

Between the 11th and 14th centuries, European Crusaders launched eight major expeditions.

First Crusade (1096-1099)

Around 50,000 knights, accompanied by priests and other pilgrims (about 100,000 in total) left for the Holy Land. They were known as Crusaders (“one who took the cross” from the Latin word *crux* for cross). Most of them were French but others were from England, Scotland, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

As they marched across Europe they attacked non-Christians. They raided Jewish communities in France and Germany. They reached Constantinople in 1097. They were ill-prepared; they knew nothing of the geography, climate or the culture of the Holy Land. When they reached Jerusalem in 1099 they did not have a strategy. The siege of Jerusalem lasted one month. On July 15, 1099 they took Jerusalem and held a 400 mile narrow strip from Edessa to Jerusalem. There were many counterattacks by the Seljuk Turks and by 1144, Edessa was taken back by the Muslims.

Second Crusade (1145-1149)

Organized to recapture Edessa but the Crusaders were defeated. Led by Louis VII of France and his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, the Crusaders went home in shame.

Third Crusade (1187-1192)

In 1187, Jerusalem was recaptured by Saladin. Three European kings led the new crusade: Philip Augustus of France, Frederick I (Barbarossa) of Germany, and Richard I (The Lionheart) of England. Barbarossa’s ship capsized and he drowned. Philip and Richard argued over who would lead and then Philip took his army back home! After several battles, Richard and the Turk leader Saladin reached a truce. Richard became sick with malaria and Saladin sent him medicine.

Jerusalem remained under Muslim rule but Christians were allowed to enter the city for pilgrimages.

Fourth Crusade (1198-1204)

In 1198, Pope Innocent III demanded another crusade to re-take Jerusalem. The knights became involved in a political dispute between Italy and Byzantium. Organized by merchants in Venice, this crusade never reached Jerusalem. Instead, they looted Constantinople in 1204. The crusaders caused a further split between the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches.

Fifth Crusade (1217-1221)

This was a crusade against the Egyptians at Damietta in North Africa. Again, it was a failure.

Sixth Crusade (1228-1229)

Led by Frederick II of Germany, it ended with a truce but Jerusalem remained under Muslim control.

Seventh Crusade (1248-1254)

Another failure. It was led by Louis IX of France who was captured by the infidels and then released.

Eighth Crusade (1270-1272)

The second crusade led by Louis IX. He died outside of Tunis in North Africa. Edward I of England reached the Holy Land and arranged a truce in 1272.

There were other minor crusades against Slavic pagans in Germany (1147), Prussian and Lithuanian pagans in the Baltic Sea region (1198-1411), heretics in southern France (1209-1229), and battles against the Moors in Spain, a time known as the **Reconquista** (until 1492).

The Crusaders succeeded in their original goal to recover the Holy Land but they kept it for less than two hundred years. The Seljuk re-established their rule and the Byzantine grew weaker. From a military viewpoint, the Crusades were a failure!

In other ways, the Crusades were a success. They encouraged trade between Western Europe and the Middle East. Those who returned from the Holy Land brought back new products; rice, sugar, lemons, apricots, silk, cotton, velvet, carpets and precious jewels. These goods created new demands and markets. These new products would eventually lead to European exploration of the New World.

The Crusades undermined the foundations of feudalism. Many religious lords freed their serfs so they could fight. Other nobles, to support their journey, allowed their serfs to buy their freedom.

Towns now grew larger and royal power across Europe increased. Disputes between kings and nobles were common. When many nobles were away fighting, their kings seized their lands.

The popes became more powerful during the Crusades as the people truly believed their religious leader and were willing to fight to capture the Holy Land from the infidels.



Seljuk Turk



European Crusader

The Causes and Effects of the Crusades		
	CAUSES	EFFECTS
Religious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To free the Holy Land from the infidels (Seljuk Turks) Restore the rights of Christians to make pilgrimages To unify the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hardened Muslim attitudes towards Christians People of different religions hate each other Stimulated broad religious spirit Popes become more powerful Christians believed they would be forgiven of sins, given right to go to heaven and own land if they fought
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To aid Byzantine Empire against their attack by the Seljuk Turks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads directly to the Turkish wars and expansion of the Ottoman Empire into the Balkans
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gain some great riches in the East Acquire new feudal lands at a time of crop failures in Europe Gain access to trade routes by the emerging Italian cities of Genoa, Pisa, and Venice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drained European resources Expanded the use of a "money economy" Stimulated trade, architecture, and a growing urban (city) culture Feudal system weakens even though feudal kings become more powerful Serfs who fought allowed to rent lands
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many people wanted to become rich and own more land Some people just wanted to leave Western Europe, travel and see new lands Freedom for serfs if they fought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadened contacts with the Muslim world Prepared Western Europe for the discoveries of the modern age, knowledge and writings of Ancient Greeks and Romans Transmitted Islamic science, philosophy, and medicines to the West

