

## The Eyewitness Accounts of the First Crusade as Political Scripts<sup>1</sup>

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The First Crusade was full of politics: full, that is, of the interplay between power, authority, and institutions; full of competing interests and conflict. Even if the amount of information available to us were substantially less than it actually is, we would still be able to infer much about the political dimensions of the crusade from the first-order facts known to us: that the crusade army was a composite of diverse nationalities and regional identities; the crusade's ability, more or less, to retain its cohesion as a collective and goal-driven enterprise over the course of more than two arduous years; and the crusade's mobility, which entailed a regular series of interactions, accommodations, and conflicts with the political cultures of the areas through which it moved. A further first-order fact in this category, perhaps, is that there was a fairly smooth transition from the prosecution of the First Crusade itself (taking the fall of Jerusalem in July 1099 and the battle of Ascalon in August as its principal moments of closure) into the early history of the Latin East. This was not a seamless process, to be sure, and was one fraught with dangers and difficulties for those living through it; but with the benefit of hindsight it has the appearance of having comprised an experiential continuum for those on the ground, who, after all, simply had to enact continuity by staying put while former comrades made their way back to the West.

The notion of an underlying continuity came to be encoded in the chronological ranges of several early texts devoted to the crusade and its effects, tentatively so in Guibert of Nogent's *Dei Gesta per Francos*, more expansively in Fulcher of Chartres's *Historia Hierosolymitana* and Albert of Aachen's *Historia Ierosolimitana* (though in both cases the texts' final chronological extents emerged *seriatim* via resumptions of the work after one or more intervals of several years), and, later in the twelfth century and definitively for readers into the modern era, in William of Tyre's *Chronicon* (which substantially drew on Fulcher for its earlier portions). With textual warrants such as these, the same notion of continuity between the First Crusade and the Latin East was enshrined in chapters LVIII-LX

of Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-89), informed nineteenth- and earlier twentieth-century grand-sweep histories of the crusades, and was popularized for English-speaking readers by Steven Runciman's *A History of the Crusades* (1951-4), whence it continues to be given in populist treatments and, sometimes more circumspectly, in modern textbooks.<sup>2</sup>

It is incontestable that, when reconstructing numerous aspects of the lived experiences of the Latins who stayed in the East after 1099, a narrative arc between the First Crusade and the Latin East can be constructed.<sup>3</sup> But it does not automatically follow that such a transition, viewed as a political process, was anticipated by the crusaders themselves, nor that it must have been present in some incipient form in the earliest formal tellings of the crusaders' experiences (or at least the earliest that we possess). The first surviving Latin narrativizations of the First Crusade are in the form of several letters written in the names of various elite crusaders, either individually or as some collective representation of the crusade *in toto*.<sup>4</sup> A great deal of scholarly work needs to be done on these oddly neglected texts – their authenticity, their textual transmission, their possible influence on the first-generation historians of the crusade, and their importance in creating both enabling paradigms for, and constricting boundaries around, the narrativity of the crusade, to mention just some of the main problems.<sup>5</sup> Without this foundational work, any mobilization of these texts is hazardous.

We are on somewhat firmer ground, however, with the numerous closely contemporary histories of the First Crusade, the products of an historiographical mini-boom between c.1100 and c.1120 that have received much more scholarly attention than the letters and have been the mainstay of the study of the crusade since Jacques Bongars' assembled most of the texts in his *Gesta Dei per Francos* (1611). Among these historical narratives, a sort of pride of place, as repositories of information if not as interpretive visions or literary achievements, has traditionally gone to the so-called 'eyewitness' accounts.<sup>6</sup> If we discount for our immediate purposes Peter Tudebode's *Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere*, which is only partially an eyewitness text *eo nomine*, these texts are the anonymous *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, the *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem* of Raymond of Aguilers (entitled the '*Liber*' by its most recent editors, without clear manuscript warrant), and the *Historia Hierosolymitana* of Fulcher of Chartres.<sup>7</sup> This last work, as we have noted, extended its range, eventually growing into a history of the Latin East (up to 1127, in fact), but we can isolate Book I (of three) as a more or less discrete treatment of the First Crusade and its immediate aftermath (it concludes with the death of Godfrey of Bouillon in September 1100).<sup>8</sup> Although it is not wholly clear that the book divisions as we now have them are Fulcher's own, and Fulcher made subsequent revisions to the First Crusade portion of the text as the chronological range of his work expanded, the closure provided by Godfrey's death, and the resultant implicit anticipation of the arrival in Jerusalem as ruler of Fulcher's

master Baldwin of Boulogne, which is the first order of business in Book II, means that we may legitimately separate Book I out and set it alongside the *Gesta* and Raymond's *Liber* as specifically *crusade* narratives.

In all three texts, one encounters multiple engagements with ideas, cultural scripts, and behaviours that one might readily characterize as political in nature: for example, various explorations of status and authority, value systems of honour, reputation, and shame, the dynamics between powerful individuals and the groups that they sought to control, the interplay between the secular political and other *loci* of identity, and numerous negotiations of the tensions between the need for leadership in times of collective crisis and expectations about the importance of consultation. Furthermore, the texts reveal a preoccupation with the problems of finding and distributing material resources, and understand these problems as tantamount to corollaries of the effectiveness, or lack of it, of the crusade's leadership. There is also some shading from the public role-playing of princely leadership into matters of individual and collective ethics – a shading best represented in the texts' construction of Bishop Adhemar of Le Puy as a crossover figure, both political operator and moral counsellor.<sup>9</sup> The texts make numerous observations that speak to the authors' understandings of the practicalities of power on the ground during the crusade: for example, several remarks made by Raymond of Aguilers to the effect that the political capital of Raymond of Saint-Gilles, count of Toulouse, among his own followers and among the crusaders more widely, ebbed and flowed according to the state of his health and the amount of cash at his disposal, as well as the extent to which he was seen to be making an active military contribution.<sup>10</sup> Insofar as the eyewitness texts call forth the crusaders' actual experiences and perceptions – a large question, to which we will return – the storyworlds that they invite the reader to create are inhabited by people alive to at least some of the political complexities that the crusade entailed.

Generally speaking, scholars have approached the question of the political dimension of the crusade, and the crusaders' consciousness of it, via what might be termed its 'macro-political', geopolitical ramifications. A central area for debate has been the papacy's and the crusaders' relations with the Byzantine empire, as well as the papacy's ambitions for the churches in those areas recovered by the crusade. To what extent, in a brave new Gregorian world, could or should any secular political dispensation emerging from the crusade harmonize at source with ecclesiastical structures and clerical hierarchies of authority? To what extent were the crusaders placed in a political vacuum, a play of improvisations and 'fixes', when the Byzantine contribution to the campaign proved less substantial than had originally been anticipated and it could be argued, as many crusaders probably did, that the Byzantines had defaulted on their right to respect for historical territorial claims in areas that the crusaders were busy 'liberating'? Was the Latin East an 'ossification' of the expedients to which the Franks resorted during and after the crusade? And what, as a consequence, was the place of the Latin East *vis-*

*à-vis* the political structures of its cultural 'metropole' in Western Europe?<sup>11</sup> These are all important questions, but such a concentration on the policies, status, and competing ambitions of the major 'players' in the shape of international institutions and polities is to focus on only one facet of the political dimensions of the crusade in the round. What is perhaps less clear but no less interesting is what the crusaders themselves thought or anticipated with respect to the political consequences, immediate or longer-term, that the First Crusade would entail.

Put another way, to what extent were those on the crusade assuming political identities or pursuing political goals? For as long as historians have pondered, or speculated about, the motivations of the first crusaders and the ideologies and interests that sustained them during the crusade, there has been debate about the degree to which the crusaders themselves were purposively engaged in some sort of exercise in political change.<sup>12</sup> Were they thinking beyond the narrative arc of crusade-as-pilgrimage to the possible longer-term consequences of their hoped-for achievements? Materialistic explanations for the crusaders' actions, of whatever stripe, always presuppose a form of political ambition, albeit atavistic, merely instinctive, or poorly apprehended. On the other hand, arguments in favour of ideological motivations are effectively, if seldom expressly, anti- or a-political in their suppositions about crusaders' cultural priorities. Lords and knights moved by religious values encoded in the rituals and spaces of kinship networks, pilgrimage shrines, and monastic houses can be constructed to appear somehow above sordid political considerations, it seems. What in recent years has been an important paradigm-shift and salutary scholarly reaction against poorly thought-through arguments about the crusades as proto-colonial and materialistic in inspiration has itself, perhaps, called forth an image of high-minded central medieval aristocrats that is too idealized, too removed from the political dimension within the cultural scripts that enabled them to function socially, and which we must presume were carried over by force of habit and the reassuring appeal of familiar referentia into the experience of crusading, insofar as this was practicable.<sup>13</sup> Be that as it may, the question of the political in the crusade needs to move beyond being caught up in the binaries of debate about motivation.

In that light, the aim of the remainder of this paper is to explore some implications of an apparent paradox: that the question of the first crusaders' awareness of the political dynamics within the First Crusade must be substantially approached via an examination of sources, the 'eyewitness' narratives, that largely engage with the issue through evasion or negation. A reading of these texts reveals that, although there are indeed many forms of political motivation and agency on display in the texts' storyworlds, these feature for the most part as incidentals of the plot design or simply as 'reality effects', bits and pieces scattered throughout the narratives that can certainly be made to add up to something meaningful in a modern historical reconstruction of the crusade, but which are not fundamental to the texts' own discourses, the narratorial voices one hears in them, and the

competencies of the implied readers that the texts call forth. In other words, addressing the question of the political dimensions of the crusade turns out to be a route into thinking about the distance, even the disconnection, between the eyewitness accounts read as prompts to the historical recreation of events, and those same histories viewed narratologically – in essence, the difference between mobilizing a ‘source’ and reading a ‘text’. The aim of the paper will thus be to propose ways of reading the eyewitness narratives of the First Crusade that foreground their textuality, using the contrasting notion of an empirical ‘what happened next’ outside the texts as an analytical foil. For the purposes of this argument, therefore, the question of the actual reception of the texts – whether, for example, politically important actors read and were influenced by them – is not at issue. Rather, because the political formation of the Latin East looms so large over the standard story of the First Crusade as a sort of immediate and inevitable coda, the category of the ‘political’ serves as a helpful way into considering the nature of the storyworlds that the eyewitness texts create. Put simply, to what extent were those storyworlds detached from the crusaders’ and the early Latin settlers’ lived experiences – not ‘accurate’ or ‘inaccurate’, but qualitatively and incommensurably different? Do the narratives ‘float’ in a textual space that historians who mobilize them as sources tend to disregard?

Using the idea of the political as a point of entry into the texts, therefore, one must begin by asking how far the so-called eyewitness accounts of the crusade – the *Gesta*, Raymond’s *Liber*, and the first book of Fulcher’s *Historia* – anticipate the morphology of the political settlement, and the dynamics of the political culture, that emerged in the aftermath of the crusade, as incarnated in the polities that we now term the ‘Latin East’. Framing the problematic in such terms does not involve, of course, asking whether authors who were writing very close to the end of the crusade – the *Gesta* anonymous most probably in the final months of 1099, Fulcher and Raymond by no later than 1101/2 – had some sort of uncanny ability to gaze ahead into the future. Rather, it comes down to examining the extent to which the discourses, conceptual schemata, and cultural scripts that the eyewitness accounts embed within their narratives had any longer-term pertinence to the post-crusade period of political consolidation in the Latin East. Or, to put the problem the other way around, how far is the state-building project of twelfth-century Outremer encoded within the early narrative accounts of the crusade?

The phrase ‘within the early narrative accounts’ requires emphasis: this is a very different exercise from investigating the lived transition from crusade to Latin East as a more or less smooth political, social, and cultural trajectory. For the moment, we need not worry about the degree of consensus expressed in the texts, that is whether their authors in some measure cast themselves or were cast by patrons and a mood of communal aspiration as ‘spokespersons’ of collective or at least widely-recognized understandings of the crusade, or whether the texts are in the end simply evidence for themselves. This is an important question, to which

we will turn. For now, however, it is important simply to remind ourselves of the value of approaching the texts *qua* texts, not as data repositories from which much of what we think we know about the crusade happens to derive. Contrary to the anxieties of those historians who fear a diminution of the evidential values of their favoured narrative source repertoires if they are exposed to too much 'literary' interrogation, such an approach does not mandate the view that there is, or was, no First Crusade beyond its textual representation. We simply need to understand much more about the internal dynamics, the meaning-making processes, in sum the poetics, of these texts before we can make judgements about the feasibility of reading 'through' them to the 'real' crusade that may or may not reside somewhere on the other side. Crusade scholarship has, by and large, fought shy of this hermeneutic route, preferring instead to take short-cuts from the narrative sources, not least the eyewitness texts that we are considering, in order to construct a master narrative of the crusade in its fullest retrievable extent. This master narrative offers itself as a 'reconstruction' that is part composite of the various narratives, any competing or inconsistent utterances individually scored with recourse to slippery quantities such as 'reliability', 'immediacy', and 'accuracy', and part mobilization of ontological externals such as knowledge of distances and terrain, a common-sense appreciation of the material conditions and technological abilities of medieval societies, and a sort of medievalist folk-psychological appreciation of the conceptual constraints within which medieval people operated.<sup>14</sup>

The eyewitness narratives encode several perceptions and ideological priorities that inhibited or deflected their authors from thinking in the sort of political terms that would anticipate a smooth transition to the Latin East. That is to say, if the Latin East was born out of the crusade through the experiences of people living through events as they unfolded, the storyworld called forth by the perceptions and memories of the crusade, as they came to be articulated in textual form, did not serve as its midwife.<sup>15</sup> To repeat, this does not entail the proposition that the First Crusade was somehow innocent of the play and interaction of political discourses, or that the crusaders' self-awareness was never framed by political identities. Rather, it suggests that the storyworld logic of the texts and the conceptual spaces that they open up did not require an extensive or indeed coherent and internally consistent engagement with the political dimensions of the crusaders' achievement. In short, the texts were not the incipient Latin East's script for what should or would happen next.

Several reasons for the texts' political innocence, selectivity, or perhaps *aporia* may be suggested. One is the disconnectedness of higher-status crusaders from the patterns of political experience with which they would most probably have been familiar at home in western Europe. This registers in the narratives in what might seem at first glance a tangential aspect but is in fact crucial: that is, the texts' severely limited fashioning, even studied neglect, of the diegetical spaces



offered up to the reader, in other words the filled-out, scenic world that the crusade is shown moving in and through. Apart from a few topographical descriptions of city-scapes (which may in some cases be authorial afterthoughts or later scribal insertions), the texts' *mise-en-scène* tends to be very bald; there is very little colour, and very little human physical description, expressiveness, or gesture. The storyworld's chronotopes, their spatio-temporal amplitude at any narrative juncture, tend in all three texts to achieve the greatest amount of depth and volume through the use of tenses and the interplay of durative and punctual verbs. That is, linear, singulative narration (one event, told once and in order) and the brisk paratactic propulsion of action through time – the rhythm of this happened, this happened, this happened – provide the basis of the texts' narrative textures, not 'thick description', generalization, or what Gérard Genette, borrowing the term 'syllepsis' from the terminology of classical rhetoric, identifies as the single narration of iterated actions and events (as in 'Every day they would...').<sup>16</sup> This has a direct bearing on our understanding of the texts' political purchase because eleventh-century aristocratic politics was largely about enacting roles, about ritual and performance, played out in more or less bounded and familiar spaces within which legitimacy and power were simultaneously symbolized and reified by fixed points such as castles, courts, family monasteries, around which there circulated a more intangible currency of habits of loyalty, traditions, and custom. What instead seems to have emerged on the crusade was a stripped-down culture of raw leadership that boiled down to the ability, and competition to show the ability, to feed and protect desperate people in relentlessly tough conditions. In an ideal world, we would like the eyewitness narratives to equip us to see more clearly into the new and unaccustomed physical settings and networks of power relationships that the crusade brought forth. But these matters were seldom part of the texts' narrative programmes. It is perhaps significant that all the eyewitness texts make much of princely banners as markers of status, achievement in war, and proprietary right, for these were one of the few traditional props of political authority that could be readily transposed into the crusade environment.<sup>17</sup> But beyond this there is very little to go on as far as the diegesis of aristocratic political behaviour is concerned.

Another telling feature of all three texts is their shallow and infrequent mapping of the crusade onto temporal schemata that might lend the enterprise the sort of validating rootedness in the past that almost invariably subtended political authority in the West and consequently informed contemporary textual explorations of Europe's political cultures. Only the *Gesta* makes any real gesture in this sort of direction, when it observes that some of the crusaders, when marching east through the Balkans, were travelling along a road to Constantinople that had first been built by Charlemagne.<sup>18</sup> This link is not developed further, however. True, Fulcher and Raymond reach back into the Old Testament past at several points in order to liken the crusaders to the Israelites and the Maccabees,

but this was a question of status-affirming simile, not the mapping of immediate and direct trajectories of descent and influence. The *Gesta*, again, comes closest, perhaps, in its statement to the effect that the Turks' admirable abilities as fighters were attributed to the belief that they were distantly related to the Franks.<sup>19</sup> What might appear to be far-fetched camp-fire lore in fact has a possible textual prehistory. The *Gesta's* statement would seem to an intertextual glimmer of a version of the Frankish Trojan descent myth that was composed in the seventh century by the chronicler usually known as 'Fredegar'. In this early version of what became a well-worn trope by the central medieval period, the people who would eventually become the Franks originated as refugees from Troy after its fall to the Greeks. One group of these refugees became detached from the rest during their westward migrations, getting as far as an area roughly identifiable with the mouth of the Danube, where they elected a king called Torquot, whence his and their descendants, a sort of 'lost tribe', assumed the name *Torci* or *Turchi*.<sup>20</sup> The homophony with the *Turci* of the crusade narratives would have been very compelling to anyone familiar with Fredegar's rendering of the myth or some variant of it. The *Gesta's* ability to mention the possibility of some connection between the crusaders and their most feared and respected opponents suggests that a recollection of the descent myth facilitated the conflation of the ancient *Torci* with the contemporary Turks. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that the *Gesta's* narrator does not entirely endorse the claim that the text makes, prefacing it with a *verbum dicendi*, 'dicunt se', which displaces the belief onto (implicitly suspect) Turkish lore. That the narrator deploys this distancing device in a rare moment of deeper historical perspective than is the text's norm illustrates the overall lack of importance of such perspectives within the *Gesta's* construction of the crusade's identity and the crusaders' self-fashioning. This passage is a faint echo, nothing more, in a text that otherwise sets up no dialogues with other historical works – indeed shows few signs of engagement with any written tradition other than the Old and New Testament, the lexis and syntactical rhythms of which saturate the *Gesta's* prose. If this is as historically grounded as the *Gesta* and the other texts get, it points up a sort of temporal detachment, a sense of the foregrounded, rolling 'now', that drives the plots of the eyewitness narratives.

A further salient factor militating against a fuller engagement with political questions is the tentativeness that is evident in all the texts about the interplay and relative importance of different agencies, human and divine, in the motivation and effecting of action. To what extent could an enterprise believed to be divinely willed and directed – indeed something constructed as a substantial, awe-inspiring amplification of the 'routine' patterns of divine intervention in the world that people like the crusaders could normally have expected – require, or even permit, a strong element of human input? Was the crusade something that the crusaders did, or did it happen to them? This never fully resolved tension is implicit at numerous junctures in the eyewitness narratives. It subtends and maps itself onto



many of the thematic binaries that provide much of the texts' conceptual apparatus – sin/purity, obedience/disobedience, division/unity – and which tend to surface as conflicts within and between crusaders as they negotiate the extent to which they control their own destinies. The many visions reported by Raymond of Aguilers, in which Christ and saints admonish the crusaders' conduct and promise future success if they submit to penance, amount to manifestos for a particular balance, or *modus vivendi*, between the crusaders taking responsibility for their actions and their submission to the fact of divine direction of their endeavour.

A particularly revealing demonstration of the tensions between human and divine agency is the opening sequence of the *Gesta*, in which its author introduces the essentials of the crusade message, the pope's and the Church's role in disseminating that message, and the widespread and enthusiastic response that it evoked, before dropping straight into what will become the main narrative matter of the text, the recounting of the crusade in motion.<sup>21</sup> Occupying just one and a half pages in the current Oxford Medieval Texts edition, this opening represents a carefully considered and cogently structured conceptual vision, one that might seem at variance with the commonplace but inaccurate characterization of the text as artless and simplistic, a powerful tradition that goes back to von Sybel and Hagenmeyer in the nineteenth century. First, there is a disembodied, almost abstract, appeal to action centred on Matthew 16:24, 'Si quis uult post me venire...' The motif of individual choice and hence of universal appeal is accentuated by the text's twice resuming the *si quis* formulation: 'si aliquis Deum studiose...sequi desideraret' and 'si quis animam suam saluam facere uellet'. The resultant response is a general and unmediated stirring, a *motio ualida*, that simply and inevitably – *igitur* – follows upon the message, without any mention, yet, of organization and leadership. Only once the great stirring is established as a given is authority introduced in the person of the pope and other ecclesiastics, but simply to the extent that their role is more to communicate than to create and validate the crusade message. What is proffered to the faithful in the crusade message is a fraternal, communal, levelling experience like no other, a unity powerfully evoked in the anaphora and asyndeton within a list of eight afflictions (plus others left unspecified) – 'miserias, paupertates, nuditates, persecutiones, egestates, infirmitates, fames, sites, et alia huiusmodi' – that are promised the crusaders; all are rendered as plurals, in some cases in plain defiance of accepted idiomatic usage, in order to emphasize the collective experience that is to follow. Moreover, we are told that the crusade message spreads 'per uniuersas regiones ac Galliarum patrias',<sup>22</sup> an artfully imprecise construction that blurs and thereby negates the actual political geography, recent (that is, post-Roman) history, and contemporary power structures of France, and so by extension their possible role in crusade recruitment. (This is an emphasis, incidentally, that is not only missed but actually inverted in Rosalind Hill's usually excellent translation when the phrase is rendered as 'through all the duchies and counties of the Frankish lands'.)<sup>23</sup> The

end product of all this is a universal will to action realised *unanimiter* and spontaneously. No secular command structures are called in aid, there is no coercion, no conventional aristocratic politics, and no identity at stake other than Christian: the remainder of the *Gesta* in effect becomes an extended commentary on, or enactment of, these ideals as locked into the crusade vocation at source. It is therefore unsurprising that the text's engagement with the nitty-gritty of power politics on the crusade is superficial, intermittent, and even naïve. Although both Raymond and Fulcher gesture towards a somewhat more nuanced understanding of what made the powerful on crusade powerful, in the main they too subordinate such reflections to the central premise of divine direction and the agency of collective endeavour, to the extent that overt depictions of political leadership in action are mostly whittled down to occasional exercises in crisis management, often in the exceptional circumstances of actual combat.<sup>24</sup>

As the *Gesta*'s programmatic opening suggests, much of the problem of the political content of the eyewitness texts comes down to their treatment of agency. A great deal can be learned from asking how, in simple terms, the texts make the crusade 'go'. Who or what are the active entities, the subject action-doers, of the texts' storyworlds? The subjects of the main verbs that carry the action, almost always coincident with the thematic agents, are of central epistemological importance, for piece by piece these cumulatively tell the reader *what* the crusade is by means of foregrounding *who*, at a very basic level, 'did' it. In all three narratives one encounters a series of negotiations between the competing claims of individual and collective agencies as the best means to ensure plot consistency and realistically motivate the action. On the one hand, there is some foregrounding of the actions of the leaders. The most recurrent expression of this is in descriptions of the crusaders' array during a siege or before battle, in which the army effectively reconfigures itself as a composite of individual, named lords. But the emphasis on the individual within contexts of collective action extends beyond this into other narrative situations: Bohemond of Taranto besieges (*obsedit*) Nicaea, for example, as do the other major lords, and Baldwin of Boulogne pursues and kills Byzantine raiders.<sup>25</sup> Two processes are at work here: the leaders are functioning as synecdoches of the whole crusading force, or portions of it; by leading they embody and exemplify.<sup>26</sup> And there is also some initial movement towards the construction of the crusade leaders as heroes, a tendency towards making exceptional their contributions that later rewrites of the crusade story would soon develop; one thinks, for example, of the early development of the story of Godfrey of Bouillon cutting a mounted opponent clean in two with one sword-blow.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps unexpectedly, an incipient leaning towards a heroic framing of action, informed by proto-chivalric language, is most evident in Raymond of Aguilers, who is traditionally portrayed as the most clerically-minded and unworldly of the eyewitness historians.<sup>28</sup> This is a reminder, if reminder were needed, that the distance between authorial persona and narrative voice is much

more important in these texts than the frequent conflation of (implied) author and narrator supposes.

Despite the possibility of apportioning plot roles to individual heroics, however, all the eyewitness accounts propel most of the action most of the time by means of plurals, in the first or third person. The result is constructions that go substantially beyond the presentation of the crusade as a mass of people in motion, observed, as it were, 'from above' by an all-seeing extradiegetic narrator; they also construct quasi-animate collectivities. These collectivities can be the subject of verbs such as to see and hear, they can possess – as in 'our scouts', 'our ships', 'our leaders' – they feel, discover, interpret, and strategize, and they can initiate action. In the *Gesta*, immediately before the battle of Dorylaeum, the words of encouragement that occupy the textual space where one might expect a leader's peroration is occupied instead by a spontaneous *sermo secretus inter nos* that is voiced in the second person in order to emphasize collective togetherness.<sup>29</sup> Again in the *Gesta*, the account of the crusaders forcing their way into Antioch is a *tour de force* of tightly juxtaposed plurals and iterated first-person plural pronouns that cumulatively express collective resourcefulness and resolve, while Bohemond, who has masterminded this moment by intriguing with a renegade within the city, ends up oddly marginalized by dint of initially missing the action and having to be reprovingly told what is happening by someone as lowly as a servant.<sup>30</sup> In Fulcher, the sense of 'we-ness' that informs the telling of the Battle of Dorylaeum actually ends up excluding the princes, whose experience of the fight becomes a parallel but by necessary implication separate quantity.<sup>31</sup> With plurals driving the action much of the time, the leaders' function is regularly reduced to tactical interventions, for instance to devise a new way of conducting a siege; these moments directly follow descriptions of the immediate circumstances that have made the intervention necessary and therefore construct the leaders' roles as reactive and limited. As we have seen, all the authors do drop occasionally and selectively into an heroic idiom of exceptional individual attribute and achievement, so the fact that they do not do so most of the time is not simply some casual function of their need to move large numbers of people efficiently across the page. It is to be considered as evidence of considered narrative priorities, the effect of which is to flatten the internal political dynamics within the crusade in the interests of emphasizing, first, the agency of the divine, and, second, the primary actantial function of the collective, the crusade *en masse*.

We have seen that political identities and political power are the sites of constant tension in the narratives, usually unresolved tension. On the one hand, the use of the possessive pronoun in constructions such as *sua militia*, *sua gens* is unproblematized, as if the leaders' 'ownership' of their forces, and by extension the legitimacy and effectiveness of their political authority, were an unremarkable given. Similarly, the frequent mentions of councils are seldom opened up by the texts into remarks about their dynamics: the mechanisms for political consultation

and debate are largely submerged within stock formulations that function as brief narrative glides between princely deliberation and resultant group action.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, all the texts present political leadership on the crusade as conditional and contingent: as Tancred tells Baldwin of Boulogne at Tarsus in the *Gesta*, lordship is always best earned.<sup>33</sup> Part of the explanation for these inconsistencies is that the authors were confronting issues of identity and authority with a very limited lexicon relating to political thought, political geography, and the operation of lordship, at their disposal. Part, too, is the constant and uncertain interplay between divine and human agency, as we have seen. It is typical, for example, that the *Gesta* at one point calls Stephen of Blois the army's *ductor*, but later uses the same word for the role played by St George and other martial saints in the battle of Antioch.<sup>34</sup> Looking ahead, one might suggest that the narratives of later crusades resolved this tension in two ways: by a retreat into the comfort zone of national political identity once kings began to get involved as the leaders of crusades; and, perhaps more significantly, by the progressive heroization of the notion of crusade leadership. These are questions that merit further investigation. For the present, we may simply observe *vis-à-vis* the First Crusade that much of the interest of its eyewitness narratives lies in their many ambiguities, evasions, and inconsistencies, the result of which is that they are not tantamount to scripts for the creation of the political cultures that emerged in the Latin East.

One final point is in order. When we query whether the eyewitness narratives represent 'scripts' for the political transition from the crusade to the establishment of a settled Latin presence in parts of Palestine and Syria, this does not amount to asking whether they had some sort of 'official' status and were directly consulted by the political elites. The fact that Raymond and Fulcher encountered, and drew upon, the *Gesta*, or a version of it close to its surviving forms, suggests that some care was taken over its preservation.<sup>35</sup> But the Latin clerical establishment in and around Jerusalem, where the *Gesta* was most probably to be found, was a very small world indeed, one in what was a handful of historically-minded authors would easily have come upon each other and each other's writings. The texts were not official histories, but nor were they private jottings meant for individual consumption. Are they, then, to be understood as personal, potentially idiosyncratic and unrepresentative, visions of the crusade, or can we extrapolate from them towards a sense of widely-shared, even consensual, perceptions of the crusade on the part of people who had lived through it? The most that can be said, perhaps, is that the three texts, for all their numerous differences in style, substantive content, and narratorial voice, converge in their treatments of the political dimensions of the crusade that we have been considering. While this does not exclude the possibility that a more politically 'savvy' telling of the crusade could have been attempted, at least in the first wave of writing about it, it suggests the powerful influence of rapidly emergent tropes governing plot design, agency, and motivation, in short the basic 'tellability' of the

crusade, that militated against more developed articulations of the play of political forces on the crusade. It must be emphasized, of course, that here we are firmly in the realm of the narrativization of the crusade, the realization of its narrative potential in certain forms, not of what the crusade 'was like'. Indeed, in addition to being an important question in its own right, the manifestations of the political in the eyewitness narratives invite consideration of the constructed quality of these cultural artefacts, in which there is no 'real' crusade as such to be retrieved, simply storyworlds of the texts', and their readers', making.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> In this paper, the notion of 'script' draws on its use in the study of narratology, as borrowed from cognitive science, to denote a set of culturally-embedded expectations and stereotypical models about how a series of events will or should unfold. Scripts overlap with 'frames' and 'schemata', but relate to dynamic situations of change through time, whereas the latter terms are used more of static experiential situations. See J. Gavins, 'Scripts and Schemata', in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. D. Herman, M. Jahn, and M.-L. Ryan (London, 2005), pp. 520-1; cf. K. Young, 'Frame Theory', in *ibid.*, pp. 185-6.

<sup>2</sup> For a helpful discussion of the intertwining of the history of the crusades and that of the Latin East, see J. S. C. Riley-Smith, 'History, The Crusades and the Latin East, 1095-1204: A Personal View', in *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria*, ed. M. Shatzmiller (Leiden, 1993), pp. 1-7.

<sup>3</sup> See J. S. C. Riley-Smith, 'Peace Never Established: The Case of the Kingdom of Jerusalem', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser. 28 (1978): 87-102.

<sup>4</sup> *Epistolae et chartae ad historiam primi belli sacri spectantes quae supersunt aevo aequales ac genuinae: Die Kreuzzugsbriefe aus den Jahren 1088-1100*, ed. H. Hagenmayer (Innsbruck, 1901). Several of the more narrative-rich letters are translated in *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials*, ed. E. Peters, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1998), pp. 283-97.

<sup>5</sup> Some of these questions will be addressed in my forthcoming monograph on the narratology of the eyewitness narratives of the First Crusade.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the notion of 'eyewitness' accounts of the First Crusade, see Y. N. Harari, 'Eyewitnessing in Accounts of the First Crusade: The *Gesta Francorum* and Other Contemporary Narratives', *Crusades*, 3 (2004), 77-99. Harari's thoughtful typology is less than wholly convincing, however, in the absence of a narratological dimension to his analysis of the texts' contents, styles, and voices. See more generally *idem*, *Renaissance Military Memoirs: War, History and Identity, 1450-1600* (Woodbridge, 2004), esp. pp. 25-42.

<sup>7</sup> *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, ed. and trans. R. M. T. Hill, London, Nelson, 1962; Raymond of Aguilers, *Le "Liber"*, ed. J. H. Hill and L. L. Hill (Paris, 1969) (Documents relatifs à l'histoire des croisades 9); Fulcher of Chartres *Historia Hierosolymitana (1095-1127)*, ed. H. Hagenmayer (Heidelberg, 1913).

<sup>8</sup> For Fulcher's writing of his work, see V. Epp, *Fulcher von Chartres: Studien zur Geschichtsschreibung des ersten Kreuzzugs* (Düsseldorf, 1990) (*Studia Humaniora: Düsseldorfer Studien zu Mittelalter und Renaissance* 15), esp. pp. 13-20, 24-35.

<sup>9</sup> The best study of Adhemar remains J. A. Brundage, 'Adhemar of Puy: The Bishop and his Critics', *Speculum*, 34 (1959): 201-12.

<sup>10</sup> Raymond, *Liber*, pp. 62, 63, 99, 106.

<sup>11</sup> See R. C. Smail, 'Latin Syria and the West, 1149-1187', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th ser. 19 (1969): 1-20; *idem*, 'The International Status of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1150-92', in *The Eastern Mediterranean Lands in the Period of the Crusades*, ed. P. M. Holt (Warminster, 1977), pp. 23-43.

<sup>12</sup> For crusader motivation in the overall context of recent debates in crusade historiography, see J. S. C. Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?*, 4th ed. (Basingstoke, 2009), esp. pp. 68-83.

<sup>13</sup> More work is needed on this problem. Some useful pointers are provided by John France's discussion of the importance of lordship and vassalage networks in recruitment for the First Crusade: 'Patronage and the Appeal of the First Crusade', in *The First Crusade: Origins and Impact*, ed. J. P. Phillips (Manchester, 1997), pp. 5-20. See also J. S. C. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders, 1095-1131* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 85-93.

<sup>14</sup> The *mise-en-abyme* of this approach may be considered to have been the first volume of Runciman's *History* (1951), devoted to the First Crusade. Among more recent retellings, and although aimed at a popular readership, T. S. Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History* (London, 2004), is the most source-sensitive; its methodology, however, requires that in the end it too is a story made out of other stories. For the concept of folk-psychology J. Bruner, *Acts of Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), pp. 33-65 is foundational. See also R. M. Thomas, *Folk Psychologies Across Cultures* (London, 2001); D. D. Hatto, *Folk Psychological Narratives: The Sociocultural Basis of Understanding Reasons* (Cambridge, Mass., 2008).

<sup>15</sup> The notion of 'storyworld' as applied here is drawn principally from D. Herman, *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative* (Lincoln, NE, 2002), esp. pp. 13-17. See also *idem*, *Basic Elements of Narrative* (Oxford and Malden, MA, 2009), pp. 105-36.

<sup>16</sup> G. Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. J. E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY, 1983), pp. 116-17. See also *idem*, *Fiction and Diction*, trans. C. Porter (Ithaca, NY, 1993), pp. 64-5.

<sup>17</sup> *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 32, 37, 47, 69, 71, 92, 95, 97; Raymond, *Liber*, pp. 40, 51, 58, 65, 82, 107, 133, 137, 143; Fulcher, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, I.11.2, I.14.9, I.14.11, I.17.6, I.22.3-4, I.22.6-7, I.25.15, I.25.17, I.31.4, I.33.6.

<sup>18</sup> *Gesta Francorum*, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Gesta Francorum*, p. 21.

<sup>20</sup> 'Chronicarum quae dicitur Fredegarii Scholastici libri IV. cum Continuationibus', *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, vol. II, pp. 46, 93. See J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Fredegar and the History of France', in his *The Long-Haired Kings, and Other Studies in Frankish History* (London, 1962), pp. 79-83; R. A. Gerbeding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 13-17. For discussion of the origins of the name Torquos, see B. Krusch, 'Die Chronicae des sogenannten Fredegar', *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde*, 7 (1882): 474.

<sup>21</sup> *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 1-2. Cf. Fulcher's universalized image of the sorrows of the departing crusader: *Historia Hierosolymitana*, I.6.13.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. the earlier formulation 'per uniuersas Galliarum regiones', p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Gesta Francorum*, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> See e.g. Raymond, *Liber*, p. 39; Fulcher, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, I.23.1, I.27.1-3.

<sup>25</sup> *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 16, 6 ('Balduinus...eosque inuasit forti animo, ac Deo iuuante superauit eos'). Cf. Raymond, *Liber*, p. 43 ('[Raymond of Saint-Gilles] eos in fugam uertit').



<sup>26</sup> See e.g. *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 5 ('Secunda uero pars intrauit in Sclauiniae partes, scilicet comes de Sancto Egidio Raimundo et Podiensis episcopus.'), 25 ('maior uero exercitus scilicet Raimundus comes...et doctissimus Boamaundus, duxque Godefridus...').

<sup>27</sup> See J. Rubenstein, 'What is the *Gesta Francorum*, and who was Peter Tudebode?', *Revue Mabillon*, 77 (2005): 188-9. Cf. the story already found in the *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 95, 97 of Duke Robert of Normandy's single combat with the emir's standard bearer during the battle of Ascalon, which eventually secures him the prize of the silver-and-gold apple that surmounts the pole (although in this version he still has to buy the apple off unnamed crusaders after the battle).

<sup>28</sup> Raymond, *Liber*, pp. 36-7, 52, 92.

<sup>29</sup> *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>30</sup> *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 46-7.

<sup>31</sup> Fulcher, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, I.11-12, esp. I.11.10; see also I.24.3.

<sup>32</sup> See, however, the *Gesta Francorum*'s treatment of the staged princely debates concerning the fate of Antioch, pp. 44-5, 72, 75-6.

<sup>33</sup> *Gesta Francorum*, p. 25; cf. Fulcher, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, I.30.1 on the qualities that encouraged Godfrey of Bouillon's election as ruler of Jerusalem.

<sup>34</sup> *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 63, 69.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. J. France, 'The Use of the Anonymous *Gesta Francorum* in the Early Twelfth-Century Sources for the First Crusade', in *From Clermont to Jerusalem: The Crusades and Crusader Societies 1095-1500*, ed. A. V. Murray (Turnhout, 1998), pp. 29-42; *idem*, 'The Anonymous *Gesta Francorum* and the *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem* of Raymond of Aguilers and the *Historia de Hierosolymitano itinere* of Peter Tudebode: An Analysis of the Textual Relationship between Primary Sources for the First Crusade', in *The Crusades and Their Sources: Essays Presented to Bernard Hamilton*, ed. J. France and W. G. Zajac (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 39-69; Rubenstein, 'What is the *Gesta Francorum*', esp. pp. 202-3.