WHY DID THE CRUSADER STATES PRODUCE SO FEW SAINTS?

by BERNARD HAMILTON

The crusading movement was an important part of the attempt by the papal reformers of the eleventh century to integrate the turbulent and powerful warrior class of western Europe into Christian society. Pope Urban II's aim was to persuade these fighting men to use their skills in defence of Christendom, and to form an armed force directed by the Church. Crusading would enable the warriors to combine their military abilities with the practice of the Christian life. This ideal later came to be accepted as normative by the armies of all Western states.

The First Crusade was successful. In 1099 it captured Jerusalem, and subsequently western settlers established control over a swathe of territory stretching from northern Mesopotamia to the Sinai peninsula. The crusaders who settled in the East and those westerners who joined them there were guardians of the Holy Places. The Catholic West regarded their work as supremely important, and huge new crusading expeditions were sent to the Levant during the next two centuries, to defend Jerusalem when it was threatened, or, after it had been lost in 1187, to recover it.[1]

Latin rule in the Holy Land led to a great increase in western pilgrimage there, and the spiritual life of some individuals was shaped by this experience, for example, that of St Raineri, the patron saint of Pisa, who spent some ten years in the Holy Land praying at the shrine churches before returning to the West, and that of St Godric of Finchale, whose two journeys to Jerusalem led him to become a hermit.[2] The beneficial consequences for western spirituality of Latin rule in the Crusader States were recognized by many western churchmen, of whom the most vocal was St Bernard of Clairvaux. He gave his enthusiastic support to the Knights

[1] See the very important work of W. J. Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia c. 1095 – c. 1187* (Woodbridge, 2008), 1–119.

[2] Colin Morris, 'San Ranieri of Pisa; The Power and Limitations of Sanctity in Twelfth-Century Italy', *JEH* 45 (1994), 588–99; *Libellus de vita et miraculis s. Godrici auctore Reginaldo Dunelmensis*, ed. J. Stevenson, SS 20 (1845).

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Templar, founded to protect the pilgrimage routes in the Kingdom of Jerusalem,[3] and his benevolent interest in the Latin East was believed to have continued after his death in 1153. When King Amalric was campaigning in Egypt in 1167, St Bernard appeared to him in a vision; Amalric attributed his subsequent victory to the saint's intercession, and sent the True Cross reliquary which he wore round his neck to Clairvaux as an act of thanksgiving.[4]

It would be reasonable to expect that some of the western settlers in the Crusader States, who devoted their lives to the maintenance and protection of the Holy Places, would have become saints, and, indeed, some of them did, but virtually all of those were members of religious communities. Some Benedictine monks of the Mount Tabor monastery, who were killed by Muslim raiders in 1113, were later commemorated as martyrs in some French Benedictine communities.[5] The Franciscan Order honoured as martyrs the friars and the Poor Clares killed by the Mamluks when they sacked Acre in 1291.[6] Helinus, the first prior of the Premonstratensian community of St Habbakuk near Jerusalem, was revered as blessed by his order.[7] But the greatest number of saints was to be found among the Carmelites. The Latin Hermits of Mount Carmel, from whom the order evolved, received their first rule from St Albert, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem (1205–14). As Andrew Jotischky has shown, later historians of the order claimed that the hermits of Mount Carmel could trace their descent from the prophet Elijah and his disciples, and the list of saints which the order claimed as members grew out of this myth of origins. From the crusading period came 'Berthold, the first prior-general, and his successor Brocard, who received the Rule from Albert; Cyril the visionary, who corresponded with Joachim of Fiore; Angelo the martyr, another ascetic

3 'Liber ad Milites Templi: de laude novae militiae', in *S. Bernardi Opera,* ed. J. Leclercq and H. M. Rochais, 8 vols (Rome, 1957–77), 3: 312–39; ET *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, intro. M. Barber, trans. M. C. Greenia, Cistercian Fathers 19B (Kalamazoo, MI, 2000).

4 *Vita s. Bernardi Clarevallensis abbatis auctore Gaufrido monacho* 3, in *Acta SS* Aug. 4, 327. Amalric's gift is recorded in a list of reliquaries belonging to Clairvaux: A. Manrique, ed., *Cisterciensium seu verius ecclesiasticorum annalium a condito Cistercio,* 4 vols (Lyons, 1642–59), 2: 548 (*s.a.* 1173, ch. 6, section 9).

5 Feast day 4 May: *Acta SS* Maii 1, 437. The attack is described by Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana* 12.9–11; ET S. B. Edgington, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford, 2007), 836–40.

6 *Acta SS* Maii 4, 135.

7 *Acta SS* Aug. 4, 398.

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and visionary of the thirteenth century'. The historical evidence for the existence of some of these saints is slight.[8] The Carmelites also promoted the cult of the Patriarch Albert who had given them their rule. He had been murdered in 1214 during an ecclesiastical procession. This was not a martyrdom, but a revenge killing: a former master of the Hospital of the Holy Spirit at Acre, whom he had deposed as unsuited to hold office, stabbed him. Albert was an able and efficient patriarch who may have merited canonization, but he does not appear in the universal calendar of the Catholic Church, only in that of the Carmelite Order.[9]

In the Western Church the most common form of canonization in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was by popular acclaim. Devotion centred on the relics of the 'saint', or, where appropriate, on his or her tomb, and votaries sought the saint's help for a variety of needs. Such cults had to receive approval from a diocesan bishop or from a provincial synod, and the local clergy often kept records of miracles which were reported to have been worked at such shrines.[10]

Although it was a widely held view among participants in the First Crusade that those who died on campaign, whether from natural causes or in battle, were martyrs for the faith, this view was never endorsed by the Church.[11] Nevertheless, popular cults grew up around some participants who died on crusades to Jerusalem, but this occurred in their homelands, not in the Latin Kingdom. For example, Thiemo, Archbishop of Salzburg, who accompanied Welf IV of Bavaria on the Crusade of 1101 and went missing at the Battle of Heraclea, was considered a martyr at Salzburg. His *Passio* claimed that he had not been killed in battle but had been taken prisoner, and that his captors, who knew that he was a skilled metal worker, wanted him to repair a Muslim idol [*sic*]. When he

[8] A. Jotischky, *The Perfection of Solitude: Hermits and Monks in the Crusader States* (University Park, PA, 1995), 139–51; idem, *The Carmelites and Antiquity: Mendicants and their Pasts in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2002), 190–210, at 191.

[9] A. Jotischky, 'Albert of Vercelli (1149/1152–1214)', in *The Crusades: An Encyclopedia*, ed. A.V. Murray, 4 vols (Santa Barbara, CA, 2006), 1: 28.

[10] See the case study: T. Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orléans 800–1200* (Cambridge, 1990).

[11] B. Hamilton, '"God wills it": Signs of Divine Approval in the Crusade Movement', in K. Cooper and J. Gregory, eds, *Signs, Wonders, Miracles: Representations of Divine Power in the Life of the Church*, SCH 41 (Woodbridge, 2005), 88–98, at 90–1.

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refused to do this, they killed him.[12] The only example which I have found of a popular devotion of this kind relating to Frankish settlers in the Crusader States is eccentric. This is the cult of SS William and Peregrine of Foggia who, according to the inscription on their reliquary recorded in 1630, had been born in Antioch and had come to Foggia in Apulia during the reign of Frederick Barbarossa (1152–90). The chronology is plausible, since they may have been refugees from the Crusader States who fled to Sicily in the aftermath of Saladin's invasion in 1187. The *Acta* which give a biography of the saints and an account of the miracles which had been performed through their intercession are of little historical value, since they were written in 1630 in order to secure confirmation of the traditional cult, which was duly licensed.[13]

I have found no evidence of any cults of this kind in the Crusader States, but because no bishops' registers survive it is difficult to be certain about this. Arguably the most important sources of evidence for such cults are saints' lives, and these have received very full attention. The standard scholarly collection of such works is the *Acta Sanctorum* edited by the Bollandist Fathers, which is arranged calendrically in accordance with the date of the saints' feast day. The first two volumes of January saints were published in 1643, but the project, which is still ongoing, has not yet reached the end of November. The work now consists of sixty-seven folio volumes.[14] In 1897, when the Bollandists had reached the end of October, Charles Kohler produced an index of the materials in this great work relating to the Latin East. This revealed that the only cults of western settlers in the Crusader States were those sponsored by religious communities, to which I have already referred. I should add that there is no archaeological evidence of cults of this kind, nor is any mention made of them in the numerous pilgrim narratives from this period.[15]

Part of the reason for this is that the Frankish population did

[12] *Passio Thiemonis archiepiscopi* (MGH S 11, 28–33, 51–62); P. Riant, 'Le martyre de Thiemo de Salzburg', *Revue des questions historiques* 39 (1906), 218–37.

[13] Feast day 26 April: *Acta SS* Apr. 3, 464–6.

[14] See David Knowles, 'The Bollandists', in idem, *Great Historical Enterprises: Problems in Monastic History* (London, 1963), 1–32.

[15] D. Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus*, 4 vols (Cambridge, 1993–2009); S. de Sandoli, *Itinera Hierosolymitana Crucesignatorum (saec. XII–XIII)*, 4 vols (Jerusalem, 1978–84).

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not predominate in the majority of settlements, and the eastern Christian communities alongside whom they lived already had well-established cults of local saints. The Frankish settlers were happy to invoke those saints. In 1156, for example, the nobleman Henry of Antioch and his wife Isabella built a church in honour of St Barsauma, an important saint in the Syrian Orthodox Church, to whose prayers they attributed the healing of their son.[16] There is no evidence that the indigenous population paid religious honour to Frankish holy men and women who lived and died among them. This appears to be further evidence of the reserve which existed at a deep level between the indigenous Christians and the Franks, to which Claude Cahen drew attention.[17]

The other method of canonization available in the Latin Church in the twelfth century was to institute formal proceedings. A provincial synod might recommend that a man or woman be canonized, but papal ratification was needed, and after 1234, when the Decretals of Gregory IX were published, the process of canonization was reserved to the pope alone.[18] Such procedures involved considerable expense and also persistence. Witnesses had to attend the papal Curia and present evidence about the good life of the saint and of the miracles with which he or she had been credited since his or her death, and proceedings could take a long time. The English crown petitioned for the canonization of Edward the Confessor in 1138, but the process was not completed until 1161.[19] Philip III of France initiated the canonization process of his father, Louis IX, in 1282. Louis had led the Crusade against Egypt in 1249–50, and, after that had failed, had stayed in the Holy Land for another four years to protect Frankish interests. In 1270 he led a second crusade and died at Carthage while planning an attack on Tunis. John of Joinville was one of the witnesses called to give evidence at the process and the notes which he made then almost certainly formed the basis of his *Life of St Louis.* Louis IX was canonized by Boniface VIII

[16] Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle* 17.13; Syriac text ed. with French trans. by J. B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 4 vols (Paris, 1899–1924), 3: 303–4.

[17] C. Cahen, 'Indigènes et croisés', *Syria* 15 (1934), 351–60.

[18] E. W. Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (London, 1948), 56–141; M. Goodich, 'Vision, Dream and Canonization Policy under Pope Innocent III', in J. C. Moore, ed., *Pope Innocent III and his World* (Aldershot, 1999), 151–63; idem, *Miracles and Wonders: The Development of the Concept of Miracle, 1150–1350* (Aldershot, 2007), 69–99. See also A. Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1997).

[19] F. Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (London, 1970), 256–85.

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in 1297, but although crusading zeal formed an important part of the evidence adduced in his favour, his just government of France was considered equally significant.[20] To be successful, canonization proceedings normally needed the support of a powerful corporate body, such as a religious order or a royal dynasty.

It might have been expected that the Latin kings of Jerusalem would have wanted at least one of their number to be canonized, because of the prestige that this would confer on their realm. Godfrey of Bouillon would seem to have had all the right qualifications for sainthood. His mother, Blessed Ida of Boulogne, was beatified.[21] He had been one of the chief vassals of the Western Emperor but had abandoned this position to take the cross. He had led the crusaders to victory at Jerusalem in 1099 and had been elected as ruler of the new state. Moreover, his moral character was said to have been irreproachable. In the later Middle Ages he was numbered among the Nine Worthies as one of the three greatest Christian rulers, yet no attempt was made to have him canonized.[22]

I would suggest that there were two reasons for this. Firstly, although his brother and successor, Baldwin I (1100–18), would have had an incentive to initiate canonization proceedings which would, if successful, have brought honour to his dynasty, he would have needed the cooperation of the patriarch of Jerusalem to present the case at the papal court. Yet throughout most of his reign the patriarchate was weakened by disputes about whether the holders of this office had been validly appointed.[23] Secondly, Baldwin II (1118–31), though a distant kinsman of Baldwin I, was not his direct heir, but was in effect the founder of a new dynasty: a considerable change of personnel took place at his court and among the chief officers of state when he came to the throne.[24] He had no incentive to promote Godfrey's cult.

[20] Jean de Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, ed. N. de Wailly (Paris, 1872); J. Richard, *Saint Louis, Roi d'une France féodale, soutien de Terre sainte* (Paris, 1983).

[21] 'B. Idae Vita, auctore monacho Wastensi coevo', *Acta SS* Apr. 2: 141–5.

[22] William of Tyre, *Chronicon* 9.5 (CChr.CM 63, 426–7). The Nine Worthies were Joshua, King David and Judas Maccabeus; Hector, Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar; King Arthur, Charlemagne and Godfrey of Bouillon.

[23] The Latin Patriarchs were Arnulf of Chocques (elected but not consecrated, July–December 1099); Daimbert of Pisa (December 1099 – 1101); Evremar of Chocques (1102–08); Gibelin of Arles (1108–12); Arnulf of Chocques (1112–18): B. Hamilton, *The Latin Church in the Crusader States: The Secular Church* (London, 1980), 12–16, 52–64.

[24] A. V. Murray, *The Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Dynastic History 1099–1125*,

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The only attempt to promote the canonization of a member of the military aristocracy of the Crusader States was initiated by Peter of Blois. He was present at the papal court in the autumn of 1187, representing Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury in a legal dispute, when news reached the pope of the defeat of Hattin and the loss of Jerusalem. Peter stayed in Rome until after 26 January 1188, when Clement III finally pronounced judgment in the Canterbury dispute. During that time Peter wrote three works in support of a new crusade: a lament for the loss of Jerusalem; an exhortation to Archbishop Baldwin to take the cross; and the *Passio Raginaldis*, an account of the life and death of Reynald of Châtillon, former Prince of Antioch and Lord of Montréal and Hebron.[25]

Peter was informed about the battle of Hattin by the members of the military orders who brought news of the defeat to Rome. Reynald was the only member of the lay nobility taken prisoner at Hattin to be killed by Saladin, the rest being held to ransom.[26] When the crusader army was encircled by Saladin, Reynald did not attempt to escape, but stood by King Guy of Lusignan until they were forced to surrender. When they were brought before Saladin, Reynald was offered the choice of conversion to Islam or death, and when he refused to apostatize Saladin beheaded him himself. Peter of Blois provides the earliest western account of Reynald's death, but the facts he gives are confirmed by Muslim historians.[27] Peter clearly hoped that Reynald would be canonized and would become a symbol of the steadfast crusader, and that this would aid recruitment for the new crusade. Peter later accompanied Archbishop Baldwin on the Third Crusade and revised his text of the

Prosopographica et Genealogica 4 (Oxford, 2000).

[25] Peter of Blois, 'Passio Raginaldis principis Antiochie', in *Petri blesensis tractatus deo* (CChr.CM 194, 31–73); R. W. Southern, 'Peter of Blois and the Third Crusade', in *Studies in Medieval History presented to R. H. C. Davis,* ed. H. Mayr-Harting and R. I. Moore (London, 1985), 207–18.

[26] Saladin did not allow the Templars and Hospitallers captured at Hattin to be ransomed, but ordered them to be executed: Abu Shama, *The Book of the Two Gardens* (RHC Or. 4, 277–8).

[27] Ibid. 275–6, 284–5, 298–9, 305; Kamal ad-Din, *History of Aleppo*, French trans. E. Blochet, *Revue de l'Orient latin* 4 (1896), 180–1; Baha al-Din Ibn Shaddad, *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin,* trans. D. S. Richards (Aldershot, 2001), 74–5; *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period,* trans. D. S. Richards, 3 vols (Aldershot, 2006–8), 2: 323–4.

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Passio while in the Holy Land as a result of information supplied by King Guy's brother, who had also been present at Hattin.[28]

No attempt was made to promote Reynald's cause using Peter of Blois's evidence. The reasons for this are, of necessity, speculative, but I would advance the following suggestion. The natural supporters of Reynald would have been the Lusignan family, but as Guy had lost his kingdom, his French kin would not have had sufficient influence to promote Reynald's cause at the papal Curia. They would have relied on the support of their overlord, Richard I of England, and they might have received it had not Richard been held to ransom at the critical point, between late 1192 and early 1194, by Leopold, Duke of Austria.[29] By the time he was released the Emperor Henry VI had gained control of the Kingdom of Sicily and become the dominant power in Italy and at the papal court, and he was hostile to Richard.[30] Although Hohenstaufen influence in Rome ended with Henry's death in 1197, Richard himself died eighteen months later. His successor, his brother John, married Isabella of Angoulême in 1200, despite the fact that she was betrothed to Hugh VIII of Lusignan, thereby alienating the Lusignan family.[31]

The *Passio* did not have a wide circulation,[32] whereas an alternative account of Reynald's role in the affairs of the Latin East reached a very large audience. This was contained in the Old French Chronicle attributed to Ernoul, which is closely related to the various recensions of the Old French translation and continuations of William of Tyre's Chronicle, known as the *Estoire d'Eracles*. The account which these sources give of events leading up to Hattin is based on information supplied by the survivors, of whom the most important was Balian of Ibelin, one of a group of knights who had fought their way through Saladin's encircling forces at Hattin, aban-

[28] Peter does not specify which brother this was: Geoffrey of Lusignan and Aimery of Lusignan, Constable of the Kingdom and later King of Cyprus and of Jerusalem, were both present at the Battle of Hattin.

[29] J. Gillingham, *Richard I* (New Haven, CT, 1999), 222–53.

[30] I. S. Robinson, *The Papacy 1073–1198: Continuity and Innovation* (Cambridge, 1990), 510–22; Brenda M. Bolton, 'A Matter of Great Confusion: King Richard I and Syria's *Vetus de Monte*', in A. D. Beihammer, M. G. Parani and C. D. Schabel, eds, *Diplomatics in the Eastern Mediterranean 1000–1500: Aspects of Cross-Cultural Communication* (Leiden, 2008), 171–203.

[31] W. L. Warren, *King John* (London, 1964), 64–76.

[32] R. B. C. Huygens, Introduction to *Petri Blesensis tractatus duo* (CChr.CM 194, 8–13).

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doning the king and the relic of the True Cross.[33] These men were concerned to justify their own part in the crisis and to lay the blame for the loss of the kingdom on Guy of Lusignan and his supporters, most of whom were dead and of whom Reynald of Châtillon had been the most important.[34] Once the *Eracles* began to circulate in western Europe, it would have been difficult to refute the account of Reynald's activities which it gives.

In the thirteenth century the social and religious position of the Franks in the reduced territories which they continued to govern did not differ substantially from that of the twelfth century, and this continued to inhibit the growth of popular cults of potential Frankish saints. Between 1192 and 1229 the crown of Jerusalem was held by women, and the husbands of those queens, all of whom came from outside the kingdom, brought their own retinues with them and placed their followers in positions of power.[35] This was an impediment to the institution of canonization proceedings in regard to earlier rulers and their aristocratic supporters, which, to be successful, would almost certainly have needed perseverance over a long period of time, as well as considerable expenditure. From 1229 to 1286, when there was no resident king in the Crusader States, the problems of initiating a canonization process were insuperable.[36] That, I would suggest, is why the Crusader States produced no saints apart from some clergy whose cults were promoted by the religious orders.

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[33] *La Chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard le Trésorier,* ed. L. de Mas Latrie (Paris, 1871); *L'Estoire d'Eracles empereur et la conqueste de la terre d'Outremer* (RHC Oc. 1–2); P. W. Edbury, 'The French translation of William of Tyre's *Historia*: The Manuscript Tradition', *Crusades* 6 (2007), 69–105. For the complex relations between the text of Ernoul and the *Eracles* in the years leading up to Hattin, see B. Hamilton, *The Leper King and his Heirs* (Cambridge, 2000), 6–11.

[34] M. R. Morgan, *The Chronicle of Ernoul and the Continuations of William of Tyre* (London, 1973), 136.

[35] The Queens regnant of Jerusalem were Sybil (1186–90), wife of Guy of Lusignan; Isabella I (1190–1205), wife of (1) Conrad of Montferrat (d. 1192), (2) Henry of Troyes (d. 1197), (3) Aimery of Lusignan, King of Cyprus (d. 1205); Maria (1205–12), wife of John of Brienne; Isabella II (1212–28), wife of the Emperor Frederick II: B. Hamilton, 'King Consorts of Jerusalem and their Entourages from the West from 1186–1250', in H.-E. Mayer, ed., *Die Kreuzfahrerstaaten als multikulturelle Gesellschaft*, Schriften des historischen Kollegs, Kolloquien 37 (Munich, 1997), 13–24.

[36] J. Riley-Smith, *The Feudal Monarchy and the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1174–1277* (London, 1973).

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