

The principal crusades



The Crusades were a series of Holy Wars launched by the Christian states of Europe against the Saracens and the rescuing of holy places of Palestine from the hands of the Mohammedans. (Alchin 1) There were eight Crusades in number; the first four were sometimes called the Principal Crusades, and the remaining four were the called the Minor Crusades. (Alchin 1) The Principal Crusades, however, were considered to be the most important. (Alchin 1) The Principal Crusades started because of key people or key events, which led to affect history.

Every crusade contained key people, which helped spark the crusades, or contained key leaders that were important in conquering them. The first impulse to the Crusade came from an appeal of the eastern emperor, Michael VII to Pope Gregory VII for aid against the Seljuks. (Walker 2) Alexius I, a stronger ruler than his immediate predecessors in Constantinople, saw the divisive squabbles among the Seljuk chieftains as an opportunity to take the offensive. (Walker 2) He, therefore, appealed to Pope Urban II for assistance in raising a body of western knights to help him recover his lost Asiatic provinces. (Walker 2) Urban called on all Christendom to take part in the work, promising a complete remission of sins to those who would take the arduous journey. (Walker 2) The leaders of the first Crusade included some of the most distinguished representatives of European knighthood. (Alchin 2) Count Raymond of Toulouse headed a band of volunteers from a Province in southern France. (Alchin 2) Godfrey of Bouillon and his brother Baldwin commanded a force of French and Germans from the Rhinlands. (Alchin 2) Normandy sent Robert, William the Conqueror's eldest son. (Waring 167) The Normans from Italy and Sicily were led by Bohemond, a son of

Robert Guiscard, and his nephew Tancred. (Alchin 2) All of these men were key leaders in the first Crusade. In 1145, Pope Eugenius III proclaimed a new crusade and in 1147 the second crusade set forth, but it showed little of the fiery enthusiasm which the first crusade possessed. (Walker 4) The contagion of the holy enthusiasm seized not only barons, knights, and the common people, but kings and emperors were now infected with the sacred frenzy. (Alchin 11) The key leaders of the second crusade were two monarchs, Louis VII of France and Conrad III of Germany. (Alchin 11) Conrad III, emperor of Germany, was persuaded to leave the affairs of his distracted empire in the hands of God, and consecrate himself to the defense of the sepulcher of Christ. (Buddy 11) Louis VII. , king of France, was led to undertake the crusade through remorse for an act of great cruelty that he had perpetrated upon some of his revolted subjects. (Alchin 11) The key men of the third crusade were both distinct leaders. King Richard I of England, who was later given the title the “ Lion-hearted”, was the central figure among the Christians knights of this crusade. (Alchin 16) The other was Saladin, chief of the Mohammedans, who was not lacking in any of those knightly virtues with which the writers of the time invested the character of the English hero. (Alchin 20) At one time, when Richard was sick with a fever, Saladin, knowing that he was poorly supplied with delicacies, sent him a gift of the choicest fruits of the land. (Alchin 20) On another occasion, Richard's horse having been killed in battle, the sultan caused a fine Arabian steed to be led to the Christian camp as a present for his rival. (Alchin 20) For two years Richard the Lion-hearted vainly contended in almost daily combat with his generous antagonist for the possession of the tomb of Christ. (Alchin 20) Both of these men contributed to the third crusade. The fourth Crusade was

authored by only one person, and that person only had one goal. The young, enthusiastic and ambitious Pope Innocent III sought once more to unite the force of Christendom against Islam. (Cairns 216) No emperor or king answered his summons, but a number of knights took the crusader's vow. (Alchin 24) None of the Crusades, after the Third, effected much in the Holy Land; either their force was spent before reaching it, or they were diverted from their purpose by different objects and ambitions. (Alchin 24) All of these key figures helped spark the Principal Crusades. The results from the key events were the end of the Principal Crusades. These events that follow helped the Christians prevail over the Muslims. Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine, and Tancred lead an expedition to recapture Jerusalem. (Alchin 5) The expedition numbered about seven hundred thousand men, of which one hundred thousand were called knights. (Alchin 5) The crusaders traversed Europe by different routes and reassembled at Constantinople. (Alchin 5) Crossing the Bosphorus, they first captured Nicaea, the Turkish capital, in Bithynia, and then set out across Asia Minor for Syria. (Alchin 5) Arriving at Antioch, the survivors captured that place, and then, after some delays, pushed on towards Jerusalem. (Alchin 5) The Siege of Antioch had lasted from October 1097 to June 1098. (Alchin 5) Reduced now to perhaps one-fourth of their original numbers, the crusaders advanced slowly to the city which formed the goal of all their efforts, Jerusalem. (Alchin 6) When the Crusaders were in full view of the Holy City, a perfect delirium of joy seized the crusaders. (Alchin 6) They embraced one another with tears of joy, and even embraced and kissed the ground on which they stood. (Alchin 6) As they passed on, they took off their shoes, and marched with uncovered heads and bare feet before attacking it. (Alchin 6) Then the grand assault

came. The first assault made by the Christians upon the walls of the city was repulsed; but the second was successful, and the city was in the hands of the crusaders by July 1099. Alchin 7) Once inside the city, the crusaders massacred their enemies without mercy. (Alchin 7) The fall and massacre of the city of Edessa sparked the second crusade. In the year 1146, the city of Edessa, the bulwark of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem on the side towards Mesopotamia, was taken by the Turks, and the entire population was slaughtered, or sold into slavery. (Alchin 9) This disaster threw the entire West into a state of the greatest alarm, lest the little Christian state and all the holy places should again fall into the hands of the infidels. Alchin 9) The second crusade, though begun under the most favorable auspices, had an unhappy ending. (Alchin 12) Of the great host that set out from Europe, only a few thousands escaped annihilation in Asia Minor at the hands of the Turks. (Alchin 12) Louis and Conrad, with the remnants of their armies, made a joint attack on Damascus, but had to raise the siege after a few days. (Alchin 12) This closed the second crusade. The capture of Jerusalem by Saladin stimulated the third crusade. Having made himself sultan of Egypt, Saladin united the Moslems of Syria under his sway and then advanced against the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Alchin 14) The Christians met him in a great battle near the lake of Galilee. (Alchin 14) It ended in the rout of their army and the capture of their king. (Alchin 14) Saladin quickly reaped the fruits of victory. (Alchin 14) The Christian cities of Syria opened their gates to him, and at last Jerusalem itself surrendered after a short siege. (Alchin 14) The news of the taking of Jerusalem spread consternation throughout western Christendom. (Alchin 15) The cry for another crusade arose on all sides. (Alchin 15) Once more thousands of men sewed the cross in gold, or silk, or

cloth upon their garments and set out for the Holy Land. Alchin 15) When the three greatest rulers of Europe, King Philip Augustus of France, King Richard I of England, and the German emperor, Frederick Barbarossa heard about the catastrophe; they set out, each at the head of a large army, for the recovery of the Holy City of Jerusalem. (Walker 5) Thus the third crusade began. The crusaders of the fourth expedition captured Constantinople instead of Jerusalem. The crusaders took Constantinople by storm. (Alchin 26) No infidels could have been treated in a worse fashion than this home of ancient civilization. Alchin 26) They burned down a great part of it; they slaughtered the inhabitants; they wantonly destroyed monuments, statues, paintings, and manuscripts—the accumulation of a thousand years—and carried away much of the movable wealth. (Alchin 26) Never had there been such plunder since the world began. (Alchin 26) The results of these events played important roles in the Principal Crusades. The effect of the Principal Crusades had historical implications on society. At the recapturing of Jerusalem of the first crusade, a terrible slaughter of the infidels took place. Alchin 7) For seven days the carnage went on, at the end of it, scarcely any of the Moslem faith was left alive. (Alchin 7) The Christians took possession of the houses and property of the infidels, each soldier having a right to that which he had first seized and placed his mark upon. (Alchin 7) All of this was the affect of the first crusade. At the retreating from the siege of Damascus of the second crusade, the strength of both the French and the German division of the expedition was wasted in Asia Minor, and the crusade accomplished nothing. (Alchin 12) Thus was the end of the second Crusade.

In the third crusade, although Richard was unsuccessful in recapturing Jerusalem, he did get Saladin to agree to give pilgrims free access to the city without paying tribute. (Cairns 214) After the truce, Richard set sail for England, and with his departure from the Holy Land the third crusade came to an end. (Cairns 214) Thus was the end of the third crusade. Although the crusaders of the fourth crusade had plundered from the sack of Constantinople, it had a negative effect. Constantinople declined in strength and could no longer cope with the barbarians menacing it. (Alchin 28) Two centuries later the city fell easily to the Turks. Alchin 28) Their greed and lust for power turned the fourth crusade into a political adventure. (Alchin 28) Thus was the ending of the fourth crusade. These were the historical affects of the Principal Crusades. The trigger of the Principal Crusades was from the emulation of key leaders and the stimulation of key events, which both had negative and positive effects on history. The crusades were great military expeditions undertaken by the Christian nations of Europe. Their purpose, to take back former Christian nations from pagans and to restore Christianity throughout them. Works Cited

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