Holy War in Early Christianity & Islam

History 110WW
Pomona College
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Description

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

Readings

Hebrew Scripture and Violence

- Hebrew Bible: Joshua 1-12; Judges 6-8; I Samuel 8-15 (7-6Cs BCE)

Christian Scripture and Violence

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

*Militia Christi*

- *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* (202)

• *Militia Christi* in the Early Church: passages

Christians as Imperial Soldiers

• Tertullian, *Apology* (197)
• Tertullian, *On Idolatry* (212)
• Tertullian, *On the Crown* (211)

• Origen, *Contra Celsum* (248): selections
• Origen, *Homilies on Joshua* 1, 12, 15, 18
• Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 6.20 (c. 310)

The Christian God and the Roman Empire

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

The End of Paganism

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

Ambrose on Violence and Warfare: Educating the Emperors

• Ambrose, *Letters* 17 (384), 40, 41 (388-389)
• Ambrose, *On the Duties of the Clergy*, Book 1:35-42 (c. 390)

Augustine on Violence and Warfare: the Donatist Schism

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

- *Theodosian Code*, Book 16 (438)

Catholic Christianity and its Enforcement: Monastic Intervention

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

Byzantine Holy War


Islam and Holy War

- Qur'an, suras 2, 3, 8, 9
• Umma Document (Constitution of Medina)
• Al-Bukhari (d. 870), Sahih (hadith collection)
• Thomas Sizgorich, Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam (Penn, 2009, pp. 144-282.
• David Cook, Martyrdom in Islam (Cambridge, 2007), 1-44.

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

• Sulpicius Severus, Life of Martin (c. 420)
• Gelasius I, Letter to Emperor Anastasius (494)
• Gregory I, Letters: selection (591-594)
• Boniface, Letter to Grifo (741)
• Royal Frankish Annals, 775-777 (c. 830)
• Capitulatio de partibus Saxonie

Holy War and Early Medieval Kingship

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

Benedictine Monasticism and Holy War

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

Peace and Truce of God

• Thomas Head, "The Development of the Peace of God in Aquitaine (970-1005), Speculum 74 (1999), pp. 656-686.
Episcopal Involvement in Warfare

- Leo IV (848) and John VIII (878): early indulgences
- Arnulf of Liege, on Wazo of Liege (Wazo and Greg I meets Macabbees)
- Fulbert of Chartres, Letter 112 (critical of episcopal involvement in war)
- Leo IX, Letter to Constantine Monomachos (1054)
- Papal indulgences, Leo IV to Eugenius III (847-1154)
- Gregory VII, Letters: selection (1074-1076)
- Henry IV and Gregory VII: depositions (1076)
- Urban II, two letters to the Catalans (1089 & 1096)
- Council of Clermont-5 versions (1095)

The First Crusade

- Tomaz Mastnak, Crusading Peace (California, 2002), pp. 1-130.
- Gesta Francorum (c. 1100)
- Bernard of Clairvaux, In Praise of the New Knighthood (c. 1135).

Reviving the Jihad

- Francesco Gabrieli, Arab Historians of the Crusades (Cal, 1969), pp. 87-175.