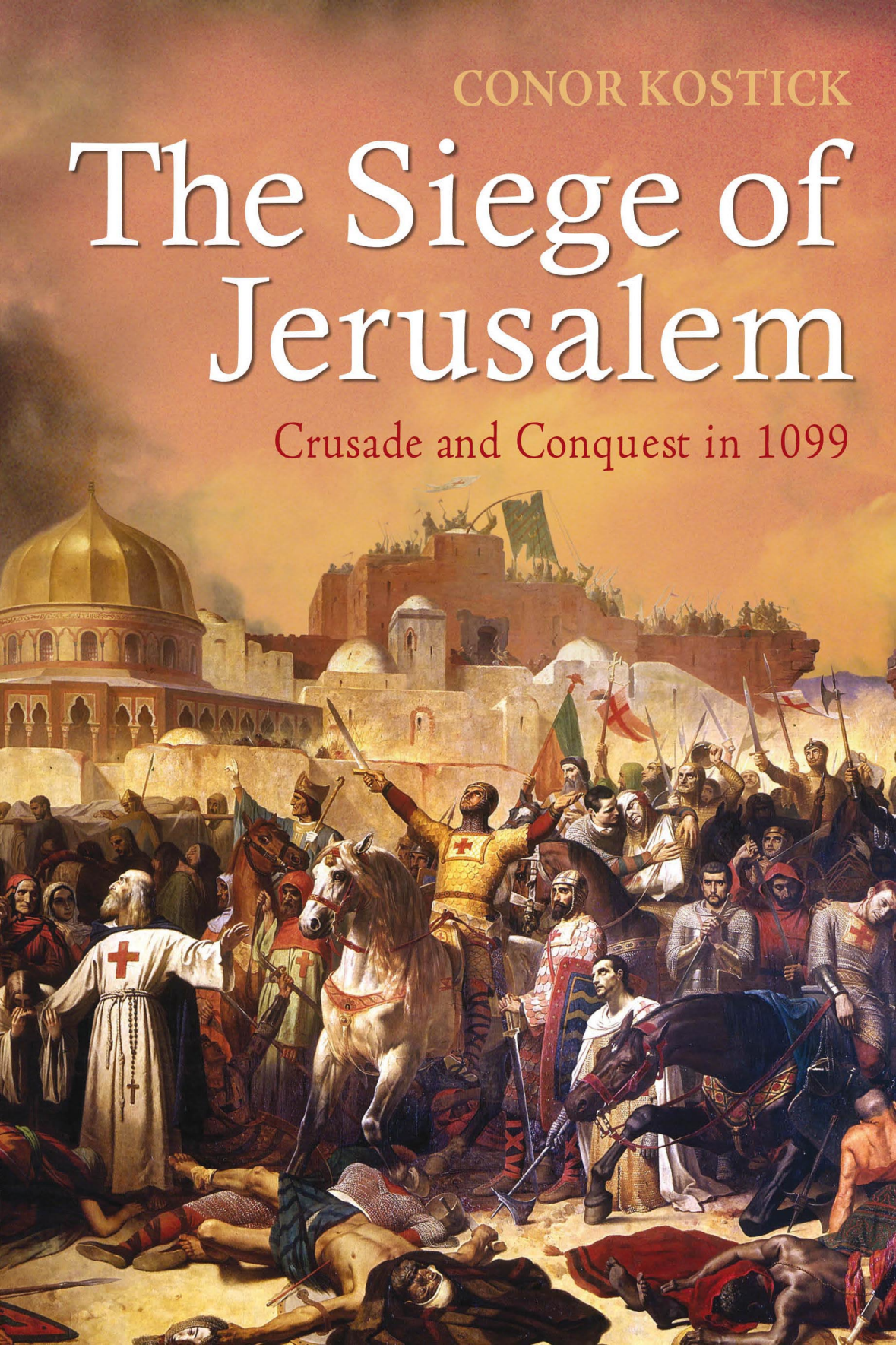
CONOR KOSTICK

The Siege of Jerusalem

Crusade and Conquest in 1099



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Crusade and Conquest in 1099

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To my old friend,
Nathan Reynard

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Preface

Tuesday, 7 June 1099. A crowd of gaunt people was gathered on a hill watching the brightening eastern sky. About a mile away the walls and buildings of a city became more distinct in the dawn light. Everyone had stumbled through the darkness of the previous night to reach this point. Just as the skylarks, finches, swallows and swifts greeted the new day with their distinctive songs, so too the crowd now began to mutter in a range of voices: prayers whispered in all the languages and dialects of Christendom.

As the light grew stronger, the crowd became more distinct. Here, an archer, with an unstrung bow over his shoulder. There, a leather-clad spearman, leaning on his weapon as a stave. And among those ready for war could be seen a surprising number of unarmed people, including priests, nuns, women and children of all ages. All of them, man or woman, soldier or cleric, looked hungry, but although their bodies lacked all measure of surplus fat, they were not emaciated. Rather, they had the cords of tough muscle only obtained through years of hard labour. And these people had laboured.

Nearby, mounted, and accompanying those on foot with a certain complacency, were a group of 70 knights, formed up in a disciplined row. Their chainmail armour and burnished helms shone, tinged with the pink of the dawn. It was the raid of these knights ahead of the army the previous day, and their return with the news that the city was close, which had caused the ragged crowds to stumble all night across a rocky terrain in the hope of seeing the physical manifestation of their dreams. Proud of their responsibility for those beneath them, the knights were alert, scanning the brightening sky in all directions for dust clouds in the morning air, for a sign, in other words, of their enemies. Ahead of the row of knights was a small cluster of warriors, whose banners and spears focused on the two leaders of the troop: Tancred and Gaston of Béarn.

Only 26 years old, Tancred was nevertheless the hero and talisman of the present company. Others, especially the Provençal army miles further back to the rear, hated the Italian Norman for his arrogance and his treacherous policy towards them. But even his worst enemies would admit that there was no braver

warrior in the entire Christian army and no sight more liable to lift the heart than that of Tancred's small band of knights charging ferociously in to battle behind their red banner. A little older, a lot darker, the Pyrenean nobleman Gaston of Béarn sat next to the Norman champion. The relationship between the two was of equals. More than that, it was of men whose common interest united them across all barriers of language and past allegiances. For Gaston and Tancred occupied the same political position inside the Christian army. They were both leaders of a small band of knights, but with nothing of the following or authority of the truly great princes. Or at least, not yet. Win a reputation for bravery, win more followers and, above all, win booty to reward those knights who took the chance of serving with them, and who knew what lay ahead? This land was full of rich cities and the fortunes of war were fickle. Tancred's own grandfather, Robert Guiscard, had, through conquest more than through diplomacy, risen from being the sixth son of a poor Norman noble to becoming an Italian Duke, solemnly recognized as such by the papacy.

On the previous day, both Tancred and Gaston – independently – had ridden right up to the walls of the city. Both had relied on the reputation of the great Christian army half a day behind them to intimidate the local Muslim forces. Gaston had been the quicker and the bolder; his 30 knights had galloped through the outlying farms around the city gathering up beasts and valuables. But when the commander of the garrison of the city realized how small this Christian force was, he ordered a troop of swift light cavalry to chase Gaston and his men. The chase led several miles to a cliff face, where the Pyrenean knights reluctantly abandoned their booty. But no sooner had the Muslim cavalry turned back towards the city with the animals and baggage than Tancred and his 40 knights arrived, curious to see what the dust clouds in the valley below them signified. The Normans rode down the hillside to greet their co-religionists. A hasty conference led to quick agreement. Both Tancred and Gaston were seeking fame and fortune, which was all the more likely to come their way as a united body. And so it proved in this encounter. The 70 Christian knights were sufficiently intimidating to scatter the Muslim troop and drive them all the way back to the gates of the city.

These knights had learned hard lessons on the journey. There was to be no stopping to gather up the scattered loot or wandering beasts. The Muslim light cavalryman was expert at riding and firing a bow at the same time. Given a chance to reorganize themselves, this force of the city's garrison could harass the Christians from afar, killing precious mounts, without ever coming within reach of a lance. Only after the city gates had slammed shut did the Christian knights wheel about to go searching for the booty that they now shared

between them. That night the main body of the Christian army acclaimed the deeds of these two young lords, whose mutual satisfaction in the day's events proved to be a firm foundation for future co-operation.

When the tale of this adventure had circulated around the camp fires of the Christian army, what caught the imagination of the crowd was the fact that the city they had fought to reach over the course of three years was so close that a rider could reach it in a few hours. At first individuals, then entire bands, gathered their meagre belongings and set off under the stars. After all, in their excitement, they would hardly have managed to sleep. What did it matter that such a chaotic enthusiastic night time march was contrary to all military discipline? By now their enemies feared them and were unlikely to be preparing ambushes. In any case, surely this close to their goal, God would protect them.

The vanguard of the sprawling Christian army had rushed forward in the darkness. But the majority waited until dawn. Even so, it was impossible to maintain discipline. The knights understood the danger of the army acting like an ill-organized rabble but their desire to get ahead of those on foot before the route was completely congested only added to the confusion. An uncharacteristic flow of horses, foot soldiers and carts, like a swollen river, carried the Christian forces in a turbulent rush towards the city.

Bringing up the rear, with the stragglers, was the elderly count of Toulouse, Raymond, the fourth of that name. Fifty-one years old, grey bearded and with a scar that ran across the side of his face and over a missing eye, the count was walking barefooted and in a rather ill temper. Only his entourage of Provençal priests and clerics were taking seriously the words of a lowly visionary, Peter Bartholomew, who had died in a trial by fire to prove that the count was especially chosen by God to lead the Christian army. Peter Bartholomew had warned the crusaders that their approach to the Holy City must be barefoot and with hearts full of contrition or they would lose God's favour, but in the excitement of their proximity to the city the crowds had forgotten all about this prophecy. Even the bulk of Raymond's own knights and followers had rushed on with the others. The count himself patiently placed his bare feet on the path and walked through the dust created by the thousands ahead of him. If his fellow Christians failed to observe this act of humility, at least the all-seeing eyes of God observed it.

Ahead on the ridge, the crowd was swelling and spreading. Despite deep political rivalries between the Saxons, the Normans, the Provençals and the many other regional contingents, a sense of shared achievement came over them all as they watched the buildings of the nearby city become distinct under

the brightening sky. They were filled with the realization that at last they had reached their goal, a place that had seemed almost mythical. The word now taken up joyously, shouted out through their tears, was comprehensible across all their respective languages: 'Jerusalem'.

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Chapter 1

In the Beginning

On 18 November 1095 a council of some 300 clerics from all over Europe convened at Clermont in southern France for the most important assembly of their generation. The city had been a notable political centre for hundreds of years, ever since – at the end of the first century BC – Agrippa had ordered the construction of major road east to west across France, from Lyon to Saintes. The fact that Clermont lay on such a major route helped make it the choice of venue for the pope, Urban II, to host a major synod at which he intended to establish papal authority in the country. Urban also had a special message to deliver on the last day of the council, for which announcement prominent secular lords and indeed more humble folk were encouraged to journey to the city. As the council deliberated over matters such as church reform and the scandalous affection of Philip I of France for Bertrade of Montfort, wife of Fulk IV of Anjou, the numbers arriving at the city in anticipation of the pope's important declaration grew larger. So, on the 27 November, with its business done, once it had been realized that no building could contain the numbers wishing to attend, the assembly adjourned to a field outside the city where the papal throne had been set up.

Against the striking background of the Puy-de-Dôme, a dormant volcano, the pope delivered his message to the crowd, still and attentive, straining to hear every word. The time had come, Urban shouted, to assist their fellow Christians in the East, whose suffering at the hands of the Saracens was growing daily. The time had come, also, when Christians should cease warfare against one another. Rather, they should direct their military prowess against the enemies of God. Let the followers of Christ form an invincible army and wage war against the Saracens. For those guilty of sin, there was no better way to earn a remission of their penance than to join this Christian army in its march to the East.

'God wills it! God wills it!' roared the crowd in reply as they surged forward. The clergy and princes nearest the pope prostrated themselves and begged for absolution. It was a thrilling moment for those present, in which passion and excitement overwhelmed any reservations. Cold calculation and logistical

considerations were irrelevant. The pope had given those present a dream. The land in which flowed milk and honey was to be theirs. Knights could earn salvation and the favour of God without having to give up the horse and lance. It was a divine mission, a pilgrimage, a war, all combined in a movement that would see God's people marching just as though they were the Children of Israel being delivered from Egypt.

The unexpected enthusiasm and cries of the crowd meant that some of the behind-the-scenes planning was lost. It was possible, at least, to see from his gestures that the pope was appointing Adhémar, the statesmanlike bishop of Le Puy, to a special role. But the subsequent speech of the envoys of Count Raymond of Toulouse was hardly noticed except by those nearest the pope. The roars of approval and enthusiasm meant a rather confused and chaotic end to the council, which broke up without appreciating the message Count Raymond had crafted for them. The elderly veteran of decades of political manoeuvring in Provence was willing to assign Toulouse over to his eldest son, Bertrand, and lead a substantial force east in the service of the pope. Naturally, being respectful of church authority, the count did not insist on being sole leader. Rather – as his envoys put it – together Raymond and Adhémar would be another Aaron and Moses, the divinely inspired leaders of the Children of Israel.[1]

This was all very well, and accorded with the perspective for the journey that had been outlined earlier, at Nîmes, when a meeting had taken place between Raymond and Urban. But their discussion had envisaged a more modest and restrained assembly held within the cathedral, where the tall vaulting provided fine acoustics for carefully worded speeches. Within moments of the Pope's actual announcement, however, it was evident that the reality of the enterprise was going to be of much greater scope than Urban, Raymond and Adhémar had anticipated. And as the crowds dispersed from Clermont, the storm showed no signs of abating.

The world was astir. All Christendom soon became agitated by the appeal to join an armed penitential expedition to Jerusalem. The pope had stamped his foot and not one, but several enormous armies now unexpectedly sprang into being, each with their own leadership and with none of them showing the slightest appreciation of the idea that Count Raymond was another Aaron.

The message that left Clermont and began to spread rapidly around Europe ignored all but the core ideas expressed by Urban: that there was to be an expedition to Jerusalem by a Christian army greater than any that had ever been seen and those who joined it would earn a heavenly reward. Attempting to keep the popular enthusiasm for the mission from distorting his conception of it, the pope sent several letters explaining the purpose and the armed pilgrimage and

restricting which categories of persons should participate. The spiritual reward that he offered participants was remission of their sins. He also set the start date for the departure of the crusade, 15 August 1096.

Urban, however, had set in motion social forces far beyond those he could control and his letters had only limited effect. For the most part the details of his message were lost. Every social class of person thought that they were eligible to participate in the journey. Everyone, including educated clerics, believed that to join was to merit more than forgiveness for their sins: to join this fight for God was to be guaranteed of a place in heaven. And many thousands of people, impatient to start, intended to do so in the spring, rather than after the autumn harvest.

It did not help the pope that a number of self-appointed preachers began to travel through Europe gathering recruits for the journey with their own version of the crusading message. There were the women who found a cross, fallen from heaven, who very many people prepared to follow to the east. Another woman made an extraordinary impression when she claimed to be the mistress of a goose that was divinely inspired. Word of this saintly bird spread through castles and towns and while there were those who scoffed at such superstition, when she reached Cambrai, a huge city then theoretically part of the empire of the German king, Henry IV (today at the north-eastern edge of France), a large assembly filled the church, to witness the woman and her goose as they arrived at the city and walked together up to the altar.[2] But among all the popular preachers of the journey to Jerusalem, there was one whose activities made him the dominant figure, to such an extent that for many it was he, rather than the pope, who was the authoritative voice of God in this matter.

Peter the Hermit was a small, middle-aged, man with a tremendous turn of phrase and corresponding powers of persuasion. Riding a donkey, he dressed in the humble garb of a hermit. His critics pointed out that despite this show of modesty, Peter did not forgo meat and wine, as a true hermit should. But his critics were few. As Peter travelled from town to town, he displayed a letter, which, it was popularly believed, God himself had given to the hermit. In fact, Peter's letter was from the Patriarch of Jerusalem appealing for assistance from the Christian west. Having been in the Holy City as a pilgrim, Peter had witnessed for himself how the followers of Christ were being exploited, how the holy places of the city were refused to all those who did not have gold, and how many devout Christians died outside the walls with their desire to worship in Holy Sepulchre unfulfilled.[3]

Great multitudes came to hear Peter. Some, believing themselves in the presence of a living saint, strove to obtain relics from the hermit, even prizing the

silver hairs from the tail of Peter's donkey. Peter spoke to all social orders and all responded to him. The rich gave generously and with their wealth Peter was very generous on behalf of the poor. He was particularly concerned with the most unfortunate women of the cities of France. Peter's generation, more than any other, had seen the church wage a vigorous campaign to end clerical marriage, even to the extent of mobilizing crowds to drive from the churches those clergy who refused to renounce their wives. In addition to the numbers of cast-off and impoverished women who, for one reason or another, had lost their male guardians, the towns of Peter's day were filled with women who as a result of the campaign against the sin of Nicholiatism had fallen from a respectable and secure state to a precarious existence. To them and all marginal women, Peter offered dowries so that they could regain through marriage their lost security.

In the course of his constant travels and urgent exhortations, Peter recruited an enormous army of men and women, some 40,000 strong, for the march to Jerusalem. But it was noticeable that there were only around 500 knights amongst this force. The vast majority of Peter's army were foot soldiers and poorly equipped farmers.[4] Nevertheless, it was an extraordinary achievement for a hitherto unknown hermit to raise the largest army in Christendom. That success itself testified to many that divine will was being made manifest through the small but passionate preacher. For the participants themselves, their lowly status was a badge of pride: divine approval was more likely to come to the humble than the proud.

The appeal of Peter's preaching was assisted by the fact that life for the poor was extremely harsh in 1094 and 1095, the two years preceding his Pied Piper speaking tour. In those years famine and plague had ravaged northern Europe. Famine had reduced the poor to living on the roots of wild plants, and even the rich were threatened by the shortage of crops. The 'plague' described by the chroniclers was in fact an outbreak of ergot poisoning in the rye crop. This sickness caused limbs to wither and blacken, as though burnt by an invisible fire. In abandoned churches the rotting trunks of the unfortunate victims of the mould were piled up in stacks. How much more attractive was the prospect of moving to the Promised Land? Hundreds of farmers seized the opportunity provided by Peter's expedition, loaded up their carts with all their household belongings and together with their wives and children set out with the hermit. These farmers were not just intending to fight as part of a Christian army: they were emigrating. The value of land and farms collapsed as a rush of people strove to turn their fixed property into coin for the journey.[5]

At Peter's right hand was one of the few nobles to join this popular march, the Burgundian knight, Walter Sanzavohir. Walter left Cologne for the long

journey through central Europe to Byzantium shortly after Easter, 12 April 1096, with just eight knights but thousands of men and women on foot. Some eight days later, Peter followed him with a war chest full of gold from the donations of the wealthy towards the cause. As they passed through Germany, incredulous peasants scoffed to learn that this rabble intended to march all the way to Jerusalem. But soon these cynics in turn became inflamed by the excitement. Perhaps, after all, they were living in an age where God's handiwork was more manifest than at any time since the days of Christ. Were there not signs in the heavens? The celestial portents alone testified that this was the time to abandon the routine but grim struggle for a living and exchange it for a blessed journey to the Promised Land. New armed bands formed from those who had formerly been labelled 'Epicureans' for their refusal to undergo the hardships of the march. Gottschalk, for example, was a German priest who had been inspired to assist in preaching the journey to Jerusalem after attending a sermon by Peter the Hermit. With his own effective speaking skills, Gottschalk drew together a sizeable army of pilgrims in the Rhineland, this time including very many knights.[6]

Right at the outset of the crusade the darker side of this popular enthusiasm for the divine mission was evident. Among the contingents that formed up in the wake of the passage of Walter and Peter through Lotharingia, Francia and Bavaria were those who turned the passions aroused by the hermit into warfare against the local Jewish population. The Jewish community of Cologne were surprised by a sudden attack on 29 May 1096 and after a great massacre, their property was shared among a crusading army. At Mainz a powerful local noble, Count Emicho, together with his fellow knights Clarembald of Vendeuil and Thomas of Marle, had been awaiting the arrival of the pilgrims to lead a similar onslaught against the Jewish population of the locality. Forewarned by the experience of their co-religionists in Speyer and Worms, the Jewish community of Mainz sought protection from Bishop Ruthard and paid an incredible sum of coin for it. But Ruthard was unable to prevent Emicho and his army breaking into the episcopal palace where most of the Jewish community had gathered and slaughtering them all, men, women and children.[7] Is it any wonder that when news of these massacres reached the Near East, the Jewish population of Jerusalem chose to fight side by side with the Muslim population of the city against the crusading army. After all, outside the city walls were Clarembald, Thomas and other knights who had already led Christian pilgrim armies against unarmed Jews.

The idea of taking the cross and marching to capture Jerusalem appealed just as much to those at the top of the social spectrum as to those at the bottom. Although no king found the crusading message persuasive, very many senior

lords – for a variety of reasons – welcomed the idea and took the cross. Of these, the most exalted in status, if not in the number of his followers, was Hugh of Vermandois, known as Hugh the Great, brother of the now excommunicate King Philip I of France. Almost as prominent in the higher reaches of the European nobility was Robert Curthose, the eldest son of Duke William I of Normandy, the conqueror of England. The adventure of the crusade appealed to this dissolute lord, who abandoned his hunting and depredations in Normandy in anticipation of pursuing the same interests in the Near East. A more pious crusader and equally prominent noble was another Robert, the second count of that name from Flanders. Robert had been regent of Flanders between 1085 and 1091 when his father, Robert I of Flanders had been on pilgrimage. These two men of the same name, but of very different character, co-operated to bring a sizeable army from northern Europe. Their acceptance of the cross had come as a surprise to the pope, who now found he had to grant the northerners their own papal legate, Arnulf of Choques, an outspoken teacher from the cathedral school at Caen who joined the expedition as chaplain to Robert of Normandy.

Not be to outdone, when Stephen, the elderly and wealthy Count of Blois, took the cross he too had the pope give legatine powers to his chaplain, Alexander. Thus as the news from Clermont had spread north, the unanticipated response to the idea of a penitential expedition to Jerusalem had required Urban to revise his initial conception of the leadership of the undertaking. Instead of one Christian army, at the head of which was the experienced Count Raymond and the Bishop of Le Puy, there were now three armies marshalling their forces with papal approval. Not to mention that Peter and several popular armies were already underway, albeit with a rather more tenuous relationship to the papacy. And the mobilization of Christendom for Holy War was not finished, for two more powerful armies formed up in support of the expedition. One was drawn from the people of Lotharingia, the other composed of Normans from southern Italy.

Three brothers of Boulogne (located in modern day north-eastern France beside the English Channel), took the cross: Eustace, the elder, destined to inherit the family lordship of the city; Godfrey, who was adopted as heir to his maternal uncle's position as Duke of Lower Lotharingia; and Baldwin, the youngest, who had left a career in the church to enjoy the lifestyle he preferred, that of a knight. The decision of such important nobles to journey to Jerusalem encouraged many other prominent figures from Lower Lotharingia and nearby regions to attach themselves to this contingent. Not all were vassals of Godfrey, but as duke of the region from which many of them came, Godfrey carried the

greatest authority in the Lotharingian army, more so, indeed, than his elder brother. In accordance with papal direction, the German contingent set out in August 1096, finding themselves travelling in the wake of the political chaos generated by the fact that on the route ahead of them had gone the various contingents of the People's Crusade.

Last to form up were those whose general was Bohemond, leader of a south Italian Norman army. The Normans were recent arrivals in southern Italian politics, but had defeated the local nobility, the papacy and the Byzantine Empire, to become the ruling elite of the region. When Robert Guiscard, the lowly sixth son of a minor Norman family, went to Italy he did so as a mercenary, but by the time of his death in 1085, he was the Duke of Apulia, recognized as such by the papacy.

In 1096, news of the crusade reached Amalfi at a time that Bohemond, eldest son of Robert Guiscard, was fighting for the city in alliance with his uncle, Roger I of Sicily, against his half-brother, Roger Borsa. Suddenly, an entirely new horizon opened to Bohemond. He took aside his young nephew Tancred and tried to persuade the talented warrior that their fortunes would be better served in the east than squabbling over their family inheritance in Italy. Tancred was sceptical until he was promised the role of second-in-command and that he would have the same freedom of action as would a duke under a king. The agreement was struck. Norman adventurers in search of fortune knew the value of uniting together against the world and when they did so thrones tumbled. Bohemond announced to his army his intention of supporting the papal initiative. Demonstratively, he cut up his most valuable cloak to make crosses. Not only did his own men rush to follow, but also – and this was the first fruit of Bohemond's adoption of the crusade – so did hundreds of knights who had been vassals of his ally. Lamenting the loss of his army, Roger was forced to abandon the siege of Amalfi and return to Sicily.[8]

Did any of those who took the cross really understand what lay ahead of them on the route to Jerusalem: three years of marching; gruelling sieges; ferocious battles; several periods of famine and months of pestilence? No other medieval army made such a journey to reach its goal. No other medieval army set itself such an extraordinary goal. The journey from Paris to Jerusalem is over 2,000 miles and while the initial stages were through the territories of fellow Christians, over 1,000 miles of the journey were travelled through land controlled by their enemies. There were something like 100,000 people who set off in 1096 to conquer Jerusalem for Christ. When, in 1099, the Christian army began the siege of the city, they numbered about 20,000. Fewer than one in five who took the cross reached their goal. Many had turned back at various

difficult points along the journey, but just as many had died. Fields and ditches along the trail of their marches were marked by hundreds of graves.

If the hardships and battles that lay ahead were unknown, the same cannot be said of the geography of their journey. The pilgrim route for European Christians to Jerusalem was long established, with popular tracts in circulation that specified the exact distances to be travelled each day and the halting places. Older still were the network of Roman roads that for over 1,000 years had linked the peoples of the Mediterranean. The crusaders took a variety of different Roman roads in 1096. These all led, however, not to Rome, but to Constantinople, one of the world's most fabulous cities and claimant to the inheritance of the Roman Empire.

From the perspective of the Greeks, the west had lapsed into barbarism, while from behind their impressive double-ringed walls, the rulers of the Byzantine Empire had preserved the only culture that deserved to be considered civilized. Constantinople in 1096 was a city of relics and statues. It was a city of enormous wealth, of busy commerce, of intense enthusiasm for public games, but above all it was a city whose elite were locked into a vicious but subtle striving for position within a bureaucratic hierarchy whose intricacies were completely lost to the outsider. Where to sit for a public function? Which dyes could be used to colour the clothes you were allowed to wear? How should the person at your side be addressed? These were all supremely important matters to the Byzantine noble and it is no wonder that as the western lords arrived, dressed as they pleased, speaking to their hosts in curt indelicate phrases, eating in great mouthfuls, and showing more interest in their horses than the artistic work on display around them that the Byzantine elite collectively raised their eyebrows in a horror that was not entirely pretence.

The fact that the first armies to arrive at Constantinople were the popular ones inspired by Peter the Hermit did little to warm the Greeks towards the crusading project. If Pope Urban's initial plans had come to fruition in a more modest way, the representative of the Latin Church would have been the extremely tactful Bishop Adhémar of Le Puy and at his side the dignified and cultured count Raymond of Toulouse. As the papal legate was to show during the expedition, by emphasizing the common cause of all Christians it was possible to create very smooth working relationships between Latin and Greek clergy, especially in the lands regained from their pagan enemies. Instead, in the middle of July 1096, the Byzantines received Walther Sanzavoir and his army. The crowds of crusaders were at first suitably impressed by the size and wealth of the city. They settled in their camp and, in limited numbers, took tours of the city to visit the saints. But as the days passed, their boldness grew: soon bands

of crusaders were stealing into the city and prising lead from the church roofs to sell back to the Greeks. They even began to raid wealthy houses, leaving the properties burning once all valuables had been seized.[9]

At the head of the Byzantine hierarchy was the emperor, who in 1096 was the former general and astute politician, Alexius Comnenus. Alexius, 48 at the time that the crusaders arrived at his capital, had come to power in 1081 in the by now traditional Byzantine manner: military coup. Naturally, the Greek emperor wanted to ship this turbulent barbarian army across the Bosphorus and away from the environs of his capital, but Walter insisted upon waiting for his comrade, Peter the Hermit, who, it was thought, was not far behind. Indeed, Peter arrived at Constantinople on 1 August, but his army was in a very different condition to that of his companion. At the town of Nish (now Niš, in south-eastern Serbia) on the fringes of the Byzantine Empire, on or around 4 July 1096, a dispute had arisen between Nicetas, governor of Bulgaria, and Peter's forces. A body of 1,000 headstrong and imprudent crusaders attempted to storm the city. In response to this attack Nicetas unleashed his full force, scattering the crusaders, who eventually reformed with the loss of about a quarter of their number and the war chest of silver and gold. It was a chastened and much reduced force of Latin troops that arrived at Constantinople with Peter.[10]

An even more shattering blow, however, had struck the troops further to the rear led by Gottschalk. Coloman, the king of Hungary, had at first been tolerant of his fellow Christians' desire to march through the kingdom in order to fight for Jerusalem. The reckless behaviour of the crowds, however, their frequent attacks on the property of his people and the danger as more and more armies were rumoured to be on their way, led to the Hungarian population becoming uneasy and, indeed, downright hostile. A dispute in the market at the fortress of Mosony (now Mosonmagyaróvár) had led to the Bavarians and Swabians driving a stake through the genitals of young Hungarian. As word of this incident spread, Coloman came under pressure from his warriors, who insisted upon taking up arms against the insults of the intruders. But when the Hungarian army came to the Benedictine abbey of St Martin at Pannonhalma, they found the crusaders drawn up in solid formation, ready to fight for their lives. Realizing that there was going to be no easy victory against an unprepared rabble, Coloman and his officials entered negotiations with Gottschalk. Agreement was reached that if the crusaders handed over their weapons to the Hungarians for safekeeping, they would be permitted markets and safe travel though the kingdom; their weapons would be returned at the border. Grateful for the opportunity of avoiding a battle, Gottschalk and his more responsible officers persuaded the German army to accept the king's proposal. They piled up their