

History of the Crusades.
Episode 54
The Third Crusade II.

Hello again. Last week we saw the effect of the devastating news of the fall of Jerusalem and the loss of the True Cross in Europe. It resulted in the Pope calling for a new Crusade, and while the Pope prepared to travel to Emperor Frederick Barbarossa to convince him to take the Cross, and while Joscius, Archbishop of Tyre prepared to travel to meet the Kings of England and France, Richard Count of Poitou, Duke of Aquitaine, and heir to the English throne, surprises everyone by jumping out of the starting blocks early and publicly declaring he will take the Cross.

Now, it's likely that this was a spur-of-the-moment decision and that Richard didn't give much thought to how his decision would affect the delicate three way balance of power between himself, his father King Henry II of England, and King Philip II of France; King Philip being the sworn enemy of King Henry II and sometimes ally of Richard. But after having made such a public and popular declaration, the cat was out of the bag. Richard couldn't take back his decision, regardless of the consequences, so King Henry and King Philip, were just going to have to deal with it. And they dealt with it in quite a sensible way. A couple of months after Richard's declaration, the two Kings met at Gisors on the border between Normandy and the French Kingdom, to discuss forming a truce in regard to their ongoing conflict.

It was at this gathering in January 1188 that Joscius, Archbishop of Tyre, met with the two Kings to urge them to join the Crusade. It wasn't a private meeting. The assembly which gathered at Gisors to discuss the peace treaty included the leading noblemen of both England and France, and Joscius preached the Cross to them all publicly, enthusiastically, and persuasively.

It was a savvy move on Joscius' part. He most likely realized that, due to the tension and history between them, neither King would be able to go on Crusade without the other. If King Henry took the Cross while King Philip stayed home, it's likely that he would return to find half his kingdom missing, particularly since his son and heir would also be absent in the Holy Land. Likewise, if Richard and King Philip left Europe on Crusade and King Henry remained behind, it would be likely that King Henry would take full advantage of their absences. So it was an all-or-nothing situation. Either both kings would go or neither king.

We don't know exactly what Joscius said to the royal assembly, but he must have been convincing. By the end of the meeting, both the English and the French Kings had pledged to take the Cross, and most of the noblemen present were obliged to do so as well. Joscius returned to the Kingdom of Jerusalem, confident that he had succeeded in his mission and that the Kings of Europe would soon be coming to the Kingdom's aid. However, his confidence was misplaced. While the Kings of England and France would set out on Crusade, it would be more than three years before either King would set foot in the Holy Land.

As soon as the meeting at Gisors concluded, King Henry went back to England to start raising money for the Crusade. As we've seen in both the First and the Second Crusade, these military campaigns are expensive, and both kings will need to raise a dizzying amount of money to finance their participation. King Henry instituted a new tax, known as

the Saladin Tithe, and set about making plans to cover the administration of his realm in his absence.

But before he could get too organized, war broke out again in France. Richard was experiencing some difficulties with his rebellious subjects in Poitou, which resulted in him coming into conflict with King Philip's vassal, the Count of Toulouse. King Philip leapt to the Count's defense and invaded King Henry's territory at Berry. King Henry responded by invading French territory, and the conflict dragged on for the rest of the year 1188. Richard ended up taking sides with Philip against his father, and to make things worse for King Henry his health was deteriorating, fast.

By the end of 1188 things were really going very badly for Henry. It was winter, he was sick, and he was away from home, campaigning against his sworn enemy King Philip and his own son Richard. But things were only going to get worse. The war dragged on, and in July 1189 the French King combined with Richard's forces to invade King Henry's territory in Normandy, where they successfully attacked and took the great castle of Tours and, perhaps even worse, the fortified city of Le Mans, King Henry's birth place and, in King Henry's words, the city he loved best on Earth.

With his health failing to the extent that he could barely walk, and with his men starting to sicken in the summer heat, Henry met with King Philip to negotiate a truce. King Henry had to be held so that he could stay on his horse, and while King Philip took pity on him and offered to spread his cloak on the ground for him to sit on, Richard told everyone who would listen that the illness was feigned. King Henry agreed to humiliating terms, and apparently, while bestowing the ritual kiss of peace upon his son, he whispered to Richard, and I quote, "God grant that I may not die until I have had my revenge on you" end quote. Unfortunately for Henry, God didn't grant his wish. He died two days later.

Richard was Henry's clear and undisputed successor. Soon after his father's death, Richard ordered that his mother, Eleanor, of Aquitaine, be released from captivity, and in return, the aging but seemingly tireless Eleanor began touring around England, drumming up support for Richard, who was not very well known in the land over which he was to rule. Richard was crowned Richard I, King of England, at Westminster on the 3rd of September 1189. He was nearly 32 years old.

Richard could quite possibly have changed his mind about embarking on the Crusade at this point. In fact, staying at home seemed to be the most sensible choice. He had a Kingdom to administer, and his younger brother, John, was proving a threat to the throne. Rumors of his scheming and his attempts to undermine the unmarried, and therefore heir-less, Richard must have made Richard question whether now was the right time to be leaving to go on a military campaign in the Holy Land which could last a number of years. Yet Richard was determined to fulfill his vow. He made peace with King Philip of France by agreeing to marry the French King's sister, Alice, as soon as he returned from the Crusade, and worked tirelessly to raise funds, make his preparations and put in place administrative arrangements which would ensure his Kingdom continued to operate smoothly in his absence.

The French King also could have been excused for changing his mind about going on Crusade. Some six years younger than Richard, he was the more experienced monarch, having been on the throne for almost a decade. He was quite unlike Richard in character. Whereas Richard was brash, energetic, and a man of action, Philip was more cautious,

and tended to operate in more considered and subtle ways. As Philip was preparing his Kingdom for his absence on Crusade, tragedy struck. His wife, Queen Isabella, died in childbirth along with their newborn twins. King Philip's sole heir and only remaining offspring was his three year old son, Louis. This left his succession arrangements in a precarious situation, and embarking on a military campaign from which he may not return must have been looking like not such a good idea. Yet, like Richard, King Philip remained true to his vows, and preparations continued for the Crusade.

This long, slow build up to the Third Crusade had one big advantage. There was plenty of time to raise money and make preparations. King Richard managed to raise a staggering amount of cash. The unpopular Saladin Tithe instituted by his father had raised a considerable sum, and Richard had embarked on a selling spree of Crown assets and land in England to top up the coffers even more. And he was going to need every penny. Unlike the previous two Crusades, this was going to be a professionally run, well organized military campaign.

Wisely, considering the perils suffered by those who marched overland to the Holy Land in the First and Second Crusades, the English and French kings decided it would be better to sail to the Kingdom of Jerusalem. But of course, this was going to cost a lot of money. It meant that a massive outlay of cash was required to hire and provision a fleet of ships, before the army even set foot in the Holy Land. And of course, there were always risks present by way of navigational and weather issues and the threat of shipwreck. But overall, the risks of travel by sea were seen as preferable to the risk of traveling to the Middle East by land.

King Richard was also planning to pay his knights and soldiers, to ensure their loyalty throughout the campaign. Not only was he going to pay them, he also had to feed them and keep them equipped for the duration of the Crusade. Records kept in England at the time show that Richard ordered 60,000 horseshoes to be made prior to his departure. Some 14,000 cured pig carcasses were paid for, along with a massive supply of cheese, beans and wine. Thousands of arrows and crossbow bolts were purchased as well. King Philip's war chest was smaller than Richards, but his preparations too were proceeding along similar lines.

Slowly but surely, the logistics were arranged and preparations were made until on the 4th of July 1190, exactly three years after the defeat of the Latin Christians at the Battle at the Horns of Hattin, the English and the French forces set out together from Europe. The first port of call on their way to the Holy Land was Sicily. Richard left Europe with a fleet of around 100 ships carrying anywhere between 6000 and 17,000 professional soldiers. A portion of the English fleet sailed on to the Holy Land under the command of Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury, while the majority sailed to Sicily. King Philip, with a smaller contingent of ships and men, also headed for Sicily, reaching the island in September 1190.

Now, Sicily at this time was in a state of uproar. King William of Sicily had died unexpectedly of an illness in November 1189, causing a bit of a problem. Sicily was a powerful and wealthy country, and King William had left no obvious successor. Into the power vacuum stepped Tancred of Lecce. Remember Tancred? He led King William's army in the invasion of Byzantium back in 1185. He is King William's cousin and, relying on his command of the island's military forces, he has stepped up and named himself ruler. But not everyone is convinced that he's the right man for the job. Sicily is an absolute

powerhouse at this moment in history, and anyone with an even vague claim to the throne is angling to throw their hat into the ring, overthrow Tancred, and become monarch of the mighty country. And, of course, stuck in the middle of all the drama, is Richard's sister and King William's widow, Queen Joanna, whom Tancred has placed under house arrest.

Sicily at this time was a multicultural and vibrant place. While its mixed population of Greeks, Normans, Italians, and Muslims made for interesting times during periods of peace, at the moment it was proving a volatile mix. Most people on the island were expecting to be invaded by the Germans. King William's aunt Constance was married to Frederick Barbarossa's successor, King Henry VI of Germany, and it was pretty obvious that Germany would like to claim Constance as William's successor and annex Sicily to its lands. Adding to the state of anxiety and uncertainty in Sicily, the Muslim population on the island was in a state of revolt, and Tancred was having trouble keeping them under control.

Pretty much the last thing Tancred needed at this point was to have to play host to enormous armies from France and England. We've seen from the First and Second Crusades the problems caused when the massive European armies make camp on their way to the Holy Land. Food becomes difficult to obtain. Skirmishes break out between Crusaders and locals, and generally the Crusading armies, wanting to kick up their heels before the start of the military campaign, make life pretty difficult for the locals. On the previous two Crusades, the Kingdom of Hungary and the Byzantine Empire have had to bear the brunt of the carousing Crusaders, but this time, with the route changed to accommodate the maritime transport scheme, it's Sicily's turn.

Now, to say things were tense in Sicily at this time is an understatement. The French contingent had lodged themselves in the Sicilian city of Messina, which was none too happy to host them. The largely Greek population of Messina were even more hostile to Richard's men, whose anger at the exorbitant prices charged by the locals for food caused the English Crusaders to resort to violence on a number of occasions. The violence came to a head in October when Richard ordered his army to attack the city of Messina, despite the fact that, as a Christian city playing host to the Crusaders, it really wasn't an appropriate target, and also despite the fact that it was full of French Crusaders at the time. The English captured Messina and went on a destructive pillage of the town, attacking all the quarters of the city, save for those housing the French. Most residents fled with their families, and Richard seized their vacant houses to accommodate his men. He ordered the Sicilian ships anchored in the harbor at Messina to be set on fire and hoisted his flag, the banner of the Plantagenets, over the town.

Tensions between the English, the Sicilians, and the French were definitely starting to rise, and the actions of Richard are about to make things a whole lot worse. Remember King Philip's sister Alice, who has been betrothed to Richard for nearly twenty years and whom Richard has recently promised to marry? Well, things are about to get very interesting on that front. Quite possibly at the urging of his mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, who had no wish to see a French woman as Queen of England. Richard is about to dump Alice and marry an obscure princess from the tiny kingdom of Navarre, in the Pyrenees. In return for the unexpected honor of having his daughter elevated to the position of Queen of England, King Sancho VI of Navarre has promised to protect the borders of Richard's lands in southern France during his absence on Crusade. The remarkable Eleanor of Aquitaine has traveled to Navarre, and will escort the Princess, named Berengaria, to Sicily. This involved Eleanor, now in her seventies, traveling over the Alps in winter, a journey which

would have daunted most men in their prime, although it seems that Eleanor took it all in her stride.

Shortly before Eleanor's arrival in Sicily in March 1191 Richard decided that he ought to break the bad news to Philip that he would no longer be marrying his sister. Philip, unsurprisingly, didn't take the news too well. But when Richard threatened to produce witnesses to prove that Alice had had an affair with his father, King Henry, and may have even borne him a son, Philip knew that he was powerless to act. When Eleanor and Berengaria sailed from mainland Italy to Sicily, Tancred's officials wouldn't let their ship dock at the port of Messina. Instead, they were forced to sail on to Brindisi, on Sicily's east coast. A furious Richard met with Tancred, demanding to know why his mother and his fiancée had been treated so shabbily, and Tancred showed him some letters written by King Philip alleging that Richard was plotting to overthrow Tancred and assist the Germans to take over Sicily.

Richard and Tancred then met and held frank and useful discussions over the next five days. Now Steven Runciman, in the third volume of his series of books on The History of the Crusades, describes Tancred as, and I quote "an ugly, unimpressive little man" end quote. But while he may have been short and ugly, I'm not so convinced that he was unimpressive. He certainly seems to have held his own during the five days of meetings held with one of the most powerful men in Europe, and by the end of it, the two of them had thrashed out a deal. A few months earlier, Tancred had agreed to pay 40,000 gold ounces to Richard in lieu of the promise his predecessor, King William, had made to Richard's father, King Henry, to provide him with gold plate, gold furniture, a silk tent, two armed ships, and a vast quantity of provisions to assist Henry on Crusade. Tancred also had agreed to release Richard's sister Joanna from custody. At this new meeting, Tancred was convinced to disregard any previous alliances he had with the French, and to throw his lot in with King Richard. To seal their pact, Richard agreed that his young heir Arthur, Duke of Brittany, should be betrothed to one of Tancred's daughters.

Philip, concerned about this new alliance, patched up his differences with both Tancred and Richard, and it was without any apparent hostility that Philip and his men left Sicily in March 1191 to sail to the Holy Land. As Philip left Sicily, Eleanor of Aquitaine and Berengaria arrived. Richard was eager to depart to sail for the Kingdom of Jerusalem, so Eleanor was only able to spend three days with her daughter Joanna, Queen of Sicily, whom she hadn't seen for fourteen years. Eleanor traveled back to England, via Italy, and Richard and his men boarded their ships to set sail for the Holy Land, followed by his fiancée, and her chaperone and new best friend, Joanna Queen of Sicily, who traveled in a separate ship.

Right. So the Kings of France and England are finally on the last leg of their journey to the Holy Land. Now, remember how, at the same time as Joscius, Archbishop of Tyre, was sent to convince the Kings of England and France to join the Crusade, the Pope himself traveled to meet with Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of Germany. Did the Pope manage to convince Barbarossa to embark on the Crusade? You'll have to tune in next week to find out. Join me next week as we take a look at the Crusade of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. Until next week, bye for now.

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