

History of the Crusades.
Episode 50
The Very Short Reign of King Baldwin V.

Episode 50. I can't believe I got to Episode 50. Yay. Okay, sorry about that. Right, back to script. Where are we? Okay, here we go.

Hello again. We left last week's episode with the death of the leper King, the 24 year old King Baldwin IV. King Baldwin's designated heir was his sister's son from her first marriage, an eight year old boy also called Baldwin. As we mentioned last week, Raymond of Tripoli became Regent, ruling on the boy's behalf, while Joscelin of Courtenay became the boy's guardian.

Now, as Regent, Raymond of Tripoli had his work cut out for him. For the past few years, the increased tensions between Saladin and the Kingdom of Jerusalem had disrupted trade and affected the local economy. To make matters worse, the winter rains had failed, and in the spring of 1185 Raymond was looking down the barrel of a major famine in the Crusader states. Despite persistent calls for assistance, only a smattering of Crusaders had drifted in from Europe, and none of them were proving much use. Some eighteen months earlier, Emperor Andronicus had signed a truce between the Byzantine Empire and Saladin. Andronicus was still on the throne in Byzantium, but would be killed and overthrown in the coming months. Basically, this meant that it was pointless asking the Byzantine Empire for any assistance. The Crusader states, beset by internal strife, impoverished by continual skirmishes with Saladin, facing the threat of famine, with a sickly eight year old boy on the throne, were officially on their own. There really was only one sensible course of action, and Raymond of Tripoli took it. He called all the noblemen of Jerusalem to an assembly and obtained their support to seek a four year long truce with Saladin.

Saladin was happy to take up the offer. Nur ad-Din's relatives in Mosul needed suppressing, and a peace treaty with the Crusader states would enable him to travel to northern Iraq and settle the matter in Mosul once and for all. The treaty was signed, and everyone in the Kingdom of Jerusalem breathed a sigh of relief when trade picked up and food was able to flow into the states, warding off the threat of starvation.

Saladin headed north to Mosul. The ruler of the city, Izz ad-Din, refused to submit to him, so Saladin besieged the city. Izz ad-Din, somewhat strangely, sent out a succession of women to plead with Saladin to lift the siege. Izz ad-Din's wife and daughters were the first to try and negotiate with Saladin. When they failed, Izz ad-Din sent out his elderly mother, who also failed in her mission. But perhaps Saladin should have listened to the women.

The siege was clearly going to last a while, and his men were wilting and sickening in the intense summer heat. The sickness in Saladin's camp seems to have worsened when the summer rains arrived, increasing the humidity to unbearable levels. A few months later, Saladin himself succumbed. He became ill and feverish and retired to a nearby fortress at Harran. Refusing to be transported there by litter, he wrote to Harran on his horse, despite being barely able to stay in the saddle. He was attended by a variety of physicians, but it seemed clear that he was dying. For weeks on end, Saladin drifted in and out of consciousness, while his body became increasingly emaciated. He had improved enough in January 1186 to make his will, but then he relapsed, spending weeks seemingly on the

verge of death. At the end of February however, to everyone's surprise including his own, he began to recover. Unlike his previous recovery, this one proved permanent.

Saladin's brush with death seems to have affected his outlook on life. Historians disagree on the extent of this change, but many argue that Saladin emerged back to good health with a renewed zeal to fight the enemies of Islam, that is the Latin Christians, instead of fighting his fellow Muslims. Soon after his recovery he signed a peace treaty with Izz ad-Din, in which Izz ad-Din was able to remain Lord of Mosul while recognizing Saladin as his overlord. Saladin's territory now stretched from Egypt to the borders of Persia.

Back in the Crusader states, things were going as well as could be expected. Trade was flourishing and there was a sense of optimism in the air. But this all came crashing down when, at the end of August 1186, young King Baldwin V sickened and died. His Regent, Raymond of Tripoli, and his guardian, Joscelin of Courtenay, were present at his death-bed in Acre. Now, the will of King Baldwin IV had provided that if King Baldwin V died before the age of ten, then Raymond of Tripoli should retain the Regency until the Pope and the Kings of England and France met to decide the competing claims of Sibylla and Isabella to the throne. With Jerusalem a hotbed of supporters of the Raynald of Chatillon / Joscelin of Courtenay camp, Raymond of Tripoli rode to Balian of Ibelin's castle in Nablus. There, as Regent of the Kingdom, he summoned the nobility of the land to the castle, to hold an assembly.

Joscelin, however, had already seized the initiative. He sent troops to occupy the cities of Tyre and Beirut and, sending young King Baldwin V's body to Jerusalem under the care of the Knights Templar, he summoned his supporters, in particular Sibylla and Guy from Ascalon and Raynald of Chatillon, from Kerak in Transjordan to Jerusalem for the young King's funeral. Oh, and he also proclaimed Sibylla Queen of Jerusalem. The supporters of the Raynald of Chatillon / Joscelin of Courtenay camp decided that it would be a good idea to hold Sibylla's coronation and her son Baldwin V's funeral at the same time. Feeling secure in their plans and position due to the fact that they had the support of Heraclius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the Templars, and they controlled the surrounding port cities, they decided to be nice and sent Raymond of Tripoli an invitation to attend Sibylla's coronation.

Fearing a trap, Raymond decided not to attend the ceremony personally, but instead sent a delegation of two Cistercian monks. The monks were set the unenviable task of advising the assembly at Jerusalem not to go ahead with the coronation, and to instead wait for the outcome of the decision of the Pope and the Kings of Europe. Did the Raynald of Chatillon / Joscelin of Courtenay camp listen to the demands of the monks and cancel the coronation? Of course not. And really, there was no-one in Jerusalem to stop them. All Raymond supporters were out of the city at Nablus, and the Grand Master of the Hospitallers was seemingly the only person present at the funeral of young King Baldwin V who had any misgivings about the wisdom of crowning Sibylla. And Sibylla, had many supporters among the people of Jerusalem. She had been the sister to a King, and the mother to a King, and her claim to the crown was a popular one. But one person who was absolutely not popular was her husband Guy, who was universally loathed.

The Raynald of Chatillon / Joscelin of Courtenay faction knew they had to move quickly, with the least fuss and opposition as possible, to get Sibylla crowned. They ordered the gates of Jerusalem to be locked and guarded to prevent a surprise attack from Raymond of Tripoli, and to ensure the support of the wider population they proposed to crown Sibylla

alone. Before she was crowned, Sibylla was forced to divorce Guy. She agreed to do so on three conditions. Firstly, that their children, all daughters, were to be declared legitimate, and secondly, that Guy would retain his lands at Ascalon and Jaffa, and finally, that she and she alone would choose a man from the Kingdom of Jerusalem whom she thought worthy to be crowned King. As the ceremony approached, the Grand Master of the Hospitallers and all the knights of the Hospital who were present walked out, refusing to take part in the proceedings.

The Patriarch of Jerusalem, with all pomp and ceremony, crowned Sibylla Queen of Jerusalem, then placed a second crown next to her. The moment had arrived. All the nobles from Jerusalem watched eagerly, hoping that Sibylla would choose one of them to be the new King. For the good of the realm and for the future of the very existence of the Crusader states, Sibylla needed to select a man who had the respect of the people, who could lead them into battle, and had the ability to navigate the treacherous waters of diplomacy and regional politics. In a shock move, she chose someone who had none of these qualities, although he was good looking and was descended from a water fairy. Yes, you guessed it. Queen Sibylla chose her former husband, Guy, to be King of Jerusalem. As murmurs of disbelief, shock and disquiet filled the coronation hall, a smiling Guy moved to the front of the assembly and knelt before Queen Sibylla, who placed the crown on his head, thereby making him the new King of Jerusalem.

There's only really two words I can say about this. Oh dear.

The two Cistercian monks who were present on behalf of the Raymond of Tripoli camp raced back to Nablus as soon as the ceremony was over to report on the events that had taken place. Raymond of Tripoli, of course, was appalled. Faced with a worst-case-scenario type situation, unfortunately, he didn't have a lot to work with. The coronation had already taken place, and the Raynald of Chatillon / Joscelin of Courtenay faction had emerged from events the clear victors. The only possible way to contest the ill-fated outcome of young King Baldwin V's early death was to try and garner support for the only other contender for the throne, King Baldwin IV's step-sister Isabella and her husband, Humphrey of Toron. Then they would somehow have to overthrow the newly crowned King and Queen of Jerusalem, and have Isabella and Humphrey crowned in their place. It would be no easy task, of course, and may cause a civil war.

Now, while Raymond of Tripoli and Baldwin of Ibelin were busy plotting how best to elevate Isabella and Humphrey to the throne, Humphrey himself was having some serious misgivings. As we've discussed before, Humphrey was Raynald of Chatillon's step-son, and shared none of his step-father's aggression and warmongering traits. Humphrey wanted nothing more than to be left alone with his books and his young wife. He was scholarly and not a particularly masculine person, and the thought of opposing the current King and Queen and his step-father, and possibly leading troops into battle against them and then becoming King of Jerusalem, filled him with dread. He slipped away from the castle at Nablus and made his way in secret to Jerusalem. Once there, he swore homage to King Guy, ending any hope of victory for Raymond of Tripoli and the Ibelin brothers. In the end, most of Raymond of Tripoli's supporters conceded defeat and submitted to the new King.

Everyone, that is, except Raymond himself and Baldwin of Ibelin. Leaving his brother, Balian of Ibelin, in charge of the family lands and castle, Baldwin relinquished his lordship and left the Kingdom. He moved to the Principality of Antioch and offered his allegiance to

Prince Bohemond III of Antioch. Raymond of Tripoli refused to pay homage to the new King, and withdrew to his wife's lands in Galilee, setting himself up in Tiberias, a small town in Galilee.

So there we have it. Raymond of Tripoli's worst nightmare had come true. The throne of Jerusalem was held by a man who lacked any military ability and who was almost universally disliked by his people. And there he was, Raymond of Tripoli, the sole pocket of resistance in the Kingdom. King Guy, of course, was not happy at all at Raymond's failure to pay homage to him and threatened him with military action.

Now this is where things get interesting. The Kingdom of Jerusalem was still subject to the truce which Raymond had arranged with Saladin while King Baldwin V was still alive. The Prince of Antioch also negotiated a truce with the Muslims on behalf of the Principality of Antioch, and Raymond followed suit, negotiating a truce on behalf of the County of Tripoli, which also extended to his wife's lands in Galilee. But Raymond's truce with the Muslims went further, quite a bit further. Raymond met with Saladin and negotiated an extraordinary deal. He obtained Saladin's protection and military support. Saladin sent a detachment of Muslim troops to Tiberias to bolster Raymond's defenses. In return, Raymond gave permission for Saladin's men to move unhindered over his wife's lands in Galilee.

Now, it's unclear exactly what Raymond's intentions were regarding this agreement with Saladin. Certainly it meant that Saladin had Raymond's back if King Guy decided to attempt to overthrow Raymond's pocket of resistance in Galilee. Possibly it meant that Raymond had the option of using Muslim forces to overthrow King Guy and Queen Sibylla and install himself as ruler in Jerusalem. Historians have been united in their disapproval of Raymond's agreement with Saladin, calling it treasonous and selfish.

But to me, it's a desperate move by a desperate man. Raymond is the only person in the Kingdom who has kept a steady hand on the wheel these past few tumultuous years, clearly having won the trust and respect of the ailing leper King, who placed him in charge of the Kingdom and ensured his Regency during the rule of his successor, young King Baldwin V, Raymond was possibly the only person in the Kingdom who could have steered the Crusader states through the stormy seas that were fast approaching. But due to the duplicitous actions of the Raynald of Chatillon / Joscelin of Courtenay faction, Raymond of Tripoli has been placed in the brig of a ship which is being sailed to its doom. Desperate times call for desperate measures, and Raymond's treaty with Saladin was certainly a desperate measure.

Despite the fact that the Kingdom of Jerusalem was still subject to the terms of the peace treaty with Saladin, tensions were building. Saladin, with his newfound jihadist zeal, was building his forces, and the Kingdom of Jerusalem, with an incompetent King on the throne, clearly needed the peace treaty to endure. Surely no one in the Kingdom would be silly enough to breach the treaty and give Saladin an excuse to invade. Unfortunately, there was someone silly enough, and that silly person took the form of Raynald of Chatillon.

As we've seen before, Raynald found it very difficult to watch wealthy, unarmed, Muslim caravans pass unimpeded through his lands. Laden with goods which could be captured and sold, accompanied by Muslim traders who could be captured and sold, the temptation to attack one of them and make a bag full of money had proven too much for Raynald

once before. At the end of 1186, Raynald watched greedily as an enormous caravan passed through Transjordan. On its way from Damascus to Cairo, it was carrying a staggering amount of goods, and was only accompanied by a small group of Egyptian troops to protect it from Bedouin raiders.

Raynald couldn't help himself. Mindless of the risk his actions posed to the very existence of Latin Christians in the Holy Land, he gathered his men and attacked the convoy, killing the Muslim troops and taking the huge haul of trading goods, together with the merchants and their families, back to Castle Kerak. Upon hearing the news, Saladin sent a delegation to Castle Kerak, demanding the release of the prisoners and reparation of the seized goods. Raynald refused to meet with the delegation, so Saladin sent them to Jerusalem to meet with King Guy. King Guy agreed that the attack amounted to a breach of the peace treaty, and ordered Raynald to release the goods and the prisoners. However, when Raynald failed to follow the King's order, the King was either unwilling or unable to press the issue.

So the treaty was broken. There was now nothing to stop Saladin invading the Kingdom, a Kingdom that was ill-equipped to defend itself. Join me next week as Saladin does indeed invade the Kingdom, resulting in one of the most famous battles in the history of the Crusades, at the Horns of Hattin.

Now, since it's the 50th episode and a bit of a milestone, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the people who have donated money to the podcast. What you might not know is that every cent you donate goes to fund the podcast, and one day I'd like to think that it might be self-funding. The major cost incurred by the podcast is the hosting fees. The History of the Crusades Podcast is hosted by Podomatic, and I pay an annual fee to enable the podcast to stay at the site. Now, quite a lot of people are listening to the podcast, which is fabulous, but the more people who listen in, the more bandwidth the podcast uses on its hosting site, and the higher the annual fee becomes. Likewise, the more episodes I post, the more storage space I use up, and the higher the fee becomes. So most of the money donated to the podcast goes to paying these fees. And really, it's due to your donations that the podcast is still coming to you each week. I'm loving bringing the podcast to you each week, but quite honestly I couldn't pay the hefty hosting fees out of my own pocket, so if it wasn't for your donations the podcast would have wound up some time ago. So for each of you who has donated, it's because of you that the podcast is able to continue, so each of you has my heartfelt thanks.

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Thanks also to everyone who's left comments about the podcast or who was posted a review on iTunes. You're a fabulous bunch of people. I always enjoy hearing from you, and I thank you for your continued support.

Well, that's it for me. I'm off to crack open a bottle of champagne or, more accurately, a bottle of Australian white sparkling wine, to celebrate. Woohoo! Until next week, bye for now.

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