

lashed on two ships to attack the defences from above. The besiegers suffered from a disease that turned their skin black and killed many. Al-Kamil attacked their camp but achieved little. A Muslim relief attempt failed. St Francis of Assisi acted as a Christian envoy – the Muslims thought the grubby saint a figure of scorn. On 5 November the crusaders broke in. Their attack on Cairo failed. The crusaders were isolated and surrendered Damietta in 1221. On 4 June 1249 St Louis' crusade arrived there. Louis leaped into the water up to his armpits rushing ashore. He used engines while the enemy hurled Greek Fire and firebolts like 'stars falling out of heaven'. On 6 June the crusaders entered the city but found it abandoned. After the crusaders were defeated at Mansurah, Damietta surrendered on 6 May 1250.

DORYLAEUM (ESKISHEHIR), BATTLES OF, 1 JULY 1097, 25 OCTOBER 1147

The first battle was the major victory of the First Crusade over the Seljuks. The crusaders took Nicaea and advanced south in two groups. They had not advanced far when the van, under Bohemond with the counts of Normandy, Flanders and Blois, was attacked by Kilij Arslan at a mountain pass near Dorylaeum (now in Turkey). The Turkish mounted archers were effective. Bohemond used infantry to protect the mounted warriors and allow them to charge. The second force, under Godfrey de Bouillon and Raymond de St Gilles, arrived to attack from the rear, winning the battle. The crusaders found much wealth in the Muslim camp. A second battle occurred near Dorylaeum in 1147 during the Second Crusade. A German force under Conrad III (HRE) was defeated by the Turks. The crusaders' retreat turned into a rout, greatly weakening the crusade.

EDESSA (URFA), SIEGES OF, 1098, 1144

Baldwin le Bourg (later Baldwin I of Jerusalem) reached Edessa in Mesopotamia on 6 February 1098. He struck east over the Euphrates, leaving the main army. Edessa

was under the Armenian Thoros, who made Baldwin an ally and adopted him as his son. In the ceremony a large shirt was placed over them both while they rubbed breasts! Thoros was murdered by his citizens on 9 March. Baldwin declared himself Count of Edessa, the first principality in the kingdom of Jerusalem. The Muslims under Kerbogha tried to recover Edessa in May 1098 but Baldwin resisted successfully and delayed the Muslim army heading for Antioch. On Christmas Day 1144 Zangi recovered Edessa from Count Joscelin II (who was elsewhere), the first major loss for the crusader kingdom that provoked the Second Crusade. Zangi's bombardment was so intense that 'even the birds dared not fly near'. The walls were mined and the city stormed. The county of Edessa was not revived.

FIELD OF BLOOD (AGER SANGUINIS), BATTLE OF THE, 28 JUNE 1119

Ilghazi of Aleppo defeated Roger prince of Antioch. Roger tried to extend his power around Aleppo, advancing without waiting for reinforcements, against the advice of King Baldwin. Faced by Ilghazi, Roger took a defensive position in the hilly country west of Aleppo, in a valley with wooded slopes on each side. Ilghazi surrounded him. The battle opened with archers shooting from either side. The wind blew dust in the Christian faces. The Christians were routed and Roger was killed, only a few escaping. Most prisoners were tortured and killed. It demonstrated Muslim recovery since the First Crusade.

HARBIYA (LA FORBIE), BATTLE OF, 17 OCTOBER 1244

Victory for the Egyptians and Khorezmians under Emir Baybars over a combined army of Christians and Muslims from Damascus. The site was a sandy plain north-east of Gaza, now in Israel. Members of the Leper Hospital of St Lazarus took part. Walter of Jaffa favoured attack, believing his forces superior, but the charge failed. Under attack the Damascenes broke and fled. The

defeat struck a serious blow to the crusader kingdom. Over a thousand knights were killed, including the grand master of the Templars. Eight hundred prisoners were taken. It inspired St Louis' crusade though his efforts were not very effective.

HATTIN, BATTLE OF, 4 JULY 1187

Defeat for Guy king of Jerusalem by Saladin. Saladin besieged Tiberias on Lake Galilee and Guy brought a relief army. The town was taken but the garrison, including Raymond of Tripoli's wife Eschiva, held out. Guy marched over difficult country, without water. Saladin harassed the march. Guy halted on the slopes of the twin-peaked Horns of Hattin, though others advised continuing to the lake. Saladin fired the scrub. In the morning the Muslims attacked, their archers bringing down many horses. Count Raymond, leading the van, broke out and escaped. Guy was captured and later released. Rainald of Châtillon was captured and executed. The defeat caused the near collapse of the kingdom, with Saladin taking Jerusalem and other territory. Tiberias surrendered on 5 July.

HOMS, BATTLES OF, 30 OCTOBER 1281, 23 DECEMBER 1299

Qalawun of Egypt defeated the Mongols under Mangu Timur in 1281. Homs was on the border of Tripoli and a target in the Christian-Muslim conflicts. The Mongols invaded Syria, joined by some Armenian and crusader Christians. The victory ended Christian hopes of escaping Egyptian domination after the Mongols withdrew. A battle occurred nearby at Salamia in 1299 when the Mongols again invaded and were faced by Egyptians. The Mongols under Ghazan won but their domination was short-lived. In any case it was too late to save the crusader kingdom.

JERUSALEM, SIEGES OF, 1099, 1187, 1244

Jerusalem was besieged during the First Crusade from 7 June. The city had recently fallen to the Egyptian Fatimids. Its governor was Iftiqah ad-Dawla. The

crusaders were under Godfrey de Bouillon, Raymond de St Gilles, Robert Curthose, Robert of Flanders and Tancred. The Muslims removed all animals from outside the city and poisoned the wells. The crusaders attacked from the north-west. Ships' timbers from the fleet at Jaffa were made into siege engines and towers because of the lack of trees. Jerusalem fell on 15 July and the crusaders carried out a sack and massacre, wading up to their ankles in blood. There were too many corpses to clear and a great stench arose. Iftiqah and a few others were allowed to leave, after surrendering to Raymond de St Gilles. Jerusalem became the capital of the new crusading kingdom of Jerusalem. In 1187 Saladin took Jerusalem from the Christians after Hattin. The defence was under the recently arrived Balian of Ibelin, who knighted young nobles and other residents to boost morale. The siege began on 20 September. Balian negotiated the surrender on 2 October. Many were ransomed. In 1244 Jerusalem was taken by the Khorezmian Turks. The city fell but the garrison held out until 23 August when it surrendered. This ended the compromise that allowed Christians a place in the city.

KRAK (CRAC) DES CHEVALIERS (HUSN EL AKRAD), SIEGE OF, 1271

The great crusader castle, near Tripoli in Syria, was taken by Baybars. Built in 1115, it was held by the Knights Hospitaller from 1144. It resisted several sieges. That by Baybars, whose allies included the Assassins, began on 3 March. Rain prevented the siege engines working for a while but they broke the outer wall on 15 March. At the end of March the Muslims entered the inner bailey. On 8 April those in the only tower still resisting surrendered and were granted a safe-conduct to Tripoli. Baybars made repairs and garrisoned the castle.

MA'ARRAT AL-NUMAN, SIEGE OF, 1098
Besieged during the First Crusade before the attack on Jerusalem. Raymond de

St Gilles and Baldwin of Flanders arrived on 27 November. They attempted storm on 28 November but failed. Bohemond arrived that day but a second attack also failed. A belfry was built for an attack on 11 December. The crusaders broke in late in the day. Next day they carried out a massacre, torturing and killing prisoners, even eating their buttocks. Raymond and Bohemond quarrelled over who should have the town, which was finally left under the bishop of Albara.

MANSURAH (AL-MANSURA), BATTLE OF, 8 FEBRUARY 1250

Between Baybars (for Turan Shah) with an Egyptian army and St Louis on his first crusade. In 1249 Louis advanced from Damietta towards Cairo, reaching Mansurah in the Nile Delta in December. The Egyptians faced him over a tributary of the Nile. In February the Christians tried to cross. The Egyptians hurled barrels of Greek Fire. A traitor showed the crusaders a ford, which some crossed. Louis' brother, Robert of Artois, charged rashly into Mansurah and was killed, as was the Earl of Salisbury. The main army fought a difficult battle to hold their ground. Louis could claim a victory, albeit Pyrrhic. In March the crusaders retreated, suffering heavily on the way, especially the Templars who gave cover. Louis was captured and the crusade ended in disaster. Baybars seized power in Egypt.

MONTGISARD, BATTLE OF, 25 NOVEMBER 1177

Victory by Baldwin IV of Jerusalem over Saladin. Saladin, ruler of Egypt, invaded the kingdom of Jerusalem. He attacked Ascalon and aimed for Jerusalem. Baldwin summoned the Templars from Gaza. The brothers Baldwin and Balian of Ibelin were among the Christian leaders. King Baldwin caught the Muslims by surprise crossing a ravine near the castle of Montgisard, near Ramleh. The Muslims were scattered, some foraging. It was claimed that St George appeared to aid the crusaders.

Many Muslims were killed and Saladin retreated, the worst defeat of his career though the setback was only temporary.

MONTSÉGUR, SIEGE OF, 1243-4

Conclusion of the Albigensian Crusade. Montségur was a Pyrenean stronghold, 12 miles east of Foix, the last refuge of the Cathar heretics. Raymond VII of Toulouse besieged it in 1241 but abandoned the attempt. Its garrison of 20 knights and 100 sergeants was not Cathar but attacked inquisitors operating in the neighbourhood at Avignonet in 1242. A new siege was undertaken in May 1243 by Hugh des Arcis, seneschal of Carcassonne, for St Louis. The citizens defended the place vigorously, women operating throwing engines. For the besiegers the bishop of Albi operated a trebuchet. A traitor let in the crusaders, and a group of Basques scaled the difficult approach to knife the guards on duty. They took a tower but the garrison held on for several weeks before surrendering on 2 March. The heretics were given the option of recanting or being burned. On 16 March, 200 were executed on a huge pyre at the foot of the castle.

NICAEA (IZNIK), SIEGE OF, 1097

The Christians on the First Crusade besieged Nicaea (now in Turkey) from 6 May, as their first major target. It had been taken from Byzantium by the Turks after Manzikert. Kilij Arslan sultan of Rum held Nicaea but was absent when the crusaders arrived. He returned with a Seljuk relief force but was defeated on 21 May and withdrew. Heads of captive Turks were shot over the walls to demoralise the defence. The crusaders built siege engines and dug mines. A belfry was destroyed by rocks thrown from the walls. A Byzantine fleet aided the crusaders, attacking from the lake. On 19 June the garrison surrendered to the Byzantines in preference to the crusaders. Kilij Arslan's wife was captured trying to escape and sent to Constantinople.

NICOPOLIS (NIKOPOL/NIGBOLU), SIEGE AND BATTLE OF, 12 SEPTEMBER 1396

Victory by sultan Bayezit I over the crusade of Nicopolis. With Constantinople under threat from the Turks a mixed army of western Christians advanced to Nicopolis (now in Bulgaria) on the Danube, which they besieged. The allies included French, Burgundians, Wallachians, Poles, Germans and Hungarians. The leaders included John the Fearless of Burgundy and the French Marshal Boucicaut. Bayezit came to the relief. Sigismund of Hungary withdrew rather than fight the large Turkish army. The remaining crusaders charged into a disguised trap of stakes and horse archers and were defeated. Nicopolis diverted Ottoman attention from Constantinople for a while.

RAMLEH, BATTLES OF, 4 SEPTEMBER 1101, 17 MAY 1102, 27 AUGUST 1105

Ramleh, west of Jerusalem, was taken from the Muslims on the First Crusade in 1099. In 1101 Baldwin I of Jerusalem defeated the Fatimid Egyptians under Saad al-Dawlah. The Egyptians headed for Jerusalem but were caught by surprise at dawn. The Christians were in six divisions. Mounted charges won the battle, notably that of the reserve under Baldwin on his horse Gazelle. In 1102 Baldwin was defeated by the Egyptians under Sharaf al-Ma'ali. The Egyptians approached from Ascalon. Baldwin entered Ramleh for refuge and escaped at night. The Muslims attacked in the morning and took Ramleh, slaughtering those within, including Stephen-Henry count of Blois. He had escaped from Antioch during the First Crusade and returned west. Now he came back to the Holy Land and met his death. Ironically he is usually seen as a coward. In 1105 Baldwin gained his revenge at Ramleh on a Sunday against invading Egyptians under Sena al-Mulk with allies from Damascus. The Patriarch of Jerusalem was with Baldwin, bearing the True Cross, and blessed the Christians before battle. A charge by Baldwin decided

the day. Sena al-Mulk escaped. The battle ended the Fatimid attempt to conquer Palestine.

TIBERIAS, SIEGE OF, 1187

The siege of Tiberias by Saladin led to Hattin. A force besieged Tiberias for Saladin from 2 July. The Lord of Tiberias was Count Raymond of Tripoli whose wife Eschiva was within the walls. The town was stormed but the citadel held out. King Guy with Raymond advanced to the relief but were defeated at Hattin. The garrison surrendered on 5 July. Eschiva was permitted to go to Tripoli.

TOULOUSE, SIEGES OF, 1211, 1217-18

Toulouse was the chief town in the region noted for Cathar heresy, a target for the Albigensian Crusade. It was Count Raymond VI's capital. Simon de Montfort the Elder besieged Toulouse from 16 June 1211 though he could not blockade the whole circumference. A storm attempt failed and the siege was abandoned on 29 June. In 1217 Simon made a second attempt after Raymond took refuge in Toulouse in September. The defenders made sorties. In May 1218 flooding proved more uncomfortable for the attackers than the defenders. Simon's attack from the River Garonne failed. On 25 June a stone from a defending trebuchet shot by women hit Simon on the head and killed him. The Capetian monarchy took over the attack on the heretics and benefited most in the long run.

TUNIS, SIEGE OF, 1270

St Louis' second crusade aimed against Tunis where Emir Mustansir was expected to convert to Christianity. The Christians camped at Carthage near Tunis on 18 July. They found that the emir had no intention of converting or surrendering. Joinville wrote 'I was not there, thank God'. Louis, along with many of his men, became ill probably with typhus, dying on 25 August. His brother Charles made terms with the emir on 1 November.

TYRE, SIEGES OF, 1111-12, 1124

The first major siege of Tyre by the Christians of the kingdom of Jerusalem failed. Tyre was almost an island, with three encircling walls and a narrow approach from land. Rocks protected the sea approach. It was held by the Fatimid Egyptians. Baldwin undertook the siege from November 1111. He lacked aid from sea and the Byzantine fleet gave little aid. A relief attempt under Toghtekin of Damascus succeeded. The siege was abandoned in April 1112. The second siege was undertaken by Baldwin II from 15 February 1124. The Turks from Damascus disputed control of Tyre from 1112 and came to take over the defence under Toghtekin in 1124. A Venetian fleet arrived to blockade from the sea. Relief attempts from Egypt and Damascus failed. The Christians operated throwing engines from belfries, one with five platforms. An Armenian Christian expert was paid to aim the engines. The Muslims used a device with hooks to catch the end of rams and

turn them over. They shot Greek Fire at the Christians. Tyre surrendered on 7 July, when each side was allowed to view the other's fortifications. The Christians now held all the main ports on the Syrian coast. Tyre resisted an attempt against it by Saladin and was one of the last Christian strongholds to surrender, on 29 May 1291.

VARNA, SIEGE AND BATTLE OF, 1444

From November 1444 a crusade under Ladislas III of Hungary and Poland with the general John Hunyadi of Transylvania besieged the Black Sea port of Varna (in Bulgaria) during the Varna Crusade aimed at Constantinople. A Venetian fleet was supposed to take the crusaders on from Varna but failed to arrive. Varna was held by the Ottomans. Sultan Murad II came to relieve it. On 10 November the smaller crusading army was defeated. Ladislas was killed and Hunyadi escaped. It was not decisive but the siege and the crusade were abandoned. It was one of the last hopes of saving Constantinople from the Turks.