

Focus Lesson - The Impact of the Crusades



Merchant ships in the harbor at Naples after the Crusades

How did the Crusades affect Europe and the Middle East?

The Results of the End of the Medieval Crusades

The crusades, judged by what they set out to accomplish, must be accounted an inglorious failure. After two hundred years of conflict and a vast expenditure of wealth and human lives, the Holy Land remained in Muslim hands. It is true that the First Crusade did help, by the conquest of Syria, to check the advance of the Turks toward Constantinople. But even this benefit was more than undone by the weakening of the Byzantine Empire in as a result of the Fourth Crusade.

Three Reasons Why the Crusades Failed

Of the many reasons for the failure of the crusades, three require special consideration.

First, there was the inability of eastern and western Europe to cooperate in supporting the holy wars. A united Christian front might have been invincible. But the bitter rivalries between the Catholic and Orthodox churches effectively prevented all unity of action. After the First Crusade the emperors at Constantinople rarely assisted the crusaders and often secretly hindered them.

Second, the lack of sea-power, as seen in the earlier crusades, worked against the success of the Crusaders. Instead of being able to go by water directly to Syria, it was necessary to follow the long, overland route from France or Germany through Hungary, Bulgaria, the territory of the Byzantine Empire, and the deserts and mountains of Asia Minor. The armies that reached their destination after this long march were in no condition for effective campaigning.

Third, the crusaders were never numerous enough to effectively colonize so large a country as Syria and absorb its Muslim population. They conquered part of Syria in the First Crusade, but could not hold it permanently in the face of determined resistance.

Why the Crusades Ended

Why the Crusades stopped. In spite of the above reasons the Christians of Europe might have continued their efforts to recover the Holy Land, had they not lost faith in the movement. But after two centuries the old crusading enthusiasm died out, the old ideal of the crusade as "the way of God" lost its spell. Men had begun to think less of winning future salvation by visits to distant shrines and to think more of their present duties to the world about them. They came to believe that Jerusalem could best be won as Christ and the Apostles had won it "by love, by prayers, and by the shedding of tears."

Impact of the Crusades

The Europeans reaped considerable and long-term benefits from their collision with the Muslim world. The Crusades gave thousands of Europeans, who had never been more than a few miles from their homes, an opportunity to see the world and the cultures of the East. During the Middle Ages, it was Eastern culture that was far more advanced and sophisticated than western European

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culture. Learning this spurred the people of western Europe to increase learning and trade so that they might achieve a level of culture equal to what they had experienced in the east.

Luxury Goods

Having experienced the luxuries of the East, many Europeans returned home with a desire to possess the more of the rich goods they had seen and brought back with them; rugs, silks, spices, camphor, musk, ivory, and pearls. This desire made trade and commerce necessary. Hundreds of Italian merchants from Venice, Genoa, Pisa and Naples settled in Asia Minor and set up trading stations. At these stations they could buy and ship home the new articles which Muslim caravans were bringing from China, India and the Spice Islands (Sri Lanka and Indonesia). This trade was extremely profitable to the Italian merchants, who took advantage of the fact that sailing vessels had been improved and made larger during the Crusades. For Europeans, this increased trade was one of the important outcomes of the Crusades.

Feudalism Weakens

The Crusades also weakened both feudalism and the manorial system of medieval Europe. Many knights left their fiefs to fight in the Crusades, and many serfs were freed for service in the crusader armies. As the powerful nobles became involved in wars outside of Europe, the kings of Europe became more powerful. The Crusades also increased the use of money throughout Europe. A crusading knight could not pay his expenses with sacks of grain and needed a simpler way to pay for goods. Although most of these changes were slowly taking place as Europe became more stable, the Crusades helped to speed the process up.

Political Changes in Europe and the East

Nearly 200 years of struggle between the crusaders produced important political changes in the Muslim world. After the Fourth Crusade the Muslims won nearly all of Asia Minor. Zangi, Nur-al-Din, and Saladin drove the Christians back to the coasts and wiped out almost all the gains of the First Crusade, but the Europeans retained naval control of the Mediterranean and its islands, they established kingdoms in Sicily, Cyprus, Malta and Rhodes from which they could trade with or raid the Muslims. Saladin's attempt to conclude a naval alliance with the Almohads of the Maghrib, in order to repel attacks on North Africa from Norman Sicily, was unsuccessful, and Egypt was exposed to European naval assault on several occasions. Although a split between the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches destroyed the last chance of a united Christian front against the Muslims, the death of Saladin in 1193 led to political fragmentation in the Muslim world. The center of power shifted in the Muslim world from Damascus and Baghdad to Cairo in Egypt and eventually to Constantinople following the final collapse of the Byzantine Empire.

An Exchange of Ideas

Intellectually, the Crusades produced some positive results. Through the conflict over the Holy Land, Muslims learned how to improve their defenses and build better fortifications, which would later influence the designs of castles in Europe. Europeans also benefitted from the capture of Toledo in Spain in 1085 as it brought Europe into closer contact with the rich accumulation of Muslim learning. A school of translators had been established there, and Arabic works on science and philosophy were translated into Latin and circulated throughout leading universities of Europe. The sophisticated urban culture of Muslim Sicily also instructed its Christian conquerors in the planning and construction of cities, and the art of scholarship of the Muslim world extended its influence deeply into Italy, contributing to the Renaissance.

Trade and Commerce

Another means of interchange took place in the form of trade and commerce between the Europeans and the Muslims. All of the major seaports of the Mediterranean were inhabited by a

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wide variety of peoples, all brought together in the interest of exchanging goods and services. In this manner, particularly in Genoa and Venice, and exchange of languages took place. For example, the words *sugar*, *syrup*, *cotton*, *admiral*, *magazine*, and many others came directly from Arabic. Also, dockside workers and sailors often passed their free time by playing chess, which came to Europe through the Muslims. The introduction of paper led eventually to the development of the printing press in Europe. The Muslim pointed arch led to the contribution of enormous cathedrals with their vaulted ceilings. Also, Arabic themes began appearing in literature, as in Chaucer's *The Squire's Tale*.

The Muslims also benefitted from the interchange of trade and commerce. The textile industries of the Byzantines led the Muslims to develop mills. In addition, some of the administrative techniques used by the Byzantines especially maintaining a professional army were adopted by Muslims. In trade, the Muslims, situated between Europe and the Far East, acted as go-betweens for all the goods flowing through the Muslim world. The silks and spices of India and China were exchanged for furs, leather goods, and wood from Europe. With such an enormous exchange of goods and ideas, the Muslims were able to create an advanced civilization.

Lesson Notes

Unit Title: Islam

Module: The Crusades

Topic: The Impact of the Crusades

Objective/EQ: How did the Crusades affect Europe and the Middle East

<u>Study Questions</u>	<u>Notes</u>
What were the results of the Crusades?	The Crusades were a failure in accomplishing any of their Goals, they resulted in a large scale loss of life, loss of money, and the eventual collapse of the Byzantine Empire.
Why did the Crusades fail?	1) the inability of eastern and western Europe to cooperate in supporting the holy wars. the rivalries between the Catholic and Orthodox churches prevented all unity of action
	2) the lack of sea-power, as seen in the earlier crusades, worked against the success of the Crusaders. Instead of being able to go by water to Syria, it was necessary to follow the, long land route, The armies that reached their destination after this long march were in no condition for effective long term fighting
	3) the crusaders were never numerous enough to effectively colonize so large a country as Syria and absorb its Muslim population.
Why did the Crusades end?	The Crusaders lost faith in the movement and after two centuries the old crusading enthusiasm died out
What was the impact of the Crusades?	The Crusades gave thousands of Europeans, who had never been more than a few miles from their homes, an opportunity to see the world and the cultures of the East.
	Having experienced the luxuries of the East, many Europeans returned home with a desire to possess the more of the rich goods they had seen and brought back with them; rugs, silks, spices, camphor, musk, ivory, and pearls. This desire made trade and commerce necessary.

Study Questions	
How did the Crusades contribute to trade?	Merchants from Venice, Genoa, Pisa and Naples settled in Asia Minor and set up trading stations where they could buy and ship home the goods which Muslim caravans were bringing from China, India and the Spice Islands (Sri Lanka and Indonesia). This trade was extremely profitable to the Italian merchants and the wealth gained from trade would lead to the start of the Renaissance in Italy
How did the Crusades affect feudalism?	The Crusades weakened feudalism and the manorial system of medieval Europe. Knights left their fiefs to fight in the Crusades, and many serfs were freed for service in the crusader armies. As the nobles became involved in wars outside of Europe, the kings of Europe became more powerful.
How did European power and influence grow?	Europeans retained naval control of the Mediterranean and its islands, they established Kingdoms in Sicily, Cyprus, Malta and Rhodes from which they could trade with or raid Muslim lands
How did the Crusades lead to better castles?	Through the conflict over the Holy Land, Muslims learned how to improve their defenses and build better fortifications, which would later influence the designs of castles in Europe.
What are some of the other ideas that can be traced back to the contact of the Crusades?	<p>1) An exchange of ideas took place in the form of language, Arabic words such as cotton, syrup, magazine, admiral, and many others entered into European languages</p> <p>2) The Crusades increased the use of money throughout Europe</p> <p>3) The Muslims introduced chess to the Europeans</p> <p>4) The introduction of paper lead to the development of the printing press in Europe</p> <p>5) The Muslim pointed arch was used in the construction of the cathedrals with their vaulted ceilings</p> <p>6) Arabic themes appeared in literature, as in Chaucer's <i>The Squire's Tale</i></p> <p>7) The Muslims developed textile industries based on technology learned from the Byzantines</p>