

William of Tyre's Crusader History of Jerusalem



Paris, BnF, Ms. fr. 2631, f. 1r

Instructor: Dr. Julian Yolles

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Office hours: Tu 1-2 and by appointment
Boylston Hall 218

Half course (Fall term): Tu/Th, 10–11 in Memorial 302

Course website: <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/6997>

Course description

Explores the life, writings, and world of William of Tyre (ca. 1130–1186), the foremost historian of the crusader kingdom of Jerusalem of the twelfth century, who wrote an extensive history covering the First Crusade and the fortunes of those who remained in the Levant and their relations with surrounding cultures, including Byzantines, Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, Arab Christians, and Armenians. Students will be exposed to a robust amount of Latin prose, with attention to interpretation rather than grammatical exposition. At the end of the course, students will have acquired a thorough understanding of medieval historiography and the topic of the crusades, and be well-equipped to translate medieval Latin prose.

Prerequisite

Two years of college Latin or the equivalent. No previous exposure to Medieval Latin required.

Required text

Peter W. Edbury and John G. Rowe, *William of Tyre, historian of the Latin East* (Cambridge, 1988). Available at the COOP.

Recommended text

Malcolm Barber, *The Crusader States* (New Haven, 2012). Available at the COOP.

All other texts will be available on our iSite or on reserve in the Smyth Classical Library in Widener.

Grading

- 20% Participation and preparation
- 20% Translation quizzes
- 10% Two short presentations
- 15% One-hour midterm exam
- 15% One-hour final exam
- 5% Prospectus
- 15% Final paper

Participation and Preparation

Attendance, active participation, and due preparation are crucial components of the course. All assigned readings are to be completed **prior** to the meeting of the class under which they are listed.

After more than one unexcused absence, a student's final grade will be reduced by one third of a letter grade (e.g., an A will become an A-) for each such absence. If you cannot attend a class meeting (for illness, a family emergency, an interview, or a varsity athletic match), please make every effort to contact me beforehand.

Translation Quizzes

Every other week, we will have a short in-class translation quiz on a passage of the assigned readings (whether or not we covered it in class).

Two Short Presentations

Over the course of term, each student will give two short (5 min.) presentations to practice presentation skills and to help other students contextualize the primary readings. For these presentations, students will summarize an item of secondary literature or a primary text (all in English or English translation), and discuss their relevance to the passage of William of Tyre of that day. All texts will be provided on the course website or placed on reserve in Smyth. **Students will choose the date and topic of their presentations by the end of the second week of term.**

Midterm Exam

The one-hour exam will consist of translation and essay questions, and will be taken in a single class.

Final Exam

The one-hour final exam will be similar in format to the midterm exam and cover the second half of the semester. It will take place during exam period (TBD).

Final Paper

The final paper will be approximately 10 pages (at least 3000 words) in length, on a relevant topic of your choosing. By **November 17th**, you should have developed an idea of your topic in consultation with me and will submit a one-paragraph proposal accompanied by a short preliminary bibliography of at least five items of secondary reading. The final paper is due on the last day of reading period (**Thursday, 12/10**), by midnight).

Assessment of graduate students: any graduate participants in the class will be expected to produce a final research paper of 20 pages to be handed in on the last day of reading period (**Thursday, 12/10**) by midnight.

Late Assignments and Make-Up Exams

All assignment deadlines are final, except in the event of medical or family emergencies. If such a situation should arise, please let me know as soon as possible by email, clearly stating the reason for the delay. In all other circumstances, the following rules apply: for the shorter assignments (i.e., the presentations and paper prospectus), late submissions will not be accepted and a grade of zero will be assigned; for the final paper, each day that the paper is late will be accompanied by reduction of the equivalent of a full letter grade. Finally, **make-up exams will only be administered in the event of a documented emergency**. Please contact me as soon as possible in the event of such an emergency.

Accessibility Education

Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with me by the end of the second week of the term.

Academic Dishonesty

Discussion of scholarship and sharing of sources are essential for successful academic work. You are encouraged to consult with the instructors about the written assignments for this course and to exchange ideas with your classmates. You should, however, ensure that any written work that you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing, and that it reflects **your own approach** to the topic. You must also provide full citation for any books, articles, websites, etc. that you have used in the preparation of your work. Other people's ideas and opinions must always be attributed to them. All quotation from published sources must be enclosed in quotation marks and the source must be acknowledged with a full citation. If you paraphrase a source, you must still acknowledge it by supplying a citation. **Plagiarism, whether of published sources or another student's work, will not be tolerated**. If this occurs, a grade of zero will be assigned and the case will be brought to the attention of university officials.

Schedule of Readings

Legend

WT=Latin text of William of Tyre, as edited by R.B.C. Huygens (1986), included in the course packet (NB: the numbers refer to book and chapter, and then to line).

ER=Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre: historian of the Latin East* (1988).

CW=course website.

R=on reserve in Smyth.

Assigned readings are required of all students; additional readings are elective, or for the purposes of the short presentations.

Week 1

09/03 (Th): Introduction: the life and times of William of Tyre

Life and writings; education and twelfth-century Renaissance; the First Crusade and creation of Crusader States

Procedurals: syllabus and expectations, aims of the course; tools and resources

Week 2

09/08 (Tu): William of Tyre and his literary program

What is WT's purpose? Who is his audience? What are his stylistic and methodological models? To what extent does WT's program resemble or differ from contemporary understandings of historiography?

Assigned readings: WT, Prologue, 1–21, 33–46, 64–144; ER, Introduction and Chapter 1

09/10 (Th): The background of the First Crusade (I): the Islamic conquests.

Student presentation signups are due.

Assigned readings: WT, 1.1 (Heraclius and the Sassanians), 1.3 (Charlemagne and Hārūn al-Rashīd); ER, Chapter 2

TRANSLATION QUIZ 1

Week 3

09/15 (Tu): The background of the First Crusade (II): the situation in Jerusalem.

Assigned readings: WT, 1.4 (Fatimids), 1.10 (pilgrims in Jerusalem); ER, Chapter 3;

Additional readings: Breisach, "Chapter 9: Historians and the Ideal of the Christian Commonwealth" (CW)

09/17 (Th): The background of the First Crusade (III): Peter the Hermit

Assigned readings: WT, 1.11–12 (Peter the Hermit)

Additional readings: Albert of Aachen, 1.1–5 (CW)

Week 4

09/22 (Tu): The Council of Clermont

Assigned readings: WT, 1.15; Fulcher of Chartres (CW)

Additional readings: Four versions of the Council of Clermont (CW)

09/24 (Th): First Crusade I: Nicaea

Assigned readings: WT, 3.2 (Sulayman II, or Kilij Arslan I), 3.5 (the crusaders' first major victory)

Additional readings: Barber, *The Crusader States*, Chapter 1 (R)

TRANSLATION QUIZ 2

Week 5

09/29 (Tu): First Crusade II: Antioch

Assigned readings: WT, 6.14 (Peter's vision of the Holy Lance), 6.15 (Peter the Hermit's embassy)

Additional readings: Asbridge, "The Holy Lance of Antioch" (CW)

10/01 (Th): The holy city

Assigned readings: WT, 8.2 (biblical context--skip quotations), 8.3 (Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the Dome of the Rock)

Additional readings: Ora Limor, "Pilgrimage and Christian sacred landscape" (CW); Hamilton, "Rebuilding Zion" (CW)

Week 6

10/06 (Tu): The capture of Jerusalem

Assigned readings: WT, 8.18, 8.20

Additional readings: Kedar, "The Jerusalem massacre of July 1099" (CW)

10/08 (Th): MIDTERM EXAM

Week 7

10/13 (Tu): Godfrey of Bouillon—Prince or Protector?

Assigned readings: WT, 9.1–2 (election), 9.6.21–28 (legendary origins), 9.9.21–33 (refusal of crown)

Additional readings: Rubenstein, "Godfrey of Bouillon vs. Raymond of St-Gilles" (CW)

10/15 (Th): The first king of Jerusalem: Baldwin of Boulogne (10-11)

Assigned readings: WT, 10.1 (Baldwin I succeeds Godfrey), 11.21 (Adelaide of Sicily comes to Jerusalem), 11.27 (resettlement of Jerusalem), 11.29.13-40 (dismissal of Adelaide); ER, Chapter 5

Additional readings: Murray, "The Demographics of Urban Space in Crusade-Period Jerusalem," (CW)

Week 8

10/20 (Tu): Warriors of God: the Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitaller
Assigned readings: WT, 12.7 (Templars), 18.4, 18.5.1–56, 18.5.71–84 (Hospitallers)
Additional readings: Bernard of Clairvaux, *In praise of the new knighthood*, tr. Greenia, Introduction, Prol., c. 1–5 (R)

10/22 (Th): Courtly crises under Fulk of Anjou (14-15)
Assigned readings: WT, 14.15 (Hugh of Le Puiset accused of treason/adultery), 14.16 (Hugh challenged to a duel), 14.18 (attack on Hugh of Le Puiset)
Additional readings: Mayer, “Studies in the history of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem,” 92–111 (CW)

TRANSLATION QUIZ 3

Week 9

10/27 (Tu): Baldwin III’s teenage rebellion
Assigned readings: WT, 16 Prol., 16.3, 17.13–14
Additional readings: Hamilton, “Women in the Crusader States,” 143–157 (CW)

10/29 (Th): Second Crusade I
Assigned readings: WT, 16.5 (capture of Edessa), 17.2 (siege of Damascus)
Additional readings: Barber, Chapter 8 (R)

Week 10

11/03 (Tu): The Second Crusade II
Assigned readings: WT, 17.5 (plot of the Damascenes), 17.6 (plot discovered), 17.7 (WT’s theories)

11/05 (Th): William and the Byzantines: Andronicus the Mad
Assigned readings: WT, 20.2 (Baldwin III marries Theodora), 22.11–13 (trouble in Constantinople); ER, Chapter 8
Additional readings: Hamilton, “Women in the Crusader States,” 157–174; Lock, “Crusades from a Byzantine Perspective” (CW)

TRANSLATION QUIZ 4

Week 11

11/10 (Tu): Baldwin III’s foreign policy
Discussion of final paper topics, tools, and methodology.
Assigned readings: WT, 18.9 (trouble at the court of Egypt); 18.11 (attack on Bedouins)

11/12 (Th): Adventures in Egypt I

The Frankish embassy to Caliph al-ʿĀḍid

Assigned readings: WT, 19.18–20

Additional readings: Lock, “Crusades from a Muslim Perspective” (CW)

Week 12

11/17 (Tu): Adventures in Egypt II

Assigned readings: WT, 19.21 (Shīʿites and Sunnites), 19.29–30 (Hugh of Caesarea and Shīrkūh); ER, Chapter 4

Additional readings: ʿUsāma ibn Munqidh, *The book of contemplation*, tr. Hitti, pp. 25–28, 161–171 and Cobb, *Usama ibn Munqidh: Warrior poet of the age of crusades*, Introduction, pp. 14–16, 28–30, 93–114 (CW)

PAPER PROSPECTUS DUE

11/19 (Th): Assassins assassinated

Assigned readings: WT, 20.29–31 (the Assassins; death of Nūr al-Dīn and Amaury)

TRANSLATION QUIZ 5

Week 13

11/24 (Tu): The leper king: Baldwin IV (21-22)

Assigned readings: WT, 21.1, 22.10 (estrangement of Raymond of Tripoli and Baldwin IV); 22.26 (Guy of Lusignan instituted as procurator)

11/26 (Th): THANKSGIVING—NO CLASS

Week 14

12/01 (Tu): The end is nigh: the run-up to the Battle of Ḥaṭṭīn

Assigned readings: WT, 21.7 (William’s explanation of the Franks’ weakened state), 23 Prol.; ER, Chapter 9 and Conclusion

Additional readings: Vessey, “William of Tyre and the art of historiography” (CW)

12/03 (Th): The Battle of Ḥaṭṭīn; reception and influence of William of Tyre

Assigned readings: Latin Continuation, 13

Additional readings: Old French Continuation of William of Tyre (Lyon Eracles version), 40–43 (CW)

Reading Period

12/10 (Th)

FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE BY MIDNIGHT