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God, Gold, or Glory: Norman Piety and the First Crusade

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GOD, GOLD, OR GLORY:
NORMAN PIETY AND THE FIRST CRUSADE

by

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For Paula, Olivia, and Thomas

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Abstract

Recent trends in crusade historiography depict the Frankish participants of the First Crusade as acting out of piety, while their Norman counterparts remain as impious opportunists. This thesis challenges this prevailing point of view, arguing that the Norman crusaders met the same standard of piety as the Franks. To support my theory, I looked at four different facets on the question of Norman piety, dividing them up into chapters of my thesis. In the first chapter, there is a brief discussion of the current portrayal of the Normans in modern crusade historiography. In the next chapter, I established what piety meant and how it was demonstrated by Christians of the 11th and 12th centuries. This includes an examination of relevant monastic charters, which provide evidence that the Normans had strong ties to the Papacy prior to the expedition to the East. The third chapter is a short summary about the developments leading to the First Crusade, and the standard of piety set by Pope Urban II. In the fourth chapter I examine the chronicles of the First Crusade and their characterization of the crusaders, both Norman and Frank, to see if the crusaders met the pontiff's standard.

I conclude that the primary accounts depict the Normans as no different from their Frankish co-religionists, with both groups acting out of piety as well as ambition. The actions of a Norman knight, Bohemond, and a Frankish crusader, Raymond of Toulouse, exemplify this fact. The comparison of these two, as well as the rest of the crusade leaders, demonstrate that the Norman crusaders were driven by a complex and sometimes conflicting mix of pious and secular motivations, no different from their Frankish counterparts.

The armies of soldiers fighting in the First Crusade in response to Pope Urban II's call to retake Jerusalem were composed of a variety of cultural groups from Western Europe. The argument over what motivated these men to become armed pilgrims, to travel long distances to strange lands, to fight and most likely die, began with the accounts of the eyewitnesses and continues to the present day. Early on the distinction was made between the pious Franks and the materialist Normans. Some Medieval chroniclers portrayed the Norman crusaders as interested only in amassing land and power, rather than fulfilling their religious vow. Even in recent historiography, the traditional interpretation of the Norman role in the First Crusade is not one of piety, but rather of opportunism – to use the conflict as a springboard for expansion into Byzantine and Muslim lands. This depiction is in stark contrast to the ongoing reexamination of the Frankish crusaders, who some crusade historians see as having a deep religious motivation. The Normans remain as the standard bearer of the pre-revisionist interpretation of crusader motives – for gold and glory, but not for God. However, examination of the evidence does not bear this distinction out. Instead of greed, a pattern of pious acts emerges performed by the families of the prominent Norman crusaders or in the case of Bohemond of Taranto, the crusaders themselves. The Normans who took up the cause for crusade were as conventionally pious as the Franks and other Europeans, exposing the falsehood of their historical portrayal as impious opportunists.

Introduction

Proving that Bohemond, Tancred, and the other Normans who participated in the First Crusade met the societal expectations of Christian piety and the Pope's standard for the armed pilgrims is the focus of this study. In order to substantiate this assertion, I have focused my research on four areas, each making up one of the chapters in this paper. The first area, discussed in chapter one, is an overview of recent Crusade and Norman historiography, exposing the persistent bias against the Normans. Chapter two follows with a definition of social norms for the Christian aristocracy in medieval Europe prior to the First Crusade. It includes evidence demonstrating that the Italian branch of the Norman Hauteville line followed the same religious practices and customs as other Europeans. Chapter three consists of an examination of the development of crusader piety and its characteristics, setting a benchmark to measure the Norman crusaders against. Chapter four is a comparison of the prominent Norman crusaders to their Frankish compatriots, showing the former to be as pious as the latter. For those unfamiliar with Bohemond, Tancred, and the Hautevilles, a short introduction is in order, starting with a brief history of their lives prior to the crusade.

The lives of the Norman crusaders prior to their participation in the armed pilgrimage remain relatively obscure. However, for Bohemond and Tancred, there is an abundance of evidence, as compared to other notables listed as participants, such

as Richard of the Principate or Robert of Ansa.¹ Bohemond and Tancred's common ancestor, Tancred d' Hauteville, was a native of Normandy. He had twelve sons, many of whom made their way to the politically fractious lands of the Italian peninsula to seek their fortune. One of their number, Robert Guiscard ("the wily"), through conquest and political scheming, came to dominate a sizeable portion of the lands of Italy.² Guiscard's first son from his first marriage, born sometime in the 1050s was baptized as Marc, and nicknamed Bohemond in his youth after a legendary giant. The name stuck, and he was known only as Bohemond from then on.³ At some point after Robert divorced Bohemond's mother, Alberada, Bohemond came to live in his father's house. Here his stepmother Sigelgaita raised him with his stepbrothers. Growing up on the Italian peninsula, this son of Guiscard was exposed to a more cosmopolitan atmosphere than most of the future crusaders, coming in contact with a variety of cultures, including Greek and Muslim. He also experienced war early on, and by 1081 became Guiscard's second in command.⁴

After Guiscard's death in 1085, Bohemond intermittently warred with his younger half-brother Roger over their father's lands. Upon Sigelgaita's insistence, Guiscard's dominion passed to Roger, disinheriting the elder son. The brothers fought throughout the late 1080s and early 1090s, with Bohemond gaining possession of

¹ In chapter one of the *Gesta Francorum*, the author lists some of the more notable men in the Norman army of Bohemond: *et Richardus princeps, ac Rainulfus frater ejus, et Robertus de Ansa, et Hermannus de Canni, Robertus de Surda Valle, Robertus filius Toustani, et Hunfredus, filius Radulfi, et Richardus filius comitis Rainulfi, et comes de Russinolo...*[and Richard of the Principate, and his brother Rainulf, and Robert of Ansa, and Herman of Cannae, Robert of Surde Valley, Robert's son Toustan, and Hunfred, Radulf's son, Richard's son's friend Rainulf, and the Count of Russino...], my translation. Peter Tudebode, *Gesta Francorum Tudebodus Abbreviatus*, Recueil des Historiens des Croisades: Historiens Occidentaux, 5 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1844–95), 3: 123–124, <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/CadresFenetre?O=NUMM-51573&M=telecharger&Y=Image>.

² Ralph Bailey Yewdale, *Bohemond I, Prince of Antioch*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1924; repr., New York: AMS Press, 1980), 1–3.

³ Yewdale, 4–5. Yewdale offers some explanation and sources for the moniker.

⁴ Yewdale, 6–8.

much of Roger's inheritance, including Taranto and Bari. During periods of intermittent peace, the stepbrothers, along with their uncle, Count Roger, worked to retain the dominance of the Hautevilles in the Apulia region. In addition, during the times of relative tranquility, the brothers performed traditional acts of piety, such as endowing the Church with lands and money, and continuing the support for the papacy established under their father. This family dynamic continued until the siege of Amalfi in 1096. At that point Bohemond decided to join the expedition to the East, inspired perhaps by the large numbers of crusaders passing through Norman territories. Tancred, Bohemond's nephew, took up the cause as well, and joined Bohemond's army.⁵

Tancred's life prior to Amalfi is one of obscurity. Other than his kinship to Bohemond, the circumstances of his youth are unknown.⁶ At the time of the siege of Amalfi, Tancred was in his early twenties, already a proven soldier, and useful as a translator, for he spoke Arabic, a rare skill among Westerners. Bohemond valued his nephew's abilities, placing him in a position of leadership during the march to Constantinople.⁷ From then on, Tancred appears throughout the primary accounts of the various battles on the journey to Jerusalem. The author of the *Gesta Tancredi* included the events beyond the victory at Jerusalem in his chronicle, adding

⁵ Yewdale, 23– 37. *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum (The Deeds of the Franks and the other Pilgrims to Jerusalem)*, trans. and ed. Rosalind Hill. (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1962), 7.

⁶ Robert Lawrence Nicholson, *Tancred: A Study of his Career and Work in their Relation to the First Crusade and the Establishment of the Latin States in Syria and Palestine*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Libraries, 1940), 1– 15.

⁷ Nicholson, 16, 17. Nicholson bases his theory that Tancred spoke Arabic on one primary source, the *Historia Sacri Belli*.

Tancred's experiences in the early crusader states, including his rule of Antioch.⁸ The evidence of piety as motivation for Tancred, Bohemond, and other Norman crusaders will be discussed later in this paper. First we must examine contemporary crusade and Norman historiography and determine the reasons for the vilification of this group of crusaders.

⁸ *The Gesta Tancredi Of Ralph Of Caen: A History Of The Normans On The First Crusade*, trans. Bernard S. Bachrach and David S. Bachrach, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005).

Chapter 1: A History of Bias – The Characterization of Normans in History

*The simpler folk were in very truth led on by a desire to worship at Our Lord's tomb and visit the holy places, but the more villainous characters (in particular Bohemond and his like) had an ulterior purpose, for they hoped on their journey to seize the capital itself, looking upon its capture as a natural consequence of the expedition. – Anna Comnena, The Alexiad, Book X*⁹

The account of Anna Comnena, daughter of Emperor Alexius I of the Byzantine Empire, includes many of the major events of her father's reign. Her recording and interpretation of events of the First Crusade remains a source for modern Crusade historians, including the characterization of the Normans crusaders as opportunists. This depiction follows them throughout volumes of Crusade and Norman histories. Even contemporary studies have not challenged Comnena's view, despite the recent changes in Crusade historiography.

Modern studies of the crusades begin with the post-World War II scholars, such as Steven Runciman. His interpretation of the crusades is that the conflict represented an early attempt at European colonialism and demonstrated the use of religion to commit atrocities. He views the crusades as a horrendous misunderstanding. Runciman theorizes that Urban II failed to understand what Byzantines actually wanted: a few hundred knights to reconquer lands lost to the Turks, not a mass of thousands to further destabilize the region. In his view, the appearance of the crusaders worsened the geopolitical situation for Byzantium and he blames the crusaders for further weakening the already debilitated eastern empire.

⁹ *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*, trans. E.R.A. Sewter, (London: Penguin Books, 1969), 311.

On the subject of Norman motivation, Runciman argues that Bohemond of Taranto, leader of the Norman contingent, was “the villain” of the First Crusade.¹⁰ He argues that Bohemond’s plan from the start was to use the crusade as a springboard to creating a new Mediterranean empire for himself.¹¹ Furthermore, it was Bohemond who turned his fellow crusaders against the Greeks, in the Norman’s quest to control Antioch. Bohemond also forced the Byzantines to leave during the siege of this town. According to Runciman, Bohemond stirred up anti-Greek feeling upon his return to Europe, and prompted Pope Paschal II to declare a crusade against the Byzantines.¹² Runciman argues that the Byzantines suffered the most due to the misunderstood call to crusade, from the unappreciative crusaders. He concludes that the Byzantines were the reason for the success of the First Crusade, and not the western knights.¹³ Runciman’s dismissal of all crusaders’ religiosity as mere cover for their atrocities is the interpretation that the revisionist school of crusade history argues against.

The most dramatic historiographical change in the last fifty years is the shift from a study of the events themselves (i.e., establishing the chronology and details of what occurred), to the interpretation of the crusades and the motivation of crusaders, starting with Carl Erdmann’s work, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*. According to Giles Constable, Erdmann’s work shifted the focus of crusade historiography onto

¹⁰ Steven Runciman, “Byzantium and the First Crusade,” in *The Crusades*, ed. Thomas F. Madden, 212–220 (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002).

¹¹ Steven Runciman, *The First Crusade*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 46–47.

¹² Runciman, “Byzantium,” 212–220.

¹³ Runciman, *First Crusade*, 192.

crusade ideology, spirituality, and crusader motivation. A number of new interpretations on crusader motivation stem from this change.¹⁴

Constable organizes the revisionist interpretations into four categories: traditionalist, popularist, generalist, and pluralist. For the traditionalists, the recapture of Jerusalem and the restoration of pilgrimage to the holy sites was the motivator for crusaders. They reject other conflicts supported by the papacy, such as the *Reconquista* or the extirpation of the Cathars as true crusades.¹⁵ One proponent of this view, Jean Richard, follows this interpretation of the crusades. For him, the crusades were only the expeditions to the East, beginning with the First Crusade and ending with the fall of Acre in 1291. However, like many of the pluralists, he considers religious piety as the motivating factor, discounting material reasons.¹⁶

The popularists have a narrower view. They agree with Richard and some pluralists that popular religious fervor was the prime mover. However, only a few events really meet this criterion, such as the mass pilgrimage during the First Crusade and later on the Children's Crusade. For Popularists, papal authorization is irrelevant. Generalists have a broader interpretation, seeing the crusades as part of a larger framework of holy wars in defense of the faith. The motivation of those who fought was to defend their religion and win their salvation through combat. Like the popularists, the generalists disregard papal approval as a criterion. The pluralists extend both the geographic and temporal scope of the crusading movement. In their

¹⁴ Giles Constable, "The Historiography of the Crusades," in *The Crusades from the Perspectives of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, ed. Angeliki E. Laio and Roy P. Mottahedeh, 1-22 (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001). Constable's essay is a more complete discussion of Crusade historiography, beginning with the earliest medieval accounts.

¹⁵ Constable, "Historiography," 12.

¹⁶ Jean Richard, *The Crusades, c. 1071 - c. 1291*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 26, 27, 483-487.

view, papal support for a conflict defines a crusade as a crusade, not its destination, nor when it happened, nor the motivation of its participants. The divergent revisionist views counter the older interpretation on the definition of crusade and the motivation of the crusaders. Despite changing definitions across the revisionist views, the common theme of the Norman crusaders as villains persists.¹⁷

Because it lacks a single definition on the subject, there is much more discussion and debate on the motivation of the crusaders in the pluralist school. Norman Housely describes the First Crusade as one in which religion was the prime mover. Like Erdmann, Housely sees Urban II's call to crusade as the culmination of centuries of change in the relationship between military forces and Christianity. Housely supports his theory on the religious documents from the time of the First Crusade. These consist of a variety of sources: eyewitness accounts of Urban II's speech in 1095, documents from the clergy who accompanied the crusaders, and crusade charters from religious institutions. Housely also points to the interest of many crusaders in finding religious relics as proof of the religious emphasis of the movement.¹⁸

Housely rejects the idea of a simple division of crusaders into pious or impious categories, as it does not take into account the crusader mindset. Within their contemporary culture, religion played a dominant role and crusaders knew that God watched their every action.¹⁹ In other words, the secular and pious actions both occurred within a religious framework. Ironically, this distinction does not prevent Housely from characterizing the leaders of the First Crusade as pious or secular. He

¹⁷ Constable, "Historiography," 13–22.

¹⁸ Norman Housely, *Contesting the Crusades*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 24 – 47.

¹⁹ Housely, 79.

depicts Count Raymond of Toulouse, a Frank, as a pious man who acted under the auspices of Urban II.²⁰ However, Bohemond of Taranto is again portrayed as a caricature of a scheming opportunist, failing to meet Housley's undefined standard for piety. Housley's view of the crusader Normans reflects Runicman's – that they used the First Crusade as part of their plans to conquer and control the former Byzantine lands. His opinion on the Norman crusaders is generally shared by other pluralists, although they differ on some points of crusader motivation.²¹

Jonathan Riley-Smith takes a more pragmatic view. Religion was the primary motivator for the crusaders, but it was tempered by feudal obligations and family ties.²² The ties and obligations to a particular lord also factored into the motivations of a potential crusader. Lords who chose to go hand-picked the most loyal and suitable knights and servants to accompany them. The servants and vassals selected would have little choice but to go on the quest. However, they were not the only ones affected. Depending on their status, an aristocrat's decision to take up the cause had a trickle-down effect in their communities, in terms of recruitment. For example, when Stephen of Blois took up the cause, most of the aristocracy of Chartres went with him. Urban II commanded lords to fund those who wanted to fight to regain Jerusalem but could not afford it, which also increased the numbers in the expeditionary armies.²³

Kinship ties also affected motivation and recruitment. Riley-Smith points out that certain families were predisposed to crusade, especially those renowned for their

²⁰ Raymond of Toulouse is often referred to as Raymond of St. Gilles.

²¹ Housely, 83.

²² Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders: 1095–1131*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 1997), 83–105.

²³ Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, 112.

piety or who had a tradition of pilgrimage, such as the house of Burgundy. Kinship also aided in spreading news about a crusade and recruitment. Bohemond's decision to go on crusade led to his recruitment drive at the siege of Amalfi in 1096 which depleted forces to such an extent that the siege was called off. One factor that was not a motivator, according to Riley-Smith was economics.²⁴

He contends that there is little evidence that crusaders came home with much, if any, newly gained material wealth. Due to the logistics involved, and difficulties of the journey, there was not an easy way to bring back a bounty. Relics, although objects of both religious and pecuniary value, were the exception. These were frequently brought back to the west and presented to churches and monasteries. For example, after Bohemond's release from captivity and return to Europe in 1106, he visited religious institutions and donated his relics from the East. Riley-Smith also disputes the theory that the crusade acted as an economic outlet for dispossessed younger sons. He contends instead that the opposite was true – taking up the call to crusade placed an economic hardship on all but the wealthiest of families. Many, in fact, had mortgaged their futures to participate in the crusades. Charters from monasteries and churches show that the need to come up with the funds for the journey often overrode other concerns. The charters also exhibit some of the practices used.

There were several ways to gain funding for the crusade. Grants from family members were commonly used so that a would-be crusader would not sell his part of a family's holdings and thereby reduce patrimony for future inheritances. Another

²⁴ Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Early Crusaders to the East and the Cost of Crusading, 1095– 1130," in *The Crusades*, ed. Thomas F. Madden, 156– 171 (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002).

was the use of *vifgages*, wherein the holder of the land would allow the lender to occupy it and take the revenue from those lands until the debt was repaid. This was one way to get around prohibitions of usury in place at that time. Often a religious institution was the creditor in a *vifgage*. Finally, as a last resort, crusaders could sell lands, although this had a negative effect on patrimony. Due to the high costs associated with crusading and the economic hardships had by many who returned, Riley-Smith concludes that the motivation to go on crusade could not have been economic in nature. Yet despite his arguments and examples to the contrary, Riley-Smith still accepts the traditional depictions of Norman motives as economic and materialistic.²⁵ At times he appears to take Greek sources on Bohemond at face value. Unlike the Frankish crusaders, Riley-Smith explains, Bohemond's intention was to carve out a new land for himself out of former Byzantine territories. About Bohemond, Riley-Smith states, "There is no doubt that he was ambitious and wanted a principality, possibly to be won at the expense of the Greeks..."²⁶ The Normans' religious motivation for joining the crusade remains unexamined.

Like Riley-Smith, Marcus Bull supports the position that the primary motivation to go on crusade was religion. Bull states that the Church by this period inhabited a position central to medieval life. Local churches were a focal point in their communities. They provided religious instruction, housed relics, and promoted the idea of pilgrimage. It is within this context, Bull argues, that the issue of

²⁵ Riley-Smith, "Cost of Crusading," 156–171.

²⁶ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1987), 22–23. Riley-Smith contradicts himself or has changed his opinion about Bohemond. In an earlier article, he states that Bohemond, "...seems to have been genuinely pious, but he was ambitious and desired honour." Jonathan Riley-Smith, "The Motives of the Earliest Crusaders and the Settlement of Latin Palestine, 1095–1100," *The English Historical Review*, vol. 98, no. 389. (Oct., 1983): 721–736.

motivation must be analyzed. Bull's discussion of crusader motivation includes a reexamination of Erdmann's thesis on the development of the relationship between the Church and secular military forces. He supports the idea that the Peace and Truce of God movement led to an increased dominion of the Church over the knightly classes. The one exception, notes Bull, was the Normans. He states that only secular authority kept them in line and ignores the evidence of Norman related charters, despite his effective use of charters in other contexts.

According to Bull, crusade charters provide a window into this religion-centered mindset in two ways. First, the crusader actions demonstrated piety in a way that few other acts could, which justified the costs, both financial and physical. Second, the charters exemplified the real fear of the prospective crusaders for eternal damnation due to their sins and the sins of their relatives, for whom some had taken up the cross. Extreme or unnatural behaviors were not the only types of sin. Everyday living as part of the warring classes led to sinfulness. It was the knights' fear of sin combined with their piety, inside the framework of the development of past centuries of the relationship between church and soldier that motivated the first crusaders to take up the cross.²⁷

Bull defends the use of charters against the argument that they do not represent the true relationship between crusaders and ecclesiastical institutions. Constable explains that the main criticism of the use of charters as evidence of piety is that they were written by clergy who framed the expedition in religious terms, thereby obscuring the would-be crusader's true motives. Constable counters this

²⁷ Marcus Bull, "The Roots of Lay Enthusiasm for the First Crusade," in *The Crusades*, ed. Thomas F. Madden, 173– 193 (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002).

theory by stating that even though the charters were composed by ecclesiasts, this does not mean the crusaders would not share the same beliefs and perspective about their role and the mission. Additionally, the crusaders demonstrated their piety by making personal and financial sacrifices to go on the expedition.²⁸ Bull defends the use of charters differently, concluding that the extant charters consistently reference crusaders, despite the small number of these documents. Furthermore, the surviving records represent a small percentage of the original number of charters that did exist, pointing to a larger body of charters as evidence of the ubiquitousness of the crusader-Church relationship. Churches, monasteries, and other religious institutions, posits Bull, were the logical partners to assist a would-be crusader. Ecclesiastical bodies had ready access to liquid capital to finance a knight, experience to draw on to assist with the armed pilgrimage, and could reinforce religious ideals of piety and devotion.²⁹

Historians, however, have not universally accepted the primacy of religious motives. John France, for example, rejects religion as the main reason to go on crusade. He asserts that there is an overemphasis on religious motives. Instead, patronage or *mouvance* was the main reason for knights to join the crusade. The obligations to others either higher or lower in the *mouvance* hierarchy would either allow one to be pressured or place pressure upon another to go on crusade. Those that went at the behest of their lords hoped to gain favor and material reward, with any spiritual gain as a secondary motivator. France discredits the charters used by Riley-Smith and other historians as evidence of piety as exaggerations that put crusaders in

²⁸ Giles Constable, "Medieval Charters as a source for the History of the Crusades," in *The Crusades*, ed. Thomas F. Madden, 130–153 (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002).

²⁹ Bull, 130–153.

the best light. He argues that those who could resist the pressure of the *mouvance* or who were at the top of the hierarchy did not join in the crusade. He cites examples of would-be crusaders who chose not to participate, such as members of the Roucy family, to support his ideas. The Roucy family, France argues, had a long tradition of participating in holy wars such as the *Reconquista* and supported religious houses such as the Cistercian monks of Valroy and the abbey of Marmoutiers. They were even related to the reluctant crusader Stephen of Blois. Yet no record exists of anyone from this family participating in the crusades, nor any documents providing an explanation of why not. Fulk IV of Le Rechin, the Count of Anjou, also did not take part, despite pressure to do so. France also takes issue with the more traditional view of the First Crusade as a means of enrichment for disinherited second sons. France disagrees with this economic motif, stating that even younger sons had familial and hierarchical obligations. What the crusade provided beyond advancement was the opportunity for some to escape the patronage system and start fresh with an opportunity for material gain. France argues that even though most crusaders were not successful in enriching themselves, this does not mean they did not start out with that intent. Regardless of all other factors, patronage determined whether someone would go on crusade or not.³⁰ France's criticism of the theory of religious motivation ignores the social importance of religion in the medieval period. For the fighting elite, patronage and obligation were important, but concerns for their salvation trumped them, as demonstrated by the charters and argued by Constable. France also neglects the tradition of protection of pilgrims by the Church. Generally, pilgrims were

³⁰ John France, "Patronage and the Appeal of the First Crusade," in *The Crusades*, ed. Thomas F. Madden, 195–207 (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002).

excused from their feudal and legal obligations until their return. A feudal lord who refused to let a knight go on crusade risked ecclesiastical sanction.³¹ In addition, his argument fails to explain the People's Crusade. Although not part of the fighting elite, the peasantry too, had familial and feudal obligations. It seems unlikely that their lords and landholders would excuse them to go on crusade. Instead those that took up the pilgrimage risked all to save their souls. France's view remains in the minority among the revisionists.

Christopher Tyerman, a generalist, also supports religiosity as the prime mover of the crusaders. In his book, *God's War: A Comprehensive History of the Crusades* Tyerman examines how the crusades came to be, and the Norman role within that path. Most notably, he discusses how the relationship between the Normans in the south and the papacy changed from one of conflict to one of cooperation. The Norman victory over the army of Pope Leo IX at Civitate in 1053 forced the papacy to rethink its antagonistic policy towards the Normans. A later pontiff, Pope Nicholas II, reversed the policy entirely and enlisted the Normans as his defenders. From that point forward, many Norman military activities were carried out with the approval of the Church. Roger, Guiscard's brother, carried out the conquest of Sicily under the papal banner, as Sicily at that time was under Muslim occupation. Tyerman uses the Hauteville clan as an example of the powerful families in the late 11th century who were able to rise to power through a mix of military conquests, strategic alliances, and a strong relationship with the papacy. However, Tyerman

³¹ Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion*, (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975), 169.

posits these connections had nothing to do with piety.³² However, unlike many other revisionist crusade historians, Tyerman leaves open the possibility of religious devotion as a motive for the Norman crusaders. He argues that Bohemond's motives were not completely materialistic, but does not conclude that piety as a motive for crusade held the same weight for the Norman crusaders as it did for the Franks. In other words, he considers Bohemond as pious as Raymond was materialistic— just enough to cast doubt on the traditional interpretations of both. He sidesteps any further discussion stating that the “psychologies of the crusade’s leaders cannot be reconstructed.”³³

With the exception of France’s thesis on patronage, most revisionist theories argue that piety strongly motivated the first crusaders. As was common for that time, they demonstrated their faith through overt action. The Normans are the exception, considered only as impious opportunists. What is missing from the current crusade historiography is a clear benchmark of what conventional piety was for the First crusaders, and an analysis among Bohemond and his kin to determine whether they met the standard.

Similarly, historians focusing on the Normans have largely accepted the impious motives of the first Norman crusaders. For the purposes of this work, Norman historiography is defined categorically: general histories, regional histories, and biographies, beginning with the early twentieth century up to the present.³⁴

While earlier historians discussed aspects of Norman sources, the pre-World War I

³² Christopher Tyerman, *God’s War*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 11– 15.

³³ Tyerman, 110– 111.

³⁴ The closest work to a discussion of Norman historiography is a critique of primary sources in Kenneth Baxter, *Making History: The Normans and their Historians in Eleventh-century Italy*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995).

writings of Charles Homer Haskins are the first general history. Haskins covers the Normans from their origins through their extinction as a separate cultural group in the latter part of the Middle Ages. While he attempts to be objective in his history, he does not always succeed. Haskins depicts his subject matter always in a favorable light, and praises their accomplishments as conquerors and assimilators. He mentions the Norman-Church relationship but only considers it as a pragmatic action by the Church. On the issue of the First Crusade, Haskins discusses the roles of Bohemond, Tancred, and Robert Curthose in the campaign positively, using them as examples of Norman martial prowess. On the issue of motivation, Haskins sides with the traditional view that Bohemond participated in the crusade to create his own eastern kingdom, and not as an act of piety. Haskins' work sets the tone for later Norman histories that have a tendency to celebrate the Normans as a great people with an instinct for conquest, not great piety.³⁵

The postwar period for Norman historiography lacks a revisionist movement similar to crusade historiography. Newer works build on Haskins' themes and are more thorough in their examination. David C. Douglas places the Normans at the crux of European development in the 11th and 12th centuries. He disagrees with Erdmann's ideas on the relationship between the Normans and the papacy. Erdmann contends that the Normans protected the Church out of piety.³⁶ However, Douglas argues that it actually demonstrates the political power held by both in the late 11th century, and not the religiosity of the Normans. Douglas contends that the Norman conquests and relationship with the papacy (after the battle of Civitate) shaped

³⁵ Charles Homer Haskins, *The Normans in European History*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1915) 13–217.

³⁶ Erdmann, 205, 214.

Western Europe.³⁷ He explains that the papacy provided Norman rulers with legitimacy, and these rulers were the vassals of the Church who reciprocated with military protection and political power.

To explain the 10th century Norman expansion, Douglas applies arguments similar to those once used by Crusade historians: overpopulation and the economic pressures that came with it.³⁸ Douglas argues that the Norman conquest of Sicily was one of the first holy wars, and its success made the idea more acceptable throughout Western Europe. Without the Normans, Urban II would have lacked the political power, military backing, and precedence to call for crusade. As for crusader motives, Douglas asserts that the only Normans who went were those who had little to lose at home, such as the disinherited Bohemond, and the politically weak Robert Curthose. He separates the Normans from other groups as using the crusades as a matter of politics. Religion only appealed to popular support of the expedition.³⁹ Douglas' works are the only ones with any real discussion of Normans in the crusade.

Like Douglas, R.H.C. Davis uses Haskins' themes of Norman conquerors and assimilators, but his focus is on Norman culture. In his book, *The Normans and their Myth*, Davis places Norman history in the context of their culture and their "Normanness," as he put it.⁴⁰ He subjectively tailors Norman history to support these themes, a method later utilized by R. Allen Brown. During the seventies and eighties, Brown wrote of the Normans in what approached hagiography. He glorified the

³⁷ David C. Douglas, *The Norman Achievement*, (Berkely: University of Los Angeles Press, 1969), 7–9.

³⁸ Douglas, 36.

³⁹ David C. Douglas, *The Norman Fate, 1100–1154*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 167, 170–172).

⁴⁰ R.H.C. Davis, *The Normans and their Myth*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 14.

Norman people and made the argument that the Normans were pivotal in the growth of the West. He, like Davis, focuses on the influence and importance of Normans in Western Europe and what it meant to be a Norman, or what Brown called “Normanitas.”⁴¹ The latest examination of the Norman people is a general history of the Normans by Majorie Chibnall. It is not a reinterpretation of earlier histories, but a continuation. Like Brown and Davis, Chibnall examines who the Normans were as a people as the focus of her work. Like her predecessors, she uses themes of assimilation and conquest, and states that it was the Norman ability to adapt and assimilate that ultimately led to their demise as a separate group. On the issue of crusade, she describes the First Crusade as part of the general Norman Mediterranean expansion and does not tie in religion as a motivating factor, although she notes the religious devotion of the early Normans.⁴² The general histories of the Normans discuss to some degree the relationship between Normans and the Church with particular focus on Normans support for the rebuilding of monasteries, monastic reform, and the ties between the papacy and the Normans in Italy. However, when it comes to the Norman role in the crusades, piety is not a motivator; instead personal ambition and economics are the driving factors.

Norman regional studies (those focusing on a particular region influenced by the Normans such as England or Italy) echo a similar sentiment. The most common regional Norman histories focus on the conquest of England by William the Conqueror in 1066 as well as a few on the Italian conquests. When it comes to the relationship between the papacy and the Normans they come to the same conclusion,

⁴¹ R. Allan Brown, *The Normans*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 19.

⁴² Marjorie Chibnall, *The Normans*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 12 –14, 95– 103.

that this tie was strictly pragmatic in nature. The Church needed protection and the Normans acted as vassals to the Church, which put their lands under its auspices. In John Julius Norwich's writings on the Italian conquests he discusses Bohemond's role in his father's conflict with the Byzantines, but does not say much about piety or involvement in the First Crusade.⁴³ G.A. Loud's study of the subject covers much of the same material, although he provides insight into the use of charters for research, mirroring Constable, he does not reinterpret the intentions of the Normans based upon that evidence.⁴⁴

The last areas of Norman historiography, biographies, do not shed any new light on the motivations of the Norman crusaders. There are only three from the modern era, and they are all over fifty years old, full of facts, but lacking in inspired interpretation. The sole biography of Bohemond, by Ralph Bailey Yewdale, is an attempt to give a full account of the Norman's life. Yewdale's work is significant in that it has a much greater genealogical depth than found in other secondary sources, but it does not delve into the psychology of the subject, and focuses on his actions. The biography of Robert "Curthose", son of William the Conqueror and crusader, is in the same style and interpretation of the Bohemond biography. Whereas Bohemond's life was tied to the Mediterranean, Curthose went on the First Crusade and returned home once he had fulfilled his vow. Like Yewdale's work, it sticks to the sources and mentions possible reasons for Curthose for going on crusade only in

⁴³ John Julius Norwich, *The Kingdom in the Sun, 1130-1194*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 38-40, 227-332.

⁴⁴ G. A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest*, (New York: Longman, 2000).

passing.⁴⁵ The biography of Tancred, a doctoral thesis, is the last of the three. Also a prewar work, its author denies that religiosity was part of Tancred's motivation for joining Bohemond on the quest.⁴⁶ New biographies on these men with fresh interpretations are sorely lacking.

Unlike the recent revisionist interpretations in crusade historiography, a reexamination of the Norman crusaders' motives and general piety remains elusive. The descriptions of the Normans by Norman and Crusade historians are consistently of conquerors and assimilators, lacking a fresh analysis. In both historiographical traditions, Normans are depicted as having a pragmatic relationship with the Catholic Church, in spite of the fact that the Normans supported clerical reforms, founded monasteries, and took back lands from Muslims with the Church's approval. Yet at every turn they do not meet the standard for conventional piety applied to other Western groups, and they are still portrayed as the cynical, secular opportunists as described by Anna Comnena nearly a thousand years ago. To determine if this assessment of the Normans is accurate, one must examine the state of Christianity during the 11th century and what it meant to be pious at that time.

⁴⁵ Charles Wendell Davis, *Robert Curthose: Duke of Normandy*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920) 92.

⁴⁶ Nicholson, 20–21.

Chapter 2: Mere Christianity? Christendom and Conventional Piety in the 11th and 12th Centuries

"In the year 1074, I, Robert Guiscard, merciful divinely favored duke of Calabria, Apulia, and Sicily, donate in perpetuity the monastery Holy Trinity of Venosa, a mediety of Venosa, for the remedy of my soul, on behalf of my father and mother, brothers and ancestors for their restful sleep in that place and for the salvation of my heirs,..." – from a charter signed by Robert Guiscard, 1074 ¹

Robert Guiscard's donation was typical among the European aristocracy of the 11th century. Outward demonstrations of devotion to God were critical to winning the Lord's forgiveness and protection. In the medieval mindset, the world existed within a religious framework. God and the saints intervened in the daily affairs of men. Miracles and misfortune demonstrated the reality of God's power. Floods, plagues, and famines were evidence of God's wrath against the sinful. The laity interpreted eclipses of the moon, lightning storms, and other natural phenomena in an attempt to divine His will. The Devil was everywhere and could take any form: a strong gust of wind, a black pig, or as a nightmare. Fear of death without salvation, resulting in one's soul remaining trapped in Hell for all eternity, pervaded the popular mindset. ²

The only way to avoid this outcome was deliberate, overt acts of devotion to God to demonstrate one's piety. Mere belief was not enough to prove one's fidelity to God and Christ. Earning forgiveness and salvation required physical

¹ The original reads *Anno 1074, ego Robertus Gusicardus, divina favente clementia dux Calabrie, Apulie et Sicilie, dono in perpetuum monasterio sancte Trinitatis de Venusio medietatem civitatis Venusii pro mee anime remedio, patris et matris mee, fratrum et parentum inibi quiescentium et pro salute heredum meorum...* The translation is mine. *Recueil des Actes des Duc Normands d'Italie (1046–1127): Les Premier Ducs (1046– 1087)*, ed. Leon-Robert Menager, (Bari, Italy: Grafica Bigiemme, 1980) 86, C.

² Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion*, (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975), 13– 21.

proof. The act of piety was the proof of one's faith, whether it was attending mass, donating to monasteries, going on a pilgrimage, or even serving in a holy war. These actions were expected by a pious society and shaped the generally accepted standards of Christian behavior. Examination of these demonstrations will show that the Normans followed these standards of behavior, which they passed down to the crusading generation.

For many, pilgrimage provided the way for the faithful to demonstrate their belief. Saints were venerated as pilgrims visited their shrines in hope of their aid. Pilgrimages to cure an illness, to provide intercession for a loved one, or even temporary relief from poverty were common. The reverence for the saints cut across all classes. Monasteries and churches accommodated the demand by building chapels to house relics and hold services. Clergy at various locations made conspicuous efforts to popularize their holy places through stories of miracles, feasts, and relics with healing powers. Some sites were so popular pilgrimages had to be limited to special holidays.³ The relics housed at these shrines were even used on occasion in battle, so that their power would bring victory to their possessors. Fascination with pilgrimage to Jerusalem continued as well.

However, the expense and the dangers of the journey gave pause to any but the devout. The father of the Norman William the Conqueror, Duke Robert, accepted the risk, traveled to Jerusalem and died on the return trip. Stories of

³ Bernhard Topper, "The Cult of Relics and Pilgrimage in Burgundy and Aquitaine at the Time of the Monastic Reform," in *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000*, ed. Thomas Head and Richard Landes, 41–57 (London: Cornell University Press, 1992).

pilgrimages ending in the death of faithful were not viewed negatively. Robert's story demonstrated the hazards of long-distance pilgrimage and his own religious devotion. Instead of being remembered as taking a foolish risk that nearly destroyed his lineage, he was remembered as a legendary example of pilgrimage.⁴

Pilgrimage provided the Hautevilles and other Norman families the chance to demonstrate their piety and explore new lands for new opportunities. For the Franco-Norman elite the three most common destinations for pilgrimage were Rome, Jerusalem, and the shrine of Saint Michael in Monte Sant'Angelo in southern Italy. Of the three, Saint Michael's shrine attracted the majority of Norman pilgrims, as he was their patron saint. The shrine, which had pagan origins, became a Christian holy site when Saint Michael was said to have appeared there in the fifth century. Saint Michael also inspired the founding of the abbey Mont Saint Michel on the border of Normandy.⁵ The journey to Saint Michael brought many Normans into contact with local peoples. This gave them a better understanding of the opportunities available to the warring classes in the fractious lands of Italy. Through their ties to local lords, the Normans quickly became a part of the political landscape of the Italian peninsula. Norman donations to monasteries and other local religious institutions further cemented their hold as they built a relationship with Rome and local monasteries.

⁴ Marcus Bull, "The Pilgrimage Origins of the First Crusade", *History Today*, (March 1997): 10–15. Sumption claims that Robert's pilgrimage could be attributed to the possibility that he murdered his brother and therefore his pilgrimage was really penitential in nature. He provides more detailed information on the hardships of pilgrimage to Jerusalem during the 11th – 13th centuries. Sumption, 101, 169–209.

⁵ Monte Sant'Angelo is located in the heel of Italy's "boot". Gordon S. Brown, *The Norman Conquest of Southern Italy and Sicily*, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2003), 21.

Donations to monasteries in the form of land, goods, or specie were commonplace. Monasteries during the 11th century played an important role in the spiritual and secular affairs of the communities of which they were a part. These institutions were comprised of churches with direct ties to the Church hierarchy or they were monasteries that for the most part existed as independent ecclesiastical communities. Monks were the primary intercessors for their local communities between God and the laity, for prayers for salvation for the living and the dead.⁶

Funding, founding, or rebuilding a monastery was a typical act of charity among the wealthy during this period. Donations showed the religious devotion of the benefactor. In this aspect, Normans acted the same as the Franks and other Europeans. The Hauteville family in Southern Italy, like non-Norman families, consistently made donations to monasteries that fell within their territorial grasp. By examining the charters from the abbey of Cava and other ecclesiastical institutions, a pattern of Norman giving emerges that appears to span generations.

Robert Guiscard made large donations to monasteries in Southern Italy, despite the early troubles he had with Pope Leo IX. In a charter from 1074, Guiscard granted land in perpetuity to the Holy Trinity monastery of Venosa.⁷ According to the charter, the reasons for his donation were to ensure the eternal rest of his relatives and to save his own soul. This idea of intercession in exchange for donation was commonplace. Donors would be included in the daily prayers of

⁶ Norman F. Cantor, *Civilization of the Middle Ages*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 146–155.

⁷ Leon-Robert Menager, *Recueil des Actes des Ducs Normands d'Italie 1046– 1087*, (Bari, Italy: Grafica Bigiemme, 1980), 86, C. See note 1 for the relevant text.

the monks, which the donor believed would protect him and his family from Hell and Purgatory, places that were very real in the medieval mind.⁸

Other charters of Guiscard follow this pattern of donation; a charter from 1079 describes a donation of Guiscard for his second wife Sigelgaita. In the grant, the Norman lord granted control of the Church of Saint Matthew to the Holy Trinity abbey at Cava.⁹ The abbey of Cava resided in the area of Salerno, which Guiscard conquered in 1077. Cava benefited from the Norman lord's piety and received the bulk of his donations, either directly to the monastery itself or to one of its subsidiary institutions.

The concessions and donations to Cava were numerous. In August of 1080, Guiscard declared that inhabitants of the abbey of Cava and its dependencies, San Arcangelo, San Magno and San Maria di Giulia, were free of any obligation to him. Furthermore, Peter, the abbot of Cava, had a right to any lands unlawfully taken and could demand that they be returned.¹⁰ The monastery of St. Benedict at Taranto, which Guiscard granted to Cava in 1081, continued to receive donations from the Hautevilles.¹¹ A charter from June 1080 includes donation of oil, wine, and fish in addition to the standard tithe of corn.¹²

⁸ Cantor, 153–154.

⁹ *La Datazione Dei Documenti Del Codex Diplomaticus Cavensis*, ed. Maria Galante, (Salerno, Italy: Grafiche Morinello, 1980), 286–287, no. 119.

¹⁰ Galante, 331–33 no 138 (August 1080).

¹¹ G.A. Loud, "The Abbey at Cava, Its Property and Benefactors in the Norman Era" in *Anglo-Norman studies IX: proceedings of the Battle Conference*, 1986, ed. R. Allen Brown, 143–177 (Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 1987).

¹² The list reads: *Insuper etiam totam decimam frumenti et ordeï, vini et olei et omnium piscium piscariam nostrarum quas nunc illic habemus vel habituri sumus.* [In addition to the whole tithe of corn and barley furthermore, wine and oil and every fish we now have from fishing or will have.], my translation. *Recueil des Actes des Duc Normands d'Italie (1046–1127): Les Premier Ducs (1046–1087)*, ed. Leon-Robert Menager, (Bari, Italy: Grafica Bigiemme, 1980), 101–103 no 31 (June 1080).

The donations to Cava demonstrate that the Guiscard line of the Hautevilles followed a pattern of donation similar to that of other pious families. Even after his death, donations continued, first by Sigelgaita, and then by his sons.¹³ As to why Cava was the recipient of their generosity, G.A. Loud states that there are several reasons behind the abbey's success. First, Cava had a reputation as a monastery that followed the Cluniac reforms. The first four abbots of the Cava monastery were reported to be very spiritual men who practiced an austere form of monasticism. The abbey received papal support as a result. Second, the abbey had a good relationship with the local churches that under were under papal control. When Cava assimilated a church or monastery as its subsidiary, it did so with little or no resistance from the local episcopate.

The clergy at Cava also excelled at record keeping, which allowed them to produce the necessary documents when land disputes arose so they could preserve their holdings.¹⁴ These record keeping skills extended to their benefactors, as demonstrated by the numerous legal affidavits by the Hauteville family in the Cava records and those at its dependencies, such as Saint Nicholas of Bari. The records from Bari are mostly from the sons of Guiscard. In one of the documents, Roger Borsa, the chosen heir, invested a new church rector named Helias. He gives thanks to God and performs the investiture on behalf of his father's soul and his own; his half-brother Bohemond goes unmentioned, perhaps indicative of the fractious relationship between the two.¹⁵

¹³ Loud, "Abbey," 156.

¹⁴ Loud, "Abbey," 168–172.

¹⁵ *In nomine sancte trinitatis. Ego Rogerius divinam per gratiam dux pro anima patris mei Roberti ducis et pro salute mea...*[In the name of the Holy Trinity. I, Roger duke by the grace of

Bohemond was Guiscard's first son from his first marriage, which the father ended so he could marry Sigelgaita, the sister of the Lombard prince of Salerno, Gisulf. The marriage embedded Guiscard into the politics of the region and legitimized him as a noble. Guiscard promised Sigelgaita that their offspring would be the legitimate heirs to his domain, leaving Bohemond without an inheritance. However, at some point Bohemond joined his father in Guiscard's conquest of the Byzantine Empire.

As mentioned earlier, Bohemond and Roger Borsa never permanently reconciled. Throughout the 1080s and 1090s, they engaged in intermittent war. By 1086 Bohemond forced Roger to settle and share his patrimony with his half-brother. For a short period of time, the donations to Cava and its client churches from the Hautevilles bear the signatures of both brothers. The peace was short-lived however, and from 1087 to 1089, the two were again at war. The second settlement resulted in Bohemond receiving the lion's share of Roger's inheritance, consisting of Bari and its territories, plus Taranto. Again the brothers joined in their donations to Cava and support of the papacy.¹⁶

The sons of Guiscard accompanied Pope Urban II to Bari, where the pontiff consecrated St. Nicholas' shrine in the fall of 1089. In August 1090, Bohemond reaffirmed the grants of his father to the monastery of Monte Cassino and made a donation to St. Nicholas a little over a year later. The brothers

God, for the soul of my father Duke Robert and for my salvation...], my translation. August 1089, no. 14, *Codice Diplomatico Barese*, vol 5 ed. Francesco Nitti di Vito, (Bari, Italy: *Commissione Provinciale di Archeologia e Storia Patria*, 1902), 27– 28. "Borsa" was Roger's nickname as he liked to count and recount his money. Ralph Bailey Yewdale, *Bohemond I, Prince of Antioch*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1924; repr., New York: AMS Press, 1980), 25.

¹⁶ Yewdale, 6– 8, 25– 33.

Hauteville also accompanied the pope to the Monte Cassino in 1093, and asked him to consecrate another monastery. However, the peace did not last, and in the winter of 1093, Roger Borsa fell ill, and a rumor spread that he died. Bohemond seized Calabria and prompted a revolt of his brother's vassals, who believed the gossip to be true. Whether Bohemond used the rumor as a pretext to seize land or meant actually to protect his brother's domain is unknown. Their uncle, Roger of Sicily put down the rebellion and in the meanwhile Bohemond went to his now-recovering brother and returned the lands he had seized. The brothers and their uncle besieged the two remaining rebellious towns. They were back under Roger Borsa's control by 1094.¹⁷ The charters from Bari at this time include a selection of documents attributed to Bohemond, the disinherited son of Guiscard, and provide greater insight into his character.

Instead of the clichéd depiction of Bohemond as a warrior-opportunist, the charters depict him as a pious Christian and a financially pressed feudal lord. In a charter from December 1090 Bohemond defends the right of a man named Pancallus to live in a house in the town of Bari on church lands. According to the document, Guiscard, Bohemond's father, had granted the property to Pancallus for his years of service. When Roger Borsa did not reconfirm this grant, Bohemond supported Pancallus' claims, arguing that it was his deserved reward, and that Pancallus had been a faithful servant to the church.¹⁸ Bohemond donated lands to the same church in 1094 through the *catepan* (governor) of Bari,

¹⁷ Yewdale, 25–33.

¹⁸ ...*Pancallus cognovimus esse proprium hominem et servitorem ecclesie beatissimi confessoris Christi sancti Nicolay*. [...recognize Pancallus as a special man and happy servant to the confessors of Christ at Saint Nicholas.], my translation. Vito, 29–30 no. 15 (December 1090).

Guigelmus, who represented Bohemond in the charter. According to the charter, Bohemond gave his lands and authority to St. Nicholas and placed them under its protection, in effect, becoming its vassal. He received money as part of the exchange; however, this does not discount his piety.¹⁹ As discussed in chapter one, this type of transaction was common between religious institutions and crusaders. Numerous crusade charters demonstrate the same type of exchange – the assumption being that an ecclesiastical institution would be a better landholder than a competing secular lord. In addition, monasteries had access to the liquid capital needed to fund a prospective crusader.

A charter from February 1094 shows the sale of some lands that Bohemond possessed to the church. This included a vineyard near the town of Pallizzo and the Byzantine territories he claimed. Although the precise reasons for the sale are unknown, it seems likely that he sought funds to maintain his territories.²⁰ The last document attributed to Bohemond prior to the First Crusade is a legal affidavit drawn up and held by the church of St. Nicholas granting Guigelmus full right to sell and dispose of any remaining property he had in Bari. The date of the document is significant: August 1096. It was in that month and year that Bohemond departed from the siege of Amalfi and joined the crusade.

¹⁹ The charter lists the details of the exchange and includes a clause preventing any modification to agreement later on: *Et dedit atque concessit michi potestatem et auctoritatem. ...Et darem illum ecclesie sancti Nicolai. Etiam dedit michi ipse dominus archiepiscopus pro eodem Rege quadraginta solidos...ut nec ipse dominus meus Boamundus nec eius heredes vel successores seu eorum ordinate iam nullo futuro tempore deinceps querant...Data vel aliquem censum ei tollant ullo modo.* [And I surrender and concede my power and authority... And I give this to the church of Saint Nicholas. Moreover the same Lord's archbishop gave to me forty solidos for the Prince (Bohemond)... and not my lord Bohemond nor his heirs or successors now or in the future can change or protest...buy or take any part of this property], my translation. Vito, 35– 36 no. 18 (January 1094).

²⁰ Vito, 37– 40, no. 19, 20 (February, 1094). Yewdale, 33.

Yewdale states Bohemond returned to the Apulian region to secure the funding he needed for the journey. It is likely then, that the money from the sale was used to go on crusade, rather than fundraising for the siege.²¹ If this is the case, Bohemond liquidated a large quantity of his assets to go on Crusade. This action demonstrates that Bohemond fits the profile of a religiously motivated crusader. Not everyone however, agrees with this interpretation. Barbara Rosewein disagrees with the concept of using donations as a demonstration of piousness. She uses the monastery at Cluny as her model to explain the complex relationship between ecclesiastics and donors. Her theory is that donations were not necessarily given for pious reasons, but as part of an economic structure where property donated to the monastery could pass back to the heirs of the original donors. This pattern repeated itself over the centuries.²² Although this may fit Cluny, there is no published evidence of a similar pattern at the monasteries of Cava or Bari. Two of the charters attributed to Bohemond note specifically that not only Bohemond, but also his heirs, gave up all rights to the lands donated or sold.²³ That is not to say that the Normans in Italy gave lands for purely pious reasons, as there were political and social motives as well. However the pattern of

²¹ As with the charter from 1094 (see note 19), the terms state that the Bohemond and his heirs ceded all rights and the terms could not be changed: *Sine requisitione et contrarietate mea meorumque heredum vel successorum. Sive nostrorum omnium hordinatorum. Et quicumque a te acceperit. Firmum et stabile illi ita permaneat...Et nec a me neque a meis heredibus vel successoribus aut hordinatis rumpatur. Nec moveatur. Nec retornetur.* [Without requirements and opposition my heirs or successors. Or all our clergy. And no matter what thou must obey. Firm and stable the former shall last...And nor my heirs or successors lest the clergy break it. Let it neither be moved nor returned.], my translation. Vito, 41–42, no. 22 (August, 1096). Yewdale, 35–36.

²² Barbara Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909–1049*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1989), 35–37.

²³ See notes 19 and 21.

behavior in the available evidence demonstrates that the Normans gave their lands freely, primarily to show their religious devotion.

The donations of the Normans of southern Italy coincide with a special relationship between them and the papacy that other European groups did not possess. Norman involvement with the papacy prior to the First Crusade reveals a common theme of fighting for the Church, both as its protector and in participation in holy wars. The ties between the papacy and the Normans of southern Italy began a generation before. In 1059, Pope Nicholas II enlisted the aid of Guiscard and another Norman leader, Richard of Aversa, against a group of Roman aristocrats who sought the pontiff's expulsion. Nicholas II reversed the policy of his predecessors who had regarded the Normans as a threat.²⁴ In 1053, for example, Pope Leo IX personally led an army to destroy the Normans. Instead, the combined forces of Richard of Aversa and the members of the Hauteville clan exterminated the Pope's army at the battle at Civitate.²⁵ Now Nicholas II needed the aid of the Normans as members of the local Roman aristocracy tried to replace him with a pontiff allied to them. Guiscard and Richard flushed the antagonists out of Rome. Nicholas II elevated the alliance by a greater order of magnitude by investing Guiscard and Richard as vassals of the papacy six months after they secured Rome.²⁶

The terms under which Guiscard and Richard swore vassalage were the same, the only difference being what territories the pontiff granted to them. Guiscard

²⁴ I.S. Robinson, *The Papacy 1073–1198*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 367–369.

²⁵ G. A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest*, (New York: Longman, 2000), 118–120. Robert Guiscard and one of his brothers, Humphrey, were the leading participants.

²⁶ Robinson, 369.

received Apulia, Calabria, and rights to Sicily, if he was able to conquer it. Richard's grant consisted of Capua. In both cases, the lords received lands back from Nicholas II they already controlled, or planned to control. Furthermore, in their oaths these lands are specified primarily as property of the Pope – Nicholas II did not give away lands that historically belonged to the church based on the Donation of Constantine, but only granted use of the lands to his vassals, with strings firmly attached.²⁷

The terms of the vassalage of Guiscard and Richard were stringent. They swore fealty to the papacy and to the current pope, and to his successors. In addition, the Norman lords had to protect and defend the possessions of the papacy and the lives of the popes. Nicholas II's concern about the usurpation of his authority by a false pope is also addressed in these oaths. Guiscard and Richard were only to recognize popes who were elected by the college of Cardinals and not ones appointed by laypersons of any status. In return for this obligation, Nicholas II granted them the aforementioned territories under firm guidelines.

The language of the oaths emphasized that these lands absolutely belonged to the Holy See and the Normans possessed them solely on the approval of the pope. The lands of the Norman vassals could not automatically be passed down to their heirs. Instead, once the originating vassal died, the papacy could choose to grant the fief to that vassal's heir or give it to someone else outside of that vassal's family. The new grantee would also have to swear a new oath of fealty to the current pope, even if the new fief holder was the heir of the prior vassal.

²⁷ The Donation of Constantine would not be discovered as a forgery until the fifteenth century. Cantor, 550.

Failure to seek this investiture would result in the loss of the fief. Conversely, if the current pope died, the terms of the agreement required the existing vassal to seek the approval of the new pope and swear a new oath. In theory, a new pope could deny the existing fief holder the rights granted to him by the prior pontiff. Guiscard and other Normans however disagreed with the papal interpretation of the terms of vassalage.

Guiscard annexed the towns of Salerno and Amalfi with their surrounding territories in the late 1070s, despite the opposition of the papacy. Guiscard and other Normans argued that the terms in the oaths were mostly ceremonial and only legitimized the facts on the ground, with the Holy See gaining the advantage of military protection. The Norman lords believed that they had a God-given right to these lands and credited the Almighty for aiding their victories, leaving the papacy out of the equation of ownership. They even designated heirs to their fiefdoms, which violated the terms of their papal vassalage. Pope Gregory VII raised the uncertainty of the possessions of the Normans in response to the differing interpretations. He added a new concept in a clause of the oath Guiscard took in 1080 – the idea of suitability. If a fief holder failed to meet papal expectations of leadership, then his grant of land could be revoked.²⁸

On the surface, the papal interpretation of vassalage makes the alliance between the Norman families and the papacy appears as strictly pragmatic. However, the Norman lords came to Nicholas II's rescue, despite the antagonistic policies of his predecessors. The lords did not receive anything for this initial action – the investiture and the strengthening of the relationship came six months

²⁸ Robinson, 369 – 372.

after their military successes against Nicholas II's enemies, not prior. The only gain of Guiscard and Richard was legitimacy in the eyes of the Holy See and perhaps some level of protection from other claimants of their territories.²⁹

For this papal recognition they handed back (on paper anyway) the lands they possessed and yielded to stringent guidelines under the authority of the papacy. In addition, the Normans enlarged the control of the Roman church. Religious institutions in the lands that Guiscard and his brother Roger conquered became part of Rome's spiritual empire. Orthodox churches in the former Byzantine territories were forced to submit to the will of the Holy See or face replacement of its clergy with their Roman counterparts. The conquest of Sicily brought it under Christian control. Orthodox churches on the island also had to submit to the Roman church.

Despite the advantages of the alliance to the Church and the piety of the Normans, the relationship was not without its controversies. For example, a pope could use his religious authority to punish recalcitrant fief holders instead of revoking land grants. Gregory VII excommunicated Guiscard three times between 1074 and 1080 for seizing territories that the pontiff did not give him. The expulsions of the Norman lord were not abnormal, nor do they show that Guiscard deviated from church teaching or was impious. The papacy's relationship with Guiscard was no different than with other powerful individuals of the period, such as the German emperor Henry IV, from whom the pope needed Guiscard's protection. After the passing of Guiscard and Gregory VII, the ties between the

²⁹ Robinson, 369 – 372.

Normans of southern Italy and the papacy remained strong for another fifty years.³⁰

Clearly, the Normans demonstrated their devoutness through pilgrimage, donations, and their strong relationship with the papacy, meeting the benchmark for piety set within the framework of medieval Christianity and the expectations of contemporary society. The Normans who participated in First Crusade continued to demonstrate their faith in ways that were acceptable to their peers and the Church, within the nascent standards of crusader piety. To prove this, however, one must first define the guidelines under which the fighting elite took up the armed pilgrimage and how they interpreted them on their journey to the East.

³⁰ Robinson, 372– 377.

Chapter 3: Knights of Christ? Piety in the First Crusade

Now we hope that none of you will be slain, but we wish you to know that the kingdom of heaven will be given as a reward to those who shall be killed in this war. For the Omnipotent knows that they lost their lives fighting for the truth of the faith, for the preservation of their country, and the defense of Christians. And therefore God will give them, the reward which we have named. – Pope Leo IV ¹

Pope Leo IV's sermon to the Frankish army in 850 demonstrated the gradual acceptance and endorsement of warfare for religious ends by the papacy. The use of violence to defend Christianity was not a part of the foundation of early Christian philosophy and teachings. Over the course of centuries, however the concept gained acceptance. By the time of the First Crusade, most theologians accepted the principle of the use of force in defense of the Church.² The policies of popes in the 11th century stretched this doctrine to its limits, eventually

¹ The original reads *Omni timore ac terrore deposito, contra inimicos sanctae fidei, et adversaries omnium regionum viriliter agere studete. Ubi usque nunc parentes vestri publicum moverunt procinctum, semper victores exstiterunt, nullaue eos multitudo populi superare potuit. Non enim audivimus ut aliquando sine fama victoriae reversi fuissent. Omnium vestrum nosse volumus charitatem, quoniam quisquis (quod non optantes dicimus) in hoc belli certamine fideliter mortuus fuerit, regna illi coelestia minime negabuntur. Novit enim Omnipotens, si quilibet vestrum morietur, quod pro veritate fidei, et salvatione patriae, ac defensione Christianorum mortuus est: ideo ab eo praetitulatum praemium consequetur.* Leo IV: *Leonis Papae IV Epistolae et Decretia. I. Ad Exercitum Francorum, Patrologia Latina: the full text database*, 115: cols.656– 657, Ann Arbor, MI :ProQuest Information and Learning Company, <http://pld.chadwyck.co.uk/>; http://gateway.proquest.com.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:pdl-us&rft_dat=xri:pdl:ft:all:Z300167922. Translation source: "Forgiveness of Sins for Those who Die in Battle with the Heathen. Leo IV (847– 55) to the Army of the Franks," from J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 115: cols. 656– 657 in *A Source Book for Medieval History*, trans. and ed. Oliver J. Thatcher and Edgar Holmes McNeal, 511– 512 (New York: Scribners, 1905; Google Books, 2008), <http://books.google.com/books?id=YbtBTCicVrkC>.

² See Carl Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of the Crusade*, trans. Marshall W. Baldwin and Walter Goffart, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), for an exhaustive analysis of the history and specific developments. For a criticism of Erdman, see John Gilchrist, "The Erdmann Thesis and the Canon Law, 1083 – 1141," in *Crusade and Settlement: Papers read at the First Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East and presented to R.C. Smail*, ed. Peter W. Edbury , 37– 45 (Cardiff, U.K.: University College Cardiff Press, 1985).

including pre-emptive war as a justifiable argument.³ The historical precedents prior to the First Crusade along with Pope Urban II's terms and requirements for the first crusaders generated a framework with which to structure militant piety for the fighting elite. In order to establish whether the Norman crusaders acted within this structure a brief discussion of historical precedent and documents related to Urban's requirements for crusaders is crucial. By defining the common beliefs and attitudes towards holy war and the ideas of Urban that clergy and laymen carried on crusade, one can determine if the Normans were similar to their coreligionists in their actions or if their caricature as scheming opportunists is more accurate.

Prior to Urban's call for an armed pilgrimage in 1095, his predecessors accelerated the changes in Church doctrine that made sponsorship of warfare more palatable. Starting in the 1060s Pope Alexander II began issuing papal banners and relics to temporal lords engaged in officially sanctioned violence. The banner's use was significant as it demonstrated papal support for the side carrying the banner, and implied the military campaign had the tone and substance of a holy war. However, the papacy stopped short of providing absolution for the combatants for violence committed during a conflict.⁴ Alexander issued the banner three times in as many years, setting a precedent with

³ The morality of these developments and what it meant to Christianity have been hotly debated since the crusades began. See Elizabeth Siberry, *Criticism of Crusading, 1095–1274*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) for a discussion of contemporary criticisms of the early crusades.

⁴ Erdmann, 182, 187–189. The most well known example is the issuance of a papal banner to William the Conqueror in 1066. The banner did not provide absolution—the Normans had to do penance for violence committed during the invasion. The Crusaders did the same following the siege of Antioch. Issuing of the banner: Peter Rex, *Harold II: The Doomed Saxon King*, (Glocestershire, UK: Tempus Publishing Ltd., 2005), 63–64, 207–212. Penance: H.E.J. Cowdrey, "The Genesis of the Crusades: The Springs of Western Ideas of Holy War," in *The Holy War*, ed. Thomas Patrick Murphy, 17–18 (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1976).

its use. These declarations of support of secular military actions by Alexander loosened the guidelines of the Church doctrine on war, which his papal successor turned on its head.

Spurred on by the Investiture Controversy and his conflict with Henry IV, Pope Gregory VII radically changed the Church's interpretation of warfare.⁵ The pontiff redefined three aspects of Christian doctrine: the definition of *militia Christi*, the role of the warrior saints, and the nature of penitential pilgrimage.

The concept of *militia Christi* ("the warriors of Christ")⁶ prior to Gregory was traditionally defined as spiritual in nature; clerics fought for the souls of men. It stood in diametric opposition to the sinful nature of secular warfare. Gregory disagreed with this interpretation and reversed the Church's official position. He argued that those who used their fighting prowess to liberate the Holy Lands and battle the enemies of the Church were following Christ's example. In his letter calling for crusade in 1074, he wrote:

Wherefore, if we love God and acknowledge ourselves to be Christians, we ought to be deeply grieved by the wretched fate of that great empire and the murder of so many followers of Christ. But it is not enough to grieve over this event; the example of our Redeemer and the duty of brotherly love demand of us that we should set our hearts upon the deliverance of our brethren. For as he offered his life for us, so ought we to offer our lives for our brothers.⁷

⁵ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 5–6.

⁶ Cowdrey, *Genesis*, 20.

⁷ "Gregory Summons the Faithful to Defend Constantinople", March 1, 1074. *The Correspondence of Pope Gregory VII*, translated with an introduction by Ephraim Emerton, (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), 25.

Some support for this policy reversal was the number of precedents where the papacy endorsed actions against a pagan enemy, granting an indulgence or remission from penance as an incentive.⁸

The warrior-saints too, took on a different role. Originally the warrior-saints received veneration for their pacifism in the face of violence. Most of the warrior-saints were Christian martyrs from the second and third centuries A.D., prior to the toleration of Christians in the Roman Empire. These saints were men who sacrificed themselves for the faith while serving as soldiers in the Roman army. Typically they were tortured and executed for either refusing to give up their faith or venerate pagan deities in addition to Christ. The martyred warriors were not ordinary soldiers, but men of rank and skill. This was an important distinction, as it showed that they had everything to lose, except salvation, by refusing to renounce their faith. This concept was not lost on some ecclesiasts who used it in their attempts to get knights to enter the monastery.⁹ Other members of the clergy, however, used the example of the saints as a model for secular knights, connecting them through prayer and ritual.

Two ceremonies demonstrate the connection made between the secular and spiritual knights. The first ritual, the *Laudes regiae*, began in the eighth

⁸ In the campaign in 1064 to recapture the Spanish town of Barbastro from the Muslims, Pope Alexander II granted an indulgence. James Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader*, (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press), 1969, 24– 5. Referenced in Marcus Bull, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade; The Limousin and Gascony, c. 970– 1130*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 73– 74. There is some controversy over this interpretation. Bull disagrees with the comparison of the early phases of the *Reconquista* as a proto-crusade and attempts to disprove Brundage in this work. Jonathan Riley-Smith in *First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, 29 (see note 5 for full reference) seems to agree with Brundage.

⁹ For more discussion on the role of conversion within knightly piety, see C. Harper Bill, “The Piety of the Anglo-Norman Knightly Class”, in *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies II*, ed. R. Allan Brown, 63– 77 (Ipswich: Boydell Press, 1979).

century during the Carolingian dynasty and persisted throughout the medieval period. It was modeled on the Litany of Saints, but differed in tone. Where the Litany was a penitential prayer, the *Laudes* asked the warrior-saints to protect the rulers of the earth and intercede on their behalf. The second ceremony which demonstrated the increasing ties between saints and knights was a ceremony originating at Cambrai in northern France. It predated the First Crusade only by a few years. The service consisted of a series of prayers ending with a request to God to intercede on the knight's behalf through the warrior-saints, Maurice, Sebastian, and George. The ritual resulted in the earthly warrior becoming the defender of a specific church or monastery.¹⁰

As the ceremony at Cambrai shows, the growing acceptance of the knightly classes transformed the role of the warrior-saints. Instead of soldiers who entered the state of martyrdom because they refused to fight or as inspirations for a knight to lay down his arms and live under the Benedictine rule, they became examples of how to be pious warriors. The scale of the military potential of an army of knights who would serve God through their martial skill was not lost on Gregory. It was with these theological changes that the pontiff planned an expedition to Jerusalem.

The theme of absolution for pious knights in exchange for the penitential pilgrimage was carried forward and combined in the pope's plan for an expedition to the East in 1074.¹¹ Gregory envisioned redirecting the military might of the

¹⁰ James B. MacGregor, "The Ministry of Gerold d'Avranches: warrior-saints and knightly piety on the eve of the First Crusade," *Journal of Medieval History*, 29 (2003): 219–237.

¹¹ Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 110–111.

Franks and other Westerners into a huge army that would rescue Byzantium, thereby funneling the violent tendencies of knights into more constructive purposes, and providing favorable conditions for reuniting the Eastern and Western churches.¹² Gregory did not live to see his vision through. Due to his struggles with Henry IV, and the unwillingness of secular leaders to subordinate themselves to his leadership, he had to set aside his plan.¹³

Pope Urban II inherited Gregory's ideas and built upon them. He constructed his own vision for an expedition to the East. The pontiff's primary goal of this crusade was to assist the Byzantines in the recapture of the Holy Lands from Islamic control. Military success, he hoped, would lead to goodwill between the Latin and Greek branches of Christianity, allowing for reconciliation, if not a reunification of the faith. To this end Urban planned to use Christian knights as the core fighting force for this expedition. This idea represented the culmination of centuries of thought and precedent in connection to the relationship between Christianity and secular war. Urban followed the lead of Gregory and recast the military role of knights into a religious one.¹⁴

The actions of Gregory and historical precedents provided Urban and his ecclesiastical supporters the impetus and justification for crusade. In addition, these acted as a foundation upon which Urban could build his own model, drawing upon two important sources: the aforementioned Church history and contemporary piety. As discussed in chapter two, societal pressure to display

¹² Thomas Madden, *The New Concise History of the Crusade*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 6–7.

¹³ Cowdrey, *Genesis*, 25.

¹⁴ Riley-Smith, *First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, 18–23.

one's devotion to God led to acts of penitence and pilgrimage. In his speeches and letters Urban combined these sources with Biblical history in his exhortations to stem the tide of internecine bloodshed among the Christian warrior-elite. He realized that by directing their aggression toward an alien foe, he could accomplish his goal to aid the Byzantines. However, Urban was careful to set guidelines and recommendations for these prospective soldiers of Christ which set out his expectations of their behavior, what he required of them, and the privileges they received as armed pilgrims.¹⁵ These included the requirements of the vow, penitential pilgrimage, and the prospect of martyrdom with the privileges of papal protection, indulgence, and possibility of material gain. The Pope's rules set the framework for crusader piety and reinforced his characterization of the knights as armed pilgrims.¹⁶ It is by these standards that one must judge the piety of the crusaders.

Throughout the versions of Urban's recruitment speech at Clermont in 1095 the themes reflecting his requirements and privileges stand out. He encourages knights to take up the vow and stop fighting amongst themselves, "you murder one another... and perish by mutual wounds."¹⁷ Those who took up the cause demonstrated their commitment by sewing crosses on their clothing or wearing the cross on their foreheads.¹⁸ The vow was not to be taken lightly; for

¹⁵ *The First Crusade: The Chronicles of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials*, 2nd ed., ed. Edward Peters, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press, 1998), 26– 42. Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095– 1127*, trans. Frances Rita Ryan, ed. Harold Fink. (Knoxville, TN : University of Tennessee Press, 1969), 65– 67. Tyerman argues that Urban called for a holy war rather than an armed pilgrimage, see *Holy War*, 72– 73.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ "The Speech of Urban: The Version of Robert of Rheims", *The First Crusade: Fulcher and Other Source Materials*, 28.

¹⁸ Ibid.

once it was declared there was no turning back. Those who wavered in their commitment faced punishment. According to Guibert of Nogent's version of the speech the Pope stated: "if anyone... after taking openly this vow, should shrink from his good intent... [he] should be regarded as an outlaw forever, unless he repented and again undertook whatever of his pledge he has omitted."¹⁹ The vow created a new type of pilgrimage that combined voluntary religious devotion with penance, due to the anticipated hardships of the long journey to the East.

In addition to the requirement of the vow, Urban II placed crusaders under papal protection similar to unarmed pilgrims. In theory, they were protected from attack from other Christians, their lands were safe from attack and seizures, and they were exempt from taxation and secular legal jurisdiction. For example, in one surviving summary Urban declared, "The People shall be admonished about the journey to Jerusalem and whoever shall go there in the name of penance (*per nomen penitentie*) shall both he and his property, always be in the truce of God."

²⁰ Urban also warned against anyone interfering with the family of the crusaders for the next three years, the amount of time he believed it would take.²¹ They were granted these privileges not as members of a secular military class, but as

¹⁹ "The Speech of Urban: The Version of Guibert of Nogent", *The First Crusade: Fulcher and Other Source Materials*, 37.

²⁰ From the Codex Laurentianus at Florence (108). Ernest Blake and Colin Morris, "Decree of Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont. 1095", <http://falcon.arts.cornel.edu/prh3/259/text/clermont.html>. See Marcus Bull, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade: The Limousin and Gascony, c. 970– c. 1130*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) for more information on the Peace and Truce of God.

²¹ 'Gesta Dei per Francos' (II. 5), 140 referenced in Bull, *Knightly Piety*, 59.

members of the clergy.²² These privileges demonstrated that the knights, in Urban's view, were armed pilgrims.

The penitential nature of the pilgrimage was both a requirement and a privilege. One writing attributed to Urban stated his offer of the armed pilgrimage as penance: "Whoever for devotion alone, not to obtain honour or money, shall set out to free the church of God at Jerusalem, that shall be counted to him for all penance..."²³ For the knights who took the vow, the Crusade acted as formal penance which demonstrated their love for God as a warrior of Christ and a liberator of the Eastern Church. Within this framework of the penitential nature of the crusade, the armed pilgrims developed rituals and ceremonies to earn God's favor by removing sin incurred on the campaign. Although the soldiers were armed pilgrims in the view of the Church, it was still an army on the march with its inherent vices and vicissitudes. It was not until the initial hard fought battles such as Dorylauem (July 1097) that the crusaders made a connection between their piety and victory. During the battle, the crusader army seemed doomed to defeat, until they confessed their sins fearing death without forgiveness. It was only at that point, as Fulcher relates it that the fight turned in the crusaders' favor. The eight month siege at Antioch (October 1097– June 1098) fell into a similar pattern.²⁴ The crusaders again were on the edge of defeat, unable to capture the city or leave it easily, with hostile forces on the way. Bishop Adhemar, Urban's

²² Jonathan Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?* 3rd ed., (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 53– 68.

²³ From Liber Lamberti (74), Ernest Blake and Colin Morris, "Decree of Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont. 1095," 108, <http://falcon.arts.cornell.edu/prh3/259/texts/clermont.html>.

²⁴ Fulcher of Charters (I:xi; ed. Hagenmeyer, 196– 197), referenced in Bernard McGinn, "Iter Sancti Sepulchri: The Piety of the First Crusaders," in *Essays on Medieval Civilization: the Walter Prescott Webb Memorial Lectures*, ed. Bede Karl Lackner and Kenneth Roy Philip (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), 51. Date of the battles, Tyerman, *God's War*, 117, 137.

representative on the march, led a religious service and procession hoping to cleanse sin from the crusaders and earn God's help. Again, the crusaders overcame their opponents and ascribed their victory to God's intervention. From that point forward, many battles of the campaign were marked by ritual such as the battle to defend Antioch from Muslim relief forces. Raymond D'Aguilers describes their pleas to the divine: "the leaders and nobles walked the streets of Antioch imploring God's help; and the commoners, crying and beating on their chest, went barefooted through the city."²⁵ Reflecting upon their early battles, the crusaders concluded that it was not until they reached out to God as truly penitent for their sins that they were able to achieve victory. As the crusaders neared Jerusalem they continued to repeat the rituals of confession and penance. By the time of the siege of Jerusalem, these practices were formalized into a three part ceremony that was conducted whenever the Latin kings of Jerusalem felt they had run afoul of God.²⁶

It is important to make the distinction that these ceremonies and rituals were only to expunge sins committed on the pilgrimage. All prior sins were cleansed as part of joining the armed pilgrimage to the East. Urban believed that the hardship of traveling to Jerusalem, combined with the fact that crusaders would have to fight their way to the Holy Sepulcher, amounted to a penitential pilgrimage of the highest order. In exchange for this penance, the crusaders had their slate wiped clean. Any sins and halfhearted penances past were forgiven and the armed pilgrims had a chance to start anew. The majority of crusaders who

²⁵ Raymond D'Aguilers, *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, trans. and ed. John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill, (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1968), 61.

²⁶ McGinn, 33– 70.

perished on the journey received a “plenary indulgence”, a full remission for any sins and penances left undone. The fallen received their salvation, in the view of the Church, as martyrs.²⁷

The eyewitness accounts and chroniclers repeatedly stress the theme of martyrdom, demonstrating its importance as one of the defining aspects of crusade. Four of the recorded versions of Urban’s speech at Clermont include references to martyrdom as do some of the chronicles. The contemporary historians stress the importance of martyrdom during two critical periods of the crusade. During both the siege of Nicea and Antioch the crusaders faced extreme conditions and fought numerous battles over extended periods of time. For example, in the *Gesta Francorum*, its author stated that during the siege of Nicea in June 1097, both the warriors who died in battle and the accompanying peasantry who died from the harsh conditions entered heaven as martyrs.²⁸ Albert of Aachen’s account of the events at Nicaea concurs with the *Gesta*: Albert attributed Bishop Adhemar promising eternal life to those who died as martyrs.²⁹ One of Bohemond’s own brothers Walo, was killed during a scouting mission. The slain crusader’s widow exhorted God to accept Walo as a martyr.³⁰ The eyewitness accounts and contemporary histories display a common belief that dying in defense of the faith could be considered an act of martyrdom under certain circumstances. Ecclesiasts who died on the field of battle while leading

²⁷ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, 27–29.

²⁸ *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum (The Deeds of the Franks and the other Pilgrims to Jerusalem)*, trans. and ed. Rosalind Hill. (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1962), 17.

²⁹ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana (History of the Journey to Jerusalem)*, ed. and trans. by Susan B. Edgington, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 107.

³⁰ *Robert the Monk’s History of the First Crusade = Historia Iherosolimitana*, trans. Carol Sweetenham, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate 2005), 139–140.

prayer or were killed giving mass in dangerous conditions were thought of as martyrs. Crusaders who perished instead of converting to Islam or died as hostages also received their final reward. However, death was not always necessary. As H.E.J. Cowdrey noted, the crusaders who survived the hardships and suffering of the armed pilgrimage to Jerusalem and lived to tell about it had were considered “living martyrs”.³¹ Those who did return from the expedition were also respected for their contribution for the cause, and could hope that the exemptions granted to them were upheld, although this was not always the case.

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Those who survived were allowed to bring back what they had gained through conquest and plunder, as stated in Urban’s recruitment speech. Two versions, one by Robert of Rheims, the other by Baldric of Dol, mention the possibility of taking the enemies’ treasure and/or subjecting the Holy Land to the rule of the Franks.³³ Although it may seem like a contradiction to the admonition against going on the armed pilgrimage to gain wealth, it was more complex than that. The opportunity for material gain, when mentioned, was stated as a secondary goal in these versions of Urban’s speech. Rescuing Christian lands from foreign aggressors and the promise of everlasting life for the knights’ sacrifice was always the primary motivator. In other words, piety and conquest were not incompatible in Urban’s terms, so long as military action advanced his goals in defense of Christendom. Indeed, when the crusading princes took control

³¹ H.E.J. Cowdrey, “Martyrdom and the First Crusade,” in *Crusade and settlement : papers read at the First Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East and presented to R.C. Smail*; ed. Peter W. Edbury, 51– 52 (Cardiff, U.K.: University College Cardiff Press, 1985).

³² Cowdrey, “Martyrdom”, 46– 56. Charles Wendell David, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920), 120– 137.

³³ Riley-Smith, *First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, 28, 32.

of the lands they had conquered after Nicaea, contemporary accounts, whether clerical or lay, do not cast their actions in a negative light. The crusaders were still in compliance with the pontiff's guidelines since they had taken control of pagan lands and restored them to Christian rule.

The eyewitness histories, like the actions of the crusaders, emphasized Urban's framework for crusade; anything out of the range of normal behavior was noted, and criticized, such as Stephen of Blois's desertion at Antioch. The pope's requirements and privileges then were the standard by which crusader piety was measured. In order to determine if Norman crusaders met that standard, one has to look at the eyewitness histories. If Norman behavior fell outside the range of accepted norms of piety it would show up there, in negative connotations. The comparison of these chronicles in their recording of Frankish and Norman crusaders demonstrates that the latter were as pious as the former, which is the subject of the final chapter.

Chapter Four: Bohemond vs. Raymond

“...Bohemond... threatened to depart, adding that honor had brought him to his decision because he saw his men and horses dying from hunger; moreover, he stated that he was a man of limited means whose personal wealth was inadequate for a protracted siege. We learned afterward that he made these statements because ambition drove him to covet Antioch.” – Raymond D’Aguilers, *Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem*¹

“The defense of the city is mine, as is the citadel on the mountain, the royal palace and the forum. The bridge and the gates open to me. The lance is mine and my forces are large. What remains except that I obtain the principality once Bohemond is dead?” – attributed to Raymond of Toulouse, Ralph of Caen, *Gesta Tancredi*²

The feud between Bohemond and Count Raymond of Toulouse, as illustrated by their chroniclers, demonstrate that the dichotomy of piety versus opportunism is an oversimplification. With the rehabilitation of the Frankish crusaders by revisionist crusade historians, Raymond has regained his role as a pious crusader. For example, on the issue of Raymond’s motivation, Madden argues that “Raymond decided to finish his life in the service of God.”³ Tyerman states that Raymond’s “religious sincerity has been widely accepted.”⁴ Bohemond, however, retains his portrayal as the scheming opportunist.⁵ Other

¹ Raymond D’Aguilers, *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, Trans. and ed. John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill, (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1968), 79. Raymond D’Aguilers was Raymond of Toulouse’s chronicler on the crusade.

² *The Gesta Tancredi Of Ralph Of Caen: A History Of The Normans On The First Crusade*, trans. Bernard S. Bachrach and David S. Bachrach, (Burlington: VT, 2005), 121.

³ Thomas Madden, *The New Concise History of the Crusade*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 23.

⁴ Christopher Tyerman, *God’s War: A New History of the Crusades*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 111. Raymond of Toulouse, also referred to as Raymond of St. Gilles, was more Provencal than Frank, however he is usually lumped in with Frankish Crusaders when placed opposite the Normans. To clarify the issue, in the primary accounts who the term ‘Frank’ applies to depends on the context. Generally, when speaking of western Christian forces versus eastern Islamic ones, all westerners are ‘Franks’, for the most part. When the chroniclers discuss certain individuals or distinct contingents in the crusading forces, they will mention discrete groups, such as Franks, Provencals, Normans, Lombards, etc.

Norman crusaders, most notably Tancred, are painted with the same brush. The evidence, however clearly does not support this facile distinction.

The surviving chronicles provide some of the most important evidence relating to the crusaders' motives, but they are not without their limitations. Contemporary sources of the First Crusade generally focused only on the leaders and their notable subordinates in the crusading armies. The group actions of the armies were recorded, but the individual stories of the foot soldiers, squires, and camp followers were not; their stories are lost. However, the actions and behavior of the elite few provide evidence of the overarching motives and beliefs of the unrecorded many. For example, the crusading princes' focus and demonstrations of piety to prove their faith to God also reflected the expectations of the armies under their leadership. The chronicles demonstrate that any impious act led to declines in morale and concerns about the success of the mission. Desertions were especially criticized. Second, the bias of the individual chroniclers strongly influenced how they recorded the actions and behaviors of other prominent crusaders. The quotes at the head of the chapter demonstrate how the biographer of Tancred, Ralph of Caen, and Raymond D'Aguilers, the historian of Raymond of Toulouse, could demonize the other crusade leaders when interpersonal conflicts arose.

The degree of subjectivity is also enlightening as it provides more insight into the interactions between the crusade leaders. By comparing various accounts for the major events on crusade, patterns appear demonstrating the points at which the crusading leaders were united and sharply divided. Further analysis shows that

with few exceptions, these accounts do not call into question the piety of the crusaders, either Norman or Frank. For the purposes of this comparison, there are five accounts that record the actions of the crusading elite in some detail.

The first source is the *Gesta Francorum*, authored by an anonymous participant in the First Crusade. He first accompanied Bohemond to Antioch and following the events there joined the Provençal contingent of Raymond of Toulouse to the victory at Jerusalem in 1099. Ironically, the *Gesta* is attributed to a Norman author, most likely a soldier in Bohemond's contingent.⁶ Raymond already had his own chronicler, the aforementioned Raymond D'Aguilers, author of *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*. Raymond joined the crusade as Raymond of Toulouse's chaplain and became a priest while on the expedition. He may have been connected with Bishop Adhemar of Le Puy prior to the crusade, or affiliated with the nearby abbey of Chaise-Dieu. Raymond D'Aguilers' writing style and familiarity with the Bible point to a person with a mid-level education, further proof that he was clergyman.⁷ As one would expect, most of the other accounts were written by clergy.

Like Raymond, Fulcher of Chartres was a member of the clergy who recorded his own history of the crusade, *Deeds of the Franks on Their Pilgrimage to Jerusalem*. His account begins with the initial journey of one of the lesser armies, that of Duke Robert of Normandy. During the journey, Fulcher joined Baldwin's contingent and remained in his service as chaplain, until the latter's

⁶ See Collin Morris, "The *Gesta Francorum* as Narrative History", *Reading medieval studies: annual proceedings of the Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies in the University of Reading*, (Reading, UK: University of Reading, 1993), vol. 19, 55–71.

⁷ Raymond D'Aguilers, 6– 8, translator's introduction. Bishop Adhemar was Pope Urban II's representative on the crusade. He died after the initial siege of Antioch in 1098.

death in 1118. His account is perhaps the most comprehensive, covering the start of the First Crusade and including events up through the 1120s.⁸

The fourth account, the *Gesta Tancredi*, by Ralph of Caen, is a narrative about the pilgrimage of Tancred to Jerusalem and includes much about Bohemond as well. Unlike the previous three chroniclers, Ralph did not accompany the crusade armies. Instead, Bohemond recruited Ralph to be the chaplain of Antioch, after the former's release from captivity and subsequent pilgrimage to France. Ralph was a priest in Caen, who had studied under Arnulf of Chocques, a future patriarch of Jerusalem. Ralph accompanied Bohemond during his ill-fated crusade against the Byzantines (1107 – 1108). Some time after Bohemond's defeat and prior to his death in 1111, Ralph left his service and traveled to Antioch. Here he served under Tancred in some religious capacity. Ralph did not begin writing the *Tancredi* until after Tancred's passing in 1112. Ralph did not rely on other sources to write his work, as he had collected eyewitness accounts from Bohemond, Tancred, and their subordinates who survived the expedition. Ralph sought to emulate classical historians through his methods. Besides his reliance on oral histories, he also postponed writing his chronicle until the demise of his two patrons, in order to avoid charges of bias.⁹

Rounding out the group is Albert of Aachen's history, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, which focused on Godfrey de Boullion and depicts the events from the point of view of the Germanic contingent. Like Ralph, Albert did not

⁸ Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem 1095– 1127*, trans. Frances Rita Ryan, ed.
Harold Fink, (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1969), 3– 18, editor's introduction.
Baldwin was the brother of Godfrey d'Boullion.

⁹ *Gesta Tancredi*, 1– 15, translator's introduction.

travel with the crusading armies, but relied on eyewitness accounts from returning crusaders. As to his identity, he may have been a clergyman in Aix-la-Chapelle, who wrote his account sometime between 1120 and 1150. His work includes material not found in other accounts and may be based on sources that are now lost.¹⁰

These five accounts were specifically selected for analysis as they all meet the set of criteria established in course of this research. First, these chronicles are either accounts written by participants in the crusade or those who had direct contact with the survivors of the journey. The accounts of Peter Tudebode, Guibert of Nogent, and Robert the Monk do not meet this criterion. They are used sparingly in this writing since they are compilations that rely heavily on the *Gesta Francorum* and other written sources instead of eyewitnesses. Second, the selected accounts are all written relatively close to the events of the First Crusade. Third, the accounts are largely independent of each other, providing different interpretations of the events. Each author provided his own opinion toward most of the prominent crusaders, giving modern readers some insight into the interpersonal dynamics of the small group of leaders, as well as demonstrating how well the knights met the expectations of piety set by Urban. However, they do share common themes of justification of the cause, the righteousness of the crusaders, and some overlap in the coverage of the events. It is to these sources that we will now turn to in order to better understand the interpersonal dynamics and piety of the crusading princes.

¹⁰ *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants*, edited by August. C. Krey. Princeton: 1921, 12– 13, editor's introduction.

Most instructive in this regard are the criticisms the chroniclers leveled at the prominent crusaders. When a crusader's actions failed to live up to Urban's standard the medieval historians pointed it out, but their disapproval could also be attributed to their allegiance to a particular crusade leader. In order to determine whether the critique is discussing a failing of piety or bias one must look at the cross section of the accounts for a particular event. If the majority of the authors disapproved of a particular action, it could mean that a crusader's piety failed to meet the contemporary standard, but if the criticism is limited to a single author or two, then bias may be the source. However, even if the criticism is unfair, it indicates, in the negative, contemporary expectations.

Examining the histories as the events unfolded demonstrates the common themes in the accounts and the opportunity to look at the criticisms of the chroniclers in their proper context. Beginning with the crusaders taking the vow and joining the crusade, there is a variance in emphasis among the accounts. Albert's account of the start of Godfrey's journey, for example, is very brief. It does not begin with the taking of a vow, but in the middle, during Godfrey's investigation of the attacks on the "People's Crusade" in Hungary.¹¹ However the bulk of the other accounts follow the armies from their departure.

Fulcher's initial focus was on Duke Robert of Normandy's taking of the cross. Robert was not directly related to the Hautevilles, but was one of the sons of William the Conqueror.¹² Fulcher omits the conditions surrounding the duke's

¹¹ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana (History of the Journey to Jerusalem)*, ed. and trans. by Susan B. Edgington, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 62–63.

¹² For a short history of the conquest of England, see David Howarth, *1066: The Year of Conquest*, (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1993).

departure which present evidence of the Norman's piety. Like Bohemond, Robert had his share of familial infighting. By 1096, William Rufus, the elder son of the Conqueror, ruled England, while Robert retained the duchy of Normandy. Both Rufus and Robert's younger brother, Henry, were in a protracted struggle with Robert over the possession of Normandy, a contest that Robert was slowly losing.¹³ Pope Urban II intervened in Robert's case in part to recruit the Norman duke to join the expedition to the East. Under the pontiff's authority the local clergy negotiated a settlement. It provided an end to the hostilities and the necessary funds for Robert to join the armed pilgrimage. His precarious hold over the duchy meant that leaving for crusade essentially resulted in ceding his holdings to his brother, William Rufus, despite the papal pronouncements to the contrary. Although Robert's actions were in part to extricate himself from a precarious situation at home, it did not preclude the motive of piety. Ralph of Caen praised Robert's devotion: "His piety and his generosity were certainly marvelous. But because he was moderate in neither, he erred in all other aspects of life."¹⁴ The beleaguered duke was accompanied by a mixed retinue of Norman knights and clergy as well as men from other parts of Europe.¹⁵

Fulcher reports that Robert and Stephen of Blois met Urban near Lucca prior to leaving Italy for the East, to take the vow of pilgrimage in person and to receive the pope's blessing. The duke and his contingent then traveled to Rome to pray at Saint Peter's where they were attacked by men allied with the anti-pope,

¹³ Charles Wendell David, *Robert Curthose: Duke of Normandy*, (London: Harvard University Press, 1920), 90–95.

¹⁴ *Gesta Tancredi*, 37.

¹⁵ David, 90–95. For a list of Robert's army, see David, Appendix D, 220–229.

Clement III. From there they wintered at Norman controlled Calabria to wait until spring to cross the sea.¹⁶ However, not everyone who started the journey with Robert made it that far. At Rome and Calabria, a number of Robert's soldiers gave up and went home. Fulcher, like the other chroniclers took a dim view of deserters: "At that time many of the common people...sold their weapons and again took up their pilgrims' staves, and returned home as cowards. For this reason they were regarded as despicable by God as well as by mankind..."¹⁷ Clearly desertions were seen not only as a failure to meet military commitments but as a failure to keep the vow of pilgrimage as well. Fulcher recounts the earliest incidents of desertions, where the other accounts do not mention the issue until the siege of Antioch. Desertion of a secular battle to join the expedition was acceptable, however, as seen in the *Gesta Francorum*.

The author of the *Gesta Francorum* recounted how Bohemond took up the cause. At the time Bohemond, along with his uncle and stepbrother, had the town of Amalfi under siege. The town had rebelled against Bohemond's uncle Roger. A large number of Frankish crusaders passed through the area, which got his attention. After inquiring to the cause and the direction the crusaders were headed, Bohemond, "inspired by the Holy Ghost" abandoned the siege and joined the cause.¹⁸ So many Norman soldiers joined Bohemond that the siege was called off due to a lack of troops. He demonstrated his commitment by cutting up "his most

¹⁶ Fulcher, 74– 76. Wibert was invested as Pope Clement III by Henry IV in 1084 when Henry ousted Gregory VII. *The First Crusade: The Chronicles of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials*, 2nd ed., ed. Edward Peters, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press, 1998), editor's footnote 1, 55.

¹⁷ Fulcher, 75– 77.

¹⁸ *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum (The Deeds of the Franks and the other Pilgrims to Jerusalem)*, trans. and ed. Rosalind Hill. (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1962), 7.

valuable” cloak into crosses, which he distributed to his followers.¹⁹ He then returned to Bari where he liquidated a significant portion of his assets, as demonstrated by the charter written in August 1096.²⁰ Bohemond recruited his nephew Tancred to accompany him on the journey to the East soon after, as there was some semblance of safety in numbers. According to the *Gesta Tancredi*, the junior Norman accepted, although he was already making plans to go, at his own expense.²¹ For Tancred, the promise of absolution provided the motivation to take up the cause. Ralph de Caen wrote of Tancred’s decision:

It seemed that his military life contradicted the Lord’s command. ...But a secular military life did not even permit the sparing of a relative’s blood. ...But when Pope Urban’s decision granted a remission of all sins to all of the Christians setting forth to fight against the pagans, then finally it was as if the vitality of the previously sleeping man was revived, his powers were roused, his eyes were opened and his boldness set in motion....his soul was at a crossroads. Which of the two paths should he follow: the Gospels or the world? His experience in arms recalled him to the service of Christ.²²

The *Gesta Tancredi* and the *Gesta Francorum* focus more on the initial religious motivation of their protagonists than some of the other accounts. With the exception of the *Gesta Tancredi* and the *Gesta Francorum*, the accounts do not include any interaction between the crusading leaders at this point. Fulcher mentions the prominent leaders of the crusade in the first book of his chronicle, but spends little time in his description of each. However, his portrayal of the leaders is generally positive.²³ At this point in the narratives there is no criticism

¹⁹ *Gesta Francorum*, 7.

²⁰ *Codice Diplomatico Barese*, vol 5 ed. Francesco Nitti di Vito, (Bari, Italy: *Commissione Provinciale di Archeologia e Storia Patria*, 1902), 41–42.

²¹ *Gesta Tancredi*, 22–24.

²² *Gesta Tancredi*, 22.

²³ Fulcher, 71–74.

of the leaders of the crusading armies, signifying a general theme of unity and support in the accounts. Besides the condemnation of the early deserters, the next major point of criticism is about the oaths the crusade leaders took at Constantinople.

Part of the criticism directed at the prominent crusaders at this juncture was due to the low opinion of the Byzantine emperor Alexius held among the different authors of the accounts. They blamed him for the slaughter of the mass of people from the west who participated in the People's crusade. This group, which was more of a mob than an army, arrived at the Byzantine capital first. Alexius, fearing that they would ravage his lands, quickly shuttled them across the Bosphorus and asked their leader, Peter the Hermit to have them wait there until the other armies arrived, which they did not do. The mob quickly passed into enemy territory and was massacred.²⁴ Some of the accounts place the blame on Alexius. He was at fault for not protecting the pilgrims and this negatively impacted their initial opinion of him. The chroniclers also took issue with his treatment of the crusade leaders.

Alexius' initial treatment of the crusade leaders did not inspire loyalty as he treated the crusading princes more as vassals than would-be rescuers. The crusade leaders were flattered, bribed, or coerced to take an oath to the Emperor. Alexius would not allow them to pass deeper into his realm to continue their mission without one. As the various contingents arrived and encamped outside the walls of Constantinople, their leaders met with and negotiated separate oaths with

²⁴ *Gesta Francorum*, 2– 5; Raymond D'Aguilers, 27.

Alexius as they arrived, a process that lasted nearly six months.²⁵ The general framework of these oaths included a vow to return all conquered lands to Byzantium, and pay homage to the emperor, making the crusade leaders who took it, his vassal. According to the accounts, Godfrey, Baldwin, Stephen of Blois, and Robert of Normandy took an oath that included this language and the negotiations were uneventful. In exchange, they received a large amount of treasure from the Emperor and a promise of military support.²⁶ The exceptions were Bohemond, Tancred, and Raymond of Toulouse who demanded different terms.²⁷

Unlike the rest of the crusade leaders Bohemond had a history with Alexius. Bohemond had fought under his father's command against the Byzantines only a decade earlier, and had some military successes ousting Greek forces from the Italian peninsula.²⁸ Neither trusted the other and Alexius, concerned about Bohemond's presence, sweetened the deal. Two sources claim that a grant of land in exchange for Bohemond's oath was the offer. The *Gesta Francorum* states that Antioch was payment for service from the Emperor to the Norman lord. The *Gesta Tancredi* mentions the promise of a gift of land from Alexius to Bohemond, but it does not state the location. However, both sources use the same measurement – the time it would take to cross the length and breadth of the land: fifteen days long and eight days wide.²⁹ While the other primary sources do not substantiate this claim, the possibility remains that this may have

²⁵ From November 1096– April 1097. *The First Crusade: Fulcher and Other Sources*, editor's footnote 1, 62.

²⁶ *Gesta Tancredi*, 30– 39.

²⁷ *Gesta Tancredi*, 30– 39. Raymond D'Aguilers, 23– 24.

²⁸ Bohemond's father Robert Guiscard attacked the Byzantine Empire directly after taking its possessions on the Italian peninsula. He started with Avlona, on the coast of Albania in 1081. Yewdale notes the Guiscard acted with the approval of the Pope. Yewdale, 9– 24.

²⁹ *Gesta Francorum*, 12; *Gesta Tancredi*, 32.

been part of the agreement between them. Bohemond also assisted in getting Tancred and Raymond to come to terms with the Emperor.

Tancred's biographer noted that the younger Norman wanted nothing to do with Alexius, and attempted to slip past Constantinople, only to be foiled by Bohemond. The emperor demanded Bohemond make good on his oath of loyalty, and forced him to recall Tancred. He returned and angrily took the same oath as the rest of the leaders.³⁰ The other exception was Raymond. While negotiating with Alexius, his contingent had been attacked by the Emperor's forces, with casualties. Consequently, Raymond refused to take the same oath as the rest and considered revenge against the Byzantines. The other leaders counseled him against it. Bohemond swore to defend Alexius in case Raymond chose to avenge his soldiers instead of coming to a peaceful solution. In the end, Raymond reluctantly swore not to attack the Emperor.³¹ Fulcher defended the crusaders' pledging to Alexius stating that they were out of necessity, and the gifts received would be useful for purchasing goods for resupply for the journey.³² Other sources disagree, opining that the crusaders gave in too easily to Alexius or gave in to greed. Ralph's commentary was one of the most critical, saying that "the leaders of the Franks had been corrupted by gifts and that Bohemond has similarly been ensnared..."³³ Eventually all the crusade leaders broke their oaths to Alexius either expressly or through their actions on the crusade. Despite the

³⁰ *Gesta Tancredi*, 35–36.

³¹ *Gesta Tancredi*, 30–39. Raymond D'Aguilers, 23–24. *Gesta Francorum*, 13; *Gesta Tancredi*, 32.

³² Fulcher, 79–80.

³³ Ralph, 32. Other criticisms: Raymond D'Aguilers, 23–24; *Gesta Francorum*, 12.

contention surrounding the vows made to the Byzantines, they and the crusaders were initially a united force, as demonstrated by the siege of Nicaea.

The crusaders acted as the vanguard for the siege, with Byzantines acting in a supporting role. After a relatively short siege by the crusaders, the defenders of the town surrendered to Byzantine forces.³⁴ They quickly took control of the city but let the Muslim soldiers go, thinking they could do no more harm. Again the chroniclers take the Byzantines to task. The accounts comment on the foolishness of this action.³⁵ It was these forces released from Nicaea that caused problems for the crusaders later on. Albert's account emphasized this point. Other authors were no exception. Raymond's own chronicler describes how the general attitude toward Alexius had worsened with their early victory at Nicaea:

Alexius had pledged to the princes and Frankish people that he would hand over to them all of the gold, silver... which were in Nicaea;...But once in possession of Nicaea, Alexius acted as such an ingrate to the army that as he might live people would ever revile him and call him traitor.³⁶

Again, the accounts do not criticize the armies as they were acting in line with the expectations set by Urban. However, their condemnation of the Byzantines demonstrates that the Greeks did not do the same. This pattern continued as the main force split into two and headed toward Antioch.³⁷

During the course of this part of the journey Baldwin, (Godfrey's brother) and Tancred split off from the main contingents and captured the towns of Tarsus,

³⁴ Raymond D'Aguilers, 25– 27. The siege was about five weeks, short compared to the nine months at Antioch.

³⁵ *Gesta Francorum*, 17.

³⁶ Raymond D'Aguilers, 26– 27.

³⁷ The forces were divided up in order to have a better chance to forage for supplies. Albert, 141.

Mamistra, Edessa and Artah.³⁸ These towns contained native Armenian Christians who lived under Turkish rule. Seizing these areas and placing them under crusader authority provided a strategic advantage. First, they had a friendly populace, once freed, that would resist the Turks. Second, it ensured that the rear of the crusader's army would not be exposed to the enemy. However, there is some question as to whether personal gain was the true motive.³⁹ With the exception of Artah, Tancred and Baldwin captured the rest of the towns independently of each other. Baldwin then proceeded to forge an alliance with the Armenian leader of Adana, and then forced Tancred to hand over Tarsus. Tancred's biographer related that the Norman chose to do this instead of fighting a co-religionist.⁴⁰ However, prior to their joint attack on Artah, their parties came to blows, leading to an unsatisfactory settlement between the two.⁴¹ Baldwin consolidated his holdings into the principality of Edessa. Tancred, unable to retain his holdings, continued on the march. The chroniclers depict their mutual enmity during their short campaign, but do not criticize it. The knights' saving grace, it appears, was that they resisted internecine violence as long as they could, and then when they could not, the fighting was brief and amounted to a large brawl. Baldwin and Tancred quickly made amends, realizing the mistake of fighting with an ally. Their conquests were not criticized in the accounts, but seen as an acceptable part of the crusade mission, which leads to the conclusion that their

³⁸ *Gesta Tancredi*, 56–73.

³⁹ Thomas S. Asbridge, *The Creation of the Principality of Antioch*, (Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 2000), 15–16. The two Crusaders may also have been acting as agents of their kin, Bohemond and Godfrey, respectively.

⁴⁰ *Gesta Tancredi*, 61.

⁴¹ *Gesta Tancredi*, 68–70. Albert and Ralph agree that Tancred initiated the skirmish, prodded on by his kinsman, Richard of Salerno. Albert, 151.

actions were beneficial to the main crusader army. Baldwin did not go on to Antioch with Tancred, but returned to Edessa. This move made strategic sense, since Byzantine forces were lagging far behind the crusader armies, and someone had to protect gains on the ground.⁴²

Meanwhile, the rest of the crusaders endured the rigors of a nine month siege of Antioch.⁴³ The battle for the city was a turning point for the crusaders. The conditions of the siege took its toll on the crusade leaders and their armies. Lack of supplies and nearly constant attacks by Turkish forces resulted in a high rate of mortality. Starvation was commonplace, as any foodstuffs to be had were too expensive to purchase.⁴⁴ The author of the *Tancredi* criticized profiteering by Provençals under the dire circumstances.⁴⁵ Morale was at an all time low, and with the news that a massive army of Turks was on the way to help Antioch's defenders, desertions of high ranking crusaders began.

The chroniclers named the most prominent deserters whom they scorned in their histories. Of particular note was Peter the Hermit, the surviving leader of the Peasants' Crusade, who fled with a Frankish knight, William the Carpenter. Tancred caught the deserters and brought them to Bohemond. He admonished the two, reminding William that this was not the first time he had deserted. Peter stayed for the remainder of the siege, but when the opportunity arose, William left for the second and last time, "greatly ashamed."⁴⁶ Stephen of Blois, from the

⁴² Fulcher, 129.

⁴³ October 1097– June 1098.

⁴⁴ Fulcher, 92– 99; Albert, 217; *Gesta Francorum*, 33; *Gesta Tancredi*, 79– 86.

⁴⁵ *Gesta Tancredi*, 86– 87.

⁴⁶ *Gesta Francorum*, 33– 34; *Gesta Tancredi*, 86. William had deserted from an expedition in Muslim controlled Spain, footnote, *Gesta Francorum*, 33.

Norman army, was another prominent deserter. He was part of Robert of Normandy's contingent, and up until Antioch had fought honorably. At this point he believed that all was lost and escaped.⁴⁷ The aforementioned Robert left the siege as well and wintered at Latakia, which was held by English soldiers loyal to Alexius. Unlike Stephen, Robert reluctantly returned to the siege and continued the journey.⁴⁸ Tacitus, the leader of the small contingent of Greeks that accompanied the crusaders this far, also left the siege. Raymond D'Aguilers said that the Greek leader, "...left with God's curse; by this dastardly act, he brought eternal shame to himself and his men."⁴⁹ In order to prevent further flight, Bohemond and the rest of the crusade leaders made a pact not to desert, after which Bohemond disclosed his plan to capture Antioch to the other leaders.

Over the period of the siege Bohemond had come into contact with one of Antioch's inhabitants and convinced him to give the crusaders a way in to the city. The other crusade leaders, with the exception of Raymond, agreed to give control of Antioch to Bohemond, if his strategy was successful and if Alexius failed to support them.⁵⁰ Bohemond's negotiation for Antioch is the main support of the argument that his primary motivation for crusade was materialistic and had nothing to do with religion. If the materialist argument was accurate, then the primary accounts should portray Bohemond's dealings negatively. However,

⁴⁷ Raymond D'Aguilers, 59; *Gesta Francorum*. 63– 64; Albert, 310– 311; Fulcher 74. Fulcher notes Stephen's desertion. Ironically, Antioch fell to the Crusaders on the following day. For more on Stephen, see J.A. Brundage, "An Errant Crusader; Stephen of Blois", *Traditio*, Vol. 16, 1960, 380– 394.

⁴⁸ *Gesta Tancredi*, 84.

⁴⁹ Raymond D'Aguilers, 37.

⁵⁰ Raymond D'Aguilers, 37; Albert, 269– 274; *Gesta Tancredi*, 88. In some of the accounts, the betrayer of Antioch was an Armenian Christian who wanted to remove the Muslim Turks from power; in others he is Muslim who is converted after the invasion to Christianity.

with the exception of Raymond D'Aguilers, the chroniclers did not. The rest mention his offer dispassionately and without judgment.⁵¹ Raymond D'Aguilers' commentary is biased in this case, as his patron Raymond of Toulouse competed with Bohemond for control of Antioch. The other accounts support this view. According to Ralph, Raymond of Toulouse had designs to eliminate Bohemond and take Antioch for himself.⁵² Albert notes that Raymond of Toulouse was the only other crusader to put part of Antioch under his direct control, with the rest wanting no part of the controversy between the Norman and the Provençal. Albert states that the rest of the crusade leaders did not want to violate their oath to Alexius, but does not categorize Bohemond's or Raymond's efforts as impious or adverse to the crusade mission.⁵³ Even Raymond D'Aguilers does not characterize Bohemond's actions as impious, only ambitious, demonstrating that conquest and piety were not incompatible.

After the victory over Kerghboa, the question of what to do with Antioch remained.⁵⁴ Turning it over to the Byzantines as the crusaders had done with Nicaea was unlikely, since during the long siege, Byzantine support was lacking. As Ralph of Caen mentions in the *Gesta Tancredi*, the nearby town of Latakia was under Greek control and well stocked with supplies, yet none came to

⁵¹ Fulcher does not mention the negotiation directly, only that Bohemond held the traitor's son as a hostage, 99. Albert, 271–273.

⁵² Bishop Ademar's vicar, Arnulf, discovered the plot and warned Bohemond, *Gesta Tancredi*, 121.

⁵³ Albert, 341.

⁵⁴ Kerghboa was the military commander of Mosul and led a massive force to retake Antioch from the Crusaders. Translator's footnote 5 in Albert, 249. For descriptions of the battle see: Fulcher, 105–107; *Gesta Francorum*, 63–71; Albert, 317–337; Raymond D'Aguilers, 59–64; *Gesta Tancredi*, 105–114.

Antioch.⁵⁵ Tacitus, appointed by the emperor to accompany the crusaders, had deserted. By this point, the general consensus was that Alexius had abandoned them, and the Byzantines could not be trusted to adequately guard what the crusaders liberated. The crusade leaders sent a delegation to the Emperor to request that he come and take control of the newly won lands, but he failed to do so, according to crusader accounts at any rate.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, Raymond disagreed with the rest of crusade leaders and took issue with Bohemond's plan to retain Antioch, citing the oath they had made to the Emperor.⁵⁷ Despite all the protests made in the name of Alexius, Raymond made a "peace of discord" with Bohemond and together they invaded the interior of Syria, taking the towns of Albara and Marra. Raymond held these territories and did not surrender them to Greek forces, implicitly disregarding his oath to Alexius.⁵⁸

Still, emotions ran high over who would control Antioch. Since Raymond still held Antioch's citadel, his opinion could not simply be dismissed as he used his control as leverage. Raymond planned to hold on to the citadel until Bohemond acquiesced to Raymond's terms, a tactic the Provençal would later attempt in Jerusalem.⁵⁹ Instead, Norman soldiers forcibly ejected Raymond's men.⁶⁰ Emissaries of Alexius arrived at Antioch in the spring of 1099, months after the crusader's victory there. They complained about Bohemond's oath breaking and offered payment to the crusaders for their efforts, if they would only

⁵⁵ *Gesta Tancredi*, 84.

⁵⁶ Albert, 341–342. Of the two knights who traveled back to Constantinople, only Hugh the Great, brother to the king of France, survived the journey; *Gesta Francorum*, 72;

⁵⁷ Raymond D'Aguilers, 75.

⁵⁸ Raymond D'Aguilers, 74–105; Albert, 369–371, 375–377; Fulcher 112–115.

⁵⁹ *Gesta Francorum*, 80.

⁶⁰ Fulcher, 113.

wait a bit longer for Alexius to show up. By this time it was already too late. Bohemond was entrenched and the rest of the crusader armies were ready to move on, spurred in part by the demands of the pilgrims who accompanied them.⁶¹

If the Norman lord had been the only one to make land the crusaders seized into a principality, the caricature of Bohemond as an impious materialist would hold more weight. But as related earlier, Baldwin and Tancred had already begun taking towns and lands and putting them under their dominion. In addition, Bohemond's decision to stay in Antioch as the other crusader armies moved on was not necessarily a sign of disinterest in completing his pilgrimage. Leaving behind a garrisoned town made strategic sense. Someone had to protect the newly liberated lands so they did not simply slip back into the hands of their enemies, a point frequently ignored by some contemporary and modern critics.⁶² Surrounding territories were also captured on the march by other crusade leaders. Nearly all of them held territories for some length of time prior to the attack on Jerusalem; only Baldwin and Bohemond stayed behind to guard the crusaders' territorial gains.⁶³ The primary accounts mention that the two crusaders did not continue the march, but do not criticize their decision.⁶⁴ Fulcher expressly

⁶¹ Raymond D'Aguilers, 105. See Randall Rogers, "Peter Bartholomew and the Role of 'The Poor' in the First Crusade", in *Warriors and Churchmen in the High Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Karl Leyser*, ed. Timothy Reuter, 109–122 (London: Hambledon, 1992), for more information.

⁶² Jonathan Riley-Smith, "The Motives of the Earliest Crusaders and the Settlement of Latin Palestine, 1095–1100", *The English Historical Review*, 98, 389 (Oct. 1983): 733. Riley-Smith supports the action of Bohemond as a strategic move, but moralizes that the Norman crusader was wrong in keeping Antioch for himself, stating, "he was wrong to deny the Greek emperor authority over his principality." Oddly, he does not make the same distinction of Godfrey's dominion of Jerusalem.

⁶³ See Asbridge, *Antioch*, 27–32 for a detailed summary of the Crusaders and their holdings.

⁶⁴ Fulcher, 113; Albert, 381; *Gesta Francorum*, 81.

approved of this strategy.⁶⁵ Control of conquered cities and lands did not cause as much dispute again until the crusaders' victory at Jerusalem. The events of the siege of Jerusalem in many aspects mirrored the capture of Antioch.

Like Antioch, the crusaders' strategy was to lay siege to the city and then invade. Unlike Antioch, this process took very little time. Within less than two months (June – July 1099) the crusaders had besieged the city and invaded. By July 15, the city was under their control. The crusaders then sacked the city, which was necessary to resupply them. In order to prevent internecine conflict, the crusade leaders set a guideline. If a knight was the first to enter a house, whatever was inside belonged to him alone, without further dispute. The chroniclers did not criticize these actions, but recorded the strife in regard to incidents involving Tancred and Raymond.⁶⁶

Tancred's transgression was the sacking of the temple of Solomon, which by that time had been converted into a mosque. Albert condemns his actions, but holds Godfrey, who received part of the wealth, blameless. Fulcher's account mentions the incident, but explains that Tancred made reparations for what he took. Unlike Albert, Fulcher took the view that the temple had already been defiled by the Turks and Tancred's actions were not out of line with the rest. Ralph states that it was the aforementioned Arnulf who caused the discord. In the *Gesta Tancredi* it is Arnulf who wanted the spoils from the temple for himself, angry that Tancred beat him to it. The priest appealed to the other crusade leaders to punish the Norman for the offense. They required Tancred to give back part of

⁶⁵ Fulcher, 128– 129.

⁶⁶ Fulcher 119– 112; Albert, 429– 433; Raymond D'Aguilers 124– 128.

what he seized to the temple, which Arnulf now controlled. Since Fulcher and Ralph were both present, their recollections are arguably more accurate.⁶⁷ Albert continues with a criticism of Raymond's attempt to impair Godfrey's rule of Jerusalem.

The crusaders selected Godfrey to rule Jerusalem prior to the counterattack by the Egyptian army, citing his piety as the reason.⁶⁸ This was not an honorary role: Godfrey ruled the city and the surrounding region until his death the following year. His brother Baldwin later inherited the crown and the territory that came with it, demonstrating that the crusaders had no intention of returning it to the Byzantines.⁶⁹ Raymond, although first offered the position, refused it. It appears he chose instead to frustrate Godfrey's position as ruler of Jerusalem. Raymond employed a similar strategy to the one followed at Antioch. He held a strategic part of the city, the Tower of David, which he refused to give up. Eventually Godfrey and the other leaders of the crusader armies forced him to acquiesce.⁷⁰ Nearly six weeks later, as an Egyptian army approached to retake Jerusalem, crusade forces assembled at the fields near Ascalon, a Muslim garrison town. According to Albert, Raymond was still angry over the loss of the tower and caused trouble for Godfrey. At first Raymond refused to come to Ascalon. Again the other crusade leaders coerced him with threats until he joined the fight. After the battle, the remnants of the Egyptian army retreated to Ascalon, which the crusaders besieged. Here Albert makes the claim that Raymond encouraged

⁶⁷ Fulcher, 122; Albert, 433–436; *Gesta Tancredi*, 149–154.

⁶⁸ Albert, 445–447.

⁶⁹ Riley-Smith, "Motives", 726, 735–736.

⁷⁰ Albert, 439, 445–447. Albert claims that Raymond D'Aguilers let the Muslims soldiers who held the tower go in exchange for a bribe; *Gesta Francorum*, 92–93.

the Muslim soldiers at Ascalon not to surrender, and persuaded the other crusade leaders (except Godfrey) to give up the siege. Godfrey left Ascalon since he was without reinforcements. On the return journey, he and Raymond nearly came to blows until assuaged by the other leaders. While the *Gesta Francorum* and Raymond D'Aguilers agree that Raymond of Toulouse was still angry about the loss of the tower, they do not corroborate the events at Ascalon. Raymond D'Aguilers explains the cause of the stalemate at Ascalon differently. He states that many crusaders had already started to leave for home, creating a manpower shortage. With the destruction of the Egyptian army and Jerusalem secure, the expedition was at an end.⁷¹

Shortly thereafter the mass exodus of crusaders continued, late into August of 1099. Godfrey and the majority of the crusade leaders stayed to protect what they had returned to Christian rule. Tancred stayed as a vassal of Godfrey and later took control of Antioch.⁷² Robert of Normandy was among the notable exceptions. He returned home, although he might have been better off had he stayed.⁷³ Raymond meandered back to Constantinople where he would later lead a new group of crusaders.⁷⁴ Although he did not accompany the main crusader army to the initial siege and capture of Jerusalem, Bohemond fulfilled his vow as promised. He and Baldwin of Boulogne completed their pilgrimage in December

⁷¹ Albert, 455– 473; Fulcher, 128; Raymond D'Aguilers 134– 135. The *Francorum* and the account of Raymond D'Aguilers finish here as well.

⁷² Albert 475– 477. Fulcher, 95– 96. Tancred ruled Antioch during his uncle's captivity, see below.

⁷³ David, 120– 137. During Robert's absence his eldest brother died, leaving the throne of England to Robert. However, Robert's younger brother Henry used the opportunity to seize the throne. Robert's attempts to unseat him failed, leaving Robert a vassal instead of a king.

⁷⁴ Fulcher, 128. See Tyerman, *God's War*, 170– 175 on the crusade of 1101.

of 1099.⁷⁵ This was no simple trip. Despite the crusaders' victory, hostile forces remained along the way between Jerusalem and the lands held by Baldwin and Bohemond. Their journey was perilous due to lack of supplies, bad weather, and ambushes.⁷⁶ Afterward, Bohemond remained in the East for a time at Antioch. He was not acting out of step with the most pious of the Frankish leaders, Godfrey. He stayed in the East and never returned to Europe. Fulcher makes the importance of this action clear in his account:

It was now necessary for the land and the cities taken from the Turks to be carefully guarded, because if everybody, in going to Jerusalem, abandoned the land, it, perchance, might be retaken in a surprise attack by the Turks... If this should happen, great harm would befall all the Franks, both those going and returning.⁷⁷

One example of the hostile conditions was the fate of Bohemond. Less than a year after the crusader's capture of Jerusalem, he met defeat. He accompanied Baldwin to the town of Melitine and raised the siege by Turkish forces. Overestimating his military might, he then pursued the Turks, who soon overwhelmed his army and captured the Norman crusader. From there he was taken to the Muslim emir of Danismand , and kept as a hostage.⁷⁸ Bohemond remained imprisoned for four years until a large ransom was paid.⁷⁹ After his release he visited Antioch, and traveled back to the West, in part for the sake of fulfilling a pilgrimage vow, he made during his captivity. Bohemond completed his pilgrimage and donated a relic as part of his veneration, a number of thorns attributed to the crown of thorns

⁷⁵ Yewdale, 89; Albert 497– 499; Fulcher 96.

⁷⁶ Fulcher, 128– 133.

⁷⁷ Riley-Smith, *Motives*, 723, 732– 733.

⁷⁸ *Gesta Tancredi*, 156– 157; Fulcher 134– 136.

⁷⁹ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy*, Vol. III, trans. Thomas Forester, (New York: AMS Press, 1968), 307– 322. Vitalis includes the “legend” of Bohemond's release, wherein he is assisted by Danismand's daughter and frees himself from captivity. His freedom most likely came at the price of 100,000 gold coins: Yewdale, 96– 97.

from Christ's crucifixion.⁸⁰ Bohemond's reaction to his capture and release highlighted that he, like the other Norman crusaders, lived within the same framework of religiosity as the rest of the Western knights. When he was freed, his first reaction was to give thanks to the saint he believed aided him, another example that Bohemond was as conventionally pious as the rest of the crusaders. The pattern of behavior by the Frankish crusade leaders indicates that religious devotion and ambition were not mutually exclusive. The reactions of the chroniclers to the actions of Bohemond and Tancred demonstrate their deeds were not out of line with conventional piety within the crusader community. The criticism of the crusaders in the first hand accounts consists of condemnation of deserters and those perceived as slowing the momentum of the expedition. Staying in the East and defending the re-Christianized lands against the continued Muslim threat was also considered an ongoing demonstration of piety. Those who remained as defenders of these territories were continuing to sacrifice themselves through their service.

⁸⁰ William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, Vol. I, trans. Emily Atwater Babcock and A.C. Krey, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), 451). Saint Leonard was the patron saint of captives. Yewdale, 102–106.

Conclusion

The evidence presented demonstrates that the caricature of the Normans as the impious villains in the First Crusade is a misrepresentation. They were not the secular opportunists portrayed in the *Alexiad*. However, revisionist crusade historians continue to perpetuate this traditional view of the Normans. While the Frankish crusaders have been “rehabilitated” as acting out of piety, Norman crusaders remain as the spoilers. Without exception, modern historians of the Normans also have failed to challenge this perception. However, the examination of Norman activities prior to the crusade paints a different picture.

The prominent Normans of the armed pilgrimage to the East came from families with strong connections to the papacy and ecclesiastical institutions. They were donors, vassals, and defenders of the Church. Bohemond and Tancred descended from the Italian Hauteville line, which had strong ties to the papacy. Bohemond’s father, Robert Guiscard, was a vassal of the Pope and defended him on numerous occasions. Guiscard made many donations to monasteries and churches within his domain as demonstrations of his piety. Bohemond as well donated to religious houses prior to the crusade, and personally knew Pope Urban II, the architect of the expedition. The Normans joined the crusade mission under circumstances similar to those of other knights and respected the standards set for the armed pilgrimage by the pontiff.

Urban’s requirements and expectations included taking the vow, completion of the pilgrimage, and the potential for martyrdom in exchange for

absolution. The chroniclers who participated in the crusade reflected the Pope's expectations in their writings. In particular they noted when crusaders failed to meet them as in the case of deserters. Other criticisms included the disputes between the crusade leaders, which the chroniclers believed delayed the mission.

Even so, the piety of the prominent crusaders, both Norman and Frank, did not come into question. Bohemond's seizure of Antioch was not portrayed as impious act, but a necessary one. He was not alone, as most of the prominent and pious Frankish leaders held territories and created their own domains. They did this out of a mix of piety and ambition, which were not incompatible. The crusade leaders believed that the Byzantines were incapable of defending what they had captured and did not want to see what they had sacrificed so much for slip out of Christian hands. The eyewitness accounts which reflected Urban's standards for crusaders, approved this action. Bohemond, and the other Norman crusaders, exemplified a complex and sometimes conflicting mix of pious and secular motivations, just like their Frankish counterparts. They met the criterion for crusaders set by Urban II and fulfilled their vow, exposing the falsehood of their portrayal as impious opportunists.

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