

Who benefited from the Crusades?

YOU will probably agree that in the short run the Muslims won the long war against the crusaders. The Christian countries of Western Europe had to give up the idea of capturing Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Their armies returned home defeated, leaving the Muslims in control of the Middle East. But who benefited the most in the long term?

Effects on the West

Let us look first at the effects on the Christian West.

Most historians agree that after the Crusades Europe prospered. They also agree that many aspects of European life benefited from ideas from the East. Europe's trade increased, and its sailors began to discover and explore the rest of the world. Advances were made in science and medicine, and in art and architecture. European languages and eating habits also changed. The result was that 100 years after the Crusades the lives of many people had changed as a result of the influence of Islamic societies.

SOURCE 1 New ideas introduced to the West from the Islamic world

- Arabic numerals were used instead of Roman ones. You have already seen how much easier it is to use Arabic numerals.
- Banks were introduced in Europe as a result of the Crusades. Banks lent money to businesses which helped them to grow.
- Windmills were built from Islamic designs.
- Stirrups were introduced, which made it easier for soldiers to fight on horseback.
- Messages were sent by carrier pigeon.
- Hand grenades began to be used in battle.
- Most of the books of the Greeks and Romans had been lost in the West but as we have already seen the Arabs had large collections of them. These books contained ideas about medicine, science and mathematics. Copies of these books found their way to the West and encouraged scholars to develop all kinds of new ideas in medicine and science.

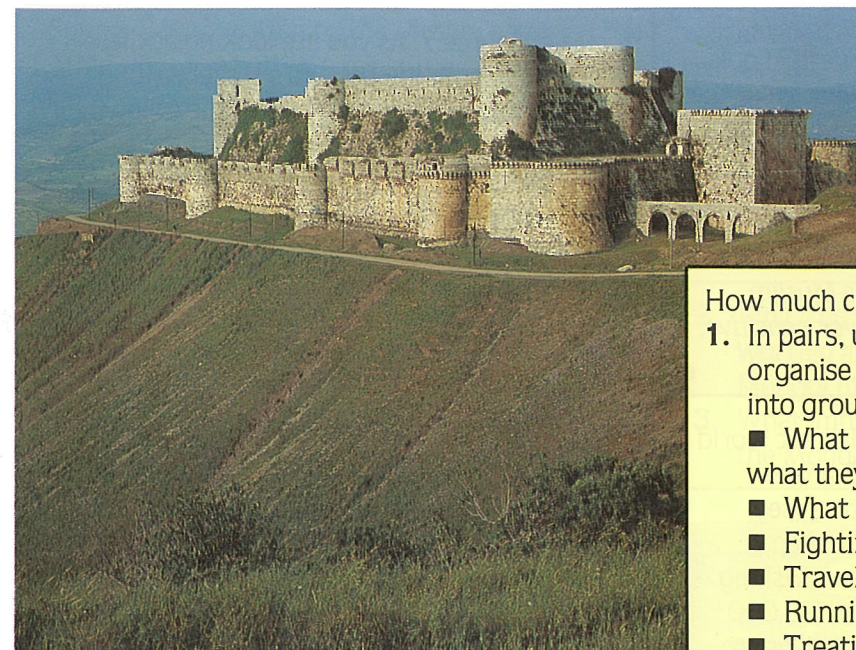
SOURCE 2 Products introduced to the West from the Islamic Empire

- Rice, coffee, spices (for preserving food), perfumes, cotton cloth for clothing, carpets (for walls and floors), sherbet, raisins, glass mirrors, melons, dates, paper for writing, enamel ware for plates and jugs, apricots, rhubarb, sugar, lemons, slippers.

Western cities like Venice and Pisa became centres for trading these goods. Gradually, all over Europe, towns grew and developed. The MERCHANTS became rich from the profits from trading with the East.



SOURCE 3 The idea of chemists' shops where a wide variety of drugs could be bought was introduced to the West from the Islamic world. This is a seventeenth-century chemist's shop in Paris



SOURCE 4 The castle of Krak des Chevaliers in the Holy Land. The idea of castles with concentric walls was introduced from the East and influenced the design of castles such as Beaumaris in Anglesey

How much change did the East bring to Europe?

1. In pairs, use the following headings to organise all the changes shown in Sources 1–5 into groups:
 - What people looked and smelled like, and what they ate
 - What houses looked like inside
 - Fighting
 - Travelling and communications
 - Running a business
 - Treating sick people
 - Changes to the landscape.
2. In which group do you think there was the most change?
3. Is there anything important which we use today which might not have been developed without contact with the East?
4. Why might the faith of Islam not have spread much to the West after the Crusades, while its products and ideas did?

SOURCE 5 Sailors using compasses. The idea of using compasses and astrolabes for navigation came from the East



WHO BENEFITED FROM THE CRUSADES?

Effects on the East

What about the effects on the Islamic world? Look at Source 6. According to this source, what were the effects of the Frankish Invasions on the Muslims?

SOURCE 6

"The Crusades started an economic and cultural revolution in Western Europe. But the Muslim world turned in on itself. It became over-sensitive, defensive and intolerant."

We can get a good idea of what the Islamic world was like 50 years after the end of the Frankish Invasions from the writings of Ibn Battuta (see Source 7). He probably travelled further than anyone else of his time. He spent 25 years visiting every Muslim country, and travelled over 70,000 miles. Let us see whether he gives any evidence to support the statement in Source 6.

1. Read Source 7. As you are looking at these extracts from Ibn Battuta's travel writings, see if you can find any evidence of the following:
 - Islam still very worried about the Frankish Invasions
 - hatred of Christians
 - suspicion of outsiders
 - the Muslim religion becoming inward-looking and dead, not open to new influences.

Activity

You have been given the job of interviewing Ibn Battuta about his travels.

Write out your questions and his answers.

Try to ask questions about what he has noticed. Make sure you ask questions about the three points listed in question 1.

SOURCE 7 Written by Ibn Battuta around 1350/750

a) In Egypt

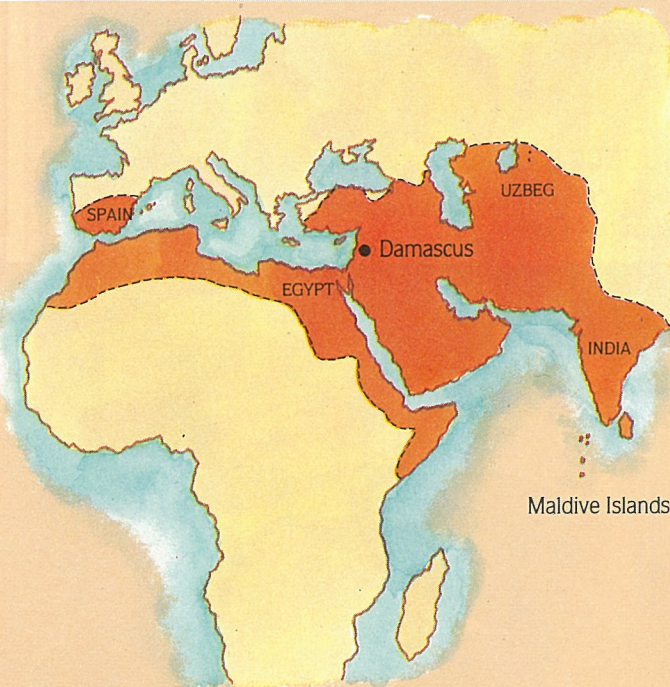
"As protection against spies from Iraq, they smooth down the sand at nightfall so that no track is left on it. In the morning, the governor comes and looks at the sand. If he finds any track he commands the Arabs to find the person who made it."

b) In Uzbek (in the modern Soviet Union)

I have never seen people more generous or friendly to strangers.

c) In Damascus at the time of the Black Death

After the dawn prayer they all went out together on foot, holding Qurans in their hands. The procession was joined by the entire population of the town, men and women and children; the Jews came with their Book of the Law and the Christians with their Gospel. Everyone sought the favour of God. God did help them. The number of deaths in a single day did not reach 2000, while in Cairo it reached 24,000 a day.



d) In India

The women of this town and all the coastal districts are beautiful and virtuous, and each wears a gold ring in her nose. Another unusual thing about them is that they all learn the Quran by heart. I saw in the town thirteen schools for girls, a thing I have never seen elsewhere.

Source 8 was written by the Muslim historian Ibn al-Athir while the battles against the crusaders were still going on.

SOURCE 8

"The events I am about to describe are so horrible that for years I avoided all mention of them. It is not easy to announce that death has fallen upon Islam and the Muslims. Alas! I would have preferred my mother never to have given birth to me, or to have died without witnessing all these evils. Not until the end of time will such a disaster be seen again."

But Ibn al-Athir isn't describing the Crusades. He is actually describing another, more serious, invasion. While the Crusades were still going on, the Islamic world

was invaded by the Mongols, a warrior tribe from central Asia. They swept across Persia and Iraq and eventually destroyed Baghdad. Ibn al-Athir writes much more about the Mongol Invasions than about the Frankish Invasions.

2. Which do you think the Muslims were more worried about, the Frankish Invasions or the Mongol Invasions?
3. What impression does Source 9 give you of the Mongols?

e) In the Maldives Islands

The Qadi [judge] is held in greater respect among the people than all other officials. His orders are obeyed as though they were the ruler's. There is no prison. Criminals are kept in wooden cases, held fast by a piece of wood, as we do in Morocco with Christian prisoners.

f) In Spain

I then proposed to take part in the Jihad [holy war] and the defence of the frontier, so I crossed the sea to Spain. This was after the death of the Christian tyrant Alphonso XI and his ten-month siege of Gibraltar, when he thought that he would capture all that the Muslims still hold of Spain."



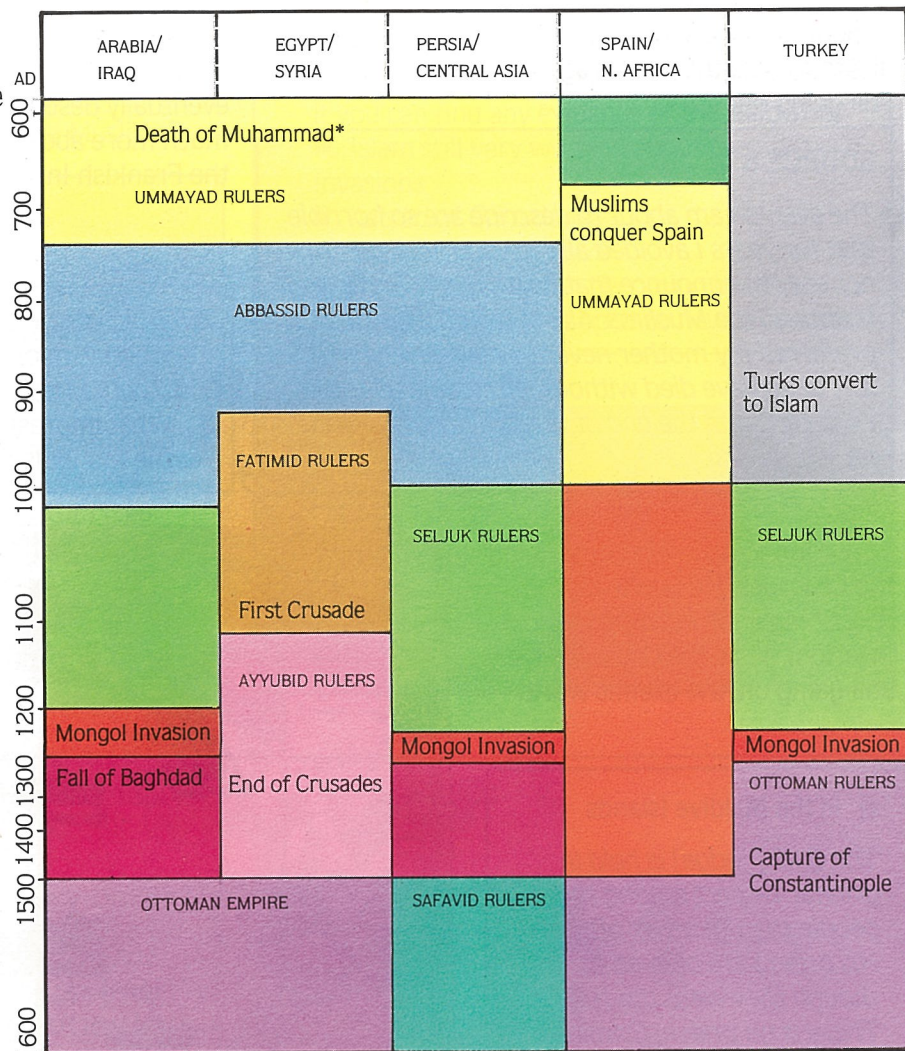
SOURCE 9 Mongol workmen building a royal palace

The Islamic Empire reborn?

LOOK at the timeline. It shows the main events in the history of Islam. You can see that at first one ruler governed much of the Islamic Empire. Then in around 800/183 the Empire began to break up, and was governed by several rulers. Many of these rulers did not survive long. They were assassinated, or deposed after civil wars.

However in about 1400/802 there was another change. The Empire came together again under the OTTOMANS. They were Muslims from Turkey, and had conquered much of the Islamic world.

The great ambition of the Ottoman Emperor, Mehmed II, was to capture Constantinople, which no Muslim ruler had ever managed to do. He wanted to make it his capital city. Constantinople was the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire (also called the Byzantine Empire). Although it was not as great as it had once been, it was still a magnificent city. It was also important because of its position (see Source 1).

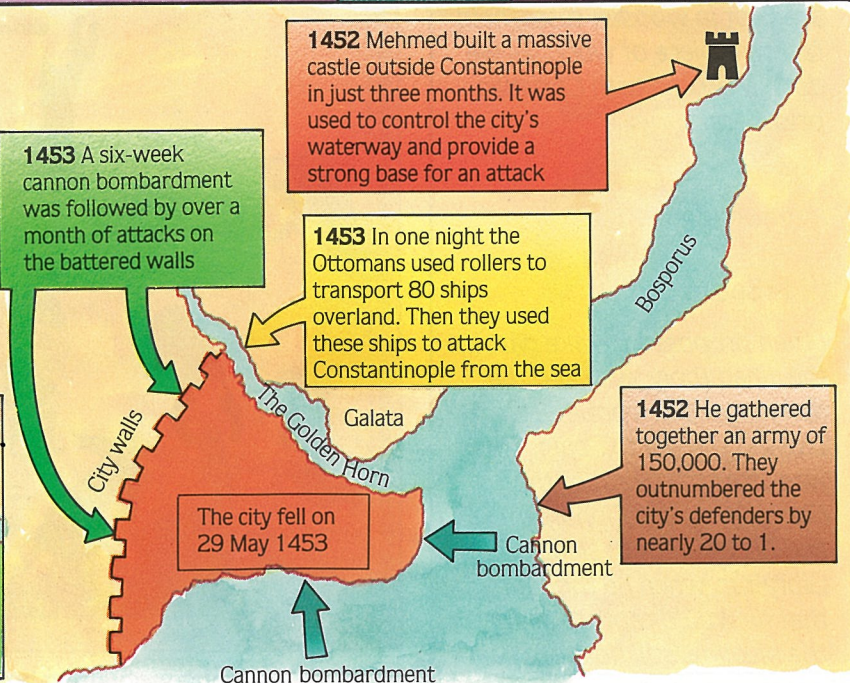


1. Look at Source 1. Why were the Ottomans so keen to capture Constantinople?

► SOURCE 2 Mehmed's campaign



► SOURCE 1

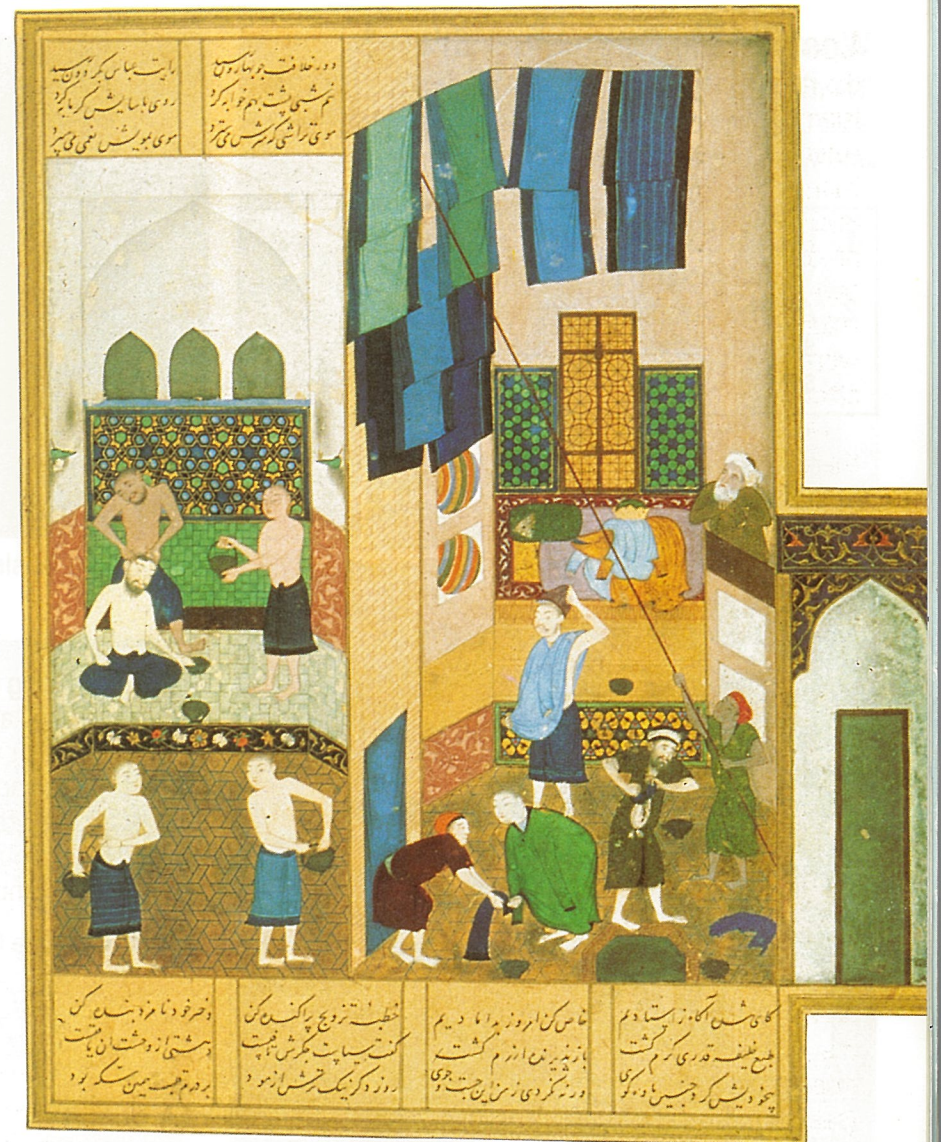


Rebuilding Istanbul

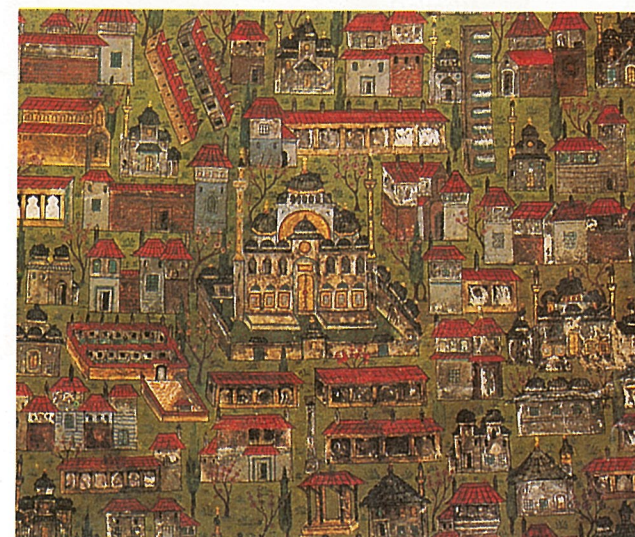
SOURCE 3 A Turkish writer records how Mehmed rebuilt Istanbul (the new Islamic name for Constantinople)

“Whoever wishes, let him come, and let him become owner of houses and vineyards.’ And they gave them to everyone who came. The Sultan then gave orders to send families, both rich and poor, from every province . . . Houses were given to them and the city began to fill up. They built mosques and private houses and the city became great again.”

Within 25 years, the population of the city had risen ten times to 80,000, and Istanbul was a thriving capital city.



► SOURCE 4 A bath-house in Istanbul



◀ SOURCE 5 Istanbul in the sixteenth/tenth century

1. Look at Sources 4 and 5. Why would each building shown be important in an Islamic city?