

**Pope Urban II, [Speech at Clermont preaching the first Crusade, Robert the Monk's version], 1095**

*The following selection is one version (of five that we have) of the speech Pope Urban II gave at the Council of Clermont in 1095 that launched the First Crusade, an armed pilgrimage to Jerusalem to free the Holy Land from the hands of the Seljuk Turks.<sup>1</sup>*

Oh, race of Franks, race from across the mountains, race chosen and beloved by God as shines forth in very many of your works...We wish you to know what a grievous cause has led us to your country, what peril threatening you and all the faithful has brought us.

From the confines of Jerusalem and the city of Constantinople a horrible tale has gone forth and very frequently has been brought to our ears, namely, that a race from the kingdom of the Persians,<sup>2</sup> an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God, a generation forsooth which has not directed its heart and has not entrusted its spirit to God, has invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by the sword, pillage and fire; it has led away a part of the captives into its own country, and a part it has destroyed by cruel tortures; it has either entirely destroyed the churches of God or appropriated them for the rites of its own religion. They destroy the altars, after having defiled them with their uncleanness. They circumcise the Christians, and the blood of the circumcision they either spread upon the altars or pour into the vases of the baptismal font. When they wish to torture people by a base death, they perforate their navels, and dragging forth the extremity of the intestines,

bind it to a stake; then with flogging they lead the victim around until the viscera having gushed forth the victim falls prostrate upon the ground. Others they bind to a post and pierce with arrows. Others they compel to extend their necks and then, attacking them with naked swords, attempt to cut through the neck with a single blow. What shall I say of the abominable rape of the women? To speak of it is worse than to be silent.<sup>3</sup> The kingdom of the Greeks is now dismembered by them and deprived of territory so vast in extent that it can not be traversed in a march of two months. On whom therefore is the labor of avenging these wrongs and of recovering this territory incumbent, if not upon you? You, upon whom above other nations God has conferred remarkable glory in arms, great courage, bodily activity, and strength to humble the hairy scalp of those who resist you.

...Let the holy sepulcher of the Lord our Savior, which is possessed by unclean nations, especially incite you, and the holy places which are now treated with ignominy...But if you are hindered by love of children, parents and wives, remember what the Lord says in the Gospel, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." ...Let none of your possessions detain you, no solicitude for your family affairs, since this land which you inhabit, shut in on all sides by the seas and surrounded by the mountain peaks, is too narrow for your large population; nor does it abound in wealth; and it furnishes scarcely food enough for its cultivators. Hence it is that you murder one another, that you wage war, and that frequently you perish by mutual wounds. Let

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<sup>1</sup> Text and introduction from S.J. Allen and Emelie Amt, *The Crusades: A Reader* (Broadview Press, 2003), 40-42.

<sup>2</sup> Refers to the Seljuk Turks.

<sup>3</sup> This list of charges is exaggerated, though there was some initial violence.

therefore hatred depart from among you, let your quarrels end, let wars cease, and let all dissensions and controversies slumber.

Enter upon the road to the Holy Sepulcher; wrest that land from the wicked race, and subject it to yourselves. ...[Jerusalem] This royal city, therefore, situated at the center of the world, is now held captive by His enemies... From you especially she asks succor, because, as we have already said, God has conferred upon you above all nations great glory in arms. Set out on this journey and you will obtain the the remission of your sins and be sure of the incorruptible glory of the kingdom of heaven.”

When Pope Urban had said these and very many similar things in his urbane discourse, he so influenced to one purpose the desires of all who were present, that they cried out, “It is the will of God! It is the will of God!” When the venerable Roman pontiff heard that, with eyes uplifted to heaven he gave thanks to God and, with his hand commanding silence, said: “Most beloved brethren...Let this then be your war-cry in combats, because this word is given to you by God. When an armed attack is made upon the enemy, let this one cry be raised by all the soldiers of God: It is the will of God! It is the will of God!

And we do not command or advise that the old or feeble, or those unfit for bearing arms, undertake this journey; nor ought women to set out at all, without their husbands or brothers or legal guardians. For such are more of a hindrance than aid, more of a burden than advantage. Let the rich aid the needy; and according to their wealth, let them take with them experienced soldiers. The priests and clerks of any order are not to go

without the consent of their bishop; for this journey would profit them nothing if they went without permission of these. Also, it is not fitting that laymen should enter upon the pilgrimage without the blessing of their priests.

Whoever, therefore, shall determine upon this holy pilgrimage and shall make his vow to God to that effect and shall offer himself to Him as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, shall wear the sign of the cross of the Lord on his forehead or on his breast....”

#### **Laws of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1200s<sup>4</sup>**

*The Christian government of Jerusalem set up two courts of law, the High Court and the Court of the Bourgeois (town-dwellers or commoners). The laws of both courts, covering many civil and some criminal matters, developed over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; they survive in a thirteenth-century Old French manuscript. Excerpted here, first, are some provisions from the Court of the Bourgeois dealing with commercial lawsuits between members of the different ethnic groups dwelling in the kingdom.*

#### **Debt Collection Procedures**

60. If a Frank makes a claim in court against a Saracen to have what the latter owes him, and the Saracen denies owing it, and the Frank has no guarantor for it, it is right that the Saracen must swear on the law that he owes the Frank nothing, and thereupon he must be acquitted. Likewise, if a Saracen makes a claim against a Frank in court to have what the Frank

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<sup>4</sup> Introduction and source adapted from S.J. Allen and Emelie Amt, *The Crusades: A Reader* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2003), 93-95.

owes him, and the Frank does not have it for him, and the Saracen has no guarantor for it, the law decrees that the Frank should not make an oath to the Saracen, if he does not acknowledge the debt at all...

65. If it happens that a Samaritan makes a claim in court against a Saracen, concerning a debt that he owes him, and the Saracen denies that it is owed, it is the business of the Samaritan to have two Saracen guarantors, because other guarantors are not sufficient for the Samaritan, if the business was not done in court, for a Samaritan cannot be a guarantor against a Saracen, according to the court of the kingdom of Jerusalem. Likewise, if a Saracen makes a claim in court against a Jew, concerning a debt which is owed him, and the Jew denies it, it is rightly the Saracen's business to have two Jewish guarantors, and if he does not, other guarantors are not valid, if the loan was not made in court, because a Saracen cannot be a guarantor against a Jew, nor a Jew against a Saracen, nor a Saracen against a Jacobite, nor a Jacobite against a Syrian, for a debt, or for an inheritance, or for any other business, if it is not conducted in court, for the law decrees that concerning this rule, the guarantor must be of the same nationality as the one who makes the claim, as the law decrees: "That no member of any of the aforesaid nationalities is permitted, according to the custom of Jerusalem, to testify against someone of another nationality, in a civil case which is conducted in court."

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<sup>5</sup> Introduction and source adapted from S.J. Allen and Emelie Amt, *The Crusades: A Reader* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2003), 112-115. Source

### Usamah Ibn Munqidh, *Memoirs*<sup>5</sup>

*Usamah Ibn Munqidh, a Syrian prince and diplomat whose life spanned most of the twelfth century, wrote his memoirs as a collection of anecdotes drawn from his own experiences for the purposes of moral and practical instruction. He spent most of his later life in Damascus but he traveled extensively in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, and he had a wide circle of acquaintances.*

[The Christian King Fulk of Jerusalem] said to me: "O Usamah, by the truth of my religion, yesterday I experienced an exceeding great joy." I answered, "May Allah make the king joyful! What have you had to be joyful about?" The king answered, "I have been told that you are a noble knight. I hadn't the least idea that you were a knight." "My master," [I] answered, "I am a knight after the manner of my race and my family" What they specially admire about a knight is his thinness and tallness....

Among the Franks who had been taken to my father's house [as captives] was an old woman with one of her daughters, young and well formed, and a stalwart son. The son became a [Muslim] and his [belief] was of a high standard as far as one could judge from his prayers and fasting. He learnt the art of working in marble in the school of an artist who paved my father's house in marble. Then, his stay there being prolonged, my father married him to a woman of a religious family and gave him everything that was necessary for his marriage and to set him up. His wife bore him two sons who grew up in the midst of us. They

trans. G.R. Potter, *The Autobiography of Ousama*, by Ousama Ibn Mounkidh (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1929), pp. 86—87, 64—65, 172—73, 176—77, 184—85.

were five or six years old when their father, the workman Raoul, whose joy they were, set off with them and their mother, taking all he had in his house, to rejoin the Franks at Apamea. He became Christian again, together with his children, after years of [Islam], prayer, and faith. May Allah the most high cleanse the world of this race!

I will report some Frankish characteristics and my surprise as to their intelligence.

In the army of King Fulk, son of King Fulk, there was a respectable Frankish knight who had come from their country to make a pilgrimage and then return. He made my acquaintance and became so intimate with me that he called me “my brother.” We liked one another and were often together. When he got ready to go back over the sea and return to his own country he said to me, “My brother, I am returning home and I should like, with your permission, to take your son with me to bring him to our countries.” (I had with me my son, aged fourteen.) “He will see our knights, and he will learn wisdom and knowledge of chivalry there. When he returns, he will have taken on the bearing of an intelligent man.” My ear was hurt by his words, which did not come from a wise head. If my son had been taken prisoner, captivity could have brought him no worse fate than to be taken to the Frankish countries. I answered, “By your life, that was my intention, but I have been prevented by the affection that his grandmother, my mother, has towards my son. She let him leave with me only after making me swear to bring him back to her.” “Is your mother still living then?” he asked. “Yes,” I replied. He said to me, “Don’t disappoint her.”...

It is always those who have recently come to live in Frankish territory who show themselves more inhuman than their predecessors who have been established amongst us and become familiarized with the [Muslims].

A proof of the harshness of the Franks (the scourge of Allah upon them!) is to be seen in what happened to me when I visited Jerusalem. I went into the mosque al-Aqsa. By the side of this was a little mosque which the Franks had converted into a church. When I went into the mosque al-Aqsa, which was occupied by the Templars, who were my friends, they assigned me this little mosque in which to say my prayers. One day I went into it and glorified Allah. I was engrossed in my praying when one of the Franks rushed at me, seized me, and turned my face to the east, saying, “That is how to pray!” A party of Templars made for him, seized his person, and ejected him. I returned to my prayers. The same man, escaping attention, made for me again and turned my face round to the east, repeating, “That is how to pray!” The Templars again made for him and ejected him; then they apologized to me and said to me, “He is a stranger who has only recently arrived from Frankish lands. He has never seen anyone praying without turning to the east.” I answered, “I have prayed sufficiently for today.” I went out and was astonished to see how put out this demon was, how he trembled and how deeply he had been affected by seeing anyone pray in the direction of the *qiblah* [that is, toward Mecca]...

The Franks understand neither the feeling of honor nor the nature of jealousy. If one of them is walking with his wife and he meets another man, the latter takes the woman’s hand and goes and talks to her while the husband stands aside waiting for the end of the interview. If the woman

prolongs it unreasonably, the husband leaves her alone with her companion and goes [on his way]...

Among the Franks, we notice those who have come to dwell in our midst and who have become accustomed to the society of [Muslims]. They are greatly superior to those who have more recently joined them in the country which they occupy. They form, in fact, an exception which must not be made into a rule.

Thus, I sent one of my friends to Antioch to settle some business. At this time the chief of the city was Theodoros Sophianos. There were bonds of friendship between us. His authority prevailed in Antioch. One day he said to my friend: "I have received an invitation from one of my Frankish friends; come with me and see their customs."

This is what my friend told me: "I went with him and we entered the house of one of the old knights who had come on the first Frankish expedition. He had been struck off the subsidy rolls and exempted from all military service, and in addition had been endowed with a fief at Antioch, from which he obtained his livelihood. At his order, they brought in a magnificent table furnished with the purest and most perfect food. However, my host noticed that I abstained from eating. 'Eat,' he said to me, 'you will find it good. For I do not eat Frankish food, but I have Egyptian cooks and eat only what they cook. Further, no pork ever comes into my house.' I decided to eat, but with care. Then we took our leave of our host. Some days later, I was going through the marketplace when a Frankish woman attached herself to me, uttering barbarous cries in their language, and I did not understand a word that she was saying. A crowd gathered round me. They were Franks, and I began to feel that my death

was near. Just then, this same knight appeared. He saw me, came up, and said to the woman, 'What have you to do with this [Muslim]?' 'He is,' she said, 'the murderer of my brother Hurso.' Now Hurso was a knight of Anamea who had been killed by a soldier from Hama. The Christian knight reproached the woman, saying, 'You have before you a merchant, who does not fight, and is not even present at battles: He then reprimanded the assembled crowd, which dispersed. Then he took my hand and went with me. It was thanks to that meal that I escaped certain death.'