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Narrativity in French Depictions of the Crusades

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in History from The College of William and Mary

by

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Introduction

History is never innocent. The writing of a history requires a perspective, a purpose, and a reason. It demands the author choose their words carefully to convey their meaning. The act of choosing what to include in even something as simple as a timeline demands a judgment of what events hold enough importance that others should know of them. Writing a history requires having a reason that this history should be written, a reason strong enough that it can be given to others as a justification for the time spent writing it. No matter the time period or background, all authors enter a project with an identity of their own, a culture and a tradition in which they have been raised, in which they live, and in which they work.

As the audience, readers must similarly be cautious and discerning in their understanding of a source given to them. In reading the information presented, it is necessary to try and understand the author themselves. If a writer cannot prevent the insertion of biases and cultural perceptions into their work, a reader cannot simply accept these given histories as unbiased. It is this bias, on some level, that allows historians to study different periods. It lends to understanding of ingrained cultural expectations, what might have been so commonplace that it does not require mention, what was so extraordinary that it requires great discussion at length. This makes historical narratives written in various periods possible areas of study for not only the era that the narrative itself discusses, but the era in which the narrative was written. Historians can study the methods of conveying the past: which narrative techniques are used, which cultural touchstones are included, even the use or lack of statistics.

The Crusades provide a convenient case study for these narrative theories, being both the subject of a number of narratives over the course of history and being a series of events based out
of a fundamental cultural understanding of religious obligation. Because cultural perceptions of
the role of religion and the state have changed so drastically over time, and both of these are
necessary for understanding the Crusades, the way that authors have written about the Crusades
over time provides insight into the way that they themselves perceived these obligations. In
addition, because of the great temporal distance between the Crusades and the modern day, there
has been time for many narratives of the Crusades to be written in differing eras and times of
varying historical theories and understandings of narrative truth.

**Narrative and the Theory of History**

The use of narrative for the production of history has been a topic of debate. In the 19th
century, narrative became a topic of discussion with writers such as Hegel, who was of the
opinion that history was a link between a “public present and a past which a state endowed with
a constitution made possible.”

For Hegel, history was inherently attached to a particular nation. In addition, narrative was a part of the content and all histories inherently shared the ability to be made into a narrative. However, in the 20th century, narrative as a form of telling history came under fire from various schools of thought who found it unsatisfactory. In particular, the Annales school decried narrative as unscientific, and thus unsuitable for the creation of history. Other schools came to narrative’s defense, however, with arguments ranging from ones claiming that narrative serving to represent a specific conception of time to ones asserting that narrative was simply the way that history has been done and should continue to be done.

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4 White, “Narrative in Historical Theory”, 7-8.
5 White, “Narrative in Historical Theory”, 8.
Discussion continued through structuralism and post-structuralism, including Levi-Strauss, who claimed that the problem of narrative was not inherent in narrative itself, but in the fact that historians claimed objectivity in narrative.  

Barthes continued the discussion in attempting to explain the difficulty of using narrative for history, in that narrative was initially considered the vehicle of epics and myths, fictions, but was becoming the method of conveying historical truths. In his discussion of this contradiction, he attacked the apparent objectivity of historians with his claim that the narrative structure inherently claimed ideology. According to Barthes, historical narrative was created and not discovered, and the method of writing historical narrative meant that this fact was obscured. This prevented it from being clear that the narrative was created and thus subject to the ideology and culture of its creators.

Barthes’s critique brings up interesting questions about history and the use of narrative therein. If narrative was originally meant to convey fiction and epics, then the question remains of whether narrative should be used for history, which is meant to be factual. It speaks to a question of understanding, whether historical truth is meant to appeal to the same kind of understanding as an epic. This would seem to be a potential tie into the initial understanding of myths as truths. Barthes categorizes them in with fictions, but they were once believed to be true stories about the world, in the same way that the Bible is considered to be a truth for believers.

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6 White, “Narrative in Historical Theory”, 13.
7 White, “Narrative in Historical Theory”, 13.
8 White, “Narrative in Historical Theory”, 13.
10 White, “Narrative in Historical Theory”, 33.
today. Considered in that light, it seems as if narrative is the vehicle of what humans consider to be true, even if it is later discounted.

One author whose writings reflect on the idea that narrative conveys truths is Hayden White, who analyzes the use of narrative and Western understanding of narrative in history in his 1984 article “The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory”. It is his work, combined with the others mentioned above, that provides a basis for my thesis. White’s theories of narrativity begin with the idea that narrative is not what did happen historically, but a representation of what happened.\(^\text{11}\) As he later explains it, narrative “transforms these ‘events’ into intimations of patterns of meaning that any literal representation of them as ‘facts’ could never produce.”\(^\text{12}\) White’s theories are based on those of Barthes and Levi-Strauss, and thus they tie together fairly cohesively and all three can be used together in order to analyze a narrative. It is this cohesiveness that makes White a solid base for my thesis.

A good portion of White’s article is devoted to a discussion of the multiple types of discourse, which is necessary in order to determine the efficacy of narrative. Literary and linguistic theory suggests that discourse is any utterance longer than a sentence, though it is fully possible to say a number of grammatically correct sentences with no relation whatsoever.\(^\text{13}\) Thus, the missing piece to the definition might be said to be a coherent logic. This logic might be less essential in some types of discourse like poetry, but it is a feature of a discourse. Rhetoric is a specific form of discourse with the aim of persuading the listener or reader of something.\(^\text{14}\) The logic is, then, that a discourse should be evaluated by the way it fills whatever the goal of the

\(^{11}\) White, “Narrative in Historical Theory”, 3.
\(^{12}\) White, “Narrative in Historical Theory”, 22.
\(^{13}\) White, “Narrative in Historical Theory”, 16.
\(^{14}\) White, “Narrative in Historical Theory”, 16.
speaker is, and not by some outside criteria. This leads those who defend narrative to justify it with this definition— that the goal of the narrative is to convey both facts and interpretation, and it serves to do that.\(^\text{15}\) According to White, narrative is meant to just convey the message, nothing more; the structure is not integral and does not add to or detract from what is being stated. Narrative is simply the basic template that is being used and thus not a fundamental part of the writing. Under this logic, only the content matters, and not the style.\(^\text{16}\)

White also elaborates on some of the varying types of narrative as articulated by not only historians, but literary theorists. According to these theories, there is a different theory of discourse available, the performance model, which says that the discourse is responsible for creating the idea, not just conveying it. The form of the discourse is as integral as the content. This theory differentiates a chronicle from a narrative; both make use of a chronology, but a narrative has other elements that are more literary or poetic. As opposed to the pattern of sounds in poetry, the narrative uses patterns of themes, motifs, and plots.\(^\text{17}\) A narrative features commentary from the author, and interpretation as to what is happening. This means that different stories can be created from the same basic facts, depending on emphasis placed on various events. The fact that different stories can be created differentiates historical writing from scientific writing.\(^\text{18}\) In scientific writing the same evidence should theoretically lead to the same conclusion no matter how it is framed. In historic writing, however, because the meaning is what is important and because it is created within this narrative structure, rearranging events and using

\(^{15}\) White, "Narrative in Historical Theory", 17.
\(^{16}\) White, "Narrative in Historical Theory", 18.
\(^{17}\) White, "Narrative in Historical Theory", 19.
different words to describe the events can lead to vastly different conclusions about what happened and what it means for later history.

That is to say, that the meaning of a narrative is dependent on the cultural context in which it is written. Because different cultures understand various events, narrative conventions, and connotations differently, the meaning of any different narrative varies depending on the culture not only of the writer, but of the reader.\textsuperscript{19} Given this, which makes history sound exactly like literature, the distinction is drawn in that historical writing is done from the basis of real events, as opposed to the fictional events of literature. Thus, a historical narrative serves as a bridge between the literary culture of a group of people and the facts of what occurred; it acts as an allegory, with the facts present but the meaning provided by relation to literary tradition within the culture. It gives more meaning to events than a simple list, though obviously the events and facts are still essential.\textsuperscript{20} Without them there is nothing to distinguish the historical narrative from a work of pure literature. This “literary truth”, while primarily ignored by historians, has been studied by philosophers stemming from Hegelian tradition.\textsuperscript{21}

Ricoeur, a philosopher of the more literary school of understanding narrative, has explored historical narrativity in a metaphysical sense. He believed that narrativity creates more of an understanding of the events than an explanation, as one finds in the physical sciences, and that the same methods used to decipher a historical text can and should be applied to decipher and understand events and actions.\textsuperscript{22} According to Ricoeur, the purpose of these studies should be to create not an explanation of what happened, but an understanding of what happened, and its

\textsuperscript{19} White, “Narrative in Historical Theory”, 21-22.
\textsuperscript{20} White, “Narrative in Historical Theory”, 23.
\textsuperscript{21} White, “Narrative in Historical Theory”, 5.
\textsuperscript{22} White, “Narrative in Historical Theory”, 26.
relevance. That is to say, that historical studies should not necessarily lead to a minute recounting of events, but a larger comprehension of what the event means overall in the larger scheme of history. Explanations are necessary in order to create this understanding, but the overall goal should be to illuminate the events as part of a whole.\textsuperscript{23} White uses an explanation here that is very helpful in understanding this point. He explains that it is possible to read a text, and individually understand every single sentence within a text, but still have missed the point of what you were reading.\textsuperscript{24} Similarly, a chain of events can be explained, every single one, and the person explaining these events can still have no idea as to what the meaning of these events were. Stating that a lack of bread caused the march on Versailles at the beginning of the French Revolution does not mean that the point of the event is made clear. A mere list of events do not provide the “so what?” of history that makes it relevant; further explanation of these events is necessary. They require a framework in order to link them together.

All of these theories brought together provide a lens through which various narratives can be studied. In studying a history with these narrative ideas in mind, a historian then is forced to consider not only the author and their own biases, but the entire culture in which a work is written. This is particularly true following the more literary theory of narrativity, in which the culture codes specific meanings into a text that are meant to convey certain meanings to someone reading the text within the same culture.\textsuperscript{25} For historians, who are outside this culture by sheer temporal distance, if not also geographical, it means that they must be aware of these cultural cues in order to hone in on what the author meant to convey. The further the cultural distance,
the more the historian needs to keep this in mind because the further the cultural cues can be skewed.

**Narrative and the Histories of the Crusades**

These theories of narrative and history are especially useful for the study of events such as the Crusades, in which the historian’s distance from the original chroniclers is almost a thousand years removed, but also further writing thereafter is based in whatever the cultural climate of not only the initial writer, but the later writers, who bring their own understandings to the original texts and meld them with their own comprehension. For this reason, the Crusades provide an interesting case study in which to consider narrative. Because there are writings of the Crusades spanning the vast amount of time between William of Tyre and the modern day, it is possible to see how the narratives of the Crusades evolve based on the period and author, while still remaining relatively consistent.

The study here involves three texts from different periods of history, all of them by French writers on the subject of the Crusades in the Levant. The first text is by William of Tyre, an archbishop, who wrote during the Second Crusade and died in 1185. Louis Maimbourg authored the second text, written in the late 17th century during the reign of Louis XIV at the height of the Ancien Regime. The third and final text is an essay written by a relatively unknown author, J.J. Lemoine, during the Napoleonic period, post-Enlightenment and post-French Revolution. These three texts paint a picture of French intellectualism and how they understood their history and their world over a period spanning about six hundred years.

Within these texts, it is possible to study not only narrativity, but historical methodology, the development of religious and intellectual thought, and the periods of the authors themselves.
In fact, it is the periods of the authors that come through these documents most clearly, in their methods of explaining and conveying history, in what they chose to emphasize as the most important aspects of society, and in the references to their own society that they make in their writing. The format of the narratives is intrinsically linked to their content and meaning; a Biblical style of writing, as that of Louis Maimbourg, conveys a different message than the analytical essay of J.J. Lemoine. The themes come not only from the content, but from the specific form being chosen. In this way, the ideas of narrativity discussed by White in his article become critical to any thorough understanding of the Crusades and the narratives thereof.

In the first text, *A History of Deeds Done Across the Sea* by William of Tyre, written during the Crusades, the base of William of Tyre’s recounting of events was narrative. His perception of the events around him was very strongly influenced and affected by his own culture, that of a Catholic clergyman of western European descent born and raised in the Levant. The literary school is particularly interesting in relation to William of Tyre because of this notion of cultural meaning encoded into any narrative. Because William of Tyre is furthest away temporally from the modern day, and also in the situation in which he found himself, in the middle of a land at war, the cultural biases and thoughts that made their way into his writing are especially necessary to understand. Fully grasping William of Tyre is of even greater importance due to his writing’s position as a fundamental text of Crusades study. Because it covers such a massive period of time and all from the perspective of a man who could combine personal experience and research, reading William of Tyre’s work lends a broader perspective on later works on the Crusades. He was trying to convey a moral in his writing, as White suggests is the function of a narrative. William of Tyre does not claim objectivity in his narrative, but that he was conveying the truth, which is an altogether different beast that does fit with White’s claim of
a need for morals in each narrative. William of Tyre’s narrative is written in a style similar to that of a great work of literature, presumably to convey the majesty and sweeping importance of that cause that he was discussing. His work was written in a literary style because that was his goal; he was trying to compile the story of the Crusades and present it to those who needed to know the history, both those who were part of the Crusades and those who were not.

Louis Maimbourg’s writing, written in the late 17th century during the reign of Louis XIV, is in a similar theoretical position of William of Tyre’s. As a religious man, he emphasizes the role of God during the Crusades, while also focusing what was most relevant to the aristocracy and nobility of Louis XIV’s court. Maimbourg does have distance from the Crusades, and he was born and raised in France, but he was also a religious man. His writing fits well under Ricoeur’s theory of narrativity, with a narrative creating an understanding and not an explanation. His writing is clearly coded for the religious framework of 17th century Catholic France, and a literal interpretation of his writing would lead to a misunderstanding of what he was writing. Louis Maimbourg tells stories in the Biblical style in addition to a narrative of more military, factual events. As mentioned above, this feeds further into the idea of the style of the narrative informing the content and meaning. The same content put into a different framework would not necessarily provide the same meaning, the cultural facets encoded within the frame having been removed. Narrative was used for myths and epics and is now used for history. The question is, then, how Louis Maimbourg used the style, in the style of myths, or history or if he saw no differentiation in his writing.

J.J. Lemoine’s essay from 1808 is perhaps the closest to a scientific writing of the three sources presented here. In his essay, he described the effects of the Crusades on the rest of the Europe and how the events of the Crusades led to Europe during his period. By making use of
demographics and statistics, Lemoine not only differentiates himself from both William of Tyre and Maimbourg, but places himself into an entirely different narrative framework as well. Lemoine’s writing is less metaphorical and more literal than either William of Tyre or Louis Maimbourg. While his logic was still reliant on a European, Western framework, the moral he was trying to convey was less based in Christianity and more based in a post-Enlightenment, rationalist understanding of the world. His writing also encounters less of the problem of Barthes’ question of the use of narrative because there is less narrative in the text and more analysis. That is to say, there are brief periods of narrative interspersed with much longer periods of analysis, and the main piece that serves as narrative and gives the initial background on the Crusades reads almost as more of a chronology without dates, or a simple list of events in chronological order than any kind of narrative. Lemoine’s writing, then, would seem to stand apart from both Maimbourg’s and William of Tyre’s writing. What links them is not only their topic, but also the western framework in which all three authors are writing. All three writers created distinct narratives that utilized the parameters of their specific styles; their meanings all would have been changed if the narrative format had been altered. In this way, each of these authors provides a valuable example of the use of narrative to convey a particular message in not just content, but with the use of narrative itself.

In order to examine the reflection of the above authors’ culture and society within their work, this thesis will be divided into three chapters with one dedicated to each author and their work, arranged in chronological order. By exploring these texts in chronological order it is possible to study the development of historical writing, grounding it in histories of one historical event. Through the prism of these histories of the Crusades, we can begin to see the imprint of the changes within French culture and society over six hundred years of historiography.
Chapter 1: William of Tyre

In the 1180s, the tide of the Crusades was turning. The Holy Land, most of which had been under dominant Western Christian control, was under siege. Saladin’s army was winning victory after victory, rapidly growing and consuming Christian strongholds.\(^{26}\) This success was of immense concern to Western Christians, who struggled to respond as a united front to counter this new threat.\(^{27}\) One of the growing problems was the lack of supplies and reinforcements, resulting in petitions being sent back to Europe in a plea for reinforcements.\(^{28}\) William of Tyre’s history of the Crusades was used to call for aid, but also recounts the history of the Crusaders in the region from the First Crusade to near the end of the Third Crusade.

William of Tyre’s account has remained one of the fundamental texts of the Crusades to this day. In order to discuss his writing, this chapter will be divided into three sections: 1) William of Tyre’s life, 2) the content of his writing, and 3) the narrative techniques that William of Tyre uses in order to advance his arguments within his text. William of Tyre’s writing features a clear moral judgment; the acts of the Crusaders were necessary to save the Holy Land from the barbaric heretics who were defiling sacred ground and abusing God’s chosen people. This moral judgment is one that also instills the importance of the text in his reader.

William of Tyre’s Life

William of Tyre was born in the Holy Land in approximately 1130. His parents are unknown, though presumably European, and it has never been determined exactly where they came from.\(^{29}\) It is believed that he was of French origin from the focus of his writings, though it

\(^{27}\) Madden, Crusades: Illustrated History, 71.
\(^{28}\) Madden, Crusades: Illustrated History, 80.
is also possible that he was Italian, or at least had a mixed heritage of the two. William himself offers no statements on the topic, which leads to the idea that he was likely not noble-born.  

This is further supported by a brief mention of his brother which appears in a legal document, where his only notation is that he is William of Tyre’s brother. He was obviously well educated, having knowledge of French, Arabic, Greek, and Latin along with smaller backgrounds in other languages such as Hebrew and Persian. He was educated, to some extent, in Europe, whether in France or Italy, and likely by the Catholic Church in ecclesiastical matters.

King Amaury, Christian king of Jerusalem, in 1167 succeeded in being received in Cairo as well as leading an expedition down the Nile River, though it was militarily unsuccessful. However, he still viewed these as great successes and wished for a history to be written. For reasons unknown, likely William’s education, he selected William to be the writer of this history in exchange for a position as archdeacon of Tyre and a boost in income. There was no indication that William had any designs of becoming a historian; his educational choices seemed entirely to be leading toward joining the Church. Nevertheless, he undertook the history that he was requested to write. In 1169, he again met with King Amaury, who was pleased enough with his work to request that William serve as a tutor for his son, Baldwin, who would become King Baldwin IV.

William continued in this role for several years. At the same time, King Amaury came to the conclusion that a new history of the Kingdom of Jerusalem was required, in about 1170. William agreed to produce this new history, even with the history that King Amaury had originally requested on his own work left unfinished. King Amaury later also requested a history

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31 William of Tyre, History of Deeds, 8-9
32 William of Tyre, History of Deeds, 12-13
33 William of Tyre, History of Deeds, 14.
of “the princes of the Orient.” William planned on stopping work on these histories after King Amaury’s death in 1174. There was little enough reason to continue: he had only begun on the King’s request, this was not his chosen field, and he had nothing to gain from the continuation of these histories. However, politics intervened and King Baldwin’s former tutor found himself as chancellor of the kingdom. This position led him to first be granted the position of archdeacon of Nazareth (while still holding the same office in Tyre). In 1175, William was finally appointed Archbishop of Tyre. He thus became not only a powerful figure in Church politics in the area, but also the king’s closest adviser. The two of them were close, given that William had been his tutor as a boy and the king, now ruling on his own, was only fifteen years old.35

William of Tyre, known for his support of and by the king, found himself on the wrong side of politics when the Patriarch of Jerusalem finally died and the position needed to be filled. He failed to secure the position and found his political position weakened as well. It was at this point that he resumed writing his history.36

This time, when he began working on his history, he broadened its scope so it was addressed not only to his king, but to all Christians in a plea for aid and support. He was further interrupted in 1182 by political strife that almost reached the scale of a full civil war before he assisted in reconciling the two sides.37 Saladin, who had been plaguing the kingdom for years, again invaded in 1183. In 1184, William wrote a preface to his work indicating that he intended for there to be twenty-three books within it. The twenty-third book was barely begun before he died, sometime before May 1185.38 This expansive timeframe in which William of Tyre was

34 William of Tyre, History of Deeds, 16
35 William of Tyre, History of Deeds, 16-17.
36 William of Tyre, History of Deeds, 22.
37 William of Tyre, History of Deeds, 23.
38 William of Tyre, History of Deeds, 24-25.
writing means that he was fitting events into his history and deciding their relevance over a long period of time. Events as they happened could be ascribed meaning based on what he wrote before and how he understood what was happening.

During William of Tyre’s life, military activity was more or less a hallmark of the region, with invasions and expeditions and truces occurring in spurts and fits. King Amaury’s incursion into Egypt was not unusual; what was unusual about it was his asking William to write a history for him. A comprehensive history of the Crusades had not been written since Fulcher of Chartres in 1127, leaving about a fifty year gap in events. William’s position was, likewise, not entirely unusual. An ecclesiastical was hardly a strange choice in tutor for a prince. However, if the premise is accepted that William was not noble born, that he was the child of merchants, as has been suggested, then he achieved an incredibly high position for his status. Most of the figures discussed around him are noble born, certainly practically all of Baldwin IV’s court, and for an adviser to the king to not have some nobility seems surprising. However, his gift for languages and writing seem to have secured him his positions, as it was this gift that likely led King Amaury to originally choose him to write the history of his reign.

William of Tyre has no intention of actively deceiving readers, but I would argue that his understanding of historical truth, as it stands, is different than the fairly secular, in theory unbiased idea of truth. William of Tyre, being a religious figure, had a perspective on the world that lent itself to a religious understanding of the world around him and the people and events therein. Like Louis Maimbourg, who will be discussed in the next chapter, at a certain point William of Tyre is trying to convey not only a physical truth of facts, but also a moral and religious truth.

The Writings of William of Tyre

William of Tyre’s writing features a number of digressions, which while providing insight into the world around William of Tyre, also lend themselves to interpretations of what personally mattered to him as well as what he believed would matter to posterity. Church conflicts, military battles, the relations between various figures, they all mattered to William of Tyre enough that they all needed to be put in this history. While it started out as a chronicling of one king’s military exploits became a history that spanned hundreds of years and vast distances.

While his foreword stresses the importance of truth and the need for a historian to present things as they happened, William of Tyre is writing from the perspective of a Western Christian in the Holy Land, describing everything from the abuses of the Christians under Muslim rule to the God-ordained victories of the Crusaders in the Holy Land. For William of Tyre, truth, the truth that his writing is meant to convey to his readers, was based in Catholicism and the inherent rightness of the Crusades and the reclamation of the Holy Land, as part of an overarching moral truth of the Catholic Church. Those past accounts that did not reflect contemporary facts were considered incorrect, as opposed to reflecting truth at a different time.\footnote{William of Tyre, History of Deeds, 327-328} William of Tyre’s focus is his own time, for the most part. Those parts of the text that he has lived through seem to be primarily based on his own experiences. His close placement to King Amaury and King Baldwin IV prevents a truly objective telling of the event of their time, but his purpose is not necessarily to give a truly objective account. William of Tyre’s purpose is to give an account of the Crusades as he understood what had happened before his time and what was happening as he wrote. Not only is his writing influenced by their opinions and personalities, but the politics of both the Church and the various states around him. He has a personal interest, in potentially securing a
position and seeing allies elevated to appropriate positions.

William of Tyre begins his work with a prologue detailing the duty of a historian, that is, to present the truth and nothing less. He does agree that describing only the truth tends to make enemies, but maintains that this is a necessary task of a historian and to do less would be to fail one’s duty.\footnote{William of Tyre, \textit{History of Deeds}, 53.} Of course, this truth is subjective. For William of Tyre, it is heavily based in Eurocentrism and the Catholic faith, in such a way that the historical truth he offers is the idea, obvious for the time, that the Muslim people who were living in the Holy Land were infidels and savages who routinely abused and murdered Christians. This also includes the idea that Islam was a heresy and Muhammad was an agent of Satan, sent to tempt and coerce Christians into renouncing the true faith. However, he does still feel that it is his duty to give this history and present this truth so that others may understand, regardless of the enemies that writing a history such as his would find him. It is also necessary to note that William of Tyre did criticize Crusaders who he felt were immoral or incompetent, which likely garnered him political enemies even about the Christians. For William of Tyre, enemies of his history would come from both non-Christians and political enemies within Jerusalem.

It also needs to be stated that William of Tyre started originally writing this history as a series of letters to King Amaury, King of Jerusalem, and later continued it for his son Baldwin IV.\footnote{William of Tyre, \textit{History of Deeds}, 13.} He is presenting a history to a king who is intimately invested in this history and its outcome, but also a patron of his. In fact, it began as a history of his patron. It was necessary to first portray his king in a good light, which would not seem to have been a hardship given that they were close friends. Later, when the history is broadened to include the entire history of the Crusades up to 1170, William obviously is on one definite side of a war. For him, it is a black or
white issue, with the Christians blessed by God and destined for victory, if not for the failings of men. His education and position in the Church more or less ensures this view. Though he does write the requested history of the non-Christians of the area, they receive much less detail and insulting terms, such as “false prophet” in reference to the Prophet Muhammad.\footnote{43 William of Tyre, \textit{History of Deeds}, 56.}

To this end, William cites several instances of abuse of the Christians that occurred before the Crusaders arrived. He describes several massacres of Christians, and invokes a type of sainthood for those who did not renounce their faith. One story in particular reads as an almost biblical story of a martyr, in which local Muslims decided to frame Christians for the desecration of a Muslim mosque with the corpse of a dog, an unclean animal. The Christians were all to be punished for this act, if no one stepped forward. One young man, knowing that none of the Christians had committed the act, and knowing that they would all be massacred unless someone took responsibility, stepped forward and was martyred.\footnote{44 William of Tyre, \textit{History of Deeds}, 68-69.} This act is venerated by William of Tyre, as the ultimate sacrifice of a Christian for his faith. He speaks of how the Christians were unable to worship freely before the arrival of the Crusaders, that their rulers were abusing them and only let them live in order to tax them into ruin and lead them away from the Christian faith.\footnote{45 William of Tyre, \textit{History of Deeds}, 67.}

Even during William’s period, he talks about abuses committed by Nur al-Din’s and Saladin’s forces upon local Christians, including full-blown massacres of all Christians in the area.\footnote{46 William of Tyre, \textit{History of Deeds}, 428, 449.} Whether this is exaggerated or not is up for debate, given William’s view of Muslims, but William himself certainly believed what he was writing. Some Muslim sources contradict this. It does, however, lend further weight to the idea that William of Tyre’s narrative fits in with
Hayden White’s theory, that narratives require morals in order to feel complete.

William’s education and high placement within the society of Jerusalem and the Holy Land lend themselves further to this idea of morality being a fundamental piece of his narrative. Having been educated in the Church and an integral part of hierarchy, William also provides insights into the inner works of the Church as an organization, everything from who was promoted to disputes with the Church, such as perceived abuses by the Knights Hospitaliers.\footnote{William of Tyre, \textit{History of Deeds}, 239-240.}

Being within the Church grants him a unique view of the politics of the area as well. While he is technically outside of politics, due to his church position, promotion, from his accounts, appeared to rely heavily on a type of patronage system. This is supported by Malcolm Barber’s \textit{The Crusader States}, in one chapter of which he discusses the clerics and chaplains engaged with various lords, or hospitals for pilgrims being granted donations.\footnote{Malcom Barber, \textit{The Crusader States}, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 106-107.} The higher ranking members of the Church were distinctly embroiled within the politics, especially given the amount of worldly wealth that came with the appointment to a position such as archbishop.\footnote{Jean Richard, \textit{The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem}, trans. Janet Shirley (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1979), 98.} In addition, William, despite being a Churchman, was promoted to the level of an adviser for King Baldwin IV. He was required to know the politics of the area, as well as the military and commercial activity. He details all of it in his book, from all corners of the Holy Land, whether he witnessed it personally or indirectly through letters, gossip, or reports from either the king or other members of the Church. He was in a position to pass judgments on what was occurring around him and how people were reacting to each other and various crises that sprung up during his lifetime.

William of Tyre also features some history of the Muslim and Turkish population in
Middle East. Despite being a devout Catholic, he does have some knowledge of the Islamic faith; he notes that there is a divide between Sunni and Shi’a Muslims. He also describes the history of the Turks and their rise to power.\textsuperscript{50} The story he gives is closer to a legend than to an actual series of events, as noted by the translator, but it is also noted that it is possible that this is how the Turks understood their own history at the time, and it is likely that this is what he was drawing from in his description of their history. He also wrote a book titled \textit{History of the Princes of the Orient}, at the request of King Amaury. This granted him a knowledge of the local Muslims that was perhaps unusual for the time. It was this work that likely led to his reckoning of the Sunni vs. Shi’a divide and the history thereof, which does appear in \textit{A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea}. This leads to an interesting contradiction, where William of Tyre has researched Islam and Islamic history for this book, but still considers their enemies infidels and their destruction, or at least defeat, utterly necessary. These attitudes were likely taught to him by the Church education and the very religiously-focused thinking of the period. However, even he notes at least one area of cooperation between Muslims and Christians, a town wealthy enough that Christian and Muslim rulers simply split the taxes and tributes levied from the city\textsuperscript{51}. This indicates that despite William’s assertion of Muslim wickedness and detailed accounts of battles, troop movements, and warfare, there was still cooperation. This is only to be expected when two groups live in as close proximity as the Christians and the Muslims did in the Holy Land. While soldiers fought, the common people did not necessarily have a reason to hold grudges against each other. This is interesting, that even in such a polarized, black and white account, William of Tyre does note cooperation. This would seem to contradict the morals being conveyed by his

\textsuperscript{50} William of Tyre, \textit{History of Deeds}, 71.
\textsuperscript{51} William of Tyre, \textit{History of Deeds}, 470.
writing, but it is still included when it would be relatively easy just to leave it out. This speaks to his attempt to write an unbiased history, to try and write things as they actually happened.

Another valuable piece of William of Tyre’s writings is the information about daily life of the period that he includes. While such things are not the focus of his writing, mentions of legal systems and doctors appear that give useful insights into the time. For instance, one subject that comes up is the idea of a divide between doctors trained in Europe, or at least trained in Western medicine, and those from the area. William details the death of King Baldwin III from some unidentified poisoning or illness, which he blames on the physician charged with his care. He claims that “our Eastern princes, through the influence of their women, scorn the medicines and practice of our Latin physicians.” William claims that the pills that the doctor of the court, Barac, gave the king medicine that made him ill and later killed him. In a similar vein, William notes a type of opium that grew in Egypt, near the Nile. He claims that this is “the best opium found anywhere”, and that it is “called by the physicians Theban.” This indicates that it was used in the medicine at the time, though he does not note the particular uses for which physicians harvested it. Such descriptions as the discussion of medicine above emphasize the divides between the inhabitants of the Levant, not only religious divides but also cultural and technological.

The Narrative of William of Tyre

William of Tyre’s perception of historical truth and historical narrative seems to be much more tightly tied into the narrative ideals discussed by Hayden White. White argues that a

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52 William of Tyre, History of Deeds, 292.

narrative requires a moral judgment, as well as a definitive beginning or ending, or the reader of a text feels cheated, in some way. It is interesting that William of Tyre calls his work *A History of Deeds Done Across the Sea*, considering Hayden White’s debate about narrativity. It only serves to reinforce how thoroughly the idea of narratives portraying history is ingrained in Western culture and historiography. Even in the 1100s, before any strong debate on the methodology of history had been written, it was simply accepted that narrative was history. This lends William’s work to a less literal interpretation, as Ricoeur suggests in his theories, which were derived from Hegelian theory. Ricoeur argues for a type of literary interpretation for history, in which the narrative itself needs to be examined as much as the actual content must. Ricoeur’s theory explains that narrative is necessary for history as it encompasses individual events, and that the purpose of history is to indicate the meaning of the events being described. The explanation of history and its meaning is what requires the narrativity, in that narrative can express meaning in a way that a simple chronology or list of events cannot.

William of Tyre’s narrative links the events he details into one series of events that come together to compose the Crusades. Taken individually, they are just events. It is his narrative that gives them meaning. Because it is the narrative giving the events meaning, and not purely the events themselves, the narrative must also be analyzed.

The idea that the narrative must be examined as much as the events themselves is difficult. It implies that events themselves have no meaning until people ascribe the meaning to them. While this is logical, in that in order for someone to go through the trouble of recording and describing an event, some meaning has to be given to it. This also means, of course, that the meaning of events are subjective. If the meaning is not inherent to the event or action, and humans give it the meaning, the any number of different meanings and relevancies can be
ascribed to one event. It is these differences in the meanings that make the study of history subjective, and variable from period to period.

For William of Tyre, his history had both a sponsor and a purpose. Writing a history under the sponsorship of the Christian kings of Jerusalem and in the position of Archbishop of Tyre lends William of Tyre a focus and a perspective in his writing that very clearly comes through. As mentioned previously, Hayden White claims that histories require morals in order for them to feel complete to readers. William of Tyre seems to have subscribed to this idea, featuring in the brief beginning of his last chapter a reflection on the writing of history, in that he claims that “by narrating successful achievements, [chroniclers of past events] hope to inspire posterity with courage, while by furnishing examples of misfortunes patiently endured they may render later generations more cautious under similar circumstances.”\(^{54}\) This idea lends a different light to his work that also fits in with his religious upbringing and life. This kind of moralizing and education would have been something familiar to William of Tyre in his position as Archbishop. It also lends the history a sort of biblical overtone, in that each instance illustrated within the text is meant to teach, to convey some new lesson.

The morals that William of Tyre was attempting to convey were based in his faith, in his belief in the Crusades and their righteousness. However, he was trying to extend them to those still in Europe as well as those in the Holy Land with him. In writing these histories and framing them as this call for aid, William of Tyre drew his readers still at home into a part of these stories. As European Christians, William of Tyre’s readers were linked to this history, or at least he believed that they should be. It was their responsibility to acknowledge and accept this history as something important and integral to their own lives and understandings. This shared

responsibility linked Europe to the Holy Land in both history and religion and conferred ownership to those who did not go on Crusade.

William of Tyre’s narrative is fundamentally based in both the Catholic faith and an identity that linked him and the Crusaders in the Holy Land to Europe, even though many Christians, such as William of Tyre, were born and raised in the Holy Land. This link binding the two of them pushes the Crusades into a chapter of French history despite the geographic distance between the Levant and France. His writing was meant to push the Crusades into France, and it seems to have succeeded.

While William of Tyre is a fundamental source of the Crusades, his was not nearly the last account to be written. Over time, new ideas and ways of discussing history appeared. However, the next source discussed is one written by another member of the Church, about four hundred years later.
Chapter 2: Louis Maimbourg

Centuries after William of Tyre’s plea for aid for Jerusalem, the Crusades again appear in French thought and writing, in the form of Louis Maimbourg’s History of the Crusades. Like William of Tyre, Louis Maimbourg was a clergyman in the Catholic Church who undertook to write a complete history of the Crusades. He was not commissioned by his king to write his history, and it was one work among a number of them, all on the topic of religion.

While the ostensible topic of Maimbourg’s work is, as the name states, the Crusades, it proves even more valuable as a study of France under Louis XIV than it does as a work on the Crusades. The politicization of history is not a modern fault and can easily be applied to the 17th century and earlier. As Lossky claims in his book Louis XVI and the French Monarchy, the 17th century saw “the growth of historical research, which was spurred by the need to demonstrate the antiquity, and thus the sound and venerable nature of local traditions.”\(^{55}\) The history that was being produced was being used as a base for the thoughts of the period; it was intrinsically required to link to thoughts and structures of Maimbourg’s time. In addition, the history was required to provide a real basis for the structures. It is difficult to base an entire way of life on something that might have been considered a coincidence. It was necessary to have strong reasons for tradition. With this knowledge, it is necessary to study Louis Maimbourg’s work as a reflection of his period. By studying his writing and the messages of his own time encoded within it, we can illuminate how history has been written and continues to be written to this day.

Louis Maimbourg’s work demonstrates two prevalent threads of the society he lived in: a strong sense of religiosity and a society centered on the power of the king and nobility. This

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historical need to prove traditions fed into these ideas. If nothing else, religion is founded on tradition. In France during this period, that same religion fed the monarchy, through the idea of the divine right of kings. The nobility, as the highest-ranking members of this society, and also intertwined with the high-ranking members of the clergy who participated in this religion were dependent on this same tradition. In the same vein, the public opinion of the lower classes was relatively disregarded, not coming into play on a large scale until the mid to late 18th century.\(^{56}\) Without this public opinion as a factor, the only things left to focus on were the nobility and the religion that permeated into all strata of society.

First, I will give a brief sketch of Louis XIV’s reign and the social and political developments of France at this time, in order to give a context to Maimbourg’s writing. Secondly, I will present a short biography of Louis Maimbourg himself, for in order to know the writer’s goals, it is necessary to know the writer, and more specifically, the cultural context in which he was writing, in order to understand the meanings encoded in his writing.

**The Life and Times of Louis Maimbourg**

Louis Maimbourg was born to a noble family in 1610 and was well-educated. He studied in Rome and eventually returned to France to become a Jesuit. When debate arose over the question of how much independence the French Catholic Church had from the Pope, he published a defense of the rights of the French Catholic Church and was expelled from the Jesuit Order. In return for this loyalty, Louis XIV granted Maimbourg a comfortable position at the Abbey of Saint-Victor in Paris.\(^{57}\) Maimbourg spent the rest of his life writing various texts and

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histories, primarily regarding religion, such as the *History of Calvinism*, *History of Lutheranism*, and the work that is the focus of this chapter: *History of the Crusades*.\(^{58}\)

Louis XIV, the Sun King and one of Maimbourg’s primary benefactors, led France through both war and peace, as well as long-term conflict with the Catholic Church which would last through the reigns of several Popes.\(^{59}\) In 1667, Louis XIV’s troops invaded the Spanish Netherlands. This war only lasted a year, but it was the first of many.\(^{60}\) With no more than five years of peace in a single stretch once Louis XIV began his wars, one would expect that domestic affairs would be neglected, but this was hardly the case.\(^{61}\)

Louis XIV also involved himself greatly in domestic affairs despite his near-constant wars. While a partial concern of his was to fund his wars, he was also “the Most Christian King” and strove to live up to this title.\(^{62}\) His support of Louis Maimbourg, a religious man expelled from the Church on his behalf, would seem to lend weight to his title. He was not content to let religious debates play out without his influence. Because of this, religious thought and theological positions became increasingly important during his reign, particularly for anyone seeking a title or court appointment. The strong link between the Catholic Church and the state of France also meant that any large questions pertaining to theology and the management of the Church were questions that affected the running of the state.

One example of the iron-clad links between the French state and the Catholic Church that made itself known during France’s numerous internal religious conflicts had to do with the

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\(^{58}\) *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Louis Maimbourg".

\(^{59}\) Doyle, *Old Regime France*, 170.


ability of the king to affect his subjects’ daily lives. The radical Augustinians in France were focused on the importance of being in a state of grace in order to receive Communion, in theory wanting much more stringent requirements for Church-goers to participate fully in the weekly Mass. The fear, however, regarding this idea, was that it would drive away members of the Church. The Church was used as a way of broadcasting government proclamations, but it was also often the center of life in a small town. Cutting off this avenue would exclude many people from vital parts of daily life.\(^{63}\) This would seem to cut off the reach of the king and actually made managing the country significantly more difficult. At the very least, it would have required the hiring and management of agents in order to propagate the king’s will, if people could not hear the news in their parish churches.

Maimbourg published *History of the Crusades* in 1675 during France’s war with the Dutch, a Protestant country. While it was written before the expulsion of the Protestants and much of the most heated religious controversy, Louis Maimbourg’s writing was used as propaganda for the expulsion of the Protestants from France not long after its publication.\(^{64}\)

**Louis Maimbourg’s *History of the Crusades***

While Maimbourg wrote a number of religious texts, his work on the Crusades, being focused on French military leaders carrying out large-scale conquests, is more targeted to Louis XIV’s interests. Most of the great leaders included in the text are noble-born, and represent the tradition of French noble military leadership that led to the aristocracy of the 1600s. The figures Maimbourg discusses would have been familiar to his readers, or at the very least the noble house being referenced.

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\(^{63}\) Lossky, *French Monarchy*, 184.

Maimbourg wrote his history for a number of reasons. Firstly, it gave him a chance to
glorify his patron, as well as other aristocrats. Secondly, he wanted to write about the
fundamental strength of the Catholic Church at a time when it was facing opposition from
Protestants, and more specifically, to write about the strength of French Catholicism. In addition,
Maimbourg’s works were not primarily histories, but platforms for religious discussions. A
history of the Crusades was but another avenue for this sort of writing.

Maimbourg begins his history with a note that he does not cite any of the sources from
his own period, only those older sources, the citations of which are few and far between. This, of
course, makes finding documentation for his claims much more difficult than it would otherwise
be. He claims that citing his contemporaries would turn his work from history into literary
criticism. While he does not elaborate further on this point, it seems like an attempt to maintain
the purity of his own writing, by not calling the work of his contemporaries into question by
name. However, it also adds the assumption that any reader of Maimbourg’s writing would also
have been familiar with the other writers of his period, to the point that a reader immediately be
able to identify information drawn from another writer. This assumes a well-read readership or a
readership for which it would likely not have mattered what Maimbourg sourced from other
writings, and describes the audience for whom Maimbourg was writing. It also indicates the state
of scholarship at the time and the general style of writing and research.

For Louis Maimbourg, truth includes a religious aspect, wherein religion permeates into
everyday life in all situations. He did not feel it necessary to find Arab accounts for his writing
because it simply did not matter. The European sources included everything that he felt the need
to say. As with William of Tyre, historical truth does not necessarily boil down to cold, hard

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facts. Both Maimbourg and William of Tyre being religious figures led to a morally based truth, in which the focus was conveying the message and essence of events with demonstrations of God’s power and presence in them. The truth as they understood it was based in religion and religious truth. Thus, this understanding of truth was encoded in Maimbourg’s writing and how he perceived the world around him and the history that he was writing.

The idea of a truth based in Catholicism and directed by God’s hand is a continuous theme through Maimbourg’s work. Religiously, the miracles that Maimbourg describes grant the Crusades legitimacy; they have been blessed and sanctioned by God. Maimbourg’s writing frequently includes tropes that almost begin to resemble Bible passages, such as the story that Maimbourg cites of one nobleman taming a lion which followed him into battle until its death, or another in which he claims that a plague that descended on an army camp was divine retribution. Furthermore, the plague was lifted by repentance and prayers from the army’s bishops. This is similar to the story of the plagues of Egypt, in a similar attributing of massive forces to God’s power in retribution for human failings. Even his account of the beginning of the Crusade, in which everyone simply knew of the Crusade as soon as it was declared, from East to West, is logically impossible. It is reminiscent of Pentecost and the descending of the Holy Spirit onto the Apostles, after which they could speak in tongues and all would understand them.

Drawing on Biblical sources would have provided familiar ideas to readers of Maimbourg’s era. These are incidents which would not, perhaps, pass muster as real “facts” today, but at the time they were important pieces of understanding the events of the Crusades. The Bible and religion were the frameworks through which Maimbourg, and writers before him,

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66 Louis Maimbourg, Crusades, 61, 47.
67 Louis Maimbourg, Crusades, 47.
68 Louis Maimbourg, Crusades, 11.
including William of Tyre, understood the world. The exclusion of these events, for Maimbourg, would likely not even have been considered. This was the narrative style to which his readers were accustomed because of its similarity to the Bible.

Maimbourg not only privileged Catholics in his writing with passages on their morality and blessings from God, he used his writing to disparage other religions. His attitudes demonstrate the overwhelming support for the Catholic Church in France, and at least have the support of the nobility who would have been both funding and reading his work. Certain passages state outright his perspectives on Islam. He claims that Muhammad was “a cruel deceiver” and that Islam is a lie.⁶⁹ In fact, he speaks of it as he might speak of a heretical movement of Christianity. At the time, it seems likely that his understanding of the two was not much different, both of them being misunderstandings of God’s will. He also discusses the oppression of Christians in the Levant prior to the arrival of the Crusaders as a demonstration of the inherent cruelty and barbarism of the Muslims.⁷⁰ For Maimbourg, while these abuses may not have been committed as he describes, they are integral to the understanding of why the Crusades were necessary. This understanding of necessity also extends back to that same logic of history being used to justify local traditions; Muslim barbarism and cruelty was, according to the history, the basis for the Crusades.

Maimbourg’s hostility also extends to Eastern Christians. According to Maimbourg, when Peter the Hermit went to the Levant and saw the abuses being carried out there on the Christians, he went to the Patriarchs of the eastern branches of Christianity. These Patriarchs apparently asked Peter to go request help from the West. While if this was the case, it would likely be for military support, Maimbourg portrays it as a weakness that the Patriarchs have to
call in the stronger, more advanced West to save them from the infidels. This is another demonstration of using the history as a justification for what happened; it was the weakness of the Patriarchs that called in the French Crusaders into the Levant.

The problem of heresies appearing within the Church is reiterated in Maimbourg’s writing, not with a reference to his own time, but a discussion of Pope Urban’s treatment of heresies and the calling of councils in order to deal with them appropriately. This is a problem that Maimbourg can personally relate to, given his other works on Arianism. The problem of heresies within the Catholic Church is hardly a problem restricted to Maimbourg’s period, but his discussion of it illuminates what a problem he finds it. He also sees Pope Urban’s call to the Crusade as a kind of end to having dealt with the heresies. If the entire Church could come together to quash dissent and heresies in the Holy Land, it could do the same with the heresies that Maimbourg believed himself to be battling in Europe.

**Maimbourg in Politics**

Maimbourg’s work offers as much insight into secular matters as religious doctrine and ideology. As a man wholly reliant on the beneficence of Louis XIV, all of Maimbourg’s writings would have had to be something of which Louis XIV would approve. In addition, as a former bishop in the upper echelons of society, Maimbourg had the placement to offer commentary on the politics of his day. At the time of Maimbourg’s writing, France was at war with a Protestant country and simultaneously struggling with its own population of Protestants. With Louis XIV as the “most Christian king”, religion was supposed to be a largely unifying factor for France, despite the arguments and factions therein. Throughout the text, Maimbourg makes references to

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73 Doyle, *Old Regime France*, 177, 180.
the political situation in relation to the Crusades, in comparisons that generally favor 17th century France.

Maimbourg’s political alliances are made exceedingly clear from the outset of the text. *History of the Crusades* begins with a flowery dedication to Louis XIV, in which Maimbourg asserts that the Crusades certainly would have been won had Louis XIV been fighting them, and that certainly it is his greatest honor to be known as a supporter and devotee of such a magnificent king.\(^74\) The dedication places this work in both a religious and material framework, in that Maimbourg’s dependence on Louis XIV’s goodwill is demonstrated. It is obviously a dedication to his greatest sponsor, but also immediately sets up potential unreliability in his account. It is clearly in his best interest to portray the monarchy and Louis XIV’s perceived ancestors in the most positive light possible, as good people and powerful leaders, blessed and ordained by God. At one point in the text, Maimbourg offers to add the ancestors of nobles and other notables if they provide a memoir from the period as documentation for an ancestor having gone on Crusade.\(^75\) He also makes reference to a noble of the First Crusade whose descendant has served Louis XIV in the most recent war at the time of his writing, and whose exploits have brought great honor to their family name.\(^76\) Because of this, Maimbourg must be viewed through the lens of not only a man portraying religious and historical beliefs, but political ideals as well.

Maimbourg was a high-ranking member of the Catholic Church before his excommunication by the Pope resulted in his losing many of resources and much of his support. Writing on the Crusades offered a chance to write on a fundamentally religious topic with

\(^74\) Louis Maimbourg, *Crusades*, b.
\(^76\) Louis Maimbourg, *Crusades*, 63-64.
relevance to the current king and the state of France. Again, this idea of justifying current traditions and events with history reappears. Like many writers of the time, Maimbourg required supporters to continue this work and this passage indicates the importance of patronage and the favor of the nobles in this regard. At the time of Maimbourg’s writing, what was relevant was nobility and religious controversy, and thus that was what made its way into the work.

Maimbourg’s work also gives a view of how the people living within France viewed themselves, providing a contrast to the later nationalist perceptions of one French nation and thus demonstrating the contrast between France during Maimbourg’s time and France after the French Revolution. At various points in the work, he references specifically French, Norman, Lorrainer, Gascon, Provencal, and Bearnais soldiers. This differentiation demonstrates how French people viewed themselves, not as a unified whole, but instead with a distinct regional identity, a sharp contrast to later efforts made by France to homogenize the country’s people and language. This is, notably, coming from a clergyman who had been in favor of Gallican rights, who, if anything, might have been expected to be in favor of some kind of unity within France, at least under Louis XIV. Instead, he distinguishes the people of each region. Whether this is from truly a lack of a perception of unity, or from an attempt to represent each group is questionable. Under Louis XIV, France was expanding, both in military capacity and claimed territory. Maimbourg’s mention of all the regions involved might be a kind of call to arms for the French people, particularly in France’s conflict with its Protestant neighbors. Under Louis XIV, the edict of Fontainebleau revoked the earlier Edict of Nantes and removed the need for tolerance of French Protestants. Without the need for appealing to French Protestants, Maimbourg can issue a call

77 Louis Maimbourg, *Crusades*, 57.
to French Catholics and in doing so in theory unify the nation.

In counterpoint to this, though, he claims Pope Urban, the Pope he admires for his handling of heresies within the Church, as a Frenchman.\footnote{Louis Maimbourg, \textit{Crusades}, 6.} There is still pride to be had for the French in having had this great Pope be a native son of France. He also references both “the most August” Charlemagne and “the Conduct of” Charles Martel as great French heroes, under which “[t]he Armes of France...have previously been so successful against the African Moors, the Arabians, and Huns.”\footnote{Louis Maimbourg, \textit{Crusades}, 9.} While these references do not necessarily come together into nationalism as it is today understood, there is an idea of heroes of the past relating to his own time.

Maimbourg claims ownership of the Crusades for France, bringing the Crusades into France’s historical narrative and also attributing responsibility for the Crusades and their results to the French people. This seems to indicate a type of proto-nationalism and unity already forming, despite factionalism within the country due to language or religion. From the stage of history at which Maimbourg was writing, it is possible to see the next step occurring into full nationalism, as it developed in the 1800s. Already, he had pride in being French, in the idea that there was something unique about it and it possessed heroes and a history to be admired.

Maimbourg’s writing also gives some idea into the social norms and customs of the time, what is permissible and what is not allowed. For instance, he makes reference to Christian soldiers looting conquered cities with little comment other than its occurrence.\footnote{Louis Maimbourg, \textit{Crusades}, 40.} However, he writes multiple times on the evils of pride and ambition, and the punishment it brought from God. Maimbourg criticizes Peter the Hermit, though he had previously spoken admiringly of him, for stepping from the role of priest into the role of soldier.\footnote{Louis Maimbourg, \textit{Crusades}, 17.} This was unacceptable. Also,
while looting was permitted, Maimbourg notes two massacres disparagingly, one of Jews and one of Hungarians. This was not acceptable behavior, frowned upon at the time of its writing even if the targets were not western Catholics. This idea of armies looting and massacring innocents would not have been a foreign concept at the time. The Thirty Years’ War, which lasted from 1618-1648, had only ended twenty years before, and France had been involved in the fighting.\textsuperscript{85} That war is known as one of the most destructive wars ever fought on European soil and was within the memory of the people who would have been reading Maimbourg’s work. Looting also would have been difficult to criticize at the time, particularly in relation to wartime armies. Looting homes was one of the easiest ways to supply a moving army, particularly if the supply trains that were supposed to be following were delayed for one reason or another. It was therefore difficult to disparage any kind of looting on the basis of sheer practicality, as long as the civilians who were having their goods stolen were not injured.\textsuperscript{86}

He also criticizes those who he believed went on Crusade for the wrong reasons. Those who went for glory were wrong, but those nobles who sold their lands and wealth to go on Crusade were pious. The clergymen who bought up this land and became rich off of it also receive scathing criticism from Maimbourg.\textsuperscript{87} Christian sacrifice, the idea of dying in a Christian war, is also praised.\textsuperscript{88} According to Maimbourg’s writings, simply doing the right thing was not enough; this action also had to be undertaken with a pure heart, more or less. This is clearly a religious ideal, and due to his own piety and religiosity. It too has a biblical moral, the idea that actions must be done from a good intention. Given France’s near-constant state of war under Louis XIV, the idea of dying in a Christian war seems entirely relevant to the period in which

\textsuperscript{85} Doyle, \textit{Old Regime France}, 258.  
\textsuperscript{86} Lossky, \textit{Louis XIV and the French Monarchy}, 89.  
\textsuperscript{87} Louis Maimbourg, \textit{Crusades}, 15.  
\textsuperscript{88} Louis Maimbourg, \textit{Crusades}, 62-64.
Maimbourg was writing. This idea of sacrifice was justified not only by the history that Maimbourg was writing, but also the entire foundation of the Catholic faith. Maimbourg’s text, if nothing else, explains how deeply the French people were intertwined with the Catholic faith. While it is true that Maimbourg was a bishop and thus had reason himself to be invested in this faith, the fact that Louis XIV supported him and his writings in an abbey, and then that the histories that Maimbourg produced would be so entangled with this idea of Catholic faith and ideals, demonstrates the strength of the piety of French culture at the time.

Conclusion

Maimbourg’s writing on the Crusades is heavily biased at best and more or less useless at worst, if it is studied in reference to the actual Crusades. However, as a portrait of his own time, it stands as a shining example of not only the writing style, eloquent and dense, but also of the values and ideals. Through his writing, the way people thought of their world and their history is plainly shown. What Maimbourg gives is an account of the Crusades, but an account tailored to the 17th century and its politics. His writings serve as examples of primary sources that tell more about their own time than the subject being described. While Maimbourg does his best to discuss the Crusades, his writings prove just as useful for a discussion of French religion, society, and politics under Louis XIV.

As was previously mentioned in the introduction, Ricoeur’s theory of narrativity and the literary method of decoding the meaning of a narrative serves to explain a large amount of Maimbourg’s writing. As a Catholic bishop, Maimbourg was writing for other Catholics, primarily likely a French audience, but his work was translated into English in the 1680s. His writing features stories written in a similar style to Biblical parables because that was a typical narrative style, and one that he would have been exceptionally familiar with as a bishop. In
addition, because his history was being written to justify traditions and offer explanations, he offers references to historical figures, to great events, in a style similar to an epic. In drawing on these various literary styles he is creating certain moods for his readers in order to best explain the message that he was trying to impart. His religiousness makes the use of narrative and thus the melding of fact and myth all the more interesting because of the tendency of a text like the Bible to mix fact and faith in conveying messages to believers.

The question is, then, if Maimbourg was attempting consciously to mimic the style of a Biblical text, if that was simply the genre of writing that he was used to and thus used for his own work, or whether it is more or less a coincidence and all texts were written in that style. I would argue that it is a blend of the first two responses. It is true that Maimbourg was likely immersed in the Bible, in reading passages from it and attempting to understand them in both the time he spent teaching and the time he spent preaching and writing. Thus, the style likely would have been familiar to him and one that he could easily use. However, I also believe that his use of the style was an intentional choice. He was making a religious statement with his history, as well as documenting past events, and the conventions of the blending of fact and faith conveyed his message in the way he thought best. This is not to say that Maimbourg did not believe what he had written in the history, or consciously chose to invent stories in order to make the historical figures sound more fantastical. He did believe what he was writing. It is to say that for Maimbourg the blending of the ordinary history and the extraordinary, miraculous religious aspects of his writing was a part of writing an accurate history. In order for people to understand, fundamentally, he had to explain and demonstrate the power of God’s will, for instance, or the greatness of one of the French leaders of the Crusades.

Maimbourg’s writing during the Ancien Regime would stand in stark contrast to the post-
Revolutionary era in France. However, the Crusades remained in French thought, and would again emerge in the Napoleonic era in the writings of one J.J. Lemoine, among others.
Chapter 3: J.J. Lemoine

In 1808, L’Institut de France, a learned society comprised of several academies, including the famous Académie française, posed a question for an essay contest: “What was the influence of the Crusades on the civil liberty of the European people, on their civilization, and on the progress of enlightenment, of commerce, and of industry?” One of the answers they received was from J.J. Lemoine, an unknown author, whose essay took first honorable mention, which was worthy of some notice. While an essay contest in the modern world is not necessarily the most prestigious source of publication, there were some essays of consequence: Rousseau’s *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men*, for example, started as an entry into an essay contest, though he did not win any prize. These publications would have been relatively widely read among the intelligentsia. The fact that the prompt also came from one of these contests implies that this was a topic that was under discussion among the intelligentsia at the time. This might seem a rather esoteric topic for the time, but its inclusion does indicate that even in 19th century France, the Crusades were considered, albeit only insofar as the ways in which the Crusades had affected modern France.

While the specifics of Lemoine’s life are unknown, it can safely be guessed from his tone that he was not a clergyman. This stands in stark contrast to Maimbourg, a Jesuit, and William of Tyre, a bishop, both of whom were fervently Catholic and highly religious. Lemoine’s secular inclinations comes through quite obviously in his work, which reflects the growing secularism in France and the French intelligentsia. This was a process that began in the 18th century with the Enlightenment and continued through the 19th century, including Napoleon himself, who while

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not an atheist was not an apparent participant in organized religion.90 Religiousness and believing in religious reasoning was seen as backwards and superstitious, contrary to progress and improvement. Lemoine was no exception to this Enlightenment trend.

Despite how little can be definitively said about Lemoine’s life, the essay’s contents and style provide insight into the changes in thinking over the 18th century brought by the Enlightenment, including a focus on logic and a more secular view of the world. The very structure of Lemoine’s essay, which was a relatively non-narrative format, and his understanding of French history indicates a change from the ways in which people considered history even as recently as Louis Maimbourg, who was writing little more than a hundred years before Lemoine. While Maimbourg’s writing was a religiously-oriented narrative of the events of the Crusades as he understood them, Lemoine’s argued a specific point: that the events of the Crusades have led to the formation of France and Europe as it existed in 1808. In addition, Lemoine’s arguments were made not on the basis of religious faith but on statistics and the “science of government”. The style of argument and writing had changed radically from Maimbourg’s time to Lemoine’s, and with it the priorities and focus of society. To examine these ideas further, this chapter will be broken into three main sections: the first will examine the actual contents of the essay itself: the second, Lemoine’s style: and the third, the ideology and societal influences that appear in his writing. Narrative was still the vehicle of conveying historical truths, but only in combination with rational analysis of this narrative being presented.

Content

The way that Lemoine thought about history was not found in either Maimbourg or William of Tyre, the way that Lemoine boiled events down to figures in order to better understand them. It was the kind of rational thinking supported by the Enlightenment. 91 This type of commentary extended from commerce to political shifts, with a focus on distinct facts and numbers as opposed to focusing on conveying the spirit of an event or person through metaphor.

With this increasing secularization of society and the desacralization of the French monarchy came a further ability to study institutions at the time of the Crusades that would have otherwise been untouchable. 92 This was also likely due to the ideals of the French Revolution, which operated on the stated principles of liberty, fraternity, and equality. A focus on the monarchy or the aristocracy would have been out of character in such a context, and would have been counter to revolutionary thinking. Combined with the growing focus on statistics and demographics, it is clear why Lemoine did not pick individuals to discuss, in favor of looking at overall trends. Lemoine’s essay discussed changing cultures and social and economic problems while discussing the nobility and their history relatively little. In contract, the monarchy and other aristocrats were the primary figures in William of Tyre and Maimbourg’s writing. In his brief survey of the events of the Crusades, he did discuss the nobility, or at least mentioned them in as much depth as he mentioned any other subject in his list, but many of his claims of effects had less to do with the nobility and more to do with overall societal changes. This was not because he seemed to make a conscious effort to exclude the nobility so much as he made a conscious effort to include other aspects of society.

91 Doyle, Old Regime France, 95.
92 Doyle, Old Regime France, 166-167.
What Lemoine actually did seem to leave out in comparison to Maimbourg and William of Tyre was discussion of events in the Holy Land themselves, whether the actual events of the Crusades or longer-term changes there. Instead, his focus on Europe provided further insight into changing perceptions in French society. Lemoine’s content primarily focused on various cultural and societal aspects of life in Europe and changes that were caused by the Crusades. That is to say, Lemoine focused on the trends, demographics, and societal shifts that he considered to be the drivers of historical processes and thus responsible for the progression of society.

One of the first problems with the Crusades that he noted was depopulation as more and more men went to fight.93 One number he cited was potentially six million people lost, though he claimed that the total loss was likely closer to two million, and “it [was] not necessary to multiply this loss by the generations drying up at their source for this loss to seem to us immense and deplorable.”94 He also noted that these numbers do not include only men, but also women who followed their husbands, and either died with them or, Lemoine claimed, ended up in harems.95 This indicates, perhaps, a change in society’s focus. The women had become worth noting, even those not of noble birth. Lemoine’s use of numbers added a kind of rationality and practicality in his writing, typical of the Enlightenment but not necessarily favored before it.96 It heralded the oncoming movement to make history more scientific, as later exemplified by the Annales school and their dislike for the use of any kind of narrative in the writing of history.

Lemoine highlighted another problem that follows depopulation: the lack of industry and capital for trade due to the massive outflow of both money and labor.97 The people who went on

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93 J.J. Lemoine, *Discours qui a obtenue la première mention honorable*, (University of London, 1808), 37.
94 Lemoine, 37.
95 Lemoine, 37.
96 Doyle, *Old Regime France*, 95.
97 Lemoine, 39.
crusade, he claimed, were industrious workers and their families, necessary for maintaining the land, and all of their money.\textsuperscript{98} Lemoine calculated that in considering the ransom needed for Saint Louis, “and supposing that every man had brought one hundred francs with him, that the Crusades had taken close to 209 million francs.”\textsuperscript{99} This calculation both indicated the overall cost of the Crusades and that his objection to the Crusades was not purely a dislike of the religious militarism, but also practical consideration for the effects of war on the realities of a state. This would have been particularly relevant for France, which spent the 18\textsuperscript{th} century variously in and out of debt depending on how recently a war had been fought. The French economy did not fully recover from this enormous debt until after the French Revolution.\textsuperscript{100}

Lemoine further claimed that thought advanced more quickly than the powers and systems of the period.\textsuperscript{101} That is to say, the intellectual life had advanced beyond what the political system was capable of accepting and adapting to. The constant fighting of the Crusades had not put a damper on intellectual life, but had kept this new intellectual thought from affecting the political systems of the time. While this was a criticism, it was also, he claimed, an unfortunate fact of life.\textsuperscript{102} This kind of philosophical thinking was, again, a product of the Enlightenment. The discussion of political issues and potential forms of government became prominent during the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, and this proposition of changes in political power ahead of its time reads more like a discussion of the French Revolution than the Crusades.\textsuperscript{103} The abuses being pointed out in thought take time to be resolved, and once one problem was discussed, others sprang into notice. In essence, this is similar to the events of the French Revolution in that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{98} Lemoine, 40.
\item \textsuperscript{99} Lemoine, 40.
\item \textsuperscript{100} Doyle, \textit{Old Regime France}, 238-241.
\item \textsuperscript{101} Lemoine, 129-130.
\item \textsuperscript{102} Lemoine, 129.
\item \textsuperscript{103} Doyle, \textit{Old Regime France}, 97.
\end{itemize}
it was only once the king began to make reforms that the uprisings began. As long as the people were too oppressed to see another option, there would likely not be objections. Only once the oppression becomes lighter, and thus a possible improvement in circumstances appears, that a revolution will begin.\textsuperscript{104} This process, in theory, led to wide societal changes as problems were discovered and addressed.\textsuperscript{105}

This method of thought was indicative of what Lemoine believed to be the beginning of a new science, the science of government.\textsuperscript{106} While the beginning of the science of government was not necessarily caused by the Crusades, with an increased focus on governmental structures, this kind of thought obviously had an immense impact on France later in history, during the French Revolution.\textsuperscript{107} Lemoine seems to be imposing Enlightenment thinking on an earlier period, but like Maimbourg, it appears that Lemoine used history to justify current traditions, in this case, activist political thinking. The fact that this apparent growth in intellectualism is not mentioned in either Maimbourg or William of Tyre indicates the focus of their period and narratives more than any lack of ability as historians. William of Tyre was living through these events and was also in the Levant; he would not necessarily have been privy to intellectual developments within France. Maimbourg, by contrast, was living with some distance from the period, but the focus of his narrative was his religious understanding of the Crusades and thus the intellectual development was not an important factor in his writing. Because he was a product of the Enlightenment, thinking about governmental structures and other such philosophical theories were a natural part of his intellectual world. Therefore, it would only have been natural for

\textsuperscript{104} Jeremy Popkin, \textit{A Short History of the French Revolution} (Boston: Prentiss Hall, 2010), 11-12.
\textsuperscript{105} Doyle, \textit{Old Regime France}, 94.
\textsuperscript{106} Lemoine, 132.
\textsuperscript{107} Doyle, \textit{Old Regime France}, 98.
Lemoine to include this kind of thinking in his history, whether or not it had originally been present in the events he was discussing.\footnote{Doyle, \textit{Old Regime France}, 95.}

In this way, the history that Lemoine was addressing, while it was focused on the aftermath of the Crusades, was a product of the times and of the intellectual society of which he was a part. While discussions of European commerce and shifts in political power seem relatively simple and uncontroversial, given that they were resolved hundreds of years before, Lemoine’s focus on culture and societal changes was very much reflective of the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century, when he was writing. In the wake of the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the rise of Napoleon, the structure of government and philosophical thought was very much relevant to the everyday running of the government.\footnote{Susan Conner, \textit{The Age of Napoleon} (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 2004), 28-29. Popkin, \textit{A Short History}, 36-43.} He was giving examples of long-term effects not only for historians during his time, but posing questions for his contemporaries, when looking at philosophy and its effects on government.

\textbf{Writing Style}

Unlike William of Tyre and Louis Maimbourg’s writing, Lemoine’s essay is not primarily based on a religious narrative and a more symbolic interpretation of events. According to Hayden White, narrative is a representation of what happened, while dissertation is an interpretation of these events.\footnote{White, “Narrative in Historical Theory”, 3.} Lemoine made use of both techniques in his essay, interwoven in a way that they were not in either Maimbourg or William of Tyre’s works. This could be for a number of reasons.
Firstly, Lemoine was writing a persuasive essay, as opposed to Maimbourg and William of Tyre, who were both writing chronological accounts of the Crusades. The histories were also written for different purposes: William of Tyre used his history to appeal to nobility for reinforcements in the Holy Land, and Louis Maimbourg’s work aggrandized Louis XIV and addressed religious struggles in France at the time of his writing. By contrast, Lemoine’s essay attempted to answer a specific question that is not asking what happened in the Crusades, but what they affected. In his case, a narrative would not suffice to answer such a question; further interpretation of the events was required in order to claim that they were responsible for the outcomes that he was interested in.

Because Lemoine’s essay took on the effects of the events of the Crusades, a brief narrative is necessary in order to orient his readers. His narrative, however, reads more as a list of events than a real, thorough narrative like Maimbourg or William of Tyre.

“Who does not know of Peter the Hermit, his voyages, his preaching, his success? Who has not heard of Pope Urban, the councils of Plaisance, of Clermont; of three hundred thousand men massacred by the Hungarians, the Bulgarians, and the Saracens, and of seven hundred thousand others reunited in Chalcedon? Who did not suddenly see this formidable army seize possession of Niconcédie, of Nicea, crossing, while fighting, Asia Minor; taking Edessa, Antioch, and causing great losses in their march?”

For Lemoine, the events of the Crusades themselves consituted mere background information in order to discuss their effects. For this reason, he was not as strict about chronology in his essay as Maimbourg or William of Tyre’s histories were. When he discussed the effects of the Crusades, they were separated into sections by whether he considered them a positive or negative effect. Within these sections, a sort of chronology is upheld in that Lemoine

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discusses first the short-term and then the long-term causes. However, he is not held to a strict timeline as one is when writing a chronological narrative of history; rather, he is free to arrange his writing in the order that he feels best suits his argument. This is a different representation of history than that of Maimbourg or William of Tyre in that it is a more thematically rather than chronologically organized approach, which indicates a shift in the perception and presentation of history.

Lemoine’s choice of events is also important. He says himself in his section heading of his history that he gives only a “rapid glance over the Crusades” as opposed to any in depth discussion of the actual events.112 Because the scope of his writing was so limited, particularly in comparison to Maimbourg or William of Tyre’s volumes of texts, Lemoine was forced to only choose those events that he felt were the most important for his later argument as to the results of the Crusades.

Lemoine’s writing style brings up questions about the writing of history as a whole, and how to interpret argumentative essays versus how to read longer histories. An essay is shorter and has less time to make its point, has to choose more specifically the points that it wishes to emphasize. Its narrative must be more carefully, delicately, constructed. One weakness in a short essay can shatter it, while the same weakness in a book might be only a minor flaw. Lemoine only gave those events that further his own argument, while Maimbourg and William of Tyre both provided multitudes of events that all fall within the realm of the Crusades. All three writings ascribe importance to the events discussed in their writings, but the events that Lemoine discussed are included and ascribed value because they led into these effects that continued to

112 Lemoine, 27.
affect Europe for centuries to come. This is a different way of considering events than either Maimbourg or William of Tyre used. Their more religious focuses gave meaning to these events because of their effects on religious life and what they perceived as the religious necessity of the Crusades. That is, the Crusades’ religious importance is the reason that narratives of the time need to be written, particularly in reference to the Catholic faith. Lemoine, by contrast, wrote about the Crusades neither due to their religious importance nor due to any allegiance to a divinely-appointed ruler such as Louis XIV.

Lemoine’s discussion and dissertation of these events meant that they are important only insofar as they have effects on what came after them, not because of their significance for the Crusades themselves. It is a radically different way of considering history than a narrative like Maimbourg’s. While Maimbourg had to choose what to put into his work and what to leave out, his decision did not have to be based in the effects of the events he put in. In fact, some of the events Maimbourg included were, as previously discussed, likely completely metaphorical or fictional in nature. The history that Maimbourg was telling is not necessarily based in fact as much as in the metaphorical meaning conveyed by the stories he told. However, Lemoine disregarded this kind of metaphorical, and often religious, thought in favor of an attempt at a rational evaluation of events of the Crusades. This stemmed from his basis in the Enlightenment and its increased focus on rationality and the natural sciences. In the Enlightenment, because religious thought was viewed as superstitious and backwards, and intellectual thought was becoming increasingly scientifically-oriented, analyses were based in rationality and logic in such a way that even writings such as Rousseau’s explanation of political inequality and the

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113 Doyle, *Old Regime France*, 95.
origins thereof were purportedly based in science and the idea of a person’s “natural rights”.\textsuperscript{114} Human institutions were purportedly unnatural and thus corrupting to the purity of man.\textsuperscript{115} It is this same idea of rationality that Lemoine applied to the Crusades.

While clearly Lemoine was writing this essay for the contest, it can be imagined that had the Crusades not had the long-lasting effects that the prompt mentioned and the Lemoine discussed, the Crusades would not have been considered worthy of a prompt for this kind of essay, while Maimbourg might still have written about them due to their religious significance. For Maimbourg the importance of the Crusades was not the ripples that resulted from the Crusades and continued through history, but the theological importance, what God would have wanted to have happened. The logic of why something should be discussed—of what is worthwhile to publish—changed from Maimbourg’s time to Lemoine’s.

**Ideology**

To begin discussing Lemoine’s thinking, it is first necessary to return to the idea that the Enlightenment radically changed scholarship and thought throughout the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. Lemoine began his essay with a reference to the fact that the Europeans of the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century considered themselves past “the ignorance and rudeness of barbaric times.”\textsuperscript{116} Lemoine viewed medieval times in language similar to Enlightenment thinkers considering organized religion, in claims that the Church “kept [the French people] stupid, kept [their] souls enchained by absurd mysteries, play-acting, and useless ceremonies.”\textsuperscript{117} While Napoleon himself was less hostile to religion and allowed for religion to be practiced within the empire, it did not become an authority

\textsuperscript{114} Rousseau, *Inequality among Men*, 103-110.
\textsuperscript{115} Rousseau, *Inequality among Men*, 70.
\textsuperscript{116} Lemoine, 4.
\textsuperscript{117} Popkin, *A Short History*, 83.
higher than the state as had been threatened under Louis XIV.\textsuperscript{118} This is a reminder of the
distance that Lemoine had from the Crusades, in contrast to William of Tyre, who was writing
during the Crusades themselves, and Maimbourg, who was a highly-religious member of the
Catholic Church for whom the Crusades echoed personal struggles against French Protestantism
and attempts to support Louis XIV’s wars. Lemoine’s distance allowed for a less involved view
of the Crusades, and an analysis of events and outcomes that mattered for him personally in how
they affected France over the ages. That is to say, the military outcomes of the Crusades, which
side of the conflict was morally right, were not as important to him as the results of the conflict
as it happened. In his writing, Lemoine did not try to justify or explain why certain battles were
won and lost, but accepted these facts at face value. What was under discussion were the
implications and results thereof, not the events themselves.

Moreover, Lemoine clearly viewed himself as French; he primarily discussed France over
the other countries and focused on French historical figures with relatively brief mentions of any
others. However, the history he was writing included other nations in a way that Maimbourg and
William of Tyre did not. He referenced country names specifically, including Germany and Italy,
which wouldn’t be truly founded as nations until 1871 and 1861 respectively. This was likely
based in the time that Lemoine was writing. William of Tyre was born and lived in the Holy
Land; he had no obvious alliance to any European power. Maimbourg was very clearly French,
but wrote his history before the nation had consolidated itself. Under the French Revolution
came the idea of real Frenchness, of a French people who spoke French and truly considered
themselves to be the same people.\textsuperscript{119} Lemoine’s writing clearly reflects this kind of thinking.

\textsuperscript{118} Emsley, \textit{Napoleon}, 49-50.
\textsuperscript{119} Popkin, \textit{A Short History}, 82-84.
While there is no explicit nationalism to be found in his writings, no French exceptionalism, there is a clear idea of a European exceptionalism and superiority.

The prompt itself hints at a kind of European universalism. It discusses the idea of a European people, as opposed to merely separate kingdoms or countries. As a result, Lemoine was required to extrapolate on the events and people of other places in Europe, at least those relating to Western Europe. The question “What was the influence of the Crusades on the civil liberty of the European people, on their civilization, and on the progress of enlightenment, of commerce, and of industry?” also indicates a growing focus on a secular understanding of history that is not visible in the other two writings. The other noticeable pieces of this question are, in fact, not present. The prompt asks nothing of religion or religious identity. Instead, it is a secular focus on specific facets of society that the prompt deems most important. It also asks nothing of the nobility or upper classes in particular, which were clearly focused on by both Maimbourg and William of Tyre. This indicates a shift in the perception of what was most important to note in a history, not specific heroes or families but facts and figures. It also asks about “the progress of enlightenment”. This wording shows a conception that enlightenment was, in theory, the ultimate goal of history that all events were either furthering or hindering. Again, this was a drastic change from the writings of either Maimbourg or William of Tyre, who were not concerned with this idea of progress in any form.

This change can also likely be ascribed to an increased secularization of European thought through the 18th century. Religion no longer served as a justification for the kind of intense study done by Maimbourg. The Enlightenment’s rationalist thinking discouraged intellectuals from remaining in the kind of superstition of religion because of its apparent
backwardness. Therefore, the writing style of Maimbourg and William of Tyre, being religiously based and written primarily for the purpose of extrapolating on religion and its history and duties, would have been more acceptable and even expected during their times than after the Enlightenment.

It is then necessary, with these ideas in mind, to return to a consideration of the theory of narrativity, and in particular a claim of Hayden White’s: the idea that a narrative requires a moral in order to feel complete. While neither Maimbourg nor William of Tyre explicitly state a moral, there are clear delineations of morality within their writings, with the Catholic Europeans primarily serving as “good” and anyone else, including non-Catholic Christians, acting as negative figures in some way. This is less evident in Lemoine’s writing, though not entirely absent, as will be discussed later, again largely based in the ideals of the Enlightenment. This movement was known for supporting religious tolerance, with a number of key Enlightenment thinkers either atheists or deists.

Firstly, as previously discussed, he was not writing a standard narrative in which the events were presented but not truly discussed. Secondly, he did not focus on a religious perspective, which tends to lend itself easily to black and white views of morality. Thirdly, he was arguing for the effects of the Crusades, as opposed to the morality of the events themselves. While he was making moral judgments on the results, he did not necessarily argue the morality of the events themselves. In his writing, the Crusades were confined to the annals of history; he was to grapple with what they left behind.

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120 Doyle, *Old Regime France*, 93.
As discussed above, Lemoine’s focus was not completely on the events of the actual Crusades. As a result of this, his writing differed from Maimbourg and William of Tyre. However, this was not the only difference between them. Another consistent difference between earlier writers and Lemoine was the difference in the perception of religion.

In Lemoine’s writing, he denounced one of the effects of the Crusades which, he claimed, resulted in an increased militarism of religion and less religious tolerance, and in fact, “in melding war and religion, one makes the religion of our ancestors bloodthirsty without making war more humane.”\(^\text{123}\) He frowned on the idea of a religious war because of the perceived moral impunity that came with fighting for God, in that men thought that they could “destroy nations with a sure conscience.”\(^\text{124}\) His writings are likely a reflection on the wars of the 18\(^{\text{th}}\) and early 19\(^{\text{th}}\) centuries, which included the War of Spanish Succession, the War of Austrian Succession, the Seven Years War, the American Revolution, and the Napoleonic Wars, which was happening as Lemoine was writing. All of these wars were political wars, fought for territorial and dynastic gains. Religious war does not appear as a fundamental justification for the large-scale European wars of the 18\(^{\text{th}}\) century, in contrast to Maimbourg’s mention of Louis XIV going to war as the “Most Catholic King”. These wars, combined with the Enlightenment call for religious tolerance, and later Napoleon’s attempts to integrate religions within France, demonstrated the changing scope of warfare over the century.\(^\text{125}\)

In this denouncement of religious wars, he also naturally denounced the religious military orders that sprang up around the Crusades, organizations like the Knights Templar and the Teutonic Knights. While objecting to military atrocities, though not specifically naming any

\(^{123}\) Lemoine, 75.

\(^{124}\) Lemoine, 75.

\(^{125}\) Emsley, \textit{Napoleon}, 51.
carried out in the Holy Land, Lemoine mentioned several conflicts that arose in Europe as a result of these orders, particularly around the Teutonic Knights in areas like Livonia and Scandinavia.\textsuperscript{126} He acknowledges that the crimes that these orders were accused of were greatly exaggerated, but he also claimed that there was no way to be entirely sure, as it was impossible to prove they definitively never happened due to the “bizarre amalgamation of piety and war.”\textsuperscript{127} Lemoine asserted that this combination of religious fervor and the mentality of a people at war could have led to abuses that were not exaggerated, and in essence that he could not claim that these abuses had never happened because of the extreme actions undertaken in both the name of piety and war. Separately, it would have been difficult enough to untangle what had happened, but combined he could not definitively say what had or had not happened, what lengths people had felt themselves compelled to go to in order prove their faith in the militant atmosphere.

In the same vein of the objection to military proselytization and religious wars, Lemoine also discussed the Church. An interesting note, however, is that unlike Maimbourg and William of Tyre, who treated the Church as a relatively untouchable institution, Lemoine discussed the Church as any other secular political structure. He went so far as to claim that the Crusades were one reason for the steep decline in papal power, but in the same way that he claimed elsewhere in the text that the Crusades caused the rise of Portugal.\textsuperscript{128} The Church was an organization like any other, and that the popes actually reduced their own power, since the papal power “was destroyed by excess” and “the Crusades were the greatest possible excess of papal power.”\textsuperscript{129}

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\textsuperscript{126} Lemoine, 76.  \\
\textsuperscript{127} Lemoine, 76.  \\
\textsuperscript{128} Lemoine, 130.  \\
\textsuperscript{129} Lemoine, 131.  
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Even Maimbourg, who agreed with Louis XIV that the Pope should have less power within France, did not object to the papal calling of the Crusades and, in fact, commended it.

Lemoine’s criticisms and dismissal of the Catholic Church placed him solidly within the Enlightenment tradition. This can be seen in Diderot’s Encyclopédie, which focuses on scientific theories over religion. In Rousseau’s Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men, though he speaks of God’s will for man within the text, his description of the perfect state of man was before any kind of organized society. By extension, this was before any kind of organized religion. Napoleon was also a secular man who saw his own authority as more all-encompassing than that of the Catholic Church, to the point of crowing himself rather than having the pope crown him. Together, these influences set the tone for Lemoine’s perception of the Church.

It should then be of little surprise that Lemoine did not use religious terminology to insult Muslims, Jews, or any other denomination of Christianity. While religious vitriol was relatively common in earlier writings, Lemoine’s lack of strong religious conviction in his writing resulted in few insults used in reference to non-Christians, and certainly fewer than can be found in either Maimbourg or William of Tyre’s writing. In fact, he objected to the treatment of Jews during the Crusades, particularly in the confiscation of Jewish land and goods to raise money for the Crusades when treasuries became depleted. As he wrote, “the commerce was in [Jewish] hands, and yet these unfortunates were always the first victims.” This was only made worse by the growing Christian militarism, which, Lemoine claimed, was not only turned on non-

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130 Doyle, Old Regime France, 95.
131 Rousseau, Inequality among Men, 70.
132 Emsley, Napoleon, 17.
133 Lemoine, 42.
134 Lemoine, 41-42.
Christians, but even within Christian communities. Overall, he could find no benefit to this Christian militarism, which only worsened “the principle of hate that already divided the Christians themselves.”

Conclusion

While Lemoine wrote this essay for a content and only received an honorable mention for his work, it offers an interesting glimpse in his period of the early 19th century and how the intelligentsia, at least, perceived themselves and their country’s history, as well as the history of the countries around them. It also shows, already, a retroactive application of concepts to periods in history where those concepts did not exist, for instance in his reference to Germany as a unified whole like France, when it would not be unified for another sixty years. What Lemoine saw in his time he translated into the history that he wrote as something that was as much a part of the landscape during the Crusades as it was for himself.

As an addition to the body of literature on the Crusades which includes both William of Tyre and Maimbourg, Lemoine added a new way of doing history, of considering the past. Rather than focusing on the religious aspects of the Crusades, Lemoine chose to look at the larger societal trends. Instead of describing a large cast of individual characters and their glorious deeds, he wrote of demographic shifts and the fate of civilians during the Crusades. His writing demonstrates the post-Enlightenment methods of viewing the past, in secular, rational terms. For Lemoine, the Crusades were not a series of glorious religious wars; they were one stepping stone in the progression of history that led to France during the Napoleonic years.

135 Lemoine, 77.
136 Lemoine, 77.
To that end, Lemoine’s writing also demonstrated the changing culture of France during his time: the increased secularism, the perception of a truly unified France, the focus on philosophical perceptions of government. The radical differences in his thoughts from those of Maimbourg showed the rapidly changing nature of France in a little over a hundred years and gave a window into an entire society that was still resettling itself after the turmoil of the French Revolution and Napoleon’s rise to power.

Though the three texts that have just been analyzed, the development of history becomes clear. William of Tyre and Maimbourg demonstrate the pre-Enlightenment idea of a more metaphorical, religiously based truth in history. What matters is the idea behind the writing, the concept of an all-powerful God who was inherently present in all actions and responsible for the consequences thereof. Lemoine, by contrast, shows an increased focus on demographics and statistics, specific numbers. He does not focus on the use of emotion or the conveying of a feeling, but an analysis of rational facts. He does not make use of this kind of metaphor, or a religiously-inspired genre of writing. His writing is post-Enlightenment writing, and not like that which came before. The writings of Maimbourg and William of Tyre, separated by hundreds of years, are more similar than that of Lemoine.
Conclusion

These three writings, through their style of narrative, also provide insight into the culture around them. William of Tyre speaks a great deal of life at court and the Church. Louis Maimbourg references noble houses, Louis XIV, and French heroes. Lemoine cites numbers, discusses the development of governmental theory. The focus of their writing beyond their basic topic is revealing in what of what their cultures valued as important and worthy of recording.

It is the development of the methodology of historical writing demonstrated in these texts that is so important for understanding how best to read and discuss writings from the past in a meaningful way. With this understanding, it is possible to make better use of historical texts, to fully grasp the messages that authors meant to convey as opposed to what they literally wrote. In studying past histories and how they were written and perceived, a historian can receive greater insights into not only their research into these histories but into their own writing. It is also crucial to looking at historical writing today. Looking back on the past, it is clear to see how writings were influenced by the period in which they were written, not just in topic, but in focus and style. While it seems impossible to divorce a writing from its period, it is important for a historian to realize that what they are writing is the product of their period. The cultural biases and assumptions under which they are writing are not the same cultural biases and assumptions that previous authors used, nor will they be the same cultural biases of future authors. The Crusades, being so religiously based and thus so dependent upon writers’ and readers’ reactions to religion, require this realization even more than perhaps more secular topics.

In studying the past, however, we cannot forget that modern writings are just as heavily imbued with current cultural biases as past texts were with the ideas of their time. However, this
is not inherently negative. What is problematic about it is the assumption that narratives are unbiased and that a historian has not viewed the past through the lens of their own time. If Western views have changed so radically on topics as fundamental as slavery and women’s rights, then it must not be expected that a myriad amount of minor cultural ideas have shifted as well, universal assumptions that authors do not discuss in their texts because they are such fundamental cornerstones of an author’s understanding of the world. Writings today would not necessarily state outright the idea that slavery is an abomination because that position has already gained widespread acceptance in the United States, but the words used in the descriptions of slavery, in the writing about them, would carry the same idea.

The Crusades in particular run the risk of falling into these types of assumptions and traps. Because the Crusades are religious wars in an area that is currently the center of a great deal of conflict, they are subject to profound cultural ideas and biases that stem from deeply emotionally driven parts of modern culture. It cannot be expected that in the past the Crusades did not strike at similarly deeply-held beliefs. Thus, they are especially susceptible to deeply encoded cultural ideals and biases. Something more mundane, or simply neutral, such as numbers of crops or the development of crafting in a particular town, might not draw out the same depth of feeling from its chroniclers. In addition, the Crusades were a symbol of Christian militarism and the expansiveness of Western Christianity which remained a feature in Europe for a long time after; Catholicism remained a strong feature of France for centuries.\textsuperscript{137} The Crusades symbolized all of this: the great power of Christianity but also of France. Therefore, an analysis

\textsuperscript{137} Doyle, \textit{Old Regime France}, 79.
of the narratives of the Crusades are overwhelmingly necessary in order to ascertain the historical truth of the period.

Overall, this use of narrative in history boils down to a larger question of how humans understand history—what we in fact receive from our understanding of history. What reason do humans have that the format that was originally meant for epics and myths is now being used to convey our historical truth? Why have humans settled on narrative as opposed to any other format? What about narrative is so enticing, and what do we get out of narrative as opposed to out of any other format? These are difficult questions, but in order to make use of history and make sense of it, they must be considered.

What people receive from narrative is a sense of order, and reasoning. In a narrative, history can be explained, boiled down to its easiest to understand components. It can be arranged logically, in whatever order best suits an author’s arguments, and in arranging history like a myth or a novel, there is a rationality to it that is appealing. A chronology, a simple list of dates, offers no reasoning, no links. A narrative chains all of the events within it together in such a way that they form a cohesive whole, and it is this cohesive whole that people find so appealing.

The three texts studied here each form a cohesive, complete story of the Crusades. The stories being told are different from one another, in focus and tone and language used, but each on its own makes sense. There is a rationale in each of them, a writer explaining the past and trying to convey a specific understanding of it with the use of particular conventions that they feel best explains their message. It is this ability to form a story, with a definitive beginning, middle, and end, with specific characters, with a plot, that makes narrative so enticing for history. There is a simplicity in this idea that is appealing, and thus it is used.
History is going to continue to make use of narrative structure in writing, regardless of any detractors. This is not in and of itself a problem. There is a reason that history has so long been written in narrative. However, in order for history to make use of narrativity, it must be considered as a whole; craftsmen are only as good as their tools. With that understanding, historians can have greater insight into the periods of their focus and have further insights into their own writing. We can make more sense of history as a discipline, why we study the past and how we study the past, and why its study is beneficial even in this modern, science-driven age.
Works Cited


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