

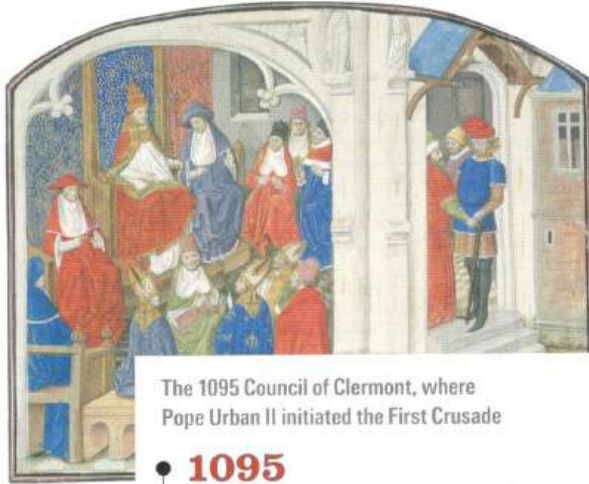
Timeline

Sophie Thérèse Ambler describes the events that shaped Christendom and the Islamic world during the long struggle for the Holy Land

1071

Turks overrun the Byzantine border

After taking control of Iraq and Syria, the Seljuk Turks under the command of Sultan Alp Arslan defeat Byzantine forces at the battle of Manzikert and conquer Anatolia.



The 1095 Council of Clermont, where Pope Urban II initiated the First Crusade

1095

The crusading movement is born

Pope Urban II summons a council at Clermont and charges the crowd of knights and churchmen to aid the Greeks in the east and stop the molestation of pilgrims and the desecration of Christian sites in the Holy Land.

The Christians march out of Antioch to face the Turks in 1098. The city lay in a crucial position on the route to Palestine

28 June 1098

St George 'saves' the crusaders

The Franks march out of Antioch to engage Kerbogha's forces in an all-or-nothing battle. According to participant reports, they see "a countless host of men on white horses, whose banners were all white": heavenly reinforcements led by St George, St Mercurius and St Demetrius.

1090



Alexius I Comnenus appealed to western Europe for help fighting the Seljuk Turks

March 1095

A call from the east

A papal council at Piacenza receives an envoy from the Byzantine emperor, Alexius I Comnenus. Assailed and desperate, the Byzantines plead for military assistance against the Seljuks – and Pope Urban II determines to respond.

1096

The First Crusade gets underway

Christian knights and pilgrims from the west, known as the Franks, journey towards the Holy Land, taking Nicaea and surviving a ferocious Seljuk attack at Dorylaeum. They besiege Antioch in northern Syria, finally entering the city in June 1098 – before they, in turn, are besieged by the forces of Kerbogha, the atabeg (governor) of Mosul.

1099

The Holy City is conquered

Inspired by victory at Antioch, the crusaders march on Jerusalem, capturing the city from the Fatimids in July and massacring the inhabitants. Godfrey of Bouillon, who engineers the victory, is chosen as first ruler of Jerusalem.

French nobleman Godfrey of Bouillon led the successful siege of Jerusalem





The death of Roger of Salerno
at the battle of the Field of
Blood on 28 June 1119

1119

Christian forces meet disaster

With the four new crusader states established after the First Crusade (Jerusalem, Antioch, Edessa and Tripoli) politically unstable, the regent of Antioch, Roger of Salerno, engages the Turkmen ruler Ilghazi. His army is annihilated in a battle known as the Field of Blood.

1110

1105

A call to jihad

In the wake of the Christian victory, a jurist from Damascus, Ali ibn Tahir al-Sulami, preaches a sermon calling on Muslims to take up arms in jihad against the Franks.



A hospice in Jerusalem owned by the German Order of St John, which descends from the Hospitallers

1113

The Hospitallers established

Pope Paschal II recognises the Hospital of St John as an independent religious order. Originally founded before the First Crusade to care for pilgrims in Jerusalem, the Hospitallers later transform into a military force between the 1120s and 1160s.

1129

The Templars swear oaths

Under the guidance of Bernard of Clairvaux and grand master Hugh de Payns, the first rule of the Knights Templar is drawn up. Members of the order, originally founded in 1119, are sworn to abandon worldly goods and devote their lives to protecting pilgrims and defending the crusader states.

A chapel fresco showing a Templar knight charging into battle at al-Buqia, modern Lebanon, 1163





The cover of the *Melisende Psalter* depicts scenes from the life of David in ivory and turquoise

1131

A crusader queen takes the throne

Melisende, daughter of Baldwin II, ascends the throne of Jerusalem with her husband, Fulk V of Anjou. She later commissions a manuscript known as the *Melisende Psalter*, one of the most stunning artworks of the era.

1147–49

The Second Crusade ends in failure

Crusader armies – led by Conrad of Germany and Louis VII of France, accompanied by his queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine – are overwhelmed by the Seljuks. After a failed attempt on Damascus, Louis and Eleanor return home.



1130

1150

1170



The siege of Edessa in 1144. The city's fall was the catalyst for the Second Crusade

1144

The resurgence of the Seljuks

Imad al-Din Zangi, a Turkish atabeg, conquers Edessa on behalf of the Seljuks. Pope Eugenius III responds by launching a new crusade, with a preaching campaign led by Bernard of Clairvaux.

1169

Saladin emerges

Nur al-Din, son of Zangi, appoints as head of his armies in Egypt a young Kurdish commander named Salah al-Din – perhaps more commonly known today as Saladin. Gathering power, he goes on to conquer Syria by the mid-1170s before leading attacks on the kingdom of Jerusalem.

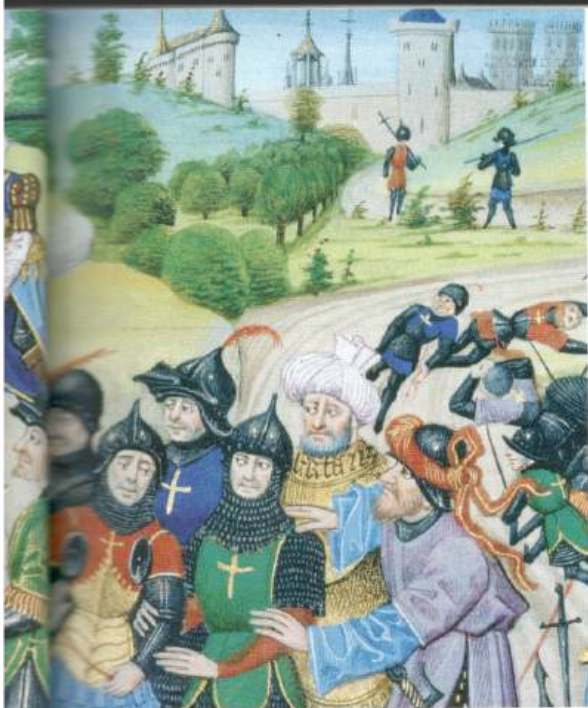
1183

A literary giant writes his masterpiece

Usama ibn Munqidh, a leading diplomat and warrior who goes on to serve Saladin in his later years, describes in his remarkable *Book of Contemplation* his encounters – and occasional friendships – with the Franks.



A 16th-century portrait of Saladin, great sultan of Egypt and Syria – and Richard the Lionheart's mighty opponent



Guy de Lusignan, King of Jerusalem, surrenders to Saladin at the battle of Hattin on 4 July 1187

July 1187

Catastrophe shakes Christendom

Saladin's campaign against the Christians triumphs at the battle of Hattin, where he obliterates the army of the kingdom of Jerusalem, captures the prized Christian relic of the True Cross, and oversees the beheading of captured Templars and Hospitallers. He goes on to seize the city of Jerusalem in October.



The Muslims of Acre surrender the keys of the city to Philip II and Richard I after the siege

June–August 1191

The Lionheart arrives at Acre

Richard (who acquires the name 'Lionheart' due to his brave leadership) brings his army to join the siege of Acre. He takes the city, and – wanting to press on and claiming that Saladin has stalled ongoing negotiations – orders some 2,700 Muslim prisoners to be executed in view of both armies.

1206

The rise of the Mongol empire

The warlord Temüjin is elected leader of the Mongols and assumes the title Chinggis (Genghis) Khan. Over the following decades, he and his successors conquer north China, what will become Iran and Turkmenistan, and the Seljuk sultanate of Rûm, sacking Baghdad in 1258.



The great Mongol leader Genghis Khan, whose armies conquered most of Eurasia

1190



A 16th-century portrait of Philip II of France, who joined the Third Crusade alongside Richard the Lionheart

October 1187

France and England respond to Hattin

Aghast at the calamity of Hattin, new pope Gregory VIII calls on Christendom to repent of its sins. The greatest Christian rulers – including Philip II of France and Richard I of England – subsequently take crusading vows.

August 1191 –October 1192

The Third Crusade ends in truce

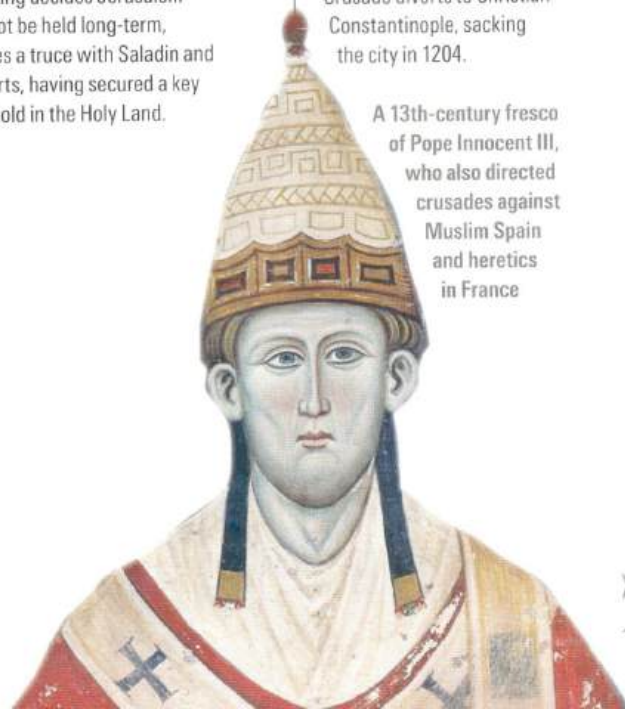
En route to Jerusalem, Richard's army defeats an attack by Saladin at Arsuf. The king decides Jerusalem cannot be held long-term, agrees a truce with Saladin and departs, having secured a key foothold in the Holy Land.

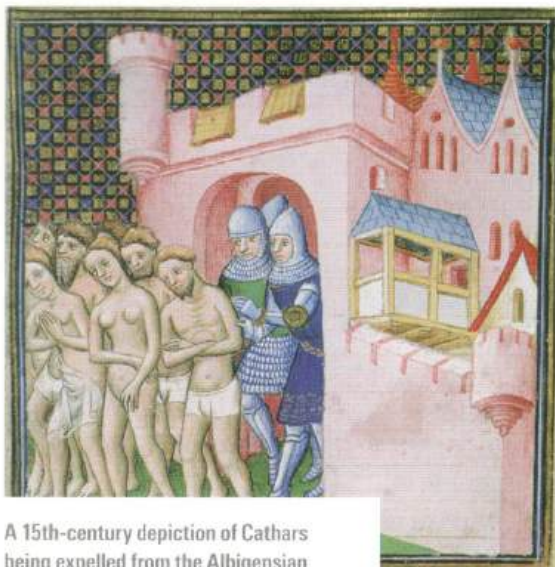
1198

A new leader for Christendom

The young, dynamic pope Innocent III is elected, and spearheads a resurgence of the crusading movement – but the first phase ends in infamy when the Fourth Crusade diverts to Christian Constantinople, sacking the city in 1204.

A 13th-century fresco of Pope Innocent III, who also directed crusades against Muslim Spain and heretics in France





A 15th-century depiction of Cathars being expelled from the Albigensian stronghold of Carcassonne, France



A coin featuring Töregene Khatun, empress regent of the Mongols and mother of Güyük Khan

1249–50

A king is captured

A further crusade, led by King Louis IX of France, lands in Egypt and captures Damietta, but Louis' forces are crushed at the battle of Al Mansurah in February 1250. In April, the survivors attempt to evacuate but, caught by Ayyubid forces, many are cut down and Louis himself is taken captive.

A 15th-century drawing of an imprisoned Louis IX – later St Louis



1245

The friars meet the Mongols

Pope Innocent IV sends an embassy of friars to the Mongols, hoping to forestall incursions into western Europe. The Franciscan emissary John of Plano Carpini writes up his account of their mission into the depths of the Mongol empire to meet the great khan Güyük (grandson of Genghis Khan).

1209

Holy war at home

Fearing the spread of a dualist heresy known as 'Catharism' in Languedoc, Innocent III proclaims the Albigensian Crusade, which begins in 1209. Simon de Montfort, 5th Earl of Leicester, is elected leader and will conquer swathes of the region in a brutal campaign.

1210

1212

Crusader triumph in Spain

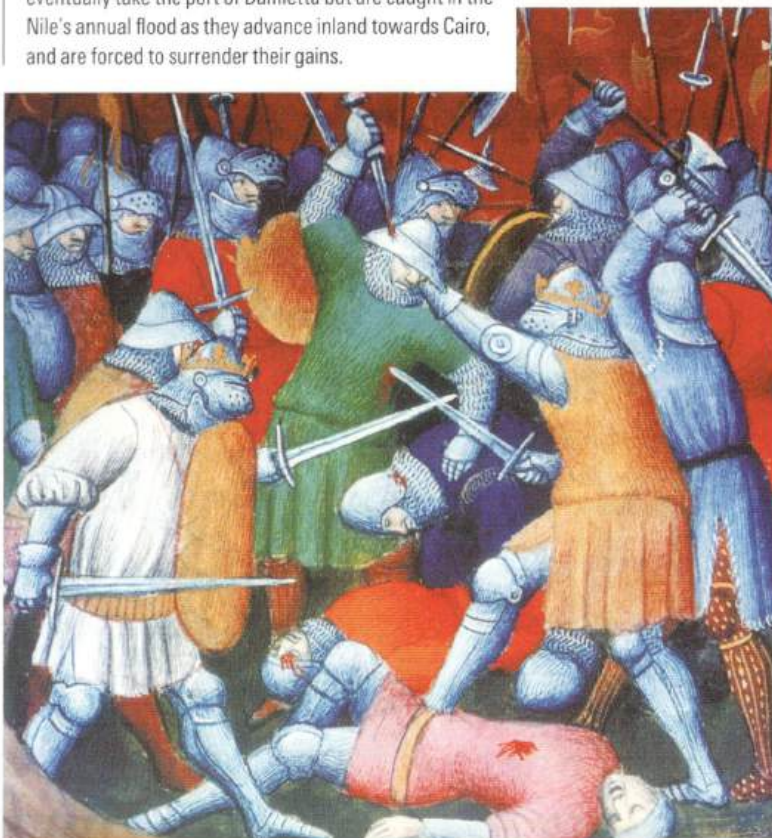
With Innocent's support, the kings of Castile, Aragon, Navarre and Portugal unite to battle the Almohads (a Berber Muslim dynasty) at Las Navas de Tolosa. Their eventual triumph marks a decisive victory for the *Reconquista* – the movement to reclaim the Iberian peninsula from Muslim rule.

1217–21

The chaotic Fifth Crusade

Innocent's successor, Honorius III, launches a planned crusade to the east, targeting Saladin's successors in Egypt – a dynasty known as the Ayyubids. The crusaders eventually take the port of Damietta but are caught in the Nile's annual flood as they advance inland towards Cairo, and are forced to surrender their gains.

A combination of bad luck, poor organisation and infighting put paid to the Fifth Crusade



Acre was the last major crusader stronghold in the kingdom of Jerusalem. Its fall in 1291 marked the end of attempts to take the Holy Land

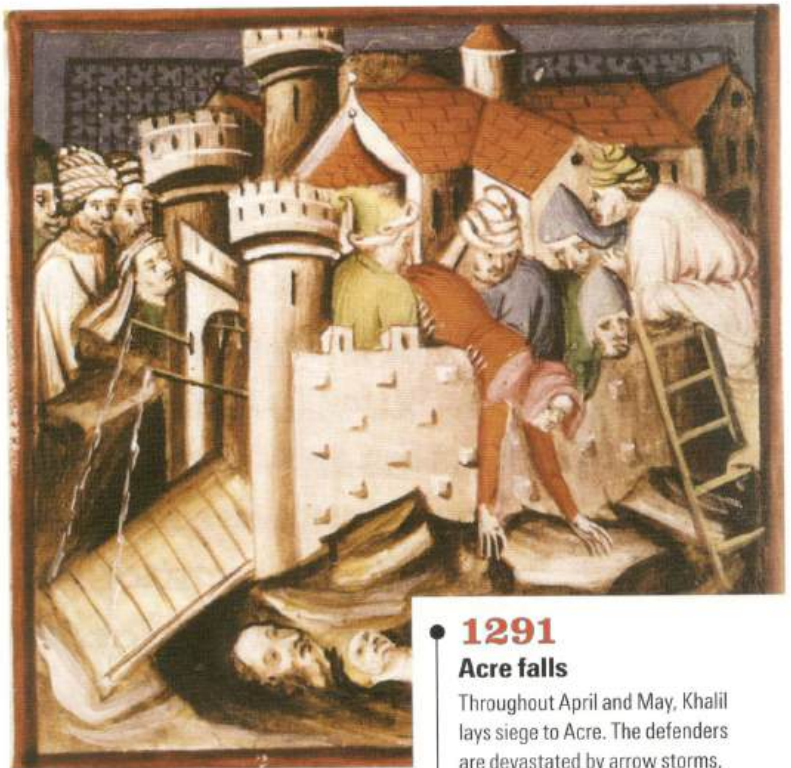


Mamluk sultan Baybars took the Hospitallers' formidable Krak des Chevaliers after a 36-day siege

1271

An attempted assassination

Baybars captures the mighty fortress of Krak des Chevaliers from the Hospitallers, before a new crusade arrives led by the future Edward I of England. The heir to the throne only just survives an attempt on his life by one of Baybars' agents.



1291

Acre falls

Throughout April and May, Khalil lays siege to Acre. The defenders are devastated by arrow storms, Greek fire (a type of incendiary weapon) and bombardment from Mamluk trebuchets, leading to the deaths of the Templar master and Hospitaller marshal. Khalil overruns the city, slaughtering and enslaving thousands and crushing the last remnant of the crusader states. **H**

1290

The scourge of the crusaders

With the death of Qalawun, his son Al-Ashraf Khalil takes command of the Mamluks and assumes the task of defeating the crusaders once and for all.



The lion 'passant', or walking, was the heraldic blazon of Sultan Baybars I. Baybars' aggression was the beginning of the end for the crusaders

1289

Qalawun takes Tripoli

Mamluk forces under sultan Qalawun capture the crusader city of Tripoli, slaughtering the inhabitants. Edward I of England responds to papal pleas for aid by sending a contingent to reinforce Acre, the last great crusading stronghold.

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The fall of Tripoli to the Mamluks in April 1289 marked the end of 180 years of Christian rule. The city was razed and its residents enslaved or massacred

1260

The Mamluks counter the Mongol threat

The newly formed Mamluk sultanate, having seized power from the Ayyubids in Egypt, defeats the Mongols in battle at Ayn Jalut in Palestine. Baybars, leader of the army vanguard, becomes sultan and begins campaigns against the crusader states, taking Antioch in 1268.