

OVERVIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY IN 36 ILLUSTRATED LECTURES

LECTURE 15 – CRUSADES AND INDULGENCES

We'll start with a prayer, appropriate to the bitter fighting during the Crusades:

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

The rest of this page is an outline of this lecture. 'Crusades' and 'Indulgences' are connected, as we'll see – one led to the shameful increase of the other.

1. CRUSADES

- 1.1 The Crusades depended on Feudalism
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- 1.5 First Crusade, 1096-99
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TOPIC – LASTING DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE CRUSADES

- 1.9 Other crusades
- 1.10 Effects of Crusades

2. INDULGENCES and how the Crusades encouraged the misuse of them

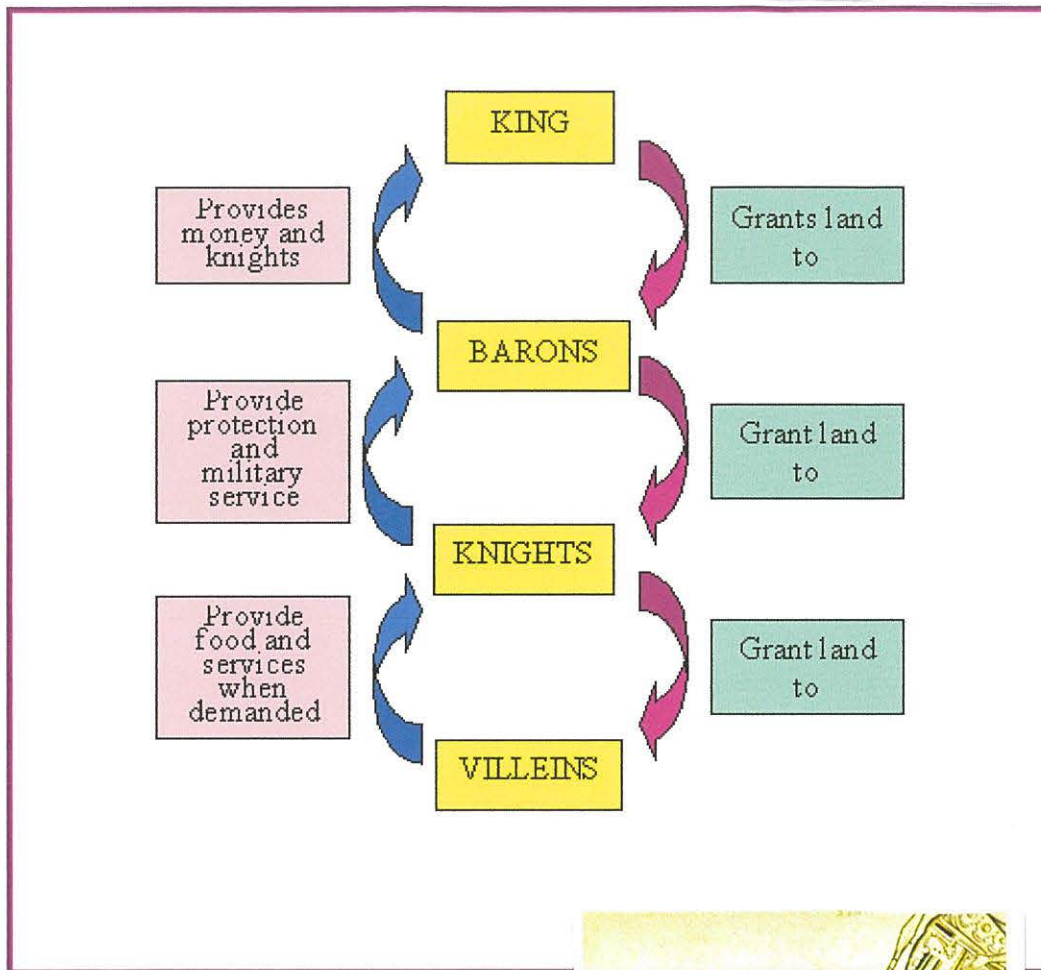
- 2.1 Introduction – history of Sacrament of Penance
- 2.2 Two types of penance
- 2.3 Growth of Indulgences



Society in Medieval Europe was based on a pyramid of relationships, known as the 'Feudal System'; everyone had his or her 'place'. It came to England with William the Conqueror in 1066. There are details and a diagram on the next page.

In preparation, read Cairns, 185-7 (feudalism), 212-17; Lion, 276-81; Vos, 66-67, 69.

1.1 The Crusades depended on Feudalism (Cairns, 185-87)



The 'Feudal System' was simple but effective. The King owned all the land. He kept some of it as his personal property, gave some of it to the Church and 'fued' the rest of it to trusted barons, on condition they raised an army to fight for him and collected taxes from the people who lived on land. Barons then 'sub-fued' part of their land to mounted knights, who provided the army, and they 'sub-fued' part of their land to farmers, merchants, craft workers, etc, in exchange for services; the latter employed servants and peasants in exchange for services provided to them. In troubled times it was not a bad system, as every 'layer' protected the people below them.



Kneeling, with folded hands and bowed head, was part of the ceremony when land was passed down in the feudal system, recognizing the authority of the person over them. Here a new knight is doing this. It is said to have influenced Western Christians into kneeling for prayer, particularly penitential prayers – in the Early Church, it was usual to stand for prayer, with arms uplifted.

The Feudal System began to fall apart in the 1200s, as money became more plentiful and people preferred to pay rent rather than be bound to give service.

1.2 First reason for the Crusades

In the Middle Ages, many people went on pilgrimages, to Canterbury in England, to see the shrine of the murdered Archbishop, Thomas Becket, to Rome, to see the Vatican and other places, and to Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain. However, pilgrimages to the Holy Land were something 'special', visiting the places where Jesus had lived and died, Jerusalem and Bethlehem and other biblical sites. The Egyptian Arabs - Moslems - who had captured the area from the Christians in the seventh century - Lecture 14 - treated Christian pilgrims well for the next 400 years - it was good for business, providing accommodation and food. As many as 7,000 Westerners at a time went from Europe, on organized pilgrimages with hostel accommodation arranged along the way. The 'package holiday' is not a C20 invention – although pilgrimages were no holidays.

Then, in 1055, a new and aggressive group of Moslems moved westward and captured the Holy Land – they came from further East and they were not Arabs; their tribal name was Seljuk and they came from Turkistan, away to the East, so they were called Seljuk Turks. They were recent converts to Islam, and they were fanatical about it, so when they captured Palestine from the Egyptian Arabs, they treated Christian pilgrims badly, attacking them and blocking access to the pilgrimage sites. Western pilgrims came back with terrible stories of Turkish persecution. Catholic Europe was outraged, not only at the physical attacks on pilgrims but also at being denied access to their prime source for relics. We saw in Lecture 8 how important it now was for local churches to have some relics of New Testament items, for devotion, for miracle cures and for prestige. Because of the demand, new items were constantly being 'discovered'/invented and sold to pilgrims - the chains that had bound Peter in prison, the bones of the three wise men, and the dress worn by Mary when the Holy Spirit overshadowed her, et cetera.

Western Catholics retaliated by a series of military expeditions, inspired and blessed by the Catholic Church, with the aim of recapturing the Holy Land (especially Jerusalem) from the Muslims. That was the background, but there was a more immediate reason.

1.3 Second reason for the Crusades

After the Seljuk Turks had captured Palestine, they advanced westward through Asia Minor and threatened its capital, Constantinople (see it and the name Seljuk Turks on the right of the map on the next page). In 1095 the Eastern Emperor asked the West for military help. The Pope was delighted at the invitation, and encouraged the West to respond, because:

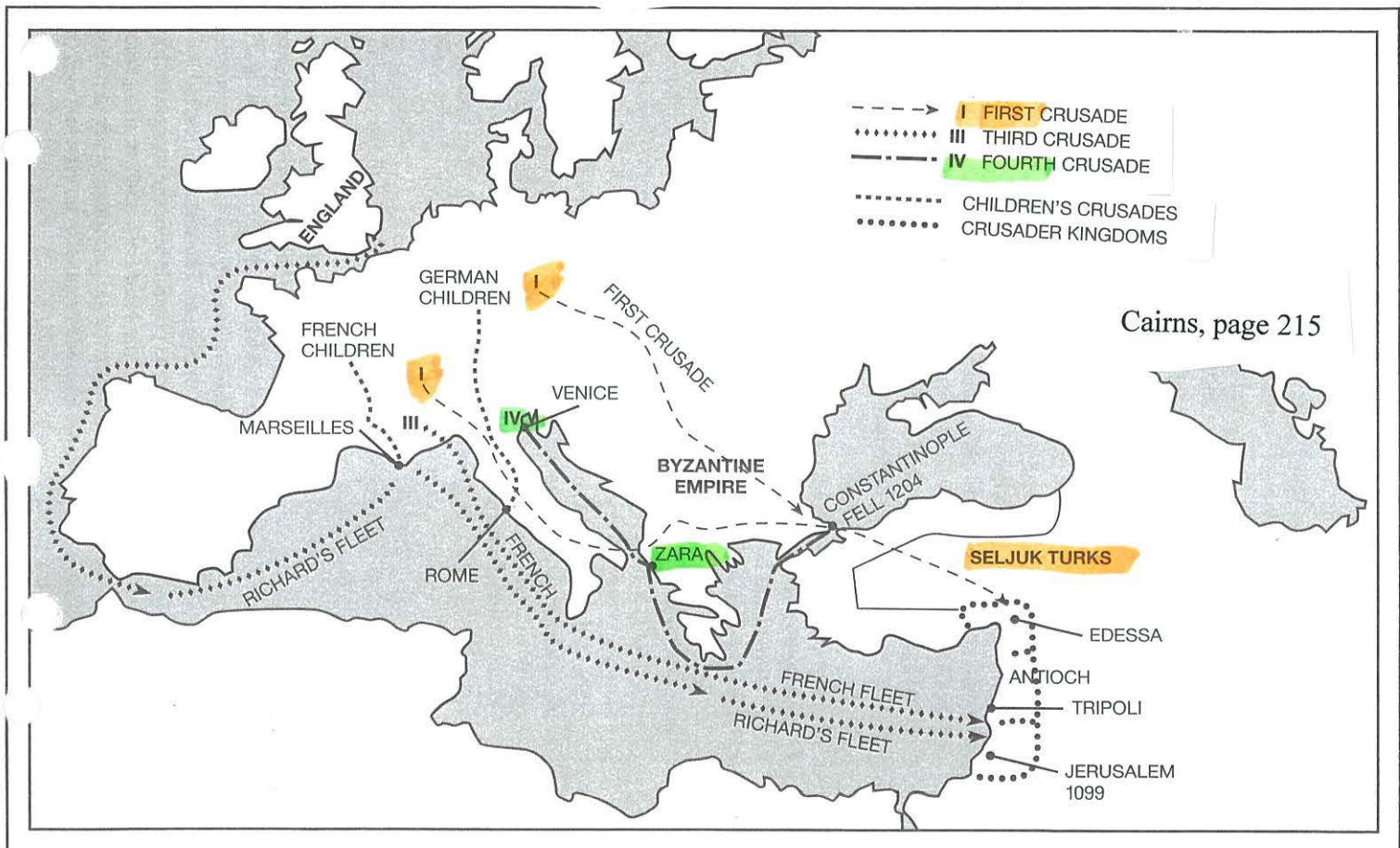
- (i) He was having trouble with the knights in the feudal system, who had no one to fight and so were bored and restless and looking for trouble. If he sent them off to fight in the Holy Land, it would get rid of this problem at home.
- (ii) The Emperor in Constantinople hinted that if the West could help him to repel the Turks, it might heal the 1054 schism, and the Pope saw this as his opportunity to further his efforts to establish the universal rule of the Papacy.
- (iii) This was during the time when, as we saw in Lecture 11, two men were both claiming to be the Pope, one in Rome, the traditional place for the Pope to be, and the other in Avignon, in France, supported by and under the domination of the French king. The one in Avignon, Urban, decided that the best way to defeat his rival in Rome was to make himself leader of great popular cause, a Crusade to liberate the Holy Land, and he correctly calculated that this would unite Catholic Europe behind him.

The word 'Crusade' comes from the Latin *crux*, cross, i.e. to campaign under the Cross. The Crusaders sewed the cross onto their clothing – picture on the next page. There were four main Crusades:

First: 1096-99; Second: 1147-49; Third: 1189-92; Fourth: 1202-1204

but there was a constant trickle of Catholic soldiers to the Holy Land to join the Crusaders who were already there, to defend and extend the territory they had won from the Turks. Fighting went on all the time.

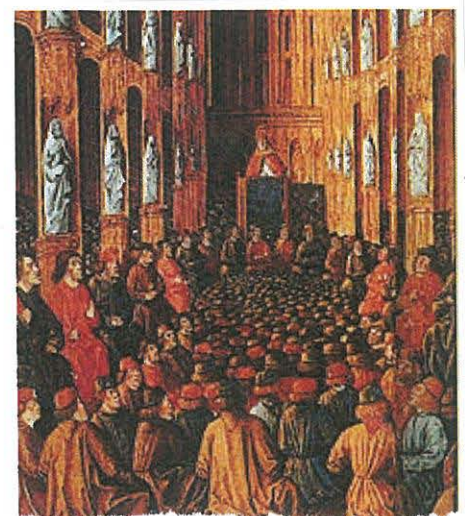
CRUSADES



1.4 Call for the First Crusade

In November 1095, at Clermont in southern France, Pope Urban called on Catholic Europe to rescue the Holy Land from the Turks. He took them through the life of Jesus, mentioning places sacred to the Christian faith, now desecrated by infidels; as he did this the crowd began to boil with anger, so he continued with the challenge:

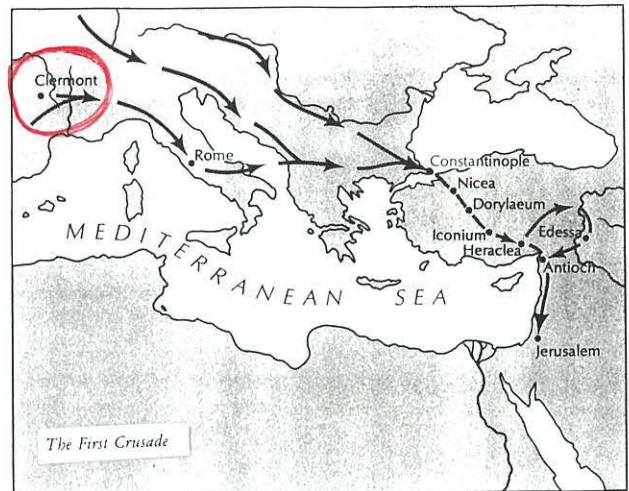
As soldiers of the Faith, turn your hands against foreign nations, and under Jesus Christ our leader, as a Christian army, an army invincible, better than the Israelites of old, you shall do battle for your Jerusalem, and attack and expel the Turks there, who are worse than the Jebusites.



Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont, where he preached an impassioned sermon to take back the Holy Land

1.5 First Crusade, 1096-99 Hanks, *Great Events*, 127-131

Crusading knights sewed red strips of cloth in the shape of the cross onto their outer clothing, as a token of their allegiance to Christ.



This map shows the First Crusade. 10,000 knights from the regular army, together with 100,000 others, nobles, squires and peasants - this was the Feudal System pulling together - set out from France and Germany, joined up at Constantinople, and in 1097 fought their way across Asia Minor, restoring it to Eastern Roman Empire. They arrived at just the right time - the Seljuk Turks were breaking into warring factions. The Crusaders defeated them one by one, although it was hard going in the intense heat - Antioch held out for nine months before a Muslim commander succumbed to bribery and opened one of the gates. In June 1099, after six weeks of fighting, they captured Jerusalem, but battle, famine and pestilence had reduced the 10,000 knights and 100,000 others to 1,500 knights and 15,000 others - that's an 85% casualty rate.

CRUSADE	DATES	CHIEF MOTIVATORS	NOTABLE PARTICIPANTS	GOAL	RESULTS
FIRST CRUSADE	1096-1099	Urban II Peter the Hermit	Walter Sansavoir Peter the Hermit Gottschalk Raymund of Toulouse Godfrey Tancred Robert of Normandy	Liberation of Jerusalem from Turks	Crusaders captured Nicaea, Antioch, Edessa, Jerusalem; established feudal Crusader Kingdoms.
SECOND CRUSADE	1147-1148	Bernard of Clairvaux Eugene III	Konrad III Louis VII	Retake Edessa from Turks	Mistrust between Western Crusaders and Eastern guides led to decimation of Crusader army; attempt to take Damascus failed.
THIRD CRUSADE	1189-1192	Alexander III	Frederick Barbarossa Phillip Augustus Richard I	Retake Jerusalem from Saladin and the Saracens	Frederick drowned; Phillip returned home; Richard captured Acre and Joppa, made treaty with Saladin, and was captured and imprisoned in Austria on the way home.
FOURTH CRUSADE	1200-1204	Innocent III	Thibaut of Champagne Louis of Blois Baldwin of Flanders Simon De Montfort Henry Dandolo	Undermine Saracen power by invading Egypt	Christian city of Zara was sacked to repay Venice for transportation; for this the Crusaders were excommunicated; they then sacked Constantinople.
CHILDREN'S CRUSADE	1212	Nicholas Stephen		Supernatural conquest of Holy Land by "the pure in heart."	Most of the children were drowned at sea, sold into slavery, or slaughtered.
FIFTH CRUSADE	1219-1221	Honorius III	William of Holland John of Brienne	Undermine Saracen power by invading Egypt	Crusaders succeeded in taking Damietta in Egypt but soon lost it again.
SIXTH CRUSADE	1229		Frederick II	Regain Jerusalem	Crusaders made treaty with sultan, giving Frederick control of Jerusalem. Frederick was excommunicated for this.
SEVENTH CRUSADE	1248		Louis IX	Relief of Holy Land through invasion of Egypt	Crusaders were defeated in Egypt.

For the first time in 450 years, Jerusalem was in Christian hands but, shockingly, the Crusaders spared no one, massacring the entire Muslim and Jewish population, 70,000, including women and children. Even if the Crusades were morally justified, because the Christians were recapturing the land the Arabs had taken from the them by Jihad 450 years earlier, nothing justified the massacre of the civil population of Jerusalem.



Crusader States after the First Crusade

The Crusaders captured more than Jerusalem, as you see from the Crusader States in this map – and they treated the territories as their own. Eastern Christians, who had asked for help, were appalled, not only at the brutality, but also because the Crusaders took over the Orthodox churches and turned them into Catholic churches, with the services in Latin, not in Greek, and with Western bishops in charge. This did more than the schism of 1054 to bring real division between Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholic Christians.

The name Peter the Hermit is in the first box on the chart on the last page, under the name Urban. He was a French monk, who had been on a pilgrimage to Palestine and had been badly treated by the Turks, so the Pope commissioned him to go from city to city on his donkey, calling on people to join a Crusade. Unfortunately, his enthusiasm ran away with him and he set off, unofficially, before the official First Crusade was ready. He was followed by 40,000 men and women,

untrained and unarmed, so they are known as the People's Crusade. 30,000 reached Constantinople, where the Emperor was far from pleased - he had asked for soldiers to fight the Turks and now he had to give hospitality to 30,000 unarmed peasants. As soon as they tried to pass through Turkish territory, they were massacred by the Seljuk Turks.

1.6 Second Crusade, 1147-49

As the first Crusaders grew old and sailed home or died, the scattered forces of Islam regrouped, and began to recapture the cities the Crusaders had taken, so the Pope called for a Second Crusade. It was a disaster; the Crusaders reached Damascus, where thick orchards with narrow footpaths concealed ambushed Saracens, but even after clearing these, they failed to take the city, and the Second Crusade collapsed. The Muslims recaptured Jerusalem. Fortunately their leader, Saladin, was more merciful than the Crusaders had been, and he allowed its conquered Christian inhabitants to leave peacefully.

1.7 Third Crusade, 1189-92

The West was shocked by the fall of Jerusalem. The Pope proclaimed a Third Crusade, to recapture Jerusalem. Three of the kings of Catholic Europe led it: Philip of France, the German emperor Frederick and King Richard I of England, known to history as Richard the Lionheart. The German emperor drowned on the way and Philip and Richard quarrelled constantly. The Third Crusaders didn't capture Jerusalem, but they did capture and hold the seaport of Acre, north of Jerusalem (marked on the map above). Richard made a treaty with Saladin, the Turkish leader, which gave the Crusaders a strip of coastland from Acre to Jerusalem, with the Christians' right of access to Jerusalem guaranteed. That was the end of the Third Crusade.

Then it all went horribly wrong.

1.8 Fourth Crusade, 1202-1204

The Fourth Crusade had lasting (adverse) implications for the Church. Again, it was at the initiative of the Pope. The Crusaders were entirely French. They gathered in 1201, intending to capture Egypt from the Muslims, and to attack Jerusalem from the south. (top map) They were to be ferried there in ships provided by the Italian republic of Venice. Venice insisted, as part payment for the use of their ships, that the French first of all capture, and hand over to the Venetians, the city of Zara (in modern Croatia). Zara had recently seceded from the Venetian empire and they wanted it back. So the Fourth Crusade began with Crusaders shedding the blood of their fellow Catholics as they stormed and captured Zara. (bottom map).

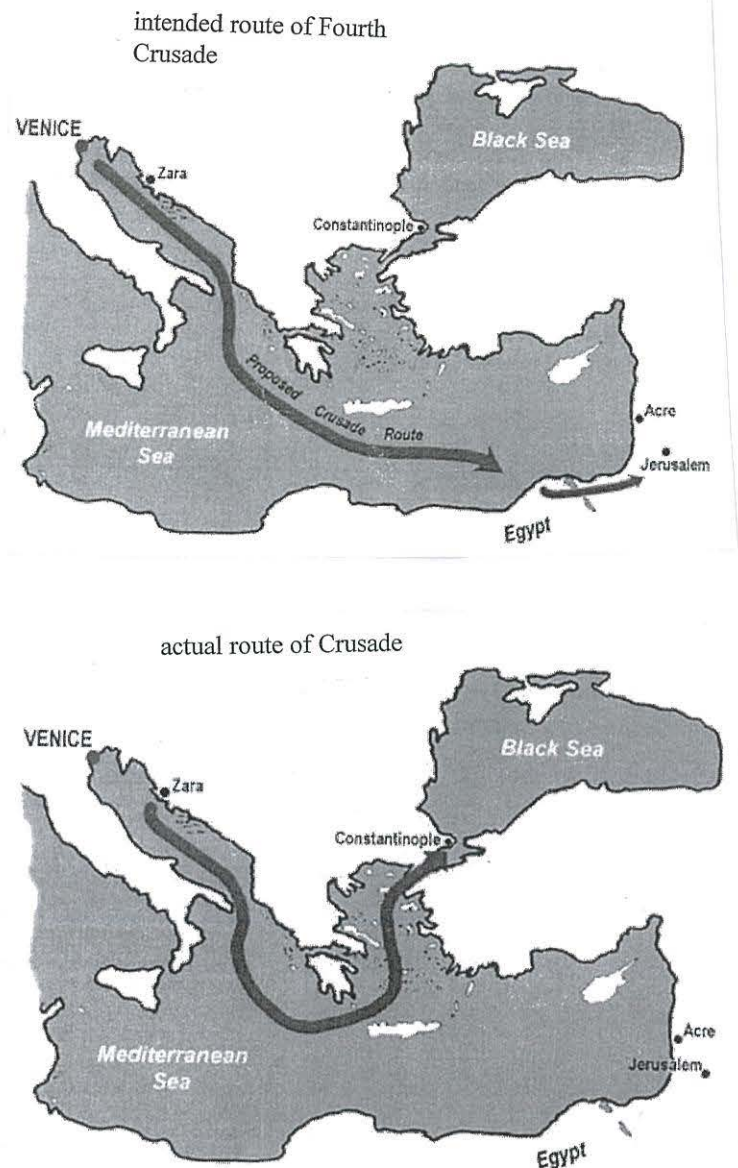
At this point Alexius Angelus, whose father had been deposed as the emperor at Constantinople, promised the Crusaders a large sum of money, and submission of the Orthodox Church to the Papacy, if they would help him regain the throne. The Venetians welcomed Alexius' proposal; they wanted to secure control of all Eastern trade. Pope Innocent III forbade the Crusaders to fight the Byzantines, but they ignored him, abandoned their original aim of conquering Egypt, and went to Constantinople (bottom map),

deposed the emperor, and placed Alexius on the throne. Alexius didn't have the money to keep his promise of payment, so the French and Venetians looted Constantinople in 1204, taking its treasures.

Although Pope Innocent had not sanctioned the diversion of the Crusaders from Egypt to Constantinople, he was pleased with the result because it meant that the capital of the Eastern Empire was now in the hands of Western Catholics and so under his control. That made him the most powerful figure in mediaeval Europe.

So, Constantinople's call for help to defend their Empire from the Seljuk Turks permanently weakened the Byzantine Empire, so that in 1453 Constantinople was easily captured by another wave of invading Turks – sketch on the next page.

TOPIC - LASTING DAMAGE CAUSED BY CRUSADES - was taken at this point in the Lecture; here, it is printed at the end of the Notes for this Lecture

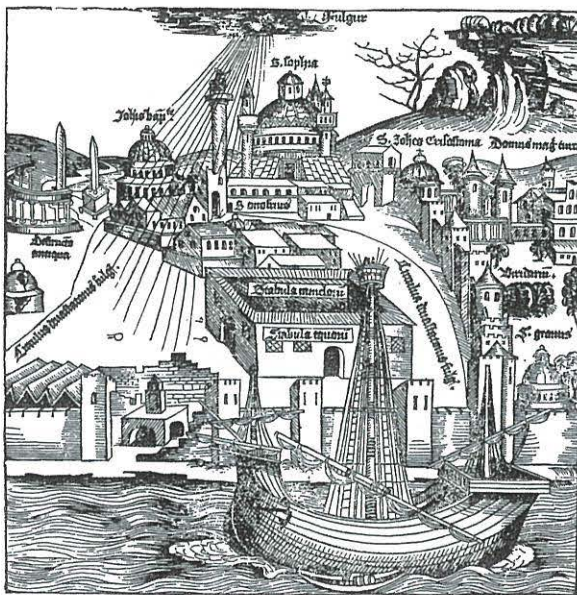


1.9 Other crusades

There were three more Crusades, but none to rival the first four. The only one of these worth mentioning is the Sixth Crusade during which, without fighting, in 1229 diplomacy secured access for pilgrims to Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth. The Holy City was once more in Christian hands, until 1244 when it was again captured by Muslims and stayed in Muslim hands until 1917 – when all of Palestine was captured by Britain from Turkey in 1917, as part of the First World War.

To sum up, the first Crusade ended in victory, although it was a violent and discreditable one, and the other six were attempts to stop the fruits of victory from being lost. Yet lost they were, and two centuries of fighting showed that the West could take Palestine but could not hold it. By the end of the C13, all of the Middle East had been reclaimed by the Muslims. Today most people agree that the Crusades were tragic blunder.

1.10 Effects of Crusades.



The Crusaders' sacking of Constantinople in 1204 so weakened the Eastern Empire that when the Turks resumed their attacks, they were able to capture it in 1453. They renamed it 'Istanbul' and, as depicted in this drawing from the Nuremberg Chronicle of 1493, added minarets to the Hagia Sophia (built in 537 as a Christian Church) and made it into a mosque. The ship in the foreground is a typical trading vessel of 1493.

In addition to the lasting damage on relations with the Eastern Orthodox Church, which was considered under the Topic:

- (a) They heightened the prestige and the influence of the Papacy. The Crusades were inspired by the Popes, uniting Christians against the Muslim menace, and organising the resources of the West in defence of the Holy Land.
- (b) Because the knights, who had been the key figures in the feudal system, were away in the Middle East for years and years on end, they lost control of their local communities and a new commercial middle class took control of the towns and cities of Western Europe. We'll see, in later lectures, how this affected Church-State relations.
- (c) They established the idea of using force to destroy the enemies of the Church. Afterwards, this led the Catholic Church to 'crusade' against dissenting groups within Christendom.

Note in passing: the Feudal System had a deep impact on the Church. A new feudal landowner would build a local church and a manse on his own land at his own expense, and so he considered that it was his right to choose the priest for it. This swept away the ancient tradition of the clergy being invited to the local church by the church members and bishops being elected by the clergy and people together.

2. INDULGENCES – and how the Crusades encouraged misuse of them

The remainder of this lecture looks at one other consequence of the Crusades - they encouraged the (mis)use of what became known as Indulgences, that is the Catholic Church purporting to forgive post-baptismal sin if you did something that benefited the Church. As we'll see, this initially meant going on a Crusade, then paying for someone else to go on a Crusade, and then simply paying money to the Church. The C16 Protestant Reformation started (Lecture 19) because Martin Luther was concerned at the abuses of Indulgences. This had its origin in the Crusades but, rather like the Long Jump in athletics, we need to take a long run before we come to the event itself.

2.1 Introduction – history of the Sacrament of Penance

By the year 100, many Christians believed that baptism washed away all sin up to that point. That's why the Church prepared candidates so carefully for baptism, for up to three years, so that after it they would be able to 'live a life worthy of their calling' (Ephesians 4:1). That's also why many people delayed baptism until late in life, when their youthful sinning was behind them, so that all their sins to date would be forgiven. But what about sin after baptism?

That was dealt with by in two ways:

- (a) for minor sins, which even the best Christian can scarcely avoid, people were expected to deal with these by themselves, by inward contrition, repentance, confession to God in prayer, almsgiving, and reconciliation if they had offended someone else, and
- (b) for more serious sins, not only inward contrition but also outward acknowledgement of sin, confession of sin to the local church.

The earliest references to that are about the year 100, one in 1 Clement (Lecture 2)

‘submit yourselves to the presbyters, Church leaders, and receive correction so as to repent’, that is, submit to whatever discipline the Church leaders imposed, perhaps exclusion from communion for some weeks, or fasting or almsgiving,

and the other in the *Didache*,

‘At the church meeting you must confess your sins’.

Gradually the second (that is, confession publicly to the local church) predominated and then overtook the place of inward repentance – forgiveness for post-baptismal sin became very public.

Move on 100 years, from 100 to 200, and we have a clearer picture of how the Church dealt with grave post-baptismal sins. The first step was obviously to repent of them, and to confess them publicly to the local church. The second step was for the church to impose what became known as ‘penance’, which might, as mentioned, be exclusion from communion for some weeks, or fasting or almsgiving.

The third step (and this was new about 200) was for the bishop, after the penance had been carried out, publicly to pronounce absolution and restoration; there is no evidence of private confession to a priest and the priest giving absolution for sin until c450. Until then, you might consult your local clergyman for advice, and tell him about your

misdeeds, and he might tell what you should do, but he didn't purport to give you absolution until c450.

You may remember Tertullian (Lecture 5), a lawyer before his conversion in his 30s. c200, he came up with idea that if you sinned after baptism, you put yourself in debt to God. In Roman law, you could clear a debt in one of two ways; you could pay cash or you could offer some equivalent - called 'making satisfaction'. People who sinned after baptism, and so put themselves in debt to God, could (according to Tertullian) cancel the debt by offering satisfaction – their good works.

As evangelicals, we believe that bringing human 'merit' into the relationship of people to God was disastrous – the idea that we can earn forgiveness for sin and favour with God by our works. But it got worse - the next step was for Church to lay down what specific 'satisfaction' was required for forgiveness for sins. That took place under Cyprian (Lecture 6). As we saw then, he laid down a graded formula for what people had to do in order to be readmitted to Lord's Supper – graded according to the gravity of their lapse. On completion of this 'penance', they were allowed back into the Church.

It was short step from there to people believing, as they did by c450, that the priest actually forgave their sins on the completion of the required penance. That gave the clergy a new and fearsome power – control of people's destiny.

Until the mid C5, confession of sin had to be made publicly in church, but this fomented scandals, so Pope Leo offered an alternative - private confession to a priest - just the two of you. Private confession received an impetus when the Celtic Church joined up with the Catholic Church - remember Whitby (the Topic for Lecture 13) - the Celtic missionary-monks preferred private confession of sin because they found the moral life so low in the pagan countries where they evangelised that they encouraged people to come to them privately to confess their sins and to receive instruction.

By c1000 the pattern was (a) confession, (b) absolution, (c) penance assigned.

2.2 Two types of penance

Because penance was dictated by the Church and supervised by the Church, it came to be called 'canonical penance', Church-imposed penance. We'll come in a moment to another type of penalty but first, how did the Church justify forgiving sin? Bishops used what they called the 'Treasury of Merit' (of the saints) to give it the authority to remit 'canonical penance'. The Church said that saints and other holy people, now dead, had done more good in their life that was needed to merit their own entry into heaven, so they died with a 'surplus of merit'. This surplus was claimed by the Church, who could draw down their merit from this bank or treasury and give it to those whom the Church thought deserving of it. By definition, it could apply only to 'canonical penance', because that's what the Church imposed and so the Church could remit it.

But what happened if people, who had been carrying out the penance the priest had imposed, died before completing it? Their sins had been forgiven on the basis that they would fulfil their 'canonical penance'. The idea developed that penance not completed at death was carried forward to purgatory, where the remaining penalty was 'purged' - hence 'purgatory', a very unpleasant experience; this was called 'temporal penance', because it was temporary - it came to an end when enough 'time' had been spent in purgatory to complete the penance.

There was no remission from 'temporal penance' until Pope Urban II (who initiated the First Crusade) decreed that:

Whoever out of pure devotion, and not for the purpose of gaining honour or money, shall go to Jerusalem to liberate the church of God, let that journey be counted in lieu of **all** penance.

Everyone who went on a Crusade for the right reasons was granted not only exemption from any outstanding canonical penance, but also, if he died, direct entry into heaven - there was no need for any temporal penance, because all the person's sins had been forgiven. That was the novelty of Urban's pronouncement. This became known as 'Indulgence'. In the Second Crusade, when it was obvious the Crusaders were not going to get to Jerusalem, the Pope promised Indulgence to all who fought the Turks.

Receive the sign of the cross, and you will likewise obtain the Indulgence of all you have confessed with a contrite heart.

2.3 Growth of Indulgences

Remission of penance to Crusaders, who exposed themselves to danger and hardship and death, was no gentle exchange; but as the Crusades dragged on, and more manpower was needed, the Church offered Indulgence if you met the cost of someone else going on a Crusade.

Gradually, the system was more and more abused. Indulgence was offered in exchange for any sizeable donation of money to the Church, which was now regarded as 'a good deed'; contrition, sorrow for sin, was no longer necessary to obtain an Indulgence. Since Indulgences covered canonical penance as well as temporal penance, a merchant who daily committed the sin of usury, money lending, could spend some of his profits to purchase an Indulgence for his sin of money-lending, and go on doing it to make more money.

In 1476 it was extended to buying Indulgence for a dead friend, who had uncompleted penance, and who had therefore gone to purgatory - to hasten his passage from purgatory to heaven. We'll take that up when we come to Martin Luther in Lecture 19.

Postscript - what happened to Indulgences?

We'll see in Lecture 26 how, when the Roman Catholics responded to the Protestant Reformations, they (commendably) recognized that some of the Protestant criticisms were valid; they called a Council at Trent in North Italy in 1545 to institute some reforms. These included removing the abuses about Indulgences which we have discussed in this section. The Council 'cancelled all grants of Indulgences involving any fees or other financial transactions'.

Indulgences continue to play a role in modern Catholic religious life. The Catechism of the Catholic Church today explains: 'An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain defined conditions through the Church's help when, as a minister of redemption, she dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions won by Christ and the saints.' (*Indulgentiarum Doctrina* 1).

This is most often achieved by saying (once, or many times) a specified prayer, but may also include the visiting of a particular place, or the performance of specific good works.

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TOPIC FOR LECTURE 15– LASTING DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE CRUSADES

The Course textbook, Cairns, lists several good consequences of the Crusades at pages 216-7, but:

Please tell us about some long-term negative consequences of the Crusades, for example how they affected relations:

between Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholic Christianity. The looting of Constantinople ended any hope of mending the East-West schism in Christianity.

between Christians and Muslims. The Crusader mentality was that Christianity must displace Islam at all costs, even through violence.

between Christian and Jews. Persecutions of Jews escalated throughout Europe.

and any other relationships that you consider were affected by the Crusades.