Misinterpreted Perception: Defining the True Nature of Chivalry During the First Crusade

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Abstract

Over the turn of the centuries, chivalry has evolved and acquired numerous definitions. Currently the characteristics of a chivalric knight are skewed by the gentlemanly mannerisms and jousting tournaments seen in films. However in the First Crusade, a knight’s actions were determined by his prowess in battle and devotion to his earthly and heavenly lord. There is plenty of evidence that refutes crusaders’ chivalric nature and argues that they were nothing more than greedy warmongers. Nevertheless, the chivalric nature of the crusaders cannot be analyzed from a modern point of view. If the texts are viewed through the eyes of their authors, then it is clear that based on the evidence presented the knights are shown to be following the ideals of chivalry at that time. The historical and literary texts analyzed in this thesis provide first hand knowledge of the events pertaining to the First Crusade. Although there is always biases that surface, for the most part many of the works provide an accurate representation of the crusaders. The evidence provided shows that any knight wishing to create a reputation for himself would set out for Jerusalem, fight valiantly in battle, and take home the spoils of war with a reputation for chivalry. The study of several literary and historical sources as well as the contextual meaning of chivalry and crusading reveals that while many believed chivalry was a force for good, there are those who believe chivalric knights used the crusades as an excuse gain wealth and power. Regardless of how the evidence is interpreted by modern standards, the authors of the primary texts depict the crusading knights possessing the characteristics of chivalry as defined by that time period.
What is Truly Chivalric: An Introduction to the Argument of Chivalric Crusaders

In the period of the crusades, a series of religious wars aimed to secure power and land for various nobles or to protect Christendom in the Holy Land. The knights who took up the cross and embarked on the road to the crusades did so with the intent to fulfill their chivalric duty to their heavenly and earthly lord. However, it could also be suggested that their actions and intent were not entirely honorable. Evidence shows that there are conflicting views as to whether or not crusaders were chivalric. The ideals and values of a chivalric knight consistently appear in literary, historical, and cultural texts such as *The Alexiad, The Chanson d’Antioche, A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, Song of Roland*, and *A Knight’s Own Book of Chivalry*. Each work possesses its own particular view of the crusades. These works were specifically chosen because they represent a variety of viewpoints, genres, and time periods: Western European Catholic and Greek Orthodox; literary epics and historical narratives; and contemporary eyewitness accounts and stories from many years later. Together they provide evidence to explore how chivalry and religion interacted. Without a better understanding of the relationship between chivalry and crusading, we will fail to comprehend how we should judge and learn from history. High-minded ideals can lead to bad consequences. If the crusades were for the benefit of power and land, then the knights were far from chivalrous and used the ruse of religion to destroy countless lives and lands. Nevertheless, there is always the possibility that the crusades could have been a true holy expedition and the knights’ actions were just.

Several questions were considered while researching the chivalric nature of the crusaders: who is portraying the right chivalric code? Were the crusader’s actions justly performed or were they done in the pursuit of power alone? How did knights serve God and a secular ruler? In Geoffroi de Charny’s *Book of Chivalry*, he outlines exactly what it means to be a knight of
Christianity. Nevertheless, there are instances in which it is difficult to see whether or not the crusaders were actually acting like knights, but rather self-serving warriors. Texts such as The Alexiad and A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem depict the crusaders as men after power and land or sent on the path of a war that is not against fellow Christians. Could knights be chivalric if their mission was for the sole purpose of power and land? Is it possible that the crusade was designed in order to convince warmongering knights to fight against someone other than their fellow Christians? The answer to these questions is complex, but study of several literary and historical sources as well as the contextual meaning of chivalry and crusading reveals that while many believed chivalry was a force for good, there are those who believe chivalric knights used the crusades as an excuse gain wealth and power. Regardless of how the evidence is interpreted by modern standards, the authors of the primary texts depict the crusading knights possessing chivalric mannerisms. The knights gain of wealth and land reflected their prowess in battle, a component of chivalry.

Anna Comnena, a Byzantine princess, wrote The Alexiad around 1148. Her work is a historical account of the First Crusade through the eyes of a Greek. Anna’s purpose is to highlight what she claims are the true events that occurred during the crusades. However The Alexiad is limited to the events that occurred during reign of Anna’s father Alexius. Most of her narrative focuses on the relationship between the Byzantine Empire, her father’s kingdom, and Western European powers, more precisely the Franks. She provides first-hand documentation of the First Crusade, but not without an underlying biased in favor of Alexius. When referring to Franks, Anna Comnena considers them barbaric. Although she shows dislike for the Turks, the leaders of the crusades are not spared from her opinions as seen in Books 10 and 11 where the First Crusade is discussed at length as well as Anna’s reactions to the ensuing events. In contrast
to Anna’s work, another historical account of the First Crusade is Fulcher of Chartres’s *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem* written from 1101 to 1128. This work chronicled the events of the crusades in as much of an unbiased tone as possible. As a participant of the First Crusade, it is possible that Fulcher’s story is the closest to being accurate. Though the chronicles are written from a Christian’s point of view, Fulcher’s chronicle portrays a systematic retelling of his experiences. The chronicle is divided into three books. The evidence used for this research focuses on Book I, which describes the preparations for the First Crusade in 1095 with the speech from Pope Urban II to the victory over Jerusalem.

Similarly, the anonymous *Chanson d’Antioche*, written around 1180, details the events of the crusaders conquest of Antioch and Jerusalem. Unlike *The Alexiad*, this account is told from a Christian point of view and is considered a literary text as opposed to a historical chronicle. The *Chanson d’Antioche* is a romanticized Christian poem illustrating Peter the Hermit, not Pope Urban, preaching the First Crusade, the preparations that took place, arriving at Constantinople, and the battle and victory over Antioch. Interestingly, the *Chanson d’Antioche* discuss the theme of the crusade being an act of vengeance for the death of Christ. Most retellings present the pope as the reason behind the crusade, who wanted to stop Christians from warring against each other. Yet, in this chanson Peter preaches that it is Christ who prophesized Christianity’s vengeance for his death. The significance of Christ providing this prediction is that it provides crusaders with a strong reason to attack Antioch and Jerusalem because their victory would glorify Christ’s death on the cross and vengeance for his death. Christ’s death can be used as propaganda in Peter’s preaching. Essentially, if a Christian refuses to take up the cross then he is ignoring the sacrifice Christ made for Christianity.
Although knowing the characters that will be analyzed in this thesis is important, it is also necessary to understand how they will be judged. The First Crusade could arguably be one of the first places where chivalry began to develop into what we define it currently. Evidence of this can be seen in the *Song of Roland* an epic poem based on the events of the Battle of Roncevaux in 778 between Charlemagne’s Christians and the Saracen Turks. The date of this work is roughly circa 1100 written by an anonymous author whom focuses of the heroic efforts of the knight Roland. This poem strongly enforces the idea that Christians fighting against the Arabs were chivalric knights who were fighting in the name of the Holy Lord. Throughout the poem there are appearances by religious figures such as the angel Gabriel who watch over the knights. For instance, upon Roland’s death angels swept down and brought him directly to heaven.

Thierry, the weaker fighter, kills Pinabel, the stronger, by divine intervention.

Years later around the 1350s, Geoffroi de Charny wrote a handbook for knights called *A Knight’s Own Book of Chivalry*. Often referred to as a treatise, this handbook provided knights with a guide on how to be a chivalric knight detailing everything from behavior to the qualities of a true knight. Unlike the other primary sources referenced in this research, Charny’s text does not focus on the First Crusade nor was it written during or about that time period. His subject matter is solely about chivalry and knighthood that most likely draws on some of the behavior exhibited during the crusade. The handbook is an excellent reference to how knights were expected to act in order to earn the reputation of a worthy knight. It considers the possible reasons behind why crusaders would leave home and embark on a perilous pilgrimage. Charny describes that as a knight’s responsibility to his lord, which could easily be interpreted as the heavenly Lord or an earthly lord. Charny even touches on knightly virtue and salvation that is expected of a man worthy of knighthood.
As these examples indicate, historical and literary texts show multiple views of chivalry and crusading. Historical texts like *The Alexiad* and *The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres* pose views that follow the same Crusade events but in different voices. As historical documents differing biases are portrayed within the text and pose questions as to which one of the texts is more accurate than the other. Not only do views differ based on the historical texts but also through literary works. One poem, *The Song of Roland*, glorifies the Christians and demonizes the Arabs while *The Chanson d’Antioche* illustrates both sides in a slightly more equal lighting. Literary works provide similar insight into what happened during the First Crusade like historical texts. However, literary pieces provide creative views on the subject matter. This project’s purpose is to show whether or not the chivalric code played any part in the First Crusade, while also presenting the difference in viewpoints between each historical and literary work. When reading various texts about the crusade it is sometimes easier to notice a biased view present because most of the works produced at that time derived from Christian authors. It is generally true that Arabic and Muslim sources paid less attention to the crusades than Christian sources; additionally, some evidence may have been lost or destroyed. Due to this slant in the evidence, this project will look deeper into specific works to pinpoint and extracts various events where the Crusaders are portrayed as chivalric heroes when in reality they may not be. Without a better understanding of crusaders’ motivations, we will fail to see how knights ended up taking up the cross as a chivalric act. Many of these texts focus on the events, rather than the emotion and motivation behind the crusaders. Although in some texts the crusaders are portrayed as greedy plunderers, there is still a possibility that religion was a motivation behind some of their efforts. In various passages, some knights are seen willing to lay down their lives for the Holy Lord while others deviously approach war for the riches.
Drawing on the work of scholars like Richard Kaeuper and Maurice Keen on chivalry, I argue that these different narratives discuss the reality behind chivalry, from its initial foundations to its moral responsibilities in society. Kaeuper argues that modern readers forget the violence behind chivalry and that we are in “great danger” of viewing “this important phenomenon through the rose-tinted lenses of romanticism, to read chivalry in terms of what we want it to be rather than what it was.”¹ In many ways chivalry is romanticized in modern literature, linking to the ideals of being a gentleman. Kaeuper reminds readers that chivalry should not be viewed through a modern point of view and avoid romanticizing chivalric knighthood. His work analyzes the claim that chivalry was a necessity to society as well as a critical look at the practices, concept, and characterization of chivalry. On the other hand, Keen’s work analyzes and encompasses all previously discussed works as well as numerous other primary sources. He depicts chivalry as a social ideal amongst knights and defines chivalric foundation and the effects it possessed on the crusades in a logical manner. The insights in Keen’s *Chivalry* defines what chivalric knighthood meant, whereas other articles, literary works, and historical texts present conflicting views on whether or not crusaders were actually chivalric.

While Keen talks in general about chivalry, Conor Kostick’s “Courage and Cowardice on the First Crusade, 1096-1099,” shows chivalric nature of battle, specifically during the crusades. Kostick argues that a knight stayed in battle regardless of his own beliefs or the consequences. In other words, regardless of how a knight acted in battle, he was given harsher criticism if he left the war altogether. This criticism was based on the violation of a knight’s oath to see his pilgrimage through to the end. All chivalric knights were expected to uphold their code with great reverence. When joining a crusade, knights “took up the cross”, which was their way of

¹ Kaeuper, Richard W. *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe.* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.) p. 2
making an oath to God. Like Jesus, if a knight chose to take the cross he was expected to stick with the war until the very end. If this was true and the historical works on the crusades deemed all the knights chivalric, then none of the knights should have ever abandoned their oath. Yet, in Kostick’s article he points out Stephen of Blois, just as The Chanson d’Antioche recounts, deserted the army and brought about heavy mockery and disgust especially by Bohemond. Desertion was abhorred by the chivalric code. Once an oath is taken, a knight can never go back on his word. Nevertheless, it is found happening in the First Crusade. Thus, showing that the Christian knights were not as faithful as they are made out to be in various works.

In a more modern review of chivalry in the First Crusade, Jon Guttman’s article “The historic meaning of the term ‘crusade’ has been less than clear--even among Christians” discusses the discrepancy found in how a survey of people view the crusades; a period of thriving and prosperous history or an embarrassment. During the start of the War on Terrorism, Guttman points out that President Bush declared a “‘crusade’ against terrorism in September 2001,” which he deem a tactical error due to the implications that he was crusading against the Islamic religion. The president’s call for the “crusade” on terrorism mirrors that of Pope Urban II’s call for a crusade to Jerusalem. The important part of the call for a “crusade” is not because of the war but the idea behind the word itself. Crusading incites an ideal of chivalry within modern people. During the First Crusade a similar feeling emerged amongst knights. Pope Urban II used “crusade” in order to deter knights from fighting amongst themselves and to go to war against a foreign enemy. Using this word in a modern context as well as in 1096 makes knights, soldiers, and feel like the war is a worthwhile cause to partake in.

Although Pope Urban stated that Turks are occupying “the lands of Christians, have overcome them, already victims of seven battles, and have killed and captured them, have
overthrown Churches, and have laid waste God’s kingdom”\(^2\), in reality there is an implication of religious superiority. From the beginning this passage projects that the motive for the crusades and the crusaders’ purpose in war may have had ulterior motives. Similarly John France’s article “The Destruction of Jerusalem and the First Crusade” takes a deeper look on the discussion over Pope Urban’s motivation to set about a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. An argument arises during this article about the importance of the First Crusade and the consequences that were created because of it. France argues that the Church “threw its authority behind the pilgrimage, the great manifestation of the popular piety of the age.” In other words, France is claiming that the reinforcement of belief was a strong driving factor for the crusade. This could be interpreted as the pope’s promise for indulgences or even for the re-establishment of Church control. There is even a disagreement behind why the Church authority put so much weight behind the First Crusade. Just as President Bush called for a “crusade” on terrorism, Pope Urban appears to be inciting a similar response by calling for a “pilgrimage” to Jerusalem.

The ideals and definitions of the term “chivalry” have taken on many meanings over the turn of the centuries. Originating from the French word “chevalerie,” meaning “horse soldiery,” chivalry was about prowess and honor, one’s duty to his lord and land. On its most basic level, a chivalric knight is characterized by his loyalty to his king, his willingness to serve his God, and his bravery in battle. The idea of chivalry was not solely based on jousting and wooing ladies. Knights were expected to uphold certain duties; “His first duty…is to defend the faith of Christ against unbelievers, which will win him honour both in this world and the next.” A knight’s second duty was to “defend his temporal lord, and protect the weak, women, widows, and

In other words, knights were expected to uphold the laws of heaven and earth. While protecting these laws, they would learn and teach virtue and loyalty as well as enforce loyalty and humility. During the First Crusade, chivalry had similar characterizations. My selected evidence illustrates knighthood in different ways: while one dismisses the crusaders as not being chivalric, another admires crusading knights for their chivalrous demeanor. However after analyzing the evidence presented in the literary and historical texts, it is clear that the crusaders exhibited chivalric characteristics throughout the First Crusade. From a modern perspective, people may argue that crusaders were warmongers who solely desired wealth and power. Nevertheless if the texts are viewed through the eyes of the authors, then it is clear that based on the evidence presented shows the knights to be following the ideals of chivalry at that time.

God’s Appearance in Chivalry: The Song of Roland’s Emphasis on Christianity

Many of the texts under examination demonstrate how chivalry aligns with crusading and Holy War. Other times, they show chivalry operating independently from the crusade. Looking at the historical and literary texts, all the questions boil down to one major inquiry; is it possible the knights were not truly chivalric. Due to romanticized films and novels about knights rescuing damsels in distress, the modern reader defines chivalry as brave men fighting against the odds to save the women he loves. The knights on the First Crusade and in the Song of Roland did behave chivalrously; however, not necessarily for the love of a woman. Although chivalry is not always compatible with material wealth, there were times when chivalric knights can benefit religiously and financially. Regardless of his reasons, a knight who strived to earn a reputation for chivalry could be one of the first men to sign up to go on the crusade. In the Song of Roland, Archbishop

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3 Keen, Maurice Hugh. Chivalry. (New Haven, CT: Yale Nota Bene, 2005.) p. 9
Turpin says, “For our king we must be prepared to die.” Turpin reminds the men before battle their purpose in fighting and explains to the reader why the knights are about to willingly enter into the war. The Archbishop states, “To save your souls I shall absolve you all. / If you die, you will be blessed martyrs / And take your place in paradise on high.” Looking closely at the Archbishop’s words, the reader would notice that he is reiterating the same words the pope says in most historical texts about the crusades. Both religious figures emphasize that if a knight dies in battle in the Holy War he will be forgiven of all sins and sent to Heaven.

In many ways, the *Song of Roland* acts as literary propaganda for the crusades despite its being set in Spain. Roland is set up as the ultimate chivalric knight who dies fighting in the name of his Lord and king. As a reward he is brought to Heaven by angels. Although this work’s descriptions are overly exaggerated, it manages to provide the reader with an idealized view of what was expected of knights during the First Crusade. The crusaders in *Song of Roland* emphasize the stereotype of how the crusaders and those of the Christian world viewed themselves. The *Song of Roland* acted as one of the initial models for chivalrous knights. Roland fought for the honor and glory of himself as well as his king. As Maurice Keen wrote, “the most important legacy of chivalry to later times was its conception of honour.” Chivalry focused on the pursuit of honor and the means in which a knight earns his honorable reputation. For Roland, his honorable reputation was earned through his valiant death against the Saracens. Although his men died because he was too proud to blow his horn, he still tried to save them in the end by fighting with the last of his strength and calling for help. When the angels take Roland directly to Heaven, the author is alluding that chivalry was strongly influenced by Christianity.

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5 *Song of Roland*, p. 65 89.1133-35
6 Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 249
Keen points out how important “a part literature could play in spreading new chivalrous customs and rituals.” Although the role of Christianity arose from the Church’s preaching and declarations in favor of the First Crusade, the Song of Roland served an important function in idealizing Christianity as well. Keen mentions that Song of Roland was not just an “earthly struggle: Gabriel stands guard beside the sleeping Charlemagne and is by him in his great struggle with the Emir; Gabriel was at Roland’s side too, as he lay dying, and heard his prayer.” The author of Song of Roland creates a strong bond between chivalry and religion. Roland is presented as the perfect knight fighting and dying for his king and with his last breath he prays. The author could have had Roland swearing at the Saracens as he lay dying, but instead Roland calls on God and his angels, solidifying an element of importance between being a chivalric knight and Christianity.

The emphasis on Roland’s chivalric duty to Christianity in the poem parallels that of Pope Urban II’s call for the crusade in 1095-6, where he said “accustomed to wage private wars wastefully even against Believers, go forth against the Infidels in a battle worthy to be undertaken now and to be finished in victory.” He continued saying that those who are “plunderers, be soldiers of Christ; now let those who formerly contended against brothers and relations, rightly fight barbarians.” Pope Urban appropriately appealed to the chivalric ideal that a knight serves his lord, both the earthbound and heavenly. He argues that those who stop their private war against their neighbors and take up the cross will be greatly rewarded in Heaven. The pope prepares the knights to go to battle knowing that if they die, their sins will be automatically forgiven. Although this promise of heavenly reward seems alluring, in historical

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7 Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 79
8 Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 51
9 *The First Crusade*, ed. Peters, p. 53 1.3.7
10 *The First Crusade*, ed. Peters, p. 53 1.3.7
and literary works there appears to be a need for a religious figure to represent and endorse the pope’s ideas. For instance, Archbishop Turpin’s role in *Song of Roland* is to be the preacher saying, “If you die, you will be blessed martyrs.” Turpin’s role in this epic is to continuously remind the crusaders why they are fighting the Holy War. The promise of indulgences also acted as a guise for many knights who were there for the expansion of their own wealth. However with the archbishop present, the poem seems to direct the reader’s focus towards religious aspects rather than the knights’ greed. When many of the crusaders took up the cross accepted the pope’s indulgences and that this war was not entirely in the name of God, prompts readers to consider the idea that indulgences manifested a certain degree of greed amongst the knights.

Another important role Turpin plays in this poem is the introduction of a knight’s loyalty to his terrestrial and heavenly lord. In the archbishop’s speech to the knights, he says, “For our king we must be prepared to die. / Help us now to sustain the Christian faith.” At first glance, this line appears to refer to being of service to Charlemagne. However upon a second look, the use of the word “king” could emphasize the importance of dying in God’s name. It is possible that the author is cleverly attempting place an emphasis on God’s role in the crusade by alluding to the idea that the knights were not only picked to serve by Charlemagne but also by God. Nevertheless, Keen notes that Roland “does not think of himself as the church’s soldier but as Charlemagne’s; Christ is his heavenly lord, but his lord in war that he is fighting against the Saracens is Charles.” Even though this passage reiterates the concept of serving one’s lord, Keen provides a clear distinction between the two lords. By emphasizing the angel Gabriel’s role and the various prayers from characters, the *Song of Roland* appears to want the reader to see the

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11 *Song of Roland*, p. 65 89.1134
12 *Song of Roland*, p. 65 89.1128-29
13 Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 76
crusaders as soldiers of God. Yet, Keen comments on how Roland fought as Charlemagne’s soldier. Keen’s passage suggests that the crusade may not solely be about Christianity. He points out that even in a religious work such as the *Song of Roland*, the knights do not identify themselves as Christ’s soldiers. In other words, even in a piece of propaganda a tension between chivalry and religion remains. This tension was exacerbated by the desire for wealth.

Though Christianity may act as a disguise or even one of the many purposes for going to war, there were still some of the men who partook in the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for religious reasons and others for wealth and property gain. Regardless of their reasons, those who wrote literary and historical texts about the First Crusade focused much of their retelling on the knights. The narrator of Roland’s story perpetuates the idealistic stereotype of how the crusaders and those of the Christian world viewed themselves. On the whole the Saracens are described as demonic creatures with no honor. However the Christians, who act just as mercilessly as the Saracens, are considered honorable knights because they fight in God’s name. The narrator continuously emphasizes the crusaders as soldiers of God. When the Arabs are killing all of Roland’s friends, he stops in the middle of the fight “And mourns them like a noble knight: / ‘Lord barons, may God have mercy on you; / May he grant all your souls a place in paradise.’”

During the crusade, devout knights believed that God was the reason if they lived or died and if they won the battle. Even after Roland’s friends lay dying, Roland, as the ideal chivalric knight, takes the time to pray to God. In his final moments Roland, “He held out his right glove to God; / Angels came down to him from Heaven.” Roland fought and died in the name of God and as a reward he is lifted into heaven by angels. If the reader looks closely enough, then they would

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14 *Song of Roland*, p. 88 140.1853-55
15 *Song of Roland*, p. 104 175.2373-74
notice that Roland is reiterating the idea that fighting in the crusade will lead to the eternal reward.

Although the author of the *Song of Roland* would have the reader believe that the primary goal for the First Crusade was solely about defending Christianity, that is far from the truth. Keen points out that,

“The crusade has become a great chivalrous adventure, in which the service of God and the quest for earthly renown and reward have become so interlaced that it is no longer practical to seek to unravel the strands.”\(^{16}\)

In other words, Keen presents a more truthful approach to how the crusades should be perceived, such as, the crusades not solely being for the purpose of protecting Christianity from the demonic infidels. They were also to gain wealth and land. In many of Pope Urban’s speeches, he implies that those who take up the cross will be forgiven of their sins and reap the benefits in heaven. In earlier works, crusaders are illustrated as devout and brave or as greedy warmongers. Numerous texts seem to try and separate both ideals, while Keen perfectly summarizes the argument. Both Keen and the *Song of Roland* present the idea that knights were not always fighting simply for their Church and God, but rather for personal gain.

**A Knight’s Duties and Responsibilities: Serving One’s Heavenly and Earthly Lord**

In contrast to the *Song of Roland*, which tried to assert the crusading knights chivalric behavior throughout, other literary texts such as the *Chanson d’Antioche* and chivalric treatises such as Geoffroi de Charny’s *Book of Chivalry* show knights as religious men who follow the

\(^{16}\) Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 55
word of the pope and are required to serve their heavenly and earthly lord. While historical and literary evidence presents strong arguments for each side, there appears to be conflicting motives about whether this is God’s work or the pope’s determination to stop fighting amongst Christians. Peter the Hermit and Pope Urban II promoted the First Crusade as a religious expedition to free Jerusalem, the holiest city in Christendom, from Muslims. However, they referred to this call for war as a pilgrimage. Originally pilgrimages were holy journeys that were supposed to be about prayer, finding one’s way back to God, and the forgiveness of sins. Weapons and sacking cities would be considered sacrilegious. Yet, in 1096 Pope Urban II called for a pilgrimage to remove Muslim influence from Jerusalem. At this time the definitions of pilgrimages and chivalry were changing, so knights were not being non-chivalric by taking weapons on their journey. Many knights responded to the call and took up arms against the Muslims. The knights had to be aware this was against the rights of a pilgrimage and therefore should not be considered chivalric. However, Geoffroi Charny would disagree with that assumption. According to Charny’s A Knight’s Own Book of Chivalry, a knight

“Is those who love, serve, and honor God and His gentle Mother and all His power, and refrain from actions by which they might incur Their wrath, and who have within them such steadfast qualities that their way of life cannot be criticized for any vile sins nor for any shameful reproach, and they thus live loyally and honestly.”

Taking weapons on a pilgrimage might appear to incite the wrath of God. Nevertheless, the knights are not entirely guilty because Pope Urban sent them and not their own greed. During this time period in the Church, the pope acted as the mortal voice of God to the world. By

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sanctioning this pilgrimage, Pope Urban is absolving the knights of any sin they might incur because they are following God’s orders. Essentially, the Crusaders were acting chivalrously and followed the Church’s suggestion of going to war. If a knight openly questioned the pope, his community or kingdom would view him as a traitor and a sinner. A knight’s duty is to loyalty obey his lord and protect all of Christendom. Pope Urban acted as the ultimate lord over these knights.

At the beginning of the First Crusade, Peter the Hermit preached the war as if it were a homily, once again enacting the chivalric code within any knight who heard his words. Peter’s words and the Pope’s papal bull were artfully crafted to ensure that the knights and kings would listen and rise up to go to battle. Similarly to Charny’s definition of chivalric ideals, they focused on promoting heavenly glory rather than simply wanting the Holy Land back in the hands of the Church. In The Chanson d’Antioche, the narrator shows Peter receiving a message straight from God while in prayer. The notion that God called for the crusade gives Peter and the Pope an enormous backing when they ask for the knights to go to war. In the stanza, God tells Peter, “Go to the patriarch and ask for My seal. Return to France from whence you came, dear brother. Tell My people that the time is near when they should come and help holy Christianity for My sake.” God is instructing Peter to go to “the patriarch” and ask him to make a formal decree asking the knights of Christendom to go to Jerusalem for the sake of the Holy Lord. Peter takes this one step further and uses the pope to help him spread the message. One of the most crucial parts of this passage is the word “My.” Peter seemingly legitimates his vision of God by saying that God asked for His people to help Christianity for His sake, which implies that not going on the crusade would be an offense against God.

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Another important factor that led to the undertaking of the crusade is the necessity for a valiant knight to seek out new experiences and undertake hardships in order to bring glory to his name. Charny narrates that, “one should honor and respect such men who subject themselves in this way to physical danger and hardship in order to see these strange things and make distant journeys.”¹⁹ During times of peace, a knight should be using his time wisely by traveling and undergoing perilous journeys to learn and fight. Those who sit around waiting for the next war squander the opportunity to explore and train. Those knights are lazy and not honorable. By going on the Crusade, knights are able to take on a new expedition that will give them military prowess and knowledge of the Middle Eastern world. Any kind of journey that is vast and dangerous provides a chivalric knight the opportunity to gain fame and honor. Those who stay behind in Europe would be ridiculed for their lack of adventure. Interestingly, in this passage Charny states that one of the reasons a knight should go on a pilgrimage is to provide a “better and truer account of them than those who will not or dare not go there.”²⁰ People can speculate all they want about a distant land, but only those who actually travel there will not be called a liar. Charny shows that only a chivalric knight who went on these pilgrimages can be trusted to tell a full and accurate account of what is out in the world.

Charny’s idea that pilgrimages are a necessity for a knight is also presented in The Chanson d’Antioche. The narrator spends the first fourteen verses of the prose driving into the reader’s mind that the crusade is a necessity for a knight to achieve glory in Heaven. Traditionally knights were unable to enter into Heaven in the committed any form of sins, murder, greed, wrath, and so on. A knight could redeem himself through penance and charitable acts but not by killing non-believers. The concept of indulgences twisted this ideal to expand to

¹⁹ Charny, A Knight’s Own Book of Chivalry, p. 51
²⁰ Charny, A Knight’s Own Book of Chivalry, p. 50
fighting in what was deemed a Holy War. Pope Urban persuaded the knights that the crusade was a part of protecting Christendom and therefore God would forgive the sins of those who fought in the war. The concept of being forgiven for one’s sins through fighting in the crusades eventually becomes one of the characteristics of chivalric knighthood in Charny’s *A Knight’s Own Book of Chivalry*. Charny states,

> “Those who perform deeds of arms more to gain God’s grace and for the salvation of the soul than for glory in this world, their noble souls will be set in paradise to all eternity and their persons will be for ever honored.”

Charny’s passage mirrors the multiple statements the author of *Chanson d’Antioche* continuously repeats at the opening of the plot that a story will be told of how Jerusalem was conquered by the valiant Crusaders with the help of God and that they were rewarded in Heaven.

For fourteen stanzas, he rewords and rephrases this sentiment but the main point remains the same. The narrator states, “Nobody has ever heard of such a pilgrimage. They all found themselves enduring immense suffering – thirst, hunger, cold, sleepless nights and lack of food – for the love of God. In return He would reward them all well and take their souls up to His glory in Heaven.” The idea is that the Crusaders suffered like Jesus did in order to be fully rewarded when they went to Heaven. In the bible, Jesus went on a pilgrimage in the desert before his death. He suffered from dehydration, hunger, extreme temperatures, and sleep deprivation. When the devil tempted him, he still possessed the strength to deny him and sent him away. By beginning *The Chanson d’Antioche* in a similar manner, the narrator is trying to enact that memory in Christians and knights. In doing so, knights would feel a sense of pride that they had the honor to walk in the footsteps of the Lord’s son. Along the same sentiment, in Matthew

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21 Charny, *A Knight’s Own Book of Chivalry*, p. 96
22 *The Chanson d’Antioche*, p. 101
16:24 “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” When joining the crusade, knights referred to going to war as “taking up the cross.” Knights gave oaths promising to fight in the name of the Lord, which fits into Matthew’s passage because the knights essentially gave up staying in the comforts of their homes to go to Jerusalem.

Taking up the cross during the First Crusade acted as an oath or vow between the knights and God. According to Charny and Keen, chivalrous knights obeyed and served their Lord’s bidding, whether he is earthly or heavenly. It is a knight’s duty to defend the faith. However not all knights who took up the cross acted in a chivalric manner. In the *Chanson d’Antioche* there is a story of Christ giving a prophecy from the cross, he “reveals God’s purpose in the crusade, but colours it with overtones of the secular vendetta: ‘Friend, in time a new people will come from beyond the sea who will exact vengeance for this death.’” This passage shows that some of the crusaders took up the cross as part of a vendetta, which does not portray the best intentions. Similarly there were crusaders who did not uphold their oaths. Count Stephen of Blois is often ridiculed and mocked as a failed knight in passages about the First Crusade. Upon realizing that the crusaders were vastly outnumbered, he feigned illness and ran away. The narrator *The Chanson d’Antioche* states “Then without further ado the count hopped out of the litter, because actually he was not ill at all. His behavior was thoroughly reprehensible.” Stephen of Blois is used as a model for the anti-knight. His actions are deceiving and cowardly; the exact opposite of what a knight should be like. In a later passage, Stephen flees further from the army to Constantinople. The true “knights of Our Lord” believed he left to rally the army and bring

24 Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 59
25 *The Chanson d’Antioche*, p. 237
26 *The Chanson d’Antioche*, p. 268
back supplies. Instead, Stephen tells the emperor “All [the Christians] are either dead already or will soon be dead.”

Stephen of Blois’ actions show the cowardice that was possible amongst knights. Aside from his cowardly actions, Stephen serves a different purpose in this story. He acts as a foil to Godfrey and Bohemond. The narrator of *The Chanson d’Antioche* depicts Godfrey as a superior knight whom “lusts after battle more than refined gold or *mangons* or pursuing girls or flying a merlin falcon.” Knights were men of action and gained glory for their name and Lord through the battles they fought, a knight who does not go off to fight risks ruining his reputation as chivalrous. When Stephen runs away with his tail between his legs afraid to lay down his life on the battlefield. The narrator displays a contrast between the two. Godfrey lusts for battle because he is fighting in God’s army. If he dies, then he will do so for the honor of the Lord and be raised to Heaven. Similarly, Bohemond is described as a leader who is known as a “noble soldier” and is “more interested in battle than refined gold or bezants.” Both knights are noble, fearless, and seek out their next battle. The narrator illustrates Godfrey and Bohemond as the perfect role models for chivalry due to their prowess. Unlike Stephen, Godfrey and Bohemond were illustrated to represent courage and humility. The narrator illustrates that some knights during this time period, like Stephen of Blois, were found chasing women, practicing falconry, and focusing on their wealth. The narrator points out that deception and greed ran rampant in the time before the crusade, most likely as a way to shame and provide a stronger foundation for the pope to lure the men to war with the promise of indulgences. Stephen represents the opposite of a chivalric knight. He poses a problem to the idea that knights are suppose to be serving in God’s

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27 *The Chanson d’Antioche*, p. 268
28 *The Chanson d’Antioche*, p. 289
29 *The Chanson d’Antioche*, p. 290
name and not for power and wealth. Once Pope Urban II made the call for the First Crusade, he appealed to their current nature and purposed that if they took Jerusalem all their sins would be forgiven. The pope’s indulgence gave knights the opportunity to have their sins forgiven once they joined the army.

The Realism Behind a Chivalric Knight: Chivalry Was Not Picture Perfect

As we have seen, the First Crusade was fraught with uncertainty as to whether or not it can be proclaimed as great or embarrassing. Charny states in his guide on chivalry that a knight “Is those who love, serve, and honor God.” In many literary and historical documents that concern the First Crusade, the pope is shown to be one of the primary reasons behind the call for the crusade. In the Song of Roland and the Chanson d’Antioche, the pope is acknowledged or is announcing the crusade and the promise of indulgences. Pope Urban II’s words are glorified and recounted in these literary poems. The historical accounts differ in their presentation of the First Crusade. Instead of finding ways to praise the pope’s words, both texts provide first hand views of the crusade that voice realistic views of what was said before and during the First Crusade. In an introduction to Fulcher of Chartes’ text, Edward Peters says, “Urban stated that God had indeed ‘changed the times’ and offered a new remedy for human sin.” Peters, like Fulcher, acknowledge that the pope’s words were not finite and held elements of corruption. Interestingly, Fulcher of Chartes and Anna Comnena recount the events of the First Crusade from their personal experiences. In similar descriptions, Fulcher presents knights desirous of war marching off to Jerusalem, while Anna’s depiction illustrates them to be greedy and, in some case, gullible. For the most part neither description paints a noble, chivalric picture of the knights. Nevertheless

30 Charny, A Knight’s Own Book of Chivalry, p. 80
31 The First Crusade, ed. Peters, p. 16
Fulcher is not entirely dismissive of the crusaders’ actions. Fulcher touches on the actions of the knights in battle and praises their actions. On the other hand, Anna focuses on the Franks’ personalities and attitudes towards one another claiming a lack of solidarity amongst the men. Both accounts discuss the actions of specific knights such as Bohemond and Godfrey and present arguments on their identities as chivalric knights. Fulcher presents them as chivalric knights while Anna takes on a more negative tone.

As evidence will show, Pope Urban II is not entirely religious in his call for war. As various accounts have shown, the pope uses the crusade as a means to stop wars amongst Christians. Nevertheless, in Fulcher’s *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem* the pope’s call for the crusade is not for the benefit of chivalry but as a means to reassert the dominance of the church and redirect warring Christians’ attention elsewhere. During the time prior to the crusade, Christians were fighting against each other. Pope Urban II needed something to redirect their attentions. Fulcher’s historical account of Pope Urban’s decree is vastly different from literary accounts. Most narratives claim that the call came from God and that He wanted Christians to retake the Holy Land that was being defiled by heathens. Fulcher, on the other hand, presents a realistic view of a pope simple trying to control the Christian population and attempting to redirect their greedy nature for land and goods towards those who were not Christians. Fulcher states that Pope Urban,

“He saw that the faith of Christianity was being destroyed to excess by everybody, by clergy as well as by the laity. He saw that peace was altogether discarded by the princes of the world, who were engaged in incessant warlike
contention and quarreling among themselves. He saw the wealth of the land being pillaged continuously."³²

Fulcher sets up the political reasoning behind Pope Urban’s decision to call for the crusade. Coincidentally within his explanation as to why Pope Urban sought to call for a crusade, Fulcher shines a light on the actions of the knights before the war. Knights who were supposed to be acting valiantly and protecting their lands from heathens are fighting one another to gain land and wealth. Fulcher portrays the knights as greedy, warmongers who have disregarded Christian values.

According to Fulcher, the crusade was merely an outlet for the knights’ sinful behavior. Pope Urban tells the knights that those who “wage private wars wastefully even against Believers, go forth against the Infidels in a battle.”³³ Essentially, Pope Urban provides the knights with an excuse to continue their wars but instead of waging against fellow Christians, they are going after “Infidels.” In his speech the pope points out that the wars Christians have waged “have overthrown churches, and have laid waste God’s kingdom.”³⁴ The wars Christians fought against one another weakened the pope’s authority, especially when kingdoms were taking hold of churches and monasteries for their own personal gain. By sending the knights off to war in Jerusalem, more land would be claimed in the name of Christianity along the way, once again portraying the crusading knights as men of greed rather than men of God. However, the war would also create an opportunity for the church to gain power again. Further on in Fulcher’s account the pope appeals to their gluttony by saying, “the sorrowful here will be glad there, the

³² The First Crusade, ed. Peters, p. 49
³³ The First Crusade, ed. Peters, p. 53
³⁴ The First Crusade, ed. Peters, p. 53
poor here will be rich there, and the enemies of the Lord here will be His friends there.” Pope Urban II promised that great wealth and happiness would be awarded to the knights if they went to war. The idea of indulgences are further represented by the phrase “the enemies of the Lord here will be His friends there” indicating that all the sins these knights have committed thus far in their wars against each other will be forgiven if they take up the cross and go to fight in Jerusalem. Sending these men off to reclaim Jerusalem will redeem the knights in God’s eyes.

Another historical piece describing the crusade shows a similar attitude towards the call for war. In the Alexiad, the Byzantine princess Anna Comnena describes the call for the crusade from the Greek perspective as a cunning ploy concocted by Peter the Hermit. She retells an incident where Peter journeyed to the Holy Sepulchre to worship and suffered the entire journey at the “hands of the Turks and Saracens.” After returning to his country, Peter wanted to make another pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre but did not want to face the Turks again. Anna presents the call for the crusade as a conniving plan created by Peter to seek revenge on the Turks. Anna states that Peter’s plan was to:

“Preach in all the Latin countries that ‘the voice of God bids me announce to all the Counts in France that they should all leave their homes and set out to worship at the Holy Sepulchre, and to endeavour wholeheartedly with hand and mind to deliver Jerusalem from the hand of the Hagarenes.’”

In this passage, the knights are portrayed in a different light. Peter plays on the knights’ chivalric duty to endure pilgrimages and fight to defend Christianity. Although it demonstrates a blind

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35 The First Crusade, ed. Peters, p. 53
37 Comnena, The Alexiad, p. 249
sense of dedication to the clergy’s word, it does not show the knights to be as greedy as Fulcher’s passages present them. Peter acts on the ideal that it is a knights’ duty to deliver the Holy Land from the hands of infidels, which is vastly different from the speech Pope Urban preached in Fulcher.

Fulcher presents the idea that Pope Urban wanted the knights to stop fighting each other. He depicts the knights as greedy and driven by war. The pope is able to use this to his advantage in proclaiming that all their sins will be forgiven and they will gain enormous wealth if they go to battle. Anna Comnena portrays the call for the First Crusade as a devious plot to seek revenge and that the knights were willing to follow blindly because of their oath to protect Christianity. *The Alexiad* presents the knights’ chivalry as blind loyalty to Christianity, which in itself shows ignorance in knighthood. During the battle for Antioch, the crusaders are plagued by famine and surrounded by Turks. Wondering what to do, they ask Peter for advice. He tells them that they must repent their sins. After nothing happens for a few days, Peter returns to the crusaders and says a “divine voice” told him to send the “chief Counts” to “dig on the right side of the altar, and there they would find the Holy Nail.” When the Counts failed to find anything, Peter told them to pray and go look again. The Counts found the Holy Nail and presented it to Peter. They believed this was God’s way of saying he was with them in battle. The way this information is presented and the time lapse between Peter telling the men to pray and the discovery of the Holy Nail prompts a feeling of suspicion. Basically, it seems like Anna Comnena is trying to insinuate that Peter planted the Holy Nail in order to revive the crusaders’ faith in the pilgrimage.

Chivalric knights are required to protect Christianity, but they are also required to possess a level of wisdom as well.

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There is a clear contradiction between the two passages. Fulcher’s account illustrates greedy, warring Christians who need their focused turned elsewhere in order to bring some peace. On the other hand, Anna of Comnena portrays the crusaders as gullible, loyal soldiers willing to believe what a priest tells them. These opposing views create confusion about the characteristics of the crusaders. However, consider who sent the knights to battle one another. A knight’s duty is to obey and serve is lord. If the king or lord sent the knight to fight in a war, then he is supposed to go without questioning it. The greedy people Pope Urban II refers to in his speech are just as likely to be the wealthy lords rather than the knights. Knights who serve earthly and heavenly lord have a responsibility to be unyieldingly loyal that can easily translate to their agreeable loyalty to whatever Peter tells them. Peter is a part of the church and therefore a part of the cleric order knights have a duty to obey as well. Even though knights usually listened to what benefited them, the church still held a certain amount of authority that could pressure knights into accepting the clergy’s preaching. Chivalric knights have a duty to an earthly lord and a heavenly Lord. Similarly to the pope, the clergy act as the mouthpiece for the Lord’s holy word. Any sort of disbelief or questioning of a clergy member’s word could have repercussions. The knights may not have been as easily convinced of Peter’s Holy Nail, as Anna Comnena would have the reader believe. Nevertheless, if they claimed he was lying there was a possibility that they could be excommunicated or struck down by God if the priest was telling the truth. Similarly, at this point in battle, the Christians were outnumbered and morale was suffering significantly. The Nail served as a symbol that Christ was on their side, which helped increase the soldier’s morale.

Although there are lords and princes fighting in the crusade, history shows that kings did not fight in the First Crusade but sent others in their place. Some of the knights that served under
these lords were considered “the simpler-minded were urged on by real desire of worshipping at our Lord’s Sepulchre, and visiting the sacred places.”

On the other hand, Anna Comnena describes the lords such as Godfrey and Bohemund as being “more astute” hoping that their pilgrimage to Jerusalem would allow them to “be able to seize the capital itself.” Anna Comnena claims that Bohemund and those like him traveled to Jerusalem with the distinct purpose to gain wealth and land. In notable contrast to his heroic portrayal in the *Chanson d’Antioche*, Bohemund is present by Anna as cunning especially when he convinced the Armenian “with honeyed words, tempted him with many promises and thus persuaded him to betray the city.” Interestingly, the pope never addresses the issue of greed in *The Alexiad*. In fact he never even appears. Therefore the reader would not be aware that they were sent on this pilgrimage to deter pillaging in Europe. Even though Anna Comnena admits that there are knights who are participating for religious purposes, her narrations still project suspicion about the knight’s chivalry. She finds them courageous but also “always very hotheaded and eager.”

Chivalry, in this instance, is about warring and plundering. Nonetheless Fulcher counters that the knights’ desire for wealth is actually the pursuit of material goods necessary for their cause. When the pope called for the crusade, he promised that everyone who went to Jerusalem would be rewarded. Fulcher’s version of Bohemund shows him as an intellectual who is simply taking supplies that is necessary to succeed in the war, unlike Anna who depicts Bohemund as a lying, cunning warmonger. The character of Bohemund Fulcher describes is still chivalric regardless of his material gain because it is excused as being necessary for God’s war.

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39 Comnena, *The Alexiad*, p. 250
40 Comnena, *The Alexiad*, p. 250
41 Comnena, *The Alexiad*, p. 277
42 Comnena, *The Alexiad*, p. 250
Coincidentally, Fulcher and Anna Comnena both point out similar flaws within the crusade. Fulcher illustrates sinful knights who have to be sent to Jerusalem to satisfy their lust for war. Anna depicts the knights as greedy and hotheaded or blind, gullible followers. On the surface both representations do not provide a flattering picture of these supposed chivalric knights. However, Fulcher’s account does not completely dismiss the crusaders as warmongers. Although their constant wars may have been one of the factors towards sending the knights on the crusade, it is Fulcher’s praise of their actions during the war that seems to redeem them. For the most part, Fulcher provides an accurate retelling of the First Crusade’s events, while Anna’s account maintains a biased undertone against the Christians. Anna focuses on the fact that the Franks are “anxious to outdo the others.”

There is no sense of camaraderie or even a brotherhood between the knights. However Fulcher emphasizes the chivalric nature of the knights during the war. When the Franks lay siege to Antioch, Fulcher says that the princes, “had seen the great difficulty of overcoming it, they swore mutually by oath to work together in siege until, with God favoring, they would capture it.” Unlike Anna Comnena’s account, Fulcher demonstrates the brotherhood of the knights during battle. The men in this passage appear more like the ideal chivalric knights then those mentioned at the beginning or in Anna’s account. Perhaps it is Fulcher’s way of showing that knights become more chivalric when fighting in the name of God.

**How Chivalry was Viewed During the First Crusade: The Chivalric Nature of Knighthood**

Medieval sources illustrate knighthood in different ways: while one dismisses the crusaders as grasping, warmongers, another praises them for their chivalric demeanor. Through

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43 Comnena, *The Alexiad*, p. 250
44 *The First Crusade*, ed. Peters, p. 71
analyzing the evidence presented in the literary and historical texts, the knights of the First Crusade exhibited chivalric characteristics. Several modern perspectives argue that crusaders pursued war for the benefits of financial gain and power. Guttman argues that when President Bush used the word “crusade,” it was no different from when Pope Urban II called Christians to embark on the First Crusade. Even France mentions that the pope had some kind of motive behind going to war, either political or religious. Pope Urban played a large role at the beginning of the First Crusade. His promises of indulgences and religious forgiveness of actions in war prompted numerous knights to take up arms and march to Jerusalem. However, the chivalric nature of the crusaders cannot be analyzed from a modern point of view. After evaluating all the evidence presented, the crusaders’ chivalric nature is confirmed despite conflicting views on the knights’ behavior at the time.

Chivalry takes on multiple definitions and identities throughout history. However, each definition is a product of its time period. For instance, during the First Crusade, knights were able to benefit economically as well as religiously without betraying their chivalric code. As we witnessed in the passages from the *Song of Roland*, knights called upon to serve in the crusade were presented with the opportunity to die in battle and have all their sins forgiven. Nevertheless, at the same time, the crusade presented an opportunity for knights to serve their lord and the Church. Chivalry focused on the pursuit of honor, serving to protect one’s earthly and heavenly lord allowed knights to achieve an honorable reputation. Roland and his fellow knights died in battle fighting for Charlemagne. Roland showed the prowess and strength befitting a knight and when he died he piously prayed to God, all traits of a noble knight. Although readers may choose to focus on his stubbornness to not blow the horn, Roland even acknowledges his folly and attempts to amend his mistake even though it is clearly too late. Yet, that damning action does
not affect Roland’s reputation for he was prepared to die in the name of God. His fearlessness comes from the notion that Pope Urban II promised that any knight who died in battle would ascend to Heaven with no sins holding them back. Christianity was only one of many reasons for knights to take up the cross, but as Keen said, “quest for earthly renown and reward have become so interlaced that it is no longer practical to seek to unravel the strands.” Crusaders were able to protect Christianity while still prospering from the personal gain.

Most of the arguments presented in the scholarly articles claim that there is some embarrassment to be felt when discussing the First Crusade. However a knight’s chivalric behavior can be characterized in many different ways, any of which could define a crusader as chivalrous. One example in particular can be as simple as following orders and not running away. Most knights were bound by the idea that when called to war they serve under the Church and their lord. A knight’s responsibility was to defend Christianity and obey his lord’s command. Based on the model of knightly duty consistently presented in society, knights would feel pressured into viewing the crusade as a component of developing a chivalric reputation. A valiant knight undergoes hardships and sacrifices in order to rise above and show his strength against adversity. Many knights, such as Godfrey and Bohemond in their real and fictional versions, represent the ideal knight of the First Crusade. Knights were deemed men of action and the pursuit of glory. Even though Godfrey and Bohemond are described in the Chanson d’Antioche as being only interested in the battles, they stand their ground and do not cowardly run away at the sight of danger like Stephen of Blois. Their fearless actions coincide with Kostick’s argument that a true chivalric knight stayed in battle no matter what happened. The crusaders stuck it out and as their reward gained Jerusalem.

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45 Keen, Chivalry, Pg. 55
Throughout this thesis a common theme appears that explains why the crusaders were chivalric: the men are simply following orders. The pope or even the Church in general is continuously acknowledged as the promoters of the First Crusade. Only the clergy possesses the power to offer indulgences, as such Pope Urban and Peter the Hermit are able to persuade knights to go to war. At the beginning of most of the literary and historical texts, Pope Urban is presented announcing the First Crusade calling on Christians to stop fighting amongst each other and to go to war against the Arabs instead. The pope appears to redirect the knights’ chivalric prowess towards Jerusalem rather than another Christian kingdom. Once again, consider whose orders the knights follow when going to battle against other Christians. A knight’s duty is to obey and serve his lord. If a knight is ordered to go to battle by his lord, then it is his obligation to oblige. This reaction is similar in respects to the clergy. Knights desirous of creating a chivalric reputation for themselves would not oppose to going to war when promised wealth and indulgences by the Church. The crusaders who embarked on the journey to Jerusalem, unyieldingly fought in battle, and enjoyed any kind of personal gain embodied the very definition of chivalry and helped to change perceptions of what it meant to be a knight, which produced significant changes in the organization and conception of medieval society.
Bibliography


