

Comparing and Connecting: The Rise of Fast Historiography in Latin and Vernacular (12th-13th cent.)

Lars Boje Mortensen*

This contribution proposes to compare, but also to connect, the rise of a new type of unlearned historical report, ›fast historiography‹, in Latin and vernacular in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Connections are suggested by combining the characteristics of such writing with book and library history as well with social history. New roles of book writing coincided with a larger social spread among authors as well as with a new library horizon – books now began to circulate at higher speed, in greater numbers and in less solemn circumstances. These possibilities were exploited and pushed forward both in Latin and vernacular historiography. This connection has been overlooked for several reasons, primarily because Latin and vernacular literatures are often considered each on their own terms, compartmentalized into two ›traditions‹ in which Latin seems to bear an automatic tag as learned and ecclesiastical. But this is not the case with *Gesta Francorum*, Galbert of Bruges, Raol (on the conquest of Lisbon), Caffaro, Henry of Livonia etc. – they all resemble the simple account in French of Robert de Clari and others. Related to this argument, the article opens with reflections on canons and paradigms of European medieval historiography (in papal Europe) and suggests that comparisons and connections always spring from certain strong national canons and that the questions they are devised to answer are to a large degree determined by such canonical series. Indirectly the article is therefore also an experiment with comparisons outside the dominant national canons and between non-canonical pieces.

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1. Canons and paradigms of the study of medieval historiography

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were a golden age of historical writing in Europe – and very much so in papal Europe which is our concern here. Chronicles – in the broad sense – proliferated in radically new numbers, new languages, new regions and new forms.¹ This embarrassment of riches has had the somewhat surprising effect that both within the fields of history and literature there are fewer household names on a European level than for the early medieval period. The works by Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Isidore, Bede, Paul the Deacon, Widukind, Richer, Liutprand, Dudo and anonymous compilations like the *Liber Pontificalis*, the *Royal Frankish Annals* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are iconic for most scholars of the early Middle Ages; this is due to their inherent qualities, but also simply to their preciousness

* Correspondence details: Lars Boje Mortensen, University of Southern Denmark (SDU), Centre for Medieval Literature, Campusvej 55, DK-5230 Odense, labo@sdu.dk. Professor of Ancient and Medieval Cultural History and Director of the Centre for Medieval Literature (sdu.dk/cml).

1 The range of European medieval historiography, with a spacious definition of chronicle, is now impressively presented in Dunphy, *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle* and in Bak and Jurković, *Chronicon*.

in a period with few grand narratives and to their often decisive structuring impact on historical discourse of the given regions, peoples and institutions in the Middle Ages and beyond.

The lack of a common European canon and the sheer amount of historical writing in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are two factors which have strongly favoured national, local research on historiography (historical and philological) over general theorization of this striking phenomenon of growth in the written European cultural memory. The bigger picture has also to a large extent been obscured by entrenched research traditions which either concentrate on works in only one language, or which make an *a priori* sharp distinction between Latin and vernacular ›tradition‹.² Finally national institutions and academic fields and grant structures continue to attract a main focus on modern national canons of medieval historiography.

This means that the theorization of the field of European medieval historical writing which has to some extent been developed since the 1950s is usually tied to one national set of highly valued texts, particularly Latin and German chronicles from the Empire by German scholars, Latin and French chronicles from France (and beyond) mainly by French, Belgian and American scholars, Latin, English and French chronicles from England mainly by English and American scholars. With the partial exception of a few northern Italian city chronicles (especially if the Early Renaissance is included), the rich historiographies in Iberia, Italy – not to speak of more peripheral ones in Outremer, Central Europe, Ireland, Scandinavia and the Baltic – have had little if any impact on the main theoretical trends which have been concerned with material perceived to be ›English‹, ›French‹ or ›German‹ (even if much of it is written in Latin).³

This state of affairs must be kept in mind when we consider questions of comparison and connection. The objectives of comparison as well as the search for new connections are still overwhelmingly being defined by national canons of medieval historiography in which the academic capital inherent in re-contextualising Geoffrey of Monmouth (and Wace), William of Malmesbury, Matthew Paris, Villehardouin, *Grandes Chroniques de France*, Joinville, *Kaiserchronik*, Annalista Saxo, Otto of Freising and Giovanni Villani tend to reproduce existing systems of relevance and to explain series of historical writings.⁴ On the other hand, the emerging dominance of English as a scholarly language and a number of excellent series of editions and translations potentially pulls in the opposite direction by making a much larger set of texts from all of Europe (and beyond) available for non-specialists.⁵

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- 2 Brandt, *Shape of Medieval History* presented a clear formula for this dichotomy, perhaps more symptomatic of a widespread practice than theoretically influential.
 - 3 This does not imply that dissatisfaction with receding approaches and experiments with new ones did not appear independently in local research traditions in these ›peripheral‹ scholarly environments. The strong bias towards modern empires/dominant nations is codified in Denys Hay's influential *Annalists and Historians* from 1977.
 - 4 Guenée, *Histoire et culture historique*, Deliyannis, *Historiography in the Middle Ages*, and Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History* are partial exceptions to this – all making excellent pleas for the importance of (western) medieval historical writing in its entirety – but the weight is still to a large degree on ›French‹, ›English‹ and ›German‹ examples. Kersken, *Geschichtsschreibung im Europa der »nationes«*, is a comprehensive study of a historiographical genre ("national history") which addresses historiographical canons in central and northern Europe; Mortensen, *Making of Christian Myths*, Garipzanov, *Historical Narratives and Christian Identity*, and Agapitos and Mortensen, *Medieval Narratives between History and Fiction*, are examples of collective volumes which try to counterbalance the dominant nations' perspective. The series edited by Kooper, *The Medieval Chronicle*, has done much to open up a wider European space in the field.
 - 5 The rapidly increasing availability of first class editions with English translations is to a large degree due to Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford), Central European Medieval Texts (CEU), and Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library (Harvard). A new series of monographs on medieval historiography is being initiated as York Studies in Medieval Historiography (Boydell and Brewer).

The conceptual frameworks and the ultimate epistemological targets for studying medieval historiography (again and in the following shorthand for the chronicles of papal Europe) has undergone several main shifts since nineteenth- and twentieth-century historicism and source criticism. By outlining a few main characteristics of these trends I aim to contextualize one particular dynamic of European historical writing of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries which I think remains undertheorized.

None of the theoretical frameworks – including the original systematic study of medieval historical ›sources‹ – are exhausted, although from a 2015 perspective they cannot help falling into the categories of residual and emergent paradigms. In a perceptive introduction to a collective volume on the remarkable early twelfth century chronicler Galbert of Bruges, Jeff Rider and Alan Murray venture to call the positivistic approach to chronicles an ›aberration‹; they date this approach to the period c. 1870-1970 and rightly characterize it as viewing the relationship between the representation and the ›reality‹ behind it as completely arbitrary: the ›reality‹ behind the narrative could have been provided by any other narrative and it remained a firm epistemological substance in spite of our limited access to it.⁶ The rhetoric, the partial viewpoint and interests of the author, the language, the key concepts, the medium and the art of representing can all, in principle, be peeled away methodically to reach real history. While perhaps few today would subscribe to such a procedure in which neither individual or communal memories and interests nor language have a place, I still think there is an important distinction to be made between individual references in a medieval text to dates, persons, places and events that can easily be translated into modern textbook ›facts‹ and the status of fully composed textual representation. In the analysis of Frank Ankersmit, an entire history book (or medieval chronicle we might add) does not *refer* to an existing past object like a simple reference to an event – it rather defines it and argues for its relevance in a specific historical discourse. The relationship holding between the full representation (say, of the First Crusade) and the represented (the First Crusade as a historical sequence) is one of verisimilitude and persuasiveness rather than of truth as in the case of single references in the text. The First Crusade is not a thing which can be neutrally signified but is both constituted, delimited and valorised by (differing) linguistic representations; while single statements of a contemporary chronicle or a modern monograph on the First Crusade are falsifiable, the complete representation is not – it serves to persuade, combine, evoke, not to be ›true‹ like a disconnected list of facts.⁷ On the level of reference the positivistic approach is as valid as ever, but on the level of representation and relevance it has indeed turned out to be an ›aberration‹.

When a new epistemological object for the study of medieval historiography began to emerge especially in German scholarship in the 1950s and 1960s – the medieval mind behind the chronicles – it should not only be ascribed to new and better hermeneutical thinking, but also to the saturation of a perfectly successful paradigm which endeavoured to extract all the facts from a fragmentizing study of medieval historical texts in order to *substitute* medieval narratives with modern ones. This substitution of narratives had been the primary goal since the beginning of historicism in the early nineteenth century – and it brought with it a renaming of the medieval texts away from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century learned editions as *monumenta* (although these are still conserved in the Monumenta Germaniae Historica (MGH) which began in the 1820s.) into the later nineteenth-century ›sources‹.⁸ When the

6 Rider and Murray, *Galbert of Bruges*, 9.

7 Ankersmit, *Historical Representation*.

8 Cf. Mortensen, *Nordic Medieval Texts*.

gain of modern scientific historical narratives was large enough, the tide turned and scholars could again afford to see medieval chronicles as meaningful complete entities composed with a rhetorical and artful purpose. The previously primary interest of establishing facts on the reference level did not go out of fashion because of failure, but because of overwhelming success.

As the history of mentalities became trendsetting in the 1970s and 1980s it gave rise, in the study of medieval historiography, to numerous illuminating studies of the type »the world of [medieval historian]« and medieval chronicles were now, and continue to be, read in their entirety for their contribution to the history of ideas. The medieval texts revealed a *Geschichtsbild*: the sum of historical imagination (*Vorstellung*), already structured, although not in a reflective way – a spontaneous view of the past one might say, in principle individualized but with many common elements. On the more intellectual and reflective level – again following Hans-Werner Goetz – we find the historical consciousness (*Geschichtsbewusstsein*) which incorporates both concrete historical knowledge, a conscious ordering of it and a meta-level of reflection on the purpose of history. Medieval historiography is always an excellent source for the historical consciousness of the writer, and it may be studied with great profit for instance for the comparative history of political ideas and attitudes.⁹

One of the many important theoretical inputs for the characterization of European medieval historiography that was produced by this paradigm was the elaboration of biblical typology and its pervasive presence in all types of chronicles, ecclesiastical as well as ›secular‹ (in effect defying this category). Although it remains debated whether typology should be defined exclusively from its transfer from Biblical exegesis into historical writing or whether the importance of distant models for later figures, events etc. reflects a more fundamental (perhaps even not specifically Christian) way of embodying past, present and future in one image, it is certain that typology with its biblical inspiration and confirmation was a primary structuring device in medieval historical consciousness.¹⁰

Two important and related theoretical developments beginning in the 1980s and 1990s, whose force has certainly not abated, were the new interests in literacy (including new philology and manuscript studies)¹¹ and in rhetoric. These brought both another body of fundamental texts – classical rhetoric and historiography – and a new emphasis on communication and audience into medieval historiographical scholarship.

The classical frame of reference (especially from ca. 1050 and onwards) was shown to be much more solid and pervasive than previously assumed in 19th and early 20th century classicist/positivist disdain of what was perceived as subaltern medieval (Latin) writing. Second only to biblical studies and typology, the presence of classical historiography and rhetoric has now been firmly established as a distinctive element of medieval European historiography.¹²

9 Goetz, *Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbewusstsein*, 26; comparative history of political ideas through historiography: Bagge, *Medieval Societies and Historiography* (which deals with the most canonical works only but from a wide geography, including a Byzantine example); Bagge, *Kings, Politics, and the Right Order*.

10 The present status of research in typology and historiography is excellently summarized and covered in Kretschmer, *Typologie biblique*.

11 Cf. Mortensen, *Change of Style*.

12 Recently presented and summarized magisterially in Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, who also integrates Jewish (Josephus) and late antique Christian historiography and learning into the medieval heritage from antiquity. Key works on the rhetorical and classical impact on medieval culture were Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation*, and Munk Olsen, *Étude des auteurs classique latins*.

In fact one might argue in a broader comparison that it is more distinctive of Europe than Scripture because a similar wealth and sustained input of distant ›pagan‹ resources were not available in Arab, Persian, Indian or Chinese written culture.¹³

As stated, emphasis on literacy and rhetoric has shifted the focus from authorial mind-set to ways of communication and the impact of audiences, addressed, real and imagined. This tendency to view medieval historical narratives as expressions and negotiations of and by (mainly elite) communities has been strengthened by the interest in collective identities and cultural memory since the turn of the millenium. These trends were in important ways prepared by research strands already developed previously, talking about the ›social logic‹ of historiographical texts (Spiegel) and the horizon of expectation decodable in medieval texts in general (Jauss). Where the history of mentality had to exclude both the production and the reception side of the equation in order to establish the firm and unmoving object of the ideas and mentality of the author, collective identity studies have to a certain extent dissolved this solid entity through a new sensitivity to how socially determined everything about writing history must have been: the education of the author, the resolve to write (very rarely a private matter),¹⁴ the readings, the formative aspect of the writing process itself (deemed irrelevant in mentality history as the writing was a reflection of a state of mind), dialogues and interviews informing the work, the authorial imagination of an immediate, and (often) of a more distant readership, the work as a speech act designed to come to terms with a crisis or to sketch out a space mediating between conflicting parties,¹⁵ the material conditions of book production during all phases of composition, dissemination, storing, use and preservation. Finally, the interest in cultural memory opened the rich European historiographical record of the Middle Ages up to a field in which it must be seen as just one type of ›memory act‹ which is not so easily distinguishable from – and must be analysed together with – those made in liturgy, fictional or semi-fictional writing, art, architecture and other material culture.¹⁶

The following suggestion of what I think is an overlooked dynamic of twelfth- and thirteenth century historiography originally sprang from a random superficial comparison of two crusading chronicles, namely Robert de Clari's French Chronicle of the Fourth Crusade (completed c. 1216) and Henry of Livonia's Latin Chronicle on the German Baltic mission in the decades after 1200 (completed 1227).¹⁷ The two chronicles have nothing to do with each other, except their relation to contemporary vague common ideas of crusading, part of their *Geschichtsbild* which can be analysed better in other and more reflective crusading texts, nor do they belong to major national canonical series of texts in which they would be linked. But

13 Cf. Arnason, *Civilizations in Dispute*, 329: »But the very novelty of Western Christian attitudes to traditions – from the twelfth century onwards—may, from another angle, be seen as evidence of uniqueness. The constitutive but contested and variously redefined role of a classical legacy is one of the most distinctive aspects of the Western European civilizational complex.«

14 Galbert of Bruges may be one of the few exceptions and even his work was conceived with a specific peer group in mind (Rider and Murray, *Galbert of Bruges*).

15 Historiography as an answer to crisis: Goetz, *Religious Dimensions*; and as the voice of a broker: Reimitz, *Historian as Cultural Broker*.

16 The opening towards fiction was already visible in Deliyannis, *Historiography in the Middle Ages*; for a full engagement with the relations between fiction, semi-fiction and history, see Agapitos and Mortensen, *Medieval Narratives between History and Fiction*.

17 Robert de Clari, *La Conquête*, ed. Lauer; a new introduction to Robert in English with references to recent scholarship and English translation of the chronicle is found in Beer, *In Their Own Words*, 57-68. Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon*, ed. Arbusow and Bauer; the study of Henry now rests on a very firm footing with the groundbreaking and very comprehensive English companion: Tamm *et al.*, *Crusading and Chronicle Writing*.

by thinking about their common lack of classical and patristic learning and about their status as eye-witness reports written (or dictated) by non-intellectuals I realized that their communicative situation was very similar and that the key to this similarity must be theorized in terms of both book- and library history, of the changing status of authors and book consumption, and of a new horizon of writing which is gradual enough not to have been noticed by contemporaries but dynamic enough to be visible in a longer perspective. The two texts, in short, do not belong to two different ›traditions‹ but to the same fascinating moment when long historical accounts began to be written into books without clear pretensions of extending the Roman/Christian master narrative or being written for eternity. By combining the frameworks of rhetorical analysis, book and library history, with theories of literary communication emphasizing the social process of writing and its horizon (or intended/implied audience), a random comparison may turn into a historical connection after all.¹⁸

2. Medieval ›humanist‹ Latin writing – slow and intertextually grounded

The historiographical norm that writers like Henry and Robert differed from could be called learned or ›humanist‹, and up to this period it was almost exclusively in Latin. One important characteristic of this learned, ›humanist‹, Latin historiography of the eleventh and twelfth centuries was its firm relation to a set of old authoritative writings, pagan and Christian. Looking at monumental historical texts from the long twelfth century, from, for instance, Adam of Bremen (Hamburg, c. 1070) up to Saxo Grammaticus (Lund, c. 1200) we are first and foremost confronted with literary discourses which are in constant dialogue with a whole library of classical, patristic and earlier medieval books. This is obvious both on the level of direct quotations from Roman poets, references to learned treatises like Solinus, Pliny and others, but also quite clear in many instances in literary devices used by these medieval humanists. One could mention Adam's use of Sallust in shaping the character of archbishop Adalbert, Cosmas of Prague's conflation of biblical and classical models for his Bohemian people seeking a home, Geoffrey of Monmouth's, William of Malmesbury's, Otto of Freising's and Saxo Grammaticus' vast reading of ancient Roman history used as information about, model for, or contrast to their own national histories.¹⁹

This highly learned approach to the past operated through what one might label as a strong *intertextual grounding*. These authors were writing new monumental books to be placed besides existing authoritative books on the shelves of episcopal and monastic libraries. Every textual manifestation of this sort understood itself as an extension of biblical, patristic and Roman narrative books and they advertised this attitude in various ways. The new narratives belonged directly to the highest and most sacred level of historical writing, and they were composed to go into polished parchment volumes of the highest caliber – thus borrowing the ceremonial status and exclusivity of liturgical books.

This positioning of a new text within a horizon of heavily charged and foundational books was signalled from the very first words, namely through the exquisite game of exordial *topoi*. Here the authors are at their most subtle, the importance of their subject and themes is

18 The argument of the present paper is closely linked to those made in two related papers, one in print (Mortensen, Latin as Vernacular), the other, on the sudden success of prose, in preparation.

19 Otto of Freising's learned writing is well contrasted to Henry of Livonia's in Arbusow, *Liturgie und Geschichtsschreibung*. Arbusow's analysis should be read now with the corrective by Undusk, Sacred History, but the general difference in the level of learning between the two remains.

explained and the relation between author, patron and primary audience is hinted at.²⁰ What complicates matters here are both the impact of models for the prologue as well as the indeterminacy of the communicative situation. On the one hand authors are delivering goods to their commissioners or are addressing themselves to their peers, on the other the Latin language and the monumental sacrality of their undertaking is placing their work in dialogue with ancient books and with eternity. The here-and-now of literary discourse is constantly fused with the universal pretensions of an author speaking about universal history in an eternal medium – the calligraphed Latin book.

The strong direct grounding on other books can also be seen in terms of Latinity and in the chronological and spatial framework. Although the authors mentioned in this category represent rather different styles, they all strive for a certain variation and richness (*copia*). Their subjects are worthy of a high style often leaning in the direction of one or two main models (*Leitautoren*). The level of execution and finish is usually very high – whether our authors have used most efforts on prose rhythm, alliteration, elaborate rhetorical figures, a fine-tuned purism of vocabulary, a subtle linking of narrative, argumentative and direct speech elements, poetic vocabulary and poetic word order in the prose, or indeed on all of them. All use typical devices of learned Latin which endow their narratives with significance and multidimensional meaning and which demand, on the part of the authors, an active mental library of authoritative biblical and Roman texts, a sophisticated linguistic sensibility, and a lot of time.

In terms of chronological framework these works also display a strong dependence on universal schemes learnt from canonical works. This can either be in explicit terms like William of Tyre's careful dating of Palestine history in relation to Papacy and Empire or in more implicit but elaborate schemes like that of Saxo.

Local geographical space is similarly strongly linked to the great Christian master narrative. The definition of missionary territory is carefully laid out in works like Adam of Bremen and the late twelfth-century anonymous *Historia Norwegie*. The *Historia Norwegie*, like Saxo's and many other national histories, contains an introductory treatise on geography which plays with both Roman and biblical geography. In sum it was clearly important to make an explicit case of continuity and contiguity with the language, the chronology and the geography of the old Roman and Christian canonical writings in order to share the same book shelves and make a bid for a similar authority in the future.²¹ Or to put it differently, new works of this kind had to include and express the entire array of relevant learning. At some level an encyclopedic urge was behind such efforts: the old is contained in the new, and the new is really only an expression of the old. The ›Library‹ is made to be present in each new work and is represented by it.

Now it might be objected that such features are natural for monumental and foundational texts. But I would claim that many smaller eleventh- and twelfth-century histories are governed by the same rules. I shall only mention three Nordic examples from the last decades of the twelfth century, but the strong intertextual grounding in those texts are inspired by the trends set by Anglo-Norman, French and German learning of the time. Two pioneering national Nordic histories are almost contemporary around 1180 and 1185, namely the *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagensium* by Theodoricus Monachus²² and the *Brevis*

20 Recent analyses of aspects of Saxo's and William of Tyre's complex prefaces are given by Friis-Jensen, *Adhering to the footprints*; Mornet, *Saxo Grammaticus*; Mortensen, *From Vernacular Interviews*; Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, 30-31.

21 Cf. Mortensen, *Language of Geographical Description*.

22 Theodoricus Monachus, *Historia*, ed. Storm; English translation with notes in Theodoricus Monachus, *An Account*, ed. McDougall and McDougall.

historia regum Dacie by Sven Aggesen,²³ probably both canons at the archiepiscopal sees of, respectively, Trondheim and Lund. Both works are unassuming in size and apologetic about their insignificance. Nevertheless they both flag up the libraries that went into them through elaborate exordial pieces and rich references to biblical and ancient history. Theodoricus writes a rather simple style but enriches the Norwegian past by numerous digressions which make out a small historical encyclopedia, and Sven Aggesen displays the potential of recent international learning by writing in a peculiar poetic style with a *recherché* vocabulary. The same can be said about a third text, the anonymous *Profectio Danorum in Hierosolymam* from around 1200. Although just a brief account of a failed Dano-Norwegian contribution to the Third Crusade, again the Latin style and the ambitious reproduction of high-level crusading discourse gives away the work as a typical twelfth-century humanist piece.²⁴

3. *The emergence of fast historiography*

There is certainly a perceivable difference when considering a text like Henry of Livonia's peculiar Baltic crusade chronicle from the 1220s.²⁵ Where should we turn to find Latin historical narratives which read like him? By this I mean works with a weak intertextual grounding and without ambitions of representing the universal ›Library‹ in itself; a narrative which reads more like a report and which only uses one of the possible subtexts inherent in the Latin language – namely the liturgical expressions analysed by Arbusow – and discards to play with its long and charged history of gnomic expressions, rhetorical figures and literary devices.²⁶ Furthermore we are looking for a kind of historical narrative that is not averse to borrowings from one or more vernacular languages to find the right term and which is structured with more concern for linear story-telling than for the construction of literary themes and striking historical portraits.

The linearity itself would make one think of *Annals* as the place to look for this more one-dimensional type of historical writing. In terms of Latin style one certainly finds a simpler level in many annals all the way from Carolingian works and through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. But they were usually written either directly into calendars related to liturgy or they were set up as extensions to world chronicles stemming from Jerome, Bede or Isidore. In this way most annals were very strongly grounded in the Library as they were not even new texts with a number of canonical subtexts, but rather texts written in the margins of the great works compiled in antiquity or the Early Middle Ages. Some famous annals do part from their marginal discourse (even if not from their physical book- or library connection to the authoritative point of departure). But those efforts seem to have been very open again to eleventh- and twelfth-century humanism, as in the celebrated case of Lampert of Hersfeld who composed his careful and eloquent work towards the end of the eleventh century by using Livy's first decade in a complex way as a stylistic and conceptual reservoir.²⁷

23 Sven Aggesen, *Historia brevis regum Dacie*, ed. Gertz; Sven Aggesen, *The Works of Sven Aggesen*, ed. Christiansen; on Sven Aggesen as a pioneer, Mortensen, *Historia Norwegie*.

24 *Historia de profectione Danorum*, ed. Gertz. The crusading discourse of the text has been analysed by Skovgaard-Petersen, *A Journey to the Promised Land*.

25 Henry of Livonia, *Chronicon*, ed. Arbusow and Bauer.

26 See note 19 above.

27 Lampert of Hersfeld, *Annales*, ed. Holder-Egger. For Lambert's authorial role see Mortensen, *Rhetoric of the Latin Page*. A comprehensive study of Lampert and his political thought is included in Bagge, *Kings, Politics, and the Right Order*.

Another promising set of texts is Henry of Livonia's two predecessors in describing Saxon mission towards heathens in the North, namely Helmold of Bosau and his continuator Arnold of Lübeck whose chronicles were composed respectively c. 55 and fifteen years before Henry of Livonia's.²⁸ They both write a more straightforward Latin style than the time-consuming prose to be found in a number of works mentioned above – and in this respect they point the way to Henry's mode of writing. But they still belong to a literature that wants to incorporate and display the internalized Library by way of exordial topoi, geographical and ethnographic description, interspersed verses of their own or of Roman making, literary portraits of main protagonists, and a number of inserts of letters and other thematic concerns which vie with the linearity of the account.

But there is a group of texts which can be likened to Henry of Livonia's chronicle. This new way of writing Latin historical prose – which I would characterize as narratives with a weak intertextual grounding – began to emerge in the twelfth century. The first text I can think of which would fit this category is the famous anonymous eye-witness account of the first crusade, the *Gesta Francorum*, written shortly after the events of 1096-99 by a member of Bohemund of Tarento's army.²⁹ The lack of context and intertext is very striking. There are no exordial topoi, a very one-dimensional style which at best incorporates a few commonplaces from the bible, no thematization of Jerusalem, no attempt to locate the important events in the geographical and chronological discourse prevalent in contemporary writing, and no literary portraits – in short a peculiar text obviously composed in haste by a man of little learning. The contradiction between the magnitude of the events described and the linguistic and rhetorical level of the text came as a shock to contemporary intellectuals in France, and within a short time no less than three proper histories were shaped from this material by Guibert of Nogent, Baudri of Bourgeuil and Robert of Reims.³⁰

A few decades after the *Gesta Francorum*, Galbert of Bruges wrote the chronicle already mentioned which reveals many of the same features. Let me quote Jeff Rider and Alan Murray again: »But for Galbert, Latin was first and foremost a working language, the language in which one wrote, rather than the vessel of a literary tradition. His work is written in Latin, but it does not belong to the Latinate tradition. It is a secular, popular work, written when one did not yet write in secular, popular languages.«³¹ Though I would avoid the ill-defined term ›tradition‹ here, Rider and Murray effectively describe the phenomenon of ›fast‹ or ›un-grounded‹ historiography of which Galbert can be quoted as one of the first examples. The same lack of contextualization and intertextual grounding beyond the biblical and liturgical also appears in yet another crusading eye-witness account from the twelfth century, namely the Anglo-French priest and crusader Raol's report on the Conquest of Lisbon from 1147/48.³²

28 Helmold of Bosau, *Chronica Slavorum*, ed. Stoob; Arnold of Lübeck, *Chronica Slavorum*, ed. Pertz.

29 *Gesta Francorum*, ed. and transl. Bréhier. An up-to-date introduction and analysis is given by Beer, *In Their Own Words*, 19-37. I would put more emphasis on the dictation (which is ›possible‹ according to Beer) – in fact there is no reason to presume that the author knew or ›wrote‹ Latin: he could have dictated in Romance (like Robert de Clari and probably Caffaro and others, see below) and the scribe could have spelled and morphologically corrected as he was taking it down.

30 The reactions to *Gesta Francorum* is discussed with further references in Mortensen, Change of Style, and Beer, *In Their Own Words*, 19-37.

31 Rider and Murray, *Galbert of Bruges*, 4.

32 *De Expugnatione Lyxbonensi, The Conquest of Lisbon*, ed. and transl. David.

A new type of annalistic reporting can fall into this category as well. Like Henry of Livonia, it is content to let the sequence of years be a very dominant textual feature with no apparent link to the Christian master narrative that other annals explicitly or implicitly continue. A chief example of this would be the Genoese consul, diplomat and chronicler Caffaro (1080/81-1166) who presented his *Annals* for the Genoese council in 1152.³³ Caffaro is often counted as the first lay historian in the Middle Ages, and this is an early form of merchant and city magistrate literature. Caffaro seems to have kept brief annual notes going all the way back to 1100, and the form in which we have them in now is mediated by a professional scribe. A syntactically simple Latin full of Italianisms and minimal literary aspirations give away the merchant turned writer (or rather *dictator*). His work was officially acknowledged by the Genoese council, ordered to be copied, kept and continued as part of the city archives.

This type of historical writing, then, seems to have emerged during the twelfth century, but it became much more pronounced during the thirteenth century. As a final example I would like to mention another report – rather a travelogue than a piece of historical writing – written some 30 years later than Henry of Livonia's Chronicle. I am thinking of Rubruk's account of his journey to the Great Khan in Karakorum in the years 1253-55.³⁴ His language and narrative is almost the complete opposite of learned humanist Latin purism – full of loanwords from a number of foreign tongues and written in a simple, almost oral Romance syntax. Rubruk's complete lack of literary orientation and structuring may be one of his appeals to modern readers, but it also sometimes makes him difficult to follow because of missing introductions of persons and events.³⁵ There is a veneer of biblical quotations, but no intertextual grounding, geographical or chronological overview or other hints at learning derived from books.

How are we to contextualize the development of this way of historical writing which gradually shows up during the twelfth century but really becomes a trend in the thirteenth century and of which Henry of Livonia is a splendid Latin example and Robert de Clari one of the first vernacular instances? Several factors are interplaying.

(1) On one level the development of written culture in general is crucial. The explosion in the number of both books and charters during the thirteenth century was accompanied by faster reading and writing habits.³⁶ In this way writing in books was loosened from its primarily sacred connotations and practices which had been dominant up to c. 1200, and which favoured slow writing and reading and the exclusivity of a polished and intertextually grounded Latin. On a very concrete level this is evident in the organization of libraries and archives and, not least, in the history of script. Although Gothic *textualis* in its accomplished form is not necessarily faster to execute for a trained scribe than the preceding protogothic or carolingian bookhand, the development of a gothic cursive in the thirteenth century is clear evidence of this.³⁷ But even within the *textualis* bookhand one can point to better word division and increased number of standard abbreviations both of which save time and space.

33 Caffaro, *Annales*, ed. Pertz, 11-39. Now available in a richly annotated English translation by Hall and Phillips (Caffaro, *Genoa*, ed. Hall and Phillips).

34 William of Rubruk, *Itinerarium*, now available in a splendid edition with introduction, commentary and notes by Paolo Chiesa: William of Rubruk – Guglielmo di Rubruk, *Viaggio in Mongolia (Itinerarium)*, ed. Chiesa.

35 The positive side for the modern reader is certainly also very striking as Rubruk writes in an immediate and personal tone, as well explained by Chiesa, *Viaggio in Mongolia*, xlvi: »Soprattutto, egli non si vergogna di manifestare le proprie sensazioni e i propri sentimenti, cosa non troppo comune nella letteratura in latino del Medioevo [...]. Questo soprattutto dà fascino al testo e costituisce la sua eccezionalità.«

36 Cf. Melve, *Med ordet som våpen*, 93-106, with further references.

37 Derolez, *Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books*, 69-70.

(2) Linked to this new, less sacred and more efficient attitude to the writing of books is the contemporary rise of vernacular literatures across Western Europe. By the thirteenth century historical prose accounts had developed or were being developed in Old Norse, French, German and other languages. The very existence of such works were also framing contemporary Latin chronicles in a new way. It is tempting to see the contemporary proliferation of Latin and vernacular fast writing as interrelated phenomena. As books of this kind began to fill a larger social space and to turn up in larger numbers outside monastic and episcopal libraries, the greater speed and volume was catered for both by vernacular writing and a new less ceremonial mode of Latin writing. What set Latin free, so to speak, were the same dynamics that favoured the development of vernacular prose.

(3) Another factor to be taken into account, although it did not influence Henry of Livonia or Robert de Clari in any direct way, is the mass of university writing that began being produced in the decades just around 1200. The world of school books and advanced theological, juridical, philosophical and scientific writings had become impossible to keep track of within a few decades. The scholastic mode of writing Latin called for precision and efficiency, not fine-tuned literary rhetoric. This partial change of Latin into a precise and speedy medium of communication happened in Henry's and Robert's lifetime; when they wrote, the lack of intertextual grounding would be much more natural than at the time of *Gesta Francorum* a hundred years earlier.

(4) Finally one should consider social factors. What shocked early twelfth-century French intellectuals about *Gesta Francorum* was no doubt the level of education of the author. Like Raol who reported about the Lisbon expedition, like Galbert of Bruges, Henry of Livonia and William of Rubruk we are here facing people outside the highest ecclesiastical echelons and institutions – with their inherent ideas about exclusivity of writing and intricate presence of authoritative texts in any new text. Caffaro did belong to the highest stratum of Genuese society, but the social context was new as a background for Latin historical writing: it was not connected to the landowning aristocracy or to ecclesiastical institutions. On the macro-level I think it is safe to say that the main stream of historiography during the twelfth century (of which 95 % or more was in Latin in papal Europe) was written by ecclesiastics of high aristocratic extraction or, at least, by members of the upper circles of episcopal or monastic institutions. The less exclusive and less educated mode of writing as exemplified by Galbert of Bruges, Raol, Henry of Livonia and William of Rubruk can therefore also be explained in terms of various lower strata conquering a voice in the definition of cultural memory. This mode emerged in the twelfth century but really came into its own, both in Latin and in the vernacular, in the thirteenth century.

A number of features would perhaps tempt us to classify this new fast writing as administrative rather than literary. The lack of a proper prologue can be accounted for by the letter-quality of their reports (also found in Raol, Robert and Rubruk for instance). They were composed in relative haste, and the words spoken at the delivery of the book (to the papal legate, king, aristocratic patron, city council etc.) would have filled the function of a prologue.

Whatever we want to make of the modern distinction into administrative and literary modes,³⁸ it was a new age for both Latin and vernacular historical writing – not through a complete substitution of the demanding mode of strong intertextual grounding, because it

38 Benoit Grévin's masterly analysis of Pierre de la Vigne's highly literary ›administrative‹ letters sets a new standard for how careful we should be with that distinction (Grévin, *Rhétorique du pouvoir médiéval*).

continued to exist – but by adding a new way of going about writing about the past; it was a comparatively quick mode of enlarging the Library without too much concern for or knowledge about it. This efficient and less purist mode of writing made Latin – as did contemporary university culture – an even more vibrant living language which involved people more widely across the social spectrum; at the same time the emerging vernacular prose literatures provided yet another outlet for unlearned report writing, in the beginning catering for the land-owning warrior class but with an inbuilt potential of larger social inclusion as well.

My claim in short is that there is *one* new fast mode of historical writing emerging in the period which can hardly be explained by one factor, but which needs to be theorized across Latin and vernacular in terms of a larger incentive and technological possibility of writing reports for immediate request and consumption operating together with a new horizon of writing beyond a specific learned mode and beyond the confines of solemn episcopal and monastic libraries.

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