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Disaster and Disaster-response in a Medieval Context: the First Crusade

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Disaster studies and disaster management are topics nowadays considered worthy of academic and institutional attention on a wide scale.¹ The conditions of modern society, in fact, far from banishing causes of and concern with disaster, have multiplied both the scale of potential and actual disasters, and diversified the sources from which they may spring. Whether invoked by war, malicious and inhumane ideologies, environmental adversity and neglect or the negligent action of multi-national companies, the loss of life and trauma associated with modern disasters amply justifies the attention of academics, administrators and planners. The historian, too, can play a role: what sort of disasters have occurred in previous times and how have contemporaries classified, explained and recovered from them? The present paper, which looks at the medieval experience of disaster in a particular context, suggests that former ages were, paradoxically, better able

1. The present paper was originally delivered to a preliminary SASSC workshop on the topic of Disaster Management held in December 1989, and is the second of three connected papers that I have prepared on the subject of the millenarian origins of the crusading movement. The first is J.O. Ward 1985 and the third, entitled 'Millenarianism and the origins of the first crusade' and containing much of the detailed work that can only be alluded to in the present paper, is in preparation. I would like to record my thanks here to my colleague John Pryor, whose unrivalled knowledge of crusading matters has been of frequent assistance to me, and whose interest in the theme of the present paper has been a source of encouragement. The present paper was written in February 1991 and takes no account of literature available in Australia after that date.

to cope with the concept of disaster than we are today, because they were able to *anticipate* and *contextualize* the disaster in ways that have lost popularity in modern times. An exploration of this theme, it is hoped, might offer some longer context within which to understand modern disaster traumas, and, at the same time, to throw some light on the role that Biblical texts and ideas played in the contemporary delineation and explanation of the disasters that provoked the medieval crusading movement, and thereby, on the vexed problem of the genesis of the movement itself.

The medieval period, we are told, is not an unimportant one when it comes to the history of disasters: on the so-called 'Foster' scale for measuring disasters, the Black Death was the second most catastrophic disaster in world history, exceeded only by World War II.² The 'Foster' scale, it seems, measures disasters in terms not only of the toll in lives, but also in terms of physical damage and the emotional stress generated. Implicit in the concept of disaster involved are the following features:

- (a) the victims of the disaster do not *deserve* the disaster in terms of their commission of any matching sin or crime;
- (b) the disaster is characterized and to a large extent measured in terms of actual, current physical damage and loss of life;
- (c) the disaster does *not* normally presage any future event or circumstance;
- (d) the disaster is susceptible to mitigation by diligent remedial/consolatory rescue action.

Defined in this way, is the Black Death the *only* contribution the medieval period can make to the history of disasters? Without conducting an exhaustive search, a candidate that comes immediately to mind is the medieval crusading movement. In many ways, the crusading movement was indeed a disaster of the sort envisaged by the Foster scale. In 1930, for example, Harold Lamb dedicated his popular *The Crusades: iron men and saints* (NY 1943 p.v) 'to the uncounted thousands who died in the crusades'. In 1938 Z.N. Brooke (1951 p.499) pointed out that 'the crusades . . . were much more costly in human lives than were wars in Europe' and found 'the most obvious feature of the crusading movement to be 'the terrible waste, the vast outlay yielding so little return'. According to Steven Runciman (1965 III *The Kingdom of Acre and the later crusades* p.469), 'seen in the

2. The third most catastrophic disaster, it seems, was World War I. See R.E. Lerner, 1982, p.78.

perspective of history the whole crusading movement was a vast fiasco'. As a movement of violent white supremacist colonialism the crusading movement is not to be compared with the European colonization of Africa or the Americas, but it certainly *was* accompanied by acts of murder and pillage as well as by episodes of military disaster that have few parallels in medieval history. One thinks immediately, for example, of the massacre of the Rhineland Jewish communities in 1096 by German crusaders, or of the Turkish massacre of the crusading peasant armies on the road between Constantinople and Nicaea (at Civetot-Dracon) in October of the same year, and, indeed, of the various atrocities committed by the different crusader groups themselves en route to the Holy Land. The capture of Antioch in 1098 and of Jerusalem itself in 1099 were accompanied - according to accepted accounts - by unparalleled bloodshed. The first two centuries of the crusading movement, in fact, were studded with disasters: the fall of Edessa on Xmas eve 1144, the disastrous retreat from Damascus in 1148, the fiasco at the Horns of Hattin in 1187 and the consequent crusader loss of Jerusalem, the fall of Constantinople in 1204, the disaster of the 'children's crusade' of 1212, the brutalities associated with the crusades against the *albigenses* 1208-1229, the surrender of Damietta in 1221, the disaster at and on the retreat from Mansourah in 1250, the debacle of the *pastoureaux* in the immediate wake of Mansourah, and the fall of Acre in 1291, which brought to an end the heyday of the crusading kingdom of Outremer. Even after the fall of Acre the lure of crusade continued to produce disasters, such as the Turkish defeat and destruction of the Franco-Burgundian crusade at Nicopolis, just beyond the Danube, en route to Constantinople in 1396.

Such episodes of violence and pillage, however, were arguably commoner then than now, and, defined in such terms, disaster must have been a common enough circumstance. Indeed, given the widespread intellectual position that life on earth was in itself a kind of collective disaster visited upon humankind, a collective *alienatio* or *peregrinatio* (cf Ladner 1983), the very idea of a 'disaster' within a disaster' must have struck some theologians as irrelevant: if life is a punishment, then the more painful it is, the more plainly does it fulfil its punitive or cathartic function. We are already moving away from our own idea of disaster as 'sudden or great (i.e. rare) misfortune, calamity' towards a conceptual field hinted at by the very make-up of the word 'disaster': 'dis-' and 'astron', meaning (in Greek) 'movement of a star'. The 'disaster' is beginning to imply *not* the events we would today see as the disaster, but the portents or omens *anticipating* those events.

Originally, in fact, the word 'disaster' meant 'the blast or stroke of an unpropitious star' and, behind that, an unfavourable aspect of a star or

planet, an 'obnoxious planet' (1635 AD). Thus Hamlet in Shakespeare's play of that name speaks (I.i.118) of 'disasters (= threatening signs) in the sun', one of the prodigies foreshadowing Caesar's death 'in the most high and palmy state of Rome' (*The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* ed. C.T. Onions Oxford 1947 I pp.517-18). Disaster thus implies, at root, an astral disturbance boding ill for humanity which is controlled by the stars. A disaster will thus be not an accidental, random thing, but a predetermined aspect of a predetermined pattern. This is nowhere truer than in the middle ages, when disaster was seen less as an actual event or set of events (these become the 'signs') and more the unseen and imminent fate that the 'event' or 'events' betokened.

The ultimate disaster in medieval eyes, continuously foreshadowed by all sorts of signs, was, of course, the end of the world, graphically portrayed in a crucial Biblical text replete with clues as to how to recognise and interpret the signs: the *Book of the Revelation of St. John (the Apocalypse)*. To those prepared to speculate upon it, the *Book of Revelations* revealed an ever-present scenario of continuous disasters presaging an imminent catastrophe (for the evil-doers) and an imminent apotheosis (for the righteous). However, there were relatively few who devoted themselves continuously to the study of *Revelations*. Rather, in times of crisis, a radical semiology based on *Revelations* filtered out from socially marginal clerical elements to the populace at large and offered it a compelling theodicy designed to alleviate its misfortunes. Thus, during the Hungarian raids on western Europe in the ninth century, European intellectuals corresponded on the subject of whether the Hungarians were the tribes of Gog and Magog whose violent advent is presented in *Ezechiel* 38 and 39 and *Revelations* 20.8 as a sign of the advent of the final days. Their discourse makes clear that clerical speculation was feeding popular fears, fears which they were at pains to discount: 'You also asked especially (writes Remigius of Auxerre to the bishop of Verdun) that I turn the sharp point of my mind to the last part of the prophet *Ezechiel* and look carefully into what he meant in his prophetic sermon about Gog and Magog and the other tribes collected with them. But I must first point out that the *opinion very commonly found both in your region and in mine*, that the Hungarian race, hated by God, is Gog and Magog and the tribes described as associated with them, is frivolous and has no truth in it. This is the passage they cite: 'thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts and after many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword' (*Ezechiel* xxxviii 15 and 8). For they say it is now the last age of the world and the end of the world is imminent and for that reason Gog and Magog are the Hungarians who have not been heard of before, but have appeared only in the

latest age. But look carefully at the races who are supposed to come with Gog and Magog: 'Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief of Meshek and Tubal' and a little later 'Persia, Ethiopia with them, all of them with shield and helmet, Gomer and all his bands, the house of Togarmah', etc. (*Ezekiel* xxxviii 2 and 5-6). If the Hungarians, *are* Gog and Magog, where are the races who are supposed to come with them?'.³

Recent work has also suggested that the coronation of Charlemagne was very likely an official act designed in part to damp down popular expectations in regard to the approaching end of the world associated with the fact that the Byzantine throne was held by a woman (Irene, 797-802 AD) and was hence technically 'vacant', suggesting that the Roman Empire had actually fallen, rendering imminent, according to *Daniel* 7, the end of the world. A second thread in this scenario of popular expectation was the attainment of the 6000th year after creation in the year 800 AD. This *annus mundi* chronological system was an inherently apocalyptic one because it held that the world would end 6000 years *after* a fixed date, creation. It was thus susceptible to frequently recalculated apocalyptic climax dates and in the successive millennial countdowns which sought to fix the 6000th year after creation at a particular point, various happenings were construed as 'signs', such as the advent of Irene to the Byzantine throne. Consequently the authorities sought to replace it with the *annus domini* system, which posited an *indefinite* number of years *from* a fixed date (R. Landes 1988 and R. Landes 1987).

By the central middle ages, thinkers of all ranks held to apocalyptic, eschatological ideas that would strike us today as bizarre. Thus historians explain Innocent III's Lateran IV decree that Jews and Muslims wear distinctive clothing, in terms of his belief that the second coming of Christ would take place around the year 1284.⁴ Thus, by the fourteenth century, the Black Death - 'Medieval Europe's greatest disaster' (R.E. Lerner 1982 p.94) - could be rapidly incorporated into the prevailing apocalyptic cultural

3. R.B.C. Huygens (ed.), 'Un témoin de la crainte de l'an 1000: la lettre sur les Hongrois' *Latomus* 15(1956) pp.231-32, or PL 131.966. The italics in the cited passage are mine. Similarly, perhaps, the Jews in the Rhineland during 1096 saw the crusaders as the tribes of Gog and Magog: S. Eidelberg 1977 p.13. On the reaction of the Jewish communities see now Chazan R *European Jewry and the First Crusade* U of California P 1987.

4. A. Cutler, 'Innocent III and the distinctive clothing of Jews and Muslims' *Studies in Medieval Culture* (Western Michigan University) 3 (1970) 92-116: the conversion of the Muslims and Jews 'was seen as man's crucially indispensable role in preparing the way for the Second Coming of Christ, which Pope Innocent III expected in 1284' (Cutler p.116). In *Revelations* the second coming of Christ *precedes* the millenium of rule with Christ by the martyrs for the faith, which in turn precedes the final Day of Judgement, but in the orthodox view the second coming and the Day of Judgement went hand in hand.

semiology. This semiology, with its Biblical underpinnings, is tangled, but important for the present topic and requires a brief summary.

By the time of Joachim of Fiore, at the end of the twelfth century, leading ecclesiastics had accepted the idea that *after* the trials and death of Antichrist mentioned in *Revelations*, would come a final time or millenium for the refreshment of the saints, the conversion of the heathen and the Jews and the reformation/purification of the Church. This would be a time of great joy for the people of God who would rule as saints. There are dim Biblical foundations for these views.⁵

A different form of chiliasm, *without* Biblical underpinning, and popular among non-literate elements, held that a last great emperor would inaugurate wondrous times on earth, before the first appearance of Antichrist. This view was normally accompanied by prophecies designed to stress current or imminent 'disasters' (in our sense today) as indications of the tribulations that would precede the advent of the last Emperor and the Holy Pope, who would reform the Church and preach barefoot against the infidel. A long period of peace would lead to the coming of Antichrist.

In all these cases a curious circumstance should be noted: actual disasters provoke a disaster-response that, in Lerner's words, was 'meant to inspire perseverance in faith, hope and penance . . . to give comfort by providing certainties in the face of uncertainty', to help 'frightened Europeans get about their work' (R.E. Lerner 1982 p.94). These disaster-responses were often so acute as to take the form of radically destabilising popular actions such as crusades, revolts and revolutions. Although Lerner describes the chiliastic ideas associated with the Black Death as 'not otherwise meant as calls to action' (R.E. Lerner 1982 p.94), two points should be noted. In the first place, the authorities often *saw* responses (for example the movement of the *pastoureaux* or the various flagellant fraternities) as destabilizing and hence sought to suppress them. Secondly, the authorities often developed a counter-discourse or ideology or propaganda to damp down the inflammatory aspects of the chiliastic mentality (see R. Landes 1988 and R. Landes 1987). This latter point is important for the present paper, for, in essence, I am proposing that our accepted view of the origins of the crusading movement is just such a counter-discourse, designed to suppress the causative role played by inflammatory millenarian forces in the last decades of the eleventh century. A proper appreciation of this point should

5. *Daniel* xii 11-12, *Revelations* viii 1, *Paul Thessalonians* i 5 3, ii 2 8. See in general N. Cohn 1970, B. McGinn 'Awaiting an end: research in medieval apocalypticism 1974-1981' *Medievalia et Humanistica* 11 (1982) 263-89, the various publications of Marjorie Reeves, the collection by D.C. West *Joachim of Fiore in Christian Thought: essays on the influence of the Calabrian Prophet* NY 1975, and D.C. West and S. Zimdars-Swartz *Joachim of Fiore: a study in spiritual perception and history* Indiana U P 1983.

not only correct an emphasis current in the historiography of the crusading movement, but confirm the suggestion that disaster-response in the medieval context is in many ways more culturally and socially revealing than disaster itself. Medieval disasters, in other words, are essentially 'constructed' and operate within a specific cultural discourse: they do not simply 'happen'.⁶

Medieval historians were convinced of the cataclysmic importance of the first crusade in human history. Robert, monk at Rheims, for example, wrote c.1108-10 in the preface to his Jerusalem-history: 'but, after the creation of the world, what historical event has been more marvellous, leaving aside the mystery of the salvational cross, than that which was carried out in our own times on this journey undertaken by our Jerusalemites?' (*Historia Iherosolimitana*, RHC III p.726). Robert does not say in his preface *why* the *iter nostrorum Iherosolimitanorum* was *mirabilius . . . opus . . . divinum* and, indeed, official preaching of 'the crusade' seldom makes reference to the impending disaster of the last days. Officially, both at the time and in the twentieth century, the crusades were a measured response to an *eastern* disaster. In March 1099 Pope Gregory VII wrote that news from overseas confirmed 'that a people of the pagans have been pressing hard upon the Christian Empire, have cruelly laid waste the country almost to the walls of Constantinople, and slaughtered like sheep many thousands of Christians' (E. Emerton 1969 p.25 and in general C. Erdmann 1977 pp.164ff, Robinson IS 1973 and Cowdrey HEJ 1982). Eight months later, despite an admission in September that 'the Christians beyond seas have, by God's help, driven back the fierce assault of the pagans . . .' (E. Emerton 1969 p.39), things had deteriorated: 'the Christians beyond the sea, a great part of whom are being destroyed by the heathen with unheard-of slaughter and are daily being slain like so many sheep, have humbly sent to beg me to succor these our brethren in whatever ways I can, that the religion of Christ may not utterly perish in our time - which God forbid!' (E. Emerton 1969 p.57).

Between 1074 and c.1110 A.D. this scenario was expanded by our Christian sources⁷ in a number of important ways. In the first place, we find reference to the Patzinaks (Pechenegs) and the Turks (Persians) daily ravaging and seizing the territories of the Greek Empire with the exception only of Constantinople, which is described as under seige. Secondly, the offending peoples, described as 'enslaved to demons', are alleged to have committed an astounding variety of carefully contrived atrocities against

6. Full illustration of these points cannot be attempted in the present paper: see above n.1.

7. Primarily the crusade 'speech' of Urban II at Clermont (on which see J.O. Ward 1985) and the various *excitatoria* cited in most of our histories of the crusading movement (for example E. Joranson 1950, A. Gieysztor 1948-50).

Christians in the Holy Land. They are alleged to have carried out compulsory circumcision on Christian boys and youths over Christians baptismal fonts, to have poured circumcision blood into the fonts, adding urine from the boys and youths, and to have smeared the altars with blood. They are further alleged to have dragged the said youths around the churches, compelling them to blaspheme against the Trinity - all on pain of torture or death. They are alleged to have robbed and raped noble matrons and their daughters, including virgins, whom they forced to sing wicked and obscene songs, compelling them to submit to rape before their own mothers, who also sang the songs. Boys, adolescents, youths, old men, nobles, serfs, clergy and monks are alleged to have been defiled by the sin of sodomy. A variety of deaths are alleged to have been contrived for the Christians, modelled on the deaths that were inflicted upon the Christian martyrs. These included having the belly cut open and the viscera taken out and tied to a stake; the owners were then flogged into running around the stake until dead; others were alleged to have been tied to a stake and shot with arrows; still others were decapitated. Other atrocities included sale into slavery, stabling of horses in Christian churches, and robbing of pilgrims' alms from the Holy Sepulchre. A particularly polemical, abusive and contemptuous *vita Mahometi* was composed and circulated to vilify in a comprehensive manner the entire religion of Islam. Our clearest representative expositions of this material today are the poems of Embrico of Mainz and Walter of Compiègne, and book I of Guibert of Nogent's *Gesta Dei per Francos* (G. Gambier 1962, R.W. Southern 1962 p.30, and note the conventional picture of the 'Saracen' in the *Chansons de geste*, [on which there is an extensive literature: Jonin 1964, Daniel 1984, Speed 1990, etc.]). A plea, addressed variously to the Pope, the count of Flanders, or the French, was drawn up, urging the addressed to come with all supporters to take Constantinople with its innumerable relics and great riches, or the Turk will do so, or else to take Jerusalem, which is depicted as a land of milk and honey, a paradise of delights, a supreme land of relics - all in return for salvation and the knowledge that thereby the sin of violence *between* Christians will be lessened.

What is clear from all this is the notion of the crusade as a specific *response to* a disaster or series of disasters. Modern historians are usually unequivocal on the nature of the disaster to which the crusades were a response.⁸ At the village of Man(t)zikert in the far eastern part of the Byzantine province of Anatolia, on the 19th of August 1071, the Byzantine

8. H.E.J. Cowdrey 1982 p.30, however, is representative of the recent trend to deny any link between Gregory VII's call to crusade and the battle of Manzikert. Gregory, of course, does not mention the battle in the letters cited.

Emperor Romanus Diogenes and a hastily scraped together army, was defeated decisively by Alp Arslan, the second sultan of the Seljuq Turks, and hordes of Turcomans, the Normans of the East, as it were, who had been moving west since the third or fourth decade of the eleventh century.⁹ This 'overwhelming defeat' (H.E.J. Mayer 1972 p.7) has been called 'the most decisive disaster in Byzantine history' (S. Runciman 1965 I p.64). 'The defeat of Manzikert, too often glossed over in our history books, was one of the worst disasters in European history' (R. Grousett 1970 p.3). Ostrogorsky describes Manzikert - with the blinding of Romanus and his death in 1072 - as 'a disastrous tragedy' (G. Ostrogorsky 1968 p.345). In the same year (1071) the Normans conquered Bari, the last Byzantine stronghold in Italy and a vassal of Alp Arslan conquered Jerusalem from the Fatimids.¹⁰ H E J Mayer, a leading crusade authority, writes that 'for Byzantium the loss of Anatolia [which followed Manzikert] remained a catastrophe' (H.E.J. Mayer 1972 p.6). 'The stages of military disaster are clear enough . . . after the defeat at Manzikert in 1071 the Empire lost the eastern highlands and central plateau of Asia Minor to the Seljuk Turks . . . the Empire could never be the same again' (P. Whitting 1971 pp.85-86). 'From 1071 on, the Turks wrested the larger part of Asia Minor from the Byzantines and captured Antioch in 1085; their advance unquestionably was one of the political causes of the crusading movement. And the efforts of Alexius to recover those territories gave a direct impulse to the crusade'.¹¹

The 'conventional' disaster-response theory, then, runs thus: calls went out from Byzantium to the West following Manzikert, stressing the chaotic and unsafe conditions for Christians in the Holy Land and asking for military assistance. Whether responding directly to a Manzikert-related request or simply out of concern for the general safety of Christians and the Holy Places, the papacy under Gregory VII and Urban II,¹² keen to extend its ecclesiopolitical sway in the east, showed an interest in organising some

9. In an interesting anticipation of the theme of the present paper, indeed, it is worth noting that the advent of the first Turkish raiders in parts of Asia Minor (1016-17 A.D.) had provoked an Armenian witness (Matthew of Edessa) to eschatological exclamations about 'the fulfillment of divine portents (. . . for) the Christian adorners of the Holy Cross' (S. Vryonis.1971 p.80-81).

10. It was recovered in 1076.

11. C. Erdmann 1977 pp.360-61 and see H. Fuhrmann 1986 p.108 'The basileus of Byzantium Alexis I (1081-1118) had unleashed the First Crusade with his appeal for help . . .'

12. The *Liber Pontificalis* life of Urban II claims that Urban was influenced by Gregory in the matter of crusading promotion, but Cowdrey feels this may simply be the writer's inference from the letters on the subject in Gregory's *Registrum* (H.E.J. Cowdrey 1982 pp.39-40). It is not, of course, unlikely, that Urban himself had read those letters. Both Urban and Gregory seem to have been interested in union between the Byzantine and western churches, whether as a cause or consequence of an interest in broader eastern problems. See H.E.J. Cowdrey 1970 pp.174ff.

expedition eastwards; minor assistance was also offered to Byzantium by individuals, such as the count of Flanders (S. Runciman.1965 I p.104). Urban II was a more effective organiser than previous popes and, consequently, his preaching of crusade at Clermont in November 1095 produced unprecedented results. Around mid-August of 1096 military contingents, led by prominent western barons, *did* set out for the east. Jerusalem itself, as is well known, was conquered as a direct consequence of this expedition, on 15/7/1099.

There are certain important weaknesses in this 'crusades-as-disaster-response' theory. These may be set out, in summary form, thus:

- (a) Manzikert is never specifically referred to as a disaster in western sources, and even from an eastern point of view it is quite clear that it merely underlined rather than created Byzantine inability to hold Anatolia and the eastern provinces.¹³ Anthony Bryer has shown that the eastern Emperor Romanus was the victim not of epochal military failure, but of the complicated vortex of Anatolian/Armenian nationalism, and, above all, of the treachery of the politically supreme 'philosophers' back in the capital, who, by blinding Romanus and disbanding his army, virtually ceded Asia Minor to the Turks (P. Whitting 1971 pp.95-96). Bryer also wonders whether 'the Byzantines were not fortunate in losing that forbidding land. Even in 1071 Central Anatolia was already desolate and thinly populated . . . nor were the Seljuqs . . . settled agriculturalists . . . responsible for the waste' (P. Whitting 1971 p.97). In addition, 'it cannot be proved that the Turks actually did oppress the Christians in the East, as western sources, among them the speech attributed to Urban II at Clermont, maintained' (H.E. Mayer 1972 p.6.). Any increased difficulties pilgrims encountered were gradual and along a broad front, not to be associated particularly with Manzikert (H.E. Mayer 1972 p.14).
- (b) Manzikert took place in 1071 and the first crusaders did not set out until August 1096, a quarter of a century later;
- (c) there is no real evidence that the Council of Clermont functioned as a crusade-rally council at all (see J.O. Ward 1985 and above n.1);
- (d) when the knightly crusaders came to Byzantium they were both unexpected and unwelcome, whatever their official reception may have been (J.P. Pryor 1984 and note in particular the remarks of Anna Comnena.);

13. See S. Vryonis 1971 Ch.II pp.69ff and especially pp.103-04 on the fact that the advent of the Turks in Asia Minor was greatly facilitated by longer term internal factors, especially rivalry between provincial generals and the bureaucrats of the capital. This chapter also has the fullest account of the battle of Manzikert.

- (e) the motley groups associated with Peter the Hermit, Walter the Penniless, Volkmar, Gottschalk and count Emicho of Leisingen, who ravaged their way through the Rhineland and Hungary to Constantinople in April, May and June of 1096, *in advance of the knightly contingents*, were even less welcome to Byzantium.

These latter groups obviously set out as soon as weather conditions permitted and their presence in advance of the knightly contingents is the chief weakness of the 'official' disaster-response theory outlined above. For, if the popular elements moved first - and the account of Guibert of Nogent suggests they did because they had fewer preparations to make (Guibert of Nogent *Gesta Dei per Francos RHC IV* p.141A, 142DE etc.) - what moved them to do so? Certainly not the kind of official arrangements that may have linked the pope with the princes.

The usual explanation is simply that the 'peasants' crusade' was a half-baked or half-cocked princely crusade, initiated because certain popular preachers simplified and overdid Urban's injunctions and exhortations at Clermont. An even more extreme proposition is the view that the "peasants' crusade" was actually a movement of 'prosperous middle-class freeholders and townsmen, foresighted enough to furnish themselves with the equipment and money necessary for a long journey to the East'; this movement of prosperous piety reflected the 'considerable economic progress . . . growth of commerce and industry, the rise of towns, and the colonization of new agricultural lands', all 'marks of prosperity', that characterized the 'last years of the eleventh century' (F. Duncalf 1921 pp.440, 453).

The tendency to blur two radically different phenomena should, it seems to me, be resisted, in the interests of historical accuracy and clarity. The idea of 'two crusades', whether 'knightly' and 'popular', or 'northern' and southern', is an old and often criticized one,¹⁴ but that is no reason to reject it. The concept of two quite different movements is, in my view, the only one that fits the evidence available. On the one hand we have the **conservative, hierarchical, non-millenarian movement** in which the pope (Urban II) initiates or helps with the organising of military aid to Byzantium on an ongoing basis, but with a number of specifically papal interests: (a) to strengthen his own position in Europe against the German-backed opposition in Italy; (b) to establish favourable links with and possible supremacy over the eastern church; (c) to make the Peace of God effective in Europe.

14. A recent version appears in M.D. Coupe 1987. Cf. B. McGinn 1978 pp.46-47 for a criticism of the 'two separate crusades' idea.

On the other hand, we have the **radical, popular, millenarian** movement described long ago by Cohn and Alphanféry (N. Cohn 1970, P. Alphanféry 1954 [see also P. Alphanféry 1952]), and recently localised to 'regions where Urban's Clermont appeal became but slowly known' (M.D. Coupe 1987 p.42). The chief feature of this movement is its apparent independence of Urban II and the knightly leaders with whom he had dealings, its messianic/millenarian flavour, its link with the *prophetae*, the proto-heretical wandering preacher-prophets¹⁵ through whom elements of the apocalyptic message contained within certain passages from the Bible reached selected groups of auditors, and through them a wider audience, for which they functioned as a theodicy explaining the relationship between current and imminent disasters (floods, plagues, falling stars, famines) and the last days.

It is heuristically desirable to keep these two movements apart *in case* they in fact were; combined, their possibly separate origins are obscured for ever. A relevant feature of the first movement, from the point of view of the present inquiry, is the non-millennial nature of its preaching and literary record, which stresses instead a tangible military foe, atrocities, relics and salvation through orthodox indulgences. It urges action to counteract something which it defines as a disaster in our modern sense, that is, the tale of woe in the east, which is undesirable, is something to be countered by specific action on earth. If eschatological elements appear, they do so in a purely metaphorical and generalised sense: 'hasten,¹⁶ therefore, with your entire people and fight with all your strength, lest such treasure¹⁷ fall into the hands of the Turks and the Patzinaks; because, while they are infinite, just now sixty thousand are daily expected, and I fear that by means of this treasure they gradually will seduce our covetous soldiers as did formerly Julius Caesar, who, by reason of avarice invaded the kingdom of the Franks,

15. For a reasonably conservative account of the background here see H. Leyser *Hermits and the New Monasticism: a study of religious communities in western Europe 1000-1150* London. See also *HF*. An extreme exponent of the 'radical' view is Helmold, whose *Chronicle of the Slavs* (1167-72 AD) I 31 records that 'a certain Peter, by birth a Spaniard, by profession a monk, entered the confines of the Roman Empire and sent forth the voice of his preaching over the whole kingdom, exhorting the people to go to Jerusalem to liberate the Holy City which was held by the barbarians. He produced a letter which he affirmed had been brought down from heaven, wherein it was written that the times of the nations are fulfilled and that the City must be liberated which was trodden down by the heathen. Then the mighty ones of all countries - bishops, dukes, counts, knightly men as well as common men, abbots, monks - took the road to Jerusalem under the leadership of the most valiant Godfrey . . .' (Tschan pp.112-13, Schmeidler pp.58-59). In this account there is, of course, no reference to Urban II's role.

16. The source being quoted ('the spurious letter of Emperor Alexius') is addressed to the count of Flanders.

17. 'the treasure-vaults of of the churches of Constantinople . . . the treasures of the temple of Solomon . . . the infinite treasures of the nobles . . . of the common merchants . . . of the former emperors . . . Constantinopolitan (and) ancient Roman . . .'

and as Antichrist will do at the end of the world after he has captured the whole earth' (E. Joranson 1950 p.815). There is no suggestion here that Antichrist *is* at hand, only that his alleged conduct provides a formal metaphoric model for certain forms of action.

An important bridge to the radically millenarian content of the messianic ideas that apparently motivated the second group referred to above, is the *Gesta Dei per Francos* of the minor northern French abbot, man of letters and self-confessed crusade rewriter, Guibert of Nogent (J. Chaurand 1965). Guibert's crusading history was composed about a decade after the fall of Jerusalem and although a formal apologist for the focal role played by Pope Urban and the baronial leaders, Guibert seems much closer to the kind of apocalyptic preaching that seems to have circulated in northern France and nearby areas in the last decades of the eleventh century than are the other learned, clerical sources for the genesis of the first crusade.¹⁸ Guibert is concerned to persuade potential crusaders by reference to the scriptural claims of Jerusalem as birthplace of Christ on any Christian. He makes no reference to atrocity stories except in terms of generalised barbarities inflicted by (Turkish) customs officials on pilgrims - which include disembowelling, but mainly as a technique for discovering hidden gold or silver. Yet Guibert *does* speak of the imminence of Antichrist's coming, 'with the end of the world already near', and of the consequent need for Christians to take over Jerusalem, for, according to the last-days prophecies, Antichrist, based on Jerusalem, must do battle *with Christians* (not with Jews), and hence there must be Christians in Jerusalem; hence the crusades are seen as a call to reconvert the eastern regions to Catholicism, thus fulfilling the claims of the prophetic books of the Bible (*RHC* IV pp.137-40).

Joshua Praver has commented on the 'revolution' in biblical interpretation that took place in the course of the eleventh century, whereby 'Jerusalem' became again, not the purely spiritual, metaphorical figure of 'the solid Christian tradition' of the patristic and earlier medieval period, but 'the physical earthly city which will witness the clash between Antichrist and the Saviour'.¹⁹ Guibert of Nogent's version of Pope Urban II's speech at Clermont is the clearest indication of the apocalyptic fervour which gripped leading intellectuals of the day, and, arguably, the *populus*, the appearance

18. His depiction of Peter the Hermit *RHC* IV p.142 has an authenticity lacking in the other chroniclers. For Guibert Peter is a figure startlingly like Henry of Le Mans or Tanchelm or some of the early twelfth century heresiarchs (R.I. Moore 1975).

19. J. Praver 1978 pp.745, 750-51. See also B. McGinn 1978 pp.41 and 60 n.43 (with references) for a view which makes less of the opposition between the spiritual and earthly connotations of the word 'Jerusalem'.

of which in our sources, argues Moore, 'is . . . one of the most obvious novelties of the eleventh century'.²⁰

Yet Guibert is doing no more than pick up a thread long since evident to 'the more watchful of the age' (*quidam de sollitioribus*: Ralph Glaber *Histories* 4.6.21 ed. France p.204) who, when asked what was the meaning of the unheard of outbreak of mass pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the 1030's AD 'replied cautiously enough that it could portend nothing other than the advent of the accursed Antichrist who, according to divine testimony, is expected to appear at the end of the world (*when*) a way would be opened for all peoples to the east where he would appear and all the nations would march against him without delay (my italics). In fact then will be fulfilled that prophecy of the Lord that even the elect will, if it is possible, fall into temptation' (*Matthew* xxiv 24). Landes, in fact, proposes that long before 1095 the clergy were adept at depicting mass fervour, miracle-working relic displays, elaborate commemorative liturgies led by the bishops, messianic themes and public prayer ceremonies at peace councils, complete with eruptions of shouting ('*pax! pax! pax!*'), as if such phenomena represented 'a sign of the everlasting covenant between God and themselves' (R. Landes 1987 p.509 quoting Ralph Glaber). They likened the attending masses to 'the sons of Israel after leaving the servitude of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea, wishing to enter the Promised Land with Moses' (R. Landes 1987 p.468 quoting an early eleventh-century source).

Whether such descriptions were of fact or represented attempts at clerical control of events, their very existence warns us of the monastic and clerical tendency 'to sanction the present goal - the stable and peaceful society toward which all should strive - . . . by picturing the past in terms of a present ideal' (R. Landes 1987 p.480, S.G. Nichols 1983). Careful study, however, suggests that 'popular spirituality apparently had a life and intensity all its own'.²¹ The lesson for any study of the events of the year

20. R.I. Moore 1980 p.49. I cannot share McGinn's skepticism in regard to apocalyptic elements in the popular preaching of the late eleventh century. His view that Guibert's apocalypticism was peculiar (I prefer P. Rousset 1945 p.194), or, more extraordinarily, his view that 'the late eleventh century was not a time of widespread fear of the end of the world', or his view that millenarian ideas (involving a role for the Emperor of the Last Days) could not have flourished because the Pope and the Emperor 'were at loggerheads' (B. McGinn 1978 p.47), strike me as out of tune with the evidence, to say the least. Against the last point it is enough to cite the satisfying discussions of N. Cohn 1970 pp.73ff, 84ff, P. Alphan ery 1954 pp.51ff, 75ff, 127ff and P. Alphan ery 1952 pp.16ff; H.E.J. Cowdrey 1982 pp.38ff; J. Riley-Smith 1982 pp.48ff. On apocalyptic aspects of the first crusade see P. Alphan ery 1954 pp.127ff, esp. p.135. J. Riley-Smith 1986 pp.34-35 and J. Gy ory 1962 pp.382-83, 389f. A. Fliche 1938 p.775 finds the fact that Urban rather than the Emperor promulgated the crusade 'l'aboutissement logique et normal de toute une s erie de circonstances qui s' chelonnent sur deux si cles.' (and see J. Riley-Smith 1986 p.153).

21. R. Landes 1987 p.505. For general changes in the European penitential system and their relevance to popular religiosity and conscience see H.E.J. Cowdrey 1976

1095 is not to underestimate (a) popular elements in the genesis of the crusading movement, in favour of elite motivation and direction, and (b) the clerical tendency to write history in accordance with a present ideal.

The core, in fact, of the radical, millenarian 'crusading' impulse is the appearance of the volatile 'crowd' on the stage of history, with its capacity for *initiating* political action. The relative paucity of 'our sources for the People's Crusade, as well as for the "popular" elements in formal Crusade' (B. McGinn 1978 pp.46-47) should not blind us to the causative role played by popular ideas and groups: by their very nature, sources reflect more the validated, institutionalised hierarchical world of authority than they do the transient, ephemeral, 'liminal'²² world of the people and the mass movements it spawns. Undoubtedly the capacity for action on the part of the *populus* was enhanced by alienated clerical and even, on occasions, knightly elements; equally undoubtedly an aspiring semi-prosperous middle element of artisans, retailers, minor producers, servile administrators and even small scale landed proprietors or owners played a larger role than the destitute and rootless *pauperes*. Nevertheless, the mobilized *pauperes* provided the crucial component of numbers that enabled coteries surrounding disaffected clerical or even knightly leaders to become prominent in, broadly, four classes of 'visible' activity during the later years of the eleventh century and the early years of the twelfth: heretical confraternities,²³ eremetical confraternities (above n.15), communal confraternities (R.G. Witt 1971 984ff, J. Scott and J.O. Ward 1992 pp.29ff) and salvational apocalyptic Jerusalem-bound fraternities (cf. in general N. Cohn 1970 pp.53-60). In all these movements except (perhaps) the communal, an energising factor was the symbolic importance of a chaste, moral and ascetic priestly eremetical leadership in close conjunction with a popular expectation of imminent salvation associated with the coming enactment of conditions prophesied in, for example, the *Book of Revelations*.

Crucial in all this was the as yet ill-understood role played by new and old local churches (R.I. Moore 1980; C.N.L. Brooke 1970), eremetical *prophetae* and other literate persons (cf. above n.15 and B. Stock 1983) in fomenting a

pp.21ff ('no reader of eleventh-century sources, especially those relating to the crusade, can fail to be struck by men's insistent preoccupation to secure the remission of sins, *remissio peccatorum* . . .') and H.E.J. Cowdrey 1970 pp.121ff. It is perhaps no accident that the 'popular' form of crusade history objected to by the learned rewriting clerics of the early twelfth century was 'acephalous' (J.O. Ward 1985 p.142). Popular religious forms were by nature acephalous. Thus Alphantery (1952 p.21) writes that in the *Chanson d'Antioch* 'l'armée élue est acéphale, le Christ guerrier est remplacé par le peuple de saints . . .'

22. Cf. the comments on 'Millenarian Movements' in V. Turner 1969 pp.111ff, and also V. Turner 1974. Cf. too n.54 below.
23. Cf. the relevant sources collected in R.I. Moore 1975, Wakefield-Evans and E. Peters 1980.

congealment in the popular imagination of socio-economic distress, stellar and other symbolic phenomena, the last days, the role of the poor in the last days and the role of Jerusalem and physical migration to it. As shortlived as this congealment was, it and it alone served to ignite the 'crusade' bonfire. The activities of the pope can only be seen as formative in the clerical post-factum rationalization that took place in the decades following the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099.

The ingredients in the above mix need a somewhat closer focus in the present context. First is a phenomenon stressed long ago by Cohn and more recently by Nelson (N. Cohn 1970 pp.53-60, J. Nelson 1972.): 'the division of communities under ecological pressure . . . migration and the establishment of the market (in) lowland Europe, the hinterlands of some twenty or thirty kilometres radius around the growing urban centres from which they drew the bulk of their population and their labour force' (R.I. Moore 1980 p.58). 'Religious dissent in the early eleventh century typically, though not invariably, appeared in the urban hinterland and moved to the town' (R.I. Moore 1980 p.59). Critical problems of conjugal relationships, landed inheritance and mortgage, a shortage of parish clergy, the absence of public order, the growing prominence of money and, consequently, of robbery, the increasing pressure of the banal seigneurie, a sense of unresolved guilt and penance, a growing unease over the moral, landed and social position of women, placed 'extraordinary strain' on newly emerging communities, involving them in 'new strains, tensions and temptations', representing for them 'a notorious source of tension and dispute'.²⁴

Such circumstances created an inflammable mix of social and economic aspirations, contrasts of wealth and poverty and a failing of political, moral and religious authority structures. Into this mix were thrown the seeds of new (literate) and potentially revolutionary theodicies. A new ferment of speculation in regard to the eucharist (B. Stock 1983 pp.252ff; J.H. Van Engen 1983 pp.135ff), baptism and the sacraments, abstinence, marriage, concubinage and relationships between men and women, creation, the devil, Christ's redemption of mankind, the power of kings, priests, bishops, and, above all, the last days, developed which thrust Europeans into the midst of an intellectual Renaissance with incalculable consequences for the future.²⁵

24. R.I. Moore 1980 pp.59ff; B. Stock 1983 pp.499ff; G. Duby 1985; P. Barker 1985 and P. Dockès 1982. Cf. also above n.59. Violante notes that the 'fioritura eremetica' occurs in strict connection with increasing traffic and urban growth and meant a movement towards a more personal, intimate, non-institutionalised form of religion (C. Violante 1972 pp.130, 135 and cf. L. Genicot 1965 pp.48ff). I find the approach of Moore, Violante and others more appropriate than that of F. Duncalf 1921.

25. In addition to works already cited see J.O. Ward 1990, V.I.J. Flint 1988; Le J. Goff *The Birth of Purgatory* trans Goldhammer A Chicago U P 1981; J.A. Brundage *Law Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* U of Chicago P 1987; R.I. Moore 1980

Amongst the new resources thrown up to provide some guidance in this ferment were the texts of the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic), occultic and apocalyptic ideas, gnosticism, law (J.O. Ward 1989 reviewing H.J. Berman 1983), biblical exegesis (with important Jewish contacts (E. Toutou 1984 pp.3-12), theological and patristic *sententiae* collections (V.I.J. Flint 1988, reprinted paper 'P'), penitentials (G. Duby 1985 ch.3 and cf. A. Gurevich 1988 ch 3 pp.78ff). Driving innovations in these areas was 'the fear of sexual contamination . . . the fear of pollution . . . the fear of manipulation, that society was being subverted by mysterious enemies, which, by their own malice or by invoking the wrath of God upon their sins, caused conflict, corruption and eventually collapse' (R.I. Moore 1980 p.67. Cf. *RHC* V p.255 *ea scilicet ratione, ut civitatem sanctam et sancta sanctorum a cultura daemoniorum et ab immundis ritibus paganorum emundarent.*)

In the ensuing struggle on the part of the reformers and the *pauperes* who found themselves the inhabitants of a world complex enough to require, eventually, a new class of specialists (a permanent, resident, full-time parish priesthood), the ascendancy of the *gyrovagi* (H. Fuhrmann 1986 p.70), *wanderprediger* (B. McGinn 1978 p.47), *prophetae* (above n.15) and heretical fraternity leaders of the period c.1075-1125 (above nn. 18,23) is a transitional phenomenon of the highest importance. This ascendancy was promoted by the ability of the transitional leaders to decodify for the *populus* distressing and foreboding signs that were to be observed all around it.

Underlying the decodification of these distressing signs was a system of semiotic identification and classification whereby observed *phenomena* could be converted into *signs* that were amenable to decodification, that is, selective interpretation. The observed phenomena were basically of two kinds: physical failure and discomfort (plague, *ignis sacer*, famine, excessive rain, matched by disasters in the east [P. Alphanhéry 1954 p.50]) and stellar or monstrous 'analogues' (prodigies, falling stars, hail, eclipses). Neither the later eleventh-century *prophetae* nor the assembled bishops at such synods as that held at Clermont in 1095 were novices in the construction and decodification of these signs: second-tier (monastic) intellectuals such as Ralph Glaber himself (see Glaber *Histories* ed. France 3.3, 4.2-6 and p.xx) and *episcoporum nonnulla . . . synodorum conciliabula* (Glaber *Histories* 3.3.12, ed. France p.112) had preceded them in the first half of the eleventh

pp.63ff; G. Evans *Old Arts and New Theology: the beginnings of theology as an academic discipline* Oxford 1980; R.W. Southern 1956.

century.²⁶ Consequently, chroniclers of all persuasions were quick to note both the above classes of observed phenomena in the 1080's and 1090's, and were just as quick to decode them.²⁷

Characteristic of the apocalypticism of the first crusade chroniclers is, perhaps, the *Hierosolymita* of Ekkehard of Aura, written, probably, in the years immediately following his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the company of German crusaders.²⁸ Ekkehard announces the reign of Henry IV in Germany and Alexius in Constantinople as a time of civil strife, earthquakes, pestilence, famine, stellar terrors et *signa magna* (*RHC* V p.12. Cf. *Matthew* xxix 24). The evidence for these is almost literally the *praesagium evangelicum*, the phraseology of *Matthew* (xxiv 7 and cf. *Mark* xiii 8 and *Luke*

26. In his *Histories* 4.1 ed. France pp.170-71, Ralph Glaber had indeed told his readers that *multiplicia prodigiorum signa* surrounded the years 1000 and 1033 A.D. and that there did not lack *sagaci mente viros industrios* to interpret them. Glaber himself had shown the close conjunction between solar eclipses, social disorder and disaster in his *Histories* 4.9.24-26 ed. France pp.210ff. See B. Stock 1983 p.104.

27. See: N. Cohn 1970 pp.63, 336 n.63; H.E. Mayer 1972 p.12; M.D. Coupe 1987 p.40; H.E.J. Cowdrey 1970a; H. Fuhrmann 1986 pp.11-12 (Holy Fire 'reached epidemic proportions in some years, for instance 1076, 1089 and 1094 . . . it is scarcely a coincidence that the First and Second Crusades had been preceded by famines in 1095 and 1145-7, and the Bamberg monk Frutolf of Michelsberg noted drily in his chronicle under the year 1095 that the "western Franks" had easily been persuaded to leave their fields, for "the lands of Gaul had for some years experienced civil war, famine, and high mortality" . . .'); P. Alphan  ry 1954 pp.44ff, 61ff and R. R  hricht 1901 p.24 (44 years of famine 970-1040 - 'Die Jahre von 1085 bis 1095 bilden eine ununterbrochene Kette von Calamit  ten . . .', though R  hricht, of course, assigns causative priority to the 'Kriegsruf Urbans II' [p.23], P. Alphan  ry.46 'm  me    lire superficiellement les chroniques, que de 1085    1095, les circonstances ont bien chang  . Une suite ininterrompue de calamit  s s'abat sur l'Occident . . .'), J. Riley-Smith 1986 pp.33-34,44 and ch.4 generally; H. Hagenmeyer 1883 pp.95ff, 130ff; H. Hagenmeyer 1973 p.7 under the year 1095; A. Rousset 1945 pp.90-99; Halphen-Poupardin p.237; J. LeGoff 1988 pp.27ff (on the reappearance of the 'marvellous' in the high culture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries); P.J. Alexander PJ 1968 p.1005 ('most apocalypses were written to provide comfort in time of tribulation . . .'). There is much of value for a correct understanding of the events of the 1090's in Europe in the account of R.E. Lerner 1983. In the 1230's a Hungarian Cistercian wrote a celebrated 'Tripoli' or 'Cedar of Lebanon' prophecy to explain the Mongol catastrophe as a scourging for Christians, and saw it as part of the fulfilment of God's plan. R.E. Lerner marks (p.197) that 'it was above all in times of perceived crisis that people wrote or read prophecies which helped them make sense of perceived disasters and served to give them hope'. The 'Tripoli' prophecy had an irreducible minimum comprising 'a message that most people expected and presumably wanted to hear' (p.190): contemporary troubles would be followed by worse ones, then a wondrous time of Christian triumph and peace would take place followed by news of Antichrist. Ensuing trials would be terrible but short. The ultimate motive behind such prophecies was (p.193) consolation: 'chilistic beliefs in the Middle Ages were commonplace aids in coping with reality' (p.194); clerics were the main initial readers (p.195). The message of the prophecies was not revolutionary (pp.195-96). The clergy and some lay folk kept track of eschatological portents/prophecies which 'were constantly copied, altered and recopied; they were always on fly-leaves and most often have been in the air to the extent that their readers talked or preached about them to others' (p.196). No less, I would argue, could be said of the late eleventh century in Europe.

28. 1101-02 A.D. *RHC* V pp.IIIff; cf. too P. Alphan  ry 1954 p.77: Ekkehard's *Chronicon Universale* was written c.1125 A.D., his *Hierosolymita* c.1112-17. On the former work, see further below.

xvi 10-11) where such phenomena are announced by Christ to his disciples who have asked him *dic nobis . . . quod signum adventus tui, et consummationis saeculi?* (*Matthew xxiv 4*). For Ekkehard it must be stated initially that the *evangelica tuba iusti iudicis adventum praeconabatur* 'for Lo! the universal church gazes upon the whole world everywhere presaging the foretold signs (*signa prophetata*)'. The 'Saracen' capture of the Byzantine east and especially of the Holy Places, particularly Jerusalem, is taken as the foretold rising up of *gens in gentem et regnum in regnum*.²⁹ Alexius, in response, sends *non paucas epistolas Urbano papae* (*RHC V p.15*). The latter convokes a general council (Ekkehard - significantly³⁰ - does not know where it was held), declaims to the assembled company and the expedition of auxiliaries bearing crosses on their clothes results.

In what follows Ekkehard has one eye on the *tribulatio* of the Gospel, involving persecution of the faithful, *desolatio . . . in loco sancto*, the appearance of *pseudoprophetae, pseudochristi* proferring *signa magna et prodigia* designed to delude even the *electi*, each of whom *autem perseveraverit usque in finem*.³¹ The *tribulatio* is followed by an eclipse of both sun and moon, falling stars (*Matthew xxiv 29*) and a movement of the *virtutes caelorum*, following which will appear the *signum Filii hominis in caelo* and all the elect will gather from everywhere for the *consummatio*.

Ekkehard first analyses the motives of those going to the land of Fresh Promise (*terra repromissionis*), perhaps as he ascertained them from those he himself encountered. The western French, within the area reached by the 'apostolic edict', were driven from their *rura* by *seditione civilis, fames, mortalitas, plaga*. The *plebes* of other (western) nations confessed themselves to have been driven by newly risen prophets, heavenly signs and revelations, ill-fortune (*incommoditates*); many came complete with the burden of their families (*RHC V p.17*). The eastern Franks and the Germans were too preoccupied with schism to hear the call to crusade (*buccina*) and it was communicated to them in a secondary, confused manner (*RHC V p.18A*). An eclipse *quod praescriptum est* (*Matthew xxiv 29*) encouraged many waverers, as did aerial happenings and portents on land: flying stars, bloody clouds, strange fiery glows from the north, flaming stars. A certain old priest, Siggerius, saw two horsed warriors in the sky, one (the victor) with a

29. The language is common to both *Matthew* and Ekkehard; *RHC V pp.12-14*.

30. The idea that the first crusade was launched at Clermont, and that the pope appointed Adhemar to lead it grew slowly, as a consequence of events (see the papers mentioned in n.1 above for a fuller elaboration of this view). Thus Guibert of Nogent does not know Adhemar's name in the preface to his *Gesta dei* (*RHC IV p.121*).

31. *Matthew xxiv 9*; cf. the role of the *pseudoprophetae* and their *miracula* in Ralph Glaber, *Histories* 4.3.6 ed. France p.180.

large cross. Another priest, now a monk, saw a wondrous sword born aloft by the wind; others saw the image of a city in the sky, to which all were rushing, on horse and on foot; some had the sign of the cross miraculously stamped on their clothes or body, a kind of *stigmata* binding them to the *militia domini* (*RHC* V p.19). Compelled by some night-time vision to change their mind, sell their goods and sew the sign of mortification onto their clothes, crowds beyond number flocked to the churches to receive a new rite in the form of swords, cudgels and pilgrims' wallets (*capsellis* [reliquaries?]). A woman two years pregnant gave birth to a speaking child and other prodigies were born. Erroneous fables and beliefs then arose to confuse the *militia creatoris*, . . . *juxta boni pastoris vaticinium* (*Matthew* xxiv 11, 24): *inimicus ille* (the devil) aroused *pseudopphetas* . . . *falsos fratres et inhonestas feminei sexus personas sub specie religionis* (*RHC* V p.19) in the Lord's armies.

Ekkehard's *Chronicon Universale*, the first redaction of which was perhaps composed shortly before the year 1100 (*RHC* V p.v; cf. also above n.28), displays similar preoccupations and phraseology. Aside from details of regnal changes, the chronicle for the years 1091-1095 contains only the following items (*MGH* SS VI p.207):

- 1091: plagues of (disease-bearing) grubs about the size of flies were seen in many areas, swarming not far above the ground and blocking the light of the sun; many interpreted this prodigious vision to be a foreshadowing of the outset of those going to Jerusalem, which happened four years later.
- 1092: a great pestilence for man and beast.
- 1093: the duke of Bohemia falls from his horse and dies. A brilliant light flying from east to west like a torch is seen (cf. *RHC* V p.18). There is an eclipse of the sun and a great mortality followed.
- 1094: the church is incredibly devastated by huge mortality, pestilence, hurricanes, floods and other disasters.

Enough has been said to indicate how closely the chroniclers read history in terms of the prophesied pattern of the last days. Nothing in Ekkehard's account suggests that the *populus* was any different, and, indeed, unless the chronicling intelligentsia was perpetuating on subsequent generations a cunning hoax, how could the *populus* think otherwise than its literate leaders? The account of the year 1096 in Ekkehard's *Chronicon Universale* (*MGH* SS VI p.208), the year in which he thought the 'crusade' began, presents an amazing picture of unreliable and extravagant priest-figures (cf. Peter the Hermit *MGH* SS p.208, Godescalc *RHC* V p.20A) leading a

populace confused by a plethora of heavenly signs: a sign appeared in the sun at the beginning of Lent: the world was everywhere thought to be about to produce various prodigies. Soon, from almost everywhere, but especially from the regions of the western kingdoms, innumerable armed throngs - kings, nobles, *vulgi*, both sexes - began to make for Jerusalem, aroused to zeal (*excitati . . . in zelum*) by frequent messengers telling of the oppression of the Lord's sepulchre and the desolation (*Matthew xxiv 15*) of all the eastern churches. The first to go followed a certain monk Peter, whom several later claimed to be a hypocrite.

A very similar pattern is found in 'one of the most celebrated and influential chronicles, that by Sigebert of Gembloux' (D. Hay 1977 p.46; *MGH SS VI* pp.366-67): severe plagues, famines, crop failures, pestilences, mortality and celestial oddities characterizing the years 1090-1094 lead up to a crescendo in 1095, an *annus calamitosus* marked by famine, social strife (*pauperibus per furta et incendia ditiores graviter vexantibus*), hurricanes, earthquakes and falling stars. The year 1096 follows Ekkehard's pattern: two eclipses of the moon lead to a universal movement to the Holy Land. The tale of stellar phenomena and natural disasters continues into 1097.

It is not impossible that chroniclers such as Ekkehard and Sigebert were recording what they perceived around them. Even a chronicler living much closer to the area allegedly in touch with Urban's crusade call³² records for the year 1089 a very close association between *ignis sacer* and mass pilgrimage to a particular church of the Virgin, where miracles and pious deeds were believed to have secured some capacity to ameliorate the terrors of the plague (Tournai, *MGH SS VII* p.543 13-14 and cf. Ralph Glaber *Histories* 4.3.6 ed. France p.180 *vulgus . . . gnatum quicquid rusticane plebis*). Bernard of St. Blasien, a chronicler more amply dedicated to the close record of the doings of society's leaders than Ekkehard or Sigebert has occasion to detail the same pattern of events (*MGH SS V* pp.455 lines 23,36, 457 lines 6,8, 459 lines 5-15, 460 line 18 - 461 line 5) leading to a crescendo of concern with clerical reform (*MGH SS V* pp.462-64), some small part of which concerns answering an appeal from Alexius for aid (*MGH SS V* p.462 line 20, under the year 1095, at Piacenza), and a mass movement *his temporibus* (i.e. 1096 A.D.) to Jerusalem *contra paganos ut liberarent Christianos* (*MGH SS V* p.464 line 14), of which the pope was *maximus auctor*, in that, as Bernard has recorded for the council held at Piacenza,³³ 'he strenuously advised all in past synods concerning this expedition and most firmly

32. Flanders. The chronicle seems to have been written c.1133 and records under the year 1095 that Urban, in a context of church reform, *viam Ierusalem instituit*, and under the year 1096 that *per admonitionem saepefacti papae Urbani, habitantes terram viam Ierusalem aggredi coeperunt*. See *MGH SS VII* pp.526, 544-45.

33. But not Clermont, which Bernard does *not* link with crusade: *MGH SS V* pp.463-64.

commended it to them in return for remission of their sins (not, note, 'penance'). All either sewed crosses onto their clothes or had one miraculously imprinted on their flesh . . .' (*MGH SS V* p.464).

The major rhetorical crusade rewriters (J.O. Ward 1985) reveal, of course, a much greater commitment to the thesis that animates the lesser chroniclers. Guibert of Nogent's concern with Antichrist has been noted already. His account of events following the council of Clermont speaks of general misery and shortage of food (*RHC IV* pp.141-42), social and moral evils of all sorts, fires and wars, all leading to a wondrous messianic fervour associated with the cross, the pope's encouragement, and Christ. The equally learned and literate historian Baudry of Bourgeuil, well persuaded of the legend of Urban's launching of the crusade at Clermont, is keen, however, to set it in the proper apocalyptic context. He records that in 1095, on Wednesday April 4, *tantus stellarum discursus* was seen by numerous observers in Gaul, such that were they not alight, one would have thought it a hailstorm (*RHC IV* p.16). Some said that the stars were falling - *opinabantur etiam quidam eas cecidisse*, but Baudry will not confirm anything rashly about this apparent falling (*de earum occubitu*), although he knows, upon the testimony of truth, what is going to happen when 'stars will fall from the sky': *Matthew*, as we have seen, describes the *suprema tribulatio* and the *adventus Filii hominis: post tribulationem dierum illorum, sol obscurabitur et luna non dabit lumen suum et stellae cadent de caelo et virtutes caelorum commovebuntur: et tunc parebit signum Filii hominis in caelo . . .* (*Matthew xxiv 29*). Baudry continues in his learned manner: 'anyone who is hesitant, or places any credence in what we say, or in what our annals say - where he will find it all set out - should at least rest assured as far as the movement or pattern of flashing of those (stars) is concerned.³⁴ What that concourse (of stars) portends in particular, however, we can define only in a minimal way, especially since it is not yet given to us to "know the mystery of the kingdom of God" (*Mark iv 11, Luke viii 10*), *sed per parabolas et quasdam competentias motui stellarum Christianitas motum comparabant*.³⁵ Baudry is thus caught between popular rumour and eschatological speculation on the one hand, and the official unknowability of the mind of God on the other.

The conjunction between the stars and events on earth is one that chroniclers far differently located in time and space are prepared to make without any reference to Urban or the council at Clermont. Thus the late

34. I.e., no-one should doubt that the stellar phenomena are factual: only their interpretation is subject to speculation.

35. That is, the movement of the stars in the heavens provides by simile or metaphor or analogy an indication of the fate of the Christian church on earth.

eleventh-century southern Italian chronicler Lupus the *protospatharius*³⁶ is happy enough to refer to almost the same April 1095 stellar phenomenon (*quinta feria* - Baudry has *quarta*), visible *per totam Apuliam*, as the chronological point at which the *populi* of Gaul and all Italy began to go (*pergere*) to the Sepulchre of the Lord in arms, bearing on their right shoulder the standard of the cross.

Such concern with the phenomenon of the last days is no more than we should expect, given the fundamental importance for medieval clerical and folk culture of the *Book of Revelations*. Medieval interest in particular books of the Bible seems to have fluctuated in accordance with such factors as the political ideology of a prevailing governmental regime (see, for example, A. Saltman 1975 p.3) and the *Apocalypse* was probably no exception. A number of late antique and early medieval commentaries on it survive, some in a considerable number of manuscripts,³⁷ and commentaries continued to be produced between the time of Bede and Joachim of Fiore,³⁸ with whom interest in *Revelations* gained considerable momentum: Joachim's own *Expositio in Apocalypsim* and the inspiration the seven seals of the

36. *MGH SS V* p.62 lines 35-38. I owe thanks to Walter Kudrycz for this reference, and for discussion of many points associated with it. The identity of the chronicler and the reliability of the *Annales Baresnes* may be ascertained, in a fashion, from the following references (all accessible in the British Library, London): *Antiqui Chronologi Quatuor* ed. A. Caraccioli Naples 1626 (the 1095 entry is p.117 and a note re authorship p.92); the note is repeated with a further essay by Camillus Peregrinus in his *Historia Principum Langobardorum quae continent antiqua aliquot opuscula de rebus Langobardorum Beneventanae olim Provinciae quae modo Regnum fere est Neapolitanum* vol. IV Naples 1754 p.51; a further edition and a repeat of the note will be found in *Bibliotheca Historica Regni Siciliae sive Historiconum fere omnium qui de rebus Siculis sui vel proxime antecedentis aevi, a Saracorum invasione usque ad nostra tempora sparsim scripsere* ed. Carusius (J Baptista), I. Panormi 1719 pp.33-34, 42. On pp.14-16 of Peregrinus are found details of the discovery and early printing history of Lupus' chronicle, together with conjectures about the author's identity, reprinting Carraccioli's original preface and adding *Camilli Peregrinii de Lupo Protospata* pp.15-16. Carusius p.33 gives a summary of the whole matter and the original preface of Carraccioli, an antiquarian cleric who apparently found the chronicle among the papers of one Joannis Franciscus Rubeus, erudite in law and the humanities. Lupus would appear (from all this) to have been a Greek/Apulian resident of Bari or Brindisi or Matera or Benevento, who flourished around the year 1088 A.D. (on the grounds that his chronicle, which ends 1102, is most ample for that year!). P. Alphanéry 1954 p.63 says of Lupus' reference 'c'est la prédication de l'Apocalypse'. Cf. also H. Hagenmeyer 1973 p.7. The term *protospatharius* is 'a Byzantine title given to a court dignitary of the western emperor' according to Niermeyer JF *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden 1976) p.866.

37. 73 for Bede: G. Bonner, *St.Bede in the Tradition of Western Apocalyptic Commentary*. Jarrow Lecture 1966 p.9.

38. A useful discussion and the key literature will be found on pp.275-82 of J.H. Van Engen 1983. See also N. Noth 1965; J. Le Goff *Medieval Civilization 400-1500* trans J. Barrow Oxford 1988 pp.187ff; H. Focillon *The Year 1000* NY 1971 P. Hanson (ed.) *Visionaries and their Apocalypses* London 1983; C. Gellinek 'Daniel's vision of four beasts in twelfth-century German literature' *Germanic Review* 41(1966) 5-26; B. McGinn *Apocalyptic Spirituality: treatises and letters of Lactantius, Adso of Montier-en-Der, Joachim of Fiore, the Franciscan Spirituals, Savonarola*, Paulist Press 1979; Emmerson 1981.

Apocalypse (v 1) gave to his basic pattern of history mark a watershed in the study of the text (M. Reeves 1969 pp.5-6.).

More important, perhaps, was the tradition of pictorial illustration of the *Apocalypse* which reached a climax in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as far as painted manuscripts were concerned (G. Lampe 1969 pp.331ff, J.H. Van Engen 1983 p.275 n.46, Emerson and Lewis 1986). In stone, the key moment and place seems to have been eleventh-century France. Much attention has focussed on the Spanish sources for the celebrated and influential Moissac *Apocalypse* tympanum, constructed, it seems, in the immediate wake of the conquest of Jerusalem.³⁹ Scholarship is divided on the exact significance of this late eleventh-century Romanesque revival of monumental sculpture. Described by one historian as 'an exquisitely popular art', Romanesque is nevertheless seen as a peculiar expression of monastic, and, to a lesser extent, knightly, rather than 'popular' cultural values.⁴⁰ As such it occupies the same cultural space as the apocalypticism of the clerical authors whose work we have just surveyed. The crucial question is the impact of clerical apocalypticism on the popular imagination. As is clear from the *apocalypse* commentaries, the millenarian elements in the book of *Revelations* could be emphasised or not, according to taste. The inflammatory *potential*, however, for contemporaries in the 1080's and 90's,⁴¹ is evident from even the most casual glance at the material.

Quite aside from *other* source material for millenarian speculation (reviewed in N. Cohn 1970), or from what the *Book of Revelations* may *originally* have meant to its auditors/readers, the implications of its graphic and resounding phrases for any clerical, clerical-influenced or even lay auditor/reader in the context of the later eleventh century must have seemed startling enough. To the ascetic, chaste and faithful, white-robed

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39. E. Mâle *Religious Art in France: the twelfth century; a study of the origins of medieval iconography*. Princeton 1978 pp.4ff, 378ff; J. Beckwith *Early Medieval Art: Carolingian, Ottonian, Romanesque* London 1974 pp.206-07, 263 n.195. See *Rev.* xi 17-18, xix 4 etc. for the 24 elders around the throne of God.
40. L. Seidel *Songs of Glory: the Romanesque façades of Aquitaine* U of Chicago P 1981 pp.80-82; Hauser *A The Social History of Art I* (NY 1951) pt.IV pp.6-7; M.M. Davy *Initiation à la Symbolique Romane (XIIe siècle)* Paris 1977 p.127; D. Grivot *Images de l'Apocalypse* Zodiaque 1977. One may doubt Gurevich's apparent view that the 'gargoyles, demons and terrifying scenes of the Last Judgement in Romanesque and Gothic art' represent popular rather than clerical elements: A. Gurevich 1988 p.181.
41. And earlier: cf. P. Alphandéry 1952 pp.14ff; R. Landes 1987 p.469; Emerson 1981; J. Wright *The Play of Antichrist, translated with an introduction* Toronto 1967 pp.100ff (Adso of Moutier-en-Der's *Libellus de Antichristo* - Adso died in 992 A.D. while in Jerusalem on a pilgrimage!). Compare the appeal of apocalyptic reference to *pseudophrophetae* in the time of the Dominicans: K. Kerby-Fulton 'Hildegard of Bingen and anti-mendicant propaganda' *Traditio* 43(1987) 386-99. DUBY's remarks in 1984 p.13 are much to the point here.

followers of the lamb (*Rev.* xiv 4) the writing must clearly have seemed on the wall for idolators, murderers, sorcerers, fornicators, robbers, devil-worshippers and merchants (*Rev.* ix 20-21, xxi 8, xxii 15, and, for the merchants, xviii 11-17, 23)! *Timete dominum, et date illi honorem, quia venit hora iudicii eius!* (*Rev.* xiv 7.) Flaming stars (*Rev.* viii 10 and cf. *Rev.* xii 7 et *factum est praelium magnum in caelo.*), eclipses (*Rev.* viii 12), portents (*Rev.* xii 21, xv 1 and elsewhere), war,⁴² plagues and pestilences (*Rev.* ix, xv-xvi etc.) and famine are seen as the precursors of *imminent* vengeance for the righteous who had died for the Lord. The white-robed elect (*Rev.* vii 9ff) await Christ (the lamb) to lead them 'to the springs of the water of life' (*Rev.* vii 17). It is tempting to see such a text behind Alphandéry's 'grand mouvement de renoncement monastique, qui remplit d'une foule de nobles et d'hommes sages, *prudentes viri*, les couvents d'Allemagne, avec une sorte de frénésie dans le renoncement qui fait songer aux premiers temps franciscains'.⁴³ Two witnesses or prophets will prophesy dressed in sackcloth (*Rev.* xi 1 et *dabo duobus testibus meis et prophetabunt diebus mille ducentis sexaginta, amicti saccis*), while Jerusalem is trampled by the Gentiles for 42 months or 1260 days (three and a half years), and during this time Satan, the Dragon and Antichrist harry the faithful and kill the two witnesses (*Rev.* xi-xii-xiii). It is not difficult to imagine the reception the *wanderprediger* might have received in the 1080's and 1090's at the hands of a *populus* familiar with this particular portion of *Revelations*. The appearance of the Son of Man on a cloud with a gold crown and sword follows, and the over-ripe evil-doers on earth are harvested 'into the great winepress of God's wrath' (*Rev.* xiv 14-20). Such a passage might well have justified attacks on Jews, Hungarians and others who appeared to stand in the path of the 'crusaders'. There follow the fall of Babylon (*Rev.* xvi 19, xvii 8, xviii) and the casting of Satan into an abyss (*Rev.* xx 1-3), the second coming of Christ, *Fidelis, Verax, Verbum Dei, Rex Regum et Dominum Dominantium*, depicted as a horsed knight with his *exercitus* following him *in equis albis vestiti byssino albo et mundo*,⁴⁴ and the advent of the millenium, the 1,000 year rule of the martyrs with Christ. These martyrs *erunt sacerdotes Dei et Christi, et regnabunt cum illo mille annis*, and they shall never die (*Rev.* xx 4-6). At the end of the millenium (*Rev.* xx 7ff) Satan shall be let loose and the tribes of Gog and

42. *Rev.* ix 15: a third of mankind are to be killed by the 'four angels held bound at the great river Euphrates'.

43. P. Alphandéry 1954 p.48. See too the enthusiastic remarks of Guibert of Nogent 'Memoirs' I.11 (*Self and Society in Medieval France: the memoirs of Abbot Guibert of Nogent*, ed. with an introduction by J.F. Benton, trans. C.C. Swinton Bland, NY 1970 pp.62-63).

44. *Rev.* xix, especially 11, 14, 19, particularly appropriate to a gathering of 'crusade' armies.

Magog shall harry the faithful. Then Satan and Antichrist will be cast into a lake of fire and sulphur for eternal torment and all the faithful who were not martyrs will be resurrected. The Last Judgement follows (*Rev.* xx 11). Death and Hell are cast into a lake of fire (*Rev.* xx 13-15). A New Heaven and a New Earth succeed the old: the Holy City, the New Jerusalem dawns (*Rev.* xxi 1, 10ff) *et mors ultra non erit, neque luctus, neque clamor, neque dolor erit ultra, quia prima abierunt.*⁴⁵ Sinners shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone for ever (*Rev.* xxi 8). The final chapter of the *Apocalypse* is devoted to the truthfulness of the situation it reveals: *haec verba fidelissima sunt, et vera. Et Dominus Deus spirituum prophetarum misit angelum suum ostendere servis suis quae oportet fiero cito. Et ecce venio velociter...ne signaveris verba prophetiae libri huius: tempus enim prope est* (*Rev.* xxii 6-7, 10). It is difficult to resist the flavour and urgency of such late eleventh-century preaching as may have made use of texts and themes like these.

We cannot, of course, expect the laity to have known unaided, of these eschatological prophecies and their possible interpretations during the eleventh century. The various radical clerical intellectuals (*prophetae*), however, and even many of the orthodox clergy, together with word of mouth at relic assemblies, on pilgrimage and at similar occasions for mass gatherings must have assisted eschatological prophecies and their possible interpretations to spread widely and rapidly, as is clear from Ekkehard of Aura's account, and from such remarks as that of Guibert of Nogent who tells us that *magnus per universas Franciae partes rumor emanat* (*RHC* IV p.140; P. Alphanféry 1954 p.61). Indeed, rumour of a mass movement to the Holy Land is exactly what is likely to have grown up from scattered reports and retellings: only a naive and cloistered historian could derive such a 'rumour' from a single papal 'Kriegsruf'.

Brian Stock has usefully alerted us to the seminal role that an 'insertion of literacy' within a not necessarily literate context can play. His study of the genesis of heresy in the eleventh century reveals that 'eleventh-century dissenters may not have shared profound doctrinal similarities or common social origins, but they demonstrated a parallel use of texts, both to structure the internal behaviour of the groups' members and to provide solidarity against the outside world. In this sense they were "textual communities" . . . what was essential to a textual community was not a written version of a text, although that was sometimes present, but an individual, who, having mastered it, then utilized it for reforming a group's thought and action. The text's interpreter might . . . remain a charismatic figure in his own right, whose power to motivate groups derived from his oratory, gestures and

45. *Rev.* xxi 4, *prima* being normally translated 'the former things' or 'the old order/age'.

physical presence . . . the outside world was looked upon as a universe beyond the revelatory text'. Stock stresses that 'the textual community was not only textual; it also involved new uses for orality. The text itself, whether it consisted of a few maxims or an elaborate programme, was often re-performed orally. Indeed, one of the clearest signs that a group had passed the threshold of literacy was the lack of necessity for the organising text to be spelt out, interpreted, or reiterated. The members all knew what it was. As a consequence, interaction by word of mouth could take place as a superstructure of an agreed meaning, the textual foundation of behaviour having been entirely internalized. With shared assumptions, the members were free to discuss, to debate, or to disagree on other matters, to engage in personal interpretations of the Bible . . . the uses of what was, so to speak, a literate's orality could be extended beyond the group, mainly by preaching. If this were done, a two-tiered structure resulted: a small inner core of literates, semi-literates, and non-literates followed the interpretation of the text itself.⁴⁶ But the literates within the heretical or reform group could also preach outside it to non-literates whose only bond with the founders was by word of mouth'.⁴⁷ The relevance of these comments to the preaching or study fraternities that must have developed in connection with the ingestion of eschatological texts in the eleventh century should be obvious to all.

In the early eleventh century novel "textual communities" of two types were formed: *cenacoli* of radical reform or gnostic thinkers, and *cenacoli* of fevered clergy fearing the diabolical resurgence of Manichaean dualism.⁴⁸ The second half of the eleventh century saw the diffusion of heterodoxy beyond the strict confines of these gnostic clerical groups and their opponents. Peter the Hermit, Robert of Arbrissel and Ramihrdus (Wakefield-Evans pp.95-96) are easily named examples of the type of radical disaffected clergy who must have stirred up enthusiastic followings in the period. Baudry of Bourgueil, talking of the period following the Council of Clermont, tells us how it could happen. In the wake of Clermont, he says, the bishops preached 'and the laity talked about what they preached, loudly and more freely; the word of God was sewn and daily the number of those interested in Jerusalem grew: *alii alios cohortabantur, et in angulis et in compitis, inde singuli sermocinabantur. Nimirum pro his agendis dicunt quaedam divinitus contigisse signa, quae nos omnino non ignoramus vera* (Baudry of Bourgueil *Historia Jerusalem RHC* IV p.16). Guibert of Nogent tells us that the *vulgus . . . tenue . . . quidem substantia, sed numero*

46. The first tier, presumably.

47. The second tier. See B. Stock 1983 pp.90-91 and cf. also his remarks at p.112.

48. The texts are mostly gathered in R.I. Moore 1975, Wakefield-Evans and E. Peters 1980.

frequentissimum adhered to Peter the Hermit and obeyed him like a master: whatever he did or said they took to be divinely inspired (*RHC IV* p.142). Such radical clergy, opposed by ascetic inclination to the hierarchy of seigniorial princes - secular or ecclesiastical - no doubt spread the currency of eschatological ideas and interpretations in connection with the rumoured disasters in the orient (P. Alphandéry 1954 p.50) and the 'disasters' in the heavens. *Annus mundi* calculations may well have been current.⁴⁹ Such figures, to judge from Guibert of Nogent's depiction of Peter the Hermit (*RHC IV* p.142; M.D. Coupe 1987 p.39; P. Alphandéry 1954 p.49 and cf. n.18 above), seem to have approximated the pattern of the slightly later heresiarchs (nn.18, 23 above), except that by the early twelfth century our clerical descriptions of the radical clerical leader - now disentangled from crusading euphoria - were uniformly hostile. So too, are clerical descriptions of heretical fraternities for the first half of the eleventh century: clearly, eschatological euphoria clouded, momentarily, the lines between orthodoxy and heterodoxy (see R.I. Moore 1970).

Guibert of Nogent and Baudry of Bourgeuil were in some ways sensitive to the eschatological undercurrents of the time, but generally they underplay their probable importance, or else are hostile to them,⁵⁰ preferring to stress the primacy of the official church sponsorship of the crusades rather than the popular movements and their ideologies. Recent work on the relationship between Peter the Hermit and the crusade (see Blake and Morris, M.D. Coupe 1987 and n.1 above), however, suggests the substantial autonomy of the older tradition that Peter the Hermit, not Urban II, was responsible for the genesis of the crusading movement, by way of an earthly visit to the Holy Land and certain signs vouchsafed to him alone: a vision of Christ in the Holy Sepulchre and a 'letter from God'.⁵¹ Rumours of disasters and atrocities in the east undoubtedly fed the kind of eschatological reasoning that Guibert provides in his version of Urban II's Clermont speech, and the uncertainties fostered by the eucharistic and investiture controversies of the decades immediately preceding the year 1095 must have encouraged the view among some that salvation would not come from the established ecclesiastical hierarchy and its sacraments. Even a moderate

49. Richard Landes, who was good enough to discuss these matters with me after his 1987 Kalamazoo paper [see Landes (1987)], feels that they were.

50. Guibert's conservative hostility towards the 'communal' movement and the Soissons heretics in the third book of his 'Memoirs' (Wakefield-Evans pp.101-04) is typical here.

51. On the visionary imagination of the middle ages see C. Erickson *The Medieval Vision: essays in History and Perception* NY 1976 ch.2 and Davidson LSD 1989; on Peter's visionary experience, see H. Hagenmeyer 1883. R.E. Lerner 1983 discusses the use of such devices as 'letters from God' and visions in the spreading of prophetic ideas.

critic of the established view of the genesis of the crusading movement such as M D Coupe (M.D. Coupe 1987) proposes that in Flanders, the lower Rhineland and NW Germany - exactly the regions most affected by the transformations expertly delineated by Cohn, Nelson and Moore (N. Cohn 1970, J. Nelson 1972, R.I. Moore 1980) - contemporaries thought of Peter the Hermit and not Urban II as the author (*primus auctor*) of the crusading movement. I think it is necessary, however, to go further than this and to see a widespread popular preaching movement gathering momentum in the early 1090's, primarily in northern France, Flanders and certain adjacent German districts. This preaching movement represented - on the model of Stock's "textual communities" - a filtering down to the populace in certain sensitive areas, of ideas current among radical sections of the literate clergy. It represented hence a phenomenon parallel to early eleventh century dualism (which lacked a truly popular element), later eleventh-century Patarine reformism (an urban radical clerical reform rather than millenarian movement in northern Italy (on which see B. Stock 1983 pp.151ff) and early twelfth century heretical enthusiasm (which, however, encountered a more emphatically expressed hostility from the orthodox clergy (nn.18, 23 above).

The popular crusading movement derived strength from a widespread consciousness of sin and a deep - if volatile - symbolic piety (B. McGinn 1978 pp.33ff, 45; H.E.J. Cowdrey 1970 pp.121ff; J. Steinruck 1987 pp.4-5); it stressed *action* designed to remedy the impact of adverse spiritual, climatological, seigneurial⁵² and economic factors. The action was crystallised by the popular preachers from written apocalyptic, millenarian traditions (N. Cohn 1970) and took the form of a bringing on of the millenium (pre- or post- Antichrist), by way of the preliminary formation of transient, liminal (see V. Turner) confraternities, whether heretical, pilgrimage oriented or millenial (crusade). Urban II, who had at Piacenza in the middle of 1095 been contemplating a Byzantine request for western aid,⁵³ went north later in the year in pursuit of monastic/clerical reform and hierarchical supremacy/legitimacy within the church, and encountered the popular ferment, in person or by information. Sometime between Clermont (where he may or may not have promoted, in private negotiations, some form of knightly assistance to Byzantium, and taken part in discussions to extend the truce of God and the protection of the church to pilgrims to the Holy Land) and August 1096, Urban had his name attached in some way to

52. Excellent keys to the problems here are P. Dockès 1982, G. Duby 1974 pt. III and 1980 ch.13.

53. R. Grousset 1934 pp.2-5, following F. Chalandon 1925 pp.20-37 thinks the idea of such an expedition came very late to Urban, later even than Clermont.

an aristocratic crusade, helped, indeed rendered imperative, by the example and the fervour of the popular crusade and its promoters.

There are even grounds for supposing that at Clermont the papacy tried to gain some control over the movement of popular religiosity associated with the peace 'councils'. 'The peace councils' of the late tenth century onwards, writes Landes (R. Landes 1987 pp.506-07), 'while not necessarily the cause, nevertheless had to be the occasion of much extra-institutional and charismatic religiosity. Indeed, since some of the heretics refused to set foot in church, and the councils were held in open terrain, they were ideal sites for spreading the word . . . the peace movement thus initially held in germ both heretical rejection of institutional structures and reforming pressure to purify those structures'. The holding of the Council of Clermont, which, as I have suggested elsewhere (J.O. Ward 1985), had little to do with launching of the crusade, may well have been an exercise in recapturing for the papacy the initiative in popular currents of spirituality, as much as it was an exercise in the assertion of hierarchical and jurisdictional supremacy.⁵⁴

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The advantages of the above reorientation of our understanding of the genesis of the crusading movement, sketchy though it must in this form be (see above n.1), are as follows:

- (a) it preserves more or less intact the older tradition of Peter the Hermit as *primus auctor* of the crusading movement;
- (b) it sees the crusade as a remedial disaster-response both to disasters in the east and to 'disasters' in the heavens and on earth in Europe, for the interpretation of which the crucial blueprint is the preexistent eschatological semiology elaborated from biblical and other texts by the newly literate popular ascetic reformers and preachers of the day;
- (c) it allocates proper attention to popular millennial elements which necessarily operated largely out of reach of the official literate hierarchy and its texts (cf. the remarks of J.J. Van Moolenbroek 1986 249-53);
- (d) it provides the most appropriate context for the Jewish massacres (N. Cohn 1970 pp.75ff, 86ff, and cf. n.3 above);

54. H.E.J. Cowdrey 1970a; Meersseman in *L'Eremitismo* pp.173ff discusses the preachers and the crusading preaching 'commission' of Urban II and stresses the independent nature of the preaching and the lack of any specific link with the papal 'commission'. Delaruelle writes in the same volume on popular spirituality and the new hermits p.238 thus: 'le fait incontestable est que, en effet, les papes ne sont jamais restés indifférents à ce mouvement . . .'

- (e) it suggests the intriguing possibility of a measure of conscious suppression and rewriting of the 'history' of the crusading movement on the part of the literate hierarchy, to preserve the notions of (i) crusade as an official papally sponsored phenomenon, (ii) popular preaching as unorthodox, and, after 1100 heretical, (iii) the crusader state as in origin an ecclesiastical (papal) creation.⁵⁵

While many details of my reorientation need further filling in, or will remain controversial, I nevertheless commend it to scholars and students as a 'postmodern deconstruction and reconstruction' of that excellent product of nineteenth century philological historiography, the myth of Urban II's launching of the first crusade at the Council of Clermont in 1095.⁵⁶ It is also an exercise in examination of our own attitudes and priorities on the subject of *disaster*: our own concept of disaster is essentially that of a dominant this-worldly society, confident that it is doing the right thing and that set-backs are accidental, uncalled for and susceptible to energetic response and remedy. For the alienated, the dispossessed and the disadvantaged, however, disaster may be an ominous climatological or stellar event, not necessarily *in itself* damaging, but, when 'decoded' according a semiotic system, capable of indicating an imminent denouement that will bring *salvation* to the disadvantaged, and *disaster* to the (deserving) hierarchs and dominant groups of the day. *Crusade* is thus interesting not so much for what it was (who can be the unequivocal arbiter of that?) but for what contemporaries thought it would be.

55. See n.1 above for further elaboration of these ideas. Although with a slightly different focus, there is much of value for the present inquiry in D.H.Green's sensitive portrayal (1966) of the influence of Biblical typology on eleventh- and early twelfth-century constructions of the crusading phenomenon. See especially his chs 7 and 8.

56. The earlier nineteenth-century view had been that Peter the Hermit was the author of the crusading movement. The 'modern (philological) deconstruction' of this view and the construction of the 'myth' of Pope Urban's 'launching' of the crusade at Clermont is due to Hagenmeyer's enthusiastic espousal (in H. Hagenmeyer 1883) of the views that Heinrich von Sybel derived from an 1837 seminar that Leopold Ranke had devoted to a careful philological scrutiny of the sources for the first crusade, and later published in his *Geschichte des ersten Kreuzzuges* (*Dritte, unveränderte Auflage*, Leipzig, with the preface dated 1881 - see A.S. Atiya *The Crusade: historiography and bibliography* Indiana U P 1962 p.113) Cf. above n.15.

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