

= William of Tyre =

William of Tyre (Latin : Willelmus Tyrensis ; c . 1130 ? 29 September 1186) was a medieval prelate and chronicler . As archbishop of Tyre , he is sometimes known as William II to distinguish him from a predecessor , William of Malines . He grew up in Jerusalem at the height of the Kingdom of Jerusalem , which had been established in 1099 after the First Crusade , and he spent twenty years studying the liberal arts and canon law in the universities of Europe .

Following William 's return to Jerusalem in 1165 , King Amalric made him an ambassador to the Byzantine Empire . William became tutor to the king 's son , the future King Baldwin IV , whom William discovered to be a leper . After Amalric 's death , William became chancellor and archbishop of Tyre , two of the highest offices in the kingdom , and in 1179 William led the eastern delegation to the Third Council of the Lateran . As he was involved in the dynastic struggle that developed during Baldwin IV 's reign , his importance waned when a rival faction gained control of royal affairs . He was passed over for the prestigious Patriarchate of Jerusalem , and died in obscurity , probably in 1186 .

William wrote an account of the Lateran Council and a history of the Islamic states from the time of Muhammad . Neither work survives . He is famous today as the author of a history of the Kingdom of Jerusalem . William composed his chronicle in excellent Latin for his time , with numerous quotations from classical literature . The chronicle is sometimes given the title *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum* (" History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea ") or *Historia Ierosolimitana* (" History of Jerusalem ") , or the *Historia* for short . It was translated into French soon after his death , and thereafter into numerous other languages . Because it is the only source for the history of twelfth @-@ century Jerusalem written by a native , historians have often assumed that William 's statements could be taken at face value . However , more recent historians have shown that William 's involvement in the kingdom 's political disputes resulted in detectable biases in his account . Despite this , he is considered the greatest chronicler of the crusades , and one of the best authors of the Middle Ages .

= = Early life = =

The Kingdom of Jerusalem was founded in 1099 at the end of the First Crusade . It was the third of four Christian territories to be established by the crusaders , following the County of Edessa and the Principality of Antioch , and followed by the County of Tripoli . Jerusalem 's first three rulers , Godfrey of Bouillon (1099 ? 1100) , his brother Baldwin I (1100 ? 1118) , and their cousin Baldwin II (1118 ? 1131) , expanded and secured the kingdom 's borders , which encompassed roughly the same territory as modern @-@ day Israel , Palestine , and Lebanon . During the kingdom 's early decades , the population was swelled by pilgrims visiting the holiest sites of Christendom . Merchants from the Mediterranean city @-@ states of Italy and France were eager to exploit the rich trade markets of the east .

William 's family probably originated in either France or Italy , since he was very familiar with both countries . His parents were likely merchants who had settled in the kingdom and were " apparently well @-@ to @-@ do " , although it is unknown whether they participated in the First Crusade or arrived later . William was born in Jerusalem around 1130 . He had at least one brother , Ralph , who was one of the city 's burgesses , a non @-@ noble leader of the merchant community . Nothing more is known about his family , except that his mother died before 1165 .

As a child William was educated in Jerusalem , at the cathedral school in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre . The scholaster , or school @-@ master , John the Pisan , taught William to read and write , and first introduced him to Latin . From the *Historia* it is clear that he also knew French and possibly Italian , but there is not enough evidence to determine whether he learned Greek , Persian , and Arabic , as is sometimes claimed .

Around 1145 William went to Europe to continue his education in the schools of France and Italy , especially in those of Paris and Bologna , " the two most important intellectual centers of twelfth @-@ century Christendom . " These schools were not yet the official universities that they would

become in the 13th century , but by the end of the 11th century both had numerous schools for the arts and sciences . They were separate from the cathedral schools , and were established by independent professors who were masters of their field of study . Students from all over Europe gathered there to hear lectures from these masters . William studied liberal arts and theology in Paris and Orléans for about ten years , with professors who had been students of Thierry of Chartres and Gilbert de la Porrée . He also spent time studying under Robert of Melun and Adam de Parvo Ponte , among others . In Orléans , one of the pre @-@ eminent centres of classical studies , he read ancient Roman literature (known simply as " the Authors ") with Hilary of Orléans , and learned mathematics (" especially Euclid ") with William of Soissons . For six years , he studied theology with Peter Lombard and Maurice de Sully . Afterwards , he studied civil law and canon law in Bologna , with the " Four Doctors " , Hugo de Porta Ravennate , Bulgarus , Martinus Gosia , and Jacob de Boragine . William 's list of professors " gives us almost a who 's who of the grammarians , philosophers , theologians , and law teachers of the so @-@ called Twelfth @-@ Century Renaissance " , and shows that he was as well @-@ educated as any European cleric . His contemporary John of Salisbury had many of the same teachers .

= = Religious and political life in Jerusalem = =

The highest religious and political offices in Jerusalem were usually held by Europeans who had arrived on pilgrimage or crusade . William was one of the few natives with a European education , and he quickly rose through the ranks . After his return to the Holy Land in 1165 , he became canon of the cathedral at Acre . In 1167 he was appointed archdeacon of the cathedral of Tyre by Frederick de la Roche , archbishop of Tyre , with the support of King Amalric .

Amalric had come to power in 1164 and had made it his goal to conquer Egypt . Egypt had been invaded by King Baldwin I fifty years earlier , and the weak Fatimid Caliphate was forced to pay yearly tribute to Jerusalem . Amalric turned towards Egypt because Muslim territory to the east of Jerusalem had fallen under the control of the powerful Zengid sultan Nur ad @-@ Din . Nur ad @-@ Din had taken control of Damascus in 1154 , six years after the disastrous siege of Damascus by the Second Crusade in 1148 . Jerusalem could now expand only to the southwest , towards Egypt , and in 1153 Ascalon , the last Fatimid outpost in Palestine , fell to the crusaders . Nur ad @-@ Din , however , also wished to acquire Egypt , and sent his army to hinder Amalric 's plans . This was the situation in the east when William returned from Europe . In 1167 Amalric married Maria Comnena , grand @-@ niece of Byzantine emperor Manuel I Comnenus , and in 1168 the king sent William to finalize a treaty for a joint Byzantine @-@ crusader campaign against Egypt . The expedition , Amalric 's fourth , was the first with support from the Byzantine navy . Amalric , however , did not wait for the fleet to arrive . He managed to capture Damietta , but within a few years he was expelled from Egypt by one of Nur ad @-@ Din 's generals , Saladin , who would later become Jerusalem 's greatest threat .

Meanwhile , William continued his advancement in the kingdom . In 1169 he visited Rome , possibly to answer accusations made against him by Archbishop Frederick , although if so , the charge is unknown . It is also possible that while Frederick was away on a diplomatic mission in Europe , a problem within the diocese forced William to seek the archbishop 's assistance .

On his return from Rome in 1170 he may have been commissioned by Amalric to write a history of the kingdom . He also became the tutor of Amalric 's son and heir , Baldwin IV . When Baldwin was thirteen years old , he was playing with some children , who were trying to cause each other pain by scratching each other 's arms . " The other boys gave evidence of pain by their outcries , " wrote William , " but Baldwin , although his comrades did not spare him , endured it altogether too patiently , as if he felt nothing ... It is impossible to refrain from tears while speaking of this great misfortune . " William inspected Baldwin 's arms and recognized the possible symptoms of leprosy , which was confirmed as Baldwin grew older .

Amalric died in 1174 , and Baldwin IV succeeded him as king . Nur ad @-@ Din also died in 1174 , and his general Saladin spent the rest of the decade consolidating his hold on both Egypt and Nur ad @-@ Din 's possessions in Syria , which allowed him to completely encircle Jerusalem . The

subsequent events have often been interpreted as a struggle between two opposing factions , a " court party " and a " noble party . " The " court party " was led by Baldwin 's mother , Amalric 's first wife Agnes of Courtenay , and her immediate family , as well as recent arrivals from Europe who were inexperienced in the affairs of the kingdom and were in favour of war with Saladin . The " noble party " was led by Raymond III of Tripoli and the native nobility of the kingdom , who favoured peaceful co @-@ existence with the Muslims . This is the interpretation offered by William himself in the *Historia* , and it was taken as fact by later historians . Peter W. Edbury , however , has more recently argued that William must be considered extremely partisan as he was naturally allied with Raymond , who was responsible for his later advancement in political and religious offices . The accounts of the 13th @-@ century authors who continued the *Historia* in French must also be considered suspect , as they were allied to Raymond 's supporters in the Ibelin family . The general consensus among recent historians is that although there was a dynastic struggle , " the division was not between native barons and newcomers from the West , but between the king 's maternal and paternal kin . "

Miles of Plancy briefly held the regency for the underaged Baldwin IV . Miles was assassinated in October 1174 , and Raymond III was soon appointed to replace him . Raymond named William chancellor of Jerusalem , as well as archdeacon of Nazareth , and on 6 June 1175 , William was elected archbishop of Tyre to replace Frederick de la Roche , who had died in October 1174 . William 's duties as chancellor probably did not take up too much of his time ; the scribes and officials in the chancery drafted documents and it may not have even been necessary for him to be present to sign them . Instead he focused on his duties as archbishop . In 1177 he performed the funeral services for William of Montferrat , husband of Baldwin IV 's sister Sibylla , when the patriarch of Jerusalem , Amalric of Nesle , was too sick to attend .

In 1179 , William was one of the delegates from Jerusalem and the other crusader states at the Third Lateran Council ; among the others were Heraclius , archbishop of Caesarea , Joscius , bishop of Acre and William 's future successor in Tyre , the bishops of Sebastea , Bethlehem , Tripoli , and Jabala , and the abbot of Mount Sion . Patriarch Amalric and Patriarch of Antioch Aimery of Limoges were unable to attend , and William and the other bishops did not have sufficient weight to persuade Pope Alexander III of the need for a new crusade . William was , however , sent by Alexander as an ambassador to Emperor Manuel , and Manuel then sent him on a mission to the Principality of Antioch . William does not mention exactly what happened during these embassies , but he probably discussed the Byzantine alliance with Jerusalem , and Manuel 's protectorate over Antioch , where , due to pressure from Rome and Jerusalem , the emperor was forced to give up his attempts to restore a Greek patriarch . William was absent from Jerusalem for two years , returning home in 1180 .

= = Patriarchal election of 1180 = =

During William 's absence a crisis had developed in Jerusalem . King Baldwin had reached the age of majority in 1176 and Raymond III had been removed from the regency , but as a leper Baldwin could have no children and could not be expected to rule much longer . After the death of William of Montferrat in 1177 , King Baldwin 's widowed sister Sibylla required a new husband . At Easter in 1180 , the two factions were divided even further when Raymond and his cousin Bohemond III of Antioch attempted to force Sibylla to marry Baldwin of Ibelin . Raymond and Bohemond were King Baldwin 's nearest male relatives in the paternal line , and could have claimed the throne if the king died without an heir or a suitable replacement . Before Raymond and Bohemond arrived , however , Agnes and King Baldwin arranged for Sibylla to be married to a Poitevin newcomer , Guy of Lusignan , whose older brother Aimery of Lusignan was already an established figure at court .

The dispute affected William , since he had been appointed chancellor by Raymond and may have fallen out of favour after Raymond was removed from the regency . When Patriarch Amalric died on 6 October 1180 , the two most obvious choices for his successor were William and Heraclius of Caesarea . They were fairly evenly matched in background and education , but politically they were allied with opposite parties , as Heraclius was one of Agnes of Courtenay 's supporters . It seems

that the canons of the Holy Sepulchre were unable to decide , and asked the king for advice ; due to Agnes ' influence , Heraclius was elected . There were rumours that Agnes and Heraclius were lovers , but this information comes from the partisan 13th @-@ century continuations of the Historia , and there is no other evidence to substantiate such a claim . William himself says almost nothing about the election and Heraclius ' character or his subsequent patriarchate , probably reflecting his disappointment at the outcome .

= = Death = =

William remained archbishop of Tyre and chancellor of the kingdom , but the details of his life at this time are obscure . The 13th @-@ century continuators claim that Heraclius excommunicated William in 1183 , but it is unknown why Heraclius would have done this . They also claim that William went to Rome to appeal to the Pope , where Heraclius had him poisoned . According to Peter Edbury and John Rowe , the obscurity of William 's life during these years shows that he did not play a large political role , but concentrated on ecclesiastical affairs and the writing of his history . The story of his excommunication , and the unlikely detail that he was poisoned , were probably an invention of the Old French continuators . William remained in the kingdom and continued to write up until 1184 , but by then Jerusalem was internally divided by political factions and externally surrounded by the forces of Saladin , and " the only subjects that present themselves are the disasters of a sorrowing country and its manifold misfortunes , themes which can serve only to draw forth lamentations and tears . "

His importance had dwindled with the victory of Agnes and her supporters , and with the accession of Baldwin V , infant son of Sibylla and William of Montferrat . Baldwin was a sickly child and he died the next year . In 1186 he was succeeded by his mother Sibylla and her second husband Guy of Lusignan , ruling jointly . William was probably in failing health by this point . Rudolf Hiestand discovered that the date of William 's death was 29 September , but the year was not recorded ; whatever the year , there was a new chancellor in May 1185 and a new archbishop of Tyre by 21 October 1186 . Hans E. Mayer concluded that William died in 1186 , and this is the year generally accepted by scholars .

William 's foresight about the misfortunes of his country was proven correct less than a year later . Saladin defeated King Guy at the Battle of Hattin in 1187 , and went on to capture Jerusalem and almost every other city of the kingdom , except the seat of William 's archdiocese , Tyre . News of the fall of Jerusalem shocked Europe and plans were made to send assistance . According to Roger of Wendover , William was present at Gisors in France in 1188 when Henry II of England and Philip II of France agreed to go on crusade : " Thereupon the king of the English first took the sign of the cross at the hands of the Archbishop of Rheims and William of Tyre , the latter of whom had been entrusted by our lord the pope with the office of legate in the affairs of the crusade in the western part of Europe . " Roger was however mistaken ; he knew that an unnamed archbishop of Tyre was present and assumed it must have been the William whose chronicle he possessed , although the archbishop in question was actually William 's successor Joscius .

= = Works = =

William reports that he wrote an account of the Third Council of the Lateran , which does not survive . He also wrote a history of the Holy Land from the time of Muhammad up to 1184 , for which he used Eutychius of Alexandria as his main source . This work seems to have been known in Europe in the 13th century but it also does not survive . August C. Krey thought William 's Arabic sources may have come from the library of the Damascene diplomat Usama ibn Munqidh , whose library was looted by Baldwin III from a shipwreck in 1154 . Alan V. Murray , however , has argued that , at least for the accounts of Persia and the Turks in his chronicle , William relied on Biblical and earlier medieval legends rather than actual history , and his knowledge " may be less indicative of eastern ethnography than of western mythography . "

== Latin chronicle ==

In the present work we seem to have fallen into manifold dangers and perplexities . For , as the series of events seemed to require , we have included in this study on which we are now engaged many details about the characters , lives , and personal traits of kings , regardless of whether these facts were commendable or open to criticism . Possibly descendants of these monarchs , while perusing this work , may find this treatment difficult to brook and be angry with the chronicler beyond his just deserts . They will regard him as either mendacious or jealous ? both of which charges , as God lives , we have endeavored to avoid as we would a pestilence .

William 's great work is a Latin chronicle , written between 1170 and 1184 . It contains twenty @-@ three books ; the final book , which deals with the events of 1183 and the beginning of 1184 , has only a prologue and one chapter , so it is either unfinished or the rest of the pages were lost before the whole chronicle began to be copied . The first book begins with the conquest of Syria by Umar in the seventh century , but otherwise the work deals with the advent of the First Crusade and the subsequent political history of the Kingdom of Jerusalem . It is arranged , but was not written , chronologically ; the first sections to be written were probably the chapters about the invasion of Egypt in 1167 , which are extremely detailed and were likely composed before the Fatimid dynasty was overthrown in 1171 . Much of the *Historia* was finished before William left to attend the Lateran Council , but new additions and corrections were made after his return in 1180 , perhaps because he now realized that European readers would also be interested in the history of the kingdom . In 1184 he wrote the Prologue and the beginning of the twenty @-@ third book .

William had access to the chronicles of the First Crusade , including Fulcher of Chartres , Albert of Aix , Raymond of Aguilers , Baldric of Dol , and the *Gesta Francorum* , as well as other documents located in the kingdom 's archives . He used Walter the Chancellor and other now @-@ lost works for the history of the Principality of Antioch . From the end of Fulcher 's chronicle in 1127 , William is the only source of information from an author living in Jerusalem . For events that happened in William 's own lifetime , he interviewed older people who had witnessed the events about which he was writing , and drew on his own memory .

William 's classical education allowed him to compose Latin superior to that of many medieval writers . He used numerous ancient Roman and early Christian authors , either for quotations or as inspiration for the framework and organization of the *Historia* . His vocabulary is almost entirely classical , with only a few medieval constructions such as " loricator " (someone who makes armour , a calque of the Arabic " zarra ") and " assellare " (to empty one 's bowels) . He was capable of clever word @-@ play and advanced rhetorical devices , but he was prone to repetition of a number of words and phrases . His writing also shows phrasing and spelling which is unusual or unknown in purely classical Latin but not uncommon in medieval Latin , such as :

confusion between reflexive and possessive pronouns ;

confusion over the use of the accusative and ablative cases , especially after the preposition in ;

collapsed diphthongs (i.e. the Latin diphthongs ae and oe are spelled simply e) ;

the dative " mihi " (" to me ") is spelled " michi " ;

a single " s " is often doubled , for example in the adjectival place @-@ name ending which he often spells " -enssis " ; this spelling is also used to represent the Arabic " sh " , a sound which Latin lacks , for example in the name Shawar which he spells " Ssauar " .

== Literary themes and biases ==

Despite his quotations from Christian authors and from the Bible , William did not place much emphasis on the intervention of God in human affairs , resulting in a somewhat " secular " history . Nevertheless , he included much information that is clearly legendary , especially when referring to the First Crusade , which even in his own day was already considered an age of great Christian heroes . Expanding on the accounts of Albert of Aix , Peter the Hermit is given prominence in the preaching of the First Crusade , to the point that it was he , not Pope Urban II , who originally conceived the crusade . Godfrey of Bouillon , the first ruler of crusader Jerusalem , was also

depicted as the leader of the crusade from the beginning , and William attributed to him legendary strength and virtue . This reflected the almost mythological status that Godfrey and the other first crusaders held for the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the late twelfth century .

William gave a more nuanced picture of the kings of his own day . He claimed to have been commissioned to write by King Amalric himself , but William did not allow himself to praise the king excessively ; for example , Amalric did not respect the rights of the church , and although he was a good military commander , he could not stop the increasing threat from the neighbouring Muslim states . On a personal level , William admired the king 's education and his interest in history and law , but also noted that Amalric had " breasts like those of a woman hanging down to his waist " and was shocked when the king questioned the resurrection of the dead .

About Amalric 's son Baldwin IV , however , " there was no ambiguity " . Baldwin was nothing but heroic in the face of his debilitating leprosy , and he led military campaigns against Saladin even while still underaged ; William tends to gloss over campaigns where Baldwin was not actually in charge , preferring to direct his praise towards the afflicted king rather than subordinate commanders . William 's history can be seen as an apologia , a literary defense , for the kingdom , and more specifically for Baldwin 's rule . By the 1170s and 1180s , western Europeans were reluctant to support the kingdom , partly because it was far away and there were more pressing concerns in Europe , but also because leprosy was usually considered divine punishment .

William was famously biased against the Knights Templar , whom he believed to be arrogant and disrespectful of both secular and ecclesiastical hierarchies , as they were not required to pay tithes and were legally accountable only to the Pope . Although he was writing decades later , he is the earliest author to describe the actual foundation of the Templar order . He was generally favourable towards them when discussing their early days , but resented the power and influence they held in his own time . William accused them of hindering the Siege of Ascalon in 1153 ; of poorly defending a cave @-@ fortress in 1165 , for which twelve Templars were hanged by King Amalric ; of sabotaging the invasion of Egypt in 1168 ; and of murdering Assassin ambassadors in 1173 .

Compared to other Latin authors of the twelfth century , William is surprisingly favourable to the Byzantine Empire . He had visited the Byzantine court as an official ambassador and probably knew more about Byzantine affairs than any other Latin chronicler . He shared the poor opinion of Alexius I Comnenus that had developed during the First Crusade , although he was also critical of some of the crusaders ' dealings with Alexius . He was more impressed by Alexius ' son John II Comnenus ; he did not approve of John 's attempts to bring the crusader Principality of Antioch under Byzantine control , but John 's military expeditions against the Muslim states , the common enemy of both Greeks and Latins , were considered admirable . Emperor Manuel , whom William met during his visits to Constantinople , was portrayed more ambivalently , much like King Amalric . William admired him personally , but recognized that the Empire was powerless to help Jerusalem against the Muslim forces of Nur ad @-@ Din and Saladin . William was especially disappointed in the failure of the joint campaign against Egypt in 1169 . The end of the *Historia* coincides with the massacre of the Latins in Constantinople and the chaos that followed the coup of Andronicus I Comnenus , and in his description of those events , William was certainly not immune to the extreme anti @-@ Greek rhetoric that was often found in Western European sources .

As a medieval Christian author William could hardly avoid hostility towards the kingdom 's Muslim neighbours , but as an educated man who lived among Muslims in the east , he was rarely polemical or completely dismissive of Islam . He did not think Muslims were pagans , but rather that they belonged to a heretical sect of Christianity and followed the teachings of a false prophet . He often praised the Muslim leaders of his own day , even if he lamented their power over the Christian kingdom ; thus Muslim rulers such as Mu 'in ad @-@ Din Unur , Nur ad @-@ Din , Shirkuh , and even Jerusalem 's ultimate conqueror Saladin are presented as honourable and pious men , characteristics that William did not bestow on many of his own Christian contemporaries .

= = = Circulation of the chronicle = = =

After William 's death the *Historia* was copied and circulated in the crusader states and was

eventually brought to Europe . In the 13th century , James of Vitry had access to a copy while he was bishop of Acre , and it was used by Guy of Bazoches , Matthew Paris , and Roger of Wendover in their own chronicles . However , there are only ten known manuscripts that contain the Latin chronicle , all of which come from France and England , so William 's work may not have been very widely read in its original form . In England , however , the Historia was expanded in Latin , with additional information from the Itinerarium Regis Ricardi , and the chronicle of Roger Hoveden ; this version was written around 1220 .

It is unknown what title William himself gave his chronicle , although one group of manuscripts uses Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum and another uses Historia Ierosolimitana . The Latin text was printed for the first time in Basel in 1549 by Nicholas Brylinger ; it was also published in the Gesta Dei per Francos by Jacques Bongars in 1611 and the Recueil des historiens des croisades (RHC) by Auguste @-@ Arthur Beugnot and Auguste Le Prévost in 1844 , and Bongars ' text was reprinted in the Patrologia Latina by Jacques Paul Migne in 1855 . The now @-@ standard Latin critical edition , based on six of the surviving manuscripts , was published as Willelmi Tyrensis Archiepiscopi Chronicon in the Corpus Christianorum in 1986 , by R. B. C. Huygens , with notes by Hans E. Mayer and Gerhard Rösch . The RHC edition was translated into English by Emily A. Babcock and August C. Krey in 1943 as " A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea , " although the translation is sometimes incomplete or inexact .

= = = Old French translation = = =

A translation of the Historia into Old French , made around 1223 , was particularly well @-@ circulated and had many anonymous additions made to it in the 13th century . In contrast to the surviving Latin manuscripts , there are " at least fifty @-@ nine manuscripts or fragments of manuscripts " containing the Old French translation . There are also independent French continuations attributed to Ernoul and Bernard le Trésorier . The translation was sometimes called the Livre dou conquete ; it was known by this name throughout Europe as well as in the crusader Kingdom of Cyprus and in Cilician Armenia , and 14th @-@ century Venetian geographer Marino Sanuto the Elder had a copy of it . The French was further translated into Spanish , as the Gran Conquista de Ultramar , during the reign of Alfonso the Wise of Castile in the late 13th century . The French version was so widespread that the Renaissance author Francesco Pipino translated it back into Latin , unaware that a Latin original already existed . A Middle English translation of the French was made by William Caxton in the 15th century .

= = Modern assessment = =

William 's neutrality as an historian was often taken for granted until the late twentieth century . August C. Krey , for example , believed that " his impartiality ... is scarcely less impressive than his critical skill . " Despite this excellent reputation , D. W. T. C. Vessey has shown that William was certainly not an impartial observer , especially when dealing with the events of the 1170s and 1180s . Vessey believes that William 's claim to have been commissioned by Amalric is a typical ancient and medieval topos , or literary theme , in which a wise ruler , a lover of history and literature , wishes to preserve for posterity the grand deeds of his reign . William 's claims of impartiality are also a typical topos in ancient and medieval historical writing .

His depiction of Baldwin IV as a hero is an attempt " to vindicate the politics of his own party and to blacken those of its opponents . " As mentioned above , William was opposed to Baldwin 's mother Agnes of Courtenay , Patriarch Heraclius , and their supporters ; his interpretation of events during Baldwin 's reign was previously taken as fact almost without question . In the mid twentieth century , Marshall W. Baldwin , Steven Runciman , and Hans E. Mayer were influential in perpetuating this point of view , although the more recent re @-@ evaluations of this period by Vessey , Peter Edbury and Bernard Hamilton have undone much of William 's influence .

An often @-@ noted flaw in the Historia is William 's poor memory for dates . " Chronology is sometimes confused , and dates are given wrongly " , even for basic information such as the regnal

dates of the kings of Jerusalem . For example , William gives the date of Amalric 's death as 11 July 1173 , when it actually occurred in 1174 .

Despite his biases and errors , William " has always been considered one of the greatest medieval writers . " Steven Runciman wrote that " he had a broad vision ; he understood the significance of the great events of his time and the sequence of cause and effect in history . " Christopher Tyerman calls him " the historian 's historian " , and " the greatest crusade historian of all , " and Bernard Hamilton says he " is justly considered one of the finest historians of the Middle Ages " . As the Dictionary of the Middle Ages says , " William 's achievements in assembling and evaluating sources , and in writing in excellent and original Latin a critical and judicious (if chronologically faulty) narrative , make him an outstanding historian , superior by medieval , and not inferior by modern , standards of scholarship . "

= = = Primary = = =

= = = Secondary = = =