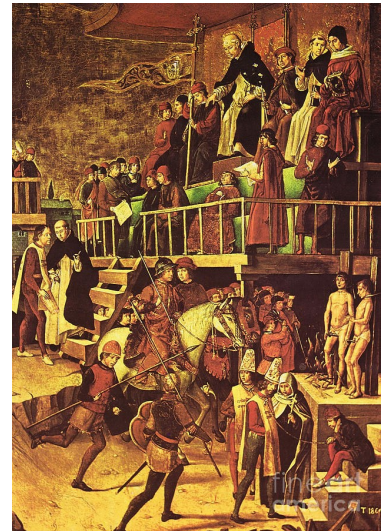


# Medieval History At Shrewsbury College



## **Conquest, control and resistance in the medieval world.**

Paper 1: The Crusades c1095-1204

Paper 2: Anglo-Saxon England and the Anglo-Norman kingdom,  
c1053-1106

Paper 3: The Golden Age of Spain, 1474-1598

Coursework essay.

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# CAUSATION

Essay questions in A level history can be categorised into different 'second order concepts'. These help us to focus on answering the question directly and effectively. They also help us to choose language and phrasing that will allow us to compare our paragraph themes to each other.

Potential second order concepts that you may come across include:

- ◆ Significance
- ◆ Change and continuity
- ◆ Similarity and difference
- ◆ Causation
- ◆ Consequence

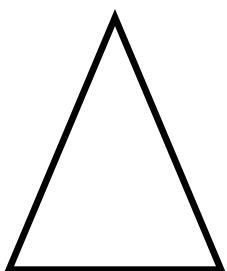
For today we will be focussing on causation by looking at factors that influenced people to go on the First Crusade.

When you are writing a causation essay, you are focussing on factors that make events happen. You may be tempted to be narrative and write about the chronology of factors that cause an event to happen but, in order to fully answer the question, you need to move beyond this. The easiest way to think about it is that you are establishing a **hierarchy of causes**. You want to be able to identify one cause as more important than the others and to be able to explain your reasoning behind this.

Perhaps one of the most common things to consider is whether the causes are **long or short term**, and whether any of them could be said to be a **catalyst** for the event.

It can also be helpful to consider the **causes in relation to each other**. For example: to what extent did the exhaustion and weakness of Harold Godwinson's army after Stamford Bridge provide opportunity for the strengths of the Norman army?

We may also consider some causes in relation to where, who and what they impacted. This could be looking at regional influence or perhaps whether it had an impact on religious or secular leaders at the time.



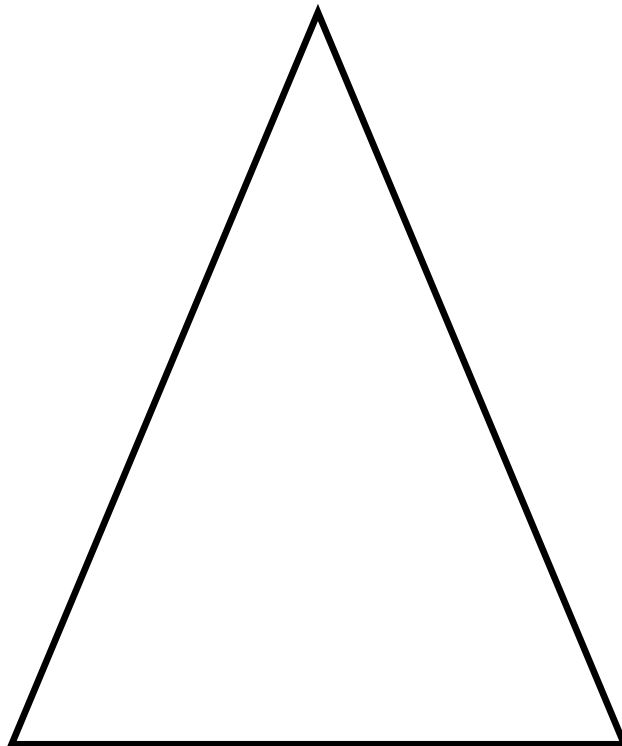


**Note down 3 new facts that you have gained about Medieval history from the timeline activity.**

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Discuss with the people around you, what aspect of the course are you most excited to learn about and why?

Why was the First Crusade called?



Discuss the reasons for the First Crusade and consider how you would place them in a hierarchy of causation.

Points to consider: are they long term or a catalyst? Do they involve anyone with significant power or influence? Do you think they influence any of the other possible causes?

A call to crusade:

Based on what you have learned about motivations, create a speech, letter or poster to encourage the people of medieval Europe to go on crusade.

**TASK:**

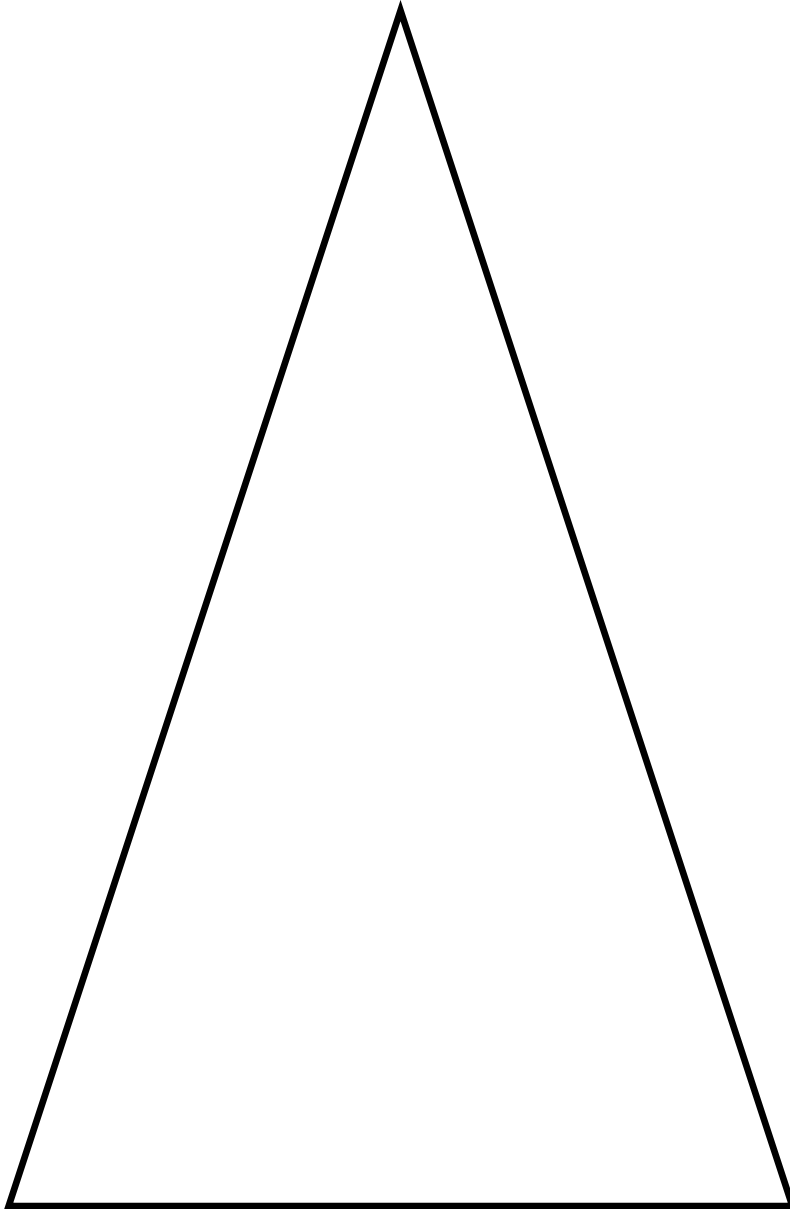
- 1. Read through the articles and extracts on the 11th Century and what was happening in the East and West.**
- 2. From this reading, create a list of factors that could be said to be contributing to the start of the crusades.**
- 3. Rank these to show which you think were the most significant factors and why.**

**These tasks will contribute as research towards your first assessment for the course.**

<b>Reasons/ factors for the crusades:</b>	<b>Evidence from reading and research</b>	<b>Any additional comments or links with other factors.</b>
Religious		
Political		
The Knights		

**How significant were the factors contributing to the crusades?**

**Rank the factors on the pyramid below.**



# *Western Europe in the 11th Century*

## **THE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL**

In order to understand why the crusades happened, we must try to understand the world in which the crusaders lived. Perhaps the easiest way to do this is to look at the 11th-century world as a series of struggles of one kind or another. The first struggle was common to everyone – the struggle to survive. Western Europe was underpopulated and only a fraction of the land was cultivated. Food shortages, famine, disease and early death were common. There was little comfort but the hope of a better life to come after death, and it is not surprising that religion held an important place in the hearts and minds of medieval people. Apart from southern Spain, which was Muslim, and certain areas north of the Baltic sea, which were pagan, western Europe was Christian, which in that part of the world meant it followed the Roman Catholic faith.

## **THE STRUGGLE FOR SALVATION**

For Christians, although a place in heaven was reserved for the righteous, the punishment for sinners was eternal damnation in hell. The second struggle, therefore, was that of good against evil. The aim of the good was salvation: to have sins forgiven and to gain a place in heaven. The most certain way of obtaining salvation was to become a monk or nun – to leave the world and fight the battle against the forces of evil in prayer. It was thought that God listened to the prayers of monks and nuns on behalf of others. The relics of saints were also thought to have a special significance, and a pilgrimage to one of the major shrines in Europe could be made as a penance, in order to gain forgiveness for past sins. The most important place of pilgrimage was Jerusalem, where Jesus Christ had been crucified and had risen from the dead. There, even the stones of the buildings were considered to be holy relics.

## **THE STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY**

The structure of society was what has been called 'feudal'. That is, men held land in return for swearing an oath to serve and advise their lord, who, in turn, swore to give them his protection. Society was organised around the need to fight. The nobility were knights, trained to their calling from boyhood. Kings were weak and struggled to establish their right to rule. A kingdom was only that area in which a king could physically enforce his authority. In France, this meant that the king ruled only the area around Paris. In the rest of his lands local lords fought him, each other and the church for control of the land that they needed to support themselves and their horses. There was little organised law and order. There were few luxuries and refinements of life.

## THE STRUGGLE OF EMPEROR AND POPE

The largest European country was the German, or Holy Roman, Empire. In Germany, the emperors had gained control by appointing churchmen as their representatives. In the past, the emperor had also appointed popes. From the middle of the 11th century there had been important reforms in the church. Popes had insisted that they had control over the election of bishops and that all Christendom, including emperors and kings, were their subjects. The German emperor, Henry IV, had been in dispute with the pope since 1076. Effectively the emperor and the pope were struggling for control of western Christendom.

## THE STRUGGLE IN SOUTHERN ITALY

In Normandy there were many highly trained knights, more than could be used in the wars of the Norman dukes. Many of these knights were younger sons who were looking for other wars to fight and other lands to conquer and settle. From the early 11th century the Normans had been engaged in a struggle in southern Italy, where the Italian noblemen and the armies of the Muslims and the Byzantines were all trying to gain control. In order to help them in their struggle against the German emperors, the popes had turned to the Normans in southern Italy. In 1095 the emperor was in a weak position, the pope, Urban II, in a strong one. If he could mobilise the forces of Christendom on a mission of his choosing then he could prove beyond doubt that the pope was the supreme leader – that the church was superior to the state.



Europe and the near east in the 11th century

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# *The East in the 11th Century*

## **THE BYZANTINE STRUGGLE AGAINST INVASION FROM THE EAST**

Eastern Europe was part of the Byzantine empire, which was the Roman empire in the east. At its heart was the magnificent city of Constantinople, where the emperor lived and ruled. At its peak, the empire had stretched from Armenia in the east, throughout Asia Minor, across the sea of Marmora and through the Balkans as far as the river Danube. During the course of its history the Byzantine empire had fought many times against invaders from the east. In the middle of the 11th century it was struggling against the Seljuk Turks. In 1071, at the battle of Manzikert, the Seljuks defeated the Byzantine emperor and took over the area of Anatolia (the Asian part of Turkey). This was a major catastrophe as Anatolia was the area where the emperor recruited his soldiers. Alexius Comnenus became emperor in 1081 and was determined to restore the empire.

## **THE BYZANTINE STRUGGLE WITH THE NORMANS**

The Byzantine empire was also having to struggle in another direction at this time. Southern Italy had been part of the empire, but it had been conquered by the Normans under Robert Guiscard. Guiscard's intention was to march on Constantinople and, to this end, he attacked Greece in 1081. Alexius Comnenus enlisted the help of the Venetian fleet and managed to slow down the advance of the Normans. In 1085 Robert Guiscard died suddenly and his sons quarrelled among themselves. As we have seen, the pope had been encouraging the Norman advance in southern Italy in his struggle against the German emperor. The Byzantine struggle against the Normans could therefore also be seen as a struggle against the pope.

## **THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE EASTERN AND WESTERN CHURCHES**

The Byzantine empire was Christian but it did not acknowledge the pope in Rome as the head of the church. The churches in the east and west had developed separately in the 4th and 5th centuries when the western Roman empire was being invaded by barbarian tribes. The language used in the eastern church was Greek and it became known as the Greek Orthodox church. In 1054 the Latin and the Greek Christian churches separated over doctrinal matters. Both thought that they were the true Christian church and that their leaders had the right to be the leader of Christendom. The death of Robert Guiscard

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made relationships between the pope and the Byzantine emperor easier. In 1089 Urban II lifted the excommunication that had been put on the emperor by his predecessor and the two churches began cautiously to negotiate with each other. Although relations between Alexius Comnenus and Urban II were friendly, there was, nevertheless, an underlying struggle for supremacy.

### **STRUGGLES IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD**

Other struggles were going on within the empire of Islam. As with the Christian world, the Muslims were not united. The southern part of Spain was ruled by the Umayyad dynasty and the Christian kings of northern Spain, supported by the pope, were engaged in a war against them to try to push them out of the country. In the near east, in the late 11th century, there were two dynasties struggling to be acknowledged as the leaders of Islam – the Abbasids and the Fatimids. The Abbasid caliph ruled from Baghdad and the Fatimid caliph from Cairo. The caliph, the successor to the prophet Mohammed, was both a religious and a secular ruler. Support for the different caliphates came from the two main branches of Islam – the Sunni and the Shia. The Sunnites supported the Abbasids, the Shi'ites supported the Fatimids.

By the middle of the 11th century the Abbasids had become more or less rulers in name only because in 1055 the Seljuk Turks had attacked Baghdad. They were Sunni Muslims and their leader had taken over the running of the Abbasid empire, giving himself the title of sultan ('he with authority'). In 1071 the Seljuks took Jerusalem from the Fatimids. In 1092 the empire was divided into five large territories. The major cities of the empire became autonomous (self-ruling) emirates governed by atabegs, who began to make war on each other.

### **LIVING CONDITIONS IN THE EAST**

Unlike the west, the near east was highly cultivated, fruitful and wealthy. The caliphs ruled from capital cities with the help of many officials. Luxury goods were exported all over the world; the textile industry flourished; mathematics, science, medicine and education were highly advanced. The Muslim conquerors left the local inhabitants to till the fields and tolerated their religions in return for taxes. Jerusalem was a holy city for both Muslims and Christians. Muslim control did not necessarily mean persecution for the Christians living there but, after the takeover of Anatolia by the Seljuks, it became more difficult and dangerous for pilgrims to travel overland from Europe to Jerusalem. Alexius Comnenus, looking for an opportunity to regain his empire, saw that the Seljuk Turks were weak because of internal disputes and aggression. He lacked soldiers, however. The west had soldiers aplenty so in 1095 he appealed to the pope, as a leader of influence in the west, to come to his aid.

## Introduction

Clermont Ferrand in late November seems an unlikely setting for the start of a world revolution. Yet it was there, in a meadow outside the cathedral, that on 27 November 1095 Pope Urban II preached his crusade sermon and set in motion a movement which was profoundly to affect western society for half a millennium. The crusades were part of an ongoing war between Christian and Muslim powers for the control of the Mediterranean, which began with the rise of Islam in the seventh century and has continued to the present day. What distinguished them from other phases of that war was a zeal for Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, sacred to Christians as the site of the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, had, since the reign of the first Christian Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great (312-37), been a pilgrimage centre adorned with churches commemorating important events in the Gospels. But in 638 it was captured by the Caliph Omar,

successor to the Prophet Muhammad (c. 570–632), founder of Islam. Muslims, like Christians, regarded Jerusalem as a holy city, because their Prophet had been taken there on a Night Journey by the Archangel Gabriel, had spoken there with the prophets who had preceded him, and then, from the living rock, had been carried to the throne of Allah in Paradise. His followers identified the platform of the Temple of Herod as the site of these events and built there the shrine known as the Dome of the Rock and the mosque of al-Aqsa.

Muhammad recognized Jesus as a prophet sent by God and limited toleration was therefore extended by his followers to Christians, but there was a lack of parity between the two faiths. Muhammad considered that Jesus and all the former prophets had received and taught the same revelation as himself, because Islam was the true religion; but that Christians had introduced many errors into his teaching. Christians were allowed to retain their churches and to worship freely by the Muslim authorities and forcible conversion was condemned, but they were treated as second-class citizens: they had to pay a religious poll tax, they were subject to discriminatory laws (e.g. they might not ride

horses), and they were forbidden under penalty of death to criticize the Muslim religion or to seek to make Muslim converts. The Islamic rulers allowed Christian pilgrims to visit Jerusalem and the Holy Land, but few Western Christians did so before the tenth century.

Although divided politically and ethnically, Western Europe was united by membership of the Catholic Church, whose public worship was conducted in Latin, and whose chief bishop was the Pope. Virtually everyone in the West, apart from the Jews, was baptized and buried in accordance with Catholic rites and accepted the Christian picture of the universe and their place in it, even though they may have doubted specific parts of the faith. The Church taught an ideal of holiness based on world renunciation, the rejection of personal property and worldly success, the observance of chastity, and the subordination of the individual will to the teachings of the Gospels. These ideals contrasted starkly with the violence prevalent throughout much of Western society. Fighting men in particular (who included almost all the landowning classes) found the practice of the Christian life very difficult.

But in the period 950–1100 a religious revival took

place, spearheaded by some of the great monasteries like Cluny in Burgundy and supported by devout rulers. Its achievements were striking: the pagans of Scandinavia and of central and eastern Europe were converted to Catholicism, a network of parish churches began to be established throughout the 'old' Christian lands, and the reformers began to engage the consciences of some of the laity. Such men were faced with a dilemma. They could not all responsibly leave the world and become monks; yet although it was technically possible for a ruler or a warrior to live in an ascetic way, it was extremely difficult.

Pilgrimage provided a partial solution to the problem. Pilgrimages were not an obligatory part of Catholic observance, and were popular precisely because they were spontaneous expressions of lay piety. They involved some degree of self-denial, and to that extent conformed to contemporary ideals of holiness, but they did not require a permanent change of life. Many pilgrimages were made to local shrines but journeys to distant shrines like Rome and Compostela became quite common. Jerusalem was regarded as the holiest of all pilgrimage destinations and by AD 1000 it had become easier to

reach. Western pilgrims could travel through Catholic lands to Belgrade where they entered the Orthodox Christian Empire of Byzantium which extended to northern Syria. Only the final stage of the journey was made through Muslim territory.

The pilgrims found Jerusalem an alien city, ruled by Muslims, and with many mosques from which the faithful were called to prayer five times each day. In 1009, in a rare act of intolerance, the Caliph Hakim of Egypt ordered the destruction of all Christian churches in the city, and although the Holy Sepulchre was rebuilt under Byzantine patronage by 1048, many of the other shrines remained in ruins. Moreover, those who had come to the Holy Land to follow in Christ's footsteps found that they were not allowed to process through the streets but could only worship behind the closed doors of their churches.

As pilgrimage to Jerusalem came to occupy a central role in the devotional aspirations of Western Christians, so resentment of Muslim rule in the Holy City grew. To understand this fully one should consider how modern Muslims would feel if their holy city of Mecca had been captured by a Western power, which, while protecting the Muslim shrines

and permitting the *hajj* to take place, also built many Christian churches in the city and regarded Islam with disdain. However, before 1095 Western Christians were powerless to remedy the situation: sheer distance ruled out political intervention and individual visitors could take no action because pilgrims were required to travel unarmed.

ONE

## The First Crusade

In 1071 the Seljuk Sultan of Baghdad defeated the main Byzantine field army at Manzikert in eastern Asia Minor and during the next few years Turkish warbands occupied most of the Asiatic provinces of Byzantium. This made it hazardous for Western pilgrims to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem unless they were rich enough to pay a large, armed escort. But in the 1090s the Turkish Empire was weakened by faction. It was an ideal time for Byzantine intervention and the Emperor Alexius I (1081–1118) appealed to the Pope for help in recruiting Western knights to serve as mercenaries in his armies.

This was the catalyst which led the Pope to launch the First Crusade. Urban II (1088–99) was in the middle of a bitter and prolonged dispute with the Western Emperor, Henry IV (1056–1106) about the control of Church appointments. Henry had set up



Listen to some of the religious motivations for going on crusade.



Listen to the reasons some knights went on crusade.



Listen to the political context that contributed to the First Crusade