

Khubilai Khan's Capital

At right, Marco Polo describes the capital city of Khubilai Khan. Marco's book about his travels in Asia became a best seller in thirteenth-century Europe. Why do you think Europeans at this time were so anxious to read about the marvels of Asia?

disposed: arranged

The new-built city received the name of Tai-du. This new city is of form perfectly square, and twenty-four miles in extent. The whole plan of the city was regularly laid out in line, and the streets are consequently straight. In the public streets there are booths and shops of every description. In this manner the whole interior of the city is **disposed** in squares, so as to resemble a chess board, and planned out with a degree of precision and beauty impossible to describe.



ACTIVITIES

1. Imagine you lived in a community with no high technology and no books. Identify one or more ways that you could gain information about the outside world. How could you be sure of what was true? Describe how **tall tales** might become respected sources over time.
2. Give three reasons why nobles had a better understanding of the outside world than serfs.
3. Examine the medieval map on page 60. Is this a primary source or a secondary source? Summarize what this map tells us about the medieval European view of the world.
4. Without consulting a printed map, draw a rough map of North America from memory. Compare this map with the maps drawn by your classmates. Why would a lack of scientifically made maps make it difficult to determine whose map is most accurate?
5. Why might Marco Polo's accounts be important to European traders? Monarchs? Ordinary people?
6. Compare Marco Polo's account of Tai-du (above) with the map of Chang'an on page 96. What does this comparison confirm?

tall tale: an exaggerated, unlikely story

DID YOU KNOW?

The term "crusade" refers to the cross the Christian knights displayed on their jupons, flags, and shields.

THE CRUSADES

The Crusades were wars in which the Christians of Europe fought against Muslims for control of the Holy Land, the area around modern-day Israel where Jesus lived and died. The Holy Land, filled with sacred places and pilgrimage sites, had once been part of the Christian Byzantine Empire. In the eleventh century, however, this area (also known as Palestine) came under the control of the Seljuk Turks, who were Muslims. The deep religious feelings of the

medieval Christians, in combination with prejudice against those of another religion and a lust for booty, made many Europeans want to drive the Muslims out of the Holy Land.

But the holy places of the Middle East were also important for Muslims. Jerusalem, for example, is the second most holy city in Islam because Muslims believe that Muhammad rose to heaven from this place.

Medieval knights, like the Muslim warriors, looked on fighting in such a holy war as a way of guaranteeing

Pope Urban II Preaches the First Crusade

The First Crusade began with a speech by Pope Urban II on November 27, 1095, at Clermont, France. The pope described in vivid detail cruelties that the Muslim conquerors of the Holy Land had supposedly committed against Christian pilgrims and settlers. He mentioned the riches that could be won. He especially stressed that Christian knights would have their sins forgiven and would find paradise if they went on a crusade to free the Holy Land. At the end of his speech, the crowd cried out in one voice, "Deus volt!" (God wills it!). This was to become the battle cry of all the crusaders.

It is the **imminent** peril threatening you and all the faithful which has brought us hither. From the confines of Jerusalem and from the city of Constantinople a horrible tale has gone forth. A race utterly **alienated** from God has invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by the sword, pillage, and fire.... On whom, therefore, is the labor of avenging these wrongs and of recovering this territory **incumbent**, if not upon you? Enter upon the Road to the Holy Sepulchre [Jesus' tomb]; wrest that land from [them], and subject it to yourselves.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Identify phrases the pope uses to excite the knights. Why do you think he uses such emotional terms?
2. Assume you are a Muslim who has just battled to regain what you consider to be your own Holy Land. Write to the pope to argue against statements he makes in his speech.

themselves a place in heaven. The crusader could also gain an honourable reputation through his warlike deeds. Many of the knights were land-hungry feudal nobles who hoped to win fiefs and even kingdoms from their enemies. Altogether, there were seven crusades between 1096 and 1254.

DISASTERS AND VICTORIES

Even before the first military crusade, ordinary people gathered from all over Europe to do battle. Thousands of men, women, and children walked across Europe in response to the pope's message. Peter the Hermit and Walter the Penniless were the leaders of this People's Crusade. On the way to Constantinople, this ragged band of wanderers was responsible for several massacres of Jews and fellow Christians. In return, they were attacked and driven from place to

place. A Turkish army wiped them out in Asia Minor. In the thirteenth century a disastrous Children's Crusade ended when most of the children were killed or sold to Arab slave traders in North Africa.

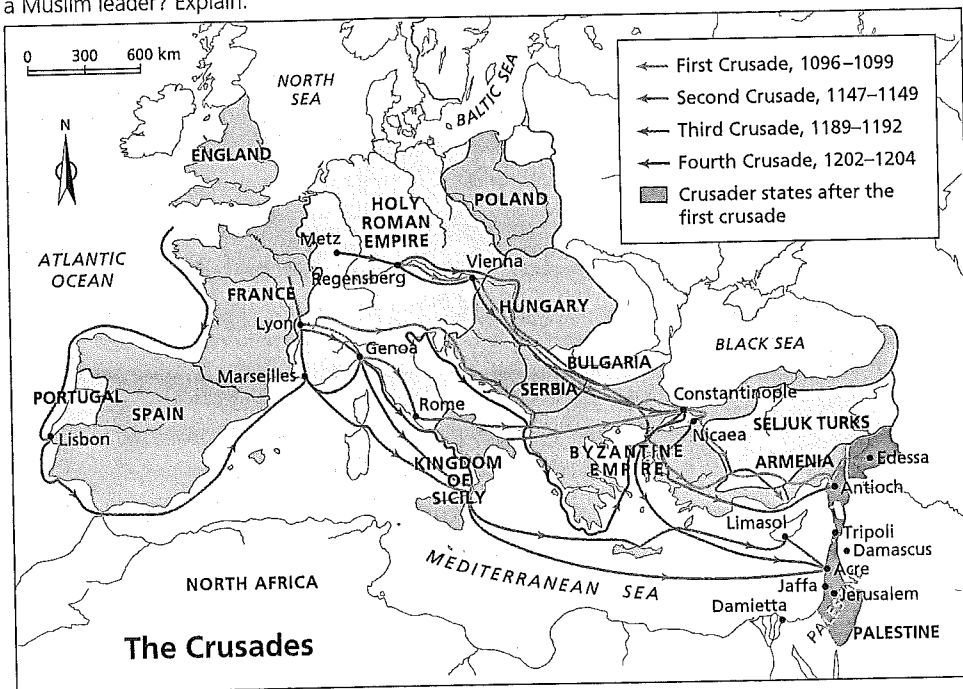
The arrival of armed knights was to have more effect. The First Crusade created a Christian kingdom in the Middle East that lasted for about a hundred years. In 1187, a bold new

imminent: immediate
alienated: turned away
incumbent: resting on as a duty

Figure 2-10 Christians and Muslims battle for control of Palestine. List all the tools of war you see in this picture.



Figure 2-11 The Crusader routes and kingdoms. If you were a Crusader leader, what areas would you want to take and hold? Why? Would your goals be different if you were a Muslim leader? Explain.



Muslim leader, the Sultan Saladin, recaptured Jerusalem. The strength of the united Muslims under Saladin, combined with a lack of direction among the Crusaders, eventually brought an end to the Crusades. The Muslims regained all their lands.

Long-Term Consequences

The Crusades did not result in the long-term military victories for which the pope and Christian kings had hoped. The Crusades did change life for many people, however. Western Europeans learned that the Muslim world was a highly advanced civilization.

At this point in time the Muslim peoples were flourishing in the scholarly pursuits of medicine, astronomy, philosophy, mathematics, and literature. The exchange of knowledge among Muslim, Jewish, and Christian scholars, which the Crusades brought about indirectly, resulted in advances in learning in Europe that would lead eventually to the Renaissance.

Atrocities of War

As in any war, very cruel acts were committed on both sides. In the passage below, a Muslim writer tells of a massacre of Muslim prisoners by the army of Richard the Lion-Hearted, of England.

[Richard] ordered all the Muslim prisoners, whose martyrdom God had decreed for this day, to be brought before him. They numbered more than three thousand and were all bound with ropes. The Christians then flung themselves upon them all at once and massacred them with sword and lance in cold blood. On the morrow morning, our people gathered at the spot and found the Muslims stretched out upon the ground as martyrs for the faith. They even recognized some of the dead, and the sight was a great affliction to them. The enemy had only spared the prisoners of note and such as were strong enough to work.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. What is meant by the phrase "prisoners of note" in the quoted passage? What did the Christians do with these prisoners?
2. How would you describe the actions of the Christian army as described in the quotation? Do you see any contradiction in soldiers fighting a war in the name of religion and yet engaging in such actions? Explain. Referring to Pope Urban II's speech, on page 63, suggest how the Christian knights might have explained their participation.
3. Richard was considered a great hero in England. Explain how a person can become a hero in one society and hated in another.

martyr: someone who is killed for their religious beliefs

The Crusades also sparked trade and expanded Europeans' knowledge of the world. The Crusaders brought back many new products from the Muslim world, including silk, silkworms, spices, and new varieties of fruit, such as plums and figs.

Unintentionally, the Crusaders created a desire for foreign goods that would later lead to the European voyages of discovery. The resulting increase in trade would open up the European economy, improving the standard of living for many Europeans.

ACTIVITIES

- Examine the map of the Crusades on page 64. Consult an atlas. What modern countries were once at least partly within the Crusader kingdoms?
 - Give at least three reasons why the Crusaders could not keep control of their conquests.
- Compare the Crusaders' reasons for travelling to Jerusalem with John Mandeville's reasons (see page 61).
 - Why did so many people take part in the Crusades, not only knights and soldiers but also ordinary people and even children?
- Write a one-page story about two friends who participate in the Children's Crusade. Exchange stories with another student and edit each other's work. Then revise your own story.
- Many historians today think that the Crusades were not justified. Why might they think this way? Is it always fair to criticize an event that occurred hundreds of years ago? Explain.
 - List the positive and negative consequences of the Crusades for Europeans.
 - How did the Crusades help end the feudal age?

ROYAL POWER AND DEMOCRACY

In Canada we value the right to take part in our government and to elect our leaders. Medieval people had no concept of democracy as we understand it. They believed that monarchy—that is, rule by a king or queen—was part of God's plan.

THE BALANCE OF POWER

By custom and under law, the feudal monarch had the power to make and change laws, to collect some kinds of taxes, to choose advisors, and to give titles and estates. The monarch's

power was not unlimited, however. As a player in the feudal system, he had to obey the feudal code. The king was kept in check by a small but powerful group of people: the wealthiest and most powerful nobles, who were called barons.

If a monarch did anything to break the feudal contract, the barons would feel justified in making war on their sovereign. The barons were a considerable threat. These warriors had large armies and strong castles, and could call upon their vassals on short notice to fight for them. The royal army, on the other hand, needed time to collect knights from all over England. Even in good weather a royal messenger might have to travel for