

Source 1
A Western Christian Perspective
Pope Urban II

The Crusades began in 1095 when Pope Urban II issued a stirring call to arms, inviting the knights and warriors of Europe to come to the aid of the Byzantine Empire and Eastern Christians, increasingly threatened by Turkish Muslim forces, and to liberate Jerusalem from Muslim control. Several versions of this famous speech have survived, including one from a French archbishop named Baldric, who included it in a history of the First Crusade, written in 1107.

Questions to consider as you examine the source:

How does the pope justify his call for military action against Muslims?

What views of the Islamic world are reflected in this speech? What did Muslim occupation of formerly Christian sites mean to the pope?

Does the fact that this account was written after the Christian victory in the First Crusade affect its usefulness to historians?

Pope Urban II
Speech at Clermont
1095

We have heard...with great hurt and dire sufferings our Christian brothers...are scourged, oppressed, and injured in Jerusalem, in Antioch, and the other cities of the East. Your own blood brothers...are either subjected in their inherited homes to other masters, or are driven from them, or they come as beggars among us; or, which is far worse, they are flogged and exiled as slaves for sale in their own land. Christian blood...and Christian flesh, akin to the flesh of Christ, has been subjected to unspeakable degradation and servitude...The churches in which divine mysteries were celebrated in olden times are now...used as stables for the animals of these people! Holy men do not possess those cities; nay, base and bastard Turks hold sway over our brothers...the Gentiles [Muslims] have established their superstitions, and the Christian religion, which they ought rather to cherish, they have basely shut out from the hall dedicated to God!...The priesthood of God has been ground down into the dust. The sanctuary of God (unspeakable shame!) is everywhere profaned. Whatever Christians still remain in hiding there are sought out with unheard of tortures.

Holy Jerusalem...This very city, in which, as you all know, Christ Himself suffered for us, because our sins demanded it, has been reduced to the pollution of paganism and...withdrawn from the service of God. Such is the heap of reproach upon us who have so much deserved it!...The Turks violently took from it [the tomb of Christ] the offerings which you brought there for alms in such vast amounts, and, in addition, they scoffed much and often at your religion...Woe unto us, brethren! We who have already become a reproach to our neighbors...let us at least with tears condone and have compassion upon our brothers!...This land we have deservedly called holy in which there is not even a footstep that the body or spirit of the Saviour did not render glorious and blessed which embraced the holy presence of the mother of God, and the meetings of the apostles, and drank up the blood of the martyrs shed there...

What are we saying? Listen and learn! You, girt about with the badge of knighthood, are arrogant with great pride; you rage against your brothers and cut each other in pieces. This is not the (true) soldiery of Christ which rends asunder the sheepfold of the Redeemer. The Holy Church has reserved a soldiery for herself to help her people, but you debase her wickedly to her hurt. Let us confess the truth, whose heralds we ought to be; truly, you are not holding to the way which leads to life. You, the oppressors of children, plunderers of widows; you, guilty of homicide, of sacrilege, robbers of another's rights..you sense battles from afar and rush to them eagerly. Verily, this is the worst way, for it is utterly removed from God! if, forsooth, you wish to be mindful of your souls, either lay down the girdle of such knighthood, or advance boldly, as knights of Christ, and rush as quickly as you can to the defence of the Eastern Church...

We say this, brethren, that you may restrain your murderous hands from the destruction of your brothers, and in behalf of your relatives in the faith oppose yourselves to the Gentiles...may you deem it a beautiful thing to die for Christ in that city in which He died for us. But if it befall you to die this side of it, be sure that to have died on the way is of equal value, if Christ shall find you in His army. God pays with the same shilling, whether at the first or eleventh hour. You should shudder, brethren, you should shudder at raising a violent hand against Christians; it is less wicked to brandish your sword against Saracens [Muslims]. It is the only warfare that is righteous, for it is charity to risk your life for your brothers...The possessions of the enemy, too, will be yours, since you will make spoil of their treasures and return victorious to your own; or empurpled with your own blood, you will have gained everlasting glory.

Gird yourselves, everyone of you, I say, and be valiant sons; for it is better for you to die in battle than to behold, the sorrows of your race and of your holy places. Let neither property nor the alluring charms of your wives entice you from going; nor let the trials that are to be borne so deter you that you remain here.

And turning to the bishops, he said, "You, brothers and fellow bishops; you, fellow priests and sharers with us in Christ, make this same announcement through the churches committed to you, and with your whole soul vigorously preach the journey to Jerusalem. When they have confessed the disgrace of their sins, do you, secure in Christ, grant them speedy pardon. Moreover, you who are to go shall have us praying for you..."

Source:

August C. Krey, *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eye-Witnesses and Participants* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1921).

Source 2
Jewish Experience of the Crusades

European anti-Semitism had a long history and many expressions. The old idea that the Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus provided a religious basis for hatred of the Jews. Their economic marginalization into occupations deemed impure although necessary, such as tax collection and moneylending, engendered hostility. These conditions, in combination with distinctive Jewish religious practices, gave rise to any number of stereotypes and negative images: Jews had magical powers derived from a pact with the devil; Jews murdered Christian children and drank their blood; Jews deliberately desecrated the host or communion wafers used in Catholic worship. Depending on time and place, Jews could be forbidden to own land or practice certain trades, forced to live in restricted areas, subjected to special taxes, and required to dress in distinctive ways. All of this marked Jews as “other,” distinctly different from their Christian neighbors.

The Crusades provided an opportunity for this European anti-Semitism to be expressed in action. On a number of occasions some Crusaders on their way to the Middle East took time to wreak havoc on Jewish communities in Europe, although such actions were widely condemned by political and religious authorities. This source provides a description of these horrendous attacks in 1096, written by a twelfth-century Christian historian named Albert of Aix-la-Chapelle based on interviews with returning Crusaders. He was not a participant in the Crusades or an eyewitness to the events he describes.

Questions to consider as you examine the source:

What is Albert's posture toward these attacks?

How did Jews attempt to protect themselves from these attacks?

To what extent did Albert distinguish among various kinds of Christians?

Albert of Aix-la-Chapelle
Emico and the Slaughter of the Rhineland Jews
Early to Mid-Twelfth Century

At the beginning of summer in the same year [1096] in which Peter, and Gottschalk [leaders of the First Crusade], after collecting an army, had set out, there assembled in like fashion a large and innumerable host of Christians from diverse kingdoms and lands; namely, from the realms of France, England, Flanders, and Lorraine. . . . I know n whether by a judgment of the Lord, or by some error of mind;, they rose in a spirit of cruelty against the Jewish people scattered throughout these cities and slaughtered them without mercy, especially in the Kingdom of Lorraine, asserting it to be the beginning of their expedition and their duty against the enemies of the Christian faith. This slaughter of Jews was done first by citizens of Cologne. These suddenly fell upon a small band of Jews and severely wounded and killed many; they destroyed the houses and synagogues of the Jews and divided among themselves a very large, amount of money. When the Jews saw this cruelty, about two hundred in the silence of the night began flight by boat to Neuss. The pilgrims and crusaders discovered them, and after taking away all their possessions, inflicted on them similar slaughter, leaving not even one alive.

Not long after this, they started upon their journey, as they had vowed, and arrived in a great multitude at the city of Mainz. There Count Emico, a nobleman, a very mighty man in

this region, was awaiting, with a large band of Teutons, the arrival of the pilgrims who were coming thither from diverse lands by the King's highway.

The Jews of this city, knowing of the slaughter of their brethren, and that they themselves could not escape the hands of so many, fled in hope of safety to Bishop Rothard. They put an infinite treasure in his guard and trust, having much faith in his protection, because he was Bishop of the city. Then that excellent Bishop of the city cautiously set aside the incredible amount of money received from them. He placed the Jews in the very spacious hall of his own house, away from the sight of Count Emico and his followers, that they might remain safe and sound in a very secure and strong place.

But Emico and the rest of his band held a council and, after sunrise, attacked the Jews in the hall with arrows and lances. Breaking the bolts and doors, they killed the Jews, about seven hundred in number, who in vain resisted the force and attack of so many thousands. They killed the women, also, and with their swords pierced tender children of whatever age and sex. The Jews, seeing that their Christian enemies were attacking them and their children, and that they were sparing no age, likewise fell upon one another, brother, children, wives, and sisters, and thus they perished at each other's hands. Horrible to say, mothers cut the throats of nursing children with knives and stabbed others, preferring them to perish thus by their own hands rather than to be killed by the weapons of the uncircumcised.

From this cruel slaughter of the Jews a few escaped; and a few because of fear, rather than because of love of the Christian faith, were baptized. With very great spoils taken from these people, Count Emico, Clarebold, Thomas, and all that intolerable company of men and women then continued on their way to Jerusalem...

So the hand of the Lord is believed to have been against the pilgrim who had sinned by excessive impurity and fornication, and who had slaughtered the exiled Jews through greed of money, rather than for the sake of God's justice, although the Jews were opposed to Christ. The Lord is a just judge and orders no one unwillingly, or under compulsion, to come under the yoke of the Catholic faith.

Source:

August C. Krey, *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eye-Witnesses and Participants* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1921).

Source 3
Muslim Perspectives on the Crusades

Well before the Crusades, Muslim impressions of the Christians, who they called Franks, were stereotypical and negative. In a word, they were uncivilized barbarians—personally dirty, sexually promiscuous, and allowing their women altogether too much independence. According to one Arab writer of the twelfth century, Europeans were “animals, possessing the virtues of courage and fighting, nothing else.” The Crusades hardened and supplemented such perceptions.

Beyond the trauma of invasion and military defeat during the First Crusade, the very presence of the Christians defiled the sacred spaces of Islam, cutting Muslims off from God. Particularly offensive was the placing of a Christian cross atop the beloved Dome of the Rock. Widely associated with filth, disease, and contamination, the Crusaders were also seen as a threat to the sanctity of Muslim women. Moreover, as Muslims became aware of the fundamentally religious impulses that motivated the Crusaders, their perception of the differences between Islam and Christianity sharpened. The Christian faith seemed to many Muslims absurd and immoral. If Jesus was God, why could he not prevent his own humiliating death? And what kind of god would be born from a woman’s private parts? Both the divinity of Jesus and the doctrine of the Trinity flew in the face of Islam’s firm monotheism.

One Muslim perspective on the Crusades derives from the writing of the Arab historian Ibn al-Athir. Known as *The Complete History*, his book was composed around 1231 and contained an extensive account of the Crusades. In these excerpts, he begins with a description of the Europeans’ bloody conquest of Jerusalem in 1099, followed by a portrayal of the Muslim retaking of the Holy City in 1187. The latter event had occurred under the leadership of Saladin, a heroic figure to Muslims, for he had unified the fragmented Muslim Middle East and had begun to push the Crusaders out.

Questions to consider as you examine the source:

What differences does al-Athir notice between these two events?

What general impression of the Franks comes across in these selections? Is it a wholly negative image or can you identify some nuance in these descriptions of them?

How does al-Athir’s portrayal of Saladin contribute, by contrast, to his description of the Franks?

Ibn al-Athir
The Complete History
ca. 1231

Jerusalem was taken...on the morning of Friday 22, sha'ban 492 [15 July 1099]. The population was put to the sword by the Franks, who pillaged the area for a week. A band of Muslims barricaded themselves into the Oratory of David and fought on for several days. They were granted their lives in return for surrendering. The Franks honored their word, and the group left by night...In the Masjid al-Aqsa [a major mosque] the Franks slaughtered more than 70,000 people, among them a large number of Imams [leaders of worship in mosques] and Muslim scholars, devout and ascetic men who had left their homelands to live lives of pious seclusion in the Holy Place. The Franks stripped the Dome of the Rock of more

than forty silver candelabra..and a great silver lamp..as well as a hundred and fifty smaller silver candelabra and more than twenty gold ones, and a great deal more booty.

[Muslim] Refugees from Syria reached Baghdad in Ramadan [the month of fasting]...They told the Caliph's ministers a story that wrung their hearts and brought tears to their eyes. On Friday they went to the Cathedral Mosque and begged for help, weeping so that their hearers wept with them as they described the sufferings of the Muslims in that Holy City: the men killed, the women and children taken prisoner, the homes pillaged. Because of the terrible hardships they had suffered, they were allowed to break the fast. It was the discord between the Muslim princes, as we shall describe, that enabled the Franks to overrun the country.

[Now al-Athir's account turns to the Muslim retaking of Jerusalem in 1187].

When the Franks saw how violently the Muslims were attacking..meeting no resistance, they grew desperate, and their leaders assembled to take counsel. They decided to ask for safe conduct out of the city and to hand Jerusalem over to Saladin. They sent a deputation of their lords and nobles to ask for terms, but when they spoke of it to Saladin he refused to grant their request. "We shall deal with you," he said, "Just as you dealt with the population of Jerusalem when you took it in 492 [1099], with murder and enslavement and other such savageries!" The messengers returned empty handed. Then Balian ibn Barzan [an important French noble in the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem] asked for safe-conduct for himself so that he might appear before Saladin to discuss developments. Consent was given, and he presented himself and once again began asking for a general amnesty in return for surrender. The sultan still refused his requests and entreaties to show mercy.

Finally, despairing of this approach, Balian said: "Know, O Sultan, that there are very many of us in this city, God alone knows how many. At the moment we are fighting half-heartedly in the hope of saving our lives, hoping to be spared by you as you have spared others; this is because of our horror of death and our love of life. But if we see that death is inevitable, then by God we shall kill our children and our wives, burn our possessions, so as not to leave you with a dinar or a drachma or a single man or woman to enslave. When this is done, we shall pull down the Sanctuary of the Rock and the Masjid al-Aqsa and the other sacred places, slaughtering the Muslim prisoners we hold—5,000 of them—and killing every horse and animal we possess. Then we shall come out to fight you like men fighting for their lives, when each man, before he falls dead, kills his equals; we shall die with honour, or win a noble victory!"

Then Saladin took counsel with his advisors, all of whom were in favor of his granting the assurances requested by the Franks, without forcing them to take extreme measures whose outcome could not be foreseen. "Let us consider them as being already our prisoners," they said, "and allow them to ransom themselves on terms agreed between us." The Sultan agreed to give the Franks assurances of safety on the understanding that each man, rich and poor alike, should pay ten dinar, children of both sexes two dinar and women five dinar. All who paid this sum within forty days should go free, and those who had not paid at the end of the time should be enslaved. Balian ibn Barzan offered 30,000 dinar as ransom for the poor, which was accepted, and the city surrendered on Friday 27 rajab [2 October 1187], a memorable day on which the Muslim flags were hoisted over the walls of Jerusalem...

The Grand Patriarch of the Franks left the city with the treasures from the Dome of the Rock, the Masjid al-Aqsa, the Church of the Resurrection and others, God alone knows the amount of treasure; he also took an equal quantity of money. Saladin made no difficulties, and when he was advised to sequester [seize] the whole lot for Islam, replied that he would not go back on his word. He took only the ten dinar from him, and let him go, heavily escorted, to Tyre.

At the top of the cupola of the Dome of the Rock there was a great gilded cross. When the Muslims entered the city on the Friday, some of them climbed to the top of the cupola to take down the cross. When they reached the top a great cry went up from the city and from outside the walls, the Muslims crying the *Allah akbar* in their joy, the Franks groaning in consternation and grief. So loud and piercing was the cry that the earth shook.

Source:

Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, (University of California Press, 1996).

Source 4
Jerusalem and the Crusades

As a city sacred to Christians, Jews, and Muslims alike, Jerusalem lay at the epicenter of the Crusades. Two images of the city, both painted by European artists in the fifteenth century to adorn richly decorated books, portray two decisive events of the Crusades. The first shows the Christian seizure of Jerusalem in 1099, while the second records Saladin's retaking of the city in 1187. While the subject matter of the two images is historical, the depictions of Jerusalem are fanciful, incorporating Western European architectural features such as European fortifications and houses. Painted centuries after the event, these images provide evidence of how Europeans perceived the Crusades after their conclusion.

Questions to consider as you examine the source:

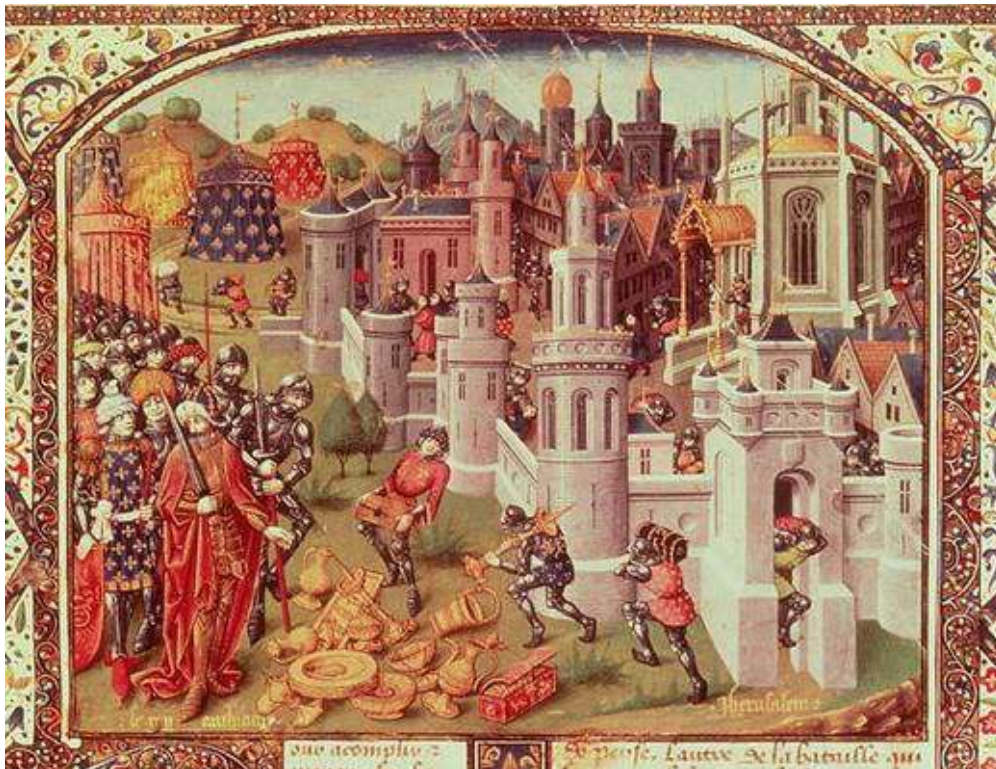
What is happening in each of the paintings?

Saladin is that rare Muslim figure who achieved a heroic stature in both the Christian and Islamic worlds. Why might the artist who painted the image in source 4B have portrayed Saladin in such a positive light?

To what extent do these paintings illustrate al-Athir's account of these two events?

Based on Urban II's speech in source 1, would he have been pleased with or appalled at the behavior shown in 4A?

The Looting of Jerusalem
1099



Illuminated miniature from a universal chronicle, 1440, by Jean De Courcy, Bibliotheque Nationale de France, Paris, France, Bridgeman Images

How Jerusalem Was Captured by Saladin
1187



Manuscript illumination, c. 1460, from the *Chronique des Empereurs*, compiled by David Aubert, Bibliotheque de Arsenal, Paris, France, The Art Archive at Art Resource, NY

Source 5
A Byzantine Perspective on the Crusades

The Crusades began in an effort by Pope Urban II to reconcile long-standing tensions between the Eastern and Western Churches by coming to the aid of a Byzantine Empire beleaguered by Muslim armies. Precisely the opposite actually occurred, as even a common hostility to Islam failed to overcome those differences. Mutual distrust and some violence between Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians came to a climax in 1204, when Crusaders on their way to Egypt diverted to Constantinople and sacked the city. In an emotional eyewitness account, the Byzantine official and historian Nicetas Choniates described that event, which solidified the hostility between these two branches of Christendom.

Questions to consider as you examine the source:

How does this passage characterize the Crusaders?

How does the sense of violation expressed in this passage compare with that of Pope Urban II in source 1 and al-Athir in source 3? What common features can you discern?

How do you think this event affected the possibility of reconciliation between the Eastern and Western Churches?

Nicetas Choniates
The Sack of Constantinople
1204

How shall I begin to tell of the deeds wrought by these nefarious men! Alas, the images, which ought to have been adored, were trodden under foot! Alas, the relics of the holy martyrs were thrown into unclean places!...the divine body and blood of Christ was spilled upon the ground or thrown about. They snatched the precious reliquaries [containers for precious relics], thrust into their bosoms the ornaments which these contained, and used the broken remnants for pans and drinking cups,-precursors of Anti-Christ...

Nor can the violation of the Great Church [Hagia Sophia] be listened to with equanimity. For the sacred altar, formed of all kinds of precious materials and admired by the whole world, was broken into bits and distributed among the soldiers, as was all the other sacred wealth of so great and infinite splendor.

When the sacred vases and utensils of unsurpassable art and grace and rare material, and the fine silver, wrought with gold...were to be borne away as booty, mules and saddled horses were led to the very sanctuary of the temple. Some of these which were unable to keep their footing on the splendid and slippery pavement, were stabbed when they fell, so that the sacred pavement was polluted with blood and filth.

Nay more, a certain harlot, a sharer in their guilt..a servant of the demons, a worker of incantations and poisonings, insulting Christ, sat in the patriarch's seat, singing an obscene song and dancing frequently... Could those, who showed so great madness against God Himself, have spared the honorable matrons and maidens or the virgins consecrated to God?

Nothing was more difficult and laborious than to soften by prayers, to render benevolent, these wrathful barbarians, vomiting forth bile at every displeasing word, so that nothing

failed to inflame their fury...often they drew their daggers against anyone who opposed them at all or hindered their demands.

No one was without a share in the grief. In the alleys, in the streets, in the temples, complaints, weeping, lamentations, grief, the groaning of men, the shrieks of women, wounds, rape, captivity, the separation of those most closely united. Nobles wandered about ignominiously, those of venerable age in tears, the rich in poverty. Thus it was in the streets, on the corners, in the temple, in the dens, for no place remained unassailed or defended the suppliants. All places everywhere were filled full of all kinds of crime. Oh, immortal God, how great the afflictions of the men, bow great the distress!

Source:

D.C. Munro, trans., *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, series 1, vol. 3:1 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1912).

Source 6
More Than Conflict

The Crusades have long been seen as an arena of conflict between Christians and Muslims with violence and brutality on both sides. And yet at least on occasion it is possible to witness something more than this. Trade between Christians and Muslims persisted, and they rented property to one another. The mid-twelfth-century Muslim writer Ibn al-Qaysrani penned celebratory poems about the churches of the Crusader city of Antioch, the beauty of Greek Orthodox church liturgy, and the loveliness of Frankish women. A Muslim warrior named Usamah Ibn Maunqidh (1095-1188), who had fought the Crusaders with Saladin, wrote of a Frankish knight who called him "brother." "Between us," Usamah Ibn Munqidh declared, "were mutual bonds of amity and friendship." In the first section below, Usamah, who elsewhere wrote of Europeans in highly negative terms, described his encounter with a group of Christian monks.

Questions to consider as you examine the source:

What did he find surprising about this encounter?

Why was he initially disappointed?

What does his comment about the Sufis reveal about his posture to the Christians?

Usamah Ibn Munqidh
Christian Piety and Muslim Piety
Mid-Twelfth Century

I paid a visit to the tomb of John [the Baptist in Damascus]..After saying my prayers..I entered a church. Inside were about ten old men, their bare heads as white as combed cotton. They were facing east...They took their oath on this sign, and gave hospitality to those who needed it. The sight of their piety touched my heart, but at the same time it displeased and saddened me, for I had never seen such zeal and devotion among the Muslims. For some time I brooded on this experience, until one day, as Mu'in ad-Din and I were passing the Peacock House..we dismounted and went into a long building set at an angle to the road. For the moment I thought there was no one there. Then I saw about a hundred prayer mats, and on the each a sufi, his face expressing peaceful serenity, and his body humble devotion. This was a reassuring sight, and I gave thanks to Almighty God that there were among the Muslims men of even more zealous devotion than those Christian priests. Before this I had never seen sufis in their monastery, and was ignorant of the way they lived.

Source 6A:

Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1969).

In this next passage, a French priest, Fulcher of Chartres, who accompanied the First Crusade to Jerusalem and lived there until 1127, wrote about Europeans who had settled permanently in one of the Crusader states.

Questions to consider as you examine the source:

According to Fulcher, what was happening to Europeans who lived in the Holy Land for some time?

How does he explain this transformation?

What limits to assimilation are suggested in this passage?

Fulcher of Chartres
The Latins in the East
Early Twelfth Century

Consider, I pray, and reflect how in our time God has transferred the West into the East, for we who were Occidentals now have been made Orientals. He who was a Roman or a Frank is now a Galilaeen, or an inhabitant of Palestine. One who was a citizen of Rheims or of Chartres now has been made a citizen of Tyre or of Antioch. We have already forgotten the places of our birth; already they have become unknown to many of us, or, at least, are unmentioned. Some already possess here homes and servants which they have received through inheritance. Some have taken wives not merely of their own people, but Syrians, or Armenians, or even Saracens [Muslims] who have received the grace of baptism...There are here, too, grandchildren and great-grandchildren...Different languages, now made common, become known to both races, and faith unites those whose forefathers were strangers...For those who were poor there, here God makes rich...and those who had not had a villa, here, by the gift of God, already possess a city. Therefore why should one who has found the East so favorable return to the West?

Source 6B:

August. C. Krey, *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants*,
(Princeton: 1921)