



# **The Road to Armageddon: The Last Years of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem**

*W. B. Bartlett*

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The Third Crusade of Richard the Lionheart is well known but the build-up to it less so. Yet the years that led up to the Battle of Hattin in 1187 is resonant with intrigue, plot and counter-plot, and the abuse of power. This is the story of those events, involving the greatest of the military orders, the Templars and their key ally, the ruthless Reynald of Chatillon, and how they seized a throne, sought to rule a kingdom and eventually, as a result, lost it. In the 1180s the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem was ruled by a weak king, Guy of Lusignan. A puppet, placed on the throne by power-hungry 'hawks' Reynald of Chatillon and Templar Grand Master, Gerard de Ridfort, he was the worst possible ruler at this crucial time. Arrayed against the hawks was a group of 'doves', those who wished to have some form of accommodation with the Muslims. This infighting among the Christian forces, coupled with the rise of a Muslim leader of genius, Salah ed-Din Yusuf, Saladin, led almost inevitably to the fateful field of Hattin. Wayne Bartlett reveals the causes and the aftermath of one of the few battles that can truly be called decisive.



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