

### Embarking on a Crusade

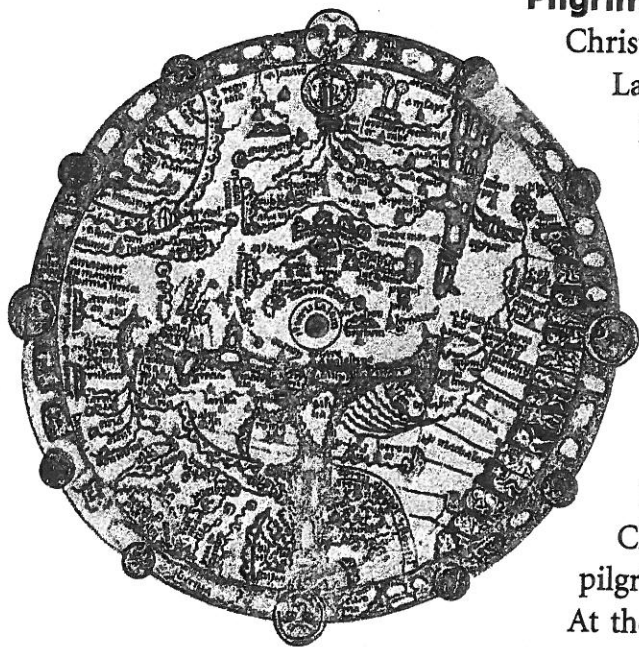
Huge armies of crusader knights sailed to the Holy Land.

**Conclude** What was involved in transporting these large armies?

## Causes of the Crusades

Over the next 200 years, the Church launched eight military expeditions, called the **Crusades**, to capture the Holy Land. The word comes from *crux*, the Latin word for “cross.” People who carried the Christian cross into battle against the non-Christian enemy were called crusaders.

**Pilgrims to the Holy Land** Since about A.D. 200, European Christians had been traveling to **Jerusalem**, a city in the Holy Land regarded as sacred by Christians, Muslims, and Jews. These people were **pilgrims**—people who journey to a sacred place. Nobles and peasants alike made the long and difficult journey. They wanted to visit the places written about in the Bible.



Many medieval Christians believed that Jerusalem was the center of the world, as this map from the 1200s shows.

**The Rise of the Turks** For centuries, Jerusalem had been controlled by Arab Muslims who generally welcomed Christian pilgrims. Then, in the 1000s, the Seljuk Turks (SEL jook turks) took control of the Holy Land. This Muslim group sometimes attacked the Christian pilgrims from Europe. Then they closed the pilgrimage routes to Jerusalem.

At the same time, the Turks were also conquering much of the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine emperor in Constantinople asked Pope Urban II to send knights to defend his Christian empire. The pope agreed and called on the people of Europe to fight the Muslim Turks.