

ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF WAR, ON THE SACRED SIDE OF HISTORY. REPRESENTATIONS OF EPISCOPAL MILITARY ACTIONS IN MEDIEVAL LOTHARINGIA

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Introduction

This article has the objective of creating a debate within the area of studies of episcopal lords, as well as taking a position on it. Essentially, this work proposes that medieval bishops were represented positively when they participated in war. I argue against the perspective of diverse scholars who suggest that representing episcopal military actions was a problematic situation for medieval authors. In my opinion, the numerous cases in which bishops are presented positively when participating in war show that narrating the military actions of prelates was a good opportunity not only to praise them but also to reinforce the identity-links between the episcopal communities and their leaders.¹

To do so, I will examine two historiographical texts coming from the Lotharingian dioceses of Liège and Trier. In the first case, I will examine a proper historiographical text, namely, the *Gesta episcoporum Tungrensium, Traiectensium et Leodiensium*,² while for the archbishopric of Trier I will work with the *Gesta*

¹ This article is based on my MA thesis entitled: “Invincible Bishops: Representations of Episcopal Military Actions in Medieval Lotharingia.” The thesis was defended at Central European University (CEU), Budapest, in June 2019. In it, I examined diverse historiographical sources coming from the dioceses of Utrecht, Liège, and Trier in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. I focused my analysis mostly on understanding the pattern of narration of warfare in the Lotharingian episcopal narratives of war and on understanding the importance of the military past of the bishoprics for the shaping of their local identities.

² The Latin edition used here is Anselmus, *Gesta episcoporum Tungrensium, Traiectensium et Leodiensium*, ed. Rolf Koepke, MGH SS. 7 (Hannover: Hahn, 1846), 189–234. This *Gesta* was mostly written by Anselm, a canon of the cathedral of Liège, between the years 1052 and 1056. His work is, in fact, a continuation of a previous *Gesta episcoporum* written by the monk Heribert of Lobbes in the last decades of the tenth century. The main objective of Anselm while writing the *Gesta* was to praise the figure of the bishop Wazo of Liège (1042–1048), who was a contemporary of the author and who probably was the figure who ordered Anselm to write the text. This fact explains why the longest and most original part of it, which was also the part entirely written by Anselm, was dedicated to the deeds of Wazo, while the sections dealing with previous bishops are shorter and mostly based on the first *Gesta* by Heribert. A brief entry about Anselm’s work can be seen in Jean-Louis Kupper, “Remarques sur la chronique d’Anselme de Liège,” *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire* 59 (1981): 1053.

Alberonis archiepiscopi treverensis, a source that can be characterized as being in-between a *Gesta* and a hagiographical text dedicated to a bishop.³ Regarding the characteristics of the *Gestae* as a medieval literary genre, scholars agree that they are historiographical texts characterized by a deep attachment to the political environment of production. Mainly, this type of narrative tried to reminisce about and legitimize bishops' actions in front of the clergy while building the bishopric community and its sacred history.⁴ Because of this positive, sacred meaning of the

³ The Latin edition that will be used here is Balderico, *Gesta Alberonis auctore Balderico*, ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS. 8 (Hannover: Hahn 1848), 243–260. There is another edition: *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Latina*, ed. Jacques P. Migne, 154 (Paris: Migne, 1857–66), 1307c–1338b. I used the following English translation: Brian A. Pavlac, *A Warrior Bishop of the Twelfth Century: The Deeds of Albero of Trier, by Balderich* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2008). There are also two German translations: Emil Zenz, ed., “Von Erzbischof Gottfried (1124) bis zum Tode Alberos (1152),” in *Die Taten der Trierer / Gesta Treverorum 2* (Trier: Paulinus Verlag, 1958), and Hatto Kallfelz, “Taten Erzbischof Alberos von Trier, verfaßt von Balderich,” in *Lebensbeschreibungen einiger Bischöfe des 10.-12. Jahrhunderts. Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters. Freiherr vom Stein-Gedächtnisausgabe* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973), 543–617. The *Gesta Alberonis* was written by Balderich of Florennes between the years 1152 and 1157. Balderich (d. ca. 1162) was born in the diocese of Liège but traveled to Paris to receive training as a cleric. While still a scholar, he caught the attention of Archbishop Albero of Trier (1132–1152), who decided to offer him the charge of master of the cathedral school. Once Albero died in the year 1152, Balderich started his only known work, namely the *Gesta*, which was dedicated to the archbishop. In the text, he narrates the life of Albero, praising his figure while presenting him as an example of good behavior to be followed by the young scholars from Trier. When Balderich needed to describe episodes previous to the arrival of Albero to Trier, he probably based his own work both on oral testimonies and on the *Gesta Alberonis metrica*, a previous hagiographical text dedicated to the same archbishop that was integrated into the *Gesta treverorum*. The work is difficult to define in terms of medieval literary genres. On the one hand, Brian A. Pavlac characterizes it as being in-between a *Gesta* and a hagiographical text. Stephanie Haarländer on the other hand, considers it directly as one of the many *vitae episcoporum* she analyzes.

⁴ The best introductory work concerning episcopal and monastic deeds, which deals mainly with the concept of “sacred history,” is Michele Sot, *Gesta episcoporum, gesta abbatum* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981). Steven Vanderputten includes also the episcopal deeds in his typology, see Steven Vanderputten, “Typology of Medieval Historiography Reconsidered: a Social Re-interpretation of Monastic Annals, Chronicles and Gesta,” *Historical Social Research* 26 (2001): 152–153. There are two articles from Theo Riches that suggest two different but somehow complementary approaches. For the deeds and their function as an archive, see Theo M. Riches, “The Function of the *Gesta Episcoporum* as Archive,” in *Jaarboek voor Middeleeuwse Geschiedenis* 10 (2007): 7–46. For their dynamic and changing political intentions, see Theo M. Riches, “The Changing Political Horizons of *gesta episcoporum* from the Ninth to Eleventh Centuries,” in Ludwig Körntgen and Dominik Wassenhoven (eds.), *Patterns of Episcopal Power* (Prinz-Albert-Forschungen, 6, Berlin–Boston: de Gruyter, 2011), 51–62.

discourse about the past that is present in the episcopal deeds, I believe these are the proper kind of written sources to search for positive representations of bishops' military activity.

Bishops and War in Historiography

While the military actions of medieval bishops have received considerable attention from historiography in the last decades, the analysis of the narrative representation of those activities has been mostly neglected until very recently, when some works started to explore how bishops were perceived when participating in war.⁵ However,

⁵ Concerning the topic of bishops' participation in warfare, most of the new contributions present a wider perspective, both methodologically – although mainly based on a cultural approach to war – and regionally, with a special focus on the narrative and visual representations of churchmen's warfare practices. A clear example of this new cultural approach to the topic of episcopal authorities and war can be seen in Radosław Kotecki, Jacek Maciejewski, and John S. Ott, eds., *Between Sword and Prayer: Warfare and Medieval Clergy in Cultural Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2018). This book is a compilation of articles, which analyze the relation between clerics and warfare from a cultural perspective and focus on diverse problems. Concerning the topoi of the representations of clerics during war, the article of Radosław Kotecki about the representation of twelfth-century Polish bishops when engaged in war must be underlined. See Radosław Kotecki, "Lions and Lambs, Wolves and Pastors of the Flock: Portraying Military Activity of Bishops in Twelfth-Century Poland," in Kotecki, Maciejewski, and Ott, *Between Sword and Prayer*, 303–340. Another compilation with a similar approach, although more focused on England, can be seen in Radosław Kotecki and Jacek Maciejewski, eds., *Ecclesia et Violentia. Violence against the Church and Violence within the Church in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014). As in the case of the previous book, it does not contain any work analyzing the Lotharingian church. The same topic of clergy and war was widely analyzed for England, with one detailed study specifically centered on it. See Craig M. Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen of Medieval England, 1000–1250* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2016). Beyond these works, most of which are compilations, it is important to mention the contributions of David S. Bachrach, who analyzed the liturgical role that the imperial clergy (both secular and regular) played in warfare during the Ottonian period in medieval Germany, see David S. Bachrach, "Military chaplains and the religion of war in Ottonian Germany, 919–1024," *Religion, State and Society* 39 (2011): 13–31. He also published a very interesting and complete work about religious conduct during warfare, which includes some passages analyzing the military actions (mainly discourses) of Lotharingian bishops from Liège and Trier. He examines these events in the contexts of what he calls secular wars, which refer mostly to regional and local wars that were perceived as different from the Crusades. See David S. Bachrach, *Religion and the Conduct of War c. 300–1215* (New York: Boydell, 2003), 151–189. The most recent study based on the Lotharingian space comes from the work of Jeffrey R. Webb, "Representations of the Warrior-bishop in Eleventh-century Lotharingia," *Early Medieval Europe* 24 (2016): 103–130. In this work Webb deals with the narrative representations of Lotharingian warrior bishops during the eleventh century. He describes how episcopal narratives changed the way they represented the bishops' involvement in warfare in that period, either by avoiding mentioning their participation or by justifying it through different rhetorical strategies.

despite these current advances, the relative novelty of the topic implies that most of the studies are focused either on specific regions or on very short periods of time. Therefore, there are no attempts to establish diachronic or synchronic comparisons among the different case studies, neither to systematize the diverse conclusions into one broad general study or to compare different historiographical positions about the representations of warrior-bishops. Consequently, one can see within this area of study that not only are there scholars with different perspectives who have never engaged in a proper debate, but also that their diverse positions are based on diverse branches of the study of representations of episcopal lords that could be related but, until now, they have not been considered together by scholars.

The problem of the lack of debates appears clearly if one attempts to respond to a simple question, which is also the main question that this article wants to solve: Were medieval bishops represented positively or negatively when participating in war? If there are different positions among scholars concerning this question, it is mainly because they are based on diverse branches of studies of the representation of bishops that have rarely been related. On the one hand, since the publication of the article “A Europe of Bishops” by Timothy Reuter, scholars have broadly studied the figure of bishops both as leaders of dioceses and as the symbolic center of their episcopal communities.⁶ On the other hand, scholars have also studied extensively the military actions of episcopal lords and their figure as army leaders. However, there have been no attempts to compare both branches of the historiographical studies of bishops, neither to understand how they might influence each other.⁷

This change was related, as Webb explains, to the transformations of the episcopal figures and their representation during the reform period.

⁶ The famous article can be seen in: Timothy Reuter, “A Europe of Bishops. The Age of Wulfstan of York and Burchard of Worms,” in Körntgen and Wassenhoven, *Patterns of Episcopal Power*, 17–38.

⁷ A good introduction to the topic can be seen in: Timothy Reuter, ed., *Warriors and Churchmen in the High Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Karl Leyser* (London: Hambledon Press, 1992). The classic works about the warrior bishops, both in Germany and Lotharingia, are Friedrich Prinz, *Klerus und Krieg im früheren Mittelalter. Untersuchungen zur Rolle der Kirche beim Aufbau der Königsherrschaft* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1971) and Leopold Auer, “Der Kriegsdienst des Klerus unter den sächsischen Kaisern,” *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 79 (1971): 316–407. Both of them extensively concentrate on the secular facet of episcopal power, as well on the aristocratic origins of the prelates. From my understanding of the topic, the origin of this dissociation between the analysis of bishops as spiritual or military leaders can be explained by the fact that the academic approaches to the analysis of the secular power of episcopal lords in Lotharingia have to a large extent been focused on the debate regarding the influence the German kings had on the construction of that power, especially within the context of the so-called Imperial Church System. The reference work on this topic is Josef Fleckenstein, *Die Hofkapelle der deutschen Könige. II. Teil, Die Hofkapelle im Rahmen der ottonisch-salischen Reichskirche* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1966). About the figure

The logical consequence of these divided paths is that the theoretical framework and the methodological tools for studying bishops either as leaders of their communities or as military leaders of their own armies have scarcely been compared. For example, when analyzing the narrative representation of episcopal military activities, important scholars like Stephanie Haarländer and Rolf Grosse underline the negative influence that the canonical proscriptions of wielding weapons and wearing armor, which were directed specifically to the clergy, had on those representations. From their perspective, those proscriptions worked as a burden for the authors of the episcopal narratives, who tried to conceal the participation of bishops in battles by different rhetorical strategies.⁸ However, the authors do not appreciate the fact that, as has been extensively demonstrated, one of the roles of the bishop was to defend their flock and their communities, and in some cases it was expected that they do so even during war periods. This facet of episcopal authority was studied by diverse scholars like Jeffrey Webb,

of the courtier bishop and the imperial chapel, see also Stephen Jaeger, "The Courtier Bishop in Vitae from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century," *Speculum* 58 (1983): 291–325. See Timothy Reuter, "The 'Imperial Church System' of the Ottonian and Salian Rulers. A Reconsideration," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 33 (1982): 347–374, which strongly influenced the academic debate about the episcopal authorities of the two regions in the following decades. About the impact that the concept of the Imperial Church System had in German scholarship, see Stephen Patzold "L'Épiscopat du haut Moyen Âge du point de vue de la médiévisque allemande," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 192 (2005): 341–358. In this sense, while the academic discussion about the relationships established between the Lotharingian episcopal lords and the German kings advanced extensively and promoted several historiographical works, the extreme focalization on the discussion of the Imperial Church System and its application ended up limiting the debate about the bishop's figure in two different ways. First, it placed the focus of the analysis of episcopal power more on the relationship between bishops and kings than on the figure of bishops themselves, as Körntgen states in his introduction: Ludwig Körntgen, "Introduction," in Körntgen and Wassenhoven, *Patterns of Episcopal Power*, 11–14. Second, it helped to increase the number of works that deal only with the secular aspect of episcopal power, while relegating other important features, like the cultural, spiritual, and liturgical ones, as John Ott and Anna Trumbore Jones point out in their introduction: John S. Ott and Anna Trumbore Jones "Introduction: The Bishop Reformed," in *The Bishop Reformed: Studies of Episcopal Power and Culture in the Central Middle Ages*, ed. John S. Ott and Anna Trumbore Jones (New York: Routledge, 2016 [2007]), 1–12.

⁸ See, for example, Rolf Grosse, "L'évêque d'Utrecht autour de l'an Mil: le modèle d'un prélat ottonien?" in *Notger et la Basse-Lotharingie aux alentours de l'an Mil*, ed. Alexis Wilkin and Jean-Louis Kupper (Liège: Presses Universitaires de Liège, 2013), 207–209, and Stephanie Haarländer, *Vitae episcoporum. Eine Quellengattung zwischen Hagiographie und Historiographie, untersucht an Lebensbeschreibungen von Bischöfen des Regnum Teutonicum im Zeitalter der Ottonen und Salier* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2000), 365–374. One of the strategies was to exaggerate the prelates' discursive ability, which in turn means that they were able to finish battle scenes or make their enemies surrender through their speeches, instead of engaging in proper combat.

Radoslaw Kotcecki, and Genevieve Bhurier Thierry, who placed their focus on the characterization of episcopal lord as defender, either of their communities, of their flock, or of their cities.⁹ However, and even if they are clearly on the opposite side, these scholars did not engage in a discussion about this topic neither with Haarländer nor with Grosse.

Therefore, some important issues related to the topic, like the diverse rhetorical strategies used to represent warrior bishops in narratives, still remain on the side of negativity, because their use is still considered to be only a strategy for concealing the participation of bishops in war. My intention in this article is not only to enlighten this debate but to contribute to it by remarking that these narratives' rhetorical strategies were used not to hide but to praise the participation of bishops in war. To start with, I need to briefly introduce the military histories of the diocese of Liège and the archdiocese of Trier.

A Brief Military History of the Diocese of Liege and the Archdiocese of Trier in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

The diocese of Liège was one of the most important bishoprics in the Lotharingian space during the High Middle Ages, mainly because of its political power and its cultural influence. Besides its important role as a center of literary production specialized in hagiographical texts, the diocese of Liège also established strong links with the German monarchs during the tenth century, which in turn ended up transforming the episcopal lords into the main allies of German royal power in the region.¹⁰ In this sense, and due to the support that the bishops of Liège offered to their imperial ambitions, the diocese received numerous grants and benefits from the royal power and, from a military perspective, these benefits helped it

⁹ See, for example: Radoslaw Kotecki, "Lions and Lambs, Wolves and Pastors of the Flock: Portraying Military Activity of Bishops in Twelfth-Century Poland," in Kotecki, Maciejewski, and Ott, *Between Sword and Prayer*, 303–340; Jeffrey R. Webb, "Representations of the Warrior-bishop"; and Geneviève Bühner-Thierry, "Bishops as City Defenders in Early Medieval Gaul and Germany," in Kotecki, Maciejewski, and Ott, *Between Sword and Prayer*, 24–45.

¹⁰ The most important bibliography for Liège in the period, which is not only general but also deals with the influence of the German Kings, can be found in Jean-Louis Kupper, *Liège et l'Église impériale aux XIe-XIIe siècles*, (Liège: Presses universitaires de Liège, 1981), available online, accessed May 14, 2019, <http://books.openedition.org/pulg/1442>. Also see Jean-Louis Kupper, ed., *Notger et la Basse-Lotharingie aux alentours de l'an Mil* (Liège: Presses Universitaires de Liège, 2013). About the cultural prestige of Liège as a center of literary production, which was based mostly on the production of hagiographical texts, see Jeffrey R. Webb, "Hagiography in the diocese of Liège (950–1130)," in *Hagiographies. Histoire internationale de la littérature hagiographique latine et vernaculaire en Occident des origines à 1550. Vol 6*, ed. Guy Philippart (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 809–904.

to become one of the most powerful political entities in Lower Lotharingia. In this sense, and to fulfill their role as keepers of order and protectors of peace, the bishops of Liège counted on a strong army that was formed mostly by the urban militia of the episcopal city.¹¹ However, despite this strong military power, the role of the diocese as an ally of the German kings transformed it into one of the main targets of the uprisings of the rebellious Lotharingian aristocrats, who were fighting against growing royal influence in the region. Because of this, the city suffered at the hands of local lords during the numerous rebellions that occurred in Lotharingia in the tenth and the eleventh centuries; it was exposed, for example, to raids and plunders by troops garrisoned in local fortresses, like in the case of Chèvremont Castle.

Concerning the archbishopric of Trier, it was also an important diocese both of Lotharingia and of the German kingdom. The story of Trier as a city and as a bishopric can be traced as far back as late antiquity when the city, then called *Augusta treverorum*, was one of the most important cities of the Late Roman Empire. Trier was transformed into an archbishopric at the end of the eighth century. Once the region of Lotharingia properly became part of the East Frankish kingdom in the ninth century, the prestige of Trier increased since it became the oldest city in that political entity. Yet, this prestige was not necessarily translated into political power, and during the majority of the High Middle Ages Trier competed for primacy in Germany against the archbishoprics of Mainz and Cologne without success.¹² In fact, from a military perspective, the archdiocese of Trier was a problematic see especially during the twelfth century. This is because it encountered many difficulties while dealing not only with ambitious secular lords like the counts of Luxembourg – who were the most tenacious rivals of the archbishopric in that period – or the palatine counts of the Rhine – who acted as representatives of the territorial ambitions of the German kings in Upper Lotharingia – but also with the local *ministeriales*, who, despite being unfree-vassals of the archbishops, had their own political ambitions and seized the episcopal city and its lords on numerous occasions.

¹¹ A detailed description of the episcopal militia can be seen in Claude Gaier, *Art et organisation militaires dans la principauté de Liège et dans le comté de Loos au Moyen Âge* (Brussels: Académie royale de Belgique, 1968), 61–66.

¹² A general introduction concerning its competition with Mainz and Cologne can be seen in Egon Boshof, “Köln, Mainz, Trier. Die Auseinandersetzung um die Spitzenstellung im deutschen Episkopat in ottonisch-salischer Zeit,” *Jahrbuch des Kölnischen Geschichtsvereins* 49 (1978): 19–48. For another major study, although concentrated on the relationship established between the archbishops, the kings, and the Popes, see Egon Boshof, *Das Erzbistum Trier und seine Stellung zu Königtum und Papsttum im ausgehenden zehnten Jahrhundert. Der Pontifikat des Theoderich* (Cologne: Verlag, 1972).

Methodology

Concerning the methodology for the examination of the patterns of narrating war, I will conduct a narratological analysis of selected passages of the texts.¹³ The analysis will focus on the narrator and the narratees, the focalization and the use of time, and will show how all these aspects – working together – contributed to creating a specific narrative spatiality of warfare in the texts.¹⁴ Regarding the characteristics of this specific narrative-war-spatiality, it is based on the difference between spaces of positive-singularity (which describe scenes of victory and are often associated with bishops) and negative-plurality (which describe scenes of defeat and are often attached to the armies of the secular lords). The concepts of narrative positive-singularity and negative-plurality are my own and I developed them mostly in my MA thesis. Briefly, the distinction implies that one group of soldiers can be described either as a singular and homogeneous unit, which,

¹³ For an introduction to narratology and its concepts, see Irene J. F. De Jong, *Narratology and Classics: A Practical Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). An excellent introduction to the analysis of narratives, which also deals briefly with narratology, can be seen in: Paul Cobley, *Narrative* (New York: Routledge, 2014). Cobley describes narratology as a discipline that “drew attention to the building blocks of narrative, exploring the various combinations that can appear in narrative texts and the devices that readers come to learn and accept.” See: *Ibid.*, 200–202.

¹⁴ The theoretical discussion about spatiality and the spatial-turn in humanities is enormous, and a proper introduction would demand an entire chapter. A brief resume of the history of the concept and the debates around it can be read in Robert T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (New York: Routledge, 2013). A classical work about space as a social production can be seen in Henry Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991 (1905)). Another classic work concerning the theory of space is Michel De Certeau, *La invención de lo cotidiano. I artes de hacer*, trans. Alejandro Pescador (Mexico: Universidad Iberoamericana, 1996 (1990)). For the concept of battle space, see: Christina Lechtermann, “Topography, Tide and the (Re-)Turn of the Hero: Battleground and Combat Movement in Wolfram’s Willehalm,” in *Spatial Practices: Medieval, Modern*, ed. Markus Stock and Nicola Vöhringer (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2014), 89–91. Lechtermann bases her own definitions of space and spatiality on the work of Michele de Certeau (see De Certeau, *La invención de lo cotidiano*). The patterns of narrating warfare were extensively studied mostly by scholars from the University of Amsterdam, from where the names of Irene de Jong and Caroline Kroon stand out. Their most recent publication is: Liedwijn van Gils, Irene De Jong, and Caroline H. M. Kroon, eds., *Textual Strategies in Ancient War Narrative: Thermopylae, Cannae and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2018). In it, the authors present an interdisciplinary approach to classic Latin and Greek narratives of war, namely, Livy’s account of the Battle of Cannae and Herodotus’ description of the Battle of Thermopylae. The analysis is built on the disciplines of narratology, which in relation to war narratives focuses on understanding how they were structured to give a specific meaning to the battle-scenes for their audiences, and linguistics, which regarding this topic focuses on studying the function of specific word-particles in relation to different fragments of a text, like, for example, how they emphasize the description of a battle-speech.

for example, may be a group of soldiers standing in phalanx formation, or as a chaotic agglomeration of people, either frightened individuals fleeing into different directions or unorganized combatants charging without order.¹⁵

In addition, I propose to examine the passages that narrate warfare from a perspective that focuses on how they influenced the shaping of local episcopal identities. To do so, the theoretical framework I will use is the one elaborated by scholars of the so-called Vienna school for the understanding of ethnic identities in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages.¹⁶ The main statement elaborated by the Vienna school builds on the idea that ethnicity existed in the early Middle Ages as a form of identification both of groups and individuals, but that it was expressed mostly as political discourse in specific contexts. In this sense, theoretically speaking, identities do not exist as natural categories in the minds of individuals but are the result of diverse processes of identification, which include the identification of individuals with a group, the identification of a group itself, and the recognition of that group as such by outsiders. All of these processes occur due to the use of diverse strategies of identification either by the individuals or by the groups, which the scholars of the Vienna school analyze in their discursive facet by trying to understand the “grammar of identity” behind those narratives.¹⁷ I plan to take this

¹⁵ In addition, the same concepts can be used to analyze the discursive aptitudes of different combatants or even generals, which may appear represented either as having a unified and clear discourse – reflected, for example, on coherent orders from the leaders to their troops and in clear and courageous discourses or behaviors made by the combatants – or in a chaotic agglomeration of diverse voices expressing different discourses – like the spread of false rumors within an army. Since a contrast exists in the appreciation of the singularity, related to scenes that describe military victories, and of the plurality, related to scenes that describe defeats or doubtful results; there is thus the characterization of “positive” and “negative” in relation to the possibility of obtaining a narrative victory.

¹⁶ For an introduction to the perspective of the school of Vienna about ethnic identity and ethnicity as a political discourse and a strategy of identification, which emerged mainly in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, see Walter Pohl, “Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West: Introduction,” in *Post-Roman Transitions: Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2013), 1–46. About belonging to a specific bishopric as a form of political and religious identity, see Walter Pohl, “Introduction: Strategies of Identification. A Methodological Profile,” in *Strategies of Identification: Ethnicity and Religion in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2013), 21–22. There are other perspectives concerning the shaping of identities also related to the topic of ethnic identity. See for example, Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The social organization of culture difference* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969).

¹⁷ The concept of the “grammar of identity” takes from the notion of “grammar” the idea of analyzing the way in which the meanings of a given language are set during the formation of different structures, from words to sentences and even entire texts. Once the notion of “grammar” is merged with the one of “identity,” the result is a concept that refers to the understanding of the rules and structures

approach as a base for my own analysis of the different strategies of identification appearing in episcopal narratives, which may express identities either from the bishopric communities as such, as well as from individuals belonging to them, or outsiders describing them. These strategies are supported by the specific meanings of the words and phrases that the written discourses of episcopal identity use, which rest on the cultural and historical backgrounds of the authors and are shaped not only by their own identity but also by its projection onto the diocesan past.

The Representation of the Military Actions of Archbishop Albero of Trier in the *Gesta Alberonis*

Positive Singularity and Negative Plurality as Narrative Characteristics

The first example in which the forces of Archbishop Albero of Trier are characterized as a singular figure – and in opposition to the plural figure of his enemies – appears in one passage of the *Gesta Alberonis* that describes the moment the prelate arrives at the city of Trier, shortly after being elected as archbishop in the year 1131. The current enemy in this scene is the local burgrave, Ludwig de Ponte, who opposed Albero's election and conspired against him.¹⁸ The archbishop, however, discovered the threat and, to protect himself, decided to gather a great army before entering the city. This army is described by Balderich as a *multo milite*, namely, as a singular figure. On the contrary, the author describes the forces of the burgrave as *sui coniurati*, that is, as a plural figure.¹⁹ The superiority of the singularity over

of identity-discourses (instead of languages), which contribute to giving meaning to their statements (instead of wordings) and make them understandable in a social group. The concept also describes the required knowledge to comprehend those rules and structures and to debate about them. About the notion of the “grammar of identity,” see Pohl, “Introduction: Strategies of Identification. A Methodological Profile,” 31–32. Pohl also bases his development of the notion of “grammar of identity” on previous studies, although with slight differences. As an example, which I will retake below and concerning the grammar of identity in relation to “otherness,” see Gerd Baumann and Andre Gingrich, eds., *Grammars of Identity/Alterity: A Structural Approach* (New York: Bergham Books, 2004).

¹⁸ The local burgrave, namely, the military commander of the city forces, was a *ministerialis*. The *ministeriales* were unfree servants of the German and Lotharingian bishops who usually fulfilled military duties, although occasionally they occupied offices like that of burgrave of the episcopal city. As Benjamin Arnold noted, the *ministeriales* had their own ambitions and often acted against their episcopal lords. For a general introduction to the figure of the *ministerial*, see Benjamin Arnold, *German Knighthood, 1050–1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 53–75. For their use by the German and Lotharingian bishops, see Reuter, *Warriors and Churchmen*, 86.

¹⁹ Balderico, *Gesta Alberonis*, 250.

the plurality appears evident in this passage because shortly after describing the different forces Balderich explains how Ludwig's army got frightened by Albero's great force and, finally, the burgrave decided to cancel the conspiracy.

A comparable example regarding the shaping of a positive singular space of battle can be seen in the description of Albero's siege of Castles Arras and Nanterburg, ca. 1137. The conflict started when two local nobles, namely, the brothers John and Werner from Nanterburg, took by "treachery" Castle Arras from the archbishop while he was following the emperor Lothar III on his campaign in Italy. After describing Albero's rage because of this treachery, Balderich explains how he gathered a great army formed by contingents from Toul, Metz, and Trier, and recovered his castle while also attacking and destroying the perfidious brothers' Nanterburg:

Colligens quoque omnes Tullensis et Metensis terrae principes, cum magna militia Treverim pervenit, et utrumque castrum, Arraz scilicet et Nanterburch, simul obsidione cinxit, et Nanterburch destructo atque Arraz recuperate, cum triumpho magno Treveris reversus est.²⁰

In this passage, Balderich uses the image of the military contingents to create a space of positive singularity that allows the archbishop not only to recover Arras but also to destroy Nanterburg. The positive singular space is shaped by the great army gathered by Albero, which Balderich calls, similarly to the previous example, *magna militia*. In this sense, the author emphasizes the singularity of the army, even if he had described that it was formed by troops from three different regions. Moreover, the phrase "simul obsidione cinxit," in which the adverb *simul* denotes a simultaneity not only of time but also of space in the action of besieging, creates in the narratee the sense of a unified space big enough to simultaneously attack both castles. In this sense, the focalization in this passage is augmented to the point that the large force of Albero encompasses the whole war scene, and that the entire battle space becomes solely a space of triumphal siege by the episcopal army. Finally, in relation to this event, Balderich directly attaches the creation of this great force to Archbishop Albero, while praising his figure and describing him as an invincible man ("vir inexpugnabilis").²¹

²⁰ Balderico, *Gesta Alberonis*, 252. "Assembling all the princes of the land of Toul and Metz, he came to Trier with a great army and simultaneously besieged both castles, namely Arras and Nanterburg. And having destroyed Nanterburg and regained Arras, he returned to Trier in great triumph." The English translation comes from: Pavlac, *A Warrior Bishop*, 54. From now onwards I will base all my English translations of this source on Pavlac's work.

²¹ Balderico, *Gesta Alberonis*, 250.

The pattern of describing Albero's enemies as plural figures is repeated many times in the text. For example, in a later episode when the count of Luxembourg and Namur attacked the city of Trier by surprise, Baldrerich describes his troops as a plural force of 1,500 knights ("mille quingentis militibus").²² The result of this scene is a partial triumph for the defenders of Trier since the count Frederick of Vianden (a vassal of the archbishop) convinced the count's forces to not sack the city.²³ In the last battle scene mentioned in the *Gesta Alberonis*, the author describes a conflict that occurred in the year 1148 between Albero and Count Palatine of the Rhine Hermann von Stahleck (1142–1156). The conflict started because of the possession of Castle Treis and, at some point, the episcopal lord decided to besiege the castle. While Albero was present at the siege leading his army, the count palatine came with reinforcements to free the castle, and both hosts were deployed to fight:

[...] castrum predictum obsedit. Palatinus autem collectis omnibus viribus suis ad liberandum castrum venit : ad introitum silvae, quae castro adiacet, castra metatus est. Archiepiscopus vero ex opposita parte, acie instructa equitum peditumque, [...]²⁴

Here it is possible to see again the contrast between the singularity in the prelate's contingent, described as an ordered single line ("acie instructa"), and the plurality of the count's forces, described as "viribus suis," which is similar to the description of the forces of the burgrave from the first example. It is not surprising, given this creation of singularity and plurality, that the singular episcopal forces obtained the victory that day. However, the way that the author explains this military triumph can be more deeply analyzed, because it is related to the way that the discursive abilities of the episcopal lords were performed during battles.

The Narrative Function of Bishops' Battle Discourses as Explanation of Victories

The conflict between Archbishop Albero and the count palatine offers an example of how a narrator can use the discursive abilities of an episcopal lord as the main narrative explanation of a military victory. Following the events described above,

²² *Ibid.*, 253

²³ Pavlac, *A Warrior Bishop*, 59.

²⁴ Balderico, *Gesta Alberonis*, 255–256. "[...] Albero besieged castle Treis. The Count Palatine, however, gathering all his troops, came to liberate the castle; and he pitched a camp the entrance to the woods where the castle lay. On the opposite side, the archbishop drew a battle line of soldiers on horse and foot [...]" Pavlac, *A Warrior Bishop*, 66.

the armies of Albero and the count palatine stayed in their positions for three days. In the meantime, the narrator describes the military practices performed by the troops of Albero. From this moment the narrative starts adjusting the focalization, first to the archiepiscopal troops. Then, when the battle is about to start, the narrative adjusts the focalization extremely close to the figure of the archbishop, at the point where the space of war presented to the narratees is delimited by his figure and the soldiers with whom he interacts.²⁵ This extreme focalization is followed by the quoting of the archbishop's speech before battle:

Tunc videres senem illum, iam toto defectum corpore, acies peditum ordinare, equites militare artedispone, notosexnominesingillatinapellare, [...] Tunc exhortatoriam orationem, tenens crucem archiepiscopalem in manibus, cepit ad armatas acies tali modo facere: O vos amici beati Petri! O sanctae defensores ecclesiae! [...] nunc veniat vobis in mentem beatus Petrus, cuius milites hodie existitis; credatis eum cum magna sanctorum caterva invisibilibus clipeis hodie vos protegere; certi estote de victoria. Respicite hoc signum crucis, hoc, inquam, signum terribile, adversariis Ihesu Crhisti. Hec est crux, in qua Herimannus comes palatii mihi iuravit fidelitatem, [...] Ipse vero palatinus tenens, manum super hanc sanctam imaginem iuratus est michi in hac verba: "Hunc Dominum, hunc pro nobis crucifixum, do vobis, domine archiepiscopo, fideiussorem, et iuro vobis per eius virtutem, quod nunquam aliquid contra vos faciam, [...]"²⁶

²⁵ An example for this is the very detailed portrayal of the military exercises that the archbishop's knights undertake before the battle, in which Balderich not only describes how they practice changing their formation during a charge, but also explains the traditional tactic of feigned flight. In addition, the narrative use of the rhythm of time supports this detailed and focalized scene, since the narrator mentions, right before the detailed description, that the battle line formed by the prelate waited for the count's advance for three days. In other words, as three days pass in the story, the narrative time moves slowly to help the narratees to concentrate on the detailed scene. Concerning this augmented and very detailed description, as noted by Brian A. Pavlac, this close perspective could be an attempt to show that the author was an eyewitness of the event. This is not at all impossible, since by this time (1148) Balderich was already in Trier, working as the master of the cathedral school. Pavlac, *A Warrior Bishop*, 1–3.

²⁶ Balderico, *Gesta Alberonis*, 256. The scene and the speech are, in fact, longer. But because of the lack of space I decided to quote only those specific passages that are useful to my point. "Then you would have seen old Albero himself, although enfeebled in body, personally draw up the battle line of foot soldiers and position his horsemen with military art. Those he knew he addressed one by one by name, [...]. Then, holding the archiepiscopal cross in his hands, he began to make an exhortatory oration to the ranks of his soldiers in such a manner: 'Oh you friends of the blessed Peter! Oh defenders of the Holy Church, [...] Now may the blessed Peter come to you in spirit, for you are his knights today. Believe that he with a great heavenly host protects you today by their invisible shields.

To reinforce the focalization of this event, which was currently in progress, the scene starts with the narrator calling the attention of the audience using the word *videres*. After calling the audience' attention, the narrator merges the embedded focalization – quoting the speech of the archbishop from very close proximity – with embedding the narration in the figure of Albero as well.²⁷ In this sense, the prelate becomes both the focus of the perspective and the narrator of a secondary story, because he does not only describe how an event occurred in front of the cross when the palatine count swore fidelity to him but also quotes his own version of the phrase that the count said during the oath. Hermann, the archbishop says, swore in front of the archiepiscopal cross that he would never attack the prelate. Because of this broken oath, the narrator explains that the count became a traitor. Furthermore, because the count's treason constitutes the main explanation of why both armies ended up fighting on that day, I consider Albero's story to be an *analepsis*, a rhetorical-literary tool used to describe past events of the main story, with the objective to explain how the situation had progressed to that point.²⁸ In this case, the *analepsis* works by bringing from the past the discursive and moral justification to support Albero's condemnation of the count's immoral behavior, namely, his treason. Finally, after the speech, the archbishop offered a general confession to all his men, forgiving their sins and inspiring them:

Tunc cum accepisset omnium communem confessionem, indulgentia facta et absolutione, benedictionem super eos faciem, ita omnes animavit, quod nec in uno signum timiditatis apparuit.²⁹

This passage is closely related to the *analepsis*; if the author can justify the transformation of Albero's soldiers into defenders of the Holy Church ("sanctae defensores ecclesiae"), it is due to the broken promise made by the count to the archbishop, especially because it happened in front of the archiepiscopal cross.

Be certain of victory. Behold this sign of the cross, this sign, I say, terrible for the adversaries of Jesus Christ. This is the cross upon which Hermann, Count Palatine, swore fidelity to me [...]. Indeed, the same Count Palatine, holding his hand upon this holy image, swore to me with these words: 'I give to you, lord archbishop, this Lord, He who was crucified for us, as my guarantor, and I swear to you by His virtue that I shall never do anything against you [...].'" Pavlac, *A Warrior Bishop*, 67.

²⁷ Regarding the tool of embedded narrative, see De Jong, *Narratology*, 34–37.

²⁸ About the concept of *analepsis* as a rhetorical tool, see *ibid.*, 78–86.

²⁹ Balderico, *Gesta Alberonis*, 256. "Then when he had accepted the public confession of everyone and granted forgiveness and absolution by making a blessing upon them, he so inspired them all that no sign of fearfulness appeared in anyone." Pavlac, *A Warrior Bishop*, 68.

Therefore, the count did not only become a traitor to the archbishop but also a traitor to the Church, and this works as narrative support of the exalted motivation of Albero's army. The transformation also reinforces the positive singularity of the ecclesiastical contingent because from that moment, Balderich describes, they would be protected by the shields of a great heavenly host of St. Peter ("magna sanctorum caterva").³⁰

From the explanation of past events evoked by the main character, it follows a change in the focalization, which is embedded in the enemy. The narrator then describes that after realizing that Albero's soldiers were so motivated by the speech, the count palatine Hermann decided that he could not win the battle and asked for peace.³¹ In this sense, the complexity of this passage is explained because the archiepiscopal discourse generates a narrative complication in the battle-story that the enemy cannot resolve, namely, the extremely motivated archiepiscopal soldiers. Therefore, the speech, the remembrance of a broken oath, and the general confession offered to the archiepiscopal soldiers are the elements that won the battle in the narrative.³²

The Siege and Destruction of Chèvremont Castle by Bishop Notger of Liège: An Episcopal Lord as Defender of his Diocese

In his famous article, entitled "A Europe of Bishops," Timothy Reuter described how the burial ceremonies of medieval bishops could attract representatives from all layers of society. These enormous groups, Reuter stated, demonstrated that the bishops were considered the leading figures of one type of "imaginary community," namely, the bishoprics, which were based more on the web of personal relationships of the bishops than on a clear dominion over the episcopal territory. In other

³⁰ Balderico, *Gesta Alberonis*, 256

³¹ Pavlac, *A Warrior Bishop*, 68.

³² Concerning this scene of Albero making a general confession to his soldiers and calling them as "knights of St Peter," David S. Bachrach argues that it shows how far the discourse of crusade and "just war" had spread around Western Christendom by the mid-twelfth century. The spreading of crusade discourse, Bachrach states, became useful for the episcopal lords because it boosted their spiritual abilities during battles. For this analysis, see: Bachrach, *Religion and the Conduct of War*, 151–189. Regardless of whether crusade discourse gave more or less abilities to Albero during battle, what is evident is that it indeed gave new narrative meanings and rhetorical tools to the author of the text, that is, Balderich. He was the one who used these new tools to potentiate the discursive abilities of his narrative invincible bishop.

words, the bishops ruled more over the people of the diocese than over the land.³³ Consequently, the fact that episcopal power was more personal and exercised over people reinforced the ties between the bishops and their flock. One of the clearest expressions of the bishops as leaders of their “imaginary communities” was their role as protectors of their dioceses, which meant that they should protect not only the properties of their episcopacies but also their people.³⁴

The notion of the diocese being protected by a bishop appears clearly in a brief passage of Anselm’s *Gesta episcoporum Tungrensium, Traiectensium et Leodensium*, in which the author describes the attack on the fortress of Chèvremont in the year 987. This episode was of considerable importance for the bishopric of Liège because from that fortress – situated near the episcopal city – many local lords instigated rebellions against the German kings, which in turn ended up ravaging the territory of the diocese. In this sense, Chèvremont was not only a political and military center of opposition against imperial power but also a local menace for the diocese of Liège.³⁵

This threat can be partially explained because at the time the castle was destroyed the leading prelate was Bishop Notger of Liège (972–1008), a figure of notorious political importance and an ally of the German rulers.³⁶ Concerning the figure of Notger, scholars agree that he was a paradigmatic example of an “imperial bishop,”

³³ Reuter states that the notion of ruling more over the people than over a territory was common all around western Europe in the year 1000. In this sense, the bishoprics were not the exception, although other facets of episcopal power differentiated them from other laity lords, like their representation as defenders of episcopal cities. About the figure of bishops as defenders of episcopal cities, see Bühner-Thierry, “Bishops as City Defenders,” 24–45.

³⁴ Jeffrey Webb notes that this change can be appreciated in the work, for example, of Anselm of Liège. See: Webb, “Representations of the Warrior-bishop,” 115.

³⁵ For a general description of the conflict, see Claude Gaier, *Grandes batailles de l’histoire liégeoise au Moyen Age* (Liège: Wahle, 1980), 15–25. For a more detailed description of the sources and the role of Notger, which includes the mention of Chèvremont Castle as an important factor for imperial politics in Lotharingia, see Jean Luis Kupper, *Notger de Liège (972–1008)* (Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique, 2015), 39–47.

³⁶ Notger, who was bishop of Liège between the years 972 and 1008, was one of the most important political and religious figures of Lower Lotharingia in his time. As a bishop, he did not only concentrate his effort on the improvement of his diocese, but also defended the political interest of the German kings, with whom he had a close relationship, both in Lotharingia and in their Italian campaigns. For this reason, he is considered to be a clear example and paradigm of an “imperial bishop.” About Notger of Liège, see Kupper, *Notger* and Godefroid Kurth, *Notger de Liège et la civilisation au Xe siècle* (Paris: Alphonse Picard & Fils, 1905). For a general overview of his figure, as well as the social, political, and cultural context of the region at the beginning of the eleventh century, see Alexis Winkin and Jean Luis Kupper, eds., *Evêque et prince. Notger et la Basse-Lotharingie aux alentours de l’an Mil* (Liège, Presses Universitaires de Liège, 2013).

namely, a prelate who was close to imperial power and who tried to organize the Lotharingian church under the influence of the German kings.³⁷ In fact, the closeness of Notger to imperial power is considered the main factor that explains why the many rebellions that emerged in the fortress also ravaged the territory of Liège.

However, despite the importance of Notger, the first record of the siege and destruction of Chèvremont does not mention him. This source, a letter by Gerbert of Aurillac from the year 987 (the year of the episode), only describes Empress Theophano leading an army that besieged and conquered the castle.³⁸ From the perspective of the analysis of the process of identity-building in the diocese of Liège, it is important that the only contemporary source about the siege does not mention the figure of Notger. This omission is due to the fact that Notger's first appearance in the Chèvremont siege episode – which is also the historical creation of his participation in the event – appears in the text written by Anselm of Liège more than fifty years later. In other words, the historical fact of Bishop Notger leading the destruction of the fortress is mentioned first in the local *Gesta episcoporum*, which had as its main objective to create a sacred history of the diocese, as well as to relate the contemporary episcopal identity with that past.³⁹ Concerning Anselm's description of the episode, it is neither extensive nor detailed. Nevertheless, he describes how the castle was full of dangerous men who ravaged the region, as well as how, after conquering the fortress, Notger destroyed it until only the ruins remained:

Multa auferens incommoda, plura huic nostrae aecclesiae contulit commoda, inter quae miseros Leodicenses liberare studuit a munitissimo et factiosis hominibus semper fecundo Montis Caprarum castello. Quod quam damnose vicinum fuerit ipse Leodio, haut longe hinc distantes fidelibus oculis subiectae attestari possunt eiusdem oppidi ruinae.⁴⁰

³⁷ Regarding the debate about whether Bishop Notger was an imperial bishop or not, see Kupper, *Notger*, 133–143.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

³⁹ The description by Anselm was the beginning of this historical tradition, but the description of Bishop Notger in the siege was enlarged by latter chroniclers, like Gilles d'Orval in his own continuation of the deeds called *Gesta episcoporum Leodensium*, which was written in the thirteenth century. *Ibid.*, 45–46; the same is described in one vita of Bishop Notger also from the twelfth century - because of the matter of space, I will not work with these sources.

⁴⁰ Anselmus, *Gesta episcoporum Tungrensium*, 203. "By separating many uncomfortable things, he brought many comfortable things to this, our church. Among them he dedicated himself to free the unhappy people of Liège from Chèvremont castle, most heavily fortified and always full of seditious men." (My translation). This passage was also partially translated into French by Jean-Louis Kupper. See Kupper, *Notger*, 42. I based my own translation on his work, although because of time constrictions I only translated the first part of the passage.

The narrator is referring to Notger in this passage and uses the active voice to describe how the bishop did many good things for “this, our church” (*plura huic nostrae aecclesiae contulit commoda*), and among them, he liberated the unfortunate people of Liège (*inter quae miseros Leodicenses liberare studuit*) from the dangers of Chèvremont fortress. Regarding these descriptions, it should first be noted that the use of the active voice gives the figure of Notger the leading role in the attack on the castle since he is the subject who performs the action. Essentially, this sentence is not only the starting point of the historical narrative that situates Notger in the place of battle but also does so by giving him the role of protector of the diocese. Furthermore, the use of the verb “dedicate himself” (*studuit*), which is not a verb that denotes a quick action but one that demands time from the subject who performs it, attempts to present the siege as a difficult task that demanded a strong effort from the bishop. This is also connected to the first sentence of the battle scene, in which the author mentions the many uncomfortable things (*Multa auferens incommoda*) that Notger kept far away from the Church, in order to protect it.

The episcopal community of Liège is mentioned in relation to the event in the first sentence, when the narrator uses the phrases *nostrae aecclesiae* and *miseros Leodicenses*. The first phrase is crucial since it defines a figure of “us” in relation to the Church, which is also an identity shared by the narrator. Furthermore, the phrase *miseros Leodicenses* adds two extra meanings to that identity, namely, the idea of having been suffering because of the problem with Chèvremont and the notion of belonging to Liège. It appears evident that the meaning of the phrase *nostrae aecclesia* refers to the diocese of Liège. Yet, the meaning of the phrase does not end there. By analyzing the word *nostrae* from the perspective of the “grammar of identity,” it is possible to note that it describes a shared identity between a narrator, who wrote in the eleventh century in the environment of the cathedral of St. Lambert and who dedicated his work to the ruling prelate of Liège, Bishop Wazo (1041–1048), and the characters of his story, namely, the miserable inhabitants of Liège, who were victims of the violence emerging from Chèvremont before the year 987.

Therefore, the link between the narrative representation of the past identity of the inhabitants of the diocese and the contemporary identity of Anselm is clearly expressed in the text. In other words, the analysis of the word *nostrae*, based on the cultural background of the narrator, helps to rebuild the knowledge that supports the statement of an identity of Liège that not only existed at the moment the text was written, but was also projected onto the past since the same *aecclesiae* was under threat from Chèvremont before its destruction.

Concerning the strategies of identification in this passage, both the identity of the group as such, that is, the people of Liège, and of the individuals as forming part of the group, namely, Anselm and Notger, appear in the sentences. Regarding the group identity, it can be seen how the people of Liège suffered together during the devastation provoked by the seditious men of the castle (*factiosis hominibus*).

Despite its brevity, this passage about the siege and destruction of Chèvremont Castle gives room for a condensed use of strategies of identification. By associating individuals like Bishop Notger, or even Anselm himself, to the identity of the diocese of Liège, and by defining the group as opposed to the seditious and aggressive bandits of the fortress, the author contributes to the shaping of the episcopal identity. Furthermore, this identity, which is the major identification that appears in the text and whose construction was one of the objectives of Anselm's *Gesta episcoporum*, was also projected into a past full of dangers. Nevertheless, the identity remained, as well as the community or social group that it represented. The main character who defended this continuity was Bishop Notger of Liège, and his tool to fulfill this difficult task was his military ability to attack a well-defended fortress and demolish it to the extent that only the ruins remained.

Conclusion

The main question of this article was whether bishops were represented positively or negatively when participating in war. After my analysis of examples coming from Liège and Trier, I believe that, at least in historical sources produced in the sphere of the political and cultural influence of the Lotharingian episcopal lords, the representation of warrior bishops is clearly positive. From my perspective, it is necessary for the development of the study of episcopal lords that the scholars who work with this topic attempt to confront their diverse perspectives in wider debates focused on the narrative representation of warrior bishops. To foment this debate, I showed how the literary strategies that medieval authors used to represent the military actions of bishops, like, for example, the exaltation of prelates' discursive abilities, were used not to conceal their participation in war but to praise it, that is, in a positive sense. The positivity of these representations is related also to the specific characteristics of the *Gesta episcoporum*, mainly due to their intention to create a sacred history for the dioceses. I believe, therefore, that the military actions of bishops were part of that diocesan sacred history.

In this sense I propose for the analysis of episcopal historiographical narratives the existence of a narrative-persona of invincible warrior-bishops that medieval authors used as a literary resource to describe episcopal involvement in war. This narrative figure, which was based on the symbolic-centrality that episcopal lords

had for their communities, had as its main characteristic narrative invincibility. This invincibility allowed authors to reinforce episcopal identities through a specific discourse about the diocesan-military-past, which was performed by projecting onto previous times the same local episcopal identity existent at the moment of the production of the text and by guaranteeing its narrative protection and continuity thanks to the effective defense made by those unbeatable prelates.