

The Holy Lance of Antioch: Power, Devotion and Memory on the First Crusade

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In the early summer of 1098 a rough conglomeration of armed pilgrim groups from north and south Francia, the Low Countries, the Rhineland and southern Italy – what, today, historians would usually describe as the First Crusade – found itself on the brink of annihilation, thousands of miles from home, in northern Syria. Having prosecuted a gruelling eight-month siege of Antioch, these disparate Latin forces finally broke into the city on 3 June and rampaged through its streets. They failed, however, to capture Antioch's citadel and, on 4 June, advance scouts from a huge Muslim relief army, led by Kerbogha of Mosul, reached the city. In a bizarre reversal of fortune the Franks now found themselves besieged within the city.

In the weeks that followed the First Crusaders reached their lowest ebb. Trapped within Antioch, they were surrounded and outnumbered perhaps four to one. Within days of his arrival, Kerbogha began using the citadel as a staging post from which to launch a series of frontal assaults on the city below, prompting the most sustained and intense fighting of the entire crusade. Terrified and exhausted Franks began to desert, among them William of Grandmesnil, brother-in-law to the crusade leader Bohemond of Taranto. Those who remained faced starvation in a city already denuded of resources.¹ The crusaders had experienced food shortages before, but this was a new, extreme form of famine, one in which the poor began to eat their shoes and it was feared that some might resort to cannibalism.²

This 'second siege' of Antioch was the worst crisis of the First Crusade. Immobilised by fear and starvation, with morale crumbling, the Franks were brought to the brink of defeat. But somehow the crusaders survived and ultimately prevailed. By 28 June 1098, they had elected to face Kerbogha in open battle and, on that day, won a seemingly miraculous victory, routing the Muslim army and taking full, uncontested possession of Antioch.³ To date, historians have looked to the unearthing of a relic of the Holy Lance on 14 June 1098 to explain this dramatic change in fortunes, arguing that the Lance's discovery transformed the crusaders' state of mind, acting as a unifying and empowering catalyst to action.⁴ This article challenges that interpretation, making a case for a careful re-examination of the accepted narrative of Antioch's second siege and for a reassessment of the impact and significance of the Holy Lance.⁵

The context of the Holy Lance's discovery

On 10 June, an otherwise unknown Provençal peasant named Peter Bartholomew was admitted to a private meeting with Bishop Adhémar of Le Puy, the papal legate on the crusade, and Count Raymond of Toulouse, *de facto* leader of the southern French crusaders.⁶ In the interview that followed Peter stated that, since 30 December 1097, he had experienced five separate visions of St Andrew the Apostle (accompanied by another figure, later revealed to be Christ), the last of which had occurred that same day. Peter asserted that, in the course of these visions, St Andrew had revealed that the Holy Lance was buried in the Basilica of St Peter in Antioch. According to Christian tradition, this Lance was the spear, wielded by the Roman soldier Longinus, that pierced Jesus' body at his crucifixion. St Andrew instructed that this relic should be unearthed by the crusaders and used as a standard because 'he who carries this lance in battle shall never be overcome by the enemy'. The Apostle also appears to have

specified that the Lance should be given to Raymond of Toulouse as 'God set it aside for him at birth'. Peter stated that, up until now, he had been too frightened to reveal this story, even though St Andrew had repeatedly returned to reprimand him for his silence. But, with the crusade on the edge of collapse, he had at last come forward.⁷

Initially, reactions to Peter's story seem to have varied. Adhémar, we are told, 'thought the tale untrue', while Count Raymond 'believed it at once and placed Peter Bartholomew in the custody of his chaplain, Raymond'.⁸ This latter Raymond was Raymond of Aguilers, who wrote a narrative account of the First Crusade soon after 1101. He was the key source for Peter Bartholomew's interview on 10 June and for the entire history of the Holy Lance, as well as a passionate advocate of the relic's significance and authenticity. Given all the above, Raymond's testimony has the advantage of his apparent proximity to events, tempered by his marked partisanship.⁹

In light of Raymond of Aguilers's perspective, it is interesting that he chose so clearly to record Adhémar's doubts about Peter's visions. In the eleventh century, the constituent elements of Peter's story – the appearance of apparitions, revelations about sacred relics – would not, in of themselves, have been viewed as fantastical or improbable. Instead, the bishop's caution was probably, at least in part, a consequence of Peter's low social status. As a senior cleric, it was, after all, his responsibility to validate carefully the authenticity of visions, miracles and relics. An important litmus test in assessing putative instances of spiritual experience or divine intervention was the willingness of a visionary or witness to confirm the veracity of their experience with a sacred oath. And, although Peter apparently 'swore the whole story was quite true', his oath as a peasant likely carried less weight than that of a cleric or nobleman.¹⁰ A further area of concern for Adhémar may have been the existence of another relic of the Holy Lance in the relic collection of the Byzantine Emperor in Constantinople, a relic which the bishop may himself have seen

1097. Greek tradition held that St Helena had discovered the Lance in Jerusalem in the fourth century and that this relic was later brought to Constantinople. Even so, the existence of this Constantinopolitan relic would not necessarily have negated the possibility of an Antiochene relic of the Lance, as Adhémar would have been accustomed to the idea that relics were often fragments of a whole object, rather than the whole object itself.¹¹

Putting aside Adhémar's scepticism for the moment, we can be certain that the basic notion of an efficacious sacred relic would have been familiar and attractive to the First Crusaders. Indeed, it has long been recognised that in common with much of eleventh-century western European society, the Franks who set out to reconquer the Holy Land were deeply fascinated by relics. Many brought sacred objects with them on their journey: Bishop Adhémar himself carried a piece of the True Cross, while Raymond of Toulouse took a chalice that had once belonged to the celebrated holy man Robert of Chaise-Dieu. The Latins also picked up numerous relics in the course of the crusade. Robert count of Flanders, for example, became a devotee of St George after a priest in his army stole a relic of the saint's arm from a Byzantine monastery on route to the Holy Land.¹²

By June 1098, the First Crusaders were also becoming accustomed to the idea that 'miraculous' interventions, supernatural forces and celestial portents were affecting the course of their expedition. Raymond of Aguilers described how two knights in 'shining armour' appeared at the battle of Dorylaeum on 1 July 1097 to fight alongside the Franks; how 'God increased the size' of the Latin forces in the battle against Ridwan of Aleppo on 9 February 1098; and how a miraculous rain filled the moat surrounding the siege fort of La Mahomerie in March of that same year.¹³

Moreover, when Peter Bartholomew came forward on 10 June 1098, the crusade appears to have been entering a period of intensified spirituality.¹⁴ Peter may have asserted that he had been experiencing supernatural visitations since December 1097, but

his declaration of these events in June marked the first recorded instance of visionary activity on the expedition. It is, perhaps, not surprising that under the intense pressure of the second siege of Antioch apparitions became more common. Raymond of Aguilers noted in mid-June that 'now reported revelations of our comrades became rife'.¹⁵ He described how, on 11 June, a priest named Stephen of Valence announced that he had experienced a vision in which Christ and the Virgin Mary scolded the crusaders for their sinful ways and ordered them to undergo five days of purificational purgation. According to Raymond, Stephen then 'swore upon the cross to verify it, and finally signified his willingness to cross through fire or throw himself from the heights of a tower if necessary to convince the unbelievers.'¹⁶ It is interesting to note that even a priest like Stephen, who had sworn an oath, felt compelled to offer to undergo an ordeal to authenticate his story.¹⁷

The impact of the discovery of the Holy Lance

On 14 June 1098 southern French crusaders began searching for the Holy Lance in the Basilica of St Peter. This appears to have been a carefully orchestrated event, possibly instigated by Raymond of Toulouse, because we are informed that 'all other Christians' were expelled from the church before a select group of thirteen men, including Peter Bartholomew, Count Raymond himself, the bishop of Orange and Raymond of Aguilers, began to dig.¹⁸ Alive to the Lance's potential significance should it indeed be found and encouraged by Peter Bartholomew's apparent willingness to associate the relic with him definitively, the count seems to have been keen to control the environment in which the search took place, and thus prevent accusations of outside interference and acquire the kudos attached to any discovery. Perhaps Raymond envisioned a rather theatrical set piece excavation, in which he would be closely, even physically,

involved in the moment of unearthing, but this was not to be. The digging continued all day long 'to a depth of two men's stature' without any success, prompting some to lose heart.¹⁹ Raymond of Toulouse himself left the Basilica, apparently to help guard the citadel, but perhaps in part to distance himself from what might prove to be a fruitless hunt. In the evening fresh replacements were brought in to continue the work, but still nothing was found, Raymond of Aguilers to record that:

The youthful Peter Bartholomew, seeing the exhaustion of our workers, stripped his outer garments and, clad only in a shirt and barefooted, dropped into the hole. He then begged us to pray to God to return His Lance to the crusaders so as to bring strength and victory to His people. Finally, in His mercy, the lord showed us his Lance and I, Raymond, the author of this book, kissed the point of the Lance as it barely protruded from the ground.²⁰

There can be little doubt that, to start with at least, most of the First Crusaders accepted the authenticity of Peter's discovery. Bishop Adhémar may still have had his misgivings, but, as Colin Morris has shown, there is no definitive evidence to indicate that, at this stage at least, any of the princes aired suspicions.²¹ The discovery of the Holy Lance does seem to have had a positive effect on the Frankish army's morale. In his second letter to Manasses, written in July 1098, Anselm of Ribemont described how this 'precious pearl revived the hearts of all our men'. The letter composed by the citizens of Lucca in October 1098, but based on recollections of the First Crusader Bruno of Lucca, who appears to have left the siege of Antioch in mid-July, described the relic as a divine 'favour' and noted that after its unearthing the crusaders 'rejoiced and magnified the mercy of God'. Raymond of Aguilers wrote of 'the happiness [...] which filled Antioch', while the author of the *Gesta Francorum* recalled that, 'throughout all

the city there was boundless rejoicing'. This positive reaction does not appear to have been confined to Latin Christian crusaders, as Peter Tudebode noted that a 'great euphoria seized the city' as Antioch's indigenous Greek, Armenian and Syrian populace likewise celebrated.²²

Modern historiography has been dominated by the view that the Lance's discovery had a transformative effect upon the crusaders' spirits. The unearthing of such an extraordinarily powerful relic, it has been argued, coming at the very moment at which the crusade seemed to face certain destruction, was interpreted by many Latins as an irrefutable indication of God's renewed support for the expedition. John France, for example, wrote that the Lance and the visions associated with it 'profoundly improved the depressed morale of the crusader army'.²³ Numerous historians have gone yet further, positing a clear connection between the Lance's discovery and the events that followed. Hans Eberhard Mayer, for example, suggested that, 'the immediate effects of the discovery [of the Lance] were enormous. The armies' morale was raised and all were united in the determination to break the blockade and destroy Kerbogha'. Jonathan Riley-Smith similarly argued that the reaction to the relic 'was an important element in the decision to sortie out of Antioch and engage Kerbogha's force'.²⁴ The widely accepted notion that the advent of the Holy Lance directly inspired the First Crusaders to seek to resolve the second siege of Antioch through a pitched battle with Kerbogha has had significant consequences for our understanding of the expedition. First, it has marked the unearthing of the Lance as a pivotal moment in the fortunes of the crusade. Secondly, it has fostered the impression that the crusaders were possessed by an ecstatic and impassioned form of spiritual piety, one powerful enough to drive them to face seemingly suicidal odds in battle.

Although the Lance's discovery does appear to have had an effect on crusader morale, the degree and significance of its impact have, to date, been exaggerated. This article argues that

there was no direct, unbroken link between the unearthing of the Lance and the decision to fight Kerbogha, and that, in fact, the crusaders may actually have sought to surrender before 28 June 1098. It also suggests that the notion that the Holy Lance had acted as an all-empowering catalyst only truly took hold in the crusaders' minds after 28 June as the cult of veneration surrounding the relic developed, and that, therefore, the wider influence of the story of the Lance upon medieval conceptions of the First Crusade's progress and the very ideal of crusading were dependent, at least in part, upon a construction or collectivisation of memory.

To some extent, the current consensus on the impact of the Holy Lance is grounded in a reasoned examination of the evidence. Historians believe that the crusaders were directly inspired to act by the Holy Lance because that is what our knowledge of contemporary attitudes towards relics would lead us to expect and what many of the primary sources for the First Crusade tell us.

Beyond the contemporary obsession with relics referenced above, there are more precise comparators to the role of, and reception of, the Holy Lance. These demonstrate that Latin Christians would have been acculturated to the notion that a relic might play a role in military affairs and, more precisely, influence the outcome of a battle, campaign or expedition.²⁵ Of course, in seeking to accurately gauge the Lance's impact we are hampered by the fact that all the primary sources relating to its discovery were written after the battle of Antioch on 28 June 1098. On 11 September 1098, the crusader princes stated in a letter to the pope that: 'We were so comforted and strengthened by [the Lance's] discovery and by so many other divine revelations that some of us who had been discouraged and fearful beforehand, then became courageous and resolute to fight, and encouraged each other.'²⁶ The *Gesta Francorum* corroborated this story in a passage that has served to define the way we think about the Holy Lance. An eyewitness account of the crusade, written by a southern Italian

Norman follower of Bohemond, the *Gesta* acted as the template for many of the narratives of the expedition that were subsequently written in the twelfth century, making its version of events hugely influential.²⁷ Its anonymous author described the unearthing of the Holy Lance and then went on immediately to note that ‘from that hour we decided on a plan of attack, and all our leaders forthwith held a council.’²⁸ These words prompt the reader to imagine that the crusaders made an immediate decision to fight Kerbogha and to expect that the battle of Antioch must have followed hard on the heels of the Lance’s discovery. But the *Gesta Francorum’s* account of these events is misleading. The Holy Lance was discovered on 14 June 1098, but it was two weeks before the crusaders went into battle on 28 June. How can this often overlooked hiatus be explained?²⁹

The two-week delay

No evidence survives to indicate that the crusaders were actively prevented from initiating military action against their Muslim besiegers between 14 and 28 June. According to Raymond of Aguilers, Peter Bartholomew received a new visitation from St Andrew and Christ during the night of 15-16 June, prompting him to recommend that all Franks ‘turn from sin to God and offer five alms because of the five wounds of the Lord’ and that the discovery of the Lance should be commemorated on 21 June. Alms do appear to have been collected, but no evidence survives regarding Peter’s projected celebration of the Lance.³⁰

It seems highly unlikely that the delay was the result of military necessity. For one thing, past precedent showed that the Franks did not need two weeks to prepare for a battle; they had, after all, defeated the relief army led by Ridwan of Aleppo in February 1098 with just a few days’ warning.³¹ And any decision to delay battle, were it deliberate, would have been deeply ill advised, given that the First Crusaders were now in the grip of the

worst famine experienced during their campaign, with each passing day more gravely eroding military resources in terms of manpower and cavalry mounts.³²

It is possible that the Latin command structure was crippled in late June by a leadership contest, one triggered or exacerbated by Raymond of Toulouse's recently conferred status as patron of the Holy Lance. Ralph of Caen certainly argued that long-standing tensions between the Provençals and the southern Italian Normans flared up during the second siege of Antioch, noting that 'the quarrel [between these groups] did not decrease, but rather increased' after the invention of the Holy Lance. But this section of Ralph's text, detailing the Lance's story and Bohemond's supposed scepticism about its authenticity, is problematic because it summarized events and attitudes from a much wider chronological period. Ralph alluded to the dispute over tenure of specific sectors of Antioch, which flared up in the winter of 1098/1099 and described the ordeal by fire undergone by Peter Bartholomew in April 1099. Given Bohemond's own expressions of apparent support for the Holy Lance in the princes' letter of 11 September 1098, it seems probable that Ralph of Caen used hindsight and a blurring of chronology to exaggerate Bohemond's initial doubts and to amplify the extent of inter-Latin rivalry in June 1098.³³

One might also suggest that the Franks had somehow garnered intelligence indicating that Kerbogha's army was itself beset by factionalism and therefore elected to delay battle in the hope that the Muslim siege might falter and disintegrate. But no primary evidence survives to support this theory, and it is rendered even more improbable by other factors. Kerbogha's decision to adopt a slower encirclement siege strategy from 14 June onwards and his disposition of troops on 28 June are indicative of a general confidence in the cohesive unity of the army he had put in the field.³⁴ This suggests that the fractures which ultimately shattered the effectiveness of his forces on 28 June remained unheralded, even to the Muslims, before that date.³⁵

It seems, therefore, that the First Crusaders were not prevented from seeking battle immediately after 14 June; nor could any delay be characterised as having been militarily expedient.³⁶ If the Franks were, in truth, directly inspired by the discovery of the Holy Lance to seek a confrontation with Kerbogha then how can their prevarication be explained? In fact, the balance of evidence suggests that the advent of this relic, spiritually powerful as it may have been, was not enough to send the crusaders marching out of the gates of Antioch to fight a battle against overwhelming odds. This would mean that the Lance's discovery was not the decisive moment of Antioch's second siege, much less a watershed in the progress of the entire crusade. If this is so, then we are still left with two questions: What happened in the two weeks between 14 June and the battle of Antioch? And what eventually prompted the crusaders to risk everything in an open confrontation with Kerbogha on 28 June?

We should consider the possibility that desperation, not hope, shaped the course of events in this period. The Franks must have felt increasingly isolated in the latter stages of the second siege of Antioch. Just before their capture of Antioch on 3 June 1098, their one-time commander-in-chief, Stephen count of Blois, had removed himself to the nearby port of Alexandretta, apparently due to illness. The anonymous author of *Gesta Francorum* described how the crusaders looked, in vain, to his return throughout the second siege: 'When we were shut up in the city, lacking help to save us, we waited each day for him to bring us aid'.³⁷ Stephen had actually fled northern Syria and set off across Asia Minor, only to encounter the Franks' other main hope for reinforcement, the Greeks, at Philomelium.

It seems very likely that, since reaching Antioch in October 1097, the crusaders had been anticipating the arrival of later waves of Latin crusaders and Byzantine forces, perhaps under the command of the Emperor Alexius I Comnenus himself. The combination of what John France called the 'Armenian strategy' and the seizure of the Belen Pass appear to indicate that the Franks

were hoping to channel this manpower from Asia Minor to Antioch as rapidly and efficiently as possible by opening the Cilician passage.³⁸ By early June 1098, Alexius had indeed advanced with his army from Constantinople to Philomelium, capitalising upon the damage done by the crusaders to the power of the Seljuq sultanate of Iconium to reassert Byzantine control over south-western Asia Minor.³⁹ According to Anna Comnena, Alexius' daughter and biographer, the emperor was preparing to march to Antioch when the arrival of Stephen of Blois and news of the crusaders' supposed defeat prompted a dramatic reversal of strategy. Prioritising the security of his empire, on or around 20 June Alexius initiated a full-scale retreat to Constantinople.⁴⁰ It is far from certain that news of the emperor's decision reached Antioch before 28 June. Admittedly Albert of Aachen recorded that it did, describing how 'the terrible report of the emperor turning back and his army dispersing sped across the ramparts of Antioch and afflicted the pilgrims' hearts with great grief and shook much of the boldness from their spirits.'⁴¹ But Albert's chronology is not always reliable so he may have been mistaken. A message from Philomelium would have had to travel to Antioch at near-record speed to have had a direct bearing upon the Frankish princes' decision to seek battle with Kerbogha. Even so, as the second siege of Antioch entered its third week, the crusaders must have begun to realise that they could not rely upon the arrival of reinforcements for their salvation.

If this assessment of the evidence is accurate, then the First Crusaders were in a state of desperation by late June 1098. Their spirits had been temporarily rallied by the discovery of the Holy Lance, but this, by itself, had not been enough to prompt decisive action. By 24 June, surrounded by a numerically superior enemy, ravaged by starvation and seemingly deserted by the Greeks, the Latins appear to have been on the verge of disaster. With this perspective in mind, we must turn to an intriguing and largely neglected episode, one that might lead us to reconsider the accepted narrative of the First Crusade.

Peter the Hermit's embassy

Towards the end of the second siege of Antioch, the crusader princes dispatched two envoys to their enemy Kerbogha. The men chosen as ambassadors were Peter the Hermit, the charismatic crusade preacher who had attempted to desert in January 1098, and an otherwise unknown interpreter named Herluin. We can be fairly certain that this seemingly incongruous episode actually occurred. The fact that it was noted in such a range of eyewitness and near-contemporary primary sources, many of which were drawn from independent stemmas of information, suggests that this was an actual event rather than a piece of imaginary epic *chanson* styling.⁴²

The dating of the embassy is, however, more problematical. In modern scholarship it has, on the basis of Heinrich Hagenmeyer's '*Chronologie de le Première Croisade*', been consistently dated to 27 June 1098, that is, the day before the battle of Antioch.⁴³ This is significant because, if accurate, it would indicate that the crusaders had made a firm decision to fight Kerbogha even before the envoys were dispatched, as the Franks are widely reported to have undergone three days of fasting and spiritual preparation prior to the battle.⁴⁴ But Hagenmeyer's conclusions deserve reconsideration. He cited Anselm of Ribemont's second letter to Manasses as his chief authority for the date of 27 June, but Anselm's testimony actually indicates that the embassy was dispatched on 28 June. Anselm went on to depict the crusaders undergoing limited spiritual preparations, including confession and mass, the timescale of which are unclear, before the battle itself commenced.⁴⁵ It seems, in fact, that Hagenmeyer chose the date of 27 June as a compromise between Anselm's account and the evidence provided by other eyewitnesses. The anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum* clearly stated that the Latins dispatched the embassy and then, upon Peter the Hermit's return,

underwent three days of spiritual purging before marching out of Antioch on 28 June.⁴⁶ The Lucca letter confirmed the observance of three days of religious ritual before the battle, but failed to mention the embassy, while in Raymond of Aguilers' account the embassy and the battle appear to be separated by a few days but the details are unclear.⁴⁷ On this basis, the embassy to Kerbogha could potentially be dated anywhere from 24 to the 28 June. At the very least, the alternative date of 24 June is just as likely as that suggested by Hagenmeyer, and would mean that the crusaders had not necessarily decided to fight their Muslim besiegers before Peter the Hermit was sent to parley.

There is, in addition, considerable disagreement among the primary sources with regard to what actually happened during this embassy. Latin eyewitnesses present in Antioch in June 1098 recorded that Peter the Hermit was sent to Kerbogha to deliver a defiant ultimatum. Raymond of Aguilers provided a succinct account, noting that the princes 'sent Peter the Hermit to Kerbogha, *atabeg* of Mosul, with orders that he give up the siege of Antioch because that city was under the jurisdiction of St Peter and the Christians', but that the Muslim general flatly refused.⁴⁸ The *Gesta Francorum* contains a rather more elaborate version of the same events, embellished by reported speech and containing the additional detail that both sides encouraged the other to convert. Although there was, in all likelihood, a textual relationship between these two sources, their testimony is broadly corroborated by Anselm of Ribemont's second letter to Manasses.⁴⁹ This group of sources does not really present Peter the Hermit's embassy as a serious attempt at negotiation, but rather as an act of intense bravado in the face of enormous odds. In reality, hard-bitten men of war like Bohemond of Taranto would surely have known that, given Kerbogha's significant numerical superiority, Latin intimidation was exceptionally unlikely to succeed. Perhaps, then, the whole affair can simply be explained as a propaganda exercise targeted more at bolstering Frankish spirits than testing Muslim resolve.⁵⁰

There were, however, other explanations for Peter the Hermit's embassy. Contemporary or near-contemporary Latins who were not in Antioch in June 1098, like Fulcher of Chartres and Ralph of Caen, believed that Peter was sent to offer Kerbogha a trial by champions. According to Fulcher, Peter suggested that 'war could be waged by five or ten or twenty or by 100 soldiers chosen from each side, so that with not all fighting at the same time, such a great number would not die, and the party which defeated the other would take the city and realm without dispute'.⁵¹ If this was indeed the nature of Peter's message then, once again, the Latins cannot have held out much hope of it being accepted. Kerbogha had no reason to renounce his overwhelming strength in numbers and, as Fulcher went on to admit, he refused the supposed offer out of hand.⁵²

In fact, if we accept the testimony of the Latin sources, we must conclude that in late June 1098 the princes were not engaging in genuine diplomacy. We might then rationalise Peter's embassy as an exercise in intelligence gathering, as an act of morale-boosting defiance, or simply as a delaying tactic. It should be stressed, however, that all of these seemingly more realistic explanations are purely speculative, having no specific basis in primary evidence.

However, a range of non-Latin, and thus potentially less partisan, sources indicate that the embassy to Kerbogha may have had a more serious diplomatic purpose. Admittedly, this evidence comes from writers who were divorced from events by both space and time, but it nonetheless merits consideration. The Armenian Christian historian, Matthew of Edessa, writing in the 1130s, described what he believed happened in June 1098:

[Kerbogha's] army arrived [at Antioch]. Being seven times larger than the Frankish force, their troops violently besieged and harassed it. Then the Franks became threatened with a famine, because provisions in the city had long become exhausted. More and more hard-

pressed, they resolved to obtain from Kerbogha a promise of amnesty on condition that they deliver the city into his hands and return to their own country.⁵³

A later Arabic source appears to substantiate this version of events. The Muslim chronicler Ibn al-Athir, who was based in Mosul and wrote a wide-ranging general history of the Islamic world up to 1231 in the first quarter of the thirteenth century based upon a range of earlier Arabic accounts, offered the following description of the second siege of Antioch:

After taking Antioch, the Franks camped there for twelve days without food. The wealthy ate their horses and the poor ate carrion and leaves from the trees. Their leaders, faced with this situation, wrote to Kerbogha to ask for safe conduct through his territory, but he refused, saying: "You will have to fight your way out".⁵⁴

Anna Comnena also alluded to the possibility of a negotiated Latin surrender, recording that in June 1098 '[the Latins] had given up hope of saving themselves and were planning to desert the fortifications [of Antioch] and hand them over to the enemy, intent only on preserving their own lives by running away'.⁵⁵ This information was, of course, noted in the context of explaining and excusing Alexius' decision to retreat from Philomelium.

These three pieces of evidence have been largely ignored by modern historians. Believing that the Franks, empowered by the invention of the Holy Lance, had already committed to battle, they have rejected out of hand any notion that the leaders of the First Crusade might have sought terms of surrender. But with the two week delay between 14 and 28 June taken into account and the impact of the Holy Lance downgraded, this material may be viewed in a different light. If we wish to make sense of the decision to send Peter the Hermit as an envoy to Kerbogha, we must at least acknowledge the possibility that he was dispatched to

explore the option of a negotiated end to the second siege of Antioch. This notion does at least have a clear, albeit not conclusively authoritative, evidentiary basis.⁵⁶

On 24 June the Latin princes found themselves trapped within Antioch, facing seemingly inevitable defeat. Even the anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum* conceded that, at the same time as Peter the Hermit was being sent to Kerbogha, 'our men did not know what to do, for they were afraid, being caught between two perils, the torments of hunger and the fear of the Turks'.⁵⁷ The crusade's central goal was the recovery of Jerusalem, not the conquest of Antioch and it is conceivable that, in this darkest hour, the expedition's leaders were prepared to give up one city in pursuit of the other. A negotiated surrender that enabled them to leave northern Syria – perhaps through retreat to Cilicia or Edessa – might well have appealed, promising the renewed possibility of reaching Palestine.⁵⁸

When Kerbogha, from a position of seemingly overwhelming military strength, refused to countenance anything short of unconditional surrender, the possibility of a diplomatic solution to Antioch's second siege evaporated. The crusaders were then presented with a stark choice: fight or face death or captivity. Drawing upon the memories of eyewitnesses, Albert of Aachen offered us a glimpse of this predicament when he wrote that:

The Christian people were besieged and began to suffer from shortage of supplies and lack of bread. They did not have the strength to suffer these things any longer, so great and small consulted together, saying it was better to die in battle than to perish from so cruel a famine, growing weaker from day to day until overcome by death.⁵⁹

To date, historians have been overly confident in their reconstructions of the second siege of Antioch. In reality, unless new evidence comes to light, we will never be able to piece

together its exact progress. There are enough grounds to suggest that we should at least consider a rather intriguing alternative version of the accepted narrative for late June 1098: one in which the unearthing of Holy Lance was not the pivotal moment in the second siege of Antioch; where the relic buoyed crusader morale, but did not prompt an outbreak of ecstatic piety, sending the crusaders running into battle; and, where the Frankish leaders, seemingly paralysed by fear between 14 and 24 June, seriously contemplated a negotiated surrender. It is true that, in the last days of June, the crusaders decided to confront Kerbogha's forces in open battle. But we should perhaps categorise this not as act of blind faith, but rather as an act of desperation.

The memory of the Holy Lance

There is, of course, an obvious problem with this thesis. If the Holy Lance had a limited effect and the crusader princes actually contemplated surrender, then how do we account for the testimony of the surviving Latin primary sources, most especially those like the letters written by Anselm of Ribemont or the citizens of Lucca, that were composed during the course of the crusade and might thus be expected to be less subject to hindsight? Why do they proclaim the significance of the Lance, while offering little or no hint of a projected withdrawal from northern Syria?

One could suggest that the true nature of the negotiation with Kerbogha was a closely guarded secret to which only the ruling elite were privy. This might not have been entirely impossible – after all, during the Third Crusade, Richard the Lionheart appears to have successfully concealed much of the nature and extent of his negotiations with the Ayyubids from the Latin world – but this explanation still is not wholly convincing, not least because the First Crusade was led not by a single individual, but by a council of potentates.⁶⁰ Are we likewise to imagine that a conspiracy of silence and deception operated across all our Latin sources? That

men such as Anselm of Ribemont and Raymond of Aguilers consciously inflated the impact of the Holy Lance, perhaps even suppressed an attempted surrender, all in order to present the crusade as an unfalteringly heroic enterprise empowered by pious spirituality?

It is more likely that the Latin primary sources for the second siege of Antioch were subject to organic rather than systematic forces of construction. The story of the Holy Lance is, in fact, an exemplar of a much wider process; one in which the events of the crusading expedition, experienced by thousands of individuals, were ordered by the collectivisation of memory and then coalesced into recorded 'history'. In all probability, the recollections of June 1098 were shaped not by a conspiracy to deceive, but by a desire to interpret and understand events and, most significantly, by a need to explain the 'miracle' of victory on 28 June. Modern historians have long looked to military science to account for the Franks' defeat of Kerbogha's numerically superior force in the Battle of Antioch.⁶¹ But to the First Crusaders, this was unquestionably an act of God. They looked to the miraculous and the divine to explain how, from a state of bedraggled exhaustion, they had achieved a triumphant success.

Among the crusaders who marched out of Antioch's Bridge Gate on 28 June was Raymond of Aguilers, ardent supporter of the Cult of the Holy Lance, bearing, according to his own testimony, the relic in his own hands. The primary sources record an array of different miracles occurring on that day, some, although certainly not all, of which were associated with the Lance. Raymond described how no one was wounded in his vicinity 'because of the protection of the Holy Lance'. Albert of Aachen believed that, at the start of the battle, Kerbogha was actually blinded and paralysed by the sight of the Lance. Meanwhile, the anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum* detailed the appearance of an army of ghostly soldiers, led by SS George, Demetrius and Mercurius, that fought alongside the Franks.⁶²

It was in this environment, in the aftermath of the battle of Antioch, that the Cult of the Holy Lance truly began to take hold. The agency of this relic helped to explain how and why events had played out as they had. And, during the summer of 1098, the formation of a shared and agreed memory of what had happened that June seems to have begun to take hold, eventually enshrining the transformative effect of the Lance's discovery. It is, of course, significant in this regard that we possess not a single shred of evidence about the events of June 1098 that was composed before the confrontation with Kerbogha.

This process of reconfiguration and coalescence of memory can be clearly observed in the history of Bishop Adhémar of Le Puy's relationship with the Holy Lance, a relationship which also highlights the Lance's role in the struggle to lead the First Crusade. There can be little doubt that in June 1098 Adhémar harboured significant doubts about the relic's authenticity; it was, after all, Raymond of Aguilers, the Lance's advocate, who recorded this scepticism. Raymond also made it clear that it was he, and not the bishop, who personally bore the relic into the battle of Antioch. But already, in the Lucca letter – which, as we have noted, was likely based on Bruno's recollections from July 1098 – it was stated that Adhémar carried the Lance on 28 June.⁶³

The revision of Adhémar's attitude to the Lance deepened and accelerated after his death on 1 August 1098.⁶⁴ The prime movers in this process were Peter Bartholomew and Raymond of Toulouse. The latter presented himself as the secular patron of the Lance's burgeoning cult and consequently as leader of the crusade, all with the visionary's complicit support. Indeed, after the relic was uncovered Peter apparently went so far as to proclaim that St Andrew had appeared to him saying: "Behold God gave the Lance to the count, in fact, had reserved it for him alone throughout the ages, and also made him leader of the crusaders on the condition of his devotion to God."⁶⁵

With Peter Bartholomew's popularity and influence rising in tandem with that of the relic he had uncovered, his continuing

visions became increasingly vocal in their support of Raymond's political cause. The reconfiguration of Adhémar of Le Puy's 'memory' was a cornerstone of this process. Just two days after the bishop's death, Peter Bartholomew proclaimed that he had experienced his first visitation from Adhémar's spirit and the process of appropriating his legacy began. The papal legate was buried in the Basilica of St Peter, within the very hole in which the Holy Lance had been discovered. The physical fusion of the two cults – a masterstroke of manipulation – was reinforced once Peter began relaying the bishop's 'words' from beyond the grave, revealing that Adhémar now recognised the authenticity of the Lance and that his soul had been severely punished for the sin of having doubted the relic, suffering whipping and burning.⁶⁶ With this *volte-face* in his stance on the Holy Lance, Adhémar's spirit became the ideal mouthpiece for the promotion of Count Raymond's political ambitions. The bishop soon 'declared' that his former vassals should transfer their allegiance to the count and that Raymond should be authorised to hand-pick the crusade's new spiritual leader.⁶⁷

Between the summer of 1098 and spring 1099, the count's prestige was boosted by his position as patron of the Cult of the Holy Lance and the support of Peter Bartholomew. In this period, Raymond became the driving force behind the continued progress of the crusade, although his authority was never entirely uncontested. Ultimately, however, his hopes of reaching Jerusalem as the expedition's overall secular commander were foiled. Distracted by his own territorial ambitions in Syria and the Lebanon, damaged by Peter Bartholomew's decision to attempt to prove the veracity of his visions through an ordeal by fire at Arqa – a feat which culminated in Peter's death – Count Raymond was, in the end, forced to share command of the siege of the Holy City with Godfrey of Bouillon.⁶⁸ It is worth noting that, in the aftermath of Peter's ordeal and with the Cult of the Lance faltering, Raymond sought to bolster his position by sending for

the relic of True Cross once carried by Adhémar of Le Puy which was then being held in Latakia.⁶⁹

In the years that followed the First Crusade's conquest of Jerusalem, the details of Adhémar's attitude to and relationship with the Holy Lance gradually blurred. The *Gesta Francorum* was instrumental in this process. Its straightforward account of events, which contained no reference to the bishop's initial doubts, nor to his *volte-face* post mortem, nor indeed to Peter Bartholomew's ordeal, became the template for many of the narrative histories of the crusade written in the first decades of twelfth century. By this time, two interconnected 'facts' about Adhémar appear to have entered collective memory: that he had supported the authenticity of the Lance; and that he had carried the relic in the battle of Antioch on 28 June 1098.

While from a 'factual' perspective we would argue that by the standards of critical method our 'best' evidence indicates that Adhémar was not a patron of the Lance's cult, this is, in many ways, far less important than understanding what medieval contemporaries believed: what was widely held to be true about the lance in the central Middle Ages; and how it entered the crusading mythology disseminated throughout twelfth-century Europe, shaping crusading thought and practice.

A succession of texts indicate that the tradition of Adhémar's relationship with the Lance was solidified and expanded. Perhaps the most significant of these was the account of the First Crusade written by Robert the Monk in c. 1107. In this, the most widely disseminated *Historia* of the expedition which appears to have taken the *Gesta Francorum* as its base text, Adhémar was clearly stated to have carried the Lance.⁷⁰ At about the same time, Guibert of Nogent was composing his own account of the crusade, the *Gesta Dei per Francos*. Like Robert, Guibert was a Benedictine monk, one who is now widely acknowledged to have had a particularly inquisitive intellect and to have been unusually willing to question the authenticity of sacred relics. Of all the contemporaries who wrote about the Holy Lance, we might expect

Guibert to be the most sceptical. But he had absorbed the tradition that Adhémar carried the Lance at Antioch and therefore, assuming that the bishop had adjudged the relic to be authentic, accepted it without question.⁷¹

As the twelfth century progressed new details were added to the story. Caffaro recorded that the ghostly army which appeared on the 28 June lowered its standards in honour of the Holy Lance borne by Adhémar, while the *Chanson d'Antioche* actually depicted the bishop pleading with Raymond of Toulouse to be permitted to carry the relic into battle.⁷² William of Tyre, writing his magisterial history of the crusades and the Latin East between the mid-eleven-seventies and the mid-eleven-eighties, reflected the now-enshrined myths regarding the episode of the Holy Lance, while adding a further refinement. He detailed the rapturous reaction to the relic's discovery and depicted Adhémar in possession of the relic at the battle of Antioch but, perhaps to validate the bishop's apparent credulity, he also adjusted Peter Bartholomew's social standing. Raymond of Aguilers had described the visionary as a peasant. To Guibert of Nogent, he had been a soldier. But in William's text, he now became a cleric.⁷³ It is interesting, and not a little alarming, to note that Peter's new-found ecclesiastical status was reiterated in as recent and as authoritative a volume as Jean Richard's *The Crusades, c. 1071-c.1291*.⁷⁴

There can be no question that Bishop Adhémar of Le Puy's views of, and relationship to, the Holy Lance underwent a significant transformation in the century that followed the First Crusade. Similar forces – the coalescence of memory, the gradual simplification of complex series of events, the conscious or unconscious manipulation of narrative record – may have shaped contemporary understanding and recollection of the second siege of Antioch, the reception to the Holy Lance, the embassy to Kerbogha and the battle of Antioch. At the very least, we should acknowledge that historians have, to date, been far too confident of their ability accurately to reconstruct the events at Antioch in

June 1098. The ‘traditional’ narrative which currently holds sway in modern historiography could still be accurate, but there are other ways of reading the evidence. It is possible that the discovery of the Holy Lance on 14 June did not inspire an overwhelming outburst of piety, nor an empowering renewal of the conviction that the crusade was operating with divine sanction; that the relic did not directly prompt the decision to engage Kerbogha in battle, and that the leaders of the crusade actually explored the possibility of a negotiated surrender and retreat from Antioch on or around 24 June; and that, with all other options exhausted, trapped in the city with their strength faltering, the Franks decided to purify their souls, place their trust in God and march out of the Bridge Gate of Antioch on 28 June to what most believed would be their deaths.

This alternative version of events does not unmake our wider understanding of the First Crusade. But it does confront us with a subtly different species of crusader – one for whom spiritual faith was still an extremely powerful motivating force, but perhaps not an all-conquering, unshakeable inspiration.

NOTES

¹ For a general overview of the Antiochene phase of the First Crusade see: J. France, *Victory in the East: A Military History of the First Crusade* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 197-268; T. Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History* (London, Free Press, 2004), pp. 153-211.

² Albert of Aachen’s account is currently only available in a nineteenth century Latin edition as, *Historia Hierosolymitana, Recueil des historiens des croisades, Historiens occidentaux*, vol. 4 (Paris, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1879), pp. 265-713. A new edition and translation by S. B. Edgington will, however, be published shortly by Oxford Medieval Texts, based on her Ph.D: ‘The *Historia Iherosolimitana* of Albert of Aachen: A critical edition’, ed. S. B. Edgington (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of

London, 1991). I am, as always, deeply indebted to Dr Edgington for allowing me access to this work in advance of publication. In view of this I will cite all references to Albert's account by book and chapter so that the new edition can be consulted. Thus, Albert's reference to poor crusaders eating their shoes appears as: Albert of Aachen, IV.34; Raymond of Aguilers, *Le 'Liber' de Raymond d'Aguilers*, ed. J. H. Hill and L. L. Hill (Paris, P. Geuthner, 1969), p. 78; Ralph of Caen, *Gesta Tancredi in expeditione Hierosolymitana, Recueil des historiens des croisades, Historiens occidentaux*, vol. 3 (Paris, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1866), p. 675.

³ France, *Victory in the East*, pp. 269-96; Asbridge, *The First Crusade*, pp. 212-40

⁴ F. Chalandon, *Histoire de la Première Croisade* (Paris, A. Picard, 1925), p. 218; R. Grousset, *Histoire des Croisades*, vol. 1 (Paris, Libraire Plon, 1934) p. 103; C. Morris, 'Policy and vision: The case of the Holy Lance found at Antioch', in *War and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays in honour of J.O. Prestwich*, ed. J. Gillingham & J. C. Holt (Woodbridge, Boydell, 1984), 33-45, p. 34; H. E. Mayer, *The Crusades*, trans. J. Gillingham, 2nd edition (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 52; J. S. C. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London, Athlone, 1986), p. 95; J. Richard, *The Crusades, c. 1071- c. 1291*, trans. J. Birrell (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 54; J. P. Phillips, *The Crusades, 1095-1197* (Harlow, Longman, 2002), p. 24.

⁵ I delivered a version of this article at a symposium held by the Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies, Reading University, in honour of Professor Malcolm Barber. The comments and observations received on that occasion were much appreciated.

⁶ Raymond of Aguilers, p. 71, had Peter Bartholomew mention that his lord was named William Peter. This is likely to have been William Peyre of Cuhlat, who was later deputised to hold Albara by Raymond, count of Toulouse.: J. S. C. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders, 1095-1131* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 86-7; T. Asbridge, *The Creation of the Principality of Antioch 1098-1130* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2000), p. 39. On Peter Bartholomew see also: R. Rogers, 'Peter Bartholomew and the role of "the poor" in the First Crusade', in *Warriors and Churchmen in the High Middle Ages: Essays presented to Karl Leyser*, ed. T. Reuter (London, Hambledon, 1992), pp. 109-22.

⁷ Raymond of Aguilers, pp. 68-72; *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, ed. and trans. R. Hill (London, T. Nelson, 1962), pp. 59-60.

⁸ Raymond of Aguilers, p. 72.

⁹ Raymond of Aguilers' account does show bias in favour of Raymond of Toulouse and also celebrates the history of the Antiochene relic of the Holy Lance. For a general discussion see: S. B. Edgington, 'The First Crusade: reviewing the evidence', in *The First Crusade: Origins and Impact*, ed. J. P. Phillips (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 56. It has even been suggested his work could be re-titled *Visiones Lanceae Dominicae*. The degree and nature of Raymond of Aguilers' partiality has, however, been the subject of considerable academic debate. J. H. and L. L. Hill, *Raymond IV, Count of Toulouse* (Syracuse, Syracuse university Press, 1962), p. 90, credited the writer with 'the extension and amplification of the visions' he reported. Morris, 'Policy and vision', 39-40, 43-5, pointed out that 'the visions which [Raymond] records do not always tally with his own views and it is reasonable to think that he was often reporting, with fair accuracy, the words of the visionaries'. The nature and format of Peter Batholomew's supposed visions, as they appear in Raymond's account, are undoubtedly formulaic, containing such *topoi* as recurrent visitation and the physical punishment of the visionary's disbelief or reluctance to act. But there are elements of Peter's apparent experiences which are more particular. The appearance of St Andrew as an intercessor is interesting as, in the context of Antioch and a relic associated with Christ's Passion, one might expect such a role to be filled by St Peter, chief of the Apostles and, according to Christian tradition, founder of the first church in Antioch. Given St Andrew's connection with Constantinople, his appearance may in some way have been a reference to the Constantinopolitan relic of the Holy Lance, about which more below. Peter's assertion that St Andrew had 'red hair sprinkled with white, a broad and bushy beard [and] black eyes' is intriguing and has no obvious origin in iconography. Raymond of Aguilers, p. 69. For a general discussion of the role of saints, visitations and visions on the First Crusade see: Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, pp. 99-107.

¹⁰ *Gesta Francorum*, p. 60.

¹¹ For a differing view of Adhémar's attitude to the Holy Lance see: Morris, 'Policy and vision', 44-5. It is worth noting that the bishop's doubts were also recorded by Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana (1095-1127)*, ed. H. Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg, Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1913), pp. 236-7. On the history of Constantinopolitan relic of the Holy Lance see: S. Runciman, 'The Holy Lance found at Antioch', *Annalecta Bollandiana* 68 (1950): 197-205.

¹² Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, pp. 93-5. For a discussion of the role of relics in western medieval society see: P. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990).

¹³ Raymond of Aguilers, pp. 45, 56-7, 62. Raymond also recorded that divine intervention saved Raymond of Toulouse from death through illness in Asia Minor [p. 46] and noted a celestial portent that appeared in January 1098 [p. 54]. For a discussion of 'miraculous' intervention see: B. Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event, 1000-1215* (Aldershot, Scolar, 1987).

¹⁴ On the night of 13-14 June some form of shooting star fell on or near Kerbogha's encampment above Antioch. This was interpreted as an omen by the Latins, particularly once Kerbogha decided to move many of his troops away from the flanks of Mount Silpius. Raymond of Aguilers, p. 74; *Gesta Francorum*, p. 62 ; Fulcher of Chartres, pp. 243-4.

¹⁵ Raymond of Aguilers, p. 74.

¹⁶ Stephen apparently swore an oath on the 'gospels and a crucifix', prompting the crusade princes to vow that they would not abandon the crusade. Raymond of Aguilers, p. 74; *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 57-9; Fulcher of Chartres, pp. 244-6.

¹⁷ On the whole, the story of Stephen of Valence's vision seems to have had a relatively limited impact upon the course of the crusade. Raymond of Aguilers pp. 74-5, did record that the Franks observed the five days of purification prescribed by Stephen of Valence, using this to explain why the search for the Holy Lance did not begin until 14 July. His chronology does, however, appear to be in error.

¹⁸ Raymond of Aguilers, p. 75; *Gesta Francorum*, p. 65. Pons of Balazun, a southern French crusader, was also named among those who began the search for the Lance, but the party seems to have not been solely limited to the count of Toulouse's followers as Farald of Thouars, from north western Poitevin, was also mentioned. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders*, pp. 205, 218.

¹⁹ H. Hagenmeyer, *Die Kreuzzugsbriege aus den Jahren 1088-1100* (Innsbruck, Wagner, 1901), p. 159.

²⁰ Raymond of Aguilers, p. 75; *Gesta Francorum*, p. 65; Peter Tudebode, *Historia de Hierosolymitano itinere*, ed. J. H. Hill and L. L. Hill (Paris, Geuthner, 1977), pp. 107-8; Hagenmeyer, *Die Kreuzzugsbriege*, pp. 159-60, 166-7; Fulcher of Chartres, pp. 235-8, 263; Albert of Aachen, IV.43; Matthew of Edessa, , *Armenia and the Crusades, Tenth to Twelfth Centuries: The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, trans. A. E. Dostourian (Lanham, University

Press of America, 1993), p. 171; Ralph of Caen, p. 678, suggested that a number of princes were immediately dubious about the lance, but his testimony is likely to have been coloured by hindsight and his anti-Provençal tendencies. Anna Comnena, *Alexiade*, ed. and trans. B. Leib, vol. 3 (Paris, Société d'édition "Les Belles Lettres", 1976), p. 30, recorded the discovery of the relic, which she describes as a 'nail' but mistook Peter Bartholomew for Peter the Hermit. Ibn al-Athir, *Kamel-Altevarykh, Recueil des historiens des croisades, Historiens orientaux*, vol. 1 (Paris, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1872), p. 195, maintained that Peter Bartholomew buried the lance himself before duping the crusaders.

²¹ Morris, 'Policy and vision', 37-8; Ralph of Caen, pp. 675-8, 682-3; Fulcher of Chartres, p. 263.

²² Hagenmeyer, *Die Kreuzzugsbriefe*, pp. 159, 166-7; Raymond of Aguilers, p. 75; *Gesta Francorum*, p. 65; Peter Tudebode, p. 108.

²³ France, *Victory in the East*, pp. 279.

²⁴ Mayer, p. 52; Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, p. 95, also maintained that 'the discovery of the Lance [...] transformed Christian morale'. Grousset, p. 103, wrote that 'the discovery of the Holy Lance had given the army courage' and drew a direct connection between the relic and the subsequent victory over Kerbogha. Richard, p. 54, suggested that the Lance 'helped to create a climate of religious exaltation and restored the crusaders' confidence'. Phillips, p. 24, wrote that the relic 'engendered such religious fervour that morale in the Christian army was transformed [and] the crusaders faced their enemy with new determination'. To date, the main dissenting voice has been that of Morris, 'Policy and visions', 33-45, but even his conclusions seem unclear, given that he noted on the one hand that 'the finding of the Holy Lance, along with some helpful advice from St Andrew, largely inspired the victory over Kerbogha on 28 June 1098', but then went on to concede 'that the discovery of the Lance did not have the galvanising effect upon morale which is indicated in the official account'. A. Jotischky, *Crusading and the Crusader States* (Harlow, Longman, 2004), p. 61, appears to have accepted Ralph of Caen's testimony at face value, as he suggested that there were widespread doubts about authenticity of the Lance from the start. See also: France, *Victory in the East*, p. 279.

²⁵ C. Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 24, noted the widespread use of relics as standards in battle. Within the context of the cult of St Foy of Conques, the head reliquary known as the Golden Majesty of St Foy was carried by monks seeking to protect their town and abbey from a rioting mob. For a discussion of St Foy's

cult see: K. Ashley & P. Sheingorn, *Writing Faith: text, sign and history in the miracles of St Foy* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1999). Widukind of Corvey's *Rerum Gestarum Saxonicarum, Monumentis Germaniae Historici. Separatim Editi*, vol. 60, ed. H.-E. Lohmann (Hannover, Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1935), pp. 38, 127-8, mentioned another relic of the Holy Lance, the Ottonian Holy Lance of St Maurice, in a military context on a number of occasions in. Legend apparently linked this lance to the Carolingians, suggesting that Charles Martel carried it at the battle of Poitiers in 732. Widukind recorded that a relic of Lance became part of royal regalia in 918 and was then carried by Otto I into battle against the Magyars at Lechfeld in 955. Thangmar's '*Vita Sancti Episcopi Bernardi Hildesheimensis*', *Lebensbeschreibungen Einiger Bischöfe des 10. - 12. Jahrhunderts*, ed. H. Kallfelz (Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973), p. 318, then described how Bishop Bernard of Hildesheim, carrying this Lance, led a charge in defence of Otto III's palace on the Aventine in 1001. I am grateful to Bernard Hamilton for directing me to this piece of evidence. *La Chanson de Roland*, ed. F. Whitehead (Oxford, Blackwell, 1978), pp. 73-4, depicted Charlemagne in possession of a relic of the Holy Lance that grants victory. This reference may have been linked to the Ottonian Lance, or perhaps more likely (depending on one's views on the dating of the text) to the First Crusade.

²⁶ Fulcher of Chartres, pp. 263.

²⁷ A completed version of the the *Gesta Francorum* was probably circulating by 1101, but it is possible that the author composed part of his account at Antioch between July and December 1098. K. B. Wolf, 'Crusade and narrative: Bohemond and the *Gesta Francorum*', *Journal of Medieval History* 17 (1991): 207-16; J. France, 'The use of the anonymous *Gesta Francorum* in the early twelfth-century sources for the First Crusade', in *From Clermont to Jerusalem: The Crusades and Crusader Societies, 1095-1500*, ed. A. V. Murray (Turnhout, Brepols, 1998), 29-42; C. Morris, 'The *Gesta Francorum* as narrative history', *Reading Medieval Studies* 19 (1993): 55-71; Morris, 'Policy and vision', p. 37; France, *Victory in the East*, pp. 378-9. It is worth noting that Anna Comnena [vol. 3, pp. 30-1] believed that the battle of Antioch took place on the day after the discovery of the Holy Lance. She credited Peter the Hermit with its discovery.

²⁸ *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 65-6.

²⁹ Both Morris ('Policy and vision', 41) and France (*Victory in the East*, pp. 279) noticed this two week gap, but, for some reason, neither decided to pursue an explanation and Morris still maintained that the Holy Lance, and the visions

associated with it, were the driving inspiration behind the crusaders' decision to fight Kerbogha.

³⁰ Raymond of Aguilers, pp. 75-8; Ralph of Caen, p. 677.

³¹ France, *Victory in the East*, pp. 245-51; Asbridge, *The First Crusade*, pp. 181-6.

³² *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 62-3; Albert of Aachen, IV.55; Fulcher of Chartres, pp. 247-9, 252.

³³ Ralph of Caen, pp. 676-9. Ralph was a southern Italian Norman cleric, closely associated with Bohemond of Taranto and Tancred of Hauteville, who travelled to the Levant in c. 1107 and wrote an account of the First Crusade and events in the East down to 1106 after 1112. For a discussion of his background see the introduction to: B. S. & D. S. Bachrach (trans.), *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005), pp. 1-17. Fulcher of Chartres, p. 263. Raymond of Aguilers, p. 79, hinted at some form of dispute, writing that in late June 1098 ordinary crusaders 'questioned delay of battle and abused the princes'.

³⁴ *Gesta Francorum*, p. 62; Fulcher of Chartres, pp. 262-3; Asbridge, *The First Crusade*, p. 219; France, *Victory in the East*, p. 293.

³⁵ Asbridge, *The First Crusade*, pp. 237-8.

³⁶ I have argued elsewhere (T. Asbridge, 'The significance and causes of the battle of the Field of Blood', *Journal of Medieval History* 23 (1997), 301-16; p. 302, note 11) that, given its association with St Peter, 28 June may have been viewed as a propitious date for battle. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that the First Crusaders deliberately waited for the Vigil of the Feast of SS Peter and Paul before engaging Kerbogha.

³⁷ *Gesta Francorum*, p. 63.

³⁸ Asbridge, *Principality of Antioch*, p. 18; France, *Victory in the East*, pp. 299-302.

³⁹ France, *Victory in the East*, pp. 299-302.

⁴⁰ Anna Comnena, vol. 3, pp. 27-9; *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 63-5; Ralph of Caen, pp. 658-9; Albert of Aachen, IV.37, IV.40-41; R.-J. Lilie, *Byzantium and the Crusader States 1096-1204*, trans. J. C. Morris and J. E. Ridings (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 37-9. In reality, Alexius may never have planned to make an immediate move to Antioch – from the Byzantine perspective it made more sense to hold ground in Anatolia and only advance to claim Antioch once the crusaders had secured its downfall.

⁴¹ Albert of Aachen, IV.41.

⁴² *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 66-7; Peter Tudebode, pp. 108-9; Raymond of Aguilers, p. 79; Hagenmeyer, *Die Kreuzzugssbriefe*, pp. 159-60; Fulcher of Chartres, pp. 247-9; Albert of Aachen, IV.44-6; Ralph of Caen, pp. 663-5; Matthew of Edessa, p. 171; Ibn al-Athir, p. 194. See also: S. B. Edgington, 'Romance and reality in the sources for the sieges of Antioch, 1097-1098', in *Porphyrogenita*, ed. C. Dendrinos, J. Harris, E. Harvalia-Crook & J. Herrin (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003), pp. 33-46; C. Morris, 'Peter the Hermit and the Chroniclers', in *The First Crusade: Origins and Impact*, ed. J. P. Phillips (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 21-34.

⁴³ H. Hagenmeyer, *Chronologie de la Première Croisade (1094-1100)* (Paris, E. Leroux, 1902), pp. 172-3; Chalandon, p. 220; Grousset, p. 103; Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, p. 161; S. Runciman, 'The First Crusade and the foundation of the kingdom of Jerusalem', *A History of the Crusades*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1951), pp. 246-7. France, *Victory in the East*, p. 280, is vague with regards to chronology at this point.

⁴⁴ *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 67-8; Hagenmeyer, *Die Kreuzzugssbriefe*, p. 167; Fulcher of Chartres, p. 247.

⁴⁵ Hagenmeyer, *Die Kreuzzugssbriefe*, pp. 159-60.

⁴⁶ *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 66-8.

⁴⁷ Hagenmeyer, *Die Kreuzzugssbriefe*, p. 167; Raymond of Aguilers, p. 79.

⁴⁸ Raymond of Aguilers, p. 79; Albert of Aachen, IV.46-47, depicted the embassy occurring on 27 June 1098.

⁴⁹ *Gesta Francorum*, pp. 66-7; Peter Tudebode, pp. 108-9; Hagenmeyer, *Die Kreuzzugssbriefe*, p. 160; Raymond of Aguilers, p. 79; Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta per Francos*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens, *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis*, 127A (Turnhout, Brepols, 1996), pp. 234-6. On the textual relation between these sources see: Edgington, 'The First Crusade: reviewing the evidence', 55-6; J. France, 'The Anonymous *Gesta Francorum* and the *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem* of Raymond of Aguilers and the *Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere* of Peter Tudebode', in *The Crusades and their Sources: Essays presented to Bernard Hamilton*, ed. J. France and W.G. Zajac (Aldershot, Ashgate, 1998), pp. 39-69; J. Rubenstein, 'Putting History to Use: Three Crusade Chronicles in Context', *Viator* 35 (2004): 131-168.

⁵⁰ J. Richard, *The Crusades*, p. 54, argued that the embassy was despatched in order to deliver a formal declaration of aggression in accordance with the 'laws of war'. We cannot, however, be certain that the rules governing military engagement were fully formalised by 1098, nor that the First Crusaders

observed normalised patterns of engagement during their campaign. For a nuanced discussion of the 'laws of war' in this context see: W.G. Zajac, 'Captured property on the First Crusade', in *The First Crusade: Origins and Impact*, ed. J. P. Phillips (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 153-86.

⁵¹ Fulcher of Chartres, pp. 247-9; Ralph of Caen, pp. 663-5.

⁵² Fulcher of Chartres, pp. 248-9.

⁵³ Matthew of Edessa, p. 171. Matthew's account of the First Crusade was based on the testimony of eyewitnesses and contemporaries. Asbridge, *Principality of Antioch*, pp. 11-12

⁵⁴ Ibn al-Athir, p. 194; C. Hillenbrand, 'The First Crusade: The Muslim perspective', in *The First Crusade* (see note 50 supra), pp. 130-41.

⁵⁵ Anna Comnena, vol. 3, p. 28.

⁵⁶ Albert of Aachen, IV.44, is problematical. Albert recorded that Peter the Hermit told Kerbogha, on behalf of 'the leaders of the Christian army', that if he converted to Christianity 'they will become your soldiers and, restoring the estate of Antioch into your hands, they are prepared to serve you as lord and prince'. When Kerbogha refused this offer, Peter apparently suggested a trial by combat, similar to that mentioned by Fulcher of Chartres and Ralph of Caen.

⁵⁷ *Gesta Francorum*, p. 67.

⁵⁸ Diplomatic negotiation with Muslims was certainly not unheard of in the context of the First Crusade, although admittedly a negotiated surrender would have represented a new level of Frankish pragmatism. See: T. Asbridge, 'Knowing the Enemy: Latin relations with Islam at the time of the First Crusade', in *Knighthoods of Christ*, ed. N. Housley (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007), pp. 18-25. Two further factors may weigh against the suggestion that the crusaders attempted to negotiate a surrender in late June. Given that he was not the obvious choice as an ambassador, Peter the Hermit may have been selected because he was considered expendable. Both the *Gesta Francorum*, p. 66, and Hagenmeyer, *Die Kreuzzugsbriefe*, p. 160, testify to the fact that the Franks accorded extra significance to Antioch because it was regarded as the patrimony of St Peter. I am grateful to Karl Borchardt for pointing out that this may have made them more reluctant to yield the city.

⁵⁹ Albert of Aachen, IV.46.

⁶⁰ J. Gillingham, *Richard I* (New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 183-5.

⁶¹ R. C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare, 1097-1193* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1956), pp. 172-4; France, *Victory in the East*, pp. 280-96; Asbridge, *The First Crusade*, pp. 232-40.

⁶² Raymond of Aguilers, pp. 81-2; Albert of Aachen, IV, 52-3; *Gesta Francorum*, p. 69.

⁶³ Raymond of Aguilers, p. 81; Hagenmeyer, *Die Kreuzzugsbriege*, p. 167. The Lucca letter's testimony may have been representative of the notion that Raymond of Aguilers carrying the Lance while in Adhémar's battle group was tantamount to the bishop bearing the relic himself.

⁶⁴ Asbridge, *The First Crusade*, pp. 249-50. On Adhémar's career and role on crusade see: J. H. & L. L. Hill, 'Contemporary accounts and the later reputation of Adhémar, bishop of Le Puy', *Mediaevalia et humanistica* 9 (1955): 30-38; J. A. Brundage, 'Adhémar of Le Puy: The bishop and his critics', *Speculum* 34 (1959): 201-12.

⁶⁵ Raymond of Aguilers, p. 75. Raymond's patronage of the Lance may have affected the balance of power among the princes. Robert of Flanders, who had not had any particular link to the Provençal camp before this point, now allied himself with Raymond. This was probably a function of the count's position as protector and advocate of the Lance, because Robert is known to have been a staunch devotee of the relic, founding a religious house in its honour upon his return to Europe. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders*, p. 154.

⁶⁶ Raymond of Aguilers, pp. 84-6.

⁶⁷ Raymond of Aguilers, p. 85.

⁶⁸ Raymond of Aguilers, pp. 120-4; Fulcher of Chartres, pp. 238-41; Ralph of Caen, p. 682; Albert of Aachen, V.13; Asbridge, *The First Crusade*, pp. 261-94, 302. For a broader discussion of the political significance of the Lance, see: Morris, 'Policy and Vision', 33-45.

⁶⁹ Raymond of Aguilers, pp. 127-30.

⁷⁰ Robert the Monk, *Historia Iherosolimitana, Recueil des historiens des croisades, Historiens occidentaux*, vol. 3 (Paris, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1866), pp. 827, 829, 834, depicted Adhémar carrying the Lance while leading the fourth column of crusaders into battle and while delivering a morale boosting sermon. In an evocative scene, the bishop was then described wearing a breastplate and helmet, holding the Lance, face flooded with tears through sheer joy.

⁷¹ Guibert of Nogent, p. 234. On Guibert's attitude towards relics see: C. Morris, 'A critique of popular religion: Guibert of Nogent on the relics of the

saints', *Studies in Church History*, vol. 12 (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 95-111.

⁷² Caffaro, 'De liberatione civitatum orientis', ed. L. T. Belgrano, *Annali Genovesi*, vol. 1 (1890-1929), p. 109; *La Chanson d'Antioche*, ed. S. Duparc-Quioc, vol. 1 (Paris, Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1982), pp. 384-91, 439; Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, pp. 95-8. S. B. Edgington, 'Holy Land, Holy Lance: religious ideas in the Chanson d'Antioche', in *The Holy Land, Holy Lands and Christian History, Studies in Church History*, vol. 36, ed. R. N. Swanson (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2000), pp. 142-53, has argued convincingly that the legend of the Holy Lance was a central theme of the Chanson d'Antioche and has suggested that this reflected the wider significance of the traditions surrounding the relic within late twelfth century conceptions about the past, present and future of crusading.

⁷³ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis*, 63-63A, 2 vols (Turnhout, Brepols, 1986), pp. 324, 330. William described Peter as 'cuidam enim Petro clerico'. Raymond of Aguilers, p. 68, described him as 'pauperem quondam rusticum'. Guibert of Nogent, p. 221, styled him as 'cuidam de exercitu'. William's description of Adhémar carrying the Holy Lance into battle is also highlighted in a number of manuscript illuminations, including, William of Tyre, *Histoire d'Outremer*, British Library MS Yates Thompson 12, fo. 29. Like William of Tyre, Orderic Vitalis (*The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. and trans. M. Chibnall (Oxford, Oxford Medieval Texts, 1975), vol. 5, pp. 101, 111) thought Peter Bartholomew had been a cleric ('quidam clericus de Provincia'), but Orderic then had Peter carry the Lance into the battle of Antioch alongside Adhémar.

⁷⁴ Richard, *The Crusades*, p. 54.