CHAPTER FIVE

MILITES: KNIGHTS OR SIMPLY MOUNTED WARRIORS?

There is a considerable literature on the question of ‘knighthood’ in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, particularly with regard to various debates on the nature and evolution of the knightly class and whether, indeed, it is correct to see knights as forming a class.¹ The incontestable spread of the use of the term milites from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries, so that it came to be applied to emperors, kings and princes as well as less distinguished soldiers, has created a debate of a very important and wide ranging nature. A typical topic of this debate would be the issue of whether the change in the usage of milites was a reflection of the growth of a rising social class of knights from lowly soldiers into an aristocracy, or whether the sources are indicating not so much change in material social conditions but an ideological change in the concept of knighthood and the evolution of the term milites.²

In other words, was the change in the usage of milites sociological or


² See J. Bumke, The Concept of Knighthood, p. 77.
philological? Or, if there was an interaction between the two, what was its nature?

Such questions are wide-ranging and complex. They are not the subject matter of this book, deserving book-length investigation in their own right. This study of the social vocabulary of the early crusading sources can, however, at least shed some light on the usage of the term *milites* for this particular group of historians. Two closely related themes arise from an examination of the use of the term *milites* by the early crusading authors; did these historians understand the *miles* to be a member of a certain social rank? Was that rank one of nobility? Or did they employ the term simply to indicate a person performing a particular function, a soldier? Secondly, the sources reflect a major concern among the *milites* of the First Crusade for their horses. All the historians comment on the loss of horses during periods of hardship during the First Crusade and many state that because of this there were *milites* who became *pedites*. This warrants close examination. Were they reporting a loss of social status or a change in military function?

Before examining these issues a preliminary investigation is necessary concerning the terms *equites* and *equestres*. Were they synonymous with the term *milites* for the early crusading sources? The term *equestres* was used above all by the most consciously classicist author, Guibert of Nogent. At issue is whether Guibert was using the term to indicate *milites* or a broader body of mounted soldiers. Among the passages in which Guibert used the term was the report that many *equestres viri* died during the harsh passage of the First Crusade through the desert terrain of Anatolia in July 1097. Here Guibert was making a minor alteration to a passage in his *fons formalis*, the *Gesta Francorum*, which referred to *milites*. This was the important passage discussed below in which the anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum* described *milites* becoming *pedites* through the loss of their horses. Guibert used this information about knights becoming footsoldiers for his description of a later part of the difficult journey through Anatolia, after the expedition had passed through Coxon, October 1097. In Guibert’s account hardship converted *equestres* into *pedites*. These two examples suggest that Guibert saw the term *equestres* as interchangeable with *milites*.

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3 GN 161.
4 GF 23.
5 See below pp. 180–1.
6 GN 168.
In his dispute with the chaplain and historian Fulcher of Chartres over the numbers that participated on the First Crusade, Guibert wrote that the entire Christian force could not have been 6,000,000 as he believed there to be scarcely 100,000 fully equipped equestres at the first assault on Nicea, April 1097. Here the term was evidently being used by Guibert to cover a body of knights who were not simply riders, as they were attempting to storm a city. Fulcher of Chartres also used the term equestres, but only once, in 1118, for those knights in the company of Baldwin I at the Nile near al-Farama, where they were described as skillfully using their lances to spear fish. The context makes it clear that these equestres were not simply riders, as Fulcher considered the term appropriate to them even while they were described as on foot and fishing. The evidence for seeing equestres and milites as synonymous in the work of both Guibert and Fulcher is therefore strong.

A similar question arises over the term equites, which appears in all the early crusading sources other than the Gesta Francorum and its close variant the Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere of Peter Tudebode. There are several clear examples of the interchange of the terms milites and equites within the individual works as well as examples of the substitution of equites for milites by later writers in their version of passages in the Gesta Francorum. Fulcher of Chartres generally used the phrase equites and pedites to refer to the entirety of an army.

In describing an expedition of King Baldwin II in 1125, Fulcher initially referred to the equites of the king and soon after the same body of knights was termed milites. Guibert of Nogent shared with Fulcher the phrasing equites and pedites to indicate a typical body of fighting men. Three examples in the Gesta Dei per Francos show that Guibert considered equites and milites to be interchangeable. In mid June, 1098, the Byzantine emperor, Alexios I Comnenus, turned back from his march towards Antioch having been brought the news, by Stephen of Blois amongst others, that the rest of the expedition was doomed. Guibert described how the milites accepted the order to turn back, he then added that the
pedites could not keep up with these swift equites on the retreat. The second example of the interchange of milites and equites appears in a passage concerning the expedition to Jaffa of Raymond Pilet during the siege of Jerusalem in mid-June 1099. Raymond Pilet, together with two other proceres, was described as taking 100 equites from the army of his lord, Count Raymond of Toulouse; soon after 30 of these equites left the main body and were referred to by Guibert as milites. Thirdly, Gervase of Bazoches was referred to as both an eques and a miles.

A comparison with the anonymous Gesta Francorum also shows Guibert using the term equites for the Anonymous’s milites. The Gesta Francorum has a passage in which the Turkish atabeg of Mosul, Kerbogha, offered to make milites from the pedites of the Christian forces facing him in Antioch. In Guibert’s version Kerbogha offered to make equites. The work of Robert the Monk reveals the same type of substitutions in his reworking of the Gesta Francorum. In his account of the journey through the desert after the battle of Dorylaeum, 1 July 1097, Robert wrote that ‘there died the greater part of our horses, and many who previously had been equites became pedites.’ The Gesta Francorum has a near identical account, but used the term milites. Robert also wrote that when Bohemond and Robert of Flanders decided to lead a foraging expedition from the siege of Antioch, around Christmas 1097, they picked out thirty thousand equites et pedites. The Gesta Francorum referred to twenty thousand milites et pedites for the same expedition.

Baldric of Dol used the term equites rather than milites in connection with the battle between the Christian forces and Kerbogha, 28 June 1098, and subsequently only on one other occasion. The account of the battle with Kerbogha was embellished by Baldric with many poetic details. A consciously literary context is probably the reason why Baldric preferred the classical term for an order of horsemen, equites, to that

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12 GN 231–2.
13 GN 272–3.
14 GN 349 (miles); 350 (eques).
15 GF 67.
16 GN 236.
18 GF 23: Ilic fuit mortua maxima pars nostrorum equorum, eo quod multi ex nostris militibus remanserant pedites.
19 RM 778.
20 GF 30.
21 BD 75, 76, 78, 86.
used for the same scenes in the *Gesta Francorum*, *milites*. Raymond of Aguilers’ preferred term for knights was *milites*, but on five occasions he used the alternative, *equites*. Two of these instances were simply a result of stylistic considerations, the chronicler preferring not to repeat himself when he wished to use a noun for knight twice in the same sentence. Thus Raymond reported a speech of Tancred in which the Norman prince pointed out that while there had once been a hundred thousand *equites* in the Christian forces now hardly a thousand *milites* remained. Later the historian wrote of there being an increase in the garrison of Albara from seven *milites* to sixty *equites*. For Raymond of Aguilers it is unlikely that the use of the term *equites* was shaped by classical authors, of whom he showed little awareness. His influences in choosing to use the term were likely to be biblical.

In the Vulgate the term *equites* is used approximately twice as often as *milites* and it might well be that Raymond of Aguilers found it the more appropriate of the terms when he reported a certain vision of divine aid. This miracle took the form of two *equites* who were said to have appeared before the Christian forces at the battle of Dorylaeum, 1 July 1097.

As there are no examples where the terms *equestres*, *equites* and *milites* are juxtaposed to suggest they carry different meanings, but several where they are used synonymously, it seems reasonable to conclude that for these authors the terms were being applied to the same category of person. This was also the conclusion of Pierre van Luyn in his study of eleventh century narrative sources, which included the early French crusading sources.

Did the early crusading sources use the term *miles* to refer to riders, soldiers, or nobles? Were they consistent in their use of the term or did it have a broad enough range of meaning for it to be applied in several different senses? Joachim Bumke’s summary of his chronologically and geographically wide ranging study of the terms *miles*, *chevalier* and *Ritter* was that ‘at times it was the military, the social, the religious, the ideological or the hierarchical meaning of the word which was most prominent. For the most part they ran parallel to one another

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22 RA 190 (240).
23 RA 193 (274).
24 See above pp. 27–39.
25 RA 25–6 (240).
and it is fair to assume that there was mutual influence and that they overlapped.\footnote{J. Bumke, The Concept of Knighthood, p. 155.} This, ‘multiple-meaning’, view was followed by Verona Epp in her study of Fulcher of Chartres and, consciously following Epp, by Carol Sweetenham in her translation of Robert the Monk.\footnote{V. Epp, *Fulcher von Chartres*, p. 251.} Undisputable as Bumke’s conclusion is for a period of several centuries and across a great extent of Western Europe, the work of an individual author, or those closely linked by subject matter and chronology, might yield a more restricted and consistent meaning. A study of the use of the term *milites* and its equivalents in the early crusading sources reveals, in fact, that they gravitated towards an understanding of the term that included a social sense to it. In other words, in the main, they were writing about ‘knights’ rather than ‘soldiers’ or ‘cavalry’.

Verena Epp is the only historian to have conducted a very close analysis of the social vocabulary of one of the early crusading historians, namely that of Fulcher of Charters. In her study of Fulcher’s use of the term *milites* she concluded that the term was used almost equally in a functional sense, for soldiers, as well as in a social sense, for noble knights.\footnote{Ibid.} For her a key passage was one in which Fulcher lamented for the loss of many ‘*nobiles* and *probì milites*,’ at the second battle of Ramleh, 17 May 1102.\footnote{FC II.xix.4 (443).} Epp observes of this passage that it implies there were other losses of non-noble *milites*.\footnote{V. Epp, *Fulcher von Chartres*, p. 257.} This is a possibility, but it might also simply have been that Fulcher was trying to emphasise the loss of several senior princes. In other words his intended distinction might not have been between noble and non-noble *milites* but between *milites* and very distinguished princes, all of whom were noble. That this was Fulcher’s intended meaning is suggested by the fact that immediately after his general lament he recorded the deaths of Count Stephen of Blois, a *vir prudens et nobilis* and Count Stephen of Burgundy.\footnote{FC II.xix.4 (443). For Stephen I, count of Burgundy see J. Riley-Smith, First Crusaders, p. 222.} Epp also made a similar point in regard to a second instance in which Fulcher referred to *milites nobiles*.\footnote{V. Epp, *Fulcher von Chartres*, p. 256.} The passage in question is Fulcher’s account of the march of Baldwin of Edessa and Bohemond of Antioch to Jerusalem in the autumn of 1099. Fulcher,
who was present, wrote that ‘you would see milites nobiles, having lost their horses in some way, become pedites’. Epp’s understanding of this passage is that by reporting the loss of status of the noble knights, Fulcher therefore implied the existence of non-noble knights. Again this is a possible interpretation, but equally the Latin does not preclude the interpretation that through his application of the adjective nobiles to the milites, Fulcher was emphasising how painful the loss of status was for certain particularly distinguished milites. Fulcher’s first, 1105, redaction shows that he was writing in this spirit as he referred to milites progenie inclyti, ‘knights, illustrious by their ancestry’ becoming pedites.

If Fulcher’s intended meaning in these two passages is uncertain, there is one clear example where Fulcher does distinguish between the different status of those within a body of cavalry, and here it is clear that he was not using the schema suggested by Epp, of noble and non-noble milites. When the army of Jerusalem marched out to meet an invasion by al-Afdal, vizier of Cairo, 27 August 1105, Fulcher, an eyewitness, wrote that ‘there were 500 of our milites, excepting those, who although riding, were not counted with the name of a soldier.’

Heinrich Hagenmeyer discussed the unusual phrase qui militari nomine non censebantur, making the likely suggestion that Fulcher was drawing a distinction between those of noble birth, who were counted as milites and the others, who were perhaps squires. Even if Hagenmeyer’s view is not accepted, this passage does show that Fulcher did not extend his use of the term milites down a social or military scale beyond a certain point. They were a group apart, in some sense other than riding horses. It remains to be shown that this was a social division and not simply a division according to the quality of their military equipment.

It is clear that Fulcher at times considered some bodies of milites to be members of a distinct social order, that is, a knightly class. Those passages in which Fulcher referred to milites nobiles discussed above are important in this regard, whether Epp’s understanding of them is accepted or not. Two other passages deserve consideration here. In Fulcher’s account of Pope Urban II’s speech at Clermont he described the pope as asking his audience to urge ‘everyone of whatever ordo,
whether *equites or pedites, divites or pauperes* to join the expedition.\(^{38}\) Here Fulcher made it clear that he understood the division between knight and footsoldier to mirror that of rich and poor, suggesting that *ordo* was not a matter of function, ‘cavalry’ and the footsoldiers, but of social rank, ‘knights’ and footsoldiers. Fulcher wrote an even clearer passage for indicating that he considered the position of a *miles* to be a social rank. Soon after the death of Nūr-ad-Daulah Belek, emir of Aleppo, 5 May 1124, in battle with Joscelin of Courtenay, count of Edessa, a messenger came to the army of Pons, count of Tripoli,\(^{39}\) with the head of Belek to proclaim the news. Fulcher reported that this messenger was the *armiger* of Joscelin ‘and since he had brought this most greatly desired news to our army standing before Tyre, having received the arms of a *miles*, he was advanced (*proiectus est*) from *armiger* to *miles*. Indeed it was the Count of Tripoli who raised him (*sublimavit*) to this rank (*gradus*).\(^{40}\)

Here there is no doubt that for Fulcher to become a *miles* was not only to receive the appropriate arms but also a promotion in status.

Does the description, discussed above, of *milites* becoming *pedites* due to the loss of their horses contradict the view that Fulcher saw the *milites* as being of a certain social status? Fulcher made it clear that the change was a temporary one in his description of the very many *milites* who were in Joppa in May 1102 awaiting to cross to France. These *milites* had no horses because they had lost everything in Anatolia, on their way to Jerusalem (a reference to the crusade of 1101).\(^{41}\) For this large body of *milites* in Joppa, no longer part of a campaigning army, their lack of horses did not mean they were termed *pedites*. Fulcher went on to report that many of them, including the very senior nobles Geoffrey I Jordan, count of Vendôme, Stephen, count of Burgundy and Hugh VI of Lusignan, borrowed horses in order to light in the second battle of Ramleh, 17 May 1102.\(^{42}\) The fact that this body of soldiers were termed *milites* whilst awaiting return on foot to France

\(^{38}\) FC I.iii.4 (134): *Cunctis cuiuslibet ordinis tam equitibus quam pedibus, tam divitibus quam pauperibus...*

\(^{39}\) Pons of Tripoli (c. 1098–1137), son of Bertrand of Tripoli and count of Tripoli from 1112 to 1137.

\(^{40}\) FC III.xxxi.7 (726): *Et quia nuntium attulit desiderantissimum in exercitu nostro ante Tyrum astante, acceptis armis ab armigeri in milesi proiectus est. Comes nempe Tripolitanus ad hunc gradum eum sublimavit.*

\(^{41}\) FC II.xv.5 (427–8).

\(^{42}\) FC II.xviii.4 (437–8). See J. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders*, p. 207 (Geoffrey) and p. 213 (Hugh).
and the inclusion of senior princes in the category does make their social status evident here.

Many other appearances of the term *milites* in Fulcher’s work are statements that describe the military activities of Christian knights but contain no social information. Verena Epp’s analysis of Fulcher’s use of the term *milites* found that approximately half the terms were associated with a social dimension and of the other uses of the term *milites*, she found it to be equally often used for a soldier in general and for a mounted soldier. As Epp herself observed, however, for Fulcher the functional and social sense of the term *milites* frequently overlaps and it would perhaps be imposing an artificial distinction to assume that in such examples he intended to convey the meaning ‘soldiers’ rather than ‘knights’. Overall it does seem to be the case that Fulcher used the term *milites* for ‘knights’ and understood that it had a distinct social aspect to it, *milites* were not simply soldiers or mounted soldiers but were of a distinct *ordo* or *gradus*.

The anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum* had a great deal to say about the relationship between a *miles* and his horse, but he was not given to generalisations of a social nature. One passage worth noting with regard to whether *milites* were noble in the *Gesta Francorum* occurs during the course of a discussion of the fighting qualities of the Turkish *milites*: “They say of themselves that they are of Frankish extraction and because of that no men ought by nature to be *milites*, except the Franks and themselves.” Contained in this comment is the view that to be a *miles* is a condition that is related to birth. The content of the passage does not, however, stretch to the implication that all *milites* are of high birth as clearly not all Franks are nobles. Nevertheless the connection between *generatio* and *miles* was in the author’s mind and this is of interest as a tentative step in the direction of seeing the status of a *miles* as one that is inherited. For a greater understanding of the nature of the *milites* on the First Crusade, the work of the northern French

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43 FC I.vii.5 (233); I.xxiv.10 (263); I.xxvii.6 (296); I.xxxi.5 (314); II.ii.3 (359); II.ii.5 (361); II.ii.2 (363); II.vi.9 (389); II.ix.2 (402); II.xi.2 (408); II.xi.14 (414); I.xviii.7 (440); II.xxxii.2 (495); II.xxxii.3 (496); II.xxxvii.3 (517); II.xliii.4 (540); II.xlv.8 (556); II.xlvi.3 (560); I.lxix.5 (569); III.xxviii.4 (698); III.xxxi.4 (725); III.xliv.4 (769); III.l.8 (789).


45 Ibid.

46 GF 21: *Verumtamen dicitur esse de Francorum generatione, et quia nullus homo naturaliter debet esse miles nisi Franci et illi.*
historians who, some ten years later, rewrote the *Gesta Francorum*, has to be examined.

In Robert the Monk’s *Historia Iherosolimitana* the phrase *milites et pedites* quite clearly referred to knights and footsoldiers. Robert used it a number of times. Duke Godfrey was described as taking the road through Hungary with a great band of *milites et pedites*.47 When he learned of the crusade, Bohemond was described as addressing everyone, whether *milites* or *pedites*. In preparation for the storming of Antioch, 3 June 1098, the leaders of the fighters assembled huge battalions of *milites* and even more troops of *pedites*.48 In November 1098 the crusading forces that had scattered from Antioch while plague raged there returned and from many parts of the world many distinguished *milites et pedites* followed the example of those who had left earlier.49 When Raymond Pilet led a newly recruited force out of Antioch in July 1098, he bound to himself a multitude of *milites et pedites*.50 Godfrey, as ruler of Jerusalem, sent to the people of Nablus, his brother Eustace, Tancred and a great band of *milites et pedites*.51 At the battle of Ascalon, 12 August 1099, the *pedites* were lined up in front of the *milites*.52

There are two significant passages in the *Historia Iherosolimitana* concerning *milites* and riding in which the passage loses its sense unless the term *milites* is understood to be referring specifically to knights. As considered under *pedites*, Robert reported that while crossing the Anti-Taurus range of mountains ‘on this uneven path the *milites* and *armigeri* carried their arms from their necks as did the *pedites* because none of them were riding.’53 For the battle against Kerbogha, ‘Bohemond formed a sixth [squadron] with those *pedites* who were lightly armed for war, and *milites*, who had been compelled by necessity to sell their horses.’54 The relegation of *milites* to a contingent of *pedites* is discussed in full below.55 Here Robert was clear that even though the *miles* was having to fight from foot, he was still a knight, a point which is similarly

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47 RM 732.
48 RM 799.
49 RM 843.
50 RM 838.
51 RM 871.
52 RM 874.
53 RM 770 *hac inaequali semita milites et armigeri collo suo arma dependentia gestabant, omnes aequaliter pedites, quia nulli eorum equitabant.*
54 RM 828: *Boamundi fuit sexta, cum quo expeditiores ad bellum pedites fuerunt, et milites qui equos suos, necessitate compulsis, vendiderunt.*
55 See below pp. 179–86.
evident in the description of those *milites* and *armigeri* required to walk like *pedites* due to the difficulty of the mountain terrain.

There are a further group of references to *milites* by Robert that should probably be understood to refer to the activity of knights rather than soldiers in general. After victory over Kerbogha, Robert reported a speech of the papal legate, Bishop Adhémar of Le Puy, to the victorious Christian forces, which claimed that never had such *milites* existed, since none had fought so many successful battles in so short a time.\(^5\)

Robert described Duke Godfrey as a ‘Duke of Dukes, a *miles* of *milites*.’\(^5\) He was also described as so gentle to the meek that he seemed more a monk than a *miles*.\(^5\) In a further passage concerning Duke Godfrey, Robert wrote that ‘God guarded his *miles*.’\(^5\) During the battle with Kerbogha, Robert, closely following the *Gesta Francorum* claimed that a countless army of *milites* clothed in white was seen to come down the mountain, whose standard bearers and leaders were said to be SS George, Mauricius, Mercurius and Demetrius.\(^6\) On another occasion Robert referred to Saint George as *invictus miles*.\(^6\)

There were several individuals given the epithet *miles* by Robert the Monk. Walter Sanzavohir, a leader of one of the contingents of the People’s Crusade was a *miles egregius*;\(^6\) Duke Robert of Normandy a *miles animosus* and *miles interritus*;\(^6\) Fulcher of Chartres, first on to the walls of Antioch, a *miles*;\(^6\) Guy of Hauteville, half-brother of Bohemond a *miles*,\(^6\) Bohemond himself, *miles* and *animosus miles*;\(^6\) Raymond Pilet a *miles*;\(^6\) Gouffier of Lastours, *miles honestus*,\(^6\) and Letold of Tournai, a *miles*.\(^6\) Robert did not name a certain Armenian lord, who was appointed

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56 RM 834.
57 RM 855: *...dux ducum et miles militia*.
58 RM 731.
59 RM 787: *Deus militem suum custodivi*.
60 RM 832.
61 RM 834.
62 RM 735.
63 RM 760, 875.
64 RM 799. Fulcher of Chartres the *miles* is not to be confused with the chronicler of the same name. See C. Sweetenham, *Robert the Monk’s History of the First Crusade*, p. 145 n. 24.
65 RM 816.
66 RM 817, 741.
67 RM 838, 844.
68 RM 847. For Gouffier of Lastours see see J. Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, p. 209.
69 RM 867.
ruler of a castle between Mamistra and Caesarea, although the *Gesta* referred to him as Symeon. While the author of the *Gesta* simply called Symeon ‘a man’, Robert described him as a *miles fortis et strenuus*.70 Peter of Aups was described as a *miles* by both the *Gesta* and Robert.71 The Byzantine envoy Tatikios together with William Carpenter was called a *miles* and *dives*.72 With the one exception of Raymond Pilet, Carol Sweetenham has preferred to translate all these terms as ‘soldier.’ This seems to be overly cautious, as all of those described as *miles*, with the possible exceptions of the Armenian Symeon and Byzantine Tatikios, clearly held a distinct social position, a very senior one in the case of Robert of Normandy and Bohemond. To portray Robert the Monk as intending the meaning ‘soldier’ rather than ‘knight’ in these cases risks losing information concerning the term *milites*.

There are, however, passages in the *Historia* in which Robert used the term *miles* in a general sense, for a soldier rather than a knight. In this regard, Carol Sweetenham’s introduction to her English translation of the *Historia Iherosolimitana* is correct in stating that ‘Robert’s use of the term *miles* is fluid; in this he mirrors his contemporaries such as Fulcher. *Miles* can mean variously a soldier, a vassal, a Christian soldier or a knight.’73 But as noted in Chapter Two, those passages where the term was not confined to the meaning of ‘knights’ tended to occur where Robert was making a theological point.

A very interesting passage in this regard occurs in Robert’s report of a speech of Bohemond at Constantinople, a speech that is not in the *Gesta Francorum*. Bohemond is described as being tearful with delight that so many *consules*, *duces* and *optimates* are at the city to meet him. He opened his address to these senior nobles by calling them ‘*bellatores Dei*.’74 Later he declaimed, ‘*O ordo militum*, now three and four times blessed! You who up to these times were polluted by the blood of murder, are now through the sweat of the saints equal to the martyrs.’75 In a metaphorical language, Robert was making the point that the expedition to Jerusalem gave a soldier the opportunity to earn a heavenly

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70 RM 768, GF 25.
71 RM 769. GF 25. For Peter of Aups see C. Sweetenham, *Robert the Monk’s History*, p. 117 n. 52.
72 RM 782.
74 RM 747.
75 RM 748: *O ordo militem, nunc terque quaterque beatus! Qui huc usque fuisti homicidi sanguine deturpatus, nunc sanctorum sudoribus compar martyrum*.
reward through the same activity that formerly condemned him. The occurrence of *bellatores* and *ordo* in the same passage makes it clear that at this point Robert was writing within the functional framework of the ‘three orders.’\(^\text{76}\) His theological message was aimed at the broad category of ‘those who fight’ from emperor to poor footsoldier. Because of this context it would probably be inaccurate to narrow down those *milites* being addressed to the category of knights. The sense of *ordo* here is not one of hierarchy; Sweetenham in her translation also preferred ‘soldiers’ to ‘knights’ at this point.\(^\text{77}\)

A similar observation can be made for Baldric of Dol’s reworking of the *Gesta Francorum*. Baldric used the term *miles* in a passage with a curious division of the Christian forces present at the siege of Antioch. When the knights departed from the Christian camp to fight the ‘Lake Battle’, 9 February 1098, Baldric wrote that everyone became anxious. ‘No one was confident in themselves, neither the *sacerdos*, nor the woman, nor the *populus*, nor the *miles*.’\(^\text{78}\) There is an echo here of the famous three orders based on function, with *miles* here almost certainly standing for a soldier in general rather than a knight in particular. So for Robert the Monk and Baldric of Dol, Benedictine monks of northern France, *milites* were not necessarily a distinct social grouping of ‘knights’, particularly when they used the term in the context of a schema of society that ordered people by their function.

For Guibert of Nogent, however, although sharing a similar background to Robert and Baldric, the use of the term *milites* is very different. Not least because Guibert’s rich social vocabulary and acute awareness of social division led him to echo a classical hierarchical ordering of society rather the simple functional division of orders. Guibert used the terms *milites*, *equites*, and *equestres* for ‘knights’ of a distinct social class and not simply mounted soldiers. This is particularly evident from the three appearances of the phrase *ordo equestris* in the *Gesta Dei Per Francos*, although Joachim Bumke has pointed out that such a phrase is not necessarily a ‘star witness’ for the case that *equestres* or *milites* formed a knightly class.\(^\text{79}\) Bumke argued that as the phrase *ordo equestris* or *ordo militaris* often appears in the works of writers consciously emulating


\(^{77}\) C. Sweetenham, *Robert the Monk’s History*, p. 98.

\(^{78}\) BD 46: Neuter de se condebat, nec sacerdos, nec mulier; nec populus, nec miles.

\(^{79}\) J. Bumke, *The Concept of Knighthood*, p. 110.
Cicero, it might better reflect the transmission of classical language than the actual sociological formation of a class of knights. Certainly Guibert’s work contained a certain amount of Ciceronian imagery. His three uses of the phrase *ordo equestris* can be seen as echoes of Ciceronian history, but they are not simply rhetorical flourishes. Guibert’s description of how before the expedition the *ordo equestris* were engaged in mutual slaughter with the *vulgus* had a real content. Social discontent and the Truce of God were major themes of Urban II at the Council of Clermont. Guibert was very conscious of the depredations against the poor made by certain knights known to him. Guibert was using his classical vocabulary to comment on a genuine sociological issue of his day, the conflict between knights and commoners. The other two examples of the phrase were introductions by Guibert to specific figures: Raymond Pilet was described as a *vir equestris ordinis* among the *primores* of Count Raymond and an unnamed ‘knight’ who appeared in a colourful anecdote as joining the expedition to rid himself of the devil, was again a *vir equestris ordinis*. The imagery is evocative of the ancient Roman order of knights, but if the sentences meant anything at all to Guibert and his contemporaries, it was surely that that Raymond Pilet and the anonymous figure belonged to a current social *ordo* of knights. Nor was Guibert referring to the so-called ‘open’ *ordo* of *bellatores* from the functional tripartite schema of those who pray, those who work and those who fight. By analogy with Roman social order, Guibert here was referring to an *ordo* with a distinct position in the social hierarchy.

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80 GN 100, 121, 206, 298, 308, 319.
81 GN 87.
83 GN 179.
84 GN 244.
85 GN 324. This person was later described as a *miles*, he was the owner of a horse, his brother died in combat and he was approached by the devil in the guise of an *eques* with a falcon on his hand.
87 On ‘open’ orders, that is those without a barrier created by the need for distinguished birth, see J. Fleckenstein, ‘Zum Problem der Abschliessung des Ritterstandes,’ in *Historische Forschungen für Walter Schlesinger*, H. Beumann ed. (Köln, 1974), pp. 264–5.
Of all the early crusading authors Guibert had the most refined sense of social hierarchy, reflected in particular in his use of the term mediocres. Indeed Guibert indicated that stratification existed among the class of equestres with his use of the highly original phrase, mediocritates equestrium virorum, the ‘middle ranks of knights’. The context of this improvisation by Guibert was his observation that after Pope Urban II had preached the iter Dei at the Council of Clermont, ‘the will of counts palatine was aroused and the middle ranks of equestres besides had come to the brink [of departure].’ The distinction made here indicates that Guibert considered that senior nobles were part of the order of equestres, but so too were equestres of more modest means.

To emphasise how the whole of that order, great and lesser, desired to join the expedition he coined a unique phrase. Further evidence that Guibert’s social schema for the First Crusade was a pyramid-like hierarchy arises from his observation that a multitude of the mediocres principes joined the expedition. These ‘middling princes’ were defined by Guibert as the owners of one, two, three or four towns and were present in sufficient numbers to draw comparisons with the siege of Troy. Guibert might well have coined the highly unusual phrase mediocres principes to assist his description of the Christian forces. At the top were the handful of senior princes, below them a large number of others encompassed by the term princeps, but of more modest means, being the lords of between one and four towns. Below these were the milites. All these groupings were encompassed within the category equestris ordo.

In describing the forces that accompanied Bohemond from Apulia, Guibert wrote that in his following were many equestres of the highest probity (virorum probitas). Again the term equestres here clearly has a social content. Similarly in Guibert’s report of the departure of the Crusade of 1101 he noted the presence of ‘so many battalions of equestres of considerable reputation (non contemnendi nominis).’ Two individuals termed ‘knight’ by Guibert were specifically praised as noble as a result of birth. It has been noted that Guibert described Gervase of Bazoches as an eques and a miles. Guibert described Gervase as an eques

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89 GN 118: Iam Palatinorum comitum pruriebat intentio, et mediocritas equestrium virorum parturire iam coeperat.
90 GN 133.
91 GN 138.
92 GN 312.
‘of famous descent’ (*nobiliter oriundus*). Gervase was related to the lords of Milly in the Beauvaisis, was a senior member of the entourage of Baldwin I and was made lord of Tiberias in 1106.

A more significant example is that of Guibert’s friend Matthew, who was described as being an *equester* of noble birth (*genere nobilis*); Matthew was not a particularly senior *eques* as Guibert informs us that Matthew’s parents owed homage to Guibert’s. Between them these examples indicate that Guibert considered nobility was associated with family and that it extended down the social scale as far as otherwise undistinguished *milites* and *equites*. The fact that Guibert saw the whole body of *milites* on the First Crusade as noble is strengthened by consideration of his description of the moment the entire Christian fighting force gathered at Nicea, June 1097. Guibert wrote that those present wearing the arms of *equestres* were the ‘flower of the nobility’ (*flos nobilitatis*) of the Franks.

It is worth noting the story in the *Gesta Dei Per Francos* of the devil who appeared to the unnamed knight mentioned above. Guibert’s description of the devil reads: ‘Indeed he appeared as an *eques*, holding a sparrow-hawk in his hand.’ The hunting bird as an accoutrement of the *eques* is important here. As Albert of Aachen noted, such birds were beloved ‘of the highest *nobiles*.’ Although Guibert’s story here is a miraculous and edifying anecdote it does provide evidence linking the term *eques* to a noble class with a distinct culture and not simply a soldier on a horse.

The work of Guibert of Nogent therefore provides the strongest evidence that the *milites* of the First Crusade were a social as well as a military grouping.

Importantly, a similar conclusion arises from consideration of Albert of Aachen’s history. As Albert was writing in Lotharingia his experience considerably broadens the geographical scope of investigation into the terms. Over the course of his long work Albert identified very many individuals as *milites*, usually with a praiseworthy epithet: Walter Sanzavohir, one of the leaders of the People’s Crusade was a *miles egregius*;

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93 GN 198.
94 GN 198.
95 GN 147.
96 GN 324: *Videbatur etiam et ipse eques, accipitrem manu gestans*.
97 AA iii.2 (140): *procerum nobilium*.
98 AA i.6 (8).
Henry of castle Esch was variously *miles*, *miles fortissimus*, *miles nobilis* and *miles nobilis genere*. Along with Henry, his brother Godfrey and Cono of Montaigu were ‘milites always most dangerous to the enemy’, Godfrey had earlier been described as a *miles fortissimus*; Warner, count of Grez, was ‘a *miles* irreproachable in the art of war’; Thomas de Marle of the castle of La Fère a *miles acerrimus*; Engelrand, son of Hugh of Saint-Pol a *miles egregius*; Milo Louez a *miles famosissimus*; Oliver of the castle Jussey a *miles audax et pugnax*; Welf of Burgundy a *miles egregius*; Richard of the Principate, count of Salerno, brother-in-law of Tancred, and Robert of Anzi, together *milites acerrimi*; Roger Barneville; Udelrard of Wissant, a *miles inreprehensibilis*, in the household of Duke Godfrey ‘who always shared his secrets before all others’ and also a ‘splendid and most noble’ knight; Everard III, lord of Le Puiset; Walbricus, Ivo, Rodolphus of Fontanais, Raimbold Croton, Peter son of Gisla, together *milites Christiani*; Tancred, *miles acerrimus, miles gloriosus*; Reinhard of Hemmersbach, ‘a *miles* most

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100 AA ii.1 (60–62).

101 AA iv.54 (332).

102 AA v.4 (342).


106 AA ii.22 (96).

107 AA ii.23 (98). Milo Louez is otherwise unknown.

108 AA ii.23 (100). For Oliver of Jussey see J. Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, p. 215.

109 AA iii.11 (154). For Welf of Burgundy see AA 154 n. 29.


111 AA iii.33 (190). For Roger Barneville, see AA 108 n. 96.


113 AA iii.33 (190); iv.32 (294).

114 AA iv.32 (294). For Raimbold Croton see J. Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, p. 218. For these other knights see AA 294 n. 43, 46, 47 and 49.

115 AA iii.7 (148); vi.29 (440).
famous in deeds and birth’;\textsuperscript{116} Folbert, ‘a \textit{miles egregius} by birth from the castle Bouillon’;\textsuperscript{117} Heribrand of Bouillon, \textit{miles nobilis};\textsuperscript{118} Walter of castle Verra, ‘a man and \textit{miles} of noble parents’, also a \textit{miles egregius};\textsuperscript{119} Gerard, born of the castle Avesnes, a \textit{miles}, \textit{miles egregius}, \textit{miles acerrimus} and a beloved \textit{miles} of Duke Godfrey;\textsuperscript{120} Franco I of Maasmechelen on the river Meuse, \textit{miles inperterritus};\textsuperscript{121} Rothold a \textit{miles acerrimus};\textsuperscript{122} Ralph of Mousson, Geldemar Carpenel, Wich the Swabian and Ralph of Montpinçon, together \textit{milites probi};\textsuperscript{123} Geldemar Carpenel was elsewhere termed a \textit{miles egregius} and a \textit{miles ferocissimus};\textsuperscript{124} while Wich the Swabian was also a \textit{miles magnificus};\textsuperscript{125} Peter, a \textit{miles preclarus} from Lombardy;\textsuperscript{126} Robert a \textit{miles probus} from Apulia;\textsuperscript{127} Wirich the butler of Duke Godfrey, a \textit{miles egregius} and \textit{miles probus};\textsuperscript{128} Milo of Claremont,\textsuperscript{129} King Baldwin I, ‘always a \textit{miles inperterritus}’;\textsuperscript{130} Walter and Baldwin of Tahun;\textsuperscript{131} Berwold, a \textit{miles nobilissimus};\textsuperscript{132} Guido of Biandrate, a \textit{miles

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\item[\textsuperscript{116}] AA v.4 (344): \textit{Reinardus de Hemmersbach, miles clarissimus opere et genere}. For Reinhard of Hemmersbach see A. V. Murray, \textit{The Crusader Kingdom}, p. 224.
\item[\textsuperscript{117}] AA v.5 (344): \textit{Folbertus, miles egregius de castello Bullon ortus}. For Folbert of Bouillon see A. V. Murray, \textit{The Crusader Kingdom}, p. 195–6.
\item[\textsuperscript{118}] AA v.12 (352). For Heribrand of Bouillon see A. V. Murray, \textit{The Crusader Kingdom}, pp. 209–10.
\item[\textsuperscript{119}] AA v.40 (392); \textit{miles nobili editus parentela}; AA v.41 (394). For Walter of Verra see J. Riley—Smith, \textit{First Crusaders}, p. 224.
\item[\textsuperscript{120}] AA vi.53 (474); vii.2 (486); vii.3 (488); vii.15 (506). For Gerard of Avesnes see A. V. Murray, \textit{The Crusader Kingdom}, p. 199.
\item[\textsuperscript{121}] AA vii.3 (490). For Franco I of Maasmechelen see A. V. Murray, \textit{The Crusader Kingdom}, p. 196–7.
\item[\textsuperscript{122}] AA vii.4 (490). Rothold is otherwise unknown.
\item[\textsuperscript{123}] AA vii.36 (538). For these knights see A. V. Murray, \textit{The Crusader Kingdom}, pp. 223–4 (Ralph of Mousson); p. 198 (Geldemar Carpenel); p. 235–6 (Wicher the Swabian); p. 223 (Ralph of Montpinçon).
\item[\textsuperscript{124}] AA vii.22 (516); vii.65 (576).
\item[\textsuperscript{125}] AA vii.71 (584). For Wicher the Swabian see A. V. Murray, \textit{The Crusader Kingdom}, pp. 236–6.
\item[\textsuperscript{126}] AA vii.4 (490). Peter the Lombard is otherwise unknown.
\item[\textsuperscript{127}] AA vii.11 (500). For Robert of Apulia see A. V. Murray, \textit{The Crusader Kingdom}, p. 225.
\item[\textsuperscript{128}] AA vii.24 (518); 559. For Wirich the butler see A. V. Murray, \textit{The Crusader Kingdom}, p. 238.
\item[\textsuperscript{129}] AA viii.24 (518). For Milo of Clermont see A. V. Murray, \textit{The Crusader Kingdom}, p. 218.
\item[\textsuperscript{130}] AA vii.34 (536); \textit{Baldwinus semper miles imperterritus}.
\item[\textsuperscript{131}] AA vii.34 (536). Walter and Baldwin of Tahun are otherwise unknown.
\item[\textsuperscript{132}] AA vii.65 (576). For Berwold see A. V. Murray, \textit{The Crusader Kingdom}, p. 189.
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egregius;\textsuperscript{133} Baldwin of Grandpré a miles pulcherrimus;\textsuperscript{134} Stephen, count of Burgundy, a miles clarissimus and miles egregius;\textsuperscript{135} Conrad, constable of King Henry IV Germany, a miles imperterritus, egregius, famosus et mirabilis;\textsuperscript{136} Dodo of Clermont a miles egregius;\textsuperscript{137} Wibert of Mount Laon, a miles ferocissimus;\textsuperscript{138} Engelbert;\textsuperscript{139} Arpin, a miles egregius;\textsuperscript{140} Count Stephen of Blois, a miles egregius;\textsuperscript{141} Reinold, a miles of King Baldwin I;\textsuperscript{142} Otto Altaspata,\textsuperscript{143} Baldwin of Bourcq a miles egregius and also a miles imperterritus;\textsuperscript{144} Joscelin of Courtenay a miles egregius and a miles fidelissimus;\textsuperscript{145} Reinard of Verdun, a miles egregius;\textsuperscript{146} Arnulf of Oudenaarde, a miles illustris;\textsuperscript{147} Roger of Rozoy;\textsuperscript{148} Gerard the Chamberlain;\textsuperscript{149} Hugh of Cassel and Albert surnamed Apostle, milites egregii;\textsuperscript{150} Gervase of Bazoches, a miles egregius;\textsuperscript{151} Robert of Vieux-Ponts, a miles indefessus;\textsuperscript{152} William of Wanges, a miles gloriosus et nobilis;\textsuperscript{153} Eustace I Granarius, lord of

\textsuperscript{133} AA viii.1 (586). For Guido of Biandrate see AA 587 n. 3.
\textsuperscript{134} AA viii.7 (594). For Baldwin of Grandpré see J. Riley-Smith, First Crusaders, p. 200.
\textsuperscript{135} AA viii.15 (604); ix.5 (644).
\textsuperscript{136} AA viii.16 (606); ix.5 (644); ix.6 (644). For Conrad the constable see J. Riley-Smith, First Crusaders, p. 203.
\textsuperscript{137} AA viii.23 (616). For Dodo of Clermont see AA 595 n. 26.
\textsuperscript{138} AA viii.17 (609). For Wibert of Mount Laon see AA 608 n. 39.
\textsuperscript{139} AA viii.48 (636). For Engelbert see AA 637 n. 79.
\textsuperscript{140} AA ix.5 (644). For Arpin of Bourges see AA 567 n. 71.
\textsuperscript{141} AA ix.5 (644).
\textsuperscript{142} AA 673. For Reinold see A. V. Murray, The Crusader Kingdom, p. 224.
\textsuperscript{143} AA ix.50 (674). For Otto Altaspata see A. V. Murray, The Crusader Kingdom, p. 218.
\textsuperscript{144} AA ix.40 (692); 860. For Baldwin of Bourcq see A. V. Murray, The Crusader Kingdom, p. 185–6.
\textsuperscript{145} AA ix.40 (692); x.37 (752). For Joscelin of Courtenay see A. V. Murray, The Crusader Kingdom, p. 214.
\textsuperscript{146} AA ix.50 (710). For Reinhard of Verdun see A. V. Murray, The Crusader Kingdom, p. 224.
\textsuperscript{147} AA ix.52 (714). For Arnulf of Oudenaarde A. V. Murray, The Crusader Kingdom, pp. 184.
\textsuperscript{148} AA x.14 (730). For Roger of Rozoy see A. V. Murray, The Crusader Kingdom, p. 227.
\textsuperscript{149} AA x.14 (730). For Gerard the Chamberlain see A. V. Murray, The Crusader Kingdom, pp. 210–11. Albert the Apostle is otherwise unknown.
\textsuperscript{150} AA x.34 (750). For Hugh of Cassel see A. V. Murray, The Crusader Kingdom, pp. 210–11. Albert the Apostle is otherwise unknown.
\textsuperscript{151} AA x.55 (770).
\textsuperscript{152} AA xi.40 (816). For Robert of Vieux-Pont see AA 816 n. 77.
\textsuperscript{153} AA xii.5 (830). William of Wanges is otherwise unknown.
Caesarea, a *miles preclarus*;\(^{154}\) Rainer of Brus, a *miles imperterritus*;\(^ {155}\) and lastly Hugh a *miles illustris*.\(^ {156}\)

This list has some interesting features. As a rule the term *milites* is not used for the most senior princes. During the course of the first six books, none of the leaders of the First Crusade are singled out by the term. Only in writing his later, chronicle style, history of the Kingdom of Jerusalem did Albert begin to apply the term to notable figures such as Joscelin of Courtenay and Baldwin of Bourcq. The fact that at one point Albert wrote that Baldwin I was ‘always a *miles imperterritus*’ was as much a comment on the king’s unvarying tactic of charging at the enemy regardless of the odds than an as epithet concerning his status.

In the cases of Henry of Esch, Warner, count of Grez, Thomas de Marle, Oliver of Jussey, Föbert of Bouillon and Walter of Verra, Albert introduced the knights as being from a particular castle. There is a considerable debate on the origin of the castle, but private ownership of castles, flourishing from around the year 1000 onwards, has generally been considered an important feature of post-Carolingian society.\(^ {157}\) Albert’s brief epithets fit with a perspective that considers the castle to be of growing importance, for they provide evidence that by 1100 some *miles* at least were defined by their ownership of a certain castle.

As with the other early crusading historians Albert considered there to be a connection between nobility and family. Henry of Esch was called a *miles nobilis* by birth (*genere*).\(^ {158}\) Similarly Walter of castle Verra was described as ‘a man and *miles* from noble elevated parents’\(^ {159}\) Reinhard of Hemmersbach, while not obtaining the epithet *nobilis* was


\(^{156}\) AA xii.11 (840). Hugh is otherwise unknown.


\(^{158}\) AA v.4 (342): *Miles nobilis genere*.

\(^{159}\) AA v.40 (392): *Vir et miles nobili editus parentela*.
‘a miles most famous in deeds and birth’, as was Folbert, ‘a miles egregius by birth from the castle Bouillon’. In Albert’s writing then, it seems that there is a considerable overlap between milites and nobiles. As noted in Chapter Two, however, there is one passage in the work of Albert of Aachen that suggests that for him there could be a distinction between milites and nobiles. This was the account of plague in Italy in 1083 that killed milites and nobiles. This might well be a reference to ministeriales, at this time often performing exactly the same function as knights, but with a servile social status. Albert, more than the French historians, would have been familiar with the fact that the German kings used this particular category of warriors.

Although not absolute, fixed, categories, a survey of the usage of the terms milites, equites and equestres in the early crusading histories shows their usage to cluster far more around a notion that includes that of social status than that of their being simply bellatores. David Crouch’s discussion of this issue made the point that ‘knighthood and noble status came together at some time before 1190.’ It seems, in fact, that around 1110, especially in the history of Guibert of Nogent, the two concepts, knighthood and nobility, were already closely linked. This is not to argue that the sociological phenomenon came into being at around this date, conceptual language has always lagged behind social evolution. The testimony of the crusading sources is not that there was a new knightly nobility on the First Crusade, but only that the terms milites, equites and equestres were becoming fastened to the activities of a social layer who might well have seen themselves as both knights and noble for some time, perhaps for as long as a hundred years in parts France. This conclusion is strengthened by the considerable commentary of these sources on the relationship between knights and horses.

Since there were very many illustrious and nobilissimi equites, whose number lies hidden, their horses having died and having been eaten because of the hunger of famine, they were reckoned in the number of pedites. And they, who from their boyhood had always been accustomed to horses and had been in the habit of riding horses into battle, were schooled to do battle as pedites. Indeed among these illustrious men he who could acquire

160 AA v.4 (342): Reinardus de Hamerbach, miles clarissimus opere et genere.
161 AA v.5 (344): Folbertus, miles egregius de castello Bullon ortus.
162 D. Crouch, The Birth of Nobility, p. 246.
163 G. Duby, La Société aux XIe et XIIe siècles dans la région mâconnaise (Paris, 1953).
a mule or ass or worthless beast of burden or palfrey, would use it as a horse. Among them were *principes*, most powerful and rich in their own lands, who entered the conflict sitting on an ass.\textsuperscript{164}

Albert of Aachen wrote this key passage concerning *equites* and *pedites* at the time of the battle outside Antioch between the Christian forces and Kerbogha. The statement that illustrious and noble *equites* were numbered among the *pedites* seems to be carefully chosen by Albert, especially in the light of his following remark. The loss of status indicated was temporary and could be alleviated by the *eques* obtaining any kind of mount on which to ride. The *eques* did not become a *pedes*, but was counted among them, his years of training from boyhood still represented a differentiation from those with whom he now fought. Nevertheless, the desperation of the *eques* to hold on to their visible status was shown by those who could obtain mules preferring the humiliation of riding an ass into battle to that of being assigned to the *pedites*.

The struggle by *milites* not to fall into the ranks of the *pedites* is one of the themes of the *Gesta Francorum*, noted by those who used the history for their *fons formalis*. In describing the hardship of the march, early in August 1097, en route to Iconium, the anonymous author wrote that ‘a great number of our horses died, so that many of our *milites* remained *pedites*, and for lack of horses oxen served us in place of nags.\textsuperscript{165} Fulcher of Chartres used the *Gesta Francorum* for this period of his own history, although he was an eyewitness to the difficulties of the march of the united Christian army. His repetition that the loss of horses led to the use of oxen as mounts by some knights is therefore corroborative.\textsuperscript{166} Baldric of Dol’s version of this passage was very similar, reporting that many renowned *milites* were compelled to march as *pedites*.\textsuperscript{167}

The anonymous author wrote that due to poverty at the siege of Antioch early in 1098 there were less than a thousand *milites* who had kept their horses in the best condition.\textsuperscript{168} Baldric’s version of the same

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\textsuperscript{164} AA iv.54 (332): *Plurimi sequidem egregii equites et nobilissimi quorum latet numerus, equis mortuis et pre famis inopia consumptis, in numero peditum computati, pedites prelia discebant, qui a puerili euo semper equis assueti et inoeci certamen inire solebant. Ex his vero egregii viris qui mulum aut asellum vel vile iumentum vel palefridum nunc adquiere poterat pro equo ueteatur. Inter quos fortissimi et ditissimi sua in terra principes asino insidientes certamen inserunt.*

\textsuperscript{165} GF 23: *Illic fuit mortua maxima pars nostrorum equorum, eo quod multi ex nostris militibus remanserant pedites; et pro penuria equorum, erant nobis boves loco caballorum.*

\textsuperscript{166} FC I.xiii.3 (202). GF 23.

\textsuperscript{167} BD 37.

\textsuperscript{168} GF 34.

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report was that ‘at that time, indeed, there was so great a decline in the number of horses of the Christians, that scarcely a thousand milites could be found in the whole of that great army who still enjoyed the use of a mount.’\textsuperscript{169} Both versions suggest there were very many milites without mounts, but at the same time, in calculating the forces available to the Christian army the message seems clear: Only those with a mount counted. This tension, between the practical assignation of milites without mounts to the ranks of pedites but their theoretical retention of their former status was an important source of internal stress within the expedition.

The section of the Gesta Francorum dealing with the embassy of Peter the Hermit to Kerbogha has the form of a chanson with invented speeches by the two parties.\textsuperscript{170} One feature of the account that is important here is Kerbogha’s purported offer to the Christian forces that if they renounced their religion he would give them land, cities and castles, so that none should remain a pedes, but all would be milites.\textsuperscript{171} Whether apocryphal or not the matter was milites becoming pedites was a continual grievance of some significance to the author of the Gesta Francorum, since he placed it at the heart of Kerbogha’s offer to the Christians.

It is notable that the author’s definition of a miles here was to be the owner of land, cities or castles. Baldric of Dol, Guibert of Nogent and Robert the Monk all repeated the offer in similar terms, although all three substituted equites for milites at this point.\textsuperscript{172} Carol Sweetenham was so anxious to avoid the difficulties of the term ‘knight’ that in her translation of Robert the Monk’s Historia Iherosolomitana she had Kerbogha offer land so as to make the Franks ‘mounted soldiers.’\textsuperscript{173} But ‘knights’ makes much more sense here, as the offer of land is an offer to raise their status: there is no mention of mounts. In his version of the negotiations between Peter the Hermit and Kerbogha, Fulcher, dependent on the Gesta Francorum for information as he was in Edessa at the time, wrote that ‘indeed [Kerbogha’s forces] knew our milites had become pedites, weak and poor.’\textsuperscript{174} Similarly in his account of the

\textsuperscript{169} BD 44: Tunc etiam in tantum Christianorum defecerunt equi, ut vix in toto et tanto exercitu mille milites invenirentur qui caballis uterunt.

\textsuperscript{170} See above p. 17 n. 35.

\textsuperscript{171} GF 67.

\textsuperscript{172} BD 75, GN 236, RM 826.

\textsuperscript{173} C. Sweetenham, Robert the Monk’s History, p. 166.

\textsuperscript{174} FC I.xxi.3 (249): Nostros vero milites sciebant effici pedites, debiles, inopes.
march of Baldwin of Edessa and Bohemond of Antioch to Jerusalem in the autumn of 1099, Fulcher, who was now an eyewitness, wrote that ‘you would see noble milites, having lost their horses in some way, become pedites.’\textsuperscript{175} All of the early crusading historians had no difficulty in envisaging that a body of milites could fall to the ranks of pedites through hardship.

Robert the Monk provided several more examples of the same theme. When the herald of al-Afdal, vizier of Cairo, came to the camp of the crusaders at the siege of Antioch, early in the spring of 1098, Robert elaborated on the \textit{Gesta Francorum} by reporting the details of the offer that the envoy is supposed to have made. The proposal was to allow the Christians to travel and worship at Jerusalem, ‘if you wish to go with the satchel and stave, they will cause you to travel there with the greatest honour and you will be endowed with rich property: from pedites will be made equites.’\textsuperscript{176} It seems that Robert imported the same ideas present in the offer of Kerbogha into this section also. Robert also described an imagined rout of the forces of Duqaq, ruler of Damascus, in which the Christian forces were all able to join the pursuit ‘since those who had come as pedites were turned into riders (ascensores equorum efficiebantur).’\textsuperscript{177} It is unusual to have a report of pedites mounting horses and perhaps noteworthy that Robert did not write that they thereby became equites. It could be that while Robert was willing to write of pedites becoming equites through the grant of rich property, he was more reluctant to use the same idea for those pedites who mounted captured horses.

For the battle against Kerbogha ‘Bohemond formed a sixth [squadron] with those pedites who were lightly armed for war, and milites, who had been compelled by necessity to sell their horses.’\textsuperscript{178} Here Robert was clear that even though the miles was having to fight on foot, he was still a knight, a point which is similarly evident in the description of those milites and armigeri required to walk like pedites due to the difficulty of the mountain terrain when the expedition descended the Anti-Taurus range of mountains early in October 1097.\textsuperscript{179}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[175] FC Lxxxiii.13 (331): Videretis milites nobiles, equis quoquam modo amissis, pedites effici.
\item[176] RM 791: Quod si de cetero in pera et baculo vultis ire, cum honore maximo rerumque opulentia vos illuc facient pertransire: de pedibus equites facient.
\item[177] RM 779: . . . quoniam qui pedites venerant, ascensores equorum efficiebantur.
\item[178] RM 828: Boamundi fuit sexta, cum quo expeditiores ad bellum pedites fuerunt, et milites qui eorum suos, necessitate compulsi, vendiderant.
\item[179] RM 770: Milites et armigeri collo suo arma dependentia gestabant, omnes aequaliter pedites, quia nulli eorum equitabant.
\end{footnotes}
A very interesting related passage is Guibert’s description of Robert Guiscard, duke of Apulia and Calabria, father of Bohemond, whom Guibert introduced as someone who was ‘from feeble enough station of birth.’ Guibert wrote that Robert Guiscard was sent away ‘a pedes’ from Normandy, perhaps banished, ‘to Apulia, where by whatever method, he earned horses and arms to become an eques.’ This is an extraordinary statement. Factually it is dubious, in that no other source mentions banishment and while Tancred, Robert’s father, was a poor lord with twelve sons, of whom Robert was the sixth, it seems unlikely he would have been so impoverished as to journey to Italy as a footsoldier. Guibert’s report does, however, testify to contemporary experience of the fluidity of social classes.

In his comments on Robert Guiscard’s early career Guibert seems to be echoing the idea that is present in Kerbogha’s offer to the Christian forces in Antioch, that a knight impoverished to the point of being a pedes could restore his status as an eques by regaining a mount and arms. Guibert continued his account of the career of Robert Guiscard by reporting that the Norman eques took over certain castles, laid siege to wealthy cities and in short ‘this new man (novus homo) extended his territory of domination.’ This idea of the creation of a ‘new man’ was sustained in Guibert’s comment that ‘anyone who wishes today may see the power of [Robert’s] son Bohemond who, having obliterated the worthlessness of his forbears, married the daughter of Philip, King of France.’ The phrase novus homo is the key to understanding Guibert’s intent here. He was echoing the classical descriptions of those families who through their military and political successes were able to thrust themselves into the ranks of the Roman elite. Just as, very rarely, new families were reported as entering the political arena of the late Roman Republic, so Guibert considered it possible for someone of relatively low birth and the equipment of a pedes to rise to the status of an eques through the acquisition of a horse, castles and cities. Humble parentage,
while not completely forgotten, could be obliterated through a successful 
military career. This whole passage unequivocally concerns status, not 
function, and throughout Guibert used the term *eques*. Here, at least, 
there can be no other meaning to the term than ‘knight.’

Although Raymond of Aguilers occasionally drew on parts of the 
*Gesta Francorum*, his work, the *Historia Francorum*, represents a very 
different tradition. Nevertheless, through several independently recorded 
examples, he also provided evidence for the importance that *milites* 
attached to horses. Outside the walls of Antioch on the evening of 29 
December 1097, Raymond observed the eagerness of certain *milites* 
to chase a horse in mid-battle, even to the point of incurring a defeat 
for the Christian forces.\(^{186}\) This pursuit by the *milites* resulted in the 
footsoldiers thinking that a flight had begun and in the confusion the 
besieging army sustained many casualties. It is highly significant that 
one horse should be the source of undisciplined pursuit by *milites*. The 
incident is best understood within the context of the considerable loss 
of horses that had seen many *milites* numbered among the *pedites* due 
to the loss of their mount. Under such circumstances a healthy Arab 
horse was of immense value.\(^ {187} \) The same context makes clear the 
importance of a council of the Provençals in January 1098, at which 
Count Raymond granted 500 marks of silver, ‘so that if any of the 
*milites* should lose his horse, he should be restored from the 500 marks 
and the rest that had been given up to the fraternity.’\(^ {188} \) This agreement 
addressed the problem that the *milites* were reluctant to defend foraging 
expeditions due to their horses being in no fit state.\(^ {189} \)

At the fall of Antioch, the chronicler noted with pleasure that fleeing 
Turkish riders were intercepted and in their panic were thrown down 
to their deaths, ‘but we were grieved that more than three hundred 
horses came to naught in that place.’\(^ {190} \) While trapped in Antioch by the 
arrival of Kerbogha, famine was so severe that ‘the majority of *milites* 
lived through the blood of their horses, but anticipating the mercy of

\(^{186}\) RA 39. 
\(^{188}\) RA 49 (245): . . . ut, si quis militum suorum equum deperderet, de illis quingentis marchis 
illi restauraretur, ac de aliis quae fraternitati concessa sunt. See also J. Richard, ‘La confrérie 
de la première croisade’, *Études de Civilisation Médiéval : Mélanges Offerts à E. R. Labande*, 
\(^{190}\) RA 80 (252): *Sed de equis plusquam trecenitis inibi decollatis dolumus.*
God, they were unwilling to kill them.\footnote{RA 116 (258): Plerique milites sanguine suorum equorum vivebant; exspectantes Dei misericordiam, nolebant eos occidere adhuc.} No sooner did the milites and wealthier plebs obtain booty than they rushed to Caesarea and Homs to buy Arab horses.\footnote{RA 188 (273).}

A full discussion of the military importance of the mounted knight in the First Crusade can be found in John France’s\footnote{J. France, \textit{Victory in the East}, pp. 122–142.} \textit{Victory in the East}. Here the evidence has been gathered with a view to the connection between being mounted and social status. One clear conclusion is that owning a mount was a necessary, although not sufficient, condition for being numbered among the milites. The descriptions of oxen and asses being ridden are strong testimony to the determination of milites not to fall to the ranks of pedites. All the sources indicate a surprising willingness to envisage both the fall of a miles to the state of a pedes and the possibility that through the acquisition of wealth pedites could become milites. One interpretation of this could be that the terms were purely functional for the author and thus the status of the miles or the pedes simply reflected whether they were mounted or not. Thus the relative rapid transformation of their fortunes is easily explained. This view, however, jars with the previous conclusion that the sources generally did mean to include an aspect of status in their use of the terms milites, equites and equestres.

Moreover, when the particular passages in which the issue of change in status arises are looked at closely, the information given is more complex than the ‘functional’ explanation can encompass. It is not the offer of horses, but land and cities, which all the sources see as essential in making pedites into equites. There are several examples where the historian saw milites as being ‘numbered among’ or ‘fighting with’ the pedites, suggesting that they retained some aspect of a former status despite the loss of their mount. A second explanation is therefore preferred here, that the early crusading histories reveal a willingness to accept rapid changes of social status, particularly with the downward movement of milites to pedites. The problem with milites becoming pedites is a great one if those terms have a social content and society at large has a strict understanding of that content. But if the lower level of knighthood was still relatively undefined, then such social fluidity seems less remarkable.

\footnotetext[1]{RA 116 (258): Plerique milites sanguine suorum equorum vivebant; exspectantes Dei misericordiam, nolebant eos occidere adhuc.}
Having abandoned their lands, the less distinguished knights were no longer anchored in a lordly social position; furthermore they could easily lose their distinguishing accoutrements during the periods of great hardship experienced by the Christian forces of the First Crusade: the horse and their arms. Then all that would distinguish them from the footsoldiers was their previous training and their desire to regain their lost status. The force of Kerbogha’s offer should be understood as being particularly directed at these former knights, rather than *pedites* in general. A *pedes* who gained a horse or temporary wealth did not become a knight (although Guibert was willing to write about the exceptional case of Robert Guiscard in that manner); a *miles* who fell to becoming a *pedes*, however, ran the risk that this loss of status could become permanent.

*Milites*, *equites* and *equestres* in the early crusading histories were, by and large, members of the social class of knights; membership of this class, however, was not firmly fixed, particularly in the context of a three-year expedition. For the poorer knight their status was at times a precarious one.