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This map depicts the location of Ibelin, known today as both "Yabneh" and "Yavneh." Not far from the Mediterranean coastline, the former "Ibelin" is about 15 miles (25 km) south of Tel Aviv. Map image online via the Vatican's website.

Before the Crusaders arrived in the Holy Land, the Ibelin family likely lived in northern Italy. The family's patriarch, Barisan, came to be known as Balian the Elder. Nothing is known of his life until 1115, when he was Constable of [Jaffa](#).

When a revolt broke out in 1134 between the Count of Jaffa and King Fulk, the [ruler of the Kingdom](#), Barisan supported the king. As a reward, he became prominent in the royal court and, in 1144, [Fulk](#) gave the [Ibelin family](#) a newly built castle. It was soon called "Ibelin."

The castle—the Crusaders built [many throughout the country](#)—was [located](#) (see lower right-hand corner, opposite Jerusalem) about 15 miles (24 kilometers) [south of today's Tel Aviv](#) in a town known to the Greeks as [Jamnia](#) and to the Romans as Iamnia. Once an ancient Philistine city, it became a center of Jewish culture in the first century.

[Spared by Vespasian](#), around 70 A.D., Jamnia was fortified by the Crusaders when they arrived in the Holy Land, nearly a thousand years later. In 1948, when Israel became an independent state, the town changed hands and is today called Yavne by Jewish people and [Yibna](#) by Palestinians.

Because of their father's status, Barisan's children were acquainted with the royal family. In 1177, his youngest son (Balian of Ibelin) married Maria Comnena, the widow (and Dowager Queen) of [King Amalric I](#) (Fulk's second son). Maria, a blood-royal herself, was great-grandniece of Manuel [Comnenus](#), the Byzantine emperor.

Significant to this story, Maria was the stepmother of Sibylla, Amalric's oldest daughter, and mother of [Isabella](#) (the beautiful half-sister of Sibylla who also had a claim to the Jerusalem throne).

During the time of tension caused by Baldwin IV's leprosy and death, Balian of Ibelin opposed Guy of Lusignan and supported Raymond of Tripoli as the king's regent. When Guy and Sibylla carried out their successful coup, Balian's brother was so upset that he left the country for [Antioch](#).

Balien, however, ultimately paid homage to the man he had once opposed.

According to Ibn al-Athir, the Muslim historian, Balian of Ibelin was "a lord who held a rank among the Franj more or less equal to that of king."

After escaping the Horns of Hattin battlefield, Balian took refuge in Tyre, as did other survivors. His wife, the Dowager Queen Marie, was still in Jerusalem where she had gone to be with Sibylla.

Since it was unsafe for Marie to travel to Tyre on her own, following the Crusader defeat at Hattin, Balian asked

Saladin for permission to retrieve his wife. In exchange for that favor, Balien agreed that he would spend only one night in Jerusalem and would bear no arms.

Saladin agreed, but once Balien arrived in Jerusalem, everything changed.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/BALIEN-of-IBELIN-Kingdom-of-Heaven>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/BALIEN-of-IBELIN-Kingdom-of-Heaven>

Media Stream



Location of Ibelin - Known Today as Yabneh

Map image online via the Vatican's website, known as "Christus Rex."

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Location-of-Ibelin-Known-Today-as-Yabneh>

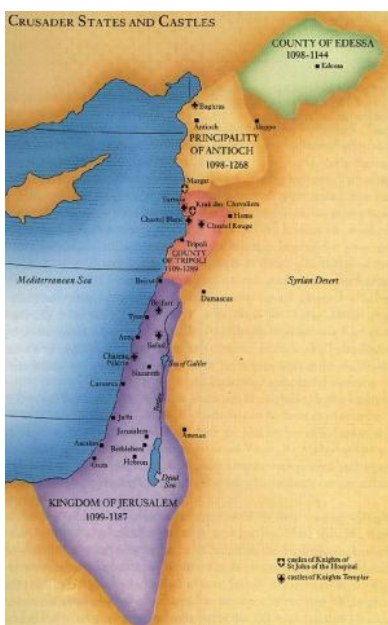


Jaffa - Illustration

Image, described above, online courtesy [New York Public Library Digital Gallery](#).

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Crusader States and Castles - Map

Image online, courtesy Missouri State University.

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Jaffa Castle

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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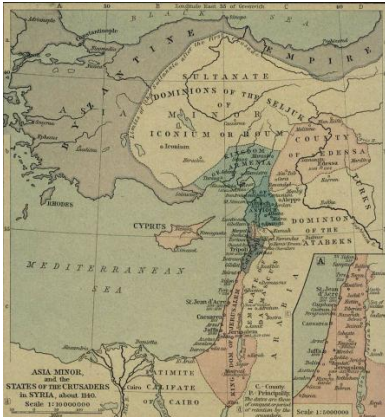


Krak Castle

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Ibelin Castle - Map Locator

Map online, courtesy Perry Castañeda Map Collection (University of Texas, at Austin).

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Ibelin - Map Locator

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Tel Aviv Today

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Yibna Village

Online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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General view of the site from the south looking north. The ruins of Yibna's mosque appear on the horizon; Israeli houses are in the foreground. (April 1951) source: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Yibna-Village>



Isabella

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Antioch - Map Locator

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