

Source 1:

Name: *The Alexiad*

Author: Anna Komnene

Year Written: 1148 A.D.

Civilization: Byzantine Empire

[Alexiad 10:5]

“. . . Moreover, Alexius¹ was not yet, or very slightly, rested from his labors when he heard rumors of the arrival of innumerable Frankish armies. He feared the incursions of these people, for he had already experienced the savage fury of their attack, their fickleness of mind, and their readiness to approach anything with violence....

And finally, he kept ever in mind this information, which was often repeated and most true that they were known to be always immoderately covetous² of anything they strove after and to break very easily, for any reason whatsoever, treaties which they had made. Accordingly, he did not indulge in any rest, but made ready his forces in every way, so that when occasion should demand he would be ready for battle. For it was a matter greater and more terrible than famine which was then reported. Forsooth, the whole West, and as much of the land of barbarian peoples as lies beyond the Adriatic Sea up to the Pillars of Hercules, all this, changing its seat, was bursting forth into Asia in a solid mass, with all its belongings, taking its march through the intervening portion of Europe.

A certain Gaul, Peter by name, surnamed KukuPeter, had set out from his home to adore the Holy Sepulchre.³ After suffering many dangers and wrongs from the Turks and Saracens, who were devastating all Asia, he returned to his own country most sorrowfully. He could not bear to see himself thus cut off from his proposed pilgrimage and intended to undertake the expedition a second time. . . .

After Peter had promoted the expedition, he, with 80,000 foot soldiers and 100,000 knights, was the first of all to cross the Lombard strait. Then passing through the territory of Hungary, he arrived at the queenly city. For, as anyone may conjecture from the outcome, the race of the Gauls is not only very passionate and impetuous in other ways, but, also, when urged on by an impulse, cannot thereafter be checked. Our Emperor, aware of what Peter had suffered from the Turks before, urged him to await the arrival of the other counts.

[Alexiad 10:6]

As we said above, there were among the Latins such men as Bohemund and his fellow counselors, who, eager to obtain the Roman Empire⁴ for themselves, had been looking with avarice⁵, upon it for a long time. Seeing an opening for their plans in the expedition which was promoted by Peter, they stirred up this huge movement; and, in order to deceive the more simple, they feigned a crusade against the Turks to regain the Holy Sepulchre and sold all their possessions.”

¹ Alexius Komnenos was Anna's father, the emperor of Byzantium.

² Envious

³ The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is located in Jerusalem at the spot where Jesus is believed to have been buried after the crucifixion.

⁴ The Byzantines thought of themselves as a continuation of the Roman Empire and referred to themselves as “Romans”.

⁵ Greed

Source 2:

Name: Call to Crusade

Author: Pope Urban II, transcribed by Fulcher of Chartres

Year Written: 1095 A.D.

Civilization: Western Europe

"Although, O sons of God, you have promised more firmly than ever to keep the peace among yourselves and to preserve the rights of the church, there remains still an important work for you to do. Freshly quickened by the divine correction, you must apply the strength of your righteousness to another matter which concerns you as well as God. For your brethren who live in the east⁶ are in urgent need of your help, and you must hasten to give them the aid which has often been promised them. For, as the most of you have heard, the Turks and Arabs have attacked them and have conquered the territory of Romania [the Greek empire] as far west as the shore of the Mediterranean and the Hellespont, which is called the Arm of St. George. They have occupied more and more of the lands of those Christians, and have overcome them in seven battles. They have killed and captured many, and have destroyed the churches and devastated the empire. If you permit them to continue thus for awhile with impurity, the faithful of God will be much more widely attacked by them. On this account I, or rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to publish this everywhere and to persuade all people of whatever rank, foot-soldiers and knights, poor and rich, to carry aid promptly to those Christians and to destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends. I say this to those who are present, it meant also for those who are absent. Moreover, Christ commands it.

All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans⁷, shall have immediate remission⁸ of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested. O what a disgrace if such a despised and base race, which worships demons, should conquer a people which has the faith of omnipotent God and is made glorious with the name of Christ! With what reproaches will the Lord overwhelm us if you do not aid those who, with us, profess the Christian religion! Let those who have been accustomed unjustly to wage private warfare against the faithful now go against the infidels and end with victory this war which should have been begun long ago. Let those who for a long time have been robbers, now become knights. Let those who have been fighting against their brothers and relatives now fight in a proper way against the barbarians. Let those who have been serving as mercenaries⁹ for small pay now obtain the eternal reward. Let those who have been wearing themselves out in both body and soul now work for a double honor. Behold! on this side will be the sorrowful and poor, on that, the rich; on this side, the enemies of the Lord, on that, his friends. Let those who go not put off the journey, but rent their lands and collect money for their expenses; and as soon as winter is over and spring comes, let them eagerly set out on the way with God as their guide."

⁶ Urban II is referring to the Byzantines.

⁷ "Pagan" was often used to refer to anyone who was not a Christian.

⁸ Forgiveness

⁹ A soldier who is hired to fight for a certain group

Source 3:

Name: The Damascus Chronicle

Author: Ibn Al-Qalanisi

Year Written: 1097 A.D.

Civilization: Arab/Muslim

“In Muharram of this year (December, 1098), the Franks made an assault on the wall of Ma'arrat al-Nu'man¹⁰ from the east and north. They pushed up the tower until it rested against the wall, and as it was higher, they deprived the Muslims of the shelter of the wall. The fighting raged round this point until sunset on 14th Muharram (11th December), when the Franks scaled the wall, and the townsfolk were driven off it and took to flight. Prior to this, messengers had repeatedly come to them from the Franks with proposals for a settlement by negotiation and the surrender of the city, promising in return security for their lives and property, and the establishment of a [Frankish] governor amongst them, but dissension¹¹ among the citizens and the fore-ordained decree of God prevented acceptance of these terms. So they captured the city after the hour of the sunset prayer, and a great number from both sides were killed in it. The townsfolk fled to the houses of al-Ma'arra, to defend themselves in them, and the Franks, after promising them safety, dealt treacherously with them. They erected crosses over the town, exacted indemnities¹² from the townsfolk, and did not carry out any of the terms upon which they had agreed, but plundered everything that they found, and demanded of the people sums which they could not pay.

Thereafter they proceeded toward Jerusalem... They therefore attacked the city with increased vigor, and prolonged the battle that day until the daylight faded, then withdrew from it, after promising the inhabitants to renew the attack upon them on the morrow. The townsfolk descended from the wall at sunset, whereupon the Franks renewed their assault upon it, climbed up the tower, and gained a footing on the city wall. The defenders were driven down, and the Franks stormed the town and gained possession of it. A number of the townsfolk fled to the sanctuary [of David], and a great host were killed. The Jews¹³ assembled in the synagogue, and the Franks burned it over their heads. The sanctuary was surrendered to them on guarantee of safety on the 22nd of Sha'ban (14th July) of this year, and they destroyed the shrines and the tomb of Abraham...”

¹⁰ A Middle Eastern city

¹¹ Disagreement

¹² Payment in return for protection

¹³ At the time of the first crusade, Jerusalem was controlled by Muslims but had a large Jewish population.