

William of Tyre, *Chronicle*

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Archbishop William of Tyre (d. c. 1184/5) is the most important chronicler of the four 12th-century polities known collectively as the Latin East or the Crusader States, formed in the wake of the First Crusade (1095-9): the kingdom of Jerusalem, the principality of Antioch, and the counties of Edessa and Tripoli. Born in Jerusalem around 1130, William spent two decades in Europe, roughly 1145-65, receiving an education in the schools of Paris, Orléans, and Bologna, before returning to the East. On arrival, he quickly received the patronage of King Amalric of Jerusalem (r. 1163-74), first acting as ambassador to the Byzantine court in 1168, then becoming royal chancellor in 1174 and archbishop of Tyre the year after. He even acted as tutor to Amalric's son, the future king Baldwin IV (r. 1174-85).

Alongside his religious and political duties, William was a keen author, producing several works: a now lost history of Islam known as the *Gesta orientaliū principū*, an account of the Third Lateran Council (1179), and his magnum opus, the *Chronicon* ('Chronicle', otherwise known as the *Historia Ierosolymitana*, 'The history of Jerusalem'). Probably composed and edited between 1170 and the mid-1180s, this chronicle covers the history of the Crusader States from their inception through to 1184, when the text ends abruptly.

The extracts translated here, drawn from William's *Chronicon*, deal with moments of Christian-Muslim warfare or diplomacy. The first focusses on the massacre of Jerusalem's Muslim inhabitants by the forces of the First Crusade on 15 July 1099. The next passage details a battle fought between King Baldwin II of Jerusalem (r. 1118-31) and the *atabeg* (or ruler) of Mosul, Aq Sunqur al-Bursuqī, near to Muslim-held Aleppo in 1125, which includes a commentary on the nature of inter-faith warfare. The final extract details the events surrounding a diplomatic agreement made in 1167 between Amalric and the Fāṭimid caliph, al-ʿĀḍīd (r. 1160-71), at the behest of the latter's vizier, Shawar, who bears the title sultan.

CMR 3, pp. 767-77. See further:

M. Köhler, *Alliances and Treaties between Frankish and Muslim Rulers in the Middle East*, transl. P. Holt and K. Hirschler, Leiden, 2013.

N. Morton, 'Perceptions of Islam in William of Tyre's *Historia*', in S.B Edgington and H.J Nicholson (eds), *Deeds done beyond the sea: Essays on William of Tyre, Cyprus and the military orders, presented to Peter Edbury*, Abingdon, 2014, 13–24.

T. Kirschberger, *Erster Kreuzzug und Ethnogenese: In novam formam commutatus – Ethnogenetische Prozesse im Fürstentum Antiochia und im Königreich Jerusalem*, Göttingen, 2015.

K. Skottki, *Christen, Muslime und der Erste Kreuzzug: Die Macht der Beschreibung in der mittelalterlichen und modernen Historiographie*, Münster, 2015.

A.D. Buck, 'Settlement, identity, and memory in the Latin East: an examination of the term "Crusader States"', *English Historical Review* 135.573 (2020) 271-302.

A.E. Zimo, 'Us and them: Identity in William of Tyre's *Chronicon*', *Crusades* 18 (2020) 1–19.

This translation is based on R.B.C. Huygens, *Willelmi Tyrensis archiepiscopi Chronicon*, 2 vols, Turnhout, 1986.

8.20. And it is certain to have occurred by the just judgement of God that those who had profaned the Lord's sanctuary [the Holy Sepulchre] by their superstitious rites and had rendered it alien to the faithful people [the Christians], should cleanse it with the shedding of their own blood and pay for this outrage by incurring an expiatory death [i.e. the massacre of the people of Jerusalem during the First Crusade]. Indeed, it was horrific to look upon the multitude of the slaughtered and to observe the fragments of human limbs here and there, and every surface overflowing with the spray of the bloodshed. Not only was there anguish for those who looked upon the bodies of the dead, with the more important limbs mutilated and the heads cut off, but it was also perilous to look upon the victors themselves who, blood-soaked from the soles of their feet to the crowns of their heads, caused a certain horror for those meeting them. Within the Temple [Mount] enclosure, up to ten thousand of the enemies are said to have died, excepting the others throughout the city who, having been killed, filled the streets and the squares, the number of whom was said to be no less. [p. 412]

13.16. Thus, al-Bursuqī, seeing the advance of our men and knowing for certain that they were prepared to join battle immediately, as was their way as prudent men, and seeing

that he was unable to decline an honourable battle, also drew up his own forces – which were said to have numbered 15,000 horsemen – in 20 battle lines. Having ordered the cohorts on both sides, and arranged them in ranks and against those who, in their turn, were advancing against them, by custom they rushed vigorously against the enemy and each in turn inflicted unspeakable slaughter with a violent eagerness for arms, causing death in many forms.

Indeed, it is usual in conflicts of this sort for the resentment of great sacrilege and the contempt of laws to cause the provocation of hatred and the fomentation of enmity. For battle is waged differently and less vehemently between kindred of the same law and faith than between the dissolute and those holding contradictory traditions. Thus, even if no other cause for hatred exists, it is sufficient that they do not share the same articles of faith to cause continual offence and perpetual quarrels. Having joined battle, therefore, the battle lines mentioned above violently set about one another. [pp. 605–6]

19.17. It pleased [Shawar], therefore, and seemed expedient to us as well, to restore the ancient pacts and to establish with inviolable stability a perpetual treaty of peace between the lord king and the caliph. [...] As the agreement pleased both sides, the lord king gave his right hand to those who had been sent by the caliph to agree the pact. However, he also sent [to Cairo] the lord Hugh of Caesarea [...] and with him certain others, in whose hand the caliph was to confirm the pact, just as it had been agreed. [...]

19.18. Having arrived at the palace [of the caliph in Cairo...] they were led through narrow passages and places lacking in light, approaching with a great multitude of clerks, who preceded them with swords and a great din. [...]

19.19. And, having passed through many winding and devious ways [...] they were admitted into the inner part of the palace, with the sultan [Shawar] exhibiting the usual deference to his lord [the caliph] according to custom. [...] Then, the sultan, approaching with all reverence, humbly pressed kisses on the feet of the seated [caliph] and explained the cause of the arrival of the legates and the tenor of the pact [made with Amalric]. [...] At this, with a quiet cheerfulness of expression, [the caliph] responded very kindly and calmly that he was prepared to fulfil the agreement, just as it had been undertaken and agreed upon by both sides. [...]

Then it was requested by our men that he should confirm this with his own hand, just as the lord king had done. At first, those who were close to him and the chamberlains who

were nearby and heard this and in whose hands had been the responsibility of the royal discussions saw this as an abhorrent thing utterly unheard of in worldly affairs. At last, though, after much deliberation and at the sultan's earnest insistence, [the caliph] extended his hand very reluctantly, albeit covered.

At this point, with the Egyptians greatly surprised and astonished that anyone might speak so freely to the highest prince, the aforementioned Hugh of Caesarea said: 'Lord, trust has no concealments, but in the midst of trust, by which princes are accustomed to be obliged to one another, everything ought to be laid bare and open, and whatsoever has been inserted into a pact by a pledge of good trust should be agreed upon with sincerity by everyone, whether to be both bound or unbound. Therefore, either you shall give your bare hand, or we shall be compelled to suppose that you have on your side something false and insincere.

Thereupon, at length, with great reluctance and as if detracting from his own dignity, yet still smiling (which the Egyptians bore with great discomfort), he presented his bare right hand into the hand of the lord Hugh. With the same Hugh dictating the form of the pact, [the caliph], following the provisions by the syllable, called to witness that he would observe the tenor of the agreement with good faith, without deceit or evil tricks. [...] Having dismissed them, [the caliph] sent gifts to the legates as a sign of his royal liberality, which commended the prince so greatly by their magnitude and splendour that they left the presence of so great a prince delighted and joyfully returned to their own lands. [pp. 886–9]