

Christiaan.

This is an interesting, well-balanced assessment of Manuel's culpability. The argument is broad ranging, you've made good use of the pertinent primary and secondary sources, and the points made out of them are generally sound. It's interesting to note that Odo recorded that Louis and Manuel got on famously at Constantinople; indeed, he noted that they were *sicut fratres* ('like brothers'). Also, Manuel was heavily criticised during his reign for being overly *Latinophron* ('Latin minded'), so that muddies the waters somewhat. Comparisons can be made with his grandfather Alexios. Both wanted to help the crusaders, but emperors needed to put their empire first, which naturally meant that their interests didn't always coincide with those of the Franks. I do, however, find your overall argument to be nuanced and convincing. Well done! – 85%

1.1 Essay Question

'Always a most treacherous people' (Geoffrey Malaterra, c. 1100).

The East Romans or Byzantines – known as the 'Greeks' to the Franks – were often labeled by Latin historians as traitors to the cause of Christendom. Was this just 'sour grapes' and/or propaganda, or was there some truth in this assertion?

To answer this question you can focus on:

- c. The Second Crusade, e.g. experiences of the French army as it marched through coastal Anatolia.

1.2 Essay Response

The French led by King Louis VII had cause to question Greek support during their journey through imperial territory during the Second Crusade. While the Greeks could have contributed significantly more to the Crusade, they were not entirely at fault, with circumstances beyond their control hampering the Crusaders.

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Byzantine Emperor Manuel I feared a Western Crusade may endanger his Empire. Manuel believed the sizeable Western armies could capture Constantinople. Members of the French contingent such as the Bishop of Langres were advocates for attacking Constantinople, and Louis was known to be on good terms with Manuel's enemy, Roger II of Sicily.¹ Manuel also worried about Westerners strengthening ties with the Crusader states. In the years leading up to the Crusade, Manuel had worked hard to ensure Raymond of Antioch swore homage to him, and Louis (whose wife Eleanor was Raymond's niece) could undermine these efforts.²

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Comment: True, but we also know that he got on well with Manuel.

¹ Ralph-Johannes Lilie, *Byzantium and the Crusader States*, trans. J C Morris and Jean E Ridings, Oxford, 2001, p. 145; Jean Richard, *The Crusades, c. 1071-1291*, trans. Jean Birrell, Cambridge, 1999, p. 160.

² Virginia Gingerick Berry, 'The Second Crusade', in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. K.M. Setton, Vol. I, *The First Hundred Years*, ed. Marshall W. Baldwin, Madison, 1969-1989, p. 484; Lilie, *Byzantium*, p. 147.

Manuel admits his fear in his correspondence with Louis, and as well as reinforcing Constantinople's walls in preparation for the westerners, demanded Louis and Conrad III, the leader of the German contingent, swear oaths of homage. These oaths guaranteed that no harm would come to any Greek cities, and land captured by the Crusaders that had previously belonged to the Greeks would be returned to them. In exchange Manuel promised provisions and support.³ Manuel's political manoeuvrings set the context for subsequent events.

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Comment:

Use past tense (as you have later in the sentence).

Odo de Deuil, King Louis's chaplain who recorded the events of the Second Crusade complained bitterly of Greek greed. In contrast to the plentiful and reasonably priced provisions in Hungary, the Greeks in the Balkans charged exorbitant prices for food.⁴ On occasions the locals supposedly refused to hand over supplies even after the French had paid for them.⁵ While these French grievances were legitimate, Conrad's army which passed through the Balkans before the French, must shoulder some responsibility. Conrad himself admitted he had little control over his army who alienated local Greeks by pillaging the countryside, stealing provisions, and inciting a riot in Philippopolis after murdering a juggler they accused of sorcery.⁶ The Germans put the Greeks offside and consequently there was little welcome for the French.

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The French experienced similar issues with supplies and transport as they progressed along the Anatolian coast. The locals continued to charge excessive prices. In one example Odo cites the commandant of Laodicea who emptied his city of provisions knowing 'no provisions could be found anywhere else and that all must starve unless food could be bought for a price'.⁷ Odo admits that the 'insolence of our mob' who 'seized what they would rather have bought' put the locals off side.⁸ Regardless, Manuel had promised open markets for the Crusaders, and permitted French plundering where no markets existed.⁹ In January 1148 Louis arrived at the port city of Adalia, and was promised ships to ferry his forces onward to the Holy Land. However, only a small fleet was available, barely enough to carry Louis and a limited number of nobles to Antioch.¹⁰ Considering Manuel's promise of aid, the French

³ Berry, 'The Second Crusade', pp. 484-492.

⁴ Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades*, Cambridge, 2006, p. 321.

⁵ Jonathan Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades*, London, 2006, p. 98.

⁶ Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. 2, Cambridge, 1954, pp. 260-261.

⁷ Odo of Deuil, *De profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem: The journey of Louis VII to the East*, trans. Virginia Gingerick Berry, New York, 1948, pp. 113-115.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 97-107.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁰ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History*, London, 1987, p. 101.

could be excused for expecting a more sizeable fleet. In defence of the Greeks, Louis had arrived in winter, with highly unfavourable sailing conditions hampering efforts to gather a large fleet; a point Odo himself admits.¹¹ The provisions and transport promised by Manuel were insufficient for the French force and while more could have been done, unfavourable seasonal conditions limited the options available.

Some of Manuel's actions adversely affecting the French were forced on him by other Western powers. Roger II's assault on Corfu is one such example. Roger's attack forced Manuel to halt his own offensive against the Seljuq Sultan Ma'sud. Coupled with the impending threat of the Western Crusaders, Manuel agreed to a truce with Ma'sud.¹² To the French this seemed like treachery. In correspondence before the crusade, Manuel had promised to fight the Turks.¹³ The shock of a Christian Emperor negotiating with a Muslim must have seemed all the more incredible considering Manuel had called a cease-fire with the same Muslims the French were Crusading against. However, Odo's claim of treachery demonstrates his political naivety. Alliances between Christian and Muslim were not new to the region, with Christian Jerusalem and Muslim Damascus allied against Zengi, Atabeg of Mosul, from 1139.¹⁴ Moreover, Roger's aggression ensured that Manuel needed his armed forces elsewhere, preventing him from offering protection to the French.

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Comment: Yes and no. Such things were not common in the West so, from his perspective, it seemed treacherous.

Latin, Greek and Syriac historians accuse Manuel of actively conspiring against the French.¹⁵ Odo makes numerous claims that the Greeks invited the Turks to attack them. For example on the road to Adalia Odo claims the 'Turks and Greeks, their arrows preventing the fallen from rising, thronged against the other part of our army'.¹⁶ The strongest case for Greek conspiracy comes in Antioch (also known as Pisidia-Antioch). Turkish forces, struggling under pressure from the French army retired inside the local Greek city, leaving Odo in no doubt as to Greek intentions.¹⁷ It is hard to argue against this example, though most sources limit their

¹¹ Odo of Deuil, *La Croisade de Louis VII, roi de France*, ed. H Waquet, DHC, Publiés par l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 3, Paris, 1949, p. 75, reproduced in Lilie, *Byzantium*, p. 159.

¹² Runciman, *A History*, pp. 275-276.

¹³ Savvas Neocleous, 'Byzantine-Muslim Conspiracies Against the Crusades: History and Myth', *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 36, 2010, p. 259.

¹⁴ P M Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East From the Eleventh Century to 1517*, London, 1986, p. 41.

¹⁵ Odo of Deuil, *De profectione*, p. 109; Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates*, trans. Harry J Magoulias, Detroit, 1984, pp. 38-39; W R Taylor, 'A New Syriac Fragment Dealing with Incidents in the Second Crusade', *The Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, vol. 11, 1929-1930, p. 123.

¹⁶ Odo of Deuil, *De profectione*, p. 117.

¹⁷ W B Bartlett, *The Crusades: An Illustrated History*, Gloucestershire, 2005, p. 125.

accusations against the Greeks to allowing Turks free movement in Greek territory. Louis himself in a letter to Abbot Suger of St Denis asserts that the ‘Turks who with the emperor’s permission, entered his lands to harry the soldiery’.¹⁸ Manuel also sent envoys to warn Louis of impending Turkish forces in December 1147, again countering accusations of Greek complicity with the Turks.¹⁹ While it appears that Greeks were violent towards the French, it is unlikely that their actions were part of a major Greek plot; rather the locals were taking reprisals over French plundering.

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Comment: Good – Manuel can hardly be blamed for the actions of those outside of his direct control.

Modern Historians differ in their interpretations of why Manuel neglected the French after such deliberate actions prior to their entry into Anatolia. Tyerman claims that Manuel’s policies towards the French changed after the German army was defeated by the Turks at Bathys. With a significant Western contingent now no longer a threat, and keen for an ally against Roger, Manuel reinforced ties with the Germans by personally caring for the sick Conrad. Neglecting to send sufficient ships and supplies, and making little effort to encourage local hospitality towards the French, Manuel essentially abandoned Louis’ army to its fate.²⁰ Berry theorises that Manuel had attempted to convince Louis to enter an alliance against Roger. In failing to do so, and hamstrung by the stipulations of his truce with Ma’sud, Manuel demonstrated a ‘detached attitude towards the French Crusaders thereafter.’²¹ These differing interpretations demonstrate how Manuel’s political agenda clashed with the Crusaders. As Tyerman states, ‘at most, Manuel helped only when and how it suited him... he ensured that the odds were stacked against the westerners.’²²

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Comment: Which is fair enough; he had an empire to worry about!

The French suffered from a lack of local support in their Crusade through Greek territory. Yet despite Manuel’s political agenda, French plundering, the attack of Roger II of Sicily and poor seasonal timing demonstrate that it is unreasonable to blame the Greeks solely for Louis’ misgivings.

¹⁸ Excerpt from King Louis VII gives news of the Crusade to his regent to Abbot Suger, March-April 1148, in *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, eds. J J Brial and L Delisle, Vol. XV, Paris, Libraires Associés, 1878, pp. 495-496, reproduced in ‘Contemporary Letters and Texts concerning the Second Crusade’, University of Leeds Faculty of Arts, trans. G A Loud, 2002, http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/download/1111/contemporary_letters_and_texts_concerning_the_second_crusade, accessed November 20, 2012.

¹⁹ Berry, ‘The Second Crusade’, p. 497.

²⁰ Tyerman, *God’s War*, pp. 325-326.

²¹ Berry, ‘The Second Crusade’, p. 492.

²² Tyerman, *God’s War*, p. 325.

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