CHAPTER SEVEN

PRINCIPES AND THE CRUSADING NOBILITY

As with their vocabulary for the lower social orders, the early Latin historians for the First Crusade differed from one another in the terms they employed for the upper layers of society. Principes, optimates, seniores, maiores, proceres and so forth had, in the classical era, held very distinct social or legal meanings.¹ By the early twelfth century, however, there was much less appreciation of their former nuances. Furthermore, the usage of such terms was still evolving, as can be seen by the various ways in which these historians made use of them.

One fairly consistent feature of the works examined here was their notion of nobility. By the early twelfth century the concept of nobilitas had come a long way from its origins as a term for the consular families (descendents of men who had held the consulship) of the Late Roman Republic.² As discussed in Chapter Five, on the whole the evidence of the sources for the First Crusade shows that they considered nobility to be a honoured social status possessed not only by the very uppermost members of the expedition, but also for the far more numerous milites, the knights. The most important examples in this regard comes from Guibert of Nogent. He described the relatively lowly knight Matthew as being of ‘noble birth’ (genere nobilis) and the entire body of knights on the crusade as the ‘flower of the nobility’ (flos nobilitatis) of the Franks.³

In one of his—rare—substantial additions to the Gesta Francorum, Peter Tudebode described an incident in which the knight Rainald Porchet, himself a miles nobilis,⁴ was displayed to the Christians on the walls of Antioch by the besiegers before being executed. Brave in the face of death, Rainald shouted out to encourage the Christian leaders, letting them know that in a recent battle they had killed all the maiores

³ GN 198, 147.
⁴ PT 79. For Rainald Porchet see J. Riley-Smith, First Crusaders, p. 219.

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and the bolder men of the city, namely twelve emirs and 1,500 nobiles.\textsuperscript{5} Although the society being described here is that of the Muslim army in Antioch and the numbers are exaggerated, it gives a sense that Peter Tudebode saw the category of nobiles as a very broad one.

Another crusading historian who used the term nobiles with regard to Muslim society was Raymond of Aguilers.\textsuperscript{6} The passage of greatest interest from Raymond’s history in this regard is his comment that bodies of Arabs, both of the nobiles and the vulgus, outside Tripoli were a delightful sight to the Christian army, following fighting early in March 1099.\textsuperscript{7} This example suggests that Raymond of Aguilers understood the couplet, nobiles and vulgus, expressed the entire body of society: that the basic social division was between noble and commoner.

The image of a society that consisted of two basic orders, the nobility and the commoners, was a commonplace for Albert of Aachen. At the siege of Antioch, sometime during the spring of 1098, Count Hugh of Saint-Pol and his son Engelrand led a successful foray against those Turks who were preventing his followers bringing forage to the camp. As a result of their victory nobiles et ignobiles came running up from every side.\textsuperscript{8} Despite this victory, famine soon pressed hard on many nobiles et ignobiles.\textsuperscript{9} Soon after the flight of Count Stephen of Blois from Antioch, 2 June 1098, a vision of the Church Father, Bishop Ambrose of Milan was reported to the Christian army. Albert wrote that Ambrose’s speeches produced great comfort to clerics and lay people, nobiles et ignobiles.\textsuperscript{10} Similarly, on the death of Bishop Adhémar of Le Puy, nobiles et ignobiles mourned with extreme lamentations.\textsuperscript{11} When, in August 1098, plague struck the Christian forces in Antioch, ‘both nobiles et ignobiles gave up the spirit of life.’\textsuperscript{12} Furthermore ‘whether equites or pedites, nobiles et ignobiles, monachi et clericī, parvi et magni, to say nothing of the female gender, more than 100 thousands were laid waste by death without being struck down by swords.’\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{5} PT 79.
\textsuperscript{6} RA 23 (240), 125 (260), 186 (272), 262 (286).
\textsuperscript{7} RA 262 (286).
\textsuperscript{8} AA iii.48 (214). For Hugh of Saint-Pol, aged vassal of Count Eustace III of Boulogne, see A. V. Murray, The Crusader Kingdom, p. 213.
\textsuperscript{9} AA iii.53 (220).
\textsuperscript{10} AA iv.38 (306).
\textsuperscript{11} AA v.4 (342).
\textsuperscript{12} AA v.4 (342): Tam nobilies quam ignobiles spiritum vitae exalatant.
\textsuperscript{13} AA v.4 (344): ...tam equites quam pedites, nobiles et ignobiles, monachi et clericī, parvi et magni, quin sexus femininus supra centum milia sine ferro morte vastati sunt.
Again, the three thousand troops that accompanied Duke Godfrey, now ruler of Jerusalem, to Arsuf in the late autumn of 1099, were divided into nobles et ignobiles, equites et pedites.14 Albert’s description of the defeat of the crusade of 1101 in July of that year, stated that everyone made haste to flight, magni et parvi, nobles et ignobles.15 A final appearance of the couplet nobles et ignobiles in the Historia Iherosolimitana was for a great number of Christians who drowned off the island of Cyprus in a storm, 20 September 1113.16

Albert used the term nobilis for a number of individuals. Count Emicho of Flonheim, leader of one of the contingents of the People’s Crusade, was a vir nobilis;17 Duke Godfrey also was a vir nobilissimus.18 Gilbert of Traves and Achart of Montmerle, together ‘mighty leaders of the Christians and viri nobles;’19 Geldemar Carpenel, a miles egregius et nobilis,20 and William of Wanges, a miles gloriósus et nobilis;21 Baldwin of Bourcq, was a vir nobilis of the family of Baldwin of Boulogne.22 Albert twice used the term nobilitas, ‘nobility,’ in connection with prominent figures of the First Crusade. He wrote of Robert of Flanders, Robert, count of Normandy, Cono of Montaigu, Count Raymond of Toulouse and all the nobilitas of Gallia.23 He described Ralph of Scegones, a relative of Duke William IX of Aquitaine, as a vir magne nobilitatis.24

Another of the crusading historians who saw noble and commoner to be a basic division of society was Baldric of Dol. As noted in Chapter Two, Baldric wrote a very interesting elaboration of a speech by Bohemond that he found in his fons formalis, the Gesta Francorum. Baldric had Bohemond appeal to the other leaders of the expedition to give good example and ride forth to battle, for ‘how does a dominus differ from a servus, a nobilis from a plebeius, dives from pauper, miles from pedes, if not that the counsel of us who rule over them should be useful, and our

14 AA vii.1 (486).
15 AA viii.18 (610).
16 AA xii.16 (848).
17 AA i.27 (50).
18 AA ii.1 (60).
19 AA vi.4 (408): Gisilbertus de Treva et Achart de Montmerla, fortes Christianorum duces et viri nobles. For Gilbert of Traves see J. Riley-Smith, First Crusaders, p. 208.
20 AA vii.22 (516).
21 AA xii.5 (830).
22 AA vii.31 (520).
23 AA iii.65 (244).
24 AA viii.35 (626). This is the only known reference to Ralph of Scegones.
help should protect them? Lord and servant, noble and commoner, rich and poor, knight and footsoldier. For Baldric a fundamental division ran through society, separating the elite from the masses, creating a responsibility for those at the top to aid those at the bottom.

The division of nobles and plebs occurred a second time in the Historia Hierosolymitana. During the spring of 1098 the Christian forces outside of Antioch decided to build a castle at a mosque, which was subsequently garrisoned by the followers of Count Raymond. The Gesta Francorum simply has the report that this was a decision of the maiores. In Baldric’s version the motive for the decision was elaborated, he wrote that the nobility were mercifully concerned to look after the plebs.

Other than this use of the term as the upper half of a bipartite division of society, there are two examples in Baldric’s history in which nobles appear, both in a context that indicates he was writing about a relatively large number of people. In his account of the council of Clermont, Baldric wrote that after Bishop Adhémar of Le Puy had been appointed the commander of the army of God ‘the great multitude of nobles offered their assent.’ Secondly, Baldric’s amendment of the eulogy to Adhémar in the Gesta Francorum, changed the description of the papal legate from having been counsellor of the divites to counsellor of the nobles.

Although Guibert of Nogent had the most acute sense of social status of the early crusading sources, he generally preferred other terms to nobles in commenting on the upper class. Apart from the examples above with regard to milites, the Gesta Dei Per Francos provides only one other interesting example where the term nobles was used. Guibert was disturbed by accounts of the shortages of food and water among the Christians at the siege of Jerusalem. Having explained that the water had to be brought six miles in the rotten skins of makeshift hide bags, he gave vent to his sympathy for the nobles undergoing such an experience. The roughness of the bread must have worn away the jaws and throats of the viri nobiles; their elegant stomachs must have been twisted by the bitterness of the putrid liquid. They doubtless remembered with

25 BD 45–6: Quid differt dominus a servo, nobilis a plebeio, dives a paupere, miles a pedite, nisi nostrum qui praesidemus eis prosit consilium, et patrocinetur auxilium?
26 GF 39.
27 BD 48.
28 BD 16. . .praebuit assensum multitudo multa nobilium.
29 GF 74.
30 BD 82.
suffering the pleasures of their former lives. This is vivid sociological evidence for the lifestyle of the nobility and although it does not define those termed nobles with any precision, the incident illustrated a basic social division on the crusade, since while the higher social class were suffering from rough bread and foul water, some of the poor were drinking water so filthy that they died of the swelling that resulted from having ingested leeches.

Thus far the sources are fairly consistent with regard to their portrayal of the nobility: it was a relatively large social grouping, not simply confined to those princes at the very top of the social structure. The evidence from one eyewitness, however, is less straightforward and it might well have been that for Fulcher of Chartres the idea of nobility was more restricted than for the other historians. Certainly very few individuals in his work were described by the adjective nobilis, all very senior figures indeed. These were Matilda, countess of Tuscany, a nobilissima matrona, Count Stephen of Blois, a vir probissimus et valde nobilis, and a vir prudens et nobilis; Duke Godfrey of Lotharingia, who on his election as ruler of Jerusalem, was described as having nobilitas and Stephen, count of Burgundy.

When Fulcher of Chartres described the journey of the contingent of Duke Robert of Normandy through France in 1096, he stated that this army was accompanied by Stephen, count of Blois, and Robert, count of Flanders and many other nobles. Clearly, Stephen and Robert shared their status as nobles with many others: the term nobles was not being restricted by Fulcher to just the handful of very senior princes. But how many more nobles were present? A very large number such as given in the example by Peter Tudebode, or by the writers who used nobles to indicate all of the upper half of a bipartite society, does not fit the spirit of the formulation, which seems to refer to only the most prominent people present.

31 GN 274.
32 AA vi.6 (412).
34 FC I.xvi.7 (228).
35 FC II.xix.4 (443).
36 FC I.xxx.1 (307).
37 FC II.xvi.1 (430).
38 FC I.v.8 (161).
Yet, to balance against these tentative suggestions of a restrictive use of the term *nobiles* in the *Historia Hierosolymitana*, there is Fulcher’s eyewitness report that during the march of Baldwin of Edessa and Bohemond of Antioch to Jerusalem in the autumn of 1099 *milites nobiles* became *pedites*, having lost their horses.\(^{39}\) Similarly, Fulcher lamented for the loss of many *nobiles* and *probi milites* at the second battle of Ramleh, 17 May 1102.\(^{40}\) In both cases he probably did so to emphasise that among the *milites* so described were figures of particularly high status, but it is clear that the term *nobiles* was, for Fulcher, broad enough to extend to at least some, if not all the *milites*.

The fact that the modern historian has access to both the early and later versions of Fulcher’s work (see Chapter One) allows a useful investigation of an interesting passage in regard to the question of his use of the term *nobiles* and composition of the higher social orders present on the First Crusade more generally. This was Fulcher’s enumeration of the divisions that formed up for the battle against Kerbogha, 28 June 1098. In his first version of the *Historia Hierosolymitana* (1101–5), Fulcher wrote that the *optimates* of the Franks at the battle were Hugh the Great, Robert, duke of Normandy, Robert, count of Flanders, Duke Godfrey, Count Raymond of Toulouse, Bohemond and many other *nobiles*.\(^{41}\) In his second redaction (1124), with hindsight, Fulcher preferred to write that the *principes* at the battle were Hugh, Robert, Robert, Godfrey, Raymond, Bohemond and ‘many other lesser [princes].’\(^{42}\)

The effect of this change was twofold. The latter version made it clear that Fulcher, unlike for his comment about the departure of Robert of Normandy’s contingent, now saw a distinct gap in status between the named senior princes and other nobles of the First Crusade. It also meant that his use of the term *optimates* was restricted to the prominent nobles of the Kingdom of Jerusalem who were involved in the decision making of the kingdom.\(^{43}\) Tempting as it is to conclude that the substitution of lesser princes for *nobiles* here means that for Fulcher they are synonymous, it might be that when he came to redraft his formulation

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\(^{39}\) FC I.xxxiii.13 (331): *Videretis milites nobiles, equis quoquomodo amissis, pedites effici.* For a discussion of this passage see above p. xxx.

\(^{40}\) FC II.xix.4 (443).

\(^{41}\) FC I.xxxii.1 (251).

\(^{42}\) FC 251 n. a; n. g: *multi alii minores tamen horum.*

\(^{43}\) FC II.xxviii.5 (481); III.xi.2 (648); III.xvi.2 (660); III.lvii.2 (807); III.lxi.5 (822).
to make explicit the point about great and lesser princes, he found the word *nobiles* unsatisfactory precisely because it was too broad.

Overall then, there is a very strong case for accepting that these sources saw the nobles as a wide group, encompassing the entirety of the upper part of the social structure of the First Crusade. The ‘nobles’ were more than the princely elite, they were all those above the social status of the middle ranks—the footsoldiers, artisans, sailors and siege engineers—who shared a non-noble status and the fact they went on foot with those below them, the *pauperes*. Looked at from this perspective, thousands of nobles were present on the First Crusade, contrasted with the commoners in their tens of thousands.

Within this broad upper class of nobles were, of course, considerable gradations. In Albert of Aachen’s account of Pope Urban II’s call to the crusade at Clermont, he noted that great *principes*, of every *ordo* and *gradus*, vowed to join the expedition.44 The comment is interesting, revealing Albert’s conscious awareness of many gradations within the upper layers of society, gradations that were reflected in his very broad range of terms for them. At various times and in various contexts Albert wrote of *nobiles*, *magni*, *maiores*, *optimates*, *primores*, *potentes*, *principes*, *proceres*, *capitales*, *capitanei* and *domini*.

The difficulty in focusing on what exactly distinguished the various layers of the upper class is that such terms were used rather loosely in all the sources and not always consistently. Perhaps this is not surprising for the early twelfth century, when even titles such as ‘count’ had yet to become clearly delineated from other grades of the senior nobility.45 A helpful contemporary model for analysing the social structure of the crusading elite is that derived from the work of Guibert of Nogent, the most linguistically innovative of our sources. In describing the different social orders that participated in the First Crusade, Guibert wrote a very important passage in which he identified a sub-stratum of the *principes*, the *mediocres principes* and gave a very specific definition of the group. He observed that along with those from the illustrious orders (*inclyti ordines*), a multitude of the *mediocres principes* marched forth who could not be counted, because who could enumerate the lords of one, two, three or four towns.46 An examination of the texts in the *Patrologia*

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44 AA i.5 (8).
46 GN 133.
Latina shows that the phrase *mediocres principes* was unique to the *Gesta Dei per Francos*.

Unlike the other early crusading historians, who struggled to match a vocabulary inherited from the past to their contemporary experiences, Guibert was willing to coin new phrases to express his ideas. In this case it is clear that Guibert held a pyramid-like image for hierarchy of knights on the First Crusade. At the top were a handful of very illustrious princes, below them a large number of others also encompassed by the term *principes*, but of more modest means, being the lords of between one and four towns. Below these were immense numbers of knights, owners of at least their armour and a horse and probably, before they departed, a fief, but not a town or castle. The same kind of schema is suggested by another original phrase of Guilbert’s: *mediocras equestrium virorum*, the ‘middle rank of equestrian men’. It appeared in his report that as news spread of the events of the Council of Clermont, counts palatine and the middle ranks of *equestres* besides were enthused to join the expedition.\(^{47}\)

Taking Guibert’s model as the most useful contemporary one, is it possible to obtain a sense of the proportions between these three layers? The senior princes were a few specific individuals who can be easily identified and they are discussed further below. The numerical relationship between the other two layers, the *mediocres principes* and the broader body of knights, is suggested by the description in the *Gesta Francorum* of how, early in October 1097, soon after leaving the town of Coccin, Count Raymond of Toulouse decided to send some of his men ahead in the hope of catching the defenders of Antioch by surprise.\(^{48}\) He therefore assigned four named leaders to accompany 500 *milites* in the undertaking. Guibert’s version of the same incident was that Count Raymond chose four men from among the *primores* of his own army, one of whom was William VI of Montpellier and

\(^{47}\) GN 118. *Comites Palatinorum*: in the earliest Merovingian times the title *comes palatii* was a technical one for the assessor who prepared cases for presentation to the king. Thereafter it evolved to becoming a title given to senior figures at the royal court who had no particular office and in the Germanic Empire a territorial prince (J. Niermeyer, *Medieval Latin Dictionary*, I, 268–9). Guibert’s use of the phrase might have been intended as a reference to those senior nobles around the court of King Philip I of France who joined the First Crusade, figures such as his brother, Hugh the Great, count of Vermandois and Waldo II of Chaumont-en-Vexin, constable to the king.

\(^{48}\) GF 26.
assigned to them 500 *equites.* Later, at the siege of Jerusalem, Guibert described Raymond Pilet and two other *proceres,* as leading 100 *equites* from the army of his lord, Count Raymond of Toulouse to the port of Jaffa. These rephrasings of the *Gesta Francorum* not only indicate that *primores* and *proceres* were distinctly higher up the social pyramid than *equites* but they also, perhaps, give a rough indication of their relative proportions.

Guibert’s examples of small numbers of *primores* being juxtaposed to large numbers of *milites* suggest that the social gap between them was huge. In fact, numerically, there was more of a division between senior nobles and knights than between knights and footsoldiers. Not that contemporaries would have considered the issue in such a numerical light. For them, as we have seen in Chapter Five, the different between riding and walking was of such importance that knights would take to oxen and mules rather than risk losing their social status by travelling on foot with the commoners.

There were, very approximately, seven thousand knights on the First Crusade if the estimate of John France, probably the most convincing writer on the subject, is accepted. Using the figures given above as a very rough guide to the proportions between the knights and the higher nobility above them, this would suggest that there were some 150–200 ‘middle-ranking’ princes on the expedition. Is this plausible? In an immensely valuable and impressive prosopographical study, A. V. Murray has provided a catalogue of the individuals who were companions to Godfrey IV of Bouillon during the course of the First Crusade. Examining this catalogue for senior clergy, advocates, castellans, counts, lords of towns or their close relatives, reveals that some 35 such individuals can be identified as forming part of the Lotharingian contingent on the First Crusade. This figure will be an underestimate,

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50 GN 272–3. For Raymond Pilet see n. 121.
53 Adalbero of Luxembourg; Arnulf of Oudenaarde; Baldwin, archbishop of Caesarea; Baldwin, bishop of Beirut; Baldwin of Bourcq; Baldwin II of Mons, count of Hainaut; Berwold; Cono, count of Montaigu; Drogo of Nesle; Dudo, lord of Cons; Engelrand of Saint-Pol; Eustace III, count of Boulogne; Franco of Maasmechelen; Fulcher of Chartres, lord of Saît; Fuluk of Guînes; Gerard of Avesnes; Gerard, lord of Quierzy; Gerbold, lord of Scheldewindeke; Giselbert of Clermont; Godfrey of Esch; Gozelo of Montaigu; Hartmann I, count of Dillingen and Kyburg; Henry of Esch;
due to the titles and even names of some prominent crusaders escaping the notice of the sources. Given the Lotharingians made up about a quarter of the united Christian army, it does seem that the estimate that there were 150–200 senior members of the nobility on the First Crusade is a reasonable one.

Although Guibert decided it would be tiresome to list all of these middle-ranking princes, modern historians, were they to follow the work of A. V. Murray and extend it to the other contingents might be able to account for a high proportion of them. J. Riley-Smith has laid a foundation for such an investigation in his establishment of a very valuable database that in 2003 consisted of 791 identified crusaders.  

This tri-partite model for the upper class, of a handful of princes, some 200 senior nobles and 7,000 knights, is consistent with the sources, albeit that an examination of their language and phrases only rarely addresses the issue with clarity. In part this is because, with the exception of Guibert, they were using terms derived from antiquity that no longer applied directly to their own experience and, perhaps related to this point, there does not seem to have been a consensus across the authors as to the exact meaning of the terms they were using. For the remainder of this discussion, an examination of the language and perspective of each of the sources with regard to the upper social orders of the First Crusade, the tri-partite division will be referred to as that between princes, magnates and knights.

*The Gesta Francorum*

In the *Gesta Francorum* the term *princeps* is only ever used for a handful of named, very senior, figures. It is also a rare term, appearing in the text only six times in total. When the leaders of the various crusading contingents gathered in Constantinople and argued with Count Raymond that he should take the oath to Alexios, which he did on 26 April 1097, the author described how Duke Godfrey, Robert of Flanders Heribrand of Bouillon; Hugh II, count of Saint-Pol; Lambert of Montaigu; Louis, count of Mousson; Louis, archdeacon of Toul; Peter of Dampierre, count of Avenois; Rainald III, count of Toul; Ralph of Aalst; Sigemar of Maasmechelen; Walter of Domart; Warner, count of Grez; William, count of Dülük. For all these crusaders see A. V. Murray, *The Crusader Kingdom*, pp. 176–238.

and other principes spoke to Raymond.\textsuperscript{55} Duke Godfrey was described as princeps of Jerusalem on his election as ruler of the city, 23 July 1099.\textsuperscript{56} Soon afterwards, Tancred was described as sending a message to Duke Godfrey, the patriarch, and all the principes at Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{57} The term principes was used to describe Count Raymond and Robert of Normandy on the 10 August 1099, two days before the battle at Ascalon.\textsuperscript{58} Another appearance of the term principes was for those leaders who after the victory over Kerbogha and the decision to halt the expedition for five months, offered to provide gold and silver in return for the services of the active poor.

One important example for identifying those who the Gesta Francorum considered to be a princeps occurred in the description at battle near Antioch, between the Christian army and the relieving forces of Ridwan, emir of Aleppo, and Suqman ibn Ortuq, 9 February 1098. Bohemond ordered that each of the principes should form up their battle lines, one after the other. There were five battle lines and a reserve led by Bohemond himself.\textsuperscript{59} Is it possible to identify the other ‘princes’ to whom Bohemond issued his orders? Stephen of Blois wrote a letter which indicated he was present at this battle\textsuperscript{60} and Ralph of Caen, who claimed to have visited the site, mentioned Duke Godfrey of Lotharingia,\textsuperscript{61} but the sources are inconsistent as to which other senior figures were present at this battle. John France reasonably suggests that Tancred would have been present in company with Bohemond and Hugh the Great with Stephen. This leaves one division with an unnamed leader. Given that Bishop Adhémar of Le Puy, Duke Robert of Normandy and Count Raymond of Toulouse were probably not present, John France’s proposition that it was Count Robert of Flanders who was the sixth princeps who formed a battle line seems entirely plausible.\textsuperscript{62}

A much more frequent term in the Gesta Francorum for the leaders of the crusade was seniores. The anonymous author probably employed the term to encapsulate not only the most prominent figures but also

\textsuperscript{55} GF 13.
\textsuperscript{56} GF 92.
\textsuperscript{57} GF 93.
\textsuperscript{58} GF 94.
\textsuperscript{59} GF 36.
\textsuperscript{60} H. Hagenmeyer, Die Kreuzzugsbriefe aus den Jahren 1088–1100 (Innsbruck, 1901), p. 150.
\textsuperscript{61} RC 647.
\textsuperscript{62} For a full discussion of this battle see J. France, Victory in the East, pp. 245–51.
others who deserved to be distinguished from the larger body of nobles. The use of the term *seniores* also probably reflects an overall Italian bias in the language of the *Gesta Francorum*, which contrasts with the vocabulary of the French sources, whom invariably replaced it (for Peter Tudebode and the term *seniores* see Chapter One).

One clear instance of *senior* being applied to a lord who was not one of the very greatest princes was the use of the term for one of the leaders of the People’s Crusade. This was a certain Rainald, leader of the German fragment of the People’s Crusade that was besieged in Xerigordo. Rainald eventually surrendered to the Turkish forces of the Seljuk Sultan of Rûm, Qilij Arslan, 7 October 1096. The term *seniores* also seems to have a slightly broader connotation in the several speeches attributed to Bohemond in the *Gesta Francorum*. Speaking to all the *milites* before the battle of Dorylaeum, 1 July 1097, Bohemond began: *seniores et fortissimi milites Christi*. Telling a council of *seniores* that he was willing to go on a foraging expedition around Christmas 1097, while the expedition was besieging Antioch, Bohemond began: *seniores et prudentissimi milites*. Bohemond again spoke to the *seniores et prudentissimi milites* at a council of leaders, 8 February 1098. Before the ‘Lake Battle’ the next day, Bohemond addressing the other leaders once more began: *seniores et invictissimi milites*. It is not at all clear where the line is being drawn between the magnates and the brave knights, but the impression is that the author means the leaders of the army in a slightly broader sense than for those whom he elsewhere terms *principes*.

A key term in discussing the leadership of the First Crusade is *maiores*. The anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum* repeatedly used it for those who gathered together in councils to direct the expedition and the historians who based their work on the *Gesta Francorum* often retained the term *maiores* in that context. At times the term *maiores* was used synonymously with *seniores*, such as in the report that when the priest and visionary Stephen of Valance came to the worried *maiores* while the Christian army was trapped inside of Antioch by Kerbogha,

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64 GF 3–4.
65 GF 18.
66 GF 30.
67 GF 35.
68 GF 36.
Stephen began his address to them by saying, ‘seniores.’ Those leaders who promised Antioch to Bohemond and whom he urged to keep that promise were omnes maiores and omnes seniores.

There is a difficulty, however, in assuming that in the _Gesta Francorum maiores_ was always synonymous to _seniores_, as the anonymous author used the former term rather loosely. Three times _maiores_ was used in a simple juxtaposition to _minores_ to mean the upper part of the entire population.\(^69\) Much more often the author wrote of _nostri maiores_, conveying a sense that they were a layer of leaders above the knights, but failing to distinguish whether it was confined to the princes or was inclusive of magnates also. One passage that does offer a little light on the issue is that in which, in spring 1096, all the Byzantine _maiores natu_ who were in Constantinople were described as meeting and agreeing that the _duces_, _comites_ and all the _maiores_ of the arriving armies ought to swear an oath faithfully to the emperor.\(^70\)

As an aside, the phrase _maiores natu_ has classical antecedents for elders, especially those who founded customs, legal opinions or institutions, but to the anonymous author it probably meant something more like ‘baronage’.\(^71\) It is interesting that a slightly different term is employed for the Byzantine courtiers and the Latin military leaders, but the main point here is that the _maiores_ seem to be not only the individual princes but a wider layer of dukes and counts. This impression is strengthened by consideration of the fact that those who took the oath to the emperor were not only the princes of the expedition but also the magnates with them.\(^72\) Given that the anonymous author often attributed the direction of the crusade to a council of _maiores_, this has important implications for assessing how the crusade was led, discussed in Chapter Eight.

_Raymond of Aguilers_

By contrast with the author of the _Gesta Francorum_, Raymond of Aguilers did not restrict his employment of the term _princeps_ to the individuals who led each of the crusading contingents. That his use of the term

\(^69\) _GF_ 44, 53, 75.
\(^70\) _GF_ 11.
\(^71\) Niermeyer, _Medieval Latin Dictionary_, II, 822.
\(^72\) AA ii.16 (86).
also encompassed a wider group of magnates can be seen from the fact that Count Raymond was twice described as holding a council with his principes.73 In other words, there were principes within the contingents of each of the most senior leaders. In one instance the historian gave the names of two knights whom he considered to be principes in the Provençal contingent: Pontius Rainaud and his brother Peter, who were principes nobilissimi.74

One other named princeps from outside the ranks of the most prominent leaders was a noble from the central Pyrenees, Gaston of Béarn, who was put in charge of workers making siege equipment for the storming of Jerusalem and featured in lists of the magnates in the following of Count Raymond of Toulouse.75 To distinguish the individual leaders Raymond qualified the term principes, terming the most prominent individuals, principes maiiores.76 He also referred to Bohemond and Raymond as the ‘two greatest principes in the army.’77 It is a reflection of Raymond’s greater interest in the lower social orders than the upper ranks of the First Crusade that his vocabulary was extremely limited in regard to the nobility and sheds no further light on the discussion.

**Fulcher of Chartres**

Fulcher of Chartres, on the other hand, had a relatively rich vocabulary for the nobility. Although his style of writing was terse, his phrasing is revealing. One term, for example, that seems to have quite a precise function for Fulcher was optimates. After redrafting his work, Fulcher’s use of the term optimates became one that was employed consistently for the prominent nobles of the Kingdom of Jerusalem who were involved in the decision making of the kingdom.78

The term proceres was a popular one for Fulcher. He seems to have favoured using the term in a military context. At the battle of Dorylaeum, Fulcher wrote of proceres nostri resisting until support could arrive.

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73 RA 49 (245), 157 (266).
74 RA 10 (236); For Pierre and Pons de Fay see RA 10 n. c; see also J. Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, p. 217 (Pierre), p. 218 (Pons).
75 RA 332 (295), PT 78.
76 RA 183 (272).
77 RA 64 (248): *Duo maximi principes in exercitu*.
78 FC II.xxviii.5 (481); II.xxxii.1 (493); III.xi.2 (648); III.xvi.2 (660); III.lvii.2 (807); FC III.b.i.5 (822); II.xxxii.1 (493).
Those senior princes so termed were Duke Robert of Normandy, Stephen of Blois, Robert of Flanders and Bohemond.\textsuperscript{79} Fulcher commented on the banners of the \textit{proceres} at the battle against Kerbogha.\textsuperscript{80} It was on the signal of the \textit{proceres}, said Fulcher, that the Christian forces attempted to storm Jerusalem in their initial, unsuccessful, assault, 13 June 1099).\textsuperscript{81} At the battle of Ascalon, 12 August 1099, Fulcher wrote that Duke Godfrey and the other \textit{proceres} advanced, some in the first line, others in the second. The one other use of the term \textit{proceres} in the \textit{Historia Hierosolymitana} with regard to the First Crusade was not in a direct military context, although it was concerned with the consequence of military action. Fulcher reported that on the fall of Nicea, 19 June 1097, the Byzantine Emperor, Alexios I Comnenus, gave gifts to \textit{nostri proceres}.\textsuperscript{82}

Whereas \textit{optimates} seems to have been a term for magnates in the \textit{Historia Hierosolymitana}, the term \textit{proceres} appears to denote a much more exclusive social group. This is borne out by an examination of Fulcher’s use of the term \textit{princeps}. When he reported on the first contingents to depart on the ‘pilgrimage’ he listed a number of \textit{principes}. These were Hugh the Great, Bohemond, Godfrey, duke of Lotharingia, Count Raymond of Toulouse and Bishop Adhémar of Le Puy.\textsuperscript{83} When Flucher described the arrival of Robert, duke of Normandy and Stephen of Blois at the siege of Nicea, early in May 1097, he called them as \textit{nostri principes}.\textsuperscript{84} The leaders of the expedition resolving upon co-operation for the siege of Antioch, which began on 21 October 1097, were also termed \textit{nostri principes}.\textsuperscript{85} In the battle against Kerbogha, Fulcher twice referred to the banners of the leaders, the first time describing them as \textit{signa procerum nostrum},\textsuperscript{86} the second \textit{vexilla principum nostrum}.\textsuperscript{87} The change was made simply for Fulcher to avoid repetition, but is helpful in showing that for the historian \textit{proceres} and \textit{principes} were synonymous. Fulcher again referred to all the leaders of the First Crusade as \textit{principes} with regard to their movements in and around Antioch in November

\textsuperscript{79} FC Lxi.10 (197).
\textsuperscript{80} FC Lxxi.4 (253).
\textsuperscript{81} FC Lxxvii.2 (294).
\textsuperscript{82} FC L.x.10 (188).
\textsuperscript{83} FC L.xvi.3 (154).
\textsuperscript{84} FC L.x.1 (181).
\textsuperscript{85} FC L.xv.5 (218).
\textsuperscript{86} FC Lxxii.4 (253).
\textsuperscript{87} FC Lxxii.6 (253).
Those leaders of the expedition at the time of its arrival at Jerusalem, 6 June 1099, who ordered the construction of ladders were termed *principes*. Baldwin of Edessa and Bohemond of Antioch on their march to Jerusalem, January 1100, were termed *principes*. It is noteworthy that Baldwin was not described as a *princeps* before his becoming ruler of Edessa.

Fulcher described the departure of the First Crusade from Nicea at the end of June 1097 by writing that ‘*nostri barones*’ received permission from the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I to depart. Quite apart from the interesting implication that Fulcher saw Alexios as having authority over the expedition at this point, his use of the term *barones* for the crusading princes was unusual. Its use was not particularly common in the early twelfth century and none of the other early crusading historians employed the term. Fulcher himself used *barones* only this once, in his first redaction of the *Historia Hierosolymitana*, although he clearly found the term unproblematic as he retained it in the later version of his work.

The term *barones* does not appear in any other of the early histories, nor again in the work of Fulcher of Chartres. This is why, when modern historians distinguish the contingents led by princes from the People’s Crusade of Peter the Hermit, it is probably more in keeping with the sources to refer to the Princes’ Crusade rather than, as is sometimes used, the Barons’ Crusade. In general at this time, the collective group, *barones*, were the great men of a realm, generally vassals to a king or emperor. It could be that in writing about the crusading princes in the aftermath of their having taken the oath to the Emperor, Fulcher was indicating a stronger sense of vassalage to the Greek Emperor than subsequently existed on the crusade.

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88 FC I.xxv.1 (266).
89 FC I.lxxxvii.1 (293).
90 FC I.lxxxiv.2 (335).
91 FC I.xi.1 (189).
92 FC 189 n. e.
Albert of Aachen generally used the term *princeps* for those at the very apex of society, particularly the leaders of the First Crusade and the senior Muslim leaders. He tended to provide additional adjectives when emphasising the pre-eminence of a select few; Duke Godfrey in particular was referred to variously as *egregius princeps*,94 *nominatissimus princeps*,95 *magnificus princeps*,96 *clarissimus princeps*,97 on becoming ruler of Jerusalem, ‘highest *princeps* of Jerusalem,’98 and on his death, *gloriosissimus* and *nominatissimus princeps.*99 Baldwin of Boulogne was termed a *praecclerus princeps* when Albert was emphasising how important a hostage he was for the good behaviour of the Lotharingians as they crossed Hungary in October 1096.100 Thereafter, Baldwin was termed an *egregius* and *nominatissimus princeps* when he arrived at Edessa, a city he was shortly to become ruler of, 10 March 1098.101 Later, on his arrival at Jerusalem, to take over the kingdom, he was an *egregius princeps* and after his coronation as King Baldwin I, 11 November 1100, he was referred to as *magnificus princeps.*102

The most common term for the upper class of a bipartite division of society in the *Historia Iherosolimitana* was *maiores*. As discussed in Chapter Two, it was several times coupled with *minores* to encompass the whole of a population. But it was also Albert’s term of choice for the general activities of the ‘greater’ people. It was the social group *maiores* that for Albert, as with the anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum*, were the leaders of the First Crusade.103 Given these references were typically to *maiores* offering counsel and advice, Albert clearly was applying the term to those magnates beyond the narrow group of princes. Only one individual was specifically named as a *maior* in the *Historia Iherosolimitana*.  

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94 AA ii.4 (66).
95 AA ii.4 (67).
96 AA vii.30 (528); AA vi.37 (450).
97 AA vii.31 (530).
98 AA vi.48 (466): *Dux Godfridus summus princeps Iherusalem*.
99 AA vii.37 (540).
100 AA ii.6 (68).
101 AA iii.20 (169).
102 AA vii.42 (548).
103 AA ii.37 (126); AA iii.9 (152); AA iii.13 (156); AA iii.16 (164); AA iii 58 (228); AA iv.9 (262); AA vi.29 (440); AA vi.30 (440).
Richard of the Principate, count of Salerno, was described as one of the *maiores* of the household of Bohemond.\(^{104}\)

In a speech that Albert imagined taking place between Peter the Hermit and the Patriarch of Jerusalem, he had Peter say that ‘I will search out all the *primates* of Christendom, *reges, duces, comites* and those who hold the foremost place of royal power, to destroy the yoke of slavery and the impatience of your difficulties.’\(^{105}\) This passage provides a useful definition of the way in which Albert used the term *primates*, namely for those senior nobles in positions of authority. King Coloman of Hungary was described as having received the advice of his *primates* concerning Duke Godfrey.\(^{106}\) Similarly, Emperor Alexios I Comnenus was described as taking advice from his *primates* before turning back from his march towards Antioch.\(^{107}\) Alexius extended his kiss of peace to Duke Godfrey’s *primates*.\(^{108}\) In reporting the election of Duke Godfrey as ruler of Jerusalem, Albert wrote that the Lotharingian prince was more blessed than all other *primates*.\(^{109}\) Four of the knights on the First Crusade were explicitly termed *primates*: Drogo of Nesle, Rainald III, count of Toul, Gaston of Béarn and Fulcher of Chartres.\(^{110}\) This group, important for a discussion of *iuvenes* on the First Crusade, were here identified as going to Edessa after Baldwin had been made ruler there.\(^{111}\)

Although the speech attributed to Peter the Hermit above and the example of the promotion of Duke Godfrey made it clear that for Albert even a king could be numbered among the *primates*, he typically preferred to use the term for the leading followers of a prince rather than the princes themselves. So, in addition to the examples above, he wrote of how Adhémar took counsel with all his *primates* at the siege of Antioch and they decided to try to destroy a bridge that was allowing the garrison to cross and attack their camp.\(^{112}\) King Baldwin I was described as holding a council with all his *primates* shortly after

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\(^{104}\) AA vii.27 (524).
\(^{105}\) AA i.3 (4): *... omnes primates Christianorum, reges, duces, comites, et principatum regni tenentes, iugum servitutis vestre reserans, et angustiarum vestrarum intolerantiam.*
\(^{106}\) AA ii.3 (64).
\(^{107}\) AA iv 41 (312).
\(^{108}\) AA ii.16 (84).
\(^{109}\) AA vi.33 (446).
\(^{110}\) AA v.15 (356).
\(^{111}\) See below pp. 202–4, 211–12.
\(^{112}\) AA iii.40 (202).
his coronation and it was the king and his *primates* who advocated to a visiting Venetian fleet that there should be an attack on Sidon.\footnote{AA vii.43 (550); x.3 (720).} Albert used a similar formulation for Baldwin’s proposals to King Sigurd Magnusson of Norway.\footnote{AA xi.30 (804). For Sigurd Magnusson see AA 798 n. 37.}

That Albert was occasionally willing to use the term *primates* in such a way as to make the it inclusive of the princes as well as magnates, is evident in a reference to Duke Godfrey and Bishop Adhémar of Le Puy ‘and the other *primates*’,\footnote{AA iii.60 (232): *ceterorumque primatum*.} as well as a reference to the *primates* of the Christian army deciding to consult a local hermit before assaulting Jerusalem.\footnote{AA vi.7 (412).}

Another of Albert’s frequently used terms for magnates was *primores*. He used it for the leaders of the People’s Crusade, the Princes’ Crusade as well as Greek, Hungarian and Muslim princes. In several instances the *primores* were indicated as being involved in decision-making. During the siege of Antioch Godfrey and Bohemond fell out over a tent that mistakenly came to Bohemond although the Armenian prince Nicusus had sent it to Godfrey. Finally, wrote Albert, Bohemond, on the advice of the *comprimores* of the army, restored the tent to the duke.\footnote{AA iv .9 (262).}

This emphasised version of *primores, comprimores*, was a term that seems to have suggested a body of equals or ‘fellow *primores’.* Albert wrote three times of Duke Godfrey ‘and the other *comprimores*’, the last example being of a manuscript tradition which used the term as a substitute for *compares*, ‘equals’;\footnote{AA iv .32 (296): *ceterique comprimores*; AA v.12 (352): *ceteri comprimores*; v.34 (382): *ceterique comprimores [H]*.} once of Godfrey, Robert of Normandy ‘and the other *comprimores*’;\footnote{AA iv .21 (280): *ceterosque comprimores*.} once of ‘Bohemond and the other *comprimores*’;\footnote{AA iii.63 (240): *Boemundus ceterique comprimores*.} and once also for Count Raymond ‘and his *comprimores*’.\footnote{AA v.29 (374): *et suorum comprimorum*.} Thus, more than *primores, coprimores* could be applied to just the more prominent princes. Similarly when Albert reported that Bohemond was promised Antioch if he could capture it by Robert of Flanders, Duke Godfrey ‘and the other *comprimores*’, he was probably referring to the other princes rather than a wider body of magnates.\footnote{AA iv.15 (272): *ceteros comprimores*.} By contrast, to emphasise...
how even very prominent magnates were afraid and preparing to flee Antioch after the arrival of Kerbogha, Albert did use the term for a broader layer of nobles.\footnote{AA iv.40 (310).}

Primi appear in the \textit{Historia Iherosolimitana} much as do primores, as the ‘foremost’ people. In his account of Duke Godfrey’s making his oath to the Byzantine emperor, Albert wrote an interesting depiction of the ceremony of vassalage in which Godfrey ‘surrendered himself to [Alexios] not only as a son but also as a vassal with clasped hands, along with all the \textit{primi} who were present.’\footnote{AA ii.16 (86): \textit{Non solum se ei in filium, sicut nos est terre, sed etiam in vassalum iunctis manibus reddidit, cum universis primis qui tunc aderant.}} The term was evidently used both for the princes as well as for a wider layer of leading nobles.

Another term for the magnates, optimates, entered Albert’s vocabulary only in later life, to judge by the fact that it appears only in books seven to twelve of the \textit{Historia Iherosolimitana}, mostly in a distinct cluster in book seven. This book marks Albert’s return to the history that he began, probably with the intention of completing with Godfrey’s rule of Jerusalem. Did the intervening time consolidate the meaning of optimates? Fulcher of Chartres, when (after 1105), returning to his own history made \textit{optimates} his term of choice for the new Christian magnates of Jerusalem, in particular the advisors to the king. Albert seemed to have had the same fixed stylistic idea of how to use the term, as \textit{optimates} always appeared in connection with a person or a kingdom, generally through the the expression King Baldwin I ‘and his \textit{optimates}.’\footnote{AA vii.39 (544); vii.43 (550); vii.46 (554); vii.51 (560); vii.53 (562); vii.54 (562); vii.60 (570); x.2 (718); xii.7 (834).} Once it was used for the senior nobles of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, who were distinguished from the knights. After the first battle of Ramleh, 6 September 1101, Albert attributed to Baldwin I the report that ‘our \textit{optimates} and all our \textit{equites} except for ourselves were killed.’\footnote{AA vii.69 (582): \textit{Optimates nostri et equites universi preter nos ceciderunt.}}

There are a number of usages of \textit{potentes} and the more emphatic form \textit{praepotentes} in the \textit{Historia Iherosolimitana} that show the term sometimes functioned as a noun for magnates in addition to its more general use as an adjective for ‘powerful’. In one sentence, where the term is coupled with \textit{principes} it seems to have a more restricted application to very senior figures. After praising the qualities of Duke Godfrey on his
election as ruler of Jerusalem Albert listed categories of leading nobles who undertook the crusade, before or since: *principes* and *potentes*, bishops and counts, and sons of kings.\(^{127}\)

*Proceres* was yet another term in the *Historia Iherosolimitana* used for the magnates of the Christian army. When Albert wanted to emphasise how the plague at Antioch killed both the higher and lower social order, he wrote that it destroyed an uncountable multitude, whether *nobiles proceres* or *humile vulgus*.\(^{128}\) When, 4–28 June, the crusade was trapped in Antioch by the arrival of Kerbogha, Albert emphasised that even *egregii proceres* had fled the city.\(^{129}\) After the capture of Nicea, a nun who had been held prisoner called out to the *proceres et milites Christi*.\(^{130}\)

To distinguish the princes from the magnates, although they were all *proceres*, Albert qualified the term with a suitable adjective. Bohemond, Count Robert of Flanders, Duke Godfrey, Robert of Normandy were collectively termed by Albert *magnifici proceres*.\(^{131}\)

A rare term in Albert’s work used for both the princes and senior nobles was *capitanei*, a term with a considerable range of meaning in the twelfth century: from a dependent subject, prominent vassal or citizen to a military commander or baron.\(^{132}\) By and large, Albert seems to have used it for those from the class of princes. In commenting that the great princes brought along with them very lowly figures of every *ordo*, the phrase he used for the upper class was *capitanei primi*.\(^{133}\) Duke Godfrey and Bohemond were described as bring among the *capitanei exercitus* on the approach to Antioch.\(^{134}\) Similarly Godfrey, Bohemond, Robert, Raymond, were together the *capitanei exercitus*.\(^{135}\) In Albert’s report on the election of a ruler for Jerusalem he wrote that only after Count Raymond and all the other *capitanei* who were offered the honour had declined did Duke Godfrey finally accept it.\(^{136}\) There is one passage in which the person named was probably a magnate rather than a prince. Because of evil rumours concerning the People’s Crusade in
Hungary, Albert reported that Duke Godfrey decided to send ahead no one from the nominatissimi et capitanei viri except an envoy, Henry of Esch. Though, as discussed below, at this point Henry of Esch was a powerful figure with considerable financial resources of his own and his social status was borderline between being considered a prince in his own right and one of the magnates of Duke Godfrey.

Robert the Monk

When it came to writing about the magnates, Robert the Monk’s preference was for the term optimates. In a passage that has been discussed in Chapter Two, for his report of the gathering of Bohemond’s forces for the expedition, Robert used the term optimates to emphasise the seniority of some of those who joined the Norman prince. Another useful passage, which confirms the optimates to be a wider grouping than the princes was that in which Robert wrote that accompanying Bohemond were nobilissimi principes, namely Tancred, Richard of the Principate, count of Salerno, and all the optimates of Apulia. Again, a layer of magnates is indicated in Robert’s report that Bohemond was greeted at Constantinople by a great number of consules, duces and optimates. These optimates of the crusade were those who were involved in decision making alongside the senior princes.

Consules was a term with a wide range of meanings by the time of the First Crusade, its classical meaning evoked the powerful image of a consul of the Roman Republic, but a relatively recent evolution of the term had occurred through its adoption by the leaders of communes of Italian cities. It appears in the history of the First Crusade written by Robert the Monk. Fortunately, Robert gave a definition of emir (admiraldus) in the Historia Iherosolimitana that also conveyed something of his meaning of the term consules. And those who they call emirs are kings, who are in charge of the provinces of the regions. A province

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137 AA ii.2 (62).
138 RM 742.
139 RM 744.
140 RM 747.
141 RM 776, 840.
is that which has a metropolitan, twelve consules and one king. This seems to indicate Robert used consules for senior nobles, akin perhaps to counts, another possible meaning of the term. They also seem to be appointees, which was consistent with both the classical and contemporary use of the term.

When Robert described the departure of the contingent of Robert of Normandy and Robert of Flanders he wrote of optimates and ‘consules of lesser repute’ joining with them, from France, Britain and Brittany. The consul then, for Robert, was of a lower social status than the optimas. With Robert the Monk we have therefore an indication of a further gradation in the ranks of the nobility. For him there are four layers: princes, magnates, consules of lesser repute and then knights.

By contrast with his fons formalis Robert was not given to using maiores to indicate the higher social orders. He used the term once to contrast with the plebeia multitudo, who rejoiced that the maiores swore not to abandon Antioch in the face of Kerbogha’s arrival. The only other use of the term as a social order occurred in Robert’s description of an invented letter from Kerbogha, which was addressed to the caliph, the king and the maiores proceres of the kingdom of Persia.

A more common term used by Robert for the magnates was proceres. That they were a social layer distinct from the princes is evident from the report that as a result of Bohemond and Count Raymond being ambushed on 6 March 1098, the report of the slaughter reached the camp and shook all the principes and proceres. Several times the proceres made important decisions with regard to the direction of the crusade. In a short but very significant comment, Robert wrote that the wife of Walo II of Chaumont-en-Vexin, had been ‘born with the blood of proceres. This is very clear evidence for Robert’s adherence to the belief that high social rank was inherited.

A favoured term for the senior figures of the First Crusade in the Gesta Francorum was seniores. Robert was clearly uncomfortable with the term and consistently replaced it with the terms discussed above.

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143 RM 788: Et quos admiraldos vocant, reges sunt, qui provinciis regionum praesunt. Provincia quidem est, quae unum habet metropolitanum, duodecim consules et unum regem.
144 RM 739: . . . minoris famae consules . . .
145 RM 823.
146 RM 811.
147 RM 783, 785, 793, 825, 857, 866.
148 RM 785: Procerum sanguine procreata.
probably indicating a difference in vocabulary between the northern French monk and the southern Italian crusader. Robert did have a limited use for the *seniores*; he twice referred to the leadership of the First Crusade as *seniores*.\textsuperscript{150} Other than those examples, the term appeared just once in the *Historia Iherosolimitana*, for those leaders of Kerbogha’s forces who lost heart after a meteor appeared to fall from the sky into their camp.\textsuperscript{151} All three examples are clustered very closely together, suggesting a temporary, unconscious, adoption of the vocabulary of his source.

*Baldric of Dol*

Baldric’s preferred term for the leading nobles of the First Crusade was *optimates*. It was applied not just to the princes but a broader group of magnates. Bohemond, for example, was described as crossing the Adriatic *cum optimatibus suis*.\textsuperscript{152} Again, Bohemond was described as addressing his following as *optimates et commilitones nostri*.\textsuperscript{153} The fact that for Baldric the *optimates* could be synonymous with ‘the nobility’ was indicated in his account of the meeting that agreed to the departure of Bohemond and Robert of Flanders on a foraging expedition. Baldric described those who met together as ‘the nobility’ *nobilitas*, soon after terming them ‘the aforementioned *optimates*.’\textsuperscript{154}

At other times Baldric clearly meant only the most senior princes, as when he described the *optimates*, together with their armies, as entering the land of the Armenians.\textsuperscript{155} Baldric imagined the citizens of Tarsus surrendering their city to Baldwin and Tancred, with the two Christian leaders being addressed as illustrious *optimates*.\textsuperscript{156} The *Gesta Francorum* reported a speech of Bohemond to the other Christian princes as beginning: *Seniores et prudentissimi milites*.\textsuperscript{157} Baldric adjusted the same speech to begin: *Optimates et domini*.\textsuperscript{158} In general Baldric edited out the term

\textsuperscript{150} RM 824, 825. \hfill \textsuperscript{151} RM 824. \hfill \textsuperscript{152} BD 21. \hfill \textsuperscript{153} BD 22. \hfill \textsuperscript{154} BD 45. \hfill \textsuperscript{155} BD 38. \hfill \textsuperscript{156} BD 38. \hfill \textsuperscript{157} GF 30. \hfill \textsuperscript{158} BD 42.
seniores, from his version of the episodes reported in the *Gesta Francorum*. *Seniores* appears just once in the *Historia Hierosolymitana*, surviving in the address of Bohemond to the other princes shortly before the capture of Antioch.\(^{159}\) Baldric’s preference for *optimates* over *seniores* almost certainly reflected a geographical difference between the terminology used for magnates in northern France and southern Italy.

Baldric commonly used another term for nobles, *proceres*, again sometimes in order to replace the term *seniores*. That *proceres* could also refer to magnates outside the ranks of the most senior princes is shown by another speech of Bohemond, given to his followers, in which he addressed his *proceres*.\(^{160}\)

A less favoured term for senior nobles in the *Historia Hierosolymitana* was *maiores*. It was used three times for the leaders of the First Crusade and once in the rather more classical sense of ‘elders’, for a wider body of nobles, when, in November 1098, *omnes maiores natu* assembled in Antioch.\(^{161}\)

Baldric used the term *primores* twice, both times as a substitute for the use of *seniores* in the *Gesta Francorum*. When, 5 April 1098, Tancred offered to garrison a castle to assist with the siege of Antioch, Baldric reported that the Norman prince made a pact with the *primores* of the Franks.\(^{162}\) The Christian princes who gathered for the battle of Ascalon were described by Baldric as *primores*.\(^{163}\)

The term *princeps* was reserved by Baldric for very senior figures. Several times he referred to the collective leadership of the First Crusade by the term, curiously in a cluster of usages towards the end of his work (which might have a relevance to the construction of a modern edition of the *Historia Hierosolymitana*).\(^{164}\) In describing the conflict of Bohemond and Count Raymond of Toulouse over the ownership of Antioch during the winter of 1098, Baldric three times referred to the two protagonists as *principes*.\(^{165}\) Tancred was twice termed a *princeps*,\(^{166}\) as was Duke Godfrey on his becoming the ruler of Jerusalem.\(^{167}\)

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\(^{159}\) BD 54.

\(^{160}\) BD 22.

\(^{161}\) BD 83.

\(^{162}\) BD 52. See GF 43.

\(^{163}\) BD 107. See GF 94.


\(^{165}\) BD 89, 89, 87.

\(^{166}\) BD 24, 76.

\(^{167}\) BD 105.
Dominus was coupled with servus in the list of several couplets that expressed a bipartite view of society.\textsuperscript{168} That Baldric sometimes used the term in a social sense and not simply to express those exercising the function of lordship is shown by its appearance in other speeches, where the domini were being addressed as the leading princes. The priest and visionary, Stephen of Valence, was described as speaking to fraters et domini mei...\textsuperscript{169} Similarly, the priests of the Christian army addressed its leaders as fraters et domini before the storming of Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{170}

Guibert of Nogent

The most common term for leaders of troops and for those in the upper part of society in the Gesta Dei per Francos was princeps. Very often it was the term used for the leaders of the First Crusade. In a passage on the high price of food during a period of famine at the siege of Antioch, during the winter of 1097, Guibert observed that when even the principes began to experience a contraction of their wealth, hardship must have been severe on those whose wealth had been used up.\textsuperscript{171} The princes here being those with the greatest resources, presumably those able to obtain revenues from the towns captured during the course of the crusade.

In one of the few passages in which the leaders were named Guibert wrote that the principes, Duke Godfrey, Count Raymond of Toulouse, Bohemond, Count Robert of Flanders and all the others, held a council together.\textsuperscript{172} It is clear, however, that Guibert was willing to employ the term to indicate ‘leaders’ without necessarily meaning persons of noble status. In his account of the behaviour of young boys who had come on crusade Guibert was struck by the fact that they formed themselves into an army of children with principes of their own named after the senior princes: Hugh the Great, Bohemond, Flanders, Normandy.\textsuperscript{173}

One of Guibert’s favoured terms for the collective leadership of the senior princes of First Crusade was primores.\textsuperscript{174} The leaders of the Cru-

\textsuperscript{168} BD 46.
\textsuperscript{169} BD 67.
\textsuperscript{170} BD 100.
\textsuperscript{171} GN 176–7.
\textsuperscript{172} GN 243.
\textsuperscript{173} GN 309.
\textsuperscript{174} GN 142, 153, 155, 234, 267.
sade of 1101 were also termed *primores*. Guibert also used the term for a slightly broader grouping of magnates than the most prominent princes. Early in October 1097, soon after leaving the town of Coxon, Count Raymond of Toulouse decided to send some of his men ahead in the hope of catching the defenders of Antioch by surprise. According to Guibert, Count Raymond therefore chose four men from among the *primores* of his own army, one of whom was William VI of Montpellier (the *Gesta Francorum* gives the other three names: Peter of Castillon, Peter of Roaix, Peter Raymond of Hautpol). Here the *primores* were leaders among a particular contingent rather than the whole army. The same sense of the term was present in the description of Raymond Pilet as being one ‘of the *primores* of Count Raymond.’

Other examples of *primores* in the *Gesta Dei per Francos* do not apply to Christian forces, but they do show the term being used consistently for relatively senior figures, albeit not individual princes. Those who surrendered the town of Tarsus to Tancred and Baldwin, a few days after 15 September 1097, were the *primores* of the city. Similarly the leaders of the city of Edessa were termed *primores*. Firuz, the officer who betrayed Antioch to the Christians, was described as one of the *primores* of the city. A sortie from the garrison of Antioch against the Christians, 6 March 1098, resulted in heavy losses for the Turkish forces and Guibert reported that twelve of their *primores* were killed. Finally, during the storming of Ma’arra, 11 December 1098, Bohemond sent an interpreter to the Saracen *primores*, in order to negotiate their surrender to him.

Another common term for both the magnates and princes of the First Crusade in the *Dei Gesta per Francos* was *proceres*. Guibert wrote that after the Byzantine emperor, Alexios I Comnenus, saw *proceres* of such great dignity gathering he envied the size of their forces and their wisdom. In his account of the departure of the various contingents of

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175 GN 314.
176 GN 168. GF 26. For these leaders see J. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders*, p. 217 (Peter of Castillon, Peter of Roaix and Peter Raymond of Hautpol), p. 226 (William VI of Montpellier).
177 GN 244: *... de primoribus comitis Sancti Egidii.*
178 GN 162.
179 GN 165.
180 GN 192.
181 GN 200.
182 GN 253.
183 GN 105.
the expedition Guibert wrote of the *proceres* of central France.184 These leaders were the papal legate, Bishop Adhémar of Le Puy, Hugh the Great, Count Stephen of Blois, Duke Robert of Normandy and Count Raymond of Toulouse. On many other occasions Guibert used the term *proceres* for the Christian princes who led the expedition.

As with *principes*, *potentes* and *primores*, Guibert did not confine his use of the term to the most prominent leaders of the First Crusade. He described how ‘certain *proceres* were supported by [Hugh the Great] and if the pagans had been justly driven out through war, and they obtained that which they strove for, they planned to make him their king.’185 Geoffrey of Montescaglioso, and William Marchius, brother of Tancred were termed *proceres*.186

*Potentes* was an uncommon term for princes in the *Gesta Dei per Francos*. It did occur, however, in an important passage concerning an offer of those whom Guibert also termed the *seniores* of the Christian army, after the defeat of Kerbogha, that insofar as there was anyone who needed a gift of money, they should adhere to the *potentes* through a pact.187 This was Guibert’s version of the passage in the *Gesta Francorum* in which the princes offered to make a compact with the *egentes* within the city of Antioch and retain them.188 It indicates that Guibert understood *potentes* to apply to those leading nobles of the First Crusade who were in a position to offer lordship to the lower social orders. He also used the term for the leaders of the Crusade of 1101, referring to Count Stephen of Blois and many other *potentes*.189 In one further example, Guibert provided a comment on the depth of the famine that preceded the departure of the First Crusade, saying that the extent of the hardship was threatening even to the *potentes*.190 In other words, as Guibert himself put it, the time of famine reduced the wealth of all.191

Guibert used the term *optimates* only once in the *Gesta Dei per Francos*. He described the arrival of Arab ambassadors at the camp of the Christians during the siege of Antioch, early in March 1098. These envoys

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184 GN 131.
185 GN 131: *Huic quidam procerum innitebantur et, si quid bellorum iure, evictis gentilibus, eos obtinere contingebat, ipsum sibi regem proficere meditabantur.*
186 GN 158.
187 GN 244.
188 GF 72–3.
189 GN 315.
190 GN 118.
191 GN 119.
dismissed the Christians as possible allies against the Turks, after they had learned that the *optimates*, through lack of horses, had now become *pedites*. Other than the fact that *optimates* here were evidently knights the precise meaning of the term for Guibert cannot be established. In his *Five Books of Tropologiae on Hosea, Amos and the Lamentations*, Guibert discussed Amos 6:1 in which the term *optimates* was defined as the ‘heads of the people’. It is likely therefore that Guibert employed the term *optimates* in that sense and it might not have been an exaggeration to depict the leaders of the Christian forces on the First Crusade as having lost their mounts. There was a desperate shortage of horses at that time and even Duke Godfrey of Lotharingia had to borrow a horse from Count Raymond of Toulouse for the battle against Kerbogha, while a bowl was carried from inn to inn on behalf of Robert of Flanders whose constant fighting had seen him lose all his own horses.

This examination of the vocabulary of the sources with regard to the upper strata of the First Crusade suggests one thing above all: that it might be a mistake to assume that the direction of affairs was solely in the hands of a very few prominent princes. Very often the historians used terms that applied to magnates for those involved in the decision-making, rather than employ the terms that they used exclusively for princes. When John France wrote about one particular example of a broad council of the leaders, he made the observation that ‘it warns us against being hypnotised by the princes.’ That this statement is more than justified is demonstrated in Chapter Eight.

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192 GN 271.
193 *PL* 156, col. 436A: *capita populorum*.
195 RC 646.