

# Holy War in Early Christianity & Islam

History 110WW  
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## Description

From its very inception, Christianity was a religion steeped in blood. The original members of this sect found themselves subject to suspicion and intermittent prosecution by the Roman authorities. In the process, some learned to welcome execution as a way of achieving a particularly intense form of identification with their crucified leader. The moment the empire embraced Christianity in the fourth century, bishops, emperors, and even monks began to inflict "divinely sanctioned" violence on groups they perceived as threats to the Christian "chosen people": pagans, Jews, and heretics. By the time Muhammad entered the picture, a whole range of Christian notions of holy violence had become commonplace. The unparalleled success of Arab expansion in the seventh century has drawn much attention to the Islamic idea of *jihad*. In this seminar, we will use primary and secondary texts to help us contextualize this concept by considering it alongside early Christian attitudes toward and experiments with religious violence.

## Readings

Hebrew Scripture and Violence

- Hebrew Bible: Joshua 1-12; Judges 6-8; I Samuel 8-15 (7-6Cs BCE)
- Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 3-5, 28-77.

Christian Scripture and Violence

- Matthew (c. 90?)
- Paul, Epistles (50s-60s)--*Militia Christi* (selections)

*Militia Christi*

- *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* (202)

- Maureen Tilley, "The Ascetic Body and the (Un)Making of the World of the Martyr," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 54 (1991), 467-475.
- *Militia Christi* in the Early Church: passages

### Christians as Imperial Soldiers

- Tertullian, *Apology* (197)
- Tertullian, *On Idolatry* (212)
- Tertullian, *On the Crown* (211)
- Gero, "Miles Gloriosus: The Christian and Military Service According to Tertullian," *Church History* 39 (1970), pp. 285-298.
- Origen, *Contra Celsum* (248): selections
- Origen, *Homilies on Joshua* 1, 12, 15, 18
- Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 6.20 (c. 310)
- Adolf von Harnack, *Militia Christi: The Christian Religion and the Military in the First Three Centuries* (Tübingen, 1905)

### The Christian God and the Roman Empire

- Lactantius, *Concerning the Deaths of Persecutors* (c. 310)
- Eusebius, *Accounts of Soldier Martyrs* (324)
- Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 4.19-21
- Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, books 8-10 (324)
- Orosius, *Seven Books of History against the Pagans* (417), book 7

### The End of Paganism

- Firmicus Maternus, *The Error of the Pagan Religions*, chs. 20, 28-29 (c. 350)
- Libanius, *Oration 30 "On Behalf of the Temples"* (386)

### Ambrose on Violence and Warfare: Educating the Emperors

- Ambrose, *Letters* 17 (384), 40, 41 (388-389)
- Ambrose, *On the Duties of the Clergy*, Book 1:35-42 (c. 390)
- Louis Swift, "St. Ambrose on Violence and Warfare," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 101 (1970), pp. 533-543.

### Augustine on Violence and Warfare: the Donatist Schism

- *Acts of the Abitinian Martyrs* (c. 312)
- *A Sermon on the Passion of Sts. Donatus and Advocatus* (c. 320)
- Augustine, *Against Faustus* 22.69-79 (398)
- Augustine, *Letter 93 "To Vincentius"* (408)
- Augustine, *Letter 133 "To Marcellinus"* (412)
- Augustine, *Letter 138 "To Marcellinus"* (412)
- Augustine, *Letter 185 "To Boniface"* (417)

- Augustine, Letter 189 "To Boniface" (418)
- Augustine, Letter 229 "To Darius" (429)
- Augustine, *Questions on the Heptateuch*, 4.44 and 6.10
- Augustine, *City of God* 19.11-12 (413-426)
- Peter Brown, "St. Augustine's Attitude to Religious Coercion," *Journal of Roman Studies* 54 (1964), pp. 107-116.
- John Mark Mattox, *Saint Augustine and the Theory of Just War* (Continuum, 2006), pp. 1-85.

#### Christian Roman Law

- *Theodosian Code*, Book 16 (438)
- Michele Salzman, "The Evidence for the Conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity in Book 16 of the 'Theodosian Code,'" *Historia Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 42 (1993), pp. 362-378.
- R. M. Errington, "Christian Accounts of the Religious Legislation of Theodosius I," *Klio* 79 (1997), pp. 398-443.

#### Catholic Christianity and its Enforcement: Monastic Intervention

- Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7.13-15 (c. 439)
- John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 84.87-103 (late 7C)
- *Panegyric on Macarius*, 5 (c. 450)
- John of Ephesus, *Lives of Simeon and Sergius* (6C)
- *Agora* (2009), directed by Alejandro Amenábar
- Thomas Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Penn, 2009), pp. 21-143.

#### Byzantine Holy War

- Tia Kolbaba, "Fighting for Christianity: Holy War in the Byzantine Empire," *Byzantion* 68 (1998), pp. 194-221.
- Halden, "Fighting for Peace: Attitudes to Warfare in Byzantium," in *Warfare, State, and Society in the Byzantine World, 565-1204* (London, 1999), pp. 13-33.
- George Dennis, "Defenders of the Christian People: Holy War in Byzantium," in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslims World*, ed. Angeliki Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh (Dumbarton Oaks, 2001), pp. 31-39.
- Laiou, "On Just War in Byzantium," in *To Ellenikon: Studies in Honor of Spyros Vryonis, Jr.* (1993), pp. 153-177.
- Monika White, "The Formation of the Martyr-Warrior Ideal," in *Military Saints in Byzantium and Rus, 900-1200* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 32-63.

#### Islam and Holy War

- Qur'an, suras 2, 3, 8, 9
- Firestone, *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam* (Oxford, 1999)

- *Umma Document (Constitution of Medina)*
- Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Marcus Wiener, 1996), pp. 1-54.
- Al-Bukhari (d. 870), *Sahih* (hadith collection)
- Thomas Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Penn, 2009), pp. 144-282.
- David Cook, *Martyrdom in Islam* (Cambridge, 2007), 1-44.

#### The Church and Holy War in the "Barbarian" West:

- Sulpicius Severus, *Life of Martin* (c. 420)
- Gelasius I, Letter to Emperor Anastasius (494)
- Alan Cottrell, "Auctoritas and Potestas: A Reevaluation of the Correspondence of Gelasius I on Papal-Imperial Relations," *Mediaeval Studies* 55 (1993), pp. 95-109.
- Gregory I, Letters: selection (591-594)
- Boniface, *Letter to Grifo* (741)
- *Royal Frankish Annals, 775-777* (c. 830)
- *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*
- Yitzhak Hen, "Charlemagne's Jihad," *Viator* 37 (2006), pp. 33-51.

#### Holy War and Early Medieval Kingship

- Chlodovocar (Clovis)-excerpts (c. 500)
- *Donation of Constantine* (c. 750-800)
- Abbo of Fleury, *Life of King Edmund* (980s)
- Helgaud, *Life of Robert the Pious* (1031)

#### Benedictine Monasticism and Holy War

- Adelerius, *Miracles of St. Benedict* (interventions in battle)
- Katherine Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture* (Boydell, 2011), pp. 9-111.
- Rosenwein, "Feudal War and Monastic Peace: Cluniac Liturgy as Ritual Aggression."
- Odo, *Life of Gerald of Aurillac* (c. 930)

#### Peace and Truce of God

- Peace of God documents, from Thomas Head and Richard Landis, *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000* (Cornell, 1997), pp. 327-342.
- Thomas Head, "The Development of the Peace of God in Aquitaine (970-1005)," *Speculum* 74 (1999), pp. 656-686.
- Georges Duby, "Laity and the Peace of God," in *The Chivalrous Society* (Cal, 1977), pp. 123-133.
- George Duby, "The Origins of Knighthood," in *The Chivalrous Society* (Cal, 1977), pp. 158-170.

## Episcopal Involvement in Warfare

- Leo IV (848) and John VIII (878): early indulgences
- Arnulf of Liege, on Wazo of Liege (Wazo and Greg I meets Macabbees)
- Fulbert of Chartres, Letter 112 (critical of episcopal involvement in war)
- Leo IX, Letter to Constantine Monomachos (1054)
- Papal indulgences, Leo IV to Eugenius III (847-1154)
- Gregory VII, Letters: selection (1074-1076)
- Henry IV and Gregory VII: depositions (1076)
- Bonizo, *To a Friend*, in Robinson, ed., *The Papal Reform of the Eleventh Century: Lives of Pope Leo IX and Pope Gregory VII* (Manchester, 2004) pp. 158-261.
- Kenneth Wolf, *Making History: The Normans and their Historians in Eleventh-Century Italy* (Penn, 1995), pp. 9-69.
- H. E. J. Cowdrey, "The Mahdia Campaign of 1087," *English Historical Review* 92 (1977), pp. 1-29.
- Urban II, two letters to the Catalans (1089 & 1096)
- Council of Clermont-5 versions (1095)

## The First Crusade

- Tomaz Mastnak, *Crusading Peace* (California, 2002), pp. 1-130.
- *Gesta Francorum* (c. 1100)
- Kenneth Wolf, "Crusade and Narrative: Bohemond and the *Gesta Francorum*," *Journal of Medieval History* 17 (1991), pp 207-216.
- M. Cecilia Gaposchkin, "From Pilgrimage to Crusade: The Liturgy of Departure, 1095-1300," *Speculum* 88 (2013), pp. 44-91.
- Bernard McGinn, "Iter Sancti Sepulchri: The Piety of the First Crusaders," in *Essays on Medieval Civilization: the Walter Prescott Webb Memorial Lectures*, ed. Lackner and Philip (Austin, 1978), pp. 33-70.
- Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood* (c. 1135).

## Reviving the Jihad

- Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspective* (Routledge, 2000), pp. 89-195.
- Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (Cal, 1969), pp. 87-175).
- Ibn Asakir (d. 1176), *The Forty Hadiths for Inciting Jihad*, in Suleiman Mourad, *The Intensification and Reorientation of Sunni Jihad Ideology in the Crusader Period* (Brill, 2013), 131-183.