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**Preambles to Crusading: the arengae of Crusade letters issued by Innocent III and
Honorius III¹**

Thomas W. Smith

In an article published in 1977, James Powell argued that the use by Honorius III (1216–27) of the *pastor bonus* sermons of his immediate predecessor, Innocent III (1198–1216), revealed important differences in their conceptions of papal authority.² The impact of his argument was partly to dismantle the pervasive historiographical perception of Honorius as the less than original continuator of Innocent’s policies who was considerably overshadowed by his great predecessor.³ Powell also demonstrated the rich pickings on offer to those with sufficient courage to take up the study of papal theology as well as to those attempting to contextualize diplomatic and chronicle evidence. Yet notwithstanding Powell’s academic leadership, the theological sources for

¹ I am very grateful to the Leverhulme Trust for the award of a Study Abroad Studentship (2013–2015), during which this chapter was written, and I also wish to thank Brenda Bolton and Bernard Hamilton for their comments on the chapter.

² J. M. Powell, ‘Pastor Bonus: Some Evidence of Honorius III’s Use of the Sermons of Pope Innocent III’, *Speculum*, 52 (1977), 522–37; repr. Powell, *Papacy*, VII.

³ J. Clausen, *Papst Honorius III. (1216–1227): Eine Monographie* (Bonn, 1895), 10–11; H. K. Mann, *The Lives of the Popes in the Middle Ages*, 19 vols (London, 1906–32), xiii, 20; A. Keutner, *Papsttum und Krieg unter dem Pontifikat des Papstes Honorius III. (1216–1227)* (Münster, 1935), 12; J. P. Donovan, *Pelagius and the Fifth Crusade* (Philadelphia PA, 1950), 105; S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, 3 vols, (Cambridge, 1954), iii, 164; T. C. Van Cleve, *The Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen: Immutator Mundi* (Oxford, 1972), 108–09; P. Partner, *The Lands of St Peter: The Papal State in the Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance* (London, 1972), 244; H. E. Mayer, *The Crusades*, trans. J. Gillingham, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1988), 220.

the thirteenth-century papacy are mostly still waiting to be tapped. In common with papal sermons, the arengae or preambles to papal letters are complex but extremely valuable sources for papal theological positioning and are themselves of intrinsic worth in the study of diplomatic practice and papal authority.

The arenga was the rhetorical preamble which served as the opening clause in an official letter (although it should be noted that not all papal letters contained an arenga). It set out the pope's authority to decide on the matters to which a letter pertained and was designed to impress the recipient of the letter.⁴ Arengae were essentially miniature sermons which the pope and his curial officials carefully crafted using biblical quotations and allusions to construct a theological justification for a papal exhortation or order that followed in the so-called *dispositio* clause.⁵ Far from being irrelevant rhetorical exercises, arengae were grounded in their contemporary political and ecclesiastical context, making them indispensable for understanding not only conceptions of papal authority but also papal diplomatic decisions.⁶

This chapter analyses a sample of arengae from the letters concerning the Holy Land crusades issued by Innocent III and Honorius III. Beginning with a survey of the current state of research, it then compares arengae from the letters of these popes concerning the manner of their accession to the papal throne and their call to crusade as

⁴ R. L. Poole, *Lectures on the History of the Papal Chancery down to the Time of Innocent III* (Cambridge, 1915), 42–43.

⁵ On the structure of papal documents see *ibid.*, Lectures, 41–8.

⁶ W. Imkamp, *Das Kirchenbild Innocenz' III. (1198–1216)* (Stuttgart, 1983), 85; H. Hold, 'Autoritative Rhetorik: Eine Untersuchung an Arengen in Schreiben des Avignonenser Papsttums', *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 40 (2002), 175–97, at 182.

expressed in their encyclical letters. The arengae of Innocent and Honorius demonstrate that, despite drawing upon similar biblical imagery, both popes articulated discrete conceptions of their authority and employed differing theological frameworks within which to situate crusading to the Holy Land. This is all the more striking because Honorius had served in the curia throughout Innocent's reign. The present chapter thus not only takes Powell's findings on the different outlooks of the two popes a step further but also contributes to the historiography on arengae by arguing that Innocent and Honorius each attributed great importance to composing bespoke arengae for their curial letters concerning the Holy Land crusades rather than emphasising continuity with their papal predecessors by copying their arengae.

The historiography on arengae in general is sparse and, in spite of their importance and a recent growth of interest in them, papal arengae from the thirteenth century have yet to be subjected to systematic analysis in print.⁷ Heinrich Fichtenau, in an influential study published as long ago as 1957, focused on early medieval arengae from papal, imperial, royal, and episcopal documents, and demonstrated that they were actually borrowed and shared between institutions.⁸ This interpretation received support in Nanna Damsholt's article of 1970 on the arengae of Danish royal documents, in which she drew attention to the impact of papal influence at the Danish royal chancery.⁹

⁷ T. W. Smith, *Pope Honorius III and the Holy Land Crusades, 1216–1227: A Study in Responsive Papal Government* (unpublished PhD thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2013), 173–226 for a comprehensive discussion of the authorship, themes, and originality of Honorius's crusade arengae.

⁸ H. Fichtenau, *Arenga: Spätantike und Mittelalter im Spiegel von Urkundenformeln* (Graz-Cologne, 1957).

⁹ N. Damsholt, 'Kingship in the Arengas of Danish Royal Diplomas 1140–1223', *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 3 (1970), 66–108, at 103, 105.

Damsholt further argued that successive Danish kings were eager to emphasise continuity with the reigns of their predecessors by reusing old arengae.¹⁰ More recently Bernard Barbiche contributed a short essay on the arengae in papal letters appointing legates between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, and traced common themes throughout the period.¹¹ Hermann Hold has also conducted research into the arengae of the Avignon popes, emphasizing their utility in expressing papal *caritas*.¹² On Honorius III's pontificate in particular, Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt has studied the pope's use of biblical quotations in letters concerning mission and crusading in the Baltic, finding them to be distinct from those in his letters on the Holy Land.¹³ To date, research questions have thus centred on the originality (or lack thereof) of arengae and their position in the diplomatic traditions of the institutions that produced them – and that research has been taken into full account in this investigation.

The arengae from the crusade letters of Innocent III and Honorius III demonstrate that the two popes possessed quite different conceptions of the authority inherent in their office and that they articulated these through the arengae of their documents. Nevertheless, although the arengae display clear differences between the

¹⁰ Damsholt, 'Arengas of Danish Royal Diplomas', 71.

¹¹ B. Barbiche, 'Diplomatie, diplomatique et théologie: les préambules des lettres de légation (XIII^e–XVII^e siècle)', in *idem.*, *Bulla, Legatus, Nuntius: Études de diplomatique et de diplomatie pontificales (XIII^e–XVII^e siècle)* (Paris, 2007), 147–56. I am grateful to Barbara Bombi for this reference.

¹² Hold, 'Autoritative Rhetorik', 197. See also *idem.*, *Unglaublich glaubhaft: Die Arengen–Rhetorik des Avignonenser Papsttums*, 2 vols (Frankfurt am Main, 2004).

¹³ I. Fonnesberg–Schmidt, 'Pope Honorius III and Mission and Crusades in the Baltic Region', in *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, ed. A. V. Murray (Farnham, 2009), 103–22, at 109–19.

two pontificates, it is almost impossible to ascertain whether either pope personally composed the text of their arengae in curial letters, given that such tasks were shared among the pope, his chancellor, and the papal notaries, and that specialist theologians at the curia might well have been involved too.¹⁴ Yet it is clear that by the thirteenth century the pope's role in the composition of letters had become both crucial and personal.¹⁵ Therefore, while we cannot definitively attribute the wording of theological statements in arengae to the pope himself, the spirit of each individual's letters certainly belonged to him.¹⁶ Based on this rationale, the arengae discussed here are attributed to Innocent and Honorius with the caveat that while these popes were undoubtedly closely involved in the production of the texts, they may have been neither the sole author nor even the author at all.

From the beginning of their pontificates, Innocent and Honorius each propounded very different conceptions of their office according to the manner by which they were brought to the papal throne. Both dispatched letters to the Holy Land to announce their election and to reassure those in the rump kingdom of Jerusalem that the recovery of the holy places would remain a papal priority. At some point between 1 and

¹⁴ J. E. Sayers, *Papal Government and England during the Pontificate of Honorius III (1216–1227)* (Cambridge, 1984), 29; C. Egger, 'A Theologian at Work: Some Remarks on Methods and Sources in Innocent III's Writings', in *Pope Innocent III and his World*, ed. J. C. Moore (Aldershot, 1999), 25–33, at p. 28. A rare exception in the pontificate of Honorius III is analysed in P. Zutshi, 'The Personal Role of the Pope in the Production of Papal Letters in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', in *Vom Nutzen des Schreibens: Soziales Gedächtnis, Herrschaft und Besitz im Mittelalter*, ed. W. Pohl and P. Herold (Vienna, 2002), 225–36, at 231–32.

¹⁵ Zutshi, 'Personal Role', 236.

¹⁶ Sayers, *Papal Government*, 29; Imkamp, *Das Kirchenbild*, 86.

10 February, following his election on 8 January 1198, Innocent dispatched a letter to Aimery, patriarch of Jerusalem, with an arenga bristling with self-confidence.¹⁷ In this, the thirty-seven-year-old pope deploys vivid biblical allusions to commiserate at the death of his nonagenarian predecessor, Celestine III (1191–1197), and to justify his own election as successor. In his arenga, Innocent presents the succession as the marvellous renewal of the Church through divine will, and cites St Paul, who had reminded the Roman Christians of the unsearchable judgements and incomprehensible ways of the Lord (Rom. 11:33). According to Innocent, popes were God's vessels on earth, summoned to the reward of eternal happiness (Phil. 3:14) achieved through death once they had fulfilled the obligations of office. Innocent claims that his election has ushered in a new infancy which will serve to delay the rust of old age. A reference to the first book of Samuel echoed the formulaic words which he uttered outside the Basilica of St

¹⁷ Out of consideration for the limitations of space only the Latin text of arengae is provided in the footnotes. References are given to English translations where they exist. Register 1:11: 'Rex regum et Dominus dominantium [Apoc. 19: 16], qui prodigia facit in celo sursum et in terra deorsum omnipotentie sue iugiter operatur indicia, ecclesiam suam per varias substitutiones pontificum mirabiliter innovans et nova semper prole fecundans et sic senium eius sua virtute consumens, ut hiis, qui fideliter in ipsius regimine militaverant, ad eterne felicitatis bravium evocatis [Phil. 3: 14], filios suscitet in parentes et in novam infantiam rubiginem transferat vetustatis. Inter cetera siquidem incomprehensibilia divine dispositionis iudicia et investigabiles vias eius magne miserationis esse credimus argumentum [Rom. 11: 33], quod sic a tedio sollicitudinum et curarum momentanee mortis compendio predecessores pro meritis responsurus absolvit, ut egenum de pulvere suscitatum et pauperem erectum de stercore sedere faciat cum principibus et solium Petri [1 Sam. 2: 8], quo nichil est inter homines gloriosius, obtinere, ut post vespertinos fletus letitia matutina succedat et ecclesia super parentis obitu de substitutione filii consoletur [Ps. 29. 6]: sicut diebus istis de nobis a Domino factum est et est mirabile in oculis nostris [Ps. 117: 23; Mt. 21: 42].'

John Lateran on the day of his election the month before, when he had used the ‘seat of dung’ (*sedes stercoraria*) image to symbolise the marvel of his elevation to the papal throne: ‘raising up the needy from the earth and lifting up the poor out of the dunghill, that he may make him sit with princes’ [1 Sam. 2: 8].¹⁸ This allusion tied in thematically with other biblical references on the Lord’s power of intervention on earth, and Innocent included a reference to Psalm 29: 6 at the end of the *arenga* to reassure Aimery and the clergy of Jerusalem that joy would follow the sadness of Celestine’s death.

Innocent’s justification of his election makes him appear precocious, pugnacious, and perhaps even a little distasteful, given his allusion to Celestine as an exhausted old man who had served his purpose and had thus been swept away (‘*et sic senium eius sua virtute consumens*’). But the *arenga* was also full of energy and vitality and displayed great clarity of purpose – Innocent was obviously relishing the opportunity presented to him of renewing the Church. It was a far cry from the account of his election in the *Gesta Innocentii III* which emphasized the new pope’s great reluctance in accepting the papal tiara, which was the traditional, and indeed desirable, response to being elected.¹⁹ At the time of Innocent’s election there was no planned crusade to the Holy Land, which perhaps explains its omission in the *arenga*, although

¹⁸ *Le Liber censuum de l’église romaine*, ed. L. Duchesne et al., 3 vols (Paris, 1889–1952), i, 311; J. C. Moore, *Pope Innocent III (1160/61–1216): To Root Up and to Plant* (Leiden, 2003), 1.

¹⁹ *Gesta Innocentii PP. III*, in *PL*, ccvii, 17–228, 19–20; D. Gress-Wright, *The Gesta Innocentii III: Text, Introduction and Commentary* (unpublished PhD dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, PA, 1981; and Ann Arbor, MI, 1994), 2–3. Translated in *Gesta*, 5.

elsewhere in the letter Innocent promised the Patriarch that he would work towards recovering the Holy Land.²⁰

Honorius's arenga in his accession letter addressed to the Holy Land displays a vastly different interpretation of the divine forces that brought about his election as Innocent's successor. Honorius was elected in Perugia on 18 July 1216, and on 25 July issued a letter addressed to Ralph, patriarch of Jerusalem, as well as John of Brienne, king of Jerusalem, the masters of the Hospitallers and Templars, and the people of the Holy Land, to announce his accession and to reassure them that the Fifth Crusade was still on its way.²¹ In his arenga Honorius emphasised the divine marvels and changes

²⁰ B. Bolton, "Serpent in the Dust: Sparrow on the Housetop": Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Circle of Pope Innocent III', in *The Holy Land, Holy Lands, and Christian History*, ed. R.N. Swanson, SCH, 36 (Woodbridge, 2000), 154–80, at 154–5.

²¹ Vatican City, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Reg. Vat. 9, fol. 1r: 'Magnus Dominus et laudabilis nimis [Psalm 144:3], gloriosus in sanctis, mirabilis in maiestatibus, faciensque prodigia [Exodus 15: 11], immutat tempora alto sue dispositionis consilio [Daniel 2: 21], cui consiliarius alius non existit, et vocat ea que non sunt, tamquam ea que sunt [Romans 4: 17], ut non gloriatur omnis caro in conspectu eius [1 Corinthians 1: 29], sed quemadmodum scriptum est, qui gloriatur in Domino gloriatur [1 Corinthians 1: 31]. Ipse namque dat secretorum scrutatores quasi non sint, et velud inanes iudices terre facit [Isaiah 40: 23], arefaciens stangna [sic], flumina in insulas collocando [Isaiah 42: 15], ab oriente ac occidente congregat sibi semen, et dicit aquiloni da, et austro noli prohibere [Isaiah 43: 5–6], ut illi, quibus arridet prosperitas, filios aquilonis impedire non possint, venire in gratiam [sic] filiorum, qua ponit humiles in sublimi, et merentes erigit sospitate [Job 5: 11]. Cumque inconprehensibilia sint iudicia sua et investigabiles eius vie [Romans 11: 33], istud ex eis tenemus procerto quod omnia iusto facit iudicio nobis, tamen ineffabili et occulto'; P.-V. Claverie, *Honorius III et l'Orient (1216–1227): Étude et publication de sources inédites des Archives vaticanes (ASV)* (Leiden, 2013), 282–83. Translated in Smith *Honorius III and the Holy Land Crusades*, 184.

which were incomprehensible to man. He presented himself as God's chosen vessel through which to carry out Innocent's crusade and used the *arenga* to mark out his authority over the inherited enterprise. Nevertheless, he styled his own election in far more humble terms than those used by Innocent in 1198. Although Innocent and Honorius both alluded to Romans 11: 33 on the inscrutable ways and unfathomable judgements of the Lord, these appear incongruous in Innocent's *arenga* and perhaps represented a token nod to tradition rather than anything else, given that he had no difficulty in explaining the death of the aged Celestine and his own election as the essential requirement for the renewal of the Church. But his election at such a young age was extraordinary and he refers to himself as a Benjamin (Gen. 44: 12) in the letter of 9 January 1198 announcing his election to the episcopate of France, thus acknowledging his youth and inexperience.²² Honorius's use of biblical allusion, however, sat squarely within the theme of his complete *arenga*.

While Celestine's death could certainly not have been unexpected since he was already showing signs of illness before Christmas 1197,²³ Innocent's sudden death in his mid-fifties must have been a shock – and his own *rust* metaphor would hardly have been appropriate for a young pope who had energised the Church. Honorius attributed his accession to the Divine Providence and referred to Exodus 15: 11 and Daniel 2: 21 when wondering at the Lord's ability to perform marvels and change circumstances

²² Register vol. 1, 3-5, ep. 1 at p. 4.

²³ 'Deinde dominus papa Coelestinus ante Natale Domini paulatim coepit aegrotare': Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, ed. W. Stubbs, 4 vols, RS 51 (1871), iv, 32; M. L. Taylor, 'The Election of Innocent III', in *The Church and Sovereignty, c.590–1918: Essays in Honour of Michael Wilks*, ed. D. Wood, SCH, Subsidia 9 (Oxford, 1991), 97–112, at 97–102.

according to His own high counsel. So far, a traditional position. However, Honorius explained God's decision to intervene on earth with an allusion to 1 Corinthians 1: 29 'that no flesh should glory in His sight'. Paul here presents God as infinitely wiser and stronger than even the wisest and strongest of men, and hence also capable of selecting the humble – in this context Honorius – to bring to nought those that are not.

Might this be read as a subtle barb directed at Innocent's pontificate, or did Honorius regard this merely as a general sentiment about the Lord's power to raise men up to the papal throne? He seems to have favoured this passage particularly and, in *Iustus Dominus* in (below), refers to 1 Corinthians 1: 27 in a way which had nothing to do with Innocent. The *arenga* probably reflects those whispers at the Curia that the death of the relatively youthful Innocent on the cusp of the Fifth Crusade was part of God's plan to have another pope to oversee the expedition. Nevertheless, such speculation must remain mere conjecture, although one could entertain the idea that Innocent's approach to the exercise of papal authority might have rankled with Honorius, given that his humble accession *arenga* contrasts so sharply with that of Innocent. What is certain though is that Honorius showed more respect to his predecessor in this *arenga* than Innocent did to Celestine at his own accession.²⁴

Honorius devoted the middle section of his *arenga* to the subject of the forthcoming crusade, and used quotations from the books of Isaiah and Job to promote himself as God's chosen administrator of the Fifth Crusade, allusions which fitted into the already established theme of divine power. It was through Honorius that good fortune would smile on the crusaders, so that nothing would be able to prevent these

²⁴ See also the argument that Innocent may have exhibited a 'strong dislike' of Honorius: Taylor, 'Election of Innocent III', 108.

‘sons of the north’ from entering into grace. Honorius proclaimed that during his pontificate the humble would be set on high and those who mourned over the loss of the holy places would be raised up to safety.

Apart from the reference to Romans, the popes employed entirely different biblical allusions to justify their accessions – the tone and message of the arengae are entirely distinct. They are quite different to the Danish royal arengae studied by Damsholt – neither Innocent nor Honorius expressing the desire to stress continuity with their predecessors by reusing their accession arengae.²⁵ Indeed, Innocent went out of his way to use his arenga to demarcate a clear break with Celestine III’s pontificate, and through Honorius’s adoption of a more humble stance in his arenga, he in turn clearly distinguished himself from Innocent. Stylistically, Innocent’s arenga is superior to that of Honorius and makes a more powerful statement of intent. This was precisely the message that the patriarch of Jerusalem wanted to hear in 1198 – the promise of new blood being injected into the Curia and the call for a new crusade after the inconclusive outcomes of the Third Crusade (1189–92) and the German crusade of Emperor Henry VI (1197–98). The situation on Honorius’s accession in July 1216 was quite different however – the Fifth Crusade had been summoned and the ruling elite in what remained of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem preferred to receive the reassurance that the crusade was going ahead than vague promises of change at the Curia. In this sense, Honorius was playing to his audience with the crusade-themed section of his arenga when he recalled Isaiah 43: 5–6: nothing was going to hinder the launch of the expedition.

The arengae in the great crusade encyclicals from both pontificates differ vastly in terms of style and content. Innocent issued more calls for Holy Land crusades than

²⁵ Damsholt, ‘Arengas of Danish Royal Diplomas’, 71.

most popes, which makes it possible to compare his crusade calls of 1198, 1199, and 1213 with each other, as well as with Honorius's encyclical of 1223. Such a comparison testifies to the great value that the popes placed on the creation of customised arengae for important curial letters. It would have been entirely impractical, however, to compose unique arengae for common letters, and these were instead copied from formularies and developed in form over the course of pontificates.²⁶

Innocent did not renege on the promise made at the time of his accession to the patriarch of Jerusalem. On 13–15 August 1198 he issued the encyclical *Post miserabile* proclaiming the Fourth Crusade (1202–1204) and calling upon the west to take up arms.²⁷ The arenga of the encyclical is famous for its length and rhetorical style. It

²⁶ See the commentary on the development of common forms of arengae to the time of Honorius III in Sayers, *Papal Government*, 101–22.

²⁷ *Reg. Inn.*, vol. 1, 336: ‘*Post miserabile Ierusalimitane regionis excidium, post lacrimabilem stragem populi christiani, post deplorandam invasionem illius terre, in qua pedes Christi steterunt et ubi Deus, rex noster, ante secula salutem in medio terre dignatus est operari [Ps. 73: 12], post ignominiosam nobis vivifice crucis translationem, in qua salus mundi pependit et delevit cirographum mortis antique [Col. 2: 14], apostolica sedes super tante calamitatis infortunio conturbata laboravit clamans et plorans ita, quod pre incessanti clamore rauce facte sunt fauces eius et ex vehementi ploratu pene ipsius oculi defecerunt [Ps. 68: 4]. Verum ne, si secundum prophetam Jerusalem obliti fuerimus, obliviscatur nos dextera nostra, adhereat lingua nostra faucibus nostris, si non meminerimus eius [Ps. 136: 5–6]: clamat adhuc apostolica sedes et quasi tuba vocem exaltat, excitare cupiens populos christianos ad prelium Christi bellandum et vindicandam iniuriam Crucifixi [Is. 58: 1], usa ipsius verbo dicentis: “O vos omnes, qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte, si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.” [Lam. 1: 12] Ecce enim hereditas nostra versa est ad alienos, domus nostre ad extraneos devenerunt [Lam. 5: 2], vie Syon lugent eo, quod non sint, qui veniant ad sollempnitatem, facti sunt inimici eius in capite [Lam. 1: 4–5], sepulchrum Domini, quod propheta gloriosum fore predixit, prophanatum ab impiis inglorium est effectum [Is. 11: 10]. Gloria*

opens with a lamentation on the state of the Holy Land that deploys striking biblical imagery in support of the pope's crusade call: 'If we forget thee, O Jerusalem, let our right hand forget her cunning. If we do not remember thee let our tongue cleave to the roof of our mouth [Psalm 136: 5-6]. Still the Apostolic See cries aloud, and she raises

nostra, de qua dicit apostolus: "Michi autem absit gloriari, nisi in cruce Domini Jesu Christi" [Gal. 6: 14], sub manu tenetur hostili et ipse Dominus Jesus Christus, qui captivitatem nostram pro nobis moriens captivavit, quasi captivatus ab impiis ab hereditate sua cogitur exulare [Eph. 4: 8]. Existente quondam in castris archa Domini Sabaoth, Urias domum suam ingredi recusavit a licito etiam uxoris se compescens amplexu [2 Sam. 11: 9–11]; nunc vero principes nostri, gloria Israel de loco suo in iniuriam nostri translata, vacant adulterinis amplexibus, deliciis et divitiis abutentes. Et dum se invicem inexorabili odio persecuntur, dum unus in alium suas nititur iniurias vindicare, non est quem moveat iniuria Crucifixi, non attendentibus ipsis, quod iam insultant nobis inimici nostri dicentes [Ps. 78: 10; Dt. 32: 37; Lam. 1: 10]: "Ubi est Deus vester [Ps. 41: 4, 11; 78: 10], qui nec se potest nec vos de nostris manibus liberare? Ecce iam prophanavimus sancta vestra, ecce iam ad desiderabilia vestra manum extendimus et ea loca impetu primo violenter invasimus et vobis tenemus invitis, in quibus superstitionem vestram principium fingitis suscepisse. Iam infirmavimus et confregimus astat Gallorum, Anglorum conatus elisimus, Teutonicorum vires compressimus nunc secundo, Hispanos domuimus animosos. Et cum omnes virtutes vestras in nos duxeritis concitandas, vix adhuc in aliquo profecistis. Ubi ergo est Deus vester? Exurgat nunc et adiuvet vos et fiat vobis et sibi protector. Teutonici siquidem, qui se presumebant inauditum de nobis reportare triumphum, ad nos vehementi spiritu transfretarunt: et cum solum castrum Baruth nullo defendente cepissent, nisi eos sicut et alios principes vestros fuge beneficium liberasset, in se potentiam nostram graviter fuissent experti et eorum stragem ipsorum soboles perpetuo deploraret. Reges enim et principes vestri, quos dudum de terra fugavimus Orientis, ut timorem suum audendo dissimulent, ad suas latebras, ne dicamus regna, reversi, malunt se invicem expugnare quam denuo vires nostras et potentiam experiri. Quid igitur superest, nisi ut – hiis, quos fugientes in excusationem vestram ad terre custodiam dimisistis, gladio ultore peremptis – in terram vestram impetum faciamus, nomen vestrum et memoriam perdituri?"

Translated in *Crusade and Christendom*, 28–37, at 31–33. See also Bolton, 'Serpent in the Dust', 159–60.

her voice like a trumpet, trying to arouse the nations of Christendom to fight the battles of Christ [Isaiah 58: 1]'.²⁸ In this expression of grief, Innocent was echoing the impassioned style of *Audita tremendi*, Pope Gregory VIII's moving *arenga* to the 1187 encyclical which launched the Third Crusade.²⁹

Innocent criticized the western rulers for fighting with each other and for committing adultery by comparing them unfavourably to the example of Uriah from the second book of Samuel who steadfastly performed his martial duty, 'refusing to enter his own house and withholding himself from the lawful embraces of his wife' while there was still a war to fight.³⁰ Uriah had refused to return home while 'the ark of God and Israel and Judah dwelt in tents' (2 Sam. 11: 11). Yet the lay powers of Innocent's day showed no such dedication to the tattered Latin possessions in the Levant. Through this allusion Innocent was also aligning the lay powers of the west, especially Philip Augustus, with the biblical King David, who had committed adultery with Uriah's wife.³¹ Innocent then included a section in which he imagined insults that the enemies of the crusaders could direct against the martial skills of the French, the English, the Germans, and the Spanish.³² Innocent employed this rhetorical device to belittle in particular the achievement of the recent German expedition which had managed to

²⁸ *Crusade and Christendom*, 31.

²⁹ Translated in *Crusade and Christendom*, 5–7.

³⁰ *Crusade and Christendom*, 32.

³¹ *Crusade and Christendom*, 32, n. 9; Moore, *Innocent III*, 59.

³² Bolton, 'Serpent in the Dust', 159.

capture the cities of Sidon and Beirut.³³ The pope was attempting to shame the recipients of the encyclical into action.

The arenga to *Post miserabile* may have been long, stylised, and imaginative, but ultimately it was ineffective. Innocent's 1198 crusade call failed to meet with the hoped for response from the secular powers.³⁴ On 31 December 1199 Innocent therefore issued a modified crusade encyclical, *Graves orientalis*.³⁵ This employed a much shorter arenga which lacked biblical allusions, and stood in stark contrast to that of the previous year. Innocent echoed his previous expression of grief over the loss of the Holy Land in a far more concise form, and merely stated that 'we are compelled to

³³ On the crusade, see J. Møller Jensen and A. V. Murray, 'Crusade of Emperor Henry VI (1197–1198)', in *The Crusades: An Encyclopedia*, ed. A. V. Murray, 4 vols (Santa Barbara, CA, 2006), i, 315–17, at 317.

³⁴ A. J. Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade, The Medieval Mediterranean*, 29 (Leiden, 2000), 24.

³⁵ Register, ii, 258: 'Graves orientalis terre miserias et necessitates urgentes iam potius peccatis exigentibus deflere cogimur quam referre, cum ad eum statum, si status tamen dicendus est casus, quod dolentes dicimus, eadem terra devenerit, ut, nisi citius ipsius fuerit necessitati succursum et occursum conatibus paganorum, pauci christiani, qui de defensionis hereditatis Domini et Crucifixi obsequiis devoverunt, hostiles sagittas sui sanguinis effusione inebriaturi credantur et paganorum gladios suis iugulis placaturi; reliquiis desolationis illius terre sine spe humani subsidii perdendis totaliter et ab hostibus occupandis, cum de partibus illis pene omnes iam redierint peregrini. Id autem hactenus Dominus Iesus Christus, ut probaret adhuc fortius fidem nostram et intelligeret plenius, qui sunt eius, misericorditer impedivit, manus eorum in ipsos convertens et eos inter se multiformiter discordantes permittens adinvicem desevire, ut christianis interim ad ipsius terre subsidium excitatis facilius daretur facultas recuperandi perdita et de hostibus triumphandi.' Translated in Andrea, *Contemporary Sources*, 24–32, at 26.

weep over the sad miseries and urgent needs of the Eastern land, rather than to recount them'.³⁶ He deployed an arresting image of the dangers faced by those few who were defending what was left of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, worrying that they 'will make drunk the arrows of their enemies by the pouring out of their blood and will make welcome the swords of the pagans with their throats'.³⁷ Again, the pope lambasted those secular rulers and others fighting their fellow Christians in the west when the Holy Land and her few defenders faced such dangers.

Innocent's two *arengae* shared broad themes but were completely different chancery products. The *arenga* from *Graves orientalis* channelled ideas from *Post miserabile* but merely summarised its rhetoric. The fact that a new *arenga* was composed when that of *Post miserabile* could have been reworked or reused is testimony to the perceived importance of these diplomatic clauses. The persuasive power of a reworked *arenga* in a crusade encyclical would have been greatly reduced had lay powers begun to think of them as being merely stock rhetoric. Popes, therefore, had to produce unique *arengae* for each call to crusade if they were to stand a chance of being effective in rousing Christendom. Yet, despite the fact that more effort was invested in the *arenga* for the 1198 crusade call than its successor a year later, its effectiveness was not great. Indeed, as a piece of rhetoric aimed at inspiring western rulers to turn aside from their quarrels and rescue the Holy Land, the *arenga* from *Post miserabile* was a dismal failure. Yet as a mirror of papal thought it is invaluable. Innocent articulates his authority imaginatively and provocatively, and in a style so different to that of Honorius, a matter to which we shall soon turn.

³⁶ Andrea, *Contemporary Sources*, 26.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

The arenga from *Quia maior*, Innocent's encyclical issued between 19–29 April 1213, which launched preparations for the Fifth Crusade (1217–1221), had much in common with *Post miserabile*.³⁸ Similarities in style and length suggest that the arengae

³⁸ PL, ccxvi, 817–8: ‘Quia major nunc instat necessitas quam unquam exstiterit ut terrae sanctae necessitatibus succurratur, et de succursu speratur major quam unquam provenerit utilitas proventura, ecce resumpto clamore clamamus ad vos, et pro illo clamamus qui moriendo voce magna clamavit in cruce, factus obediens Deo Patri usque ad mortem crucis, clamans ut nos ab aeternae mortis eriperet cruciatu [Mt. 27: 50; Lk. 23: 46], qui clamat etiam per seipsum, et dicit: Si quis vult venire post me, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me [Mt. 16: 24]: ac si diceret manifestius: Qui vult me subsequi ad coronam, ne quoque subsequatur ad pugnam, quae nunc ad probationem proponitur universis. Poterat enim omnipotens Deus terram illam, si vellet, omnino defendere, ne in manus traderetur hostiles. Posset et illam, si vellet, de manibus hostium facile liberare, cum nihil possit ejus resistere voluntati [Rom. 9: 19]. Sed cum jam superabundasset iniquitas [Rom. 5: 20], refrigescente charitate multorum [Mt. 24: 12], ut fideles suos a somno mortis ad vitae studium excitaret, agonem illis proposuit in quo fidem eorum velut aurum in fornace probaret [1 Pt. 1: 7], occasionem salutis, imo salvationis causam praestando, ut qui fideliter pro ipso certaverint, ab ipso feliciter coronentur, et qui ei noluerint in tantae necessitatis articulo debitae servitutis impendere famulatum, in novissimo districti examinis die justam mereantur damnationis sententiam sustinere. O quanta jam provenit utilitas ex hac causa! quam multi conversi ad poenitentiam pro liberatione terrae sanctae mancipaverunt se obsequio crucifixi, et quasi per agonem martyrii coronam gloriae sunt adepti [1 Pt. 5: 4; 1 Thes. 2: 19], qui forte in suis iniquitatibus periissent, carnalibus voluptatibus et mundanis illecebris irretiti! Vetus est hoc artificium Jesu Christi, quod ad suorum salutem fidelium diebus istis dignatus est innovare. Si enim rex aliquis temporalis a suis hostibus ejiceretur de regno, nisi vassalli ejus pro eo non solum res exponerent, sed personas, nonne cum regnum recuperaret amissum, eos velut infideles damnaret, et excogitaret in eos inexcogitata tormenta, quibus perderet male malos? Sic Rex regum, Dominus Jesus Christus, qui corpus et animam et caetera vobis contulit bona, de ingratitude vitio et infidelitatis crimine vos damnabit, si ei quasi ejecto de regno, quod pretio sui sanguinis comparavit, neglexeritis subvenire. Sciat ergo se culpabiliter durum et dure culpabilem quicumque in hoc necessitatis articulo suum negaverit obsequium

from *Post miserabile* and *Quia maior* better reflect Innocent's conception of his authority to launch crusades than the cursory preamble which opens *Graves orientalis*. The arenga to *Quia maior* displays a similar, albeit much shorter, outpouring of papal grief on behalf of Christ to that of *Post miserabile* with numerous allusions made to Matthew 27: 50 and Luke 23: 46. Innocent stated that although it was within God's power to grant the Holy Land to the Christians (Romans 9: 19), He had 'proposed a task for them in which He can test their faith like gold in a furnace' (1 Peter 1: 7). This arenga also shares a similarly provocative approach to that of the 1198 encyclical by threatening those Christians who would not contribute to the crusade with 'a just sentence of damnation on the final day of the last judgment'.³⁹ Innocent's threat went hand-in-hand with his extension of the crusade privilege to encompass those who supported the crusade financially without personally taking part.⁴⁰ He applied the metaphor of vassals serving their temporal lord to Christians serving the Lord, and criticised those who did not sacrifice everything on His behalf.

Redemptori. Nam et quomodo secundum praeceptum divinum diligit, proximum suum sicut seipsum [Lv. 19: 18; Mt. 19: 19] cui scit fratres suos fide ac nomine Christianos apud perfidos Saracenos ergastulo diri carceris detineri ac iugo deprimi gravissimae servitutis, ei ad liberationem eorum efficacem operam non impendit, transgrediendo illius naturalis legis mandatum, quod Dominus in Evangelio declaravit.

Quaecunque vultis ut faciant vobis homines, et vos facite illis [Mt. 7: 12]. An forte nescitis quod apud illos multa millia Christianorum in servitute ac carcere detinentur, qui tormentis innumeris cruciantur?

Translated in *Crusade and Christendom*, 107–12, at 107–8.

³⁹ *Crusade and Christendom*, 108.

⁴⁰ Powell, *Anatomy*, 20.

This feudal topos was relatively common in Innocent's letters.⁴¹ Honorius employed it himself in the arena of a letter to Philip Augustus in 1223, although Honorius arguably displayed greater originality in his use of the metaphor.⁴² Whereas Innocent appeared belligerent and threatened 'unthinkable tortures' against reluctant vassals of the Lord, Honorius succinctly implied that such men were guilty of treason and unworthy of their fiefs. It makes Innocent's example from *Quia maior* appear quite unsophisticated by comparison.

Honorius's crusade encyclical *Iustus Dominus in*, issued between 11–23 April 1223, was a product of his negotiations with Emperor Frederick II at Ferentino a month previously, and aimed to secure support for the imperial crusade planned for 1225.⁴³ Its

⁴¹ S. Schein, *Gateway to the Heavenly City: Crusader Jerusalem and the Catholic West (1099–1187)* (Aldershot, 2005), 45–6.

⁴² Reg. Vat. 12, fol. 39r: 'Nonne vassallus cuiuslibet domini temporalis quasi proditionis reus et feodo quod tenet ab eo iudicaretur indignus, si domini sui terram intransibus hostibus pro viribus non resisteret, et se iuxta posse ad expulsionem non attingeret eorundem?'; Reg. Hon. III, no. 4321; Smith, *Honorius III and the Holy Land Crusades*, 194–97.

⁴³ Reg. Vat. 12, fol. 52: 'Iustus Dominus in omnibus viis suis [Ps. 144: 17], qui unicuique pro meritis condigna retributione respondet, circa negotium Terre Sancte, spem populi Christiani fovit aliquando prosperis, et interdum debilitavit adversis. O quantum Christocolis videbatur arridere prosperitas, o quantum illuxisse credebatur fidelibus felicis aurora successuum, quando cruce signatorum exercitus Egyptum aggrediens, post turrinam captam, post transitum fluminis, post hostes exterritos, in adversariorum stationibus castra fixit, et Damiatam, que robur censebatur Egypti, duris obsidionis angustiis coartavit. Res quidem agebatur miraculi, cum Dominus, qui elegit infirma mundi, ut confunderet fortia [1 Cor. 1: 27], civitatem expugnationi difficilem eo tempore tradidit gerentibus bellum eius, quo invaluerat multum partis adverse potentia, et abbreviatus erat non modicum nostrorum numerus bellatorum. Habebat autem in hiis universitas Christiana unde protenderet quasi certe spei fiduciam in futurum, verum

arenga demonstrates how popes drew on a common store of biblical knowledge yet deployed it in their own distinct manner. Honorius's arenga reveals that he went about inspiring the lay powers to action in a manner quite different from that of Innocent. The arenga was shorter than those in Innocent's encyclicals of 1198 and 1213 and differed vastly in content. Though Honorius lamented the failure of the Fifth Crusade, he did not articulate in this letter the same degree of grief for the state of the Holy Land as had his predecessor in 1198. While in *Post miserabile* Innocent had depicted the Holy Land as being on the brink of collapse, Honorius's arenga opened with a more positive picture, and emphasised how the cause might wax and wane in relation to God's support for the expeditions. Such a view was reminiscent of Innocent's statement in *Quia maior*, that it was within God's power simply to restore the Holy Land to the crusaders but, in *Iustus Dominus in*, Honorius did not set up the new crusade as such a clear cut test of faith. He merely alluded to Psalm 144 to explain that the Lord was just in all his ways – while the crusaders had brought the failure of the Fifth Crusade on themselves, they now had a favourable opportunity to redeem themselves.

The arenga of *Iustus Dominus in* contained a brief narrative segment half way through which explained the Curia's perception of why the Fifth Crusade failed. While Innocent had criticised such general sins as adultery and infighting perpetrated by those

succendentibus prosperis victores obliti nomen Domini post triumphum [Gen. 40: 23], dato virtutibus libello repudii [Jer. 3: 8], sic contraxere cum vitiis, quod detrahebatur fidei, ubi convertendi fuerant infideles, et maior erat peccatorum commissio, ubi maior remissio sperabatur'; Reg. Hon. III, no. 4262; translated in Smith, *Honorius III and the Holy Land Crusades*, 202–3. On the 1223 Crusade call see idem, 'Honorius III and the Crusade: Responsive Papal Government versus the Memory of his Predecessors', in *The Church on its Past*, ed. P. D. Clarke and C. Methuen, SCH, 49 (Woodbridge, 2013), 99–109, at 107–08.

in the west, Honorius focused instead on the individual sins of the crusaders and how these had ruined the Fifth Crusade, using ample allusions to Genesis and Jeremiah. Yet he did not use his *arenga* to provoke a reaction or threaten dire consequences for non-participation as Innocent had in his. Stylistically, *Iustus Dominus* in was by no means as refined as *Post miserabile* or *Quia maior*: if anything it bore a greater resemblance to *Graves orientalis*, which was also clearly produced in haste, unlike the more carefully considered calls of 1198 and 1213. Nevertheless, Honorius still accomplished a clever rhetorical flourish when he insisted that the crusaders, after capturing Damietta, had shown themselves so ungrateful as to forget the name of the Lord who had brought about their success (Gen. 40: 23) and had issued a bill of divorce (Jer. 3: 8) in order to enter into a contract with vices. According to Honorius this divorce led directly to sins being committed when the sinners ought instead to have been seeking remission. Proof exists then that Honorius was capable of producing elegant imagery in *arengae*, something which is borne out in an examination of his other preambles.⁴⁴ Although we do not possess a crusade encyclical *arenga* from Honorius's pontificate which could be compared with either of those from 1198 and 1213 (which demonstrate Innocent's long-term planning), the evidence we do have shows clearly the difference in attitude between them.

In common with the accession *arengae*, some dissimilarities between the *arengae* of the two popes must be attributed to the contemporary situation – Honorius was organising a crusade under very different conditions to those pertaining during Innocent's pontificate. While Innocent was attempting to recruit new crusades *ab initio*, Honorius was actively seeking support for Frederick II's promised imperial crusade.

⁴⁴ See Smith, *Honorius III and the Holy Land Crusades*, 204–25.

Innocent's crusade encyclicals were the mature products of long-term crusade planning whereas, following the papal-imperial colloquium at Ferentino in March 1223 at which Frederick made a renewed commitment to crusade, Honorius's encyclical was hastily produced within a month.⁴⁵ It should, therefore, come as no surprise that, purely in terms of style, *Iustus Dominus* compares unfavourably to *Post miserabile* and *Quia maior*. Honorius was also trying to drum up support immediately after the failure of the Fifth Crusade – it was natural that he would concentrate on how close the undertaking had come to success. Although Innocent was composing his 1198 encyclical immediately after the disappointment of the German crusade of 1197–98, his arenga was still heavily influenced by loss of the Holy Land following the Battle of Hattin in 1187 and bears many stylistic similarities to Gregory VIII's *Audita tremendi*.

One similarity between *Iustus Dominus* and *Post miserabile* is that both failed to stir the lay powers to action – and when Frederick's crusade of 1228–29 finally occurred, it was composed almost entirely of his own vassals.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the differences in style are proof of the individually tailored nature of arengae in crusade encyclicals. Honorius clearly did not feel compelled to attempt to imitate his predecessor's language, biblical justifications, or rhetorical devices. Although there was naturally some overlap of biblical source material in the composition of arengae, both popes possessed different conceptions of the best way to style the preambles of their crusade encyclicals.

In conclusion, this short survey of the arengae in the crusade letters issued by Innocent and Honorius confirms Powell's findings from his research into the sermons of

⁴⁵ W. Stürmer, *Friedrich II., 1194–1250*, 2 vols (Darmstadt, 1992–2000), ii, 91, 93.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem.*, Stürmer, *Friedrich II.*, ii, 131.

both popes.⁴⁷ In common with their sermons, the arengae of Innocent and Honorius demonstrate differing conceptions of the authority of their office and different constructions in their arengae, despite relying on similar biblical imagery. Some differences can be attributed to the changing circumstances in which the letters were produced. In itself, this tells us something important about high medieval papal arengae in curial letters, namely, that they were most often bespoke. Although shared themes were reminiscent of previous popes such as Gregory VIII, neither Innocent nor Honorius simply recycled crusade arengae to emphasise continuity with their predecessors. The sample of preambles to crusade letters presented in this chapter reveal clear differences between Innocent and Honorius, both in the way they perceived their own authority and the ways in which they exercised it to organise crusades to the Holy Land.

⁴⁷ Powell, 'Pastor Bonus', 523–4, 536–7.