

The crusades: holy war or struggle for wealth



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The Crusades, the words themselves inspire thoughts of bravery, chivalry, and the quest for glory in the name of Christianity for God himself. This is what an uneducated person in medieval studies may be persuaded to believe, that the Crusades were a holy quest to regain Jerusalem, the holy land. However upon closer inspection, and a little research, it is clear to see that there is far more to the Crusades than a religious mission to gain back the holy land by the taking of Jerusalem. There are many sources stating that a cause for the crusades was the overpopulation of Europe and its slowly dwindling resources, and a crusade to Jerusalem would provide the resources they needed. Evidence of this can be seen in Pope Urban's address to his people stating that the riches available in Jerusalem were 'fruitful beyond all others' and that the land there "floweth with milk and honey". This in itself is evidence enough to show that the Crusades were not just a holy quest to regain Jerusalem, that the speech made by Pope Urban (which can be attributed to starting the First Crusade) clearly indicates the Crusade is also about material gain for the people of Europe. This is the standpoint I am going to take, that the meaning of the Crusades is a common misconception and that it was more about monetary and material gain than a holy quest. This standpoint can easily be taken as the preliminary research I have done has already turned up multiple sources with evidence supporting my statement and I suspect further research will only increase the validity of my arguments. I will use information collected and documented about the individual crusades and crusaders ("pilgrims" supposedly sent to inhabit the holy land) to backup my thesis. There is a wide variety of information

published on these topics from reliable sources, and it should be quite easy to gather enough information to build a strong argument.

Annotated Bibliography

Smail, R. C. Crusaders: In Syria and the Holy Land. Great Britain: Thames and Hudson, 1973.

Print.

This novel seems like a good source for information regarding the crusades and the crusaders that took part in it. It has information on not only the events that took place during the crusades but also chapters devoted to the homes, castles, churches and literature of the time. There is a lot of extra information that will not be needed and may need to be sorted through but should prove to be quite useful

Boase, T. S. R. Kingdoms and Strongholds of the Crusaders. New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company

Inc., 1971. Print.

This novel seems to be a good source of reliable information especially about the earlier crusades. I have yet to explore all the information available in the text however preliminary research of it seems to show it will be useful.

Runciman, Steven. A History of the Crusades: Volume 1: The First Crusade. Great Britain:

Cambridge University Press, 1973. Print.

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Although this novel focuses primarily on the first crusade, it will still be a valuable source. It will have the most in depth information on one of the crusades and will offer a better perspective on the events leading up to and the start of the crusades.

Course Materials Regarding the Crusades in the Course Package

The materials available to me in the course package will be quite useful including the speech by Pope Urban II, which can be attributed to the start of the first crusade. I will need to learn how to properly cite and document those sources before their use.

Mundy, John H. Europe in the High Middle Ages 1150~1309. New York: Longman Group UK

Limited, 1991. Print.

This is probably my least useful source and will possibly be dropped before I finish the final draft of my essay. It is a reliable source, however it only offers a general history of the middle ages around the time of the crusades and as such only skims over the main events of the crusades and does not focus on them.