

Pope urban ii and the first crusade



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Pope Urban II's decision to launch the First Crusades altered Medieval Europe politically, socially, and economically. The Pope stressed the religious and economic importance of the Eastern churches and Jerusalem that had both been taken over by Muslim Turks. Previously Vikings and Muslims had been attempting to invade most Western European countries and were troubling them but were soon defeated. All across Europe countries were economically recovering and looking for ways to expand. With the growth of people entering the Catholic Church many people were looking for ways to honor God.

Then Pope Urban II announced a Crusade and many countries were eager to assist in his religious mission into the East. Pope Urban II's motive to launch The First Crusade in 1096 A. D. was to recover the many Eastern churches that had been conquered by the Muslim Turks and with the land they reclaimed they would create a Christian State in Jerusalem for Christians to control. The soldiers were extremely passionate about the battle; they created the symbol of a cross with any red material they could find and sewed it onto their armor.

The red cross became the unofficial symbol for the crusades and was worn by nearly every soldier in the army. The war was called the Crusade, because the word crusade is derived from the Latin word crux which means cross. Until 1065 Christians were granted safe travel to Jerusalem which was controlled by the Saracens but the Muslim Turks defeated them and took control of The Holy Land. The Holy Land, which is called Jerusalem was where Jesus was crucified, buried, and rose from the grave and is the most sacred of places for all Christians.

The Saracens were another group of Muslims but were rivals with the Turks. When the Turks took control of Jerusalem they massacred 3,000 Christians that were in the city at the time and tortured all the other Christians that were left. This alarmed the Pope and he realized that the Christians needed to control the Holy Land for themselves. At the beginning of Pope Urban II's campaign into the East he declared the importance of creating a Christian State in the Holy Land. Not allowing Christians to enter the Jerusalem startled the Pope and the battle for its recovery was important to everybody within the church.

The Crusaders were facing an uphill battle in taking on the Turks. The Turks would be fighting on their own land and knew the geography of the land as opposed to the Crusaders who were traveling into unknown territory. Pope Urban II was widely encouraged to lead the Crusades himself but decided he was not fit to lead an army into battle. Seeing no one capable of controlling so much power and men, knights just followed their local overlords into battle. The Pope appointed a Bishop named Adhemar to keep the overlords working together in their conquest into the East.

Many people believed that because of the lack of unified leadership there would be problems with authority that would lead to ultimate failure but Adhemar did his job of keeping peace between the overlords. Another reason many believed The Crusaders would fail is that Europe's economy was just recovering from years of battles compared to the wealthy and stable trading economy of Turks. Like all wars, it would cost Europe a lot of money. They would need to be able to feed their soldiers, supply them with armor and weapons, and pay them when they return.

With Europe's economy growing it was narrowly able to sustain a war but compared to the Turks they were at a significant disadvantage. Because of their central location in the ancient world the Turks were very successful in trading between Asia and Eastern Europe. The Turks were overconfident of their dominance in battle. They had recently expanded their territory and maintained a strong military and were used to the varied conditions of Eastern Europe. The Crusaders had to march across mountains and plains under the harsh sun.

The Turks were surprised with the ferocity and dedication of the Crusaders. Because of this they were defeated to the surprise of people around Europe. Many believed that God had won the battle for them in the face of adversity. At the beginning of the war many countries across Europe revised their taxing system to make sure they did not fall short during the war. All countries raised their taxes to accommodate the cost of war and that made the people in Europe worry if they would survive it throughout the war.

When countries interact with each other, the trading of goods usually takes place. The Byzantine Empire consistently exchanged currency with the soldiers of the many European countries fighting in the war. Disagreements about the ratio of trading currencies arose many times during the First Crusade. The French believed they were unfairly being treated for the amount that their currency was being traded for. This began the first legislation between the two countries declaring the value of French currency.

Jerusalem was very successful in the early years of its independence. They maintained close economic and political ties to all the European countries that liberated them and provided them with an outlet into the rest of the

ancient world. It was a very popular destination for religious tourism after thirty four years of not allowing anyone into the Holy Land. Many countries benefited from the creation of the Christian State that had very close political and economic ties to Europe.

Jerusalem and the Byzantine Empire became very popular trading centers between many European countries and the unknown goods of the East. Foreign spices, paper, and alternate currencies began arriving in Europe for the masses because of the strategic location along Eastern trade routes. Luxurious textiles became common for many Europeans with imports from the far reaches of Asia. This created a new market for foreign goods from all over the world that had never been seen in Europe before.

Jerusalem became the link between the East and Europe bringing in a new era of goods from foreign lands. It also became the religious center for the world and was very successful. In 1099 the Pope passed away shortly before the Crusaders returned to France to celebrate their victory. His death was followed by a very successful time in Europe when the economy was flourishing around the world. Jerusalem became the longest standing Crusader State until it fell in 1291 when the Muslim Turks recovered and reclaimed the land they believed was theirs.