



ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem

The Armies of the Crusades

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Financing a Crusade.....	2
Transporting an Army	7
Crusader States.....	9
The Byzantine Empire	11
The Military Orders	12
European Armies	13
Muslim Armies	13
Organization & Tactics.....	15
Logistics.....	16

INTRODUCTION

The Armies of the Crusades



The armies of the Crusades (11th-15th centuries), which saw Christians and Muslims struggle for control of territories in the Middle East and elsewhere, could involve over 100,000 men on either side who came from all over Europe to form the Christian armies and from all over western Asia and North Africa for the Muslim ones. The Christians had the advantage of disciplined and well-armored knights while the Muslims often used light cavalry and archers to great effect. Over time both sides would learn from each other, adopting weapons and tactics to their own advantage. Huge resources were invested in the Crusades on both sides and while Christian armies were successful in Iberia and the Baltic, in the arena that mattered most, the Holy Land, it was perhaps the superior tactics and greater concern with logistics that ensured the armies of the various Muslim states eventually saw off the Christian threat.



Middle Ages

The Middle Ages is one of the three major periods in the most enduring scheme for analyzing European history: classical civilization, or Antiquity; the Middle Ages; and the Modern Period. The "Middle Ages" first appears in Latin in 1469 as *media tempestas* or "middle season". In early usage, there were many variants, including *medium aevum*, or "middle age", first recorded in 1604, and *media saecula*, or "middle centuries", first recorded in 1625. The adjective "medieval" meaning pertaining to the Middle Ages, derives from *medium aevum*.

Financing a Crusade

Issues of finance influenced the goals and military success of crusade expeditions and also determined the nature of participation in them.

Initially, individual crusaders mustered the funds for the arms and supplies necessary for themselves and their dependents, together with cash for their journey and sustenance on campaign. If insufficient funds were forthcoming from debt collection and loans or gifts from lords, allies, or relations, crusaders from the landowning classes often donated, sold, or mortgaged produce from land, livestock or forests, rights and revenues, or, as a last resort, property in exchange for cash or gifts of equipment. These transactions often took the form of a settlement of long-standing disputes over land, combining financial transactions with the confirmation of legal rights and the promise of spiritual benefits regarded as essential for crusaders to depart in peace. Crusaders also turned to moneylenders for loans, leading popes to grant crusaders a temporary moratorium on paying the principal of their debts, exemption from payment of interest, and freedom from taxes and tolls. Intended to aid crusaders in fulfilling their vows, these financial privileges in effect often ruined their credit rating, so that individuals occasionally waived them to obtain loans. These provisos could also threaten the income of rulers who relied on taxation of Jewish and Christian usurers for income crucial for fulfilling their own crusade vows or ensuring the safety of the realm.

Although the hordes of noncombatants who accompanied many crusading armies may have hoped to join the entourage of a lord or knight or to subsidize their meager financial resources by foraging or plunder, the latter proved negligible in offsetting the often ruinous costs of a crusading expedition. Many noblemen, prelates, and kings, including Richard I of England and Louis IX of France, sought to keep crusade armies from dissolving by retaining at their own expense fighters who had run short of cash; in surviving records, these impecunious crusaders and waged knights are often almost indistinguishable from professional mercenaries. Fleets from England and Italy and crusading contingents from urban areas organized themselves after corporate models familiar to them from domestic confraternities and communal governments, forming sworn associations whose members shared the financial burden of the expedition. Affluent prelates and magnates contributed to communally organized and disbursed funds for needy crusaders, while formal agreements regarding the division of deceased crusaders' mobile possessions were often drawn up to ensure the equitable redistribution of resources within the crusading army rather than their bequest to relatives back home. Armies often also adopted elaborate rules for the partitioning of spoils, which were frequently put into a common pool and dispensed in payments scaled according to each category of crusader within the camp.

While a lack of material resources or military reverses could create a unified atmosphere characterized by penitential rituals and the perceived necessity of divine aid for success, infusions of booty or aid from home, which should in theory have bolstered an army's defensive and offensive capabilities, could render it liable to paralysis by debauchery or dissension over the partitioning or theft of resources.



Saladin Tithe

or the Aid of 1188, was a tax, or more specifically a tallage, levied in England and to some extent in France in 1188, in response to the capture of Jerusalem by Saladin in 1187. It was a literal tithe of 10% on revenues and movable properties. The tithe was assessed by dioceses, rather than by shires, and local sheriffs had no role in collection of the tithe. The money was collected instead by the local priest or bishop, the dean of the local church, the local baron, and a sergeant of the king, as well as, notably, a Knight Templar and a Knight Hospitaller, whose orders were especially concerned with the defense of the Holy Land. Assessments were made by oaths in rural areas, and by a jury in urban areas. Anyone who joined the crusade was exempt from the tithe altogether.

The changing nature of crusading, including the shift from overland to overseas routes to the Holy Land, reinforced endeavors by organizers to whittle down the numbers of noncombatant crusaders. Crusade finances also evolved in response to the hard lessons learned with each expedition, leading to attempts by kings and popes to create a system of legal privileges and finances to aid individuals in fulfilling their vows. Kings and noblemen also laid imposts (known as tallages) on Jews, townsmen, and peasants, and levied feudal aids from their secular and ecclesiastical vassals to finance their crusades. Such contributions soon evolved into formal taxes. In 1166, Louis VII of France and Henry II of England declared a five-year royal tax on the property and revenues of all laypersons and ecclesiastics in France and England. The fruits of this and of a three-year tax levied in 1185 upon incomes, bequests, and movable possessions were destined directly for the Holy Land. A similar tax intended to subsidize crusade preparations was levied in the same regions in 1188: the Saladin Tithe, as it became known, claimed a tenth of all income and movables from all except crusaders, who were entitled to receive the moneys paid by their non-crusading vassals.

Although occasional secular taxes were imposed throughout the thirteenth century, their contributions to the crusading movement were dwarfed by the papacy's taxation of the church. The first universal clerical income tax was instituted by Pope Innocent III in 1199, who asked ecclesiastics and communes to contribute a set number of warriors or a corresponding sum of money to the Fourth Crusade (1202-1204). The papal legate Peter Capuano persuaded the French clergy to agree to contribute one-thirtieth of their annual income, provided that no precedent was set for future taxation, a sum that Innocent soon reduced to one-fortieth in the face of concerted resistance. Collection proved problematic, particularly from monastic orders claiming exemption from taxation, including the Cistercians, who eventually agreed to a reduced "voluntary" contribution.

Clergy gathering donations for the holy war

Innocent III learned from this episode and sought formal clerical approval for a triennial twentieth for the Fifth Crusade (1217-1221); it was imposed during the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) upon all ecclesiastics, with the exception of certain religious orders. Enforced by the penalty of excommunication for fraud or nonpayment, it set the pattern for future regular levies on clerical income in aid of the crusading movement, varying from a tenth to a hundredth.

Although initially attached only to crusades to the Holy Land, these taxes were soon transferred to crusades in other arenas, including the war against heretics in southern France and the anti-Staufen crusades, although not without serious protest. By the close of the thirteenth century, the tenth was also increasingly granted to secular rulers for purposes unconnected to the crusade, weakening its ties to the crusading movement.

These taxes were aided by enormous leaps in the sophistication and extension of ecclesiastical, papal, and royal accounting and administration. The precise method, however, of collection and disbursement to crusaders, the military orders, or settlers fighting in contested regions seems to have varied considerably. In England, royal agents collaborated with members of the military orders expert in the international transfer of funds and with local clergymen in the collection of the Saladin Tithe of

1188, and bishops were initially responsible for the evaluation and collection of the ecclesiastical income tax. The collection of clerical income taxes was often resisted or delayed, and its expenditure frequently shifted. For example, during the Fifth Crusade, the money collected from income tax, alms, and redemptions of vows by cash payments seems initially to have funded local contingents of crusaders departing for the Holy Land; yet as the campaign wore on, collection became increasingly centralized, and it was often diverted, in response to appeals for money, to the crusaders before Damietta.

The availability of funding directly affected those able to participate in the crusade. Poor or middling persons who took the cross hoping for subsidy from these sources could find themselves forced to redeem their vows when, as increasingly occurred, these sources of funding were granted to noblemen to organize and fund crusading contingents, and these noblemen were not minded to subsidize the participation of devout but untrained pilgrims. In response to pleas from local clergymen entrusted with gathering these moneys and to letters from crusaders, Honorius III appointed papal legates in England, Spain, Germany, Hungary, and Italy to increase the efficacy of their collection and transfer to the needy. The need to collect, store, transport, and efficiently disburse the money amassed for the crusades partly drove advancements in effective record keeping, currency exchange, transferal of funds, and banking. The military orders' expertise in these matters was often utilized by individual crusaders, secular governments, and the Curia. In the later Middle Ages, Italian bankers served a similar function, transferring crusade revenues from local depositories or the Templar houses in London and Paris to the papal Camera or the crusade front, or advancing money in expectation of revenues yet to be collected.

Experiments with centralizing tax collection via papally appointed legates and collectors continued throughout the thirteenth century. However, the process of centralization was by no means inevitable, nor was it originally intended to enrich the papacy. Self-evaluation and collection by local clergymen and agents posed problems of efficiency, potential diversion, and lack of disinterestedness. Yet because papal collectors were often also entrusted with amassing the papal census or Peter's pence, or funds were diverted from local crusaders to those in greater need, clergymen and crusaders often accused the papacy and its collectors of attempting to profit from the crusading movement. Papal collectors countered with accusations of local obstructionism, while Innocent III and his successors stressed that the Curia was paying a tenth and more of its own revenues in support of various crusades. Yet the impression that crusade taxes were being diverted to Rome was fatally reinforced when Pope Gregory IX and his successors instituted clerical income taxes for the anti-Staufen struggle and granted levies initially intended for the Holy Land to papal allies, including Henry III of England, sparking enormous protest.

Popes continued to struggle with enormous logistical problems, including keeping assessments impartial and up-to-date, balancing impartiality and local knowledge in the appointment of local clergy or papal agents as collectors, circumventing tax evasion, efficiently transporting revenues to where they were most needed, and also keeping accurate accounts to prove that the money was actually spent on the crusade and to counteract suspicions of embezzlement or diversion to other projects. By 1274, Pope Gregory X divided Europe into twenty-six collectorates with agents for each and provided detailed guidelines for the income taxes' assessment, collection, and transport, a system that, by the pontificate of Boniface

VIII (1294-1303), provided the means for collecting moneys essential for the crusading movement and the papacy's survival against various political enemies. Yet, although attempts at centralization from the mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth centuries eventually led to greater control of collection by the papal Camera and the levying of new taxes over wider areas, it also resulted in mounting clerical resistance to crusade taxation and increasing demands for control over taxation by secular authorities whose own administrations were expanding. The French clergy deplored the relentless grant of crusade tenths throughout the thirteenth century, while English ecclesiastics protested against the levying of taxes for the papal-imperial struggle, which appeared merely to swell papal coffers. Although local resistance could only delay collection, it threatened good relations between the papacy and regional churches. Similarly, when, from the pontificate of Boniface VIII onward, crusade taxes were commonly transferred to the papal Camera, rulers felt threatened to see precious resources go to pay for foreign projects such as papal wars; their resistance contributed to a gradual loss of papal control over the tenths in France and England in the late thirteenth to early fourteenth centuries.

Despite the problems associated with the clerical income tax, including outdated valuations, slow and costly collection, and the tendency of the papacy to extract rights for clergymen from rulers in return for granting its proceeds to secular magnates, it provided a large and often quantifiable proportion of the funding for many crusades, including those of Louis IX of France. The custom of donating the tenth, vow redemptions, and other funds from a certain region to lay rulers who possessed the resources to organize a crusade also led eventually to the secular taxation of the clergy. As the crusades became increasingly intertwined with dynastic and national policies, rulers tended to spend money raised for the crusade on other more pressing projects, particularly if political considerations or a crisis led to the cancellation of a planned general departure. The failure of past crusades or planned expeditions led to increasing resentment of new taxation, while the inability to obtain sufficient funding through levies spelled the demise of many a projected expedition. Nevertheless, even after the fall of Acre to the Mamlûks (1291), strategic difficulties, rising costs, and repeated delays and diversions led some to lose hope for the recovery of the Holy Land, the collaboration of lay officials remained essential for the success of preaching tours, which used church taxes and the sale of plenary indulgences to finance crusades fought by professional soldiers in Italy, the Iberian Peninsula, and Northern Africa, as well as expeditions against the Turks and Hussites.

Other sources of funding included gifts and legacies (including the diversion of indistinct bequests), the confiscation of the possessions of convicted heretics or rebels, donations deposited in chests placed in local churches, alms collected by crusade preachers, and the redemption of crusading vows, including those adopted voluntarily or imposed by secular and ecclesiastical courts as a penalty for serious sins or crimes. Grave qualms arose concerning some of these categories, especially when donations to the crusade were substituted for penances or for criminal sentences; Innocent III warned bishops to avoid the appearance of extortion or bribery and to ensure that payments were scaled to the seriousness of the offense and the penitent's means. Kings and noblemen also often exacted heavy tallages from towns and Jews to offset the extraordinary expenses incurred by participation in the crusading movement. Eventually, although not without hesitation and criticism, the incomes of vacant benefices and dubiously acquired possessions that could not be restored to the victims of the original crime (including money



Innocent III

(1160 or 1161 – July 16, 1216) was one of the most powerful and influential of the medieval popes. He exerted a wide influence over the Christian states of Europe, claiming supremacy over all of Europe's kings. Innocent greatly extended the scope of the crusades, directing crusades against Muslim Spain and the Holy Land as well as the Albigensian Crusade against the Cathars in southern France. He organized the Fourth Crusade of 1202–1204, which ended in the disastrous sack of Constantinople.

confiscated from Christian and Jewish moneylenders and the property of heretics and rebels) were also used for crusade projects.

Innocent III also sought to enable the financial participation of those unable to take the full crusading vow by ordering wooden chests or trunks to be installed in every church conducting the special liturgies organized in support of the crusade. He specified that those who gave alms would receive an indulgence proportionate to their devotion and the financial sacrifice their offering represented, while those who funded substitutes would receive the plenary indulgence. In a similar fashion, many urban confraternities and guilds financed by annual contributions helped to subsidize members who wished to participate in a crusade, while remissions of sin were offered to prelates, secular rulers, and communities who funded contingents of warriors from the late twelfth century onward. Although Innocent III and those he appointed to preach the crusade also encouraged all to take the cross without prior examination (perhaps intending that the fit but impoverished would be subsidized by the alms of the faithful), the reaction of military leaders who feared being burdened with hordes of noncombatants meant that the vows of many were eventually commuted to monetary donations. This led to confusion between the plenary indulgence earned by the full crusade vow and the partial indulgences granted for almsgiving. Groups of crusaders unable to fulfill their vows were soon urged to band together to send a substitute in their stead, while several Tuscan communes declared hearth taxes during the Fifth Crusade or supported a communal contingent of fighters. Those who contributed to these efforts or paid crusade taxes were often rewarded with partial indulgences.

Innocent III has been labeled a prescient innovator who encouraged indiscriminate taking of the cross in order to convert the devotion of the militarily unfit into financial support for the crusade through vow redemptions. However, it seems that this was not his original intent, but only gradually became a general policy under pressure from military leaders in charge of the crusade, who sought to restrict crusading to salaried warriors by forcing noncombatants, who they felt consumed limited resources and undermined discipline, to redeem their vows. This policy met with only partial success in the mid to late thirteenth centuries; the masses' desire for personal participation persisted, despite criticism by the chronicler Matthew Paris of the attempts of papally appointed mendicant preachers to immediately redeem the vows of the impecunious or unfit whom they deliberately encouraged to take the cross during preaching campaigns. Originally voluntary, redemption could become forced when the clerical taxes, alms, legacies, and redemptions derived from a given region were handed over to a local magnate unwilling to subsidize the devout faithful. It was only with the loss of the Holy Land in 1291, however, that the outright sale of indulgences was used by the papacy and secular rulers to finance armies made up of hired mercenaries or career soldiers.

It is clear that crusade finance and taxation aided the evolution of social, financial, and legal institutions. Crusaders' quests to realize assets made property more available and increased the circulation of coinage and precious materials within Europe. Crusading expeditions also created immense demand for victuals, supplies, weapons, and shipping, benefiting local merchants and artisans. Levies for various crusades also contributed to the development of centralized financial administrations and the growth of papal and royal taxation, at the same time aiding

the development of representative bodies whose consent was required for many forms of taxation.

Transporting an Army

Crusaders made their way to the Holy Land by whatever means they could. Many went by land, and many went by sea. The Crusaders of the First Crusade, which began in 1095, went mostly by land to reach Jerusalem. Some of the wealthier knights did travel part of the way by boat down the Danube River, but mostly they went over land in large caravans. This was slow going, and it took these crusaders nearly a year to reach the Holy Land on a journey of over two thousand miles.

During the following Crusades, many crusaders still traveled over land. However, a number of lucrative maritime transportation enterprises developed to ferry Crusaders by sea to the Holy Land. Most of these were based out of Italy, particularly in the city-states of Venice and Genoa. This saved the Crusaders a lot of time, as this journey by sea took weeks instead of months.

The Second Crusade involved a combination of land and sea routes. Most Crusaders went over land to Constantinople. There, they split in two, with some of the forces marching across Anatolia and others following the coast in ships until they reached the port of Acre.

The Third Crusade was the first to go almost entirely by sea. This involved two fleets, one leaving from Genoa and the other, under the command of King Richard of England, leaving from England and traveling by way of Marseille.

The Seventh Crusade, led by King Louis IX of France, involved a huge fleet of thirty-six ships that sailed from southern France to the Holy Land by way of Cyprus. This is considered the largest single Crusader fleet.

Most of the later Crusades relied almost entirely on ocean-going transportation. This solved the huge logistical mess that was involved in supplying, feeding, and housing large armies on the march. By traveling by sea, Crusaders arrived sooner at their destination without the need of the large and complicated supply lines that would otherwise be necessary to support them on land journeys.

The types of ships involved in the crusades at various times were referred to in contemporary sources by a wide variety of different names, and in most cases the types of vessels to which the terms corresponded are known reasonably well; however, there are exceptions that are sometimes difficult to categorize with certainty. This is particularly true of the Muslim world. Only a handful of scholars have addressed the issues, and none have examined the nature of the ships involved, their historical evolution, and their performance capabilities, issues that influenced, indeed governed profoundly the actual participation of naval forces in the crusades.

Here are examples of the types of ships used during the period.



Figure 1 Cog

The **Clinker** was another name for the **Cog** (In French and English), Kogghe (in Batavian), Koggen (in German) or “Coque”, from the Spanish Coca or Cocha, or Concha in Latin, Coccha in Venetian. This was typical of the versatile cargo ships of northern Europe between the early Middle Ages and the era of great discoveries. Classical kogges primarily used primarily in the Baltic by the rich merchant cities of the Hanseatic League united in 1241, were built in oak with ash couples, and with a deck clearing a large hold. Quickly adopted by the English who also produced a local version of the nava, the Roundhip Cog had a raised platform for archers and a small front forehead almost always rectangular. The stern post was almost straight, supporting a large rudder with straight bar, the transverse lever system only appearing much later. The hull was quickly adopted in the Mediterranean, with local constructions, such as the freeboard, and a rounded bow instead of right. This ship dominated trade waterways for three centuries as an all-purpose do-it-all ship.



Figure 2 Nava

The **Nava** was well used in the medieval period, in the Mediterranean, strongly influenced by the Byzantine cargo ships, from which she shared many characteristics, including the galley-type rear, tilted front mast and Lateen sails. The Franks made great use of it in the Mediterranean, also marrying square sails to this rigging. It was called “Nef Marchande”

It was on these very special ships that the Crusaders landed in the Holy Land during the First Crusade. The Mediterranean Nave had a mixture of square and Latin sails, but some of them were even closer to the galleys.



Figure 3 Crusader Nava

The Hanseatic Nava, or northern nava, probably appeared in the 12th century, first in the coastal cities of the North Atlantic, in the North Sea and then in the Baltic. It is the perfect illustration of the encounter in naval techniques of the north and the south, bearing in germs the future heavy European ships. While the southern, Mediterranean nave mingled Norman contributions of Scandinavian naval technique with the local Latvian ships, the northern nave saw it as a simple, finer and more graceful declination of line construction than the Kogges of transport in local use. As a result, the Nordic Nava was preferred as an armed transport ship or even a warship, as the heavy kogge. The lighter construction, however, lent less to offshore navigation than the Kogges, and in the end, Kogges and naves in the north were concurrent to develop their sails and lead to the carrack.



Figure 4 Hanseatic Nava

The first Western fleet to sail to the East in the period of the crusades was probably that commanded by Guynemer, a Boulognese pirate. He assembled a fleet of Danes, Frisians, and Flemings and set out from northern Europe for the eastern Mediterranean in Spring 1097. He sailed up to Tarsus, where he found Baldwin of Boulogne besieging the place, then held by Tancred of Hauteville, a fellow Christian but rival of Baldwin's for dominance in Cilicia. Excited to find a native of his own home town, he readily gave assistance to Baldwin, and after the town was taken he was given command of the garrison.

In 1098, after Baldwin had moved on to rejoin the main Crusading army, Tancred requested the assistance of Guynemer in taking Alexandretta, which was held by the Turks. With Baldwin out of the region, Guynemer consented and together they captured the city. At the Siege of Antioch, Guynemer briefly held Latakia.

His vessels are characterized merely as naves by the chronicler Albert of Aachen, who was undoubtedly using the term as a generic for ships. The Genoese fleet that sailed in summer 1097 reportedly consisted of 12 galee (galleys of a new Western design) and 1 sandanum. The term sandanum was a Latinization of the Greek chelandion, for a transport galley. The Pisan fleet that left in summer 1099 reportedly numbered 120 naves, while that of the Venetians that sailed in summer 1099 had at least 30 naves. The fleet of Sigurd Jorsalfar, which left Norway in 1107, was said by Thórarinn Stúfsson to have consisted of 60 ships.

In 1123 the Venetian fleet that sailed for Outremer reportedly numbered 120 naves plus some small boats.

During the Third Crusade (1189–1192), a Northern fleet of 50 ships referred to as cogas (cogs) reached Acre (mod. ‘Akko, Israel). The fleet of Richard I the Lionheart, king of England, consisted of ships variously called esneccas or enekes, gallees, naves or nefes, dromonz, and bucees. For the Fourth Crusade (1202–1204) the Venetians supplied a battle fleet of 50 galeae (galleys) and a transport fleet consisting of naves for the men and uissiers for the horses. In 1217 Count William I of Holland led a fleet of coccones to Damietta in Egypt. For his Crusade of 1227–1229 the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II prepared various fleets of ships described as naves, galee, usseria, chelandre, and taride. King Louis IX of France contracted with Marseilles and Genoa for squadrons of naves, taride, and galee for his Crusade of 1248–1254.

Crusader States

The Crusader States (also known as the Latin East or Outremer) were created after the First Crusade (1095–1102) in order to keep hold of the territorial gains made by Christian armies in the Middle East. The four small states were the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the County of Edessa, the County of Tripoli, and the Principality of Antioch. The Westerners managed to maintain a political presence in the region until 1291 but were constantly hampered by dynastic rivalries, a lack of fighting men, underwhelming support from Western Europe, and the military prowess of such Muslim leaders as Zangi, Nur ad-Din, and Saladin.



Figure 5 The Crusader States c. 1135

Creation of the Crusader States

The First Crusade was launched by Pope Urban II (r. 1088-1099) in response to the rise of the Muslim Seljuk Turks in the Middle East and their capture of Jerusalem in 1087. The Seljuks were only taking over from Fatimids of Egypt, but they posed a serious threat to the Byzantine Empire, and its emperor, Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081-1118), asked for help from the West. After Urban II's rallying speech at the Council of Clermont in November 1095, a Crusader army was assembled numbering around 60,000 men and including some 6,000 knights.

On arrival in the Holy Land, the Crusade was remarkably successful for such a complex international military operation in unfamiliar territory. Nicaea was captured in 1097, Edessa in March 1098, and Antioch shortly after in June. Jerusalem was captured in July 1099, and a Muslim army defeated was at the Battle of Ascalon in August of the same year. In May 1101 Caesarea and Acre fell. In 1109 Tripolis was captured, followed by Beirut and Sidon in 1110 and Tyre in 1124. These territorial acquisitions, helped enormously by the presence of fleets from the Italian city-states of Venice, Genoa and Pisa, would form the basis of the newly created Crusader States.

The Kingdom of Jerusalem

The most important of the Crusader States was the Kingdom of Jerusalem which controlled a narrow strip of coastal lands from Jaffa in the south to Beirut in the north. The kingdom controlled various fiefdoms, including Acre, Tyre, Nablus, Sidon and Caesarea. Godfrey of Bouillon, who had been one of the key leaders during the siege of Jerusalem in the First Crusade, was made the first king of Jerusalem and given command of a small garrison in the city (around 300 knights and 2,000 infantry). The Norman Arnulf of Choques was made patriarch or bishop of Jerusalem. The capital had a population of around 20,000, a figure which rose to 30,000 over the next century.

The County of Edessa

In March 1098, Baldwin of Boulogne took control of Edessa and the County of Edessa was formed, the first of the Crusader States. Although Baldwin had, in effect, usurped power from the ruling Christian Armenians, he did promote a mixing of Western and Armenian nobility through marriages, making the County of Edessa the most integrated of the four Crusader-created states. The County, although covering the largest territory of any Crusader State, was a vassal state to the more important and powerful Latin polities of Antioch and Jerusalem, and functioned, in particular, as a military shield to Antioch further to the west, even if its small army necessitated truces and alliances with its Muslim neighbors to survive.

The County of Tripoli

The County of Tripoli, with its capital at the important seaport of Tripolis, then the most important port of Damascus, covered an area which is today Lebanon and was founded by Raymond of Toulouse. Raymond's army had captured Tripolis after a lengthy siege in 1109 with the help of Byzantine emperor Alexios I, for which Raymond had to swear an oath of loyalty. Thus, the County gave the Byzantines influence in the region, even under Alexios' successors. In contrast, it was the most independent Crusader State from the far-reaching political tentacles of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The County was divided into semi-independent lordships with each controlling an important port or castle. As a consequence of this arrangement, the County was perhaps the weakest, politically speaking of the Crusader States.

The Byzantine Empire



Figure 6 The Byzantine Empire c. 1090

By the 12th century the Byzantine Empire was in decline and its army reflected this situation by being mostly composed of mercenaries. Nevertheless, at the time of the First Crusade, the Byzantine emperor Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081-1118) could muster an army of around 70,000 when required. In the early Crusades, the Empire did contribute to Crusader armies, providing its various units of mercenaries which included Turkish light cavalry, the Varangian Guards of Anglo-Saxon- and Viking descendants who wielded huge battle-axes, Serbs, Hungarians and Rus infantry.

All were highly organized and well-trained and especially useful were the Byzantine engineers who brought invaluable expertise to siege warfare.

In the 12th and 13th century the Sultanate of Rum took half of Asia Minor, and then disaster struck when the armies of the Fourth Crusade sacked Constantinople in 1204. Carved up between Venice and its allies, the Empire existed only in exile before a restoration in 1261. By the 14th century the Empire consisted of a small area in the tip of southern Greece and a chunk of territory around the capital. The final blow came, as already mentioned, with the Ottoman sack of Constantinople in 1453.



The Military Orders

Initially formed to protect and offer medical care for pilgrims travelling through the Holy Land, the military orders such as the Knights Templar, Knights Hospitaller and Teutonic Knights soon established themselves as an invaluable military presence in the region. Knights of the military orders, who were recruited from across Europe and lived much like monks, were frequently given the most dangerous passes and strategically valuable castles to garrison and they provided several hundred knights for most Crusade field armies. With the best training and equipment, they were the elite force of the Crusaders and their frequent execution if ever captured is a testimony to the respect they had from their opponents – they were simply too skilled and fanatical to be allowed back onto any future battlefield. The one drawback of the orders was their total independence which sometimes resulted in arguments with rulers of the Crusaders States and leaders of Crusader armies over strategy and alliances. Knights of the military orders were sometimes a little too enthusiastic on the battlefield and could make rash, unsupported charges but their valor and worth to the crusading cause is undisputed. Other military orders soon sprang up in Europe, especially in the Iberian peninsula during the *Reconquista* against the Muslim Moors and the big three already mentioned spread their tentacles of power throughout mainland Europe. The Teutonic Knights were especially effective and carved out their own state in Prussia and beyond during the Northern Crusades against European pagans.

See the publication, *The Hospitaller and Military Orders* for more details.

European Armies

European armies throughout the Crusades were a mix of heavily armored knights, light cavalry, bowmen, crossbowmen, slingers, and regular infantry armed with spears, swords, axes, maces and any other weapon of choice. Most knights swore allegiance to one particular leader and, as many Crusades were led by multiple nobles or even kings and emperors, any Crusade army was usually a cosmopolitan mix of nationalities and languages. Although an overall leader was typically appointed before the campaign, the power and wealth of the nobles involved meant that disputes over strategy were frequent. With the exception of the first two crusades (1095-1102 & 1147-1149), the armies were almost entirely raised on a feudal basis - conscripted men from the lands of barons - with a significant section of mercenaries, usually infantry, added on. Noted mercenary groups in Europe came from Brittany and the Low Countries while Italian crossbowmen were highly regarded. When kings were involved they could call on conscription of any able-bodied man to serve the needs of the crown but these troops were poorly trained and equipped.

The transport of armies to where they were needed was mostly provided by the ships of the Italian states of Genoa, Pisa and Venice as noted earlier. Sometimes, these cities would also provide troops and ships for active service in the campaign itself. Naturally, an army in the field numbering tens of thousands of fighting men required a large number of non-combatant personnel such as baggage handlers, laborers, carpenters, cooks, and priests, while knights brought along their own personal squires and servants.

Muslim Armies

Muslim armies generally followed a similar pattern of recruitment as European armies and were made up of an elite bodyguard (*askars*), feudal levies from such key cities as Mosul, Aleppo and Damascus, allied troops, volunteers and mercenaries. In the Muslim armies, there were units of cavalry, which could include mounted archers, and infantry armed with spears, crossbows or bows and protected most

often by a circular shield. Seljuk cavalry typically wore lamellar armor which was made of overlapping rows of small iron or hardened leather plates.

MUSLIM is an Arabic word meaning "submitter" (to God).



Figure 7 Seljuk soldiers

Seljuk Turks

The Seljuks dominated western Asia from the mid-11th century and their armies were notable for the large contingents of highly skilled mounted archers. It was a common tactic to engage the enemy, fire off a lethal barrage of arrows and then withdraw as quickly as possible to minimize losses. With any luck, and it happened frequently, the enemy might also be tempted to launch a risky cavalry charge in pursuit when the archers could turn back and attack again or fire down on the enemy from a position of ambush.



Figure 8 Fatimid soldiers

Fatimids

The Fatimid Caliphate (909-1171) was based in Egypt and relied heavily on mercenary troops but their vast wealth ensured they could field very large armies of reasonably well-trained and well-equipped infantry which included contingents of Sudanese archers. Cavalry was usually composed of a mix of scimitar-wielding Arabs, Bedouins and Berbers. The Fatimid army might have been the best in the Muslim world of the time but they were somewhat off the pace compared to the Crusaders in terms of weapons, armor and tactics; their successors the Ayyubids, though, would soon catch up.



Figure 9 Mamluk soldiers

Mamluks

As already noted, the Mamluks formed a vital part of Ayyubid armies and they became so expert at warfare that they overthrew their masters in the mid-13th century and formed the Mamluk Sultanate (1250-1517). They employed mercenaries such as Bedouins, Turks, Armenians and Kurds in their armies which were so large that the Crusaders became extremely wary of direct battles. Mamluk cavalry often wore metal helmets engraved with verses of the Koran, wore a piece of chain mail over the lower half of their faces and carried a kite-shaped shield. Another interesting feature of the Mamluk field army was multiple corps of musicians who played trumpets and drums which contributed to creating panic amongst the enemy, especially their horses. The sultan's personal bodyguard had its own band of 4 oboe (*bautbois*) players, 20 trumpeters and 44 drummers.

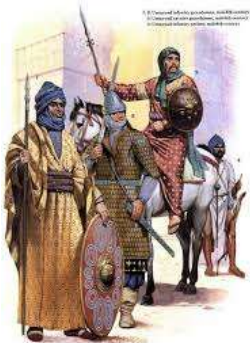


Figure 10 Moor soldiers

Moors

The Moors who controlled most of the southern half of Iberia and faced the Crusaders of the Reconquista favored hit and run tactics using lightly armed cavalry whose preferred weapons were the lance and javelin. Even infantry troops, typically the frontline of a unit, had throwing javelins while the rest were armed with long spears. Berbers carried a distinctive heart-shaped shield, the *adarga*, while Moorish cavalry had a kite-shaped shield similar to their European counterparts.

Ottomans

By the end of the 14th century, a new foe was identified as a legitimate target for a Crusade: the Ottoman Turks. The Ottomans had two elite units of note. The Janissary Guards were a corps of infantry archers formed from conscripted Christians who were given military training from childhood. Secondly, the elite *sipahis* was a cavalry unit whose members were promised the right to estates and tax revenues for any success on the battlefield. The Ottomans also used gunpowder weapons from the 15th century. Some of their cannons were huge measuring 30 ft. in length and able to fire a ball weighing 1,100 lbs. over a distance of 1,600 yards.



Figure 11 Ottoman Soldiers

Organization & Tactics

Crusader armies were organized into several divisions each led by a senior commander who was expected to follow the pre-arranged battle plan and the orders of the overall field commander. Communication was achieved through banners (which were especially used as rallying points) or verbal orders but in the noise, dust and chaos of battle, it was safer if everyone avoided the temptation for rash charges without proper support. Not that this was always avoided as many defeats during the Crusades were largely down to one element of an army taking too high a risk in an independent action.

In terms of tactics, infantry was typically armed with spears and crossbows and protected by padded armor. They were so arranged in combat to form a protective encirclement of their own heavy cavalry of knights. The idea was that enemy missiles would be prevented from harming the horses if they had a protective barrier of more expendable infantrymen. The same strategy was used when a Crusader army was on the march. In battle, infantry was divided into small companies while knights typically operated in groups of 20-25.

Knights were the elite part of Crusader armies. Protected by chain and then plate armor, and riding a similarly protected horse, they could charge the enemy in a very tight formation with lances and break up the enemy lines, cutting down opponents with their long swords. Sergeants, the rank one level down from a knight, may also have formed cavalry units but they were used as infantry, too. Initially, heavy cavalry brought significant victories for the Europeans but eventually, the Muslim armies adapted and even adopted some of their tactics, with the Ayyubids fielding their own heavy cavalry units, for example.

Knights made up only around 10% of any Crusader army and heavy cavalry needed both reasonably level and dry ground to operate effectively. Consequently, a well-disciplined and numerically superior body of infantry armed with crossbows could sometimes hold their own against them in battle. It should also be remembered that the wars of the Crusades most often involved sieges of fortified cities; field battles were rare and such was the gamble involved in them that defeat in a single day could spell the end of a particular campaign. In addition, a favorite Muslim tactic was to harass the enemy with light cavalry and mounted archers so the knights never got the chance to perform a disciplined charge against massed enemy lines. All in all, then, the role of heavily armored knights was not quite as great an influence on victory as literature and subsequent legends would have us believe.

As noted, siege warfare was a major part of Crusade warfare and then knights were expected to pitch in with everyone else and try and bring a city or fortified camp to its knees as quickly as possible. Both Christian and Muslim armies found themselves the attackers and defenders throughout the many campaigns. Catapults launched huge boulders and flaming missiles against the defenders. Sometimes, too, projectiles of a more psychological nature such as decapitated heads were lobbed over the walls. There were even the really unscrupulous commanders who sanctioned the firing of diseased corpses of animals and humans into the laps of the enemy. Siege towers and battering rams permitted a direct attack on the walls themselves. Undermining walls was a tactic where specialized engineers dug tunnels

and set fires in them to bring the foundations of towers crashing down. Meanwhile, the defenders would launch rocks and flammable liquids onto the attackers and send out sorties of heavy cavalry to disrupt the attacker's camps.

Logistics

Logistics has always been a crucial aspect of warfare that can spell defeat or win victory regardless of an army's fighting skills and a commander's knowledge of strategy. Unfortunately for the Crusaders, medieval Europe had long since lost the skill of battle logistics, those having disappeared following the demise of the Romans. The skills would have to be relearned in the Middle East, especially so considering the often harsh and arid climate and terrain where living off the land was usually not an option. Many a Crusader army was defeated simply because it could not find adequate food and water and men died of scurvy or starvation. Another frequent killer was bacterial disease, especially rife in the filthy army camps of siege armies which typically lacked adequate sanitation, clean water and treatment of the dead.



Figure 12 A 19th century painting depicting Richard I (r. 1189-1199) leading the march of the Crusader army to Jerusalem during the Third Crusade (1189-1192)

A lack of forward planning was also often evident with the Crusaders' sieges being carried out without proper siege equipment or rivers navigated without reliable boats. There were exceptions: Richard I of England (1189-1199) was a meticulous planner and not only did he ship catapults to the Middle East but also the huge boulders they needed as ammunition. The armies of the Crusader States were much better at this aspect of warfare and supply columns and chains of supply bases were sometimes established but again and again; when European leaders took the field they often simply ignored the particular challenges of the terrain they hoped to win victory on. In contrast, the Muslims were far better in this department and

maintained excellent supply columns using thousands of mules and camels which included doctors and medical equipment. In addition, the Muslim armies frequently worsened the Crusaders' situation by spoiling wells, rounding up livestock and destroying crops. Finally, a feature of the Muslim world which often proved useful during the Crusades was the well-established communication system of staging posts spread across the region connected by trained pigeons. With messages being carried on the wing over great distances the movements of the enemy could be quickly reported and appropriate responses planned and executed.

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

The Armies of the Crusades
