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Posted on 10 December 2019 By Jonathan Phillips

## [Read Epub] ? The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople ?

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An honest and conscious account of the Fourth Crusade written by a superb historian Jonathan Phillips explains how an initially Egypt bound expedition goes wrong from the start and ends up taking one of the most splendid cities of Christianity The seemingly incredible event is broken down and analysed, leaving the reader with the understanding that the Fourth Crusade was an avalanche of unfortunate accidents one after the other, leading to an outcome no one ever could have foreseen A crusader army leased a fleet from Venice but fails to bring enough participants to pay off the debt The crusaders gave what they had, but both they and the Venetians, who halted their normal mercantile business for a year, were on the verge of bankruptcy To ease the disastrous financial burden, the crusader army tries to muscle Zara, an economic opponent of Venice, into surrender When Zara is on the brink of surrendering, unrest in the crusader army prevents a bloodless outcome The pope forbade the attack, and some crusaders tell the inhabitants of Zara that the Franks won't support the Venetians, and so they will only face their small part of the army In this belief, Zara prepares to hold out But the crusaders did support the Venetians, feeling honor bound to their outstanding debt Zara could not withstand the combined force of the crusaders and Venetians All the loot and money raised from the siege went directly to settling the debt The crusaders earned no penny, but at least their crusade was back on track, only to be thrown off trail yet again A young Greek prince offers the crusaders a deal that sounds too good to be true If they return him and his father to power, he will pay them handsomely projecting the end of the debt, reunite the church of Byzantium with Rome, and support the current crusade by sending Greek soldiers and leasing the Venetian fleet for one year on his costs Again the crusaders and Venetians think it will only come down to a mere show of force, presenting the rightful ruler to his people and rounding up the false regent But it proved to be difficult They eventually succeed in bringing the prince and his father Isaac Angelos back on the throne But the Byzantine rulers have trouble filling in their promises To raise money, they mulc their subjects, creating an atmosphere of hatred towards the crusaders The crusaders demand their rightful pay and the Byzantines can't gather that sum It is the same situation as arose in Venice The crusaders were still broke and the expenses kept mounting with every diversion When the people of Constantinople turn to full scale rebellion and overthrow the new rulers, the crusaders besiege the city A small broke and frustrated crusader army attacks Constantinople, and almost by miracle captures it What follows is a grim and gruesome scene of pillaging, looting, raping and sacking But with the previous troubles in mind, it is no longer an incredible outcome The crusaders choose a new emperor from their midst and create the Latin kingdom of Constantinople The pope who once forbade the crusaders to attack Zara now saw his dream of a united church came true But the capture of Constantinople diverged crusader energy, and in the end weakened the

christian cause Even when the Greeks recaptured their fair city, they would never recover from the blow dealt that day. A clear, thoughtful and well researched history of this catastrophe Phillips argues that the lack of manpower and financial resources was the main weakness of the crusaders and that their subsequent course stemmed from this He also contends that a conquest of Constantinople only became a goal after Alexius IV was toppled by Murtzuphlus. The narrative is strong, engaging and accessible, and Phillips does a great job setting up context, explaining how the ideas behind crusading developed and how confidently the crusaders anticipated success He ably describes how overconfidence, bad timing, bad judgment and political expediency led the crusaders to a city they never even intended to visit His writing makes the characters and their surreal twists of fate come to life, and his portrait of the crusaders is nuanced Some analysis of the empire's weakness, corruption and finances would have been helpful The book does skim over the military aspects in a somewhat hurried fashion, though, especially in the sections covering the city's fall Some material on Pope Innocent III would also have helped There are also a few oddities that could have been caught by an editor the blind doge of Venice at one point breaks into tears at the sight of one event, for example A solid, well written and readable work. [Read Epub] ? The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople ? In , Zealous Western Christians Gathered In Venice Determined To Liberate Jerusalem From The Grip Of Islam But The Crusaders Never Made It To The Holy Land Steered Forward By The Shrewd Venetian Doge, They Descended Instead On Constantinople, Wreaking Terrible Devastation The Crusaders Spared No One They Raped And Massacred Thousands, Plundered Churches, And Torched The Lavish City By , One Of The Great Civilizations Of History Had Been Shattered Here, On The Eight Hundredth Anniversary Of The Sack, Is The Extraordinary Story Of This Epic Catastrophe, Told For The First Time Outside Of Academia By Jonathan Phillips, A Leading Expert On The Crusades Knights And Commoners, Monastic Chroniclers, Courtly Troubadours, Survivors Of The Carnage, And Even Pope Innocent III Left Vivid Accounts Detailing The Events Of Those Two Fateful Years Using Their Remarkable Letters, Chronicles, And Speeches, Phillips Traces The Way In Which Any Region Steeped In Religious Fanaticism, In This Case Christian Europe, Might Succumb To Holy War One of the best books I've read on the Fourth Crusade Well sourced throughout, the author strikes a very good balance between rich and dense historical facts and a narrative that makes it engaging without reading like the work of a frustrated wannabe novelist. I loved this book Jonathan Phillips describes the events leading up to the Sack of Constantinople with perfect clarity Supported by a plethora of facts and a clear writing style this book is an excellent account of the Fourth Crusade I read this to get background on this crusade One of the textbooks I use for my world history class has a series of primary sources from different sides, and I wanted to know about the crusade itself. Phillips does a good job of bringing together all of the threads to explain how this whole thing happened Actually, his afterword is pretty much all you need the rest of the

book is just detail and lots of little asides There s the chivalric culture honor and the idea of serving your lord, there s the religiosity of the age for the background The lack of funds and the over estimation of personnel that makes the treaty with the Venetians so hard to fulfill and seemingly requiring the sacking of Zara also a city of Christians and Constantinople to make up for it The schism between the Catholic church and the Eastern Orthodox church The financial commercial incentives of the Venetians and everybody else, let s be honest The instability within Constantinople itself and its decaying navy army The whole thing is a potent stew. Having said that, the over arching idea I draw from this is that it was underfunded from the start, which meant that even if the crusaders were in it for the recapturing of the Holy Land and for the religious glory and rewards, once they made a concession to attacking a city Zara for money to keep it going, they were compromised and much likely to make a similar decision for similar reasons It got easier for the bulk of the force Phillips points out that many grumbled, if not outright dissented or left to justify their immediate actions for money, plunder, even food on the grounds that they were trying to get back on track to liberate the Holy Land The failure of the thing seems like God s retribution in the long run, from Phillips s reading It took awhile, but the infamy of the Fourth Crusade was well deserved. Phillips s writing is weird He repeatedly does this thing where he mentions something that happens and then jumps backward in time to explain something else that happened There s a chapter on Alexius IV s murder and the descent into war the descent into war happens FIRST and the murder comes at the END of the chapter Granted, this isn t a spoiler alert, but his chronological oddities are off putting. It s always refreshing to come across a writer who can make history interesting and engaging without dumbing it down. A fascinating and extremely readable account of this strange misadventure Phillips uses sources from all sides of the conflict to deftly examine the motivations of the nobles who led the crusade and found themselves trapped in one impossible situation after another the pope who kicked it off but later railed impotently at the crusaders attacks on Christian cities the lesser men who, aiming to liberate Jerusalem, were instead directed against Zara and Constantinople, ripping them to pieces and still feeling cheated of their spoils and the Byzantine emperors six of them whose poor leadership doomed the Queen of Cities. Possibly the best 10p I ve spent on a book The 4th Crusade achieved its infamy by being diverted from its original goal of re taking Jerusalem, thanks to two targets of opportunity that intervened First, the city of Zara on the Adriatic, and Second, the Byzantine Empire and its capital of Constantinople For the most part, the participants went no farther south. Jonathan Phillips s The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople shows us in great detail why the business of crusading was fraught with perils Pope Innocent III started the ball rolling, but once the crusaders had left Venice, he could only bluster and excommunicate There were no kings in this crusade, only nobles like Boniface of Montserrat and Baldwin of Flanders The closest to a king was Enrico Dandolo, the Doge of Venice, who was not only in his nineties, but blind The targets of opportunity to which I refer

bent the crusade from its aim. When the crusaders contracted for some 35,000 knights and their men to be transported to the Holy Land, the Venetians demanded a price that could not be met as only some 12,000 men showed up. So Venice wanted the Crusaders to take the city of Zara, which was now a Hungarian port and the Hungarians were Catholics, not infidels. Second were the extravagant promises of a Greek, Alexius Angelos, whose father was deposed by the current Byzantine emperor Alexius III. He offered to pay extravagant sums if the crusaders put him on the throne of Constantinople, which they did. It turned out that Alexius was unable to deliver on his promises. So the crusaders took Constantinople and ruled it for sixty years. So the upshot was that, instead of fighting the wicked Muslims, the 4th Crusade conquered a Catholic city and the center of Eastern Orthodox Christendom. Why is the Fourth Crusade one of the most awesome events in western if not world history? It is because the idiots involved didn't even make it to the Holy Land or any Muslim controlled territory but instead attacked their Christian ally Byzantium and sacked Constantinople, one of the greatest cities in history, to pay off the debt to Venice incurred through the building of the ships for the Crusade. And then they went home. I dare you to name a stupider series of events than that.

"The best book I have read on the  
Fourth Crusade—learned,  
comprehensive, and well written.

An exciting story."

—Norman F. Cantor, author of  
*In the Wake of the Plague*



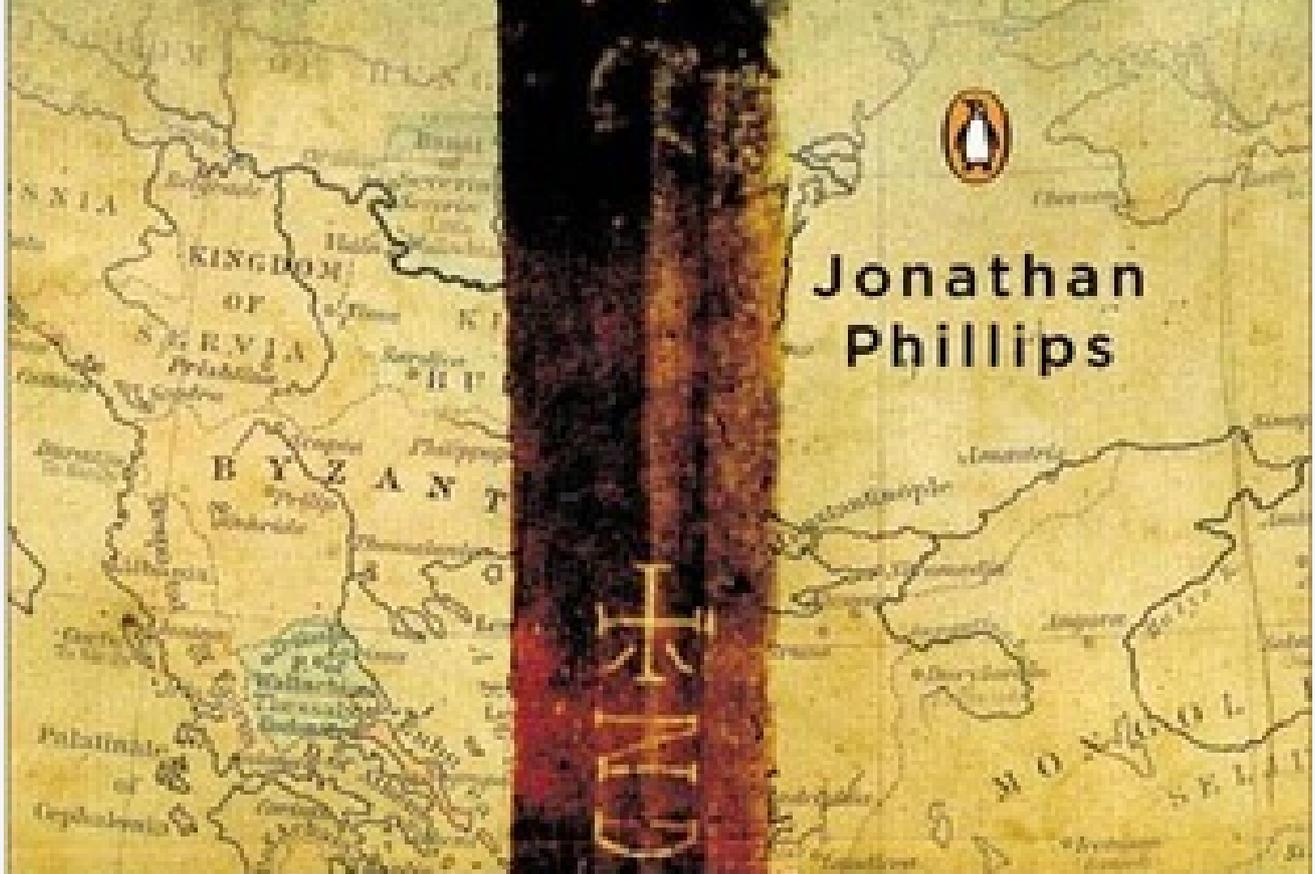
# THE FOURTH Crusade

AND THE SACK OF  
CONSTANTINOPLE



Jonathan  
Phillips

CRUX



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