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AN IDIOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY OF THE FIRST CRUSADE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE
OF JUST WAR THEORY AND DEFENSIVE NEOREALISM



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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I sought to study the doctrine of the just war within the context of the First Crusade. Utilising an aggregate theory consisting of just war theory, defensive realism, and poliheuristic decision-making, I operationalised my research questions in an idiographic case study scrutinising two transcriptions of a speech Pope Urban II made at Clermont in 1095. I found that the differing accounts gave rise to two distinct lines of justification for military intervention, which I call Fulcher's and Robert's Pope. I conclude that Fulcher's Pope meets the principles for being construed as a 'just war,' whilst Robert's Pope does not. The main cause of this discrepancy stems from the weight of humanitarian intervention. In the former, the humanitarian imperative is 'urged by necessity,' and the role of assisting an alliance partner is stressed; in the latter, it comes secondary to military adventurism and ideas of possessing a superior heritage.

KEYWORDS: just war theory, defensive neorealism, First Crusade, Papacy, Urban II

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is a thesis which situates itself in the ethics, morality, and rational basis behind armed conflict. Thus, it is only appropriate to open with the following reminder of the nature of war as depicted in this poem by Randall Jarrell:

Profits and death grow marginal:
 Only the mourning and the mourned recall
 The wars we lose, the wars we win;
 And the world is – what it has been.¹

War is a seasonal blight on the collective history of our species, and yet its minute details linger, intriguing and provoking succeeding generations of laymen and academics with matters of martial interest. The deployment of the triplex acies, the efficacy of the *tercio*, the brilliance of the Carolean; how these instruments of death entice! However, it is not the ambition of this thesis to entertain the gruesome reality of war, but rather delve into the political neighbourhood of the First Crusade,² and to gain an understanding of war and the concept of a just cause in the landscape of the late 11th century. The Crusades are a controversial avenue of scholarly and colloquial debate, with Crusade historian John L. La Monte writing in 1940³ that “with the possible exception of Renaissance Florence, probably no field has been the subject of so much worthless pseudo-historical trash.” Whilst this thesis aims to provide a chiefly political-scientific understanding of the event, I still wish for it to evade such a scathing appellation in the vast *corpus* of academic scholarship on the Crusades.

The First Crusade, or the Crusades in general, may in the public eye be deemed a subject that traditionally belongs within the confines of the historian’s lofty demesne rather than the relatively new-fangled abode of the political scientist. Whilst not all thinkers and academics who concern themselves with the field of international relations deal with the present, it is no grand surprise that a large body of IR scholarship handles post-Westphalian systems and orders. But war is not

¹ R. Jarrell, ‘The Range in the Desert,’ *The Complete Poems*, New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1969, p. 176.

² “Der Krieg ist eine bloße Fortsetzung der Politik mit anderen Mitteln.” So reads a famous passage in Chapter I in Book I of Carl von Clausewitz’s *Vom Kriege* (trans. On War) and it is perhaps this formulation which resulted in this thesis combining political realism with the doctrine of the just war.

³ J. L. La Monte, ‘Some Problems in Crusading Historiography,’ in *Speculum*, vol. 15:1, 57-75, 1940, p. 58.

constrained by human-induced advancements in political thought and perceptions of statehood and sovereignty. Like Jarrell wrote: the world, and war by association, is what it has been.

1.1. MOTIVATION

I aim to provide a different perspective and method of inquiry regarding the First Crusade as there is a relative lack of political-scientific studies conducted on this subject. As alluded to earlier, the subject matter is of public and academic relevance as a source of controversy; my wish is not to stoke the fire, but to temper it.

1.2. PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this thesis, I will attempt to provide a novel approach to the understanding of a ‘just war’ by synthesising defensive realism with traditionalist and revisionist schools of thought within just war theory. War, or the looming possibility thereof, has been an ever-present fact of humanity since the appearance of organised communities, and this running norm of life is unlikely to lose its relevance any time soon. It is with this background that a prominent tradition within international relations was brought to mind: realism. And though I do not share in its beliefs, it is an excellent analytical tool within the boundaries of conflict.

These are the research questions that I will attempt to answer in the thesis:

- Can Pope Urban II’s speech at Clermont in 1095 be reconciled with an aggregated just war theory? How well do the reasons for the First Crusade fall under the appellation of a ‘just war’?

1.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

An idiographic and theory-guided case study will be employed to answer the thesis’ research questions. Further, a model of rationalist-cognitivist decision-making, namely poliheuristic theory, has been integrated with the selected framework. The study itself will chiefly depend on primary and secondary sources, accounts, and other types of pertinent material which the thesis’ theoretical and methodological frameworks hinge upon. A significant portion of the works cited will relate to Papal

and Church history: this is deliberate, as I consider, with the backing of several scholarly sources,⁴ the Holy See to be the central actor behind the Crusades and which authorised, directed, and sponsored its presence in Europe and the Middle East.

1.4. STRUCTURE

I will begin this thesis with a literature review. Afterwards, I will outline the aggregate theoretical framework with sections on just war, defensive neorealism, and the poliheuristic model. This will be followed by a presentation on the elected methodological approach. The main corps of the thesis will be dealt with in the analysis and discussion, whereupon a conclusion is presented and after which the bibliography is detailed.

⁴ Jonathan Riley-Smith, a Crusade historian, writes heavily in *What Were the Crusades?* about the influence of the Pope and the Papal legitimisation of these armed and religiously-motivated expeditions. I must credit Riley-Smith and this work in particular for having inspired this thesis as he devotes the first half of that book to explaining historical and contemporary Christian concepts of just war and the role of the Church as a legal authority. Another academic on the subject matter is Paul E. Chevedden, who provides a thorough explanation of Urban II's theoretical contributions to the Crusades as a phenomenon in his essay *Pope Urban II and the Ideology of the Crusades* in *Crusader World*.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the literature review, I will present previous research as well as outline what material will be used.

2.1. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

An important academic work dealing with the First Crusade, and the Crusades in general, is Jonathan Riley-Smith's⁵ *What Were the Crusades?* This book, though from a historian's perspective, nevertheless seeks to answer several questions that are of relevance within the context of just war theory, such as the thorny debate on what constitutes a legitimate authority and the problem of a just cause. However, in the line of Riley-Smith, much, if not virtually all, of contemporary Crusade scholarship is historiographical, genealogical, or adjacent to those lines of inquiry, and as a result, there are no direct political-scientific sources to draw from.

2.2. MATERIAL

The thesis' primary analytical sources will be translated speeches made by Pope Urban II, which can be found in Oliver J. Thatcher and Edgar Holmes McNeal's *A Source Book for Mediæval History*, a large collection of translations of various European documents⁶ between the 9th and 13th centuries. By the authors' admission,⁷ they seek to touch upon "what may be called the most important matters ... of the whole mediæval period," an incredibly bold undertaking, but for the purposes of this thesis, the select material relating to the lead-up of the First Crusade in section IX of the book is something I consider wholly sufficient. The specific translations, secondary sources both, are made by Fulcher of Chartres and Robert the Monk, and they both concern Urban's speech at Clermont. Further, auxiliary to this, Paul E. Chevedden's essay⁸ *Pope Urban II and the Ideology of*

⁵ Riley-Smith is an eminent scholar on the historiography of the Crusades. Other notable works of his that may be consulted in the interest of further reading on the matter include *Feudal Nobility and the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1174-1277* and *The Crusades: Idea and Reality, 1095-1274*.

⁶ The authors make clear in the preface exactly what type of documents are included, and for what reasons they have excluded certain events and entire geographical regions, for example, documents pertaining to France and England's political development; namely, that there are other collections that do an excellent job of it. O. J. Thatcher & E. H. McNeal (eds.) [Thatcher & McNeal], *A Source Book for Mediæval History: Selected Documents Illustrating the History of Europe in the Middle Age*, New York: Scribners, 1905.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. v.

⁸ P. E. Chevedden, 'Pope Urban II and the Ideology of the Crusades,' in A. Boas (ed.), *The Crusader World*, 7-53, 2015.

the Crusades in *Crusader World* will be used, as it provides an intriguing and well-developed analysis of the personal contribution of Urban to the Crusading movement at large, and as I intend to include a rational-cognitive method as a way to strengthen the viability of a defensive realist theoretical approach, his essay becomes an invaluable inclusion.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework utilised in this thesis is derived from just war theory and defensive neorealism. In particular, traditionalist and revisionist aspects of just war theory will be necessary to properly allow for a rigid analysis of the complexities and contemporary differences in a Papal-oriented view of the Christian international system at the time of the First Crusade. Further, the key realist concept of balance of power will be prominently featured as a central factor behind the outbreak of war.

3.1. JUST WAR THEORY

Modern just war theory is a military-ethical amalgamation of philosophy, religious doctrine, and legal precedent.⁹ The unyielding and complex question of morality in war is a divisive issue and just war theory seeks to establish common ground¹⁰ between those who consider war¹¹ to be beyond morality¹² and those who deem war unjustifiable from the perspective of a structured and normative moral framework. There are two categorical sets of principles that just war theory utilises: the concepts of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. The former are *a priori* conditions that must be satisfied, in part or full, for war to be legally and morally accepted whilst the latter is concerned with acceptable conduct during the war itself.

⁹ There are many aspects to this section that may most appropriately be dealt with in an exhaustive footnote instead of taking up the main body. Religion has played a central role in shaping values and regulating codes of morality; organised religions have perhaps been the most successful in this regard. An important figure both in the development of historical just war theory and in the Catholic Church, Saint Augustine, argued in *De civitate Dei* that it is sinful not to raise arms when the aggressor can only feasibly be stopped by violence. More recent contributions to the field can be seen in the ‘responsibility to protect,’ a doctrine accepted in unanimity by the members of the United Nations which legitimises the use of violence to prevent egregious infractions against life and dignity as is the case for genocide and ethnic cleansing.

¹⁰ S. Lazar, "War", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), available at <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/war/>>, last accessed 12 May 2022.

¹¹ I wish to elaborate Saint Augustine’s explanation of the *iusta bella* and how, in his philosophy, Christian doctrine can reconcile violence with the divine commandments. God can rightfully grant exception to the commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill,’ (lat. *non occides*), and a legitimate authority can also delegate this exception, with the argument that they who hold and use the sword for this exceptional circumstance are not responsible for the deaths they cause. A striking example that Augustine gives is that Abraham, when he was instructed to sacrifice his own son, was not only guiltless of cruel behaviour, but even stood as a testament of piety because he adhered to God, the source of justice: “quos vel lex insta generaliter vel ipse fons iustitiae Deus...” A. Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, vol. 1, l. I, c. 21, pp. 35-36.

¹² A follow-up on the earlier argument by Saint Augustine. Whilst it is possible to put others to death without violating the commandment of ‘Thou shalt not kill,’ he strongly emphasises that it is the wrong-doing of others which allow for just wars, and more centrally, that wars are miserable regardless of circumstances. As he phrases it:

Haec itaque mala tam magna, tam horrenda, tam saeva quisquis cum dolore considerat, miseriam fateatur ; quisquis autem vel patitur ea sine animi dolore vel cogitat, multo utique miserius ideo se putat beatum, quia et humanum perdidit sensum.

Ibid., vol. 2, l. XIX, c. 7, p. 367. This is an oft-forgotten moral statement alongside the *iusta bella* of his invention, that war, justified or not, is a universal misery, and that those who can endure it without pain must think of themselves as happy because they have lost their very sense of human feeling.

3.1.1. JUS AD BELLUM

The standard principles within the lens of *jus ad bellum* are the following:¹³

1. Just cause
2. Legitimate authority
3. Right intention
4. Reasonable prospects of success
5. Proportionality
6. Necessity

In the following subsections each principle will be detailed. And whilst all six of these conditions can be analysed as factors which morally allow for an act of war to be taken, they are not weighed equally.¹⁴ Necessity may override the others with the argument that in a given case, war may be the least harmful option; for example, to avert genocide or some other crime against humanity. Should this be the case, proportionality is the only additional principle that has to be fulfilled.

3.1.1.1. JUST CAUSE

Having a morally and ethically sound cause is central for launching a just war. There is a high burden of justification by default because war is exceedingly destructive and has the potential to bring ruin not only to lives, but to the very soil of the area it touches. Traditionalists recognise national self-defence and humanitarian intervention¹⁵ as just causes to fight, whilst revisionists tend to critique the value of sovereignty in wars of self-defence and advocate an expanded¹⁶ view of humanitarian intervention. I will primarily employ a revisionist interpretation of this stemming from the fact that the First Crusade was not an example of self-defence. It was more akin to a reaction that had been decades in the making when it launched, and some of the reasons that Urban gave for the call to arms are arguably from the stance of a Christian humanitarian imperative.

¹³ Lazar, op. cit., 2.5.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 3.1.

¹⁶ With the reasoning that military intervention could be better for individual human rights than non-intervention. In general, both traditionalist and revisionist schools of thought can be used to justify wars of aggression or other types of causes that most would probably deem unjust. Further, there exists a significant internal split in just war theory between other types of moral outlooks, such as between reductivists and exceptionalists, and that between individualists and collectivists. This thesis will not encompass these various sub-perspectives, as it would derail its political-scientific focus, but additional reading about this debate in contemporary just war theory can be found in *ibid.*, 2.3.

3.1.1.2. LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY

The concept of a legitimate authority is likely familiar to most: perhaps some type of executive state institution comes to mind. Similarly, just war theory has been marked by statist¹⁷ currents, and thus the concept of sovereign power has inextricably been associated with state actors. Revisionism¹⁸ ethically allows for action to be taken without the permission of a state authority in the protection of individual rights. In contemporary scholarship, democratic affirmation of this state authority is important, but not exclusionary, and due to the historical period that this thesis is placed in, I must theoretically preclude democratic status from having an intrinsically greater ability to justify armed conflict than non-democratic types of authority. None of the belligerents involved in the First Crusade can be empirically classified as anything but possessing variances of autocracy and oligarchy. Likewise, an emphasis on democratic affirmation would seriously distort any drawn conclusion, and this is not a desirable outcome.

3.1.1.3. RIGHT INTENTION

Right intention is merely the warring actors' ambition to achieve their just cause honourably, that is, they seek to fulfil the just cause¹⁹ and not utilise it for other nefarious or otherwise non-stated purposes.

3.1.1.4. REASONABLE PROSPECTS OF SUCCESS

A reasonable prospect of success determines the probability of the war being able to conclude favourably.²⁰ This principle is largely assumed to be true with any serious consideration of launching an armed conflict.

3.1.1.5. PROPORTIONALITY

Proportionality is a gauge that morally informs us if fighting should continue or not.²¹ It is closely tied to the precept of the just cause but is also a factor for the *in bello* principles, which only have a secondary function in this thesis. Typically, a

¹⁷ Ibid., 3.3.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 2.5.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 2.5, 3.4.

greater value is ascribed to the political or humanitarian interests of one's own social community; otherwise, an argument could be made that, during a conflict, a smaller community should surrender to the larger since quantifiable political interests are skewed in favour of total population. Majoritarian or power-centric views are currents that just war theorists tend to avoid as it would negate much of what has been written about the just cause.

3.1.1.6. NECESSITY

Necessity, or last resort,²² is probably the most significant variable that must be evaluated before a war begins in earnest. Is the commencement of open warfare truly the only remaining option? If alternative methods of resolution are available, such as diplomacy, the limiting factor is whether or not these avenues are worth exploring. But in the end, war is, and always will be, the *ultima ratio*²³ of kings and common men and not something that should be entertained mindlessly.

3.1.2. JUS IN BELLO

How combatants act during the conflict is measured by the *in bello* principles.²⁴ They are (1) **discrimination**, (2) **proportionality**, and (3) **necessity**. For the purposes of this thesis, only discrimination will be of relevance; it proscribes that combatants must distinguish between military and civilian targets, and only military objectives may be subjected to deliberate attack. This principle is an attempt to minimise collateral loss of human life, and in the context of the First Crusade, difficult to enforce; however, as I will show in the analysis, the manner in which the Papacy attracted people to fight under the Cross was, whilst a rationally sound decision to recruit as many as possible, also highly prone to drawing in people with less-than-ideal motivations to serve as soldiers at war. Discrimination *in bello* is inordinately difficult to ascertain as a result of contemporary feudal-military hierarchies, which is why this aspect of just war theory has a secondary place in the theoretical framework.

²² Ibid., 3.5.

²³ Literally meaning last method or final argument. Used to denote a last resort.

²⁴ Lazar, op. cit., 2.5, 4.

3.2. DEFENSIVE NEOREALISM

Kenneth Waltz²⁵ proposes a theory of state interaction that highlights the prime desire of survival in the international system; the logic that follows is that states do not seek to maximise power but instead steward national security.²⁶ As a result, states make use of strategic calculation in a ‘self-help’²⁷ system to maintain the existing order, and consequently, the security of the sovereign states comprehending it. War is explained as a by-product of unquantifiable or unpredictable causes, such as uncertainty of information or the individual characteristics of individual decision-makers.²⁸ In the end, defensive realism assumes that states, and those who lead them, act and formulate policy on a rational basis, and since survival is the pillar on which the continuation of human societies depend, it is not reasonable for decision-makers to undertake measures that threaten this condition; thus, war is not a phenomenon that this theory provides a strong theoretical foundation for.

3.2.1. RATIONALIST BALANCE OF POWER

I will also present a variant of the balance of power theory that Waltz²⁹ proposes. An underlying assumption he makes is that states become socialised to a system and consequently act within the expected norms and boundaries of that system. Power balances will form, and when shattered, they will reconstitute, utilising methods such as coalition-building and bandwagoning to that end. However, contrary to Waltz’s process of systemic socialisation, I choose to maintain a classical realist assumption of rationality,³⁰ partly because I have elected to make use of the poliheuristic model of decision-making, itself based on rational choice theory, and partly because I consider the specific circumstances³¹ pertaining to the case more explicable from a rationalist standpoint.

²⁵ K. N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1979.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 123-128.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

²⁸ J. W. Taliaferro, ‘Security Seeking under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited,’ *International Security*, vol. 25:3, 128-161, 2000-2001, p. 129.

²⁹ Waltz, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-128.

³⁰ R. O. Keohane, ‘Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond,’ in R. O. Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and Its Critics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, p. 165.

³¹ These are too many to include in the historical background, but the principal reason I make this choice is that the schism between the Latin and Eastern rite, which occurred in the mid-11th century, is very recent within the context of the First Crusade. Any process, be it normalisation of relations or socialisation of an order, could not reasonably be expected to have taken place when Urban held his speech at Clermont in 1095. And as the historical background will show, the means by

3.3. POLIHEURISTIC DECISION-MAKING

Poliheuristic theory is a two-step model of decision-making mainly developed by Alex Mintz that combines aspects³² from the rational choice and cognitive psychology schools of decision-making. The first step is the heuristic removal of noncompensatory factors³³ which is followed by a rational examination of remaining options in line with the standard logic of maximising gain whilst minimising risk. Potential issues that could influence this process in the historical context of the Papal State in the 11th century are domestic opposition, external challenges to the current order,³⁴ and threat to the dignity of the Holy See.

Its usage here is chiefly to supplement the weak explanatory factor of the outbreak of war in defensive realist theory; it provides valuable insight into the process that individual or collective entities undertake when facing crucial decisions. Within the historical context of the selected case, the poliheuristic model permits us to study, theorise, and structure the thought process of Urban II by discussing the impact of antecedent events, and how these could be reasoned to have shaped the core of Urban's ideology and likewise in his declaration of war against the Seljuks.

which the Byzantine Emperors tried to generate a response to the Seljuk conquest arguably follow in the line of a rational risk calculation.

³² A. Mintz, 'How Do Leaders Make Decisions?: A Poliheuristic Perspective,' *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 48:3-13, 2004, pp. 3-4.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 7-8.

³⁴ The Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire were at the time locked in a bitter conflict known as the Investiture Controversy. In short, what began as a dispute regarding the investment of bishops and other high religious seats in the Holy Roman Empire had erupted into a zealous struggle between the supreme Imperial and Papal seats, contending over the ultimate sovereignty of temporal and religious authority. The Holy Roman Emperor named loyalist antipopes in opposition to the Papal State and the Vicar of Christ supported disgruntled antikings in the feudal demesne of the Emperor.

4. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methodological basis for the thesis will be outlined. Its scope is limited, and thus an idiographic theory-guided case study,³⁵ as Jack S. Levy defines it, serves as the catalyst by which the research questions will be investigated.

4.1. METHODS AND DATA

An idiographic case study³⁶ does not lay claim to any pretences of normativity or generalisability; it applies to a singular event or series of closely-related circumstances. Thus, its main goal is not to generalise beyond the case study of the First Crusade, but to construct a valid and sound theoretical explanation for this one specific case; however, this does not preclude nomothetic³⁷ elaborations from occurring, nor from nomothetic conclusions being drawn, but this is not what this thesis seeks to achieve due to its fundamental design. Whilst it may be tempting to include the Second or Third Crusades within this thesis' scope, due to them being consequences of the First, it would result in too broad a focus, and include too many variables, for the study to retain some explanatory value for the idea of a just war.

Continuing from chapter 2, a relevant issue to discuss pertains to language and translation. The First Crusade occurred nearly a thousand years ago, and empirical gateways to the event rely on the selected translations being dependable and accurate. Consequently, I rely on corroboration by trained historians, mainly Riley-Smith and Chevedden, to support my case.

4.1.1. CASE SELECTION

This thesis will make use of two translated transcriptions of Pope Urban II's speech at the Council of Clermont. The different accounts will be aggregated in order to, as accurately as possible, analyse the central reasons he provides for military action and thereafter to scrutinise them within the theoretical framework of the defensive just war. The reason for this single-case selection is due to its instrumental role in

³⁵ J. S. Levy, 'Case Studies: Types, Designs, and Logics of Inference,' *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 25:1-18, 2008, pp. 4-5.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁷ Nomothetic is the opposite of idiographic. *Ibid.*

the First Crusade, as it clearly included a call to arms³⁸ against the Seljuks. Likewise, it features the deliberations and vexations of a central figure, arguably the central figure, in the First Crusade: the Pope himself. Additionally, defensive realism maintains that war can be explained by unpredictability and individual decision-making, and this further validates the selection I make use of.

4.1.2. THEORY-GUIDED CASE STUDY

A theory-guided case study consists of a strong theoretical foundation³⁹ with clear conceptual definitions and an unambiguous typology. This was established in the previous chapter. Levy argues⁴⁰ that social scientists possess a relative advantage over historians in explaining isolated cases, which results in these types of studies being more analytically robust and logically cohesive, which in turn renders them easier to validate, falsify, or otherwise contradict.

³⁸ This is one such example:

Let those who have been accustomed unjustly to wage private warfare against the faithful now go against the infidels and end with victory this war which should have been begun long ago. ... [l]et those who have been fighting against their brothers and relatives now fight in a proper way against the barbarians.

Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, I, pp. 382f., trans. in Thatcher & McNeal, op. cit., p. 517.

³⁹ Levy, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

5. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It has been an established course in contemporary scholarship to set the start of the Crusades in 1095,⁴¹ and not without reason, as this was the year that marked the eventual beginnings⁴² of Western Christian military action in the Holy Land. However, a slightly larger temporal scope, mostly focusing on the Reform Church of Pope Urban II, will be necessary to include owing to the explanatory ambition of this thesis.

Firstly, it may be of relevance to briefly define the term ‘Crusade,’ as this is a common point of contention.⁴³ Following Riley-Smith and Andrew Latham,⁴⁴ I define the Crusades as institutionally-driven sets of sponsored and penitential⁴⁵ warfare directed against heretics, heathens, and, failing that, enemies of the Roman Church, organised by writ of the Papacy.⁴⁶

The ideology behind the Crusades was not Urban’s alone. The Reform Movement⁴⁷ in the Papacy can be regarded as the heralds of its beginning; Gregory VII suggested something similar in a letter⁴⁸ dated to 1076, and Urban adopted⁴⁹ existing verbiage and scriptural precedent from the Old Testament to delineate his vision for the future mission of the Church. Nevertheless, the influence that Urban and his pontificate had on Crusader thought should not be disregarded; he was an ambitious visionary, a ‘dreamer of the day’ who strayed from apocalyptic contemporaries,⁵⁰ and the eschatological dream he propagated was as universalist as it was militant.⁵¹ The speeches he held at Clermont and Piacenza are, therefore,

⁴¹ J. S. C. Riley-Smith, *What Were The Crusades?*, 3rd ed., Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 1.

⁴² 1095 was the start of Urban’s preaching and calls to arms against the Seljuks, and an ill-equipped force mostly consisting of commoners and a few hundred knights set out shortly after, which ended with them being killed or enslaved after an engagement with a Seljuk army in September and October of 1096. M. Barber, *The Crusader States*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012, p. 5.

⁴³ Riley-Smith, op. cit., pp. 1-7.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 27-35; A. A. Latham, *Theorizing Medieval Geopolitics: War and World Order in the Age of the Crusades*, New York: Routledge, 2012, pp. 100-103, 106-113.

⁴⁵ Fighting in the Crusades was a unique way to be granted remission for one’s sins. I discuss this phenomenon more elaborately in chapter 6.1.2.

⁴⁶ Not all Crusades fall in line with this definition; for example, the sack of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade defied the Pope’s threats of excommunication. But the abovementioned definition is more than serviceable for the events of 1095-1099.

⁴⁷ Chevedden, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

⁴⁸ Bongars in Thatcher & McNeal, op. cit., pp. 512-513.

⁴⁹ Chevedden, op. cit., p. 14.

⁵⁰ ‘Dreamers of the day’ is an expression found in T. E. Lawrence’s *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Chevedden, op. cit., p. 15.

⁵¹ For example, that the Church should “make disciples of all nations,” a passage from the Gospel of Matthew (Mk 28:19). Ibid., p. 16.

more appropriate to regard as the final culminations to a process that had begun many years prior.

Still, 1095 marked the definite beginning of the Era of Crusades. Decades after the conquest⁵² of most of inner Anatolia to the Seljuk Empire, Pope Urban II launched the First Crusade at the behest of the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I.⁵³ Whilst the superficial intention was to act in defence of the Greek Church,⁵⁴ as Alexios had appealed for help, Urban, and the Reform Movement at large, held the city of Jerusalem in such great reverence that the strategic objective of the First Crusade quickly transformed into the express capture of this city;⁵⁵ and when Jerusalem fell to the Crusaders in 1099, the First Crusade was at an end. At this time, the Fatimid⁵⁶ and Seljuk caliphs had already died, and to use the words of Riley-Smith,⁵⁷ “[t]he crusaders were, therefore, charging through a gate which was already off its hinges.”

Several polities were established in the wake of the First Crusade, the so-called Crusader States,⁵⁸ such as the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the County of Edessa. These feudal Christian settlements remained in existence until 1291, though they had been drastically reduced in territory long before that.⁵⁹

⁵² Riley-Smith, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

⁵³ Alexios I and his predecessors had been trying for many years to secure military support from foreign powers after the loss of Anatolia in 1071: the Pope was only one of them. Lay Western rulers including Robert Guiscard, the Duke of Sicily, were approached, but as history shows, the Papacy eventually turned out to be the most receptive to their pleas. P. Charanis, ‘Byzantium, the West and the Origin of the First Crusade,’ *Byzantion*, vol. 19:1, 17-36, 1949, pp. 17-28.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵⁵ This trend was called ‘the march to Jerusalem,’ or *iter Hierosolymitanum*.

⁵⁶ Riley-Smith, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁵⁸ Also known as the Outremer. Barber, op. cit., figure 1: the Secular and Ecclesiastical Rulers of the Crusader States in the Twelfth Century.

⁵⁹ Riley-Smith, op. cit., pp. 15-16; Barber, pp. 262ff.

6. ANALYSIS

The analytical chapter will initially be divided by author. Each account will be scrutinised from the perspective of just war theory. After the accounts have been intellectually exhausted, a short summary regarding their general suitability to the defensive realist framework will be made, which will be expounded upon in chapter 7. The poliheuristic model will be applied at the end.

6.1. URGED BY NECESSITY: FULCHER'S ACCOUNT

Most beloved brethren: Urged by necessity, I, Urban, by the permission of God chief bishop and prelate over the whole world, have come into these parts as an ambassador with a divine admonition to you, the servants of God ... [o]n this account I, or rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to publish this everywhere ... and to destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends.⁶⁰

The above-cited quote is a highly truncated version of Fulcher of Chartres' version of Pope Urban II's speech at the Council of Clermont. Urban's speech there was, by no exaggeration, the fundamental staging point of what would become the First Crusade; thus establishing a new policy precedent in the Roman Catholic Church: the official sanction of holy war against heathens. There are numerous accounts of Urban's speech,⁶¹ and this section will analyse the English translation of Fulcher's primary account and apply the composite theory of defensive just war to it.

6.1.1. JUST WAR AND CHRISTIAN GEOPOLITICS

As can be immediately observed in Fulcher's account, not only does the Pope refer to his deferred authority as the Vicar of Christ on Earth in order to make his case, but he also compels his audience, who were ordained clerics of the Christian faith,⁶² to fulfil this holy mission in the name of God. Indeed, upon concluding his call to war against the Seljuks, Urban tells⁶³ the congregation that what has been said "is meant also for those who are absent. Moreover, Christ commands it." It is therefore only appropriate to say that the Holy See's perceived function was that of an

⁶⁰ Bongars in Thatcher & McNeal, op. cit., pp. 513-517.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 513-514.

⁶² The council of Clermont had a delegation of bishops from France, the Italian states, and the Holy Roman Empire, as well as a diplomatic representative from the Byzantine Empire. Riley-Smith, op. cit., p. 12.

⁶³ Bongars in Thatcher & McNeal, op. cit., p. 517.

institution with legitimate authority, originating from the divine itself, to make war. Papal jurisdiction is clearly assumed to be universal in nature, an unsurprising feature, as its temporal power ultimately derives from the divine itself,⁶⁴ “by the permission of God chief bishop and prelate over the whole world,” a line of reasoning that can be transferred to the requisites of just cause and right intention: Urban refers back to the divine to justify armed intervention. Humanity is fallible and prone to make errors in judgment and calculation, but this course of military action was not made at the behest of the Pope; it is commanded by the Pope in the name of God, and a mandate from God is not subject to errors in the same manner. However, whilst divine infallibility could unilaterally satisfy the conditions for *jus ad bellum* from a theological standpoint, I must champion the opposite assumption that realists advocate: that leaders make decisions on a rational basis. Of course, using divine justification could be regarded as the rational course of action, given that he appealed to the clergy and to peoples’ faith at large; still, there are observable conditions that allowed Urban to successfully launch the Crusade at this precise point in time. Therefore, I seek to evidence a more substantive and grounded process of decision-making in order for the defensive just war theory to be applicable, and the following section may aid us in that matter:

Although, O sons of God, you have promised more firmly than ever ... to preserve the rights of the church, there remains still an important work for you to do. [...] For your brethren who live in the east are in urgent need of your help ... the Turks and Arabs have attacked them and have conquered the territory of Romania [the Greek empire] as far west as the shore of the Mediterranean and the Hellespont ... [t]hey have occupied more and more of the lands of those Christians, and have overcome them in seven battles. They have killed and captured many, and have destroyed the churches and devastated the empire. If you permit them to continue thus for awhile with impunity, the faithful of God will be much more widely attacked by them.⁶⁵

This passage embodies several concepts which are also central to the idea of a just war. It reinforces the validity of right intention by highlighting existing plights which must be corrected as to prevent future attacks; likewise, the Seljuk conquest

⁶⁴ A short digression can be made on this point. In Christian scripture, God is responsible for creating the world and introducing humanity to it. Since the Holy See’s temporal function was essentially that of a doctrinal enforcer and highest representative of God, it only follows that the Pope possesses the right to impose this divine prerogative anywhere on Earth, since his office, at least in theory, ultimately answers to the one who created it.

⁶⁵ Bongars in Thatcher & McNeal, op. cit., pp. 516-517.

can be inferred to have caused an imperative for the Christian world to intervene, thus satisfying the condition of necessity. However, it also bears further scrutiny. Are the threats that Urban describe truly enough to satisfy the criterion of a just cause? It is a reaction to an act of aggressive expansion; however, the injustices committed are described in the past tense and are somewhat non-descript, which would make it problematic from a traditionalist self-defence approach. Considering it as a revisionist humanitarian intervention appears more theoretically agreeable; he claims that Christians will be subjected to future violence unless the Turks and Arabs are hindered, whilst giving vague allusions to the damage that has already been done. As a result, Urban's vociferations may be seen as exhortations to avert future harm, and whilst this view is set on quite a shaky foundation,⁶⁶ it is not without cause.

Further, within the purview of defensive neorealism, a few observations can be made: by annexing large parts of the Byzantine Empire, the Seljuk Empire has gravely upset the balance of power in a Christian international system,⁶⁷ and such a consolidation of power to a singular polity therefore forces the system to react. States, or feudal polities, care about security and are only brought to drastic action when this security is threatened by a power-accruing aspirant. Further, as was mentioned in chapter 5, Byzantine Emperors had reached out for help ever since this strategic loss was inflicted, which indicates an active attempt on their part to correct this imbalance. I must make the following inferences. First, the recent history of war, territorial concessions, and outright hostility between the Byzantine and Seljuk Empires was an archetypical example of power conflicts under a system of anarchy in which intent and resources were difficult to ascertain. Secondly, the Byzantine alliance-chasing was an expected act of rebalancing that sought to neutralise an external threat. And lastly, the Papal view of itself as the sovereign of a universal Christian Republic⁶⁸ led to them being able to both claim dominion over, and having a vested interest in, the safety of their astray brethren.

⁶⁶ There are many assumptions that must be true in order for this intervention to fulfil the mandate of being a just cause. Most importantly, it assumes that Christians will be subject to widespread death should the rest of the Christian world do nothing: should being the operative word. I would argue that Urban capitalised on an eventuality that was bound to happen.

⁶⁷ Or systems. Latham uses the Latin Church as the basis for an international system, but in this case, the churches of Rome and Constantinople joined in a union which very briefly represented a united front for Christianity.

⁶⁸ A term used by some historians to describe the concept of a universal Christian state. See for example Riley-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

6.1.2. REMISSION OF SIN AND CONDUCT IN WAR

Urban declared that those who partook in this Crusade would be given remission of all sins.⁶⁹ This decision can be interpreted as a way to bolster the reasonable prospects of success; and, following the same logic, to guarantee that the Christian alliance could reverse the tilted balance of power. It also invites an issue in the form of the belligerents' conduct; anyone could swear on the Cross and be granted eternal salvation fighting in the 'war of liberation'⁷⁰ in the Holy Land. Can all those who joined be expected to adhere to the laws of war, and thus not break the just war principles *in bello*? In the translation,⁷¹ the Pope gives as an example to "let those who, for a long time, have been robbers, now become knights," against the "despised and base race," and there can be no illusions as to the complete lack of discrimination in this statement. The enemy is a monolith, a scourge on the Earth, that must be wholesale defeated. This is something that was alluded to⁷² earlier, and the only constraining provision in that citation was geographical. However, it must be noted that relying entirely on specific formulations is inappropriate, especially since this is not something that Urban wrote himself. Robert the Monk's version should hopefully illustrate that this is a recurring issue with accounts of Urban's speech at Clermont. Still, there are some inferences that can be made with some degree of accuracy, which I will raise in the next subchapter.

Returning to the matter at hand: since I utilise a definition of Crusade that relies on Papal authorisation of action, the people who fought in them did so at the behest of the Pope, and if there was a formal chain of command, he would be at the top of it. And there were numerous atrocities⁷³ committed in the name of the Cross, most notably when the city of Jerusalem itself was conquered,⁷⁴ and these can not be classified as anything but complete transgressions of the *in bello* principles.

⁶⁹ In Fulcher's account Urban says that

All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins.
This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested.

Bongars in Thatcher & McNeal, op. cit., p. 517.

⁷⁰ Urban used this term to describe two separate goals: the liberation of the people under the Eastern rite and of the Holy Sepulchre, the tomb of Christ, in Jerusalem. Riley-Smith, op. cit., p. 14.

⁷¹ Bongars in Thatcher & McNeal, loc. cit.

⁷² Namely, that they were to "destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends." Ibid.

⁷³ For a scholarly discussion on how this part of the First Crusade has been handled I refer to B. Z. Kedar, 'Crusade Historians and the Massacres of 1096,' *Jewish History*, vol. 12:2, 11-31, 1998.

⁷⁴ Barber, op. cit., p. 8.

However, a complicating factor is that many of these massacres were carried out on the way to the military objectives of the Crusade, and Urban's call to action was clearly directed against Sunni Muslims in the Near East, not the Jewish diaspora around Europe.

6.2. WITH SWORD AND FIRE: ROBERT'S ACCOUNT

The sad news has come from Jerusalem and Constantinople that the people of Persia, an accursed and foreign race, enemies of God ... have invaded the lands of those Christians and devastated them with the sword, rapine, and fire.⁷⁵

Robert the Monk's narrative of Urban's speech is considerably more descriptive, violent, and bellicose. In Fulcher's account, Urban merely mentions that Christians have died and are bound to suffer more whilst Robert appends vivid language⁷⁶ and concrete cases of the manifold tortures the Christians were subjected to. The veracity of his claims is disputed. Riley-Smith writes⁷⁷ that Robert came "perilously near to promoting" the First Crusade as a war of conversion; but any reading of the statements that Urban supposedly makes corrals the reader into a very specific mindset. For example, here Robert writes

Whose duty is it to avenge this and recover that land, if not yours? For to you more than to other nations the Lord has given the military spirit, courage, agile bodies, and the bravery to strike down those who resist you. Let your minds be stirred to bravery by the deeds of your forefathers ... of Karl the Great and of Ludwig his son ... who have destroyed Turkish kingdoms and established Christianity in their lands.⁷⁸

It is a segment bereft of rhetorical guile. Exceptionalist provisions like superior strength is not a valid claim to possessing a *jus ad bellum*, and whilst there are

⁷⁵ Bongars in Thatcher & McNeal, op. cit., p. 518.

⁷⁶ In the text, Robert writes that

They circumcise the Christians and pour the blood from the circumcision on the altars or in the baptismal fonts. Some they kill in a horrible way by cutting open the abdomen, taking out a part of the entrails and tying them to a stake; they then beat them and compel them to walk until all their entrails are drawn out and they fall to the ground. Some they use as targets for their arrows. They compel some to stretch out their necks and then they try to see whether they can cut off their heads with one stroke of the sword.

Why Fulcher and Robert maintain so vastly different accounts is up for debate. What can be gathered from the two writers is that Urban did, at the very least, speak of injustices committed by the Seljuks. Ibid., pp. 518-519.

⁷⁷ Riley-Smith, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

⁷⁸ Bongars in Thatcher & McNeal, op. cit., p. 519.

elements of inhuman cruelty that would fall within the category of intervening to avert injury, one has to take issue with, again, discrimination and proportionality. Christians have been murdered, and in implicit response, kingdoms are to be destroyed and its inhabitants struck down. Even when specific examples are disregarded in the account, its general message remains clear and in stark contrast to that of Fulcher's. Both narratives advocate an intervention in the name of God; in Fulcher's version, though indiscriminate in its own right, does contain limiting conditions to the proposed expedition and chiefly relies on spiritual arguments and immaterial rewards; the Pope, in his elected⁷⁹ capacity as head of the Roman Church, does possess some perceived legitimacy in issuing these types of promises, as the office he represents assumes the prerogative of divine adjudication. On the contrary, Robert's account has Urban tempt the audience by mentioning the material riches of the land⁸⁰ they are being asked to claim. However, there is one saving grace to the account: it embodies the military nature of the Crusade. Only those in fighting condition are to go; the old and weak would be a "hindrance rather than a help, a burden rather than an advantage."⁸¹ This distinction is not conferred on the enemy.

6.3. DECISION-MAKING OF A CRUSADE

What does the poliheuristic model of decision-making hold in relation to the declaration to the Crusade? Urban was a staunch reformer of the office he held, and he had supervised expansions of its influence before; he reinstated ecclesiastical sees on the Iberian peninsula in 1088⁸² and saw armed struggle as one method of many in the ultimate mission of the Church,⁸³ which was to bring salvation to all. Acceptable methods for the institution and mission he advocated were more

⁷⁹ Papal elections were reformed in 1059 by Nicholas II and which curtailed the influence of the Holy Roman Emperor in the process. Nicholas II, Papal Bull, *In Nomine Domini*, 13 April 1059, available at <<https://web.archive.org/web/20070927231216/http://www.osjcuria.org/sga/young/giovannipaolo/innominedomini.pdf>>, last accessed 10 August 2022.

⁸⁰ Jerusalem is described as

That land which, as the Scripture says, is flowing with milk and honey, [it] is the best of all lands, more fruitful than all others, as it were a second Paradise of delights.

Whilst he pontificates with a bishop's crozier, he appeals to a peasant's scythe. The effectiveness of such a statement in a room full of bishops is not for me to pass judgment on. Bongars in Thatcher & McNeal, op. cit., pp. 519-520.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 520.

⁸² Chevedden, op. cit., pp. 15-19.

⁸³ Urban instructs the new Archbishop of Toledo not to "give offense to Christians or to Muslims," but rather "strive by word and example." The bloodthirsty warmonger that Robert described in his narrative would likely balk at the tolerance. Ibid., p. 16.

reasonably determined by the conduct of other rulers, and war was one of them. And even when warfare was an elite endeavour, fought by noble retainers and regiments of mercenaries, the first crusaders were a haphazard force of faithful peasants who set out with little direction and were defeated in their first engagement. Urban, in his role as chief bishop of the Church of Rome, only needed to carry the Cross to the altar in Clermont, for afterwards, the people he offered the eternal reward would bear it all the way to Golgotha in fulfilment of the mission he had envisioned for many years.

Unacceptable alternatives are rejected in the poliheuristic model and the remaining options are gauged relative to their political expediency. Alexios' request was a chance to establish the Roman Church as a central authority governing the expansion of Christianity abroad. Likewise, it was a possibility to establish the Bishop of Rome as a superior title to that of the Holy Roman Emperor in matters temporal and spiritual, since those who undertook the March to Jerusalem would nominally act under Papal authority, not Imperial. Therefore, any risks associated with the Byzantine request would likely be deemed acceptable to the relative benefits they presented to the political dimension for the Holy See in Europe.

7. DISCUSSION

It may seem that the analytical findings brought forward are somewhat circular in nature, or that the circumstances we find are unrelated. I disagree. The beginnings of ‘Crusade ideology,’ the centralisation of the Roman Church by the Reform Movement of the Papacy, the declining power of the Byzantine Empire, and the territorial ambitions posed by non-Christian polities all converge into a critical mass that results in Urban being able to successfully declare a Crusade at Clermont in 1095. Material conditions and political desperation on the part of the Byzantine Empire permits the Papacy to cooperate with its Eastern counterpart, allowing Urban to export a policy of salvation and ideas of universal jurisdiction to the shared Holy Land of the Abrahamic religions whilst simultaneously strengthening his domestic position to the chagrin of the Holy Roman Emperor. Urban was possessed with a doctrinal and forward-looking ideology that was allowed to manifest itself in the countless thousands who went to fight in the ‘war of liberation’ and the precedent that he set rung loud and true for centuries.

In the two texts I chose, Urban is presented quite differently. I believe it within the realm of reasonable speculation to claim that out of the narratives, the comparatively restrained Pope in Fulcher’s account corresponds more closely to reality than the sabre-rattling lunatic from Robert’s recapitulation. And from the arguments that are mentioned, I consider Fulcher’s Pope, absent massacres committed *in bello*, to warrant a serious consideration as having fulfilled the important requisites in a just war theory. There is a stated humanitarian imperative; it is a belated reaction to an act of territorial conquest in the nominal aid of an allied polity; there is a geographical limitation to the military objectives; and it has a reasonable prospect of success. Robert’s Pope advocates a grossly disproportionate response and makes dubious appeals to exceptionalist nonsense in pursuit of his aims.

I must make clear one aspect: what Fulcher’s Pope represents and how it is arguably acceptable within a just war theory model is not a normative delineation of morality on my part. There are two considerations here: first, the defensive

neorealist framework has no impact on the utility of either Pope; it merely explains the pertinent political processes during the case, that is, the underlying will to restore some semblance of a balance of power, and which aids in understanding the chain of events that led to the speech in Clermont. Second, it gives us an intriguing view of character presentation. Both narrative accounts concern the same historical event, with the same main arguments being led by the Pope in order to launch a Crusade; however, whereas a contemporary writer may consider the two accounts equally justified in their cause, I do not deem them to morally weigh the same based on the analysis that I performed. Even a strong revisionist would have to oppose Robert's Pope on the grounds of him placing humanitarian imperative secondary to military glory.

In summary, the First Crusade was a conconvocation of cause and circumstance in a time of strife and turmoil: Urban was its epochal catalyst.

7.1. CONCLUSIONS

This thesis aimed to answer the following research questions:

- Can Pope Urban II's speech at Clermont be reconciled with an aggregated just war theory? How well do the reasons for the First Crusade fall under the appellation of a 'just war'?

I have demonstrated that the answer to the first question is affirmative. The second research question depend on the material as the character that is presented is vastly different. However, after analysis, Fulcher's Pope can be determined to fulfil the moral criteria of a just war, whilst Robert's Pope does not.

7.2. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There are a multitude of aspects that could be expanded upon from these conclusions. Studying all accounts of Urban's speech may be one, as there are a few that I elected to not take into consideration. Likewise, a study focusing on the development of the concept of Crusade, to ascertain if the just war criteria persevere in intent or are redefined to changing political environments, and if so,

how these can be explained. A valid avenue of consideration, in a multiple-case study, could encompass the evolution of language as a central object of scrutiny. In such a study an interpretative method may be utile, such as the idea of conceptual history theorised by Reinhart Koselleck. Lastly, since Crusades were launched all around Europe, one might want to focus on another case entirely, like the Albigensian or Northern Crusades.

INTER ARMA ENIM SILENT LEGES

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