



ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem

The First Crusade

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INTRODUCTION



First Crusade

The **First Crusade** (1095–1099) was the first of a number of crusades that attempted to recapture the Holy Land, called for by Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont in 1095. Urban called for a military expedition to aid the Byzantine Empire, which had recently lost most of Anatolia to the Seljuq Turks. The resulting military expedition of primarily Frankish nobles, known as the **Princes' Crusade**, not only re-captured Anatolia but went on to conquer the Holy Land (the Levant), which had fallen to Islamic expansion as early as the 7th century, and culminated in July 1099 in the re-conquest of Jerusalem and the establishment of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The expedition was a reaction to the appeal for military aid by Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos. Urban's convocation of the Council of Clermont was specifically dedicated to this purpose, proposing siege warfare against the recently occupied cities of Nicaea and Antioch.

During their conquests, the crusaders established the Latin Rite crusader states of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the County of Tripoli, the Principality of Antioch, and the County of Edessa. This was contrary to the wishes of the Eastern Rite Byzantines, who wanted the land that the Muslims took from them returned, rather than occupied by Latin Catholics. After the retaking of Jerusalem, most of the crusaders returned home. This left the crusader kingdoms vulnerable to Muslim reconquest during the Second and Third Crusades.

Historical Context

The causes of the Crusades in general, and particularly of the First Crusade, is widely debated among historians. While the relative weight or importance of the various factors may be the subject of ongoing disputes, it is clear that the First Crusade came about from a combination of factors in both Europe and the Near East. Its origin is linked both with the political situation in Catholic Christendom, including the political and social situation in 11th-century Europe, the Gregorian Reform within the papacy, as well as the military's and religious confrontation of Christianity and Islam in the East.

The Gregorian Reforms were a series of reforms initiated by Pope Gregory VII and the circle he formed in the papal curia, c. 1050–80, which dealt with the moral integrity and independence of the clergy. The reforms are considered to be named after Pope Gregory VII (1073–85), though he personally denied it and claimed his reforms, like his regnal name, honored Pope Gregory I.

Christianity had been adopted throughout the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity, but in the 7th to 8th centuries, the Umayyad Caliphate had conquered Syria, Egypt, and North Africa from

the predominantly Christian Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire, and Hispania from the Visigothic Kingdom. In North Africa, the Umayyad Empire eventually collapsed and a number of smaller Muslim kingdoms emerged, such as the Aghlabids, who attacked Italy in the 9th century. Pisa, Genoa, and the Principality of Catalonia began to battle various Muslim kingdoms for control of the Mediterranean Basin, exemplified by the Mahdia campaign of 1087 and battles at Majorca and Sardinia.

Between the years of 1096 and 1101, the Byzantine Greeks experienced the crusade as it arrived in Constantinople in three separate waves. In the early summer of 1096, the first large unruly group arrived on the outskirts of Constantinople. This wave was reported to be undisciplined and ill-equipped as an army. This first group is often called the Peasants' Crusade or the People's Crusade. It was led by Peter the Hermit and Walter Sans Avoir.

The second wave was also not under the command of the Emperor and was made up of a number of armies with their own commanders. Together, this group and the first wave numbered an estimated 60,000.

The second wave was led by Hugh I, Count of Vermandois; the brother of King Philip I of France. Also among the second wave were Raymond IV, Count of Toulouse and the army of Provençals. It was this second wave of crusaders which later passed through Asia Minor, captured Antioch in 1098 and finally took Jerusalem 15 July 1099.



Codex

Vigilannus

or *Codex Albeldensis* is an illuminated compilation of various historical documents accounting for a period extending from antiquity to the 10th century in Hispania. Among the many texts brought together by the compilers are the canons of the Councils of Toledo, the *Liber Iudiciorum*, the decrees of some early popes and other patristic writings, historical narratives, various other pieces of civil and canon law, and a calendar. The compilers were three monks of the Riojan monastery of San Martín de Albelda: Vigila, after whom it was named and who was the illustrator; Serracino, his friend; and García, his disciple. The first compilation was finished in 881, but was updated up to 976. The *Codex* contains, among other pieces of useful information, the first mention and representation of Arabic numerals (save zero) in the West.

The third wave, composed of contingents from Lombardy, France, and Bavaria, arrived in Jerusalem in the early summer of 1101.

Situation in Europe

At the western edge of Europe and of Islamic expansion, the Reconquista in the Iberian Peninsula was well underway by the 11th century. It was intermittently ideological, as evidenced by the *Codex Vigilannus* compiled in 881. Increasingly in the 11th century foreign knights, mostly from France, visited Iberia to assist the Christians in their efforts. Shortly before the First Crusade, Pope Urban II had encouraged the Iberian Christians to reconquer Tarragona, using much of the same symbolism and rhetoric that was later used to preach the crusade to the people of Europe.

The heart of Western Europe had been stabilized after the Christianization of the Saxon, Viking, and Hungarian peoples by the end of the 10th century. However, the breakdown of the Carolingian Empire gave rise to an entire class of warriors who now had little to do but fight among themselves. The random violence of the knightly class was regularly condemned by the church, and in response, it established the Peace and Truce of God to prohibit fighting on certain days of the year. At the same time, the reform-minded papacy came into conflict with the Holy Roman Emperors, resulting in the Investiture Controversy. Popes such as Gregory VII justified the subsequent warfare against the Emperor's partisans in theological terms. It became acceptable for the Pope to utilize knights in the name of Christendom, not only against political enemies of the Papacy, but also against Al-Andalus, or, theoretically, against the Seljuq dynasty in the east.

"Byzantine Empire" is a term created after the end of the realm; its citizens continued to refer to their empire simply as the **Roman Empire** or **Romania**, and to themselves as "Romans".

To the east of Europe lay the Byzantine Empire, composed of Christians who had long

followed a separate Orthodox rite; the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches had been in schism since 1054. Historians have argued that the desire to impose Roman church authority in the east may have been one of the goals of the crusade, although Urban II, who launched the First Crusade, never refers to such a goal in his letters on crusading. The Seljuq Turks had taken over almost all of Anatolia after the Byzantine defeat at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071; however, their conquests were piecemeal and led by semi-independent warlords, rather than by the sultan. A dramatic collapse of the empire's position on the eve of the Council of Clermont brought Byzantium to the brink of disaster. By the mid-1090s, the Byzantine Empire was largely confined to Balkan Europe and the northwestern fringe of Anatolia, and faced Norman enemies in the west as well as Turks in the east. In response to the defeat at Manzikert and subsequent Byzantine losses in Anatolia in 1074, Pope Gregory VII had called for the *miles Christi* ("soldiers of Christ") to go to Byzantium's aid. This call was largely ignored and even opposed.



Alexios I Komnenos

was Byzantine emperor from 1081 to 1118. Although he was not the founder of the Komnenian dynasty, it was during his reign that the Komnenos family came to full power. Inheriting a collapsing empire and faced with constant warfare during his reign against both the Seljuq Turks in Asia Minor and the Normans in the western Balkans, Alexios was able to curb the Byzantine decline and begin the military, financial, and territorial recovery known as the *Kommenian restoration*. The basis for this recovery were various reforms initiated by Alexios. His appeals to Western Europe for help against the Turks were also the catalyst that likely contributed to the convoking of the Crusades. In spite of the success of the First Crusade, Alexios also had to repel numerous attempts on his territory by the Seljuqs in 1110–1117. Apart from all of his external enemies, a host of rebels also sought to overthrow Alexios from the imperial throne.

The reason for this was that while the defeat at Manzikert was shocking, it had limited significance and did not lead to major difficulties for the Byzantine Empire, at least in the short term.

Situation in the East

Until the Crusaders' arrival, the Byzantines had continually fought the Seljuqs and other Turkish dynasties for control of Anatolia and Syria. The Seljuqs, who were orthodox Sunni Muslims, had formerly ruled the Great Seljuq Empire, but by the time of the First Crusade it had divided into several smaller states after the death of Malik-Shah I in 1092.

Malik-Shah was succeeded in the Anatolian Sultanate of Rum by Kilij Arslan I, and in Syria by his brother Tutush I, who died in 1095. Tutush's sons Fakhr al-Mulk Radwan and Duqaq inherited Aleppo and Damascus respectively, further dividing Syria amongst emirs antagonistic towards each other, as well as Kerbogha, the atabeg of Mosul.

Egypt and much of Palestine were controlled by the Arab Shi'ite Fatimid Caliphate, which was significantly smaller since the arrival of the Seljuqs. Warfare between the Fatimids and Seljuqs caused great disruption for the local Christians and for western pilgrims. The Fatimids, under the nominal rule of caliph al-Musta'li but actually controlled by vizier al-Afdal Shahanshah, had lost Jerusalem to the Seljuqs in 1073 (although some older accounts say 1076); they recaptured it in 1098 from the Artuqids, a smaller Turkish tribe associated with the Seljuqs, just before the arrival of the crusaders.

Council of Clermont



Figure 1 Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont. Illustration from Sébastien Mamerot's *Livre des Passages d'Outre-mer*

Byzantine emperor Alexios I Komnenos, worried about the advances of the Seljuqs in the aftermath of the Battle of Manzikert, who had reached as far west as Nicaea, sent envoys to the Council of Piacenza in March 1095 to ask Pope Urban II for aid against the invading Turks. Urban responded favorably, perhaps hoping to heal the Great Schism of forty years earlier, and to reunite the Church under papal primacy by helping the Eastern churches in their time of need. Alexios and Urban had previously been in close contact in 1089 and after, and had



Pope Urban II

was born Odo of Châtillon or Otho de Lagery to a family of Châtillon-sur-Marne. He was prior of the abbey of Cluny, later Pope Gregory VII named him cardinal-bishop of Ostia c. 1080. He was one of the most prominent and active supporters of the Gregorian reforms, especially as legate in the Holy Roman Empire in 1084. He was among the three whom Gregory VII nominated as *papabile* (possible successors). Desiderius, the abbot of Monte Cassino, was chosen to follow Gregory in 1085 but, after his short reign as Victor III, Odo was elected by acclamation at a small meeting of cardinals and other prelates held in Terracina in March 1088. Urban took up the policies of Pope Gregory VII and, while pursuing them with determination, showed greater flexibility and diplomatic finesse.

discussed openly the prospect of the (re)union of the Christian church. There were signs of considerable co-operation between Rome and Constantinople in the years immediately before the crusade.

In July 1095, Urban turned to his homeland of France to recruit men for the expedition. His travels there culminated in the ten day council at Clermont Auvergne, at the time part of the Duchy of Aquitaine, where on Tuesday November 27, he gave an impassioned sermon to a large audience of French nobles and clergy. There are five versions of the speech recorded by people who may have been at the council or who went on crusade, as well as other versions found in later historians (such as William of Tyre). All of these versions were written after Jerusalem had been captured. Thus it is difficult to know what was actually said and what was recreated in the aftermath of the successful crusade. The only contemporary records are a few letters written by Urban in 1095.

The five versions of the speech differ widely from one another in regard to particulars, but agree that Urban talked about the violence of European society and the necessity of maintaining the Peace of God; about helping the Greeks, who had asked for assistance; about the crimes being committed against Christians in the east; and about a new kind of war, an armed pilgrimage, and of rewards in heaven, where remission of sins was offered to any who might die in the undertaking. They do not all specifically mention Jerusalem as the ultimate goal. However, it has been argued that Urban's subsequent preaching reveals that he expected the expedition to reach Jerusalem all along. According to one version of the speech, the enthusiastic crowd responded with cries of *Deus vult!* ("God wills it!").

It is disputed whether the famous slogan "God wills it" or "It is the will of God" in fact was established as a rallying cry during the Council. While Robert the Monk says so, it is also possible that the slogan was created as a catchy propaganda motto afterwards.

Urban also discussed Cluniac reforms of the Church, and also extended the

excommunication of Philip I of France for his adulterous remarriage to Bertrade of Montfort. The council also declared a renewal of the Truce of God, an attempt on the part of the church to reduce feuding among Frankish nobles.

As a better means of evaluating Urban's true motives in calling for a crusade to the Holy Lands, there are four extant letters written by Pope Urban himself: one to the Flemish (dated December 1095); one to the Bolognese (dated September 1096); one to Vallombrosa (dated October 1096); and one to the counts of Catalonia (dated either 1089 or 1096–1099). It is Urban II's own letters, rather than the paraphrased versions of his speech at Clermont, that reveal his actual thinking about crusading. Nevertheless, the versions of the speech have had a great influence on popular conceptions and misconceptions about the Crusades, so it is worth comparing the five composed speeches to Urban's actual words. Fulcher of Chartres has Urban saying this:

I, or rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to publish this everywhere and to persuade all people of whatever rank, foot-soldiers and knights, poor and rich, to carry aid promptly to those Christians and to destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends. I say this to those who are present, it is meant also for those who are absent. Moreover, Christ commands it.

The chronicler Robert the Monk reported the following from Urban II:

... this land which you inhabit, shut in on all sides by the seas and surrounded by the mountain peaks, is too narrow for your large population; nor does it abound in wealth; and it furnishes scarcely food enough for its cultivators. Hence it is that you murder one another, that you wage war, and that frequently you perish by mutual wounds. Let therefore hatred depart from among you, let your quarrels end, let wars cease, and let all dissensions and controversies slumber. Enter upon the road to the Holy Sepulchre; wrest that land from the wicked race, and subject it to yourselves ... God has conferred upon you above all nations great glory in arms. Accordingly undertake this journey for the remission of your sins, with the assurance of the imperishable glory of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Robert continued:

When Pope Urban had said these ... things in his urbane discourse, he so influenced to one purpose the desires of all who were present, that they cried out "It is the will of God! It is the will of God!". When the venerable Roman pontiff heard that, [he] said: "Most beloved brethren, today is manifest in you what the Lord says in the Gospel, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.' Unless the Lord God had been present in your spirits, all of you would not have uttered the same cry. For, although the cry issued from numerous mouths, yet the origin of the cry was one. Therefore I say to you that God, who implanted this in your breasts, has drawn it forth from you. Let this then be your war-cry in combats, because this word is given to you by God. When an armed attack is made upon the enemy, let this one cry be raised by all the soldiers of God: It is the will of God! It is the will of God!"

Within Fulcher of Chartres account of pope Urban's speech there was a promise of remission of sins for whoever took part in the crusade.

All who die by the way, whether by land or by sea, or in battle against the pagans, shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant them through the power of God with which I am invested. O what a disgrace if such a despised and base race, which worships demons, should conquer a people which has the faith of omnipotent God and is made glorious with the name of Christ! With what reproaches will the Lord overwhelm us if you do not aid those who, with us, profess the Christian religion! Let those who have been accustomed unjustly to wage private warfare against the faithful now go against the infidels and end with victory this war which should have been begun long ago. Let those who for a long time, have been robbers, now become knights. Let those who have been fighting against their brothers and relatives now fight in a proper way against the barbarians. Let those who have been serving as mercenaries for small pay now obtain the eternal reward. Let those who have been wearing themselves out in both body and soul now work for a double honor. Behold! on this side will be the sorrowful and poor, on that, the rich; on this side, the enemies of the Lord, on that, his friends. Let those who go not put off the journey, but rent their lands and collect money for their expenses; and as soon as winter is over and spring comes, let them eagerly set out on the way with God as their guide.

Urban II's own letter to the Flemish confirms that he granted "remission of all their sins" to those undertaking the enterprise to liberate the eastern churches. One notable contrast with the speeches recorded by Robert the Monk, Guibert of Nogent, and Baldric of Dol is the lesser emphasis on Jerusalem itself, which Urban only once mentions as his own focus of concern. In the letter to the Flemish he writes, "they [the Turks] have seized the Holy City of Christ, embellished by his passion and resurrection, and blasphemy to say—have sold her and her churches into abominable slavery." In the letters to Bologna and Vallombrosa he refers to the crusaders' desire to set out for Jerusalem rather than to his own desire that Jerusalem be freed from Muslim rule. It was believed that originally that Urban wanted to send a relatively small force to aid the Byzantines, however after meeting with two prominent members of the crusades Adhemar of Puy and Raymond of Saint-Guilles, Urban decided to rally a much larger force to retake Jerusalem. Urban II refers to liberating the church as a whole or the eastern churches generally rather than to reconquering Jerusalem itself. The phrases used are "churches of God in the eastern region" and "the eastern churches" (to the Flemish), "liberation of the Church" (to Bologna), "liberating Christianity [Lat. Christianitatis]" (to Vallombrosa), and "the Asian church" (to the Catalan counts). Coincidentally or not, Fulcher of Chartres's version of Urban's speech makes no explicit reference to Jerusalem. Rather it more generally refers to aiding the crusaders' Christian "brothers of the eastern shore," and to their loss of Asia Minor to the Turks.

It is still disputed what Pope Urban's motives were as evidenced by the different speeches that were recorded, all of which differ from each other. Some historians believe that Urban wished for the reunification of the eastern and western churches, a rift that was caused by the Great Schism of 1054. Others believe that Urban saw this as an opportunity to gain legitimacy as the pope as at the time he was contending with the antipope Clement III. A third theory is that Urban felt threatened by the Muslim incursions into Europe and saw the crusades as a way to unite the Christian world into a unified defense against them.

The most important effect of the First Crusade for Urban himself was the removal of Clement III from Rome in 1097 by one of the French armies. His restoration there was supported by Matilda of Tuscany.

Urban II died on July 29, 1099, fourteen days after the fall of Jerusalem to the Crusaders, but before news of the event had reached Italy.

People's Crusade



Figure 2 Peter the Hermit Preaching the First Crusade – from the painting by James Archer

Urban had planned the departure of the first crusade for August 15, 1096, the Feast of the Assumption, but months before this, a number of unexpected armies of peasants and petty nobles set off for Jerusalem on their own, led by a charismatic priest called Peter the Hermit.

The peasant population had been afflicted by drought, famine, and disease for many years before 1096, and some of them seem to have envisioned the crusade as an escape from these hardships. Spurring them on had been a number of meteorological occurrences beginning in 1095 that seemed to be a divine blessing for the movement: a meteor shower, aurorae, a lunar eclipse, and a comet, among other events. An outbreak of ergotism had also occurred just before the Council of Clermont.

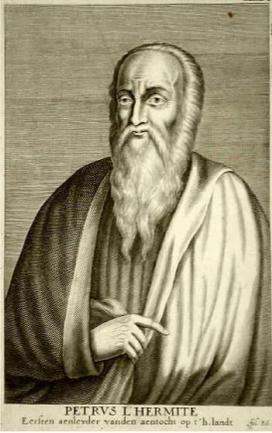


Ergotism is the effect of long-term ergot poisoning, traditionally due to the ingestion of the alkaloids produced by a fungus that infects rye and other cereals. Symptoms can include convulsions and gangrene. The convulsive symptoms from ergot-tainted rye may have been the source of accusations of bewitchment that spurred the Salem witch trials.

Millenarianism, the belief that the end of the world was imminent, popular in the early 11th century, experienced a

resurgence in popularity. The response was beyond expectations: while Urban might have expected a few thousand knights, he ended up with a migration numbering up to 100,000 Crusaders of mostly unskilled fighters, including women and children.

Peter the Hermit was the most successful of the preachers of Urban's message, and developed an almost hysterical enthusiasm among his followers, although he was probably not an "official" preacher sanctioned by Urban at Clermont. He was known for riding a donkey and dressing in simple clothing. He had vigorously preached the crusade throughout northern France and Flanders. He claimed to have been appointed to preach by Christ himself (and supposedly had a divine letter to prove it), and it is likely that some of his followers thought he, not Urban, was the true originator of the crusading idea.



Peter the Hermit

was born around 1050. Sources differ as to whether he was present at Pope Urban II's famous Council of Clermont in 1095. It is certain that he was one of the preachers of the crusade in France afterward, and his own experience may have helped to give fire to the Crusading cause. There is very little concrete record for his life after returning to Europe following the crusade and much of what we do know is speculation or legend. However, Albert of Aix records that he died in 1131, as prior of a church of the Holy Sepulchre which he had founded in France or Flanders.

It is often believed that Peter's army was a band of illiterate, incompetent peasants who had no idea where they were going, and who believed that every city of any size they encountered on their way was Jerusalem itself; this may have been true for some, but the long tradition of pilgrimages to Jerusalem ensured that the location and distance of the city were well known. While the majority were unskilled in fighting, there were some well-trained minor knights leading them.

A century later he was already a legendary figure; William of Tyre believed that it was Peter who had planted the idea for the crusade in Urban's mind (which was taken as fact by historians until the 19th century). It is commonly believed that Peter's followers purely consisted of a massive group of untrained and illiterate peasants who did not even have any idea where Jerusalem was, but there were also many knights among the peasants, including Walter Sans Avoir, who was lieutenant to Peter and led a separate army.

Walter Sans Avoir (died October 21, 1096) was the lord of Boissy-sans-Avoir in the Île-de-France. He was mistakenly known as **Walter the Penniless**, but while his name literally means "Walter without property", it derives from the name of his demesne and, ultimately, the motto of his family, *Sans avoir Peur* ("Fearless").

Lacking military discipline, in what likely seemed to the participants a strange land (Eastern Europe),

Peter's fledgling army quickly found itself in trouble despite the fact they were still in Christian territory. The army led by Walter fought with the Hungarians over food at Belgrade, but otherwise arrived in Constantinople unharmed. Meanwhile, the army led by Peter, which marched separately from Walter's army, also fought with the Hungarians, and may have captured Belgrade. At Nish the Byzantine governor tried to supply them, but Peter had little control over his followers and Byzantine troops were needed to quell their attacks. Peter arrived at Constantinople in August, where his army joined with the one led by Walter, which had already arrived, as well as separate bands of crusaders from France, Germany, and Italy. Another army of Bohemians and Saxons did not make it past Hungary before splitting up.

This unruly mob began to attack and pillage outside the city in search of supplies and food, prompting Alexios to hurriedly ferry the gathering across the Bosphorus one week later. After crossing into Asia Minor, the crusaders split up and began to pillage the countryside, wandering into Seljuq territory around Nicaea. The greater experience of the Turks was overwhelming; and most of this group of the crusaders were massacred because of it. Some Italian and German crusaders were defeated and killed at Xerigordon at the end of August. Meanwhile, Walter and Peter's followers, who, although for the most part untrained in battle but led by about 50 knights, fought a battle against the Turks at Civetot in October. The Turkish archers destroyed the crusader army, and Walter was among the dead. Peter, who was absent in Constantinople at the time, later joined the main crusader army, along with the few survivors of Civetot.



Figure 3 Massacre of the Jews of Metz during the First Crusade, by Auguste Migette

At a local level, the preaching of the First Crusade ignited the Rhineland massacres perpetrated against Jews, which some historians have deemed "the first Holocaust". At the end of 1095 and beginning of 1096, months before the departure of the official crusade in August, there were attacks on Jewish communities in France and Germany.

Count Emicho was said to be influenced into action by a divine vision. In the vision an apostle is giving Emicho a crown in "Italian Greece" and promising him "victory over his foes." This vision is a grave reference to "The Last Roman Emperor." In the legend the purpose of the "Last Roman Emperor" is to restore God's power in the Holy Land. To restore God's power the chosen one, the one granted the vision, is expected to kill or convert those who oppose Christianity.

In May 1096, Emicho of Flonheim attacked the Jews at Speyer and Worms. Other unofficial crusaders from Swabia, led by

Hartmann of Dillingen, along with French, English, Lotharingian and Flemish volunteers, led by Drogo of Nesle and William the Carpenter, as well as many locals, joined Emicho in the destruction of the Jewish community of Mainz at the end of May. In Mainz, one Jewish woman killed her children rather than see them killed; the chief rabbi, Kalonymus Ben Meshullam, committed suicide in anticipation of being killed. Emicho's company then went on to Cologne, and others continued on to Trier, Metz, and other cities. Peter the Hermit may have been involved in violence against the Jews, and an army led by a priest named Folkmar also attacked Jews further east in Bohemia. Emicho's army eventually continued into Hungary but was defeated by the army of Coloman of Hungary. His followers dispersed; some eventually joined the main armies, although Emicho himself went home. Many of the attackers seem to have wanted to force the Jews to convert, although they were also interested in acquiring money from them. Physical violence against Jews was never part of the church hierarchy's official policy for crusading, and the Christian bishops, especially the Archbishop of Cologne, did their best to protect the Jews.

The massacre of the Rhineland Jews by the People's Crusade and other associated persecutions were condemned by the leaders and officials of the Catholic Church. The Church and its members had previously carried out policies to protect the presence of Jews in Christian culture. For example, the twenty-five letters regarding

the Jews of Pope Gregory I from the late sixth century became the primary texts for the canons, or Church laws, which were implanted to not only regulate Jewish life in Europe but also to protect it. These policies did have limits to them; the Jews were granted protection and the right to their faith if they did not threaten Christianity and remained entirely submissive to Christian rule. These regulations were enacted in a letter by Pope Alexander II in 1063. Their goal was to define the place of the Jews in Christian society. The *Dispar nimirum* of 1060, was the late eleventh-century papal policy concerning the Jews. It rejected acts of violence and punishments of the Jews, and it enforced the idea of protecting the Jews because they were not the enemy of the Christians. This papal policy aimed at creating a balance of privilege and restrictions on Jews so that the Christians did not see their presence as a threat.

Fifty years later, when St. Bernard of Clairvaux was urging recruitment for the Second Crusade, he specifically criticized the attacks on Jews that had occurred in the First Crusade. Though Clairvaux considered the Jews to be "personae non gratae," he condemned in his letters the crusaders' attacks on the Jews and ordered protection for Jewish communities.

News of the attacks spread quickly and reached the Jewish communities in and around Jerusalem long before the crusaders themselves arrived. However, Jews were not systematically killed in Jerusalem, despite being caught up in the general indiscriminate violence caused by the crusaders once they reached the city. The Hebrew chronicles portray the Rhineland Jews as martyrs who willingly sacrificed themselves in order to honor God and to preserve their own honor.

Princes' Crusade



Figure 4 Godfrey de Bouillon, 1058-1100, sets off on Crusade, 1056, manuscript illumination, 15th century.

The four main crusader armies left Europe around the appointed time in August 1096. They took different paths to Constantinople and gathered outside its city walls between November 1096 and April 1097; Hugh of Vermandois

arrived first, followed by Godfrey, Raymond, and Bohemond. This time, Emperor Alexios was more prepared for the crusaders; there were fewer incidents of violence along the way.



Adhemar of Le Puy

(died 1 August 1098) was bishop of Puy-en-Velay from before 1087. He was the chosen representative of Pope Urban II for the expedition to the Holy Land. Remembered for his martial prowess, he led knights and men into battle and fought beside them. Adhemar is said to have carried the Holy Lance in the Crusaders' desperate breakout at Antioch. He was extremely skeptical of Peter Bartholomew's discovery in Antioch of the Holy Lance, especially because he knew such a relic already existed in Constantinople; however, he was willing to let the Crusader army believe it was real if it raised their morale. He died on August 1, 1098, probably of typhus and was buried in Antioch within the Basilica of St Peter.

Urban's speech had been well-planned: he had discussed the crusade with Adhemar of Le Puy and Raymond IV, Count of Toulouse, and instantly the expedition had the support of two of southern France's most important leaders. Adhemar himself was present at the Council and was the first to "take the cross". During the rest of 1095 and into 1096, Urban spread the message throughout France, and urged his bishops and legates to preach in their own dioceses elsewhere in France, Germany, and Italy as well. However, it is clear that the response to the speech was much greater than even the Pope, let alone Alexios, expected. On his tour of France, Urban tried to forbid certain people (including women, monks, and the sick) from joining the crusade, but found this nearly impossible. In the end, most who took up the call were not knights, but peasants who were not wealthy and had little in the way of fighting skills, in an outpouring of a new emotional and personal piety that was not easily harnessed by the ecclesiastical and lay aristocracy. Typically, preaching would conclude with every volunteer taking a vow to complete a pilgrimage to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; they were also given a cross, usually sewn onto their clothes.

Urban ensured that there would be an army of knights, drawn from the French aristocracy. Aside from Adhemar and Raymond, other leaders he recruited throughout 1096 included Bohemond of Taranto, a southern Italian ally of the reform popes; Bohemond's nephew Tancred; Godfrey of Bouillon, who had previously been an anti-reform ally of the Holy Roman Emperor; his brother Baldwin of Boulogne; Hugh I, Count of Vermandois, brother of the excommunicated Philip I of France; Robert Curthose, brother of William II of England; and his relatives Stephen II, Count of Blois and Robert II, Count of Flanders. The crusaders represented northern and southern France, Flanders, Germany, and southern Italy, and so were divided into four separate armies that were not always cooperative, though they were held together by their common ultimate goal.

The size of the entire crusader army is difficult to estimate; various numbers were given by the eyewitnesses, and equally various estimates have been offered by modern historians. Historians estimate the armies to have consisted of about 30,000–35,000 crusaders, including 5,000 cavalry. Raymond had the largest contingent of about 8,500 infantry and 1,200 cavalry.

The princes arrived in Constantinople with little food and expected provisions and help from Alexios. Alexios was understandably suspicious after his experiences with the People's Crusade, and also because the knights included his old Norman enemy, Bohemond, who had invaded Byzantine territory on numerous occasions with his father, Robert Guiscard, and may have even attempted to organize an attack on Constantinople while encamped outside the city.

The crusaders may have expected Alexios to become their leader, but he had no interest in joining them, and was mainly concerned with transporting them into Asia Minor as quickly as possible. In return for food and supplies, Alexios requested the leaders to swear fealty to him and promise to return to the Byzantine Empire any land recovered from the Turks. Godfrey was the first to take the oath, and almost all

the other leaders followed him, although they did so only after warfare had almost broken out in the city between the citizens and the crusaders, who were eager to pillage for supplies. Raymond alone avoided swearing the oath, instead pledging that he would simply cause no harm to the Empire. Before ensuring that the various armies were shuttled across the Bosphorus, Alexios advised the leaders on how best to deal with the Seljuq armies that they would soon encounter.

Siege of Nicaea

see *Sieges and Battles of the Crusades* for details

Nicaea was an ancient Greek city in northwestern Anatolia, and is primarily known as the site of the First and Second Councils of Nicaea – the Nicene Creed comes from the First Council.

The Crusader armies crossed over into Asia Minor during the first half of 1097, where they were joined by Peter the Hermit and the remainder of his relatively small army. In addition, Alexios also sent

two of his own generals, Manuel Boutoumites and Tatikios, to assist the crusaders. The first objective of their campaign was Nicaea, previously a city under Byzantine rule, but which had become the capital of the Seljuq Sultanate of Rum under Kilij Arslan I. Arslan was away campaigning against the Danishmends in central Anatolia at the time, and had left behind his treasury and his family, underestimating the strength of these new crusaders.

Subsequently, upon the Crusaders' arrival, the city was subjected to a lengthy siege, and when Arslan had word of it he rushed back to Nicaea and attacked the crusader army on May 16. He was driven back by the unexpectedly large crusader force, with heavy losses being suffered on both sides in the ensuing battle. The siege continued, but the crusaders had little success as they found they could not blockade the lake, which the city was situated on, and from which it could be provisioned. To break the city, Alexios sent the Crusaders' ships rolled over land on logs, and at the sight of them the Turkish garrison finally surrendered on June 18.

Battle of Dorylaeum

see *Sieges and Battles of the Crusades* for details

At the end of June 1097, the crusaders marched on through Anatolia. They were accompanied by some Byzantine troops under Tatikios, and still harboured the hope that Alexios would send a full Byzantine army after them. They also divided the army into two more-easily managed groups—one contingent led by the Normans, the other by the French. The two groups intended to meet again at Dorylaeum, but on 1 July the Normans, who had marched ahead of the French, were attacked by Kilij Arslan. Arslan had gathered a much larger army than he previously had after his defeat at Nicaea, and now surrounded the Normans with his fast-moving mounted archers. The Normans deployed in a tight-knit defensive formation surrounding all their equipment and the non-combatants who had followed them

along the journey, and sent for help from the other group. When the French arrived, Godfrey broke through the Turkish lines and the legate Adhemar outflanked the Turks from the rear; thus the Turks, who had expected to destroy the Normans and did not anticipate the quick arrival of the French, fled rather than face the combined crusader army.

The crusaders' march through Anatolia was thereafter unopposed, but the journey was unpleasant, as Arslan had burned and destroyed everything he left behind in his army's flight. It was the middle of summer, and the crusaders had very little food and water; many men and horses died. Fellow Christians sometimes gave gifts of food and money, but more often than not, the crusaders simply looted and pillaged whenever the opportunity presented itself. Individual leaders continued to dispute the overall leadership, although none of them were powerful enough to take command on their own, as Adhemar was always recognized as the spiritual leader. After passing through the Cilician Gates, Baldwin of Boulogne set off on his own towards the Armenian lands around the Euphrates; his wife, his only claim to European lands and wealth, had died after the battle, giving Baldwin no incentive to return to Europe. Thus, he resolved to seize a fiefdom for himself in the Holy Land. Early in 1098, he was adopted as heir by Thoros of Edessa, a ruler who was disliked by his Armenian subjects for his Greek Orthodox religion. Thoros was later killed, during an uprising that Baldwin may have instigated. Then, in March 1098, Baldwin became the new ruler, thus creating the County of Edessa, the first of the crusader states.



Figure 5 Baldwin of Boulogne entering Edessa in 1098, painting by Joseph-Nicolas Robert-Fleury 1840

Siege of Antioch

see *Sieges and Battles of the Crusades* for details

The crusader army, meanwhile, marched on to Antioch, which lay about halfway between Constantinople and Jerusalem. The first siege, by the crusaders against the Muslim-held city, lasted from October 21, 1097 to June 2, 1098. Antioch lay in a strategic location on the crusaders' route to Palestine. Supplies, reinforcements and retreat could all be controlled by the city. Anticipating that it would be attacked, the Muslim governor of the city, Yaghi-Siyan, began stockpiling food and sending requests for help. The Byzantine walls surrounding the city presented a formidable obstacle to its capture, but the leaders of the crusade felt compelled to besiege Antioch anyway.

The crusaders arrived outside the city on October 21 and began the siege. The garrison sortied unsuccessfully on December 29. After stripping the surrounding area of food, the crusaders were forced to look farther afield for supplies, opening themselves to ambush. On the December 31, a force of 20,000 crusaders encountered a relief army led by Duqaq of Damascus heading to Antioch and defeated them. As the siege went on, supplies dwindled and in early 1098 one in



Figure 6 The Siege of Antioch, from a 15th-century miniature painting

seven of the crusaders was dying from starvation, and people began deserting. A second relief force, this time under the command of Ridwan of Aleppo, advanced towards Antioch, arriving on February 9. Like the army of Duqaq before, it was defeated. Antioch was captured on June 3, although the citadel remained in the hands of the Muslim defenders. Kerbogha of Mosul began the second siege, against the crusaders who had occupied Antioch, which lasted from June 7 to 28, 1098. The second siege ended when the crusaders exited the city to engage Kerbogha's army in battle and succeeded in defeating them. On seeing the Muslim army routed, the defenders remaining in the citadel surrendered.

Proceeding down the Mediterranean coast, the crusaders encountered little resistance, as local rulers preferred to make peace with them and furnish them with supplies rather than fight, with a notable exception of the abandoned siege of Arqa.

Siege of Jerusalem

see *Sieges and Battles of the Crusades* for details

Crusaders' arrival at Jerusalem revealed an arid countryside, lacking in water or food supplies. Here there was no prospect of relief, even as they feared an imminent attack by the local Fatimid rulers. There was no hope of trying to blockade the city as they had at Antioch; the crusaders had insufficient troops, supplies, and time. Rather, they resolved to take the city by assault. They might have been left with little choice, as by the time the Crusader army reached Jerusalem, it has been estimated that only about 12,000 men including 1,500 cavalry remained. These contingents, composed of men with differing origins and varying allegiances, were also approaching another low ebb in their camaraderie; e.g., while Godfrey and Tancred made camp to the north of the city, Raymond made his to the south. In addition, the Provençal contingent did not take part in the initial assault on June 13. This first assault was perhaps more speculative than determined, and after scaling the outer wall the Crusaders were repulsed from the inner one.

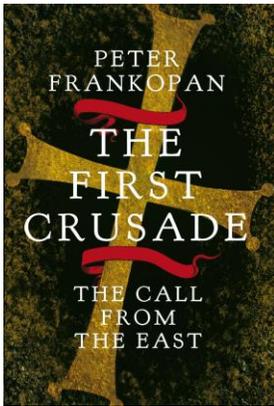


Figure 7 *Taking of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, 15th July 1099, Émile Signol, oil on canvas (1847)*

After the failure of the initial assault, a meeting between the various leaders was organized in which it was agreed upon that a more concerted attack would be required in the future. On June 17, a party of Genoese mariners under Guglielmo Embriaco arrived at Jaffa, and provided the Crusaders with skilled engineers, and perhaps more critically, supplies of timber (stripped from the ships) to build siege engines. The Crusaders' morale was raised when a priest, Peter Desiderius, claimed to have had a divine vision, of Bishop Adhemar, instructing them to fast and then march in a barefoot procession around the city walls, after which the city would fall, following the Biblical story of Joshua at the siege of Jericho. After a three-day fast, on July 8, the crusaders performed the procession as they had been instructed by Desiderius, ending on the Mount of Olives where Peter the Hermit preached to them, and shortly afterward the various bickering factions arrived at a public rapprochement. News arrived shortly after that a Fatimid relief army had set off from Egypt, giving the Crusaders a very strong incentive to make another assault on the city.

The final assault on Jerusalem began on July 13; Raymond's troops attacked the south gate while the other contingents attacked the northern wall. Initially the Provençals at the southern gate made little headway, but the contingents at the northern wall fared better, with a slow but steady attrition of the defense. On July 15, a final push was launched at both ends of the city, and eventually the inner rampart of the northern wall was captured. In the ensuing panic, the defenders abandoned the walls of the city at both ends, allowing the Crusaders to finally enter.

The massacre that followed the capture of Jerusalem has attained particular notoriety, as a juxtaposition of extreme violence and anguished faith. The eyewitness accounts from the crusaders themselves leave little doubt that there was great slaughter in the aftermath of the siege. Nevertheless, some historians propose that the scale of the massacre has been exaggerated in later medieval sources.



Alternative View

British historian Peter Frankopan (2012) has argued that the First Crusade has been fundamentally distorted by the attention paid by historians to western (Latin) sources, rather than Greek, Syriac, Armenian, Arabic and Hebrew material from the late 11th and 12th centuries. The expedition to Jerusalem, he argues, was conceived of not by the Pope but by the Emperor Alexios I Komnenos, in response to a dramatic deterioration of Byzantium's position in Asia Minor and also as a result of a state of near anarchy at the imperial court where plans to depose Alexios or even murder him were an open secret by 1094. The appeal to Pope Urban II was a desperate move to shore up Emperor and Empire. Frankopan further argues that the primary military targets of the First Crusade in Asia Minor — Nicaea and Antioch — required large numbers of soldiers with experience in siege warfare, precisely the type of force recruited by Urban in France in his call to arms of 1095/6.

After the successful assault on the northern wall, the defenders fled to the Temple Mount, pursued by Tancred and his men. Arriving before the defenders could secure the area, Tancred's men assaulted the precinct, butchering many of the defenders, with the remainder taking refuge in the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Tancred then called a halt to the slaughter, offering those in the mosque his protection. When the defenders on the southern wall heard of the fall of the northern wall, they fled to the citadel, allowing Raymond and the Provençals to enter the city. Iftikhar al-Dawla, the commander of the garrison, struck a deal with Raymond, surrendering the citadel in return for being granted safe passage to Ascalon.

The slaughter continued for the rest of the day; Muslims were indiscriminately killed, and Jews who had taken refuge in their synagogue died when it was burnt down by the Crusaders. The following day, Tancred's prisoners in the mosque were slaughtered. Nevertheless, it is clear that some Muslims and Jews of the city survived the massacre, either escaping or being taken prisoner to be ransomed. The Eastern Christian population of the city had been expelled before the siege by the governor, and thus escaped the massacre.

On July 22, a council was held in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to establish a king for the newly created Kingdom of Jerusalem. Raymond of Toulouse at first refused to become king, perhaps attempting to show his piety, but probably hoping that the other nobles would insist upon his election anyway. Robert the Monk is the only contemporary chronicler of the crusade to report that Godfrey took the title "king". Godfrey, who had become the more popular of the two after Raymond's actions at the siege of Antioch, did no damage to his own piety by accepting a position as secular leader. Raymond was incensed at this development and took his army out into the countryside.

Battle of Ascalon

see *Sieges and Battles of the Crusades* for details

The crusaders had attempted to negotiate with the Fatimids during their march to Jerusalem, but to no avail. After the crusaders captured Jerusalem from the Fatimids, they learned of a Fatimid army about to attack them. On August 10, Godfrey of Bouillon led the remaining troops from Jerusalem to Ascalon, a day's march away.

The **Fatimids** claimed descent from Fatimah, the daughter of the prophet Muhammad. The **Fatimid Caliphate** was a Shi'i Muslim caliphate that spanned a large area of North Africa, from the Red Sea in the east to the Atlantic Ocean in the west.

The Fatimids were estimated to have as many as 50,000 troops (other sources estimate about

20,000–30,000) entering the battle. Their troops consisted of Seljuq Turks, Arabs, Persians, Kurds, and Ethiopians, led by vizier al-Afdal Shahanshah. Opposing them were the crusaders, whose numbers, estimated by Raymond of Aguilers, were around 1,200 knights and 9,000 infantry.

On August 12, crusader scouts discovered the location of the Fatimid camp, which the crusaders immediately marched towards. According to most crusader and Muslim accounts, the Fatimids were caught unaware. Because of a somewhat ill-prepared Fatimid army, the battle was fairly short, although it still took some time to resolve, according to Albert of Aix. al-Afdal Shahanshah and his army retreated into the heavily guarded and fortified city of Ascalon. The next day the crusaders learned that al-Afdal Shahanshah had retreated back to Egypt via boat, so they plundered what remained of the Fatimid camp. After returning to Jerusalem most of the crusaders returned to their homes in Europe.

Aftermath

The First Crusade succeeded in establishing the "crusader states" of Edessa, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Tripoli in Palestine and Syria (as well as allies along the Crusaders' route, such as the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia).

However, there were many who had gone home before reaching Jerusalem, and many who had never left Europe at all. When the success of the crusade became known, these people were mocked and scorned by their families and threatened with excommunication by the Pope. Many crusaders who had remained with the crusade all the way to Jerusalem also went home; according to Fulcher of Chartres, there were only a few hundred knights left in the newfound kingdom in 1100. Godfrey himself only ruled for one year, dying in July 1100. He was succeeded by his brother, Baldwin of Edessa, the first person to take the title King of Jerusalem. Among the crusaders in the Crusade of 1101 were Stephen II, Count of Blois and Hugh of Vermandois, both of whom had returned home before reaching Jerusalem. This crusade was almost annihilated in Asia Minor by the Seljuqs, but the survivors helped to reinforce the kingdom upon their arrival in Jerusalem. In the following years, assistance was also provided by Italian merchants who established themselves in Syrian ports, and from the religious and military orders of the Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitaller, which were created during the reign of Baldwin I.

Back at home in Western Europe, those who had survived to reach Jerusalem were treated as heroes. Robert of Flanders was nicknamed "Hierosolymitanus" (*Robert of Jerusalem*) thanks to his exploits. The life of Godfrey of Bouillon became legendary even within a few years of his death. In some cases, the political situation at home was greatly affected by crusader absences. For instance, while Robert Curthose was away on crusade the throne of England had passed to his brother Henry I of England instead, and their resultant conflict led to the Battle of Tinchebray in 1106.

Meanwhile, the establishment of the crusader states in the east helped ease Seljuq pressure on the Byzantine Empire, which had regained some of its Anatolian territory with crusader help, and experienced a period of relative peace and prosperity in the 12th century. The effect on the Muslim dynasties of the east was gradual but important. In the wake of the death of Malik Shah I in 1092, political instability and the division of the Great Seljuq Empire prevented a coherent defense

against the Latin states. Cooperation between them remained difficult for many decades, but from Egypt to Syria to Baghdad there were calls for the expulsion of the crusaders, culminating in the recapture of Jerusalem under Saladin later in the century when the Ayyubids had united the surrounding areas.



Figure 8 Map of Crusader states 1135

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

The First Crusade
