INNOCENT III
HOLY LORD OF EUROPE

Written by LLA



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Disclaimer: This document was not written by a historian and should not be considered an authoritative source. It is intended, instead, to be a summary of research conducted across several volumes and online sources. Bibliographical sources are listed at the end of each chapter, but I remind you the document should not be considered a complete introduction on the lives and events of Innocent III, at century Lotario dei Conti di Segni. The current doc doesn't include the events of the IV crusade and the crusade against the french heretics.

CHAPTER I
THE ECCLESIASTICAL CAREER: LOTARIO DEI CONTI (1161-1198)

Lotario dei Conti di Segni was born in 1161 in Sevignano or Segni, perhaps in the family castle. He was the son of Trasimodo dei Conti di Segni, head of one of the so-called Roman baronial houses (a group of particularly influential noble families of Rome), and Clarissa Scotti, a relative of the future Pope Clement III. Although Lotario's family was one of the most important and prominent of the Roman nobility, the child's position was secondary in its plans, as he was likely the second-born son, which immediately steered him towards an ecclesiastical career (his brother Riccardo was later entrusted with the family fiefdoms).

Lotario received his early education at the Abbey of Sant'Andrea al Celio in Rome, taught by Pietro Ismaele, abbot of the abbey and future bishop of Sutri[1].

(Crystallized Intelligence: Knowledge)

Around 1180 (perhaps shortly before), Lotario left Rome for Paris and its renowned university, the leading center of theological studies in Europe for decades. He will be the first Roman pontiff to have studied at the University of Paris. In the French capital, the young man studied under some of the most celebrated minds of his time, including Peter Cantor, Peter of Poitiers, Migliore of Pisa, and Peter of Corbeil, becoming especially close to the latter. In addition to theology, he also studied literature, and traces of his university background can be found in his future papal letters, rich in typically scholarly quotations.

We know that Lotario was part of a group of exceptionally gifted students, his friends included Stefan Langton and Robert de Courson: the former would become the greatest exegetical scholar of his time and Archbishop of Canterbury, the latter the papal legate to the University of Paris. The three were united by a shared interest in theological study, political debate, and Thomas Becket, the martyred bishop of England, whose tomb they visited together in Canterbury during their university years[2].

(Fluid Intelligence: Cognitive Capacity/Learning Ability-Crystallized Intelligence: Knowledge)

In the summer of 1187, after more than seven years of studies, Lothair left the University of Paris, intending to head to Bologna, Europe's other great academic capital, to study law, a course he would pursue for another two years. Almost immediately after his return to Italy, between October and December 1187, Lotario was appointed subdeacon, the lowest rung of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, by Pope Gregory VIII.

Even in Bologna, the future pope demonstrated his brilliance and intelligence, attaining great legal erudition (a field he would remain interested in throughout his life), a fact confirmed by his letters and papal records. We can say without hesitation that the brevity of his stay in Bologna did not limit his legal knowledge. Lotario may have even studied with Uguccione of Pisa, one of the greatest lawyers of his time and a professor in Bologna during those years[3].

(Fluid Intelligence: Cognitive Capacity/Learning Ability-Crystallized Intelligence: Knowledge/Knowledge Application)

1187 was undoubtedly a turning point for Lotario, but for a much greater reason than his studies in Bologna: his uncle Paolo Scolari was elected Pope, taking the name Clement III. The accession of a relative to the throne of Peter was always a source of great fortune for his family, and indeed after just two years Lotario was named cardinal deacon, the lowest rank among cardinals, but still a full member of the College of Cardinals and therefore a papal elector. After obtaining the office, in September 1189, Lotario left his university studies to devote himself fully to his career within the Church.

(Adaptability: Environmental)

Despite the drastic change of role to which he was called, the young man did not lose his intellectual interests: it was during his cardinalate that he wrote *De Miseria Conditionis Humane*, a theological treatise brimming with quotations from the Bible, the Church Fathers, the great Latin authors and contemporary Parisian philosophers. The work, it must be said, lacked great thematic originality, but it demonstrated a scholarly erudition.

(Crystallized Intelligence: Knowledge/Knowledge Application)

During this period, in the early 1190s, the young Cardinal Lotario (remember that he was appointed cardinal at just 27 years old) formed a partnership with Pietro Gallocia, another cardinal and an important papal diplomat, to ensure his political protection within the difficult politics of the Roman Curia[4]. That was needed also because his uncle, Clement III, died after just three years of pontificate, in 1191, leaving him more vulnerable, especially because during the conclave, the first of Lotario's career, Giacinto Orsini (now Celestine III), an old member of one of the bitter enemy families of the Counts of Segni, was chosen as Clement's successor.

(Social Engineering: Influence Building-Strategy: Castling)

In 1195, Lotario also wrote the treatise *De Missarum Mysteriis*, a highly ideological religious work, in which he laid the foundations for his policy of papal supremacy. His thesis, strongly argued with exegetical citations and the dialectic he learned at the University of Paris, was clear: the pope is the natural successor of Saint Peter, and Saint Peter is the head of the Universal Christian Church appointed by Christ himself; therefore, the bond between the pope and Christ is superior to that between other men and the divine, making him an intermediate figure between God and humanity.

(Crystallized Knowledge: Knowledge Application-Thinking: Critical-Reasoning: Abstract)

Bibliography:

[1]Jane Sayers, *Innocenzo III* (*Innocent III: Leader of Europe*), Roma 2018 (Oxford 1993), Viella Editrice (Longman Publishing Group), p.27

[2]*Ibi*, p.29

[3]*Ibi*, p.33

[4]*Ibi*, p.33

CHAPTER II
BIRTH OF INNOCENT III: THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLAVE AND THE FIRST STEPS IN ITALY (1198-1200)

On January 8 1198 Pope Celestine III, the political adversary of Lotario and his family, died of old age. That same day, the conclave was called, and all the cardinals in the vicinity of Rome, including Lotario, were immediately summoned to elect a new pope, with exceptional haste. Surprisingly, it was Lotario himself, despite being a young candidate (just 37 years old) and only a cardinal deacon, who was elected as the new successor of Saint Peter.

Lotario's victory in the election can be explained by several factors: first, he was Roman, and the desire to limit the power of ecclesiastics from outside Lazio was still strong among the great Roman families. Second, he was recognized as a dynamic figure, strongly linked to papal supremacist ideology, and the Church strategically felt it necessary to man like him to exploit the power vacuum left by the recent death of Emperor Henry VI. Finally, the faction opposed to the recently deceased Celestine III feared a segregation of power in the hands of older and more timid prelates (in fact, the other three candidates for the papal throne were all former close collaborators of Lotario's predecessor). It is very likely that Lotario's ideological works and his moderate position among the cardinalate factions favored his rise, although many certainly remained skeptical about the election of such a young candidate, and therefore potentially destined for a long reign. His fame as a genius surely helped contain those doubts. At the moment of the acclamation the pontifical archdeacon gave him the name of Innocent III, and from there for the next two days great symbolic ceremonies were celebrated throughout the city of Rome.

Innocent III's biographer speaks of white doves flying over the cardinals and landing on the newly elected heir of Peter, and of bishops who had visions of the pope wedded to the Church. While these testimonies are far from historically credible, they demonstrate that Innocent's spiritual charisma was strong even at the beginning of his reign; few of his recent predecessors were deemed worthy of such mentions indeed[1].

(Social Engineering: Charisma/Influence Building)

Since he had never formally been a priest, much less a bishop, Innocent had to wait six weeks before being officially crowned pope, having to first obtain those two ecclesiastical titles. Finally, at the end of February, the enthronement took place on what was symbolically the most important throne in Europe, above the tomb of St. Peter and before his altar. The people who had gathered in St. Peter's Basilica celebrated enthusiastically, and after the ceremony, Innocent ascended a high stage outside the church, so as to be as visible as possible. Here, the archdeacon replaced his bishop's miter with the double papal tiara, officially crowning him. Innocent then mounted a white horse, a symbol of purity and royalty, and paraded through the crowded streets

of Rome, stopping frequently to greet the celebrating people and to donate large amounts of money to them.

(Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements-Social Engineering: Charisma/Leadership)

The situation of the Roman Church that Innocent found was not the best, although glimmers of hope were visible. Rome had been a decadent city for centuries, living in its past: the bourgeoisie was weak and underdeveloped, and it lacked a single, stable power, given that the clashes between the Papacy and the Empire for influence over the city had never ended. During the reign of Celestine III, the former borders of the Papal States (which stretched from Romagna to Abruzzo) had been occupied by the imperials, given the pope's old age and weakening strength. The death of Emperor Henry VI, who had left a two-year-old child as his heir, now warranted new political maneuvers.

Innocent was determined to take matters into his own hands. First, he gathered the city's highest officials and had them swear obedience to the pope in exchange for gifts, thus asserting his absolute power within the walls of Rome. Subsequently, papal legates and diplomats were sent to the territories of the Papal States to assert the Pope's authority. In less than a year, by the end of 1198, papal dominion over those regions was no longer merely theoretical; on the contrary, it had actually grown, expanding towards Tuscany[2]. Gaining direct control over Central Italy was essential to advance the international ambitions that Innocent was already planning and to deal as sovereign with the other lords of Europe.

(Strategy: Building/Foresight-Planning: Aim/Formulation)

The papal seat had always been in Lateran since Constantinian times, but since it was far from the city's sphere of influence of the Counts di Segni family, Innocent III decided to move the seat to a more central location in the city, namely the Vatican Hill. It was Innocent III himself who moved the center of papal power to the Vatican, the place that over the centuries would become the heart of the Church and the cultural, spiritual, and political power of the Curia. The papal palace in the Vatican desired by Innocent was fortified with walls and towers, in order to dominate the other residences of the Roman nobility (literally, as the Tower of Counts was so tall that some described to be able to touch the clouds) and, above all, to defend itself from them. Indeed, it is worth remembering that the great Roman families were constantly vying for influence over the city's senate and the assembly of cardinals. Innocent also ordered the expansion of St. Peter's Basilica, with the aim of presenting it as the "Mother of all Churches." The ultimate goal was obviously once again to strengthen the imposition of Petrine primacy. Innocent was also the first pope to use a coat of arms, establishing one of the future noble symbols of the pontiff's figure.

(Strategy: Building/Castling-Foresight: Depth-Thinking: Convergent-Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements/Demoralization)

While he started to work to create a powerful and dominant Church, Innocent had not forgotten his own family. The Counts of Segni reached their political peak during the pontificate of Lotario, becoming the most influential family in the city, thanks in part to a well-conceived plan hatched by the pope himself, having as goal to acquire more lands out of the city. Also eager to

strengthen the family's position outside of papal protection (which would inevitably end sooner or later, given that the papacy is obviously not heritable), he decided to approach the noble Annibaldi family, marrying his sister to Pietro Annibalde, a senator of Rome and lord of vast territories in the Lazio countryside. Through the marriage and the subsequent rapprochement of Pietro's sons through nepotism, Innocent effectively secured a significant acquisition of the Counts of Segni's property, ensuring their power even after his death (indeed he also appointed one of his nephews as cardinal). At the same time, the brother of the Pope, Riccardo dei Conti di Segni, was nominated as supervisor of Tower of Counts and also was appointed to work in order to buy new lands in the countryside and to moderate discussions with local nobility. Thanks to this strategic plan Riccardo also received the title of Count from the King of Sicily, given that the family's properties were now so large to exceed the borders of the State of the Church.

Not only nephews and brothers, but also the extended family received appointments to strengthen the family's position. Two cousins were appointed to high-ranking treasurers between Lazio and Tuscany, a cousin of third grade (the future Innocent IX), already a cardinal, was helped in his ecclesiastical career, while another relative obtained the title of cardinal deacon Lothair himself had held. In essence, four relatives were appointed cardinals, and others held high lay positions within the papal administration[3].

(Planning: Aim/Intricacies/Process-Strategy: Building/Castling-Social Engineering: Influence Building-Fluid Intelligence: Problem Solving)

Returning to the seizure of control of the Church, the papal chancery was one of the bodies Innocent took greatest interest in. The Chancery had existed since the third century, imitating the imperial one, and was essentially the Church's post office, from which all letters and documents were sent and received, that is, it was the gateway to and from for diplomacy. Innocent personally took control of the chancery, dismissing the cardinal appointed by Celestine III, and he appears to have done so in a despotic manner. Such a commitment to the administration of every single body of the Roman Curia certainly required considerable effort on the part of the pope.

(Adversity Capacity: Perseverance)

I had already mentioned the policy of *recuperatio*, Innocent's rapid and successful attempt to regain possession of territories theoretically under the control of the Papal States, and I also mentioned that this was achieved both through military force and, above all, through diplomatic action. The imposition of papal authority over those regions at the dawn of his pontificate clearly demonstrates Innocent's political and propagandistic prowess, but to better understand it, it is necessary to clarify some key documents that legitimized papal temporal power.

Written in the VIII century, the Donation of Constantine is one of the most famous forgeries in history, a document purporting to have been drafted by Constantine the Great for Pope Sylvester I. In the document, Constantine supposedly claimed to be handing over the pope's right to power, as Peter's successor, over all Western lands, thus legitimizing the Roman Church's political supremacy over all of Europe. Well, starting in the XI century, the Donation of Constantine became a cornerstone of papal propaganda aimed at elevating the role of the Pope over that of

the Emperor (hence the long period known as the "Investiture Controversy" that raged for half of a century in Italy and Germany, even spreading to France). Innocent III naturally also used the Donation of Constantine to promote his foreign policy and supremacy, but, at least initially (i.e., immediately after his election, eager to regain possession of ecclesiastical territories), he realized that the use of such an ancient document would not have the immediate and strong impact of the (actual) official donations and concessions granted by the Carolingian rulers (like Charlemagne) to the Pope during the VIII/IX centuries. The more recent (and concrete) validity of those imperial diplomas effectively ensured little legal resistance from the indecisive German political system (let us also remember that Emperor Henry IV had recently died, and the German princes were still disputing his succession). The Donation of Constantine would be heavily exploited by Innocent later, especially in international disputes and victories against the European monarchies. **(Strategy: Castling-Planning: Contingencies/Formulation/Process-Deception: Sophistry-Tactics: Timing)**

Bibliography:

[1]Jane Sayers, *Innocenzo III* (*Innocent III: Leader of Europe*), Roma 2018 (Oxford 1993), Viella Editrice (Longman Publishing Group), pp 34-36
[2]*Ibi*, pp. 42-43
[3]*Ibi of Europe*, 1993, Longman Pub Group, pp 45-47

CHAPTER III:
THE SUN AND THE MOON: AN EXHAUSTING CONFLICT FOR THE SUBMISSION OF THE EMPIRE (1200-1212)

Once he had secured control over his direct territories, the Pope's attention shifted to the larger game of European geopolitics, which was then in utter chaos.

The death of Henry VI of Swabia, Holy Roman Emperor with truly continental ambitions, at just 32 years of age left all the major European monarchies entangled in a grand scheme for the succession to the German throne. Henry left behind a two-year-old son, the future Frederick II, and a wife, Queen Constance of Sicily. While succession to the German throne was sanctioned by election by the Diet of Princes, in theory succession to the Kingdom of Sicily was by inheritance, but the young age of the young Frederick and the political weakness of his mother could have opened other avenues. However, it was Charlemagne's crown that attracted the greatest concern. Philip Augustus, King of France, and Richard the Lionheart, King of England, who were at war with each other at the time, were summoned by several German princes to secure the German throne. After initial hesitation, however, both understood the difficulties that their direct election would entail, and consequently decided instead to support the election of two German princes who were close allies: one was the brother of the Count Palatine, Otto, and the other the brother of the deceased Henry VI, Philip of Swabia (who also were claiming that the throne should have been theoretically of the little Frederick due to direct and legitimate heritage decided by his father).

Innocent decided to make the most of his cards. The Pope's role in the dispute was essential, as he was the one who crowned the King of the Romans first and then the Emperor. The option of nominating Philip of Swabia was the worst for the Roman Curia: the Hohenstaufen emperors (first Frederick I Barbarossa, then Henry VI) had always promoted a strong and decisive imperial policy, independent if not superior to the papal primacy not only in Germany but even in Italy; consequently, the continuation of the dynasty would have limited Innocent's ambitious plans. Precisely for this reason, Roman support had shifted fairly quickly to Otto, despite his weakening position. To maintain all his cards, Innocent nevertheless decided to revoke Philip of Swabia's excommunication (obtained years earlier while a bishop), so as not to automatically veto his election as emperor[4].

(Strategy: Adaptability/Castling-Planning: Contingencies)

The fears of the Hohenstaufens proved well-founded: in May 1199, the Speyer Declaration was sent to Innocent, in which Philip and many German princes on his side argued that the pope could no longer procrastinate and must crown him, given that an imperial election (not universally recognized) had already taken place and that the pope had no right to refuse it. The House of Swabia's conception of imperial power did not require the approval of the papacy, but only its symbolic presence.

(Foresight: Accuracy)

Unfortunately, papal spies present in Germany during 1199 were unable to pass necessary information to the papal chancellery due to the increasingly intense imperial counter-espionage war, and the pope was mistakenly led to believe that Otto's situation had stabilized and the outcome of the conflict was still open. Innocent's response to the Speyer Declaration was balanced but clear: the pope was the arbiter of the imperial dispute, his judgment was essential in his capacity as both king and priest, and for the first time the pope declared publicly himself not only Vicar of Peter, but also and especially Vicar of Christ, the earthly representation of divine will.

Innocent's political acumen soon made him understand that the situation was not as balanced as he believed and that Otto's only opportunity to obtain victory was to gain time and strengthen his position. For this reason, thanks to his influence on the Archbishop of Mainz, he managed to convince the two parties to reach a truce of 6 months, during which a tribunal of 16 princes (8 on each side) would be organised, which would sanction the outcome of the dispute. Given Otto's lack of political ability (whom the Pope ultimately favored also because he was more stupid than Philip), he forced Innocent to act as the mastermind of the anti-dynastic faction, even if formally he remained fairly neutral[5]. The request of Otto to Innocent to put pressure over the 16 princes in his favour made the Pope mad: his plan wasn’t to do such a thing, but to impose directly a pontifical legatus in the diet and lead in a more firm way the election.

(Planning: Process/Versatility/Aim-Strategy: Adaptability-Counteraction: Improvisation-Reasoning: Inductive)

On Christmas Eve 1200, a secret consistory of powerful cardinals presided over by the Pope met to definitively establish what should be done based on three factors: what was legally permissible, what was morally permissible, and what was convenient to do. In reality, the second point was largely overlooked by the cardinals and the pontiff, as it was rather dishonestly declared that the personal actions and sins of Philip of Swabia were the reason for their refusal of his coronation, not his membership in the House of Hohenstaufen. The consistory therefore decided to send three of the highest papal legates to a council where the outcome of the imperial nomination would be decided. At the end of the discussion, Innocent also decided to clarify the position of the little Frederick, son of Henry VI, arguing that the child, once grown up, might feel robbed of the title to which he was entitled, and that it was therefore important to avoid future conflict with him by overlooking him in the meantime.

(Planning: Formulation-Deception: Sophistry/Fabrication-Foresight: Depth-Field Crafting: Risks Calculation-Reasoning: Abductive)

The plan to hold a council to decide on the election under apparent neutrality, however, foundered almost immediately: the papal envoy Eugenio, present for the election of the new archbishop of Mainz, where the papal and Hohenstaufen camps were already clashing again, promptly delivered dire news for the Guelph camp: Otto's situation seemed to be deeply deteriorating, and his party was on the verge of collapse. Innocent realized that diplomatic means

were no longer viable, and openly declared his support for Otto, mobilizing his front in less than one month.

(Thinking: Speed-Strategy: Adaptability-Field Crafting: Info Gathering)

Given the weakness of the Guelph party in Germany, due to the continued erosion by the Hohenstaufens, Innocent immediately turned his attention to gaining international support. As we have said, Henry VI's ambitions far exceeded the confines of the Holy Roman Empire, and probably his brother was planning similar things, to the detriment of the new European monarchies. England, which had previously supported Otto's candidacy, was easy to convince, despite the difficult situation that the new king, John Lackland, was facing. France, which until then had supported Philip of Swabia, was also convinced by Innocent of the European danger that the strengthening of the Holy Roman Empire could pose. To encourage King Philip Augustus, Innocent even lifted the veto that had been cast on his male heirs (since they were born from a polygamous marriage, which had followed the murder of his first wife).

The speed of Rome's political maneuvering allowed the Guelph front to quickly recover from a dramatic situation.

(Strategy: Adaptability-Thinking: Speed-Manipulation: Direct/Logical-Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements)

Events proceeded quickly, partly because Innocent counted on speed to achieve success. In March 1201, Otto was anointed and crowned emperor in Cologne. This, however, did not mean that Philip of Swabia's faction had weakened; on the contrary, it was. In September of the same year, the Hohenstaufen family declared its own diet, attended by many German princes. It rejected Otto's coronation and called on the pope to cease his interference in German politics. Innocent's harsh response only inflamed the dynastic party, which in the meantime was re-establishing relations with the French King (who protested for the election of Otto).

Innocent, however, did not lose his speed of action in the slightest: the prince-bishops (this is the name given to those bishops who held power over entire regions) of all of Germany were summoned to Rome, reprimanded and disciplined to obtain their absolute support for Otto's cause, and he also excommunicated Philip of Swabia. All the bishops who had supported the Hohenstaufens were harshly reprimanded and realigned with the Guelph party[6]. With this order alone, about half of Germany abandoned Philip's faction, in a centralization of international ecclesiastical politics rarely seen before in history.

(Social Engineering: Leadership/Communication-Strategy: Adaptability/Castling-Tactics: Timing-Psychological Warfare: Abusing Insecurities/Demoralization)

Finally, the Pope published a denunciation against Philip of Swabia, declaring him guilty of a long list of crimes (including failure to pay two million marks to the King of Hungary), for which he said he could be tried without trial. The final piece in Philip's downfall was the defection of his chancellor, the Bishop of Würzburg, who would soon be found murdered (it’s still not clear if the murder was decided by the guelf faction or by the dynastic one). However, after the death of the former chancellor, the German popular opinion abandoned totally Philip, considering him implicated in the murder, and Innocent took advantage of this to prove himself

instead a solid executioner: he had the bishop's actual murderers captured, excommunicated them and sent them as cannon fodder in the crusades.

(Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements/Abusing Insecurities-Strategy: Adaptability-Thinking: Speed-Manipulation: Mass/Emotional)

It was at that point that Philip of Swabia was forced to moderate his tone and seek a compromise with Innocent: he promised him that he would have no aspirations over Northern and Central Italy and that he would not allow his nephew, the young Frederick, to unite the crowns of Germany and Sicily in the future (an event that would have trapped the State of the Church essentially). The pope, however, prevaricated, confident that time would make matters even better.

In September 1203 Innocent fell seriously ill, causing many to think he was close to death, but he managed to recover and immediately began leading the Guelph faction[7].

(Adversity Capacity: Mental Fortitude-Perseverance)

Meanwhile, the conflict was beginning to spread even within the archbishoprics, with the Ghibellines attempting to have pro-imperial bishops elected in place of the Guelph candidates, in order to weaken the influence of Innocent III over that half of Germany subjected to the prince-bishops. Firstly Mainz, then Colonia, fell into internal divisions because of that.

However, Philip of Swabia's position was slowly worsening, thanks to Innocent's political maneuvering, so much so that in 1206 the duke sent a letter to the Pope promising him an end to the struggle for the control of the archbishoprics in exchange for imperial recognition and half of his own archbishops candidates. He also referred to Innocent as the Vicar of Christ, asking forgiveness for his offenses against the Church and hoping for a return to stability. Even these words did not soften Innocent's heart, as the Duke of Swabia still stubbornly refused his role as supreme arbiter of the Empire.

(Adversity Capacity: Perseverance)

In reality, the Pope's support for Otto was never aimed at total victory, however desirable that might be. The true purpose of his policy was to make him the arbiter of imperial power, the man who could confirm or dismiss an emperor at will[8]. For this very reason, paradoxically, the channels with Philip of Swabia were never closed, and the support to Otto was never absolute. The ongoing war was necessary for the Pope to sufficiently exhaust the contenders to assume an even stronger position in the end.

(Planning: Intricacies/Contingencies/Versatility-Manipulation: Mass/Logical-Deception: Acting Skills/Sophistry/Information Control/Misrediction-Reasoning: Deductive)

After the Pope forced the King of England to finance the Guelph party in Germany in 1207, the plan could finally be considered a success, after nearly a decade of incessant fighting. Philip's allied princes asked their leader to officially recognize the Pope as the arbiter of the imperial nomination. In May 1208 Philip agreed and sent his delegates to Rome to ask Innocent to oversee the imperial election. Victory had come finaly; Innocent had humiliated the emperor's role before all of Europe by forcing the candidate princes to accept his superior arbitration, making him the most powerful and prestigious person in Europe already. It was a triumph that

the popes had dreamed of for a century and a half, since the papacy of Gregory VII, and it had finally arrived. But in June 1208, Philip of Swabia was suddenly assassinated for personal reasons by the count of Baviera.

Given Philip's death, it was natural to crown Otto as Emperor of the Romans in Rome. Perhaps Innocent believed he could finally rest at this point, but it was far from it, as just a few months after his coronation, Otto IV drastically changed his policy, growing equally disliked by the Pope and the German princes. He violated the Papal States' promises of protection, began plundering Hohenstaufen lands in revenge and to his Saxons allies, plundered church property in Germany to repay debts to the King of England, and attempted to strengthen his presence in Italy. Soon, even his former German supporters turned away from him, and Innocent immediately formed a front against him, going so far as to excommunicate him when Otto moved his army toward the Kingdom of Sicily to occupy it.

(Thinking: Speed-Strategy: Adaptability-Counteraction: Improvisation/Trap evasion)

Innocent took advantage of the hatred and dismay that were spreading in Germany over the emperor's unscrupulous actions, inciting the German princes and forming a common front with the King of France, Philip Augustus, against whom he had clashed a few years earlier precisely over imperial issues.

(Social Engineering: Influence Building-Adaptability: Environmental)

It was at this point, between 1209 and 1210, that the new protagonist of the german political scene finally came out. He was Frederick, the son of Henry IV and nephew of Philip of Swebia, new imperial candidate of both Innocent and Philip Augustus, but it’s better to introduce him properly.

THE YOUNG HOHENSTAUFEN: FREDERICK AS JOKER CARD OF INNOCENT

Innocent III had already understood the enormous opportunities that the death of Henry IV in 1197 granted the Church over the Kingdom of Sicily. The heir to the kingdom was the young Frederick, just two years old at the time, whose only parental figure was his frail mother, Constance of Hauteville. Innocent first imposed his control over the South, making it a fiefdom of the Papal States. Secondly, he had reached an agreement with Constance, guaranteeing her and her son's protection in exchange for recognition of papal authority over the king of Sicily and the promise that Sicily and the imperial crown would never be reunited. A few months later, Constance fell ill and appointed Innocent as the child's guardian, making him his father figure. A few months later, Constance also died. As early as the Christmas of 1200, Innocent had understood that a future Frederick might feel robbed of his father's imperial crown, and so he worked to ensure that the young man would not develop this feeling in the future. Although many of his attempts to persuade the young man did not have long-term positive results, this one can be said to have worked.

In the following years, marked by the constant war between Otto and Philip of Swabia, Frederick's uncle, Innocent kept the child away from political affairs, ignoring the proposals of some German princes to appoint him emperor. He was nominally king of Sicily, but the kingdom was de facto in the hands of Innocent, who could exploit its resources to ensure support for the Guelph party. In any case, the relationship between the two was long characterized by mutual trust, and Innocent worked to ensure that the young man would become a champion of the Church, a king loyal and submissive to papal authority, despite the relations between the two (or rather, between Frederick and the tutors to whom Innocent entrusted him) were often hindered by interference from southern barons and envoys of the Hohenstaufen (who even invaded Sicily(.

Frederick, in reality, would be very different in adulthood (although he would prove far less anti-Guelph than his father Henry IV and especially his grandfather Frederick I), but at least while Innocent was alive, he maintained a friendly relationship with the Church.

Frederick's long education under the papal indirect mantle took on unexpected value at the time of Otto's betrayal. Since Innocent had always prioritized avoiding the unification of Sicily and the Empire (which would have put the Papal States in a stranglehold), the assumption of power by a friendly and, in some ways, easily influenced figure like Frederick (whose claims to the throne could be strong) could have allowed the pope to keep the two crowns separate. In 1212, in fact, when Frederick swore an oath of vassalage to the Pope, Innocent made him promise that the inheritances of Germany and Sicily would not be united and that the administration of the two kingdoms would remain separate.

In a certain sense, Innocent did not err; for as long as he lived, Frederick would be a good son of the Church, both as King of Sicily and then King of the Romans (he was not crowned emperor by Innocent, but four years after his death by his successor Honorius). However, problems between the Holy See and the Stupor Mundi would begin some years later, perhaps more due to the papal antagonism than to any desire for confrontation on Frederick's part. The entire relationship between tutor and pupil, however, was, sincerely or not, supported by Innocent's early years, in order to exploit the political opportunities the child represented, depending on the various situations to be faced.

(Fluid Intelligence: Problem Solving-Emotional Intelligence: Realization/Facilitation-Manipulation: Direct-Deception: Sophistry/Acting Skills-Planning: Aim/Versatility-Strategy: Castling/Adaptability/Foresight-Foresight: Depth/Accuracy-Field Crafting: Risks Calculations-Adaptability: Enviromental-Social Engineering: Influence Building)

Thanks to the support of his powerful allies and the popularity that the Hohenstaufen still had in Germany, Frederick's rise was rapid: in 1212 he sailed up the Rhine acclaimed by the cities, while in 1214 the resistance of Otto and the King of England John (still his ally since Otto was still in debt to him) was crushed at Bouvines by the united forces of the Swabians and the French of Philip Augustus, leading to Otto's definitive downfall.

Bibliography:

[1]Jane Sayers, *Innocenzo III* (*Innocent III: Leader of Europe*), Roma 2018 (Oxford 1993), Viella Editrice (Longman Publishing Group), pp. 67-72
[2]*Ibi*, pp. 72-74
[3]*Ibi*, p.77
[4]*Ibi*, p.79
[5]*Ibi*, p.81

CHAPTER IV:
KINGS AND HERETICS: PAPAL POWER BETWEEN EUROPEAN HEGEMONY AND THE ALBIGENSIAN GENOCIDE
(1198-1213)

The conflict against the empire was only one, albeit the main one, of the fronts on which Innocent III fought to establish the supremacy of the papacy: all of Europe was, in effect, his target, both temporally and spiritually.

The papacy he inherited in 1198 had already been nominally lord of Portugal since 1179, and as soon as Innocent took possession of the Petrine throne, he sent letters to the King of Portugal, Sancho I, demanding the timely and regular payment of vassalage to Rome. Despite Sancho's initial loyalty to his vassal duties, after a few years he clashed with the Bishop of Porto, the expression of ecclesiastical and therefore papal power in the kingdom. The disagreement between the court and the clerical community, however, was overcome by the latter, thanks in part to the sovereign's worsening illness, and Innocent forced Sancho to sign new, even more restrictive agreements, which ensured that canon law would take precedence over secular law and that the clergy would be exempt from taxes, also confirming the inferior role of the king to the pope[1]. By 1212, therefore, Portugal could be considered a genuine fiefdom under Innocent's influence.

(Strategy: Building-Planning: Process-Thinking: Speed)

Aragon also boasted ancient ties to the papacy, but these ties must have strengthened starting in 1204, close to the time, as we will see and analyze in detail, of the Albigensian Crusade launched by Innocent III in southern France. Fearing for the safety of his kingdom and in desire of protection of his interests in Provence, Peter II, King of Aragon, decided to submit to Innocent's authority. He traveled personally to Rome, where, in a sumptuous ceremony rich in symbolism and propaganda, he was named a vassal of the Pope in exchange for his protection. After Peter II's death in 1211, Innocent assumed the tutelage of his son James, appointed his own advisors within the kingdom, and also obtained the only ecclesiastic influence over the kingdom's bishops election[2].

(Strategy: Building-Planning: Versatility/Process-Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements/Abusing Insecurities)

Innocent's influence had already reached the Spanish part of the Iberian Peninsula in 1999, when he intervened in a dynastic dispute involving the kingdoms of Portugal, León, and Castile. The King of León, Alfonso IX, had married the daughter of Sancho I of Portugal, but the King of Castile, Alfonso VIII (the future victor of the Battle of Las Navas), had forced the couple to divorce to prevent a dynastic union between León and Portugal, and had then imposed a marriage between Alfonso IX and his daughter Berengaria. At that point, since the couple needed

a papal dispensation to annul their previous marriage, Innocent III stepped in. His goal was to prevent the annulment, since a strengthening of Portugal's power would have been advantageous to Rome (given the vassalage relationships we have already discussed). After declaring the marriage null and void, seeing that the couple refused to separate, Innocent placed an interdict on both the kingdoms of Castile and León and declared the couple's children illegitimate, arguing not only the lack of papal dispensation but also the consanguinity between the two spouses (who were, in fact, first cousins, a common practice among noble families at the time, but theoretically prohibited and exploited by the pope on this occasion). Thanks to the interdict and ecclesiastical pressure, a compromise was eventually reached: the couple accepted the annulment of the marriage in exchange for the legitimization of their children. The compromise strengthened papal prestige in Spain and laid the foundation for the solid relations between the Roman Curia and the Castilian crown, already tested a few years later by Innocent III's approval of the Castilian invasion of Navarre.

(Strategy: Building/Adaptability-Tactics: Creativity-Psychological Warfare: Abusing Insecurities)

Bibliography:

[1]Jane Sayers, *Innocenzo III* (*Innocent III: Leader of Europe*), Roma 2018 (Oxford 1993), Viella Editrice (Longman Pub Group), p.103

[2]*Ibi*, pp. 103-104