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The Aims and Spirituality of the First Crusade as seen through the eyes of Albert of Aachen

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The work of scholars in recent years has greatly clarified the development of the ideology of the crusades.¹ The beginning of the formation of a distinctive spirituality for the participants of the First Crusade is to be found in the intentions of Urban II and his preaching at the Council of Clermont in November 1095, but it is clear that it did not appear in a state of instant completion, like Athene from the head of Zeus. The ideas of the crusaders were further, and deeply, shaped by the remarkable experiences of the expedition itself. We can see its impact in some of the letters which they wrote back to the west, and in two chronicles which were written by eye-witnesses and were almost certainly completed within a few months of the fall of Jerusalem in July 1099: the Anonymous *Gesta Francorum*, composed by a Norman from southern Italy who began the march in the army of Bohemond, and the *Liber* of Raymond of Aguilers, chaplain of Count Raymond of Saint-Gilles, the leader of the Provençal contingent.² Back in the west, three monastic writers, Robert the Monk, Baudri of Bourgueil and Guibert of Nogent transformed the *Gesta Francorum* into more extensive chronicles of the crusade, re-writing it and incorporating reminiscences of returned crusaders.³ These three works provided a 'theological refinement', as Jonathan Riley-Smith has called it, for the theory of the crusades. In spite of some differences of emphasis, they form a family, for they were all written between 1105 and 1110 by Benedictine monks in northern France, with the *Gesta Francorum* as primary source for all of them. Two of them at least were widely influential. There is still work to be done on their precise impact upon the next generation, but there are evident signs that these

chronicles helped (directly or indirectly) to form the programme of the Templars, which was shaped in nearby Champagne and Burgundy, and which was embodied in Bernard of Clairvaux' famous work, *In Praise of the New Militia*. In 1147 Bernard emerged as the outstanding preacher of the Second Crusade, which was authorised by his pupil, the Cistercian Pope Eugenius III. Both were very important for later crusading ideas, for Bernard's works were much read and Eugenius' encyclical *Quantum Predecessores* was adopted as the model for the papal proclamations of later crusades in the twelfth century.⁴ This tradition formed a spirituality, or as some contemporaries called it a *devotio*, which shaped official teaching about the crusades, although it remained largely distinct from the discussion of warfare which was being developed in the canon law.⁵ The fighting men who embodied this spirituality will strike the modern reader as a great deal less saintly than some other figures who inhabit this volume in honour of David Farmer, but they formed an equally influential element in the history of medieval religion. This tradition formed the royal road to the classic crusading ideology of the late twelfth century. It was also, it must be said, a French road and a monastic one, which identified the crusaders as above all *Franci*, French or Frankish, and was deeply impressed by Benedictine and Cistercian thinking, as well as being adapted to the needs of the Templars as a religious order. The question remains whether there were other ideological traditions which read the crusades differently.⁶

As it happens, the longest and fullest of all the histories of the First Crusade is the *Historia Hierosolymitana* of Albert of Aachen.⁷ Albert represents a quite distinct historiographical tradition from the French one. He was a native of Lotharingia or Lorraine, not a monk but a senior member of the imperial collegiate church at Aachen.⁸ There are serious problems in determining the date and character of his chronicle. It must have been completed between 1119, when the narrative ends, and 1140, which is the approximate date of the earliest surviving manuscripts. Since 1119, the end of the first year of the reign of Baldwin II, does not look like a deliberate stopping-place for a history of the kingdom of Jerusalem, the natural assumption is that Albert was working on the book for several years and it was abandoned unfinished, whether because of the author's death or some other cause, about 1120.⁹ Albert was not an eye-witness of the events; he wrote, he said, 'not like someone at leisure, but as a companion (*consocius*) on the way, though not in body, yet in my

whole heart and mind', and he did not know, or at least did not use, the surviving eye-witness accounts of the First Crusade, the *Gesta Francorum* or the book of Raymond of Aguilers.¹⁰ He himself several times appealed to the testimony of those who saw the events, and there is no doubt that (like his French contemporaries) he interviewed those who had come back from the expedition and recorded their memories for posterity. It is probable, however, that he also had a written source. There are close similarities between Albert's narrative and that of the great chronicler William of Tyre, written some fifty years later, and these can best be explained on the assumption that they were using a common source which does not now survive. On this view, there was originally a further eye-witness account of the expedition, a 'Lorraine chronicle' to match the Norman *Gesta* and the Provençal Raymond. In any case, Albert stands well outside the tradition of French monastic writing, based on the *Gesta*. We have here an account by a German (or Lotharingian) canon which rests on the recollections of the returned Lorrainers and very possibly on the written Lorraine chronicle.¹¹

For many centuries of historiography, Albert was regarded as the best source for the First Crusade, precisely because it was the fullest. In the course of the nineteenth century, however, his reliability was attacked by famous names among German historians.¹² His dependence on oral evidence suggested that he was a retailer of camp-fire stories, and the material which came to him from the circles of Peter the Hermit and Duke Godfrey, in particular, was seen as trembling on the brink of legend or as passing well beyond it. This raises the question whether, when we read Albert, we are finding evidence of a different way of thinking among the participants of the First Crusade, or of a tradition in the family of Duke Godfrey which had lost touch with historical reality. It would be perverse to argue that everything in the chronicle is good history, but Albert is an important source for many of the events which he records; and, in any case, it is important to observe his position in the development of the chronicle record of the First Crusade. He is not unique in preserving camp-fire stories; there are plenty of them in the *Gesta Francorum*, particularly the anecdotes about family life in Kerbogha's camp. Nor is he distinctive in moving beyond historical reminiscence; as Jonathan Riley-Smith has shown, the French chroniclers theologised, and even monasticised, the crusade, and in their various reconstructions of Urban's sermon at Clermont they took giant steps

beyond the limits of historical probability. The interesting thing about Albert is that his movement from history to interpretation was in a different direction from theirs, and shows real divergences in his thinking about the crusade. In some ways, indeed, he brings us closer to the memory of the historical events, as they seemed to the participants, than do the other histories. The sheer volume of Albert's material would have made it difficult to impose a consistent pattern of theological reflection upon it, and there seem to be some instances in which the incorporation of oral or written material introduced an idea foreign to the main text of Albert. In general, as we shall see, he succeeded in imposing his own view, but he asked no radical theological questions about the crusade of the sort which sometimes occupied the minds of the French writers. He rarely quoted the Bible in an attempt to understand the place which these striking events occupied in God's providential purpose; parallels from classical history virtually do not occur; and we shall have to note a number of instances where Albert's theology remains vague and unspeculative.¹³ Visions are concentrated almost entirely on Godfrey's election as ruler of Jerusalem to the exclusion of other aspects of the expedition. It is a different historiographical tradition from the French, but nothing justifies us in regarding Albert as legend and the French as history.¹⁴

His presentation of the crusade occupies different geographical and historical horizons from those of Guibert and the monastic writers of northern France. The author of the *Gesta Francorum* habitually described the crusaders as *Franci*, and Guibert of Nogent took this much further, deliberately entitling his book, *Gesta Dei per Francos*.¹⁵ It is difficult in the twelfth century to know whether we should translate *Franci* as Frankish or French, but predominantly the topographical term *Francia* was used for northern France. When the chroniclers were obliged to find a term for these large armies of westerners, the Anonymous selected the word *Franci*. It was not, as far as the evidence goes, an inevitable choice, and indeed its source was obscure, all the more so because the Anonymous himself was a Norman from southern Italy. Perhaps the best explanation is that it was already current in the vernacular, and was a transfer of a usage from the *chanson de geste* to the new circumstances of the crusades.¹⁶ Albert, in contrast, described the crusaders in general as Gauls, *Galli*. The word occurs over fifty times in this sense in the first six books.¹⁷ The term covers all westerners from north of the Alps, so that we read of 'the slaughtered and lifeless bodies of the Christians, both Gauls

and Greeks, Syrians and Armenians'; and Albert specifically tells us that the *regnum Galliae* ends at the frontier of Austria.¹⁸ The usage is an unusual one, and Knoch adduces some evidence for thinking that it was particularly a Lotharingian usage. In any event, as a term for the army it has the effect of consolidating the Germans with their western neighbours as participants in the expedition. *Francigenae* means, to Albert, the French.¹⁹ The German dimension to the expedition is made more specific by the occasional occurrence of *Theutonici*, and Albert several times lists the various German stems, thus undoubtedly exaggerating the extent of German participation by spreading it well beyond the borders of Lorraine.²⁰

Just as the geographical framework of the participants is different in Albert, so is the idea of the origins of the crusade. Curiously, the two eye-witness chronicles had provided almost no information about this, and the second generation writers rushed in to repair the omission by giving lengthy accounts of the proceedings at the Council of Clermont, where Urban announced the expedition in November 1095.²¹ Albert gave an almost completely different account, which he derived, at least in part, from the Lorraine chronicle: Peter the Hermit, having previously visited Jerusalem on pilgrimage, was deeply distressed at the oppression of the churches there, and received a commission from Christ in a vision, and from the patriarch, to go to the churches of the west and appeal to them. Peter returned to the west and notified the pope 'about the defilements of the Gentiles and the injuries of the saints and pilgrims'. The pope agrees that 'in everything he would be obedient to the mandates and prayers of the saints', and accordingly he visited France and then, at Clermont, persuaded the bishops, dukes and counts to join the expedition.²² Albert's presentation of Peter is almost totally favourable, and he seems to have had access to stories which were circulating in Peter's circle at the time of the crusade. It is also consistent: when he tells of Peter's embassy to Kerbogha at Antioch, he repeats that he was 'the beginning of this way'.²³

The role ascribed to Peter the Hermit is closely related to one of the clearest elements in Albert's presentation of the First Crusade: it was a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, designed to cleanse the church of Jerusalem from the defilements of the Gentiles and to open it to access to pilgrims. At the very beginning, he undertook to tell 'how they opened entry and access to the Holy Sepulchre of our Lord Jesus Christ; they remitted altogether the taxes and tributes of

pilgrims who desired to enter there'. After the conquest of Antioch, Duke Godfrey is said to have decreed that all 'should press on their way as they had vowed to Jerusalem, for desire of which, and for the sake of seeing the Sepulchre of the Lord Jesus Christ, they had left their native lands', and the crusaders were still speaking of that same desire to a hermit during the siege of Jerusalem.²⁴ The message which Peter the Hermit brought at the beginning, that the unbelievers were oppressing the church at Jerusalem, is confirmed by the report at the end of the crusade, that Christians had been excluded from all the churches of the city except for the Holy Sepulchre and St Mary ad Latinos.²⁵ The crusaders are persistently called pilgrims, *peregrini* (76 occasions, if we include such phrases as *exercitus peregrinorum*, the army of pilgrims). Nor is there any suggestion at all that part of the purpose of the expedition was the relief of Constantinople from Turkish pressure. This emphasis upon Jerusalem and pilgrimage is, indeed, common to all the chronicles, but nowhere else is it presented so directly and consistently as the motive force. *Gesta Francorum* and Raymond do not examine the historical background of the crusade at all, while Robert and Guibert both complicate matters by making use of the supposed letter of the Emperor Alexius to Robert of Flanders, describing the Turkish atrocities against his people, and thus implying that the protection of Byzantium was one of the objectives. The very fact that these two chronicles, along with Baudri, focus attention on Urban as originator of the crusade, naturally and rightly directs historians to look at the pope's intentions, and therefore at his previous negotiations with Alexius, at the presence of Byzantine ambassadors at Piacenza and at the concern for 'liberation' which was expressed in his privileges for Spanish and Sicilian churches, although the chroniclers themselves supplied none of this information. The pilgrimage theme in the French chronicles is tempered, or at least confused, by these other considerations, whereas in Albert it is straightforward and consistent. The one significant exception to this is the report in the first book of the attacks upon the Jewish communities, especially in the Rhineland, which are virtually absent from the French chronicles. Albert is hesitant in his judgement, saying that he does not know whether it was done 'by the judgement of God or some error of mind', but he is familiar enough with the circumstances to report on the ideas of those who attacked the Jews. They asserted, he reports, that 'this was the beginning of their expedition and obedience against the enemies of the Christian

faith'. Robert Chazan has argued that this confirms statements in the Jewish persecution chronicles, and establishes that within the varied ideologies of the armies were people who believed that God had called them to the annihilation of unbelievers.²⁶ Albert recorded this view, but did not share it; for him, the deliverance of Jerusalem from the Gentiles was the sole purpose.

Perhaps because of the straightforward and direct idea which Albert held of the purpose of the expedition, we do not find the same struggle as in the French chroniclers to define in theological terms its place in the historical purposes of God. He does, indeed, see it as a mighty work of the Lord, but there is not much in his chronicle which goes beyond the traditional picture, evident in pre-crusade literature and probably in the older strands of the *chansons de geste*, of the defence of the faithful against the unbeliever. He firmly believed that the crusade had been summoned by God and was being conducted under his protection. In a desperate situation at Antioch a Lombard clerk told of a vision in which 'a certain pilgrim' had questioned a priest about the nature of the expedition. The priest expressed his doubts:

Different people have different views about this way. Some say that the desire has been aroused in all the pilgrims by God; others, that the French princes and people have set out from frivolity of mind, and that for this reason the pilgrims have run into so many difficulties in the kingdom of Hungary and other kingdoms; and therefore their intention cannot come into effect. As a result I myself am in two minds, having long been touched with desire for this way and wholly occupied with this intention.

The pilgrim replied with an assurance that he should not 'believe that the beginning of this way arose from lightness or vanity, but from God, to whom nothing is impossible'. Those who fell in the expedition would be rewarded as martyrs, and the survivors would conquer Jerusalem in the third year. The pilgrim then revealed himself as Bishop Ambrose of Milan.²⁷ In line with this confidence, Bishop Adhemar could declare that 'today God will fight for us', echoing Exodus 14:14, and victories are regularly ascribed to divine help. It was 'by the help and mercy of God' that the bowstrings of Turkish archers were disabled, and 'by the grace and will of God' that the great city of Antioch was taken - examples which could be multiplied

many times.²⁸ Only rarely, however, did Albert interrogate passages of Scripture to discover what God was doing in this remarkable new work, and he was conservative in defining the spiritual status of the participants. The author of the *Gesta Francorum* had given them the title knights of Christ, *milites Christi*. In the context, this was new, for in the past it had referred to monks. The *Gesta* is the source which familiarises us with this new usage - it barely appears in the letters from the crusaders, and it is relatively rare in Raymond; and it was seized upon and used freely by the French chroniclers who took it from the *Gesta*. Albert, however, does not use it.²⁹ His favourite word for the crusading host as a whole is simply 'Christians', and that occurs a huge number of times and is his standard term in narrating the progress of the expedition or describing battles.³⁰ True, this is a usage of some significance, because 'Christian' was relatively rare in western usage before 1095, and made its fortune especially in crusading chronicles; Albert's use of it reflects a heightened awareness of the conflict with pagan societies around. But it never, in Albert, acquires a more specific meaning than a simply party label, and the more abstract and theological term *Christianitas* is very rare in these pages.³¹ Other chroniclers turned to visions to elucidate God's purposes in the First Crusade: this is particularly evident in the long discussions of the Holy Lance by Raymond, but there are further instances of crucial visions which assure the crusaders of God's help (the presence of saintly warriors at Antioch) or of his reward (the sight of martyrs in heaven). Albert was most certainly not sceptical about visions, but he presents them only sparingly: the heavenly saints do not appear in his pages, and the discussion of the Holy Lance, while well informed, is concise. The one major exception to this statement is the reporting of visions about the election of Godfrey as ruler of Jerusalem, to which we shall come shortly. It is interesting, too, to notice that, although Albert was well aware of the problems of starvation and want which afflicted the army, he virtually never wrote of the 'poor' under that name. This term already carried a strong overtone of theological significance from the Scriptures, and its use in other crusade chroniclers indicates the special responsibility of the upper classes for those who were suffering want, as when the author of the *Gesta* presents Bishop Adhemar as ordering the knights 'to respect the poor and succour them'.³² When, unusually, we do hear in Albert of 'the poor of Christ' in their afflictions, we find that he is using the term of a group of Armenian monks: an old-fashioned and

eminently respectable usage.³³ Albert does not rethink older concepts in the light of the great work of God in the crusade.

This conservative approach to the ideology of the crusade can be seen particularly in Albert's treatment of heavenly reward. He was confident that eternal life was the reward of all who faithfully followed Christ in the crusade, and his views are lucidly summarised in a speech by Bishop Adhemar at the siege of Nicaea:

O people dedicated to God, you have left everything for the love of God, riches, fields, vineyards and castles. Here and now there is perpetual life for every one who is crowned with martyrdom in this battle. Advance without hesitation against these enemies, who contend with the living God; by God's gift, you will receive victory today.³⁴

Albert's belief in this eternal reward seems to rest on the promise in the Gospels, which he echoes, without precisely quoting, several times: 'every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life' (Matthew 19:29). He highlights this passage in his introductory chapter.³⁵ There is no awareness, at any point in the narrative, of a special papal 'indulgence' at Clermont, granting forgiveness of sins and remission of penance, which appears in the French chronicles in the account of Urban's proclamation of the crusade. It is true that (somewhat surprisingly) these chronicles do not mention Urban's grant again in the course of the crusade, so that Albert's omission of it is not as distinctive as we might at first suppose. For the writer of the *Gesta* and the other French authors, the heavenly reward is above all guaranteed by the status of those who die in battle against the unbeliever as martyrs. Early in the *Gesta* narrative we hear that the men of Peter the Hermit's company were 'the first to receive blessed martyrdom for the name of the Lord Jesus', and that among them was a priest whom the Turks found saying mass, and 'at once martyred him upon the altar'.³⁶ By the time of the siege of Nicaea, the author is recording a vision which guarantees the 'stole of martyrdom' to those who fell in battle, and also to 'the poor' who 'died of hunger for the name of Christ'.³⁷ It is evident from the passage quoted above from Adhemar that Albert accepted that those who died on the expedition received the rewards of martyrdom, and the point was made even clearer in the vision of Saint Ambrose which

was mentioned above:

You may know without doubt that they are counted, enrolled and happily crowned among the martyrs of Christ in the courts of heaven, who are overtaken by death on this way ...³⁸

While there is therefore no formal disagreement between Albert and the other chroniclers, it is remarkable how little stress he places upon martyrdom in the chronicle as a whole. There is, in his lengthy narrative of the crusade, only one other mention of the fallen as martyrs in addition to the two already quoted.³⁹ There are also some startling differences of usage. On several occasions *martyrium* is used in its other sense of torment or suffering, seemingly without any thought of heavenly reward.⁴⁰ Perhaps even more strikingly, at the death of prominent men Albert carefully records that they were buried with due ceremony, but without any mention of heavenly reward. Thus at the siege of Nicaea he reports of Baldwin Calderun and Baldwin de Ganz that 'the bishops and abbots buried these most noble men with all honour and religion, dividing among the needy and beggars a handsome distribution of alms for the salvation of their souls'.⁴¹ The careful record of a ceremony of this kind would seem very different from confident belief and the rewards of martyrdom. It is probably fair to say that, in the tradition of the *Gesta*, the French chroniclers were concerned with a new theology of martyrdom as a reward for all fallen crusaders, whereas Albert appears more conservative in his approach. He believes (on Biblical authority) that those who give up worldly things for Christ receive a heavenly reward, and that fighting men who fall in the defence of faith are thus rewarded, and are entitled to be called martyrs. These were beliefs which can be evidenced for several centuries before 1095, and there is no sign that Albert advanced beyond this traditional position, which he applied to the First Crusade.⁴²

One distinctive feature of Albert's crusading spirituality is his sense of Christian brotherhood. For this, his usual word is *confrater*, a term even stronger than the straightforward 'brother'. It is a frequent usage, and its force can best be indicated by the speech which Duke Godfrey and Count Robert of Flanders addressed at Antioch to other princes, who were thinking of abandoning the crusade:

Why do you despair and give up hope in the help of God, ...

- and plan to abandon your brothers (*confratres*), although they
- are humble foot-soldiers, and take to flight in failing faith?
- Stand and accept with manly spirit your sufferings for the
- name of Christ, and do not desert your brothers (*fratres*)
- in this tribulation.⁴³

Confratres serves often to emphasise the links between all those on the expedition, of whatever nation or social rank, as when we hear of Godfrey's exaltation 'as prince and ruler of his brothers (*confratrum*).⁴⁴ In the same way the returning crusaders, once in the west, are asked by Godfrey to urge their Christian brothers (*confratres*) to help their colleagues (*consocii*) in the east.⁴⁵ This sense of brotherhood is supported by a number of references to the words of Christ in John 15:13: 'Go and advance, and offer your life to God, knowing that the love of God is *to lay down your life for your friends*'.⁴⁶ The duty to bring help to the brethren is stressed, forming a link between the military ethic and the Christian one, and this readiness is particularly seen as a personal quality of Duke Godfrey, to whom a Moslem ally wrote, 'We have learned that you are a man and a prince powerful in might, and that you are strong to bring help to your allies'.⁴⁷ This sense of Christian brotherhood extends more widely to Christians of all descriptions than in any other writer of the First Crusade. Albert's lack of awareness that the prospect of bringing help to Byzantium formed any part of Urban's intentions arose from his isolation from the Gregorian papacy, and did not imply an indifference to the fate of the eastern brethren. He acknowledged the Hungarians and Bulgarians as *conchristiani*, and presented the Greek Emperor Alexius as willing to assist the passage of Peter the Hermit 'because you are a Christian, and your companions are Christians'. In Pisidia, the crusaders encountered 'Christian citizens', and in Laodicea the inhabitants were 'catholic Greeks'. Albert assumed that the eastern Christians were favourable to the purposes of their Latin brethren, as at Turbessel, where 'the Armenian citizens, men of Christian profession' wanted 'rather to serve a Christian leader than under Gentile rule'.⁴⁸ Of course, he was well aware that conflict can arise between fellow-Christians. He wrote of the cruelty of the Hungarians towards their Christian *confratres*, and could be sharply critical of the Emperor Alexius. Such hostility was, however, a matter for deep regret: 'Why was such cruelty committed by Christians, persecuting Christians?' The set-piece discussion of conflict among Christians occurs shortly after the

end of the crusade, when the returning army angrily reproached Archbishop Daimbert of Pisa, who was besieging the Greek town of Laodicea and had to defend himself with embarrassment on the grounds that he had been misled by Bohemond, who had told him that they were 'false Christians'.⁴⁹ In contrast to the anti-Greek spirit of Guibert of Nogent, and to a lesser extent of other French writers, Albert is an advocate of oecumenical Christian brotherhood.

In a number of ways, Albert appears as a conservative in his theology of the crusade. He does not see it as a new work of God, proclaimed with new privileges by the pope; he is cautious in his claims for the crusaders, to whom he does not accord the new and resounding title of soldiers of Christ; and, while he certainly does not deny them the privileges of martyrdom, he does not explore the term with the same enthusiasm as other writers. Part of the explanation of this attitude is undoubtedly Albert's grasp of the Carolingian tradition which was still strong, and his isolation from the new forces which were shaping the Gregorian papacy; for most of his life he is likely to have been the servant of an emperor who was in dispute with the pope, and indeed excommunicated by him. There is also another explanation in the special position of Duke Godfrey in Albert's chronicle. The French writers as a whole were reserved about the military leaders of the crusade. It is true that Bohemond appears as something of a hero, and as a natural leader, in the *Gesta Francorum*, but he inevitably disappeared from its last book, which described the progress from Antioch to Jerusalem in which he refused to participate. Raymond of Aguilers is sometimes remarkably critical of his own lord, the most powerful single man on the crusade, Raymond of Saint-Gilles. In Albert, Godfrey occupies a position for which there is no parallel elsewhere. Some of the material consists of camp-fire tales of heroism: Godfrey divides an armed Turk into two with his sword, and rushes to the help of a pilgrim attacked by a bear.⁵⁰ Even such tales of knightly heroism are given a devotional context by the stress, which we have observed already, on Godfrey as the bringer of help to his brethren. He is also a man of true piety, who before the beginning of the crusade 'had often sighed, and his heart's desire was above all, to visit the holy city of Jerusalem and to see the sepulchre of the Lord Jesus, and often opened the intention of his heart to his personal companions'.⁵¹ Far more than that, he was the man appointed by God to deliver Jerusalem and to govern it in the name of God. Albert, otherwise rather sparing in visions, introduced two

immediately after the report on Godfrey's election, both of them seen by people in the neighbourhood of Aachen: the knight Hezelo reported seeing Godfrey climbing Mount Sinai, and a colleague of Albert's, a fellow-canon of Aachen, saw Godfrey sitting on a throne in the sun, with all kinds of birds around him. Albert thus thought to establish that 'the election and promotion of this duke is believed to have been by no means the result of human will, but was wholly done by the ordination and the grace of God'.⁵² He was 'the prince of the Christians exalted to the throne of Jerusalem to protect the city and its inhabitants', 'preordained by God and constituted prince of the people'.⁵³ He preserved a ritual sanctity of an almost priestly kind, as when he refrained from the cruel slaughter of the Saracens at Jerusalem, going instead barefoot in procession round the city until he came to worship at the Holy Sepulchre. It is not that Albert condemns the massacre of the Saracens, but rather that Godfrey has kept himself clean from the blood which was shed in the holy city.⁵⁴ He is, in fact, a leader in the spirit of Moses - one of the few places where Albert, as the French chroniclers more frequently do, perceives the crusade as a continuation of the victories of Israel in the Old Testament.⁵⁵ This presentation of Godfrey as the God-given leader, an image of righteousness and courage, was to have a long history in later writing, as in the *First Cycle of the Crusades*. It is more difficult to guess at its origin before Albert, but it may have begun with highly flattering stories of his bravery, in epic tradition. These were then given a spiritual dimension by Albert's idea of Godfrey as a helper of his brethren, and by the visions which point to Godfrey as the champion of God's purpose in the delivery of Jerusalem and its restoration to Christian rule.

While there are ideas and information in common between the account which Albert of Aachen gave of the crusade and those in the *Gesta*, Raymond of Aguilers, Guibert of Nogent, Robert the Monk and Baudri, he does represent a distinct stream of crusading spirituality, which reflects the separate ideas of the Lorraine contingent as they subsequently developed in Germany. He has little awareness of the role of Urban II in the initiation of the enterprise, and presents the expedition quite consistently as one designed to rescue Jerusalem from the defilement of the unbeliever and to open it to pilgrims. His ideas of the status of the crusaders and their heavenly reward, although positive, are more old-fashioned and cautious. Conversely, he sees Peter the Hermit and Duke Godfrey as the special

agents of God in the call for the deliverance of Jerusalem and its final success and government. In a certain sense, Peter and Godfrey stand in this chronicle as representatives of God's purpose in the place which, in the French tradition, had been occupied by Pope Urban and the whole crusading host.

NOTES

¹ See in particular E.O. Blake, 'The Formation of the "Crusade Idea"', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 21 (1970), 11-31 and J. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London, 1986), with a brief but helpful bibliography.

² R. Hill (ed.), *Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolimitanorum* (Oxford, 1962); J.H. and L.L. Hill (eds.), *Le Liber de Raymond d'Aguilers* (Paris 1969). Strictly, there is a third eye-witness account, that of Fulcher of Chartres. Fulcher is a source of great importance for the history of Edessa and the first two decades of the history of the kingdom of Jerusalem, but the amount of genuinely eye-witness material about the First Crusade is so limited that he cannot be placed in the same class as the other two.

³ The chronicle of Robert is published in the *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades, Historiens Occidentaux* (Paris, 1879) (henceforward RHC Occ) III, 717-882; those of Baudri and Guibert in IV, 1-263.

⁴ There were important differences between the crusading policies of Bernard and Eugenius, but the underlying similarities were even more significant.

⁵ For the term *devotio* see F.-W. Wentzlaff-Eggebert, 'Devotio in der Kreuzzugspredigt des Mittelalters', *Festgabe für Kurt Wagner* (Giessen, 1960), 26-33.

⁶ There is an attempt to examine the relationship between the official ideology of the hierarchy and the ideas circulating among the crusading aristocracy in C. Morris, 'Propaganda for War: The Dissemination of the Crusading Ideal in the Twelfth Century', *Studies in Church History* 21 (1983), 79-101, but the evidence is relevant mainly to the period from the Second Crusade onward.

⁷ RHC Occ IV, 265-713. More recent study of the manuscript tradition has shown that this edition, indispensable as it is, does not rest on the best manuscripts, and a new critical edition is being prepared by S. Edgington at London University, and will be very welcome when complete. The authoritative discussion of Albert is by P. Knoch, *Studien zu Albert von Aachen* (Stuttgart, 1966); see also E. O. Blake and C. Morris, 'A Hermit goes to War: Peter and the Origins of the First Crusade', *Studies in Church History* 22 (1985), 79-107, especially the Appendix by Dr Blake on pages 98-107.

⁸ Only two manuscripts give his name, Albert or Adalbert, but the

ascription is rendered plausible by the occurrence of specific references to the Aachen area. Unfortunately, the records of the church are poor, and it is not possible to identify the chronicler Albert among its clergy. See Knoch, *Studien*, 64 ff.

⁹ This assumption is complicated by the summary which Albert gave of his own intentions, which were specifically to describe the First Crusade up to the fall of Jerusalem (Albert i.1). This strongly suggests that he had not originally intended to cover the first two decades of the Latin settlement in the east, but I can find no convincing indication that, like Fulcher of Chartres, he produced a history of the crusade and then extended it later. The book seems to have been the product of one writing 'campaign', although its sheer volume indicates several years' work. To give the date 1115/20 is a guess, but may not be far off the mark. He did in fact say, in the opening words, that he had been intending to write the history for a considerable time. Knoch, *Studien*, argues however for an initial starting-date soon after 1100 or 1101. Claude Cahen has recently suggested ('A propos d'Albert d'Aix et de Richard le Pèlevin', *Le Moyen-Age* 96 (1990), p. 31-3) that Albert is most naturally to be seen as the editor of a history of the first Crusade, combined with a history of the Franks in Syria, both of these composed in the east. If that view is correct, it would of course mean that the argument for the date 1115/20 would fall to the ground, and the chronicle would have taken its present form some time later than that. There are problems with this suggestion, however, as with almost every hypothesis about the composition of Albert's work.

¹⁰ Albert i.1. As the chapters in this edition are short, I will give chapter references only to RHC Occ IV. There is a very small amount of information in Albert which is recorded, among surviving sources, only in the *Gesta Francorum*. In the absence of any other sign that Albert had read the work, it is more natural to assume that he acquired this information elsewhere.

¹¹ The strongest reason for believing in the lost source is the fact that there is no significant overlap between Albert and William of Tyre after the fall of Jerusalem; but if William had a copy of Albert in front of him, it is incomprehensible that he should never have used him for the early years of the kingdom. Detailed discussions of the arguments for a common source can be found in Knoch and in the Appendix by Blake, cited in the footnotes above.

¹² The hatchet job, done initially by Von Sybel, is available (if only rarely) in English translation by Lady Duff Gordon, *The History and Literature of the Crusades* (London, no date). The inconsistencies in the account of the First Crusade, mentioned on pages 163-69, are on the whole minor, and some are capable of explanation. The attack was refined and developed by H. Hagenmeyer, *Peter der Eremit*e (Leipzig 1879; French

translation Paris 1883). On the reliability of Albert's material on Edessa, see A.A. Beaumont, 'Albert of Aachen and the County of Edessa', *The Crusades and other Historical Essays Presented to D.C. Munro* (New York, 1928), 101-38.

¹³ On classical and Biblical quotation, see Knoch, *Studien* 80-81. One could add a considerable number of echoes of the Vulgate, but these are mainly stylistic, and do not weaken Knoch's conclusion.

¹⁴ In the rest of this article I concentrate on the first six books, in which Albert narrates the history of the First Crusade, since the history of the kingdom of Jerusalem after its establishment raises somewhat different issues.

¹⁵ For Guibert's explanation, see his preface, RHC Occ IV. 121: 'I have given it a title which is not arrogant, and redounds to the honour of the race, that is *God's Deeds through the French*'. The title of the work of the Anonymous seems to have been *The Deeds of the French and of the other Jerusalemers*, thus recognising the presence of others besides the *Franci*; but they do not appear in his narrative.

¹⁶ There is an important discussion in Knoch, *Studien*, 91 ff. The suggestion that the word was derived from the usage of the Saracens seems to me, however, a desperate expedient. In the *Song of Roland* the army as a whole, or at least its dominant part, is 'the French'. The earliest manuscript dates from c.1140, and we do not know what elements were present in the poem before the First Crusade; but the Anonymous' choice of *Franci* suggests that the usage already existed then.

¹⁷ The statistics given in this article indicate the number of usages in the first six books, that is up to the end of the crusade and its immediate aftermath. The word-counts should be taken with a pinch of salt, because they necessarily vary according to whether particular meanings are included (*Galli* for all the westerners, or specifically the crusaders) and which cognates are counted (such as *miles Gallus* and *Gallia*). The figures therefore vary from those of Knoch, and do not have scientific precision. They still give some impression of the frequency of a usage, and are retained for that purpose alone.

¹⁸ Albert iv.23; ii.1 (*ubi fluvius Lintax regnum Galliae terminat et dividit*).

¹⁹ Thus Peter's army is said to come *a diversis regnis ... scilicet Francigenae, Suevi, Bawarii, Lotharingi* (i.7). There seem to be one or two occasions when *Franci* is used in the wider sense of the *Gesta*, but in such cases it is difficult to be sure whether Albert meant the crusaders as a whole or the French group within them.

²⁰ Thus in the battle of Kerbogha at Antioch, Godfrey is said to have gone to the help of Bohemond *cum Alemannis, Bawariis, Saxonibus, Lotharingiis, Theutonicis, et Romanis* (iv.51).

²¹ Robert the Monk specifically said that he was present at Clermont, and Baudri used the first person plural at one point in describing the events there. Guibert almost certainly was not personally present, since long afterwards he was unfamiliar with the name of Bishop Adhemar of Le Puy, who was so prominent at the council.

²² Albert i.5. Albert clearly had some information about the pope's movements in France, but Clermont is far less prominent in his account than in the French chronicles. The heavy overlap with William of Tyre suggests that the information was mostly derived from the supposed 'Lorraine chronicle'.

²³ Albert iv.44. It is another matter whether there was any historical content in these stories of the Hermit. They undoubtedly are exaggerated in giving him virtually the sole credit for the initiation of the crusade, but at the same time it would be an exaggeration of the opposite kind to deny them any content, for example by rejecting out of hand the historicity of the Hermit's pilgrimage to Jerusalem. See Blake and Morris in *Studies in Church History* 22 (1985), with a reply by M.D. Coupe, 'Peter the Hermit - a reassessment', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 31 (1987), 37-46.

²⁴ Albert i.1; v.36; vi.7.

²⁵ vi.25.

²⁶ Albert i.26. See R. Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade* (Berkeley 1987), chapter 3.

²⁷ Albert iv.38. The passage is an interesting illustration of Albert's use of sources. It is only the prophecy of victory in the third year which makes the vision relevant to the situation at Antioch. It looks as if either the Lombard preacher or Albert as chronicler knew of a vision originating in Lombardy in 1096, and incorporated it later in a quite different context.

²⁸ Albert iii.35, 62; iv.23.

²⁹ To be quite accurate, we do have *fidelissimi milites Christi* in iv.18, and *Christi milites peregrini* in iv.38. Interestingly, these mentions occur in the course of a speech and a vision incorporated by Albert: was he simply quoting them from written or oral information? In any case, this is very little among the many uses of *milites* and the periphrases which Albert employs, such as *milites Christiani*, *milites Christianorum* and *milites catholici*. It is clear that *milites Christi* had no special significance for him, as it did for other chroniclers.

³⁰ I count 210 occurrences of *Christiani* in the straightforward sense of 'crusaders' in the first six books, if we allow such variants as *Christianus exercitus* or *populus Christianus*. This excludes the many instances when the word is used for the Christian inhabitants of eastern lands.

³¹ It never seems to mean 'Christendom' in a territorial sense, and all except one of the handful of mentions is in the context of conversion to

the profession of Christianity. For *Christianitas* in other writers, see references in P. Rousset, *Les origines et les caractères de la première croisade* (Geneva, 1945), 102-104.

³² R. Hill (ed.), *Gesta Francorum* 74.

³³ Albert v.14. There is, however, in iii.48 *pauperes suos atque confratres Christianos*. More often, the lower classes are *vulgus* (e.g. vi.6, 21, 25) or *egeni*, needy, a term used a good deal in Carolingian discussions of poverty (ii.29, vi.7).

³⁴ Albert ii.27.

³⁵ i.1.

³⁶ R. Hill (ed.), *Gesta Francorum* 4.

³⁷ *Gesta Francorum* 17. A vision almost certainly lies behind this passage and gives authority to it.

³⁸ Albert iv.38. The two passages which, exceptionally, speak of *milites Christi* also include two of Albert's rare mentions of martyrs. It strengthens the case for believing that he has incorporated the two from some other source, oral or written.

³⁹ iv.14, at the time of the battle with Kerbogha at Antioch.

⁴⁰ See i.11 (*tam saevo martyrio*), 21, 24 (*pauci ab hoc martyrio liberarentur*); ii.25 (*simili poena et martyrio*); and iii.49 (*gravi martyrio*). The first three passages refer to conflicts with the Hungarian Christians, which could hardly be regarded as martyrdom in the proper sense, on any assumption.

⁴¹ ii.29; see also ii.34, 43 and iii.29.

⁴² For early ideas about martyrdom, see A. Noth, 'Die Anfänge des Kriegermartyriums', in his *Heiliger Krieg und Heiliger Kampf in Islam und Christentum* (Bonn, 1966), 95-109. There are interesting discussions of the development of the idea by J. Riley-Smith, 'Death on the First Crusade', in D. Loades (ed.), *The End of Strife* (Edinburgh 1984), 14-31, and H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'Martyrdom and the First Crusade', in P.W. Edbury (ed.), *Crusade and Settlement* (Cardiff, 1985), 46-56.

⁴³ iv.39.

⁴⁴ vi.38.

⁴⁵ vi.53.

⁴⁶ iv.18. It is noticeable, however, that Albert does not otherwise speak of friendship as a bond between the crusaders.

⁴⁷ v.8. As a Moslem, the speaker is a *confoederatus*, not a *confrater*.

⁴⁸ i.7, 13; iii.3; vi.55; iii.17.

⁴⁹ ii.2; vi.57.

⁵⁰ iii.4, 65.

⁵¹ vi.26.

⁵² vi.33.

⁵³ vi.39, 35.

⁵⁴ vi.25.

⁵⁵ vi.35.