

# CRUSADING AND masculinities

CRUSADES – SUBSIDIA 13

edited by  
NATASHA R. HODGSON, KATHERINE J. LEWIS  
and MATTHEW M. MESLEY

# Crusading and Masculinities

This volume presents the first substantial exploration of crusading and masculinity, focusing on the varied ways in which the symbiotic relationship between the two was made manifest in a range of medieval settings and sources, and to what ends. Ideas about masculinity formed an inherent part of the mindset of societies in which crusading happened, and of the conceptual framework informing both those who recorded the events and those who participated. Examination and interrogation of these ideas enables a better contextualised analysis of how those events were experienced, comprehended, and portrayed. The collection is structured around five themes: sources and models, contrasting masculinities, emasculation and transgression, masculinity and religiosity, and kingship and chivalry. By incorporating masculinity within their analysis of the crusades and of crusaders the contributors demonstrate how such approaches greatly enhance our understanding of crusading as an ideal, an institution, and an experience. Individual essays consider Western campaigns to the Middle East and Islamic responses; events and sources from the Iberian Peninsula and Prussia are also interrogated and re-examined, thus enabling cross-cultural comparison of the meanings attached to medieval manhood. The collection also highlights the value of employing gender as a vital means of assessing relationships between different groups of men, whose values and standards of behaviour were socially and culturally constructed in distinct ways.

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# **Crusading and Masculinities**

**Edited by  
Natasha R. Hodgson,  
Katherine J. Lewis and  
Matthew M. Mesley**

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# Crusading and masculinities

## Introduction

*Natasha R. Hodgson, Katherine J. Lewis,  
and Matthew M. Mesley*

In the first decade of the twelfth century, medieval writers were presented with the challenge of recording and explaining a historic event of immense religious significance to their world-view: the capture of the Holy City of Jerusalem by the First Crusaders in 1099.<sup>1</sup> As they sought to categorise and explain events, most agreed that divine providence was key, but they sought also to emphasise the outstanding credentials of the crusaders, both as a group and as individuals, who had enjoyed such extraordinary success in warfare. Although historians have subsequently debated the extent to which crusading was a defined and recognised concept before and during the twelfth century, the medieval texts convey a sense that something new and miraculous had occurred as a result of both human and divine agency.<sup>2</sup> The early authors who sought to categorise the expedition to Jerusalem and its participants thus had a substantial role in shaping ideals of crusading and “ideal crusaders”, but those ideals continued to develop through the twelfth century and beyond as crusading expanded to new frontiers and was “rebranded” by each successive generation. Like those authors, modern historians of the crusades have been drawn to provide explanations and examine motivations for these events, evaluating in great depth the political, military, social and religious circumstances that attracted people to this new form of religious military activity. Thus far, however, gender has played a limited role in informing these debates.

This collection presents the first substantial exploration of crusading and masculinity, focusing on the varied ways in which the symbiotic relationship between the two was made manifest in a range of medieval settings and sources, and to what ends. It includes contributions both from established scholars of the crusades and of medieval gender, and those earlier in their careers who have recently completed cutting-edge doctoral projects. The collection seeks to demonstrate that incorporating masculinity within analysis of the crusades and of crusaders is an essential approach that greatly enhances our understanding of crusading as an ideal, an institution, and an experience. Traditionally, crusading has been approached and interpreted as a male enterprise, but without attention to the gender identity of its participants. In more recent years, much research has shed light on the involvement of women, considering their vital roles in campaigning, colonisation, and even in warfare.<sup>3</sup> This scholarship has provided an invaluable springboard for the analysis of gendered ideas and ideals upon the depiction and practice of crusading

more broadly.<sup>4</sup> It has also highlighted the richness of the source materials written from a wide range of different religious and cultural outlooks, for attitudes towards gender and social manifestations of gender within medieval societies, and for cross-cultural comparisons.<sup>5</sup>

The use of gender as a tool for historical analysis has become commonplace in other areas of medieval history, and, of late, there has been a flourishing of research into medieval masculinities.<sup>6</sup> This is particularly evident in work undertaken upon the medieval clergy, in terms of their specific roles, functions, and differences. Much has been written about how the requirement for celibacy from the twelfth century informed and contributed to a particular identity that distinguished the secular clergy from the laity. The use of the gendered language of warfare to express the superiority of clerical men and monks over laymen has been interpreted within different sources and contexts as demonstrative both of defensiveness and of self-confidence.<sup>7</sup> The operation of gender within political rhetoric has also been explored for how it was used both to justify and undermine the rule and actions of individuals such as Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy and the English kings Richard II, Henry V, and Henry VI.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, studies of high-status laymen and kings have fruitfully drawn on R.W. Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity to gauge how meanings of manhood functioned as an essential part of the conceptualisation and successful exercise of lordship.<sup>9</sup> The extent to which notions of chivalry were intertwined with masculine ideals has also begun to be explored.<sup>10</sup> Despite the applicability of these issues and methodologies to an analysis of crusading materials, most scholarship on the crusades still tends not to incorporate a gendered approach. Conversely, those scholars working on medieval ideas of gender and masculinity have usually focused on non-crusading environments. This essay collection therefore explicitly addresses a substantial lacuna in research.

Scholarship on warfare in later periods increasingly considers the experience and representation of war in terms of the gender identities both of men who fought, and those who did not.<sup>11</sup> But the abundant variety of ideas about medieval manhood and masculinity that are ubiquitous throughout crusade sources remain largely untapped, with a few notable exceptions.<sup>12</sup> Nor have these sources been much explored for what they can tell us about the extent to which such ideas influenced the conduct of men on crusade and were thus made socially manifest. Crusade narratives are an excellent source for unpicking the complex interactions between gender theory and gendered practices. A focus on issues of masculinity should not therefore be viewed as an intellectually retrograde step that serves merely to reinforce a traditional focus on powerful men. Using the crusades to explore socio-cultural perceptions and constructions of what it meant to be a man provides a vital means of understanding the basis and maintenance of medieval patriarchal social and political hierarchies more widely.<sup>13</sup> It also reveals the role of gender as part of individual and collective senses of self and place in the world. Moreover, the crusades remain one of the best examples of a medieval propaganda machine in action, successfully motivating men from hugely diverse social



and cultural backgrounds to participate over several generations. Ideas about masculinity formed an inherent part of the mindset of societies in which crusading happened, and of the conceptual framework informing both those who recorded the events and those who participated. These ideas need to be examined and interrogated if we are to approach a fully contextualised understanding both of what happened and how those events were experienced, comprehended, and portrayed.

Crusading itself was an innovation in religious warfare, an experiment geared towards creating a new path to salvation for those men in society unable to embrace a religious life. While a clear definition of the term “crusade” continues to elude historians, its ongoing conceptual development formed an effective sounding board for ideas about masculinity from a range of secular and ecclesiastical perspectives and thus highlighted the very points of tension in society at which the deepest concerns about gender identities emerged. Following Joan Scott’s influential assertion that gender is a “primary way of signifying relationships of power”, the crusades offer abundant evidence for contemporary understandings of the mutually reinforcing interplay between authority, status, and gender.<sup>14</sup> They also provide an ideal environment within which to assess relationships both between men and women, and between different groups of men whose values and standards of behaviour were socially and culturally constructed and defined in distinct ways. We can also apply such an analysis to the male (and occasionally female) authors who produced these narratives. In keeping with the didactic aspects of medieval historical writing, those authors who described crusades from a Latin Christian perspective were expressly committed to commenting on the manliness of its participants, successful and unsuccessful, in order to advise their audience on the correct behaviour and ensure the desired outcome of any future expeditions. Such depictions also informed the developing ethos of chivalry to play a role in defining and establishing influential normative versions of high-status masculinity in the later Middle Ages.

Natasha R. Hodgson contends that: rather than trying to pin down one elusive ‘ideal’ of crusader masculinity, which after all changed over time as religious war developed, we need to move towards a model of scholarship which encompasses the wide range of masculine terminology employed in contemporary texts.<sup>15</sup> Crusaders were not a simple hybrid of Western secular and religious ideals. They represented a spectrum of masculinities from different medieval societies: rich and poor, laymen and the religious, traders and settlers, fighters and pilgrims. These roles could change or develop in the course of an expedition as crusaders lost or gained wealth, clergy fought or knights joined military orders, and men were injured, killed or changed allegiance. Sometimes women caught *in extremis*, such as Margaret of Beverley, would take on masculine roles and characteristics in response to particular circumstances.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, becoming a man was not simply a matter of attaining a particular age but was a social process, and for many men participation in warfare was a key benchmark serving both to confirm and assess adult manhood. By extension there was a contemporary tendency



to equate failure on the military stage with a failure of masculinity, both at the time and in more recent scholarship, too. The case of Stephen of Blois, who fled from the siege of Antioch in 1098 and was reputedly encouraged to redeem his honour and return to the Holy Land by his wife, is a well-known example.<sup>17</sup> Secular masculinity was predicated not so much on the ability to dominate women, in a strictly patriarchal sense, but on the ability to dominate and govern other, subordinate, men. However, despite the premium placed on lineage, the valorisation of these qualities, involving personal strength, fortitude, and domination, meant that this form of masculinity could be adopted by men of ability not born to the role. So, the experience of crusading arguably offered them the opportunity to modify and enhance their standing as men, not just in political or social terms, but in specifically gendered terms, too. Even kings who returned from crusades that can only be considered unsuccessful, such as Louis VII and IX of France, seem to have returned to the West with their international reputations and manhood enhanced rather than damaged.

Distinctions based on gender and sexual differences were used alongside other forms of identity, such as social status, race, class, and religion. An increasing amount of scholarship seeks to highlight the significance of cross-cultural contacts and non-Western perspectives.<sup>18</sup> As this collection demonstrates, both Christian and Muslim authors used gendered comparisons to draw distinctions between the men who fought for their religion and those who were deemed to be their enemies. However, one obvious area that this essay collection does not fully explore is the relationship between Western and Eastern Christian perceptions of masculinity. This topic was represented at the Zürich conference, but the editors took the decision not to commission an additional piece, largely because some significant work on this area has already been undertaken, especially in relation to Western perceptions of Byzantium.<sup>19</sup> Gendered language is so often overtly used in descriptions of Byzantine dress, culture, and behaviour that it has not gone unnoticed by some crusade scholars, but discussions of this have often been subsumed into wider analyses of cultural differences and identity rather than focusing specifically on gender.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, some of these issues are explored in relation to clerical masculinities in chapter 12.

This collection presents analyses that take a variety of conceptual and methodological approaches to a range of primary source materials. The contributors present careful interrogations of contemporary perceptions of the mutually reinforcing interplay between gender and other facets of identity and experience, such as status, age, religion, and ethnicity. Chronologically, the volume's contents span the High to Late Middle Ages. Some of the contributors focus on the "classic" period of crusading – events and phenomena born of the various Western campaigns to the Middle East from the late eleventh to the late thirteenth century, and also on the Islamic responses to these. The accounts of authors from Christian traditions are considered, as well as texts by Muslim and Jewish writers. Narratives of these events and of heroic individuals such as Godfrey of Bouillon and Bohemond of Taranto, continued to be written, copied, and circulated in the later medieval period. Thus, other contributors consider the continuing power of crusading as an inspirational and aspirational ideal after 1291, exploring how it informed concepts and models of chivalry and kingship. Crusading, or at least an

expressed commitment to crusading, clearly functioned as a benchmark of manliness into the sixteenth century.

Moreover, warfare between Christian and Muslim forces that explicitly drew on ideologies of holy war/*jihād* was not confined to the Middle East. Crusader aggression extended to other ethnic and religious groups that diversified both Christian ideals of manhood and the portrayal of their enemies. Reflecting this, some of our contributors focus on events and sources from the Iberian Peninsula and Prussia, which allows for illuminating comparisons and contrasts with materials relating to the Middle East. By focusing on masculinities, this collection sheds new light on our understanding of crusading as both ethos and experience. Most of the contributors have not previously approached crusade sources in relation to issues of masculinity before. Thus, the collection also seeks to highlight the value of employing gender as a very fruitful means of assessing relationships between different groups of men, whose values and standards of behaviour were socially and culturally constructed in distinct ways.

The essays that follow are divided into five thematic sections: Sources and Models; Contrasting Masculinities; Emasculation and Transgression; Masculinity and Religiosity; and Kingship and Chivalry. These themes highlight the wide-ranging scope and potential that an investigation of the crusades and masculinities offers in diverse chronological, geographical and cultural contexts. Following these sections, we conclude with an afterword by Ruth Mazo Karras. She identifies a number of thematic strands running throughout the collection, which collectively establish what she identifies as a taxonomy of masculinity. She highlights the usefulness of this taxonomy as a tool for historical enquiry and, in so doing, further emphasises the enormous potential that crusading sources of various kinds hold for scholars of medieval masculinity.

We begin with Sources and Models. These provide an excellent introduction to crusading and masculinities, focusing on the construction of masculine ideals and identities and their representation in different types of sources: sermons designed to encourage support for and participation in thirteenth-century crusades; the influential *Gesta Francorum* chronicle and *chansons de geste*; Arabic court chronicles; and educational texts that drew on warrior metaphors in order to guide adolescent males to adulthood. In pinpointing a variety of textual traditions, rhetorical strategies, and moral instructions, they articulate the varied relationships these sources had with different models of masculinity. Between them the essays explore differing viewpoints as to how men were expected to behave, which in these sources involved the identification of characteristics and abilities deemed heroic and exemplary. They also examine the didactic and political uses to which masculinity could be put to suit the interests of particular authors and audiences within crusading contexts. This common approach also reveals areas of both similarity and contrast in understandings of what it meant to be a man, and the ways in which such definitions drew on other aspects of identity, especially occupations and activities relating to social status. Furthermore, each of these essays show that crusade contexts were never impermeable; instead, they were influenced by, and interacted with, broader social, cultural, and intellectual

developments. Indeed, perceptions of ideal masculinity were not divorced from, or shielded by cultural encounters and the impact of acculturation.

Christoph T. Maier analyses thirteenth-century sermons that sought to engage potential crusaders by urging them to emulate heroic leaders of the past, especially those described in the Old Testament, such as Judas Maccabeus, Matthias, and Abraham. Their authors included well-known figures such as James of Vitry and Humbert of Romans, and the texts were intended to be used not only to compel men to take the crusader vow, but also to exhort them once the crusade was underway, just before battles, for example. The prescriptive quality of these sermons render them an excellent guide to the function of masculinity within the creation of a normative crusader identity. Maier sets out to challenge the contention that becoming a crusader entailed taking on a type of hybrid masculinity that drew both on ideals of secular knighthood and clerical vocation. Rather than creating a model for the would-be crusader that required them to modify or even eschew their existing masculine identity, Maier shows that the exemplary nature of Old Testament figures was expressed in terms of idealised versions of their social roles and cultural practices as husbands, fathers, and vassals. The process of becoming a crusader outlined by the sermons did not entail a rejection of a man's existing values, or of his self. Instead, the validation of the holy warrior that the sermons present constituted the validation of a particular form of knightly masculinity.

Anne-Lydie Dubois also takes these sermons as her main source, along with contemporary educational texts, pointing out that many examples of both types of source were composed by Mendicant authors. These educational texts, written, for example, by Vincent of Beauvais, were aimed at male adolescents and designed to guide them through the experience of maturation in order that they should arrive at ideal manhood: *virilitas*. Dubois explores the striking parallels that her sources evince between the adolescent striving to attain adult masculinity and the ideal crusader, pointing out that both the sermons and the educational treatises were primarily aimed at men of knightly status. Within these both preacher and educator are positioned as leading their addressees on a journey, in one case the journey to the Holy Land, in the other the journey to becoming a man. These journeys required superlative levels of moral and physical fortitude, and Dubois focuses on the significance of becoming a soldier of Christ to both. Being a soldier of Christ had obvious resonances for crusaders, who had taken an oath and also taken up arms to defend Christ's church. But it was also a very useful model for training adolescents, because becoming a man necessitated triumphant combat against worldly and especially sexual temptations. Both crusaders and would-be men fought infernal foes. Thus, Dubois's analysis demonstrates that while crusading was, for some, an actual experience, for others it was held up as a metaphor for the ideal behaviour to which they should aspire in order to achieve manhood.

The essays by Simon Thomas Parsons and Mathew Barber both examine the narrative depiction of specific men. They consider how gender was used to praise and to criticise leaders, and also highlight the role of discourses of holy warfare within such assessments. Parsons presents a close examination of the depiction of

Bohemond in the influential *Gesta Francorum* and related contemporary chronicles that draw closely on it. Traditionally, the *Gesta Francorum* has been viewed as a panegyric written by an admirer of Bohemond, who is thus the hero of the narrative. However, Parsons analyses the language of masculinity and social status used within the *Gesta* and related texts to argue that in fact Bohemond is depicted in rather more complex and often critical terms than this scholarly orthodoxy has allowed. Despite the premium that the texts place on military activity as a benchmark of high-status masculinity, Bohemond is rarely seen in battle. Having thus identified an equivocal view both of Bohemond and of masculine conduct more widely emerging from these texts, Parsons contextualises this by reference to contemporary vernacular *chansons de geste*, including the *chansons* of the *Guillaume* cycle, which depict the exploits of William of Orange. This approach demonstrates that, far from straightforwardly embodying the traits of ideal masculinity that are evoked within the *Gesta*, particularly self-control, Bohemond actually has far more in common with the carnivalesque *vilain* character type of the *chansons*. Parsons argues that this reflects a socio-cultural context in which models of masculinity were in flux and that the ways in which authors played with the normative constituent parts of such models expressed tensions revolving around their intersection with social status.

Mathew Barber's essay demonstrates that martial abilities were also crucial to the performance of a high-status masculine identity in Fatimid Egypt. He evaluates the career of Al-Afdal b. Badr al-Jamālī a *wazīr* in Egypt at the time of the First Crusade, who led early campaigns against the Franks. Al-Afdal has received rather less attention from scholars of Islamic perspectives on the crusades than the later leaders Zengī, Nūr al-Dīn, and Saladin. Barber contends that investigating the depiction of al-Afdal and the representation of his masculinity in narrative sources furthers our understanding of Fatimid perspectives on the crusades and of the role of gender in Arabic writings on the crusades more broadly. Drawing on theoretical approaches that perceive an inherently precarious quality to masculinity, Barber compares accounts of al-Afdal contained both in texts written by men who were his contemporaries and in those written later. The contemporary sources praise al-Afdal's military campaigns, including his response to the First Crusade, but do so by omitting his military failures. As the later accounts describe al-Afdal as unmanly due to his capricious and emotional character, Barber posits that the contemporary authors' emphasis on his martial abilities, which drew strongly on *jihād* ideology, was propagandist and promoted by al-Afdal himself. This was intended to present him as virile and masterful and to counter claims that he did not possess the masculine character essential to rule over others. However, the version of himself that he sought to promote was not reflected in the later sources, and it is significant that at least one later commentator implicates al-Afdal in the Fatimids' loss of Jerusalem. This evidences a perception of the interrelationships between masculinity, warfare, and rulership. It also reminds us that an individual's gender identity could be shaped and reshaped in historical narratives in ways that tell us not what that individual was "really" like, but instead reveal the preoccupations of the author.

*Contrasting Masculinities* explores the interactions between paradigms of manhood and chivalry, both within and between different medieval societies. Crusading was one of a number of arenas in which men could, and often were, differentiated. The chapters in this section analyse the function and representation of competing masculinities within literary and historical texts associated with the culture of crusading. This theme also resurfaces more broadly throughout the collection, for constructing or emphasising differences between men was itself a tool by which medieval authors could reify (or attempt to make dominant) particular notions of masculinity within the context of warfare and inter-religious dialogue.

Both Yvonne Friedman and Helen J. Nicholson examine how cross-cultural contacts between Christians and Muslims influenced the ways in which writers of each faith characterised their adversaries during the crusades. What was admired or reviled in their opponents often revealed an author's own ideas about appropriate masculine conduct and behaviour, as well as reflecting broader developments in cultural understandings of warfare. Indeed, Friedman suggests that the formation of chivalric ideology in the West was itself influenced by Muslim ideals of masculinity. The crusades may even have acted as a catalyst for acculturation. They certainly provided both Christians and Muslims with opportunities to reflect on how they characterised knightly or heroic behaviour. In this respect, shared values, and even some appreciation and acclaim, was conceivable. However, there were still penalties for miscegenation and intermarriage, and a need to claim moral and physical pre-eminence on both sides. Friedman demonstrates, for example, the Christian authors' emphasis on lineage and hereditary superiority. Accordingly, Muslim heroes could be presented as having Christian ancestors, in order to maintain Frankish fantasies of dominance. The treatment of women, as Nicholson thoughtfully highlights, was also used by Christian and Muslim writers to make claims both about a ruler's worthiness, and also more broadly about the primacy of one religion over another. Attitudes may be similar on occasion, for example, in relation to common approaches to the treatment of noble women. Yet writers still framed these male–female encounters in accordance with their own particular Christian or Muslim religious and social codes. Highlighting appropriate behaviour towards women who were associated with the enemy clearly did matter, yet, as Nicholson makes clear, it is important to distinguish the ideal from the norm.

The final two contributors in this section consider crusader masculinities in texts written in areas of Europe that have often been neglected, in contrast to the volume of scholarship about crusading in the Middle East. Alan V. Murray brings attention to the Teutonic Order of Knights in late medieval Prussia and Lithuania, and suggests that their main objective was to convert Eastern Pagans to Christianity. In particular, he compares them with the secular Western crusaders. From the late thirteenth century these crusaders increasingly travelled to the Baltic in order to undertake a season of campaigning as guests of the Knights Brethren. For these noble and royal participants, crusading in Prussia was a socially exclusive endeavour that acted as a status symbol of both wealth and honour. In such an environment, Murray argues that a qualitative model of masculinity

was characterised chiefly by two factors: the absence of women and conspicuous consumption. The former reaffirmed a particular homosocial environment of male bonding, and may have even encouraged a situational celibacy, at least outside of heteronormative codes. The latter is seen in the activities that were habitual – feasting, hunting, campaigning, and ceremonies – that all required wealth and recognition of social status. This was in sharp contrast to the ideology of spiritual and physical self-sacrifice, and the monastic tenants of obedience, poverty, and chastity adopted by the Teutonic Knights. Nonetheless, Murray demonstrates that there were also tensions between crusaders of different nationalities, and that even the Knights Brethren were not adverse to recognising or even endorsing secular ideals of honour and valour.

James Doherty analyses the depiction of crusading culture in Icelandic sagas. These highlight how Scandinavian involvement within the crusades was depicted in very different ways to the accounts produced in Western Europe by monastic and clerical authors of the First Crusade. Within the sagas expectations of masculinity were not constructed through the prism of religiosity. As such, there was no stress on chastity, atonement, or religious leadership; instead, prestige, glory-seeking, sex, and secular pursuits were highlighted as motives. A crusade leader's success was judged on his ability to enhance his own honour and to provide for his followers. Yet Doherty shows that within Scandinavian culture crusading also acted to open up and centre debates (and arguments) about what was ideal masculinity. This created new possibilities for gendered insults and invective, particularly between those who had stayed at home and those who had ventured abroad. In the sagas we see not only a distinct form of secular masculinity on crusade that reflected the genre and audience of these texts; we also discern how, for Scandinavians, going on crusade encouraged a more visceral culture of boasting and judgement about male behaviour.

The contributors to *Emasculation and Transgression* all explore the ways in which crusading contexts and narratives could be used to frame discussions and discourses surrounding bodily ambiguity and breaches of normative gender ideals and roles. Indeed, what was considered appropriate during warfare could be viewed as excessive or transgressive at home. Who a person was, and what he or she represented, could also, in certain circumstances, violate social or moral boundaries. In depicting those who failed to maintain contemporary masculine ideals, authors could allude to broader concerns or anxieties, even if they admired the same actions in different contexts. Such contradictions or inconsistencies suggest that alongside culturally sanctioned views, there were other less “official” or marginalised interpretations. As our contributors demonstrate, transgressive acts, or depictions of humiliation and failure, also spoke to the necessity of upholding specific identities, particularly when judging one's enemies. In deciding what was acceptable, in identifying what should be restricted, and in articulating when feats or actions were either heroic or went beyond the pale, medieval authors highlight the tensions inherent in medieval notions of masculinity and gender, even as they represented and remembered individuals in ways that suited their motives and audience.



Joanna Phillips begins this section by examining the relationship between crusading leadership and bodily incapacity. She highlights how medieval understandings of corporeality and health often shaped the representation and interpretation of masculinity during crusade expeditions. As Phillips reminds us, the body, physiology, and sexual difference were viewed in the Middle Ages through a gendered prism. During the crusade, concerns about the health of men could also intersect with beliefs about social status, class, religiosity, and kingship. Indeed, with respect to the latter, Phillips uses the example of Jean of Joinville's *Vie de saint Louis* as a springboard with which to analyse other narrative examples that articulate the relationship between leadership, corporeality, and masculinity. As she demonstrates, illness, bodily infirmity, or even wounds could compromise the reputation, authority, and masculine identity of crusade leaders, particularly if their health or sickness resulted in their failure to fulfil their responsibilities or obligations. Furthermore, a lack of vigour or strength may have (or may be viewed as having) serious repercussions in terms of maintaining control of an army, or in achieving success. Indeed, Phillips makes clear that such anxieties fed into how crusade leaders sought to embody or perform their roles, but would also influence how they came to be represented by particular authors of crusade narratives.

In her essay, Susan B. Edgington introduces us to Wicher the Swabian and his fight to the death with a Saracen giant. The account, an original addition to a verse adaptation of Robert the Monk's *Historia Iherosolimitana*, was written by the Bavarian Benedictine monk Metellus of Tegernsee, prior to the Second Crusade. In the text, Wicher's epic duel against the anonymous giant is used by Metellus to amplify German participation in the First Crusade, and is, significantly, placed in the text prior to the battle and subsequent capture of Jerusalem in 1099. Wicher, who was a historical individual, is portrayed alongside Godfrey of Bouillon, who would become the crusading hero and masculine exemplar par excellence. Yet it is Wicher who is shown to flatter Godfrey into agreeing that he, the Swabian, rather than Godfrey himself, should undertake the duel. The competitiveness that is often identified as an underpinning feature of chivalric masculinity is thus here played out in terms of ethnic identity and national pride. The duel itself parallels and reflects many of the tropes that would become common in *chansons de geste* and later chivalric romances, most noticeably the almost grotesque hyper-masculinity attributed to the Saracen giant. Significantly, it was not enough here for Wicher to defeat his foe; instead, he is described as inflicting a vulva-shaped wound on the giant's thigh. As Edgington describes it, the enemy was thus "comically emasculated" for the text's audience.

In our final chapter of this section, Niall Christie investigates Muslim representations of women fighting. His analysis highlights how actions or roles deemed to be natural or "intuitive" were nonetheless constructed and supported through gendered rhetoric. Christie shows that, in certain contexts, the assumption that fighting was the exclusive domain of men was actually somewhat flexible. Examining depictions of women participating in combat also draws our attention to how, and in what circumstances, medieval male authors identified what was seen

as a violation of gender roles or norms. If Frankish women were often used within these narratives for propagandistic purposes, for example, as a way of sullyng the reputation or honour of Christian forces, Muslim women were generally shown to fight out of sheer necessity or in an auxiliary role. Christie demonstrates that there could be a disparity between the conventional views underpinning these narratives, and writers' recognition of the circumstances that women faced during wars and conflict. Indeed, in certain narrative contexts, allowances were made for women's participation in combat, and, even if temporary or situational, there was an appreciation of their roles. Christie also draws attention to the ways in which gender ideals can differ between sources that purport to be factual (historical narratives) and those that are fictional (folk or epic literature). In the latter, there are more examples of women warriors, and more opportunities for transgressing certain gender roles. This had to be balanced with the idea that these women still deferred to societal understandings of male authority and control. There was thus both admiration and anxiety about women transgressing gender norms, or acting like men.

The innovation of crusading at the end of the eleventh century created an alliance between military and religious ideals that was wildly popular, but also contentious. It was subject to criticisms and constant reinterpretation to suit new situations, especially when military failure led to reflection on spiritual shortcomings. The Church was instrumental in defining, promoting, and regulating crusades, yet time and again they had to rely for the most part on secular warriors to carry out warfare according to religious principles with varying degrees of success. At a time when reformers were seeking to reify clerical masculine identities and separate clergy from the secular world, conversely crusading necessitated developing a close relationship with and even participating in that military activity with the warrior group. Disseminating these ideas successfully to target groups of suitable men was also key. The four contributions in *Masculinity and Religiosity* highlight the ways in which authors used idealised representations of men in order to deconstruct and interpret ideas about religious identity, holy war, and martyrdom. They consider, in different settings, how religiosity was informed by ideals of masculinity, but could also shape those ideals. Notions of self-abnegation, faithfulness, and piety were considered integral components of high-status manhood in both Christian and Islamic narratives of holy warfare. Moreover, all four essays examine texts that emphasise the exemplary nature of certain individual men or groups of men, exploring notions of hypermasculinity.

Clerical participation in crusades was problematic from the outset. Bishops and priests were needed to provide leadership, communication skills, minister to the army and regulate their behaviour, but this entailed working cheek by jowl with an army on the move, exposing them to worldly sin. Monks, who lived regulated lives in cloisters and took vows to remain there, were (officially at least) discouraged from participation in crusading until the end of the twelfth century. Natasha R. Hodgson explores how crusading and masculinity informed each other by investigating an example of monastic gender identity on crusade during the brief period under the pontificate of Innocent III when these restrictions were relaxed



and some monastic participation in crusades was deliberately sought. She focuses on the *Hystoria Constantinopolitana* of Gunther of Pairis, and its central figure, Abbot Martin of Pairis, who participated in the Fourth Crusade. In this complex and literary text, Gunther presented Martin as a masculine exemplar for imitation by an educated monastic audience not as a crusader but as a model abbot, and because he was judged worthy by God to steal and transport back to his community a substantial haul of relics from the sack of Constantinople. Hodgson shows that when set against the wider context of clerical masculinity on crusade, Martin's experience provides a significant insight into the gendered conflicts inherent in the presence of clergy on these expeditions at the start of the thirteenth century. She establishes that crusaders did not fit neatly in to predefined masculine models: Gunther explored Martin's various roles in religious and secular contexts: as a monk, a preacher, the leader of an army, a pastor, a thief, and above all, an abbot. Hodgson also engages with Gunther's portrayal of Martin's emotions and actions in gendered contexts, examining how he evaluated and rationalised a monk's experiences outside the cloister during a controversial crusade against Christians that presented severe challenges to those tasked with defending it in writing. She argues that authors like Gunther did not simply replicate existing templates of secular and ecclesiastical manliness in depicting exemplary models. Captialising on the opportunity provided by the exceptional nature of crusading they adapted and interwove these selectively in order to explore and express contemporary tensions inherent in engaging with the world for those whose vocation usually required them to live away from it.

In common with a number of other essays in the collection Beth C. Spacey highlights the signal role played by narratives of the First Crusade in creating models of masculine endeavour that provided a benchmark of manly excellence that subsequent crusaders were enjoined to match. Her particular focus are depictions of martyrdom – men who died fighting and were described as having attained heavenly glory as a result of this sacrifice. Spacey argues that it was essential for crusader martyrs to display holiness prior to death and a crucial means of achieving this was to describe them as the embodiment of masculine virtues. The death of Templar Jacquelin of Mailly in battle in 1187, and the posthumous treatment of his body, serves as an illuminating test case. Crucially, de Mailly's death and its representation relates not only to the spiritual status of warriors in general, but to the validity of the Templar vocation more particularly. The influence of the contemporary reform movement that sought to delineate a masculine hierarchy in which men in religious orders were superior to laymen is clearly observable in the sources that Spacey analyses. This involved measuring men against men, a tactic that is also central to the sources at the heart of Linda G. Jones's essay. She focuses on Christian and Islamic accounts of holy warfare produced in the Iberian Peninsula in the fourteenth century. While there was frequent conflict between the kings of Castile, the Marinid sultans and the Nasrid kings of Granada, there were also, on occasion, alliances between them, and individual rulers were often served by both Christian and Muslim individuals and forces. This interaction has profound

implications for the ways in which the masculinity of religious others was perceived and represented on both sides. Illustration is provided by close reading of the depiction of the rulers Alfonso XI of Castile and Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb. Jones contends that focusing on piety has the merit of highlighting similarities in Muslim and Christian understanding of what constituted both hegemonic and subaltern masculine identities within this context. Importantly, Jones identifies the renunciation of autonomy as a means of confirming hegemonic masculinity, which bears close relation to Spacey's discussion of the function of self-sacrifice as an aspect of a crusade martyr's holy superiority.

Jones's essay shares with Erika Tritle's not only a focus on the Iberian Peninsula but also an emphasis on the interactions of religion and gender with medieval perceptions of race in the context of ongoing warfare between Christians and Muslims. Tritle analyses the mid-fifteenth-century writings of bishop Alonso de Cartagena that exhorted Castile to complete its God-given mission to oust the Moors from Granada and unite Spain as a Christian country. Cartagena identified an exemplary model of knighthood, imbued with masculine ideals, as key to this enterprise. But he claimed that these manly qualities, if not kept in rational balance, tended to lead nobles to sinful excess. In offering tactics to redress this Cartagena used understandings of Judaism, femininity, and theology to problematise contemporary connections of both Spanishness and Christianity with a disproportionately warlike notion of masculinity. As other essays in this collection also highlight, performance is key to these articulations of the inter-relationship between masculinity and religiosity. The central aspects of a manly religious identity must be enacted and witnessed. Here religiosity is not a matter of internal conviction, it is a matter of conduct, framed by gendered expectations. Being a religious man is a means of making an impression of masculine superiority on enemies, rivals, subjects, or even on God himself, in order to achieve ends both spiritual and political.

The final section, Chivalry and Kingship, explores how crusading masculinity was inflected by social status and political function, in combination with notions of chivalry as both code and practice. Focusing on sources and settings from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries it emphasises the continued currency of crusading within late medieval Christendom. The four essays share a common theme in highlighting the exemplary nature of History as a repository of good and bad examples from which readers were expected to take instruction. They also draw out the varied implications of following heroic crusading exemplars, both figuratively, in terms of adopting their manly attributes, but also literally, taking up arms against a non-Christian foe. As Matthew M. Mesley discusses, with reference to Matthew Paris's *Chronica Majora*, announcing the intention of going on crusade remained a powerful ideological tool, implying commitment to established ideals of Christian knighthood. For kings, such as Henry III of England, the expression of active interest in crusading and offering support for the recovery of the Holy Land continued to be a vital means of accentuating political and moral authority, as well as underlining their affinity with the manly ideals of a Christian warrior.

Katherine J. Lewis uses William Caxton's *Godeffroy of Boloynes*, dedicated to Edward IV of England, to explore what were, by the late fifteenth century, the well-established definitional attributes common to masculinity, chivalry, and kingship. In considering the social and political implications of this conceptual nexus, what emerges clearly from all four essays is that crusading functioned as a recognisable shorthand for this formula of elite manhood. As both Mesley and Lewis discuss, this constitutes a recognisable brand of hegemonic masculinity, as conceived by Connell. Moreover, this identity, as all four essays discuss, was articulated in numerous crusading texts written for kings and other elite men. These were intended not only to give an account of past events, but to influence present circumstances via the inculcation of normative ideals. David Cantor-Echols explores these issues in relation to Alfonso XI of Castile, heir to his predecessors' attempts to oust Muslim rulers from the southern Iberian Peninsula. Alfonso commissioned a number of narrative and poetic accounts both of his ancestors' deeds, and of his own exploits as a warrior leader. These texts were a response not just to the conflict between Christianity and Islam, but also to more specific political circumstances. They speak to Alfonso's experiences as a child king who needed to establish adult manhood with an explicitly martial tenor, in order to demonstrate his qualification to rule. Both Cantor-Echols and Lewis discuss the role of such narratives in the training and socialisation of young men. Lewis argues that in addition to reflecting the threat posed by the Ottomans to Western Europe in the later fifteenth century, Caxton's account of Godfrey speaks to contemporary concerns about the state of English manhood in the wake of the Wars of the Roses and the Hundred Years' War. His *Godeffroy of Boloynes* thus forms part of a wider syllabus designed to restore noble masculinity by placing a particular emphasis on the exemplary nature of Godfrey's astonishing physical prowess. Lewis's analysis therefore reveals, as does Mesley's, the performative nature of the various elements that together constituted elite male identity. All four essays also consider what was perceived to be at stake in correct performance of these, not just in terms of personal standing and authority but, on occasion, national security.

Nor were these ideals simply imposed on the men expected to follow them. Robert B. Desjardins reveals the extent to which discourses of both masculinity and chivalry were fundamental to elite male understandings of, and navigation through, their social and military careers. His focus is the Burgundian noble Waleran de Wavrin's crusading activities in Eastern Europe, as recounted collaboratively in the later 1440s with his uncle, the chronicler Jean de Wavrin. This reminds us that texts outlining the hegemonic ideal were sometimes written by those who had direct experience of trying to follow it. Waleran de Wavrin's determination to become a crusading hero illustrates very well crusading's continuing attraction as a means of obtaining both renown and more material rewards, and the extent to which success was held to be predicated on the adoption of masculine virtues. De Wavrin's failure to distinguish himself in this arena left him and his uncle attempting to fashion a heroic narrative silk purse out of a rather sorry experiential pig's ear. Their efforts to do so testify to the potentially vulnerable nature of a high-status male identity that rested on crusading endeavour. But it also

proves the extent to which embodying this identity continued to matter very much to men throughout the later Middle Ages, both as individuals, and collectively.

## Notes

- 1 For example, the *Gesta Francorum* and histories by Guibert of Nogent, Baldric of Dol, Robert the Monk, Fulcher of Chartres, Peter Tudebode, Raymond of Aguilers, and Albert of Aachen were all in circulation during this period.
- 2 For an overview, see Christopher Tyerman, *The Debate on the Crusades, 1099–2010* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).
- 3 See, for example, *Gendering the Crusades*, eds Susan B. Edgington and Sarah Lambert (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001); Christoph T. Maier, 'Roles for Women in the Crusade Movement: A Survey', *Journal of Medieval History* 30(1) (2004), 61–82.
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# Sources and models





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# 1 Propaganda and masculinity

## Gendering the crusades in thirteenth-century sermons

*Christoph T. Maier*

### Introduction

Crusading masculinities are a relatively new topic of research. Following in the footsteps of gender historians who have been exploring the female roles and contributions to crusading in the Middle Ages, casting male crusading in terms of modern gender theories comes almost naturally.<sup>1</sup> Ever since medieval writers first told stories of crusading in the wake of the momentous events from 1095 to 1099, when religious warriors from Western Europe conquered Jerusalem and the Holy Land, men took centre stage as the principal characters of these stories. Crusading was a men's world conceived of by men and recorded by men.<sup>2</sup> Having switched focus from women to men, modern gender history mainly addresses two questions with regard to the medieval discourse concerning male crusading: what are particularly male traits and attitudes that medieval authors ascribed to crusading? And how do such crusading masculinities differ from masculinities attributed to men in other areas of medieval society?

One of the most pronounced recent statements about crusading masculinities has come from Andrew Holt, who has claimed that crusading engendered a particular set of masculinities that cut across existing boundaries established by the interaction of secular and clerical male identities represented in texts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>3</sup> As a warrior the crusader was lodged in the secular world of power and warfare; as a servant of the Church the crusader answered to ecclesiastical precepts that at times contradicted his secular role and identity. Holt has suggested that male crusading was cast as a hybrid between secular and clerical identities, as crusaders from secular backgrounds were tied into structures governing clerical life: they took a religious vow, they performed a penitential exercise while on crusade and they were expected to practise sexual abstinence at specific moments of the crusade. Humility and chastity were the clerical attributes that crusaders were expected to adopt when becoming holy warriors. This, so Holt has argued, accounted for the emergence of a discourse in which crusaders were ascribed a hybrid form of masculinity. From the middle of the twelfth century this hybrid masculinity became institutionalised in the military orders, whose members were at the same time secular knights engaged in crusading and members of a monastic order living as clerics.

Holt's hypothesis is an attempt at establishing a comprehensive identity of male crusading from the vantage point of modern gender history. It is informed by research into the development of clerical masculinities in the wake of the Gregorian reform movement of the eleventh century, which is said to have caused a growing gulf between secular and clerical male gender roles. At the centre of this gulf lies the enforcement of clerical celibacy and sexual abstinence as one of the principal defining differences between secular and clerical masculinities.<sup>4</sup> But can crusading masculinities really be described adequately as a product of intermingling strands of secular and clerical identities? Taking up religious vows, performing penance and practising temporary sexual abstinence were after all not a prerogative reserved to members of the clergy and were thus not necessarily signs of diverting from a secular masculine identity. Recently, Natasha Hodgson also pointed out that other factors such as age, social status, and origin were constituent elements of sometimes competing masculinities ascribed to crusaders.<sup>5</sup> Holt's perspective, it must be pointed out, is limited. The evidence he draws on are mainly twelfth-century chronicles of the First Crusade and the writings of Bernard of Clairvaux. The question must, therefore, be asked whether Holt's view of the crusader as a hybrid between secular knight and abstinent cleric is the only way of looking at crusading masculinities. When considering other sources and alternative chronological contexts crusading masculinities present themselves in different versions. Crusade sermons of the thirteenth century, for example, do not talk about male crusaders as adopting semi-clerical identities but on the contrary firmly lodge crusading masculinities within secular contexts drawing on habitual cultural values and practices of maleness.

### **Thirteenth-century crusade model sermons**

We know of about thirty sermon texts from the thirteenth century that concern propaganda for the crusade by well-known authors such as James of Vitry, Gilbert of Tournai, Humbert of Romans or Eudes of Châteauroux.<sup>6</sup> Most of these are so-called model sermons, texts that were recorded for reading and instruction. They were meant to supply preachers with arguments and materials that would help them compose sermons preached in front of live audiences, mainly during campaigns for the recruitment of crusaders but also, for example, to people leaving home to join crusade armies and to crusaders during the journey or before and after battles. These model sermons vary greatly with respect to their style, their origin and the extent to which they were derived from live sermons that had actually been preached.<sup>7</sup> Most crusade sermon texts extant today are didactic material rather than a historical record of sermons preached. These texts are prescriptive and normative and thus contain idealised models of crusading and idealised modes of masculinity in a thirteenth-century crusading context.

The addressees or audiences of these texts are twofold. The primary audiences were crusade propaganda preachers, that is, male members of the clergy, who would use the texts as part of their training or when preparing propaganda sermons.<sup>8</sup> The secondary audiences were those who listened to crusade sermons that

were derived from the model texts. Who these latter people were is more difficult to define, since audiences of crusade propaganda sermons varied greatly. They included both men and women, often together but sometimes apart. However, by the thirteenth century recruiting crusaders meant targeting men first and foremost as there was a general tendency to streamline crusade armies by admitting only people who were used to warfare. Even if women were encouraged to take the cross, they were expected to redeem their vows by paying redemptions rather than join crusade armies.<sup>9</sup> In any case, the intended or imaginary audiences addressed by the sermon writers tended to be exclusively male, since most of these texts were written as model sermons for recruiting crusaders who would be prepared to join a crusading army as actual fighters. Crusade model sermons, therefore, are primarily about men.

To do full justice to model sermons, they have to be interpreted individually, as topics and argumentative strategies vary greatly from text to text. Each sermon produces particular focuses, which structure the conception and communication of crusader identities. Given constraints of space, it is not the purpose of this paper to offer full-scale interpretations of individual crusade sermons but to analyse select passages from these texts in order to explain the principal strategies that sermon authors used for constructing masculine identities: (i) citing Old Testament figures as models for crusaders; (ii) casting the crusader as God's vassal and friend; (iii) and addressing the crusader in his female and family environments.

### **Old Testament figures as crusading role models**

Only occasionally Old Testament heroes are cited as generic models for crusaders in medieval sermons. One such incident comes from a sermon text by Cardinal Eudes of Châteauroux, one of the chief crusade propagandists of the mid-thirteenth century, who was also closely involved with King Louis IX's first crusade in the 1240s. The text was derived from a sermon that the cardinal had once preached in the context of Louis's brother Charles of Anjou's Italian crusade in the 1260s.<sup>10</sup> The text makes a general comparison between Charles and Joshua of the Old Testament, claiming that God was leading Charles in the conquest of the Muslim city of Lucera in Apulia just as he had led Joshua when he conquered Jericho.<sup>11</sup> Lucera was a Muslim colony set up by Emperor Frederick II from the 1220s to the 1240s when he moved the Muslim population out of Sicily into the Apulian town.<sup>12</sup> During Charles of Anjou's conquest of Southern Italy, Lucera was the last Hohenstaufen stronghold, which was only defeated in 1269. In Eudes's sermon there is no further characterisation of Charles or Joshua in this passage, so all the text suggests is that God ordered Charles to fight the Muslims of Lucera just as Joshua had fought the enemies of God in the Old Testament. Such direct parallels between Old Testament wars and contemporary crusading are, however, rare in crusade model sermons.<sup>13</sup>

In the normal run of things, the texts take individual verses from the Bible rather than entire passages and use them as an authority for only one element of a particular strand of thought or argument. References to Old Testament figures are

thus used to supply models for particular aspects of crusader masculinity, chiefly among them mentions of soldierly qualities moulded on Old Testament examples. Crusaders were, for instance, encouraged to show leadership in battle following the examples of Judah and Judas Maccabeus,<sup>14</sup> or were meant to be courageous and zealous in battle like Mattathias,<sup>15</sup> Phineas, Judah, Ehud or Samson, who fought in the Old Testament wars of the people of Israel. As in this example by James of Vitry:

Where is he who is *eaten up with zeal for the house*<sup>16</sup> of the Lord, where are the sighs and anxieties of Mattathias, where the courage of the Maccabees, where the zeal and the dagger of Phineas, where is Ehud's sharpened sword, where Shamgar's ploughshare and *the jawbone of a donkey* in Samson's hand, where is he *who rises out of misfortune* and catches the little foxes who demolish the Lords vines?<sup>17</sup>

Such appeals echo well-known strands of muscular masculinity that were traditionally tied to chivalric values and codes of conduct in war: bodily strength, courage in battle and zeal to fight for one's convictions.<sup>18</sup> In rare cases, the sermons explicitly designate such behaviour as masculine, when they directly call upon crusaders "to fight manfully".<sup>19</sup>

But it is by no means only heroic battle behaviour that was thus attributed to crusaders. References to Old Testament discourse were also used to rouse potential recruits by appealing to their emotions. In both his extant crusade model sermons James of Vitry quotes Old Testament figures whose emotions were presented as exemplary to crusaders. The latter were encouraged to address experiences of individual emotional pain and told to let this pain be transformed into feelings of revenge when joining a crusade and thus follow the examples of Eli, Haggai and Uriah in their respective Old Testament stories:

He who has a breast of iron and does not pine over the blame of his father is not worthy of pity, as we read about Eli the priest that, even though he was once bad, he fell from his seat and died from too much pain as soon as he heard that the ark of the Lord was captured. So what about those who hear that the Holy Land is overthrown by the enemies of Christ and are not moved by pain and do not appear to care, against whom the Lord says through Haggai: *My house lies in ruin and each of you is busy with his own house?* About Uriah we read that he did not want to enter his house and enjoy any pleasures while his brothers laboured in his army and *the ark of the Lord was in tents*.<sup>20</sup>

Elsewhere, potential crusaders were assured of the value of sustained suffering as an incentive for earning the immense rewards of crusading just as Jacob or Noah had done in Old Testament wars:

This really ought to motivate you to take upon yourselves the service of God and the labours for Christ, just as a poor man who, doing manual work,

earns only six pennies for his labour would, if he was promised one hundred marks for his day's work, gladly and joyfully carry *the weight and heat of the day*, and he would not complain about the labour, even if he suffered cold or extreme heat while waiting for the great reward, so that, for the little bit of work, he who had always been in poverty and misery would become rich beyond measure and from then onwards be at rest with his pleasures.

Whence we read about Jacob that *he worked for seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him like a few days because of the greatness of his love*. In the same way, the days of present tribulation are considered short and light compared to the infinite and unimaginable reward: *All that we suffer in the present time is nothing in comparison with the future glory which will be disclosed to us*. If Noah worked one hundred years to build the ark in order to escape death in this life, how much more ought you to work a few years in order to escape eternal death and to acquire everlasting life!<sup>21</sup>

Crusading was presented as an emotional engagement as much as a physical one and Old Testament examples quoted in crusade sermon texts advised preachers to address feelings of hardship and pain when talking about the crusades. Potential crusaders were thus encouraged to confront such emotions as part of the process of deciding to become crusaders. Old Testament examples not only suggested that such feelings were legitimate but also salvific because the pain and suffering that caused these feelings were the basis of the indulgence and the redemptive power of crusading.

In a similar fashion, references to Old Testament passages were used to contextualise the crusader's feelings on leaving home. Citing Abraham's story, Eudes of Châteauroux, for example, acknowledged the emotional strain that crusaders experienced when leaving their families and loved ones:

The Lord then said: *Leave your country and your family*, but he did not say: Come to the country that I shall show you. Then he told people to leave the world, but now tells them to come to the country which he will show them and, in fact, has already shown them. But someone might say: Why did the Lord lead Abraham out of his country? Could he not have blessed him in his own country? This is of course true, but the reason for this is hinted at when it says that he led them out of Ur of the Chaldees in order to go to the land of Canaan. Thus, if he wanted, God could give us his blessing and a plenary remission of sins in our own country, but he also wants you to leave your country in order to liberate you from the fire of demons, desire, indulging and envy.<sup>22</sup>

Gilbert of Tournai also echoed Abraham's story as an example of the salvific value of crusaders leaving home:

Just as small fish hide beneath rocks, so they escape the storm and are not swept away by the current, when dolphins are seen playing in the sea, which