

History of the Crusades.
Episode 69
The German Crusade.

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Hello again. We have spent the last two episodes exploring Christianity in the Crusader States and Life in the Crusader States. This week we return to the chronology. If you remember back to our final episode on the Third Crusade, Richard the Lionheart had returned to Europe, and Saladin returned to Damascus to attack his pile of paperwork. Latin Christian territory in the Holy Land was restricted to a strip of land less than 10 miles wide and around 90 miles long, which was the reduced Kingdom of Jerusalem. The Kingdom included within its territory the cities of Tyre, Acre, and Jaffa. The County of Tripoli to the north of the Kingdom was under Latin Christian control, as was the small Principality of Antioch, which stretched from the city of Antioch down to the coast.

Now, before we proceed any further, I need to point out an error I made back in Episode 65. After Henri of Champagne married Conrad of Montferrat's widow Isabella and moved down to the palace in Acre, I wrongly referred to them as the new King and Queen of Jerusalem. This is in fact incorrect. For reasons which aren't entirely clear, Isabella and Henri weren't ever actually crowned, so their correct titles at this time are Princess Isabella and Henri of Champagne. Henri is, to all intents and purposes, the King of Jerusalem, but since he hasn't been crowned in a formal coronation ceremony, he isn't actually the King of Jerusalem, if that makes sense. This of course puts Henri of Champagne in a slightly precarious position. With King Richard back in Europe and King Guy ruling Cyprus, Henri of Champagne is clearly the leader of the Kingdom in the Holy Land, but the fact that he technically wasn't their King led to some problems, particularly within the Church, which questioned his right to intervene in ecclesiastical matters. Henri did, however, have the support of most of his subjects and, importantly, the military Orders were 100% behind him.

The support of the military orders was to prove crucial during the first real test of Henri of Champagne's rule. In 1193 Henri became aware of a plot against him. The Pisans living in the Holy Land were upset. They believed that Henri had been favoring their rivals, the Genoese, so they came up with a cunning plan. They would seize the city of Tyre and hand it over to - can you guess? Yes, King Guy. From his new home on the island of Cyprus, King Guy had been watching events unfold with interest. Wanting to hold onto the dream that he would one day regain the Kingdom of Jerusalem, he promised the Pisans rich rewards for their support.

But Henri was one step ahead of him. He discovered the Pisan plot and immediately arrested the ringleaders, then expelled all but thirty people from the Pisan quarter in the city of Tyre. The expelled Pisans responded by raiding coastal towns between Tyre and Acre, so Henri expelled all the Pisans from Acre as well. King Guy's brother Amalric was actually the Constable of the Kingdom at this time. Instead of backing Henri, Amalric came

down on the side of the expelled Pisans. This, of course, didn't please Henri, and he promptly had Amalric arrested. The Masters of the Temple and the Hospitallers managed to convince Henri to release Amalric, who then sensibly decided to remove himself to Jaffa, the Kingdom's southernmost city, where he'd keep his head down for a while. Henri eventually made peace with the Pisans. He restored their quarter in Acre, and in return they recognized his authority over them.

The issue was resolved once and for all the following year. In May 1194 King Guy died in Cyprus. His death, although it left Henri without a rival, raised some questions about who would govern Cyprus. Guy had named his brother Geoffrey as his successor, but Geoffrey had returned to France and didn't seem overly keen to move back to the Middle East. So the next obvious choice was Guy's other brother, Amalric. Amalric traveled back from Jaffa and was happy to have himself installed as the new ruler of Cyprus.

This led to a rather interesting political situation. We now have Henri, who is not a King but would like to be ruling the Kingdom of Jerusalem, and Amalric, who is not a King but would like to be, ruling Cyprus. They both decided that the two territories should be closely allied, and to that end, Amalric's three young sons, Guy, John, and Hugh were betrothed to Isabella's three young daughters, Maria of Montferrat, who was Conrad's daughter, and her two daughters with Henri, Alice and Philippa of Champagne. In the end, only Hugh and Alice would marry, as Amalric's other two sons died before they were of a marriageable age.

Despite agreeing to this alliance, Amalric didn't actually want Henri as his overlord. Amalric wanted to be crowned King and wanted Cyprus to be an independent Kingdom, willing to work with the Kingdom of Jerusalem without being subservient to it. The tricky part was, who was going to crown him as King? He immediately discounted appealing to the Pope or the Byzantine Emperor, and instead settled on the German Emperor, Henry VI. In October 1195 he sent an ambassador to Frankfurt, and his request was well received. Emperor Henry had in fact been planning a Crusade of his own, and having the ruler of Cyprus under his wing might come in handy. He sent Amalric a royal sceptre, and Amalric was duly crowned King of Cyprus in September 1197.

Meanwhile, in the Principality of Antioch, Prince Bohemond was having some trouble with the neighbors. Immediately to the north of the Principality was Armenia, ruled by Prince Leo II. Early in his reign, Prince Leo and Prince Bohemond formed an alliance, and united to fight the Seljuk Turks. Recently, however, their relationship had soured. Leo had lent Bohemond a large sum of money which Bohemond had failed to repay, and Leo had managed to secure for himself the Templar castle of Bagras. Saladin had taken the fortress from the Templars, and while Saladin was occupied elsewhere, Leo had moved his men in and taken the castle. Bohemond had appealed to Saladin for assistance, which had infuriated Leo. In October 1193, after Saladin's death, Leo invited Bohemond and his family to Bagras to try and resolve the issue. Bohemond traveled to Bagras with his wife, Princess Sibylla, and their son. However, as soon as he arrived at the fortress, Leo took Bohemond prisoner along with his family, stating that he would only release them if Bohemond recognized Leo as overlord and allowed the Principality of Antioch to fall under Leo's control. Surprisingly, Bohemond agreed, and Bohemond's Marshall and Leo's nephew-in-law traveled to Antioch to prepare the city for its new regime.

However, the news that Antioch was now going to have a new Armenian overlord didn't go down so well with the barons and nobility of Antioch. A riot broke out in the palace and

quickly spread through the city. Armenians were attacked and expelled from the city, and the nobility met to form a new administration. In Bohemond's absence, they swore allegiance to Raymond, Bohemond's eldest son and heir. Messengers were sent to Bohemond of Tripoli and Henri of Champagne to come and save Antioch from the Armenians. Bohemond of Tripoli raced to his brother's assistance, and Prince Leo decided to retreat to his capital, taking his prisoners, Bohemond and his wife and son, with him.

A few months later Henri of Champagne also decided to intervene. He marched the army of the Kingdom of Jerusalem northwards where, strangely, he was met by an embassy from the Assassins. The Old Man of the Mountains had recently died, and the new leader of the Assassins was keen to form an alliance with the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The Assassins apologized for killing Conrad of Montferrat, and Henri generously forgave them. Then Henri was invited to visit the stronghold of the Assassins in the mountains, where he was wined and dined and showered with gifts.

After his unexpected interlude, Henri continued onwards towards Antioch. Once there, he gathered supporters and marched straight into Armenia. Unwilling to take on the might of the army of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, Leo agreed to peace terms. Bohemond and his family were to be released immediately without a ransom; Bagras and its surrounding territory were to be recognized as being under Armenian control; and neither Prince was to be subservient to the other. To seal the deal, Bohemond's eldest son and heir, Raymond, was to be betrothed to Leo's niece and heiress, Alice.

But it didn't all end there. Leo was an ambitious man and he heard word that Amalric was seeking to be crowned King of Cyprus. Being a King seemed to Leo to be a mighty fine idea, much better in fact than being a mere Prince like his neighbor Bohemond, so Leo took Amalric's lead and applied to Emperor Henry for a crown. Emperor Henry didn't seem too fazed by this sudden influx of requests for kingships from the Middle East, and he duly gave his permission.

The German Chancellor, Conrad of Hildesheim, traveled to the Armenian capital Sis with the papal Legate Conrad the Archbishop of Mainz, to attend the coronation ceremony. Leo was presented with a royal sceptre by the Germans, and the Byzantine Emperor sent him a crown. The ceremony was also attended by the heads of the Orthodox and Jacobite Churches, while representatives from the Caliph in Baghdad and the nobility of Antioch were also present. The newly crowned King Leo II was lauded by his subjects for reviving the ancient Kingdom of Armenia, and the Germans found themselves with two staunch allies in the region in the form of the new Kings of Cyprus and Armenia.

And that was all well and good, because the Germans were planning a new Crusade. The German Emperor Henry VI was the son of Frederick Barbarossa, who had died during the Third Crusade. As a result of his father's death the German contribution to the Third Crusade had been embarrassingly small, and German influence in the Holy Land was almost entirely absent. Emperor Henry wanted to change this. He had done pretty well extending German influence in Europe during his reign. In 1194, after the death of King Tancred of Sicily, Emperor Henry conquered the strategically important island kingdom. His wife Constance had a claim to the throne, and Emperor Henry had himself crowned King of Sicily on Christmas Day 1194.

Keen to extend German influence even further, Emperor Henry took up the Cross during Easter 1195, and proclaimed a new Crusade. His health at the time was a little fragile, so

he decided not to lead the Crusade in person but to appoint commanders to do so. The German Imperial Chancellor, Conrad of Hildesheim and the Imperial Marshall Henry of Kalden were appointed as military leaders, while Archbishop Conrad of Mainz and Archbishop Hartwig of Bremen provided clerical leadership.

To start with, an expedition of knights and soldiers would sail for the Holy Land, followed by thousands of others who would make their way, mainly by sea, to the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The Crusaders were predominantly from the Emperor's own household and his allies in western and southern Germany. Altogether, an observer at the time, Arnold of Lubeck, estimated that the crusade contained 60,000 men, but it was more likely around a quarter of that size.

The first contingent of crusaders arrived in Acre in August 1197. Henri of Champagne was not overly pleased to see them. His main advisers were the Ibelins and the Lords of Tiberias, who were step-sons of Raymond of Tripoli. Like Raymond, they advocated a policy of peace and diplomacy with the Muslims. At this stage, the coastal cities of Beirut and Sidon, to the north of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, were under Muslim control, and formed a barrier between the Kingdom and the County of Tripoli. After the chaos of the Third Crusade, Henri of Champagne wanted nothing more than to consolidate his small Kingdom and oversee its recovery from the military campaign.

But the Germans had other ideas. They arrived itching for a fight, and without consulting Henri of Champagne or his advisers, they marched straight into Muslim territory in Galilee. Following the death of Saladin, the territory around Galilee was under the control of al-Adil, Saladin's brother and former peace negotiator during the Third Crusade. He quickly mustered an army and turned to counter the German attack. News of the approach of al-Adil's army reached the German camp long before the actual army. Talk of the size and ferocity of the Muslim force that was fast approaching became more and more exaggerated, until the Germans snapped, and fled in panic back to Acre. The knights, on their horses, beat a swifter retreat than the foot soldiers, and when al-Adil's army eventually did arrive, it was met only by a force of German foot soldiers.

Choosing not to engage them, al-Adil swung his army around and, in a surprise move, attacked the city of Jaffa. Jaffa was well fortified and its small garrison were able to defend it against the Muslim attack. Al-Adil besieged Jaffa, and the Latin Christian garrison waited for reinforcements.

Back in Acre, Henri of Champagne gathered together whatever troops he could spare and requested the Pisan quarter within the city to provide men as well. On the 10th of September, these troops assembled in the Palace Courtyard in Acre, and Henri of Champagne inspected them from his palace window, before they were due to march down the coast to Jaffa. Henri was at the window when a Pisan envoy entered the room. He turned to greet them and then, forgetting about the open window behind him, stepped backwards and fell out the window. According to Stephen Runciman, in his third volume on the History of the Crusades, a dwarf happened to be standing next to Henri at the time. The dwarf made a brave but entirely ineffectual attempt to prevent Henri from falling out the window by grabbing a handful of his clothes, but Henri of Champagne, leader of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, and the dwarf both fell out of the window and plummeted to their deaths on the courtyard below, in front of the startled troops.

Henri's death threw the Kingdom of Jerusalem into a tailspin. His wife Isabella, finding herself a widow yet again, was distraught over his death. The eldest of her three daughters was only five years old, so it was clear that, you guessed it, Isabella had to remarry, and quickly. The barons of the Kingdom couldn't agree on who would be a suitable husband for the grieving Isabella, and while they were squabbling, news came in that Jaffa had fallen to the Muslims.

While the Latin Christians were attempting to deal with this disaster, Conrad of Mainz and the other German commanders arrived in Acre. They had called into Cyprus on their way to the Holy Land, and Conrad suggested to the feuding barons that the throne of Jerusalem be offered to King Amalric of Cyprus. Conveniently Amalric's wife had recently died, leaving him free to remarry. Thankfully, Amalric was nowhere near as silly as his brother, the late King Guy, and the proposal to marry him to Isabella met with widespread approval. King Amalric himself, however, may have had some misgivings. He waited four months before finally making up his mind to accept the offer. He traveled to Acre in January 1198. The day after he arrived he was married to Isabella, and a few days after that they were crowned the King and Queen of Jerusalem.

When Conrad of Mainz and the bulk of the German Crusaders arrived in Acre some 12 days after Henri of Champagne's death, they decided not to go to the assistance of Jaffa, which had recently fallen to al-Adil, but to strike northwards at the Muslim coastal towns of Sidon and Beirut. In the absence of any French leaders, a German commander, Henry of Brabant, led the Latin Christian forces, which comprised not only the German Crusaders but men from the County of Tripoli and the Principality of Antioch.

And they were successful. A mere four weeks after they set out, the Crusaders took possession of Sidon, Beirut, and the territory surrounding the cities, meaning that the Kingdom of Jerusalem now extended northwards all the way to the southern border of the County of Tripoli.

Buoyed by their success, the German Crusaders began to talk about taking Jerusalem itself. The local barons from the Kingdom of Jerusalem advised the Germans that in order to improve their chances of winning back the Holy City for Christendom, they ought to consolidate the Christian position in western Galilee. The German commanders agreed, and happily marched southwards towards Galilee, attacking and besieging the fortress of Toron.

It was during the siege of Toron that the Germans received some devastating news. Back in Europe, their Emperor Henry VI had died of an illness, leaving his infant son Frederick as heir to the Empire. In a horrible case of *deja-vu*, following the death of the Emperor the German Crusade faltered and then fizzled out. The Germans began receiving news that civil war might erupt in Germany over the issue of succession to the Imperial throne, and they were eager to return home. Conrad of Mainz gave orders to raise the siege of Toron, and the German Crusaders made arrangements to return to Europe. Unfairly perhaps, since they had managed to secure the cities of Sidon and Beirut, the German Crusade was viewed as a failure, and did nothing to increase German prestige in the Holy Land.

Regardless of how it was viewed, one notable and interesting outcome of the German Crusade is that it led to the establishment of the institution of the Order of Teutonic Knights. A bunch of German knights decided to stay on in the Holy Land after the end of the German Crusade, and they joined up with some German knights who had already

established a hospice in Acre along similar lines to the Hospital of Saint John. In 1198 this organization received recognition from the Pope and the King as a military order. Known as the Order of the Teutonic Knights, they joined the Templars and the Hospitallers in providing knights for the defense of the Latin Christian territory in the Holy Land.

While all this was happening in the Middle East, momentous events were taking place in Europe. In January 1198, around the time that Amalric and Isabella were crowned the King and Queen of Jerusalem, the elderly and frail Pope Celestine III had died in Rome. In his place, the Cardinals and Bishops elected a man who was to become one of the most powerful and dynamic popes of the medieval period, Pope Innocent III. In August 1198, when he had been Pope for little more than six months, Pope Innocent sent letters across Christendom calling for Christians to take up arms in a new Crusade. Join me next week for the first in a series of episodes on the Fourth Crusade.

Now, just before we go, I'm pretty sure you noticed at the beginning of this episode an announcement that the episode had a sponsor, Leatherman Data Services. This sponsorship has occurred in conjunction with the HistoryPodcasters.com network, and will continue for the next few weeks, providing an extra source of income for the podcast. Accurate historical maps are always handy to have. Hopefully, you won't be too fazed by these brief advertisements and will instead race off to contact Leatherman Data Services and procure their services. Until next week, bye for now.

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