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One of the reasons why the crusades have fascinated historians and others is because they represent a kind of crescendo of war, an orgy of violence committed in the name of Christ, the 'prince of peace'. This has been seen as a transformation of the Christian message, and enormous effort has been spent on explaining how it came about. The leading synthesis remains the one produced in 1935 by the German scholar Carl Erdmann, though substantial efforts have been made by others, notably the French scholar Jean Flori.[1] To a degree, such analyses have not really recognised that the issue of violence highlighted a very fundamental problem in Christianity which medieval men had to deal with. It was not that using violence was contradictory to the Christian message. Quite to the contrary, because although a pacifistic current can be detected in early Christian thought, some fundamental biblical texts suggested that violence was integral to human existence. The difficulty lay in reconciling the need for violence implicit in biblical authority with the condemnation of the taking of life which had come to assume such importance in Christian thinking and penitential practice. Moreover, in seeking to explain the 'transformation', historians have focused on ideas about large scale violence, in essence what contemporaries sometimes called 'public war', rather than the place of violence as a whole in early medieval society. In particular, the needs of internal security were basic to the conduct of life and they were seen on a day to day basis as depending on the sanction of violence and, indeed, killing. Once it is appreciated just how ingrained in the contemporary outlook was what we would regard as horrific violence, the notion of transformation seems extremely weak.

The Christian Church insisted that murder was a terrible sin. Any perpetrator was personally responsible and should suffer a heavy penance. This was ultimately based on the seventh of the Ten Commandments which firmly laid down 'Thou shalt not kill', and of course this was reinforced by

[1] C. Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade* (New Jersey 1977); J. Flori, *La Guerre sainte. La Formation de l'idée de croisade dans l'Occident chrétien* (Paris 2001); Idem, *Guerre sainte, jihad, croisade. Violence et religion dans le christianisme et l'islam* (Paris 2002).

much that can be found in the New Testament.[2] Yet this attitude, to which the Church adhered in principle, was actually at odds with much else which was also fundamental to the Christian message. Christ himself had advised his followers to 'Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's'.[3] In a highly familiar passage St Paul had firmly laid down that 'the powers that be are ordained of God.'[4] The clear implication was that the Roman State, over which Caesar ruled, should be upheld. Yet the Roman Empire which wielded the sword, was, in fact, a heavily militarized entity because it needed both to hold down its often reluctant subjects and to defend its frontiers against external attack.

There certainly was a current of pacifism in the early Church. Hippolytus of Rome (170-235) was one of its powerful champions, as he showed when he wrote:

> A soldier of the civil authority must be taught not to kill men and to refuse to do so if he is commanded, and to refuse to take an oath. If he is unwilling to comply, he must be rejected for baptism. A military commander or civic magistrate must resign or be rejected. If a believer seeks to become a soldier, he must be rejected, for he has despised God.[5]

However, pacifism was never the dominant current of thought in the early Christian Church, and this is hardly surprising when one considers the texts such as that of St Paul cited above. Moreover, for contemporaries, Christian or pagan, the Hippolytus passage could only be seen as striking at the very basis of the social order which depended on the use of force. Once Constantine the Great had adopted and established Christianity in the place of the old pantheon of Gods, Christian leaders had little difficulty in accommodating to the new situation. Indeed they welcomed the access to state violence granted by Constantine because it could be used against those who perverted the faith, the heretics and dissidents who arose within the ranks of Christianity. After all, for Christians, as for others, the maintenance of the social order was a priority and the Christian Church was becoming a

[2] Exodus 20:13.

[3] Matthew 22:21 and Luke 20:25.

[4] Romans 13:1.

[5] G. Dix, *The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus of Rome, Bishop and Martyr* (London 1992) No. 16: 9-11.

major part of that order. The great St Augustine (354-430) represented that attitude when he shrewdly justified the methods used to meet it:

> Surely it is not without purpose that we have the institution of the power of kings, the death penalty of the judge, the barbed hooks of the executioner, the weapons of the soldier, the right of punishment of the overlord, even the severity of the good father. All those things have their methods, their causes, their reasons, their practical benefits.[6]

At one level this is a pragmatic stance, but underlying it is the notion that 'the powers that be are ordained of God', and that to obey their will was, therefore, no sin.

This concern with the maintenance of the social order became ever stronger in the early Middle Ages. For those who lived in what are now France, Italy, Germany, and England – the core areas of European culture – this was a time of trial when the bonds of society were exposed to numerous threats and kings found it difficult to make their wills felt. In these circumstances Church and State came together in a grand alliance to defend the world that they knew and its order. The involvement of churchmen in politics to this extent was not without its critics. It did, after all, bring with it the temptations of pride, luxury and selfishness, and many felt that spiritual leaders should be distinct from the crude warlords who dominated society. Hence, the biographer Ruotger felt the need to make a defence of his subject's position in his life of Archbishop Bruno of Cologne (r. 953-965):

> If anyone who is ignorant of the divine dispensation objects to a bishop ruling the people and facing dangers of war, and argues that he is only responsible for their souls, the answer is obvious; it is only by doing these things that the guardian and teacher of the faithful brings them to the rare gift of peace and saves them from the darkness in which there is no light.[7]

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[6] Augustine, Letter 153: O. O'Donovan and J. Lockwood ed., *From Irenaeus to Grotius: a Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought, 100-1625* (Grand Rapids 1999) 125.
[7] *Ruotgers Lebensbeschreibung des Erzbischofs Bruno von Köln* 40, I. Ott ed., MGH SRG NS 10 (Weimar 1951) 46; this was written immediately after Bruno's death in 1065. On this work see H. Mayr-Harting, *Church and Cosmos in Early Ottonian Germany: The View from Cologne* (Oxford 2007).

In many ways Bruno personified the alliance of sacred and secular which was emerging across the Christian West. He was the brother of the Emperor Otto I of Germany (r. 936-973), and had been appointed to the archbishopric of Cologne as a counterweight to Conrad the Red, duke of Lorraine. When that magnate rebelled Bruno stood by his brother, and was rewarded by the gift of the Duchy of Lorraine when Conrad was defeated. He thus became, after Otto, the most important man in Germany and acted as regent after 961 during his brother's absences in Italy. This immersion in political affairs is justified by Ruotger as bringing to the Christian people 'the rare gift of peace', and it is indeed difficult to see how people could live a devout life without such protection. In this context violence was surely sacred, for without it society would have been plunged into the abyss.

In the divided and fragmented world of central and southern Gaul, where the authority of the crown had long given way to the perpetual feuding of aggressive aristocrats, this same powerful impulse gave rise to the institution of the Peace of God. After 989 the bishops of the area called Councils at which the masses were used as a moral pressure upon the bearers of arms. Their enthusiasm was aroused by religious celebrations and the displays of relics, which even produced miraculous cures. The purpose was that all should swear 'that the peace should be preserved inviolate so that all men, lay and religious, whatever threats had hung over them before, could now go about their business without fear and unarmed.' The sanction which was invoked to impose this order was moral and spiritual pressure: 'Such enthusiasm was generated that the bishops raised their crosiers to the heavens, and all cried out with one voice to God, their hands extended: Peace! Peace! Peace!'[8] It was a natural extension of this pressure that Archbishop Aimon of Bourges created an army of peasants and devout knights in order to force the more recalcitrant barons of the area to accept the peace. The creation of a largely peasant militia, however, was itself seen as a threat to the social order and many rejoiced in the eventual defeat of this initiative.[9]

Of course this concern with the social order was in practice concern with a particular social order which guaranteed the positions of the leadership elements of society: the kings, lords and the senior clergy who

[8] R. Glaber, *The Five Books of the Histories (Historiarum Libri Quinque)*, J. France ed. (Oxford 1989) 194-197.

[9] For a discussion of the Peace of God see J. Flori, *La Guerre sainte. La formation de l'idée de croisade dans l'Occident chrétien* (Paris 2001) 59-99, especially 90-93.

were drawn from their ranks. The upper ranks of society had long been concerned to enjoy a monopoly of violence, to the extent that they crushed peasant militias whenever possible:

> The Danes ravaged the paces beyond the Scheldt. Some of the common people living between the Seine and the Loire formed a sworn association amongst themselves, and fought bravely against the Danes on the Seine. But because their association had been made without due consideration, they were easily slain by our more powerful people.[10]

For the upper class, therefore, the maintenance of the social order was the maintenance of their own position. For them this order had to be sacred and the violence needed to uphold it had to be sacred also. For the European upper classes were by now deeply integrated into the Catholic Church. They virtually monopolised all senior positions in the Church for their families, and increasingly laid great store by their reputation for piety. They founded many monasteries and made enormous gifts of land to them and to other churches. They were visitors and patrons of great shrines, and participated enthusiastically in pilgrimage, notably the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Fulk Nerra count of Anjou (987-1039) was a ruthless soldier and politician who enormously enhanced his county at the expense of his neighbours, but he went to Jerusalem at least three times and founded the important abbey of Beaulieu-lès-Loches.[11] The Church as a whole was, of course, highly supportive of such people, and from the beginning of the eleventh century its thinkers tended to stress the reciprocal nature of society. The peasants who produced and paid rents and taxes to their lords, received in return protection, as did those who prayed. In this way the notion of the three orders of society was enshrined in contemporary thinking.[12] But the elaboration of this theory and the defence of it bespeak a certain queasiness about its practical implications. Clerical reformers were not slow to point out how self-interested the great were, and the rise of widespread popular religiosity gave a focus for this kind of criticism. In any case, the brutality of their methods also spoke volumes. In 1091 William of Breteuil in Normandy waged war against his enemies, the Goëls, raising the resources

[10] J.L. Nelson, *The Annals of St Bertin* (Manchester 1991) Year 859: 89.
[11] Glaber, *The Five Books of the Histories*, 60-65, 212-215.
[12] G. Duby, *The Three Orders. Feudal Society Imagined* (Chicago 1982).

for his troops: '(…) with the help of ransoms of captives and plunder taken from the poor people.'[13] The warrior ethic by which the leaders of society lived was clearly disruptive of society and certainly not at all in accord with the Christian ethic of love.[14] Yet these were the people who were shaping society, driving the peasantry to greater economic activity and extending the boundaries of the Church.

On the face of it they seemed condemned by the Christian injunction against killing and stood in danger of damnation. But in fact the Church had already made a number of adjustments to its attitudes which accommodated their position, simply because it had to. A vital part of maintaining the social order was defending it from external attack and from the excessive ambitions of those within. We call the early Middle Ages the 'Dark Ages' for very good reasons. Warfare dominated these centuries of European development. Nobody could ever say that Christians as a whole were especially peaceful people who eschewed violence. This was not simply a matter of crude warlords, because the Church itself was not particularly reluctant to employ such means to gain its ends. The Pope, as the ruler of a Central Italian principality, had substantial material interests and in an age of violence he had little alternative but to fight fire with fire.

In the ninth century Muslim raiders established themselves on the River Garigliano barely 100 km south of Rome and devastated the area around the city, at times imposing tribute upon the papacy. In 915, Pope John X created an alliance of southern powers, including Gaeta, Naples, the Lombard princes and the Byzantines which succeeded in expelling them from their bases. In 1052, when Norman mercenaries were becoming a real threat to the stability of the area, Pope Leo IX (r. 1049-1054) personally raised and led an army against them in the battle of Civitate on 18 June 1053. After this defeat Pope Leo reported a vision of those who had died fighting for him in the battle:

> I was deeply encouraged by our brothers who were killed fighting for God in Apulia. I saw them numbered amongst the martyrs, and their

[13] O. Vitalis, *Historia aecclesiastica* IV, M. Chibnall ed. (Oxford 1969-1979) 294.

[14] R.W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford 1999) brilliantly demonstrates the disruption caused by the attitudes and actions of the chivalrous classes.

> clothes had the splendour of gold. In their hands they held bouquets of imperishable flowers.[15]

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that daily experience came to be seen as somewhat opposed to the notion of war as inherently sinful. Penitential codes were actually modified to accommodate this, and heavier penances imposed upon private murder than upon killing in public war. In the eighth-century *Penitentiary of Bede* a penance of four years was imposed upon those who murdered for gain, but only forty days upon those who killed in public war, and a similar tariff was used in the *Ecclesiastical Discipline* by Regino of Prüm of about 906. After the conquest of England in 1066 a much heavier penance was levied upon Duke William's mercenaries than upon his vassals, on the grounds that the former clearly fought for gain while the latter fought out of duty.[16]

This amelioration, while very welcome, could not change the fact that the basic vocation of the great was killing, and that this was a terrible sin in the sight of God. But a much more dynamic and potent idea seems to have emerged in the time of the great king, Charlemagne (r. 768-814). This was the idea that killing non-Christians was in some way different and more acceptable to God than killing Christians. Certainly Charlemagne was a great killer of pagans and others, and the wars he waged extended the boundaries of Christendom enormously. The Church was deeply impressed by his achievements and offered no contradiction to his pose as the champion of Christendom which was particularly evident in his prosecution of the wars against the pagan Avars settled in what is now Hungary. And after the death of the great king, his empire was divided and its land were assailed from all directions by many pagans. Amongst them the Vikings were particularly spectacular, but Slavs came from the east and Muslims from the south. Those who chronicled these events were not slow to portray these as wars against the enemies of Christ. Thus when the Vikings attacked Poitiers the author of the *Annals of St Bertin* reports:

> The men of Poitiers offered prayers to God and St Hilary and boldly attacked those Northmen (…) They killed some of them and drove

[15] J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 143: 527, cited in Flori, *Guerre sainte, jihad, croisade*, 299.

[16] H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'Bishop Ermenford of Sion and the penitential ordinance following the battle of Hastings', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 20 (1969) 225-242.

> the rest to take flight. They gave a tenth part of all their booty to St Hilary.[17]

Before his battle with the Hungarians at the Riade in 933 Henry I of Germany (919-36) assured his troops that they would receive divine aid in their struggle against their pagan enemies.[18]

The papacy itself shared this view. Pope Leo IV (847-855) witnessed the devastation of St Peter's by Muslim raiders, and had set in train the construction of what are now called the Leonine Walls around the Vatican. In December 853 he appealed to the Franks for military assistance against 'the enemies of the Holy Faith' and proclaimed:

> (…) whoever dies in the Faith (and we do not wish anyone to die) in this struggle, will not be denied the Heavenly Kingdom. The Almighty knows that if any of you should die he will be doing so for the good of the faith, the salvation of his country and the defence of Christians. For these reasons the profit I have mentioned will flow from Him.[19]

In 878 a group of German clerics wrote to Pope John VIII (872-882) asking:

> (…) whether those who, for the defence of the Holy Church of God and Republic have recently fallen, have been brought to nothing in doing this, or may seek forgiveness of their sins.

They received a very robust reply:

> We, through the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, can reply boldly that those who, in the service of the Christian faith, fell in conflict and battle may be sustained by the rest of Eternal Life in struggling against the pagans and infidels (…) Through us, by the intercession of the Apostle Peter whose power it is to bind and loose in heaven and earth, we absolve them and by prayer commend them to the Lord.[20]

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[17] *Annals of St Bertin*, year 868: 152.
[18] D. Bachrach, *Religion and the Conduct of War c.300-c.1215* (Woodbridge 2003) 87.
[19] J-P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 115: 656-657. Author's own translation.
[20] Ibidem, 126: 816. Author's own translation.

This invocation of the papal power is particularly notable, but the point here is that killing of non-Christians was receiving authoritative endorsement, so that Pope Alexander III (1059-1073) could state boldly: 'All laws, ecclesiastical and secular, punish the shedding of human blood unless they order it for the punishment of criminals or the affliction of the Saracens.' [21] The equivalence here posited between the punishment of criminals in maintenance of the social order and killing Saracens is remarkable, and perhaps underlay the same pope's confidence in invoking his special authority in a statement which anticipated Urban II at Clermont:

> With fatherly affection we urge those who have resolved to go to Spain that they take great care to complete the task which, with divine counsel, they set out to accomplish. Let each soldier confess, according to the character of his sins, to his bishop or spiritual father, and let the confessor impose suitable penance upon him, lest the devil be enabled to accuse him of impenitence. We, however, by the authority of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, relieve them of their penance and grant them remission of their sins, while our prayers go with them.[22]

When Urban II launched the expedition which we call First Crusade in 1095 he was primarily appealing to the great leaders of society and their military followings. In this way, as he shrewdly calculated, numbers of people who lived in their *mouvances*, their patronage followings, would be obliged to follow.[23] These people had a powerful vested interest in the social order and conceived of their essential duty as to defend it. Yet they were all too well aware of the confusion between this moral duty and their personal self-interest. Defending the social order, however, was a vital task and one readily equated with protecting European society from outside attack, particularly the threat from Islam. By publically consecrating violence against Islam, Urban was also sacralising the entire social pre-eminence of the bearers of arms and their way of life. It had long been thought that killing Muslims and pagans was acceptable to God and popes had stated

[21] *Epistulae Pontificum Romanorum Ineditae*, S. Löwenfeld ed. (Leipzig 1885) No. 83: 43-44. Author's own translation.

[22] J. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader* (London 1995) 24.

[23] J. France, 'Patronage and the appeal of the First Crusade' in: J. Phillips ed., *The First Crusade* (Manchester 1997) 5-20, reprinted in T. Madden ed., *The Crusades, The Essential Readings* (Oxford 2002) 194-208.

this quite clearly. Urban II simply copied and developed earlier pronouncements. The difference was that he did it in a highly public way, at a Church Council, and arranged that those attending should spread the message. Further, he toured much of France spreading his message. But perhaps above all, he could count upon the aid and cooperation of the religious orders and particularly the Cluniacs who acted as the spiritual advisors of the upper class.[24] In this way the notion of holy violence, which had long been current in society but was accompanied by a certain queasiness, was given authority, and thereby a dynamism which it had hitherto lacked. The idea of journeying to Jerusalem in a fighting pilgrimage at once sanctioned the basis of the social position of the upper class and provided them with opportunities, for while Urban was careful to demand that those who went should go with proper intention: 'Whoever for devotion only, not to gain honour or money, goes to Jerusalem to liberate the Church of God, can substitute this journey for all penance.'[25]

It is very clear that he did not forbid the pursuit of honour and wealth during this penitential process. To do that would have vitiated his whole appeal which was based, ultimately, on sacralising the whole position of the upper class to whom he was appealing.

In this volume of *Leidschrift* it is possible to recognise the enormous impact of crusading on European history over a very long period indeed. Crusading was much more than mere 'metal bashing' but an integral part of European development which also influenced the lives of people in the wider world. It arose from the very well-springs of the European outlook and it influenced almost everybody in the continent in one way or another. It was seen as a spiritual exercise, a path to salvation by the Church and this gave it immense currency amongst the masses. For kings and great leaders it was often an instrument of policy and a means of enhancing the solidarity of their governments. It was also portrayed as a path to glory by those who wrote *Chansons* and *Romans* for the delectation of the secular elite. But if the crusade attracted mass enthusiasm, this only fitfully produced great armies willing to cross the Mediterranean to fight in the east at their own expense.

[24] M. Bull, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade* (Oxford 1993).

[25] Canon 2 of the Council of Clermont in R. Somerville ed., *The Councils of Urban II.* I, *Decreta Claramontensia* (Amsterdam 1972) 74; J. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London 1986) 29.

Crusading was never a tap that could be turned on or off at will by any one person of institution.

One of the most startling events of the First Crusade was the invention of the Holy Lance which served as a rallying point and a token of God's will and support for the crusader army besieged in Antioch. It subsequently became enmeshed in the political divisions of the crusader leaders and its bearer, Peter Bartholemew, was put to the trial by fire, which produced an equivocal outcome. The belief that God would judge truth or falsity by such a mechanism was deeply ingrained in the religious outlook of Europeans, but hitherto historians have largely dealt with the trial in a limited way in the context of the crusade. Conor Kostick here explores this context much more thoroughly than has been hitherto attempted, and at the same time connects the event with its wider context in European belief.

Gregory Lippiatt confronts us with that familiar phenomenon, the Fourth Crusade, whose erratic path has fascinated and horrified commentators ever since 1204. But his take on it is to probe further and more deeply into why many participants chose to leave the expedition and to go on to the Holy Land, for whose aid the crusade was originally intended. In the process he examines how contemporaries saw crusading in the period immediately before Innocent III undertook a major definition and reorganization of the institution. The lure of the crusade was indeed powerful, but it was by no means universal and its priority targets, the rich and powerful, were not always attracted to participate.

Antheun Janse explores the appeal to lesser people, a subject which in the past has been vitiated because they have often been seen through a Marxist lens by historians primarily interested in 'Social History'. Here we have a contemporary source for Frisian participation analysed to provide a more contemporary view on the problems of crusading.

With the work of J.A. Mol this volume enters the later Middle Ages. Until relatively recently crusading was seen as ending with the fall of Acre in 1291, and the *Preussenreisen* of the Teutonic Order were connected with the collision of the Teuton and Slav peoples. The whole subject was for long vitiated by the poisonous association with the racialist ideas of the Nazis, who in 1941 sponsored a great jamboree in commemoration of the battle of Liegnitz (now Legnica) of 1241 which they portrayed as foreshadowing their attack on the 'Asiatic masses' of Russia. Recent scholarship has disavowed this legacy and Mol here explores the special appeal of the Baltic Crusade for the people of the Dutch provinces – who are not at all

traditionally associated with the Teutonic Order by historians. In his article Hans Mol touches upon the vital appeal of crusading as part of the chivalric milieu of late medieval Europe and stresses the religious appeal of this crusade. His approach to the subject is remarkable and casts a new light on this topic.

Gender history has proved to be a popular and powerful tool for analyzing the past, yet relatively few historians have adopted this approach to the crusades. So in looking at the contribution of crusading princesses to the wars of the settlers in the eastern Crusader States, Deborah Gerish is attempting something new while building on an existing body of scholarship concerned with the history of the kingdom. In the process she shows how difficult it is to use sources, for William of Tyre was a participant in events and reported them in ways that suited his interests.

Jaap van Moolenbroek explores a rather different aspect of the historiography of the crusade. His subject is the work of Conrad Busken Huet (1826-1886) whose approach to the subject was a very curious amalgam. On the one hand he shared Voltaire's contempt for the whole movement: in a letter to Frederick the Great this champion of the Enlightenment commented apropos of the crusades that 'Christianity is the most ridiculous, the most absurd and bloody religion that has ever infected the world.' On the other hand Huet understood the idealism of the crusaders and their powerful religious motivation, something that has only really been explored in the last thirty years in reaction to the materialist approach of historians post World War I. This essay reminds us that we should not crudely divide nineteenth-century historians between 'Muscular Christians' who championed European imperialism and sceptics who were the heirs of the Enlightenment. The reality was much more complex.

Crusading cannot be pigeonholed as a kind of eastern diversion of European history, and this is the real lesson of these essays. The Enlightenment and its heirs in modern historiography, especially the *Annales* school, relegated crusading to an inconvenient annex, removed from the main homes of European historical development. The essays in this volume show how far the annex has now moved into, and even taken over, the mainstream. Crusading was an integral part of the European spiritual and intellectual experience and its resonances stay with us till this day.