

THE DEEDS OF THE FRANKS AND THE OTHER PILGRIMS TO JERUSALEM

I

[i] When that time had already come, of which the Lord Jesus warns his faithful people every day, especially in the Gospel where he says, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me'¹, there was a great stirring of heart throughout all the Frankish lands, so that if any man, with all his heart and all his mind, really wanted to follow God and faithfully to bear the cross after him, he could make no delay in taking the road to the Holy Sepulchre as quickly as possible. For even the pope² set out across the Alps as soon as he could, with his archbishops, bishops, abbots and priests, and he began to deliver eloquent sermons and to preach, saying, 'If any man wants to save his soul, let him have no hesitation in taking the way of the Lord in humility, and if he lacks money, the divine mercy will give him enough.' The lord pope said also, 'Brothers, you must suffer for the name of Christ many things, wretchedness, poverty, nakedness, persecution, need, sickness, hunger, thirst and other such troubles, for the Lord says to his dis-

ciples, "You must suffer many things for my name",¹ and "Be not ashamed to speak before men, for I will give you what you shall say"² and afterwards "Great will be your reward."³ And when these words had begun to be rumoured abroad through all the duchies and counties of the Frankish lands, the Franks, hearing them, straightway began to sew the cross on the right shoulders of their garments, saying that they would all with one accord follow in the footsteps of Christ, by whom they had been redeemed from the power of hell. So they set out at once from their homes in the lands of the Franks.

[ii] The Franks ordered themselves in three armies. One, which entered into Hungary, was led by Peter the Hermit⁴ and Duke Godfrey,⁵ Baldwin his brother⁶ and Baldwin, count of Hainault.⁷ These most valiant knights and many others (whose names I do not know) travelled by the road which Charlemagne, the heroic king of the Franks, had formerly caused to be built to Constantinople.⁸

The aforesaid Peter was the first to reach Constantinople on 1 August, and many Germans came with him. There they found men from northern and southern Italy and many others gathered together. The emperor⁹ ordered such provisions as there were in the city

⁷ Baldwin, count of Mons in Hainault

⁸ This was the traditional route by way of the valleys of the Danube, the Morava and the Maritza. The ascription to Charlemagne is legendary.

⁹ Alexius Comnenus. He was the most dangerous enemy of Bohemond and of the Normans of the Two Sicilies, and the anonymous Author of the *Gesta*, being a follower of Bohemond, is understandably unfair to him. Later MSS of the *Gesta*, written after 1204, describe him in even more unflattering terms. He was, however, a great emperor, and his own point of view is given in the *Alexiad* written by his daughter, Anna Comnena, and by the modern historians Chalandon and Runciman.

to be given to them, and he said, 'Do not cross the Hellespont until the great army of the Christians arrives, for there are not enough of you to fight against the Turks.' But those Christians behaved abominably, sacking and burning the palaces of the city, and stealing the lead from the roofs of the churches and selling it to the Greeks, so that the emperor was angry, and ordered them to cross the Hellespont. After they had crossed they did not cease from their misdeeds, and they burned and laid waste both houses and churches. At last they reached Nicomedia, where the Italians and Germans broke away from the Franks,¹ because the Franks were intolerably proud. The Italians chose a leader called Rainald; the Germans also chose a leader, and they all went into Rum² and travelled for four days' journey beyond the city of Nicea, where they found a deserted castle named Xerigordo which they took, finding therein plenty of corn and wine and meat and abundance of all good things. But when the Turks heard that the Christians were in the castle, they came and besieged it. Before its gate was a well, and beneath its walls a spring, where Rainald³ went out to lay an ambush for the Turks, but when they arrived on Michaelmas Day they caught Rainald and his company, and killed many of them. The survivors fled into the castle, which the Turks at once besieged, cutting off the water-supply. Our men were therefore so terribly afflicted by thirst that they bled their horses and asses and drank the blood; others let down belts and clothes into a sewer and squeezed out the liquid into their mouths; others

passed water into one another's cupped hands and drank; others dug up damp earth and lay down on their backs, piling the earth upon their chests because they were so dry with thirst. The bishops and priests encouraged our men and told them not to despair. This miserable state of affairs went on for eight days. Then the leader of the Germans made an agreement to betray his comrades to the Turks, and pretending that he was going out to fight he fled to them, and many men went with him. Of the remainder, those who would not renounce God were killed; others, whom the Turks captured alive, were divided among their captors like sheep, some were put up as targets and shot with arrows, others sold and given away as if they were brute beasts. Some of the Turks took their prisoners home to Khorasan,¹ Antioch or Aleppo or wherever they happened to live. These men were the first to endure blessed martyrdom for the Name of our Lord Jesus.

Afterwards, when the Turks heard that Peter the Hermit and Walter the Penniless² were in Kivotos, which is beyond the city of Nicea, they came thither full of glee intending to kill them and their comrades, and when they had come they found Walter and his men, and killed them at once. Peter the Hermit, however, had gone off to Constantinople a little before this happened, for he could not control such a mixed company of people who would not obey him or listen to what he said. The Turks fell upon his men and killed most of them—some they found asleep, others naked, and all these they slaughtered. Among the rest they found a priest saying mass, and they killed him at once upon the altar. Those who managed to

escape fled to Kivotos. Some leapt into the sea, and others hid in the woods and mountains. The Turks chased some of our men into the castle, and piled up wood so that they could burn them and the castle together, but the Christians in the castle set fire to the pile of wood, and the flames were blown back against the Turks and burned some of them, but God delivered our men from that fire. At last the Turks took them alive and apportioned them as they had done with the others, sending them away through all the neighbouring lands, some to Khorasan and some to Persia. All this happened in October. When the emperor heard that the Turks had inflicted such a defeat on our men he rejoiced greatly, and gave orders for the survivors to be brought back over the Hellespont. When they had crossed over he had them completely disarmed.

[iii] Our second army came through the Dalmatian lands,¹ and it was led by Raymond, count of Saint Gilles,² and the bishop of Le Puy.³ The third came by way of the old Roman road.⁴ In this band were Bohemond⁵ and Richard of the Principality,⁶ Robert count of Flanders, Robert the Norman,⁷ Hugh the Great,⁸ Everard of Puiset, Achard of Montmerle, Isard of Mouzon⁹ and many others. Some of them came to the port of Brindisi, others to Bari or Otranto. Hugh the Great and William son of the Marquis¹⁰ embarked

¹ Bohemond's cousin, the count of Salerno

² Eldest son of William the Conqueror

³ Hugh of Vermandois, younger son of Philip I of France. 'Magnus' is described by Bréhier as a corruption of 'maisné', i.e. the younger (Bréhier, *Histoire Anonyme*, p. 14).

⁴ French barons

¹⁰ Bohemond's nephew, son of his sister Emma

at Bari and sailed to Durazzo, but the governor of that place, hearing that warriors of such experience were arriving, immediately devised a treacherous plan, and he arrested them and sent them under guard to the emperor at Constantinople, so that they might swear fealty to him.

After this Duke Godfrey was the first of all our leaders to reach Constantinople with a great army, and he arrived two days before Christmas, and encamped outside the city until that wretch of an emperor gave orders that quarters were to be assigned to him in the suburbs. When the duke had settled in, he sent his squires out each day, quite confidently, to get straw and other things necessary for the horses; but, when they thought that they could go out freely wherever they liked, the wretched Emperor Alexius ordered his Turcopuli¹ and Patzinaks² to attack and kill them. So Baldwin, the duke's brother, hearing of this, lay in ambush, and when he found the enemy killing his men he attacked them bravely and by God's help defeated them. He took sixty prisoners, some of whom he killed and others he presented to the duke his brother. When the emperor heard of this he was very angry, and the duke, realising this, led his men out of the city and encamped outside the walls. Late that evening the miserable emperor ordered his men to attack the duke and the Christian army, but our unconquered leader with his Christian knights drove back the imperial troops, killing seven men and driving the rest to the gates of the city. Afterwards he came back to his camp and stayed there for five days, until he came to an

agreement with the emperor, who told him to cross the Hellespont and promised that he would have as good provision there as he had in Constantinople; moreover the emperor promised to give alms to the poor so that they could live.

[iiii] As for Bohemond, that great warrior, he was besieging Amalfi when he heard that an immense army of Frankish crusaders had arrived, going to the Holy Sepulchre and ready to fight the pagans. So he began to make careful inquiries as to the arms they carried, the badge which they wore in Christ's pilgrimage and the war-cry which they shouted in battle. He was told, 'They are well-armed, they wear the badge of Christ's cross on their right arm or between their shoulders, and as a war-cry they shout all together "God's will, God's will, God's will!"' Then Bohemond, inspired by the Holy Ghost, ordered the most valuable cloak which he had to be cut up forthwith and made into crosses, and most of the knights who were at the siege began to join him at once, for they were full of enthusiasm, so that Count Roger¹ was left almost alone, and when he had gone back to Sicily he grieved and lamented because he had lost his army. My lord Bohemond went home to his own land² and made careful preparations for setting out on the way to the Holy Sepulchre. Thereafter he crossed the sea with his army, and with him went Tancred son of the Marquis,³ Richard of the Principality and Ranulf his brother, Robert of Anse, Herman of Cannes, Robert of Sourdeval, Robert Fitz-Toustan, Humphrey Fitz-

Ralph, Richard son of Count Ranulf, the count of Russignolo and his brothers, Boel of Chartres, Aubré of Cagnano and Humphrey of Monte Scaglioso.¹ All these crossed at Bohemond's expense, and reached western Macedonia, where they found plenty of corn and wine and other things to eat, and going down into the valley of Andronopolis² they waited for their men, until all had crossed over. Then Bohemond called a council to encourage his men, and to warn them all to be courteous and refrain from plundering that land, which belonged to Christians, and he said that no-one was to take more than sufficed for his food.³

Then we set out and travelled through very rich country from one village to another, and from one city to another and from one castle to another, until we came to Castoria,⁴ where we held the feast of Christmas and stayed for some days trying to buy provisions, but the inhabitants would sell us none, because they were much afraid of us, taking us to be no pilgrims but plunderers come to lay waste the land and to kill them. So we seized oxen, horses and asses, and anything else we could find, and leaving Castoria we went into Palagonia,⁵ where there was a castle of heretics.⁶ We attacked this place from all sides and it soon fell into our hands, so we set fire to it and burnt the castle and its inhabitants together. After this we reached the river Vardar, and my lord Bohemond crossed over

⁶ Probably Manichaeans, of whom there were a great number in the Balkans. See S. Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*. The Author of the *Gesta*, as an orthodox Catholic, clearly thought heretics fair game, and was outraged when the Byzantine troops avenged their murder by an attack at the Vardar river.

with some of his men, but not all, for the count of Russignolo and his brothers stayed behind. The emperor's army came up and attacked the count and his brothers and all their men, so when Tancred heard of this he went back and, diving into the river, he swam across to the others, with two thousand men following him. They found Turcopuli and Patzinaks fighting with our men, so they made a sudden and gallant attack and, since they were men of experience, they defeated the enemy and took many prisoners whom they bound and led before my lord Bohemond. He said to them, 'You scoundrels, why do you kill Christ's people and mine? I have no quarrel with your emperor!' They answered, 'We cannot do anything else. We are at the emperor's command, and whatever he orders, that we must do.' Bohemond let them go scot-free. This battle was fought on the fourth day of the week, which was Ash Wednesday.¹ Blessed be God in all his works! Amen.

Here ends the first book, and the second book begins.

II

[v] The wretched emperor commanded one of his own men, who was very dear to him and whom they call the *kyriopalatios*,¹ to accompany our messengers so that he might guide us safely through his country until we came to Constantinople. Whenever we passed by any of their cities this man used to tell the people of the land to bring us provisions, as those whom we have mentioned before used to do. It was clear that they were so much afraid of my lord Bohemond's strong army that they would not allow any of our men to go inside the walls of the cities. Our men wanted to attack one of the castles and take it, because it was full of goods of all kinds, but the valiant Bohemond would not allow this, for he wished to treat the country justly and to keep faith with the emperor, so he was furious with Tancred and all the others. This happened one evening, and next morning the inhabitants of the castle emerged in procession, carrying crosses in their hands, and came into the presence of Bohemond, who received them with joy and let them also go away rejoicing. After this we reached a town called Serres,² where we encamped and had provisions good enough for Lent. While we were there Bohemond made an agreement with two of the *kyriopalatioi*, and because of his friendship with them and his desire to treat the country justly he ordered all the animals which our men had stolen and kept to be given back. Thereafter we reached the city of Rusa.³ The Greek inhabitants came out and ap-

proached my lord Bohemond rejoicing, bringing us plenty of provisions, so we pitched our tents there on the Wednesday in Holy Week.¹ While we were there Bohemond left his army, and went ahead to Constantinople with a few knights to take counsel with the emperor. Tancred stayed behind with the army of Christ, and when he saw that the pilgrims were buying food he had the idea of turning aside from the road and bringing the people where they could live in plenty; so that he went into a certain valley full of all kinds of things which are good to eat, and there we kept the festival of Easter with great devotion.²

[vi] When the emperor had heard that Bohemond, that most distinguished man, had come, he ordered him to be received with proper ceremony, but took care to lodge him outside the city. After Bohemond had settled in, the emperor sent to invite him to a secret conference. Duke Godfrey and his brother were also present, and the count of St Gilles was near the city. Then the emperor, who was troubled in mind and fairly seething with rage, was planning how to entrap these Christian knights by fraud and cunning, but by God's grace neither he nor his men found place or time to harm them. At last all the elders of Constantinople, who were afraid of losing their country, took counsel together and devised a crafty plan of making the dukes, counts and all the leaders of our army swear an oath of fealty to the emperor.³ This our leaders flatly refused to do, for they said, 'Truly, this is unworthy of us, and

Syria and Romania, wished, reasonably enough, to compel the crusading leaders to admit that they were re-conquering these lands in his name (*Alexiad*, x, 9).

it seems unjust that we should swear to him any oath at all.¹

Perhaps, however, we were fated to be misled often by our leaders, for what did they do in the end? They may say that they were constrained by need, and had to humble themselves willy-nilly to do what that abominable emperor wanted.

Now the emperor was much afraid of the gallant Bohemond, who had often chased him and his army from the battlefield, so he told Bohemond that he would give him lands beyond Antioch, fifteen days' journey in length and eight in width, provided that he would swear fealty with free consent, and he added this promise, that if Bohemond kept his oath faithfully he would never break his own.² But why did such brave and determined knights do a thing like this? It must have been because they were driven by desperate need.³

The emperor for his part guaranteed good faith and security to all our men, and swore also to come with us, bringing an army and a navy, and faithfully to supply us with provisions both by land and sea, and to take care to restore all those things which we had lost. Moreover he promised that he would not cause or permit anyone to trouble or vex our pilgrims on the way to the Holy Sepulchre.

suggestion of a secret treaty with him would have been extremely unpopular.

¹ The Author was not present at the council, and shows a natural reluctance to believe his own lord capable of deliberate duplicity. He seems to have been disillusioned in the autumn of 1098, but even then he utters no explicit condemnation of Bohemond. This was a right and proper attitude for a vassal to take to his lord. If, however, Bohemond used the *Gesta* as a justification of his claim to Antioch, it is odd that he did not omit from this passage the mention of his own oath, the breach of which left him with no justifiable pretext for continuing to hold the city (see Krey in *The Crusades and other historical essays presented to D. C. Munro*, ed. L. J. Paetow, pp. 57-79, and C. Cahen, *La Syrie du Nord*, pp. 8-9).

The count of St Gilles was encamped outside the city in the suburbs, and his army had stayed behind, so the emperor ordered him to do homage and swear fealty as the others had done; but when the emperor sent him this message the count was planning how to revenge himself on the imperial army. Duke Godfrey and Robert, count of Flanders, and the other leaders, however, told him that it would be improper to fight against fellow Christians, and the valiant Bohemond said that if Count Raymond did any injustice to the emperor, or refused to swear fealty to him, he himself would take the emperor's part. Therefore the count took the advice of his friends and swore that he would respect the life and honour of Alexius, and neither destroy them nor permit anyone else to do so; but when he was asked to do homage he said that he would not, even at the peril of his life.¹ After this my lord Bohemond's army came up to Constantinople.

[vii] Tancred and Richard of the Principality crossed the Hellespont secretly, because they did not want to take the oath to the emperor, and nearly all Bohemond's forces went with them. Soon afterwards the count of St Gilles approached Constantinople, and he stayed on there with his forces. Bohemond stayed with the emperor in order to consult him about the supply of provisions to the people who had gone on beyond Nicea, so Duke Godfrey was the first to go to

passage in Raymond d'Agiles (*P.L.*, clv, 395). Raymond omits the description of Bohemond as 'vir sapiens', which the Author of the *Gesta* uses frequently throughout the first nine books, and I think that he was here using, and emending, the MS of the *Gesta*, unless we may assume the not impossible hypothesis that two historians may describe the same event in very similar words.

Nicomedia, taking with him Tancred and all the others. They stayed there for three days, and when the duke saw that there was no road by which he could lead these people to Nicea (for there were so many of them that they could not go by the route which the other crusaders had followed) he sent ahead three thousand men with axes and swords so that they could go on and hack open a route for our pilgrims as far as the city of Nicea. This route led over a mountain,¹ steep and very high, so the pathfinders made crosses of metal and wood, and put them upon stakes where our pilgrims could see them. Eventually we came to Nicea, which is the capital of Rum, on Wednesday the sixth of May, and there we encamped. Before my lord the valiant Bohemond came to us we were so short of food that a loaf cost twenty or thirty pence, but after he came he ordered plenty of provisions to be brought to us by sea, so goods poured in both by land and sea, and all Christ's army enjoyed great abundance.

[viii] On Ascension Day² we began to lay siege to the town, and to build siege-engines and wooden towers by means of which we could knock down the towers on the wall. We pressed the siege so bravely and fiercely for two days that we managed to undermine the wall of the city, but the Turks who were inside sent messengers to the others who had come to their help, telling them that they might come and enter, fearlessly and safely, by way of the south gate, for there was no-one there to stand in their way or attack them. This gate, however, was blocked on that very day (the Saturday after Ascension Day) by the count of

St Gilles and the bishop of Le Puy. The count, who came from the other side of the city with a very strong army, trusting in God's protection and glorious in his earthly weapons, found the Turks coming towards the gate against our men. Protected on all sides by the sign of the Cross, he made a fierce attack upon the enemy and defeated them so that they took to flight and many of them were killed. The survivors rallied with the help of other Turks and came in high spirits, exulting in their certainty of victory, bringing with them ropes with which to lead us bound into Khorasan. They came along gleefully and began to descend a little way from the top of the mountain, but as many as came down had their heads cut off by our men, who threw the heads of the slain into the city by means of a sling, in order to cause more terror among the Turkish garrison.

After this the count of St Gilles and the bishop of Le Puy took counsel together how they could undermine a tower which stood over against their camp, so they set men to sap it, with arbalists and archers to protect them. The sappers dug down to the foundations of the wall and inserted beams and pieces of wood, to which they set fire, but because all this was done in the evening it was already night when the tower fell, and since it was dark our men could not fight with the defenders. That night the Turks arose in haste and rebuilt the wall so strongly that at daybreak there was no chance of defeating them at that point.

Soon afterwards Robert count of Normandy and Count Stephen¹ arrived with many others, and Roger

of Barneville¹ followed them. Then Bohemond took up his station in front of the city, with Tancred next to him, then Duke Godfrey and the count of Flanders, next to whom was Robert of Normandy, and then the count of St Gilles and the bishop of Le Puy. The city was therefore so closely besieged by land that no-one dared go out or in. Our men were all, for the first time, collected together in this place, and who could count such a great army of Christians? I do not think that anyone has ever seen, or will ever again see, so many valiant knights.

On one side of the city was a great lake, on which the Turks launched boats, and they went in and out bringing fodder and wood and many other things, so our leaders took counsel together and sent messengers to Constantinople to ask the emperor to have boats brought to Kivotos, where there is a harbour, and to have oxen collected to drag these boats over the mountains and through the woods until they reached the lake. The emperor had this done immediately, and sent his Turcopuli with them. His men would not launch the boats at once on the day on which they arrived, but they put out on the lake at nightfall, with the boats full of Turcopuli who were well armed. At daybreak there were the boats, all in very good order, sailing across the lake towards the city. The Turks, seeing them, were surprised and did not know whether it was their own fleet or that of the emperor, but when they realised that it was the emperor's they were afraid almost to death, and began to wail and lament, while the Franks rejoiced and gave glory to God. Then the

Turks, realising that their armies could do no more to help them, sent a message to the emperor saying that they would surrender the city to him if he would let them go free with their wives and children and all their goods. The emperor, who was a fool as well as a knave, told them to go away unhurt and without fear; he had them brought to him at Constantinople under safe-conduct, and kept them carefully so that he could have them ready to injure the Franks and obstruct their crusade.

We besieged this city for seven weeks and three days, and many of our men suffered martyrdom there and gave up their blessed souls to God with joy and gladness, and many of the poor starved to death for the Name of Christ. All these entered Heaven in triumph, wearing the robe of martyrdom which they have received, saying with one voice, 'Avenge, O Lord, our blood which was shed for thee, for thou art blessed and worthy of praise for ever and ever. Amen.'

Here ends the second book, and the third book begins.