

The History of the Crusades Podcast presents
Reconquista: The Rise of Al-Andalus and the Reconquest of Spain
Episode 72
The Kingdom of Portugal and the Second Crusade, Part 4

Hello again. Last time we continued our examination of the Siege of Lisbon. When we left the last episode it was October in the year 1147 and the siege had been in place for more than three months. At the end of the episode, we saw the Anglo-Norman Crusaders make a breakthrough when they manoeuvred their giant siege tower over to the south-western corner of the city wall. Pretending that the tower was heading towards the western section of the wall, at the last minute the Crusaders swung their tower around the corner and instead pushed it towards the southern wall. This surprise move meant that the archers stationed on top of the siege tower were able to take aim at any defenders trying to switch position over to the southern parts of the wall, with the result that the Crusaders were able to successfully prevent the tower from coming under concerted attack. As night was beginning to fall, a decision was made to leave a contingent of archers inside the tower overnight to protect it, then early the next morning the remainder of the Anglo-Norman Crusaders would make their way to the tower, then push it over to the wall, secure it to the wall, and use it to make their way onto the wall, then into the city itself.

The archers settled in to watch over the city walls from their position high in the siege tower, and the rest of the members of the Crusader army returned to their camp to get a good night's sleep, anticipating the final push into the city at dawn the next day.

However, when dawn broke the next day, the Crusaders awoke to a nasty surprise. The city walls of the town of Lisbon ran down to the shores of the estuary, and the estuary, being so close to the sea, was, of course, tidal. The tide had come in during the night and was now surrounding the base of the siege tower, meaning that the archers were now trapped on top of the tower, with no Crusaders able to access the siege tower, let alone push it over to the city wall. Really, this was all a bit embarrassing for the Crusaders. Their ships were anchored in the estuary and they must have known that it was tidal, but they failed to include this vital piece of information in their plans.

As much as the tide coming in and cutting off the siege tower was a nasty surprise for the Crusaders, it was a pleasant surprise for the Muslims, and they moved to take full advantage of it. With the archers stationed on the tower, who were no doubt sleep-deprived from having stayed on watch all night, now unable to be relieved and completely isolated from the rest of the Crusader forces, the Muslims swarmed onto the section of the wall near the tower and began to attack it in earnest, setting up catapult machines from which rocks and other projectiles, as well as flammable material, was hurled at the tower. The archers were kept busy patching up breaches in the tower's defences and putting out fires.

Once the tide retreated, the archers were able to be swapped out and fresh defenders made their way into the tower, but the bombardment by the Muslims didn't let up, with their missiles hitting not only the tower but Crusaders making their way to the tower. In his book "The Second Crusade", Jonathan Phillips reports that a captain from one of King Alfonso's ships was killed outright from a catapult shot, while the engineer who designed the siege tower was so badly wounded by a projectile that he was no longer able to advise the Crusaders.

It's difficult to say exactly what happened next, but it seems that the tower may have sunk in the sand, because it was unable to be shifted away from the sea wall, and was once again surrounded by water when the tide returned. For the next two days, the Crusaders did their best to defend their waterlogged siege tower, then finally, on the 21st of October, the Crusaders achieved their goal, managing to shift the tower right over next to the wall. The Muslims stationed on the wall fought valiantly, but the Crusaders were able to lower the drawbridge of their tower onto the wall.

The Muslims then asked for a truce to take the evening and the night to consider their position. The Crusaders agreed. As part of the truce arrangements, hostages were taken by both sides. The Muslim hostages were handed over to Hervey of Glanville and one of King Alfonso's men, Fernando Captivo. Hervey and Fernando then delivered the Muslim hostages to King Alfonso, a move which outraged the Anglo-Norman Crusaders who believed that they should have been entitled to take possession of the hostages.

The Muslim hostages ended up acting as sort of negotiators, which perhaps explains the anger of the Crusaders. Early the next morning, the leaders of all the different Crusader factions gathered to hear the proposals offered by the Muslim hostages for the handover of Lisbon. The Muslims proposed handing Lisbon over to King Alfonso and delivering all gold, silver and wealth from the city into the King's hands. This proposal kind of confirmed the Crusaders suspicions that King Alfonso had been secretly negotiating with the Muslim hostages while they were in his custody. Accepting this proposal would mean that the Crusaders would be unable to plunder and loot Lisbon as they had been promised by King Alfonso. Anger amongst the Crusader leaders boiled over, and a chronicler who witnessed the events described many of the Crusaders losing their tempers before calm eventually descended.

Meanwhile, the rank-and-file Crusaders were also getting angry. They had not yet heard about the proposal that Lisbon be surrendered without being picked over and looted by the Crusaders. Instead, they were still furious about the fact that Hervey of Glanville had allowed the Muslim hostages to be handed over to King Alfonso. One of the English priests who had sailed to Lisbon with the Crusaders began to inflame the crowd with incendiary preaching about the divine right of the Crusaders to the wealth of Lisbon. There were also rumours circulating amongst the crowd that some Crusaders who had misbehaved during the siege had been sanctioned by Hervey of Glanville and had been told that they would be required to forfeit their share of the booty. Around 400 of the, by now very angry, Crusaders decided that they would go and seek out Hervey of Glanville to get him to explain himself. While the leaders of the Crusade were able to talk the 400 men down before they found Hervey, the Muslim hostages heard about the situation and used it to their advantage during the negotiations, describing the Crusaders as a bunch of untrustworthy, out of control rabble-rousers who shouldn't be allowed to roam the streets of Lisbon looking for plunder.

Numerous meetings were held between the Muslims and the Christians until a solid proposal had been formulated by the Muslims, who then relayed it to the leaders of the Crusaders. The proposal was this. The city's Administrator and his son-in-law would be allowed to keep their possessions. All other Muslims inside Lisbon would surrender their property, but would be provided with food as soon as the city was handed over. The Muslim negotiators advised that they would need to check with the city's Administrator and the city's residents as to whether these were terms which they would be willing to accept. Likewise, while King Alfonso had agreed with the terms, the Crusaders would also need to agree. In the end, the Anglo-Norman Crusaders indicated that they would be happy with

the terms, but the Rhinelanders and the Flemish Crusaders stated that their costs were already very high and that the residents of Lisbon shouldn't be provided with food; only the city's Administrator should be allowed to keep his property and be fed. The day ended with no agreement having been reached.

Overnight, tensions amongst the rank-and-file Crusaders rose once again, and the following morning a large crowd of Flemish and Rhineland Crusaders gathered together and decided to march to King Alfonso's camp to seize the Muslim hostages. Fortunately, the Flemish and Rhineland leaders noticed what was about to take place, and managed to avert the crisis. However, King Alfonso heard about the plot to kidnap the hostages and made his anger about the event known to the Crusade leaders. In the end, in order to placate King Alfonso and keep everything on track, the leaders of the Crusade all offered to swear fealty to King Alfonso and to remain his loyal subjects during their time on Portuguese soil.

With everyone having shaken hands and settled down, a decision was made to accept the terms offered the previous day by the Muslims and bring the siege to an end. Final talks were held between the Muslims and the Christians to wrap up the finer points of the surrender, and it was eventually agreed that a force of Anglo-Norman, Rhineland and Flemish Crusaders would proceed into Lisbon and take control of the citadel of Saint George. All the inhabitants of Lisbon were then to take all their money and possessions of value to the upper castle of the Citadel. Once the possessions were all deposited, they would be distributed amongst the Crusaders. The Crusaders would then be allowed to roam the city looking for valuables which hadn't been surrendered. Any valuables found were then to be seized and the owner executed. Once the Crusaders were satisfied that all the valuables had been collected, then the residents of Lisbon were considered to be released.

These terms were agreed to, then the Archbishop of Braga, accompanied by all the senior clerics, led the way into Lisbon, followed by King Alfonso and the leaders of the Crusade. The flag of the Kingdom of Portugal was raised over the Citadel and songs of praise were sung by the priests. The Siege of Lisbon was at an end.

Unfortunately, things didn't go quite to plan after the city surrendered. While the Anglo-Normans followed the terms of surrender, a chronicler reports that the Flemish and Rhineland Crusaders didn't. Instead, they began looting and plundering people's homes. In the end, the Administrator of the city, who was meant to be able to leave Lisbon with all of his possessions, had many of them seized. Residents were assaulted and their homes ransacked and damaged, and many of the items in the Citadel which were meant to be divvied out amongst the victors, were stolen by out-of-control Crusaders. Shockingly, in the chaos the Mozarab Bishop of Lisbon was assaulted and his throat was cut.

Eventually, order was restored and the booty was distributed. The Crusaders decided to stay in the Iberian peninsula over the winter months and set sail for Jerusalem in the spring. Many residents of Lisbon decided to leave and relocate to Muslim controlled regions nearby. Muslim territory to the north of Lisbon was now sandwiched between the Kingdom of Portugal and now Christian-occupied Lisbon, and as a result some towns, including Sintra, surrendered to King Alfonso, while other Muslim strongholds in the region were abandoned, with their garrisons retreating back into Muslim territory. In an attempt to convince some of the Crusaders to remain behind in Lisbon, King Alfonso appointed one of the Crusader priests, a man called Gilbert of Hastings as the first Bishop of Christian

Lisbon, while offering financial and territorial inducements to any Crusaders who were thinking of remaining behind.

On the 1st of November, the new bishop, Bishop Gilbert of Lisbon, oversaw the purification of the central mosque of Lisbon, and King Alfonso signalled his intention to construct a cathedral inside Lisbon on the site occupied by the central mosque. Work on the cathedral began almost immediately and will continue over the next six decades. Happily, the cathedral still stands today and you can visit it should you be fortunate enough to travel to Lisbon.

Over the winter months, many of the literate Crusaders sat down and wrote letters home. Many of these letters described the siege, which has added to our knowledge about the event. On the 1st of February, the Crusaders set sail for Jerusalem. Now, those Crusaders who elected to remain behind in Lisbon made a wise choice, as the conquest of Lisbon will be one of the few success stories coming out of the Second Crusade, which will basically face-plant in the Holy Land.

While King Alfonso remained based at Coimbra, which still served as the capital city of the Kingdom of Portugal, Lisbon became an integral part of the Kingdom of Portugal and was a major milestone in the Reconquest of Al-Andalus by the Christians.

While King Alfonso of Portugal is sitting back enjoying his victory, we need to see how the other Christian kings of Spain are faring in their efforts to use the crusading movement against the Muslims. Join me next time as we see how King Alfonso VII and Count Ramon Berenguer IV have been spending their time while the siege of Lisbon has been taking place. Until next time, bye for now.

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