



Key events of the thirteenth century

- **The Fourth Crusade (1202–1204):** Initially aimed at recapturing Jerusalem, it ended with the sack of Constantinople, severely damaging Byzantine-Latin relations.
- **The Fifth Crusade (1217–1221):** An attempt to conquer Egypt as a strategic base to reclaim Jerusalem, but it ended unsuccessfully.
- **The Sixth Crusade (1228–1229):** Led by Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, this was a diplomatic crusade that resulted in a peaceful agreement returning Jerusalem to Christian control without major military conflict.
- **The Seventh Crusade (1248–1254):** Led by King Louis IX of France, it targeted Egypt but failed after Louis was captured.
- **The Reconquest of Constantinople (1261):** Constantinople returned to the control of the Byzantines.
- **The Eighth Crusade (1270):** Also led by Louis IX, it aimed at Tunis in North Africa. Louis died of disease shortly after arriving, and the campaign was abandoned.
- **The Ninth Crusade (1271–1272):** Led by Prince Edward (later Edward I of England), this Crusade achieved little.
- **The Siege of Acre (1291):** The city of Acre, the last major stronghold of the Crusader states in the Holy Land, fell to the Mamluks. This event marked the effective end of the Crusader presence in the Levant.

Key people

Baldwin IV	The 'Leper King', King of Jerusalem.
Salah ad-Din	Sultan of Egypt and Syria; leader of the Muslim forces.
Richard I of England (Richard the Lionheart)	The King of England and one of the leaders of the Third Crusade.
Philip II of France	King of France. Leader with Richard, but also his rival.
Sultan Qalawun	Mamluk ruler who captured Tripoli from the Crusaders.
Sultan al-Ashraf Khalil	Mamluk ruler who captured Acre in 1291, to end the time of the Crusaders in the Levant.

The fate of the Crusader kingdoms

By the late 1200s, the Crusader states (also known as the **Latin states** due to their loyalty to the Pope), established after the **First Crusade (1096–1099)**, were in deep decline. The main causes of their downfall included internal conflicts, external threats, and a lack of European support.

The **Kingdom of Jerusalem**, the most significant Crusader state, faced severe instability after King Baldwin IV's death in 1185. Factional quarrels, particularly between **Queen Sibylla** and **Raymond III of Tripoli**, weakened the kingdom, enabling **Salah ad-Din** to defeat the Crusaders at the **Battle of Hattin** in **1187** and capture Jerusalem. Similarly, the **County of Edessa** fell to Muslim forces in **1144**, while the **Principality of Antioch** fell to the **Mamluks** in **1268**.

Civil wars further weakened the Crusader states. In **Tripoli**, disputes over succession following the death of **Count Bohemond VI** in **1275** led to rebellion and power struggles. Exploiting this weakness, the Mamluks, led by **Sultan Qalawun**, captured Tripoli in **1289**.

In **1290**, **Sultan al-Ashraf Khalil** launched a siege against Acre, the last Crusader stronghold, deploying overwhelming forces and advanced siege tactics. Acre's defenders were outnumbered and divided. On **18 May 1291**, the Mamluks breached the walls, overwhelming the city. The Knights Templar made a last stand but were defeated on **28 May**. This marked an end to the Crusader presence in the Levant.

The collapse of Acre ended the Crusader presence in the Levant, forcing military orders like the Templars and Hospitallers to shift focus to defending Mediterranean outposts. The Crusades' failure underscored the destructive impact of internal divisions and inadequate external support.