

**THE CREATION OF
THE LATIN STATES
IN THE NEAR EAST**

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QUADERNO n° 10/2012



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Introduction

Medieval European society, in the eleventh century, was strongly religious and the war against the infidels ensured the salvation of the soul, because it assured honour and glory to the brave and as such they were highly sought after by the nobles. Since the legacy of the nobles belonged only to first-born children, the other children were in constant search of glory and wealth.



Pope Urban II - Incitement in Clermont

Pope Urban II, granting the request of the Byzantine emperor, who asked for the help of the Church of Rome against the Seljuk Turks (who had already occupied a large part of its territory and constituted a danger for Latin Christendom), thought that each army should leave with their commanders from Europe, to gather together in Constantinople and from there should march to the conquest of Anatolia, Syria, Palestine, and eventually, also of Jerusalem.

According to the pope the war against the Turks was justified by the occupation of the Byzantine territories, the massacres committed against the Christians of the East and of European pilgrims who visited the holy places, the destruction of Christian churches and the enslavement of the survivors of the massacres. The pope urged European Christians to "*drive out the wicked race from our lands, with the cry: God wills it*".

This call, made on November 26, 1095 on the occasion of the closing of the Council of Clermont, had an unexpected effect even for the same pope. In fact, the following spring the so-called "crusade beggars" started, it was led by Peter the Hermit, a charismatic preacher who announced the coming of the "Church of the poor" and that he could involve thousands of men, women, children and knights in a short time.



Alexius I Comnenus receives Peter the Hermit

The army, after arriving in Istanbul in August 1096, suffered a total defeat in the vicinity of Nicaea by the Seljuk Turks. Peter managed to escape with a few men, and subsequently he participated in the crusade of the nobles who, in the meantime, prepared their departure from Europe.



Raymond IV, Godfrey of Bouillon, Bohemond of Taranto and Hugh of Vermandois in the first Crusade

The first to go were Godfrey of Bouillon and the Count Hugh of Vermandois, brother of the King of France, who followed the Count Raymond of Saint Gilles, Prince Bohemond of Taranto, Baldwin of Boulogne, Duke Robert of Normandy (pretender to the throne of England), Duke Robert of Flanders, and many other nobles. No European sovereign participated in the First Crusade.

The commanders of the first Crusade

Raymond IV of S. Gilles (1041-1105)

Raymond IV, count of Toulouse, was the oldest and the richest of the leaders of the First Crusade, and he could rely on the most numerous army of those prepared by the nobles. Deeply religious, he wanted to die in the Holy Land. He left the county of Toulouse at the end of October 1096 and he arrived with his wife in and Bishop Adhemar (Apostolic Legate for the first crusade) in Constantinople, in the month of April 1097. He refused to swear loyalty to the emperor Alexius I Comneno, although then he assured

him friendship and support against the common enemy, that is, Bohemond of Taranto.

In June 1098, after the conquest of Antioch, he didn't want to deliver to Bohemond the palace of the Emir and the tower occupied by him, but he had to yield to the demands of his companions.

When Bishop Adhemar died, Raymond was considered to be the new leader of the crusade. He was stubborn in wanting to conquer a territory to elect his court there, he tried furiously to take possession of Tripoli, thus delaying the departure for Jerusalem, and for this reason he lost prestige and respect by the Crusaders.

Raymond refused the crown of Jerusalem for Godfrey of Bouillon, although he was reluctant to hand over the Tower of David (the citadel located near the Jaffa Gate), which he won. After the election of Godfrey of Bouillon (22 July 1099), he returned to Tripoli to conquer it. He won the battle of Ascalon with the other Crusaders, he challenged Godfrey of Bouillon in the possession of the city and therefore, in the absence of an agreement, Ascalon remained under the control of the Egyptians.

In 1099-1100 he subtracted possession of Laodicea to Boemondo, which once he had taken it from the Byzantines, and he allied himself with the emperor against Bohemond himself.

In 1101 he participated in the unsuccessful expedition reinforcement of the First Crusade, and after the defeat of Heraclea, he took refuge in Constantinople. In 1102, having left Constantinople, he went by sea to Antioch, but he was intercepted and taken prisoner by Tancred, who held the regency of the city. Subsequently he was released by Tancred, but only after having received the promise that he would never attempt hostile actions against Antioch or Acre.

A short time later, however, he broke his promise; he attacked Tortosa with the help of the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Comnenus and he began the construction of a castle on Monte Pellegrino, which was necessary for the conquest of Tripoli.

He died in 1105, having acquired only the nominal title of Count of Tripoli. At his death he was succeeded by his nephew William Jordan, who helped by King Baldwin I, conquered the city, establishing the County of Tripoli. In the same year Jordan was deposed by his son Raymond, Bertrand II of Toulouse, and the county remained the possession of his family until 1187.

Godfrey of Bouillon (1060-1100)

In August 1096, he started from Lorraine with his brothers Eustace and Baldwin of Boulogne (the future King of Jerusalem) and at the head of an army, he arrived at Constantinople after a series of misfortunes suffered in Hungary, where he failed to prevent their soldiers from raiding the Christian territories.



Godfrey of Bouillon takes oath in front of Alexius I Comnenus

In the month of November 1096 he was the first to arrive in Constantinople, where he reluctantly accepted the oath of allegiance to the Emperor Alexius I Comnenus, an oath that also included the restitution of the lands that belonged to the Byzantines, but was occupied by the Seljuk Turks at that time.

At the beginning of the military campaign Godfrey of Bouillon was a minor figure of the crusade, since he depended on the orders of Raymond, Bohemond, Tancred and the papal legate Adhemar. Godfrey was the first to take up a position in the siege of Nicaea, but his first important work was the help given to Bohemond during the Battle of Dorileo, in which the Turkish of the sultan Qilij Arslan also surrounded him. The two, however, managed to break the encirclement by the intervention of the other crusaders.

After the conquest of Antioch he convinced Raymond (then considered the supreme commander of the crusade) to resume the march on Jerusalem. After distinguishing himself in some minor battles, he was among the first to enter Jerusalem, opening the way to the army, and he distinguished himself by value, courage and piety. In fact, he did not participate in the massacre of the local population and went barefoot and unarmed to the church of the Holy Sepulchre.



Godfrey of Bouillon places in the Holy Sepulchre the standard subtracted from the Egyptian vizier during the battle of Ascalona

Following the example of Raymond, he refused the crown of Jerusalem, preferring to accept the title of Protector of the Holy Sepulchre, "*Advocatus Sancti Sepulchri*" (22 July 1099). Shortly after he founded the equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. He defeated the Fatimid Egyptians in the battle of Ascalon, but because of a bitter dispute he had with Raymond (Godfrey of Bouillon wanted to annex the city to the kingdom of Jerusalem, while Raymond wanted it for himself), the city remained under Egyptian control.

He faced too, in a strong way, the Patriarch Dagobert, who considered Jerusalem territory of the pope, and so claimed his authority over the city, while Godfrey intended to establish a secular government. The dispute

between the two might have been resolved if the crusaders had conquered Cairo, where they moved the seat of government, leaving the holy city to the Church, this, however, was never to happen. Before dying Godfrey annexed the coastal cities of Acre, Arsuf, Jaffa and Caesarea Marittima to the Kingdom of Jerusalem. At his death, which occurred in July 18, 1100, his brother Baldwin, already Count of Edessa, was elected king of Jerusalem with the name of Baldwin I. The Patriarch accepted this election and the coronation was made in Bethlehem rather than Jerusalem (Christmas 1100) with great reluctance to avoid further tensions.

Bohemond Prince of Taranto (1058-1111)

In the period 1080-1085, with his father Robert Guiscard, he attacked the Byzantine Empire, but during his father's absence the Emperor Alexius I Comenus defeated him. After the death of his father he was to receive for an inheritance the territories of the Balkans, but because of their loss (because in the meantime they had been reconquered by Byzantium), a violent dispute began with the other brothers. His mother Alberada of Buonalbergo, who granted Bohemond the Principality of Taranto in exchange for the waiver of Puglia, brought the conflict back.



Bohemond of Taranto

In 1096, while with his uncle Roger I he was besieging Amalfi, at the sight of the crusaders on their way to the Holy Land, he sensed the opportunity to fulfil their ambitions and gathered an army of Normans, he left with his nephew Tancredi for the crusade.

In the month of April 1097 he arrived in Constantinople and paid homage to the emperor. In the same year he was the first to take sides in

the siege of Antioch, and, after having conquered the city with cunning and dispersed the Turkish army that came to his aid, in January 1099, despite the violent opposition of advancing Raymond he claimed something from the newly conquered city and he became prince of Antioch.

Bohemond did not go on to Jerusalem and, therefore, did not participate in the conquest of it, because he would not leave his new principality, for fear of losing it. There he went later to attend the election of the patriarch Dagobert. In 1100, during the Battle of Melitene, he was captured by the Turks and thrown into prison until 1103. The nephew Tancred became regent of the principality. In 1103 the Armenian prince Vasil paid a large ransom for his release and he returned to freedom, immediately he tried to attack the neighboring emirates Muslims to secure supplies. In 1104 he was defeated at Harran (in South Eastern Anatolia, in the south of Edessa) and immediately he underwent a Byzantine attack in Cilicia. Leaving the care of the principality to his nephew Tancredi, he returned to Europe in search of reinforcements and managed to convince Pope Paschal II to preach a holy war against the Byzantines.

He moved to the court of King Philip I of France, where he obtained the hand of his daughter Constance (whom he married in Chartres in 1106) and the availability of an army with which he returned to the Holy Land to fight against the Emperor Alexius I.



Miniature depicting the battle Ager Sanguinis

Aided by the Venetians he defeated him, forcing him to sign a humiliating treaty (Devol, 1108), by which, in fact, Bohemond became a vassal of the Byzantine emperor, who ordered him also the presence of a greek-orthodox patriarch to Antioch.

He returned to Italy in search of new aid and left the government of the principality to his nephew Tancredi once again, but he died in 1111 in Bari. After the death of Tancred, which took place in 1112, the son Bohemond II succeeded him under the regency of Roger of Salerno (nephew of Tancredi), who repulsed an attack of the Seljuk Turks in 1114. In 1119, in the battle known as Ager sanguinis (Field of Blood), also Ruggero died and the Principality of Antioch became a vassal state of Jerusalem, with King Baldwin II regent of the principality until 1126.

Hugh of Vermandois (1057-1102)

Son of King Henry I of France and brother of the new king, Philip I, Hugh was Count of Vermandois and of Valois. He participated in the First Crusade and initially he was considered to be one of the four commanders of the expedition. He fought in Nicaea and Dorileo, and during the conquest of Antioch he earned the nickname of "great", but when the Turks besieged the city in their turn, he returned to his homeland, demoralized and discouraged without fulfilling the vow he had made. After the capture of Jerusalem, ashamed, returned to the Holy Land, but wounded in battle, died at Tarsus in Cilicia.

The first patriarchs of the Latin Church of the kingdom of Jerusalem

Until 1099, before the conquest of the Holy City by the Crusade, the Christians of the Holy Land were under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox patriarch of Jerusalem. At the beginning of the crusade Arnolfo di Roieux was under the authority of Bishop Adhemar, delegate of the pope and spiritual leader of the First Crusade. At the latter's death (1098), Arnolfo shared the care of the faithful with the other papal legate, Peter Narbone. He did not believe the veracity of the discovery of the "Spear of Longinus" and for this reason he was in constant conflict with Raymond S. Gilles. He was chosen, with Peter the Hermit, to pronounce the sermon before the attack in Jerusalem. The true cross, recovered after the conquest of the holy city, was considered the most important and most sacred relic of the kingdom of Jerusalem.

On 1 August 1099, after the departure of Raymond to Tripoli, Arnolfo di Roieux, thanks to the support of Godfrey of Bouillon, was elected Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. After his election, he imposed the use of the Latin

rite on the Christians of the Holy Land, thereby arousing discontent among Greek-Orthodox. Since it was later found that his election as patriarch was not legal because he was still a deacon, at the end of the month of December 1099 he was deposed. Dagoberto from Pisa took this place, for disposal of Pope Paschal II. Arnolfo, an ally of Baldwin I, however, was appointed Archdeacon of Jerusalem.

To Dagobert, who died in 1107, Gibelino of Arles was succeeded, while the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem Simon II took refuge in Constantinople. On the death of Gibellino, which took place in 1112, Arnolfo de Roeux became the new patriarch of Jerusalem, and this time with full rights. As soon as he was installed, however, he forbade non-Catholic rites in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and this made him very unpopular and earned him many enemies. Accused of various crimes, in 1115 he was deposed again, but the following year he was reinstated in his office. At the death of King Baudouin he claimed the throne of Baldwin for Le Bourg. He died in 1118, Guermondo (1119-1128), Stephen of Chartres (1128-1130), William I (1130-1145), Fulcher (1146-1157), Amalric (1153-1180) and Heraclius (1180-1191) succeeded him in order.

The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem kingdom was divided into four archdioceses (Tyre, Caesarea, Nazareth, Petra), each of which was headed by an archbishop. The Latin Patriarch also controlled the Latin Quarter in Jerusalem, the site of the Holy Sepulchre. After the fall of Jerusalem (1187), the seat of the Latin Patriarchate was first moved to Tyre, then to Acre (1191), to Jerusalem in 1229 and again to Acre in 1244.

The fall of St. John Acre (1291) marked the end of the kingdom of Jerusalem, but in spite of this, the Church of Rome continued to appoint new patriarchs, but only nominally. In 1374 the seat of the patriarchate of Jerusalem was moved to Rome at the Basilica of St. Lorenzo outside the walls. Throughout the fourteenth century, the Latin Patriarch continued to have jurisdiction in the Greek islands of Cyprus, Lesbos, Chios, Crete, Rhodes and Narso.

The establishment of the Latin states (Edessa, Antioch, Jerusalem, Tripoli)

The siege of Nicaea (May 14-June 19, 1097)

The armies of the First Crusade assembled in Constantinople between the months of December 1096 and May 1097. After having sworn

allegiance to the Byzantine emperor and promised the return of the territories which formerly belonged to the empire, but for the time occupied by the Turks, they departed from Constantinople, 14th May they reunified in Kocaeli and from there they made their way to Nicaea, former Byzantine city but conquered in 1078 by the Sultanate of Rum Seljuk Turks.

Together with the army a multitude of pilgrims, women and children marched, with food and animals in tow, which hindered the advance crusade to Jerusalem.

The crusader army arranged itself according to agreed positions: Godfrey of Bouillon and his brothers were placed in the east of the city, Bohemond of Taranto, Robert II of Flanders, Robert of Normandy and Stephen of Blois were placed in the west, the south side was assigned to the Bishop Adhemar, the pope delegate and the spiritual leader of the crusade, and Raymond of St. Gilles stood in the last field.



Attack carried out by Sultan Qilij Arslan I against the crusaders who were besieging the city of Nicaea

The Seljuk sultan Qilij Arslan I, who held the family and the treasure at Nicaea, organized an army, and came down from the mountains to its

capital, attacking the side of Raymond. Godfrey, Baldwin, Robert of Flanders, Robert of Normandy, Bohemond and Tancred distinguished themselves in the battle. They were able to repel the Turkish army and put it on the run.

Resumed the siege of the city, the Crusaders captured the sultan's family who were trying to escape. When the conquest of Nicaea seemed next, in the camp crusader came two Byzantine generals sent by Emperor Alexius I. During a break, one of them succeeded in entering the city and promised the Byzantine protection to the Turks against the crusade fury if they surrendered into the hands of Alexis I. So, while the Crusaders were preparing to launch the final attack, they saw the Byzantine gonfalons hoisted on the city walls. Nicaea, one of the most venerated city of Christianity and the capital of the Sultanate of Rum, had been conquered: it was on 19 June, 1097.

This caused discontent among the Christian nobles, who already foretaste the sack and the division of the spoils of war. The nobles were calmed down by the Emperor Alexius I who filled them with praise and gifts and even he managed to get Tancred to swear allegiance to him, because he had not done yet so. The emperor offered freedom to the family of the Sultan and to the entire Turkish population of the city. Such generosity alarmed the Crusaders, who suspected a secret agreement between the Byzantines and Seljuk Turks.

Siege of Dorileo (1st July -3rd July, 1097)

On 25 June 1097 the crusaders, disappointed, left Nicaea and marched to Dorileo, dividing his army into two parts. The largest was in command of Godfrey of Bouillon and formed the rearguard, while the other, under the command of Bohemond of Taranto, had the vanguard position. On 30 June, Bohemond encamped near the ruins of the city of Dorileo (ancient Dorylaeum, today Eskischeir), and after just one day he sighted the Turkish army that the sultan of Nicaea Qilij Arslan had managed to gather groped for revenge after the defeat at Nicaea.

Bohemond organized the defence, but a large number of Turkish troops managed to encircle the Crusaders. When the Turks thought they had the victory in hand, the army led by Godfrey of Bouillon came and penetrated into the encirclement and was reunited with that of Bohemond. The Christian army regrouped and attacked the enemy, prevailing just before the arrival of the troops of the Christian rearguard under the command of

Bishop Adhemar and Raymond. The sultan raised the encirclement and retreated to the mountains. The Crusaders surrounded the hill on which the Turkish army stood abandoned by the sultan and it was exterminated. By then, the Turks no longer constituted an obstacle during the crossing of Anatolia.

The victory of Dorylæon opened the road to Palestine to the Crusaders and offered the Byzantine a chance to conquer Anatolia again.

The conquest of Tarsus (3 July-September 1097)

After the victory of Dorylæon on 3rd July, the Crusaders made their way to Konya, the current Konya. Tancred and Baldwin of Boulogne, at the head of their armies, were sent on ahead. Once in Konya (on 15 August), they found the town deserted and, thus, they went on with the bulk of the army to Caesarea in Cappadocia, on that road there was the city of Tarsus.

But Tancred, the first to arrive at Tarsus, agreed the surrender of the city and settled there. Baldwin, although he arrived later claimed the city for himself since he had the larger army. The population was invited to choose one of the two commanders as their own leader, but when the Turks chose Tancredi, the rival tore and threw down his gonfalon and threatened the people, taking the command of the city.

Baldwin, for fear of retaliation by Tancredi, forbade accommodating, within the city walls, a small contingent of Bohemond, the uncle of Tancredi. The contingent was forced to camp outside the walls and, at night, was massacred by the Turks fled from Tarsus.

Baldwin was forced into hiding to save himself from the anger of the Crusaders, who, not being able to react differently, unloaded their fury over the Turks remained in the city, slaughtering them. Meanwhile a fleet had arrived in the port of Tarsus carrying Christian pilgrims from Flanders, Switzerland and France, and directed to Jerusalem.

The establishment of the county of Edessa (1098-1149)

Departing from Tarsus, the crusaders of Tancred, followed by those of Baldwin, went towards Mamistra, where the two, after an armed confrontation, made peace. In a short time Tancred, who soon after rejoined the main army at Marash, dominated all Cilicia including Alexandretta.

On the contrary Baldwin left Mamistra and he reunited immediately with the Crusaders who had stopped at Marash. While Baldwin was in this

town he received a request for help by Toros, Armenian prince and governor of Edessa, who had managed to maintain the independence of the city paying a heavy tribute to the close emir. He went to Turbessel and conquered it, then marched to Edessa.



Baldwin of Boulogne goes into Edessa

Arriving with a few men in the city, he was cheered by the crowd who resented his prince, who asked protection to Baldwin. Thoros, just to win the sympathies of the Crusader leader, elected him as his heir, but during one of the many popular uprisings, he was killed and Baldwin was hailed liberator and ruler of Edessa.

Baldwin of Boulogne, having assumed the government of the city, conquered some neighbouring territories that were still in the hands of the Turks. He was a widower, then he married the daughter of a local nobleman and created the County of Edessa, the first free State in the Near East, which became an important bulwark against the Turks of atabec Kerbogha, governor of Mosul.

Baldwin did not return the county to the Byzantines and ruled until 1100, the year in which after the death of his brother Godfrey of Bouillon, he was elected king of Jerusalem. Baudouin I gave the management of the new county to his cousin Baldwin of Le Bourg, who subsequently was to be king of Jerusalem by the name of Baldwin II.



Thoros of Edessa was killed as he tried escape

Baldwin II held dominion over the county until 1118, when he was elected king of Jerusalem, passing the domain of the county to Joscelin de Countray and his heirs.

The Constitution of the Principality of Antioch (1098-1268)

The main body of the crusader army, when it left Konya, was directed towards Caesarea in Cappadocia, then on Marash (October 1097), where the other crusaders joined. Here their commanders (except Baldwin, who had stopped at Edessa) decided to march towards Antioch, without waiting for the arrival of spring. After the city of Chinarsi was over, on 21st October 1097, they came in sight of Antioch, manned by a strong contingent Muslim. In Antioch, the apostle Peter was appointed bishop and many pilgrims came there to pray at the tomb of St. Babila.

In November, a Genoese fleet arrived in the port of San Simeon, bringing supplies and equipment for a war. In December, the supplies of food began to run low and Bohemond and Robert of Flanders left the camp in search of food and timber, but even they were attacked by a contingent sent from Damascus to the rescue of Antioch, after defeating them, they managed to get to the precious supplies in the camp crusader, the same

supplies they had raided in nearby lands, even though they were insufficient to satisfy the needs of the multitude of pilgrims following the army crusader.



Battle near Lake of Antiochia during the siege of the city

In the month of January 1098 the lack of food caused the death of humans and animals. Desertions began. Robert of Normandy took refuge in Laodicea, but soon he returned with the Crusaders who, with insistence, had invited him to fall into line. Even Peter the Hermit tried desertion in vain, but Tancred took him back to the camp. The Bishop Adhemar invited the Crusaders not to crash and to trust in divine grace, and to prevent further escapes he established a tribunal to punish defectors.

In February, the Byzantine contingent, under the command of General Tatikios, left the field in search of reinforcements and Bohemond took the opportunity to accuse the Byzantines had not honoured the deal of help and support to the crusade signed in Constantinople, so he let it be known that the city of Jerusalem, after the conquest, would not have been returned to them. On 9th February 1098 Bohemond still defeated an army sent by the Emir of Aleppo. In March an English fleet brought food and materials for the siege from Constantinople. With the arrival of spring supplies from Cyprus, Rhodes and Chios, began to flow with regular continuity, but inside the walls provisions were beginning to run low.

Meanwhile, Godfrey of Bouillon had recovered from a bad wound received in battle, and his active return among the troops sparked renewed hope and joy. In April, a delegation from Egypt to negotiate a peace agreement, although at the beginning it was welcomed, it was rejected.

Immediately after a Turkish delegation left from Antioch to discuss the possibility of surrender of the city if they had been spared the lives of its inhabitants, obtained a respite, during which both Christians and Turks could move freely in their respective fields and in the city; but due to an accident that caused the death of a knight, hostilities flared up again.

However, Bohemond wanted to take possession of the city at all costs. And so, having bribed the head of the main towers of Antioch, he offered the crusade leaders the opportunity to take the city without bloodshed. Some nobles opposed and the proposal was not accepted.

Meanwhile Kerbogha, Prince of Mosul, with a massive army that also included those of the emir of Damascus and the Emir of Homs, was dangerously close to Antioch. Fearing the worst Stephen of Blois left the camp to meet the Byzantine Emperor who was on the march to Antioch to bring relief to the Crusaders. Arriving in Filomelio he met the emperor Alexius I and General Tatikios, who guiltily reported that the crusading army had been defeated. The emperor, convinced by what was narrated by the noble crusader, decided to return home. The Crusaders, as a result, interpreted this gesture as a real betrayal. It was 2 June 1098.



Kerbogha defeated by Godfrey of Bouillon in Antioch

When among the Crusaders spread the news of the imminent arrival of the Muslim army, their commanders considered the proposal of Bohemond, and the city was conquered, but thanks to the betrayal of Firouz, responsible for the three main towers of the city, - to reassure the Crusaders on its actual availability of betrayal - showed the corpse of his brother that he had killed because he did not accept his behaviour.

Climbing the walls at night, the city was taken, a massacre followed. A group of Turks took refuge in the fortified citadel placed at the highest point of the city, resisting the Crusaders' attacks. But in the morning of 3rd June 1098 the gonfalon of Bohemond waved on the yards of the city.

The festivities began and Bishop Adhemar reinstated in his role the Greek Patriarch John II, a former prisoner of the emir.

During the siege, the emir of Antioch had sent messengers in Persia, Asia Minor, Damascus, Jerusalem and Arabia to get help. On 4th June, the army of Kerbogha, came to Antioch, began the siege of the city and the ships that brought supplies to the Crusaders, and that were moored in the port of San Simeon, moved away from the coast.

After a few days, inside the walls, hunger, fear and desertions took over and Kerbogha was already looking forward victory. Among so much disorientation Tancredi solemnly swore that he would stay to defend the city with his army; the other nobles and their armies did the same thing.



The Bishop Adhemar attends the unearthing of the sacred spear

The excitement caused by such oaths, strengthened by a series of premonitions of victory announced by monks and bishops in the city, and

the discovery of the "spear of Longinus" (according to tradition the spear that had pierced the side of Christ) infused courage and strength to Crusaders.

Peter the Hermit was sent into the enemy camp to propose a duel between representatives of the two sides: the winners would be awarded the victory, thus avoiding unnecessary bloodshed. But the monk was mocked by Kerbogha and sent to town again.

A strong enthusiasm was created by the discovery of the holy lance, on 28 June 1098, the crusading army went out from the walls to confront the Muslim army; Raymond remained in the city to garrison the fortified citadel that was still in Muslim hands, while the bishop Adhemar, holding the "sacred spear", urged the crusaders crying "*God will sit*"



Battle under the walls of Antioch. - The Bishop Adhemar wields the Holy lance

The first clash was that of Hugh of France, who defeated the Turks placed to defend the bridge of Antioch. The rest of the Christian army arranged in a way not to be surrounded and Kerbogha, at the sight of that arrangement, ordered the emirs of Damascus and Aleppo (sons of the

Turkish sultan Tutush) to place their troops on the way to the port to close any possibility of escape.

The battle that followed, after various vicissitudes, ended with the victory of the crusaders and the escape of the enemy army. When the emirs of Damascus and Aleppo decided to intervene, also Bohemond entered the field, he was helped by Godfrey of Bouillon and Tancred and managed to disperse the Turkish troops, but these, called to battle by their commanders, were subsequently slaughtered by the Crusaders. Kerbogha was forced to flee. It was the summer of 1098.

Waiting in Antioch before leaving for Jerusalem

After the victory, the leaders of the crusaders armies decided that they would resume the march towards Jerusalem in autumn. But in the waiting a plague struck the city, killing thousands of pilgrims, even the Bishop Adhemar fell victim of it, and he died on 1st August 1098. In this difficult situation Godfrey of Bouillon wrote to the pope invoking his help and his presence strengthened opposition between Bohemond and Raymond, who, being the architect of the conquest of the city, claimed its possession.

For their own protection from infection and to procure food supplies, the nobles, with their armies, went out of the city. Bohemond, followed by Tancredi, went to Cilicia and annexed the city of Tarsus, Mamistra and other cities to his principality. Raymond, however, followed by Robert of Normandy and Robert of Flanders, stepped in Syria and in the month of December 1098 reached the city of Marra (Ma'arat), he besieged, conquered and sacked it, and he massacred its population.

The constitution of the Kingdom of Jerusalem

The city of Jerusalem and Palestine were part of the Egyptian caliphate, until in 1078 the Turkish sultan Tutush tore the holy city from the Fatimids of Egypt. But the latter in 1097, taking advantage from the fratricidal struggle broke out between the sons of Tutush (respectively emir of Aleppo and emir of Damascus) allied themselves with one of the brothers against the other one, with the intent to recapture Jerusalem and Palestine. In the month of May 1097 the Egyptian vizier al-Afdal managed to conquer Tyre, but the governor of Jerusalem, who ruled the city on behalf of the emir of Damascus, was able to block the advance of the Egyptians in Palestine. The arrival of the Crusaders in Antioch forced the Turkish army to come to the defence of the city; the Egyptian vizier al-Afdal took

advantage on it, in fact on 26 August 1098 he captured the holy city, granting authority in his own commander.

As soon as the news came that the Fatimids took Jerusalem, the Crusader armies, who had lingered to Antioch to comply with Bohemond's wishes, resumed their march to the holy city. While Tancredi, on behalf of Bohemond, conquered the fortified town of Antioch, Raymond reached the city of Archas, not far from Tripoli, and put it under siege. It was 14 February 1099.

Raymond, after the failed attempt to create his own domain in Antioch, tried to conquer the domain of Tripoli. The Crusaders, who were remained in Antioch, waited for the arrival of other armed groups of Christians, and when Godfrey of Bouillon and the other princes were reunited in Antioch, forced by pilgrims, they also decided to march to Jerusalem. Bohemond accompanied Godfrey of Bouillon to Laodicea, where the whole crusading army regained his composure. Bohemond, for fear that someone laid a trap for his principality, he returned to Antioch. Baldwin also chose not to participate in the march to Jerusalem, for fear of losing the county of Edessa, which he had recently conquered.

During the difficult siege of Archas there was the doubt about the veracity of the discovery of the Holy lance. This divided the army into two factions: believers and unbelievers. At the same time the Byzantine Emperor Alexis made them known that he would follow the Crusaders with its own army. The vizier of Cairo, al-Afdal, taking advantage of the temporary weakness of the Seljuk Turks had taken possession of Palestine and Jerusalem, fearing the arrival of the Crusaders, sent his ambassadors to inform them that he would allow access to Jerusalem to Christians, but only if they were unarmed. The proposal, however, was not accepted.

The crusading army was reunited in Archas, where Raymond had tried to conquer the city but with no result. Meanwhile ambassadors of the emir of Tripoli had arrived and, for fear of losing their domain, they brought gifts and food, and the invitation to the commanders and the noble crusaders to visit the beautiful city. Despite the opposition of Raymond, who wanted to conquer Tripoli for himself, the nobles accepted the gifts and decided to resume the march to Jerusalem (May 1099), proceeding along the coast, constantly replenished by the fleets of Pisa and Genoa. After crossing Botrys, Byblos and Berith, the Crusaders arrived in Sidon and conquered it. Then they reached the city of Haifa and Tyre, and they stopped there to study the next move.

Resuming the march, they arrived at St. John of Acre and the emir, who ruled the city on behalf of the caliph of Egypt, for fear of looting and following the example of other governors of cities crossed by the crusaders, sent rich gifts and food. The Crusaders went on to Caesarea, and camped at the lake with the same name, and then they went to Lydda, where they found the church of S. Giorgio destroyed.

Finally, they took possession of Ramla, which was uninhabited. On 6 June, a delegation of Christians from Bethlehem came to the camp, they asked for help to the Crusaders; Godfrey of Bouillon ordered Tancredi to go to the town with a group of soldiers and after having conquered the city, he visited the stable where, according to tradition, the Saviour was born.



The crusading army arrives in sight of Jerusalem

At dawn of 7 June the crusaders, left Anathot, and climbed the last mountain that separated them from the Holy City. The year before Jerusalem had been conquered by the Fatimids of Egypt, the same who prepared to defend it. The Crusaders, who arrived under the walls, prepared themselves for the siege. After a futile first attack (13 June), they realized they had to equip themselves with siege engines, and for this reason they commissioned some department to provide the wood needed to build them. The summer heat and thirst, however, began to create some worries because before their arrival the wells close to the city had been poisoned.

Meanwhile, in the port of Jaffa a fleet full of precious supplies had arrived. A department of armed men was instructed to go to the port and, after defeating a group of Muslims who wish to obstruct them in Lydda, went to Jaffa, finding the abandoned city and the fleet in flames; fortunately, however, the local Christians were able to rescue supplies just arrived.



The battle for the conquest of Jerusalem

With the recovered materials in Jaffa it was possible to start work for the construction of siege engines. On 8 July, inspired by one of the many visionaries who accompanied the crusader army, the bishops and monks following organized a penitential procession along the walls of Jerusalem, inviting every crusader to come together in prayer. On 13 July, when all was ready, the assault on the city began.

Godfrey of Bouillon and his brother Eustace were leading the assault on the highest mobile platforms, but after a day of fruitless attacks the crusaders had to give up. In the night between 13 and 14 July, and throughout the day of 14, the Crusaders repeated assaults unsuccessfully, until, on 15 July, around noon, a footbridge fell by mobile tower of Godfrey of Bouillon, allowed to Godfrey himself and his men to jump on the walls, where - after - they were joined by other groups of crusaders who had managed to climb the walls with other systems of assault.

In a short time the bulk of the Christian army entered the city and the emir was forced to take refuge in the fortress of David.

A massacre of Muslims began and even the old men, women and children were not spared. The Crusaders penetrated in the mosque of Omar, where some Egyptian had taken refuge, and even there the massacre

was renewed. Godfrey of Bouillon did not attend the bloodbath, and, followed by some soldiers, he went unarmed and barefoot to pray in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

After the crusaders had known about their commander's act of devotion, they suspended massacres and went also, in silence and prayer, to the Church of the Resurrection. It was 15 July 1099.

The next day some crusader commanders thought to eliminate the survivors saved the day before and in anticipation of the arrival of a new Muslim army, all the survivors, including old men, women and children, were killed, the same fate befell the Jews, who were burned into their synagogue. The Muslims, who had taken refuge in the fortress of David, however, were spared thanks to the intercession of Raymond of St. Gilles.

Finished the slaughter and cleaned up the city, the "true cross of Christ," was found, the same that the Christians of Jerusalem had been stolen from the Egyptians during the siege. After having carried in procession through the streets of the city, the true cross was kept in the Church of the Resurrection. After a few days, the Crusaders leaders elected Godfrey of Bouillon King of Jerusalem (22 July). But Godfrey did not want to wear the golden crown in the place where Christ had brought that with thorns, and, instead, he chose to assume the title of Protector of the Holy Sepulchre "*Advocatus Sancti Sepulchri*". On 29 July, Pope Urban II died: he had not had time to know the news of the victory crusade.

The Battle of Ascalon.

Before the Crusaders conquered Jerusalem, the Turks of Syria and Persia were at war against the Fatimids of Egypt. Now, however, the people of Damascus and Baghdad were expecting a lot from the "enemy" al-Afdal, vizier of Cairo, and hoped that these give some Muslim counter-offensive against the Crusaders. Al-Afdal did not take persuading. In a short time he set up a powerful army that joined several warriors from different regions in Muslim hands. The aim was to expel the Crusaders from Jerusalem and Palestine.

At the news of the initiative Egyptian, Godfrey of Bouillon sent his brother Eustace, accompanied by Tancredi and Robert II of Flanders to explore, for news on the consistency and the real capacity of the Muslim army. Received the necessary information, after a church service and blessing of the weapons, the crusading army led by Godfrey of Bouillon

took the road to face the enemy. Despite their reluctance, but entreated by their peers, even Raymond and Robert of Normandy marched.



The battle of Ascalon

The Christian army gathered in Ramla, from where it marched to Ascalon. The Emir of Ramla, surprised by the enthusiasm shown by the Christian soldiers who were preparing to face a dangerous enemy, vowed to Godfrey that he would convert himself to the Christian religion, since it gave him so much strength and courage.

Arriving near Ascalon, the crusaders found the Muslim army ready for battle and their fleet, loaded with weapons and war machines, in the harbour.

The dust raised by the herds of the Crusaders gave the Muslims the impression that the Christian army was larger than it actually was. This intimidated them and their leaders incited them to battle in vain. The crusader attack was able to create wide gaps in the ranks of the enemy and the troops, commanded by Tancred, by Robert of Normandy and Robert of Flanders, managed to get to the Egyptian command post and to take possession of their standards.

At the sight of so much audacity, Muslim warriors tried to escape to the port, but were thwarted by the men of Raymond, who followed them until the sea, where they hoped to find refuge on the Egyptian fleet that awaited them. Many of them killed, many were drowned. In the battlefield men of

Godfrey massacred Muslims who remained motionless and petrified, waiting to be pierced.

The vizier al-Afdal, who watched disbelieving the pitiful scene and the defeat of his army from the walls of Ascalone, he cursed Allah because he had abandoned his soldiers who were committed to face an army protected by a stronger God.

This important victory was followed by the usual looting of many treasures left by the Egyptians in their camps. However, Godfrey of Bouillon and Raymond quarrelled over possession of the city, the first one, in fact, wanted to annex it to the kingdom of Jerusalem, while the other thought he could finally take possession of an important domain.

The same scene was repeated when, returning from Ascalon, the crusaders conquered Arsuf. The dispute threatened to escalate into an armed confrontation between the two. The invaluable contribution of Tancred, Robert of Normandy and Robert of Flanders begged the worst and the two contenders were forced to make peace. In fact, however, the city of Ascalon remained under Egyptian rule and, in the following months, from it dangerous attacks started against the kingdom of Jerusalem.



Baldwin I king of Jerusalem

With the capture of Jerusalem and the victorious battle of Ascalon, the first crusade was intended formally closed. Most of the crusaders, having fulfilled their vows praying in the church of the Holy Sepulchre, returned home, bringing with them new cultural, agricultural and technological

experiences, and finding fertile soil, they began the rebirth of Europe, making it out slowly the stalemate in which it had fallen in the Middle Ages. But the Crusader presence in Palestine was not established, it was necessary to acquire other territories to ensure the safety of the Latin states just created.

The establishment of the county of Tripoli

In February 1099 the Muslim governor of Tripoli sent his ambassadors to the crusade leaders approaching the city bringing them gifts and an invitation to visit the beautiful city. Raymond, since he had not yet succeeded in gaining his own kingdom, on 14 February attacked the city of Arqa (Archas) and put it under siege. On 13 May, even if he has not conquered the city yet, he rejoined with the main army on the march towards Jerusalem.

After the conquest of the Holy City (1099) and the victorious battle of Ascalon (1099), Raymond, an ally of the Byzantines, reworked the project of conquest of Tripoli. And so in 1101, he departed from Constantinople at the head of a diversified army, which was part of a large contingent of Lombardi, advanced to Asia Minor, marching to Ankara, where it was believed that Bohemond was held captive, whom - you do not understand why - the Lombardi wanted to deliver at all costs. However, they did not know that the Turks, who held him prisoner since 1100, had transferred him to an area close to the Caucasus.

Arrived in Ankara (Ancyra), he conquered it and gave it to the Byzantines. Then he went on the march towards the north, suffering constant attacks, then he headed for east toward Mersivan, where his army was surrounded and cut off. Raymond managed to escape and repair to Constantinople with a few riders. The same fate befell another column direct to Konya, also massacred during his retreat in Eraclea.

In 1102 Raymond attacked and conquered Tartus (Tortosa), which became the military basis of the expeditions to Tripoli. In 1103, with the help of the Byzantines, he built the "Fortress of Saint-Gilles", located on Monte Pellegrino, then, in 1104, he won Gibilet (Byblos), located along the coast between Beirut and Tripoli, and he claimed the title of Count in spite of Tripoli even if he had not conquered the city yet. In September 1104, during the Turkish attack to the citadel Saint-Gilles, Raymond was seriously injured and died in the month of February 1105. His place was taken by his nephew William Jordan.

In 1109, after a long siege, the Crusader army under the command of King Baldwin I of Jerusalem, Baldwin II of Edessa, Tancredi Prince of Galilee and regent of Antioch, Guglielmo Giordano and Bertrand II, son of Raymond, was able to conquer Tripoli. Thus the county of Tripoli was born; this county was partly attributed to William Giordano as a vassal of the principality of Antioch, and partly to Bertrand, son of Raymond, as a vassal of the kingdom of Jerusalem.

Immediately after the conquest (12 July 1109) the Crusaders sacked the city; a portion of the population was deprived of their possessions and enslaved, the other was expelled. In 1110 Bertrand, the illegitimate son of Raymond, made assassinate William Jordan, claiming two-thirds of the city for himself and a third for his allies Genoese. In 1111, Bertrand extended the possessions of the county with the city of Sidon and in 1124 with that of Tyre. First Raymond II (1137-1152) and then Raymond III (1152-1187) succeeded Bertrand.

In 1187, after the fall of Jerusalem, Tripoli was annexed to the principality of Antioch.

Expeditions after the first crusade

When Paschal II was elected pope excommunicated all the Crusaders, including the noble Hugh of Vermandois and Stephen of Blois, who had not kept the vow because they had abandoned ship before the conquest of Jerusalem.



Bertrand riceve la resa di Tripoli

Since the return home of the Crusaders, who had fulfilled their votes, had unprotected whole areas of newly conquered territories, the newly

formed Latin states were in constant need of the West, that had sent several armed expeditions between 1101 and 1147.

They were not real crusades because the canon law had not completely defined them yet. Instead they were armed pilgrimages, which, however, eased - even if temporarily - the shortage of men in arms in defence of the Holy Land.

The political organization of the Latin states of the Near East imitated the European feudal model, according to which the princes, in a discretionary way, conceded much power to their vassals in exchange for their protection and their willingness to take up arms if necessary.

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Filippo Tarantino

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Filippo Tarantino. Born and raised in Palermo, he specialized in systems television and radio engineering, he gained work experience within different in to ENEL as a technical specialist in real estate management. Always sensitive to social issues, between 2000 and 2007 has written several articles for magazines Palermo “Arenella News” and “Luce del Faro”, also organizing the conference “*MONTE PELLEGRINO: La sua costa e il mare*”. Founder and partner association “Pro Arenella”, as well as co-founder and President of the Association non-profit organization “*Antonio Caponnetto*”, organized and coordinated, in the district of Palermo Arenella, defined “difficult”, cultural activities and ludic in favor the local community. For several years he devoted himself with appreciable enthusiasm and commitment, to the study of the history of the Middle Ages.



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