

# God Wills It? A Comparison of Greek and Latin Theologies of Warfare during the Medieval Period

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A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts in History

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2013

## **Abstract**

The history of the Church's participation in, and attitudes towards, warfare have been well-documented in several fields of research. The development of the doctrine of just war and the medieval crusades within Western Christianity, have been the subject of a considerable amount of scholarship. There has also recently been an increasing amount of research done by historians, theologians and political theorists comparing the status of warfare within the Christian and Islamic traditions. However, the current state of the historiography is focused almost entirely on Western Christianity, and does not address in any depth the attitudes toward warfare present in Eastern Christianity within the Byzantine Empire in the Middle Ages.

This thesis seeks to address this historiographical imbalance by comparing the development of the Eastern and Western Church's positions on warfare throughout the medieval period. The thesis examines the factors that led to the divergence of the two Churches' attitudes towards warfare, and the development and impact of their differing theologies during the medieval period. It is argued that the fundamental point of divergence between the Eastern and Western Church's attitude to warfare is linguistic and theological in nature. The linguistic differences between the Greek and Latin Churches, led to different theological interpretive frameworks regarding the subject of warfare. These different fundamental theological assumptions would lead the two Churches down different developmental paths and would prevent the development or acceptance of Western theories of just war and holy war in the Eastern Church.

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## Acknowledgments

The study of the events of the past has been a fascination of mine for as long as I can remember. Whether it be ancient Rome, medieval knights, or dinosaurs, I have always been interested in digging up (literally and figuratively) the secrets of the past. The study of history shows us how we are connected to the past; how it shapes our perceptions of the world, the values we hold, and the decisions we make. In the same way, I am indebted to those people, who without their effort and hard work, I would not have been able to complete this thesis.

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Chris Jones, who over the course of my honours and then master's thesis, has thoroughly converted me to medievalism. For the duration of my masters, Chris has provided guidance, encouragement, and constructive criticism when it was needed. Also thanks to Dr Peter Field, my secondary supervisor, for his insights and feedback.

Of course, to even get to this point I am indebted to a whole range of people too numerous to mention. I would like to thank my high school history teacher, Jane Ellis, who through her teaching and encouragement gave me the confidence to continue my study of history at university. To my friends, who have patiently listened to me trying to explain my research for the last year or so. To my Dad, John Newman, and my good friend Sam Anderson, who have proofread for me and given me advice throughout the course of my research. To my colleagues in the Masters Room, whose friendship and good humour has kept me going. Finally, I want to thank my family, who have supported and encouraged me right from the start.

## A Note on Biblical Translations

Throughout this thesis, particularly in the first chapter, I have included a number of biblical citations, which are related to the subject of warfare, many of which were directly referenced by Church Fathers such as St Augustine in their discussions of the topic. To more accurately reflect the biblical texts that would have been prevalent in late antiquity and the medieval period, I have used two different English translations.

For Old Testament references, I have used the Douay-Rheims translation of St Jerome's Latin Vulgate.<sup>1</sup> This translation is the closest English approximation of the language of the Vulgate, the version of the Bible most common in medieval Europe from the fifth century. For the New Testament however, I have used a different translation. Although ideally I would have again liked to have used the Douay-Rheims text prepared by Edgar and Kinney, their edition of the New Testament is, at the time of writing, not yet available. For this reason, I have relied upon the King James Version of the Bible for my New Testament references.<sup>2</sup> While the New Testament of the King James Version was itself translated from the original Greek, its translators made use of secondary Latin sources and it is closer in style to the Latin Vulgate than most other English translations.

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<sup>1</sup> Angela McKinney and Swift Edgar (eds.), *The Vulgate Bible: Douay-Rheims Translation*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2010-13)

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Prickett and Robert P. Carroll (eds.), *The Bible, Authorised King James Version* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998)

## Introduction

The role of warfare in religion has provided a lengthy and much debated field of research for historians in recent times. In particular, the Crusades of the Middle Ages provide the best example of the long association between Christianity and ‘holy war’. Indeed, there is a common conviction that the three Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, are somehow inevitably linked to some doctrine of holy war in one form or another. All are monotheistic, teleological and adamant that their religion presents the one true way to salvation, implicitly rendering all other faiths as redundant and illegitimate. However, this understanding of the role of religion in Christianity overlooks a very important fact. While Western Christianity produced the Crusades and also eventually a doctrine of holy war to justify it, the churches of Eastern Christianity, situated within the Byzantine Empire, did not. Eastern Christianity did not practice or condone a form of holy war comparable to that of the West, despite its closer proximity to Muslim world, which provided the impetus for the Crusades in the first place. The first aim of this thesis then, is to answer the question of why Eastern and Western Christianity developed different theologies of warfare during the medieval period. What caused this distinction? Is it the result of a fundamentally different theological understanding? Or is it due primarily to more pragmatic issues such as political, social and economic structures and values? Secondly, the thesis aims to explore the historical implications of these differences. How did the theological positions of the Eastern and Western Churches develop and then impact the way Latin and Greek Christians thought about warfare?

The research scope of the thesis covers a fairly wide period of time. While it can be broadly described as medieval, there are several aspects that need to be taken into account. The first of these is the pre-medieval writing on just war and religious warfare in general, which formed the basis of Christian thought on warfare in both East and West. These influences include classical Greek and Roman scholars such as Aristotle and Cicero, examples of warfare from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, and opinions from within the early Church prior to Constantine. The second grouping focuses on the development of the just war tradition within the Western Church. This period starts in the fourth century with St Augustine’s original concept of Christian just war, and culminates with Thomas Aquinas’ formulation of just war in his *Summa Theologiae* in the thirteenth century. Finally, the Eastern Church’s theological perspective on warfare begins in the fourth century, as articulated by St Basil of Caesarea. Due to the nature of the development of the Eastern

theology of warfare, the natural endpoint in this study coincides with the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, although the latest meaningful contribution to the topic appears with Gregory Palamas in the fourteenth century.

### **Historiographical Context**

One of the aims of this thesis is to address the lack of comparative studies between Eastern and Western Christianity in relation to just war and attitudes to Christian warfare in general. There has up to this point in time, been little in the way of a comparative analysis between Eastern and Western concepts of warfare, and as a consequence this study will cover several fields of historiographical debate.

The history of just war theory in the Western world is a subject which has received comprehensive coverage by scholars in recent times. One of the pre-eminent scholars on the history of just war today, James Turner Johnson, identifies the true beginnings of just war as a systematic concept or doctrine with the publication of Gratian's *Decretum* in the twelfth century. While Augustine was obviously hugely influential on medieval thought on the subject, only with Gratian "is a comprehensive and continuing inquiry initiated into just moral and legal limits to war that produced fruits that defined the just war doctrine of Western Christendom in its classic form by the end of the Middle Ages."<sup>3</sup> Contributing to the development of just war concepts in medieval Europe, Johnson identifies several key sources. The Hebraic tradition, Roman legal concepts, classical philosophy, Christian morality, and finally the Germanic warrior culture all contributed towards the specific doctrines that were developed in the medieval West in the centuries after Gratian.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Frederick H. Russell, in *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, argued that although contributions towards the just war theory were made from classical Greece and Rome as well as the Judaeo-Christian tradition, it was the events of the twelfth century that led to the development of a systematic medieval doctrine of just war.<sup>5</sup>

Within these studies however, there has been little focus placed on attitudes towards warfare within the wider Christian tradition; namely the Eastern Church. While the Eastern Church clearly shared some of the cultural elements that led to the development of just war in

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<sup>3</sup> James Turner Johnson, *Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War: A Moral and Historical Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 121

<sup>4</sup> James Turner Johnson, 'Historical Roots and Sources of the Just War Tradition in Western Culture' in John Kelsay and James Turner Johnson (eds.), *Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), pp. 7-12

<sup>5</sup> Frederick H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 292

the Western tradition, by the early medieval period a divergent attitude towards war was developing between East and West. There is within the current historiography a number of comparative studies of just war traditions, but these studies have made the comparison between (Western) Christianity and Islam. Scholars such as John Kelsay and James Turner Johnson, amongst others, have conducted research comparing the theological traditions of just war and jihad in Christianity and Islam respectively.<sup>6</sup>

The lack of discussion of Eastern Christian approaches to warfare is also repeated in other discussions of Christian attitudes towards warfare. Roland Bainton's influential *Christian Attitudes towards War and Peace* tracks Christian approaches to warfare from the New Testament through to the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> In his thesis, Bainton argues that there are three basic attitudes towards war that developed in the Christian ethic: pacifism, just war, and the crusade.<sup>8</sup> However, in his argument, Bainton pays little attention to the Byzantine attitude towards warfare. Although he is seemingly aware that the Byzantines did not adopt the same attitudes towards the holy war as the Western Christians, there is no real exploration of the Eastern view or an explanation as to why it differed from that of the West.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, discussions of holy war in the historiography of the crusades present little in the way of Eastern views on the subject. In *Fighting for Christendom*, Christopher Tyerman mentions that Byzantine Christians had a different attitude towards the concept of just war and holy war, but attributes this difference to political circumstances rather than theological differences.<sup>10</sup> Most discussions of the holy war revolve around the reform papacy and the influence of the Germanic warrior culture on Western European society. More often than not, the development of the crusades is considered in relation to the role of jihad in Islamic society rather than the Byzantine approach to warfare, such as in Thomas Asbridge's discussion of the subject in *The Crusades*.<sup>11</sup>

The historiography of the Byzantine theology of warfare is therefore limited mainly to Byzantinists and Orthodox Christian theologians. Even within Byzantine historiography, the theology of warfare is not a subject which receives much attention within general histories of

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<sup>6</sup> John Kelsay, *Arguing the Just War in Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); John Kelsay and James Turner Johnson (eds.), *Just War and Jihad: Historical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991)

<sup>7</sup> Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Towards War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-evaluation* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960)

<sup>8</sup> Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Towards War and Peace*, p. 14

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 112-114

<sup>10</sup> Christopher Tyerman, *Fighting for Christendom: Holy War and the Crusades* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 103,115

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Asbridge, *The Crusades: The Authoritative History of the War for the Holy Land* (New York: Ecco Press, 2012), pp. 14-19



Byzantium or the Eastern Orthodox Church. There does appear however to be a general consensus among Byzantinists that the Eastern Church did not develop a doctrine of just war similar to that of the Western Church. While there are a number of case studies on Byzantine attitudes towards warfare, there have been few comparisons between Western views of just war and the reasons behind their divergence. Ioannes Stouraitis' study *Jihad and Crusade: Byzantine Positions towards the Notion of 'Holy War'*, examines Byzantine attitudes towards holy war in relation to Islamic and Western Christian notions of the concept.<sup>12</sup> While Stouraitis shows the rejection of holy war as a penitential exercise within the Byzantine Empire, the scope of his study does not cover the fundamental basis of this divergence with Western Christianity. It is only within the field of Eastern Orthodox Patristic theology, that the fundamental theological basis for the Eastern Church's rejection of just war is covered in any real depth. While there is not unanimous agreement over the status of just war within Orthodoxy, amongst prominent contemporary Orthodox theologians such as Stanley Harakas and John McGuckin, there is a clear rejection of the Augustinian understanding of just war, and as a necessary consequence, holy war.<sup>13</sup> The basis of this position comes primarily from the authority of St Basil's canons, and from the theological concept of *theosis*.

### Methodology

Within the current historiography then, there has not been a lot of scholarly attention paid to explaining the divergence of attitudes in the Eastern and Western Churches in regards to warfare. This study will explore the reasons behind the divergence of attitudes, and in particular look at the role theology played in bringing them about. One of the key methodological considerations which has not been looked at in depth, is the role that language played in shaping the Greek and Latin positions on warfare. From the third century onwards, a distinctive Latin form of Christianity began to develop within the Western Roman Empire, the character of which was shaped significantly by the Latin language and Roman culture.<sup>14</sup> As contact between East and West fell away after the fall of the Western Empire,

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<sup>12</sup> Ioannis Stouraitis, 'Jihad and Crusade: Byzantine Positions towards the Notions of "Holy War"', *Byzantina Symmeikta*, 21 (2011) pp. 11-63

<sup>13</sup> John Anthony McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008); Fr. Stanley Harakas, "The Teaching of Peace in the Fathers" in Hildo Bos and Jim Forest (eds.), *For the Peace from Above: An Orthodox Resource Book on War, Peace and Nationalism* (Bialystok: Orthdruk Printing House, 1999)

<sup>14</sup> Hans von Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Latin Church*, trans. Manfred Hoffman (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1964), pp. 1-3

differences in liturgy and doctrine began to widen noticeably.<sup>15</sup> Many of these differences between East and West developed due to the “linguistic peculiarities” of Greek and Latin.<sup>16</sup> Although they remained in communion with each other until the schism of 1054, by the medieval period few Greek or Latin theologians could speak the others language or had much awareness of their theological traditions.<sup>17</sup> One of the major issues that this study endeavours to explore then, is the effect that the Latin and Greek languages had on the interpretation of theology, and how that impacted on the development of attitudes towards warfare in the Greek and Latin Churches.

In terms of sources, I have focussed primarily on the two fourth-century theologians who prove to be highly influential on the subject of warfare in the East and West for the next 1000 years. St Augustine in the West and St Basil in the East would provide the basis for the attitudes towards warfare in their respective Churches. Augustine’s *City of God*, along with a number of his other writings, contains the essential principles that would shape the medieval West’s burgeoning theory of just war.<sup>18</sup> Along with Augustine, there are a number of other medieval Western sources I have used. Most of these come from the eleventh century onwards, as there is a relative lack of sources from the early medieval period. Of these, the twelfth-century canon lawyer Gratian and the thirteenth-century theologian Thomas Aquinas are highly important. Gratian, through the compilation of the *Decretum*, brought together for the first time in the West a systematic account of Augustine’s just war principles. The *Decretum* would then provide a basis for the development of a just war doctrine within the medieval Latin Church. Thomas Aquinas’ discussion of the just war in his *Summa Theologiae* is perhaps the most comprehensive discussions of the just war in the medieval period. In comparison to the writings on warfare in the medieval West, there are relatively few Byzantine sources which directly address the issue of the Christian just war. St Basil, although his position on warfare would prove to be hugely influential within the Eastern Church, did not write a lot on the subject. Anna Comnena’s *Alexiad* provides a first-hand account of a Byzantine’s introduction to the First Crusade in the eleventh century. There are however, a number of sources which comment on the topic in a less direct way. I have used several Byzantine military manuals, which express the attitudes of Byzantine emperors and

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<sup>15</sup> Tia M. Kolbaba, ‘Latin and Greek Christians’ in Thomas F.X. Noble and Julia M.H. Smith (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Christianity, vol. 3, Early Medieval Christianities c. 600-c. 1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 213-215

<sup>16</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, vol. 2, The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 179

<sup>17</sup> Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom*, pp. 170-182

<sup>18</sup> Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, pp. xxiv-xxv

generals towards war and the practical implementation of their ideology. Also, while they do not comment directly on the concepts of just war or crusade, Byzantine theological critiques of the Islamic jihad provide an insight into the attitudes of medieval Byzantines on the issue of holy war.

Although the focus of this study is primarily concerned with examining the impact of theology on the development of the Eastern and Western Churches' different trajectories in relation to warfare, the impact of other factors need to be taken into account. In particular, the effect of the fall of the Roman Empire in the West and the social, political and economic changes it brought about have to be taken into consideration. As well as this, the relationship between secular and ecclesiastical authorities differed in Western Europe from the Byzantine Empire during the medieval period, a factor which needs to be looked at when examining the role of the Church in the affairs of the military.

The first chapter examines the origins of just war theory within the Latin Church, from its antecedents in ancient Roman law, classical philosophy, and the Old and New Testaments, through to the development of the Christian principles of just war as defined by St Augustine. The primary focus of this chapter is to examine the theological foundations that led to Augustine's endorsement of the just war concept. While Augustine's writings on just war were the most comprehensive and well-thought out Christian position on warfare during antiquity, they were founded firmly in earlier Christian and Roman writings on the subject. During this period as well, the Latin Christian tradition was beginning to emerge in the Western Empire, based mainly in Rome and Carthage. In this chapter, I will analyse the impact of Latin language and culture on the development of the Latin Church's attitude towards warfare, and how it compared to the developments in the Greek-speaking Church.

The second chapter examines the influence of Christian, Roman and Germanic attitudes towards war in the West and their impact on the development of the idea of Holy War leading up to the First Crusade. Following the fall of the Western Roman Empire, Europe faced major social and political upheaval, which effected the further development of Augustine's just war theory. To what extent did theology, such as that of St Augustine's concept of just war, contribute towards the development of holy war and the Crusades in the eleventh century? While theological issues played an important part, it is also necessary to consider the impact of social and political factors in post-Roman Europe. Less educated, less centralised and more violent, the medieval world was a different world than that inhabited by Augustine and the early Church Fathers.

Chapter Three examines the relationship between the theology of warfare within the Eastern Church and its implementation within the Byzantine Empire. The focus of this chapter is to examine the correlation between theological concepts of warfare within Eastern Christianity and their practical impact on Byzantine attitudes towards warfare. The Eastern Church's position on the issue of just war was most comprehensively articulated by St Basil of Caesarea in the fourth century, in which he essentially rejected the just war doctrine that would develop in the medieval West. The rest of the chapter looks at the application of St Basil's canons on warfare within Byzantine history. In addition to the theological basis for the Byzantine attitude towards warfare, social and political factors are also taken into account, such as the effect of Islam on Byzantine society, and the relationship between the Byzantine Emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople.

The final chapter compares the development of just war theory between East and West in the later medieval period. The later medieval period highlighted the growing divergence between Christian East and West in regards to just war and the theology of warfare in general. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw the development of the just war and the Crusade from ambiguous concepts to more systematically defined theological doctrines. This process of development in the West was exemplified by the just war formulation of Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century. Aquinas' synthesis of Augustinian and Aristotelian concepts would be foundational for the modern West's conception of just war. However, this development in the West was contrasted with almost total stasis in the East. Byzantine theologians did not appear to show any appetite for development with their theology of warfare, and any attempts made to challenge the position stated by St Basil were refuted. This chapter examines the growing divergence between the Churches and the various factors which contributed towards it.

Ultimately, the importance of this study is that, unlike previous studies, it focuses on the underlying theological reasons behind the different attitudes towards warfare in the medieval Greek and Latin Churches. Many studies have been made about the development of the just war in the Western tradition, or have compared the Christian crusade to the Islamic *jihad*. This study seeks to explain the divergent positions on warfare between two Christian societies that shared the cultural and religious heritage of Rome. By examining the theological and linguistic origins of this divergence and their historical implications, we can in turn see the role that language and religion has had on shaping many of the foundational assumptions of Western civilisation.

## Chapter One – The Origins of the Just War

The divergent attitudes towards warfare that developed during the medieval period in Western and Eastern Christianity, had their origins in the late Roman Empire. As the Latin Church established its own distinct theological tradition in the third century, so too did it begin to develop its own unique attitude to the problem of warfare. While the Old and New Testament scriptures provided the basis for Christian thought on the subject, the Western Church also began to borrow concepts from outside of Christianity. The Christianisation of the empire in the fourth century had led the Church to confront the moral status of warfare and the role that Christians would play in it. The Western Church would turn to the Roman concept of the just war to resolve the tensions between the moral problem of bloodshed and the need to protect the Roman Empire from its enemies. Through the person of St Augustine (354-430 AD), a synthesis between the Roman just war and Christian morality would be developed which would prove foundational to Western thought for the next thousand years.

### Latin Christianity

The development of a distinct just war tradition in Western Christianity needs to be understood within the wider context of Christianity within the Roman Empire. From the third century onwards, a distinct Latin form of Christianity, with its own ecclesiastical life and theology, began to emerge within the Western Roman Empire.<sup>19</sup> As Latin Christianity began to develop its own independent intellectual identity, its character was shaped heavily by Latin language and culture. The unique nature of the Latin language, and the philosophical inheritance of Roman civilisation would significantly impact on the way the early Fathers of the Western Church approached the Christian faith.

The emergence of the Latin Christian tradition was comparatively late, when compared with that of the Greeks. Although Christianity is ostensibly a Jewish religion, right from the beginning Greek language and culture were an important part of the growing Christian tradition. The New Testament was written in Greek, and Greek-speakers occupied influential positions within the Church from its inception.<sup>20</sup> In addition to this, Greek was also the *lingua franca* of the Roman Empire during the first and second centuries.<sup>21</sup> While

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<sup>19</sup> von Campenhausen, *Fathers of the Latin Church*, p. 1

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 1-2

<sup>21</sup> Pierre de Labriolle, *The History and Literature of Christianity: From Tertullian to Boethius*, trans. Herbert Wilson (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1924) pp. 40-42

Latin was the official language and widely spoken in the West, in large Western cities with immigrant populations such as Rome and Carthage, Greek was the most commonly used language.<sup>22</sup> Even Paul's epistle to the Romans from the first century, was written in Greek rather than Latin.<sup>23</sup> Because the Greek-speaking world already had a vast tradition of theological speculation and biblical commentary, the flow of intellectual thought tended to be from East to West, and not the other way around.<sup>24</sup> Because of these factors, the development of a Latin form of Christianity occurred relatively slowly.

By the third century however, there was within the Western Roman Empire, a distinct Latin form of Christianity beginning to emerge, with a recognisably different attitude towards theology from that of the Greek East. The development of this tradition was based primarily in two Western cities, Rome and Carthage.<sup>25</sup> The unique character of Western Christianity was shaped heavily by the Latin language and the culture which it spawned. Latin differs greatly from Greek, and its idiosyncrasies affect the way theology is understood. As noted by Steven Runciman:

While Greek is a subtle and flexible tongue, admirably suited to express every shade of abstract thought, Latin is far more rigid and inelastic; it is clear, concrete, and uncompromising, a perfect medium for lawyers.<sup>26</sup>

The linguistic character of the Latin language can also be observed in the culture of the ancient Roman people. In both their secular and religious life, the pagan Romans were an extremely legalistic people.<sup>27</sup> Right from the beginning of recorded history in Rome, there has existed a fascination with law and the legal process.<sup>28</sup> These characteristics also naturally express themselves within the writings of the early Fathers of the Latin Church. Tertullian, one of the first recognisable Fathers of the Latin Church, is defined intellectually by his realism, legalism and emphasis on will, standards and discipline.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, early Latin Christianity shared many traits with Judaism, and many of the early Latin Fathers, such as

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 40-42

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 42

<sup>24</sup> von Campenhausen, *Latin Church*, p. 1

<sup>25</sup> W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984), p. 339

<sup>26</sup> Steven Runciman, *The Eastern Schism: A Study of the Papacy and the Eastern Churches During the XIth and XIIth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), p. 8

<sup>27</sup> Alan Watson, *International Law in Archaic Rome: War and Religion* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 66

<sup>28</sup> Watson, *International Law in Archaic Rome*, pp. 66-67

<sup>29</sup> von Campenhausen, *Fathers of the Latin Church*, p. 35

Tertullian and Jerome, had a particular affinity for the books of the Old Testament.<sup>30</sup> Before Augustine in the late fourth century, Latin Christianity was very Jewish in character, described by Hans von Campenhausen as essentially ‘moral, legalistic, and rigorous’.<sup>31</sup> While through theologians such as St Augustine, who had a far greater empathy for the works of pagan philosophers such as Plato and Cicero, Western Christianity would open itself up to a more philosophical approach to theology, it would also retain its own distinctive Latin character.

### **The Graeco-Roman Contribution to Just War**

While the concept of just war is most prominently associated with theorists within the Christian tradition, the foundations of the concept can be seen in the classical societies of Greece and Rome. The Greek philosopher Aristotle would be one of the first authors to examine the subject of just war, and his discussions on warfare and ethics in general would have a major impact on the later medieval Western understanding of just war, in particular on the thought of Thomas Aquinas. As well as the Greeks, the Roman concept of just war would prove to be highly influential in the development of attitudes towards war in the Latin Church. Both Ambrose of Milan and Augustine owe much of their legal justification of warfare to the principles laid down by the Roman orator Cicero.

The first man to coin the phrase ‘just war’ was the philosopher Aristotle (384-322 B.C.).<sup>32</sup> A student of Plato and one of the greatest philosophers of antiquity, Aristotle would have a significant impact on the development of the just war theory. Like Plato, he did not write specifically on the subject of just war or formulate a legal definition of the concept. Rather, Aristotle’s discussions on the nature of warfare are given to us through his teachings on ethics, namely the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *The Politics*. Related to Aristotle’s views on warfare are his discussions on the matter of courage and virtue on the battlefield, the distinction between natural and legal justice, and the issue of slavery.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle draws the distinction between two different forms of political justice: natural justice and legal justice. Natural justice refers to a certain code of conduct in operation in human society which is applicable everywhere, regardless of

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 3, 35, 180

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 183-184

<sup>32</sup> Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1.8.1256b26, (ed.) Stephen Everson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 11

language, religion or ethnicity.<sup>33</sup> Legal justice refers to laws decided by convention, “what originally makes no difference whether it takes one form or another, but does matter when people have adopted it.”<sup>34</sup> These laws are decided arbitrarily and vary from place to place. In regards to the subject of war, war could be considered just under two circumstances: in self-defence, or to extend dominion over those who Aristotle considered to be ‘natural slaves’.<sup>35</sup> This is not to say that Aristotle was by any means an advocate of unrestricted warfare. For Aristotle, war was not a means unto itself. War could be necessary and just, but it could not be justified for its own sake.<sup>36</sup> In particular, he criticised those states which had based the laws of their societies around warfare, such as the Spartans, for whom making war and conquest was their sole aim.<sup>37</sup> Aristotle argued that the laws of a society should be framed towards what is honourable, rather than what is necessary:

For men must be able to engage in business and to go to war, but leisure and peace are better; they must do what is necessary and indeed useful, but what is honourable is better.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to discussing the ethics of war on a political level, Aristotle also examined the concepts of courage on the battlefield as they related to the individual. For a soldier, ethical considerations were just as important as the fighting itself. A truly brave man, aside from avoiding the extremes of cowardice and recklessness, is brave because he fights for the right reasons:

So the courageous person is the one who endures and fears – and likewise is confident about – the right things, for the right reason, in the right way, at the right time.<sup>39</sup>

The impact of Aristotle’s ideas on the development of the just war theory would prove to be significant. While he did not develop any kind of systematic discussion of the topic, Aristotle was one of the first to articulate the concept of a just war and its ethical basis. In the context of the just war in Latin Christianity though, Aristotle’s influence was not felt for a long time. During late antiquity, Aristotelian philosophy had lost its popularity in favour of

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<sup>33</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 5.7.1135a, (trans.) Roger Crisp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 94

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.7.1135a, p. 94

<sup>35</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.5.1255a1-3, p. 7

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.14.1333b12-7.15.1334a10, pp. 178-180

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.14.1333b12-7.15.1334a10, pp. 178-180

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.14.1333a41-7.14.1333b2, p. 177

<sup>39</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 3.7.1115a-3.7.1115b, pp. 49-50



the neo-Platonism of pagan philosophers such as Plotinus and Porphyry.<sup>40</sup> When rediscovered by the West through the extensive translation of his writings in the twelfth century, his discussion of subjects such as natural and legal justice, amongst others, would prove to be hugely influential on the scholars of medieval Christendom.<sup>41</sup> In particular, Thomas Aquinas, one of the greatest proponents of medieval just war theory, owed a huge debt to Aristotle's philosophy on a wide range of topics.<sup>42</sup> His concept of the common good, which shaped much his just war definitions, was based heavily on Aristotelian principles.

During the period of the late Roman Empire though, the Roman just war tradition would prove to be more directly influential on the attitudes of Christian theologians towards warfare. The concept of just war was embedded both in traditional Roman religion and in secular law as well. One of the last great contributors towards the theory of the just war in classical times was the Roman orator Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.). In his most famous work, *On Duties*, Cicero gives us one of the clearest expositions of just war ideas from a Roman perspective. Written as a tutorial book for his son Marcus, *On Duties* covers all aspects of Roman statesmanship, including warfare. In contrast to Aristotle, Cicero clearly articulates what defines a just war, and in particular establishes a criterion of just causes for war.<sup>43</sup>

The concept of the just war has a long tradition in pre-imperial Roman history. Pagan Rome had a reputation amongst other nations for being both a highly religious and very legalistic society.<sup>44</sup> Roman state religion reflected the legalism of Roman secular culture, and was concerned overwhelmingly with correct observance of ritual, rather any particular set of beliefs or theology.<sup>45</sup> Romans were proud of their religiosity, and attributed much of their military success to their piety.<sup>46</sup> In this context then, the issue of warfare and its correct prosecution were of crucial importance to the Roman people.<sup>47</sup> It was essential that any war Rome fought must be just, and that justice was established by the proper legal and religious procedures.<sup>48</sup> In archaic Roman society, a group of priests called the *fetiales* were responsible “for the proper, religious conduct of international relations, including the observance of the

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<sup>40</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, 8.12, in *The City of God against the Pagans*, edited and translated by R.W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 329-330

<sup>41</sup> Anthony Kenny, *A New History of Western Philosophy: In Four Parts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010), pp. 299-301

<sup>42</sup> Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980), pp. 17, 19

<sup>43</sup> Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, pp. 4-5

<sup>44</sup> Watson, *International Law in Archaic Rome*, pp. 64-65

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69

sacred forms.”<sup>49</sup> The *fetiales* would go through an elaborate legal process to ensure the war was just, through the making of demands for reparations, calling on the gods to act as judges between the two sides, and the actual declaration of the war itself.<sup>50</sup> The use of *fetiales* was common throughout Latium, but as Rome continued to expand, the *ius fetiale* system broke down when Rome came into contact with other religious tradition.<sup>51</sup> Nonetheless, while by the time of the empire any overt religious rituals had disappeared from Roman warfare, formal declaration and observance of correct legal procedure was integral to the Roman concept of just war.<sup>52</sup>

The traditional Roman attitude towards warfare can be observed in Cicero’s discussion of the just war. Cicero defines justice primarily as “good faith – that is, truth and fidelity to promises and agreements”.<sup>53</sup> Injustice is defined in two ways: “the one, on those who inflict wrong, the other on the part of those who, when they can, do not shield from wrong those upon whom it is being inflicted”.<sup>54</sup> For Cicero, warfare is considered very much to be a last resort, one to be taken after all other avenues have been explored.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, in his discussion of the relative merits of military and civic virtues, Cicero argues that civic duties are more virtuous than military ones.<sup>56</sup> When warfare is inevitable however, it should be pursued for the sake of peace and with the aim of the restoration of justice, either in the pursuit of self-defence or honour.<sup>57</sup> Following these general principles, Cicero presents a set of criteria, under which combatants are said to have just cause for making war. War must be preceded by a formal declaration and only if demands for reparations have not been met, and prisoners of war must be treated fairly.<sup>58</sup> Honour also must be seen to be maintained, even between enemies. If a promise has been made between enemies in wartime, justice demands that it must be kept.<sup>59</sup> In this manner, war was not conceived so much as an act of wilful violence, but rather as a just and honourable endeavour pursued for the eradication of injustices.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Watson, *International Law in Archaic Rome*, p. 1

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64

<sup>53</sup> Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1.7.23; trans. Walter Miller (London, Heinemann, 1913), p. 25

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.7.23, p. 25

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.11.34-1.13.41, pp. 37-45

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.22.74-1.22.75 and 1.22.77-1.23.79, pp. 75-77, 79-81

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.11.34-1.13.41, pp. 37-45

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.11.34-1.13.41, pp. 37-45

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.11.34-1.13.41, pp. 37-45

<sup>60</sup> Russell, *Just War in the Middle Ages*, p. 5

The Roman understanding of the just war, and in particular the criteria specified by Cicero, would be hugely influential on the development of just war concepts in Western Christianity. In both of their discussions on just war, Augustine and Ambrose would base their criteria for just war heavily on Cicero's principles. Crucially, Western Christianity would adopt the Roman legal framework when considering the issue of warfare and then apply it within a Christian moral and theological context.

### **Warfare in the Old and New Testament**

The traditions and philosophy of pagan Greece and Rome were, of course, only partly responsible for the development of attitudes towards warfare in the early Christian Church. The holy books of Christianity, the Hebrew Old Testament and the gospels and epistles that would make up the New Testament, provided the backbone of the Christian faith and would prove ultimately authoritative on any questions relating to warfare. The two collections of books do however, present different depictions of war. The Old Testament is replete with descriptions of war, recounting events such as Joshua's campaign against Canaan, the struggle between the Jews and the Philistines, and the eventual capitulation of the kingdom of Judah at the hands of the Babylonians. The New Testament does not cover the subject of war to the same degree as the Old Testament, but has nonetheless provided passages later used to both justify and denigrate Christian participation in warfare.

In the Old Testament, the God of the Jews, Yahweh, takes an active role in the business of warfare throughout Israel's history. The armies of the Hebrews fight under the authority of Yahweh, and Yahweh himself is described as actively fighting on behalf of the Hebrews. In the account of the Hebrews' escape from captivity in Egypt, it is Yahweh who fights directly on behalf of the Hebrews against the Egyptians, drowning the Egyptian army in the Red Sea.<sup>61</sup> In the 'Song of the Sea', Yahweh is described by the Hebrews as a warrior fighting on their behalf.<sup>62</sup> Moses, under Yahweh's authority, commanded the Israelites against the Amalekites in the desert and defeated them.<sup>63</sup> This trend continues throughout the conquest of Canaan. While Joshua is the military leader of the campaign, Yahweh is

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<sup>61</sup> Exodus 13:17-14-31 (Douay-Rheims Version)

<sup>62</sup> Exodus 15:1-21 (DV)

<sup>63</sup> Exodus 17:8-16 (DV)

described as the war leader.<sup>64</sup> Through the will of God, Israel is commanded to destroy the nations of Canaan:

When the Lord, thy God, shall have brought thee into the land which thou art going to possess and shall have destroyed many nations before thee, the Hittite and the Girgashite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, seven nations much more numerous than thou art and stronger than thou, and the Lord, thy God, shall have delivered them to thee, thou shalt utterly destroy them. Thou shalt make no league with them nor shew mercy to them.<sup>65</sup>

As well as actively intervening on the side of the Hebrews in battle, Yahweh has also been portrayed as an agent of judgement against the nation of Israel.<sup>66</sup> Throughout the Bible, there are many examples where Yahweh is described as using warfare as a tool of judgement against the nations of the earth. The invasion of Canaan, as well as providing the Hebrews their promised land, portrayed the defeat of the Canaanites as righteous judgement for their blasphemous ways.<sup>67</sup> The total destruction of the Canaanites is necessary ‘lest they teach you to do all the abominations which they have done to their gods and you should sin against the Lord, your God’.<sup>68</sup> This judgement would however prove to be a double-edged sword for the Jews, resulting in the destruction of their kingdom and eventual exile. The Bible portrays the Hebrews as falling away from Yahweh in the latter years of the kingdom, ignoring the covenant and adopting the customs of the surrounding nations. As punishment, the northern kingdom of Israel suffered defeat at the hands of the Assyrians, and eventually, Yahweh raised up the army of Babylon to invade the kingdom of Judah and carry off the people into exile.<sup>69</sup> Throughout the Old Testament then, there are a number of precedents for Yahweh actively involving himself in warfare and using it as a tool of judgement.

Unlike the Old Testament, the New Testament of the Bible barely mentions the topic of war at all. Jesus Christ makes statements only indirectly related to the subject, while the New Testament authors are focussed almost entirely on issues within the early Church and do not cover the issue in any depth. This is due primarily to the different literary styles of the two collections. The Old Testament is concerned with telling, amongst other things, the

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<sup>64</sup> Millard C. Lind, *Yahweh is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel* (Scottsdale, Herald Press, 1980), p. 88

<sup>65</sup> Deuteronomy 7:1-2 (DV)

<sup>66</sup> Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 76

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152

<sup>68</sup> Deuteronomy 20:18 (DV)

<sup>69</sup> Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace*, pp. 49-50

history of the political nation of Israel. Conversely, the New Testament is written primarily for the Church, to instruct and teach Christians on right belief and action.

The New Testament gospels do not give much insight into the thought of Jesus Christ on the subject of warfare. Jesus never addresses the issue directly, so there is no definitive statement from Jesus on the status of war as a just or a sinful act. There are a number of indirect references though, from which Christians have argued both for and against the issue of warfare. In the Beatitudes, Jesus exhorts his followers to act in humility and resolve conflicts peacefully, and even to love their enemies:

But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.<sup>70</sup>

Elsewhere in the gospels, both Matthew and Luke record an interaction between Jesus and a Roman centurion, whose servant was seriously ill.<sup>71</sup> In both accounts, Jesus heals the centurion's servant, and remarks of him that: 'I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel'.<sup>72</sup> Jesus says nothing of the nature of the soldier's profession, an omission which is noticed by St Augustine, and used as an argument which allowed the possibility of Christians serving in the military.<sup>73</sup> The gospel account of Jesus' arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane provides another example of an encounter with soldiers.<sup>74</sup> When the soldiers attempt to arrest Jesus, Simon Peter cuts off the ear of the high priest's servant.<sup>75</sup> Jesus rebukes Peter, calling him to: 'put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword'.<sup>76</sup> For some early Church writers, most notably Tertullian, this statement prohibited Christians from taking up arms in any form.<sup>77</sup> Due to the lack of any specific statement on the subject of warfare though, Jesus' gospel account was used both for and against Christian participation in warfare.

References to the subject of war in the New Testament, outside of the gospels, are also few and far between. The focus of the New Testament authors is very much on the conduct of the early Church and on providing guidelines for living for members of the

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<sup>70</sup> Matthew 5:44 (King James Version)

<sup>71</sup> Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10 (KJV)

<sup>72</sup> Matthew 8:10 (KJV)

<sup>73</sup> Augustine, *Letter 189, to Boniface*, Ernest L. Fortin and Douglas Kries (eds.), *Augustine: Political Writings*, trans. Michael W. Tkacz and Douglas Kries (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994) pp. 219-20

<sup>74</sup> Matthew 26:47-57 (KJV)

<sup>75</sup> Matthew 26:51-52; John 18:10-11(KJV)

<sup>76</sup> Matthew 26:52 (KJV)

<sup>77</sup> Tertullian, *On Idolatry*, 19.1-3, from Louis J. Swift (ed. and trans.), *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983), pp. 41-2

Church. Given the context of the Church in the first century Roman Empire, political matters outside of compliance with those in government at the time were not really touched upon. Warfare is mentioned in passages throughout the New Testament, but much of it is metaphorical or hyperbolic. Paul uses military metaphors to describe good Christians putting on the ‘armour of God’ to help fight against “spiritual wickedness in high places”.<sup>78</sup> In Revelation, John uses symbolic imagery of war to describe God’s judgement on mankind.<sup>79</sup> Practical considerations of Christians within the Roman legions or on the justice of war are not touched upon. Paul does however, urge that Christians should submit to the governing authorities, as the authorities that exist have been “ordained of God”. Whatever Christians are considered to owe the authorities, they are expected to give<sup>80</sup>.

### **Warfare and the Early Church**

Throughout the twentieth century there was a general acceptance of the view that up until the reign of Constantine in the fourth century, Christian attitudes towards warfare were generally pacifistic. The two most prominent proponents of this view were Roland Bainton and John C. Cadoux. Essentially, they argue that from the period of the early Church in the first century, Christianity was pacifistic by nature and against warfare or bloodshed of any kind. The third century Church Fathers condemned the practice of Christians fighting in the Roman legions, and it was not until the fourth century, when Constantine became emperor and eventually the Roman Empire was Christianised, that the idea of Christians participating in warfare came to be accepted.<sup>81</sup> More recently however, this view of the early Christian attitude to warfare has come under scrutiny. In particular, James Turner Johnson has criticised Bainton and Cadoux’s position, and argued that while just war concepts were certainly further developed by men such as Ambrose and Augustine, they were not without precedent in the early Church. Johnson’s criticism is based around two main themes: the social world of the early Christian communities, and the nature of the early Church Fathers’ rejection of military service.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ephesians 6: 10-18 (KJV)

<sup>79</sup> Revelation 19:11-21 (KJV)

<sup>80</sup> Romans 13: 1-7 (KJV)

<sup>81</sup> Bainton, *Christian Attitudes towards War and Peace*, p. 66, John C. Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War: A Contribution to the History of Christian Ethics* (New York: Seabury Press, 1982), p. 256

<sup>82</sup> James Turner Johnson, *The Quest for Peace: Three Moral Traditions in Western Cultural History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 9-10

Both Bainton and Cadoux argue that pacifism was the normative position for Christians immediately after the establishment of the Church in the first century. This view comes partly from the fact that until the late second century, there is no evidence that Christians were serving in the Roman military. The fact that Christians did not serve in the military was taken for granted.<sup>83</sup> When it becomes clear that Christians were serving in the military, the third century Christian writers condemned the practice. However, as Johnson shows, there are other factors that need to be taken into account.

Social and demographic factors were a major influence on the reason why Christians did not join the military in the formative years of the Church. For the most part, Christians did not join the military because there was very little incentive to do so. This is due to the fact that the people who became Christians were not likely to join the military anyway, and lived in places where the army did not traditionally recruit from. In the early Church, a significant proportion of the people who joined the new faith were not eligible for military service. Many Christians were either women, slaves or Jews, few of whom would be able to join the army, even if they were inclined to do so.<sup>84</sup> In addition to this, early Christianity was almost exclusively an urban phenomenon.<sup>85</sup> Most of the large Christian centres during the first century were based in cities well away from warzones or large military garrisons. Traditionally, recruits for the legions came from rural as opposed to urban areas, and often from regions near the frontiers of the empire.<sup>86</sup> Rural Romans, due to the nature of their upbringing, were generally far better equipped for military service, and because of these factors there was little need for urban Romans to join the military.<sup>87</sup> It must also be remembered that at this early stage, the Church was still very small relative to the empire, and would take until the third century to establish itself as a major religion within the empire<sup>88</sup>.

As well as these social issues, there is also a theological reason for the lack of interest by Christians on issues such as military service or the status of warfare. In the pacifist interpretation, there is an implicit belief that Christianity was understood by the early Christians as a transformative movement. In this view, warfare and military service were rejected because Christians had a greater moral vision for the world.<sup>89</sup> However, this view

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<sup>83</sup> Bainton, *Christian Attitudes towards and Peace*, p. 68

<sup>84</sup> Johnson, *The Quest for Peace*, p. 32

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32

<sup>88</sup> Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a few Centuries* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 40

<sup>89</sup> Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War*, p. 66

needs to be balanced with the eschatological views within early Christianity. In the early Church, there was a strong perception amongst many that the return of Jesus was imminent, and that the old order would pass away and be replaced by a new one.<sup>90</sup> Because of this, many Christians sought to separate themselves from ‘the world’ as much as possible. Warfare and military service were indeed rejected, but on the basis that it was a tool of the state, along with many other activities.<sup>91</sup> The gradual shift away from this eschatological view, as Christians sought to live within the apparatus of the empire, makes more sense of the attitudes of Christians towards war after Constantine. The pacifist interpretation requires a complete overthrow of Christian principles in the previous three centuries, to go from a wholesale rejection of war to its enthusiastic support by the majority of the Christian community.

By the end of the second century, there is definite evidence that Christians were active in the Roman army, and in relatively large numbers as well. This development can be attributed to a number of changing social and demographic factors. By the third century, Christianity was growing rapidly and unexpectedly, and moving outside of its primarily urban base.<sup>92</sup> By the reign of Diocletian at the beginning of the fourth century, it is possible that as much as ten percent of the empire may have been Christian. In addition to the growth of the Christian population, there was also a changing perception of the relationship between Christians and the empire. The early eschatological, sectarian Christian beliefs had mostly died out, and Christians had become much more active in the affairs of the empire.<sup>93</sup> These factors had an effect on Christian perceptions of the military, and consequently there had developed a considerable Christian presence within the Roman legions.

By the third century then, the previously ignored subject of warfare becomes a point of discussion for a number of Christian writers. In their discussions of the issue of warfare, while there is a general distaste for warfare and the role of Christians in the military, there are a diverse range of justifications for these positions. One of the earliest recorded opinions on the matter came from Justin Martyr (103-165). For him, the arrival of Christianity was the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah, an age of peace where the nations:

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<sup>90</sup> Johnson, *The Quest for Peace*, p. 12

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14

<sup>92</sup> Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200-1000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), p. 63

<sup>93</sup> Johnson, *The Quest for Peace*, pp. 14-17



shall turn their swords into ploughshares and their spears into sickles. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they be exercised any more to war.<sup>94</sup>

Because of this, Christians should refuse to make war against their enemies under all circumstances.<sup>95</sup> Tertullian (160-220) provides a more nuanced argument against military service on two grounds. Firstly, he made the point that it would not be fitting for a ‘son of peace’ to take part in battles, prisons, tortures and punishments.<sup>96</sup> Although in the Old Testament, the Patriarchs used the sword as a means to carry out God’s will, for him, Jesus’ act of taking away Peter’s sword in the garden of Gethsemane thereby ‘disarmed every soldier thereafter’.<sup>97</sup> Tertullian’s objection to military service is also related to the pagan practices that permeated the Roman military:

Will a son of peace who should not even go to court take part in battle [?] Will a man who does not avenge wrongs done to himself have any part in chains, prisons, tortures and punishments [?] Will he perform guard duty for anyone other than Christ, or will he do so on the Lord’s day when he is not doing it for Christ himself [?]<sup>98</sup>

It is important to note that Tertullian’s objections on this basis are related to his adherence in later life to a form of Christianity called Montanism.<sup>99</sup> Similar to many early first century Christians, Montanists believed Christians should separate themselves from worldly affairs, which while precluding military service also applied to professions such as teaching and the civil service.<sup>100</sup>

Most other Christian writers were not so emphatically pacifistic however. There appears to be a strong tension between the antipathy Christians had towards bloodshed of any kind, and the desire to acknowledge faithfully the authority of the Roman state and the obedience of Christians toward it. In the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus (170-235), a distinction is made between combat soldiers and soldiers of the civil authorities.<sup>101</sup> While Christians are prohibited from joining the regular army, soldiers serving the civil authorities

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<sup>94</sup> Isaiah 2:4 (DV)

<sup>95</sup> Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 39.2-3, from Louis J. Swift (ed. and trans.), *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service* (Wilmington, Michael Glazier, 1983), pp. 34-5

<sup>96</sup> Tertullian, *On the Crown*, 11.1-7, from Louis J. Swift (ed. and trans.), *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service* (Wilmington, Michael Glazier, 1983), pp. 43-4

<sup>97</sup> Tertullian, ‘On Idolatry’, 19.1-3, pp. 41-2

<sup>98</sup> Tertullian, *On the Crown*, 11.1-7, pp. 43-4

<sup>99</sup> Von Campenhausen, *Fathers of the Latin Church*, pp. 30-32

<sup>100</sup> Johnson, *The Quest for Peace*, p. 23

<sup>101</sup> Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition*, 16.17-18, from Bart D. Ehrman (ed.), *After the New Testament: A Reader in Early Christianity* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 353-4

are acceptable provided they do not kill anyone and refuse to take oaths.<sup>102</sup> St Cyprian of Carthage (d. 258), while not advocating one way or the other in regards to Christian military service, clearly laments its existence. “The world is wet with mutual blood(shed): homicide is a crime when individuals commit it, (but) it is called a virtue, when it is carried out publicly”.<sup>103</sup> Clement of Alexandria (150-215), while again deploring the existence of war, nonetheless treats the profession of soldiery largely with impartiality. In the same manner as the farmer or sailor who becomes a Christian, a soldier who comes to faith is to remain in his calling serve in a manner which is just.<sup>104</sup>

This tension is articulated well in the writings of Origen (185-254) on the subject of war and military service. When looking at the issue of whether Christians can rightfully participate in warfare, Origen answers in the negative. While in the Old Testament, wars were fought by the Hebrews under God’s authority, Origen insists that these wars are to be understood allegorically:

Thus, the Apostle, being aware that physical wars are no longer to be waged by us but that our struggles are to be only battles of the soul against spiritual adversaries, gives orders to the soldiers of Christ like a military commander when he says, “Put on the armor of God so as to be able to hold your ground against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11).<sup>105</sup>

However, Origen also recognised the authority of the emperor on the basis of Romans 13 and Timothy 2:1-2, and the necessity for wars to be fought against enemies of Rome.<sup>106</sup> He acknowledged that the armies of Rome could do battle in a just cause under the just rule of the emperor, killing its enemies for the common good.<sup>107</sup> However, just as pagan priests were not enlisted in times of war, Christians should reasonably be allowed to ‘keep their right hands clean’.<sup>108</sup> Instead, through prayer and petition to God, Christians could assist the armies of the empire.<sup>109</sup> In these statements, Origen is not arguing over the necessity of war itself (he admits that it is necessary), but over the appropriate role for Christians to take in

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<sup>102</sup> Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition*, 16.17-18, pp. 353-4

<sup>103</sup> Cited from Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War*, p. 148

<sup>104</sup> Adolf Harnack, *Militia Christi: The Christian Religion and the Military in the First Three Centuries*, trans. David McInnes Gracie (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), p. 73

<sup>105</sup> Origen, *Homilies on Joshua*, XV, from Louis J. Swift (ed. and trans.), *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service* (Wilmington, Michael Glazier, 1983), pp. 59

<sup>106</sup> Origen, *Against Celsus*, 8.73, from Louis J. Swift (ed. and trans.), *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983), pp. 54-5

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.73, pp. 54-55

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.73, pp. 54-55

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.73, pp. 54-55

response to warfare. Christians can pray for the righteous victory of Rome's armies over her enemies, but cannot themselves participate.

The conversion of Constantine to Christianity in 312 A.D. would precipitate a massive cultural shift in the Roman Empire over the next century.<sup>110</sup> Although by the beginning of the fourth century Christianity had an increasingly strong presence within the Empire, it was still held in low regard by many Romans. The conversion of Constantine gave Christianity a sense of legitimacy within the empire, and its favoured status gradually enticed many converts from the Roman upper classes.<sup>111</sup> The Edict of Milan, issued by Constantine in 313, would officially legalise Christianity, which had up to that point been illegal and had recently suffered heavy persecution under the reign of the Emperor Diocletian (303-311). The rise of Christianity would continue throughout Constantine's reign and beyond, and in 380 the Edict of Thessalonika would establish Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire.

The effect of the changing relationship between the Roman Empire and Christianity could not help but also affect the Christian attitude towards warfare. While James Turner Johnson argues forcefully that pre-Constantinian Christianity was not necessarily pacifistic and was potentially open to a limited form of just war, the impact of Constantine's conversion on Christian attitudes towards war was significant. In the North African apologist Lactantius (240-320 AD), we can observe the effect of Constantine on his view of the relationship between Christianity and the empire. Prior to Constantine, Lactantius still represented a strong anti-war element within the Church. Lactantius maintained that God's prohibition of killing extended not just to what is unlawful, but also to what men regard as ethical.<sup>112</sup> Christians are still forbidden from serving in the army; killing a human being, he argues, is without exception, a sinful act.<sup>113</sup> After Constantine's conversion however, Lactantius in his writings shows a newfound loyalty to the emperor, hailing the man "who has restored justice and wisdom to human affairs."<sup>114</sup>

After Constantine, the exclusively pacifistic voices within the Church become much rarer, and a general consensus emerges for the necessity and permissibility of warfare for Christians within the empire. However, the extent to which Christians could participate, and

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<sup>110</sup> Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2005), pp. 119,121

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127

<sup>112</sup> Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, 6.20.15, from Louis J. Swift (ed. and trans.), *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983), pp. 62-63

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.20.15, pp. 62-63

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.1.13, pp. 67-68; Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Towards War and Peace*, p. 75

the moral status of warfare was still up for debate. During the fourth century, Eastern and Western Christianity began to develop different approaches to these questions.

In the East, several different approaches to warfare emerge in the fourth century. One of these positions is provided by Eusebius of Caesarea (263-339 AD) who hails the new partnership of the Roman Empire and the Christian religion as a fulfilment of Isaiah 2:4, delivered through the *Pax Romana*.<sup>115</sup> While Eusebius is still an enthusiastic supporter of the virtues of peace, it is now being delivered and upheld through the institution of the Roman Empire and its legions.<sup>116</sup> To ameliorate the contentious issue of Christian involvement in the military, Eusebius posits the creation of two grades of human conduct: that fitting to the laity and that suitable to the clergy.<sup>117</sup> While the laity are permitted to marry, fight just wars and involve themselves in civic duties, the clergy are prescribed a life of celibacy, poverty and separation from the world.<sup>118</sup> While allowing for the necessity of warfare, Eusebius leaves its prosecution entirely in the secular domain, specifically the armies of the Roman Empire. St Basil of Caesarea (329-379), while admitting the need for soldiers to defend the empire in the interests of ‘sobriety and piety’, made the observation that those who participate in bloodshed have ‘hands that are not clean’, and must abstain from communion for three years.<sup>119</sup> This understanding of the moral status of warfare, would prove to be highly influential in Eastern Christianity during the medieval period.

The attitude towards warfare in Western Christianity would develop in a different direction to that of the East. In particular, the traditional Roman concept of just war would heavily influence the way Western Christian theologians viewed the morality of warfare. St Ambrose of Milan (337-397) would be one of the first theologians to fuse Christian ethics with the Roman concept of just war. One of the first rhetorically trained bishops in the Western Church, Ambrose came from a wealthy family with a strong upbringing in classical literature.<sup>120</sup> Ambrose has been described by some as a ‘Christian Cicero’, providing a Christian version of the Roman just war.<sup>121</sup> Like Cicero, he believed that wars should only be fought for just causes, and that honour and respect for the enemy’s rights must be maintained

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<sup>115</sup> Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Towards War and Peace*, pp. 92-93

<sup>116</sup> Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War*, p. 209

<sup>117</sup> Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Towards War and Peace*, p. 87

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p.87

<sup>119</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *Letter 187: To Amphilochius, Concerning the Canons*, 187.13, in Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (eds.), *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, Volume 8, *St. Basil: Letters and Select Works*, trans. Rev. Blomfield Jackson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) p. 228

<sup>120</sup> Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, p. 133

<sup>121</sup> Russell, *Just War in the Middle Ages*, p. 14

during wartime.<sup>122</sup> To support these ideas, Ambrose appealed to stories of the Old Testament, where figures such as Moses, Joshua and David used warfare to vanquish their enemies.<sup>123</sup> In addition to his support for a form of Roman just war, Ambrose adds a few Christian nuances. He condemns the practice of self-defence, but allows Christians to fight on behalf of the defenceless or in defence of the state.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, he prohibits clerics and monks from military service, as war is not their domain, but rather steers their energies ‘to the forces of peace’.<sup>125</sup>

The perception of war within the early Church changed significantly from the first to the fourth century. The growth of Christianity, and its evolution from a small Jewish sect to the official religion of the Roman Empire, forced Christian theologians to consider problems they would never have dreamt of in the first few decades of the Church. The Church attempted to maintain its peaceful values while at the same time reconciling itself to the defence of the Roman Empire. By the end of the fourth century, there was a general acceptance of the role that the military played within the Roman Empire. After this point however, Western and Eastern Christianity began to diverge in their respective attitudes towards warfare. St Ambrose touched upon this through his combination of Roman just war and Christian ethics. His stance on war, however, was incomplete. It would take one of the greatest minds of late antiquity to synthesise the just war of the Romans and the ethical principles of Christianity.

### **The Just War According to St Augustine**

St Augustine (354-430 AD) would prove to be the definitive voice on the subject of just war leading up to the Middle Ages.<sup>126</sup> An heir to the wisdom of classical antiquity, Augustine would bring together the various strands of Greek and Roman thought, together with examples given in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.<sup>127</sup> For while he was a Christian, he remained heavily influenced by authors such as the Roman orator Cicero, the

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<sup>122</sup> Ambrose, *On the Duties of the Clergy*, 36.179, from Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (eds.), *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, vol. 10, trans. H. de Romestin, E. de Romestin and H.T.F. Duckworth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), p. 82

<sup>123</sup> Ambrose, *On the Duties of the Clergy*, 1.35.178, from Louis J. Swift (ed. and trans.), *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service* (Wilmington, Michael Glazier, 1983), pp. 101-2

<sup>124</sup> Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Towards War and Peace*, p. 90; Ambrose, *On the Duties of the Clergy*, 3.3, 1.36.178, pp. 98, 101-102

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90

<sup>126</sup> Henry Chadwick, *Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 1

<sup>127</sup> Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Towards War and Peace*, p. 91

Greek philosopher Plato and the school of neo-platonic philosophy he inspired.<sup>128</sup> While Augustine's legacy on the subject of just war is not to be underestimated, it must be said that he never fully systemised his thoughts on the just war. Rather, they remain scattered somewhat haphazardly throughout his voluminous writings.<sup>129</sup> Because of this lack of systemisation, Augustine's coverage of certain aspects of war are coloured by a number of contemporary political issues unique to Roman North Africa, where he lived for all but five years of his life.<sup>130</sup> In particular, Augustine's opinions on the use of force in religious matters were heavily influenced by the events surrounding the Donatist heresy in North Africa in the early fifth century.

At the very core of Augustine's theory of just war is the Christian concept of sin. The description of the fall of man in Genesis, introducing sin and death into the world, forever corrupted mankind and prevented him from attaining perfection in this life.<sup>131</sup> As a younger man, Augustine had entertained the belief in the possibility of human perfection in this life, a position he would later abandon.<sup>132</sup> In his conception of the two cities, the 'City of God' and the 'Earthly City', although Christians belong to the City of God, they are in this life forced to lead a 'life of captivity' while they are alive in the earthly city.<sup>133</sup> Because of its temporal nature, the earthly city will always be subject to strife and conflict.<sup>134</sup> Mankind will never be free of suffering, and there will never be a shortage of wars to fight and enemies to face.<sup>135</sup> Only in the next life will true peace be realised, to those chosen by God.<sup>136</sup> Because of the current state of mankind, discipline and punishment through the law was given to mankind to curtail and correct his evil nature.<sup>137</sup> War is ultimately therefore the product of sin, but through the law, can also be harnessed as a corrective and disciplinary measure.

For Augustine, the prospect of war invites no joy. Indeed, throughout his writings on the subject, war presents itself as an unmitigated evil. He describes the man who experiences or even contemplates such evils without heartfelt grief, as one who has 'lost all human

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<sup>128</sup> Chadwick, *Augustine*, pp. 9-10, 23-24;

<sup>129</sup> Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby (eds.), *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2006), p. 70

<sup>130</sup> Reichberg, Syse and Begby (eds.), *Ethics of War*, p. 71; Chadwick, *Augustine*, p. 1

<sup>131</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, 13.1-13.3

<sup>132</sup> Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Towards War and Peace*, p. 91

<sup>133</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, 19.17, pp. 943-945

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.4, pp. 638-639

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.17, 22.22, pp. 943-945, 1153-1157

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.27, pp. 962-964

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.22, pp. 1153-1157

feeling'.<sup>138</sup> It is not just the suffering of war which is lamentable for Augustine, but perhaps more importantly the vices which it stirs up within people:

The desire for harming, the cruelty of revenge, the restless and implacable mind, the savageness of revolting, the lust for dominating, and similar things – these are what are justly blamed in wars.<sup>139</sup>

Looking at the Roman Empire, Augustine sees these same vices at work. Ever since its first conquest of Alba, Rome itself was conquered by the 'lust for mastery' over other peoples.<sup>140</sup> While Rome's great conquest brought uniformity in language and the *Pax Romana*, Augustine questions whether even these benefits can justify the blood that was shed to bring them about.<sup>141</sup> While a just man by necessity may be forced to undertake a just war, he at the same time laments the fact that he has to fight at all.<sup>142</sup>

As regretful as the spectre of war appears to be for Augustine, he nonetheless concedes that it is, at times, the only remedy against oppression and injustice. War becomes necessary when the alternative outcome appears worse than the prospect of the war itself. While it is preferable 'to have a good neighbour and live in peace with him [rather] than to subdue a bad neighbour when he makes war', such a war is a necessity 'since it would be still worse for the unrighteous to lord it over the just.'<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, it is because of the injustice of the opposing side that just men are forced to take part.<sup>144</sup> Above all, however, war can become necessary for the sake of peace. While the earthly city will forever be subject to conflict and dissension, even an earthly peace is preferable to continuing conflict. For the earthly city, this peace often has to come about through making war.<sup>145</sup>

Given the suffering and vices brought about by war itself though, how could it possibly be just? Augustine's answer to this question lies in his interpretation of the concept of Christian charity and love. In the New Testament, Jesus teaches two main precepts: love of God and love of neighbour. In turn, man finds three objects for his love: God, himself and his neighbour. Augustine gives the example of a household, where ideally the husband gives orders to his wife, parents to children, and masters to servants. Those in command should not

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<sup>138</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, 19.7, pp. 928-929

<sup>139</sup> Augustine, *Against Faustus the Manichean*, 12.74, from Ernest L. Fortin and Douglas Kries (eds.), *Augustine: Political Writings*, trans. Michael W. Tkacz and Douglas Kries (Indianapolis, Hackett, 1994), pp. 221-222

<sup>140</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, 3.14, pp. 109-113

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.7, pp. 928-929

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.7, pp. 928-929

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.15, pp. 161-162

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.7, pp. 928-929

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.4, pp. 638-639

give these orders ‘because of a lust for domination but from a dutiful concern for the interests of others, not with pride in taking precedence over others, but with compassion in taking care of others’.<sup>146</sup> Right and wrong do not reside in outward acts, but rather they depend on the inward disposition. Taking the example of Elijah in the book of 2 Kings, Elijah was warranted in bringing down fire from heaven against the messengers of Ahaziah, because he had love in his heart both for God and spiritual well-being of the Jewish nation.<sup>147</sup> Whereas in the book of Luke, Jesus rebuked the disciples for wishing the same thing, as they were motivated by vengeful intent.<sup>148</sup> Augustine maintained that it was not impossible for those in the military to please God, citing the case of the Roman centurion commended by Jesus for his great faith.<sup>149</sup> As an agent of the law, it is possible for a soldier to fulfil his duties in combat with the enemy, without the lust for domination.<sup>150</sup> The soldier is not fighting for himself, but rather to uphold the law. However, this provision does not extend to the private citizen. A man who kills an attacker in self-defence, has no recourse to the law, for he is acting only out of love for himself, not that of his neighbour.<sup>151</sup> Therefore, if ‘the earthly city observes Christian principles, even its wars will be waged with the benevolent purpose that better provision might be made for the defeated to live harmoniously in justice and godliness’.<sup>152</sup>

The ultimate aim of every war must be peace. Augustine observed that right throughout nature, from the savage beasts through to all spheres of humanity, there is no-one that does not desire peace.<sup>153</sup> ‘Even robbers, to ensure greater efficiency and security in their assaults on the peace of the rest of mankind, desire to preserve peace with their associates’.<sup>154</sup> If possible, the prevention of war through persuasion or any other peaceful means ‘are more glorious things than slaying men with the sword’.<sup>155</sup> If war is unavoidable, however, one

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<sup>146</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, 19.14, pp. 940-942

<sup>147</sup> Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Towards War and Peace*, p. 92; 2 Kings 1:1-17 (D-R)

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92; Luke 9:51-56 (KJV)

<sup>149</sup> Augustine, *Letter 189, to Boniface*, 189.4, pp. 219-20; Matthew 8:5-13 (KJV)

<sup>150</sup> Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, 1.5-6, Ernest L. Fortin and Douglas Kries (eds.), *Augustine: Political Writings*, trans. Michael W. Tkacz and Douglas Kries (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), pp. 213-17

<sup>151</sup> Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, 1.5-6, pp. 213-17

<sup>152</sup> Augustine, *Letter 138, to Marcellinus*, 138.2, from Louis J. Swift (ed. and trans.), *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983), p. 122

<sup>153</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, 19.12, pp. 933-937

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.12, pp. 933-937

<sup>155</sup> Augustine, *Letter 229 to Darius*, 229.2, from Louis J. Swift (ed. and trans.), *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983), p. 115



should adopt the attitude of the peacemaker, who, even by fighting, through his victory may bring the defeated the advantages of peace.<sup>156</sup>

Augustine never laid out a specific treatise on the criteria for a just war. However, his writings on the subject foreshadow the three *ius ad bellum* criteria: legitimate authority, just cause and right intention. Augustine's definition of rightful authority is very similar to that of the Romans. Legitimate authority for war could only come from either God or the ruler of the state.<sup>157</sup> Just cause is defined, somewhat ambiguously, as 'those [wars] which avenge injuries, if some nation or state against whom one is waging war has neglected to punish a wrong committed by its citizens, or to return something that was wrongfully taken.'<sup>158</sup> Upright intention is again in reference to the inward disposition:

Love does not preclude a benevolent severity. . . . No one indeed is fit to inflict punishment save the one who has first overcome hate in his heart. The love of enemies admits no dispensation, but love does not exclude wars of mercy waged by the good.<sup>159</sup>

As for general conduct, Augustine's principles remained similar to those of Cicero. Faith must be kept with the enemy, and there should be no unnecessary violence, profanation of temples, looting, massacre or destruction of property.<sup>160</sup>

With regard to the use of force in the service of religion, Augustine has a less clearly defined position. Initially, he pointed to the example of Jesus Christ, 'who did nothing by force, but did everything by persuading and warning'.<sup>161</sup> However, the continuing divisions between the Donatists and the Catholics in Roman North Africa, seem to have swayed his opinion.<sup>162</sup> Formed in 311 AD after a dispute over the succession of the bishopric of Carthage, the Donatists established their own episcopate, one that was not recognised throughout the rest of the Roman Empire.<sup>163</sup> Relations between the two groups were poor, defined by mutual hostility and distrust.<sup>164</sup> To make matters worse, in Augustine's time,

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<sup>156</sup> Augustine, *Letter 189, to Boniface*, 189.4, p. 220

<sup>157</sup> Augustine, *Against Faustus the Manichean*, 12.74-5, pp. 222-223

<sup>158</sup> Augustine, *Questions on the Heptateuch*, 4.44, from Louis J. Swift (ed. and trans.), *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983), p. 135

<sup>159</sup> Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Towards War and Peace*, p. 97

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97

<sup>161</sup> Augustine, *On True Religion*, 16.31, Ernest L. Fortin and Douglas Kries (eds.), *Augustine: Political Writings*, trans. Michael W. Tkacz and Douglas Kries (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), pp. 231-2

<sup>162</sup> Augustine, *Letter 93, to Vicentius*, Ernest L. Fortin and Douglas Kries (eds.), *Augustine: Political Writings*, trans. Michael W. Tkacz and Douglas Kries (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), pp. 234-239

<sup>163</sup> Chadwick, *Augustine*, p. 76

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77

Donatist zealots often committed deplorable acts of violence against Catholic buildings and clergy.<sup>165</sup> Although he maintained his belief that ‘men should be led to worship God by teaching, [rather] than that they should be driven to it by fear of punishment or pain’, Augustine did concede that many former Donatists had ‘found advantage in being first compelled by fear or pain’.<sup>166</sup> Augustine argued that as the ‘lost sons’ of the Church, the Donatists should be compelled back in by force.<sup>167</sup> Clearly though, this was an issue which greatly troubled Augustine, as he struggled to establish a clear position on the subject. It is difficult from these examples to extrapolate a general theory for the use of force in defence of religion, as Augustine’s argument was so closely related to one specific issue. It is debatable whether Augustine’s recommendations can be applied to other instances of heresy within the Catholic Church, let alone between other religions.

The writings of Augustine on the subject of just war would provide the basis for future scholarship within the Roman Church for the next thousand years. While his influence within the Eastern Empire was comparatively minor, he would prove to be the single most influential writer from antiquity on the subject in the West. Augustine incorporated the philosophy of Greece, in particular Plato, the legal definitions of the Roman Empire, and the examples of warfare within the Old Testament, and reconciled them with the Christian concepts of love, mercy and charity. There were ambiguities in his writings however. He lacked a systematic doctrine of just war theory, and his discussions of the use of force in the service of religion were incomplete, allowing a wide scope for different interpretations. The breakdown of the Western Empire in the fifth century and the rise of Islam in the seventh century changed the political landscape of the Mediterranean, and led to interpretations of warfare within the Western Church that Augustine himself could not have foreseen.

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., p. 77

<sup>166</sup> Augustine, *Letter 185, to Boniface*, from Philip Schaff, (ed.), *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans, 1956), pp. 641-642

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., pp. 641-642

## Chapter Two – Just War and the Origin of the Crusades

The understanding of the Augustinian concept of just war underwent a significant change following the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century. The worlds that Augustine and his medieval counterparts lived in were in many respects, radically different. While there were many continuities between the world of late antiquity and the early medieval period, such as the Roman Church itself, there had been a fundamental cultural shift in Western Europe. This changed culture had a significant effect on the Church itself, and had a major impact on the way medieval society looked at warfare.

The traditional narrative of the development of holy war in Christendom leading up to the First Crusade, most famously posited by Carl Erdmann, emphasises the revolutionary role of the reform papacy.<sup>168</sup> The Church at the turn of the millennium ‘adopted a peculiarly strained position toward war’, which had not been evident in Christian thought prior to that point.<sup>169</sup> Certainly, under the leadership of popes such as Leo IX, Gregory VII and Urban II, the concept of holy war within the papacy was greatly expanded and developed. Yet, between the fall of Rome in the fifth century and the reform of the papacy in the eleventh century, the tradition of the Christian just war had not been completely lost. Stemming from Augustine’s Christian ideas and the Roman concept of just war, medieval Europe inherited a cultural legacy in which warfare could be seen to be applied in a meritorious manner. The collapse of the Roman Empire in the West resulted in the creation of a fragmented and regionalised society. As a result of this, conceptions of just war within Christendom became divergent and often simplified, but there was maintained a general acceptance of the belief that war could be morally justified and used as a means of attaining justice. The advent of the reform papacy in the eleventh century did not necessarily alter the concept of just war within the Church, but rather attempted to direct the waging of warfare under the authority of the papacy. Only under the guidance of the Church could warfare be conducted in the service of God.

### The Transition from Roman to Medieval

The Roman world that Augustine had inhabited at the beginning of the fifth century, was to contemporary eyes, still a formidable and impressive empire. While the Empire had

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<sup>168</sup> Carl Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, trans. Marshall W. Baldwin and Walter Goffart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977)

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34

faced considerable turmoil due to the incursions of the Germanic tribes to the north, there was no clear indication that the fall of Rome was in any way inevitable.<sup>170</sup> While Rome had certainly changed in the four hundred years since it had become an empire, all of its central institutions remained intact and functional. At its centre, the emperor remained the head of state. While no longer considered to be divine himself, as the protector of the Roman Church he was still seen as divinely appointed and inspired by God.<sup>171</sup> Rome maintained a massive army, controlled a huge trade network, and was administered by a large bureaucracy drawn from the upper classes of Roman society. Underpinning all these institutions was an effective taxation system, which was gathered together from Syria in the East all the way to Britannia in the West.

For the Roman imperial machine to be able to undertake all of its critical functions, there needed to be some way of paying for all of it. Taxation was the financial base that the entire Roman system relied upon.<sup>172</sup> Taxes in the empire were comparatively high for a predominately agrarian society, but were necessary in order to fulfil the functions of government, in particular Rome's huge military. Roman imperial revenue was predominately gathered in the form of a land tax, based on acreage. While there was no doubt plenty of corruption and evasion of tax within the empire, on the whole the system was relatively efficient and ensured a steady flow of revenue. Without it, the empire would simply not be able function and fulfil its duties adequately.<sup>173</sup> The vast majority of the revenue gathered by the Roman bureaucracy went towards the upkeep of Rome's military. While administration was primarily the domain of the civilian elite, the duty to protect Rome's vast borders fell to the Roman army. The very existence of a full-time, professional army is what allowed in the first place the establishment of a civilian aristocracy.<sup>174</sup>

By the fifth century the Roman Empire had become organised into two administrative zones with two different emperors, ruled from Milan in the West and Constantinople in the East. The emperors remained hugely powerful in the fourth and fifth centuries, and any veneer of republicanism present in the early empire had by that time well and truly vanished.<sup>175</sup> Below the emperor, the task of governance and administration of the empire fell to the bureaucracy. The Roman bureaucracy consisted primarily from members of the

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<sup>170</sup> Chris Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: A History of Europe from 400-1000* (London: Penguin, 2009), p. 22

<sup>171</sup> Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, pp. 23-24

<sup>172</sup> Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome*, pp. 34-35

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33

<sup>175</sup> Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, pp. 23-26

senatorial and curial classes, the self-proclaimed elites of Roman society. By 400 AD, there were around 6,000 senior bureaucratic functionaries operating throughout the empire.<sup>176</sup> This civilian aristocracy was remarkably tightly-knit and homogenous throughout the Empire, as it had a shared system of values based around a strong literary education. More than wealth or political status, the Roman ruling class was defined by its culture and values. Thus, intimate knowledge of classical authors such as Virgil and Cicero was expected from the members of Rome's political elite, and set them apart from the rest of Roman society. Roman society was unusual in that it was dominated politically and administratively by a civilian elite, rather than a military aristocracy.<sup>177</sup> Although Rome maintained a very impressive military force, it was the civil society that established and supported imperial power.<sup>178</sup> The nature of this relationship affected the way Roman society viewed war and peace, and the role that the military played within it. In the Graeco-Roman tradition, peace did not simply mean the absence of war, but was related to the order and well-being of society as a whole.<sup>179</sup> In this context, the functions of the Roman military were, as James Turner Johnson puts it: 'in principle, determined by the need of the larger society to maintain its own internal peace with order and justice'.<sup>180</sup> This relationship between the civil and the military would change drastically with the fall of the Western Empire.

The collapse of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century would have a major effect on almost every aspect of life in the post-Roman West. Political structures would be changed, through the creation of a number of smaller regional polities in place of the Roman Empire. Social structures would change, through a strong urban to rural drift and a militarisation of civilian elites. Economies would simplify, through smaller and more localised trading networks, and a less sophisticated tax system. All these changes would affect the culture and values of early medieval Europe, transforming it into a society very different from the world Augustine had inhabited at the beginning of the fifth century, and whose experience and attitudes towards war would be much different.

Perhaps the most obvious change that occurred following the fall of Rome was the changed political landscape of Europe. Over the course of the fifth and sixth centuries, the formation a collection of new states and polities occurred throughout what had been the old Western Empire. Tribal groups such as the Goths, Franks, Vandals, and Saxons all carved out

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., p. 28

<sup>177</sup> Wickham, *Inheritance of Rome*, pp. 28-31

<sup>178</sup> Johnson, *The Quest for Peace*, p. 70

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., p. 68

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., p. 68

for themselves kingdoms throughout the Western Empire.<sup>181</sup> The removal of imperial authority led to a period of political decentralisation and a growing sense of regionalism throughout Western Europe. In contrast to the old empire, travel and trade throughout the regions of Western Europe became much more difficult from the sixth century onwards. The lack of a central administration and overriding 'Roman' culture in these areas stifled the flow of information and material goods across borders. In these new polities, both internal economies and wider economic networks were simplified considerably.<sup>182</sup> These changes created a society which was less stable, less wealthy, and less educated. In such an environment, any further development of Augustine's just war principles would prove extremely difficult.

Aristocratic society was undergoing a period of transition at this time as well. Traditionally, Roman aristocratic society had been defined by its civilian, literary culture, and had performed the key political and administrative functions of the empire. However, the aristocracies of the newly formed Germanic states were almost exclusively military, borne out of a society where warfare was the norm. Due in part to their close proximity to Rome, the Celtic and Germanic peoples of Europe had drifted away from the tradition of government by hereditary, sacral kings, in favour of warrior leaders who were chosen primarily for their fighting and leadership abilities. Victory in battle conferred legitimacy on a leader, and thus the constitutional integrity of these societies depended on successful war and conquest.<sup>183</sup> When these new elites settled within the empire and began to acquire lands of their own, they precipitated a shift from administrations based on tax collections, to ones which acquired their wealth from private rents derived from landowning.<sup>184</sup> In these new states, professional armies were replaced to a degree by volunteer armies drawn from this ruling military aristocracy. Over time, these changes would eventually render the old Roman aristocracy obsolete. Without a professional army devoted to purely military matters and a vastly simplified bureaucracy, the surviving Roman elites faced the option of adapting to meet the realities of the new system or else face irrelevance.<sup>185</sup> By the eighth century, any

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<sup>181</sup> David Nicholas, *The Evolution of the Medieval World: Society, Government and Thought in Europe, 312-1500* (London: Longman, 1992), pp. 56-62

<sup>182</sup> Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome*, pp. 78-79

<sup>183</sup> Patrick J. Geary, 'Barbarians and Ethnicity', in G.W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, Oleg Grabar (eds), *Interpreting Late Antiquity: Essays on the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 112

<sup>184</sup> Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 60

<sup>185</sup> Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome*, pp. 105-107

vestiges of the old Roman aristocratic elite had been absorbed into the Frankish or Gothic military aristocracy.

The impact of this transition should not be underestimated. While Roman society kept a reasonably strict division between civil and military society, the societies that emerged in the post-Roman world knew of no such distinction. While in Roman society, the military was one profession amongst many in the empire, almost every adult male within Germanic tribal society was expected to be a warrior and fight when the time came.<sup>186</sup> There was no real distinction between warrior and civilian, and so the fate of the entire tribe was far more intimately tied to the process of war and violence.<sup>187</sup> While within the Roman Empire, peace was understood as referring to a state of civil well-being, in Germanic tribal society it was understood more in the absence of threats from outside of the tribe.<sup>188</sup> In addition to this, the militarisation of the aristocracy brought with it a different set of cultural values. The highly masculine values of the war-band become predominant in early medieval society, highly-prizing such characters as honour, bravery, loyalty and courage on the battlefield.<sup>189</sup> Even when converted to Christianity, these military aristocracies maintained their love of war and the values identified with its pursuit, interpreting the Christian faith through the imagery of the war-band.<sup>190</sup>

While many structures and institutions fell with the collapse of the Roman Empire, the Western Church remained strong and even grew in the post-Roman world. While the administrative structures of the Church in the West remained stable, the collapse of central authority would result in a number of unforeseen consequences for the Latin Church. While Christianity continued to grow throughout the early medieval period, it became far more regionalised and diverse than it had been under the old Roman Empire. This fragmentation would have an adverse affect on the development of theology in the early medieval West, and would also impede the development of just war theory. However, by this time, the Church was the only remaining centre of intellectual development in the West.

While the fall of the Western Empire precipitated the collapse of a number of key Roman administrative and social institutions, it did not have the same effect on the structure and administration of Roman Christianity. For the most part, the structures and hierarchies of

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<sup>186</sup> Johnson, *The Quest for Peace*, p. 69

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69

<sup>189</sup> Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome*, pp. 190-195

<sup>190</sup> Tyerman, *Fighting for Christendom*, pp. 104-105

the Western Church, which were based on Roman imperial structures, would survive.<sup>191</sup> By the fifth century, Christianity had been firmly established as the predominant religion throughout most of the Empire. Only in the more marginal areas of the Empire did Christianity recede when Roman imperial authority disappeared.<sup>192</sup> A key to the survival of Christianity in the early medieval period was its organisational structure. By the fifth century, there was within the Church a fairly standard form of organisation. Regional dioceses were supervised by a bishop who in turn had jurisdiction over a number of priests who served local churches. While the Pope was widely acknowledged as the head of Western Christianity, monasteries and new dioceses could be established without papal authorisation. In this way, Christian modes of organisation were not so dependent on central authority and could be easily replicated everywhere.<sup>193</sup> Because of this flexibility, Christianity not only held its own in the former territories of the Roman Empire, but began to expand actively to regions and peoples which had never been under Roman authority at all. During the early medieval period, the pagan Anglo-Saxons, Franks and Irish were introduced to Christianity, and eventually gained support and patronage from the upper classes of each society.<sup>194</sup>

While the structures of the Western Church remained fairly stable at the grassroots level, the Church was nonetheless impacted by the growing decentralisation and regionalism of the early medieval period. While the Church of Rome remained the figurehead of Western Christianity, in practice the regional churches of Western Europe were run independently.<sup>195</sup> In the sixth and seventh centuries, the papacy looked eastward, towards Constantinople, rather than to its dominions in Western Europe.<sup>196</sup> As a consequence, the ability of the papacy to legislate and enforce doctrine was substantially limited, as was its ability and inclination to combat heretical strains within the Western Church.<sup>197</sup> Because of this, there was a major trend towards diversification within the various regional churches of Western Europe. Throughout Western Europe, there was a wide array of different Church customs and liturgical practices throughout the different regions. These were “micro-Christendoms” as described by Peter Brown, attempting to replicate the religion of Rome and recreate it in their own region.<sup>198</sup> In practice, Western Christendom at this stage did not have a clear centre and

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<sup>191</sup> Julia M.H. Smith, *Europe after Rome: A New Cultural History 500-1000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 200

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 222-223

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222

<sup>195</sup> Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome*, p. 171

<sup>196</sup> Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 113-115

<sup>197</sup> Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome*, pp. 172-173

<sup>198</sup> Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 12-15



periphery, but rather was made up of ‘a loosely spread constellation of centers’.<sup>199</sup> The lack of central organisation at this time adversely impacted the development of any kind of consistent Church position on the subject of warfare.

The transition from Roman to medieval society would also have an effect on the role of the church as an intellectual centre. The decline of widespread literacy, due in part to the militarisation of aristocratic society, had reduced the contribution of the laity to theological matters.<sup>200</sup> By the early medieval period, the Church had very much become the spearhead of intellectual thought in Western Europe, and effectively the only civilian career available to the aristocracies of the post-Roman kingdoms.<sup>201</sup> Even within the Church though, there was still a relative dearth of intellectual rigour and complex theological argument. Key intellectual figures at this time, such as Pope Gregory I (590-604) and Bede (672-735), proved to be the exception rather than the rule.<sup>202</sup> Contact between the different regions in Western Europe, while it did occur, was still fragmented to a large degree. As a result, unorthodox and even heterodox doctrines and belief sprang up with regularity at the local and regional level.<sup>203</sup>

While there was much diversity within the Western Church at this stage, there were also common ties that bound them together. Hand-in hand with the growth of the Church as the intellectual heart of Christendom, was the entrenchment of Latin as the language of law, government and religion. In many parts of Europe where new regimes were formed in the old Roman heartlands, the new barbarian rulers attempted to incorporate Roman administrative structures, symbolism and imagery, and legal systems into their new kingdoms.<sup>204</sup> Rulers such as the Ostrogoth Theodoric the Great, attempted to portray themselves in the manner of Roman emperors to their new subjects in order to prove their legitimacy.<sup>205</sup> It was in the Church however, that Latin would be entrenched as the sacred language of Western Christianity. By the seventh century, the Bible was almost exclusively read in Latin in Western Europe, with the Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic versions having been effectively discarded.<sup>206</sup> When Isidore of Seville (d.636) proclaimed that Latin was on the same level as

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid., p. 16

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., pp. 233-234

<sup>201</sup> Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, p. 442

<sup>202</sup> Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome*, p. 173

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., pp. 173-174

<sup>204</sup> Geary, ‘Barbarians and Ethnicity’, pp. 121-123

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., pp. 122-123

<sup>206</sup> Guy Lobrichon, ‘Making Sense of the Bible’, in Thomas F.X. Noble and Julia M.H. Smith (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Christianity, vol. 3, Early Medieval Christianities c. 600-c. 1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 534-535

Hebrew and Greek ‘he was in effect recognizing its actual dominance in West.’<sup>207</sup> While Roman government had collapsed in the fifth century, the Latin language would continue to shape Western theology throughout the medieval period.

### **Early Medieval Attitudes Towards warfare**

Attitudes towards warfare in the early medieval period reflect the often fragmented and regionalised state of society in Western Europe at the time. Theories of just war are often ill-defined, if present at all, and lack the subtleties of Augustine’s thought. Moreover, during this period it is not possible to discern a consistent theological position held by the Church or the papacy with regard to the subject of warfare. As well as traditional Christian and Roman interpretations of warfare, a number of Germanic traditions make an impression on the way early medieval Europeans understood warfare. What remains consistent throughout this period though, leading up to the reform movement of the eleventh century, is the general view of the necessity and the permissibility of war. This belief is often expressed in different ways, but remains linked to the Roman legal definition of just war.

At the beginning of the medieval period, the concept of just war was understood in a fairly rudimentary fashion, as opposed to the nuanced view expressed by Augustine at the beginning of the fourth century. The change in attitudes towards war can be explained to a degree by the changed nature of society in Western Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire. During the early medieval period, Christianity and the Germanic warrior culture were engaged in a symbiotic relationship.<sup>208</sup> While Germanic culture had been Christianised and re-oriented religiously, Christianity could not avoid the saturating influence of the Germanic warrior culture.<sup>209</sup> As we have already seen, post-Roman Europe was dominated by military aristocracies whose very identity was tied up in the pursuit of warfare. Violence was a way of life for much of Europe’s laity, and this culture which glorified violence “demanded an aggressive religion”.<sup>210</sup> The Church, whose upper clergy often originated in these same aristocratic families, would not have been immune to the influence of the martial values of this society.

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid., p. 535

<sup>208</sup> Tyerman, *Fighting for Christendom*, pp. 104-105

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., pp. 104-105

<sup>210</sup> Louise and Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: Idea and Reality, 1095-1274* (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), p. 9

The changed intellectual landscape of early medieval Europe can also explain to a degree the changing attitudes towards warfare. The disappearance of the old civilian aristocracy, combined with the fragmentation of the empire, had reduced both the numbers of people participating in intellectual debate and had restricted their contact with each other. The Church, while it had become the new haven of intellectual study and learning, still suffered through a lack of good scholars and centres of learning.<sup>211</sup> The result of these changes is that interpretations and understanding of just war, where they exist at all, lack the refinement present in Augustine's thought. An example of this simplified understanding of war can be found in the fifth century letter *Gravi de Pugna*, a spurious work attributed to St Augustine.<sup>212</sup> The author of *Gravi de Pugna* explains just war in a deterministic manner, very similar to the Germanic legal principle of trial by ordeal, whereby a defendant's guilt or innocence is proven by the result of an imposed ordeal. The author asserts that God is on the side of the righteous, and his support is necessary for victory. As with the trial by ordeal, victory or defeat in battle is indicative of the justness of the cause and the evidence of divine assistance.<sup>213</sup> This view of war is held in stark contrast to that of Augustine, who believed while war could be fought in a just cause, the outcome of war was decided by providence and did not necessarily favour the side with the more just cause. Indeed, Augustine's *City of God* was written in no small part to explain the defeats suffered by the Christian Roman Empire at the hands of the barbarian invaders.<sup>214</sup>

The deterministic views espoused by the author of *Gravis de Pugna* would however continue to have resonance well into the medieval period, echoed even into the twelfth century by writers such as Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153).<sup>215</sup> Another example of this conception of the just war can be found in the eighth century account of St Bede, in reference to the battle between the Anglo-Saxon King Oswald and the British King Cadwallon in AD 634.<sup>216</sup> Throughout the account, the role of Providence and evidence of divine sanction are shown to be at work. Before the battle, Oswald sets up an image of the cross on the battlefield and leads his entire army in prayer before the battle, beseeching God to grant them victory "for He knows we are fighting in a just cause".<sup>217</sup> The subsequent victory of the Anglo-

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<sup>211</sup> Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome*, pp. 170-174

<sup>212</sup> Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, p. 26

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26

<sup>214</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, 1.1-1.2, pp. 4-5

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37

<sup>216</sup> Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Judith McClure and Roger Collins (eds) (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 111-112

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111

Saxons is attributed to their faith in God, and is confirmed by an outbreak of miracles that occur at the site of the battle itself.<sup>218</sup> As with the author of *Gravi de Pugna*, victory is seen by Bede as a vindication of faith and the confirmation of a just cause.

Not all interpretations of warfare were so strongly religious in tone however. Bishop Isidore of Seville (d.636) attempted to define just war in his encyclopaedic *Etymologiarum sive Originum Libre* in very secular terms. Isidore followed a very basic Roman approach to war, whereby a just war is defined by a formal declaration to recover lost goods or to punish and repel enemies.<sup>219</sup> Unjust wars are waged out of madness and without legitimate cause. Not only does this definition of war fail to adequately reflect Augustinian or Germanic tradition, it is also far less sophisticated than the criteria provided by Cicero over 600 years earlier.<sup>220</sup> Isidore's understanding of the just war, alongside those of Bede, illustrate the simplification of the concept and its divergent interpretations during the early medieval period. As well as this though, it shows the durability of the Roman legal definition of the just war and its impact on early medieval thinking.

#### *Papal Attitudes towards Warfare*

Papal attitudes towards warfare during the early medieval period are far too varied to attempt to give a singular definition. In the 500 years between the papacy of Gregory the Great and the reforms instituted by Leo IX, the papacy evolved in ways that could not have been foreseen. During this time period, there would be a fundamental re-orientation of the papacy and its role, which would in turn affect the papacy's stance on warfare.

From the fifth century to the eighth century, the papacy underwent a slow process of re-orientation, with its political and theological sphere of influence shifting from the East to the West. Following the Byzantine Emperor Justinian's reconquest of Italy in 533, the papacy oriented itself towards Constantinople in the East.<sup>221</sup> The papacy was closely aligned with Eastern Christianity, and between the years 678 and 752, no less than eleven of the thirteen popes were Greek or Syrian by birth.<sup>222</sup> The perception of the papacy in Constantinople and the East differed greatly from that of the peoples in Gaul and Northern Europe. In the East, the pope was seen predominately as a source of theological authority. The bishop of Rome

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid., pp. 111-112

<sup>219</sup> Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, p. 27

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., p. 27

<sup>221</sup> Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1968), p. 29

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p. 29

was viewed amongst the ecclesiastical hierarchy as a “judge among bishops”, who held perhaps the most exalted position within the Church.<sup>223</sup> Within the West however, the pope was seen in a far more reverent light. As the bishop of Rome, the pope was seen as the direct successor of St Peter, holding the keys to the gates of Heaven in a very literal manner.<sup>224</sup> Over the course of the sixth and seventh centuries, events such as the Lombard invasion of Italy and the emergence of Islamic power in the East would reduce the direct influence of Constantinople over Roman affairs.<sup>225</sup> While still part of the Empire, the papacy increasingly had to rely on itself to protect Rome and its surrounds. The coronation of the Frankish ruler Pippin III in 754 would mark a new era for the papacy, in which its allegiance was tied to the fortunes of the Frankish kingdom in the West, rather than the Roman Empire in the East.<sup>226</sup>

Gregory I (590-604) is an exemplar of the changing position of the papacy in the early medieval period. As the bishop of Rome, Gregory was highly involved in the political organisation of Rome in the sixth century. Faced with the threat from the Lombards in the north, Gregory became a pivotal player in negotiations with them and for the defence of the city of Rome itself. However, the role played by Gregory was forced more by necessity than out of political ambition.<sup>227</sup> Indeed, his political role as bishop of Rome was comparable to that of the bishops in most other major western cities at the time.<sup>228</sup> Gregory’s actions as a political player were necessitated in part by the lack of any tangible presence of Byzantine power in central and northern Italy. Despite his often unilateral actions, Gregory still saw himself as a loyal subject of the Roman Empire. The issue of papal primacy in the sixth century was still at that time, an issue of theological rather than political primacy. In regards to the prosecution of war, Gregory did not believe he had legitimate military authority as a cleric. However, he did consider that rulers with the proper authority could count on divine aid in performing military tasks at the behest of the clergy.<sup>229</sup>

Attitudes towards war amongst the popes after their re-alignment to the West remain somewhat divergent, and there is a lack of a unified doctrine pertaining to just war. However, there is evidence that the papacy condoned and even at times participated in warfare in the centuries leading up to the advent of the reform papacy, foreshadowing similar proclamations

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid., p. 47

<sup>224</sup> R.W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), pp. 94-95

<sup>225</sup> Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy*, p. 30

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., p. 39

<sup>227</sup> Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 205-206

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., pp. 106-110

<sup>229</sup> Russell, *Just War in the Middle Ages*, pp. 27-28

that would be made in the eleventh century. During the ninth century, there are a number of accounts from different popes in support of war against non-Christians. Popes Leo IV (847-55) and John II (878) both write letters absolving soldiers who died in battle against pagans of their sins.<sup>230</sup> John II writes:

You have modestly expressed a desire to know whether those who have recently died in war, fighting in the defence of the church of God and for the preservation of the Christian religion and of the state, or those who may in the future fall in the same cause, may obtain indulgence for their sins. We confidently reply that those who, out of love to the Christian religion, shall die in battle fighting bravely against pagans or unbelievers, shall receive eternal life.<sup>231</sup>

In this statement there are contained two of the elements of Augustine's conception of just war: just cause and right intent. Just cause is defined in this context by the defence of the church and the preservation of the Christian religion, while rightful intention is expressed by those who fight 'out of love to the Christian religion'.<sup>232</sup> Nicholas I (858-867) and Hadrian II (867-872) stress that while warfare should not take place amongst Christians, it is permissible to fight against pagans.<sup>233</sup> Following on into the tenth century, there are numerous examples of popes living and dying by the sword. Pope John X, John XII and Sylvester II all actively took part in military campaigns, while John VIII, Stephen VI, Benedict VI and John XIV were all murdered during their pontificates.<sup>234</sup> While Papal attitudes towards warfare during this period are still divergent, they are united by the general acceptance of warfare as a positive means to achieve the ends of the papacy.

### *Carolingian Approaches towards Warfare*

The Carolingian Empire of the eighth and ninth centuries would also provide their own unique approach to the subject of Christian warfare. The Carolingian dynasty came into being out of the dissolution of the old Frankish Merovingian dynasty.<sup>235</sup> Founded by Charles

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<sup>230</sup> 'Pope Leo IV (847-855) to the Franks' and 'Pope John II, 878', in S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt (eds), *The Crusades: A Reader* (Toronto, Broadview Press, 2003), pp. 19-20, from O.J. Thatcher and E.H. McNeal (trans.), *A Source Book for Medieval History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), pp. 511-512

<sup>231</sup> 'Pope John II, 878', p.20

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20

<sup>233</sup> John Gilchrist, 'The Papacy and War against the 'Saracens', 795-1216', *The International History Review*, 10:2 (May 1988), p. 182

<sup>234</sup> Gilchrist, 'The Papacy and War against the 'Saracens'', pp. 183-184; Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy*, p.

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<sup>235</sup> Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Europe, 300-1000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999) p. 257

Martel in the late seventh century, the authority of the Carolingians in Francia was formally recognised by the crowning of Pippin by Pope Stephen II in 754.<sup>236</sup> The apex of the Carolingian empire was achieved under the leadership of Charlemagne who ruled from 768-814. Charlemagne's empire oversaw the conquests of the Saxons, Avars, and Lombards amongst others, and for the first time since the fall of the Roman Empire, a significant proportion of Western Europe was united under a single ruler. Charlemagne's rule was not notable solely for his military expansion however. Rather, the Carolingian Empire was unique for its time in the way it attempted to radically transform Frankish culture.

The re-orientation of Carolingian society that took place under the leadership of Charlemagne, *renovatio*, was at its core religious in nature. This was not a transformation akin to the Italian Renaissance of the fifteenth century, but rather an institutional movement designed to shape the character of Frankish society to adhere to Christian norms.<sup>237</sup> While theocracy may be a somewhat misleading description of Charlemagne's dominion, the Christian religion was very much at the centre of Carolingian politics. This idea manifested itself in Carolingian society in two distinct ways; the conception of the Franks as a unitary society, and the intellectual revival that took place within it during the late eighth century.

The Frankish concept of the unitary society is based very much on Old Testament biblical principles.<sup>238</sup> Just as Israel presented itself to the gentiles as a 'holy nation', so too had the Franks ceased to be simply the *populus Francorum*, but now envisaged themselves as the *populus Dei*.<sup>239</sup> The subjects of the Carolingian Empire were conceptually no longer defined by tribe or ethnicity, but had been incorporated into one body, the church.<sup>240</sup> In essence, there was no division between the clergy and the rest of society, for the entire Frankish nation *was* a part of the Church.<sup>241</sup> Accompanying this notion of the Franks as a holy nation, was the desire to educate the population according to the biblical principles they had been founded on. Under the reign of Charlemagne, there underwent an intellectual revival on a scale as significant as any other during the medieval period.<sup>242</sup> The translation and dissemination of literary works, particularly Christian ones, reached hitherto unprecedented levels during the medieval period, and significantly raised literacy levels

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid., pp. 258-259

<sup>237</sup> Walter Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (London: Methuen, 1969), p. 7

<sup>238</sup> Henry A. Myers, *Medieval Kingship* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1982), pp. 138-142

<sup>239</sup> Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance*, pp. 8, 17

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., p. 8

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., p. 17

<sup>242</sup> Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome*, p. 411

within Francia, particularly amongst the aristocracy.<sup>243</sup> The nature of this revival was however, somewhat derivative in nature. Great deference was given towards the literature of the past, and most scholars did not attempt to expand upon the knowledge provided to them, but instead sought to systematise and disseminate it further. Despite the recovery of much of the ancient knowledge of the early Church, no significant original contributions to just war theory were made by the Carolingians.<sup>244</sup>

The Carolingian concept of warfare, particularly under the leadership of Charlemagne, reflects, to a degree, the unitary concept of the *populus Dei*. Because of the lack of differentiation between secular and ecclesiastical society, in a sense all of Charlemagne's wars were 'holy wars'. Unlike other societies in medieval Europe, in Charlemagne's empire even the clergy were obligated to participate in the military campaigns of the emperor.<sup>245</sup> Many of the military campaigns undertaken by Charlemagne had some religious significance. Charlemagne's wars against the Spanish Muslims, Saxons and Avars were all justified to some degree by their status as pagans.<sup>246</sup> The protracted and bloody campaign against the Saxons was as much a war of conversion as of conquest, with defeated Saxon leaders forcibly converted to Christianity and pagan forms of worship outlawed.<sup>247</sup> In addition to this, as Christopher Tyerman argues, the prayers, blessings of warriors and weapons, liturgies and different scales of penance conducted by the Frankish Church during these conflicts elevated them into holy wars.<sup>248</sup> While in many ways the Carolingian approach to warfare differed from other approaches during the early medieval period, there remained a consistent belief that warfare could be used by Christians in a morally righteous manner. The Carolingian concept of war would not however last long. After the death of Charlemagne, the Empire's growth stagnated and eventually fragmented during the ninth century.

### **The Eleventh Century and the Genesis of the Crusades**

The events of the eleventh century would represent a turning point in the way Western Christians looked at the issue of warfare. It was at the end of that century that the First

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid., p. 414

<sup>244</sup> Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Crucible of Europe: The Ninth and Tenth Centuries in European History* (Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1976), pp. 26-27

<sup>245</sup> Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, p. 29

<sup>246</sup> Collins, *Early Medieval Europe*, 265-268; Tyerman, *Fighting for Christendom*, p. 105

<sup>247</sup> Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 431-433

<sup>248</sup> Tyerman, *Fighting for Christendom*, p. 105



Crusade was launched against Jerusalem, setting in motion two centuries of conflict between Christianity and Islam over the Holy Land. The seeds of that particular conflict were sown, however, in the reform movement which swept through the churches of Christendom in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Prior to the eleventh century, the Western attitude towards just war was basic and lacked any clear definition. Throughout the medieval period in Europe up to that point, there appears to be a general consensus that wars could be fought for in a just cause, based on a combination of Roman and Germanic legal concepts. By the eleventh century however, there was a clear effort within medieval society to define who exactly has the authority to wield the sword, and against whom the sword could be wielded legitimately.

The roots of this change can be found in the ninth and tenth centuries, starting with the decline of Carolingian power. The weakening and ultimate breakup of the Carolingian Empire in Europe ushered in a fresh period of violence and instability.<sup>249</sup> To add to this instability, the ninth century also saw the intensification of external pressures on Christendom, in the form of Muslim, Viking and Magyar invasion. Much of Europe's coastline was subject to the attentions of raiders from both north and south, further contributing to the anarchic state of post-Carolingian Europe.<sup>250</sup> In Western Francia, the situation was particularly bad. The fragmentation of political power significantly reduced the influence and authority of the monarchy.<sup>251</sup> Instead, effective power resided within a class of landed aristocrats operating at the regional and local level. Without any effective central control present in Western Francia, Frankish society descended into a period of lawlessness and private feuds between warring aristocrats.

In the absence of effective central authority in regions such as Western Francia, often the onus of responsibility fell upon the Church to find solutions to the problems created within this violent society. The 'Peace of God', and later the 'Truce of God', were examples of the Church attempting to solve the problem of violence in Francia which the laity apparently could not. While they certainly presented an innovative solution to controlling violence, they were by no means without precedent. In the ninth century, Carolingian *missi* offered the same promise of protection for the defenceless in society, only sanctioned by the king rather than the bishop.<sup>252</sup> The first of these initiatives to appear was the 'Peace of God'. The beginnings of the movement can be traced back to the Council of Le Puy in 975, when

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<sup>249</sup> Barraclough, *The Crucible of Europe*, pp. 82-83

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77

<sup>251</sup> Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (London: Penguin, 2007), p. 42

<sup>252</sup> H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'The Peace and the Truce of God in the Eleventh Century', in Andrew Jotischky (ed), *The Crusades* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 108-109

the bishop of Anjou assembled the peasants and *milites* of his diocese to consult with them how best to keep the peace.<sup>253</sup> From this meeting, a basic principle was established: that the *milites* would respect the possessions of both the Church and of the peasantry.<sup>254</sup> This principle would provide the foundation for the ‘Peace of God’ movement as it developed in the eleventh century. At the proclamation of the ‘Peace of God’ in Charroux in 989, three prohibitions were decreed for those who carried arms:

1. Anathema for violators of churches: if anyone breaks into a sacred church, or violently removes anything thence, unless he makes satisfaction, let him be anathema.
2. Anathema for spoilers of the poor: if anyone robs peasants or other poor of sheep, ox, ass, cow, goat, or pigs, unless by the other’s fault, and if he neglect to make full reparation, let him be anathema.
3. Anathema to those who assault the clergy: If anyone attacks, captures or assaults a priest or deacon or any clergyman, who is not carrying arms (that is, shield, sword, coat of mail and helmet), but quietly going on his way or remaining at home, that sacrilegious man shall be held to be cast forth from the holy church of God, unless he makes satisfaction, after the clergyman has been examined by his bishop to see if he was at fault.<sup>255</sup>

These decrees from Charroux would form the pattern for a number of subsequent peace councils such as Limoges (994), Poitiers (1000, 1014), and Elne-Toulouges (1027).<sup>256</sup> Now, while the ‘Peace of God’ movement was certainly concerned with establishing and maintaining peace within Christendom, it should by no means be understood as a pacifist movement. What the ‘Peace of God’ achieved rather, was for the Church to establish boundaries between warfare that was considered licit and that which was illicit. As Johnson puts it, “in the name of the Peace of God the sword was employed to establish and maintain peace.”<sup>257</sup> At the Council of Le Puy in 975, it was the Counts of Brioude and Gevaudan who intervened to enforce the rulings of the council on those *milites* within the bishop’s diocese who resisted.<sup>258</sup> While some older interpretations have viewed the Peace of God as an attack on the warrior aristocracy, recent historians such as Janet Nelson and Kathleen Cushing have argued that the secular aristocracy often worked with the Church to contain the violence that

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<sup>253</sup> Phillipe Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, trans. Michael Jones (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), p. 271

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271

<sup>255</sup> ‘Peace of God, Proclaimed in an Assembly at Charroux, 989’, from R. G. D. Laffan (ed), *Select Documents of European History, 800-1492* (New York, Henry Holt, 1929), p. 19

<sup>256</sup> Kathleen Cushing, *Reform and Papacy in the Eleventh Century: Spirituality and Social Change* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 41

<sup>257</sup> Johnson, *The Quest for Peace*, p. 83

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83

had resulted from the decline of the Carolingian Empire.<sup>259</sup> Indeed, princes and other major aristocratic figures often played key roles in councils and peace leagues.<sup>260</sup>

Another attempt to regulate violence in the eleventh century Europe was the ‘Truce of God’. While the ‘Peace of God’ was concerned primarily with protecting classes of people against violence, the ‘Truce of God’ attempted to impose a ban on all fighting for a certain period of time. In the earliest ‘Truce of God’, fighting was prohibited between “the ninth hour on Saturday until the first hour on Monday.”<sup>261</sup> Over time at subsequent councils, these restrictions were increased to include large sections of the ecclesiastical calendar, including Christmas, Lent and some saints’ festivals. However, these restrictions were intended only to apply Christians fighting amongst themselves:

First, we order that no Christian slay his fellow Christian. For he who kills a Christian, without doubt sheds the blood of Christ. If anyone unjustly kills a man, he shall pay the penalty according to law.<sup>262</sup>

While the ‘Truce of God’ was expected to be observed by Christians, it did not prohibit warfare against non-Christians during periods of truce. In practice, this applied primarily to infidels and heretics.

Both the ‘Peace of God’ and the ‘Truce of God’ would have a significant impact on the attitudes of Western Christians towards warfare. While warfare is presented as a lamentable situation, particularly when Christians direct their violence towards each other, it can also be used as a means of keeping the peace. Even though they do not make any specific statements about justice or the legitimacy of warfare, both the ‘Peace of God’ and ‘Truce of God’ lay down a set of guidelines establishing when, and against whom, war can be legitimately fought. In this context, warfare is presented in neutral terms. The sword is a tool, which can definitely be used in a sinful way, when raised against other Christians. However, there is also an implicit acceptance that warfare can be used for appropriate purposes. The sword can be used to enforce the peace against those who would seek to disrupt it, and there is no prohibition on warfare prescribed for those who fall outside the jurisdiction of the Church. These attitudes towards warfare, particularly in relation to non-Christians, would have a significant effect on the development of the Crusades at the end of eleventh century.

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<sup>259</sup> Cushing, *Reform and Papacy in the Eleventh Century*, p. 43

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43

<sup>261</sup> ‘The Earliest Truce of God, Proclaimed in the Diocese of Elne, 1027’, from R. G. D. Laffan (ed), *Select Documents of European History, 800-1492* (New York: Henry Holt, 1929), pp. 19-20

<sup>262</sup> ‘Truce of God Proclaimed at the Council of Narbonne, August 25, 1054’, from R. G. D. Laffan (ed), *Select Documents of European History, 800-1492* (New York: Henry Holt, 1929), pp. 20-21

The eleventh century would also witness the beginning of the papal reform movement. In the first half of the century, there had been within Europe a clamour to reform the Church in a number of different areas. By the end of the eleventh century, the papacy had not only undergone a reform in its practices, but it had also significantly extended its power and influence throughout Western Europe.<sup>263</sup>

The background to Church reform cannot be traced back to any one particular issue, but was more a result of the convergence of a number of issues which had led to a general dissatisfaction with the condition of the Western Church.<sup>264</sup> In the early eleventh century, there was a strong desire amongst reformers to restore the clergy to its condition as it existed within the early Church, and in particular to remove the clergy from worldly interference.<sup>265</sup> To achieve this endeavour, reformers focussed primarily on the issues of simony and clerical marriage, as well as the removal of secular influence. The reform movement swept through the clergy of Europe and eventually reached the papacy by the middle of the eleventh century. A key figure in this process was Pope Leo IX (1049-54), described by Geoffrey Barraclough as ‘the real founder of papal monarchy over the church’.<sup>266</sup> Upon his appointment as Pope, Leo brought with him to Rome in his entourage many of the leading members of the reform movement.<sup>267</sup> Unlike previous popes, Leo did not become entangled in Roman politics, but used his position to effect change in a far wider European sense. He did not merely stay in Rome, but actively attended synods, issued decrees and settled disputes throughout France and Germany.<sup>268</sup> While the primary goal of the reformers had been a moral reform based on issues such as simony and clerical marriage, within a Roman context, reform provided an opportunity to reinforce and extend the authority and influence of the papacy.<sup>269</sup>

Gregory VII, more than any other previous pontiff, used his position to strengthen the authority of the papacy. Gregory’s vision went far beyond the traditional view of the papacy, which placed itself as the spiritual head of Christendom. Instead, based on the authority provided to him as the heir of St Peter, Gregory extended this view of the papacy’s dominion to the temporal world as well. As the vicar of St Peter, Gregory believed he had the power “to

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<sup>263</sup> Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (New York: Penguin, 1994) p. 243

<sup>264</sup> Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 79

<sup>265</sup> Morris, *The Papal Monarchy*, pp. 80-81, 98-99

<sup>266</sup> Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy*, p. 74

<sup>267</sup> Walter Ullman, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1972), p. 129

<sup>268</sup> Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy*, pp. 74-74

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75

confer and withhold not only heavenly rewards but also material success and military victory in this world".<sup>270</sup> Leading on from this position, Gregory attacked the role of kingship itself. Kings were seen by Gregory as removable officials, who while still carried a divine mandate, could under the authority of the pontiff be removed if they did not fulfil their duties properly.<sup>271</sup> While Gregory did not personally succeed in fulfilling his vision of the papacy, his concept of the papacy as the authoritative seat of Christendom, was an idea that became strongly embedded within the papacy during the rest of the medieval period.<sup>272</sup> By the end of the eleventh century under the leadership of Urban II, the papacy's stature and influence within Christendom had grown to the point where it could inspire and direct the military forces of Europe in a holy war for the liberation of Jerusalem, the First Crusade of 1096.

### Holy War

The First Crusade, preached by Pope Urban II in 1095 and launched in 1096, represented a landmark in medieval history. The Crusades were unique in the way they were motivated primarily by religious reasons and also in the way that they caught the imagination of the people of Christendom. They did not appear, however, without precedents from earlier in the medieval period. As revolutionary as the impact and consequences of the Crusades were, the ideas behind them were innovative rather than original. The First Crusade incorporated elements of holy war, just war, penance and pilgrimage. Over the course of the late eleventh century and beyond, these elements would be brought together to fashion a new form of Christian warfare.

While the First Crusade was to a large extent a product of its circumstances, owing much to the political events of the late eleventh century, the various elements that contributed towards the Crusade were present in Christendom well before this time. The issue of penance and military service dates back to the ninth century, where both Pope John VIII and Leo IV offered soldiers fighting in defence of the faith remission for their sins.<sup>273</sup> Absolution of sins is granted to the soldiers, on condition that they are acting 'out of love of the Christian religion'.<sup>274</sup> Moving forward to the eleventh century, there is again evidence of papal justification and support for warfare. During the Spanish Reconquista, the siege of Barbastro

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<sup>270</sup> I.S. Robinson, 'Gregory VII and the Soldiers of Christ', in Andrew Jotischky (ed.), *The Crusades* (London, Routledge, 2008), pp. 225-226

<sup>271</sup> Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy*, pp. 86-88

<sup>272</sup> Ibid, p. 90; Morris, *The Papal Monarchy*, p. 121

<sup>273</sup> 'Pope Leo IV (847-55) to the Franks' and 'Pope John VIII' in Allen, *The Crusades: A Reader*, pp. 19-20

<sup>274</sup> 'Pope John VIII' in Allen, *The Crusades: A Reader*, p. 20

in 1063 attracted the support of Pope Alexander II. In his endorsement of the war against the Moors, Alexander granted a remission of sins for those who took part in defence of Christendom.<sup>275</sup> Similarly, in 1053 Pope Leo IX personally led an army into battle against a force of Normans, while also offering remission of penance and absolution of sins.<sup>276</sup>

A significant contribution to the concept of the crusade was made by Gregory VII. Over the course of his pontificate, Gregory sought to establish an independent army which would be used in the service of the papacy, the *milites sancti Petri*.<sup>277</sup> What differentiated Gregory from previous popes was the source he derived for his authority. In the past, popes had called on the nobility for military support in the defence of the Church against the heathen.<sup>278</sup> Gregory's appeal, however, was based solely on his position as St Peter's vicar. Knights would be bound to serve him in a feudal relationship, based on their acceptance of Gregory as head of the Church, and would be absolved of their sins in return.<sup>279</sup> This army would be the agents of Gregory's justice, using military force to overturn errant governments and vindicate the proprietary rights of St Peter.<sup>280</sup> Throughout his pontificate, Gregory attempted to win support from the aristocracy of Europe by this method. His most ambitious plan, foreshadowing Urban's call in 1095, was in 1074 to raise an army under the authority of St Peter and liberate the Christians of the East from the Seljuk Turks. As well as appealing to the authority of St Peter, Gregory also called on the example of Christ: 'Because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren'.<sup>281</sup> While the expedition never gained enough support to be put into action, its ideas show their influence in the appeal of Urban II in 1095.<sup>282</sup>

The message preached by Urban to the faithful in 1095, brought together the different elements that defined a Crusade. The Crusade was a just war, a holy war, a penitential exercise, and a pilgrimage. Above all, Urban sought to portray the Crusade as a just war. Throughout the 1080s, a group of scholars, including Anselm of Lucca, Ivo of Chartres and John of Mantua, had begun to bring together much of Augustine's writings on warfare,

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<sup>275</sup> Tyerman, *God's War*, p. 56

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46

<sup>277</sup> Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London: Athlone Press, 1993), p. 6

<sup>278</sup> Robinson, 'Gregory VII and the Soldiers of Christ', p. 229

<sup>279</sup> Louise and Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: Idea and Reality*, p. 5

<sup>280</sup> Robinson, 'Gregory VII and the Soldiers of Christ', p. 229

<sup>281</sup> 'Gregory VII's call for assistance to the Greeks', in S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt (eds), *The Crusades: A Reader* (Toronto: Broadview, 2003), pp. 35-35, from O.J. Thatcher and E.H. McNeal (trans.), *A Sourcebook for Medieval History, Selected Documents Illustrating the History of Europe in the Middle Ages* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905) pp. 512-513

<sup>282</sup> Tyerman, *God's War*, p. 50

supplemented by papal doctrines, into an intelligible form.<sup>283</sup> Urban justified the Crusade on the basis that it was a defensive war, fought for the liberation of a people and a place: the Eastern Christians suffering under the yoke of the Muslims, and for the city of Jerusalem itself.<sup>284</sup> The Crusade was also considered to be a holy war, called by Urban by the authority of St Peter, fought on behalf of Christ himself.<sup>285</sup> Because of its nature as a holy war, the Crusade could also be undertaken as a penitential exercise. Provided they are motivated:

not because they desire earthly profit but only for the salvation of their souls and the liberation of the church, we....relieve them of all penance imposed for their sins, of which they have made genuine and full confession, because they have risked their lives for the love of God and their neighbour”.<sup>286</sup>

This indulgence can be understood in the sense that because the crusade was such a severely penitential exercise, it would provide a satisfactory penance for all previous sins committed.<sup>287</sup> Urban’s final innovation was to combine the holy war with the idea of pilgrimage. Those taking part in the crusade were inducted through the motifs of the pilgrimage. Each crusader swore a vow to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, had their land and property placed under the protection of the Church, and had a cross sewn onto their garment to confirm their status as a pilgrim.<sup>288</sup> The First Crusade would mark the beginning of a new era in Christendom, in which the papacy actively sought to authorise and direct the use of warfare within it.

The First Crusade of the eleventh century, and the subsequent crusades that were inspired by it, are the result of the intertwining of two threads in the history of Christendom: the just war and the temporal aspirations of the medieval papacy. From the early medieval period onwards, there had been a consistent acceptance that warfare, under the right circumstances and conducted with the right intent, could be considered just and even meritorious. This concept was readily accepted within a laity whose culture was based heavily on martial values, but which was also generally accepted within the theological realm of Christendom. While these concepts were often expressed in different ways from the fifth to the eleventh century, their core principles remained a fundamental part of Western thought.

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<sup>283</sup> Jonathan Riley-Smith, ‘An Approach to Crusading Ethics’, in Andrew Jotischky (ed), *The Crusades* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 208-209

<sup>284</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, pp. 17-18

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 15-16

<sup>286</sup> ‘Urban to his partisans in Bologna, 19 September 1096’ in Louise and Jonathan Riley-Smith (eds), *The Crusades: Idea and Reality, 1095-1274* (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), pp. 38-39

<sup>287</sup> Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, p. 28

<sup>288</sup> Thomas F. Madden, *The New Concise History of the Crusades* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), pp. 9-10

The Church reform movement of the eleventh century took the concept of just war and sought to wrest its prosecution from the secular realm. Just as the development of peace movements in the eleventh century were focussed primarily on regulating and controlling violence, not eliminating it, so too the Crusades were an attempt by the papacy to direct warfare in a manner which was both just and holy.



## **Chapter Three – Warfare in the Byzantine Empire**

The status of warfare within the medieval Byzantine Empire provides an interesting contrast to that of Western Christendom. Although it shared the same faith as the kingdoms of Western Europe, and suffered far more acutely from the invasions of its non-Christian enemies, Byzantium never engaged itself in a holy war comparable to that of the Western crusades. In contrast to Western Europe, the Byzantine Empire had certain theological, political and social constraints that prevented the development of a doctrine of holy war. With regard to warfare, the Eastern Church's attitude was considerably different. Unlike the West, the Eastern Church did not develop at any stage a doctrine of just war, or approve of the concept developed by St Augustine. Byzantine theologians generally held a negative view of warfare, which remained consistent throughout the history of the empire. This attitude was prevalent throughout Byzantine society and even within the military establishment itself, where generals sought to limit the negative effects of warfare and avoid it when possible. In addition, the power of the religious establishment in Byzantium was checked far more strongly within the empire. Unlike the Western Church, it lacked any real authority over the temporal sphere of government.

### **The Status of Warfare in Eastern Christian Theology**

The ultimate basis of both the Western and Eastern Churches' attitudes towards warfare can be found in their theology. During the time of the Roman Empire, the five patriarchates were united both by doctrine and their location within the borders of the empire. Following its collapse, however, Rome and the Eastern Churches began to slowly drift apart. Augustine's just war, and the conceptual framework upon which it was based, never became influential within the churches of the Byzantine Empire. Instead, the Eastern Church's approach to the subject of war was drawn from its own theological traditions, in particular from the canons of St Basil of Caesarea.

One of the most important factors behind the growing theological divergence between the Western and Eastern Churches, was the issue of language. Although united in doctrine, Rome and the churches of the West used Latin as their liturgical language, while in the

Eastern half of the empire Greek was used.<sup>289</sup> Throughout the early medieval period, the churches of what had been the East and West of the old Roman Empire, began to diverge in some of their interpretations and practical application of scripture.<sup>290</sup> This divergence would eventually lead to a schism between the East and West in 1054, which to this day remains unresolved between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches.<sup>291</sup> Other factors, such as the reduced contact between East and West due to the collapse of Roman power, would also contribute to and exacerbate the divergence.<sup>292</sup> Language would however, have a significant effect on the way scripture was understood and interpreted in the East and West. All languages possess certain idiosyncrasies which influence the interpretation of any given text. Ideas that can be expressed clearly in one language may be almost impossible to convey in another.<sup>293</sup> The hallmark of Latin is its logical precision and efficiency. It is an excellent legal language, ideal for formulating and defining abstract terms.<sup>294</sup> Greek however, with its more complex grammar and larger vocabulary, allows for more nuance and the expression of finer shades of meaning.<sup>295</sup>

The effect that language can have on theology can be seen from the differing definitions of some basic Christian concepts. For example, even the simple term *Catholic* is understood differently between Greek and Latin speakers. The Latin understanding of the word *Catholic* corresponds to the term universal.<sup>296</sup> It evokes the notions of unity and uniformity. However, the term *Catholon* in Greek has a wider meaning: integrity, wholeness and harmony of diverse parts.<sup>297</sup> In practice, Catholics adhere to the concept of a united church, with one head and conforming to the same rituals and liturgical language.<sup>298</sup> In contrast, Orthodox Christians view the church as united in faith but comprising many different communities, each self-governing and independent in its administration.<sup>299</sup> Ultimately, both Eastern and Western Christianity would come to reflect the mentality of the languages their theologies employed. With its emphasis on the rational and the abstract,

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<sup>289</sup> Nicolas Zernov, *Eastern Christendom: A Study of the Origin and Development of the Eastern Orthodox Church* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961), pp. 227-229

<sup>290</sup> Judith Herrin, *Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire* (London: Penguin, 2007), pp. 47-48

<sup>291</sup> Herrin, *Byzantium*, pp. 47-48

<sup>292</sup> Andrew Louth, 'Byzantium Transforming (600-700)', in Jonathan Shepard (ed), *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 221

<sup>293</sup> Zernov, *Eastern Christendom*, p. 227

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228

Western theology would become far more systematic and legalistic than the East.<sup>300</sup> Eastern theology is far more experimental in nature, and hesitant to identify Orthodoxy with any one teacher or system of theology.<sup>301</sup>

The growing divergence of Eastern and Western Christianity during the medieval period also resulted in different perspectives on the subject of warfare. These differing attitudes towards warfare stem from deeper theological issues. In the Western Church, theological doctrines were generally presented within a legal framework. For example, in Catholic (and later Protestant) theology, the doctrine of atonement is presented in the form of a legal transaction. In this doctrine, Jesus Christ suffers death on the cross in place of humanity, paying the legal penalty for mankind's sin, in order that humanity may be legally justified before God. In addition, Western Christianity had inherited a certain innate pessimism from writers such as St Augustine, about the corruption of the material world through *original sin* and the inability of mankind to overcome its depravity.<sup>302</sup> Eastern Christianity however, took a different approach to these issues. While not denying the importance of atonement or the problem of sin in the world, Eastern theologians focus on the redemptive and sanctifying aspects of Christ's death and resurrection, viewed through the conceptual lens of *theosis*.<sup>303</sup>

*Theosis* is one of the most important concepts in Orthodox Christianity, and is essential to a proper understanding of Orthodox theology and as an extension, the role of warfare within that worldview. *Theosis*, otherwise known as deification, is the process that represents the goal of the Orthodox Christian, to participate in the eternal life of the Holy Trinity.<sup>304</sup> Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christians are by grace able:

to participate fully in the healing and fulfillment that the Incarnate Son of God has brought to the world. All are called to embrace and be transformed by the holiness of God, to become saints.<sup>305</sup>

An integral part of this process as shown in the Orthodox divine liturgies is peace. Along with perfection, holiness and sinlessness, peace was seen as an ideal to strive toward

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid., p. 236

<sup>301</sup> Ibid., p. 236

<sup>302</sup> John Anthony McGuckin, *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), p. 40

<sup>303</sup> John Anthony McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 198-99

<sup>304</sup> Philip LeMasters, 'Orthodox Perspectives on Peace, War, and Violence', *The Ecumenical Review*, 63:1 (March 2011), p. 57

<sup>305</sup> Ibid., p. 57

and uphold.<sup>306</sup> Any activity which would either frustrate or impede a believer's ability to participate in the ongoing process of deification, such as warfare, could only be seen as sinful.<sup>307</sup>

In Orthodox theology then, killing in warfare is understood in light of the concept of 'involuntary sin'. Involuntary sin refers to actions which are damaging to the soul despite the fact they are performed without malice and out of necessity.<sup>308</sup> The basis of this concept comes from the creation account in the book of Genesis, whereby death enters the world as the result of Adam's sin. Death is therefore symptomatic of the corruption of the world and the alienation of man from God and neighbour.<sup>309</sup> Anyone who participates in an action such as killing, regardless of intent or context, is participating in the work of death and as such is committing a spiritually damaging act.<sup>310</sup> Again in contrast to the West, Eastern Christianity views sin and repentance in a slightly different light. Rather than looking at repentance as the obligation to pay a legal penalty for one's sins, Eastern Christianity views repentance in a restorative context, whereby the sinner is healed by reorienting their life towards God. A soldier who kills in battle needs to be cleansed, not so much because he has broken a law, but because the act of killing is spiritually damaging.<sup>311</sup> In this context, it is difficult to conceive of a theory of just war similar to that of St Augustine, as killing is regarded as inherently evil, and cannot be justified even through right intent.

Amongst contemporary Orthodox theologians, there is a general consensus that Eastern Christianity never fully developed a doctrine of just war equivalent to that which developed in the West over the course of the medieval period.<sup>312</sup> Two leading twentieth-century Orthodox theologians, Olivier Clement and Stanley Harakas, have defined warfare as a 'necessary evil', which while permissible is not in the strict sense of the term 'justifiable'.<sup>313</sup> John McGuckin, while not ruling out the potential necessity of warfare, described it as "a curse on the human race. It arises only from evil, and causes only wickedness. The Orthodox Church can never legitimately endorse it."<sup>314</sup> The closest

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<sup>306</sup> Ibid., p. 58

<sup>307</sup> Ibid., pp. 57-58

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., p. 57

<sup>309</sup> Ibid., p. 57

<sup>310</sup> Ibid., p. 57

<sup>311</sup> Ibid., p. 57

<sup>312</sup> Ibid., p. 56

<sup>313</sup> Fr. Stanley Harakas, 'The Teaching of Peace in the Fathers', pp. 181-193; Olivier Clement, 'The Orthodox Church and Peace – Some Reflections' in Hildo Bos and Jim Forest (eds.), *For the Peace from Above: An Orthodox Resource Book on War, Peace and Nationalism* (Bialystok: Orthdruk Printing House, 1999), pp. 172-179

<sup>314</sup> McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 407

endorsement of a ‘just’ war theory in contemporary Orthodoxy has been presented by Alexander Webster.<sup>315</sup> Webster defines three positions in relation to war and peace: holy war, just war and pacifism.<sup>316</sup> Holy war, of the type equivalent to the Western Crusade or Islamic jihad, is not considered a viable moral option for Orthodox Christians. Along with pacifism though, ‘justifiable’ war is seen by Webster to be accepted within the Orthodox tradition, citing support from patristic, canonical and hagiographical sources.<sup>317</sup> Webster equates sources which permit warfare as in some sense also justifying it, leading to some significant criticism from other Orthodox scholars.<sup>318</sup>

One of the most important foundations for the Eastern Christian perception of warfare comes from St Basil of Caesarea (330-379) in his thirteenth canon. St Basil writes:

Homicide in war is not reckoned by our fathers as homicide; I presume from their wish to make concession to men fighting on behalf of chastity and true religion. Perhaps, however, it is well to counsel that those whose hands are not clean only abstain from communion for three years.<sup>319</sup>

This canon, although never implemented into Byzantine law, remained highly influential within Byzantine theological circles.<sup>320</sup> This was due in no small part to Basil’s status within the Eastern Church, where along with Gregory Nazianzus and John Chrysostom, he was considered one of the “Three Holy Hierarchs” of the ancient Church.<sup>321</sup>

The first verse of the canon: “Homicide in war is not recognised by our fathers as homicide”, is a reference to earlier allowances of warfare by theologians, and most likely in particular to St Athanasius of Alexandria (298-373).<sup>322</sup> In his letter to Amun, Athanasius declared that:

it is not right to kill, yet in war it is lawful and praiseworthy to destroy the enemy; accordingly not only are they who have distinguished themselves in the field worthy of great honours, but monuments are

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<sup>315</sup> Alexander F.C. Webster, *The Pacifist Option: The Moral Argument against War in Eastern Orthodox Moral Theology* (San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1998); Alexander F.C. Webster and Darrell Cole, *The Virtue of War: Reclaiming the Classic Christian Traditions East and West* (Salisbury: Regina Orthodox Press, 2004)

<sup>316</sup> Webster, *The Pacifist Option*, pp. 82-83

<sup>317</sup> *ibid.*, pp 82-89

<sup>318</sup> Andrew Louth, ‘Review of: Alexander F.C. Webster and Darrell Cole, *The Virtue of War: Reclaiming the Classic Christian Traditions East and West*’, *In Communion*, Issue 33 (Spring 2004)

<sup>319</sup> Basil, *Letter 187*, 187.13, p. 228

<sup>320</sup> Patrick Viscuso, ‘Christian Participation in Warfare: A Byzantine View’, in George T. Dennis, Timothy S. Miller and John W. Nesbitt (eds.), *Peace and War in Byzantium: Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1995), p. 38

<sup>321</sup> McGuckin, *Patristic Theology*, p. 47

<sup>322</sup> Basil, *Letter 187*, 187.13, p. 228; McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 403-404

put up proclaiming their achievements. So that the same act is at one time and under some circumstances unlawful, while under others, and at the right time, it is lawful and permissible.<sup>323</sup>

Although Basil is certainly seeking to challenge aspects of Athanasius' position, it is less clear how far apart their views actually are. In a different translation of the text, Stanley Harakas interprets Athanasius' statement as one which is consistent with the concept of involuntary sin: "Therefore, the same thing on the one hand according to which at one time is not permitted, is on the other, at appropriate times permitted and is forgiven".<sup>324</sup> While deeming war "lawful and praiseworthy" in its proper context, it is still acknowledged that the action itself still requires forgiveness.<sup>325</sup> It is also important to point out that Athanasius' letter to Amun is not ostensibly about the issue of the legality of warfare. Its primary focus is a reply to a query by an Egyptian monk as to whether involuntary nocturnal emissions are deemed to be sinful.<sup>326</sup> John McGuckin argues that Athanasius merely used the discussion on warfare as a rhetorical tool to illustrate his answer: namely that context and intent inform whether an action is sinful or not.<sup>327</sup> In this context, Athanasius may merely be commenting on the common contemporary view of warfare, not explicitly defining the position of the Church.<sup>328</sup> It would, he argues, be reading too much into the text to assume that this could provide the basis for a Christian conception of warfare.<sup>329</sup>

In the second part of the passage, Basil admits to the necessity of war under certain circumstances, in this instance "to men fighting on behalf of chastity and true religion".<sup>330</sup> The context in which Basil was writing referred to the small-scale raiding of Roman border towns by pagan tribal insurgents.<sup>331</sup> Although bloodshed is seen as lamentable and sinful, it is necessary for the protection of the weak and defenceless and of the Christian faith. Because of this, Basil still prescribes an abstention from communion for three years for those who fight, as their "hands are not clean".<sup>332</sup> This ruling, although seemingly harsh, treats the soldier who kills in war as an involuntary sinner rather than a voluntary murderer. Furthermore, in the wider context of the letter, Basil's judgement in this situation is relatively

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<sup>323</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, *Letter 48, to Amun*, in Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (eds.), *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, Volume 4, *St. Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, ed. Archibald Robinson (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1991), p. 557

<sup>324</sup> Harakas, 'The Teaching of Peace in the Fathers', p. 191

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191

<sup>326</sup> Athanasius, *Letter 48*, p. 557

<sup>327</sup> McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 404

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 404

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 404

<sup>330</sup> Basil, *Letter 187*, 187.13, p. 228

<sup>331</sup> McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 404-405

<sup>332</sup> St Basil, *Letter 187*, 187.13, p. 228

lenient. Those who are judged to be involuntary murderers, that is, those agents whose actions are “purely unintentional, and widely removed from the purpose of the agent”, are to receive an eleven year abstention from communion.<sup>333</sup> Women who abort their unborn children are to receive an eleven year sentence, while those who are convicted of a voluntary murder would face a sentence of twenty years.<sup>334</sup>

The authority of Basil’s thirteenth canon within the legal framework of the Byzantine Empire throughout its history has at times been questioned. A prime example of this involved a tenth-century dispute between Byzantine Emperor Nikephoras II Phokas (963-969) and Patriarch Polyeukos. The dispute revolved around the emperor’s attempt to “establish a law that those who fell during wars be honoured equally with the holy martyrs, and be celebrated with hymns and feastdays.”<sup>335</sup> The Church hierarchy responded by appealing to Basil’s thirteenth canon by stating, “how is it possible to number with the martyrs those who fell during war, whom Basil the Great excluded from the Sanctified Elements for three years since their hands were not clean?”<sup>336</sup> This argument led to a confession from certain bishops and priests present at the synod that they themselves had been involved in military campaigns. These individuals were subsequently either defrocked or made to leave the priesthood.<sup>337</sup> Patrick Viscuso, in his study ‘Christian Participation in Warfare’, examines the fourteenth-century Byzantine canonist Matthew Blastares and his views on the authority of Basil’s thirteenth canon.<sup>338</sup> Blastares defends the authority of the canon against the arguments of two twelfth-century canonists, John Zonaras and Theodore Balsamon. Both Zonaris and Balsamon argued that the thirteenth canon was not to be considered authoritative.<sup>339</sup> This was due to the fact that the canon had never been strictly implemented but was used as counsel, due to its overly burdensome nature, and believed the actions of Polyeukos’ synod in the tenth century were motivated primarily by a wish to reduce imperial interference within the Church.<sup>340</sup> As well as offering his historical argument, Blastares also appealed to theological and scriptural arguments, citing Luke 9:55, whereby even when Israel conducted wars under divine sanction, those who took part were required to be ritually purified. Blastares does not

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<sup>333</sup> Basil, *Letter 187*, 187.8 and 187.11, pp. 226, 228

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.2, p. 225

<sup>335</sup> Viscuso, ‘Christian Participation in Warfare’, p. 37

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38

refute the argument that the thirteenth canon was never incorporated into legislation, but relies on the holiness of Basil's viewpoint to support its authority.<sup>341</sup>

The Eastern Church's understanding of warfare is significantly different from the concepts which developed in the West. War is understood in light of the concepts of *theosis* and involuntary sin. While at times it is unfortunately necessary, it is a state which is inherently defiling and is a frustration of the individual's process towards *theosis*. Because Eastern theology does not place the concepts of sin and repentance within a legalistic framework, war cannot be considered 'just'. This view is reflected in Basil's canons concerning war. While never strictly applied in practice, Basil's thirteenth canon represents an ideal which strives to uphold peace as a normative state.

### **Social and Political Considerations**

Theology was of course, not the only differentiating factor between attitudes to warfare in the East and West. Social, political and economic factors would also help determine the paths that were taken. The survival of the Roman Empire in the East would lead to a society that was in a number of ways very different from the medieval West. The political relationship between the Byzantine Emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople, the continuation of Roman administrative institutions and the effects of the seventh-century Arab invasions would provide fundamental points of distinction between the culture of Eastern and Western Christianity.

One of the key political distinctions between Byzantium and the medieval West was the relationship between the temporal and spiritual spheres of society. While in the West, a clear separation between the two developed, in Byzantium the relationship between the imperial and the priestly was far more complex. This relationship was not an easy one to define. Byzantium possessed no written constitution that summarized the distribution of authority, nor did it have an official Byzantine political theology.<sup>342</sup> In the past, Western scholars have sought to define the relationship between Emperor and Patriarch under the heading of *Caesaropapism*. In contrast to the situation in the West, both civil *and* religious authority was vested in the hands of one person.<sup>343</sup> This gave the Roman emperor disproportionate authority over the Patriarch, relegating the Church effectively to a

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<sup>341</sup> Ibid., pp. 35-38

<sup>342</sup> Deno J. Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West: Two Worlds of Christendom in Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), p. 58; McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 384

<sup>343</sup> J.M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 299



‘department of state’.<sup>344</sup> This is a view which has been challenged in recent decades, as it does not appear to adequately grasp the complexity of the relationship between the *basileia* and *sacerdotium*.<sup>345</sup> The ideal relationship between emperor and the patriarch was originally envisioned to be a relationship defined by *symphonia*, harmonious cooperation.<sup>346</sup> In the fourth century, Eusebius envisioned a system based on the Graeco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian traditions, whereby the emperor is sovereign and provides the law, but all those laws must be based on Christian principles.<sup>347</sup> Furthermore, while the emperor was considered to be divinely appointed, this validation was understood as a conditional arrangement.<sup>348</sup> Failure to live up to these divine standards could see an emperor lose his legitimate right to rule, a situation not uncommon in Byzantine society.<sup>349</sup> This general understanding of *symphonia* was affirmed by Justinian I in his Novels. Byzantine society was made up of the *sacerdotium* and the *basileia*, with the priesthood responsible for promoting orthodoxy, while the empire looked after temporal affairs.<sup>350</sup> In addition, it was the task of the emperors to carry out the religious decrees put in place by the Church councils.<sup>351</sup> Throughout the history of the empire, this ideal would remain consistent, although in practice the relationship between the emperors and patriarchs would be defined by compromise, conflict and interference.

The practical outworking of the relationship between the *basileia* and *sacerdotium* did not always live up to the ideals of *symphonia* promoted by earlier theologians and statesmen. Due to the lack of precise definition of the administrative roles within the empire, conflict and interference between the sacred and the secular was almost inevitable. Deno Geanakoplos, in his critique of *caesaropapism*, constructed a framework within which power was distributed between the *basileia* and *sacerdotium*.<sup>352</sup> Divided into three different spheres were the secular realm, the external form of the Church, and its inner, esoteric form.<sup>353</sup> External refers to the organisational and administrative aspects of Church governance, while internal refers to the fundamentals of the Church’s beliefs, including dogma and the

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<sup>344</sup> Ibid., p. 299

<sup>345</sup> Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West*, pp. 55-83; McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 380-84; Hussey, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 299-303

<sup>346</sup> McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 390-91

<sup>347</sup> Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West*, p. 61

<sup>348</sup> McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church*, pp 386-87

<sup>349</sup> Ibid., pp. 386, 381-2

<sup>350</sup> Hussey, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 300

<sup>351</sup> Ibid., p. 300

<sup>352</sup> Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West*, p. 64

<sup>353</sup> Ibid., p. 64

sacraments.<sup>354</sup> Two of these spheres had a relatively straightforward source of authority. The secular realm was effectively unchallenged as the sole domain of the emperor, and was not interfered with by the patriarch.<sup>355</sup> Conversely, while emperors certainly did on occasion try to change the fundamentals of Church doctrine, such as during the Iconoclast affair, for all intents and purposes the Church maintained authority over its canons and sacraments.<sup>356</sup> The main point of contention revolved around the external administration of the Church. Both emperor and patriarch had important functions within Church administration, but due to his prerogative power to be able to select and depose the patriarch at will, in theory the emperor could exert a disproportionate influence over that administration.<sup>357</sup> The tension between imperial and ecclesiastical power was never fully resolved in Byzantium. Views ranged from regarding the emperor as above canon law to the other extreme, whereby the emperor should be restricted to purely secular affairs.<sup>358</sup>

The nature of the relationship between the sacred and secular in the Byzantine Empire would have significant implications for the development of a theory of holy war. The Byzantine conception of temporal and spiritual authority remained fundamentally distinct from that which developed in the medieval West. While the papacy in the West reached a point where popes could claim both religious and political authority over Christendom, their equivalents in Constantinople never acquired (or attempted to acquire) any degree of authority in the secular realm. While in 1095 Urban II was able to bring together an army under papal authority to win back the Holy Land, no patriarch was ever in a position to launch a holy war based on his own independent political authority.

The Eastern Roman Empire was not affected by the invasions and crises of the fifth century to anywhere near the same extent as the citizens of the Western Empire were. By 400AD, the Eastern Empire was still a politically and financially stable entity.<sup>359</sup> Despite the loss of many Western provinces, by the beginning of the seventh century the Eastern Empire was, in relative terms, powerful, politically stable and prosperous.<sup>360</sup> It operated under the same basic economic and administrative framework that existed in the fourth- and fifth-century empire, maintaining its fiscal structures and regional interrelationships.<sup>361</sup> However,

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<sup>354</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-66, 74

<sup>355</sup> Ibid., pp. 80-81

<sup>356</sup> Ibid., pp. 80-81

<sup>357</sup> Ibid., pp. 80-82

<sup>358</sup> Hussey, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 302-303

<sup>359</sup> Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, p. 29

<sup>360</sup> Mark Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium 600-1025* (London: Macmillan, 1996), p. 68

<sup>361</sup> Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, p. 124

over the course of the seventh century, Byzantium would face a crisis every bit as severe as that which faced the Western Empire during the fifth century. The first major crisis to strike Byzantium was the outbreak of a protracted and devastating war with Persia at the beginning of the century. While the Byzantines eventually came out of the conflict victorious and in a better state than the Persians, it severely weakened the Byzantine state.<sup>362</sup> The war had been characterised by sweeping campaigns which penetrated deep into the enemy's heartland, thus ensuring mutual devastation for both Byzantium and Persia.<sup>363</sup> The resolution of that conflict was then followed, almost immediately, by another invasion. Under the banner of the new religion of Islam, the tribesmen of Arabia launched an invasion against both Byzantium and Persia, a development which was at the time, totally unprecedented and unexpected.<sup>364</sup> By 642, the empire had already lost Syria, Palestine and Egypt, while regions such as Anatolia would be systematically attacked for another century.<sup>365</sup>

The most important, as well as obvious, distinction between the crisis that faced the Western Empire in the fifth century and the Eastern Empire in the seventh Century was the political outcome. While in the West the Roman imperial framework had fallen apart, the Eastern Empire, while significantly diminished in size, survived and would continue to survive in some form for another eight hundred years. While Byzantium would be forced to evolve and adapt as a civilisation, the identity and traditions of its citizens remained very much tied to the concept of Rome and the empire.<sup>366</sup> While Latin had only ever been a language of government and administration in the East, and even then only up until the sixth century, the Byzantines continued to identify themselves as Romans (*Romaioi*) and were considered as such by their Muslim neighbours as well (*Rum*).<sup>367</sup> There was no significant change to the conception of the emperor or his specific roles. Because of this, issues such as the relationship between the emperor and the patriarch remained relatively stable and constant throughout Byzantine history. Likewise, institutions vital to the continuation of the Roman state continued to exist. The army continued to function, and a system of taxation was maintained even during the worst periods of the seventh-century crisis.<sup>368</sup> These institutions, along with many others, would be transformed significantly as a result of the Arab invasions.

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<sup>362</sup> Hugh Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests: How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live In* (London: Penguin, 2008), pp. 366-369

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 366-369

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 368-370

<sup>365</sup> Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, p. 125

<sup>366</sup> Robert Browning, *The Byzantine Empire*, Revised Edition (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992), pp. 69-70

<sup>367</sup> Herrin, *Byzantium*, p. 19; Louth, 'Byzantium Transforming', p. 238

<sup>368</sup> Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 127-129

However, the Byzantine world of the eighth century and beyond, was formed from the basis of the Roman imperial system that was present during the late Roman period.<sup>369</sup>

While the events of the seventh century did not destroy Byzantine civilisation, they did change the way in which Byzantium functioned both politically and socially. The loss of the provinces of Egypt, Syria and Palestine would have far-reaching consequences for the empire and would ensure it never again reached the size and power that it had enjoyed during Justinian's reign. The loss of these provinces was certainly damaging culturally and numerically.<sup>370</sup> Even more damaging was the loss of Egypt as the primary grain supply for Constantinople. Without the surplus Egyptian grain, Constantinople could not afford to support its comparatively huge population.<sup>371</sup> In order to cope with the new situation, many Byzantine institutions would undergo significant transformation. One of the most significant changes that resulted from the seventh-century crisis was the merging of civil and military administration in the provinces. The reforms of Diocletian and Constantine had established a rigid separation between the army and the civilian administration of a province.<sup>372</sup> Provincial governors had no authority over troops stationed in their area, while army commanders had no authority over the civilian population.<sup>373</sup> With almost all regions in the empire now vulnerable to attack, standing armies became vital to the survival of the Byzantine state.<sup>374</sup> Over the course of the eighth and ninth centuries, a system developed where the surviving Byzantine territories were formed into military districts, called *themes*.<sup>375</sup> These districts were put under the command of a *strategos*, who was responsible for both the civil and military administration of a province.<sup>376</sup> In a similar situation to what had happened in Western Europe, provincial civilian hierarchies were replaced by military hierarchies.<sup>377</sup> Only in Constantinople did the civilian administration of Byzantium continue to survive.<sup>378</sup>

In many ways it would appear that Byzantine society after the seventh century had many features in common with Western Europe. Like the West, Byzantium had suffered from an external crisis which had left it poorer and more militarised.<sup>379</sup> The old system of the city-based economy had declined, while military aristocracies had emerged at the expense of the

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<sup>369</sup> Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium*, p. 103

<sup>370</sup> Browning, *The Byzantine Empire*, p. 43

<sup>371</sup> Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 125-126

<sup>372</sup> Louth, 'Byzantium Transforming', p. 240

<sup>373</sup> Browning, *The Byzantine Empire*, p. 47

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*, p.48

<sup>377</sup> Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, p. 236

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129

civilian administration in the provinces.<sup>380</sup> However throughout this period, unlike Western Europe, Byzantium remained a highly centralised state. Its economy was undoubtedly weaker, yet it still retained a centralised taxation system.<sup>381</sup> The military administration had been transformed, yet its loyalties remained tied to the emperor rather than its provincial aristocracy.<sup>382</sup> And while Byzantine aristocracies had increasingly become military rather than civil, Constantinople retained a salaried, civilian bureaucracy.<sup>383</sup> The invasions of the fifth century in Western Europe had resulted in a fragmented and regionalised society which was not only militarised, but was imbued with a strong martial culture. This can be attributed to some degree to the influx of Germanic culture into Western Europe, but was also a product of the breakdown of Roman imperial structures. This did not happen to the same extent in the Byzantine Empire. While society was to a degree militarised, the glorification of war and martial virtues that was so pervasive in Western Europe was not present in the Byzantine East.

The social and political environment of the Byzantine Empire contributed significantly to the way its citizens approached warfare. In Constantinople, the roles of the emperor and the patriarch were considerably different from that of their counterparts in Western Europe. Unlike the role the papacy was to develop, the Byzantine clergy never gained or attempted to gain a governing role in secular affairs. Whereas the papacy got to the stage in the eleventh century where they could raise an army under a papal banner, the patriarch was always restricted in power to purely ecclesiastical matters. Furthermore, while in the medieval West, the collapse of Roman institutions and influx of Germanic culture resulted in a militarised society within which war was glorified, the Byzantine Empire did not share the same attitude. While the Arab invasions had brought about significant socio-political changes, Byzantine society remained heavily centralised and did not create an environment in which violence was considered a great virtue.

### **Practical Application of Warfare in Byzantium**

While Byzantine theologians may have viewed it in a negative manner, warfare would prove to be an ever-present reality throughout Byzantine history. The manner in which wars were fought, would however be a reflection of attitudes of the empire's emperors and

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<sup>380</sup> Louth, 'Byzantium Transforming', pp. 240-241

<sup>381</sup> Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 128-129

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129

generals. Byzantine attitudes towards war would also be challenged by the emergence of the holy war in the form of the crusade and jihad.

The Byzantine understanding of warfare was tied closely to the concept of empire, and in particular to the person of the emperor himself. While after the Christianisation of the empire it was shown that war could be utilised for the defence and advancement of Christianity, it was not a necessary precondition that Rome's wars had to be fought in the defence of religion.<sup>384</sup> Above all, the empire's wars were fought for the benefit of the empire and to bring victory to the emperor himself.<sup>385</sup> This conception of warfare was similar to that which existed during Late Roman times.<sup>386</sup> Very much representative of this imperial model was the Emperor Justinian (527-565). While deferential to Christianity as the official religion of the empire, Justinian viewed his conquests through a very traditional Roman lens, whereby barbarians were brought under the Roman yoke and new provinces were added to the empire.<sup>387</sup> This was evident by the nature of the triumph in Constantinople arranged after the victory of his general Belisarius in Africa. The triumph itself was a throwback to a bygone era, as no triumph had been held in Constantinople for the two centuries of its history.<sup>388</sup> What was notable about it however, was the lack of Christian elements present in the procession and rituals of the triumph.<sup>389</sup>

The lack of overt Christian symbolism in the military sphere had changed by the seventh century. The wars with Sassanid Persia during the reign of Heraclius (610-641) saw the introduction of a number of Christian symbols and rituals.<sup>390</sup> From that time on in Byzantine history, there would be a noticeable liturgical element in the wars of the empire.<sup>391</sup> In contrast to the traditional Roman imperial imagery present in the Triumph of Belisarius, Heraclius' own triumph after the defeat of the Persians placed religious symbolism at the forefront.<sup>392</sup> Rather than being based around the centre of secular celebrations, the Hippodrome, Heraclius' triumph was directed towards the church of the Hagia Sophia.<sup>393</sup> For some historians, Heraclius' war against Persia provides evidence enough that Byzantium was

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<sup>384</sup> Nicholas Oikonomides, 'The Concept of "Holy War" and Two Tenth-Century Byzantine Ivories' in George T. Dennis, Timothy S. Miller and John W. Nesbitt (eds.), *Peace and War in Byzantium: Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1995), p. 62

<sup>385</sup> Oikonomides, 'The Concept of Holy War', p. 66

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68

<sup>387</sup> Browning, *The Byzantine Empire*, p. 12

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14

capable of launching a holy war of its own.<sup>394</sup> However, Nicholas Oikonomides makes the argument that the increased use of religious rituals before and during warfare did not amount to the idea of a war fought in the name of religion. Rather, divine favour was sought to ensure the victory of the emperor, just as it had been throughout human history.<sup>395</sup> Byzantine armies certainly did make use of religious rituals before battle, such as prayer, Divine Liturgy and the Holy Communion.<sup>396</sup> However, these rituals took place as standard procedure, regardless of the religion of the enemy, whether they were Muslim or Christian.<sup>397</sup> In his study of two Byzantine ivories commemorating imperial victories from the tenth century, Oikonomides concluded that the references to imperial wars were incidental and did not provide any evidence of a prevailing Byzantine concept of holy war.<sup>398</sup> Wars such as Heraclius', with clear religious consequences, merely reflected the intensity and gravitas of the conflict, without fundamentally changing the approach toward war, which was fundamentally based around the person of the emperor.<sup>399</sup>

This understanding of warfare in Byzantium is reflected by a collection of Byzantine military handbooks ranging from the sixth to the tenth century. These manuals, called *strategikon*, provided a practical guide to military strategy, tactics and logistics, but also offer some insight into attitudes towards the concept of warfare itself within the Byzantine military establishment. An anonymous manual from the sixth century justifies the use of arms in spite of their 'evil' nature:

I know well that war is a great evil and the worst of all evils. But since our enemies clearly look upon the shedding of our blood as one of their basic duties and the height of virtue, and since each one must stand up for his own country and his own people with word, pen, and deed, we have decided to write about strategy.<sup>400</sup>

Another manual from the sixth century, *Maurice's Strategikon*, most likely written by Emperor Maurice himself, approaches the subject of war in a very serious and meticulous manner.<sup>401</sup> The author clearly does not view warfare as a noble pursuit in and of itself, but

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<sup>394</sup> Ibid., p. 12

<sup>395</sup> Oikonomides, 'The Concept of Holy War', pp. 66-67

<sup>396</sup> Ibid., p. 66

<sup>397</sup> Ibid., p. 66

<sup>398</sup> Ibid., p. 86

<sup>399</sup> Ibid., p. 86

<sup>400</sup> *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, trans. George T. Dennis (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), p. 21

<sup>401</sup> *Maurice's Strategikon: Handbook of Byzantine Military Strategy*, trans. George T. Dennis (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), p. xiv

rather as a means towards furthering the goals of the state, undesirable though it may be.<sup>402</sup> War is not glorified, and there is a continuous bias against the pursuit of open warfare if at all possible.<sup>403</sup> Victory through sheer force is advised against, as it is considered ‘ridiculous to try to gain a victory which is so costly and brings only empty glory’.<sup>404</sup> Instead, the use of trickery, ambushes and ruses are recommended, to demoralise the enemy and prevent the need for open battle.<sup>405</sup> Generals are even advised to leave a gap in their lines to give the enemy an opportunity to flee, ‘in case they judge that flight is better than remaining and taking their chances in battle.’<sup>406</sup> An interesting contrast is provided in a section describing the tendencies and tactics of the Frankish peoples. While disparaged for their perceived lack of discipline and organisation, the Franks are characterised as violent, bold and impetuous on the battlefield, with a seemingly callous disregard for their own personal safety.<sup>407</sup> While the Byzantine avoids war and fights only when he has to, the Frank is portrayed as actively seeking out combat as an opportunity to prove his value.<sup>408</sup>

In addition to these, Emperor Leo VI (886-912) also produced a military manual, the *Taktika*, which commented on the merits of military enterprise.<sup>409</sup> In the introduction, Leo states the Byzantine position on the subject of war. In the opinion of Leo, the normative state for humanity is one of peace.<sup>410</sup> Humans cherish their own safety, and embrace peace as the proper way of life, if given the opportunity.<sup>411</sup> The existence of war is attributable to the devil, who through sin entices humans to fight with each other, going against their natural inclination.<sup>412</sup> War could therefore, only be justified when fighting against those who were doing the devil’s work. Defensive wars were considered legitimate as they were a response to unprovoked aggression.<sup>413</sup> Offensive warfare, however, against those who have not been wronged, is considered unjust and undesirable, regardless of whether they are Christians or barbarians.<sup>414</sup> All three of these *strategika*, while created for the express purpose of teaching generals how to win wars, do not seek to glorify the profession of warfare at all. War is

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<sup>402</sup> Ibid., p. xiv

<sup>403</sup> Ibid., p. 83

<sup>404</sup> Ibid., p. 65

<sup>405</sup> Ibid., p. 80

<sup>406</sup> Ibid., p. 91

<sup>407</sup> Ibid., p. 119

<sup>408</sup> Ibid., p. 119

<sup>409</sup> *The Taktika of Leo VI*, trans. George T. Dennis (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2010)

<sup>410</sup> George T. Dennis, Timothy S. Miller and John W. Nesbitt (eds.), *Peace and War in Byzantium: Essays in Honor of George T. Dennis* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1995), p. 4

<sup>411</sup> Ibid., p. 4

<sup>412</sup> Ibid., p. 4

<sup>413</sup> Ibid., p. 4

<sup>414</sup> Ibid., p. 4



presented as a necessary obligation for the defence of the empire, and in Maurice's *Strategikon* and Leo's *Taktika* there are some just war ideas present. Even so, war is never portrayed in a positive light or as something that should be sought after. Both the anonymous sixth-century manual and Leo's *Taktika* explicitly state that war itself is an evil, while the undesirable nature of war is implicitly referred to throughout Maurice's *Strategikon*.

The Byzantine attitude towards warfare can also be understood more clearly from its interactions with other cultures and religions. Over the course of Byzantine history, the empire was confronted with theories of holy war from both Western Christianity and Islam. The reactions of the Byzantines to the concepts of crusade and jihad help to illustrate more clearly the Byzantine concept of war.

The Byzantine Empire was first introduced to the Western Christian idea of holy war through the medieval crusades. During the First Crusade, Byzantine forces under Emperor Alexius Comnenus had a number of interactions with the crusading armies that assembled in the capital, Constantinople. A Byzantine perspective on the crusades and on the Western Christians themselves has been recorded in the account of Anna Comnena in the *Alexiad*.<sup>415</sup> Comnena's understanding of the motivation and justification behind the crusade was fairly simplistic. She understood the originator of the movement to be Peter the Hermit, who was commanded by a divine voice: 'To proclaim to all the counts in France that all should depart from their homes, set out to worship at the Holy Shrine and with all their soul and might strive to liberate Jerusalem from the Agarenes'.<sup>416</sup> Comnena does not comment on the merits, good or bad, of the crusade itself. Of theological issues such as the remission of sins for crusaders, she does not seem to have much awareness. What she does comment on, however, is the overall character of the Franks and their deeds. In general, Comnena held the Franks' character in a fairly low estimation, noting their uncontrollable passion, erratic character and greed as key traits.<sup>417</sup> In their deeds they were also shown to be very cruel, through their treatment of the population of Nicaea.<sup>418</sup> The divergent attitudes toward warfare itself between the Latins and Byzantines are most striking in Comnena's description of a Latin priest fighting alongside his soldiers.<sup>419</sup> Shocked by the willingness of the Latin clergy to take up arms with the same hands that handle sacred objects and distribute the sacraments,

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<sup>415</sup> Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*, trans. E.R.A. Sewter (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969)

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 309

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 311-312

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 317-318

Comnena comes to the conclusion that the Latin race “is no less devoted to religion than to war”.<sup>420</sup>

While the crusades certainly made a significant impression on Byzantine history, the Islamic concept of jihad was a far more pressing concern for the empire after the emergence of Islam in the seventh century. During the period of initial contact between the caliphate and the empire, the Byzantine understanding of jihad or even Islam itself was almost non-existent. In the account of Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, the Arabs were portrayed as godless or God-hating barbarians.<sup>421</sup> Seemingly unaware of the fact they were preaching a new religion, the Arabs were seen by Sophronius as a judgement on the empire against heresy.<sup>422</sup> Over the next few centuries, the Byzantine understanding of Islam did increase, although those living in close proximity to Muslim populations tended to have a far better understanding than those on Islam’s periphery.<sup>423</sup> Islam was interpreted within a Christian framework, where it was assumed to be a heresy similar to Arianism, as it denied the divinity of Christ.<sup>424</sup> Held almost universally by Byzantines in a very low regard, Muhammad was considered to be a false prophet, while the Qu’ran was described by Nicetas Byzantinos as ‘pitiful’ and ‘inept’.<sup>425</sup>

Byzantine scholars were almost universally opposed to the concept of jihad. As it is argued by Ioannas Stouraitis, Byzantine theologians rejected jihad on the basis of two of its core ideas: “the idea that God commanded the subjugation or annihilation of the infidel and the idea that the believer could gain eternal life in Heaven and become a martyr through his participation in divinely ordained warfare.”<sup>426</sup> The idea that killing can be considered a meritorious act is repeatedly rejected in Byzantine texts. Two ninth-century theologians, Theophanes the Confessor and Nicetas Byzantius, dismiss the idea that warfare can be seen as a religious task, as God would not favour the destruction of his greatest creation, man.<sup>427</sup> Leo VI labels the Muslims as ‘impious’, as they wrongly rejoice in war, whereas God disperses the warmongering nations.<sup>428</sup> This understanding of jihad is supported by the first-hand account of the fourteenth-century Archbishop of Thessaloniki, Gregory Palamas.

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<sup>420</sup> Ibid., p. 317

<sup>421</sup> Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests*, p. 346

<sup>422</sup> Ibid., p. 346

<sup>423</sup> John Meyendorff, ‘Byzantine Views of Islam’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 18, (1964), p. 120

<sup>424</sup> Ibid., pp. 119-121

<sup>425</sup> Ibid., p. 122

<sup>426</sup> Ioannis Stouraitis, ‘Jihad and Crusade’, p. 14

<sup>427</sup> Ibid, p. 15

<sup>428</sup> Ibid, p. 15

Following his capture by Turkish forces of the coast of Kallipolis, Gregory expressed his dismay at the Muslims' belief that violence and warfare were approved of by God:

For these impious people, hated by God and infamous, boast of having got the better of the Romans by their love of God . . . they live by the bow, the sword and debauchery, finding pleasure in taking slaves, devoting themselves to murder, pillage, spoil . . . and not only do they commit these crimes, but even – what an aberration – they believe that God approves of them. This is what I think of them, now that I know precisely about their way of life.”<sup>429</sup>

Stouraitis also notes that this general antipathy towards jihad cannot be attributed simply to political and cultural animosity.<sup>430</sup> As the Byzantines considered Islam to be a heretical form of Christianity, their rejection of it was based primarily on theological and ideological principles.<sup>431</sup> Warfare in the Byzantine Empire was carried out in a manner, if not always consistent with the theological ideals of Eastern Christianity, that attempted to minimise its destructive effects. Byzantine military strategists and tacticians were mindful of the sinful nature of conflict, and sought to achieve victory without resorting to battle if at all possible. War as a profession was a necessity within the empire, but it was not glorified as an end unto itself. In addition, Byzantium had to face the ideological challenge of holy war from both Western Christianity and Islam. While the Byzantine military did incorporate some Christian rituals during its campaigns, it repeatedly rejected the concept that war and the shedding of blood could be considered a holy religious duty.

The Byzantine attitude towards warfare is one which is based primarily on theological principles. Warfare is considered to be an evil state, brought about as a consequence of human sin. Even when considered a necessary task in light of even less desirable alternatives, the act itself is still considered sinful and spiritually damaging. Within this framework, war cannot be fully just according to the definition of St Augustine (i.e. without sin) as the very act of killing in warfare is regarded as sinful, regardless of intent. This view, as a normative ideal, is consistent throughout Byzantine history and was vital in shaping the attitudes of the emperors and soldiers who were required to fight for the empire. War was an essential duty, but it was not actively pursued or admired as an end unto itself. This negative attitude towards war also prevented the development of any form of holy war akin to the crusades or

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<sup>429</sup> Cited from Elizabeth Zachariadou, 'The Holy War in the Aegean during the Fourteenth Century', in Benjamin Arbel, Bernard Hamilton and David Jacoby (eds.), *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (Totowa: Cass, 1989), p. 219

<sup>430</sup> Stouraitis, 'Jihad and Crusade', pp. 15-16

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 15-16

jihad. Indeed, jihad was rejected because of its claim that killing in battle could be regarded in any sense as a meritorious religious act. Additionally however, other factors need to be taken into account, in particular political and social considerations. Unlike the papacy in medieval Western Europe, the patriarchs of Constantinople did not at any stage claim authority over the secular rulers in the way popes such as Gregory VII and Urban II did. The continuity of Roman rule in Byzantium would not allow the development of patriarchal power along the same lines as in Western Europe. Furthermore, Byzantine society was on the whole, far less conducive to the glorification of martial values that typified the aristocracies of Western Europe. However, while these social and political factors need to be taken into consideration, the key underlying factor in the Byzantine attitude towards warfare is that of theology. By consistently defining warfare as an evil and sinful state, holy war could never be fully legitimised within the empire.

## The Medieval Theory of Just War

The twelfth century would mark an important period in the development of just war as a systematic theory. Prior to then, while the concept of just war had been understood as a general principle, there had been no major attempt in the West to expand upon the basic foundational principles as laid down by St Augustine. However, over the latter period of the Middle Ages, a serious effort to refine and elaborate upon Augustine's definition of just war would take place. Canonists and theologians would develop a number of new formulations of the just war, the most well-known and influential of which is found in Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*. In addition to the development of just war theory, the canonists would also seek to define and formulate the concept of holy war, which from 1095 onwards manifested itself in the form of the crusades. However, in contrast to the Latin West, the Byzantine East would fail to either develop its own theory of just war or borrow the concept from its Western neighbours before its destruction in 1453.

### Gratian and the *Decretum*

Up until the twelfth century, just war was a concept that, while influential, was not clearly defined as either a theological doctrine or a legal principle. After this period however, the concept of just war would begin a process of development that would result in a complex doctrine. The catalyst for this long period of development would owe itself to the production of just one book. The *Concordia Discordantium Canonum* ("The Harmony of Discordant Canons"), commonly known simply as the *Decretum*, was an attempt by its author to compile the many canons of the church into one volume and resolve the inconsistencies between them.<sup>432</sup> The *Decretum* was compiled in 1140 by Gratian. Very little is known about the life of Gratian, and even his occupation is the subject of much speculation. Traditionally considered to be a Camaldolese monk, some recent scholarship has questioned this assumption, and there have been suggestions that Gratian may have been a bishop or even a lawyer.<sup>433</sup> The location where the *Decretum* was put together is however more certain. The

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<sup>432</sup> Anders Winroth, *The Making of Gratian's Decretum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 5

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7

*Decretum* was written in Bologna, which was in the twelfth century perhaps the leading law school in Europe.<sup>434</sup>

In compiling the *Decretum*, Gratian drew upon a vast collection of texts, spanning from the Bible itself, through the period of the pre-Constantinian Church right up until the time of the book's completion.<sup>435</sup> These texts included papal decretals, conciliar canons, writings of the Church Fathers, and pieces of secular legislation.<sup>436</sup> In relation to the sections involving the issue of warfare, Gratian drew heavily on St Augustine and Isidore of Seville.<sup>437</sup> Indeed, Gratian was not particularly original in his consideration of just war theory, and deferred judgement heavily to the authorities of the past. To focus solely on this though, would be to miss the significance of Gratian's contribution to the development of just war theory. In the opinion of F.H. Russell, Gratian's *Decretum* 'inaugurated the period of systematic canonical jurisprudence'.<sup>438</sup> Whereas earlier efforts at compiling canon law from the Carolingian period onward had been inconsistent at best, the *Decretum* was the first real systematic compilation of canon law in medieval Europe.<sup>439</sup>

The *Decretum* itself consists of three main parts. The first section is divided into 101 *distinctiones*, which are concerned with the sources of law, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and the discipline of the clergy. The second part consists of 36 *causae*, each divided into questions. The third part consists of five *distinctiones* and treats the remaining sacraments.<sup>440</sup> The texts which specifically refer to the matter of warfare are found in Causa 23. The Causa is introduced by stating a hypothetical situation in which "certain bishops have fallen into heresy with the people in their charge".<sup>441</sup> These bishops, threatening their Catholic neighbours to adopt their heretical position, force the Church to act and take measures to bring the heretics into line by force.<sup>442</sup> From this starting point, Gratian poses eight questions relating to the use of violence in a Christian context. Because of this, the debate extends further than the question of whether war can be just, but also delves into such issues as corporal punishment and the correct treatment of heretics.

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<sup>434</sup> Ibid, pp. 144, 157-9

<sup>435</sup> Ibid., p. 5

<sup>436</sup> Ibid., p. 5

<sup>437</sup> Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, pp. 55-56

<sup>438</sup> Ibid., p. 55

<sup>439</sup> Ibid., p. 55

<sup>440</sup> Winroth, *Gratian's Decretum*, p. 5

<sup>441</sup> Gratian, *Decretum Gratiani*, II, causa 23, q. I in Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby (eds), *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2006), p. 109

<sup>442</sup> Ibid., II, causa 23, q. I, p. 109

In quaestiones one of Causa 23, Gratian focuses on the issue of whether it is a sin to serve as a soldier. Providing a number of examples from Jesus in the New Testament, Gratian first puts forth the proposition that it appears that it is a sin to serve as a soldier.<sup>443</sup> Christians are instructed to turn the other cheek and reserve judgement on others, leaving vengeance and justice for the Lord to repay.<sup>444</sup> To answer these objections, Gratian follows closely the lead of Augustine. Paraphrasing Augustine, Gratian replies that “the precepts of patience have to prevail less in outward deed than in the preparation of the heart”.<sup>445</sup> Provided that a soldier’s heart is peaceable while waging war, in obedience to God or a lawful authority, and not subject to motivations such as mischief, cruelty or greed, it is possible to wage war without sinning. Adhering strictly to the teachings of Augustine throughout the text, Gratian concludes that the occupation of soldiery is not to be considered sinful.

The concept of righteous intent outweighing outward action in warfare is evident in Gratian’s writings throughout Causa 23. In quaestiones three and four, objections are again raised to the legitimacy of warfare. Quaestiones three raises the issue of avenging injury done to one’s associates, where the example of the early Church appeared to be “suffer with joy” any wrongs done to them, having been found worthy to bear disgrace for the sake of Christ.<sup>446</sup> In this case, Gratian follows Ambrose of Milan in saying that those who fail to prevent injury against an associate (who have it in their power to prevent it) are just as culpable as those who inflicted the injury.<sup>447</sup> Citing Exodus, Ambrose writes that Moses, when confronted by an Egyptian mistreating a Jew, defended the latter by striking the Egyptian and burying him in the sand.<sup>448</sup> In the case of quaestiones four, the objection is raised from the Gospel that, “he who resorts to the sword shall perish by the sword”.<sup>449</sup> This objection is countered by Gratian as applying to those who do not fight with legitimate authority and with wrong intent. Gratian then states that vengeance, as it is expressed in warfare, can at times be legitimate and just. Provided that this vengeance is motivated by zeal for justice, rather than for the sake of vengeance itself, warfare can be an appropriate method to correct evil deeds.<sup>450</sup> Throughout both of these texts, the idea that the internal disposition

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<sup>443</sup> Ibid., II, causa 23, q. I, pp. 109-111

<sup>444</sup> Ibid., II, causa 23, q. I, pp. 109-111

<sup>445</sup> Ibid., II, causa 23, q. I, c. 2, p. 111

<sup>446</sup> Ibid., II, causa 23, q. III, p. 114

<sup>447</sup> Ibid., II, causa 23, q. III, c. 7, p. 114

<sup>448</sup> Ibid., II, causa 23, q. III, c. 7, p. 115

<sup>449</sup> Ibid., II, causa 23, q. IV, p. 115

<sup>450</sup> Ibid., II, causa 23, q. IV, cc. 51, 54, pp. 115-116

takes precedence over the external action is fundamental to Gratian's understanding of warfare and justice.

Having provided the reassurance that warfare itself can be pursued without sin, Gratian then moved on to the definition of the just war in question two. In this case, Isidore of Seville's basic Roman conception of just war provides the blueprint. A just war is described in Canon one simply as a war "which is waged by an edict in order to regain what has been stolen or to repel the attack of enemies".<sup>451</sup> From this, Gratian ascertains that there are but two criteria which define the just war: formal declaration or the avenging of injustice.<sup>452</sup> Referring to Augustine's commentary on the wars of the Israelites, Gratian uses their example to further nuance his own definition of just war. The use of ambushes by Joshua against the Canaanites gave legitimacy to the tactic, and did not affect the justice of the cause of war.<sup>453</sup> In addition, the wars of the Israelites against the Amorites provided an example of a rightful cause for war. By denying the Israelites innocent passage across their territory, "which ought to have been granted according to the most equitable law governing human society", the Amorites therefore inflicted an injustice on the Israelites that legitimated a war against them.<sup>454</sup>

Also related to the concept of just war in Gratian's mind was the principle of legitimate authority. In quaestiones five of Causa 23, Gratian answers the objection to the idea that all killing is prohibited as specified by the biblical commands "Thou shalt not kill" and "Whoever takes the sword, shall perish by the sword".<sup>455</sup> In answering these objections, Gratian makes a clear distinction between the public and private spheres. While the act of killing undertaken by a private citizen would in almost any context be categorised as homicide, Gratian makes a distinction between the actions of private individuals and those acting in obedience to authorities.<sup>456</sup> In canon 41 of quaestiones five, Gratian takes his position from Augustine. Augustine judges that neither a soldier killing an enemy, or a judge or his minister killing a criminal would necessarily be guilty of committing a sin, as they were acting in obedience to a legitimate authority. As it is stated in Augustine's *Questions on Leviticus*: 'When a man is justly killed, it is the law, not you, who kills him.'<sup>457</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> Gratian, *Decretum Gratiani*, II, causa 23, q. II, c. 1, p. 113

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid.*, II, causa 23, q. II, c. 3, p. 113

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*, II, causa 23, q. II, c. 2, p. 113

<sup>454</sup> *Ibid.*, II, causa 23, q. II, c. 3, p. 113

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.*, II, causa 23, q. V, p. 116

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*, II, causa 23, q. V, cc. 9, 13, p. 117

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.*, II, causa 23, q. V, c. 41, p. 119



In addition to his definition of the just war in Causa 23, Gratian also discussed a number of issues relating to the role of the Church in warfare. As F.H. Russell noted, Gratian's just war functioned on two different levels.<sup>458</sup> While on one level, there was warfare which derived from legitimate secular authority and was waged for the recovery of stolen goods or the avenging of injuries, there was a second level which was related to the concept of holy war.<sup>459</sup> Quaestiones six, seven and eight of Causa 23 examined the role of the Church and its relationships with heretics, excommunicates and infidels. Quaestiones six and seven dealt primarily with the issue of heretics, whether they should be compelled back into the Church and whether they were allowed to retain their own property. Citing Augustine again, Gratian concludes that it is indeed right for Catholics to compel heretics by whatever means necessary.<sup>460</sup> Gratian argues that the use of force is justified, as through tribulations and the fear of punishment, evil will fall into disuse and 'the good becomes agreeable owing to habit'.<sup>461</sup> Likewise, Catholics could rightly dispossess heretics of their property, as what the heretics possess, they possess without right.<sup>462</sup>

Quaestiones eight of Causa 23 provided clarification on a number of issues related to the Church and its role in warfare. The Church definitely had a role to play, but it was a limited one. On the issue of the involvement of priests in warfare, there was a strong prohibition against them taking up arms themselves.<sup>463</sup> However, this prohibition only extended to the physical participation of priests in warfare. In canon eight Gratian quotes Pope Leo IV, who states that: 'we have to defend our flock against everybody and be its foremost protectors.'<sup>464</sup> Because of this, Gratian argues that it is allowed for the prelates of the Church, following Leo's example, to 'vigorously exhort anybody to make a defence against the adversaries of the holy faith and to incite everybody to fend off the violence of the infidels.'<sup>465</sup>

The significance of the *Decretum* in the development of just war theory should not be underestimated. Gratian's achievement lay not particularly in the originality or innovation of his own ideas, but in his systematic organisation of centuries of canonical texts. In his treatment of warfare and in particular the concept of just war, Gratian was heavily indebted to

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<sup>458</sup> Russell, *Just War*, p. 84

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84

<sup>460</sup> Gratian, *Decretum Gratiani*, II, causa 23, q. VI, cc. 1, 4, p. 122

<sup>461</sup> *Ibid.*, II, causa 23, q. VI, c. 4, p.122

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*, II, causa 23, q. VII, pp. 122-123

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*, II, causa 23, q. VIII, c. 4, p. 123

<sup>464</sup> *Ibid.*, II, causa 23, q. VIII, c. 8, p. 124

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.*, II, causa 23, q. VIII, c. 28, p. 124

St Augustine and deferred to his judgement on most matters. In his definition of just war he was vague and required further elaboration. However, by bringing together and systematically organising Augustine's thought on just war into a single text, Gratian would lay the foundation for future generations of canonists and theologians in Europe. As the theory of just war began to be nuanced and defined more precisely throughout the course of the medieval period, Gratian's *Decretum* would set the parameters of discussion and provide the starting point upon which others would build.

### **Just War in the Decretists and the Decretalists**

The compilation of the *Decretum* in 1140 would provide the spark that precipitated the development of the theory of just war in the medieval period. From roughly 1140-1190, a group of canon lawyers later known as the Decretists, would utilise Gratian's *Decretum* as a starting point to refine and develop his treatment of warfare in Causa 23.<sup>466</sup> In his discussions on warfare, Gratian had inherited from Augustine a number of general principles on the nature of warfare and its correct use within a Christian context. However, in his Causa 23 he had not come up with a clear formula expressing the theory behind the just war principle.<sup>467</sup> Throughout the second half of the twelfth century, the Decretists would attempt to define the theory of just war and its component parts more articulately. Issues such as just cause, legitimate authority, and the role of the Church in warfare would all be expanded upon by the Decretists. Following on from the Decretists, the thirteenth century would see a new wave of canonists studying the just war. As they predominately commented on papal decretals (authoritative statements on issues of canon law) they are commonly referred to as the Decretalists.<sup>468</sup> The Decretalists would further refine the definitions of concepts such as legitimate authority and just cause, and apply them specifically within the context of medieval feudal political structures. Individuals such as Raymond of Penafort, Pope Innocent IV, and Hostiensis would prove to be influential to the growing theory of the just war.

As was the case with Gratian, the Decretists were not highly original in their interpretation of the just war. Causa 23, which contained a comprehensive compilation of Augustine's thought on the subject of warfare, remained the blueprint from which the

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<sup>466</sup> Russell, *Just War*, p. 86

<sup>467</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95

<sup>468</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127

Decretists gained their understanding of the concept.<sup>469</sup> One of the key contributions of the Decretists was to draw together Gratian's various canons on warfare and attempt to develop new formulations of the theory of just war. The earliest effort to expand on Gratian was recorded in Rufinus' *Summa Decretorum*.<sup>470</sup> According to Rufinus, war could be considered just on three grounds: On account of the one who proclaimed the war, on account of those who fought it, and of the one who should be repelled by it.<sup>471</sup> If on any grounds the claim was found to be lacking, it would be considered an unjust war.<sup>472</sup> Russell points out that this definition was "schematic rather than descriptive", invoking general principles but not specifying any particular institutions.<sup>473</sup> The Decretists' understanding of just war theory was not so much legal or canonical as it was theological and moral.<sup>474</sup> Without a clear distinction between what was legal and what was moral, the Decretists' formulations concerning warfare were equally as applicable to contexts such as rebellion, police action and intra-familial feuding as they were to public warfare. Though they were presented in different formulations, common to almost all the theories of the Decretists were the concepts of legitimate authority and just cause.

For the Decretists, the concept of just cause in warfare was closely related to the defence against violence and injustice. In general, the Decretists were in agreement that the necessity of defence justified the use of armed force to retaliate.<sup>475</sup> However, they lacked a clear distinction between the repulsion of violence in general, and the repulsion of violence specific to warfare.<sup>476</sup> To clarify this particular distinction, the Decretists were forced to emphasise the necessity for legitimate authority to prevent unrestrained private warfare.<sup>477</sup> As well as the necessity of just cause, the presence of a legitimate authority was also commonly held by the Decretists to wage a just war. While Rufinus' *Summa Decretorum* did not specify the nature of the authority that could wage the just war, the author of the *Summa Parisiensis*, Sicard of Cremona, and Huguccio stated that the legitimate authority to declare war resided with princes or princely authority (*potestas principis*).<sup>478</sup> What exactly constituted princely

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<sup>469</sup> Ibid., p. 86

<sup>470</sup> Ibid., p. 87

<sup>471</sup> Ibid., p. 87

<sup>472</sup> Ibid., p. 87

<sup>473</sup> Ibid., p. 87

<sup>474</sup> Ibid., p. 92

<sup>475</sup> Ibid., p. 98

<sup>476</sup> Ibid., p. 97

<sup>477</sup> Ibid., p. 97

<sup>478</sup> Ibid., pp. 87-89

authority is more difficult to define, but at least the identification of ‘princes’ with just war is an indication that public authority was a necessary component in the waging of a just war.

The thirteenth century Decretalists would further build on the work of the Decretists in developing the theory of just war, both in its formulation and definitions. In the early thirteenth century Laurentius Hispanus would provide a set of criteria which would be adopted into common use by a number of Decretalists. These criteria were divided into *persona, res, causa, animas* and *auctoritas*.<sup>479</sup> Raymond of Penafort’s treatment of the just war adopted Laurentius’ formula with modifications. *Persona* specified the type of person who was able to fight in a war. For a war to be just, it had to be fought by secular persons, with clerics being prohibited from fighting unless under necessity.<sup>480</sup> *Res* referred to the object, which must be the recovery of property and the defence of the *patria*.<sup>481</sup> *Causa* specified the cause of the war, which had to be fought out of necessity and to achieve peace.<sup>482</sup> *Animus* was understood as the state of mind with which combatants entered the war. War had to be fought out of piety, justice and obedience, while motives such as hatred revenge or greed were condemned.<sup>483</sup> Finally, *authority* (auctoritas) to declare war resided with either the Church or the ‘prince’.<sup>484</sup>

A second kind of formulation was constructed by Hostiensis, who instead came up with a list of seven different kinds of wars: *Roman, Judicial, Presumptuous, Licit, Temerarious, Voluntary* and *Necessary*.<sup>485</sup> Of these, *Roman, Judicial, Licit* and *Necessary* wars were considered just, and were differentiated by the nature of the enemy and the source of authority. A *Roman* war, for instance, occurred between believer and infidels and was considered just because of the nature of the enemy, while a judicial war was fought between believers with one side fighting under the authority of a judge.<sup>486</sup> *Presumptuous, Temerarious* and *Voluntary* wars were however categorised as unjust, and were often directly related to one of the types of just war. For example, *Presumptuous* wars were fought by believers

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<sup>479</sup> Ibid., p. 128

<sup>480</sup> Raymond of Penafort, *Summa de Casibus Poenitentiae*, 2.17, in Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby (eds), *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 134

<sup>481</sup> Raymond, *Summa*, 2.17, pp. 134-135

<sup>482</sup> Ibid., 2.17, p. 134

<sup>483</sup> Ibid., 2.17, p. 135

<sup>484</sup> Ibid., 2.17, p. 135

<sup>485</sup> Hostiensis, *Summa Aurea*, in Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby (eds), *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 165-166

<sup>486</sup> Hostiensis, *Summa Aurea*, p. 166

(against other believers) who were obstinately opposed to a judge, the opposite of the *Judicial war*.<sup>487</sup>

Definitions of certain concepts were more thoroughly explained by the Decretalists than their predecessors. One of these definitions involved the right to self-defence as a just cause for war. While the Decretists had shied away from attempting to resolve the issue of the legitimacy of violent self-defence, the Decretalists made a more thorough effort to define the issue.<sup>488</sup> The Decretalists took much of their position from the Roman law dictum that violence could be repelled by violence, and attempted to harmonise it with their understanding of Gratian.<sup>489</sup> Raymond of Penafort stated that even without the special authority of the prince or the Church, it was permitted by law for anyone to “repel force with force, immediately (*in continenti*), and with the moderation of blameless defence”.<sup>490</sup> Raymond stressed that the reaction to any attack should be moderate and proportionate to what was inflicted.<sup>491</sup> Hostiensis was more lenient in his interpretation, stating that any injury inflicted upon an assailant by the victim in self-defence would not be held against him.<sup>492</sup> An important contribution was made by Innocent IV who, in the context of self-defence, differentiated between the terms war (*bellum*) and defence (*defensio*).<sup>493</sup> Because of this distinction, it would then be permissible for anyone to defend themselves or their property against attack without the authority of a prince, as they are not engaged in a just war but rather a justified right to private self-defence.<sup>494</sup>

The Decretalists further elaborated upon and defined what constituted a legitimate temporal authority to declare war than the Decretists had. Under the Decretists, legitimate authority to declare war was to be found in the Church and the authority of the prince (*potestas principes*). The Decretalists would expand on this rather vague definition to fit the realities of thirteenth-century European society. To determine exactly who within the temporal sphere had the requisite authority to make war, some of the Decretalists attempted to establish a structural hierarchy of princes equivalent to that of the Church.<sup>495</sup> While Europe functioned politically under a feudal general framework, large monarchies like France and

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<sup>487</sup> Ibid., p. 166

<sup>488</sup> Russell, *Just War*, p. 131

<sup>489</sup> Ibid., p. 131

<sup>490</sup> William of Rennes, *Apparatus ad Summam Raymundi*, in Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby (eds), *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2006), pp. 139-140

<sup>491</sup> William of Rennes, *Summa Raymundi*, p. 140

<sup>492</sup> Hostiensis, *Summa Aurea*, p. 164

<sup>493</sup> Innocent IV, ‘On the Restitution of Spoils’, in Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby (eds), *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2006), p. 150

<sup>494</sup> Innocent IV, ‘On the Restitution of Spoils’, p. 151

<sup>495</sup> Johnson, *Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War*, pp. 162-163

small Italian city-states were quite different in terms of their political independence and prestige.<sup>496</sup> Because of this, distinctions between levels of political authority were arbitrary and often disputed.

The most contentious division for the Decretalists in this issue, resided between the authority of princes against the authority of the western Emperor. At one end of the spectrum, Hostiensis declared that only the emperor had the authority to declare just wars, and explicitly condemned all wars between Christian rulers, which were of course during this time very common.<sup>497</sup> As the rulers of Europe were bound by kinship as the ‘Roman People’, any war between them was considered unjust. This did not entirely rule out the possibility that Christian rulers could make war against each other, as in the case of a judicial war, which was undertaken by believers against other believers at the behest of an authoritative judgement.<sup>498</sup> In contrast, a perhaps more balanced view of legitimate authority was developed by Innocent IV. In Innocent’s formulation, war could be declared by a ruler who did not have a superior.<sup>499</sup> Any war then could only be directed against those who fall outside of his own jurisdiction, while those within his jurisdiction he could not declare war on but would be subject to, his judgement.<sup>500</sup> In his commentary on just war, William of Rennes took Innocent’s concept and expanded upon it. According to William, a ruler who has no superior – whether a king or the emperor – may on his own authority wage war against foreigners if he has a just cause.<sup>501</sup> In addition, he may also grant subordinates the right to wage war on his behalf. However, he may not wage war against his subordinates, provided the perpetrator is willing to undergo judgement by trial. If not, the ruler then has the authority to wage war against him.<sup>502</sup>

In comparison to the canonists, the theologians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, prior to Thomas Aquinas, did not contribute anything particularly original to the theory of just war. If anything, they were even more reliant on Gratian’s *Decretum* than the canonists, who by the thirteenth century were also making use of papal decretals in their formulations. They continued to see just war primarily in moral terms, where it served as a punitive measure against sin. Alexander of Hales provides a reasonable representation of theological thought at the time. In a similar fashion to the canonists, Alexander provides a set of five

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<sup>496</sup> Ibid., pp. 162-63

<sup>497</sup> Hostiensis, *Summa Aurea*, pp. 163-4

<sup>498</sup> Ibid., pp 163-5

<sup>499</sup> Innocent IV, ‘On the Restitution of Spoils’, p. 151

<sup>500</sup> Ibid., p. 151

<sup>501</sup> William of Rennes, *Summam Raymundi*, pp. 136-137

<sup>502</sup> Ibid., pp. 136-137

criteria to distinguish between a just and an unjust war: authority (*auctoritatem*), state of mind (*affectum*), intention (*intentionem*), condition (*conditonem*), desert (*meritum*) and cause (*causam*).<sup>503</sup> Where Alexander in particular differed from the canonists was his attitude to private self-defence. Following Augustine, Alexander distinguished his position by stating that private self-defence was not a justifiable grounds for war.

The twelfth and thirteenth century canonists took the Augustinian view on just war as it was presented in the *Decretum*, and over a period of two centuries gradually developed a more complex formulation of the just war. While they did not stray far from the general principles espoused by St Augustine, they made the attempt to extrapolate those principles into a set of more precise legal definitions. Through the work of the Decretalists, definitions of just cause and legitimate authority were developed within the context of a feudal political hierarchy. By the end of the twelfth century, the theory of just war had begun to move away from a purely moral framework of sin and punishment, to one which was viewed more as a legal and judicial process.

### **Holy War and its Relationship with Medieval Just war Theory**

The systematic development of just war theory over the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was accompanied by a parallel development in defining the role of the Church in the realm of warfare. Issues such as clerical participation in war, the relationship between just war and holy war, and the definition of the crusade as an institution were examined and developed by Western canonists and theologians over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The twelfth century Decretists took a keen interest in attempting to define the role of the Church in medieval western warfare. Although in many aspects related to warfare, the Decretists struggled to achieve a consensus, at least on the subject of the participation of clerics in warfare there was unanimous agreement. The Decretists agreed that all clerics were to be prohibited from physically taking part in warfare.<sup>504</sup> This did not necessarily rule out all instances of armed violence however. According to Rufinus, it would be possible to take up arms to defend themselves under urgent necessity against pagans, on the order of a superior

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<sup>503</sup> Alexander of Hales, *Summa Theologica*, in Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby (eds), *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2006), p. 158

<sup>504</sup> Russell, *Just War*, p. 106

authority.<sup>505</sup> Rolando Bandinelli and Stephen of Tournai distinguished between major and minor orders of clerics. While clerics from a major order were absolutely prohibited from any fighting, Rolando argued that clerics from minor orders could even return to secular pursuits such as soldiery, a proposition that led Rufinus to question the sobriety of his fellow canonist.<sup>506</sup> While it was almost never considered licit for clerics to actually fight in a war, under certain circumstances they could have an involvement in warfare. In the instance of prelates possessing temporal jurisdiction who were obligated to take part in war, they could perform their functions within certain parameters.<sup>507</sup> While not allowed to physically fight, they could perform functions such as comfort, counsel and prayer for soldiers under their authority.<sup>508</sup> Similarly, clerics involved in a holy war against infidels could arm and armour themselves for the purpose of self-preservation.<sup>509</sup> Although their purpose was to encourage their soldiers and terrify the enemy, they were nonetheless prohibited from the shedding of blood.<sup>510</sup>

The advent of the crusades at the end of the eleventh century had provided the Decretists with something of a problem to solve – the justification of Christian holy war. On this issue, the Decretists were again divided on what actually constituted a holy war. While there was no dispute over the authority of the Church to call for a crusade, division existed over whether the pope alone or bishops could call for a holy war, and what exactly justified a holy war against infidels or heretics.<sup>511</sup> Was warfare justified against infidels merely for their unbelief, or did it require a specific trespass against Christians for war to be declared?<sup>512</sup> Of all the Decretists, perhaps the most comprehensive and insightful scholar in this matter was Huguccio. The basis of Huguccio’s position on holy war, as with most of the Decretists, comes from the example of Israel in the Old Testament.<sup>513</sup> While in their wars against the Canaanites, the Israelites took their authority directly from God, Christians should now take the pope as the ultimate authority for warfare.<sup>514</sup> As Christ had since his resurrection been given dominion over the whole world, the pope, as the vicar of Christ, therefore possessed the

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<sup>505</sup> Ibid., p. 106

<sup>506</sup> Ibid., p. 106

<sup>507</sup> Ibid., p. 109

<sup>508</sup> Ibid., p. 109

<sup>509</sup> Ibid., p. 108

<sup>510</sup> Ibid., p. 108

<sup>511</sup> Ibid., p. 112

<sup>512</sup> Ibid., p. 112

<sup>513</sup> Johnson, *Just War Tradition*, pp. 158-161

<sup>514</sup> Ibid., pp. 158-161



authority to declare war that God had wielded in the Old Testament.<sup>515</sup> In deciding whether the Saracens deserved having war waged against them, Huguccio laid two charges against them. The lesser charge, that of disbelief, was not necessarily worth declaring war over, as Huguccio asserted that infidels were entitled to some limited rights such as property.<sup>516</sup> The far greater charge was the usurpation of Christian lands by the Saracens, in particular the Holy Land. Because of the particular importance of the Holy Land to Christianity, Huguccio argued that the scope of any crusade would be limited to the Holy Land itself.<sup>517</sup> By placing the authority for war within the office of the church, and providing just cause for the war against the Saracens, Huguccio and the Decretists brought the holy war within the definition of the just war.

The primary contribution of the Decretalists to the role of the church in warfare, was the further elaboration of the theory of the crusade. In relation to the participation of clerics in warfare, the Decretalists did not add anything original, but looked to consolidate the views of the Decretists. By the thirteenth century however, there still remained a dispute over the just cause for holy war against infidels. In the case of the Saracens, both Raymond of Penafort and William of Rennes were willing to tolerate Muslim control of their own territories, but not those which had been formerly under Christian control (which formed a large proportion of Muslim territory).<sup>518</sup> The key contributor to forming a consensus on this issue, and others relating to the crusades, was Pope Innocent IV.

In his treatment of the crusades, Innocent set the parameters for both just cause and legitimate authority for the declaration of a crusade. On the question of authority, Innocent argues that the pope is the supreme authority to declare a crusade.<sup>519</sup> This authority is based on the pope's position as the Vicar of Christ. Because Christ has dominion over all, the pope therefore has dominion over infidels as well as Christians.<sup>520</sup> Furthermore, only the pope has the authority to grant an indulgence to those who set out on crusade.<sup>521</sup> As to the question of whether infidels merit a war to be waged against them, Innocent takes a measured approach. Innocent argues that God is the source of all earthly dominions, possessions and jurisdictions, and that he intended their use for all rational creatures, not just those who are Christians.

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<sup>515</sup> Ibid., pp. 158-161

<sup>516</sup> Russell, *Just War*, pp. 114, 122

<sup>517</sup> Ibid., p. 122

<sup>518</sup> Russell, *Just War*, pp. 197-198

<sup>519</sup> Innocent IV, 'On Vows and the Fulfilling of Vows', in Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby (eds), *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2006), p. 152

<sup>520</sup> Innocent IV, 'On Vows and the Fulfilling of Vows', pp. 152-155

<sup>521</sup> Ibid., pp. 152-155

Therefore, infidels have a right to dominion over land which cannot be taken away from them solely because of unbelief.<sup>522</sup> That being said, because the pope has dominion over the whole world, infidels must respect natural laws and should admit preachers into the lands within their jurisdiction. While the pope should only make war against the infidels under extreme necessity, he and he alone has the jurisdiction to declare war against them on behalf of Christendom.<sup>523</sup> However, while the infidel may legitimately lay claim to dominions that were former Christian lands, the Holy Land is considered distinct. Although the Saracens own it, they own it illegally because it was consecrated by the birth, life and death of Christ, and is therefore sacred to Christianity.<sup>524</sup> Furthermore, as the Holy Land was conquered in a just war by the Romans after the death of Christ, it is part of the Roman Empire, the rightful inheritance of the Church of Rome. In this manner, Innocent defined the crusade as a just war, fought for the liberation of the Holy Land, under the special jurisdiction of the pope who had the dispensation to grant indulgences.

The key contribution of the canonists in this matter was to bring the concept of holy war within the definitions and boundaries of the just war. By identifying the pope as the source of legitimate authority for holy war, and defining what formed a legitimate cause for war against the infidels, holy war could be seen to fill all of the criteria of the just war.

### **The Just War According to Thomas Aquinas**

The re-introduction of Aristotelian ideas into the mainstream of medieval European thought would have a profound effect on the fields of theology and philosophy, and upon the theory of just war. Between 1150 and 1250, there was a major influx of new translations of Greek texts into Western Europe.<sup>525</sup> By the mid-thirteenth century, virtually the entirety of Greek science and philosophy was accessible to European scholars.<sup>526</sup> The impact these texts had on Western theology was significant. In a comparison between Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, written in the mid-twelfth century, and Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* written a hundred years later, R.W. Southern notes that while the former had only three quotations from secular philosophy, the latter had roughly 3,500 quotations from Aristotle

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<sup>522</sup> Ibid., pp. 152-154

<sup>523</sup> Ibid., pp. 152-154

<sup>524</sup> Ibid., pp. 152-154

<sup>525</sup> R.W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism: and other Studies* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), p. 48

<sup>526</sup> Southern, *Medieval Humanism*, p. 48

alone.<sup>527</sup> Coinciding with the re-introduction of Greek ideas, particularly from Aristotle, was the development of a changing theological and philosophical framework within medieval Europe. In the self-perception of mankind, there was a form of Humanism developing, whereby humanity was seen in a far more positive light than had been the case in previous centuries.<sup>528</sup> In the political and legal spheres, there was a change from a fundamentally supernatural view of society to a more natural one. Conceptions of government were beginning to move away from a feudal system bound up in ritual, to the conception of the community as the source of a ruler's power.<sup>529</sup> Understanding of the legal system began to be seen more in terms of rights and judgement by peers, rather than appeals to the supernatural as exemplified by the trial by ordeal.<sup>530</sup> When applied to the realm of warfare, these trends in Western society would also affect the interpretation of the just war.

The impact of Aristotelian philosophy on Thomas Aquinas is difficult to overestimate. While Aquinas's acceptance of Aristotelian ideas was tempered by his Christianity, much of his philosophy was modelled on that of Aristotle. Aquinas' knowledge of Aristotle was extensive, he wrote commentaries on a number of Aristotle's works, including *De Anima*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Metaphysics*, and *Politics*.<sup>531</sup> Indeed, the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas's most extensive work, and the source of most of his writings on just war, was modelled predominately on the *Nicomachean Ethics* itself.<sup>532</sup> The *Nicomachean Ethics* was written as a portrayal of the good life through the exploration of Aristotle's virtues. Happiness was defined as the activity of the soul acting in accordance with virtue. Aquinas took Aristotle's model and applied it within a Christian framework, using Aristotle's concept of the Golden Mean to establish the most important Christian virtues. Aquinas then concluded from this that perfect happiness can only be found in the contemplation of God, and only then realised fully in the resurrection body.<sup>533</sup> Aquinas' reconciliation of Aristotelian and Christian concepts, as seen throughout the *Summa*, would have a significant effect on his understanding of warfare.

In his treatment of just war, Aquinas drew on two major concepts from two different authors: Aristotle and the concept of the common good, and Augustine's notion of the inward disposition informing the external action. In following Augustine's justification of war, Aquinas was much the same as Gratian, the Decretists and the Decretalists. This

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<sup>527</sup> Ibid., p. 46

<sup>528</sup> Ibid., pp. 49-50

<sup>529</sup> Ibid., p. 51

<sup>530</sup> Ibid., p. 52

<sup>531</sup> Kenny, *Aquinas*, p. 19

<sup>532</sup> Ibid., p. 20

<sup>533</sup> Ibid., pp. 20-24

understanding can be seen in Aquinas's discussion of self defence in the *Summa*. Moral acts are defined by intention, not from what is beside the intention.<sup>534</sup> Where Aquinas distinguishes himself from his canonistic and theological predecessors, however, is in his adoption of Aristotle's concept of the common good. This concept is rooted in the notion that at heart, man is a social and political animal.<sup>535</sup> Because of this, it is natural that man lives in fellowship with others and provides for each the necessities they would otherwise lack, living in solitude.<sup>536</sup> Arising from this situation, it is then necessary to appoint leaders to govern the community to ensure the integrity of the community and the common benefit to all.<sup>537</sup> Just governments will serve their citizens and secure the common good, while unjust governments are directed towards the private good of the ruler.<sup>538</sup> Furthermore, the establishment of law is directed towards the maintenance of the common good of the state.<sup>539</sup> Aquinas uses this concept in his discussion in the *Summa* of whether it is lawful to kill sinners. Aquinas compares the actions of the sinner within the community to a disease or corruption within a body.<sup>540</sup> Just as a physician would remove some member from a body if he deemed it likely to cause more damage or corruption, so would it be praiseworthy for a community to kill a sinner if he was considered to pose a significant danger to the health of the community.<sup>541</sup> In his treatment of warfare, this form of argument would prove to be highly influential for Aquinas.

Aquinas's formulation of the just war consists of three components. Firstly, the authority of the prince by whose command the war is being waged.<sup>542</sup> Second, a just cause is required.<sup>543</sup> Thirdly, it is required that those who wage war should have a righteous intent.<sup>544</sup> Compared to canonists like Hostiensis or theologians such as Alexander of Hales, Aquinas' formulation is fairly simple. The simplicity of Aquinas's formulation brought it back in line with Augustine's original definition. As F.H. Russell pointed out, "shorn of its medieval accretions, the formula could then apply to societies other than Christian and beyond his own

<sup>534</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, IIa-IIae, q. 64, art. 7, In R.W. Dyson (ed), *Aquinas: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 263-264

<sup>535</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, q. 96, art. 4, p. 4

<sup>536</sup> Thomas Aquinas, 'De Regimine Principum', in R.W. Dyson (ed), *Aquinas: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp. 5-8

<sup>537</sup> Aquinas, 'De Regimine Principum', pp. 5-8

<sup>538</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8

<sup>539</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia-IIae, q. 95, art. 4, p. 135

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid.*, IIa-IIae, q. 64, art. 2, pp. 253-254

<sup>541</sup> *Ibid.*, IIa-IIae, q. 64, art. 2, pp. 253-254

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.*, IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 1, pp. 240

<sup>543</sup> *Ibid.*, IIa-IIae, q. 40, art 1., p. 240

<sup>544</sup> *Ibid.*, IIa-IIae, q. 40, art 1., p. 241

time.”<sup>545</sup> Because of this, Aquinas’ formulation of just war quickly gained acceptance with contemporaries and remains influential even today.

Aquinas’ first just war criteria, that of authority, is based heavily on the concept of the common good. Authority to wage war is vested solely in the prince, since the care of the commonwealth is entrusted to him.<sup>546</sup> This definition of ‘prince’ is fairly broad, and is applied in this context either to a city, kingdom or province.<sup>547</sup> Quoting the Apostle Paul, Aquinas judges it lawful for princes to use the sword to protect the commonwealth against external enemies, in the same manner as it is expected of them to deal with enemies within the commonwealth.<sup>548</sup> This authority is exclusive to the prince however. No private citizen has the authority to declare war on either his own behalf, or that of others. A private citizen cannot declare war on his own behalf, because he already has recourse to legal justice.<sup>549</sup> Neither can a private citizen declare war on behalf of the commonwealth, on account of the fact that he has not been entrusted with its protection.<sup>550</sup> On the issue of authority, Aquinas essentially reaches the same conclusions as his Decretist and Decretalist predecessors, but his method differs considerably. Where the Decretalist formulation of authority was heavily influenced by medieval feudal political structures, Aquinas’ Aristotelian framework provides far more flexibility for application in different contexts.

On the matter of just cause, Aquinas essentially adopts Augustine’s position without adding anything new to it. According to Augustine: ‘A just war is customarily defined as one which avenges injuries, as when a nation or state deserves to be punished because it has neglected either to put right the wrongs done by its people or to restore what it has unjustly seized.’<sup>551</sup> From this, Aquinas couches the issue of just cause very much within a moral framework. Those against whom war is waged must deserve having war waged against them.

For the third criteria, righteous intent, Aquinas borrows from both Augustine and Aristotle. Aquinas defines righteous intent as either an intention to promote a good cause or avert an evil.<sup>552</sup> Following the example of Augustine, Aquinas looks to the inward disposition to decide whether a war can be considered just. Wars ultimately have to be fought out of a desire for peace and to the end of coercing the wicked and helping the good. ‘The desire to do

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<sup>545</sup> Russell, *Just War*, p. 269

<sup>546</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 1, p. 240

<sup>547</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 1, p. 240

<sup>548</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 1, p. 240

<sup>549</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 1, p. 240

<sup>550</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 1, p. 240

<sup>551</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 1, p. 240-241

<sup>552</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 1, p. 241

harm, the cruelty of vengeance, an unpeaceable and implacable spirit, the fever of rebellion, the lust to dominate' are all motives to be condemned, and can render unlawful a war which has already been declared by a legitimate authority for a just cause.<sup>553</sup> Yet even within this very Augustinian interpretation of righteous intent, there remains present a hint of Aristotelian sentiment. In his defence of the biblical objections to violence: 'But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil', and: 'Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but give place unto wrath', Aquinas agrees that one should always be prepared to not resist or defend himself if necessary.<sup>554</sup> However, the for the benefit of the common good, and even for the good of those you are fighting, war provides a necessary alternative.<sup>555</sup>

On the role of church in warfare, Aquinas consolidated much of the thought of the Decretists and Decretalists. Like them, Aquinas prohibited all within the clergy from the shedding of blood in war. His reasoning however, was again partially attributable to Aristotle and the notion of the common good. Starting from Christ's command to Peter to 'Put up thy sword into the scabbard', Aquinas argued that the act of warfare was not a task befitting bishops or clerics.<sup>556</sup> This prohibition was not put in place because fighting is a sin, but because it was not in keeping with their duty.<sup>557</sup> Because clerics are devoted to works even more meritorious than just war, their participation would be rendered sinful, relative to their greater obligations.<sup>558</sup> In his argument, Aquinas specified two particular reasons. Firstly, that warlike tasks disquiet the mind and prevent clerics from performing their duties properly, such as the offering of prayers for the people. Secondly, as those who are ordained to administer the sacraments, clerics should emulate Christ in being prepared to pour out their own blood, rather than shed that of others.<sup>559</sup> However, while they could not shed blood, clerics could still participate in war within certain parameters. Following the lead of the canonists, Aquinas allowed clerics to participate on a spiritual level, through the use of prayer and admonitions, and the offering of spiritual assistance to those who fight justly.<sup>560</sup>

In relation to the issue of holy war, Aquinas did not attempt any systematic discussion of the topic, or relate the theory of crusade to that of the just war. When he did refer to the nature of relations with unbelievers in the *Summa* however, Aquinas tended to follow the

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<sup>553</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 1, p. 241

<sup>554</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 1, obt. 2; IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 1, ad. 2, pp. 239, 241

<sup>555</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 1, ad. 2, p. 241

<sup>556</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 2, p. 243; John 18: 11 (DV)

<sup>557</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 2, ad. 3, p. 245

<sup>558</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 2, ad. 4, p. 245

<sup>559</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 2, p. 244

<sup>560</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 2, ad. 2, p. 244

example of Innocent IV. Unbelievers who had never received the faith were not to be coerced into it, and should only be fought in the event that they ‘hinder the faith by blasphemies or evil persuasions, or, indeed, by open persecutions.’<sup>561</sup> Unbelief by those outside of Christendom’s jurisdiction was not in itself a just cause for war against them, but could only be brought about if injustices were being done to Christians. The lack of attention paid by Aquinas to the crusades, and holy war in general, may perhaps be indicative of the reduced success of the crusading movement in the latter part of the thirteenth century.

On the matter of conduct in war, Aquinas focussed on two different issues in the *Summa*: the use of ambushes in war and the legality of fighting on holy days. On the use of ambushes in warfare, Aquinas first put forward the objection that ambushes, as a kind of deception, were unlawful to use even in a just war.<sup>562</sup> To counter this objection, Aquinas cited the authority of Augustine, who permitted the use of ambushes, and the example of Joshua against the city of Ai.<sup>563</sup> Aquinas then distinguished between two forms of deception. Deception through the breaking of a promise or the telling of false information was considered to always be unlawful, even in warfare. However, deception through the withholding of thoughts or intentions could be considered lawful in a war against the enemy, as Christians are not always bound to reveal to others anything that they know.<sup>564</sup> In the case of fighting on holy days, Aquinas cites the example of Christ and also the notion of the common good. Aquinas reasons that just as physicians are allowed to treat people on holy days on the authority of John 7:23: ‘Are ye angry at me because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath-day?’, it is much more important to preserve the health of the commonwealth through the prevention of slaughter.<sup>565</sup> As far as it is considered necessary, it can be considered lawful to wage just war on holy days in order to defend the commonwealth of the faithful.<sup>566</sup>

Aquinas’ treatment of the just war marked a turning point in the development of the theory. More than any other medieval scholar, Aquinas’ formulation of the just war would continue to influence successive generations of just war theorists right up until the present day. In terms of his conclusions, Aquinas was not much different from the other theologians or canonists of his day. What distinguished Aquinas was the manner in which he reached his conclusions. While Augustine remained a heavy influence, it was his introduction of

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<sup>561</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 10, art. 8, p. 268

<sup>562</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 3, obt. 1, p. 245

<sup>563</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 3, p. 246

<sup>564</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 3, p. 246

<sup>565</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 4, p. 247

<sup>566</sup> Ibid., IIa-IIae, q. 40, art. 4, p. 247

Aristotelian concepts that set Aquinas apart from his medieval predecessors. Aquinas' synthesis of Christianity and Aristotle laid the foundation for a more recognisably 'modern' conception of warfare, based around the institution of the state.

The development of just war theory in the later medieval period owed a massive debt to Gratian's transmission of Augustine's writings in the *Decretum*. First of all, the act of bringing together effectively all of the Western Church's writings on the subject provided a foundation for development which had not previously existed. Secondly, by deferring to the judgement of Augustine throughout Causa 23 of the *Decretum*, Gratian provided the basis for further elaboration of the just war through his conclusion that warfare could indeed be fought without sin. Having first accepted this proposition, the Decretists, Decretalists and theologians of medieval Europe were then free to speculate on the limits of just war and its precise definitions. As the formulation and definitions of just war theory became more complex, the related concept of holy war was also brought within the definition of just war. In the Byzantine East however, there were no real intellectual efforts to establish a theory of just war. Despite the presence of some twelfth-century challenges to established Church doctrine, the Eastern Church's negative attitude towards warfare was never seriously questioned. Without being able to first establish that warfare could be pursued without sin, any effort towards developing a concept of just war in the Eastern Church were stillborn. Finally, the contribution of Thomas Aquinas represented the apex of just war theory in the Middle Ages. His formulation of the concept was quickly adopted throughout medieval Europe and remains the most influential of any of the medieval scholars. However, Aquinas' incorporation of Aristotelian ideas within his treatment of just war, pointed towards a new understanding of the theory. Aquinas' understanding of warfare in service of the common good, pointed more towards the modern conception of the state and the standing army, than it did towards the old feudal hierarchy of medieval Europe.

### **Just War theory in Medieval Byzantium**

Unlike the Christian West, the Byzantine East never formulated a theory of just war comparable to that developed by Rufinus, Hostiensis or Thomas Aquinas. In the case of the Decretists, Decretalists, and medieval theologians, the issue of whether war could be pursued without sin was almost undisputed. The Augustinian arguments put forward in the *Decretum* had essentially closed the debate on the subject in the West, and from that point on Western scholars sought to define the parameters of the just war. However, in the Christian East, there



had remained a consistently negative attitude towards the issue of warfare. Based primarily on the writings of St Basil, the act of killing in warfare was considered sinful, regardless of motive. Without first establishing the proposition that hypothetically, war could be fought without sin, there could be no formulation or elaboration of a just war theory.

In the twelfth century however, there was an attempt by two Byzantine canonists to readdress the relationship between sin and warfare. In reference to St Basil's command prohibiting soldiers with unclean hands from communion for three years, John Zonaras and Theodore Balsamon both argued against its enforcement.<sup>567</sup> Citing Athanasius' approval of warfare in his *Letter to Amun*, they argue that soldiers are not deserving of the prohibition on communion, 'which is an unendurable punishment for Christians.'<sup>568</sup> Zonaras and Balsamon stress the virtues possessed by the soldier, as well as their good intentions. Why should Christians who fight bravely for the defence of chastity and piety be punished for their deeds? Furthermore, they make the point that if it was not for the soldier's willingness to come to blows with his opponents, Christians everywhere would fall under barbarian rule.<sup>569</sup>

This attitude to warfare did not however, have any real impact on Byzantine theology or lead to a new consideration of just war. Indeed, these arguments were roundly rejected by the fourteenth-century Byzantine canonist, Matthew Blastares. In his case, Blastares makes use of both theological and philosophical arguments.

In his philosophical argument, Blastares refers to the relationship of evil with the presence of passions in human nature.<sup>570</sup> Man is exposed to two types of passions: 'those united to nature and necessity and those supported by nature and deliberate choice'.<sup>571</sup> The first type is considered natural, and free from indictment as no element of choice is present. The second type of passion however, which warfare falls within, is voluntary and thus man is responsible for it.<sup>572</sup> By choosing to 'dip their right hands in the blood of the enemy', soldiers then require penance to purify them through the medicines of repentance.<sup>573</sup>

Blastares' theological argument comes predominately from the example of Moses in the Old Testament. While Israel's holy wars were divinely ordered, the soldiers who took part in the killing were required to remain outside the camp for a week to purify themselves.<sup>574</sup>

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<sup>567</sup> Viscuso, 'Christian Participation in Warfare', p. 34

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34

<sup>569</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34

<sup>570</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35

<sup>572</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35

<sup>573</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36

<sup>574</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37

Similarly, God refused to allow King David to construct a temple on account of his ‘right hand having incurred pollution by the immense murder of enemies’.<sup>575</sup> Drawing a parallel between Israel and the Byzantine Empire, Blastares justifies the necessity of soldiers being purified before being admitted into communion.

In addition to the internal debate within the Byzantine Empire, the external context may have contributed to the lack of development with regard to just war. While the schism of 1054 had had an adverse effect on Latin-Greek relations, there remained some degree of tolerance and goodwill between the two Churches. There was an active dialogue between the churches during the twelfth century, and neither Church generally considered the other to be heretical.<sup>576</sup> However, this situation would radically change following the Fourth Crusade in 1204.

The Fourth Crusade, originally intended for the Holy Land via Egypt, ended with the sack of Constantinople by the crusading armies of Europe. With the capital of the Byzantine Empire conquered, a Latin kingdom was set up in its place. Weak and heavily reliant on the West for support, the Empire of Romania met its end in 1261 when it was recaptured by Byzantine forces.<sup>577</sup> The lasting legacy of the Fourth Crusade and the kingdom it spawned, was severe damage to relations between Western Europe and the Byzantine Empire, and between the two Churches. The Latin occupation of Constantinople, and its attempts to impose its own ecclesiastical hierarchy over that of the Orthodox Church, only served to embitter Greek against Latin.<sup>578</sup> Any chance of reconciliation all but disappeared after that point. This hostile attitude towards the West also permeated into the field of theology, and may perhaps have affected attitudes toward a theory such as just war. For example, Matthew Blastares, as well as arguing against any consideration of a just war theory, was also ardent in his opposition to Church reconciliation.

In addition to the damage it caused to relations between the Latin and Greek Churches, the Fourth Crusade would also contribute to the eventual downfall of the Byzantine Empire itself. Although already weak in 1204, as shown by its capture by the crusading army, the establishment of the short-lived Latin Empire almost certainly hastened Byzantium’s eventual demise. The loss of Constantinople as the capital for almost sixty years severely weakened the empire. Even after the re-capture of the capital in 1261, Greeks had begun to identify themselves more through their common religion than their citizenship in the

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<sup>575</sup> Ibid., p. 36

<sup>576</sup> Hussey, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 182-183

<sup>577</sup> Madden, *The New Concise History of the Crusades*, pp. 119-120

<sup>578</sup> Tyerman, *God’s War*, pp. 558-560

Byzantine Empire.<sup>579</sup> As Western Europe grew stronger, both politically and intellectually throughout the medieval period, the opposite occurred in Byzantium, its empire eventually succumbing to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. Subjugated under Muslim rule, any future discussion of matters such as just war would be of a purely academic nature for theologians in the Ottoman Empire.

The development of a just war theory in the East was a difficult proposition, due to its lack of compatibility with Christian Greek theology. Although at times the question was raised, there was never really any serious theological opposition to Basil's decree that warfare could not be pursued without sin. Without first establishing that proposition, there could be no serious development of a just war theory within the Christian East. Furthermore, due to the breakdown in relations between the Latin and Greek Churches following the Fourth Crusade in 1204, there was less possibility for agreement between the Churches on matters of doctrine. The just war, let alone a holy war, was never realised within the Byzantine Empire.

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<sup>579</sup> Ibid., pp. 558-560

## Conclusion

The prevailing attitudes towards warfare in Eastern and Western Christendom during the medieval period, ultimately found their basis in theology. Beginning in the fourth century, two theologians would set the tone for each of their respective Church's positions on warfare throughout the remainder of the Middle Ages. In the West, St Augustine introduced the concept of the Christian just war. This concept would continue to be refined and developed right throughout the medieval period, and would result in the establishment of the Catholic Church's doctrines of just war and crusade. In the East however, St Basil came to the conclusion that warfare could not be truly just, but was rather a necessary evil. Throughout the history of the Byzantine Empire, St Basil's position remained normative, despite a number of attempts to revise the position.

The separation of the Roman Empire into two political spheres in the fourth century foreshadowed a cultural divergence that would only continue to grow over time. Some of the reasons for the drifting apart of East and West were due to external factors, namely invasion from outside and all the social and economic upheavals that are associated with it. However, the most important factor affecting the ideological outlook of East and West was that of language. In the West, Latin became the language of the Church and of government. In the East, Greek remained the common language in the Byzantine Empire and even replaced Latin as the language of government. The peculiarities of the two languages would have a significant effect on the way the theologians of East and West interpreted scripture. Precise and structured, Latin lent itself well to abstraction and the formation of legal doctrine. Alternately, the nature of Greek allowed for intricate philosophical speculation, but not necessarily many settled formal doctrines. Coupled with a relative lack of interaction between Greek East and Latin West after the fifth century, Greek and Latin theologians would interpret scripture and develop their theologies within two distinct interpretive frameworks.

The key theological issue which separated East from West with regards to warfare was the understanding of sin. In Western theology, sin has been primarily understood within a legal framework, through the doctrine of atonement. In a general sense, atonement describes the process by which Christians are justified before God, through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. As sinners, all humanity has transgressed God's law and therefore stands legally guilty and deserving of punishment. However, through the person of Jesus Christ, God took the penalty of humanity's sin upon Himself in order that humanity may be legally

justified before God. Because of this legal framework, the subject of warfare provides a major ethical dilemma in Western theology. How can a Christian society carry out warfare in a manner which can be consistent with God's law? In contrast, the Eastern understanding of sin does not emphasise this legal framework. Instead, the Eastern view of sin is understood in light of the concept of *theosis* – the process by which believers are transformed by the Spirit into the likeness of God. Within this context, sin is seen as a frustration of this process, which can occur either through a wilful turning away from God, but also out of necessity. This latter concept can be described as 'involuntary sin', which can include actions which are damaging to the soul, despite being done out of necessity and without wrongful intent. Because of this theological distinction, there is within Eastern Christianity simply less incentive to justify an issue such as Christian warfare. These foundational theological presuppositions can be identified in the writings of both St Augustine and St Basil, and indeed in theologians of warfare that followed throughout the medieval period.

In the West, St Augustine would provide the foundation for the medieval conception of the just war. All of the key principles of Christian just war can be found within Augustine's writings. Augustine re-interpreted the traditional Roman understanding of just war within a Christian framework. War, although often reprehensible and responsible for much suffering, is not necessarily considered sinful. According to Augustine, if carried out with the proper authority, intention, and inward disposition of the heart, it is possible for a Christian to shed blood in warfare without falling into sin. What mattered was not the physical action, but whether the agent was acting out of love (of God and neighbour) or selfish motivation.

In the centuries after the fall of Rome and the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, Augustine's just war theory was not developed to any significant degree. In fact, the scholarly understanding of just war often reverted to the old Roman understanding of the concept, as illustrated by Isidore of Seville in the sixth century. As basic as it may have been however, during the early medieval period there was an implicit understanding that there was a division between 'just' and 'unjust' wars. During the formation of the councils of the 'Peace of God' and 'Truce of God', while the aim was to limit the effects of warfare on the innocent, warfare was not condemned in and of itself as an evil. Rather, the crime was that the sword was being misused against those who did not deserve it. Likewise, the development of the papal holy war which led to the First Crusade in 1095 shows that within the Church, war could be seen as a positive good as well as a negative. As early as the ninth century, popes were granting assurances to soldiers fighting against Muslim infidels that their military sacrifice would

ensure them of their salvation (provided of course their intent was righteous). The First Crusade itself, launched before any systematic formulation of just war doctrine had been established, was defended by theologians first and foremost as a justifiable war.

Following the systematic organisation of Church doctrine that occurred in the twelfth century, and in particular the appearance of Gratian's *Decretum*, Augustine's thought on just war became more accessible to a wide range of canon lawyers and theologians. This facilitated a period of development whereby the principles that Augustine established for the just war began to be systematically formulated into a number of doctrines and theories. In addition to this, doctrines defending the crusades and Christian holy war in general were developed within the wider just war tradition. For all their development however, until the arrival of Thomas Aquinas and his re-introduction of Aristotelian concepts into the just war theory, medieval just war theory remained well and truly based in the thought of St Augustine.

The relationship between Eastern Christianity and warfare would however follow a very different path. Although nowhere near as prolific as St Augustine in his writings on warfare, St Basil's treatment of the issue would set the standard for discussion on the subject. Unlike Augustine, Basil ruled out the notion that war could be considered just or even morally neutral. While upholding the right of Christians to defend themselves militarily against those who would seek to destroy or subdue them, Basil nonetheless decreed that even if borne out of necessity, war remained an objective evil. Viewed through the theological lens of *theosis*, the shedding of human blood through warfare (or by any other means) was an action which was intrinsically damaging to the agent, regardless of whether or not the action was carried out with righteous intent. By holding this attitude towards warfare, Basil was never able to either endorse just war or holy war as principles.

The basic principle that St Basil adhered to in his attitude towards warfare, that it was a necessary evil, ensured that just war would remain a stillborn concept within the Byzantine Empire. Throughout the history of the Byzantine Empire, there is strong evidence that this view remained normative. Various Byzantine military manuals, such as those written by the Emperors Maurice and Leo VI, display recognition of war as a necessary evil, and in their recommended tactics reveal a desire to avoid combat when possible. When confronted with the holy wars of Islam and Latin Christianity, Byzantine scholars consistently reject the concept. And when Basil's pronouncements themselves came under attack from those within the Byzantine Empire, even from the emperor himself, the authority of Basil was consistently upheld by Byzantine Churchmen. Through to the fall of Byzantium in 1453, this inherently

negative attitude towards warfare prohibited any internal development of an Eastern conception of just war, and also prevented its adoption from either the Latin West or the Islamic East.

What this thesis has sought to address is the lack of scholarly attention paid to the Eastern Church's attitude towards warfare in comparison to the Latin West. In particular, it asks and answers the question of why just war theory developed in the Latin Church but was consistently rejected in the East. The primary cause of this divergence between East and West is theological. The Greek Church's theological framework, interpreted through the lens of *theosis*, made the concept of just war fundamentally inconsistent with the mindset of Eastern Christianity. In the West, the ethical dilemma that warfare posed to a Christian society demanded questions that had to be answered. In the East, the theological framework did not raise the same issues, as warfare could not be justified as a righteous act. The stasis of Eastern thought on the subject, compared to the increasingly complex formulation of just war concepts in the West, bears witness to this fact. In addition to answering this question, this thesis has also attempted to highlight the influence of language in shaping the divergent paths of Eastern and Western Christianity. The subject of warfare in this instance is in many ways indicative of a wider theme. Although they were members of the same empire, shared the same religion, and shared essentially the same philosophical and intellectual inheritance, the Churches of Rome and Constantinople developed along very different paths. The issue of Christian warfare is but one example of how East and West interpreted theology in a very distinctive way. The effect of language on culture, and in this context theology, is a significant one indeed, and can be equally as important as any single economic or political factor.

The issue of just war and the differing approaches taken towards it in the Latin West and Greek East is just a small part of a much larger area of research which has not received sufficient scholarly attention to date. Ever since Edward Gibbon's negative depiction of the Byzantine Empire and the legacy that it provided in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the history of Byzantium and the Christian East has not received much attention from Western scholars, relative to the study of Western Europe.<sup>580</sup> Those who do study Byzantine history, usually do so without any comparative reference to the West. There is however a good case for more comparative research of the two halves of Christendom. Both share the cultural and religious inheritance of Rome, and their similarities outweigh their

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<sup>580</sup> Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: Longman Brown Green and Longmans, 1847)

differences. By further examining the issues that divided and united East and West, we can better understand the elements that have made our own Western civilisation distinct.



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