

CRUSADES IN MIDDLE AGES ACTIVITIES

A) After reading Text A about the Clermont Council and Text B (the speech of Pope Urban at the Clermont Council), write a short text of about 120 words, in which you will explain:

- a) what were the real causes of the First Crusade, i.e. what did the Pope and the Byzantine Emperor expect from it.
- b) how did the Pope try to persuade people to follow him, that is what would the crusaders earn out of their participation in the Crusade?

Text A

The major ecclesiastical impetuses behind the First Crusade were the Council of Piacenza and subsequent Council of Clermont, both held in 1095 by Pope Urban II, and resulted in the mobilization of Western Europe to go to the Holy Land. Byzantine emperor Alexios I Komnenos, worried about the advances of the Seljuks, who had reached as far west as Nicaea, in the aftermath of the Battle of Manzikert of 1071, sent envoys to the Council of Piacenza in March 1095 to ask Pope Urban II for aid against the invading Turks.

Urban responded favourably, 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 openly discussed 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 of Clermont, where on 27 November 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 (Baldric of Dol, Guibert of Nogent, Robert the Monk, and Fulcher of Chartres) or who went on crusade (Fulcher and the anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum*), as well as other versions found in the works of later historians (such as William of Malmesbury and 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. It is also thought that Urban may also have preached the Crusade at Piacenza, but the only record of which is by Bernold of St. Blasien in his *Chronicon*.

Source: Wikipedia

Text B

"Although, O sons of God, you have promised more firmly than ever to keep the peace among yourselves and to preserve the rights of the church, there remains still an important work for you to do. Freshly quickened by the divine correction, you must apply the strength of your righteousness to another matter which concerns you as well as God. For your brethren who live in the east are in urgent need of your help, and you must hasten to give them the aid which has often been promised them. For, as the most of you have heard, the Turks and Arabs have attacked them and have conquered the territory of Romania [the Greek empire] as far west as the shore of the Mediterranean and the Hellespont, which is called the Arm of St. George. They have occupied more and more of the lands of those Christians, and have overcome them in seven battles. They have killed and captured many, and have destroyed the churches and devastated the empire. If you permit them to continue thus for awhile with impurity, the faithful of God will be much more widely attacked by them. On this account 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 meant also for those who are absent. Moreover, Christ commands it."

"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. (Fulcher of Chartres)

Let none of your possessions detain you, no solicitude for your family affairs, since 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. That land which as the Scripture says "floweth with milk and honey," was given by God into the possession of the children of Israel Jerusalem is the navel of the world; the land is fruitful above others, like another paradise of delights. (Robert the Monk)

B) After reading the next text write a short text narrating the most important events of the Fourth Crusade. Since you are going to write a narrative text, take the following into consideration:

Structure:

- start with a short introduction (when did it start/ end? how long did it last?)
- continue with a. the events that led to the Crusade and b. the main events of the Crusade, naming chronologies, historical persons, places

- use temporal adverbs/ conjunctions, such as: before, after (+ noun. gerund), then, meanwhile, later, at the end, finally, having + past participle, at the same time etc.

Language:

- which verbal tense are you going to use? Which person?
- will you mainly use verbs or nouns in order to narrate?
- choose the necessary terminology from the text you will read.

Content:

- try to avoid any details that are not necessary
- be accurate
- keep in mind that your classmates, who will listen to your text, have to understand the sequence of events, as well as the way in which they are linked.
- at the end read your text again and make sure that someone who doesn't know anything about this historical event will fully understand it.

Text

Pope Innocent III was the first pope since Urban II to be both eager and able to make the Crusade a major papal concern. In 1198 he called a new Crusade through legates and encyclical letters. In 1199 a tax was levied on all clerical incomes—later to become a precedent for systematic papal income taxes—and Fulk of Neuilly, a popular orator, was commissioned to preach. At a tournament held by Thibaut III of Champagne, several prominent French nobles took the cross. Among them was Geoffrey of Villehardouin, author of one of the principal accounts of the Crusade; other important nobles joined later, and contact was made with Venice to provide transport.

Unfortunately, Thibaut of Champagne died before the Crusaders departed for Venice, and the barons turned to Boniface of Montferrat, whose involvement as leader of the Crusade proved to be fateful. He had close family ties with both the Byzantine Empire and the Crusader states. His brother, Conrad of Montferrat, had received the crown of Jerusalem only to be killed by members of the Nizārī Ismā'īlyyah shortly thereafter. Before going to the Holy Land, Conrad had married the sister of Emperor Isaac II Angelus and received the title of Caesar. Boniface was also the vassal of Philip of Swabia, who was a contender for the German throne and the son-in-law of Isaac II. In 1195 Isaac was blinded and deposed by his brother, who took the throne as Alexius III. Several years later Isaac's son, also named Alexius, escaped from Constantinople and fled to Philip's court. At Christmas 1201 Boniface, Philip, and the young Alexius discussed the possibility of using the Crusade to depose Alexius III and place the young man on the throne. Boniface sought the approval of the pope for the diversion, but Innocent refused to allow it. The young Alexius also journeyed to Rome but had no better luck with Innocent III. Despite the papal prohibition, Boniface and the Byzantine prince still hoped to find a way to move the Crusade toward Constantinople on its way to the Holy Land.

When the Crusade army arrived in Venice in the summer of 1202, it was only one-third of its projected size. This was a serious problem, since the French had contracted with the Venetians for a fleet and provisions that they now realized

they neither needed nor could afford. The Venetians had incurred enormous expense for the French and were understandably upset by their inability to pay. The leader of Venice, Doge Enrico Dandolo, was a man of great sagacity and prudence who was in his 90s and completely blind by the time of the Crusade. Dandolo proposed that if the French would assist the Venetians in capturing the rebellious city of Zadar (now in Croatia), he would be willing to suspend the outstanding debt until it could be paid in captured booty. With few options, the Crusaders agreed, even though Zadar was a Christian city under the control of the king of Hungary, who had taken the Crusader's vow. Innocent was informed of the plan, but his veto was disregarded. In November 1202 the Crusaders captured Zadar and wintered there. Reluctant to jeopardize the Crusade, Innocent gave conditional absolution to the Crusaders, but not to the Venetians.

Meanwhile, envoys from Philip of Swabia arrived at Zadar with an offer from Alexius, the Byzantine prince. If the Crusaders would sail to Constantinople and topple the reigning emperor, Alexius would place the Byzantine church in submission to Rome, pay the Crusaders an enormous sum, and join the Crusade to Egypt (now the centre of Muslim power in the Levant) with a large army. It was a tempting offer for an enterprise that was short on funds. The Crusade leaders accepted it, but a great many of the rank and file wanted nothing to do with the proposal, and many deserted. The Crusade sailed to Corfu before arriving in Constantinople in late June 1203. After the Crusaders attacked the northeastern corner of the city and then set a destructive fire, the citizens of Constantinople turned against Alexius III, who then fled. The Byzantine prince was elevated to the throne as Alexius IV along with his blind father, Isaac II.

Although the new emperor tried to make good his promises to the Crusaders, he soon ran short of money. He also faced anti-Latin hatred in Constantinople, which had been endemic for decades and now reached a fever pitch. Alexius IV, who owed his throne to Latins, became bitterly unpopular and was finally toppled in a palace coup in late January 1204. The Crusaders, now cheated of their reward and disgusted at the treachery of the Byzantines, declared war on Constantinople, which fell to the Fourth Crusade on April 12, 1204. What followed was one of the most profitable and disgraceful sacks of a city in history. Despite their oaths and the threat of excommunication, the Crusaders ruthlessly and systematically violated the city's holy sanctuaries, destroying, defiling, or stealing all they could lay hands on. Many also broke their vows to respect the women of Constantinople and assaulted them. When Innocent III heard of the conduct of his pilgrims, he was filled with shame and strongly rebuked them.

Before the capture of the city, the Crusaders had decided that 12 electors (6 Venetians and 6 Franks) should choose an emperor who would rule one-fourth of the imperial domain. The other three-fourths was to be divided. The clergy of the party that did not include the emperor-elect were to oversee Hagia Sophia and choose a patriarch. A small amount of property was specifically designated to support the clergy, and the rest was divided as booty.



C) Discuss with your classmates about the character of the Crusades as a religious phenomenon. Do you think that there are, in a way, in our days similar phenomena? Reflect on the modern relations between Christians and Muslims.

D) Suppose that a leader of a far-right political party asks people to start a "crusade", i.e. a social and cultural war, against the Muslims of your town. As a leader of a democratic party, write a speech in which you try to convince the members of the Town Council that this would be disastrous for your society.

Keep in mind the following:

Structure and content:

- write a short introduction about the topic
- use logical arguments (what will the negative results be in society? how will social relations/peace/integrity be affected?)
- give also sentimental arguments (e.g. try to present examples of Muslim families that will be negatively affected)
- end your speech with a dramatic appeal to humanitarian values etc.

Language:

- which verbal person/mode would you use?
- would you use many adjectives?
- would you use metaphors and other rhetorical schemes?
- what would be the style?/or register?