

**A SCOTSMAN
IN EGYPT**



JERUSALEM

Foreword

In August of 2006, SomethingAwful Forums member Sankis started a thread dealing with a neat concept - a "succession" thread based on the game Medieval: Total War. The game followed the progress of the Danish Empire as it rose from obscurity to total world domination, with a player telling the story of each King and his exploits, a new player taking control of the thread every time a King died whether from old age, in battle, assassination or sickness.

The thread was a huge success, but also a massive undertaking, and follow-up attempts to create further succession threads of follow-up games Rome: Total War and Medieval 2: Total War met with limited or no success. Becoming increasingly frustrated by the stymied potential of these threads, in December of 2006 I took it upon myself to try something different - a Total War thread that told the story of the rise of an Empire from obscurity to world domination that was written not by a succession of players, but one person - me.

What the hell was I thinking?

Somehow - despite patches, bugs, mods with horrible Darth Vader loading screens, the loss of TWO graphics cards and the purchase of a new computer - I pushed on through, determined to complete the tale, and after nine long months it was finally done.

Medieval II: Total War - A Scotsman In Egypt.

During one of the failed attempts to recreate a succession thread, Forums member "butt problem" (yes that is his name) came up with an ingenious concept - start the game with the Scottish, grab their army and sail them to Egypt, and then have them build their Empire from there. It was an intriguing idea, and when the succession thread began and then fell apart, I decided I was going to run with it. I took butt problem's concept and sailed the Scottish Armies to the opposite edge of the earth, creating a new empire of red-headed, kilt wearing, claymore swinging bastards in the desert holdings of Egypt.

Happily, the thread was embraced eagerly by members of the SomethingAwful forums, which had been a concern for me considering that the thread was half a playthrough of the game and half a piece of alternate history fanfiction. Over the next nine months, the story of the thread unfolded as two drunken Scottish Princes sailed across the world, destroyed an ancient Empire and found themselves embroiled in a world of spies, assassins, politics, religion and conspiracy. Crusades against infidels; the creation of an unparalleled spy network; conspiracies within the royal family; the threat of the Mongol Horde; the ravages of the plague; the politics and impact of the Catholic Church; the machinations of rival empires; a silent war against the Pope; the arrival of the great Timurid Empire; elephants; and finally, the discovery of the new world - these were the events covered in the nine months of the thread, and over a century of the game.

When it was all over, the thread completed, closed and archived at <http://www.letsplayarchive.com/Scotsman> and also made available by several helpful SomethingAwful Forum members in a variety of formats - I was asked to write up this introduction to the game, to let people understand a little better the context in which it was created. To put it simply, this is the story of an Empire attempting to take over the world. To go into greater detail would be a waste of time and effort, as the detail sits within the story itself, and half the fun is in watching it unfold.

So I hope you enjoy this story as much as I enjoyed playing/writing it - Medieval 2: Total War is a great game, but at the end of the day it is a sandbox game of statistics. It is up to each individual player to really make such a game "fun", and creating stories in my head about the characters I play is one of the ways I do that with almost every game I play.

Thanks for letting me tell you one of those stories.



Jerusalem - October 15, 2007.

Introduction



Come gather around, and hear my tale, for it is both an inspirational account of man's ability to survive and even excel in alien surroundings.... and a warning of the horrors that a man's inability to admit defeat can bring to the innocent.

In the year of our Lord, 1080, England was ruled by the mighty William The Conqueror. But in the North, Malcolm III ruled Scotland and pressed his people's position by irritating the English King, knowing that his attention was more wont to stray to France, and that if suitably prodded, Scotland could gain much from England in their effort to do away with the distraction.



But the King's sons had other ideas.

Edward - eldest but young still - was a bloody-minded fighter who was quick to anger and famously impatient. His younger brother Edmund was smarter, but cursed with a reputation as an academic and weakling. Both Princes of Scotland sat together in Edward's room one fateful night, both heavily drunk and complaining about what had earlier been their reason for victory drinks. They'd taken the rebel town of York on the ever-shifting border with England, and the Council of Nobles had eagerly rewarded them for their work with donations of money. But the earlier heady celebrations of a triumphant return home from a hard-fought victory (Edmund's first firsthand experience with war) had turned melancholy, as they discussed the "mission" they'd been given.

"We're Princess of Shcotlan," snapped Edward angrily, "Nae bloody erran boysh!"

"Who th... who the heh are they tell ush what tah do!" agreed Edmund, then raised himself up high and lifted an arm imperiously, squeaking in a falsetto, "Aye, be gooh ladsh now, an fetch us a Yorksh!"

Edward stared wide-eyed at Edmund, then burst into laughter. He thumped the table and wiped tears from his eyes as Edmund slumped back into his seat, head buzzing and a wide grin on his face.

"Da... Dadsh losht it," grunted Edward finally, after gaining control of himself, "Finksh hesh sho sma... sho smart, playsh all the anglesh, buh wha he don.... wha he dinnae geh.... wha it ish...."

"ECSHACTLY!" cried Edmund, standing up.

"YESH!" roared Edward, leaping up himself and staggering backward as he almost lost his footing.

"We... We shoul be Kingsh!" proclaimed Edmund.

"Huh?" muttered Edward, struggling to get his treacherous fingers to wrap around the mug's handle, "Nae, I'm older I getsh tah be King firsh."

"Thatsh nae fair," sulked Edmund, dropping back down into his seat.

"Oh come on.... fine, we'll both be Kingsh then," grunted Edward, then paused to think for a moment, "....Kingsh of where?"

The next day, Edmund woke with a groan, clutching at his sore head. He sat up in his bunk and swung his feet around to the floor, then hauled himself up with a belch. He swayed and cursed whatever ale they'd drunk last night, so potent that even now it seemed

that the floor was rocking and rolling like a... like a.... like a boat!

Staggering out of the cabin with a sick feeling in his stomach, he stared in horror at the sea surrounding him, and the coast far to his left. He clutched the rail to keep his balance, and felt his belly roll once more as he looked back to his right and saw another Scottish ship sailing parallel to them, and just like his own, that ship's decks were lined with soldiers!

"King Edmund!" laughed his brother's voice, and he twisted about to see Edward staggering towards him with a drink in one hand - probably more ale - and a sloppy grin on his unshaven face.

"King? Edward, what the hell is going on!?" he cried, clutching at his head as a bolt of pain shot through it.

"We're on our way, Edmund!" laughed Edward, apparently no worse the wear for a night's drinking, "Ye came up with the plan last night! We're going to make our own Kingdom, we grabbed our forces from the battle of York, made up some crap about a secret mission to get a couple of boats, and we left Father behind to deal with the nobles and England and arranged marriages and all his own crap.... we're going to be Kings!"

"Kings? King's of where!?" spluttered Edmund, aghast.

"I asked the same question last night, and ye said ye knew a place from your books where the Kings have slaves and are treated like Gods, and ye can drink what ye want when ye want, and all the lasses wander about with their kit off" grinned Edward, ".....we're going to be the new Kings of Egypt!"

Edmund doubled over the ship's railing and let the contents of his stomach loose.

The single Scottish ship pulled into the port of Alexandria with a shudder, and Edward was the first to storm off with a nervous Edmund in tow. He'd been in a horrific mood ever since they'd lost their second ship to a Rebel boat further back along the coast. Most of the men had been saved, and they'd escaped capture or worse at the hands of the rebels, but Edmund was concerned that Edward had settled into one of his infamous bad tempers. As they'd travelled on towards Egypt, Edmund had spent much of the time convincing his Brother of the folly of taking on one of the mightiest nations in the world with less than 2000 men, and seemed to be getting through to him. He had been sure that once they landed, Edward would spend some time whoring through Alexandria, drink himself into a stupor, get into a fight and then travel over to the Italian Peninsular with him and write to Father asking for forgiveness. But ever since the naval battle, Edward hadn't responded to any talk on the matter.

Alexandria was a good sized city, close to the ocean as well as the Nile River, giving a green look to Egypt not familiar to Edmund from his studies. To his great surprise, he saw a familiar face standing on the dock smiling at him, it couldn't be.... but it was!



"Hello Edmund, Edward," Patrick greeted them with a warm smile, "On behalf of Sultan Al-Mustansir, King of Egypt, I welcome ye to Alexandria."

"Ye.... ye welcome us?" asked Edward, perplexed.

"Aye, I arrived a week ago to sign an agreement between Egypt and Scotland to end the threat of Moorish rebels to the West. I explained all about how King Malcolm was so committed to ending Rebel influence that he was sending 2000 of his best troops, along with his own two sons, to lend aid."

"He.... he told the Sultan we were coming....?" hissed Edward, and Edmund felt his heart sink as his brother's face turned black with rage.

"Aye," replied MacDougall uneasily, having obviously not foreseen this reaction.

"He twists everything, he.... he...." gasped Edward, straining for breath, "We were going to be Kings.... he cannae.... he cannae just.... he....."

"Now Prince Edward, be reasonab...." started MacDougall.

"NOT PRINCE!" roared Edward, "KING! KING EDWARD AND KING EDMUND OF EGYPT! TO ARMS! TO ARMS! DEATH TO SULTAN EL MUSTARD!"

"Wha..." gasped MacDougall as Edmund felt numbness washing over him, and soldiers on the docks recovered from a moment of shock to react with the precision drilled into them in the military, "Nae, nae! Ye cannae do this! We have a deal with these peop...."

"FUCK YOUR DEAL!" roared Edward, startling MacDougall with his vehemence, "FORWARD! TO THE GATES! KILL THE FUCKING EGYPTIANS! KILL THEM!"

Soldiers began marching at the order, ignoring MacDougall's frantic protests even as they buckled on armor, pulled themselves up onto horses and looked across the dusty plain separating the port and Alexandria's gates.



Inside Alexandria itself, Sultan Al-Mustansir stared with wide eyes from his balcony at the force marching towards the city, obviously preparing for battle.

"Seal the gates, man the walls with archers!" he hissed, "Send birds to Tulun of Taba and let him know the Scots have broken their pact! If we can hold the walls, he can have 1000 men here within a week! I'll have the Scottish Princes' heads sent to their Father for this treachery!"



At the port, McDougall rushed to Edmund's side as the younger son calmly strapped on his armor.

"Ye have to do something, this is madness! Edward will never take the walls and we have nae provisions, reinforcements will come up within a week and wipe us all out!"

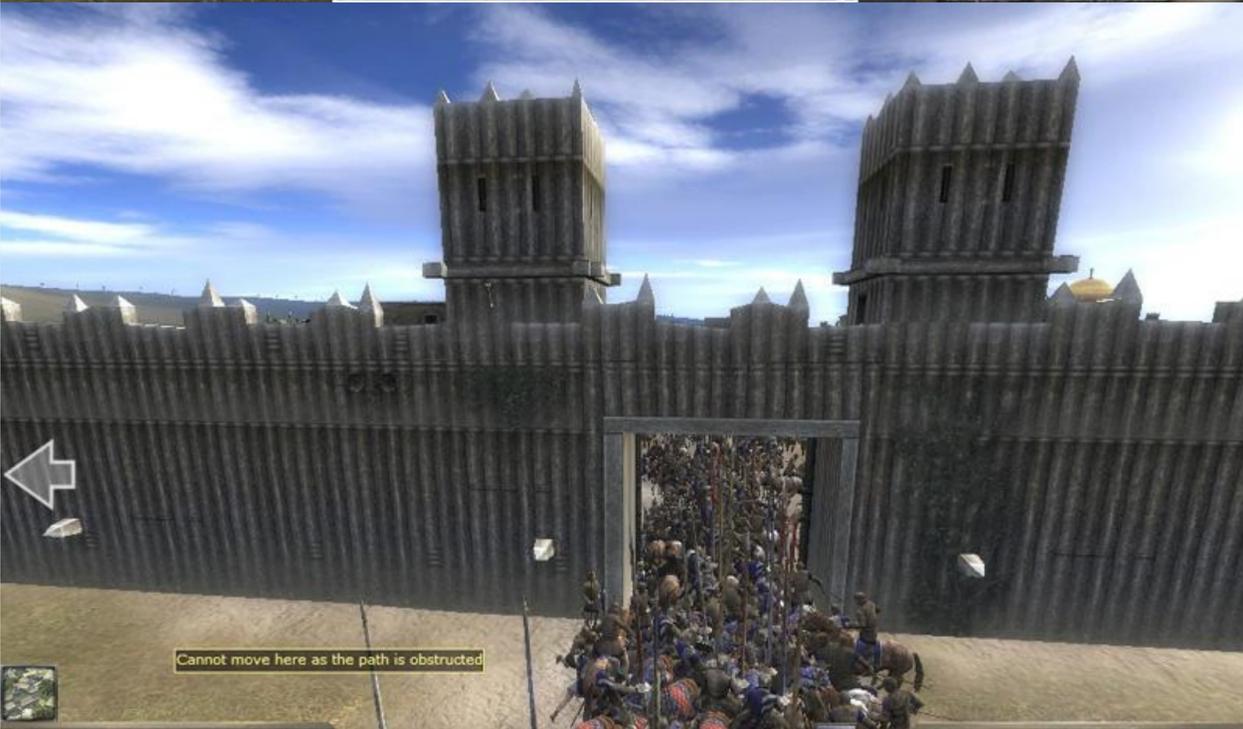
Edmund turned a look on MacDougall that chilled his soul, as he saw for the first time that Edmund appeared not only resigned to this course of action, but almost indifferent to its consequences. As if reading his mind, Edmund spoke, "I have worried myself to death on this trip, agonising over the consequences of a night of drunken boasts spoken in jest gone too far.... now there is nothing that can be done about it, all there is, is to make the best of a bad situation."

Stalking over to a wicker cage of birds offloaded from the ship, Edmund coolly reached in and pulled out a dove, then flung it into the air. MacDougall watched perplexed, then heard a massive cheer go up from the Scottish troops. Turning, he saw to his shock the gates of Alexandria standing wide open.

"My studies... and my Father, taught me always to be prepared for any eventuality," hissed Edmund, "I had a spy leave the ship days earlier and make his own way into Alexandria, he has opened the gates."

MacDougall stared with wide eyes as Edmund mounted his horse and joined his waiting bodyguard, then rode with them towards the city as Edward poured his men through the open gates.

"The Sultan has a garrison of less than 200 men," he gasped, "The mad fools are going to kill the King of Egypt and bring ruin upon us all!"





And for now, that is my story. Return to me again, and I shall tell you more of the two Scottish Princes - one bloody-minded and quick to temper, the other intelligent and coldly calculating - who attempted to remake themselves as Kings of Egypt.





Alexandria - Large town



Edmund the Chivalrous
Governor
Command
Chivalry
Loyalty
Piety

Age: 27

Command: 10/10
Chivalry: 10/10
Loyalty: 10/10
Piety: 10/10

Retinue

Mentor: 

Traits

- Skilled Bureaucrat
- Fair in Rule
- Bastion of Chivalry
- Feels Appreciated

Construction: 0 Recruitment: 0 Repair: 0 Retrain: 0

0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0

Units available for hire: _____ Recruitment Slots Remaining: 2

Army
Town
Agents

Large town Alexandria

12

3991



									
40	55	123	102	102	116	150	145	102	
106	35	105	71	9					



Chapter 1

Edmund struggled to open his eyes, which felt gummy and heavy. His head was beating like a drum, and his arms felt like they were being held down. With a groan he sat up and tried to support his weight on one arm, only to curse as his hand slid along the silken cushions that the Egyptian nobility seemed to favor sleeping on. The women were all gone, which pleased him; he hated it when they stuck around past their usefulness. He might have been known as Edmund the Chivalrous, but these women were not to be wed and bear children, but merely to be used for their more obvious charms.

"Will this blasted heat never end," roared a familiar voice, and the sheer curtains over the entranceway to his chambers were batted away by Edward, half naked and wildeyed, "Edmund, have ye nae got any women left?"

"I'd say ye've had enough, Edward," chuckled Edmund, holding his head, "In fact I'd say we've all had enough.... I dinnae know how ye convinced me sacking our own city would be a good idea."

"Aye, but twas fun was it not?" laughed Edward, "And the men needed a reward after that cursed sea journey here.... and the women.... by God Edmund, these Egyptian women!"

Together the two brothers stepped out onto the balcony, where a thin sea breeze did something to lessen the impact of the desert heat. Over the ocean and across the continent, and over another ocean and THEN over the length of England, that was their "home" of Scotland. But what had been a drunken boast had become reality, and though Edmund still thought it madness, he couldn't help but admit that Edward had succeeded in the impossible, they'd taken control of the Egyptian city of Alexandria and killed the Egyptian King.... technically making them Kings, according to Edward.

Edmund thought the rest of the Egyptian Royal Family and their armies might have something to say about that, though.

"This Tulun laddie," muttered Edward, "When he saw we'd killed his King, he turned tail and headed into the Desert.... that says something about him, does it not."

"It says he is smart," came a new voice, echoing what had been in Edmund's mind, "He had less than 1000 men and we controlled the walls, he pulled back to gain new men and prepare siege equipment."



The two "Kings" of Egypt turned to stare at Patrick MacDougall, the young Diplomat their father had sent to Egypt to (unsuccessfully) prevent war between the two nations. MacDougall had studied at the same schools as Edmund, though he was younger, and the Prince believed that Father had sent him in the hope of some bond of friendship to be stronger than his bond with his Brother.

"So ye're back, are ye," grunted Edward, who did not like MacDougall, "And what has ye weak jabbering gained for us? Have ye signed another deal on behalf of Father that leaves us little more than servants?"

"I have spoken with Tulun of Taba," replied Patrick, ignoring the insult, "And while he turned down my offers of diplomacy, it did give me a chance to gain valuable insight into the situation of the Egyptians."

"And?" insisted Edward, "I dinnae have time for ye pontificating, MacDougall, give it to me straight!"

"The Egyptians are proud and stubborn, which I'm sure ye are familiar with," grinned MacDougall, and was rewarded with a surprised smile from Edward, "But the food they offered was scarce, their clothes were frayed at the sleeves and their armor - though polished - was battered.... given the late Sultan's eagerness to accept our previous offer of assistance.... I believe the war with the rebels has bankrupted them."

Edward roared with laughter, throwing his arms in the air, "It's almost enough to make one believe there really is a God! We attack at just the moment the Egyptians cannae afford to mount a counter-attack!"

"Don't be so quick to claim divine favor, Edward," warned Edmund, "We're not exactly awash in money ourselves, running this city will cost us; the price of mercenaries given the war between us, Egypt and the rebels is astronomical, and we need to reinforce the troops we brought from Scotland."

A diplomatic cough caught the three men's attention, and they turned to see a messenger standing in the doorway. Edmund raised an eyebrow at the crest the messenger wore, that of a member of the Papacy, and cursed Edward's earlier mention of God, or the lack of one.

Edward took the message from the man without a word, a scowl on his face, and Edmund knew what he was thinking. Their Father was religious, and put great stock in the approval of the Pope, had he requested a favor from the Pope? Was this a demand from God's representative on Earth that they cease their Egyptian adventure and return to the cold, wet highlands of Scotland? Edward read over the note, his scowl changing to a wide-eyed look of wonder before a huge smile lit up his face.

"Servants!" he cried, "Take this messenger and treat him like a King! Feed him, bathe him, and clothe him in the finest silks!"

The messenger raised an eyebrow but did not object as ever present servants materialised seemingly from nowhere to see to his needs. Edmund had to admit that the Egyptians had done a good job of breaking down their countrymen into perfect servants.

"Dinnae be so quick to claim divine favor, Edward!" mocked Edward, mimicking Edmund's earlier words with a high falsetto, "I dinnae remember much of my interminable Bible studies, Brother, but I do remember this.... God helps those who help themselves!"

And he handed the scroll to Edmund and Patrick, who stared in shock at what it read.

New Mission



Join the Crusade

Time Remaining 9 turns
 Source The Pope
 Description The Pope has called a holy Crusade, and the Pope has sent the call to arms to all devoted Catholic factions. You must create a Crusading army within the time limit to take part.
 Target Jerusalem
 Penalty Your reputation with the Pope will not be as high as it once was.

Edmund sat on his horse looking at the high walls of Jerusalem nervously. He had seen large cities in the past, his status as a Prince of Scotland and his education had taken him to some of the greatest cities in the world. But Jerusalem was something else, even for someone like himself who took religion as just another duty to be performed on Sundays. The city was history itself, the home of major religions and major conflicts about the same.

He and Edward had set out with the bulk of their army from Alexandria, leaving behind enough men to dissuade any Egyptian army from attempting to retake their Port City in their absence. Edward had insisted they make contact with Tulun of Taba before taking ship to Jerusalem, and they'd engaged in an unsatisfactory skirmish with Tulun's archers, killing a large number of Egyptians but failing to prevent Tulun himself from escaping.

Battle Deployment

Your forces attack an army of Egypt



Your Forces

Scotland
 ★★☆☆☆☆
 Prince Edward
 1163 men

Reinforcements: 0

None

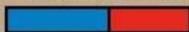
Enemy Forces

Egypt
 ★★☆☆☆☆
 Tulun of Taba
 901 men

Reinforcements: 0

None

Balance of power



Attempt a night attack



Clear Victory

Battle Results

	Men Deployed	Men Lost	Men Remaining	Enemies Killed
Prince Edward	1163	285	878	383 (55)
Tulun of Taba	901	461	440	349 (0)



But things were different now, they'd sailed past Gaza and arrived at the walls of Jerusalem, and it was here that their ranks had swelled massively. Religious fanatics from around the world had responded to the Pope's rallying call, and been waiting only for a leader to take them into Jerusalem itself. Other Nations had been raising armies to join the Crusade, but providence had seen to it that only the two Scottish Princes were in place to take control of the religious mercenaries, and they'd spent almost every last florin they'd brought with them to bring the men into their ranks. Edmund had to admit that religion had its uses, for the cost of a small band of Sudanese swordsman he'd purchased shortly after the sack of Alexandria; they'd gained almost 1000 fanatical fighters to help them take Jerusalem.

Edward had changed on their journey, after their victory over Tulun he'd taken to following the advice of a grizzled old Scottish veteran who had fought by their Father's side in his youth, and when they'd been surprised by a large force of Egyptians on their way to their ship, the Veteran's advice had been pivotal in turning the course of battle and gaining them victory. As they'd approached Jerusalem, Edmund had been surprised to hear Edward talking about strategies to take Jerusalem while reducing their own losses, a far cry from his strategy in York and Alexandria, which had been to overwhelm the opposing army and decimate them.

Retinue Expands Prince Edward



An addition has been made to this person's entourage of followers. It is the nature of man to follow more remarkable people.

Veteran Warrior

A hardened old brother in arms, always there to defend to the last, or serve as midfield mentor.
+1 to personal security (improves the chances of detecting and foiling assassination attempts), +1 Command when commanding infantry

Average Victory

Battle Results

	Men Deployed	Men Lost	Men Remaining	Enemies Killed
Prince Edward	1028	346	682	1027 (106)
Captain Iamam	2311	1165	1146	418 (0)

Now Edmund sat his horse with a smallish force of the religious fanatics they'd added to their ranks, staring first at the high stone walls of Jerusalem lined with hundreds upon hundreds of archers, and then down the field before the city, where Edward was leading the bulk of the forces. Edmund's mission here was hardly a glorious one, he was to hold position with his men unless called for, and otherwise simply make sure no surprise reinforcements came to aid the rebels holding Jerusalem.

Battle Deployment

Your forces attack an army of Rebels (Arab Rebels)



Your Forces

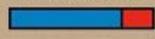
Scotland
Prince Edward
1662 men

Reinforcements: 0

None



Balance of power



Attempt a night attack

Enemy Forces

Rebels
Captain Reis
1125 men

Reinforcements: 0

None



Game interface showing the Army tab with a list of units and their stats. The Faction Heir is Prince Edward. The year is 1803.

Unit	Count	Cost	Attack	Defense	Speed
Prince Edward	1	40	34	34	49
Rebels	1	61	68	68	44
Infantry	114	120	80	80	50
Archers	150	80	150	80	50
Knights	120	150	150	80	50
Spearmen	120	80	150	80	50



Edward stared wide-eyed at his men, of such a number that they stretched the entire length of Jerusalem's city wall. He felt euphoria now before the battle that he usually only felt at its climax, which he put down to being the infectious religious euphoria of the bulk of his new troops. They were itching with excitement, eager to kill heathens, and his original Scottish troops seemed to be getting caught up in the religious fervor too, and Edward knew he had to be careful to ignite that smoldering flame with just the right words. He lifted his sword high, and felt the hairs on the back of his head raise up as the entire force suddenly went quiet, waiting to hear him speak.

"Okay lads!" he roared, "Let's get the bastards!"

Chapter 2

"To the walls lads, the walls!" screamed the Highlander commander, and his men lifted the ladders and began running at a quick trot, followed on all sides by the other units chosen to scale the walls. They were close to 500 men, the Highlanders who had travelled to Egypt with Prince Edward and Edmund outnumbered by the mercenaries hired to help them, who themselves consisted mainly of rabidly fanatical Christians who believed themselves on a divine mission from God.

"Angus, what in the hell have we gotten ourselves into!?" cried one Highlander as he gripped the ladder tightly and ran towards the imposing stone wall, arrows flying past them as the rebel troops on the walls sought to bring them down.

"It's just like a bar-room brawl, Rory!" laughed the Highlander on the opposite side of the ladder, his mouth hanging wide open in a crazed grin, "Just with a few thousand more lads to bash up!"

They reached the walls first, giving a cheer as they saw the others spread out along the wall reach their targets, their commanders roaring at them to raise the ladders and climb, climb, climb!



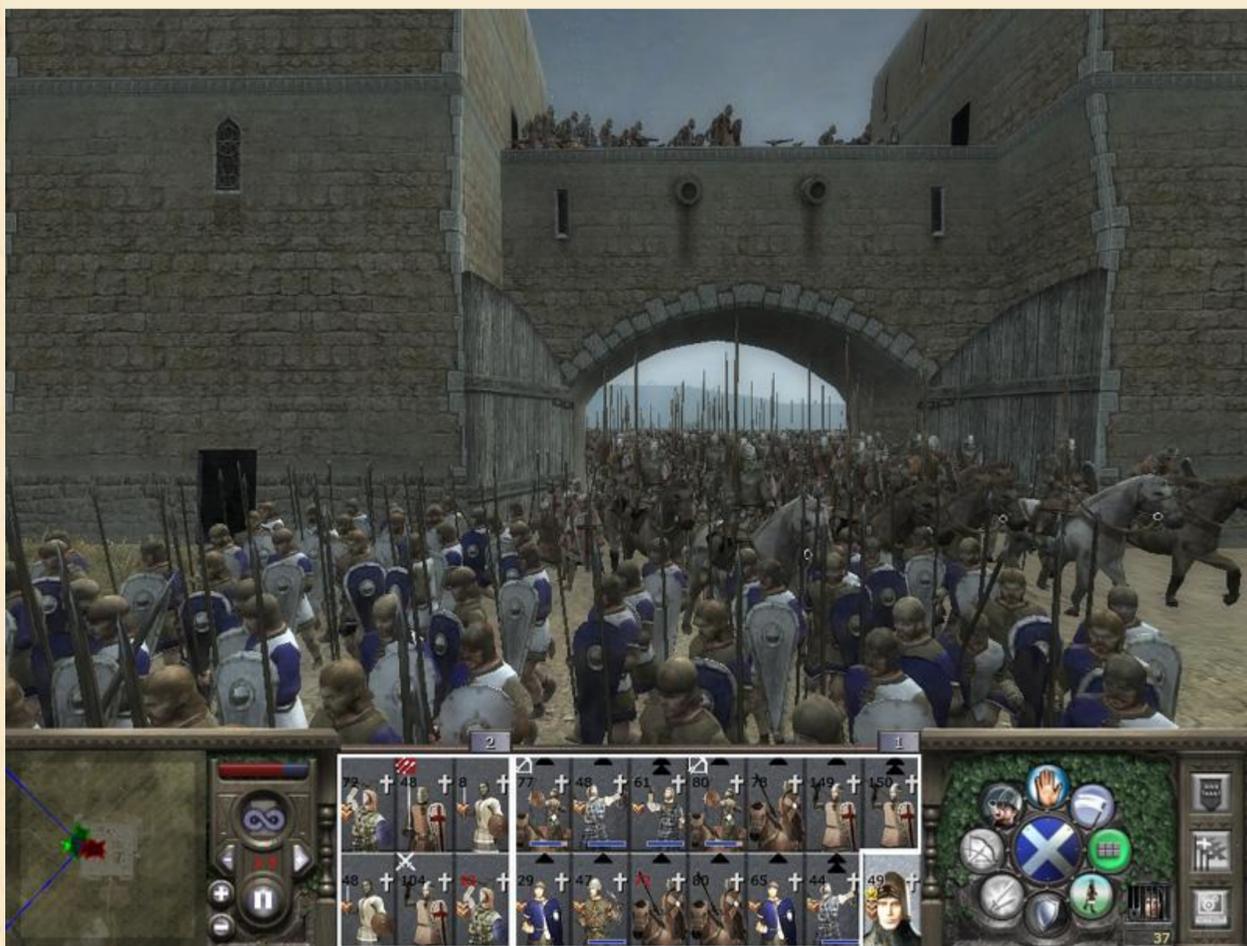


In desperation, the archers fired their arrows down the ladders at the quickly climbing soldiers, but they kept coming, seemingly unfazed as rebels desperately tried to push back the weighted ladders and the men on them. Reaching the top, swords swung and the poorly armed archers quickly retreated, offering little resistance at the only time they might have successfully repelled the invaders. Religious mercenaries seemed to be possessed of almost divine strength as they reached the top, letting loose a roar as they swung swords and cleaves heads from necks, grabbing panicked archers and pitching them off the side of the wall to the ground far below.

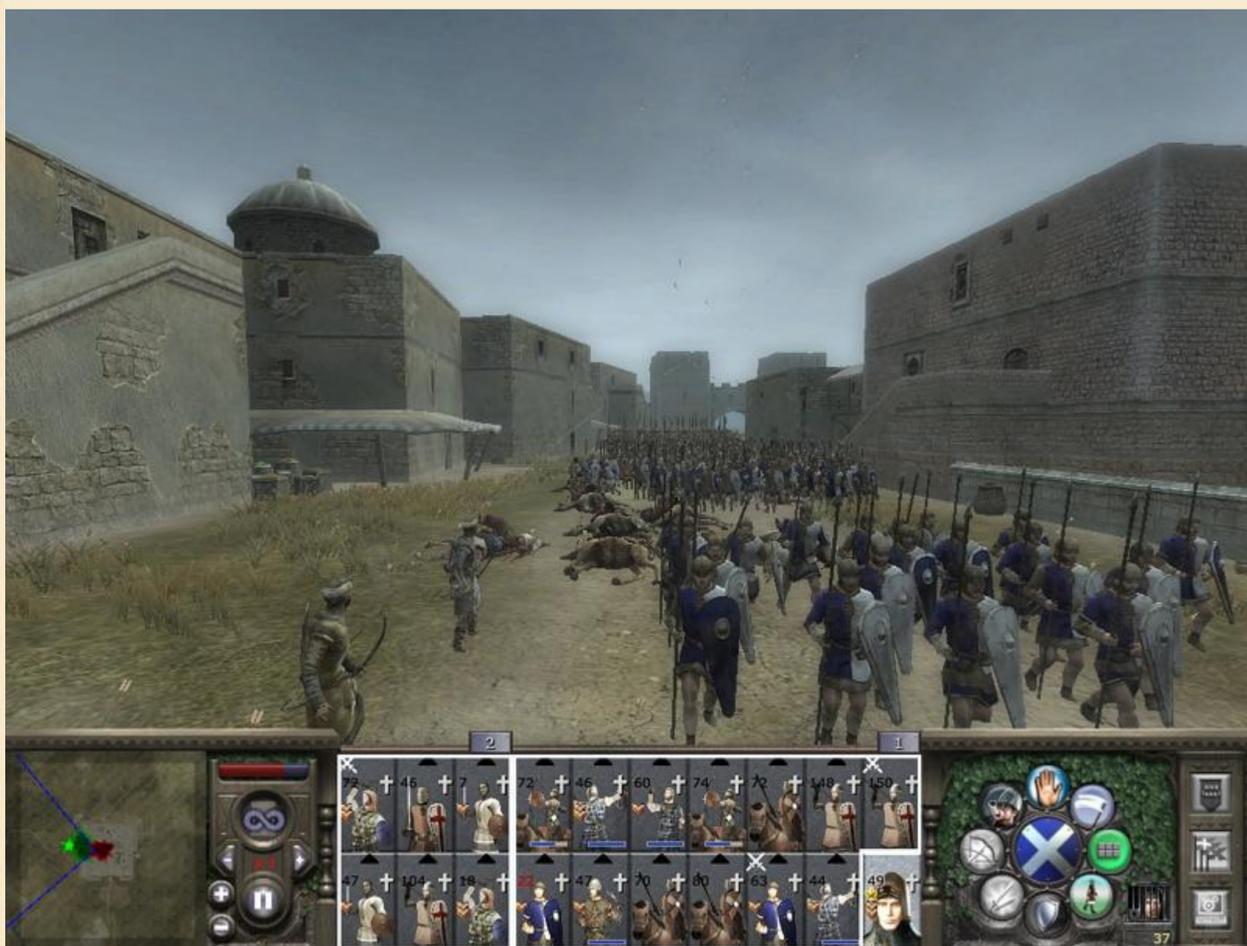
"Take the gate, take the gate you bastards!" screamed the Highland Commander, "Open the gate!" The Highlanders surged forward like demons, their faces painted and the terrified rebels retreating before them as they let loose a bloodcurdling battlecry. Angus burst through the gatehouse door, charging directly into a rebel as the man tried to drop his bow and draw his sword. Lifting him bodily into the air, he flung him into the wall, the rebel slumping to the ground like a sack as more Highlanders pushed inside, taking control of the gates.

"FORWARD!" boomed Edward as his messengers brought word the gate was theirs, "KILL THE HEATHENS! THEY HOLD CHRISTIAN LAND!"





The religious mercenaries left loose a scream of triumph as they passed through the gate, as further inside Jerusalem the Rebel Captain roared for his men to pull back from the streets and hold the City Centre, to make the Crusaders come down the narrow streets to them and offset their numbers advantage. The last of the archers who had escaped the massacre on the walls ran in horror, finding themselves overtaken by the Scots and slaughtered despite any cries of protest.



"My Lord," gasped the messenger as he reached Edward's side near the gates of Jerusalem, "The Rebels are holding the City Centre, our men must move narrowly down the main road!"

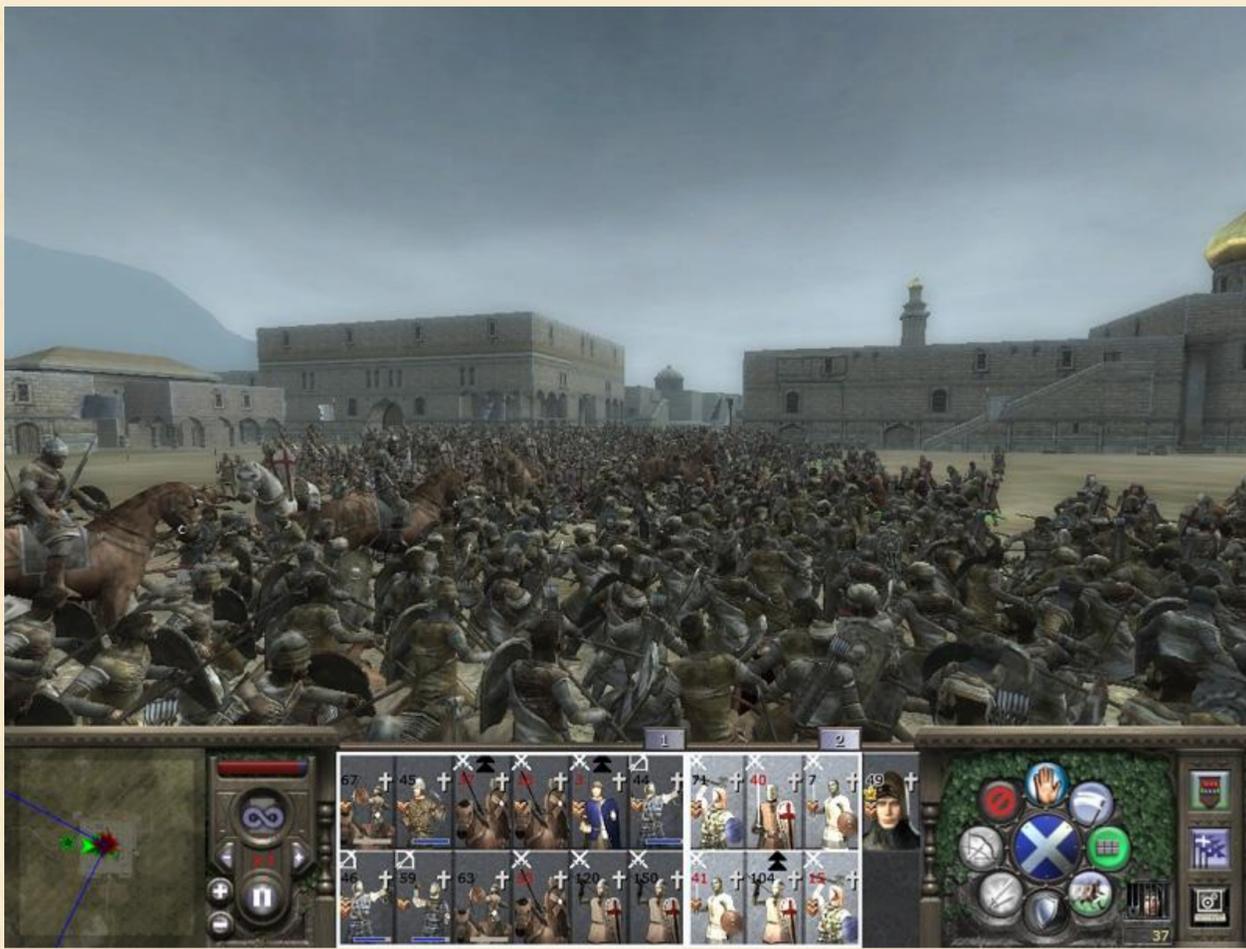
"Send a unit of mounted Knights to the front," ordered Edward, "Have them charge the rebel spears."

"My Lord, Spearmen will make short work of the caval...."

"THEN," growled Edward, narrowing his eyes at the messenger, "Move two more units of mounted Knights to either flank of the Rebels, pull back the first and send in our infantry to engage the Spear at the front. Then have our Archers fire over the top of our men into the rear of the Rebels."

"Aye my Lord," gasped the messenger, saluting, "I apologize for my hasty words."

"Kill them," whispered Edward as the messenger rushed away to impart orders, "Kill every last heathen bastard."



Edward's orders had the desired effect, as the Rebels found themselves essentially surrounded, with no way to retreat back without allowing the entire Scottish army to take the City Centre and crush them like an unstoppable wave. The Rebels knew they had no other option to fight, and screamed their defiance as they fought back, but found their intensity surpassed by the religious fervor the fanatics had whipped themselves into.

"KILL THE HEATHENS!" screamed a mounted Knight as he laid into rebels with both horse and sword, "KILL THEM! KILL THEM! IN THE NAME OF GOD AND JESUS! JESUS! JESUS!"

"Aye, Jesus!" proclaimed Angus as he cut down a Spearman with a laugh, "Good lad that Jesus, always gets his round in!"

"Ahahaha by God Angus, if I get killed from laughing I'll haunt ye the rest of ye life!" laughed Rory.

"By hell you will," laughed Angus, smashing in the face of another rebel, "Ye'll be watching ye're own sister bathe in the lake back home!"



A small group of Bedouin Cavalry pulled through the mass of death and maiming taking place before the Highlanders, and one raised his sword as he saw that much of the force was behind him now, with only unmounted Highlanders between him and the city gates... and perhaps freedom. He charged his horse forward, thinking the Highlanders would part before him, and to his great shock one appeared to laugh as he jumped aside and grabbed the man by the arm, hauling him off of the horse and roughly to the ground.

"وقرتني أنا أكون زعيمتهم!" cried the man.

"A gah-lah bala to you too, laddie," grinned Angus, and bashed in the face of the Rebel's Leader, Captain Reis.



A collective moan rippled through the Rebels as news quickly spread, and suddenly the already dominant Scots found themselves tearing through their opponents, wiping out the last of the Rebels. Arms grew weary as the sword was lifted high and brought low again and again, as every last rebel soldier was massacred where they stood, lay or ran. Finally, there was nothing left to kill, and momentarily confusion seemed to hold sway over the victorious Scottish army, the haze of killing lifted and the religious fervor of the Crusaders temporarily halted.... and then a massive cheer lifted up from the assembled men, Jerusalem was captured! Jerusalem was theirs!



Clear Victory

Battle Results				
	Men Deployed	Men Lost	Men Remaining	Enemies Killed
Prince Edward	1662	598	1064	1088 (37)
Captain Reis	1125	1125	0	683 (0)



Jerusalem was..... Scotland's.



Chapter 3

Edmund rode through the gates of Jerusalem, his religious fanatics following close behind babbling excitedly at being in the Holy City. Bodies had been cleared from the major thoroughfares, but only the Scottish had been taken away for funeral preparations, the rebels were simply stacked in giant piles, to be moved later. He frowned at barely guarded gates, but noted with approval that looting appeared to have been at a minimum. Madmen the religious mercenaries might be, but at least they knew enough not to loot and burn their own city.

For such it was, the Pope had ordered Jerusalem be retaken by Christian hands, and they had done so. But it was the Scots who had taken the city, while other Nations gathered forces and prepared ships to take them across the ocean. Providence had been kind to Scotland, the mad decision to abandon the North of England and travel to this Godforsaken Desert had turned into a boon, and now the mighty city of Jerusalem was theirs.

Edmund entered the City Square to find the bulk of the army lined up around the edges, men parting for his bodyguard when they saw who he was. At the centre of the square, the leader of the mercenaries - a Hospitaller Knight of St John - was kneeling before Edward, and presenting to him a small object on a red cushion.

"Behold!" cried the Hospitaller, "The Crown of Thorns!"

A gasp rose up from the assembled fanatics and Knights, while Edmund and Edward's Scotsmen exchanged surprised and wry looks.

"The Crown of Thorns, eh?" chuckled Edmund to himself, "I think I plucked a piece of the true Cross from my arse last week."

But Edward accepted the "Crown" from the Hospitaller with due reverence, and turned about holding it high above his head, every one of the Crusaders following it with adoring eyes.

"I am a King!" cried Edward, "But I am nae the King of Kings! I serve he who died at the hands of those who lived in this very city, and it is in his name that I claim Jerusalem for God and Scotland!"

The Crusaders cheered, as did the Scots, and Edmund wondered who cheered for God and whom for Scotland.

"So I ask ye now," continued Edward, his voice clear and travelling across the square, "With the Crusade done, will ye return to ye old ways? Will ye go back to waiting for the Pope to call ye to arms? Or will ye come with me, and retake the rest of the Holy Lands in the name of God and Scotland? Will ye become good Catholic Scotsmen!?"

And as the assembled men roared their approval, Edmund remembered what his old mentor had often stressed to him as a child. While Edward had spent his youth learning the skills and strategies of War at the expense of a wider education, the eldest son of Malcolm III was, in fact, a genius.

Retinue Expands
Prince Edward the Mauler



An addition has been made to this person's entourage of followers. It is the nature of man to follow more remarkable people.

Crown of Thorns
The woven chaplet of thorn branches worn by Jesus before His crucifixion. "And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, And said, Hail, King of the Jews!"
+2 Piety, +1 Command

Retinue Expands
Prince Edward the Crusader



An addition has been made to this person's entourage of followers. It is the nature of man to follow more remarkable people.

Hospitaller Knight
Accompanied by a Hospitaller knight of Saint John, a side effect of dealing with their noble order.
+1 Chivalry, +1 Command

Successful Crusade Jerusalem



Now that this settlement has fallen to the Crusaders, jubilant Catholics throughout the known world are helping to spread the news of their resounding victory over the 'heathens' that opposed them.

The Pope acknowledges your devotion to the Crusades with these rewards:
 - 1883 florins
 - 22 units get an experience bonus

Relations Improved The Papal States Outstanding



In light of recent acts of friendship, goodwill and mutual consent, it would be fair to say that your relationship with these people has improved considerably.

Crown Prince Nasser was young, but already recognised as a promising tactician. Control of the capital Cairo had been left to him as his Father travelled to Gaza to explore options to repel the mad Scottish invaders that had killed the former King and then taken Jerusalem from the Rebels which had plagued his late reign. With a sizeable force to dissuade the Scots in Alexandria, Nasser was in no danger, but his Father saw that the young Prince could learn much from running their mightiest City in his absence, and as Faction Heir it was important he gain that knowledge now.

Enemy Character Details

Crown Prince Nasser
 Governor
 Command: ★★★★★
 Chivalry: ●●●●●
 Loyalty: ●●●●●
 Piety: ●●●●●

Age: 20

Retinue	Traits
None	Religiously Proper Born Conqueror Heir Apparent Night Fighter Money

As the next leader of his people, this man is already an individual of immense importance.
 +1 Command, +1 Authority, +2 to personal security (improves the chances of detecting and foiling assassination attempts)

But now Nasser saw a different chance, to gain back some of the prestige lost to Egypt when the mad Scots had killed Sultan Al-Mustansir and taken Alexandria. His agents had intercepted messages between the Scots in Egypt and those in their accursed homeland, and it seemed that family politics were finally coming to a head. Nobles in Scotland had demanded their King recall his sons from their adventures in Egypt and capture a rebel settlement in Scotland called Inverness. With the Princes lust for blood and glory apparently sated by the sack of Jerusalem, they and a large portion of their army had boarded a ship and set sail for the Holy Roman Empire, where they would be rewarded for their Crusade by the Pope before travelling back to Scotland. Alexandria was still too well defended, but there were reports of riots in Jerusalem and a stretched garrison of cripples, youths and criminals its only defence. Nasser saw the chance to make a move now, to recapture Jerusalem before the Rebels could gain control again AND bloody the nose of the Scots in the bargain.

Time was of the essence, he knew this, and his studies had taught him that sometimes taking a measured approach was not the wisest course. Some situations called for bold action, and so it was that without first conferring with his military advisors or sending a message to his Father in Gaza, Crown Prince Nasser sent the bulk of his force in Cairo to lay siege to Jerusalem. He gambled high, leaving only a tiny garrison to protect Cairo, reasoning that the city itself would prove able defence against the nearest possible Scottish force in Alexandria, which itself could not be emptied for fear of an attack by Moorish rebels.

The night that Nasser heard word that his forces had laid siege to Jerusalem, he retired for the night feeling that things could only get better from this point on for him, and for Egypt.



"Edmund, I've done it!" laughed Edward, as his brother entered his office high in the Palace of Cairo. The battle for the city had been more of a chase, as they'd climbed the walls after appearing out of the desert where they'd lain in hiding to see if Nasser took the bait. Then they'd thundered through the streets after the terrified garrison, running the men down and killing another Egyptian noble. Edmund wished he could feel proud of his plan succeeding in gaining them Cairo, but the slaughter had been anything but glorious. At least it had broken the siege of Jerusalem, as the Egyptian King had gone into a panic at the death of his Son and called all his forces to his side.

"Done what, brother?" asked Edmund with a grin, as always infected by his brother's good mood, "Convinced Patrick to return to Scotland?"

"Chance would be a fine thing," chuckled Edward, "Nae, after taking Cairo I wrote letters to various Kings, Merchants, Noblemen and the Pope himself.... Edmund, I've succeeded in gaining recognition of Cairo as the Capital of Scotland!"

"Ye..... ye what!?" gasped Edmund, shocked almost speechless, "But.... but Edinburgh...."

"Is nae more our home now than London or Rome," laughed Edward, "Come Edmund, we dinnae even notice the heat anymore, can ye imagine us suffering another Scottish Winter? Or Summer?"

"But Fathe...."

"Father will still get his messages and his contacts and his reports," snapped Edward dismissively, "They won't agree to call me King Edward just yet, though they have taken to calling me the Scottish King of Egypt in Rome, so I hear."

Edmund took the pile of notes that Edward had been holding and scanned them himself, frowning as he read assurances from various persons of importance that from this point forward, international diplomatic notes of import would be sent to Cairo **as well** as Edinburgh. Edward was right, it was essentially recognising that Cairo was a Capital of Scotland, and it was a great victory for him, but it changed nothing on their Father's behalf, he was still the King of Scotland. Still, there was no point in dampening his brother's cheer, and he forced a smile and clapped Edward's shoulder, congratulating him.

"Oh aye tis a great day," smiled Edward, settling down at his desk and frowning at the paperwork, "I must say I dinnae envy Father the papers and the writing that come with being King.... I'm just glad I have ye to share the load with me, Edmund."

"The Scottish Kings of Egypt, aye," smiled Edmund.

"They talk of me as King," muttered Edward, going through his papers with an air of distraction, "But it has always been the two of us, I'd nae have taken Alexandria without ye, and we'd never have cleared Cairo and taken it without ye."

"Let them call you King, Edward," smiled Edmund, "The people need a figurehead, and since you took Jerusalem the people have called ye everything short of Jesus himself."

"Aye Jerusalem," smiled Edward, then frowning as he noted something in a report he didn't like, "A wonderful battle that, I felt like God himself the entire time, directing the troops, taking the walls, conquering the Square...."

"Oh, all you was it?" laughed Edmund, though he was being serious. Since the taking of Jerusalem, Edward had been widely acclaimed for his piety as much as his ability to command a battlefield, and the man himself seemed to have gained a Road to Damascus conversion, talking openly and often of the importance of faith, "What about Jesus then? You said you claimed it in his name?"

"Who? Oh Jesus, right," grunted Edward with a dismissive wave of his arm as he signed off some papers, then muttered under his breath, "Good lad that Jesus, always gets his round in."

"Aye, brother," said Edmund with a smile, and left the King to his work.



The time had come, the decision had been made, and now the sons of Scotland rode to war once more to put an end to Egypt once and for all. The once mighty Nation had been reduced to Gaza, and found themselves now flanked by Scottish cities on two sides - to the West was their former capital of Cairo, and to the East the Holy City itself, Jerusalem.

As always, Edward and Edmund rode together, accompanied by an odd collection of the troops that had fought with them throughout the desert since their fateful arrival at Alexandria. Religious fanatics dedicated to the extermination of heathens, hard as nails Highlanders, Scottish spearmen, Sudanese swordsmen and unmounted Knights, all moved with a common purpose, to put an end to Egypt. As the two brothers discussed their strategy, a messenger arrived bringing warning, two small hosts of Egyptians were approaching, one led by Tulun of Taba, whom Edward had desired to kill since their first encounter.

"Allow me to approach them," suggested Patrick MacDougall, who to this day still seemed convinced their presence in Scotland was a temporary madness, "Perhaps I can reach some kind of agre...."

"Unless that agreement includes Tulun castrating himself," warned Edward, "I'll hear nae more from ye."

MacDougall **had** learned enough at this point to hold his tongue.

The two sides met at a point directly halfway between Gaza and Cairo, the Scottish outnumbering the Egyptians by a third. By this point, Edward was a far more capable Commander than his first meeting with Tulun, but numbers and geography conspired against them once more as Tulun stuck with his normal strategy of attacking, retreating, attacking and retreating. Finally, after his fellow Commander's army had been all but decimated and three quarters of Tulun's own forces had been wiped out, the Egyptian called a retreat, having satisfied him that he had gained a firsthand insight of the make-up of Edward's forces.





Two days later, as the Scottish Army moved closer to Gaza, another force approached from the small city, but this one was far larger. This time when MacDougall begged for a chance for Diplomacy, Edward reluctantly agreed.

He returned only a few hours later looking very pleased with himself, and explained himself to the Brothers. He had met the leader of the Army, one Captain al Mahdi, and quickly determined that the man was a nobody, someone the Egyptians felt they could safely lose. He'd offered the man a bribe to lead his Army anywhere but there, knowing it would be refused, but creating the impression that they were concerned by the sheer size of the army.

"He and his Army are castaways, throw-offs," explained MacDougall as, for the first time, Edward listened in rapt fascination, "Kill al Mahdi and the rest will break and run, they are here simply to be a bump in the road, to give the Egyptians time to prepare defences at Gaza..... I think this bodes well for us, my Lord, it suggests the forces in Gaza are neither numerous or of quality."

"Then we kill al Mahdi," replied Edward cheerfully, standing up, "There are nae many Egyptian soldiers left, we may as well kill them while we still can."



With al Mahdi gone, the Scottish army finally approached Gaza, making camp within a day's ride of the city as Edmund waited for word from his Agent. Upon receiving it, he was forced to read the documents several times before he could believe what he was reading, and with a heavy heart he approached Edward's tent.

"Ye've made contact then?" asked Edward.

"Aye," sighed Edmund, "MacDougall was right, the Egyptian army is all concentrated here, and they're neither numerous or of quality.... but there is a problem"

He showed Edward his documents, notes taken by his most trusted spy, Fearghus Campbell. They detailed the defences and make-up of the Egyptian garrison, and they made for worrying reading. There was close to 1200 of Egypt's best soldiers ready to defend Gaza, but that was not the source of concern. The problem was that Tulun's mounted archers would be able to make use of the city streets to safely attack from great distances; the gatehouse was far too well defended for Fearghus to infiltrate and open in the event of a siege; and the walls would be swarming with soldiers ready to repel any attack. Gaza was perfectly designed to repel a siege.

"It's now or never then," muttered Edward, "We cannae let ourselves come this far, gain so much, only to fall at this last obstacle. Soon we lay siege to Gaza, and at the end of the battle, either Egypt will no longer exist.... or Father will be the undisputed King again and have two sons less to worry him."

Enemy Character Details

Sultan Mubarak Age: 43
 Governor
 Command
 Chivalry
 Authority
 Piety

Retinue
 Mathematician
 Tax Farmer

Traits
 Deep Pockets
 Poor with Taxes
 Religious
 Fair in Rule
 Faction Leader

Spotted By: Fearghus Campbell
 Subterfuge: 5/10

Enemy Settlement Details
 Gaza - Capital

Buildings

Garrison

67	24	47	80	51	12	52	52	9
14	62	93	150	52	98	26	28	67

Agents

Income: 1036
 Public Order: +180%
 Population: 4228
 Population Growth: +1.5%

Spotted By: Fearghus Campbell
 Subterfuge: 5/10

In the event of a siege, this settlement can hold out for 9 turns
 Your spies have infiltrated this settlement. There is a 40% chance that they will manage to open the gates if you attack.

Enemy Character Details

Crown Prince Moussa Age: 17
 Faction Heir
 Command
 Chivalry
 Loyalty
 Piety

Retinue
 None

Traits
 Sociable
 Religiously Proper
 Heir Apparent

Spotted By: Fearghus Campbell
 Subterfuge: 5/10

Enemy Settlement Details
 Gaza - Capital

Buildings

Garrison

67	24	47	80	51	12	52	52	9
14	62	93	150	52	98	26	28	67

Agents

Income: 1036
 Public Order: +180%
 Population: 4228
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Spotted By: Fearghus Campbell
 Subterfuge: 5/10

In the event of a siege, this settlement can hold out for 9 turns
 Your spies have infiltrated this settlement. There is a 40% chance that they will manage to open the gates if you attack.

Chapter 4

The time had come, the final battle ready, as Egypt made its last stand against the most unexpected of foes, the forces of Scotland.



Edward had added to the Scottish host, taking delivery of men from Alexandria, as well as two catapults that had originally been created to act in defence of that city. Siege ladders were ready, Edward had laid out his battle plans to his commanders, and all that remained was to attack.

Edward's biographer would later write of the passionate battlefield speech the Scottish King in Egypt made that day, of how he waxed eloquent on the virtues of the Scottish, the nobility of the Catholic faith and the evils of the Egyptian heathens. He would write of Edward's impassioned plea for noble battle under the recognised rules of civilized warfare, to remember that they were liberating the peoples of Gaza and do all in their power to avoid bringing harm to them.

Which was a slight exaggeration of what Edward actually said, which was, "RARRRRRRRRRRRRGGGGGHHHHHH!"

As the units chosen to carry the siege ladders ran for the Eastern and Western Walls, the catapults unleashed their firepower, smashing stones against the gates of Gaza as Crusader Knights, Religious Fanatics, Highlanders and Sudanese Swordsmen reached the walls and raised up the ladders, charging up to meet Egypt's first line of defence.





The Egyptians found themselves stretched thin and surrounded, but they held the position of power by holding the Gate Towers, and would be able to hold for a considerable amount of time. But Edward had expected this, knowing that the Egyptians would hold the gates in force, splitting their numbers in the hope of holding out the Scots.

"Through the gates!" cried Edward, his remaining infantry on the ground charging through arrow fire to enter the city. This was the moment of truth, when Edward's plan would succeed or fail based on the reaction of the Egyptian lords. As his men entered the city, flags raised in the City Centre to pass on orders, and to Edward's great relief the Gate Towers began to empty out as close to half the Egyptians holding them ran to meet the Scottish infantry on the ground.

"Charge the horses!" screamed his Cavalry Commander, and they charged forward, firing arrows as they rode at the Egyptians massing at the doorway, trapped now between the Scottish infantry inside the city and the Horse closing in on them.

In the City Centre, Tulun of Taba gritted his teeth as the latest message came in; they stood to lose the gates, their men there surrounded on all sides by the Scottish.

"My King, we must destroy their infantry and push them back from the gates," Tulun warned the man by his side, Crown Prince Moussa. The 17 year old Heir to the crumbling Egyptian Empire was untested in battle or command, raised only recently to a never expected position of authority by the death of his brother, Nasser. He wore a frightening mask that was designed both to strike fear into his enemies and also mask his own youthful features and insecurity. It was this inexperience that Tulun played on now.

"Perhaps a cavalry charge into their rear?" suggested Moussa hesitantly.

"You show a grasp of tactics unexpected in one so young and untested, my Lord," complimented Tulun, "Would you have me lead the charge?"

"No... No, if I am to lead the Egyptians, I must truly lead," whispered Moussa, his face unreadable behind the mask but his body language screaming his desperate desire to please, "I shall throw back these infidels!"

"The men will be honored to see you lead them, my Lord," smiled Tulun with a bow, "Truly you prove yourself this day."

Moussa raised sword and ordered his men forward, moving at a fast trot downhill as Tulun watched Sultan Mubarak carefully. As usual, the Egyptian ruler seemed not to know his son even existed, and it was Tulun's hope that soon he would not. The charge would probably succeed, but if Tulun knew Moussa's type, the youth would ride at the head of the force and be amongst the first to die. The end result? The Scots would be repelled, Moussa would die a hero and he, Tulun of Taba, would be the new heir apparent to the throne of Egypt.

At the gates, Moussa did indeed lead the charge, but the result was nothing that any on Egypt's side would have expected. The Scottish infantry parted in a rush to either side of the gate as the Egyptian cavalry rode in, the Scottish Horse Archers on the other side turning aside as well as a great horn sounded and the thunder of hooves drowned out the sound of Moussa's own charge.

"FOR GOD AND SCOTLAND!" roared Edward, leading his heavy cavalry as it cut through the Egyptians inside the gate like a hot knife through butter.

"FOR ETHELRED!" cried Edmund, in honor of the woman he had recently become betrothed to and would soon marry.... if he survived this battle.

The Egyptian infantry were crushed by the horses, which plowed through them and directly into Moussa's bodyguard, Scotsman swinging swords in a killing frenzy as above them on the walls Egyptians were cut down and bodily thrown aside as Scotland took the gates of Gaza.



Moussa's eyes were wide behind the implacable face of his battle mask, his panic rising as he saw his men cut down before him. A sword swung at him, seen from the corner of his eye, and he flung up his shield in a panicked attempt to block it, unbalancing his horse which rose up on its hind legs, spilling Moussa from his mount. His world went black and he staggered to his feet, clutching in horror at his face as he realised his helm had twisted on his head and blinded him to the battle around him.

"FATHER!" he screamed, and then was rode down by a Scottish horse, squawking in surprise before his world went dark again, this time for good.



The Scottish forces regathered, staring up the narrow road and the turn that would lead to the City Centre, which stood on an easily defended hill. They had gained their first victory in taking the Gate, but now was the most dangerous challenge, assailing Sultan Mubarak on high ground.

In the square itself, Tulun grinned behind his veil, things had not gone as expected at the Gate, but he had his own surprise in store for the Scots. Soon they would ride up the streets towards he and Sultan Mubarak, only to find their horse cut off from the infantry by reserve Spearmen. Then Tulun would ride in to crush the accursed Scottish Princes against the wall of spears, which was sure to lead to the rout of the rest of the Scottish Army.

"We ride at the front," Edward told Edmund as the army prepared to march up the street, "Let the Egyptians see us coming, let them see the new Kings of Egypt coming to replace them."

"Aye, Brother," agreed Edmund, "But remember Tulun and his archers, one stray arro..."

"Let me worry about Tulun," grunted Edward, "I have plans for that lad."

Tulun watched in rapture, sensing his moment of victory was close now, so close. From his vantage point he could see the banners of the Scots approaching, and as he'd expected the Princes were riding at the vanguard. He forced himself to wait, not to make the call too early, not to wreck this last chance to gain him glory and, eventually, the throne. He waited and waited, and waited and... NOW! He cast his arm down and a flaming arrow was fired into the air to send the call out.

"What was that?" grunted Edward as the flaming arrow fizzled out, "A signal?"

"Let **me** worry about that, Brother," smiled Edmund, "You worry about Tulun."

At the Eastern wall, a sealed door slammed and shuddered as the Spearman who had been hiding inside the tower attempted to burst free, only to find their way blocked.

"Open! Open in the name of Tulun of Taba!" screamed the Spearman Commander, "OPEN!"

"Sorry laddie," chuckled a voice from the other side of the door, "Tulun dinnae run this city anymore."

Fearghus Campbell chuckled some more as he leaned against the wall and enjoyed the feel of the sun on his face. Usually his missions for Edmund saw him move about at night, it was wonderful to be out in the sun. He heard a mighty roar in the distance that was undoubtedly Scottish, and guessed that Edward and Edmund were finally clashing with Tulun of Taba and Sultan Mubarak.





Tulun screamed in fury as the Scots washed over them from all sides. How had it all gone wrong? He'd planned for every eventuality, he'd been sure the Scottish madmen would be his key to the Throne, but the Gate hadn't held; Moussa had died without any gain; and the Scots had taken so few significant casualties that they'd been able to ride up on both flanks of the Square to strike at his forces. Sultan Mubarak's bodyguard was surrounded and the man himself would probably be brought down soon, meaning that Tulun would technically be King of Egypt, but only for a few moments.

"EDWARD!" he screamed in madness, "EDWARD FACE ME YO-"

He was cut off with a squawk as hands grabbed at him from all sides, pulling him from his mount. He hit the ground with a rough thud, and turned to stare in horror at the robed figures surrounding him, faces shrouded by hoods, rough hands clutching crude cudgels.

"IN THE NAME OF GOD!" screamed one of the robed figures, "KILL THE HEATHEN!"

Clubs rained down on Tulun, and his screams of fury became screams of terror.





"SCOTLAND!" screamed Sultan Mubarak, seeing his last blood relative dying at the hands of the Scots. Hands clutched at him, eager Crusader Knights and laughing Highlander's seemingly gone mad with battle lust dragging him from his mount, "WITH MY DYING BREATH I WILL CUR-"



Edward sat his horse in the Centre of the City, watching as his men wiped out the last of the Egyptians. He noted Edmund giving orders, sending several units to the East Wall to deal with some Spearmen who apparently hadn't joined the battle for some reason, and allowed himself a moment to breathe. The battle had gone better than he'd expected in his wildest dreams, and now the blood-soaked streets of Gaza belonged to him and Edmund.

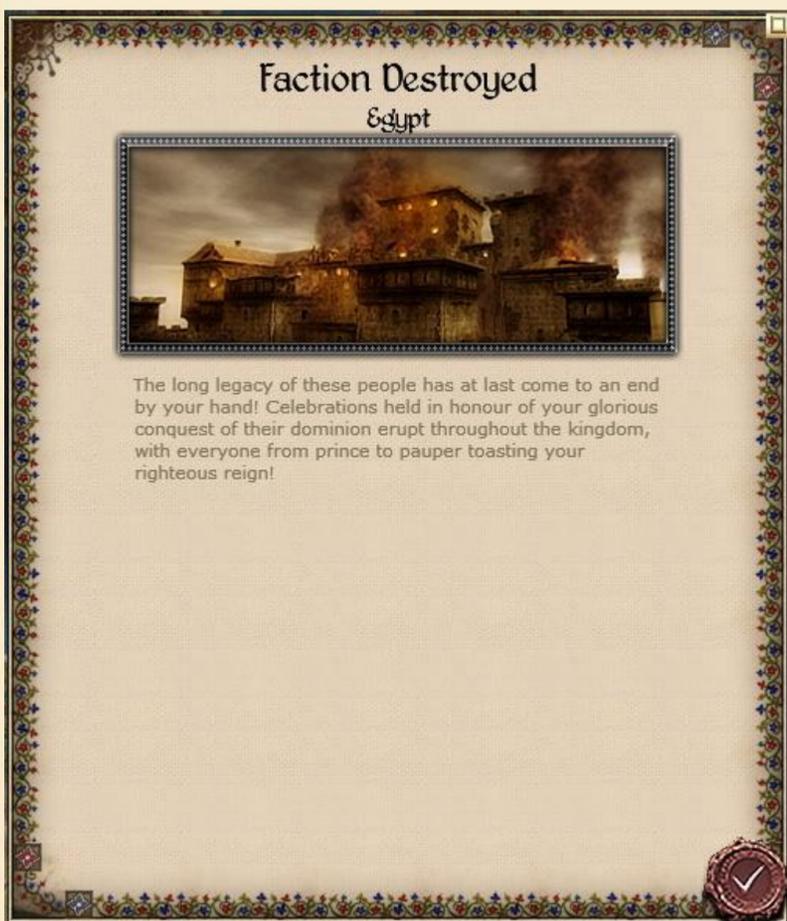




"It is done," he grunted to Edmund as his brother rode to his side, "The impossible dream, two Brothers who did nae let common sense or an old, broken down man decide their fates."

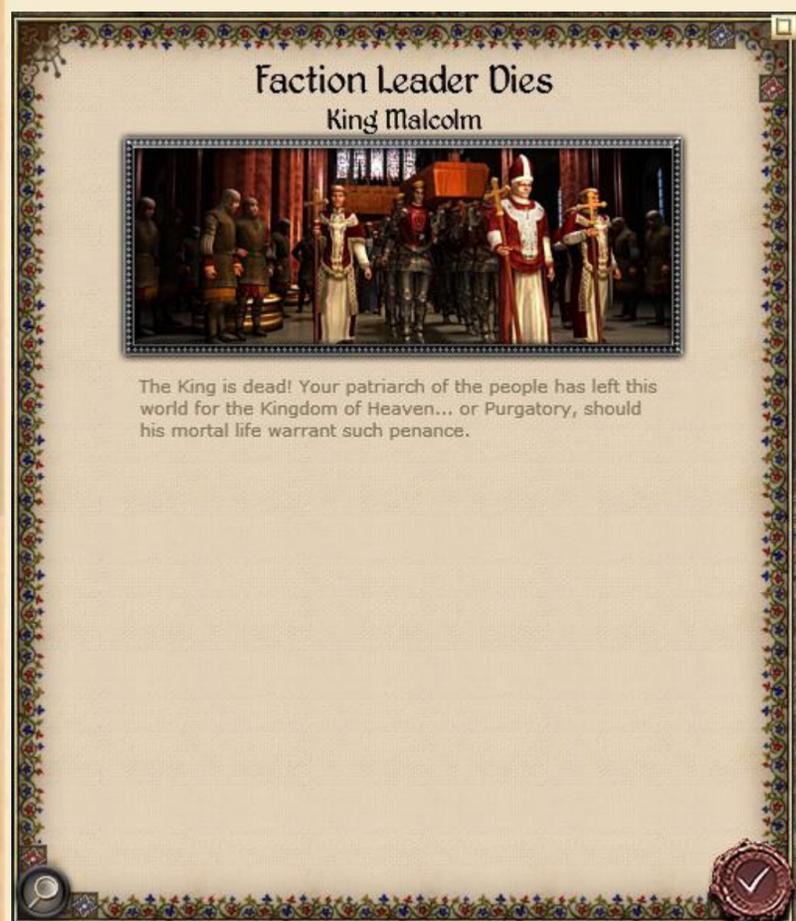
The two brothers stared out over Gaza, the last city of the Egyptians, now theirs as was all of Egypt, which had once been the mightiest nation on Earth.

But now there was no more Egypt..... there was only Scotland.



Chapter 5

The King Is Dead, Long Live The King!



Malcolm III was dead, and Edward could scarcely believe it. Somewhere in the back of his mind, he'd always believed he'd see his Father again, though in his fantasies it was his Father who would come to him, on bended knee in the court of Cairo to beg forgiveness for ever doubting his son. Outside of assigning Patrick MacDougall the task of forming a hasty Alliance with Egypt, Malcolm had never acknowledged his son's departure to Egypt, never called for reconciliation with him or Edmund. He'd been notoriously quiet on the subject of Edward's victory at Jerusalem and offered no comment on the destruction of Egypt, and now he never would. He was dead, and now the rest of the world had no option but to call Edward what he'd been now for years.

The King of Scotland.

King Edward the Crusader looked up from his seat with a sad smile at the man before him, Mac Dobarchon of Angus. A Highland Noble from a family fallen on hard times, Mac had travelled with them to Egypt as little more than a lad, and was now a fully grown man who had proved himself in bloody battle at Jerusalem, Cairo and Gaza. Now he was more than just a soldier, he was family.



Edward, to his great surprise, had taken the death of his Father hard, and realised that despite he and Edmund being married and having two more brothers beside back in Scotland, there was no one of an age he could trust to take control of Scotland if he was to die. Thoughts of mortality were usually the last thing on Edward's mind, but the knowledge that the constant presence of his Father SOMEWHERE in the world was no longer there.... he needed someone he could rely on. Edmund was as fine a brother as any man would ever have, and his education made him one of the brightest men in the world as far as Edward was concerned. But would the people follow him? Would the Pope accept a Scottish King who kept a Pagan Magician in his retinue? More importantly, did Edmund even WANT to be King?

He'd not have thought any man would ever say otherwise, but their years in Egypt had shown Edward that his brother's truest concern had always been being appreciated. He'd been angry with Father because Father had taken him for granted, and that was something Edward had never done - he still considered his Brother a fellow King, and treated him as such, even if officially HE was the King of Scotland.

"Acre," Edward said, breaking off his chain of thought, "A small rebel stronghold led by a Captain Baydara.... it sits to the north of Jerusalem and prevents contact with the Continent and possible diplomatic ties that could improve Scotland's position.... it is important, do you ken, Mac?"

"Aye," nodded Mac, "You want me to take it from the Rebels and open up trade lines."

King Edward nodded, adding, "Not just that, Mac, this is your chance to command men, more than just the unit you commanded at Gaza, you'll control the whole host. I need to know you can do this, the men need to know you can do it.... it's important, Mac, so important."

"I shall not let you down, my King," saluted Mac, "Nor ever forget the chance you have given me."



Mac Dobarchon of Angus sat his horse as the catapult blasted at the gates of Acre, mulling over his intelligence. They were almost twice outnumbered, but the Rebels were rabble with no cavalry to speak of, depending on the strength of the walls to protect him.

The gates shattered, and Mac lifted his sword, ordering his men forward through the unguarded gates. Keeping in mind the lessons he'd learned from King Edward and Prince Edmund, he sent his infantry through first and brought up the rear, to avoid a sudden attack that would kill him and send the army into a panic. The air was still and the streets deserted, a foreboding feeling in the air, the calm before the storm.

"Where are they," muttered Mac, and then heard a familiar whistling noise, raising his head to see flaming arrows arcing through the air towards him as he cried out in warning, "SHIELDS!"

He threw up his own shield and felt an arrow bounce away from him as he stared down the street and saw a large collection of archers reloading to fire once more. They were only archers though, and relying on the element of surprise.

"CHARGE!" he roared, knowing the lightly armored Rebels would quickly outpace his own infantry, "BRING THEM DOWN!"





The Archers were brought down in large numbers, completely unable to cope with Mac's Bodyguard as they charged through them, the infantry not far behind slaughtering those that survived the initial charge. But as the last survivors scrambled down the streets towards safety, a cry rang up from the Gate, as the catapult unit was attacked on the main street by Captain Baydara's Spearmen.

"Infantry, back! Cavalry, follow me!" roared Mac, leading his horse down the side street with his Bodyguard in tow. They broke out onto the main road behind the force of Spearmen who were concentrating on the swiftly approaching Infantry, completely oblivious to the Heavy Cavalry behind them. Mac grinned fiercely, and kicked at his horse's sides as he screamed the order, "CHARGE!"

They smashed into the backs of the Spearmen, who screamed in terror as they were trampled and bitten by horses while their rides slashed with their swords. Captain Baydara called the retreat and those of his men still in possession of their wits charged to the sides of the street along the walls of buildings where the way was relatively clear of the Horse.

"NO ESCAPE! NO PRISONERS!" cried Mac, "INFANTRY, GIVE CHASE!"

As the Knights and Swordsmen charged after the fleeing Spearmen, Mac and his Cavalry laid about them dealing with those not lucky enough to have escaped. As the last man was brought down, he turned his attention back down the dusty road only to see that the Rebel Spearmen were spreading distance between them and their pursuers. There was nowhere to run, but Mac was furious, the battle should be over by now, the Rebels were only extending the inevitable.

"After them, men!" he cried, "Let's finish this now!"

He charged forward, lost in battle and forgetting his battle plans, believing that at this point all was said and done. He quickly passed his Infantry, closing the gap between him and the Rebels and letting loose a blood chilling scream of triumph as he raised his sword.

"NOW!" screamed Captain Baydara as he charged forward, and from the alleyways emerged a small group of reserve Spearmen, bracing themselves as they presented their spears at an angle directly at the heart of Mac's horse.

"NO!" he had time to scream, and then his horse was buckling and screaming itself as he fell to the side and hit the ground with a rough gasp. Acting more on instinct than anything else, he rolled aside and to his feet, swinging his sword wildly and cutting into the side of a Spearman as the Rebel lunged at him.

"To me, men!" he cried, tearing his sword free as the Spearmen charged him, "TO ME!"

The rest of his cavalry not caught in the trap had rode clear and turned, and now they prepared to charge back when the rest of the fleeing Spearman turned and charged at them, surrounding them and preventing their horses from moving as the men riding them fought desperately to get clear.

"MEN OF SCOTLAND TO ME!" screamed Mac as a sword jammed in his upper arm, causing him to drop his own, "TO ME!"

The infantry charged in, overwhelming the Spearmen surrounding the Scottish Noble as he collapsed to his knees, a spear jammed into his side and blood spilling from several wounds.

"Men of... Scotland...." gasped Mac Dobarchon of Angus, "Men of Sco....."

And then he spoke no more.



"KILL THEM!" screamed a Crusader Knight who had served under Mac at the battle of Gaza, horrified to see his former Commander lying dead on the streets of some filthy rebel town,"KILL THEM ALL!"

"KILL THEM ALL!" screamed Captain Baydara,"WE KILLED THEIR LORD! NOW KILL THEM!"

The remaining Spearmen charged screaming, and the remaining Scots charged screaming louder, and when the two met, Captain Baydara quickly discovered why it was a bad idea to upset a Scotsman.



Edward was enraged when the news reached him, Acre was taken but at the expense of Mac Dobarchon, who had died in battle with Captain Baydara. The death of a man he had fought with and recently adopted into his family hit him so hard that some whispered he was using the death of the man as an excuse to vent his grief over the death of his Father. He retired to his chambers, warning death on any who disturbed him, and even Edmund knew enough to leave his Brother to himself. After a day he ordered food brought to him, and then drink, then more drink and then more drink. At night the Palace at Gaza roared with Edward's voice, alternating between laughing, crying, singing and cursing. Then for a day there was no noise from him at all, and just as Edmund was considering entering his Brother's chambers unbidden, the call came from Edward to meet him.

When he arrived, several men were gathered around Edward's desk, the King looking dishevelled, unshaven and red-eyed. They bowed to Edward, then turned and bowed to Edmund as they left, the Prince recognising his spy Fearghus Campbell and another man he knew the former had recruited. The others were diplomats, though Patrick MacDougall was conspicuous by his absence. Another man entered the chambers behind Edmund, and he turned to raise an eyebrow at him, recognising him as an able commander from their army, one Finguine Arthyn. He knew Finguine more by reputation than personal experience, by all accounts he was a promising commander with a strong religious bent, but he was also well known for taking victory at all costs, including using non-combatants as a means to an end. Finguine shrugged at him, indicating he didn't know why he had been summoned either, and then Edward coughed roughly and got both their attention.

"Finguine, ye Father was a landless Noble, was he nae?" asked Edward.

"Aye, my King," replied Finguine,"Our Grandfather went into debt and my Father was forced into the army, which I was born into."

"I am adopting ye into our Royal Family, Finguine," grunted Edward almost dismissively,"Ye're a good Commander and ye're nae naive, ye ken the realities of the world..... Mac Dobarchon did nae, and he died."

"My.... my King," gasped Finguine, astonished,"I dinnae ken what to say..."

"Ye'll prove your worth with me on the field as ye have in the past," Edward snapped, cutting him off,"Forgive ye King, Finguine, for circumstance makes what should be a joyous occasion a short one, return to the barracks and take what ye will from ye quarters, then return to the palace where ye'll be given quarters."

"My King," replied Finguine gravely, bowing,"May God bless ye."

old man on his deathbed, cursing himself for a stubborn old fool and telling Edward that he was proud of his son for having the guts to go out and gain himself a Kingdom rather than wait for his Father to die and inherit an impoverished Scotland under all but official rule by the English.

So it was that Edward spoke eloquently (and almost desperately) to Edmund of the need for a young Heir, someone with the best qualities of Clan Canmore. David was, by all accounts, a natural tactician with an eye for strategy and an inborn talent to command men. His weak physical nature spoke against him, but as General he need not ride into the thick of battle anyway. Edmund pointed out that Alexander was not much older than David AND tested in battle, which David was not - in fact he was concerned that the obviously weak-bodied youngest brother would faint dead away at the sight of blood. But Edward angrily pointed out that Alexander's great shame was his apparent impotence, and Edward would not name heir a man who could not father children. Finally Edmund had acquiesced, since he had to agree that whatever the reasons for Edward's choice of Heir, he himself had no desire to be King, and David seemed an agreeable enough lad, and obviously bright.

Character Details

Alexander Canmore Age: 24

Family member
 Command ★★
 Chivalry ★
 Loyalty ★★★
 Piety ★

Retinue
 Tutor

Traits
 Proper Morals
 Active Builder
 Lame of Loins
 Talent for Command

There seems absolutely no hope at all that this man will ever sire a healthy child. He is known to be lacking in potency. Decreases the chance of having children

Character Details

Prince David Age: 22

Faction Heir
 Command ★★★★
 Chivalry ★
 Loyalty ★★★
 Piety ★

Retinue
 Tutor

Traits
 Born Conqueror
 Chivalrous Father
 Un-Manly
 Night Fighter
 Builder

Goes pale at the sight of blood, a weak quality unbecoming of a true man. -1 Authority, -1 Morale for all troops on the battlefield

Plus, Edmund had to admit that both their younger brothers were keen to prove themselves. When Edward told them he was preparing to travel with Finguine to the desert city of Baghdad to take it from the Rebels there, both had insisted on travelling with him to take part in the battle. Edward had readily agreed, keen to make use of both Alexander and David's talent for strategy as well as show them the realities of war outside of dusty old books and accounts of battles 1000 years in the past.

They set out for Baghdad, leaving behind Edmund in Gaza to deal with the day to day management of the Empire, a task he mostly delegated to underlings anyway while taking part in his own passion, which was the Spy network he'd been working on for months now with Fearghus Campbell. After signing off on trade deals with France, The Holy Roman Empire and Denmark he went back to a report from Diplomat Gille Calline the Balleol, an exceptional Diplomat who had been working on opening relations with the Moors. It seemed Venice had been embraced once more by the Pope, and Sicily was trying to make inroads against the Moors, which would put them in proximity to Scotland's own lands. He frowned as he considered the implications of this, and then frowned again as a cough caught his attention. He looked up and saw to his surprise Patrick MacDougall, whom hadn't been seen in the palace for a good week now after Edward had roared at him for bringing news from Scotland, where the Council of Nobles was still obsessed with the Rebel stronghold of Inverness, and an English Spy had been caught in the act of trying to infiltrate York.

"My Lord," Patrick said with a bow, "I bring word from Damascus, the Rebels there are building up forces, apparently in preparation for an attack on Acre."

Edmund frowned, Fearghus' report on Damascus showed it to be lightly garrisoned, but the Spy had not been there for weeks as he infiltrated Baghdad on Edward's behalf. It was possible, and if true, with Edward and the bulk of the Scottish forces across the desert in Baghdad Acre was exposed. If Acre fell, it would cut their trade and negate the deals he'd only just signed into effect.

"Where do you get ye information from, Patrick?" asked Edmund, curious.

"King Edward has had little use for me, as ye know," sighed Patrick, "A Diplomat makes contacts whether his King will use them or not, and the word comes to me through my contact with merchants and fellow Diplomats travelling through our lands."

"Then we must take Damascus before Damascus can take Acre," grunted Edmund, "I can raise a small army, and our men in Acre can gather intelligence on the works of Damascus itself."

"If I may make a suggestion, my Lord?" asked Patrick, and continued when Edmund waved a hand, "Prince Alexander and David travelled with the younger sons of Scottish Nobles seeking to gain favor with the King. They are all military men, and experienced in combat, I am sure they would jump at the chance to fight for Scotland."

"Assemble them, Patrick," nodded Edmund, "I must prepare the city for my absence."

King Edward stood in his tent outside of Baghdad, reviewing his battle plans for Finguine, Alexander and David. A messenger entered the tent and passed him a note, and Edward grinned fiercely.

"Our spy has reported he has infiltrated the Gatehouse and will open the gates for us on command," he grinned, "The time is right, our men are rested, we go to battle!"

The others bowed and left the tents to make their own preparations, David and Alexander moving to the large tent they shared.

"This blasted Desert is a far cry from Scotland, is it not, Brother," grinned Alexander as he pulled on his armor.

"Yes Brother," agreed David, the Scottish accent he affected on Edward's behalf replaced by the accentless voice of someone raised and schooled in the finest academies of multiple Nations throughout the world, "But if all goes to plan, this heat is not something we need worry about for long."

"The fool really bought it, didn't he?" laughed Alexander, a bitter, barking sound, "He really thinks Father wrote that letter, that he took pride in this crazed dream of a Scottish Empire in Egypt!"

"Enough that the drunken sop made me heir," nodded David, "And if all goes according to plan here and at Damascus, soon I will be King, you will be my General, and we will be home where we belong, in Scotland."

With shared grins, the two who considered themselves Malcolm Canmore III's true sons prepared to go to War.



Chapter 6

"Inside men, there are Rebels to kill!!" roared Edward, and his men charged forward towards the Gate, as inside the tower Fearghus Campbell waited patiently. Beside him, the Rebel assigned with him to man the gate controls laughed at the ludicrous arrogance of the Scots, having no idea that Fearghus was not a fellow Rebel. As the men approached, some falling to arrows fired from the walls, Fearghus slammed his elbow into the man's face before slamming the lever that controlled the gate mechanism, the doors swinging open and allowing the invading army in. Faerghus dragged his unconscious companion to the corner and swiftly tied him up before checking once more the bolts on the gatehouse door, they were secure, and here he would remain until the end of the battle.



The Rebel Infantry, which had been caught surprised by the gates opening, charged in desperately hoping to stop the Scots, but they were flooding in like the tide, splitting around the Rebels and surrounding them, leaving them completely exposed on all sides. Catapult fire smashed into the wall where archers were stationed, the rebels fleeing in horror as the walls crumbled around them. On the ground, Highlanders screamed out in challenge as they prepared to charge into battle.

"All right, lads!" laughed Angus, his blood up and battle lust upon him, "Let's shove our swords up their arses!"





The Rebel Infantry held momentarily, then broke and ran as more and more of them were cut down by the Scottish, the Highlanders in particular striking fear into their hearts as the long haired, face-painted warriors screamed and hacked and roared in triumph.

"Cavalry, through the gates!" ordered King Edward, and spurred his horse forward with Finguine and his Turkopole Archers close behind. Alexander and David nodded to each other and pushed their horses into a canter, being careful to bring up the rear behind the King.

Edward passed through the gates, his men cheering to see him as they dealt with the last of the archers and infantry that hadn't escaped.

"Are these Rebels men? Or are they women dressed in armor!?" cried Edward, to the delight of the soldiers, "Shall we cut their cloth from them and discover what is between their legs?"

"Aye!" laughed Angus, ecstatic, "My cousin Rory can make use of either!"

Rory laughed as loudly as the other Highlanders, the Sudanese all smiling bright teeth in dark faces, the Crusader Knights staring with open admiration at King Edward while the Religious Fanatics simply stood and waited for the chance to kill more heathens. At the entrance to the city, Alexander and David exchanged knowing glances.

"Then forward men!" cried Edward, "Today Baghdad becomes Scottish!"

He spurred his horse forward, the Infantry charging alongside as far down the street ahead of them they saw Arab Cavalry approaching, hoping to pepper them with arrows and retreat on horseback. There was no way they could avoid King Edward though, and the Turkopole Archers riding with him blasted arrows into the air, catching those that did retreat as they tried to run.



As they clashed, the surviving Rebel Infantry and a small number of Arab Cavalry found themselves behind the main line, between the fighting Scots and the two units of Heavy Cavalry still sitting at the Gate, Alexander and David.

"To the sides!" ordered Alexander, seeing the danger, "Ride East and West and rejoin the King at the City Centre!"

He spurred his horse forward and his men followed, Alexander cursing the poor quality of the Rebel Defence. David's plan had been for the Infantry to get bogged down in fighting at the Gate, with King Edward being forced to ride ahead to deal with the mounted Cavalry firing arrows from further inside the City. Then Alexander and David would ride around to place themselves between Edward and the Scottish Infantry, ostensibly to lend support to the men on the ground, leaving Edward isolated in the heart of enemy territory where even his accursed luck would not save him.

Instead, the Rebel Infantry had folded immediately, allowing Edward to ride with Infantry at his side to face the Arab Cavalry. It was a setback, now they would have to wait for a fresh opportunity to manoeuvre Edward into a position to die, but at least the battle was nearing its conclusion. Reaching the corner of the city walls, Alexander took a moment to look back to the gates, and felt his blood turn to ice. David remained where Alexander had left him, unmoving on his horse as his Bodyguard fought on horseback all around him against the surviving Rebels.

"Ride David, ride!" he cried, but his Brother seemed almost a statue, sitting perfectly still. Cursing, Alexander spurred his horse and rode as hard as he could, his own men following behind as he cried, "DAVID! DAVID! TO THE PRINCE'S SIDE!"

Finguine twisted his head to the side as he cleaved in a Rebel's head, hearing Alexander's screams across the cacophony of battle all about him. Cursing as he saw Prince David's predicament, he twisted his horse about, crying, "To Prince David's side!"

He crashed into the Arab Cavalry from behind, swinging his sword roughly as through the shifting mass of horse and men he saw David sitting his horse, his face paler than ever, eyes wide and mouth hanging open.... what was he doing?

Finguine let loose a scream and pressed forward, hearing his men smashing into the Rebels on either side of him as he reached David's side and grabbed at his reins, tugging the horse away from the battle. But as the horse turned, David remained in place, sliding from the horse and crashing into the ground, foot stuck in a stirrup. Finguine cursed and leapt down, slashing at a Rebel who charged him screaming before collapsing gurgling blood and clutching at his slashed neck. A large armored figure barrelled past him, the distraught face barely recognizable as Alexander as the Prince dropped to his knees and clutched at David's body. He roared for David to get up, but Finguine could have told him it was useless.

Somehow, some way, Prince David Canmore - Heir to the Scottish Throne - was dead.

A Noble Death Prince David



Regardless of how this man has behaved throughout his life, his death can only be described as noble. He chose to bravely stand his ground and accept his fate, preferring death to the dishonour of fleeing in shame.

Plunging a sword through Captain Osman's belly, King Edward looked about for more enemies to kill and saw none close by. The tattered remnants of the Rebels were being dealt to by his Highlanders, Angus and Rory laughing insults back and forth between them as they cast down their opponents. Turning on his horse, Edward frowned as he noted Finguine and Alexander walking horseless down the street towards him, carrying a body between them.



"Prince David," grunted Finguine as he reached the King, shock evident on his face, "He.... he is dead."

Edward slid from his horse, pulling away his helm, his eyes wide and mouth opening and closing in disbelief as he approached David's body and knelt beside it.

"He... he bears nae mark," he gasped, staring at David's face, which was locked in a rictus of mortal terror.

"My King...." muttered an Armored Knight, one of David's personal bodyguard, "He would nae move once we passed the gate and you rode after the Rebels.... he kept whispering, "The Blood... the Blood," over and over again, we could nae get him to move."

"He always hated blood, but it only made him sick, never this, never anything like...." whispered Alexander in horror, then gulped visibly before turning his sweat soaked face to Edward, "He died of fright... all his plans, his mind, his potential.... he died of fright."

"Nae," replied Finguine fiercely, and before the startled eyes of all present he drew his sword and plunged it into David's side, where the armor was buckled.

"He died in battle, bravely facing the enemy charge!" roared Finguine at the assembled horsemen, "Do ye ken!?! He died in battle!"

They stared at him in horror, and then Edward gripped Finguine's shoulder, "Aye! My youngest Brother was a true man, and would not bring shame to the family by running. He died sending his enemies to hell, he died a man!"

"Hail Prince David!" roared a horseman, and the others quickly took it up as Alexander dropped to his brother's side and began weeping, inconsolable.

"Finguine, kneel before me," hissed Edward, and Finguine did so immediately, lowering his head. Edward drew his sword, and placed it on Finguine's shoulder, "I name thee Prince Finguine, Heir to the throne of Scotland!"

Alexander's weeping redoubled, but was drowned out by the roar of approval from the horsemen surrounding him. The last "true" son of Malcolm Canmore weeping not just for the death of his beloved Brother, but what he truly believed to be the end of any chance to restore Scotland to what it once had been.

New Faction Heir
Prince Finguine



Your people rejoice at the news of this noble's ascendancy to the title of Crown Prince, the heir to the throne. God willing, he will learn what is needed to lead his people to greatness when his time to sit atop the throne comes.

Chapter 7

He was King Edward the Tyrant.

That is what they called him now, the man who had come from Scotland looking for glory and raised Scotland to a point where it was recognised as the greatest Empire in the World. He had lead a Crusade and recovered the Holy City of Jerusalem from Heathens, killed Rebels by the thousands and returned Cities into Christian hands for the first time since the days of the Old Testament.

But he bought death and destruction with him, and had wiped out the ancient Empire of Egypt for his own gain. He sacked the cities he captured to meet the cost of the Empire he had created, and he preached with almost fanatical zeal a religion foreign to the majority of the people he now ruled. Only recently he'd sent a Priest to preach in Acre at the Pope's request, impressing the Holy Father once more with his staunch support of Catholicism, even if he did turn a blind eye to Edmund's study of Liber de Compositione Alchemiae.

End Of Turn Report



Military Summary

Battles Fought	15	Battles Won	12
Troops Recruited	61	Troops Lost	0
Regions Captured	7	Regions Lost	0

Financial Summary

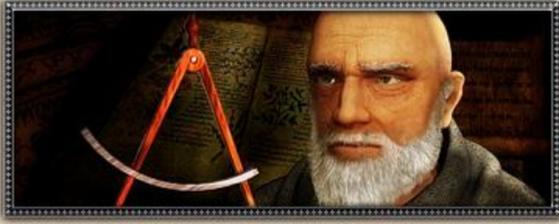
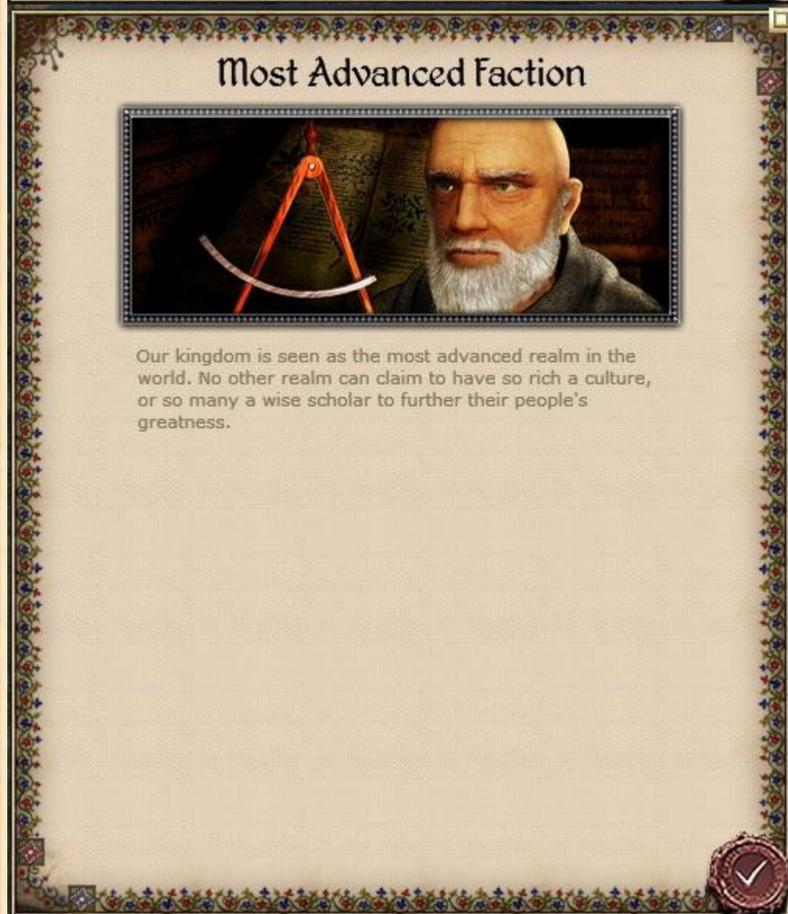
Income:	23473	Expenditure:	20978
Profits:	2495		
Total:	4174		

Balance of Power

Your Rating	Current Leader
Military: 7 (67%)	The Holy Roman Empire
Financial: 14 (11%)	Denmark
Production: 1 (100%)	Scotland
Population: 1 (100%)	Scotland
Overall: 1 (100%)	Scotland



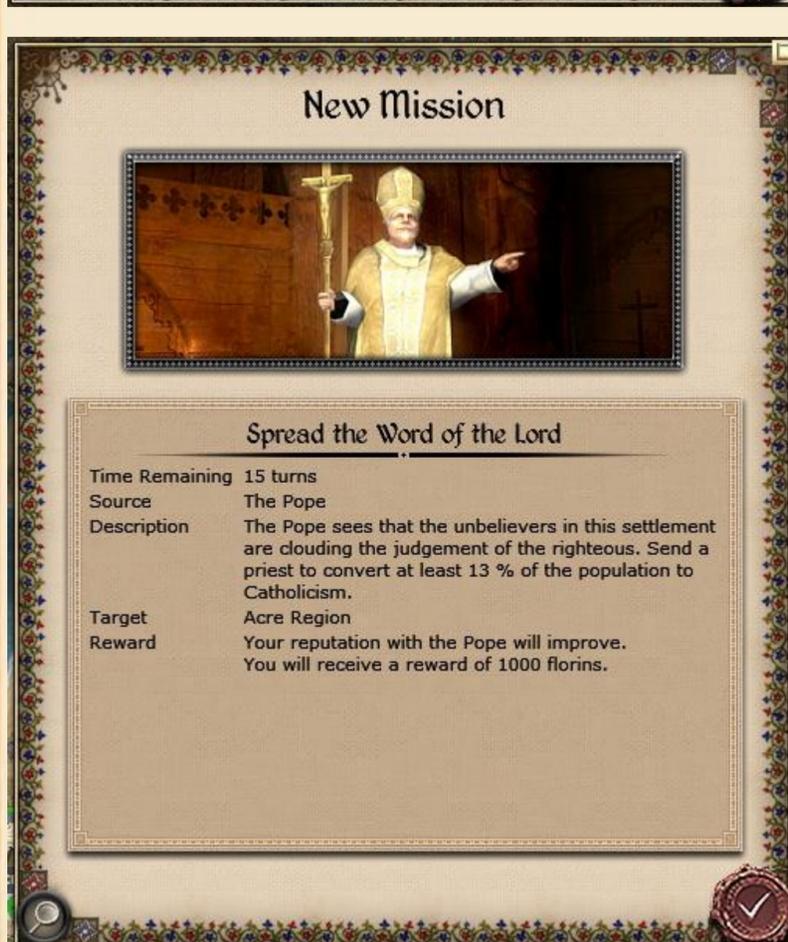
Most Advanced Faction



Our kingdom is seen as the most advanced realm in the world. No other realm can claim to have so rich a culture, or so many a wise scholar to further their people's greatness.



New Mission



Spread the Word of the Lord

Time Remaining	15 turns
Source	The Pope
Description	The Pope sees that the unbelievers in this settlement are clouding the judgement of the righteous. Send a priest to convert at least 13 % of the population to Catholicism.
Target	Acre Region
Reward	Your reputation with the Pope will improve. You will receive a reward of 1000 florins.



Liber de Compositione Alchemiae



Robert of Chester, an English translator has completed his transcription of the Liber de Compositione Alchemiae, or more simply, the Book of the Composition of Alchemy. Originally an Arabic text, this grand compendium of scientific and alchemical discoveries and musings is being deemed an affront to holy mandate by the establishment... But rumour has it most scholars would risk being associated with heretical beliefs to glean the knowledge hidden within its pages.



But King Edward was still, despite all he had gained and all he had grown, the same free spirited Scottish lad he'd been when he first got drunk with his brother Edmund all those years ago and set off on a ship on a mad jaunt. He enjoyed a laugh, a drink, and he still valued his family above all else. His youngest Brother David had recently died in battle, and despite only knowing the lad for a brief time he'd truly felt a connection with him, David had obviously looked up to him and wanted him as a mentor, and Edward blamed himself for bringing him into harms way by taking him to the siege of Baghdad. He and his brothers Edmund and Alexander were all married and all had children - even the supposedly impotent Alexander - but they were all boys, and it was a constant fear of Edward's that if some calamity struck them and killed he, Edmund and Alexander, there would be no one of a suitable age or ability to lead the Empire. He'd thought that David could be that person, and now his adopted "son" Finguine was Heir to the Throne, but Edward's fear had not faded, and after long consideration he'd adopted Feradac of Peeblesshire into the Royal Family, the young man proven in battle and loyal beyond reproach.

A Candidate for Adoption

Benefactor: King Edward the Tyrant

Feradac of Peeblesshire Age: 24

Command: ●●●●●●●●

Chivalry: ●●●●●●●●

Loyalty: ●●●●●●●●

Piety: ●●●●●●●●

Loyalty
Even upon threat of death, this man is willing to endure great hardships in service of his master and people

Loyal

Fair Fighter

This man is of noble birth, and would bring no shame to the royal family should he be adopted into it. Would you like to see this arranged, to have this man join the family as a potential claimant in years to come?

✓
✗

Now he was preparing to go to war once more, but he felt a moment's hope that maybe despite this he would not be known as Edward the Tyrant much longer. Only recently he'd signed a Trade Deal with Russia, and much to the delight of the Nobles who advised him he had agreed to a trade deal with the Turks. Edmund had reported to him with a smile that the Turkish Diplomat had been overjoyed, obviously expecting nothing more than the formality of, at best, and a polite refusal. Maybe he would become known as King Edward the Diplomat? Or King Edward the Just? Or even just plain King Edward?

Scotland

Acre

Castle

Details & Behaviour

Relations: So-so

Reputation: Deceitful

Power: Capable

Wealth: 293

Religion: Catholic

Make offer

Alliance

Attack faction

Give region

Make single payment

Regular tribute

Map information

Marry faction heir to princess

Make demand

Attack faction

Make single payment

Regular tribute

Map information

Make declaration

Cancel trade rights

Neutral for 32 turns

Good, we have found some common ground.

Demeanour: Neutral

|

Make offer

Russia

Antonina

Details & Behaviour

Priorities: Unknown

Reputation: Mixed

Power: Modest

Wealth: Bankrupt

Religion: Orthodox

Allies & Enemies

Allies: None

Enemies: Rebels

Current Treaties:

Trade rights granted: 0 turns



But for now there was battle to engage in, war was a necessity when you ruled the greatest Empire in the world, and he was more dedicated to the extermination of the Rebels now than ever before. They had killed his first adopted son, Mac Dobarchon of Angus, and his youngest Brother, Prince David. After the conquest of Baghdad, he'd barely had time to relax when Prince Alexander had approached him, obviously still distraught over David's death but oddly fixated on Edmund. Edward had only recently learned Edmund was laying siege to Damascus, where Rebels were apparently planning an attack on Acre, and it seemed Alexander was in possession of the same information. Grimfaced and obviously holding back the tears which had flowed freely on the battlefield, where the release of such emotion could be forgiven, Alexander had warned that the Canmore's had lost one son too many already, and no chances should be taken with Edmund, who by all accounts was outnumbered by the Rebels, even if they were mostly poorly equipped rabble.

Edward had faith in Edmund's ability to defeat a few Rebels, but Alexander was insistent that they MUST join Edmund at Damascus, and since they needed to return past Damascus on the road to Gaza anyway, Edward saw no reason not to reunite with their Brother.

Edmund received the message that Edward was returning and maintained his siege longer than normal, welcoming the extra numbers provided. He made his commiserations over David's death, and laughed when Edward told him Prince Finguine remained in Baghdad to act as Governor to a population not exactly pleased to have been "liberated" from Rebels.

"He'll learn Administration and Diplomacy the hard way," chuckled Edmund, as he showed Edward and Alexander his plans to take the city. They were much the same as either Brother would have made, making use of the smaller numbers to divide parts of the Rebel army from the rest and wear them down. With the extra numbers, the plan was only slightly modified; instead they would divide all sections of the Rebel army at once, and wipe them out quickly.





King Edward had brought his catapults from Baghdad, and made use of them here as he blasted at the Gate. Archers on the walls lit their arrows and fired volley after volley at the Catapults, and Edmund ordered two units forward with siege ladders both to draw their fire and clear the walls. The Gate was stout but far from invulnerable, and the constant barrage of heavy rock fired at it smashed through the huge doors as Crusader Knights and Highland Nobles climbed the ladders to do battle with the archers holding the walls on either side of the gate. Rebel Spearmen moved to brace themselves at the entrance, as Edmund sent his Mailed Knights charging in before the Spear could fortify their position.





The Crusader Knights made short work of the Archers on their side of the gate, and rushed through the tower to come to the aid of the Highland Nobles who had found themselves attacked in the rear by Spearmen held in reserve. Edmund had prepared for this eventuality, however, and held his Religious Fanatics in check, and the men charged up their siege ladders screaming in religious ecstasy as they plunged headfirst into the fray. On the ground, the surviving Rebel Cavalry tried to run from the battle as they saw the Scottish overwhelming them like a tide, an unstoppable force that screamed and laughed as it killed. But their attempts to flee were in vain, as the Generals joined the Mailed Knights in bringing down the survivors.

"This is it?" laughed Edward, "These rabble thought to take Acre from Scotland!?! None shall take from us! Scotland is invincible, INVINCIBLE!"

The Knights around him cheered, Edmund grinning as his Brother drank in the atmosphere of victory. Off to his side, Alexander stared at Edward with a blank face, betraying no apparent emotion.





Later that night, as soldiers revelled in the streets and inns and brothels did a roaring trade, Alexander excused himself early from the victory feast. No one questioned it, and if any thought it strange they made no mention, knowing Alexander was still distraught over David's death.

The youngest surviving son of Malcolm Canmore sat at his desk in his quarters, going over the papers sent to him as a member of the Royal Family, as well as those he gained by other means. Edinburgh and York seemed to managing themselves well in the absence of a member of the Royal Family; the Pope had called off his aggressive war with the Moors (the other report noting a call for donations to the Papacy suggested the reasons for the ceasefire may have more to do with Finances than a Divine Message); Venice had been excommunicated *again*; and the Turks were attempting to open more diplomatic ties with the rest of the world, emboldened by their unexpected trade deal with Scotland.



Diplomatic Information



The following factions are now at war with each other:



Venice



Sicily



The Holy Roman
Empire



Sicily

The following factions have declared a truce:



The Papal States



Moors



A cough got Alexander's attention, and he looked up to see two men standing in the entranceway to his chamber. One was the Diplomat, Patrick MacDougall, and the other Robert, the leader of the young Highland Nobles who had travelled to Gaza with him and David.

"What now for us, my Lord?" asked Robert, "We were ready to kill Edmund in the battle, then we learned Prince David had died and we were unsure how to act, and then you came to Damascus and told us to serve Edmund, and we did.... what now? Have we come all this way only to become more military fodder for our Egyptian Kings?"

"I was aggrieved to hear of Prince David's death, my Lord," said Patrick, ignoring Robert's open admission of collusion to commit murder and the contempt with which he used the word Egyptian, "Am I to take it from your part in the battle of Damascus that we are resigned now to accepting the fate dictated to us by King Edward?"

Alexander looked up at both of them, a Nobleman and a Diplomat, both saying the same thing in different ways, both looking to him for orders. He'd been older than David, but it had always been David others looked to for orders, including himself. Now it was his decision to make, and they waited to hear from him.

"Accept our fate?" he asked, then allowed a thin smile that made him look more like his Father than ever before, "Nae, I will return the Crown to the proper Canmore hands if I must strangle the life from Edward the Pretender myself. We will make Scotland itself once more, this I swear."

Chapter 8

Gille Calline the Balleol stood at the edge of the world, looking out over the ocean that disappeared into the sky far in the Horizon. He was a Diplomat, and his education had taken him from inauspicious beginnings in a small Scottish village to places most of the World's people would never know of, let alone see. He'd stood atop the pyramids; travelled down the Nile; sailed the ocean; crossed deserts; been entertained by pagans and heathens in their cities; slept with exotic women and drank bizarre alcohol that would spin the head of the toughest old Scot.

Character Details

Gille Calline the Balleol Age: 31

Diplomat Influence ██████████

Retinue: None

Traits: Diplomatic Nature, Discreet, Open to all Religions

But now here he stood looking out over the Edge of the World, knowing that he had to send word back to his King far back in Egypt. He was to be the bearer of bad tidings, in the midst of such good news. Prince Finguine had married; The Christian Knights of the Templar were travelling to Gaza to set up a Guildhouse there, which was seen as yet further evidence of the high esteem the Church felt for Scotland; Europe was embracing pressed paper, a creation from the Middle East brought to the Continent by Scottish Conquest; and three of Scotland's great rivals to the position of greatest Empire on Earth - France, The Holy Roman Empire, and Poland - had been excommunicated by the Pope.

Marriage Celebrations

Prince Finguine
Mariorie Arthyn

Celebrations erupt throughout the kingdom as news of the royal wedding makes its way to the far corners of the realm, and beyond. The people are already excitedly speculating whether or not their first-born will be a boy or a girl.

European Paper

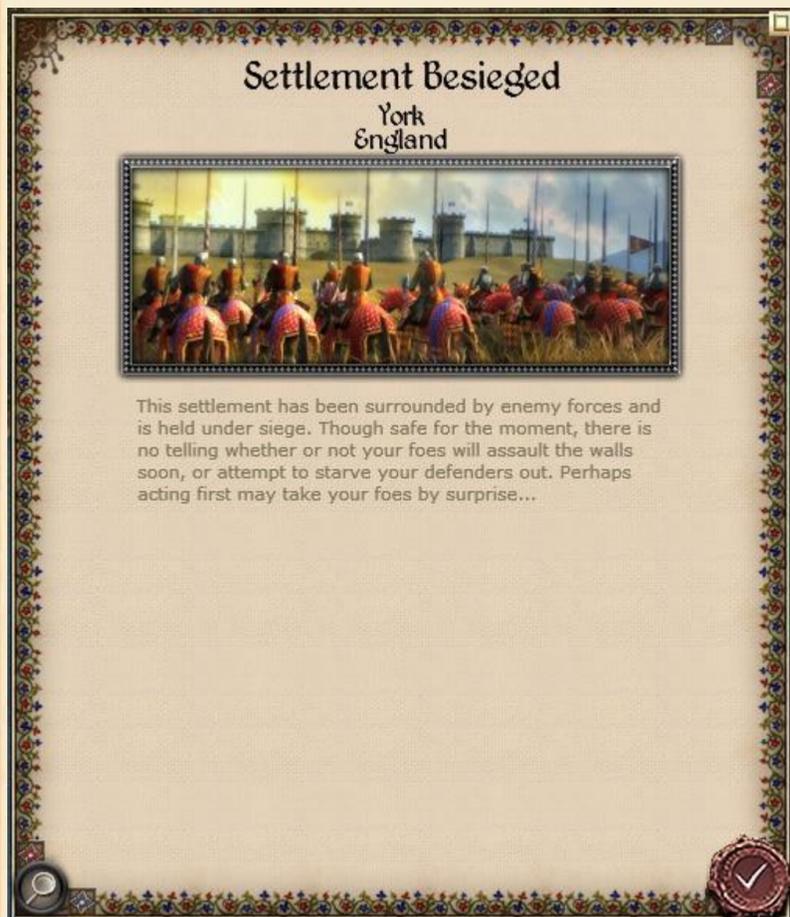
Word is spreading across Europe on a new medium... Written on pressed paper! What has been an expensive luxury imported from the Middle East and beyond has now come to western Europe.

A small mill devoted to pressing paper into sheets has been established in Xativa, south of Valencia. Although the ongoing Reconquista suggests that Islam is not welcome in Iberia, it is evident that some Muslim culture and innovations definitely are.

- The following factions have been excommunicated:
- The Holy Roman Empire
- The following factions have been excommunicated:
- France
- The following factions have been excommunicated:
- Poland

But Gille Calline had to send word to King Edward that Scotland's ancient rival had not forgotten them. While the sons of Malcolm Canmore had left their ancestral lands behind to conquer Egypt and build an Empire, the sons of William The Conqueror were looking to the North of their country, and the unprotected lands there.

England had laid siege to York.



At Aleppo, north of Gaza, King Edward was as yet unaware of this attack on the first City he'd ever captured, so many years ago. At the moment, his attention was on dealing with the Rebel Captain Khushqadam, who held the small Rebel Outpost that had been abandoned by the Turks several months earlier after an Earthquake. His Highlanders roared and jeered at the Rebel Archers as they peered over the flimsy looking wooden walls, screaming insults as the Rebels looked back grimly and silently, knowing Edward's reputation all too well.



The Archers finally gave a reaction when Edward ordered his catapults to fire on the Gate, unleashing a volley of flaming arrows in the hopes of burning it down before it could break down the door. But Edward was no novice, he'd had the catapults treated to resist

fire, and the flimsy gate barely stood a chance in the first place, the doors smashing open as Prince Alexander gave the order for the Cavalry to charge through the gates, followed closely by the Infantry.



Captain Khushqadam fell almost immediately, and the Rebels immediately broke, trying desperately to run from the thundering Horses, the roaring Highlanders, the blast of the Catapult, but not a single man escaped the wrath of King Edward The Tyrant.



In the aftermath of the battle, as Edward's commanders saw to their troops and the fortification of the outpost for Scotland's own use, as bodies were dragged into the desert to be burnt, a messenger arrived loyal to Prince Alexander, and bypassed King Edward to give him the news.

The Prince read the message with wide eyes, dismissing the messenger as he grabbed at a wall for balance. What Father had long feared had finally come to pass, the true cost of Edward's Egyptian misadventure, York was under siege by the English.



Captain Mac Dobarchon - named for a relative of his Father's long dead in Egypt - stood in the snow covered streets of York amongst the militia who stood in defence of the town. Outside the gates stood the English, unmounted Knights who would cut through them like butter if they made it through the walls. He called out to his men, all of whom he knew by name, all of whom could be dead by day's end.

"Lad's!" he cried, "Out there are the English.... if they come in, let's give them an old-fashioned Scottish welcome!"

His men roared in approval, as outside the Gates the English began to march forward, carrying no siege equipment, heading straight for the doors to York.

"Is that gate secure?" roared Mac, "Answer me damn you!"

But no reply came, until Mac harshly ordered runners to enter the tower to check the men who were supposed to be guarding the entrance, only for the gates to swing open as the English charged in. The cursed English had a spy inside!

"HOLD THEM AT THE GATE!" roared Mac, gripping his own sword and rushing forward as heavily armored English Knights smashed into his militia.



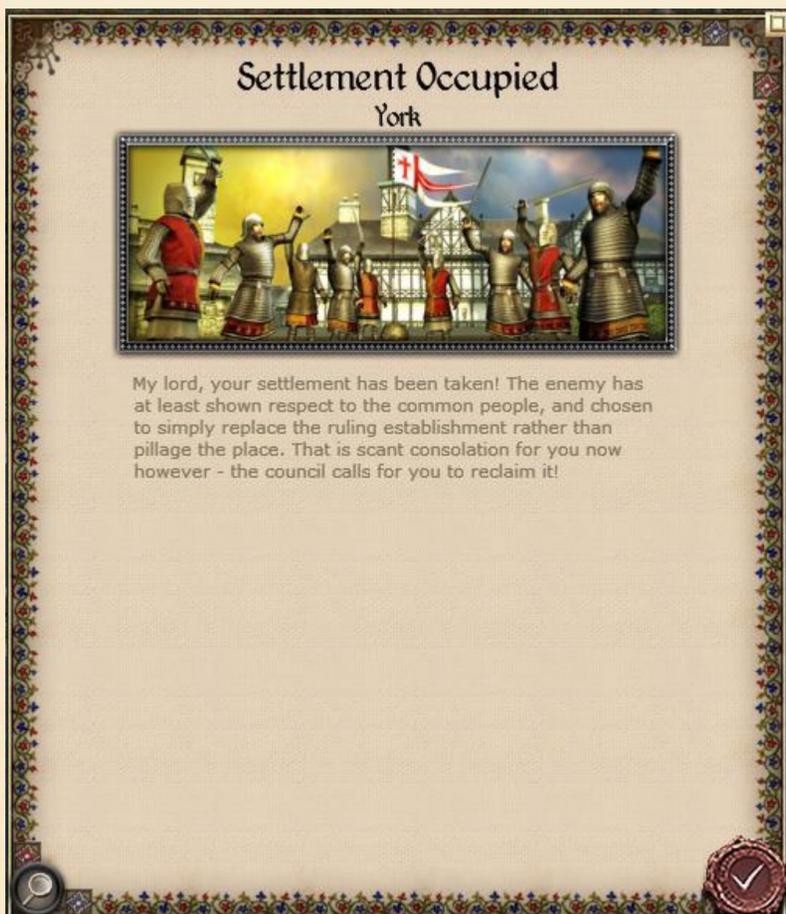
Mac slashed viciously at the Knights as they pressed against the line he was trying desperately to maintain, knowing that if the English could push past them they'd take York. The English Knights were hard to kill, but they moved sluggishly, allowing his more lightly armored militia to dodge and slash, cutting them down bit by bit. Just as Mac felt himself gaining a wild hope that they just might hold back the tide, a mighty roar rose from the back of the English host, and fresh Knights came charging through their own men, ignoring the Scottish as they charged through and over them, their immense weight inexorably parting the Scots and leaving them clear. They continued down the street as English militia moved in to replace them, attacking the Scottish with a vengeance, Mac cursing as he realized they meant to hold them at the Gate while their Knights took York unopposed.

"After them!" he roared, but his men could not obey, locked in a life or death struggle where they were. Mac roared in fury and cut at the English about him like a man possessed, and suddenly the English were running, charging past them and screaming for help. Mac raised his sword high and screamed for his men to follow him, and they charged down the street after the retreating English, the Captain still hoping they could catch up to the Knights and somehow, some way, wear the English down and hold the Town. But as the English militia ran, Knights charged in to meet the Scottish, blocking them from making it any further towards the City Centre.



Despite himself, Mac felt his heart welling with pride as he fought amongst the English Knights in the streets of York. None of his men had broken, none had hesitated to meet the English despite their superior armor and weapons, and none took a backwards step now. Scots went down, but so did the English and Mac felt a yearning to scream his defiance to the world, to tell the English they'd have to fight for every yard of Scottish ground. But that was his heart, not his mind, the latter telling him that if York fell, Edinburgh was next, and by now the Knights that had pushed past them would have taken the City Centre, would be making it a defensive fortress, would be taking control of important buildings and other defensive positions.

"York has fallen!" roared Mac bitterly, "Away! We return another day; we must go to the aid of Edinburgh!"



Chapter 9

"I hate the English," grunted Captain Aidan, standing on the walls of Edinburgh and staring out at the host of English that was laying siege to them.

"I hate the Scottish," muttered Captain Gregory, sitting his horse on the field outside Edinburgh staring up at the walls of the enemy.

Captain Aidan had 941 men, all of them untested in battle (with the exception of the survivors of York) but well trained for years in preparation of the inevitable. When young Prince Edward and Edmund had left Scotland they'd taken the bulk of King Malcolm's veteran fighters, leaving Edinburgh basically without a trained garrison. King Malcolm had instituted a training program for young Scottish men and called for reinforcements from Scottish Nobles and various villages throughout the land. But few had answered, not wanting to lose their own defences, and for years now, what Aidan considered the true Capital of Scotland (not some bizarre desert city on the other side of the world) had been defended by the militia. For years it had seemed that would be enough, as their only real threat, England, looked to France and ignored the North. But now England had taken York, and Edinburgh was left to stand alone.

They had sent word to King Edward in Egypt of course, but received no answer. Aidan didn't even know if the message had reached him, and even if it had, would Edward even care? He'd not returned once to Scotland, even for the burial of his Father, and as far as Aidan was concerned, the real rulers of Scotland had been Prince Alexander and David. David had died under Edward's care in the accursed desert, and Alexander apparently rode with Edward and Edmund now, the last Aidan had heard was that they were expanding their Empire north, towards the Turks.

If Morgunn Brechyne had been near, Aidan would have asked him to make contact with the Church in Europe and seek information of any possible help. But the Priest had disappeared after his recent trial, a farce brought about by an Inquisitor who had stopped on his way to Inverness. Contrary to popular opinion, not everyone who suffered the Inquisition was found guilty, and Morgunn had been found innocent of heresy, but the event had left the Priest clearly shaken. In any case, there were rumors that the Pope was focused on France at the current time, and despite recent poor relations with England, his Holiness was unlikely to come to Scotland's aid anytime soon by ordering England to call off their attack.

"It's come to this, lads!" he cried, "If the English take Edinburgh, they'll control all of Scotland beneath Inverness! There'll be nae going back to ye villages or ye clans, the English will take our homes, our lands, our women.... so what do ye say lads, are we going to let them!?"

The men roared their defiance, and Aidan grinned. This was possibly the bleakest point in Edinburgh's history, but by God he loved being Scottish, and he was looking forward to this fight!



"Send up the ram," yawned Captain Gregory, sitting his horse and looking thoroughly bored, "Fire arrows at the walls to keep the scum back, and have our militia place ladders at the walls and scale them. Let's **try** to have this done by nightfall, shall we? I think it's going to rain and I just had this armor polished."

The battering ram pushed forward with groans, the way hardgoing in the muddy grass alongside the road. The men cursed that the ram hadn't been placed on the paved road itself, but did so quietly, Captain Gregory was well known for his dislike of backchat in the ranks. In fact, the infantry were almost all concerned about the way Gregory was leading the Army, though none would say so.

He seemed almost irritated to have to come out into the field, and hadn't even known to order a latrine trench be dug when they arrived at Edinburgh, as if he expected one to be ready for him upon arrival. The ram had been placed on muddy grass in the damp Scottish weather rather than on the hard road, the siege ladders were in the control of untested militia units, and the archers were placed too close to the walls to be able to effectively fire over the walls. In fact, the ram hadn't been treated to make it fire resistant, and if the Scots were to....

"Fire flaming arrows!" roared Captain Aidan, and suddenly fiery death was raining down upon the English, arrows jamming into the ram which quickly caught alight.

"Put that bloody ram out!" snapped Captain Gregory with disdain, "It's useless if it is burnt, you fools!"

But the ram was all ready falling apart, and in desperation the archers charged behind the burnt remains for cover and began firing their arrows at the wall, all of them falling short. Captain Aidan barked laughter and ordered the men manning the gate towers to fire arrows from their murder holes, bringing down the archers where they stood.



At the walls themselves, English militia stared in horror up at their siege ladders at the laughing, taunting Scotsmen on the walls. Several tentatively started climbing, but when they reached the top they were quickly killed and thrown back, and suddenly the militia broke, turning and running from the ladders in horror.

"Are these English really men!?" screamed Aidan in rapturous disbelief as his men howled with laughter, "Arrows, bring the cowards down! Better they die than live like rabbits!"

Arrows brought them down in scores, as Captain Gregory clenched his teeth in fury, demanding to know what was wrong with the idiots he was being forced to deal with.

"Your orders, sir?" asked the Spearman Reserve Commander.

"Orders?" asked Gregory, confused, "Kill them! That's my order!"

The Commander blinked in surprise, then saluted sharply, "Yes sir, kill them we will."



Inside the city, Aidan grinned in satisfaction as the last of the English militia died squealing and running from the arrows. The last of the English were beyond the reach of the Gate Archers now, and it was time for Aidan to make a decision. The City seemed to be safe from the English breaching their walls, but their presence in the field was unacceptable. Aidan needed to take a risk, and venture out beyond the walls to put paid to them for good, or they would be back in greater numbers before they could reinforce and fortify the City.

Calling his Spearmen down from the walls, they marched to the gate where the Pikemen had been instructed to hold the Door, ready to absorb a Cavalry charge that had never come. Aidan stopped to speak quickly with the Pike Commander, warning him to hold steady if things went unexpectedly badly, and then contrary to all he had expected at day's dawning, ordered the gates of Edinburgh to open.





"That will do," sighed Captain Gregory, surprising his men, "These Scots are too ignorant to fight war in a proper fashion, and our men too lazy to follow proper command. We'll leave them their city for today."

Turning, Gregory rode away, followed shortly after by his perplexed and horrified men, leaving behind the English Spearmen to face the wild, laughing Scotsmen as they emptied out of the city and unleashed years of pent up frustration. To their credit, the English held for a few moments before turning and routing, chased for close to an hour by the laughing, whooping Scottish as they celebrated an unexpectedly clear and total victory.





Captain Aidan stood in the field with his men, watching the last of the English disappearing into the deep forests, and threw his head back and laughed. Doubling over, he clutched at a knee and roared with mirth before finally regaining control of himself. He stood tall and pulled off his helm, turning to face his men who were laughing, cheering, dancing and joking amongst themselves.

"A great victory, lads," he smiled, "But we must return to the City and send forth the call for reinforcements. The English will nae like having their noses bloodied like this, they'll be back, and they'll come in larger numbers..... and we'll throw him back just like we did today!"

Pope Gregory the Chivalrous sat in his sumptuously appointed offices, coughing roughly into a silk cloth as he read through the day's correspondence. Each day, the most important letters and missives off the thousands he received were separated out and sent to his Secretary for review, before being passed on to his final attention. Even with only 1% of the correspondence being sent to him eventually making its way to his desk, the Pope still dealt with scores of important documentation every day. Previous Popes had taken a less off-hand approach, in fact some had ignored the paperwork entirely in favor of either a more spiritual focus or, in a depressingly large number of cases, to indulge in the physical. But Pope Gregory wasn't interested in physical pursuits, his only interest was in the strengthening of the Church's position. So many of the world's nations professed devotion to God and the Church, but so few of them actually suited action to words. He sometimes felt Scotland was the only Nation that he could trust, and King Edward the only King who truly believed in spreading the word. Why the man had travelled halfway around the world to spread the message to the heathens in Egypt and liberated Jerusalem, Gaza and Baghdad from Islamic rule.

So it was with great pleasure when the Pope opened his next document and discovered that Scotland had officially joined the Crusade. He had called recently for the occupation of Toulouse, a city held by the ex-communicated French, and only Scotland so far had answered the call.

"Truly he is bless.... <cough, cough>... blessed by God," gasped the Pope, coughing more harshly, "King Edward the Blessed I... <cough>.... I call him, a true Catholic... a.... a...."

He opened the next document and his eyes widened as another fit of coughing overtook him, the report from his Inquisitor at Inverness telling him that the English had laid siege to Edinburgh!

"This.... this cannot.... <cough, cough>.... cannot stand," wheezed Pope Gregory, grabbing at parchment and quill, "The English go... <cough>.... go too far."

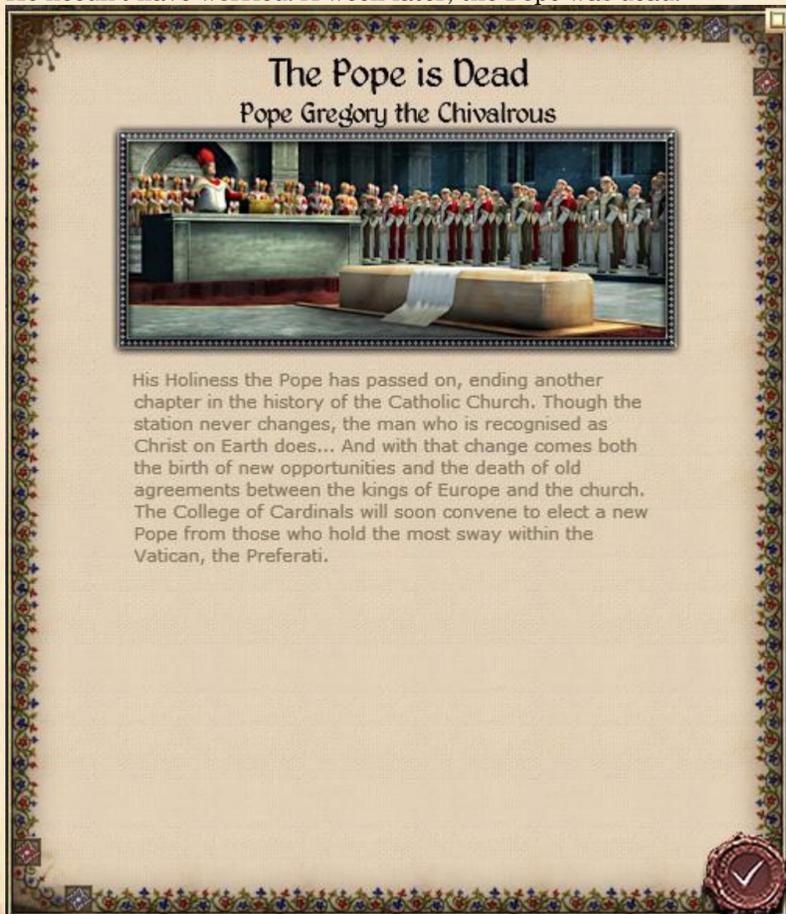
He coughed violently and cursed his failing body at a time when his mind and spirit felt more infused than ever with the Holy Spirit. Ringing a small bell on his desk, a page arrived and solemnly took the sealed parchment from him, leaving without a word but offering a quirk of his eyebrows to the Pope's Secretary, the man instantly understanding that the Pope needed his help. He entered the quarters and went to the Pope's side, supporting him as the man coughed violently.

"To bed please, your Holiness," whispered his Secretary, "You must preserve your strength if you are to continue God's work."

"I have.... <cough, cough>.... ordered the ex-communication of the English," wheezed the Pope as he allowed himself to be supported up from his desk, "They spit in my face by attacking the Scots.... you do not spit in the face of God's man!"

His Secretary agreed, helping the Pope into his adjourning quarters, where he undressed him and placed him into bed, urging him to rest himself. The Crusade against France would require the Pope to at least allow an audience with the Armies going to war on his behalf, and he would need his strength.

He needn't have worried. A week later, the Pope was dead.



to the Royal Court - Gille Calline the Balleol.

The Diplomat instantly gained kudos by speaking in flawless French, and offered just the right amount of ingratiating flattery without being saccharine to fit in perfectly in the Court. King Louis found himself impressed, the man wasn't just talking French, he was talking LIKE a French Noble, impressive indeed for a barbaric Scot.

Gille spoke eloquently of Scotland and France's shared Catholic faith, and of Scotland's service to the Church and God through the Christ on Earth, the Pope. But he also noted that where the last Christ on Earth called for the ex-communication of France and the capture of Toulouse, the current Christ on Earth called for the reconciliation of France. Scotland had no quarrel with France, it never had, and had acted only in the service of God's will, which was for no mortal to question or understand. Thus, a new Pope meant the declaration of War between Scotland and France should also come to an end.

King Louis felt immense relief wash over him, France's wealth had been sapped by its constant wars with its enemies, its power was capable but nowhere near that of Scotland's. But in the French Court, appearance was everything, and thus he kept a blank face as he noted with a bored look, "Oui, why not?"



Outside Antioch, north of Damascus, King Edward received note from Gille of the deal with France without much interest. He'd never wanted to go to war with France, but one did not ignore the call of the Pope, plus it had given him an opportunity he would not otherwise have had. Now they were not at war with France, and no French or Scottish soldier had come within shouting distance of each other, it had been a war on paper only. What did interest him was Gille's report on the actions of the Scottish army that had landed on France, and he read those details over and over again before he was satisfied.

Stepping outside of his tent, he stared at the walls of Antioch. Another City taken by rebels that they thought would be safe haven for them, located at it was between desert and mountains. But nowhere was safe for the Rebels from Edward, he would not be satisfied until they were all in Hell.







With Antioch taken, King Edward wasted little time in riding his army to the small outpost of Adana, taking control of the final rebel stronghold between Scotland and the Turks with little trouble. The mountains provided a good natural buffer between the two Nations, which pleased Edward as at the current time he had no desire to fight the Turks.... but he also knew the Church would not look kindly on an Alliance with non-Catholics.

To the South and West, his agents were investigating the previously known locations of Rebel Desert strongholds. King Edward had plans to take control of much of the African coastline, which would put him in a position to launch from any number of locations should he seek to expand into Europe at any point. But that was far into the future, and in his darker nights, Edward wondered if he, Edmund and Alexander's sons would be the ones to fulfil the dreams of their Fathers.

In Scotland, Captain Aidan walked the walls of Edinburgh and wondered if his sons would live as Scottish men. Perhaps they would, but in some far off desert under the rule of King Edward? Or worse still, would they grow up English?

England had laid siege to Edinburgh within a week of their defeat there. By that time, however, Aidan had managed to bring more men in from nearby villages and farms, and though they were mostly untrained they made up numbers, and that had been enough to scare England off.... for now.

But recently reports had come to him of English ships sailing up and down between the Irish and English coasts, and armies unloading into York in preparation for another shot at Edinburgh. When they came this time, they'd bring catapults and rams treated to be fire resistant. They'd bring siege ladders manned by experienced troops and siege towers that would allow huge numbers to jump onto the walls. They'd come from multiple angles, spreading the Scottish troops thin, and they would overwhelm them with sheer numbers alone. All ready a spy had been spotted inside the City Walls, only to escape when challenged. Who knew how many had entered the city unseen.

"Men approach from the West!" cried a guard, and Aidan briskly marched along the walls to see. He reached the guard, who pointed out towards the far distant shore where a large, unmarked mercenary ship sat anchored. About halfway between the distant coast and Edinburgh was the raised dust of what was clearly a marching army.

"How many?" he asked, as the guard lifted a looking glass to his eye.

"Close to 1500, by my reckoning," gulped the Guard, "Sir, they have catapults."

Aidan cursed, and asked himself why they were approaching from the West instead of from York.... unless they were to lay siege while reinforcements came up from York.... in which case it would not be a battle, but slaughter, the annihilation of every soldier in Edinburgh for sure. He took the looking glass from the guard and raised it to his own eye, grimacing at the approaching men covered in dust from marching, too far away still to make out faces or emotions.... but.... but.

"That's nae English red," he whispered, and squinted his eye tight as he looked through the glass again, "That's blue.... that's the blue of Scotland, by God!"

"Sir?" asked the Guard, "There are nae Scottish troops of such number anywhere but Egypt."

"The Crusade..." gasped Aidan, a huge smile crossing his face, "Do ye not see, man? Scotland joined the Crusade.... but the Crusade did nae happen! And what happened to the Crusaders?"

"They... they..." started the guard, his eyes growing wide and a smile lighting up his own face as he too realized what Aidan had already grasped.

"The army has returned to Scotland!" laughed Aidan, then roared with glee from the walls,"The army has returned to Scotland!"

And marching down the road far in the distance, Prince Alexander Canmore lead his 1500 men down the road towards Edinburgh.

Towards home.



Read more at <http://www.letsplayarchive.com/Scotsman>