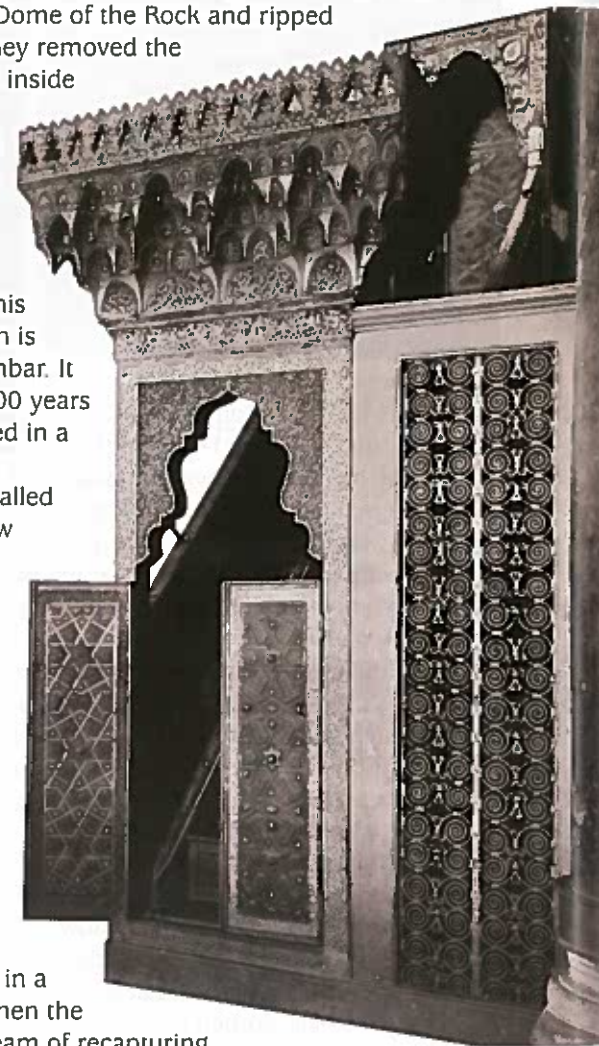


6 What led to the Muslim recapture of Jerusalem in 1187?

Jerusalem, 2 October 1187. For the first time in almost 90 years the banners of Islam fluttered in the breeze above the city's battlements. Saladin, the Muslim leader, made his triumphant entrance into the city. This was a profoundly proud moment for Saladin. For the last thirteen years he had encouraged his fellow Muslims to follow the jihad and to recapture Jerusalem for Islam. Now, that goal had been achieved.

Saladin and his followers began a ritual cleansing of the Holy City. They climbed to the top of the Dome of the Rock and ripped down the large golden cross. They removed the Christian altar and statues from inside the building. They purified the Dome of the Rock and the Aqsa Mosque with rose water and incense. As part of the Muslim takeover of Jerusalem Saladin had a new minbar (pulpit) installed in the Aqsa Mosque. This rare black and white photograph is all that remains of Saladin's minbar. It stood in the Aqsa Mosque for 800 years until 1969 when it was destroyed in a fire.

The minbar that Saladin installed in the Aqsa Mosque was not new in 1187. It was in 1168 that the Muslim leader Nur ad-Din had commissioned the master carpenter al-Akharini to carve the finest minbar in the Muslim world. Nur ad-Din hoped that one day he would be able to install the wonderful minbar in the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. For nearly twenty years the minbar had stood in the Great Mosque of Aleppo where it lay, according to one Muslim chronicler, 'like a sword in a scabbard' waiting for the day when the Muslims might achieve their dream of recapturing Jerusalem. In October 1187 that day had arrived.



△ The minbar of Nur ad-Din.

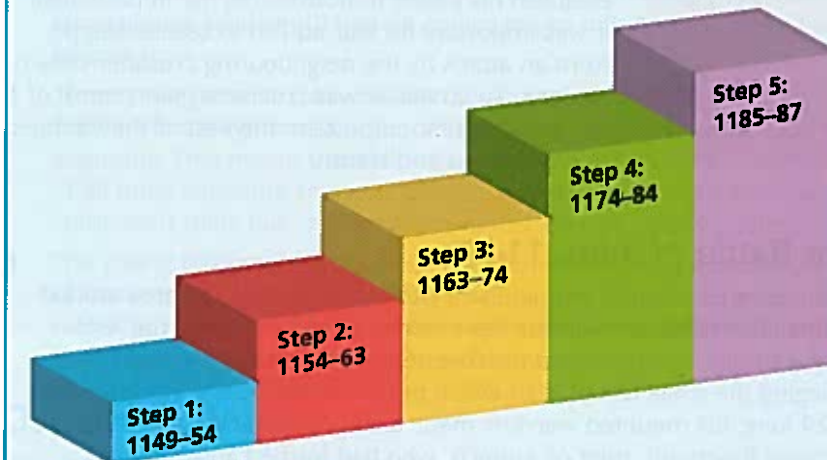
Enquiry Focus: What led to the Muslim recapture of Jerusalem in 1187?

One thing that the story of Nur ad-Din's minbar reveals is that the recapture of Jerusalem began a long time before 1187. Your challenge in this enquiry is to explain exactly what led to the Muslim recapture of Jerusalem in 1187. We have divided the period between the Second Crusade and the fall of Jerusalem into five different time-frames. Each of these can be seen as a 'step' towards the Muslim recapture of Jerusalem. We suggest that you start a separate page of notes for each of these steps.

In the middle of each page draw a 'step' to show which years it covers.

In the space above the 'step', make bullet point notes to summarise the achievements of Nur ad-Din or Saladin in these years.

In the space below the step, make bullet point notes to summarise changes in the crusader states in these years.



At the end of the enquiry you can use your 'flight of steps' to consider a range of issues that shed light on the Enquiry Focus: *What led to the Muslim recapture of Jerusalem in 1187?*

- In what ways did Nur ad-Din lay the foundations for the Muslim recapture of Jerusalem?
- What particular strengths did Saladin display in the years leading up to the capture of Jerusalem?
- When and how did political weakness in the crusader states contribute to the fall of Jerusalem?
- Which turning points were particularly important in leading to the fall of Jerusalem?
- At what point do you think the Muslim recapture of Jerusalem became inevitable?
- Overall, what factors were most important in explaining what happened in 1187?



△ Northern Syria in 1150.

1149–54: Nur ad-Din and the crusader states

On the night of 14 September 1146, Zengi, lord of Mosul and Aleppo was knifed to death in his bed by one of his own servants. Zengi's heirs acted quickly. Saif ad-Din, his eldest son, took control of Mosul, the main centre of Sunni Islam. Nur ad-Din, Zengi's 28-year-old younger son, became the new emir of Aleppo. In the years that followed, Nur ad-Din would unite Syria, extend his power into Egypt and achieve a number of victories against the crusader states. However, at the beginning of his rule, Nur ad-Din's position was precarious. After the Second Crusade, he emerged as the most important Muslim leader in the Near East, but Nur ad-Din still needed to establish his power in northern Syria. In particular, it was important for Nur ad-Din to secure Aleppo from an attack by the neighbouring crusader state of Antioch. To do this, it was crucial to gain control of the two crusader outposts to the east of the Orontes river: Apamea and Harim.

You have already encountered Nur ad-Din during the Second Crusade. See pages 85–86.

The Caliph was Nur ad-Din's spiritual leader.

The Battle of Inab, 1149

In the summer of 1149, Nur ad-Din's troops moved into the area around Apamea. He planned to isolate the town by taking control of the Ash-Shogur Bridge which crossed the River Orontes. Nur ad-Din began by besieging the small fort of Inab which protected the bridge. At daybreak on 29 June, his mounted warriors made a surprise attack on the forces of Prince Raymond, ruler of Antioch, who had formed an overnight encampment on the plain outside Inab. After hours of fighting in the heat and dust, Nur ad-Din's men emerged victorious. When the dust settled, they found the body of Raymond of Antioch among the dead. They decapitated Raymond and presented his head to Nur ad-Din who sent it as a trophy to the Caliph in Baghdad.

Nur ad-Din's victory at the Battle of Inab allowed him to launch further attacks on crusader territory. In mid-July, his forces captured the town of Harim. By the end of July he had also taken Apamea. Nur ad-Din now controlled all the land to the east of the Orontes. However, he decided not to press home his victory by besieging the city of Antioch itself, perhaps realising that the city's huge fortifications, and the possibility of reinforcements from Jerusalem, made an attack too risky. Nur ad-Din's victory at Inab and his conquests of Harim and Apamea were enough to ensure that the crusader state of Antioch now posed a more limited threat to the security of Aleppo. In order to advertise the significance of his victory at Inab, Nur ad-Din bathed in the Mediterranean.

Weaknesses in the crusader states

In the years between 1149 and 1154 there were several reasons why the crusader states could offer only limited resistance to Nur ad-Din. The most important Latin ruler was Baldwin III, King of Jerusalem, but Baldwin faced some serious challenges.

- 1 In 1149 Baldwin was only nineteen years old. Since 1143 he had ruled jointly with his mother, Melisende, but, from 1149, relations with his mother soured because she refused to allow him to rule alone. Between 1150 and 1152 their relationship grew even worse as Baldwin tried to force Melisende's abdication and establish himself as an independent ruler.
- 2 From 1149 Baldwin III also faced the additional challenge of ruling Antioch. Prince Raymond's death at the Battle of Inab created a succession crisis in Antioch because his son and heir was only five years old. Constance, Raymond's young widow, refused to marry a man of Baldwin's choosing so this left Antioch without a male military commander. Baldwin III had no choice but to rule Antioch as well as Jerusalem.
- 3 Three years later, in 1152, Baldwin took over control of the County of Tripoli when Raymond II, ruler of Tripoli, was murdered by a band of assassins. This meant that Baldwin III was now charged with the rule of all three surviving crusader kingdoms. Baldwin III was a brave and competent ruler, but, in his early twenties, he was clearly stretched!
- 4 The young King received no help from Europe. Following the failure of the Second Crusade the Franks made urgent requests to European rulers for a new crusade, but there was no response. Baldwin III was left to defend the crusader states on his own.

Damascus, 1154

Despite these weaknesses, Nur ad-Din chose not to attempt a direct assault on the crusader states in the early 1150s. Instead, he focused his resources and energy on consolidating his power in Syria. Nur ad-Din's priority was to take control of the city of Damascus. In the four years between 1150 and 1154 he used a mixture of military threats and propaganda to subdue the city. His strategy worked: in April 1154, the people of Damascus surrendered. For the first time since the Crusades began, Aleppo and Damascus were now under the rule of one man. Nur ad-Din had created a united Muslim Syria. This would give him a formidable power base in his fight against the Franks.

Some medieval Muslim chroniclers suggested that from this point onwards, Nur ad-Din dedicated himself to jihad against the Franks, but the evidence does not support this view. Following his seizure of Damascus, Nur ad-Din agreed a truce with the crusaders that allowed him to continue securing his Syrian territory. Fighting a Holy War against the Christians of the Near East does not seem to have been at the top of Nur ad-Din's agenda in 1154.

■ Make your notes for the first step, 1149–54. Remember – the bullet points above the step should summarise Nur ad-Din's achievements and the bullet points below the step should summarise the changes in the crusader states.

Start with the main points. For Nur ad-Din's achievements these could be his securing of Aleppo and his victory over Raymond of Antioch. For the crusader states, the main points might be the problems of leadership and the lack of support from overseas. When you have decided on the main points you can then add the details.

1154–63: Nur ad-Din and the building of jihad

Nur ad-Din may not have been ready to fight a Holy War in 1154, but he was keen to portray himself as a devout Muslim and a warrior for jihad. The Muslim leader brought together the religious and military classes in Syria by ensuring that his army included religious men: prayer leaders, preachers, judges and Sufi mystics. He also saw it as his religious duty to construct buildings in the name of Islam. In the years between 1154 and 1163, Nur ad-Din paid for a range of new religious buildings in Damascus and other Syrian towns. Many of his new mosques, minarets, madrasas (religious schools), hospitals, orphanages and Sufi cloisters had his name inscribed on their walls. In 1163 Nur ad-Din completed the greatest of his buildings in Damascus – the House of Justice. It was here that his subjects could bring their grievances and where Nur ad-Din himself sometimes acted as judge. Nur ad-Din was keen to project an image of being a ‘just ruler’. His House of Justice, and the other buildings that he sponsored, helped to portray him as a model Sunni Muslim ruler who was deeply religious and seriously committed to jihad.

In 1157–58, Nur ad-Din became seriously ill and almost died. This seems to have deepened his religious commitment. The Muslim chroniclers tell us that Nur ad-Din experienced a spiritual awakening in these years. After his illness he focused on his own greater jihad in preparation for Holy War (lesser jihad) against the Christians. Nur ad-Din discarded his luxurious clothes and began to wear the simple garments of a Sufi mystic. In 1161 he performed the **Hajj**, the pilgrimage to Islam’s holiest city – Makkah. Following his pilgrimage he rebuilt the walls of Medina – Islam’s second holiest city. At the same time as Nur ad-Din was becoming more deeply spiritual, religious leaders in Syria were stressing the importance of religious martyrdom. They wrote and preached that Muslims who died fighting the infidel would be rewarded with a place in Paradise. In particular, the religious leaders emphasised that it was the duty of good Muslims to recapture Islam’s third holiest city – Jerusalem.

The crusader states fight back

After 1154, Nur ad-Din established himself as a devout Sunni ruler, but he made little real advance in jihad against the Franks. During the period 1154–63, the crusader states were beginning to regain some of their strength:

- King Baldwin III proved to be more than a match for Nur ad-Din. In 1153 Baldwin had achieved an important victory when, after an eight-month siege, his armies had taken the southern port of Ascalon. This helped to secure the southern frontier of the crusader states and provided the crusaders with a potential stepping-stone into Egypt. The crusaders now held all the ports on the coast of Palestine, providing greater security for trade and pilgrimage.
- In the north, the crusader state of Antioch began to revive. In 1153, after four years of ruling alone, Constance finally married a young and handsome French knight, Reynald of Châtillon. Reynald had fought alongside Baldwin in the Siege of Ascalon and had gained the King’s

permission to marry Constance. He was a particularly brutal man who proved to be a formidable defender of crusader territory until he was captured by Nur ad-Din in 1161.

- In 1158 the crusaders recaptured the town of Harim from Nur ad-Din. Antioch was on the offensive again.
- The crusader states were further strengthened when relations with the Byzantines were restored. By the late 1150s, the Byzantine Emperor, Manuel I, was keen to forget the bad feeling caused by the Second Crusade. In September 1158, Baldwin III married Manuel’s niece, Theodora. Three years later, Manuel married Maria of Antioch, the daughter of Constance and her first husband, Prince Raymond. These marriage alliances brought the Byzantines and the Franks closer together.

Nur ad-Din’s pragmatism

In the light of these changes, Nur ad-Din proved himself to be a pragmatic ruler. In 1159, when Manuel I assembled Christian armies in Antioch for an assault on Aleppo, Nur ad-Din knew that the Muslims were outnumbered, so he negotiated a truce. In 1161, the capture of Reynald of Châtillon weakened the principality of Antioch, but Nur ad-Din chose not to exploit this. Instead, he agreed a truce with Baldwin III. In 1163, Baldwin III died suddenly of consumption at the age of 33. With the death of their most powerful ruler the crusader states were vulnerable, but, once again, Nur ad-Din did not react. In the years 1154–63, Nur ad-Din might have experienced a spiritual awakening and laid the foundations for jihad, but he chose not to commit his forces to a Holy War against the crusader states. In 1163, all that was about to change.

1163–74: Conflict and control in Egypt

After 1163, Nur ad-Din began to confront the Franks on the borders between his territory in Syria and the crusader states of Antioch, Tripoli and Jerusalem. However, the main focus of conflict in these years was in Egypt. Nur ad-Din knew that division between his Sunni Syria and Shi’ah Egypt was undermining any hope of recapturing Jerusalem and of forcing the Franks out of the Near East. If he could gain control of Egypt and unite Damascus with Cairo, the crusader states would be encircled. Control of Egypt would also give Nur ad-Din access to the country’s fantastic wealth. Egypt’s Fatimid regime had been weak for many years and, in 1163, it was in chaos. The summary of events on pages 96 and 97 shows how Nur ad-Din and his generals gained control of Egypt in the years between 1163 and 1174.



△ Egypt and Palestine in the twelfth century.

■ Make your notes for the second step, 1154–63. Above the step, summarise the main achievements of Nur ad-Din during these years. Below the step, explain how the Franks regained some of their strength. To what extent do you think the recapture of Jerusalem had become more likely by 1163?

Gaining control of Egypt, 1163–74

September 1163, Amalric, King of Jerusalem, invaded Egypt, but retreated. Baldwin III had no children and was therefore succeeded by his 27-year-old brother Amalric. William of Tyre, the new King's chancellor, wrote that Amalric was quite tall and good-looking with blond hair and a full beard. He was confident but quieter than his brother, perhaps because of a slight stammer. Amalric did not eat or drink too much, but was very fat 'with breasts like those of a woman hanging down to his waist'. Like Baldwin, Amalric would prove to be a strong crusader king who was prepared to confront his enemies. From the beginning of his reign, the new King of Jerusalem made the conquest of Egypt a priority. He invaded Egypt for the first time in September 1163 and began to besiege the town of Bilbais which lay on a tributary of the Nile. His troops were forced to retreat when the Egyptians opened the dykes and flooded the land around the town. However, before his death in 1169, Amalric would attempt four more invasions of Egypt.

April 1164, Nur ad-Din's forces invaded Egypt

During 1164, Nur ad-Din's energy was directed at fighting the Franks in the north, but he knew that he could not risk the possibility of



a Frankish victory in Egypt. Reluctantly, his attention was drawn to the south. In April 1164, he ordered his Kurdish general, Shirkuh, to lead a campaign into Egypt. Shirkuh, blind in one eye and immensely fat, was feared and respected as a veteran soldier. Shirkuh was a trusted member of Nur ad-Din's inner circle, but he saw an Egyptian invasion as an opportunity to establish independent power for his own clan, the Ayyubids. Shirkuh's second-in-command was his young nephew, Yusuf Ibn Ayyub, better known as Salah ad-Din or Saladin. Between 1164 and 1169 Shirkuh and Saladin fought a number of bitter campaigns against the crusaders in the Nile region. Increasingly, they saw the potential of establishing an Ayyubid kingdom in Egypt.

January 1169, Shirkuh gained control of Egypt

The Egyptian wars came to a head in the winter of 1168–69. The Franks' fourth invasion of Egypt, which began in October 1168, was a disaster. Amalric managed to capture the town of Bilbais, but failed to besiege Cairo and was forced to retreat from Egypt. The stage was now clear for Shirkuh. In January 1169, he ordered the assassination of the Egyptian vizier and made himself the new ruler of Egypt. With Syria and Egypt now united under the banner of Sunni Islam, the threat to Jerusalem, and to the overall security of the crusader states, suddenly intensified.

◁ A late medieval depiction of al-Malik al-Nasir Salah al-Dunya wa'l-Did Abu'l Muzaffar Yusuf Ibn Ayyub Ibn Shadi al-Kurdy – known (thankfully) to westerners as Saladin. In his twenties, Saladin had been Nur ad-Din's favourite polo partner. In 1169, when he took over from his uncle in Egypt, he was 31 years old. According to one Muslim chronicler, Saladin's religious conviction deepened after his rise to power. He was said to have given up wine-drinking and other frivolities.

March 1169, Saladin established his power in Egypt

Within weeks of taking control of Egypt, Shirkuh, by then in his sixties and vastly overweight, died of a heart attack. He was succeeded as vizier by his nephew, Saladin. At first, Saladin's position seemed insecure, but he soon began to impose his authority. He appointed members of his own family to senior positions in the government. His father, for example, became treasurer of Cairo. Saladin also began to impose Sunni Islam on Egypt. He built Sunni madrasas, dismissed Shi'ah judges and began to destabilise the teenage Fatimid Caliph, al-Adid. Saladin defeated the Fatimids' powerful Sudanese infantry regiment and created his own military corps – the Salahiyya. In the autumn of 1169, at the coastal city of Damietta, Saladin defeated Amalric's fifth and final invasion of Egypt.

September 1170–March 1171, Amalric sought help from Europe and the Byzantines

The Syrian Muslims' acquisition of Egypt caused panic in the crusader states. In the autumn of 1170 Amalric sent diplomats to Europe to ask for help. Meetings with the Pope came to nothing. Political differences between King Louis VII of France and King Henry II of England (Amalric's nephew) meant that the two rulers could not agree on support for the crusader states. It was clear that there would be no new crusade to the Holy Land. With no prospect of help from European monarchs, Amalric travelled to Constantinople and paid homage to the Byzantine Emperor in the hope that Manuel I would help to defend the crusader states. Amalric's submission to the Byzantine Emperor showed how dangerous the threat from the Muslims had become by 1171.

September 1171 Saladin took control

By 1171 Saladin had tightened his grip on Egypt; but, as vizier, he was still second in command to the twenty-year-old Shi'ah Caliph, al-Adid. He was also bound by ties of loyalty to Nur ad-Din. At the end of August

1171 al-Adid became ill. A Muslim chronicler later claimed that he was poisoned. On Friday 10 September, Saladin took the next step in establishing his power and authority. On that day, for the first time in over 200 years, Friday prayers in Egypt's mosques omitted the Shi'ah Caliph's name, replacing it with that of the Sunni Caliph of Baghdad. The next day, Saladin presided over a huge military parade in Cairo. The message was clear: Saladin was now in control. With the death of the Caliph on 13 September, Shi'ah Egypt came to an end. In late September 1171, Saladin took his forces into Transjordan (see the map on page 100) intending to join Nur ad-Din in attacking the crusader castles of Montreal and Kerak. However, Saladin soon retreated to Egypt and the two armies never combined. Nur ad-Din became increasingly aware that he was losing control of Saladin. Tensions between the two Muslim leaders deepened. Nur ad-Din now threatened to invade Egypt.

May–July 1174, the deaths of Nur ad-Din and Amalric

By the spring of 1174 open warfare between Nur ad-Din and Saladin seemed imminent. Then, suddenly, on 15 May 1174, Nur ad-Din died of a heart attack. His body was later interred in one of the madrasas he had built in Damascus. During the 28 years of Nur ad-Din's rule, Aleppo and Damascus had been united, and the idea of jihad against Islam's enemies in the Near East had been revived. However, in 1174, the crusader states remained unconquered and Jerusalem was still under crusader control. Less than two months after Nur ad-Din's death, the crusaders' grip on Jerusalem began to look much less secure. On 11 July 1174, Amalric died following an attack of dysentery. He was succeeded by his son, Baldwin IV. Not only was Baldwin IV only thirteen years old, but he was also suffering from leprosy.

■ Make your notes for the third step, 1163–74. In what ways did the conflict in Egypt make the recapture of Jerusalem more likely?

1174–84: Crisis and conflict in the crusader states

In the summer of 1174, the contrast between the leaders of the Muslim and Frankish worlds in the Near East could not have been greater. Saladin was an experienced and ambitious warrior who was determined to impose his authority on the Muslim Near East. Baldwin IV was a thirteen-year-old boy with an incurable disease who could only rule through a regent. In the years between 1174 and 1184, Saladin secured his hold over Egypt and Syria and began to create a greater degree of unity among the Muslims of the Near East. Meanwhile, the crusader states became weaker and more divided. But how much closer did the Muslims come to recapturing Jerusalem over these years?

Saladin and the Muslim Near East

Saladin faced a tricky situation in 1174. With the death of Nur ad-Din the Zengid regime fractured, but members of the Zengid dynasty still held positions of power in Syria and **Mesopotamia**. In particular, Saladin knew that he would have to display loyalty to Nur ad-Din's young son, al-Salih. Saladin established his control over Syria through patient diplomacy and propaganda rather than through force. One of the first things Saladin did following Nur ad-Din's death was to write to al-Salih, expressing his loyalty and reassuring the young ruler that he would protect al-Salih from his enemies. Saladin gained further authority and legitimacy by marrying Nur ad-Din's widow. Saladin was absolutely determined to pursue his own power in Syria and used the threat of force when necessary. But during the first years of Saladin's rule he was careful to establish his authority over other Muslims in the name of al-Salih, and in the wider interest of jihad against the Franks.

Saladin began his bid to rule the Muslim Near East by targeting Damascus. He accused the Damascene rulers of weakness because they had agreed a truce with the crusader state of Jerusalem. On 28 October 1174, Saladin marched peacefully into Damascus. According to Muslim chroniclers, many people in the city rejoiced at Saladin's takeover. The large sums of money that Saladin distributed to the people of Damascus must have helped to win their support. He later justified his occupation of Damascus as a step on the road to retaking Jerusalem. Not everyone at the time was convinced by this explanation. Some people thought that Saladin's desire for Muslim unification was more to do with his personal ambition than his commitment to jihad.

By the end of 1174, several of Syria's warlords had decided to support Saladin. The Sultan was able to seize control of Homs, Hama and Baalbek with little bloodshed. The conquest of Aleppo proved more difficult – it was not until 1183 that Saladin finally brought Aleppo under his control. Like Nur ad-Din, Saladin had spent the first ten years of his rule mostly fighting other Muslims. Perhaps this was a necessary precondition to waging Holy War on the Franks and prizing Jerusalem from their grasp.

The vulnerability of the crusader states

During the reign of Baldwin IV (1174–85) the crusader states became less capable of countering Muslim attacks. The position of the Franks was not entirely hopeless. In 1177, for example, they defeated the Muslims and almost killed Saladin himself at Montgisard. But overall, the crusader states became more vulnerable between 1174 and 1185. The weakness of the crusader states was caused by three main factors.

- 1 **Baldwin IV's leprosy.** Baldwin proved to be a courageous and determined ruler, but, as he grew up, the King became more and more disabled. The fevers caused by Baldwin's leprosy sometimes made him incapable of ruling. By his early twenties Baldwin was partly paralysed and nearly blind. When on campaign, the King had to be strapped to a horse or carried in a litter. The longer Baldwin lived the weaker the crusader states became.
- 2 **Divisions within the ruling elite of the crusader states.** It was clear that Baldwin's reign would be short and that he would not produce an heir. Different factions within the crusader states therefore began to compete for power. Raymond III, Count of Tripoli (Baldwin's cousin), came to head one of the two main factions, while the other was led by Baldwin's mother, Agnes. In 1180, tensions between the two groups increased when Baldwin's sister, Sibylla, married Guy of Lusignan, a young French knight. Guy became a potential regent and successor to Baldwin, much to the disgust of Raymond's faction. This became a central issue in the politics of the crusader states and distracted the Franks from focusing on the threat from Saladin. When the Franks *did* turn their attention to Saladin, different approaches emerged. Raymond of Tripoli advocated truces with the Muslims but Reynald of Châtillon (after his release from prison in 1176) provoked Saladin with his aggressive campaigns.
- 3 **Lack of support from the Byzantine Empire and Europe.** We have seen how the crusader states were strengthened by a closer relationship with the Byzantine Empire during the reign of Manuel I. In 1180, the Byzantine Emperor died and the new Emperor, Andronicus I, showed little interest in supporting the Latin rulers of the Near East. Neither did European monarchs. In autumn 1184 three of the most important men in the crusader states – the Patriarch of Jerusalem and the masters of the Hospitallers and Templars – were sent to Europe seeking support, but neither Philip II of France nor Henry II of England felt able to lead a new crusade to the Holy Land. The three diplomats returned to Jerusalem empty-handed.

Confrontations and conflicts

The map below shows the main conflicts between the crusaders and the Muslims in the years between 1174 and 1184.

- Use the map and the previous two pages to make notes for the fourth step, 1174–84.
- Do you think that the weakness of the Franks was the most important change between 1174 and 1184?
- How much closer do you think the Muslims came to recapturing Jerusalem in these years?

2 Summer 1179:

Baldwin IV had begun to build a castle at Jacob's Ford – an important crossing point on the River Jordan which separated Christian Palestine and Muslim Syria. Saladin could not ignore this as the castle was a threat to Damascus itself. In August 1179 the Muslims attacked Jacob's Ford and razed the castle to the ground.

1 Autumn 1177:

Saladin launched his first military campaign on the crusader states. This was a limited raid rather than a full-scale invasion aimed at recapturing Jerusalem. Saladin's forces were defeated by Baldwin IV and Reynald of Châtillon at the Battle of Montgisard. Saladin was forced to flee for his life and was deeply humiliated.



3 Summer 1182:

Saladin launched a sea-borne attack on the crusader port of Beirut using the Egyptian navy that he had rebuilt. The Franks resisted and Saladin was forced to withdraw.

4 October 1183:

Provoked by Reynald of Châtillon's attacks on Muslim pilgrims as they travelled across the Red Sea on their way to Makkah, Saladin launched a major offensive on the Kingdom of Jerusalem. He encountered crusader armies at Saffuriya, but failed to engage Guy of Lusignan's forces in battle and withdrew after a couple of weeks.

5 November 1183: Saladin besieged the crusader castle of Kerak in Transjordan. The attack coincided with the wedding celebration of Sibylla's younger sister, Princess Isabella. Saladin ordered his men to avoid bombarding the bridal suite for one night! More importantly, the castle resisted and Saladin's attack failed.

1185–87: The final step to Jerusalem

A turning point for Saladin

At the beginning of December 1185, Saladin, by now aged 48, became ill with a fever. As the weeks passed, Saladin failed to recover and his family became increasingly concerned. His Syrian doctors tried a range of treatments, but nothing worked. As the weeks turned into months, Saladin became weaker and weaker. In January, Saladin made his will. People began to think about the consequences of his death. Then, towards the end of February, Saladin began to regain his strength and to make a slow but lasting recovery. He spent most of the year of 1186 convalescing in Damascus – thinking, debating, hunting and hawking.

Many people came to see Saladin's illness during the winter of 1185–86 as a turning point in his life that had profound consequences on the future of the crusader states. Chroniclers suggested that Saladin's illness had forced him to confront his own mortality. From 1186, his spirituality deepened and he dedicated himself to the cause of jihad and to the recovery of Jerusalem. Since 1169, Saladin had been devoted to extending his Ayyubid Empire in the name of jihad in order to liberate the Holy City. Now it was time to focus on the end rather than the means. From 1186, Saladin became more determined to recapture Jerusalem and to expel the Franks from Palestine.

A succession crisis in the crusader states

Baldwin IV finally died in May 1185 at the age of just 23. He had shown great courage in enduring his leprosy, but his reign had created great instability in the crusader states. The turmoil only deepened after his death. The new King of Jerusalem was Baldwin V, the seven-year-old sickly child of Baldwin IV's sister, Sibylla. By September 1186, the young King was dead. A bitter dispute over the succession erupted in the crusader states. Raymond III, Count of Tripoli, who had been acting as regent, plotted to seize the throne. But Sibylla and Guy of Lusignan outmanoeuvred him and were crowned Queen and King of Jerusalem.

Many people considered Guy to be too weak and inexperienced to be King of Jerusalem. Raymond of Tripoli, in particular, was infuriated by Guy's elevation to the position of king. When Raymond discovered that Guy was planning to seize his lands in Galilee, Raymond made a truce with Saladin, allowing the Muslims to move across his lands if they would support him in his bid to be king. That Raymond, Count of Tripoli, one of the most important Frankish nobles, made such a pact with Saladin demonstrated the degree of disunity in the crusader states in 1186. One Muslim chronicler later noted:

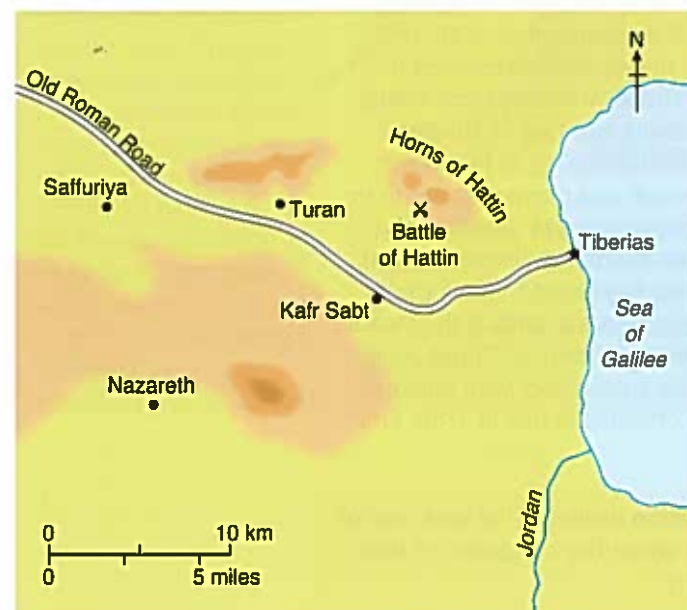
Their unity was disrupted and their cohesion broken. This was one of the most important factors that brought about the conquest of their territories and the liberation of Jerusalem.

The Battle of Hattin, July 1187

In the winter of 1186–87 Saladin began to prepare for a major offensive against the Franks. He was provoked by Reynald of Châtillon who raided a Muslim caravan that was crossing Transjordan on its way from Cairo to Damascus. Reynald's action contravened the truce with Saladin, but he refused to pay compensation. Saladin now had an excuse to fight. When the truce with the Franks expired in April 1187, he began to gather his forces for an invasion of Palestine. Saladin then launched a series of initial raids into crusader territory. On 1 May he easily overwhelmed a small force of Templar and Hospitaller knights at the Battle of Cresson. Saladin's forces withdrew carrying the heads of the slaughtered Christian soldiers on their spears. The loss of over 100 of the Franks' finest knights must have been a severe blow to their morale.

By June 1187, both sides had gathered their troops for battle. Saladin's aggression had persuaded Raymond of Tripoli to expel the Muslims from his territory and to support King Guy. The Christian army that assembled at Saffuriya probably numbered about 16,000 including around 1200 knights. They were heavily outnumbered by Saladin's forces which included at least 12,000 cavalry and probably totalled around 30,000. In the intense heat of the summer, the light armour of the Muslim warriors gave them an additional advantage over the heavily-armoured Franks. On 27 June 1187, Saladin led his men across the River Jordan just south of the Sea of Galilee. The full-scale Muslim invasion of Palestine had begun.

Saladin's aim was to draw the Franks away from Saffuriya and to engage them in a battle at a place of his choosing. On 2 June, Saladin laid his trap for the Franks by attacking the town of Tiberias. Raymond of Tripoli's wife was besieged in the citadel, but Raymond advised King Guy to avoid a confrontation hoping that Saladin would retreat after capturing Tiberias



△ The Battle of Hattin, July 1187.

and that a ransom could be paid for his wife. Guy rejected Raymond's advice and, on the morning of 3 July, ordered his army to march out from Saffuriya. This decision would ultimately end the Franks' 90-year occupation of the holy city of Jerusalem.

Tiberias was a day's march from Saffuriya across a dry and barren plateau. By leaving Saffuriya the Franks were abandoning their only certain supply of water. Saladin understood that access to water would play a crucial role in the conflict. He ordered all the wells in the area to be filled in, ensuring a plentiful supply of water for his own troops from the springs at Kafr Sabt and from supplies carried by camels from the Jordan valley. As Guy's men began to dehydrate, Saladin used his superior number of cavalry to attack them.

His mounted archers fired countless arrows into the Franks and claimed many lives. Guy realised that it was no longer possible to reach Tiberias that day and decided to make an overnight camp on the plateau.

As dawn broke over the hills of Galilee on 4 July, the thirsty and exhausted Christian soldiers set out along the old Roman road leading to Tiberias. Saladin waited until the blistering heat in the middle of the day before he made a move. Then he ordered his men to set fire to the dry scrub that lay ahead of the Franks. Guy's men were forced to make their way through clouds of hot and stifling smoke. Around noon, Saladin ordered his archers to unleash a torrent of arrows on the choking Franks. In desperation, Guy headed off the road and led his men to the crater of an ancient volcano known as the Horns of Hattin. Here the Franks found some temporary shelter from the Muslim bombardment.



△ The Horns of Hattin. This was the rocky outcrop in western Galilee where Saladin's forces defeated the Franks on 4 July 1187.

The King pitched his tent and rallied his men around the relic of the True Cross that had been discovered in the days after the capture of Jerusalem in 1099. Their only hope was to charge down the hill and try to kill Saladin himself. They made two attempts and killed many of the soldiers surrounding Saladin, but, each time, the Muslims forced them back into the crater. When Saladin saw Guy's red tent crumple he knew that the battle had been won. His soldiers brought him the Christians' True Cross. Saladin dismounted from his horse, prostrated himself on the ground in thanks to God and wept for joy.

After the battle, Saladin ordered the captured King Guy and Reynald of Châtillon to be brought to his tent. Guy was dying of thirst and shaking with fear. Saladin gave Guy a refreshing cup of iced water. This was a sign that the King's life would be spared. But Saladin did not allow Guy to pass the cup to Reynald. The Sultan had not forgotten Reynald's attacks on Muslim pilgrims and his raid on the Muslim caravan. Saladin drew his scimitar sword and sliced off Reynald's head.

Jerusalem

The huge army that had been assembled to confront Saladin in the summer of 1187 had left very few soldiers to defend the crusader settlements. In the weeks after the Battle of Hattin it is not surprising that Saladin's armies swept through the crusader states. His forces quickly recaptured the crusader coastal settlements in Palestine, and, by late September, they began to besiege their ultimate goal – Jerusalem. The Holy City was recaptured by the Muslims on 29 September after a five-day siege. Saladin made his triumphant entry into the city on 2 October – the anniversary of the Prophet's Night Journey from Jerusalem to heaven.

■ Concluding your enquiry

Now use your 'flight of steps' to consider the range of issues in the Enquiry Focus on page 91.

■ Make your notes for the final step. In your bullet point list above the step include all the factors that led to Saladin's success at Hattin. Below the step, make sure your bullet point list includes all the Frankish weaknesses that led to their defeat.