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# Surviving Three Cycles of Destruction: The Graves of the Crusader Kings in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre

Amit Re'em, Estelle Ingrand-Varenne, Ilya Berkovich

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Jerusalem 2022

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# Surviving Three Cycles of Destruction: The Graves of the Crusader Kings in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre<sup>1</sup>

Amit Re'em, Estelle Ingrand-Varenne and Ilya Berkovich

For more than seven hundred years the monuments of the first eight rulers of Frankish Jerusalem were to be seen directly behind the main entrance of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The two founders of the Crusader Kingdom, Godfrey of Bouillon (d. 1100) and his brother Baldwin I (d. 1118), lay at the very foot of Calvary (Figs. 1–3). The graves of the next two kings, Baldwin II (d. 1131) and Fulk of Anjou (d. 1143), were also located within the Chapel of Adam along the same line as those of Godfrey and Baldwin I, either south or east of them. Four other kings were buried at the crossing of the southern transept and the *Chorus Dominorum*, roughly along the current line of the southern wall of the *Katholicon*. These were Baldwin III (d. 1163), Amalric (d. 1174), Baldwin IV (d. 1185) and the boy king Baldwin V (d. 1186) (Figs. 1 and 2). By placing the royal tombs in those places, the Crusaders followed an established tradition which corresponded perfectly to the funerary habits of the medieval West. Burial at the entrance to a church was considered a sign of great honour. The tombs would be seen by all visitors and pilgrims who—it was expected—would surely remember the deceased persons in their prayers (Re'em 2021: Vol. 1, 110–121; Baud and Tardieu 2014:169–216).

Although their physical remains have long since vanished, the shape and the decorations of some of these monuments are sufficiently well-known, including their Latin funerary inscriptions (De Sandoli 1974:51–61). The royal tombs are attested

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1 We thank our colleagues who contributed to this research: R. Elbag (3D reconstruction), M. Chernin, A. de Vincenz and Y. Yilmaz (source material), and D. Bryce (copy editing). A special thanks goes to the anonymous reviewer for his useful remarks. In addition, E. Ingrand-Varenne is grateful for the support of the European Research Council [Starting Grant SH6 ERC-2020-STG 'Latin as an Alien Script in the Medieval Latin East']. I. Berkovich is thankful of the generous support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. All years mentioned in the article are in the Current Era (CE) unless written otherwise

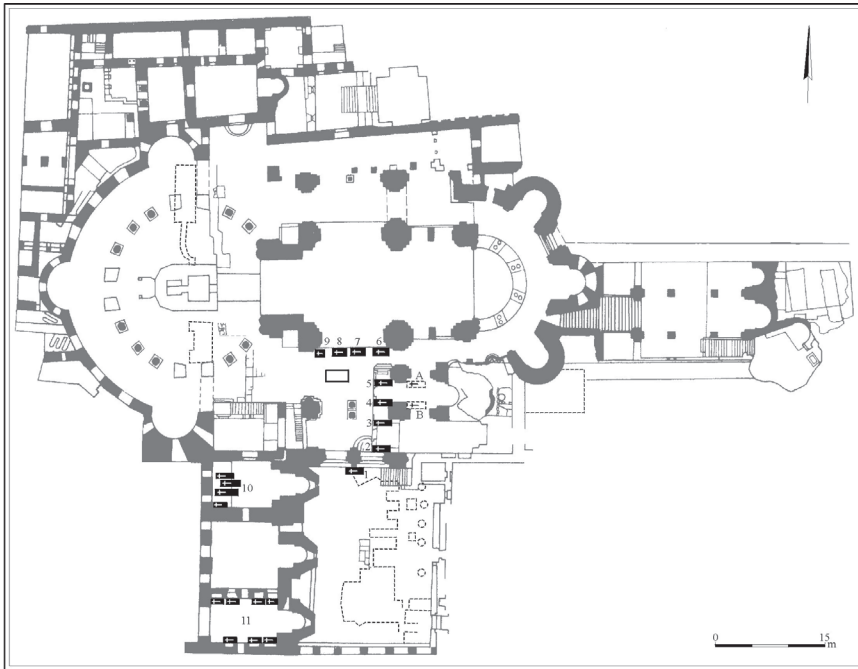


Fig. 1. Map of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher with the Crusaders' tombs: 1.) Philip d'Aubigny; 2.) Fulk of Anjou; 3.) Baldwin II; 4.) Godfrey of Bouillon; 5.) Baldwin I; 6.) Baldwin III; 7.) Amalric; 8.) Baldwin IV; 9.) Baldwin V; 10.) Tombs in the Chapel of the Forty Martyrs; 11.) niche tombs in Chapel of St. James; A, B = alternative locations for the tombs of Baldwin II and Fulk of Anjou (Drawing: N. Zak).



Fig. 2. A 3D reconstruction of the tombs in front of the Calvary and along the southern transept (Drawing: R. Albag).

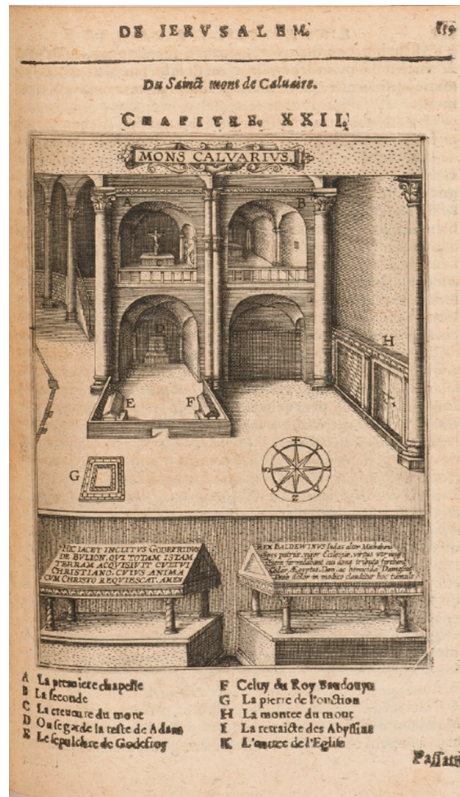


Fig. 3. Engraved plate of the Calvary and the royal tombs from Zuallart (1587:159).

in the contemporary Crusader sources from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Accounts by historians such as Albert of Aachen (fl. 1180–fl. 1120) and William of Tyre (ca. 1130–1186) and of pilgrims like Theodoric (fl. 1169–1174) and Wilbrand of Oldenburg (ca. 1180–1223) provide details of the location of royal burials and mention the exquisite workmanship of their marble monuments.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, nearly all pilgrims who visited the church in the late medieval and early modern period mention these tombs, often providing their description in various detail. The royal tombs also figure prominently in research literature on Crusader archaeology and art (Buschhausen 1978; Jacoby 1982; Folda 1995:37–40,74–75,114–115,467–469;

2 Albert of Aachen 2007:514–517,862–73; William of Tyre 1986: Vol. 1, 413–414,515, Vol. 2, 45–46,134–135,292–293,395; Theodoric 1994:154; Wilbrand of Oldenburg 2012:134; see also Fulcher of Chartres 1913: 613; Lyon Eracles 1982:5.

Pringle 1993: Vol. 3, 64–65; Boas 2001:180–181; Mahoney 2018). Finally, concrete studies of the tombs elaborate on various aspects of their history, art and burial customs (Hody 1859; Angelini 1902; Dunkel 1906; Jacoby 1979; Mayer 2021; Re'em 2021).

The current article discusses the fate of the royal tombs from the end of the Frankish rule to their subsequent disappearance. We focus on three chronological milestones: the sack of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by the Khwarizmians in 1244, the great fire of 1808 and the renovation and building works within the church in the twentieth century. We agree with the previous scholarship that the tombs have undergone several cycles of destruction. However, we add an important nuance missing from almost every modern discussion of the royal burials. Damage to the monument above ground does not necessarily result in the destruction of the grave underneath (Fig. 4).<sup>3</sup> One should also distinguish between the two clusters of tombs: that in the Chapel of Adam and the other at the crossing of the transept. Thorough re-examination of the historical, epigraphical, and archaeological evidence enables us to make the following argument: In spite of the eventual obliteration of all the eight grave markers, four of the royal tombs have survived *in situ*. Godfrey of Bouillon and the following three Kings of Crusader Jerusalem still lay in their original graves under the modern paving of the church.

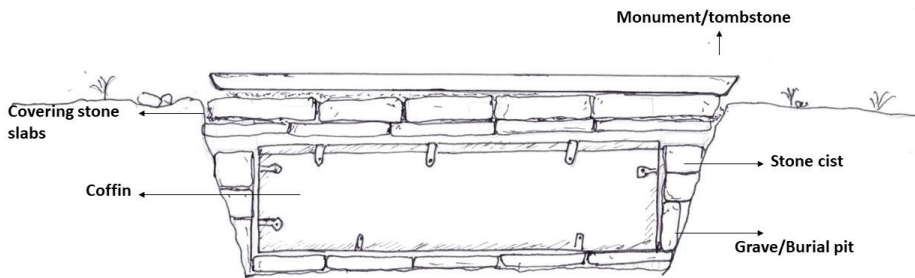


Fig. 4. The morphology of a medieval tomb (Drawing: A. Re'em).

3 On tombs, burials, and monuments in medieval Europe, see Binski 1996; Daniell 1997; Gilchrist and Sloane 2005; Saul 2009.

## The Monuments in the Historical Records

In October 1187, Jerusalem was captured by the Ayyubid Sultan Saladin. As the city surrendered on terms, safeguarding the lives of its defenders, one could expect that the Muslim conquerors would—at the very least—take symbolic revenge on the city’s Christian shrines in retaliation for the brutal sack of the city at the end of the First Crusade. In fact, some of Saladin’s advisers urged him to demolish the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and turn it into a heap of stones. Had the Sultan followed their advice the monuments of the Crusader kings—a symbol of former Latin victories—would likely have been among the first to suffer. However, as told by the historian Imād ad-Dīn al-Isfahani, Saladin’s generosity and political realism, which the pious Imād ad-Dīn himself tacitly criticizes, protected the church from damage (Imād ad-Dīn 2004:82). Latin sources continue to describe the Crusader royal tombs in their original location throughout the Ayyubid period until Jerusalem’s return to Christian rule in 1229 (Wilbrand of Oldenburg 2012:134). The short Ayyubid recapture of the city during the Baron’s Crusade of 1239–1240 (Berkovich 2012; Re’em et al. 2021:270–271) also seems to have left no mark on the Church.

The tolerant approach of Saladin and his immediate successors came to an abrupt end in the summer of 1244 when the city was attacked by the Khwarizmian Turks. Following a siege of forty days, and after most of the defenders were tricked into leaving the city by ruse, the Khwarizmiens breached the defensive perimeter around the Christian Quarter (Berkovich and Re’em 2016:200,204). The contemporary account in the Old French *Rothelin* continuation of William of Tyre provides lurid details of what happened next:

*“In the church of the Sepulchre they found Christians who had refused to leave with the others. These they disembowelled before the Sepulchre of Our Lord and they beheaded the priests who were vested and singing mass at the altars. Then they threw down the marble framework that enclosed the Sepulchre of Our Lord and took the carved columns that stood in front of it and sent them to Muhammad at Mecca as a sign of victory. And for a disgrace and dishonour to Christians, they demolished the tombs of the kings and took the kings’ bones and scattered them about” (Rothelin 1999:64; see also Rothelin 1859:563; Matthew Paris 1872–1883: Vol. 4, 340).*

Almost identical descriptions by medieval Arab historians make the former Latin accounts sound all the more credible. The Syrian man-of-letters Ibn Wāṣil (1208–1298), who grew up in Jerusalem, tells us that the Khwarizmiens “dug the tombs of the Christians and their graves of the Frankish kings at al-Qumamah [Church of the

Holy Sepulchre] and burned the bones of the dead” (Ibn Wāṣil 1953: Vol. 5, 337). A century later a similar account appears in another important Arabic source. In his book *al-Ṭārīq al-wāḍiḥ al-maslūk ilā tarājim al-khulafā’ wa ’l-mulūk* (*History of the Dynasties and Kingdoms*), the Egyptian historian Ibn al-Furāt (1334–1405), who is renowned for his use of a wide variety of sources—including Christian—describes the fate of the tombs as follows: “[the Khwarizmians] ransacked its Christian and Frankish graves, and the royal graves that it contains, burning the bones of the dead” (Ibn al-Furāt 1971:3).<sup>4</sup>

And yet these vivid and graphic tales of desecration and destruction are puzzling, as the Crusader royal tombs are continuously described in their original place in numerous later accounts. Dating from 1258–1263, the French pilgrimage *Guide to the Holy Land* mentions the monuments only a few years after their apparent ruin: “...and nearby there is a stone tomb where lie the seven kings who were formerly kings of the city, and Godfrey of Bouillon” (Pelrinages et Pardouns de Acre 2014:230). The trustworthiness of the accounts attributing the destruction of the graves to the Khwarizmians is hard to reconcile with eyewitness accounts from the Mamluk and Ottoman periods by both Western and Eastern pilgrims who are consistent in their description of the tombs, their locations in the church and the inscriptions they bore (English Anon 1923: 453; Tafur 1874:55; Préfat s Vlkánova 2014:155; Quaresmio 1639: Vol. 2, 481–482; Nau 1679:157–158; Proskynetarion 1900:15–16,51; Sukhanov 1870:159–160). The outward appearance of the tombs and their position inside the building is also consistent with the highly detailed visual representations, illustrations and plans of the church by such authors as Jean Zuallart (1587:203–204; Fig. 5A), Bernardino Amico (1620:102) and Elzear Horn (1902:50–56; Figs. 5B–D).<sup>5</sup> These later sources all seem to imply that the monuments stood in their original place in full splendour for hundreds of years until their disappearance in 1808.

That said, as far as early modern sources are concerned, it seems that throughout the ages the physical condition of the monuments had deteriorated and that parts of their funerary inscription were no longer readable. Johann Nepomuk Sepp claims that in 1583 Godfrey’s and Baldwin I’s epitaphs were scratched away (1863:376–377; see also de Vogüé 1860:197). Moreover, travellers such as Jan van Cotwyck (1619:186–

4 See also the letter of the Sultan of Egypt al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb to Pope Innocent IV from 15 August 1246 (Golubovich 1906: Vol. 2, 344–345, No. 69).

5 While a newer bi-lingual edition of Horn’s writings is available since 1962, we advise employing the original 1902 edition due to the higher quality of the reproductions of Horn’s original drawings.

187) and Jean Doubdan (1661:55) note that the monuments were already damaged and neglected centuries before the great fire of 1808. Giovanni Mariti reports that by the second half of the eighteenth century the fighting between the Greeks and the Latins, together with further damage inflicted by Muslim treasure hunters, had reduced the four tombs in the transept to such a pitiful state that he doubted whether the ashes of the dead were still inside. In comparison, the tombs of Godfrey and Baldwin I were well preserved although their originally white marble had acquired a yellowish hue (Mariti 1784:130-131,173-176). In the de Vogüé version (Fig. 5E), parts of the second and third lines of Godfrey's funerary epitaph were erased exactly where the inscription relates how Godfrey "won all this land for the Christian faith." An engraving appearing in *John Cassell's Illustrated History of England* (Fig. 5F) shows a more advanced stage of the deletion, in which the prayer for the salvation of Godfrey's soul ("may his soul reign with Christ, Amen") was also erased. Due to the political situation of the time, it is likely that references recalling the rights of the Latin Christians over the Church and the Holy Land were deliberately deleted. Later there might have been an attempt to interfere with Godfrey's salvation by erasing the prayer for his soul. One should add that the reason for the funerary inscriptions wearing out with time was not necessarily malicious. The early eighteenth-century

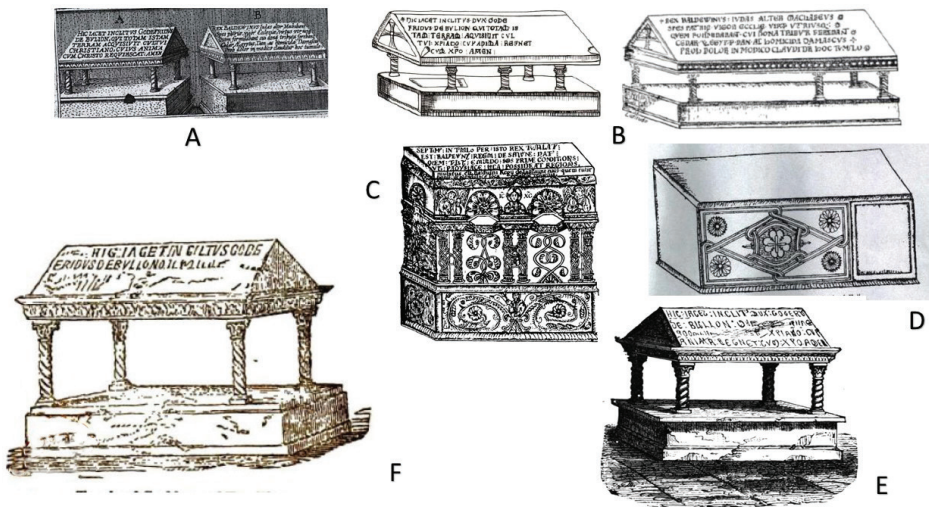


Fig. 5. The monuments as they appeared from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century:  
 A.) Cotwyck (1619:188); B,C,D.) Horn (1902:51); E.) de Vogüé (1860:195);  
 F.) Smith and Howitt (1857:131).

Russian Pilgrim Ioann Lukiyanov tells how superstitious pilgrims were rubbing their backs against the royal tombs (2008:92–93).

Whatever the case, the monuments still stood, and their inscriptions were readable—at least in part—until the early nineteenth century. The French writer François-René de Chateaubriand (2005:345) and the German explorer Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1809:184), both of whom visited Jerusalem in 1806, were probably the last to describe the monuments *in situ* before they vanished in 1808. In Hody's opinion, since both these travellers mentioned only the tombs of the two first rulers in Adam's Chapel, the four royal tombs at the crossing of the transept were already removed (Hody 1859:333). On October 12, 1808, a massive fire severely damaged a large part of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Willis 1849:282–285; Harvey 1935:xiii–iv; Coüasnon 1974:20). The fire began at the Armenian Chapel in the triforium of the Rotunda from where it spread to other parts of the church, where additional heavy damage was caused by the collapse of several ceilings. As the Western powers were preoccupied with the Napoleonic wars, the Ottoman authorities entrusted the restoration of the Church to Jerusalem's Greek Orthodox community. By the time these works were complete the Latin community was horrified to discover that the tombs of Godfrey of Bouillon and his successors had all vanished from the church. The precise sequence of events cannot be established. We do not know whether the fire reached Adam's Chapel, and if so what degree of damage was inflicted on the royal tombs. It could well be that the fire gutted the monuments so badly that a genuine need arose to remove them. As far as the Latins were concerned, the Greeks deliberately destroyed the tombs under cover of the fire, or the renovations works that followed. A possible motive for this was to inflict symbolic vengeance on the Crusader kings under whom the Catholic clergy was first installed into the church. There were also pragmatic considerations. By that time, it was already clear that the balance of power was moving strongly against the Ottoman Empire, suggesting that Western European powers (exactly as would happen later that century) might use their growing political muscle to stake claims to parts of Jerusalem. The presence of the Royal Crusader tombs might provide the pretext for such claims in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. One should also add that it is logical that a colossal disaster like the fire might also be seen as an opportunity to change the *status quo*. Similar tactics were used by other Christian communities within the church. For instance, the prominent role played by the Franciscans in the restoration of the Aedicule of the sixteenth century and—even more so—the restoration of the Anastasis Rotunda in 1720 allowed them to impinge on Greek property rights. In the latter case, the Greeks

lost their ownership of the area directly in front of the Aedicule of Christ, which in turn prompted the removal of the Byzantine Monomachian altar which served as the high altar of the Holy Sepulchre until the Crusaders rebuilt the church in Romanesque style (Re'em, Berkovich and Yilmaz forthcoming).<sup>6</sup>

Leaving aside the question as to what actually happened in 1808 and why, contemporary Latin writers were adamant that the Greeks actions were premeditated and malicious. According to Father Francesco Cassini, who provides a detailed description of the fire and its aftermath (Cassini 1857:295–304), the Greeks began destroying everything that might suggest Latin ownership, even in areas spared by the flames. Finally, the Greek had “the audacity to penetrate with their feet into the tomb of Godfrey and the other Latin Kings [...] they destroyed the elegant epitaph and destroyed the marble tomb and scattered the venerable ashes.” The enraged Cassini made his frustration clear:

*“Oh! Why didn’t the shadow (spirits) of Godfrey and Baldwin come up from the urn, why didn’t they reclaim such insults to their memories, why wasn’t there a universal scream from all the courts of Europe and why did nobody demand the highest satisfaction for such a severe insult done to the respectable ashes of the glorious ancestors?” (Cassini 1857:301; see also Horn 1902:LI–LII).*

Similarly, The Swiss Abbot Jacques Mislin, who was in Jerusalem on pilgrimage when the church burned, reports that his informants told him that the Greeks broke the

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6 The smooth restoration of the Rotunda was prompted in part by the recent Ottoman defeat in their war against the Habsburg Monarchy. While not appearing as an official clause of the 1718 peace treaty of Passarowitz, Habsburg backing for the Franciscans is attested by copies of three *Firmans* of Sultan Ahmed III, which were promptly forwarded to the Viennese Court over the winter of 1719–1720. In these decrees, the Sultan granted explicit permission to the Franciscans to restore the Anastasis Rotunda, as well as declaring further safeguards for Latin presence in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and in Jerusalem. These documents are kept in the Household, Court and State Archive of the Austrian State Archives in Vienna, see: ÖStA HHStA *Türkische Urkunden* 12 “Traduzione del Commandamento del Gran Segniore con Casiaschieri per la riparazione de Santi Luoghi di Gerusalemme” (October 1719), “Ferman Sultan Ahmeds III. zum Schutz der christlichen Kaufleute & Der katholischer Religionsausübung in der Hl. Grabeskirche” (1–10 January 1720) and “Ferman Sultan Ahmeds III. zum Schutz der christl. Kaufleute sowie der katholischer Religionsausübung in der Hl. Grabeskirche & am Berg Zion” (12–21 January 1720). We are grateful to Yasir Yilmaz for sharing these documents with us. For more on diplomatic aftermath of the Treaty of Passarowitz consult the open access digital database *QHOD: Digitale Edition von Quellen zur habsburgisch-osmanischen Diplomatie 1500–1918* at <https://qhod.net/> (Accessed 14 August 2022).

*tombeau* of Godfrey (Mislin 1858:251–253). In another version of his *Les Saints Lieux: pèlerinage à Jérusalem*, he adds: “According to the most authentic reports, the flames themselves respected these royal tombs, as the Muslims had respected them during seven centuries of oppression. The jealousy of the Greeks was more destructive than the flames. More intolerant than barbarism” (quoted in Horn 1902: XLVI.2).

This tone of Latin clergy was subsequently repeated in the writing of Western scholars (Hody 1859:333; Sepp 1863:376–377; Pierotti 1864:114). The Swiss biblical scholar Titus Tobler accused the Greeks of a “hideous act of violence and atrocities of devastation” (Tobler 1851:152). The French scholar Melchior de Vogüé, whose *Les églises de la Terre Sainte* is widely considered as the founding text of Crusader art history (Folda 1995:5), does not spare words either:

*“During the works of 1808, the Greeks broke these venerable stones and threw their debris to the wind, as if the glory of Godfrey were not common to all who bear the name of Christian, as if the sacrilegious hammer could efface the memory of the Crusades. Of all the profanations committed by the Greeks, this is the most odious; it bears witness to a hateful jealousy, powerless against ideas but lowly enough to attack tombs” (de Vogüé 1860:195).*

Ermete Pierotti in his book *Jerusalem Explored*, published in 1864, provides interesting information. He claims that the remains of the Latin kings were not profaned but were deposited (as he was informed) in a recess in the chamber to the south of the chapel under the south wing of the Calvary (nowadays the Greek Treasury). He adds that: “It is to be hoped that when Russia and France have completed the restoration of the dome, the Greeks will bring them (the bones) forth from their hiding-place and erect over them new monuments bearing the old inscriptions” (Pierotti 1864: Vol. 1, 14). Nevertheless, Pierotti was a controversial scholar (Re’em 2013), and everything he says must be taken with a pinch of salt unless corroborated by other sources.

These allegations aside, it is important to determine whether only the monuments were demolished or whether the graves underneath were opened and destroyed as well. The perspective of contemporary Greek Orthodox observers should also be considered. While making sure to mention that the Latin burials near Christ’s tomb were blasphemous and illegal, a Greek eyewitness to the events of 1808, Monk Neophytos of Cyprus, clarifies that the Crusader monuments “fell victim to the flames during the fire.” According to Neophytos, the Franciscans then complained to the Ottoman court that the Greeks offended them by repaving the tombs of their monarchs with plain stonework instead of marble (Neophytos 1901:44). In other words, the initial Franciscan grievances were not about the removal of the

monuments, but rather that the Greek restorers of the church failed to rebuild the Crusader royal tomb markers. Unlike Neophytos, whose account deals with the four later tombs adjacent to the *Katholicon*, the 1835 Russian pilgrim Avram Norov provides information on the tombs in the chapel of Adam: “Here is the place where, according to legend, the ashes of Melchizedek, the founder of Jerusalem, the Priest of the Highest God, are hidden; also, the place of the tomb of the liberator of Jerusalem, Godfried and his brother Baldwin. The last fire destroyed these two monuments” (1838:135).

As expected, there are substantial differences between Latin and Eastern sources on the fate of the tombs. The Orthodox sources claim the monuments over the tombs were ruined by the fire; the Latins claim the fire was used as a pretext for active destruction of the entire burials, graves and monuments alike. Nevertheless, in spite of the emotion and anger of the eyewitness testimonies, their authors unintentionally provide us with some interesting archaeological insights. In the High Middle Ages, most of the burials in the churchyard and urban cemeteries and even church burials were shallow with the body lying directly under the tombstones (Rodwell 2005:174). This is also typical of the Frankish burials and cemeteries (Boas 2017:235). Hence, opening a typical grave would not require much effort. However, some medieval burials were dug deep into the ground (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005:131). Illustrations in late medieval books of hours depict corpses lowered into the graves with ropes. Other miniatures show the undertakers standing in the grave up to their shoulders (Daniell 1997:50). Graves of monarchs, nobles and senior members of the clergy were dug deeper, with further protection provided by stone lining of the walls and covering the grave with a monolithic slab. There are surviving examples of this type of burial inside Latin churches from the Crusader Period. The Chapel of the Forty Martyrs in the Holy Sepulchre contains cist graves 1 m below the level of the floor (Re’em 2021: Vol. 2, 19–21). When the undisturbed tomb of the English knight Philip d’Aubigny was excavated in the twentieth century, his skeleton was found 1.5 m under the decorated stone slab (Re’em 2021: Vol. 2, 16–17, Fig. 9). Similarly, cist graves from the Crusader period excavated in the cloister of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem had an average depth of over 1 m (Bagatti 1952:199). The five graves excavated in 1871 by Swiss architect Christopher Edward Mauss at the portal of the Church of St. Anne were 1.34 m deep (Mauss 1888:33, Fig. 24). Destroying such deep graves required additional effort and much digging. On the other hand, if only the monuments were damaged and replaced with new paving, as suggested by Neophytos’ account, the actual graves could remain intact in their original location.

This last point adds an important aspect to the history of the Frankish royal tombs. In their attempts to reconcile the accounts of the brutal destruction of 1244 with numerous subsequent sources describing the tombs at their original location from the mid-thirteenth to the early nineteenth century, previous scholars raised the following three possibilities:

1) *In 1244 the Khwarizmians completely destroyed the Crusader royal graves. Their tomb markers were rebuilt at a later date.* In his major book on twelfth century Crusader art, Folda suggests that the tombs were destroyed in 1244. The available visual representations of the monuments, all of which date to the period after 1555, show the renovated version and not the original state of the tomb markers (Folda 1995:39). In his second volume covering the period between the Third Crusade and the Fall of Acre, Folda implies again that the tomb markers were repaired according to their original design shortly after the Khwarezmian attack “between 1244–1250 or after that time” (2005:273).

2) *In 1244 the tombstones were not damaged, but the burials were destroyed.* Some scholars claim that the Khwarezmians indeed opened the graves and plundered the bones, weapons and treasures inside. But the monuments themselves remained undamaged and survived until the fire of 1808 (Dunkel 1906:63–64; Mayer 2021:10–11; cf. Janet Shirley’s commentary in Rothelin 1999:64).

3) *The historical accounts of 1244 exaggerate. The tombs either incurred only superficial damage or were left completely untouched. They remained in their original place until the fire of 1808.* This is the view that prevails among the majority of scholars writing on that subject to date, even if not all state it as clearly. For example, Pringle quotes the accounts describing the Khwarizmian destruction and then proceeds to discuss the tombs as these appear in early modern drawings (Pringle 1993: Vol. 3, cf. 32 with 64–65; see also Buschhausen 1978:139; Jacoby 1979:9; Boas 2001:180–181). References to the the sack of 1244 are missing altogether from studies such as Jacoby’s (1982) otherwise excellent analysis of the sculptural decoration of the royal tombs (see also Mahoney 2018:12–14).

We should add one further option. The fire of 1808 brought about the removal of the tombstones (damaged or not), but not the burials themselves. These remained in their original location under the new pavement.

### **Contextualising the Sack of 1244**

Destroying tombs and digging out the buried corpses to ritually humiliate one’s enemies was a common practice among medieval Christians and Muslims alike (Re’em

2021: Vol. 1, 11–12). Hence, the desecration of royal burials described in accounts of 1244 was well in line with contemporary practices. However, archaeological findings within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and its immediate vicinity speak strongly against this option. Several Crusader tombs located close to the royal burials have remained sealed until modern times. For example, the tomb beneath the floor in the Chapel of the Forty Martyrs was revealed undamaged in the 1999 excavations when a small trial excavation unearthed four modest cist tombs.<sup>7</sup> The material from inside the tombs indicates that they were installed during the twelfth or the early thirteenth century, at the very latest. The remains of several unarticulated bodies were also uncovered, suggesting that these tombs were used as repositories during the Crusader period (Re'em 2021: Vol. 2, 19–21). In the nearby Chapel of St. James, seven niche tombs with sealed plain stone sarcophagi were found *in situ*. The design of the tombs, including the characteristic diagonal tooling on the surface of the sarcophagi, suggests Crusader period dating. A non-destructive examination of one of these tombs revealed that the burial holds skeletons and artefacts, all of which can be dated to the Crusader period (Re'em 2021: Vol. 1, 154–155, Vol. 2, 18). Boas' argument that the deceased "were members of the royal family or high nobles as it is unlikely that anyone of lesser status would have been buried in such a location" is perfectly reasonable (2001:182). In 1867 the bench of the Turkish custodians, which stood directly adjacent to the door of the church, was removed. Directly beneath lay the grave slab of the English knight Philip d'Aubigny, who was buried in 1236 during the second episode of Crusader rule in Jerusalem (Hanauer 1887:76–78; Clermont-Ganneau 1896: Vol. 2, 106–112). Before it was covered over in the Ottoman Period, this slab could be seen by anyone entering the building, as it was installed directly into the pavement of the forecourt of the church. The plaque bears a funerary inscription and the arms of the d'Aubigny family. When the grave underneath was first opened in 1925 by British archaeologists the original skeleton of the deceased was discovered inside.<sup>8</sup>

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7 The excavation was conducted by G. Avni and J. Seligman on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

8 Among those who examined the grave was the future rector of the Hebrew University Leo Ary Mayer. Photos published at the time show Mayer arranging the bones of the English knight's legs. Mayer notes in his letter to the British Inspector of Antiquities that the tombstone was shorter than the actual grave and, therefore, there was a need to arrange the bones inside the tomb. Further, he recommended placing a glass bottle in the tomb, with a coin and a local art object, as a sort of time capsule for future scholars to know that the tomb had been opened that year (Re'em 2021: Vol. 1, 16–17).

The second possibility—that the Khwarizmians only interfered with the graves without damaging their monuments, as suggested by Dunkel (1906:63–64)—is also most unlikely. As we know from medieval burial customs, the monuments were placed directly on top of the burials. So, excavating deliberately from the side and undermining the tombstone to interfere with the burial seems illogical, especially during the heat of a battle like that of 1244. The accounts of the brutal destruction of the graves must also be considered in light of the perception of the Khwarizmians by their contemporaries. In the decade after the death of the last Anushteginid Khwarazmshah Jalal al-Din Mangburni, his old army has become a landless mercenary force on the move. By 1244, its original Oghuz troops from Central Asia were joined by Kipchaq, Persian and Kurdish elements (Berkovich 2011:34–35). Although their conquest of Jerusalem and subsequent destruction of the Frankish army at the battle of Forbie was hailed by Arab historians as a great victory (for instance, Ibn Wāṣil 1953: Vol. 5, 337–338), most of the Khwarizmian time in the Middle East was spent fighting fellow Muslims. After having fought the Seljuq Turks, the Syrian Ayyubids and the Franks, eventually the Khwarizmians were turned-upon and exterminated by their former ally the Sultan of Egypt al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb, on whose behalf they took Jerusalem. A heterogeneous refugee army, the Khwarizmians had few friends among contemporary historians—Christian or Muslim alike. This, together with their record as fierce fighters,<sup>9</sup> made it logical to attribute the Khwarizmians all sort of depredations and excesses.

Irrespective of whether the Khwarizmians were as ferocious and brutal as contemporary sources suggest, the archaeological evidence clearly indicates that the royal graves were not exhumed and that their monuments were not mutilated beyond recognition. Furthermore, the suggestion that the graves were destroyed and then restored at a later date cannot be right considering what we know of the history of the region after the Franks' final loss of Jerusalem. Started in 1244, the war against Egypt continued until the defeat of the Saint Louis' Crusade. Although the French king stayed in the Holy Land for another four years, while engaged in several major building projects, Jerusalem remained out of his reach as it lay in the warzone between the Syrians Ayyubids and the nascent Mamluk sultanate. From 1256 the

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9 A comprehensive history of the Khwarizmians after Jalal al-Din's death is yet to be written. For the time being, see the recent English translation of Ziya Musa Bunyatov's classic 1986 study (2015:153–159). For the Khwarizmian involvement in the power struggle between the Ayyubid principalities, see Humphreys 1977. On their military effectiveness, see Berkovich 2011:25–26, 41–44.

Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was torn by a civil war with fighting continuing until the Mongol invasion of 1260. Soon afterwards, the Franks came under sustained attack by the Mamluk Sultan Baybars. The truce concluded after his death in 1277, left the Franks with only a few coastal enclaves which were torn by internal strife until the final Mamluk conquest of Acre in 1291. As long as the Frankish kingdom existed it would be unlikely that the Muslims overlord of Jerusalem—first the Ayyubids and then the Mamluks, whose political legitimacy was grounded in holy war (Sivan 1968:165–189)—would allow the restoration of such potent signs of Frankish power. By 1327, the royal graves and their inscriptions were described concretely for the first time (Reboldis 1890:162; see also Humbert of Dijon 1855:528). That was a decade before the establishment of the first Franciscan monastery in Jerusalem (Jotinsky 2016). It is improbable that the friars would have been able to accomplish the restoration of the tombs before acquiring a permanent base in the city. However, the most conclusive evidence against the possibility of a subsequent restoration of the tombs actually comes from late medieval and early modern sources. The images and verbal descriptions of the grave markers and—even more importantly—the transmission of their funerary inscriptions indicates the authors of these later account still saw the original twelfth century monuments.

### **The Design and the Inscriptions of the Royal Tombs**

From the total of eight Latin rulers buried in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the sources provide us with concrete details about the appearance of only four tombs. One of the first detailed verbal descriptions belongs to the Franciscan Friar Niccolò da Poggibonsi who arrived in Jerusalem in the spring of 1347. According to Poggibonsi, the tombs of Godfrey and Baldwin I had the same basic design and were supported by marble columns three feet high (1945:22–23). This account is consistent with the first surviving drawing of the tombs by Zuallart (1587:203; Fig. 5A), who shows two monuments with gabled roof, each supported by four squat colonnettes (plain for Baldwin and twisted for Godfrey; Fig. 3). Dating to the 1720s, the drawings of Elzear Horn show that the gable roof of Godfrey's monument is supported by five squat colonnettes (Fig. 5B; Horn 1902:51). This design was relatively common in some regions of twelfth–thirteenth century France such as Limousin (Durier 2009). In the Levant, a thirteenth century example of this type is known: the sarcophagus of Adam of Antioch, the Marshal of the Kingdom of Cyprus, which was discovered near Nicosia and is now preserved in Limassol (Fig. 6; Ingrand-Varenne and Villano 2020:307–310). The monuments with the greatest resemblance to those of Godfrey



Fig. 6. The sarcophagus of Adam of Antioch in the castle of Limassol (Photo: E. Ingrand-Varenne).

and Baldwin I can be seen in the twelfth century anonymous gabled tombs in San Lorenzo fuori le mura in Rome (Deer 1959:36, Figs. 8, 9).

While some later authorities describe them as simple, by the standards of their time the royal tombs of the first two rulers were exceptional. To put these monuments into perspective, the French King Louis VI (d. 1137) was buried under a plain inscribed slab, which can still be seen in the Musée de Cluny in Paris. The form, the precious construction material and—most importantly—the location at the entrance of Christianity’s holiest church highlighted the outstanding character

of the deceased. The monuments of Godfrey and Baldwin were much in line with what Marcoux has pointed out as the use of monumentality toward the retrospective and the meritorious (2013:372). The stylistic similarity between the tombs led Folda to suggest that Baldwin not only commissioned Godfrey's tomb, but also planned his own burial as part of a double mausoleum (1995:38–40). The two tombs show the continuity in the successful establishment of a new royal dynasty that prevailed despite all the difficulties encountered by the Franks in its early days (Crouzet-Pavan 2013:215).<sup>10</sup> If the monuments of Godfrey and Baldwin I seem modest, it is only in comparison with the Tomb of Baldwin V (Fig. 5C). This was the most ornately decorated royal tomb in twelfth century Jerusalem. Since the deceased was a child, Baldwin V's tomb was roughly half the length of that of Godfrey and his brother. The marble monument was an exquisite work of art decorated with interlaced columns, foliate designs, birds, angels and a carved head of Christ. Stylistically, these ornaments belonged to what is commonly known as the "Temple Mount Workshop," which produced some of the most elaborate sculptural decorations in the Holy City (Strzygowski 1936; Jacoby 1979; Folda 1995:467–469). The fourth monument, whose appearance is known to us, was originally located by the southern wall of the Chapel of Adam. Presumably it belonged either to Baldwin II or to Fulk of Anjou. It was a chest tomb measuring roughly 180 cm in length (Horn 1902:53; Fig. 5D). The face of the monument integrates a rectangular marble panel bearing an elaborate geometric ornament. A single interlacing band creates three figures: a quincunx inscribed into a decussate rectangle with four corner roundels, inscribed in turn into an outer rectangular frame. Each of the triangular spandrels between the two rectangles bears a rosette. A fragment of this panel was discovered in 1937 during the re-pavement of the Calvary. Initial analysis by Bagatti suggests the panel was a piece of Monomachian *spolia* employed by the Crusaders (Bagatti 1939:131, Fig. 64). The intricate proto-cosmatesque motif on that panel might provide the missing link to the subsequent development of that art form in the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem (Berkovich and Re'em 2022). Thus, in spite of displaying three distinct styles, these four grave markers were original twelfth century monuments.

The same holds true for the burial inscriptions of the Crusader kings. Admittedly, as with the grave markers, the evidence is not always consistent. The content of the funerary epitaphs of three rulers of Frankish Jerusalem—Godfrey, Baldwin

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10 For a similar use of funerary monuments as political manifestos, see the work of Dectot (2004) on the County of Champagne.

I and Baldwin V—survives. However, for the first two rulers six different textual versions are known. Furthermore, not all of these texts are funerary epitaphs in the etymological sense, i.e., texts originally intended to be inscribed on a tomb. The content, form and epigraphical aspects of these epitaphs, together with the history of their transmission, must be analysed in order to establish who inscribed them, when and for what purpose. Our palaeographical analysis is based on the versions in Francesco Quaresmio's (1639) magnum opus *Historica theologica et moralis Terrae Sanctae elucidatio*. A Franciscan who spent many years in the East, Quaresmio formed an intimate knowledge of the Holy Land. As a scholar aware of the importance of palaeography, Quaresmio observed the inscriptions and accurately copied the shape, size and ligature of each letter. He was also critical of previous authors who made no effort to copy the inscriptions exactly as they were (Quaresmio 1639: Vol. 2, 482; Ingrand-Varenne forthcoming). Below is a discussion of the three inscriptions.

**I. The epitaph of Baldwin V:** This funerary inscription offers the simplest case. It reads as follows: “+ *Septim(us) in tumulo puer isto rex tumulat(us) / Est Baldewini(us) regum de sanguine nat(us) / Quem tulit e mundo sors prime conditionis / Ut p(ar) adysiace loca possideat regionis*” (“Within this tomb rests a youthful king, Baldwin, the seventh king of royal blood, whom the common lot has carried off from the world to inhabit the regions of paradise”) (Fig. 7). Its poetic and palaeographic elements leave no doubt that its composition dates shortly after this young king's untimely death. Composed of four rhyming hexameters (*unisoni*: -atus, -ionis), this poem stresses the royal rank of the deceased (*septimus rex, regum de sanguine natus*), then his death (verse 3) and the wish that his soul is now in paradise (verse 4). Concerning the writing, for such a short inscription there is a substantial number of letter-plays: seven connected letters (such as A and N in sanguine) and fifteen nested letters (such as I in V in the same word) (Ingrand-Varenne 2019). These aspects, together with the

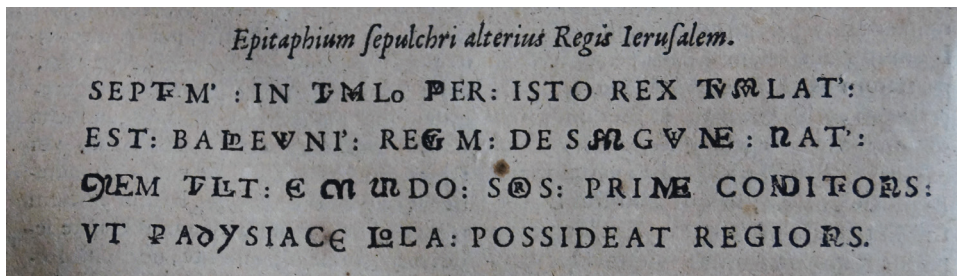


Fig. 7. Epitaph of Baldwin V  
(Quaresmio 1639: Vol. 2, 482; © Biblioteca Generalis, Custodia Terrae Sanctae).

fact that the script is mostly in capitals with some uncial shapes (12 capital Es and 2 uncial Es, 5 capital Ds and 1 uncial Ds, 5 capital Ms and 2 uncial Ms, 4 capital Ns and 4 uncial Ns), are characteristic of the twelfth century.

**II. The epitaphs for Baldwin I:** The first transmission of Baldwin's funerary inscription is provided by the German pilgrim Theodoric who visited Jerusalem in 1169 (Theodoric 1994:154). Quaresmio's version of that inscription reads: "*Rex Baldewinus Judas alter Machabeus / Spes patrie, vigor eccl(es)ie, virt(us) ut(r)iusq(ue), / Quem formidabant, cui dona tributa fereba(n)t / Cedar et Egypt(us), Dan ac homicida Damascus. / Proh dolor, in modico clauditur hoc tumulo*" ("King Baldwin, a second Judas Maccabeus, the hope of his country, the strength of the Church, the pride of both, feared by all, to whom gifts were brought by the tribes of Kedar and Egypt, Dan and man-slaying Damascus, is enclosed, alas, in this narrow tomb") (Fig. 8). This brief composition of four leonine hexameters and one pentameter draws a dense portrait of a king as heir of the Maccabees, great biblical figures seen as exemplary warriors who restored the Temple to its former glory. The political motive behind this parallel is obvious (Gerish 1997; Yolles 2017:429–430). The taking of the royal title and further appropriation of the Jewish royal tradition were no longer regarded as sacrilegious but were now seen as holy (Murray 2000:97). Baldwin was a leader and a warrior against pagans, who enlarged the kingdom with the support of the Church (Edgington 2019). The final lament is a formula common in the funerary texts (*CIFM* 23:73–74; *CIFM* 1-3:150). It does not refer to the actual size of the tomb but offers a symbolic contrast between the great deeds of the man and the small space required for his mortal remains. This text reflects the spiritualist trend that was still strong in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In spite of growing references to one's function, status and rank, funerary inscriptions tended to focus on religious praise rather than descriptions of the individual dead and their social roles.

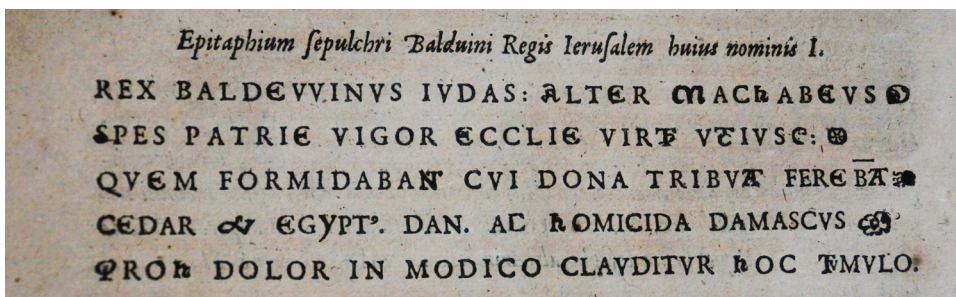


Fig. 8. Epitaph of Baldwin I  
(Quaresmio 1639: Vol. 2, 482; © Biblioteca Generalis, Custodia Terrae Sanctae).

The stonecutter used capital and uncial letters. For the letter E and H, the uncial shape is the more common (3 capital Es and 10 uncial Es; 4 uncial Hs, no capital form). The number of letter-plays is reduced to four: three ligatures and one nested letter. The geometric or floral signs at the end of the line are to fill blank spaces and graphically mark the end of each verse (Ingrand-Varenne 2019). The palaeographic characteristics copied by Quaresmio in the seventeenth century correspond to twelfth century models. Even more importantly, the text is identical to Theodoric's transmission from the late 1160s. We can conclude that this is the original epitaph of Baldwin I and that it survived the events of 1244.

Two further funerary poems were written in Baldwin's honour. The first, consisting of fourteen verses, was composed by Fulcher of Chartres (ca. 1059–fl. 1128), a French chaplain who served Baldwin I for many years (1913:613–614). The second is a collective epitaph attributed to Hildebert de Lavardin which presents both brothers as equal in their bravery and achievements (1854:1455–1456). In the West, the eleventh and twelfth centuries mark the peak of the popularity of the literary eulogy as a poetic genre among medieval Latin authors. Baldric of Dol, Hildebert of Lavardin, and Foulcoie of Beauvais wrote several dozens of these metric compositions (Debiais and Ingrand-Varenne 2016).

**III. The epitaphs for Godfrey:** This last case is the most complex, as no less than three funerary texts for Godfrey are known. The earliest is a verse epitaph composed – as he was to do later for Godfrey's younger brother – by Fulcher of Chartres (1913:350–351). Unlike Fulcher's poem, which was always taken as a literary epitaph (Mayer 2021:15), the remaining two versions were seriously considered as the possible transmissions of the funerary inscriptions adorning Godfrey's grave. The former is a text in verse dating to the first half of the twelfth century. The latter is a prose version that first appears in the early fourteenth century sources. That latter text has been widely copied in travel and pilgrimage accounts from the late Middle Ages until 1808. This leaves us with the question as to which is the original epitaph engraved after Godfrey's death. Were the two inscriptions engraved successively? Did they appear simultaneously on the monument or did one inscription replace the other?

The first epitaph in honour of Godfrey is a verse version, the text of which varies between 9, 10 and 12 hexameters. It first appears in the anonymous treatise *Descriptio locorum circa Hierusalem adjacentium*, which was composed between 1131–1143 and received further embellishment by Rorgo Frettelus shortly after 1148. Another version of this epitaph is transmitted in an autograph manuscript of the *Annalista*

*Saxo* written between 1148–1152 (2006:501). A slightly longer version of this text was copied into one of the thirteen manuscripts of the history of Albert of Aachen dating to 1158 (2007:xxxix). It reads:

*“Francorum gentis, Syon loca sancta petentis, / Mirificum sydus, dux hic recubat  
Godefridus. / Egypti terror, Arabum fuga, Persidis error / Rex licet electus, rex  
noluit intitulari, / Nec diademari, sed sub Christo famulari. / Ejus erat cura Syon  
sua reddere jura, / Catholiceque sequi sacra/ pia? dogmata juris et equi / Totum  
scisma teri circa se jusque foveri. / Sic et cum superis potuit diadema mereri, /  
Milicie speculum, populum vigor, anchora cleri”* (“Here lies Duke Godfrey, a  
dazzling star of the race of Franks who came to Zion, to the holy places, who  
made the Egyptian tremble, the Arab flee, and the Persian deceive. When he  
was elected king, he refused to have the title and the crown but wanted only to  
serve Christ. He strove always to govern Zion with equity, to follow the dogmas  
of the Catholic faith with righteousness, to stifle all schism around him and to  
practise justice. Thus he was able to earn the heavenly crown, mirror of chivalry,  
strength of the people, anchor of the clergy”).

After disappearing from the historical record, this version is transmitted once again in the 1531 pilgrimage account of the Lorrainer Benedictine monk, Dom Nicolas Loupvent. Loupvent introduces the French translation of the verses and deplores the poor state of the inscription (Loupvent 2007:119). The gap of three and a half centuries between the two transmissions, during which the other version of Godfrey’s epitaph is quoted numerous times, suggest that Loupvent might have not seen this version of the epitaph. Writing more than a decade after his journey, it might be suggested that he relied on earlier authorities to write his account, not least Theodoric. The practice of employing illustrious authorities when one’s own memory failed was not uncommon at the time (Tinguely 2000:13).

The reliability of this epitaph can be questioned for several reasons. Firstly, Theodoric, who transcribes the inscription of Baldwin I, provides no text for Godfrey. Secondly, while the tombs of the two brothers were nearly identical in size, Godfrey’s poem is almost double the length of that of Baldwin I. To make it fit into the monument, a different type of inscription would be required. Thirdly, the content could be seen as problematic. It is hardly believable that a text with such a pronounced theocratic ideology could have been engraved considering the resistance of the first two Baldwins to papal demands to make the kingdom direct vassal to the Holy See (Bourgeois 2014:13–14). Finally, the context in which this epitaph appears in the primary source has already prompted the view, not least by Petrus Cornelius Boeren,

who produced a critical edition of Rorgo Fretellus, that this version was a literary epitaph only (Rorgo Frettelus 1980:45–46; cf. Mayer 2021:13–15). Nevertheless, in spite of their strengths, these arguments are insufficient to reject out of hand the reliability of the first version of the epitaph. Its absence from Theodoric’s account does not prove it did not exist. Moreover, another German pilgrim and contemporary of Theodoric, John of Würzburg, who transmits a number of inscriptions, quotes neither that of Baldwin nor Godfrey (1994:124–125). The lack of space is not a valid argument either. The gabled surface of the tomb was sufficiently large for nine or even twelve verses. This was also a fairly average length for a funerary epitaph, even if surviving examples from the Latin Kingdom rarely go over five lines. An example in the French abbey of Nieul-sur-l’Autise has an early thirteenth century tomb whose gabled roof is inscribed on both sides (*CIFM* 23:126–128). Moreover, the content is still in line with the message Baldwin wanted to convey, with the reference to church dogma being no more than a polite nod toward the papacy. Last but not least, in Godfrey’s time it was more common to honour the deceased with verse than with prose epitaphs.

Let us now consider the short prose epitaph (Fig. 9). According to Hody this was the original epitaph (Hody 1859:398–401). However, this version of the text emerges for the very first time more than two hundred years after Godfrey’s death in the account of the Franciscan Antonius de Reboldis, who travelled twice to the Holy Land in 1327 and 1330–1331. Reboldis’ transmission of the text reads: “*Hic jacet inclitus dux Godefridus de Bullon, qui totam istam terram aquisivit cultui chr(ist)iano. Cuj(us) anima regnet cum Chr(ist)o. Amen*” (“Here lies the famous Duke Godfrey of Bouillon who won all this land for the Christian faith; may his soul reign with Christ, Amen”) (Reboldis 1890:162). A second and nearly identical transmission is given by Jacob of

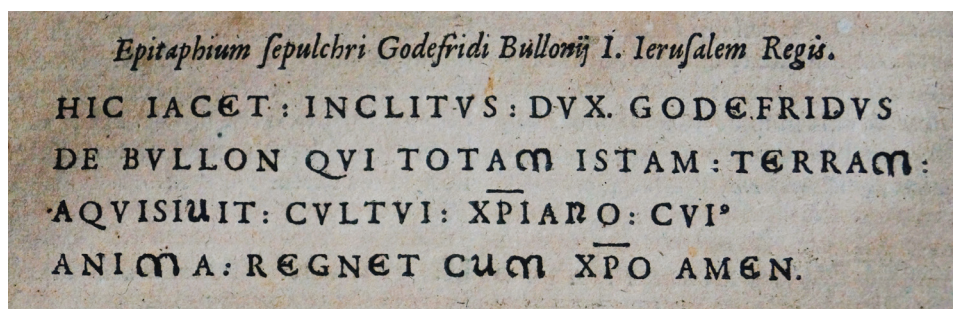


Fig. 9. Prose Epitaph of Godfrey of Bouillon  
(Quaresmio 1639: Vol. 2, 482; © Biblioteca Generalis, Custodia Terrae Sanctae).

Verona (or Bern) (1895:187),<sup>11</sup> who visited Jerusalem eight years later. Since then, that version appeared regularly in pilgrims' and travellers' accounts all the way to the early nineteenth century. Could it be that the shorter epitaph has been made during the early Mamluk period? This hypothesis can be tested by comparing Quaresmio with another transmission of the inscriptions made by Thomas 'Buck' Whaley. Whaley, who visited Jerusalem in 1788, claims that he copied the inscriptions exactly as they had appeared on the stone (Fig. 10; Whaley 1906:198). These two testimonies of what are supposed to be the same inscriptions are not identical. The layout is different and there is an inversion in Whaley's transcription ("*aquisivit terram*" versus "*terram aquisivit*"). Nevertheless, we are dealing with what is basically the same type of writing. Both versions primarily employ capital letters with some uncial characters (all the Es, and almost all the Ms). There is no letter-play, contrary to the epitaphs for Baldwin I and Baldwin V, but three common abbreviations marked by a right tilde for the terms *christiano* and *Christo* and an apostrophe for *cujus*. All these elements are characteristic for the twelfth century or the first half of the thirteenth century at the latest.

Pringle raised the possibility that both versions of Godfrey's epitaph have appeared on the monument together, each inscribed on a different side of the gable (Pringle 1993: Vol. 3, 63–65). In such a case, the longer verse version must have been removed

HIC IACET INCLITVS  
 DVX GODEFRIDVS DE  
 BVLLON QVITOTAN  
 A<sup>^</sup>QVISIVIT TERRAM  
 ISTAM. CVLTVI  
 XPIANO CVI ANIMA  
 REGNET CVM XPO AMEN.†

Fig. 10. Prose Epitaph of Godfrey of Bouillon from Whaley (1906:198).

11 For the identification of this author, see Halm 1994:47–49.

sometime before the fourteenth century. Meddling with funerary inscriptions was not unheard of in the Crusader Church of the Holy Sepulchre. John of Würzburg alleges that the epitaph on the grave of the German Crusader hero Wicher was rewritten to make him into a Frenchman (John of Würzburg 1994:125). However, it is hard to believe this could occur in Godfrey's case. For our purpose, it is less relevant which version of the inscription is original. The textual and epigraphical context of both the prose and the verse epitaphs places them firmly in the twelfth century. As in the case of Baldwin I and Baldwin V, Godfrey's monument standing in Adam's Chapel until 1808 was an original monument from the Crusader period.

### **The Fate of the Monuments after the Fire of 1808**

The storerooms of the Greek Patriarchate and of the Franciscan Terra Sancta Museum preserve many sculptural fragments and small decorated marble and limestone pieces bearing characteristic decorative geometric and floral patterns of the Crusader period. Many of these were first identified and documented by Jacoby, a foremost expert on Crusader sculpture.<sup>12</sup> More stone fragments were discovered by one of the authors (Fig. 11; Re'em 2021: Vol. 2, 22–24). According to the testimony of the local clergy of the church, these fragments were revealed during excavations conducted along the southern wall of the *Katholicon* at the beginning of the 1980s, several meters from the Stone of the Anointing. Based on these testimonies alone it is difficult to assess whether these artefacts came from the royal tombs. Delicate church furniture might be another potential source of origin. However, the intricate decoration, finishing and decorative style of these artefacts suggest small rather than monumental sculpture. Jacoby was able to prove that at least a few fragments belonged to the chest tomb of Baldwin V (Jacoby 1979). Crucial evidence was the close resemblance between these fragments and the drawing of the tomb by Elzear Horn (1902:50–56). When we look at these fragments, it is noticeable that they were intentionally broken down into small pieces (Fig. 11). It is important to note that no soot or other signs of burning can be seen on the surfaces. This said, it is still possible that the fragments were washed at some later point in order to remove evidence of a fire. In our opinion, the state of these fragments and the places in which they are said to have been found point to the aftermath of the 1808 fire.

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12 Many of these fragments can now be seen online thanks to Z. Jacoby's digital corpus "Crusaders Sculpture in the Land of Israel," available from the Haifa University Library website: <https://lib.haifa.ac.il/index.php/en/crusaders> (Accessed 14 August 2022).



Fig. 11. The decorated stone fragments from the storerooms of the Greek Patriarchate (Photo: A. Re'em).

Contrary to the view that the tombs “fell victim to the flames,” we think that the fragments offer direct archaeological evidence of intentional damage done to the monuments. We also reject the possibility that these fragments are a reminder of the Khwarizmian sack of the church. Considering the universal love for souvenirs and relics by medieval and early modern travellers and pilgrims—eastern and western alike—it is impossible that so many fine fragments would have remained in the church for centuries after the events of 1244. Apart from the removal of the tomb markers, is it possible that the aftermath of the 1808 fire also witnessed the opening of the graves themselves and the scattering of the bones? As already mentioned, Pierotti reports that the graves were opened and the bones collected in a box. In his book about the tombs of Godfrey of Bouillon and the Latin kings of Jerusalem, Hody argues that all the eight kings were buried at the foot of the Calvary and that future excavations might reveal their remains (Hody 1859:252). This argument was developed recently by Hans Eberhard Mayer, who suggests that the four monuments that stood at the crossing of the transept were transferred there from their original

location in the second half of sixteenth century (Mayer 2021:11). This assumption is to be refuted if we consider the latest available evidence.

Eyewitness testimony obtained by one of the authors concerns the building of the modern southern wall of the *Katholicon* in 1970. Its foundation trench was excavated to a depth of about 2 m below the current floor level along the line where four of the royal tombs formerly stood. According to the testimony, well-built and sealed cist graves were discovered at a depth ranging from 1.5–2 m. Another eyewitness claims to have seen the remains of cist graves when the abovementioned foundation was renovated in 2002. Although they offer fascinating information on the fate of the four royal tombs that originally stood in the crossing of the transept, these testimonies should be treated with caution and a fair degree of scepticism. As this evidence was obtained under the Chatham House Rule, no formal references can be made. Furthermore, when having to choose between upholding the formalities of academic publishing and the potential risk of upsetting the delicate balance in one of the Jerusalem's holiest sites, we hope our readers understand why we cannot cite our sources on this point. Nevertheless, we believe that these accounts must be put in writing in the hope they might encourage further research. On our side, we shall continue our efforts to locate images and other relevant materials that might inform us on the history and location of graves of the kings of Crusader Jerusalem.

## Conclusion

For more than seven centuries, the Frankish royal tombs were a potent symbol of Latin power in Christendom's holiest church. Despite the disappearance of their visual remains, the tombs of the Latin rulers of Jerusalem continue to inspire curiosity, interest and veneration—as well as tension. In 1849, old engravings were used to create copies of Godfrey of Bouillon's tomb by order of the Belgian Minister of Interior. These were commissioned for the Royal Museum of Armour and Antiquities and other state institutions as a tribute to Belgium's "national hero" (Hody 1859:5). The history of the funerary epitaphs mirrors that of the physical monuments, with a life of their own. While the verse inscriptions for Baldwin I and Baldwin V were engraved in the twelfth century, there is still doubt regarding the two distinct funerary texts for Godfrey of Bouillon. The dating of the prose text is particularly baffling. Without manuscript sources for the thirteenth century, we cannot determine for sure which of these two versions is the original.

By comparing textual, visual, and material sources from the twelfth century onwards, we were able to identify several contradictions. The sack of the church by

the Khwarizmians was not as destructive to the tombs as contemporary historians appear to suggest. It is clear that in 1808, the monuments were removed, and their fragments were buried under the new floor, taken into storerooms or used as *spolia* within the renovated church structure. However, the obliteration of the marker does not necessarily indicate the destruction of the burial below. Considering the likely depth of the grave pits, we think that in spite of the fire and renovations of 1808, the burials remained undisturbed until the twentieth century. Admittedly, interpreting the events of 1970 and 2002 based on eyewitness testimony alone is problematic, yet we cannot ignore it. The information we obtained is very much in line with what is known about that period in the history of the church (Cohen 2008:138,170–175,178–179,204,216,223–224,229–232). We hope that future paving work in the Church Holy Sepulchre, combined with modern excavations and/or non-intrusive techniques such as GPR (ground penetrating radar), will shed more light on the royal graves. This concerns the graves in particular, whose monuments originally stood at the foot of the Calvary. We conclude by reiterating our original hypothesis: it might well be that the remains of Godfrey of Bouillon, Baldwin I, Baldwin II and Fulk of Anjou are still laying undisturbed in unmarked pits under the modern pavement.

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