

## Crusader Vows

Paul M. Aitchison

*Florida College*

### ABSTRACT

Crusader vows during and after the Crusading Period changed due to the politization of the religious and solemn vow. The concept of crusading expanded beyond its original intention as the Levantine Crusades ended and the Crusader States failed. Originally used as a sign highlighting to others the free choice in going on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the form of a cloth cross, potentially proclaimed the willingness to fight for God. The military orders pledged vows and wore crosses. Later, the vow meant one was willing to fight against Muslims, heretical Christians, and pagans in Eastern Europe. The origins of the vow continue today in the form of the military oath taken by commissioned officers of many militaries.

**Keywords:** Middle East, Medieval, Military, Religious, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Baltics

## Juramentos de los cruzados

### RESUMEN

Los juramentos de los cruzados durante y después del Período de las Cruzadas cambiaron debido a la politización del voto religioso y solemne. El concepto de cruzada se expandió más allá de su intención original cuando terminaron las Cruzadas Levantinas y fracasaron los Estados Cruzados. Originalmente utilizado como un signo que resaltaba a los demás la libre elección de ir en peregrinación a Jerusalén en forma de cruz de tela, proclamaba potencialmente la voluntad de luchar por Dios. Las órdenes militares hacían juramentos y llevaban cruces. Más tarde, el juramento significó que uno estaba dispuesto a luchar contra los musulmanes, los cristianos heréticos y los paganos en Europa del Este. Los orígenes del juramento continúan hoy en la forma del juramento militar que hacen los oficiales comisionados de muchos ejércitos.

**Palabras clave:** Medio Oriente, Medieval, Militar, Religioso, Europa Occidental, Europa del Este, Países Bálticos

## 十字军誓言

### 摘要

由于庄严的宗教誓言的政治化，十字军时期和之后的十字军誓言发生了变化。随着黎凡特十字军东征的结束和十字军国家的失败，十字军东征的概念超出了其初衷。此概念最初被用作一个标志，以布十字架的形式向其他人强调前往耶路撒冷朝圣的自由选择，其潜在表明“为上帝而战”的意愿。军事团体对此宣誓并佩戴十字架。后来，这个誓言意味着愿意与穆斯林、异端基督徒以及东欧的异教徒作战。此誓言的起源至今仍以“许多军队长官宣誓誓词”的形式延续。

关键词：中东，中世纪，军事，宗教，西欧，东欧，波罗的海

This paper examines Crusader vows during the major Crusades into the Levant and Holy Land (1090s AD–1291 AD). During this period, the impression and perception of the crusading movement expanded beyond its original intent. The battle of Manzikert in 1071 in eastern Asia Minor saw the Byzantium army defeated and the last of the Diogenes family of emperors captured. This disaster spurred the call to the west for aid. The Council of Piacenza occurred in the spring of 1095. Among the topics of discussion between ecclesial and laypeople was a Byzantine request for knights to help him restore the lost territories of Anatolia. The call for aid was not the first time the Eastern Roman Empire had asked for assistance from the west. This distress signal came when the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church had better relations after the Schism of 1054. The Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Com-

nenus (1081–1118) was restored from being excommunicated after Pope Urban II (r. 1088–1099) came to the papal throne. The historical ground was set, with examples from the recent past where Popes looked to the early Church fathers and Doctors of the Church, such as Saint Augustine of Hippo (354–430 AD) for the justification of arming individuals to fight for the cross. As the Levantine Crusades ended and the Crusader States failed, the Church and the idea of taking a crusading vow also underwent a change. The lineage of this vow continues in secular ceremonies such as the military officers oath. The notion of crusading and what it would take for an individual brought to go on an armed pilgrimage was not something that developed out of thin air.<sup>1</sup>

Previous popes in the early eleventh century, such as Pope Gregory VII (1073–1085), looked for ways to push the profession of arms from a realm of the laity to the realm of the spiritual.

The Peace of God and Truce of God, beginning in the tenth century, was at first regionally focused, with bishops in their respective diocese alongside local secular leaders in the Frankish kingdom attempting to keep nobility of the area from attacking paupers on the roads and not to steal. The procession of relics, alongside the masses at the local parish level added pressure to local magnates to assist in cleaning up the roadways and encourage trade. As masses began to be more formalized in the eleventh century, the notion that daily masses could do “good” also became more prevalent. As a result, the Church in Europe was seen as the authority for spiritual and sometimes secular punishment for those who fought against that “goodness.” The types of punishments under the authority to be used by local bishops included public penance, interdict and formal oaths and vows, which always had a religious formula. The local and regional synods occurring in the tenth and eleventh century addressed much of this to provide not just a legal proceeding against unnecessary violence but also with creating solutions to the problems alongside the secular leaders. An example of this would be in the Synod of Poitiers in 1000 and 1014, which recommend a peace militia be created for the purpose of enforcing the Peace and True of God. Taking a more militant approach by clerical leaders to secular problems began to occur throughout the eleventh century with the crusades or the armed pilgrimage being a outcome, only realized decades later. The Peace of God and the Truce of God was not able to

stop the violence, and in the decades following the localized movement towards a more general peace the Papacy took steps towards formalizing violence away from Europe and from those who lacked the ability to protect themselves.<sup>2</sup>

The focal point of what became the First Crusade (1095–1099) was not on being led by the church but led by nobles and knights of the west who would take a vow from the clergy which laid out the bounds of what was allowed during the pilgrimage. Urban II’s speech is lost to the time of history; several write-ups occurred in the subsequent decades and centuries that became the foundation of crusading and taking a vow before God. In that sermon, it is assessed by the chroniclers who wrote after the event that Urban encouraged the clergy to meet their responsibilities to their local parishes and diocese, to correct themselves and to agree to enforce the Truce of God.<sup>3</sup>

“The Lord Pope said also, ‘Brothers, you must suffer for the name of Christ many things, wretchedness, poverty, nakedness, persecution, need, sickness, hunger, thirst, and other such troubles, for the Lord said to his disciples, ‘You must suffer many things for my name.’ And ‘Be not ashamed to speak before men, for I will give you what you shall say and afterwards ‘Great will be your reward.’ And when these things had begun to be rumored abroad throughout all the duchies and counties of the Frankish lands, the Franks,

hearing them, straightaway began to sew the cross on the right shoulder of their garments, saying that they would all with one accord follow in the footsteps of Christ, by whom they had been redeemed from the power of hell.”<sup>4</sup>

The first challenge the Papacy needed to overcome was sanctioning the use of force. Gregory VII laid the foundation for using force by merging crusading with armed pilgrimage and holy war. The combination of papal approval, the laity’s vow to God and the church, and the holy war for Christ created the conditions that Urban II used to preach the First Crusade throughout France and Germany in the late eleventh century. A unifying holy war with an armed pilgrimage to support the church’s cause on Earth was a powerful force. The vow, taken by the laity in front of the clergy, reinforced the religious and sacrificial aspect of the violence committed on behalf of religion. The council of Clermont, instituted to manage a number of problems for the Church in Western Europe at the end of the eleventh century, would be remembered as a council not of peace but one of war, with the institution of war being directed against the infidel outside of Christendom in the name of the Church.<sup>5</sup>

When Pope Urban II in 1095 called for an armed pilgrimage to retake Jerusalem from the Seljuk Turks, he asked for those promising to affirm with a solemn vow before a priest and God. An outward sign of this affirma-

tion was the attachment of a cloth cross to their outer garment right after the ceremony. The cross was the sign of the willingness of the person to risk his life in battle for God. The cloth cross, for centuries, gave physical protection to crusaders against persecution, search, and secure and legal foreclosure. Urban II was looking for an opportunity, as a medieval feudal lord, to extend his control over a more substantial portion of Europe and thus focused his words during the preaching of the First Crusade on freeing the eastern churches from the clutches of not only the Muslim Caliphates and sultanates but also the Eastern Orthodox Church. In the spontaneous atmosphere, Urban II and his clerical administration also unveiled their greatest gift, one used sparingly in the past, the granting of indulgences. The clergy’s goal for the First Crusade and the knightly class’s goals would soon clash.<sup>6</sup>

Saint Bernard, at this time the abbot of Clairvaux (1090–1153), wrote to the Master of the Knights Templar, Hugh de Payens, around 1128 AD, extolling the virtues of pleading one’s life to the militant cause of fighting for God. In the aftermath of the success of the First Crusade, the collapse of the County of Edessa against the Muslim counteracts. At the core of the original success of the First Crusade was the preaching, guided by Pope Urban II. For the Second Crusade, Pope Eugene III (r. 1145–1153) commissioned the greatest orator of the twelfth century, Bernard to not only preach before other clergy to train them on their roles and responsibilities of preaching the Cru-

sade to the laity, he also took time to lay down the rules for the military order of the Knights Templar, fusing the idea of a militant monk fighting against the forces aligned against God.

“Go forth confidently then, you knights, and repel the foes of the cross of Christ with a stalwart heart. Know that neither death nor life can separate you from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ, and in every peril repeat, “Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.” What a glory to return in victory from such a battle! How blessed to die there as a martyr! Rejoice, brave athlete, if you live and conquer in the Lord; but glory and exult even more if you die and join your Lord. Life indeed is a fruitful thing and victory is glorious, but a holy death is more important than either. If they are blessed who die in the Lord, how much more are they who die for the Lord!”<sup>7</sup>

The granting of indulgences provided the means by which the church could recruit a large number of soldiers for the task, and the ceremony by which to formally send those soldiers outside of Western Christendom needed to be sufficiently sacred. The vow, a religious obligation to the church as a whole, was at once religious and also militant. Even the symbol, the cloth cross, a sign of the ultimate sacrifice by the king of kings and leader of the world, was a military symbol for the army gathering in Europe to fight and to continue

to do so in the face of peril. While the record of Urban II preaching concerning the First Crusade is incomplete, it is asserted through other sources, including letters of abbeys and monasteries in France and the Holy Roman Empire that Urban wanted those who could actually fight to go east, and wanted all to have an oath affirmed by local clergy to fight for the liberty of Christians in the east.<sup>8</sup>

If Urban had used the goal of freeing Jerusalem from Muslim control, then naturally total focus for the armed pilgrimage would have been to rid the city of God. However, it does not seem to be the case. Instead, Urban emphasized at the beginning of the preaching the importance of freeing fellow Christians in Asia Minor from the yoke of oppression in the east. Only afterward, as Ademar, the bishop of Le Puy and the papal legate of the crusades, continued to shape the narrative of what the armed pilgrimage would morph into, freeing Jerusalem became the shining goal. In addition, his immediate predecessor, Gregory VII, began to formulate the idea of a *militia sancti Petri*, who served as the vicar of Christ on Earth, or the papal throne first and foremost. The idea would continue to evolve into the military orders, the Knights Templar and Hospitallers, and the Teutonic Order in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup>

The recruitment for the First Crusade was very much an *ad hoc* affair. While the Papacy preached the first Crusade, they were not the ones who were the military or logistical leaders of the armies; that fell to the nobles and

military commanders. The papal legate for the Crusade could suggest, extoll, and encourage the troops toward the goal but could not make liege men fight. The methods used by Urban II to preach the First Crusade in providing indulgences and protection from prosecution. Fulcher of Chartres writes that at Clermont, Pope Urban stated,

“Let those accustomed to waging private wars wastefully even against Believers, go forth against the Infidel in a battle worthy of being undertaken now and to be finished in victory ... let those, who was recently hired for a few pieces of silver, with their eternal reward.”<sup>10</sup>

The original formulation in the mind of Gregory VII and Urban II might have been to aid Constantinople because of the pleas from the Byzantine emperor not only to the papal court but also to the nobles in the Frankish and German lands. The laity, whipped to a frenzy by the preaching of wandering itinerant priests centuries before the Franciscans' formation, may have played a role in how the Pope laid out why and who should go on the armed pilgrimage to the east. It is likely, especially in the aftermath of the Papal Schism of 1054, that Urban II saw the armed expedition to the east as being under the overall command of the Greek Emperor to bring about a healing between the two branches of Christianity and would be fighting in Asia Minor with a distant and long after attaining the goal of liberating the whole of the Levant and Jerusalem for Christianity.

From the records of Clermont, it is apparent that the movement's overall goal was the liberation of Christians and the capture of Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup>

The naming of the First Crusade did not occur until centuries had passed, and several of what was initially termed as penitential armed pilgrimages to the east had already been completed. The crusading ideal, coming straight from the throne of Saint Peter, was a sanctioned, holy war against those who opposed the church by individuals sanctioned by that same church to do violence in their name for the regeneration of faith on Earth and to bring about the final judgment of God on the whole Earth. The evangelizing efforts of the wandering preachers were thought to bring about a general reawakening in the spiritual aspects of the commoners and nobles alike in Europe.<sup>12</sup>

In the decades up to the First Crusade, the church continued to evolve its stance on violence and the sanctioning of violence on behalf of the church. One bishop, Adalbero of Laon, expressed it in the following terms: The House of God, which was believed to be one, was in reality three because, in it, three categories of men performed three distinct functions, the first prayed, the second fought and the third worked. The church began to see the need to combine the functions after the success of the First Crusade, nobles who participated in the crusades also began to see the need to create a military order that would combine the aspects of praying and fighting to provide a solid military force for the new cru-



A 14th century CE illustration depicting the siege of Antioch of 1097-1098 CE during the First Crusade. Some crusaders forsook their vows and departed the Levant. Those who stayed conquered the city. [National Library of the Netherlands, The Hague.]



King Louis IX devoted much of his adult life to crusading, taking the cross twice for the 7th and 8th Crusade. He also served temporarily as the King of Jerusalem. [Illustration of Louis IX from manuscript BL Royal 16 G VI, f. 404v, British Library]

sading states in the east. These so-called holy knights, or the military orders included the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon or the Knights Templar (1119), and Order of Knights of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem, or the Knights Hospitaller (1099) would also provide safe passage to the lucrative pilgrimage trade of individuals and goods moving back and forth across the Mediterranean and Europe as the crusades evolved.<sup>13</sup>

The vow of a crusader was different than other vows taken in religion because ever since the First Crusade, it was done in conjunction with an indulgence provided by the local bishop through the Pope, and while it was done at the individual level, it was completed through the efforts of many people working together. It was a vow before God but also a public vow before other Christians, in one aspect to keep each other accountable and in another to be pushed forward as a collective to an ultimate earthly, secular goal, the capture of territory, a city, or the liberation of oppressed Christians in a region. While general vows before the clergy might be for penitence or to press someone publicly to complete an arduous task or labor, the crusading vows focused the goal of those taking the vow in the direction of violence against fellow men.<sup>14</sup>

The church always wanted to have a larger role in the planning and execution of the crusades, especially after the success of the First Crusade, and attempted to do so through the *crucesignati* or those wearing the sign of the cross—to make a solemn vow committing themselves to the endeavor

proposed by Popes as they called for renewed offensives against their enemies. As the vow itself was comprised of a personal statement of intent to carry out a certain series of actions on earth in an attempt to gain rewards in the life after. The acts crusaders hoped to complete martial acts rarely seen in Europe, to march to the Middle East, and take over large areas of defended cities and citadels. The fact that although the vow was a reciprocal pact made between an individual and God, the Latin Church acted as God's guarantor. Within that structure, the pope had a large stake in creating the terms of the crusader vow in such a manner that would benefit the Papacy as a whole. Those who took the vow had to fulfill the requirements to receive the spiritual benefits, and this combined the penance of pilgrimage with acts of violence to be assured of the reward. Nevertheless, this cannot and should not overshadow the fact that the vow was still an agreement between the individual and God—one which was oftentimes personalized to reflect one's own understanding of this activity. Crusaders and those who organized and promoted the crusade in the first century in which crusading took place possessed different understandings of what it meant to be signed with the cross.<sup>15</sup>

In the enthusiasm of the First Crusade (1095–1096), Second Crusade (1147–1149) and the Third Crusade (1189–1192), some individuals desperately wanted to fulfill their vow but were physically unable to do so for whatever reason. The church, at the time, created a substitute for the penitential exercise

of going on the Crusade, and one could provide a monetary donation instead. Not only did this provide a sacrifice in the minds of the church, but it would also provide funds for someone who might be more physically able to pursue the crusading vow to travel and fight. This continued to morph and evolve as other crusades had different goals and motivations, and the personal and societal understanding and opinion of crusading changed. The evolution of the crusading vow brought with it problems of abuse and coopting of the religious and solemn nature to be subordinate to the martial and secular nature. St. Bernard, in laying out the rules of the Templar, makes an example of the life of a crusader under a vow.<sup>16</sup>

“In the first place, discipline is in no way lacking and obedience is never despised. As Scripture testifies, the undisciplined son shall perish and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, to refuse obedience is like the crime of idolatry. Therefore, they come and go at the bidding of their superior. They wear what he gives them, and do not presume to wear or to eat anything from another source. Thus, they shun every excess in clothing and food and content themselves with what is necessary. They live as brothers in joyful and sober company, without wives or children. So that their evangelical perfection will lack nothing, they dwell united in one family with no personal property

whatever, careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. You may say that the whole multitude has but one heart and one soul to the point that nobody follows his own will, but rather seeks to follow the commander.”<sup>17</sup>

The abuses of the crusading vow began as soon as the First Crusade was preached. Individuals, who might be in dire legal or financial situations, would immediately take the cross and gain the privilege and protection. They would then look for ways to keep that protection while not actually having to fulfill the vow, thus creating the abuse of liberty. As more and more crusades were preached through the twelfth and thirteen centuries, the Papacy began to develop a system of sending out preachers who were trained in what to say and who to look for to start to form the army of a crusade. The author of the *Gesta Francorum* states that,

“For even the Pope set out across the Alps as soon as he could, with his arch-bishops, bishops, abbots, and priests and he began to deliver eloquent sermons and to preach, saying, “If any man wants to save his soul, let him have no hesitation in taking the way of the Lord in humility, and if he lacks money, the divine mercy will give him enough.”<sup>18</sup>

Strong-willed popes, such as Innocent III (r. 1189–1216), also harangued nobles and kings alike in west-



A romantic view of Peter the Hermit Preaching the First Crusade. Note the crowds of classes of society pleading and pledging to go on the armed pilgrimage – [Casell's History of England, Vol. I - anonymous author and artist]

ern Europe to coordinate the fulfillment of vows in a way that would increase his temporal power while displaying the might of the Papacy in the aftermath of the setbacks in the east and the fall of Jerusalem and most of the Crusader States. Innocent also brought a youthful vigor to the throne of Saint Peter, being 37 years old when he ascended to the head of the Christian world in the west. Innocent's youthful exuberance for crusading, both near and far across Western Europe and the Levant was only outstripped by his ability to cajole, recruit and finance the crusading movement. In the encyclical, *Quia maior*, calling for the Fifth Crusade, Innocent III called for the reclamation of

the Holy Land because it belonged to the Christian faith. He utilized apocalyptic and eschatological language in describing the "beast was approaching" and that almost 666 years elapsed since Muhammad's Hijrah. This was after he already called the Fourth Crusade, the Albigensian Crusade, and the Iberian Crusade.<sup>19</sup>

The military orders, the Knights Templar, and the Knights Hospitaller pledged solemn vows and wore cloth crosses that let all know who they fought for in Palestine. In the subsequent generations of crusaders, the vow meant one was willing to fight against Muslims in Spain, Christian heretics in

southern France, and pagans in eastern Europe and the Levant. The vow, alongside the indulgence offered by the clergy, was a powerful motivation to send men, women, and whole families to the farther reaches of the known world at that time to fight for Christ.

Alongside the military orders was the secular knightly order of society, those who fought. By the eleventh century, the *milites* were attracting the attention of the most prominent institution, the church. The church's primary focus was on the spiritual and morale aspect of the warrior society, to focus the soldier's wrath against a target that would benefit all of Christendom and shift the focus away from the disruption to the daily life and rhythm of western Europe. The need for a defender for the church was apparent before the First Crusade. At the local diocese level, bishops and abbots attempted to reduce the violence through the Peace of God and other such efforts to curb the enthusiasm of the combatants. The church understood that they could not stop wars, and even some wars were to the benefit of the Papacy through the protection and expansion of land holdings but, more importantly, in the safety of the sanctity of the clergy. The combination of the clerical with the militant was a potent one indeed.<sup>20</sup>

The churches focus on the hierarchy of things on the Earth directly related to how they viewed the cosmic scale. As a result, they saw and believed the role of the soldiers as one of defense and defense of the church. The gradual process after the First Crusade in de-



KNIGHT IN ARMOUR.  
*MS. Roy. 2 A. xxii.*  
Late Thirteenth Century.

Kneeling crusader knight. The military orders used the cross extensively on their knightly garb. A religious vow could not be forsaken by a secular ruler. [13th-century illustration from Westminster Psalter. British Library]

veloping and establishing the military orders was melding the sacred with the secular, the holy, and the profane or wrathful.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, in addition to being soldiers, those who took the cross were also pilgrims. Crusaders also solemnly vowed to travel to Jerusalem and offer their prayers at the Holy Sepulchre. Observers and participants alike understood the First Crusade first and foremost as a pilgrimage. One sees this no more clearly than by looking at the form of the vow taken by crusaders in



Urban II at Clermont. Urban preached what became the First Crusade mainly to other prelates of the church and nobles, who in turn preached in their own realms. Note the extensive use of crosses on both the secular and spiritual garb. [unknown artist, mid-14th century]

1095 AD and thereafter. The crusade vow mimicked the vow made by devotional pilgrims in the period leading up to the First Crusade with two important additions. First, as one pronounced the vow a cloth cross was attached to the votary's garment, and secondly, "benediction was bestowed on swords along with [pilgrim's] staffs" in recognition that unlike other pilgrims the crusaders were allowed, in fact encouraged, to carry weapons while undertaking their penance. If one was to allow for any consensus in regard to how participants saw the crusade it would have to be based upon this: to one extent or another every crusader agreed that the crusade was a peculiar form of pilgrimage.<sup>22</sup>

The vow, given with all solemnity and before an ordained priest of the Roman Catholic Church, was, first and foremost, a religious ceremony. Moreover, as a religious ceremony, it is still seen today in the evolution of our legal system in swearing in a witness, and the United States oath of officer for the branches of the Armed Forces. Religion brings people worldwide together in discourse, faith, and, unfortunately, conflict. The High Middle Ages are seen as a simple yet dark time by many who are not historians of that era. However, western Europe's culture, religion, and society were advancing in a rapid pace, with the developing ideas of nations, regions, and communities begin-

ning to bring about an awareness of the wider world. The connection of a vow, combined with the benefit of an indulgence to undertake the quest to the Holy Land, was in the fulfillment in the eyes of the medieval church and secular society, a sign of God's grace. As Jerusalem fell back into Muslim hands, the crusades and the crusading vow began to take on a new importance, as Gregory VIII noted that the crusades were a test to see if people were prepared to do penance and risk their lives in service of something higher than themselves. Also, Innocent III spoke about the Crusade as the service that God requires to show obedience to him and in failing to accomplish the goals of the various crusades, the crusaders themselves were being tested and either coming out stronger or weaker. The importance of having a standard for the world, built on a foundation of something greater.

The military oath has a long and rich history dating back centuries. Its importance and growth have evolved over time, and it is still a vital part of the military today. The oath serves as a binding contract between soldiers and their country, and it has deep religious roots. The concept of oaths can be traced back to ancient civilizations, where it was believed that the gods would punish those who broke their promises. In the Middle Ages, knights took oaths of loyalty to their lords and to the church. The first recorded military oath was taken by the Roman army in 312 BC. The Roman soldiers swore an oath of allegiance to their commander and to the state. This oath was taken very seriously, and those who broke it

were punished severely. The Christian notion of vows also played a significant role in the development of the military oath. In the Bible, Jesus teaches that one's word should be binding, and that a person should not make oaths lightly. Christians believed that oaths should be made before God, and that breaking them was a sin. This belief carried over into the military, where soldiers would take oaths in the name of God. Over time, the military oath changed and evolved.<sup>23</sup>

During the American Revolution, soldiers took an oath of loyalty to the United States, swearing to defend the country against all enemies, foreign and domestic. The oath was updated again during the Civil War, when soldiers were required to swear an oath of allegiance to the Constitution. Primary source material from the Civil War era provides insight into the importance of the military oath. In a letter to his wife, Union soldier John A. Mather wrote, "I take the oath of allegiance to the United States of America with my whole heart and soul. I am ready to fight and die for my country."<sup>24</sup> This sentiment was echoed by many soldiers on both sides of the conflict. During World War II, the military oath was updated once again. The modern military oath, which is still used today, includes a pledge to obey the orders of the President and those appointed over the soldier. It also includes a promise to uphold the Constitution and to defend the country against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Religious aspects of the military oath are still present today. Many soldiers choose to take the oath with their hand

on a Bible, and the oath itself includes the phrase “so help me God.” However, soldiers of all faiths and those who do not have a particular religious affiliation may take the oath in a way that is meaningful to them. In conclusion, the military oath has a long and rich history, with deep religious roots. It has evolved over time to reflect the changing nature of warfare and the role of the military in society. The importance of the military oath cannot be overstated, as it serves as a binding contract between soldiers and their country. Primary source material from throughout history provides valuable insight into the meaning and significance of the military oath.<sup>25</sup>

Crusading vows proved a motivational force in sending Christians from thousands of miles across Europe together to gain Jerusalem for Christianity and fulfill what they saw as their duty to God in furthering a religious cause on the Earth and bringing about a judgment against those seen as enemies of God. The vow called upon something greater than the military force on the ground to

assist in the defense or offense. It provided a spiritual defense to both the common soldier departing his family for the final time, the noble with his large retinue and retainers, and the clergy, ministering to the spiritual needs of those on the crusade. The physical defense also protected the property of those away from their families and homesteads. As it continued to evolve, crusaders taking vows could go crusading for a season, or a few years or for a campaign, and then return home. Swearing a vow before a host of people was also a way to bring a group of people together as a team, and that is through that history the military oath used today evolved. It serves as a commitment to uphold the values and principles of the armed forces, serves as a reminder of the high expectations and responsibilities placed on service members today and reinforces the idea of unity and teamwork. The evolution of crusading vow shaped the conflicts between Christianity and Islam to this day.

## Endnotes

- 1 D.C. Murno, “The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095,” *American Historical Review*, xi (1906): 231-242.
- 2 Frederich Kempf, *The Church in the Age of Feudalism*, (New York: Crossroads, 1982), 346.
- 3 *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Electronic Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Emgh. München Turnhout: Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Brepols, 2002*), 462; *The Historia Ierosolimitana of Baldric of Bourgueil*. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014), 124-125; Georg Strack, “The Sermon of Urban II in Clermont and the Tradition of Papal Oratory,” *Medieval Sermon Studies*, vol. 56 (2012): 32-33.

- 4 St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, trans. By M. Conrad Greenia (Trappist, Kentucky: Cistercian Publications, 1977), 1-2.
- 5 St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, trans. By M. Conrad Greenia (Trappist, Kentucky: Cistercian Publications, 1977), 23; Paul A. Chevedden, "Crusade Creationism "versus" Pope Urban II's Conceptualization of the Crusades," *The Historian*, 75 (2013), 25-29; Peter Hecht, "Crusading as Philosophical Construct: Thoughts and Actions of Pope Urban II, St. Bernard, and Peter the Venerable," *Comparative Civilizations Review*: Vol. 84: No. 84, Article 6, (2021): 37-41; Giovanni Dominicus Mansi, "Quia qui christianum occidit, sine dubio christi sanguinem fundit," in *Sacrorum Concilliorum Nova*, vol. 19, col. 827 (Lepizig, F.M. Geidel, 1903), 536-542; Jean Flori, "Knightly Society." In *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 165.
- 6 Cowdrey, H.E.J, "Pope Urban II's preaching of the First Crusade," *History*, Vol. 55, No. 184 (1970): 178-180; John Patrick Doland, *Handbook on Church History: The Church in the Age of Feudalism*, (The University of Michigan: Herder and Herder, 1969), 448-449.
- 7 Bernard Bernard. *Treatises III: On Grace and Free Choice in Praise of the New Knighthood*. Kalamazoo Mich: Cistercian Publications, 1997, 2-3.
- 8 John Patrick Doland, *Handbook on Church History: The Church in the Age of Feudalism*, (The University of Michigan: Herder and Herder, 1969), 448-449.
- 9 H.E.J. Cowdrey, "Pope Urban II's preaching of the First Crusade," *History*, Vol. 55, No. 184 (1970): 178-180.
- 10 Fulcher of Chartres, *Chronicle of the First Crusade*, trans. M.E. McGinty (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press): 1941, 15-17; Jonathan Riley-Smith, "The Crusades, 1095–1198." Chapter. In *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, edited by David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith, 4: 534–563. *The New Cambridge Medieval History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 536.
- 11 Jonatha Riley-Smith, "The Crusades, 1095–1198." Chapter. In *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, edited by David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith, 4: 534-563. *The New Cambridge Medieval History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 537-539.
- 12 Tyerman, Christopher, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades*, (Harvard: Harvard University Pressm 2009), 72; H.E.J Cowdrey, "Pope Urban II's Preaching of the First Crusade," *History*, 55 (1970): 188; Paul E. Chevedden, "The Islamic View and the Christian View of the Crusades: A New Synthesis." *History*, vol. 93, no. 2 (31) (April 2008): 181-187.
- 13 Adalberro of Laon, "Triplex ergo Dei domus est, quae creditor Una;/Nunc orant, alii pugnant, aliique laborant," *Carmen ad Rotbertum regem*, (Italy, 1760), 297-8; Jean Flo-

- ri, "Knightly Society." In *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 165.
- 14 Christoph T. Maier, "The Friars and the Redemption of Crusade Vows." Chapter. In *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the Thirteenth Century*, 135-160. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought: Fourth Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 134-135.
- 15 T.S. Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History* (New York: 2004), 43-45; Jennifer Ann Price, "Cruce Signatus: The Form and Substance of the Crusading Vow." (PhD diss, University of Washington, 2005), 272-273.
- 16 Christoph T. Maier, "The Friars and the Redemption of Crusade Vows." Chapter. In *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the Thirteenth Century*, 135-160. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought: Fourth Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 135-136.
- 17 Bernard Bernard. *Treatises III: On Grace and Free Choice in Praise of the New Knighthood*. Kalamazoo Mich: Cistercian Publications, 1997, 4-6.
- 18 *The Deeds of the Franks and the Other Pilgrims to Jerusalem*. (London: T. Nelson, 1962), 48.
- 19 Christoph T. Maier, "The Friars and the Redemption of Crusade Vows." Chapter. In *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the Thirteenth Century*, 135-160. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought: Fourth Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 139-40; Hehl, Ernst-Dieter. "War, Peace and the Christian Order." Chapter. In *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, edited by David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith, 4: 185-228. *The New Cambridge Medieval History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 188; Vatican City, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, *Registra Vaticana* 8, fos. 140v-41v; edited in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, Series Latina, ed. J.P. Migne (221 vols., Paris, 1844-65) cccxvi, vols. 817-22; Tyerman, Christopher, *How to Plan a Crusade*, (New York: Pegasus Books), 219; Tyerman, Christopher, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades*, (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2009), 612; T.W. Smith, "How to craft a crusade call: Pope Innocent III and *Quia maior* (1213). *History Research*, vol. 92. Iss. 255 (2019); 6.
- 20 Jean Flori, "Knightly Society." In *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 149, 165; Giovanni Dominicus Mansi, "Quia qui christianum occidit, sine dubio christi sanguinem fundit," in *Sacorum Concilliorum Nova*, vol. 19, col. 827 (Lepizig, F.M. Geidel, 1903), 536-542.
- 21 Hehl Ernst-Dieter, "War and peace and the Christian order," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History IV*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 209-210.
- 22 Ekkehard of Aura, *Chronicon*, ed. Joseph Stevens (Vaduz: Kraus Reprint, 1964), 214;

Geoffrey of Villehardouin, *La conquete de Constantinople*, ed. E. Fara!, Les Classiques de l'Histoire de France au Moyen Age 18-19, 2 vols. (Paris, 1938-39), 1: 44; A. Gottlob, *Kreuzablass und Almosenablass: eine studie uber die Fruhzeit des Ablasswesens* (Amsterdam, 1965), 308; Jennifer Ann Price, "Cruce Signatus: The Form and Substance of the Crusading Vow." (PhD diss, University of Washington, 2005), 272-275.

23 Rosa, John W., *Preface to the U.S. Air Force Academy Officer Development System*, Jan 2004, 1; Reese, Thomas, "An Officer's Oath," *Military Law Review*, 25 (July 1964): 3; *The Armed Forces Officer's Guide*, Department of Defense, 2006, 4.

24 Mather, John Austin, *Journals, 1832-1880*, Andover-Harvard Theological Library, 2012, 144.

25 Hehl Ernst-Dieter, "War and peace and the Christian order," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History IV*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); 209-210; Gerhoh of Reichersberg, *De aedificio Dei*, chap. 43; *PL* 194, cols. 1300--4. (Regensburg: Schnell and Steiner, 2020), 103; Rosa, John W., *Preface to the U.S. Air Force Academy Officer Development System*, Jan 2004, 1; Reese, Thomas., "An Officer's Oath," *Military Law Review*, 25 (July 1964): 3; *The Armed Forces Officer's Guide*, Department of Defense, 2006, 4.

## Bibliography

Ann Price, Jennifer., "Cruce Signatus: The Form and Substance of the Crusading Vow." PhD diss, University of Washington, 2005.

Asbridge, T.S., *The First Crusade: A New History* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Chartres, Fulcher of., *Chronicle of the First Crusade*, trans. M.E. McGinty Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press 1941.

Chevedden, Paul A., 'Crusade Creationism "versus" Pope Urban II's Conceptualization of the Crusades,' *The Historian*, 75 (2013): 1-46.

Chevedden, Paul E. "The Islamic View and the Christian View of the Crusades: A New Synthesis." *History*, vol. 93, no. 2 (31) (April 2008): 181-200.

Cowdrey, H.E.J., "Pope Urban II's preaching of the First Crusade," *History*, Vol. 55, No. 184 (1970): 177-188.

Doland, John Patrick., *Handbook on Church History: The Church in the Age of Feudalism*, The University of Michigan: Herder and Herder, 1969.

Ekkehard of Aura, *Chronicon*, ed. Joseph Stevens Vaduz: Kraus Reprint, 1964.

Flori, Jean., "Knightly Society." In *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Gottlob, A., *Kreuzablass und Almosenablass: eine studie uber die Fruhzeit des Ablasswesens* Amsterdam, 1965.

Hehl Ernst-Dieter, "War and peace and the Christian order", in *The New Cambridge Medieval History IV*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Hecht, Peter., "Crusading as Philosophical Construct: Thoughts and Actions of Pope Urban II, St. Bernard, and Peter the Venerable," *Comparative Civilizations Review*: Vol. 84: No. 84, Article 6, (2021): 37-41.

Kempf, Frederich., *The Church in the Age of Feudalism*, New York: Crossroads, 1982.

Laon, Christoph T., 'Triplex ergo Dei domus est, quae creditor Una;/Nunc orant, alii pugnant, aliique laborant', *Carmen ad Rotbertum regem*, Italy, 1760.

Maier, Christoph T., "The Friars and the Redemption of Crusade Vows." Chapter. In *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the Thirteenth Century*, 135160. Cambridge Studies in *Medieval Life and Thought: Fourth Series*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Mather, John Austin, *Journals, 1832-1880*, Andover-Harvard Theological Library, 2012.

Mansi, Giovanni Dominicus., "Quia qui christianum occidit, sine dubio christi sanguinem fundit," in *Sacorum Concilliorum Nova*, vol. 19, col. 827, Lepizig, F.M. Geidel, 1903.

Murno, D.C., "The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095," *American Historical Review*, xi (1906): 231-242.

Monumenta Germaniae Historica. *Electronic Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Emgh*. München Turnhout: Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Brepols, 2002.

Reichersberg, Gerhoh of. *De aedificio Dei*, chap. 43; PL 194, cols. 1300-4. Regensburg: Schnell and Steiner, 2020.

Reese, Thomas., "An Officer's Oath." *Military Law Review*, 25 (July 1964): 3-17.

Riley-Smith, Jonathan., "The Crusades, 1095–1198." Chapter. In *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, edited by David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith, 4: 534-563. *The New Cambridge Medieval History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Rosa, John W., *Preface to the U.S. Air Force Academy Officer Development System*, Jan 2004.

Smith. T.W. "How to craft a crusade call: Pope Innocent III and *Quia maior* (1213)." *Historical Research*, vol. 92, iss. 255 (2019): 1-23.

Strack, Georg., "The Sermon of Urban II in Clermont and the Tradition of Papal Oratory." *Medieval Sermon Studies*, vol. 56 (2012): 30-45.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, trans. By M. Conrad Greenia Trappist, Kentucky: Cistercian Publications, 1977.

*The Armed Forces Officers Guide*, Department of Defense, 2006.

*The Historia Ierosolimitana of Baldric of Bourgueil*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014.

*The Deeds of the Franks and the Other Pilgrims to Jerusalem*. London: T. Nelson, 1962.

Tyerman, Christopher, *God's War: A New History of the Crusade*, Havard: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Tyerman, Christopher, *How to Plan a Crusade: Religious War in the High Middle Ages*. New York: Pegasus books, 2017.

Villehardouin, Geoffrey of., *La conquete de Constantinople*, ed. E. Fara!, *Les Classiques de l'Histoire de France au Mayen Age* 18-19, 2 vols. Paris, 1938.