



CLASSIQUES  
GARNIER

MAZZITELLO (Pantalea), « Eating enemies, eating sins. Anthropophagy in the Eracles Italian vulgarization », *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes / Journal of Medieval and Humanistic Studies*, n° 36, 2018 – 2, p. 357-376

DOI : [10.15122/isbn.978-2-406-08953-7.p.0357](https://doi.org/10.15122/isbn.978-2-406-08953-7.p.0357)

*La diffusion ou la divulgation de ce document et de son contenu via Internet ou tout autre moyen de communication ne sont pas autorisées hormis dans un cadre privé.*

© 2019. Classiques Garnier, Paris.  
Reproduction et traduction, même partielles, interdites.  
Tous droits réservés pour tous les pays.

MAZZITELLO (Pantalea), « Eating enemies, eating sins. Anthropophagy in the *Eracles* Italian vulgarization »

RÉSUMÉ – Cette contribution analyse deux épisodes de cannibalisme dans l'adaptation italienne de l'*Estoire d'Eracles* (Florence, Bibliothèque Laurentienne, Plut. LXI.45): le banquet à base d'espions turques rôtis organisé par Bohémond, et l'exécution d'Andronic Ier Comnène dévoré par les femmes de Constantinople. Ces deux évènements sont exemplaires du caractère sensationnel de la punition et de la vengeance: les croisés visent à décourager l'ennemi ; les victimes du tyran souhaitent se purifier.

ABSTRACT – The contribution deals with two episodes of cannibalism in the Italian vulgarization of the *Estoire d'Eracles* (Florence, Laurentian Library, Plut. LXI.45): the barbecue feast of Turkish spies in Bohemond's campsite; the lynching of Andronikos I Komnenos devoured by Constantinople's women. Both events are examples of sensational punishment and revenge: in the first episode Crusaders aim to discourage the enemy, in the second one the victims seek to purify themselves from the tyrant's sins.

## EATING ENEMIES, EATING SINS

### Anthropophagy in the *Eracles* Italian vulgarization

Of the various types of cannibalism that occurred in the Middle Ages several can be found in the Crusade chronicles. This paper aims to introduce some of the anthropophagic episodes featured in the First Crusade reports. The text instigating this research is a Tuscan vulgarization of the *Histoire d'Eracles*. The Latin work by William of Tyre – *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum* – was written between 1169 and 1184 and was amply translated in Old French at the beginning of the thirteenth century<sup>1</sup>. The original chronicle reported facts dating back from 1095 until the author's death, whereas the French translation was complemented with events that occurred up until 1291; these continuations are tightly bound to the *Chronique d'Ernoul et Bernard le Trésorier*, a chronicle of the events of *Outremer* written by a supporter of the Ibelin family and later reworked<sup>2</sup>. This new text, composed of the translation from William's *Historia* and its continuations, is called *Eracles*<sup>3</sup>. The French tradition of the *Eracles* comprises approximately 46 manuscripts<sup>4</sup>, whereas, as far as

- 1 Guillaume de Tyr, *Chronique*, ed. R. B. Huygens, Turnhout, Brepols, 1986. All the quotations from William's *Chronicle* are taken from this edition.
- 2 *Chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard le Trésorier*, ed. L. de Mas Latrie, Paris, 1871; M. Gaggero, "La *Chronique d'Ernoul*: problèmes et méthode d'édition", *Perspectives médiévales*, 34, 2012 (online); M. Gaggero, "L'édition d'un texte historique en évolution: la *Chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard le Trésorier*", *Actes du XXVII<sup>e</sup> Congrès international de linguistique et de philologie romanes*, Nancy, 15-20 juillet 2013, ed. R. Trachsler, F. Duval, L. Leonardi, Nancy, ATILF/SLR, 2017, p. 133-145; M. Morgan, *The Chronicle of Ernoul and the Continuations of William of Tyre*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1973.
- 3 *Guillaume de Tyr et ses continuateurs*, texte français du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, ed. P. Paris, Paris, 1879-1880 (all the quotations from *Eracles* are taken from this edition); *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum* and *L'estoire de Eracles empereur*, ed. *Recueil des historiens des Croisades. Historiens occidentaux*, Paris, 1844, t. 1 (from now on *RHC*; all the quotations of Latin chronicles in their original language are taken from this series); P. Handyside, "The Old French translation on William of Tyre", PhD dissertation, Cardiff University, 2012.
- 4 P. Edbury, "The French Translation of William of Tyre's *Historia*: the manuscript tradition", *Crusades*, 6, 2007, p. 69-105; J. Folda, "Manuscripts of the History of Outremer

we know, only one witness reports a Tuscan vulgarization of the work: the manuscript Pluteo LXI.45, kept at the Laurentian Library in Florence. In the text, we encounter two *loci* where Christian Crusaders eat Saracens: the siege of Ma'arra and the encampment and siege of Antioch; there is also a third narrative *locus* of cannibalism that does not involve Crusaders, which is the lynching of Andronikos I Komnenos, emperor of Constantinople, in 1185. These two types of anthropophagous occurrences characterised the text of the *Eracles* compared to other medieval chronicles of Crusades, as we will see later. Despite the dissimilarity between the three episodes, it is possible to detect some common ground in the choice of the author to include cannibal events in the narration. All three occurrences seem to reflect the need to offer strong *exempla* about punishment and revenge, through the intriguing choice of cannibalism rather than other types of violence.

On 28 November 1098, the crusading army, led by Bohemond and by Prince Tancredi, arrived in the city of Ma'arra, not far from Antioch. The siege was extremely hard, for both Christians and Saracens, and lasted so long that the resources of both parties were depleted. Reports of this event recount that hunger compelled some Christians to feed on the corpses of the Saracens, often after having disembowelled them while looking for gold and silver – which they thought the Saracens had eaten. A letter to Pope Paschal II states the following:

moreover, hunger so weakened us that some could scarcely refrain from eating human flesh [...] and while we were delaying there, there was so great a famine in the army that the Christian people now ate the putrid bodies of the Saracens<sup>5</sup>.

Three main chroniclers have narrated the events of Ma'arra first-hand: the anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum*, Peter Tudebode and Raymond of Aguilers. There are three later rewriters of the *Gesta*: Guibert of Nogent, Robert the Monk, Baudry of Bourgueil. Moreover,

---

by William of Tyre: a Handlist”, *Scriptorium*, 27, 1973, p. 90-95, at p. 92-95; P. Riant, “Inventaire sommaire des mss. de l’*Eracles*”, *Archives de l’Orient latin*, 1, 1881, p. 247-256 and 716-718.

5 “Letter to Pope Paschal II (Laodicea, September 1099) from Godefroy of Bouillon, Raymond of S. Gilles, and Daimbert”, *The First Crusade. The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials*, ed. E. Peters, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971, p. 293-294.

three independent chroniclers took part in the First Crusade, but not in the events of Ma'arra: Fulcher of Chartres, Albert of Aachen and Ralph of Caen. Lastly, Gilo of Paris wrote in verse the tale of the Crusade<sup>6</sup>. William of Tyre belongs to a third generation of chroniclers and relies on these works as a source to relate the events occurred before his birth. As Peter Edbury already argued extensively<sup>7</sup>, William makes a reasoned and virtuous use and reuse of his sources, which are primarily Fulcher and Raymond of Aguilers, followed by Baudry of Bourgueil, Albert of Aachen and – to a lesser extent – the *Gesta*. William treats briefly of the regrettable events of Ma'arra, and he makes the anthropophagous meal seem just a minor detail: in doing so, he substantially differs from Fulcher's version, which represents his main source for all events until 1127. At this narrative sticking point, therefore, the archbishop of Tyre chooses to move away from his usual sources, by cutting short the account of this unglorifying behaviour of the Crusaders to the greatest extent possible. The following French and Tuscan vulgarization of that episode make the account even more concise: "It is also said that there were many people eating human flesh and other food not good to eat".

*Erat preterea in eodem exercitu tanta famis acerbitas, ut deficientibus alimentis multi contra morem ferarum animos induti ad esum immundorum se converterent animalium. Dicitur etiam, si tamen fas est credere, quod multi pre alimentorum inopia ad hoc ut carnes humanas ederent prolapsi sunt. Sed neque clades deerat in populo, nec merito deese poterat, ubi tam immundis et pestilentibus cibis – si tamen cibi dicendi sunt qui contra naturam sumuntur – misera plebs alebatur. Nec enim momentaneum fuerat nec ad tempus modicum illa tanta talisque que populum afflixerat inopia, sed quasi ebdomadibus quinque vel amplius circa illam, quam expugnare nitebantur, urbem moram fecerant cum hoc periculo.* (William of Tyre, VII, 11)

D'autre part avoit en l'ost merveille grant soufrete de viandes, si que les povres gen moroient de fain. Mainz en i ot, ce dit-l'en, qui menjoient char d'omes et maintes autres choses qui n'estoient ne netes ne bones à mengier. De ce sourdi une mout grant mortalité; car il avoient sis entor cele cité de Marram à tel meschief de famine, si que mout avoient perdu de leur gent. (*Eracles*, VII, 2)

6 H. Blurton, *Cannibalism in High Medieval English Literature*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 105-131; M. Rouche, "Cannibalisme sacré chez les croisés populaires", *La religion populaire. Aspects du christianisme populaire à travers l'histoire*, ed. Y.-M. Hillaire, Lille, Université de Lille, 1981, p. 29-41; J. Rubenstein, "Cannibals and Crusaders", *French Historical Studies*, 31, 2008, p. 525-552.

7 P. Edbury, *William of Tyre, historian of the Latin east*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

*Da l'altra parte avea l'oste grande soffratta di vivanda, sì che le povere genti morivano di fame. Molti v'ebbe, per quello che si dica, che manicavano carne d'uomo e molte altre cose che non erano né belle né nette a mangiare. Di questo nacque una molto grande mortalità, ch'ellino erano stati intorno a quella città di Marran a tal misagio di fame sì che molti n'aveano perduti di loro gente non pur solamente per arme ma per lo misagio ch'elli sufferirono<sup>8</sup>. (Eracle volg., VII, 9)*

The initial formula “*dicitur etiam*” (it is also said that) promptly clarifies William’s stance: what he is about to report is not considered – or he does not want the reader to consider it – certain and indisputable. Fulcher, instead, situates the cannibal events during the siege and this detail is not to be neglected: there is quite a difference between cannibalism performed after victory – and probably in secret – and cannibalism performed during the siege, in order to arouse fear into the enemy.

Here, when the siege had lasted twenty days, our people suffered excessive hunger. **I shudder to tell** that many of our people, harassed by the madness of excessive hunger, cut pieces from the buttocks of the Saracens already dead there, which they cooked, but when it was not yet roasted enough by the fire, they devoured it with savage mouth. **So the besiegers rather than the besieged were tormented**<sup>9</sup>. (Fulcher of Chartres, I, 25)

Raymond of Aguilers situates the episode at the end of the siege of Ma’arra and justifies it as driven by hunger – as William will –, but he also reports what happened on the public place and that the Crusaders ate *avidissime* (with gusto).

Now the food shortage became so acute that the Christians ate with gusto many rotten Saracen bodies which they had pitched into the swamps two or three weeks before. This spectacle disgusted as many Crusaders as it did strangers<sup>10</sup>. (Raymond of Aguilers, X)

8 All the quotations from the Tuscan vulgarization are taken from my PhD dissertation, “Edizione critica del volgarizzamento fiorentino dell’*Estoire d’Eracles* (Firenze, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Plut. LXI.45)”, University of Parma, April 2016.

9 *The First Crusade*, p. 84. For reasons of space the original Latin text is reported only when comparing the *Eracles’* with the Latin, French and Italian versions. In all other cases I report in a footnote only the most expressive sentences in Latin marked in bold: “*Dicere perborreo*”; “*Itaque plus obsessores quam obsessi angebantur*”, Fulcher of Chartres, *RHC*, t. 3, 1866, I, 24.

10 Raymond of Aguilers, *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, ed. and trans. J. H. Hill, L. L. Hill, Philadelphia, The American Philosophical Society, 1968, p. 81.

Albert of Aachen and Ralph of Caen do not hide their astonishment and repulsion:

It is extraordinary to relate and horrifying to the ears: these same torments of famine grew so great around these cities that — **wicked to tell, let alone to do** — the Christians did not shrink from eating not only killed Turks or Saracens, but even dogs whom they snatched and cooked with fire. [...] But why marvel? There is no sharper sword than long-drawn out hunger<sup>11</sup>. (Albert of Aachen, V, 29)

It is shameful to report what I heard and what I learned from the authors of this shame. For I heard that they said that they were forced by the lack of food to begin to eat human flesh. Adults from among the gentiles were put into the cooking pot, and their youth were fixed on spits and roasted. In devouring them, the Christians looked like wild beasts, like dogs roasting men<sup>12</sup>. (Ralph of Caen, XCVII)

The anonymous author of the *Historia belli sacri* adds some grim details and an interesting reference to some people carrying Saracen flesh extracted from the corpses to sell at the market<sup>13</sup>. The *Gesta* — usually characterised by carefulness and diplomacy — reveals more information than William does:

While we were there, some of our men could not satisfy their needs, either because of the long stay or because they were so hungry, for there was no plunder to be had outside the walls. So they ripped up the bodies of the dead, because they used to find bezants hidden in their entrails, and others cut the dead flesh into slices and cooked it to eat<sup>14</sup>. (*Gesta Francorum*, X, 33)

Peter Tudebode proves to be particularly understanding towards the episode:

- 
- 11 Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana: History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, ed. and trans. S. B. Edgington, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2007, p. 375. “*Mirabile dictu et auribus horrendum! [...] Quod nefas est dicere, nedum facere*”, Albert of Aachen, *RHC*, t. 4, 1879, V, 29.
- 12 *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen. A History of the Normans on First Crusade*, ed. and trans. B. S. Bachrach, D. S. Bachrach, Aldershot-Burlington, Ashgate, 2005. “*Pudet referre quod audierim quodque didicerim ab ipsis pudoris auctoribus*”, Ralph of Caen, *RHC*, t. 3, XCV.
- 13 The *Historia Belli Sacri*, written by an anonymous monk of the Abbey of Montecassino, was published in the *RHC* under the title *Tudebodus imitatus et continuatus*: “*Scindebant corpora mortuorum, eo quod in interioribus eorum inveniebant byzantios reconditos; alii autem caedebant carnes eorum per frustra, et decoquebant ad manducandum; alii quoque portabant ad platea ad vendendum*”, *RHC*, t. 3, XCII.
- 14 *Gesta Francorum. The deeds of the Franks and the other pilgrims to Jerusalem*, ed. R. Hill, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1962, p. 80.

Consequently, our poor people began to split open the pagan corpses because they found bezants hidden in their bellies. There were others who were so famished that they cut the flesh of the dead into bits, cooked, and ate it<sup>15</sup>. (Peter Tudebode, IX)

Baudry of Bourgueil, similarly, reports the event emphasizing the extraordinary starvation and stressing that the Christians were suffering because they were fighting for the glory of God<sup>16</sup>. Also the other chroniclers who – as Baudry – rewrote the *Gesta* emphasize the episode:

They were so desperate with hunger that they ended up – a horrible thing to have to describe – cutting up the bodies of the Turks, cooking them and eating them<sup>17</sup>. (Robert the Monk, VIII, 8)

Some of our men, entirely without resources, finding nothing in nearby areas to satisfy their needs, desecrated the bellies of dead Saracens, daring to probe their internal organs, because they had heard that pagans in serious danger would try to preserve their gold and silver by eating them. Others, they say, cut pieces of flesh from the corpses, cooked them and ate them, but this was done rarely and in secret, so that no one could be sure whether they actually did this<sup>18</sup>. (Guibert de Nogent, IV)

In any event, the condemnations expressed in these texts are mitigated: according to the chroniclers, hunger constitutes a sufficient ground to break the taboo and some of them – such as William – highlight the risks of eating rotten meat. As we can notice, there are many rhetorical strategies to report a crime so far ascribed – and ascribable – to the Saracens. Saracens were frequently described as anthropophagous in the *chansons de geste* and this element should not come as a surprise to

15 Peter Tudebode, *Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere*, ed. and trans. J. H. Hill, L. Hill, Philadelphia, The American Philosophical Society, 1974, p. 102.

16 “*Relatum est enim et compertum quia multi carnes turcinas, carnes scilicet humanas, verutatas et ignibus assas, inverecondis morsibus tetigere. Exibant itaque furtim a civitate, et procul ignibus accensis coquebant; et nefandis dapibus sumptis (sic etenim miserae consulebant vitae) tanquam nihil egerint huiusmodi revertentantur. [...] nec tamen imputabatur eis pro scelere, quoniam famem illam pro Deo alacriter patiebantur, et inimicis manibus et dentibus inimicabantur. Patrabant equidem illicita, sed legem violari compellebat angustiosa necessitas*”, Baudry of Bourgueil, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, RHC, t. 4, III, 27.

17 *Robert the Monk's History of the First Crusade. Historia Iherosolimitana*, ed. and trans. C. Sweetenham, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006, p. 186. “*Quod etiam dictu horribile est*”, Robert the Monk, RHC, t. 3, VIII, 8.

18 Guibert of Nogent, *Deeds of God through the Franks*, ed. and trans. R. Levine, World eBook Library, 2003, p. 69.



modern readers; Christians did consider the Saracens evil people incline to repugnant crimes. But how could an author ascribe the same crimes to Franks and, on top of that, to those belonging to the crusading army<sup>19</sup>? According to the comparison above, the critics have identified two attitudes: discretion and defence, without considering condemnation. The chroniclers wishing to erase these events as soon as possible from the reader's memory adopt the first attitude, which explains why they apply an aesthetic of conciseness to these episodes, but not to other ones (e.g. the long descriptions of heroic deeds). This group includes the authors who witnessed the First Crusade and William. The second trend is to explain, justify and excuse the cannibal action, by highlighting the starvation of the Crusaders. Fulcher offers a good conclusion by justifying this dietary drift: the assailants suffered more than the besieged ("*Itaque plus obsessores quam obsessi angebantur*<sup>20</sup>").

What the chroniclers seem to tell us – William in particular – is that the end justifies the means and that even what is usually considered awful and sacred may become a great strategy or an excusable need in war times. The Crusaders' *status* allows Christians travelling to the Holy Land to perpetrate this nefarious deed (*nefas*) as, first of all, they are starving to fight for the glory of God and, secondly, the needs outdo the respect of civil rules. Last, but not least, while going to Jerusalem and thus fulfilling their vows, the Crusaders will have all their sins forgiven. The second element that the texts intensively underline – as it will soon be clear when dealing with the siege of Antioch – is the positive evaluation of using extreme deeds in order to terrify the enemy.

The events of Ma'arra – with the mentioned variants – recur in all chroniclers' reports and much has already been written about mutual textual correspondence. It is much more complex to perform a comparative analysis of the chronicles of the siege of Antioch – which occurred briefly before the assault of Ma'arra – as they differ greatly from each other. This time, let's start with the contents in William's work and in the Florentine vulgarization. Saracen spies are clearly hiding among the Crusaders' troops, since the enemy steadily anticipates

19 A. Maalouf, *Le crociate viste dagli arabi*, Torino, SEI, 1994.

20 M. Janet, "Les scènes de cannibalisme aux abords d'Antioche dans les récits de la première croisade: des chroniques à la chanson de croisade", *Bien dire et bien apprendre*, 22, 2004, p. 179-191; M. Uhlig, "Chrétiens mangeurs d'hommes et urbanité païenne dans la *Chanson d'Antioche*: l'*excitatorium* en question", *Romania*, 132, 2014, p. 353-376.

every decision made by the Christian barons, to the point that the situation is becoming unbearable for the commanders. Bohemond claims in front of the council that he has found a solution to the problem and asks permission to implement it. At sunset, he demands for all imprisoned Saracens to be killed, placed over the embers, cooked and served to the barons. He further asks to spread the word about what is happening in his camp: he wants all spies still dwelling in the camp to race off with fear but, most importantly, to survive in order to share their knowledge of these events with their commander and with their entire community.

*Dominus Boamundus, sicuti perspicacis erat ingenii, et mentis acumine pollebat, fertur divisisse principibus: 'Fratres et domini, omnem istam sollicitudinem proicite super nos, nam nos auctore domino conveniens huico morbo inveniemus remedium'. Sic itaque soluto principium consistorio quisque ad castra sua reversus est. Boamundus vero, promissi memor, circa primum noctis crepusculum, cum alii per castra pro cene apparatu, more solito, essent solliciti, educi precipit Turcos aliquot quos habebat in vinculis, et tradens eos carnificibus iugulari mandat et igne copioso subposito quasi ad opus cene diligenter assari precipit et studiosius preparari, precipiens suis quod si ab aliquibus interrogati essent quidnam sibi cena talis vellet, responderent quod inter principes convenerat ut quotquot deinceps de hostibus aut eorum exploratoribus caperentur, omnes prandiis principum et populi ex se ipsis escas via simili cogerentur persolvere. Audientes igitur qui in expeditione erant quod talia in castris domini Boamundi tractarentur, facti admirantes novitatem illuc concurrunt universi.* (William of Tyre, IV, 22)

Buiemont n'ot mie oublié ce que il leur ot promis; quant vint à l'anuitier, li oz s'atourna por souper. Il ot mandé les bochers de sa terre, et fist trere Turs que il avout en prison, si leur bailla; cil leur couperent les gueules et les enfondrent et atornerent por rostir. L'en comença à demander que ce estoit? Buiemont l'ot dit à sa mesnie et cil le distrent aus autres: que tuit li baron avoient einsi créanté entr'eus que toutes le espies que l'en porroit prendre en l'ost l'en les rostiroit et serviroit-l'en aus tables aus Barons, et en mangeroient li Baron par leur créant. La parole s'espandi par l'ost que l'en fesoit tel chose au tref Buiemont; tuit corurent veoir cele merveille. Li Tur meismes qui estoient venu por espier, quant il virent ce, si furent mout espoenté; et fu tart à chascun que il se fust partiz des heberges, por ce que il doutoient que l'en ne féist autretel d'eus. Quant il revenoient à leur seigneurs qui les avoient envoiez, il leur disoient et espandoient par toute sa terre que cele gent qui estoient à siege devant Antioche, soufroient plus mal et estoient plus dur encontre mesese que roche ne que fers: [de cruauté passoient-il ors et lyons; car les bestes sauvages menjuent les genz toutes crues, mès cil les rotissent avant et puis les deveurent]. (*Eracles*, IV, 23)

*Ma Buiamonte, ch'era di molto gran senno e di gran cuore, disse a li altri baroni: 'Io vi priego che voi mi lasciate ad acivire questa cosa, però ch'i'o pensato il diliveramento di questa cosa e di questo pericolo, s'è vorrei molto provare s'elli rimarrà per questo e s'è lasciate sopra me'. I baroni tenevano Buiamonte per savio, volentieri comisono la bisogna sopra lui; attanto si partì dal consiglio. Buiamonte non ebbe obliato quello ch'elli avea inpromesso: quando venne all'anottiare l'oste s'aconciò per cenare, elli mandò suoi cavalieri e fece amenare turchi ch'elli avea in pregione. Elli fece loro tagliare le gole e li fece sparare e votare e metterli in ischedoni e arostirgli e le genti domandavano che ciò era. Buiamonte il disse a sua masnada e quegli il dissono agli altri che tutti i baroni aveano giurato che tutte le spie ch'elli potrebbero prendere nell'oste ch'elli li farebbono arostire e ch' e' baroni li mangerebbono a tavola per loro saramenti. La cosa si sparse per l'oste, quello che si faceva al trefo di Buiamonte e tutti correvano a vedere quella novità. De' turchi medesimi che v'erano venuti per ispiare furono molto spaventati e molto parve loro indugiare a partirsi dell'oste per paura che non fosse fatto altrettale di loro. Quand'elli rivenieno a' loro signori che li aveano mandati, elli lor diceano che quella gente che aveano posto l'asedio erano più duri che pietra o che ferro e di crudeltà passavano li orsi e lioni, però che le fiere selvatiche mangiavano le bestie o le persone crude ma quelli l'arostivano e poi le mangiavano. Questa cosa si sparse sì per Paganìa che unque poi non potè trovare né 'l gran soldano né li altri amiragli chi loro andasse per ispiare nell'oste. Quelli della città medesimi ne furono molto isbigottiti ed ebbone gran duolo di questa cosa. (Eracle volg., IV, 22)*

In fact, the texts do not explicitly state that the barons and Bohemond had actually eaten the Saracens: the episode focuses on Bohemond's scheme to intimidate the enemy. We get an explanation of what Bohemond wants to – and actually does – achieve: to make the Saracens fear the Crusaders to the point of believing that they would be as fierce as to eat human flesh. I did not find this episode in any other of the sources I examined herein (that, as said before, constitute William's usual sources). There is a strong suspicion that the archbishop made it up, but even more compelling is the question of why William wanted to add this unverifiable and maybe false episode to his chronicle. Why would he want to depict Bohemond and the barons as cannibals, when they are continually praised in a work as apologetic as the *Historia rerum*? Why would he cast a shadow of cannibalism – one of the most abhorrent taboos for Christianity – on the Crusaders? As mentioned above, the Crusaders' *status* allows much more than would be normally accepted, war necessities stand above any precept and the final goal, that is reconquering Jerusalem, is of such an importance to overlook anything. The ultimate purpose of the pilgrimage is to reconquer the holy sites, but the Crusaders' mission also involves the war against the infidels. The

enemy must be completely annihilated and his destruction is part and parcel of the crusading concept. The enemies also included Eastern Christians practising different beliefs and rituals; there is evidence of massacres and violence against local Christian communities belonging to other cults. The fight against infidels is experienced in its broadest sense, by identifying as infidel all those who were not Crusaders.

Referring back to the text, Bohemond orders all prisoners to be executed and grilled, and spreads the word that this is the treatment inflicted on spies. The author certainly does not want to arouse disapproval of the deeds of a great hero of the First Crusade in the reader. First of all, we can read that Bohemond is sharp and smart; he is a very shrewd man and he enjoys the trust of other barons; he keeps his promises. It seems that this episode aims at highlighting his abilities as a strategist and that he is celebrated as an example of cunning and war superiority of the Franks over the Saracens. But what do William's sources report at this point of the story? Some of them narrate that, not far from Antioch, the Christians exhumed the freshly buried Saracens to eat them, sell their flesh and steal all the riches buried with them. William also quotes this episode, but he does not mention cannibal deeds at this time:

*Erat autem ibi, ut predixisse nos meminimus, superstitionis eorum oratorium, ubi et sepulture suorum locum deputaverant. Illuc ergo tam nocte preterita quam diei parte sequentis iam exacta defunctorum suorum transtulerant et sepelierant corpora. Quod ut plebi nostre plenius et pro certo compertum est, illuc violenter irruentes occasione spoliiorum, que cum ipsis tradita fuerant sepulture, sepulchra violant, sepultos effodiunt, aurum, argentum et vestes preciosas cum ipsorum funeribus de monumentis extrahentes. Factum est autem ut qui prius de numero interemptorum, eo quod de nocte consummatum erat prelium, dubitarent, per banc talem revelationem facti doctiores pleniorum de esterno negocio leticiam conceperunt.* (William of Tyre, V, 7)

En cele mahomerie qui estoit iluec, si com je dis desus, avoient enterré de nuiz li Tur les morz qui avoient le jor devant esté ocis en bataille. Quant la gent à pié de l'ost le sorent, il corurent là, et les desterrent touz, et pristrent l'or et l'argent et les robes que il avoient mis en leur sepouture, selonc leur costume. Mout en orent grant duel cil de la ville, porce que il virent trainer parmi les chans les cors de leur amis que il avoient enterrez à grant costemaz; et leur desplesoit ce li nombres de leur morz fu seuz, que il cuidoiert mout celer. (*Eracles*, V, 7)

*In quella maomeria ch'era di sopra, sì com'io vi dissi, aveano i turchi soppelliti i loro morti di notte, quivi quelli ch'erano stati morti nella battaglia. Quando la gente a piede il seppono, elli corsono là e li disotterrarono tutti e tolsono loro di sopra l'oro e*

*l'argento e l'altre cose ch'ellino aveano messe in loro sopulture secondo il loro costume. Molto n'ebbono grande duolo quelli della città perch'ellino viddono tranar i corpi di loro amici ch'elli aveano sopelliti a gran costo e molto loro dispiacque che 'l novero de loro morti fu saputo, ch'elli credevano molto celare. (Eracle volg., V, 6)*

Here, *Eracles'* editor Paris adds a note claiming that William does not write everything he knows and that he does not mention the role of the Tafurs; then, he inserts a quote of a passage from the *Chanson d'Antioche*. Paris is strongly convinced that William has omitted the real reason why the corpses were exhumed, that is to eat their flesh. Who are these Tafurs, that the editor claims William has omitted<sup>21</sup>? They are not found in William's usual sources – Fulcher and Raymond – but they appear in *Dei gesta per francos* by Guibert of Nogent and in several *chansons de geste*:

Moreover, when the pieces of flesh were found among the pagan bodies at Ma'arra, and elsewhere, during a terrible famine a hideous rumor (based on something that had been done furtively and very rarely) circulated widely among the pagans, that there were some men in the Frankish army who eagerly fed upon the corpses of Saracens. To circulate this rumor among them even more vividly, the men carried the battered corpse of Turk out in full view of the other Turks, set it afire, and roasted it as if the flesh was going to be eaten. Then they learned what had happened, thinking that the charade was real, they grew even more afraid of the fearlessness of the Tafurs than of our other leaders. Like the ancient pagans the Turks were tormented more by unburied bodies than any Christian seems to be concerned with his soul of fears damnation<sup>22</sup>. (Guibert de Nogent, VII)

They would be an independent Crusader battalion that stuck with their commander (the self-appointed King of the Tafurs) after he lost his horse and the status of knight. The story goes that they lived in abject poverty, did not accumulate wealth and owned no weapons. They were sort of twisted Franciscan warriors, whose first feature was utmost poverty and the second was hostile fierceness<sup>23</sup>. The Tafurs do

21 An in-depth study on the Tafurs is provided by M. Janet, *L'idéologie incarnée. Représentations du corps dans le premier cycle de la croisade* (Chanson d'Antioche, Chanson de Jérusalem, Chétifs), Paris, Champion, 2013, p. 142-155, 171-184.

22 Guibert of Nogent, *Deeds of God*, p. 86.

23 About the Tafurs see also: P. Alphandéry, A. Dupront, *La cristianità e l'idea di crociata*, trad. Brunelli Foschi Martini, Bologna, Il mulino, 1974, p. 90-96; Uhlig, "Chrétienneurs d'hommes".

not appear in chronicles (except in Guibert), but are a recurrent subject of the *chansons de geste*: in the *cycle de la Croisade*, the anthropophagous scenes are much more developed and the Tafurs are depicted as the leading perpetrators of Christian cannibalism. They are charged with the cruellest and most abhorrent deeds, and this is the reason why doubts have been cast on their real existence, to the point that scholars suggested that they might have been invented to justify actions that would have been hideous if performed by Crusaders. In short, they would be a sort of extreme fringe to be blamed for the most drastic behaviours, prone to be included and concurrently excluded from the military strategy of “our part”. The possible identification of the Tafurs with Peter the Hermit and his troops has already been noted and investigated; this group namely constituted the poorest – and in some cases the most savage – fringe of the crusading pilgrims. Going back over the *chansons*, we observe that it is always Peter who suggests the Tafurs eat the enemy corpses to overcome hunger and that the Tafurs listen to him. Not all poor people in the crusading army are represented as Tafurs, but the Tafurs might have been used as a reference to a portion of Peter’s troops, to that unrulier and less manageable group that made the Hermit’s life very difficult during the pilgrimage from Europe to the Middle East. In this regard, it is worth considering some references to Peter and to his troop made by Anna Komnene in her work *Alexiad*, which reports two episodes interestingly related to the purpose of this paper, which occurred when the Hermit and his bunch passed through Constantinople. For that text, we report Weber’s edition, translated into English:

As the fool still would not hold his tongue after a second and third warning, the emperor sent him off to Kherson and ordered that he be imprisoned. [...] The Cumans took him with them to their own country and there he lived with them there for a fairly long time, gaining their confidence to the extent that they soon addressed him as emperor. The Cusmans, who were longing to gorge themselves on human blood and human flesh and were more than ready to amass booty from our territories, found that they had in him Patroklos-excuse; they decided to march in full force against the Roman Empire, on the pretext of re-establishing him on the ancestral throne. (*Alexiadis*, X, 2)

The emperor was aware what Peter had suffered before from the Turks and advised him to wait for the other counts to arrive. [...] Normans, numbering 10,000 in all, joined him but detached themselves from the rest of the

army and ravaged the outskirts of Nicaea, acting with horrible cruelty to the whole population; babies were hacked to pieces, impaled on wooden spits and roasted over a fire; old people were subjected to every kind of torture<sup>24</sup>. (*Alexiadis*, X, 6)

The strategy implemented by the *chansons* is that of blaming someone else, a Christian group alien to chroniclers and readers. William does something similar when he ascribes everything to a single man's choice (Bohemond), in that he transforms the image of cannibalism spread across the Christian ranks into the decision of an individual made with a strategic goal. On the contrary, the other chroniclers tend to be extremely tactful in revealing the cannibals' identity and they conceal their monstrosity by not mentioning them and using generic references, such as *populus*. The *chansons'* reports go on for a number of verses and are characterised by a remarkable fascination with cannibalism<sup>25</sup>, which seems to stem from the fact that it isn't the same type of cannibalism nor the same cannibals as in the chronicles. Here the cannibals are not decent human beings turned into savages by starvation; instead, we have a socially-marked human group – the Tafurs –, which performs cannibalism as a habit. Unlike the chronicles, the anthropophagy reported in the *chansons* does not reveal a scenario of savageness and does not depict an entirely barbaric picture of the events. The *chansons* rather suggest a reasoned, social and ritual cannibalism. The cannibalism for

24 Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad*, ed. and tras. E. R. A. Sewter, Baltimore, Penguin Books, 2003.

25 Precise references to the texts are provided in Janet, *L'idéologie incarnée*, and Janet, "Les scènes de cannibalisme". I recall here only the main passages: *Chanson d'Antioche*, v. 4039-4118; *Chanson de Jerusalem*, v. 6415-6427, 7453-7460, 8146-8148; *Chanson de la première croisade d'après Baudri de Bourgueil*, v. 4579-4603; *Le Chevalier au Cygne et Godefroy de Bouillon*, v. 6441-6456. See also G. Sorice, "Invulnerabili e cannibali nelle *chansons de geste*", *Par deviers Rome m'en revenrai errant. XX<sup>ème</sup> Congrès International de la Société Rencesvals pour l'étude des épopées romanes*, ed. M. Careri, C. Menichetti, M. T. Rachetta, Roma, Viella, 2017, p. 655-664. On the version of Baudri de Bourgueil see also P. Meyer, "Un récit en vers de la première croisade fondé sur Baudri de Bourgueil", *Romania*, 17, 1876, p. 1-63; A. Petit, "Le camp chrétien devant Antioche dans le *RPCBB*", *Romania*, 108, 1987, p. 503-519. We will not discuss here the Middle English text *Richard Coer de Lyon*, about king Richard eater of Saracens. For this text cf. F. Leona Cordery, "Cannibal Diplomacy. Otherness in the Middle English Text *Richard Coer de Lion*", *Meeting the Foreign in the Middle Ages*, ed. A. Classen, New York, Routledge, 2002, p. 153-171; Blurton, *Cannibalism in High Medieval English Literature*; M. L. Price, *Consuming Passions. The Uses of Cannibalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, New York-London, Routledge, 2003, p. 5-11.



nutritional purposes portrayed in the chronicles turns into political and bellicose cannibalism in the *chansons*; in other words, it is not committed because of starvation, but rather in order to terrify the enemy. It is a new kind of cannibalism with an increased value, as it is considered a successful gimmick. In comparing the *Eracles* to its sources, the text reveals the development of a concept of cannibalism more similar to that of the *chansons de geste*, with which it shares at least two elements: sensationalism and the use of cannibalism for military purposes. In the *chansons* and in William's text, we witness a political cannibalism, a ritual with a refined preparation that is most often performed in public and to wreak vengeance.

Finally, we can observe that chronicles are characterized by the moral intervention of the narrator, who identifies cannibalism as a despicable deed by using a brief and lean style to tackle a hideous event that deserves being rejected. On the contrary, the *chansons* show much more developed episodes, expanded upon an epic, sometimes a dramatic or a comic tone, and focus on some specific characters (the Tafurs). In this context, William's version and the *Eracles* contain some of the most spectacular and functional elements characterizing the *chansons*.

However, we should not think that the chronicles attempt to be more truthful: they are pieces of work reflecting a specific writing strategy and involving narrative and lexical choices. We know that William makes use of his sources through the filter of political and personal decisions, in that he picks, modifies and evaluates each episode in the chronicles, to steer it and follow the thread of his interests<sup>26</sup>. William intended that, in general terms, the *Historia* should edify, inform and instruct. Since the defence of Christendom and the protection of the places associated with the life of Christ are the *raison d'être* of the events described, it is not surprising that various passages satisfy the Christian model of sin, repentance, grace and redemption. The *Historia* is balanced between divine providence and human activity. Beyond the attractive storytelling and the theological or secular interpretations of past events lies a didactic purpose.

William adds and William removes. Cannibalism for nutritional purposes, even if necessary, is subject to little and maybe great deletions in the archbishop's chronicle, whereas anthropophagy as a tool to

---

26 Edbury, *William of Tyre*.



scare and destroy the enemy becomes more and more present through the pages of the report, and also through the addition of a paragraph never seen in William's usual sources. In conclusion, the archbishop of Tyre specifically reuses the previous chronicles and shares with the *chansons* the sensationalism of cannibalism for purposes of revenge and intimidation: while the *chansons* bestow the cannibalism upon the Tafurs, William bestows it upon Bohemond, in order to limit to a single element what perhaps was a much more widespread practice. Through the spies' episode, William limits to one person and one moment an act of anthropophagy that would be much more abhorrent if performed by an entire starving troop satisfying a mere bestial need.

As I mentioned at the beginning, the medieval chronicles contain other types of cannibalism. In the particular case of the *Eracles*, I was referring to the lynching of Andronikos I Komnenos, a despotic emperor who was entirely eaten by the women of Constantinople. Cannibalism for expositive and vindictive purposes dominates the entire Antioch episode narrated by William and the paragraph concerning the fall of Andronikos I Komnenos<sup>27</sup>. Within this episode, we will abandon the discussion about Crusaders eating Saracens and we will briefly tackle the cannibal representation in the *Eracles* (as a matter of fact, this episode is to be found in book XXII of the *Eracles*, belonging exclusively to the continuations and not to William's text). Andronikos ascended to the throne in 1182 by deceivingly and cruelly killing the entire royal family and every single relative who could inherit the crown by dynastic line. His reign was brief and yet terrible for Constantinople's citizens, who suffered vexations and violence; in particular, his reign was lecherous and characterized by a total absence of moral restraints:

Or vous dirons d'Androine, qui empereres fu de Coustantinople. Il ne demouroit beile nonne en toute le tiere, ne fille à chevalier, ne fille à bourgeois, ne femme, [ne une ne autre,] por que elle li seist bele, que il ne le presist, et gisoit à li à force; ne abéie nulle que il ne raensist et desiretast. Et si estoit si haïs pour le malisse k'il faisoit, que ainc haus home qui tiere tenist, ne fu onques si haïs de toutes gens, com il estoit<sup>28</sup>. (*Chronique d'Ernoul*, IX)

27 For a detailed overview of cannibalism as political revenge across the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, see A. Montanari, *Il fiero pasto. Antropofagia medievale*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2015, p. 55-75.

28 This section belongs to the *Eracles'* continuation; the successive quotations are taken from the *Chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard le Trésorier*, ed. Mas Latrie.

*Andreino, essendo imperadore di Gostantinopoli, elli non v'avea né bella monaca in badie o monistero, né figlia di borgesse ch'elli non giacesse co lei per forza. Le badie e le chiese disertava, elli era sì odiato per le mali operazioni ch'elli faceva che niuno alto uomo che terra tenesse non fu unque tanto odiato. (Eracle volg., XXII, 5)*

Yet, his fall was proportional to his ascent: bloody and fast. The population took revenge through a number of penances evocative of the places and symbols of his career (the square, the crown made of garlic, the donkey, and so on), complemented by a series of exemplary punishments falling within the law of retaliation, such as blinding (of only one eye, because with the remaining one he must see the pains inflicted upon him:

Dont vint Kirsac, si se pourpensa de quel vil mort il le feroit morir, pour sono signour droiturier qu'il avoit noié en le mer, qui fieux avoit esté l'empereour Manuel, et pout les grans malisses qu'il avoit fais. Dont vint, si le fist despoulier tout nu, et si fist apoter une ries d'aus, més li ail n'i estoient mie: si l'en fist faire une couronne et le fist couronner comme roi, et si le fist bertauder et tondre en crois, et si fist amener une anesse, si le fist torner çou devant deriere et tenir le keue en se mai, comme frain. Ensi le fist mener par toutes les rues de Coustantinoble, et porter couronne en tel maniere. Or vous dirai que les femes faisoient. Elle avoient apparellié escloi et merde et longaine se li saloient au devant et li ruoient en mi le visage, [et celes qi n'i pooient avenir, montoient es solieils et si avoient aparilié la puinesie et la longaigne, si li ruoient sor la teste.] Ensi li faisoit on en cascune rue où il venoit. Ensi porta couronne Androines aval Coustantinoble, de si qu'il fu fors de le cité. (*Chronique d'Ernoul*, IX)

*Adunque venne Chirsac e si pensa di qual morte elli farebbe morire Andreino per lo suo signore diritto, il quale elli avea anegato, il qual era stato figlio de lo 'nperadore Manuello, e per li gran mali ch'elli avea fatti. Allora il fece spogliare tutto ignudo e apportare una resta d'agli e fecelo tondere e poi raderli il capo in croce e fare una corona di quella resta d'agli e porrelo in sun uno asino, volto col viso alla coda, e tenea la coda in mano in guisa di freno; e così il fece menare per tutte le rughe di Gostantinopoli con quella corona. Ora udirete come le donne il conciarono: elle toglievano piscio e sterco d'uomo e altro fastidio sì gl'faceano gittare nel viso e in capo e per tutto, da le finestre e di terra, e così li feciono per tutte le rughe della città. E così porto il disleale Andreino corona per tutto Gostantinopoli. (Eracle volg., XXII, 5)*

Most of the tortures inflicted upon Andronikos (similar to many other lynchings of dictators) belonged to standard law and therefore to penalties set out by law, with the sole exception of cannibalism, which was usually performed – as in this case – by more vulgar and enraged crowds. The *Eracles'* chronicle reports that Andronikos was thrown at women as if

he were a carcass thrown at dogs and that they broke his body into small pieces and ate all of it. These women claimed that whoever ate him would be redeemed, as if, by eating even the tiniest piece of his corpse, they could contribute to erase all the evil deeds he had done:

Quant il fu fors de le cité, si le livra on as femmes. Et les femmes li coururent sus comme li chiens famelleus fait à la carougne, et le depicierent tout piece à piece. Et celle qui en pooit avoir aussi gros com une feve, si le mangoient, et raioient le car de sous les os à lor coutiaus, si le mangoient. Ne onques n'i demora uns oissiaus ne jointure, que les femes ne mangaissent. Et disoient que toutes celles qui avoient mangié de lui estoient salves, pour che que elles avoient aidié à vengier le malisse qu'il avoit fait. Ensi fina Androine. (*Chronique d'Ernoul*, IX)

*Poi il trassono della città e diederlo alle femine, le quali corsono adosso come cani alla carogna. Elle lo spezzarono tutto minuto e chi ne potea avere, pur quant'una fava, s'è 'l si mangiava. Altre radevano l'ossa dalla carne per mangiarne e non ne rimase né carne né osso ch'elle non divorassono e dicevano che chiunque avea mangiato di lui era salva, però ch'elleno aveano aiutato consumare i gran mali ch'elli avea fatti. Così finì Andreino. (Eracle volg., XXII, 5)*

The women chewed on Andronikos in order to clean themselves from the sins he perpetrated on them. This gesture involved a number of elements: catharsis, purification, annihilation of the enemy. The total destruction of the foe, achieved through his molecular dissolution, also calls off his sin and therefore the shame left on the person who endured it. As Angelica Montanari reported in her research, eating the enemy was not an uncommon practice during the Middle Ages. In these events, the subject was – however reluctantly – the victim of cannibalism, and those performing it were part of an indefinite mass that had suffered on the hands of the cannibalised. The people who ate Andronikos, the tyrant, according to Montanari's view, loved the *tyrannus* as an institution but considered that position to have been abused by an impostor. The punishment of the oppressor counterbalanced his conduct: in the same way he had devoured the society and drained it, the society ate him. In some way, every oppressor that was cannibalized had been a cannibal himself.

I reiterate here the same question about the spies' episode in Bohemond's camp: did the lynching of Andronikos really take place? And, if not, why did the author choose to report it? The most relevant

source about the story of Andronikos' reign is a Byzantine chronicle written by Niketas Choniates<sup>29</sup>; the book XI of his *Annales* deals extensively with the figure of Andronikos, and in particular with his rise and drastic decline. The Byzantine historian describes in detail the beatings inflicted by the angry crowd of Constantinople against him: the list of sufferings is rather long and cruel, but cannibalism does not appear<sup>30</sup>. In addition, it is quite hard to find this anthropophagous episode in most of medieval chronicles, one exception being the work of a Picard knight, Robert de Clari's *La Conquête de Constantinople*. In his chronicle, he concluded the description of the lynching of Andronikos with only a reference to the cannibalistic revenge of the women:

And the women whose daughters he had taken by force, they seized him by the beard, and they did him such terrible shame that when they came to the other end of the city there was no flesh on his bones. Then they took the bones and threw them into a sewer. In such wise did they avenge themselves on this traitor<sup>31</sup>.

The editor of Robert de Clari's work noted that the cannibal story of Andronikos appeared first in the *Eracles* or *Chronique d'Ernoul*'s tradition, and only after in *La Conquête* by Clari<sup>32</sup>. It is not possible to demonstrate a direct influence of the *Eracles* on Robert de Clari's chronicle, but it is prudent to note that both texts choose to report the fall of Andronikos in such an emphasized way.

Therefore, the author of the *Eracles* decided to insert a cannibal episode even though it did not appear in the historical sources, in the same way as William of Tyre included the feast of Turkish spies in Bohemond's camp. The previous cannibal occurrences in the Latin source – the siege of Ma'arra and the roasted Turks – may have influenced the authors of the *Eracles* and *Ernoul* to remodel the historical event of Andronikos' lynching into a powerful and impressive literary episode. The anthropophagy at the end adds to the narration a remarkable sense of pathos and in both chronicles – *Eracles* or *Ernoul* and *La Conquête* – the

29 *O city of Byzantium: annals of Niketas Choniates*, ed. and trans. H. J. Magoulias, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1984.

30 *O city of Byzantium*, XI, 8, 6-14.

31 Robert de Clari, *The conquest of Constantinople*, ed. and trans. E. H. McNeal, New York, Columbia University Press, 2005, p. 56.

32 E. H. McNeal, "The Story of Isaac and Andronicus", *Speculum*, 3, 1934, p. 324-329.

heart of the event is the women's desire to take revenge on the abuser; therefore, the cannibalization is a kind of literary development of the well-known and cruel lynching of Andronikos.

It is interesting to note that in literary texts, the topic of eating human flesh – in particular the heart – traditionally acts as a revenge of the betrayed husband against the cheating lady and her lover; the suggestion evoked by this scene briefly takes us back in particular to the *Lai d'Ignaure*. The ladies of the *Lai* shared – unaware – the same lover. When their husbands discover the affair, they decide not only to kill him, but also to erase the shame by feeding the women with their lover's heart and penis<sup>33</sup>. In this case, the vengeance does not only aim at taking revenge for the betrayal, but also at dissolving the love opponent. After the horrific meal, one of the husbands stresses again: "I have killed and destroyed your lover / [...] / We are now well avenged for your misdeed" (v. 571, 575). This literary example shares with the episode of Andronikos the idea that anthropophagy is the most effective way to erase shame, and sexual shame in particular.

The Constantinople episode involves cannibalism against the enemies to achieve their total annihilation; here revenge and the law of retaliation are much clearer, and it should be considered another example of spectacular, political, vindictive and ritual cannibalism, together with the episode in Antioch. Despite the differences between these episodes – in terms of characters and context – it is quite relevant that the text from which the Tuscan vulgarization was translated reported with emphasis events like these. William of Tyre uses great discretion when talking about the cannibalism during the siege of Ma'arra, hiding it behind the need raised by famine and starvation; however, the human banquet set up by Bohemond acts as a proper episode, in which the Crusader's strategy is portrayed in detail and with the aim to affect the reader. Even if the chronicle reports an act of cannibalism perpetrated by a Crusader, the explanation of its cause and effect seems enough to avoid clouding his reputation. The idea of roasting Turkish prisoners is presented as horrifying, but useful for the safety of the army. In a

33 *The Old French Lays of Ignaure, Oiselet and Amours*, ed. and trans. Glyn S. Burgess, Leslie C. Brook, D. S. Brewer, Cambridge, 2010, v. 541-548: "In four days time let us remove from the vassal / His lowest member down below, / The delights of which used to please them, / And have it made into a meal; / We'll put the heart in as well. / [...] / And trick them into eating it, / For we couldn't take any better revenge on them".

similar way, the episode of Andronikos occupies a full section in the description of Constantinople's political situation. The narrator explains in detail the cruel behaviour of Andronikos, especially his betrayal and treachery to conquer the throne illicitly. His evil tyranny seems to find its proper conclusion in the brutal punishments he receives from the people of Constantinople, and the cannibalism at the end takes the form of a collective catharsis, necessary for purifying the abused society, and symbolically put into action by its women.

The *Eracles* does not contain authentic *exempla*, but sometimes there are brief descriptions of people or events aiming at representing moral values; in this sense, they incorporate little exemplary reports within the bigger frame of the chronicle. The intimidation of enemy spies in Antioch is performed through the *staging* of their punishment – which can be defined as exemplary – just like the punishment and revenge against the despotic Andronikos. In the overall context of the Crusades, Bohemond's episode suggests how the end justifies the means, and the event in Constantinople reminds the readers that the end is also justified by the cause.

Pantalea MAZZITELLO  
Indiana University