

These all worked to make the Crusaders think like crusaders. I am not saying there was no pure motivation anywhere but it is mighty hard to find. Greediness and blood seem to be what the crusaders sought first of all...any service to God or others followed some distance behind.

The First Crusade

Pope Urban II (1088-1099) responded to a call from the Eastern emperor, Alexis I (1081-1118) for help against the Islamics. He was pressed hard and the Muslim were not in a mood for bargaining. Urban II, having won a round in the lay investiture fight, thought it a worthy cause with an opportunity to advance the prestige of Rome in the east...remember the division was in 1054. If the sacred sites could be recaptured perhaps the primacy of Rome would be recognized again in the east. So in 1095 he called for a strike force and in addition to the many secular reasons that would make a crusade profitable, he promised many spiritual advantages to those who might not make it back when they got to the fighting front.

By 1096 a large army was mustered and the most prominent leader was the French leader, Geoffrey of Bouillion...one of the more honorable Crusaders and a man who seemed to have fewer ulterior motives than most. The Crusade forces had no "united command" or chief of tactics however, and suffered at times when the troops of one ruler acted independent of the forces of another. But three major task forces departed between 1096 and 1099 and by 1099 Jerusalem had been retaken. Under Geoffrey's leadership Jerusalem was reorganized after the pattern of the European feudal states and a line of kings was instituted under his family direction. This "Kingdom of Jerusalem" continued until overthrown by a united Islamic front in 1187 and so had a history of about 90 years.

Out of this Crusade developed the Knight's Templars (1119) and the Knight's Hospitallers (Knights of St. John). The former was a militant fighting organization and the latter a humanitarian institution caring for the sick and wounded. The Templars in time would conquer a lot of stuff for themselves and become very rich and envied. To this group in 1190 came the Teutonic Knights. Out of the Hospitallers