

The Holy Lance of Antioch

A Study on the Impact of a Perceived Relic during the First Crusade

Master Thesis

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*The crucified Jesus and the Roman soldier Longinus with the spear that would become the Holy Lance.
Portrait by Fra Angelico from the Dominican cloister San Marco, Florence.*

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Preface

The process of writing this thesis has been long and hard, but ultimately very satisfying. Though I alone am responsible for the thesis, I have had some help along the way. Special thanks to my supervisor Leidulf Melve, professor at the Centre for Medieval Studies, for all his insight and great advice through the two years I worked on this thesis. Thanks also to all students and staff who have participated on the medieval seminar at the AHKR-institute for the support and feedback they have offered. I would also like to thank Andre Jørgensen for providing invaluable aid with the Latin manuscripts used in this thesis. Last, but not least, I would like to thank Mona Stenberg for the continuous morale support you offer and for keeping me sane through this entire process.

Marius Kjørmo

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Cast of Characters

<i>Adhemar of Le Puy</i> (†1098):	Bishop of Le Puy in southern France and papal legate on the crusade.
<i>Alexius Comnenus</i> (†1118):	Emperor of Byzantium (1081-1118); founder of the great Comneni dynasti.
<i>Bohemond of Taranto</i> (†1111):	Son of Robert of Guiscard and leader of the southern Italian Norman crusaders.
<i>Kerbogha of Mosul</i> :	Ruler of Mosul and renowned general; leader of a massive Muslim army to relieve Antioch.
<i>Peter Bartholomew</i> (†1099):	Provençal visionary who discovered the Holy Lance.
<i>Peter the Hermit</i> (†1115):	Charismatic preacher and nominal leader of the People's Crusade.
<i>Raymond d'Aguilers</i> (†1099):	Raymond of Toulouse's chaplain and carrier of the Holy Lance.
<i>Raymond of Toulouse</i> (†1105):	Count of Toulouse and lord of St. Gilles; secular leader of the southern French crusaders.
<i>Stephen of Blois</i> (†1102):	Count of Blois and leading figure among the northern French crusaders.
<i>Tancred of Hauteville</i> : (†1112):	Bohemond of Taranto's young and adventurous nephew.

The Holy Lance of Antioch

A Study on the Impact of a Perceived Relic during the First Crusade

Chapter 1 – Introduction and Historiography

1.1 Introduction

The Crusades are by many viewed as a symbol of the ultimate clash between different cultures. Now, more than 900 years after Pope Urban II (†1099) held his famous council at Clermont in 1095,¹ students of history still flock to the sources in an attempt to understand the complexity of a movement that far exceeded Urban's visions when he declared that all men who fell on the road to, or in combat against the Turks who had attacked the Christians in the East, would get full absolution for their sins.² As I am sure most social anthropologists can confirm, it is often when confronted with a different culture that one learns more of its own. This is undoubtedly true also of the first crusade, and this is the motivation behind this thesis. What can be learned from the Christian men and women who travelled 3000 miles from their homes in search of adventure, personal glory and wealth, and absolution in the eyes of God?

The role of religion will play an important part in this thesis. There is no doubt that most men and women who took the cross were God-fearing people. However, just by browsing the source material one cannot fail to notice the disagreements between the crusaders on exactly how God's will were manifested in the events that took place on the arduous journey from the heart of Europe to the holiest place in all of Christendom, Jerusalem. Another interesting aspect revealed by the sources is the political strife which existed between the crusaders. The crusaders were drawn from all over Europe and after uniting outside Nicea in early June 1097,³ the only thing which kept the crusaders as one united body was their belief in God and their common distaste of what they considered to be pagans. But what happens when religion, their unifying factor, becomes a point of debate, or even a tool in the power struggle between the different leaders of the crusade? This thesis attempts to focus on this point of intersection, where the lines between politics and religion become blurred and where the two spheres slide into one another.⁴ At no time during the first crusade is this better exemplified than during the siege, capture, and battle of Antioch. Not only were the struggles at Antioch a pivotal moment for the expedition, it is also here that we first encounter stories of visions which would subsequently influence crusading politics.

¹ The Council of Clermont took place on November 27, 1095.

² Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 66.

³ Thomas Asbridge, 2004 : 121-122.

⁴ The division between religion and politics is of course a modern invention; however, the focus of this thesis will not primarily be on the interchangeable relationship between the two, rather how a perceived relic fits into a political world so dominated by religion. Colin Morris states: "The discovery of the holy lance at Antioch...is an outstanding example of the entanglement of politics and visions." Morris, 1984 : 33.

Antioch is also the site for perhaps the most controversial event on the entire crusade; the discovery of the Holy Lance. The story of how the Holy Lance was uncovered, the effect it had on the crusaders and how it was interpreted by contemporary witnesses, medieval chroniclers and modern historians alike, will be the main focal point for this thesis. As will be seen, this is a subject where neither the contemporary sources nor modern historians agree on what actually happened and to what extent the supposed relic led to the subsequent triumph of God's army.

The main focus of this thesis is the Holy Lance discovered at Antioch in the summer of 1098 by Peter Bartholomew, centered on the question: what was the impact of the Lance to the first crusade? To be able to answer this question we must examine the story of the Lance, from the reported visions that led to its discovery, to the ordeal of fire where it mostly disappears from the sources. We will have to take into account the gallery of people involved in this story, especially Peter Bartholomew, Raymond d'Aguilers, Raymond of Toulouse, Bohemond of Taranto and Bishop Adhemar of le Puy.

When trying to uncover what impact the Lance may have had on the crusade, we must divide the crusade into certain areas that is relevant to the period between the discovery and the ordeal. Firstly, most of the sources state that the Lance had a great impact on the morale of the crusaders immediately upon its discovery.⁵ Secondly, some modern historians have claimed a direct link between the discovery of the Lance and the tactical decision by the crusaders to sortie out of Antioch and charge the superior Muslim army of Kerbogha.⁶ Thirdly, Raymond d'Aguilers claims the Lance had protective power during the battle of Antioch.⁷ And fourthly, some modern historians claim the Lance was an effective political tool for Raymond of Toulouse in his disagreements with Bohemond.⁸ These are the areas this thesis will focus on, in order to ascertain what, if any, impact can be attributed to the Holy Lance.

⁵ Among others, Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 100, Tudebodus et al., 1977 : 83, Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 57, and Hill, 1962 : 60.

⁶ Among others, Jonathan Riley-Smith, 1997 : 95, and Christopher Tyerman, 2006 : 144.

⁷ "Superior in numbers they neither wounded anyone nor shot arrows against us, no doubt, because of the protection of the Holy Lance." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 63.

⁸ Among others, Steven Runciman, 1950 : 200, and Asbridge, 2007 : 22.

1.2 Lance Historiography

In undertaking this project I hope to be able to shed some light on a subject that, in my opinion, has been granted too little attention from modern scholars. Of the more recent studies is F. de Mely 1904, L.F. Sheffy 1915, Steven Runciman 1950, Colin Morris 1984, and Thomas Asbridge 2007.

The nature of the relic, known as the Holy Lance, is considered by F. de Mely in 1904 in his *La croix des premiers croisés ; La sainte lance ; La sainte couronne*.⁹ Mely, however, concentrates mostly on the Holy Lance in general, and his work contains very little information of the Lance discovered at Antioch.

In 1915, a master thesis was written at the University of Texas by L.F. Sheffy.¹⁰ This is titled *The Use of the Holy Lance in the First Crusade* and contains a thorough survey of the eyewitness accounts of the first crusade, pointing out where the Lance is mentioned. It contains little analysis however, and besides functioning as an overview, it has little to offer.

Steven Runciman published in 1950 his *The Holy Lance Found at Antioch*.¹¹ This article is the first attempt to critically analyze the discovery of the Lance by Peter Bartholomew and its impact on the crusade. It is a rather short article, and much of it is focused on the fate of the Antiochian Lance after the crusade. Runciman offers few answers, but raises a lot of questions, many of which will be dealt with below. Some of the statements that we will return to include the claims that the Lance upon its discovery “was at once almost universally believed”,¹² that the visions of Peter Bartholomew “reflected too obviously the wishes of the Provençal party”,¹³ and that the Lance was “involved in the political quarrels between Raymond of Toulouse and the other princes”.¹⁴

Published in 1984, *Policy and vision: The Case of the the Holy Lance at Antioch* by Colin Morris takes the research on the Antiochian Lance one step further.¹⁵ Morris attempts to answer some of the questions raised by Runciman, and in the process discovers that “the discovery of the Lance did not have the galvanising effect upon morale which is indicated in

⁹ Mély, 1904.

¹⁰ Sheffy, 1915.

¹¹ Runciman, 1950.

¹² Runciman, 1950 : 197.

¹³ Runciman, 1950 : 198.

¹⁴ Runciman, 1950 : 200.

¹⁵ Morris, 1984.

the ‘official’ account”,¹⁶ and that the visions of Peter Bartholomew was “by no means in complete sympathy with the count’s policy.”¹⁷ Moreover, he refers to the outdated notes of H. Hagenmeyer from the 1890’s, and the findings of John H. and Laurita L. Hill which today is often considered controversial. Morris will to some extent be used in this thesis, but some parts are too general to be of any use.

In 2007, Thomas Asbridge published *The Holy Lance of Antioch: Power, Devotion and Memory on the First Crusade*.¹⁸ Several of his views regarding the Holy Lance can be traced in his other publications, but in the above mentioned article he consolidates his views and attempts to conclude on the question of the Lance’s impact. Asbridge addresses almost every modern crusade historian and it is quite obvious that there has been much additional research on the crusades after Morris’s article in 1984. Asbridge is essential to this thesis in that he directly addresses several aspects of the impact of the Lance.

Asbridge is focused primarily on the second siege of Antioch. He argues that the Lance had little effect on the planning leading up to the battle, but on certain aspects his opinions appear unclear. He states: “There can be little doubt that, to start with a least, most of the First Crusaders accepted the authenticity of Peter’s discovery”¹⁹ and “The discovery of the Holy Lance does seem to have had a positive effect on the Frankish army’s morale.”²⁰ He argues that the Lance did increase the morale of the crusaders, but at the same time he claims “the degree and significance of its [the Lance’s] impact have, to date, been exaggerated.”²¹ Asbridge appears a little unclear at times and as he is focused on Antioch, he neglects to analyze the role possibly played by the Lance after the battle of Antioch.

These lacunas in crusade scholarship is the reason why I basically follow Asbridge’s own suggestion; to provide a careful re-examination of the accepted narrative of Antioch’s second siege and reassess the impact and significance of the Holy Lance. Apart from these articles, several other historians have considered the case of the Lance to various degrees. This thesis attempts to include all important views from the many crusade historians, but Christopher Tyerman and Jonathan Riley-Smith will receive extra attention as these both have relatively recent publications on the first crusade.

¹⁶ Morris, 1984 : 41.

¹⁷ Morris, 1984 : 42.

¹⁸ Asbridge, 2007.

¹⁹ Asbridge, 2007 : 8.

²⁰ Asbridge, 2007 :8.

²¹ Asbridge, 2007 : 9-10.

1.3 Terms and Expressions

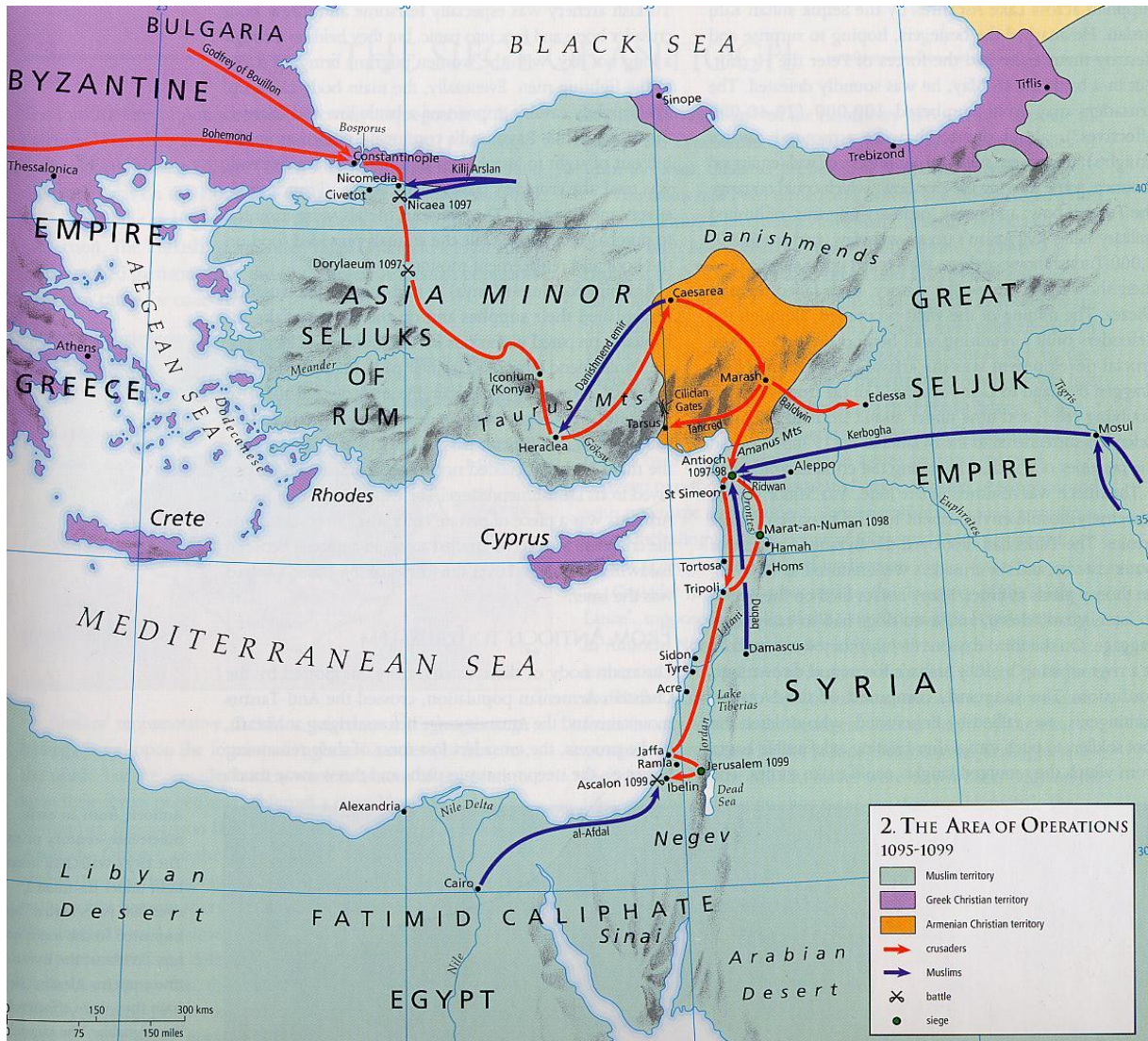
The first term to address is *Crusade*. Scholars have long disagreed on how to define a crusade. Due to the nature of this thesis, there is no need to go into a lengthy discussion of what constitutes a crusade, and how a crusade is differentiated from other holy wars.²² However, when I refer to a *crusader*, I mean a person who has, by the blessing of his local priest, sworn to fight against the churches enemies in the Holy Land.

The Holy Land is another term that needs explanation. When I refer to the Holy Land, I speak in general terms of the area in the middle-east between Cyprus in the west, Edessa in the east, Jerusalem and Ascalon in the south and Caesarea in the North.²³

Prince, princes or *crusade princes* is sometimes used to describe the leaders of the first crusade. These are the terms the English translations of the sources generally use. Although the crusade leaders were not all sons of kings or even of royal family, they were all tied to the nobility. Consequently, the word prince serves as a good term encompassing all the princes, counts, dukes and other nobles that were considered leaders of the first crusade.

²² For a discussion on the definition of a crusade, consult Constable, 2001, Jotischky, 2004, and Tyerman, 1998.

²³ Consult the map on page 14.



Map 1. Routes of the crusaders and their enemies 1095-1099.

Chapter 2 – The Sources

2.1 Analysis of Important Sources

Historians have for a long time made different assumptions regarding the eyewitness chronicles of the first crusade. One theory is that the author of the *Gesta Francorum*, as well as Raymond d'Aguilers and Peter Tudebode, all had access to a manuscript that has been lost. Supporters of this theory claims that certain facts presented in all three chronicles have such similar wording that they have to originate from a common source. Other historians have added that there is no proof or indication that such a manuscript ever existed and that it is more likely that the chronicles were based upon each other. In any case, for the purpose of this thesis, I will consider Raymond d'Aguilers, Fulcher of Chartres, Peter Tudebode and the anonymous *Gesta Francorum* as eyewitness accounts. I will also rely heavily upon Ralph of Caen as spokesperson of the Normans on the crusade. Robert the Monk, Albert of Aachen, Guibert de Nogent and William of Tyre will also be used to some extent in this thesis.

2.2 *Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem*

Raymond d'Aguilers' chronicle of the Franks who conquered Jerusalem is an eyewitness narration which describes Raymond IV of Toulouse's part of the crusade as they travel through Sclavonia,²⁴ via the siege of Antioch, to the immediate time after the conquest of Jerusalem. He describes several divine revelations the crusaders experienced on their journey, something which has led many historians to doubt his sincerity. In recent years, however, historians have been more inclined to rely on Raymond d'Aguilers as he provides information on parts of the first crusade not covered by other sources. For this thesis the *Historia Francorum* is especially important as it is by far the source that in most detail describes the visions experienced by Peter Bartholomew and the controversy surrounding the Holy Lance. Raymond d'Aguilers was in fact charged with carrying the Lance himself.

The author was, as mentioned, a part of the crusade. He served as chaplain under Raymond IV of Toulouse and was made a priest sometime during the crusade.²⁵ Some traits

²⁴ A north-eastern part of today's Croatia.

²⁵ Very little is known about Raymond d'Aguilers' life before and after the crusade. We can only assume, based on his writings, that he was a man of the church with moderate education. He refers to himself as a canon of Le Puy and mentions in his introduction that his book is written for the information of the bishop of Viviers. General information on Raymond's life is missing and among them are dates of his birth and death. His name is

of the author can be discovered by studying his writings. Raymond was a man of moderate education and well versed in the liturgy. He reveals his pragmatic views of the ultimate triumph of Christianity, as well as certain prejudices which were quite common in his time; amongst them are his distaste for the Greeks and a peculiar habit of blaming military adversity on local prostitutes.

The purpose of his work, besides keeping the bishop of Viviers informed, was to inform the reader of “God’s mighty work” and to counter slander from those whom the author describes as “misfits of war and cowardly deserters”. Raymond d’Aguilers tries to explain the grandeur of the crusade and leaves no doubt that God’s army, although it suffered divine punishment for its transgressions along the way, triumphed over paganism because it was God’s will.²⁶

An interesting aspect of this source is the fact that when Raymond d’Aguilers began working on the *Historia Francorum*, he had a co-author. This was Pons of Balazun, an obscure knight believed to be from the diocese of Viviers.²⁷ He dies in the siege of Arqa and Raymond completes the book without him. There is little doubt that Raymond takes notes during the crusade and that the book itself is compiled in the immediate aftermath. The extent of Pons’ influence on the book is unknown and most historians merely mention Pons as a side note.²⁸

2.3 Gesta Francorum et Aliorum Hierosolymitanorum

The acts of the Franks and the other pilgrims on the expedition to Jerusalem, which will be referred to as *Gesta Francorum*, was written by an unknown author and starts with the council of Clermont in November 1095, and ends at the battle of Ascalon in August 1099. The author

written in a variety of ways (Agilers, Agiles, Aguilers and Aguillers) but these differences in spelling are in all probability purely scribal and without significance.

²⁶ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 15.

²⁷ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 15.

²⁸ The translation of the *Historia Francorum* by Hill and Hill that I rely upon for this thesis is for the most part quite accurate. However there are instances where the English translation makes no sense at all. For instance the last sentence in Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 on page 46. “When the waning cowardice disappeared sufficiently, and boldness – sufficient at all times to brave all perils with and for brothers – returned, one of the besieged Turks confided in our princes that he would deliver Antioch to us”. Also I would have to agree with James A. Brundage; even though the translators strive to identify whenever Raymond cites scripture, they often fall short on this point. Brundage, 1969 : 451-452. The translation of Hill and Hill is based upon the *Saint Victor Codex* from the Bibliotheque Nationale Paris, which contains one of seven more or less intact versions of *Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem*.

tells of the journey from Amalfi to the crossing of the Bosphorus strait where his part of the army merged with the rest of the crusaders. He was present at the siege of Nicea, the battle of Dorylaeum and most likely also at the siege and battle of Antioch. He was a soldier in Bohemond's army. After the capture of Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man in 1098, Bohemond went back to Antioch and intended to stay there as the crusade continued towards Jerusalem. The unknown soldier then joined the ranks of Raymond of Toulouse where he participated in the siege of Arqa, the march to Jerusalem, and finally the battle of Ascalon.

Although the author's name remains hidden, some information concerning his person can be deducted from the *Gesta Francorum*. It is safe to assume that he hailed from southern Italy, probably Apulia, and that he owed allegiance to Bohemond. He was a knight and an active participant in the battles he describes. He shows that his knowledge of Islam was limited and he often confuses Turks and Arabs, two traits quite common among the Latin chroniclers. He shows a great interest in tactics and the science of warfare, but at the same time he makes the mistake of assuming that his Muslim opponents organized their army in the exact same fashion as the Europeans did. It is impossible to know whether he wrote the chronicle himself or whether he dictated it to someone with writing abilities. Educated knights (*militēs literati*) were not unknown in the twelfth century, but their numbers were few. The fate of the author escapes us, but in an appendix to one of the earliest manuscripts to the *Gesta Francorum* we see signs that could indicate that he reached the Holy Sepulchre before he died.²⁹

Nowhere does the author mention his motivations for writing, but the *Gesta Francorum* appears to be a collection of heroic deeds and it is unlikely that the author viewed himself as a chronicler. The work in itself consists of ten books and the first nine appear to have been written before the author left Antioch in November 1098. The tenth book, being the longest, is probably written in short succession of the battle of Ascalon and no later than 1101.³⁰

The *Gesta Francorum* offers eyewitness accounts of the experience of a knight participating in the First Crusade. Through it we gain insight into the complex relationship that existed between a vassal and his lord. It also sheds some light on the subject of knightly discipline on the battlefield (or lack thereof), and contains detailed descriptions of several of

²⁹ Hill, 1962 : 11-16.

³⁰ Hill, 1962 : 9.

the most important sieges and battles on the first crusade. For this thesis the *Gesta Francorum* is a very important source since it is the second eyewitness to the siege of Antioch. It also appears that the *Gesta Francorum* and the above mentioned *Historia Francorum* are more or less independent from one another.³¹

2.4 Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere

Peter Tudebode's history of the journey to Jerusalem has had a rather controversial history. For many years Tudebode were deemed to be a fraud, merely copying the *Gesta Francorum*. After a closer examination, Hill and Hill conclude that rather than copying, Tudebode had access to the same source material as the anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum* and Raymond d'Aguilers. Certain elements can be discovered in Tudebode's chronicle that is not present in either the *Gesta Francorum* or the *Historia Francorum*. This could indicate that Peter was in fact an active participant on the crusade. For this thesis the usefulness of Tudebode is however limited. Most of his facts are identical to what can be found in the previously mentioned sources, but one has to keep an eye out for the few subjects on which he provides additional information.³²

2.5 Historia Hierosolymitana

Fulcher of Chartres history of the expedition to Jerusalem is divided into three books. The first contains the author's account of the first crusade from the council of Clermont in 1095 and the journey to Jerusalem. It ends with the message of the death of Godfrey of Jerusalem on the 18th of July 1100. The second book is dedicated to Baldwin I (†1118) and the kingdom he founded around Jerusalem in the years 1100-1118, whereas the final book is dedicated to Baldwin II (†1131) and his attempts at defending and expanding the Christian kingdom between 1120 and 1127.

³¹ The translation by Rosalind Hill contains certain errors that students of history should be aware of, as D. Ross thoroughly demonstrates. Ross, 1965 : 108-109. The translator has a very liberal approach and tries to translate the meaning more than the words, and in some cases this lead to errors. Examples: *Multos ex eis* means "Many of them", not "Most of them", *ferreas* means "of iron" not "of metal", *inopia panis* means "shortage of bread" not "shortage of food" and *quod nullatenus ex suis exercitibus adiutorium habere possent* means "that they could get no more help from their forces" not "that their armies could do no more to help them".

³² Tudebodus et al., 1977 : Introduction.

Fulcher of Chartres was undoubtedly a man of the church. Little is known about his past, besides the fact that he refers to himself as Fulcher of Chartres and thus it is commonly assumed that he hailed from Chartres, France.³³ He served as the chaplain of Baldwin I and resided in Jerusalem from the end of 1100 until 1127 when he vanishes from the sources. Large parts of his chronicle are probably based on the author's firsthand experience. At other times, he has to rely on other sources, especially when he journeys with Baldwin I to Edessa, while the rest of the crusaders are besieging Antioch. Here he is dependent on Raymond d'Aguilers and the *Gesta Francorum*. Still, the fact that he was part of the crusade and did not experience the ordeals of Antioch leaves Fulcher with an interesting perspective on the whole affair.³⁴

The *Historia Hierosolymitana* was probably written after 1099. According to Hagenmayer, Raymond d'Aguilers' chronicle had to be completed after *Gesta Francorum*,³⁵ and based on this, Fink³⁶ places the *Historia Hierosolymitana* between when Fulcher moved to Jerusalem at the end of 1100 and Stephen of Blois' death in May 1102. There are also indications that the last chapters were written continuously as the events transpired until book III suddenly stops in the summer of 1127.³⁷ Fulcher's motivation for his work is to teach the uninformed about the expedition to Jerusalem, and how their toils and hard work culminated in success by the grace of God.³⁸

Fulcher's writing is to a surprisingly small degree moralizing (In strong contrast to most of the other sources). One example is when he reports on the siege of Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man where he almost clinically describes how the Franks turned to cannibalism to survive.³⁹ There is no doubt that Fulcher influenced other writers such as Gubert de Noget and later William of Tyre. For this thesis Fulcher will have a limited, but important role. Since he was at Edessa during the siege of Antioch, he can offer little in terms of facts surrounding the

³³ This is also supported by his writings. At one point he states that he wish he would rather be in Chartres or Orleans. Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 139. In addition, he refers to himself and his companions as "...we western Franks..." Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 74.

³⁴ What perhaps separates Fulcher the most from the other primary sources is that he relates some of the events leading up to the first crusade and quite a bit about the time after Jerusalem was conquered. Among other things he offers good insight into the Christian states in the Holy Land that grew out of the First Crusade. It seems that Fulcher wanted the crusader's acts to be known and supported back in Europe. Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 188-189.

³⁵ Fulcherius and Hagenmeyer, 1913 : 50-60.

³⁶ Harold Fink was the editor of the 1969 edition of the English translation of Fulcher of Chartres.

³⁷ Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 18-24.

³⁸ Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 71. Later he substantiates his reasons for writing so the acts of the crusaders should not be forgotten, since no other has taken it upon them to write about these events.

³⁹ Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 112-113.

events that took place there. However, he did later meet people who were part of those events, and the fact that he himself were removed from the terrible toils and the religious excitement may leave him in a good position to adequately assess the effects of certain incidents.

2.6 *Gesta Tancredi*

The *Gesta Tancredi*, written by Ralph of Caen (†after 1130), is a form of biography about Ralph's lord Tancred (†1112). The chronicle consists of 157 chapters where 36 are written in verse and the rest in prose. This may leave the reader dumbfounded to what the *Gesta Tancredi* really is, since some of it contains qualities that are most reminiscent of contemporary entertainment literature. There are clear indications that Ralph intended his work to be understood as history, but the fact that he utilizes a prosimetric narrative can lead to some confusion as to what part of the chronicle is intended to be fact and what part is fiction. Tancred himself is only mentioned in half of the prose chapters and only in five of the verse chapters. This should be an indication that the work itself contains an abundance of information not directly relating to Ralph's lord. Tancred was the nephew of Bohemond and was to become regent of Antioch, and after the siege of Jerusalem, also prince of Galilee.⁴⁰

Little is known about Ralph of Caen. He may hail from the Caen region, since he studied there during his youth, probably at the cathedral school under the direction of Arnulf of Chocques who later became patriarch of Jerusalem.⁴¹ How Ralph got connected to Bohemond is hard to tell, but it would not be unreasonable to assume that Ralph's family enjoyed a certain status. His connection to Arnulf of Chocques could be another reason for the fact that he was hired by Bohemond. In 1107 Bohemond travelled back to the eastern Mediterranean and here Ralph experienced Bohemond's poor relationship with the Byzantine emperor and the siege of Durazzo. Bohemond died in 1111 and a few months earlier Ralph journeyed to Antioch where he entered the service of Tancred. Here he served until Tancred's death 12th of December 1112.⁴²

The *Gesta Tancredi* was probably written after 1112, since the author specifically states that he did not wish to write until after the passing of his lord. He felt that his credibility would be questioned if people were to think that his work was composed only to attain

⁴⁰ Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : passim.

⁴¹ We do not know if Ralph had completed his education when Arnulf left for the holy land in the contingent of Robert of Normandie, but by 1106 he was an ordained priest and were recruited by Bohemond to serve as his chaplain. Are one to assume that proper church regulation was followed, then Ralph must have been more than 25 years in 1106 as this was the minimum age for the ordination of priests.

⁴² Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 1-5.

goodwill from his employer. The *Gesta Tancredi* has a sudden ending and it is silent on the last six years of Tancred's career. We do not know if this is because the chapters have been lost, or if Ralph died before he was able to finish his work. We can ascertain that he was alive and writing in 1130, since in chapter 71 he mentions the death of Bohemond the younger which happens in this year.⁴³

Ralph of Caen relies a lot on the testimony of eyewitnesses and he claims he could not have waited much longer before he started writing, probably because the number of living eyewitnesses was dwindling. He demonstrates critical insight as he claims that while eyewitnesses have the most accurate information, they were not always able to offer a reflected account of traumatic events. He refers to what modern historians have dubbed "the memoir-effect": a person has a tendency to "remember" the past in a way which reflects better on his or her own character. Ralph was close to both Tancred and Bohemond, and a lot of his information is supposedly gathered from conversations with them or with their retinue and soldiers. He is often critical to his sources, and on several occasions he presents conflicting views, before guiding his readers to the conclusion he himself finds the most plausible.

As mentioned above, the author switches between verse and prose. One theory is that he uses verse when he feels that his information is improbable or at least less accurate. He uses verse when he describes the actions of the non-Norman leaders at the battle of Dorylaeum⁴⁴ where his information probably was limited. However, when he describes the death of Tancred's brother William in the same battle,⁴⁵ a subject of which he had the opportunity to extract solid testimony from both Tancred and his officers, he switches from verse to prose. This would then reflect upon his capacity to be critical towards his sources.⁴⁶

⁴³ The chronicle shows that the author had a thorough classical education. Apart from scripture, Ralph had knowledge of Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Livy, Caesar, Lucan and Sallust. He demonstrates both in his introduction and through his work that he is aware of his role as historian. He is a supporter of Caesar and Livy's philosophy that the historian has to encourage good deeds and warn against evil deeds by providing examples of both. He states that writing history is a noble art and that the actions of the prince must be reported accurately and honestly. It is the responsibility of the historian to write what should be read, not just what people want to read. It seems almost ironic that Ralph relates his express wishes that his audience learn from his work and not just consider it a form of entertainment, when the style in which he has chosen to present his work in is the style most commonly used in contemporary heroic literary composition. His reasons for writing is ultimately that he wanted to tell the truth of the Christian army which he felt had been distorted by other accounts and he claims he took up the burden of writing because none with a more "adept style" had taken up the task. Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : passim.

⁴⁴ Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 50-57.

⁴⁵ Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 48-50.

⁴⁶ The best example of this is probably when he relates the story of the discovery of the Holy Lance. Here, Ralph, through Bohemond, draws the entire story into question. He attacks Peter Bartholomew who found the lance, claiming he was not a trustworthy man. Then he rhetorically asks why one of Jesus' companions would carry the lance across such a distance and not just hide it in Jerusalem. He tackles the theory that a Jew or a

Still, his criticism of Peter Bartholomew and Raymond of Toulouse surpasses that of healthy scrutiny as he has no good words to say about Bohemond's political opponents. As will be seen, his views are so tainted by the political conflict between the two parties that a lot of his information concerning the Holy Lance and the actions of Raymond of Toulouse and the other Provençals has to be considered as unreliable at best.

In any case the *Gesta Tancredi* will probably prove very useful to this thesis as it contains a lot of information gathered directly from both Bohemond and Tancred. Even though it is obviously biased, it is still outspokenly critical of Raymond d'Aguilers' account of the Lance.⁴⁷

2.7 Historia Iherosolimitana

Robert the Monk's history of the first crusade is a thorough chronicle of the first crusade from the council of Clermont to the battle of Ascalon. Knowledge of the author himself is scarce.⁴⁸ What we do know for sure about Robert the Monk is that he was a monk, and that his work on the chronicle was conducted at the Benedictine abbey of St. Remi in Reims, France. Robert was an eyewitness to the council of Clermont, but there are no indications that he ever travelled to the Holy Land.⁴⁹

pagan could have taken it by asking why they then would have hidden it in a church, and finally when he remembers the old legend claiming that the lance belonged to one of the soldiers of Pontius Pilate, he asks if there is any proof at all that Pilate ever even visited Antioch. This is interesting, as several other sources just blatantly accept the tale of the discovery of the lance without any discussion on the subject.

⁴⁷ Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : passim. The translation of the *Gesta Tancredi* by Bachrach and Bachrach that I rely upon for this thesis seems to be quite adequate. The authors prefer a *sensus pro sensu* principle rather than a *verbum pro verbo*, which means that they try to relate the meaning of the author, rather than the exact words. To a certain degree this is quite practical, as Ralph of Caen can be somewhat cryptic and uses a difficult Latin. At the same time this leaves a lot of the interpretations to the translators and there is a risk that certain elements can be lost in the translation. Jonathan Riley-Smith have pointed out several errors, including an instance in chapter 135 where *Papae* is translated as "pope" where it actually should mean the interjection "How strange!" and in chapter 21 there is one translated sentence which totally misses the original meaning. Riley-Smith, 2006 : 820-821. The Latin text which Bachrach and Bachrach bases their translation upon is published in *Recueil des historiens des croisades: historiens occidentaux vol III*. The version of *Gesta Tancredi* which is found in the *Recueil* was prepared by Martene and Ursinus Durand in 1717, based on the only surviving manuscript of the *Gesta Tancredi* discovered in a cloister in Gembloux, Belgium, after a fire ruined most of the contents of its library in 1716. L. A. Muratori published a revised edition of this text in his *Scriptores rerum Italicarum* and it was this edition that was the basis for the 1866 *recueil*-edition. Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 15-17.

⁴⁸ Many have tried to associate Robert the Monk with different 'Roberts' known to live at the same time and in the same geographical location, especially an Abbot Robert. However the evidence is questionable and Sweetenham makes a good case against this theory.

⁴⁹ Robert the Monk and Sweetenham, 2005 : 1-11.

In the early 12th century there was a growing discontent amongst the scholars of Europe against the *Gesta Francorum*. For several reasons, this chronicle was not considered adequate and a string of new chronicles were written. The *Historia Iherosolimitana* is probably written in this tradition. It is hard to say exactly when it was completed but strong circumstantial evidence dates it to 1106-07.⁵⁰ Some have claimed that the chronicle was written as propaganda based on Bohemond's tour of Europe in 1105-06, intending to create enthusiasm for a new expedition to the Holy Land. Sweetenham's line of arguments in support of this theory, is, however, mostly speculation.⁵¹

Robert the Monk's chronicle was probably one of the most popular accounts of the First Crusade in Europe. Modern historians have discovered more than one hundred surviving manuscripts, ten times more than any other similar chronicle. It also appears that other works, especially the *Chanson d'Antioche* relies on Robert the Monk for historical accuracy. With the exception of the account of the council of Clermont, the *Historia Iherosolimitana* adds little of historical facts relating to the events of the crusade, since most of them are gathered from the *Gesta Francorum*. However, since the chronicle was the most popular account of the First Crusade, it can shed some light on how the events of the crusade were received and retold to a European public.⁵²

2.8 *Historia Ierosolimitana*

Albert of Aachen's history of the journey to Jerusalem is the most extensive surviving contemporary chronicle concerning the First Crusade. It is dated to sometime between 1119 and 1130. The author lived in or near Aachen in the Rhineland and even though there is little evidence identifying the author's name as Albert or Adalbert, this has become the established name in crusading scholarship. He was not part of the crusade, but was able to gather oral testimony from returning crusaders. Albert is of particular interest to this thesis for three reasons. Firstly, it appears that he did not have knowledge of, or at least did not utilize, the aforementioned eyewitness accounts. This means that his chronicle may have escaped some of the political bias contained in the eyewitness sources. Secondly, he breaks out of the tradition of viewing the crusades from a French perspective. He focuses more on Godfrey of

⁵⁰ Robert the Monk and Sweetenham, 2005 : 4-7.

⁵¹ Robert the Monk and Sweetenham, 2005 : Introduction.

⁵² Robert the Monk and Sweetenham, 2005 : Introduction.

Bouillon and his followers who were active in their support of the German emperor. This tradition were later picked up and popularized by William of Tyre.⁵³ Thirdly, he adds certain bits of new information, not found in the other sources.

2.9 *Gesta Dei per Francos*

Guibert de Nogent's history of the deeds of God through the Franks was written sometime between 1106 and 1109. It never circulated widely during the middle ages and it is not mentioned by contemporary writers. Guibert even neglects to mention it himself in his autobiography written five to ten years later. Based primarily on the *Gesta Francorum*, Guibert's chronicle intends to rectify certain elements he disagreed with in the *Gesta Francorum*.⁵⁴ His biggest objection was with the raw and unpolished style of the *Gesta Francorum*. Guibert takes pride in utilizing a very complex Latin and this in itself might be a reason for why his chronicle never reached any degree of popularity.⁵⁵

Guibert was born sometime between 1053 and 1065⁵⁶ and was made abbot of Nogent-sous-Coucy in 1104.⁵⁷ He is a spokesperson for the nobility and he also holds the French in a much higher regard than the Germans. In fact, Guibert admires Bohmond and claims French heritage for the prince, even though he was born in southern Italy. As indicated by the mentioned title, he strives to attribute all the fortunate events of the crusade to God and he also uses rhetoric to paint a more vivid picture than is offered by the *Gesta Francorum*.⁵⁸ For

⁵³ Albertus Aquensis and Edgington, 2007 : Introduction.

⁵⁴ The title itself is a good indication of this. Where the full title of *Gesta Francorum* translates to the deeds of the Franks and the other pilgrims on the expedition to Jerusalem, Guibert's title emphasizes that the deeds were accomplished by God through the Franks.

⁵⁵ Guibertus de Novigento and Levine, 1997 : Introduction.

⁵⁶ The last editor of *Monodiae* (Guibert's autobiographical work) claims he was born in 1055.

⁵⁷ Based on his autobiography, the following characteristic has been offered of Guibert de Nogent: "...an aristocratic oblate, who became an aggressive Benedictine monk, fervently attached to his pious mother, fascinated and horrified by sexuality, enraged at the extent of contemporary ecclesiastical corruption, intensely alert to possible heresies, and generally impatient with all opinions not his own." This view has been supported by later historians. For a deeper analysis of Guiber de Nogent, see Kantor, 1976

⁵⁸ A good example of this is the description of the crusaders arrival at Jerusalem. The *Gesta Francorum* offers the following statement: "We, however, joyful and exultant, came to the city of Jerusalem..." Hill, 1962 : 87. Guibert spices up that account with the following statement: "Finally they reached the place which had provoked so many hardships for them, which had brought upon them so much thirst and hunger for such a long time, which had stripped them, kept them sleepless, cold, and ceaselessly frightened, the most intensely pleasurable place, which had been the goal of the wretchedness they had undergone, and which had lured them to seek death and wounds. To this place, I say, desired by so many thousands of thousands which they had greeted with such sadness and in jubilation, they finally came, to Jerusalem." Guibertus de Novigento and Levine, 1997 : 126.

this thesis Guibert's interpretation of the political controversy surrounding the Holy Lance of Antioch is of great interest.⁵⁹

2.10 Historia Rerum in Partibus Transmarinis Gestarum

William of Tyre's history of deeds done beyond the sea starts with the Muslim conquest of Syria in the 7th century, quickly advancing to the First Crusade and ends up discussing the political history of the kingdom of Jerusalem. William, born to European parents around 1130, was a native of Jerusalem. He became archbishop of Tyre in 1175 and died ten years later. His chronicle is written after the other chronicles used in this thesis, but it is included for good reasons. Not only was William born and raised in the Holy Land, giving him a unique perspective of western/eastern relations, he also mastered a large number of languages and put together his historical facts in a unique way. Most contemporary chroniclers were content with picking out one account of The Crusade and improving on this. William however, used all the written sources available to him, demonstrating a degree of textual criticism in the process. His work also became very popular, in many ways setting the standard for later crusade chroniclers. Manuscripts are found in Latin, Old French (*langue d'oïl*), English, and at one point the Old French version was translated back to Latin, the translator probably being unaware of the existence of the original. In other words, William of Tyre became the authority on the Christian activity in the Holy Land and August C. Krey claims that "William's history must have been known in nearly every castle and considerable town in Europe" and that it was "perhaps the most widely read chronicle in the later Middle Ages..."⁶⁰ His influence can be traced not only to modern historians, but also to works of art, like Dante's *Divine Comedy* and other more recent contributions.⁶¹

2.11 Other Sources

The most important sources for this thesis are mentioned above, but there are some more that need mentioning, even though the extent of their use is somewhat limited. One such source is The *Alexiad* of Anna Comnena. Anna was the daughter of Byzantine emperor Alexius

⁵⁹ Guibertus de Novigento and Levine, 1997 : Passim.

⁶⁰ Guilelmus et al., 1943 : 43.

⁶¹ Guilelmus et al., 1943 : Introduction.

Comnenus and the *Alexiad* is a historical account of her father's reign. She has little to add to the actual events of the First Crusade, but she represents a Greek perspective and on certain issues it is interesting to draw upon her knowledge from the imperial court in Constantinople.⁶²

The chronicle of Ibn al-Athir (*al-Kamil fil'l-ta'rikh*) is only one of several eastern sources dealing with the First Crusade. Even though the primary focus for this thesis is the Latin sources, it is sometimes necessary to call upon eastern sources to get a Muslim's perspective. This is especially true when trying to learn more about Kerbogha, a central figure during the siege of Antioch, and about his army. The reason for selecting Ibn al-Athir above other Arabic sources is simply because his is the only one mentioning the holy Lance.⁶³

The *Historia Vie Hierosolimitane*, written by Gilo of Paris and an anonymous co-writer, is an epic poem describing the events of the First Crusade. The poem was long believed to be based only on known sources but closer study reveals small tidbits of information that cannot be traced to any other source.⁶⁴

⁶² Comnena and Sewter, 1969.

⁶³ Ibn al-Athir, 2006.

⁶⁴ In example the poem claims that Godfrey's participation on the crusade owed to a personal appeal for aid from Patriarch Euthymius of Jerusalem. This seems a plausible explanation even though it appears in *Historia Vie Hierololimitane* alone. Gilo et al., 1997 : Introduction.

Chapter 3 - The Lance is Discovered

3.1 Chapter Introduction

In this chapter I will explore how the Holy Lance was discovered. The visions and the discovery of the Lance will lay the foundation for an analysis of the impact the Lance had on the crusaders. The sources unanimously claim that the Lance, upon its discovery, immediately raised morale and that it made them able to fight off the Muslim army that was threatening to destroy them and thus ending the crusade. Through a closer look at the sources, we will look into the background for this claim. I start with presenting the story of the Lance as it is explained by Raymond d'Aguilers, but first some context is in order.

At the Council of Clermont November 27 - 1095, Pope Urban II (†1099) declared that all men who fell on the road to, or in combat against the Turks who had attacked the Christians in the East, would get full absolution for their sins.⁶⁵ This is usually recognized as the beginning of the first crusade.

The first crusade did not have any clear leader-figure. It consisted of several contingents whom, after taking different routes through Europe, merged at Nicea. Fulcher of Chartres identifies six different leaders of the various contingents. These are Hugh the Great (†1101),⁶⁶ Bohemond of Apulia (†1111),⁶⁷ Godfrey of Lorraine (†1100),⁶⁸ Raymond of Provence (†1105),⁶⁹ Peter the Hermit (†1115) and Robert of Normandy (†1134).⁷⁰ Also worth mentioning is Bishop Adhemar of le Puy. He was the papal legate on the crusade and was probably the one who were able to keep the crusaders more or less united until his death. It is commonly believed that the medieval sources we have tend to exaggerate the number of those who took the cross and marched against Jerusalem. This makes it hard to establish how many crusaders there actually were. According to Andrew Jotischky there were 70 000 men and women of whom maybe 7 000 were knights at the siege of Nicea in 1097, and by the time they reached Jerusalem in June 1099 there were about 12 000 left and maybe 1200-1300 of these were knights.⁷¹ Some would argue that even these numbers are too high.

⁶⁵ Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969, book I Chapter III : 66.

⁶⁶ Hugh the Great was also the brother of King Phillip of France.

⁶⁷ See Bohemond of Taranto on p.7.

⁶⁸ He was also known as Godfrey of Bouillon and later as Godfrey of Jerusalem.

⁶⁹ See Raymond of Toulouse on p.7.

⁷⁰ Robert of Normandy was the son of king Wiliam of England. Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 71-74.

⁷¹ Jotischky, 2004: 55.

The relationship between the Byzantine emperor, Alexius Comnenus and the crusaders was always tense. The emperor demanded that all the crusaders who wanted to travel through his lands should swear allegiance to him. Some of the crusaders refused this, and when Nicea fell, emperor Alexius claimed control of the city despite the fact that it was the crusaders who drove out the Turks. Some of the crusaders felt that they were cheated out of their rightful plunder and this only made the relationship worse. Several eyewitnesses describe the Greeks as uncooperative.⁷²

The siege and battle at Antioch⁷³ is reckoned as the decisive turning point of the First Crusade. After besieging Antioch for nine months (October 1097 – June 1098), suffering heavy casualties due mainly to starvation and disease, the crusaders finally managed to take the town, only to find themselves surrounded and under siege by a large army led by Kerbogha. At this time Emperor Alexius was on his way to Antioch with a relief force to aid the crusaders, but after he got reports stating that the crusaders were all dead, he turned around and marched back to Constantinople. When the crusaders defied the odds and defeated Kerbogha's army, they believed they had lost the support of the Byzantine emperor. This opened up the possibility of a western principality in the area around Antioch. This is also where the Holy Lance was discovered, and I will return to this later. There was also established a county around Edessa, and another one around Tripoli and when Jerusalem was finally conquered in 1099 a Western kingdom emerged.⁷⁴

The first crusade was generally thought of as a huge success both by contemporaries and later historians. The thousands of crusaders and pilgrims who died along the way became martyrs and the Christians had proven for themselves that when united, they were unbeatable. It also proved that armies of mercenaries could conquer and hold large areas, even if they were a long way from home. Finally, the Crusade showed that Christian West-Europeans could under duress, and even under failing leadership, fight together as brothers.⁷⁵

When the crusaders breached the walls of Antioch on the third day of June 1098 they slaughtered all the Turks and Saracens they could find. How many died that day is unknown, but it was no doubt a large number.⁷⁶ The crusaders, although joyful for finally taking the city,

⁷² Jotischky, 2004: 54-62.

⁷³ Antioch was a large medieval city, situated on the eastern side of the Orontes river. It is near the modern city of Antakya in Turkey. See map 1 on p. 14 and map 2 on p.73.

⁷⁴ Jotischky, 2004: 54-62 and 62-72.

⁷⁵ Tyerman, 2006: 159-164.

⁷⁶ "We cannot estimate the number of slain Turks and Saracens, and it would be sadistic to relate the novel and

were starved and exhausted after besieging it for almost eight months. Though they stripped their newly conquered city of valuables, there were little to nothing in terms of food and supplies. To make things even worse, they found themselves under siege only 2 days later by a coalition of armies. The numbers are clearly exaggerated, but it is fair to believe the crusaders were heavily outnumbered.⁷⁷ It was in the period between the 3rd of June and the 28th of June,⁷⁸ while the desperate Christians were holed up in Antioch, the discovery of the Holy Lance, as described below, took place.

Apart from the notion of impending doom either by starvation or by the swords and arrows of the huge army outside their newly acquired gates, there was one more thing unsettling the crusaders. The tension between their leaders was growing stronger, and even before they breached the city they had argued over who should control Antioch once it was taken. It is in this political tug-of-war we find the most interesting variations in the crusade sources. I will return to this topic later, but suffice to say the Christian leaders, Bohemond and Raymond in particular, used every political option available to them to further their own agenda. This certainly did not have a positive effect on the rest of the crusaders.

It is in this setting that Raymond d'Aguliers account of the discovery of the Holy Lance should be placed. Raymond was, as mentioned, an eyewitness to the first crusade. He served as the chaplain of Raymond of Toulouse, a position, as will be seen, that put him in the

varied means of death” Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 48.

“They [the crusaders] all came running as fast as they could and entered the city gates, killing all the Turks and Saracens whom they found there except for those who fled up to the citadel...All the streets of the city on every side were full of corpses...nor could anyone walk along the narrow paths of the city except over the corpses of the dead.” Hill, 1962 : 47.

“Then you would have seen the city overflowing with bodies and with intolerable stench. Markets, public places, the porches and vestibules of homes, which once were adorned with beautifully polished marble surfaces, were now completely stained with gore. Infinite numbers of corpses heaped up everywhere, a horrible spectacle, and the savagery of the foul air, horribly infected both the eyes and the ears. The narrow streets were strewn with deep piles of stinking bodies and since there were no way to carry off so many dead, and there was no escape from the smells, the constant sight and stink made men used to the horror.”

Guibertus de Novigento and Levine, 1997 : 93-94.

⁷⁷ “Since Kerbogha had with him a great army of Turks whom he had been assembling for a long time...The Amir of Jerusalem came to his help with an army, and the king of Damascus brought a great number of men. So Kerbogha collected an immense force of pagans – Turks, Arabs, Saracens, Paulicians, Azymites, Kurds, Persians, Agulani and many other people who could not be counted.” Hill, 1962 : 49.

“Kerbogha, the general of the king of the Persians, was there with 400 000 mounted troops.” Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 96.

“They were estimated to number three hundred thousand, both horsemen and footmen.” Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 103. Fulcher had an even higher number in an earlier redaction.

“That day 100 000 knights died, and it would have been too great a task to count the number of those who died from the great multitude of footsoldiers.” Robert the Monk and Sweetenham, 2005 : 173.

Thomas Asbridge speculates that their number were closer to 35 000. Asbridge, 2004 : 204.

⁷⁸ 28th of June was the day the crusaders marched out of Antioch to defeat the besieging forces of Kerbogha. Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 136.

middle of the controversy surrounding the Holy Lance. Raymond d'Aguiers got the responsibility of carrying the Lance for his Lord, and he would also establish a close relationship with Peter Bartholomew, the man whose visions led to the discovery of the Lance. Raymond's *Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem* is the chronicle that by far contains the most details concerning the Holy Lance and his testimony will serve as background for a discussion and a deeper analysis of the events pertaining to the Lance.

3.2 The Finding of the Holy Lance at Antioch According to Raymond d'Aguiers

After the crusaders had taken the city of Antioch, they found themselves captured inside its walls by Kerbogha. A Provençal peasant by the name of Peter Bartholomew came forth to Count Raymond of Toulouse and Bishop Adhemar. He claimed that on five separate occasions he had been visited by

*...two men clad in brilliant garments....The older one had red hair sprinkled with white, a broad and bushy white beard, black eyes and an agreeable countenance, and was of medium height; his younger companion was taller, and 'Fair in form beyond the sons of man.'*⁷⁹

The first time they appeared to Peter, the older man revealed himself to be St. Andrew the apostle. He commanded two things from Peter. First he should meet with Bishop Adhemar, the Count of St. Gilles (Raymond of Toulouse) and Peter Raymond of Hautpoul and ask the bishop why he did not “preach the word, exhort, and bless the people with the Cross which he carries daily?”⁸⁰ Second, he commanded that Peter should “Follow me and I shall reveal to you the Lance of our Father, which you must give to the Count because God set it aside for him at birth”⁸¹ At this point Peter gives a detailed description of how he followed St. Andrew to St. Peter's Church in Antioch where he was shown the location of the Holy Lance. He was then told to return later with twelve men and search for the Lance in the shown location. This he never did. Peter excuses himself saying that he did not dare to approach the Bishop with these words.⁸²

⁷⁹ “...duo viri astiterunt in veste clarissima...Alter erat senior rufo canoque capillo. Oculi nigri, et convenientes faciei. Barba vero cana et lata et proluxa et statura eius media. Alter vero et iunior et procerior erat. Speciosus forma pre filiis hominum.” Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 52. Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 69.

⁸⁰ “...cur negligit episcopos predicare et commonere et cum cruce quam prefert cotidie signare populum?” Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 52. Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 69.

⁸¹ “veni et ostendam tibi lanceam patris nostri Ihesu Christi, quam comiti donabis, etenim Deus eam concessit illi ex quo genitus est.” Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 52. Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 69.

⁸² Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 51-53.

Some days later St. Andrew and his companion again visited Peter Bartholomew. This time the saint scorns him for not having done what was commanded and explains that Peter was especially chosen for this task. After they left, Peter gets stricken with an illness that apparently affected his eyesight. Again he did not dare to approach the bishop, this time because he was afraid that Adhemar would “...cry out that I was a famished man who carried such a tale to secure food”⁸³

The third time Peter was visited by St. Andrew was on the eve of Palm Sunday. Peter was resting in a tent together with his lord, William Peter, in the port of St. Simeon.⁸⁴ And again the saint asked why he had not delivered his message, on which Peter replied: “Lord! Have I not begged you to send a more intelligent replacement, one whom they would heed; and besides you must know that the Turks kill anyone en route to Antioch.”⁸⁵ Now St. Andrew countered that he should not be afraid and that the Turks would not hurt him. He also gave a more cryptic message.

*But tell the Count not to be dipped in the river Jordan upon his arrival, but first row across in a boat; and once on the other side be sprinkled while clad in a shirt and linen breeches and thereafter keep his dried garments along with the Holy Lance.*⁸⁶

Peter assures that Lord William Peter can vouch for the conversation he had with the saint, but admits that William Peter did not actually see St. Andrew himself. Peter then went back to Antioch, but claims he could not assemble the three persons he was told to speak to.

Peter next travelled to the port of Mamistra. Here he planned to sail to Cyprus to get supplies for the crusaders. While waiting here St. Andrew appeared again, this time with grave threats and Peter cried when he realized that it was impossible for him to travel the three days journey back to the crusader camp. So, at the insistence of his lord and his comrades, he embarked and rowed for a whole day in favourable winds towards Cyprus. But at sunset a sudden storm broke out and in an hour or two drove them back to the port of Mamistra. Realizing that they would not reach Cyprus, they travelled back to St. Simeon

⁸³ “famelicum me esse et pro victu talia ea referre me proclameratis, itaque ea vice conticui.” Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 53. Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 71.

⁸⁴ William Peter has been identified by Runciman as a pilgrim.

⁸⁵ “domine nonne ego precatus sum te ut alium pro me mitteres? Qui et sapientior esset, et quem audire vellent? Preterea Turci sunt in itinere qui venientes et abeuntes interficiunt.” Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 54. Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 71.

⁸⁶ “Hec quoque dices comiti cum venerit ad iordanem fluvium non intinguatur ibi sed navigato transeat. Cum autem transierit, camisa et bragis lineis indutus de flumine aspergatur, et postquam siccata fuerint eius vestimenta reponat ea et conservet cum lancea Domini.” Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 54. Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 71.

where Peter again fell ill. However, when he heard the news of the capture of Antioch he went there and confessed his vision to Bishop Adhemar and the Count of Toulouse.

The Bishop did not believe Peter Bartholomew, but the count did and placed him in the custody of his chaplain, Raymond d'Aguilers. On the following night, Jesus Christ also revealed himself to Stephen of Valence, a priest lying on his deathbed. While death was approaching, he entered the church of the Blessed Mary where he confessed and received absolution for his sins. He then chanted hymns with his friends and kept vigils while the others slept, repeating: "Lord, who shall live in your dwelling? Who shall find rest on your holy mountain?"⁸⁷ At this moment a man "handsome beyond human form" appeared and asked who had entered Antioch. Stephen answered that they were Christians. In the following conversation the man reveals that he is in fact Jesus Christ, that he is the Lord, mighty and powerful in battle and that the Christians should not fear the pagan hordes. He proclaimed that Adhemar should take command and that they should abstain from sin. If they followed his command for five days his compassion would be with them. Then Mary, the mother of Jesus appears and inquires what Jesus is doing and while they are talking, Stephen tries to wake his companions to witness the visions, but at this time Jesus and Mary "rose out of sight"⁸⁸

Since Kerbogha's men were now spotted close to the city, the princes in charge discussed whether they should stay and fight or evacuate the city and flee to the port. At this critical moment, Stephen of Valence told the princes of his encounter and Bohemond and Adhemar ordered the gates of Antioch to be closed and that the crusaders were to stay and fight. A great star suddenly appeared in the sky above Antioch. It split into three pieces and fell into the Turkish camp. This was regarded as a good sign and strengthened the crusader's faith as they waited for the fifth day that the priest Stephen had told them about. On the fifth day, twelve men and Peter Bartholomew started digging in the church of the blessed Peter. Raymond d'Aguilers and Raymond of Toulouse were among the scavengers. After digging an entire day and losing hope of finding anything, Peter jumped into the hole and asked everyone to pray to God to return his Holy Lance. This seems to have worked because soon after they found the Lance and Raymond d'Aguilers kissed its tip.⁸⁹

Later the same night, St. Andrew and his companion again revealed themselves to Peter Bartholomew. Peter asked for mercy for the Christians in Antioch and St. Andrew

⁸⁷ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 55.

⁸⁸ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 54-56.

⁸⁹ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 56-58.

answered that the Lord would pity his people. The mysterious companion now revealed himself to be Jesus Christ. In the consecutive battle, the crusader won against Kerbogah's superior force and put the Turks to flight. A short time after the battle, Bishop Adhemar passed away. Now the political differences between the crusaders, especially between the Provençals and the Normans became all the more evident. Due to this political strife many now doubted the authenticity of both the Holy Lance and the reported visions of Peter Bartholomew. This again led Peter to demand an ordeal by fire to prove that he was in fact telling the truth. A crowd of 60 000 people came to witness Peter's ordeal and Peter, carrying the Holy Lance, walked straight through a big pile of burning wood and emerged unharmed. Upon witnessing this miracle the crowd, believing that Peter had to be a saint, swarmed him in hopes of touching him or getting a piece of his clothing. He was almost trampled to death, and his back was broken, but was saved by a knight named Raymond Pilet who charged the crowd and carried the injured Peter Bartholomew to safety. Here Peter spoke to, among others, Raymond d'Aguilers and died shortly after. The Holy Lance now disappears from Raymond d'Aguilers chronicle, but it is believed that Raymond of Toulouse offered it as a gift to Emperor Alexius when he visited Constantinople in 1100.⁹⁰

3.3 The Tradition of the Holy Lance

In the gospel of St. John, the story is told of a soldier who thrust a spear or lance into the side of the crucified Christ. This was apparently done to make sure that Jesus was dead: "But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water."⁹¹ In the western theological tradition, this soldier became known as Longinus, the name probably derived from the Greek word for Lance. He appears on almost all portrayals of the crucifixion.⁹² Due to the popularity of this tradition, one can assume that all the crusaders were aware of the significance of the Lance, and a number of Lances have been recorded in various relic collections. The Lance with the most respectable ancestry was at the time of the first crusade kept in the chapel of the Pharos in Constantinople. It is hard to imagine that the crusaders, at least the clerics and Bishop Adhemar, were unaware of the Lance in Constantinople. The sources however, make no mention of the Lance at Constantinople and

⁹⁰Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 51-71 and 93-103.

⁹¹ John xix. 33:34.

⁹² As can be seen on p.1.

there is no doubt that the Lance discovered at Antioch was believed to be the actual Dominical Lance.⁹³



St. Longinus with the Holy Lance. Here on display in St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican.

⁹³ Morris, 1984 : 35-36.

3.4 Peter Bartholomew

Before we start analyzing the account revealed to us by Raymond d'Aguilers, it would be prudent to take a closer look on one of the main characters in his story. In many ways the story of the Holy Lance of Antioch is also the story of Peter Bartholomew and, as we shall see, historians, modern and contemporary alike, have differed in their view of this controversial figure.

Peter Bartholomew, the poor peasant who discovered the lance after claiming to have received several visions from St. Andrew and Jesus Christ, has been called both a charlatan and a saint. Modern historians, as well as contemporary crusaders, seem to disagree both on his motives and his character. In fact, Peter Bartholomew has become something of a mythical person, shrouded in a cloud of uncertainty. But a few things can be uncovered in an attempt to get a clearer picture of him.

According to Runciman, Peter Bartholomew was a peasant who had joined the Crusade as the servant of a Provençal pilgrim called William-Peter. He came from humble origins, but was not entirely illiterate. Among his fellows he was known as a rather disreputable character, who was mostly interested in the grosser pleasures of life.⁹⁴ He was even known as a liar, and later historians has found his visions and explanations to be so aligned with the political ambitions of the Provençal's, that it is very hard to believe in his testimony. On the other hand, it is also difficult to ignore him as just fraudulent. He was so convinced of the legitimacy of his visions that he supposedly demanded an ordeal of fire to prove his worth, something a complete fraud hardly would have done.⁹⁵ Runciman attempts to reflect on the different aspects of Peter Bartholomew's role during the first crusade, but by and large he concludes that Peter was a fraud, and this is probably his reason for not going into the visions experienced by Peter and related by Raymond d'Aguilers in any detail.⁹⁶

The only chronicler who deals with Peter Bartholomew in great detail is Raymond d'Aguilers. He reveals little of Peter's background, but one can trace a clear development of

⁹⁴ Runciman, 2005 : 149-150.

⁹⁵ Runciman, 1950 : 197-198 There seems to be a disagreement between the sources on who suggested the ordeal. While Raymond d'Aguilers claims Peter Bartholomew demanded it himself, other sources state that it was ordered by the crusade princes or demanded by the doubting crowd of people. In any case, the ordeal of fire is a very harsh form of proving one's sincerity. If the ordeal was Peter's choice, he could possibly have suggested a less violent test of faith.

⁹⁶ Neither Morris nor Asbridge chooses to emphasize the visions that surrounded the short lived cult of the Lance. This exemplifies the fact that modern research has yet to gain a greater understanding of visions and their interpretations.

his character through the chronicle. From being a lowly and insecure peasant, chosen by God to deliver his words to the crusaders, he is elevated to a prophet, a religious visionary who should not be questioned. It is hard to pinpoint exactly when this transformation takes place, but after the victory over Kerbogha's army, and particularly after the death of Bishop Adhemar, Raymond d'Aguilers presents an increasing number of visions experienced by Peter and he neglects to mention any criticism that may have risen against them. Peter's visions also become increasingly more detailed and although some historians have claimed that these visions mostly represent Raymond of Toulouse's political views,⁹⁷ in actuality they often criticize him and appear to be more in line with the moral views of Raymond d'Aguilers. As will be seen, it appears that Peter Bartholomew, along with his visions, becomes an agent for the author and it is impossible to separate the 'real' Peter from the visionary and morally aware Peter represented in the *Historia Francorum*.

Many explanations have been given on the visions of Peter Bartholomew and the subsequent discovery of the Lance. Some are quite amusing, while others need to be investigated seriously. Runciman declares: "It would be rash to condemn him [Peter Bartholomew] entirely as an imposter."⁹⁸ However, this is exactly what he does, suggesting, in essence, that Peter could have experienced some of his supposed visions as dreams and then fabricated evidence to support his claims. On the actual discovery, Runciman allows for the fact that Peter might have had the ability to "divine the presence of metal in the ground."⁹⁹ Moreover, Runciman claims that Peter may have been amongst the civilian crusaders sent to clean the cathedral before its re-consecration as a church, immediately after Antioch was captured. He believes Peter could have sensed the piece of metal in the ground, and "like so many professional mediums of today, he [Peter] had the recourse to fraud and invention to sustain his reputation and the interest he aroused."¹⁰⁰

This does indeed sound harsh on Peter. As will be seen, Peter Bartholomew and Stephen of Valence were not the only ones experiencing visions. Reports of divine contact surfaced,¹⁰¹ reports that had not emerged earlier on the crusade and Tyerman states: "From this extreme crisis emerged the visionary politics that characterized the rest of the campaign

⁹⁷ For example Runciman.

⁹⁸ Runciman, 1950 : 198.

⁹⁹ Runciman, 1950 : 198.

¹⁰⁰ Runciman, 1950 : 198.

¹⁰¹ "now reported revelations of our comrades became rife." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 74.

until Jerusalem was won.”¹⁰² Colin Morris notes that there were “special reasons why the crusaders were sensitive to such phenomena”,¹⁰³ but he does not specify these “special reasons” other than the fact that the crusaders future appeared dire.

The legacy of Peter Bartholomew, then, has ranged from blasphemous liar to saintly intercessor. The sources are divided on the issue and so are the later medieval chronicles. Modern historians, with quite a different approach to saintliness and visions, also find it hard to evaluate the contribution of Peter to the First Crusade. However, a trend can be seen the last fifteen years. As we shall see, recent historians have approached Peter Bartholomew a little less decisively, opting not to take a stand one way or the other.

3.5 The Series of Visions and Revelations Leading Up to the Discovery of the Lance

I have already given an account of some of the events leading up to the discovery as they are related by Raymond d’Aguilers. Now I will study them in more detail and compare them with other sources. I will start by focusing on the series of visions experienced by Peter Bartholomew. Some historians have declared that Peter’s visions are so conveniently aligned with the politics of Raymond of Toulouse and the Provençal party that they should be completely disregarded as nothing but fiction.¹⁰⁴ One might also speculate that Raymond d’Aguilers, the only person to record Peter’s visions and his subsequent discovery of the Lance in great detail, might himself have played an active part in creating these visions. In any case, a thorough investigation into the visions and the discovery of the lance is necessary in order to understand the complexity of visions recorded in medieval chronicles.

It appears that Raymond d’Aguilers records the visions related by Peter Bartholomew without any skepticism. He either accepts them as they are told, neglects to record his own doubts, or he edits the visions, imposing his own interpretations upon the reader. The tale told by Peter Bartholomew to Raymond of Toulouse and Bishop Adhemar is first and foremost documented by Raymond d’Aguilers and the Holy Lance takes a central part in his chronicle. Peter Bartholomew, Raymond d’Aguilers and Raymond of Toulouse were all Provençals, and thus shared a cultural bond. When Peter told about his visions, Raymond of Toulouse, according to Runciman, with his simple piety and his political ambitions immediately

¹⁰² Tyerman, 2006 : 143.

¹⁰³ Morris, 1984 : 33.

¹⁰⁴ Runciman, 1950 : 198.

believed it to be true.¹⁰⁵ Adhemar, on the other hand, refused to believe it and this is very interesting. Adhemar was clearly open to believe, as he accepted the vision of Stephen of Valence after he swore on the cross. But Stephen was, after all, a cleric. Peter, on the other hand, was not as respected a character as a priest and thus his word would not hold as much weight, at least not in matters of faith. Adhemar's mistrust, then, can be accounted for by Peter's questionable reputation. Raymond d'Aguilers' emphasis on Bishop Adhemar and his rejection of the Lance is an aspect we will return to.¹⁰⁶ For now we will remain focused on the visions leading up to the discovery of the Lance.

The story of Peter Bartholomew's visions is related in all the accounts of the First Crusade, however with certain variations. The *Gesta Francorum* makes no mention of Peter's conversation with Adhemar and Raymond, and thus offers no insights into Adhemar's skepticism. The author also states that those Peter told about the visions of St. Andrew doubted him, but that they believed in him after he had sworn that the story was true.¹⁰⁷ It seems however that the unknown writer of the *Gesta Francorum* puts an equal emphasis on Stephen of Valence's and Peter Bartholomew's visions, though he mixes them up a bit. According to Raymond d'Aguilers, Jesus told Stephen to follow his commands for five days, then they would get their victory.¹⁰⁸ The author of the *Gesta Francorum*, however, relates that Peter Bartholomew told the crowd that St. Andrew promised a sign of victory from God within five days.¹⁰⁹

Robert the Monk mentions nothing of any doubt in Peter Bartholomew's visions.¹¹⁰ His short account makes it seem as everyone agreed that God, through Peter, had granted the crusaders a blessing. Also Robert the Monk seems to treat Peter's and Stephen of Valence's visions as equally important signs from God.¹¹¹ Raymond d'Aguilers, however, fond of

¹⁰⁵ Runciman, 1950 : 200.

¹⁰⁶ "The bishop considered the story fraudulent, but the Count immediately believed it and placed Peter Bartholomew in the custody of his chaplain, Raymond[d'Aguilers]." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 54

¹⁰⁷ "Then at once Peter revealed to our men the mystery told to him by the Apostle, but they did not believe him and turned him away... So Peter came [presumably to the council of leaders] and swore that the whole story was quite true... When our men heard that their enemies were destined to be altogether defeated, their spirits revived at once, and they began to encourage one another..." Hill, 1962 : 60.

¹⁰⁸ "My compassion shall be with you if you follow my commands for five days" Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 56.

¹⁰⁹ "So Peter came and swore that the whole story was quite true, since St. Andrew had twice appeared to him in a vision, and had said to him, 'arise, go and tell the people of God to have no fear, but to trust surely with their hearts in the One True God, and they shall be victorious everywhere, and within five days God will send them such a sign as shall fill them with joy and confidence..." Hill, 1962 : 60

¹¹⁰ He refers to Peter Bartholomew as "...a certain pilgrim...called Peter" Robert the Monk and Sweetenham, 2005 : 162.

¹¹¹ Robert the Monk and Sweetenham, 2005 : 162-163.

documenting visions, treated Stephen's vision almost as a sidenote compared to Peter Bartholomew's. Robert probably bases his facts on the account in the *Gesta Francorum*. William of Tyre, writing in the next century, who also bases his facts on earlier chronicles, similarly leaves out any skepticism.¹¹²

Not all the crusade sources are equally positive towards Peter Bartholomew. Fulcher of Chartres, who was at Edessa at the time of the siege of Antioch, describes the Holy Lance and all the details around it in a highly skeptical manner. But the facts he presents seem to agree with those related by Raymond d'Aguilers. Fulcher starts his account in a derogatory fashion: "It happened moreover that after the city was taken a certain man found a lance in a hole in the ground under the Church of the blessed Apostle Peter."¹¹³ He establishes at once that he does not agree that the lance found was in fact the lance used to pierce the side of Jesus and he refers to Peter Bartholomew only as "a certain man". Fulcher goes on to verify Raymond's account, namely, that Peter confessed his visions to Adhemar and Raymond of Toulouse, in his own skeptical wording.¹¹⁴ On the vision of Stephen of Valence, Fulcher seems to lean neither one way nor the other, and adds no opinion of his own.¹¹⁵

One writer even more skeptical than Fulcher is Ralph of Caen. Ralph, in contrast to Fulcher, has a clear political agenda in his writing. He appears hostile towards every action taken by Raymond of Toulouse and holds nothing back in his criticism of the Provençal part of the crusaders. He introduces Peter Bartholomew like this: "...a shrewd speaker of lies named Peter came forth from among Raymond's people and preached that the salvation of the people had been revealed to him..."¹¹⁶ Ralph then goes on to claim that when Raymond of Toulouse first heard of Peter's visions, he immediately summoned a digging party to uncover the lance from its resting place. According to the other sources, there were several days between Peter's confession and the search for the Lance, this apparently because Stephen of Valence was told in his vision that they should wait five days. Not only does Ralph fail to mention anything about the vision of Stephen of Valence, but he also neglects to write about the doubts of

¹¹² Guilelmus et al., 1943 : 280-282.

¹¹³ "Accidit autem, postquam civitas capte est, a quodam homine lanceam unam inveniri, quam in ecclesia beati Petri apostoli fossa humo repertam, asseverabat esse illam de qua Longinus in latere dextro Christum secundum Scripturas pupugit." Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 99-100. Latin: Fulcherius Carnotensis, 1844 : 344.

¹¹⁴ "And when it had been discovered and the man himself told the bishop of Le Puy and Count Raymond, the Bishop thought the story false, but the Count hoped that it was true." Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 100

¹¹⁵ Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 102.

¹¹⁶ "Quum enim in supradicta fame populous tribularetur obsessus, surrexit de gente Raimundi versutus mendacique commentor Petrus, qui salutem populi revelatam sibi prædicaret hoc modo" Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 118. Latin: Ralph of Caen, 1844 : 676.

Bishop Adhemar. Surely, the fact that Adhemar, the spiritual leader of the crusade, was skeptical to Peter, would be great ammunition in Ralph's attack on the Provençals.¹¹⁷ Based on this, it seems that Ralph had limited knowledge of the actual events in Antioch and the fact that he was still back in Europe at this point in time becomes all the more apparent. He was a Norman and though his account of the events in Antioch may not necessarily represent what actually happened, his views are important for understanding how the people of Europe, or at least England and Northern France, interpreted the news arriving from the Holy Land.

As seen, while focusing on the visions received by Peter Bartholomew, modern historians have to rely solely upon Raymond d'Aguilers for the actual content of the visions. However, the other sources confirm that Peter Bartholomew spoke of receiving visions that ultimately lead to the discovery of the Lance. One also notes that the contemporary chroniclers which were not present in Antioch at the time (Fulcher and Ralph) are more skeptical than the anonymous writer of the *Gesta Francorum*. This could indicate that the eyewitnesses did not manage to distance themselves from the events at Antioch and thus lacked the perspective of other chroniclers. Or, as with most matters of faith, the story was simply too fantastical to believe, unless one was there to experience it. Later chroniclers like Robert the Monk and William of Tyre account for the visions without adding any interpretations of doubt of their own, possibly indicating a more widespread acceptance of visions after the First Crusade.

3.6 The Discovery

The visions and the discovery of the Lance are closely tied and many of the sources barely differentiate between the two. Thus it becomes necessary to study the accounts of the discovery as well, before drawing any historical conclusions on the visions.

Raymond d'Aguilers' description of the unearthing of the Holy Lance is by far the most detailed. This should not be a surprise, as he was one of the thirteen men working on the

¹¹⁷ It is obvious that Ralph of Caen has no love for the Provençals, nor for Peter Bartholomew. A good example of this is when St. Andrew berates Peter for not confronting Adhemar with his visions. St. Andrew, in Ralph's version, uses much coarser language. According to Ralph, St. Andrew calls Peter an "ignorant sheep, mute dog, delayer of salvation, retarder of victory, cause of loss to the citizens, comfort for the enemy." Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 118-119. In Raymond d'Aguilers' account St. Andrew "confronted me [Peter] with grave threats." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 54. Raymond d'Aguilers obviously both knew and spoke to Peter on several occasions. It is hard to believe that Ralph had any real insight into Peter's visions or his recollection of them.

excavation. Though all the scavengers have not been accounted for, I regard it as very likely that all the information presented in the sources derive from Raymond's notes and chronicle. The identified members of the excavation party were the Bishop of Orange (†1098),¹¹⁸ Raymond d'Aguilers, Raymond of Toulouse, Pons of Balazun,¹¹⁹ Farald of Thouars,¹²⁰ and Peter Bartholomew. Raymond d'Aguilers reports that after digging until evening, some started to lose hope of finding anything and fresh diggers were persuaded to replace the exhausted men. Peter Bartholomew then, seeing the hard working men getting tired of the digging, stripped his garments and barefooted started digging himself. At this point, Peter asked the rest of the party to pray to God to return the Lance to the crusaders. Raymond's description now becomes more vague, and he does not specify who actually found the Lance:¹²¹ "Finally, prompted by His gracious compassion, the lord showed us His Lance and I, Raymond, author of this book, kissed the point of the Lance as it barely protruded from the ground"¹²²

After the unearthing of the Lance and the reported "rejoicing which filled Antioch",¹²³ Peter had another visit from St. Andrew and his companion. Here, the Apostle reveals that the Lance was intended for Raymond of Toulouse and that he should be the leader of the crusaders.¹²⁴ He also reveals that they have nothing to fear from the forthcoming battle and this is when St. Andrew's companion reveals himself to be Jesus Christ.¹²⁵ An interesting comment can be made on the way Raymond d'Aguilers depicts St. Andrew's mysterious companion. He leaves quite obvious hints from even the first vision that this has to be Jesus,¹²⁶ and yet leaves Peter stupefied when he discovers this in their sixth encounter. Such a

¹¹⁸ This was probably William, the man who became the spiritual leader of the crusaders after the death of Adhemar, only to share his fate six months later.

¹¹⁹ Co-author of the *Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem* who died at the siege of Arqa.

¹²⁰ Farald of Thouars came from Thouars, a town northwest of Poitiers. Why he is mentioned by name while many others have been left out is unknown.

¹²¹ It is generally believed that Peter Bartholomew was the discoverer.

¹²² "Tandem per gratiam pietatis sue commonitus est Dominus, ut lanceam suam nobis ostendat. Et ego qui scripsi hec cum solus mucro adhuc appareret super terram, osculatus sum eam." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 57. Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 75. The Lance was discovered on the 14th of June. "...but I can state that the Lance was uncovered on the eighteenth day before the calends of July" Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 57.

¹²³ "Quantum gaudium et exultatio tunc civitatem replevit." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 57. Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 75.

¹²⁴ "Behold God gave the Lance to the Count [Raymond of Toulouse] in fact, had reserved it for him alone throughout the ages, and also made him leader of the crusaders on the condition of his devotion to God." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 57-58.

¹²⁵ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 58.

¹²⁶ "...his younger companion was taller, and Fair in form beyond the sons of men." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 52. "Fair in form beyond the sons of man" (*Speciosus forma pre filiis hominum*) is a term used to describe the son of God in psalm 44 in "versio juxta hebraicum" where St. Jerome re-translated the psalms from Hebrew. "versio juxta hebraicum" is found in the oldest manuscripts of the Vulgate Bible. The term

literary style is used by Raymond d'Aguilers on several occasions and may very well be a clue later on, as we shall see, in understanding the *Historia Francorum's* account of Bishop Adhemar's doubt and later approval of the Lance. One can also deduct that the description "Fair in form beyond the sons of man", whether a product of Raymond d'Aguilers or Peter Bartholomew, had to have been added in retrospect after the identity of Jesus had been revealed. This, in turn, reflects what we already suspect, namely that the *Historia Francorum* was indeed not written as the events took place or, at least, that the author edited his notes later.

The *Gesta Francorum's* choice of words can sometimes be confusing. When describing the unearthing of the Lance, there is a subtle indication that the anonymous author might have been one of the thirteen diggers. However, I find this highly unlikely and believe his choice of words is meant either to include himself as a supporter of Peter Bartholomew, or as an artistic turn, intended to relay that everyone (himself included) was very enthusiastic of the prospect of finding the Holy Lance.¹²⁷ It could also indicate that he claims to have been watching the excavation, but this also seems quite unlikely since Raymond d'Aguilers specifically states that all other Christians were evacuated from St. Peter's Basilica at the time of the excavation.¹²⁸ The author's description is short and concise and in line with the testimony offered by Raymond d'Aguilers.¹²⁹

Ralph of Caen, on the other hand, is beyond skeptical. He obviously believes that Peter Bartholomew was a fraud and he lets his reader know this in the clearest way possible. According to Ralph, the Lance that Peter discovered was an old Arab spear point that Peter himself had planted. Moreover, he paints an almost farcical picture of Peter's performance when he finds it.¹³⁰ Ralph's account of the discovery of the Lance is quite clearly biased. It

...his form beyond the sons of men is used in many translations of the Bible to describe the Messiah in Isaiah 52:14. Raymond d'Aguilers uses a similar term to describe Jesus in the vision of Stephen of Valence: "At this moment, a man, handsome beyond human form, appeared..." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 55. Even the most ignorant man at this time would know that this was a description of Christ.

¹²⁷ "Now we, who heard the words of the man [Peter Bartholomew] who brought us the message of Christ through the words of his Apostle, hurried at once to the place in St. Peter's Church which he had described, and thirteen men dug there from morning until evening." (*Nos igitur auditis sermonibus illius qui nobis Christi reuelationem retulit per uerba apostoli, statim festinantes peruenimus ad locum in sancti Petri ecclesia, quem ille demonstrauerat.*) Hill, 1962 : 65.

¹²⁸ "...Peter Bartholomew collected the proper tools and began to dig in the church of the blessed Peter, following the expulsion of all other Christians." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 57

¹²⁹ He does note that after the Lance had been found, there was "boundless rejoicing" (*immense laetitia*) throughout the city. Hill, 1962 : 65.

¹³⁰ "When asked about the location, Peter indicated that it was under the altar, just as he had arranged it. He urged them to dig. Then, so that his words would have weight, he composed his face. They dug. But nothing appeared. For the upturned earth could not return what had never been placed in or been accepted by it. But

also confirms that Ralph never read Raymond d'Aguilers' chronicle. He leaves out several key elements from Raymond's account, among them the fact that there was only 13 diggers and most importantly the fact that when Peter discovered the Lance, he had the rest of the excavation team distracted by praying. Had Ralph known this, there would not be any need for his unconvincing claim that the "trickery was aided by the shadows." Apart from the obvious parts where he explains what Peter Bartholomew felt and thought, he adds a couple of elements that is not found in any of the other sources. He claims that the Lance was discovered under the altar, that the Lance looked like the iron tip from an Arab spear, and that Bohemond, along with several others of the crusade leaders, openly doubted its authenticity even before the battle with Kerbogah's forces. He also plays down the effect the discovery of the Lance had on the crusaders, apart from the Provençals, an effect documented by every other available source.¹³¹ Morris argues that the assertion that Bohemond doubted the authenticity of the Lance immediately upon its discovery is quite dubious.¹³² I agree with Morris that it seems unlikely that Bohemond spoke out against the Lance at this point in time. However, I believe that this may not be due to the fact that he did not doubt its authenticity; rather that he was too preoccupied with military matters to be bothered with fantastical claims from the Provençals. Benedicta Ward ascribes to Ralph of Caen the opinion that the discovery of the Lance was facilitated by Raymond of Toulouse,¹³³ but after studying the *Gesta Tancredi*, it is my opinion that Ralph believed that Raymond of Toulouse only exploited the situation and that Peter Bartholomew was the actual facilitator of the discovery of the Lance.

Guibert de Nogent has little to add in terms of new details, but he identifies Peter Bartholomew as the discoverer of the Lance, he confirms the uplift in morale the discovery caused, and he goes far in suggesting that the unearthing of the Lance was a key factor in the tactical choices of the crusade princes in the upcoming battle with Kerbogah's army.¹³⁴

Peter had secreted the iron point from an Arab spear that he had found by chance. He had picked this up as a means of carrying out his trickery. It was rough, worn, old and dissimilar in form and size to what we use. He felt that because of the novel shape of the spearhead, people would believe his story. Peter therefore seized the moment for his deception. Picking up a hoe, he jumped into the ditch and turned toward a corner. While digging he said 'here it is, here lies that for which we have been searching'. Then he showed it. Then adding more and more blows, he struck the Lance which he had fraudulently placed in the ditch. This trickery was aided by the shadow, the shadow by the crowd of people, and the crowd by the narrowness of the place."

Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 119.

¹³¹ Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 118-120.

¹³² Morris, 1984 : 38.

¹³³ Ward, 1987: 203-204.

¹³⁴ Guibertus de Novigento and Levine, 1997 : 107.

William of Tyre, who usually writes in great detail, has only a short summary of the discovery. He does not reveal the discoverer, or the negative reaction of Bishop Adhemar. What he does mention, is that the crusaders became freed from their anxiety and that they felt renewed strength to carry out the divine commands after the discovery. He also points to other visions of angels and the apostles who strengthened faith in Peter Bartholomew.¹³⁵

Robert the monk offers little in addition to the other sources on the discovery of the Lance. He includes his own opinion, mentioning that they found it “by God’s will” (*Domino disponente*) and that consequently “The whole people rejoiced, loudly chanting the *Te Deum* and *Gloria in excelsis deo*.”¹³⁶ Fulcher of Chartres is, as mentioned, very skeptical about the authenticity of the Lance, but still confirms that it lifted the spirit of the crusaders, at least for a while.¹³⁷

As we have seen, most sources agree on certain facts, Ralph of Caen being the only one who refutes some of them. A relic, thought to be the Lance that pierced the crucified Jesus, was discovered in Antioch while the crusaders were under siege by a greater army. The chronicles report that morale was severely boosted due to the discovery of the relic. This leaves the reader to believe that the crusaders in general accepted the Lance as authentic either due to conviction or desperation. On the other hand, the chroniclers may in retrospect wrongfully have attributed the desperate crusaders with opinions they did not have. We will return to this later. For now, to fully understand the consequences of discovering a powerful relic like the Lance that pierced Christ, we will turn our attention towards the tradition of saints and relics.

3.7 The Cult of the Saints and the Importance of Relics in the Middle Ages

To try to understand the meaning of saints in the visions described in the crusade sources and the influence of relics, it is imperative to realize the importance of saintliness and the role of relics in the Middle Ages. The pagan Mediterranean world emphasised the importance of the divide between the dead and the living. The common belief was that when a person died, his

¹³⁵ “The despondent spirits of the people rose marvelously.” Guilelmus et al., 1943 : 281.

¹³⁶ “fuitque magna lætitia in omni populo, magnisque vocibus personabant: Te Deum laudamus, et Gloria in excelsis Deo.” Robert the Monk and Sweetenham, 2005 : 163. Latin: Robert the Monk, 1844 : 823.

¹³⁷ “All the people when they heard this [that the Lance had been discovered] exulted and glorified God. For almost a hundred days the Lance was held in great veneration and was carried gloriously by Count Raymond, who guarded it.” Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 100.

soul would separate from the body and transcend to the stars. This left behind a dead body with no direct connection to the spiritual world. However, it was not uncommon to leave small offerings at the grave, or even to gather around it in memory, especially if the deceased person was someone of importance, like an emperor. And from this practice rose the cult of heroes. But it was quite unthinkable to worship the dead like a divine being because of the infallible barrier between heaven and earth.¹³⁸

In relation to this, Peter Brown has demonstrated the relationship between the Christian cult of martyrs and the pagan cult of heroes, and also how the Christian martyrs became an intercessor between heaven and earth thus leaving a foundation for belief in relics with supernatural powers.¹³⁹

The word relic comes from the Latin *reliquiae* which translates into “remains”. In short a relic was the remains of a deceased martyr. Later the remains of saints would become more common. But these were corporeal remains. Due to the strict laws protecting the dead and buried, especially in the west, indirect or secondary relics became quite popular. These are often called contact, symbolic or representative relics. Latin sources use terms like *reliquiae, sancturia, pignora, patrocinia, merita, beneficia, vocabula, brandea, and palliola*. Contact-relics could be anything from the clothes the martyrs had worn to utensils, torture instruments used on them, but also oil from the lamps by their tombs and filings from the fences surrounding them. By the ninth century, however, people started to lose interest in contact relics. By the twelfth century, ecclesiastical authority even lost interest in acquiring relics from the saint’s daily life. One type of relic, apart from the corporeal relics, that did not lose its popularity was objects that had been in contact with Jesus himself or at least could be traced back to the early days of Christianity. The cloak of Mary, the shirt of John the Baptist and St. Peter’s tunic were all exhibited to the crowds in public showings and even today the shrine of the three Magi adorns Cologne Cathedral. In 1222, Philip II Augustus (†1223) purchased a foot long relic of the true cross. In 1239, Louis IX (†1270) obtained the crown of thorns¹⁴⁰ and built the Sainte-Chapelle to house it. And in 1247, a large collection of relics of the passion was added to the Sainte-Chapelle, including the blood of Christ, a particle of the true cross, the sponge which was used to quench Jesus’ thirst, the purple cloak, the swaddling clothes from the crib, and a portion of his shroud. The fact that the French kings paid a

¹³⁸ Brown, 1981: 1-8.

¹³⁹ Brown, 1981 : 5-8.

¹⁴⁰ The crown of thorns is today kept in the treasury of Notre Dame in Paris and is exposed and revered on Good Friday.

staggering amount to obtain these relics of the passion should indicate some of the importance and the high regard in which these relics were held.¹⁴¹

It was believed that the relics contained an essence of divinity and that proximity to the relic would bring one closer to God. The relics also provided protection and quite early there were mentions of other beneficial properties of certain relics. This “added power” contained in the relics were referred to as *virtus* by Cyril of Jerusalem (†368) and Gregory of Nazianze (†390). It included the healing power of the handkerchief and belt of the apostle Paul, and the ashes of St. Cyprian (†258) which expelled demons, cured the sick, and foretold the future. It became only natural to assume that the bones of the saints had the same qualities as the contact relics, and soon it was believed that the shrine of the martyr or the saint could exercise the same power as the bones contained therein. In the Merovingian period, a custom had arisen within the Frankish empire of proclaiming a saint patron of a city or region in which its relics were housed. This custom became so widespread in the Carolingian period that the concept of the saint as *patronus*, *intercessor* and *defensor* passed into general use in the feudal-vassal relationships. With the disintegration of the Carolingian Empire, the local holder of power, a *seigneur*, had to be relied upon for protection against Saracens, Hungarians, and Vikings. But in addition to the earthly protector, they now had the holy *patronus* and his intercession with God could keep them from harm’s way. The relics now became a tactical part of war, and though it was important to keep them out of the hands of pagans, they could very well be used to reinforce a threatened position. This reliance on relics eventually led to the acceptance that the relics and the saint in fact were one and the same. A saint had the power to deal a fatal blow to anyone committing perjury on his grave. For instance, in Nivelles the arm of St. Gertrude emerged from the shrine to receive offerings and in Gent St. Bertulf caused knocking sounds to come from his shrine to bring passers-by to repentance. There could be no doubt that the saint existed in the relics and maybe this explains the great importance of the relics of the passion.¹⁴²

When understanding the origins of relics and the impact they had on Christian society, one also understands better the importance of a discovery of a major relic during the First Crusade. Not only were the crusaders on a mission from God, but they were unshakably convinced that God assisted them along the way. As to the personal relation the crusaders had

¹⁴¹ Snoek, 1995 : 9-30.

¹⁴² Snoek, 1995 : 9-23. For a more detailed account of the development of the belief in saints and relics, consult Brown, 1981 and Snoek, 1995.

with relics one can point out that Bishop Adhemar were carrying a piece of the true cross with him from Europe, Raymond of Toulouse carried a chalice that had once belonged to the celebrated holy man Robert of Chaise-Dieu, and the crusaders picked up several relics on their journey to Jerusalem. Robert count of Flanders, for instance, became a devotee of St. George after a priest in his army stole a relic of the saint's arm from a Byzantine monastery.¹⁴³ From these observations, we are better equipped to examine how the discovery of the Holy Lance affected the crusaders and what events were attributed to the Lance in retrospect.

In this chapter we have established the events that took place in Antioch during the first crusade that are important to this thesis. We have seen how Peter Bartholomew discovered the Lance after receiving visions of St. Andrew and Jesus Christ. The discovery itself illustrates how divided the sources are, which is also the case for the character of Peter Bartholomew. We have established the importance placed on relics and especially relics of the passion, and also that there was a general belief that relics could in fact have practical applications, among other, in battle. As seen, the sources unanimously agree on one thing, namely the great impact the Lance had on morale upon its discovery. But can the sources be trusted on this issue? I believe we have to study the fate of the Lance, also after its discovery, in order to really understand the complexity of this controversial subject.

¹⁴³ Asbridge, 2007 : 6.

Chapter 4 – The Aftermath of the Discovery

4.1 The Miraculous Survival of the Christian Army

The tale of the Holy Lance at Antioch does not end with its discovery. As seen, several of the sources indicate that the Lance gave the Christian soldier the will to fight again. In order to understand what possible effect the Lance actually had, both in the planning and in the execution of the battle between the crusaders and Kerbogha, we must now turn our attention to the description of the battle as related by the sources.

The Christian army was facing terrible odds. Kerbogah's army greatly outnumbered them, but the discovery of the Lance and the promise from St. Andrew that they had nothing to fear from the forthcoming battle, supposedly boosted their spirit. Some of the leaders, however, starting to realize that the battle could very well go against them, were having second thoughts. Stephen of Blois,¹⁴⁴ for instance, had already abandoned the Christians during the siege; as such, the troops were concerned that the other leaders would sneak out during the night and leave the rest of the crusaders to meet their destiny alone. Thus, in an attempt to keep the Christians calm the leaders swore that they would "neither flee nor abandon Antioch except by common council"¹⁴⁵ Still, the only way to prevent a panic-induced evacuation by the entire Christian army was to leave them no possible escape route. To this effect, Bohemond and Adhemar ordered that all the gates should be closed. In spite of this, some Christians escaped, including Bohemond's brother-in-law William of Grand-Mesnil.¹⁴⁶ The fact that many Christians wanted to flee, stands in grave contrast to the "heightened spirits" caused by the visions and miracles reported by mostly all sources. It is hard to establish an exact timeline of all reported events, but the modern reader cannot help but be puzzled by the conflicting notions that the chronicles report. In other words, how can we reconcile the fact that the crusaders experienced a boost in morale and an increased will to fight due to the discovery of the Lance, and at the same time were terrified by the prospect of

¹⁴⁴ Stephen of Blois was a reluctant crusader who was urged to take the cross by his wife Adela, the daughter of William the Conqueror. His flight and subsequent disgrace was largely forgotten when he lost his life in 1102 in an ill-fated attack on Egyptian forces at Ramla. Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 59.

¹⁴⁵ "Tunc iuraverunt principes, quod de Antiochia non fugerent neque egrederentur nisi de cummuni consilio ominum." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 56. Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 74. This is also reported by other sources, among others Guilelmus et al., 1943 : 281-282.

¹⁴⁶ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 56-57.

battle and were seeking to flee? In order to dig a bit more into this seemingly contradictory stance, we must turn our attention towards the battle with Kerbogha.

Another miracle noted by many sources happened while the crusader army was under siege. Raymond d'Aguilers describes it as "...a great star hanging over Antioch for a short time, then splitting three ways and falling into the Turkish camp."¹⁴⁷ The *Gesta Francorum* describes it as "...a fire in the sky, coming from the west, and it approached and fell upon the Turkish Army, to the great astonishment of our men, and the Turks also."¹⁴⁸ Robert the Monk reports the incident in similar words as the *Gesta Francorum* but also adds his own interpretation, claiming that "...the fire descending from heaven represented the anger of God; because it had come from the west it symbolized the armies of the Franks through whom he would make his anger manifest."¹⁴⁹ Later chroniclers also report this event. Guibert de Nogent, for instance, compares the stars falling from the sky to signs of the Apocalypse.¹⁵⁰

Runciman concludes that what the crusaders saw was a meteor and ratifies the date of this event to be the 14th of June.¹⁵¹ This event is a good example of the difficulties one is presented with when working with crusader sources. Did the crusaders see a meteor and immediately believe that it represented God's favor, or was the sighting of the meteor only interpreted as God's favor after they won the subsequent battle? One can at least not rule out the possibility of retrospective interpretation and this could in turn lead to a collectivization of memory. In other words, when the chroniclers started writing down the events, they remembered interpreting the meteor as a positive sign, even if this interpretation really occurred after the event. Could this also be true about the Lances' effect on the battle with Kerbogha?¹⁵²

When all the Christians marched out of Antioch, with the exception of a small garrison left to protect the city walls, to face Kerbogah's army, it must have been a grand spectacle. Raymond d'Aguilers, obviously lacking in military training, compares the formation of the

¹⁴⁷ "Nam stella quedam maxima per noctem super civitatem stetit, que post paulum in tres partes divisa est, atque in Turcorum castris cecidit." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 57. Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 74.

¹⁴⁸ "ignis de caelo apparuit ab occidente uenis, et appropinquans cecidit intra Turcorum exercitus. Vnde mirati sunt et nostri et Turci." Hill, 1962 : 62.

¹⁴⁹ "Inter se enim vaticinare cæperunt quod postea contigit: quia ignis de cælo descedens, ira Dei erat, quia vero ab Occidente venerat, Francorum agmina designabat, per quos iræ suæ animadversionem excercebat." Robert the Monk and Sweetenham, 2005 : 164. Latin: Robert the Monk, 1844 : 824.

¹⁵⁰ Guibertus de Novigento and Levine, 1997 : 102-103.

¹⁵¹ Runciman, 2005 : 152.

¹⁵² On the collectivization of memory regarding the Holy Lance, consult Asbridge, 2007 : 20-26.

marching crusaders to priestly procession.¹⁵³ Though lacking in details of the preformed military maneuvers, Raymond's description is certainly not short of religious fervor. He reports that while the fighting went on in front of the gates, "...barefooted priests clad in priestly vestments stood upon the walls invoking God to protect His people..."¹⁵⁴ While pushing forward, he tells that a group of Turks rushed upon the part of the Christians led by Adhemar,¹⁵⁵ but that no one was wounded or shot at. This he attributes to the protection of the Holy Lance which was carried by someone in this group, most likely Raymond d'Aguilers.¹⁵⁶ He further describes a heavenly shower of rain that fell on the crusaders and invigorated both the men and the horses.¹⁵⁷

Of arguably greater interest, Raymond reports that when the Christians lined up they made up eight lines, but suddenly five lines more appears. He explains this later: "Because God added soldiers to our army, we outnumbered the Turks in battle although previously we appeared outmanned."¹⁵⁸ Raymond claims that most of the Turks fled without giving them a chance to fight, but also says that though they hardly killed any Turkish knights, almost none of their footmen survived. In conclusion, he claims that the victory was achieved not by the crusaders, but by their merciful Lord, and also gives special thanks to the "saintly intercessors" St. Peter and St. Paul.¹⁵⁹

These references to miracles and divine intervention, which, as we shall see, are also stressed by other sources, serve as an indication to the collective religious state the crusaders found themselves in. Whenever the crusaders find themselves in peril or under great duress, stories of visions and miracles flourish, and it is only in calmer periods that they start to question the perceived miracles, as will be seen later in the ordeal of fire. The religious fervor that existed among the crusaders may have contributed to the escalation in sightings of a divine nature.

¹⁵³ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 61-63. For a more detailed description on the battle I suggest Albert of Aachen, or for a more modern view see Asbridge, 2004.

¹⁵⁴ "Stabant sacerdotes nudis pedibus et induti sacerdotalibus vestimentis supra muros civitatis Deum invocantes, ut populum suum defenderet," Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 63. Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 81.

¹⁵⁵ Raymond d'Aguilers was himself part of the battle line commanded by Adhemar.

¹⁵⁶ It is uncertain who carried the Lance during the battle. Some sources claim Adhemar, some Raymond d'Aguilers, while most are not specific. Raymond d'Aguilers claims that he himself bore the Lance, and this seems by far the most plausible. Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 63.

¹⁵⁷ "Its drops brought to those touched by it such grace and strength that they disdained the enemy and charged forth as though nurtured in regal style. The shower affected our horses no less miraculously." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 63 This event is also mentioned in Guilelmus et al., 1943 : 289-290.

¹⁵⁸ "Multiplicavit adeo Deus exercitus nostrum ut qui ante pugnam pauciores hostibus esse videbamus, in bello plures eis fuimus." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 63-64. Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 82.

¹⁵⁹ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 64.

The *Gesta Francorum* describes the priests standing on the walls, enchanting the blessings of God upon the Christians. The anonymous author adds that they all were holding crosses, and that some priests carrying big crosses also joined them in battle. According to the *Gesta Francorum*, Kerbogha divided his army in two, trying to encircle the Christians, and when they started to close in:

*Then also appeared from the mountains a countless host of men on white horses, whose banners were all white. When our men saw this, they did not understand what was happening or who these men might be, until they realized that this was the succor sent by Christ, and that the leaders were St. George, St. Mercurius and St. Demetrius. (This is quite true, for many of our men saw it.)*¹⁶⁰

The saints mentioned are all soldier saints who might be expected to help a soldier in times of need. St. George was particularly honored as the patron saint of knights. Although the *Gesta Francorum* does not describe the impact this saintly army had on the battle, it reports that the Turks and Persians were all fleeing and that the Christians were more interested in pursuing the fleeing enemy than stopping for plunder. Both the *Gesta Francorum* and Raymond d'Aguilers report that a lot of riches and badly needed supplies were recovered after the battle.

Neither Fulcher of Chartres nor the *Gesta Francorum* makes any mention of the Holy Lance during the battle and Fulcher also neglects to mention any of the warriors sent by God to aid the crusaders. He claims that the crusaders attacked Kerbogha's army head on, and as the Christians breached their enemy's lines they were all "...struck by a heaven-sent fear"¹⁶¹ and thus fled the scene of battle. He also reports the presence of unarmed priests among the crusaders' lines and the amount of booty captured from Kerbogha's camp after the battle.

Robert the Monk gives the battle an even more grandiose context than that already established by the other sources: "And so the soldiers of Christ marched out against the acolytes of the Antichrist, through the gate in front of the mosque"¹⁶² When the fighting starts, Robert borrows from the *Chanson d'Antioch* to describe a particular incident where Hugh the Great kills a Turkish soldier, before returning to the *Gesta Francorum* to describe the celestial

¹⁶⁰ "Exibant quoque de montaneis innumerabiles exercitus, habentes equos albos, quorum uexilla omnia errant alba. Videntes itaque nostri hunc exercitum, ignorabant penitus quid hoc esset et qui essent; donec cognouerunt esse adiutorium Christi, cuius ductores fuerunt sancti, Georgius, Mercurius et Demetrius. Hec uerba credenda sunt, quia plures ex nostris uiderunt." Hill, 1962 : 69.

¹⁶¹ "Sed immisso timore cælitus in eos, ac si totus mundus super eos rueret, fugam omnes immoderatam egerunt" Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 106. Latin: Fulcherius Carnotensis, 1844 : 349.

¹⁶² "Egressi itaque sunt milites Christi contra satellites Antichristi, per portam quæ est ante Machumariam." Robert the Monk and Sweetenham, 2005 : 167. Latin: Robert the Monk, 1844 : 828.

army: "...an innumerable army of white soldiers was seen riding down from the mountains. Its standard bearers and leaders were said to be St. George, St. Maurice, St. Mercurius and St. Demetrius."¹⁶³ Notice how Robert adds St. Maurice to the list provided by the *Gesta Francorum*. St. Maurice was certainly a patron saint of soldiers, but curiously enough he also has a strong connection to the Holy Lance. In fact, his name is carved into the Lance that is at this time on display in Vienna. Robert, however, leaves no clue as to why he includes St. Maurice in his description of the celestial army. He claims that the sight of this celestial army is what drove Kerbogha's men into flight. He also reports, as previously mentioned, that the crusaders killed over 100 000 knights and a countless number of footsoldiers.¹⁶⁴ Nowhere does he mention the Holy Lance as an effective relic in the battle, but he does point out the carrier to be Adhemar.¹⁶⁵

Ralph of Caen, being as colored by his political views as always, does not mention the Lance by a word in his description of the battle. Neither does he mention the appearance of a celestial army. But he does claim that Kerbogha's army fled because they saw the sign of the cross being worn by the bravest Christian knights. He singles out Bohemond and Bohemond's constable Robert, son of Gerard for praise. He also relates a struggle between the east wind and the west wind. God, controlling the west wind, unleashed his full power and the wind was apparently so strong that it blew both the Turkish tents and their horses away. This story obviously serves as a metaphor of the battle between two armies of different faiths and Ralph lets the reader know that the Christians won due to their superior or correct religious belief.¹⁶⁶

Not surprisingly, Ralph uses this opportunity to tarnish the reputation of Raymond of Toulouse, but again he fails admirably. While he tells of the heroic fighting of Bohemond and

¹⁶³ "Dum sic ceratur, et tam longi certaminis prolixitas poterat tædiare, nec numerus illorum videbatur decrescere, albatorum militum innumerabilis exercitus visus est de montibus descendere, quorum signiferi et duces esse dicuntur Georgius, Mauricius, Mercurius et Demetrius." Robert the Monk and Sweetenham, 2005 : 171. Latin: Robert the Monk, 1844 : 832. Guibert de Nogent also reports the aid received from celestial knights and names St. George, St. Mercurius and St. Demetrius, as mentioned in the *Gesta Francorum*. Guibertus de Novigento and Levine, 1997 : 110. The celestial army is also mentioned by Peter Tudebode. He also refers to St. George and St. Demetrius, but he replaces St. Mercurius with St. Theodore. Tudebodus et al., 1977 : 87-88. It is uncertain which St. Theodore Peter Tudebode refers to and why he incorporates him into the battle, as the only chronicler. In all likelihood he refers to the Greek military saint Theodore of Amasea.

¹⁶⁴ This is obviously an exaggerated number. It is extremely unlikely that Kerbogha had 100 000 knight at his disposal. The other sources claim that the crusaders hardly killed any knights. The numbers presented by Robert the Monk appears to be his own invention. Thomas Asbridge recons the Muslim force counted about 35 000, while the Christian army were reduced to less than 1 000 knights. Asbridge, 2004 : 183 and 204.

¹⁶⁵ "The reverend Bishop of Le Puy could be seen, wearing a breastplate and helmet and carrying the Holy Lance, face flooded with tears through sheer joy." Robert the Monk and Sweetenham, 2005 : 173.

¹⁶⁶ Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 109.

the “amazing slaughter” caused by Tancred, he claims Raymond of Toulouse did not take part in the fighting at all, but was responsible for the reserve forces who should come to the aid of whichever of the divisions that faltered first.¹⁶⁷ He does however praise the astonishing job done by Robert of Flanders in protecting the city of Antioch with only a few men to aid him, thus preventing the crusaders being overrun from the rear. What Ralph obviously did not know, which is clearly stated in all the other sources, is that Robert of Flanders was not protecting the city. Robert was in the first division with Hugh the great, fighting the Turks head on. The person defending the city of Antioch so “astonishingly” was none other than Raymond of Toulouse.¹⁶⁸ Gilo of Paris, has little to offer, but claims Bishop Adhemar was carrying the Lance during the battle and that it had an effect on the morale of the Christians.¹⁶⁹ He also makes a reference to the divine army sent by God to aid the crusaders, through an inspiring speech by Adhemar.¹⁷⁰

As we see, most of the sources agree on the general outcome of the battle. The Christians miraculously won, losing few men and inflicting a great amount of damage on the opposing army before it fled. However, all the sources are quite lacking in details on the actual events of the battle, apart from the appearance of a celestial army. They struggle to explain the victory and the only plausible reason they can come up with is that it was God’s will that they were triumphant.

Furthermore, all the sources claim that the crusaders always had the best intentions in mind. They try to convince the reader that the reason for marching out of Antioch to meet the besieging force head on was because they wanted to “offer battle” to the Turks. This supposedly was the gentlemen-like thing to do, and clearly separated the crusaders from the “barbaric” Turks. However, a close examination of the sources reveals that the crusaders were in fact desperate. They had undertaken a long siege, which they were not properly prepared for and after months of little food and the constant threat of attack they finally managed to take the walls of Antioch, only to find its food storage depleted and coming under siege themselves by a superior army. All the sources note the extreme hunger and the soaring prices on everything edible. The Christians wanted to flee and the crusade leaders could only hold them back by force. It seems obvious that the only option available to them was to try their

¹⁶⁷ “Raymond followed in the sixth place with a lot of noise. He was here not so that he could join his comrades in battle against the Turks but rather to support those fighting with his aid.” Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 106.

¹⁶⁸ Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 104-111.

¹⁶⁹ “...the Holy Lance of God, carried before him, [Adhemar] gave heart to the men...” Gilo et al., 1997 : 185.

¹⁷⁰ “God will send his legion of Angels to help...” Gilo et al., 1997 : 185. William of Tyre has no details on the battle.

luck in battle or risk mutiny and death behind the walls. There can be little doubt that if they had proper access to food and supplies, they would have remained behind the strong fortified walls of Antioch, at least until they were more fit to fight. As seen, the notion of this being a “noble deed”, the crusaders marching out the front gate, is purely a romantic one, a literary tool used by the Christian chroniclers. It was not an act of proper gentlemen-like courtesy; it was an act of desperation.¹⁷¹

The fact that they did win, is beyond question. But how much of a battle there really was is uncertain. As seen, some of the sources claim the Turks fled almost immediately upon sight of the Christian army, while others claim that the crusaders battled and killed tens of thousands. None of the sources report heavy losses on part of the crusaders. If this may indicate little actual fighting, then why would Kerbogha’s men turn and flee from an inferior Christian army?¹⁷²

Apart from the explanation offered by most of the chroniclers who attribute the victory to God, another explanation is presented by the Muslim historian Ibn al-Athir. He reports of dissent among the leaders of Kerbogha’s army and claims, that because of his behavior towards them, they plotted to abandon him during the battle.¹⁷³ On the battle itself, he claims the Muslims wanted to attack the Christians while they were coming out of the gate, before they had the time to enter into proper formation. Kerbogha supposedly wanted to wait until they were all outside, further angering his generals. Subsequently the Muslims rode off when the crusaders had formed their battle-lines.¹⁷⁴ It is hard to know what Ibn al-Athir bases his testimony on. We will probably never know if his report on the battle is accurate, if he fabricates a reason for the defeat suffered by a Muslim force, or if he tries to find a reason for why the Muslims fled. In any case, René Grousset seems to support the notion that Kerbogha, with good reason, might have been suspicious of the loyalty of some of his forces, particularly

¹⁷¹ This view is also suggested by Asbridge: “We should consider the possibility that desperation, not hope, shaped the course of events in this period.” Asbridge, 2007.

¹⁷² For a thorough outline of warfare in the middle ages, consult Verbruggen, 1977, Contamine, 1984, Rogers, 1992, France, 2006 and Pryor, 2006. For specifics on siege warfare, see Bradbury, 1992, Bachrach, 1994 and Strickland, 1998.

¹⁷³ “...Karbogha behaved badly towards the Muslims with him. He angered the emirs and lorded it over them, imagining that they would stay with him despite that. However, infuriated by this, they secretly planned to betray him, if there should be a battle, and they determined to give him up when the armies clashed.” Ibn al-Athir, 2006 : 16.

¹⁷⁴ “At that, the Muslims turned their backs in flight, firstly because of the contempt and the scorn with which Karbogha had treated them and secondly because he had prevented them from killing the Franks. The flight was complete. Not one of them struck a blow with a sword, thrust with a spear or shot an arrow.” Ibn al-Athir, 2006 : 17.

those drawn from Syria and Damascus.¹⁷⁵ This view is also supported by Mayer¹⁷⁶ and I believe that even though the sources are lacking on the internal situation in Kerbogha's army, the theory seems more than plausible.

Another possible explanation is that Kerbogha might have received poor intelligence and thus made the wrong tactical decisions. According to the *Gesta Francorum*,¹⁷⁷ Kerbogha divided his army in two, in an attempt to surround the Christians. If Kerbogha had heard from his scouts that the crusader army was weak, small in number and barely able to fight, this would be a sound plan. However, the Christians proved more resilient and in greater number than Kerbogha might have expected and thus, stretching the line of his men suddenly does not seem such a good idea after all. A tactical miscalculation with dire consequences. This, combined with the fact that some of his forces already contemplated leaving the battle, might explain why Kerbogha's army fled, or retreated, from the battle.

The crusaders, then, experienced what they considered to be a miracle. With no food and in a desperate state, they fended off the superior Muslim army. It is not hard to understand why the Christian soldiers, already in an environment where visions and miracles flourished, and the religious fervor reached new heights, considered their victory a sign of God's mercy. This view was also adopted by the later chroniclers, serving as proof that the crusaders were indeed doing God's work. Modern historians, usually a bit more reserved in attributing divine intervention as an explanation for historical events, have considered other possible reasons; a disorganized Muslim army combined with poor tactical decisions from its commander, are the most probable alternative explanation. But if the victor was not a miracle sent from God to aid his faithful servants, what then of the Holy Lance? The Lance could only have aided the crusaders if they truly believed in it, and so we must turn our attention towards that particular question; did the crusaders actually believe the Lance was a genuine relic?

4.2 The Perceived Legitimacy of the Lance

Needless to say, it would be an exercise in futility to attempt to uncover whether the piece of metal dug up by Peter Bartholomew was the actual spear that supposedly pierced the side of Christ. However, it might be of interest to follow the fate of the Lance after the crusade. This

¹⁷⁵ Grousset, 1934 : I, 103-104.

¹⁷⁶ Mayer, 1988 : 57.

¹⁷⁷ Hill, 1962 : 69.

could provide indications of how the Lance was viewed in the Christian west after the dust of the first crusade had settled. Steven Runciman has made a thorough, yet hardly concluding effort.¹⁷⁸ The problem is that there are several “Holy Lances” or possibly small parts of lances circulating at any given time since the Crusade. Moreover, the sources do not give any clear indication of what happened to the Lance discovered by Peter Bartholomew and left in the possession of Raymond of Toulouse. Most of them seem to agree that Raymond made it a gift to Emperor Alexius when he visited Constantinople in 1100. Yet, Alexius already had a Holy Lance in his collection and this had a more credible history than Raymond’s.¹⁷⁹ According to Runciman, Alexius either gave the lance back to Raymond of Toulouse, subsequently to be lost in his Anatolian disaster, or it was added to the relic-collection of Constantinople. In 1241, Emperor Baldwin II sold the relics of the passion to France and amongst these were a holy lance. At the same time another holy lance was kept in Constantinople, perhaps indicating that the Antiochian Lance did indeed find its way to the collection of relics in Byzantium’s capital. Runciman suggests that Baldwin sold the Antiochian Lance, whilst keeping the other, more respected Lance for himself. The Lance kept in Constantinople was in 1492 sent to Pope Innocent VIII as a gift from Sultan Bayazit II, and it has remained in Rome ever since. The cardinals of Rome doubted its authenticity, knowing there were already a Lance in Paris and another one in Nuremberg (which has no apparent connection to the one found in Antioch), kept by the German emperors. In the eighteenth century Cardinal Lambertini (later Pope Benedict XIV) dismissed the lance of Nuremberg, and claimed that the Lance of Paris and the Lance of Rome was in fact one and the same. Paris supposedly had the tip, while Rome had the shaft. At the same time, he officially repudiated the lance of Antioch. The Lance of Paris is believed to have been destroyed during the French revolution, and the Lance of Rome has never been on display, thus making it hard to verify the claims of Cardinal Lambertini.¹⁸⁰

Whether the Lance found in Antioch was lost with Raymond of Toulouse in Anatolia, or during the French revolution, or remain well preserved in the Vatican is all pure conjecture. In any case, the Lance found at Antioch remains a major point of controversy during the First Crusade, and the fact that several Lances were sold for large amounts of money, or exchanged

¹⁷⁸ See Runciman, 1950.

¹⁷⁹ According to the story, Saint Helena left the Lance in Jerusalem. When the Persians captured the city in 614 it was somehow rescued and thus it was not sent to Ctesiphon with the other relics of the passion. It was instead sent to Constantinople where it arrived on October 28th, 614, and was placed in the church of Saint Sophie. Runciman, 1950 : 199-200.

¹⁸⁰ Runciman, 1950 : 204-209.

as diplomatic gifts, if nothing else, serves to underline the importance placed on the relics of the passion in the Christian West.¹⁸¹

If we disregard the testimony of Ralph of Caen, there is agreement among the sources that no one, with the exception of Adhemar, voiced skepticism regarding the lance's authenticity at the time of the discovery. Though most sources fail to mention the Lance as having a definitive impact on the ensuing battle, they do concede the Lance to have had an effect on the morale and spirits of the Crusaders. This could lead us to think that all the crusaders accepted the Lance as indeed the divine relic used to pierce the side of Jesus on the cross. This may however not have been the case. As we shall see, many came to doubt the lance's legitimacy in the months following the battle of Antioch, and this raises the question, why did they not speak up about it at an earlier time, or at least why do the sources fail to report these disagreements? One possible explanation is that the crusaders were so desperate that they all yearned for a glimmer of hope, a sign that God still cared for his servants. He was after all the reason they had undertaken this journey in the first place. They might have been willing to accept any good news, but this, a clear sign from God that they would prevail in the coming battle, could have been exactly what they had hoped for.

Another explanation might be that they all, or at least some, saw the discovery of the Lance as just another part in the political squabble between the princes, but were too hungry, exhausted and demoralized to care about petty politics at the time. It seems, however, rather unlikely that the princes, and especially Bohemond, would hold his tongue if he sensed something could threaten his position and tip the scale on the balance of power that existed between Raymond of Toulouse and himself.

A third possible explanation is that the holy lance itself did not have that much of an impact at the time of the discovery. The sources tell of crusaders finding what they believed to be important relics a number of times during the first crusade and it is plausible that the discovery of the Lance only had an impact on a small circle of people around Raymond of Toulouse. Consequently, the Christian chroniclers may have played up the importance of the Lance after the First Crusade was completed. The story of the Lance is no doubt a great symbol of God's favor shining down on the crusaders. And many of the Christians might have

¹⁸¹ For more on relics, see chapter 3.7 above.

been greatly surprised when Kerboghas army fled from them.¹⁸² To them, divine intervention might be seen as the most logical conclusion, at least in the time right after the battle.

In my opinion, the crusaders had a rather ambiguous relationship to relics. As mentioned, the crusaders discovered many relics that the Christian chroniclers devote little to no attention, and it seems that most relics only were significant to those who had a personal relationship with one; usually the person who carried it or discovered it. Raymond d'Aguilers became the carrier of the Lance and so it is prudent that he is the only chronicler to devote a lot of attention to it. Among the eyewitness sources he is clearly the one who is quickest to attribute positive events to the Lance. Thus, it seems to me that the most plausible reception of the Lance upon its discovery was that of a calm optimism; it was only after the victory over Kerbogha's army that those who venerated the Lance got a bigger audience.

4.3 Doubt and the Ordeal of Fire

The sources do not mention any doubt towards the Lance in the immediate aftermath of its discovery.¹⁸³ This however, was to change. At the time of discovery most of the sources describe how the crusaders applaud the Lance and its discoverer. But only a year later, Peter Bartholomew is forced to undertake an ordeal of fire in order to prove the authenticity of the Lance. At one point between June 1098 and April 1099 something apparently happened that changed popular opinion about the Lance. Many modern historians¹⁸⁴ have conveniently circumvented the question of why people, who previously believed in the Lance, now doubted it enough to demand proof. Runciman's argument that "Many crusaders began to remember that the authentic Lance was at Constantinople"¹⁸⁵ seems far too simplistic. If the Lance in Constantinople was a valid point of criticism, surely this would have been an issue right from the start. Furthermore, none of the eyewitness accounts mention the Lance at Constantinople, neither at this, nor any other time. What transformed opinion of the Lance to such an extent that it provoked the ordeal of fire? In order to approach this question I will focus on the ordeal to see if some clues can be uncovered in confrontation between those who believed in the

¹⁸² "When the Franks observed this, [The flight of Kerboghas men] they thought it was a trick, since there had been no battle such as to cause a flight and they feared to pursue them." Ibn al-Athir, 2006 : 17.

¹⁸³ With the exception of Ralph of Caen.

¹⁸⁴ In example Mayer, Jotischky.

¹⁸⁵ Runciman, 1950 : 200.

Lance and those who did not. Since Raymond d'Aguilers again is the most detailed of the chroniclers, we start with him.

To set matters straight, a council was called, probably in the early April 1099.¹⁸⁶ Raymond d'Aguilers relates that Arnulf of Choques, the priest who now held the responsibilities as papal legate after the deaths of Adhemar of Le Puy and William of Orange, was called in. Arnulf admits that he was skeptical to the Lance because Adhemar had questioned its authenticity. Then another priest, Peter Desiderius, claims to have spoken to the deceased Adhemar in a vision. Here Adhemar supposedly confessed that he had been led into hell, on account of the fact that he had indeed doubted the Lance. And so, *post mortem*, Bishop Adhemar becomes a supporter of the Lance as a factual relic.¹⁸⁷ A priest named Erbrard was the next witness in line to testify. He claimed to have been in Tripoli during the time of the siege of Antioch. Here he supposedly took refuge in a church and met a Christian Syrian. This man told him that he had recently experienced a vision of Mark the evangelist, who told him that Christ now resided in Antioch and there he supported his followers. He also told Erbrard that:

*You must understand that it is recorded in the gospel of the Blessed Peter that the Christian people who are destined to capture Jerusalem shall first be besieged in Antioch and cannot break out until they find the Holy Lance.*¹⁸⁸

Erbrard ends his testimony with an offer to prove his sincerity with an ordeal of fire.

Stephen of Valence adds to the previous testimony by recalling the vision he received while under siege in Antioch. He claims the Virgin Mary promised him that God would end the Christian's toil on the fifth day and points out that the Lance was discovered on the fifth day. Also he offers to undertake an ordeal of fire to prove his words ring true.

After the Bishop of Apt also added his testimony in favor of the Lance, Raymond d'Aguilers himself took the stand. He recounted the event of the unearthing of the Lance and then adds another testimony on behalf of one Bertrand of Le Puy. Bertrand supposedly also had a vision of Adhemar and his standard bearer Heraclius, while he was very ill. They revealed to him that the reason for his illness was his doubt of the lance. And so Raymond

¹⁸⁶ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 137.

¹⁸⁷ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 96-97.

¹⁸⁸ "Intellige, in euangelio Beati Petri est scriptorum, quod gens christianorum que capiet Iherusalem infra Anthiociam clausa erit, nec inde exire poterit, nisi prius lanceam Domini repperit." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 98. Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 118. Hill and Hill speculate that the Syrian's instructions could pertain to some apocryphal writings.

d'Aguilers has again made Adhemar a post mortem supporter of the Lance. I will treat this particular subject in more detail later.

When hearing the aforementioned testimonies, Arnulf stated that he was now convinced of the lance's legitimacy and promised to do public penance because of his skepticism. But some days later he retracted that promise, claiming he still believed in the Lance, but would only do penance after consulting with his lord (Robert of Normandy). This attitude by Arnulf made Peter Bartholomew angry and he became "...righteously indignant like a guileless but truthful man."¹⁸⁹ And thus he demanded an ordeal of fire to prove that he was telling the truth and that the Lance was in fact sent by God. Raymond d'Aguilers, probably being the only surviving eyewitness account, relates that the ordeal took place on the eight of April 1099. A crowd of 60 000 had gathered to witness the event. "Dry olive branches were stacked in two piles, four feet in height, about one foot apart, and thirteen feet in length."¹⁹⁰ Peter prayed, and then with the Lance in his hands walked through the flames and emerged supposedly unharmed on the other side. Upon seeing this, the crowd went wild. They stormed towards Peter trying to get a piece of wood from the fire or a piece of Peter's clothes, believing they were relics of immense power (Raymond claims that God preformed many "worthy acts" through these objects later). In this ruckus Peter received a mortal wound to his back. After being carried away from the crowd by a knight, he got his wounds bound up, and rested. Now witnesses were called to him to assess his injuries. He had a lot of wounds, but the burn marks on his feet were trivial. The verdict was that he had been telling the truth all along. Peter died from his injuries 20th of April 1099, and according to Raymond d'Aguilers he died as a vindicated and respected man.¹⁹¹

Not everybody thinks it happened exactly in the way described by Raymond d'Aguilers. Oddly enough the ordeal is not mentioned at all in the *Gesta Francorum*, Fulcher, however, remaining skeptical of Peter Bartholomew, describes that the ordeal made it obvious that Peter was a fraud, and that those who formerly believed in the Lance were filled with grief by the outcome. Raymond of Toulouse nonetheless preserved the Lance for a long time afterwards.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ "...iratus nimium sicut homo simplex, et qui veritatem obtine ..." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 100.

Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 120. A guileless man (*homo simplex*) is an expression used to describe the biblical Job.

¹⁹⁰ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 100.

¹⁹¹ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 93-103 and 108.

¹⁹² "...and the finder of the lance quickly ran clear through the midst of the burning pile to prove his honesty, as

Ralph of Caen supports the view presented by Fulcher.¹⁹³ He also adds an accusation of his own. He claims that Raymond of Toulouse and his “Provençal accomplices” refused to accept the outcome of the ordeal and blamed Arnulf for it. They threatened him and even would have killed him had he not sought refuge with Robert of Normandy.¹⁹⁴ This is another preposterous accusation from Ralph against the Provençals. Granted, Arnulf might not have had the greatest relations with those who supported the Holy Lance, but no other sources mentions any outspoken hostility between them, let alone an assassination attempt.

Guibert de Nogent presents his view in a bit more open-minded manner. He claims Peter Bartholomew walked through the fires and “...escaped from the fire safe and sound.”¹⁹⁵ He supports Raymond d’Aguilers’ story that Peter was overrun by the crowd, but different from the other sources he reports of confusion among the Christians. He relates that some believed Peter died from the flames, while others that he was killed by the crowd. Then he dismisses “whatever popular opinion might have been” and concludes that the Holy Lance was in fact legitimate.¹⁹⁶ Albert of Aachen relates the event in much the same words as Guibert de Nogent, but is a bit more reserved in his judgment.¹⁹⁷ Albert relates both sides of the story, but distances himself from both views by adding the phrases “...so they say” and “It is related by some people...” Although he hints that the general consensus might have been that the lance was a fraud, it seems clear that the ordeal of fire gave no definitive resolution to the conflict. William of Tyre supports the view of Albert, stating: “Thus the matter over which the controversy had arisen was not conclusively settled but, on the contrary, was left still more uncertain.”¹⁹⁸

he had requested. When the man passed through the flames and emerged, they saw that he was guilty, for his skin was burned and they knew that within he was mortally hurt. This was demonstrated by the outcome, for on the twelfth day he died, seared by the guilt of his conscience” Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 100-101.

¹⁹³ “Peter, who was wearing nothing but a tunic and trousers, passed through the burning logs and fell down at the exit after being burned. He died the following day. When the people saw what happened, they decided that they had been fooled by his clever words and regretted having erred.” Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 126.

¹⁹⁴ Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 126-127.

¹⁹⁵ “...et dum incolumem focus cum excessisse” Guibertus de Novigento and Levine, 1997 : 121. Latin: Guibertus de Novigento, 1967 : 218.

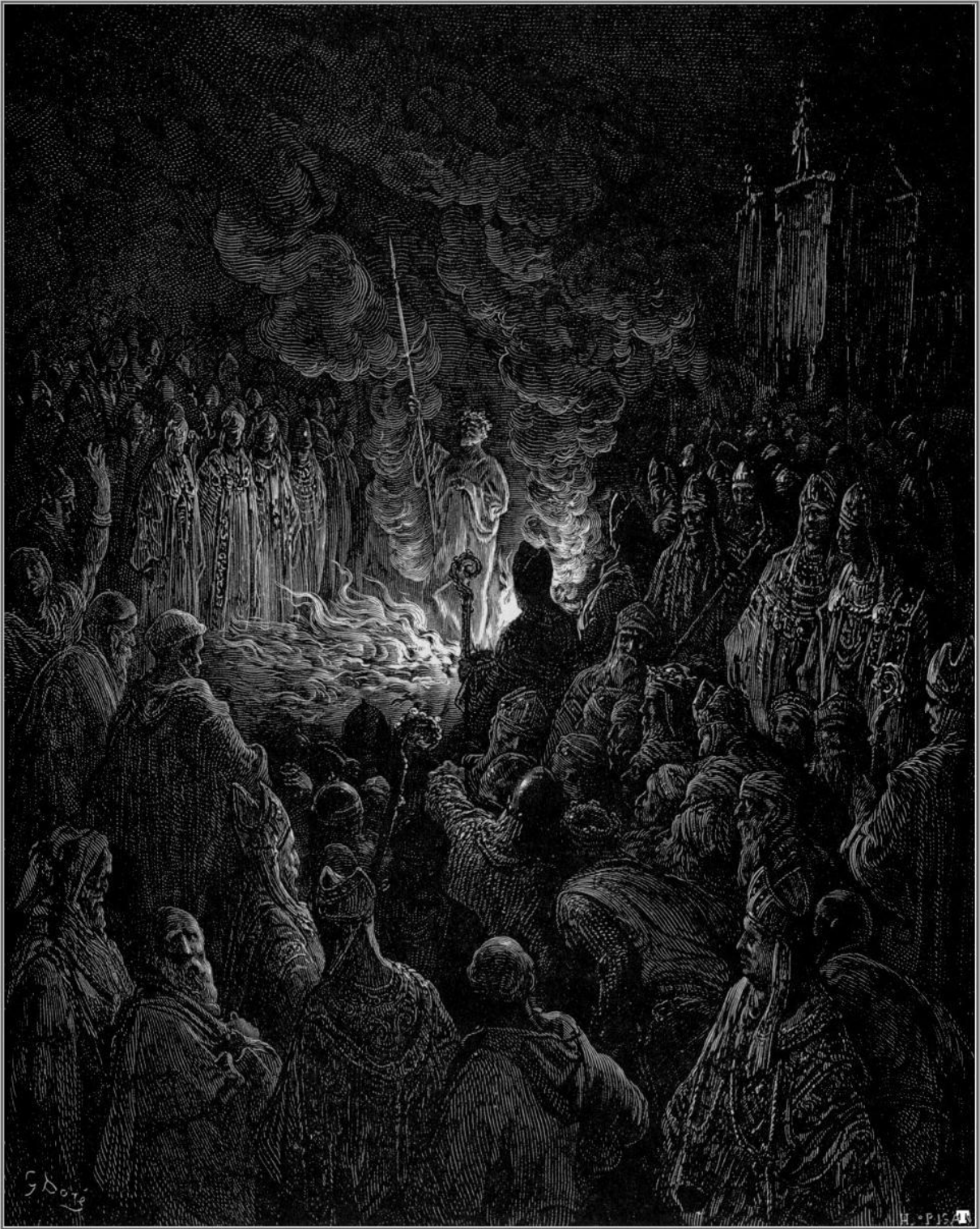
¹⁹⁶ Guibertus de Novigento and Levine, 1997 : 121-122. I will return to Guiberts view of the outcome of the ordeal of fire later.

¹⁹⁷ “On this account the instigator and betrayer [Peter Bartholomew] of its discovery [The Lance] passed through the fire; he came out unharmed, so they say, and count Raymond of Provence himself and Raymond Pilet rescued him from the hands and hustling of envious people, and they revered the lance from that day, along with all their company. It is related by some people that after this the same cleric grew so much more ill as a result of the trial’s conflagration that in a short while he died and was buried. Because of this the faithful began to hold the lance in less veneration, believing its discovery to owe more to Raymond’s greed and activity than to any divine truth” Albertus Aquensis and Edgington, 2007 : 378-379.

¹⁹⁸ Guilelmus et al., 1943 : 325.

Consequently, even an ordeal of fire could not give a definitive answer on the Lance's authenticity. Of the eyewitness accounts, Raymond d'Aguilers is the only one claiming that the ordeal had a positive outcome for Peter Bartholomew and the Lance. Fulcher of Chartres is negative and Peter Tudebode and the *Gesta Francorum* are disappointingly silent on the subject. Ralph of Caen's view, which was not an eyewitness account, but based on eyewitness interviews and independent from the other sources, is also negative. The opinion of the later chroniclers also varies. Some like Guibert de Nogent, agrees with Raymond d'Aguilers' account, while Albert of Aachen hints towards a negative outcome. William of Tyre states that the ordeal was inconclusive and Robert the Monk leaves out the entire ordeal.

The fact that the Lance more or less disappears from the sources at this point have led many modern historians to believe that even though a small circle of people around Raymond of Toulouse may still have venerated the Lance, most of the crusaders now believed that Peter Bartholomew was a fraud and that the Lance was a fake. The confusion this caused was to continue in the Christian West for some time, but after the ordeal, the Lance only appears once or twice in the sources and then only as a side note. It seems plausible that the Lance lost its appeal to the crusaders who were part of the first crusade, but the fact that Raymond of Toulouse still carried the Lance with him in his entourage would indicate that some still believed in it. But even if the account of the ordeal proves that the crusaders were somewhat ambiguous about the Lance, it gives no indication as to why they suddenly started doubting it in the first place. The reason for it may have been the ongoing political strife between Bohemond and Raymond of Toulouse. This we will examine closer in chapter 4, but we are not quite ready to leave the story of the Lance behind just yet. The Lance must have been more than just a piece in a princely quarrel.



The ordeal of fire. Peter Bartholomew walks into the fire while holding the Lance. Portrait by Gustave Doré.

4.4 The Impact of the Lance

A subject that has been raised by every single source that mentions the discovery of the Holy Lance is the positive effect it had on the morale of the crusaders at the time of its discovery. Though it is possible that the chroniclers paint a darker picture of the situation after the capture of Antioch to further increase the glorification when the crusaders ultimately won the battle with Kerbogha, there can be no doubt that the Christian army were downhearted and exhausted. If the discovery of the Lance had a big impact on morale, it must also have been accepted as a legitimate sign from God. This is the opinion of most modern historians.¹⁹⁹ Yet it remains hard to explain why so many of the Christians wanted to flee Antioch if they truly believed God was protecting them.

When reading the tale of Peter Bartholomew's visions and subsequent discovery of the lance, it is important to remember that there is only one person who describes the events in great detail. While studying Raymond d'Aguiler it becomes apparent that he was not a man afraid to present events in such a way that they fitted with his point of view and with his style of writing. He actively applies phrases and excerpts from the Apocrypha, the miracles, the lives of the saints, various psalms, and other religious writings known to him. This was in no way unusual for a chronicler of his time, but it still does not hide the fact that sometimes style in itself may obscure the truth.²⁰⁰ This becomes all the more apparent when reading Raymond's presentation of Peter Bartholomew's recollection of the visions he experienced.

Much has been written about the human mind's inability to represent or even interpret religious experience.²⁰¹ It is obvious that this, combined with the amount of time passed between the visions and Raymond's description of them, alone would be enough to obscure reality. When Raymond again takes notes, and then waits for another year or so before he starts turning his notes into a final chronicle, one has to be skeptical about the details provided by Raymond on the visions. We know that some of the references he attributes to Peter are from scripture Peter had no knowledge of.²⁰² This raises the question of what other facts have been obscured by Raymond d'Aguilers in this story. He was an avid supporter of his lord Raymond of Toulouse (though it should be attributed to his character that he did not refrain from criticizing him, when he thought it prudent), and historians like Runciman has

¹⁹⁹ See Asbridge, 2004, Bachrach, 2003, Grousset, 1934, Runciman, 2005, Tyerman, 2006 among others.

²⁰⁰ Krey, 1921 : 8.

²⁰¹ See among others Sharf, 1998 for a closer study of mans inability to interpret and relate religious experiences.

²⁰² For examples see Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 10-13 and 51-58.

disregarded most of his presentation on the visions of Peter Bartholomew on the grounds that they are too much in line with the politics of Raymond of Toulouse and the Provençal crusaders.²⁰³ Tyerman disagrees and shows how Peter Bartholomew's visions did not directly serve the Count of Toulouse until after the capture of Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man in January 1099.²⁰⁴ Asbridge enunciates surprise that Raymond d'Aguilers so clearly records the skepticism of Bishop Adhemar.²⁰⁵ However, Raymond d'Aguilers knew that he could not get away from the fact that Bishop Adhemar did not believe in the Lance. What he could do was to turn Adhemar's doubt into an advantage for the Lance's and/or the Provençals' cause. As I shall discuss later, Raymond consciously uses Adhemar as a *post mortem* supporter of the Lance. Most historians agree that the visions, in which Adhemar states the Lance was a true relic, was a political tactic employed by Raymond and his Provençal brethren.²⁰⁶ If this is the case, then he probably would have used this tactic also in his reports on Peter Bartholomew's earlier visions. And in fact, maybe he did; during one of the visions, Raymond d'Aguilers has St. Andrew criticize Bishop Adhemar's lack of morale support for the crusaders.²⁰⁷ This seems odd when most sources commend him for his inspiring speeches and the fashion in which he leads the crusaders ever onwards toward Jerusalem. Could it be that Raymond again uses these visions, to give the reader an early hint that perhaps Adhemar was incorrect, only to later have Adhemar appear in visions to state that he had in fact been incorrect in his early assessment of the Lance? This would be a literary tool often utilized in medieval chronicles and Raymond himself does the same thing when he describes the proceedings leading up to the ordeal of fire. Initially he has several witnesses ending their testimony with an offer to undertake an ordeal of fire, thus giving the reader a hint of what is to come. Then the ordeal of fire follows, just as Raymond has so subtly announced.²⁰⁸ What this means is that though one has to remain very skeptical of the factual contents of the visions, one should not dismiss the visions of Peter Bartholomew altogether. They are, together with the other visions related by Raymond d'Aguilers, a source of information on the political strife among the crusaders, absolutely essential to understanding the author's way of presenting his knowledge, and also a good case study in trying to understand medieval chronicler's utilization of visions.

²⁰³ Runciman, 1950 : 198.

²⁰⁴ Tyerman, 2006 : 145.

²⁰⁵ Asbridge, 2007 : 5.

²⁰⁶ Among others Runciman, 1950, and Asbridge, 2004.

²⁰⁷ "Why doesn't Adhemar preach the word, exhort, and bless the people with the Cross which he carries daily? Certainly, it would be a great blessing to them." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 52.

²⁰⁸ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 93-103. Asbridge, in the most recent treatment of the Lance, fails to see this and is surprised by Stephen of Valence's offer to undergo an ordeal. Asbridge, 2007 : 7.

Where does this leave us in our quest of uncovering the impact the discovery of the Holy Lance had on the crusaders and their battle with Kerbogha's army? It is hard to argue against the fact that the discovery raised the morale of the crusaders. But if this was the only effect of the Lance, surely modern historians would not have spent so much time on the subject. Some historians have suggested an unbroken link between the discovery of the Lance, and the subsequent victory against the Muslim army.²⁰⁹ Riley-Smith, for instance, states that the reaction to the discovery of the Lance was "an important element in the decision to sortie out of Antioch and engage Kerbogha's forces."²¹⁰ And Tyerman claims "The discovery transformed the army's mood from terrified inertia to awed encouragement, allowing the leaders to organize a military breakout with some prospect of success."²¹¹ In my opinion, there is little evidence to support such a claim. The Christians did not, at the moment the Lance was discovered, grab their weapons and rush out to meet the enemy. In fact, the crusaders, as will be seen, did everything in their power to prevent a battle with Kerbogha. The Lance was discovered on June 14th and the Christians did not march out to battle before the 28th.

In between these events the crusaders sent a delegation to Kerbogha in an attempt to avoid all out battle. Raymond d'Aguilers reports that Peter the Hermit was sent to meet with Kerbogha. He supposedly demanded that Kerbogha abandoned the siege, something Kerbogha arrogantly refused.²¹² According to the *Gesta Francorum*, Peter the Hermit's message was to offer the Muslim army conversion to Christianity to which Kerbogha's reply was to offer his own religion to the crusaders on the promise that they would retain the land they had occupied as well as attain the status of knight. Both offers were refused.²¹³

Peter the Hermit's conversation with Kerbogha is also treated in Ralph of Caen's *Gesta Tancredi*. He reports on much discussion between the crusade leaders: "by what means, by what reason or art, death could be turned aside and fleeing life be called back."²¹⁴ There was apparently an open discussion that lasted "day and night" and when the leaders had agreed upon a strategy, they sent out an envoy of five men, including Peter the Hermit, to meet with Kerbogha. They demanded, as recorded by the other sources, that the Muslim army

²⁰⁹ See Mayer, 1988 and Riley-Smith, 1997.

²¹⁰ Riley-Smith, 1997 : 95.

²¹¹ Tyerman, 2006 : 144.

²¹² Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 60-61.

²¹³ Hill, 1962 : 66-67.

²¹⁴ "Multa studet, volvit, rimatur, circinat, ambit: Qua vi quove modo, quanam ratone vel arte. Declinet mortem, vitam revocet fugientem, Sit nox, sitve dies tractat secum ista palamque." Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 102. Latin: Ralph of Caen, 1844 : 663.

should leave Antioch since this was regarded in the Christian tradition as the city of Peter the Apostle. Expectedly, Kerbogha refused to accept their demand. The crusaders then proposed an alternative. In place of an all out battle where numerous lives would be lost on both sides, they wanted Kerbogha to pitch a few of his best fighters in a battle with the strongest crusaders. Whoever won would get control of the city, while the losing party would leave peacefully. In this way the Christians were guaranteed that if they lost the city, at least they would all escape unharmed. Kerbogha, realizing that he had the most to lose on this deal, declined, throwing in a couple of insults of the Christian religion in the process. Then Peter the Hermit declared that the Christians would take the battle to them at the rise of the sun the following day.²¹⁵

Fulcher of Chartres²¹⁶ and Robert the Monk²¹⁷ also mentions this conversation, whereas Ibn al-Athir refers to a meeting where the Christians asked for “terms to leave the city”²¹⁸ A last account is William of Tyre; stating that Peter the Hermit offered several alternatives to Kerbogha, including single combat or a duel between several knights.²¹⁹

All studies into medieval warfare reveal that most commanders shunned open conflict and tried to avoid battle wherever this was possible. As demonstrated above, the crusaders approached Kerbogha with an offer to settle the dispute over control of Antioch by single combat. The tradition of judicial duel can at least be dated back to the fifth century,²²⁰ but a challenge offered were almost never accepted. This leads one to contemplate why there is this common element in the medieval sources. The challenger often probably did not expect his opponent to accept, however there were certain other advantages to be gained by offering to enter into single combat. The general consensus was that God paid closer attention during these fights and he decided who was the most worthy of the chosen combatants. If a military leader rejected a challenge, it could be construed that he did not dare to place his fate in the

²¹⁵ Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 102-104.

²¹⁶ Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 103.

²¹⁷ Robert the Monk and Sweetenham, 2005 : 165-166.

²¹⁸ Ibn al-Athir, 2006 : 16.

²¹⁹ “You may yourself meet one of our chiefs in single combat and, if victorious, obtain all, but, if vanquished, leave us in peace. Or several of your knights may fight with the same number of ours, under the same terms; or again, the entire hosts on both sides may try the result of battle.” Guilelmus et al., 1943 : 284 Albert of Aachen also adds some details to this proposal. According to him Peter the Hermit demanded: “you should choose twenty young knights from your multitude, and the Christians should do the same, and, with hostages given on both sides – you in your god, they in theirs – they should join in single combat in the middle. And if the Christians do not obtain victory they will return to their own lands peacefully and without injury, restoring Antioch to you. If, though your men are unable to triumph, you and yours will withdraw peacefully from the siege, leaving the city and land to us, and you will not allow so great an army to perish in fighting one another.” Albertus Aquensis and Edgington, 2007 : 319.

²²⁰ Strickland, 1998 : 323.

hands of God and thus losing the moral high ground. This in turn led many to substitute a blatant rejection with a counter offer, often leading to talks of a peaceful solution.²²¹ In the case of the crusaders at Antioch they most likely hoped for a peaceful solution. In the end, it was not to be like this, as Kerbogha outright refused their request.²²²

4.5 Medieval Siege Tactics and the 14 Day Delay

To be able to analyze the crusader's actions during the siege of Antioch, one must first gain some insight into the world of medieval poliorcetics.²²³ Some attention has been given to siege warfare by modern historians, and The Crusades play an integral part in the development of siege tactics in Western Europe.²²⁴ Jim Bradbury does a fine job in showing the development, and perhaps lack thereof, from the Roman Empire's poliorcetics to that of early medieval times.²²⁵ After the fall of the Roman Empire, the knowledge of constructing siege equipment declined in the west and some historians claim that it was not until the time between the first and the third crusade that the standards of the Romans were surpassed.²²⁶ The cause of this poliorcetic renaissance is largely The Crusades themselves. Although siege warfare was not at all uncommon in Western Europe at the time of the First Crusade, the scale of the sieges increased with the Norman conquests in Italy, the Crusades and the *Reconquista*.²²⁷ The famed Athenian writer Aristophanes once claimed "It is from their foes, not their friends, that cities learn the lesson of building high walls..." The truth of this statement in relation to the siege technology renaissance during The Crusades is a point of debate. When the Latins reached the Holy Land it became obvious to them that both the Muslims and the Byzantines were more adept both at building fortifications and at tearing them down. They also learned that siege warfare was to become far more important to the success of The Crusade than open field battles. But the crusaders adapted quickly and the manner in which this adaption took place is at the heart of the debate. While most modern historians agree that knowledge was gathered from both allies and enemies during The Crusades,²²⁸ Runciman stresses the importance of direct Byzantine assistance in the

²²¹ For more on the history of judicial dual and alternative solutions in medieval warfare, see Strickland, 1998.

²²² Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 103.

²²³ Poliorcetics is the professional term for the art of siege warfare and fortifications.

²²⁴ For a thorough review of medieval warfare historiography, consult Bachrach, 1994.

²²⁵ Bradbury, 1992.

²²⁶ See Rogers, 1992 and Fino, 1967.

²²⁷ Contamine, 1984 : 54-64.

²²⁸ For a different view, consult White jr, 1975. He claims the crusaders had a technological advantage over the

production of siege machinery.²²⁹ Joshua Prawer, on the other hand, claims the crusaders hired native Christian workmen during their journey through Syria who helped with construction of necessary siege equipment.²³⁰ Randall Rogers warns that the construction of siege machinery was not the only obstacle the crusaders faced and that some historians tend to put too much emphasis on this particular part of siege warfare. He points out that some of the major challenges the crusaders faced included inexperienced soldiers,²³¹ logistical problems and internal political disagreements.²³²

The first crusade in particular is well covered by both eyewitnesses and contemporary historians. Although most of the writers had little insight into warfare in general, they seem to reveal that most sieges were unique.²³³ One thing that separates the first crusade from later struggles in the Christian principalities is that city-sieges were all important, whereas castles and fortresses became a much more deciding factor later on. This can be explained by looking on the objective of the crusaders. During the First Crusade, the goal was clear: Reach and conquer Jerusalem. The faster the crusaders could move through the Holy Land to reach their primary destination, the better the chances were of success. The Christians did not at first plan to hold the conquered areas,²³⁴ but as history proved they found it hard to release their captured cities. When controlling an area became the prime objective, then the castles became an important tool.

During the siege of Nicea May 6th – June 19th 1097, the crusaders had the direct support of the Byzantine emperor. This meant that lack of supplies were less of a problem. They built several siege engines and kept the defenders under constant pressure. The siege of Antioch was an entirely different matter. Without the supplies from Constantinople, undertaking a long siege was a big challenge. After picking clean the surrounding areas, the crusaders were entirely dependent on friendly merchants to get food and basic supplies. Even though they had a supply line from Cyprus via the port of St. Simeon, only a limited amount

Muslims because of their re-introduction of the mobile siege tower. This view, however, is considered controversial.

²²⁹ Runciman, 2005.

²³⁰ Prawer, 1980.

²³¹ "Soldier" is a very loose term and in siege warfare usually every man, woman, and child available played a part.

²³² Rogers, 1992 : 8-11.

²³³ The surrounding areas were all-important in drawing up a siege tactic, and a complete blockade of a city was often hard to initiate. Since the crusaders often found themselves in a very hostile area, attrition usually became just as big a problem for the besiegers as it did for the besieged.

²³⁴ Some of the princes on the Crusade may have had ambitions to control parts of the Holy Land, but whenever one leader tried to stray from the collective objective to take Jerusalem, the crusader masses would object. Thus controlling the captured cities became more relevant as the crusade was nearing its target.

of supplies reached the crusaders at the gates of Antioch. This meant that food prices soared, and the crusaders, especially the less wealthy ones, starved. The defenses of Antioch were deemed too strong for a direct attack, so the crusaders decided on a blockade.²³⁵ This strategy was usually dependent upon provisioning and security, and since the besiegers had neither, they were forced to desperate short-term measures just to hold their position. The siege started on October 21th 1097, but it took until April 1098 for the crusaders to construct enough counter-forts to manage a complete blockade of the city. When the city was finally taken at the end of June 1098, this happened because of the betrayal of one of the garrison generals. Although many reasons for this betrayal are suggested by the sources, it seems more than plausible that the lack of food inside the city was the deciding factor.²³⁶

When the crusaders themselves became besieged inside the walls of Antioch, they knew through experience the great defensive potential of the city. The only way they could loose the city was either by betrayal or starvation. Based on the actions of the crusaders, it seems they might have feared both. When in a desperate situation a well-known tactic known as *overthrow* or *destruction* was often the only alternative in medieval warfare. This tactic calls for the commander in charge to summon all the available men and recourses he has available and throw them all together at the enemy. The outcome depended heavily on the reaction of the opposing army, and in the case of the crusaders' sortie out of the besieged Antioch, it worked as well as one could possibly hope. This particular tactic was used with success by among others Charlemagne (†814) in his campaign against the Lombards in 773-774, and against Duke Tassilo of Bavaria in 787 and also by William the Conqueror (†1087) in 1066 and by Saladin (†1193) in 1187.²³⁷ In other words, the decision to charge out of Antioch to meet Kerbogha's army in open battle was not an unusual tactic inspired by the finding of a relic. It was a considered decision by skilled military commanders who most likely regarded it as their last and only hope to survive.

If the Christians were indeed so confident in God's grace there would be no need for the long wait after the discovery of the Lance, nor would it be necessary to propose an alternative to fighting, as seen above.²³⁸ Nothing prevented the crusaders of initiating warfare in the given period. The fact that hunger ravished the crusaders and the fact that they had

²³⁵ According to Gillingham, 2006, a blockade in an attempt to starve out your enemy was the most common form of siege in the early middle ages.

²³⁶ Rogers, 1992 : 10-39.

²³⁷ Verbruggen, 1977 : 283-284.

²³⁸ Colin Morris also finds it hard to explain the 14 day delay between the discovery of the Lance and the battle with Kerbogha. Morris, 1984 : 41-42.

previously shown their ability to organize an attack in far shorter time²³⁹ strengthen the conclusion that the two week delay was not part of a tactical plan to charge the besiegers. The Christian army was desperate, and their conduct was in line with proper siege tactics at the time. The sources indicate no unbroken link between the finding of the Lance and the decision to march out to meet Kerbogha's army.²⁴⁰ This supports the claim made earlier in this thesis that the Lance at first was only venerated by a smaller circle of crusaders revolving around Raymond of Toulouse and included Peter Bartholomew and Raymond d'Aguilers. But how do we explain that the chronicles all claim a significant impact of the Lance?

The discovery of the Holy Lance seems to be a very effective literary tool, utilized by several of the chroniclers to explain how God helped the crusaders defeat a superior Muslim army. The Christians had little insight into Kerbogha's loose confederation of forces gathered from several different parts of the Muslim world. That they would have issues with leadership equal to, or even greater than the crusaders is more than likely, and the fact that Kerbogha's army retreated, be it either for reasons of internal strife and/or poor tactical choices, needed explanation. And what would be a better explanation to justify the idea of the crusade than God himself intervening on behalf of the Christians and sending the Muslims to flight. It is quite possible that the veneration of the Holy Lance started with this victory. The discovery of a piece of metal in the ground by a disreputable character might not have convinced every one, but if the crusaders believed that the only reason for their unlikely victory was by the grace of God, that would be a testament to the authenticity of the Holy Lance. This would also explain why Bohemond and his Norman and northern-French compatriots would feel the need to confront the Provençals and demand proof that the Lance was in fact real. If the Lance had no support among the crusaders, it would not have been a threat to the political ambitions of Bohemond, but now that God had saved the Crusaders from certain doom, the Lance would have gathered enough believers to potentially tip the scale of power in advantage of Raymond of Toulouse and the Provençals.²⁴¹

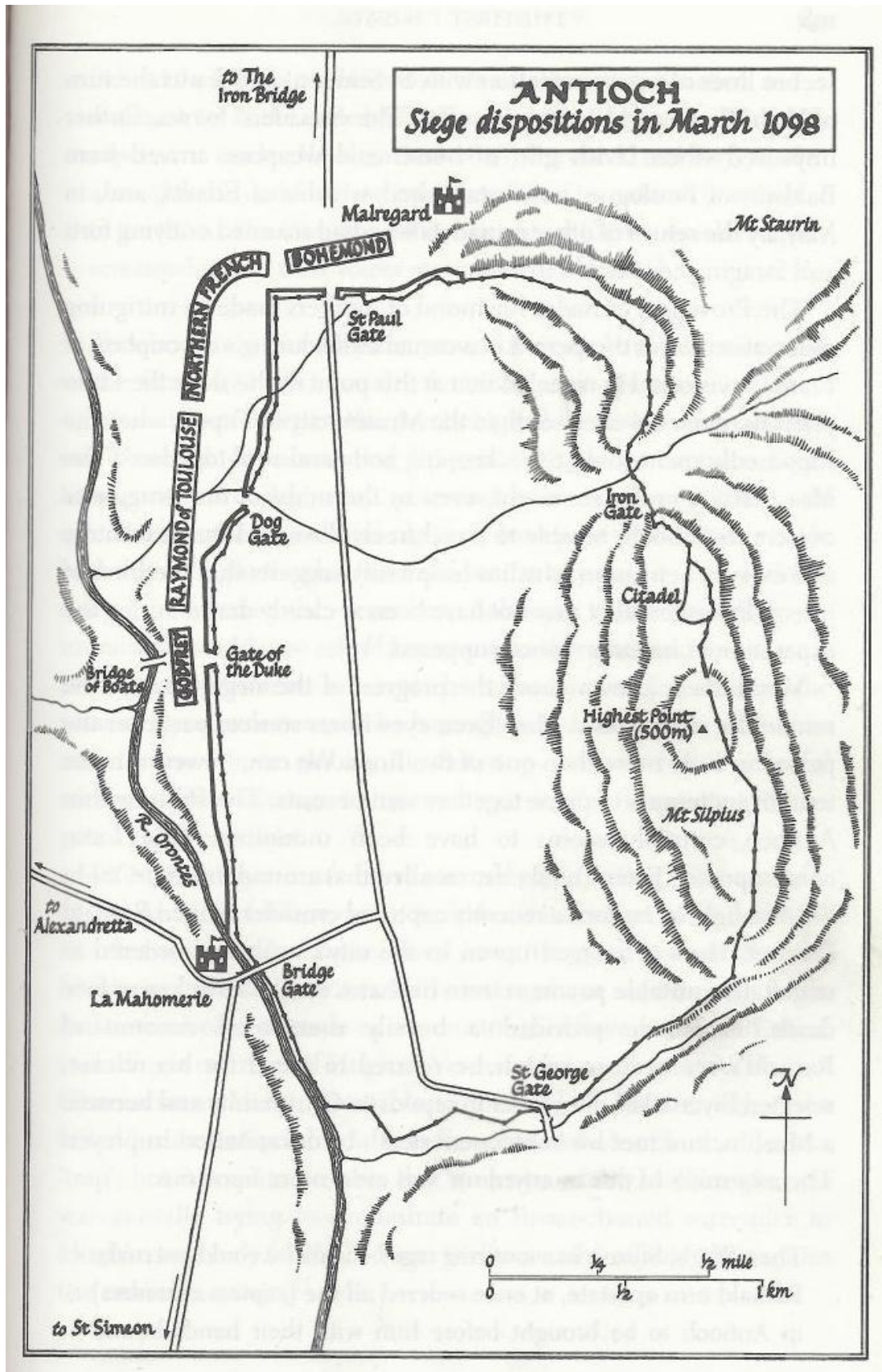
In this chapter I have presented my theory that the Lance, upon its discovery, was only venerated by a small group of people around Raymond of Toulouse. However, when the Christians defeated the superior Muslim army led by Kerbogha, they considered their victory

²³⁹ Asbridge, 2004 : 181-186.

²⁴⁰ For a similar view, see Asbridge, 2007.

²⁴¹ The view that the Holy Lance was first venerated after the battle with Kerbogha is also suggested by Tyerman, even though he still claims that the Lance was pivotal for the crusaders even at the time of its discovery. Tyerman, 2006 144-145.

a miracle and a sign that they had God's favor. Since the vision preceding the discovery of the Lance foretold that they would be victorious as long as the Lance was in their possession, many of the crusaders now believed that the Lance had been proven authentic, as the visions had become true. This also means that there can be no unbroken link between the discovery of the Lance and the decision to sortie out of Antioch. I have shown that the Crusaders tried, in vain, every possible option of avoiding open battle, and followed standard military tactics while under siege. The sources leave no indication that the Lance was a factor in the tactical decision-making; even though the Christian warriors might have been inspired by religious fervor during the battle, little of this can be directly attributed to the Lance. Even though we have seen that the Lance had little effect on the battle of Antioch, due to its increase in popularity after the battle, it was still to become a great point of controversy.



Map 2: Layout of Antioch in March 1098. The map shows the position of the crusader contingents during the first siege.

Chapter 5 - Crusader Politics

5.1 Chapter Introduction

The Holy Lance discovered at Antioch was to become more than just a religious symbol. As indicated by among others Runciman²⁴² and Asbridge,²⁴³ the Lance was to play a part in the political struggle between the crusader princes. In order to get a better understanding of the impact of the Holy Lance we must now turn our attention toward the conflict brewing between the crusade leaders. Did the Lance really play a part in the political agenda of Raymond of Toulouse, Bohemond, and the other princes? What role did the crusade masses and the papal legate Adhemar play? Was the Lance a blessing or a curse for the political ambitions of Raymond of Toulouse?

5.2 A Divided Army of God

The First Crusade had no undisputed leader figure. The crusader army consisted of several contingents from different parts of Europe led by different nobles. This, as one can expect, lead to a lot of disagreements. Through several councils and by the guidance of Bishop Adhemar, the papal legate, the crusade leaders mostly managed to agree on strategic choices. However, the division between them became greater as the crusade was nearing its target, and once again we return to the siege of Antioch. The city of Antioch had a reputation well known to Europeans at the time. Though it had lost most of its former glory after falling into Muslim hands, it was still remembered as a great city with a huge potential for trade and commercial activity. Already before the Christians had taken the city, the dispute over its fate were to become an issue that may have influenced the siege tactics and could even have jeopardized the entire crusade.

It all starts with the decision to besiege Antioch. Raymond d'Aguilers tells of a disagreement between the princes on whether to initiate the siege at the moment they arrived, or to postpone the siege until winter had passed. Raymond of Toulouse apparently did not want to wait for the winter to pass or for imperial reinforcements. And through a speech

²⁴² "...had not the Lance been involved in the political quarrels between raymond of Toulouse and the other princes of the crusade." Runciman, 1950 : 200.

²⁴³ "...a relationship which also highlights the Lance's role in the struggle to lead the first crusade." Asbridge, 2007 : 22.

where he argued that they had arrived at this moment through God's inspiration, he convinced the other princes to start the siege immediately.²⁴⁴

It is difficult to discern whether this type of religious rhetoric is literary constructions of the chronicler in question, but it would not be unusual for the leader of an army to utilize religion to inspire his subjects. To what degree religion played a part in the council between fellow generals on the First Crusade is uncertain. The decision to initiate the siege before winter has been regarded by modern historians as a poor choice.²⁴⁵ Raymond of Toulouse gained a lot of prestige during the crusade for his insistence on pushing on towards Jerusalem with minimal delay,²⁴⁶ but the long siege of Antioch led to extreme famine and many lives were lost.

The hunger and the constant attacks the crusaders experienced outside the walls of Antioch took its toll not only on the soldiers, but also on the princes. Raymond d'Aguilers reports that Bohemond threatened to abandon the crusade. He also claims that Bohemond's reasons for these threats were his ambitions to seize control of Antioch for himself.²⁴⁷ Due to Raymond d'Aguilers' close connection and obvious sympathy with Raymond of Toulouse, one must remain skeptical of Raymond's continuing negative statements regarding Bohemond. Still, Tyerman agrees with Raymond d'Aguilers in the fact that Bohemond did contemplate leaving the siege and that he probably had high hopes of expanding his own wealth by the capture of Antioch.²⁴⁸ While it is not very likely that he would actually leave, it is not impossible that Bohemond would use the threat of leaving in order to gain support from the other leaders.

Raymond d'Aguilers also adds that during this time, and perhaps because of his threats to leave, all the other princes with the exception of Raymond of Toulouse, agreed to give Bohemond control of Antioch in the event that it was taken. Due to this promise, Bohemond

²⁴⁴ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 30.

²⁴⁵ Among others, Tyerman is very critical to the decision to besiege Antioch. He not only questions the timing, but believes taking the city was unneccacary for the crusaders to complete their objective. Tyerman, 2006 : 135-136.

²⁴⁶ This may not be justified as many modern historians argue that Raymond was no less motivated by personal ambition than his fellow crusade leaders. More on this later.

²⁴⁷ "To add to our misfortune, Bohemond, now famous for his brilliant service in Hispania, threatened to depart, adding that honor had brought him to his decision because he saw his men and horses dying from hunger; moreover, he stated that he was a man of limited means whose personal wealth was inadequate for a protracted siege. We learned afterwards that he made this statements because ambition drove him to covet Antioch." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 35.

²⁴⁸ Tyerman, 2006 : 137-138.

and the other princes swore a pact not to leave the siege.²⁴⁹ There are some discrepancies between the sources on what time Antioch was offered to Bohemond, and I will return to this shortly.

The other available sources reveal little of the events leading up to the siege of Antioch,²⁵⁰ but when the crusaders were nearing a conclusion to the siege, conflicts arose. When they heard news of Kerbogha's approaching relief army, they had to act fast. Kerbogha was only a few days away and the crusaders risked being trapped between a hostile Muslim force and the solid stone walls of Antioch. It is at this moment modern historians place the offer of control of Antioch to Bohemond.²⁵¹ If he could take the city, he would be allowed to keep it, provided no help came from the Byzantine emperor. The sources reveal different versions of the meeting where this deal took place, but most later sources seem to agree on the version recorded by Peter Tudebode: When Bohemond first suggested that whoever could deliver Antioch would get control over it, the other princes turned him down, but when news reached them of Kerbogha's approaching army, they all agreed, with the exception of Raymond of Toulouse.²⁵² Bohemond had for a while maintained contact with an Armenian dissident inside Antioch named Firuz. Under the cover of darkness a small group of Christian warriors, aided by the betrayal of Firuz, managed to sneak into the city and open one of the gates. When morning came, the rest of the crusaders poured in to the city and Antioch was seized in a matter of hours. Yaghi-Siyan (†1098), who were the governor of Antioch, locked himself up in the city's citadel together with the rest of the garrison who managed to flee the attacking crusaders.²⁵³

After the Christians had driven out and killed the Muslim inhabitants of Antioch, with the exception of those locked up in the citadel, control of the main gate was granted to Raymond of Toulouse while Duke Godfrey and Bohemond each controlled another.²⁵⁴ But while most of the crusaders were engaged in storming the city, Tancred were guarding the

²⁴⁹ "...all the princes with the exception of the Count [Raymond of Toulouse] offered Antioch to Bohemond in the event it was captured. So with this pact Bohemond and other princes took an oath they would not abandon the siege of Antioch for seven years unless it fell sooner." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 37.

²⁵⁰ Fulcher of Chartres, for instance, reports on the pact sworn by the crusade leaders, but he adds no context to the oath and he does not mention any threats from Bohemond."Our princes when they saw how hard it would be to take the city swore mutually to cooperate in a siege until, God willing, they took it by force or stratagem." Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969.

²⁵¹ Asbridge, 2004 : 201-205.

²⁵² Tudebodus et al., 1977 : 61-62.

²⁵³ Tyerman, 2006 : 141-142. The sources disagree on whether Yaghi-Siyan made it to the citadel or if he died and another officer took control.

²⁵⁴ Hill, 1962 : 61, and Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 65.

roads on the outskirts of Antioch and according to Ralph of Caen he was not at all pleased with being left out of the plans to storm the city. Ralph provides an extensive speech that makes this perfectly clear.²⁵⁵ Tancred was no doubt disappointed to be left out of Bohemond's plans, but the long tirade provided by Ralph of Caen is most likely a product of the author intended as a apologetic justification as to why Tancred was not part of the conquering of Antioch.

Raymond of Toulouse did not only control the gate facing the bridge over the Orontes river, he also controlled the palace inside Antioch and several forts to the south and west of the city, effectively giving him control of the roads to Alexandretta and the port of St. Simeon. This in turn gave him a strong foothold in the struggle for control of Antioch.²⁵⁶

Most sources mention a curious event that puzzled historians for many years. It happened after the Christians had seized control over Antioch. Yaghi-Siyan had barricaded himself inside the citadel and Bohemond apparently had troubles motivating his men to attack the citadel. The *Gesta Francorum* reports that the men "...stayed in the houses cowering, some from hunger, and some for fear of the Turks" and Bohemond in an attempt to chase the soldiers out of the houses set fire to the part of the city containing Yaghi-Siyans palace.²⁵⁷ This was a part of the city which Raymond of Toulouse controlled and Asbridge speculates that this might in fact have been an attempt from Bohemond to limit Raymond's control over the city.²⁵⁸

When faced with the grave threat Kerbogah's army posed to the crusaders, the leaders all managed to put their differences aside and unite in a joint effort to break out of Antioch and charge the opposing force. Raymond of Toulouse had fallen ill at this time and so he was charged with defending the city while most of the crusaders were outside fighting. Yagi-Siyan and his troops in the citadel still posed a threat and the crusaders were concerned that if they did not leave some men behind to keep them in check, they would find themselves fighting on

²⁵⁵ "When he [Tancred] had found out what was happening from the people he had captured during their flight, he groaned, 'alas to me, alas. I am the only one to suffer in the midst of such ineffable joy. What shame that some labored while I slept, that some scouted while I snored. O Bohemond, Bohemond, you shared your plans with others but kept them secret from me. O kinsman of my blood, you would act thus to your kinsman? You made sure I would be absent when you know I would not have failed to take a leading role in such an action were I present. You know that if I had been there, I would have been the first to rush the wall, the first to clasp the rope, the first to go over the top and the first to kill.'" Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 95.

²⁵⁶ Thomas Asbridge has done an excellent job in nesting up the many leads and misleading accounts presented by both primary and secondary sources on the subject of which crusade leader controlled the different regions in and around Antioch. Asbridge, 2000 : 34-42.

²⁵⁷ Hill, 1962 : 61. The fire eventually spread and burned down a large part of the city including some churches.

²⁵⁸ Asbridge, 2000 : 36.

two fronts. When the crusaders ultimately prevailed, this left Raymond in a good position to seize control of key positions inside Antioch.

The most important position to control the city of Antioch was arguably the citadel and on this subject there is an interesting story related by several of the sources. It illustrates the power struggle that existed between Raymond and Bohemond, and it also indicates that Bohemond may have been reckoned as the most distinguished general of the two:

When the amir who was in charge of the citadel saw Karbuqa and all the others fleeing from the battlefield before the Frankish army, he was much afraid, and he came in great hurry to ask for a Frankish banner. The count of St. Gilles [Raymond of Toulouse], who was there keeping watch outside the citadel, ordered his own banner to be delivered to the amir, who took it and was careful to display it upon his tower. Some men from southern Italy, who were standing by, said at once, 'This is not Bohemond's banner.' The amir questioned them, saying, 'Whose is it?' and they replied, 'It belongs to the count of St. Gilles.' The amir came and took the banner and gave it back to the count, and just then the noble Bohemond came up and gave him his own banner, which he accepted with great joy....Bohemond agreed to the amir's terms and put his followers into the citadel at once.²⁵⁹

Although the variations to this story between the sources are minor,²⁶⁰ some elements to the story are questionable. It seems unlikely that Bohemond managed to return to the citadel so quickly. Guibert de Nogent for instance, makes no mention of Bohemond appearing in person to the Emir,²⁶¹ while Robert the Monk leaves Bohemond in his camp with messengers running back and forth.²⁶²

²⁵⁹ "Ammiralius itaque qui castellum custodiebat, uidens Curbaram et omnes alios fugientes e campo ante Francorum exercitum, magis timuit. Statim uero cum magna festinatione petebat Francorum uexilla. Comes igitur Sancti Egidii qui illic astabat ante castellum, iussit ei portari suum uexillum. Ille autem accepit illud, et diligenter misit in turrim. Statim dixerunt Longobardi, qui illic stabant: 'Hoc uexillum non est Boamundi.' Interrogauit ille et dixit: 'Cuius est?' Qui dixerunt: 'Sancti Egidii comitis.' Accessit ille, et apprehenso uexillo reddidit comiti. Ipsa Uero hora uenit uir uenerabilis Boamundus, deditque illi suum uexillum. Ille autem illud accepit cum magno gaudio...Consensit ille quicquid ei ammiralius postulauit, et continuo misit suos seruietes in castellum." Hill, 1962 : 70-71. By carrying the banner of a Frankish general, the Emir signalled that he surrendered and was not to be harmed by the crusaders.

²⁶⁰ One version which presents a quite different chain of events are that of Raymond d'Aguilers: "Following the victory the Frankish leaders, Bohemond, the Count [Raymond of Toulouse], the Duke [Godfrey] and the Count of Flanders, recaptured the citadel; but Bohemond, conceiving mischief by which he brought forth sin, seized the higher towers and forcibly ousted the followers of Godfrey, the Count of Flanders and the Count of Saint-Gilles from the citadel with the excuse that he had sworn to the Turk who had delivered Antioch that only he would possess it. Emboldened by this unpunished act, Bohemond came to demand the castle and the gates of Antioch which Raymond, Adhemar and Godfrey had protected from the time of Kerbogha's siege. With the exception of the Count all yielded. Despite his enfeebled state, Raymond did not wish to let go the bridge gate, and prayers, promises and threats did not dissuade him." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 65. Gesta Tancredi also has a different version where it claims Raymond seized the citadel, and Tancred then stormed in, forced the Provençals out and delivered the citadel to Bohemond. Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 116-117. Both Raymond d'Aguilers and Ralph of Caen's versions seem tainted by political views.

²⁶¹ Guibertus de Novigento and Levine, 1997 : 111.

²⁶² Robert the Monk and Sweetenham, 2005 : 174.

Which every way it happened, Bohemond got control over the citadel, and all the other princes gave up their towers and gates to Bohemond's men, with the exception of Raymond of Toulouse who still challenged Bohemond's authority of lordship over Antioch.²⁶³ The crusade leaders now agreed to wait for a while before proceeding towards Jerusalem. This meant that Raymond and Bohemond had time to settle the dispute.

Yet the discord seems to be more complex than just a power struggle between two nobles. Ralph of Caen informs that Raymond and Bohemond's men fought each other whenever they met outside camp and that the crusade leaders struggled to keep them from seriously harming each other.²⁶⁴ This conflict escalated to also include innocent bystanders and, if Ralph of Caen is to be believed, it divided the entire crusade.²⁶⁵

While the less biased sources speak little of the internal strife, Ralph of Caen and Raymond d'Aguilers, representing the Norman and the Provençal side respectively, are more than happy to point fingers. Ralph has a separate chapter describing the "customs of the men of Provence." Here he reports on several negative characteristics of the Provençals and goes on to accuse them of exploiting the great hunger experienced by the crusaders to personal gains, and also that they killed healthy horses, which were not their own, to feed themselves.²⁶⁶ Raymond d'Aguilers reports from the siege of Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man that when the crusaders stormed the besieged city, Bohemond's men were "more of a hindrance than a help" and that they were "only half-hearted in pressing the siege."²⁶⁷

²⁶³ See above.

²⁶⁴ "Men from both sides were sent out to forage for grain. They found supplies but at the same time they found conflict as well. The cereal was divided by battle, and both sides, having been frightened, inflicted wounds. Both groups then returned home with their wounds. The leaders were upset with the blood they saw on their own men. Since, in a similar case, the emotions of the wounded men had burned for revenge, the commanders ordered that this fire be kept covered in camp. But they fanned the flames into a storm outside. Their men happily went along with this and it was difficult maintaining the prohibitions against fighting in camp. Therefore, when a large group from one side, met a smaller group from the other that was burdened with supplies, they set aside their own load of supplies and attacked them with a storm of blows. Thus, the side with more strength enjoyed the spoils." Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 117.

²⁶⁵ "Sometimes men fought alongside their fellows who spoke the same language. Sometimes men were beaten because of the language that they spoke although innocent of any part in the conflict. The men of Narbonne, Auvergne, Gascony, and all of the people of Provence were on one side. The remainder of Gaul, and especially the Normans, were with the men of Apulia. The Bretons Swabians, Huns, Ruthenians and others protected those whom they heard speaking their language outside the walls. Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 117-118 (When Ralph speaks of "Huns" in this context, he most likely means Hungarians, that is Magyars).

²⁶⁶ "There was one thing that they did out of greed which was shameful. They sold dog meat to others as if it were hare and mule meat as if it were goat. And, if it was possible for them to reach a fat horse when no one was watching, they would give it a wound in its guts from the back or through its rectum, and the animal would die... Then this people approached the cadaver like a flock of crows and each one took away whatever portion had been cut off either for his own stomach or to market." Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 86-87.

²⁶⁷ "Itaque nec ipse nec qui cum eo fuerant pugne profuerunt, sed potius oberant." and "...obpugnationi non

This leads us to the next point of conflict. The disagreements over Antioch were carried over to Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man. As soon as the city was taken, both Raymond's and Bohemond's men stormed in to seize loot and control of towers and gates. This ended at another standstill as neither Raymond nor Bohemond wanted to let go of their possessions. In the end, Bohemond chose to leave town, conceding control to Raymond. This has led Asbridge to conclude that Raymond of Toulouse probably controlled most of the town, even though the sources reveal nothing of how this conflict was resolved.²⁶⁸

Bohemond left Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man in mid January 1099. Now Raymond controlled both Albarra and Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man, and had firm control over most of the Jabal as-Summaq region. The Jabal as-Summaq plateau region was to the south-east of Antioch and east of the Orontes, extending from the Ruj valley and contained the two above mentioned towns and also Kafartab. The region was of considerable strategic and political importance, since the Ruj offered one of only two southern approaches to Antioch and Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man lay on a Roman road that acted as the major link between the Muslim city of Aleppo and its southern neighbors Shaizar and Homs.²⁶⁹ The sources are not clear on what happened with the city of Kafartab, but Raymond d'Aguilers reports that Raymond of Toulouse's "foragers left their booty at Kafartab"²⁷⁰ and the *Gesta Francorum* states that "...he [Raymond of Toulouse] went out barefoot from Mara on the thirteenth of January and reached Kafartab, where he stayed for three days and the count of Normandy joined him."²⁷¹ This would indicate that also Kafartab was under the control of the crusaders and possibly Raymond of Toulouse. The contemporary sources have often understood Raymond's expeditions in Jabal as-Summaq as a continuation towards Jerusalem, but modern historians have pointed out that he never traveled far from Antioch and that he probably wanted to strengthen his own claim to the old trade centre.²⁷² In the end, and after a lot of pressure from his fellow crusaders, Raymond of Toulouse chose to leave the area and head south towards Jerusalem. In doing so he effectively conceded control of Antioch to Bohemond, allowing Bohemond to start the process of forming the principality of Antioch.

multum intertissent." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 79. Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 98.

²⁶⁸ Asbridge, 2000 : 40-41.

²⁶⁹ Asbridge, 2000 : 37.

²⁷⁰ "...in castro quoddam quod vocabatur Cafarta...spolia sua dimiserunt..." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 83. Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 102.

²⁷¹ "exiit nudis pedibus de Marra decima tertia die intranet Ianuario, et peruenit usque Capharda, fuitque ibi per tres dies." Hill, 1962 : 81.

²⁷² Asbridge, 2000 : 41-42.

The outcome of the conflict between Bohemond and Raymond left Bohemond to build up his own principality based around Antioch. Raymond however, though having to leave much of his conquered territory behind, gained a lot of favor among the crusaders. The conflict between Raymond and Bohemond had led to Raymond being politically isolated. With Bohemond refusing to leave Antioch, Raymond had less competition for the leader role as the crusade continued towards Jerusalem. Moreover, the sacrifices he made in leaving all his newly conquered possessions behind redeemed him in the eyes of both the crusaders and the other crusade leaders.

5.3 The Holy Lance: A Political Tool?

As we now have established the political conflict between the crusaders, it is time that we return again to the artifact discovered during the siege of Antioch. The holy Lance, discovered by Peter Bartholomew and kept by Raymond of Toulouse, was obviously a nuisance to Bohemond and his followers. Still, it is interesting to note that apart from Raymond d'Aguilers testimony, there is little mention of the Lance except for when it is discovered and during the ordeal of fire. Did Raymond of Toulouse actually believe that he was in possession of the actual spear that pierced the side of Jesus? And if so, did he try to exploit this fact in order to gain political advantages?

After the death of Bishop Adhemar, on which we will shortly turn our attention to, Peter Bartholomew's visions became more detailed and more relevant to the daily events of the crusaders. In the absence of the respected Bishop, which was an outspoken doubter of Peter's visions, Peter now had a better opportunity to present his visions unopposed. During the siege of Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man we see how the Provençal's attempted to use the visions to influence the outcome of the siege. While the city was under siege by Raymond of Toulouse's Provençal followers, Bohemond and his Norman contingent arrived and joined the siege. The Christians suffered great hardships and when the future appeared bleak, Peter Bartholomew received a vision from St. Peter claiming God was angry with Raymond of Toulouse, but because of his great mercy he was willing to grant the city of Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man to Raymond. All he had to do was lead the attack and the city would fall.²⁷³ Peter consulted

²⁷³ "...the Lord is prepared to give you that which you need; but he will give Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man to you on account of His mercy and not because of your deeds; and whenever you wish besiege it; do so because, without doubt, it will be seized." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 78.

Raymond of Toulouse and Raymond then called together the people and told them of Peter's vision. They attacked the city all day and night and finally the besieged yielded. When the dust had settled and time came to discuss who should control the city, it would appear that the Provençals' referred to the vision stating that the city was Raymond's to keep. Bohemond and his followers ridiculed these reasons.²⁷⁴

This is the only case where we see conflict between the Normans and the Provençals directly related to the Holy Lance. Some might argue that this conflict was more about the credibility of Peter Bartholomew than the authenticity of the Lance. However, the two are so closely intertwined that it is hard to imagine the crusaders believing the one without the other. The Lance is the supposed proof that Peter actually received divine commands and according to these, the Lance was bestowed upon Raymond of Toulouse. The chroniclers all agree upon one thing; if the Lance is authentic so is Peter Bartholomew and vice versa.²⁷⁵

The capture of Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man does not only show that the Holy Lance was a relevant point of discussion in the conflict between the Provençals and the Normans. In the wake of the siege, the crusaders started voicing their restlessness. They were not content with all the delays and wanted to continue on towards Jerusalem. They disliked the bickering between the princes and when turning towards Bohemond he stated that he would not leave until after the passing of Easter. The bishop of Albara together with some nobles called a meeting with the 'poor people' and, according to Raymond d'Aguilers, they begged and implored count Raymond of Toulouse to lead them towards Jerusalem, appealing almost as much to the Lance as the count himself.²⁷⁶ This incident may illustrate that the Lance was an important symbol for the crusade masses and we cannot rule out the possibility that the Christian masses, and at least the Provençals, accepted the Lance as authentic and believed that Peter had become prophetic.

It is hard to verify the statements made by Raymond d'Aguilers that the Holy Lance was indeed a point of conversation in the debate on whether to continue on towards

²⁷⁴ "Now the Lord had brought to pass a Miraculous event, and, as I reported above, even though we explained to the people before the capture of Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man the apostolic commands of Peter and Andrew, Bohemond and his comrades ridiculed us." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 79.

²⁷⁵ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 73-82.

²⁷⁶ "...the knights and all the people knelt before the Count, recipient of the Holy Lance, and tearfully beseeched him to make himself leader and lord of the army. They further stated that in view of the merits of his possession of the Holy Lance and the fact that he was beholden for the Lord's benefaction, he would not fear to continue the journey in safety with the people. Failing to do so Raymond should hand over the Lance to the masses, and they would continue the march to the Holy City under the Lords leadership." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 79-80.

Jerusalem. Tudebode, for instance, mentions the visions proclaimed by Peter Bartholomew during the siege of Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man, but makes no reference to the Lance. Furthermore, the *Gesta Francorum* mentions neither the vision nor the Lance. Fulcher was many miles to the north-east and offers no details on the events surrounding the siege of Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man and Ralph of Caen's account of the siege is also superficial.

In fact, from the victory at Antioch to the siege of Arqa, there is no mention of the Lance in any of the sources, with the exception of Raymond d'Aguilers. It is also notable that Peter Bartholomew hardly gets mentioned either. The only event that actually indicates that the Lance and Peter Bartholomew were still relevant after Antioch was the ordeal of fire which is described above. We will now turn back to the ordeal in an attempt to understand what ultimately provoked this spectacular event.

The ordeal was not a common phenomenon. It played an important, but infrequent role in medieval systems of justice. The ordeal was used only as a last resort and, in particular, when an individual's morale character could not be vouched for within society. In such cases, when an oath could not be trusted, the accused might undergo some form of trial, usually under the supervision of the clergy. This might involve holding on to a red-hot iron or placing one's hand in a cauldron of boiling water. Also, it was usually not expected that the defendant should emerge totally unscathed, even if they were innocent. The wounds of the accused would be bound and some days later inspected. If they revealed any sign of infection, this would indicate guilt on part of the accused.²⁷⁷

At the time of the ordeal, the differences between Raymond of Toulouse and Bohemond had been resolved. This of course does not mean that the Provençals and the Normans were all best friends, but it probably relieved some tension. The crusaders should also be upbeat, considering they had recently resumed the march towards Jerusalem. Fulcher claims the priests and the laity was the cause of the ordeal, and makes no mention of a Provençal/Norman conflict: "Then it happened that many of the priests and laity hesitated, thinking that this was not the Lord's lance but another one dishonestly found by that doltish man [Peter Bartholomew]."²⁷⁸ In Ralph of Caen's account we see indications that the question

²⁷⁷ Asbridge, 2004 : 290-291. For a more detailed oversight of ordeals and their place in the medieval judicial system, consult Bartlett, 1986.

²⁷⁸ "...contigit multos de clero ac populo hæsitare quod non esset illa dominica lancea, se dab homine illo stolido altera erat fallaciter inventa." Fulcherius Carnotensis et al., 1969 : 100. Latin: Fulcherius Carnotensis, 1844 : 344.

of the authenticity of the Lance actually divided the crusaders and that the ordeal of fire were decided by the leaders attempting to resolve the conflict:

While they set aside their arms and put aside military operations in this period of rest, the question was raised about investigating the discovery of the lance mentioned above. For a schism was disturbing the people with some praising what had been done and others condemning it while neither side was completely sure. The leaders decided that the one who was the initiator of this error should be the one to settle the quarrel.²⁷⁹

Guibert de Nogent's view is that Bishop Adhemar had held "the middle and lower ranks" in check and he characteristically blames the poor masses for forcing Peter Bartholomew into an ordeal. Guibert is a believer in the Lance as a genuine relic and appears angry at those he blames for undermining the Lance:

After the death of the noble Bishop of Puy...arguments and rude, arrogant behavior began to rise among the leaders; in particular, the middle and lower ranks began to behave badly...since they had no single ruler, and every man thought himself the equal of every other man, justice diminished among them and, and the will of the mob often prevailed. Therefore it happened that, after the discovery of the Lance...a shameful and faithless rumor began to circulate, some said that the discovery had been staged, and that he [Peter Bartholomew] had exhibited not the Lord's Lance, but merely a lance. Many people from the lower ranks began to grumble, and, by relentless lying, they corrupted those who had believed truly and had venerated the lance. They demanded proof of the discovery; they asked that the discoverer be tested by divine judgment.²⁸⁰

William of Tyre singles out Arnulf of Choques as the man who forced the ordeal and brings his character into question:

The people had grave doubts on the subject, and the leaders also were much perplexed. Some declared that this was the actual weapon which had pierced the side of the Lord when He hung on the Cross and that by divine purpose it had been revealed for the inspiration of the people. Others said that it was merely a proof of the Count's cunning, a fraudulent trick devised for his own advantage. The chief author of this controversy was one Arnulf, the friend and chaplain of the count of Normandy. He was a learned man, but of immoral life, a man who delighted to stir up discord.²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ "Dum ergo vacant arma, dumque otium curas excludit mavortias, oboritur qæstio de supra memoratæ cuspidis inventione examen factura: vexabat namque schisma populum, his factum landantibus, illis damnantibus, neutra parte admodum rata. Unde placuit summis procerum ut, qui erroris initium fuerat, ipse litem finiret, ignito argumento rei dubiæ fidem factururus. Ralph of Caen et al., 2005 : 126. Latin: Ralph of Caen, 1844 : 682.

²⁸⁰ "Post mortem plane viri admirabilis Podiensis episcopo...cæpere inter principes simultates aliquotiens ac insolentiæ oboriri; apud mediocre præterea et vulgares...Dum ergo nemini singulariter parent, et universa inter eos æstimantur æqualia, fiebant sæpius, dum vulgi libido prævalet, apud eos minus apta iudicia. Unde accredit ut post Dominicæ revelationem Lanceæ...fædæ nimium incredulitatis murmur emergeret, dicentibus quibusdam quia non veraciter, sed præstigiöse reppererat, et non Dominicam, sed lanceam qualemcumque præbuerat. Incipit itaque enormis plebeculæ passim mussitare frequentia; et eos qui crediderant, et venerari delegerant, verborum suorum sedulo corrumpunt fallacia. Rei repertæ probationes exigunt; repertorem iudiciis divinis addicunt." Guibertus de Novigento and Levine, 1997 : 121. Latin: Guibertus de Novigento, 1967 : 217-218.

²⁸¹ Guilelmus et al., 1943 : 324.

Furthermore, William indicates that Peter Bartholomew volunteered to the ordeal to stop the bickering dividing the crusaders.²⁸² Raymond d'Aguilers who shared tent with Peter Bartholomew after the Lance was discovered, has by far the most detailed description of the events leading up to the ordeal. He claims that when confronted, Arnulf remained skeptical to the authenticity of the Lance since his predecessor Bishop Adhemar had doubted it. After being confronted with various witnesses speaking in favor of the lance,²⁸³ Arnulf apparently conceded that the Lance was in fact real and that he would do public penance for disbelieving it. At a later council he supposedly upheld his veneration of the Lance, but refused to do penance. The fact that Arnulf rejected to meet the crowd of crusaders and admit that the Lance was authentic, caused Peter Bartholomew to decide that the only way to convince the masses of his sincerity, was to offer proof from God by undertaking the ordeal by fire.²⁸⁴ Raymond does not reveal if there was a particular part of the crusaders who doubted the Lance, but his account supports William of Tyre's claim that the Ordeal was provoked by Arnulf and volunteered by Peter.

So was the Lance really a relevant issue after the battle of Antioch? Some people obviously felt that way. Peter Bartholomew was working to get more support for the Lance and subsequently himself. However, there are good reasons for being cautious in linking the Lance too much to Raymond of Toulouse and his political ambitions. It is not certain that Raymond had ambitions to control Antioch at all. After all, Raymond claims all along that he contested Bohemond's rule because the crusaders had sworn allegiance to Alexius, and Raymond was on good terms with the Byzantine emperor. When given the opportunity to become king of Jerusalem, Raymond declined. Perhaps this is another indication that his ambitions were not to become a ruler. He was an old man and apparently he wanted to die in the Holy Land. One might argue that his actions after the capture of Jerusalem indicate that he did want to gain control over an area for himself. Supported by Alexius he continued to attack Tripoli. Raymond's motives remain uncertain, but there is only one instance in the sources where he is recorded to have attempted to use the Lance, or rather Peter's visions, to his own political advantages. This happened, as seen above, at the siege of Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man, and it

²⁸² "At length to convince the people and remove all doubt, Peter, the man who claimed that the revelation had been made to him, directed that a great fire be kindled. With the help of God, he would convince the incredulous by actual ordeal by fire that no trick or underhanded practice had been employed in the matter." Guilelmus et al., 1943 : 324.

²⁸³ See above.

²⁸⁴ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 93-103.

did not work out as Raymond had hoped. At first glance, the Lance appears to have had little effect in aiding Raymond's politics.

There is also the question of differentiating between the Lance and Peter Bartholomew. As mentioned above, it becomes exceedingly hard to evaluate the one while not considering the other. Raymond probably felt blessed for receiving the Lance, but Peter was to become a big problem. Bartholomew's visions may have "reflected too obviously the wishes of the Provençal party" as Runciman claims,²⁸⁵ but they did not reflect the wishes of Raymond of Toulouse, at least not after the siege of Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man. After this siege Raymond did not want to continue towards Jerusalem. Peter wanted it otherwise. In his visions he claims that God was angry with the crusade leaders, Raymond of Toulouse included, for delaying the journey to Jerusalem. This was ammunition for the crusaders who desperately wanted to conclude this undertaking and in the end Raymond was forced to abandon his holdings in Jabal as-Summaq and travel south. Peter was just as much a spokesperson for the crusade masses as he was for Count Raymond.

Besides, Raymond of Toulouse was a very religious person and it seems beyond a doubt that he himself believed in the Lance. However, claims that he tried to utilize the Lance in order to gain more prestige for himself²⁸⁶ seems totally unfounded. Not even Raymond d'Aguilers reports that Raymond at any time referred to the Lance as proof that he was chosen by God. In fact, whenever the Lance is brought up, it is by Bohemond and his Norman followers or Peter Bartholomew. The Lance may have served as a political tool, but not in the sense that many historians have believed. The Lance did not work to a great advantage for Raymond. In fact, one might argue that he failed to capitalize on a great opportunity, in that he did not exploit the potential of the perceived relic. It seems however that the Lance served as a useful tool for those who opposed Raymond. Raymond and his followers were ridiculed for their belief in the Lance and it seems that the Lance caused as much, if not more, harm to Raymond than it benefitted him. The ordeal of fire, after which the Lance lost most of its prestige, was ultimately provoked by Peter Bartholomew and his increasingly demanding and judgmental visions. Had bishop Adhemar been alive, the fate of the Lance and of Peter would possibly have been quite different. Raymond d'Aguilers, perhaps the strongest supporter of the Lance, writes: "The Bishop [Adhemar] considered the story fraudulent".²⁸⁷ But if

²⁸⁵ Runciman, 1950 : 198.

²⁸⁶ As presented in Runciman, 1950.

²⁸⁷ "episcopus autem nichil esse preter verba putavit." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 54. Latin: Raimundus

Adhemar did not believe in the Lance, why would Guibert de Nogent ten years later write: “Therefore it happened that, after the discovery of the Lance, which the late Bishop [Adhemar] had accepted devoutly...we know that the glorious bishop embraced the sacred Lance with veneration...”²⁸⁸

5.4 Adhemar: Bishop in Life, Pawn in Death

In order to answer this question we must turn our attention toward Bishop Adhemar and his role as papal legate. Adhemar of Monteil was of noble birth, possibly belonging to the Valentinois family. Sometime between 1080 and 1087 he became bishop of Puy and during his time in office he became acquainted with Raymond of Toulouse. In August 1095 Pope Urban II visited Puy and in all likelihood met with Adhemar. The bishop was present at the council of Clermont later the same year and was the first person to swear an oath to undertake the crusade. The next day Adhemar was appointed papal legate for the crusade and Pope Urban II referred to Adhemar when he tried to recruit for the holy war he now had proclaimed. The bishop traveled with the army of Raymond of Toulouse and on the journey towards Constantinople he had to endure hardships that were probably far from anything he had ever experienced before. Among other things he was thrown from his mule, robbed of his gold, and received a blow to the head. While in the army of Raymond of Toulouse, Adhemar took on the responsibilities of a military leader. As early as the siege of Nicea he was given command over Raymond’s right flank and during the battle of Dorylaeum he managed to completely outflank the Turkish army of Kilij Arslan and turned the battle in favor of the crusaders. Apart from these incidents he is not mentioned in the chronicles until the crusaders reached Antioch.²⁸⁹

One of the few things that all the relevant chroniclers have in common is their praise of Bishop Adhemar and his work. They highlight his importance for the crusade and their view has carried over to modern historians.²⁹⁰ However the Hills have analyzed the eyewitness accounts and reached quite a different conclusion. They claim Adhemar was not a

de Agiles, 1969 : 72.

²⁸⁸ Guibertus de Novigento and Levine, 1997 : 121-122. Latin: “Sed quocumque modo se sentential vulgaris egisset, illum gloriosum præsulem, omni sacrosanctam Lanceam sicimus veneratione complexum; adeo ut in eo ipso quo reperta fuerat loco sit ejusdem pontificis corpus, ipso pæcipiente, sepultum.” Guibertus de Novigento, 1967 : 218. See also note 280 for complete Latin.

²⁸⁹ Brundage, 1959 : 201-204.

²⁹⁰ See among others Asbridge, 2004 and Jotischky, 2004.

great statesman, but simply “a trustworthy man whose recorded accomplishments fell far short of the encomiums heaped upon him.”²⁹¹ When trying to defend this conclusion, the Hills are facing the same problems that we meet with the theory that the Holy Lance did not have a serious impact on the crusaders. In both cases, all the sources claim the exact opposite. The Hills’ explanation for the overestimation of Adhemar’s contribution to the crusade is simple: The sources cannot be trusted. They claim that the crusaders were desperate for a leader figure that could be trusted by all, and Adhemar, being a non-controversial figure of good repute, fitted the bill perfectly.²⁹² Brundage, on the other hand, demonstrates effectively that Adhemar was something more than what the Hills credit him to be. By pointing out how he was developing his ecclesiastical policy towards the Eastern Church, and his role in military matters both in councils and on the battlefield, he leaves little doubt that Adhemar was an important and resourceful figure on the crusade. He concedes that the sources may exaggerate his role as the one unifying part on the expedition, but claims that he was held in high regard not only by retrospective chroniclers but also by the contemporary crusaders.²⁹³

That being said, Brundage leaves out some evidence suggesting that the crusaders did in fact regard Adhemar as a figure of note, namely the visions reported by Raymond d’Aguilers. Raymond states that Adhemar doubted both the Lance and Peter Bartholomew while he was alive. But he appears posthumously in several visions where he admits to have been wrong about the Lance and that his body is in fact burning in Hell due to his doubt. On the second day after his burial he appears to Peter Bartholomew.²⁹⁴ Later he appears to one Peter Desiderius, a priest also pertaining to the Provençal army.²⁹⁵ Raymond d’Aguilers also relates a testimony on behalf of Bertrand of Le Puy. Bertrand was a priest belonging to Adhemar’s household, and when Bertrand fell sick, Adhemar appeared claiming that his illness was caused by his doubt in the Lance.²⁹⁶

²⁹¹ Hill and Hill, 1955 : 38.

²⁹² Hill and Hill, 1955 : passim.

²⁹³ Brundage, 1959 : passim.

²⁹⁴ Adhemar appears to Peter Bartholomew in a vision on the second night after the bishop’s burial. Adhemar posthumously proclaims: “Following the uncovering of the Lance, I sinned deeply and so was drawn down to Hell, whipped most severely, and as you can see my head and face was burned.” Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 66.

²⁹⁵ During the council at Arqa, while trying to determine the truth about the Lance, Peter Desiderius confesses to have received a vision from Adhemar, where the deceased bishop admitted: I now reside in the heavenly hosts of Saint Nicholas, but because I hesitated to believe in the Lord’s Lance, when, I, of all people, should have accepted it, I was led into Hell.” Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 96-97.

²⁹⁶ Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 99.

The fact that the Provençals, represented by Raymond d'Aguilers and Peter Bartholomew, claimed that Adhemar retracted his doubt posthumously has several interesting aspects to it. All modern historians agree that this was a political strategy from the Provençals' part.²⁹⁷ If we believe that the appearance of Adhemar's ghost were a literary invention of Raymond d'Aguilers intended as propaganda for the Lance's authenticity, it would mean that it was invented after the crusade and thus had no effect on the crusaders journey. It certainly had some effect of influencing later chronicler's view on the Lance, however. After a thorough review of the ordeal of fire, Guibert de Nogent concludes in no uncertain terms:

“However, whatever popular opinion may have been, we know that the glorious bishop embraced the sacred Lance with veneration, to the point that, in accordance with his directions, the body of the bishop was buried in the place where the Lance was found. So much for this matter.”²⁹⁸

Guibert obviously buys in to the illusion that Adhemar supported the Lance, something he clearly did not do. Guibert, however, is alone in his conviction, as other chroniclers usually ignore the visions of Adhemar altogether. But Guibert's conclusion points out one important thing. He claims that Adhemar was buried in the same spot where the Lance was uncovered. This is indeed mentioned by other sources, albeit Adhemar himself probably had little say in the matter. There can only be one reason as to why the good bishop was buried where the Lance was uncovered, that is, as pointed out by Asbridge,²⁹⁹ to connect Adhemar with the cult of the Lance. Adhemar was buried there, supposedly after his own wishes, as revealed in a vision to Peter Bartholomew. “A masterstroke of manipulation” according to Asbridge.³⁰⁰ This proves that the strategy of constructing a false memory of Adhemar as a supporter of the Lance was not a literary invention on the part of Raymond d'Aguilers, but a political strategy planned and executed by Peter Bartholomew and the Provençals around him. This, in turn, opens up another possible explanation of what provoked the ordeal of fire. Runciman contends that the crusaders who did not believe in the Lance could accept the fact that the Provençals did. But when they decided to pull the deceased Adhemar into their political agenda, thus putting “a slur on his reputation”,³⁰¹ this was more than they could take.

²⁹⁷ Again, it is difficult to ascertain if this strategy was developed by Raymond d'Aguilers, Peter Bartholomew, or Raymond of Toulouse. However, there is no indication in the sources that the count himself came up with this plan.

²⁹⁸ Guibertus de Novigento and Levine, 1997 : 122.

²⁹⁹ Asbridge, 2007 : 22-23.

³⁰⁰ Asbridge, 2007 : 23.

³⁰¹ Runciman, 1950 : 200.

It seems reasonable that the disbelievers of the Lance would resent the actions of the Provençals. Adhemar clearly was a leader in high regard by most every crusader, and when he was accused of supporting the Lance without any possibility to answer the accusations, one can easily imagine that this would upset the masses. However this was not the final straw as the ordeal of fire took place months after visions of Adhemar started appearing. It was, however, ammunition for those who opposed the Provençals. Mayer claims that now: “Bohemond began a systematic campaign to discredit the Provençals...”³⁰² Runciman agrees with this view, but attributes nothing to Bohemond himself: “Adhemar’s known reluctance to accept its authenticity gave ammunition to Bohemond’s party...Bohemond himself seems to have kept out of the discussion...”³⁰³

The Provençals tried their best to turn Adhemar into a supporter for the Lance. As shown, some like Guibert de Nogent, took the bait, but it was a dangerous policy that increased resentment against the believers of the Lance. Bohemond’s party may well have seized upon this opportunity and as seen earlier after the siege of Ma’arrat-an-Nu’mān, they certainly did not respect neither the Lance nor the visions presented by Peter Bartholomew. All this, however, was not enough to provoke the ordeal of fire. Peter and the Provençals were used to the doubt and ridicule from the Normans. The final blow was probably orchestrated by Peter himself in April of 1099.

5.5 One Vision Too Far

As we have seen, the sources suggest various explanations for why the ordeal of fire occurred. However, Raymond d’Aguilers reveals what is the most likely cause. During the siege of Arqa, the princes decided to starve out the defenders and thus a period of rest commenced for the crusaders. It is at this point in time that the ordeal of fire is provoked. We can only speculate that Peter Bartholomew felt so threatened or insulted by the crusaders who did not believe he was prophetic, that he decided to test how far he could actually go with the support he had already gained. Tired of the Normans continuous opposition he moved to rid himself of the disbelievers once and for all. During the night of the 5th of April Christ appeared to Peter Bartholomew. He spoke of a crowd of people, ordered in ranks, staring at him while he hung on the cross. Some of the ranks supported him, and some were betrayers. This

³⁰² Mayer, 1988 : 58.

³⁰³ Runciman, 1950 : 200.

apparently also applied to the crusaders, and Peter was chosen to root out those who did not believe him:

The Lord replied, 'Would you like to know the doubters?' I added, 'Indeed I would.' Then Christ commanded: 'Have the Count call the leaders and the people together, and have them line up as if for battle or a siege, and at the proper time let the best known herald give the battle cry, God help us, three times, and have him try to complete the military array. Then, as I said to you, you shall see the ranks, and along with the other believers recognize the unbelievers.' Then I asked, 'What shall we do with the doubters?' The Lord answered: 'Show them no mercy, kill them; they are My betrayers, brothers of Judas Iscariot.'³⁰⁴

In other words, Peter was to line up all the crusaders and he would see who was the betrayers of Christ and subsequently execute them. This way Peter would get rid of those who were in opposition to him, consolidating his own position as God's messenger.

Peter Bartholomew may have built up quite a following after the victory at Antioch, but it was hardly enough to complete this 'divine' task. Most likely, many of his own supporters doubted this command. This would of course cause all in opposition to Peter to speak up in protest. The behavior of Peter could no longer go unanswered and they called upon the crusade leaders and the clergy to solve this matter immediately. The only problem now was that a clear successor to Adhemar had not been established. Arnulf of Choque had indeed been pointed out to take over the papal responsibilities that had previously belonged to the now deceased bishop of Puy, but Arnulf was a much more controversial character and did not have the wide admiration of the crusaders as Adhemar had enjoyed. The princes and the clergy called a council to decide the fate of Peter Bartholomew. There was no way they could allow Peter to go through with his murderous plan. They needed another solution, a solution that would quell the hostility that divided the crusaders. The only way this could happen was to somehow stop Peter from proclaiming his visions. After the hearing of witnesses, the council was over.³⁰⁵ It is impossible to establish the exact course of events, but whatever happened, Peter realized that his support did not run deep enough and that he only had two options. He could either admit to be a fraud, or he had to prove that he was legitimate. He opted for the latter, and it appears that he himself chose to undertake the ordeal of fire. It is of course quite possible that Peter really believed that he received messages of God and that the

³⁰⁴ "Et respondit michi Dominus: Vis cognoscere eos qui his non credent? Et dixi: etiam Domine. Congregat comes principes et populum, disponentque de bello vel de castris obpugnatione, aliquid cum tempus fuerit, proclamatque notissimus prece Deus adiuva, ter, atque dispositum complere tendat. Tunc sicut dixi tibi ordines videbis, et tu et alii qui his credetis incredulos distinguetis. Et dixi: Quid de incredulis faciemus? Et respondit michi Dominus: Non parcatis eis sed occidite, quia proditores mei sunt fratres Iude Scarioth." Raimundus de Agiles et al., 1968 : 95. Latin: Raimundus de Agiles, 1969 : 114-115.

³⁰⁵ For more on the council at Arqa, see above.

Lance was a genuine relic. One can only speculate what went through Peter's head as he stepped into the burning pile of wood, but whatever was the case, two weeks later Peter was dead and the problem solved. The Lance vanishes from the sources and at Jerusalem a new relic, a piece of the true cross is discovered by Arnulf. The Lance is kept by Raymond of Toulouse and disappears from the history books shortly after the fall of Jerusalem.

The political strife between the Normans and the Provençals was not so much caused by the Holy Lance as it was the setting for its controversy. Raymond of Toulouse believed in Peter's words when he claimed that God had set aside this relic for him, and he took the Lance into his care. The sources leave no indication that Raymond of Toulouse in any way directed Peter Bartholomew to produce visions in accordance with his wishes. Raymond may in the beginning have tried to capitalize on the fact that the Lance was granted explicitly to him, but it seems like he after a while withdrew from the debate and became more of an observer than a participant to the visionary politics. Peter Bartholomew seems to have enjoyed a special status after the Lance was discovered. He now traveled with the clergy and the entourage of Raymond of Toulouse and there is no mention of him participating in any work or warfare. His close surroundings believed that he was indeed receiving messages from God, or at least they were afraid to admit that they doubted him. This gave Peter a unique position to dictate visions according to what he himself thought prudent. The fact that Adhemar died and no fully accepted replacement were made, Peter's visions would also go unopposed from the clergy. After some of the crusaders started publicly ridiculing the Lance and its supporters at Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man, Raymond of Toulouse never refers to the Lance again. In all likelihood, Raymond realized that Peter Bartholomew was becoming a political burden, and even though he venerated the Lance, he tried to distance himself from Peter. At the council of Arqa, there is no mention of Raymond of Toulouse speaking in favor of Peter, and surely his word would hold a lot of weight. He most likely agreed that Peter, with his latest vision, had gone too far.

In this chapter I have shown that the ordeal of fire was ultimately provoked by Peter Bartholomew. The Lance in itself, seem to have had little relevance to the crusaders other than being another useful relic. The reason for the continuous controversy was the escalating visions proclaimed by Peter Bartholomew. The death of Adhemar worsened the situation firstly because there was no longer a central religious official to keep Peter in check, and secondly because Peter were now using Adhemar as a *post mortem* advocate for the lance, supplying his opposition with further incentive to speak up against him. Peter was of course,

only able to play such a part after Raymond of Toulouse had accepted the Lance and placed Peter in a heightened position, but Raymond's support for Peter seem to stop there. Claims that Raymond of Toulouse masterminded Peter's visions seem highly unlikely. Peter was more of an instigator of the masses, than a political puppet. The only effect that can be attributed to the Lance after the battle at Antioch, then, was to serve as the basis of legitimacy for Peter Bartholomew and his visions. Peter himself had little influence on the crusade other than further splitting an already divided army.

Chapter 6 Summary and Closing Comments

The Holy Lance of Antioch, discovered by the peasant Peter Bartholomew on the 14th of June 1098, has intrigued readers of history for centuries. Chroniclers have elevated the story of the Lance, making it a symbol for God's presence and approval of the First Crusade. The Lance filled the crusaders with courage to defeat the pagan hordes that dared threaten God's will. When portraying the role of the Lance in such a way, it ultimately leaves the chroniclers with a problem. If this was indeed a relic of God, how do you explain the ordeal of fire, and the subsequent decline in the Lance's popularity? In short, the chroniclers usually do not grant the reader this explanation, but rather let the tale of the Lance slowly fade away. When at the same time, even the chroniclers who keep a skeptical attitude towards the Lance all along also report of the effect of the Lance, the modern reader is left stupefied. What did the discovery of the Lance actually do?

At first it did nothing. When the Lance was discovered by an excavation party including both the now prophetic Peter Bartholomew and the chronicler chaplain Raymond d'Aguilers, they believed they had found the actual Lance that pierced the side of Christ. But convincing the rest of the crusaders was another matter. They were in a desperate state, starving and surrounded by enemies, and there was an extreme focus on religious behavior. The crusaders might at this point have been willing to accept the Lance as a sign from God, if only to comfort themselves. Moreover, all the sermons and the religious guidance was lead by Bishop Adhemar. Adhemar was an outspoken doubter of Peter Bartholomew and no matter how desperate the state of the crusaders may have been, he was not willing to forego his clerical integrity to lull his congregation into a false sense of security. This was, however, not a time for prosecution, and so Peter Bartholomew were able to try to spread the word of the Lance. Meanwhile, the military leaders of the crusaders were busy planning how to get out of the trap that was Antioch. They tried diplomacy, they tried bartering, it is even possible that they asked for terms of surrender, but this got them nowhere. When the already depleted food storage of Antioch was completely exhausted, the leaders had no other options available to them. They ordered that the crusaders should sortie out of Antioch in a final attempt to overthrow the superior Muslim force. The sortie was by no means a spontaneous call to arms from the crusaders upon the discovery of the Lance, as some historians have suggested.³⁰⁶ It happened over two weeks after the discovery and the sortie was well planned with Raymond

³⁰⁶ Among others, Riley-Smith, 1997 : 95, and Tyerman, 2006 : 144.

of Toulouse covering the rear and Bohemond taking charge of the flank. The military tactics were well considered by generals who knew the art of warfare. The Lance appears not to have had any impact on the military decisions or the decision making process.

The Lance was carried into battle by Raymond d'Aguilers. Raymond was a part of Adhemars rank, and some chroniclers have named Adhemar as the carrier, but it seems highly unlikely that the man, who was the only outspoken doubter of the Lance at this point, should be the one carrying it into battle. The Lance does not seem to have had any real impact on the battle either. This can be ascertained mostly because there was little fighting actually going on. Kerbogha, the general of the Muslim army, let the Christians march out of Antioch before he tried a flanking maneuver. When this did not work, the Muslims, already angered by poor leadership from their general, abandoned the fight and fled. Now this seemed like a miraculous battle indeed. The Christians, under desperate conditions, had fended off a much larger army, and almost without casualties. The crusaders had no insight into the opposing army and believed that they had won a miraculous victory, which could only be attributed to God. At this point the Provençals who thought the Lance was real all along voiced their belief, stating that Peter had not only discovered the Lance, but that he had also predicted their victory. Interest in the Lance and Peter Bartholomew now reached new heights. At this point, when the crusaders were searching for an explanation for how they had emerged triumphant from what they believed to have been certain doom, they were prone to believe in the Lance and Peter Bartholomew. If the crusaders believed that they had achieved victory due to the Lance, this would explain why most chroniclers attribute the Lance with the power to increase morale in the crusaders. So the Lance had no effect on the outcome of the battle either, even though the crusaders, in retrospect, believed that it did.³⁰⁷

After the battle at Antioch, a power struggle arose between the princes, especially Raymond of Toulouse and Bohemond. Modern historians have been keen to point out that the Holy Lance served as a tool for Raymond of Toulouse and that he was able to use the Lance to turn popular opinion against his rival Bohemond. A thorough analyzes of the sources however, reveals the exact opposite. The Holy Lance was accompanied by its own spokesman, namely Peter Bartholomew. Peter was, in contrary to popular belief, not a puppet for Raymond's political ambitions. Peter was a spokesperson for the crusaders, for the poor, but most of all for himself. Raymond of Toulouse could not control him, in fact, the only man

³⁰⁷ This view is similar to that of Asbridge. Asbridge, 2007 : passim.

who could was Bishop Adhemar, who died shortly after the capture of Antioch. Because of Peter's controversial statements, the Holy Lance went from being a positive symbol of God's mercy, to a negative stain on Raymond's reputation.

At Arqa, the discontent with Peter Bartholomew had reached its boiling point. Peter demanded the right to execute all the crusaders who God revealed to him was betrayers. In this manner, Peter forced a confrontation only to discover that few had enough faith in him to accept this demand. It seems Peter then chose himself to undergo a trial to prove that he was indeed protected by God and subsequently spoke the truth. Peter endured the trial by fire but died two weeks later due to injuries he sustained in the trial. The sources reveal that the Lance played no more part in the crusade after this event and thus it leads us to believe that the crusaders lost faith in it and that the trial gave a conclusive answer. Raymond d'Aguilers however, claims that Raymond survived the trial, but was killed by the masses afterwards. This led many chroniclers to believe that the trial gave an ambiguous result, but it is just as likely that Raymond d'Aguilers was so strongly convinced of the Lance's authenticity that he refused to believe the outcome of the trial. In all likelihood most crusaders were satisfied with the outcome. Peter died and the Lance was no longer an issue. But a small group of Provençal's probably still venerated the Lance. Raymond d'Aguilers obviously did, and so did Raymond of Toulouse who kept it with him also after the capture of Jerusalem.

The aim of this thesis has been to disprove certain assumptions regarding the role of the Holy Lance during the First Crusade. It has shown that the Lance did not play a pivotal role during the siege and battle of Antioch and that it did not provide much in aiding the political ambitions of Raymond of Toulouse. On the contrary, the Lance, and Raymond's belief in it, was used against him. However, this thesis leaves room for more research to be done on the subject. We do not know enough about visions, how they were experienced and interpreted during the Middle Ages or even how to interpret them today. A further study into the nature of the visions could provide more insight into the motivations of Peter Bartholomew and/or Raymond d'Aguilers. Furthermore, the crusade sources provide little in terms of understanding the personal relationship between certain notable characters and the relics discovered during the crusade. A closer character study of Raymond of Toulouse and Bohemond with a view to uncover their personal beliefs could also provide additional knowledge that would help us get a better understanding of why events progressed in the way that it did. This thesis may not revolutionize the way we view the First Crusade, but I hope it serves to shed some light on certain events in this period. By showing that the role played by

the Lance has been widely exaggerated by the sources, I believe that modern historians can now rule out the relic from their equation, making it easier to puzzle out how and why the first crusade actually transpired. Not to say that the tale of the Lance is not an interesting historical phenomenon in itself, but while studying the first crusade as a whole, the Lance should be merely considered an interesting anecdote and not a pivotal event that shaped the First Crusade.

Summary in Norwegian

Norsk oppsummering

Denne oppgaven søker å sette fokus på oppdagelsen av den Hellige Lanse som ble oppdaget i Antiokia av Peter Bartholomeus i 1098. Gjennom en grundig analyse av det tilgjengelige kildematerialet ønsker jeg å se nærmere på hvilken påvirkningskraft Lansen egentlig hadde på det første korstoget. Oppgaven fokuserer dermed på ulike aspekter som Lansen kan ha påvirket.

Det første området som undersøkes er hvilken påvirkning lansen hadde i det øyeblikket den ble oppdaget, og om den påvirket korsfarernes avgjørelser i det kommende slaget med Kerboghas hær. Nesten samtlige kilder uttrykker at Lansen hadde stor betydning for korsfarernes moral og historikere som Jonathan Riley-Smith og Christopher Tyerman hevder at lansens oppdagelse hadde direkte innflytelse på korsfarernes taktiske beslutninger. Denne oppgaven hevder at Lansen ikke hadde en slik effekt, og søker å vise at korsfarernes avgjørelser passet godt inn i samtidens krigføringstradisjon, og altså ikke var inspirert av en relikvie.

Dernest stilles spørsmålet om Lansen kan ha hatt en betydning i den politiske drakampen som oppstod mellom Raymond av Toulouse og Bohemond av Taranto. Igjen indikerer moderne historikere at dette kan ha vært tilfelle. Kildene viser derimot bare to tilfeller der Lansen blir trukket frem etter slaget ved Antiokia. Den første er ved beleiringen av Ma'arrat-an-Nu'man og den neste ved Arqa, hvor Peter Bartholomeus må gjennomgå en prøvelse for å bevise at han snakker sant anngående Lansen. Denne oppgaven prøver å vise at Lansen var til liten hjelp for Raymond av Toulouse.

Utover dette er det også et fokus for oppgaven å se på rollene til Peter Bartolomeus og biskop Adhemar i forhold til den Hellige Lanse.

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