

The Byzantine Perspective of the First Crusade:
A Reexamination of Alleged Treachery and Betrayal

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ABSTRACT

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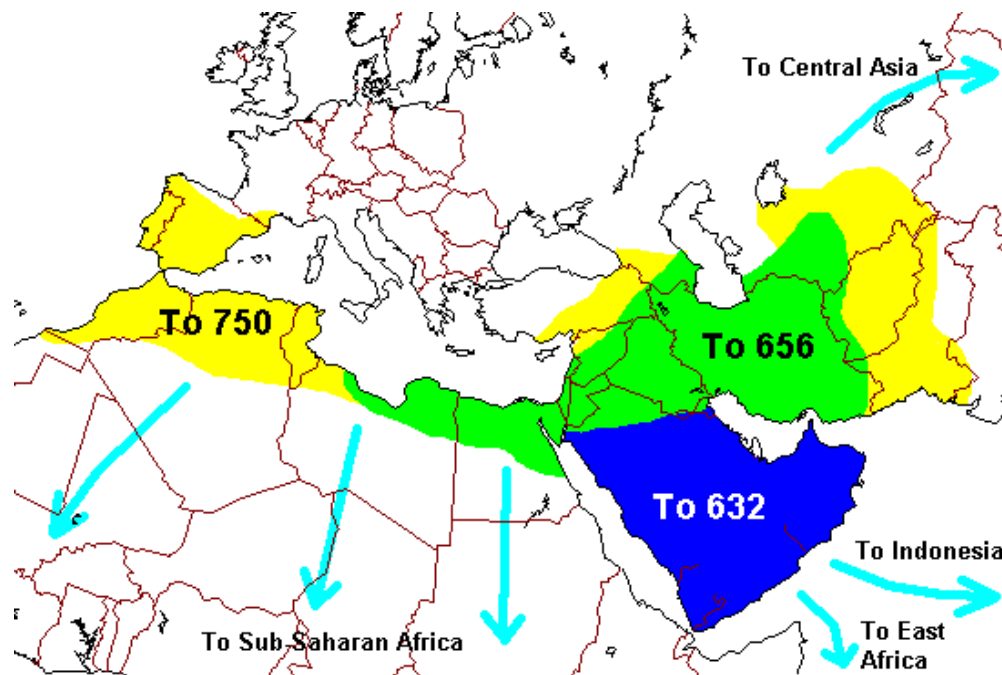
Scholars have generally ignored the Crusades from the Byzantine perspective with the majority of scholarship focusing on the Western, and more recently, Arabic viewpoints. Western sources from the period such as the *Gesta Francorum* and the account of Fulcher of Chartres typically portray Alexius I, the Byzantine emperor during the First Crusade, as anti-Western. It is this study's position that Alexius's actions derived from a need to protect his people and empire rather than a desire to see the crusaders' mission fail. By studying the Byzantine perspective, we gain a fuller understanding of the First Crusade and the Crusades as a whole begin to become more comprehensible.

Table of Contents

Page	
1	Introduction
11	Historiography
37	Language, Sources, & Methodology
41	Analysis of Byzantine Perspective
84	Conclusion
87	Appendix A
93	Bibliography

I. Introduction

The world's newest monotheistic religion, Islam, had existed for only four centuries, yet was the biggest threat to Christianity since the polytheistic rulers of the Roman Empire by the end of the eleventh century. Islam, founded by a trader named Mohammed in 622, spread from its homeland in Arabia to the west across northern Africa and, in less than a century, had made its way into Christian Spain. Muslim warriors traveled north as well and conquered the Levant, the area at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea where the Holy Land is located, and its surrounding areas, threatening the Christian Byzantine Empire. In the eleventh century, western Europeans attempted to pacify this threat, beginning the Christian holy wars known as the Crusades.



The Spread of Islam

The Crusades were not the first instance of Christians fighting Muslims. Beginning in 711, Christian troops fought bitterly to expel the Muslims from Europe. Charles Martel, leading a Frankish contingent, defeated a larger Muslim army at Poitiers

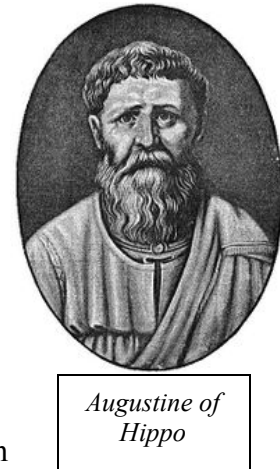
in 732, which halted the spread of Islam further into Europe. This battle did not expel the Muslims from Europe though; it only forced them back into Spain where they remained a formidable force for the next seven centuries, until they were permanently pushed across the Straits of Gibraltar in 1492. The Muslims were a thorn in the side of the Christian rulers near Spain because they conquered Christian territory and forced the conversion of many Christians to Islam, and they also threatened to conquer more territory and, as the rulers saw it, corrupt more Christians. The fact that Muslims still occupied much of Spain was second of the Pope's worries, though, since Muslims still controlled the Holy Land where Jesus Christ, the founder and central figure of the Christian faith, had lived, preached, and died.



The Muslims caused problems for the Byzantine emperors in Constantinople as well. Muslim forces – both Arabic and Turkish – were a constant threat to Byzantine territories and to Constantinople itself, the seat of the eastern half the Roman Empire and home to the patriarch of the Eastern Church. The Byzantine Emperor, Alexius Comnenus I (r. 1081-1118), was deeply concerned that his territory and city were in grave danger

because the Seljuk Turks were encroaching further into his Empire. In March 1095 Alexius sent an appeal to Pope Urban II (r. 1088-1099), asking for aid in the form of trained mercenaries to assist his army in defeating the Turks. Urban II was eager to respond and called all manner of Christians to “take up the cross” and go to Alexius’s assistance and to the aid of the Holy Land. In this way, the Crusades were born and continued intermittently for the next five hundred years, finally ending in the late sixteenth century.¹

Urban’s call to crusade was not conceived in his sermon at Clermont. As noted earlier, there had been a long tradition of Christians fighting Muslims in Europe, and an equally long tradition of justifying such action through the writings of early theologians such as Augustine of Hippo and the pre-Crusade bishop Anselm of Lucca (1036-1086). Pope Urban II’s predecessor Gregory VII (r. 1073-1085) was the prime instigator in the call to war against Muslims in Spain and had drawn upon Augustine’s ideas and the models of *just war* and *holy war* to defend such fighting. By combining these concepts, Urban called for a crusade to the Holy Land.



The Byzantines were completely unfamiliar with the concepts of *holy war* and *just war*. They believed that fighting for one’s territory was perfectly acceptable if there were no other non-military solutions, but waging war for a religious idea was, by war’s very nature, sacrilegious. Thus, the act of having thousands of foreign soldiers marching through Byzantine territory, led by clergy under the banners of *just war* and *holy war*

¹ The end of the Crusades is contentious because scholars cannot agree on what constituted a crusade. Some argue that they ended with the fall of Acre in 1291, others hold that they did not end until the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. See Section III – Historiography.

began a series of misunderstandings between Byzantine and crusader that inevitably led to Alexius's alleged treachery against the crusaders. Let us first distinguish between *just war* and *holy war* because the combination of these concepts was central to the crusading idea and without which a crusade would not have been defensible from the Western perspective.

Historian H.E.J. Cowdrey defined *just war* within the legal and secular sphere. It is prosecuted according to human laws and waged at the command of a legitimate earthly ruler or authority for a defined purpose. There must be an objective to secure, one that can only be accomplished by force where other means are not sufficient, or to limit more total forms of military action. *Just war* is not conducted to implement the judgment or will of God but "is to be appraised according to the humanly defined and declared end for which it is fought."² Soldiers must also account for the necessity and appropriateness of the means by which the *just war* is waged. Those who fight do so for an earthly reward rather than for the benefits of sanctification. By contrast, *holy war* belongs to the transcendent and religious sphere. It is warfare undertaken for God and with His evident blessing. Cowdrey writes that *holy war*, in that it belongs in such ways to the sphere of religion, "was sponsored, if not initiated, by clergy, including popes and bishops."³ The reward is victory for the survivors and martyrdom for the slain rather than monetary remuneration. Those who fight do so for spiritual rewards and are eschewed from desiring temporal rewards or revenge. When Urban II preached the First Crusade, his address fell within the realm of *holy war* because in essence, he likened victory over the Muslims to Christ's victory over evil on the cross, as well as within the realm of *just war*

² H.E.J. Cowdrey, "Christianity and the Morality of Warfare During the First Century of Crusading," in *The Experience of Crusading*, vol. 1: Western Approaches, ed. Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 176.

³ Ibid.

in that he justified the Crusade in terms of freeing the Holy Land from the Muslims who had unjustly seized Christian territory.⁴

Although Urban combined the ideas of *holy war* and *just war* in his sermon at Clermont, during the First Crusade the ideas of *just war* and *holy war* remained separate for the majority of the crusaders although for the clergy they were entwined. Later writers used Augustine's writings on *just war* to justify the Crusades and enmesh the idea of *holy war* within the concept of *just war*, but for the compilers of the Romano-Germanic Pontifical in Mainz (960) *holy war* was more significant. They argued that those who fight must have the correct motive and attempt to imitate Christ, who by the humility of his death triumphed over evil.⁵

Gregory VII picked up this idea in his preaching of the wars against the Muslims of Spain, and Anselm of Lucca, who died a decade before the preaching of the First Crusade, argued that when coercion was used it should be done so with love and goodwill.⁶ Cowdrey wrote of Anselm's argument that, "Coercion thus exercised could be an occasion for growth in the sanctifying virtues of Christians living a life of grace. By means of it the warrior's will could be made perfect, and so rise above the sins that were endemic to his calling."⁷ By the end of the twelfth century the concepts of *just war* and *holy war* were fully intertwined for both clergy and crusader.

⁴ For the majority of the crusaders, the argument for *holy war*, or *bellum sacrum*, was not as frequently used during the First Crusade as *just war*, or *bellum iustum*, but both were used by the Second Crusade. *Just war* was used in the ancient world both by pagans and Christians as a reflection of the Greek and Roman legal realities of territorial and political defense or capture.

⁵ The Romano-Germanic pontifical was the book that contained the rites for the performance of episcopal functions. Mainz was an important center of Christianization for the German and Slavic peoples.

⁶ Cowdrey, "Christianity and the Morality of Warfare," 182. Gregory VII was pope from 1073 to 1085 during which time he preached against the Muslims in Spain.

⁷ Ibid.

This entwining of the concepts is best seen in Gratian's *Decretum*, written around 1140, and those works directly influenced by it. In the *Decretum*, Gratian wrote that no knight who killed a man in obedience to the appropriate power was guilty of homicide,⁸ and that a man was not only justified but righteous when he defended his country (*patria*) from barbarians by means of war.⁹ The *Summa* of Robert of Courson, written around 1212, drew upon Gratian to argue that a war begun to vindicate rights rooted in human law, undertaken by legitimate authority or by the authority of the church, was *just*. Robert of Courson wrote of the Crusades, "If a prince fights with the authority of the church against infidel enemies, as in the Holy Land for the liberation of an eastern region that was entirely converted by the apostolic preaching and so is rightly our inheritance, the region is licitly captured by him, because nothing is being taken from another but what is its own is being restored to the church."¹⁰ According to Gratian and Robert of Courson the Crusades were both *just* and *holy*. Cowdrey wrote, "In this case, crusaders (*cruce signati*) meritoriously set out to defeat the enemies of the land of promise."¹¹

The First Crusade marked the beginning of acting on the idea of a justified holy war in Christianity, a concept that was clearly defined by the twelfth century and carried on through the rest of the crusading period. The western theologians' combination of the concepts of *holy war* and *just war* was seen as profane by the Byzantines in the First Crusade, and the Greeks' opinions had not changed by the later Crusades. This lack of understanding furthered ill-will between the East and West. In the West, Crusade advocates used the writings of prominent theologians to justify the wars. In addition to

⁸ Gratian, *Decretum*, trans. Augustine Thompson (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 935.

⁹ *Iustitia plenus sit qui bello tuetur a barbaris*. Ibid., 897.

¹⁰ Cowdrey accessed Robert of Courson's *Summa* in an archive since it has not been published for the general academic community. Cowdrey, "Christianity and the Morality of Warfare," 189.

¹¹ Ibid. *Cruce Signati* means "signed with the cross."

rescuing the Holy Land from the Muslims through a justified holy war, the crusaders thought they were going to the aid of their Christian counterparts in the east. Alexius I had called for help despite the tensions between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches that had grown increasingly strained since the Great Schism of 1054.



The split between the churches arguably began in the fourth century when the emperor Constantine moved the center of the Roman Empire from Rome to Byzantium and changed the city's name to Constantinople in the 330s. In addition to political complications, issues of religious authority and personal affronts came in the years following this move.¹² When the empire permanently split into two halves with the death of Theodosius in 395, each half retained its own emperor and its own patriarch. Prior to the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the patriarchs of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch were recognized as having precedent over their fellow bishops. The Council of Chalcedon accepted the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem as well, and the patriarchs of

¹² The political complications of Constantine's move to Constantinople will not be discussed in this study.

Constantinople and Rome were elevated to higher status since they sat at the two capitals of the Roman Empire. By the late fifth century, the western half had been weakened by invading Germanic tribes, while the eastern half, also known as the Byzantine Empire, continued to thrive. Political unity was the first to fail, soon followed by linguistic divergence: the western half spoke primarily Latin and the eastern half spoke Greek, and the number of people who spoke both Greek and Latin dwindled until communication became increasingly difficult. Lastly, religious unity also crumbled because each side used different rites and different approaches to religious doctrine. The Great Schism of 1054, with each side excommunicating prominent members of the other, was the final split between east and west.

Despite these tensions, the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I believed he had no choice but to call upon the Pope, the patriarch of Rome, for aid. In March 1095, Alexius asked for aid from the West in the form of trained mercenaries to help defend his territory from the Seljuk Turks. Later that year at the Council of Clermont, Pope Urban II urged *all* Christians to join in the war against the Muslims with the promise of remission of sins. Clermont gave birth to the First Crusade and thousands of crusaders left their homes and traveled east towards Constantinople. The Byzantines found the crusaders as much of a threat as the Muslims, though; they were unprepared for such vast numbers of crusaders, who were more pilgrims than soldiers. Thousands of foreigners, pilgrims, and soldiers under neither Alexius's command nor control, marched through his territory, ravaging the surrounding country and treating his subjects cruelly.

The threat to his empire's safety and security forced Alexius to take actions against the crusaders, such as ferrying them across the Bosphorus and refusing them entry

into the city. His actions have often been interpreted by Westerners, both contemporary and modern, as betrayal. Some Western sources, such as Fulcher of Chartres's *Gesta Dei per Francos* and the anonymous *Gesta Francorum*, accused the emperor of crimes ranging from refusing the crusaders markets where they could buy food and supplies, to making alliances with the Muslims to the detriment of the crusaders. These western sources describe the crusaders' actions and the Byzantine "treachery" but make no connection between the two: the Westerners do not seem to have understood the emperor's need to secure the safety of his people and empire from the crusaders.

When these sources, along with Byzantine sources, are analyzed within the context of the events it becomes clear that Alexius had deeper concerns than treating the crusaders graciously at all times. After all, the crusaders had yet to treat his empire and people respectfully. Alexius was not anti-Western, but assisted the crusaders to the best of his ability with respect to seeing to the safety of his empire. While it may not be possible to ever know exactly what happened, an examination of the Byzantine accounts alongside Western chronicles gives a clearer picture of the events than relying solely on Western sources.

Much has been written about the Crusades from the Western perspective, but far less from the Byzantine viewpoint. In analyzing the Byzantine perspective and attempting to understand how they viewed the Crusades and crusaders, it becomes clear that Alexius had deeper concerns for his people and empire that outweighed assisting the crusaders. What Westerners have seen as treachery and betrayal were acts of defense and protection stemming from fear of the crusaders' own actions and were not unprompted acts of hatred.

II. Historiography

The Crusades have been intensely studied and are a topic on which there has been little agreement among scholars. There have been several changes in the concentration of the research over the years. Early scholars tended to tell the story of the crusading figures and glorify their exploits, but as the centuries changed so did the focus of Crusade historiography. Scholars began to consider the morality and practicality of the expeditions and their results. Early scholars disagreed over whether the Crusades were necessary, a necessary evil, or simply evil, but reached no consensus. Modern historians still debate some of these same issues. They have not reached a consensus either.

Early Historiography



William of Tyre, from an illuminated French manuscript

Although begun in the late eleventh century, it was not until the calm of the Italian Renaissance, four centuries later when the Crusades had become a memory, that scholars began to study them as a historical entity unto themselves.¹³ The first Renaissance scholar to study the Crusades was Benedetto Accolti (d. 1466), a Florentine professor of law, who with his brother Leonardo, compiled a history of the Crusades in 1432. Their work, *De bello a*

Christianis contra Barbaris gesto pro Christi sepulchro et Judaea recuperandis libri

¹³ Up to this time, the Crusades were still an on-going campaign, as some scholars argue; others believe the Crusades ended with the fall of Acre in 1291.

tres,¹⁴ was based primarily on information contained in William of Tyre's *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum*, the most influential Crusade history of its day.¹⁵ The Accolti brothers' *De bello a Christianis* furnished the information and inspiration for another work, the Italian poet Torquato Tasso's (d. 1595) best-selling epic poem *La Gerusalemme liberata*,¹⁶ written in 1574. This work was, according to historian John Saunders, "the Christian *Iliad* of the Catholic Counter-Reformation."¹⁷

While the Crusades were a significant topic of study in Italy, they were seen as a national enterprise across the Alps in France. Under the patronage of the French king Henri IV (r. 1589-1610), Jacques Bongars (d. 1612) published *Gesta Dei per Francos* in 1611.¹⁸ This two-volume comprehensive study was a collection of the principal writers of the Crusades and gathered together the texts of William of Tyre, Albert of Aix, Fulcher of Chartres, Jacques of Vitry, and "almost all the other Latin writers who ranked as primary authorities."¹⁹

However much its writers endeavored to praise the expeditions to the Holy Land, this period was not free from its criticism of the Crusades. In the mid-sixteenth century Martin Luther (d. 1546) attacked the Crusades as a tool of a corrupt papacy.²⁰ The Catholics countered this argument and defended the Crusades by arguing that they were a

¹⁴ *On the War carried on by the Christians against the Barbarians, for the Recovery of Christ's Sepulchre, and of Judea.*

¹⁵ *History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea.* William of Tyre was archbishop of Tyre and chronicler of the Crusades. He died in 1185.

¹⁶ *Jerusalem Delivered.* In this epic poem he describes the battles between Christians and Muslims at the end of the First Crusade during the siege of Jerusalem.

¹⁷ John J. Saunders, *Aspects of the Crusades* (Christchurch, NZ: Whitcombe & Tombs, Ltd., 1968), 10.

¹⁸ *The Deeds of God done through the Franks.* He borrowed the title from Benedictine historian Guibert of Nogent's 1108 work of the same title.

¹⁹ Saunders, *Aspects of the Crusades*, 10. Albert of Aix (d. c. 1121) was a historian of the First Crusade and canon of Aix. Fulcher of Chartres (d. 1127) was a chronicler of the First Crusade, having traveled with the crusaders, and chaplain to King Baldwin of Jerusalem after the city's 1099 conquest. Jacques of Vitry (d. 1240) was a historian and canon of d'Oignies. He, along with Pope Innocent III, preached the Albigensian Crusade (1209-1229) against the Cathars in southern France.

²⁰ Martin Luther was a German priest, professor, and church reformer whose teachings inspired the Protestant Reformation.

necessary way to defend the Christian faith. Despite their feelings toward the Crusades, even the Protestants had to recognize the power of the Ottoman Turks and the threat they posed to Christian Europe. The scholars of the Italian Renaissance could examine the Crusades as a historical entity rather than an on-going campaign, yet they still had to contend with the power of the Ottomans and thus constantly regarded the Turks as a threat. By the seventeenth century, though, the Ottoman expansion had begun to stall and the Turks were becoming less of a danger than ever before, which allowed the Western scholars a chance to step back and analyze the Crusades differently than their Italian predecessors.

One of the earliest to regard the Crusades in the light of the declining Turkish threat was Thomas Fuller (d. 1661), an English churchman and historian. In his 1639 *Historie of the Holy Warre* he argued points that were readily received by Enlightenment thinkers. He accepted that the Turks were the enemies of Christendom, but “questioned the wisdom of the medieval Crusades which, in his view, had spent European lives and wealth for nothing more than a faraway plot of land and a few relics.”²¹ He showed both the lawfulness and the futility of the wars and hinted at the contradiction inherent in the expeditions, suggesting the costs of the Crusades outweighed the benefits:

Arguments for the lawfullnesse of the Holy Warre: The Turks by their blasphemies and reproaches against God and our Saviour had disinherited and divested themselves of all their right to their lands; and the Christians, as the next undoubted heirs, might seize on the forfeiture. This Holy Warre would make up all breaches, and unite all their forces against a common foe of Christianitie. Reasons against the Holy Warre: Grant that the Turks were no better than dogs, yet were they to be let alone in their own kennel. They and the Saracens had now enjoyed Palestine foure hundred and sixty yeares: prescription long enough not

²¹ Thomas F. Madden, introduction to *The Crusades: The Essential Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 3.

only to corroborate but to create a right. . . . To visit those places in Jerusalem was as useless as difficult . . . the pains would be above the profits.²²

By the later seventeenth century, the views again changed to reflect a more favorable opinion, at least from the Western standpoint. Western scholars began compiling Greek sources so they could study the Byzantine perspective as well as the Western view to gain a more complete understanding of the Crusades. Charles du Fresne (d. 1688), for example, a distinguished philologist and historian of Byzantium and the Middle Ages, “best known for his marvelous and still unsurpassed *Dictionary of Medieval Greek and Latin*,”²³ edited Villehardouin’s famous book on the capture of Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade of 1204, attempting to correct some of the mistakes therein.²⁴

With the Age of Reason came a widespread decline in the opinion of all things medieval, and attitudes toward the Crusades were no exception.²⁵ Modern historian Thomas Madden believes it was due to the failing military might of the Ottomans and the dawning of the Age of Reason, with its emphasis on anticlericalism, rational thought, and religious toleration that the shift in treatment of the Crusades occurred. For the first time the Crusades were analyzed from a historical as well as a philosophical viewpoint. Philosophers like David Hume (d. 1776) and Voltaire (d. 1778)²⁶ viewed the Frankish

²² Thomas Fuller, *Historie of the Holy Warre* (London, W. Pickering, 1840), 13-6.

²³ Saunders, *Aspects of the Crusades*, 11.

²⁴ Geoffrey de Villehardouin (d. 1212) was a knight and historian who participated in and chronicled the Fourth Crusade. He was one of the main characters of that campaign. Geoffrey de Villehardouin, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, trans. Frank Marzials (Westport, CN: Greenwood, 1983).

²⁵ The Age of Reason was an eighteenth-century philosophical movement stressing reason as the ultimate authority and discounting the value of emotion. The Age of Enlightenment was the longer period of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries and included the Scientific Revolution.

²⁶ David Hume was a Scottish philosopher and historian. He is considered one of the most important figures in the history of Western philosophy. Historians view his philosophy as a form of deep skepticism because of his questioning of the reliability of perception. Voltaire was the pen-name of François-Marie Arouet, a French Enlightenment writer and philosopher known for his wit, philosophical sport, and defense of civil liberties, including freedom of religion.

expeditions to the Holy Land as “nothing but orgies of superstitious militarism, unprovoked assaults by feudal barbarians on the richer and more sophisticated culture of the East.”²⁷ Hume viewed the Crusades as a “universal frenzy,” an “epidemic fury of fanatical and romantic warriors,” and “the most durable monument of human folly that has yet appeared in any age or nation.”²⁸ In 1756, Joseph de Guignes (d. 1800), a French orientalist and sinologist, wrote his *Histoire générale des Huns, des Mongoles, des Turcs et des autres Tartares occidentaux*.²⁹ His opinion of the Crusades was clear:

Parmi les Francs, une multitude de gens sans aveu et de libertines sortirent de l’Europe et ne passèrent en Asie que pour s’enrichir, se livrer de plus en plus à leurs vices et y trouver l’impunité; les crimes de ceux-ci, le fanatisme de quelques autres, et le mélange bizarre de religion et de chevalerie, on fait désapprouver un siècle plus éclairé ce sortes de guerres.³⁰

Edward Gibbon (d. 1794), a well-known Enlightenment scholar and historian, disapproved of the Crusades and believed they were primarily undertaken as an excuse to indulge religious and material passions. He argued that nothing decent came of the Crusades, except perhaps exposure to more sophisticated cultures of the East, and wrote of the crusaders themselves in his famous six-volume *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-88):

Of the chiefs and soldiers who marched to the Holy Sepulchre, I will not dare to affirm that *all* were prompted by the spirit of enthusiasm, the belief of merit, the hope of reward, and the assurance of divine aid. But I am equally persuaded that in *many* it was not the sole, that in *some* it was not the leading principle of action.

²⁷ Saunders, *Aspects of the Crusades*, 12.

²⁸ Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Rise of Christian Europe* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965), 28.

²⁹ *General history of the Huns, Mongols, Turks and other Western Tartars*. “Tartar” refers to any of the Turkic speaking peoples of Eastern Europe and Western Asia. These groups are also known as “Tatars.”

³⁰ Joseph de Guignes, *Histoire générale des Huns, des Mongoles, des Turcs et des autres Tartares occidentaux* 4 vol. (Paris, 1756-8) 1:13. Among the French, a multitude of people, without confession and with libertines went out of Europe and through Asia only to make themselves rich, to give themselves over more and more to their vices and to find there impunity; the crimes of some, the fanaticism of some others, and the strange mixture of religion and chivalry, makes a more enlightened century disapprove of these sorts of wars.

. . . War and exercise were the reigning passions of the Franks or Latins; they were enjoined, as a penance, to gratify those passions.³¹

This was an opinion echoed in 1791 by Friedrich Schiller (d. 1805), a German philosopher and historian, in his *Über Volkwänderung, Kreuzzüge und Mittelalter* when he suggested that the Crusades could be better understood as a continuation of the barbarian invasions that destroyed ancient Rome.³²

The Age of Enlightenment and Age of Reason, with their focus on rationality and reason, viewed the Crusades in a generally negative light, but a change in the opinion of the medieval expeditions came in the nineteenth century with the philosophical movement known as Romanticism. Romantics rejected the detached rationalism of the Enlightenment and attempted to view medieval crusaders on their own terms, even if the battles and objectives for which they fought were unwise. Charles Mills wrote in his *History of the Crusades* (1820) that the motives of the crusaders were heroic, selfless, and courageous, whatever the outcomes of their efforts, and criticized Gibbon for projecting modern values on medieval men.³³ With the Ottoman expansion halted and the tables completely turned as Europeans began to expand on a global scale, many belittled the previous Turkish danger and cast doubt on its former gravity. Joseph Michaud (d. 1839), a conservative Catholic historian, published a full length *Histoire des Croisades* (1811) in which he aimed to show that the Crusades had been a necessary military expedition to save Christendom from being overrun by Turkish Islam. He also believed contact with

³¹ Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. J. B. Bury (New York, P. F. Collier & Son, 1899), 270-5.

³² Madden, *The Crusades*, 3. *About Tribal Migration, the Crusades, and the Middle Ages*.

³³ *Ibid.*, 4.

the East had stimulated growth of the arts and sciences in Europe and thus the Crusades should not be viewed completely negatively.³⁴

French scholars may have been some of the earliest to examine the Crusades and take an interest in their national Crusade heritage, but this interest quickly spread to neighboring countries. Jeremiah Holmes Wiffen, an English librarian and historian, published in 1824 a list of the English nobility and gentry who went on the Crusades as an introduction to his translation of the Italian poet Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*.³⁵ The German historian Hans Prutz (d. 1929) was the first to examine the Frankish principalities in the Levant and discussed the cultural effects of the Crusades in his 1883 *Kulturgeschichte der Kreuzzuge*.³⁶ This was one of the first serious non-philosophical investigations of other sides of the Crusades besides the military aspects. His work was soon followed by Reinhold Röhricht's 1898 *Geschichte des königreichs Jerusalem*, which remained the authority on the greatest Frankish principality in the East for over eighty years.³⁷ Nineteenth century scholars also took an interest in the non-Western

³⁴ Joseph Michaud, *Histoire des Croisades*, trans. W. Robson, 3 vol. (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1881). A German contemporary of Michaud named Wilken used Arabic and Syriac sources; this caused Michaud to visit Palestine to correct the mistakes of his *Histoire* in 1832.

³⁵ Elizabeth Siberry, "Nineteenth Century Perspectives of the First Crusade," in *The Experience of Crusading*, vol. 1: Western Approaches, ed. Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 281-8. Art and literature also portrayed the Crusades favorably in the first half of the nineteenth century, its paintings and statues showing magnificent, strong, honorable men. William Etty's "The Warrior Arming" in 1835 showed a Crusader, Godfrey, with chain armor, shield, surcoat, sword, and lion at his feet, with flaxen hair and beard and a pleasant countenance. A statue by Simonis in the Grand Place in Brussels, described by the *Illustrated London News* in 1851, depicts "the knightly Crusader bestrides a warhorse of somewhat heavy proportions, which he has suddenly reined in, as he waves on high a flag as a rallying sign for his comrades in arms." There were few other artistic representations of the Crusades in the early Victorian Era and few literary examples apart from Walter Scott's *Essay on Chivalry* (1818), and *Count Robert of Paris* (1831) in which an adventurous knight displayed his valor and assumed the Byzantine throne. Richard Lewis Browne's *The Taking of Jerusalem in the First Crusade* (1832) looked forward to a time when Jerusalem will again be restored to Christendom and William Stigand's epic poem *Athenais or the First Crusade* (1866) lamented the faithlessness of his age and praised the chivalry and heroism of the Crusaders. Tasso inspired at least 100 operas in the course of the nineteenth century such as Rossini's *Armide* and *Mose in Egitto*, and Verdi's *I Lombardi alla prima crociata* the subject of which was Lombard participation in the First Crusade.

³⁶ *Cultural History of the Crusades*. Saunders, *Aspects of the Crusades*, 15.

³⁷ *History of the Kingdom of Jerusalem*. Ibid.

Crusade figures: the first study of the celebrated Muslim general Saladin was undertaken by the British orientalist Stanley Lane Poole (d. 1931) in his *Saladin and the Fall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem* (1898) and remains one of the best biographies of Saladin available.³⁸

Despite the generally favorable views that developed during the nineteenth century, the Crusades were viewed with disapproval by Western scholars in the early twentieth century, perhaps as a result of the political turmoil in the aftermath of the First World War. In the mid-1930s, René Grousset (d. 1952), a French historian specializing in Asiatic and Oriental history, published his *Histoire des Croisades* which portrayed the Western Europeans as intruders into the Levant rather than as liberators.³⁹ Steven Runciman (d. 2000), a British historian known for his work on the Middle Ages, was first to study the Crusades from the Byzantine perspective and the first modern historian to side with the Greeks at Constantinople, doing so in his 1967 *Byzantine Civilization*.⁴⁰ Runciman's unwavering support lay with the Greek Byzantines, as he rated the Fourth Crusade's sack of Constantinople in 1204 as among the most repugnant crimes in history. It was his staunch conviction that the enduring result of the Holy Wars was the destruction of the Byzantine Empire and the Christian East, and that nothing positive – not exposure to more sophisticated cultures, nor the spread of arts and sciences – came from them.⁴¹

Scholars no longer discuss military strategy or individual battles but rather are concerned with defining a crusade and how the idea of crusading began, crusader motivations, the impact of the Crusades, and the Crusades from the Muslim perspective.

³⁸ Stanley Lane Poole, *Saladin and the Fall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Beirut: Khayats, 1964).

³⁹ René Grousset, *Histoire des Croisades et du royaume franc du Jérusalem* (Paris: Plon, 1936).

⁴⁰ Saunders, *Aspects of the Crusades*, 17.

⁴¹ Steven Runciman, *Byzantine Civilization* (New York, Meridian Books, 1967).

Defining a Crusade and the Origins of the Crusading Idea

Scholars are united in their opinion that a definition of a crusade is needed. However, this is where the agreement ends, although they have developed two main theories. The earlier of the two, the *traditionalist* theory, sometimes referred to as the catastrophe theory, proposes that the Crusades began suddenly with Urban's speech at Clermont in 1095 and ended with the fall of Acre in 1291. Traditionalists like Hans Meyer and Jean Richard see a crusade as a major campaign launched by the West to capture and defend the Holy Land and neighboring regions.⁴² The crusades against heretics, pagans and enemies of the pope were distortions of an ideal and therefore something different altogether and are thus not included in their lists of Crusades.

The traditionalist view has been essentially rejected by modern scholars and has been replaced by the *revisionist* view. Jonathan Riley-Smith, one of the most renowned historians in the field, has been at the forefront of attempting to redefine a crusade. He argues that a crusade need not be focused on the Holy Land: any papally-sanctioned war against the enemies of the faith should be included in the list, including the Albigensian Crusade (1209-1229) against the Cathars of southern France.⁴³ Norman Housley, a specialist on the later Crusades, argued that it is incorrect to think that "political crusades" called against enemies of the pope and heretics were corrupt versions of an original ideal because the original ideal was, as Riley-Smith defined, a papally-

⁴² Madden, *Crusades*, 8-9.

⁴³ Catharism was a belief system that combined Christianity with Manichaean influences. Manichaeism was a dualist religion of Iranian origin, ironically once practiced by one of the founders of the Roman Catholic Church, St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), before his conversion to Christianity. To the medieval popes, the Cathars were enemies of the faith.

sanctioned war against enemies of the faith.⁴⁴ Christopher Tyerman goes so far as to suggest that no Crusades existed at all before the twelfth century because there are few references to the earlier Crusades in sermons written before 1187, but his view has found few adherents.⁴⁵

One revisionist scholar who rejected the catastrophe theory argued that the Crusades need to be defined using a centuries-earlier starting point than Urban II's 1095 Clermont speech. Egyptian scholar Aziz S. Atiya argued that the Crusades were part of a longstanding conflict between East and West that went back to the days of Greeks and Persians. In *The Crusade: Historiography and Bibliography* he saw the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (r. 610-641) as the first crusader because of his recovery of the Holy Cross from the Persian Zoroastrians.⁴⁶ Atiya regarded the Byzantine offensive in Syria (975-999) as "a Greek prelude to the Latin enterprise of 1096-99."⁴⁷ Rather than end with the sack of Constantinople in 1204, he carried the Crusading story as far as the battle of Lepanto (1571) when the Holy League defeated the Turkish fleet.⁴⁸

Scholars have been debating the origin of the crusading idea since the turn of the twentieth century when American historian Dana Munro (d. 1933) tried to recreate Urban's speech in a 1905 article.⁴⁹ Munro, who believed Urban's sermon sparked the idea

⁴⁴ Norman Housley, "Crusades Against Christians: Their Origins and Early Developments, c. 1000-1216" in *The Crusades: The Essential Readings*, ed. Thomas Madden (Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 96-7.

⁴⁵ The Christians were defeated by Saladin and his Muslim forces at the Battle of Hattin in 1187. This defeat was a decisive setback in that it enabled Saladin to capture Jerusalem. Christopher Tyerman, "Were There Any Crusades in the Twelfth Century?" in *The Crusades: The Essential Readings*, ed. Thomas Madden (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 124-5.

⁴⁶ Zoroastrianism is an ancient Iranian religion that holds that Ahura Mazda is the divine creator who upholds truth and order. It is a dualistic religion: Ahura Mazda will battle Angra Mainyu, the destructive force in nature, but Ahura Mazda will be victorious. Aziz S. Atiya, *The Crusade: Historiography and Bibliography* (Westport, CN: Greenwood, 1976).

⁴⁷ Saunders, *Aspects of the Crusades*, 17.

⁴⁸ The Holy League was an alliance between the Mediterranean maritime states of Venice, Genoa, the papacy, Spain, the Knights of Malta, and the Duchy of Savoy. It was originally called by Pope Pius V to aid the Venetians who were defending Cyprus against Ottoman invaders but won a crushing victory at Lepanto. It was the final major naval battle in world history in which solely rowing vessels were used.

⁴⁹ Dana Munro, "The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095," *AHR* 2 (1905-6): 231-42.

of crusading, attempted to reconstruct what Urban *actually* said by cross-matching the themes and motifs found in the major contemporary accounts of the speech.⁵⁰ He then organized the correlations into the categories of *definite*, *probable*, and *possible* and endeavored to prove that Jerusalem was the main objective of the Crusade. Marcus Bull, writing a century later, pointed out the naïvety of Munro’s methodology, noting that contemporary accounts of Urban’s speech, while honest attempts to record it, were affected by the writers’ failing memories and/or incomplete information because the accounts were not written until many years after the speech. These factors were responsible for differences in the accounts and it is therefore not possible to accurately reconstruct the exact sermon delivered at Clermont, nor prove beyond doubt that the objective of the recovery of Jerusalem was a more significant aspect of the sermon than aiding the Eastern Christians.⁵¹

In support of Munro’s theory, other traditionalist scholars such as British historian H.E.J. Cowdrey have argued that it was the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre all along that prompted Urban’s sermon and the plight of the Byzantine Christians was only a secondary concern. He wrote in a 1970 article, “Urban at all times seems to have preached Jerusalem as the goal of the Crusade, and to have looked upon it as standing at the heart and center of the Eastern Churches, which he desired to free from pagan domination.”⁵² Modern historian John France agreed with this theory in 1998, suggesting western Christians were largely unconcerned with the city of Jerusalem except as a

⁵⁰ These accounts were the anonymous *Gesta Francorum* (*The Deeds of the Franks*), which influenced other accounts written by Fulcher of Chartres, Robert the Monk, Baldric, archbishop of Dol, and Guibert of Nogent.

⁵¹ Marcus Bull, “Views of Muslims and of Jerusalem in miracle stories, c. 1000-1200: Reflections on the Study of First Crusaders’ Motivations” in *The Experience of Crusading* vol. 1: Western Approaches, ed. Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 21.

⁵² H.E.J. Cowdrey, “Pope Urban II’s Preaching of the First Crusade,” in *The Crusades: The Essential Readings*, ed. Thomas Madden (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 29.

pilgrimage site, like Santiago de Compostela, before Urban II bound together in their minds “the heavenly Jerusalem with the terrestrial one.”⁵³

Traditionalists have argued that Urban’s speech immediately sparked the crusading idea but some revisionist scholars view the Crusades as a direct result of a powerful religious revival that swept over Latin Christendom in the wake of the Cluniac reform movement and the papal campaign for moral enrichment.⁵⁴ Revisionist scholars argue that since the Crusades were not the first Christian holy wars, the origin cannot be Urban’s speech: Christian campaigns against Muslims in Spain, schismatic Greeks in Italy, and Slavs and Germans in the east had already been underway for centuries. They were considered by Gregory VII and his followers, primarily Urban II, to be steps toward restoring “right order in the world.”⁵⁵ The Crusades, therefore, were a continuation and extension of well-established trends.

Other revisionists place the origin of the Crusades within the rapidly changing feudal-clerical society of tenth- and eleventh-century Western Europe. The German historian Carl Erdmann (d. 1945) pioneered this argument in *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*. He believed that crusading arose as a response to the growing prominence and militarization of the European nobility. Medieval reformers had abandoned early Christianity’s ideal of withdrawal from the world and embraced the secular militaristic culture both to purify it and use it as a tool of purification. Erdmann argued that this ultimately made the Crusade possible and suggested that in the age of the Investiture

⁵³ John France, “Le role de Jérusalem dans la piété du XIe siècle” in *Le partage du monde: échanges et colonization dans la Méditerranée médiévale*, ed. Alain Michel and Ducellier Balard (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1998), 151-61.

⁵⁴ The Cluniac reform movement was a series of changes in medieval monastic life which called for a return to the traditional monastic life with its encouragement of art and caring for the poor. During its height around 930 it was the largest religious force in Europe.

⁵⁵ Burns, *Western Civilizations*, 338.

Controversy the church turned warfare into an ethical activity through the work of the “theologians of violence, namely Anselm of Lucca.”⁵⁶ The Crusades, then, were neither an *ad hoc* reaction to, nor a peculiarity of, the times, but a natural element of the medieval world.

Jonathan Riley-Smith supported this idea, pointing out the pragmatic attitude of the papacy toward violence and its support for violence against thieves and murderers, but questioned the influence of the “theologians of violence” on the aristocracy and their attitudes, feeling this assertion needs more research. John France, author of several modern works on the Crusades, agreed with Riley-Smith. He believed Erdmann was overly selective and unduly rigid in his interpretation of the evidence and argues that Erdmann failed to grasp that the church and churchmen had long accepted that war could have positive moral value.⁵⁷ As a result, when Urban preached his sermon in 1095, he was able to draw upon a consensus that war, while in principle deplorable, was not merely permissible but could be said to have moral worth in its own right if used for the right ends, such as the recovery of the Holy Land.

In addition to the increasing acceptance of violence as having moral value, Riley-Smith also believed that the Church was responsible for the crusading idea, but that it had very little control over the aftermath: preaching recruitment demanded “unprecedented responsibilities of the clergy, who often were at sea when trying to cope with the

⁵⁶ Carl Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, trans. M. W. Baldwin and W. Goffart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 97. The Investiture Controversy was the most significant dispute between secular and religious powers in Europe which began in the eleventh-century as a debate between the Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope over who could appoint church officials. Anselm (d. 1086) was a prominent figure in the Investiture Controversy and supported Pope Alexander II’s authority over that of Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV.

⁵⁷ John France, “Holy War and Holy Men: Erdmann and the Lives of the Saints” in *The Experience of Crusading* vol. 1: Western Approaches, ed. Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 194.

unfamiliar issues they had to face.”⁵⁸ Thomas Madden holds that the Crusades were a product of several factors including “ecclesiastical reform, growing papal authority, devout relic veneration, knightly chivalry, turbulent relations with the Christian East, feudalism, and a host of other factors” and that it is futile to attempt to pinpoint any one origin of the crusading idea.⁵⁹

The Fourth Crusade (1201-1204), which resulted in the sack of Constantinople by the Christians in 1204, was entirely different altogether in that its goal was not only the capture of Jerusalem, but Cairo as well, in order to topple the Fatimid dynasty and gain control of the Mediterranean. Its origin unquestionably does not fit any of the theories proposed for the earlier Crusades. Lothar of Segni, who became Pope Innocent III (r. 1198-1216), was well acquainted with the frustration of the Third Crusade (1189-1192). The Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa’s death in 1190, King Philip Augustus of France’s early return (r. 1180-1223), and King Richard I of England’s (r. 1189-1199) failure to take Jerusalem were to stay with him during his entire pontificate, and may have shaped his plans for the Fourth Crusade, according to modern historian James Powell.⁶⁰ Powell argued that historians have paid too little attention to Innocent’s first plan for crusade in which he desired the unity of the Churches and the Emperor Alexius III’s assistance in aiding the beleaguered Crusader states. Byzantine historian Michael Angold believed Innocent III’s crusade plans were entwined from the start with what

⁵⁸ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders 1095-1131* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 10.

⁵⁹ Madden, *The Crusades*, 2.

⁶⁰ James M. Powell, “Innocent III and Alexius III: A Crusade Plan that Failed” in *The Experience of Crusading* vol. 1: Western Approaches, ed. Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 96.

seemed to him to be Byzantine intransigence and bad faith, although he still desired Christian unity.⁶¹

In addition to disagreeing over what sparked the Fourth Crusade, James Powell and John Pryor, modern Crusade historians, argued that in order to understand the Fourth Crusade the Venetians' role from the outset must be examined. Powell argued that had it not been for the Venetians' desire to secure financial privileges, and as retaliation for Emperor Manuel I Comnenus's (r. 1143-1180) seizure of Venetian property and wealth in Constantinople, the Fourth Crusade would never have taken the turn that it did. Powell believed that Constantinople was the goal from the start. Pryor suggested, though, that Constantinople was a secondary target, with Egypt being the primary goal, whose fall would have been extremely beneficial in financial terms for the Venetians, who would then control the trade routes from Europe to the Far East.⁶² Only when Cairo fell could Jerusalem be taken since Cairo was the Muslim's financial center of power. Only because the Venetians lacked sufficient manpower to attack Egypt did they turn their sights toward Constantinople. Powell and Pryor are agreed that the Venetians were directly responsible for the sack of Constantinople.

In addition to disagreeing over the origin of the crusading idea, scholars debate crusader motivations.

Crusader Motivations

⁶¹ The Byzantines had split from the Roman Catholic Church during the Great Schism of 1054. Michael Angold, *Byzantine Empire 1025-1204: A Political History* (London: Longman, 1997), 287.

⁶² John H. Pryor, "The Venetian Fleet for the Fourth Crusade and the Diversion of the Crusade to Constantinople" in *The Experience of Crusading* vol. 1: Western Approaches, ed. Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 123.

Perhaps the area of modern Crusade study that has gained the most attention is the debate over crusader motivations and what prompted them to leave their homes and travel to the Holy Land. One of the two prevailing theories in the first half of the twentieth century is the *reductive/literalist* view, which claimed that people readied themselves for the Crusade message by doing what most closely resembled crusading: fighting Muslims in Spain or going on pilgrimage. Marcus Bull noted that the problem of the reductive view ensues from an “unduly negative view of the imaginative powers and resourcefulness of late eleventh century society in general, and of its aristocratic elites in particular.”⁶³

The second theory is the *maximalist* view, which argues that an individual’s response to the First Crusade was a product of their cultural upbringing that comprised all facets of their lives: “family, lordship networks, regional affiliations, education, age, sexuality, mental and physical health, self-fashioning, etc.”⁶⁴ This view also has its shortcomings in that it fails to address the problem of why others, with similar cultural backgrounds, did not go on crusade. The early twentieth-century’s *literalist* and *maximalist* views do not begin to solve the complex problem of why the crusaders were motivated to go to the Holy Land.

In attempting to answer this question, modern scholars have produced more complete theories. One theory interprets the Frankish expeditions to the east as the earliest form of European expansionism, comparable to the colonialism of the nineteenth century, “a comparison made by the modern Arab leader President Nasser.”⁶⁵ Modern historian Norman Zacour believed the Frankish expeditions to the Holy Land gave a great

⁶³ Bull, “Views of Muslims,” 19.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 19-20.

⁶⁵ Saunders, *Aspects of the Crusades*, 18.

stimulus to western expansion and that territorial expansion was both motivation for and result of the Crusades. He argued that the very idea of “crusade” provided both incentive and an air of legitimacy to those who, in Germany and Spain, sought to enlarge their territories at the expense of non-Christian neighbors.⁶⁶ Historian Edward Burns believed that because Western European civilization was imperialistic, it would be wrong to reject this theory of crusader motivation, writing that “it is probably not inaccurate to regard the Crusades as the chief expression of medieval expansionism.”⁶⁷

Scholars like Jonathan Riley-Smith and Thomas Madden have claimed that religious devotion and Christian love were stronger motivations for the crusaders than imperialism because for nearly all western Christians, the Crusades were divinely sanctioned wars against the enemies of Christ and his Church.⁶⁸ Thomas Madden’s theory of crusader motivations holds that the people who went on the Crusades were undeniably motivated by religious passion and a desire to aid their fellow Christians, as well as a desire to free the Holy Sepulchre from Muslim control. Riley-Smith argued that piety was a great motivator for the crusaders, suggesting Christian love was the basis for crusading enthusiasm. He believed the spiritual renewal called for in the eleventh-century reform movements and the justification for war seen in the Crusades were connected by Christian love: popes and Crusade preachers depicted crusading as an act of selfless love and charity. As Riley-Smith wrote, “I would argue that love . . . was theologically essential to the crusading movement, because for Christians in all ages sacred violence cannot be proposed on any grounds save that of love. . . . This explains why participation

⁶⁶ Zacour, *Introduction*, 35.

⁶⁷ Edward McNall Burns et al. *Western Civilizations: Their History and Their Culture*, 5th ed. Vol 1. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1974), 428.

⁶⁸ Madden, *The Crusades*, 2.

in Crusades was believed to be meritorious, why the expeditions were seen as penitential acts that could gain indulgences, and why death in battle was regarded as martyrdom.”⁶⁹

In addition to the theories that the Crusades were imperialistic ventures or motivated by religious devotion, scholars have also suggested that the early Crusades were little more than large-scale plundering expeditions. Western knights were already familiar with looting from their forays into Spain and elsewhere.⁷⁰ Lured by promises of riches in the East, crusaders took up arms and ventured toward the Holy Land; the conquest of Jerusalem and neighboring territories along the Levantine coast opened a new frontier to which many flocked to seek their fortune.⁷¹ Riley-Smith asserted that this view is flawed regardless of eyewitness descriptions of the knights’ desire for booty: in reality, the knights had to scavenge for food, and even the highest-ranking nobles had to live on subsistence-level rationing.⁷² French historian Georges Duby believed that because families were growing larger, they adopted strategies that encouraged surplus male members to seek their fortunes elsewhere, which was satisfied by crusading.⁷³ Riley-Smith again disagreed, arguing that Duby’s theory needed to be revised because “crusading cost the families of volunteers a lot in financial terms” and thus did not bring economic relief to the families of the crusaders.⁷⁴

Norman Housley echoed Riley-Smith’s belief in his study of financing the Crusades. He found direct correlations between the intensity and duration of crusading

⁶⁹ Jonathan Riley-Smith, “Crusading as an Act of Love,” in *The Crusades: The Essential Readings*, ed. Thomas Madden (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 49-50.

⁷⁰ John France, *Victory in the East: A Military History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 11-16.

⁷¹ Zacour, *Introduction*, 35.

⁷² Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders*, 19.

⁷³ Georges Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. Cynthia Postan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 120.

⁷⁴ Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders*, 21.

activity and the amounts of specie available and the ease with which it could be accessed.⁷⁵ Housley argued that to discount financial considerations leaves out an essential ingredient of how the Crusades were realized, but there is also danger in overstressing the role that finances played: an overemphasis distorts the history of the Crusades by making “commitment hinge on the state of bank balances – crusading then becomes a mere offspring of the economic growth of the central middle ages.”⁷⁶ He made the case that although crusading became inevitably more expensive, it was a development of which contemporaries seem to have been aware, and so the crusaders must have been motivated by something other than the prospect of bringing financial relief to their families. Housley wrote, “The result is a strengthening of the argument that in this period, as earlier, few people contemplated crusading for the sake of their financial well-being.”⁷⁷

On the other hand, this was not necessarily true for the Italians. Scholars have long debated the motivation of the Italians for going on crusade. While some contend that the Venetians and Genoese were financially motivated, others suggest they were religiously motivated, like other Europeans. Modern scholar Christopher Marshall argued that historians have tended to concentrate on the commercial angle of the Italians’ role in the Latin East, but in doing so have assumed that the priorities of the city republics lay, to the exclusion of all else, with the exploitation of commercial opportunities. While Marshall believes this argument has merit, it is decidedly too narrow: “it would be foolish to argue that commercial prospects played no part in the Italians’ military involvement just as it would be foolish to suggest that all crusaders were motivated by purely religious

⁷⁵ Norman Housley, “Costing the Crusade: Budgeting for Crusading Activity in the Fourteenth Century” in *The Experience of Crusading* vol. 1: Western Approaches, ed. Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 45.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 59.

factors.”⁷⁸ The financial motivation argument fails to address the fact that the Italians abandoned the siege of Corfu to aid Christians who were facing increasing Muslim attacks in the Levant, though.⁷⁹ He found evidence in narrative accounts of strong religious devotion among the Italians and has concluded that while the Italians *were* undeniably concerned with their material prosperity, they were also aware of the spiritual value of the Crusade and the subsequent defense and expansion of the Latin kingdom. This has led Marshall to conclude that religion and business were not mutually exclusive motivations for the Italians.



The decision to go on crusade Corfu came down choice, no matter

what motivated a crusader. Paul Rousset, a French historian, argued in *Les Origines et les Caractères de la première Croisade* that the crusaders did not respond solely to

⁷⁸ Christopher Marshall, “The Crusading Motivation of the Italian City Republics in the Latin East, 1096-1104” in *The Experience of Crusading* vol. 1: Western Approaches, ed. Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 60-1.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 78.

political causes, nor solely to those of personal interest. They also reacted to spiritual motives, some above all else.⁸⁰ Crusading relied on both individual spontaneity and collective collaboration to turn idea into reality. Although scholars cannot agree on a single motivating factor, there does seem to be some consensus that the incentive, whether territorial, financial, or spiritual, could not be separated from consideration of the emotional, economic, social, and political resources that were available to turn idea into reality.⁸¹

Impact of the Crusades and Their Ultimate Results

Historians have debated the impact of the Crusades and their ultimate results, but in general both Western and Eastern scholars have reached agreement in this area. Scholars hold that while there were a few positive results of the Crusades, the majority of the lasting effects were negative. The early twentieth-century historian Hilmar Krueger argued that the Crusades were the strongest influence on the development of medieval trade and industry, which is the basis for our modern business and banking systems.⁸² Modern historian Norman Zacour believed the Crusades greatly stimulated the economies of Italian commercial towns like Pisa, Genoa, and Venice, which were already actively wresting control of Mediterranean shipping from the Muslims of Spain and North Africa. There was a constant flow of crusaders to the east and as a result, a growing interchange of goods, people, and ideas between east and west, which would later lead to the spread

⁸⁰ Paul Rousset, *Les Origines et les Caractères de la première Croisade* (Neuchâtel: Baconniére, 1945), 194-8. *The Origins and the Characters of the First Crusade*.

⁸¹ Bull, "Views of Muslims," 37.

⁸² James A. Brundage, *The Crusades: Motives and Achievements* (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1964), 2.

of scientific ideas from the Muslim world to Western Europe and ultimately spark the Scientific Revolution.⁸³

Despite the positive aspects seen by Krueger and Zacour, the latter also acknowledged that the Crusades unquestionably had their dark side: the Crusades directly promoted hostility between the East and West. The twelfth-century expeditions to the Holy Land increased rather than alleviated the suspicion and hostility of Latin for Greek and Greek for Latin because popular opinion in the west held that the “schismatic Greek was just as great an enemy as the infidel Muslim.”⁸⁴ The Crusades became a major cause for the fall of the Byzantine state as well, which Runciman considered among the worst crimes in history.⁸⁵ Most modern historians recognize that while there were some positive outcomes of the Crusades, most of the enduring results were negative.

Crusades from the Muslim Vantage Point

Muslim scholars are working to make available memoirs and first-hand accounts of the events. Unfortunately, because this is a relatively new field, little has been done yet to acquaint the western reader with the Muslim situation during the Crusades. Few historical writings of the Crusading period from the Muslim perspective are accessible to the general English speaking academic community. Among those that are available are the memoirs of Usama ibn Munqidh, an educated Syrian sheikh and friend of Saladin,

⁸³ Zacour, *Introduction*, 35.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 37. This goes back to the Great Schism of 1054 when the Eastern Church separated from the Church in Rome over papal authority, the *filioque* clause of the Nicene Creed, and various excommunications. The original Nicene Creed reads, “We believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father,” and the modified version reads, “We believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father *and the Son*.” Roman Catholics accept the revision but Eastern Orthodox Christians reject it.

⁸⁵ Burns, *Western Civilizations* 9th ed., 251.

whose account of the Third Crusade was made available in 1964.⁸⁶ The chronicle of Ibn al-Qalanisi, a distinguished noble from Damascus, whose story begins in 1176, was presented in English in 1967.⁸⁷ Baha al-Din's account of Saladin's life, written around 1230, was published in English in 1897.⁸⁸ Ibn Jubayr's *Travels*, covering the period from 1183-5, translated in 1952 is also available,⁸⁹ as well as *An Introduction to History*, translated in 1959, written by Ibn Khaldun, a fourteenth-century philosopher who believed that since the crusaders operated only on the fringe of the Muslim world and never penetrated far inland, they were therefore always a nuisance and never a serious danger.⁹⁰

Not surprisingly, recent Arabic scholarship paints a different portrait of the Crusades than Western research. Muslim scholar Nidita Elisséeff argued that the Muslims of Syria did not see the Crusades as a holy war against them but rather as a Byzantine reconquest of lost territory. Even when Jerusalem was conquered the Muslims did not see it as struggle of religions but rather as a conflict over territory.⁹¹ Historian Benjamin Z. Kedar described the way in which Muslims lived in the Crusader states and finds remarkable docility among them. This was not because of the military power of the Franks, but because they were not overly disturbed by the Christians.⁹² Muslims continued to practice their religion and go about their business with little interference,

⁸⁶ Usamah ibn Murshid, *Usamah ibn Murshid, called Ibn Munkidh, an Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusade*, trans. P. K. Hitti, (Beirut: Khayats, 1964).

⁸⁷ Ibn Al-Qalanisi, *Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, trans. H. A. R. Gibb (London: Luzac, 1967).

⁸⁸ Baha al-Din, *The Life of Saladin by Beha-ed-Din*, trans. C. R. Conder (London: Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, 1897).

⁸⁹ Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, trans. Roland Broadhurst (London: J. Cape, 1952).

⁹⁰ Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddima: An Introduction to History* 3 vol., trans. Franz Rosenthal (New York: Princeton, 1959).

⁹¹ Nidita Elisséeff, "The Reactions of the Syrian Muslims after the Foundation of the First Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem," in *The Crusades: The Essential Readings*, ed. Thomas Madden (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 221.

⁹² Dr. Kedar's primary research interests are expulsion as an issue in world history and cultural persistence under conditions of total political collapse.

Kedar argued, and found that the level of interaction between the two religious groups was very low.⁹³ This was because, as Kedar writes, “The clerics who went on the First Crusade or who went east were by no means a representative sample of the clergy of their time. Many of them came from regions with major religious schools but none is known to have been a prominent man of learning. These men were not interested, or capable of, intellectual give-and-take with Oriental Christian or Muslim scholars.”⁹⁴

Conclusion

Recent scholarship has overturned the idea that crusaders were motivated exclusively by a desire for plunder and conquest. New evidence and new interpretations have stressed religious motivations: virtuous idealism has replaced cynical greed in modern thinking. Jonathan Riley-Smith put forward the idea that scholars are more willing to accept that genuine religious piety motivated medieval crusaders because they have witnessed the same piety spark revolutions in Latin America under the banner of Liberation Theology.⁹⁵ While we may not agree with their methods or reasoning, many scholars now believe that most crusaders were honestly attempting to perform a selfless act for the good of Christendom. It is possible that while motivated by a genuine desire to assist their coreligionists, the crusaders also hoped to increase their wealth along the way.

The modern view is to see the Crusades, as Terry Jones did in his 1995 BBC series *The Crusades*, “as a long misguided war of intolerance, ignorance, and barbarism

⁹³ Benjamin Z. Kedar, “The Subjected Muslims of the Frankish Levant” in *The Crusades: The Essential Readings*, ed. Thomas Madden (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 263.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 264.

⁹⁵ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 256-7. This is a school of theology that focuses on Jesus Christ as not only the Redeemer but also the Liberator of the Oppressed. It emphasizes the Christian mission to bring justice to the poor and oppressed, particularly through political activism.

waged against a peaceful and sophisticated Muslim world.”⁹⁶ Modern criticism arises from a wide-spread belief that the medieval crusades were evil precisely because they were wars of religion. To many modern people, fighting for a certain vision of this world is generally acceptable and even admirable; waging wars for religious beliefs is almost always reprehensible. The wide-spread horror in the aftermath of the World Trade Center attacks of 2001 was due to a rejection of the method and reasoning behind the attacks, not a rejection of the religious beliefs that fueled them. It could be argued that the Crusades were seen in much the same light by Enlightenment thinkers as by modern scholars: we reject the methods employed by the crusaders but not their religious beliefs.

Much has been written about the Crusades from the Western perspective, and there is a growing amount from the Muslim viewpoint, yet there is a dearth of research on the Crusades from the Byzantine position. Steven Runciman’s work concentrated on the Byzantine Empire’s politics and civilization but discusses the Crusades only briefly when he expounds on the atrocious consequences of those wars; his work does not examine the viewpoint of the Byzantines who were active participants in or eyewitnesses to the events.⁹⁷ Michael Angold’s research is primarily concerned with Byzantine culture and politics and while it inevitably discusses the Crusades, they are again only briefly covered.⁹⁸ This study will help fill the gap in Crusade historiography by analyzing the First Crusade from the Byzantine perspective. Along with reconsidering Western sources, it will examine the Byzantines’ writings and interpretations of the events they witnessed and how they felt about the crusaders themselves, and interpret Alexius’s actions from a Byzantine perspective rather than from a Western viewpoint. It will contribute to current

⁹⁶ Madden , *The Crusades*, 1.

⁹⁷ Runciman, *Byzantine Civilization*.

⁹⁸ Angold, *Byzantine Empire*.

scholarship in that it will provide a more complete picture of the Crusades and how they impacted their participants and onlookers.

I. *Language, Sources, & Methodology*

In order to understand the sources, a few notes on the language and terminology used are necessary, as well as an explanation of the sources chosen and the way in which they were analyzed. Language often determines how groups of peoples are viewed by their contemporaries, enemies, and modern scholars. Because the Crusades were wars, the terminology used by each side to designate certain groups of peoples was often pejorative, but gives interesting insight into the feelings each faction had for the others. While it is certainly possible to appreciate the sources without an explanation of language, a fuller understanding will be gained by a brief clarification of terms.

This research is conducted from the Byzantine perspective of the Crusades, by which *Byzantine* refers to the inhabitants of Constantinople – formerly Byzantium – and the Christian residents of the Byzantine Empire. When Byzantium became Constantinople, it was the center of the Greek-speaking Roman Empire, and its eastern capital. On occasion, the Byzantine sources refer to *Romans*, by which they are designating the people of Constantinople and not the inhabitants of the city Rome or citizens of the Western Roman Empire: the Byzantines saw themselves as the continuation of the Roman Empire in the east. Generally, for this research, Byzantine source refer to *Byzantines* rather than *Romans* or *Greeks* to designate the inhabitants of Constantinople or the Greek-speaking Christian residents of the Byzantine Empire. Because many of these people were descendants of early Greek inhabitants of Byzantium, they are often referred to in Western European sources as *the Greeks* or *Greek*. This was, to Western contemporaries, a pejorative term because of the perceived inferiority of the Byzantines. Western European opinion of superiority stemmed from the

perception that the eastern Byzantines were not Roman but Greek and from the perceived wrongness of the Eastern Orthodox religion that differed from Roman Catholicism. This perception was especially strengthened following the Great Schism. The term *Greek*, as I use it, does not refer pejoratively to the Byzantines but is used interchangeably with *Byzantine* because of the language spoken by the Byzantines.

The Byzantine sources also designate the Western Europeans in terms showing their dislike for those they perceived as European intruders. *Latins* is a generic term referring to Western Europeans, sometimes used interchangeably with *barbarians*. *Barbarian*, as used by the ancient Greeks, referred to anyone who was not Greek, and did not have the same intensity that it does for modern people. The *Franks* are seen as one of the many groups of *Latins*.⁹⁹ The term *Frank* does not refer to people of the land of Francia, which later became France and Germany: the people of Francia are *French*. For instance, the count of Francia, Stephen of Blois, is *French*. The term *Frank*, however, designates people of Norman descent, and on occasion less specifically to peoples north of the Alps. The “large army of the Franks” under the command of Bohemond was a Norman contingent, the Frankish navy was a Norman fleet, and the famous Frankish warrior Roger was a Norman commander.¹⁰⁰ The term *Norman* was not used by Byzantine writers, perhaps because it was too specific or perhaps the Byzantines believed *Franks* carried less respect than the regional *Norman*. Byzantine sources refer to other groups of peoples, in addition to the Franks, in later Crusades as well.

⁹⁹ Alexander Kazhdan, “Latins and Franks in Byzantium,” in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, ed. by Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy P. Mottahedeh (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2001), 91. Anna Comnena, in her history, writes of Bohemond and his *Franks* causing serious troubles to the empire, but unlike the *Latins*, they are rarely characterized in a negative fashion. Two exceptions are her reference to their greed and their habit of breaking oaths. The *Latins* were perceived by Anna as dangerous aliens while the Normans (*Franks*) were more than simple mercenaries – some of them entered the ranks of the Byzantine ruling class.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 90.

Western Europeans did not refer to themselves in all-purpose terms like *Latins* or *Westerners*. In general, Italians referred to themselves by their city and Germans referred to themselves by their tribal or territorial affiliation. For instance, crusaders and merchants from the cities of Venice, Pisa, or Genoa were *Venetian*, *Pisan*, or *Genoese* rather than Italian, and Germanic peoples designated themselves as *Franconian*, *Bavarian*, or *Swabian* rather than German. The Normans, and in later Crusades the English, were exceptions, though, designating themselves as *Franks* and *English*.

The sources chosen for analysis reveal Western and Byzantine views of one another, and naturally are biased. Taken individually, such bias could create a problem in that it would provide a one-sided view of the First Crusade. When viewed together, however, the sources provide a relatively clear picture of the events that occurred a millennium ago, in that the Western sources confirm details attested to in the Byzantine sources, and vice versa. The primary sources used in this study are the anonymous *Gesta Francorum*, written around 1100 by a member of Bohemond of Taranto's party and the *Alexiad*, written around 1140 by Anna Comnena, Alexius's daughter. Fulcher of Chartres's chronicle and the *Gesta*'s original purposes were to chronicle the events of the First Crusade and provided the day to day events of the journey to Jerusalem and the bias lies in its anti-Greek prejudice. It does not, however, explicitly state that Alexius acted unprovoked but does chronicle the crusaders' actions that forced Alexius to take action against them for the sake of his city. Anna's *Alexiad* is the biography of her father and is biased to the Byzantine cause. Her work is partially what she experienced and partially what her father



Anna Comnena

related to her, especially those events that she was too young to have experienced firsthand. It chronicles the events of the First Crusade from their perspectives; it is also the only extant Byzantine account of the First Crusade. Anna's account notes many of the same events as the *Gesta* and chronicles her father's actions.

The sources were selected primarily for the picture they paint of Byzantine suspicion of Western crusaders and distrust felt by Western Europeans for their eastern counterparts during the First Crusade. The sources I have chosen for this study include Byzantine sources which, when compared with European sources, explain that Alexius's alleged treachery and betrayal was not due to an anti-Western attitude or a desire to see the crusaders fail in their mission but stemmed from a perceived need to protect his people and his empire. This need for protection arose from the crusaders' breaking of oaths and their destruction of the people and countryside as well as from actions prior to the Crusades. As the sources show, the actions of the Byzantines were not underhanded, as the Western sources imply, and were rational from the Byzantine standpoint. As I will show, Alexius was not anti-Western nor did he directly cause the crusaders difficulties in their mission; rather, Alexius did what was necessary to protect his empire, often from the crusaders themselves, and was forced to make extremely difficult decisions. Alexius did not take action against the crusaders unnecessarily but was forced to choose between his people and the foreign masses destroying his territory; had the crusaders acted differently, those actions would have been unnecessary.

IV. Analysis of the Byzantine Perspective of the First Crusade

In order to better understand the Byzantine perspective of the First Crusade, it is necessary to recognize the events preceding it and how they shaped Byzantine views of their Muslim neighbors and their Western coreligionists. In examining the years leading up to the First Crusade and the events therein, it becomes clear that Alexius I, the



Alexius I
Comnenus

Byzantine Emperor during the First Crusade, was not exceptionally anti-Western, as he is generally portrayed by Fulcher of Chartres and the anonymous *Gesta Francorum*, but had concerns for his empire and people that affected his treatment of and attitude toward the Western crusaders. Due to the crusaders' own conduct and events prior to the Crusades, Alexius had no other option but to take action against them. The measures taken must be examined in light of Alexius's perceptions of the Western armies.

Islam had been a growing threat to all of medieval Christendom since its inception in the early seventh century. It had spread across North Africa and across the Straits of Gibraltar into Western Europe; Muslim armies had also conquered much of Asia Minor and the Levant. The Frankish duke Charles Martel (d. 741) successfully led an army against the Muslims in a decisive battle at Poitiers in 732, after which the Muslim advance in to Europe was halted. It was not until over four centuries later that a similar decisive battle was fought in the East, but with opposite results.¹⁰¹ In August 1071, the Byzantine Emperor Romanus IV Diogenes (r. 1068-1071) faced a formidable Seljuk army under Alp Arslan (d. 1072) near Manzikert in Turkey and was routed.

¹⁰¹ This battle is also known as the Battle of Tours.

Romanus IV was captured in battle and released after only eight days with the promise of a treaty and a hefty ransom. Manzikert was both a tactical calamity on the battle field and a long-term strategic failure for the Christians. It could be argued that the failure of this battle was ultimately the root cause of the First Crusade: had the Byzantines been successful in defeating the Muslim armies at Manzikert and driving them out of the Byzantine Empire, Alexius would have had no need for Alexius to appeal to the West for aid.

Following the defeat at the Battle of Manzikert, other Byzantine losses occurred primarily at the hands of the Western Christians but also to the Muslims as well.

Romanus IV Diogenes' successor Michael VII Ducas (r. 1071-1078) lost Bari, the last



Robert Guiscard

Byzantine possession in Italy, to Norman forces under Robert Guiscard and his son Bohemond, a major player in the First Crusade. Michael VII was forced to recognize the Seljuk conquests in Asia Minor after another defeat hastened by the desertion of his Western mercenaries. His successor, Nikephoros III Botaneiates (r. 1078-1081), was

equally unsuccessful in military matters and came to rely heavily on his main general, Alexius Comnenus, who quashed rebellions in the Balkans in 1079 and in Anatolia in 1080.¹⁰² It was into this situation of distrust of Westerners, and threats of Muslim strikes against the empire, that Alexius came to power after Nikephoros III abdicated in 1081. Thus, from the outset, Alexius's fear of military

¹⁰² Alexius I was also in charge of the army which faced Robert Guiscard's Norman forces who declared war under the pretext of defending the rights of Constantine Ducas, who was engaged to Robert's daughter.

confrontations with Western armies was reasonable since they had attacked Byzantine holdings in southern Italy.¹⁰³



Manzikert in Turkey



Apulia Region in Italy



Dyrrhachium / Durazzo / Durres

¹⁰³ Elizabeth Hallam, ed. *Chronicles of the Crusades: Eye-Witness Accounts of the Wars Between Christianity and Islam* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), 52.

Alexius faced another strike by Robert Guiscard and his son Bohemond in 1081 when they took the Byzantine territories of Dyrrhachium and Corfu and laid siege to



Larissa in Thessaly.¹⁰⁴ Anna Comnena (1083-1153), Alexius's daughter, wrote in the 1140s of Robert's motives in her *Alexiad*, a biography of her father and an account of the First Crusade.¹⁰⁵ The *Alexiad* was partially an account of what she herself had experienced, such as the First Crusade, and partially what her father had described to her, such as Robert Guiscard's early attacks on his empire. Because she was not yet born when Guiscard carried out the first strikes, she had no firsthand knowledge of them. We can reasonably assume that the opinions expressed in the *Alexiad* are Alexius's. Her work shows Alexius's distrust of Guiscard and Bohemond and his fear that their primary goal was the conquest of Constantinople: after Michael VII Ducas was forced to abdicate in 1078, the empire had fallen into anarchy, which gave Guiscard a good opportunity to attack Constantinople itself. Anna noted that Guiscard's advisors and his wife attempted to prevent war. Guiscard and Bohemond, it seems, were the ones with whom it was impossible to reason.

[Guiscard] mustered a great force about him and even aimed at becoming emperor of Constantinople, concocting excuses – which sounded reasonable enough – for his hatred of and hostility toward the Byzantines. It is said that he was totally unscrupulous, and was thirsting for war against the Byzantines. He had been

¹⁰⁴ Dyrrhachium is also known as Durazzo or Durrës. It is in present-day Albania. Corfu is an island off the coast of present-day Albania and Larissa is the capital of the province of Thessaly in present-day Greece.

¹⁰⁵ The princess Anna Comnena was perhaps the first female historian. She was incredibly well-educated and wrote the only Greek eye-witness account of the First Crusade. While her *Alexiad*, the history of her father Alexius's life and reign, is generally considered to be accurate by historians, it must also be noted that, like Western sources, it is unabashedly partisan. It is still of great value in that it is the only full account of the First Crusade, its weapons and tactics, written from the Byzantine perspective. Anna was suspicious of the Crusades, regarding them as both a political and religious threat to the empire of her father.

making preparations for war for a long time but was prevented from doing so by the good advice of some of the most reputable men around him and by his wife Sichelgaita herself. They argued that he would be starting unjust wars against Christians and he was frequently prevented from undertaking such an attack. Yet he still wanted to devise a plausible excuse for war.¹⁰⁶

Guiscard and Bohemond did not have adequate reason to wage war against the Byzantines – there had been no attack on Western Europe by the Byzantines and so it was not in retaliation for a previous action nor was there a breach of any treaty. This gave Alexius apt reason to be suspicious of their true motives for attacking the Byzantine Empire, for the objective of such an assault could only be, in Alexius's mind, territorial or political; it gave him even more reason to be suspicious when Bohemond arrived in Constantinople several years later with a large contingent of armed crusaders (see below).

A more probable reason for Guiscard's assaults on the Byzantine Empire requires a look at the politics of the East-West relations in the years preceding the First Crusade. At the time of the attacks on Byzantine territories, the Normans were supported by Pope Gregory VII, whose goal was the reunion of the churches and who was in conflict both with the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV over the Investiture Controversy and with the Byzantine emperor over issues of religious authority. While the pope did not contest, in theory, the Byzantine emperor's claim to having secular authority in the east, Gregory VII believed the pope had supreme authority over religious matters throughout the entire Christian world, authority the Byzantine emperor claimed for himself over religious matters in the east. It is probable that Guiscard's attacks on Byzantine territories, with Pope Gregory VII's outright support, were carried out to restore unity to the Church and

¹⁰⁶ Anna Comnena, "Alexiad," in *Chronicles of the Crusades: Eye-Witness Accounts of the Wars Between Christianity and Islam* ed. Elizabeth Hallam (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), 52.

thus religious authority to the Pope. Such a plan also would have made the Greek Orthodox religion a heresy: the Church in Rome viewed any religious belief or practice that differed from the Church's official beliefs and practices as wrong, misguided, heretical, and thus subject to being "brought back into the fold" by whatever means necessary. In addition to Constantinople's enticement for the pope, there was incentive for Guiscard as well, because if Constantinople had fallen to the Normans, Guiscard would have been the most likely candidate for the throne. If Anna's account of her father's concerns is correct, as most historians believe, the conquest of Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire and the placing of a Norman loyal to the pope on the throne as Emperor would have achieved this end.

Robert Guiscard died in 1085, an event noted by William of Apulia, a chronicler of the Normans who wrote in the 1090s of Robert's death, "With Robert gone, his army was struck with fear . . . as if they had been denied life and salvation. The death of this man was the cause of fear for many: those who had regularly defeated armies of enormous size while the duke was alive were afraid, now that the duke was dead, to put up a struggle against even a small force."¹⁰⁷ With the threat that Robert posed to Alexius's empire, it is interesting that Anna makes no mention of his death, which suggests that Anna considered Robert a lesser threat than his son Bohemond, of whom she wrote unkindly, fearing his real intention was the seizure of the throne of Constantinople and its wealth, just as his father had desired. It is possible that her failure to mention Robert's death came from her lack of actual contact with Robert, since she was only two years old when he died; it also possible that Alexius was not bothered

¹⁰⁷ William of Apulia, "Death of Robert Guiscard, 1085," in *Chronicles of the Crusades: Eye-Witness Accounts of the Wars Between Christianity and Islam*, ed. Elizabeth Hallam (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989), 55.

enough by Robert's death to relate it in detail to her. Alexius was also fighting Robert's son Bohemond in 1085, who was still attacking Byzantine territory, about which Anna was well-informed, which suggests that Robert's death was of lesser significance than Bohemond's assaults. This is evident later in Alexius's suspicion of Bohemond and of the Crusade mission in general a decade later, which, to Alexius, must have looked like another Western invasion of his empire.

Robert's death in 1085 did not stop the Norman attacks on the Byzantine territories, however. Alexius was defeated several more times before bribing Henry IV, the Holy Roman Emperor, into attacking the Normans in Italy, which forced the Normans to return and defend that area rather than continue the siege of Byzantine territories. Balkan uprisings were pacified in 1091, which allowed Alexius I to concentrate on securing Asia Minor from the Turks, who had overrun much of it. Alexius's army, though, was not powerful enough to defeat the Turks on its own, which forced him to seek aid from the papacy: Alexius had been on relatively favorable terms with the papacy for several years following Pope Urban II's lifting of the excommunication ban set down by Gregory VII in an attempt to ease tensions between East and West. With the defeat at Manzikert and the following losses, it should come as no surprise that Alexius I was deeply concerned with the security of his empire and safety his people. Alexius asked for trained mercenaries but received something else entirely: Pope Urban II raised a call to arms that reverberated across Europe, causing thousands of untrained peoples to leave their homes and travel to the Holy Land. This call to arms was the birth of the First Crusade.

The first crusaders from Western Europe enthusiastically “took the cross” to go to the aid of their fellow Christians in the East. This enthusiasm was not reciprocated by the Eastern Christians. Jonathan Riley-Smith writes that this first group of crusaders thought they were going to campaign under the command of the Emperor Alexius, but once they arrived in the east, found they were unwelcome guests in Alexius’s empire: the Greeks felt threatened by forces much larger than they had expected, under the command of their own leaders, and unaccountable to Alexius or any of the Greek commanders. This meant that Alexius had no control over the crusaders – they neither had to obey nor serve him – and meant that their loyalty lay with their own commanders and not with the Greeks. Alexius was understandably alarmed by the response to his appeal to the West for aid. Hugh Trevor-Roper wrote, “He felt like the sorcerer’s apprentice who had conjured up a force more terrible than he had imagined.”¹⁰⁸ This was a logical fear considering the previous campaigns led by Western Europeans against Byzantine territories.

There was a prevailing suspicion of these Crusade leaders, and a distrust of the crusading mission itself. Politics, authority, and loyalty played major roles in the reception received by the crusaders and in their subsequent treatment. Western Europeans believed the pope’s claim that he was the supreme religious authority and that the Eastern Greeks were misguided in their beliefs. They also believed that the pope had encouraged the Norman attacks on Byzantine territories. The Byzantines, though, were well aware of the actions taken against them by their Western coreligionists, the same people who were now marching in large numbers through their land, and were wary of the crusaders’ intentions. After all, one of the Crusade leaders was the same Bohemond of Taranto, the son of Robert Guiscard, one of the Emperor’s most formidable enemies, who had

¹⁰⁸ Trevor-Roper, *The Rise of Christian Europe*, 106.

participated in the attacks on Byzantine territories. The Byzantines were suspicious that this was a second attempt to conquer Constantinople, since Guiscard and his son had not been successful earlier, and this time there were considerable reinforcements.

Pope Urban II's intention behind the sermon he gave at the Council of Clermont in 1095, and the intention evident in his letters to the bishops of other major towns in Europe, must be explored because it lays the foundation for the mistrust of the crusading mission felt by the Byzantines.¹⁰⁹ Urban called in Clermont for "liberation ecclesiasae Dei in Hierosolyma"¹¹⁰ but in a letter sent to the bishops of Flanders he called for "die Befreiung der östlichen Kirchen."¹¹¹ While staying at the monastery of Vallombrosa in Italy, Pope Urban II called for "liberation Christianismi" but in another letter to the bishops in Flanders wrote, "The barbarians in their frenzy have invaded and ravaged the churches of God in the eastern regions. Worse still, they have seized the Holy City of Christ."¹¹² He stated twice that he desired the freedom of Jerusalem but only once that the intention of the Crusade is the assistance or liberation of the Eastern Churches, which could also be interpreted to mean Jerusalem rather than the Byzantine churches. It could be argued as well that by "liberation of the Eastern churches" Urban is referring to the reunion of the churches and bringing the Eastern churches back into Roman Catholicism and thus "liberating" them from the wrongness of the Eastern Orthodox religion, which to Urban, would also be the "liberation of Christianity" since the Byzantines were endangering their souls by conducting incorrect rites.

¹⁰⁹ For Fulcher of Chartres's account of the speech, see Appendix A.

¹¹⁰ "The liberation of the Church of God in Jerusalem." Robert Somerville, "*Decreta Claromontensia*: The Councils of Urban II," *Annuaire Historiae Conciliorum* 2 (Amsterdam: Hakert, 1972), 74.

¹¹¹ Urban called for "the liberation of the Eastern Churches." Heinrich Hagenmeyer, *Die Kreuzzugsbriefe aus den Jahren 1088-1100* [The Letters of the Crusades from the Years 1088-1100] (Innsbruck: Wagner'sche universitäts-buchhandlung, 1901), 136.

¹¹² "The liberation of Christianity." Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders*, 61.

Urban either misunderstood the needs of the Byzantine Emperor, which seems unlikely, or had his own plans for the Crusade. The letters and the speech imply that the main intention was the Pope's desire to have the Holy Land in his control, which would have given the pope the upper-hand in the struggle to reunite the Church, rather than the desire to assist the eastern Christians against the Turks. This issue of authority was one that had been faced earlier by Michael VII with the attacks by Robert Guiscard at the behest of Pope Gregory VII. It is understandable that Alexius would be distrustful of the intentions of the crusaders given the previous conflicts between the Emperor and the pope over religious authority and in light of the assaults on his empire at the hands of some of the very same men who now led large armies through his territory.

However Pope Urban II interpreted Alexius's request for assistance and passed on the message through his sermons, the way in which it was construed in Urban's call to crusade was radically different from what Alexius needed. Alexius had sent for aid in



Pope Urban II

defeating the Turks in his territory, not aid to free the Holy Land from the Muslims.¹¹³ He had asked for mercenaries that would be under his command. Pope Urban II called for the *entirety* of Christendom to go, which was unnecessary unless the real intent was a much larger objective than the assistance of an already well-trained army in need of some extra military might.

Perhaps the pope misunderstood Alexius's request for assistance when he called for all of Christendom to go to the aid of the Eastern Christians but this seems unlikely considering the fact that a Western mercenary force in the service of the Byzantine Emperor was not a

¹¹³ Alexius's delegates met with Pope Urban II at the Council of Piacenza from March 1-5, 1095. See Michael Angold, *Byzantine Empire 1025-1204: A Political History* (London: Longman, 1997), 136-70.

new phenomenon – Western mercenaries had assisted Michael VII before deserting his army – and so the pope would have been well aware of Alexius’s specific request.

Perhaps Urban sought to harness the military potential of France, “to bring again the Golden Age of the Church when the Holy Land was still part of united Christendom,” which seems somewhat more plausible given the papacy’s endless desire to see the reunion of the Church.¹¹⁴ With the Holy Land in its control, the papacy would have had an advantage over the Eastern Church, using the possession of Jerusalem as a bargaining chip to bring the Eastern Church back into the proverbial fold and correct the perceived errors of Eastern Orthodoxy by bringing them back to Roman Catholicism. Perhaps he “desired to increase papal prestige,” to prove that the pope, not the Emperor, was the leader of Western Christendom, which seems the most likely intention of all.¹¹⁵ This had been the desire of Pope Gregory VII, Urban’s teacher and mentor, in any case. If Pope Urban II in Rome could accomplish something that Alexius in Constantinople could not – the possession of Jerusalem – he would have greater claim to being supreme religious authority of all Christendom and could conceivably force Alexius’s hand in the reunion of the Churches.

Urban justified the summons to war as a response to Muslim antagonism but there is evident incongruity in his intentions: in order to retake Jerusalem, as seems the true objective, the crusaders would have to assist the eastern churches and the Byzantine Empire. Assisting the Byzantine Empire and eastern churches, as a secondary objective, and then only an objective in so far as it was necessary to traverse the Byzantine Empire to reach Jerusalem, was an affront to the Byzantine Emperor Alexius, who had

¹¹⁴ George Henderson, *Early Medieval Style and Civilization* (Great Britain: Hazell Watson & Viney Ltd., 1972), 164.

¹¹⁵ Joseph R. Strayer, *Western Europe in the Middle Ages: A Short History* 3rd ed. (Glenview: Scott, Foresman, & Co., 1982), 68.

specifically asked for assistance in defeating the Turks. Thus, it seems that from the very outset, Urban's main goal was the capture of Jerusalem rather than the assistance to Alexius that was promised, and this led, from the beginning, to a furthering of tensions between Greeks and Westerners. It is little wonder that Alexius and his subjects were suspicious of the true intentions of the crusade to the Holy Land since Alexius had said nothing about freeing the Holy Land from Muslim control: he had merely asked for assistance in defeating the Turks in his territory, of which the Levant was not a part.

The recovery of as much of his former territory was far more important to Alexius than taking Jerusalem from the Muslims. Jerusalem was at that time held by the Fatimid caliphs, with whom Byzantium had been on excellent terms for several years, and who were kindly disposed toward local Christians, allowing pilgrims to pass unmolested. The Seljuk Turks held Antioch, a former possession of the Byzantine Empire and strategic city both militarily and religiously, and no doubt Alexius would have liked to have seen it returned, but further south in Jerusalem, it was "far more advantageous that the Fatimids keep the disruptive Turks in check."¹¹⁶ Alexius's policy, in traditional Greek fashion, was to encourage as much mistrust and jealousy as possible between the various Muslim rulers in order to avoid the Alexius's biggest fear – the possibility of the Muslim princes uniting against him.¹¹⁷ This holy war envisaged by Urban in which the crusading armies would attack all Muslims on the road to Jerusalem might well prove to have the effect Alexius most feared.

¹¹⁶ Steven Runciman, "Byzantium and the Crusades," in *The Crusades: The Essential Readings*, ed. Thomas Madden (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 214. Antioch was important militarily because of its strategic position on the Mediterranean Sea and religiously because its patriarch was recognized as having precedent over his fellow bishops.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

When the news of the crusading movement reached Constantinople it aroused feelings of disquiet and alarm; both the Emperor and his subjects were uneasy. Anna Comnena wrote that her father was deeply troubled by the news that the crusading armies would soon reach his city, and for good reason. As stated above, Western attacks on all Muslims on the pilgrimage route to Jerusalem might well serve to unite the Muslim princes against the Byzantines; he also feared the vast numbers of uncontrollable soldiers traversing his empire and the potential to cause harm to his empire and people. Anna's account makes this clear:

He dreaded their arrival for he knew their irresistible manner of attack, their unstable and mobile character, and . . . also knew they were always agape for money and seemed to disregard their truces readily for any reason that cropped up. . . . Indeed the actual facts were far greater and more terrible than rumor made them. For the whole of the West and all the barbarian tribes which dwell between the further side of the Adriatic and the pillars of Heracles had all migrated in a body and were marching into Asia through the intervening Europe and were making the journey with all their household. . . . The simpler minded were urged on by the real desire of worshipping at our Lord's Sepulchre and visiting the sacred places but the more astute, especially men like Bohemond and those of like mind, had another secret reason, namely, the hope that while on their travels they might by some other means be able to seize the capital itself, looking upon this as a kind of corollary.¹¹⁸

With the immense numbers of uncontrollable foreign soldiers marching through his territory, it is understandable that Alexius would be fearful for his territory and his people. He had dealt with the Normans on several occasions when they had attacked his territories, unprovoked, in support of the pope's desire to reunite the churches; the Emperor had suspected that had the Normans been successful in seizing the throne and the empire's wealth, as the Byzantines believed the Westerners were prone to do, the Byzantine Empire and religion would be destroyed. He had no reason to believe, given

¹¹⁸ Dennis Sherman, ed., *Western Civilization: Sources, Images, and Interpretations* Vol. 1, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1995), 196.

the past encounters, that this vast army with so many Normans was trustworthy, especially since they were under the control of their own leaders and not accountable to him. He also had no reason to believe that they were there to assist him in defeating the Turks since he had specifically requested trained mercenaries but received a motley horde of pilgrims and knights whose allegiance lay elsewhere. Thus, as Anna's account shows, Alexius was deeply concerned at the arrival of the crusading armies and their potential to cause much damage to his empire and people and feared that, once again, the Norman Bohemond had designs on Constantinople itself. This account also gives Anna's opinion that the crusaders believed they were going to Jerusalem to capture it from the Muslims, not to aid Alexius against the Turks.

The crusaders had been resentfully prepared to accept the fact that Alexius might assert ultimate authority over the Christian East, but his indifference to the Holy Land, in the crusaders' minds, voided his claim. Religious differences also came into play because the Westerners could not comprehend the tolerance shown to the Muslims by the Byzantines. For instance, the Western crusaders could not understand the presence in Constantinople of a mosque for visiting Muslim merchants and ambassadors. To the West, the Greeks were not only obstinately heretical, but they positively encouraged the infidel.¹¹⁹ This lack of understanding would lead to more trouble, more resentment, and more hostile feelings between east and west, Byzantine and crusader.

Peter the Hermit's wretched army was the first large group to arrive in Constantinople. It consisted of several thousand of Peter's followers, who had come en masse uninvited and terrorized the Byzantine civilians and destroyed the countryside: his following was not so much an army as a motley flock of pilgrims he had convinced to

¹¹⁹ Runciman, "Byzantium and the Crusades," 218.

follow him on an armed pilgrimage to Jerusalem.¹²⁰ Like the actual armies of knights that would follow, Peter's horde was uncontrollable: it paid no allegiance to anyone and was under neither Alexius's nor even Peter's command. Anna Comnena wrote her account of his adventure preceding the People's Crusade,¹²¹ recording that he had once attempted to worship at the Holy Sepulchre but had failed.

Peter, with the surname Koukoupetros, went off to worship at the Holy Sepulchre, and after suffering many frightful things at the hands of the Turks and Saracens who were plundering all of Asia, barely and only with great difficulty succeeded in reaching home. But he could not bear to have failed in his plan to go to Jerusalem. And so he wished to make a second journey, but realizing that it was not wise for him by himself to make the trip to the Holy Sepulchre (for something worse might happen to him), he worked out a clever scheme. It was to preach in all the lands of the Latins: "A divine voice has called me to proclaim before all the counts of France that all [of you] should leave your homes and go off to worship at the Holy Sepulchre and with all your might and should strive to free Jerusalem from the hands of the Agarenes [Muslims]." And he actually succeeded in his aims.¹²²



Peter the Hermit on his Donkey, from an illuminated French manuscript, c. 1270

Anna's account illustrates her opinion that while Peter had perhaps suffered at the hands of the Muslims, Peter's call to free the Holy Land from the Muslims was more a scheme designed to protect him on his return to the Holy Sepulchre than a legitimate need for armed forces to go to Jerusalem: it makes no mention of Muslim atrocities in Jerusalem

¹²⁰ By my choice of the word "wretched" in this sentence, I mean the term in that they were ill-equipped, poor, hungry pilgrims.

¹²¹ The People's Crusade, consisting of Peter the Hermit's army, ran from April to October 1096.

¹²² Anna Comnena, *Alexiad of Princess Anna Comnena, being the history of the reign of her father, Alexius I, Emperor of the Romans*, trans. Elizabeth A. Dawes (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1967), 206-9.

nor of harm to pilgrims, other than those which Peter alleged. Anna's surprise at his success in raising an "army" is evident; it is also logical to believe Alexius would have been deeply fearful of it. Peter and his horde were both pitiful and frightening to the Byzantines, who found Peter foolish but also feared his "army" because of its size and unruliness. Alexius had no way to control or manage this group; he had no way to keep its raiding and pillaging in check.

As the situation worsened with Peter's advance, popular opinion of the crusaders and their mission declined even further. The thousands of pilgrims following Peter were all ill-equipped, ill-prepared, and ill-disciplined. The pilgrims marched through Hungary, killing approximately four thousand Hungarians in the town Semlin as they passed, after which they built rafts to ferry themselves across the Save River to the opposite Byzantine town of Belgrade. At the news of the crusaders' imminent arrival, the citizens of Belgrade deserted their town and fled to the woods. The Byzantine governor withdrew his forces to the village of Nish when he realized that he had insufficient troops to cope with the unruly pilgrims. The crusaders were thus left free reign of Belgrade, which they promptly pillaged and burned. The pilgrims left Belgrade, pushed onward, and arrived at Nish where the Byzantines furnished them with supplies and food only after the crusaders had given hostages to guarantee their future good conduct. From then on, so long as they were in Byzantine territory, the crusaders were carefully escorted by organized bodies of Byzantine soldiers, who only partially succeeded in maintaining order among the quarrelsome, ill-organized crusading party.¹²³

To Alexius's experienced eye the expedition was not impressive. They were untrained, ill-equipped pilgrims – not soldiers – and he feared that if they crossed into

¹²³ Brundage, *The Crusades*, 29.

Asia they would soon be annihilated by the Turks. The *Gesta Francorum* recorded the events: “The Emperor said to them, ‘Do not cross the Strait until the chief host of the Christians has come, for you are not so strong that you can do battle with the Turks.’ The Christians conducted themselves badly, inasmuch as they tore down and burned buildings of the city and carried off the lead with which the churches were constructed and sold it to the Greeks.”¹²⁴ What is interesting about this section of the *Gesta*, written by a Norman or Italian knight and thus from the Western perspective, is that it clearly admits the western Christians’ poor conduct and seems to validate the actions Alexius took rather than blame him for malicious actions. It does not accuse Alexius of acting against the western Christians without justifiable reason. It also clearly states that Alexius did not, in fact, immediately send them across the Straits, unprotected, where they were certain to be slaughtered by the Turks, but acknowledges that he asked Peter’s horde to wait for the better-trained knights who were on their way to Constantinople.

Despite this initial request for his fellow Christians to await the bulk of the army, Alexius was required to take some action against Peter’s horde since they were burning buildings and destroying the city. The army’s indiscipline and commission of numerous thefts obligated him to move it as soon as possible from the neighborhood of Constantinople because it was not possible to control the actions of Peter’s army or to prevent it from destroying the surrounding areas. Steven Runciman wrote of Peter’s Crusade, “They broke into palaces and villas in the suburbs; they even stole the lead from the roofs of churches. Though their entry into Constantinople itself was strictly controlled . . . it was impossible to police the whole neighborhood.”¹²⁵ For these reasons, the *Gesta*

¹²⁴ “Gesta Francorum,” in *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eye-Witnesses and Participants*, ed. August C. Krey (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith Publishers, 1958), 71.

¹²⁵ Steven Runciman, *The First Crusade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 75.

Francorum records that Alexius forced them across the Straits: “The Emperor was enraged thereat and ordered them to cross the Strait. After they had crossed, they did not cease doing all manner of evil, burning and plundering houses and churches.”¹²⁶ This section of the *Gesta*, despite implying Alexius’s negative intent by the use of the word “ordered,” clearly describes the crusaders’ destructive actions. The *Gesta*, while a western source, does not imply that Alexius was unjustified in his actions nor does it suggest that Alexius sent the crusaders across the Straits because of a desire to see them massacred by the Turks. Instead, it describes the Western Christians’ detestable actions in burning the houses of Alexius’s people and looting the Christian churches in the area. It is understandable why Alexius would have wanted the crusading army as far from his city as possible: he was concerned for the safety of his people and feared the crusaders’ further destruction if he permitted them to stay in the city.

Anna’s account also states that Alexius urged them to await the main body of crusaders: “The Emperor of Constantinople, Alexius I Comnenus, advised Peter to await the other Christian forces. However, he did not; trusting in the large numbers of his followers, he crossed the Bosphorus and pitched camp at a small village called Helenopolis,”¹²⁷ the then-unused military base of Civetot.¹²⁸ This again contradicts previous theories that Alexius wished for the destruction of the crusaders. It, like the *Gesta*, notes that Alexius asked them to wait for better-trained reinforcements rather than shipping them across the Straits into Turkish hands. Anna’s account shows that it was the crusaders themselves who went against Alexius’s advice by departing Constantinople without the bulk of the crusading army. In Civetot, Peter soon lost his control over the

¹²⁶ “*Gesta Francorum*,” in Krey, *The First Crusade*, 71.

¹²⁷ Comnena, *Alexiad*, in *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 66.

¹²⁸ Brundage, *The Crusades*, 30.

motley horde, morale quickly deteriorated, and the pilgrims took to raiding in unorganized groups, pillaging the nearby Byzantine villages and surrounding territories: Anna noted, “As many as ten thousand French crusaders separated from the rest of the army and with the utmost cruelty, plundered the Turkish territory around Nicaea.”¹²⁹ In failing to heed Alexius’s advice they brought upon themselves the situation that befell them by specifically provoking the Turks, against whom Alexius had warned them if they left the base.

Anna recounts the cruelty of the pilgrims, over whom neither Peter nor Alexius had any control, and the foolhardiness of their actions, which brought on the wrath of the Turks, who soundly defeated Peter’s army. Their actions also angered the Byzantines, who were generally tolerant of the Muslims and who had expressly advised Peter’s horde of the dangers of leaving the safety of the fort.

[The crusaders] dismembered some of the babies, others they put on spits and roasted over a fire; those of advanced years they subjected to every form of torture. When the people inside the city of Nicaea learned what was happening they opened the gates and went out against the crusaders. A violent encounter ensued, but Peter’s followers attacked hard, forcing them to retreat. The raiders then took their booty and returned to Helenopolis. Then some audacious Germans separated from the others, went to the castle of Xerigordos and took it by assault. When the Turkish sultan Qilij Arslan learned what had happened, he sent an adequate force against them. He recaptured Xerigordos, put some of the Germans to the sword and took others captive.¹³⁰

Peter’s army’s actions had incurred the wrath of the Turks in the area and a disastrous battle had ensued and had cost many thousands killed and hundreds taken prisoner. This disaster further irritated Alexius, who had specifically advised Peter against leaving Civetot, because he knew of the Turkish military power and knew that Peter’s army would be decimated if they attempted to engage them in battle. Alexius was further

¹²⁹ Comnena, *Alexiad*, in *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 66.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

irritated when he was forced to rescue the remainder of Peter's army, but could have left them to their demise had he truly wished their failure.

After the German contingent of Peter's army was crushed, Anna continued to describe the Turkish defeat of the rest of the army and the way in which the Turkish sultan Qilij Arslan contrived a plan to cause confusion amongst the Latins.

[Qilij Arslan] devised a plan against those who had remained behind with Peter the Cuckoo. He placed men in ambush at suitable places so that anyone heading for Nicaea would fall into the trap and be caught. Further, knowing the Franks' love of money, he instructed two energetic men to go to Peter's camp and announce that the forces had captured Nicaea and were dividing up the spoil from the city. When this report reached the men with Peter, it threw them into total confusion. At the news of plunder and money, they immediately set off along the road to Nicaea, with no semblance of order, all forgetting their military skill and discipline required of those going out to battle. The race of Latins is generally noted for its love of money; but when it embarks on the invasion of a country, then it becomes totally unbridled, devoid of all reason. Since these men were advancing in no sort of order or discipline they fell into the Turkish ambushes near Drakon and were miserably wiped out. Such a large number of Franks became the victims of Turkish swords that when the scattered remains of the slaughtered men were collected, they made not merely a hill or mound or peak, but a huge mountain, deep and wide, most remarkable, so great was the pile of bones.¹³¹

Anna's account is interesting in that does not accuse the Turks of acting against the crusaders without provocation nor does it in any way sympathize with the crusaders, whose actions she, and undoubtedly her fellow Byzantines, found deplorable. The Byzantines had been tolerant of the Muslims. Although they were willing to fight to rid the empire of the Turks, did not condone the crusaders' violent acts. Anna seems to defend the Turks' destruction of the crusaders in the battle of Civetot as being brought on by the crusaders themselves. This is not to say that if the crusaders had left Civetot but not acted as they did that they would have been allowed to pass unmolested through

¹³¹ Ibid.

Turkish territory, which will never be known. But the implication is that they would probably not have been slaughtered on such a scale had they left the villages in peace and not destroyed everything in their path, which angered both the Turks and the Byzantines.

Peter's horde and its actions had tried the patience of the Emperor and his subjects. In spite of his anger at being so thoroughly ignored, Alexius ordered his imperial army to rescue the few survivors when he heard of Peter's defeat at the hands of the Turks: he was moved to rescue his fellow Christians despite the band's actions toward Constantinople and its people. Cynically, this could be interpreted as Alexius's wish to not be blamed for Peter's army's destruction or to make sure the remainder of the army did not somehow make its way back to Constantinople. Despite the implication in the *Gesta* of Alexius forcing them across the Straits, it seems clear that Alexius did not truly desire their destruction and did so to protect his city and people. Peter's army was not under any sort of control: they were not there to serve Alexius, and neither could Peter himself rein in his own unruly followers. Alexius ushered Peter's horde across the Straits not out of cruelty but because of its uncontrollable actions. Had he wished their demise, he would not have specifically advised against leaving the base, which is noted in both the Byzantine and Western sources. There is no indication in either the *Gesta*, which admits the destructive acts of the army and does not accuse Alexius of malice, or the *Alexiad* that Alexius desired the destruction of the crusaders. Had that been the case, he would not have gone to their rescue after the Turks annihilated the majority of them, but would have left them to their own devices in saving themselves.

The People's Crusade that ended with the battle of Civetot in October 1096 and the deaths of a great number of Peter's followers was only a precursor to the situation that

Alexius was to face when equally unruly but armed bands of knights – some of whom carried a long-standing grudge against the Emperor – arrived in his city. When the real crusading armies arrived at Constantinople, they proved another insult to the Byzantine Emperor and his people. Both Western and Byzantine sources note the arrival of the crusading armies at Constantinople. The *Gesta Francorum* implies that the Emperor was to blame for the crusaders' actions in that Alexius refused them entry into the city and markets in which to buy food and supplies.

We sought a market, but the people were unwilling to accord it to us, because they feared us greatly, thinking that we came not as pilgrims but to devastate their land and to kill them. Wherefore we took their cattle, horses, asses, and everything that we found. Leaving Castoria, we entered Pelagonia, in which there was a certain fortified town of heretics. This we attacked from all sides and it soon yielded to our sway. Thereupon, we set it on fire and burned the camp with its inhabitants, that is, the congregation of heretics. . . . The unhappy Emperor sent one of his own men to conduct us in security until we should come to Constantinople. . . . They permitted none of us to enter the walls of the city.¹³²

The *Gesta* acknowledges the crusaders' actions in burning, pillaging, and stealing. Yet while it *seems* to validate the crusaders' actions by blaming the people for their fate because they refused to supply a market, it does not explicitly do so. It does not state that the Byzantines refused the crusaders a market out of ill-will, but that they were acting out of fear of the crusaders, and understandably so. Despite this, the *Gesta* does not accuse Alexius of unprovoked actions, nor does it imply that Alexius commanded the Byzantines to refuse food to the crusaders. It is reasonable to think that Alexius would be fearful of the crusading knights after seeing what little regard they had for the inconsequential villagers, and because of this, understandable that Alexius was concerned

¹³² "Gesta Francorum," in Krey, *The First Crusade*, 63.

about the possible damage they would do to him, the city, and his people, whom they blamed for their lack of markets in which to purchase supplies.

Fulcher of Chartres, a Western chronicler and an eye-witness to the First Crusade, acknowledged Alexius's fear of the crusaders when he wrote that the reason they were not allowed to enter the city as a group was due to Alexius's fear that they meant to harm him: "Since we could not enter Constantinople, for the Emperor Alexius would not allow it, fearing that we planned some harm to him, we had to buy our daily needs outside the walls. The Emperor ordered the citizens to bring these to us. Nor were we permitted to enter the city in groups of more than five or six at a time, and then with an hour between each group; as some came out, others went in to pray at the churches."¹³³ After the destructive acts of Peter's crusaders and those of this army, and the concern that the crusaders meant to overthrow him and seize the city that was carried over from the Norman attacks on Byzantine territories at the behest of the pope, it seems logical that Alexius would not want large numbers of foreigners inside the city walls at any one time. Although Anna does not discuss Alexius's refusal to let them into the city or the refusal of the people on the way to Constantinople to sell food to the crusaders, it is no wonder that the people were fearful of the hordes of foreigners traversing their territory.

With the destructive actions of the main crusading army traveling in the wake of the disaster that was Peter's horde, Alexius and his advisors saw the approaching army not as the arrival of long-awaited allies but rather as a potential threat to the stability of the empire and to Alexius's own best interests. The Byzantines could not understand the enthusiasm of the western Christians, whose concept of war was very different from that

¹³³ Fulcher of Chartres, "Chronicle of the First Crusade," in *Chronicles of the Crusades: Eye-Witness Accounts of the Wars Between Christianity and Islam*, ed. Elizabeth Hallam (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), 72.

of the Byzantines. For the Byzantines, war was neither good nor holy but was justified only when used to defend an empire and its faith.¹³⁴ Since peace was to be preferred, they were shocked to see clergy leading military campaigns, which led the Byzantines to regard the Crusade, with its declared goal of liberating the Holy Sepulchre, with skepticism. The arrival of the crusaders was dreaded, and the declaration of the Crusade was regarded with some skepticism, as a cover of a plan to seize Constantinople itself as had been the perceived plan when the Normans attacked Byzantine territories a decade earlier.¹³⁵

In spite of this skepticism, Alexius was genuinely interested in helping the crusaders as much as he could, even though the main reason was because it would serve his interests. The Byzantines regarded the Crusades both fearfully and as an opportunity to regain territory. Properly organized the crusaders could strike a serious blow to the Seljuks in Asia Minor. This had been the reason for his appeal to the Papacy for aid in the first place. Alexius's foremost concern, though, was the safety of his empire and people in light of the sheer size of the crusading armies and the problems posed by supplying and maintaining discipline therein, since if they decided to turn against the Emperor, they would pose a serious threat. Alexius resorted to methods used by his predecessors when armies of foreign allies and mercenaries marched through Byzantine lands. When the Crusade leaders did not abide by his demands Alexius did not hesitate to call the Byzantine army against them, but when they agreed to his requirements, he showered them with gifts and privileges to win their loyalty.

¹³⁴ Eleni Sakellariou, "Byzantine and Modern Greek Perceptions of the Crusades," in *Palgrave Advances in the Crusades*, ed. Helen Nicholson (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 247.

¹³⁵ Jonathan Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades* (London: Hambledon & London, 2003), 56.

Because of his suspicion of the true motives of the massive crusading armies, he demanded an oath of each Crusade leader as he reached Constantinople.¹³⁶ The dispensation of oaths of good faith, loyalty, and submission to leaders of foreign troops was a traditional Byzantine military practice, and from the eleventh century onward there was a tendency to resort to oaths as a means of regulating relationships in the higher strata of Byzantine society.¹³⁷ The oath of the Crusade leaders was different, though, in that the leaders who took the oath became vassals of Alexius in the sense that in return for their service Alexius would offer them assistance and protection; the oath was different in that it was also reciprocal. Alexius would supply the Crusade leaders with reinforcements and supplies, without which the expedition would surely fail, and in return the leaders swore to three things: they would not endanger Byzantine interests; they would restore to Byzantine rule any formerly Byzantine cities they might capture; and they would acknowledge the Byzantine Emperor as overlord of any other cities they might capture and keep for themselves.¹³⁸ This oath referred at least to territory that had been Byzantine until the 1080s, which would include northern Syria and the city of Antioch, if not to all of Syria and Palestine and the city of Jerusalem. Although it is tempting to see this as offensive rather than defensive, it does not seem likely that Alexius was willing to risk acquiring Palestine when it was far more beneficial that the Fatimids control the area and keep the Turks there in check. Rather, it is far more likely that Alexius desired the return of previous Byzantine territories in Asia Minor and northern Syria, including Antioch.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 28. The oath originally had little place in Byzantine society but was commonly used to secure loyalty of foreign allies and mercenaries. Later it became commonplace.

¹³⁷ Sakellariou, "Perceptions," 248.

¹³⁸ Brundage, *The Crusades*, 40.

By accepting the oath, the Crusade leaders acknowledged Alexius as suzerain of the territory and accepted his offer of assistance. None of the sources imply that by accepting the oath the leaders would in any way endanger their own positions in Western



*Godfrey of Bouillon, from
a fresco by Giacomo
Jaquerio, c. 1420*

Europe, as Godfrey of Bouillon, the first King of Jerusalem, believed.¹³⁹ Alexius was not demanding a surrender of their property there to him, or payment for protection. Neither was he asking that the crusader knights become his vassals in the sense that it was typically used in the Middle Ages. Under the vassalage system of the Middle Ages, knights swore a permanent oath of fealty to a lord, who in return for service in his army granted them land over which they had control.¹⁴⁰

While it is understandable how the crusader knights could

have seen an oath to Alexius in this way and believed their position in Europe would have been compromised, none of these stipulations are made. There is no promise of land either explicit or implied, nor an implication that the oath was to be permanent. Alexius merely demanded that previously Byzantine territories be returned to him. Some of the Crusade leaders, such as Hugh of Vermandois, made no objection to Alexius's requirement. They accepted his offer of assistance and supplies and did not fear that they would compromise their positions upon their return to Europe by acknowledging Alexius as suzerain. Others refused until they were forced by necessity to do so, which gave Alexius

¹³⁹ See below.

¹⁴⁰ This oath could be broken in dire circumstances, such as the knight's failure to honor his agreement or the lord's failure to honor his, or the lord's dishonorable conduct toward the knight. For more on the richness and complexity of the medieval feudal system in medieval Western Europe, see Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: the Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

further reason to be suspicious of the Crusade leaders: if they would refuse to swear an oath to not destroy his territory, they were a serious threat to the emperor and empire.

According to Raymond of Aguilers, Raymond of St. Gilles refused to pay homage to the Byzantine Emperor, saying that, “He had not come to make another man his lord or to fight for another save him on whose account he had left his country and his goods.”¹⁴¹

Godfrey of Bouillon refused as well, fearing it would constitute an oath of fealty to Alexius, thereby endangering his position as Duke of Lower Lorraine, which is nowhere implied or stated outright in the oath itself. Alexius cut off food supplies to Godfrey’s force to secure his promise, but when Godfrey’s forces attacked Constantinople on April 2 and 3, 1097, the Emperor sent the Byzantine army against the crusaders, who were quickly defeated. After his humiliating defeat, Godfrey was forced to take the detested oath. A look once again at the misinterpretation of Alexius’s request for aid makes clear how Alexius would have been annoyed at the refusal to accept the oath in that he had asked for mercenaries to fight for *him*, under his leadership; Urban II had convinced the crusaders that they were fighting for *God* but under their own leaders and therefore not under the command of a foreign ruler. It is thus understandable that Alexius would be insulted and angered by such ignorance on Raymond’s part and the general miscommunication of the mission, whether deliberate or accidental. Another of the Crusade leaders, Bohemond of Taranto, refused the oath as well. Alexius thoroughly distrusted Bohemond, and with good reason, considering Bohemond’s earlier participation in the Norman attacks upon Byzantium. Imagine the surprise, and fear, caused when Bohemond arrived at Constantinople with one contingent of the large

¹⁴¹ Raymond of Aguilers, *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem* [The History of the Franks who Conquered Jerusalem], trans. & ed. John Hugh and Laurita Lyttleton Hill (Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society, 1968), 41.

crusading armies. Alexius was deeply suspicious of Bohemond's motives for joining the Crusade and suspected that his ambitions lay more with seizing territory for himself than with assisting the imperial army.

Contemporary references to Bohemond such as Geoffrey Malaterra, a Norman monk living in southern Italy and a supporter of Bohemond's political opponent, Roger I of Sicily, believed with strong conviction that Bohemond took the cross only because he wanted to carve a territory for himself out of the Byzantine Empire. Geoffrey wrote in his *Gesta*, "Bohemond, who already shortly before this had invaded the Byzantine Empire with Robert Guiscard his father and always wanted to subjugate it to himself, seeing a large number [of crusaders] hurrying [to Greece] through Apulia, but without a head, wanted to become their leader by binding them to him. He placed the symbol of that expedition, a cross, on his clothes."¹⁴² The suspicion that Bohemond's intentions were less honorable than a desire to rescue the Holy Land from the Muslims is evident, as it is in the anonymous *Gesta Francorum*:

When the Emperor Alexius had heard that Bohemond, that most noble man, had arrived at Constantinople, he gave orders that he should be received honorably, but also cautiously, that he should be looked after outside the city. When he had been lodged, the Emperor sent a message summoning him to speak in secret with him. Godfrey of Bouillon and his brother Baldwin of Boulogne also went; Raymond of Toulouse was near the city. The Emperor [was] full of anxiety and boiling with anger. . . .¹⁴³

It is understandable that he would be angered that Bohemond, who had earlier waged war against him, had entered Byzantine territory under the guise of going on crusade. It is

¹⁴² Geoffrey Malaterra, "De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae comitis et Roberti Guiscardi ducis fratris eius," in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, Nova Series*, 34 vols., ed. G. Carducci, (Bologna, 1900), vol 5, 102. "The Deeds of Count Robert of Calabria and Sicily and Duke Robert Guiscard, His Brother."

¹⁴³ "Gesta Francorum," in *Chronicles of the Crusades: Eye-Witness Accounts of the Wars Between Christianity and Islam*, ed. Elizabeth Hallam (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), 72.

likely that Alexius did not want to provoke Bohemond and his men by treating them dishonorably but equally as probable that Alexius wanted them to be on their way as quickly as possible, fearing what Bohemond and his men might do to the city, or to Alexius himself. By receiving them honorably but insisting they remain outside the city walls and calling for a secret meeting – that is, with as few soldiers as possible – Alexius could still exert some form of control and thus maintain what little security against Bohemond and his men he could.

Anna Comnena was equally wary of Bohemond, remembering his dubious nature. She wrote, “In his conversations he gave responses that were always ambiguous. Such was Bohemond’s character, and such his physical size, that only the Emperor, through luck, eloquence, and other natural advantages, could surpass him.”¹⁴⁴ This suggests that it was not only because he had previously warred against the Byzantines that Bohemond was not trustworthy; it suggests as well that his honor was questionable in that he would not give direct answers to the Emperor. It is interesting that Anna chose to mention his physical size in comparison with her father, suggesting that if he had chosen, Bohemond could have physically overpowered the Emperor easily. Although she does not mention what “other natural advantages” were used to surpass him, it could be argued that Anna felt Alexius was intellectually superior to Bohemond and that as a result of luck, flattery, and intellect, Alexius was able to ward off a possible attack from a physically superior untrustworthy adversary.

Godfrey, who had taken the oath of allegiance only because Alexius had cut off food supplies, waited in Constantinople for the arrival of Bohemond and his contingent of crusaders. Having learned a valuable lesson with Peter’s army, namely that it was in his

¹⁴⁴ Comnena, *Alexiad*, in: *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 72.

best interest to ferry the crusaders across the Straits upon their arrival in Constantinople to minimize the damage done to the countryside, Alexius made arrangements to send Godfrey across. Anna suspected the real reason – Godfrey was waiting for Bohemond so that they could join forces against the Emperor – when he made excuses to remain in Constantinople:

While the Emperor urged [Godfrey] to cross the strait of the Propontis, he went on from day to day contriving one excuse or another and put off the matter. The real reason, to state the matter simply, was that he was awaiting the arrival of Bohemond and the other counts. For, though in the beginning Peter had aroused this great expedition to adore the Holy Sepulchre, the other counts, Bohemond above all, were cherishing in mind the old grudge against the Emperor and were awaiting a favorable opportunity to take vengeance on him for the splendid victory which he had gained over Bohemond when the latter engaged him in battle at Larissa. Apparently they were making an expedition to Jerusalem; in reality, however, they wanted to divest the Emperor of his kingdom and take Constantinople.¹⁴⁵

They were perhaps correct in their suspicion that Godfrey and Bohemond desired Constantinople for themselves. Before departing, Bohemond and his armies attacked the city, unsuccessfully. Anna wrote that despite this attack, Alexius refused at first to take any action against them since it was Holy Week, writing, “But the Emperor neither armed his sides with breastplate of scale-armor, his left hand with a shield, his right with a spear, nor girded himself about with a sword; for he absolutely refused to have any armed band led outside of the walls against the Latins because this was the most sacred of days, for it was Friday of the greatest, of Holy Week, when the Savior had undergone ignominious death for us all. In the second place, he refused to engage in civil war between Christians.”¹⁴⁶ This is again evidence of the Byzantine attitude toward war: the

¹⁴⁵ Anna Comnena, “Alexiad,” in *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eye-Witnesses and Participants*, ed. August C. Krey (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith Publishers, 1958), 86.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

Westerners were not attempting to defend their empire or faith, and thus Alexius would have felt it wrong to engage in war against fellow Christians. It would have been unnecessary to engage in war to defend his city since Constantinople was heavily fortified – the Westerners were unable to breach the walls – and they could easily have been defeated by a small contingent of the Byzantine army.

This refusal to engage in civil war was disregarded by the crusaders, who continued their assault, which forced Alexius's hand and caused him to take action against them. Anna continues,

But the Latins threw missiles in such profusion that they struck across the chest one of the men standing near the Emperor's throne. . . . Finally when he saw that the Latins, bereft of all shame, were invading the walls of the city and scorning his useful counsel, he first summoned his son-in-law, Nicephorus, and commanded him to take with him the strongest men and those skilled in shooting arrows and go to the top of the wall. He advised them, at the same time, to hurl down weapons on the Latins as frequently as possible, but for the most part, harmlessly, with bad aim, in order to frighten them, not to kill them.¹⁴⁷

These accounts suggest again that Alexius was merely defending his city and people rather than deliberately attempting to harm the crusaders. Had Alexius desired to harm the crusaders, it would have been quite simple to destroy their armies.

Alexius was convinced that, whatever might be the official reasons for the Crusade, the real objective of the Franks was to secure for themselves principalities in the East. He did not object to this as long as the Empire recovered all the lands that it had held before the Turkish invasions, in which case there was much to be said in favor of the creation of a Christian buffer zone.¹⁴⁸ However, the crusaders captured former Byzantine territory and kept it for themselves, as was the case with Bohemond in Antioch. This gave Alexius further reason to distrust the crusaders because it constituted breaking one

¹⁴⁷ Comnena, "Alexiad," in Krey, 87. Later, Nicephorus became Anna's husband.

¹⁴⁸ Runciman, *The First Crusade*, 93.

of the three promises of the oath taken, to return any city that they might seize that had once been part of the Byzantine Empire.

After the crusaders' departure from Constantinople in 1098, they made some very bold, very reckless, decisions, for example, setting off across the Straits into Asia Minor with only a token force of Greek soldiers serving as guides. The entire Byzantine army did not accompany the crusaders. They were initially quite successful, however, winning victories over the Turks at Nicaea, Dorylaeum and Eregli. Ibn Al-Qalanisi, a Syrian chronicler, wrote of the capture of Nicaea that despite the crusaders' promise to restore territories to the Emperor, they did not honor their agreements: "Now the Franks, on their first appearance, had made a covenant with the king of the Greeks, and had promised that they would deliver over to him the first city which they should capture. They then captured Nicaea, and it was the first place they captured, but they did not carry out their word to him on that occasion, and refused to deliver it up to him according to the stipulation."¹⁴⁹ This source is interesting in that it shows that the Muslims knew of the crusaders' agreement with Alexius to return previously Byzantine territories and implies that the Muslims also felt that the crusaders were dishonorable and untrustworthy. The fact that they did not honor their agreement gave Alexius further reason to be suspicious of the crusaders' motivations, suspecting that their true goal was the conquest of the Byzantine Empire since they were keeping Nicaea, once a Byzantine possession, for themselves.

Following the battle and capture of Nicaea, the crusaders were shocked at the Emperor's lenient treatment of the Turks, especially so when Alexius offered the Turkish soldiers the choice of enrolling in the Byzantine army or being given a safe conduct back

¹⁴⁹ Ibn Al-Qalanisi, *Damascus Chronicle*, 63.

to their own land. The crusaders felt they had been robbed of their chance to plunder the city of Nicaea regardless of wealth distributed by Alexius as compensation to the crusaders; they also suspected that the enrolment of Turks in the Byzantine army was part of some future plan to harm them.¹⁵⁰ Although Alexius had no desire to see the Crusade fail, he did not want to be left on bad terms with his Muslim neighbors if it did. Had Alexius treated the Turkish soldiers harshly, this, combined with the crusader attacks on Muslim territories en route to Jerusalem, could have caused the Muslim princes to unite against him, which would have had disastrous consequences for the Byzantine state.

The crusaders marched on and upon reaching Antioch, after an eight-month long campaign defeated two Muslim armies, but were then besieged by a Turkish relief army.¹⁵¹ They appealed to Alexius for help but western sources report that rather than hurry to their aid, the Emperor turned back to Constantinople with a significant group of Christian rebels who had helped persuade Alexius to return to the capital city with his army of Greek and western forces.¹⁵² Without Alexius's aid, Antioch fell to the crusader armies in 1098. Anna's account of the siege of Antioch has a decidedly different tone than those of the Western writers, and suggests that Alexius had other reasons for leaving the battle other than because he wished failure upon the mission.

And thus the Emperor's expedition, which he undertook for the sake of the Franks, and with the desire of wiping out the Turks was stopped both by the report which the Franks had brought and by the news of Ishmael's advance against him. For he calculated what would probably happen in the future, namely, that it was an impossibility to save a city which had only just been taken by the Franks and while still in a state of disorder was immediately besieged from outside by the Hagarenes. . . . For these reasons, as his forces were insufficient against such numbers, and he could not change the Franks' decision, nor by better advice convert them to their advantage, he considered he had better not proceed any

¹⁵⁰ Harris, *Byzantium*, 61.

¹⁵¹ Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders*, 13.

¹⁵² Warren Treadgold, *A Concise History of Byzantium*, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 174.

further, lest by hastening to the assistance of Antioch he might cause the destruction of Constantinople.¹⁵³

It seems that had Alexius genuinely desired the crusaders' failure he would not have gone toward Antioch in the first place. He also could have allied with the Turkish princes or the citizens of Antioch to sabotage the crusader efforts or could have installed his own men in the city to fight against them. This was not the case, though, evident when Anna's report of the siege is taken into account, which says that Alexius did not desert the crusaders out of hatred; rather, he returned to Constantinople to protect it and his people and because his army was insufficient to defeat the Muslim relief armies.

By the terms of the oaths the crusading princes had sworn to the Byzantine Emperor, Antioch, as a former Byzantine possession, was to be turned over to Alexius when taken. Constantinople was far away, though, and there seemed no immediate possibility that the Emperor would be able to make good his claims to the city by force. Moreover, Bohemond had designs on Antioch for himself. Since the Emperor had done nothing to help the crusaders, they argued, the princes allowed Bohemond to make it the capital of his own principality rather than cede it to Alexius. Bohemond became prince of Antioch in 1099, to Alexius's great irritation. Raymond of Aguilers, a chronicler of the First Crusade, stated of Bohemond's seizure, "In the spring of 1099 a delegation came to the crusader army from the Emperor Alexius, bearing bitter complaints against Bohemond, because he had retained the city in defiance of the oath of allegiance which he had sworn to the Emperor. Bohemond was indeed holding Antioch at the time; for when he heard that Raymond of Toulouse had left Ma'arra for Syria, he violently

¹⁵³ Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, Medieval Sourcebook, ed. Paul Halsall, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/AnnaComnena-Alexiad.html>, (May 2007).

expelled the count's men from those towers in Antioch which they had been guarding."¹⁵⁴

Bohemond was openly defiant of the terms of the oath and was also antagonistic toward the Greek contingent that had accompanied them across Asia Minor. He made things so difficult for them that they "withdrew to avoid an open row."¹⁵⁵

Raymond's account of the seizure of Antioch acknowledges Bohemond's failure to uphold his oath; it also seems that Raymond felt Bohemond was in the wrong by not doing so. It also seems to accuse Bohemond of unnecessarily aggressive actions when he expelled his fellow crusader's men from the city. Raymond does not accuse Alexius of deserting the crusaders or of taking action against them, but justifies the complaints against Bohemond's seizure of Antioch. Had Alexius wished to do so, he could have sent an army against the crusaders at Antioch instead of a delegation bearing complaints. The accusations of Alexius's anti-Western sentiments are unsupported here as well: the failure to return the city after having sworn to do so and Bohemond's open antagonism to his supposed allies gave Alexius further reason to distrust, and dislike, the crusaders, but he did not take military action against them as he could have had he desired their destruction.

For most crusaders, however, the Emperor's failure to come to their aid at Antioch forfeited his right to the city. Raymond of Aguilers wrote that Alexius encouraged the crusaders to leave Antioch, promising "much gold and silver" to those who would meet him in Jerusalem in the summer of 1099.¹⁵⁶ The Western descriptions and accusations of desertion, though, cannot be taken at face value because it must be remembered that the crusaders had gone back on their oaths on at least three occasions –

¹⁵⁴ Raymond of Aguilers, *Historia Francorum*, in *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 86.

¹⁵⁵ Runciman, "Byzantium and the Crusades," 216.

¹⁵⁶ Raymond of Aguilers, *Historia Francorum*, in *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 86.

that is, they refused to return both Nicaea and Antioch, and they devastated the surrounding countryside, which they had promised not to destroy. When the crusaders later discovered that Alexius was encouraging the Fatimids to negotiate with them about a division of Syria which would leave Jerusalem in Fatimid hands, his treachery to the cause seemed proved, and the crusaders felt this further justified their keeping of the city. The Fatimids were lenient toward the Christian residents and pilgrims in Palestine and there was no *practical* reason why Jerusalem should be surrendered to the Christians; the crusaders did not see things this way, though, and argued that Alexius was a traitor to the Christian cause for his lack of effort in fighting to return Jerusalem to Christian hands. However, it must be remembered that it was in Alexius's better interests to have Jerusalem in Fatimid control where they could keep a watchful eye on the troublesome Turks in the area, but the crusaders rationalized their actions by arguing that since Alexius appeared to be siding with the Muslims, he was therefore anti-Christian.

The crusaders used the argument of Byzantine treachery and betrayal to justify their dealings with Muslims further south on the way to Jerusalem as well, actions chronicled by Ibn Al-Qalanisi:

“In Muharram of this year (December 1098) the Franks made an assault on Ma'arrat al-Nu'man from the east and north. . . . They captured the city after the hour of sunset prayer, and a great number from both sides were killed. The townsfolk fled to the houses to defend themselves in them and the Franks, after promising them safety, dealt treacherously with them. They erected crosses over the town, exacted indemnities from the townsfolk, and did not carry out any of the terms upon which they had agreed, but plundered everything that they found, and demanded of the people sums which they could not pay.”¹⁵⁷

The crusaders acted in similar ways when they arrived in Jerusalem and laid siege to it.

Ibn Al-Qalanisi wrote of the crusaders' entrance into the city on 15 July 1099:

¹⁵⁷ Ibn Al-Qalanisi, *Damascus Chronicle*, 47.

The defenders were driven down, and the Franks stormed the town and gained possession of it. A number of the townsfolk fled to the sanctuary of David and a great host were killed. The Jews assembled in the synagogue, and the Franks burned it over their heads. The sanctuary was surrendered to them on guarantee of safety on the 22nd of Sha'ban of this year (14 July 1099) and they destroyed the shrines and the tomb of Abraham. The swords of the Franks were given mastery over the Muslims, and death was meted out to the footmen, volunteers, and townsfolk, about ten thousand souls, and the camp was plundered. The Franks besieged Ascalon until at length the townsmen agreed to pay them twenty thousand *dinars* as protection money and to deliver this sum to them forthwith. It is said that the number of people of Ascalon who were killed in this campaign – that is to say of the witnesses (the respectable citizens, men of unblemished character), men of substance, merchants, and youths, exclusive of the regular levies – amounted to two thousand seven hundred souls.¹⁵⁸

The *Gesta Francorum* depicts the capture as well, with strikingly similar descriptions.

Then one of our knights, Lethold by name, climbed up on to the walls of the city. As soon as he had climbed it, all the defenders of the city fled along the walls and through the city, and our men, following Lethold, chased after them, killing them and dismembering them as far as the Temple of Solomon. And in that place there was such slaughter that we were up to our ankles in blood. Our pilgrims entered the city, and chased the Saracens, killing as they went, as far as the Temple of Solomon. There the enemy assembled and fought a furious battle for the whole day, so that their blood flowed all over the Temple. At last the pagans were overcome and our men captured a good number of men and women in the Temple; they killed whomsoever they wished and chose to keep others alive. In the morning the men climbed up cautiously on to the roof of the Temple and attacked the Saracens, both male and female, and beheaded them with unsheathed swords.¹⁵⁹

Tancred, one of the crusader knights who participated in the siege of Jerusalem, took the Temple Quarter for his own. He offered protection to the Muslims living there but was unable to prevent their destruction at the hands of the other crusaders. Fulcher of Chartres wrote of the slaughter, “Indeed, if you had been there you would have seen our feet coloured to our ankles with the blood of the slain. But what more shall I relate? None

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 48-9.

¹⁵⁹ “Gesta Francorum,” in *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 93.

of them were left alive; neither women nor children were spared.”¹⁶⁰ These accounts do not communicate either glory or pride in the actions carried out by the crusaders. Rather, they imply religious fervor against non-believers, specifically non-Christians. With these reports it is again evident why the crusaders were held in such low esteem by both the Muslims and the Byzantines, who were the most likely to feel the wrath of the Muslim princes should they unite against their Christian enemies.

Since both western and Muslim accounts of the seizure of Jerusalem are markedly similar it can be assumed that the actions chronicled therein occurred with the ferocity described. It must be remembered that the Byzantine view of war was distinctly different from that of the Westerners: the Westerners had been convinced that the effort to rescue the Holy Land from infidel hands – both Muslim and Jewish – was mutually holy and just, while the Byzantines believed war could never be good or holy and was justified only when defending the empire and its faith. With such actions of the Christians against their fellow man, it is of little wonder that Alexius and his Byzantine subjects, as well as the Muslims and Jews living in and en route to Jerusalem, distrusted and feared the crusaders.

Following the siege of Jerusalem, Godfrey of Bouillon took the title *Advocatus Sancti Sepulchri*.¹⁶¹ Bohemond went to Jerusalem on Christmas of 1099 but was later captured in battle in 1100 by Malik Ghazi Danishmend, the emir of Anatolia, and held prisoner until 1103 when he was ransomed by the second king of Jerusalem, Baldwin II of Bourcq (d. 1131). Bohemond waged the occasional battle and was defeated each time,

¹⁶⁰ Fulcher of Chartres, “The Siege of the City of Jerusalem,” *Gesta Francorum Jerusalem Expugnantium* in *Parallel Source Problems in Medieval History*, ed. Frederick Duncan and August C. Krey (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1912), 109-115.

¹⁶¹ “Protector of the Holy Sepulchre.” Godfrey died in 1100 and was succeeded by his brother Baldwin I of Edessa, who took the title “King of Jerusalem.”

after which his resources were devastated; this required him to return to Europe for further resources and reinforcements. The *Gesta Tancredi*, written sometime after Tancred's death in 1112 by Ralph of Caen, reports that despite emptying the treasury of Antioch, Bohemond was still in dire need of financial support and departed for Europe.¹⁶² Bohemond toured the courts of Europe, disseminating stories of Byzantine perfidy and laying the foundations for further distrust of the Greeks. Ralph of Caen wrote, "He spoke on a dais before the Lady altar in the cathedral of Chartres on the day of his marriage to the king of France's daughter. He began by telling the story of his adventures and in calling for a crusade to Jerusalem" and proposed an invasion of the Byzantine Empire, promising immense wealth to those who would go with him.¹⁶³ This account circulated throughout Europe and probably made its way to Alexius. This would no doubt have angered the Emperor who was already distrustful of Bohemond for reneging on the oath and fearful of the military might Bohemond might bring back from Europe.

Bohemond further angered the Byzantine Emperor by expelling the patriarch of Antioch, John the Oxite, upon his return to the East and installing a Catholic patriarch of his own choosing, Peter of Narbonne. Bohemond then directed another Norman attack on the empire: his troops gathered in Apulia in the autumn of 1107 but after landing on the Albanian coast and laying siege to Durazzo, they were surrounded by the Byzantine Greeks and forced to surrender in September 1108.¹⁶⁴ According to the terms of the Treaty of Devol between Bohemond and Alexius, Bohemond was forced to acknowledge

¹⁶² "The Deeds of Tancred of Hauteville." Ralph of Caen was also Bohemond of Taranto's chaplain during Bohemond's return to Palestine in 1107 and took up service with his nephew Tancred while he ruled Antioch from 1108-1112. "Bohemond of Taranto stripped the treasury of Antioch before his departure to Europe."

¹⁶³ Ralph of Caen "Gesta Tancredi," in *Recueil des historiens des croisades: Historiens Occidentaux* 5 vol., ed. Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres (Paris: Imprimerie Royale 1844-95), 3:713-14.

¹⁶⁴ Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders*, 9.

Alexius as his overlord and to hold Antioch as an imperial fief.¹⁶⁵ The offense the Greeks felt at the presence of a Latin patriarch in Antioch and the favor shown to the Latin over the Orthodox religion can be gauged from the fact that a clause of the Treaty of Devol between Alexius and Bohemond stipulated that the patriarch of Antioch should be “one whom your Majesties shall appoint from among [the personnel of] the Great Church (St. Sophia) of Constantinople.”¹⁶⁶ Bohemond’s humiliating defeat by Alexius in 1108, after which he had to promise to recognize imperial suzerainty and restore the Greek Patriarchate of Antioch, only increased mutual ill feeling since he was not unable but unwilling to fulfill his promises.

Within ten years of the crusaders’ capture of Jerusalem, there was a general feeling in the West that somehow Byzantium, and therefore Alexius, was a traitor to the Christian cause. The *Gesta Dei per Francos*, written by one of Bohemond’s followers, Guibert of Nogent, and reflecting his anti-Greek opinions did much to arouse this anti-Greek feeling, one encouraged by such intolerant clerics as St. Bernard of Clairvaux.¹⁶⁷ When Bohemond returned to Europe, he was able to persuade Pope Paschal II (r. 1099-1118) that the Greeks were so disloyal to Christendom that a Crusade should be preached against them. Wiser statesmen, though, saw the value of a Byzantine alliance: until the last quarter of the twelfth century, Byzantium was still the chief military power in the Near East, and it is significant that this realization was very strong in the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem. Kings of Jerusalem Baldwin III (r. 1143-1162) and Amalric I (r. 1162-1174) sought and won Byzantine brides, Emperor Manuel Comnenus’ niece Theodora, and Manuel’s grandniece Maria, respectively. The historian William of Tyre was a keen

¹⁶⁵ Joseph Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy, 1198-1400* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1979), 1-2.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁶⁷ “Deeds of God through the Franks.” Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) was a Cistercian monk and a staunch advocate of the Second Crusade.



*Maria and Amalric,
from Historie
d'Outremer, c. 1295*

advocate of a Byzantine alliance, and the Second Crusade taught Conrad of Germany to desire friendship with Byzantium.¹⁶⁸

The troubles of the First Crusade were officially over, with little resolution to the problems which originally forced Alexius to appeal to the West for assistance.

There was even more ill-will between East and West at the end of the First Crusade than at the beginning, and with good

reason. Against Alexius's wishes, thousands of ill-equipped, ill-trained and ill-disciplined pilgrims left their homes and traveled toward Constantinople across Byzantine territory. The crusaders massacred thousands of Hungarians on their way to Constantinople; they set out on ill-advised treks across the Bosphorus against the advice of the Emperor, a native to the area familiar with the danger at hand. When Peter the Hermit's hordes were almost annihilated by their own foolhardiness, they blamed the Emperor, whose advice they had ignored. They reneged on their oaths sworn to Alexius to return territories seized and they destroyed the countryside and villages they encountered after having promised to leave the areas unmolested. They massacred thousands of Jews and Muslims in Jerusalem with seemingly no regard for human life. They exiled the Orthodox patriarch of Antioch and had even attacked Byzantium itself.

Previous scholarship has argued that Alexius was vehemently anti-Western because of the accusations of his treachery implied in the accounts of Fulcher of Chartres and Raymond of Aguilers. However, upon closer examination of both western and

¹⁶⁸ Runciman, "Byzantium," 217.

Byzantine accounts of the First Crusade and the decade leading up to the official call to crusade, it becomes necessary to reevaluate the previous scholarship and examine it from the Byzantine standpoint. It is arguable that Guiscard's attacks on Byzantine territory, with the pope's support, before the official call to crusade, were carried to restore religious authority to the pope in Rome, which by design would have restored religious unity to the Church. This would have made the Greek Orthodox religion a heresy. If Anna's account of her father's fears is correct, as most historians believe, a Norman on the throne of Constantinople, with the pope's support, would have achieved this end.

Western, Muslim, and Byzantine sources portray the crusaders as violent, foolish, and arrogant, although the western sources do so more subtly. The sources acknowledge the crusaders' failures to honor oaths taken and the violence with which they conquered the cities in their path. Due to the prior Norman attacks on Byzantine territories, it is evident why Alexius was distrustful of the crusading mission and its participants and was fearful that one of the main goals of the Crusade was the seizure of Constantinople itself, and the reunion of the Church. Alexius's alarm when he heard of the great hordes that were coming into his empire from the West was well justified and for this reason it is necessary to reexamine the First Crusade from Alexius's perspective.

From the sources it is evident that Alexius had concerns for his own city and people that affected his treatment of and attitude toward the crusaders, which was mostly brought on by the crusaders' own actions. Had Alexius truly wished the failure of the crusade mission, there were countless ways in which he could have seen to its demise, including taking military action against them outright. Alexius was decidedly not anti-Western, as previous scholarship has asserted, but was in a precarious position. He was

forced to choose between protecting his empire, assisting the crusaders, and keeping the Turkish princes from uniting against him. At such an *arête*, Alexius was forced to drop one of these from his list of concerns. Due to the crusaders' actions and previous Norman attempts to conquer the Byzantine state, he had reason to stop assisting the crusaders. With the First Crusade well behind them, the Byzantines undeniably came out more distrustful of Westerners than ever before, and the coming of the Second Crusade did nothing to ease tensions between Latin and Greek.

V. Conclusion

It could be argued that the Crusades were the result of the rise of Islam and that Manzikert was the beginning of the downfall of the Byzantine Empire. The failure of this battle was ultimately the root cause of the First Crusade, because had the Byzantines defeated the Muslim armies at Manzikert, there would have been no need for Alexius to appeal to the West for aid, which ultimately led to the disaster of 1204. The Crusades weakened the empire to the point where it was unable to defend itself against its enemies, the result of which was the fall of Constantinople to Muslim armies in 1453. It is undeniable that the Crusades are a turning-point in history: the speech Urban gave at Clermont in 1095 set off a series of events that irreparably damaged the already fragile relations between the East and the West. The picture is not so clear as this, however, but becomes more understandable when more than one perspective is taken into account.

Western and Byzantine sources from the First Crusade depict the crusaders as brutal, irrational, egotistical warriors. The *Alexiad*, the *Gesta*, and the accounts of Fulcher of Chartres recognize the crusaders' breaking of oaths and their violent conquests of towns and people in their path. The Norman attacks on Byzantine territories in Greece and Italy with the pope's support gave Alexius cause to be suspicious of the crusaders; it is also understandable why he would be concerned that the main goals of the Crusade were the restoration of religious authority to the pope in Rome, the seizure of Constantinople itself, and the reunion of the Christian Church.

Based on the motives of the crusaders and the earlier Norman attacks, Alexius's alarm when he learned of the immense host of Westerners headed for Constantinople is understandable, and for this reason a reinterpretation of the First Crusade from Alexius's

perspective is necessary. If Alexius had truly wished the failure of the crusade mission, as seems to be suggested in the Western sources, there were countless ways he could have seen to their demise, including sending the Byzantine army against them. Alexius was in a perilous situation, forced to choose between protecting his empire, assisting the crusaders, and keeping the Turkish princes from uniting against him. Because of the crusaders' actions and earlier Norman attempts to conquer the Byzantine state, he had apt reason to discontinue his assistance to the crusaders.

With the First Crusade well behind them, the Byzantines undeniably came out more distrustful of Westerners than ever before. During the entirety of the Crusades, the Greek Byzantines were caught in the middle of the conflict between Western Christians in their attempt to recapture Jerusalem, and the Muslims in their attempt to prevent it. Urban's speech at Clermont in 1095 set forth a chain of events that would further tensions between East and West, and we can still feel the repercussions of them today. The relationship between East and West was undeniably altered but the First Crusade can best be understood when both sides of the story are taken into account. As with any historical event, it is necessary to consider multiple viewpoints, and in the case of the First Crusade, investigating the Byzantine perspective has provided a better understanding of the events and actions of those involved than existed before.

In addition, it revises the opinion that Alexius was anti-Western and wished for the crusaders' demise and shows that Alexius had deeper concerns, namely the care of his own people. Such a study adds to Crusade historiography as well, making the Crusades more human by painting a clearer picture of the events and of the people involved. Perhaps most importantly, such a study makes the Crusades more understandable in that

it breaks down monolithic notions of *Christianity* and *the Church* and adds humanity to figures in our history books.

Appendix A

Fulcher of Chartres's account of Urban II's speech at the Council of Clermont, 1095, as found in the *Gesta Dei per Francos*, In *A Source Book for Medieval History*.

Translated by Oliver J. Thatcher. Edited by Edgar Holmes McNeal. New York: Scribners, 1905, p. 513-17.

Most beloved brethren: Urged by necessity, I, Urban, by the permission of God chief bishop and prelate over the whole world, have come into these parts as an ambassador with a divine admonition to you, the servants of God. I hoped to find you as faithful and as zealous in the service of God as I had supposed you to be. But if there is in you any deformity or crookedness contrary to God's law, with divine help I will do my best to remove it. For God has put you as stewards over his family to minister to it. Happy indeed will you be if he finds you faithful in your stewardship. You are called shepherds; see that you do not act as hirelings. But be true shepherds, with your crooks always in your hands. Do not go to sleep, but guard on all sides the flock committed to you. For if through your carelessness or negligence a wolf carries away one of your sheep, you will surely lose the reward laid up for you with God. And after you have been bitterly scourged with remorse for your faults-, you will be fiercely overwhelmed in hell, the abode of death. For according to the gospel you are the salt of the earth [Matt. 5:13]. But if you fall short in your duty, how, it may be asked, can it be salted? O how great the need of salting! It is indeed necessary for you to correct with the salt of wisdom this foolish people which is so devoted to the pleasures of this -world, lest the Lord, when He may wish to speak to them, find them putrefied by their sins unsalted and stinking. For if He, shall find worms, that is, sins, in them, because you have been negligent in your duty, He will command them as worthless to be thrown into the abyss of unclean things. And because you cannot restore to Him His great loss, He will surely condemn you and drive you from His loving presence. But the man who applies this salt should be prudent, provident, modest, learned, peaceable, watchful, pious, just, equitable, and pure. For how can the ignorant teach others? How can the licentious make others modest? And how can the impure make others pure? If anyone hates peace, how can he make others peaceable? Or if anyone has soiled his hands with baseness, how can he cleanse the impurities of another? We read also that if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch [Matt. 15:14]. But first correct yourselves, in order that, free from blame, you may be able to correct those who are subject to you. If you wish to be the friends of God, gladly do the things which you know will please Him. You must especially let all matters that pertain to the church be controlled by the law of the church. And be careful that simony does not take root among you, lest both those who buy and those who sell [church offices] be beaten

with the scourges of the Lord through narrow streets and driven into the place of destruction and confusion. Keep the church and the clergy in all its grades entirely free from the secular power. See that the tithes that belong to God are faithfully paid from all the produce of the land; let them not be sold or withheld. If anyone seizes a bishop let him be treated as an outlaw. If anyone seizes or robs monks, or clergymen, or nuns, or their servants, or pilgrims, or merchants, let him be anathema [that is, cursed]. Let robbers and incendiaries and all their accomplices be expelled from the church and anathematized. If a man who does not give a part of his goods as alms is punished with the damnation of hell, how should he be punished who robs another of his goods? For thus it happened to the rich man in the gospel [Luke 16:19]; he was not punished because he had stolen the goods of another, but because he had not used well the things which were his.

You have seen for a long time the great disorder in the world caused by these crimes. It is so bad in some of your provinces, I am told, and you are so weak in the administration of justice, that one can hardly go along the road by day or night without being attacked by robbers; and whether at home or abroad one is in danger of being despoiled either by force or fraud. Therefore it is necessary to reenact the truce, as it is commonly called, which was proclaimed a long time ago by our holy fathers. I exhort and demand that you, each, try hard to have the truce kept in your diocese. And if anyone shall be led by his cupidity or arrogance to break this truce, by the authority of God and with the sanction of this council he shall be anathematized.

After these and various other matters had been attended to, all who were present, clergy and people, gave thanks to God and agreed to the pope's proposition. They all faithfully promised to keep the decrees. Then the pope said that in another part of the world Christianity was suffering from a state of affairs that was worse than the one just mentioned. He continued:

Although, O sons of God, you have promised more firmly than ever to keep the peace among yourselves and to preserve the rights of the church, there remains still an important work for you to do. Freshly quickened by the divine correction, you must apply the strength of your righteousness to another matter which concerns you as well as God. For your brethren who live in the east are in urgent need of your help, and you must hasten to give them the aid which has often been promised them. For, as the most of you have heard, the Turks and Arabs have attacked them and have conquered the territory of Romania [the Greek empire] as far west as the shore of the Mediterranean and the Hellespont, which is called the Arm of St. George. They have occupied more and more of the lands of those Christians, and have overcome them in seven battles. They have killed and captured many, and have destroyed the churches and devastated the empire. If you permit them to continue thus for awhile with impurity, the faithful of God will be much more widely attacked by them. On this account I, or rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to publish this everywhere and to persuade all people of whatever rank, foot-soldiers and knights, poor and rich, to carry aid

promptly to those Christians and to destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends. I say this to those who are present, it meant also for those who are absent. Moreover, Christ commands it.

All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested. O what a disgrace if such a despised and base race, which worships demons, should conquer a people which has the faith of omnipotent God and is made glorious with the name of Christ! With what reproaches will the Lord overwhelm us if you do not aid those who, with us, profess the Christian religion! Let those who have been accustomed unjustly to wage private warfare against the faithful now go against the infidels and end with victory this war which should have been begun long ago. Let those who for a long time, have been robbers, now become knights. Let those who have been fighting against their brothers and relatives now fight in a proper way against the barbarians. Let those who have been serving as mercenaries for small pay now obtain the eternal reward. Let those who have been wearing themselves out in both body and soul now work for a double honor. Behold! on this side will be the sorrowful and poor, on that, the rich; on this side, the enemies of the Lord, on that, his friends. Let those who go not put off the journey, but rent their lands and collect money for their expenses; and as soon as winter is over and spring comes, let hem eagerly set out on the way with God as their guide.

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