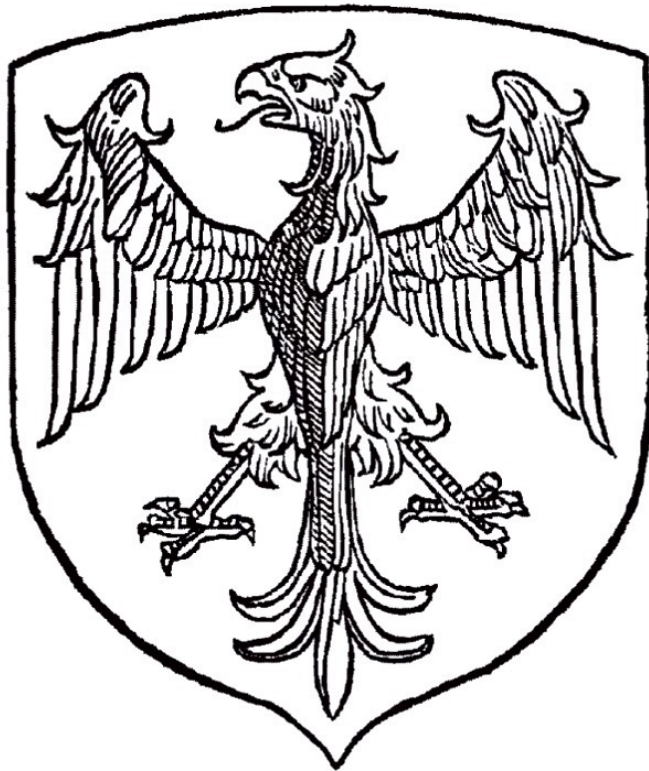


Frederick, Conrad & Manfred
of Hohenstaufen, Kings of Sicily

The Chronicle of "Nicholas of Jamsilla"
1210 - 1258



Translation and Commentary by
Louis Mendola

PREFACE



“Obiit insuper stupor mundi Frethericus, die Sanctae Luciae, in Apulia.”

— Matthew Paris

“Frederick, peerless wonder of the world, died in Apulia on Saint Lucy’s Day.” It is here, immediately after his death, that Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor, King of Sicily, King of Jerusalem, King of the Germans, was given the enduring appellation *Stupor Mundi*.

The chronicles of Matthew Paris that consider Frederick, in terms both flattering and critical, have been published in English. Until now, the “Jamsilla Chronicle,” which recounts something of Frederick but much more about the sons who survived him, has not been available in the world’s modern *lingua franca*. Not only has the chronicle of apocryphal “Nicholas of Jamsilla” never been published in English, precious little has ever been written about it in any language other than Italian and German. Hence this volume.

Jamsilla is the greatest chronicle you’ve never heard of. *Meglio*

tardi che mai. Better late than never.

This unique chronicle touches many resonant chords, especially those of politics, theology, loyalty, courage, struggle, and of course the art of war. In fact, most of the story is about war and the obscure machinations behind it. Battle after battle, siege after siege, skirmish after skirmish. And betrayal after betrayal.

Frederick II was descended from the family that ruled Swabia, in what is now part of Germany and Switzerland. Swabia is one of those European regions, like Aragon and Scotland, that produced more than her fair share of medieval warriors. Here audacity issued forth in the guise of the Hohenstaufen dynasty of Holy Roman Emperors, amongst whom we find crusading Frederick I “Barbarossa,” the grandfather of Frederick II.

As fate would have it, Frederick II, the greatest of his line, was born near Ancona, in Italy, and raised in the splendid city of Palermo. He mastered several tongues, including Sicilian and Arabic, but he seems to have been less fluent in German. Indeed, to anybody who met him, he probably seemed “German” in little more than name or appearance.

No matter. The monarch known to posterity as *Stupor Mundi* never failed to make himself understood, and he never seemed worried about how others might perceive or define him.

The same could not be said of his sons, Conrad and Manfred, who succeeded him. They lived in the shadow of their father’s greatness. Conrad and Manfred inherited a patrimony perpetually under attack from many quarters, and especially from Rome, where *Pontifex Maximus* felt chronically threatened by a sovereign whose dominions to the north and south were viewed as a potential threat to the Papacy’s temporal authority in central Italy and its spiritual power across western Europe. *Christendom* was not nationalism as we understand it today. The

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Papacy no more wanted Italian nationhood under the Hohenstaufens in the thirteenth century than under the Savoys in the nineteenth, unless, of course, the entire peninsula were to be united under the Pope's dogmatic aegis. Neither dynasty was opposed to Catholicism *per se*. The bone of contention was the Papacy's political ambition in Italy.

In the Middle Ages, the typical aristocrat might find it difficult to serve one monarch; serving two was onerous.

In the wake of Frederick's death in 1250, northern and central Italy experienced a series of conflicts between the *Guelphs*, who supported Papal (and then Angevin) power, and the opposing *Ghibellines*, who embraced the authority of the Holy Roman Emperor (and implicitly opposed Papal hegemony). Factionalism was rife. Certain cities, especially some of the quasi-independent, northern *communes* governed by local patriciates, were divided between the two parties. Woe betide anybody caught in the middle.

At this distance of time, it is difficult to discern right or wrong, good or bad, rhyme or reason in this complex socio-political milieu, but the conflicts were very real, colored by localized struggles for economic power and the wider maritime ambitions of Venice, Pisa and Genoa.

Much has been written about Frederick — very much less about Conrad and Manfred. The “Jamsilla Chronicle” stands out as the rare exception. Its attention to Frederick is perfunctory at best, consisting of little more than a concise synopsis and what might be called “flashbacks.”

The true focus of the chronicle is Manfred and his hard-won triumphs. Even the succinct sections dealing with the ephemeral reign of Conrad, his elder brother, are told from Manfred's point of view. Here we have the classic tale of “the man who would be king,” the young knight who must defend, indeed earn, his birthright. This is a true story of fate, success, failure, fealty and betrayal. Manfred's is a story more interesting

than any historical fiction.

Such chronicles are instructive but not authoritative. However, complemented by the royal decrees, Papal bulls, letters and other contemporaneous records known to us, they form the backbone of our knowledge of history.

Not surprisingly, those most passionate about the legacy of Frederick II and his heirs are to be found in Italy and the German-speaking nations, where the dynasts are viewed as “native sons.” For a long time, indeed into the latter decades of the twentieth century, Italian historians were rather reluctant to embrace a tradition which might remind us that certain regions flourished as sovereign countries long before unification in 1861, and this explains the dearth of detailed Italian biographies of Frederick and his heirs until very recent times. German scholars, conversely, more readily saw in Frederick a national hero, especially after their nation’s unification in 1871.

Long before the *Risorgimento* movement and the bloody unification war it spawned, Italian historiography saw other forces at work, most notably the overwhelming literary (and even historiographical) influences of Guelphic poets such as Dante and Boccaccio, who rarely viewed the Hohenstaufens in anything like a favorable light. Written just a few decades following the demise of Frederick’s dynasty and thriving into modern times, such views have enjoyed the unearned benefit of wide diffusion and a very long life.

The “Jamsilla” work is, admittedly, a minor chronicle addressing just a few years in any significant detail. It can never take the place of the chronicles of Peter of Eboli, Salimbene of Adam, Peter delle Vigne, Peter of Pretio, Tolomeo of Lucca or even Saba Malaspina. Nor does it boast the literary importance of *Lu Rebellamentu di Sichilia contra Re Carlu*, the romanticized account of John of Procida planning an uprising against the Angevins. Nonetheless, it is significant for the brief period it covers in detail. King Manfred is, or should be, more

than a footnote to history.

Unlike most chronicles of the thirteenth century, this one refers to many castles and towns in Apulia, Campania, Basilicata, Calabria and Sicily which are generally overlooked elsewhere. Remarkably, a few of the families mentioned, such as the Ruffo, Aquino (Aquinas), Capece, Filangieri and Lancia (Lanza), have survived into our times, even though the Staufens are long gone.

Manfred's descendants, through his daughter Constance (consort of Peter III of Aragon) who returned to Sicily during the War of the Vespers that began in 1282, ruled Sicily into the fifteenth century. Indeed, it was through his wife's Hohenstaufen birthright that Peter of Aragon claimed Sicily *jure uxoris*.

Peter of Aragon reigned as King of Sicily for just a few years, until his untimely death in 1285. His sons and grandsons proved less adept in the role, and at all events the kingdom they ruled had already begun its tumult toward a morass of mediocrity, culminating in the monocultural society evident by the middle of the fourteenth century. Islam was barely a memory, while Judaism was tolerated but severely marginalized. By 1400, even the mellifluous Middle Sicilian language of Giacomo of Lentini and Ciullo of Alcamo was a thing of the past, having evolved into the guttural tongue we hear today.

The island's independence diminished. As a jewel in the "Crown of Aragon," Sicily was inherited by the united Spain, which ruthlessly suppressed Judaism in 1493. A cruel feudalism survived until 1812, and land reforms broke up the *latifondi*, the vast private estates where ordinary people were regarded as little more than serfs, only in 1949. By then, Italy was a republic. The island of Sicily found herself overpopulated, largely deforested, unequivocally impoverished, and still a dystopia from which many Sicilians emigrated in search of greater opportunities.

In our times there is a tendency to characterize certain epochs as “interludes.” Just as every species that ever survived to transmit its genes to its descendants is “transitional,” every historical period, every reign, is indeed transitional. Our perceptions of historical time are formulated only in retrospect. Nobody living in 1100 was likely to have thought of that era as the “middle” ages. The reigns of Conrad and Manfred represented, if anything, a Staufen denouement, but something more than a cursory coda.

Outside the aristocracy and the intelligentsia, the merits of Frederick II were appreciated more after his death than during his lifetime. The same could be said of his sons, albeit in lesser measure. John of Procida, Manfred’s onetime tutor and later his chancellor, lived until 1298, praised by Ghibellines but hated by Guelphs; in recent times his reputation has been rehabilitated, and he is now recognized as an exemplary physician and statesman.

The Hohenstaufen era was worthy of whatever nostalgia it engendered, yet by the end of the Middle Ages it was all but forgotten, along with its lofty principles. Frederick’s Constitutions of Melfi of 1231 guaranteed the right to a divorce, something the Italians would legalize again only in 1970, and ratify by referendum four years later. The same medieval legal code made rape a serious crime; this law eventually fell into disuse, and Italy again made rape a felonious form of personal assault, rather than an “offense to public decency” akin to pornography, only in 1996. (The author vividly recalls how even then, on the cusp of the twenty-first century, some Italians opposed changes to an outmoded statute that ignored fundamental personal rights and made our beloved *Italia* look ridiculous in the eyes of other nations.)

They may not have declared such an intention very openly, but Conrad and Manfred were fighting for much more than a large island and part of a mountainous peninsula. Personal

rights, freedom of religion and a unique culture all hung in the balance. So much faith did Manfred place in his father's legal code that he asked to be judged by it when a Pope accused him of murdering a traitorous baron.

A subtle enigma haunts the visitor to Palermo, Sicily's regional capital and largest city. Books and websites refer to a multicultural heritage, yet medieval mosques and synagogues are nowhere to be seen in the chaotic metropolis. Apart from the syncretic Norman-Arab architecture, there is little to evoke the island's polyglot Middle Ages. The Sicilians speak Italian or a guttural, bastardized, modern Sicilian, and Roman Catholic churches in the overbearing Baroque style dominate the cityscape. The cuisine, though enticing, does not strike one as very Greek or Tunisian.

If we look beneath the surface, an ancient mikveh is concealed under a courtyard in the old Jewish quarter. A few blocks away, an Arabic inscription survives on a pillar of the cathedral's portico that once graced a mosque; looking down upon the Koranic verse is a Gothic gargoyle carved into the form of a boar.

The dearth of reminders is a paradox that is easily explained. Sicily's modern social environment was born of the dominance of a Latin monoculture following the fall of the last Hohenstaufens. In the wake of Manfred's death, decade after decade of Angevin and Aragonese rule chipped away at the complex cultural edifice built by Byzantines, Fatimids, Normans and Swabians. By 1300, the island's multicultural society was no more.

History is based on what happens, not what *might* have happened, but it is worth taking a moment to contemplate the path it may have followed had Frederick's dynasty survived for another century or two. In northern and central Italy, the Ghibellines would have triumphed over their opponents, and the vehement views of commentators like Dante, the eternal

Guelph, may have been more sympathetic to the Hohenstaufens and to figures like John of Procida. Laws like those addressing divorce and rape would have survived for a time, possibly into the modern era. That is also true of Frederick's law permitting women to inherit property. Sicilian, rather than Tuscan, likely would have become the "national" language of a loosely-united Italy. Sicily itself would have prospered, perhaps becoming a key region into the age of the Renaissance. Religious minorities like the Jews and Muslims would have enjoyed something approximating social equality. Italy would have looked outward rather than inward.

This, of course, is speculation.

Stepping back into the realm of reality, this English publication of the "Jamsilla Chronicle" brings to light a precious work which can now be consulted and enjoyed by a global readership.

Buona lettura.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



“If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.”

— Isaac Newton

Over the years, a number of individuals have assisted the research efforts that led to this volume, some long before the internet and its online resources simplified such work.

Firstly, I wish to express my gratitude to the cooperative staffs of the National Library and the State Archives of Naples for permitting consultation of the manuscripts of the “Jamsilla Codex.” Many thanks to the library’s director, Simonetta Buttò.

Several fine gentlemen deserve posthumous recognition, and readers of my earlier books may recognize the names in this distinguished pantheon.

My friend His Eminence Jacques Paul Cardinal Martin (1908-1992), Prefect of the Pontifical Household, and my *confratello* His Eminence Alfons Maria Cardinal Stickler (1910-2007), onetime Archivist and Librarian of the Holy Roman Church, made possible my consultation of relevant material

in the Vatican, where I enjoyed the rare privilege of unrestricted access in the library and archives.

Marquis Achille Di Lorenzo (1909-2000), recipient of the Legion of Merit (USA) for his efforts fighting Fascism during the Second World War, was always willing to assist in unravelling the tangled Neapolitan bureaucracy. I remember with fondness being entertained by him and his wife at their villa overlooking Naples.

Further afield, Sir Steven Runciman (1903-2000), author of *The Sicilian Vespers* and sometime professor, offered precious encouragement over the years.

Julian Allason, to whose memory this book is dedicated, was in one incarnation or another a magistrate, travel journalist, historian, photographer, psychologist, entrepreneur and computer programmer, obviously something of a Renaissance man. A philanthropist, he was a knight of Malta, and together we published the first edition of the website of the British Association of the Order of Malta in 1999, working with Frà Matthew Festing (who was then Grand Prior of England), the talented Philippa Leslie and the distinguished Peter Drummond-Murray of Mastrick (1929-2014). Julian was a member of White's, where we sometimes lunched together, and a founding member of the Anthony Powell Society. He was always a friend.

Any shortcomings which might present themselves in the pages that follow are, of course, solely my responsibility as *author et scriptor* of this work.

— L. Mendola

Montefranco, Sicily
 Saint George's Day
 23 April 2016

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INTRODUCTION



“Our purpose is to present the facts as we find them.”

— Frederick II, *De Arte Venandi cum Avibus*

There are greater, lengthier chronicles, tomes that have shaped our most fundamental perceptions of Europe’s eclectic Middle Ages, but none are more significant in the study of the Kingdom of Sicily during the years immediately following the death of Frederick II in 1250. Here is a chronicle worth studying, for it brings us news of a pivotal phase in the history of Europe from Saxony to Sicily, an era that saw the end of a multicultural golden age. Unlike many chronicles, this one is most likely a firsthand account recorded by a witness, an “insider” present at court.

The Chronicle

The reader shall be forgiven for not knowing that there was never a chronicler called “Nicholas of Jamsilla.” The surname *Jamsilla*, sometimes *Jamvilla*, is an Italian corruption of *Joinville*,

the name of the Angevin family long in possession of the oldest known manuscript. This feudal family seems to have arrived in southern Italy during the reign of Charles of Anjou, who succeeded the last Hohenstaufens. It is unlikely that the chronicler (to whom we'll refer henceforth as "pseudo-Jamsilla" or "Jamsilla") even bore the name *Nicholas*.

The survival of "anonymous" chronicles is not altogether unusual. Scholars debate the authorship of other important works, such as *Lu Rebellamentu di Sichilia contra Re Carlu*, the "memoir" of John of Procida written as a chronicle around 1290, and of course the famous text composed during the twelfth century attributed to "Hugh Falcandus."

Like most works of its kind, the "Jamsilla Chronicle," was written in Medieval Latin. By the middle of the thirteenth century the spoken tongue in Sicily, southern Calabria and parts of Apulia was Middle Sicilian, with which Frederick, Conrad and Manfred were familiar. Indeed, it is quite possible that this was the principal language, the "mother tongue," spoken by the multilingual Manfred.

The "Jamsilla Chronicle" takes us to 1258, the year of Manfred's coronation in Palermo, and the work was almost certainly completed by the end of 1263; Manfred was killed at the Battle of Benevento in 1266.

Only the chronicle's first chapter deals explicitly with Frederick's reign. Beginning with his majority and ending with his death, it is essentially a very concise, superficial synopsis. The first major event mentioned is the ill-fated invasion of southern Italy, as far as Apulia, by Otto IV in 1210.

A few early chapters focus on the reign of Frederick's son, Conrad, but most of the chronicle recounts events during the regency of Conrad's young son, Conradin, under Manfred.

Over the years, supplementary information has been added to published editions of the original chronicle to include events after 1258. A transcription edited by Giuseppe Del Re

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and published in Naples in 1868 includes an “anonymous supplement” to *Jamsilla* which is very obviously the work of another author and contains passages taken almost verbatim from Malaspina. It is important to avoid confusing this matter, as the later chronicle of Saba Malaspina occasionally cited as “complementary” is rabidly Guelphic in orientation, whereas the “Jamsilla Chronicle” is presented from the Ghibelline point of view sympathetic to the Hohenstaufens.

Clearly, whoever wrote the chronicle was close to the Staufen court in Italy. Over the years, a number of candidates have been advanced for its authorship, such as Nicholas of Brindisi, the court notary Nicholas of Rocca, Manfred’s confidant Godfrey of Cosenza, and the archbishop (and onetime notary) Belprand of Cosenza. The names of James and Rudolph of Poggibonsi, both notaries, have been propounded.

There is no consensus, nor can there be absolute confirmation, but among scholars the favorite seems to be Godfrey of Cosenza, who figures in the pages of the chronicle and may have been Manfred’s kinsman.

Rarely mentioned in this regard is John of Procida, Manfred’s tutor and longtime chancellor. Apart from the memoir already noted, a lengthy treatise on medicine is attributed to John of Procida.

What is beyond doubt is the chronicle’s tone, its subtle but real apologia for the Swabian dynasty, something obvious from its very first paragraph. The underlying theme is Manfred’s conflict with the Papacy and the treachery of some disloyal barons.

Had it been published in English before the present century, the chronicle might well have contributed to our canon of popular quotations. If not altogether original, these three excerpts are reasonably eloquent:

“We praise those who succeed where others have failed at the same task.”

“We must pay more attention to the effects of words than to the voice affirming them.”

“The nobility derived from deeds was more distinguished than that rooted merely in ancestry.”

And this lengthier nugget of timeless wisdom:

“Ambition betrays many who initially underestimate the effort behind achieving the prestige they covet, unable to scrutinize single details that should be contemplated beforehand. They see and desire what pleases them, without seeing the unpleasant things concealed by the pleasant ones. In seeking glory without considering its weight, they are crushed by the load.”

Concordance

The substance of the “Jamsilla Chronicle” is confirmed by contemporary sources, most notably royal charters and Papal bulls. The most important “primary” record of this period is *Historia Diplomatica Regni Siciliae inde ab anno 1250 ad annum 1266*, later compiled by Bartolomeo Capasso and published in 1874. (Such records are described in greater detail in this book’s Sources.)

Capasso sagely provides footnotes referring to corroborative sources. Indeed, the very first note in his first volume refers to “Nicholas of Jamsilla” along with the chroniclers Matthew Paris and Salimbene of Adam.

In passing, it is worth noting that invaluable publications such as Capasso’s were fortuitous, for many of the original manuscripts in this series, long retained by the Archive of State of Naples, were burned by German troops in late September 1943 in reprisal for Italy changing allegiance earlier that month. This ignored the fact that these documents were issued by

monarchs of the same Swabian dynasty glorified by German nationalists long before the Second World War. In truth, the Nazi and Fascist regimes never enjoyed a monopoly on vandalism or the destruction of valuable records; the great majority of useful sources disappeared long before the twentieth century, usually through nothing more malicious than neglect. Countless parchment manuscripts have been destroyed by moisture or eaten by ravenous rodents lacking any political agenda.

It seems obvious enough that medieval chronicles are a precious historical resource. The author's translation of *Lu Rebel-lamentu di Sicilia contra Re Carlu* is based on a codex rediscovered quite recently, in 1870. Such manuscripts emerge out of the darkness from time to time. In 2005, an uncatalogued, unpublished series of letters between Frederick II and his son, Conrad, was discovered in the library of Innsbruck University.

Far from esoteric, chronicles complement the *corpus* of "official" records, decrees and various contemporary charters. Beyond any question of accuracy regarding specific events, medieval chronicles inform us of the zeitgeist and opinions of their times, the social climate or "mood." In *Jamsilla* an obvious example of this is the tone that connotes a rather critical view of the Papacy, a position shared by many but expressed by few.

Whereas documents such as original decrees and charters are usually kept in archives, chronicles, which are generally regarded as literary works, are more often protected in libraries. That is usually the case in Italy and the Vatican, although it cannot be said to be a universal rule.

Supplementary evidence is important, particularly for shedding light on context and details. The skeletons of knights discovered near Saint Ann's Convent, once the residence of the Angevin justiciar John de Saint Rémy, tell us something about

the butchery that took place in Palermo on Easter Monday in 1282. Researchers need not have found the decapitated body of Andrew Chiaramonte in the chapel of Palermo's Steri Palace to confirm the fact that he was beheaded in the nearby square in 1392, but its discovery confirms the historical record.

Genetic haplotyping corroborates the historical accounts of Sicily being conquered by waves of colonizers from antiquity through the Middle Ages.¹ This includes the "Saracens" mentioned in the very first chapter of the chronicle published in these pages.

Another important field is geography. The author is familiar with the regions, and many of the localities, described in the chronicle, and he once climbed the mountain crowned by Enna's castle, sieges of that town being mentioned in *Jamsilla*.

Because the chronicle itself is a primary, contemporary source, it is not the intent of the author to question every single detail broached by the chronicler, nor to engage in endless conjecture about facts. As this book is not a biography, a retrospective "psychoanalysis" of the major players is unnecessary.

As we have said, most of the story told in *Jamsilla* involves a young royal regent's attempts to protect his nephew's birthright from Papal plotters. In our times the sophistry of the loosely-woven, paranoid *conspiracy theory*, divorced as it is from sound epistemology, warrants a generous dose of skepticism. Yet the evidence of Papal machinations was manifest during the thirteenth century; more than one Pope instigated riots against the Hohenstaufens in numerous cities, leading to a conflict virtually indistinguishable from a civil war.

The Text

The translation and conservation of medieval texts is a sacred trust. The oldest, complete surviving manuscript of our

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chronicle is dated to the fifteenth century and retained in the collection of what is now the National Library in Naples, formerly the Bourbons' *Reale Biblioteca di Napoli*, opened to the public in 1804. Neither the autograph nor any pre-1300 manuscript of the chronicle copied by a contemporary amanuensis is known to survive.

The *editio princeps* of the "Jamsilla Chronicle" saw the light of day in 1662 as part of the *Italia Sacra* compilation of Ferdinando Ughelli published in Rome. This was reprinted in Venice by Nicola Coleti in 1722.

One of the few Anglophone historians who was reading the "Jamsilla Chronicle" at an early date was Edward Gibbon, who mentions it as a source in *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, his *magnum opus* published in six volumes between 1776 and 1789. Gibbon was known for consulting "primary" sources like *Jamsilla* whenever possible.

If the chronicle was generally ignored in France and Britain, it found a dedicated readership in Italy, Austria, Switzerland and Germany among scholars hungry for information about Frederick's dynasty. Giovanni Battista Caruso included the text in his *Bibliotheca Historica Regni Siciliae*, published in Palermo in 1723. This contained supplementary information from a codex discovered at Messina. At the same time, an edition was published in Leipzig by Johann Georg von Eckhart.

More widely distributed was a corrected transcription of 1726 effected by Ludovico Muratori, who assigned the chronicle the descriptive title *Historia de Rebus Gestis Frederici II Imperatoris ejusque filiorum Conradi et Manfredi Apuliae et Siciliae regium ab anno MCCX usque ad MCCLVIII* and identified "Nicolai de Jamsilla" as its author. Published in Milan, this is regarded by the great majority of scholars as the most reliable of the "traditional" publications of the Latin text.

An edition that stands out appears in pages 167-333 of Giovanni Gravier's *Raccolta di Tutti i più Rinomati Scrittori dell'Is-*

EMPEROR FREDERICK II



Amongst the memories bequeathed us by past writers, we recall having had as Holy Roman Emperor the distinguished Frederick II, who traced his noble roots through another Emperor, his father. Frederick's wisdom and magnanimity far eclipsed anything engendered by the emperors who preceded him, for he gave more to the Empire than the Empire gave to him.

In childhood, following the deaths of both his parents, young Frederick found himself surrounded by ambitious tyrants who tried to devour him whole, as if he were a lamb among wolves. Looking only to the hand of God to care for him, until the age of majority Frederick found himself under the protection of Pope Innocent III.¹⁰

Owing more to divine virtue than to earthly effort, Frederick thwarted the ambitions of Otto IV, who, having become Holy Roman Emperor, invaded the Kingdom of Sicily, attempting to usurp the young monarch's precious birthright.¹¹

Frederick prevailed, ousting the tyrants who challenged his authority and obtaining the Imperial crown, a prerogative confirmed by the elector princes as well as hereditary right.

During the pontificate of Honorius III, the German lands were ably administered by Frederick's firstborn son Henry, born of his first wife Constance of Aragon.

In Sicily, Frederick confronted the aggression of the Saracens.¹² These Muslims had rebelled during his youth, when they seized some mountain regions. Armed with military power tempered by uncommon wisdom, Frederick resettled many of them in the plains, and over time he sent them to a place called Lucera in Apulia, where they kept their fealty to him.¹³

With the Sicilian Saracens resettled and peace restored to his entire realm, Frederick arrived by sea in the Kingdom of Jerusalem.¹⁴ Here his name was disparaged by the local Saracens, who for some time had visited acts of their superstition upon the Holy Sepulchre, a grave affront to the Christian faith.¹⁵ Whilst he was seeking to bring order to the Kingdom of Jerusalem, Frederick learned that Pope Gregory IX, who had succeeded Honorius III, had sent an army to invade the Kingdom of Sicily, arriving as far as the Apulian borderlands. The Pope personally undertook this enterprise in Frederick's absence.

Having established peace in his Kingdom of Jerusalem, Frederick returned with alacrity to the Kingdom of Sicily, where he pushed the invading foreign army beyond his borders and quelled some uprisings.¹⁶ With his forces, he then entered those parts of Italy and Germany where unrest was being fomented.

He removed from power his firstborn son, Henry; Frederick's enemies had set this heir apparent against him.¹⁷ Beside himself with anger, Frederick sent Henry to Calabria. In Henry's stead, Frederick appointed Conrad, his son by Yolanda of Brienne of Jerusalem.

At the same time, Frederick undertook an incursion into his dominions in Lombardy, first reining in the city of Vicenza,

which had rebelled against the Holy Roman Empire.¹⁸ Next he subdued the Milanese and their allies during a pitched battle, imprisoning many of the Lombard leaders and sending them southward to the Kingdom of Sicily.

He devastated the town of Brescia and its environs, and forced the surrender of Faenza following a lengthy siege. Through force of arms, Frederick compelled many other Lombard, Tuscan and Umbrian towns to submit to the Imperial authority they were obligated to recognize.¹⁹

Moreover, he built and founded some cities in the Kingdom of Sicily, such as Augusta and Eraclea in Sicily, Monteleone and Alitea in Calabria, Dordona and Lucera in Apulia, and Fregelle, near Ceprano in Terra di Lavoro.²⁰

He destroyed some cities after they rebelled. These include Centuripe, Capizzi and Troina in Sicily, Benevento in the Papal province of that name, and San Severo in Apulia.²¹

Frederick was certainly a man with a great heart, but his magnanimity was tempered by a wisdom so profound that he was never moved to undertake anything hastily. Rather, he pursued every venture with a judiciousness inspired by the sophistication of his reasoning. He certainly would have achieved things (such as additional territory) greater than he did had he followed his innate instincts without heeding the brakes imposed by philosophical thought. Not only was he a devout student of science, which he cultivated personally, but he sought to propagate it in the places he ruled.

In truth, the early part of his reign was a time that found in the Kingdom of Sicily few men of learning, indeed almost none. Therefore, the Emperor instituted schools for the humanistic arts and for every distinguished science, attracting through the use of generous incentives learned scholars from every part of the world, paying them salaries from his rich treasury. As well, he granted subsidies to poor students, so that nobody, regardless of his social condition or poverty, would

be denied the study of philosophy.²²

Moreover, the Emperor, owing to his great intellect, which was especially pronounced in the natural sciences, wrote a book on the nature and care of birds, a work that clearly reflects his passion for science.

Likewise, he cherished and admired the rule of law, depriving nobody of the right to demand justice, even where this meant the right of recourse to the Emperor himself. He did not seek refuge in the power of Imperial privilege, instead subjecting himself to the same laws he had formulated. No jurist defending anybody, even a poor person, ever had to fear taking a position against the Crown. The Emperor, who himself had established this right, would sooner lose a case than risk the failure of justice.²³ At all events, he respected the spirit of the law, to the point of sometimes mitigating its rigor with his clemency.

This did not please Pope Gregory, who convoked in Rome a council against Frederick, at which all the foreign prelates were to arrive under protection of a Genoan fleet. The Emperor's admiral, charged with protecting the sea passages, defeated the Genoan fleet during a naval battle, capturing and imprisoning in the Kingdom of Sicily all the prelates being transported, along with the two cardinal legates of the Holy See who had invited them to the council. But the Emperor, though justified in acting against these prelates hostile to his authority, pardoned them, and, giving more satisfaction to God than to himself, freed them.

By the same token, it was only his wisdom that protected Frederick when he was attacked, if never defeated, by sundry, ubiquitous adversities that arrived from the hands of his adversaries. At times he was the target of the hatred of his own kinsmen. When one such conspiracy was made public, it became known that a kinsman was willing to raise a sword to strike down Frederick. Yet even the leaders of the Lombard

2
MANFRED



Frederick was survived by Conrad, his son born of Yolanda of Brienne, Manfred, his son born of an Italian wife, and Henry the Younger, his son born of an English wife.²⁴ His designated heir apparent was Conrad, who had been elected King of the Germans. In view of Henry, an elder son, having died prematurely in Calabria, Conrad was the oldest of the three brothers.

Conrad was thus the heir to the Holy Roman Empire as well as the Kingdom of Sicily, with Manfred and young Henry sometimes acting as his delegates.

Finding himself in Germany, Conrad ceded Italian administrative authority to Manfred, Frederick's most beloved son, who was raised and educated at court. Manfred became Prince of Taranto, and Count of Gravina, Tricarico and Montescaglioso. He was also invested with Mount Sant'Angelo, which the Emperor Frederick had given to Manfred's mother, who he loved deeply. Manfred became Bailiff General of the entire Kingdom of Sicily.²⁵ On his own initiative, he undertook to reward those who had supported the Emperor Frederick.

After Conrad returned to the Kingdom of Sicily, Manfred

should have retained Taranto and the other lands granted to him personally as his legitimate fiefs under his own authority, as the late Frederick had wished.²⁶

Nature formed Manfred to epitomize every grace, harmonizing in every part of him a beauty so great that nothing in his being could have been better. Attracted since youth by his father's love of learning, he revealed through obvious signs his innate genius as well as the prudence which would distinguish him in adulthood. Thanks to Manfred, the august Hohenstaufen dynasty could reign whilst maintaining its glorious status. So, not without reason, Manfred himself was considered almost an extension of Frederick, as if he were the true incarnation of his dead father, because in him one saw all the late Frederick's virtues.

Not without reason was he called *Manfred* ("Hand-Fred"), which almost seems like the *hand* of Frederick, enabling the young man to hold the sceptre borne by Frederick's own hand. *Menfred* ("Mind-Fred") embodied the *mind* and memory of Frederick. *Monfred* ("Mount-Fred") represented the *mountain* or fortress of Frederick in a human way because in Manfred's person were conserved the name and glory of Frederick as high as a mountain. Whatever vowel one changes, the result represents the deeds and name of the father.²⁷

Not without merit, each of the vowels, in their diversity, adapt themselves to the etymology of an illustrious name, clearly demonstrating that the personage reflected in that name is the one suited to be a universal norm. The other letters alone form no words without the vowels, yet the vowels are sufficient to form words if joined to those consonants. And so Manfred's very name expresses the power and the identity of Frederick through the use of various vowels. In the same sense, Manfred's personality contains within itself the essence and the name of Frederick, his father. The changing of a few vowels allows the universal guide to survive in perpetuation

of itself.

Nothing could be spoken or written that might add to those virtues of Frederick embodied in Manfred's ability to rule, either through the greatness or the intellect of the father inherited by the son.²⁸

Although the Emperor Frederick sired other sons who were gifted, kind and extraordinarily capable of inheriting their father's abilities, Manfred was the heir and true successor of his graces and virtues. The divine design of Providence transmitted to this son, through the right of primogeniture previously enjoyed by his elder brothers, a circumstance reminiscent of the situations of the sons of Isaac and David.²⁹

At Frederick's death, Manfred had obtained eighteen years of age. With his father gone, he began to exercise in the northern Italian comunes and in the Kingdom of Sicily the role of Bailiff General to which he was appointed by Conrad. Manfred sent his younger half-brother, Henry, to act on his behalf in Calabria and on the island of Sicily so that the residents of those regions might recognize and recall in the face of the young man the late Emperor, and therefore desire to keep the peace and be reassured in the wake of Frederick's death, which had provoked disquietude.³⁰ Having achieved this, Manfred himself then went to the Naples area.

Although it was thought that, following the recent death of the Emperor, grave unrest would ensue throughout his realms, as often happens upon a monarch's passing, the beginning of Manfred's administration was, by the will of God, such that, in the aftermath of Frederick's death there seemed to be no disturbance to the peace and serenity. Conrad succeeded to sovereignty with the continuity of government uninterrupted, as his administration seemed identical to that of his late predecessor.

Manfred retained without change the court of his father with all its offices, salaries, duties and freedom of administra-