Jihad and Jihadn’t: Emerging Parallels in Twelfth Century Holy War Propaganda

By Philip Layfield

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Introduction
Few events have shaped Western conceptions of the Middle East as deeply as the Crusades. The image of hundreds of thousands of Christians on a bloody journey to bring the holy land under their control is one that is still invoked today when considering the role of the West in the politics of the Arabian Peninsula. The conflicts of both the late eleventh-thirteenth centuries and the modern era in the Levant are often characterized as clashes of civilization, with two opposite ideologies struggling against one another for the supremacy of their associated culture and religion. Yet examining the records of the era of the crusades left to us by each side paints something of a different picture. The ideologies of crusade and jihad appear astoundingly similar: two conceptions of holy war so inevitably opposed because they both place deep importance on the same holy sites, to be protected from defilement by foreign religion in the same way.

These parallels are all the more surprising given the differences in the development of holy war ideologies between Christianity and Islam. The Islamic framework of jihad was effectively first pursued during the life of the Prophet Muhammad, used to defend the fledgling Muslim community at Medina. It was codified shortly after his death in 632 and invoked in the conquest of the vast Islamic Empire under the authority of the first Caliphs as a divine mission to spread Muhammad’s revelations to all corners of the earth. The term crusade, however, was not even coined until the thirteenth century, long after the first bloody seizure of Jerusalem by militant European pilgrims and over a thousand years after intense debate first began over whether warfare could have any place in Christianity at all.
This thesis will argue that crusade and jihad as holy war developed independently, beginning with different philosophies and developed at different times by different individuals who had very little contact with or understanding of each other. It will then assert that the twelfth century, in which crusade first came to be and jihad resumed in response after a long period of inactivity, represented a period of astounding convergence in holy war ideologies. This convergence can be clearly demonstrated through side-by-side analysis of the propagandistic chronicles of the period, which share remarkable cross-religious parallels in their descriptions of justifications, goals, desirable and undesirable characteristics, and the intervention of God in holy war. The independent convergence of the language used to popularize these two ideologies raises the question: how is it possible for people halfway around the world from one another, with little mutual awareness and no cultural collaboration, to simultaneously profess the same ideas?

1. Origins of Holy War

In the centuries before the period of convergence when crusade\(^1\) first faced jihad, Christianity and Islam took very different paths in developing holy war ideologies. Although Islam was founded six hundred years after Christianity, jihad predates crusade by nearly five hundred years. While defensive struggle was an established part of Islam from the very beginning, with the Prophet Muhammad himself a successful warrior against enemies of the faith, the doctrines of the early

\(^1\) Although the term “crusade” was not yet in use at the time of the chronicles to be examined, it will be used in this paper to refer the Christian holy war ideology that would later come under that name for ease of reference.
church forbade violence even in self-defense. Soldiers were sinners and nonviolent martyrs were heroes. In short, as far as holy war before the twelfth century was concerned, Islam jihad, while Christianity jihadn’t. Yet over a thousand years Christian thought underwent a dramatic transformation in perceptions of warriors and warfare as the ideas of “just war” and “soldiers of God” gradually emerged, culminating in the power of the Pope himself to call for and justify military campaigns. This process occurred independently from the continuing development of jihad, which had largely fallen out of favor in the Muslim world by the time of the Crusades. Its hasty revival in the face of an existential threat to Islam enabled a contest between two theories of holy war largely unaware of one another.

I. The Rise, Fall, and Revitalization of Jihad

The word “jihad”, from the root j-h-d (meaning “to struggle”), first appears in a religious context in the Quran. It is used alongside and sometimes interchangeably with the root q-t-l (meaning “to fight” or “to kill”) in describing God’s revelations to Muhammad as he fights to defend his new religious community at Medina.2 These commandments, known as the Sword Verses, urge that warfare “be conducted offensively against idolaters, polytheists, and infidels, [and] also defensively against those who fight against Muhammad, his followers, and right religion in general.”3 The most direct and famous of the commandments is to, “once the sacred months are shorn, kill the polytheists wherever you find them, arrest them, imprison them,

2 Mourad and Lindsay, Sunni Jihad Ideology, 17.
3 Mourad and Lindsay, Sunni Jihad Ideology, 22.
besiege them, and lie in wait for them at every site of ambush.”\textsuperscript{4} Another commands that Muslims “fight those who do not believe in God or the Last Day, who do not hold illicit what God and His Messenger hold illicit, and who do not follow the religion of truth... until they offer up the tribute, by hand, in humble mien.”\textsuperscript{5} The verses also indicate great heavenly rewards for those who fight for Islam or financially support the struggle: “The Messenger and the believers with him have waged jihad with their properties and persons. These – to them belong the finest rewards... God has readied for them Gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever. This is the greatest of triumphs.”\textsuperscript{6} Meanwhile, those who fail to support the struggle would suffer “both divine and worldly punishments and [be] denounced as hypocrites.”\textsuperscript{7}

Although there is debate among Islamic religious scholars today as to whether these verses were meant to be applicable to Muslim conduct in general or merely to Muhammad’s situation at the time, the Caliphs who led the Muslim community after the Prophet’s death favored the former theory. They “used Quranic verses and a host of hadiths,” sayings of the Prophet recorded by those who knew him as examples of good conduct for Muslims, “to form the basis for the ideology of jihad in the medieval Islamic world.”\textsuperscript{8} The next century saw the rapid growth of the Islamic Empire, spreading outward from the Arabian Peninsula until it stretched from Iran to Spain, under the theological justification of fighting “until all religion is devoted to God alone... so that the religion of truth would triumph over all [other]

\textsuperscript{4} Quran 9:5
\textsuperscript{5} Quran 9:29
\textsuperscript{6} Quran 9:88
\textsuperscript{7} Blankinship, \textit{End of the Jihad State}, 12.
\textsuperscript{8} Mourad and Lindsay, \textit{Sunni Jihad Ideology}, 22.
religion."\(^9\) However, it was not until after these great conquests that Muslim theologians began to codify and further explain the idea of obligation to jihad.

The first treatises on jihad were written by scholars who were themselves involved in waging jihad around the turn of the ninth century, mostly against the Byzantine Empire. They reconfirmed jihad as obligatory for all able-bodied Muslims in the same way that prayer and pilgrimage to Mecca were. They also divided the world into two categories: Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb.\(^{10}\) Dar al-Islam, meaning “the house of Islam,” referred to territories under Muslim rule, where Islam could be freely practiced. Dar al-Harb, “the house of war,” referred to territories under the control of foreign religions. Jihad against the latter was obligatory until all the governments of the world accepted Islam, though not necessarily all the people of the world; forced conversion was explicitly forbidden by the Quran, and thus “holy war was not to convert unbelievers but to turn them into tributaries” within the House of Islam.\(^{11}\) Due to the religious necessity of pursuing this goal, permanent peace between the two houses was considered impossible. Temporary truces were permitted, but only to help Islam recover from a position of disadvantage. As a result, jihad became a very demanding ideology, particularly since it explicitly could not be waged against other Muslims.\(^{12}\)

When the Islamic Empire fractured in the middle of the eighth century due to the Great Berber Revolt, the sort of sweeping jihad conquests that had first forged it became impossible. Many of the Muslim states that resulted from the empire's

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collapse were surrounded by rivals of the same faith, which were now of more immediate concern than any non-Muslim power. While individual Muslim polities continued to wage jihad against infidel states, these attacks were restricted to the fringes of the former Islamic Empire (Central Asia, Spain, and India) by the time Muslim scholars began writing their great treatises on jihad. Even in those areas, jihadi attacks were largely relegated to raids rather than expansion beyond the borders of the former Empire. The Arabian Peninsula was thus excluded from the waging of holy war for several centuries before the First Crusade; the Abbasid Caliphate that ruled the Islamic heartland at the time of the Islamic Empire’s breakup was caught up in local struggles against Muslim Turks in the north and the Shiite Fatimid Caliphate in the south, isolated from non-Muslims by both. As the power of the Caliph dwindled and the rulers of individual cities in the Levant increasingly jockeyed amongst themselves for regional influence, the Muslim community became more and more divided, to the point that it could not have waged an effective, unified jihad even if it had found a target to wage it upon. The mechanism of holy war continued to be a topic of deep interest to Muslim scholars, but increasingly in a legal sense rather than a religious one. “Manuals on jihad raised numerous legal and judicial issues that frequently imposed restrictions and established objections [regarding] the valid and invalid waging of jihad,” creating a dense body of Islamic law poorly understood by non-jurists and difficult to apply to actual battlefield situations.

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The shock of the First Crusade abruptly revived the concept of practical, military jihad in the Levant. While individual Muslim rulers, long occupied with battling each other, encountered the Franks\textsuperscript{16} “with various degrees of indifference, opportunism, complete rejection, and ineffectual religious outcries,” often bribing the crusaders to attack their rivals instead, the common people of the Holy Land were deeply traumatized by the sudden establishment of infidel rule in territories that had been under Muslim control for centuries.\textsuperscript{17} Refugees and religious scholars loudly criticized the selfishness, disunity, and inaction of Muslim leaders during the crusade, making increasingly loud appeals for them to unite and wage jihad to expel the invaders. Emblematic of this revival was the career of Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali ibn Tahir al-Sulami, author of the 1105 \textit{Book of Jihad}, who preached in Damascus in the years immediately following the crusade. Not a trained theologian but a scholar of grammar, he returned to an earlier (and thus less legalistic) form of jihad treatise written by jihadis to encourage others to join the struggle. In a move unpopular with the ruling elite, he also blamed the defeats of Islam and the disunity of the holy land on the spiritual weakness of local leaders, who could only purify themselves through jihad.\textsuperscript{18} Other scholars gradually took up his call to holy war, particularly in and around Damascus, the strongest remaining Muslim city in Syria.

It was not enough, however, for religious scholars to advocate a return to jihad; secular leaders, the commanders of the armies needed to wage holy war, would have to heed that call, in spite of the disadvantage inherent in choosing to

\textsuperscript{16} Muslim chroniclers commonly referred to crusaders as Franks or “Franj”, reflecting the most common place of origin among crusaders of the First Crusade.
\textsuperscript{17} Mourad and Lindsay, \textit{Sunni Jihad Ideology}, 32.
\textsuperscript{18} Mourad and Lindsay, \textit{Sunni Jihad Ideology}, 33-35.
stand against invaders stronger than any one of the divided Muslim states. The early twelfth century saw only a few rulers willing to take this position, with most Muslim powers still content to make treaties with the invaders in order to preserve and advance their political positions. The foremost of those who rejected cooperation with the infidels was Zangi, a powerful Turkic ruler who captured the County of Edessa in 1144. But although Zangi virtuously and vigorously fought jihad, he was often lacking in other virtues, winning his battles through “his truculence and complete lack of scruples.”

It fell to his second son, Nur ad-Din, to become the model of Islamic virtue and truly bring about the popular revival of jihad. Nur ad-Din’s military successes far exceeded even those of his father, but his greater contribution was the way he popularized them by patronizing poets, chroniclers, and religious scholars to praise and record his ideology and deeds.

Nur ad-Din supervised his core of propagandists personally. He would commission poems, letters, and books, and always took care that they were released at the time when they would produce the desired effect. The principles he preached were simple: a single religion, Sunni Islam... a single objective, jihad... treatises [were written] hailing the merits of... the holy city, and public readings were organized in the mosques and schools... [praising] the supreme mujahid, the irreproachable Muslim Nur ad-Din.

Through the campaign of written works he organized, Nur ad-Din created a new type of legitimacy. He framed himself as the only righteous ruler honoring the call to jihad, using religious arguments to create not only a cult of personality but a wider enthusiasm for holy war. Vast outpourings of popular support for the “Saint King”

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19 Maalouf, *Through Arab Eyes*, 143.
20 A person who wages jihad.
21 Maalouf, *Through Arab Eyes*, 144.
and his holy struggle forced reluctant Muslim rulers to join the jihad or face not only public disgrace but the wrath of Nur ad-Din himself.

By reforging the Muslim states of the Levant into a unified religio-political entity, defined by the opposition of its religion to the religion of the invaders and ruled by a leader with both kingly secular authority and religious authority as the supreme mujahid, Nur ad-Din advantageously reframed the conflict. Where jihad had formerly languished due to a lack of legitimate targets, his propaganda machine and military successes revitalized it, making it the only legitimate form of warfare to be waged while infidels held the Holy Land. His successors continued with the idea he developed, employing their own chroniclers to portray them as warriors for the faith and stir up support for their campaigns. Characterized as a long-neglected obligation now revived under truly righteous rulers, jihad thus served to both explain Islam’s defeats and provide Muslims with a path to deliverance.

II. Early Christianity and Warfare

Unlike Islam, early Christianity was not an independent polity. Its followers were citizens of the Roman Empire, which professed a different state religion and extensively persecuted Christians until the time of Emperor Constantine. Despite the hopes of Hebrew rebels to the contrary, Christ’s promised kingdom was explicitly “not of this earth,” and accordingly had no territory to defend and no army to expand it.\textsuperscript{22} With no political system to maintain and thus no battles to fight, Christian leaders were free to advocate nonviolence, emphasizing biblical verses

\textsuperscript{22} Mourad and Lindsay, \textit{Sunni Jihad Ideology}, 20.
about loving one’s enemies and turning the other cheek. In short, "the question early Christianity posed was not whether religion was a valid basis for war, but whether it was possible for a Christian to fight at all."  

As a result, while military ranks were often used in metaphors about evangelism and church hierarchy, many early theologians considered it unacceptable for Christians to be soldiers. Second century theologian Clement of Alexandria emphasized that “Christ gathers his ‘bloodless host’ of ‘soldiers of peace’ rather than blowing the trumpet that collects ‘soldiers and proclaims war.’” His contemporary the prolific theological author Tertullian asserted that “Christians count it better to be killed than to kill.” He went on to ask, “How will a Christian man war, nay, how will he serve even in peace, without a sword, which the Lord has taken away? The Lord... in disarming Peter, unbelted every soldier.” When a Roman scholar named Celsus asserted that the Roman Empire would be overthrown if all its citizens became Christians and therefore refused military service, the third century theologian Origen retorted that an all-Christian empire would not need an army because it would be protected by the power of God. Early military saints were often martyred or shunned for refusing to continue their military service, though it should be noted that they were also (even primarily) rejecting the military practice of sacrificing to Roman gods before battle as idolatry. The biblical imagery of soldiers and armor belonged only to the “militia Dei,” the army of God, whose

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26 Sider, *The Early Church on Killing*, location 1205.
27 Shean, *Soldiering for God*, 76.
struggle was exclusively spiritual; it was thus separate from the battles of the “militia saecularis,” the secular army, whose worldly battles were profane.\textsuperscript{28}

Despite the evidence for these stark positions, it is important to note that “the writings of the early church fathers [as a whole] do not reflect any consensus on the issue of war and military service.”\textsuperscript{29} Tertullian’s direct assaults on military professions were far from the norm; many theologians emphasized the parts of the Gospel commanding “Christians to accept their lot in life, not to challenge civil authority, and to be loyal citizens... to ’pay caesar what belongs to caesar and God what belongs to God,” and one of the obligations of the Roman state was military service and obedience to military commanders.\textsuperscript{30} No small number of Christian writers provided instructions for the conduct of Christians in the army without attaching any judgment. Some even acknowledged the military as a part of God’s plan for the world before it was united and made peaceful in faith. Second century theologian Irenaeus explains the authority of the Roman Empire by stating that, in the face of evil,

God imposed upon humanity the fear of people, as they did not acknowledge the fear of God, in order that, being subjected to human authority, and kept under restraint by their laws, they might attain to some degree of justice, and exercise mutual forbearance through dread of the sword suspended full in their view, as the apostle says: ‘For he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, the avenger for wrath upon him who does evil.’\textsuperscript{31}

Seen in this light, the existence of soldiers and armies was accepted and even considered necessary in a fallen world in spite of the push for pacifism. It is worthy

\textsuperscript{28} Erdmann, \textit{Idea of Crusade}, 14.
\textsuperscript{29} Shean, \textit{Soldiering for God}, 78.
\textsuperscript{30} Shean, \textit{Soldiering for God}, 82.
\textsuperscript{31} Sider, \textit{The Early Church on Killing}, location 384.
of note that “even pacifists such as Origen and Tertullian prayed for the safety of the empire and its success in defensive warfare.” However, on the opposite end of the spectrum, even the theologians most favorably disposed toward Christian soldiers believed that all killing, “including killing in the course of war,” was sinful, and that those who committed such a sin “were to be excluded from the communion of the church until they confessed their sins and successfully carried out the proscribed penance.” Early Christian thought on the subject of Christian soldiers was thus divided among outright rejections of the profession, acknowledgements of their existence without attached value judgments, and statements that could be interpreted as reluctant acceptance of their necessity. In any case, the third century saw Christians increasingly serving in the Roman army to the point that they were a recognized faction within its ranks.

The first major shift in this unclear policy came in the fourth century during the reign of Constantine, the first imperial patron of Christianity. The emperor’s famous adoption of a Christian symbol to be painted on the shields of his troops before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge aligns with the idea that Christians served in the Roman army at the time and that “the rest of the army [had] accommodated themselves to their presence.” It also represented the first recorded use of Christian symbology on the battlefield and the first claim of the Christian God granting literal military victory. Constantine’s conversion and abolishment of persecution against Christians produced an “unforeseen new relationship between

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32 Shean, Soldiering for God, 80.
33 Bachrach, Conduct of War, 24.
34 Shean, Soldiering for God, 74.
35 Shean, Soldiering for God, 74.
church and state [that] imposed a new set of responsibilities on the church and...
sparked a re-evaluation of the role of the empire in salvation history.”\(^{36}\) Theologians of the time were faced with a difficult quandary: a battle, said to have been won by the intervention of a God who commanded pacifism, had ended persecution of Christians and provided them with a powerful patron who restored confiscated property, built churches, and spread the faith faster than ever before. Could warfare have been part of God’s plan for the world’s salvation?

The matter only became more complicated when Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire in 380. A Christian empire was now involved in multiple wars to preserve its territories, and required an ideological framework that would allow it to legitimately do so in the eyes of God. Augustine of Hippo, the “second founder of the faith,” provided that framework with his theory of Just War. This model asserted that military violence could be justified if its aim was to “avenge injuries, if some nation or state against whom one is waging war has neglected to punish a wrong committed by its citizens, or to return something wrongfully taken.”\(^{37}\) While this is restrictive, effectively ruling out expansionistic warfare as unjust, it represents a major shift for a faith whose adherents formerly prided themselves on nonviolence and martyrdom in the face of evil. To justify this shift, Augustine famously reinterpreted the biblical verses that called for peace and forgiveness of enemies:

> What is the evil in war? Is it the death of some who will soon die in any case, that others may live in peaceful subjection? This is mere cowardly dislike, not

\(^{36}\) Shean, *Soldiering for God*, 78-79.

any religious feeling. The real evils in war are love of violence, revengeful cruelty, fierce and implacable enmity, wild resistance, and the lust of power, and such like; and it is generally to punish these things, when force is required to inflict the punishment, that, in obedience to God or some lawful authority, good men undertake wars, when they find themselves in such a position as regards the conduct of human affairs, that right conduct requires them to act, or to make others act in this way.\(^{38}\)

Augustine thus not only justified wars explicitly “to defend... life and liberty” in the face of invasion but also classified wars to end injustice and violations of moral law as essentially defensive on behalf of God, an idea that later became the centerpiece of the crusade ideology. All of this, however, was predicated on war being “undertaken in obedience to God... [and being] a righteous war,” free of the aforementioned evils it ought to be punishing.\(^{39}\) Further, Augustine asserted that the world was full of injustices, and “few [were] of such magnitude that war should be resorted to in order to resolve them.”\(^{40}\)

Although Rome continued to wage wars of territorial expansion, devoid of Augustinian justification and heavily criticized by Augustine himself, Just War theory represented a major shift in theological discussion of war. It became the first real, widely accepted religious justification for conflicts initiated by secular leaders of Christendom. Because the war was waged for sinless reasons, if not in a sinless manner, it also allowed clergy to march with the army and deliver military sermons, eulogies for fallen soldiers, and battlefield orations beseeching the favor of God, practices that expanded to become universal among the Christian powers of Europe

\(^{38}\) Mattox, *Theory of Just War*, 47.
\(^{40}\) Mattox, *Theory of Just War*, 47.
during the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{41} However, it is important to note that a Just War “was not at first a war of religion, but a moral war.”\textsuperscript{42} Its reasons made it excusable, not holy.

Thus over the course of three centuries, still long before the rise of Islam, Christian thought on warfare underwent a dramatic change. In the second and third centuries, when Christians were not openly involved in Roman politics and had no authority over the army that protected them and other citizens of Rome, many theologians pushed for total pacifism. Some openly criticized Christian soldiers, and even those who acknowledged Christian participation in the Roman military considered violence a sin for which those soldiers would have to repent and face divine judgment. By the end of the fourth century, with Christians playing a prominent role in administering and defending what had become an officially Christian state, a framework had emerged to justify the participation of Christians in the military defense of that state and limited foreign intervention. God did not bless warfare, but He did not oppose war waged righteously and for righteous reasons. Soldiers were not blessed, and would be brought to account for their sins, but it was possible for them to behave righteously in spite of their profession. In essence, “the closer the alliance between church and state became, the more the church aligned its ethical demands and liturgical prayers with the military functions of the state,” though not yet to the point of claiming that war could be waged in the name of Christianity rather than a political entity.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{41} Bachrach, \textit{Conduct of War}, 19-20, 90.
\textsuperscript{42} Erdmann, \textit{Idea of Crusade}, 8.
III. Papal Power and Holy War

The second major shift in Christian thought about warfare was a result of the rising power of the Papacy. With the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476, the church in Rome (already the most prominent) was no longer in imperial territory, but remained closely tied to the Christian Eastern Roman Empire. Yet the church soon began to assert its superiority to the Empire on theological grounds. The Gelasian Doctrine of the late fifth century emphasizes how the decree of God and the martyrdoms of the apostles Peter and Paul “made the above-mentioned holy Roman church special in Christ the Lord and gave preference in their presence and veneration-worthy triumph before all other cities in the world,” explicitly including the Eastern church seat of Antioch (which was still within the Empire) and implicitly including the seat of the Emperor in Constantinople. Over the following centuries disagreements mounted between the Pontiff and the Emperor over the extent of the latter’s authority over the church, coming to a head in 729. Pope Gregory II, responding to a demand by Emperor Leo III to forbid the veneration of images, asserted the higher spiritual authority of the church:

We derive our power and authority from the prince of the apostles, Peter, and we could, if we wished, pronounce judgment upon you... cease behaving like a priest, and follow the sacred churches, as you ought to. Dogmas are not the business of emperors, but of pontiffs, because we have the sense and mind of Christ.45

These bold statements established the right of the church to determine the course of Christianity separately from imperial policy, greatly increasing the reach, power,

45 Ullmann, Growth of Papal Government, 47.
and independence of the Pope. At the same time, partly to protect itself from the emperor’s retribution, the Papacy gained secular power by soliciting the aid of the Christian Franks, whose assistance established the Pope as “lord of the Duchy of Rome” in what became the territorial basis for the Papal States.\(^{46}\) In this way the eighth century saw the transformation of the Papacy from an imperial apparatus to the primary religious authority for all the powers of Western Europe. It even became, to some extent, a secular power player among them. The head of the Christian faith now ruled an independent (though limited in authority and dependent on foreign protection) secular polity, and considered himself responsible for securing the defense of the faithful. He thus arrived at the position in which the Prophet Muhammad had begun. This period also saw the first case of a papal request for military intervention, one of the major distinguishing features of the crusade ideology. Yet when tenth century Popes such as John XII infamously led armies, they were seen as doing so in the name of their newfound secular power, without religious justification; such actions were considered signs “of the moral decay of the Papacy and not as proof that ecclesiastical theory was developing.”\(^{47}\) A new framework was needed to clarify the legitimate secular and religious rights and responsibilities of the Pope as leader of Christendom.

The next major step in the direction of crusade occurred with the Gregorian Reforms of the eleventh century. Through these reforms Pope Gregory VII sought, among other things, to redefine the relationship between church and state, and specifically between the Papacy and secular rulers. This would assert and secure the


superior position of the Papacy after several tumultuous centuries of disputes over church authority and existential threats to papal lands after the fall of the Papacy's Frankish protectors. The philosophy produced by the Gregorian Reforms asserted that even the lowliest of clerics was superior to the mightiest of kings, since the church was concerned with the higher spiritual world while kings were restricted to the lower material world. The right of kings to rule came from God but did so through the Church. Thus all Christian kings were defenders of the church and the faithful, but not “self-styled or self-appointed protectors; they do not receive their sword from God; it is the ‘priests of Christ’ who confer upon kings the sword of the specific purpose of protection and defense.” This framework asserts not only the right of the Pope to deputize and call to action the defenders of the faithful but also the responsibility of Christian rulers to heed that call.

Gregory VII also brought about another important transformation by adapting the concept of “milites Dei,” meaning soldiers of God, to a combined religious and feudal framework. The “militia Christi,” meaning Army of Christ, had long been a part of ecclesiastical tradition. Although described in military terms, with church officials holding military ranks, “the ‘knights of Christ’ were unwarlike and contrasted with the militia saecularis;” the secular, worldly army, because they engaged only in “spiritual combat” against the forces of sin and evil. The command of the militia Christi, of course, fell to the Pope. But since the Pope was also the secular lord of the Duchy of Rome, and under the logic of the Gregorian Reforms

48 Ullmann, Growth of Papal Government, 229.
49 Ullmann, Growth of Papal Government, 269.
50 Erdmann, Idea of Crusade, 201.
superior in worldly power to all the kings of Christendom, he was also owed fealty by worldly knights, for whom the same word (miles, pl. milites) was used. Gregory VII’s innovation was that he “interwove both meanings”\textsuperscript{51} by having knights undertake oaths of fealty to St. Peter, creating a holy soldiery that fought on behalf of Christendom with “both temporal and spiritual weapons.”\textsuperscript{52} This was the final step in removing the stigma of the soldier’s profession in Christian thought; the soldiers of God, a long-accepted element of Christian doctrine, became literal soldiers. Since “those who love St. Peter should not love secular princes more than him,” the first loyalty of this new militia Dei would be (at least in theory) to the Papacy, the unifying authority of Christendom.\textsuperscript{53} Despite internal political divisions among the feuding princes of Europe, the greater Christian religio-political unit now had an army of its own.

While these shifts effectively enabled the Papacy to organize a holy war, they did not bypass the major obstacle in Christian theology: the fact that “killing in battle,” even during a just war, was “considered a defilement for which penance was due.”\textsuperscript{54} This was not a problem for wars waged by deputized Christian kings; penance could occur afterward, its length depending on the intentions of the soldier in choosing to fight and of his lord in causing the battles, and all would be well.\textsuperscript{55} Yet it would be inappropriate and even nonsensical for the Papacy, entrusted by God with the responsibility to steer mankind away from sin, to directly organize an act

\textsuperscript{51} Erdmann, \textit{Idea of Crusade}, 205.  
\textsuperscript{53} Erdmann, \textit{Idea of Crusade}, 205.  
\textsuperscript{54} Erdmann, \textit{Idea of Crusade}, 16.  
\textsuperscript{55} Bachrach, \textit{Conduct of War}, 101.
that would require penance. Waging a *holy* war would by definition have to be a righteous act, but waging any kind of war was sinful. It was not until the Council of Clermont, the very event calling for and leading to the First Crusade, that this problem was solved by means of the creation of the plenary indulgence. Such an indulgence offered remission of the temporal punishments of confessed sins. It did not offer the remission of the sins themselves, as is commonly but mistakenly believed; this was within the power of God alone.\(^{56}\) Pope Urban II extended the first plenary indulgence to all who took part in the proposed “armed pilgrimage”\(^ {57}\) to Jerusalem, creating a “novel form of martial penance”; fighting this special type of church-sanctioned war was effectively penance for itself.\(^ {58}\) Given the severity of penance inflicted for killing even with the best of intentions in a just war, this was a tremendous innovation; as late as 1067 soldiers were required to undergo a year of penance for each man they killed, forty days for each man they struck, and three days for each man they wished to kill.\(^ {59}\) By characterizing this and future crusades as the only kind of conflict that lessened the burden of sin rather than adding to it, the Pope set them apart from secular wars.

Even after the First Crusade, however, deep uncertainty remained among Christians about the extent to which such an indulgence truly protected them from the punishments of sin; remission of earthly punishment was largely meaningless if the sinner still burned in the fires of hell. The final shift that brought crusade into line with jihad as a true holy war ideology was to “redefine the nature of the

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\(^{57}\) The term “crusade” was not coined until after the first crusade.

\(^{58}\) Tyerman, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 1.

\(^{59}\) Bachrach, *Conduct of War*, 102.
sinfulness engendered by homicide committed in battle,” transforming the killing of infidel soldiers into an act of merit in God’s eyes.\textsuperscript{60} This theological development did not fully manifest until the 1120’s, several decades after the First Crusade, but arrived in time to deeply influence Christian chroniclers writing to stir up support for future crusades. The abbot Bernard of Clairveux, writing during this period to soothe the uncertainties of the newly formed Knights Templar about whether it was truly possible to be soldiers of a God of peace, explained it thus:

The knights of Christ fight the battles of their Lord in all peace of mind, in no way fearing to sin in killing the enemy or to die at his hands, since indeed death, whether inflicted or suffered, is not tainted by crime but is marked by a large degree of glory... Obviously, when he kills an evil-doer, he does not commit a homicide, but rather, as one might say, a malicide, and clearly is considered the avenger of Christ against those who do evil... In the death of an infidel the Christian glories because Christ is glorified.\textsuperscript{61}

This last and most dramatic shift sets crusade even further apart from secular wars. Not only does participation in a crusade offer remission of the penalties for previous sins, but the warfare conducted in the crusade itself is not merely without penalty but sinless and even glorious in the eyes of God. Only after this could crusades truly be called holy wars.

\textbf{IV. Conclusion}

The development of crusade and jihad were thoroughly separated by distance, time, and differing religio-political circumstances. Islam, founded by a warrior and rapidly spread through extensive conquest, developed an ideology of

\textsuperscript{60} Bachrach, \textit{Conduct of War}, 64.
\textsuperscript{61} Bernard of Clairveux, \textit{The Templars}, 219.
holy war practically immediately; with religion and state effectively one in the Islamic Empire, defense and expansion of the state automatically took on a religious element. Christianity, beginning as a largely-pacifist minority protected as citizens of a larger state with a different official religion, initially had no such needs or associations. Frameworks allowing for holy war only gradually developed in response to political pressures, first to respond to the Christianization of the Roman Empire and later as a factor of the expansion of the secular and religious power of the Papacy. Despite points in history where the two faiths interacted prior to the twelfth century, such as the attempted Islamic invasion of Frankish Europe thwarted at the 732 Battle of Tours, the clash of religions does not appear to have been even a minor factor in the rate of development of holy war; it would be a further four centuries from Tours before the killing of the non-Christian invaders there would be considered sinless. Further, all of the major events on the path to crusade occurred at a time when Europe was barely conscious of Islam; the faith of the Saracens, Turks, and Moors was seen as merely one of the many pagan faiths menacing Christendom. Nor was jihad in any way shaped by crusade; it had already been employed extensively and to great effect before the turn of the twelfth century. In short, the two ideologies converged from completely independent origins.

2. Suffering and Desecration

The astonishing convergence of Christian and Muslim holy war ideologies can be clearly seen by analyzing side-by-side Christian and Muslim chronicles of the events in the Levant during the twelfth century. The chroniclers, who were as much
propagandists as historians, sought not only to glorify their particular patrons but also to drum up support for future holy wars. By examining the rhetoric used by the most prominent chroniclers of the age, it is possible to extract the traits they both praised and decried in holy warriors, the way they framed victories and defeats for their respective faiths, and their views on the ultimate reasons for and goals of holy war, all of which are so similar between the two faiths as to appear virtually interchangeable.

To prove this assertion, this chapter will examine the justifications which chroniclers of both faiths provide for launching holy war. The most prominent device employed to this end is graphic descriptions of the suffering and desecration brought about by the enemies of the faith.⁶²

I. Suffering

Both crusade and jihad were built around the idea of defending the faithful, and so the surest way for Christian and Muslim chroniclers to demonstrate the need for a holy war was to report the suffering inflicted upon those faithful by enemies of the faith. In addition to providing a call to righteous fury and decisive action, these descriptions served to characterize the heathen foe as wicked, alienated from God, and deserving of retributive death. Three different Christian chroniclers, reporting on the crusade-launching speech by Pope Urban II at Clermont, give similar accounts that fit this model. Robert the Monk, who did not join the First Crusade but claims to have been present at Clermont, records his version of the Pope’s words:

⁶² In the interest of consistency, and with no value judgments attached, Christian examples will be placed first in each chapter, followed by Muslim examples.
An accursed race... has invaded the lands of the Christians and depopulated them by the sword, pillage and fire; it has led away a part of the captives into its own country, and a part it has destroyed by cruel tortures... They wish to torture people by a base death... What shall I say of the abominable rape of the women? ... The kingdom of the Greeks is now dismembered by them and deprived of territory so vast in extent that it cannot be traversed in a march of two months.⁶³

With fellow Christians subjected to torture, slavery, rape, and death under an empire of wicked pagan marauders rising in place of a Christian kingdom, the Pope implies, no good Christian could stand idly by.

Fulcher of Chartres, a monk who participated in the First Crusade and wrote a later account of the same events, describes the Pope’s grim tidings similarly:

For the Turks, a Persian people, have attacked... They have seized more and more of the lands of the Christians, have already defeated them in seven times as many battles, killed or captured many people, have destroyed churches, and have devastated the kingdom of God. If you allow them to continue much longer they will conquer God’s faithful people much more extensively.⁶⁴

Fulcher’s account further characterizes the invaders as blasphemous and evil, destroyers of churches in addition to murderers of the faithful. The Pope characterizes the attacks not simply as assaults on allied Byzantium but as blows against the kingdom of God as a whole, inflicting wounds and insults which no man of faith could let pass. The account also serves to add urgency to the crusade: any delay the faithful permitted would allow the atrocities to continue. A third chronicler, Benedictine monk Guibert of Nogent, describes the Pope’s closing appeal to prevent that from happening:

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⁶³ Robert the Monk, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 2.
⁶⁴ Fulcher of Chartres, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 9-10.
Let the great suffering of those who wish to visit the Holy Places touch you…
Each time they move from one place to another they are… compelled to pay ransom…
The money that they did not have was forced from them by intolerable tortures; the skin of their bones was probed, cut and stripped…
Remember, I beg you, the thousands who died deplorably.\textsuperscript{65}

With graphic descriptions of the tortures and injustices inflicted upon the faithful,
the Pope makes these martyrs into a battle cry. To defend and avenge them, and to
destroy their oppressors, is clearly not mere duty but justice, a good and righteous act. To abandon them to their hideous fate would be unthinkable.

While records of this early speech and its revelations about the suffering of eastern Christians served to explain the First Crusade which the chroniclers were focused on retelling, each chronicle also served a second purpose: to drum up support for future crusades. Therefore the chroniclers took care to record that the situations the crusaders encountered along their difficult journey validated everything the Pope had said about the horrors inflicted by the wicked pagans.

Fulcher of Chartres records how the crusaders passed Nicomedia, where the ill-fated People’s Crusade had met its end: “Oh, how many severed heads and how many bones of the slain we found lying in the fields near the sea around Nicomedia! In that year the Turks had annihilated our people… Moved by pity at this sight we shed many tears.”\textsuperscript{66} The field of bones, written about by a monk who saw it with his own eyes, served as a stark proof of the Pope’s claims and a validation of the crusade’s motives.

\textsuperscript{65} Guibert of Nogent, \textit{Chronicles of the First Crusade}, 19.
\textsuperscript{66} Fulcher of Chartres, \textit{Chronicles of the First Crusade}, 101.
The evils of the “accursed race” continued to be a major part of each chronicle after the crusaders brought them to battle. The *Gesta Francorum* ("Deeds of the Franks"), an early account of the First Crusade written by an anonymous soldier, describes the horrors inflicted by the enemy’s scorched earth policy as they retreated before the crusaders: “[The Turks] used to loot the churches and houses and other places and carry off horses, asses, mules, gold and silver and anything else they could find. They also kidnapped Christian children, and burned or destroyed anything that might be helpful or useful to us.” Characterized as looters of holy places and kidnappers of children, the “pagan” Turks are portrayed as greedy, wicked marauders valuing cunning over honor. Yet despite their frequently described retreats and ambushes, they were still shown to be a significant military threat that took every opportunity to massacre Christians. Fulcher of Chartres describes their wicked conduct during the siege of Antioch, which the crusaders had seized only to become entrapped within it by a larger Muslim army:

Oh, how many Christians in the city, Greeks, Syrians and Armenians, did the Turks kill in rage and how many heads did they hurl over the walls with [stone-throwing machines] in view of the Franks! This grieved our men very much. The Turks hated those Christians, for they feared that somehow the latter might assist the Franks against a Turkish attack.

Filled with fear and hate even for Christian noncombatants, the vile infidels are shown murdering these innocents and using their mutilated bodies to demoralize the soldiers of God. Against such unthinkable evil there could be only one response: holy war to safeguard the battered faithful.

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67 *Gesta Francorum, Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 135.
68 Fulcher of Chartres, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 147.
Muslim chroniclers described the suffering of the Muslim faithful during the Christian incursion in much the same way: attacked suddenly and without provocation by an army of bloodthirsty barbarians from the West, the people of Islam cried out for their defenders. Their chronicles, however, tend to be more direct and immediate, as the beginning of the conflict in their eyes happened in their own homeland. Ali Ibn al-Athir, writing toward the end of the twelfth century to stir up support for Saladin’s efforts to finally expel the Crusader States, records the horrors inflicted by the Franks during their assault on Antioch: “[The Franks] entered the city by the gates and sacked it, slaughtering all the Muslims they found there... For three days the slaughter never stopped; the Franks killed more than 100,000 men and took innumerable prisoners.”69 The Franks are shown to be indiscriminate killers satisfied only by total depopulation of Muslim lands, a powerful existential threat against which all Muslims must unite.

Ibn al-Qalanasi, an earlier chronicler upon whose chronicle Ibn al-Athir often relied, provides an account of the fall of Tripoli that strikingly parallels accounts of the Pope’s words at Clermont:

The Franks... sacked [Tripoli], captured the men and enslaved the women and children. They seized an immense quantity of loot and treasure as well as the contents of the city library, works of art and heirlooms belonging to the local notables... the rest of the population was subjected to terrible ordeals and cruel tortures, its possessions confiscated and its hidden treasures dragged to light.70

69 Ibn al-Athir, Arab Historians, 6-9.
70 Ibn al-Qalanasi, Arab Historians, 25.
The Franks here are shown to be not just bloodthirsty but cruel and greedy, torturing those few innocents they neglected to massacre in order to seize their hidden belongings.

Even as Muslim cities, hearing of the horrific devastation brought about by the crusader armies, began to try to surrender and offer bribes to be spared, they could not ensure their safety against the honorless Franks:

The Franks failed to keep the terms of the surrender; they seized the Muslims’ possessions, using every form of violence and torture to extort them... and unleashed the full violence of their brutality on the population... Many Muslims were killed and their possessions taken... The Frankish armies unleashed all their ferocity on the Muslims.71

Both chroniclers describe the fall of each major city along the crusaders' route, with only a few survivors escaping to tell the horrific story. Soon “refugees from Syria reached Baghdad,” the seat of the Caliph, defender of the faithful, and “told the Caliph’s ministers a story that wrung their hearts and brought tears to their eyes... weeping so that their hearers wept with them as they described the sufferings of the Muslims.”72 Faced with an enemy determined to murder the faithful, burn their cities, and loot the ashes, the people of Islam had only one chance for salvation: to unite under the banner of holy war and drive out their wicked foe.

II. Desecration

The terrible suffering inflicted upon the faithful by the enemies of God was reason enough for holy war, but chroniclers of both faiths also emphasize that so

71 Ibn al-Athir, Arab Historians, 17, 23.
72 Ibn al-Athir, Arab Historians, 11.
wicked were these enemies that their affronts did not end with murder, torture, plunder, and rape; they went so far as to make an enemy of God Himself by their desecration of His holy places. For Christian chroniclers, accounts of desecration often focused on defilement of churches; Pope Urban II himself, in one of his letters calling for crusade, described how “A barbaric fury has deplorably afflicted and laid waste the churches of God in the regions of the orient.” Yet for marauders whose defining characteristic, so far as Christian chroniclers were concerned, was irredeemable wickedness, merely laying waste to churches and their inhabitants was insufficient; they should instead be utterly polluted in the sight of God. Robert the Monk’s account of the speech at Clermont contains a particularly graphic example:

A race utterly alienated from God... has either entirely destroyed the churches of God or appropriated them for the rites of its own religion. They destroy the altars, after having defiled them with their uncleanness. They circumcise the Christians, and the blood of the circumcision they either spread upon the altars or pour into the vases of the baptismal font.

The blasphemous marauders oppressing the faithful defile the house of God with their blood and turn them away from the true faith by forceful mutilation, acts intolerable and almost inconceivable to the righteous hearers of this horrific account. Raymond of Aguilers, a court chaplain who accompanied the crusade, describes similar sacrilege recalled by newly liberated eastern Christians:

If some because of God’s grace defied the pagans, they were forced to hand over their beautiful children to be circumcised and trained in the Koran... The flaming evil passions of [the Turks] incited them to tear down churches

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73 Pope Urban II to the Faithful in Flanders, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 24.
74 Robert the Monk, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 2.
of God and the saints, break to pieces images, gouge out the eyes of the more indestructible and use the statues as targets for their arrows. They tumbled altars and made mosques of the great churches.\textsuperscript{75}

Again the emphasis is on how, through the evils of the pagans, holy places and faithful people are defiled and dragged by force from the true way of God. A war to avenge such utter blasphemy, the chroniclers imply, would clearly be a war set apart in justice and nobility of purpose; allowing such incredible evil to continue, however, would make the faithful complicit.

The greatest blow of all was to see the holy city of Jerusalem, where the Holy Sepulchre stood, in the hands of those who would commit such unthinkably evil deeds. The thought of such terrible defilement being inflicted on this holiest of places and those pilgrims who sought to reach it was too much to bear, and each chronicle emphasizes the vital importance of recovering the city. Robert the Monk’s account of the speech at Clermont makes clear Jerusalem’s importance:

\begin{quote}
Jerusalem is the navel of the world; the land is fruitful above others, like another paradise of delights. This the Redeemer of the human race has made illustrious by his advent, has beautified by residence, has consecrated by suffering, has redeemed by death, has glorified by burial. This royal city... is now held captive by his enemies, and is in subjection to those who do not know God, to the worship of the heathens. She seeks therefore and desires to be liberated, and does not cease to implore you to come to her aid.\textsuperscript{76}
\end{quote}

In this way Jerusalem was not only the crusade’s ultimate goal but symbolic of all of its goals: defeating the enemies of God, defending the faithful in the holy land, and redeeming the places defiled and held in subjection by infidels. The city became a central part of each appeal to crusade. Robert the Monk writes: “Let the Holy

\textsuperscript{75} Raymond of Aguilers, \textit{Chronicles of the First Crusade}, 303.
\textsuperscript{76} Robert the Monk, \textit{Chronicles of the First Crusade}, 4.
Sepulchre of the Lord our Savior, which is possessed by unclean nations, especially incite you, and the Holy Places which are now treated with ignominy and irreverently polluted with their filthiness.”77 Similarly, Guibert of Nogent writes: “O my dearly beloved brothers, you must exert yourselves, with all your strength, and with God leading you and fighting for you, to cleanse the holiness of the city and the glory of the tomb, which has been polluted by the thick crowd of pagans... if you love the traces that He has left on earth.”78 Such language was aimed to make clear to all hearers that any faithful Christian, in seeking to follow the path of Christ, should strive to liberate and redeem the land of Christ through holy war.

Muslim chroniclers describing the Frankish incursion also wrote of the terrible blasphemies against God inflicted by the heathen enemy, the greatest of which was their seizure of the holy city of Jerusalem. Ibn al-Athir describes the horrors committed in the city after the walls fell: “In the Masjid al-Aqsa,” another name for the Dome of the Rock, among Islam’s holiest sites, “the Franks slaughtered more than 70,000 people, among them a large number of imams and Muslim scholars, devout and ascetic men who had left their homelands to live lives of pious seclusion in the Holy Place.”79 The Frankish thirst for carnage, terrifying in each city they conquered, is shown as going beyond cruelty into utter desecration with the massacre of defenseless holy men taking shelter in a deeply-sacred shrine, polluting the place with pious, innocent blood. Nor was their desecration of the Dome of the Rock yet complete. “The Franks stripped the Dome of the Rock of more than forty

77 Robert the Monk, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 3.
78 Guibert of Nogent, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 16.
silver candelabra, each of them weighing 3,600 drams, and a great silver lamp weighing forty-four Syrian pounds, as well as a hundred and fifty smaller silver candelabra and more than twenty gold ones, and a great deal more booty.”

Beautiful decorations intended to honor God were stripped from the shrine to be bartered and sold by the heathens, further desecrating the holy place. Most intolerable of all, this was not the only thing the Franks took. The chronicler Imad ad-Din, a staunch advocate of his patron Saladin, describes a terrible discovery upon the city’s reconquest: “The Franks had cut pieces from the Rock,” where the Prophet Muhammad had stepped during his ascension to heaven on his nocturnal journey, as souvenirs to be sold back in Byzantium; “the marks of these cuts were seen and men were incensed to see how it had been mutilated.” By theft and by blood the Franks had horribly dishonored a place of deep holiness.

With Jerusalem and many other cities in the hands of the infidels after the establishment of the Crusader States, the call to arms for jihad was characterized as a call to end and avenge these blasphemies. On the eve of the reconquest of Jerusalem, Imad ad-Din has Saladin lament, “Jerusalem has been in the hands of the enemy for ninety-one years, during which time God has received nothing from us here in the way of adoration.” Therefore it was necessary to unite beneath the banner of Islam and to:

Bring the exiled Faith back to her own country and dwelling-place and drive away from the al-Aqsa those whom God drove away with his curse... silence the Christian clappers and allow the Muezzin to be heard again, to remove

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80 Ibid.
81 Imad ad-Din, *Arab Historians*, 170-171.
82 Imad ad-Din, *Arab Historians*, 151.
the heavy hand of unbelief with the right hands of the Faith, to purify Jerusalem of the pollution of those races, of the filth of the dregs of humanity... [to see] Jerusalem... purified of the filth of the hellish Franks and... stripped [of] her vile garments to put on the robe of honor.\textsuperscript{83}

With the true faith silenced by the unbelievers, whose very presence profaned the holy places nearly as deeply as their horrible deeds, the only solution was holy war to drive them out and restore right practices in the holy land.

\textbf{III. Conclusion}

Examined side-by-side, Christian and Muslim justifications for holy war are virtually identical: a false religion has attacked the faithful, committed terrible evils against them and against God Himself, and seized control of the Holy City of Jerusalem, preventing the practice of the true religion in the holy land. Also identical is the characterization of the enemy: greedy, honorless, bloodthirsty, cruel, blasphemous, and powerful. To defeat such an enemy, the chroniclers make clear, requires a special kind of war waged by a special kind of army, united by a purpose greater than worldly concerns: a holy war, to which the name of crusade or jihad could equally be applied.

\textbf{3. Greed and Idleness}

Graphic reports of the suffering and desecration of each religion’s faithful in the holy land provided ample reason to launch a holy war, but there were also powerful counterincentives to crusade and jihad. Committing to holy war meant

\textsuperscript{83} Imad ad-Din, \textit{Arab Historians}, 147, 163.
exposing oneself to all the risks of warfare, but with less potential for personal gain than simply waging war against local rivals of the same faith. To combat these counterincentives, chroniclers leveled harsh accusations against those who failed to take part in holy war: faithlessness, apathy, cowardice, and greed, all of them with terrible consequences when facing the judgment of God. In so doing, they created a clear model of what a righteous warrior should not be.

I. Faithless Wars

The first target for chroniclers seeking to show what a righteous ruler should not do was the waging of intra-religious wars. Christian chroniclers emphasized the sinfulness of such conflicts, contrasted with the sinless crusade. Guibert of Nogent, in his record of Pope Urban II’s speech at Clermont, quotes the Pope as telling the assembled masses, “Until now you have waged wrongful wars, often hurling insane spears at each other, driven only by greed and pride, for which you have deserved only death and damnation.”84 Fulcher of Chartres, in his account of the same speech, records that Urban was disturbed that “the peace [was] totally disregarded [and] the princes of the land were incessantly at war quarreling with someone or other.”85 Greed and pride, deadly sins in their own right, were insufficient motivation for even a just war, let alone a holy one; murder in their name was not merely sinful but inexcusable. Further, the chroniclers emphasized how shameful it was that people of the true faith should fight one another while enemies of the faith threatened their brothers and sisters to the East. Fulcher of Chartres records the Pope’s warning:

84 Guibert of Nogent, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 16-17.
85 Fulcher of Chartres, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 5-6.
“Oh, what reproaches will be charged against you by the Lord himself if you have not helped those who are counted like yourselves of the Christian faith!” The failure to protect the Christians of the holy land made the rulers of Europe, who had been busy fighting amongst themselves, partially responsible for the horrors these distant faithful endured.

This was especially shameful because Christians were being driven back and oppressed by a rival faith. “Oh, what a disgrace,” Fulcher of Chartres quotes the Pope, “if a race so despicable, degenerate and enslaved by demons should thus overcome a people endowed with faith in Almighty God and resplendent in the name of Christ!” Since Christianity was, as far as the chroniclers were concerned, the one true faith, its defeat by those whom they considered wicked pagans was inconceivable. The only explanation was that “evils of all kinds multiplied throughout Europe because of vacillating faith,” and so God had turned away from His people as punishment. Truly faithful Christians would not behave in the way the lords of Europe had, waging war for personal gain while darkness fell over the world.

This accusation of faithlessness was a serious and powerful one; it represented a fearsome threat to the legitimacy of those rulers against whom it was levied. Yet Fulcher also records that the Pope provided a way to escape it, commanding, “Let those... who are accustomed wantonly to wage private war against the faithful march upon the infidels” in a sinless war, fought for faith rather than for personal gain.

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86 Fulcher of Chartres, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 10.
87 Fulcher of Chartres, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 10.
88 Fulcher of Chartres, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 5-6.
than greed or pride.\textsuperscript{89} Similarly, Guibert of Nogent records the Pope saying, “Now we propose for you battles which,” in contrast to the damnation and disfavor gained by unrighteous intra-religious conflict, “offer the gift of glorious martyrdom” and thus assured salvation.\textsuperscript{90} If the rulers of Europe wished to be exempted from the charge of “vacillating faith,” they could prove their righteousness by turning their military power toward enemies of Christendom. They would then transition from sinful war, requiring repentance, to sinless war against evil. In so doing, they would drive back their “pagan” enemies and regain the favor of God.

Muslims chroniclers identified the same faithless act of intra-religious strife as the reason for the success of the First Crusade, the bringer of suffering and desecration, and held Muslim rulers partially responsible. “It was the discord between the Muslim princes... that enabled the Franks to overrun the country,”\textsuperscript{91} Ibn al-Athir writes. “While the Franks – God damn them! – were conquering and settling in a part of the territories of Islam, the rulers and armies of Islam were fighting among themselves, causing discord and disunity among their people and weakening their power to combat the enemy.”\textsuperscript{92} This accusation of failure to protect the faithful due to the personal greed that provoked war amongst their rulers is even more damning for the Muslims, as it represents not only a religious failure to uphold the faith against infidels but also a secular failure to protect one’s own subjects against external threats.

\textsuperscript{89} Fulcher of Chartres, \textit{Chronicles of the First Crusade}, 10.  
\textsuperscript{90} Guibert of Nogent, \textit{Chronicles of the First Crusade}, 17.  
\textsuperscript{91} Ibn al-Athir, \textit{Arab Historians}, 11.  
\textsuperscript{92} Ibn al-Athir, \textit{Arab Historians}, 18.
The explanation cited for this failure is the same one cited by the Europeans: weak or absent faith. The poet Abu al-Muzaffar al-Abiwardi, in the wake of the First Crusade, wrote, "he who lies in the tomb at Medina\textsuperscript{93} seems to raise his voice and cry 'O sons of Hashim! I see my people slow to raise the lance against the enemy; I see the faith resting on feeble pillars.'"\textsuperscript{94} In waging war against each other to gain power and territory, Muslims were disrupting the community of God, the Ummah. By doing so while an infidel power was directly threatening the faithful, they were ignoring their obligation to jihad. Instead of spreading the divine revelation across all the world, they were aiding the enemies of the faith in destroying it.

The shame of having been defeated by a rival faith is also equally present. At the time of the Third Crusade, the chronicler Abu Shama records Saladin’s call to holy war, writing, "Where is the sense of honor of the Muslims, the pride of the believers, the zeal of the faithful? We shall never cease to be amazed at how the Unbelievers, for their part, have shown trust, and it is the Muslims who have been lacking in zeal."\textsuperscript{95} Given the assumption of Islam as the one true faith, its defeat at the hands of the "polytheist"\textsuperscript{96} Christians implied that God had turned away from the Muslims because they had not shown righteous conduct. Only uniting and carrying out the divine command of jihad, defending the House of Islam from being overrun by the House of War, could restore His favor.

\textsuperscript{93} This refers to the Prophet Muhammad, who was buried at Medina.
\textsuperscript{94} Abu al-Muzaffar al-Abiwardi, \textit{Arab Historians}, 12.
\textsuperscript{95} Abu Shama, \textit{Arab Historians}, 214-215.
\textsuperscript{96} Muslims at the time perceived the Christian idea of the Holy Trinity as worship of multiple gods, which they decried as polytheism.
II. Apathy and Luxury

Even leaders who did not wage intra-religious war were far from exempt from criticism, though the reasons they were criticized differed. Their unwillingness to contribute to holy war, which would cost them time, money, and safety with little apparent material return, was roundly condemned as abandonment not only of the suffering faithful but of the True Faith itself.

Robert the Monk’s account of Urban II’s speech at Clermont provides more gentle encouragement. He describes the Pope’s efforts to highlight the scriptural idea that much is expected of those to whom much is given, a category that certainly included the lords of Europe. “On whom therefore,” he quotes the Pope, “is the labor of avenging these wrongs and of recovering this territory incumbent, if not upon you? You, upon whom above all other nations God has conferred remarkable glory.” 97 He goes on to give scriptural examples of right conduct, framing the crusade as righteous and failure to commit to it as faithless:

If you are hindered by love of children, parents and wives, remember what the Lord says in the Gospel, ‘He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.’ ‘Everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name’s sake shall receive a hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life.’ Let none of your possessions detain you, no solicitude for your family affairs. 98

Those who agreed to go on crusade were taking up the Cross and following Christ as had the disciples of old, while those who failed to do so were denying Him and failing to heed the holy scriptures.

97 Robert the Monk, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 2.
98 Robert the Monk, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 3.
Raymond of Aguilers, in his circa 1100 chronicle, wrote more directly and harshly of the consequences of failure to participate in holy war through the medium of visions of Christ and the Saints that were said to have appeared to certain crusaders. He describes how a vision of Saint Andrew appeared to rebuke the faltering crusaders during the harsh siege of Antioch: “May any slacker who won’t fight be with Judas, betrayer of Jesus Christ, who abandoned the apostles and sold the Lord to the Jews.”99 Later a vision of Christ Himself appeared to remind the crusaders of their duty:

Those [who] shut themselves up in their houses and tend to their own business when war arises... are like my Crucifiers... Those [who], hearing the noise of battle... display cowardice rather than bravery, and take no risks for me or their brothers... are similar to the betrayers, Judas and the judge, Pontius Pilate.100

Seen in this light, failure to contribute to holy war was not merely a failure to follow Christ but an active betrayal of Him, a deliberate choice to become an enemy of God. Holy war was set apart not only because participating in the war was uniquely sinless but also because failing to participate was actually sinful.

Muslims were faced with similar condemnations for inactivity in time of holy war. The poet Abu al-Muzaffar al-Abiwardi demands of Muslim rulers, many of whom were reluctant to risk their personal domains against the powerful invaders:

Do you dare slumber in the blessed shade of safety, where life is as soft as an orchard flower? How can the eye sleep between the lids at a time of disasters that would awaken any sleeper? While your Syrian brothers can only sleep on the backs of their chargers, or in vultures’ bellies? Must the foreigners

100 Raymond of Aguilers, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 290.
feed on our ignominy, while you trail behind you the train of a pleasant life, like men whose world is at peace?101

To fail to wage jihad while others were doing so was a failure to stand among the righteous and honor the obligations of the true faith, thereby making a deliberate choice to stand apart from God’s true people. Saladin complained of the inactivity of the Muslim rulers in more secular terms: “Not one of them has responded to the call, not one intervenes to straighten what has been distorted... They have become negligent and lazy, the victims of unproductive stupefaction and completely lacking in enthusiasm.”102 And yet a religious component is also implied; it is “negligent and lazy” to fail to answer “the call”, that is, God’s call to jihad when His faithful are threatened. War to defend and spread Muhammad’s final revelation was as vital as daily prayer or pilgrimage to Mecca, for without it the House of Islam would fall and rightful worship would become impossible, as it already had in so many of the conquered cities of Syria. God, the chroniclers warned, would not look favorably upon those who neglected this obligation in a time of crisis.

Indeed, jihad was so vital that certain chroniclers implied that it was justified to seize the territories of those who were not honoring their obligation. Saladin himself was accused of this negligence by Ibn al-Qalanasi, who in his circa 1160 chronicle described how his lord “Nur ad-Din was making preparations to invade Egypt and take it from Saladin, in whom he divined a certain reluctance to fight the Franks as he should.”103 Nur ad-Din in particular was known for harsh treatment of

101 Abu al-Muzaffar al-Abiwardi, Arab Historians, 12.
102 Abu Shama, Arab Historians, 214-215.
103 Ibn al-Qalanasi, Arab Historians, 69.
those who neglected their obligation; Ibn al-Athir reports how one Muslim lord, called to jihad, lamented: “If I do not rush to Nur ad-Din’s aid,’ the emir said, ‘he will strip me of my domain, for he has already written to the devotees and ascetics... each of these men sits... weeping and cursing me. If I am to avoid anathema, I must accede to is request.”¹⁰⁴ For his part, Al-Qalanasi had also earlier supported the ambitions of the great conqueror Zangi, condemning the city of Damascus for refusing to submit to him and create a united Syria that could oppose the crusaders. He described the great betrayal when “the Franks agreed to give Damascus support and help in driving Zangi back and prevent his getting what he wanted”; had this unholy alliance not been made, Zangi would have been able to “break through the Frankish lines and attack their territories.”¹⁰⁵ Further, a treaty with an infidel power like the Crusader States was just as much a violation of the tenets of jihad as failing to answer the call to holy war, for there could be no peace between the House of Islam and the House of War. The clear implication of such accounts is that those who neglected their obligation to jihad, whether from cowardice or greed, politics or lust for power, were not worthy to rule, and should be replaced by someone who would act more righteously.

Muslims with less authority than such great lords as Zangi and Nur ad-Din found other ways to demonstrate their disgust with those who refused to wage jihad. Ibn al-Qalanasi records the arrival in Baghdad of refugees from Syria, which had been overrun by the crusaders after receiving no support from Muslims further to the East. One group of refugees entered the Sultan’s mosque, smashed the pulpit,

and “made such a commotion that people could not offer the obligatory prayers” on a Friday, the holiest day of the week in Islam.106 This was particularly significant because the Caliph, Commander of the Faithful and ostensible leader of all Muslims, was one of those trying to pray. The message was clear: those who were enabling disorder within Islam and did not honor their obligation to holy war, a far higher and more important calling than standard weekly prayers, were undeserving of respect, whoever they might be and whatever title they might hold. Indeed, their titles instead obligated them to lead the charge, as Nur ad-Din noted: “Since God has bestowed upon me the power to grant succor to the Muslims and wage war on the infidels, it would be impermissible for me to neglect the Muslims and fail to take up their defense.”107 As with Christians, God expected more of more powerful Muslims.

III. Lack of Steadfastness

Even those who joined the fight were not exempt from criticism if their conduct was unbecoming of a warrior of the true faith. One example of such bad conduct in holy war was failure to see it through to the bitter end. Those who initially fought but ultimately abandoned the war effort were strongly condemned for the effects of their desertion on their more faithful comrades.

The First Crusade began as a truly massive undertaking, but the difficulty of the journey and the many sieges both undertaken and endured along the way led to a high rate of attrition among the crusaders. While disease, starvation, and death in battle were all major causes of this reduction in numbers, these were acceptable

106 Ibn al-Qalanasi, Arab Historians, 29.
107 Ibn al-Qalanasi, Through Arab Eyes, 151.
ways to leave the service of the crusade, and all those who suffered them were considered martyrs. However, the harsh conditions also produced no small number of deserters, both among the rank and file and among the nobility. Fulcher of Chartres remarked that “If all who departed from their homes to undertake the holy journey had been present” at Antioch, where a particularly harsh counter-siege led to mass famine and subsequent mass desertion among the crusaders, “there doubtless would have been six million fighting men. But... some, unwilling to undergo the hardships, had returned to their homes.”

The point being made is clear: those “faint-hearted soldiers” who selfishly desert their comrades not only surrender their divine reward but also endanger the work of God’s army as a whole by weakening it. High profile deserters from Antioch included the monk Peter the Hermit, who had organized the ill-fated People’s Crusade, and Viscount William the Carpenter, though one of the lords “went after them and brought them back in disgrace.” Count Stephen of Blois successfully fled mere hours before Antioch fell, but his own wife publically shamed him with his betrayal of his sacred duty until he finally agreed to return to the Holy Land, dying in battle there in 1101. There might be escape from death by abandoning the crusade, but there was no outrunning the terrible disgrace.

Retreat was just as unacceptable as desertion; only those who stood fast, even unto martyrdom, were deserving of God’s favor. Raymond of Aguilers, in his dramatic and unforgiving style, describes the rout of a company of crusaders: “It

108 Fulcher of Chartres, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 114.
109 Anselm of Ribbemont, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 195.
110 Gesta Francorum, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 159.
111 Tyerman, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 182-183.
was not disgraceful enough for our men to throw down their weapons, to run away, to forget all sense of shame; no, they even jumped into the river to be hit by stones or arrows or to be drowned.”

Those who fled, seeking to preserve their lives, not only still met their deaths but did so humiliated and without divine reward. They “ignored God” and His command to stand fast even in the face of martyrdom, “and he in turn did not provide for ingrates.” The message was clear: there could be no retreat in holy war.

Muslim chroniclers likewise drew a connection between cowardly desertion and a weakening of the army of the righteous. Yaghi Siyan, governor of Antioch, defended the city throughout a long siege, but one of the gates was opened by a traitor working with the crusaders. Ibn al-Athir reports how, when this was discovered, the governor failed in his duty:

Panic seized Yaghi Siyan and he opened the city gates and fled in terror, with an escort of thirty pages. His army commander arrived, but when he discovered on enquiry that Yaghi Siyan had fled, he made his escape by another gate. This was of great help to the Franks, for if he had stood firm for an hour, they would have been wiped out.

A clear link is drawn between Yaghi Siyan’s personal failure of courage and the ultimate fall of the city. In failing to lead by example because he feared death, as no truly faithful soldier of God would, the governor doomed his city to capture by infidels. Yaghi Siyan soon receives the just reward for those who abandon the faithful when, having fallen from his horse in grief for his failure, he is beheaded by a

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112 Raymond of Aguilers, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 151-152.
113 Raymond of Aguilers, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 320.
passing Armenian.\textsuperscript{115} He could not even escape with his honorless life, making clear the fate of cowards in holy war.

Cowardice on the part of anonymous soldiers and servants could do just as much damage and was just as reprehensible as the cowardice of leaders. While waging a battle that he ultimately won, one unit of Saladin's army was defeated, and fell back toward their camp. Baha' ad-Din describes the results of the chaos:

When the Muslims suffered that initial defeat and their servants saw their tents standing empty... they believed that it was a general rout and that the enemy would loot the tents, so they began the job themselves and stripped the tents of their contents. They seized quantities of Muslim money, goods and arms, more than even defeat would have cost.\textsuperscript{116}

Seen in this way, cowardice among those who were supposed to be dedicated to holy war and martyrdom could be far more damaging than even their death and defeat would be. Such accounts emphasize the need for bravery and steadfastness among holy warriors, as well as the terrible shame upon those who allowed their fear to rule them rather than their faith.

\textbf{IV. Unholy Avarice}

Cowardice was not the only trait that could cause even someone who had committed to holy war to lose his divine reward; greed could be equally damaging. This included both material greed and lust for power, and the typical consequence was the loss of both secular respect and divine favor.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{116} Baha' ad-Din, \textit{Arab Historians}, 195.
Among the crusaders, greed was often pointed to as a reason the forces of the true faith failed; their sin caused them to fall away from God's path, and He withdrew His favor. Fulcher of Chartres describes how “luxury had defiled some of us, and avarice and other vice had corrupted others.”¹¹⁷ One example of this loss of divine favor as a result of abandoning righteous conduct comes just before the First Crusade, during the so-called Peasants’ Crusade led by Peter the Hermit. Granted hospitality in Constantinople by the Byzantine Emperor, “the Christians behaved abominably, sacking and burning the palaces of the city, and stealing the lead from the roofs of the churches and selling it to the Greeks, so that the emperor was angry.”¹¹⁸ The crusaders were expelled from the city and, left on the plains of Anatolia with no refuge, were soon massacred by marauding Turks. For behaving in the same way as the heathens they had been called to defeat, looting even the house of God in a city where they had been granted hospitality, these crusaders lost God’s favor and therefore had no chance of victory.

Greed among the crusaders was also characterized as leading to a loss of secular respect that ultimately brought secular ills to those it infected. Raymond of Aguilers describes how, when the leaders of the crusade stopped to bicker over how the newly conquered cities should be divided among them, the common people grew restless, saying, “It is obvious that our leaders because of cowardice… do not wish to lead us to Jerusalem… Let those who covet the emperor’s gold or the Antiochian revenues possess them; but for us who left our homes for Christ, let us renew our march… May the coveters of Antioch die wickedly even as its inhabitants

¹¹⁷ Fulcher of Chartres, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 130.
¹¹⁸ Gesta Francorum, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 64.
did recently.”\textsuperscript{119} They ultimately tore down the walls of the city to force the crusade, now unprotected, to move on toward Jerusalem, which Raymond portrays as the righteous response to the nobility “luxuriating in idleness and riches”\textsuperscript{120} rather than pursuing their holy mission.

While the previous example of the cowardice of Saladin’s servants doubles as an example of greed, Muslim chroniclers focused more on the idea of lust for power and territory as undermining holy war by enabling disorder within Islam. Efforts to promote Muslim unity, even through conquest, were praised, but only so long as they could be portrayed as being for the good of Islam as a whole rather than personal ambition. Zangi’s efforts to capture Damascus and thus unify Syria against the crusaders, for example, were portrayed in a positive light. The admittedly-biased Ibn al-Qalanasi, a partisan of the Zangid dynasty, tells us that the ruler of the city, “Jamal ad-Din... would have preferred to accept [Zangi’s] terms and come to a peaceful agreement without bloodshed, in a way that would bring peace and prosperity to the people. But his advisers rejected this view.”\textsuperscript{121} By characterizing these advisors as petty and greedy, holding onto their own power at the expense of uniting for holy war, al-Qalanasi attacks their legitimacy. The fact that they allied themselves with local Christian rulers to fight Zangi, violating the tenets of jihad twice over, aligns perfectly with this model.

Even successful jihadi rulers, however, had to be reminded to be mindful foremost of God. When Saladin was attempting to unify the Islamic world to push

\textsuperscript{119} Raymond of Aguilers, \textit{Chronicles of the First Crusade}, 263.
\textsuperscript{120} Raymond of Aguilers, \textit{Chronicles of the First Crusade}, 249.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibn al-Qalanasi, \textit{Arab Historians}, 44-45.
back the crusaders, his advisors warned him that "in the East people are cursing us, saying that we no longer fight the infidels but have begun to fight Muslims instead." Walking the line between compelling those who shirked holy war to do their duty and conquering out of personal greed was a constant challenge for Muslim leaders of the period, and those who were considered the most noble and free of greed did not attempt it at all. When Tughtikin lifted the siege of Muslim-controlled Tyre, for example:

The people of Tyre took back the offer they had made to Tughtikin to hand the city over to him [in exchange for rescue], but he simply said: 'I did what I did for the love of God and his Muslims, not in hope of money and power.' This noble deed brought him blessings and gratitude, and he promised that in a similar situation he would be quick to help them.  

The ideal holy warrior was free of any personal greed, serving solely out of faith and righteous devotion.

V. Conclusion

Where demonstrating the need for a holy war proved insufficient to garner the requisite support, negative reinforcement bridged the gap. Intra-religious wars, the main distractions from holy war against a rival faith, were portrayed as faithless and sinful. Soldiers and nobles alike should instead fight for God in a righteous conflict, where martyrdom and divine favor could be found. Idleness and reluctance to contribute was a betrayal of the faithful and even of God Himself. Cowardice, whether leading to desertion or merely retreat, was likewise a betrayal; since

122 Ibn al-Athir, Arab Historians, 119.
123 Ibn al-Qalanasi, Arab Historians, 35.
martyrdom was a worthy goal, failure to seek it (or at least to stand fast and endure it) was a faithless act that brought difficulties on all of God's army. Greed could be equally damaging, bringing down divine retribution and dividing the holy coalition with mistrust and scorn.

Taking this as a whole, we emerge with a strikingly similar model between Muslims and Christians of the ideal holy warrior. Such a person does not, for any reason, give less than everything to the war effort, and is ready to die at a moment's notice if the cause of righteousness calls for it. He does not retreat or even hesitate, seeking only to continue battling the enemies of the faith until they are eradicated. He seeks nothing for himself, and spurns those whose reasons for waging the holy war are impure. His allies are all those who follow the True Faith, no matter what may have divided them in the past, and his enemies are the infidels, no matter what benefit he might gain by siding with them.

4. Righteous Conduct

It was all too easy for Christian and Muslim chroniclers to give examples of wrongful conduct and its devastating results, both for the individual acting in an unrighteous way and for the army of the faithful as a whole. Ideally this would discourage such sins. However, it was just as important to provide potential crusaders and jihadis with positive examples to aspire to. These examples had to vary as widely as the people they were meant to inspire, and in holy war the targets were men of all social classes from mighty lords to penniless paupers. As a result,
the great deeds recorded in each chronicle were not exclusively the domain of the nobility. Any man could sell his life dearly for the faith and be immortalized as a warrior for God. The central virtues for holy warriors were thus largely accessible to anyone who chose to fight: faith, zeal, sacrifice, endurance, justice, and generosity.

I. Faith

The most basic characteristic of a holy warrior was his faith, which manifested as an absolute trust in the will of God, wherever it might lead the warrior. While the wavering faith of greedy and idle persons caused God to turn away from them, the strong faith of true crusaders and jihadis brought them His favor and assured the victory of the true religion. Robert the Monk’s version of Pope Urban II’s crusade-launching speech at Clermont makes the contrast clear by quoting scripture:

> Whoever... shall determine upon this holy pilgrimage and shall make his vow to God... and shall offer himself to Him as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, shall wear the sign of the Cross of the Lord on his forehead or on his breast... [This] will fulfill the precept of the Lord, as he commands in the Gospel, ‘He that taketh not his Cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.’

Those who came on the crusade were literally walking in the footsteps of Christ, taking up the cross and offering their lives in order to purify the same den of paganism and depravity that Christ had purified, now again polluted. Those who did not were unworthy of His sacrifice, and would surely burn in hell. Raymond of Aguilera likewise describes how the crusaders “all took the sacrament, surrendered

124 Robert the Monk, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 5.
to God’s will, even to death if He so wished.” Worldly concerns like self-preservation were irrelevant to crusaders with the virtue of faith. The only important consideration was following the commandments of God, and those who did would surely receive His favor.

True faith also included a proper recognition of God’s role in achieving victory for the crusade rather than attributing it to secular military might or the ability of the Christian commanders. Raymond of Aguilers records how the prominent lord Raymond refused to delay the siege of Antioch, saying:

Through God’s inspiration we have arrived, through His loving kindness we won the highly fortified city, Nicaea, and through His compassion, have victory and safety... therefore, our affairs should be entrusted to him. We ought not to fear kings or leaders of kings, and neither dread places nor times since the Lord has rescued us from many perils.

126 Holy warriors possessing the virtue of faith should be fearless; all battles were determined by the will of God and His judgment of His people, and therefore so long as He was pleased by their faith victory was assured.

Faithful warriors also knew the importance of keeping that faith even in repeated victory, when it was easy to succumb to greed and luxury. Christian leaders where praised for thinking first of God when they were successful, such as when “the noble Raymond... restored the town [of Ma’arra] to the Christian faith, and took counsel with his most trustworthy advisers as to how he might... consecrate the house of the devil to be a temple of the true and living God, a church

125 Raymond of Aguilers, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 277.
dedicated to His saints.” The purpose of the crusade was not to seize territory or wealth but to restore the true faith and protect the faithful, and the faith of those who worked toward this ideal was highly praised. As such, Raymond of Aguilers describes the greatest reward of the First Crusade as being “to see the worship of the pilgrims at the Holy Sepulchre, the clapping of hands, the rejoicing and singing of a new song to the Lord” and how “Their souls offered to the victorious and triumphant God prayers of praise which they could not explain in words.” This restoration of the true religion in the holy land was the end goal for all crusaders who embodied the virtue of faith.

Muslim chroniclers also made clear the relationship between faith and responsibility, praising those who left behind secular concerns to follow the path of God as laid out in scripture. Ibn al-Athir describes one such case:

Among the soldiers was the lawyer Hujjat ad-Din Yusuf ibn Dibas al-Findalawi of the Maghrib, a very old man and a lawyer of absolute probity. When Mu’in ad-Din saw him marching on foot he went to meet him, greeted him and said: ‘Sir, your age gives you dispensation; I will concern myself with the defense of Islam!’ and he begged him to retire. But the old man refused, saying: ‘I have offered myself for sale, and He has bought me. By God, I never asked nor agreed that the contract should be annulled!’ He was referring to the words of Almighty God: ‘God has bought the faithful, both themselves and their possessions, and given them Paradise in exchange.’

Joining the holy war to defend Islam was repayment of a debt owed to God by all the faithful. The example of even the frail al-Findalawi, a bookish scholar rather than a

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127 Gesta Francorum, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 249.
128 Raymond of Aguilers, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 329.
129 Ibn al-Athir, Arab Historians, 60.
warrior, honoring his obligation to jihad and refusing to be relieved of that duty makes it clear that no man should consider himself exempt.

Of course, greater things were expected of those with greater means. Elsewhere in his account of the same conflict Ibn al-Athir also praises how Mu‘in ad-Din Unur, “a wise and just man, upright and God-fearing... assumed responsibility for mustering an army and defending the city [of Damascus].”\textsuperscript{130} Where al-Findalawi embodies the common man’s responsibility under faith, Mu‘in ad-Din embodies the responsibility of the God-fearing prince: to organize and lead the fight against the infidels, not to buy them off or fearfully abandon his domain and flee for his life. As with the crusaders, God’s role as granter of victory to the truly faithful was recognized above individual achievement. While He withheld success from squabbling Muslim princes who divided the Ummah, proving themselves faithless by allying with the infidels to benefit themselves, He bestowed His favor upon the unifiers. Lords who had the power to create a unified army of holy warriors thus also had the responsibility to do so, even if they had to do it by force. Ibn al-Athir describes how “if God in His mercy had not granted that [Zangi] should conquer Syria, the Franks would have overrun it completely.”\textsuperscript{131} Zangi’s conquest of other Muslims was justified because he did it to serve God, not to aggrandize himself. In fact, because he was capable of it, it was his duty.

As with the crusaders, jihadis demonstrating the virtue of faith fought to restore right practices in the holy land rather than to gain wealth or power. When Saladin recaptured Jerusalem, the very city where the warriors of the First Crusade

\textsuperscript{130} Ibn al-Athir, \textit{Arab Historians}, 60.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibn al-Athir, \textit{Arab Historians}, 41.
had shown such joy at restoring their way of worship, he immediately set about restoring Muslim practices there:

Saladin ordered that the shrines [of Jerusalem] be restored to their original state... The Sultan ordered that the Dome of the Rock should be cleansed of all pollution, and this was done... Saladin gave orders for the restoration of al-Aqsa, giving every encouragement to its embellishment and having it faced with fine stone and mosaics... Saladin had some beautiful Qur’ans brought to the mosque, and magnificent copies of the sections of the Holy Book for use in worship. He established reciters of the Qur’an there, heaping them with bountiful endowments. So Islam was restored there in full freshness and beauty. This noble act of conquest was achieved.132

Only this kind of victory, a victory dedicated to God and the true religion, could be considered a “noble conquest”, a proof of faith that would bring divine favor.

Complete victory for the jihad would mean complete expulsion of the European invaders and restoration of all the houses of God and all the people who worshipped in them in every city of the holy land, the perfect inverse of the goal and propaganda of the crusaders.

Such nobility of purpose was not restricted to Muslims with the means to refurbish entire mosques. After a craftsman, whose name is not even recorded, invented an ingenious weapon that burned down two Frankish siege towers during the siege of Acre, “the inventor was brought before Saladin who offered him great wealth and honor, but he refused to take anything. ‘I did it for the love of God,’ he said, ‘and I want no other reward than Him.’”133 Warriors embodying the virtue of faith, whether warriors by trade or simply out of duty, sought no earthly reward; it was enough for them to serve God. Trust in the divine meant knowledge that the

132 Ibn al-Athir, Arab Historians, 144-146.
133 Ibn al-Athir, Arab Historians, 200.
material world was transitory, but the promise of paradise for the faithful and the threat of damnation for the idle were eternal.

II. Zeal

Faithful trust in God was the cornerstone of the holy war, but eagerness to fight for Him was equally essential. In the war against the infidels there could be no hesitation. A warrior with proper zeal encouraged the faithful and was merciless toward heathens, always full of passion and ready to seek the next battle for the faith. Guibert of Nogent describes how, after Pope Urban II’s speech, all of Europe was full of zeal for the holy war:

Whoever heard the news of the pontiff’s decree urged his neighbors and family to undertake the proposed ‘path of God’ (for this was its epithet). The courtly nobility were already burning with desire, and the middle-level knights were bursting to set out, when lo, the poor also were aflame with desire, without any consideration for the scarcity of their resources.  

The divinely inspired mission should fill all those who heard of it with eagerness, no matter their station or their resources. It was set apart from worldly things, more important than any secular consideration, and was the best chance for all those who heard of it to earn forgiveness for their sins.

While all men should demonstrate zeal and enthusiasm for the holy mission, commanders in particular had a chance to lead by example, demonstrating their faith by being the first to charge and the last to retreat. The Gesta Francorum describes how “The noble count of Flanders, armed at all points with faith and with the sign of the Cross (which he bore loyally every day), made straight for the enemy

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134 Guibert of Nogent, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 20.
with Bohemund at his side, and our men charged them in one line.”\textsuperscript{135} Guarded by the symbol of their faith, the crusaders were unified under God and eager to serve Him by battling His enemies. The virtue of their leaders made these men worthy to lead God’s people.

Chroniclers also emphasized that leaders who acted in this valiant way were the ones who were consistently victorious, indicating the divine favor brought by proper zeal while also aggrandizing the leaders themselves. Raymond of Aguilers describes how “A very noble Provencal knight, Isoard of Ganges, accompanied by 150 footmen, knelt, invoked the aid of God, and stirred his comrades to action by shouting, ‘Charge! Soldiers of Christ!’ Thereupon he hurled himself against the Turks, and... the haughtiness of the enemy was shattered.”\textsuperscript{136} Similarly, the \textit{Gesta Francorum} describes Bohemund’s fierce attacks on the infidels:

Bomhemund, protected on all sides by the sign of the cross, charged the Turkish forces, like a lion which has been starving for three or four days, which comes roaring out of its cave... His attack was so fierce that the points of his banner were flying right over the heads of the Turks. The other troops, seeing Bohemund’s banner carried ahead so honorably, stopped their retreat at once, and all our men in a body charged the Turks, who were amazed and took to flight. Our men pursued them and massacred them.\textsuperscript{137}

While the individual valor of these leaders is flatteringly emphasized, it is always paired with expressions of their faith and zeal, granting them both the characteristics necessary to win a secular victory and the ones necessary to deserve success in the eyes of God. Further, their power to inspire and lead by example was

\textsuperscript{135} Gesta Francorum, \textit{Chronicles of the First Crusade}, 158.
\textsuperscript{136} Raymond of Aguilers, \textit{Chronicles of the First Crusade}, 174.
\textsuperscript{137} Gesta Francorum, \textit{Chronicles of the First Crusade}, 178-179.
a great boon to the crusade, and surely earned great merit in the eyes of God. It was
to this ideal that all crusaders should aspire.

Muslim chroniclers were equally enthusiastic about enthusiasm. Imad ad-Din
describes the excitement when Saladin finally gathered his great army of holy
warriors to retake Jerusalem:

Each young man longed for the fire of battle, each man of the faith was
jealous for the Lord’s religion, each army was like a tempestuous sea,
everyone who stained a sharp sword with blood was defending the True
Faith, everyone who believed in the other life hated this lower one and asked
God for martyrdom, drawn away from desire for earthly survival and ready
to pour out his wealth in the holy cause.\textsuperscript{138}

Combining with the faith and conviction that God’s will would be done was an
eagerness to see it done and to help to accomplish it, and this affected all men of the
faith. By extension, those who did not feel such zeal must be weak in faith, slow to
fulfill their debt to God and undeserving of His rewards.

Zeal demonstrated through the personal valor of Muslim lords was just as
much a priority, providing examples for the leadership of the jihad to aspire to.
Some descriptions paralleled the European ones extremely closely, such as the
somewhat generic description of how “the amir Mu’in ad-Din performed prodigious
feats in this battle, showing unparalleled valor, tenacity and indefatigable prowess
in his onslaught on the enemy.”\textsuperscript{139} The amir is characterized as a great warrior, but
the only connection to zeal for his faith is that he is fighting in the context of holy
war. Others are even more explicitly religious than the European descriptions, with

\textsuperscript{138} Imad ad-Din, \textit{Arab Historians}, 150.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibn al-Qalanasi, \textit{Arab Historians}, 57-58.
faith becoming more the focus than battle prowess, such as Imad ad-Din’s
description of Saladin after his triumph at Jerusalem:

How many promises [Saladin] fulfilled, how much praise he won, the eternal
rewards he secured with the blood he had shed, the pious works added to his
account with a neck severed by him... I saw how he killed unbelief to give life
to Islam, and destroyed polytheism to build monotheism... the embers of the
assembled unbelievers faded and were extinguished.”

Here it is less Saladin’s battle prowess that is praised than the goals and results of
his battles, but his zeal for holy war remains the primary focus.

Many times praise for the zeal of Muslim rulers was not directly related to
their battle prowess but to their leadership and strategy. Ibn al-Athir describes how,
in the early years of the crusader incursion, “[The Franks] had laid siege to this town
and that, but Zahir ad-Din Tughtikin had barely heard the news before he was
mustered his men and marching on the Frankish territories. He besieged them and
raided them, and in this way forced the Franks to abandon their campaign and
return home.” Such was Tughtikin’s zeal for jihad, defense of the faithful, that
while other Muslim rulers solely defended themselves in their own territories he
went out seeking ways to drive the Franks back from all the lands of Islam. Similarly,
“during his reign in Mosul [Zangi] was entirely surrounded by hostile states, all
doing their best to seize his kingdom. But he, far from merely defending himself
from his enemies, never let a year pass without taking over a piece of enemy
territory.” Zangi’s zeal drove him to not merely hold the line against the infidels
but to actively push them back, even when beset on all sides. Taken together, these

140 Imad ad-Din, Arab Historians, 138-139.
141 Ibn al-Athir, Arab Historians, 41.
142 Ibn al-Athir, Arab Historians, 55.
examples point to zeal as a unifying concept; zealous rulers were driven by their faith to defend the faithful and fight the heathens everywhere, no matter how far from their personal domains. They were not content to merely defend the House of Islam; they also sought to expand it by driving back the House of War, spreading the Prophet Muhammad’s revelation as God had commanded.

Zeal could also be manifested in ways that were largely unrelated to personal might or larger strategy. Imad ad-Din praises how Saladin, when his troops were hesitating, “dispatched the doubters’ gloom with the light of his pious exhortation, brought every pious warning to bear on the sleepers to waken them, to incite wrath for the wicked, tenderness for friends and harshness for the enemies of God.”143 His zeal was inspiring to those who followed him, awakening their own zeal in a less military form of leading by example. In being able to stir up the faith and zeal of others, leaders such as Saladin could prove the strength of their own faith and the zeal they had for spreading it.

III. Sacrifice

Central to the holy war propaganda of both Christians and Muslims was martyrdom, the extension of faith and zeal even unto death. To die for the faith was presented as one of the greatest acts one could accomplish on Earth, a sure path to paradise. In Fulcher of Chartres’s description of the speech at Clermont, the Pope assures the listeners that “For all those going thither [to the holy land] there will be remission of sins if they come to the end of this fettered life while either marching

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143 Imad ad-Din, *Arab Historians*, 168.
by land or crossing by sea, or in fighting the pagans.”\textsuperscript{144} This ultimate sacrifice was an opportunity, but also an obligation. The Patriarch of Jerusalem, writing to those preparing the crusade, reminds the readers, “Did not God, innocent, die for us? Let us therefore also die, if it be our lot, not for him, but for ourselves, that by dying on earth we should live for God.”\textsuperscript{145} If the purpose of the crusade was to walk in Christ’s footsteps and re-consecrate the land from the stain of pagan evil, crusaders would have to be prepared for their journey to end in the same way that Christ’s had. In fact, they should be eager for it; it would ensure that they would be raised up to heaven. Bernard of Clairveux, in a letter to encourage the Templars, writes:

> Truly the knight... fears neither demon nor man. Nor does he fear death, for he wishes to die. Why should he fear, whether living or dying, since for him life is Christ and death is reward? He takes his stance for Christ willingly and faithfully but prefers to die and be with Christ ... Life brings its rewards and victory its glory, but a holy death is rightly considered preferable to both... How much more blessed are they who die for the Lord?\textsuperscript{146}

While glory, honor, respect, and riches are transitory things, the abbot emphasizes, the paradise that awaits martyrs is eternal, and far greater than any worldly reward.

To encourage and reassure potential martyrs, Christian chroniclers ensured that no martyr went unremembered; almost everyone who died throughout the campaign is explicitly referred to as a martyr, no matter the cause of death, and mention of the rewards of martyrdom always follows. Better-known figures, usually the noblemen and clergy leading the crusade, were mentioned by name. Raymond of Aguilers describes one such martyrdom:

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\textsuperscript{144} Fulcher of Chartres, \textit{Chronicles of the First Crusade}, 10.  
\textsuperscript{145} Patriarch of Jerusalem to the Church in the West, \textit{Chronicles of the First Crusade}, 166.  
\textsuperscript{146} Bernard of Clairveux, \textit{The Templars}, 217.
At the siege of Arqah Anselm of Ribemont died gloriously. Arising one morning, he summoned priests to him, confessed his omissions and sins, invoked God’s mercy and told them of the imminence of his death... Anselm on this same day advanced to combat some Saracens who had stealthily sneak ed out of their fort, hoping to steal something or inflict injury upon someone. In the ensuing melee Anselm fought courageously, but was hit on the head by a rock from a catapult. So he left this world to dwell in the heavenly home prepared for him by God.147

Pious to the end, Anselm showed no fear even after having predicted his death. His faith was strong enough that he was prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice, and he surely received the heavenly reward.

Lowborn martyrs, though generally referred to in groups, were still remembered and highly praised. Death for the faith could be achieved by anyone, and should instill enthusiasm in everyone. The Gesta Francorum describes the martyrdom of many crusaders during the siege of Nicaea:

We besieged the city for seven weeks and three days, and many of our men suffered martyrdom there and gave up their blessed souls to God with joy and gladness, and many of the poor starved to death for the name of Christ. All these entered heaven in triumph.148

All those faithful enough to die gladly, even those who starved rather than going down fighting, were worthy of God’s promise. Indeed, the rewards of martyrdom were not closed even to those who had greatly sinned. The Gesta Francorum also describes the end of the ill-fated Peasants’ Crusade, which had looted the churches Constantinople before being expelled from the city and soon surrounded by Turks. “Those who would not renounce God were killed... These men were the first to

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147 Raymond of Aguilers, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 286.
148 Gesta Francorum, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 111.
endure blessed martyrdom for the name of our Lord Jesus.” Despite their evil deeds, those who held firm in their faith in the face of death were still worthy of praise and divine favor.

Muslim chroniclers placed equal emphasis on the importance of sacrifice and its rewards. The righteous holy warrior “hated this lower [life] and asked God for martyrdom, drawn away from desire for earthly survival and ready to pour out his wealth in the holy cause.” The previously mentioned scholar al-Findalawi, fighting for the faith in spite of his advanced age and bookish nature, appears again in accounts by multiple chroniclers as a perfect example of this mentality. Ibn al-Qalanasi describes the old clerk’s death:

On this day the Malikite lawyer and scholar, the imam Yusuf al-Findalawi - God have mercy on him! - fell in battle, a martyr for the faith, by the river at ar-Rabwa. He was facing the enemy and refusing to withdraw, in obedience to the precepts of God Almighty in His noble book. The devout Abd ar-Rahman al-Halhuli met the same fate.

Al-Findalawi’s martyrdom is presented as being in obedience to God, exemplifying the submission to the will of the divine to which all Muslims should aspire. The scholar himself, having stated that his life was "bought" by God in exchange for paradise, actively sought martyrdom, the proper repayment. Ibn al-Athir writes of the assurance of al-Findalawi’s divine reward: “A certain learned lawyer said that he saw al-Findalawi in a dream and asked him: ‘How has God treated you and where

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149 Gesta Francorum, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 64-65.
150 Imad ad-Din, Arab Historians, 138-139.
151 Ibn al-Qalanasi, Arab Historians, 57.
are you?’ and received the reply, ‘God has pardoned me. I am in the Garden of Eden (among the blessed).’ Like the besiegers of Nicaea, he entered heaven in triumph.

As with Christian chronicles, both prominent individuals and groups of lesser persons were recognized for their sacrifice. Ibn al-Athir provides frequent eulogies for martyrs, both specific and general. On one occasion he writes:

Among the Muslim martyrs was the amir ‘Izz ad-Din Isa ibn Malik, one of the leading amirs and the son of the ruler of Ja’bar. Every day he had led the attack himself, and at his death passed to God’s great mercy; a man dear to Muslims both great and small, whose death brought grief and sorrow to many. Ibn Malik is portrayed as an ideal righteous leader, leading from the front with fearless faith. But in another battle he recognizes that “The only Muslims to stand firm were a detachment of warriors from the holy land, who fought to acquire merit in God’s eyes and to seek martyrdom.” Nameless common soldiers could be remembered alongside the great and powerful, and receive the same heavenly reward; God would recognize the sacrifice of any man of faith.

IV. Endurance

Where the virtue of faith, unifying all true servants of God, countered internal struggles, and the virtue of zeal, eagerness to be a selfless servant of God, dispelled the temptations of apathy and luxury, the virtue of endurance was the opposite counterpart to the lack of steadfastness that so often provoked desertion among holy warriors. Conditions for both sides were often incredibly harsh, particularly

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during periods of siege, and as a result chroniclers lavished praise upon those who stood firm in difficult situations. Sometimes this came in the form of the incredible prowess of individuals who held out against the odds. The *Gesta Francorum* describes a Muslim attack on a tower guarded by three knights during the siege of Antioch:

Two of the knights were wounded and came out from the tower, but the third defended himself manfully all day from the Turkish attack, and fought so bravely that he overthrew two Turks at the approach to the wall, breaking his own spears. On that day three spears were broken in his hands, but both the Turks were killed.\(^\text{155}\)

This was an example that any crusader could aspire to; while the desertion or retreat of even a single man could spell disaster, the brave endurance of a single man (even, or perhaps especially, when his comrades failed) could prevent disaster.

The leadership of the crusade showed endurance when they chose to rally the people and continue fighting the infidels. Again, the power of their example to their followers was greatly emphasized, as is clear in this excerpt from the *Gesta Francorum*:

"All our leaders took counsel together at that hour that they should all swear an oath that none of them, while he lived, would flee, either from fear of death or from hope of life. It is said that Bohemund took the oath first, and after him the count of St Giles, Robert the Norman, Duke Godfrey and the count of Flanders. But Tancred swore and vowed that so long as he had forty knights to follow him, he would not turn aside either from this battle or from the march to Jerusalem. When the Christians heard of this oath they were greatly encouraged."

\(^{155}\) *Gesta Francorum, Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 216-217.
The willingness to swear and follow these binding oaths amidst hardship and setbacks spoke well not only of a nobleman’s secular honor but of his faith, since it demonstrated that he had trust that God would deliver ultimate victory to the faithful no matter the present difficulties.

The army of the faithful as a whole demonstrated endurance when they held firm, providing an example for all future holy warriors (regardless of their social status) to follow. Raymond of Aguilers describes with pride the steadfastness of the crusaders:

“All the hellish din of battle broke loose; from all parts stones hurled from [catapults] flew through the air, and arrows pelted like hail. But God’s servants, resolute in their faith regardless of the outcome of death or immediate vengeance on the pagans, endured this attack patiently.”

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Trusting in God’s will because of their strong faith, the crusader army was therefore fearless of death; it was impossible for the enemy to intimidate them in spite of the terrible barrage they were unleashing. Furthermore, the trials facing the crusader army themselves were righteous; they caused the crusaders, whose goal was to walk in the footsteps of Christ, to suffer as Christ had, re-sanctifying the holy land with their sacrifice in a parallel to the self-sacrifice of the Son of God. It is thus with pride that the Gesta Francorum records, “These and many other troubles and anxieties... we suffered for the name of Christ and to set free the road to the Holy Sepulchre.”

157 Worldly suffering only made the crusaders more worthy of heavenly reward.

156 Raymond of Aguilers, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 326.
157 Gesta Francorum, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 218.
Muslim chroniclers also emphasized the power of oaths, binding contracts with God that effectively surrendered the idea of self-preservation in favor of standing firm at all costs. Ibn al-Qalanasi, for example, describes how Ilghazi, one of the earliest leaders to resist the crusaders, “made all the amirs and commanders renew their oath to fight bravely, to stand firm without retreating, and to offer their lives in the Holy War.” And just as the crusaders praised those whose endurance drove them to fight until all of the holy land was in Christian hands, Muslim chroniclers praised those who, like Saladin, felt that “It is better to carry on the Holy War until we have expelled [the Franks] from Palestine, or death overtakes us [than to make peace].” Purifying the holy land from the taint of the infidel invaders and thereby securing the House of Islam was not something that true holy warriors were content to do halfway. No matter the personal cost, they would continue the war until the goal was accomplished in full. Even in grief and failure they would refuse to give up, as demonstrated by the account of the moment when Saladin heard that his efforts to relieve the city of Acre from siege by the crusaders had been unsuccessful: “The Sultan was smitten by the news [of Acre’s impending fall] as by no other blow that had ever struck him, to such an extent that his life was feared for. But he continued his unceasing prayers to God and turned to Him throughout the crisis, with patience and pious abnegation and tenacious energy.” The concepts of patience and of turning to God in times of trial were essential to both the Christian and Muslim models of endurance, as they clearly demonstrated faith in His plan

158 Ibn al-Qalanasi, Arab Historians, 37.
159 Baha’ ad-Din, Arab Historians, 230.
160 Baha’ ad-Din, Arab Historians, 217.
even in times of hardship; it was more virtuous to be faithful when His beneficence was not obvious than when it was easily seen and rejoiced in.

V. Justice and Generosity

While most virtues emphasized by chroniclers of holy war were applicable to all who served under the banner of their faith, the virtues of justice and generosity were targeted specifically at the nobility, those who had the means to be generous and the responsibility to be just. They were also less emphasized overall, as they were less directly related to ultimate military victory. However, both Christianity and Islam have strong scriptural language about these virtues, and thus lords who were truly and strongly faithful should possess them. Further, they did have benefits on campaign, as these qualities were admired by the rank and file and thus helped to preserve the fragile coalitions on which armies of the faith depended.

Even so, these virtues tended to be emphasized in the rulers that each individual chronicler favored and largely ignored (or the lack of them criticized) in other lords. The Gesta Francorum, for example, is a flattering portrayal of Bohemond; it describes how, when the lord joined the crusade, “Bohemond, inspired by the Holy Ghost, ordered the most valuable cloak which he had to be cut up forthwith and made into crosses, and most of the knights who were [present] began to join him at once, for they were full of enthusiasm.”161 Bohemond’s faith moved him to give away his valuables, as Christ commanded. His cutting of his cloak may have been in imitation of St. Martin, a warrior saint who famously divided his

161 Gesta Francorum, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 73.
cloak with a beggar. His zeal impressed the other knights who were present, inspiring them to join him even though they were in the middle of a different war in Italy. Yet these two virtues are clearly filtered through the more specific virtue of generosity. Similarly, when the crusade had begun to lose the advantage of its heavily armored knights because so many of their mounts had been slain, they held a council among their leaders. “At the conclusion of the council,” Raymond of Aguilers records, “Raymond [of Toulouse] distributed 500 marks to the group on the terms that, if any one of the knights lost his horse, it would be replaced from the 500 marks.” 162 By giving of his own money to support the cause of the army of the faith as a whole, Raymond demonstrates generosity and proves that his motives are to fight for God and not to gain wealth for himself. However, it is not a coincidence that this story is reported by Raymond of Aguilers, who frequently portrayed his namesake in a flattering light.

Descriptions of the justice of the crusade’s leadership likewise sought to emphasize the purity of their motives, and were likewise largely restricted to the leaders favored by each chronicler. The Gesta Francorum, for example, mentions multiple times that Bohemond prevented his troops from sacking lands belonging to other Christians. For example, “Bohemond called a council to encourage his men, and to warn them all to be courteous and refrain from plundering that land, which belonged to Christians, and he said that no one was to take more than sufficed for his food.” 163 Later, “our men wanted to attack one of the [Byzantine] castles and take it, because it was full of goods of all kinds, but the valiant Bohemond would not

162 Raymond of Aguilers, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 154.
163 Gesta Francorum, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 74.
allow this, for he wished to treat the country justly and to keep faith with the emperor."\(^{164}\) By setting aside easy opportunities to enrich himself by plundering unsuspecting lands because they belonged to other faithful, Bohemond demonstrated the crusader ideals of unity and just conduct within the faith.

Muslim chroniclers similarly championed their favored lords' faith and contribution to the holy war by emphasizing these virtues. Ibn al-Qalanasi, praising one of the earliest leaders of the jihad, reports how the Turkic leader “Ilghazi took over the Frankish camp and his soldiers brought to him the booty they had collected, but he took only some arms to be sent to the rulers of Islam and left the rest to his troops.”\(^{165}\) Such is Ilghazi's generosity that he not only leaves most of the spoils of war, which he could easily use to enrich himself, to his troops as a reward for their service but goes so far as to use what little he takes solely to support other Muslim leaders in the struggle. Similarly, Ibn al-Athir, a firm partisan of the Zangid dynasty, describes how Zangi destroyed Edessa, the first crusader kingdom to be established and the first to be retaken:

“But when Zangi inspected [Edessa] he liked it and realized it would not be sound policy to reduce such a place to ruins. He therefore gave the order that his men should return every man, woman, and child to his home together with the goods and chattels looted from them. This was done in all but a very few cases, in which the captor had already left the camp. The city was restored to its former state, and Zangi installed a garrison to defend it.”\(^{166}\)

Although Zangi could have reaped the revenues of slave sales and spoils taken from the city, enriching himself and avoiding the necessity of paying his troops out of his

\(^{164}\) Gesta Francorum, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 88.
\(^{165}\) Ibn al-Qalanasi, *Arab Historians*, 38.
\(^{166}\) Ibn al-Athir, *Arab Historians*, 52.
own treasury, he instead has it all returned and rebuilds Edessa because its strong walls are an important tactical advantage in the holy war. Ibn al-Athir’s chronicle also contains such an account of the ever-virtuous Nur ad-Din:

Nur ad-Din’s wife once complained that she did not have enough money to provide adequately for his needs... He retorted, ‘I have nothing else. With all the money I command, I am but the treasurer of the Muslims, and I have no intention of betraying them, nor of casting myself into the fires of hell on your account.’

By considering only the holy war and not their own interests, these men provide an example for righteous leaders to follow.

As the example of Ibn al-Athir’s description of Edessa shows, generosity for Muslim chroniclers could be framed as restorative, renewing the devastated holy land rather than contributing to its ruin for selfish reasons. Justice could be framed in the same way. Ibn al-Athir, again in praise of the leader he favored, writes of Zangi’s efforts to restore newly-reconquered territory:

One of Zangi’s finest acts was his treatment of the people of Ma’arra. When Franks took the town they seized their possessions... including the title deeds. [Zangi] had the land registers in Aleppo examined, and anyone for whom there was an entry for the land tax on a particular holding was given that land. Thus he restored their land to the people of Ma’arra, the finest act of justice and generosity that I ever heard of.167

Paralleling Bohemond’s instructions not to ravage the lands of fellow Christians, Zangi’s decision to go to significant effort to restore to their original owners lands he could easily have seized for himself points to his desire to aid the faithful rather than expand his personal wealth. Similarly, Ibn al-Qalanasi describes how, even when marching to take Damascus from those who had made alliances with infidels and

167 Ibn al-Athir, Arab Historians, 43.
failed to answer the call of jihad “Nur ad-Din acted benevolently toward the peasants and did not impose his presence on them. Throughout Damascus and all its dependencies, the people prayed to God on his behalf.”\textsuperscript{168} Nur ad-Din’s quarrel was with the rulers of Damascus, not the innocent Muslims they ruled, so he justly treated them well; in return, he gained their support, and ultimately gained control of the city with almost no bloodshed.

Justice was also a preserver of the unity of the faithful. Ibn al-Athir describes how the early jihad leader Suqman reacted when he was robbed of a valuable crusader hostage by other Muslims ostensibly fighting alongside him:

“When Suqman returned he was exceedingly angry, and his followers leapt into the saddle and were on the point of setting out in pursuit, but he called them back and said: ‘The Muslims will be as dismayed at our quarrel as they were delighted at our reconciliation. I should not want to give the enemy the satisfaction of seeing me give vent to my anger at Islam’s expense.’”\textsuperscript{169}

Recognizing that fighting other Muslims would be harmful to the holy war, Suqman allows a personal slight to pass, generously bowing to the need for the divine justice of jihad rather than seizing personal justice. For chroniclers of both religions, justice and generosity represented restraint and selflessness in the name of the faith.

\textbf{VI. Conclusion}

The image of the righteous warrior as portrayed through examples of good conduct blends seamlessly with the image provided by examples of bad conduct. Whether Christian or Muslim, he possesses unshakeable faith that holy war is God’s

\textsuperscript{168} Ibn al-Qalanasi, \textit{Through Arab Eyes}, 150.
\textsuperscript{169} Ibn al-Athir, \textit{Arab Historians}, 20.
commandment. His dedication to and enthusiasm for carrying out the will of God is absolute, and cannot be tempered by personal hardship, self-interest, or even the fear of death. He lives and dies in defense of the faithful, and knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that paradise awaits him.

5. Divine Favor

By giving examples of righteous and unrighteous conduct, Christian and Muslim chroniclers established a clear model of how a holy warrior should act. And yet, despite the promise of heavenly reward, the model was a demanding one; there was much mention of death and suffering among the faithful. To counterbalance the fearsome prospects of pain, martyrdom, and personal loss, chroniclers emphasized the inevitable victory of the true faith over its pagan enemies. While they often did so in a direct address to the reader, as an aside from the course of the chronicle itself, they found their proof of divine favor in the same way that they had shown how the righteous should act: by drawing examples from the histories they recorded. Their evidence that God was on their side came in the form of events in which they claimed that He had strengthened the faithful, hindered the heathens, granted deliverance from hopeless situations, created miracles to show His favor, and sent heavenly warriors to fight alongside the armies of His chosen.

I. Strengthening the Faithful

According to every chronicler, Christian and Muslim, every battle won by the faithful was won “by God’s help.” The phrase appears countless times in all records
of the struggle for the holy land, a simple reminder that the war was one of true faith against wicked paganism, with the victory of the former assured. Often, however, chroniclers went further to emphasize how the power of God had given them victory, especially at times when they seemed to lack the secular strength to defeat their enemies. Fulcher of Chartres describes how, during the difficult siege of Antioch, “The rich as well as the poor were wretched because of starvation as well as the slaughter, which daily occurred. Had not God, like a good pastor, held His sheep together, without doubt they would all have fled.”170 When the crusaders were suffering righteously for the faith, and that suffering went beyond their earthly endurance, God gave them the strength to go on in His name. The further they went and the more they accomplished in the name of the true faith, the greater the favor shown to them by God; as Raymond of Aguilers records, describing the final push toward Jerusalem, “Day by day the poor regained health, the knights became stronger, the army seemed to multiply; and the further we marched the greater were God’s benefits.”171 God, as the old adage goes, helped those who helped themselves, rewarding their faith not only in the next life but also in the material world. Even the doomed People’s Crusade, which had sinned so grievously in looting the churches of Byzantium, was aided by being given the strength to endure their martyrdom: “God, who customarily turns many vain undertakings to a pious end, prepared salvation for their simple souls, because of their good intentions.”172

170 Fulcher of Chartres, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 147.
171 Raymond of Aguilers, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 280.
172 Guibert of Nogent, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 22.
But in holy war it was more important to achieve victory over the heathens than to simply endure the suffering they brought about, and the favor of God was seen as equally relevant in this regard. Those who fought with true faith, as righteous warriors who sought to serve the divine rather than enrich or empower themselves, would experience that favor in battle. The Patriarch of Jerusalem explained the victories of the crusade:

Confiding not in numbers, nor in bravery, nor in any presumption, but protected by justice and the shield of Christ, and with St George, Theodore, Demetrius and Basil, soldiers of Christ, truly supporting us, we have pierced, and in security are piercing, the ranks of the enemy. On five general battlefields, God conquering, we have conquered.  

The crusaders were shown as instruments of God’s will. Through them He achieved victory, and as such the victory was His, as all the righteous would recognize. But God was not portrayed as a distant lord, giving commands and then watching from afar. Instead He was shown as an ally and an active participant in each and every battle. Stephen of Blois describes how, during a difficult struggle, “God, however, fought for us, his faithful, against [the Turks]. For on that day, fighting in the strength that God gives, we conquered them and killed an innumerable multitude - God continually fighting for us.” God was a part of the war, and His presence made victory certain. Invoking His name in the fight earned His further favor and support. The Gesta Francorum tells of how “we called upon the true and living God and rode

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173 Patriarch of Jerusalem to the Church in the West, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 166.
174 Stephen of Blois to His Wife Adela, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 185.
against them, joining battle in the name of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Sepulchre, and by God's help we defeated [the Turks].”

Muslim chroniclers placed equal emphasis on the role of God as strengthener of the faithful in battle and granter of victory. Phrases such as “God gave the Muslims a glorious victory and cast down the infidels” and “God gave victory to the Muslims. The Franks who fled to their camp were slaughtered” inevitably appear whenever a chronicler describes a success by Muslim armies. Such language clearly establishes God as the guarantor of victory to righteous warriors. God was also shown to grant strength and favor to Muslim leaders who behaved righteously. Imad ad-Din describes how Saladin rode forth “accompanied by victory, aided by unfailing supplies, supported by power, buttressed by good fortune, augmented by luck, with success in attendance, conversant with glory, the companion of victory, with the thanks of Islam and the support of God Almighty.” The long list emphasizes the omnipotence of God; there was nothing He could not grant to the faithful who truly fought in His name, making the cause of the infidels hopeless.

Muslim chroniclers also used their knowledge of Christianity, however distorted, in an effort to more directly demonstrate God’s favor for Islam. Sibt ibn al-Jauzi writes in his account of the siege of Damascus:

The Franks had with them a great priest with a long beard, whose teachings they obeyed. On the tenth day of the siege of Damascus he mounted his ass, hung a cross around his neck, took two more in his hand and hung another round the ass’s neck. He had the testaments and the crosses and the Holy

175 Gesta Francorum, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 224.
176 Ibn al-Athir, Arab Historians, 16.
177 Ibn al-Qalanasi, Arab Historians, 37.
178 Imad ad-Din, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 127.
Scriptures set before him... Then he said: 'The Messiah has promised me that today I shall wipe out this city.' At this moment the Muslims opened the city gates and in the name of Islam charged as one man into the face of death... One of the men of the Damascus militia reached the priest, who was fighting in the front line, struck his head from his body and killed his ass too. As the whole Muslim army bore down upon them the Franks turned and fled.\textsuperscript{179}

All of the infidel priest's symbols of faith and all of his promises in the name of the Messiah were proven false by the strength of the righteous Muslim warriors, who needed no such reassurance to have faith that God was on their side. Similarly, Ibn al-Athir describes how, when Saladin fought the Franks at Hattin, "The Muslims captured their great cross, called the 'True Cross', in which they say is a piece of wood upon which, according to them, the Messiah was crucified. This was one of the heaviest blows that could be inflicted on them and made their death and destruction certain."\textsuperscript{180} The explicit skepticism about the relic, combined with the recognition that its loss was a heavy blow, reinforces the message of Islam as the true faith, with the support of God in fighting the infidels.

II. Hindering the Heathens

The chroniclers did not restrict divine intervention on the behalf of the faithful to bolstering the faithful themselves; God was equally often depicted confounding the efforts of the infidels. Sometimes this intervention was subtle. Raymond of Aguilers writes on one occasion that "God, the customary scourge of wicked counsel, ruined [the Turks’] schemes."\textsuperscript{181} Similarly, Fulcher of Chartes

\textsuperscript{180} Ibn al-Athir, \textit{Arab Historians}, 122.  
\textsuperscript{181} Raymond of Aguilers, \textit{Chronicles of the First Crusade}, 112.
records that “On a certain day it happened that seven hundred Turks were killed by the Franks, and thus those who had prepared snares for the Franks were by snares overcome. For the power of God was manifest there.” When infidels resorted to traps and tricks that might threaten the faithful, God prevented their plans from succeeding and even turned them back on the planners. Only divine inspiration, and never the “wicked counsel” that sprung from demonic paganism, could bring victory in the holy war. Therefore only the righteous could achieve it.

At other times God’s efforts against the enemies of the faith were less subtle. The Gesta Francorum records that “God’s enemies and ours were standing about, amazed and terrified... The knights of the true God, armed at all points with the sign of the Cross, charged them fiercely and made a brave attack upon them... Those who did not [escape] suffered there everlasting death with the devil and his imps.” God’s splendor, made manifest through the faithful, sowed fear and dismay among the heathens, breaking their ranks and forcing them to flee or die. This sowing of the fear of God among His enemies is a recurrent trope in many of the chronicles. Raymond of Aguilers tells of an occasion when the crusaders were engaged in a difficult siege of a well-fortified castle, and were making little progress. But God, the guide and protector of Christians from all disasters, so terrorized the [Turkish] defenders that in their precipitate haste they left their dead unburied. In the morning only spoils of war and a ghost castle awaited us. So great was the holy terror brought by the presence of the True God that infidel soldiers in a position of

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182 Fulcher of Chartres, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 146.
183 Gesta Francorum, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 181.
184 Raymond of Aguilers, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 283.
advantage behind strong walls threw down their weapons and fled. The same terror could halt a siege just as surely as it could win one; Raymond also writes how, during the siege of a city the crusaders had previously taken:

“On the third day [the Turks] stormed the fort so forcefully that it seemed that only God’s power protected it and halted the enemy, because for some unknown reason the Turks became panic-stricken... They pressed forward furiously as if to wipe out their shameful rout, but once again were intimidated by God’s power.”

In this way the Christian chroniclers portrayed a mighty God who could ensure the victory of His faithful by directly routing their enemies.

Muslim chroniclers also emphasized the power of God’s wrath to hinder and destroy the infidels in direct terms. Ibn al-Qalanasi writes of how, in the successful campaigns of Zangi, “Almighty God was... casting down the rebellious infidels and hastening their death and utter destruction and the coming of the time when no trace of them should remain. Such a thing is not difficult for God the Omnipotent, the Almighty.” As with the Christian chronicles, God is not limited to strengthening the faithful; He is directly involved in defeating the enemies of the faith. At the Battle of Hattin, for example, the Muslims had entrapped the bulk of the Christian forces inside a narrow ravine. “Seeing that the only way to save their lives was to defy death [the Franks] made a series of charges that almost dislodged the Muslims from their position in spite of their numbers, had not the grace of God been with them.”

When providing the faithful with strength and wisdom was insufficient to assure

185 Raymond of Aguilers, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 205.
their victory, God directly foiled the attacks of their enemies, the shield of grace at Hattin closely paralleling the shield of holy fear that Raymond of Aguilers described.

Muslim chroniclers also portrayed God hindering the crusaders in more subtle ways. When a dispute over the succession of the Kingdom of Jerusalem caused a rift between the new king and Count Raymond, the discord made Saladin’s campaign against the crusader kingdoms easier; it was therefore a setback when “[Count Raymond] agreed to make his peace and be reunited with them and return with them to the Frankish king... But God saw that it did them no good. Infantry and cavalry mustered and marched from Acre to Saffuriyya, but they were reluctant and demoralized.”188 Such was the reach and power of the divine that even events in which the faithful had no role could be influenced by “Almighty God... to debase polytheism and its faction,”189 ensuring the ultimate victory of the true faith.

III. Deliverance

In spite of the favor of God, manifest in His tireless aid to the faithful and equally tireless smiting of pagans, the situation for crusaders and jihadis sometimes became desperate. Fortunately, the chroniclers emphasize, God in His mercy was prepared to rescue them from such dark times. Thanks to such intervention the faithful did not always endure martyrdom even in defeat. The Gesta Francorum describes on one occasion how "If God had not been with us in this battle... none of us would have escaped... but Almighty God, who is gracious and merciful, delivered His knights from death and from falling into the hands of the enemy and sent us help

188 Ibn al-Athir, Arab Historians, 119.
189 Ibn al-Qalanasi, Arab Historians, 67.
speedily.” God would not allow the crusade to fail so long as the crusaders remained faithful, and so no military defeat could destroy them so long as they called on Him. This protection also applied to faithful individuals. Raymond of Aguilers describes how “The Pechenegs captured the Bishop of Le Puy... [but] the great bishop, indispensable to God’s justice, was spared to mankind because of God’s compassion. When the commotion was heard in camp, the attacking crusaders saved the bishop.” God’s merciful intervention was not always flashy or overt, as the bishop’s case demonstrates, but it was always effective.

The mercy and compassion of the almighty were, however, restricted to the deserving. If the crusaders fell away from righteousness, they would have to seek absolution before receiving deliverance. Fulcher of Chartres writes:

We humbly begged mercy from God... The Lord does not give victory to splendor of nobility nor brilliance in arms but lovingly helps in their need the pure in heart and those who are fortified with divine strength. Therefore He, perhaps appeased by our supplications, gradually restored our strength and more and more weakened the Turks.

Similarly, Raymond of Aguilers writes of an appeal to the divine made outside the walls of Jerusalem during the city’s difficult and uncertain siege.

A spirit of forgiveness came over the army and along with liberal donations we implored God’s mercy. We urged that He should not forsake His people at the last moment after he had brought them gloriously and marvelously thus far in their quest of the Holy Sepulchre. God now was on our side because our bad luck now turned to good and all went well.

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190 Gesta Francorum, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 128.
191 Raymond of Aguilers, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 104.
192 Fulcher of Chartres, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 131.
193 Raymond of Aguilers, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 324.
The chroniclers emphasized that God supported the faithful and deserving and opposed the pagans, but also that it was sometimes necessary for the faithful to prove their faith through supplication, particularly after they had sinned or shown doubt in His plan. Thus it was important to follow the model of the righteous warrior in the first place.

Deliverance of another sort was also evident in each chronicle: deliverance of the holy land from the wickedness of paganism, and the suffering and desecration which the pagans had brought about. Raymond of Aguilers writes of the crusade’s passage through pagan Eastern Europe:

We passed through Slavonia without losses from starvation or open conflict largely through God's mercy... This successful crossing of the barbarous lands leads us to believe that God wished His host of warriors to cross through Slavonia in order that brutish, pagan men, by learning of the strength and long-suffering of His soldiers, would at some time recover from their savageness or as unabsolved sinners be led to God's doom.\(^\text{194}\)

This passage serves not only as another reminder that the crusade’s mission was a spiritual one, not one aimed at material gain, but also as a proof of the contribution of God’s power to the ultimate and inevitable success of that mission. After the capture of Jerusalem and the slaughter of most of its residents, including a large number who had taken shelter on the Temple Mount, Raymond triumphantly recorded: “In my opinion this was poetic justice that the Temple of Solomon should receive the blood of pagans who blasphemed God there for many years.”\(^\text{195}\) Aided by God, the faithful would re-consecrate the holy land by the blood of those who had profaned it, and in this way it would be delivered from unbelief.

\(^{194}\) Raymond of Aguilers, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 103.

\(^{195}\) Raymond of Aguilers, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 328-329.
Muslim chroniclers also emphasized the power of the divine to bring salvation to the faithful in difficult situations. The omnipotent and omniscient God could end threats to the Ummah even before they became apparent. When the rulers of France, England, and the Holy Roman Empire embarked on the Third Crusade, they were weakened when Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa drowned in a river in Anatolia, effectively ending his domain’s part in the crusade. Ibn al-Athir writes that “If God had not shown His grace to Islam in the death of the German King on his way to attack Syria... it would have been said one day that Syria and Egypt had once been Muslim lands.”

Having foreseen a threat to the true faith that His faithful could not overcome in battle, the Almighty simply destroyed it. Similarly, when an aged and battle-worn Saladin finally made a treaty with the remaining crusader kingdoms, “It was indeed a good thing [to make peace with the Franks], as God in his prescience knew, for Saladin died soon afterward, and if he had died during a campaign Islam would have been in danger. Peace was therefore an act of divine providence and a fortunate occurrence for Islam.” Deliverance was proven by the power of God, in knowing what was to come, to influence events to the advantage of Islam when they might instead have proven disastrous.

Deliverance from the suffering and desecration brought to the holy land by the faithless infidels was equally important. Ibn al-Athir writes of the aftermath of Saladin’s recapture of Jerusalem:

“At the top of the cupola of the Dome of the Rock there was a great gilded cross. When the Muslims entered the city on the Friday, some of them

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196 Ibn al-Athir, Arab Historians, 183.
197 Baha’ ad-Din, Arab Historians, 234.
climbed up to the top of the cupola to take down the cross. When they reached the top a great cry went up from the city and from outside the walls, the Muslims crying the Allah akbar in their joy, the Franks groaning in consternation and grief.”

The sanctity of the Dome of the Rock was restored, bringing joy to the faithful and grief to the faithless. This victory served as proof that God would make possible the mission of cleansing and re-consecration requested in the call to jihad. Writing of the same event, Imad ad-Din describes how “The victory of Islam was clear, and so was the death of Unbelief... The Qur’an was raised to the throne and the Testaments cast down.” God’s deliverance of Jerusalem from her captivity by the unbelievers proved that He would keep His promise to the faithful, a sentence that could have been written by either Christians or Muslims.

IV. Miracles and Heavenly Warriors

While Christian and Muslim chroniclers established the ability of God to influence reality in ways that advanced the cause of the true faith, they also emphasized the ability of the Almighty to surpass the limits of reality entirely in the form of miracles. The type of overt divine intervention found in the scriptures of both religions was portrayed as being manifest on the battlefields of the holy war, demonstrating once again that a war in the name of God was a different kind of war than mere secular conflict.

198 Ibn al-Athir, Arab Historians, 144.
199 Imad ad-Din, Arab Historians, 156 and 164.
Some of the miracles recorded by Christian chroniclers were acts of divine reassurance. Fulcher of Chartres, writing about the difficult passage certain crusaders took by sea to begin the pilgrimage, recorded that:

Among all these ships we saw one near the shore which suddenly cracked... Consequently, four hundred of both sexes perished by drowning, but concerning them joyous praise at once went up to God. For when those standing round about had collected as many bodies of the dead as possible, they found crosses actually imprinted in the flesh of some of them... It was... proper that such a miracle should show those who witnessed it that the dead had now attained by the mercy of God the peace of eternal life. Thus it was most certainly manifest that the scriptural prophecy had been fulfilled: 'The just, though they shall be taken prematurely by death, shall be at peace.' 200

Even in the midst of a horrific disaster God’s presence and mercy were made evident to the crusaders, reassuring them of the rewards of the true path no matter how they met their end while walking it. Similarly, amidst the terrible trials of starvation and thirst the crusaders suffered while besieged within the newly-captured city of Antioch, Raymond of Aguilers describes how visions appeared to the Christian defenders. Guided by Mary, Christ, and Saint Andrew, they began to dig in the “church of the blessed Peter,” whereupon, “prompted by His gracious compassion, the Lord showed us His lance.” 201 This Holy Lance, the weapon used to pierce Christ’s side at His crucifixion, was said to make the army that carried it invincible. The Gesta Francorum describes the aftermath of the lance’s discovery:

St Andrew appeared again, saying... ‘Know of a truth that he who carries this lance in battle shall never be overcome by the enemy...’ When our men heard that their enemies were destined to be altogether defeated, their spirits revived at once, and they began to encourage one another, saying, ‘Let us

200 Fulcher of Chartres, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 99.
201 Raymond of Aguilers, Chronicles of the First Crusade, 212-213.
arise, and be strong and brave, for God will soon come to our help, and he will be a mighty refuge for his people, on whom he has looked in the time of their affliction.\textsuperscript{202}

When besieged by a much larger army, with dwindling supplies and rampant disease within the walls, a secular army would despair. But the crusaders, set aside in their faithful intentions, received a sign from God in the form of a mighty relic to bolster their spirits and reassure them of the righteousness and inevitable victory of their cause.

Other miracles were more military in nature. Raymond of Aguilers records how, before the weary crusaders commenced a difficult battle in which they were badly outnumbered:

God increased the size of the six units of the knights so that each one seemed to grow from scarcely seven hundred men to more than two thousand… Furthermore, God, who had offered the above-mentioned advantages, now offered us six adjoining valleys by which our troops could move to battle… Without delay the ever-present Lord ‘strong and mighty in battle’ shielded his children and cast down the pagans.\textsuperscript{203}

Where the ranks of the faithful were insufficient, God bolstered them with soldiers of heaven. The presence of angels and saints on the battlefield, leading the charge, was a recurrent trope in the writing of many Christian chroniclers. The \textit{Gesta Francorum} records how, when a crusader force faltered in battle:

Then... appeared from the mountains a countless host of men on white horses, whose banners were all white. When our men saw this, they did not understand what was happening or who these men might be, until they realized that this was the succor sent by Christ, and that the leaders were St

\textsuperscript{202} \textit{Gesta Francorum, Chronicles of the First Crusade}, 216.  
\textsuperscript{203} \textit{Raymond of Aguilers, Chronicles of the First Crusade}, 170-171.
George, St Mercurius and St Demetrius. (This is quite true, for many of our men saw it.)

This overt evidence of the presence and favor of God, with his heavenly and earthly servants fighting the scourge of paganism together, served as the ultimate reassurance of the inevitable victory of the true faith, for as Christian scripture records, “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

Muslim chronicles also contain this ultimate reassurance through the direct intervention of omnipotent God. Ibn al-Qalanasi writes of how, in a battle against numerically superior crusaders:

Almighty and all-conquering God had sent His virtuous supporters victory and condemned the rebel infidels to hell... The Muslim army lost only two men: one of the champions mentioned earlier, who killed four infidel champions before his time came... and one other, an unknown foreigner. Both died as martyrs for the faith, deserving a heavenly reward.

In an ordinary battle more men than this would inevitably die on both sides in the first charge. But a battle in the name of God was not an ordinary battle, and the presence and favor of God could make the impossible possible in His name.

Descriptions of the presence of heavenly warriors to aid the faithful closely parallel Christian descriptions, save that where white was the color of Christian saints and angels, green was the heavenly color for Muslims. Muslim chroniclers also tended to write more subtly about the origins of these mysterious warriors from on high, leaving the presence of the heavenly color to allow the reader to infer

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204 Gesta Francorum, *Chronicles of the First Crusade*, 223.
205 Romans 8:31.
divine intervention. Ibn al-Qalanasi, for example, writes of the aftermath of one of Ilghazi’s victories:

When the prisoners were brought before [Ilghazi] he noticed one of magnificent physique, who had been captured by a small, thin, ill-armed Muslim. As he passed before the Prince the Turcoman soldiers said to him: ‘Aren’t you ashamed to have been captured by this little man, with a physique like yours?’ and he replied: ‘By God, this man did not capture me; he is not my conqueror. The man who captured me was a great man, greater and stronger than I, and he handed me over to this fellow. He wore a green robe and rode a green horse!’

The final details mark the mysterious warrior, who was able to triumph over the mightiest soldiers of the Franks and yet generously gave away his prisoner to a weak but faithful man, as a divine emissary of the Prophet Muhammad. Similarly, while Saladin was trying to break the crusader siege of Acre, a messenger reported to him of a curious disturbance, likely an earthquake.

The messenger ... said that from the great noise heard in the city during the night the Franks thought that a great army had entered Acre. ‘A Frank,’ he said, ‘came up to the wall and cried out to one of the guards: ‘In the name of your Faith, tell me how many soldiers came into your city last night.’ This was the night ... during which a great uproar was heard that alarmed both sides, but its cause was not discovered. ‘A thousand cavalry,’ replied the other. ‘No,’ he returned, ‘fewer than that; I saw them myself, and they were dressed in green robes!’

Such was the might of the warriors of God that the ground shook at their passing, and these warriors were on the side of the true faith, making the triumph of Islam over unbelief certain.

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207 Ibn al-Qalanasi, Arab Historians, 38.
208 Baha’ ad-Din, Arab Historians, 221.
V. Conclusion

In seeking to encourages the faithful to undertake the daunting task of holy war, Christian and Muslim chroniclers characterized the support of the Almighty in similar ways. God was portrayed as an omnipotent guide, supporter, rescuer, and granter of miracles who was present on every battlefield beside every man of faith. He could strengthen the spirits of the faithful, bolster their armies with soldiers of heaven, and scatter the wicked with His power. The righteous could count on His help and, ultimately, His inevitable victory, a fact that set holy war aside from all earthly wars.
Conclusion

Between the necessity of rescuing the true religion, the punishments for evil conduct, the rewards of righteousness, and the support of God Himself, Christian and Muslim chroniclers of the twelfth century constructed a model of holy war that any faithful, able-bodied man would have great difficulty refusing to join. That the chroniclers’ portrayal of each of these aspects are virtually interchangeable between religions is exceptionally remarkable given the vast philosophical differences between the two religions at their inception: where Christianity was deeply conflicted about its adherents engaging in any kind of violence, let alone violence in the name of God, warfare to protect the faithful and spread the Prophet Muhammad’s revelations was a part of Islam from its very beginning. The twelfth century represents the first period in which this remarkable and independent convergence of ideas is visible.

The question remains: how is it possible for people halfway around the world from one another, each with no awareness of the other’s development in holy war ideologies, to simultaneously profess the same ideas on the subject? The answer may point to a deeper truth about the interaction of religion and politics. When Islam was founded, it made no distinction between religion and state; Muhammad was both the secular ruler of Medina and the religious leader of his faith because Medina was the community of the faithful. In the same way, the Caliphs who succeeded him were each “Commander of the Faithful” and conquered the “Islamic Empire,” the lands under the rule of Muslims. These territories were defined by the religious, and not ethnic, character of their rulers, and as a result any wars they
undertook were wars of faith. When the Islamic Empire fractured, however, Muslims were still unified by faith but not by government. The resulting polities redefined themselves against their Muslim neighbors along secular dynastic lines, creating a tapestry of city-states and sultanates where the Empire had once stood. Outlying polities, which neighbored infidel states, could still use the framework of holy war, but struggles among the Muslim states of the Levant (at least where all parties involved were Sunni) could only be secular. But when a non-Muslim threat invaded the region, the instinct of religious scholars and the most successful leaders was to unify the local Muslim states against it, once again defining themselves against foreign powers in terms of religion.

Christianity began in a much different situation: its religious head held no political power. Even after the adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, with the leader of a major political power now professing the faith, religious and political authority were invested in two different people, the Pope and the Emperor. As a result, while Christians would pray for the Empire and imperial soldiers would defend Christians, political Rome and the Christian faith were not synonymous. Christianity was protected within but did not control a host state, allowing for church leaders to profess pacifist doctrines that did not advantage the Empire or provide justification for its territorial wars. The independence of the Papacy and the spread of Christianity beyond Rome, however, began to change the relationship between religion and secular power, as the head of the Christian faith was no longer tied to a single state. Through the Gregorian Reforms, the Papacy asserted a higher religious and secular authority over all Christian kings, creating
the idea of all of Christian Europe as a single religio-political unit under the Pope. This de jure state of Christendom paralleled the Islamic Empire, and though Christian doctrine on war had steadily evolved over the course of a millennium to keep up with increasing political authority it was only from this position that the final doctrinal transformations allowing for holy war could take place.

Whether this hypothesis of religio-political unity as a prerequisite for holy war would be borne out by examination of the doctrinal development of other religions is beyond the scope of this paper. It is possible that the Abrahamic character of Christianity and Islam, both based upon Hebrew scriptures replete with descriptions of holy war under a religiously (though also ethnically) defined state, uniquely influenced them to progress along this developmental path. Whatever the larger truth, the fact remains that the clash of holy wars in the twelfth century, traditionally pointed to as a conflict between irreconcilably opposite civilizations, was in fact so intense because both factions pursued opposed versions of exactly the same goal, justified and encouraged in exactly the same way.
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