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William of Tyre, Orientalism and the (De)Construction of Latin Identity in Twelfth-century Jerusalem

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Abstract

This article examines the representation of Jerusalemite identity in William of Tyre's *Historia Ierosolymitana* (*c.*1184). William laments that his contemporaries in Jerusalem did not live up to the standards of their forefathers anymore: they were not wise, virtuous men, but put their own needs before those of the community. In doing so, William makes use of a narrative strategy that is found in the Roman historians Livy and Sallust as well. In the histories of Livy and Sallust, it was contact with the Near East that prompted societal decline. The riches and *dolce far niente* of the East had, in their eyes, corrupted Roman morals. In William's work, by contrast, the Eastern Other often functions as a mirror for the Self. This, in combination with William's emphasis on former generations as reference point for the current generation allows for a much more dynamic interplay of identities than an orientalist binary East-West division.

Keywords

William of Tyre – orientalism – classical reception – Latin East – crusades

1 Introduction

Near the end of his *Historia Ierosolymitana*, William, Archbishop of Tyre (*c.*1130–1186) famously comments upon the reasons why the Latins in Jerusalem are no longer able to withstand the pressure from their Muslim neighbours.[1] His explanation consists of three parts: first, the current generation has fallen into sin; second, former generations were moved by religious zeal and were used to military discipline; third, if earlier Jerusalem's neighbours were divided, they were now united under Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, and thus posed a bigger threat to the Kingdom's safety.[2] William's observations on Jerusalem's political situation proved prophetic: barely half a decade after he stopped adding to his work, the city of Jerusalem had fallen to the Ayyubid forces under Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. Yet, for William a united Muslim front was only part of the problem. Of equal importance seems to have been the mentality of his compatriots. This article argues that William's comments not only provide an immediate explanation for the political situation in the early 1180s, but also form the key to interpreting how he envisaged Jerusalemite identity.[3] I propose a literary reading of the *Historia*, centred around the themes of *patria*, identity and memory. An

1 Note on transliterations: in transliterating Arabic names and terms I have followed the conventions of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three*, eds. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas and Everett Rowson (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007). All translations are my own, except where otherwise noted.

2 William of Tyre (hereafter "WT"), *Historia* 21.7. The most recent edition is that of R. B. C. Huygens, ed., *Guillaume de Tyr. Chronique. 2 Vols.* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1986). To my knowledge, the only translation of this edition is the Dutch translation by Gust de Preter (online accessible at https://lup.be/pages/download-hier-de-integrale-nederlandse-vertaling-van-het-chronicon-van-willem-van-tyrus, last accessed 30-06-2020). The most recent English translation (based on the text in the *Recueil des historiens des croisades*, hereafter "RHC") is Emily Atwater Babcock and August C. Krey, trans., *William of Tyre. A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943).

3 In this article I use the terms "Jerusalemite" and "Latin" indiscriminately to refer to Western European (first-, second-, and third-generation) immigrants in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, as does William himself. As Timo Kirschberger has noted, by the time when William was writing, the settlers had begun to envisage themselves as belonging to a wider Eastern Latin community, with terms like "Antiochene" and "Jerusalemite" being used to further distinguish inhabitants of the different Latin entities in the Levant. See Timo Kirschberger, *Erster Kreuzzug und Ethnogenese. In novam formam commutatus – Ethnogenetische Prozesse im Fürstentum Antiochia und im Königreich Jerusalem* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress 2015), 97–102. On ethnic identity in the Latin East, see further Alan V. Murray, "Franks and Indigenous Communities in Palestine and Syria (1099–1187): A Hierarchical Model of Social Interaction in the Principalities of Outremer," in *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), 291–309; Alan V. Murray, "Ethnic Identity in the Crusader States: The Frankish Race and the Settlement of Outremer,"

important element in the *Historia* is the question what it means to be a Latin in Jerusalem – a question which William approaches through historical *exempla*. These *exempla*, in turn, should be read in line with William's overarching idea that writing history is to preserve both prosperous and adversarial times, in order for future generations to learn from the past.[4] In using the past as a lens through which to view the present, William not only comments upon the immediate political situation, he also inserts himself into a tradition of exemplary history stretching back to the Roman historians Livy and Sallust – and through them to Thucydides.

The *Historia Ierosolymitana* is a chronicle of the history of the Holy Land from the time of Muḥammad until William's own day. It has long been recognized as one of the most important works that have come down to us from the Latin East.[5] For much of the twelfth century, it is our only contemporary source that describes the history of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and its surrounding states in rich detail. From the earliest stages of its dissemination, the *Historia* has been mined for information about the topography and history of the Holy Land. It enjoyed some popularity in Western Europe during the early thirteenth century, when Jacques de Vitry and Matthew Paris used the work, and when it was translated into Old French.[6] In France, as well as in the Latin East, several continuations were made over the course of the thirteenth century.[7] Other than being a source of information, William's chronicle has, in recent years, gained approval as a work of significant literary quality. Several motifs within the work have been explored. In 1977 Rainer Schwinges published a long monograph in which he argues that William's idea of a *bellum iustum* was first and foremost the defence of one's *patria*, and hence the concept could

in *Conepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Simon Forde, Lesley Johnson, and Alan V. Murray (Leeds: School of English, University of Leeds, 1995), 59–74.

4 WT 23.prol. plane liquet rerum gestarum scriptoribus utramque sortem pari esse ratione propositam, ut sicut gestorum feliciter narratione posteros ad quandam animositatem erigunt, sic infortuniorum subiectorum exemplo eosdem reddant in similibus cautiores.

5 William's own title for his work is unknown, but he refers to it as *historia* at various points (e.g. 21.7). I follow Edbury and Rowe in their assessment that *Historia Ierosolymitana* is a better approximation of William's title than Huygens's *Chronicon*. See Peter W. Edbury and John Gordon Rowe, *William of Tyre: Historian of the Latin East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1, n. 1.

6 Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre*, 3–5. On the dating of the Old French translation, see Philip D. Handyside, *The Old French William of Tyre* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015), 114–19.

7 Peter W. Edbury, "New Perspectives on the Old French Continuations of William of Tyre," *Crusades* 9 (2010): 107–113.

be applied to Christians and Muslims alike.[8] William's attitude to his Muslim neighbours' place in international law, Schwinges argues, is uncharacteristically tolerant for his time.[9] Though William undoubtedly had a negative opinion of Islam, he nevertheless recognized it as an independent religion, and judged Muslim claims to the Holy Land as rightful and justified.[10] To William, war was not so much a religious struggle as it was a political one, and hence holy war could not be classified as *bellum iustum*.

A decade later, Peter Edbury and John Rowe published the first anglophone biography of William, in which they interpret his work as an effort to promote the legitimacy of the ruling dynasty of Jerusalem and provoke renewed crusading efforts.[11] Moreover, they recognize the need to interpret the *Historia* as a literary work rather than a quarry of historical data.[12] The two authors do not engage with the ideas of Schwinges expressed above (although they do acknowledge his work), noting that "[i]f there is one unifying thread which runs right through the *Historia*, it is the waging of war against the Muslims."[13] This formula, though true up to a point, does not do justice to William's careful and nuanced depiction of the political situation in the Levant and more than anything reflects the modern (Western) scholarly tendency to view the history of the Middle East between 1096 and 1291 in terms of an enduring conflict between Christianity and Islam.[14] Such a view obscures the complex ethnic, religious and political alignments that shaped the history of the Kingdom of

8 Rainer Christoph Schwinges, *Kreuzzugsideologie und Toleranz. Studien zu Wilhelm von Tyrus* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1977).

9 Unfortunately, Schwinges's notion of tolerance has often been fundamentally misunderstood as "sympathy for Islam", whereas Schwinges intended the term as a combination between pragmatic tolerance and dogmatic intolerance. Moreover, what is often forgotten is that the very notion of tolerance is "to bear something with which one does not agree" – and therefore the exact opposite of "sympathy". The concept has furthermore been applied to other Latin authors in the Levant, but there are some serious objections to this use, which have convincingly been summarized by Kristin Skottki, *Christen, Muslime und der erste Kreuzzug: Die Macht der Beschreibung in der mittelalterlichen und modernen Historiographie* (Münster/New York: Waxmann, 2015), 149–64.

10 Schwinges, *Kreuzzugsideologie und Toleranz*, 119–41; 215–61. See also Rainer Christoph Schwinges, "William of Tyre, the Muslim Enemy, and the Problem of Tolerance," in *Tolerance and Intolerance: Social Conflict in the Age of the Crusades*, ed. Michael Gervers and James M. Powell (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 124–32.

11 Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre* (see n. 5 above).

12 Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre*, 167.

13 Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre*, 151.

14 Suleiman A. Mourad, "A Critique of the Scholarly Outlook of the Crusades. The Case for Tolerance and Coexistence," in *Syria in Crusader Times. Conflict and Coexistence*, ed. Carole Hillenbrand (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 144–60.

Jerusalem and the surrounding states.[15] Even if the division between "us" and "them", as Ann Zimo has recently shown, often followed religious boundaries, William was careful to differentiate between the various ethnic groups that lived in the Middle East during his lifetime.[16] Often, as the work of William shows, factionalism and *realpolitik* influenced human actions more than religion, and Edbury and Rowe rightly point to the difference between William's religiously informed first eight books (the narrative of the First Crusade) and the more secular later fifteen.[17] It will become clear in the course of this article that for William it was not the war against religious others that mattered, but the war to defend the *patria*.[18]

Since the publication of Edbury and Rowe's work, various scholars have heeded their call for a literary interpretation of William's work, (re)examining his views on Islam, Byzantium and women, as well as delving into the specifics of his vocabulary.[19] Despite the existence of this excellent scholarship, the

15 As Mourad (note above) asserts, *realpolitik* and religious motivations do not necessarily exclude each other, and some decisions (such as Al-Kāmil's peace offerings to the leaders of the Fifth Crusade) are in fact better understood as religiously motivated than as political opportunism.

16 Ann E. Zimo, "Us and Them: Identity in William of Tyre's Chronicon," *Crusades* 18 (2019): 1–19. However, William has little attention for the various ethnic groups living *within* the Crusader States: apart from the incidental deprecating remark, they do not feature in the fabric of his work.

17 Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre*, 151–65. David Crispin notes that there is a paradox between the Latins' pragmatic *realpolitik* and the lively memory of the bloodiness of the First Crusade in William's work. See David Crispin, *Ihr Gott kämpft jeden Tag für Sie. Krieg, Gewalt und Religiöse Vorstellungen in der Frühzeit der Kreuzzüge (1095–1187)* (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schönigh, 2019), 198–204.

18 Rainer Christoph Schwinges, "Multikulturalität in den so genannten Kreuzfahrerherrschaften des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts," in *Akkulturation im Mittelalter*, ed. Reinhard Härtel (Ostfildern: Thorbecke Verlag, 2014), 339–69, esp. 354–360.

19 Alan V. Murray, "William of Tyre and the Origin of the Turks: Observations on Possible Sources of the Gesta Orientalium Principum," in *Dei gesta per Francos. Études sur les Croisades dédiées à Jean Richard*, ed. Michel Balard, Benjamin Z. Kedar, and Jonathan Riley-Smith (London: Routledge, 2001), 217–29; Miriam Rita Tessera, "Prudentes Homines … Qui Sensus Habebant Magis Exercitatos: A Preliminary Inquiry into William of Tyre's Vocabulary of Power," *Crusades* 1 (2002): 63–71; Bernard Hamilton, "William of Tyre and the Byzantine Empire," in *Porphyrogenita. Essays on the History and Literature of Byzantium and the Latin East in Honour of Julian Chrysostomides*, ed. Charalambos Dendrinos et al. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 219–33; Conor Kostick, "William of Tyre, Livy, and the Vocabulary of Class," *History* 65, no. 3 (2005): 353–68; Alan V. Murray, "Biblical Quotations and Formulaic Language in the Chronicle of William of Tyre," in *Deeds Done Beyond the Sea: Essays on William of Tyre, Cyprus and the Military Orders Presented to Peter Edbury*, ed. Susan B. Edgington and Helen J. Nicholson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 25–34; Nicholas Morton, "William of Tyre's Attitude towards Islam: Some Historiographical Reflections,"

quantity and depth of William's work means that there is still much uncharted territory. In this article I will examine two aspects of the *Historia* that have not been studied sufficiently yet. I argue that one of the fundamental questions of the *Historia* – what it means to be a Latin in Jerusalem – should be approached through a comparison of William's descriptions of his contemporaries with various Others in his work, most notably the Byzantines and Fāṭimids, who are both religiously and culturally Other. Moreover, William applies the Ciceronian dictum *historia magistra vitae* to show which virtues have been historically associated with the Latins in the Holy Land. These virtues (e.g. *prudentia, patientia, strenuitas*) are remarkably similar to Livy's concept of *virtus*. Through historical exempla William creates an image of the ideal Self, which he contrasts with the harsh reality of his day and age. Both the ideal Self and the various Others therefore focus as a mirror for William's audience. In other words, Latin identity in William's work is expressed through a double dialectical process against the background of the classical East-West dichotomy which both forms and informs the values of that same identity.

To fully understand the importance of Latin identity in William's work, it is necessary to briefly discuss the questions oh his audience and his composition process. William himself states that he started writing in response to a request of King Amalric, suggesting that the primary intended audience would be the king himself, and perhaps his heir Baldwin IV, whom William tutored.[20] As William's writing progressed, however, Amalric died and Baldwin grew more and more incapacitated.[21] It is clear that William made substantial revisions around 1181, especially in books 18–21. Edbury and Rowe state that William around this point realized the possible value of his narrative for a Western European audience and made some changes accordingly.[22] The prologue, written in 1184, starts with a dedication to *venerabilibus in Christo fratribus* ("venerable brothers in Christ"), suggesting that William's primary audience at the end of his writing may have been the Latin clergy in the East. Nevertheless, as Huygens notes in the introduction to his edition of William's work, the *Historia* is implicitly aimed at a much larger public, including the Latin nobility in

in *Deeds Done Beyond the Sea: Essays on William of Tyre, Cyprus and the Military Orders Presented to Peter Edbury*, ed. Susan B. Edgington and Helen J. Nicholson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 13–23; Andrew D Buck, "William of Tyre, Femininity, and the Problem of the Antiochene Princesses," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 70, no. 4 (2019): 731–49.

20 WT prol., ll. 80–89 and chapter 19.21.

21 On the composition process of the *Historia*, see most recently Benjamin Z. Kedar, "Some New Light on the Composition Process of William of Tyre's Historia," in *Deeds Done Beyond the Sea: Essays on William of Tyre, Cyprus and the Military Orders Presented to Peter Edbury*, ed. Susan B. Edgington and Helen J. Nicholson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 3–11.

22 Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre*, 29; 170–71.

the East.[23] Indeed, the immediate political importance William attributes to his work, and the emphasis he places on Baldwin III, Amalric and Baldwin IV enjoying having history read to them, suggest that William throughout intended his stories to reach the Latin nobility.[24] By confronting them with both great deeds and failures of earlier rulers – both Latin and non-Latin – William hoped to spur future generations to great deeds as well, and have them avoid repeating mistakes of old.

2 Livian *Virtus* and William's Ideal Self

The memory of the First Crusade looms large over the *Historia*: William devotes eight of the 23 books of his history alone to the expedition, and it forms an important point of reference for the remainder of his narrative.[25] Although he is not completely uncritical of the First Crusaders, he portrays them generally in a positive light, as prudent, strong men. More importantly, they fought with unanimity, putting the needs of the collective before the needs of their own. During the initial phases of the siege of Antioch, for instance, William notes that the Crusaders, "mindful of their uncorrupted virtue, rushed unanimously" into the enemy ranks.[26] At this display of courage, the enemy's "virtue withered away" (*emarcuit virtus*).[27] This stands in stark contrast to William's narrative of the siege of Hārim, which will be discussed in full below. There, it is the virtue of the Latins, not that of their enemies, that whithers away.[28]

In William's eyes, the participants in the First Crusade thus habitually exhibited *virtus*, while, to put it bluntly, his own generation did not anymore. Indeed, at various points William complains that the current generation is unlike their forefathers, noting that "our forefathers were religious and god-fearing, but in their stead a most treacherous and nefarious generation has grown

23 Huygens, *Chronicon*, 33.

24 The passages discussing the kings' predilection for history are: 16.2, 19.2 and 21.1. The immediate political importance is discussed below.

25 This is true for William's work as it is for the Crusader states in general. See Andrew D. Buck, "Settlement, Identity, and Memory in the Latin East: An Examination of the Term 'Crusader States'," *English Historical Review* 135, no. 573 (2020): 271–302. Buck emphasizes the significance of the memory of the First Crusade to Latin society in the Levant, and the social and cultural ties between the Latin East and the Latin West. Memories of the First Crusade and the European home lands, he argues, were fundamental in shaping both the collective and individual identities of the settlers in the Levant.

26 WT 5.6: pristine virtutis memores in eos unanimiter iruunt.

27 WT 5.6.

28 WT 21.24 (25): omnis nostrorum emarcuit virtus.

up, who neglect their religious plights and abound in scurrilous practices".[29] Telling is William's distribution of the term *virtus* across his work. Of a total of 106 usages, 61 occur in the first nine books (the crusade narrative), an average of 6,8 times per book. The rest is scattered across books 10 to 22, an average of 3,5 times per book. William's use of *virtus* is reminiscent of that of the Roman historian Livy (64/59 BC–12/17 AD). Despite its limited availability in the twelfth century, Livy's work appears to have been one of William's chief influences in the composition of his history. Livy was known in the circles in which William spent his years studying in Western Europe; William's diction is reminiscent of Livy's, for instance in his repeated use of the rather uncommon (and Livian) turn of phrase *dum hec … geruntur* ("while these things were happening") to conjunct parts of his narrative; his narrative style owes more to Livy's expansiveness than to Sallustian *brevitas*.[30]

The last (unfinished) book of the *Historia* starts with a prologue in which William laments the pitiable state of affairs in the Kingdom. Citing Livy's prologue, he notes that "it has now come to the time when we cannot endure our sins, nor the remedies for them".[31] Yet, despite the pain he feels in describing adverse times, he nonetheless resolves to write them down as well, "because just like, through a narrative of deeds with positive outcomes, [historians] can inspire later generations to similar deeds, they can likewise, through an example of more infortune subjects, render those same people more cautious in similar situations."[32] This statement is also reminiscent of Livy's prologue. Livy asserts:

29 WT 21.7: pro patribus nostris, qui fuerunt viri religiosi et timentes deum, nati sunt filii perditissimi, filii scelerati, fidei christiane prevaricatores, passim et sine delectu per omnia currentes illicita. Cf. also 19.9, where William notes that "there was nobody who remembered the vigor of old, who was mindful of the virtue of their forefathers" (*non es qui vigoris meminerit preteriti, qui paterne memor virtutis*) and 20.22.

30 Huygens (*index general*, s.v. Titus) notes thirteen verbal echoes of Livy's work scattered across the *Historia*. Edbury and Rowe (Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre*, 37–38.) were sceptical of William's knowledge of Livy, as the author was not widely distributed before 1300, but see Kostick, "William of Tyre, Livy, and the Vocabulary of Class"; Tessera, "Prudentes Homines." Kostick asserts that parts of the *Ab Urbe Condita* were not only rather widely distributed in the twelfth century, but also known and used by William's contemporary Peter of Blois (*c.*1130–*c.*1203), who studied in Bologna at the same time as William did. On the dissemination of Livy in the twelfth century, see Birger Munk Olsen, *L'étude des auteurs classiques aux XI^e^ et XII^e^ siècles, Tome II. Catalogue des manuscrits classiques latins copiés du IX^e^ au XII^e^ siècle. Livius – Vitrivius – Florilèges – Essais de Plume* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1985), 1–16.

31 WT 23.prol: iam enim ad ea tempora, quibus nec nostra vicia nec eorum remedia pati possumus, perventum est.

32 WT 23.prol: ut sicut gestorum feliciter narratione posteros ad quandam animositatem erigunt, sic infortuniorum subiectorum exemplo eosdem reddant in similibus cautiores.

> What chiefly makes the study of history wholesome and profitable is this, that you behold the lessons of every kind of experience set forth as on a conspicuous monument; from these you may choose for yourself and for your own state what to imitate; from these, mark for avoidance what is shameful in the conception and shameful in the result.[33]

Both authors therefore conceive their work as a means for current and future generations to learn from – a conception that goes back to Thucydides's famous *ktèma es aiei* ("a possession for eternity").[34] Moreover, we can see the same theme of societal decline and the loss of morals as an organizing principle in the work of both authors. Livy wants his readers to consider "what life and morals were" when Rome was expanding, and how "while military discipline gradually gave way, morals followed".[35] Not coincidentally, those same two elements are coupled in William's excursus on the reasons why the Kingdom was in trouble (21.7). William hoped that the new generation would bring new glory to the kingdom through emulation of positive examples, and avoidance of negative ones.[36] Lastly, William's choice to write a history of the *land* (instead of chronicling a war, a people, or a dynasty) may be inspired by Livy's choice not to write a history of the Roman people, but of the city.[37]

The concepts of *virtus* and *vitium* are central to Livy's history.[38] They form the key to interpreting "what life and morals were" and what the reader should choose to emulate or to evade. Though originally connected to martial valour, in Livy the word *virtus* takes on a wider array of meanings and can be best

33 Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* (hereafter "*AUC*") 1.prol: Hoc illud est praecipue in cognitione rerum salubre ac frugiferum, omnis te exempli documenta in inlustri posita monumento intueri; inde tibi tuaeque rei publicae quod imitere capias, inde foedum inceptu, foedum exitu, quod vites. Translation by Foster, B. O., trans., *Livy. History of Rome, Volume I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919).

34 Thucydides, *Historiae* 1.22: κτῆμά τε ἐς αἰεὶ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν ξύγκειται. ("[My history] is composed as a possession for eternity more than a feat to hear in the present.")

35 Livy, *AUC* 1.prol: quae vita, qui mores fuerint … labente deinde paulatim disciplina velut desidentis primo mores sequatur animo.

36 For an elaborate discussion of these elements in William's prologues, see Kirschberger, *Erster Kreuzzug und Ethnogenese*, 160–70.

37 On the *Historia* as a history of the region, see Bunna Ebels-Hoving, "William of Tyre and His Patria" in *Media Latinitas. A Collection of Essays to Mark the Occasion of the Retirement of L. J. Engels*, ed. R. I. A. Nip et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 211–16; Schwinges, "Multikulturalität," 359–60.

38 For the concept of *virtus* in Livy in general, see Catalina Balmaceda, *Virtus Romana: Politics and Morality in the Roman Historians* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 84–128.

characterized as "action performed for the benefit of the community".[39] This can be achieved through military success, but also through thoughtful and selfless behaviour in peace time. As such, it is closely connected to the concept of *prudentia*, which Livy uses, for instance, to describe Q. Fabius Maximus during the initial stages of the Hannibalic war, and a term used extensively by William.[40] Instead of heedlessly attacking a much stronger foe, Fabius chose the tactic of deferral in order to gain more military strength, which later earned him the nickname *Cunctator*, "hesitator". Although it is uncertain to which parts of Livy William had access, his liberal use of the concept of *prudentia* appears to be a direct influence of a thorough reading of Livy's work.[41] Indeed, as we shall see, those who act *imprudenter* in William's work, often behave selfishly or rashly, forget the greater good and endanger the kingdom with their actions.

A striking example that clarifies the connection between *virtus, prudentia* and *mores* is William's narrative of the second battle of Ramla, fought on May 17, 1102 between a small crusader army led by Baldwin I and a large Egyptian army led by Sharaf al-Maʿālī, the son of the Fatimid vizier Al-Afḍal. Upon hearing of the arrival of the Egyptian army, Baldwin "behaving, not according to custom, too recklessly (*preter morem se habens nimis inprovide*)" decided not to wait for reinforcements but, "trusting too much in his *virtus* (*de virtute sua presumens*)", to seek battle with a small retinue of 200 knights. By the time Baldwin realises he is greatly outnumbered, it is too late. William continues:

> But those in the enemy army who were wiser (*prudentiores*) and had more experience in military matters saw that our troops advanced, not according to custom (*preter morem*), without infantry, and also the cavalry in disarray, having left military discipline behind. They gained more hope in a victory.[42]

Importantly, William does ascribe *virtus* to Baldwin's actions, as his intention was to fight for the benefit of the community. However, he exhibited little

39 Balmaceda, *Virtus Romana*, 125.

40 Balmaceda, *Virtus Romana*, 98–99. On the concept of *prudentia* in William's work and the connection to Livy, see Tessera, "Prudentes Homines," 68. William uses the term and its derivates over 200 times in his work.

41 On the dissemination of Livy in the medieval West, see Kostick, "William of Tyre, Livy, and the Vocabulary of Class," 358–60; Munk Olsen, *L'étude des auteurs classiques, Vol. 2*, 1–16.

42 WT 10.19(20): At vero qui in exercitu hostium erant prudentiores et in re militari maiorem habebant experentiam, videntes nostros preter morem absque peditum manipulis, equitum quoque turmas pretermisso ordine militari confusas, accedere, ceperunt apud se maiorem de victoria spem habere […].

prudentia, and the battle ended in a small disaster for the Kingdom, with almost all knights being killed and Baldwin having to seek refuge in a nearby tower. William continues by telling a fantastical story about how Baldwin was rescued by an Arab noble whose wife Baldwin had saved before.[43] With the nobleman's help Baldwin managed to escape to Arsuf, from where he was able to reach Jaffa. In the meantime, Sharaf al-Maʿālī had already reached Jaffa and was besieging the city. Baldwin, this time having drawn up his troops *iuxta rei militaris disciplinam*, managed to lift the siege however, and the Egyptians withdrew.[44] Again, the Jerusalemites are portrayed as fighting with divinely inspired *virtus*, "for their wives and children, for liberty and the fatherland".[45] As in Livy, *virtus* is presented here as fighting bravely for a larger goal, most notably the defense of the *patria*.[46] It was the combination of *virtus, prudentia* and divine grace, however, that brought victory in the end.

If we compare William's narrative to his two main sources, Fulcher of Chartres and Albert of Aachen, some differences stand out. The main story of Baldwin being defeated and having to flee is found in all three (although neither of William's sources mentions the Arab nobleman).[47] Yet the authors diverge on the reasons for the initial defeat. According to William, as we have seen, Baldwin behaved recklessly, which was out of the ordinary (*preter morem*). Fulcher, by contrast, attributes the defeat to Baldwin's *immodestia*, which appears to be a more constant character trait of his in Fulcher's work.[48] Albert does not give any evaluative comment, but his presentation suggests that Baldwin was taken by surprise, and therefore he was not to blame for the

43 William tells the story of the nobleman's wife at 10.10(11).

44 WT 10.21(22). The emphasis on the right military disposition may be the result of a reading of Vegetius's *De Re Militari*, which was increasingly popular in twelfth-century France. See Christopher Allmand, *The De Re Militari of Vegetius. The Reception, Transmission and Legacy of a Roman Text in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 63–67.

45 WT 10.21(22): pro uxoribus et liberis, pro libertate et patria totis viribus decertantes, infusa de supernis virtute et divina preeunte gratia.

46 Balmaceda, *Virtus Romana*, 108–17.

47 Susan B. Edgington, *Baldwin I of Jerusalem, 1100–1118* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 134–39. It may be that the story of the Arab nobleman was fuelled by contemporary depictions of Baldwin as an Eastern monarch, on which see Jay Rubenstein, *Nebuchadnezzar's Dream. The Crusades, Apocalyptic Prophecy and the End of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 87–91. However, the episode is also a positive example of interfaith diplomacy and may be intended as a mirror for (for instance) Raynald of Châtillon's disrespectful behaviour towards Muslims and even Christians later in William's work (e.g. 18.10; 22.15(14)).

48 Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana* 2.18.5: immodestia regis magna fuit ("the hubris of the king was great").

defeat.[49] William holds the middle ground between his sources, definitely blaming Baldwin for the defeat, but not attributing it to a character flaw. Instead, his explanation is consistent with his portrayal of Baldwin as someone who had experience in military matters – a character trait which is temporarily transferred onto the enemy.[50] By repeatedly emphasizing that Baldwin's reckless behaviour was *preter morem*, William furthermore shows that the military successes of the First Crusade were not gained by plunging headlong in battle, but through a combination of discipline, courage, and *prudentia*. In other words, the phrase *preter morem* does not only refer to Baldwin's own *mores*, but also to those of the time.

3 The Price of Decadence: Montgisard and Ḥārim

Baldwin's eventual victory at Jaffa was gained, according to William, because he observed military discipline. This fact was of direct importance to William's audience, who had recently experienced a series of setbacks at the hands of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. The last Jerusalemite military victory at the time of William's writing dated from 1177. At Montgisard, near Ramla, an army led by Baldwin IV defeated Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's forces, despite being greatly outnumbered. According to William, the Jerusalemite leaders arranged their troops *iuxta militarem disciplinam* – a prerequisite for winning battles in William's work.[51] However, human skill alone is not sufficient to defeat the enemy, as William asserts:

> If the Count [Philip I] of Flanders, the Prince [Bohemond III] of Antioch, the Count [Raymond III] of Tripoli and their military host (which was absent) had been present in this divinely ordained matter, they would not have feared to say – in the manner of unwise men (*more inprudentum*) and with the arrogance of someone who creeps in when all is prosperous, and if not in words, then at least in their minds: "our hand has triumphed; the Lord has not done all this.[52]
>
> DEUT. 32:27

49 Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolymitana* 9.3.

50 Cf. WT 10.2.

51 WT 21.21(22).

52 WT 21.23(24): Nam si presenti operi divinitus procurato comes Flandrie, princeps Antiochenus, comes Tripolitanus et illa militie multitudo, que aberat, interfuisset, more inprudentium et qui solet in prosperis irrepere fastu, et si non verbo, saltem cogitatione non vererentur dicere: manus nostra excelsa et non dominus fecit hec omnia.

In the end, the victory was to be ascribed to God, and not to human skill. The passage is lined with references to the Song of Moses (Deut. 32:1–43) and Exodus 15, referencing Israel's idolatry and rebellions, and God's hand in defeating Israel's enemies. William may have felt that the current state of Jerusalem, epitomized by the behaviour of Bohemond and Raymond, resembled Israel's lapses into decadence and drew hope from this major victory, seeing that God had not withdrawn his favour from his new chosen people.

Immediately following his description of Montgisard, the narrative switches to Philip, Bohemond and Raymond, who were besieging Ḥārim, a fortress between Antioch and Aleppo. The initial goal of their campaign had been the city of Hama, but they changed their minds upon hearing that the garrison of Ḥārim did not recognize the new ruler of Aleppo.[53] William does not tell us about the initial plan, but tells the story as if Ḥārim was the original goal of the expedition. The siege itself lasted from December 1177 to early 1178, as William tells us that Philip celebrated Easter in Jerusalem.[54] The siege ended inconclusively, with the defenders paying a sum of money to the attackers and Philip returning to Flanders. William describes the siege in two parts, directly before and after his narrative of Montgisard. The first part is rather dry and factual, but when we return to Ḥārim after Montgisard, the tone of the narrative changes:

> While these things were happening with us, the count and those who were with him persevered in the above-mentioned siege, but in vain. For because they devoted themselves to frivolity, they put more effort in dice and other harmful pleasures than military discipline or the law of a siege allowed; they went into Antioch all the time, where they devoted themselves to baths, dinner parties and drunkenness, and other slippery pleasures – they forsook the siege in idleness.[55]

53 Bernard Hamilton, *The Leper King and His Heirs. Baldwin IV and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 132–33; WT 21.18(19). On the strategic importance of the fortress of Ḥārim, see Andrew D. Buck, "The Castle and Lordship of Ḥārim and the Frankish-Muslim Frontier of Northern Syria in the Twelfth Century," *Al-Masāq* 28, no. 2 (2016): 113–31.

54 Hamilton, *The Leper King*, 136–37; WT 21.24(25).

55 WT 21.24(25): Dum hec apud nos geruntur, comes et qui cum eo erant in obsidione supradicti castri perseverabant, sed inutiliter. Nam in dissolutionem dati, aleis et ceteris noxiis voluptatibus maiorem dabant operam quam disciplina militaris aut obsidionis lex exposceret, continuis itineribus Antiochiam properabant, ubi balneis, comessationibus et ebrietatibus et ceteris lubricis voluptatibus dediti, desidiis obsidionem deserebant. Note also the phrase dum hec … geruntur, a favorite of both Livy and William.

This passage has generally been accepted as true – and it is certainly possible, as the fortress was located about forty kilometres (about a day's journey) east of Antioch, and Antioch was known for its bathhouses.[56] However, the accusations levelled at the Latin nobility are in line with both classical tropes of decadence and William's criticism of the current generation of Latins. In fact, the passage closely parallels Livy's description of Hannibal's winter stay at Capua in 216/215 BC, where Hannibal's soldiers lose military discipline by repeatedly attending bath houses and dinner parties.[57] Moreover, the juxtaposition of the two events (Montgisard and Ḥārim) in William's narrative and his decision to mark the narratological shift of focus with this statement shows that he was eager to explain the failure in moral, rather than military or other terms. Bernard Hamilton suggests that the decision to lift the siege was likely prompted by Philip's desire to celebrate Easter in Jerusalem and return home, while Andrew Buck puts forward the possibility that the besieged convinced the besiegers to withdraw by offering tribute and forestalling Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's advancement in the region.[58] William's version of the events is slightly different:

> After various events and assaults [...] the situation descended into neglect, as we have told before, and because of our sins all virtue of our men disappeared and all prudence faded (*omnis nostrorum emarcuit virtus et evacuata est omnis prudentia*), so that they began to think of returning home, despite the fact that the besieged had fallen into a state of supreme despair. We cannot stop to wonder – for this appears to be beyond human reasoning – that the Lord instilled such a fog of mind in such princes, and in his anger hit them with such blindness, that without anyone forcing them, only driven by jealousy (while neglect reinforced all this), they abandoned the fort, which was almost conquered, to the enemies.[59]

56 Krijnie N Ciggaar, "Adaptation to Oriental Life by Rulers in and around Antioch. Examples and Exempla," in *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean. I. Antioch from the Byzantine Reconquest until the End of the Crusader Principality*, ed. Krijnie N. Ciggaar and David M. Metcalf (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2006), 261–82.

57 *Ab Urbe Condita* 23.18.10–16. There is also a possible parallel in Alexander the Great's degenerative stay in Babylon in Curtius Rufus, *Historia Alexandri* 5.1.36–39, but the parallel is less clear and it is uncertain whether Curtius was known in twelfth-century Jerusalem. Noteworthy, too, is the fact that William also criticizes Joscelin II of Edessa and Raymond of Poitiers for playing dice at the siege of Shaizar in 1138 (15.1), ascribing that vice to their youthfulness.

58 Hamilton, *The Leper King*, 137; Buck, "The Castle and Lordship of Ḥārim," 129–30.

59 WT 21.24(25): Post varios igitur eventus et frequentes assultus ... decidit res in negligentiam, ut prediximus, et peccatis nostris exigentibus ita omnis nostrorum emarcuit virtus et evacuata est omnis prudentia, ut, cum iam qui inclusi tenebantur in supremam

The contrast between the two confrontations could not have been greater. If Montgisard was a miraculous victory in a seemingly hopeless situation, the siege of Ḥārim could easily have been won, if only the besiegers had exhibited some *virtus* and *prudentia*. Instead they did the exact opposite and lost where they should have won. William's choice to juxtapose the two confrontations in such a way as he did appears to be a deliberate choice in order to create a contrast between two extremes and show what the consequences were of acting either *prudenter* or *imprudenter*.

4 The Turning Point: The Siege of Damascus, 1148

The siege of Ḥārim, William tells us, was not only lost because of a lack of military discipline, but also because of *invidia*, jealousy, precluding a unanimous approach. Internal discord is one of the key themes in William's work. During the course of the First Crusade, for instance, when the armies were traversing Cilicia, Baldwin of Boulogne (the future king) came into conflict with Tancred over the city of Tarsus.[60] It would take mediation from his brother Godfrey to resolve this conflict, and shortly afterwards the army of Baldwin breaks off from the main army to go to Edessa.[61] Whether the conflict with Tancred played a part in this, is impossible to ascertain. William is keen to downplay the conflict, however, noting that Baldwin, under the influence of others, was acting *preter morem*, "for he was a man otherwise wholly praiseworthy, and rumours of such kind where not heard of him any further".[62] The implication here, as with William's narrative of the battle of Ramla in 1102, is that Baldwin did not exhibit the *mores* of the time, as well as his own *mores*.

William's representation of the First Crusade, as we have noted, is generally one of unanimity, although he was slightly biased against Raymond of St.-Gilles.[63] The Crusaders were generally virtuous and prudent men, who were

desperationem incidissent, nostri ceperunt de reditu ad propria tractare. Admirari non sufficimus – esse enim videtur amplius opinione hominum – quod tantis principibus tantam induxit dominus mentis caliginem et ita in indignatione sua cecitate eos percussit, quod nemine compellente castrum iam pene expugnatum, sola stimulante invidia et negligentia revocante, hostibus dimitterent.

60 WT 3.21 (20).

61 WT 4.1.

62 WT 4.1. Erat enim vir alias per omnia commendabilis, nec auditus fuerat amplius sermo huiusmodi de illo.

63 William's bias may have arisen due to his reliance on Albert of Aachen, on which see Susan B Edgington, ed., *Albert of Aachen. Historia Ierosolymitana. History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, trans. Susan B Edgington (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), xxxii. On internal

in control of their emotions.[64] This stands in stark contrast to later times, when greed and personal ambition precluded unanimity on the side of the Jerusalemites. William blames the fall of Edessa in 1144 on a personal dispute between Joscelin II of Edessa and Raymond of Poitiers, Prince of Antioch, that arose after the failed siege of Shaizar in 1138 and escalated into full enmity in the years following.[65] Assessing the failure of the siege of Damascus in 1148, during the subsequent Second Crusade, William puts the blame on some unidentified leaders, who, deceived by greed or jealousy, took bribes from the Damascenes and sabotaged the expedition by convincing the Western leaders to move camp to a less strategic position.[66] The result of this failure was an enormous amount of distrust between the Western and Eastern leaders.

> Thereafter, they held all the ways of our princes to be suspect, and because of their [our princes's] "merits" they refused their counsel, as if it were malicious, displaying lukewarm interest in the affairs of the kingdom – not only while they were still in the East, but even after they had returned home. [...] As a result, not so many have taken the pilgrim's way since, and they are not so zealous either: they do not want to become entrapped in their [the Eastern leaders'] treachery, but even today they strive to return home as fast as possible.[67]

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conflicts during the crusade, see e.g. Alan V. Murray, "National Identity, Language and Conflict in the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1096–1192," in *The Crusades and the Near East: Cultural Histories*, ed. Conor Kostick (London/New York: Routledge, 2011), 107–30; Jay Rubenstein, "Godfrey of Bouillon versus Raymond of Saint-Gilles: How Carolingian Kingship Trumped Millenarianism at the End of the First Crusade," in *The Legend of Charlemagne in the Middle Ages: Power, Faith, and Crusade*, ed. Matthew Gabriele and Jace Stuckey (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 59–75.

64 Stephen J. Spencer, *Emotions in a Crusading Context, 1095–1291* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 129–32.

65 WT 16.4.

66 On the siege, see most recently Jonathan Phillips, *The Second Crusade. Extending the Frontiers of Christendom* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 207–27.

67 WT 17.6: Qui deinceps non solum quamdiu in Oriente moram egerunt nostrorum principum vias suspectas habebant et eorum merito tanquam maliciosa nimis declinabant consilia, circa regni negocia tepidos se exhibentes, verum postquam ad eorum regiones eis datum est reverti [...] ita ut iam de cetero neque tot neque ferventes adeo huius peregrinationis viam arriperent et advenientes etiam, nolentes eorum illaqueari fraudibus, domum citius redire etiam hodie contendant.

William sees the Second Crusade as the turning point for the Kingdom's fortunes.[68] If before the Kingdom could rely on more or less continuous support from the West, the infighting of the Jerusalemite leaders during the siege of Damascus had dramatically changed the public opinion in the West. The Western European princes were no longer keen to help their coreligionists in the East.[69] William leaves the question open as to who was responsible in the end, but, adding insult to injury, does not fail to mention that the leaders were paid in monopoly money.[70] It is clear from William's narrative, however, that it was an inside job, perpetrated by either "certain nobles of the Kingdom", who were dissatisfied with Thierry of Flanders's claim to Damascus, or Prince Raymond of Antioch, who had wished for Louis VII of France to help his own cause.[71] More important than the political reasons behind the treason, William emphasizes how the Jerusalemite nobility could be corrupted by greed, and that this was the turning point in the Kingdom's fortunes.

William blames the nobility's decision to accept money on their *cupiditas*, a term which he rarely uses, but twice here in short succession, and a highly significant one both in light of William's classical models and the context in which he was writing.[72] Katherine Allen Smith has argued that while Crusader scholarship often emphasizes the value of *caritas* to contemporary historians of the First Crusade, the same is true for its opposite, avarice.[73] As exegetes trained in the context of the so-called "Gregorian reform" of the eleventh century, they were keen to blame the Crusaders' first defeats on their avarice, and to link the 1099 massacre in Jerusalem to Christ's cleansing of the Temple. A poem by prior (later abbot) Geoffrey of the *Templum Domini*, dated *c.*1136–7,

68 WT 17.9: "From that day on, the situation of the Latins in the East started to deteriorate clearly." (*Ab ea die coepit Orientalium Latinorum manifeste deterior fieri contitio.*)

69 William's presentation is charged here, as several Western European leaders went to the Holy Land in the years that followed. Especially the counts of Champagne and Flanders, and later the margraves of Montferrat undertook several armed pilgrimages to the Holy Land in the second half of the twelfth century. It is true, however, that there were few who took the cross in the years between the Second and Third Crusades, although this mainly has to do with internal troubles in Western Europe at that time. See also Jonathan Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land: Relations between the Latin East and the West, 1119–1187* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

70 WT 17.7: tota illa male sumpta pecunia inventa est reproba et penitus inutilis.

71 WT 17.7. The failure may also have been due to a combination of different factors. Cf. Phillips, *The Second Crusade*, 222–25.

72 WT 17.5, lines 21 and 28. William uses the terms *cupidus*, *cupiditas*, and their derivates a total of 18 times in his work, of which 12 instances occur in books 17–22.

73 Katherine Allen Smith, "The Crusader Conquest of Jerusalem and Christ's Cleansing of the Temple," in *The Uses of the Bible in Crusader Sources*, ed. Elizabeth Lapina and Nicholas Morton (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2017), 197–210.

connects the narrative of the Books of the Maccabees to contemporary issues of simony, a connection which also has its roots in the same late eleventh-century context of reform.[74] Moreover, the intellectual elite of twelfth-century Western Europe, under whom William studied, appears to have been particularly preoccupied with avarice as the root of all vices.[75] William himself does not explicitly level any accusations of simony in his work, but it is noteworthy that he lived and had grown up in a society that viewed avarice as the root of all evil.[76]

William's designation of the siege of Damascus as a turning point caused by avarice has striking parallels in classical Latin literature. Roman historians were almost unanimous in asserting that the conquest of the Near East brought luxury and greed to Rome, corrupting the morals and laxing Roman military discipline.[77] Sallust notes in his *Bellum Catilinae* that the successive conquests of Carthage and Asia Minor introduced the Roman soldiers to greed, personal ambition and wantonness, and that because of the influx of wealth to Rome, "luxury, avarice and pride invaded the youth".[78] He also notes that "at first, it was more ambition than avarice that invaded the minds of people, which, although it is a vice, is closer to virtue."[79] Livy's work follows the same pattern, placing the start of Rome's decline during its first campaign in Asia Minor in 189 BC.[80] During the subsequent Second Macedonian War the Roman leaders are accused of avarice on multiple accounts.[81] Both authors explicitly link the idea of moral corruption to Rome's contact with the luxurious way of

74 Eyal Poleg, "On the Books of Maccabees: An Unpublished Poem by Geoffrey, Prior of the Templum Domini," *Crusades* 9 (2010): 13–56; Julian Yolles, "The Maccabees in the Lord's Temple: Biblical Imagery and Latin Poetry in Frankish Jerusalem," in *The Uses of the Bible in Crusader Sources*, ed. Elizabeth Lapina and Nicholas Morton (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2017), 421–39. On the condemnation of simony among Gregorian reformers, see Brett Edward Whalen, *Dominion of God. Christendom and Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 9–31.

75 Lester K. Little, "Pride Goes before Avarice: Social Change and the Vices in Latin Christendom," *The American Historical Review* 76, no. 1 (1971): 16–49. The themes of avarice and simony also play an important part in the epic *De Bello Troiano* of William's contemporary Joseph of Exeter, on which see J Roger Dunkle, "Satirical Themes in Joseph of Exeter's De Bello Troiano," *Classica et Mediaevalia: Revue danoise de philologie et d'histoire* 38 (1987): 203–13.

76 Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre*, 87.

77 Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 304–23.

78 Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 10–12. The quote is 12.2: igitur ex divitiis iuventutem luxuria atque avaritia cum superbia invasere.

79 Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 11.1: primo magis ambitio quam avaritia animos hominum exercebat, quod tamen vitium propius virtutem erat.

80 *AUC* 39.1 and 39.6. Cf. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism*, 310–12.

81 Balmaceda, *Virtus Romana*, 105–8.

living in the Near East – a *topos* going back as far as the fourth century BC.[82] William's narrative contains the same assumption, albeit somewhat more implicitly. Here it is not conquest that comes before corruption, but corruption that in fact prevents conquest. Yet, the idea that living in the Eastern clime had weakened the morals of the settlers is certainly present in William's work. In the famous paragraph in which he examines the problems that afflict the Kingdom, he does not only decry the Eastern morals of the current generation, but also explicitly compares the *dolce far niente* in the Eastern clime to the warlike behaviour of former generations of Latins, suggesting that a shift has taken place under influence of the Eastern way of life.[83] The abundance of the region, in other words, kindled not only avarice, but also its equally vicious opposite, wantonness (*luxuria*).[84]

6 Orientalism and the *patria* in the *Historia Hierosolymitana*

William, despite being born in the East himself, imbues *Oriens noster*, as he himself calls it, with traditionally "Western" (Roman) values, contrasting these to the actual *mores* of the current generation of Jerusalemites.[85] He notes that "such are the men of today, and especially those in the Eastern clime: if one would try to describe their *mores*, or rather tokens of vice, with a more diligent pen, he would succumb to the immensity of the material and appear to write satire rather than history."[86] It is tempting to see in this statement a

82 Isaac, *The Invention of Racism*, 60–69; Georgia Irby, "Climate and Courage," in *The Routledge Handbook of Identity and the Environment in the Classical and Medieval Worlds*, ed. Rebecca Futo Kennedy and Molly Jones-Lewis (London/New York: Routledge, 2015), 247–65.

83 WT 21.7.

84 Cf. also Williams remark at 20.22 that the older, wiser generation had passed away and a new generation had taken their place – a generation "which … squandered their fathers' goods in detestable ways" (*que … bona paterna in usus dilapidabat detestabiles*).

85 The term *Oriens noster* occurs at 18.3, 18.34, 20.13, 21.25, 22.11, and 23.prol.

86 WT 21.7: Tales sunt presentis seculi et maxime Orientalis tractus homines, quorum mores, immo viciorum monstra si quis diligentiore stilo prosequi temptet, materie immensitate succumbat et potius satiram movere videatur quam Historiam texere. Curiously, this passage has often been downplayed as being part of William's apology for his fellow countrymen (e.g. R. H. C. Davis, "William of Tyre," in *Relations between East and West in the Middle Ages*, ed. Derek Baker (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973), 64–76; Jan Vandeburie, "'Maugré li polein': European Migration to the Latin East and the Construction of an Oriental Identity in the Crusader States," in *Migration and Migrant Identities in the Middle East from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, ed. Justin Yoo, Andrea Zerbini, and Caroline Barron (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 244–62.). The condemning tone of William's words leave little room for interpretation, however.

form of orientalist critique not unlike the type of invective that Roman satirists and historians used against peoples living in the eastern parts of the Empire. The conquest of the Near East, in brief, had brought decadence and wealth to Rome, corrupting the morals of the Romans.[87] We find similar accusations of Eastern decadence levelled at those living in Jerusalem in European authors in the late twelfth century. The Anglo-French chronicler Ralph Niger (*c*.1140–*c*.1217), for instance, describes Patriarch Heraclius of Jerusalem (*c*.1128–1191), who was in Western Europe to petition help against Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn in 1184/5, as follows:

> I will not speak of other sins, both public and private, that Antioch and Jerusalem commit openly. I saw with my own eyes that the patriarch of Jerusalem came to the Western parts in search of help in much splendor of silver and golden paraphernalia, whose arrangement was tiresome to hear because of the tingling. But also the wafts of perfume, which they apply many times over, I drank in on occasion. That is why their clothes smell and your whole brain is moved.[88]

Ralph, who was a critic of the Third Crusade, taps into the same anti-Oriental rhetoric as Roman authors did a thousand years before him, suggesting that the theme of Eastern decadence was a common trope in late twelfth-century Western Europe.[89]

It appears that William claims a similar moral superiority of Western *mores* over Eastern ones. A closer examination of William's words, however, reveals that the picture is a little more complicated. First, William remarks that

87 The idea that the conquest of the East brought corruption and decline to Rome was rather widespread among Roman authors. See Isaac, *The Invention of Racism*, 304–23.

88 Radulfus Niger, De re militari et triplici via peregrinationis Ierosolimitane 3.83: Taceo vitia alia et communia et singularia, que palam coluerunt Antiochia et Ierosolima. Vidi utique patriarcham Ierosolimitanum venisse in partes occiduas pro adiutorio in multa pompa supellectilis argentee et auree, cuius etiam repositionem propter tinnitum tedium erat audire. Sed et fumigationes aromatum quas facerent multiplices et varie hausi, unde et vestes redolent et totum cerebrum moveretur. Ludwig Schmugge, ed., *Radulfus Niger. De Re Militari et Triplici via Peregrinationis Ierosolimitane* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1977).

89 Ironically, William's text, and the passage in which William criticizes his fellow countrymen in particular, was later used (e.g. by Jacques de Vitry) to prove that Eastern *mores* had brought about the loss of Jerusalem. See Vandeburie, "'Maugré Li Polein.'" On Ralph's criticism of the Third Crusade, see John Cotts, "Earthly Kings, Heavenly Jerusalem: Ralph Niger's Political Exegesis and the Third Crusade," *The Haskins Society Journal*, no. 30 (2018): 159–75.

especially the *mores* of those living in the East are lamentable, thus suggesting that the people living in Jerusalem belonged to the same cultural sphere as those in the West but that the problem was more widespread in the East. In other words, both East and West are ridden with vice, but the issue is more pressing in the East. Second, it is unclear what type of satire William had in mind when he refers to the current situation as satire-like. Roman satire, and especially the work of Juvenal, was full of orientalist stereotypes and belonged to the standard curriculum of the twelfth-century schools.[90] At the same time, the twelfth century was a golden age for venality satire, criticizing the avarice of the Roman church and its simoniac practices.[91] Did William have a specific type of satire in mind, or was this merely his way of emphasizing the perilous state of things in Jerusalem?

At the time of William's writing, there had been a long tradition in European literature that defined the Self in opposition to the Eastern Other. Briefly speaking, the West is associated with qualities like order, rationality and (the right) faith. The East, by contrast, is defined by the exact opposite: chaos, irrationality and infidelity. This dichotomy goes as far back as the fourth century BC and can be said to correspond to Edward Said's category of imaginative orientalism: the creation of a fictional entity, the Orient, that is timelessly bound by certain characteristics.[92] This tradition would eventually pave the way for what Said called historical orientalism: "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient".[93] It is tempting, then, as several scholars have done, to view the Western incursions into the Middle East of the twelfth and subsequent centuries as premodern attempts at imperialism, sanctioned by a discourse that proclaimed moral authority of the West over the East.[94] However, the most important prerequisite for historical orientalism (and colonialism), that of an unequal power balance, does not seem to fit the

90 Estrella Pérez Rodríguez, "Reading Juvenal in the Twelfth Century," *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 17 (2007): 238–52.

91 John A. Yunck, *The Lineage of Lady Meed. The Development of Medieval Venality Satire* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963); Rodney M. Thomson, "The Origins of Latin Satire in Twelfth Century Europe," *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 13 (1978): 73–83.

92 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 1–4.

93 Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

94 The most prominent proponent of this approach has been Joshua Prawer, but see Kristin Skottki, "Kolonialismus avant la Lettre? Zur umstrittenen Bedeutung der lateinischen Kreuzfahrerherrschaften in der Levante," in *Transkulturelle Verflechtungsprozesse in der Vormoderne*, ed. Wolfram Drews and Christian Scholl (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 63–88. More recently, Prawer's thesis has been revived by Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 118–27.

twelfth-century Levant. We must therefore be careful not to apply essentialist, orientalist readings to medieval literary depictions of the Other without taking into account the historical context that shaped the authors and their work.[95] We shall see that William's work is definitely influenced by the concepts of East and West, but at the same time shows a tendency to complicate the binary opposition between the two.

In many medieval Western texts, as Suzanne Akbari has pointed out, there is an overlap in categories defining the Self (Christianity/West/Europe) and the Other (Islam/East).[96] She rightly advocates the need to distinguish between these two intertwined forms of Eastern alterity (religious and geographic/bodily) that, taken together, constitute a unique form of medieval Orientalism.[97] On a religious level, the East was associated with Eden and Jerusalem, but also with dangerous heresies. Moreover, in eschatological terms it was the place where it all started and where it all would end eventually. Geographical/bodily alterity is best understood in terms of climatological determinism, the ancient belief that environmental circumstances determine one's physiology, and hence one's character.[98] This distinction between two forms of otherness is highly useful in differentiating between several Others. However, in William's work a third mode of alterity functions, which we may call cultural alterity, and which comes close to Said's category of imaginative Orientalism. In the remainder of this article we shall see how William describes the Fāṭimid Egyptians as geographically, culturally, and religiously Other. The Byzantines, though religiously Other up to a point, are mostly culturally and geographically Other. At the same time, William presents the Jerusalemite Self as becoming more and more Other too, albeit only on a geographical/bodily level.

William describes the Kingdom of Jerusalem as a space that is neither fully Eastern, nor fully Western. It constitutes a liminal space, sharing cultural

95 Kristin Skottki, "Medieval Western Perceptions of Islam and the Scholars: What Went Wrong?," in *Cultural Transfers in Dispute. Representations in Asia, Europe and the Arab World since the Middle Ages*, ed. Jörg Feuchter, Friedhelm Hoffman, and Bee Yun (Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus, 2011), 107–34.

96 Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 2009), 12.

97 Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 280–88.

98 Cf. Claire Weeda, "The Fixed and the Fluent. Geographical Determinism, Ethnicity and Religion, c. 1100–1300 CE," in *The Routledge Handbook of Identity and the Environment in the Classical and Medieval Worlds*, ed. Rebecca Futo Kennedy and Molly Jones-Lewis (London/New York: Routledge, 2015), 93–113; Joseph Ziegler, "Physiognomy, Science, and Proto-Racism, 1200–1500," in *The Origins of Racism in the West*, ed. Benjamin Isaac, Miriam Eliav-Feldon, and Joseph Ziegler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 181–99.

values with Western Europe, but geographically in the Middle East and, as we shall see, by no means immune to its influence. *Oriens noster* ("our Orient"), as William calls his homeland on occasion, is different from the West, but also different from the Orient that surrounds it. More importantly, Jerusalem was William's *patria* – a highly charged concept meaning not only "homeland" in the temporal sense of the word, but also in the spiritual sense, as the heavenly Jerusalem was each Christian's spiritual homeland.[99] At a time when Bolognese legalists – William studied in Bologna for five years – were defining the fight for the *patria* as the only cause for a *bellum iustum*, William's emphasis on the defense of *his patria* would take on a double meaning.[100] For his compatriots, it meant first and foremost the defense of their homes and temporal fatherland; for his audience in the West, the defense of Jerusalem could provide a means to safeguard their way into heaven.

7 The Struggle for Egypt

William develops the themes of abundance, avarice and decline during his narrative of king Amalric's campaigns in Egypt during the latter half of the 1160s. The power of the Fāṭimid caliphs had been steadily declining during the first half of the twelfth century, while that of their *wazīr*s (chief ministers) had been growing. From 1137 on, the *wazīr*s were habitually invested with the title *al-malik* ("king"), denoting their power in the realm. When the last caliph al-ʿĀḍid (r. 1160–1171) succeeded his cousin al-Fāʾiz (r. 1154–1160) at age nine, the affairs of the caliphate were completely dominated by his *wazīr* Ṭalāʿī Ibn Ruzzīk (r. 1154–1161), with the caliph serving as a mere figurehead. After Ibn Ruzzīk's assassination in 1161, Egypt became the décor of a power struggle in which the key players were Shāwar ibn Mujīr al-Sāʿdī (*wazīr* from 1162–1163 and 1164–1169), Asād al-Dīn Shīrkūh (*wazīr* for a few months in 1169 and the uncle of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn) and the Jerusalemite king Amalric.[101] Despite Amalric's efforts

99 Ebels-Hoving, "William of Tyre and His Patria"; Schwinges, *Kreuzzugsideologie Und Toleranz*, 233–40. On the heavenly Jerusalem in the twelfth century, see Sylvia Schein, *Gateway to the Heavenly City. Crusader Jerusalem and the Catholic West (1099–1187)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Suzanne M. Yeager, "The Earthly and Heavenly Jerusalem," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the Crusades*, ed. Anthony Bale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 121–35.

100 Ernst Kantorowicz, "Pro Patria Mori in Medieval Political Thought," *The American Historical Review* 56, no. 3 (1951): 472–92; Gaines Post, "Two Notes on Nationalism in the Middle Ages," *Traditio* 9 (1953): 281–320; Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Mediaeval Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 232–49.

101 Eric Böhme, *Die Außenbeziehungen des Königreiches Jerusalem im 12. Jahrhundert. Kontinuität und Wandel im Herrscherwechsel zwischen König Amalrich und Balduin IV*.

to seize Egypt for the Kingdom of Jerusalem, Shīrkūh won out in the end, paving the way for his nephew Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's takeover of power at the death of Al-ʿĀḍid in 1171.

William's narrative starts in late 1163, when Amalric invades Egypt and fights (and defeats) the then-*wazīr* Abū al-Ashbāl al-Ḍirghām (r. 1163–1164), who had recently ousted Shāwar. After Amalric returned to Jerusalem, Shāwar enlists the help of Nūr al-Dīn, who sends his general Shīrkūh to Egypt to depose Ḍirghām.[102] Ḍirghām, in turn, tries to enlist the help of Amalric, but before Amalric can intervene, Ḍirghām is killed by one of his own soldiers and Shāwar is restored to the *wazīr*ate.[103] At this point William casually remarks that "to their highest leader it is all the same which of the contenders died or gained the position, as long as there was someone who took care of his and the kingdom's business and slavishly served him."[104] Shīrkūh, as William tells us, did not return to Syria, but instead started besieging the city of Belbeis. With the help of Amalric, Shāwar succeeds in defeating Shīrkūh, who then returns to Damascus.

The picture William paints in this first episode is one of political instability, caused by several forces – both internal and external – competing for power, and a leader who is not able to assert his authority. To this he adds a few chapters later, by way of Shīrkūh, that the Egyptian people were "addicted to luxury, destitute of military expertise and wanton due to a long period of peace".[105] Although it is Shīrkūh, and not William himself, who speaks here, these accusations – a variation on the classical stereotype of the degenerate Easterner – remind one of William's criticism of the Jerusalemite Latins later in his work. In fact, William uses almost the exact same turn of phrase to describe the Egyptian people (*rei militaris expertem, longa quiete dissolutum*) as he does to describe the Latins two books later (*longa pace dissolutus, rei militaris expers*).[106] The turn of phrase *rei militaris expers* is highly uncommon

(Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2019), 72–140; Jonathan Phillips, *The Life and Legend of the Sultan Saladin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 46–56.

102 WT 19.5.

103 WT 19.7.

104 WT 19.7: nam summo eorum principi pro minimo est uter de contendentibus aut subcumbat aut obtineat, dummodo non desit qui sua et regni negocia procuret et se illius mancipet servituti.

105 WT 19.13: populum deliciis deditum, rei militaris expertem, longa quiete dissolutum. William reaffirms this statement at 20.4.

106 WT 21.7. The latter passage technically refers to the *orientalis populus* at the time of the First Crusade, but the subtext is that at the time William wrote these words, the tables had turned, and therefore it must be inferred that the words are applicable to the Latins in the Levant, too.

in Latin literature. Before William's use of it, it is only found (with slight variation) in one passage in Livy (*AUC* 7.32.10).[107] The reader is thus left with the impression that the Egyptian situation mirrors the Jerusalemite one, even if William uses Shīrkūh as a mouthpiece to convey this sentiment. One of the upshots of this small piece of intratexuality is that even if William's narrative of the successive campaigns can be called orientalistic by modern standards, his audience is invited to ponder on the possibility that they, too, are in the process of becoming "like the Other". Especially the fact that William ostensibly revised this part of his *Historia* during the early 1180s, when the Kingdom of Jerusalem had become politically unstable, gives the emphasis on the political instability in the Fāṭimid state extra weight. William shows awareness of the fact that identity is not a static product constructed along the binary division between Us and Them. The Other here is not fully Other, but appears to function as a mirror for the Self as well.[108]

The episode takes place in 1167, when Shīrkūh had been at the court of the ʿAbbāsid caliph Al-Mustanjid, whose support he hoped to gain for another invasion of Egypt. Upon hearing of Shīrkūh's plans, Amalric gathered his army and followed Shīrkūh. William disrupts his narrative with a brief description of the founding of Cairo by the Fāṭimid caliph Al-Muʿizz, followed by Shīrkūh's refusal to engage with the Jerusalemite army and the formation of an alliance between Shāwar and Amalric.[109] To ratify the treaty the Jerusalemites send Hugh of Caesarea and the Templar Geoffrey Fulcher to the caliphal palace of Al-ʿĀḍid. William describes the scene in what is arguably the most lavish description in his entire work, noting of the "status and magnificence and enormous amount of riches" that "it will not be of the least importance to understand these things well".[110] Unfortunately the passage is too long to cite in its entirety, so I will limit myself here to some of the most telling parts.

> There was such an elegance in the materials and quality of work, that it held the eyes, unwilling, of those who passed through. It did not allow

107 William uses this formula a total of five times (18.18, 19.13, 19.28, 20.7, and 21.7), suggesting that books 18 through 21 were composed or revised more or less contemporaneously.

108 A similar mirroring function can be discerned in William's narrative of the deaths of Baldwin III in 1162 and Nūr al-Dīn in 1174. Confronted with a military opportunity at the death of Baldwin, Nūr al-Dīn replies by keeping peace out of respect for the enemy (18.34). At the death of Nūr al-Dīn in 1174 by contrast, Amalric responds by immediately attacking the city Banyas and thus not respecting the enemy's grief (20.31). The contrast is also noted by Huygens *ad loc.*

109 WT 19.15–17.

110 WT 19.18: de statu et magnificentia et immensitate divitiarum … non enim erit minimum profecisse, hec intellexisse diligentius.

> their gaze to be satisfied: it was pressured by a certain urge to look because the exquisite novelty of the work was so inviting. There were marble pools flowing over with limpid water, there was the distinctive sound of birds of all forms, which our world does not know, with unknown looks and foreign colours [...] When they were admitted to the inner courtyard, while eunuch princes preceded them, they found buildings even more elegant than those before, in the same way that the things they had seen before had seemed standing out among vulgar and common things. [...] it seemed without doubt that our Solinus had based the story of his Polyhistor on these places.[111]
>
> After they had entered and were admitted to the inner palace, the Sultan, according to protocol, showed his customary reverence to his lord: he prostrated once and twice on the ground and like a suppliant he started to lay out his due reverence, as if to a godhead, and some kind of admiration; a third time he prostrated to earth, and laid off the sword which he carried around his neck, and look! suddenly the curtains, embroidered with a variety of pearls and gold, that hung in the middle and obscured the throne, opened with miraculous speed, and a countenance was revealed, sitting on a golden throne, with more than regal robes and only a few of his household and palace eunuchs around him – the caliph appeared.[112]

Clearly the palace as William describes it belongs to a wholly different world than the one he is living in. It is the world of wonders, the Orient as found in the fantastical writings of Solinus, not only geographically, but also epistemologically different from the world surrounding it: the caliphal palace belongs

111 WT 19.18: quibus tanta inerat materie et operis elegantia, ut transeuntium etiam invitos detinerent oculos et quadam videndi aviditate, invitante operum eximia novitate, intuentium aspectus non sinerent saciari. Erant ibi piscine marmoree aquis redundantes limpidioribus, erant avium multimodarum, quas noster non novit orbis, varii garritus, forme incognite et peregrini coloris [...] Inde ad ulteriora, previis eunuchorum principis, admissi, item edificia tanto prioribus elegantiora inveniunt, quanto que prius viderant vulgaribus et usitatis praestantiora videbantur [...] videbatur proculdubio quod ex his locis Solinus noster Polistoris sui deduxerit historiam.

112 WT 19.19: Ingressis porro eos et in interiorem palatii partem admissis, soldanus de more consuetam domino exhibens reverentiam semel et secundo humi prostratus quasi numini debitum cultum et quoddam adorationis genus supplex cepit impendere; tercio iterum prostratus ad terram, gladium, quem de collo gestabat suspensum, deposuit et ecce subito contractis mira velocitate velariis, margaritarum varietate auroque contextis, que media dependebant et obumbrabant solium, revelata facie, throno sedens aureo, habitu plusquam regio, paucis circa eum de domesticis et familiaribus eunuchis, apparuit calipha.

to the realm of mythology, to the Orient as described by the ancients instead of the one in which William lived. It strengthens the idea of the Near East as a land of plenty. In contrast to other places where William references Solinus, he does not cite his work as an authoritative source, but as a point of comparison.[113] That is not to say that William's description was made up: in fact, there is a very close parallel in the *History of Baghdad* by the eleventh-century author Al-Khaṭīb Al-Baghdādī, where a tenth-century Byzantine embassy to Baghdad is likewise led through a series of corridors and open spaces filled with riches and exotic animals.[114] William's addition that these places are without doubt the basis of Solinus's work, however, shows that in his interpretation there are two types of Orient: the fantastical and unknown, and the known *Oriens noster*. The elaborate description of the caliphal palace furthermore serves to paint a picture of a king living remote from politics, and, in William's own words, "enjoying a perpetual holiday, addicted to riches, ignorant of the tumult and living carefree".[115]

Al-ʿĀḍid is not the only fantastical Other in William's work. In 1171, Amalric embarked on a diplomatic mission to the Byzantine emperor Manuel Komnenos (r. 1143–1180). Like the envoys to Al-ʿĀḍid in 1167, Amalric and his company were led *per angiportus et mire varietatis diversoria* ("through alleys and diverse displays of wondrous variety") to the inner chambers of the palace, where the emperor resided.[116] Julian Yolles has noted that William uses the same vocabulary to describe the Byzantine emperor as he does to describe Al-ʿĀḍid in the above passage.[117]

> ingresso ergo domino rege **contractis subito velariis**, his qui extra velaria fuerant **apparuit dominus imperator throno sedens aureo**, *imperiali vestitus scemate.*[118]
>
> 20.23

113 The fact that William saw Solinus as a useful source regarding the East does not mean that he was unwilling to correct him. At 8.4, for instance William wonders how Solinus could have said that Judea was famous for its waters. He concludes that Solinus was either wrong, or that the circumstances had changed in the meantime.

114 Jacob Lassner, *The Topography of Baghdad in the Early Middle Ages* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), 86–91.

115 WT 19.20: ocio vacans perpetuo et deliciis deditus, tumultuum ignarus et sollicitudinis expers.

116 WT 20.23.

117 Julian Yolles, "Latin Literature and Frankish Culture in the Crusader States (1098–1187)" (Harvard University, 2015), 341–43.

118 "After our lord the king had entered, the curtains were suddenly opened, and to those who were outside the curtains the lord emperor appeared, sitting on a golden throne, clad in imperial vestments."

> et ecce **subito contractis** mira velocitate **velariis**, margaritarum varietate auroque contextis, que media dependebant et obumbrabant solium, revelata facie, **throno sedens aureo**, *habitu plusquam regio*, paucis circa eum de domesticis et familiaribus eunuchis, **apparuit calipha**.
>
> 19.19

If we compare the Latin of the two passages, we see, as Yolles suggests, that William uses similar description techniques to describe similar situations. It is possible that, having himself been on diplomatic missions to Byzantium in 1167 and 1179, William used his own experiences to amplify the eyewitness accounts of the ambassadors to the Byzantine and Fāṭimid courts. However, the intratext also suggests that for William, the Fāṭimid and Byzantine courts both belonged to the same world, a fantastical East, which differed from William's *Oriens noster*. William saw the corrupting potential that contact with this fantastical East could bring. In his day and age, his *Oriens noster* was already becoming more and more like the Other East: unwarlike, effeminate, corrupted by its own riches.

A similar case can be made with regards to the issue of prostration. Prostration was an established element in Fāṭimid court protocol, but that same protocol required ambassadors to kiss the threshold of the caliph's audience room as well.[119] William only tells us how the sultan (likely Shāwar) prostrated, showing the difference between Shāwar and the Jerusalemite ambassadors. This difference is further emphasized by the ambassadors not complying with court protocol in insisting that the caliph ratified the treaty himself and with bare hands, thus superimposing Latin court manners upon Egyptian ones. The scene also brings to mind the prostration of Reynald of Châtillon before Manuel Komnenos in the city of Mamistra in 1158. After having launched a raid on Cyprus two years before, Reynald was forced to do penance in public.[120] William expresses his intense disgust of the situation, noting that "[Reynald] grovelled there for so long, that he turned the stomach of all present and turned the glory of the Latins to shame, for he was a man of excesses, both in offending and in recompensating."[121] Notwithstanding the fact that public acts of penance were quite common in twelfth-century Europe, William's dislike of

119 On Fāṭimid court protocol, see Paula Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994), 13–37.

120 On the political implications of Reynald's penance, see Andrew D. Buck, "Between Byzantium and Jerusalem? The Principality of Antioch, Renaud of Châtillon, and the Penance of Mamistra in 1158," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 30, no. 2 (2015): 107–24.

121 WT 18.23: tam diu iacuit, quousque cunctis verteretur in nauseam et Latinitatis gloriam verteret in obproprium, et in delinquendo et in satisfaciendo vehementissimus.

Reynald's prostration shows not only his personal hatred of Reynald, but also suggests that he considered the act itself as the Latins unworthy. The scene moreover strengthens the link between the Fāṭimids and Byzantines as potentially dangerous Others.

William's exoticism is thus not purely for aesthetic purposes: his emphasis on the value of his description suggests that he intends for his audience to learn from his narrative. What exactly is not immediately clear. The elaborateness and level of detail lend authority to William's description; at the same time, those two elements serve to differentiate between the Self and the Other. In other words, William's detailed descriptions emphasize the fantastical Otherness of the Egyptian caliph and (to a lesser extent) the Byzantine emperor. It is telling that William narrates to his audience how the Jerusalemite ambassadors defied all protocols: elaborate court rituals were something Others conducted, not the Latins. William's claim to the truthfulness of his account and the ambassadors's insistence on following "Western" court practice symbolize, almost in an embryonic orientalistic fashion, an attempt to exert authority over the East. Encounters with the fantastical East, as William knew through his study of classical historians, could prove dangerous to the morals of the Latins. The richness of the region was a desirable goal for conquest, with the caveat that it also, when conquered, could lead to corruption and greed, which would cause military morale to weaken. William seems to suggest that this process had been going on since the Second Crusade, and that the situation had been growing gradually worse since.

In this light, the outcome of the "Egyptian episode" is telling. During another Jerusalemite incursion into Egypt in the summer of 1168 the army is camped before Cairo. The expedition proved to be a mistake and a failure on all fronts: not only did the Jerusalemites have a treaty with the caliph, they were also in the process of securing an alliance with the Byzantine emperor Manuel Komnenos.[122] The reasons for the expedition, William tells us, were unjust as well: Gilbert of Aissailly, Grandmaster of the Knights Hospitaller, hoping to gain from the conquest, had convinced Amalric that Shāwar attempted to double-cross him by appealing to Shīrkūh.[123] In response, Amalric broke the treaty with Shāwar, who in turn did enlist the help of Shīrkūh. While the Jerusalemite army was camped before Cairo, Shāwar attempted to stall their advance by promising them a large amount of money. William remarks that the Jerusalemites could easily have taken Cairo by a surprise attack, but decided to wait for the payment – another costly mistake, because the advancement

122 Phillips, *The Life and Legend*, 51.

123 WT 20.5.

of Shīrkūh's troops forced the Jerusalemites to withdraw, while the latter murdered Shāwar and took over the *wazīr*ate.[124] William first tries to divert the blame for this failure by accusing the royal seneschal Miles of Plancy (d. 1174) of perniciously influencing the king by appealing to the latter's avarice.[125] Attacking the city would lead to plunder, and hence less income for the royal treasury, is his reasoning. In the end, however, William is quite clear:

> O blind avarice of men, greater than every crime, o noxious fury of the covetous mind and insatiable spirit! See now how boundless greed put us from such a quiet and tranquil state into a state of turbulence and full of anxieties! The riches of Egypt, its immense amount of opulence lay ready at hand for us to use, from that part our kingdom had a safe side, there was no one to fear from the south. […] But now all has changed for worse […] All these things the greed and avarice (*cupiditas et avaricia*), the root of all vices, of one man has brought upon us – it has obscured our God-given clear sky.[126]

As with the siege of Damascus in 1148, a sure-looking victory was squandered because of the avarice of the Jerusalemites, in this case the king himself. Amalric's avarice was rather well-known according to William, but the sequence of events in William's narrative suggests that it was kindled through contact with Egypt's riches.

8 Conclusion

William's narrative from the Second Crusade to his own day was undeniably a narrative of a state in decline. Notwithstanding the fact that the Kingdom of Jerusalem was one of the most powerful states in the Near East in the 1160s, William's reading of classical historians such as Livy and Sallust imbued him with an idea that conquest inevitably led to decline. More precisely, contact

124 WT 20.7.

125 WT 20.9.

126 WT 20.10: O ceca hominum cupiditas et omni crimine maior, o nefanda cupide mentis et insaciabilis animi rabies! Ecce a quam quieto et tranquillo penitus statu in quam turbulentum et anxietatibus plenum nos deiecit inmoderatus habendi ardor! Egypti copie, opulentiarum inmensitas nostris usibus famulabantur, ex ea parte regnum nostrum tuta habebat latera, non erat quem ab austro formidaremus. […] At nunc econverso cuncta calculum sunt sortita deteriorem […] Hec omnia unius hominis invexit cupiditas et avaricia, viciorum radix, nostra obnubilavit data divinitus serena.

with the riches and way of living of the (Middle) East allowed slack and luxury to taint the morals of those who conquered and settled in the area. These ideas are also present in the work of the Archbishop of Tyre. Thus the picture that he presents of 1160s and 1170s Jerusalem is one of a society ridden by vices (most notably avarice) and consisting of people who put their own needs before those of the state. Contact with fabulous Others, such as the Fāṭimid caliph and the Byzantine emperor, as well as with the "Eastern way of life", may have been kindled these vices.

One of William's goals in writing his *History* was to show by example how virtuous behaviour had led to the conquest and growth of the Kingdom, while vices had led to setbacks and decline. This approach is very Livian in nature, and it suggests that William did not only have (parts of) the *Ab Urbe Condita* at hand while composing his narrative; he also took over Livy's framework of teaching through example. Moreover, his concept of virtuous behaviour is comparable to Livy's: both authors emphasize that *virtus* can be obtained through fighting for a higher cause, most notably the defense of the *patria*. At times when internal conflicts and personal ambition take center stage, such as during the siege of Ḥārim, William emphasizes that the men exhibited no *virtus*. *Virtus* was not the only element that is needed for the survival of the Kingdom. It needed to be combined with both *prudentia* and divine grace. If one of the three was lacking, the Kingdom could not survive. From William's narrative, the ruling elite of the Jerusalemite kingdom could infer that they should be more concerned with the common good than with fostering their personal ambitions. Unity was needed, above all, to regain divine favour and ensure the Kingdom's survival.

Despite its negative message, the *Historia* is not a defeatist work. William's concerns about the state of the Kingdom should be interpreted as patriotism rather than dismay. He firmly believed that things could take a turn for the better if the current generation were to exhibit the same *mores* as the first generation of settlers, the heroes (in his eyes) of the First Crusade. Instead of barons fighting each other, a unanimous approach to defend the *patria* was needed. With the knowledge of what happened at Ḥaṭṭīn it is hard to imagine what William thought the future would bring. The ending of the *Historia* is telling. Despite all factionalism of the years before, the king finally decided to appoint the most capable man in the Kingdom, Raymond III of Tripoli, as regent.[127] Whether that would be enough, time would tell. William did foresee an uphill battle, but there is reason to believe that he still had faith in a positive outcome. Much like the Roman historians, William advocates a return to an imagined

127 WT 23.1.

pristine society, yet uncorrupted by urban luxury and ambitious barons. By inserting both positive and negative examples in his history William hoped to spur the Latin nobility to deeds worthy of comparison with those of the First Crusaders and have them avoid repeating mistakes their forefathers made.

To what extent is it possible to characterize the *Historia* as a proto-orientalist work? The answer, as it turns out, may not be as simple and one-sided. William's "Egyptian narrative" shows both his genuine interest in the Other, as well as a desire to conquer that same Other. Although the power dynamics in the twelfth-century Levant were never unequivocally in the Kingdom's favour, William does attempt to exert narrative authority over the East. At the same time, William does not limit his orientalist tropes to descriptions of the Fāṭimids and the Byzantines. The Latins are regularly criticized in similar (or even the same!) terms. Yet, William's criticism functions only on a geographical/bodily level. The Fāṭimids and the Byzantines are still presented as culturally (and, in the case of the Fāṭimids, religiously) Other. William's work thus calls into question the usefulness of the concepts of East and West to investigate medieval Latin representations of the Middle East. If it is useful at all, it is only to show that identities are often not constructed on such a binary basis. Perhaps it is better to conclude by saying that William presents the Kingdom of Jerusalem as some sort of liminal space. It was neither West nor East, but somewhere in between – the doorstep, as it were, to the more fantastical East, which was both fearsome and fascinating, existing both to be conquered and contained.