

SALAH AD-DIN AND THE CRUSADES

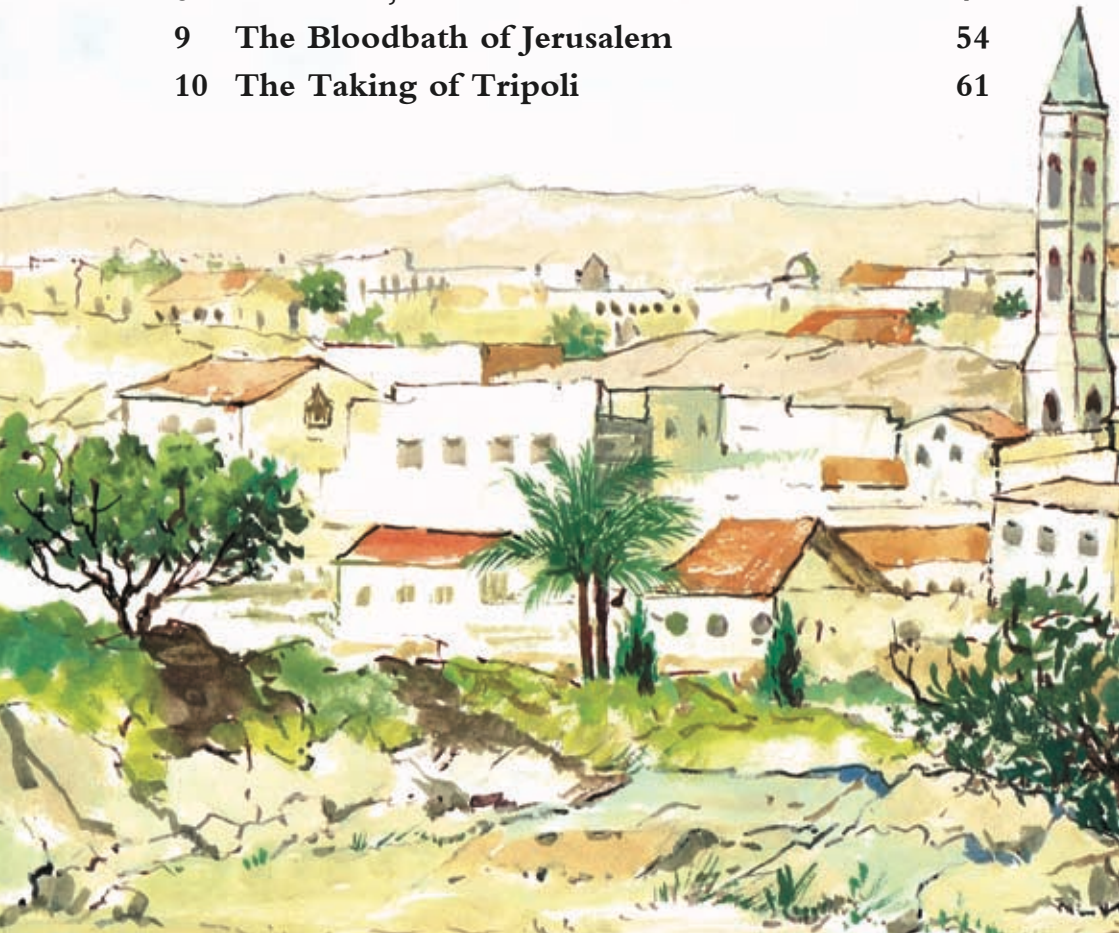
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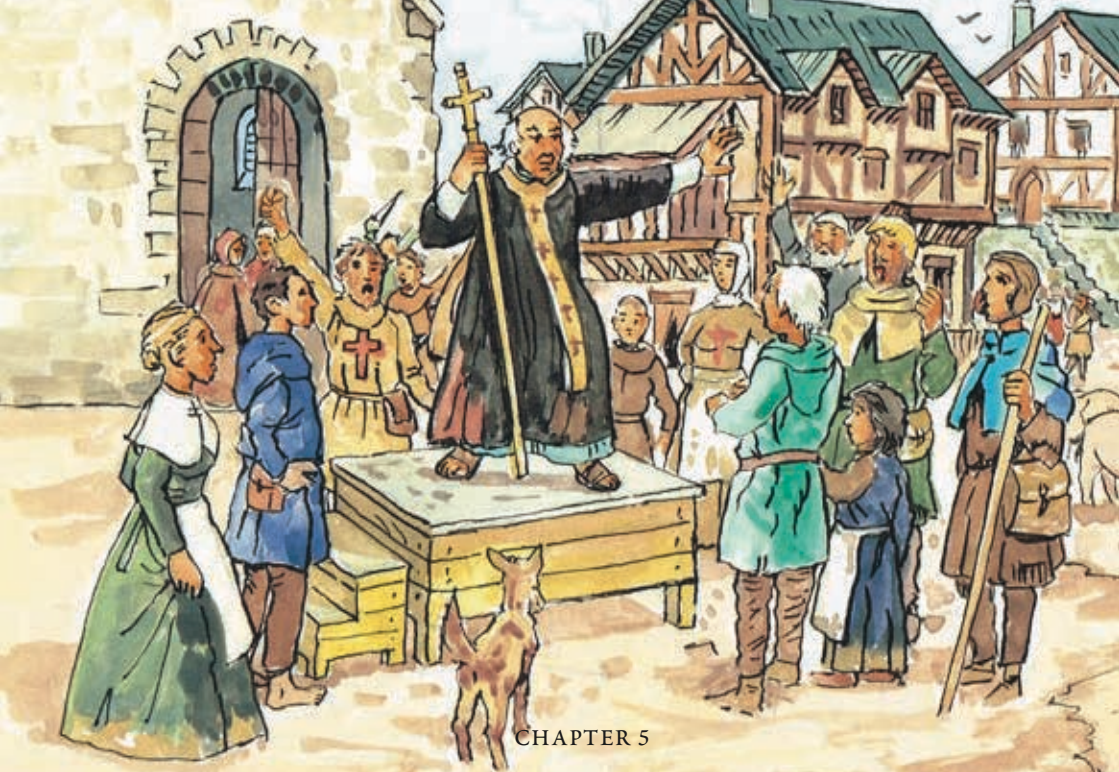
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CHAPTER 5

URBAN II LEADS CRUSADE 1

When he made his call, Pope Urban's main target was the significant community of knights in Europe; men who could fight skilfully on the battlefield. But the majority of people who planned to "take up the cross" were peasants and lesser nobles who had no military skills or training. Whilst all Crusaders were required to wear a material cross on their clothes, Urban knew that blind faith would not be enough. He needed to send men that would pose a threat to the Muslims.



He therefore tried his utmost to ban women, monks, the mentally unstable and the ill from travelling to the East. However, he found the situation impossible to control. They all had their own reasons for wanting to join the Crusades. Some were motivated by the Pope's call to aid the Christians of the East, some hoped to earn forgiveness from

God for their sins whilst others hoped for glory in the name of Christendom. In addition, there were those who hoped that they would become wealthy and escape from the harsh life they lived in Europe.

Urban had declared that the official departure date was 15th August 1096, after the Feast of the Assumption. But many peasants set off for the Holy Land on their own much earlier in the year, ignoring the Pope's official timetable for the mass migration to the East. "The People's Crusade", as it became known, was led by one of the most magnetic personalities in Christendom, Peter the Hermit, a priest from Amiens.



FOR BETTER OR FOR VERSE!

Peter the Hermit was so popular that Raymond of Antico ordered that the Chanson de Chetifs be written. This was a poem composed in Peter's honour in around 1130.