

The Crusades

The truth in opposition to the multiple lies spread abroad today.

Preface

This paper is an expansion of an appendix to my book, *Islam: theology, politics, and history*. I considered that few people would read this paper as an appendix in a large work but more may find the information helpful if it were published separately, plus the appendix needed to be enlarged and more details provided.

The reason for this paper

Whining mistaken liberals

History is a poorly taught subject today and society is a worse place for this. We are seeing people commit the same foolish policies, strategies, crimes and mistakes made in history because they have not learned from history.

Over and over again today commentators, the media and foolish liberals, who are fixated on stopping 'Islamophobia', berate Christians for the Crusades. Barack Obama compared Islamic jihad to the Crusades.¹ Liberals talk about, '*all the death caused during the crusades*'; that, '*Christians wiped entire races from the earth during the Crusades*';² '*Christians shouldn't criticise Islamic jihad because of the Crusades*' (sic);³ and other such absolute nonsense.

The reason for this modern establishment attack on the Crusades is to berate something that is perceived as being founded upon Christianity. The modern elite psychological warfare is against Christ and all the forms of modern mental suppression are based on attacks on Christ. No one questions the millions killed by Tamerlane (a Muslim), or Temujin (a pagan Mongol: see footnote on Genghis Khan); or the hundreds of millions killed in Muslim jihad. No one cries for the millions of massacred Hindus, Christians, Zoroastrians, Persians and Buddhists (by Muslims); yet the Crusaders are constantly castigated for a defensive stand against oppression.

This has resulted in much hand-wringing and false humility; many ignorant church leaders have even called for a national repentance for the Crusades happening at all. This is utterly foolish since no one can repent for the sins of another person. Secondly, no one alive today is responsible for sins committed by men a thousand years ago. Thirdly, the Crusades consisted of people from many nations; comparatively few were from Britain. Fourthly, the motivation for the Crusades was just; they were a response to pleas for help against a destroyer.

The truth

Firstly, true Christians are non-violent. The genuine Christian church does not gather armies to wage foreign wars, whatever the cause. The teaching of Christ is to love enemies. Thus the Crusades cannot be blamed upon Christians, in the first place.

¹ In the annual prayer breakfast in 2015.

² Statements made in Twitter debates by members of the public.

³ ABC '20/20' anchor Chris Cuomo in a Tweet of 26 August 2010.

Religious wars are initiated by people in positions of power with something to lose; people who are not regenerated believers but are called ‘Christian’ or something else; for example medieval popes whose lands were threatened by Muslim invaders.

Secondly, the Crusades were a reaction to centuries of aggression, attacks, invasions and massacres by Muslim armies; the Crusades were not pre-emptive or aggressive but defensive. In their eyes, the Crusaders were engaged in a justified ‘holy war’.⁴ Medieval Europeans universally considered that Crusaders were the height of righteous, self-sacrificial, courage.

Background

What were the Crusades?

The Crusades were a series of military expeditions (11th–14th centuries) to secure Christian rule over the Muslim-controlled holy places of Palestine.

The word ‘crusade’ was formed from the root Latin word for ‘cross’ because this was a supposed war for the Christian religion. The cross was thus emblazoned on the knights’ dress and shields.

The origin of the word was the late 16th century French word *croisade* (influenced by the Spanish *cruzado*). This was an alteration of the earlier *croisée*, literally ‘*the state of being marked with the cross*’. The root was based on the Latin *crux* or *cruc* = ‘cross’. In the 17th century the form *crusado*, from Spanish *cruzado*, was introduced. The blending of these two forms led to the current spelling, which was first recorded in the early 18th century.

Thus a crusade is a holy war waged by supposed Christians in defence of the claims of Christ.

Muslim advancement

At the beginning of the Crusades Islam had brutally taken over more territory in 300 years than Rome had in 800.

From its base in Arabia, Islam had first penetrated the Byzantine Empire in Syria and the Middle East, conquering as far as all of North Africa. It pushed into Iraq and Persia (Iran) and then went into Pakistan, Afghanistan and Northern India.

In Europe it eventually occupied all of the Balkans, Spain, Sicily and other islands. It constantly raided southern Italy as far as Rome, attacked Vienna, occupied parts of Greece and tried to invade France, until stopped at Tours (in 732; see footnote).

Muslim pirates scoured the Mediterranean for centuries, stopping trade and threatening coastal cities, causing farming degeneration and famine. These pirates plundered the coastlines and were particularly interested in gaining women and children for slavery.

Individual Muslim commanders were some of the biggest empire builders in human history, such as Uthman, Tamerlane or Akbar the Great. They are to be ranked alongside Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan⁵ and Napoleon.

⁴ An oxymoron that I do not believe in.

⁵ Genghis Khan (1162–1227), founder of the Mongol empire; born Temujin. He took the name Genghis Khan (‘ruler of all’) in 1206 after uniting the nomadic Mongol tribes, and by the time of his death his empire extended from China to the Black Sea.

The formidable nature of the opponent of the Crusaders is not to be minimised. In fact, the idea that a few European rulers could stop this advance was, in fact, wishful thinking. The fact that they held the Muslim advance for 200 years is a remarkable feat of military skill.

The immediate cause of the Crusades

A defensive military strategy that saved Europe

The Crusades were not a pre-emptive strike against Islamic nations. The Crusades were a military response to the continual waves of Muslim invasion and conquest of nations that had been Christian for over 600 years (such as Turkey, the Middle East and North Africa). These had fallen to violent actions by Islamists whereby millions of Christians were killed and women and children sold into slavery. For example one caliph alone destroyed 30,000 churches. Christians were fleeing their ancient towns and there were many cases of brutality, torture and deaths.

In 637 Jerusalem was captured by Arabs from the Byzantine Empire, forcing Islam upon the inhabitants. The Arabs went on to conquer all of Palestine, Syria, North Africa and invaded Spain. However, initially the Arabs were tolerant to Christians going on pilgrimage to the Holy Land; but the symbolic loss of Jerusalem was more than the pope could bear.

In 1071 the Muslim Arabs were overcome by the Muslim Seljuk Turks.⁶ At this time the Byzantine Empire was defeated at Manzikert, leading to Seljuk expansion into Asia Minor (Turkey) and threatening Constantinople; the Seljuk Turks also conquered Syria and Palestine. The Byzantine emperor sent many appeals to western rulers asking for help against the Muslim invasion. The pope was also concerned about the security of Christians going on a pilgrimage

This was a Muslim assault on the Byzantine Empire, which was formally Christian, but which had been weakened by wars with Persia and the Black Death which wiped out a third of the population and wrecked the economy. As a result, the emperor at Constantinople pleaded for help from the pope. This was unprecedented since there had been continual rivalry between the head of the western church and the head of the Eastern Church. The Crusades began as a result of the pope's response to the eastern emperor.

The various ill-fated campaigns of the Crusades were initiated to regain lands that had been taken by force by Muslim invasions and occupations. Therefore, castigating them for trying to help Christian nations brutally ravaged by Muslim invaders is insane.

Islamic aggression	The Crusades
637: Jerusalem conquered.	458 years before the First Crusade.
641: Alexandria fell to Muslims.	454 years before the First Crusade.
642: Egypt overrun.	453 years before the First Crusade.
652: Italy invaded and plundered.	443 years before the First Crusade.
667: Muslims invade southern Italy (Sicily conquered in 902). Muslims raid southern Italy, Corsica and Sardinia repeatedly.	428 years before the First Crusade.
674: Constantinople first besieged (for four years).	421 years before the First Crusade.

⁶ A Turkish dynasty that ruled Asia Minor in the 11th–13th centuries, successfully invading the Byzantine Empire.

711: Spain invaded and conquered.	384 years before the First Crusade.
717: Constantinople beseiged again.	378 years before the First Crusade.
732: France invaded. Defeat of Muslims at Tours stops an Islamic invasion of all Europe.	363 years before the First Crusade.
846: Rome sacked. Desecration of burial sites of Peter and Paul. Rome attacked again in 849.	249 years before the First Crusade.
1009: Destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.	86 years before the First Crusade.
1071: Byzantines defeated and lose a large part of the empire. Emperor begs the west for help.	24 years before the First Crusade.
Formal Byzantine appeal to the pope.	First Crusade: 1095
About two-thirds of ancient Christianity had disappeared under violent jihad before the Crusades began.	

The whole Christian world was under threat. Muslim pirates meant that the Mediterranean Sea was no longer safe for trade and travel; this alone brought hardship to many nations. Trade had to go along land routes and many staple things became very expensive. In the years following several plagues and depopulation, this was serious.

Millions of Christians had been killed; men, women and children; many of these had been tortured and brutally murdered. A million Christians, at least, had been enslaved. Hundreds of thousands of white Christian women had been kidnapped and sold as sex slaves. Thousands of churches had been burned to the ground and Christian sites desecrated.

Some countries were on the brink of capitulating to Islamic aggression; others had been engaged in defensive wars with Islam for centuries (e.g. the Balkans). Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land (not something I agree with) were being killed or kidnapped for ransom. Finally, the Byzantine Empire, a Christian empire that had stood for centuries, was on the verge of falling to Islam.

If anything, Europe was far too slow in combating the Islamic threat.

Cynical causes

Of less importance, but something that must be considered, is the commercial ambition of the merchants of growing cities, such as Genoa, Pisa and Venice. Some have made much of this but it was a minor motivation; Crusaders were far more motivated by Holy War. Modern historians discount the idea that greed was the prime motivator for the Crusaders.

Some also suggest that many Crusaders were motivated by the prospect of land-grabbing opportunities in the Holy Land, but this makes little sense. To even get there with a small army cost a fortune; some suggest at least four times an annual income per Crusader. Then there was the prospect of fighting Muslim armies that had successfully defeated empires. Even if they were successful, they then had to hold on to territory gained hundreds of miles from supplies facing overwhelming odds. Such claims make no cost-effective sense.

Modern scholarship denies such claims and demonstrate that Crusaders were very concerned about the prospect of disease (which actually killed many), long overland marches in great heat, and death in battle far from home and loved ones. While individual Crusaders were away, their families often had to struggle to manage farms for long periods. It was their belief in the need for a just war that drove them past such concerns, not greed.

The overriding motivation was the meritorious belief that fighting infidels that had conquered the Holy Land would guarantee personal salvation.

Initial assessment

Battles and deaths

The number of military campaigns waged in the Crusades is a tiny, tiny fraction of the battles waged by Islam, so that they pale into virtual insignificance when compared to Muslim aggression. Furthermore, the number of Muslims killed by Crusaders is a very tiny proportion of the number of non-Muslims killed by Muslims. There were only 31 main battles fought in the 200 years of the Crusades. There were far more battles than this fought in six years during the Second World War.⁷

In comparison Muslims engaged in over 500 battles in Europe alone and hundreds more in India, Africa, and Eurasia. The death toll of Muslim invasions has been estimated as at least 270 million, but some put this as high as 800 million. In some Muslim campaigns 90,000 people were killed in one day,⁸ as well as many tortured, raped and others sold as sex-slaves. Commonly, Muslim commanders would raise a tower of human heads fifteen feet high; after one battle there were 120 of such towers. This practice was following Muhammad's words, found in the Qur'an and the Hadith, to behead all non-Muslims.

The brutality of Muslim war (jihad) was extreme. When stories of Muslim atrocities and war crimes spread around Europe there was widespread anger and a desire for retaliation.

Mistakes

Were mistakes made by the Crusaders? Of course there were. The worst mistake was the sacking of Constantinople, the very place that had asked for military assistance. The pillaging of parts of Europe by some rogue early Crusaders was also a great evil.

There were also atrocities, such as the massacring of the population of Jerusalem. Yet this must be considered in its time; such massacres were a normal part of aggressive warfare in those times. In fact, Muslims had committed far more, and far worse, massacres for many centuries before this. We cannot excuse it, but it must be seen in context. The few atrocities committed by Crusaders were seen by people of the time as entirely normal and justified considering what happened before they got there.

Motivations of the Crusaders

Contrary to modern claims, it was not to get rich; in fact it caused very many Crusaders to become poor. Why would anyone consider travelling many hundreds of miles in medieval times, with all that it entails in terms of health, cost and deprivation, just for the uncertain possibility of loot? Plunder could be obtained far nearer to home than Palestine.

The average Crusader had to be landed and wealthy in order to be there; in fact many people mortgaged property for equipment and supplies. He had to procure weapons, armour, horses, ships and a company of supporters. Like today, 90% of the army are in a supporting role; all these needed paying and providing for. It was an incredible expense to take an armed force to the Middle East. Those going were making a sacrifice, and they knew it, rather than expecting to gain wealth.

⁷ There were hundreds of battles across the whole world including, land actions, battles in the air and naval battles. There were 47 battles in 1942 alone.

⁸ Tamerlane killed 90,000 Hindu captive prisoners in one day because they were a drain on his resources.

According to their own written records, the Crusaders stated that their intention was an act of penance and empathy with persecuted Christians under Muslim rule. The mindset of the medieval person must be understood here. This was long before the Reformation and justification by faith was little understood; indeed, salvation was taught as meritorious works by the Roman Church. The Crusaders believed that this was of spiritual benefit to them; it was an act of asserting the kingship of Jesus over his own land, for which they would be rewarded.

Bravery

Contrary to the modern liberal trend of castigating and slandering the Crusaders, we ought to applaud their bravery and personal sacrifice.

The brutality of the Muslim expansion, for hundreds of years, had been absolutely horrific, and this was deliberate. Following Muhammad's teaching, terrorism was a tool for jihad (the struggle for Islamic expansion) and was widely applied. Massacres had been committed by Muslim armies since the days of Muhammad himself. Beheading of thousands of prisoners was normal behaviour, again following precedents and teaching by Muhammad. Torture of captives was also normal, following Islamic teaching.

Advancing Muslim armies absolutely terrorised countries they invaded. They raped thousands of women, enslaved women and children, and killed all the men in the early stages of invasion (later they spared some as worker drones). They committed terrible acts of brutality and atrocity; even murdering old women in foul ways.⁹ The numbers of their victims is measured in the hundreds of millions. Over a million European Christian women were captured and sold as sex-slaves; Muslims dominated the slave trade (following Muhammad's practice) for centuries.

The brutality of Muslim aggression put such fear into the inhabitants of an invaded country (as it was meant to) that many cities surrendered without fighting. Even this did not spare prisoners, who were often tortured and killed anyway. This fear of Muslim invasion scared all of Europe.

Despite this terrible fear of Muslim terrorism, knowing full well that many would fall into their hands, the Crusaders left house, home, wife, children, relatives and comforts to travel under vile conditions to wage war for a religious cause. They were very brave and principled people in the main.

⁹ Such as tying them to camels and ripping them in twain.

The First Crusade (1095-1099)

Beginnings

In Europe kings and barons were at constant war with each other. The pope considered that a call to arms against a common foe would end this fighting, as well as securing the Holy Land. So Pope Urban II ordered a crusade to oppose the rise to power of the Seljuk Turks interfering with pilgrimages to Palestine. Spiritual benefits were promised to warriors who saw this as an opportunity for acts of valour and honour as well as an economic opportunity (such as opening up new markets). This was first proclaimed in a sermon on 27 November 1095 at Clermont-Ferrand, France.

Preaching war

Preachers, inspired by the pope and the Council of Clermont, proclaimed the message of a coming crusade. One famous preacher was Peter the Hermit, travelling on a donkey round Europe. Pope Urban commissioned bishops to return to their homes and enlist people in the Crusade that would begin the journey in August 1096. Each group would be self-financing and responsible to their own leader. Various groups would travel to Constantinople where they would gather together. The initial plan was to unite with the Byzantine army and retake Anatolia from the Seljuks; then they would march against the Muslims in Syria and Palestine, aiming to retake Jerusalem.

The rabble army – ‘The People’s Crusade’

Stirred by the Catholic preaching, hordes of rabble gathered from France and Germany, led by some priests and knights. This was the largest group and was led by Peter the Hermit from Amiens. This ‘army’ began travelling through Europe but due to ill preparation they robbed and pillaged wherever they went, causing disorder in Hungary and Bulgaria.

Most of them failed to get to Constantinople and those that did were not welcomed by Emperor Alexius. Peter returned to Europe to beg for supplies while the rank and file were ferried across the straits in August 1096. Passing through, they were ambushed by the Turkish Muslim army at Cibotus and were all slain.

Other less-disciplined bands, mostly from north-west Germany committed atrocities against Jewish communities but were dispersed before reaching the Byzantine border.

The first true Crusaders

Meanwhile the real army of about 500,000 was preparing, led by various dukes and counts. Five major armies of noblemen assembled in August 1096; the majority coming from France, others from southern Italy, Lorraine, Burgundy and Flanders.

The Crusaders reached Constantinople between November 1096 and May 1097.

The Greek Emperor, Alexius I Comnenus, was shocked to learn that they intended setting up a rival kingdom of their own in Palestine, but feared for his own capital, and so helped them on their way, demanding that they return to him Byzantine territory conquered and swear allegiance to him for any lands occupied beyond the former frontier.

Leaders

- Baldwin of Boulogne.
- Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lorraine (the only major prince from Germany). He was joined by his brothers, Eustace and Baldwin, and a kinsman, Baldwin of Le Bourg. He reached Constantinople in December without incident.
- Peter the Hermit (and his assistant Walter the Penniless).

Knights with armies included:

- Hugh of Vermandois, brother of King Philip I of France.
- Bohemond, a Norman from southern Italy and the son of Robert Guiscard, arrived at Constantinople in April 1097.
- Raymond of Saint-Gilles, Count of Toulouse, who had the largest army. He was accompanied by Adhémar, bishop of Le Puy, whom the Pope had named as legate for the Crusade. His followers included non-combatant pilgrims whom he supported. This large body caused considerable trouble in Dalmatia. It arrived in Constantinople in April.
- Robert of Flanders. Accompanying Robert were his cousin Robert of Normandy (brother of King William II 'Rufus' of England) and Stephen of Blois (the son-in-law of William I the Conqueror).

No king took part in the First Crusade, and the predominantly French-speaking participants came to be known as Franks. They gathered forces numbered around 4,000 mounted knights and 25,000 infantry, causing a headache for Alexius.

Initial victories

The Crusaders captured Nicea in June 1097, surrendering it to the Byzantines. This led to fears by the Crusaders that they were being used as warrior pawns for the emperor's goals.

Shortly after this the Crusaders encountered the principal field army of the Seljuks at Dorylaeum. On 1 July 1097 the Crusaders were victorious and nearly annihilated the Turkish force. As a result there was little resistance to the campaigns in the rest of Anatolia.

On 3 June 1098 the Crusaders captured Antioch in Syria after a seven-month's siege. Immediately another Turkish army from Mosul arrived which was repulsed on 28 June.

They captured Jerusalem in July 1099, which was then under Egyptian control, and massacred its inhabitants, establishing a kingdom there under Godfrey of Bouillon. The last campaign was against an Egyptian army at Ascalon in August. After this most of the Crusaders returned to Europe leaving Godfrey and a small contingent to organise a government and establish Latin (Western European) control over the conquered territories. The Latin colonists established four states with the kingdom of Jerusalem being the largest.

The next year Godfrey died and his brother Baldwin, Count of Edessa, was crowned king.

At its greatest point this kingdom stretched from Beirut in the north to the Red Sea in the south. North of Jerusalem lay three Frankish territories (Crusader States) acknowledging the King of Jerusalem:

- The County of Tripoli on the Syrian coast.
- The Principality of Antioch.
- The County of Edessa (now Sanliurfa, Turkey), largely populated by Armenian Christians.

Effect

For a time the entire western seaboard of the Mediterranean was in the hands of the Crusaders. This can be considered as a complete success for the First Crusade.

The success of the Crusaders was partly due to the isolation and weakness of the Muslim powers. However, the next generation saw a re-unification of Seljuk Muslims under Imad ad-Din Zangi, ruler of Mosul. The Muslims' first victory was retaking Edessa in 1144 and then systematically dismantling the Crusader state in that region. These events prompted the papacy (Pope Eugenius III) to provoke a second crusade in late 1145.

In this period two famous orders of knights were established: the Knights Hospitallers¹⁰ (to aid the wounded) and the Knights Templars¹¹ (to guard pilgrims and Jerusalem).



The Second Crusade (1147-49)

This was inspired by Bernard of Clairvaux and involved King Louis VII of France and Emperor Conrad III (the Holy Roman Emperor) hoping to occupy all Palestine.

All this did was to sour relations between the Crusader kingdoms, the Byzantines, and friendly Muslim rulers.

Conrad's German army set out for Jerusalem from Nuremberg in May 1147 with the French forces following about a month later; many of the men died on the way due to starvation and cold weather. Near Dorylaeum in Anatolia the Germans were routed by a

¹⁰ Knights Hospitallers were a military and religious order founded as the 'Knights of the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem' in the 11th century. Originally protectors of pilgrims, they also undertook the care of the sick. During the Middle Ages they became a powerful and wealthy military force, with foundations in various European countries. In England, the order was revived in 1831 and was responsible for the foundation of the St John Ambulance Brigade in 1888.

¹¹ Knights Templars (also Knights Templar) a religious and military order for the protection of pilgrims to the Holy Land, founded as the 'Poor Knights of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon' in 1118. The order became powerful and wealthy, but its members' arrogance towards rulers, together with their wealth and their rivalry with the Knights Hospitallers, led to their downfall; the order was suppressed in 1312, many of its possessions being given to the Hospitallers.

Turkish ambush; most soldiers and pilgrims turned back. The French army lasted a while longer but only part of the force reached Jerusalem in 1148.

In alliance with King Baldwin III of Jerusalem, the Crusaders attacked Damascus in July but failed to take the city. Shortly after the collapse of this attack the French king and the remnants of his army returned home.

This crusade failed and it allowed the Muslims time to regroup under Nur-ad-Din, successor to Zangi, who expanded his realm into a major power in the Middle East, occupying Damascus in 1154. In 1169 his forces, under the command of his nephew Saladin, took control of Egypt and occupied Aleppo in 1183. When Nur ad-Din died five years later, Saladin succeeded him as ruler of a Muslim state that stretched from the Libyan Desert to the Tigris Valley, surrounding the Crusader states on three fronts.

Saladin finally invaded Jerusalem with a large army in May 1187. On July 4 he decisively defeated the Latin army at Hattin in Galilee. Although King Guy of Jerusalem,¹² with some of his nobles, surrendered and survived, all the Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller of St John of Jerusalem were beheaded on or near the battlefield.

After this victory, Saladin swept through most of the Crusader strongholds in the kingdom of Jerusalem, including the city of Jerusalem, which surrendered to him on October 2. At this point the only major city still in Crusader hands was Tyre in Lebanon.

The Third Crusade (1189-92)

This was prompted by Saladin's¹³ capture of Jerusalem in 1187. On October 29, 1187, Pope Gregory VIII proclaimed the Third Crusade, which was very popular. The largest force yet marched to Palestine.

Leaders

- Frederick I (Barbarossa), the Holy Roman emperor, nearly 70 years old.
- The French king, Philip II.
- The English king, Richard I.
- William II of Sicily, but he died in November 1189.

Preamble

Before the Crusade began, there was a small recovery in the East. Two weeks after Hattin, Conrad of Montferrat, Baldwin V's uncle, had landed at Tyre with a small Italian fleet and a number of followers. He immediately established himself sufficiently to stave off an attack by Saladin. When, toward the end of 1188, Saladin released King Guy from prison in Damascus as he had promised, Conrad refused to submit to the king and denied Guy entry into Tyre.

To establish his authority, Guy suddenly gathered his few followers and besieged Acre.¹⁴ Saladin was taken completely by surprise. When he finally moved his army toward the city,

¹² Guy of Lusignan, a French knight. He reigned in Jerusalem from 1186-1192 by right of marriage to Sibylla of Jerusalem. He had been appointed as regent with Sibylla when Baldwin's health deteriorated.

¹³ Saladin (Arabic name Salah-ad-Din Yusuf ibn-Ayyub, 1137-93) Sultan of Egypt and Syria 1174-93. He invaded the Holy Land and reconquered Jerusalem from the Christians (1187), and, for a period, resisted the Third Crusade, the leaders of which included Richard the Lionheart.

¹⁴ Acre (or 'Akko) A seaport of Israel, on the Bay of Haifa. Known to the Phoenicians as Ptolemais, Acre was taken by the Arabs in 683 and used as a supply port for Damascus. Captured by the Crusaders in the 12th

the Crusaders in their camp outside had begun to receive reinforcements from the West, many under the banner of Henry of Champagne. There was stalemate; Saladin couldn't enter the city nor dislodge the Crusaders and by winter of 1190-91 the Crusaders had suffered losses from disease and famine.

Guy's throne relied upon his connection through his wife, Sibyl, who was one of the victims of disease. The older barons who had supported him now turned to Conrad. The marriage of Sibyl's sister, Isabel, to Humphrey of Toron was annulled, and she was constrained to marry Conrad. But Guy refused to relinquish the throne.

At this point, in May 1191, ships arrived near Acre with supplies and the approaching Crusading armies.

The Crusade proper

Frederick set out in May 1189 with a large army and crossed Hungary into Byzantine territory, though his troops caused disturbances in the Balkans. Frederick was eventually persuaded to avoid Constantinople and cross the Dardanelles. In May 1190 he reached Iconium after defeating a Seljuk army. Thence his troops crossed into Armenian territory.

On June 10 Frederick, who had ridden ahead with his bodyguard, was drowned while attempting to swim a stream in Anatolia. The morale of his army was ruined and most of them returned to Germany immediately following his death. A small remnant, under Frederick of Swabia and Leopold of Austria, finally reached Tyre.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Josius had convinced Philip II Augustus of France and Henry II of England to support the crusade. Henry died in 1189, leaving the responsibility to his son and successor, Richard I the Lion-Heart. This was a tricky alliance since the French kings sought to recover territories in France held by the English Angevin kings, especially Normandy. The two kings met on 4 July 1190 at Vezelay and prepared to set out.

Richard was a poor administrator who had rebelled against his father but he was a genius in the art of war and the favourite of his formidable mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine. In many ways Richard was the archetypical chivalrous, courageous Crusader, but a poor king for England.

Philip II Augustus was the opposite of Richard. He was unattractive but was a skilled and unscrupulous politician and a reluctant crusader. However, the two kings signed an agreement at Messina in Sicily confirming their obligations to each other.

Philip arrived with the French fleet at Acre in April 1191 and began the siege. Due to storms, Richard anchored at Cyprus where his sister Joan and his fiancée, Berengaria of Navarre, had been shipwrecked and held by the Byzantine ruler, the rebel prince Isaac Comnenus. Isaac attacked Richard's forces and was defeated; Richard went on to capture all of Cyprus. He arrived at Acre on 8 June 1191.

After a month of battering by siege engines, Acre surrendered against Saladin's orders. A shocked Saladin was forced to ratify an agreement for an exchange of prisoners.

century, it became part of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and later a residence of the Knights of St John. It fell into Muslim hands again in 1291 and was eventually taken by the Ottoman Turks in 1517. Captured by British forces in 1918, Acre was assigned to the Arabs in the proposed 1948 partition of Palestine but was subsequently absorbed into the new State of Israel.

After recapturing Acre, there were disputes over the disposal of areas. Richard offended Leopold of Austria, and Philip, who felt that he had fulfilled his crusader's vow and who was unwell, left for home in August, leaving Richard to campaign alone.

When Saladin returned the first prisoners, Richard found some flaw in the selection of them and refused to free the Saracen captives. Subsequent negotiations failed, and Richard, anxious to march on Jerusalem, ordered them all killed, along with their wives and children. The truce arrangements were voided.

The Crusaders managed to seize a chain of cities on the coastline but achieved little more. Richard won a series of battles, defeating Saladin at Arsuf (1191), he reoccupied Jaffa as a base and took Daron in 1192, but never recaptured Jerusalem or much of the territory of the Latin Kingdom.

Without support, Richard was forced to make peace with Saladin, securing protections for pilgrims to Jerusalem and a five-year peace treaty in September 1192. The coast from Jaffa north remained in Christian hands, but Ashkelon was to be demolished. Pilgrims were to have free access to the holy places. Meanwhile, the French king then took control of Richard's holdings in France. Saladin withdrew to Damascus, where he died.

Richard consented to the demands that Guy be deposed and Conrad accepted as king. Immediately after, Conrad was assassinated and Isabel persuaded to marry Henry of Champagne. Guy was given the governorship of Cyprus. This was Richard's most successful enterprise since Cyprus became of significant importance as an outpost in the east and a base for future crusades.

Richard had constant news of problems at home and finally left Palestine in October 1192, when the Latin Kingdom had been reconstituted. However, this was smaller than the original kingdom and much weaker militarily and economically; yet it lasted precariously for another century.

Returning home, Richard was shipwrecked and then captured by Leopold of Austria and held hostage by the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI until being released in 1194 on payment of a huge ransom. Richard's long absence caused many problems in England. Though he waged a heroic war, he achieved little in Palestine and lost a great deal in his kingdom.

The Fourth Crusade (1202-04)

Leaders

- Thibaut of Champagne was chosen as the main leader but he died in 1201.
- Boniface I, Marquess of Montferrat (Piedmont, Italy) was then chosen as the replacement leader.
- William V of Montferrat, father of Boniface.
- Baldwin VI, Count of Hainaut (Flanders). Later Baldwin I, first Emperor of the Latin Empire of Constantinople.
- Geoffrey of Villehardouin, lesser leader, envoy and historian of the Crusade.

The Fourth Crusade was called in 1198 by Pope Innocent III to strike against Egypt. In 1199 a tax was levied on all clerical incomes—later to become a precedent for systematic papal income taxes.

It was agreed that Venice would provide the transport. This was fateful. The Venetian republic had acquired trading privileges with the Byzantine Empire and many merchants had incurred hostility from the Greeks. In 1171 Venetians had been arrested and a number of Latins¹⁵ massacred by citizens of Constantinople in 1182. Since the prime target was now the centre of Muslim power in Egypt there was a problem since Venice had commercial links with it. There was a conflict of interests between the Crusaders and the Venetians. Despite this an agreement was made for payment of transport and sharing the conquests.

The aim was to attack Egypt, the seat of Saladin's rule but this Crusade was diverted by Venetian interests to attack Constantinople because it was plagued by financial difficulties. The crusader army could not afford to pay for ships and outfitting from Venice, so they agreed to capture the Christian city of Zara in Hungary (which fell in 1202) and then attack Constantinople, which fell in the summer of 1203.

Alexius III was deposed, and 'Alexius IV' (who was related by marriage to some Crusaders) was crowned as co-emperor with his father. When the new 'emperor' was assassinated by the resentful Greek population, the Venetians and Crusaders took over the city and government. It was decided that 12 electors (six Venetians and six Crusaders) should choose an emperor who would have a quarter of the empire, the rest would be divided up, with some property going to the clergy.

Constantinople was sacked in April 1204 by the rank and file army, with massacres lasting three days, making the gulf between Eastern and Western Churches unbridgeable (even though Pope Innocent III repudiated the action). Many priceless relics arrived in western Europe, mostly in Venice.

Some Crusaders benefited from the division of Byzantine territories known as the 'Latin Empire of the East' (or 'Of Constantinople', 1204–61). The elected emperor of Constantinople was Count Baldwin of Flanders; and the Venetian Thomas Morosini chosen as patriarch (head of the church). Some parts of the Byzantine Empire survived, such as the imperial government in Nicaea, Epirus or at Trebizond. Various Latin-French lordships throughout Greece did provide cultural contacts with Western Europe and promoted the study of Greek.

This usurped state briefly replaced the Greek Empire at Constantinople until Michael VIII Palaeologus retook the city in 1261, aided by the Genoese (the rivals of the Venetians). Yet the Byzantine Empire had suffered a devastating blow which weakened it significantly.

Diversion: The Albigensian Crusade (1209-1229)

In 1208, Pope Innocent III proclaimed a crusade against the Albigenses,¹⁶ a religious sect in southern France that had existed separately from the Roman communion for centuries. This crusade was the first to be fought in Western Europe, resulting in terrible massacres

¹⁵ The Byzantines referred to the Crusaders as 'Latins' due to their adherence of the Latin Church rite.

¹⁶ Albigensians (or Albigenses) were accused of a form of the Cathar heresy (a Manichaean Gnosticism); they took their name from the town of Albi in Languedoc in southern France. There, and in northern Italy, the sect acquired immense popularity. The movement was condemned at the Council of Toulouse in 1119 and by the Third and Fourth Lateran councils in 1179 and 1215, which opposed it not only as heretical but because it threatened the family and the state. By 1229 the heretics were largely crushed and the Treaty of Meaux delivered most of their territory to France. Many Baptist and Brethren historians consider the claims of heresy to be false and credit the Albigenses with being a true Christian community, thus provoking the Roman hierarchy.

such as at Montségur. Led principally by Simon de Montfort, it failed to bring the Albigenses under papal control but ended their political influence.

Children's Crusade (1212-1218)

This was a very sad crusade to the Holy Land by tens of thousands of French and German children. Most of the children never reached their destination, and were sold into slavery by the captains offering them travel in Marseilles. Many others died of starvation and disease.

This shows the level of motivation that the Crusades held in the European mind.

The Fifth Crusade (1217-21)

Leaders

- King Andrew of Hungary.
- Cardinal Pelagius.
- King John of Jerusalem.
- King Hugh of Cyprus.

Pope Innocent III called for another strike at the Muslim world. These Crusaders first captured, then lost, Damietta in Egypt near the Nile.

After conquering the seaport Damietta in 1219, an attack on Egypt was required, capturing Cairo and then the Sinai Peninsula. When the Emperor Frederick II failed to reinforce the Crusaders, the attack on Cairo was abandoned, which was also hampered by floods. Thereafter, the Crusaders were forced to surrender Damietta to the Egyptians in 1221 and the Europeans dispersed after concluding an 8-year truce.

The Sixth crusade (1228-1229)

This was led by Emperor Frederick II who won Jerusalem, Nazareth and Bethlehem for the Crusaders without any fighting but using skilful negotiations with the sultan of Egypt, Al-Kamil in 1229. These negotiations produced a peace treaty by which the Egyptians restored Jerusalem to the Crusaders and guaranteed a 10-year respite from hostilities.

Frederick had been excommunicated by the pope before he reached the Middle East because he had procrastinated in starting the Crusade due to illness and domestic problems. Despite his achievement, Frederick was shunned as an excommunicate by both the clergy and the lay leaders of the Latin states. The pope had also proclaimed a Crusade against Frederick, and attacked the emperor's Italian possessions, forcing Frederick to return to Europe in May 1229.

The Crusaders quarrelled amongst themselves again losing Jerusalem in 1244, which would remain in Muslim hands until 1967. In 1244, forced west by the advancing Mongols, the Khwarezmian Turks sacked Jerusalem with Egyptian help.

The Seventh Crusade (1248-1254)

Louis IX of France financed and led this expedition to restore Jerusalem, taking four years to prepare. In August 1248 Louis sailed to Cyprus to spend the winter. Louis landed in Egypt on June 1249, capturing Damietta.

The goal was to attack Cairo in the spring of 1250. Failing to guard their flanks, the Egyptians controlled the water reservoirs along the Nile and then flooded the area trapping the Crusading army. Louis surrendered in April 1250, having to pay a huge ransom and surrendering Damietta. He sailed to Palestine to spend four years building forts and strengthening the Latin defences, returning to France in 1254.

The Eighth Crusade (1270-1272)

Louis IX tried again with a disheartened expeditionary force against the easier target of Tunis, but he fell sick and died. Tribute was secured from the Bey (local ruler) but only Prince Edward (later Edward I of England) reached Palestine but left in 1272 empty-handed.

After this failed Crusade, the last major enterprise, the Latin outposts in Syria and Palestine were placed under increasing pressure. Gradually they began to fall to the Egyptian Mamelukes.¹⁷ The last stronghold, Acre, was taken in May 1291, and the Crusaders, with the military orders of the Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller, took refuge on Cyprus.

About 1306, the Knights Hospitaller established themselves on Rhodes, which they ruled as an independent state, the last Crusader outpost in the Mediterranean until 1522 when it surrendered to the Turks.

In 1570, Cyprus, by then under the government of Venice, was also conquered by the Muslim Turks. Other Latin states established in Greece as a result of the Fourth Crusade survived until the mid-15th century.

After shocks

After this there were only minor crusading expeditions against the Turks throughout the 14th – 15th centuries, but none were a serious attempt to regain the Holy Land. The heart had gone out of the European nobles to pursue a lost cause. The fall of Acre in 1291 ended the Crusader presence in the Levant.

After the Mamelukes of Egypt succeeded in ousting the Mongols from Syria, sultan Baybars I fought the Crusaders, many of whom had allied with the Mongols. In 1268 the Mamluks captured Antioch and slaughtered all its inhabitants. Tripoli fell in 1289, and Acre, the last Latin outpost, fell in 1291.

In 1453 Constantinople fell to the Muslims ending the Byzantine Empire. By 1529 the Turks had reached the gates of Vienna, which was surrounded again in 1683. The Crusaders had merely held the Muslim advance back for 200 years. While Europe held Muslim armies at bay, Muslim pirates continued to ravage the Mediterranean Sea until stopped by the US Navy in the 19th century. The Islamic caliphate only ceased after WWI in 1923 with the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

¹⁷ Mameluke (from Arabic *mamluk*, 'slave'); the name of two Egyptian Muslim dynasties. Mameluke rule extended over Egypt and Syria (including the present Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and western Arabia). Their external trade reached across Africa as far as Mali and Guinea, and throughout the Indian Ocean as far as Java. In 1517 the Ottoman Turks captured Cairo and overthrew the Mamelukes.

Practical effects of the Crusades

The Crusades indirectly had a huge effect on the development of society in the Middle Ages, affecting trade, commerce, technology, food tastes, literature, chivalry, freedom of thought, transmission of knowledge, rediscovery of Classical philosophy, art and science. In short, they were a catalyst for the European Renaissance.

Trade

While deepening the hostility between Christianity and Islam, they also stimulated economic and cultural contacts of lasting benefit to European civilisation, introducing many products such as cotton, muslin, damask, mirrors, sugar, maize, lemons and melons. Commerce in southern Europe, particularly Italy, was greatly stimulated and the demand for spices was stimulated, creating new tastes in food. Trade depots were established beyond the Crusader frontiers, which lasted until 1291.

Technology

The transportation needs to enable the flow of trade goods led to the development of better shipbuilding techniques.

Fiscal matters

Apart from the benefit of knowledge and trade, the papal efforts to raise money to fund expeditions led to developing systems of direct taxation that had long-term consequences for the fiscal structure of European governments. Italian banking facilities became indispensable to popes and kings. Catalans and Provençals also profited, and, indirectly, so did all of Europe.

Ideas

Sicily and Spain had provided an avenue for the transmission of Arabic knowledge, which was itself a regurgitation of Aristotelian thinking. The Latin East (Crusader kingdoms) did not especially aid this transmission of ideas. However, the Crusades had a marked effect on literature. The proliferation of chronicles, eyewitness accounts and histories, in verse and prose, in the vernacular as well as in Latin, was a boon to the development of historical literature in Europe.

Art and science

Furthermore the flow of knowledge, art and science led to the European Renaissance. Interest in the Orient, and exploitation of oriental trade goods and knowledge was of great significance, creating new artistic tastes.

Criticism of the Roman Church

After initial successes, the repeated failures led to suspicions about the papal demands for crusades. Gradually, attention was removed from eastern crusades and focused upon wars against heretics. The levies on clerical incomes was also deeply unpopular. All this led to growing criticism of the church and a diminishing of trust, which finally culminated in the Reformation.

The Crusades, especially the Fourth, so embittered the Greeks that any reunion of the Eastern and Western churches was out of the question.

Religious missions

Following Italian merchants, a number of foreign missions were established in the east, especially as the Mongols were tolerant of religious propaganda. Thus mission bases were established in Iran, Inner Asia and China. However, conversions from Islamic controlled

areas were few, especially since apostates were executed. Many missionaries were persecuted and killed, but some gained considerable influence. In the 14th century the Franciscans were finally permitted to reside in Palestine as caretakers for the holy places, but not as missionaries. Eventually, the Ottoman Turks ended the movements of missionaries in the mid-14th century.

Conclusion

Little mark was left in Syria and Palestine apart from numerous churches, forts and a chain of great castles. The deepest impression of the Crusades was the impact upon Europe.

Europe's fear of Muslim power was such that the crusade vision persisted into the 17th century, and the conviction that war might be just became more deeply enshrined in Western thinking.

Lessons learned from the establishment of the Latin states in the east established methodologies that were later used when Europeans colonised the territories discovered by the explorers of the 15th and 16th centuries.

Without a doubt, without the Crusades Europe would have been a very different place and far worse off.

Salient points regarding today's deprecation of the Crusades

British involvement was minimal

Britain is often targeted in criticism of the Crusades but this is foolish. This tradition of criticism began when the British Empire was in the ascendant, or shortly thereafter, and it was popular to castigate British imperialism. In fact only one crusade had an English king involved in the leadership and few Englishmen were able to travel with a retinue to fight at the other end of the Mediterranean in any other Crusade. In any case, Britain had enough problems at home to deal with. Later monarchs learned lessons from the one crusading British king whose chivalrous exploits did nothing but harm to domestic government.

They were defensive

The melodramatic denunciation of the Crusades today is little short of perverse. They were not a pre-emptive attack. They were not for monetary gain. They were not for temporal expansion. The motivation (however unbiblical) was to ensure personal salvation by waging a holy war against oppression as well as proving military prowess and chivalry. The major cause of the Crusades was the relentless invasion, wars, raids, piracy, attacks, brutality, massacres, murders, slavery, torture and destruction of churches by waves of Muslim armies over hundreds of years.

Minimal comparative violence

The destruction unleashed by the Crusaders was minimal by the standards of the time. Jerusalem and Acre were massacred, but this was seen a due vengeance for multiple massacres committed by Muslims. The Muslims retaliated with equal harshness; thus the inhabitants of Acre were first slaughtered by the Crusaders and later by the Muslims.

The wars of the Crusades were relatively few and fall far short of the hundreds of battles committed by Muslim invasions over 1400 years. There were more battles in 1942 alone than there were in the entire Crusade period of 200 years and there were far more casualties in six years during World War II than in the Crusade period. Why denounce the Crusaders fighting for a good cause but not denounce the 70 million killed by Mao (many

of them Christians and intellectuals), or the 50 million killed by Stalin (most of them Christians and farmers) or the 270 million (at least) killed by Muslims?

Without the Crusades the Muslim advance into Europe could have overrun the whole continent and you would today be under Sharia Law.

Conclusion

The point for our purpose here is that the Crusades, often held up as something the West should repent for, were a response to the aggression of Muslim advances and were not pre-emptive. Neither were there many military battles. Furthermore, though something of a mess overall, they did check the Muslim advance into Europe and did lead to the Renaissance. There is no comparison between the few military exploits of the Crusaders and the savagery of 1400 years of Islamic warfare, brutality, rape and slavery.

While I do not condone the actions of the Crusaders I merely observe the facts; their worst sins were killing European and Byzantine Christians, who were innocent. The Crusaders' attack on Palestine was an entirely logical defensive response to Muslim aggression.

Modern liberals should note this; were it not for the Crusades the Islamic advance could not have been stopped and all Europe would have become Muslim. As it was, Muslims besieged Vienna twice, as late as the 17th century, and advanced to central France as early as the 8th century.¹⁸ Whining liberal feminists moaning about the Crusades would today be wearing a hijab, and have no rights at all in a Muslim caliphate similar to ISIS, without the Crusades.

Liberals need to start questioning their programming. They have been brainwashed since early school days and don't bother to read outside of school curricula and neither get to the truth, nor learn to critically assess what they are told.¹⁹ They need to understand that there is an intellectual war going on that is deliberately perverting their thinking to follow an anti-Christian programme that will result in their eventual slavery.

To look at the modern effect of liberal, multicultural, foolishly tolerant thinking, just look at the real situation right now in Malmo, Sweden's third city. It is a war zone. Hundreds of children are being raped by gangs, some killed as a result. Old women are being raped. Murders are through the roof. Grenades are being set off in city streets. Fires are blazing. Cars are torched. Shops are being looted. Burglaries are at an all-time high. Drug crime is rampant.

All this is being committed by Muslims roving in gangs in migrant ghettos. This is jihad; it is the behaviour expected of Muslims according to the Qur'an and the Hadith.²⁰ It is the sort of thing that stimulated the Crusaders to try to put a stop to this in lands formerly ruled by Christians. Yet instead of resisting this crime wave that has stopped Malmo residents from leaving their homes, liberals moan about Islamophobia and castigate anyone revealing the truth. Parts of Germany, France and Greece are experiencing the same problems. Britain has already experienced the Rotherham scandal and the London bomb attacks.

¹⁸ The Muslim invasion of France was only stopped by Charles Martel in 732 at the Battle of Tours, in central France. This stopped the Muslim advancement into Europe and initiated Carolingian rule. Charles won despite being outnumbered with 20,000 Carolingian Franks against a Muslim force of 50,000 under Abdul Rahman al-Ghafiqi. Charles' grandson was Charlemagne.

¹⁹ State school teaching of history is shockingly poor and limited to modern history and little else.

²⁰ For a full explanation of Islam and jihad see my book, 'Islam: theology, politics and history'.

The Crusaders considered that they had good reasons to launch military campaigns to regain territory lost to Muslim invaders. What will modern European nations do as their cities are slowly being overtaken one by one?

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