

PART 1: THE CRUSADER STATES AND OUTREMER, c1071–1149

1 The origins of conflict and the First Crusade, c1071–99



In this chapter, we will examine the power of the Christian church throughout medieval Europe, the restrictions placed upon it by secular rulers, its rising influence, and its relations with Byzantium. We will then investigate the role of the Seljuk Turks in creating the conditions for a crusade. Finally, we will consider the motives of the Pope in calling the crusade, and of the crusaders themselves for going, and we will look at the course of the crusade and its impact by 1099 on the Muslim Near East, the Byzantine Empire and the Latin west.

We will look into the:

- Investiture Contest and Gregorian Reform
- rise of the Seljuk Turks and the impact this had on Asia Minor and Syria
- internal problems of the Byzantine Empire
- aims and objectives of the papacy c1095
- reasons for going on crusade
- reasons for the success of the First Crusade.

A/AS Level History for AQA: **The Age of the Crusades, c1071–1204****ACTIVITY 1.1**

Use either the image of the Chaldon Doom Painting or research your own:

1. Annotate what is in the picture.
2. Explain what it says about the role of the medieval church.
3. Explore your local area to find a doom painting and investigate its history.



Figure 1.1: The Doom Painting at St Peter and St Paul's Church in Chaldon, Surrey is from the twelfth century and clearly shows the damned at the bottom.

Christianity in western Europe

The role of the Church

The Medieval Church was an all-powerful, international institution: Europe was bound by its rules, popes and bishops anointed kings and Doom paintings reminded individuals what awaited the sinner in the afterlife. The unexplained was explained through miracles and society worked because people knew their place under God. Sometimes the position of the Pope came under challenge throughout this period often supported by one of the most powerful rulers of the period: the Holy Roman Emperor.

The position of Holy Roman Emperor emerged from the time of Charlemagne, Charles the Magnificent, King of the Franks and the formation of France and Germany in the ninth century. Charlemagne controlled an area of Europe that covered modern France, Germany and northern Italy. He styled himself as a Roman Emperor and, with the support of the Pope, added 'Holy' to his title. Under his children and grandchildren, the empire split in two, creating the kingdoms of the Franks and Germans. The medieval kings of France and Germany trace their ancestry back to Charlemagne. Subsequent German kings insisted on the title of 'Holy Roman Emperor' but needed the support of the Pope to achieve its use.

The relationship between the Pope and the **nobility** of Europe was important. Church appointments (investitures) were the responsibility of the church, but the right to appoint to lucrative posts was often sold to the ruling nobility. This practice, called simony, gave the nobility much needed income, and careers in the church gave second sons in noble families a secure future. Appointments within the church were controlled by the nobility and were sold rather like stocks and shares are today: this brought income to the seller as a fee was paid to him and income to the purchaser in the form of tithes. Unfortunately for them, simony was against **canon law** and the time was right to do something about ending it.

The rising influence of the papacy

Medieval thinkers often saw power as being divided between 'spiritual' power and 'earthly' power. Few in medieval Europe questioned the Pope as the spiritual leader of western Christendom, able to make decisions on matters of religion about what was and was not acceptable in the Catholic Church. It was far less clear whether or not the Pope held *earthly* power. Could the Pope intervene to tell kings how to run their kingdoms? Could a Pope tell a king what to do? This issue was all the more problematical in the Holy Roman Empire: was the *Holy* Roman Emperor subject to the demands of the Pope? This came to a head in the second half of the eleventh century. In 1056, at a time when nobles in the Holy Roman Empire were becoming keen to assert their independence from the Emperor, a six-year-old boy inherited the throne. He became Henry IV and spent his reign fighting to keep his title and maintain control over his nobles. One of his most difficult fights, however, was against the **papacy** in what is known as the Investiture Contest or Investiture Controversy.

The Church Reform Movement

The controversy developed over whether or not the nobility had the right to appoint individuals to church positions. Church reformers seized the opportunity presented by a child-king in the Holy Roman Empire to take back the power of investiture to church positions from the nobility. Over the next decade a series of declarations were made, including the creation of the **College of Cardinals** to elect future popes. The attack on simony had begun. However, Henry, now a young man, continued to appoint his own bishops. This came to a head in 1073 when Pope Gregory VII **excommunicated** Henry. Gregory could count on the support of the **barons** in the Holy Roman Empire, who

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wanted a weaker emperor so they could seize royal holdings and build forts. Gregory had also managed to negotiate with the Normans of Sicily for reinforcements, and these proved very useful. This combination of forces made Henry back down and, in what is known as Henry's 'Walk to Canossa', he was absolved. Henry was made to wear a hair shirt and stand in the snow barefoot in the middle of winter for three days as penance before Gregory gave him absolution.

In late 1084, Pope Gregory was under pressure from the leaders of the people of Rome who disapproved of his Norman allies' methods in fighting against Henry. Rome in the late spring of 1084 was in carnage: Gregory had needed to escape with the help of Robert Guiscard's Normans and Clement III was now trying to install himself as anti-pope. When Gregory died in 1085, he was not broken but a 'disappointed, disillusioned man'.¹ Norwich asserts that despite the state Rome was in, the Church had 'shown her teeth; future emperors would defy her at their peril'.² The Investiture Contest shows that, after decades of **secular** rulers investing and making money from church appointments, the popes of the late 11th century were becoming more powerful.

Following Gregory's death, Abbot Desiderius was persuaded to leave his safe monastery at Monte Cassino, where he had developed its influence as a centre of learning over 27 years, to become Pope Victor III. It had taken a year and Victor managed four days in Rome before serious rioting broke out. Ten months later, Victor was **consecrated** in Rome; he lasted another month, fled back to Monte Cassino and died two months later. It was into this environment that Odo de Lagery, cardinal-bishop of Ostia (a suburb of Rome), and previously **legate** in Germany, would emerge as Pope Urban II, a pope best remembered for calling the First Crusade.³ Urban II was a true **Gregorian reformer**. He was also a realist and recognised that he would need Norman help to succeed in asserting his position as pope. It took him six years to reach Rome. Once installed, he opened diplomatic relations with the Byzantine Emperor, Alexius Komnenus.

It is worth spending time trying to understand the situation that successive popes found themselves in with regard to the Holy Roman Emperor and the people of Rome. By bringing in the Normans to fight on their side, popes Gregory and Urban had begun to establish the idea of an army fighting for them. Previous popes were no strangers to battles but now the papacy was getting stronger and asserting itself above the power of kings.

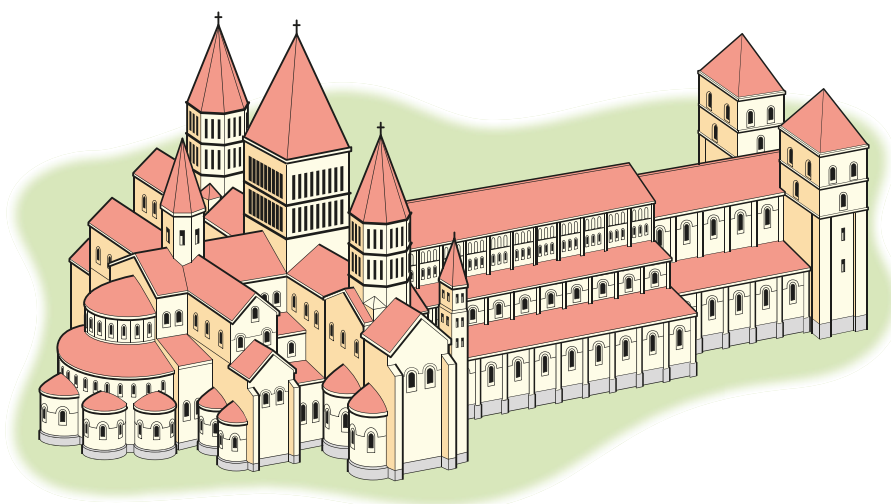


Figure 1.2: The Abbey at Cluny during the medieval period was one of the largest enclosed spaces on earth.



Key term

Cardinals were and still are senior figures in the Catholic Church. The **College of Cardinals'** role is to advise the pope on important matters and elect a new pope when a vacancy arises. Under the Gregorian Reforms it was only the College of Cardinals that was allowed to elect a new pope, a measure designed to reduce the power of kings.



Key term

Urban was a **Gregorian reformer** and key adviser to Pope Gregory VII at the beginning of the 1080s. From this time he developed an understanding of the papal reform movement and would continue the reforms already in motion, effectively placing the Pope's position above that of secular rulers.

ACTIVITY 1.2

Using the information from this section and referring to Figure 1.2 assess the power of the medieval church.

ACTIVITY 1.3

Use specific examples from this book and your own research to produce a mind map that represents the main features of medieval western European society. Include the following branches: religion, politics, economy and society (alternatively, work in groups of four on one branch each and share research to make a combined mind map).

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ACTIVITY 1.4

Begin an A–Z card index of the main people, places and events as you learn about during the course of your A Level. Each card should include basic details of the person, place or event and be colour coded for ease of use. Alternatively, create a digital index and include maps, paintings and other details all hyperlinked in one document.

Islam c1071

Muslim expansion

Following the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Islam split in two. One group of followers, the Sunni Muslims, asserted that **caliphs** should be democratically elected as the first four caliphs were. Another group, the Shi'a Muslims, asserted that while caliphs could be democratically elected only descendants of the Prophet could be **imams**. By 1095 the two different branches of Islam had control of vast swathes of land in the Near East.

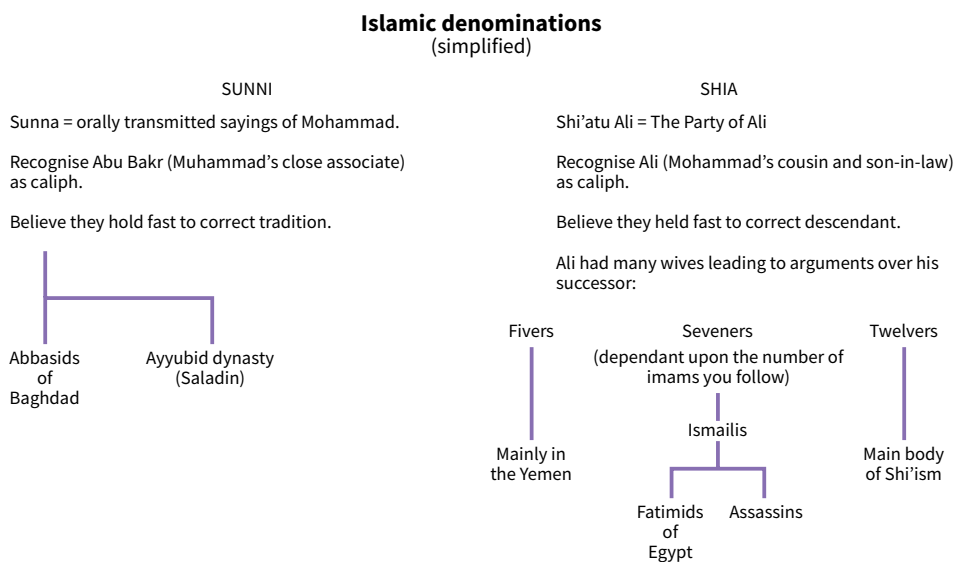


Figure 1.3: The split between Sunni and Shi'a.

Islamic society and economy

Since the birth of Islam the faith had spread out of the east to North Africa and into the Iberian peninsula. In fact, under the leadership of Abd-al-Rahman, Islam had come close to defeating 'French' forces led by Charles Martel at Tours. This highlights just how far Islam had spread within one hundred years of the prophet Muhammad's death.

Islamic cities were bigger and more 'civilised' than their European counterparts. Larger ones numbered in their 100 000s (such as Baghdad with a population of around 800 000) while only Constantinople could rival this with perhaps 500 000 and this was not strictly speaking western. By contrast, London and Paris may have had 20 000 people living in them making them similar in size to Jerusalem.

Islamic towns performed a variety of functions, including acting as the trade centre (market), a sacred centre, a transport hub, a garrison town or administration centre. Obviously, bigger towns and cities would have a combination of these functions. Furthermore, a cosmopolitan mix of people would populate them: Muslims, Jews and Christians, Arabs, Turks and Greeks as well as Africans, Slavs and Europeans. Non-Muslims living in Muslim-held territory were required to pay a tax called the Jizya. This served to show the payers' submission to Muslim rule and allowed them to practise their own faith while receiving protection from the rulers.

As with Europe, Islamic wealth was based on an agrarian economy with the production of foodstuffs meaning that land was key. Typical goods for sale were spices and cloth

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Excerpt

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while incoming goods from Europe included fur and timber. A flourishing trade in European slaves also existed.

All in all, Islamic society can be seen to be advanced by European standards. Cobb's assessment was that 'the Islamic world, by contrast [to the developing region of Europe] seemed the very model of civilisation: it was wealthy, ordered, enlightened, imperial, and protected by a merciful God'.⁴ However, he does add that it is an unfair comparison given the relative sizes of the two faiths' influence.⁵

Islamic politics

'There is no ruler without an army; and there is no army without revenues; and there are no revenues without cultivation; and there is no cultivation without equity and good governance'.⁶ This is the 'Circle of Equity' and neatly summarises what it takes to be a good ruler of an Islamic society. At the top of that society was the caliph who, by the age of the crusades, was no more than a symbolic figurehead but a potent one, nonetheless.

The Umayyad dynasty that lasted from the 7th to the 8th centuries was overthrown in Syria by the Abbasids and from 750 their centre of power was Baghdad. The Umayyad dynasty almost died out but a new Umayyad caliph emerged in Spain (al-Andalus). Furthermore, a Shi'a caliphate had emerged following the conquest of northern Africa (modern-day Tunisia) and pushed on to Egypt. From their base in Cairo they would jostle for supremacy in Sicily, Syria and Palestine. Therefore, on the eve of the crusades two rival Muslim power bases existed and they did not co-operate.

The rise of the Seljuk Turks

A further Muslim group was the Seljuk Turks, who were recent converts to Islam and staunchly Sunni. They had been the dominant power in the region since the mid-11th century. They had created a power base in Iran and Iraq and then consolidated and expanded this into central and southern Syria by the 1070s. By the end of the 1080s their hold on the region had extended to northern Syria. Sulayman and then Malik Shah exerted power over a wide area (see section 'The impact of defeat in the Battle of Manzikert'). Malik Shah's brother, Tutush, continued the family business in the north until his death in 1095. His sons, Ridwan of Aleppo and Duqaq of Damascus, argued between themselves, which allowed Kerbogha of Mosul to become the pre-eminent power in northern Syria.

The Danishmends controlled north and eastern Anatolia, while the south and west became the **Sultanate** of Rum under Kilij Arslan (Sulayman's son, imprisoned by Malik Shah and released on his death). The struggle for control between these rival powers would have consequences for the progression of the crusaders as they crossed Anatolia.

The authority of the Seljuk Turks rested entirely on their martial ability. Well-garrisoned towns ruled by warlords kept control over the local populations, and this was essential, as the Seljuks were at odds with most of their subjects on religious grounds. They were fiercely orthodox Sunni while the majority of the peasants they ruled were Christians or Shi'a Muslim. The Fatimid Caliphate, to the south and also Shi'a Muslim, relied on a **mercenary** army; their soldiers came from the upper Nile region or were slaves (Mamluks). The **vizier** of Egypt, al-Afdal, had successfully taken Jerusalem for the Fatimids in 1098.

Christopher Tyerman asserts that the land fought over by the crusaders was not of great importance to Baghdad, the centre of Sunni power. When the crusaders arrived, they were not seen as a distinctive new threat but as 'Byzantine mercenaries [who] fitted easily into a world dominated by armies of foreign hirelings ... The First Crusade was well suited to contemporary Near Eastern politics'.⁷

ACTIVITY 1.5

Use specific examples from this book and your own research to produce a mind map that represents the main features of medieval Islamic society. Include the following branches: religion, politics, economy and society (alternatively, work in groups of four on one branch each and share research to make a combined mind map).

The Byzantine Empire up to 1071

The partition of the Roman Empire in 395 created a western and an eastern empire. In reality, this had been a lengthy process, begun by Diocletian in the 3rd century and not fully realised for almost another century. Following a series of civil wars, Diocletian recognised that one person could not rule the whole empire, and two centres held sway: Rome in the west and Byzantium in the east. In 330 **Byzantium** had become Constantinople, in honour of Emperor Constantine, and ruled over a largely Greek-speaking population. When the western Roman Empire collapsed it gave way to an influx of Germanic tribes, who were gradually Christianised over a period of several hundred years (including during the crusading period). As we have seen, Charlemagne established himself as the first Roman emperor in the west for three hundred years. The eastern empire, however, had not suffered at the hands of the barbarians in quite the same fashion, and had survived. In fact, it reconquered some of the lands in North Africa lost by the western empire. During the reign of Emperor Justinian I in the 6th century, the Byzantine Empire had regained, at least in part, some of the power and glory associated with ancient Rome. At its greatest extent the empire stretched from the southern tip of modern Spain in the west to Egypt and Syria in the east and to the Black Sea in the north, and included Anatolia, Greece and Italy.

By the mid-11th century, the empire was under a threefold threat: the Normans were taking advantage of rivalries in southern Italy and were challenging the empire for control of the area; the Pecheneg tribe based around the Black Sea was raiding inland, particularly around the Balkans; and the Seljuk Turks, bands of warrior tribesmen, were sweeping in from the east through Anatolia, and beginning to make inroads there. Byzantium dealt badly with these threats. By 1071, the Normans had taken Sicily and parts of southern Italy, creating a power-base that was used to harass the empire. Bribery was used to buy off the Pechenegs. It was, however, the attempt to deal with the threat from the Seljuk Turks that caused the greatest upheaval.

The impact of defeat in the Battle of Manzikert

In 1071 Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes took decisive action against the Turks and rode ahead of an army to do battle with them near the fort of Manzikert in Eastern Anatolia. Romanos badly underestimated the size of the enemy force and the ensuing battle ended in humiliating defeat for him. Most of Anatolia was lost. This caused a mass influx of Byzantines to Constantinople out of fear. The mass migration to Constantinople, combined with conscription into the army to fight the disastrous battles against the Turks or Pechenegs, led to lack of manpower in the fields and hence a reduction of tax revenue. Attempts to curb inflation by **debasing** the coinage failed and Constantinople went into an economic crisis and civil war. Within a decade of the loss at Manzikert the Balkans were being freely raided by the Pechenegs, the Norman Robert Guiscard had launched an attack from southern Italy, and the Seljuk Turks had reached the shores of the Bosphorus. To quote Byzantine historian Peter Frankopan, ‘things could scarcely have been worse’.⁸

Alexios Komnenos

One young general, Alexios Komnenos, took action. He was placed in charge of part of the Byzantine army and sent to fight the Norman threat from the west at Epirus. He marched out of Constantinople then promptly turned and marched back again. His troops advanced on the city and support for the emperor fell away. The target of the army’s pillage was the Constantinopolitan elite. The emperor was placed in a monastery and Alexios was crowned emperor. Having consolidated his position with judicious use of appointments to key positions, he turned his attention to the Norman threat.⁹ Alexios took control of the army and, after initial setbacks, was ultimately successful against the Normans. By 1083 he was ready to deal with the Pechenegs. Alexios’s initial attempts were unsuccessful and, with Pechenegs continuing to invade



Key term

Byzantium was the name given to the eastern empire centred on Constantinople. The new city of Constantinople was built over the top of an existing Greek village called Byzantium. The location of the new city, on the banks of the Bosphorus, was ideally suited to ruling the land around it. The word, Byzantium, and its derivatives will be used to describe things to do with the eastern empire.

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the empire up to 1091, he mustered as many troops as he could and prepared for battle at Lebonion Hill. What ensued was, ‘one of the most startling military victories in Byzantine history’.¹⁰ The Pechenegs were completely wiped out. They would pose no further threat to Byzantium. Alexios’s stock continued to rise.

Alexios would use a rather different tactic to deal with the third of the threats he faced. He negotiated with a Turkish chieftain, Sulayman, who agreed to protect the emperor’s Anatolian holdings. This was a mutually beneficial agreement. Alexios had allied himself with a very able general, who put down any Turkish raids on Byzantine territory under his charge, on one occasion even sending a few thousand troops to fight against the Normans in Durazzo. Sulayman gained in riches and prestige. This arrangement worked very well until the early 1090s when Sulayman died. His successor was not cut from the same cloth and launched attacks on Byzantine land to the north of Nicaea. The threat from the Turks had resurfaced. The **sultan** of Baghdad, Malik Shah, recognised the potential for disaster in Anatolia and probably worried that it would spill over into his lands. His death in 1092 not only robbed Alexios of a useful ally but plunged the Turkish world into two years of civil war. Alexios could not benefit from this power vacuum as warlord after warlord fought to rise to the top. Help would eventually come from an unlikely source.

The Council of Piacenza

Back in the west, the Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope (now Urban II) continued to vie for supremacy. To show his authority over Henry IV, Pope Urban had embarked on a tour of Italy and France. In the north Italian city of Piacenza he held a council (1–7 March 1095) attended by bishops and other church officials. It was at this council that **envoys** from Alexios arrived with the request for help to regain lands lost in Anatolia. Alexios asked the Pope for western knights to fight for him. He was surprised by the result.

Why would Urban want to help Alexios? As we have seen, the Roman Empire had split into two spheres of influence. This split was not only political, but religious as well. The Catholic Church in the west fell into decline before the slow process of converting the barbarian tribes began. The Greek Orthodox Church had faced no such decline. Constantinople became the leading Christian centre and a centre of religious discourse, given form by the construction of the Hagia Sophia, a vast cathedral. However, by 1095 Alexios’s star was on the wane while Urban’s was waxing. Urban had lifted the **excommunication** placed on Alexios by Gregory VII and the mood between the two was one of tentative friendship. Furthermore, Urban was keen to heal the **schism** between the two churches and place Rome at the head of a united church. Urban decided to call another council for November of that year and this time the bishops and abbots were asked to bring the prominent lords of their provinces. The gathering was to be at Clermont in central France.

Thus 1095 marked the culmination of several factors that led to the call for a crusade; first, the actions of a pope who sought to assert **papal** authority and continue the reforms started by Gregory VII; second, the machinations of a Byzantine emperor who had seized control of an empire and dealt with most of the threats facing him, only to see his policy with the Turks crumble; and third, the behaviour of the Turks who fought to fill the power vacuum created by the deaths of Sulayman and Malik Shah.

ACTIVITY 1.6

Use specific examples from this book and your own research to produce a mind map that represents the main features of medieval Byzantine society. Include the following branches: religion, politics, economy and society (alternatively, work in groups of four on one branch each and share research to make a combined mind map).

ACTIVITY 1.7

Use this section and your own research to create a table showing what the threat to Byzantium was in c1081 from the Normans, the Pechenegs and the Seljuk Turks. Then add another column showing how Alexios dealt with these threats to c1095.



Key term

Schism is the term used to describe the split between the Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church. It is a split over church doctrine and interpretations of whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *and* the Son (Catholic) or just from the Father (Greek). This is the Filioque Controversy and is significant in that it decides the importance of the role of the Father or Son in the Holy Trinity.

ACTIVITY 1.8

	Western Christian society	Byzantine society	Eastern Islamic society
Religion			
Politics			
Economy			
Society			

Table 1.1 Different societies and the main aspects of their culture

Use your three mind maps and any extra research to complete Table 1.1 to show similarities and differences between each society. Add any extra rows you can think of.

Conduct a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) on each society and compare your findings with a partner/the class.

Urban II

The reasons for calling the First Crusade

Just what was going through Pope Urban's mind when he called for the Council of Clermont? The threats to the Byzantine Empire were not new, and pilgrims throughout the ages had been subject to random lootings and violence. The call for this crusade was not in response to any one particular event. In the words of Thomas Asbridge this crusade was 'primarily proactive rather than reactive'. The crusade was designed 'to meet the needs of the papacy'.¹¹

By 1095 Pope Urban II had stabilised the position in Rome and by co-operating with the Normans of Sicily had established a stable power-base in Italy. Furthermore, he had embarked on a tour of France, designed to take him back to his old stamping ground in order to strengthen his power there. He used his local knowledge and contacts to set up the Council of Clermont, knowing that he would be a big draw in that area. One of Urban's main motives was the desire to re-establish friendly relations with Byzantium and Alexios. Since the schism of 1054 relations had been difficult. However, relations between Alexios and Urban had improved, and Alexios felt able to write asking for help in his struggle against the Turks. It could be seen as an altruistic act by Urban to oblige and help a fellow Christian in trouble. However, it might have been expected that Urban's altruism would indirectly increase his influence over the Eastern church, expanding the power of the Latin Church eastwards, and he might also have hoped to increase Latin influence over the Christian churches of Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine. Among the five major **sees** the popes saw themselves as pre-eminent. In reality, the topic rarely surfaced at **synods** and if it did, it was fudged. For all these reasons, this was a very attractive project for Urban.

A further reason for Urban to call a crusade was his wish to do something about the rulers of Jerusalem itself. As the main location for Christ's **patrimony** and **Passion**, Jerusalem was seen as the true centre of the Christian world. Medieval maps depicted Jerusalem in the centre (see Figure 1.9). Christian pilgrims had been welcome in Jerusalem, despite its rulers, for most of the Islamic occupation. This was not enough for Urban; he wanted Jerusalem under Christian control.

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Finally, Urban felt responsible for his flock. He fervently believed that every soul should be saved. He recognised that in a society largely based on knightly violence something had to be done to ensure the safe passage of the knightly class into heaven. By directing the internecine violence of medieval society towards a common enemy, he could harness the expertise and brutality of the knights towards a mutually beneficial end.

Pope Urban had neatly combined the need to help the Byzantine Empire, expand the influence of the Latin Church and redirect the violence inherent in medieval society: we call it the First Crusade.

The Council of Clermont

There is no surviving **papal bull** setting out Urban's exact words at the Council of Clermont. The most famous painting of the speech given by Urban (an illumination from the *Livre des Passages d'Outre-mer* c1474) is also incorrect as it shows him speaking indoors. The speech, on the penultimate day of the ten-day meeting, had to be outside on a specially constructed stage because so many people wanted to hear it. We are lucky that, despite no official bull, five versions of this speech have survived. One version, known as the *Gesta Francorum* (the Deeds of the Franks) and written by someone associated with Bohemond of Taranto, has heavily influenced three other versions. These four were written after the capture of Jerusalem and by writers who were not present at the council. This has an impact on what they say. The only version written by somebody likely to have been present at the council is the version by Fulchre of Chartres and even he wrote his down after the capture of Jerusalem. We must recognise the shortcomings of the evidence left to us but still endeavour to investigate what it tells us about the reasons Urban gave for going and the promises he made.

ACTIVITY 1.9

	Evidence in speech	Speech taken from
Remission of sins		
Helping the Eastern Church		
Stop fighting each other		
The need to take Jerusalem (not mentioned in Fulchre's version)		
The atrocities committed by the Muslims on Christians or their property		

Table 1.2 The main themes of Urban's speech

Research different versions of Urban's speech to provide evidence for the point he is trying to make. Record your research using Table 1.2.



Key term

A **papal bull** is a charter issued by the pope and named after the seal appended to it. The papal bull calling for the First Crusade does not exist but subsequent crusading bulls do.

The motives of the crusaders

The principal leaders

Raymond, Count of Toulouse and Marquis of Provence, was a powerful and wealthy man in the autumn of his years (it is estimated that he was in his 60s at the time of the crusade). He had plenty of military experience and had established himself, ahead of his elder brother, as the Count of Toulouse, adding this to the smaller title of Marquis of Provence. Stories abounded of his conquests against the **moors of Iberia** but no evidence survives to suggest their truth, nor any to say how he lost his eye. Pope Gregory VII had excommunicated Raymond twice but by the 1080s Raymond was repentant and an enthusiastic supporter of the Reform Movement. His land was perfectly situated to receive the gossip and news from travellers coming and going between the major pilgrimage destinations of Jerusalem and Santiago de Compostela (north-western Iberia), the burial place of James the Apostle's remains. The tales of the mistreatment of pilgrims faced would have piqued Raymond's interest.

It is highly likely that the Pope met with Raymond before the Council of Clermont to discuss the possibility of Raymond joining the crusade. Raymond was keen to be involved and certainly held aspirations to be its secular leader; Adhemar, Bishop of Le Puy, of the family of the counts of Valentinois (at times under the possession of the counts of Toulouse) would be the papal legate and spiritual leader. Adhemar was middle-aged but younger than Raymond and had previously been on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The historian Steven Runciman describes him as: 'a fine preacher and a tactful diplomat, broad-minded, calm and kindly, a man whom all would respect but who sought to persuade rather than to command'¹⁴ – essential if he was to keep the leading princes together. These two joined the crusade on the same day and would travel together and remain close until Adhemar's death within Antioch.

What motivated a wealthy, landowning old man like Raymond to go on crusade? Despite a lack of clear evidence, there are clues if one looks into Raymond's actions. He ruled a vast territory to the south-east of France and he began to settle his account before leaving for Jerusalem. This included handing over possessions to the monastery at St Gilles, his original Provençal lordship. Five years earlier Raymond had renounced all rights to investiture at the church of St Gilles, showing his adherence to the reforms started by Gregory and his support for Pope Urban II. He had given up part of his wealth and the rest he would use on crusade. According to Anna Komnenus, daughter of Alexios and present at the meetings between her father and the crusaders, he was pious and sincere. However, her motives for saying this may have more to do with the subsequent good relationship her father and Raymond enjoyed. It seems safe to assume that Raymond's main reason for going was a spiritual one. He was a converted supporter of the Pope as shown by his actions with regard to the church of St Gilles, and had relinquished property to pay for the expedition (he would start as the wealthiest of the princes). And he was seen (perhaps favourably) as a most pious man. How true does this hold for the other leading princes?

Hugh of Vermandois was King Philip I of France's brother. Among the clerical business at Clermont was the excommunication of Philip by Urban for an adulterous affair with the Countess of Anjou. It must have been very satisfying for Urban to learn of Philip's submission in this matter, along with the news that his brother, Hugh, would be joining the crusade. This was further proof of the strength of the papacy under Urban's continuing reforms. It seems that Hugh had an over-inflated sense of his own worth, as on his arrival at Constantinople he sent word that he should be welcomed as one befitting his great status. Anna Komnenus considered that he came from a small, backward country and had a joke at his expense, saying that Hugh called himself the king of kings. Guibert of Nogent states that Hugh joined the crusade because of a lunar eclipse where the moon turned blood-red. Celestial phenomena played a part in deciding the course of action during the medieval period and beyond; Halley's Comet



Key term

Iberia is the name used to identify the peninsula to the southwest of Europe and includes modern-day Spain, Portugal and Andorra (as well as a small part of France and Gibraltar). Rapid Muslim expansionism during the 8th century AD meant that this part of Europe was dominated by Islam.