

# Timeline of Events

**August 19, 1071** The Seljuk Turk leader **Alp Arslan** defeats the army of the Byzantine Empire at the Battle of Manzikert, establishing Turkish power in Asia Minor and in the Middle East, leading to the First Crusade.

**1093** The Byzantine emperor **Alexius I Comnenus** sends a letter to the Catholic pope, asking for assistance against the Muslim Turks, who are threatening to overrun Constantinople and already have attacked the Holy Land in Palestine and sacked Jerusalem.

**November 28, 1095** **Pope Urban II** calls for a holy war, or Crusade, against the Muslims in the Holy Land and Constantinople at the Council of Clermont.

**Spring 1096** The poor traveling religious man **Peter the Hermit** preaches the Crusade to the people of Europe and mounts the tragic “People’s Crusade” to Constantinople.

**1096–98** The Byzantine princess **Anna Comnena** depicts the early stages of the First Crusade in her history, *The Alexiad*.

- July 15, 1099** The leader of the First Crusade, **Godfrey of Bouillon**, captures Jerusalem. All the Muslims in the city are slaughtered.
- 1118** The crusader **Hugh de Payens** forms the Knights Templars, which becomes one of the first military orders of the church. Its mission is to battle Muslims, or the infidel (unbeliever), in the Middle East.
- 1143** At the death of her husband, King Fulk of Anjou, **Melisende** becomes queen of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, serving for nine years, until her son Baldwin III takes over. She is one of the most powerful women during the time of the Crusades and sees the power of the Crusader states diminish as the Muslims begin to organize against them.
- March 31, 1146** Preaching at Vézelay, France, **Saint Bernard of Clairvaux** calls for the Second Crusade to battle the rising power of Islam in the Holy Land.
- 1148–49** The queen of France, **Eleanor of Aquitaine**, and her husband, Louis VII, take part in the unsuccessful Second Crusade.
- 1159** **Benjamin of Tudela**, a Spanish rabbi, sets out on his travels, documenting Jewish living conditions during the time of the Crusades in *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*.
- 1169** The Spanish Arab philosopher and physician **Averroës** begins his commentaries on the works of Greek philosopher Aristotle, forming a bridge between the classical age of the Greeks, the Arab/Islamic world, and the Christian West, as Crusaders bring such scholarship and learning home with them.
- 1185** The Syrian nobleman **Usamah ibn Munqidh** begins his memoirs, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades*. This autobiography documents everyday life in the Middle East from the First Crusade until just before the Third Crusade, which began in 1189.
- October 2, 1187** The great Muslim military leader **Saladin** rallies all of Islam to the  *jihad* , or holy war, against the

Christian Crusaders and captures Jerusalem. This leads to the Third Crusade.

- 1190** The famous Spanish Jewish scholar **Maimonides** writes *The Guide to the Perplexed*, an attempt to balance the work of Greek philosophy with Jewish religion. Intellectual life in the Middle East continues amid the disruption of the Crusades.
- 1192** The leader of the radical Shiite Muslim sect the Assassins, **Rashid al-Din Sinan**, dies at his mountain fortress in Syria. His fanatical followers, the *hashashin*, continue to fight both Crusaders and other Muslims for control in the Middle East.
- 1192** The king of England, **Richard I, the Lionheart**, concludes a truce with the Muslims that ends the unsuccessful Third Crusade.
- 1198** Pope **Innocent III**, calls for a new Crusade to the Holy Land, resulting several years later in the Fourth Crusade.
- 1202** The Crusaders of the Fourth Crusade, encouraged by **Alexius IV Angelus**, the next in line to become Byzantine emperor, sack Constantinople.
- 1219** During the siege of the Egyptian city of Damietta in the Fifth Crusade, **Saint Francis of Assisi** attempts to convert the Egyptian sultan to Christianity.
- 1221** The Egyptian leader **Sultan al-Malik al-Kamil** defeats the Christian soldiers of the Fifth Crusade at the Battle of Mansurah.
- February 18, 1229** Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, **Frederick II**, reclaims Jerusalem by treaty and diplomacy during the Sixth Crusade.
- May–July 1250** **Shajarat al-Durr**, a Mamluk, or slave, who rose from being a member of the Egyptian sultan's harem to becoming his favorite wife, is appointed sultana, or queen, of Egypt, one of only a few medieval Muslim women to attain such power. She also helps command the Muslim armies that defeat the Seventh Crusade.

**September 1260** The invading Mongol army is defeated at Ayn Jalut by **al-Zahir Baybars** and his Egyptian Mamluk army. Baybars thereafter becomes sultan of Egypt and pushes the Crusaders into their final strongholds in Palestine.

**August 25, 1270** King **Louis IX** of France dies at the outset of what was planned as the Eighth Crusade. His death ends the Crusader movement in Europe.