the Second Crusade *and* the preeminent chronicler of the First Crusade, who also served on many diplomatic missions to Byzantium, then the nature of crusading within the Empire and especially at the imperial court would have to be seriously reconsidered. In my forthcoming book on the court chapel, I will not only deepen the investigation of Albert of

¹²⁷ *Aachener Urkunden 1101–1250*, Doc. 1, at 115, ll. 73–6.

¹²⁸ *Friderici I. diplomata*, I, 1152–1158, Doc. 128, at 214.

Aachen, but I will demonstrate that several other chaplains were clearly connected to crusading and the Latin East, of whom Burchard of Strasbourg, the first Latin writer to describe Egypt and Syria since the seventh century, is currently the only known case. For scholars working on the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, this identification would enable a wider net to be cast for Albert's sources and personal connections.

Even if my hypothesis were to be rejected, the text's Henrician bent is now apparent, as is Albert's relationship to the notarial style of Gottschalk of Aachen, Albert of Sponheim and the Karlsdekret. The question may be framed in a different way: Albert of Aachen and Albert of Sponheim clearly share many traits, but are they the same person, or two closely related individuals, sharing the same name, locality and time? And if the name Albert and the office of 'custos' should be discounted as requirements for the author's identification due to their late and singular appearance in the manuscript tradition – and even then these are only tied to an unclear 'edita' – it remains the case that the other similarities and connections listed in this article are so striking, that it is hard to conceive of anyone other than Albert of Sponheim as Albert of Aachen.