
Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte
Herausgegeben vom Deutschen Historischen Institut Paris
(Institut historique allemand)
Band 22/1 (1995)

DOI: 10.11588/fr.1995.1.59264

Rechtshinweis

Bitte beachten Sie, dass das Digitalisat urheberrechtlich geschützt ist. Erlaubt ist aber das Lesen, das Ausdrucken des Textes, das Herunterladen, das Speichern der Daten auf einem eigenen Datenträger soweit die vorgenannten Handlungen ausschließlich zu privaten und nicht-kommerziellen Zwecken erfolgen. Eine darüber hinausgehende unerlaubte Verwendung, Reproduktion oder Weitergabe einzelner Inhalte oder Bilder können sowohl zivil- als auch strafrechtlich verfolgt werden.

Marcus BULL, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade. The Limousin and Gascony, c. 970–c. 1130*, Oxford (Clarendon Press) 1993, XIV–328 p.

Here is a book questioning long held beliefs about what it is that motivated the earliest crusaders (those of 1096 and 1101) to make the extraordinary expenditures of time, wealth, and energy required to join those incredible expeditions to the East. It is not about the crusades themselves which figure here almost not at all but exclusively about the motivations of the participants which Marcus Bull finds to have been decisively religious in character. Earlier and still authoritative accounts of the crusades, expressing skepticism about any idealism among those campaigners, had stressed much more prosaic explanations for the willingness of people to crusade. Among the various attractions were the hope making a fortune or acquiring land (particularly applicable to younger sons of nobility having little hope of inheriting ancestral lands) and the love of adventure in foreign lands. One was left with the impression that these warriors (whom the author calls *arms-bearers* in order to include both mounted and foot soldiers, p. 17; would *men-at-arms* have been more satisfactory than this ungainly term?) were immune to the religious subtleties of papal preaching and cynically transferred their violent practices from the slaughter of their own to the killing of heathen, all the while believing themselves to be performing pious works which would be rewarded by the remission of sins and the granting of salvation.

To this Marcus Bull responds, no, the first crusaders »were not ignorant ruffians wrapped up in some barely Christianized Germanic or Gallo-Roman Urglaube, for whom support of the church was only a matter of outward form and the doctrinal content of the charters so much incomprehensible verbiage« (p. 202). He maintains that even though one cannot expect them to have been capable of the theological niceties of educated clerics, they were men firmly and sincerely committed to Christian teachings of repentance for past sins after which could come forgiveness, penance, and redemption. These men volunteered for the Holy Land campaign out of regret for earlier sinful lives and in the belief that crusading would be a penitential act (as outlined by Urban II at Clermont and later) which would aid not only themselves but also their departed ancestors.

The major part of this book is given over to sustaining this claim on the basis of a detailed and careful examination of evidence from three regions in southwestern France, the Limousin, the Bordeaux region, and Gascony. The author begins, however, with two »negative« chapters where he is concerned to rule out the possibility that lingering after effects of two earlier movements could have influenced the »popular ideology« of the First Crusade. In the first of these he rejects the argument that the Christian warrior ethic of the Peace Movement in early eleventh century Aquitaine could have played a significant role in motivating the crusaders of 1096. This mainly on the grounds that that movement had been moribund since the middle of the century. Likewise he rejects the belief that the first wave of crusaders simply applied to the Holy Land notions of Holy War developed in Spain earlier in the eleventh century by French nobles allied with the Christian rulers of Aragon and Castile in the Reconquest of Muslim held parts of the country. Here he confirms the findings of recent historians of medieval Spain to the effect that one cannot speak of a crusading mentality in northern Spain until after 1110 and then it was French warriors returning from the First Crusade who imported such concepts into the Christian-Muslim conflict.

In effect MB is contending that the Aquitanian warriors who responded to the papal appeal in 1095–96 saw the Holy Land crusade not as an altered form of older movements, but as something new. And yet, paradoxically, not new since he insists that, despite the obvious novelty of Jerusalem as the goal, crusading was an extension of the religious life for which people were prepared and to which they were accustomed by already conventional beliefs and practices. To sustain this argument MB seeks to reconstruct the religious mentality of arms-bearers by examination of the various written records available for the time – narrative sources; chronicles and hagiography, and documentary sources; monastic charters. This

examination has convinced him that monastic communities (canons and monks) played the decisive role in shaping the religious perspectives of the crusaders. That, in fact, particularly close ties linked these men to the abbeys of their regions. To begin with the latter recruited their new members mainly from the ranks of the aristocracy who often designated certain sons for the monastic life. But adult conversion brought additional members to those houses as did also reception *ad succurrendum* of the elderly prior to death. Moreover many nobles sought burial in »family« abbeys. In addition to this monastic charters show that many nobles sought to share in the spiritual benefits of monastic confraternity through pious donations of land and other wealth to their favored communities. Their association with these communities imbued these men with the elements of monastic spirituality which criticized the worldly sinfulness of their violent lives. In this context the donation of property became an act of penance and MB argues that aristocratic acceptance of monastic criticism of their worldly sinfulness predisposed members of that class to be receptive to Urban II's preaching of the crusade as a penitential act in 1096. He documents this with numerous clauses drawn from contemporary charters (179–89), which make clear that these warriors feared for the salvation of their souls (and those of their ancestors), believed in a Last Judgement and in the existence of a middle realm between Heaven and Hell (not yet called purgatory), and were persuaded that prayer and penitential acts could be efficacious in assisting the departed and in looking forward to their own lives after death.

The same monastic communities also participated in another dimension of the religious life of the aristocracy, that of pilgrimage, for some housed relics which served as the goal of penitential journeys to their shrines while others were staging areas along the roads to the great center at Santiago de Compostela in Spain. Chapter 5, *Pilgrimage and the Cult of Saints*, brings out widespread aristocratic participation in pilgrimages in eleventh century Aquitaine, thereby preparing members of that class for the crusade of 1096 itself a form of pilgrimage. The final link in the chain of MB's argument is his examination of monastic charters to see what they reveal about the actual response of local aristocracy to the call of the pope after the council of Clermont. Though the evidence is fragmentary due to archival gaps, it is convincing. One particularly striking case is that of the community of canons of Aureil in the Limousin. Independent narratives establish that its Prior, Gaucher, had close and sympathetic ties with Urban II and the charters of this new and then modest establishment reveal that between six and a dozen different men from that region left on the Jerusalem trip, altogether an exceptionally large number in comparison to the contingents revealed by the records of other houses.

In conclusion, then, men-at-arms from Gascony, the Bordelais, and the Limousin joined crusader ranks in 1096–1101 mainly because they believed it would further their chances of salvation from the eternal damnation to which their sinful lives would otherwise have condemned them. In my view the author has made a persuasive case in favor of his contention. He has based this case not on sporadic sampling from widely distant periods and places but on an exhaustive examination of the available evidence from a smaller yet still sizeable region(s) during the critical period prior to 1096 and has in the process used documents which I suspect have never before been exploited for crusade history and some of which are still unpublished. Thus his study is an example of the detailed regional monograph, in this instance applied to the crusade but distinctive in looking at the expedition through the eyes of participants prior to departure. Essential to his argument is his insistence on taking seriously the reasons given by contemporary aristocracy for making the crusade. In this respect his book adds another example to a trend of recent years of scholars making a serious effort to understand the religious motivations of medieval people even if they do not personally approve of the reasoning and behavior which led, as in this instance, to holy wars and killing on religious grounds. Earlier writers on the crusades were well aware of the statements of motivation by medieval people in the charter clauses on which MB bases his argument but they tended either

to ignore them or dismiss them as words put into the mouths of nobles by manipulative monastic scribes or to regard them as mere window dressing concealing more cynical views aiming at self aggrandisement. I suspect that such attitudes say more about the religious skepticism or indifference of modern scholars than about the beliefs of the crusaders themselves. This carefully written book is thus not only a significant addition to crusading research, it is also an important contribution to the growing body of studies in medieval popular religion, or in the ›histoire des mentalités‹.

Reading it left me with one question I would like to have posed to the author. Could their local parish priests have had any part in shaping the religious views of those Aquitanians weighing the possibility of crusading in 1096? MB gives all the credit in this regard to monastic communities and unless I missed it he passes over the parish connection without comment (esp. p. 115). But given the small number of monastic communities and their relative isolation, the parish must have been the center of the daily religious lives of most medieval people and, presumably, at least some parish priests provided instruction from the pulpit. Is it simply that almost nothing is known about the substance of parish life due to lack of parish records, whereas charters document some aspects of monastic life?

George BEECH, Kalamazoo

Margit MÜLLER, *Am Schnittpunkt von Stadt und Land. Die Benediktinerabtei St. Arnulf zu Metz im hohen und späten Mittelalter*, Trier (Trierer Historische Forschungen) 1993, 466 p. (Trierer Historische Forschungen, 21).

Exemple remarquable – disons-le d'entrée de jeu – de monographie, rigoureusement insérée dans une problématique d'ensemble, l'étude de l'abbaye bénédictine de Saint Arnould de Metz apporte, entre autres chefs d'intérêt, des éléments de réponse essentiels à deux questions posées actuellement par les historiens français et allemands: le devenir des »vieux« Ordres (l'accent mis sur les Ordres Mendicants les a éclipsés au point qu'on a pu les croire moribonds) et le poids de l'Eglise dans la vitalité urbaine, précisément dans les cités épiscopales densément investies par les établissements ecclésiastiques et leurs occupants.

Le choix de Saint-Arnould se révèle un angle d'attaque judicieux: la ville de Metz compte, en effet, plus d'établissements religieux que la métropole voisine de Trèves et cette masse n'avait permis jusqu'alors que des travaux d'ensemble même si Saint-Arnould se distingue dans l'historiographie¹ par son prestige politique, attaché à la dynastie du mytique ancêtre des Carolingiens, Arnould, et par son prestige spirituel et culturel, première abbaye touchée par la réforme de Gorze. Monographie nécessaire donc. D'autre part, la ville de Metz, bien étudiée et surtout richement dotée d'archives, pouvait constituer un des deux pôles du binôme ville / campagnes, problématique d'ensemble rajeunie² par ce travail. Pour ce faire, toutes les sources utilisables³ ont été mobilisées et systématiquement mises en forme: particulièrement suggestives, les cartes des possessions de l'abbaye différenciées selon leur mode d'accroissement (p. 242, 255, ensemble p. 284), ou les tableaux généalogiques des familles patriciennes messines (p. 419–429).

1 Excellente critique de Margit MÜLLER dans son introduction qui permet de comprendre la place de l'abbaye dans la mémoire messine.

2 Outre les secteurs d'enquête bien rodés (phénomène de centralité, relations juridiques, dépendance économique, flux migratoires etc.) l'auteur en s'intéressant à la muraille de la ville, séparation et pont tout à la fois, met en valeur le rôle de relais du bourg Saint-Arnould (jusqu'à son incorporation) entre ville et campagnes. De telles enquêtes, sur les zones intermédiaires, ne sont pas légion ...

3 Le fonds gigantesque mais surtout mal classé de Saint-Arnould conservé aux Archives Départementales de la Moselle, par exemple, n'a pu permettre que des sondages.