CHAPTER 12

The Crusades

Pope Urban II (reigned 1088–1099) was troubled at the growing power of Islam in the East. The Arabic rulers of Baghdad and the Muslim caliphs of Egypt had surrendered to a new and fiercer Muslim people, the Seljuk Turks. Fresh from the Asian grasslands, the Seljuks—under the command of their leaders, called **sultans**—soon had all the Middle East in their hands. The Seljuks were not as tolerant of other faiths as the former Arab rulers had been. Seljuk edicts, for instance, forbade Christian pilgrims from entering shrines, such as the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

sultan: a king or ruler of the Turks

The whole of Asia Minor up to the Bosporus soon fell under Turkish Muslim control. Seeing the Turkish threat, the Eastern Roman emperor at Constantinople asked the pope for a contingent of knights to help the Byzantine armies hold back the Seljuks from overrunning the Eastern Empire.



A 15th century depiction of Pope Urban II summoning the whole of Christiandom to arms on November 27, 1095.

God Wills It!

Pope Urban II believed the recovery of the lands where Our Lord had walked and died was an act of piety and love, so he did not send just a

contingent of knights to rescue the Eastern Empire, but a whole army. In 1095, at a Church council in Clermont, France, Pope Urban called on the great lords of the Western lands to mobilize their forces to take back the holy places for Christendom. The assembly of clerics and nobles from all of France, stirred by the pope's call to arms, answered with the shout, *Deus lo volt!*—"God wills it!"

The Peasants' Crusade

Pope Urban's appeal for the relief of the Christian holy places, however, did not inspire only kings and nobles. A preacher called Peter the Hermit wandered about Europe, calling on all Christians to join in the pious cause of freeing the Holy Land from the Muslim Turks. Moved by Peter's preaching, a virtually leaderless mass of thousands of peasants (including small children) set out for the Holy Land. This "Peasants' Crusade," as it has been called, got under way in 1096 without plan or preparation. Since most of the force had never traveled far from their homes, they had no concept of the distances they had to cross to reach Constantinople. The motley force, however, gathered at Cologne on the Rhine, set off for Mainz in April of 1096, and traveled up the Rhine, down the Danube, and across the Balkans to Asia Minor.

Peter the Hermit preaching the First Crusade



Already a huge mob, the peasants' "army" collected numbers of zealous folk as it moved eastward. They lived on what they could seize and left a trail of destruction across the Balkans to Constantinople. The Byzantine emperor fed and sheltered the large host—but safely, miles away from the city—and then transported it over the Bosporus into Muslim-held Asia Minor. Harried by Turkish forces, the remnant of the great unorganized force finally took shelter in a hill fort, where they were besieged. At last they surrendered to the Turks, who sold them into slavery.

The First Crusade



Four Leaders of the First Crusade by Gustave Doré

Meanwhile, a more organized force was gathering for the long march to the Holy Land. Thousands of warriors and their leaders had made a solemn vow to fight until Jerusalem was taken. Sewing a red cross to the front of their cloaks, these warriors came to be called "crusaders" (from the Latin word *crux*, meaning "cross.") They were engaged, they believed, in a holy task. They were "taking up the cross."

Three crusader armies eventually converged on Constantinople: the men of the Rhineland under Godfrey of Bouillon and his brother Baldwin; the men of southern France under Bishop Adhemar of Le Puy and Count Raymond of Toulouse; and the men of northern Europe, joining the Normans of the heel of Italy, led by Count Bohemond of Taranto.

The Christian forces seemed formidable to their Turkish foes. The knights wore steel helmets and covered themselves in long coats of chain mail. An Arab or Turkish warrior wore a tunic of mail, but only a soft head covering and leather leggings. The Christian warriors were trained to make massed charges with their heavy cavalry. They advanced like a huge wall of iron with lances at rest and supported by infantry. But Arabic and Turkish warriors excelled as light cavalry; they were mobile and deadly in a cut-and-turn technique.

After receiving oaths of loyalty from the crusader leaders, the Byzantine emperor hastily sent the "Frankish" force (as the Byzantines called them) off to Asia Minor, where they were lucky enough to find the Muslims so distracted by local rivalries and religious differences that they were unable to resist the invaders effectively. After taking the great city of Antioch in Syria, the crusaders moved against Jerusalem. In June 1099, after three years on their armed pilgrimage, the crusaders finally came in sight of the towers of Jerusalem. Only one in five of their number had survived the trip. Beholding the holy city, the crusaders knelt and wept.



Godfrey of Bouillon made lord of Jerusalem

On June 7, 1099, the crusaders laid siege to Jerusalem, a major fortress defended by walls and towers. The final assault broke through the defenses on July 15, and the army poured into the city. In the frenzy of attack, the crusaders slaughtered defenders and ordinary citizens alike. At dawn, having conquered the city, the crusaders wept with gratitude for survival—and with shame for their atrocities. The next day, July 16, 1099, the exhausted crusaders trooped into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to give thanks to God for their victory and pray forgiveness for their sins.

The victorious crusaders, amid great rejoicing, set up a Christian feudal kingdom in Jerusalem. They offered the crown first to Raymond of Toulouse, who had commanded the siege of Jerusalem, but he refused to be "a king in Christ's kingdom." Godfrey of Bouillon accepted the crown but asked to be called Prince of Jerusalem and Duke of the Holy Sepulchre, not king.

Godfrey fell ill and died in 1100, after reigning only a few months. His brother, Baldwin, count of Edessa and ruler of Syria (two lands the crusaders had conquered on their way to Jerusalem), was asked to take his brother's throne in Jerusalem. Baldwin did not share his brother's humility and was crowned king, not prince, of Jerusalem in 1100. Under his 18-year rule, the kingdom was secure and prosperous.

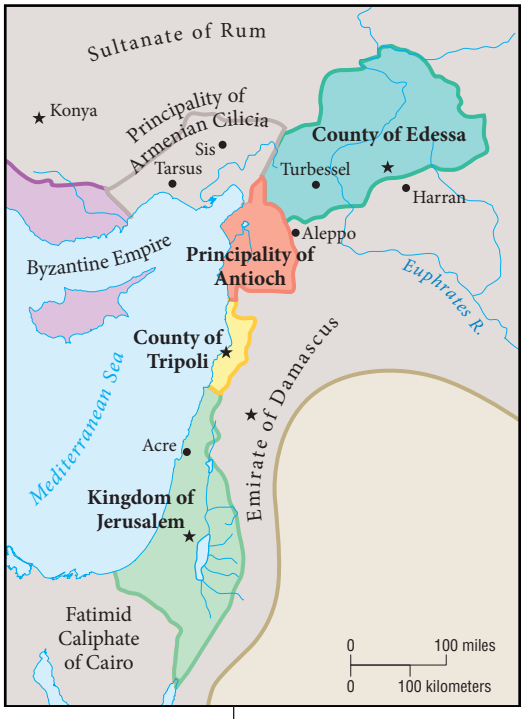
The Crusader Kingdoms of Outremer

In their march to Jerusalem, the crusaders had conquered large portions of Syria. A group of crusaders had even marched east, to the Euphrates River, conquering a land called Edessa. Out of all the conquered lands, the

crusaders formed four states: Jerusalem, Tripoli (on the Syrian coast), Antioch (on the northern border of Syria near the sea), and Edessa. The lands of the crusader lords stretched in a narrow line from the Euphrates to the desert of Sinai—some 600 miles. In some places the Christian territory was only 10 miles wide.

The Holy Land was under the control of crusader lords for about 100 years. During this time, Christians resumed making pilgrimages to the holy places, and trade was established between Europe and the Holy Land, which Europeans began to call *Outremer* (meaning "over-the-sea"). Pilgrims, colonists, and more warriors swelled the number of Western settlers until they reached about 140,000 people.

The original inhabitants of Palestine and Syria included many Christians as well as Muslims. The crusaders, however, had no respect for these "foreign" Christians because they spoke the same language and wore the same dress as their Muslim neighbors. Native Palestinians, both Christian and Muslim, became second-class subjects of the new lords and paid high taxes to support their feudal states. Local Christians, orthodox or not, were excluded from government along with Muslims. This inspired bitter feelings among local Christians, both for the crusaders and for the Western Catholic Church they represented.



Crusader kingdoms of Jerusalem, Antioch, Edessa, and Tripoli

Templars and Hospitallers

In the early years of the Latin kingdom, a knight of Burgundy, Hugh de Payens, formed a group of companions to protect pilgrims coming to Jerusalem. The king of Jerusalem granted them a house next to the ruined temple in Jerusalem, from which they received their name, Knights Templar. The Templars took the threefold monastic vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience. But they were still soldiers, keeping their weapons and martial organization as protectors of the pilgrimage routes from the coast of Palestine to Jerusalem.

It was not long before the Templars went from their main business of protecting pilgrims to engaging in a general war against the Muslims. Templar heroism and **austerity** attracted new members to their order from western Europe. Nobles and ordinary citizens gave them huge gifts,

austerity: the quality of being ascetic, unadorned, severe (adj., *austere*)



Effigy of a Templar Knight

so that within 100 years the Templars were the wealthiest order in western Europe, with recruiting centers in major cities and their own fleets to transport troops to Outremer from the north and south of France.

Before the crusaders' conquest of the Holy Land, the citizens of Amalfi in Italy had set up a hospital in Jerusalem for poor pilgrims, dedicating it to St. John the Baptist. After the conquest of Jerusalem, the pope permitted this charitable institution to become a military order of knights, like the Templars.

These Knights of St. John, known as the Hospitallers, became as strong and almost as wealthy as the Templars. Across Europe, the houses of both orders became recruiting centers, pouring more and more armed men into Outremer. These recruits kept alive the forces of the Latin kingdom. Huge fortresses, like the magnificent Krak des Chevaliers of the Hospitallers, east of the Jordan River on the desert's edge, defended the kingdom's most perilous borders.



Crusader castle Krak des Chevaliers (1140–1260), Syria

The fighting monks formed their own states within the feudal state, and they were often at odds with the king of Jerusalem and each other. Nevertheless, the two orders were the most indestructible military force in the kingdom. Their well-drilled units allowed the crusader kingdom to hold its own against Arab and Turk.

The Second Crusade

The Christian crusader states, however, suffered weaknesses. After the First Crusade, many crusaders returned home, leaving too few men to guard the newly conquered lands. Reinforcements from Europe came from time to time, but they were never enough. The crusader states, too, did not work together and at times quarreled amongst themselves. As long as the Turks themselves were divided, the crusader states could hold their own against them.

Raymond of Poitiers welcomes Louis VII to Antioch



The first crusader state to fall to the Muslims was Edessa in 1144. Though the Muslims had not yet become strong enough to threaten the other crusader states seriously, the loss of Edessa caused alarm in Europe. In 1145, St. Bernard of Clairvaux preached a second crusade and moved King Louis VII of France to take up the cross. Though he was at first reluctant to join the crusade, Germany's Emperor Conrad III cast in his lot with Louis, and the two rulers led a splendid army to Constantinople.

Moving into Asia Minor, the crusaders met their first disaster. The Turks defeated Conrad III of Germany on the mountain roads of Asia Minor, and the emperor escaped with a few companions to the French camp at Nicaea. Louis VII of France, meanwhile, followed the coastal road south and reached Antioch. But instead of reinforcing Jerusalem,

Louis and Conrad attacked the rich city of Damascus. This assault was an utter failure, and Conrad and Louis went home, leaving Outremer to defend itself.

For the next 30 years after this Second Crusade, the Latin kingdoms prospered, though the Latin princes quarreled among themselves. After Baldwin no strong king ruled Jerusalem, and corruption and selfishness replaced the religious zeal of the First Crusade. Outremer had to rely more and more on the Templars and Hospitallers to defend it.

Saladin, the Conqueror

Then, in 1169, a strong Muslim leader named Saladin came to power in Egypt. Over the next two years, Saladin took complete control of that land and then moved against the Muslim city of Damascus. After seizing control there, he marched his forces into Mesopotamia, conquering most of that ancient land between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. For the first time, a united and powerful Muslim kingdom, ruled by a generous and crafty sultan, surrounded the Christian states of Outremer.

Saladin next turned his attention to the Kingdom of Jerusalem. On July 4, 1187, the Christian forces under Guy of Lusignan, king of Jerusalem, met Saladin in battle on the shores of the Sea of Tiberias (or Galilee). The Muslim leader destroyed the Christian army, took Guy of Lusignan prisoner, and seized the relic of the True Cross that King Guy had taken with him into battle. Saladin then moved against Jerusalem itself, which fell to the Muslims on October 2, 1187. Saladin showed mercy to the Christians in the Holy City. He allowed them the use of their holy places, though they had to pay a heavy tax for this favor.

After the fall of Jerusalem, only Tyre, Tripoli, and Antioch remained in Christian hands.

The Third Crusade

News of Saladin's conquest of Jerusalem spread alarm throughout Christian Europe. No great preacher needed to move Christian princes to take up the cross. Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, King Philip Augustus of France, and England's King Richard the Lion-Heart assembled a very large host and, in 1189, set off for the Holy Land. Frederick led his forces by land through Constantinople and Asia Minor, while the kings of France and England advanced by sea from Italy.

Meanwhile, Saladin had released King Guy, sending him on his way to his cousins in Tripoli. But Guy surprised Saladin. Taking with him a small

party of knights, the king of Jerusalem rode instead to Saladin's port city and fortress of Acre and laid siege to it. When the first ships from Europe arrived, they sent ashore their crusader troops, who dug trenches and fortifications around the city.

When the crusaders were in place, Saladin and his troops arrived, trapping the Christian army between the Muslim host and the city. The crusaders besieging the city were themselves now under siege, fighting on two sides. At last the two kings, Philip and Richard, landed with their troops to bolster the besieged crusaders. The fighting was unbroken. The siege lasted for 683 days. At last the second wave of crusaders broke into the city, the first attackers led by Richard himself. The city surrendered in July 1191, and Saladin's army withdrew to the hills of Judea.



A 16th century depiction of Saladin

Satisfied with capturing Acre, Philip returned to France. Richard the Lion-Heart, left in sole command, marched his force to Jaffa, a city on the route to Jerusalem. Richard was a careful and wise **tactician**. His spies had told him that Saladin had laid an ambush on the route, at a place called Arsuf. Richard sent forward his spearmen, while his crossbowmen and longbow archers remained behind. When Saladin attacked, Richard's archers and crossbowmen rained a terrible hail of steel on the Muslims. Richard then brought up his rear guard of heavy horse, crushing the lighter-armed Turks between spear and lance. After Arsuf, no Muslim army dared face Richard again.

tactician: one who is an expert in coming up with sound *tactics*—on the battlefield, the arrangement of troops and the directing of how the battle should go

Richard then looked to conquer Jerusalem, but Saladin had no intention of giving up the Holy City. Saladin's troops laid waste to the lands between the coast and the city, poisoning the wells in that dry country and destroying everything that could not be carried into Jerusalem. Judea became an artificial desert.

Richard knew too well the costs of war. He saw no way for the crusaders to hold Jerusalem, even if they should take it. So he arranged a truce and a treaty with Saladin to save whatever he could of Christian Outremer.

Richard the Lion-Heart at Arsuf



In the autumn of 1192, Richard and Saladin signed a treaty, leaving the crusaders in possession of their coastal cities, ensuring the return of the True Cross relic, and guaranteeing safe passage for pilgrims to the holy shrines in Jerusalem. The treaty did not satisfy the knights, who had come to the Holy Land to regain Jerusalem; but it was the best that could be won. Richard, as the final commander, received the blame for the failure of the Third Crusade.

The Failure of the Fourth Crusade

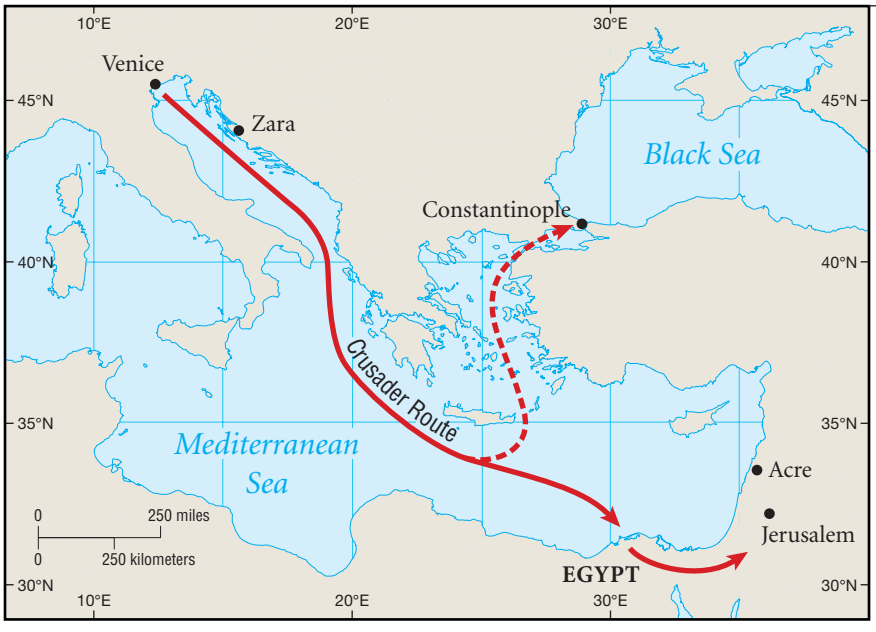
Innocent III's goal, when he became pope in 1198, was to continue the reform of the Church as begun by his predecessors on the Throne of Peter. But the failure of the Third Crusade to recover Jerusalem made another crusade to the Holy Land the pope's first priority. In the very year he became pope, Innocent ordered another crusade. Knights from France and Germany, led by Boniface, marquis of Montferrat, pledged to take up the cross.

The crusaders' goal was first to conquer Egypt, the center of Turkish Muslim power, and from there to move against Jerusalem. The crusader leaders came to an agreement with the Italian city-state of Venice to transport their army by ship to Egypt. The crusaders, however, could not pay the entire amount the Venetians demanded. Seeing an opportunity, the Venetians said they would forgive the amount

The Noble Infidel

Dying only five months after his treaty with Richard the Lion-Heart, Saladin lived on in the history and the legends of western Europe. Europeans remembered their Muslim foe as gallant, noble, and courteous—a **paragon** of chivalry. So courteous was Saladin that once, when King Richard the Lion-Heart was unhorsed at Jaffa, the sultan sent him a fresh mount. Later, when Richard fell ill with a fever, Saladin had snow brought from the Syrian mountains to cool him.

paragon: a model of excellence or perfection



Proposed route for the Fourth Crusade from Venice to Egypt (solid line). Actual route (dotted line)

the crusaders still owed—if they helped Venice attack the Christian city of Zara, in Dalmatia, across the Adriatic Sea from Venice. The crusaders agreed and, in November 1202, Zara fell to the combined crusader and Venetian force. Sorrowful at the news of the fall of Zara, Pope Innocent excommunicated the leaders of the crusade for turning their arms against fellow Christians.

In the end, Innocent absolved the crusaders and urged them to set out for Palestine. But the army, instead, sailed toward Constantinople. Alexius—son of the deposed Byzantine emperor, Isaac Angelus—promised them that if they helped him regain the imperial throne, he would aid them in the crusade. The crusaders and the Venetians reached Constantinople in 1203. The **usurper** emperor, who had deposed Isaac, fled the city. The crusading army placed Alexius and his father on the imperial throne.

usurper: one who seizes power or authority without any right to them

Alexius, however, was slow in keeping his promises to the crusaders—and only seven months after he gained the throne, a revolution deposed both him and his father. The crusaders and the Venetians then laid siege to Constantinople. The nobles of Byzantium closed the great gates of the city to these threatening foreigners. The Byzantine army, under the new emperor, put up a strong resistance to the crusaders.

A Byzantine traitor, however, opened the sea-gates to the enemy. The host of crusaders and Venetians slipped into the city, storming it on April 12, 1204. For three days, the crusaders and Venetians looted and burned the ancient capital of the Eastern Christian world. Constantinople held the masterpieces of the ancient world. The invaders smashed the statues of the classical heroes and pagan gods and melted down bronze statues to make coins. They even pillaged the city's churches, loading mules with the gold and jewels that adorned the sacred buildings. The plunder of the civilized world's richest city was almost too much to believe.

Having conquered Constantinople, the leaders of the crusade claimed the Eastern Roman Empire for their own. Fanning out from Constantinople, crusader forces looted and burned the cities of Greece, confiscated land from ancient families, and allotted territories to individual crusader leaders. Amid the ruins of Constantinople the crusaders established a French feudal state and imposed Latin Christianity on the Greeks. Baldwin, count of Flanders, was chosen as emperor of the Romans.

Innocent III was appalled at the result of his call to crusade. Instead of delivering Jerusalem from the Muslims, the crusaders had conquered



St. Mark's cathedral in Venice, enriched by spoils taken from Constantinople

and plundered a Christian people. The papacy had, it was true, control of the Church of Constantinople, which had been in schism with the pope since 1054. But the conquest only turned the Greek people against everything having to do with Catholic western Europe, including the papacy. The Fourth Crusade made the schism of 1054 a permanent division, not only between the churches of Rome and Constantinople, but between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches in Greece, the eastern Mediterranean, Russia, and eastern Europe.

The Schism of 1054

Since the end of the Western Roman Empire in 476, the Churches of the Christian East and the Western Church under the pope gradually grew further and further apart. They remained, for most of the period between 476 and 1054, in union with each other. They held the same Faith, but differences in culture, language, and the ways they expressed certain mysteries of the Faith led to misunderstandings. The West, for instance, used unleavened bread in the celebration of the Eucharist, while the East used leavened bread. The Eastern Churches maintained the original words of the Nicene Creed, where it reads "I believe in the Holy Spirit . . . who proceeds from the Father." In its Mass liturgy, however, the West added the words, "and the Son" to this phrase, and some in the East thought this addition was heretical.



Hagia Sophia, 1852

Another problem was that the leaders of the Church of Constantinople, called "patriarchs," began to insist that they were at least second in honor to the pope, the bishop of Rome. After all, was not Constantinople "New Rome"? Was not the Patriarch of Constantinople the bishop of the imperial city? Controversy between Rome and Constantinople grew more intense when the popes, in their attempts to reform the Church, insisted more and more on the authority given them as the successors of St. Peter. At the same time, some patriarchs of Constantinople wanted to increase their power and authority in the Eastern Church and resented any "meddling" on the part of the bishop of "Old Rome."

A serious schism between Constantinople and Rome occurred in the ninth century, but the churches were finally reconciled. Less than 200 years later, however, controversy broke out between the pope and the ambitious patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Kerullarios. In 1053, Michael closed the Latin churches in Constantinople and condemned Latin customs. The pope demanded that Michael recognize his authority. But when the patriarch refused, in 1054 the pope's representative in Constantinople presented Michael with a document from the pope, excommunicating him. In turn, Michael excommunicated the pope.

Though the pope had only excommunicated Michael—and Michael, the pope—the excommunications led to a split between the Churches of Rome and Constantinople. Eventually, the other great Churches of the East—Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria—joined Constantinople in a permanent schism with the Catholic Church. The churches in Russia and eastern Europe that had been founded by Constantinople also went into schism. With the older Eastern Churches, they formed what today we call the Eastern Orthodox Church.

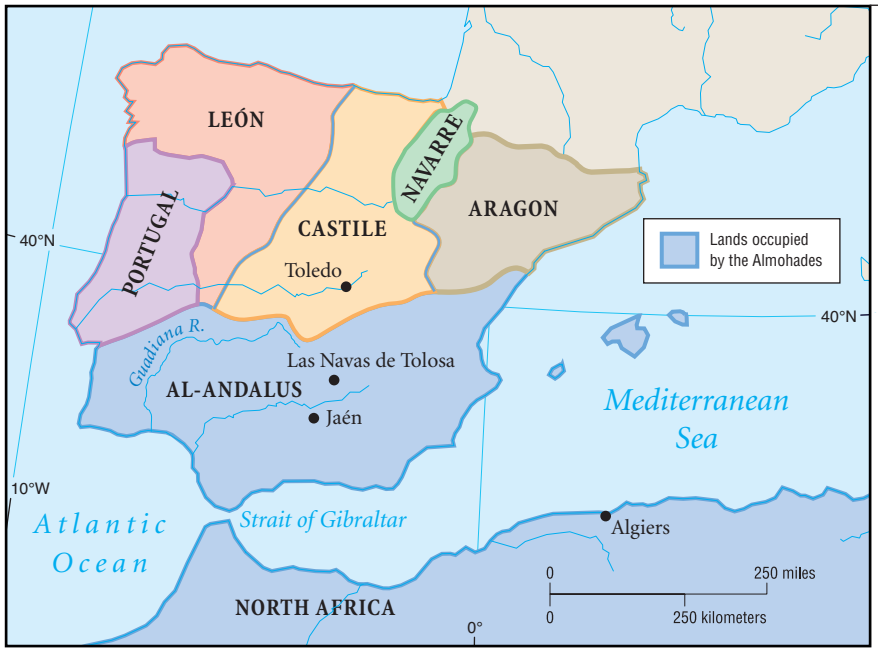
The mutual excommunication between the pope and the patriarch of Constantinople stood for 911 years. On December 7, 1965, however, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I each read a formal statement lifting the excommunications against one another.

The Iberian Crusade

Normally, when we think of the Crusades, our minds turn to the wars fought to recover the Holy Land from the Turks. But the Middle Ages had other crusades. Some were fought against pagans, others against heretics, and still others against Muslims for other reasons than the recapturing of Jerusalem.

The wars for the reconquest of Spain from the Muslims were true crusades, even if not called for by popes. From the 8th to the 12th centuries, the small Christian states had expanded and held their own against the Muslims. But, in the late 12th century, the Christian kingdoms of Portugal, León, Castile, Navarre, and Aragon faced a new Muslim threat. The Almohads had replaced the Almoravids as the greatest power in North Africa. Crossing into Spain, the Almohads drove out the Almoravids and added Al-Andalus to their empire.

After conquering Muslim Spain, the Almohads repeatedly attacked the Christian borderlands, killing defenders, enslaving captives, carrying off booty, and burning crops. The Almohads took many forts and castles. Christian rulers in Spain could not stop them, because the Christians



Iberia in the early 13th century

rarely put aside their own disagreements to coordinate their military campaigns against the common enemy.

Church leaders worked to get the Christian monarchs of Spain to join forces against the common enemy. Several popes urged the kings to cooperate. Finally, Pope Innocent III, understanding the danger facing the Christian kingdoms of Spain, called for a crusade against the Almohads. He exhorted Christians all over Europe to take up the cross and head for the Iberian Peninsula.

With the aid of the crusade, King Alfonso VIII of Castile vowed to break the Almohad power. He made peace with his Christian neighbors and announced his intention of marching deep into Al-Andalus to confront its fierce Almohad overlords. He invited volunteers to meet him in Toledo on Pentecost Sunday, 1212. Gallant King Peter II of Aragon and gigantic Sancho VII of Navarre also made preparations for the great campaign.

Las Navas de Tolosa

The Almohad emir had a long name—Abu Abd Allah Muhammad Al-Nasir—but Spanish-speaking peoples called him simply Miramamolin. The emir was bent upon conquering Al-Andalus. He had gathered such a large army in North Africa that it took almost three months to ferry his troops across the Straits of Gibraltar in the spring of 1211.

As Alfonso VIII had asked, a large international army of crusaders mustered at Toledo during the week before Pentecost Sunday in 1212. Meanwhile, prayers for a successful venture were being said in all the churches of Rome. The crusaders left Toledo on June 20 and headed south through La Mancha. They took the fortress of Malagon on June 24 and Calatrava Castle on the 30th. From Calatrava, Alfonso pushed south and took several other castles. Peter II stayed at Calatrava, waiting for the seven-foot- tall Sancho VII, who arrived on July 7 with a modest force. Joining their forces, the three monarchs crossed the mountains of the Sierra Morena on July 14 and sighted the bulk of the enemy forces encamped below.

The Muslim army covered several low hills and promontories, though most of it gathered on a hill named Cerro de los Olivares. Some of the Muslims tied themselves together in pairs by the legs so they could not abandon their stations; behind them, a circle of slaves (blacks from central Africa and Hispanic Europeans), chained together, formed a ring around Miramamolin's red silk tent, perched on top of the hill. The 31-year-old emir, wearing a black cape and a magnificent turban, stood before his tent,



A depiction of the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa

brandishing a sword in one hand and holding the Koran aloft in the other. His forces were twice the size of the Christian army.

Before sunrise on the morning of July 16, the Catholics were absolved of their sins, heard Mass, and formed ranks. In the summer heat, the Christians, encased in metal armor, struggled up the Cerro de los Olivares. In the thick of the battle, the forces of Peter and Sancho encircled the Africans. Alfonso rushed forward, breaching the enemy lines. Then Sancho drove into the main body of the adversary, breaking the circle of chained slaves guarding Miramamolin.



Defile of Despenaperros, Spain; its name means, "where dogs are thrown over", and refers to the "infidel hounds" overthrown in the battle at Las Navas de Tolosa

The Almohad emir panicked. So hastily did he flee that he lost his bejeweled turban. Miramamolin did not stop riding until he reached Jaen at nightfall. Left behind on the field of battle, the Muslim troops now saw, atop the Cerro de los Olivares, not their emir but Christian crosses, banners with images of the Blessed Virgin and Santiago, and Sancho VII, the tall king of Navarre. Dismayed, the Muslim army broke ranks and dissolved. The Muslim troops untied their legs and disbanded; and the crusaders routed them. Because they were chained together, many African slaves were killed that day. Indeed, so many men were slain that they could not all be buried.

The Christian triumph at Las Navas de Tolosa destroyed Almohad power and pushed the frontier in central Spain as far south as the Guadiana River.

The Albigensian Crusade

By the end of the 12th century, southern France was the center of a vibrant and flourishing culture. It was there that the poetry of the troubadours was born—those poets whose songs, praising fair ladies and knightly deeds, had spread to all of Europe. This region of France was known as Languedoc (meaning the "language of Oc") because its people, who spoke a different dialect of French from those in the north, said *Oc* for yes. Those in the north said *Oui*—so those lands were called "Languedoui" (meaning the "language of Oui").

Yet, despite its glittering culture, Languedoc at the end of the 12th century had become the stronghold of a terrible heresy. This heresy was called the Albigensian or Cathar movement. It spread quickly over southern France and claimed the allegiance of many nobles and townsmen there.

The preachers of this heresy lived lives of rigorous self-denial and asceticism, and were thus called *Cathari*, meaning "the purified." They were also called Albigenses after the southern French district of Albi,

where they were first identified. The Albigenses established communities in every town and city of Languedoc, preaching against the luxury of the noble courts and the greed of the Catholic clergy. Because many of the Catholic clergy of southern France lived immoral lives, the Cathars could claim they themselves were reformers of Christianity.

But the Albigenses were anything but Christian. Like the Manicheans, they believed and taught that there are two gods, one good and the other evil. The evil god, said the Albigenses, is the creator of this physical world and, particularly, of the human body. Albigenses thought the soul, created by the good god, is imprisoned in the material world and is to be freed only through denying all pleasures of the flesh. They also despised marriage (since it produces new physical life) and praised suicide, since it freed the soul from the body. The Albigensian teachings threatened not only the Church but human society by undermining marriage and the family and creating a culture that despised life itself. But the Albigenses were popular because they preached against the corrupt clergy, whom even the common people had come to despise.



St. Dominic subjects both Albigensian and Catholic books to a trial by fire. The flames reject the Catholic books but burn the Albigensian books.

For 30 years, beginning in the mid-12th century, the Church had tried to meet the threat of the Albigenses by peaceful means—sending preachers, such as St. Bernard of Clairvaux himself, to Languedoc. The Albigenses themselves, however, became violent and plundered the regions in and around Albi and Toulouse. In 1198, Pope Innocent III called on the Cistercians to re-evangelize Languedoc. The two Cistercian preachers sent to the south of France had the help of a young, charismatic Spaniard named Dominic de Guzman. Their preaching, however, had little impact on the heretics or their followers.



Map of Languedoc in the early 13th century

The Murder That Brought on War

The Albigenses had the support of a powerful lord of Languedoc—Count Raymond VI of Toulouse. Great-grandson of that Raymond of Toulouse who had been a hero of the First Crusade, Raymond VI ruled Toulouse, the largest portion of Languedoc. The first cousin of the French king, Philip Augustus, and brother-in-law of King Richard the Lion-Heart and King John of England, Raymond VI was indeed a powerful lord.

Count Raymond, however, was an enemy of the Catholic clergy. Though not a Cathar himself, he protected the heretics against any attempts to stamp them out. In 1207 Pope Innocent III's legate, Peter of Castelnau,

excommunicated the count because he had not restored to the Church certain churches that he had seized for himself. In a fit of anger, Raymond spoke wrathfully against "meddlesome priests"—and on January 15, 1208, one of his knights murdered the papal legate. Innocent III then deposed Raymond and preached a crusade against him and all his Albigensian subjects, whom the pope called "worse than Saracens."

In 1209, even though Philip Augustus did not himself join the crusade, a host of northern French warriors took the cross against Raymond and the Albigenses. The greatest families, including the duke of Burgundy, participated in the crusade—not so much for religious reasons, but because they wanted the rich lands of Languedoc for themselves. The leader of the expedition, however, was a man of unbending will and fierce religious zeal. His name was Simon de Montfort, a baron of Normandy. His son was that Simon de Montfort of England who forced King John to sign the Magna Carta and called the first parliament.

The Assault on Languedoc

Confronted with so fearsome a host of northern warriors, Raymond of Toulouse was terrified. He promised the new papal legate that he would punish the Albigenses. But Raymond's vassal—Raymond Roger, viscount of Béziers—refused to submit to the crusaders. They, together with Raymond of Toulouse, laid siege to Raymond Roger's fortresses of Béziers and Carcassonne, slew the inhabitants, and laid waste to the viscount's lands.

With the defeat of Raymond Roger, Simon de Montfort gained control of Béziers and most of the crusaders returned home. But the defeated southerners again found courage, and Simon found he had to defend Béziers and Carcassonne against the forces of Languedoc. Raymond of Toulouse again took arms in defense of his own lands and people.

Once again, in 1212, the northern French invaded southern France and Languedoc was awash in blood. Raymond's brother-in-law, Peter II of Aragon, hero of Las Navas de Tolosa, attempted to make peace. Innocent III was willing to accept his offer, but the northern lords insisted on continuing their "crusade," which had turned into a war for plunder. Peter took the field on the side of Raymond, but Simon de Montfort met his army at the battle of Muret, 1213, and broke it. Peter of Aragon himself was killed in the battle.

Two Simons

In Chapter 11, you read of a Simon de Montfort who led a rebellion in England that, in 1215, forced King John of England to sign the Magna Carta. This Simon was the son of Simon IV de Montfort, who led the crusade against the Albigenses. The elder Simon participated in the Fourth Crusade and vigorously opposed attacking Constantinople. Though a Frenchman, Simon IV inherited the earldom of Leicester in England, which he passed down to his youngest son, Simon V de Montfort, the hero of the Magna Carta.



Carcassonne is a fortified French town, in the former province of Languedoc.

This defeat settled the fate of Languedoc. Raymond abandoned Toulouse, and Simon de Montfort became lord of the city and all the southern lands. He divided his new territories between the northern lords, hungry only for land and booty, who had fought beside him. Pope Innocent III gave a fragment of Toulouse to Raymond VII, the son of Raymond VI.

Map of the eastern Mediterranean lands at the time of the last crusades



The Medieval Inquisition

The Albigensian Crusade did not destroy Albigensianism, as Pope Innocent III had hoped it would. The heresy still had a strong hold in Languedoc, though it went underground. To ferret out the secret Albigenses and destroy the heresy once and for all, Pope Gregory IX in 1231 instituted a tribunal, called the Inquisition. In establishing the Inquisition, the pope had two aims—to crush the heresy and to replace violence with the rule of law. An office of the Holy See, the Inquisition spread to all of Europe.

Under the Inquisition, the pope appointed judges to seek out and reconcile the remaining Albigenses to the Church. The judges were generally Franciscans or Dominicans because they were the best-educated members of the clergy and, the popes thought, they were less likely to be influenced by worldly motives.

Under the Inquisition, judges would come to a town and preach a sermon on the basic doctrines of Christianity. They would then urge the Albigenses to come forward and be reconciled. If any did so, they were given a mild penance and accepted back into the Church. If the evidence was strong that a person was a member of the Albigenses but refused to admit it, the judges would gather together a jury of local clergy and laymen. The jury would examine the witnesses for and against the accused, determine whether witnesses were telling the truth, and decide if the accused was guilty or innocent.

The accused had certain safeguards to protect him: He could reject a judge whom he considered personally prejudiced against him, and if convicted of heresy, the accused could appeal the case to a higher court. However, those accused of heresy were not allowed to confront the witnesses against them, though they could draw up a list of their known enemies, who were then disqualified from testifying. The Inquisition used torture as a means of bringing the guilty to confess the truth. But it must be remembered that all the tribunals of Europe used torture; the Inquisition did not invent torture but in fact carefully limited it.

The Inquisition punished those guilty of heresy, meting out sterner punishments to those with greater guilt and milder punishments to those with less. A repentant heretic was given a relatively mild penance, while those who pretended to repent and were later convicted of **perjury** were imprisoned so that they would not corrupt others. Convicted heretics who, after repentance, returned to their old beliefs and heretical practices, were turned over to the state for execution.

perjury: saying what is false, as in court, when under oath to tell only what is true

The Last Crusades in Outremer

Though he was disappointed in the results of the Fourth Crusade, Pope Innocent III continued to cherish plans for a crusade to free the Holy Land. In 1207, he decided to organize a new crusade to retake Jerusalem, but his plans were interrupted by the need to do something about the Albigenses and then the Almohads in Spain.

Finally, in 1213, Innocent ordered a crusade to regain Jerusalem to be preached throughout Europe. In 1215, at the tomb of Charlemagne



Aachen cathedral in Germany, where Charlemagne's tomb is located

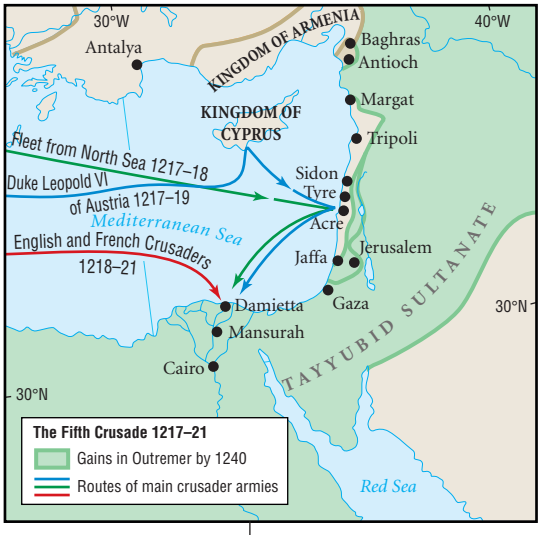
in Aachen, the German Emperor Frederick II vowed to lead the crusade. In 1216, Pope Innocent died, thinking his hoped-for crusade was finally under way.

The Fifth and Sixth Crusades

But Innocent was deceived. Only six months after the pope died, Frederick received permission from Pope Honorius III to delay entering the crusade. Without Frederick, King Andrew II of Hungary and Duke Casimir of Pomerania sailed to Acre in 1217.

But the main action of this, the Fifth Crusade, was led by the King of Jerusalem, John of Brienne, and the pope's legate. With a force of German crusaders, King John assaulted Egypt, the center and stronghold of Muslim rule in Middle East. They took the fortress of Damietta on the mouth of the Nile in November 1218. The crusade, however, ended in failure when a Muslim army defeated the Christians on July 24, 1221, and forced John of Brienne to surrender Damietta.

Though he had officially been the leader of the Fifth Crusade, Emperor Frederick II had remained in Europe. He finally set sail for Outremer in June 1228, but only after Pope Gregory IX had excommunicated him for failing to set sail the previous year. The pope's opposition to Frederick undermined this, the Sixth Crusade, and many of Frederick's troops abandoned it. So, instead of waging war, the emperor began negotiations with the sultan of Egypt. In 1229, the sultan gave control of Acre, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem to Frederick, who had proclaimed himself king of Jerusalem.



Map of medieval Egypt and Palestine

The return of Jerusalem to Christian hands after 40 years was the last real triumph of the Crusades. But the lands of Jerusalem were not easy to defend, and Frederick could not command the allegiance of the crusader lords of Syria. Frederick eventually returned to Italy, and the Christian lands in Outremer fell into disorder and civil war.

In 1244 a new Turkish people, the Khwarazmians, swooped down on Jerusalem and retook it, slaughtering Christian and Muslim inhabitants. Never again would Christians hold Jerusalem. Only a few coastal cities in Outremer remained in Christian hands.

The Crusades of St. Louis of France

When the Holy City was lost a second time, only one monarch in Christendom could be roused to take up the cross. In the summer of 1248 the saintly king of France, Louis IX, sailed for Cyprus, where a large host of fellow Frenchmen joined him.

Louis and his lords were persuaded to follow the strategy of the Fifth Crusade and invade Egypt, the center of Muslim power, rather than land on the Syrian coast. Landing in Egypt, Louis took the fortress of Damietta—the key to the Egyptian coast—on June 7, 1249. Yet, despite this victory, the Seventh Crusade did not succeed. The heavily armed

horses and knights of Europe sank in the Nile mud; disease and heat exhausted the soldiers; and the waters of the Nile, muddy and contaminated, were not suitable for drinking.

When Louis finally ordered his dispirited and sickly men back to the coast, the Muslims threw themselves on the retreating host. Louis fought valiantly in the rear guard in defense of his men, but he was taken prisoner at last. The whole French army, weakened by plague and thirst, surrendered; but they were put to the sword. To obtain his freedom, Louis agreed to pay his Muslim captors an enormous sum of money and to abandon the fortress of Damietta.



King Louis IX of France

Freed by his captors, King Louis went to Palestine. He remained there until 1254, working to restore the Christian fortresses and cities. At last, upon hearing that his mother—who had been acting as his regent in France—had died, Louis returned to France.

Beginning in 1263, a series of disasters befell the remaining Christian states in Outremer. That year, the Muslims destroyed the Christian church at Nazareth. Two years later, they conquered the coastal cities of Caesarea and Jaffa. In 1268, the city of Antioch fell to the Muslims.

Most monarchs in Christendom had come to care little for what happened to Outremer—unless, of course, going on crusade was in their personal interest. King Louis IX, however, did care. On March 24, 1267, he and his three sons took up the cross and began preparing a new crusade.

This time, Louis decided to direct his attack against Tunis, which lay on the North African coast to the west of Egypt. Landing in North Africa, however, Louis soon found himself blockaded in his camp, among the ruins of ancient Carthage. Both the king and his men suffered bitterly from heat and plague; and on August 25, 1270, Louis himself died. The grieving crusaders took the body of their king back to France.

The last of the seven crusades ended in the sands of North Africa. The Christian kingdoms in Palestine and Syria did not long survive it. In 1289, Tripoli fell to the Muslims. In 1291, Acre, the capital of the Latin East, surrendered. Henceforth, only the Hospitallers' stronghold on the island of Rhodes and Guy de Lusignan's "Kingdom of Jerusalem" in Cyprus remained in Christian hands. The commercial wealth of Cyprus and Rhodes

made the "Kingdom of Jerusalem" a rich jewel of Greco-Frankish castles and European courts. The music of Cyprus, moreover, was acknowledged as the height of European composition in the late 14th century. But of the Christian realms in Syria and the Holy Land, not one remained.

Effects of the Crusades

Judging them simply by their religious and political goals, the Crusades to reconquer Jerusalem and the Holy Land were a failure. The Christian kingdom of Jerusalem lasted less than a century. The Muslims again came



A picture by Gustav Dore, depicting a battle of the First Crusade

to dominate the Holy City and all of Palestine. And, because of the Fourth Crusade and the crusaders' mistreatment of native Christians in the East, the split between the Catholic and Orthodox churches widened, ending in a schism that continues to this day.

The Crusades were far more successful in reducing feudal warfare in Europe because they gave feudal lords the opportunity of fighting a common enemy rather than feuding among themselves. The Italian cities, particularly Venice, reaped great benefits. The Crusades kept the Mediterranean from being completely controlled by the Muslims, thus permitting Italy to engage in a profitable trade with the East. More importantly, though, the Crusades pushed back the Muslim advance against eastern Europe, allowing the peoples there to develop Christian rather than Muslim cultures and so keeping them as members of Christendom.

Perhaps the most impressive feature of the crusading movement was the tremendous response of everyone—from emperor to noble to peasant—to the Church's call for action. One distinguished medieval historian has said that nothing shows more clearly than the Crusades the strength of medieval Europe's religious faith or the effectiveness of the Church's leadership in those far-off times.

Chapter Review

Summary

- The Seljuk Turks conquered the Middle East, threatened the Eastern Empire, and forbade Christians from making pilgrimages to holy places in Jerusalem. The Eastern Roman emperor asked the pope for aid against this new threat.
- Pope Urban II called the First Crusade to recover the Holy Land for Christendom. Europeans, both lords and peasants, responded enthusiastically to the pope's call. The main host conquered Antioch and then Jerusalem in 1099. A feudal kingdom was established in Jerusalem, along with others in Antioch, Tripoli, and Edessa.
- These crusader kingdoms lasted for about 100 years. Two military religious orders, the Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller, were established to protect the Holy Land.
- Quarrels among the crusader kingdoms allowed the reunited Turks to take Edessa. This inspired the unsuccessful Second Crusade in 1145.

Under their great leader, Saladin, the Turks were able to overthrow most of the Christian kingdoms and take Jerusalem itself in 1187. Only three coastal cities in Palestine and Syria remained in Christian hands.

- This disaster led to the Third Crusade. Under the leadership of King Richard the Lion-Heart of England and King Philip of France, the crusaders took the coastal city of Acre in 1189. Philip then returned home, leaving Richard to face Saladin. Though he defeated the great Turkish leader in battle, Richard knew he could not hold Jerusalem, even if he succeeded in taking it. He thus signed a treaty in 1192 that opened Jerusalem to Christian pilgrims.
- The last four crusades to the Holy Land were not successful. The Fourth Crusade ended in the Latin conquest of Constantinople. The Fifth Crusade was an unsuccessful assault on Egypt. In the Sixth Crusade, the Emperor Frederick II won Jerusalem by negotiation, but it was again conquered by the Turks. The Seventh Crusade ended ingloriously on the northwest coast of Africa.
- In the late 12th century, the Muslim Almohads conquered Muslim Iberia and attacked the borderlands of the Christian kingdoms there. The kings of Castile, Aragon, and Navarre joined forces in a crusade to defeat the new Muslim threat. The crusaders crushed the Almohad power at Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212.
- Adherents of the dangerous Albigensian heresy had the protection of Raymond VI of Toulouse, the powerful lord of Languedoc in southern France. Pope Innocent III called a crusade against Raymond and his heretical subjects. Lords of northern France, however, joined the crusade—not for religious reasons, but to conquer and divide the rich lands of the south.
- To deal with the Albigensian threat that remained after the crusade against them, Pope Gregory IX established a tribunal called the Inquisition. It was an attempt to curtail violence and to reconcile the Albigenses to the Church.

Key Concepts

crusade: a war fought in defense of Christianity, named from the cross (Latin: *crux*) worn by the first crusaders
Holy Land: Palestine, called *Outremer* by the crusaders
Templars: the Knights of the Temple; crusader military order of knights, organized like a monastic order

Hospitallers: the Knights of St. John of the Hospital; crusader military order
sultan: the king or ruler of the Turks
Albigensian/Cathar: the name for someone who held to the heresy asserting that material existence is evil
The Inquisition: ecclesiastical court created after the Albigensian Crusade to deal with the threat of heresy

Dates to Remember

1054: the pope and the patriarch of Constantinople excommunicate one another, leading to a schism between the Eastern and Western Churches
July 150, 1099: fall of Jerusalem to the crusaders
1187: Jerusalem reconquered by the Muslims under Saladin
1204: sack of Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade
1209–1218: the Albigensian Crusade
1212: Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa
1231: Pope Gregory IX institutes the Inquisition
1291: Fall of Acre to the Muslims

Central Characters

Urban II (1042–1099): the pope who called the First Crusade
Godfrey of Bouillon (1061–1100): French leader of the First Crusade
Richard I, Lion-Heart (1157–1199): king of England and leader of Third Crusade
Saladin (1138–1193): the Turkish sultan of Egypt and Syria who reconquered Jerusalem from the Christians
Innocent III (1160–1216): the pope who called the Iberian and Albigensian crusades, as well as the failed Fourth Crusade.

Questions for Review

1. Why were the wars against the Turks in the Holy Land called "crusades"?
2. Why did Pope Urban II call for a crusade in 1095?
3. When did Jerusalem fall to the crusaders? Who refused to take the title of king of Jerusalem? Why?
4. Describe what the Templars and the Hospitallers were. Why were they so called?
5. Why did the crusaders not gain the help and affection of the Christians they had liberated in the Holy Land?
6. When did crusader control of Jerusalem end? Who ended it?

7. Why did the Fourth Crusade attack Christian Constantinople?
8. Why did Pope Innocent III call for a crusade in Iberia? What were the results of this crusade?
9. Why did the pope call for a crusade in the south of France? Was the crusade successful? Please explain.
10. What was the purpose of the medieval Inquisition?

Ideas in Action

1. Discuss: What is a crusade? For what other causes, besides military ones, do we now use the term? Why do we call these causes "crusades"?
2. Make a map of the kingdom of Jerusalem and the other three crusader principalities of the Middle East. Make another map of the final coastal cities held by the crusading armies.
3. Find Languedoc on a map. Draw your own map showing the principal lands and cities of Languedoc: Toulouse, Carcassonne, Beziers, Marseilles, Avignon, and Albi.
4. Find a photo of the surviving walls of Carcassonne. Draw a picture of that fortress city and then write reports on its fortifications, its location in the countryside, and the great sieges it endured.
5. Find photos of the treasures of the Iberian Crusade: the tent of Miramamolin and the other relics and objects kept in Spain from that event. Find Las Navas de Tolosa on a map.
6. Report on the facts about Saladin. Was he the chivalrous gentleman that Western tradition has remembered?

Highways and Byways

The Bells of Cordoba

One achievement of the Iberian Crusade against the Almohads was the king of Castile's conquest of the old Muslim capital of Cordoba. The victorious Castilians crowded into the spectacular city's Great Mosque, which had been hurriedly consecrated as a Christian church, and prepared for a solemn Mass. But King Alfonso VIII's first command after taking possession of Cordoba was that the bells of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela be taken down from the mosque and sent back where they belonged, to Compostela.

The bells had been taken as war trophies by a great Islamic warrior, Al-Mansour, when he raided Santiago in 997. Christian prisoners had been

forced to carry the bells hundreds of miles across the Iberian Peninsula. Then the bells, whose sound the Muslims hated, were turned upside down to be used as oil lamps.

Hispanic Christians had never forgotten the insult inflicted on their patron, Santiago. Recovered by Alfonso, the great bells were rehung in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. There, in 1492, they tolled for the capture of Granada, the last Muslim stronghold in Spain. The next year, 1493, the bells rang to commemorate another great event—Christopher Columbus's successful voyage to the New World.