

LANGUAGE AND PERCEPTION: RICHARD THE LIONHEART IN CRUSADE
NARRATIVES OF THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES

by

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For Mama and Avó

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ABSTRACT

LANGUAGE AND PERCEPTION: RICHARD THE LIONHEART IN CRUSADE NARRATIVES OF THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES

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The character of Richard the Lionheart (r. 1189-1199) remains prevalent in the national legend of medieval England. Images of the king as a valiant knight have bled into the popular perception of the country's past, prompted by legendary literature such as *Richard Coeur de Lyon*.¹ In part, these legends find their origins in the narrative chronicles contemporary to Richard, many favoring his kingship over that of his peers.² Previous scholarship, analyzing these sources for their adherence to truth, argues for and against Richard's capabilities as king. This thesis, instead, examines narrative sources as cultural artifacts to explain why Richard was distinguished from his contemporaries, despite his questionable kingship.³ In analyzing the *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte* and the

¹ Bradford B. Broughton, *The Legends of King Richard I Coeur De Lion: A Study of Sources and Variations to the Year 1600*, (Netherlands: Mouton & Co., 1966), 142. Christine Chism, "Saladin and Richard I," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the Crusades*, edited by Anthony Bale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 167, 196.

² Broughton, *The Legends of King Richard I Coeur De Lion*, 41.

³ See Anthony Bale, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the Crusades*, edited by Anthony Bale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 2, 4-5, 7. Broughton, *The Legends of King Richard I Coeur De Lion*, 45, 92, 108, 138. John Gillingham, *The Life and Times of Richard I* (London, UK: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), 64, 69. Ralph V. Turner and Richard R. Heiser,

Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Recardi, this thesis argues that crusade chroniclers idealized Richard to bolster Angevin kingship amid power struggles with the French at the turn of the twelfth century.

The Reign of Richard Lionheart: Ruler of the Angevin Empire, 1189-991 (Essex, UK: Longman, 2000), 2. Martin Aurell, *The Plantagenet Empire, 1154-1224*, Translated by David Crouch (Essex, UK: Longman, 2007), 14-15, 88, 103-104.

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INTRODUCTION

For centuries, images of Richard the Lionheart (r.1189-1199) have dominated the popular imagination of medieval England. This can be seen in works of literature, from the fourteenth-century romance *Richard Coeur de Lion* to the novels of Sir Walter Scott from the nineteenth century.⁴ Situating themselves within the historical narrative of the Third Crusade (1189-1192), these texts showcase the English king as a romantic hero and a domineering leader. Outside of written works, Richard also appears in art. He is depicted defeating the skilled Saladin in thirteenth-century floor tiles and currently overlooks the House of Lords as an imposing statue dating from the nineteenth century.⁵ As seen in these few examples, artisans have repeatedly portrayed Richard as an idealized historical figure. Further, it is clear that the perception of the English king as a courageous ruler has bled into the collective memory of England's medieval past.

One reason for the overwhelming scholarly focus on Richard is the relatively extensive number of primary source works describing his role in the Third Crusade. Among these works are crusade chronicles, narratives, or itineraries which, as a larger genre, provide detailed accounts of the crusading movement across the eleventh and fourteenth centuries.⁶ The First Crusade (1096-1099) popularized this genre for purposes

⁴ Louise D'Arcens, "The Crusades and Medievalism," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the Crusades*, edited by Anthony Bale (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 250-251. Robert Rouse, "Romance and Crusade in Late Medieval England," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the Crusades*, edited by Anthony Bale (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 218.

⁵ Chism, "Saladin and Richard I," 169.

⁶ Elizabeth Lapina, "Crusader Chronicles," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the Crusades*, edited by Anthony Bale (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), 11, 15.

of historical record and to prompt future journeys east.⁷ Chronicles additionally strengthened the preexisting cultural ties between chivalry, nobility, and kingship by glorifying the act of crusading as an expression of religiosity, wealth, and guardianship.⁸ This said, the subsequent failure of the Second Crusade (1147-1149) lowered Western ambitions in the East until the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin and Muslim armies in 1187. This loss prompted what would be the most strategic crusade operation to date, the Third Crusade.⁹

Many of the narrative sources of the Third Crusade favor Richard's leadership over that of his crusade partner, Philip II of France (r. 1180-1223). Scholars of the period frequently use these texts to compare the two crusader kings and debate Richard's ability to live up to the ideals of medieval kingship.¹⁰ While some, such as Richard's biographer, John Gillingham, praise Richard's prowess and military tact, others argue that he was an

⁷ Lapina, "Crusader Chronicles," 11-12.

⁸ Timothy Guard, *Chivalry, Kingship and Crusade: The English Experience in the Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2013), 5. Martin Aurell, "Chivalric cultures in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries," translated by Karl G. Johansson and Else Mundal in *Riddarasögur: The Translation of European Court Culture in Medieval Scandinavia* (Oslo: Novus Press, 2014), 5, 7, 10. Martin Aurell, *The Lettered Knight: Knowledge and aristocratic behaviour in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries* (Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge Press, 2017), 17-18, 183, 270, . Richard W. Kaeuper, *Medieval Chivalry* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 277, 282-283, 374.

⁹ Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2006), 341.

¹⁰ Michael Markowski, "Richard Lionheart: bad king, bad crusader?" *Journal of Medieval History* 23, no. 4 (1997): 352-353. Steven Spencer, "The Third Crusade in historiographical perspective," *History Compass* 19, no. 7 (2021): 2-3, 9.

irrational leader, who put his own needs before those of his people.¹¹ Although these arguments have their place within the historiography of rulership in medieval Europe, historians can analyze these chronicles for more than what they say about Richard's capacity for kingship. By examining the structure and language of the French vernacular poem, the *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte*, and its closely related Latin narrative, the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum*, this thesis argues that the chroniclers idealized Richard I to appeal to noble values of kingship. In doing so, they sought to legitimize Angevin rule amid escalating tensions with the Kingdom of France.

The narratives of the Third Crusade are largely centered around the dominating personalities who led the expedition, Frederick Barbarossa (r.1155-1190) of the Holy Roman Empire, Philip II of France, and Richard I of England. Being the only English king of the Angevin period to follow through on his crusader vow, these chronicles give Richard a distinct military source base advantage over Henry II (r. 1154-1189) and John (r. 1199-1216).¹² Further, chroniclers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries tend to favor Richard over his fellow crusade leaders, due to Frederick's death on the road to Jerusalem, and Philip's early departure following the Siege of Acre.¹³ Richard's decision

¹¹ Markowski, "Richard Lionheart," 364-365. John Gillingham, *Richard the Lionheart* (Manhattan, NY: Times Books, 1979), 12, 168-169. John Gillingham, "The Art of Kingship: Richard I, 1189-99," *History Today* 35, no. 4 (1985): 21-22.

¹² This argument follows that of John Hosler in his overview of Henry II's military exploits, that the primary issue of twelfth-century sources is "not content, but supply." John Hosler, *Henry II: A Medieval Soldier at War, 1147-1189*, (Boston: Brill, 2007), 11.

¹³ James Naus, "Philip Augustus and the Decision to Join the Third Crusade," in *The Third Crusade: New Interpretations*, edited by John D. Hosler and Stephan Bennett, (Woodbridge, CT: The Boydell Press, 2025), 100.

to go and to remain on crusade provided chroniclers with a plethora of examples detailing his excellence in leadership, which has further skewed present-day scholarship in the direction of the English king. By focusing on the three rulers in their narratives, crusade chroniclers showcased, and arguably embellished, the ideals of medieval kingship, such as piety, military tact, and generosity.¹⁴ In this way, scholars can utilize crusade chronicles to understand broader social constructs of the medieval period.

The concept of examining narrative histories as artifacts of culture is not new. In his 1995 analysis of Norman narratives, Kenneth Baxter Wolf asserts that there are two ways for historians to approach narrative histories.¹⁵ The first resembles the name-date method of historical thinking, in which scholars use chronicle sources to piece together a general timeline of events. Alternatively, the second, more analytical approach, asks historians to understand that narratives were created by individuals with biases formed by their personal experiences within medieval society.¹⁶ In deciphering what information chroniclers highlight, diminish, exclude, or elaborate, narrative sources are informative about the societal values of the time period in which they were written.

¹⁴ Aurell, *The Lettered Knight*, 17, 33. Ralph Turner, *King John* (Essex, UK: Longman, 1994), 4, 185, 262.

¹⁵ Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Making History: The Normans and Their Historians in Eleventh-Century Italy* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 1-2.

¹⁶ Wolf, *Making History*, 1-2. See also Emily Albu, *The Normans and Their Histories: Propaganda Myth and Subversion* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2001), and Leah Shopkow, *History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1998).

Both methods are fundamental in the broader scope of historical analysis. Where the first provides a general overview of history, providing historians with an idea of what happened, the second colors in the picture, to understand how and why things happened. What Baxter Wolf encourages with his approach is for scholars and students to formulate a more nuanced version of history, in which the biases present in primary sources are not discounted as meaningless, but rather are included to suggest underlying motivations and societal constructions. This approach can be applied to crusade chronicles in the same way Wolf applies it to Norman narratives. This method can prove useful as medieval scholarship shifts to consider the role of Western politics in written accounts of the crusading movement.¹⁷

Drawing on this idea, this thesis will argue that the chroniclers of the Third Crusade reveal much about the turbulent politics of Western Europe through their inherent biases. It will place these texts within the larger scope of crusade literature from the medieval period, with regard to *chansons* and epic poetry, in order to seek clues regarding audience and intention.¹⁸ This thesis will argue that Richard's idealization in crusade chronicles is the result of an appeal to the values of western medieval society. It

¹⁷ Turner and Heiser, *The Reign of Richard Lionheart*, 241-242. John D. Hosler, "Introduction," in *The Third Crusade: New Interpretations*, edited by John D. Hosler and Stephan Bennett (Woodbridge, CT: The Boydell Press, 2025), 2-3, 8.

¹⁸ The *chanson de geste* is a medieval narrative genre of epic poetry that originated at the time of the First Crusade (1096-1099). Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 13. The relationship between the *chanson de geste* as orated dramatic poems and the genre of prosaic crusade chronicles has been debated; however, there is general agreement that the *chansons* can be considered as narrative and can be related to chronicles. Marianne Ailes, "The Chanson De Geste," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the Crusades*, edited by Anthony Bale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 25, 35. Lapina, "Crusader Chronicles," 11-12, 13-14, 20.

proposes a more nuanced approach to understanding the Third Crusade and the primary source documents which cover its progression.

Chapter one will provide a broad overview of the political landscape of the Angevin Empire. At its core, the empire was a conglomeration of states differing in culture and governance; and therefore, the king's ability to maintain relationships with the baronage and the Church in each distinct region directly impacted the overall control of the monarchy.¹⁹ Further, throughout the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, many of the territories held by Henry II and his sons were vassal states to the kingdom of France. In surveying the political landscape of the Angevin Empire, the chapter will argue that its institution of kingship was distinctly fragile among the emerging powers of Western Europe. It will do so, in part, by defining the ideals of medieval kingship throughout the reigns of the Plantagenets, with a particular focus on the expression of public power, or the kings' interest in the common good.²⁰

Specifically turning to the *Estoire* and the *Itinerarium*, chapter two will argue that crusade chroniclers distinguished Richard from his peers by highlighting and elaborating his exhibitions of ideal medieval kingship on crusade.²¹ To do so, the chapter will

¹⁹ Turner and Heiser, *The Reign of Richard the Lionheart: Ruler of the Angevin Empire, 1189-99* (Essex, UK: Routledge, 2000), 188-189. In 2009, Ralph Turner published a second edition of his analysis of the reign of John. This second edition accounts for the changing ideas and definitions of authoritarian kingship and feudalism in the field of medieval history. Ralph Turner, *King John: England's Evil King?* (Cheltenham, UK: The History Press, 2009), 11, 14, 16.

²⁰ Turner, *King John*, 11.

²¹ This argument builds off of that of Marianne Ailes in her 2003 translation of the French text. Marianne Ailes, *The History of the Holy War: Ambroise's Estoire de la Guerre Sainte* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2003), 13, 16, 20.

compare the presented image of Richard to that of Philip in terms of their leadership, generosity, and encouragement toward fellow crusaders, as well as their dedication to the cause of the crusade itself. This chapter will argue that, with the Second Crusade in hindsight, Ambroise and the compiler of the *Itinerarium* were aware of how future generations might look back on Richard's inability to capture Jerusalem. The chroniclers sought ways to shift blame from Richard to Philip or the sins of the crusaders themselves by highlighting the crusade's progress, rather than admonishing its failure.

Chapter three looks exclusively at the *Estoire* to explain how its author, Ambroise, merged genres of contemporary romantic literature and formal crusade itineraries to widen the audience of his poem.²² This chapter argues that Ambroise's attempt to engage with the noble class was intended to rehabilitate Richard's image after the failure of the Third Crusade and his imprisonment in Germany from 1192 to 1194.²³ Further, Richard de Templo's later compilation of Third Crusade texts, including Ambroise's *Estoire*, suggests the need to reassert the power of the English crown in the aftermath of John's struggle with the king of France in the early 1200s.²⁴ This chapter resituates the chronicles of the Third Crusade within the broader scope of Western European history.

²² Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 37.

²³ Gillingham, *Richard the Lionheart*, 221, 227, 229, 237. Kate Norgate, *England Under the Angevin Kings* (London, UK: Macmillan, 1887), 322, 326, 327.

²⁴ Norgate, *England Under the Angevin Kings*, 390, 402, 428-429. Kate Norgate, *John Lackland* (London, UK: Macmillan, 1902), 292.

This thesis aims to view crusade chronicles as more than itineraries of travel, but rather as cultural artifacts depicting wider political tensions in the West. It argues that images of Richard in Third Crusade narratives have remained pervasive as his time on crusade provided chroniclers with the ability to display ideals of medieval kingship. Further, as these ideals were essential in securing power within the complex structure of the Angevin Empire, primary source documents such as the *Estoire* can be read as politically motivated documents. At the very least, these documents depict in detail the social constructions of the medieval period. At most, they were intended to influence widespread ideals about what it meant to be king in the tumultuous political climate of Medieval Europe.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ANGEVIN “EMPIRE” AND THE VALUES OF MEDIEVAL KINGSHIP

This thesis argues that chroniclers of the Third Crusade utilized idealized images of Richard I to depict noble ideals of medieval kingship. This chapter argues that this intentional manipulation of character was important for the stability of Angevin rule, as the institution of kingship in western medieval Europe was rooted in the perceptions of the king held the nobility and the Church. Due to the diverse political make-up of the Angevin Empire and the relationships of the English kings to the kings of France, it was essential for Henry, Richard, and John to perform the ideals of kingship in ways that the elite social groups in their landholdings would understand. This chapter will examine how scholars have defined the interactions of the Angevin kings with the baronage and Church officials over time. In understanding how Angevin kingship was performed by kings through their actions to maintain stable rule across a diverse empire, the prevalence of noble ideals in chronicles detailing the Third Crusade become clearer.

1.1 The Angevin “Empire”

For clarity, this thesis will refer to the land held by the counts of Anjou from the 1150s to the early decades of the 1200s as the Angevin Empire; however, scholars in the field continue to debate this classification.²⁵ This is primarily because the empire itself was made up of many diverse parts in terms of social culture, economic structure, and

²⁵ Aurell, *The Plantagenet Empire*, 2. Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire*, 1, 3-5.

political policy, and it had no central political center to unify it.²⁶ In his 2004 analysis of the Angevin Empire, Martin Aurell dissects two argumentative strands, that of the British and the French. British scholars, such as H.G Richardson, W.L. Warren, and J. C. Holt have viewed Angevin Empire simply as pieces of land held together with a fragile system of kingship.²⁷ Alternatively, French historian Robert Henri Bautier suggests that the term Plantagenet *espace* or zone is more accurate, referencing the family name of Henry, Richard, and John to signify the influence of familial connection, struggle, and strife in the governing of Angevin landholdings.²⁸

In his 2011 publication, one of the leading biographers of Richard I, John Gillingham, reinforces Bautier's idea that the health of the so-called Angevin Empire was dependent on the relationships of the Plantagenet family line. Henry himself, Gillingham argues, did not treat his lands as a unified state, but as familial landholdings that he could use to provide inheritance for his sons.²⁹ Historians favoring this theory, such as Bernard Bachrach, note that the goal of crafting a familial dynasty was not unique to the Angevin line, following with contemporary Norman tradition, but that it caused tension within the Plantagenet family.³⁰ This tension resulted in conflicts between Henry and his sons, such

²⁶ Aurell, *The Plantagenet Empire*, 2-10, 27, 82. Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire*, 1, 11, 59-66, 67, 82. Turner and Hieser, *The Reign of Richard Lionheart*, 17.

²⁷ Aurell, *The Plantagenet Empire*, 25.

²⁸ Aurell, *The Plantagenet Empire*, 27.

²⁹ John Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire* (London: Arnold, 2001), 78. Norgate, *England Under the Angevin Kings*, 57. W. L. Warren, *Henry II* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973), 110.

³⁰ Aurell, *The Plantagenet Empire*, 101-102, 162. Bernard S. Bachrach, "Henry II and the Angevin Tradition of Family Hostility," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 16, no. 2

as the Great Revolt of the 1170s and the rebellion during which Young Henry died in the 1180s.³¹

While the succession rights and land distribution determined by Henry did have a profound effect on the political landscape of the region, Aurell adds that power struggles with the Capetian line in France played an equal or greater part in the reasoning for diversified political structure.³² This was because Henry, and his sons, continued paying homage to the French king for Angevin territories held in Western France into the thirteenth century. In doing so, the Angevin rulers relinquished part of their political legitimacy in those regions.³³ Although the scholarship of medieval Europe is currently moving away from rigid definitions of feudalism, it is important to note how the relationships between royal households, given their overlapping territories, affected the political landscape of the West.

Further, despite the Plantagenets arguably holding more territory and wealth than the Capetians, the complex relationships between these two powerful families meant that Philip II and his father Louis VII (r. 1137-1180) were able to capitalize on growing familial tensions. For example, during the Great Revolt, Henry's sons were granted refuge by Louis. When Henry refused to declare Richard as his heir and threatened to

(1984): 125-126, 130. Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire*, 32-33. Hosler, *Henry II*, 65. Turner, Heiser, *The Reign of Richard Lionheart*, 24-25. Warren, *Henry II*, 7, 46.

³¹ Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire*, 34-35. Hosler, *Henry II*, 9, 75, 85-86.

³² Aurell, *The Plantagenet Empire*, 32.

³³ Aurell, *The Plantagenet Empire*, 32. Turner and Heiser, *The Reign of Richard Lionheart*, 39-40.

redistribute some of Richard's landholdings to John instead, Richard fled to France, making a dramatic show of his close friendship with Philip.³⁴ Later, while Richard remained on crusade and during his imprisonment in Germany, John, encouraged and prompted by Philip, took over areas of Richard's land.³⁵ While the Angevins held the titles, it is clear in these instances that the French kings were the ones holding the strings.

Both the inability, or lack of interest, in unifying their territory under one political doctrine and the complex familial tensions between the Plantagenets and the Capetians played a role in the diverse make-up of the Angevin Empire. Trying to make sense of these relationships, historians have described the system of governance as an authoritarian monarchy, with feudal systems in place to ensure the loyalty of their subjects.³⁶ In turn, the kings of the Angevin Empire were also subjected to the rulership of the king of France, particularly in Normandy, Anjou, Maine, and Aquitaine. Ralph Turner, who has written extensively on the empire and its three monarchs, suggests that in this vast hierarchal structure, there was an understood element of paternalism, in which the king, held accountable to God, was expected to act in the best interest of his people.³⁷ This said, in refusing to unify their vast territories, Angevin rulers would find it difficult to contend with the competing needs of the nobility and the Church.

1.2 Public Power: The Elective Element of Medieval Kingship

³⁴ Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire*, 38. Warren, *Henry II*, 616-617.

³⁵ Gillingham, *Richard the Lionheart*, 234.

³⁶ Turner and Heiser, *The Reign of Richard Lionheart*, 39.

³⁷ Turner and Heiser, *The Reign of Richard Lionheart*, 39-40.

In this case, the nobility refers to members of medieval society who held hereditary titles and made up the baronage, acting as administrators to the monarch.³⁸ The Church, as a unified institution consisting of the pope, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and priests, often acted as advisors to the monarch on matters both spiritual and political.³⁹ Across the medieval period and the crusading movement, these two social classes of elites shared a close kinship with each other and with the monarchy.⁴⁰ These interconnected, and often contentious, relationships dictated both internal and external affairs in medieval territories. The political make-up of the Angevin Empire is no exception to this.

In 1994, historian Ralph Turner analyzed medieval kingship in the Angevin dynasty in three ways. First, he identified the relationships of the kings to the nobility, their relationships with the Church, and finally, their ability to act in favor of the common good, or their public power.⁴¹ Turner details John's reign through how these three concepts of medieval kingship were all shown through the king's ability to express protection, loyalty, and generosity to his people.⁴² In this way, interactions with the elite social groups of society were vital to the stability of medieval kingship. The nobility and

³⁸ David Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France, 900-1300* (London, UK: Routledge, 2005), 3.

³⁹ Andrew Brown, *The Church and Society in England, 1000-1500* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 1, 7.

⁴⁰ Brown, *The Church and Society in England*, 24. Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, 3.

⁴¹ Turner, *King John*, 14, 16.

⁴² Turner, *King John*, 15.

their wealth often supported the revenue collected by the royal family and therefore had immense influence over general commerce and the financial health of the Angevin realm. This was particularly true for the Angevins, as Henry and his sons never formally consolidated their lands under one economic doctrine.⁴³

The importance of the baronage, the clergy, and their support in the stability of kingdoms in medieval Europe gave the line of succession an elective nature. While hereditary preference, or primogeniture, was kept in mind, the named heir was expected to have, and to maintain, good relationships with the nobles and the Church.⁴⁴ This precedent is seen, as described by historian Dan Jones, in the cases of Henry II's two closest predecessors, Henry I (r. 1068-1135) and Stephen of Blois (r. 1135-1154).⁴⁵ Though both men had elder brothers, their strong political, economic, and religious ties which benefited the nobility and the clergy allowed them to jump the line of succession. For example, Jones states, Stephen's marriage to Matilda of Boulogne made him popular with the baronage because of Boulogne's importance in the wool trade. Further, his brother Henry was the bishop of Winchester, which additionally won him the support of the Church.⁴⁶

⁴³ For more about the definition of the Angevin realm as an empire, see Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire* (London: Arnold, 2001).

⁴⁴ Tuner, *King John*, 16.

⁴⁵ Dan Jones, *The Plantagenets: The Warrior Kings and Queens Who Made England* (New York, NY: Penguin Random House, 2014), 21.

⁴⁶ Jones, *The Plantagenets*, 35, 67-70. Warren, *Henry II*, 21-22.

Once crowned king, however, Stephen's popularity faltered due to his mismanagement of the baronage, blatant disrespect of Church officials, and ineffective military command in times of crisis.⁴⁷ The current leading biographer of Henry II, W. L. Warren suggests that Stephen's eventual downfall was a build-up of these issues which slowly wore away at the trust the nobles and the Church had for him.⁴⁸ Warren agrees with Jones that one of the key offenses committed against the Church was Stephen's promotion of Henry to the see of Canterbury and the proceeding arrest of the bishop of Salisbury and his followers.⁴⁹ Additionally, although he was able to sway public opinion when Henry I's legitimate daughter, Matilda, appealed to the pope on behalf of her son, he and his advocates were unable to shake accusations of perjury concerning Henry's relinquishment of the barons from oaths they had taken to Matilda across the 1120s and 1130s. Therefore, the responsibility of the king was not limited to creating strong initial bonds with the nobles and clergy, but also the maintenance of them over time.

Through the example of Stephen, it is clear that the quality of medieval kingship is measurable through the king's ability to maintain balance in his relationships with the nobles and the Church through repetitive assertions of royal authority.⁵⁰ The ideals of medieval kingship that are found in crusade texts are contingent upon this aspect of medieval kingship, in that the legitimacy of monarchal power truly rested on the

⁴⁷ Hosler, *Henry II*, 23, 175. Jones, *The Plantagenets*, 22, 24. Warren, *Henry II*, 24, 56-57.

⁴⁸ Jones, *The Plantagenets*, 24-25. Warren, *Henry II*, 19-20, 22, 23.

⁴⁹ Jones, *The Plantagenets*, 22. Warren, *Henry II*, 22.

⁵⁰ Turner, *King John*, 11.

perceptions of the elite social groups with whom they interacted. Therefore, to make sense of the ideals of medieval kingship as they are expressed in the Third Crusade narratives, it is vital to understand how the Angevin kings interacted with the nobles and the Church.

The next section will examine Henry, Richard, and John's interactions with these groups. It will do so by tracing how scholars have utilized these historical events to gauge the quality of kingship performed in retrospect. In doing so, it will argue that the pillars of medieval kingship, such as leadership, generosity, and dedication to the betterment of the common good, were expressed through interactions with the elite social groups of the medieval world. This is essential to the overall argument of this thesis as it defines the noble ideals of medieval kingship which Richard was expected to live up to on crusade. Once defined, they are easily identifiable in crusade texts such as the *Estoire* and the *Itinerarium*.

1.3 Noble Ideals of Medieval Kingship

Scholars suggest that maintenance of the nobles and clergy was an area in which Henry II excelled. He kept close ties with his baronage and relied on them for support. Even in times of crisis, such as during the Becket Affair in which Henry was accused of provoking the murder of Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, scholars agree that Henry was able to assert his royal prerogative and regain control over both the Church and unruly nobles.⁵¹ Jörg Peltzer, for example, tracks Henry's relationships with

⁵¹ Jörg Peltzer, "Henry II and the Norman Bishops," *The English Historical Review* 119, no. 484 (2004): 1203, 1227.

Norman bishops over the course of the Becket Conflict and the Great Revolt in the early 1170s.⁵² These conflicts outline the ways in which Henry attempted to solidify royal authority throughout his reign through the transition of the first wave of bishops, who held their own power separate from the king, and the second generation, who held their positions at the will of Henry II. This, Peltzer argues further, signals a shift in the way the royal authority was exercised and understood in the twelfth century.⁵³ Therefore, it is once again evident that the concept of public power should not be confined to his ability to act in service of the public good, but rather should also include his ability to reassert his own royal authority over time.

This would explain why historians have described John as less effective in his kingship. His initial gestures of royal authority were grand, but his ability to maintain balance over the course of his reign proved disastrous. J.R. Maddicott utilizes the scene of the Oath of Marlborough in 1209 to evaluate the dynamics between the king and his subjects during John's reign. He argues that at Marlborough, John consolidated his own royal authority by reinforcing his son as heir at a time when his relationships with the Church threatened him with excommunication.⁵⁴ The Oath at Marlborough showcases John's ability to think strategically about his line of succession. It also shows that he, like his father, was aware of the importance of the baronage and their approval.

⁵² Peltzer, "Henry II and the Norman Bishops," 1226-1227.

⁵³ Peltzer, "Henry II and the Norman Bishops," 1227.

⁵⁴ J.R. Maddicott, "The Oath at Marlborough, 1209: Fear, Government and Popular Allegiance in the Reign of King John," *The English Historical Review* 126, no. 519 (2011): 284.

While John's statement at Marlborough shows his knowledge of the importance of public power, it also shows his distrust of the baronage, with whom he did not have the same capacity for working as did his father and elder brother. Henry and Richard were overly cautious of the administrators they left in charge in each of their landholdings and maintained marginally stable allegiances throughout the Angevin territories.⁵⁵ Turner states that it was John's ineffectual treatment of the barons during his rule that has prompted historians to view John as an ineffective king.⁵⁶ Turner states that barons wanted a voice in governance, but John, instead, elected his own counselors without asking for the advice of previously instated officials.⁵⁷ This acted against the expectations barons had of their king who instead was attempting, in Turner's opinion, to remodel royal authority based on Roman law.

Lane Sobehrad highlights John's ineffective military leadership, which contrasts with the image of Richard I in crusade narratives.⁵⁸ Sobehrad analyzes how chroniclers of John's reign characterize his rulership through his incompetence and his failure to live up to the expectations set by the narratives of his brother and father before him. This thesis lends weight to how instrumental chronicles can be as sources. Additionally, it shows how images of kingship in these sources were read by the nobility over time and

⁵⁵ Heister, Turner, *The Reign of Richard The Lionheart*, 56.

⁵⁶ Turner, *King John*, 47.

⁵⁷ Turner, *King John*, 47.

⁵⁸ Lane Sobehrad, "Hating John: How English Chroniclers Portrayed the King," *Medieval Warfare* 2, no. 7 (2017): 14.

influenced the way they viewed their rulers in hindsight. Carole Levin furthers this theory, evaluating the transformation of King John's image throughout the Tudor period during the time of Thomas Cromwell and other Protestant reformers.⁵⁹ She argues that the image of the king was rehabilitated by the reformers, likening him to Henry VIII (r. 1509-1547) who aligned against Rome.⁶⁰ Over time, as support of Henry and Protestantism wavered during the reign of Mary I (r. 1553-1558) images of John were still "sympathized" with in communities of Protestant reformers, however he was not "constantly admired" as he had been decades prior.⁶¹ This argument shows how chronicles of the medieval period are vital sources through which people interacted with the Angevin kings and their images over time. This thesis examines these narratives regarding Richard I and the Third Crusade to argue that images of the ideal king are not necessarily reflective of the true nature of the people they describe. Instead, they offer insight into the values of the time they were written in, and interpretations of these texts over time are equally as biased by contemporary conceptions of kingship and morality.

While Richard might have shared more in common with his father than his brother regarding ties with ecclesiastical and political officials, what differentiated him from both was the act of going on crusade. While all three Angevin kings took the oath to

⁵⁹ Carole Levin, "A Good Prince: King John and Early Tudor Propaganda," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 4, no. 11 (1980): 25.

⁶⁰ Levin, "A Good Prince," 26-27.

⁶¹ In this passage Levin cites the argument of John Elson regarding images of King John in John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Levin, "A Good Prince," 31.

recapture Jerusalem, Richard was the only king who followed through on his promise.⁶² This not only diminished the relationships that Henry and John had with the Church, but it gave historians an overwhelming amount of literature featuring positive aspects of Richard's reign.⁶³ The lack of primary source evidence coupled with Turner's analysis that John's biographers were not nuanced enough in their analysis of his kingship proposes a clear argument for why Richard is celebrated above his father and brother.⁶⁴

In chapter two, the chivalric literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries will be looked at more closely to understand how Richard was characterized in comparison to Philip II of France. Gillingham suggests a bias toward sources depicting Richard's time on crusade rather than his time at home in Aquitaine which has led scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to unfairly depict Richard as little more than an "absentee king."⁶⁵ In reality, Gillingham argues, the act of going on crusade was the best thing that Richard could have done in an effort to make good on the various promises he made to his people in his coronation oath of September 1189.⁶⁶ Richard, according to Gillingham, made three basic promises "first, to protect the church; second, to do justice; third, to suppress evil laws and customs."⁶⁷ It is not a stretch of the imagination to see

⁶² Gillingham, *Richard the Lionheart*, 112. Norgate, *John Lackland*, 21, 232.

⁶³ Hosler, *Henry II*, 11, 67.

⁶⁴ Turner, *King John*, 45-48.

⁶⁵ Gillingham, *Richard the Lionheart*, 2.

⁶⁶ Gillingham, "The Art of Kingship," 18.

⁶⁷ Gillingham, "The Art of Kingship," 18.

that through the narratives of the Third Crusade, Richard clearly fulfilled all three of these promises.

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter argues that the image of Richard presented in Third Crusade narrative sources was not the result any true character difference between him, his father and his brother. Rather, it was the importance of noble perceptions of kingship in legitimizing the crown's control that partially drove chroniclers' embellishments. Due, in part, to the lack of a centralized administrative structure and tensions with the kings of France, Henry, Richard, and John all had to take extra care to perform the ideals of medieval kingship. The Third Crusade not only provided Richard with a grand stage on which to perform these ideals, but it gave chroniclers in his time the means to produce stories of heroic legend.

This aspect of Richard's reign is what makes chronicles of the Third Crusade appealing as primary source documents. As will be detailed in chapter two, these narratives provide evidence of Richard as an ideal crusader king, living up to the expectations of the nobles and the clergy. Therefore, even in the case that these texts exaggerate Richard's qualities of kingship, they act as reflections of the larger concept of public power and the unique attributes of Angevin political practice and kingship. In this way, the political motivations behind the writing of Third Crusade chronicles are made clearer. For example, the precedent of choice in the claim to the throne of England is essential to answering the question of why Ambroise wrote the *Estoire*. Writing in the

years after Richard named his nephew, Arthur of Brittany, heir at Messina in 1190, Ambroise would have been writing with questions of contested succession in mind.⁶⁸ Given the limited primary source base available to medieval historians, it is essential to find new ways to read and analyze the texts that are accessible. Research regarding this issue has begun to touch on how the lack of source-base evidence affects our understanding of historical figures. Hosler's analysis of the military genius of Henry seeks to close this gap, but more work still needs to be done.⁶⁹ This chapter has explored the different ways in which chronicle sources have been utilized to understand the quality of kingship found in the cases of Henry, Richard and John. It argues that scholars have viewed chronicle documents at face value to supply a summary of events along a timeline, and in doing so skew modern perceptions of historical figures. It suggests, instead, that the question historians should ask of these documents is no longer how Richard is depicted by chroniclers, but why they chose to depict him in the ways they did.

⁶⁸ Judith. A. Everard, *Brittany and the Angevins: Province and Empire 1158–1203* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 159.

⁶⁹ Hosler, *Henry II*, 9-10.

CHAPTER TWO
THE KING'S CRUSADE: IMAGES OF RICHARD I AND PHILLIP II AT
THE SIEGE OF ACRE

The importance of public power and the subjugation of Angevin rulers to the king of France gave the empire's institution of kingship a distinct fragility.⁷⁰ Those writing in times of increasing political tensions would be writing with this in mind. Specifically utilizing the *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte* and the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, this chapter examines chronicles favoring Richard's time on crusade. In doing so, this chapter details how the Third Crusade offered chroniclers an opportunity to highlight ideal aspects of medieval kingship, such as loyal leadership, generosity and encouragement, and dedication to the cause of the crusade. It argues that, in part, chroniclers were motivated by their understanding of chronicle sources as a genre of historical reference and sought to shift the blame of the Third Crusade's failure from the English king. They did so by juxtaposing Richard's idealized image against negative perceptions of his French counterpart, Philip II, and detailing the dangers of sin on crusade.

Before evaluating the failure of the Third Crusade, and Richard's part in it, it is essential to understand what success really means in the overarching culture of crusading. The goal of the Crusades, as suggested by Pope Urban II's call at the Council of Claremont in 1095, was to recapture the Holy Land of Jerusalem and the True Cross from

⁷⁰ Aurell, *The Plantagenet Empire*, 264-265. Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire*, 1, 4, 23-24, 33.

the Muslim forces in the East.⁷¹ The First Crusade provided those in the Christian West with what Johnathan Phillips defines as “contemporary heroes,” whose stories gave way to a new genre of literature celebrating crusaders in the same way people celebrated heroes of antiquity.⁷² Alternatively, the Second Crusade (1147–1150), was wholly ineffectual in the reclamation of the Holy Land, due to the crusading armies’ lack of comradery, supplies, and financial aid.⁷³ This loss diminished the enthusiasm for crusading, which eleventh-century chronicles had induced though their heroic depictions of the first crusaders.

Considering the outcomes of the first two crusading endeavors, it is interesting that the Third Crusade, much like the second, failed in capturing Jerusalem. Even so, chroniclers still managed to churn out narratives that showcase Richard as a good leader on crusade. One explanation for this is that Richard did succeed in securing a safe route of pilgrimage through the Treaty of Jaffa in 1192.⁷⁴ Additionally, there is some suggestion that he may have vowed to return to Jerusalem after addressing the political conflicts created by John and Philip back in the West.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, 18, 111-113.

⁷² Jonathan Phillips, “The Crusades: A Complete History,” *History Today* 65, no.5 (2015), <https://www.historytoday.com/archive/feature/crusades-complete-history>.

⁷³ Tyerman, *God’s War*, 335, 336-337.

⁷⁴ Thomas Asbridge provides an in-depth analysis of Richard’s diplomacy, arguing that the negotiations of the treaty allowed Richard “to garner military and political intelligence” and “gain insight into the temperament and mindset” of Saladin. Thomas Asbridge, “Talking to the Enemy: The Role and Purpose of Negotiations between Saladin and Richard the Lionheart during the Third Crusade,” *Journal of Medieval History* 39, no. 3 (2013): 289.

⁷⁵ Asbridge, “Talking to the Enemy,” 289.

This said, Richard's inability to recapture Jerusalem has proved a complicated issue for scholars attempting to understand his reign. In his biography of Richard, Gillingham admires Richard for his sustained military strength and tact throughout the crusade, suggesting that Richard's military prowess is what distinguished him from other English kings.⁷⁶ Gillingham argues that the failure of the Third Crusade was not an issue of Richard's nonperformance, but of John's alliance with Philip.⁷⁷ This tentative cooperation, Gillingham suggests, arguably weakened the hold that the Angevin kings had on their so-called empire, particularly in the regions of Northern France. Gillingham asserts that it was this familial betrayal, and the resulting political tensions back home, that weakened Richard's claim to the crusade, pushing him towards a more diplomatic approach with Saladin.⁷⁸ At the same time, Gillingham asserts that the alliance led to the fall of the Angevin Empire as a whole, and that John died having sown the seeds of his own political chaos.⁷⁹

Gillingham argues that to understand Richard's character, it is essential to view the English king as more than the medieval warrior exonerated in romantic epics, but as an adept military strategist.⁸⁰ Controversially, scholars such as Michael Markowski suggest that Richard had diverted from the goal of the Third Crusade by creating

⁷⁶ Gillingham, "The Art of Kingship," 21-22.

⁷⁷ Gillingham, "The Art of Kingship," 21-22.

⁷⁸ Gillingham, *Richard the Lionheart*, 130.

⁷⁹ Gillingham, *Richard the Lionheart*, 286.

⁸⁰ Gillingham, "The Art of Kingship," 18.

divisions and delays before forcibly removing his army from the East.⁸¹ This clear cut division in the historiography of the Third Crusade's failure partially stems from asking the wrong questions of the source base. Instead of debating whether Richard was to blame for the Christian loss, historians might begin to ask why they were so insistent he was not.

To understand why these texts depict Richard as an ideal ruler on crusade, this chapter evaluates how he is set up as a foil against the villainous nature of the French king, Philip. Additionally, it details how chroniclers used the sins of the crusaders' themselves to justify the crusade's failure as God's will. Although this chapter nods to the current historiographical debate concerning the validity of Richard's characterization as an ideal ruler on crusade, the primary goal is not to argue whether the authors of these crusading texts were being entirely truthful in their analysis of the English king; rather, it is to highlight the crusading narratives as cultural objects, which reflect the expectations the noble class held concerning the role of kings on crusade. In this way, the argument made here will further the current understanding of a political motive found in the narratives of the Third Crusade and offer a possible explanation for their apparent need to shift the blame of the crusade's failure from Richard himself.⁸²

2.1 Authorship and Audience: The *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* and the *Estoire*

⁸¹ Markowski, "Richard Lionheart: bad king, bad crusader?," 361.

⁸² Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 11.

In order to compare the characterizations of Richard and Philip, this chapter will utilize two closely related chronicle sources: The *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi* and the *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte*. The historiographical debates concerning the publication dates and authorship of these two texts are intertwined. From the early decades of the twentieth century, scholars such as Gaston Paris argued that the *Estoire* was simply a French translation of the Latin *Itinerarium*.⁸³ Later, historians including Kate Norgate, Hans Mayer, and Helen Nicholson worked to debunk this theory, insisting that the *Itinerarium* was a compiled document of many crusade texts.⁸⁴ The *Estoire*, being one of these documents, was likely added with other narrative chronicles and passages to the original text of the *Itinerarium* sometime around the 1220s.⁸⁵ This, and recent work done by James Kane concerning the *Estoire*'s influence on another chronicle from the early thirteenth century, the Latin Continuation of William of Tyre, or *Continuatio*, suggests that the *Estoire* itself was composed sometime in the mid-to-late 1190s.⁸⁶

⁸³ Gaston Paris, *L'estoire de la guerre sainte; histoire en vers de la troisième croisade, 1190-1192*, Paris, France: *Du Minidtre de L'Instruction Publique* (1875), 88.

⁸⁴ *Das Itinerarium peregrinorum: eine zeitgenössische englische Chronik zum dritten Kreuzzug in ursprünglicher Gestalt*, ed. Hans E. Mayer, Leipzig: Germany, Hiersemann, 1962, 7. See Helen J. Nicholson, "The Construction of a Primary Source: The Creation of *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* 1," 37, vol. 1, *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes*, 2019. Kate Norgate, "The 'Itinerarium Peregrinorum' and the 'Song of Ambrose,'" *The English Historical Review* 99 no. 547, (1910) 524, 526-527.

⁸⁵ Norgate, "The 'Itinerarium Peregrinorum' and the 'Song of Ambrose,'" 159.

⁸⁶ James H. Kane, "Between parson and poet: a re-examination of the Latin Continuation of William of Tyre," 44, no. 1 *Journal of Medieval History* (2018), 65, 69, 72, 76.

In the most recent translation of the *Estoire*, French scholar Marianne Ailes concurs that Ambroise wrote soon after the events of the Third Crusade. Given both the validity of his eyewitness account and the fact that he concludes his writing after Richard I's release from imprisonment in Germany in 1194, Ailes suggests a publication date ranging from 1195 to 1199.⁸⁷ Thus, the *Estoire* represents one of the first detailed accounts of the Third Crusade.

The authorship of the *Estoire* is much clearer than that of the *Itinerarium* as the author refers to himself as Ambroise at several points within the text.⁸⁸ This said, scholars still debate his profession.⁸⁹ Several interpretations of the text describe him as a jongleur or entertainer, citing his use of popularized tales as proof of a "low level of learning."⁹⁰ In Mariane Ailes' 2003 translation of the *Estoire*, she argues that the level of language Ambroise utilizes in his rhythmic verse and his references to biblical texts instead suggests that he was not an entertainer, but rather a cleric.⁹¹ In this case, his use of popular stories and literature reflected the audience he was trying to reach rather than his own level of knowledge. Due to Ambroise's allusions to popular stories, and his use of

⁸⁷ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 3.

⁸⁸ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 2.

⁸⁹ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 2.

⁹⁰ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 1.

⁹¹ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 2

literary verse and the French vernacular, Ailes concludes that it is likely that he was writing to a growing class of literate nobility, “knights and their followers.”⁹²

Given that the intended audience of texts such as Ambroise’s *Estoire* was the baronage, the appeal to noble ideals of kingship they contain becomes clearer. This chapter furthers this discussion by proposing that these authors were writing both for the nobility, contemporary to themselves, and for future generations. Their determination to shift blame for the Third Crusade’s failure off of Richard, in various ways, implies that they recognized how chronicle sources were used as historical documents. They embellished ideals of kingship in their own time to leave behind impressions of a steadfast and honorable English king. Their writings reflect concern for the legitimacy of the English throne in the face of growing French power and political uncertainty back in the Angevin realm. To exemplify this argument, the remainder of this chapter will focus on how Richard de Templo and Ambroise both chose to set Richard apart from his crusade partner, the French king, Philip.

2.2 Noble Ideals of Kingship in the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* and the *Estoire*

Crusade narratives favoring the English king over Philip highlight his piety, military tact, and economic generosity. Using the Siege of Acre as a case study, this chapter will argue that Ambroise and de Templo repeatedly stage Richard’s acts of

⁹² Ailes’ argument concerning the reach of vernacular poetry concurs with that of Johnathan Philips, who suggests that the literature boom ignited by the First Crusade continued to permeate crusading culture well into the later decades of the twelfth century. Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 13. See also Marcus Bull, *Eyewitness and Crusade Narrative: Perception and Narration in Accounts of the Second, Third and Fourth Crusades* (Philadelphia, PA: Boydell Press, 2018), 227-228.

kingship against Philip's lack thereof. For example, Richard is shown to offer his men a higher payment than the French king, and is praised for remaining on crusade, even after learning of his brother's betrayal back home.⁹³ Philip, on the other hand, is demonized for his choice to leave after the Siege of Acre and is likened to the devil for luring John into betraying his brother.⁹⁴ In these ways, images of Richard in medieval histories and crusade chronicles tend to outweigh those of his peers, both in number and in idealization.

A common feature of the crusade narratives favoring Richard is their condemnation of Philip's departure from the crusade during the Siege of Acre in 1189.⁹⁵ The *Itinerarium*, for example, describes Philip's departure as a "shameful" and "outrageous" decision, further providing three guidelines or "duties" for kings to follow on crusade.⁹⁶ The first is "to guide" crusaders along their quest. The second is "to encourage the Christian people in such a pious and necessary work," and the third is "to ensure the progress of such an arduous undertaking!"⁹⁷ Beginning with a case study of how the compiler of the *Itinerarium* portrays both the English king's and the French king's behavior in Acre, this section will argue that Richard was able to manage all three of these duties.

⁹³ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 106.

⁹⁴ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 106.

⁹⁵ Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 223.

⁹⁶ Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 223.

⁹⁷ Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 223.

In this case, the first duty of ideal crusader kingship in the medieval period was to “guide” crusaders in their journey east. This would not only mean that the king would physically lead his men into Jerusalem, but that he would remain alongside them during times of strife and battle. The depiction of the Siege of Acre (1189-1191) in Third Crusade chronicles provides several examples of Richard’s steadfast leadership. The most prominent example of how this sets him apart from Philip is when both kings fall ill.

Little is mentioned about Philip’s illness in these narratives, other than to suggest that he fell ill through the grief of watching his men die, or to suggest that he “recovered some time before” Richard.⁹⁸ During his illness, Ambroise states that Philip, “could not ride,” his horse, while the *Itinerarium*, perhaps more tellingly, uses the phrase, “would not mount his horse.”⁹⁹ While Thomas Wagner and Pierce Mitchell understand the lack of these sources’ concern with the illness of the French king as evidence that the authors would not have been in close proximity to him, an alternative interpretation is that these descriptions suggest that Philip’s illness was less of a physical illness than Richard’s.¹⁰⁰ Although a modern understanding of the events at Acre suggests that both kings were ill, the actual specifics of Philip’s ailment would not have mattered to narrative authors who were writing with the purpose of inflating the respect of their own king.

⁹⁸ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 96. 98. Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 206.

⁹⁹ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 96. Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 206.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Wagner and Pierce Mitchell, “The Illnesses of King Richard and King Philippe on the Third Crusade: Understanding Leonardie and Arnaldia,” *Crusades* 10, no. 7 (2011): 24.

Once the French king's condition improved, and when the city of Acre fell to the crusaders, the chroniclers characterized Philip as abandoning his troops when they needed him most. While the compiler of the *Itinerarium* argues that the French king's "reputation should not be completely blackened" by his return to France, due to the "great deal of effort" Philip had put into the storming of Acre itself, they also suggest that he "made arrangements for his journey as quick as he could."¹⁰¹ This directly contrasts with the firm and steady actions taken by Richard. "While the king of France was prematurely hurrying back home," the compiler writes, "King Richard was applying his attention to repairing the walls of the city so that they were higher and better than they had been before...."¹⁰² Ambroise reacts to this event similarly, in that Philip's departure from Acre tarnishes the good work he'd done to capture the city. He argues that Philip embodied an abandonment of the will and order of God, unlike the king of England who "did not wish to be neglectful of God" while on crusade.¹⁰³

The description of Philip's time at Acre contrasts greatly with that of Richard's. Ambroise writes that though he lay ill, Richard "wished the city of Acre be attacked under his command" and ordered to be "dragged to the ditches" on a makeshift, "wrought" stretcher. The *Itinerarium* additionally depicts this episode, stating that Richard had the *cercleia* he was carried out on to be "made with great care" and brought

¹⁰¹ Nicholson, *The Chronicles of the Third Crusade*, 224, 227.

¹⁰² Nicholson, *The Chronicles of the Third Crusade*, 227.

¹⁰³ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 105-106.

to the “ditch outside the city wall.”¹⁰⁴ While these depictions show that Richard was actively guiding his men in warfare, they also concur with modern assumptions that favor Richard’s kingship. John Gillingham states that Richard was unique as king because of his determination to fight alongside his fellow crusaders.¹⁰⁵ In doing so, Gillingham argues, the soldiers “fought better” for “knowing their lord was with them.”¹⁰⁶

This episode of the Siege of Acre also depicts Richard’s adherence to the second duty of a crusade king, “encouraging” his men on crusade. While it shows that he offered physical support to his men, even at the cost of his own health, it is also one of the times that Richard offers financial incentive. The *Estoire* and the *Itinerarium* both praise Richard’s offer of a growing amount of *besants* to the man who could “remove a block of stone” from a wall of a tower at which they were shooting.¹⁰⁷ This would have been particularly impactful for the crusaders, given both that crusading was an expensive endeavor and that delays on the Third Crusade had made it even more so.¹⁰⁸ While both Richard and Philip offered a small wage to their men, these crusade narratives depict

¹⁰⁴ A *cercleia*, as the author of the *Itinerarium* describes, is “firmly constructed from frames of stiff cane,” which are then “covered with rawhide.” Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 99. Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 99, 101. Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 210, 213.

¹⁰⁵ Gillingham, *Richard the Lionheart*, 285.

¹⁰⁶ Gillingham, *Richard the Lionheart*, 285.

¹⁰⁷ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 100. Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 214.

¹⁰⁸ Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 170.

Richard as generous to the point of superiority, offering four gold coins per month while Philip gave only three.¹⁰⁹

Beyond financial support, the author of the *Itinerarium* depicts Richard as physically supportive of his men in his inventive and swift problem-solving. One instance of this occurs early on in the crusade narrative, when a bridge collapses as the crusaders make their way into Messina.¹¹⁰ In the words of the *Itinerarium*, it was Richard's "capacity for firm action" that was "never shaken" and his plan to string a line of boats "firmly together" that ended up getting most of the people across the Rhône.¹¹¹ As Nicholson comments in her translation of the text, while both the *Estoire* and Roger of Howden detail this episode in their own narratives, the *Itinerarium* is unique in that it attributes the solution to Richard.¹¹²

Richard is also presented in direct contrast to Philip when he is faced with his own choice to return home. Although many reasons have been posed for Philip's choice to abandon crusade, the current understanding is that he left due to the death of the Count of Flanders.¹¹³ Realizing the potential for a succession crisis, Philip has been retrospectively praised for understanding the need to leave Acre. Although the chronicles suggest alternative reasons for his departure, such as illness or irritation at Richard's

¹⁰⁹ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 95. Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 204.

¹¹⁰ Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 153.

¹¹¹ Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 153.

¹¹² Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 153n36.

¹¹³ Naus, "Philip Augustus and the Decision to Join the Third Crusade," 113-114.

arrogance and uncontrollable anger, in reality, they probably understood the event within its political context. One clue is in how the *Estoire* specifically presents Richard with a similar dilemma: the betrayal of his brother, John, and Philip, in threatening to take over his territories while he is away.

Ambroise titles this section of his poem “A Dilemma for King Richard,” and scholars remain unsure as to the reality of the subsequent scene. Using the device of direct speech, the *Estoire* depicts a conversation between the distraught king of England and “a chaplain of his own country.”¹¹⁴ Upon seeing the chaplain crying, Richard calls him over and learns that, as had occurred with Philip, news of his rumored departure had shaken the men’s trust in him. Having been granted permission to proceed, the chaplain goes on to describe the divine favor Richard has enjoyed during the crusade up until that point, enjoying “little loss” compared to other kings at the time, and defeating armies and illnesses that no one believed he could.¹¹⁵ In depicting Richard as standing in God’s favor, after likening Philip to the persuasive snake in the Garden of Eden who turned John off of the “right path,” Ambroise makes important points about the priorities of a crusader king. “King,” the cleric in Ambroise’s story continues, “remember and take good care of the land of which God has made you guardian for he entrusted everything to you when the other king left.”¹¹⁶ Whatever their motivations, chroniclers chose to depict

¹¹⁴Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 160.

¹¹⁵ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 160-162.

¹¹⁶ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 162.

Richard showing both financial and physical support. Even in times of crisis and dilemma, chroniclers showcase Richard's ability to encourage his troops, guiding them to their end goal: the city of Jerusalem.

The third directly stated "duty" of a king on crusade is to "ensure the progress of such an arduous undertaking" as a crusade.¹¹⁷ The phrasing of this is important to note, as it subordinates the actual success of the crusade to the general progress of it. Given that Richard was the final king left on the "King's Crusade" and that he had failed to recapture the city of Jerusalem, chroniclers would be searching for ways to rehabilitate the king's image, particularly as the *Estoire* was most likely written between the time of the king's release from the imprisonment of Frederick Barbarossa's successor, Henry VI, in 1194 and his death in 1199, while the *Itinerarium* was probably compiled following the disastrous reign of John Lackland in 1222. Instead of focusing on the end result, Richard's failure to recapture Jerusalem for the Christians, these sources praise his determination to stay on crusade and to ensure the progress of the crusading movement, advancing diplomatic relations with Saladin through his brother, Al-Adil.¹¹⁸ In this way, Richard—though not able to recapture the city in full—still made progress for the crusade movement going forward, therefore completing the final duty of a crusader king listed by the *Itinerarium*.

2.3 Writing as Reaction: The Failure of the Third Crusade

¹¹⁷ Nicholson, *The Chronicles of the Third Crusade*, 223. Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 106.

¹¹⁸ Thomas Asbridge, "Talking to the Enemy," 284.

If de Templo and Ambroise wrote with the intension of reaching the wider nobility, the question still remains as to why. The simple answer is that they, like other medieval narrative chroniclers, were attempting to take down history for the future record, and to provide a means of justification for the Third Crusade's failure after the devastating loss of the Second.¹¹⁹ In this sense, Ambroise's *Estoire* is indicative of how Christians should act in medieval society. For example, the story itself opens with the loss of Jerusalem at the Battle of Hattin on the fourth of July in 1187. Ambroise justifies this loss as God's response to the sins of Western society.¹²⁰ "It was through God," Ambroise writes, "who wished to bring Himself his people whom He had redeemed and who at that time had not served Him at all."¹²¹ He continues to explain that those in the Battle of Hattin were essential losses, which brought "others to come to their aid."¹²²

Another example of this is depictions of sin found in both the *Estoire* and the *Itinerarium*. In these texts, the sins of the knights on crusade were linked to the failure of the expedition. Scholars, such as Beth Spacey and Katherine Allen Smith, have begun to look at this issue through the depiction of miracles and biblical analogy. In stressing the role of God in deciding the outcome of the Crusades and criticizing the sin of the crusaders along the way, Spacey and Smith suggest a need to distract from the

¹¹⁹ Smith, *The Bible and Crusade Narrative in the Twelfth Century*, 12-13. Spacey, *The Miraculous and the Writing of Crusade Narrative*, 2-3, 4-5, 94-95.

¹²⁰ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 29.

¹²¹ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 29.

¹²² Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 30.

expedition's failure.¹²³ The blame of the expedition's failure is shifted away from Richard and instead placed on the crusaders' sinful acts on pilgrimage, Philip's sinful nature and abandonment at Acre, or John's betrayal of his brother back in the West.

The way each source poses this connection offers insight into how their contemporary audience viewed intangible aspects of social construction. In the *Estoire*, suffering as a consequence of sin is depicted in an immediate and individual way. Gillingham concurs that the *Estoire* brings the audience "into the tents of the poor soldiers," allowing them to witness second-hand "their dreams and disappointments," with the latter often being a direct consequence of repetitive sins.¹²⁴ Alternatively, the *Itinerarium* views the consequence of sin more collectively, attributing it to the failure of the crusade itself.¹²⁵ Stefen Vander Elst argues that the *Itinerarium*, unlike other narrative sources, distinctly made an attempt to highlight the vices of crusaders to shift blame off of Richard.¹²⁶ The failure of the Third Crusade is instead attributed to a combination of "Eastern sin," and the "decline of the Crusader army" into such a state of sin.¹²⁷

¹²³ Katherine Allen Smith, *The Bible and Crusade Narrative in the Twelfth Century* (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2020), 12-13. Beth C. Spacey, *The Miraculous and the Writing of Crusade Narrative* (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2020), 2-3, 4-5, 94-95. See also Stefen Vander Elst "'The holiness of that forsaken place': The Purpose of Sin in the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*," *Studies in Philology* 116, no. 2 (2019): 195-197.

¹²⁴ Gillingham, *Richard I*, 1n45.

¹²⁵ Vander Elst, "'The holiness of that forsaken place,'" 197.

¹²⁶ Vander Elst, "'The holiness of that forsaken place,'" 195.

¹²⁷ Vander Elst, "'The holiness of that forsaken place,'" 197.

Due to the failure of the Second Crusade, there was also a need to understand what happened to Christians who died en route to Jerusalem. Medieval Christians were concerned with the potential failure of the crusade, and the fulfillment of their indulgences of salvation, which many received upon taking the cross.¹²⁸ During an incident with the fallen bridge, in which at least two crusaders died, Ambroise addresses this issue, “If they perished in this world they are [now] before God pure and purified.” He continues, “They were going about His business and He will have mercy on them, as is right.”¹²⁹ The word choice here is intentional. Ambroise uses “pure” and “purified” to define the crusaders who are believed dead, meaning their indulgences would be fulfilled. He further defines God as merciful, as was “right,” just, and fair.

This theme of justification was essential politically. Staunton states that the Third Crusade was not only “King Richard’s crusade,” but it was the crusade of England. Its results were expected to have “profound consequences” for the succession of the English throne because of how crusading as an ideology impacted every level of the class divide, given its connections to chivalric nobility, piety, and kingship.¹³⁰ This said, the current understanding of the *Itinerarium* and its publication in the early thirteenth century could have been to “bolster the prestige” of the English monarchy after the death of John and the land lost to the French.¹³¹ By highlighting a king of England who was both “a

¹²⁸ Spacey, *The Miraculous and the Writing of Crusade Narrative*, 46, 48, 49, 94-95.

¹²⁹ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 36.

¹³⁰ Vander Elst, “The holiness of that forsaken place,” 197.

¹³¹ Gillingham, *Richard the Lionheart*, 1n45.

successful military leader” and one who was able to “ensure the loyalty of his forces” through listening to and implementing their strategies on crusade, the *Itinerarium* reasserts the right of the Angevin lineage in the wake of a disastrous defeat.¹³²

The argument that progress on the Third Crusade was more meaningful than the recapture of Jerusalem itself can be seen in the diplomatic negotiations of the Treaty of Jaffa in 1192. The *Estoire* and the *Itinerarium* view the truce between Richard and Saladin as a reflection of Richard’s commitment to ensuring “safe and free passage everywhere, and access to the Lord’s Holy Sepulchre without any exactions.”¹³³ The *Itinerarium* further shifts blame of the crusade’s failure off of Richard, by citing the king of France’s abandonment and betrayal as reasons why Richard could go no further.¹³⁴ Ambroise concurs that both Philip’s departure, and an illness debilitating his troops who were “already leaving in hordes by ship,” proved that Richard was “let down” by everyone.¹³⁵ These chroniclers depict Richard as having no choice but to commit to a truce, as he was “no more than two leagues” from Muslim armies, without the support of those who had taken crusader vows just as he had.¹³⁶

By defining Richard’s turmoil in this way, Ambroise implies that it was both through the goodness of Richard’s heart as a good leader, and due to his devotion to the

¹³² Gillingham, *Richard the Lionheart*, 151-152, 193.

¹³³ Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 371.

¹³⁴ Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 371.

¹³⁵ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 186-187.

¹³⁶ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 186-187.

cause of the crusade that he secured a route of pilgrimage for the Western Christians. Additionally, Ambroise states that, for Richard, the Treaty of Jaffa was not the end.¹³⁷ Ambroise and the author of the *Itinerarium* insist that Richard intended on returning and capturing Jerusalem three years after the truce was signed. Of course, this never occurred due to the state of affairs back in England worsening after Richard's imprisonment in Germany.¹³⁸

The importance of Richard's promise, as reflected by both the *Estoire* and the *Itinerarium*, is in the high value placed on oath-taking and keeping. The persistence of Richard in keeping his oath, both to his people and to God, acts as a direct contrast to the actions of the French king, Philip. Early on in the crusade, the two European kings make an oath of loyalty to one another, and an agreement to "share loyally" whatever they together "gained."¹³⁹ This said, very quickly, Philip is described as having broken his oath by siding with the Lombards during a conflict in Messina, during which the *Itinerarium* suggests he "was more ready to assist the Lombards than the forces of the king of England," with whom "he had previously bound himself to ... by oath."¹⁴⁰ Additionally, it is because of this initial oath that Philip's departure from crusade is deemed particularly injurious to his moral character.

¹³⁷ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 187. Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 371.

¹³⁸ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 187, 193. Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 371, 383.

¹³⁹ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 35. Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 151.

¹⁴⁰ Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 161.

Philip's departure from crusade is depicted in both of these crusading narratives as a violation of his oath to his people, to Richard, and, perhaps most importantly to God. Both the *Estoire* and the *Itinerarium* suggest that the French crusaders were "filled with anger" and "would have renounced their obedience to him," both arguing that by abandoning his crusade, Philip was betraying the trust of the people he'd sworn to lead.¹⁴¹ Further, because of Philip's previous violations of their original oath, Richard is said to have "demanded" Philip vow to respect the borders of Richard's land and the people within them, distrustful of Philip's intentions of returning home early.¹⁴² This secondary oath to Richard would also be broken, and not only does the betrayal serve to diminish Philip's integrity in the crusade narratives, but it also shakes that of Richard, as evaluated in greater detail above. It is a combination of these factors as well as Philip's disloyalty to the supposed will of God to see the crusade through to the end, that show how the authors of these crusade narratives expressed the need to diminish the French king in order to uplift the English monarchy.

One way in which this is asserted is through the contrasting depictions of Philip's and Richard's favor in the eyes of God. The *Estoire* states that, as soon as Philip abandoned the crusade, "on leaving," the French king "received more curses than blessings" and was not able to support his men without the, perhaps exaggerated,

¹⁴¹ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 104. Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 224.

¹⁴² Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 105. Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 224-225.

financial generosity of Richard.¹⁴³ The *Itinerarium* concurs, also suggesting that Richard lent Philip 5,000 marks of silver to pay and appease his men.¹⁴⁴ This misfortune, a result of Saladin abandoning the hostages on whom Philip was depending for payment, could be read as evidence that Philip had fallen from the favor of God with Ambroise stating that Saladin did not fulfill his obligation “because God did not wish it.”¹⁴⁵ Richard, on the other hand, is seen to have God’s favor throughout the crusade itself. By the end of the crusade, and through the duration of Richard’s imprisonment, Ambroise argues that Richard had suffered all he had in the name of God, and that the weight of his suffering was more than any saint had endured.¹⁴⁶ He goes on to say that this suffering is indicative of the persistence Richard had to fulfill his obligation and vow to God. Therefore, he would be justly rewarded: “that he who labors in [God’s] service will again receive his portion.”¹⁴⁷ If read politically, this line suggests that Richard’s claim to his lands and people were his by divine right and favor, both of which Philip, in leaving crusade, had given up for earthly possessions.

What is interesting about the *Itinerarium*, is that the author chooses to emphasize not only Richard’s duty to God, but his role in being an active leader for his people. The *Itinerarium* states, in its postscript, that Richard deserves the title of a great leader

¹⁴³ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 105.

¹⁴⁴ Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 225-226.

¹⁴⁵ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 106.

¹⁴⁶ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 193.

¹⁴⁷ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 193.

because he “was active in arms,” on which Gillingham would agree, because he “showed foresight” in the advice he gave to his men and others, and because he was “effective with words.”¹⁴⁸ Only after listing these three attributes, “seldom found together in one person,” does the author state that Richard’s kingship was effective also because of his respect for clerical officials and the work he did upon his return home to act as “an anchor of the people.”¹⁴⁹ This section of the *Itinerarium* then goes on to describe the various economic actions taken by Richard upon his return home, to ensure uniform prices of grain, and some degree of quality control for market goods such as fabrics. Deviations from Ambroise’s text such as these, and the further judicial reforms and phallophobic investments into the Church, are starkly different in their language from the rest of the *Itinerarium*, which provides details and specific events that bolster Richard’s character. In this way, this last section of the *Itinerarium* reflects the structure of a guidebook on kingship, concerned more with the roles and responsibilities of a king, which prove that Richard, and by extension the Angevin line, deserves to rule in England. If published in the early thirteenth century, after Richard’s death, this assertion could prove influential to the understanding of the *Itinerarium* as a politically-charged text, particularly in comparison to Ambroise and the *Estoire*.

There is a consensus among historians of the crusading movement and the Third Crusade, in particular, that Richard I owes his current popularity and image to the

¹⁴⁸ Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 386.

¹⁴⁹ Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, 386-387.

crusading narratives of the twelfth century, namely the *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte* and the later published *Itinerarium Peregrinorum*. Both of these texts have been studied and researched in terms of defining who wrote them, when they were written, and why. Coming out of these studies, in addition to the comparison of the fictionalized literature of the nineteenth century, such as the works of Sir Walter Scott, more recent studies have shown that the details in the crusading texts may have more of a purpose than recording the events and taking down history for future reference.¹⁵⁰ By examining these two crusading narratives both as politically-charged documents and as cultural objects that reflect the values of the noble class for which they were written, this thesis will hopefully open the doors to further research on the failure of Richard in capturing Jerusalem and help suggest that the literature of the Third Crusade played an important role in shaping ideals of kingship in the early thirteenth century and on the eve of the Fourth Crusade. The third chapter of this thesis will look at these sources through the lens of the chroniclers' intended audience and their interpretations of literature and the world around them. Understanding the political tensions that strained Western Europe at the time these sources were written, as well as whom they were intended to reach, helps us to appreciate how chroniclers were writing with the hope of rehabilitating the image of Richard and strengthening Angevin legitimacy.

2.4 Conclusion

¹⁵⁰ Jonathan Phillips, *The Crusades, 1095-1204* (Abingdon, NY: Routledge Press, 2014), 7.

This chapter argues that the authors of the *Itinerarium* and the *Estoire* were, in part, writing about the ideals of the past to influence the perceptions of the future. Given the time periods in which they were writing and the audience they were writing to, both authors would have been aware of earlier chronicles of the First Crusade and the disastrous impacts of the Second. Because of this, the texts created by de Templo and Ambroise speak to larger aspects of narrative literature. Among these aspects are motivating future expeditions East and providing an image of an ideal crusader and crusader king. In their discussions of sin on crusade and their depictions of Richard, these Third Crusade chronicles do both.

A way to argue this point further, although outside of the scope of this thesis, would be to identify and analyze any proof of noble reactions to these texts. Interest in the literacy of knights is currently growing. Recently, scholars such as Martin Aurell, have reexamined how members of society, including the laity and the knightly class, would interact with literature.¹⁵¹ This discussion prompts another way to view chronicles of the Third Crusade as a guidebook for future combatants and pilgrims.

This chapter argues that the existence of noble ideals of kingship in Third Crusade chronicles were essential to the justification of the failure of the Third Crusade. This suggests that the chroniclers were aware of the importance of maintaining the king's relationships with the baronage and the Church over time, as defined in chapter one. Chapter three will look exclusively at the *Estoire* to argue that the structure of the poem

¹⁵¹ See Aurell, *The Lettered Knight*, and Brian Stock, *The Implication of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).

differentiates it from other crusade narratives and that it introduced Richard's character to more popularized adaptations. By doing so, Ambroise sought to legitimize Angevin authority in the medieval period, while solidifying it in future perceptions of England's larger history.

CHAPTER THREE

THE *ESTOIRE DE LA GUERRE SAINTE* AND THE FOUR NAREMES OF THE ROMANTIC EPIC

The following chapter will examine one of the chronicles of the Third Crusade, the *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte*, for clues of intended audience. It argues that the text's author, Ambroise, merged the structures of the medieval romance epic and formal crusade narrative to express political ideas to a wider audience of nobles in a time of uncertainty. This argument is bolstered by Richard de Templo's later inclusion of the text in his compilation of the *Itinerarium*. Therefore, this chapter argues that it was partly turmoil in the Angevin West that motivated crusade authors to write the narrative. Looking at the *Estoire* in this way, this chapter will tie the Third Crusade back into the larger tapestry of medieval Europe, by exploring what the texts imply about the relationships between the growing powers of the West and the personalities that represented them. Therefore, viewed within a wider historical context, this chapter proves that crusade texts are important sources for those seeking to understand turbulent moments of political change in the medieval period.¹⁵²

3.1 Structure and Language as Clues of Intended Audience

It has been argued that Ambroise's word choice and language use provide insight into the audience he was attempting to reach.¹⁵³ While many of the traditional narratives

¹⁵² Lapina, "Crusader Chronicles," 11, 13, 17, 20, 21-22.

¹⁵³ Ailes, "Ambroise's *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte*," 1-2.

from this time are written in Latin, Ambroise chose to write in the vernacular language of Old French, which would have been common knowledge for the nobility in Normandy, where the author was from.¹⁵⁴ Due to this, Ailes's argument that the *Estoire* is somewhat of a halfway point between a text made for entertainment and one sought to provide an insightful history of events holds even more weight.¹⁵⁵ Rather than focusing on the language or imagery of the *Estoire*, this chapter dissects the poem for its unique structure. Written in verse, rather than prose, the *Estoire* is unique among texts of Third Crusade.

Ambroise's use of verse, not only stirs questions of intended audience, but of how that audience interacted with the text. Ailes does not believe that the linguistic or the structural modifications suggest that the *Estoire* was meant to be recited orally. Instead, she argues that Ambroise only sought to use the structures known to him to relay information in an entertaining and effective way.¹⁵⁶ In other words, Ailes suggests that the genre of a chronicle maintains some of the characteristics of an epic or romance, but she believes them to be simply stylistic devices. They do not, she argues, necessarily suggest that the text was meant to be read aloud.¹⁵⁷ While this could be true, it is an argument of practice versus intent.

Ambroise frequently implies that whoever is interacting with the text would be listening to it. "Listen and pay attention," he states at a point in which he diverges from

¹⁵⁴ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 2.

¹⁵⁵ Ailes, "Ambroise's *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte*," 1-2.

¹⁵⁶ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 16.

¹⁵⁷ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 21.

the main story to speak about the Siege of Acre up to the arrival of Philip and Richard: “Now you will hear what men took part in and how bold the undertaking.”¹⁵⁸ Ambroise does two things with this quote. First, he acknowledges the reader. He makes an illusion to them listening as he recounts a story for them. Second, he implies that the stories that follow are important for the audience to pay close attention to because they provide larger instructions for how crusaders are meant to act. Ambroise frequently employs this attention-grabbing method throughout his text. He does so once more when referring to a battle he believes was caused by the treachery of Philip: “Listen and hear about the great trouble that came because of the slaughter... that brought sorrow to the French.”¹⁵⁹ There are also additional occurrences when he directly addresses the audience, calling them “my lords.”¹⁶⁰

Although it cannot be truly proven whether or not the *Estoire* was ever read publicly for entertainment, this analysis calls into question the difference between public and private consumption of literature in the medieval period. As Brian Stock argues, sources like the *Estoire* often had three circles of “textual communities,” the individual, the family, and larger interactions with society.¹⁶¹ When these communities interacted with one another, information was spread through the larger society. This could occur both through formal recitation of text, which Ailes discounts in the case of the *Estoire*,

¹⁵⁸ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 66.

¹⁵⁹ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 76.

¹⁶⁰ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 130, 137.

¹⁶¹ Stock, *The Implication of Literacy*, 89.

and through informal conversation, publicly or privately.¹⁶² In other words, although Ambroise's *Estoire* may not have been performed for the purposes of entertainment, those who came across the text would certainly have discussed its contents with members of their various textual communities. This is particularly true given that de Templo's inclusion of the text in the *Itinerarium* suggests a continued knowledge of its contents.

In any case, the *Estoire*'s use of language is dynamic and strives to keep the reader entertained. It also leaves behind clues that the intended audience was members of society who had some degree of knowledge concerning the noble standards of warfare. One example of this can be found in Ambroise's depiction of one of the most damaging events in Richard's time as king: the massacre of around two thousand Muslim noncombatants outside of Acre.¹⁶³ Ambroise strictly explains this episode in terms of oath making and breaking. He blames Saladin for not upholding his end of a contract proposed in the weeks prior, which angered Richard.¹⁶⁴ In justifying Richard's anger, and his extreme reaction, Ambroise quickly glosses over any wrongdoing, and at the end of the stanza writes, "Thanks be to God the Creator."¹⁶⁵ In phrasing Richard's slaughter of Muslim noncombatants in this way, Ambroise signals his intended audience's

¹⁶² Stock, *The Implication of Literacy*, 89, 91.

¹⁶³ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 107-108. For more information about the extensive historiography surrounding Richard's stained reputation after this incident, see Stephen J. Spencer, 'Like a Raging Lion': Richard the Lionheart's Anger during the Third Crusade in Medieval and Modern Historiography," 132, no. 556, *The English Historical Review* (2017): 495-532.

¹⁶⁴ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 108.

¹⁶⁵ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 108.

understanding of warfare in the medieval period. He cannot fully disguise the wrongdoing, because his reader or listener would have already been aware that Richard's actions lay outside of the expectations for a noble king. Thus, to increase credibility, it was essential for Ambroise to choose his words carefully in the description of this episode.

Another indicator of Ambroise's audience is the intentional use of descriptive language and literary devices, which would have been familiar to the medieval nobility. Ailes highlights Ambroise's description of "arrows sticking out" of bodies like "prickles of a hedgehog," drawing a parallel to the "hyperbolic" structure of the epic style, which would have been familiar to him and the noble class.¹⁶⁶ One of the best examples of Ambroise's mastery of literary or stylistic devices is what Ailes identifies as direct speech, wherein an author uses direct quotations instead of paraphrased lines to outline a conversation or monologue.¹⁶⁷ To the noble class, the usage of Old French and the implementation of powerful imagery to describe battles and the experiences of those on crusade would have been reminiscent of knights and other members of the lower nobility. In shaping his text this way, Ambroise makes the story of the crusade more accessible to those in the West.

¹⁶⁶ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 13. See also Bull, *Eyewitness and Crusade Narrative Perception and Narration in Accounts of the Second, Third and Fourth Crusades* (Philadelphia, PA: Boydell Press, 2018), 227-228.

¹⁶⁷ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 21.

There are several instances where it is clear that Ambroise exaggerates Richard's character to prove a point, to make a claim about kingship, or to keep the reader invested in the outcome of the Third Crusade. For example, there is a the scene in which a priest in Richard's party speaks with the discouraged king, who has just learned about the alliance made between John, his own brother, and Philip Augustus, after the latter's return home.¹⁶⁸ Across forty lines, the author begins each stanza with "King, remember..." or simply, "Remember..." and describes a feat of Richard on crusade, ranging from favors from God himself to the love and trust Richard's men have in him.¹⁶⁹ Ailes argues that dramatizations of the text would have been apparent to people reading the *Estoire* in the time it was written. This said, as time went on, the nuance of the text would be lost in favor of crafting idealized images of Richard the Lionheart.¹⁷⁰ Staunton agrees with this perspective and suggests that the *Estoire* and the *Itinerarium* contain a mixture of fact and fiction. In order to understand how the epic image of Richard took shape in scholarship and popular culture, both of these are essential.¹⁷¹

As can be seen in the language used to describe the events of the Third Crusade, Ambroise once more is able to expertly combine the genres of traditional narrative chronicle and epic vernacular poetry. In this way, he would have reached both learned, literary audiences, as well as less educated lower nobility and knights. The *Estoire*

¹⁶⁸ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 158-163.

¹⁶⁹ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 160.

¹⁷⁰ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 60.

¹⁷¹ Staunton, *The Historians of Angevin England*, 129.

provides not only a guide for knights on crusade and chivalric heroes to look up to, but it also makes political arguments about the Third Crusade's failures. In this way, Ambroise was already writing with the intention of shaping thoughts and feelings about the crusade itself, and Richard as an ideal crusader king.¹⁷² The next section will explore this text through the lens of political tensions in the Angevin Empire and how chroniclers hoped images of Richard as an ideal crusader king would ease said tensions.

3.2 The *Estoire* in Wider Literary Context

French historian, Marianne Ailes, argues that Ambroise's manipulation of genre was intentional; however, historians have largely misunderstood its importance.¹⁷³ She argues that scholarship surrounding the *Estoire* overwrites the connection it bares with *chansons de geste*, abandoning the knowledge that can be gained by looking at the text as a learned narrative.¹⁷⁴ In her study, Ailes compares the *Estoire* to a vernacular narrative chronicle written in the 1170s by Jordan Fantosme, clerk to the Bishop of Winchester.¹⁷⁵ Both of these sources differ from previous literary models written in the vernacular as they contain original material rather than serving as translations of Latin texts for the lay

¹⁷² For more information on how the image of Richard the Lionheart transferred from historical scholarship to popular culture, see Broughton, *The Legends of King Richard I Coeur de Lion: A Study of Sources and Variations to the Year 1600*, Netherlands: Mouton: Mouton & Co., 1966.

¹⁷³ Ailes, "Ambroise's *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte* and the Development of a Genre," 3.

¹⁷⁴ This, Ailes argues is due to the text's primary translator, Gaston Paris, and his incorrect assumption that Ambroise was a *jongleur*, or an entertainer. Ailes, "Ambroise's *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte* and the Development of a Genre," 3.

¹⁷⁵ Ailes, "Ambroise's *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte* and the Development of a Genre," 3, 6, 16.

population.¹⁷⁶ They differ from each other, Ailes suggests, because Fantosome's work draws from *chansons de geste* more directly, whereas Ambroise demonstrates a more developed understanding of genre, language, and structure. Therefore, Ambroise's *Estoire*, Ailes argues, has more in common with Latin narrative chronicles than romantic literature.

In making this argument, however, Ailes diminishes the importance of Ambroise's text as a bridge between genres, which allowed the nobility to understand the Third Crusade. Alternatively, this chapter argues that the *Estoire*'s importance as a primary-source hinges on its ability to reach a vast audience of learned individuals and lay nobility alike. This chapter argues that the possibility that the *Estoire* was a source for the entertainment of the nobility does not weaken its importance as a primary source document. As earlier chapters have shown, the text is still able to provide detail about the society within which it was constructed, and de Templo still found the contents of the *Estoire* meaningful enough to pull from them for his own work. This chapter argues that the structure of the *Estoire* is a bridge between popular and scholarly literature of the twelfth century, and that the dramatizations and additions are important in understanding why this bridge was necessary.

Michael Staunton, author of *The Historians of Angevin England*, agrees with this perspective and is of the opinion that the *Estoire* and the *Itinerarium* both stand as a mixture of fact and fiction, both of which are essential to understanding how the "legend

¹⁷⁶ Ailes, "Ambroise's *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte* and the Development of a Genre," 1.

of Richard I” took shape in more scholarly debates and circles.¹⁷⁷ Staunton goes on to agree with the argument of Mulher, Nicholson, and Ailes that Richard de Templo, as compiler of the *Itinerarium*, was surely inspired by the *Estoire*.¹⁷⁸ In Staunton’s opinion, the primary question should not be examining if the compiler of the *Itinerarium* borrowed from the *Estoire* at all, but rather to explore if he, like Ambroise, was pulling from an established literary tradition of classical heroes in contemporary romantic literature.¹⁷⁹

This chapter will expand upon the idea of Ambroise as a manipulator of text by understanding exactly how Ambroise combined the popular genre of the vernacular romance epic and that of Latin narrative chronicles. To do so, it will examine the four *narreme* structure of vernacular epic poetry, as put forth by literary historian Eugene Dorfman to understand how the structure of Ambroise’s narrative history fits into the wider scope of popularized literature and epic poetry of the time.¹⁸⁰ Then, it will consider how the language utilized by Ambroise signals his appeal to a broader audience beyond the literate population. The chapter will then turn to understanding tensions faced by the Angevin kings in the time the *Estoire* was first written and when it was later drawn upon for the compilation of sources in the *Itinerarium*. Given the historical tensions between

¹⁷⁷ Michael Staunton, *The Historians of Angevin England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 129.

¹⁷⁸ Staunton, *The Historians of Angevin England*, 129.

¹⁷⁹ Staunton, *The Historians of Angevin England*, 148.

¹⁸⁰ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 2.

the kings of England and the king of France in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, chroniclers of the Third Crusade were writing with the intention of asserting Angevin legitimacy in their romanization of Richard the Lionheart's crusade.

3.3 The Four *Narreme* Structure of the Medieval Romance Epic

In his 1969 literary analysis of romantic literature, Eugene Dorfman proposes that vernacular epic poems in French, such as the *chanson de Roland* and the *chansons de geste* of the twelfth century, all unfolded in a similar pattern. He maps the throughlines of each text's structure and found four *narremes* or central incidents which connect to tell a larger narrative story: The family or lovers quarrel, the insult, the act of treachery or prowess, and the resolution as punishment or reward.¹⁸¹ These *narremes* were essential to the substructure of each medieval narrative and, according to Dorfman, flowed from one to the next in a logical order through a system of cause and effect.¹⁸² While this paper does not suggest that Ambroise had a formal knowledge of this structure, it is interesting to see how his description of events on crusade connects to this framework. The elements are present, even if they do not necessarily follow the same exact pattern Dorfman describes. Thus, it can be argued that Ambroise was, as Ailes argues, attempting to combine two genres, one formal as a chronicle of crusade, and the other, vernacular.

Ailes has argued that Ambroise combined the genres of epic poetry and narrative chronicle expertly, and that too much emphasis has been placed on examining the

¹⁸¹ Eugene Dorfman, *The Narreme in the Medieval Romance Epic: An Introduction to Narrative Structures*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969, 5-6.

¹⁸² Dorfman, *The Narreme in the Medieval Romance Epic*, 7-8.

theatrical and fictionalized elements of the *Estoire*. While this may be true, this chapter argues, in line with Wolf, that Ambroise's expertise cannot fully be understood without recognizing his successful combination of fact and fiction. Utilizing Dorfman's four *narreme* framework reveals that sections of the *Estoire* were expertly pieced together to flow like familiarized romantic literature. If this is true, it might be the case that the *Estoire* was performed vocally. As Brian Stock argues, this would give the text yet another less formal platform to spread throughout the lower nobility and the baronage.¹⁸³ Not only would the nobility potentially have the poem formally recited to them, but it would be further dispersed through vocal recitation and informal conversation rather than a true reading of the text.¹⁸⁴ Given his structure and combination of epic vernacular poetry and formal crusade chronicle, Ambroise likely knew of this secondary, informal transfer of information. In fact, he may have even intended it.

The *Estoire* tracks the progress of the crusade as it follows Richard I, and, at times, his crusade rival Philip Augustus. In Ailes's translation of the poem, geographic locations and themes are broken into sections, each of which has a clear beginning, middle, and end. In this way, the sections are episodic, and when read with Dorfman's theory in mind, they show distinct elements of Dorfman's four *narreme* structure. One of the best examples of these episodes takes place in Messina, where Ambroise opens the scene with a reference to the *Chanson d'Aspremont* to explain the location of the city to

¹⁸³ Stock, *The Implication of Literacy*, 91, 114-115.

¹⁸⁴ Stock, *The Implication of Literacy*, 90-91.

his readers.¹⁸⁵ After orienting the reader, Ambroise continued with the first of Dorfman's *narremes*: the family quarrel. The king of Messina at the time of Richard and Philip's arrival was a man called Tancred. He came to power after the death of William II, who was married to Richard's own sister, Joanna.¹⁸⁶ After the death of William, Tancred did not pay Joanna's dowry, which Ambroise stated Richard was determined to restore.¹⁸⁷ This initial familial quarrel is followed quickly by two motivating insults, the first of which is connected to wider ideas of nobility in the twelfth century. When dictating Richard's arrival to the Sicilian city, Ambroise employed the proverb "I see you, so I regard you," to suggest that a noble's entrance into a city should be grand for the respect of those living there.¹⁸⁸ Richard's entrance, as he went on to describe, was full of fanfare and celebration. "Never in my life did I see such a fleet," Ambroise wrote, "There were people of all sorts, with tents and pavilions and banners set up along the shore."¹⁸⁹ On the other hand, Philip, who had arrived in the Sicilian city first had taken a back route. Ambroise's depiction of his arrival is overwhelmingly negative and an insult to nobility. "My lords," he wrote, "it is custom and tradition that when princes of high degree, as high as the king of France... should enter a city or a town or a land, such as Sicily, then

¹⁸⁵ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 37.

¹⁸⁶ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 37n43.

¹⁸⁷ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 37.

¹⁸⁸ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 38.

¹⁸⁹ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 38.

he should come as a great lord.”¹⁹⁰ He proceeded to write, “The king of France was the first to arrive at Messina, where many people gathered to see him. But they did not see his face, for he had only one ship ... to avoid such a crowd he disembarked at the palace itself.”¹⁹¹ This action, in Ambroise’s opinion, insulted the city as well as Richard as fellow nobility.¹⁹²

The second insult occurs during what most narrative chronicles describe as the bread incident. Here, a woman, who Ambroise names “Ame,” refused to sell bread to one of Richard’s men at a “fair price.”¹⁹³ This action is particularly insulting to Ambroise because of his loyalty to Richard and his men and his disdain for the Lombards with whom he associates Ame.¹⁹⁴ As the conflict in the market devolves into violence, Ambroise states that Richard was notified and jumped into action to aid his people. Fulfilling the *narreme* of the act of prowess, Richard is depicted as a valiant knight, who sends the Lombards running as he pursues them.¹⁹⁵ Ambroise’s depiction of the scrimmage is descriptive as he showed the English, Angevins, the men of Poitou and the

¹⁹⁰ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 38.

¹⁹¹ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 38.

¹⁹² Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 38.

¹⁹³ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 39.

¹⁹⁴ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 39n55, 40, 41.

¹⁹⁵ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 41.

Normans all as powerful fighters, while the French, unmotivated by their own king, were “relaxing at their leisure.”¹⁹⁶

Here, Richard’s act of prowess is set against the foil of Philip’s act of treachery— a characteristic often applied to him throughout the text. After being offended when Richard’s banners are hung around the city after Richard and his men successfully took the city, he plotted to ruin Richard’s attempts to collect his sister’s dowry as a part of his reward. This *narreme* connects the wider substructure of this episode together, tying the familial quarrel to the insults and the battle against the Lombards. Philip spoke privately with Tancred, telling him that he should not give Richard the dowry and instead that he “do what he, Philip, wanted.”¹⁹⁷ This act of “villainy,” as Ambroise writes, caused significant stress on the crusader army and their cause, delaying their journey and cutting off their food supply when yet another conflict ensues due to Philip’s dishonesty. This accusation is somewhat ironic and could be shifting the blame for the journey’s delays, caused in part by Richard, who spent extra time in Messina building a castle to purposefully provoke the Grifons.¹⁹⁸ In the end, Richard is able to secure both his sister and her dowry, and returns to the people of Messina all they had lost.¹⁹⁹ Ambroise

¹⁹⁶ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 41.

¹⁹⁷ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 44.

¹⁹⁸ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 44.

¹⁹⁹ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 45-46.

concludes this episode stating: “And so Messina, where so many ships were seen to gather has reason to boast that never has the sun risen over such a rich fleet.”²⁰⁰

Ambroise opens the following episode with a boat on rough sea. The familial quarrel occurs when the ship carrying both Joanna, Richard’s sister, and his betrothed, Berengaria of Navarre, lands on Cyprus, ruled then by the self-proclaimed Byzantine emperor, Isaac Ducas Comnenus.²⁰¹ Ambroise provides a vivid description of Isaac, presumably in an effort to justify Richard’s concern for his sister and Berengaria, and to make another delay of the crusade somewhat justifiable. He suggests that Isaac is a friend of the Muslim leader, Saladin, and that the two had drunk each other’s blood to prove their alliance. Ambroise also implies that he had purposefully wrecked three of Richard’s ships.²⁰² After Isaac acts with “treachery,” taking Richard’s men’s weaponry and guaranteeing them safe passage before attacking them brutally, Richard lands on the island. Upon hearing and seeing the “trials of his men,” and the “dromond in which his sister was awaiting him in terror,” Richard fulfils another act of prowess, and begins to chase Isaac and his men inland.²⁰³

After a series of conflicts, Richard is successful in capturing the island and commits an act of treachery himself. Showing Ambroise’s wish to appeal to a wider audience through entertainment, the author relays a scene wherein Isaac pleads for

²⁰⁰ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 48.

²⁰¹ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 49n105, 50-51.

²⁰² Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 50-51.

²⁰³ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 51.

forgiveness. The discouraged emperor asks only not to be put in iron chains to avoid shame in front of his daughter and his people: Richard agrees and has chains of silver made instead.²⁰⁴ In the end, Richard reaps the rewards, gaining both his sister and betrothed back as well as taking over territory on Cyprus.²⁰⁵ Although this episode seems outrageous, the audience of the *Estoire* would have been aware of exaggerations and fictionalized elements in the text, as seen by Ailes's analysis of Ambroise's exaggerated language and manipulated storytelling.²⁰⁶

In dissecting these episodes and comparing them to the theory of the medieval narrative proposed by Dorfman much about Ambroise's intentions in writing the *Estoire* becomes clearer. The structure of the more traditional Latin chronicle exists as the *Estoire* provides a detailed itinerary of events which follows the story of the Third Crusade in a somewhat chronological manner. There are several occurrences where Ambroise made references to himself physically being present and witnessing the events as they unfold.²⁰⁷ Additionally, he remains dedicated to justifying the idea of crusading as

²⁰⁴ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 60.

²⁰⁵ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 60.

²⁰⁶ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 20.

²⁰⁷ Eyewitness testimony was a large aspect of medieval narrative chronicle culture. See Bull, *Eyewitness and Crusade Narrative Perception and Narration in Accounts of the Second, Third and Fourth Crusades*. Chris Given-Wilson has proposed that there were two elements to eyewitness credibility in the genre of narrative chronicle: accuracy, referring to precision and truthfulness, and trustworthiness, referring to plausibility of hearing about or seeing an event occur. Chris Given-Wilson, *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England* (New York, NY: Hambledon, 2004), 2-6, 6-10.

a positive endeavor, even in the light of its eventual failure, shifting blame off of Richard and understanding events through the “will of God.”²⁰⁸

In these ways, Ambroise’s text resembles that of a Latin narrative chronicle. At the same time, he also appeals to wider audiences with the method he chooses for his storytelling. He sticks close to the structure of, and even makes references to, popular stories that would have been familiar to lower nobility and the baronage. In appealing to these audiences in this way, the long form story was made more accessible to them, allowing them to connect to the stories they were reading, or hearing, more effectively. Therefore, in understanding how Ambroise utilized the structure of more popular vernacular genres, such as the *chansons de geste*, it is evident that he was attempting to appeal to a wider audience.

3.4 The *Estoire* in Historical Context

The authors writing and compiling these texts were certainly aware of the longevity their compositions would have. As Marianne Ailes argues in the case of Ambroise, these writers were aware of previous texts in the narrative genre and worked off those models.²⁰⁹ Given the references to narrative sources and romantic literature detailing the progression of the First Crusade, Ambroise showed his awareness that his poem would be returned to in later years. Therefore, he would have been keenly intentional about the way in which he characterized the Angevin king. In this way,

²⁰⁸ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 32.

²⁰⁹ Ailes, “Ambroise’s *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte* and the Development of a Genre,” 6.

Ambroise shaped contemporary thoughts of Richard as a valiant knight and attempted to inform future perceptions of the heroic English king.

When Richard de Templo included portions of the *Estoire* in his compilation of the *Itinerarium* in the 1220s, he was performing a similar task. With the rising power of the Kingdom of France, proven by Philip's seizure of Angevin territories in the years of John's reign, there was a distinct need to legitimize the English throne in returning to the valiant image of Richard proposed in the *Estoire*.²¹⁰ Both Ambroise and de Templo were perceptive to how future generations would interact with these texts and recognized that their description of Richard would have implications on how historians remembered the king himself and the institution of English kingship.

In other words, these texts do not exist in a crusade vacuum but, rather, are meant to interact with the larger scope of medieval sources pertaining to Western European history. Analyzing sources like the *Estoire* and the *Itinerarium* as texts that were written in the past for the value of the future is one way to resituate the history of the Third Crusade into the wider history of medieval Europe. Despite the overwhelming scholarly focus on the validity of Richard's quality of kingship, the reality of Richard's character was only a marginal concern for chroniclers. Rather, they were interested in crafting a heroic legend whose image would outlive them. This image was intended to do several things, such as encouraging future crusades, justifying the failure of the Third Crusade, and bolstering the English throne as French power grew. Looking at the repetitive use of

²¹⁰ Norgate, *England Under the Angevin Kings*, 390, 402, 428-429. Norgate, *John Lackland*, 292.

the image of Richard the Lionheart in national lore, fictional legends, and historical scholarship, it is clear that the tactics of chroniclers like Ambroise were successful.

3.4 Conclusion

Chronicle sources as a genre are useful tools for historians in that they provide a timeline of the events they discuss. This chapter argues that chronicles can also be utilized as cultural documents which leave behind clues concerning contemporary societal values and political tensions. The *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte* is a key source for both understanding the values of kingship in medieval society and why those values were important to detail in the political climate of the Angevin Empire. Written in the years between Richard's costly release from German captivity and his death in 1199, Ambroise structured his poem to reach wider textual communities including both the growing literate class of nobility and the Church. Created after the disastrous reign of John, Richard de Templo's *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*'s use of the *Estoire* suggests that their sources were read and returned to in times of political struggle with the intension of rehabilitating Angevin kingship against the growing power of the French king.

CONCLUSION

Concluding the first chapter to his widely accepted biography of Richard, John Gillingham states: “Inevitably only the opinions of those who wrote them down are in some measure accessible to us. Often, they were trying to shape opinion rather than merely reflect it.”²¹¹ Since the 1980s, scholars have utilized narrative chronicles of the Crusades to detail and determine what occurred enroute to Jerusalem, and also to explore the factors that motivated people to join the cause.²¹² Christoph Maier’s analysis of the historiography of the crusade movement defines the many approaches scholars have taken to understand the origins, outlines, and impacts of the crusade movement.²¹³ He argues that work of historians hoping to contextualize these aspects of the crusades with “specialist approaches” have been undervalued due to the exaggerated debates of more prominent argumentative camps.²¹⁴

This thesis argues that looking at crusade texts in specialized ways opens up new opportunities for engagement. Additionally, in analyzing these sources within the historical framework proposed by Kenneth Baxter Wolf, social values of the time period

²¹¹ John Gillingham, *Richard I*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 14.

²¹² See, for example, Natasha Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative* (Suffolk, England: Boydell Press, 2017). Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009). Jay Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven: The First Crusade and the Quest for Apocalypse* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2011). Nicholas Paul, *To Follow in Their Footsteps* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017) and Phillips, *The Crusades, 1095-1204* (Oxfordshire: Routledge Press, 2014).

²¹³ Christoph Maier, “How Modern Are Modern Crusade Studies?” *Speculum* 99, no. 4 (2024): 1220.

²¹⁴ Maier, “How Modern Are Modern Crusade Studies?,” 1222-1223.

related to kingship, chivalry, and piety become clear.²¹⁵ This said, historians have dismissed the importance of Third Crusade sources in their overarching analyses of medieval Europe. Only recently has attention turned to understanding what implications the expedition had on Western politics, economy, and culture.²¹⁶

Narrative chronicles are key sources for understanding the importance of the Third Crusade, and of Richard's idealized image over time. They allow historians to piece together a timeline and explain how the expeditions unfolded. Additionally, as this thesis argues, they also can act as important cultural relics that inform about aspects of medieval society such as kingship. Building on the works of John Gillingham and Marianne Ailes, this thesis argues that the chronicles of the Third Crusade, and the idealization of Richard the Lionheart can be understood as an attempt to shape public opinion on concepts of chivalry, knighthood, and kingship, both in the time period they were written in and for future generations.²¹⁷ When viewed in this way, Ambroise's *Estoire de la Guerre Sainte*, while entertaining, is a primarily political text due to how it reads in response to shifting powers in Western Europe.

What is known about the effectiveness of Richard's kingship is from what others have written about him. Given the political tensions between the emerging powers of Western Europe, their writings are filled with overtly opinionated language. These

²¹⁵ Wolf, *Making History*, 1-3.

²¹⁶ Hosler, "Introduction," 2-3, 8.

²¹⁷ Ailes, *History of the Holy War*, 5. Gillingham, *Richard I*, 14.

opinions often tell historians more about the writer themselves than Richard. Therefore, while scholars studying the image of Richard examine crusade chronicles for evidence for and against his quality of kingship, this thesis argues that the next question asked of these texts should be why Richard was chosen to bolster English legitimacy. This question is important because it speaks to the broader issues of the mythological idolization for historical figures, and the specific argument that Richard was hardly English at all.²¹⁸

The debate concerning the classification of Angevin territories as an empire is central to this thesis, as the political climate in the West informed the decisions Richard made in the East.²¹⁹ Rooted in deep familial tensions, the fragility of Richard's hold on his land is exemplified in Ambroise's discussion of "A Dilemma for King Richard."²²⁰ Further, de Templo's repurposing of the *Estoire* suggests a continued interest in positive images of the English king. This thesis proposes that this interest was motivated by the shifting nature of European politics and the decline of the Angevin Empire in the early 1200s.

Treatments of the Siege of Acre praise the cooperation of crusader armies with their kings. This thesis utilizes the descriptions of the siege to decipher how chroniclers distinguish Richard from Philip. Appealing to the noble values of kingship defined in chapter one, chapter two argues that both Ambroise and de Templo were aware of the

²¹⁸ Turner and Heiser, *The Reign of Richard Lionheart*, 75. Gillingham, Richard I, 136.

²¹⁹ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 162.

²²⁰ Ailes, *The History of the Holy War*, 160-162.

impacts crusade chronicles had on the knightly class. Intent on avoiding the abysmal reaction to the Second Crusade, their chroniclers detailed how the Third Crusade made important progress for Western Christendom. Additionally, they detail how more progress might have been made if it were not for Philip's departure and betrayal, or the overarching effects of crusader sins. In staging the narrative in this way, Ambroise and de Templo provided a story of heroic kingship and idealized Richard to do so.

Chapter three used the case study of the *Estoire's* structure to differentiate it from other sources existing at the time. Understanding the structural components of the epic narrative is important because along with Ambroise's use of the vernacular and allusions to popularized romantic stories of the period, it showcases his appeal to a wider audience than the typical learned Latin narrative. Further, the unique structure of the *Estoire* promoted its longevity as a source in crusade history. In this way, the *Estoire* is a vital source for medieval historians, both because of its detailed analysis of how kings lived up to noble standards and because of how its characterization of Richard has skewed scholarship in favor of the English king.

The image of Richard the Lionheart remains one of the most prolific idealizations of the medieval period. The valiant rulership of the English king is scattered throughout history, both in popular memory and the scholarship surrounding the history of England.²²¹ The story of Richard's time on crusade is vital to how he is remembered as a chivalric

²²¹. D'Arcens, "The Crusades and Medievalism," 250-251. Rouse, "Romance and Crusade in Late Medieval England, 218.

hero of legend.²²² However, the origins of this story, the narrative chronicles of the Third Crusade, heavily embellish its progression. Due to this, scholars have been left trying to pick apart fact from the fantastic. This thesis argues that questioning the validity of Richard's strong aptitude for kingship is only one piece of a larger puzzle. In evaluating the *Estoire de le Guerre Sainte* and the *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi* for clues about why Richard was distinguished over his peers, this thesis argues that the prolonged idealization of the English king is a side effect of the underlaying political motivations of the texts. From justification to legitimization, the chroniclers of the Third Crusade used their writings to create ripples across medieval society and for future generations to come.

²²² Broughton, *The Legends of King Richard I Coeur De Lion*, 41.

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