

To Jerusalem and Back Again: Objects of the Crusades



Bearers of the Cross
Material Religion in the
Crusading World, 1095–c.1300

Information for teachers

This education pack has been created by the Museum of the Order of St John in partnership with the University of Birmingham to provide Key Stage 3 History teachers with a lesson plan and resources to explore *Christendom, the importance of religion and the Crusades* through object-based learning using real objects from the Museum's collection. ¹

The pack draws extensively on new research undertaken as part of the *Bearers of the Cross: Material Religion in the Crusading World, 1095–c.1300* project, which was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Led by Dr William Purkis (University of Birmingham), *Bearers of the Cross* explored the lived, material religion of crusaders through a wide-ranging analysis of texts, art, architecture and material culture associated with the medieval crusading movement. The project has shed new light on the devotional worlds that crusaders inhabited, examining the ritual practices they observed, the religious artefacts they treasured, and the sacred spaces they shaped and were shaped by. Central to this work was a fresh study of the medieval collections of the Museum of the Order of St John.

How to use this resource

The resource includes a full lesson plan and three activities, as well as full notes to accompany the presentation and tasks. The presentation notes correspond with the PowerPoint presentation slides and the activity instructions are highlighted in blue at the relevant stage of the presentation.

There are also lots of opportunities to ask further questions and encourage group discussion, and secondary research for teachers' information is shown in green.

Resources:

- Teachers' presentation notes
- PowerPoint presentation
- Activity sheets
- Copies of primary resources
- Links to further information

Learning objectives

- Know what the crusades were and some of the reasons why they were fought
- Understand the importance of religion in the history of the crusades
- Understand the importance of historic objects in helping us to understand the past

¹ 'Christendom, the importance of religion and the Crusades' is a non-statutory example of a topic that might be taught under the heading 'the development of Church, state and society in Medieval Britain 1066–1509': Department for Education, *History Programmes of Study: Key Stage 3, National Curriculum in England* (2013), p. 2, via https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239075/SECONDARY_national_curriculum_-_History.pdf



To Jerusalem and Back Again: Objects of the Crusades



Bearers of the Cross
Material Religion in the
Crusading World, 1095-c.1300

Lesson plan summary: suggested time 1 hour

5 min starter activity: Just a rock?	Introduces students to a real object from Jerusalem and asks them to consider why it is important, and what we can learn from it to help us understand the crusades.
Presentation: Jerusalem and pilgrimage	Introduces the city of Jerusalem and why it is a holy place. Introduces the concept of pilgrimage and explains why this is a key factor in the origins of the First Crusade.
Presentation: The First Crusade	Explains some of the reasons why the crusades began and provides an overview of the First Crusade and the impact of the campaign, including the establishment of the crusader states.
15 min group activity: What's in a coin?	Students work in small groups to complete the activity sheets provided and look closely at the images of crusader coins. This activity introduces students to the concept of object-based learning and using objects as evidence in historical enquiry. Each worksheet asks students to draw one of the coins, which develops their skills in close, detailed looking to understand the object as a whole.
Presentation: Collecting holy objects and souvenirs	Explores the legacy of the crusades and the continuing tradition of Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This links back to the fragment of stone at the beginning of the lesson and asks students to think about the significance of bringing back objects from holy places.
10 min individual activity: Souvenirs and special objects	Students look closely at images of two models of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre from the Museum collection and consider their own relationship to special objects and souvenirs.
Presentation: Conclusion and quick review	Return to the key terms introduced at the beginning and ask students what they know about these words now.

Further suggested questions and activities

It is important to note that the resources produced here concentrate on examining the attitudes and perspectives of medieval western Christians, with particular reference to their ideas surrounding the importance of holy places and sacred objects. The resources are not intended to offer a holistic assessment of the early history of the crusades, insofar as the experiences of those individuals and communities from other faith traditions – namely medieval Muslims and Jews, as well as eastern Christians – are not addressed directly.



To Jerusalem and Back Again: Objects of the Crusades



Bearers of the Cross
Material Religion in the
Crusading World, 1095-c.1300

This concentration reflects the nature of the medieval collections of the Museum of the Order of St John, which are primarily focused on objects relating to the history of the Order itself but also include a significant number of coins produced by and for the rulers of the so-called 'crusader states'.

Consideration of Muslim and Jewish perspectives on the early history of the crusades – and, especially, comparative work on Muslim and Jewish attitudes towards holy places and things – would therefore be a valuable potential extension activity that teachers might pursue with their students. It would be particularly interesting to consider the similarities and differences in devotional attitudes towards other religious sites in Jerusalem, such as the Aqsa mosque, the Dome of the Rock, and the Western Wall of the Temple Mount.

For further exploration of these topics, see especially the web pages associated with the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 2016 exhibition *Jerusalem: Every People Under Heaven, 1000–1400*: <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2016/jerusalem>

Where to find further information

Further information about the Order of St John, its role in the crusades and its historic collections can be found here: <http://museumstjohn.org.uk/>

The *Bearers of the Cross* project website includes further research and interpretation about the Museum's medieval collections and can be found here: <https://www.bearersofthecross.org.uk/>

Large images of the coins included on activity sheets can be found with the following links on the *Bearers of the Cross* website:

People, Power and Coins: [LDOSJ_C283](#) and [LDOSJ_C282](#)

Military Power: [LDOSJ_JE10](#)

Crusader States: [LDOSJ_ED3](#) and [LDOSH_ANT94](#)

Religious Symbols: [LDOSJ_ANT6](#)

Visit the Museum of the Order of St John

School groups can book 'The Crusades and Knights Hospitaller' workshop which examines key events of the crusades through a tour of the historic site and hands-on exploration of real crusader artefacts.

This education pack can be used as a standalone resource or as a pre-visit introduction to the history of the crusades before visiting the Museum of the Order of St John to explore original crusader objects up close.

To find out more information and how to book one of our workshops, please visit <http://museumstjohn.org.uk/learning/schools/>



To Jerusalem and Back Again: Objects of the Crusades



Bearers of the Cross
Material Religion in the
Crusading World, 1095-c.1300

Presentation notes

Slide 1 – Introduction

Slide 2 – Introduction (continued)

This lesson is going to be all about exploring the history of the crusades and understanding what they were and some of the reasons why they happened. We are going to use real historic objects from the medieval period to help us do this.

We are going to think about and discuss some key terms today, so make a note of them as we will return to them at the end of the class to review what you have learned about the meaning of each word.

Glossary of key terms (definitions marked with an asterisk are taken from the Oxford English Dictionary):

- **Crusade** – A form of medieval Christian holy war, authorised by the papacy, whose participants adopted signs of the cross and anticipated receiving spiritual rewards for their efforts. Originally focused on the conquest and colonisation of the Holy Land, crusades were subsequently fought in other parts of the medieval world (including the Iberian peninsula and the Baltic region) and against other groups and individuals who were identified as ‘enemies of Christ’ (including political opponents of the papacy and people accused of heresy).
- * **Pilgrimage** – A journey (usually of a long distance) made to a sacred place as an act of religious devotion; the action or practice of making such a journey.
- * **Christianity** – A religion based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament, and the belief that he was the son of God; the system of doctrines and precepts taught by Jesus and his apostles. (N.B.: the Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘Christendom’ as ‘The countries in which Christianity is the dominant or traditional religion, considered collectively; the Christian world or domain, esp. Europe. Now chiefly in historical contexts.’)
- * **Holy Sepulchre** – The cave in which Jesus Christ was buried outside the walls of Jerusalem; hence, the name for the group of buildings erected over the traditional site of this cave.
- * **Islam** – The Muslim religion, based on belief in one God, Allah, and in the prophet Muhammad as the messenger of God, whose sacred text is the Qu’ran.

Image: View towards the Old City of Jerusalem from the east. In the foreground is the city’s sacred esplanade (known to Jews as ‘Temple Mount’ and to Muslims as ‘the Noble Sanctuary’), with the Aqsa mosque on the left and the Dome of the Rock in the centre.



To Jerusalem and Back Again: Objects of the Crusades



Bearers of the Cross
Material Religion in the
Crusading World, 1095-c.1300

Slide 3 – Just a rock?

Starter class activity – 5–10 minutes

Show class the image of the rock on the slide and ask what they think it might be.

Questions to get the class thinking:

- Can we tell anything about it?
- Where does it come from?
- How old is it?
- What is it made of?
- Do you think it is important or valuable?

At first glance, this is indeed ‘just a rock’, with little to suggest it has any particular meaning or value. Careful observers might note that it has some of the hallmarks of having been purposely tooled (e.g. flat surface, straight edges); otherwise, further contextual evidence is required for us to understand what this object really is.

Slide 4 – Just a rock? (continued)

The slide shows the reverse side of the ‘rock’, where there is an inscription that reveals the object’s origin:

FRAGMENT OF THE ORIGINAL CORNER OF THE CHUCH [sic] OF THE (STONE)
HOLY SEPULCHRE. The gift of Major E.W. Newman, 1931

Hand out copies of letters (see file “Activity 1_Just a rock”) relating to the object which explains that the ‘rock’ is in fact a fragment of stone taken from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (pron. *Sep-ul-ker*) in Jerusalem. Ask students to read the letters and think about or discuss in pairs what the evidence tells us about the rock.

Now we have read the evidence, and seen the accompanying inscription, what do we know about the rock?

Ask students to suggest what the documents tell us. Refer back to the above prompt questions if needed.

Consider the following questions:

- Does this change what we think of the object?
- Do you think it is important now?





Slide 5 – Why is this rock important?

This fragment of stone is hundreds of years old and has been carried thousands of miles to the UK, where it is now held in a museum in London. Many people believe it is an important and valuable item for several reasons:

- It originates from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem – a place that is of great significance for Christians all over the world. (It is perhaps worth noting the similarities in the colour of the stone fragment and that of the church's façade, as can be seen on the slide.)
- It was acquired by a visitor to Jerusalem as an evocative souvenir of his journey to the city. The value attached to the fragment is evident from the fact that (i) it was presented to Major Newman as a prestigious gift by the bishop of Jerusalem and (ii) it was subsequently donated to - and gratefully received by - the Museum of the Order of St John.

By examining historic objects such as this stone fragment, and its supporting documents, we can piece together vital information to help us understand what happened in the past. Although it was acquired hundreds of years after the crusades began, the collection and treasuring of this fragment of stone from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre can help us begin to understand what the crusades were and some of the reasons why they were fought. As we shall see, collecting and preserving objects from the holy city of Jerusalem has been important to many Christians for hundreds of years.

Slide 6 – Why is Jerusalem holy?

From the fourth century onwards Christians from around the medieval world travelled to a place designated as the Holy Land (*Terra Sancta*). By engaging in a devotional practice known as pilgrimage (*peregrinatio*), these pilgrims sought to gain a fuller understanding of their religious heritage by visiting and touching a landscape they deemed to be of paramount importance. Their travels took them to places such as Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jerusalem – key sites in the story of Christ's birth, childhood and death respectively. Because these sites were all believed to be places that Christ had come into direct physical contact with, they were understood to contain and emit a kind of radioactive sacred power. Believing that any material object that had touched these holy places absorbed this sacred energy, pilgrims often sought to acquire souvenirs of their journey by collecting fragments of stone, oil and water from the various holy places. Through the acquisition and removal of these sacred objects, known as relics, the power of the Holy Land was transported around medieval Christendom.

The first image on the slide is from an early sixteenth-century manuscript and imagines the moment that Christ ascended to heaven. The site of Christ's ascension, at the summit of the Mount of Olives (to the east of the city of Jerusalem, from where the photograph on Slide 1 was taken), was understood to be an important stopping point on any Jerusalem pilgrim's itinerary because it was believed to offer pilgrims one of the most visible and tangible points of contact with Christ's body. Here, pilgrims could (and still can) expect to find the imprints of Christ's feet embedded into the



To Jerusalem and Back Again: Objects of the Crusades



Bearers of the Cross
Material Religion in the
Crusading World, 1095-c.1300

rock, as depicted in this manuscript image. It became commonplace for medieval pilgrims to chip and scrape at these footprints, to produce stone-dust that they could then collect and take away with them as souvenirs of their visit.

Images: Detail from the Rhodes Missal ([London, Museum of the Order of St John, LDOSJ K100, f. 61v](#)). Advancing the slide introduces a recent photograph of the footprint relic, which can still be seen at the summit of the Mount of Olives.

Slide 7 – Why is Jerusalem holy? (continued)

The site of Christ's ascension was just one of many points of interest for medieval Jerusalem pilgrims. By far and away the most important sacred place for Christian visitors to the city was the Holy Sepulchre: the empty tomb in which Christ was understood to have been buried following his death on the cross, and from where he was believed to have risen from the dead three days later.

This early sixteenth-century manuscript illumination imagines the moment of Christ's resurrection. The Holy Sepulchre – the tomb from which he has emerged – stands empty behind him, guarded by three sleeping soldiers. The word 'sepulchre' is derived from the Latin word *sepulchrum*, meaning 'a place where a corpse is buried; a grave; a tomb'.

Image: Detail from the Rhodes Missal ([London, Museum of the Order of St John, LDOSJ K100, f. 56v](#)).

Slide 8 – Why is Jerusalem holy? (continued)

From the time of the Roman emperor Constantine (r. 306–337 CE) the site of Christ's resurrection has been contained within a building known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The image on this slide is taken from an early sixteenth-century travel guide for pilgrims to Jerusalem. It depicts the main entrance and south façade of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre from a similar position to that from which the recent photograph in Slide 5 was taken.

Many Christians believe that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre also contains other significant holy places and objects within its walls. These include the site of Christ's execution and death on Mount Calvary, and the Stone of Unction, upon which Christ's dead body was believed to have been laid out and prepared for burial following his removal from the cross. In the foreground of the image on this slide a group of medieval pilgrims are depicted on their knees in prayer before the Stone of Unction.

For a brief overview of the early history of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (1.5 mins), see also <https://youtu.be/Oa7PvB2KADo> (link also embedded in slide).

Image: Detail from Bernhard von Breydenbach's guide for Holy Land pilgrims ([London, Museum of the Order of St John, LDOSJ H37](#)).



To Jerusalem and Back Again: Objects of the Crusades



Bearers of the Cross
Material Religion in the
Crusading World, 1095-c.1300

Slide 9 – Why is Jerusalem holy? (continued)

Detail of a group of medieval pilgrims before the Stone of Unction in the courtyard in front of the main entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Image: Detail from Bernhard von Breydenbach's guide for Holy Land pilgrims ([London, Museum of the Order of St John, LDOSJ H37](#)).

Slide 10 – Why is Jerusalem holy? (continued)

Many practices of pilgrimage that originated in the Middle Ages – including the desire to see and touch objects and places that Christ's body was believed to have touched – continue to this day. This image shows a group of contemporary pilgrims praying at the Stone of Unction, much as their medieval predecessors did before them.

Slide 11 – A medieval pilgrim's experience

Medieval pilgrims often sought to collect souvenirs of their visit to the Holy Sepulchre – including fragments of stone, some of which were chipped away from the empty tomb itself.

The text on the slide is taken from a first-hand account of a Russian pilgrim's journey to Jerusalem in the early years of the twelfth century. The pilgrim, named Daniel, describes having had the opportunity to worship at the Holy Sepulchre in private, which was an unusual privilege and indicates that he was regarded as an important, high-status individual by those responsible for guarding the site. It was probably for this reason that the Sepulchre's custodian was also willing to break off a piece of stone for Daniel to take away with him – an act that might also be compared to the bishop of Jerusalem's presentation of a fragment of the Holy Sepulchre to Major Newman, as we considered in the starter activity.

Slide 12 – Why is Jerusalem holy? (continued)

Jerusalem is not just a sacred place for Christians. This map shows the location of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre relative to two of the city's other holy places: the Western Wall and the Dome of the Rock.

Slide 13 – Why is Jerusalem holy? (continued)

The Western Wall is the principal surviving remnant of the Second Temple (which was destroyed by Jerusalem's Roman rulers in 70 CE), and is one of the holiest places in the world for Jews.



To Jerusalem and Back Again: Objects of the Crusades



Bearers of the Cross
Material Religion in the
Crusading World, 1095-c.1300

Slide 14 – Why is Jerusalem holy? (continued)

Just beyond the Western Wall is Jerusalem's sacred esplanade, known to Jews as 'Temple Mount' and to Muslims as 'the Noble Sanctuary' (*al-Haram al-Sharif*). For Jews, it is where the Temple once stood; for Muslims, it is the location of two of Islam's most holy sites, the Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock – a building that is believed to contain the place from which the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven (and where, much like the Mount of Olives, it is believed that his footprint can still be seen in the rock). The photo on the slide shows a view of the sacred esplanade, looking north towards the Dome of the Rock.

In the early Middle Ages Jerusalem had been under the control of the Christian emperors of Byzantium, but in the early seventh century the holy city was conquered by the expansionist forces of Islam. During the four centuries of Muslim rule that followed, pilgrims of other faith traditions were still permitted to visit the city's holy places; however, by the late eleventh century, there were increasing concerns across western Christendom about the difficulties associated with travelling to the Holy Land – not least because of the hostile environment many Christian pilgrims reported having experienced when they arrived in Jerusalem. In some quarters it was even feared that the Muslim rulers of the Near East were determined to destroy the Christian holy places completely. It was these concerns about the accessibility and preservation of the Holy Sepulchre that provided the backdrop to – and the provocation for – the dramatic and bloody military expedition known to historians as the First Crusade (1095–99).

Slide 15 – The First Crusade

In November 1095 the head of the western Church, Pope Urban II (r. 1088–99), travelled to France to preach a sermon in which he called on the knights of Christendom to travel hundreds of miles from their homelands to fight a war for the conquest of the Holy Land and the 'liberation' of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. To encourage them to volunteer for the campaign, which he appears to have envisaged as a kind of pilgrimage-in-arms, Pope Urban promised participants that they would be rewarded with 'remission of sins'. By this he meant that those who joined the expedition would be forgiven for all their past sinful behaviour because of the profound risks involved in travelling to, and fighting for, the Holy Land. This was a revolutionary offer, and one that proved to have a very wide appeal – especially for members of the late eleventh-century warrior aristocracy, who had spent their lives being told by the Church that acts of violence were inherently sinful. Simply put, the pope had presented the knightly classes with an opportunity to work for the benefit of their souls while performing their traditional social function: fighting.

Pope Urban subsequently went on a preaching tour across France, seeking recruits for his war for the Holy Land. One of the nobles who heard him preach in person was Count Fulk IV of Anjou (r. 1068–1109), who later wrote an account of what he understood the pope to have said in early 1096. A short extract from the count's report appears on the slide: it suggests the pope emphasised that Jerusalem and the wider Holy Land region were 'occupied' by (and thus in need of 'liberation' from) 'the pagan people'. Other sources confirm that a major theme in Pope Urban's preaching was that Jerusalem should be 'liberated' from Muslim rule not only to make it easier for Christian pilgrims to



To Jerusalem and Back Again: Objects of the Crusades



Bearers of the Cross
Material Religion in the
Crusading World, 1095-c.1300

visit and worship in the city but also to ensure that its holy places – and especially the Holy Sepulchre – were sufficiently protected and preserved from the perceived risks of desecration, damage and destruction.

The military campaign that the pope inspired has become known as the **First Crusade**, and the people who took part are called **crusaders** – a term derived from the cross-shaped cloth badges participants adopted, by which they were identified as *crucesignati* (literally, ‘people signed with the cross’).

The image on the slide depicts the departure of a contingent of crusaders in 1096. It is worth noting that they are shown as pilgrims rather than warriors (which underscores the devotional nature of their undertaking); and that the knowing glance exchanged between one of the crusaders and his wife encapsulates the drama and emotion associated with such moments of separation.

Image: Detail from London, British Library, MS Yates Thompson 12, f. 9r.

Contrasting arguments and interpretations

Historians’ explanations for what prompted people to join the crusade have tended to fall between two polarised positions. On the one hand, some historians have argued that the crusaders were primarily motivated by the prospect of ‘material gain’ – i.e. that they saw in the crusade opportunities for social, political, territorial or economic advancement through the conquest and colonisation of the Holy Land region. In this framework, it is often argued, the claims that were made by medieval writers about the crusaders being motivated by spiritual concerns (such as the desire to gain remission of sins) are dismissed as providing little more than a convenient religious legitimisation for their materialistic actions and ambitions. Other scholars, however, have tended to take medieval ideas and declarations about the crusaders’ religious motivations more seriously – not least because of what is now known about the substantial social and political risks, and the significant financial costs, of going on crusade.

One of the most recent contributions to these debates has come from the University of Birmingham, where new research by Dr William Purkis has shown that the material and the devotional are not in fact so easily separated. By examining a wide range of evidence for the crusaders’ profound enthusiasm for holy places and sacred objects, Dr Purkis has argued that anxieties about (sacred) material loss, such as the prospect of the Holy Sepulchre’s destruction, and hunger for (sacred) material gain, such as the acquisition and possession of relics, should be regarded as among the most powerful triggers that prompted medieval Christians to go on crusade. For further reading on these arguments and interpretations, see William J. Purkis, “Holy Christendom’s New Colony”: The Extraction of Sacred Matter and the Colonial Status of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, *The Haskins Society Journal* 30 (2020), pp. 177–211.





Slide 16 – The First Crusade (continued)

To get a sense of the scale of the undertaking that the crusaders were committing themselves to, this slide shows just how far Jerusalem is from the medieval heartlands of western Christendom in what are now England, France, Germany and Italy. According to Google Maps, the most direct journey to the holy city is nearly three thousand miles, and would require nearly 850 hours of uninterrupted walking to complete it!

It in fact took the armies of the First Crusade around three years to reach Jerusalem. They broke into the holy city on 15 July 1099, massacred its population of Muslims and Jews, and established Christian custody over its many sacred sites – including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Dome of the Rock. They did so confident in the belief that they were agents of God's will.

Slide 17 – The battle of Ascalon

Exactly three weeks after their conquest of Jerusalem, the crusaders' sense of divine approval for their actions was amplified even further when they discovered what they believed to be a major relic: a piece of wood they identified as part of the cross upon which Christ had been crucified (generally known as the 'Holy Cross' or the 'True Cross'). It was an object whose holy power was very quickly tested – and supposedly proven – when the crusaders marched to fight the final battle of the First Crusade near the coastal city of Ascalon on 12 August 1099. (N.B. Ascalon's location is marked on the map that appears on Slide 19.)

The image on the slide is a nineteenth-century depiction of the battle of Ascalon, as identified by its accompanying caption. The central figure holds aloft a box containing the relic of the True Cross.

Slide 18 – The relic of the True Cross

Following its effective deployment in August 1099, the True Cross was wielded in battle time and again during the course of the twelfth century. It is no exaggeration to say that the crusaders who remained in the Holy Land after the First Crusade's conclusion regarded the relic as the most powerful weapon in their arsenal. The French chronicler Fulcher of Chartres described its importance for Baldwin of Le Bourcq, one of the leaders of those who defended the crusaders' conquests. Writing in c.1120, Fulcher noted that Baldwin 'preferred to possess that Cross together with the Lord's help and favour than many thousands of men ... Without the Cross neither he nor the others dared to set out for war.'





Slide 19 – The establishment of the crusader states

At the time that Fulcher of Chartres was writing, Baldwin of Le Bourcq had in fact risen to hold the most powerful position within the post-conquest societies that the crusaders went on to construct in the Holy Land: he was the king of Jerusalem.

During the course of their three-year march towards the holy city in 1096–99, the armies of the First Crusade had fought and won numerous battles and besieged and conquered various towns and cities. The territorial gains that the crusaders had made therefore provided the foundations for four new Christian lordships that were established in the Holy Land during the early years of the twelfth century:

- the kingdom of Jerusalem
- the county of Tripoli
- the principality of Antioch
- the county of Edessa

These four lordships are often referred to as the ‘crusader states’, because those crusaders and other western Christians who settled in the Holy Land following the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099 saw themselves as defending the achievements of the First Crusade. The settlers maintained close ties with their homelands in Europe, with one northern French chronicler identifying the most important of the four crusader states – the kingdom of Jerusalem – as ‘holy Christendom’s new colony’.

In the generation that followed the conclusion of the First Crusade Baldwin of Le Bourcq held power in two of the four crusader states: he was the count of Edessa from 1100–1118, before ascending to become king of Jerusalem from 1118 until his death in 1131.

The map on this slide shows the territorial extent of the four crusader states in c.1135. The locations of the respective capital cities of the kingdom of Jerusalem, the county of Tripoli, the principality of Antioch and the county of Edessa are marked on the map with a ☆. This map is preceded by an image from Google Maps, which shows how the crusader states crossed the span of countries known today as Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine.

Slide 20 – What’s in a coin?

The crusading movement was concerned with both the conquest and colonisation of the Holy Land region; as such, it was a political as well as a religious project. With this in mind, among the most valuable sources of evidence for our understanding of the ideas, priorities and aspirations of those who ruled the four crusader states are some of the objects they produced for daily use by their Christian and non-Christian subjects alike: coins.

What are the main functions of coins?

First and foremost, then as now, a coin has an intrinsic financial value, which means it can be exchanged for goods and services. But a coin can also have an important secondary function as a



To Jerusalem and Back Again: Objects of the Crusades



Bearers of the Cross
Material Religion in the
Crusading World, 1095-c.1300

vehicle for disseminating political, social or religious messages. Alongside consideration of its monetary value, the letters, symbols and images imprinted on a coin can therefore be analysed as evidence for the politics, society and cultures of the time and place from which it originated.

The images on this slide are of real coins that were produced and used by the inhabitants of the crusader states during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They are hundreds of years old but they have survived to this day and are now kept safely in a museum. Today, they are vital sources of evidence that enable us to explore the political, cultural and religious history of the crusader states.

Slide 21 - What's in a coin? (continued)

Before we look closely at the crusader coins, let's consider a contemporary example: the Brexit 50p. Discuss:

- What does the text say and what do you think it means?
- What does the message suggest about the process of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union?
- Whose profile is shown on the reverse of the coin? Why?
- How might future historians use this coin as evidence for the politics and culture of twenty-first-century Britain?

Extension question:

- Whose voices or histories are NOT represented by this coin? What are the implications of this for our analysis of coins originating from the crusader states?

Group activity – 15 mins

Split the class into groups – there are four activity sheets, each looking at different sets of coins and a different theme. Students in each group should be given a copy of the same worksheet and the group should then work through the activities together. The purpose of the activities is to look closely at the coins to find out what clues and information they can give us about the history of the crusades and the crusader states.

At the end of the time each group can feed back to the class two things that they have found out about their set of coins:

- What symbols are depicted on the coins?
- What do the symbols represent?

(N.B. The coin from Edessa on Activity Sheet 3 was minted during the reign of Count Baldwin II (r. 1100–1118), also known as Baldwin of Le Bourcq, who would go on to become King Baldwin II of Jerusalem (r. 1118–31), as considered at Slide 19.)





Slide 22 – Conclusion of coin activity

Historic objects such as these coins help us to understand the religious and political worlds of those who ruled the crusader states during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They show us some of the key people, places and things associated with the crusader conquest and colonisation of the Holy Land, including individuals such as Baldwin of Le Bourcq, buildings such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and objects such as the relic of the True Cross.

We are learning the importance of studying an object's meaning, value and context, and noticing that an object's meaning and value can change over time and space. In the Middle Ages, for example, these coins were important because (i) they served a financial purpose and (ii) they provided medieval rulers with a means of mass communication. Today, these same coins are important primarily because they help us to learn more about what the crusades were and some of the reasons why they were fought.

Some of you will have seen that your coins show a depiction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. We have already talked about the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as one of the most important sacred places in Jerusalem, and by depicting it on their coins the kings of Jerusalem sought to assert and reinforce their claims to authority and power over the holy city. The coin on this slide is one of the earliest coins to feature this image: it shows an internal view of the church's rotunda and dome, at the centre of which stood the Holy Sepulchre itself.

Slide 23 – The Crusader Church of the Holy Sepulchre (continued)

During the twelfth century the rulers of crusader Jerusalem rebuilt and redecorated the Church of the Holy Sepulchre so that it was grander than ever before. The text on this slide offers a medieval perspective on this rebuilding and redecoration project: according to the chronicler Albert of Aachen, King Baldwin I of Jerusalem (r. 1100–1118) – who was another veteran of the First Crusade – had declared that he wished 'to treasure both the church and its Sepulchre, in accordance with its worth, and to glorify it with richer gold, with jewels and craftsmanship'.

Many of the architectural changes that the crusaders introduced to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre – including its splendid new south façade, shown again on this slide – have survived to the present day. For the most part, the building that modern pilgrims visit is the product of the crusaders' twelfth-century reconstruction work.





Slide 24 – Collecting souvenirs

For medieval pilgrims who made the long journey to Jerusalem and visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, it was often important to return home with a token of their visit to the holy city. We have already seen a fragment of stone taken from the church in the twentieth century, and heard about various relics acquired by pilgrims over time, but visitors to pre-modern Jerusalem were also keen to purchase souvenir products, many of which were made by local craftspeople to satisfy the demands of the pilgrim market.

The magnificent scale model shown on this slide is an example of a deluxe reproduction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, manufactured for sale to wealthy Jerusalem pilgrims in the seventeenth century. Only thirty of these models are known to have survived to the present day, and three of them are held in the Museum of the Order of St John in London. These models can be understood within the history of the collecting and treasuring of objects from the Holy Land that we have considered throughout this lesson. For those who had acquired a model of the Holy Sepulchre while on pilgrimage themselves, these objects no doubt evoked memories and feelings similar to those experienced at the time of their visit to the holy city. Equally, such models also helped those who were not able to make the Jerusalem journey to imagine what the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was like, and to establish a devotional connection to the holy places without ever having travelled there.

This short film (3 mins) provides a brief introduction to the models and their devotional functions as evocative Holy Land mementoes, and was made in 2016 as part of the *Bearers of the Cross* project: <https://youtu.be/P3KY0CU3vzk> (link also embedded in slide).

Slide 25 – Collecting souvenirs (continued)

The images on this slide juxtapose a recent photograph taken within the rotunda of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with that of a partially dismantled model highlighting the same part of the building. The perspective of the photograph taken from within the rotunda is similar to that which medieval artists were seeking to capture on the twelfth-century Holy Sepulchre coins that were produced in the kingdom of Jerusalem (such as the example shown on Slide 22).

Individual activity – 10 minutes

Hand out worksheets to the class to complete on their own. The first activity encourages students to notice specific features about the historic models, and to consider what connections they inspire with the themes already discussed using descriptive words. The second activity encourages individual reflection on their own relationship with physical objects by thinking of a souvenir they have acquired during a past journey.



To Jerusalem and Back Again: Objects of the Crusades



Bearers of the Cross
Material Religion in the
Crusading World, 1095-c.1300

Slide 26 – Conclusions

- What do these objects tell us about the crusades?
- What have we learned about the importance of religion in the Middle Ages?
- Why are historic objects important and what type of things can they tell us about the past?

Reflective activity – 5 minutes

Revisit the key terms introduced at the beginning of the session and ask students what they now understand about the words and what they mean in the context of the crusades.

Slide 27 – End



To Jerusalem and Back Again: Objects of the Crusades



Bearers of the Cross
Material Religion in the
Crusading World, 1095-c.1300

Timeline

<u>Key moments in the history of England</u>	<u>Key moments in the history of the crusades</u>
1066 – Norman conquest of England; William I ‘The Conqueror’ becomes king	
1087 – William II ‘Rufus’ becomes king	1071 – Victory of the Seljuk Turks over Byzantine army at the battle of Manzikert
	1095–6 – Pope Urban II preaches the First Crusade across western Europe
	1096–7 – Crusaders depart western Europe for the Holy Land
	1097–8 – Crusaders besiege and conquer Antioch; foundation of the county of Edessa and the principality of Antioch
1100 – Henry I becomes king	1099 – Crusaders besiege and conquer Jerusalem; foundation of the kingdom of Jerusalem
1135 – Stephen becomes king	1120 – Foundation of the Order of the Temple
	1144 – Zengi of Aleppo and Mosul besieges and reconquers Edessa
1154 – Henry II becomes king	1145–8 – Second Crusade
1170 – Murder in Canterbury Cathedral of Archbishop Thomas Becket	1187 – Saladin besieges and reconquers Jerusalem
1189 – Richard I ‘The Lionheart’ becomes king	1188–92 – Third Crusade
1199 – John becomes king	
1215 – Sealing of Magna Carta	1204 – Crusaders besiege and conquer Constantinople

