# THE EXPERIENCE OF CRUSADING

## Volume One

## *Western Approaches*

EDITED BY

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# *Contents*

*List of illustrations* *page* x
*Notes on contributors* xi
*Acknowledgements* xiii
*List of abbreviations* xiv

Jonathan Riley-Smith, the crusades and the military orders: an appreciation 1
*Norman Housley, with Marcus Bull*

PART ONE THE CRUSADES AND CRUSADING

1 Views of Muslims and of Jerusalem in miracle stories, *c.* 1000 – *c.* 1200: reflections on the study of first crusaders' motivations 13
*Marcus Bull*

2 A further note on the conquest of Lisbon in 1147 39
*Giles Constable*

3 Costing the crusade: budgeting for crusading activity in the fourteenth century 45
*Norman Housley*

4 The crusading motivation of the Italian city republics in the Latin East, 1096–1104 60
*Christopher Marshall*

5 Odo of Deuil's *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem* as a source for the Second Crusade 80
*Jonathan Phillips*

6 Innocent III and Alexius III: a crusade plan that failed 96
*James M. Powell*

7 The Venetian fleet for the Fourth Crusade and the diversion of the crusade to Constantinople 103
*John H. Pryor*

PART TWO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE CRUSADE

8 The conquest of Jerusalem: Joachim of Fiore and the Jews 127
*Anna Sapir Abulafia*

9 Crusades, clerics and violence: reflections on a canonical theme 147
*James A. Brundage*

10 Humbert of Romans and the crusade 157
*Penny J. Cole*

11 Christianity and the morality of warfare during the first century of crusading 175
*H. E. J. Cowdrey*

12 Holy war and holy men: Erdmann and the lives of the saints 193
*John France*

13 The *bible moralisée* and the crusades 209
*Christoph T. Maier*

PART THREE THE MILITARY ORDERS

14 The Hospitallers in twelfth-century Constantinople 225
*Anthony Luttrell*

15 Serving king and crusade: the military orders in royal service in Ireland, 1220–1400 233
*Helen Nicholson*

PART FOUR RETROSPECTIVE

16 The First Crusade in post-war fiction 255
*Susan Edgington*

17 Nineteenth-century perspectives of the First Crusade 281
*Elizabeth Siberry*

*Index* 294

# *Illustrations*

Jonathan Riley-Smith, portrait by Crispin Thornton-Jones *frontispiece*

1 MS Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, codex 2554, fol. 4r. Photo: Bildarchiv, ÖNB, Vienna. *page* 213
2 MS Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, codex 2554, fol. 38r. Photo: Bildarchiv, ÖNB, Vienna. 217
3 MS Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, codex 2554, fol. 40v. Photo: Bildarchiv, ÖNB, Vienna. 220

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## MAPS

1 The voyage of the Fourth Crusade. © John H. Pryor, 2001. 104
2 The Nile delta *c*. 1200, with mean average barometric pressure and wind directions in July. © John H. Pryor, 2001. 120

## TABLE

1 Roles played by brothers of the military orders in the English royal administration in Ireland, 1200–1399. 252

## CHAPTER 1

# *Views of Muslims and of Jerusalem in miracle stories, c. 1000 – c. 1200: reflections on the study of first crusaders' motivations*

### *Marcus Bull*

As much of Jonathan Riley-Smith's work has demonstrated, analysis of the First Crusade is central to the study of crusading in general. This is so whether one's inclination is to see crusading as essentially an episodic sequence of clustered events or as a more sustained and transcendent cultural quantity.[1] The manner in which one constructs the First Crusade effectively functions as the organon for any understanding of subsequent crusade-related thought and action. A key aspect of scholarly inquiry into the First Crusade, as much of Jonathan's work has demonstrated, is the investigation into its participants' ideas, the motivations that bridged the gap between the crusade as a suggestion and the crusade as a played-out event.[2] This essay begins by offering some reflections on the importance of the subject of motivation, arguing that to select this topic for analysis is not just to recognize that it has an immediate interest today given our own awareness of its importance in historical explanation: the issue of what motivated crusaders is also embedded within the discourses of the principal source types available to historians of the First Crusade. With this in mind, the second half of the essay explores the potential of one particular type of text, the miracle story, in the context of developing our understanding of the cultural assumptions and cognitive habits that turned numerous members of late eleventh-century western European society into something altogether new – crusaders.

The events of 1095–1101 are unusually well served by the surviving sources. The question why the First Crusade generated an exceptional amount of written evidence is perhaps more delicate than scholars sometimes realize, for the answers are connected to the attempts by contemporaries themselves to identify meanings that could attach to their experience. To write about the crusade was not simply to register its existence, but also to frame formal understandings that discarded what was judged irrelevant, excluded counter-interpretations, tidied up loose ends, and worked towards some form of closure. Among the surviving sources, two types in particular have assumed a fundamental importance in recent scholarly investigation. Both are genres that Jonathan Riley-Smith himself has done a great deal to exploit and reinterpret. First there are the charters (a term that is useful shorthand for a wide range of diplomatic forms in a period of little standardization). The work done on these sources by Jonathan, as well as by Giles Constable, John Cowdrey and others, amounts to perhaps the single most significant expansion of the study of the early crusades in recent decades.[3] One particularly important aspect of the charter record is that it is not simply about the externals of crusade participation such as names, financial arrangements and rituals of departure. Although it is a mine of useful information in these respects, it also bears directly on issues of intentionality by allowing significant space for expressions of crusaders' purposes. Even apparently neutral formulations such as 'Hierusalem iturus' in fact amount to a subtle shorthand for the mental states that rapidly became projected onto and subsumed within the decision to crusade.[4] Charters, in other words, demonstrate how issues of motivation could be central to the production of the record at source.

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[1] See C. J. Tyerman, *The Invention of the Crusades* (Basingstoke, 1998), esp. pp. 8–29, a contentious attempt to revise the evolutionary model of explanation advanced in J. S. C. Riley-Smith, *What were the Crusades?*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke, 1992).

[2] See esp. *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London, 1986) and *The First Crusaders, 1095–1131* (Cambridge, 1997). Earlier work on the same theme, modified by the later books, is represented by 'The Motives of the Earliest Crusaders and the Settlement of Palestine', *EHR* 98 (1983), 721–36.

The second principal element of the First Crusade's source base, is, of course, the unusually rich harvest of narrative sources.[5] These comprise both texts that are specifically devoted to the crusade and others that are more wide-ranging narratives within which substantial portions deal with crusading.[6] Moreover, a number of the surviving narratives were, as is well known, written by those who participated in the crusade in some capacity. These are typically referred to as 'eye-witness' accounts, a term so embedded in the crusade historian's lexicon that it tends to obscure how problematic it is on the basic level of what in fact is the nature of 'witness'. Nonetheless, the availability of participant narratives is an important aspect of the source repertoire: these texts occupy a useful generic middle ground between the closest we come to the crusaders speaking directly to us, through charters drafted when they set out on the crusade and letters written while they were on it, and the polished narratives composed by those whose aim was to insert what Jonathan Riley-Smith has aptly labelled 'theological refinement' into the memory of the crusade.[7] In fact, it is easy for those who work on crusades to take 'eye-witness' narratives rather for granted: the First Crusade became the headspring of tradition that was to have a long and rich history. It is difficult to think of any comparable type of activity or sustained process that generated this quantity and quality of participatory record. The relationship between the doing of crusading and the writing of crusades, the dynamic between lived sequential experience and the narrativizing (sometimes near-simultaneous) of that experience, is something that scholars perhaps need to investigate more fully. For our immediate purposes, the important point to note is that through the narrative sources we again encounter a close relationship between crusading as an activity and crusading as a series of more or less ordered and coherent reflections which inevitably turn to matters of purpose and justification. This, in turn, highlights issues of motivation – issues which are never far from the surface even when the narratives are engaged in what superficially looks like neutral description. As is the case with the charters, therefore, to probe into issues of motivation is to work with the grain of the narrative source base.

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[3] Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, pp. 2–5, 60–75, 111–34; and 'Early Crusaders to the East and the Costs of Crusading 1095–1130', in *Cross Cultural Convergences in the Crusader Period: Essays Presented to Aryeh Grabois on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. M. Goodich, S. Menache and S. Schein (New York, 1995), pp. 237–57; G. Constable, 'The Financing of the Crusades in the Twelfth Century', in *Outremer*, pp. 64–6, 70–88; and 'Medieval Charters as a Source for the History of the Crusades', in *CS*, pp. 73–89; H. E. J. Cowdrey, 'Pope Urban II's Preaching of the First Crusade', *History* 55 (1970), 181–3. See also M. G. Bull, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade: The Limousin and Gascony, c. 970 – c. 1130* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 252–4, 259–61, 267–80; and 'The Diplomatic of the First Crusade', in *FCOI*, pp. 35–54.

[4] Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, pp. 60–75; Bull, 'Diplomatic', pp. 39–45.

[5] An up-to-date treatment of crusade historiography is much needed. The lead offered by the suggestive but now dated L. Boehm, '"Gesta Dei per Francos" oder "Gesta Francorum"? – Die Kreuzzüge als historiographisches Problem', *Saeculum* 8 (1957), 43–81 has not been taken up in more recent scholarship. For a study that has wider methodological lessons, see V. Epp, *Fulcher von Chartres: Studien zur Geschichtsschreibung des ersten Kreuzzugs*, Studia humaniora 15 (Düsseldorf, 1990).

The availability of a diverse but basically harmonious narrative record has had one important methodological consequence, in that historians are able to attempt a reconstruction of the First Crusade at a very unusual level of detail: witness the degree of precision in Heinrich Hagenmeyer's chronology of the First Crusade.[8] Of course, there is an enormous amount that could still be known about the First Crusade as it unfolded. But if one comes to the study of the crusade from looking at, say, western European societies earlier in the eleventh century, one is struck by the remarkable amount of available information and, thanks to crusading's reliance upon ritual and symbol, the potential for 'thick' description.[9] One consequence of this opportunity is that perhaps too little scholarly attention has been paid to the narrative sources as cultural artefacts above and beyond their value as repositories of information contributing to the bigger macronarrative of the recreated crusade – the quantum that itself functions as the primary analytical object. One should ask how far some of our very deep-rooted assumptions about what made a crusade what it was are simply reinscriptions of the frames of reference developed by contemporary historiography. More fundamentally still, how far is the story that we make of crusading a reflection not of the experience itself – in so far as this was indeed something more than a formless mass of countless human actions – but of the narrativizing strategies that contemporaries themselves chose to apply? To pose this problem is not the same as suggesting that there was and is no such thing as the First Crusade beyond its textual representation.[10] But it is also fair to say that the crusade's narrativity was in large measure as a cultural construct that has been appropriated or inherited by modern scholarship; it is not simply a corollary of the observation that certain types of collective activity such as military endeavours do indeed lend themselves to emplotment within a beginning-middle-end explanatory narrative framework.[11] When Jonathan Riley-Smith integrated what had usually been ring-fenced as 'The 1101 Crusade' within the larger scope of the First Crusade,[12] and when he applied prosopographical research to extend the chronological reach of the crusade a further three decades,[13] these were important indications of the value of breaking out of traditional narrative paradigms. As people more than events come to operate as the principal bearers of meaning, a necessary corollary is that an understanding of individual and group consciousness, and by extension questions of perception and motivation, become particularly important parts of any comprehensive treatment of the crusade.

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[6] For a useful survey of the principal narratives, see R. Hiestand, 'Il cronista medievale e il suo pubblico: Alcune osservazioni in margine alla storiografia delle crociate', *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Napoli* 27 (1984–5), 207–27. See also S. Edgington, 'The First Crusade: Reviewing the Evidence', in *FCOI*, pp. 55–77.

[7] For the process of theological refinement, see Riley-Smith, *First Crusade*, pp. 135–52.

[8] H. Hagenmeyer, 'Chronologie de la première croisade 1094–1100', *ROL* 6 (1898), 214–93, 490–549; 7 (1899), 275–339, 430–503; 8 (1900–1), 318–82.

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[9] The term is taken, of course, from C. Geertz, 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture', in his *The Interpretations of Cultures* (New York, 1973), pp. 3–30.

[10] For a recent reconstructionist application of the evidence, see J. France, *Victory in the East: A Military History of the First Crusade* (Cambridge, 1994).

[11] For a useful introduction to debates about narrative in history, see the collected readings assembled in *The History and Narrative Reader*, ed. G. Roberts (London, 2001).

[12] *First Crusade*, pp. 120–34.

[13] *First Crusaders*, pp. 169–88.

The interest that scholars show in the First Crusade is also linked to another important factor: the challenge posed by the fact that this was something that people were invited to do. This consideration as much as anything accounts for the lively tradition of scholarship on why people went on the crusade. It is very unusual for issues of motivation to arise involving such large numbers of people, for this is a goal of analysis that is typically geared to the study of individuals or of small groups whose more-or-less clearly articulated purposes function as common points of reference. The problems are particularly acute when we are faced by the wholly or substantially 'voiceless' majorities within medieval societies. When scholars are drawn to the actions of large groups, the tendency is for issues of motivation to be seen as mediated by pre-existing structures. So, for example, it would be fair to argue that people took part in the Norman Conquest of England for reasons that can be located within practised ways of engaging with uncontentious ideas about reward and opportunity, political loyalty, rights and duties, regional identity and worldly ambition. The Conquest was an unusual event in itself, but it was also the setting for the enactment of well-known values ordered for the participants in reassuringly familiar configurations.[14] By the same token, issues of motivation attaching to recurrent activities that more closely resemble crusading in their voluntary quality tend to be approached through the identification of factors that extended over long timeframes. Thus, questions such as why people went on pilgrimage or gave land to monasteries have been tackled through an examination of durable structures and habits of mind, within which every individual case is in the nature of a co-opting of tradition.[15] The perennial problem, of course, is that these sorts of (wholly legitimate) perspectives turn the men and women of the eleventh century into creatures of the practised, recurrent and consensual. But these break down when applied to the study of those who went on the First Crusade. The motivations of first crusaders represent western European society's reaction to an unfamiliar and potentially disruptive paradox: how to embrace novelty by stepping outside the confines of its experience while simultaneously acting

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[14] For an excellent survey of Conquest scholarship, see M. Chibnall, *The Debate on the Norman Conquest* (Manchester, 1999).

[15] The literature on pilgrimage is vast. For a useful introduction, see D. Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West* (London, 1999). Among the many discussions of aristocratic benefaction of churches, particular mention may be made of C. B. Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister: Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980–1198* (Ithaca, NY, 1987); S. D. White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints: The Laudatio Parentum in Western France, 1050–1150* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1988); B. H. Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909–1049* (Ithaca, NY, 1989).

'in character'. This amounted to the negotiation of remarkable challenges on an unprecedented scale. Of course, most people did not go on the First Crusade, and enthusiasm for it seems to have been geographically uneven.[16] But to be too insistent about crusading's 'minority appeal' would be to miss the bigger point about the remarkable scale and impact of the response that can be discerned, and about the methodological challenges that this poses for the historian.

Scholarly analysis of the reasons why people went on the First Crusade has traditionally been conducted within quite clearly defined, though fairly wide, methodological parameters. For example, there is no serious Marxist interpretation of the crusade and its motivations – perhaps because problems of human agency obtrude a little too disconcertingly when large numbers of people consciously engage in something that on the surface appears so eccentric in relation to the broad trends of social change. Perhaps, too, because the 'poor' are seldom more than a shadowy presence in the dynamics of a crusade, cultural Marxist analysis is a lost cause.[17] Gender theory, on the other hand, may prove a useful starting point for new approaches given its interest in the culturally formulated expressions of masculinity. And broader disciplinary categories may have something to offer: social and legal anthropology, for example. Until now, however, debate has tended to centre much more than these methodological approaches would countenance on terms of reference that resonate directly with the conceptual universe of the crusaders themselves. That is to say, motivation has been studied principally through categories that would have been consciously present and largely unproblematic to medieval men and women within the reality that they themselves apprehended. The possible limitations of this approach are obvious, but it continues to exert a very strong appeal, as much as anything, perhaps, because it powerfully conveys respect for the dignity and individuality of people whose 'otherness' can appear so profound.[18]

To demonstrate both the value and some possible drawbacks of the prevailing methodology, it is useful to imagine its implicit assumptions extrapolated to their two possible extremes. Very few scholars would subscribe to one or other extreme, of course, and scholarly debate in effect turns on the relative merits of nuanced intermediate positions. But the exercise is nonetheless valuable in highlighting key problems and possibilities. First, there is what could be labelled the reductive, literalist view: that essentially people readied themselves for the crusade message by doing what most obviously resembled crusading as an enacted and observable quality. In effect, this amounted to fighting Muslims or going on pilgrimage. A crusade message which was a fusion of ideas about meritorious violence and pilgrimage clearly built on the two existing behaviours that offered the most direct correspondences.[19] But there are difficulties to be addressed. The reductive approach proceeds from an unduly negative view of the imaginative powers and resourcefulness of late eleventh-century society in general and of its aristocratic elites in particular. Crusaders and their contemporaries can too easily be corralled into mental spaces where connections can only be made across small gaps, where changes in perception and behaviour can be learned only slowly and tentatively, and where there is little or no scope in their lived experience for extrapolation, metaphor and invention. Much of this seems a legitimate position in relation to what was a generally conservative society, but as an *a priori* absolute it is unsatisfactory.

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[16] J. France, 'Patronage and the Appeal of the First Crusade', in *FCOI*, pp. 9–10.

[17] For non-Marxist treatments, see W. Porges, 'The Clergy, the Poor, and the Non-Combatants on the First Crusade', *Speculum* 21 (1946), 1–23; R. Rogers, 'Peter Bartholomew and the Role of "The Poor" in the First Crusade', in *Warriors and Churchmen in the High Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Karl Leyser*, ed. T. Reuter (London, 1992), pp. 109–22.

[18] See the comments of Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, p. 6.

The second position can usefully be termed the maximalist view, an approach that is superficially attractive but ultimately self-defeating. According to this perspective, when individuals responded to the appeal of the First Crusade, this act was a function of a cultural formation that comprised all facets of their social positioning and identity – family, lordship networks, regional affiliations, education, age, sexuality, mental and physical health, self-fashioning and numerous other factors. In other words, no aspect of life was potentially irrelevant, or at least no attribute can be formally ruled out as a possible influence, which comes to the same thing. There is certainly something appealing about this vision in that perhaps crusade historians – like most historians most of the time – are too willing to compartmentalize aspects of the totalizing life experiences of their subjects, wary no doubt of the infuriatingly imprecise image of what people were 'really like', and of what they thought and felt, that can emerge from a historical vision fixed on the vaguer reaches of *longues durées* and *mentalités*.[20] The First Crusade, they might argue, lends itself to a coherent narrative exposition that is pretty much as *événementielle* as history gets in the period. And if people in the late eleventh century can, conceptually speaking, be seen spending most of their lives as vectors of long-term patterns and trends, then taking the cross and doing something as odd as crusading can almost seem like a defiant assertion of the possibilities of direct human initiative and agency.

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[19] E. O. Blake, 'The Formation of the "Crusade Idea"', *JEH* 21 (1970), 11–18.

[20] The enthusiasm for the First Crusade as a possible turning point in the history of *mentalités* that was expressed by J. Le Goff, 'Mentalities: A History of Ambiguities', in *Constructing the Past: Essays in Historical Methodology*, ed. J. Le Goff and P. Nora (Cambridge and Paris, 1985), p. 166 has, significantly, not resurfaced in his subsequent work or that of the *Annalistes* generally. The impressionistic, inaccurate, and hostile view of the First Crusade expressed by G. Duby, 'Ideologies in Social History', also in *Constructing the Past*, pp. 162–4, explains a great deal. But compare the suggestive contribution to the same volume by A. Dupront, 'Religion and Religious Anthropology', pp. 123–50.

The maximalist view seems to square the circle by allowing for influence-packed, socially conditioned individuals to be products of their cultural milieu while at the same time doing something as specific and, in some respects, atypical as going on crusade. All this makes a lot of sense. Nonetheless, the seductions of this approach need to be recognized, for the danger lies in confusing comprehensiveness with clarity. For one thing, it becomes logically impossible to ask why other people, the majority, fashioned within the same conceptual universe, did *not* go on crusade. In addition, the maximalist approach makes effective differentiation between discrete, or at least separable, ideas and impulses very problematic. Motivation as a historical problem is about the subtle configurations of its constituent elements, not simply their undifferentiated cataloguing. Otherwise, the net effect of historical debate and revision is simply to make its subjects seem more complicated – there is always room for something else in their brains – rather than more clearly understood. Another drawback of the maximalist approach is that it risks slipping into a sort of determinism which requires that the First Crusade was somehow the inescapable outgrowth of the 'nature' of late eleventh-century western European society. There is far too much contingency in the story of the crusade to make this approach remotely realistic.

So, the historian's task must be rigorously to prioritize ideas and influences in any assessment of crusade motivation, with due acknowledgement that this will at best amount to the construction of a pattern of approximations and generalizations that can never be proven in individual cases. This, of course, is where the crusade historian's project potentially becomes most vulnerable to a postmodernist critique about the unknowability through texts of the historical object, and about the ideologically charged imposition of coherence upon shapeless form.[21] To forestall this criticism, an effective approach is to route analysis through what amounts to the core evidence – 'core' not simply in the sense that modern historians have awarded it some particular evidential value from a recreationist perspective, but also to the extent that it is itself an embodiment of attempts by people at the time to invest the crusade with enduring meaning. This involves asking how society at the time of the First Crusade formally inscribed its understandings of the crusade. Commemoration took a number of forms, including the visual, the plastic and vernacular literary expression. But the earliest widespread medium, and thus an important influence upon other forms, was the Latin narrative, predominantly in prose. The narrative record amounts to an extensive and multifaceted corpus. For the purposes of this essay, therefore, it is useful to isolate a point of entry that can bear with particular force upon questions of crusade motivation. Unsurprisingly, this search is facilitated by the fact that the authors of crusade histories were deeply sensitive to the matter of origins as a necessary element within a coherent narrative structure. The identification of starting points, as is well known, focused on the Council of Clermont in November 1095 and in particular Urban II's sermon on the 27th. Not all the crusade narratives mention the council, and there is evidence of belief in competing, or at least complicating, origin myths,[22] but Clermont is foregrounded sufficiently often to suggest that the crusade was widely believed to originate in a significant and identifiable *event*, and that this duly fitted the bill.

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[21] The literature is as vast as its debates are heated. For good introductions to the issues raised by the 'linguistic turn', poststructuralism and postmodernism generally, see J. O. Appleby, L. A. Hunt and M. C. Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History* (New York, 1994); R. F. Berkhofer, Jr, *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995); A. Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (London, 1997); *The Postmodern History Reader*, ed. K. Jenkins (London, 1997). Medieval historians have generally been underrepresented in the debates, but see G. M. Spiegel, 'History, Historicism,

If the First Crusade is indeed a 'constructed narrative', to use Hayden White's term, then Clermont serves perfectly as the 'inaugural motif':[23] historiographically speaking, it functions as the animating and transitional moment out of which the First Crusade, hitherto present only in some potential form by virtue of whatever antecedents and contributory causes are assigned to it, becomes a discrete narrativized object. But was the council, and specifically Pope Urban's speech to it, so important? Few scholars nowadays would subscribe to the approach of Dana Munro, who in a famous article published a century ago attempted to recreate Urban's sermon by cross-matching the themes and motifs found in the major contemporary

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and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages', *Speculum* 65 (1990), 59–86; N. F. Partner, 'Historicity in an Age of Reality-Fictions', in *A New Philosophy of History*, ed. F. Ankersmit and H. Kellner (Chicago and London, 1995), pp. 21–39.

[22] See E. O. Blake and C. Morris, 'A Hermit Goes to War: Peter and the Origins of the First Crusade', in *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition*, ed. W. J. Shiels, *SCH* 22 (Oxford, 1985), pp. 79–109; P. J. Cole, *The Preaching of the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1095–1270*, Medieval Academy Books 98 (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), pp. 8, 33–6.

[23] H. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, Md, 1973), pp. 5–7.

accounts of it, and then ordering the correspondences into the categories of definite, probable and possible.[24] It is easy to smile at what now looks like Munro's methodological naivety, for his basic premise was that the accounts of what Urban said were essentially exercises in honest reconstruction; failing memories or incomplete information are what account for the differences between the authors' versions. More recent scholarship has drawn attention to the very constructed nature of the accounts: they were expressions of a particular sermon-centred discourse which was at some remove from a concern for verbatim reportage.[25] For all its empiricist certainties, however, Munro's vision at least proceeded from a belief in a clear and unproblematic correlation between what Urban's speech was as a historical event and why it was important as a cause of other historical events. Retreating from the possibility of recovering Urban's exact utterances while retaining the belief in the importance of the speech as a causal episode places that link under some strain.

The answer is to differentiate clearly between the Clermont speech as a single event, something now utterly beyond recovery, and what contemporaries soon turned it into, a commemorative and explanatory device. By assuming the status of the big answer to how the crusade started, Clermont necessarily became an encapsulation of informed contemporary impressions of what made western European society respond to the crusade message. Historians have possibly exaggerated Urban II's own contribution in this: what appears like the utterances and behaviour of a shrewd judge of the contemporary scene might simply be part of a narrative logic which needs to posit a certain action in order to produce the sort of reaction which is its principal concern. In any event, the records of the Clermont speech as they have been preserved are to some extent not about a speech itself; they envisage the message simultaneously 'bouncing back' from its audience, informing and inflecting what Urban must have said. The reports of the speech, then, amount to analyses of crusaders' ideas and motivations, chronologically positioned before the event as a matter of narrative cohesion. To this extent, critically, the accounts of Urban's utterances assume the character of reception framed as message.

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[24] D. C. Munro, 'The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095', *AHR* 11 (1905–6), 231–42. See the comments of Cole, *Preaching*, pp. 2–3. The accounts used by Munro, and the principal bases for all subsequent treatments of the speech, are Guibert of Nogent, *Dei Gesta per Francos*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaeualis 127A (Turnhout, 1996), pp. 111–17; Robert the Monk, 'Historia Iherosolimitana', *RHC Oc.* 3: 727–30; Baldric of Bourgueil, 'Historia Jerosolimitana', *RHC Oc.* 4: 12–16; Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, ed. H. Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg, 1913), pp. 132–8; William of Malmesbury, *De gestis regum Anglorum libri quinque*, ed. W. Stubbs, *RS* 90, 2 vols. (London, 1887–9), II: 393–8. The account in Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History*, ed. and trans. M. Chibnall, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1968–80), V: 14–18 is substantially based on that of Baldric but also drew on additional sources of information.

[25] Cole, *Preaching*, pp. 1–8, 10–33.

What was that message and by extension its reception? In the context of analysing crusaders' motivations, we need to identify in particular any elements that lent themselves to effective transmission across boundaries of geography, language and to some extent class. Message elements that particularly suited internalization and empathetic identification – what gave crusaders a personal stake in an idea which could represent itself as an impulse emanating from the interior self – are also important to locate. This search can profitably focus on the use of vivid constructions that invited imaginative visualization, and on metaphorical language that operated as a bridge between individual experience and the conceptualization of dispersed, sometimes unencountered collectivities – for example, the totality of western armsbearering society, the brotherhood of eastern Christians, or the pagan Other. Approaching the accounts of the Clermont speech from this perspective, two dominant and interwoven strands emerge: the circumstances in which the Holy Land, and especially Jerusalem, found itself, and the actions and characteristics of the Muslims there. This binary emphasis is very well known, of course; but if we return to the earlier point about the conflation of message and reception, then it becomes important to ask how and why these *topoi* chimed so well with the efforts of thoughtful observers to understand what crusaders felt and thought.

Surveying the versions of the speech for the treatments of the East's fate and of Muslims – in effect, approaching the material like Munro, but in a less literalistic manner – one finds clusters of recurrent and powerful motifs. The stylistic and structural complexities of each text mean, of course, that these motifs appear in different permutations and with variations in relative emphasis. But however they are syntactically expressed, they effectively boil down to sequences of evocative abstract nouns: defilement, dirtiness and pollution; perfidy, dishonour, evil, infamy, lust and cruelty; tyranny, violence, violation, oppression and destruction; slaughter, enslavement and abuse; pagan-ness, barbarism and idolatry; profanity, impiety and disbelief; remoteness, degeneracy and alienness. Urban II's surviving letters provide corroborative evidence for the importance in broad terms of these forms of abstraction, though their language is generally terser and less charged.[26]

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[26] *Die Kreuzzugsbriefe aus den Jahren 1088–1100*, ed. H. Hagenmeyer (Innsbruck, 1901), pp. 136–8; 'Papsturkunden in Florenz', ed. W. Wiederhold, *Nachrichten der K. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Phil.-hist. Kl.* (1901), 313–14; *Papsturkunden in Spanien. I. Katalanien*, ed. P. Kehr, Abhandlungen der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen ns 18, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1926), II: 287–8.

Fuller support for the significance of this repertoire of images, metaphors and associations is provided by the charter evidence, which suggests a close correspondence with the terms of reference being used in 1095–6 as the crusade message criss-crossed Europe.[27] One noteworthy feature of this group of ideas is the skilful manner in which it elides perils to the individual body with the hazards faced by the corporate body of believers – Christians are circumcized, according to Robert the Monk, they are eviscerated and decapitated, and the Holy Places are dishonoured and polluted, in the grip of unclean hands.[28] Churches are being turned into stables, says Baldric of Bourgueil, and Christ's flesh is abused in the spilling of Christians' blood.[29]

The fact that this sort of connection could be made at a level beyond that of artful rhetoric naturally draws us into the worlds of psychology and psychoanalysis. But there is an immediate problem. Psychohistory has proved notoriously difficult to do in relation to the Middle Ages. One of its most conspicuous victims has been none other than one of the First Crusade historians, Guibert of Nogent, by virtue of his having penned a rare memoir of his childhood – the key domain, of course, for any psychoanalytical understanding of personality.[30] If analysis of Guibert is so problematic, attempting the same for crusaders with much less to work on is bound to fail. So, it would be very interesting but ultimately impossible to dig deeply into what un- or subconscious triggers were fired by evocations of themes such as dirt and pollution, separation and grief, lust and violation, and bodily dismemberment – all this quite beyond, or at least analytically detachable from, the sort of conscious and expressible introspection that was encouraged by the penitential slant of the overt crusade message.

On the other hand, it is possible to consider another level of consciousness which connects to the historical specificity of cultural and social forms in late eleventh-century Europe but does not simply reinscribe contemporary ideas in their own terms. That is to say, we can ask what were the general conceptual schemes which people were equipped to apply to the idea of the crusade – particular clusters of contexts, associations and connotations that could give a concept shape and tone. These notions do not in themselves take us to the level of express contemporary discussion – how, say, members of a family group weighing up the merits of the crusade message might have applied the lexicon that crusading itself offered them. Rather, we are looking for underlying assumptions and instincts which up to then may not have found any dedicated outlet but could now assume a central importance in the strategizing of would-be crusaders. Imagine crusaders responding to a word-association exercise in which terms such as 'Jerusalem' or 'Turk' were quickly thrown at them in order to elicit instant connections. That never happened as such, of course, but a good crusade sermon, after all, was effectively an extended exercise in something not dissimilar.

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[27] See Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, pp. 60–2, 67–8.

[28] 'Historia Iherosolimitana', pp. 727–8.

[29] 'Historia Jerosolimitana', p. 13.

[30] Guibert of Nogent, *Autobiographie*, ed. and trans. E.-R. Labande, Les classiques de l'histoire de France au moyen âge 34 (Paris, 1981). See J. F. Benton's analysis in the introduction to his translation of Guibert's memoir: *Self and Society in Medieval France: The Memoirs of Guibert of Nogent* (New York, 1970), pp. 12–28. See also the same author's 'The Personality of Guibert de Nogent', *Psychoanalytic Review* 57 (1970–1), 563–86. Cf. J. Kantor, 'A Psychohistorical Source: The *Memoirs* of Abbot Guibert of Nogent', *JMH* 2 (1976), 281–303.

By what means, then, can we establish how people would have responded to these basic notions, and why? An under-researched source base with a good deal of potential is provided by the many collections of miracle stories that were composed in the centuries either side of the First Crusade. This is not material with the same revolutionary potential as the charter evidence, but a preliminary study suggests that research into *miracula* can throw valuable light on some of the most important contemporary perceptions that activated crusading enthusiasm – that is to say, the broad cultural 'fit' within which crusading functioned as a particular sub-discourse. The remainder of this essay will offer some preliminary observations on the value of this source material in relation to the motifs that have been identified in the versions of Urban II's sermon and other crusade material. With this in mind, it is useful to begin by considering some more general issues relating to this source type's main characteristics and its credentials as historical evidence.

An initial survey of miracle collections from France, the Empire and England from between *c.* 1000 and *c.* 1200 suggests that the premises informing their perception of the East and of Muslims were remarkably stable, despite the obvious fact that the period is bisected by the arrival on the scene of crusading. There are, of course, references to symptoms of changes in circumstances, such as stories involving the Hospital of St John in Jerusalem.[31] Further research will undoubtedly nuance and complicate the picture. But the continuity that is evident – as in many other thematic strands within the discourse of *miracula* more generally – is worthy of emphasis. It points towards the durability of straightforward and powerful images, emotional responses and associations – in effect the building blocks that someone could use to construct a framework of meaning when hearing trigger words such as 'Jerusalem', 'Sepulchre', 'Saracen', 'pagan' and 'journey'.

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[31] *Les miracles de Notre-Dame de Rocamadour au XII siècle*, ed. and trans. E. Albe, rev. J. Rocacher (Toulouse, 1996), p. 206; Eng. trans. M. G. Bull, *The Miracles of Our Lady of Rocamadour: Analysis and Translation* (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 155–6; William of Canterbury, 'Miracula gloriosi martyris Thomae, Cantuariensis archiepiscopi', ed. J. C. Robertson, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury*, *RS* 67, 7 vols. (London, 1875–85), 1: 466.

On the face of it, miracle stories should pose few methodological problems for any area of study that traditionally has other types of narrative sources in its repertoire. Within a usually very straightforward narrative structure – a consistently foregrounded central character or group that provides the narrational viewpoint, clearly set-up introductory expositions followed by middle-section sequential action and definitive closure, little anticipation or retrospection, uncomplicated characterization, few digressions and tangential 'fills' – the stories represent attempts to describe human experiences that are framed within the same sorts of terms of reference, such as family, locality, cult and church, that are found in many other genres. The inhabitants of miracle texts, in other words, live in a familiar narrativized world governed by much the same set of institutions and structures that one encounters through other, more traditionally 'historical' sources.

On the other hand, it is very obvious that if one applies a reconstructionist methodology to these stories akin to how, for example, crusade histories are often deployed, then one is regularly confronted by the paradox of incidents which seem to attain the status of historical episodes but simultaneously defy belief. A comparison with a text such as the *Gesta Francorum* is illuminating. Like many other crusade narratives, the *Gesta* includes material of a miraculous or marvellous nature.[32] But most of what it describes can be transposed into a narrative that conforms to modern historiographical idiom. (Whether the resulting version is or is not historically 'correct' is another question entirely.) For example, the text can serve as a central piece of evidence for a rendering of the battle of Antioch that does not require the appearance of a ghostly army to explain its outcome.[33] This is not necessarily the most fruitful approach to the material – culturally speaking, something like the belief in the ghost army is actually much more significant than what may or may not have taken place over the course of a few hours one day in late June 1098 – but it works on its own terms.[34] The same cannot be said, however, if one turns to the great majority of miracle stories. Peel away the miraculous and the narrative easily dissolves: any factual residue loses its coherence once its organizational rationale is removed. Attempts to salvage some meaning usually succeed in explaining away the redundant and speculating about circumstances that cannot be retrieved, which scarcely amounts to a satisfactory interpretative strategy.[35]

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[32] *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, ed. and trans. R. M. T. Hill (London, 1962), pp. 57–60, 62, 65, 69.

[33] For a reconstruction of the battle, see France, *Victory in the East*, pp. 279–96.

[34] For the belief in heavenly assistance during and after the crusade, see Riley-Smith, *First Crusade*, pp. 72–3, 82–9, 91–107, 111–19, 139–43.

Two responses are in order: one bearing on the place of the discourse represented by *miracula* within the wider frames of historiographical reference that were available to writers in this period; the other flowing from a consideration of the social interactions which supplied the stories' raw material. First, the issue of the historiographical credentials of miracle stories that has vexed modern scholars.[36] Confusion has been compounded by the fact that the terms 'historiography' and 'hagiography', and by extension whatever distinctions there are between them, have antecedents in medieval usage but have also become modern terms of art which create their own expectations about content and form.[37] One scholar has recently been moved to argue that the debate about the relationship between hagiography and history has become so fraught with variables and inconsistencies that it can only meaningfully be resolved at the level of individual texts.[38] For practical purposes, it is enough to note that miracle stories were usually written by people who were close in time to the events that they relate, regularly attested to their veracity by appeals to authenticating devices such as personal observation or reliable oral testimony, and readily communicated belief in the 'realness' of their stories' details.[39] Moreover, the interpretative loading of the stories was grounded in this appeal to veracity – the 'historical' character was indispensable to the communication of meaning.[40] One revealing result was that a number of miracle collections slid structurally or substantively into more overtly 'historiographical' forms such as monastic institutional histories, without their authors resorting to any self-conscious transgression of or playing with generic boundaries.[41]

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[35] Bull, *Miracles of Our Lady*, pp. 32–3.

[36] Baudouin de Gaiffier, 'Hagiographie et historiographie: Quelques aspects du problème', in *La storiografia altomedievale*, Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 17, 2 vols. (Spoleto, 1970), 1: 139–66; F. Lotter, 'Methodisches zur Gewinnung historischer Erkenntnisse aus hagiographischen Quellen', *HZ* 229 (1979), 298–356; P.-A. Sigal, 'Histoire et hagiographie: Les "Miracula" aux XIe et XIIe siècles', *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest* 87 (1980), 237–57.

[37] See F. Lifshitz, 'Beyond Positivism and Genre: "Hagiographical" Texts as Historical Narrative', *Viator* 25 (1994), 95–113.

[38] L. Shopkow, *History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Century* (Washington, DC, 1997), pp. 277–80.

[39] See P.-A. Sigal, 'Le travail des hagiographes aux XIe et XIIe siècles: Sources d'information et méthodes de redaction', *Francia* 15 (1987), 149–82.

[40] Bull, *Miracles of Our Lady*, pp. 32–7.

[41] A conspicuous example is the miracle collection compiled between the ninth and twelfth centuries at Fleury: *Les Miracles de saint Benoît*, ed. E. de Certain (Paris, 1858). See D. W. Rollason, 'The Miracles of St Benedict: A Window on Early Medieval France', in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. H. C. Davis*, ed. H. Mayr-Harting and R. I. Moore (London, 1985), pp. 73–90; T. Head, *Hagiography and*

A further consequence was that some miracle writers were able to demonstrate the sort of interest in the wider world that one would most readily associate with a sensitive and informed chronicler. One particularly vivid example is provided by William of Canterbury, one of the authors of the miracle collections assembled at the shrine of St Thomas Becket in the 1170s. He used a number of his stories to offer a sharp critique of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland in 1171–2 by subtly inverting the language of just war that seems to have been used to justify the exercise, and by parodying the rhetoric of papal and royal attacks on the 'uncultured' Irish.[42] This degree of topical political comment was unusual in a writer of *miracula*, but many other texts display some thoughtful engagement with contemporary affairs. William's close contemporary, the author of the *Miracles of Our Lady of Rocamadour*, for example, was alive to the recurrent problems caused by mercenaries drawn to the wars waged in southern France.[43] Similarly, some Anglo-Norman miracle writers writing after 1154 used their texts as opportunities to comment on the failings of King Stephen and the troubles of his reign.[44]

Given this sort of attention to the current and the well-known, it is unsurprising that a number of miracle writers reveal an interest in crusades and in how people fared on them. Indeed, some of their observations amount to informed comment that bears comparison with what those writing in other genres had to say. For example, one of the contributors to the *Miracles of St Donation*, writing early in the twelfth century,

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*the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orléans, 800–1200* (Cambridge, 1990). For a more modest example, see 'De miraculis SS. Gregorii et Sebastiani', *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum bibliothecae regiae Bruxellensis. Pars 1: Codices latini membranei*, ed. Société des Bollandistes, Subsidia hagiographica 1, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1886–9), I: 238–48.

[42] William of Canterbury, 'Miracula gloriosi martyris Thomae', pp. 180–1, 181–2, 275–6, 364–5, 378–80, 457, 507.

[43] Bull, *Miracles of Our Lady*, pp. 74–90.

[44] Benedict of Peterborough, 'Miracula sancti Thomae Cantuariensis', ed. Robertson, *Materials*, II: 79; Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis Beati Cuthberti Virtutibus*, ed. J. Raine, Publications of the Surtees Society 1 (London, 1835), pp. 104–5, 127–8, 134–5, 193–4. For the use of events such as sieges, natural disasters, tournaments, plagues and dynastic successions as contextual background or as chronological markers, see 'Miracula S. Lupi episcopi Senonensis', *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum latinorum antiquiorum saeculo XVI qui asservantur in bibliotheca nationali Parisiensi* (hereafter *Catal. Paris.*), ed. Société des Bollandistes, Subsidia hagiographica 2, 3 vols. (Brussels and Paris, 1889–93), II: 311; 'Miraculum S. Juliani', *Catal. Paris.*, I: 512–13; 'The Miracles of the Hand of St. James', trans. B. Kemp, *Berkshire Archaeological Journal* 65 (1970), 7–8, 16, 17; 'Des miracles advenus en l'église de Fécamp', ed. R. N. Sauvage, *Mélanges de la Société de l'Histoire de Normandie*, 2nd ser. (Rouen, 1893), p. 29; 'Historia inventionis et miraculorum S. Gilduini', *Analecta Bollandiana* 1 (1882), 169; William of Canterbury, 'Miracula gloriosi martyris Thomae', pp. 456, 475, 539, 543; 'Les Miracles de S. Aignan d'Orléans (XIe siècle)', ed. G. Renaud, *Analecta Bollandiana* 94 (1976), 264–5; Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis Beati Cuthberti Virtutibus*, pp. 272, 273; 'Liber miraculorum sancti Aegidii auctore Petro Gulielmo', *Analecta Bollandiana* 9 (1890), 396.

recounts the departure of Count Robert of Flanders and an impressive retinue when 'a countless army of Christians set out for Jerusalem in order to expel the sons of disbelief from the place in which the whole promise of our redemption was fulfilled'.[45] The story goes on to describe how there was a breakdown of order in the count's absence – a problem attested elsewhere[46] – prompting the clergy and people of Bruges to process with St Donation's relics, whereupon a crippled boy was cured next to the feretory. A twelfth-century story from Saintes describes how a knight took the cross 'during one of the signings' (*tempore cujusdam cruce signationis*) and travelled overseas 'to extend the worship of God and to avenge the wrong done to Christ'.[47] He was subsequently captured and then miraculously freed. A story recorded at Bec is set during the First Crusade, when 'the people distinguished by the Christian name and moved by divine inspiration journeyed together from all parts of the world towards the Saviour's tomb in memory of the holy cross and to drive out the pagans'.[48] An account of an aristocratic feud in Germany is chronologically fixed in the *Miracles of St Giles* by reference to the Balearic crusade of 1114–16, 'the time when the army of Christians had journeyed by sea to attack Majorca . . . and to release the captives from there'.[49]

Direct references to crusades are, however, quite rare.[50] Significant as such overt evocations are for what they reveal about the capacity for historical mindedness on the part of miracle writers, the importance of *miracula* for the study of crusading ideas and motivations extends beyond this form of overt engagement into more general considerations about the interactions which made the stories possible and which they in turn enshrined. Some forms of hagiographical composition such as saints' *vitae* and *translationes* were predominantly exercises in institutions creating texts and fashioning memories for their own internal consumption. Broadly speaking, miracle stories were, in contrast, reflections and affirmations of the value to religious communities of looking outwards and of interacting – on terms congenial to themselves, naturally – with the world beyond. This is a very schematic distinction, of course: the fact that a saint's Life and posthumous miracles were often written up as complementary parts of single texts warns against formulating too rigid an opposition. On the other hand, it is fair to say that Lives generally privilege the individual subject relative to his/her immediate communal setting, and in turn that immediate community or communities relative to the wider world – the amorphous and only partially glimpsed 'out there' met in long journeys, one-off encounters, and the intrusion of exceptional events. 'Out there,' in complete contrast, was precisely what most miracles were about – the domain of outsiders who either brought the news of a miraculous event to a shrine or experienced a miracle in the sight and hearing of those who recorded it, before (usually) disappearing back into the world. Of course, the stories in the forms in which they now survive are many removes from their authors' initial encounters with their informants and the information that they saw, heard, or read, but their origins in forms of interaction remain noteworthy. To this extent miracle stories are analogous to charters as formulaic records of a religious institution's dealings with outsiders, particularly lay people. Indeed, it is interesting to note that there is some thematic convergence between the two types, most obviously in accounts of how property disputes were resolved.[51]

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[45] 'Miracula S. Donatiani', *Acta Sanctorum quotquot orbe coluntur* (hereafter *AASS*), ed. Société des Bollandistes, 1st and 3rd edns (Antwerp, Brussels and Paris, 1643–1940), Oct. 6: 508–9.

[46] Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, pp. 145–6.

[47] 'Miracula S. Eutropii', *AASS* Aug. 3: 738; cf. p. 743.

[48] 'Miracula S. Nicolai conscripta a monacho Beccensi', *Catal. Paris.*, II: 427–9; cf. p. 422.

[49] 'Miracula beati Egidii', *MGHS* 12: 318.

[50] For an interesting comment on the Second Crusade that echoes contemporary criticism, see 'Miracula S. Rictrudis', *AASS* Mai. 3: 112.

Like charters, miracle stories present delicate problems of deciding whose voice or voices one is hearing. However much the lay beneficiary of a miracle is the person whose experience stimulates the written record and functions as its narrative centre, in much the same way that the act of benefaction of a monastery equips the benefactor to 'speak' through a charter in the first or third person, do the ideas and sentiments overtly or implicitly communicated in the text flow from the actor or the narrator? The answer, in varying degrees, is both simultaneously, in that the monastic and clerical writers of *miracula* generally tempered the imposition of narrative clarity, literary style and theological sophistication upon their versions of events with some sensitivity to what their informants' particular circumstances were: abstracted miracles-as-types, shorn of historical specificity, were not common before the thirteenth century. In addition, it is reasonable to suppose that those who travelled in the hope of benefiting from a miracle or who had a miraculous episode to relate had often internalized a version of the very discourse that would inform any written version of their experiences in order to explain and structure their experiences – in effect anticipating the expectations of their observers and interlocutors at the shrine, just as someone giving property to a monastery no doubt had to 'think him/herself' into the role of donor, its postures, protocols and language. Lay people in miracle stories were participants as well as narrative objects; their world is not simply the one made for them by authors. Miracle stories are not a direct route into the laity's mental landscape, and they speak to only some aspects of its lived experience. But they get us close enough to glimpse the operation of some important cultural values and perceptions, including ideas that can be related to crusade motivation.

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[51] 'Miracula S. Lifardi', *AASS* Iun. 1: 308; 'Translatio S. Honorinae virginis et martyris et ejusdem miracula', *Analecta Bollandiana* 9 (1890), 141–3; 'De miraculis S. Autberti Camaracensis episcopi libelli duo saec. XI et XII', *Analecta Bollandiana* 19 (1900), 207–8.

This last point is particularly apparent in relation to the ways in which Jerusalem and the Holy Land are treated in *miracula*. Jerusalem and the other holy places were not noted as places that people principally visited in the hope of cures – the staple miracle type in the great majority of collections. This means that Jerusalem and the Holy Land feature in the surviving miracle texts selectively and in some necessary relation to the saint, cult and shrine of which each text is a celebration. Connections were necessarily created by mobility – the east appears as a consequence of people in motion. It followed that the Holy Land was not conceptually framed within a straightforward binary opposition – with the west as observer and the east as object. On the contrary, many miracle stories reveal that Jerusalem was integrated within a complex pattern of different cult centres and devotions, some of them very small-scale, others more intermediate in terms of popularity and status. Significantly, many of the references to Jerusalem and other holy places that occur in the miracle stories are in the context of attempts to situate a saint, and by extension his or her cult centre, clearly within this matrix.

The significance of the matrix is revealed by one of the fairly rare occasions when it experienced sudden and widely registered change – the substantial addition to western Europe's devotional geography brought about by the cult of St Thomas Becket that emerged soon after his murder in December 1170. *Miracula* from English and other European shrines show that other cult centres responded to this challenge, using the mobility of their central characters as the narrative means to establish relationships between Becket's cult and themselves. These could be based on a posture of outright competition, but in many instances the negotiation was subtler, expressing notions of saintly co-operation that were played out through the experiences of the narratives' characters.[52] In this way, emphasis was placed on the cult's parity with, or at least proximity to, the status and renown enjoyed by Canterbury. Interestingly, the perspectives at play alter significantly when we examine Canterbury's own self-positioning through the large collection of miracle stories that was compiled in the decade after Becket's death. Now the key markers – the triangulation points that fixed relative value – are places such as Compostela, Rome, Rocamadour and Saint-Denis.[53] As one man was told in a vision of St Thomas, Henry II need only visit Canterbury (which he did in 1174) to merit the forgiveness for his part in Becket's murder that he would normally expect to earn by means of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem or Rome.[54] This was the summit to which Canterbury hoped to aspire.

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[52] Thomas of Monmouth, *The Life and Miracles of St William of Norwich*, ed. and trans. A. Jessopp and M. R. James (Cambridge, 1896), pp. 289–94; Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Vita et Miraculis S. Godrici, Heremitae de Finchale*, ed. J. C. Robertson, Publications of the Surtees Society 20 (London, 1847), pp. 391–2, 397–8, 409–10, 410–11, 423, 428, 432–3, 441–2, 459–60; Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis Beati Cuthberti Virtutibus*, pp. 251–2, 260, 261–2, 270–1, 271–2; 'Miracula S.

For all shrines, then, there was a pronounced element of self-definition that required external referents – up, down and sideways – to establish a relative position. Jerusalem's particular importance within the devotional matrix was as an unimpeachable point of ultimate reference – a status not simply stated but actually enacted in the movements and decision-making processes of pilgrims in *miracula*. Jerusalem served an important stabilizing function, for it was the pilgrimage destination that was most beyond the reach of competitive language. It was also the principal fixed point in a system of relative positionings that was much more fluid than is sometimes supposed. Historians often imagine Jerusalem located in a quite fixed hierarchical framework, a pyramid of international, regional and local centres surmounted by itself, Rome and Santiago de Compostela.[55] While there is evidence to support this view, the miracle stories also suggest that many other configurations could suggest themselves, in part, of course, because of the particular interests of each author but also because that is how individual pilgrims made choices and acted on them in their movements to and between shrines.[56] There was no universally acknowledged pyramid of devotion. Even Compostela and Rome, while clearly accorded great respect,

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Frideswidae', *AASS* Oct. 8: 570, 583, 586, 587; 'Vita et miracula S. Bertrandi, episcopi Convenensis', *AASS* Oct. 7: 1183; 'Vita et miracula B. Bernardi Poenitentis', *AASS* Apr. 2: 680–1, 682, 688, 692–3; 'Inventio reliquiarum S. Eligii, anno 1183', *Analecta Bollandiana* 9 (1890), 427–9.

[53] For Canterbury's awareness of more local counter-attractions, see Benedict of Peterborough, 'Miracula sancti Thomae', pp. 32–3, 96–7, 148–9, 222–3.

[54] William of Canterbury, 'Miracula gloriosi martyris Thomae', pp. 275–6, and see also pp. 337–8, 362; Benedict of Peterborough, 'Miracula sancti Thomae', pp. 35–6, 182–3, 208–9.

[55] Cf. D. J. Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome in the Middle Ages: Continuity and Change*, Studies in the History of Medieval Religion 13 (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 150–1, 155–82.

[56] See, for example, William of Canterbury, 'Miracula gloriosi martyris Thomae', pp. 289–91; *Les miracles de saint Privat suivis des opuscules d'Aldebert, évêque de Mende*, ed. C. Brunel, Collection de textes pour servir à l'étude et à l'enseignement de l'histoire 46 (Paris, 1912), pp. 106–7; 'Vita S. Bertrandi', p. 1183; Thomas of Monmouth, *Life and Miracles of St William*, pp. 178–81.