Fear, Fortitude and Masculinity in William of Malmesbury's Retelling of the First Crusade and the Establishment of the Latin East[1]

In 2011, Kirsten Fenton convincingly argued that the Benedictine monk and author William of Malmesbury defined the First Crusade (1095–9) as a 'Christian masculine space' in Book 4 of his *Gesta regum Anglorum*, composed between 1118 and c.1125–6.[2] This conclusion was based on two main observations. Firstly, through the distribution of the Latin term *virtus*, William emphasised the crusaders' masculinity and simultaneously differentiated between the virile Latins and the cowardly Turks.[3] Secondly, the uniformly antagonistic portrayal of women, both Turkish and Christian, revealed that William attached greater importance to

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[1] I am grateful to the editors and Joanna Phillips, who kindly commented on earlier drafts and offered helpful suggestions for improvement.

[2] K. A. Fenton, 'Gendering the First Crusade in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*', in C. Beattie and K. A. Fenton (eds), *Intersections of Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Middle Ages* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 125–39, at p. 134. On William's use of gendered language more broadly, see K. A. Fenton, *Gender, Nation and Conquest in the Works of William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 26–85; K. A. Fenton, 'Men and Masculinities in William of Malmesbury's Presentation of the Anglo-Norman Court', *The Haskins Society Journal*, vol. 23 (2014), 115–24.

[3] Fenton, 'Gendering the First Crusade', pp. 128–31.

gender distinctions than ethnic divisions, at least regarding the dangers posed by female sexuality.[4]

It will be argued here that this preoccupation with masculinity, and specifically William's intention of pitching the First Crusade as a model of male fortitude for future generations, had a far greater impact on his presentation of events in *Outremer* than has yet been acknowledged. The use of gendered language in Book 4 of the *Gesta regum* will be considered first, before then exploring two ways in which this concern for gender shaped William's portrayal of events in the East: namely, the paucity of references to both deserters and instances of Latin fear. The article ends with a comparative case-study, analysing how William approached his principal source for King Baldwin I of Jerusalem's career to determine whether his omission of Latin fear was a deliberate narrative strategy. In so doing, this article seeks to advance our understanding of William's account of the First Crusade and the early years of Latin settlement, which remains relatively understudied due to his lack of eyewitness credentials, and to contribute to the growing corpus of scholarship on the gendered presentation of crusading in historical narratives.[5]

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[4] Fenton, 'Gendering the First Crusade', pp. 131–4.

[5] A. Grabois, 'The Description of Jerusalem by William of Malmesbury: A Mirror of the Holy Land's Presence in the Anglo-Norman Mind', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, vol. 13 (1990), 145–56; R. M. Thomson, 'William of Malmesbury, Historian of Crusade', *Reading Medieval Studies*, vol. 23 (1997), 121–34, revised in R. M. Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, 2nd edn (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 178–88; J. Phillips, 'William of Malmesbury: Medical Historian of the Crusades', in R. M. Thomson, E. Dolmans and E. A. Winkler (eds), *Discovering William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge, 2017), pp. 129–38; S. B. Edgington and S. Lambert (eds), *Gendering the Crusades* (Cardiff, 2001); A. Holt, 'Between Warrior and Priest: The Creation of a New Masculine Identity during the Crusades', in J. Thibodeaux (ed.), *Negotiating Clerical Identities: Priests, Monks and Masculinity in the Middle Ages* (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 185–203; M. Mesley, 'Episcopal Authority and Gender in the Narratives of the First Crusade', in P. H. Cullum and K. J. Lewis (eds), *Religious Men and*

Creating 'an incentive to deeds of valour'

That William of Malmesbury perceived crusading in gendered terms is suggested, above all, by the constant imputation of *virtus*, as well as other terms deriving from the same stem, to Latin Christian combatants. Medieval chroniclers inherited a complex etymology of *virtus* from the writers of Late Antiquity, for whom it possessed a dual meaning, designating both virtue – moral excellence – as well as the martial qualities of courage, strength and manliness.[6] The connection between *vir* (man) and *virtus* meant that, for twelfth-century Latin writers like William, *virtus* had strong connotations of ideal masculine behaviour, although recent research has revealed that the term was frequently used to describe the masculine identities of lay and religious men alike.[7] William of Malmesbury used *virtus* in various grammatical forms a total of forty times in his account of the First Crusade and the early years of the Latin East, almost always to communicate the manly courage of Latin protagonists. Significantly, William justified the incorporation of a history of the First Crusade into Book 4 of his *Gesta regum Anglorum* by remarking that 'to hear of such a famous enterprise in our own time is worthwhile in itself and an incentive to deeds of valour

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Masculine Identity in the Middle Ages (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 94–111; N. R. Hodgson, 'Normans and Competing Masculinities on Crusade', in K. Hurlock and P. Oldfield (eds), *Crusading and Pilgrimage in the Norman World* (Woodbridge, 2015), pp. 195–214; N. R. Hodgson, K. J. Lewis and M. M. Mesley (eds), *Crusading and Masculinities* (forthcoming with Routledge).

[6] M. Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Chicago, IL, 2001), pp. 20, 31, 207–9.

[7] Fenton, *Gender, Nation and Conquest*, pp. 43–55.

(*uirtutis*)'.[8] The inclusion of this disclaimer was by no means unique. Fulcher of Chartres, whose *Historia Hierosolymitana* William consulted, clearly appreciated the didactic value of the First Crusaders' actions, announcing in his prologue that:

> It is truly pleasing to the living, and also profitable to the dead, when the deeds of brave men, especially of those fighting for God, are either read from writing or, preserved in the recess of the mind, are soberly recited from memory among the faithful.[9]

Nor did William of Malmesbury necessarily conceive of the crusaders' actions as the only deeds of valour worthy of remembrance and imitation. In the prologue to his final historical work, *Historia Novella*, William remarked:

> Further, what is more pleasant than consigning to historical record the deeds of brave men, so that following their example the others may cast off cowardice and arm themselves to defend their country?[10]

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[8] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford, 1998–9) [henceforth *GR*], vol. 1, p. 542: 'quia tam famosam his diebus expeditionem audire sit operae pretium et uirtutis incitamentum'. All references are to vol. 1, unless otherwise stated.

[9] Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, ed. H. Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg, 1913) [henceforth FC], p. 115: 'Placet equidem vivis, prodest etiam mortuis, cum gesta virorum fortium, praesertim Deo militantium, vel scripta leguntur vel in mentis armariolo memoriter retenta inter fideles sobrie recitantur.' For the redaction used by William, see FC, pp. 82–3; Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, p. 179.

[10] William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, ed. E. King, trans. K. R. Potter (Oxford, 1998), p. 2: 'Quid porro iocundius quam fortium facta uirorum monimentis tradere litterarum, quorum exemplo ceteri exuant ignauiam, et ad defendandam armentur patriam?'

Yet this narrative agenda of presenting acts of manly prowess as exemplars for future generations appears to have been especially influential in conditioning William's treatment of the First Crusade and events in *Outremer*. Indeed, for William, even the valiant heroes of Antiquity were inadequate comparators, since they fought for worldly splendour, rather than God. As such, he maintained that the virile deeds performed by the First Crusaders surpassed those of the Ancients and should be prioritised accordingly:

> Nothing to be compared with their glory has ever been begotten by any age. Such valour as the Ancients had vanished after their death into dust and ashes into the grave, for it was spent on the mirage of worldly splendour rather than on the solid aim of some good purpose; while of these brave heroes of ours, men will enjoy the benefit and tell the proud story, as long as the round world endures and the holy Church of Christ flourishes.[11]

The same idea, that the First Crusaders transcended the Ancients as role models, can likewise be discerned in William's description of the Latins' lachrymose worshipping at the Holy Sepulchre on 15 July 1099, in which he suggested that even the Ancients, such as Orpheus, would be unable to number the tears poured forth to God that day.[12]

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[11] *GR*, p. 654: 'Nichil umquam horum laudi comparabile ulla genuere secula; nam et si qua illorum fuit uirtus, in sepulchrales fauillas post mortem euanuit, quod potius in mundialis pompae fumum quam in ullius boni solidum effusa fuerit. Istorum autem fortitudinis sentietur utilitas et ostendetur dignitas quam diu orbis uolubilitas et sancta uigebit Christianitas.'

[12] *GR*, p. 650.

The First Crusaders' virility was firmly established in William's account of Urban II's Clermont sermon, in which the pope juxtaposed the Christians' manful courage with the timidity of the Turks, who fought with *virus* (venom) rather than *virtus*. They were thus deemed 'the weakest of men' (*homines inertissimi*) – a characteristic determined by climate.[13] The westerners' more temperate climate meant that they possessed the *virtus* that the Turks lacked: 'Go forth', Urban reportedly announced, 'and lay these cowardly nations low! Let the celebrated *uirtus* of the Franks … advance'.[14] With the crusaders' manliness established, the remainder of the narrative is peppered with references to their virile courage, appearing primarily in relation to the expedition's leaders. Thus, Godfrey of Bouillon was considered a 'paragon of courage' (*uirtutis specimen*) and his *virtus* was said to have contributed to his selection as Jerusalem's ruler.[15] As has been acknowledged elsewhere, the final portion of William's account was dedicated to the heroic exploits of princes like Bohemond of Taranto, who was 'second to none in courage' (*uirtute nulli secundus*).[16]

The treatment of deserters

On the basis of the forgoing analysis, we can plausibly postulate that the depiction of the expedition's participants – especially its leaders – as exemplars of manly valour probably represents a conscious authorial ploy. Yet this appears to have had a significant bearing on several other aspects of the narrative. Remarkably little attention was afforded to those who abandoned the enterprise, despite the fact that William's sources, such as Fulcher of Chartres'

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[13] *GR*, pp. 600–2. See also *GR*, pp. 632, 652, 666; Phillips, 'William of Malmesbury', pp. 133–4.

[14] *GR*, p. 600: 'Ite, et prosternite ignauas gentes! Eat famosa Francorum uirtus'.

[15] *GR*, p. 658.

[16] *GR*, p. 690; Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, pp. 186–7.

Historia and the anonymous *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, were littered with such stories.[17] There was only a nod towards Stephen of Blois' flight from Antioch in June 1098 and the shame incurred:

> Then it was that Stephen, count of Blois, fled secretly, using lies to turn back new
> arrivals; and without doubt it is a great reproach to the man, that on the day after
> his departure the city agreed to surrender.[18]

The various accounts of Stephen's desertion, many of which were based on the *Gesta Francorum*, have already received a great deal of scholarly attention, most recently from Conor Kostick and William Aird, although it is worth noting here that William of Malmesbury's version is significantly shorter than most other accounts of this episode.[19]

William's decision to brush over the count's departure was probably a by-product of political considerations: the *Gesta regum Anglorum* was originally commissioned by Matilda II, wife of King Henry I, to whom Stephen was related via his marriage to Adela of Blois. Tellingly, this passage was excised from a slightly later version of the *Gesta regum*, perhaps

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[17] William relied on Fulcher's history and only used the *Gesta Francorum* sporadically: Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, pp. 179–81.

[18] *GR*, p. 634: 'Tunc et Stephanus comes Blesensis clam effugit, mendatis suis aduentantes retro agens, et magno proculdubio hominis improperio, quod sequenti statim die discessionis eius ciuitas deditioni consensit.'

[19] C. Kostick, 'Courage and Cowardice on the First Crusade, 1096-1099', *War in History*, vol. 20 (2013), 32–49; W. M. Aird, '"Many others, whose names I do not know, fled with them": Norman Courage and Cowardice on the First Crusade', in Hurlock and Oldfield (eds), *Crusading and Pilgrimage in the Norman World*, pp. 13–30.

in reaction to the accession of Stephen of Blois' son and namesake to the English throne.[20]

However, two additional factors could also explain William's brevity. Fulcher of Chartres only alluded to Stephen's flight in passing, and this event may have conflicted with William's authorial aim of presenting the expedition as an exemplar of masculine behaviour.[21] Such an interpretation is supported by two further references to the expedition's deserters, the first of which represents a more hostile rendering of Fulcher of Chartres' account of Hugh of Vermandois' departure and suggests that William held deserters beyond Stephen in low esteem. After recording the death of Bishop Adhémar of Le Puy on 1 August 1098, Fulcher stated: 'and then Hugh the Great, with the goodwill of the princes, departed for Constantinople, and from there to France'.[22] William, whose description of this episode likewise immediately follows the bishop's passing, made several subtle revisions to Fulcher's account. He omitted the reference to Constantinople (and thus the pretext for Hugh's departure, implied by Fulcher and directly stated in the *Gesta Francorum*, that he was sent to liaise with the Byzantine emperor), cast doubt on the leaders' consent through the addition of '*ut aiunt*' (so they say) and seemingly questioned Hugh's motives by having him claim illness: 'and Hugh the Great, with the agreement of the heroes, so they say, returned to France, alleging the incessant contortion of his bowls'.[23] William's final allusion to deserters, which appears in connection to the so-called 1101 Crusade, lays bare his narrative agenda.

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[20] *GR*, vol. 2, pp. 318–19.

[21] FC, p. 228.

[22] FC, p. 258: 'et tunc Hugo Magnus Constantinopolim favore procerum abiit, deinde Franciam'.

[23] *GR*, p. 638: 'et Hugo Magnus, concessu ut aiunt heroum, Frantiam rediit, causatus continuam uiscerum tortionem'; *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, ed. and trans. R. Hill (London, 1962), p. 72. For differing accounts of Hugh's infirmity, see J. Phillips, 'Crusader Masculinities in Bodily Crises: Incapacity and the Crusader Leader, 1095–1274', in Hodgson, Lewis and Mesley (eds), *Crusading and Masculinities* (forthcoming).

Detailing the participation of Stephen of Blois, Stephen of Burgundy, Hugh of Lusignan and Hugh of Vermandois, William wrote that they were 'eager to make good the disgrace of their former withdrawal by some fresh act of deliberate valour (*uirtute*)'.[24] The decision to acknowledge reticent crusaders here can be explained by the fact that their redemption through the 1101 enterprise conformed with, rather than opposed, William's vision of events in the East as a model of manful prowess for readers to emulate.

The omission of Latin fear

This consideration seemingly encroached on William of Malmesbury's retelling of the First Crusade in another significant way. One of the striking features of his account is the almost complete absence of crusader fear. Whereas other writers, including the anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum* and Fulcher of Chartres, recognised moments when Latin combatants experienced terror – even if, for the most part, they considered it an inappropriate emotion – William did so very rarely.[25] This cannot simply be explained by a lack of interest in the emotional experience of crusading, for William purported to 'recount the journey to Jerusalem, reporting in my own words what other men saw and felt'; accordingly, a variety of passions were attributed to participants throughout his account.[26] For example, episodes of Latin joy – usually related using *laetitia* and *gaudium* – punctuate the crusading segment, with William writing of the ability of the sign of the cross to stimulate joy and alleviate toil; the happiness associated with seeing the Holy Sepulchre or receiving the martyr's crown; the

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[24] *GR*, pp. 680–2: 'antiquae discessionis improperium noua et excogitata uirtute sarcire cupientes'.

[25] *Gesta Francorum*, ed. and trans. Hill, pp. 35, 56, 57, 60, 61, 62–3, 67, 79, 88, 90; FC, pp. 171, 195–6, 211, 222, 228, 244, 246–7, 330; *GR*, pp. 628, 664, 668.

[26] *GR*, p. 592: 'Nunc iter Ierosolimitanum scripto expediam, aliorum uisa et sensa meis uerbis allegans'.

glee of those who departed and the sorrow of those left behind; the cheerful shouts which accompanied the war-cry '*Deus uult! Deus uult!*'; and the crusaders' delight at the sight of the emir of Antioch's decapitated head.[27] There are no indications that this emotion possessed significant gendered implications for William, although his description of the crusaders expressing the 'joy of their hearts' (*animorum laetitia*) through combat during the siege of Jerusalem, coupled with the frequent imputation of this passion to Latin protagonists, suggests that it was not considered detrimental to their masculine identities.[28]

The remainder of this article therefore offers several feasible explanations for the omission of crusader fear. While William of Malmesbury is renowned for being steeped in classical tradition, this does not appear to have impacted directly on his appraisal of fear, even though he had Urban II recite Lucan: '*no greater are the labour and fear you seek, but higher the reward*'.[29] Hagiographical literature probably exercised a more formative influence over William's conception of fear. On the whole, admissions of *timor mortis*, the

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[27] *GR*, pp. 602, 604, 606, 608, 636. See also the discussion of William's lexicon for pleasure and applause in M. Winterbottom, 'Words, Words, Words…', in Thomson, Dolmans and Winkler (eds), *Discovering William of Malmesbury*, pp. 203–18, at pp. 212–13.

[28] *GR*, pp. 602, 604, 606, 608, 636, 648.

[29] *GR*, pp. 598–600; Lucan, *De bello civili*, ed. and trans. J. D. Duff, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1962), Bk I, l. 182, p. 24: '*Par labor atque metus, pretio meliore petuntur.*' For William's knowledge and use of classical literature, see esp. J. Blacker, *The Faces of Time: Portrayal of the Past in Old French and Latin Historical Narratives of the Anglo-Norman Regnum* (Austin, TX, 1994), pp. 58–66; J. G. Haahr, 'William of Malmesbury's Roman Models: Suetonius and Lucan', in A. S. Bernardo and S. Levin (eds), *The Classics in the Middle Ages: Papers of the Twentieth Annual Conference of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies* (Binghamton, NY, 1990), pp. 165–73; Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, pp. 48–62; S. O. Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History* (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 21–41.

fear of death, were rare in accounts of saints' lives, including those by William himself.[30] In fact, there is a strong correlation between William's representation of fear in Book 4 of his *Gesta regum* and in his hagiographies, such as the *Vita Dunstani* and *Vita Wulfstani*. In all these texts, faith – or, more precisely, humble trust in God – was the antidote to a terror-stricken mind. Thus, William praised those who settled in the East following Jerusalem's capture in 1099, for they willingly endured 'fear of barbarian attacks' (*metum barbaricorum incursuum*) and set 'a memorable example of faith in God' (*memorabili fidutiae Dei exemplo*).[31] The sight of demons passing before his eyes did not cause St Dunstan to 'flee in helpless fear' (*inerti pauore refugit*), and when the Devil attempted to interrupt St Wulfstan's prayer, the latter repelled his adversary by reciting Psalm 117:6: '*The Lord is my helper; I will not fear what man can do unto me*'.[32] Moreover, Wulfstan reportedly reassured mourners at his deathbed that 'none of those you fear will be able to harm you, if you are willing to faithfully serve God'.[33]

Despite Rodney Thomson's conclusion that this chronicler's 'explicitly Christian sentiments in relation to the Crusade are remarkably scarce and very diluted indeed', William's vision of crusader spirituality, and the conceptual link he drew between

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[30] V. Fumagalli, *Landscapes of Fear: Perceptions of Nature and the City in the Middle Ages*, trans. S. Mitchell (Cambridge, 1994), p. 26.

[31] *GR*, p. 654.

[32] William of Malmesbury, *Saints' Lives*, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson (Oxford, 2002), pp. 232, 28: '*Dominus michi adiutor; non timebo quid fatiat michi homo*'. All biblical citations are from the Douay-Rheims version.

[33] William of Malmesbury, *Saints' Lives*, ed. and trans. Winterbottom and Thomson, p. 142: 'nec aliquis ex eis quos timetis uobis poterit nocere, si Deo uelitis fideliter seruire'.

fearlessness and martyrdom, may also account for the relative absence of fear.[34] While it is

unlikely that Urban II had promised the martyr's crown to those who died during the

enterprise, the incompatibility of fearing death with the reward of martyrdom was an integral

aspect of the pope's Clermont address in the *Gesta regum*. In this, Urban explicitly referred

to the reward of 'blessed martyrdom' (*felicis martirii*), before asking his audience:

> Do you fear death, bravest men, outstanding in boldness and courage? Surely
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> nothing human wickedness will be able to devise for you can outweigh heavenly
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> glory; *for the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory*
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> *that shall be revealed in us* (Romans 8:18). Can it be, you do not know that, for
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> men, to live is loss [and] to die is happiness?[35]

In light of this reward, the pope continued, 'Why, then, do you fear death, you who love the

respite of sleep, which is the image of death? It is without doubt a thing of madness to refuse

everlasting life for oneself on behalf of a desire for this short life.'[36] Overcoming the fear of

death by meditating on the acquisition of the martyr's crown was, therefore, a central theme

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[34] Thomson, 'William of Malmesbury', 126; Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, p. 183. See also R. M.
Thomson, 'William of Malmesbury's Historical Vision', in Thomson, Dolmans and Winkler (eds), *Discovering
William of Malmesbury*, pp. 165–73, at p. 168.

[35] *GR*, pp. 600, 604: 'Mortemne timetis, uiri fortissimi, fortitudine et audacia prestantes? Nichil certe in uos
poterit comminisci humana nequitia quo superna pensetur gloria; *non enim sunt condignae passiones huius
temporis ad futuram gloriam quae reuelabitur in nobis*. An nescitis quod uiuere hominibus est calamitas, mori
felicitas?'

[36] *GR*, p. 604: 'Cur ergo mortem timetis, qui somni requiem, quae instar mortis est, diligitis? Res est nimirum
dementiae pro cupiditate breuis uitae inuidere sibi perpetuam.'

of William's version of the pope's exhortation, which suggests a greater interest in crusading spirituality than Thomson appreciated.

While the association between fearlessness and martyrdom was current in just one participant narrative of the First Crusade – Raymond of Aguilers' *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem* – it became markedly more pronounced in several non-participant Benedictine accounts of the early twelfth century.[37] Robert the Monk, Guibert of Nogent and Gilo of Paris all adopted a similar approach to *timor mortis*, recording that the crusaders undauntedly approached death to attain the martyr's crown and denouncing those who failed to do so.[38] For instance, Robert the Monk criticised one fearful warrior (*meticulosus miles*) whose trepidation prevented him from undergoing martyrdom, and the same author later had the crusaders defiantly declare to visiting Fatimid envoys: 'There is no human strength which can instil terror in us at all; because when we die we are born, when we lose temporal life we gain everlasting life.'[39] I would suggest that this shared interpretation of the fear of death – which centred on the ideal of imitating Christ and the reward of martyrdom – is indicative of

[37] Raymond of Aguilers, *Le 'Liber' de Raymond d'Aguilers*, ed. J. H. Hill and L. L. Hill (Paris, 1969), pp. 113–14.

[38] For example, see Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta per Francos*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens (Turnhout, 1996), pp. 156, 179; Gilo of Paris, *Historia vie Hierosolimitane*, ed. and trans. C. W. Grocock and J. E. Siberry (Oxford, 1997), pp. 68–70, 172. I have discussed this uniformity elsewhere: S. J. Spencer, 'The Emotional Rhetoric of Crusader Spirituality in the Narratives of the First Crusade', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, vol. 58 (2014), 57–86, at 69–72; S. J. Spencer, 'Constructing the Crusader: Emotional Language in the Narratives of the First Crusade', in S. B. Edgington and L. García-Guijarro (eds), *Jerusalem the Golden: The Origins and Impact of the First Crusade* (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 173–89, at pp. 178–9.

[39] Robert the Monk, *The Historia Iherosolimitana of Robert the Monk*, ed. D. Kempf and M. G. Bull (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 10–11, 48: 'Nulla virtus est humana, que nobis omnino terrorem incutiat; quia cum morimur, nascimur, cum vitam amittimus temporalem, recuperamus sempiternam.'

a common 'emotional community'. An interpretative framework proposed by Barbara Rosenwein, 'emotional communities' are 'groups in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value – or devalue – the same or related emotions'.[40] Admittedly, not all Benedictine chroniclers of the First Crusade engaged with this theme; Baldric of Bourgueil, for one, rarely did so.[41] Nevertheless, on the whole, the relationship between fear and martyrdom was particularly prevalent among early twelfth-century Benedictine commentators, and William of Malmesbury, as part of the same Benedictine 'emotional community', was probably conforming to that rhetorical tradition.

This, in addition to hagiographical conventions, likely helped to shape William's conception of fear, yet I would argue that his preoccupation with masculinity, and especially his presentation of *Outremer* as a place where manly ideals and endeavours were played out, was an even greater contributing factor. Of course, the notion that fear was contrary to the ideal of manhood was not unique to the *Gesta regum*; scholars have long recognised that fear was considered a feminine characteristic in western Europe, and this was reflected in an array of crusade texts.[42] What *is* distinctive about William of Malmesbury's account, however, is the extent to which gendered considerations appear to have directed his attitude towards fear. In short, fear was incompatible with the male space that William sought to construct.

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[40] B. H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY, 2006), p. 2.

[41] Baldric of Bourgueil, *The Historia Ierosolimitana of Baldric of Bourgueil*, ed. S. J. Biddlecombe (Woodbridge, 2014).

[42] See the introduction to A. Scott and C. Kosso (eds), *Fear and its Representations in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2002), p. xxv; and for examples, see Baldric of Bourgueil, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, ed. Biddlecombe, pp. 31, 66; Ralph of Caen, *Gesta Tancredi in expeditione Hierosolymitana*, in *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens occidentaux*, ed. Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 5 vols (Paris, 1844–95), vol. 3, p. 698.

An intrepid king: Baldwin I of Jerusalem

There are several moments when this gender-centred appraisal of fear comes to the fore in the *Gesta regum*, but by far the most revealing section is the 'brief and entirely trustworthy' (*integra et breui ueritate*) account of King Baldwin I of Jerusalem's career.[43] For this, William explicitly stated that he was:

> placing entire confidence in the words of Fulcher of Chartres, who, [as] his chaplain, wrote a fair amount about him, in a style not indeed rustic but … without polish and practice.[44]

Fulcher himself claimed to have written 'in a rustic yet truthful style'.[45] But William did more than simply improve Fulcher's style; he tailored and manipulated his source to suit his narrative agenda.[46] From the outset, Baldwin's crusade participation stemmed from his search for 'splendid opportunities in which [his] *uirtus* could stand out' – something not suggested by Fulcher.[47] The latter's account of Baldwin's subjugation of Tarsus 'with great daring'

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[43] *GR*, p. 660.

[44] *GR*, p. 660: 'fidei soliditate accommodata dictis Fulcherii Carnotensis; qui, capellanus ipsius, aliquanta de ipso scripsit, stilo non quidem agresti sed … sine nitore ac palestra'.

[45] FC, p. 116: 'stilo rusticano, tamen veraci'.

[46] On William's use of Fulcher's *Historia* for several episodes (but not Baldwin I's career), see J. O. Ward, 'Some Principles of Rhetorical Historiography in the Twelfth Century', in E. Breisach (ed.), *Classical Rhetoric and Medieval Historiography* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1985), pp. 103–65, at pp. 121, 122, 131–2, 144; Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, pp. 180–2.

[47] *GR*, p. 660: 'splendidas occasiones aucupari quibus uirtus enitescere posset'.

(*ausu magno*) clearly appealed to William, although, unlike Fulcher, he conveniently ignored the fact that it was seized from a fellow crusader, Tancred of Hauteville, and instead recorded that the citizens willingly accepted him as their lord.[48]

Furthermore, compare their accounts of Baldwin's journey to Edessa in 1097, at the invitation of the city's Armenian ruler, Thoros. Fulcher wrote:

with his tiny army, that is eighty knights, [Baldwin] proceeded to cross the Euphrates. Having crossed this, we went on very quickly through the entire night [and], very afraid, passed near fortresses of the Saracens that were left here and there.[49]

No such acknowledgement of trepidation features in William's version. Instead, the journey was transformed into a heroic, if perhaps rash, act:

Baldwin, with just eighty knights, crossed the Euphrates; it was a remarkable display of either courage or rashness (whichever you prefer to say) to advance unhesitatingly with so small an army between surrounding nations of barbarians, whom another would have held suspect either for their nationality or for their unbelief.[50]

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[48] FC, pp. 207–8; *GR*, p. 660.

[49] FC, pp. 210–11: 'cum minimo exercitulo suo, scilicet LXXX militibus, pergens transiit Euphratem. Quo transito, nocte tota perpropere prope Saracenorum castra, hinc et inde linquentes ea, valde pavidi perreximus.'

[50] *GR*, p. 662: 'Ita Balduinus … cum octoginta solum militibus Eufratem transmeauit, spectaculo mirando seu dicere uelis fortitudinis seu temeritatis, ut inter circumfusas barbarorum nationes, quas alter haberet uel gente uel pro incredulitate suspectas, cum tantillo exercitu non hesitaret procedere.'

A similar recasting of Fulcher's narrative is discernible in William's treatment of the battle of Nahr al-Kalb, fought in October 1100 during Baldwin's journey to Jerusalem to succeed his brother, Godfrey, as ruler. Fulcher recorded that Latin scouts notified Baldwin that a narrow pass near Beirut was blocked by a Turkish army, at which Baldwin drew up his forces into battle order.[51] William developed this scene substantially, unusually recognising the trepidation of the scouts, breathless 'on account of fear' (*pro timore*), who served as a foil for the intrepid Baldwin: 'But Baldwin, who was not far short from being the best soldier who ever lived, feared nothing and resolutely drew up his battle order.'[52] Fulcher then offered a stark admission of fear, noting that the Christians were instructed to pitch camp closer to the enemy:

> lest we seemed timid, as we would if we left the place as if fleeing. We showed
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> one thing, but indeed thought another. We pretended boldness, but we feared
>
> death. … Indeed, I wished rather to be in either Chartres or Orléans.[53]

Conversely, William failed to mention their dread and instead pitched the entire affair as a calculated strategic move, whereby Baldwin employed a feigned retreat and even ordered his men to allow the enemy to penetrate their formation. As such, the Latins' terror was nothing

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[51] FC, pp. 357–9.

[52] *GR*, p. 668: 'At Balduinus, qui parum ab optimo qui umquam fuerit milite distaret, nichil perterritus atiem dispositam in eos constanter instituit.'

[53] FC, p. 360: 'ne videremur quasi timidi, si locum ceu refuge linqueremus. Sed aliud monstravimus, aliud vero cogitavimus. Audaciam finximus, sed mortem metuimus. … Ego quidem vel Carnoti vel Aurelianis mallem esse'.

more than a simulation: Baldwin arranged his men thus to give 'the suspicion of fear' (*suspitionem metus*); and the Latins merely 'pretended fear' (*metum fixisse*).[54]

According to William of Malmesbury, Baldwin never retreated from the field, 'except at Ramla and at Acre' in 1102 and 1103 respectively.[55] Yet, he maintained, both routs were followed by resounding victories, 'because they sprang more from reckless courage than from fear'.[56] In other words, even *inconsiderata virtus* was preferable to *timor*. Whereas other twelfth-century chroniclers warned that excessive boldness could lead to recklessness, in this section of the *Gesta regum*, a relatively sympathetic attitude towards temerity, at least in the performance of courageous deeds, is discernible; as we have seen, William openly acknowledged that Baldwin's journey to Edessa in 1097 might be considered rash, but still described it in glowing terms. In Baldwin's endeavours, William found – or rather created – 'a model of valour to the whole world' (*omni seculo … uirtutis spectaculum*).[57] Though both the aforementioned retreats had initially incurred shame, the king's ability to rectify these setbacks made 'his astonishing and almost divine *uirtus* an inspiration to his contemporaries, just as it will be the admiration of posterity'.[58] William's manipulation and transformation of the 1102 defeat at Ramla into a celebrated triumph and an exposition of Latin virility is further suggested by the fact that his account stands in marked opposition to those by Fulcher

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[54] *GR*, p. 668.

[55] On Baldwin's failed siege of Acre in 1103, and the city's eventual conquest in 1104, see S. B. Edgington, 'The Capture of Acre, 1104, and the Importance of Sea Power in the Conquest of the Littoral', in J. France (ed.), *Acre and Its Falls: Studies in the History of a Crusader City* (Leiden, 2018), pp. 13–29.

[56] *GR*, p. 680: 'quod magis inconsiderata uirtute quam timore prouenerint'.

[57] *GR*, p. 684.

[58] *GR*, p. 688: 'Quibus laboribus effecit ut ammirabilis et pene diuina uirtus eius fuerit presentibus stimulo, futura posteris miraculo.'

of Chartres and Albert of Aachen, both of whom alluded to Baldwin's panic-stricken flight.[59] William did have the king succumb to a temporary moment of hesitation (*hesitabat*), caught between retreating (which would incur shame) and engaging the enemy (which would result in the death of his men), but his eventual decision to fight was represented as a triumph over *metus*: 'Nevertheless, inborn passion conquered, and now fear was made to turn back'.[60]

In addition to the reshaping of Fulcher's account of Baldwin's career, three further considerations suggest that this downplaying of fear was a deliberate authorial decision. The first concerns William's intended audience. As noted above, the *Gesta regum*'s original patron was Matilda II, and after her death in 1118, William revised the text and dedicated it to her stepson, Earl Robert of Gloucester (1121–47).[61] Therefore, in emphasising virile courage and omitting Latin fear, William was probably tailoring his text to satisfy a courtly audience. This also helps to explain why Baldwin was cast as a model of fearlessness, for William displayed a palpable interest in the behaviour and moral standards of kings elsewhere in the *Gesta regum*.[62] Secondly, when fear does feature in William's account, it is almost exclusively a Muslim passion.[63] The timid Turks, who 'regarded the courage of the Franks with secret dread', serve as a counterpoint to the virile Latins.[64] Their fright was

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[59] FC, pp. 439, 444–5; Albert of Aachen, *Historia Iherosolimitana*, ed. and trans. S. B. Edgington (Oxford, 2007), p. 642. Albert characterised the king as '*uite diffisus*' (despairing of life), a formulaic phrase he often used in conjunction with fear terminology.

[60] *GR*, p. 684: 'Veruntamen uicit calor ingenitus, et terga iam dabat metus'.

[61] Blacker, *Faces of Time*, pp. 12–13; Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, pp. 36–7; Fenton, *Gender, Nation and Conquest*, p. 23.

[62] See B. Weiler, 'William of Malmesbury on Kingship', *History*, vol. 90 (2005), 3–22.

[63] *GR*, pp. 640, 648, 672, 676, 678.

[64] *GR*, p. 770: 'tacito metu Francoum fortitudinem suspitientes'.

symptomatic not only of their climate, which made them characteristically effeminate, but also of their erroneous faith. The papal legate, Adhémar of Le Puy, was 'especially feared [by the Turks], because they called him the Christians' pope and the instigator of their wars', and God repeatedly struck the crusaders' adversaries with terror.[65] To give just one representative example, the Turks' three successive days of flight from Dorylaeum in July 1097 'testified that something greater than human fear was upon them'.[66] William's distribution of fear terms is thus an important element in his gendered presentation of crusading, achieved through a juxtaposition of the manly, intrepid Latins and the cowardly, fearful Turks. However, there is a notable exception to this trend. Unlike the author of the *Gesta Francorum* and Fulcher of Chartres, William did not portray Kerborgha, *atabeg* of Mosul, as experiencing a dramatic emotional transformation (from pride to fear) during the battle of Antioch on 28 June 1098.[67] Rather, he recorded that although the Turks fled in panic, their general held fast, 'mindful of his inborn courage' (*genuinae uirtutis memor*).[68] William's recognition of Kerbogha's *virtus* and departure from his sources here probably reflects a desire to augment Robert Curthose's crusading exploits: he went on to relate that Robert and two compatriots overthrew the virile Kerbogha, the latter having unwisely measured the duke by his small stature alone.[69] However, given William's overarching concern for kingship, this passage can also be read as a commentary on rulership – the message being that even Muslim rulers stood firm in battle.

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[65] GR, p. 638: 'maxime metuerent, quia illum papam Christianorum et incentorem bellorum dictitarent'.

[66] *GR*, p. 630: 'abiectis arcubus maius aliquid quam humanum timorem continua trium dierum fuga testati sunt'.

[67] *Gesta Francorum*, ed. and trans. Hill, pp. 51–6, 66–8; FC, p. 254; S. J. Spencer, 'Emotions and the "Other": Emotional Characterizations of Muslim Protagonists in Narratives of the Crusades (1095–1192)', in S. T. Parsons and L. M. Paterson (eds), *Literature of the Crusades* (Cambridge, 2018), pp. 41–54, at p. 52.

[68] *GR*, p. 702.

[69] *GR*, p. 702.

Finally, there are signs that William perceived other emotions in gendered terms. He rarely depicted the crusaders as weeping, a common marker of emotion in other accounts, with the exception of a passing reference to the tears which filled the air during the battle of Dorylaeum and the aforementioned description of the Christians' tearful outpourings at the Holy Sepulchre.[70] There is at least one inference that, in certain circumstances, tears were unmanly: on his deathbed in 1100, a stoic Godfrey of Bouillon, whose heart, we are told, was as unconquerable in the face of death as in the midst of the sword, 'often kindly rebuked those who stood weeping'.[71] Moreover, Fenton's examination of William's oeuvre revealed that he regarded the restraint of anger as a marker of masculinity in both lay and religious men, and this perhaps explains the relative paucity of 'anger incidents' in his account of the First Crusade.[72] However, William appears to have suspended this assessment when relating the 1099 conquest of Jerusalem, during which 'the insatiable anger of the victors was devouring'.[73] The crusaders' wrath was characteristically '*insatiabilis*', allegedly resulting in the slaughter of 10,000 Muslims in the al-Aqsa mosque, yet there is no hint of criticism or accusation of imperfect masculinity.

Conclusion

For William of Malmesbury, the Holy Land represented an arena for the display of martial prowess and *virtus* – an unambiguously male space. This narrative agenda, it is contended,

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[70] *GR*, pp. 630, 650.

[71] *GR*, pp. 658–60: 'qui lacrimas astantium sepe benignus cohercuerit'.

[72] Fenton, *Gender, Nation and Conquest*, pp. 35–43. See also Weiler, 'William of Malmesbury on Kingship', 9–11.

[73] *GR*, p. 650: 'insatiabilis ira uictorum consumebat'.

had a greater impression on his treatment of the First Crusade and events in *Outremer* than has hitherto been recognised. It entailed negating the issue of reticent crusaders, whose abandonment of the enterprise was either downplayed, conveniently sidestepped or introduced only to elucidate ideal masculine behaviour, while potentially awkward events – like Baldwin I's defeats at Ramla and Acre – were transformed into edifying tales of male fortitude. In William of Malmesbury's retelling of the First Crusade and the establishment of the Latin East, we find a story of manly courage, one which had little room for fear. William's reluctance to impute fear to Latin protagonists may be symptomatic of hagiographical conventions and his Benedictine 'emotional community', yet it is also indicative of the degree to which he perceived crusading through a gendered lens. His reworking of Fulcher of Chartres' narrative of Baldwin I's reign, his intended aristocratic audience, his frequent acknowledgement of Muslim terror and his gendered presentation of other passions – all point to the deliberate suppression of episodes of Latin fear, in all likelihood because they conflicted with his broader goal of creating a narrative of virile deeds worthy of emulation. In this respect, William of Malmesbury's text can be legitimately considered as a precursor to the denial of male fear which characterised chivalric literature of the later Middle Ages.[74]

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[74] See A. Taylor, 'Chivalric Conversation and the Denial of Male Fear', in J. Murray (ed.), *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West* (London, 1999), pp. 169–88.