

History of the Crusades.  
Episode 19.  
The Crusader States: The Principality of Antioch.

Hello again. Hopefully you've noticed something about this podcast episode. Hopefully it sounds better than the other episodes.

Before we launch into Episode 19 I want to tell you a bit about my week. It's been busy. Earlier in the week, I went to record this episode and my microphone broke. It wasn't a good microphone. In fact, it was a terrible microphone, so I wasn't too disappointed. But it meant I had to scramble to get a new one. While I was getting a new microphone, I decided to update my recording software, as the program I was using was nearly as bad as my microphone. So, new microphone, new software, and a few days later here I am re-recording Episode 19.

Now I'm coming to the punch line. With all these new purchases, added with the fees I've paid to increase my storage space and bandwidth on my podcast hosting site, I'm discovering that delivering a podcast serious can be quite an expensive business, and I'm afraid to say that it's starting to impact on the family finances. I'd rather it didn't do that, so I'm putting out a one off request for donations. So here it is: my request for donations. If you are enjoying the podcast, and would like to contribute to it in a financial way, and can afford to pay \$5 or \$10, I've placed a donation button on the website at [HistoryOfTheCrusades.webs.com](http://HistoryOfTheCrusades.webs.com). If you click on the button, you will be taken to a PayPal site where you can make a donation. There is, of course, no obligation to donate, as it's a free podcast after all, But if you do choose to donate, you will have my eternal gratitude. Right, back to Episode 19.

Last week, we looked at the aftermath of the first Crusade and the tumultuous events of the years 1100 to 1101. This week, we're going to zoom in and take a closer look at the exploits of Bohemond and of the state that was created around the city he seized, the Principality of Antioch. When we left Bohemond in the last episode, he was being held in captivity by the Danishmend Emir, and in his absence his nephew Tancred has been installed as Regent of Antioch and its territories. And it looks like Bohemond is going to be in captivity for a while. The Danishmend Emir is asking a ransom of 100,000 gold pieces for his release. Is Tancred racing around busily trying to raise the ransom to secure his uncle's release? No. In fact, Tancred is doing absolutely nothing on that front.

The two people who take up the campaign to free Bohemond are Count Baldwin II of Edessa (if you remember from last week's episode, this Baldwin is Baldwin of Boulogne's cousin; Baldwin of Boulogne installed him as ruler of Edessa when he went south to become King Baldwin I of Jerusalem), and the Latin Patriarch of Antioch, who had recently been appointed by Bohemond, Bernard of Valence. Bohemond himself is playing a part in the negotiations. Rumor has it that, when he's not praying to Saint Leonard, the patron saint of prisoners, Bohemond is spending quite a bit of time with the women of the Danishmend court, among whom he is proving rather popular. The Emperor Alexius has been in contact with the Danishmend Emir and has offered a considerable sum for Bohemond's release. Bohemond doesn't like the sound of that at all, and instead persuades the Emir to deal exclusively with the Latin Christians. We will leave Bohemond for a moment, while Count Baldwin II and Patriarch Bernard campaign to raise money for Bohemond's ransom.

When Tancred took over leadership of Antioch, his goals were as follows. Internally, he wished to improve the administration of the Principality and to consolidate the Latin Christians within the Church hierarchy at the expense of the Byzantines. There were Greek, Armenian, and Muslim residents in Antioch, and its surrounds, and Tancred made use of local administrative practices, placing Latin Christians, Armenians, and even Muslims in positions of power. Externally, Tancred not only wished to defend Bohemond's territory from surrounding hostile Byzantine and Muslim interests, he actually wished to expand Antioch's borders. By the time Bohemond had been captured, he had lost control of Cilicia and the strategically important port of Lattakiah to the Byzantine Empire, and was struggling to hold the eastern borders against Muslim incursions. Tancred decided to change this.

The disastrous Crusades of 1100 meant that the Emperor Alexius was struggling to hold Imperial territory against the rejuvenated and confident Seljuk Turks. Tancred took advantage of this, and knowing that Alexius and the Byzantine army were fully occupied with their woes in Anatolia, he moved his troops into Cilicia and captured the towns of Mamistra, Adana and Tarsus, which had come under Byzantine rule three years ago. Tancred appointed the knight Bernard the Stranger to rule Tarsus. This was the same Bernard the Stranger who arrested Raymond of Toulouse in last week's episode, apparently on Tancred's orders. Tancred moved Raymond to Antioch and held him there in captivity. However, this was all a bit much for the other Crusading leaders and for the Patriarch of Antioch. Tancred eventually was forced to bow to public pressure, and he released Raymond, making him swear an oath not to interfere in Northern Syrian affairs. Raymond left Antioch and headed southwards.

Negotiations for Bohemond's release were proceeding nicely, and in the spring of 1103 he was handed over to the Latin Christians. The bulk of the money for his ransom had been raised by Count Baldwin II and Bernard the Patriarch of Antioch. Contributions had also flowed in from an Armenian prince who hoped to gain a later strategic advantage from his donation, and from Bohemond's relatives back in Italy. Tancred had not contributed anything.

Upon his return, Bohemond assumed leadership of Antioch. Tancred requested that he be allowed to keep the territory he had won in Cilicia and Lattakiah. Bohemond said no, and Tancred reluctantly handed all the territory back to Bohemond. Once back in power, Bohemond wanted to reward the loyalty of Baldwin II, and if possible, pay back his share of the ransom. With this in mind, he embarked on a military campaign to crush Muslim resistance in the region, and provide a secure line of communication and route of supply between Antioch and Edessa. Bohemond was joined in his campaign by Tancred, and Baldwin II was joined by Joscelin of Courtenay, Baldwin's cousin, a northern French aristocrat who had arrived in the holy lands after 1101.

In spring 1104 they decided to attack the fortress of Harran, situated between Edessa and the Euphrates River. Capturing this stronghold would isolate Aleppo and restrict contact between the northern Syrian Muslims and their Persian and Iraqi counterparts. Unfortunately for the Latin Christians, the Battle of Harran was a disaster. The forces from Edessa became isolated from the rest of the army during the battle, and then fell for the old Muslim strategy of feigned retreat. A small contingent of Muslim fighters attacked the Edessan forces, then turned and fled. Thinking they had the upper hand, the Edessans gave chase and were led into an ambush set by the main Muslim army. The losses to the

Latin Christians were massive. Almost all the Edessan troops were captured or slain. Baldwin II and Joscelin were both taken and imprisoned.

When Bohemond and Tancred saw the extent of the Edessan defeat they realized they had no option but to retreat. The Islamic forces celebrated their resounding victory, while to the Latin Christians, Bohemond in particular, the loss was shattering. The Byzantines and local Muslims took full advantage of the situation. The Emperor Alexius recaptured territory in Cilicia and Lattakiah, and some strategically important towns, including Artah, which was only one day's march northeast of Antioch, expelled their Latin Christian garrisons and came under the rule of the King of Aleppo.

Things were getting desperate. Bohemond needed to secure his territory, but without the forces from Edessa, he just didn't have the manpower. He also wanted to rescue Baldwin II and Joscelin, although you would have to say that raising money took a higher priority.

In the absence of Baldwin II, Tancred became Regent of Edessa. He successfully beat back an attack in a skirmish with the local Muslim leader, and in the process captured a Seljuk princess. The Emir was so keen to have her returned that he offered to swap her for Baldwin II in a prisoner exchange arrangement, or pay 15,000 gold pieces in ransom for her. Bohemond and Tancred decided to take the money, and Baldwin II remained in captivity. The situation really was getting quite dire for Bohemond. He just didn't have the men or resources to effectively defend his territory, and in fact, the entire existence of the Principality of Antioch was looking shaky.

Luckily for the Latin Christians, they were given some breathing space when King Duqaq of Damascus died in June 1104. His two sons fought for power, and King Ridwan of Aleppo turned his attention away from Antioch to concentrate on this politically important regional event. It was also becoming clear to Bohemond that the other Crusading leaders would not be coming to his aid, particularly in his struggles against the Byzantine Empire. They were none too happy at his decision to take a small pile of gold instead of securing the release of Baldwin II. In contrast, the Emperor Alexius was known for his generosity in providing ransoms, and neither King Baldwin I of Jerusalem nor Raymond of Toulouse were prepared to jeopardize their strong ties with Constantinople by providing assistance to Bohemond.

So what was Bohemond to do? Well, he came up with a fateful and ambitious plan. In September 1104 he summoned Tancred to Antioch and informed him of the decision he had made. Bohemond decided to return to Europe, taking with him all the riches and treasure of Antioch, in order to undertake a massive recruitment drive. He needed an army, and Bohemond was sure that his fame and reputation, combined with monetary enticements, would encourage many of Europe's most experienced knights to leave their homes and join his cause. And that's what he did. Bohemond sailed for Europe, intending to embark on a lengthy mission to raise an army.

He was welcomed in Europe as a hero. In fact, that's probably an understatement. Crusading fever was rife all across Europe, and Bohemond was the first major player from the successful First Crusade to tour Europe. Godfrey had died in the Holy Lands, while Raymond of Toulouse, King Baldwin I of Jerusalem, and Tancred were all still busy in the Middle East and hadn't yet made the journey back home. Tales of his successes in battles against huge odds, and even of his years in captivity in the court of a Muslim Emir, fired the public imagination, and Bohemond was celebrated and lauded wherever he went. It is

quite possible that all this public adulation went to his head, fueled his ambitions, and gave him a sense of invincibility.

He befriended Countess Adela of Blois, the widow of Stephen of Blois. Countess Adela seemed quite taken with the heroic Bohemond, who no doubt she compared with her own, less impressive, late husband. Being the daughter of William the Conqueror, she was extremely well connected, and arranged a meeting between Bohemond and her brother, King Henry I of England. She was also instrumental in arranging alliances by marriage between the southern Italian Norman leaders and the court of King Philip of France. Bohemond was promised the hand in marriage of King Philip's daughter Constance, whom he married in 1106. King Philip's younger daughter Cecilia was promised to Tancred. Constance remained in Europe with Bohemond, but Cecilia sailed to Antioch towards the end of 1106. Bohemond took his time, touring Europe on his recruitment drive, soaking up the adulation and formulating plans for his new army, which he planned to take to the Holy Lands in the form of a Crusade.

Bohemond's Crusade has raised some interesting questions for historians, mainly because, by the time Bohemond had finalized his plans, it looked less like an expedition by Latin Christians to the Holy Land to secure territory there, and more like an attack by Latin Christians on the Greek Orthodox Christian Byzantine Empire. Bohemond's ambitious goal was to take his Crusading army to the Balkans and directly attack the frontier of Byzantine territory. It is likely that in the best-case scenario, Bohemond saw himself conquering the Empire, overrunning Constantinople, and placing either himself or a Latin Christian puppet in the Imperial seat, before moving his army across Anatolia to Antioch.

This, of course, would have solved a lot of problems for Bohemond. His territory in Antioch would no longer be under attack from two fronts. To the west, all the territory adjacent to the Principality of Antioch would be under Latin Christian control, and it was possible that the Muslim forces to the north and east would retreat in the face of the mighty Latin Christian powerhouse.

Bohemond's Crusade had all the outward appearances of a true Crusade. He had his soldiers wear crosses. They made vows and were promised remission for their sins if they were successful, but it was a marked contrast to the First Crusade, where Pope Urban II, at the request of the Emperor Alexius, sent Latin Christians to the Holy Land to rescue it from the Muslims. Pope Urban II and his Legate Bishop Adhemar were both careful to forge strong ties with the Greek Orthodox Byzantines, with the aim of healing the rift between Latin Christianity and Greek Orthodox Christianity, and to unite the two strands of Christianity against Muslim interests in the Holy Land. In contrast, Bohemond's plan split the rift between the two strands of Christianity wide open. Bohemond certainly had the support of the new Pope, Pope Pashal II, for his Crusade, but it's unclear whether the Pope specifically endorsed the attack on the Byzantine Empire, or whether his support was more about sending Latin Christians to the Holy Lands, regardless of what they did on their way there.

Anyway, whether this was a true Crusade or a blind grope for territory by Bohemond dressed up as a Crusade, the expedition of around 30,000 men left Italy, in around 200 ships, in 1107 and sailed to the Balkans. Bohemond's plan was to attack the city of Durazz, which was viewed as the gateway to the Byzantine empire. But, unknown to Bohemond, the Emperor Alexius had become aware of his plans and had been doing some preparations off his own. He decided to shore up his territory in the Balkans by

conceding territory in Anatolia to the Seljuk Turk Sultan Kilij Arslan. In return, Kilij Arslan supplied the Emperor with a number of Muslim mercenaries, which he could deploy against the Latin Christians.

Deciding that the city of Durazz was too heavily fortified to take by assault, Bohemond and his army settled in for a lengthy siege. However, things didn't go quite to plan. The Byzantine navy blockaded a nearby port which was sending supplies to the Latin Christian army, which also cut their line of communication back to Europe. Then, a few months later, the main Byzantine army arrived on the scene and encircled the Latin Christians, cutting off their sources of supply by land. Famine, disease, and plummeting morale hit Bohemond's army like a sledgehammer.

Eventually, Bohemond knew he had been defeated, and surrendered to the Emperor Alexius. The terms of surrender were brutal. Bohemond would be allowed to return to Antioch, but he would rule the city on behalf of the Byzantine Empire. The Latin Christian leaders of the Church in Antioch were to be replaced by Greek Orthodox clerics. Alexius made a list of all the towns and territory over which Bohemond could rule on the Emperor's behalf, and then claimed territory in Cilicia and the port of Latakia as part of the Byzantine Empire, to be ruled directly by Constantinople.

It's probably fair to say that the terms of the surrender and the epic failure of his ambitious Crusade broke Bohemond as a man. His army scattered, and while some of them made their own way to the Holy Lands, Bohemond himself limped back to Italy, where he and his new wife, Constance, lived in obscurity, keeping pretty much to themselves. Constance bore Bohemond two sons. He never went back to Antioch, but died in Italy in 1111, discredited, with his reputation and fortune in tatters.

Did his nephew Tancred fare any better? When Bohemond departed for Europe, he left Tancred in a precarious position. Prior to leaving, Bohemond had bled Antioch's treasury dry. Bohemond decided that Antioch's existence as a Crusader state depended on him being able to raise an army in Europe, so he stripped the city of its riches, which he intended to use to fund his recruitment drive. So Tancred became Regent of a territory beset on two sides by hostile forces, with no money in its bank. As if he didn't have enough on his plate, Tancred was also Regent of Edessa, as Count Baldwin II was still in captivity. Certainly, no one would have been surprised if things had gone horribly wrong for Tancred.

But despite his young age, he proved himself an able and wise administrator and military strategist. His first move was to put money back in the coffers. He issued an emergency tax on Antioch's residents, gaining enough funds to pull the state back from the brink of financial disaster. And then he made an audacious move. Instead of just holding tight and concentrating on defending Antioch's territory until the return of his uncle, Tancred engaged in a process of military expansion. He gathered Christian forces from Edessa and added them to his own men from Antioch. Realizing that much rode on his next move, Tancred chose his target very, very carefully.

He decided on the town of Artah, part of King Ridwan of Aleppo's territory. He marched on the town intent on besieging it. King Ridwan sent a huge force, reportedly containing 30,000 men, to Artah's assistance. Using tactics reminiscent of his uncle at the peak of his success, Tancred defeated the much larger army and was victorious. It was a watershed moment in the history of the Crusader state. Tancred went on to repeat his success,

picking carefully targeted towns to attack. Slowly but surely he consolidated and expanded Antioch's influence in the region.

After Bohemond's death in 1111, Tancred continued on as Regent, but just over a year later, in December 1112, Tancred, aged just 36, became suddenly ill and died, possibly from typhoid. Tancred's nephew, Richard of Salerno, who was the son of a knight from the First Crusade also called Richard of Salerno, was named the new Prince of Antioch. He immediately immersed himself in the politics of the region by marrying Count Baldwin II of Edessa's sister. Tancred was always going to be a hard act to follow, but Roger didn't do too badly. He carried on Tancred's policy of cautious military expansion, and sought tributes from surrounding Muslim rulers. The city of Aleppo was always of concern to Antioch, due to its location. In 1113 its ruler, King Ridwan died, leaving it in a state of disarray. King Ridwan's young sons in turn, struggled with prominent noblemen within the city for control.

By 1119 the city was ruled by the Emir Il-ghazi, who decided he had had enough of Antioch's expansionist policies. He gathered an army of around 10,000 men and marched them out of Aleppo towards Antioch. A Latin Christian army was being assembled in Jerusalem to march to Antioch's aid, but Roger decided to meet the enemy head on. He gathered together 700 knights and 4,000 foot soldiers, which was the entire army of Antioch, together with some mercenaries, and marched to a valley near the plain of Sarmada, making camp near a small fortress. The surrounding terrain was hilly and rocky. Roger felt safe in this terrain and planned to move out the next morning, marching swiftly towards the Muslim army to take them by surprise.

It was Roger, however, who was taken by surprise. As dawn broke, Roger awoke to find the Muslim army advancing on their position from three sides. They were about to be surrounded. Roger urgently gathered his forces and prepared for battle but, outnumbered and outmaneuvered, Roger's army was overrun. By midday, it was all over. The Latin Christian forces had been soundly defeated. Only 100 or so knights and a handful of foot soldiers had survived, breaking out of the battle and fleeing back to Antioch. Roger himself was killed in the battle, which was later given the name "The Field of Blood".

The battle left Antioch in a weakened and vulnerable state. Leaderless, and with most of its army dead, the very existence of the Principality was in doubt. Roger left no heirs, and all his relatives who could have taken over leadership had been killed at the Field of Blood. The Kingdom of Jerusalem stepped in, naming Bohemond's nine year old Italian son, also called Bohemond, as successor. Until the boy came of age, The King of Jerusalem would rule Antioch as regent. While the Principality of Antioch survived, it would never again rise to the level of prominence and success it had enjoyed under Tancred's rule.

Join me next week as we take a closer look at Antioch's neighbors, the Counties of Edessa and Tripoli.

I hope you enjoyed listening to this podcast on my new recording equipment. It's all still very new to me, but I'm hoping over the next few episodes the quality of the sound I produce will improve. To finish, just a quick reminder to go to [HistoryOfTheCrusades.webs.com](http://HistoryOfTheCrusades.webs.com) if you would like to make a donation and make me a very happy podcaster. Until next week, bye for now.

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