*Introductory reading

- Read the introductions to the Crusades, 1095-1204, and the Byzantine Empire, c.1040-1204.
- Annotate as you read - if you are unfamiliar with a historical term, name or event try to briefly define it in the margin.*

**The Byzantine Empire, c.1040-1204**

In 1041, Constantine IX became the Byzantine Emperor. Fearing for Byzantium's declining military power, important generals attempted a coup. Constantine IX barely survived, and, as a result, took an aggressively negative approach to the army. He starved it for funds and man-power, allowing peasants to buy their way out. The old Byzantine army based on Theme soldiers (in the Byzantine Empire, a *Theme* was a military unit stationed in a provincial area and by the 7th century the name was applied to large military districts formed as buffer territories against Muslim encroachments in Anatolia) and officers rising through the ranks and long years of training disappeared; emperors came to rely on foreign mercenaries of doubtful loyalty.

By the late 1050s, the eastern frontier was newly threatened. Muslim Turks had been migrating through the Islamic World from Iran westwards since the early 1000s. A Turkic Islamic state ruled by the Seljuk dynasty had occupied Baghdad in 1040s, and offshoots of it, as well as less disciplined, semi-nomadic Turcoman tribes, had begun incursions into Byzantine lands from the mid 1060s. The leaders in Constantinople belatedly realized that they had to strengthen their eastern defenses, and consented to the ascent of a military leader as emperor. Romanus IV Diogenes came to power in 1068, and gathered a mercenary army of Bulgars, Franks, Normans and others. He took it east to garrison the forts, but was ambushed in east-central Anatolia by Seljuk forces under Alp Arslan. The Byzantine forces were totally defeated. Romanus himself was taken into captivity, where he died. There was absolutely no Anatolian Byzantine army, and Turcoman tribesmen ranged freely and widely in Eastern and Central Anatolia for the rest of the century and beyond.

**The Byzantine Empire & the Islamic World**

From the mid 800s, the Islamic world was politically riven by rival states. Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad were increasingly unable to exert control over outlying governors, and by the 950s, were rulers only in name. Under the protection of Turco-Persian Buyid Amirs in their own capital, Abbasid territories no longer extended past Iraq. By 970, a rival polity emerged in North Africa. The Fatimids were a Shi'i political dynasty who soon occupied Egypt and moved into Syria as well. Thus, a political conflict carried heavy undertones of Sunnis versus Shi'is; sectarian conflict. An upshot was that the Abbasid forces, or the forces of their protectors, were no longer as able, or inclined, to pursue sustained offensives against Byzantium. Indeed, both the Fatimids and Buyids at times requested Byzantine assistance in their conflicts, and it was because of the political vacuum in the southeastern Anatolia-Syria-Lebanon region - the seam between Abbasids and Fatimids - that Byzantine Emperors were able to capture areas such as Antioch.

These favorable external conditions did not persist, especially in the East. Ever since the 900s, the Turks had been looming on the eastern fringes of the Islamic world and in the early 1000s a more serious Turkish migration into Islamic lands began. Based on armies of mounted light cavalry able to fire arrows while at a gallop, they bested the armies put against them. Under the Seljuk dynasty originating in Iran, they came through the Abbasid heartlands in the 1040s, reigning supreme in Baghdad by 1050. Now, there was a strong Sunni state to rival the Shi'ites in Egypt and Syria. Along with this polity came less disciplined Turcoman tribes, who the Seljuk sultans had trouble restraining. Indeed, the Seljuk sultan Alp Arslan had pursued peaceful relations with the Byzantines in the 1050s and 1060s so that he could shore up his position in Mesopotamia and go on the offensive against the Fatimids in Syria. The tribes, however, began plundering and pasturing in Asia Minor from the late 1050s. At times, segments of Turkic tribes were brought further into Anatolia when they were hired as mercenary soldiers by Byzantine generals. When these somewhat Islamized Turkic groups began to capture Byzantine posts and plunder Greek population centers, the Seljuk Sultan Alp Arslan was eventually forced to defend these kinsmen who now came under Byzantine military pressure.

**The Byzantine Empire and the Latin West**

In 1054 there occurred an event of extreme cross-cultural importance. Latin Christianity, whose spiritual leader was the Pope, had for the past two-hundred years taken a very different course from the Greek Orthodox Christianity of the Byzantine Empire. Whereas the Pope articulated a position of autonomy from, and even supremacy over, secular rulers in the West, the Byzantine Church was almost a department of state. Patriarchs were appointed by the Emperor, and carried out state policy, theological or otherwise. In addition, while the Pope saw himself as *the* vicar of Christ and leader of Christendom on earth, the Patriarch in Constantinople usually considered the Bishop of Rome as little more than a primus inter pares (first among equals). In a more concrete manner, Byzantium and the Papacy had conflicting goals in the Italian peninsula. While the Papacy wished to maintain and increase the power and size of the Papal States, Byzantine leaders had never given up on their shrinking possessions on the peninsula. This often brought the two into tension. By the 1050s, though, a new threat emerged, in the form of the Normans who controlled southern Italy. Pope Leo IX actually led an army against them in 1053, and was defeated and captured near Civitate. Supposedly, the Pope should have received Byzantine assistance--an impossibility given the (lack of) military policy in Constantinople. In any event, in 1054, a Papal legation headed by the anti-Greek Cardinal Humbert of Mourmoutiers was sent to Constantinople to deal with a few disagreements in doctrine, as well as the much more important matter of an anti-Norman alliance. The Patriarch, Michael Cerularius, was equally anti-Latin, and treated his colleagues as a superior would treat an irrelevant inferior. This infuriated the Papal legates. Over four months of no progress, relations deteriorated, and on July 16, 1054, Humbert and his followers excommunicated the Patriarch, and, by implication, the entire Eastern Church. Oddly enough, they did this at a time when Leo IX had died and a new Pope had not been elected. Still, though it was not seen as permanent - excommunications had occurred before - the 1054 Schism remained. The rift continues today.

**The Byzantine Empire, 1071-1204: Decay, Defeats, Latin Betrayal, and Survival**

The Battle of Manzikert in 1071 saw the Byzantines under the emperor Romanus IV Diogenes were defeated by the Seljuk Turks led by the sultan Alp-Arslan. It was followed by Seljuq conquest of most of Anatolia and marked the beginning of the end for the Byzantine Empire as a militarily viable state. The disastrous results of 1071 should not be surprising. Romanus' army was not even Greek in composition, and to the extent that it was coherent, it could not match the mobile, mounted forces of the Turks.

After the defeat at Manzikert, the Byzantine army was in tatters. The Emperor Romanus Diogenes had died in captivity, and his replacement Michael IV was incompetent. Also from this period begins increasing Western intrusion. A Norman adventurer Roussel was allowed into Anatolia as a mercenary with a force of Norman and Frankish knights to fight off Turcoman marauders. Instead, he set up his own short-lived state, harassing the Byzantines. At the same time, Byzantium was casting about for help. Preferential trade agreements were made with Venice, while the Empire itself was racked by another series of internal conflicts as claimants struggled for the throne. Ultimately the young general Alexius Comnenus took power in 1081, and spent the next years fighting off Norman incursions into Macedonia and Thrace under their leader Bohemond. In the early 1090s, he sent word to the Pope Urban II asking for some auxiliary forces to fight off the Seljuk Turks in eastern and central Anatolia, just as Michael IV had sent a similar request to Gregory VII in the 1070s. What he got was the relatively unruly First Crusade, none of whose warriors saw themselves as fighting to restore lands to the Byzantine state. Still, during the First Crusade, Alexius was able to restore some lands around western and southern Anatolia. Life was generally hard though for the average Byzantine. Nobles kept on usurping lands and military recruiters scoured the countryside for soldiers, further depleting the agricultural base of the empire. Additional soldiers were acquired by purchasing the services of Hungarian, German, Anglosaxon, and Russian mercenaries. As well, the Byzantine government cut the central payroll, farming out much of the bureaucracy. When he died in 1118, Alexius had provided stability, but glory was a thing of the past.

John ruled from 1118-1143. There were sporadic problems with the Normans invading Albania, and increasing commercial privileges were given to the Latin, Italian states. Venice in particular was enlisted to fight Normans. These Italian merchants were becoming essential for Byzantium's economic survival, the Greeks resented them. While John had tried to cancel their privileges, he was forced to back down when Venetian ships plundered the Byzantine coast. Manuel Comnenus (1143-1180) was able to arrest their leaders, ending the Venetians privileges, yet Byzantium needed the commodities, and the Emperor found he had to grant similar dispensations to the Pisans and Genoans. He also began inviting larger numbers of Latin, French aristocrats to settle in the Empire, giving them Anatolian and Thracian lands.

Manuel was somewhat of a tragic figure. On the one hand he was able to establish a suzerainty over Crusader states from the 1140s, taking back more lands around Antioch for the Empire. Unfortunately, it all fell apart in the 1170s. In 1176, Manuel lead one of his many expeditions to central Anatolia. This time he was resoundingly defeated at Myriocephalum by Kilij Arslan, Sultan of the Seljuks of Rum. Though Manuel was allowed to retreat, this signifies the final breaking of Byzantium militarily. The army was destroyed and never fully replaced. Manuel died in 1180, and was succeeded by a regency headed by Maria of Antioch. She relied on the Italian merchants and French aristocrats settled in Constantinople. She was overthrown in 1182 by Andronicus, and the capital was rocked by riots in which Greeks massacred Latin elites and merchants. Andronicus' reign was a disaster. In 1184 the Normans invaded western Greece, taking Thessalonica. Andronicus then executed his generals, after which the urban mob rose, murdering him. At the same time, Serb tribes rose in the Balkans. Upon Andronicus' death, the Bulgars rose yet again, re-establishing their old kingdom. In order to fight them Isaac Angelos (1185-1195) relied on imperial warlords, who encroached on the Emperor's power and on state finances even more. In 1195, Isaac was overthrown by his brother Alexius III. Hoping he would shore up support for his position, he offered to support German Henry VI's impending Crusade with financial and military contributions. His inability to do so combined with Western designs on Byzantium and internal court intrigue to unseat him and pave the way for the Latin sack of Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade from 1202-1204. Byzantine rulers were then ejected from their own capital. Baldwin of Flanders became 'Latin Emperor' of Caonstantinople, and was hated by the populace, as a Barbarian usurper.

**Commentary**

What stands out most here is the complete disintegration of Byzantine state and society. Good reasons are yet to be provided. Part of it, however, involves the unwillingness of Byzantine elites to unite in support of single emperors, as well as their reluctance to give up any of their prerogatives as holders of lands that oppressed peasants. Of course, by the 1100s, this may have been besides the point. The magnitude and speed of Turkic infiltration into Asia Minor by the 1110s - as far west as the Western Anatolian coastal mountains, in spite of Crusades - may have meant that the human and material basis for Byzantine survival was ebbing away. Increasingly, Byzantine aristocrats were reduced to bargaining for power and alliances with Turkic tribal leaders of the Seljuk state. Indeed, in typically prudent Byzantine fashion, Manuel was able to secure peaceful relations with the Seljuks through treaties in the 1150s and 1160s. Beyond this, though, the process of "De-Hellenization" and "Islamization" of Asia Minor was proceeding. As well, the gradual entry into the region of the institutions of Islam, its clerics and preachers meant that eventually, conversion to Islam was making the region part of the Muslim homeland. Byzantium in quite a short time was becoming less Greek, more Muslim, and more riven by the tensions of a large foreign mercenary army and increasing Latin encroachment.

That is the last point of significance in this era. Greek Byzantines had always felt culturally, politically, and even religiously superior to the West, whose kings and even clerics were the descendents of the barbarian tribes who wrecked the Roman society that Byzantium was preserving. For their part the Latins envied the material and intellectual wealth of the East, yet never trusted Byzantium. The political culture was much more subtle, and Byzntine Imperial willingness to engage in negotiations with the Muslims, or to ally with them if it served an Emperor's interests, almost smacked of infidelity to the Latin West. Indeed, no emperor had kindly received Crusading armies, having viewed them as a nuisance at best, and a dangerous horde at worst. Basically, the Western attitude was that the Byzantines were too sophisticated, to subtle, not sufficiently honest, always holding back, and perhaps in secret league with the Muslims. Beyond this, they wanted a piece of the legendary Byzantine wealth. Greeks, then, especially after 1071, resented the fact that they - the protectors of true civilization, ‘Romnanness’, and proper Christianity - had been forced to fight the long fight against Islam and to come to terms with it, while the West was imposing its armies, ideas, and now economic strangulation on a glorious culture.

#### **The Crusades: 1095-1204**

#### **Summary**

By 1094, Pope Urban II (1088-1099) received an appeal from Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus for military assistance against the Turks in Anatolia. Urban had done much to restore Papal prestige after Gregory VII and the Investiture Controversy. While engaged in a papal tour of French dioceses, he stopped at Clermont on 27 November 1095, and Preached the First Crusade. The Muslim victories against the Byzantines and their constriction of pilgrimage to Jerusalem were said to be a disgrace to Christianity. Instead of pursuing strife among themselves, western nobles and knights should turn their efforts outward to the enemies of Christianity and the oppressors of the Holy Land. Thus, the Pope called for an armed pilgrimage, and those dying in the blessed campaigns of liberation would receive a heavenly reward.

Urban had been targeting mostly French nobles, and had wanted a well-disciplined body of knights under control of a Papal legate. Others were immediately attracted, mostly through itinerant preachers. Contrary to the Pope's wishes, the Peasants' Crusade began first, in the spring of 1096. It was lead by the most popular itinerant preacher, Peter the Hermit. Passing through France into Germany, its impoverished adherents survived by gifts and plunder. Met in Germany by more adherents and a few knights, it proceeded to plunder and destroy Jewish communities, in Worms and Metz in particular. Upon reaching Hungary, the King Coloman would not tolerate their depredations, and routed a large segment of the force. When it arrived in tattered shape in Constantinople, the appalled Emperor ferried them across to Anatolia. The Turks soon annihilated them.

The knightly component of the Crusades was organized by the late summer of 1096. Henry IV of Germany and Philip I of France were excommunicated at the time, so the greatest kings of the West were not part of the Crusade. Urban appointed Adhemar, Bishop of Le Puy, as Papal legate and leader of the Crusader armies. The brothers of the kings of France and England - the 'second sons' - were prominent as Crusade leaders. These included Robert, duke of Normandy, and Hugh of Vermandois. The Flemish and northwestern Franks were led by Baldwin of Flanders and his brother Godfrey of Bouillon, the Duke of Lower Lorraine. Raymond de St. Gilles led the southern French knights, while Bohemond, son of Robert Guiscard, gave up battling in Italy to join the Crusade.

They then left for Constantinople in several waves. Godfrey led his troops - as well as their bloated baggage train containing mendicants, pilgrims, merchants, and even prostitutes - along the Danube, through Hungary, Bulgaria and on to Constantinople, barely avoiding serious entanglements with indigenous populations and warriors along the way. The Count of Toulouse fared much worse by taking a route through Italy, Venice, and along the Adriatic coast. On the way to Durazzo, the difficult terrain and war-like inhabitants caused his forces several losses as well as starvation. The Normans and northern French went through Italy, then crossed to Durazzo. When the whole host was arrived in Constantinople, Alexius did his best to get rid of them quickly. He quartered them outside of the city, supplying them with provisions and transportation to Asia Minor. He then told them to proceed along the southern coast of the peninsula, but they preferred to go right through its center. When they captured Nicaea in May 1097, the Emperor occupied it himself, claiming the surrounding areas for Byzantium.

At this point the Western army consisted, at the most, of 3,000 knights and 12,000 foot-soldiers. It split into two columns that were mostly autonomous. The northern force was under Robert of Normandy and Bohemond, while the southern group was commanded by Godfrey of Bouillon and Raymond of Toulouse. They soon learned why the Greeks had told them to avoid the interior - the Greek-Turkish combat, as well as Turcoman raiding, had denuded the countryside of provisions, and retreating Turks burned all else. Soon famine and drought was eating away that the armies. On July 1 at Dorylaeum in Western Anatolia, Turks and Crusaders met in battle. Bohemond's forces were initially bested by the light cavalry of the Turks. Much more agile than the knights and infantry, they were able to wear them down with arrow-fire for almost the entire day; by the afternoon, Turkish raiders were plundering Bohemond's base camp. Suddenly Godfrey's mounted knights appeared at the tops of the surrounding ridge, and the Turks were defeated by the two converging crusader columns. The victory at Dorylaeum cheered the crusaders and caused the Turks to avoid further contests at all costs, choosing instead to harass the columns as they moved east. When they reached Edessa in eastern Anatolia, Baldwin decided to break from the Crusade and establish his fief there. The rest of the host continued on to Antioch, where they settled down to a seven-month siege, and a mutual war of attrition with the Turks. Though the Christians defeated the two Seljuk relief armies, they were without siege engines or catapults, and were able to do little to undermine the city's defenses. Ultimately, though, Bohemond convinced one the of the Muslim tower guards to surrender it to him, and then proposed to his fellow knights that the first one to definitively establish a foothold in the city would have it as his own possession. Bohemond of course was the winner, and a few days after he assumed the title of prince, another Turkish relief force arrived under the amir Kiboga. The erstwhile besiegers were now under siege themselves. Under tremendous physical privation the crusaders barely survived, until the supposed discovery of a holy relic - the lance that had pierced the side of Christ during the Crucifixion - encouraged the Crusader host. On 28 June 1098, they burst out of the city and defeated the Turks.

Bohemond remained behind, and the crusaders continued the saga. They reached Jerusalem in June 1099. After a month-long siege they broke through, massacring the majority of the inhabitants - Muslim, Christian, and Jewish.The Crusaders now found that they needed to appoint a leader to administer their new conquest. Since Raymond of Toulouse and Bohemond were rivals, neither could become the ruler of Jerusalem. Thus, the nobles settled on Godfrey. Avoiding the title 'king', he did homage to the city's Catholic patriarch as 'defender of the Holy Sepulcher'. His brother Baldwin kept Edessa, just as Bohemond was left Antioch. Raymond became the count of Tripoli. A year later, Godfrey died, so Baldwin succeeded to the rule of Jerusalem (1100-1118). With the help of Italian naval squadrons from Venice, Pisa, and Genoa, he captured the Muslim coastal towns of Palestine, then continued to divide the area into fiefs, keeping Jerusalem, Tyre, and Acre as royal domain.

The Muslim reaction took more than a generation to emerge, and this was the high point of the crusading states. From the 1140s, though, it was uninterruptedly downhill. The Seljuk ruler of Mosul, Zengi, ultimately undertook the duty of *Jihad* to expel the infidel from Muslim lands. In 1144, he recaptured Edessa, shocking the West and the Pope into calling for the Second Crusade. Bernard of Clairvaux was tireless in his preaching, and convinced Conrad III of Germany as well as Louis VII of France to lead armies east. Louis was not able to attract many French counts to his host, though, and Conrad was at that time feuding with German princes. Also, Roger II of Sicily was at that time in a power struggle with the Byzantine Emperor Michael, who was an ally of Conrad. This doomed the Crusade from the start. Just outside Nicaea, Conrad's army was nearly annihilated, forcing the king to set out for Palestine by boat with the remains of his forces. Louis marched through Asia Minor, but lost much of his forces and most of his supplies when attacked by Turks at the passes of Laodicea. He then sailed for Antioch, leaving his infantry behind, which was soon massacred by Muslim forces. When they met in Jerusalem the two kings decided to lay siege to the Seljuk stronghold at Damascus. When Conrad and Louis began to quarrel, though, Conrad returned to Germany and the Crusade fizzled, having accomplished nothing.

Within two decades, the West's greatest crusader-period nemesis emerged as a powerful Muslim leader. Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, known as Saladin, was a Kurdish warlord of the Damascus ruling household. Sent to wrest Egypt from the Shi'i Fatimids in 1169, he had been able to take Syria for himself as well by 1174. By the 1180s, both Egypt and Syria were his, and he took *Jihad,* or counter-Crusade, very seriously. In 1187, he decided to attack the Kingdom of Jerusalem directly, beginning with a siege of Tiberius. Jerusalem's king, Guy de Lusignon, then depleted all the garrisons of the realm in order to muster forces to meet Salah al-Din in battle. Refusing to await his enemy in well-watered and provisioned terrain, Guy marched forward into the desert east of Tiberius, finally halting at Hattin. They were exhausted and starving, and the Ayyubid forces on the hills above them harassed them all night. The next day the battle proper began, and Salah al-Din was soon victorious. Only Raymond of Tripoli escaped, the rest of the army destroyed. The Latin kingdom was destroyed as a military challenge, and Ayyubid forces took all of Palestine and Syria's interior, including Jerusalem. Only a small coastal littoral remained to the Christians. A Third Crusade was promptly preached in 1188.

Though the kings of France, England, and Germany all took the cross, only Frederick I could set out by 1189. He was a formidable adversary for the Turks and Ayyubids. Employing infantry with long-range bows to hold off the mounted Muslim archers, he also understood how to best deploy cavalry to charge lesser- armed opponents. Throughout his progress across Anatolia, he was able to fight off Turkish advances, and was able to storm Konya, the central Anatolian capital of the Seljuks of Rum. Shortly thereafter, however, Frederick drowned in the Calycadnus River. At this point Richard the Lionheart and Philip II Augustus arrived in the East. Arguing with each other incessantly, they were able to see to the capture of the port of Acre, after which Philip returned to France. Richard was a worthy opponent to Salah al-Din. The latter was not able to recover Acre, while the former marched within sight of Jerusalem, but was not strong enough to take it by force. Negotiating a truce with the Sultan, Richard ensured that Christian pilgrims would be allowed free access to Jerusalem, and that the port of Jaffa and other coastal towns were returned to Latin nobles.

#### **Commentary**

A military expedition to a destination thousands of miles from home was at first glance an undertaking beyond the capacity of medieval states, or alliances of states. When we consider that it was to be led not by kings of unitary polities, but by feudal nobles under the overall command of the Papacy, the adventure seems even more unlikely to have succeeded. But it did, and much of this had to do with what people thought they were doing when they left France, Italy, or even Germany from 1095 onwards. First let us consider the Papal attitude. What did Pope Urban II believe he was calling for art Clermont in 1095?

For Pope Urban, the Crusade was a natural outgrowth of church reform and previous papal policy. Ironically, no exact transcription exists of his speech at Clermont. A few important questions present themselves: 1) What kind of army did he want, and who was to lead it? 2) What was the nature of the campaign to be? 3) Was Jerusalem mentioned as a target? 4) What was the benefit to those involved? 5) Was his idea novel? Regarding the first question it is perfectly clear that in his mind, the Pope was to be the commander-in-chief of the Crusading Movement, with a papal legate the in-theater commander. While recognizing the martial expertise of the knights, he did not want a secular cast to be thrown over the venture. This partly explains his unpreparedness to lift the ban of excommunication on European monarchs who might 'hijack' the Crusade.

The second question gets us into speculative territory, as we must rely on reports of the Clermont sermon written some time later. It seems clear that he was calling for a war of liberation. This is on multiple levels. In line with the 'Peace of God' and 'Truce of God' initiatives meant to reduce feudal warfare in Europe, it could be said that one aspect of the liberation was to rescue Europe from the martial excesses of warriors by directing it outwards. In more concrete terms, it is related that he spoke explicitly of liberation of captive Christians and eastern churches, most likely intending Byzantium. Of course, by going to Byzantium's aid, the Crusade could go a great distance to healing the rift between the Catholic Church of Rome and the Orthodox Church of Constantinople going back to 1054, thus liberating Christendom as a whole from dissent. This aspect of liberation brings us to our third question, regarding Jerusalem. When Alexius Comnenus had sent word to Urban for help, the Byzantine Emperor definitely did not have Jerusalem in mind, and there are those historians who have claimed that Jerusalem was not Urban's target either. Instead, according to this approach, Jerusalem became the goal only in the masses minds, including noble leaders as well as peasants and other aspirants. Thus, the Crusade was 'hijacked' from the beginning. Other writers do think that Jerusalem was Urban's stated goal. Jerusalem became increasingly important to eleventh-century Christians, lay and clerical alike. As well, it is possible that the political friction between Fatimids and Seljuks - along the seam of Syria and Palestine - may have made pilgrimage more difficult for Europeans. Furthermore, in charters written by people making over their goods to heirs just before departing on Crusade - and these were documents usually witnessed by clerics - Jerusalem was explicitly mentioned. The issue still remains open, but the pilgrimage aspect of the Crusades sheds some light on the matter. Urban definitely did perceive the venture as a pilgrimage of sorts, and procedures associated with a pilgrimage attended departure on Crusade - Church protection or disposition of properties left behind, the taking of avow and the wearing of the Cross, as well as the undertaking of pilgrimage-specific devotional exercises while on the trip. Thus, a pilgrimage with the ultimate goal being Jerusalem is quite plausible. In brief, then, it is likely that Urban and his cardinals envisioned an *armed pilgrimage of able-bodied males to liberate Christian peoples and places, culminating with Jerusalem.* Through this, Christendom as a whole would be liberated. As regards the benefit to those involved Urban is understood to have mentioned *indulgence.* This is a technical concept whereby the penance performed by the sinner would outweigh the punishment that would be meted out in the afterlife, and thus acquire great merit in God's eyes. In essence, the idea was that the Crusade would constitute such an arduous, dangerous undertaking that it would merit an indulgence.

What was new in all of this? Actually very little. Gregory VII, as well as Urban himself, had referred to the ongoing Reconquista as a war of liberation, and had often used terms smacking of holiness and Christian duty when referring to it. That Urban preferred Spanish knights to remain behind fighting the nearer infidel indicates that he saw the Spanish wars as analogous to a Crusade. That war could be holy was a theological idea also going back to Gregory, when his theological advisers had found in St. Augustine the notion that certain types of combat were commanded by God. Of course, the whole idea of getting knights out of Europe for domestic peace's sake was part of the reforming Church's program in terms of the 'Peace of God'. And again, liberation had always been part of the reforming plank - liberation of Christians and Christian locales abroad is not so different from liberation of Spain, or the liberation of the Church as a whole from secular rule - the aspiration from Leo IX onwards. In the same vein, the very idea that the Church could lead a military campaign is in line with the pretensions of Papal power in the temporal world, a worldly activism to improve the religion's lot. What distinguishes Urban, then, is his *synthesis* of ideas, and his papacy's ability to make good on them.

How did the secular participants perceive it? First, it is most likely the case that on the formal level, as well as on the emotive level for several, they had similar motives as the Church's in terms of liberating Christians and Christian places. The religious frame of mind took pilgrimage and the ability to earn indulgences very seriously. At the same time, there were likely other more temporal motives. Several of the crusader leaders - not to mention the lesser knights - were 'second sons', those male members of feudal society usually left out of primogeniture-based inheritances, or given a very small portion. Going on Crusade could at the least increase the esteem in which these warriors were held back home, and at the most, they could perhaps attain their own material base - witness the creation of secular Crusader kingdoms and counties, complete with fiefs and feudal political structures. This is an important point. Rather than military administration, or even clerical administration perhaps quite appropriate to the Holy Land, the Crusader polities were reproductions of the feudal states in Europe - France, to be exact. This transplantation of a western European political system to the Middle East is one of the most intriguing aspects of crusader politics. It indicates the more worldly interests quite well. In short, on the popular level, religious motivation mixed quite thoroughly and indistinguishably with secular, mundane desires, such that while plundering merrily away in Constantinople, crusader leaders could portray and perceive their actions as religiously legitimate, even if it was a further hijacking of the Crusades.

Thus, the Crusades capture so much of the High middle Ages political, religious, and social trends. Two questions persist. How were the Crusaders able to defeat forces so much better adapted to Middle Eastern fighting, and who were the real winners of the Crusades? The first question relates to the internal political situation in the Islamic world. The Fatimids in Egypt were the confirmed enemies of the Seljuks in Anatolia and the Fertile Crescent, for political as well as religious reasons. Thus, as long as the crusading armies were passing through Seljuk lands, the Fatimids, who controlled Jerusalem at the time, were unconcerned and unwilling to take the necessary measures, even as Western armies passed through Syria. Likewise, the Seljuks were no longer concerned once the feudal host had left their domains. Thus, the political semi-vacuum of Palestine worked to Crusaders' fortune, and once they were in Fatimid lands, the Egyptian rulers a) still did not feel threatened in Cairo, and b) did not see the crusader warriors as effective militarily. It is, then no coincidence that the tide turned against the Crusades at that very juncture when Muslim leaders began to create a more unified western Islamic polity by conquering fellow Islamic states, from Zengi onwards. Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi was the first to restore political unity to the entire Syria-Palestine-Egypt region, and was also the Muslim leader to eject crusaders from Jerusalem. Finally, as regards the military success of the Crusades, while the Seljuks were more effective at cavalry hit-and-run, and much more mobile than the Christians, whenever the crusaders could get Muslim opponents into set battles, their heavier armor and weapons always won the day.

So, who were the real winners? The crusaders' states were ultimately totally destroyed, by the 1290s. By that time, Islamic lands were subject to Mongol invasions. But, where were the Italian maritime states? Throughout the Crusades, they used their unique role to grow commercially and politically. By the 1230s, they had bases, extraterritorial enclaves, throughout the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean, which just increased their political power as it increased the indispensability to material - and manpower-short crusader leaders. In retrospect, cities like Venice - it survived to the eighteenth century - were the real winners of the Crusades.