# *Prologue*

On 15 May 1174 Nur ad-Din, the greatest ruler of western Islam, died at Damascus leaving an eleven-year-old heir, and his dominions were torn by faction as his kinsmen and generals fought for control. Two months later, on 11 July, King Amalric of Jerusalem died of dysentery at the age of thirty-eight. He was succeeded by his thirteen-year-old son, who was crowned king as Baldwin IV four days later. Although Baldwin suffered from leprosy, he remained king until his death in 1185, during which time Saladin, ruler of Egypt, made himself master of all Nur ad-Din's former territories until he ruled an empire stretching from the frontier of Libya to northern Iraq. It was like a giant Islamic nutcracker pivoted round the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. In 1187 Saladin sprang the mechanism: he invaded Galilee, defeated the Franks at Hattin on 4 July and the first Crusader Kingdom came to an end.

The classic description of the internal history of the Latin Kingdom 1174–87 is that of Sir Steven Runciman:

> Now two definite parties arose, the one composed of the native barons and the Hospitallers, following the leadership of Count Raymond [of Tripoli], seeking an understanding with their foreign neighbours, and unwilling to embark on risky adventures; the other composed of newcomers from the West and the Templars. This party was aggressive and militantly Christian; and it found its leaders in 1175 when at last Reynald of Châtillon was released from his Moslem prison, together with Joscelin of Edessa, a Count without a county whom fate had turned into an adventurer.[1]

This colourful story gathers momentum as the leper king's reign continues and fresh actors line up on either side. On the 'good' side, that of Raymond of Tripoli, are the historian, William archbishop of Tyre, chancellor of the Kingdom, and the Ibelin brothers, Baldwin, who aspired to marry the leper king's sister and heiress, Sibyl, and

[1] S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1951–5), II, p. 405.

his brother Balian, who did marry King Amalric's widow, the Byzantine princess Maria Comnena, and thereby become the stepfather of the leper king's half-sister Isabel. On the 'bad' side the cast is led by Agnes of Courtenay, King Amalric's first wife, whose marriage had been annulled in 1163, but who was the leper king's mother and became very powerful during his reign. She is held responsible for two decisions that had a baneful effect on the future of the kingdom: first, she persuaded her daughter Sibyl, the heir to the throne, to reject the suit of Baldwin of Ibelin and to marry a handsome but useless young man from France, Guy of Lusignan; secondly, she used her influence to secure the appointment of her former lover, Heraclius, who lived in open concubinage and was poorly educated, as patriarch of Jerusalem in preference to the learned and godly William of Tyre. This group was joined in 1185 by the new, hot-headed master of the Temple, Gerard of Ridefort, an avowed enemy of the count of Tripoli. In 1186 this party seized power and excluded their more able rivals from government. The kingdom was therefore singularly ill-equipped to meet Saladin's attack in 1187 because all the wrong people were in positions of authority. Furthermore, had Raymond of Tripoli and his friends been in office the attack would never have taken place because they knew how to keep peace with Saladin.

The first two volumes of Sir Steven's *History of the Crusades* were published while I was an undergraduate. I read them with avidity, and although I now disagree with his account of the leper king's reign, I still think that his *History* is one of the great literary works of English historical writing, which has inspired an interest in and enthusiasm for the crusades in a whole generation. Any book dealing with so long a span of history is bound to be in part a work of synthesis, and in his account of the events leading up to Hattin Sir Steven accepted what was then the most recent modern account, that of Marshall Baldwin, *Raymond III of Tripolis and the Fall of Jerusalem*, which appeared to be borne out by the contemporary chronicle sources. Sir Steven was, of course, aware when he was writing that American scholars were planning a multi-volume history of the Crusades: 'It may seem unwise for one British pen to compete with the massed typewriters of the United States' he commented in the preface to his first volume.[2] That work, the

[2] *Ibid.*, I, p. xii.

Pennsylvania *History of the Crusades*, began to appear in 1958, and the last chapter in the first volume was entitled 'The decline and fall of Jerusalem, 1174–1189'. It was written by Baldwin, and told exactly the same story as that found in Runciman, and this congruence of opinion in the two standard modern histories made it appear that there was unanimity among scholars about the events of the leper king's reign.[3]

Baldwin did not make up the 'two-party' account of the fall of Jerusalem. Thomas Archer and Charles Kingsford, in their contribution to a series called *The Story of the Nations* in 1894, noted how by the end of Baldwin IV's reign: 'it would seem that there were two parties in the state; on the one side the native nobles, on the other the aliens'.[4] Indeed, the evidence on which this theory is based is found in the two principal narrative sources for the years 1174–87, both composed in the Holy Land, the *Chronicle* of William of Tyre, and the *Chronicle* of Ernoul. I shall consider in Chapter 1 the problems which those texts present.

The traditional interpretation of the history of the Crusader States in the period 1174–87 is convincing only if the view of Saladin that has been traditional in the English-speaking world ever since Sir Walter Scott published *The Talisman* in 1825 is accepted as true. This represents the sultan as a man of honour, who could always be relied upon to keep his word. Scott did not invent that view, but merely repeated what the sultan's official biographers had said about him. This view of Saladin appeared to validate the opinion of Baldwin; that Raymond of Tripoli and his supporters had been right in supposing that Saladin would honour the truces that he made with them, and that however great his power became, he would be willing to live at peace with his Christian neighbours even though they had turned Jerusalem, the third holy city of Islam, into an exclusively Christian city.

The first reappraisal of Saladin was made by Andrew Ehrenkreutz in 1972. He did not adduce much new evidence, but he brought a new critical approach to his subject, treating the contemporary lives of Saladin just as any western scholar would treat the contemporary lives of a saint, for example those of Saint Louis. I found his book

[3] M.W. Baldwin, 'The decline and fall of Jerusalem, 1174–1189', in Setton, *Crusades*, I, pp. 590–621.
[4] T.A. Archer and C.L. Kingsford, *The Crusades. The Story of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (London, 1894), p. 268.

refreshing, though I thought that he was overreacting to the work of his predecessors and was reluctant to concede any good qualities to Saladin.[5] Then in 1982 Malcolm Lyons and David Jackson published *Saladin. The Politics of the Holy War.* This work is based on a wide range of new archival material and provides a serious reappraisal of Saladin and of his relations with the Franks.

Other studies made during the past twenty-five years of particular aspects of the history of the Latin Kingdom in the years leading up to Hattin have also shown that the traditional interpretation is inadequate. In 1973 Jonathan Riley-Smith drew attention to the fact that the constitutional issues involved in the appointment of a regent for Baldwin V and of a successor to him in 1186 were far more complex than the conventional interpretation allowed.[6] In 1978 I published a paper on Reynald of Châtillon, in which I argued that he was far from being a maverick robber baron, a view that modern scholars have derived from the *Chronicle* of Ernoul, but was considered a serious military threat by Islamic contemporaries.[7] When Joshua Prawer's *festschrift* appeared in 1983 it contained two revisionist essays about Baldwin IV's reign and its aftermath. R.C. Smail, one of the most judicious of the older generation of English crusading historians, in 'The predicaments of Guy of Lusignan', examined sympathetically Guy's reasons for fighting the battle of Hattin; whereas on the evidence of the accounts given in the Old French *Continuations* of William of Tyre, this is usually dismissed as a rash and irresponsible decision by the king and Gerard of Ridefort, who disregarded the wise advice of Raymond of Tripoli that they should not fight. The other essay, by Benjamin Kedar, was about the Patriarch Heraclius. He has had an almost uniformly hostile press since the twelfth century because of the stories in Ernoul about his liaison with Pascha dei Rivieri, a merchant's wife known as 'Madame la Patriarchesse', and about his alleged avarice at the fall of Jerusalem, when he left the city with the treasures of the Church, which he refused to spend on ransoming poor Christian captives. While not attempting to deny the patriarch's weaknesses, Kedar wrote also of his strengths, notably his excellent education, equal to

[5] A.S. Ehrenkreutz, *Saladin* (Albany, 1972).
[6] J. Riley-Smith, *The Feudal Nobility and the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1174–1277* (London, 1973), pp. 106–12.
[7] B. Hamilton, 'The elephant of Christ: Reynald of Châtillon', SCH, 15 (Oxford, 1978), pp. 97–108.

that of William of Tyre, and showed that he was not an unworthy head of the Catholic establishment in the kingdom, even though he may have been a worldly one.[8] In 1993 Peter Edbury published an article in which he argued that the traditional division into two factions of the powerful men in the Latin Kingdom during the years leading up to Hattin cannot be sustained.[9]

As these examples show, many scholars share the view that a re-examination of Baldwin IV's reign and the events leading up to Saladin's victory at Hattin is necessary. The most recent survey of the period, Pierre Aubé's *Baudouin IV de Jérusalem. Le roi lépreux*, published in 1981, runs to 500 pages, but is merely a retelling of the traditional account based on William of Tyre and Ernoul. Mark Pegg wrote an interesting article in which he examined what their readiness to have a leper as king tells us about the way in which the Franks of the East perceived their own society and the king's place within it.[10] Pegg is primarily concerned with the social implications of Baldwin's illness, but in any case Baldwin's reign needs more sustained exploration than the best article can provide. I have written this book in an attempt to meet that need.

I have tried to examine more fully Baldwin IV's own role in the events of his reign. Earlier writers have portrayed him as a brave warrior, but also as a man who, because of his poor health, had little power but was manipulated by court factions. My own conclusion, which the reader must judge, is that the leper king had a more dynamic role in the affairs of the Latin East.

[8] R.C. Smail, 'The predicaments of Guy of Lusignan, 1183–87', in *Outremer*, pp. 159–76 and B.Z. Kedar, 'The Patriarch Eraclius', in *Outremer*, pp. 177–204.

[9] P.W. Edbury, 'Propaganda and faction in the Kingdom of Jerusalem: the background to Hattin', in M. Shatzmiller (ed.), *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-century Syria* (Leiden, 1993), pp. 173–89.

[10] M.G. Pegg, 'Le corps et l'autorité: la lèpre et Baudouin IV', *Annales. Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 45(2) (1990), pp. 265–87.

CHAPTER I

# *The sources for Baldwin IV's reign*[1]

## LATIN AND OLD FRENCH SOURCES

### *Narrative accounts*

Two independent accounts of Baldwin IV's reign were written in the Latin East, William of Tyre's *Chronicle* and the *Chronicle* attributed to Ernoul. William was born in Jerusalem in c.1130, but as a young man went to western Europe where he was trained in the schools of France and Lombardy. After he returned to the Latin East in 1165 King Amalric commissioned him to write a history of the Crusader Kingdom.[2] This is divided into twenty-three books and covers the period from the origins of the First Crusade to the year 1184. Book XXIII is incomplete, consisting only of a separate preface and a single chapter.[3] Although the precise date of William's death is disputed, it occurred before 21 October 1186. William is justly considered one of the finest historians of the central Middle Ages and was uniquely well placed to be knowledgeable about public affairs in Baldwin IV's reign. King Amalric had appointed him tutor to Prince Baldwin in 1170, and then in 1175, during Baldwin IV's minority and while Raymond of Tripoli was regent, William was appointed archbishop of Tyre (a position second only to that of patriarch of Jerusalem in the Catholic hierarchy), and chancellor of

[1] I have not given references to those works mentioned in this chapter that can be readily identified in the bibliography.

[2] R. Hiestand, 'Zum Leben und zur Laufbahn Wilhelms von Tyrus', *Deutsches Archiv* 34 (1978), pp. 345–80; P.W. Edbury and J.G. Rowe, *William of Tyre. Historian of the Latin East* (Cambridge, 1988); H.-E. Mayer, *Die Kanzlei der lateinischen Könige von Jerusalem*, 2 vols., MGH Schriften, 40 (Hanover, 1996), I, pp. 167–253.

[3] Robert Huygens argued that William did complete Book XXIII, but that the remainder of the text has been lost, 'La tradition manuscrite de Guillaume de Tyr', *Studi Medievali* 5 (1964), pp. 281–373 at p. 314.

the kingdom, which meant that he had charge of the royal archive and writing office. But scholars have been reluctant to accept that because William was an important political figure he was unlikely to have been impartial in his reporting of events, for although his work as chancellor gave him an excellent opportunity to be well informed about matters of state, he was also constrained, as any political figure is, by the need to be discreet. He is too good an historian to falsify evidence, but he is guilty on occasion of suppressing the truth. Sometimes he appears to have done this for reasons of political necessity. His account of Philip of Flanders's negotiations with the crown in 1177, for example, is so guarded that it is difficult to make out what really happened, although it is clear from hints that William gives that he knew much more than he wrote.[4] But at other points in his narrative he uses silence as a weapon with which to attack those of whom he disapproved, by consigning their deeds to oblivion. This is particularly evident in his treatment of Reynald of Châtillon, who is seldom mentioned by William, but who occupies a central place in Muslim accounts of Saladin's wars with the Franks of Jerusalem. William also sometimes gives accurate information in a misleading way. This is a political skill, and his account of the leper king's reign has to be used as a political source; it is written by the chancellor of the kingdom, not by an impartial and detached observer. Robert Huygens has produced an exemplary edition of William's *Chronicle* which is a pleasure to read.

The other account of Baldwin IV's reign written in the Latin Kingdom is the work edited by Louis de Mas-Latrie as *La Chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard le Trésorier*. In four manuscripts of this text the author is named as Ernoul. The relevant passage records how on 1 May 1187 Balian of Ibelin came to the castle of La Fève and found it deserted: 'Dont fist descendre i sien varlet qui avoit a non Ernous. Ce fu cil qui cest conte fist metre en escript.'[5] Nothing more is known for certain about him, although Mas-Latrie thought it possible that he was Arnaix de Gibelet, an Ibelin supporter in Cyprus in the early 1230s, an identification which Ruth Morgan found persuasive, but which is of necessity speculative.[6] In its present form the work contains an account of the history of the Kingdom of

[4] WT, XXI, 13–18, pp. 979–87 and 24, pp. 994–6.
[5] Ernoul, p. 149; M.R. Morgan, *The Chronicle of Ernoul and the Continuations of William of Tyre* (Oxford, 1973), p. 41.
[6] Morgan, *Chronicle*, pp. 44–6.

Jerusalem from 1099 until 1228, which becomes more detailed during the reign of Baldwin IV. Some manuscripts contain additional material covering the years 1228–32, and Ruth Morgan argued convincingly that Bernard the Treasurer, who is named in the colophons of two of them, was the compiler of that recension.[7]

If Ernoul was a page in 1187 he cannot have been more than about fifteen years old, and although this means that he was an eyewitness of events immediately preceding and following Hattin, he must have relied on verbal reports when writing about Baldwin IV's reign as he had only been a child at the time. It is not easy to determine how much he wrote himself of the chronicle which bears his name. It begins with the words:

> Oiés et entendés comment la tiere de Jherusalem et la Sainte Crois fut conquise de Sarrasins sour Chrestiiens. Mais ançois que je vous die, vous noumerai les rois et les segneurs ki furent puis le tans Godefroi, qui le conquist sour Sarrasins, il et li Chrestiien ki avoec lui estoient.[8]

In view of this statement of intent it is reasonable to suppose that Ernoul's account extended to the end of the Third Crusade in 1192. He may himself have added material about the later history of the kingdom, or that may have been the work of later editors of his text. All the surviving manuscripts of this chronicle date from the second half of the thirteenth century or later, and it seems highly probable that in all of them some changes have been made to the original work.

It is a very different kind of text from William of Tyre's *Chronicle*. Much of the historical material is cast in an anecdotal form and is interspersed with long digressions about the topography of the Crusader States, which is often enlivened by stories drawn from the Old and New Testaments and occasionally from Josephus, together with some comments on the fauna of the region, largely derived from St Isidore.[9] Despite its loose structure, it is an important historical source. The material about Baldwin IV's reign is based on evidence supplied by eyewitnesses who had a different perspective from William of Tyre. The section of the work that covers the period

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 46–58; see section II, parts A and C of J. Folda, 'Manuscripts of the *History of Outremer* by William of Tyre: a handlist', *Scriptorium* 27 (1973), pp. 90–5 at p. 93.

[8] Ernoul, pp. 4–5; Ruth Morgan argued convincingly that the preface published by Mas-Latrie on pp. 1–4 of his edition and attributed by him to Bernard the Treasurer was not part of the Chronicle at all, *Chronicle*, pp. 57–8.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 117–37.

1184–7 has a unique importance as the only sustained narrative account of the history of the Latin Kingdom in those critical years after William of Tyre's *Chronicle* ended. Nevertheless, Ernoul's *Chronicle* is a work of polemic, and the author's express purpose, as the opening words of his text show, is to place the blame for the loss of the kingdom on the people who were in power in 1187, almost all of whom were dead when his account was written. His chief informants were presumably his patron, Balian of Ibelin, and Balian's wife, King Amalric's widow, Maria Comnena. From the beginning of Amalric's reign, where an account is given of his divorce from Agnes of Courtenay, to the end of the Third Crusade in 1192, the work is, as Ruth Morgan pointed out, 'the story from the Ibelin point of view, answering by implication all those who saw the Ibelins as the villains and not the heroes [of the events leading up to Saladin's conquest]'.[10] This source certainly needs to be used with great caution, yet it has not always been handled in that way. I suspect that part of the reason for this is that the *Chronicle* has great charm both because of the language in which it is written and because of the vivid stories and imaginary conversations with which it is filled, which make it seem more like a twelfth-century romance than a conventional history. Historians have sometimes used it in preference to other, better sources, even sometimes in preference to William of Tyre, and have reached some strange conclusions as a result of this.

There is an Old French translation of William of Tyre known as *L'estoire de Eracles empereur et la conqueste de la terre d'Outremer*, a title taken from the opening words of William's *Chronicle*. This text is usually referred to simply as the *Eracles*. In the *Recueil* edition of William of Tyre the *Eracles* is printed as a kind of running footnote to the Latin text, but the best existing edition of it is that made by Paulin Paris in 1879–80. In 1987, under the auspices of the Institute of Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a group of scholars, of whom I was one, investigated the relationship between William of Tyre and the *Eracles*, which contains many variant readings and additions to William's text. Robert Huygens made the important observation that the *Eracles* does not seem to be based on any of the known manuscripts of William of Tyre. It appears from internal information to have been written by a western

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 136; cf. pp. 112–14.

clerk, almost certainly of noble birth, who had visited the Holy Land, and wrote at some time between 1205 and c.1234. John Pryor, who wrote the official report of the 1987 seminar, concluded: 'The text of the *Eracles* is useful to historians. It does contain important information independent of that provided by William of Tyre . . . It is not simply a translation of William of Tyre and is worthy of study in its own right.'[11] This accurately reflects my own view.

Although some manuscripts of the *Eracles* contain only the translation of William of Tyre's *Chronicle*, there are no fewer than sixty which include continuations of it. All the continuations extend to 1232, and in twenty-six manuscripts further continuations have been added extending into the second half of the thirteenth century, but these are not relevant to the present study.[12] The continuations which cover the period 1184–1232 begin with Book XXIII of William of Tyre's *Chronicle*, omitting the special preface but translating chapter 1. They then continue with an adaptation of the text of the *Chronicle* of Ernoul for the years 1184–1232, but omitting the earlier part of his work. The surviving manuscripts fall into three main families. By far the largest number, represented by manuscripts *c* and *g* in the *Recueil* edition, are, despite some variations, broadly in agreement with the text of the Ernoul manuscripts; but important differences are found in the Colbert-Fontainebleau *Continuation*, while the text of MS Lyon 828 stands apart from the rest.[13] Ruth Morgan argued that the *Chronicle* of Ernoul had only been preserved in an abridged form, the work of later compilers, and considered that Lyons 828 most closely represented Ernoul's original text for the period 1184–97, albeit in an abbreviated form.[14]

[11] J.H. Pryor, 'The *Eracles* and William of Tyre: an interim report', in HH, pp. 270–93 at p. 293.

[12] Sections III, IV, V of Folda 'Manuscripts of the *History of Outremer*', pp. 93–5. Related to the *Chronicle* of Ernoul and to the Old French *Continuations* of William of Tyre is the *Estoires d'Outremer et de la naissance Salehadin*, of which Margaret Jubb has recently produced a critical edition. This is an historical account of the Crusader States from 1099 to 1230, which contains long fictional interpolations, notably of the romances known as *La fille du comte de Ponthieu* and *L'Ordre de chevalerie*. It is still unclear whether Samuel de Broë, seigneur de Citry et de la Guette's *Histoire de la conqueste du royaume de Jérusalem sur les chrestiens par Saladin* (Paris, 1679) is based on a lost manuscript of the *Estoires d'Outremer*, or whether it is a seventeenth-century reworking of the *Estoires*, of no interest to the historian of the Latin Kingdom. I have not found material in either of these works relevant to the present study.

[13] Morgan, *Chronicle*, pp. 9–11; P.W. Edbury, 'The Lyons *Eracles* and the Old French Continuations of William of Tyre', in *Montjoie*, pp. 139–53 at pp. 139–40.

[14] Morgan, *Chronicle*, pp. 98–116; see also her introduction to her edition of the Lyons text: M.R. Morgan (ed.), *La continuation de Guillaume de Tyr (1184–1197)*, DRHC 14 (Paris, 1982), pp. 7–16.