**Second Crusade (1147-9): broad overview**

* Launched 1st Dec 1145 – Pope Eugenius III – Papal Bull *Quantum praedecessores*: response to fall of Edessa (Christmas 1144) to forces of Turkish warlord, Zengi, and subsequent desperate appeals from Franks of Nr East for help V this threat to the Latin Kingdoms of Outremer.
* Easter 1146 - Bernard of Clairvaux preached @ Vezalay – attended by K Louis VII of France.
* Christmas 1146 – Bernard of Clarvaux preached @ Speyer…Conrad III of Germany ‘took the Cross’.
* May 1147 – Conrad III departed from Nuremburg: army big (30, 000+, but many were not really soldiers) arr Constantinople, Sept 1147.
* June 1147 – Louis VII departed from Metz: army (many thousands, incl 100 Templars who’d joined in April ’47 – big boost!) arr Constant, Oct, 1147.
* NB Both took land route to Constantinople (C had always planned to; not L, but polit probs\* forced change on him) – “staggered” start (month apart) deliberate (conserve local food sources for foraging en route), but this had negative consequences later (Asia Minor) – divided force!
* Oct, 1147 – Conrad’s army harassed by Turks/ denuded/ forced to retreat from Dorylaeum area. Humiliating retreat to Nicaea. Conrad seriously wounded.
* Jan 1148 – Louis’ army defeated around/ on Mt Cadmus – another serious setback.
* Early 1148 – strategic rethink…move V Syria, led by Louis March 1148…
* June, 1148 – conference @ Acre – new focus = Damascus!
* July, 1148 – disastrous defeat @ Damascus: Conrad withdrew to Ger, Sept 1148…Louis to France, April, 1149.
* NB 2nd Crusade = “Holy War” on 3 fronts, not just in Nr East. First time major European rulers participated. Others fought V “Wends” (pagans) in Baltic , & V Moors in Iberia, where an English led naval force enjoyed some successes.
* The campaign in the Nr East was beset by problems – eg huge cost; diffs of co-ord forces; logistical difficulties; tricky relations with Byzant Emp Manuel; Turkish reactions under Zengi far more coherent than Muslim reactions during 1st Crusade; lack of clear strategic purpose – by the time Crusade actually got to Nr East, Edessa itself had been utterly destroyed!

**How and why did the 2nd Crusade come about?**

1. Muslim disunity ensured that by 1140s the 4 Crusader States *seemed* pretty secure.
2. But rise of *ZENGI* (Imad ad-Din Zengi), a ruthlessly effective Turkish warlord, and his shockingly unexpected CAPTURE OF EDESSA, Christmas Eve, 1144, changed everything.
3. Zengi - born circa 1084 – 1120s gained patronage of Seljuk Sultan of Baghdad – 1127 became Govnr of Mosul (+1128 captured Aleppo) in Syria.
4. Usama ibn Munqidh (who worked at Z’s court) describes Zengi’s terrifyingly brutal ferocity: Z possibly insane (albeit in a “high functioning” way!), almost certainly a psychopath.
5. 1140s – Z’s focus = extending his territory into S Syria & Iraq: not particularly interested in the Franks per se.
6. 1143 – Z Campaigning in N Iraq V local warlords, one of whom was allied with Joscelin II, Frankish ruler of Edessa. Autumn 1144 – Z’s spies informed him that Edessa was weakly defended, so in Nov he launched an opportunistic attack: used sophisticated siege warfare techniques/ tactics (siege towers, mining etc), which hitherto Turks had not been keen on, preferring light manoeuvre warfare – big shock to Franks! Edessa’s walls breached – Dec 26th Edessa under Z’s control. Indigenous Christians spared; Franks massacred – women & children enslaved; churches razed. (By 1146/7 city of Edessa had been destroyed.)
7. Franks horrified – implications for other Frankish states? William of Tyre – “an ominous disaster”. Desperate appeal to West – Papal Bull – preaching – Second Crusade launched.
8. Started full of high purpose/ ideals; ended in defeat & humiliation of 2 of the most powerful rulers in Christendom.

**Why was the 2nd Crusade such a failure?**

1. **Lack of clear strategic aims**
2. **Poor leadership of Louis VII & Conrad III**
3. **Bad relations/ mistrust b/ween Crusaders & Byzantines**
4. **Logistical problems**
5. **Muslim unity & military effectiveness**
6. **Poor relations/ lack of co-ordination b/ween Crusaders & the Frankish states of Outremer**

**Pope Eugenius III/ preaching & preparation (Dec 1145-May 1147)**

1. Nov 1145 – envoys from Antioch & Jerus arr Italy requesting help. (news of Edessa’s fall prob reached Rome early Summer 1145)
2. Eugenius III – new Pope. Heard appeal – researched situ carefully – drafted Papal Bull *Quantum praedecessores*, 1st Dec 1145.
3. Emphasises key points: Christian suffering in East; precedent of 1st Crusade, which had set a high standard; Divine Authority of the Papacy.
4. Challenged Christians to “Take the Cross” – guaranteed safeguarding of familial ppty/ interests; exemption from interest on loans & debts; remission of sins. Carefully drafted to reassure and incentivise potential crusaders.
5. The Bull was, however, flawed in 2 ways: did not limit non-combatant participation (because, strictly speaking, any expedition to Nr East was a “pilgrimage” – open to all Christians). Nor did it state clearly an overarching strategic aim – only called rather generally to protect Jerusalem, and imitate the deeds of predecessors.
6. Consequences of these flaws were profound: 2nd Crusade had too many “hangers-on”, and there were continual arguments b/ween ldrs re what exactly they were striving to do!

**Louis VII of France**

1. Louis VII cld be impulsive. Eager to assert own authority over realms – Fra still v much a “patchwork” of diff territorial/ feudal & noble interests – not a well-defined unitary state under full control of king.
2. Early 1140s L engaged in vexatious and bitter disputes not only with the Papacy (eg Vitry atrocity, 1143 – L’s troops burned down a church/ killed many), but also with Count of Champagne.
3. By mid 1140s, however, tensions were easing: Louis regretted Vitry incident; possibly wanted to make amends…a pilgrimage wld be good for him/ his standing (in France, & with Papacy), and might be a unifier of his nobility/ realm.
4. Louis was probably intent on leading a force to Nr East by Christmas 1145 – before the Papal Bull had reached his Winter court in Bourges, to which a considerably larger number of nobles than was customary had been invited (suggests L had something notable in mind – a great undertaking for which he’d need their support).
5. Louis’ plan to help the Christians of Outremer presented to nobility – response less than

enthusiastic. Agreed, however, to reconsider at Easter after running it past Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, leading French churchman – v influential figure in Christendom.

1. Pope Eugenius reissued his Bull, 1st March 1146, by which time he and Louis had planned a recruiting drive centred on Burgundian abbey of Vezelay.
2. Easter Sunday – Louis in attendance – huge audience – Louis & Bernard delivered sermons & speeches to mass audience. Crowds so big they did so from a wooden platform outside the abbey church. Massive popular response.

**Conrad III of Germany**

1. Bernard’s success @ Vezelay – widening of call for crusade – preachers sent all over Fra, & letters to other ldrs – Engl, N Italy, Brittany.
2. Autumn 1146 – B undertook 7 month preaching tour – N France, Flanders, Germany.
3. Nov 1146 – Frankfurt - Conrad III’s court in session…
4. Conrad had already visited Jerus, 1124. Ally of Papacy V Sicilian Norman aggression in Italy.
5. Conrad had a chance to reinforce his reputation for piety, & enhance his reputation thro’out Christendom. But Conrad had troubles close to home – his own nobles were fractious, & K of Hungary a concern. Initially reluctant to leave German lands because he feared for security of his realm.
6. Bernard “cut a deal” with Welf IV of Bavaria – C’s main security concern – when Welf agreed to join crusade, Conrad felt happier to commit himself to the cause.
7. 24th Dec – Bernard @ Conrad’s Christmas court @ Speyer. Dramatic sermon by B appealing directly/ personally to Conrad a “game changer”; by end Dec 1146 Conrad was on-side.

**Early 1147 – things get moving…**

1. Eugenius now had 2 strong monarchs committed – widened the call – broadened the target range!
2. Supported K Alfonso VII of Castile in his on-going attempts to retake Almeira from Moors, & encouraged expeditions V Lisbon.
3. March 1147 – received a delegation of Germans requesting Papal support/ blessing for campaign V pagan Wends of the Baltic coastal zone. Bernard & Eugenius v keen.
4. 3 Front War developing – weakened strategic focus.
5. Initially, Conrad & Louis seemed to be co-operating well (reps liaised b/ween them), but each had “issues” to address before leaving Europe:
6. Who wid govern in their absence?
7. Funding?
8. Regents appt’d – Fra (Abbot Suger of St Denis, Louis’ old tutor); Ger (Conrad’s 10 yr old son, Henry, designated heir; Abbot Wibald of Corvey to be regent).
9. Both taxed towns & churches rather than general populations – poor harvests of 1140s meant common folk were already suffering enough.
10. Initially, a lot of cash raised, but sustainability of money supply a big concern.
11. Also, ltd likelihood of active/ sustained co-operation from K Roger II of Sicily, nor Byzant Emperor Manuel I, both of whom needed to be on-side if logistical/ travel diffs were to be handled successfully. Not v auspicious!
12. Roger of Sicily in conflict with Papacy and Byzantines over his on-going expansion into

S Italy ! Unlikely to support allies of Papacy & Byzantines, eg Conrad III!

1. Manuel I – suspicious of Louis because he was friendly with Roger of Sicily!\*
2. Manuel gave Louis an impression of friendship (envoys sent early 1147), but this was prob a diplomatic smokescreen to mask his real feelings/ intentions.
3. Due to such complications\*, the decision was taken that both forces shld follow entirely overland routes via the Balkans/ Constantinople to Holy Land.
4. French & Ger forces therefore moved in 2 waves (to limit demands on food supplies in lands thro’ which they’d pass), a month apart, which wld subsequently prove catastrophic to unity of their enterprise.
5. Even worse, there was no significant liaison with the Franks in Outremer!

Prob because they intended heading straight for Edessa, but also possibly because L & C were simply too arrogant to bother consulting with such “minor” rulers!

1. Manuel clearly worried: a successful crusade wld strengthen Frankish power in N Syria. Conrad’s absence from Europe wld strengthen/ embolden Roger, his enemy, in S Italy. Afraid that some French might join Roger to attack Byzantine territories. Consequently, Manuel made a truce with the Seljuk Turks – perceived as treachery by crusaders.

**Conrad III – Arrival Constantinople – Asia Minor – disaster @ Dorylaeum**

* Conrad’s force was hobbled from the outset by including too many “non-professionals”.
* By the time it reached Byzantine territory there were already big supply problems, esp food!(poor ldrshp, poor prep & planning, dreadful logistical/ supply management)
* Fractious relations with locals – drunken riots/ fights etc.(poor ldrshp, command & control, indiscipline)
* Before getting to Constantinople the Germans suffered a major setback – poor reconnaissance/ local info led them to encamp on a river flood plain – flash flood killed many men & horses, destroyed much kit.(all of the above + outright military incompetence)
* 10th Sept arr Constantinople – Manuel I less than helpful – kept Germans out of city – communicated with Conrad in writing (calculated insult?!) (poor ldrshp, intelligence, diplomacy etc)
* Manuel expedited German move away from city over Bosphorus asap (ships & guides supplied).
* Conrad then decided to proceed without waiting for Louis’ French force. Major error/ communication breakdown. Strategically stupid, & contrary to what the 2 kings had previously agreed. C demo’d bad judgement & impetuosity. V poor ldrshp/ decision making!
* C took direct route to Antioch via Dorylaeum & Iconium – ie route of 1st Crusade.
* Turks ready/ watching/ able easily to track the Germans! Massive tactical error which assumed the Turks wld be as complacent/ unprep’d as they’d been in 1097.
* Conrad put bro, Otto von Freising, i/c the non-combatants with orders to lead them along the less direct/ “safer” coastal route.
* Germans left Nicaea, 25th Oct, but within less than a fortnight were running out of supplies!
* Approaching Dorylaeum (arid area with ltd food supplies, water sources) the exhausted Germans came under sustained attacks from fast moving Turkish mounted archers who were able to manoeuvre rapidly out of their own adjacent safe territory.
* The Germans had no answer to this rapid manoeuvre, missile firing, raiding tactic, and were eventually forced into an humiliating retreat back to Nicaea, under fire all the way! Nightmare. Conrad sustained a serious head wound, and when they reached the safety of Dorylaeum, many of his troops deserted to head home.

**Louis VII – Constantinople – Asia Minor – Mt Cadmus**

* L’s army left Fra June 1147 – splendid farewells overseen personally by Pope Eugenius III.
* Metz onwards followed same route as Conrad’s force. Odo of Deuil, L’s chaplain, notes how L tried to impose discipline, but problems with money & logistics were soon evident – indiscipline/ problems with local suppliers en route.
* Arr Constant early Oct 1147 after a 4 month journey; diplomatic diffs/ mistrust – Fre found out about Manuel’s Turkish truce; some French crusaders loathed Byzants. L rebuffed calls from some to join R of Sicily to attack Byzants!
* Manuel treated French courteously; provided food & supplies etc, but it was soon clear Manuel wanted them to move on asap. Provide transport for crossing Bosphorus + guides to help them thro’ Asia Minor, & promises of help with food supplies etc. – his local officials wld fix things for them once they were in Asia Minor.
* French then joined Ger stragglers & headed for Ephesus, where it was soon obvious that the supply chain had broken down – local Greek officials not helpful – not facilitating things as Manuel had promised they would!
* Conrad unable to proceed – Manuel offered him a safe haven back in Constantinople to recuperate from his wounds.
* Dec – weather turning bad (heavy rain & then snow), but L decided to press on inland via mountain passes to the port of Adalia!
* French struggled – v cold, & subject to continual Turkish raiding. At Mt Cadmus they were decimated: force strung out over almost impassable mountain trails – formation/ march discipline broken – easy targets for Turks hiding in the rough terrain. Louis personally v courageous, but this could not hide the reality that he’d led his force into a death trap.
* Louis handed control to Templars, who managed to lead the much depleted/ demoralised force to Ephesus, 20th Jan 1148. Louis’ authority/ credibility now much undermined. Nobles then persuaded L that best move was to evacuate to Syria. Wounded & non-combatants left in Ephesus for their own safety, under Byzant protection – most subsequently slaughtered by Turks!
* Louis reached Antioch, March 1148. Conrad (now recovered) arr Acre around same time.

**The Syrian Debacle, March- July 1148.**

* Prince Raymond of Antioch (uncle-in-law of Louis VII) welcomed the French; force incld’d Louis’ wife, Raymond’s niece, Eleanor of Aquitaine.
* Raymond had his own agenda: Edessa now lay in ruins, and Ray hated Joscelin of Edessa anyway! Ray wanted French support to capture Muslim cities of Aleppo & Shaizar, which wld massively improve the security of Antioch.
* + a N Syrian campaign wld weaken Byzantine infl in the area; territory Manuel & Co maintained was theirs.
* May 1148 – Raymond held an assembly, but L rejected his masterplan.
* Why was Louis so negative?

1. Personally committed to Jerusalem/ “pilgrimage” etc
2. Obligation to Conrad/ Gers – recently arr Acre to the S.
3. Army not equipped/ configured for siege warfare – short of foot soldiers, requisite specialists etc
4. On-going financial diffs – money v short/ siege warfare v expensive.
5. Cld open a “can of worms” with Byzants – even if successful, what if Manuel then asserted his (possibly legitimate) claim to N Syrian territory. Diplomatically v problematic!

Early Summer 1148:Conrad & Louis finally actually linked-up in the Levant, and finally were actually talking with the local Frankish rulers!

* Grand Council, 24th June 1148: attended by all, incl young K Baldwin III of Jerus & his mother Melisende.
* Conrad & Lewis decided to attack Damascus, one of the most important cities in Islam: possibly strategic insanity!
* Why?

1. Unur of Damascus had (since 1140) been allied with Jerusalem to ward off Zengi!
2. Zengi murdered by rivals, 1146.
3. Unur realigned with Zengi’s son, the more reasonable (sane?!) **Nur ad-Din**, &recently had sealed this new alliance by marrying his daughter to Nur ad-Din.
4. This new Muslim alliance represented a clear & present danger to Outremer/ Jerusalem.

* So, altho’ a “big ask”, an attack on Damascus probably seemed the best strategy for countering a new threat that wld’ve been pressing on the minds of the Franks of Outremer, esp Baldwin III & Melisende of Jerusalem.
* Seems likely, however, that Conrad & Louis, who had not hitherto demo’d great military capability, did not really appreciate the enormity of the task they were setting themselves!

**Damascus**

* Damascus – walled, strong citadel, great mosque etc – was surrounded by a belt (often 5 miles wide) of irrigated, walled orchards overlooked by watchtowers.
* Formidable “defensive belt” – almost impassable to horsed/ heavily armoured forces. Complex network of narrow paths b/ween high walls & water channels: nightmare for attackers, esp if short of well-trained/ experienced infantry.
* Assault launched 24th July 1148: eventually got thro’ the “outer belt”, but only at v heavy cost. Franks then attacked Damascus proper.
* Desperate situ for defenders – all seemed lost… but Unur proved v capable:

1. Invocation of faith – gathered people in Great Mosque – symbolic significance of its sacred treasure The Qu’ran of Uthman (the 3rd Caliph/ personal friend of the Prophet) – mass prayer for Allah’s help/ symbolic sprinkling on heads of ashes – ready to die for faith etc.
2. Personal ldrshp – immense/ vigorous/ relentless.
3. Streets barricaded – last ditch defences readied. Sent to Nur ad-Din for urgent assistance.
4. Misinformation/ psychological warfare – sent messages to former allies Baldwin & Jerusalem Franks – Conrad & Louis only wanted Damascus for themselves…cleverly engendered disputes among Franks about who exactly should have Damascus if/ when it fell.

* Frankish War council, 27th July: made another bad decision – move focus of assault to East of city, but this was away from the forage rich/ well-watered West; an arid area, and contrary to reports, the defences were no weaker. This took the impetus out of the assault, & again highlighted the poor ldrshp & intelligence of Frankish commanders. Unur had wrong footed them.
* Fearful of the imminent arrival of Nur ad-Din’s relief force – danger of being crushed against Damascus’ walls – running out of food & water etc, Conrad & Louis had no option but to withdraw rapidly. Utter humiliation.

**Who was to blame?**

* Conrad III – letter to Regent Wibald (Autumn 1148) – blamed King Baldwin & Jerusalem nobility. Believed they had treacherously misled Western forces outside Damascus because they didn’t like the way things were going. Blame shifting – away from himself?
* But, Louis & Conrad had promised Count Thierry of Flanders custodianship of Damascus – not sensible – a promise that was bound to antagonise the Franks of Outremer, esp King Baldwin, & Jerusalem nobles! V poor diplomatically/ showed scant regard for legitimate concerns of Franks of Outremer.
* Manuel I had never been on-side, but then the leadership of Louis & Conrad had been less than confidence inspiring/ competent, & possibly he had good reason to mistrust them!
* Pope Eugenius III & Bernard of Clairvaux had also been unhelpful – had too readily diluted the strategic focus of the whole enterprise from the outset.
* Bottom line: Muslims were simply too strong… Seljuk responses far more coherent/ disciplined/ focused than they had been in 1097. Turks played to their strengths/ outmanoeuvred Westerners at every turn.
* Attacking Damascus (one of holiest cities of Islam) had been foolhardy – Muslims, esp well led Muslims, were bound to rally in its defence, and L & C’s assault had quite simply provided a focus for many which hitherto had been lacking. This presaged a Muslim revival of “lesser jihad” which wld in yrs to come put increasing pressure on the Latin Kingdoms.

CRH, 2017.