

Who's Who of the Crusades

Byzantine **Alexius I Comnenus** (1048-1118)

Alexius belonged to the Comnenus dynasty of Byzantine emperors. He was the son of John Comnenus and Anna Dalassena and the nephew of the emperor Isaac I Comnenus. Alexius became emperor in 1081. Alexius spent the first years of his reign waging war on the enemies of the Byzantine Empire. These included nomadic tribes and Norman invaders. The Muslim Seljuk Turks were Alexius' primary concern, however. The Seljuks had seized large portions of the empire and, in 1095, Alexius sent ambassadors to the pope, Urban II, requesting aid from his fellow Christians in Europe against the Seljuks. Pope Urban II responded to the emperor's request. Yet the larger idea of the pope's — to free the Holy Land from Muslim control — ultimately became the guiding principle of the First Crusade. Alexius had to deal with the arrival of a multitude of European nobles (and peasants) and their disorderly armies on Byzantine soil. When the foreign lords arrived, Alexius asked for each noble's oath of loyalty and pledge to return all Byzantine lands and cities held by the Seljuk Turks. Once the Crusaders began to march south to the Holy Land, it became clear that Byzantine and Crusader goals were different. When the city of Antioch fell to the Crusaders in 1098, the Norman lord Bohemond claimed it for himself. Alexius then spent six years trying to re-take the city. Ultimately, Alexius was unable to prevent the establishment of Crusader states in the Middle East that followed the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099.

Baldwin I of Jerusalem (?-1118)

Baldwin was a leader of the First Crusade. A younger brother of Godfrey of Bouillon, the founder of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, Baldwin seized Edessa in 1098 and ruled over it as a feudal lord. Following the death of his sibling Godfrey in 1100, Baldwin was crowned king of the Crusader state of Jerusalem. His reign was stormy as rival Crusaders tried to seize his lands and turn him out of power. However, by 1107, Baldwin began to turn his attention to Muslim warlords who held the all-important seaports

upon which the Kingdom of Jerusalem depended. Baldwin was successful against the Muslims and extended his kingdom as far south as Aqaba. He subsequently campaigned in Egypt where he died at Al-Arish. As king of Jerusalem, Baldwin strengthened the kingdom and made it the leading Crusader state in the Middle East.

Baldwin IX of Flanders (1172-ca. 1205)

Baldwin was one of the leaders of the Fourth Crusade. He took the cross in 1200 and two years later left for the east leaving his wife, Marie of Champagne, as regent in Flanders. Baldwin led the largest army of the Crusade. After the Crusaders captured Constantinople in 1204, Baldwin was elected Latin emperor and was crowned. As emperor of the Latin Empire (the name the Crusaders gave to the Byzantine Empire after the sack of Constantinople) he kept the imperial Byzantine bureaucracy but employed a feudal concept of government, including the granting of fiefs to other nobles. He gave Thessalonika in the western Byzantine Empire to Boniface of Montferrat, but wanted to occupy the city with his own forces. Boniface and Baldwin disagreed violently but came to a peaceful agreement. Baldwin's contemptuous attitude toward the Byzantines angered the populace of Thrace and led to their revolt in 1205. Baldwin was defeated in battle by the Bulgarian king Kalojan and was imprisoned. He died under mysterious circumstances. The other Crusaders learned of his death in 1206.

Bohemond I of Sicily (ca. 1050-1111)

One of the leaders of the First Crusade, this son of Robert Guiscard — the Norman warrior who seized the island of Sicily from the Byzantines — was renowned for his strength and bravery in battle. With his father, Bohemond tried to take western Greece from the Byzantine emperor Alexius I Comnenus. With the death of Robert in 1085, the Norman threat to the Byzantine Empire came to an end. The birth of a half brother had cut out Bohemond from the inheritance of his father's lands. The quest for new lands guided his future endeavors. When Pope Urban II called forth the First Crusade in 1095, Bohemond sensed new opportunities for land and fortune. He assembled a force of Norman knights and joined the Crusade. Upon his arrival in Constantinople with the other Crusaders, Bohemond pledged allegiance to his former enemy Alexius and promised

to return to the emperor all Byzantine lands he might take from the Muslims. During 1097-1098, Bohemond was one of the leaders of the successful siege of Antioch, an important commercial and religious center held by the Muslims and the most heavily fortified city in northern Syria. In defiance of his oath to the emperor, Bohemond proclaimed himself prince of Antioch. For several years Alexius waged war on Bohemond until he finally gained a pledge of vassalage from Bohemond. In 1109 Bohemond was defeated by Muslims at Harran and did not return to Antioch. He turned over control of the city to his nephew Tancred. Bohemond died in southern Italy in 1111. Antioch became one of the first Crusader states established by Europeans in the Middle East.

Boniface of Montferrat (ca. 1150-1207)

A cousin of King Philip II of France, Boniface was the leader of the Fourth Crusade. In 1201, Boniface united with another cousin, Philip of Swabia, and the future Byzantine emperor, Alexius IV, and agreed to place Alexius on the Byzantine throne and use the Crusade as a means of achieving this end. The three men decided to turn the force of the Crusade against Constantinople and the then reigning emperor, Alexius III. During the sack of Constantinople in 1204, Boniface set up his followers in the emperor's Great Palace and was expected to become emperor. However, Baldwin of Flanders was chosen to wear the crown. Boniface was given Thessalonika to rule as his own kingdom. Soon, he managed to occupy central Greece and captured Alexius III who had fled. Boniface made the mistake of rejecting the support of the Byzantine nobles who then turned to the Bulgarian leader Kalojan. Boniface fought the Bulgarian in several skirmishes from 1205 to 1207 and was eventually killed in an ambush.

Enrico Dandolo (ca. 1108-1205)

Dandolo was doge, or leader, of Venice during the Fourth Crusade. Prior to the Crusade he had a long history of dealings with the Byzantine Empire and had served in several Venetian embassies to Constantinople. Blinded at some point during his life, Dandolo nevertheless continued his activities. He was elected doge in 1192. In 1201, Dandolo and his council agreed to aid the Fourth Crusade's voyage to Constantinople in return for payment for ships and provisions. When the Crusaders failed to re-pay their debt, Dandolo agreed to forgive the debt as long as the Crusaders

agreed to seize the Adriatic port of Zara, Venice's enemy. The Venetians were convinced by Dandolo to join the Crusade and Dandolo himself played an important role in the seizure of Constantinople in 1204. In a treaty he negotiated with the Crusaders that year, Dandolo gained the repayment of Venice's expenses and took three-eighths of the Byzantine Empire. When the Latin emperor Baldwin I was captured at Adrianople, Dandolo was there and helped the Crusaders retreat from their defeat. He died soon thereafter and was buried in the great church of Hagia Sophia, in Constantinople.

Godfrey of Bouillon (ca. 1060-1100)

One of the leaders of the First Crusade, Godfrey was duke of Lower Lorraine and a descendant of Charlemagne's. Godfrey funded his Crusade from his landholdings and sold or mortgaged other lands for vast sums to help pay for the trip. He probably took the cross because of spreading excitement in France for the endeavor and, being the duke, was made leader of the army. Godfrey was accompanied on the Crusade by his brothers Eustace and Baldwin. Upon arriving in Constantinople around Christmastime 1096, Godfrey refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Byzantine emperor, Alexius I. After several skirmishes with the emperor's troops, Godfrey finally agreed to swear loyalty to the emperor. Godfrey and his army took part in the siege of Nicaea, a Turkish-held city on the main military road across Anatolia and also the siege of Jerusalem. Godfrey was the first of the nobles to enter the city and was offered the kingship. He refused the honor and instead agreed to be called "defender of the Holy Sepulcher." The domain Godfrey carved out for himself included Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Ramala and the port of Jaffa. His rule was brief, however. He died on July 18, 1100.

Louis IX of France (St. Louis) (1214-1270)

Louis became king in 1226 on the death of his father, Louis VIII. Since he was too young to rule on his own, his mother, Blanche of Castile, became regent and ruled in his name. Blanche continued to advise her son after he became an adult and served as regent when Louis was away from France. Deeply pious, Louis led the Seventh Crusade in 1248. The king was unsuccessful as a warrior and was captured at al-Mansura in Egypt in 1250.

Upon his release, Louis spent several years improving the Crusader castles and fortified cities in Palestine before he returned home. Despite his poor health, Louis departed on another Crusade in 1270. He died after landing in northern Africa. Louis was the ideal of the Christian monarch, pious but also a hardworking administrator and diplomat.

Nur al-Din Mahmud (1118-1174)

Nur al-Din was the son of the warrior Zangi. He came to power in 1145. He defeated the Seljuk Turks in Anatolia (Asia Minor) and in 1154 seized their stronghold of Damascus, in Syria. From Damascus Nur al-Din ruled over a united Muslim Syria. He launched military campaigns against the Crusader states from Damascus and also built religious schools there. Nur al-Din led campaigns as far away as Egypt. He was one of the most effective rulers of Damascus during the Crusades. Nur al-Din died in 1174. His most outstanding general, Saladin, succeeded him as the main Muslim leader against the Crusaders.

Peter the Hermit (?-1115)

A charismatic preacher, Peter was one of the leading personalities of the First Crusade. Little is known about his early life except that he was born in France. Some chroniclers of the Crusade say that Peter had tried to cross Anatolia on his way to the Holy Land but failed on his pilgrimage because of the Muslim Seljuk Turks. Peter returned to France and began to rally popular support for a war to free the Holy Land from Muslim control. Poor peasants and pilgrims were attracted to Peter and joined him in the so-called People's Crusade. They marched across France, Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria and finally to Constantinople. In the summer of 1096, Peter led his band into Anatolia where they sacked the villages and killed the local populace. Several skirmishes with the Turkish forces followed and Peter's followers were killed. By the autumn of 1096, the People's Crusade had fallen apart and its goal of reaching the Holy Land had failed. Peter managed to survive the defeat of the People's Crusade however, and eventually made it to the Holy Land. During the siege of Jerusalem he inspired the Crusaders. A few years later he returned to France where he died.

Raymond of Toulouse (ca.1041-1105)

Raymond was the first of the great French nobles to take the cross and was one of the chief leaders of the First Crusade. He was the only prince consulted by Pope Urban II and swore to devote his life to the cause. His age at the time of the Crusade, wealth and experience led to his role as main planner and organizer of the venture. He was also a rival to Bohemond for the leadership of the Crusade. When Raymond met the Byzantine emperor Alexius I in Constantinople in the spring of 1097, he refused to give him his pledge of loyalty and rather promised never to harm or injure the emperor's life or honor. Although he never took a more defined oath, Raymond and Alexius remained on good terms. After the siege of Antioch in 1097-1098, Raymond opposed Bohemond's seizure of the city for himself. When the Crusaders gained control of Jerusalem, Raymond, noted for his piety and courage, was offered the title of king but refused the honor. During his time in the Middle East, Raymond waged war on Bohemond and was taken prisoner for a time by Tancred, Bohemond's regent in Antioch. Raymond spent the last years of his life trying to gain a foothold in Syria. He blockaded the port city of Tripoli in 1103 but died in 1105, unable to conquer the city. Raymond's descendants later ruled the County of Tripoli, the smallest of the Crusading states.

Richard I, the Lionheart (1157-1199)

The third child of Henry II of England and his queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Richard became king of England and lord of his father's territories in France in 1189. Richard soon departed England for the Holy Land on the Third Crusade. Along the way he joined up with the French king, Philip II Augustus, and together the two kings combined forces to besiege the coastal city of Acre. After their conquest of Acre in 1191, Richard marched south to the port city of Jaffa. Along the way, he engaged the Muslims in battle at Arsuf and forced them to retire. Never successful in taking Jerusalem, Richard negotiated a truce with the Muslim warrior Saladin in which both agreed to share rule over the Holy Land. He also strengthened the Crusader-held cities that guarded the route to Jerusalem. Richard and Saladin also agreed to allow Muslims and Christians the freedom to travel through Palestine. In 1192, Richard returned to England. On the return trip, he was taken prisoner by the duke of Austria who kept

the English king captive until a ransom was paid. Richard was released in 1194 and returned home. Richard did not spend much time in England, however. Suspicious of his brother John's treachery and mindful of Philip II Augustus' designs on his French holdings, Richard left for France. He spent the rest of his life waging war on the French king and ultimately regained all the lands and castles previously lost to Philip. During a siege, Richard was wounded by an arrow from a crossbow. He died of the resulting infection on April 6, 1199.

Saladin (1137/38-1193)

Saladin was born into a Kurdish family and rose to fame in Iraq and Syria. In 1156, Saladin was placed in charge of the security forces of Damascus, the capital of Syria and the main command center for Muslim military operations against the Crusaders. In a short time, he became the most important link between the Syrian leader Nur al-Din and his generals. Between 1164 and 1169 Saladin gained important experience as a general during military campaigns against the Fatimid rulers of Egypt. He became commander of the Syrian army in Egypt and was named vizier of the Fatimid caliph's lands. When Nur al-Din died in 1174, Saladin took control of Damascus. By 1186, he was lord of northern Syria, Iraq and eastern Anatolia. In July 1187, during the Third Crusade, Saladin and his army totally defeated the Crusaders at the Battle of Hittin. A few months later, the Crusader-held city of Jerusalem surrendered to Saladin. After unsuccessfully engaging the armies of Richard I in several battles, Saladin agreed to a truce with the English king in 1192. He died shortly thereafter. Although he failed to destroy the Crusaders and their fortified cities along the Mediterranean coast, Saladin's recapture of Jerusalem made him a hero in the Muslim world.

Urban II (1035-1099)

Urban, the pope who called forth the First Crusade, was born in France. His name was originally Odo. He studied at Rheims and became a monk at the monastery of Cluny, soon rising to the position of prior. Odo traveled to Rome where he became an assistant to Pope Gregory VII. In 1084 he was sent to Germany where he became involved in a dispute between the papacy and the German emperor Henry IV. Odo was elected pope in

1088 and took the name of Urban. As pope, Urban struggled for power with rivals and did not claim papal supremacy until 1093. Urban instituted many reforms and advertised them by traveling to different parts of Europe and speaking at councils of the entire population. He established diplomatic relations with the Byzantine emperor Alexius I Comnenus with whom he hoped to heal the division between the Eastern and Western Churches. In 1095, Urban preached the First Crusade at the Council of Clermont in France.

NAME _____

PERIOD _____ DATE _____

WHO'S WHO CRUSADE QUIZ

_____ - I was one of the leaders of the First Crusade; crowned king of the Crusader state of Jerusalem; I died in Egypt; my kingdom was the leading Crusader state.

_____ - I was a French leader in the Fourth Crusade; I agreed to put Alexis on the Byzantine throne, but I turned against the Byzantines; I did not get the throne at Constantinople, but was given Thessalonika; I was not happy.

_____ - I was king of France; deeply pious, I led the Seventh Crusade; I was the ideal of a Christian monarch, pious but also hardworking administrator and diplomat.

_____ - I was a charismatic preacher of the First Crusade; I rallied popular support for this war; poor peasants were attracted to me to join the People's Crusade; although the People's Crusade fell apart, I made it to Jerusalem and inspired the Crusaders.

_____ - I was Henry II's son; I was known for my bravery and was known as the "lion-hearted"; I negotiated a truce with Saladin over the Holy Lands.

_____ - I was the leader (doge) of Venice; I aided the Fourth Crusade's voyage to Constantinople in exchange for provisions; when they refused to repay, I asked them to seize Zara, my enemy, on the Adriatic Sea.

_____ - I was the Pope who called for the First Crusade; I had diplomatic relations with the Byzantine emperor in hopes of healing the division between the Eastern and Western Churches.

_____ - I was the Byzantine emperor who was at war with the Seljuk Turks; I asked the pope in Rome for help; I asked all the nobles passing through my soil to swear an oath of loyalty and return all Byzantine lands taken by the Turks back to me.

_____ - I was a Muslim against the Crusaders; I ruled Damascus during the Crusades; my general, Saladin, succeeded me as Muslim military leader.

_____ - I was the famous Muslim military leader who fought in the Third Crusade; I made a truce with Richard.

_____ - I was one of the leaders of the First Crusade; I seized Sicily; I captured Antioch and made it one of the first Crusader states.

_____ - I was the first great French nobles to take the cross; I was one of the chief leaders of the First Crusade; I was a main planner and organizer of the venture; I was offered the title king of Jerusalem, but refused it; I was from Toulouse, France.

_____ - I was a French leader in the first Crusade and a descendant of Charlemagne; I was called the "Defender of the Holy Sepulcher"; my domain included part of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Ramala, and the port of Jaffa.

_____ - I was one of the leaders of the First Crusade; I seized Sicily; I captured Antioch and made it one of the first Crusader states.

WORD BANK:

Alexius	Baldwin I of Jerusalem	Baldwin IX of Flanders	
Bohemond I of Sicily	Boniface	Dandolo	Godfrey
Louis IX	Nur al-Din	Peter the Hermit	Raymond of Toulouse
Richard	Saladin	Urban	