

## Crusader Masculinities in Bodily Crises: Incapacity and the Crusader Leader, 1095–1274.<sup>1</sup>

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Spring 1250 was the nadir of Louis IX's first crusade.<sup>2</sup> Aged in his middle years, the French king had taken the cross in 1244 upon recovery from a serious illness, and following extensive preparations had embarked with a large host from his port of Aigues-Mortes on the Mediterranean coast of France in the summer of 1248. After over-wintering in Cyprus, the crusaders departed for their target of Egypt in the late spring of 1249, and, upon arrival, quickly captured the coastal city of Damietta which had been won and lost by the Fifth Crusaders some thirty years previously. In the winter of that year the crusaders began to make their way south, following the river Nile. They reached the city of Mansurah and fought the armies of the Ayyubid defenders there in February 1250. Although the crusaders were victorious, it was a hard-won victory, and their military advancement stalled. Deprivation and suffering struck the camp, according to Jean of Joinville, a close associate of the king who

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<sup>1</sup> The research for this article was made possible by an Arts and Humanities Research Council Block Grant Partnership, Award Reference 1229073. My thanks to Alex Bamji, Sunny Harrison, Laura King, Claire Martin, Jessica Meyer, Iona McCleery, Alan V. Murray, James Titterton, and Vanessa Wright for their suggestions. Translations from Latin are the author's own; reference is given to published translations for works in Old French.

<sup>2</sup> The following narrative is based on: Jean of Joinville, *Vie de saint Louis*, ed. Jacques Monfrin (Paris: Dunod, 1995), 142–54; trans. by Caroline Smith in *Joinville and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2008), 217–22. References are to the numbered section of the text, which is the same in both editions, while the page numbers given in brackets are to Smith's translation, for the convenience of the reader. On Louis's assumption of the cross and his preparations for the crusade, William C. Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade: A Study in Rulership* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

recorded the events of the crusade in his *Vie de saint Louis*. There was a shortage of food supplies, and a deadly sickness named the *maladie de l'ost* arose due to “the noxiousness of that country, in which no drop of water ever rains”, and the fact that the crusaders had, during the season of Lent, eaten fish from the river which had been feeding upon the bodies of those who had died in the battle of Mansurah.<sup>3</sup>

Seeing the afflictions of his followers, and with little hope of progress, in April 1250 Louis ordered retreat north to Damietta, which was at that point still in Christian hands. The king himself was stricken with bodily failure, a victim of the *maladie de l'ost*, and also suffering from a very strong flux (*menoison moult fort*) which manifested in diarrhoea so severe that his breeches had to be cut off; his infirmity was so great that he fainted several times on the night of the retreat.<sup>4</sup> Urged to escape quickly by travelling downriver in a galley, but concerned above all for those of his people for whom there was no place on the ships, Louis insisted that “please God, he would never abandon his people”.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately for Louis, his noble followers and advisors (including Joinville himself) felt no such compunction and took ship, leaving the king “not one of all his knights and all his sergeants”, save for one of his closest companions, Geoffrey of Sergines; the pair attached themselves to the company led by Walter of Châtillon.<sup>6</sup> With the king mounted on an ordinary riding horse (*un petit rouncin*) — albeit one accoutred with a silk cloth — and unable to defend himself due to

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<sup>3</sup> “pour l'enfermeté du païs, la ou il ne pleut nulle foiz goutte d'yaue”: Joinville, sec. 291 (trans., 218).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., sec. 306 (trans., 221).

<sup>5</sup> “Dieu plest, il ne leroit ja son peuple”: ibid., sec. 306 (trans., 221).

<sup>6</sup> “li demoura de touz chevaliers ne de touz serjans”: ibid., sec. 309 (trans., 222). Geoffrey of Sergines had fought in the king's entourage at Damietta and vehemently opposed the proposal to offer the king as a hostage during the aborted negotiations of surrender described above: ibid., secs 173, 302 (trans., 188, 220). He later acted as a member of Louis's council during the king's sojourn in Acre: ibid., sec. 438 (trans., 253). See also: Jonathan Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 77–80; Jean Richard, *Saint Louis: Crusader King of France*, ed. Simon Lloyd, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; first publ. as *Saint Louis: roi d'une France féodale*

his physical weakness, Geoffrey protected Louis “just as a good servant protects his lord’s cup from flies”.<sup>7</sup> On their arrival at a village, with the king unable to travel further, he was taken into a house and “laid, as if he were quite dead, in the lap of a *bourjoise* from Paris”.<sup>8</sup> Political failure followed: on the cusp of concluding a truce with the Saracens, confusion amongst the crusaders meant that some of them started to surrender and were taken captive, leading to the collapse of the truce. Louis himself was taken prisoner, and the expedition ended ignominiously.<sup>9</sup>

Joinville’s account of these events contains a good deal of commentary on Louis’s kingship and corporeality. A brief introduction to the text is necessary to contextualise his layered presentation of the incapacitated king.<sup>10</sup> Joinville’s *Vie de saint Louis* was composed early in the fourteenth century, commissioned by Jeanne of Navarre, wife to Louis’s grandson Philip IV, and dedicated to her son, later King Louis X. By that time, Louis IX had become Saint Louis, canonised in 1297, but it is likely that the section of the *Vie* which describes the crusade of 1248–54 was written at a somewhat earlier date (perhaps the 1270s–1280s), and framed by opening and

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(Paris: Fayard, 1983)), 148–49. Walter of Châtillon had proved himself in the battle of Mansurah, but was not part of Louis’s inner circle: Joinville, secs 243, 256–57, 268 (trans., 206, 210, 213).

<sup>7</sup> “comme le bon vallet deffent le hanap son seigneur des mouches”: *ibid.*, sec. 309 (trans., 222).

<sup>8</sup> “le coucherent ou giron d’une bourjoise de Paris, aussi comme tout mort”: *ibid.*, sec. 310 (trans., 222).

<sup>9</sup> Louis was later freed thanks to the negotiation of a treaty, the surrender of Damietta, and the payment of a hefty ransom: *ibid.*, secs 340–42, 380–88 (trans., 229–30, 239–41).

<sup>10</sup> For varying introduction and analyses: Daisy Delogu, *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign: The Rise of the French Vernacular Royal Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 22–57; M. Cecilia Gaposchkin, *The Making of Saint Louis: Kingship, Sanctity, and Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 181–96; Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, trans. Gareth Evan Collard (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009; first publ. Paris: Gallimard, 1996), 376–98; Caroline Smith, *Crusading in the Age of Joinville* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 47–74.

closing sections when Joinville compiled the whole text in response to Jeanne's commission.<sup>11</sup> While the frame is overtly hagiographical in tone, the crusading section of the *Vie* has a different focus, giving us many details about Joinville's own experiences and treating Louis as a rather more fallible character.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, it has been suggested that Joinville's attitude to the king in this section can be read as ambivalent, with flashes of overt criticism, contrary to the overwhelmingly positive impression of its subject that mark other royal biographies.<sup>13</sup>

In this instance, Joinville's presentation of Louis begins on a highly negative tone, with a critique that hinges on the king's physical condition to comment on his leadership, kingliness, and nobility. The foulness of Louis's illness contaminates the image of the pure and saintly king that was to be his lasting reputation.<sup>14</sup> In Joinville's presentation, Louis is seen to have lost control of his bodily integrity at the same time losing control of the military situation, an impression reinforced by the fact that the

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<sup>11</sup> While Monfrin suggests that the whole text was composed between 1305–09, Gaposchkin and Smith prefer the two-stage composition proposed by Gaston Paris in 1894: Monfrin, "Introduction", in *Vie de saint Louis*, ed. Jacques Monfrin (Paris: Dunod, 1995), lxvi–lxxvi; Gaposchkin, *Making of Saint Louis*, 182–85; Smith, *Age of Joinville*, 48–48.

<sup>12</sup> Gaposchkin, *Making of Saint Louis*, 182, 187.

<sup>13</sup> Afrodesia E. McCannon, "Two Capetian Queens as the Foreground for an Aristocrat's Anxiety in the *Vie de saint Louis*", in *Capetian Women*, ed. Kathleen Nolan (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 163–76. On the more positive portrayals usually to be found in vernacular royal biographies: Delogu, *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign*, 16–17. In discussing the negative features of Joinville's portrayal of Louis IX, we should acknowledge the debate which hinges on how far Joinville's criticism informs whether the *Vie* ought to be read a hagiography or biography. Delogu argues that Joinville's negative descriptions of the king, taken by some as evidence that the text cannot be hagiographical in nature, enshrine the king as an exemplar to which the audience can aspire: *ibid.*, 41–42. Joinville's description of Louis's bodily crisis has not thus far been fully analysed as a critique of the king.

<sup>14</sup> On the physical and moral contamination of excrement, Martha Bayless, *Sin and Filth in Medieval Culture: The Devil in the Latrine* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

king was abandoned by all but one of his closest followers. That he was then unable to defend himself and needed protection further emphasises his incapacity and feebleness, even if his high social status is preserved in the simile that Geoffrey rendered service to him as a good servant to his lord's table. However, Louis's situation on a pack horse compromises his nobility; the note that the *rouncin* was equipped with a silk cloth was perhaps an attempt to befit it for its royal rider, but there is tension in this detail nevertheless. Upon arrival at the village, the imagery of Joinville's narrative becomes increasingly complex. The detail that Louis was laid in the arms of a woman may be a Christo-mimetic vignette of a *pietà* scene.<sup>15</sup> Note, furthermore, how Joinville had shown that Louis, like Christ, was prepared to sacrifice himself for his people in refusing to take ship to Damietta and thus secure his own safety.<sup>16</sup> But, in the maternal aspect of this scene, Joinville may be infantilising Louis, which calls the effectiveness of the king's leadership into question. The identity of the woman is curious and adds a new layer to our reading. Christopher Tyerman has hypothesised that she may have been Hersende, the female physician who attended Louis on his crusade, but if she was then Joinville seems to have chosen to occlude her occupational identity and focus on her femininity and inferior social status as a

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<sup>15</sup> The figural group of the *pietà* in art is traced to the early fourteenth century, and is closely related to the developing religious culture of affective piety of the thirteenth century onwards. See Joanna E. Ziegler, *Sculpture of Compassion: The Pietà and the Beguines in the Southern Low Countries c. 1300–c. 1600* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992). In written sources it is detectable from at least the eleventh century: William H Forsyth, *The Pietà in French Late Gothic Sculpture* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995), 199.

<sup>16</sup> An action which Joinville described as a demonstration of exemplary kingship in the prologue of the *Vie*: sec. 10 (trans., 142–3); Gaposchkin, *Making of Saint Louis*, 194–95.



*bourjoise*, one of the mercantile and artisanal classes.<sup>17</sup> Her bodily superiority to the king can thus be read as pejorative of Louis's infirmity, her status rising as his falls with his incapacity. Christo-mimesis aside, the juxtaposition of noble man — leader and king — incapacitated and in the care of a lower-class but bodily-intact woman signals that Joinville may be making an incisive comment on Louis's masculine identity; the king, who ought to embody power and authority, is instead humbled and compromised, failed by his body and therefore unable to fulfil his ordained role of king and crusader leader.

It is the premise of the present discussion that corporeality and incapacity, as exhibited in the vignette just explored, are intertwined with understandings of masculinity in the medieval period, and contribute to a reading of (in this case) crusader masculinities through the prism of health.<sup>18</sup> Especial resonance can be found in the explicitly gendered way health was understood in the pre-modern past, as discussed further below. The particular focus here is an in-depth examination of the subject of the male crusader leader compromised by bodily infirmity, considering how health and corporeality intersect with the experience and interpretation of masculinity during crusader expeditions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Such a specific focus is justified by an appreciation that male crusaders, as a whole, deviated from the norms and ideals of contemporary masculinity. For instance, Natasha Hodgson has demonstrated how far crusaders were unable to fulfil the model of masculine identity

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<sup>17</sup> Christopher J. Tyerman, *How to Plan a Crusade: Reason and Religious War in the High Middle Ages* (London: Allen Lane, 2015), 167, 252. On Hersende, Piers D. Mitchell, *Medicine in the Crusades: Warfare, Wounds and the Medieval Surgeon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 19.

<sup>18</sup> This idea has influenced historians of other historical periods; for example, Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion, 1996). The point is not to enforce the sex-gender dichotomy — that male bodies must accordingly have masculine experiences — but rather to consider the relationship between the two: R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept", *Gender and Society*, no. 19 (2005): 837, 851–2.

as that of protector, procreator and provider: crusading men were dislocated from their dependents, sworn to celibacy, and had diverted their resources to the crusade.<sup>19</sup> Even when problematised thus, there is nuance: given that Louis IX's wife Marguerite of Provence gave birth three times while on crusade, it seems that the couple were not keeping any vow of celibacy.<sup>20</sup> Hodgson proposes that there is no one ideal form of masculinity to be found in the context of the crusades and that a "subtle and nuanced approach" must be taken to identify the varying models of masculinity which are exhibited in the contemporary sources.<sup>21</sup> Clearly, the complexity of the masculinities manifest in the crusader context is best revealed through specific investigations of different aspects of the same, as this whole collection demonstrates. This will be achieved in the present chapter by, firstly, an investigation of what it meant to be a male crusader leader, how these attributes were conceived of as embodied in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and, additionally, how far maleness and health were understood as related in this period. The discussion will then consider how crusader leaders found their position threatened by the experience of ill-health or bodily incapacity. In particular, the chronicles of the crusades will be examined as indicative of what expectations were held of men in such situations and thus how far a man

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<sup>19</sup> Natasha Hodgson, "Normans and Competing Masculinities on Crusade", in *Crusading and Pilgrimage in the Norman World*, ed. Kathryn Hurlock and Paul Oldfield (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2015), 201–02. The principles are David D. Gilmore's, from his sociological work *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 222–23, and were applied to the Middle Ages by Vern L. Bullough in "On Being a Male in the Middle Ages", in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clare A. Lees (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 34. However, studies of medieval masculinities have in fact shown as much deviation from this model as adherence to it. See, *inter alia*, Jacqueline Murray, ed., *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West* (New York: Garland, 1999); P.H. Cullum and Katherine Lewis, eds., *Religious Men and Masculine Identity in the Middle Ages*, *Gender in the Middle Ages* 9 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013).

<sup>20</sup> To Jean Tristram in 1250, to Peter in 1251, and to Blanche in 1253: Joinville, secs 196, 254, 294 (trans., 244, 272–73, 293).

<sup>21</sup> Hodgson, "Competing Masculinities", 212.

might succeed or fail in the role of sick leader. It will be seen that the experience of incapacity was a pressure point for crusading leaders in which their authority, masculinity, and reputation could be threatened or exalted.

Crusader leadership was overwhelmingly male.<sup>22</sup> The position of crusader leader – here referring to those secular men who led substantial crusader contingents – carried specific expectations of the men who fulfilled it, expectations which formulated a particular interpretation of masculinity.<sup>23</sup> To be a crusader leader was to inhabit a role predicated on capacity and physical ability. Marcus Bull has suggested that crusading stripped back the functions of leadership from a complex interchange of relationships, fealty, and custom, centred on the infrastructure of power such as castles and family monasteries, to a pure ability to “feed and protect desperate people in relentlessly tough conditions”.<sup>24</sup> In the straitened circumstances of a crusading expedition, when the participants suffered hardship and deprivation, the traditional bonds of society could become more flexible. Alan V. Murray has shown that during the journey across Anatolia in 1097, and at the siege of Antioch in 1097–98, knights who were reduced in material worth by loss of their horses and equipment (and who experienced, concomitantly, a reduction in their knightly status), might be taken into

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<sup>22</sup> As ever, when such bald statements are made, exceptions can be found. Notably, Marguerite of Provence oversaw the defence of Damietta after Louis IX was taken into captivity, but her case is the exception rather than the rule: Joinville, sec. 399–400 (trans., 244).

<sup>23</sup> That certain roles fostered specific forms of masculinity underpins Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003) and Katherine Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England* (Routledge, 2013). Because of this rationale, clerical leaders are excluded from the current investigation, being subject to different expectations of masculinity than secular leaders. On the interactions of clerical leadership and masculinity during crusading expeditions, Matthew Mesley, “Episcopal Authority and Gender in the Narratives of the First Crusade”, in *Religious Men and Masculine Identity*, 94–111.

<sup>24</sup> Marcus Bull, “The Eyewitness Accounts of the First Crusade as Political Scripts”, *Reading Medieval Studies* 36 (2010): 29.



service by leaders who could provide for them.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the physical incapacitation of the leader himself could have far-reaching consequences for those who followed him, and in this we must confront the paradoxical ambiguity of the sick leader. Since the term describes someone who leads, when a man who led a crusader contingent – with all the responsibilities, obligations, and expectations thus implied – was unable to fulfil his function because of sickness or incapacity, was he still to be thought of as a leader, and did his followers still treat him as one when he was compromised by bodily failure?

To use the experience of corporeality and incapacity as a lens for the study of crusading masculinities is particularly apposite since health and the body were understood through an explicitly gendered framework in the Middle Ages.<sup>26</sup> This was the system of humoralism, inherited from Ancient Greece, wherein health was thought to be governed by the proportion of certain substances within the body, known as the four humours: blood, black bile, yellow bile, and phlegm.<sup>27</sup> Balance of the humours represented good health, while imbalance was understood to be the root cause of disease and illness. The health of each individual person was thought to be

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<sup>25</sup> Alan V. Murray, "The Army of Godfrey of Bouillon, 1096–1099: Structure and Dynamics of a Contingent on the First Crusade", in *Medieval Warfare*, ed. John France (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006; first publ. in *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 70 (1992), 301–29), 325. Jonathan Riley-Smith also pointed out that ties of lordship could fluctuate in the course of a crusade expedition: *The First Crusaders, 1095–1131* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 87.

<sup>26</sup> Explored at length in Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). See also Bullough, "Being a Male", 31–33.

<sup>27</sup> For further details, including the origin of the theory of the four humours, and its transmission in the medieval west: Vivian Nutton, "Humoralism", in *Companion Encyclopedia of the History of Medicine*, ed. W.F. Bynum and Roy Porter, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 1993), 281–91; Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval&Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 104–06.

governed by their own particular balance of the humours, their “constitution”, but certain factors — including age, geographical origin, and, significantly for this investigation, sex — were thought to predispose one towards a certain constitution. Men were held to be more inclined to an excess of blood; this sanguinity meant that they were constitutionally “hot” and “wet”, while women were thought to tend towards the phlegmatic, “cold” and “wet” in constitution, meaning that men and women were thought to experience good and bad health differently. Thus, the health of men in the Middle Ages represents a discrete area of investigation.<sup>28</sup>

Approaching crusading masculinities from the perspective of health and infirmity also relates strongly to the concept that certain societal roles have been correlated, throughout history, with particular expressions of gender, a point already mentioned.<sup>29</sup> Crusader leadership, which was a largely male role, was also for the most part a preserve of the nobility.<sup>30</sup> This, too, has repercussions for the experience and expression of masculinity and bodily health found therein.<sup>31</sup> In the Middle Ages

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<sup>28</sup> One which, thus far, has received relatively little attention. Highly significant is: David Green, “Masculinity and Medicine: Thomas Walsingham and the Death of the Black Prince”, *Journal of Medieval History* 35 (2009): 34–51 (and see n. 39, below). Particularly relevant to this study, but less overtly gendered in analysis is: Thomas G. Wagner and Piers D. Mitchell, “The Illnesses of King Richard and King Philippe on the Third Crusade: An Understanding of *Arnaldia* and *Leonardie*”, *Crusades* 10 (2011): 23–44. The interactions between humoralism and masculinity have been studied for a later period by: Jennifer Jordan, “‘That ere with Age, his strength is utterly decay’d’: Understanding the Male Body in Early Modern Manhood”, in *Bodies, Sex and Desire from the Renaissance to the Present*, ed. Kate Fisher and Sarah Toulalan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 27–48.

<sup>29</sup> See n. 23, above.

<sup>30</sup> Kirsten Fenton stresses the importance of the intersection between noble masculinity and crusading in William of Malmesbury’s *Gesta regum Anglorum* but the same interplay can be observed in the works of other authors: Kirsten A. Fenton, “Gendering the First Crusade in William of Malmesbury’s *Gesta regum Anglorum*”, in *Intersections of Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Cordelia Beattie and Kirsten A. Fenton (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 129. Once again, exceptions can be found: neither Walter Sansavoir nor Peter the Hermit, leaders of the so-called “People’s Crusade” of

status was considered to be embodied, and the noble body was thought to be constitutionally distinct: refined and delicate, susceptible to health conditions which the less noble, rustic body would have shrugged off.<sup>32</sup> One manifestation of this was that nobility were thought to require better quality food; that the coarser food which was fitting and healthful for the lower classes could be bad for the health of those of higher social status.<sup>33</sup> Consider in this light the concern the chronicler Guibert of Nogent showed for the noble crusaders at the siege of Jerusalem, 1099:

How many throats and gullets of noble men were eaten away by the roughness of this bread; how we suppose their delicate stomachs were tortured by the acridty of the putrid liquid! Good God, we think of their suffering there, where they were mindful of their former standing in their homeland [...] This is my thought, only this, never have such princes

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1096, had exalted backgrounds, even though Walter's surname is now thought to be toponymic, rather than a reference to his pecuniary fortunes or social position: Murray, "Godfrey of Bouillon", 445.

<sup>31</sup> Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard recently suggested that future studies on the history of masculinity ought to be sensitive to the significance of social status for male identities, and Deborah Gerish has suggested that nuanced consideration of the interaction of masculinity, social status and crusading is an as-yet-untapped seam of research: Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard, "What Have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History, circa 1500–1950", *Journal of British Studies* 44 (2005): 276–77; Deborah Gerish, "Gender Theory", in *Palgrave Advances in the Crusades*, ed. Helen J. Nicholson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 139.

<sup>32</sup> On nobility as embodied, Danielle Westerhof, *Death and the Noble Body in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008). See also Fiona Whelan, *The Making of Manners and Morals in Twelfth-Century England: The Book of the Civilised Man* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 113–81, for how elite status was thought to be demonstrated and safeguarded through behaviour, bodily moderation, and diet.

<sup>33</sup> Iona McCleery, "Getting Enough to Eat: Famine as a Neglected Medieval Health Issue", in *The Sacred and the Secular in Medieval Medicine*, ed. Barbara S. Bowers and Linda M. Keyser (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2016), 130–31; Melitta Weiss Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 227–29.

existed, who in expectation only of a spiritual benefit, exposed their own bodies to such suffering.<sup>34</sup>

By “putrid liquid” Guibert refers to the water carried six miles in untanned hides to quench the thirst of the besiegers; particularly foul, in Guibert’s opinion, to the “delicate stomachs” of the nobility. His objection towards the bread the crusaders ate is firmly rooted in his perception of the refined noble constitution. Guibert tells us that the bread in question was made from barley, a traditionally low-status food.<sup>35</sup> While this passage has been interpreted as demonstrating Guibert’s contempt of the poor, it seems instead that he displays a contemporary sensitivity to the physiological distinctness of the noble body.<sup>36</sup> In this interpretation, Guibert’s concern would be not simply that the food was much lower quality than noble crusaders would have been used to consuming, but that in eating it their health was at particular risk. Moreover, he describes this experience as specific to the noble men, *virī nobiles* and *principes*, and so places their suffering as greater than that of the rank-and-file crusaders who are assumed implicitly to be better suited to such conditions and victuals. Similar concern for the distinct experience of suffering noble men is found in the *Itinerarium peregrinorum*, which specified how “those who had once been delicately nourished, noblemen and the sons of potentates” ate grass (*herba*) wherever they found it

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<sup>34</sup> “Quanta tot virorum nobilium fauces et guttura cibarii panis illius rodebantur aspredine, quanta delicatos eorum stomachos putidorum laticum putamus tortos acredine! Bona deus, quid patientiarum inibi fuisse pensamus, ubi non immemores erant quique habitae quondam in patria dignitatis [...] Haec mea est sententia, haec unica, numquam a seculorum tales exstitisse principiis, qui pro sola expectatione emolumenti spiritualis tot corpora sua exposuere suppliciis”: Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta per Francos*, in *Dei gesta per Francos et cinq autres textes*, ed. R.B.C Huygens, Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio Mediaevalis 127A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 274–75.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 274; Adamson, *Food*, 1–4.

<sup>36</sup> For the former opinion, Robert Levine, “Introduction”, in *The Deeds of God through the Franks: A Translation of Guibert de Nogent’s Gesta Dei per Francos* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), 9.

growing at the siege of Acre of 1189–91.<sup>37</sup> Elsewhere, Ralph of Caen emphasised how, “accustomed to good things, those nobles, the illustrious offspring of dukes, counts and kings” experienced particular torment when the First Crusaders were besieged in Antioch in 1098, fearful of hunger and short of water.<sup>38</sup> Significantly, in these two examples the suffering men are described as young, emphasising their vulnerability by implying that they had not reached the peak of their military and masculine capabilities. Their bodies are doubly exposed to hardship through their nobility and their immaturity.

Specific strands of the relationship between body, masculinity, and status can be perceived in portrayals of crusading kings in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, although these issues have a much longer history. Royal health has been the object of study for David Green and Paul Kershaw, focusing respectively on Edward the Black Prince, and Alfred the Great.<sup>39</sup> Their work emphasises how the textual representations of the suffering body of a king or prince can be read for comments on that king’s performance of kingship, particularly predicated on humility and spirituality. Such issues have been seen above, in the extended discussion of Louis IX’s bodily crisis where, while his leadership of the French crusaders was compromised by his incapacity, the Christo-mimesis of the episode prompts awareness of his kingship; the French king aligned to the King of Kings. This takes on especial significance in a French context thanks to the Capetian programme of sacral monarchy (of which Louis

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<sup>37</sup> “hi qui nutribantur olim deliciose, viri nobiles et filii potentum”: Richard de Templo, *Chronicles and Memorials of the Reign of Richard I: Itinerarium peregrinorum et gesta regis Ricardi*, ed. William Stubbs, vol. 2, Rolls Series 38 (London: Longman, 1864–65), 127.

<sup>38</sup> “assueta bonis tam nobilis illa, tam preclara ducum, comitum regumque propago”: Ralph of Caen, *Tancredus*, ed. Edoardo D’Angelo, Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio Mediaevalis 231 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 71.

<sup>39</sup> Green, “Masculinity and Medicine”; Paul Kershaw, “Illness, Power and Prayer in Asser’s Life of King Alfred”, *Early Medieval Europe* 10 (2001): 201–24.



was an early proponent, and to which his grandson Philip IV, in whose reign Joinville's *Vie* was composed, was strongly committed) although in Louis's sickness the concept of the king as healer — a central idea of Capetian sacral monarch — is inverted, for the king himself requires healing.<sup>40</sup> There are additional ramifications to the ill-health of a crusading king. While he was (like all crusaders) theoretically prepared to lose his life in the expedition, in his royal position the crusading king bore responsibility for the welfare of his realm as well as for the crusaders who followed him, and so his death or incapacity would have far-reaching consequences. In sickness, the tension between the competing roles of crusader and king was palpable, as Otto of St Blasien expressed after his king, Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, drowned in the River Salef in Asia Minor in 1190, while travelling to the crusader siege of Acre with a German contingent of the Third Crusade. The Germans continued under Barbarossa's son, Frederick, duke of Swabia, but in Antioch they were riven with disease and most of the crusaders died. The remainder limped on to Acre where the younger Frederick also died. Of the epidemic in Antioch, Otto lamented:

with the head having been cut off in the death of the emperor, pestilence  
ran riot through the whole body.<sup>41</sup>

Here Otto makes explicit use of the metaphor of the body politic to explain how serious the loss of the emperor had been to the German expedition.<sup>42</sup> However, his

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<sup>40</sup> On sacral monarchy as pertaining to the cult of St Louis, Gaposchkin, *Making of Saint Louis*, 5–1, 100–24. On the king as healer, an especially French expression of sacral monarchy, Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, trans. J.E. Anderson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1973; repr. Oxford: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>41</sup> “pestilencia desecto capite in morte augusti per totum corpus grassatur”: Otto of St Blasien, *Ottonis de Sancto Blasio chronica*, ed. Adolfus Hofmeister, MGH SS rer. Germ. 47 (Hannover: Hahn, 1912), 52.

<sup>42</sup> The key work on the concept of the king's two bodies, physical and political, is Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957; repr. 1997). On the issue of how far the (in)capacity of a king through sickness

use of the metaphor is a variant of its more usual application to describe the royal realm; instead Otto describes the crusading host, with the emperor at its head, just as Barbarossa headed his kingdom. Otto then relates the concept to the physical reality of the crusaders: having lost their “head” in their leader, the “body” was made vulnerable to the dangers of physical illness. In using the metaphor of the body politic, Otto unites Barbarossa-the-monarch and Barbarossa-the-crusader as inhabiting one failed body, and emphasises how his leadership and kingship were both compromised. If the suffering king — like Alfred the Great, the Black Prince, or Louis IX — could be read as a paradigm of humble religiosity, the sick crusader king faced the same expectations of capacity and leadership to which non-royal crusader leaders were subject, causing his dual identities of crusader and king to be opposed.

We have now established how masculinity and the noble (sometimes kingly), male body were intrinsically related in medieval medical thinking. How, then, did crusader leaders, embodying masculinity and nobility, experience incapacity, and how was the execution of male leadership affected when the leader was afflicted by bodily failure? Furthermore, we ought to ask how the experience of incapacity by crusader leaders was represented by others: since the evidence for this study is drawn from chronicles written in every case by an observer of the man in question, rather than by the leader himself, their modes of description and interpretation are key to helping us understand the performance of male crusader leadership in physical adversity.<sup>43</sup> On this point, we should note that the authors of chronicles of the crusades were mostly

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affected the “health” of his nation, Wendy J. Turner, “A Cure for the King Means the Health of the Country: The Mental and Physical Health of Henry VI”, in *Madness in Medieval Law and Custom*, ed. Wendy J. Turner, *Later Medieval Europe* 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 176–95.

<sup>43</sup> Although note the debates on such an approach articulated by John Tosh in “The History of Masculinity: an Outdated Concept?”, in *What is Masculinity?: Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World*, ed. by John H. Arnold and Sean Brady (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 17-34. In study of medieval masculinities, a focus on representation rather than primary experience is

from a clerical background (Joinville, a secular lord, is a notable exception). The picture of secular masculinity preserved in the chronicle record is therefore painted with a clerical brush, and this imparts certain emphases and preoccupations to the image of the crusader leader thus described. For example, monastic chroniclers particularly concerned with the spirituality of the crusading endeavour may be inclined to foreground the righteousness of the bodily suffering endured by their subjects, as we have already seen with Guibert of Nogent. The chronicler's interpretation of the experience and performance of incapacitated crusader leaders must be given full weight, and while a cleric's interpretation of the ideals of manliness may differ from those of a secular man, this adds nuance to our investigation.

The incapacity of a leader through illness or wounding was certainly seen to affect his ability to fulfil his function. Raymond, Count of Toulouse, one of the primary leaders of the First Crusade, was ill during the siege of Antioch, 1097–98, and his reduced strength caused some of his Provençal followers to disassociate themselves from him.<sup>44</sup> Eager to resist accusations of “idleness and greed”, Raymond took control of a fortification the crusaders had built in order to prove his strength, and refused to give up its command despite his ailing health.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, when Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lotharingia and later the first Latin ruler of Jerusalem, was wounded in a fight with a bear in Asia Minor in 1097, his incapacity caused 15,000 of his followers to abandon him “because he could not provide for himself or for any others”, according to Guibert of Nogent.<sup>46</sup>

Variants of this story are also told by Albert of Aachen, the Charleville Poet (in Gilo of Paris's poetic account of the First Crusade), William of Malmesbury (where the

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unavoidable, due to the nature of the sources available, but such an approach is not undertaken unthinkingly.

<sup>44</sup> Raymond of Aguilers, *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, in *RHC Occ.*, vol. 3 (1866) (Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1844–95) 250.

<sup>45</sup> “desidia et avaritia”: *ibid.*; on his refusal to give up the fortification: *ibid.*, 262.

<sup>46</sup> “quia nec sibi ulli providere poterat”: Guibert of Nogent, 286–87. The full story is told at 285–87.

animal is a lion) and William of Tyre.<sup>47</sup> The alternative readings contain different comments — both laudatory and critical — on Godfrey’s leadership, which have been discussed elsewhere, but a consideration of the features relating to his capacity, masculinity, and leadership is appropriate here.<sup>48</sup> Under what circumstances did Godfrey encounter the beast? Albert, Guibert, and William of Tyre all say that he was hunting, an activity befitting his noble station. In Albert’s text, the context is of great hardship and the implication is that the nobles were hunting to supplement the crusaders’ food supplies. William of Tyre says that they hunted “to forget their sorrows”, suggesting that the excursion was entertainment, but Guibert’s tone is critical: he says that the nobles had relaxed their caution, suggesting a frivolous dereliction of duty and a failure of responsible leadership. In all variants, Godfrey came to the aid of someone below his station who had been attacked by the animal, but the identity of this victim differs, each permutation highlighting a different aspect of Godfrey’s status. The victim for Albert and William of Tyre was a pilgrim, showing Godfrey’s religious identity as a crusader and defender of the faith(ful). Guibert, William of Malmesbury and the Charleville Poet say it was one of Godfrey’s fighting men, highlighting the duke’s military leadership; for the Charleville Poet, the victim is a

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<sup>47</sup> Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana: History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, ed. and trans. Susan B. Edgington (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 142–44; Gilo of Paris, *The Historia vie Hierosolimitane of Gilo of Paris, and a Second, Anonymous Author*, ed. and trans. C.W. Grocock and Elizabeth Siberry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), ll. 365–95; William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum: The History of the English Kings*, ed. and trans. R.A.B. Mynors, Rodney M. Thomson, and Michael Winterbottom, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 658; William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens, vol. 1, *Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio Mediaevalis* 63 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1986), 219–20.

<sup>48</sup> Natasha Hodgson, “Lions, Tigers, and Bears: Encounters with Wild Animals and Bestial Imagery in the Context of Crusading to the Latin East”, *Viator* 44 (2013): 83–93; Joanna Phillips, “William of Malmesbury: Medical Historian of the Crusades”, in *Discovering William of Malmesbury*, ed. Rodney M. Thomson, Emily Winkler, and Emily Dolmans (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2017), 129–38 (esp. 135–36).

foot-soldier, *pedes*, which by comparison emphasises Godfrey's higher social status further still.

How was Godfrey wounded? The different accounts supply varying commentaries on Godfrey's fighting ability. The Charleville Poet and William of Tyre both say that the wound was inflicted by the animal, while William of Malmesbury says that Godfrey was wounded by his weapon which had become lodged in the animal's side. Guibert also says that Godfrey was wounded by his own weapon, but only once the animal was dead; during the fight, the animal had almost bested him by inflicting a serious bite on his hip. Albert of Aachen's version, where the duke entangles his legs with his own sword during the fight, questions Godfrey's martial ability even further. Moreover, in Albert's version Godfrey was unable to finish the beast off by himself and had to be assisted by another crusader, Husechin, who rushed to his side.<sup>49</sup> Finally, in a point which has the most significance for Godfrey's masculine identity as a noble crusader leader, the authors comment on how his injury affected his ability to lead. Guibert stressed his inability to maintain control over his men and showed Godfrey to be aware of the effect his incapacity had on his followers: "too late, the duke now regretted his solitude [in engaging the beast alone], for harm came to pass for his own followers and the entire sacred army."<sup>50</sup> However, while Albert admits that the duke's contingent was slowed by his incapacity, the Charleville Poet was impressed by the fact that Godfrey apparently exercised command from a litter.

These different representations of Godfrey's injurious encounter and his response to his incapacity beg the question of what expectations were had of a male leader who experienced bodily failure. The Charleville Poet's description of Godfrey exercising the functions of leadership while incapacitated is paralleled by the later

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<sup>49</sup> Husechin is otherwise unknown and may be presumed to be non-noble. That Godfrey required the assistance of a probable commoner further undermines his status.

<sup>50</sup> "Solitudinum suarum penituit tunc sero ducem, dum per id appendicis sibi exercitus et totius sacrae militiae detrimenta contingunt": Guibert of Nogent, 286.



portrayal of King Richard I of England at the siege of Acre in 1191 when, crippled by illness, the king had himself carried to the walls in a litter so that he could shoot at the defenders of the city with a crossbow.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, according to Ambroise and the *Itinerarium*, Richard apparently suffered more from awareness of his incapacity than from his illness, tormented by the fact that he could see the enemy attack his people but could not contribute fully to their defence.<sup>52</sup> The positive descriptions of Richard's response to his illness may be contrasted with the less flattering portrayal of his cousin Philip II, King of France, who returned home soon after the conclusion of the siege because of his poor health.<sup>53</sup> Philip's retreat attracted severe criticism from Ambroise, who cast doubt on the French king's claim to be ill:

He was going back because of his illness, so the king said, whatever is said about him, but there is no witness that illness gives a dispensation from going with the army of the Almighty King, who directs the path of all kings.<sup>54</sup>

Castigation such as this, foregrounding both the king's health and his royal status, indicates that certain expectations were held of crusader leaders in health and sickness, including that they should prioritise dedication to the crusade above their good health.<sup>55</sup> Ambroise targets Philip's kingly status: while returning to his kingdom

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<sup>51</sup> Ambroise, *The History of the Holy War: Ambroise's Estoire de la guerre sainte*, ed. and trans. Marianne Ailes and Malcolm Barber, vol. 1 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), ll. 4921–36 (trans. Ailes, vol. 2, 100); *Itinerarium peregrinorum*, 224–25.

<sup>52</sup> Ambroise, ll. 4795–802 (trans. Ailes, 99); *Itinerarium peregrinorum*, 220.

<sup>53</sup> Wagner and Mitchell, “*Arnaldia and Leonardie*”, 41–42.

<sup>54</sup> “Il s'en vint pas sa maladie, / Li reis ço dist — que que l'en die — / Mais nus n'ad de ço testimoine / Que maladie en seit essoigne / D'aler en l'ost le rei demaine / Qui toz les reis conduit e maine”: Ambroise, ll. 5250–55 (trans. Ailes, 105).

<sup>55</sup> Wagner and Mitchell, “*Arnaldia and Leonardie*”, 43.

rather than risk his health further could have been interpreted as prudent behaviour, Ambroise claims that in retreating (and for what he clearly suspected was a spurious reason) Philip had placed his own physical condition above the fortunes of the expedition and in doing so betrayed his devotion to God. These actions showed Philip to be a poor leader and king who overstepped his proper position in the hierarchy of man and the divine. But commitment to the crusade at all costs, even unto death, was untenable for crusader leaders such as kings and princes who had responsibilities to people and land back home; the crusade was only expected to be a temporary interruption from their life course and certainly one from which they intended to return. Prince Edward of England, later Edward I, felt the need to pre-empt possible criticism and safeguard his reputation in case he should be forced to break his vow, decreeing before his departure in 1272 that he would return from the east before his vow was fulfilled if he became seriously ill.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, Philip was not the only leader to attract censure for retreating when ill. Consider the *Itinerarium's* judgement on Ludwig III, Landgrave of Thuringia, when he too left the siege of Acre on account of illness:

The landgrave had been made unwell and on this pretext he deserted the camp to return to his own country. While he had performed many illustrious feats to much acclaim, the brilliance of his glorious feats was spoiled by the disgrace of his return.<sup>57</sup>

In this case, the language is subtle: the author acknowledges that the landgrave was ill, but the use of “pretext” (*praetextus*) to describe his decision to return home does carry shades of suspicion. There is, however, clear criticism that Ludwig had fallen

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<sup>56</sup> Arnold Fitz-Thedmar, *De antiquis legibus liber*, ed. Thomas Stapleton, Camden old ser. 34 (London: Offices of the Society, 1846), 131.

<sup>57</sup> “Landegravus enim valetudinarius effectus, repatriandi praetextu castra deseruit: qui cum multa clarius et ad omnium favorem egisset, illustrem factorum gloriam turpi reditu deformavit”: *Itinerarium peregrinorum*, 94.

short of expectations by allowing his health to take precedence over his commitment to the holy endeavour of the crusade.<sup>58</sup>

An alternative reading of the landgrave's fate is found in the *Chronica Reinhardsbrunnensis*, the chronicle of the monastery where Ludwig's family sepulchre was located. Here Ludwig's illness and death is carefully described, but the exact location is kept vague, with the chronicler saying it happened in "the lands over the sea" (*in transmarinis partibus*) and that, following the treatment of the body with *mos teutonicos*, wherein the bones were separated from the flesh in order to allow burial of the parts likely to decay most quickly and the transportation of the bones to a different place of interment, Ludwig's internal organs were buried in Cyprus.<sup>59</sup> While "the lands over the sea" is a phrase which was often used as a descriptor for Palestine, it lacks specificity, and avoids claiming that the landgrave died actively engaged in the siege of Acre. Perhaps the sympathetic chronicler was trying to save his champion the shame of retreat from the crusade.

An intriguing development to the problem of retreat caused by infirmity is found in the case of Count Hugh of Vermandois, who left the First Crusade at Antioch in 1098. According to Albert of Aachen and Baldric of Bourgeuil, he had been sent on an embassy to Emperor Alexios Komnenos, a responsibility which showed him to be one

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<sup>58</sup> We do not know whether the author of the *Itinerarium* knew that Ludwig had died on the return journey, as Roger of Howden attests, nor whether knowledge of this fact would have changed the author's opinion: Roger of Howden, *Gesta regis Henrici secundi: The Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I A.D. 1169–1192*, ed. William Stubbs, vol. 2, Rolls Series 49 (London: Longman, 1867), 148; Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, ed. William Stubbs, vol. 3 (1870), Rolls Series 51 (London: Longman, 1868–71), 88.

<sup>59</sup> O. Holder-Egger, ed., *Chronica Reinhardsbrunnensis*, MGH SS, 30.1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1896), 546. On *mos teutonicos*, Westerhof, *Death and the Noble Body*, 79.

of the premier crusader leaders.<sup>60</sup> William of Malmesbury, with perhaps a hint of scepticism, said that his departure was due to the “alleged unremitting contortion of his bowels”.<sup>61</sup> Ralph of Caen, however, adds a new dimension: he said that Hugh had received a wound to the thigh which caused him to retreat to Tarsus for treatment.<sup>62</sup> Two things about this interpretation encourage us to take a closer look at what, on first glance, looks like simple inconsistency between the accounts of chroniclers who relied on second-hand information to compile their texts. Firstly, the location of Hugh’s wound is reminiscent of two other occasions when crusader leaders who received thigh wounds found their commitment to the crusade and their role as leader jeopardised. Bohemond, the leader of the Italo-Norman contingent of the First Crusade, was compromised by a thigh wound during the siege of Antioch in 1098, so much so that his martial prowess was affected. As his followers “saw their leader’s spirits fall” (*uidere ducis procumbere mentem*), many of them abandoned the fight, according to Gilo of Paris.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, all the accounts of Godfrey of Bouillon’s fight with the wild beast described above agree that the wound that apparently so badly affected his ability to lead was to his thigh. Such specificity about the location of a wound is unusual in the corpus of crusader chronicles and encourages closer attention. Secondly, from ancient times thigh wounds held a special literary significance, wherein a wounded thigh signified physical, spiritual, or political impotence in a man, and a concomitant loss of heroic status and authority – resonances which continued into the medieval period.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps the best-known

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<sup>60</sup> Albert of Aachen, 340–42; Baldric of Bourgueil, *The Historia Ierosolimitana of Baldric of Bourgueil*, ed. Steven Biddlecombe (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2014), 84.

<sup>61</sup> “causatus continuam uiscerum tortionem”: William of Malmesbury, 638.

<sup>62</sup> Ralph of Caen, 90.

<sup>63</sup> The quotation is from Gilo of Paris, ll. 181–82. See also Robert the Monk, *The Historia Iherosolimitana of Robert the Monk*, ed. Damien Kempf and Marcus Bull (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013), 57.

<sup>64</sup> In the crusader context, see the editors’ note to Gilo of Paris, 172, n. 2. More broadly, Debbie Felton, “The Motif of the “Mutilated Hero” in Herodotus”, *Phoenix* 68 (2014): 48; William Sayers, “An Archaic

medieval incidence of this motif is Chrétien de Troyes's Fisher King, whose physical incapacity, caused by his wounded groin, was simultaneously the cause of, and reflected in, his impotent and wasted kingdom. Although Chrétien's *Perceval* was not written until the 1180s, post-dating the records of Hugh's, Godfrey's, and Bohemond's wounds by at least half a century, there may be a complex relationship between the historical and the literary via crusading at play here: it was suggested by Helen Adolf, and supported by Helen Nicholson, that Chrétien's Fisher King was an analogue of Baldwin IV, the incapacitated king of Jerusalem.<sup>65</sup> Chrétien was possibly harking back to the literary tradition, also transmitted through crusading narratives, of the thigh wound as an unmanning and enfeebling injury to incapacitate his Fisher King. Interpretations of the Fisher King's impotence changed as time went on: in the Arthurian literature of the central to later Middle Ages, thigh wounds, or genital wounding, have been interpreted as evidence of spiritual purity and therefore fitness to keep the grail, but the meaning in the earlier period seems much less complimentary.<sup>66</sup> There is clearly an issue of compromised masculinity and leadership here: we have already noted how both Bohemond and Godfrey found their ability to

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Tale-Type Determinant of Chrétien's Fisher King and Grail", *Arthuriana* 22 (2012): 85–101. In the medieval period, the association is due to the use, from late Antiquity, of *femur*, "thigh", as a synonym for penis: Lynda L. Coon, "Gender and the Body", in *Early Medieval Christianities, c. 600–c. 1100*, ed. Thomas F.X. Noble and Julia M.H. Smith, vol. 3 (2008), Cambridge History of Christianity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006–09), 435.

<sup>65</sup> Helen Adolf, "A Historical Background for Chrétien's *Perceval*", *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America (PMLA)* 58 (1943): 605–07; Helen J. Nicholson, *Love, War, and the Grail: Templars, Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights in Medieval Epic and Romance, 1150–1500*, History of Warfare 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 117, 131.

<sup>66</sup> Jed Chandler, "Eunuchs of the Grail", in *Castration and Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. Larissa Tracy (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013), 229–54; Kenneth Hodges, "Wounded Masculinity: Injury and Gender in Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*", *Studies in Philology* 106 (2009): 14–31.



lead affected by their wounds, and in Bohemond's case the peril to his masculinity is made even more explicit by Gilo, who says the wound was to his "manly thigh" (*uirile femur*).<sup>67</sup> In Hugh's case, the shades of doubt cast on the truth of his claim to be ill by William of Malmesbury when correlated with Ralph of Caen's account indicate that his "thigh wound" may be a cipher for Ralph to signify his shame, feebleness and emasculation in leaving the crusade.

The bodily integrity of the male crusader leader was key to his performance in that role and it is suggested here that the masculine ideals expected of crusading leaders can be discerned in the performance of leadership during bodily crisis. For a man whose noble status was thought to be embodied and whose role as military leader was predicated on maleness and bodily capacity, incapacity represented a threat not only to the execution of his role as leader, but also his reputation and masculine identity. The sick leader might be abandoned by his followers, but in sickness the leader who refused to let his condition incapacitate him could be exalted. The risks of failing to exercise firm and effective leadership were intensified in the military and religious context of the crusades, since in failing to perform as crusader leader, the man in question could be accused of lack of commitment to the holy expedition. This could take the form of an explicit charge that the leader had gone against the will of God in allowing his bodily condition to affect his participation in the crusade. Through such charges, the chronicler assumes an important role in the construction of the male crusader leader's reputation through the contemporary histories of the crusades. In this the presentation of an incapacitated crusader leader sits somewhere between the intersection of literature and history, wherein the trope of a thigh wound, as sustained by three notable crusader leaders, can be interpreted as a cipher for inadequate and unmanly performance in the religious war. If such presentations represent the interpretations and opinions of the chronicler rather than the suffering man himself, this underlines the point that the reputation of a leader

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<sup>67</sup> Gilo of Paris, l. 182.

could be affected by his response to incapacity. Exploring the execution of crusader campaigns through the prism of health and gender reveals that the body of that leader was both his own and that of the crusading host. The picture painted by the detailed case studies offered here shows clearly that the specificity of the crusading context made the experience of bodily incapacity a point of crisis for a male leader, one wherein the fate of his expedition and his reputation hung in the balance.