Princes, Patriarch, and the People: William of Tyre and Popular Legitimacy in the People’s Crusade and the Principality of Antioch, 1095-1143

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By Nicholas Thompson

**Part I: Introduction**

William of Tyre recorded a peculiar incident in his renowned late twelfth century work *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*. William records that the rise of a new patriarch of Antioch in 1136, “[Ralph of Domfront] was chosen, it is said, by the vote of the people alone, without the knowledge of his brethren and fellow bishops, and was placed on the throne in the cathedral of the Prince of the Apostles.”

Popular elections are not something typically associated with the twelfth century. In this instance, William spoke out against Ralph’s ascension being at the hands of a “frenzied mob” and decried how this event was sinful and against the will of God. The archbishop clearly had a negative view of Ralph’s rise to power. The reliability of William’s account of the 1130s to 1140s has been difficult to analyze by historians. Crusades historian Malcolm Barber notes that much of William’s information comes from those who could stretch their memory back forty years, and thus his account is somewhat dubious.

Nonetheless, what William chose to record and emphasize is reflective of his own understanding. The case of Ralph is curiously contrasted with that of Princess Alice of Antioch. William records that, after Alice took power in the city following her husband's death in 1130, the citizens of Antioch rightly despised and opposed her rule as tyrannical. Even still, William is not able to point to a discernible action the people took against her rule, though the example of Ralph makes clear the citizens at this time were not hesitant to make their political will known.

In both the case of Ralph and Alice, William uses the will of the people to tailor the legitimacy of certain political figures. In the former, the people’s support for Ralph carried with it the negative connotations of a “frenzied mob.” The latter, meanwhile, saw the people’s opposition to Alice connoted positively as opposition to tyranny. This paper will look at several examples in *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea* where William discusses the common people in regard to political developments. While this paper will focus on William’s coverage of the People’s Crusade in the 1090s and the Principality of Antioch in the 1130s and early 1140s, these are not the only relevant examples in the archbishop’s vast work, merely the ones I have chosen to focus my study. These examples reveal that William viewed popular action with the understanding that it could be legitimate or illegitimate depending on the behavior and leadership of the people, and William deployed such an understanding of popular legitimacy to support...
his political narrative.

William of Tyre's history forms the basis for a large part of our understanding of the Latin East during the twelfth century. William himself was born in Outremer in the year 1130 and left for Europe in 1146 to study in Paris, Orleans, and Bologna. This education was undoubtedly formative in William's understanding of the role of the people in governance. In 1165, William returned and established a successful career with the Church in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, in large part due to the patronage of King Amalric. From the beginning of William's success, he was reliant on the Jerusalemite throne for position. This connection was strengthened when William tutored Baldwin IV, Amalric’s son and the future King of Jerusalem. In 1175, William became Archbishop of Tyre alongside his position as chancellor of the kingdom and royal diplomat. The archbishop was not only just a religious figure or a scholar, but also a political player. The purpose of William's chronicle was to advocate for the ruling house of Jerusalem. William's writings suggest that he approved of popular agency and saw the people as a source of legitimacy, at least so long as they were led by the nobility and clergy.

Whenever William described the populace at large or chose to divide them into groups, he did so in terms of social status. William wrote that the resistance to the rule of Alice came from the “chief men” and “entire people” of Antioch. William uses the same language to describe Fulk's arrival in Antioch. After Fulk took power in the city and ruled as a de facto regent, the archbishop mentioned that the king's actions were met with the “gratitude of all the citizens and also the loyal party among the nobles.” When William chose to describe the population of the entire city, save for a few disloyal nobles, he did so with the language of social status. When Emperor John II attempted to exercise control over Antioch, as per a treaty with Prince Raymond, the treaty was considered invalid as it was not made with the approval of the “citizens and lords.” William did not divide people into Latins and others, lay people and clergymen, or Christians and others. The most notable social cleavage for William was social status. This perspective of William is critical for understanding the archbishop's approach to popular agency. William's language will also lay out the terminology of this paper. Common people will refer to non-nobles and citizens will refer to specifically urban common people.

Popular agency is not often associated with the Middle Ages. The reality, however, is that commoners, particularly citizens, were active and influential in some of the most important events and developments of the Medieval period. Medieval scholars Jonathan Stavnskær Doucette and Jørgen Møller argue that, following the collapse of royal power in ninth and tenth century West Francia, a bottom-up coalition of clergy and citizens led to an increase in urban self-government. The scholars went on to define their understanding of urban self-government. The concept specifically applied to at least parts of the citizenry choosing citizens from among their number to form a town council.

6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 William of Tyre, A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea, 44.
11 Ibid, 55.
12 Ibid, 125.
14 Ibid, 204.
were not merely concerned with governance. During the Cluniac Reform movement, lay people were integral to forcing secular authorities to surrender tithes and land to the Church and to convince clergymen to abide by the new restrictions. This association of the citizenry with Cluniac Reform ran deep. Eleventh century oath-sworn associations of urban reformers attempted to reform their local Churchers and demanded that bishops be chosen by popular election. A strong element of this reform movement was a critique of elites. The senior clergy was often considered immoral while the secular authorities were viewed as corrupt for protecting them. This popular zeal continued into later reform movements.

The Gregorian Reform Movement saw another wave of popular action, this time at the specific behest of the pope. Pope Gregory VII encouraged lay authorities to sanction unreformed clergy and for local assemblies to punish simony and clerical unchastity. With the approval of the pope, citizen authorities gained a new degree of legitimacy. Gregory’s call resonated with citizens, particularly in areas where Cluniac reform had been popular. This was not a one-off incident of popular action, but a consistent and popular effort by urban commoners. In a papal decree issued in 1074, Gregory declared that, “if [unreformed clergy] refuse to obey our orders, or rather those of the holy fathers, the people shall refuse to receive their ministrations, in order that those who disregard the love of God and the dignity of their office may be brought to their senses through feeling the shame of the world and the reproof of the people.” So long as their clergyman was unreformed, the pope specifically empowered the entire Christian people to take political action. By the early twelfth century, popular agency was not an unknown phenomenon, rather, it had precedence in the formation of town councils and citizen action with the goal of Church reform.

**PART II: Background of Antioch**

A large part of this study is dedicated to the Principality of Antioch from 1130-1143. Therefore, it is important to briefly lay out the demography and political context of Antioch in the lead up to the 1130s. Understanding the demography of the city is crucial to understanding how the population of the city would have viewed and interacted with the Latin rulers. The population of Antioch at this time was composed of a vast array of Eastern Christian communities, including Orthodox Greeks, Armenians, Syriac Jacobites, and others. Jewish and Muslim communities also existed in and around Antioch. These were greatly diminished following the Crusader sack of Antioch in 1098, however. The *Gesta Francorum*, an anonymous account by a participant in the First Crusade, recorded that the Crusaders killed all the “Turks and Saracens” within the city except a few that fled to the citadel. Fulcher of Chartres in his *History of the Expedition to Jerusalem* was less specific, but concurred that a great slaughter occurred while some “Turks” escaped to the citadel.

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15 Ibid, 211.
16 Ibid, 211.
17 Ibid, 211.
18 Ibid, 212.
19 Ibid, 212.
22 Ibid.
The Muslim chronicler Ibn al-Qalanisi gave an even more bitter account, “...the number of men, women, and children (in Antioch), killed, taken prisoner, and enslaved from its population is beyond computation.” Al-Qalanisi agreed that some escaped to the citadel, and numbered them 3,000. The letter sent to Pope Urban II also recorded that 1,000 men surrendered with the citadel when it ultimately fell. Considering the letter references “men,” this number seems compatible with the broader accounting provided by al-Qalanisi. The *Gesta Francorum* went on to record that, when the citadel surrendered, some of those inside chose to convert to Christianity, while the rest were “escorted into the lands of the Saracens.” All of this suggests that the Muslim population of Antioch by the time of this study, just over thirty years later, was likely very small.

Antioch had long been a Byzantine-Roman city before falling to Muslim hands in the mid-10th century. When the First Crusade arrived in the Byzantine capital of Constantinople in 1097, its leaders swore fealty to Emperor Alexios Komnenus and promised to return any former Byzantine territory they captured. This included Antioch, a city of vital importance at the crossroads of Byzantine, Muslim, and eventually Latin Eastern power. The city itself was imposing, being described by the author of the *Gesta Francorum* as “a very fine and distinguished place” with a “wonderful” and “exceedingly strong” citadel that commanded an “impressive and well-planned” city while being defended by two walls and 450 towers. As the *Gesta Francorum* also noted, “...everything about this city is beautiful,” and thus it made a fine home for 360 monasteries and the Patriarch of Antioch, who commanded over 153 bishops. The size and position of the city made it strategically vital while the presence of the patriarch and other of the clergy added significant religious importance. It is evident why the city was so desired by the various regional powers.

Deciding who controlled Antioch was not just a matter of swords and sieges, but also rights and oaths. When the crusaders arrived before the city in 1098, they engaged in a taxing and lengthy siege for several months, eventually forcing them to ask for Byzantine aid. Emperor Alexios, however, had received false reports that the Franks had been defeated and thus he turned back north. In reality, thanks to the aid of two Armenian brothers, the Crusaders managed to take the city, though they were subsequently surrounded by a vast Muslim relief army. Miraculously, the Crusader launched a successful sortie against the Muslim siege. Following the victory, the *Gesta Francorum* recorded that the Franks sent Hugh the Great to Alexios to offer him command of the city so that he may fulfill his obligations, but no response was given. Fulcher of Chartres concurred that Hugh was sent to Constantinople but did not mention his purpose or that they intended to return the city to Byzantine rule. Whatever exactly occurred, the city remained only nominally under the emperor’s authority. Raymond

26 Ibid.
31 Ibid, 77.
of St. Gilles, a prominent Frankish leader of the Crusade, proposed he be given control of the city, a proposition which was opposed by those who did not wish to break their oaths with Alexios or threaten the progress of the expedition.  

Eventually, however, another Crusader leader Bohemond of Taranto seized the city and established a steady dominion.  

From the start of Antioch's Latin dominance, control and leadership were controversial. The degree to which Antioch actually owed allegiance to Constantinople was ever murky. It is difficult to say how welcoming the Eastern Christians were of their new Frankish overlords. The letter to Pope Urban II claimed that the Franks were not “able to overcome” the “heretics, Greeks and Armenians, Syrians and Jacobites.” This suggests the locals resisted in some way, but which way is not exactly clear. Considering the letter referenced “heretics,” it seems likely the Latins were unable to convert the locals to Latin Christianity, even if the Eastern Christians were not opposed to Frankish rule. Indeed, there is evidence that at least some Eastern Christians were delighted at the arrival of the Franks, or at least at the opportunity to overthrow the current regime. Fulcher recorded that the Muslim emir of Antioch was “beheaded while fleeing by an Armenian peasant” who brought the severed head to the Crusaders. Killing the emir alone suggests only a distaste for the Muslim rulers, but offering it to the Franks suggests some affinity for the new arrivals. The Gesta Francorum recorded the incident slightly differently, that an entire village of Syrians and Armenians killed the emir beyond the city and presented it to the Latins “as the price of their freedom” while his possessions were sold.  

While this account implies a broader participation on behalf of the locals, it also suggests the motive was practical and monetary rather than for any love for the Crusaders. The Gesta also noted that, after the Muslim relief army was destroyed, the Armenians and Syrians moved to cut off their retreat and “killed any of them whom they caught.” Such a mobilization also suggests a disdain for Muslim rule and a desire for cooperation with the Franks. At the very least, the two groups had aligned interests. It is worth noting that these two examples are from communities beyond the city. Those within Antioch had just experienced a brutal sack in which, “the streets of the city on every side were full of corpses, so that none could endure to be there because of the stench.” It is unlikely the Crusaders were always able to distinguish between Christians and Muslims, and many of the former as well as the latter likely died in the sack. Thus, the people in the city may have been less favorably disposed towards the Crusaders. Those outside the city, upon hearing of the massacre, may have assisted the Franks out of fear rather than agreement.

The Eastern Christian chroniclers themselves shed more light on such a perspective. The Armenian Matthew of Edessa, who penned his chronicle from 1113-1140, recorded that, “[God] shepherded and preserved [the First Crusade] as the army of the children of Israel” in their conquest of Antioch, and that the ultimate victory of the Franks, “was one day of great happiness for the believers in Christ.” Matthew did not decry any slaughter, instead his language towards the Franks is quite favorable and suggests a greater Christian unity, in spite of denominational differences. However,
Matthew was of Edessa, not Antioch. The people of Antioch themselves, likely victims to some degree of the sack, might have thought differently. Michael the Syrian, Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Antioch from 1166 to 1199, remembered that, “[The Turks] inflicted the Christians who came to worship in Jerusalem with many evils by beating and humiliating them,” which, “kindled the zeal of the kings and princes in Rome,” beginning the First Crusade.46 Once again a certain Christian unity is evident, with Michael ascribing the cause of Latin intervention to brutality done to Eastern Christians. Michael also offered no critique of Frankish brutality in the siege itself, instead he echoed Matthew that the victory was divinely ordained.47 Michael’s perspective was, however, removed by several decades from the sack itself, and quite possibly the negative attitudes of the Antiochene people. Both sources were also written by clergymen, not the people at large, who may have held different attitudes. Nonetheless, Matthew and Michael, as well as the actions of the Eastern Christians around the fall of Antioch, suggest a favorable attitude. At the very least, a certain Christian unity born of common opposition to Muslim power is evident. There is no real evidence the local Christians held any grudge for the sack of Antioch.

The Latins themselves were far less numerous than most other groups in the region. Following the First Crusade, merely 2,000-4,000 Latins lived in the entirety of Outremer.48 The height of the Latin population in the Latin East was around 150,000, 120,000 of whom lived in towns and cities like Antioch.49 Over the course of the time period under examination, the Latin population of Antioch likely saw a progressive incline. The lion’s share of Latin Easterners in Outremer were borgesies, who were middle-class tradesmen separate from feudal obligations, though they held to the public law of Assises des Bourgeois.50 Such freedom and position would have allowed the borgesies to participate in Antiochene politics better than lower classes. Most important to borgesies participation was their status as Latin Christians, which granted them greater legal standing, a standing which was extended to any Latin converts.51

The First Crusade continued as Jerusalem fell to the Frankish onslaught. More cities and towns joined it and soon enough the Levant was ruled by a collection of Frankish polities including the Kingdom of Jerusalem, Principality of Antioch, County of Edessa, and County of Tripoli, collectively referred to as the Latin East or Outremer.52 The Principality of Antioch was perhaps second only in significance to the Kingdom of Jerusalem itself. Prince Bohemond I of Antioch warred with Constantinople in 1107 over the issue of pilgrimage through Byzantine lands, eventually coming to a truce in which Alexios assured the safety of pilgrims and Bohemond swore to keep “loyalty to the emperor in all things” and to maintain his peace.53 The Treaty of Devol, as it was known, officially made Antioch a Byzantine possession.

**Part III: The People’s Crusade**

The famous, or perhaps infamous, First Crusade of legendary figures like Godfrey of Bouillon, Baldwin of Boulogne, and Bohemond of Taranto was preceded by a different sort of crusade. Historian Jonothan Ri-
ley-Smith argues that the People’s Crusade, led by Peter the Hermit and Walter the Peniless, was described as a more common sort of movement than the later crusades, partially by its contemporaries to separate themselves from its massacre of Jews, indiscipline, and ultimate annihilation. The People’s Crusade was recorded by William to contain a disproportionate number of “foot soldiers” but “very few knights.” While there were more common people in the People’s Crusade than the First Crusade proper, there were also many knights among their number. This crusade, as William understood it, was a uniquely popular movement led by members of the nobility and clergy.

I will argue in this section that William uses the concept of “the people” to present his interpretation of the People’s Crusade, including its origin and ultimate destruction. Through his interpretation, William asserts that popular agency is legitimate when done under the purview of the clergy or nobility. Otherwise, it is liable to become a “mob,” an illegitimate exercise of popular agency. William understands the People’s Crusade through this paradigm. When the people abide by elite authority, William uses favorable language to describe popular action. When the people ignore such elites, his language is less favorable. Ultimately, William regards the People’s Crusade as an admirable endeavor that met a tragic end as a result of the nature of mob rule.

William’s understanding of the cause of the First Crusade was rooted in popular legitimacy. As part of his justification for the First Crusade, William wrote about the suffering experienced by Eastern Christians under Muslim rule in the Holy Land. The scholar remarked, “Thus neither at home nor abroad was there any rest for the citizens” and “Death threatened them every day and, what was worse than death, the fear of servitude, harsh and intolerable, ever lowered before them.” William went on to lament this state of affairs, “For four hundred and ninety years, as has been stated, this devoted people of God endured cruel bondage with pious long-suffering.” William clearly expressed a certain degree of compassion for his coreligionists, even though they were of a different sect. William’s lamentation turned to a call for action when he described a meeting between the Eastern Christian Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Latin pilgrim Peter the Hermit. The patriarch told Peter that, “the strength of your people, true worshippers of the Lord, is still intact, and their kingdom, the dread of our enemies, flourishes far and wide. If they, in brotherly love, would sympathize with us in our present situation and provide a remedy for the calamities which oppress us or if they would, at least, intercede for us with Christ, we might hope that our affliction would soon end.” William recorded the patriarch as speaking in the same language of Christian brotherhood as he did. It is curious that the patriarch referred to the Latins as the, “true worshippers of the Lord,” amidst the sectarian division between Latin and Eastern Christianity. The patriarch went on to lambast the Byzantine Empire by saying, “We have no hope henceforth of receiving any aid from the empire of the Greeks, although they were more closely connected with us by blood and proximity and have far greater wealth.” William recorded this event in the context of inter-Christian sectarian divides. With this quote, the kinship between Latin and Eastern Christians is once again firmly

55 William of Tyre, A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea, 97.
57 William of Tyre, A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea, 81.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid, 83.
60 Ibid, 83.
established, this time in opposition to Greek Christians. William seemingly had a positive perspective on the Eastern Christian people, better at least than his perspective on Greek Christians.

William used the discontent of Eastern Christian people as justification for the First Crusade, logic which gave the will of such people a certain degree of political legitimacy. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) was an influential figure to Medieval Christian thought, something that is often discussed by scholars and linked to Crusades justification. Augustine is well known for his concept of just war, the notion that, for a war to be just, it must have a just cause. Augustine's concept of just war, laid out primarily in the book *City of God*, was well-known at the time and was used by Latins to justify crusading. As a well-educated Latin scholar and clergyman, William would have been familiar with Augustine's work. Augustine's thought defined several just causes, such as defending the innocent from attack, the recovery of stolen property, or the punishment of evil. From William's perspective, all these criteria have been met. The innocent Eastern Christians suffered from the assault of brutal tyranny, their property and the Holy Land itself was stolen, and they suffered many evils that must be punished. Should Latin rule be equally as tyrannical and unpopular among Eastern Christians, William's justification for the First Crusade and the continued Latin presence in the Levant would be undermined. Thus, William would have an interest in the favor of Eastern Christians, or at least have endeavored to depict them as grateful for Latin liberation. This perspective granted a deal of legitimacy to the will of the Eastern Christian people.

William admired how the common people were included in the growth of Crusading zeal in Europe, though it remains less clear whether or not he approved of such popular agency in secular matters and by non-Latins. William considered this participation exceptional; beyond the norm but still welcomed.

William emphasizes the importance of popular participation in the lead up to the First Crusade. The impetus for this popular action was Peter the Hermit. The archbishop recorded how, even before the Council of Clermont began the First Crusade, Peter the Hermit preached across France to encourage his countrymen to go "to the aid of their brethren" Christians in the Holy Land. The archbishop's language suggests that he approved of this egalitarian approach. William made sure to note that Peter did not preach to the "princes alone" but also to "the common people and men of lower classes." Peter did not merely want to convert or educate these common people, he wanted to convince them to join him on a military expedition halfway across the known world. Peter wanted to start a movement, a movement that included the common people as much as anyone else. William did not merely record this instance of popular action, his description also suggests he approved of it. William notes that Peter was "devoutly solicitous" in his attempts to call "the poorest and most lowly" to the task of liberating the Holy Land. This language evokes a Christian sentiment in which the lowliest and highest alike should be called to religious conviction. William describes Peter as "devout" for his attempts, suggesting he approved of them. The archbishop continued to apply religious connotations to Peter's actions. William noted that Peter served to, "[prepare] the hearts of his hearers to obey, so that the
pope, who wished to persuade them to the same course of action, had less difficulty in attaining his purpose and was able to influence them more readily.”

William appears to have referenced the Gospel, with Peter the Hermit as John the Baptist to “make straight the way for the Lord” (Mark 1:3), Jesus in this case being the pope. William’s favorable description, particularly his Biblical allusions, of Peter’s campaign makes clear that the scholar approved of this instance of popular action. The question remains of to what extent this approval extended to non-religious matters and whether or not it applied to non-Latins. Peter’s preaching was also an effort of the clergy, not a grassroots effort led by common people.

Peter the Hermit’s preaching eventually culminated with the People’s Crusade, an initial outburst of peasant crusaders that preceded the more professional force. William’s description of this event continued his trend of associating popular movements with elite leaders. William specified that the movement went beyond class, “In all the provinces of the West, there was not a single home idle; for each man, according to his condition, was engaged in arranging his private affairs, about which he was anxious. Here the father of the family, there the son, and there the entire family were making preparations to set forth.”

William specified that “each man, according to his condition” was involved in this venture, a statement which would include the common people. The language of “according to his condition” is critical because it implies people of different conditions, or classes, had different roles. The People’s Crusade contained many commoners, but also a small group of noble leaders. The archbishop recorded that, “Walter the Penniless, a man of noble birth, valiant in arms, was the first to set out on the pilgrimage…He had with him a large company of foot soldiers but very few knights.”

Though called the penniless, William specified that Walter was a “man of noble birth” who led a force that was made up of an unusually large portion of common “foot soldiers.” It is this description that suggests William saw it as different from the First Crusade proper. This unusual number of common people is what makes the People’s Crusade a popular movement, though both were led by elites. In this case, William continued his trend of linking popular movements to a noble or religious leader.

Though William seemingly approved of this degree of popular participation, he did lament the mob-like tendencies of such a movement. William saw the mob as an illegitimate exercise of popular agency and thus spoke about it negatively. When the People’s Crusade arrived in the land of the Turkish sultan Kilij Arslan, tensions arose in the Christian camp after some of their number were killed by the Turks. In the ensuing debate, William expressed anxiety over the danger of mob behavior. William wrote that one faction demanded that they, “Let both knights and foot soldiers arm and go forth to avenge the blood of their murdered comrades. The more important men of the army and those of greater experience in such matters desired to obey the orders of the emperor. When they would have checked this purpose and sought to allay the indiscreet fervor of the infuriated mob, the people rose against them in insubordination, placed themselves under the patronage of a certain Godfrey, surnamed Burel, the leader of that faction, and began to pour forth insults on those of higher rank.”

Though William spoke positively of the participation of common people earlier in his account, this example shows how he feared the excesses of the mob. For William, popular agency became a bad thing when the people ignored...
the guidance of elites. Indeed, the mob turned to hurling insults at “those of higher rank,” a statement which entrenched the class-based nature of this disagreement. After the “will of the worst element finally prevailed,” the crusaders fought the Muslims and were destroyed. William’s description of the mob as the “worst element” confirms that he looked down upon this instance of popular agency. This story served as a warning for common crusaders to abide by the rule of professional, hence largely noble, leaders. Once again, William seems to link legitimate popular action to the guidance of elites.

Despite his reservations at the mob mentality displayed by the People’s Crusaders, William described them with a greater degree of dignity than did other chroniclers. Seemingly, the archbishop saw greater value in this instance of popular action than did his contemporaries. William’s narrative states that, “Both armies fought valiantly and stoutly, but the Christians were finally overcome by the multitude of the foe.” Despite the capricious behavior of the crusaders, William still asserted that only by sheer numbers were they defeated, and that they “fought valiantly and stoutly.” This is high praise compared to the Gesta Francorum, which claimed that the crusaders “behaved abominably” and were betrayed by their own and murdered in their sleep. Fulcher of Chartres, meanwhile, only noted that there was a “crowd of people on foot but only a few knights” that he offhandedly mentioned was destroyed. Fulcher did not even refer to these popular crusaders as soldiers like William did. The example of the People’s Crusade reinforces the idea that William admired the participation of common people, but only so long as they were led by nobles or clergy.

William’s justification for the First Crusade, including the People’s Crusade, was rooted in the legitimacy of popular opposition to tyranny. William explicitly included the common people in the story of the First Crusade. These common people were nonetheless led by elites, members of the nobility and clergy. When the common people ignored such elites, the popular action that was the People’s Crusade became illegitimate and was met with due destruction. Even in that destruction, however, William afforded the People’s Crusade a degree of dignity not granted by other records of the event.

**Part IV: Princess Alice of Antioch**

Latin Medieval thought separated the concept of “king” and “tyrant.” There was no such thing as a “bad king,” as a king does what is right, and if they do not do what is right, they are not a king, but a tyrant. The twelfth century political thinker John of Salisbury wrote in the *Policraticus* that, “One is not to be troubled that I am appearing to have associated kings with tyranny, since, although it is said that ‘king’ (*rex*) is derived from the ‘right’ (*recte*) which is fitting for princes, still this name incorrectly refers to tyrants.” As a leading Medieval analyst of tyranny, John’s analysis is indicative of the perspective of those at his time. Such political thought was valuable for determining the legitimacy of a given ruler. What makes a ruler a king as opposed to a tyrant is intertwined with popular

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72 Ibid, 108.
75 Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem*,
legitimacy.

This section will argue that William of Tyre understood and deployed this concept of tyranny alongside popular will in an effort to legitimize the removal from power of Princess Alice of Antioch. William saw Alice as hostile towards his political narrative and thus felt compelled to justify her removal from power. Although William uses negative gender tropes in his description of Alice, the archbishop did not oppose Alice because she was a woman. Rather, William employs such gender tropes because he opposed Alice politically. This justification involved the legitimacy of popular will and the language of tyranny. William asserts that the people opposed Alice’s rule as a way to legitimize her removal, though the evidence suggests most of the people of Antioch supported the princess. William’s describes this opposition as nearly universal and derived from the two major social cleavages as he saw them: the common people and the nobility.

William had political reasons to deploy the language of popular legitimacy and tyranny. Alice represented opposition to Jerusalem’s hegemony in Outremer, which went against William’s pro-Jerusalem narrative. Alice ruled Antioch three separate times from 1130 to 1137 and each time she was removed from power at the behest of the King of Jerusalem and/or an alliance of nobles and clergy. Alice herself was the daughter of King Baldwin II of Jerusalem and wife of Prince Raymond of Antioch, ruler of that principality, and had one daughter Constance, who was heir to Antioch. When, in 1130, Raymond died in battle, William records that “an evil spirit led [Alice] to conceive a wicked plan,” to steal her daughter’s inheritance for herself. Her father, King Baldwin II, eventually managed to remove Alice from power, though it proved to be one of his last acts and the king died soon after. Alice, supposedly an “extremely malicious and wily woman” with a “tyrannical will,” took the opportunity to return to power and apparently bribed the Count of Tripoli and Count of Edessa. This was no meager feat as Alice now held two of the four Latin Eastern states as allies while the third was under her direct rule. This act represented resistance on the part of the smaller states to the dominance of Jerusalem. Crusades historian Malcolm Barber regarded this time as a revolt of the northern states against Jerusalem’s rule, especially Tripoli and Edessa who had been vassals to the kingdom since 1109. Fulk prepared to head north to remove Alice as his predecessor had. Pons of Tripoli opposed this, denying Fulk passage through his lands and following him north to assist Alice in any way possible. War eventually broke out between the king and the count. The Damascene chronicler Ibn al-Qalanisi recorded that, “a dispute had arisen among [the Franks], though a thing of this kind was not usual with them, and fighting had taken place between them.” Peace eventually prevailed and Fulk managed to enter Antioch and remove Alice once more, supposedly to the “gratitude of all the citizens and also the loyal party among the nobles,” replacing her with a constable until Constance came of age to marry a consort. A ruler could not simply be removed, however. William had to assure the reader that the removal of Alice was legitimate.

Although William employed negative tropes relating to Alice’s gender in his descrip-

79 William of Tyre, A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea, 43.
80 Ibid, 44.
tion of the princess and her rule, the archbishop did not oppose Alice because she was a woman in power. Rather, William opposed Alice because her actions went against the interests of Jerusalem and he utilized existing misogynistic tropes to do so. This is revealed in an examination of two other Latin Eastern women in power, Beatrice of Edessa and Melisende of Jerusalem. Following the imprisonment of Count Joscelin II in 1150, his wife Beatrice led the defense and governance of the county. William described Beatrice as a “chaste” and “sober” woman who “tried to govern the people to the best of her ability.” Despite William’s patronizing tone, he clearly held some respect for Beatrice. William applied a distinctly gendered analysis when he remarked that Beatrice performed “far beyond the strength of a woman.” This is in contrast to his description of Alice but also Count Joscelin II, whom William described as “lazy” and prone to following “base pursuits.” Joscelin II was part of Alice’s coalition against Jerusalem alongside Tripoli, and thus represented a similar threat to Jerusalem’s hegemony. Moreover, the need for Beatrice to adopt her position of leadership reflected poorly on Joscelin II, who, in a patriarchal society, was unable to care for his family. William spoke highly of Beatrice in part because it discredited a figure that opposed his political narrative. Alice’s own sister, Melisende, served as regent for her thirteen year-old son. William described Melisende as a “woman of great wisdom” with “experience in all kinds of secular matters” that rose far above the “normal status of women.” William’s description of Melisende is very much at odds with how he saw Alice, suggesting he was not categorically opposed to powerful women. Curiously, Alice was criticized by William as a usurper when she acted as regent for her infant daughter while Melisende was praised for doing the same for her teenage son. What made the two different is that Alice stood athwart William’s narrative in a way Melisende did not.

While recording Alice’s removal from power in Antioch, William used popular agency as a source of legitimacy in accordance with contemporary political theory. When Alice took power for the first time, William recorded her rule with great disdain. William was adamant that the “entire people” as well as the “chief men” of the city opposed Alice’s “tyrannical will.” William’s language specifically divides the people into two categories: the people and the elites. When faced with such perceived tyranny, William claims that both camps acted to oppose Alice. This is consistent with twelfth century thinking on tyranny and the removal of tyrants. Policraticus, written by John of Salsbury around 1159, stated that, “it is not only permitted, but it is also equitable and just to slay tyrants.” This was published while William was studying in Europe and only a few decades before William wrote his chronicle. The common language of tyranny between William and John also suggests a common perspective. John wrote that, “he who has rashly usurped that which is not his, not to he who receives what he uses from the power of God.” William made sure to

89 William of Tyre, A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea, 201.
90 Ibid.
92 Ibid, 201.
93 Ibid, 47.
94 Ibid, 47.
95 Ibid, 137-139.
96 Ibid, 44-45.
97 John of Salisbury, Policraticus, 25.
98 John of Salisbury, Policraticus, 25.
specify that Alice usurped power in Antioch, in accordance with John's political thinking. The archbishop recorded that, “Alice was determined to disinherit her daughter and keep the principality for herself in perpetuity.”99 Alice is, therefore, a usurper in the account of William and liable to be removed as a tyrant. Thus, William's critique of Alice aligns with the political thinking on popular legitimacy at the time. As an advocate for the Kingdom of Jerusalem, William wished to discredit Alice, a figure that opposed that kingdom's hegemony. Just as William used the contemporary cultural understanding of the place of women to discredit Alice's authority, in this instance he used the legitimacy of popular will to justify her first removal from power.

When Alice returned to power in Antioch, William continued to deploy popular legitimacy and contemporary political theory to further his narrative objectives, though he in fact contradicted another chronicle. William noted that King Baldwin II, “feared the wicked malice of his own daughter (Alice), lest she should make a second attempt to disinherit her minor daughter (Constance).”100 These fears proved to be warranted, at least in part. After Baldwin II died and Fulk took the throne of Jerusalem, William recorded that Alice “was intriguing to wrong the principality” and rose to power once more, to which King Fulk responded and prepared to remove Alice as his predecessor had.101 William’s account differs somewhat from another chronicle on the event. The Syriac Christian cleric Bar Habraeus recorded that King Fulk arrived at the city to take it for himself while “the people of Antioch shut their gates in their faces” so that Constance could inherit it.102 This is the same Antioch where William recorded that the “entire people” and “chief men” of the city saw Alice as a tyrant. Furthermore, Alice is recorded here as a protector of her daughter’s inheritance, not a usurper. It is not clear whose account is accurate, but it is crucial that William chose to emphasize the will of the people and brand Alice as a tyrant and usurper. This connects back to William’s political leanings and pro-Jerusalem stance. To record that the King of Jerusalem sought to depose the rightful heir of Antioch, only for the people of that city to “shut their gates in their faces” would not be in accordance with William’s narrative objectives. William wanted to present the legacy of the crown of Jerusalem in a positive light. To call the King of Jerusalem an attempted usurper of his own niece-in-law was exactly the kind of defiance of law that John of Salisbury described as tyranny.

William’s description of Alice as a tyrant and usurper is not just about making the princess look bad, it is also about removing her divine sanction as a legitimate ruler. William wrote of Alice that the “chief men” and “entire people” of Antioch opposed her permanent rule.103 Such a description was not enough to warrant her removal, however. John of Salisbury also wrote in the Poliicricus that “power is regarded as venerable by those who are good” and even when such power is a “plague upon the elect,” such authorities are still instituted by God.104 In effect, the will of the people is of limited value if a ruler is legitimately instituted by God. William could describe Alice as cruel or unfair to her subjects all he wanted but that would not mean her authority was illegitimate, and thus liable to be removed. John, however, does not suggest that princes are able to act as they will. Rather, as John said with reference to the Code of Justinian, “Because the authority of the prince is

99 William of Tyre, A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea, 44.
100 Ibid, 45.
101 Ibid, 52-54.
103 William of Tyre, A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea, 44.
104 John of Salisbury, Poliicricus, 29.
determined by the authority of right, and truly submission to the laws of princes is greater than the imperial title; so it is the case that the prince ought to imagine himself permitted to do nothing which is inconsistent with the equity of justice.”

Even divinely sanctioned princes are not above the law. John clarified his own views on what exactly made a prince different from a tyrant. The theorist states that, “There is wholly or mainly this difference between the tyrant and the prince: that the latter is obedient to law, and rules his people by a will that places itself at their service, and administers rewards and burdens within the republic under the guidance of law in a way favorable to the vindication of his eminent post, so that he proceeds before others to the extent that, while individuals merely look after individual affairs, princes are concerned with the burdens of the entire community.”

The law is what makes an authority legitimate and legitimate authority is sanctioned by God. In this sense, William had to ensure that Alice was seen as a usurper, not just an unpopular leader. A prince must place his will at the service of the “entire community;” that is what made their authority rightful. William could not just describe Alice as unpopular, though that was part of the equation, he also had to make clear that God did not sanction her rule. William did this by declaring the princess a usurper. This does represent a limit on William’s use of popular legitimacy in his political narratives. On the other hand, despite having an acceptable justification for Alice’s removal, William still chose to emphasize that the people opposed her rule. Even though the will of the people was not necessary to declare Alice’s authority illegitimate, William still saw value in mentioning their opinions.

When William described legitimate popular agency in the removal of Alice, he did so in terms of social status, specifically the commoners and the elites. William wrote of Alice that the “chief men” and “entire people” of Antioch opposed her permanent rule. The archbishop went on to describe exactly how they acted on this sentiment. William specifically mentioned that it was William Aversa and a monk named Peter Latinator, “with the consent of others,” that sent word to King Baldwin II and allowed him into the city so that the king could remove Alice, his daughter, from power. William does not specify who these two characters were, other than that Peter was a monk of St. Paul, and they are not mentioned anywhere else in the chronicle. William’s lack of specificity could have meant Peter and William were well-enough known that clarification was not necessary. More likely, these figures were simply not notable, especially considering one was a mere monk. William repeatedly mentioned that everyone, noble and common, opposed Alice’s rule, though he only really described the nobles as acting on it, except for this case. The inclusion of “consent of the others” could refer to the people at large within the city, or it meant the party of nobles that opposed Alice. Perhaps Aversa and Latinator are meant to be the representatives of the “entire people” of the city that William mentioned. The archbishop also described how the “chief men” opposed Alice. William claimed that the “wiser men of Antioch consulted Alice in the citadel and convinced her to relinquish her position.”

In this, William is consistent with contemporary political thought in a manner that delegitimizes Alice’s rule. John of Salisbury noted that, “it is not only permitted, but it is also equitable and just to slay tyrants” and that, “whoever does not prosecute [a public enemy] transgresses against himself and against

105 John of Salisbury, Policraticus, 29.
106 John of Salisbury, Policraticus, 28.
107 William of Tyre, A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea, 44.
108 Ibid, 45.
109 Ibid.
the whole body of the earthly republic.”

In this, John calls upon all to resist a tyrant. Not only is it permitted, it is also “equitable and just” to the extent that those who do not resist a tyrant transgress against the entire community. William made sure to emphasize that commoners and nobles alike resisted Alice as resistance against a tyrant is regarded as the action of an entire community.

In an effort to secure legitimacy, William made sure to emphasize that resistance to Alice was domestic and popular. An example of this is when Raymond of Poitiers was invited to Antioch. William records that, in secret, “the people of Antioch sent envoys” to a promising noble youth named Raymond of Poitiers, who was at the court of King Henry I of England, and suggested that the knight marry Princess Constance. William’s use of the term “people” in this incident is peculiar. Raymond concurred and set out in disguise to avoid word reaching Alice. The archbishop is quite vague about who these “people” were. This lack of specificity is suggestive of William’s political motivations. Earlier in his chronicle, William specified that it was, in fact, “the nobles of Antioch” who pleaded with King Fulk to help them find a husband for Constance, and thus remove Alice from power. William chose to claim it was the “people” who resisted Alice, even when elsewhere in his account he specified it was the nobles and the king of Jerusalem. Moreover, it is unclear why the people did not do more to resist Alice, if they were truly so opposed to her rule. Later, in 1137, the people of Antioch rioted so effectively that they managed to drive Emperor John II out of the city. In the case of Ralph of Domfront in 1136, a “frenzied mob” managed to overturn the clerical election for patriarch and install their own ruler. For whatever reason, the best that could be done to oppose Alice was to send letters and envoys. If there is no evidence that the people resisted Alice, when it is evident they were capable of resistance, perhaps the people did not oppose her rule. In this case, William seemingly used the language of “people” to be purposefully vague. In an effort to assure the reader that Alice’s removal was legitimate, William had to make the resistance to Alice appear domestic rather than foreign.

William’s narrative asserted that the people were universally opposed to Alice’s rule to legitimize her removal. The reality seems to be quite different, particularly considering the role of Eastern Christians. Alice managed to gain power in 1130, after her husband’s death, in 1131, after her father’s death, and was in power once more by 1136. It seems quite likely that Alice, in fact, had some degree of popularity in the city, otherwise she would not be able to keep coming to power. In fact, when Raymond arrived at Antioch, he was not even able to get through the gates of the city without Alice’s approval. If Alice was so unpopular, among both the citizens and the nobles, it seems unlikely such a tight grip on entrance to the city could be maintained. Amin Maalouf went so far as to argue in Crusades Through Arab Eyes that Alice had the support of the Greek, Syrian, and Armenian people of Antioch. This is much in contrast to William’s narrative that Alice was an unpopular tyrant. Alice herself was half-Armenian and had never so much as laid eyes on Europe. If Alice did have the support of the large portion

110 John of Salisbury, Policraticus, 25.
111 William of Tyre, A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea, 77.
112 Ibid, 77-78.
113 Ibid, 59.
114 Ibid, 100.
115 Ibid, 60.
117 Ibid, 77-78.
119 Ibid.
of Antioch’s population, as most of its people were likely Eastern Christians, then that would have gone against William’s narrative. The approval of the Eastern Christians was a major part of William’s justification for the Latin presence and rule in the Holy Land. It was not just about the Latins being in the Holy Land, however, it was also about them being in charge. A half-Armenian princess defying the Latin King of Jerusalem with the support of the local Eastern Christian people would have gone against William’s narrative of legitimacy.

William made use of the language of tyranny and popular legitimacy to legitimize the removal of Alice from power. This was not because Alice was a woman, but rather because she represented opposition to William’s pro-Jerusalem political narrative. William describes Alice as a tyrant who was opposed by nearly all in Antioch, though she in fact seems to be at least somewhat popular, especially among Eastern Christians. William’s description of this opposition was born out in the two major social statuses as William understood them: the common people and the nobility.

**Part V: Patriarch Ralph of Domfront**

When the first Antiochene patriarch, Bernard of Valence, died in 1135, the principality lost its last surviving member of the First Crusade. The position of patriarch and the clergy was all the more important amidst the political turmoil in Antioch as lay power was precarious. In this uneasy situation, Ralph of Domfront circumvented the ecclesiastical election with a wave of popular support that saw him become the new Patriarch of Antioch. Ralph, whom William actually met as a child, was formerly archbishop of Mamistra and had a military background from southern Normandy. During his tenure, Ralph did not look for papal confirmation, and instead declared himself an equal to the Church in Rome and an inheritor of Peter. This was in staunch opposition to William’s own views, which were in favor of papal supremacy. Thus, William had to describe the patriarch’s authority as illegitimate.

This section will argue that William employed Ralph’s rise at the hands of the people of Antioch to delegitimize the patriarch’s rise and authority. William associates Ralph with the mob, which the archbishop understood as an illegitimate exercise of popular agency. While Ralph’s election at the hands of the people of Antioch was not completely without precedent in the era of Church reform, it was still too radical a position for William and too much in contrast to papal supremacy. Ralph certainly had the support of many common people and lesser nobles within Antioch. William did not oppose Ralph because he was supported by the people of Antioch. Rather, William opposed Ralph for political and religious reasons and so used the patriarch’s supporters as a means to delegitimize.

The rise of Patriarch Ralph of Domfront reveals how William used the negative connotations of a “mob” to delegitimize political opponents. The archbishop’s account linked this instance of popular agency with negative connotations of certain popular behavior. William described Ralph’s ascension as being at the hands of a “frenzied mob” whom the Latin clerics were too fearful to oppose. This language of “frenzied mob” is reminiscent of “infuriated mob,” which William used to describe the debate that culminated in the destruction of the People’s Crusade. William’s description

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121 Ibid, 167.
122 Ibid, 167.
124 Ibid, 172.
of the legitimate clerical election was similar to that of the leaders of the People’s Crusade. The archbishop recorded that, to carry out this election, “bishops as well as archbishops, assembled according to custom, to provide suitably for the consolation of the church… they were giving careful consideration to this important matter, as is the custom in such cases.”127 William’s language evokes tradition with terms like “custom,” as well as thoughtful reason with words like “careful consideration” and “this important matter.” Altogether, the deliberation is written to appear sacred and intentional. This is reminiscent of how William described the leaders of the People’s Crusade, “The more important men of the army and those of greater experience.”128 Both of these groups were described as well-reasoned and rational in contrast to the “frenzied mob” of Ralph supporters. Unlike the example of the People’s Crusade, however, this popular action was led by a clergyman.

William’s description of Ralph’s supporters is quite unfavorable, though the mob’s actions are not entirely without precedent in the Latin Church. The archbishop recorded that Ralph “was chosen, it is said, by the vote of the people alone, without the knowledge of his brethren and fellow bishops, and was placed on the throne in the cathedral of the Prince of the Apostles.”129 “Vote of the people” is less harsh language than “frenzied mob,” and suggests more of what exactly happened here. The idea of the faithful electing clergymen was not unheard of in the Latin Church. During the eleventh century Cluniac Church Reform movement, “popular urban movements” were integral to reform and even formed their own “oathsworn associations.”130 Ralph’s supporters could very accurately be described as a “popular urban movement.” The most prominent demand of these reformers was for urban bishops to be elected by the community of believers instead of the decision of lay authorities.131 Electing a city’s patriarch, in this case, is not so different. William was, in fact, a staunch Church reformer. The archbishop decried the practice of secular rulers choosing bishops instead of the Pope.132 Such a stance also shows the limitations of William’s acceptance of popular involvement in clerical elections. William wanted the pope and the Church structure at large to choose bishops and patriarchs, not lay people. Thus, while a reformer, William was not quite so radical as to put the power of investiture in the hands of the citizens. This event shows a limit of William’s respect for popular agency that it could not interfere with the authority of the Latin Church.

William’s account provides more detail about who exactly supported Ralph. William asserts that Ralph was a “great favorite both of the people and those of knightly rank” due to his “magnificence” and “generosity.”133 William does not say nobility, rather “those of knightly rank,” implying the knights who supported Ralph were a lesser nobility in comparison to barons or counts. In this context, “the people” seems to refer to Antioch’s citizens. “The people” could mean the entire population of the city, but, considering it is used alongside “those of knightly rank,” it is likely meant to refer to a group separate from any kind of nobility. In a city like Antioch, that would mean the citizens. Thus, considering the city’s demographics, William’s support seemingly came from Latin settlers and lower ranking Frankish knights. It is unclear to what extent the Eastern Christian population was involved. Eastern Christians were, of course,
not Latin Christians, and so might not have any interest in choosing a Latin patriarch. The Latin patriarch was the only patriarch, however, and the Eastern Christians might have had an interest in compensating for such a lack. Either way, William did not mention Eastern Christian involvement.

While William employed the language of the “mob,” it was not Ralph’s supporters that the archbishop disliked. Ralph shirked the sanctity of the clerical election process. The patriarch also later made himself an enemy of the Roman Church as he declared himself an equal to the pope. This was in blatant opposition to William, who was a staunch supporter of papal supremacy in the Investiture Controversy. William described Ralph’s supporters as a “frenzied mob” not because he disliked popular action, but because certain connotations of popular action could be used to delegitimize Ralph’s rise to power. William had to make sure that Ralph’s rise to power was illegitimate to defend the sanctity of the papal position.

Interestingly, the Eastern Christian sources of Matthew of Edessa, Bar Habraeus, and Michael the Syrian did not mention Ralph in their accounts, despite covering matters around the same years. Perhaps, given the authors were all clergy, they did not wish to concern themselves with Latin Church controversies. Ralph’s further actions support this. Ralph argued, even before the Pope himself, that the Patriarchate of Antioch was “equal in all respects” to that of Rome. The Eastern Christian clerics could have wished to avoid commenting on such a controversial figure or have simply been unaware of Ralph’s Latin controversies. Ralph’s further actions support this. Ralph argued, even before the Pope himself, that the Patriarchate of Antioch was “equal in all respects” to that of Rome. The Eastern Christian clerics could have wished to avoid commenting on such a controversial figure or have simply been unaware of Ralph’s Latin controversies. Given that William provided the only real discussion of Ralph’s rise, it is difficult to say exactly what happened in his rise to power and why. Despite this dilemma, it seems as if popular agency was influential in this political development, though Crusades historian Malcolm Barber did dissent in that regard. Barber argued that Ralph was likely put in power by his fellow Normans among the Antiochene nobility, whom he had a background and kinship with, rather than a sudden popular movement. Barber pointed to how swift Ralph was to secure his position by jailing rivals and how he was not present at the clerical election. While this does suggest forward-planning, there is no real evidence Ralph was supported by Norman nobles rather than other of the city’s people. What is important is that William chose to stress that the people were involved in Ralph’s election. On this occasion, William opposed Ralph and so used negative connotations of the people to delegitimize Ralph’s election.

Ralph represented opposition to papal supremacy, which went against William’s own beliefs, even as a Church reformer. Thus, William looked to Ralph’s rise at the hands of the people of Antioch as a means to delegitimize. While William spoke out against the people putting Ralph in power, it was not because the archbishop opposed popular action. Rather, this instance of popular action went against William’s political and religious stance in regard to papal supremacy.

**Part VI: Prince Raymond of Antioch**

In this section, I will argue that William considered the people of Antioch as a source of legitimacy in the power politics between Antioch and Constantinople. William chose to emphasize the people as being opposed to Byzantine rule, both by the actions of the people themselves and by the words of the nobility. William did this even when it went against the most likely historical reality as revealed by other chroniclers. Though William was not completely opposed to the Byzantines, the

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134 Ibid, 85.
135 Ibid, 115.
137 Ibid.
archbishop did express fears that their rule over the Holy Land would end in the fall of the Latin East and the Christian Levant.

Even when an incident of popular agency likely did not occur, William sought to describe it as such to place Antioch and Constantinople at odds with one another, in accordance with his own political leanings. As patriarch, Ralph allowed Raymond into the city to marry Princess Constance and become prince consort. This action ended Alice’s rule in the city for good. William recorded the response of the Byzantine Emperor John II to the rise of Raymond in Antioch. William writes that, “As soon as [John II] learned from reliable sources that the people of Antioch had summoned Raymond thither, that they had given the city to him, and had bestowed upon him as his wife the daughter of Lord Bohemond, John determined to go to Antioch.” This is perhaps the first of many instances in which William put the people of Antioch at odds with Constantinople. It is remarkable in this instance because, as was discussed, it was likely not the people who put Raymond in power over Alice. In fact, the people seemed quite loyal to Alice. It was Ralph and a certain party among the nobles that supported Raymond’s rise. William, nonetheless, chose to emphasize the divide between the people of Antioch and Constantinople. The archbishop went on to record John II’s response to the marriage of Raymond and Constance, “Very wroth was he that, without his knowledge or command, they had presumed to give the daughter of their lord in marriage and, without consulting him, had dared to hand over the city to the rule of another.” The marriage of Constance to Raymond at the hands of the people is given emphasis in William’s description. William uses the people to emphasize the divide between Antioch and Constantinople.

The archbishop construed Alice as an unpopular figure to legitimize the turn of Antioch towards Jerusalem via the marriage of Constance to Raymond. The sphere to which Antioch belonged, Byzantine or Latin, was a highly contentious issue and important for William to comment on. John II might have been angry at more than just Raymond becoming Prince of Antioch without his approval. The emperor might have had designs of his own, designs which went against Jerusalem’s interests. John Kinnamos, secretary to Manuel I Comnenus, recorded that the “principal personages” of Antioch during the rule of Alice offered a marriage between Constance and Manuel, which would firmly unite Antioch to Constantinople. Such an offer would have been a threat to Jerusalem’s power in the region. Antioch eventually rescinded this offer in favor of an alliance with Leon, the ruler of Armenian Cilicia, who was a rival of John II. The extent to which Jerusalem and later William were aware of this new offer is unclear, but either marriage would have been against the kingdom’s interest. John II was already in the midst of expanding his power south and east, into the Holy Land. The Danishmend Turks were conquered in 1135, and the emperor then put pressure on Armenian Cilicia and Antioch itself. In the face of such expansion, William was repeatedly insistent that the people of Antioch did not wish to return to Byzantine rule.

William’s description of instances of popular agency is sometimes at odds with that of other chroniclers, specifically in a way that emphasizes the role of popular legitimacy. Such discrepancies can be explained by William’s political motivations, specifically to advocate Jerusalem’s hegemony. William and Niketas Choniates, a Greek chronicler, de-

139 Ibid, 83.
140 Ibid, 83.
143 Ibid, 169.
scribed the arrival of the Byzantine Emperor John II to Antioch in 1136. Niketas Choniates recorded that, “[John II] was welcomed by Prince Raymond and the entire city populace” when he arrived before Antioch. Niketas described the emperor’s arrival quite favorably, with specific mention of the “entire city populace.” William’s account of the emperor’s arrival, on the other hand, was quite different. William wrote that John II besieged the city and that there was “active warfare between the two armies.” These are obviously quite contradictory, with William recording war and Niketas peace. William also starkly disagrees with Niketas about the behavior of the people. The archbishop records that, “The people of Antioch sallied forth against the emperor’s army and frequently wrought great havoc” after Prince Raymond returned from the Siege of Montferrand. William remarks on how the people of Antioch fought against John II while Niketas claims the people welcomed the emperor. In this account, William emphasized conflict between Antioch and Constantinople. William also claimed that it was “the people” who “sallied forth against the emperor’s army.” William did not say Prince Raymond led the sally, though he was in the city, nor did he describe the knights and soldiers or the army as being responsible for the attack. William chose to emphasize the role of popular agency in this account to strengthen the notion that the people of Antioch did not want Byzantine rule. This would serve to drive the principality further into the Jerusalemite sphere, an end that was consistent with William’s loyalties.

William’s emphasis on popular will is even more stark in the context of the Damascene chronicler Ibn al-Qalanisi. Al-Qalanisi provided a more mixed account compared to William or Niketas with curious implications for the timeline of events. Al-Qalanisi records that John II retook several disloyal towns before he encamped before Antioch and “blockaded its inhabitants” in August of 1136. While so far mostly similar to the Frankish account, a blockade is different from an active siege, as William described it. A blockade is a threat while a siege is an open act of war. Al-Qalanisi went on to record that John II and Raymond reconciled before the prince left to aid the Kingdom of Jerusalem at the Siege of Montferrand. This account differs from William’s in that it places the reconciliation as having happened before, not after, Raymond left for Montferrand. Such a timeline appears more sensible. By William’s account, Raymond somehow escaped Antioch with his army while “a countless number of cavalry and a vast array of chariots” laid siege to the city and then somehow managed to return to the city after the Siege of Montferrand. William was known to favor the perspective of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, and emphasizing the divides between the Byzantine Empire and Antioch would push the principality further into the Jerusalemite sphere. Even though Antioch and Constantinople were likely at peace, William recorded they were at war in a way that emphasized popular disdain in Antioch for Greek rule. This was done to legitimize Jerusalem’s hegemony and delegitimize Byzantine expansionism.

William did not always describe the people of Antioch as being entirely opposed to the Byzantines, rather, such a description was

146 Ibid, 92.
148 Ibid.
reserved for when Byzantine interests went against that of the Latin East. William recorded that, in 1137, John II reportedly grew angry at the Antiochenes for failing to aid the emperor in his Syrian campaign and so brought his army before the city and demanded use of the citadel, as per the terms of the 1136 treaty.\textsuperscript{150} William and Niketas do seem to agree on the manner of John II’s entry to the city and that it was a glorious affair. Both also emphasized the reaction of the people to the emperor’s arrival. William recorded that, “[The emperor] was conducted with great ceremony...Songs of praise and the sound of musical instruments accompanied his progress as well as frequent bursts of joyous applause from the populace.”\textsuperscript{151} William’s account is unusual, as the archbishop was typically inclined to depict the people of Antioch as hostile to the emperor. Niketas’s record agreed with that of William’s by saying, “the entire populace poured out to greet [the emperor] and to prepare a splendid reception.”\textsuperscript{152} William did not simply twist everything to suit his political ends. The archbishop could have described the crowds hurling insults or rioting at the arrival of the emperor, but he instead chose to depict the situation accurately. This is not to say William was without bias of course, rather that he was not inclined to twist the reality of situations at every turn to suit his political ends. Moreover, the Byzantines were not necessarily enemies of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. While William often emphasized the inability of Constantinople to keep the Holy Land within Christendom, such as in his description of the conversation between the Eastern Christian patriarch of Jerusalem and Peter the Hermit, they were still fellow Christians. William even served as a diplomat to Constantinople for the Kingdom of Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{153} William was certainly willing to meet and negotiate with the Byzantines, and he did not despise them utterly. The archbishop was less friendly when the Byzantines opposed Latin Eastern political interests. The behavior of the citizens, given their number and lack of personal historical record, is more malleable and open to interpretation for a chronicler like William. Thus, each instance when William does construe the people as being opposed to something is indicative of William’s perspective.

William reveals his own perspective of the role of the people in politics when John II attempted to bribe some Antiochene citizens, namely, that he thought such participation was strange. The Byzantine emperor stayed for a time in Antioch, much to the chagrin of the Frankish nobles, and attempted to secure the loyalty of those within the city. This was done in a way that surprised William. The archbishop recorded that, “For several days, as if the palace were his own, the emperor indulged freely as he would in the pleasures of the baths and other recreations pertaining to physical welfare.”\textsuperscript{154} Such language is in line with Latin stereotypes of the Greeks as indulgent and opulent and indulgent. William’s record made note of the types of people John II showed favor towards in language that reveals his attitude towards such people. The archbishop wrote, “To the prince and the count, to their nobles, and even to some of the citizens, he showed profuse and almost prodigal munificence.”\textsuperscript{155} In other words, the emperor attempted to buy their loyalty with gifts. The prince, the count, and the nobles were all logical figures to attempt to bribe. As rulers and leading authorities, securing their loyalty was important to controlling the city. The citizens

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid, 96-97.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid, 97.
\textsuperscript{152} Niketas Choniates, \textit{O City of Byzantium}, 18.
\textsuperscript{154} William of Tyre, \textit{A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea}, 97.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid.
are a notable inclusion, however, as they were not from the ruling nobility. William specifically said gifts were given “even” to certain citizens, and thus he certainly thought the emperor’s actions were strange. This is revealing for how William saw the citizens in regard to their political participation. William did not think it was strange when they participated on the streets, but their involvement within the halls of power was atypical. William regarded the participation of the citizenry as relevant and important, to be sure, but unusual in certain circumstances. It is also possible that “even to some of the citizens” was meant to emphasize the wealth of the emperor. John II was so rich he could afford to express “profuse and almost prodigal munificence,” even to commoners. William did not mention that John II attempted to bribe the Latin clergy. Constantinople, however, did not recognize the legitimacy of the Latin clergy. Thus, it is not surprising that John II did not attempt to bribe the Latin clergy as it might grant them undo recognition. This attempted bribery suggests William’s perception of citizens in politics, though the bribery itself proved to be unsuccessful.

Niketas was content to end the account of John II’s presence in Antioch with a favorable attitude. William’s language to describe the emperor’s withdrawal shows how the archbishop employed varying language to denote legitimate popular action. The Byzantine chronicler in the very next sentence remarked how, “[The emperor] departed Antioch amidst propitious acclamations and laudatory farewells…” William went into more, very different, detail. Fearful of the emperor’s intentions, Count Joscelin, a Frankish noble, sent secret messages to the people of the city to “rouse them to arms” as rumors spread that Antioch was to be sold to the Byzantines and the citizens were to be kicked out. The riot that followed was a far cry from the “joyous applause from the populace” that welcomed the emperor to the city. The townspeople attacked the emperor’s servants, whipping many and killing those who resisted. Even though William discussed the violence of the attack, he only once used the word “mob” to describe the uprising, and that was only after it got out of hand. His description was more favorable than Ralph’s “frenzied mob” or the “infuriated mob” of People’s Crusaders. Compared to these events, William’s description of the Antioch riot of 1137 seems more akin to the uprising of the Eastern Christians during the Siege of Antioch in 1098. What both uprisings had in common, of course, was that William agreed with their outcome: the safeguarding of Antioch for Latin rule. Thus, William adapted his language to grant the rioters greater legitimacy.

William’s understanding of the cause behind the Antioch riots is linked to his brotherly attitude towards Eastern Christians and Byzantines. William believed that it was the sinfulness of all Christendom that invited God’s wrath in the form of the Arab and Turkish invasions and subsequent fall of Jerusalem and Antioch. Thus, did William blame Latin Christians, Greek Christians, and Eastern Christians. Eastern Christians endured centuries of “pious long-suffering,” and the Latin Christians absolved their sins with the First Crusade, but the Eastern Christian Patriarch of Jerusalem lamented, “We have no hope henceforward of receiving any aid from the empire of the Greeks.” The Eastern and Latin Christians had repented for their sins, but Greek Christians were continually viewed negatively. After John II expressed his desire

159 Ibid.
160 Ibid, 75.
161 Ibid, 81-83.
to “surrender to [Byzantine] care the citadel of this city” and that “[Byzantine] forces must also have free access to the city,” the Latin nobility were horrified that Antioch, which the First Crusaders bled for, might “fall into the hands of the effeminate Greeks.”

The Antiochene nobility and William feared that the Byzantine Empire would not be able to hold the city. William recorded that, in response to the emperor’s demands, the Latins noted that, “Antioch had always been the head and governor of many great provinces, and, without her, it seemed to us that the rest of the country could not hold out.” Antioch represented this alliance between Eastern and Latin Christians. Without the city and its strategic significance, William feared the Latin East would fall. Thus, did William record how the Eastern and Latin Christians worked together, in the case of riot, to stop John II’s attempts at control.

The cause of the riot is suggestive of William’s concept of the role citizens play in governance. While not always the leading authorities themselves, the people are nonetheless a part of the system and should be considered. The Latin nobles quibbled that, in the treaty of 1136, the emperor’s demands were legitimate. Moreover, the emperor had enough soldiers that resisting him with force would be difficult. Thus, the Latins turned to the only means of legitimacy and influence left to them: the people. Count Joscelin left the citadel and sent secret messages to the people of the city to “rouse them to arms” as rumors spread that Antioch was to be sold to the Byzantines and the citizens were to be kicked out. William’s language of “rouse them to arms” is more akin to a city preparing for an enemy attack than a riot of angry civilians. Whether it was Joscelin’s orders or the rumors that truly began the riots is unclear, though it was likely a mix of both. Even still, William saw this event as an instance in which the elite called for popular action and the citizens answered. The nobility proved that they had some measure of control over the riot. Once John II made his preparations to leave the city, “The prince and the count then went out with others of the principal men and by words and gestures, nods and signs, endeavored to calm the uproar.” The fact that the elites were able to control the riot was important to William. This is reflective of the archbishop’s understanding of popular agency. While the people on their own are a mob, when guided by the elite, they can be a

162 Ibid, 98.
163 Ibid, 98.
164 Ibid, 98.
165 Ibid, 98.
166 John of Salisbury, Policraticus, 29.
168 Ibid, 100.
legitimate political force.

As a source of legitimacy, William chose to emphasize the will of the people in political events. In 1142, John II tried again to exercise his influence over the Latin East. The emperor arrived before the Frankish County of Edessa with an “incomparable host,” forced the allegiance of Count Joscelin, and then continued to Antioch.169 Afraid that they would face a similar fate as Edessa, the rulers of Antioch made use of the same tool they used in 1137: the people. It was at this time that a council of the “leading men of the city” unanimously agreed to send an envoy to John II claiming that the treaty which gave the emperor dominion over the city was invalid as it was not made with the consent of all the nobles and citizens, and that the emperor was forbidden from entering the city.170 This lack of popular consent was the same excuse made the last time the emperor tried to take Antioch. Most likely, the aristocracy in Antioch did not actually care what the citizens felt on the matter, but their consent was nonetheless used to justify the council’s position. Curiously, this envoy was sent “on behalf...of the patriarch and all the citizens.”171 William made sure to mention that “all the citizens” were responsible for this decision, though the council was only made up of the “leading men.” William’s understanding of popular will clearly did not necessitate the agency of the people, though that does not mean they were not important.

William specified why exactly, among themselves, the rulers of the principality opposed Greek rule, and it had little to do with popular legitimacy. The nobles believed it was against their interests to give “a city so noble, so powerful, and so well fortified” to any empire.172 Evidently, the Antiochenes were not inclined to be part of the Byzantine Empire. The elites were particularly afraid, in this case, that, “The result of [giving Antioch to John II] would be that through the indolence of the Greeks the city, together with the whole region, would fall into the hands of the enemy, as had happened more than once before.”173

The concept of Byzantine laziness is evoked, language William used repeatedly. The Antiochene nobility also blamed the Byzantines for territorial losses in the past, blame which was used to doubt their capacity to hold land in the future. William favored such a narrative in his writings. William’s account places the decision of the Latin nobility to resist Byzantine rule as being done to protect Antioch from being taken by non-Christian powers.

William decried the actions of the Antiochene nobility, despite their attempts to leverage popular legitimacy, which reveals that William was suspicious of those who used popular will to excuse their own actions. The archbishop recorded that the nobles believed they could not simply break faith with the emperor and so had to devise a “pretext.”174 Abiding by treaties and promises was important for more than just diplomatic reliability. Raymond would not just hurt his reputation by dissolving a treaty he signed and breaking promises he made, it brought into question his legitimacy as a ruler. As John of Salisbury wrote, abiding by the law was what separated a prince from a tyrant.175 To go against the law was to go against God’s established earthly authority. Raymond only had the right to rule to Antioch through his child wife as prince consort, and could not risk such a threat to his legitimacy. Thus, the Antiochenes declared that, “these former acts of the prince would not be considered as in any way valid; that he had had no legal power to make covenants in that way, in the patrimony of his wife; and that she also had never had power to trans-

169 Ibid, 124.
170 Ibid, 124-125.
171 Ibid, 125.
172 Ibid, 124-125.
173 Ibid, 125.
174 Ibid, 125.
175 John of Salisbury, Policraticus, 29.
fer the government to another person without the acquiescence of the citizens and lords.” Raymond’s power to execute such authority is limited by his consortship and the approval of the “citizens and lords.” With the position of Raymond’s legal authority called into question by his refusal to abide by his treaty and promises, the nobles of Antioch sought to appeal to the other measure of a just ruler. John of Salisbury also wrote that a prince must consider the entire community, rather than just his own whims, to avoid becoming a tyrant. Despite sharing similar fears of the Byzantines, William viewed this breaking of the treaty with distaste. The archbishop called the use of popular consent a “pretext” to cover up this “far from laudable act.” Though William’s political interests aligned with a resistance to Byzantine expansion, he still found this act deplorable. That is not to say the archbishop did not care for popular will, rather he felt Raymond’s actions went against just rulership.

William made sure to specify that it was the citizens that did not want the Byzantines to rule Antioch, even in contrast to a Byzantine source. William recorded that the emperor was angry at the decision of the council but, ultimately, decided that it was not wise to oppose “the hearts of the citizens,” and he left for Cilicia. Niketas largely agreed with William’s account, with some variation. The Byzantine chronicler reported that John II feared that as soon as he left Antioch his progress would be undone by the Latins, and so the emperor turned for Cilicia. Both accounts agreed that John II tried to exercise control over the city but, upon realizing the extent of the opposition, the emperor abandoned the plan and left for Cilicia. Niketas, however, did not mention the Antiochene envoy or any real discussion of popular will within the city, and instead regarded the Latin elite as the main source of opposition to Byzantine rule. William chose to repeatedly mention how the rulers of Antioch leveraged the legitimacy of popular will, even while the Byzantine chronicle ignored their participation entirely. Whatever John II’s reasoning, William noted that the emperor realized that, “entering Antioch with his legions was wholly impossible.”

Though William regarded the use of popular legitimacy as a pretext, he still thought of the people as a very real political force, real enough for the Byzantine emperor to take seriously. The consent of the people, even when they were not actively participating in politics, was a factor William chose to emphasize as it granted legitimacy to the narrative he favored. While not completely opposed to the Byzantines, William saw the Latins as the most likely to uphold a Christian Levant. The archbishop employed popular action to delegitimize the efforts of Constantinople to gain control over Latin Antioch. William was nonetheless cautious of the common people being used by the nobility as a means to disavow existing agreements. The archbishop still ultimately asserted that the people of Antioch were opposed to Constantinople’s rule and that their opposition served to delegitimize Byzantine efforts to control the principality.

**PART VII: Conclusion**

William chose to not ignore the people in political developments, a factor which itself cannot be ignored. Legitimacy or illegitimacy was vital for William’s understanding of popular action, an understanding which he used to empower or discredit events and figures ac-

179 Ibid, 125.
According to his narrative. The examples I have discussed are not the only ones relevant to the discussion of popular legitimacy in William’s lengthy history. They nonetheless provide a framework for how William understood and utilized popular legitimacy. This work serves as a reminder that, even in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, common people were not idle in political affairs and made an impression on the minds of key thinkers at the time.

REFERENCES

PRIMARY SOURCES


SECONDARY SOURCES