

## Visit of Heraclius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, 1185

*Painted by Stephen Reid (1873- 1940), 1918-19*

Object no. 1931.277

Location - Bayeux Gallery, Museum of Reading



This painting shows the Patriarch of Jerusalem pleading for Henry II to send a crusade to defend the holy land from the Muslim leader Saladin.

The Holy Land was part of the Byzantine Empire until the Muslim Arab conquest in 635AD. Christians tolerated this situation until the invasion by the Seljuk Turks, whose hostility toward pilgrims led, in 1096, to the start of the First Crusade. This established the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem.

In 1185 Jerusalem was threatened by Muslim invaders. King Baldwin V of Jerusalem sent a delegation to urge Western powers to send a crusade to rescue the Holy Land. On 17 March 1185 the Patriarch of Jerusalem and Lord Roger des Moulins, Master of the Hospitallers, visited Reading Abbey to ask for King Henry II's help.

Henry called a council in London with his nobles and King William of Scotland. Money was voted to help the cause, but eventually the Crusade was declined. In 1187, the Christians were defeated at Hattin and Jerusalem fell in the same year.

The painting shows Heraclius kneeling before King Henry, who is seated with Abbot Hugh II in the east end of the Chapter House. Next to the Patriarch is the Master of the Hospitallers, shown in the costume of the Order. The Master holds the banner of Jerusalem and on the steps are the keys to Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre. There are also reliquaries containing the relics of the Nativity, Passion and Resurrection of Christ. These are all gifts from Baldwin V to obtain Henry's support.