

FOURTH CRUSADE, SACKING OF CONSTANTINOPLE (1198-1204 AD)

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“Keep your friends close, and your enemies closer.”
“The Art of War,” Sun Tzu, 500 BC

“A man can be destroyed but not defeated.”
Ernest Hemingway, American novelist

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”
Holy Bible, Saint Paul, Eph. 6:12

“Those who disbelieved plotted against you to restrain you or kill you or evict you.
But they plan, and God plans.
And God is the best of planners.”
Holy Quran, Surat Al-Anfal, 8:30

INTRODUCTION

In a little over a century the religious spirit in which the crusades originated had changed. The fourth crusade, initially intended against Egypt ended up sacking the city of Constantinople, capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. It is unique in revealing that the European princes who led it and the other crusades were as much motivated by the prospects of booty and war spoils more than they were motivated by religious fervor. After the pillage and rape of Constantinople by the Western Christians in 1204 AD, the Eastern Orthodox Christians said that they "preferred the crown of the sultan to the tiara of the pope".

Similarly, the city of Lisbon (Lisboa) in Portugal was sacked and pillaged by the crusaders on their way to the Middle East. Even after it was taken from the Moslems and under Christian rule. These crusaders were all Nordic, or people from the north.

The fourth crusade was proclaimed by Pope Innocent III (Fig. 1) and wreaked havoc and violence by the Western Christians on the Byzantine Eastern Christians.



Figure 1: Pope Innocent III, originator of the fourth crusade.

The political situation in Constantinople was very violent even before the start of the third crusade. The Byzantine Emperor of the third crusade, Isaac Angeles, had taken the throne only after the people of Constantinople had rebelled against their emperor and killed him. Isaac was not capable of keeping the Moslems on his borders at bay, so he too was usurped, by his brother Alexius III.

Alexius III was not a popular ruler either, and he found his position as emperor challenged by Philip of Swabia, who claimed rights to the throne through marriage. Philip of Swabia also claimed rights to the recently vacated position of Holy Roman Emperor and was challenged by Otto of Brunswick. Both empires were on unstable ground. France and England were also at each other's throats, each desiring to conquer the other.

Pope Innocent III interjected into the situation with a call for the fourth crusade in 1198, the stated intent of which was to liberate Jerusalem. Pope Innocent III tried to pacify the warring Christians, but it was not until the end of 1199 that enough truces were signed to make taking the cross a reasonable venture. Innocent III finally convinced the city of Venice to provide the ships necessary to carry the crusaders. This agreement was destined to go sour, however, and this would permanently change the course of the fourth crusade.

This crusade was initially planned against Egypt. The reasoning was that conquering it would be the key to regaining Jerusalem. Instead, by a twist of events, it turned into a sacking and looting of a rich Christian city: Constantinople, who was the capital of the Christian Eastern Empire. Domenico Tintorello (1518-1594) immortalized this event in his famous painting: “Taking of Constantinople, 1204” shown in Fig. 2.



Figure 2. “Taking of Constantinople, 1204” showing the sacking of Constantinople, capital of the then Christian Byzantine Empire under Emperor Justinian III by the fourth crusade. Painting by Domenico Tintorello (1518-1594).

TAKING OF THE BYZANTINE CHRISTIAN CITY OF ZARA IN DALMATIA

This crusade was led by a large number of noblemen such as Thibaut de Champagne, Simon de Montfort, and Baldwin of Flanders. Initially, on their way to Egypt, the crusaders assembled in Venice, Italy with twenty thousand combatants, but could not raise enough money for their passage of the Mediterranean Sea to Egypt.

At the beginning of the 13th century Venice was the richest city in the West. Merchants there had made a tidy living off the import and export of goods from all over the civilized world. When the Doge Enrico Dandolo, the merchant head of the Venetian government, was initially approached regarding the crusades, he agreed to provide the ships thinking that the venture would net him a hefty profit. He made the decision to risk angering his merchant ties with the East to win even more profit from the capture of his trading partners. The crusading armies were formed and assembled in Venice in 1201. Their leader was Boniface de Montferrat.

Despite the prompt arrival of the crusaders at the time expected, the Doge of Venice had become quite unhappy with the deal. He had not been paid the amount specifically stated in the contract for the ships and was not about to comply until he was assured of a profit. Willing to make arrangements to avoid cancelling the lucrative deal, the Doge offered to delay the crusader's payment of fees if they would help him recover the Byzantine Christian city of Zara in Dalmatia. They accepted the new deal.

Coincidentally, it seems that at the same time that arrangements were being made to attack Zara, Alexius IV also happened to be staying in Italy. He appealed to the crusaders to help him unseat his father from the throne of Constantinople. In return he promised the crusaders that he would financially back the crusades.

Another deal was made which seemed to work for the benefit of all, for Venice itself had recent difficulties arranging trade agreements with Emperor Alexius III. Alexius IV seemed much more willing to negotiate.

At this point in time, pope Innocent III had clearly lost control of the crusades. Zara was a Christian city and Innocent III strictly forbid any attack on Zara, but the crusaders were now motivated by a need to get out of debt. The Venetian merchants, who controlled the ships, took advantage of the situation and demanded eighty-five thousand marks of silver to transport the crusaders across the Mediterranean. The crusaders did not possess this sum of money.

The Venetians promised the crusaders a passage to Egypt, in return for the crusaders conquering for them the Byzantine Christian city of Zara in Dalmatia. Pope Innocent III ordered the crusaders' army not to proceed, and even excommunicated them, but to no avail.

The city of Zara fell rather quickly to the crusaders in 1202. Upon learning of the crusaders' intent to follow-up the attack on Zara with an attack on Constantinople, Innocent III also forbade this attack. But once again his demands were ignored.



Figure 3, Byzantine Eastern Christian Empire Emperor Justinian III.

After conquering the Christian city of Zara as the Venetians asked them, the crusaders readily diverted their attention from Egypt to Constantinople, the richest Christian city in the world at this time. The crusaders and the Venetians plundered the city on April 12, 1204, and robbed it of its wealth, including the religious treasures of its great church Hagia Sophia. They battled against other Christian men, and they raped Christian women.

And they never went to the Holy Land.

CONSTANTINOPLE, ISTANBUL

Constantinople or modern-day Istanbul was named in Roman: Constantinopolis and in Greek: Konstantinoupolis. It was the capital of the Byzantine Eastern Christian Empire and claimed to be the capital of the restored Roman Empire. The ancient name of Constantinople was Byzantium or in Greek: Byzantion from which the Byzantine Empire's name was derived. Istanbul has its origin in the Greek "Eis Tin Poli" or "To The City" and the Greeks called it "I Poli," or The City.

The name was changed by Roman emperor Constantine I who moved the capital of the Roman Empire there on May 11, 330 AD. Constantine I wanted to name the city Nova Roma or New Rome, but this name never caught on.

Constantinople remained the last outpost of the old Roman Empire for centuries after the Western Roman Empire fell. The crusaders from the West were called to help. Instead, attracted by its worldly riches, they captured and sacked the city in 1204, making it an outpost of their own Latin Empire until Michael VIII Palaeologus retook it in 1261.

Constantinople, and thus also New Rome, fell to the Ottoman Turks on May 29,

1453. They continued to use the name Constantinople as well as Istanbul and the name of the city was not officially changed until 1930.

The Hagia Sophia is Constantinople's most famous landmark and one of the most famous buildings in the world. It was the city's cathedral and the site of a church originally built by Constantus, son of Emperor Constantine the Great. The original church was burned down in 532 AD and the present church was built between 532 and 537 AD under the supervision of Justinian I. The original dome fell after an earthquake and the current dome is slightly different in architecture.



Figure 4. Egyptian Pharaoh Thutmose III Obelisk at the Hippodrome Park, Istanbul, Turkey.

Over 900 years the Hagia Sophia or Holy Wisdom was the seat of the Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople. When the Ottomans captured the city, they turned it into a mosque. Minarets were added and the frescos were covered over since the Islamic faith prohibits the depiction of human, plants, or animal figures in places of worship as a defense against possible idolatry. It remained as a mosque for over 500 years until the Turkish government decided to turn it into a museum and tourist attraction in 1935.

A landmark of Istanbul is the Hippodrome that was first constructed around 200 AD by Roman Emperor Septimius Severus. Constantine the Great later expanded it. Originally it was 480 meter long and 117 meters wide and some believe that it could hold up to 100,000 spectators. Used as a park, it contains the plundered obelisk of the Egyptian Pharaoh Thutmose III (1504-1446 BC). Constantine appropriated it to himself from near Thebes, Egypt. It was erected in 390 AD by Emperor Theodosius to one third of its original height. In the same location is the Column of Constantine

Porphyrogenitus, also called the bronze obelisk because some thought that it had a bronze sheath.

The Dolmabahce Mosque is another major landmark and was built in the mid-nineteenth century and is located southwest of the Dolmabahce Palace.



Figure 5. The Dolmabahce Mosque, Istanbul, Turkey.



Figure 6. Roman water aqueduct in Istanbul, Turkey.

DOUBLE SACKING OF CONSTANTINOPLE

In July 1203 AD, the crusaders attacked the city of Constantinople in force, with the help of Venetian warships in the city's harbor. The fighting lasted for many days, with the Venetians successfully landing, and breaching part of the city walls. Constantinople

was set on fire. Meanwhile the crusader forces attacked the city with little resistance from Constantinople defenders.

Emperor Alexius III, probably fearing the worst, snatched up his children and as much wealth as he could carry, and fled. The city still refused to surrender, and they released Isaac Angeles of the third crusade's fame from prison and promptly claimed that he was the true ruler. The crusaders found they really could not contest this ploy, and they agreed to recognize Isaac Angeles as Emperor if their ally Alexius IV was named his equal and co-Emperor. The treaty was ratified with the crowning of Alexius IV in August of 1203.

Alexius IV did not turn out to be the emperor that the crusaders had hoped for. With the city ravaged and a great deal of its wealth spent on coronation gifts, Alexius IV could not offer the crusaders the funding he had promised for their planned invasion of Egypt.

There was another Alexius on the list of the drama's major players. Early in 1204 Alexius Murzuphlus decided that he wanted the throne of Byzantium. He had Alexius IV assassinated, Isaac Angeles put back in prison, and claimed the throne for himself in January of 1204 as Alexius V.

Alexius V was an open enemy of everybody within the Western Roman Empire, and upon his usurpation of the throne the crusaders quickly exited the city and reformed their armies. The crusaders were desperate for money and decided the only way out of their predicament would be to take Constantinople and install a reliable western noble as its emperor.

Once again, the crusaders successfully retook the city in just a few days, and once again the new Emperor fled taking his children and as much loot as he could carry. The enraged crusaders ran mad in the streets, looting and plundering. For three days the crusaders burned, disassembled, and harassed the city, before gathering all of its wealth and dividing it out among Venice, the new Emperor, and the crusaders. The city was taken and almost entirely decimated in April of 1204.

The Byzantine historian Niceta Choniates (ca. 1155-1215/16) gave the following account of the sacking of the city of Constantinople on April 12, 1204, during the fourth crusade, as reported by D. C. Munro:

“How shall I begin to tell of the deeds wrought by these nefarious men? Alas, the images, which ought to have been adored, were trodden under foot! Alas, the relics of the holy martyrs were thrown into unclean places! Then was seen what one shudders to hear, namely, the divine body and blood of Christ was spilled upon the ground or thrown about. They snatched the precious reliquaries, thrust into their bosoms the ornaments which these contained, and used the broken remnants for pans and drinking cups, --precursors of Anti-Christ, authors, and heralds of his nefarious deeds which we momentarily expect. Manifestly, indeed, by that race then, just as formerly, Christ was robbed and insulted and His garments were divided by lot; only one thing was lacking, that His side, pierced by a spear, should pour rivers of divine blood on the ground.

Nor can the violation of the Great Church be listened to with equanimity. For the sacred altar, formed of all kinds of precious materials

and admired by the whole world, was broken into bits, and distributed among the soldiers, as was all the other sacred wealth of so great and infinite splendor.

When the sacred vases and utensils of unsurpassable art and grace and rare material, and the fine silver, wrought with gold, which encircled the screen of the tribunal and the ambo, of admirable workmanship, and the door and many other ornaments, were to be borne away as booty, mules and saddled horses were led to the very sanctuary of the temple. Some of these which were unable to keep their footing on the splendid and slippery pavement, were stabbed when they fell, so that the sacred pavement was polluted with blood and filth.

Nay more, a certain harlot, a sharer in their guilt, a minister of the furies, a servant of the demons, a worker of incantations and poisonings, insulting Christ, sat in the patriarch's seat, singing an obscene song and dancing frequently. Nor, indeed, were these crimes committed and others left undone, on the ground that these were of lesser guilt, the others of greater. But with one consent all the most heinous sins and crimes were committed by all with equal zeal. Could those, who showed so great madness against God Himself, have spared the honorable matrons and maidens or the virgins consecrated to God?

Nothing was more difficult and laborious than to soften by prayers, to render benevolent, these wrathful barbarians, vomiting forth bile at every unpleasing word, so that nothing failed to inflame their fury. Whoever attempted it was derided as insane and a man of intemperate language. Often, they drew their daggers against any one who opposed them at all or hindered their demands.

No one was without a share in the grief. In the alleys, in the streets, in the temples, complaints, weeping, lamentations, grief, the groaning of men, the shrieks of women, wounds, rape, captivity, the separation of those most closely united. Nobles wandered about ignominiously, those of venerable age in tears, the rich in poverty. Thus, it was in the streets, on the corners, in the temple, in the dens, for no place remained unassailed or defended the suppliants. All places everywhere were filled full of all kinds of crime. Oh, immortal God, how great the afflictions of the men, how great the distress!"

The crusaders who returned to Europe with the Eastern Church treasures were not condemned by European society. The pope Innocent III even was compelled to remove the ban that had excommunicated them. The acquisition of the Greek Eastern Empire was after all a great prize for Western Europe.



Figure 7. Territories during the fourth and later crusades.

THE HAGIA SOPHIA

Emperor Justinian III (Fig. 3) who was born on 482-3 and who reigned over the period (527-565) with his wife Theodora had ordered the building of what is considered the most splendid cathedral ever built: Hagia Sophia, which signifies Holy Wisdom.

The church was dedicated in 537, and was dedicated not to Saint Sophie, but to Christ, the “Holy Wisdom” of God. It was originally called “Magale Ekklesia” or “The Great Church,” and is sometimes referred to by that name. Figure 8 shows its exterior in Istanbul, Turkey around 1920, and Fig. 9 shows its interior. Since 1935 it has been preserved as a museum.

The description of the Hagia Sofia comes to us from Procopius of Caesaria in Palestine (490/507-560s), who lived in Constantinople since he describes the great plague

of 542 in it. He was given the title of Illustrius in 560 and he may have been the prefect of Constantinople in 562-3. He wrote a vitriolic attack on the character of Justinian and his wife Theodora. He also wrote “On the Buildings”: “De Aedificiis” or “Peri Ktismaton” in six volumes which was published in 561. In it he describes the Hagia Sofia as follows.



Figure 8. Exterior of the Hagia Sofia mosque, Istanbul, Turkey.



Figure 9. Interior of the Hagia Sofia. Initially converted into a mosque, since 1935 it has been preserved as a museum.

In his words:

“The emperor, thinking not of cost of any kind, pressed on the work, and collected workmen from every land. Anthemius of Tralles, the most skilled in the builder’s art, not only of his own but of all former times, carried forward the king’s zealous intentions, organized the labours of the workmen, and prepared models of the mechanopios called Isidorus, a Milesian by birth, a man of Intelligence, and worthy to carry out the plans of the emperor Justinian. It is indeed a proof of the esteem with which God regarded the emperor, that he furnished him with men who would be so useful in effecting his designs, and we are compelled to admire the wisdom of the emperor, in being able to choose the most suitable of mankind to execute the noblest of his works.

The church is distinguished by indescribable beauty, excelling both in its size, and in the harmony of its measures, having no part excessive and none deficient; being more magnificent than ordinary buildings, and much more elegant than those which are not of so just a proportion. The church is singularly full of light and sunshine; you would declare that the place is not lighted by the sun from without, but that the rays are produced within itself, such an abundance of light is poured into this church.

Now above the arches is raised a circular building of a curved form through which the light of day first shines; for the building, which I imagine overtops the whole country, has small openings left on purpose, so that the places where these intervals occur may serve for the light to come through. Thus far I imagine the building is not incapable of being described, even by a weak and feeble tongue. As the arches are arranged in a quadrangular figure, the stonework between them takes the shape of a triangle, the lower angle of each triangle, being compressed where the arches unite, is slender, while the upper part becomes wider as it rises in the space between them, and ends against the circle which rests upon them, forming there its remaining angles. A spherical shaped dome standing upon this circle makes it exceedingly beautiful; from the lightness of the building, it does not appear to rest on a solid foundation, but to cover the place beneath as though it were suspended from heaven by the fabled golden chain. All these parts surprisingly joined to one another in the air, suspended one from another, and resting only on that which is next to them, form the work into one admirably harmonious whole, which spectators do not dwell upon for long in the mass, as each individual part attracts the eye to itself.

No one ever became weary of this spectacle, but those who are in the church delight in what they see, and, when they leave, magnify it in their talk. Moreover, it is impossible accurately to describe the gold, and silver, and gems, presented by the emperor Justinian, but by the description of one part, I leave the rest to be inferred. That part of the church, which is especially sacred, and where the priests alone are allowed

to enter, which is called the Sanctuary, contains forty thousand pounds weight of silver.”

This description of the gold, gems and silver probably caught the attention of the Western European crusaders who desecrated it during the fourth crusade. Its wealth and its religious relics and that of Constantinople were looted and carried out by the crusaders and their Venetian allies to Western Europe.

WESTERN CRUSADES AGAINST THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Eastern Crusade of Pope Innocent III, 1204

Many people mistakenly believe that the crusades only happened in the Middle East and that they were only directed at the Islamic Faith. Even though the official excuse for the western crusades at that time was to free the city of Jerusalem from the Moslems, the crusades also were aimed at either exterminating or converting the “Greek Schismatics” or the Orthodox Christians of Eastern Europe. The most notorious episode of this anti-Orthodox crusade is the sack of Constantinople by the crusaders in 1204, during the 4th Crusade, in which the city was subjected to three days of pillaging, looting and massacres by the Western Christians of their fellow Eastern Christians. They looted and burned down Orthodox Christian churches, monasteries and convents, raped nuns on church altars and placed a prostitute on the Patriarchal throne.

Northern Crusades of Pope Gregory IX, 1242



Figure 10. Pope Gregory IX.

Unlike his predecessor who directed his soldiers towards the Holy Land, Pope Gregory IX had a very different idea: he wanted to convert the “pagans” of Northern and Eastern Europe to the true faith. He considered Christian Orthodox Russia as part of

these pagan lands. His order to the Teutonic Knights, which were the spiritual successors of the Franks who had pillaged and destroyed Rome, was to either convert or kill all the pagans they would encounter. This genocidal order is like the one given by Ante Pavelic to his own forces against the Serbs during WWII: convert, kill or expel.

Pope Gregory IX instituted the Papal Inquisition and showed no mercy to the Greek schismatics. However, the Pope's crusading hordes were met in Russia by the resistance of Prince Alexander Nevsky.



Figure 11. Russian Prince, Saint Alexander Nevsky.

Before dealing with the Pope's crusaders Prince Alexander Nevsky had repelled an earlier invasion of Russia by the West from the Swedish Kingdom, which he defeated in 1240 at the battle of the Neva. Prince Alexander Nevsky is proclaimed as a saint by the Russian Orthodox Church. He was a deeply pious person who had a deep understanding of the Holy Scriptures. He remembered the words of Christ when asked whether taxes should be paid to the Roman rulers: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21), and: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

Prince Alexander Nevsky was unable to defeat a Mongol invasion from the East. He was faced by a civilizational choice. Russia could not fight the Papacy and the Mongols at the same time. He decided to submit to one and to resist the other.

Prince Alexander Nevsky submitted to the benevolent Mongols who had no desire to convert anybody or to persecute the Church. The Mongols respected the Church and its clergy, and they never persecuted it. In contrast, the crusaders were given the specific order to convert or murder all the Orthodox Christians they would encounter as they did before, and as they would do many times later. Prince Alexander Nevsky chose to

submit to the Mongols' Khan and to fight the crusaders whom he defeated at the Battle of the Ice in 1242.

By 1242 the Mongol army had captured all of Russia. Its leader, Batu Khan chose Old Sarai, in the lower Volga, to establish the headquarters of the Mongol dominion over Russia, which became known as the Golden Horde. The Golden Horde, as a center for the Mongol administration of Russia, endured for almost 250 years. A daruga handled Russian political affairs and the collection of an annual tribute.



Figure 12. Encounter between Mongols and Russians.

To become eligible to take office, Russian princes had to journey to the Golden Horde to pay obeisance to Mongol overlords. Contented with being overlords, the Mongols never established a dynasty in Russia. Occasionally, Russian military units had to serve alongside the Mongol army. Despite an attempt by Prince Dimitri of Moscow to wrestle Russia from Mongol control in 1330, they managed to rule and exact tribute for a further century.

Ivan III of Moscow finally broke Mongol rule over Russia in 1480. Failing to check the emergence and rise of the Muscovite state, the seed of modern Russia, the Mongols ceded control. To this day, Russia's national culture involves elements of both Mongolian and European heritages.

Fall of the Eastern Roman Empire, 1453

Having been repelled by Russia twice, the western crusaders temporarily renounced their invasion plans. The Russian victories did not endear the Russian people or culture to the western elites.

Another wave of invasions from the West began in the early 14th century and lasted until 1385 when the Union of Krewo sealed the union of Poland and Lithuania. At that time the territory of today's Ukraine was fully conquered by the Western powers.

In 1453, the Fall of Rome in the East, in Constantinople, marked the end of the the Roman civilization which had succeeded the Fall of Rome by a about one thousand years: The Western Roman Empire fell in 476 AD; and the Eastern Roman Empire fell in 1453.

The Western powers attempted to submit the Orthodox world by a mix of threats and promises to assist Constantinople against the Ottomans at the so-called False Union of Florence They failed, and Constantinople fell to the Ottoman armies of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror.

Moscow replaced Constantinople as a bastion of Eastern Christianity or as a Third Rome. It became the focal point of the Western hatred of Orthodox Christianity. The next western strike was launched in 1595.



Figure 13. Pope Clement VIII

Pope Clement VIII conceives the Ukraine, 1595.

By the end of the 16th century, most of western Russia had been occupied by the Western Europeans for two hundred years in the 14th-16th centuries. The Mongols dominated Eastern Russia during the 13th-15th century.

The situation of the Orthodox Christian peasants under the Western Europeans occupation was practical enslavement. Israel Shahak describes it in his book “Jewish History, Jewish Religion”:

“Due to many causes, Medieval Poland lagged in its development behind countries like England and France; a strong feudal-type monarchy, yet without any parliamentary institutions, was formed there only in the 14th century, especially under Casimir the Great (1333-70).

Immediately after his death, changes of dynasty and other factors led to a very rapid development of the power of the noble magnates, then also of the petty nobility, so that by 1572 the process of reduction of the

king to a figurehead and exclusion of all other non-noble estates from political power was virtually complete.

This process was accompanied by a debasement in the position of the Polish peasants (who had been free in the early Middle Ages) to the point of utter serfdom, hardly distinguishable from outright slavery and certainly the worst in Europe. The desire of noblemen in neighboring countries to enjoy the power of the Polish pan over his peasants (including the power of life and death without any right of appeal) was instrumental in the territorial expansion of Poland.

The situation in the 'eastern' lands of Poland (Byelorussia and the Ukraine) – colonized and settled by newly enserfed peasants – was worst of all.”

The local elites apostatized and sold out to the Polish occupier to enjoy the privileges of slave-owning. Before that, Russia had never known serfdom. The enslaved peasants held on to their faith. A solution to this problem was thought out by Pope Clement VIII: the forcible conversion of the local Orthodox Christians to the Western Church; the Union of Brest.

A long period of vicious persecution of the Orthodox peasantry ensued by the combined efforts of the Polish nobility and the Jesuits Illuminati who justified any atrocity under the slogan “ad majorem Dei gloriam” or “to the greater Glory of God”.

The persecution of the Orthodox Christians was led by Josphat Kuntsevich who was eventually lynched by a mob of peasants. He is buried in the Saint Peter Basilica in Rome, next to the relics of Saint Gregory the Theologian and Saint John Chrysostom.

The hatred of the Orthodox Christians and Russians barely exists in western circles; it has been replaced by an effort to establish bridges between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church by means of the Ecumenical Dialog.

However, a remnant exists as exemplified by Zbigniew Kazimierz Brzezinski, an American of Polish heritage, diplomat, and political scientist who was USA President Jimmy Carter's national security advisor, who advocated the dismemberment of Russia through gradual disintegration and devolution. He has stipulated that “a more decentralized Russia would be less susceptible to imperial mobilization” [1]. In this context, he states: “A loosely confederated Russia - composed of a European Russia, a Siberian Republic, and a Far Eastern Republic - would find it easier to cultivate closer economic regulations with Europe, with the new states of Central Asia, and with [East Asia], which would thereby accelerate Russia's own development” [1].

DISCUSSION

The fourth crusade resulted from the failure of the third crusade promoted by pope Celestine III to recapture Jerusalem.

The crusaders became involved in the affairs of the Byzantine Empire and never reached their originally stated goal, Egypt. Pope Innocent III persuaded many French nobles to take part in the fourth crusade, which he thought should go to the Holy Land as well.

This crusade resulted in increased tensions between the Byzantine Christians and the West European Christians. In 1204, religious hatred played a key role in the capture of Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Christian Empire by Western forces as it was ruthlessly sacked.

Pope Innocent III accused the pilgrims of respecting, in their lust, neither age, nor sex, nor religious profession; and bitterly laments that the deeds of darkness, fornication, adultery, and incest, were perpetrated in open day; and that noble matrons and holy nuns were polluted by the grooms and peasants of the Catholic camp. The crusaders were fiendishly cruel and wantonly destructive. Villages, churches and country houses were devastated and pillaged. Artistic treasures were destroyed or defaced, and priceless writings burned.

The fall of Constantinople marked the end of the fourth crusade. Once debts were paid to Venice, the crusaders themselves seemed more concerned with protecting the personal wealth they had acquired from the city.

The fourth crusade was contemporaneously hailed as a success, for the western kingdoms and empires had desired the reunification of Byzantium with the Western Roman Church for some time. Considering the destruction of Greek Orthodox churches and the reemergence of Roman dominion in Constantinople, pope Innocent III was convinced to lift the excommunication he had placed on the crusaders.

The city of Constantinople would never recover under western rule. Only after the advent of the tolerant Ottoman Turks, the wounded city in 1261, renamed as Istanbul, would return to its previous glory.

REFERENCE

[1] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geo-strategic Imperatives," NYC: Basic Books, p. 202, 1997.