

How much control was the Pope able to exert over the Crusaders?

The Crusades were a series of religious conflicts ranging from 1095 to 1291. These conflicts primarily took place in the middle east with the primary motive of conquering, and defending the Holy Land, however, other 'crusades' took place elsewhere such as Europe against other 'non-Christians'.¹ Crusades were defined as 'Just Wars' by the Church and leading Christian theologians, due to the intentions of the Crusaders and the leaders.² The figureheads of the Crusades were the Popes, who were often the ones who proclaimed the need for a Crusade, made the call to Christians for them to take up the cross, and set out the aims and the goals for the Crusades. Throughout the period, one could witness the changing nature of the Papacy, with the relationship between Pope and Crusade often being a good indicator of Papal power. The Popes who were behind the Crusades often had varying degrees of control over the Crusaders, with some Popes able to successfully manage certain elements of the campaign, and others often remaining powerless throughout the conflict. Popes were only able to exert a small amount of control over the Crusades, and whilst the power of the Papacy was in constant flux, very often the Papacy were not able to exert massive amounts of control over the Crusades.

The Crusades were characterised by huge military operations, primarily in the Middle East. Crusades were often called for by Popes, through ecclesiastic councils, and Papal encyclicals, these particular methods became the official methods after; Urban II called for the first Crusade through the Council of Clermont in 1095 and Eugenius III called for the Second Crusade through the encyclical 'Quantum Predecessores' in 1145.³ Several different Popes such as Innocent III later used these methods when calling for European Crusades against Christian heretics, and infidels in the Southern regions of Europe in the 1200s. Whilst Popes were able to control, when, where, how, and to who they proclaimed the Crusade, they were rendered powerless in military matters. Popes were able to appoint Legates to expeditions, these Legates took charge of the spiritual needs of the Crusaders, leading to the Church being entirely dependent on secular leaders for military guidance.⁴ The lack of Papal control of the Crusades was typified at the beginning of the First Crusade. Urban II had set a departure date of August 15th 1096, however, several groups, led by Peter the Hermit and Walter Sans-Avoir, left early going against Urban II's intentions.⁵ Groups that did set off on Urban II's departure date of 15th August set off separately, once again going against Urban II's wishes.⁶ These several groups were led by several different secular leaders such as Raymond of Toulouse, and Godfrey of Boulogne; leaders who ended up dictating military policy in the Holy Land, setting a precedent for future crusaders, a precedent that allowed military policy to be dictated by new generations of secular leaders such as; Lord Edward, Frederick II, Simon de Montfort and Louis IX.^{7 8} These secular leaders had to take charge of

¹ T.Wise, *The Wars of the Crusades: 1096-1291*, (Osprey, London, 1978) pg 12

² J.Riley-Smith, *What were the Crusades?*, (Macmillan, London, 1977) pg 16

³ J.Riley-Smith, *What were the Crusades?* pg 34

⁴ Ibid pg 51-52

⁵ T. Asbridge, *The First Crusade*, (The Free Press, London, 2004) pg83

⁶ R.H.C. Davis, *A History of Medieval Europe*, (Pearson Longman, Harlow, 2006) Pg 306

⁷ Ibid pg 306

⁸ T. Asbridge, *The First Crusade*, pg 321

the Crusade as the combination of fighting a war away in the Holy Land, and the logistics of communicating orders from Rome made it difficult for the Pope to control military matters. The number of Princes who participated also made it impossible to have one leadership figure, and the 'impression that the whole enterprise was directed by the Pope, vanished'.⁹ Furthermore, western Europe was often unaware of events until several months after they had occurred due to the time it took for news to travel. The success of the First Crusade, which saw the capture of Jerusalem and the establishment of the Crusade States, and the achievements and failures of all future Crusades, all occurred without Papal control over military policy, and instead was down to Secular leadership control over policy. Innocent III, the apogee of papal power was fully unable to exert his control over the Crusades' military policy through his Papal legate.¹⁰ This was demonstrated through Innocent III's most powerful Crusade Legate Pelagius, not being able to control military policy on behalf of the Papacy even when there was no recognised leader of the Crusade, Pelagius was left to advise, however, his advice was not always taken.¹¹ It has been accepted, that whilst the Papacy gave legitimacy to the Crusades, the Papacy was unable to control it after it had set off, and for a spiritual leader, such as the Pope, to control a secular affair, such as war and its military affairs, was something that was not possible in the time period.¹²

Military Orders had a strong presence in the Middle East, and they were set up in order to protect Pilgrims, and protect the Holy Land, but grew to offer many different services; often taking a variety of financial, governmental, and other military roles during the Crusades.¹³ Orders such as the Templars were supported by powerful secular leaders such as Hugh Count of Champagne, and it was due to these supporters that military orders grew to become so strong and powerful.¹⁴ Innocent II elevated several military orders such as the Knights Templar, and the Hospitalers to a level where they were only answerable to the Papacy, thus allowing them to operate above 'ecclesiastical jurisdiction'.¹⁵ These military orders were trusted by those in the upper echelons of medieval society; with Richard I and Phillip II fighting with the Templars and the Hospitalers during their Crusade, and Popes such as Eugenius III and Innocent III using their services to protect or fight high value objects and targets, such as transporting money to Jerusalem or fighting the Germans in Sicily.^{16 17} This shows that powerful military orders were strictly under the control of the Papacy. As the orders, particularly the Templars, grew more powerful they started to drift in and out of the control of the Papacy, in 1207 the Templars were chastised by Innocent III for disobeying Papal Legates, and for exploiting their rights to give mass in areas under an interdict and charging those who took mass.¹⁸ However, whilst they did occasionally drift out of the control, the military orders ultimately remained loyal to the Papacy, and their powers only started to diminish as they started to threaten secular lords with their power,

⁹ H.E. Mayer, *The Crusades*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1972) Pg 46

¹⁰ Johannes Haller, *Lord of the World in Innocent III Vicar of Christ or Lord of the World*, (Washington D.C, CUA Press, 1994) pg79

¹¹ J.Riley-Smith, *What were the Crusades?*, pg 52

¹² Ibid pg 53

¹³ D Jones, *The Templars*, (Head of Zeus, London, 2017) pg 2

¹⁴ S, Martin, *The Knights Templar*, (Pocket Essentials, London, 2004) pg 26

¹⁵ P.P Read, *The Templars*, (Phoenix Press, London, 2001) pg 116

¹⁶ D. Jones, *The Templars*, pg 207-209

¹⁷ P.P. Read, *The. Templars*, pg 183-185

¹⁸ Ibid pg 179-180

demonstrated when Phillip IV of France engineered their downfall through his puppet Pope Clement V.¹⁹ The Military orders threatened these secular lords though their vast network of assets, and support they possessed enough money and resources to wage war. Secular lords saw the threat they presented, and the threat the Papacy posed with the Templars at their disposal.

Being the huge military operations that they were, the Crusades required large financial backing before, during, and after they had occurred. The money was raised in a variety of ways, and by a variety of different types of people. Temporal leaders, such as Kings, Princes, and Lords raised money in several different ways. Tithes, and tax were collected by nations and the Church, for their crusading royalty so that they may go on Crusade.²⁰ Henry II of England, and Phillip Augustus of France in 1167, at the behest of Pope Alexander III, imposed a tax for the Holy Land at the rate of a penny from every pound and it was collected by the Clergy.²¹ This money was then used to Crusade and protect the Holy Land, the tax was utilised once again by Henry II and Phillip Augustus when they took the cross together in 1188, however, the rate of the tax was altered to one tenth the payee's worth, and was levied upon all non-crusading subjects.²² This level of taxation by royalty upon their subjects was not uncommon, with Louis VII imposed a similar tax in 1146 in order to fund his expedition to the Holy Land.²³ Royalty did not always raise money from tax, other times they raised money from their feudal lands. Royalty raising money from their feudal lands for their Crusade was a feature of Crusading that continued right up until its end, appearing not just in the first Crusade with Princes such as, Hugh I Count of Vermandois who went in place of his father King Henry I, who were funded by their feudal lands, to the Ninth Crusade, when Lord Edward, later Edward I of England, was granted a twentieth of revenue to fund his crusade.²⁴ Whilst these leaders were encouraged to crusade by the Popes, the Papacy had very little control over how much funding they received, and how it was spent when they got to the Holy Land. An example of this would be King John in 1201, John declared that English money would go to the Hospitalers, the Templars, and to 'Crusaders of the land where it was collected'.²⁵ There was however, a level of ecclesiastical control over the collection of the taxes, and tithes, with Bishops, members of the clergy and members of religious military orders being the ones who ensured it was safely collected.

Some temporal leaders were not as well off as the Princes who were going on Crusade. Some members of the nobility, and Knights could not afford to finance their crusades without some form of financial assistance. This financial assistance came in the form of; loans, pawning of property, monetary gifts, and the selling of goods to and from richer, non-crusading members of the aristocracy, or the Church.²⁶ There were a variety of different loans available for Crusaders to utilise in order to finance their crusade. Some of these loans

¹⁹ Ibid pg 264

²⁰ F.A Cazel Jr, *Financing of the Crusades*, in *A History of the Crusades*, eds. in H.W. Hazard, N.P Zacour, (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1989) Pg 125

²¹ Ibid pg 125-126

²² Ibid Pg 126-127

²³ J.Riley-Smith, *What were the Crusades?*, pg 45

²⁴ Ibid pg 46

²⁵ F.A Cazel Jr, *Financing of the Crusades?*, pg 128

²⁶ Ibid pg 120

were interest free, such as Louis IX's loan to Lord Edward in 1269.²⁷ Others used 'vif gages', where they traded the use of their land for money, the income from that land affected the repayment that the Crusader was required to make when they returned, however, the most popular fundraising method for Crusaders was a 'mort gage'. A 'mort gage' is where the Crusader borrowed money in return for the use of his land with the profit from the land serving as interest.²⁸ The Papacy did try and impose their control over crusading finances, with several Popes such as Eugenius III and Innocent III prohibited interest on all forms of loans to Crusaders whilst they were away on Crusade.²⁹ Furthermore, the Pope brought everyone who went on Crusade under Papal protection, ensuring that they had the support of the Church if they were unable to reclaim their land upon their return.³⁰ The peasants that followed Peter the Hermit to the Holy Land were beyond any control of the Papacy, and its leader, with the peasants murdering, and stealing from Jews across Western and Eastern Europe as they travelled on their way to the Holy Land.³¹ However, the Papacy did not have full control over this area, as many Christian money lenders continued the practice of charging interest ignoring the commands of the Pope, and Jews were still able to charge interest as they were not under the control of the Church.³²

Under Innocent III the Papacy's control of finances increased, as Innocent III sought to make the Church the bankers of the Crusades, with several Canons at the Fourth Lateran Council preventing Christians from doing business with Jews making this possible. Whilst people were still expected to pay their own way to the Holy Land, Innocent III wanted the Church to be able to assist the Crusaders financially.³³ At the Fourth Lateran Council Innocent III declared that the Church would be providing a grant of thirty thousand pounds to help with expenses, three thousand silver marks to assist the Patriarch of Jerusalem, the Templars, and the Hospitalers.³⁴ Innocent III also taxed the clergy in order to 'aid' the Holy Land with the tax amounting to a twentieth of their ecclesiastical revenue for three years, with the Cardinals also pledging a tenth of their ecclesiastical revenues.³⁵ Even though Innocent III is widely considered the apex of the Papacy's temporal power, he still did not have full control over the financial reforms he implemented, with the tax on the clergy still not collected in some places ten years later.³⁶ Innocent III's tax on the clergy that was announced at the Fourth Lateran Council set a precedent for future Popes, and leaders when they looked to finance their Crusades, these precedents were practiced in and by: France, England, Denmark, Gregory X and by many other Popes across the 1200s for several different expeditions to the Holy Land. Crusades that benefited from these new finance methods were; Frederick II's Crusade (Sixth Crusade), the Seventh Crusade, Louis IX's Crusade (Eight

²⁷ J.P. Trabut-Cussac, *Le Financement de la Croisade Anglaise de 1270 in Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, (Paris, Librairie Marcel Didier, 1962) pg 113-121

²⁸ F.A Cazel Jr, *Financing of the Crusades?*, pg 120

²⁹ Ibid pg 120

³⁰ Ibid pg 120

³¹ T. Asbridge, *The First Crusade*, pg 84-89

³² Innocent III, *Canon 71 at The Fourth Lateran Council*, (1215, available at:

<https://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum12-2.htm#46>)

³³ J. Richards, *The Crusades: c.1071-c.1291*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999) pg 271

³⁴ Innocent III, *Canon 71 at The Fourth Lateran Council*

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ J.J Norwich, *The Popes*, (Vintage, London, 2012) pg 172

Crusade) and Lord Edward's Crusade (Ninth Crusade).³⁷ However, much like Innocent III these levies were often difficult to collect, as the laity were often against paying them.³⁸

The Crusades were also very political and occurred in a time where temporal leaders were constantly vying for more territory, and more control. The Crusades offered these leaders the perfect location to increase their territorial possessions and served as a catalyst for an increase in political disputes. The first Crusade was mostly a French Crusade, due to Urban II campaigning being based in the south of France, however this meant that the Crusaders were mostly French and thus the Crusader States in the middle east naturally ended up in French aristocratic hands.³⁹ ⁴⁰ The presence of the French in the region created more political disputes, as rivalries that had occurred in France had followed the nobles to the Crusader states, this was demonstrated via the relationship between Raymond of Toulouse and Godfrey of Boulogne.⁴¹ This rivalry was played out in July 1099 when Raymond and Godfrey feuded over who would become the ruler of Jerusalem. Godfrey managed to outmanoeuvre Raymond to obtain control over the City, despite Raymond holding possession of the citadel, which according to historical precedent would have allowed the dispute to continue.⁴² This feud escalated when Raymond refused to take orders from Godfrey to assist in the defence of the city in the aftermath of the event, and only joined the defence at the behest of his supporters.⁴³ Godfrey discontinued negotiations with the Muslims over the possession of Ascalon to prevent Raymond of Toulouse from creating a powerbase in the Holy Land, and from gaining a considerable power in the region.⁴⁴ This feud was present throughout the first crusade and played in role allowing the Muslims to have a troublesome powerbase on the coast for the next 50 years.⁴⁵ After the death of Urban II's Papal Legate the political relationships within the Crusades deteriorated, and Urban II was asked to lead the Crusade himself, this demonstrates that the Pope himself was not considered to be in charge, and that there was a clear lack of leadership within the Crusades. Several Popes were unable to create peace between the Byzantine and Latin worlds, in particular Urban II, and Innocent III was unable to foster this relationship as they had no political control over the Crusaders.⁴⁶ Urban II was unable to control the crusaders clashing with Byzantine Emperor Alexius, this lack of control from Urban II over the Poor Crusade led to an unfavourable relationship with the Byzantine.⁴⁷ Alexius tried to extract from the Crusaders an oath that would establish the Crusader lands as fiefdoms of the Byzantium Empire, however, Raymond of Toulouse and Godfrey of Boulogne did not want to pay homage for any lands that they acquired, the actions of these two only exacerbated tensions with the Byzantium Empire, and Alexius.⁴⁸ At the conclusion of the first Crusade the Crusaders who had made an oath to Alexius and controlled the states refused to uphold

³⁷ J. Richards, *The Crusades: c.1071-c.1291*, pg 274 & 276

³⁸ F.A Cazel Jr, *Financing of the Crusades?*, pg 129

³⁹ D. Jones, *Crusades*, (Head of Zeus, London, 2019) pg 54-57

⁴⁰ H.E. Mayer, *The Crusades*,Pg 64

⁴¹ T. Asbridge, *The First Crusade*, pg 320-321

⁴² Ibid pg 321-322

⁴³ Ibid pg 324 & 328

⁴⁴ Ibid pg 324 & 328

⁴⁵ Ibid pg 328

⁴⁶ H.E. Mayer, *The Crusades*, pg 56-57

⁴⁷ Ibid, pg 44-45

⁴⁸ Ibid pg 48-49

their oath to Alexius, thus ruining the relationship between the Latin World and the Byzantium. Innocent III's lack of political control over the fifth crusade led to the beginning of the downfall of the Byzantium Empire. The Fourth Crusade led to large swathes of the Crusading army being excommunicated by Innocent III after ignoring his advice, and sacking Zara.⁴⁹ As the sack was done under the influence of the Venetians, they were excommunicated and political communication with them was banned.⁵⁰ Innocent III was also unable to prevent his crusaders from attacking, laying siege to, and sacking Constantinople alongside the excommunicated Venetians.⁵¹ This ignoring of Innocent III's orders shows the lack of control that the Papacy had over one of their greatest creations, the Crusades.

The Papacy also saw the Crusades as a religious instrument. The goal of the Crusades was to liberate the Holy Land from the Muslims, and protect the purity of the faith, and this was seen as a religious exercise across all of the Crusades. The nature of penance changed throughout the Crusades. The initial idea of penance for the Crusade was that it was earned after the journey, the journey which was seen as a self-imposed punishment.⁵² Urban II defined the granting of penance to those who went on the expedition to the Holy Land primarily through 'Devotion only'.⁵³ This definition outlines the Crusade as a purely religious journey, however, as the primary motive had to be devotion to the cause many still managed to gain penance despite gaining 'honour and financial gain[s]' in the Holy Land.⁵⁴ This shows the papacy had lost a small amount of control over who earned penance, as they themselves could define their own primary motive, as opposed to non-crusading method, which saw the Church granting penance as they saw fit. The granting of penance morphed before the 2nd Crusade under the guidance of Eugenius III, under Eugenius III the granting of penance shifted to those who 'devoutly begins and completes... or dies on it'.⁵⁵ The change in definition came as the Church needed to engage with a wider support base for the 2nd Crusade, and a change in definition would lead to greater support. This definition did not change throughout the future Crusades. There was no loss in control from the 1st Crusade's definition, however, more people earned salvation as a result of a widening of the definition, and a large number of people going Crusade.

In the taking of a Holy Land, the Church had to re-establish the power of the church in an area that had been dominated by other faiths. To re-establish control over the area, the Church began appointing Bishops to abandoned Cathedrals, and establishing parishes that answered to that Bishop to restore ecclesiastical communities in the Holy Land.⁵⁶ These communities were given the right to levy tithes in a bid to recreate western religious life in the Holy Land, Baldwin I of Jerusalem granted these rights to the Bishops, and Patriarch of Jerusalem.⁵⁷ One of the aims of the Crusade was to liberate the Eastern Church, and the Holy Sepulchre, and upon establishing control of the Middle East, the Eastern Church were

⁴⁹ Ibid pg 187

⁵⁰ Ibid. pg 187

⁵¹ Ibid pg 190

⁵² J.Riley-Smith, *What were the Crusades?*, pg 59

⁵³ Ibid pg 59

⁵⁴ Ibid pg 59

⁵⁵ Ibid pg 60

⁵⁶ J. Richards, *The Crusades: c.1071-c.1291*, pg 109

⁵⁷ Ibid pg 109

restored to their prelate positions and the majority of their Holy seats, including the Holy Sepulchre.⁵⁸ This was a huge move that showed the two Churches to be co-operating in the Middle East in the aftermath of the Great Schism of 1054. Examples of the two churches working together was demonstrated when the Latin Cathedral of Turbessel elected a Jacobite Patriarch to the position of Bishop, and also when two clergy regularly engaged in theological discussion about the teachings of both churches.⁵⁹ The Western Church through its Crusade also took control over some of the major Cathedral's in the region, such as Jerusalem and Antioch, to the detriment of the Eastern Church who previously occupied those Patriarchal seats.⁶⁰ This relationship between the Eastern and Western Churches demonstrates that the Papacy did not have full religious control over the area, leading to the Western Church having Primacy instead of hegemony. With Jerusalem becoming a Latin Patriarch it ascended to becoming the centre of the Crusader States' religious centre, but the power this gave saw Patriarch Randolph attempt to gain religious independence, citing that his seat was the Holy Throne of St. Peter; Rome responded to this threat asserting their religious control, and removing him.⁶¹ The Pope also gave monastic orders the right to establish sites in the Holy Land, in order to establish religious control over the lay people of the region.⁶² A similar move was made in the European Crusades, where heretics were given the choice to either convert or to be killed, this was especially seen in the Languedoc region during the Albigensian Crusade.

To conclude, the Papacy did not manage to exert very much control over the Crusades at all. Much of the features of a Crusade were out of the control of the Papacy either due to the actors within, or the features of the Crusades. The Papacy exercised the least amount of control over the military in the Crusades. It was inconceivable that the Papacy, that was mostly stationed in Rome, could; control and co-ordinate a massive military operation that featured several strong secular Princes and Lords from across Europe, that for the most part distrusted one another, and dictate military policy and orders from around 2,500kms away from the frontlines.⁶³ The Papacy controlled the religious policy the most, as it was one area where secular Princes and Lords could not infringe upon, as doing so put them and their subjects at risk of being excommunicated. The Papacy controlled; the number of indulges that they could issue, how people that could earn salvation, and the high-level ecclesiastical appointments to the Crusade and in the Holy Land. This control ensured that the Pope's religious policy was followed wherever the Crusades went. The Pope with the most control over the Crusades was Innocent III, whilst he had little control over the political and military features of the Crusade, he was able to successfully change the nature of the Church, and finance large chunks of the expedition. Innocent III as the apogee of Papal power was also able to successful direct and control large parts of the European Crusades, playing a large role in the Albigensian Crusade. The Pope with the least control, despite the Pope's who had little interest in Crusades such as Innocent IV, would be Urban II. Urban II attempted to have

⁵⁸ Ibid pg 110

⁵⁹ Ibid pg 113-115

⁶⁰ Ibid pg 114

⁶¹ J. Richards, *The Crusades: c.1071-c.1291*, pg 113

⁶² Ibid 115-117

⁶³ DistanceFromTo, *Distance from Israel to Italy*, (Availabe at: <https://www.distancefromto.net/distance-from-israel-to-italy>)

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a large amount of control over the Crusades and failed. Urban II was unable to control any part of his crusade. His lack of control left military policy, and finances to be dealt with those who went, his political control was ruined by the actions of the Crusades who eventually usurped this role, which left him control over the religious policy, most of which was reworded, and reworked by Eugenius II upon his accession to the Papacy.

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