



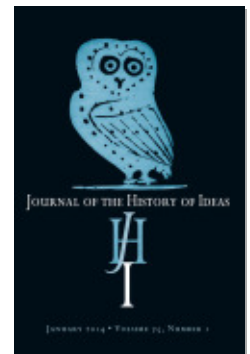
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William of Tyre, Livy, and the Vocabulary of Class

Conor Kostick

The most valuable source for the history of the early crusades and the Kingdom of Jerusalem is undoubtedly William of Tyre's *A History of Deeds Done Beyond The Sea*. A work of great scholarship and careful detail, it is particularly important in that William was Chancellor of the Kingdom of Jerusalem from 1174 and Archbishop of Tyre from 1175 to his death c. 1185 and so was closely placed to the political decision making of the period. William was also a careful and highly educated scholar; although born in Jerusalem, he spent twenty years among the leading intellectuals of France and Italy and, after pursuing an avid interest in the liberal arts, devoted himself to civil law and the teachings of the masters at Bologna.¹ In this respect William is far more than a narrator of crusading history, for which he would be highly regarded; he is also an important figure in the intellectual advances of the twelfth century. A close examination of William's vocabulary of social order shows that in his work he advanced the evolution of twelfth-century social concepts and also shed some light on the social structure of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

The *History* was commissioned by King Amalric of Jerusalem in 1167 and took its final form after redrafting by William in 1184, and it is clear that in his work William reveals a very rich vocabulary to describe social classes (see appendix). William actually uses the term *classis* to mean a social category of person. Current scholarship in history, sociology, and political theory would consider it anachronistic to talk about class in the twelfth century. Indeed, the use of *classis* as a term for social category must have been extremely rare as even such eminent scholars of lexicographers as Charles Dufresne Du Cange and Jan Frederik Niermeyer do not note it.

Insofar as medieval writers before William discussed society, they referred to *ordines*, the orders of society. In the early part of the eleventh century even

¹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, *Corpus Christianorum*, Vols. LXIII and LXIII A (Turnholt, 1986), 19.2.

the most advanced discussion of the subject of class had not progressed beyond the work of Adalbero, Bishop of Laon, and Gerard, Bishop of Cambrai, writing c. 1025, who had articulated the famous tripartite division of society according to function—those who pray, those who fight, and those who labor.²

William uses the term *ordo* to mean order in the theological sense and *ordines* to indicate social order, but equally often he uses the term *classis* for the same purpose. For example, in describing the character of Baldwin III, he writes that “[Baldwin] acquired so great favor to himself from the commoners and the greater people that he was more popular with both classes [*classis*] than his predecessors.”³ After the defeat of King Louis VII at Mount Cadmus, 7 January 1148, during the Second Crusade, William describes how the women fearfully cast about during for the return of fathers, lords, husbands, and sons: “and while they did not find what they sought they spent the night kept awake by the burden of their cares ... nevertheless there returned in the night some of each of these classes [*classis*].”⁴

Classis also appears in the phrase *secundae classis homines*, a phrase used three times to indicate a category of middle-class person. In describing the distant origins of the Hospitallers he says that it was a time when “there also flocked [to Jerusalem] some of the other nations, both nobles and the second class of men.”⁵ At the fall of Balbis (3 November 1168) King Amalric’s troops, “scarcely spared the old people and children, and were not any more merciful to the second class of persons.”⁶ For his campaign beginning December 1170 the king’s formidable opponent Saladin “increased his army with commoners and the second class of people.”⁷ It is interesting to note that in these last two examples the term is referring to Muslim society, which William must have considered as socially diverse as his own. The existence and activity of a middle class of person as subjects of his history required William to use similar phrases throughout his work such as *mediae manus hominum*, *secundae manus homines*, and *inferioris manus homines*. That these terms are interchangeable is explicit in the protest against Count Baldwin at Tarsus (c. 20 September 1097) where Baldwin is described as being criticized for leaving 300 Norman knights

² See G. Duby, *The Three Orders, Feudal Society Imagined* (Chicago, 1978).

³ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 16.2.24: “Unde tantam sibi plebis et patrum conciliaverat gratiam, ut predecessorum suorum quolibet amplius utrique classi haberetur acceptus.”

⁴ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 16.26.19: “et domestica iactura non premeret: hic patrem, ille dominum; illa filium, hec maritum cuncta lustrando perquirat; dumque non inveniunt quod querunt, noctem percurrunt pondere curarum pervigilem, quidquid absentibus potest accidere deterius suspicantes. Reversi sunt tamen nocte illa de utraque classe nonnulli.”

⁵ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 18.5.32: “Confluebant etiam per illa periculosa tempora nonnulli ex aliis gentibus, tam nobiles quam secunde classis homines.”

⁶ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 20.6.18: “vix senibus parcitur et pueris, et secunde sorti non plenius indulgetur.”

⁷ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 20.19.4: “ampliatoque ex plebeis et secunde classis hominibus militum numero.”

outside the city, the criticism coming "... from those also who were inside, men of lesser status having sympathised with their bretheren."⁸ Shortly afterward, for stylistic purposes (so that William can avoid repetition), the term *inferioris manus homines* is exchanged for *secundae classis homines*: "the second rank took up arms against Lord Baldwin and the greater men ... when they clashed the enraged people rushed against their superiors with righteous indignation."⁹

Other examples of William referring to the deeds of a middle class are common. For example, after the fall of Nicea (19 June 1097) there was discontent among the *secunde manus homines*, in particular that the city had surrendered to Emperor Alexius I Comnenus rather than been sacked: "the people and the men of second rank who had sweated most diligently to this end in the siege of the aforesaid city of the world had labored in order that they could recoup the losses of their property with the many types of wealth found within the city."¹⁰

A threefold division of the army of the First Crusade is given in the description of their common experience of suffering at Antioch (June 1098): "pitiful calamity and famine had enveloped not only commoners and the middle ranks of people but also only too rudely intruded upon greater princes."¹¹ At the battle of the Mount of Pilgrims, where Baswaj of Damascus defeated Count Pons of Tripoli (c. March 1137), "there fell in the same battle very many nobles of the city but also a great crowd of men of middle rank."¹²

The term *secundae classis homines* is a formulation that appears to be created by William of Tyre as it does not seem to occur in the writings of any other Latin author before William. A certain amount of confidence can be put in such propositions by modern scholars thanks to the existence of powerful databases which allow researchers to survey a vast corpus of works in minutes—a task which would have taken our predecessors months and which could never have hoped to achieve the same degree of thoroughness. In particular this study used the *Patrologia Latina* for Latin works from Tertullian in 200 AD to the death of Pope Innocent III in 1216 and the *Pandora* database for Latin works predating

⁸ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 3.23 (22).24: "pro quibus etiam qui interius erant, inferioris manus homines, compatientes fratribus, cum preces porrigerent."

⁹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 3.24 (23).8: "secunda classis contra dominum Balduinum et maiores arma corripiunt.... Unde facto impetu, in primates suos iusta indignatione commotus irruit populus."

¹⁰ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 3.13 (12).9: "Verum populus et secunde manus homines, qui ad hoc in predictae urbis obsidione studiosius desudaverant, ut de spoliis captivorum civium, et de substantia multiplici infra urbem reperta rerum suarum dispendia que pertulerant resarcire possent."

¹¹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 6.7.43: "Nec solum plebeios et medie manus homines huius tam miserabilis inedia calamitas involverat, verum et maioribus nimis importune se ingesserat principibus."

¹² William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 14.23.12: "Cecidit in eodem prelio nobilium predictae urbis, sed et medie manus hominum, maxima multitudo."

200 AD. It is therefore possible to conclude that in this case William seems to have found it necessary to arrive at a new term to allow him to describe events accurately.

If not from medieval authors, was there any precedent that stimulated William to arrive at his distinct usage of the term *classis*? Throughout his work it is clear that William was familiar with a number of classical writers, quoting them in spirit and occasionally in detail. In particular in the preface to Book 23 of his *History*, the historian makes the following point:

For those who have the heart [to read it] we will continue in that design which we once had begun and those who pray constantly that our efforts which should be to depict the whole status of the Kingdom of Jerusalem for posterity whether prosperous or adverse, putting forward the example of the most accomplished of historical writers, Titus Livy, who recorded with his writing not only prosperous but also evil times.¹³

Livy is the key to William's adoption of the term *classis*. Of all the Roman writers it is Livy who uses the term *classis* to the greatest extent and gives it a very specific definition. Livy wrote that Servius Tullius (King 578-34 BC) instituted the census in order to raise funds for the Roman army from people of differing social status according to their means: "Then he assigned classes and centuries and this order from the census, for beautiful peace or war."¹⁴ Each of the categories created by Servius Tullius was described by Livy as a class. For example, those who were rated with the value of 100,000 bronze coins or more "were all named the first class."¹⁵ The second class had between 100,000 and 75,000 bronze coins, the third class 50,000 and so on.¹⁶

It seems that William inherited Livy's vocabulary for the different social orders. This proposition is strengthened by two other considerations. First, it is likely that William himself was from the second class of citizen, his brother featuring as a burgess on a Jerusalem charter, and so he would have had a certain sensitivity to the position of this class.¹⁷ Second, William was chancel-

¹³ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 23.P.32: "Sed quibus cordi est, ut in eo, quod semel cepimus, nos continuemus proposito, quique orant instantius ut regni Ierosolimorum status omnis, tam prosper quam adversus, posteritati, nostra significetur opera, stimulos addunt, proponentes historiographorum disertissimos, Titum videlicet Romanorum non solum prospera, sed etiam adversa mandasse litteris."

¹⁴ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, ed. B. O. Foster (Cambridge, 1976), 1.42.5: "tum classes centuriasque et hunc ordinem ex censu discipit, vel paci decorum vel bello."

¹⁵ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 1.43.1: "Ex iis, qui centum millium aeris aut maiorem censum haberent octoginta confecit centurias, quadragenas seniorum ac iuniorum; prima classis omnes appellati."

¹⁶ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 1.42.

¹⁷ P. W. Edbury and J. G. Rowe, *William of Tyre Historian of the Latin East* (Cambridge, 1988), 14.

lor at a time when King Baldwin IV called a general assembly of all the barons of the realm (February 1183) at Jerusalem, to take measures to raise funds to deal with the threat posed by Saladin's reunification of the Muslim world. The result of the council was a special emergency tax, a census, the full document of which is inserted into William's history. It is more than likely he had a significant role in the formulation of the census, given that it assigns him the prime role in the protection of the revenues that are taken from the northern half of the Kingdom. In a similar manner to the measures Livy attributes to Servius Tullius, the census of 1183 is based on the assessment of wealth, not land ownership, and it has the same spirit of setting out the nature of the payment in such a way as to ensure "that the richer do not to give more lightly nor the poorer be overburdened" as the 1183 census puts it, or "in proportion to the money they hold" as Livy describes it in not dissimilar language.¹⁸

Stylistically the census has a far more bureaucratic and repetitive tone than William's *History*. Its use of the social term *vavassor* suggests that an Italian influenced author had some involvement with the actual draft of the census as William does not use the term in his own work.

As several nineteenth-century historians have noted, this census is remarkable for being non-feudal.¹⁹ The payments it sets out are based on the value of moveable goods and income rather than the obligations owed based on the land ownership relation of lord and vassal. This innovation was quickly copied, spreading to England and France within five years.²⁰ That the idea of taxing wealth rather than property should begin in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem is not in fact that surprising. The wealth being generated by trade through the coastal ports of the Kingdom was disproportionately high compared to that from the soil, which in this distant realm of near constant border warfare suffered from a chronic shortage of agricultural labor. Given the perilous position of the Kingdom in the face of the military crisis, it was necessary to be as effective as possible in raising cash, and that meant looking in a fresh way at the sources of wealth in the kingdom. The fact that the chancellor of the time was familiar with a similar Roman mechanism for covering the costs of the army is probably not a coincidence.

In their biography of William of Tyre, Edbury and Roe suggest that the historian did not make a special study of Livy, saying that "although there are a number of echoes of phrases from their works scattered in the *Historia*, neither

¹⁸ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 22.24(23).73: "ne ditiores levius transeant, vel graventur pauperiores"; Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 1.42.5: "Censum enim instituit, rem saluberrimam tanto futuro imperio, ex quo belli pacisque munia non viritim, ut ante, sed pro habitu pecuniarum fierent."

¹⁹ See J. L. La Monte, *Feudal Monarchy in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem 1100 to 1291* (Cambridge, 1932), 180-83.

²⁰ See F. A. Cazel Jr., "The tax of 1185 in aid of the Holy Land," *Speculum*, 30 (1955), 385-92.

Cicero nor Livy is referred to or quoted directly elsewhere, and it may be suspected that William was not as familiar with these authors as he would have liked his readers to believe.”²¹ The reason they give for doubting William’s own testimony is that they claim that in the historian’s use of classical sources “lines are quoted without attribution, in such a way as to suggest that they formed part of his general knowledge rather than that he had a close familiarity with the authors’ works.”²² It is correct to say that William utilizes classical (and biblical) images and phrases without attribution, as is the case for most twelfth-century authors, but this favors a view that his concern is not to display his erudition but to find appropriate language to communicate the events he is describing.

The following investigation suggests that even if he did not have a copy of Livy’s history at hand, William had in fact paid very close attention to Livy’s writings, especially those concerned with the defense of Rome.

William’s own claim that he was inspired by the example of Livy cannot be lightly dismissed. In general, William was more focused on explaining events than with providing classical embellishments to the reader in order to show off his own intellectual worth. In any case, we have a decisive phrase that occurs in the Preface of Livy’s *History* and the preface to book 23 of William’s. William adopts wholesale Livy’s comment that “it has come to these times, in which we can tolerate neither our vices nor of their cure.” In William the Latin reads: “*Tam enim ad ea tempora, quibus nec nostra vicia nec eorum remedia pati possumus, preventum est,*”²³ and in Livy: “*donec ad haec tempora, quibus nec vitia nostra nec remdia pati possumus, preventum est.*”²⁴ That William uses this phrase in this preface, written in a pessimistic context, and therefore part of the redraft of 1184 suggests that he had access to Livy, although it is possible that he retained this evocative phrase from his period of study some thirty years earlier. Given the sporadic survival of the various chapters of Livy, it is noteworthy that this sentence appears shortly before the description of the census of Servius Tullius.²⁵

Further connections between William’s vocabulary and that of Livy can be established through detailed textual comparison. Although insufficient as they are not quite unique to both authors, there are a number of uncommon phrases that both historians share which supplement the more conclusive comment about William’s times. Accordingly, the innocuous looking phrase *communicato inter se consilio* is in fact unique to Livy among classical writers, and in the whole range of works published in the *Patrologia Latina* series it is used only

²¹ P. W. Edbury and J. G. Rowe, *William of Tyre*, 37.

²² *Ibid.*, 33.

²³ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 23.P.

²⁴ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, P.1.9.

²⁵ On the scattered distribution of the parts of Livy see below, n.38.

by two other medieval authors prior to William, which are unlikely to have been known to the historian.²⁶ Similarly, when William talks of men rushing to their ruin having been elated by success, he uses *successu elatus*, a phrase used twice by Livy, no other classical author, and very few medieval writers before William.²⁷ Two other terms, while not being classical phrases unique to Livy, have probably come to William from Livy. Other than Livy,²⁸ Annii Florus²⁹ is the only other classical writer to use the image of *incipiti Marte* to describe the untrustworthy outcome of battle. William makes use of the image, the only other proceeding medieval author to do so being the relatively obscure Pacatus Drepanius.³⁰ Livy, Cicero, Peter Damien, Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury (1138-61), and William share the use of the phrase *praeter opinionem omnium*.³¹ Again, it is possible that these phrases lingered in William's vocabulary from his years in Paris and Bologna, but it is more likely that, given the circumstances of the census of 1183 and his desire to redraft the history in a time of adversity, William turned to Livy and so inherited some of his vocabulary.

It is relevant to consider the distribution of Livy in twelfth century Europe. The full history was broken into its various decades in the early middle ages and not reassembled until Petrarch (1304-1374) made his partial compilation. Library catalogues show that various parts of Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* existed in the Cathedral School of Bamberg and Verona and the monasteries of Cluny, Corbie, Limoges, Murbach, and Pomposa.³² Wipo, the chaplain of Emperor Conrad II, wrote in 1046 to Henry III that "while the Italian youth sweated over the study of history, the German schools neglect it,"³³ yet as early as 970 Widukind, monk of Corbie, had used Livy in his *Res gestae Saxonicae*, and Livy was a school text in eleventh-century Germany.³⁴ The Norman historians

²⁶ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 11.10.24; Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 8.25.9. The phrase appears only in Seher, Abbot of Chaumouzey, *De primordiis Calmosiacensis Monasterii* PL 162 Col 1143D and Wibald of Stablo, *Epistola CXLV*, PL 189 Col 1247C.

²⁷ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 18.13.33: "plures enim acti prosperis et successibus elati solent in preceptis ruere"; Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 28.6.8, 42.66.3. Other authors are Rufinus of Aquileia; Freculph of Lisieux; Richard of St-Rémy; Herman of Reichenau; and Sigebert of Gembloux.

²⁸ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 7.29.2.

²⁹ Lucius Anneus Florus, *Epitome* 2.13.285.

³⁰ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 13.7.1; Pacatus Drepanius, *Panegyricus*, PL 13 Col 0499A.

³¹ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 38.16.14; Cicero, *Planc.* 49.5; Peter Damien, Sermon V.II, PL 144, Col. 0527D; Theobald, *Letter to the General Chapter of Arrouaise*, in *The Letter of John of Salisbury (1153-61)*, ed. C. N. L. Brooke (Edinburgh, 1955) 166; William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 10.3.21.

³² J. S. Beddie, "The Ancient Classics in the Medieval Libraries," *Speculum*, 5 (1930), 3-20; R. R. Bolgar (ed.), *Classical Influences on European Culture (AD 500 - 1500)* (Cambridge, 1971), and see S. P. Oakley, *A commentary on Livy books VI - X* (Oxford, 1997), 156.

³³ In E. Matthews Sanford, "The Study of Ancient History in the Middle Ages," *JHI*, 5 (1944), 21-43.

³⁴ B. Doer, "Livy and the Germans," *Livy*, ed. T. A. Dorey (London, 1971), 104.

William of Poitiers (c. 1020-87) and William of Malmesbury (c. 1090 - c. 1143) knew Livy,³⁵ as did the polemicist Sigebert of Gembloux (c. 1035-1112), who utilized Livy in establishing the chronology of his extremely widely disseminated world chronicle.³⁶ John of Salisbury, who was a student in Paris (1141-45) around the time William of Tyre left Jerusalem to develop his own studies, refers to Livy in his *Policraticus*.³⁷ Munk Olsen's catalogue of surviving manuscripts from the eleventh and twelfth centuries shows that the works of the Roman historian were very widely distributed, albeit in a partial form, with copies of the preface and first decade surviving with a noticeably greater frequency than any other section.³⁸

Perhaps the most helpful assessment of the distribution of Livy in William's day is that of his exact contemporary, the statesman and theologian Peter of Blois (c. 1130 - c. 1203), who studied in Paris and Bologna while William was also present. Peter wrote that "besides all the other books that are famous in the schools, it profited me to frequently examine Trogius Pompeius, Josephus, Suetonius, Hegesippus, Q. Curtius, Cornelius Tacitus, Titus Livy, who all in the histories which they recorded interwove much material for the edification of morals and the advancement of liberal knowledge."³⁹ In other words it was possible, although untypical, for a scholar of the period to study Livy.

William's use of the term *classis* reflected the fact that new social orders had come into being by the end of the twelfth century, social orders that were not adequately covered by existing tax laws or social theorists. By reaching back to the Roman writers for a vocabulary in order to write about these social orders, William cloaked the rise of a new social structure in the mantle of tradition. However, in thus attaching the ancient term to the new conditions, he modernized it and brought it forward another step in its evolution into the modern English term "class."

Other terms are of interest in William's vocabulary, if not on the same scale of significance. *Gregarius* is also a classical term, and while rare in the works of medievalists, it was far from unique to William. Historians of the First and

³⁵ On William of Poitiers see Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England* (London, 1974), 100. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, PL 179, Col 1414A.

³⁶ E. Matthews Sanford, "The Study of Ancient History in the Middle Ages," *JHI*, 5 (1944), 24.

³⁷ John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, PL 199, Col 0495C.

³⁸ B. Munk Olsen, *L'Étude Des Auteurs Classiques Latins Aux XI^e Et XII^e Siècles* (Paris, 1985), 1-16.

³⁹ Peter of Blois Ep. 101. PL 207 Col 0314B: "Praeter caeteros etiam libros, qui celebres sunt in scholis, profuit mihi frequenter inspicere Trogium Pompeium, Josephum, Suetonium, Hegesippum, Q. Curtium, Corn. Tacitum, Titum Livium, qui omnes in historiis quas referunt, multa ad morum aedificationem, et ad profectum scientiae liberalis interserunt." See Sanford, "The Study of Ancient History in the Middle Ages."

Second Crusades use it with disproportionate frequency.⁴⁰ *Gregarius* is a term employed by William in the conventional classical sense of the rank and file soldier but also in a more technical sense to denote soldiers, both noble and non-noble, who draw pay. The crucial example for this latter use of the term is that of Renaud de Châtillon, who is described as *miles quasi gregarius*⁴¹ on his being the surprising selection of Lady Constance of Antioch for her husband. Although Renaud de Châtillon was a prominent knight and an important leader at the capture of Ascalon (23 November 1152), he was not of the highest status, being merely a paid, rather than property-owning, knight. William twice makes it clear that Renaud was a *stipendium miles*, first when explaining the popular amazement at his fortune in marrying the heiress and second when qualifying the list of prominent knights at the capture of Ascalon.⁴² The importance of the social distinction between paid and unpaid knight is also clear in William's description of the offer by Thoros, ruler of Edessa (February 1098) to pay Count Baldwin of Bouillon for his services. Baldwin entirely rejects that he should be paid "like anyone among the *gregarius*."⁴³ This technical meaning makes sense of an incident of 1160, when Najim al-Din of Damascus prevented a raid by Baldwin III with the offer of 4,000 pieces of gold and the release of six *gregarii milites*. The point of the incident is to show the wisdom of Najim al-Din and the lengths he was willing to go to in order to achieve peace at a time of weakness for Damascus. If William was using the term for its conventional meaning, it does not really suit the purpose, as the release of six footsoldiers would not have been particularly noteworthy. It is far more likely that the *gregarii* here are paid knights, perhaps even of the status of Renaud de Châtillon before his marriage.⁴⁴ Again, it does not quite make sense directly to substitute commoner in the case of a certain Rohard, about whom William says that while he was a man with the splendid title of guardian of the citadel at

⁴⁰ That is, Guibert of Nogent, Albert of Aachen, William of Malmesbury, Odo of Deuil, Orderic Vitalis, and John of Salisbury.

⁴¹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 17.26.8: "Festinavit igitur predictus Rainaldus ad exercitum et verbum domino regi communicans, sumpta eius coniventia Antiochiam rediens predictam duxit in uxorem principissam, non sine multorum admiratione quod tam praeclara, potens et illustris femina et tam excellentis uxor viri, militi quasi gregario nubere dignaretur. And 17.21.40 De principibus autem laicis: Hugo de Ibelin, Philippus Neapolitanus, Henfredus de Torono, Symon Tyberiadensis, Gerardus Sydoniensis, Guido Beritensis, Mauricius de Monte Regali, Rainaldus de Castellione, Galterus de Sancto Aldemaro, qui duo stipendia apud dominum regem merebant."

⁴² William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 17.26.1: "Dumque hec circa Ascalonam in castris geruntur, domina Constantia, domini Raimundi Antiocheni principis vidua, licet multos inclitos et nobiles viros, eius matrimonium appetentes, more femineo repulisset, Rainaldum de Castellione, quendam stipendiarium militem, sibi occulte in maritum elegit."

⁴³ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 4.3.11: "Quod dominus Balduinus omnino respuens, ut tanquam gregarius aliquis apud eum stipendia mereret, ad reditum se parabat."

⁴⁴ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 18.27.28: "et multiplicatis sibi data pecunia intercessoribus, impetrat postulatam, datis insuper sex gregariis militibus, quos in vinculis detinebat."

Jerusalem, he was in fact a *gregarius homo*.⁴⁵ In general, while retaining the term *gregarius* for common soldier, William also uses it in a technical sense which draws attention to the existence by the mid-twelfth century of a layer of lesser, paid knights. It is worth noting in this connection that the lack of royal demesne in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem meant that, as a matter of policy, the monarchy preferred to hire forces for pay than levy troops on the basis of the ownership of fiefs.

William had a sophisticated vocabulary for terms covering the lower social orders, which again befits a chancellor interested in matters of tax. He uses a number of standard terms for commoners, which he shares with the Vulgate and his contemporaries, terms such as *plebs*, *vulgus*, and *pauperes*, and *populares*. At the same time, however, his use of terms for the lower orders is in fact quite nuanced and context dependent. Within the very broad terms for the lower class there is significant differentiation, perhaps the most important being that between the free and unfree poor. He reserves the term *servi* for the farmers of Egypt, whom William recognizes as being bound to the land in more servile conditions than for agricultural workers elsewhere in the region.⁴⁶ His explanation for this is an interesting example of the legal understanding of social relations in the twelfth century. William explains that the Egyptian lords hold the *servi* in extreme terms because the people once sold the entire country, first the possessions and then their persons, to the biblical figure Joseph (Genesis 47, 19-26).⁴⁷

By contrast the crusading settlers even from the lowest social orders were free in the sense that they never sold their persons and retained the right to relocate themselves. This is the conclusion that J. Praver draws from the charters concerning the colonization of Beit-Jibrin, built in 1136, whose charters were renewed in 1158 and 1177. These charters show that the settlers had the right to leave. Tenures there were hereditary and could be sold, the obligation on the producers being the payment on rent. The rent was not a fixed one based on the amount of land cultivated, but, more favorably to the farmers, was *terraticum*, a portion of the crops.⁴⁸ Similarly with Castle Imbert (Akhzib),

⁴⁵ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 21.4.15: “Hic ut videretur aliorum quodammodo lenire invidiam, arte quadam, sed nimium manifesta, ad colorem quesitum alium quemdam Rohardum nomine, arcis Ierosolymitane custodem, gregarium hominem et minus sufficientem, subornaverat tanquam is preesset, Milo vero ejus mandatis obsequeretur. Erat autem versa vici nimis: nomen magis splendidum quam solidum gestabat, ille autem sub hoc colore de regni negociis pro sua voluntate tractabat.”

⁴⁶ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 19.20.23: “[with regard to Joseph] unde et servili nexu et extrema conditione ei tenentur adnexi.”

⁴⁷ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 19.20.18: “Emit ergo prius possessiones, deinde personas. Unde est quod artiore vinculo tenentur Egyptii domino suo et amplius sunt ei obligati quam aliarum habitatores regionum magistratibus suis quippe qui et eos et eorum possessiones precio interveniente comparavit, unde et servili nexu et extrema conditione ei tenentur adnexi.”

⁴⁸ J. Praver, *Crusader Institutions* (Oxford, 1990), 124.

colonized by royal initiative 1146-53. There the inhabitants received houses as hereditary possessions without rent or duty. Each farmer obtained a plot of land for tillage and a further allocation in order to cultivate vines or a garden. Rent to the king was a quarter of the crop, and although these conditions were extremely favorable, the king also obtained revenues from his control of baking and bathing.⁴⁹

The relatively free status of the colonists almost certainly arose because of the circumstances of the conquest and the conditions of the First Crusade. After a sense of betrayal overtook the footsoldiers and *pauperes* on the surrender of Nicea (19 June 1097) to Emperor Alexis I Comnenus, it became the rule for conquered property that it would remain in the possession of those who left their mark upon it, regardless of their rank.⁵⁰ This rule, which was particularly insisted upon by the poor before the conquest of Jerusalem, provides a further material motivation for the ruthless annihilation of the non-Christian population of Jerusalem upon its fall to the Crusade (15 July 1099). Whatever status the poorest crusader had once held before leaving on the pilgrimage, as colonists in a region short of Christian farmers, they were not to be compared with the *servi* of Egypt and their masters.

Confirmation of the free status of the Christian peasantry of the Kingdom of Jerusalem is indicated by the vocabulary of William of Tyre. When describing a settlement near Daron, William makes a very interesting comment. He explains that “certain cultivators of the fields from the neighboring places had gathered together and certain of them giving help through mediation they had built there a church and a suburb near the fortress of Daron, where the men of less substance could prosper more easily than in the city.”⁵¹ The social terms here are *agrorum cultores* for those who initially gathered together and *tenuiores homines* for the class of people who prospered more easily. Both are unusual terms. The former occurs more times in William’s work than in all the writers of the *Patrologia* put together, and the latter is unique to his *History*. Why did William not use more conventional terms, such as *rusticus* or *agricola*? Almost certainly because the situation he was describing was itself unconventional. The colonists are described as gathering and erecting a church and dwellings on their own initiative. So while they are clearly of the lower, laboring social orders, they seem to be free from lordship and indeed prospering as a result.

⁴⁹ Prawer, *Crusader Institutions*, 140-41.

⁵⁰ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 8.20.43: “clipeos vel quodlibet armorum genus in introitu defigentes, ut esset signum accedentibus ne gressum ibi figerent, sed loca preterirent quasi iam ab aliis occupata.” A tradition also noted and briefly discussed in J. Prawer, *Crusader Institutions* (Oxford, 1990), 253-54.

⁵¹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 20.19.54: “Convenerant autem aliqui ex locis finitimis agrorum cultores et negociationibus quidam operam dantes, edificaverant ibi suburbium et ecclesiam non longe a presidio, facti illius loci habitatores: erat enim locus commodus et ubi tenuiores homines facilius proficerent quam in urbibus.”

Even in his deployment of more standard social terms, William can be shown to be a very careful commentator, unusually alert to social differentiation. As a result, his work allows for a more sophisticated understanding of the social structure of his world than can be derived from more typical twelfth-century writing. For example, *plebs* is an extremely frequent term in the social vocabulary of medieval writers, including William. It is generally applied sweepingly to the non-noble classes. For example, when King Amalric took over the direction of Antioch in 1164, William describes him as “ruling over nobles and commoners [*plebs*] with great gentleness and farseeing moderation.”⁵² However, elsewhere William makes it clear that the term includes a variety of types. For example, the army led by Eustace Grenier against the Egyptians c. 1123 is described as having *plebs omnimoda*—all kinds of commoner.⁵³ The kinds of distinction that William is referring to can be seen in context. *Plebs* is used for (Muslim) farmers at the fall of Sidon (19 December 1111) as the terms of the surrender of the city permit the *plebs* to devote themselves to agriculture under good conditions.⁵⁴ But it also covers a crowd of fierce pilgrims, such as the *plebs indomita* (untamed commoners) on the First Crusade who, unbidden by the lords, steal into the undefended city of Marrat (November 1098).⁵⁵ *Plebs* can also be an urban class of commoner with potentially dangerous political aspirations. When John II Comnenus arrived at Antioch (September 1135), trapping the Latin nobility between their desire of independence and their need for an alliance with the Emperor, they skilfully manipulate the *plebs* into anger against Greek rule before turning to the Emperor and warning him of an impending riot should he continue his plans for the direct rule of the city.⁵⁶

An even broader term whose nuances can easily be overlooked is *populus*, the people. Very often it is the term used by William to cover the entire people. So, for example, for the trial by fire of the peasant visionary Peter Bartholomew (7 April 1099) “the entire *populus* assembled, from the least even unto the greatest.”⁵⁷ Similarly “in the year of the Incarnation of the Lord 1104, in the

⁵² William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 19.11.12: “nobiles et plebeios multa mansuetudine providoque moderamine regens.”

⁵³ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 12.21.35: “Nostrī porro populi promiscui et plebis omnimode, dicebantur esse quasi septem millia.”

⁵⁴ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 11.14.71: “et missa legatione petunt, ut nobilibus concedatur exitus, plebi vero, sicuti et prius, agriculture operam dare liceat bonis conditionibus.”

⁵⁵ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 7.9.45: “nostri equites et maiorum manus negocium, ut summo mane redirent in id ipsum, tota nocte circa urbem, ne hostibus pateret exitus, custodierunt vigilias. At vero plebs indomita longis fatigata laboribus et diutinae famis acerbitate vexata, videns quod hostium nemo compareret in menibus, quod civitas sine strepitu tota quiesceret, absque maiorum conscientia in urbem ingressa est.”

⁵⁶ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 15.3.59: “ne tumultu plebis intercurrente executioni petitionum vestrarum future prestetur impedimentum.”

⁵⁷ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 7.18.22: “convenit universus populus a majore usque ad minimum...”

month of May, the same lord king [Baldwin I] having summoned his men and all his people, from the least even unto the greatest, hastened to besiege that same city [Acre] about which we have spoken above.”⁵⁸ But this wide usage can obscure a more technical, legal use of the term which seems to denote those citizens who, in addition to the nobility, are entitled to a say in public affairs. They are a category of persons listed in the great assembly at Nabalus in late 1166 to raise an emergency tax. Present were bishops, prelates, princes, and the people.⁵⁹ Similarly, those witnessing the raising of the status of the church of Bethlehem to that of a Cathedral were the “rejoicing clergy, the princes, and the people.”⁶⁰ When the term *populus* is used to include the lower social orders, William often qualifies it with an adjective. For example, the crowds whose threats dispersed the clergy during the election of Ralph as Patriarch in 1136 are described as *furentis et vociferantis populi*, “furious and noisy.”⁶¹ The same incident shows that the term *populus* can have a specifically secular meaning since “Ralph was elected by the *populus* alone without the knowledge of the brethren and the bishops.”⁶² *Populus* is also used interchangeably with *plebs* in a few instances.

The point of this examination of the language of William of Tyre is primarily to gain further evidence of the social conditions of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and also to indicate an important stage in the evolution of sociological vocabulary, particularly that of the notion of class. But this close examination of the social language of William of Tyre also allows comment to be made on a very old controversy. William is the only source for a famous letter from Daimbert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, sent to Bohemond, Prince of Antioch, on the death of Godfrey, ruler of the Kingdom (18 July 1100). The letter is much discussed because in it Daimbert puts forward the view that the church should rule the entire city of Jerusalem. William claims that he is inserting a copy of this letter into his *History*, but for over a hundred years historians have been arguing over whether this letter was genuine or not. While the most unconvinced think that it is fraudulent, even the most sympathetic to the validity of the letter

⁵⁸ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 10.27 (28).1: “Anno itaque ab incarnatione Domini M^oC^oIII, mense Maio, idem dominus rex, iterum convocatis viribus et populo universo a minimo usque ad maximum, eadem de qua supradiximus Ptolomaidam obsidere contendit...”

⁵⁹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 19.13.23: “curiam apud Neapolim convocat generalem, ubi praesentibus domino patriarcha, archiepiscopis, episcopis et aliis ecclesiarum prelati, principibus et populo necessitates regni docet ex ordine, omnium suppliciter implorans auxilium.”

⁶⁰ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 11.12.23: “Cui ego Balduinus ab exultante clero, principibus et populo primus rex Francorum.”

⁶¹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 14.10.17: “timentes furentis et vociferantis populi indiscretos impetus.”

⁶² William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 14.10.13: “absque fratrum et coepiscoporum conscientiasolo populi, ut dicitur, suffragio electus est.”

see it as an “elaboration”⁶³ or “suspect.”⁶⁴ Yet William’s inclusion of other documents is not put under such scrutiny, largely because they are less controversial, and indeed other charters included by William in his *History* are demonstrably authentic.⁶⁵ Nor are William’s motives explained if he is inventing or distorting the letter, because for all that he himself is an advocate of Church rights, after having investigated the question, William’s own conclusion was that, dating back to an agreement of 1063 between Constantin X of Byzantium and the Caliph of Egypt, the Church in fact ruled over only a particular quarter of the city.⁶⁶

An examination of the language of this document indicates that the vocabulary is not that of William of Tyre and is thus not an invention or an elaboration on his part. In describing how the city was seized by supporters of an opposing faction, Daimbert writes, “even after this happened, however, some baseborn men of the common people took over the tower and the entire city.”⁶⁷ The terminology used for baseborn men is *virii ignobilis*. This term is not used in the *History* other than in this letter, suggesting it is that of the patriarch. Similarly the method of address, *filius charissimus*, is unique to this letter, as is the description of the Patriarchate as *omnis Ecclesia singularis*.⁶⁸ Again, the use of the description *totus Christianitas* is confined to this document.⁶⁹ Furthermore the verb *monstrare* (to point out) occurs only at this point, as do the adjectives *rationabilis* and *irrationabilis*.⁷⁰ To maintain that William invented the letter in the face of this distinctively different vocabulary, his lack of motive, and his use of other documents in the history is no longer plausible.

The sophisticated gradation of the social structure of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in the second half of the twelfth century is revealed in the vocabulary of William of Tyre. His careful and varied use of a number of terms for differing social classes, and indeed the revitalizing of Livy’s category of *classis* for his

⁶³ E. A. Babcock and A. C. Krey (trans.), *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, by William Archbishop of Tyre (New York, 1943), I, 418.

⁶⁴ J. Praver, *Crusader Institutions* (Oxford, 1990), 297.

⁶⁵ For example, the treaty between Venice and Baldwin II for the siege of Tyre (16 February 1124).

⁶⁶ J. Praver, *Crusader Institutions* (Oxford, 1990), 297-98.

⁶⁷ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 10.4.88: “virii ignobiles ac de plebe adhuc eandem turrum cum tota urbe occupantes tenent.”

⁶⁸ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 10.4.1: “Scis, fili karissime, quoniam me ignorantem et invitum, bone tamen ac sancte intentionis affectu, in eam quae omnium ecclesiarum singularis est mater et gentium domina.”

⁶⁹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 10.4.37: “Hoc ipso autem mortuo virii ignobiles ac de plebe, adhuc eandem turrum cum tota urbe occupantes tenent, adventum Balduini, ad ruinam ecclesie et totius Christianitatis interitum prestolantes.”

⁷⁰ William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 10.4.59 [of Baldwin I]: “monstrans ei quoniam inrationabile est tot pro eadem ecclesia labores sustinuisse totque pericula ut illa libera fieret, si nunc vilis et abiecta servire cogatur illis, quibus dominari et preesse materno iure debet.”

overall framework, shows an extraordinarily attentive scholar at work, one who far surpasses his contemporaries in his awareness of social distinctions and whose desire to set out an accurate account of his times led him to advance sociological concepts.

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Appendix of Terms Denoting Social Classes in William of Tyre

- agrorum cultores* – Peasants, literally, cultivators of the fields
artifices – Craftsmen
burgenses – Burghers
classis – Class (of persons)
coloni – Serfs
consules – Consuls (of the Genoese)
cultores – Inhabitants
domestici – Household slaves
equestres – Knights
gregarius – Common soldier or paid soldier (including knights)
inferus – A person of lower position
inferioris manus homines – Men of lesser might
ingenui – Freeborn
maiores – Greater people. Often contrasted to *minores*
mancipia – Slaves
manubiae – Moveable plunder. Half the time that William uses this term it is a catch all term which includes human captives
mediae manus hominum – Men of middle strength
milites – Knights
minores – Lesser people. Often is contrasted to *maiores*
nobiles – Nobles
ordo – Social order, class
patres – Patricians (akin to *maiores*)
pauperes – The poor
plebs – The common people (see also *plebs inferior* – The lesser commoners and *plebs indomita* – The untamed commoners)
populares – The commoners, associated with *plebs* and *vulgus*
populus – The people – but exactly which category of person is included depends on context
proceres – Magnates

secundae classis homines – A social order lower than the nobility, but above the commoners

secundae manus homines – Second rank of men

seniores populi – Elders of the people

servi – Slaves

servientes – Sergeants, but used only of the Templars

tenuiores homines – Men of lesser substance, literally “thinner people”

turba – The mob

vir magnificus – Great magnate

viri prudentes – Wise men

vulgus – The common people