

enfeoffed with their possessions by the pope. Thus they became vassals of the Church and as such, like all vassals, they had the duty of doing military service for their lord, though in this case the duty was still limited to undertakings which could be reconciled with the teachings of the Church. So now the Church had a feudal military force available for the defence of the papal states, a force which could be used for the purposes of holy war. For their part the Normans recognized the usefulness of a holy war just as much as the churchmen did. Robert Guiscard carried out his conquest of northern Sicily (1061–72) very much in the style of a religiously motivated holy war, a war against the heathen. He had announced his intention of doing this in his oath at Melfi in 1059 and had thus obtained the approval of the Church for the enterprise. Erdmann believed that this war for the conquest of Sicily had been a kind of crusade, but in fact one essential ingredient of a crusade was missing. There is no evidence for active papal participation though it is difficult to believe that the popes did not connive at it.

Even more than these Norman wars, the fight against the Muslims in Spain has often been described in terms appropriate to a crusade.¹² In particular, the conquest of Barbastro in 1064, in which many Frenchmen took part, has been elevated to the status of a 'proto-crusade'. But here too the same essential element, active papal co-operation, seems to be missing. Alexander II's approval of, and support for this war was limited to granting a kind of indulgence to all participants. The mere fact that the war against the Muslims in Spain was believed to be meritorious and thus attracted a certain number of French knights does not make it a crusade. War against the heathen was, in general, felt to be meritorious and the old Church doctrine that a soldier had to do penance even when he killed during the course of a just war in the service of a just prince was fast disappearing. What happened in Spain was, in fact, a normal holy war, and here the war against the heathen fitted into a long tradition of resistance to Islam and as part of the European pattern of resistance it naturally played an important part in the origins of the crusades. It helped to keep the idea of fighting the heathen in the forefront of men's minds, above all in France, where the Spanish campaigns awoke a very strong response. Obviously there was a connection, however tenuous, between resistance to the Arabs on the one hand and the crusades on the other. Nevertheless the war in Spain was not a crusade. Later it became a substitute for a crusade: French knights, chary of the difficult journey to Jerusalem, could instead fight Islam in Spain. The popes promoted this, recognizing it as the equivalent of a crusade. But this cannot hide the fact that these Spanish 'proto-crusades' were actually just holy wars. And not until the pontificate of Urban II can we see the influence of Spain on the developing concept of the crusade. These considerations also seem to apply to the naval expedition of the Pisans and Genoese to Mahdia in Tunisia (1087). The

Pisans combined it with a pilgrimage to Rome and therefore many of them still wore the pilgrim's scrip in Africa. But this was coincidental and Erdmann went too far in asserting that the campaign had been 'conducted entirely as a crusade'. However, this campaign may have alerted Urban to the possibility of arming pilgrimages.

When making his own crusading plans Urban could look back to his predecessor, Gregory VII, after whom this whole period has been called the Gregorian Age. Gregory was one of the most energetic and pugnacious men ever to sit on the throne of St. Peter. For him it was no longer just a question of the freedom of the Church from secular lordship. He proclaimed the overlordship of the pope. This policy led inevitably to the struggles of the Investiture Contest. Both sides used polemical writings as war propaganda and, given the bitterness with which they waged the struggle, it was pretty well inevitable that they would in some way or another become involved with the question of holy war—especially since Gregory VII paid a great deal of attention to the knightly classes and tried to win them over to fight in the service of the Church. To do this he used the old concept of a soldiery of Christ, *militia Christi*. Previously this had been taken to mean the clergy who fought with the weapons of peace. Under Gregory it became a 'new model army', the *militia sancti Petri*, the knights of St. Peter, and retained little of the old peaceful content. The knights of St. Peter were the armed soldiers of the church. One of the most convinced Gregorians, Bishop Bonizo of Sutri, was, in his book *De vita christiana* (c. 1090–5), the first writer to compile a catalogue of the duties of a Christian knight. With this work the Church had finally arrived at a new attitude to war. The knights, as a class, had acquired their own professional ethos—an ethos firmly rooted in the Church's conception of the world—with its visible liturgical expression in the ceremony of dubbing. It is important to realize that on the eve of the crusades there existed a fully developed class of knights, sharing a moral code which transcended political frontiers and which enabled them to undertake common enterprises.

Bonizo, however, expressly disavowed the idea of fighting the heathen. They no longer posed an immediate threat and in the heat of the Investiture Contest it was common for other considerations to assume greater importance in the Church's theory of war. Instead of war against the heathen, men thought in terms—once again they were essentially St. Augustine's terms—of war against heretics and schismatics. Without going into details it is possible to distinguish roughly between the Gregorians who were in favour of an aggressive war against heretics and the supporters of the emperor who opposed it.

Even so the idea of war against the heathen was still far from being dead. Ivo of Chartres, a man who looked for a compromise solution to the Investiture Contest, continued to propound it. And during the whole of

Tradition
of fighting
heathen.

the year 1074 no less a person than Gregory VII cherished the plan of an expedition to the East. He wanted to lead it himself and in this way help to defend the Christian empire of Byzantium against the advancing heathens. It is impossible to say whether Gregory wanted to go to Jerusalem itself, but Our Lord's Sepulchre was mentioned—the words which later were to be so effective had been spoken. We know about the plan from the references to it in Gregory's letters, but how he came to devise it remains a mystery. Occasionally his intentions were clothed in such adventurous and fantastic terms that it is difficult to see clearly just what lay behind it all. Certainly the plight of the Byzantine Empire was desperate enough to warrant such intervention. The Greek army had been annihilated by the Seljuks at the battle of Manzikert in 1071 and, as a result, Anatolia lay open to the Turcoman attacks. At the same time the Petchenegs were pressing forward in the Balkans; in south Italy Bari fell to the Normans. Moreover Gregory VII, like Urban II and many later popes, hoped to mend the schism of 1054 and it is quite possible that some idea of reuniting the Churches lay behind the plan of 1074. In fact, his plan was quite impracticable. With the Investiture Contest breaking out the pope could not leave and there was no hope of German co-operation. Besides this, the Normans were at odds with Byzantium and Gregory was urging the French nobility to take action against their king in support of the Church's policy. None the less Gregory's plan is important in as much as here, for the first time, we can see the idea of a papally directed military operation in the Middle East. In broad terms, what Urban II proposed at Clermont was very similar to what Gregory VII had intended, and since in much else Urban was to carry through to completion the plans which Gregory himself had been unable to accomplish, it may well be that the similarity was deliberate. In the event, however, Urban's crusade was not to be an undertaking in the Gregorian manner, 'in the service of St. Peter', as Robinson has suggested. For although Urban bestowed banners of St. Peter on the crusaders and although the official biography of him in the *Liber Pontificalis* emphasizes the leadership of St. Peter in the crusade, none the less, Riley-Smith has clearly demonstrated that for nobles and common folk alike the crusaders were no longer a *militia sancti Petri* but a new style fighting *militia Christi*.¹³

In the historical discussion about the origins of the crusades it seems probable that too much attention has been paid to the eleventh-century developments in the Church's concept of a holy war. Erdmann, in particular, was inclined to give this overriding importance. But one thing at any rate his investigations have shown beyond all question: a crusade was possible only after the Church had prepared the ground for it by working out a theory of holy war and by creating a class of Christian knights.

Despite everything that has been said about pilgrimages and holy war, it would be wrong to hope to explain the big part played in the crusade by the knights only in terms of religion, group psychology, and a professional ethos. Dry economic and social factors were also significant, more so indeed than is commonly allowed today. Frequently specialists have tended to ignore this side of the problem, important though it clearly is. Instead a great deal has been said about the knight's love of adventure and his lust for booty. In the East he had the chance of making a quick fortune and of rising to a much higher position than he could ever have hoped for in his native country. The Norman Conquest of England had shown what could be done. Doubtless some of the leaders of the First Crusade thought in such terms, especially the Normans from south Italy, Tancred and Bohemund of Taranto, and perhaps Robert of Normandy as well. After all, at Clermont Urban himself had promised that all those who went on crusade would enjoy undisturbed possession of the lands they conquered.

Love of adventure, lust for booty—these are characteristics of individuals. But thanks to the work of Duby and Herlihy we know of economic and social problems which touched the knightly class as a whole and taught it to look upon the crusade as a way out.¹⁴ Herlihy has argued that there was a crisis in the agrarian economy of south France and Italy beginning in about 850 and becoming steadily worse until its climax was reached in about 1000. For the years after 1000 we have vivid chronicle descriptions of recurring famines which can be explained in terms of the failure of agricultural production to keep pace with the rising population. The still prevalent Carolingian custom of dividing an inheritance between all the heirs tended to hinder efforts to increase production. After 1000 the position began to improve, slowly at first, but then with gathering momentum. This was achieved mainly by doing away with the custom of splitting up the land into ever smaller holdings. There was no relaxation of population pressure. The Church and the nobility began to buy out small landholders in order to build up efficient economic units. Care was taken to ensure that land, once gathered together, should not again be dispersed. The knightly classes—the crusading classes par excellence—did this in various ways. In north France they developed the system of primogeniture, the right of the eldest son to succeed to the inheritance. Younger sons had to look after themselves, whether by entering the Church or by going in for a military career. Obviously the crusade acted as a kind of safety valve for a knightly class which was constantly growing in numbers. It is within this context that we must see an individual's love of adventure or hunger for loot.

In Italy and in France south of the Loire, above all in Burgundy, fragmentation of land was avoided by various forms of shared possession. We are particularly well informed about conditions in the Mâconnais, where there was a very strong tie binding the individual to the family. Here

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allodial land i.e. land which was freely owned, was almost always held in common by the members of the family. This was a legal form known as *fréteche* (*fraternitia*). It usually remained effective up until the second generation and prevented the splitting up of allods. Control of an inheritance passed to the brothers in common, or sometimes it might be shared with uncles, nephews, and even legal persons. Even if the individual's stake in the whole was only a small one, the community remained rich enough to equip one or two mounted knights. In this way the family's social status was preserved and at the same time provision was made for the uninterrupted administration of the estate by those who stayed at home. But this was an institution which worked only when the individual submitted to a tight discipline—the control exercised by the head of the family, a control which seems to have been extraordinarily strict at the end of the eleventh century. This was particularly so in matters of marriage, since, for economic reasons, the success of the *fréteche* depended upon an upper limit to the number of share-holders being enforced. Against the tide of a generally rising population the number of children had to be kept roughly constant. At that time there was only one really effective way of doing this: by a deliberate restriction of marriage. If, despite this, there were still too many potential heirs, some of them would have to be provided for in monasteries or in cathedral chapters. It is in fact possible to trace the outlines of such policies being pursued by the families of the Mâconnais.

Thus the maintenance of the family's economic and social position, in other words its standard of living, involved considerable sacrifices on the part of the individual. Men of an independent outlook may well have been frustrated by such strict family authority; not all were prepared to bow to the harsh requirements of the community, to renounce marriage even. One way out was to enter the Church but that was to exchange one community for another. The other great safety valve of the twelfth century, the crusade, offered a real chance of escaping from the tutelage of the *fréteche*, a real chance for the individual to become independent. But if there were some men who went on crusade in order to break away from the forced community of the family and to make a freer life for themselves, there were also others who chose to go in order to serve the best interests of the family, particularly in a situation where there were too many heirs and where fragmentation seemed inevitable unless some of them left home. An example of this occurred in the Mâconnais family of La Hongre. In 1096 it consisted of five men. Two of them were monks; two went to Jerusalem and did not return. This left Humbert who remained behind as the sole heir of their allodial possessions. In 1147 one of Humbert's grandsons went on the Second Crusade, leaving the whole inheritance to his brother. Thus the La Hongre family was still well-off at the beginning of the thirteenth century when others of their class were already beginning to feel

the pinch of new economic developments. It is also worth noting that the early legislation of the crusader kingdom of Jerusalem was clearly appropriate to the needs of men with strong family ties like those of the *fréteche*. The estates held by the knightly families of Jerusalem could be inherited not only by daughters but also by collateral relatives. Not until c. 1150 was the right to succeed limited to direct descendants. The earlier custom was clearly designed to persuade knights to settle down in the Holy Land; thus it had to accept the requirements of the *fréteche*. If the crusader died then the family back home in Europe could choose another member to take over the Palestinian inheritance, in this way further easing conditions within the *fréteche* itself. It is not accidental that the Mâconnais has bulked large in this discussion. In this region Urban II's appeal met with a notable response. We know the names of many crusaders who came from this part of Europe in the first half of the twelfth century. This is not just the result of chance survival of evidence. It reflects clearly the social and economic situation of a class which looked upon the crusade as a way of solving its material problems or—to say the very least—which was, owing to this situation, all the more ready to consider going on a crusade. Riley-Smith has recently expressed doubts about taking the cross in the interests of the family. Instead he has justly pointed to the importance of vassalic loyalty as a motive for settling in the East, a motive which must also have applied to taking the cross. However, restricting the number of marriages is a drastic way to safeguard a family's economic position, and in situations where only the eldest son and heir was allowed to marry—as was also the case, so Duby has more recently argued, among the aristocracy of northern France—it is natural to assume that younger sons would make use of every available opportunity, the crusade included, to ease their lot. In any event we should not overlook those crusaders, particularly numerous in the count of Toulouse's contingent, who were not tied as vassals to one of the leaders of the crusade.

One more motive for taking the cross remains to be considered; and this one was to put all the others in the shade. It was the concept of a reward in the form of the crusading indulgence.¹⁵ In modern Roman Catholic doctrine the indulgence comes at the end of a clear process of remission of sins. First the penitent sinner must confess and receive absolution so that the guilt of the sin is remitted and instead of suffering eternal punishment he will have to suffer only the temporal penalties due to sin. (It is important to note that these penalties may take place either in this world or the next and will include purgatory.) Then in return for indulgence-earning works the Church may grant him remission of all or part of the penalty due to sin, depending on whether the indulgence is a plenary one or not. This is a judicial act of grace based on the authority of the Church's power of the keys and is entirely separate from the sacrament of penance. The indulgence would affect both the canonical punishment imposed by

the Church—the penitential punishment—and the temporal punishment imposed by God, since the Church could offer God a substitute penance from the 'Treasury of Merits'—an inexhaustible reservoir of merits accumulated by Christ and added to by the saints on a scale far in excess of what they themselves needed. Undoubtedly then the indulgence has a transcendental effect before God (*in foro Dei*). Where the theologians disagree with one another is on the question of whether one can absolutely guarantee that this judicial act will have a positive result *in foro Dei* or whether it runs up against the problem of God's freedom. In this case the positive result is only indirectly and morally assured in as much as the Church guarantees that the offer of a substitute penance is sufficient to discharge the whole of the punishment due, i.e. the sinner could not have achieved any better result even if he had himself done full penance. But when considering early indulgences, especially the first crusading indulgences, it is vital to remember that this logical doctrine was a later construction designed to give theological authority to customs which, in practice, already existed.

Not until after the First Crusade did the theologians of the twelfth century, first among them Hugh of St. Victor, work out—in practical, if not yet in formal terms—the distinction between the guilt of sin and the punishment due to sin which is crucial to the theory of indulgences. And not until c.1230 was the important doctrine of the 'Treasury of Merits', which provided the equivalent substitute necessary if punishment were to be remitted, formulated by Hugh of St. Cher. The detailed problems of the precise nature of an indulgence and the justification for it were hotly disputed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Even St. Thomas Aquinas was clearly hard put to it to explain the indulgence because he began his proof of it by producing a classic logical fallacy (*petitio principii*): 'Everyone agrees that indulgences are effective because it would be godless to say that the Church does anything in vain.' Where even the theologians found much obscure, there was little chance of popular opinion being well-informed. Any discussion of the crusades must take this point more fully into consideration than has hitherto been customary. In assessing the effect of the crusading indulgence what matters is what people understood or believed they understood by it, not what it actually was. And it is worth noting that the debate about indulgences which started c.1130 was sparked off by the fact that they were being abused. As long as the abuses were not too blatant, people looked upon the indulgence as an acceptable innovation without bothering too much about the theology of the matter. We must always remember that the publicizing of the first crusading indulgence took place in an atmosphere which was free of the limitations imposed either by an official Church pronouncement or by a proper theological debate. The only way the new elements could be defined was by comparing them with earlier penitential practices.

The indulgence must, in fact, be seen as a development of the Church's earlier penitential discipline. This was originally divided into three stages: confession, satisfaction, and reconciliation (i.e. being readmitted to communion). Satisfaction was looked upon as the element which earned extinction of sins and thus made the reconciliation possible. At this time no distinction would have been made between remission of guilt and remission of punishment. In principle, the penance had to be equivalent to the sin committed. One had to pay, as it were, pound for pound. But obviously it was only a matter of chance whether or not a precisely equivalent penance was found; thus in addition there had to be the temporal penalties due to sin which, being imposed by God, could measure exactly any guilt that was still remaining. Since God's temporal punishment was feared far more than any earthly penance, a penitential system of draconic severity was developed on the theory that the harsher the penance in this world, the smaller would be the settlement in the next. The fact that up until the sixth century only serious offences were subject to the penance of the Church helped to establish the severity of penitential practice. Yet when, for reasons which cannot be gone into here, this changed so that penance had to be done for venial sins as well, the old system at first remained in force. But now harsh tasks and long penances during which the sinner remained excluded from the sacraments were no longer always appropriate, so inevitably there developed a trend towards a milder and a more differentiated system of punishment. At first this was done by the use of commutation and redemption, i.e. one form of punishment was exchanged for another which theoretically was still equivalent to the sin committed. Thus if it were shorter, it was also supposed to be harder; but in practice it tended to be more lenient. Lists of the penalties due to various sins were drawn up tariff-fashion in the 'Penitentials', together with the appropriate redemptions. In these redemptions we have one of the main roots of the crusading indulgence. In the eleventh century the system became still milder when it became customary to allow reconciliation to take place as soon as a man had begun his penance, though of course he still had to complete it. Thus long-term excommunication—one of the most feared consequences of sin—was in effect abolished. This change also meant the end of the old custom of total reconciliation. Its place was taken by an absolution granted immediately after confession. This involved reconciliation with God and the Church, i.e. forgiveness of the guilt of sin, but it did not mean full remission of the punishment due to sin. Nevertheless absolution went further than redemption and thus came closer to the indulgence in that the Church made a powerful plea for pardon; so a transcendental effect was at least intended. This was still not a judicial act, however, nor was it a remission of punishment granted independently of the sacrament of penance. But from here it was only a short step to the indulgence, i.e. to a more clearly

defined and more certainly effective remission of the penance imposed by the Church. By an act of grace allowance was made for the transcendental effect *in foro Dei* of the Church's plea. This then made it possible to curtail the penance imposed by the Church. According to Poschmann, one of the leading Catholic experts on the subject, 'the indulgence was no longer just a part-payment on the time after death, it was also a most welcome relief during this earthly life'. The special feature of the indulgence was that the ideal of equivalence was no longer adhered to in practice. Later on the doctrine of the 'Treasury of Merits' was developed in order to justify this practice.

It is revealing that the idea of indulgence only became really effective when it was linked with the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Papal pronouncements rather similar to indulgences were occasionally made before the crusades, but these were, in fact, usually absolutions. Alexander II, for example, promised a remission of penance to the soldiers who had joined the Barbastro expedition of 1063. In addition he also offered them the *remissio peccatorum*, the remission of the temporal penalties due to sin. It has been argued that the pope's letter is a forgery, but in fact it is a perfectly genuine plenary indulgence. Yet for various reasons it had very little effect. For one thing, it was addressed to a much smaller group than was the crusading indulgence of 1095. Alexander's offer applied only to those who had already decided to take part in the Spanish campaign; and he left it open whether he would extend the terms of the indulgence to include those who joined later. Furthermore normal penitential practice was adhered to in that a penance had first to be imposed, at least formally, before it could be considered as cancelled by the indulgence. Finally a campaign in Spain did not have the same mass-appeal as an expedition to the Holy Land. This example shows clearly why the full effects of the indulgence were felt only when it became linked with the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

In this context it was important that the penitential journey to Jerusalem was thought to be especially meritorious and salutary. In theory the Church had always taken the view that movement from one place to another did not bring a man any nearer to God; but it was impossible to extinguish the popular belief in the value of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Its popularity was assured from the moment when the reconciliation with the Church was moved forward to the beginning of the work of penance, in this case the pilgrimage. This applied, of course, to any penitential pilgrimage; what gave Jerusalem its special significance was the tradition of the Holy Places. There is evidence from as early as the eighth century for the belief that remission of sins could be earned by a visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. But those who shared this belief in the value of pilgrimages were denounced at the Council of Chalons in 813. The Council was relying on the authority of Jerome who had said that it was not

seeing Jerusalem that was praiseworthy, but living a good life there. Indeed, in Jerome's eyes, even this had no special purifying value. He wrote that he had gone to Palestine in order to understand the Bible better, not to obtain spiritual advantages. But since the Council quoted only Jerome's first statement and not his commentary on it, it was possible to believe that both Jerome and the Council were prepared to concede an indirect purifying value to the journey to Jerusalem—i.e. when it led to a long period of residence there. Later on the Church quite patently failed to combat the belief that the pilgrimage to Jerusalem was worth an indulgence. Indeed it formally granted partial indulgences for it, like the year's indulgence allowed by Alexander III. This was during the heyday of the crusades, when the crusader was granted an unlimited plenary indulgence; understandably the peaceful pilgrim obtained just a partial indulgence.

There are some good reasons for assuming that in the pre-crusade period pilgrimages to Jerusalem were valued more highly and that those who undertook them received promises rather in the style of indulgences. The first official pronouncement on this point was made by Urban II. In 1096 he revived the archbishopric of Tarragona and ordered the Catalan nobility and clergy to help with the rebuilding of the town. He then added that those who, in a spirit of piety and penitence, were intending to go to Jerusalem should be advised to devote to the rebuilding of the church of Tarragona the money they would have spent on a pilgrimage. In this way the town would become celebrated as a bulwark of Christendom against the Saracens. Everyone who followed this advice should be granted the same indulgence as he would have obtained had he gone to Jerusalem. (Then, as now, the word 'indulgence' could be used both in a precise, technical sense and also with a much more general meaning.) The final sentence of the letter used to be treated with a good deal of scepticism by students of papal diplomacy, but more recently its genuineness has been vindicated. It is no longer possible, however, to ascertain just how comprehensive was the reward for those would-be pilgrims who instead helped to rebuild Tarragona. Certainly there can be no justification for calling it a plenary indulgence.

The importance of the Tarragona appeal for the origins of the crusades is obvious—though only Erdmann has given it the attention it deserves. Here the Christian idea of pilgrimage is linked together with a project intended to promote resistance to the Saracens. Fully six years before the Council of Clermont the pope had already granted an indulgence, indeed a pilgrim's indulgence, for the war against the heathen. It has been objected that whereas the crusade was an offensive enterprise, the rebuilding of Tarragona was defensive in character. But this objection cannot be sustained. When Urban returned to the same theme at some date between 1066 and 1099 he suggested to some Catalan counts that they should help