

‘The Conquest of the Holy Land by Saladin’

This account of Saladin’s conquest of the Holy Land has come down to us in association with the Chronicon Anglicanum of Ralph of Coggeshall, a Cistercian from Essex who was one of the most important historians of early thirteenth-century England. However, while the author who compiled the tract may have been English, Ralph himself was not the person responsible. The particular value of this tract is that while in its present form it probably dates from c. 1220, it incorporates an earlier eye-witness account from a soldier who took part in the defence of Jerusalem and was wounded during the siege. The later compiler expanded this, adding details concerning the holy sites taken by the Muslims, quite possibly taken from a contemporary pilgrim guide, a brief account of the subsequent Third Crusade, which seems to have been taken from the much longer ‘Itinerary of King Richard’ by Richard de Templo,¹ and various passages of lamentation and moralising over the supposed iniquities of the Christians that had led God to allow the Muslims to succeed.

The text has been translated from the De Expugnatione Terra Sanctae per Saladinum, in Ralph of Coggeshall, Chronicon Anglicanum, ed. J. Stevenson (Rolls Series, London 1875), 209-62. Use has been made of a previous translation of some passages from this tract by James Brundage, The Crusades: A Documentary History, (Milwaukee, 1962), 153-159, although the version here, which is a complete translation, and thus much fuller than the extracts used by Brundage, has been made afresh from the Latin text.

How the Countess of Jaffa was Anointed as Queen, and of the Quarrels of the Nobles

Who can convey to your Excellency all the troubles and disasters that the Eastern Church suffered from the pagans without grief and tears flowing? For when the boy king Baldwin, the seventh or eighth king of the Latins, had entered upon the way of all flesh, the lords of Jerusalem gathered together, but not as one. Hence the princes of the Church, the Master of the Order of the Temple with his knights and

¹ English translation, *Chronicle of the Third Crusade. A Translation of the Itinerarium Perigrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, trans. Helen Nicholson (Aldershot 1997).

Prince Rainald of Montreal,² along with their friends the Count and Countess of Jaffa, closed the gates of Jerusalem, allowing nobody to enter or leave. While the princes and barons of the land were absent, they anointed Countess Sybilla of Jaffa, the daughter of King Amalric, as queen, and made her lord Guy of Lusignan, the Count of Jaffa, king, with some people chanting, ‘This is the will of the Lord’, while others spoke out against this. It was because of this that the Sepulchre of the Lord, and Jerusalem and its appurtenances were destroyed. For as a result such great dissension arose in the land that scarcely two people could agree together on anything. There were only a few men with the king, while many, indeed almost all [the rest], were with the Count of Tripoli and his allies, and they prepared to wage war against each other. However, the disputes were stilled for a time, but not settled; they remained quiet for a little while, but the hatred remained in the hearts of each side. With these stormy issues blowing up, and the stabilising influence of charity lacking, the Lord’s ark was broken and cast away, and with the waters of contradiction rising up, those who had no care for the heritage of the Cross, lost both it, their own heritage, and themselves.

The Invasion of the Land of Galilee

Saladin and his followers rejoiced greatly over these evil actions, for they knew that ‘every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation’.³ He sent out messengers throughout the lands that lay under his rule who said that anyone who wanted to have gold and silver, properties, houses and male and female captives, should hasten to him, and so he gathered a vast army. They mustered from every part [of his empire]; Turks, Kurds, Syrians, Arabs, Alans, Cumans, Qipchaks, Idumaens, Turcomans, Bedouins, Saracens, Egyptians, and those who dwell in the land of Lebanon, and they camped in a place which is called Rasseleme, which means ‘the head of the waters’. Recognising the weakness of the Christians, Saladin sent seven thousand of his bravest men to lay waste the land of Galilee. He thought that if these few could plunder that region and come back unharmed, then the rest of his men would be keener for battle and would fight more fiercely. Thus the servants of evil,

² Rainald of Châtillon, lord of Oultre-Jordain through his marriage to the heiress Stephanie of Milly in 1176. He was called ‘prince’ since he had, through his first marriage, formerly been Prince of Antioch from 1148 until his capture by the Muslims in 1160.

³ *Matthew*, xii.25; cf. *Mark*, iii.24.

thirsting for the blood of the saints and like rabid dogs running after a dead body, rode at speed to a place called Cavan, and then rested there until evening. Once the sun had gone down, they crossed the river [*Jordan*] and as the sons of darkness and the shadows, in the silence of the night they rode across the land of Galilee as far as Cafra, slaying the poor of Christ and dragging both men and women, as well a multitude of beasts, into captivity. They followed the example of their father, the Devil,⁴ who murders those whom he found on this fleshly road, as they lie sleeping quietly in a state of sin, and drags them with him into the pit of damnation. And since the dawn of truth and the sun of justice did not illuminate them, they sent their prisoners and no small amount of booty back ahead of them in the evening twilight, and placed some four thousand men in ambush in the valley of Saphoria, while the rest remained in the open in the plain of Cana in Galilee. When dawn came, the scouts from the city of Nazareth raised up their eyes, and seeing the enemies of the cross of Christ riding hither and thither down the valleys, they were struck by fear, and as they entered the city they cried out, exclaiming: ‘Here are the Turks, here are the Turks!’ On hearing this, the heralds called out through the town: ‘Men of Nazareth, take arms and fight bravely for the hometown of “the true Nazarene”’.⁵

Concerning the Master of the Knighthood of the Temple and the Master of the Hospital

It happened that this same night the Master of the Knighthood of the Temple and the Master of the Hospital were staying there,⁶ for they had been sent by the king and the patriarch, along with two bishops, to negotiate in good faith a peace treaty and agreement between the king and Count Raymond of Tripoli, who was at that time staying at Tiberias. They were woken up by the hubbub in the town and asked what was going on. They were told that the Turks had occupied the road by which they were about to travel to Tiberias. The Master of the Knights Templar then spoke as follows to his companions: ‘My dearest brothers and companions-in-arms, you have always withstood these false and fallible people, you have exacted vengeance from them, and you have always been victorious. Gird yourselves, and stand forth to fight

⁴ *John*, viii.44.

⁵ *Matthew*, ii.23.

⁶ Gerard de Ridfort, Master of the Temple 1185-89, and Roger des Moulins, Master of the Hospital 1177-87.

for the Lord. Hold in your memory your forefathers the Maccabees, whose duty of fighting for the Church, the law and the heritage of the Cross you once upon a time took for yourself. You should know that your fathers were everywhere victorious, not through numbers of armed men but through faith, justice and observing the orders of God, for it is not hard to be victorious, “whether you are many or few”,⁷ when victory is granted by Heaven’. Everybody then spoke as though with one voice: ‘We are ready and prepared to undergo death for Christ, who by His precious death redeemed us. Knowing this, whether we live or die, we are always victors in the name of Jesus!’

Then the Master of the Hospital, a good and pious man, spoke kindly to his brothers and to the people. ‘My dearest brothers, friends for ever, we should not be made fearful by these growling dogs, for although they flourish today, tomorrow they will be despatched to a pool of fire and sulphur. You however are the race of the elect, the holy tribe, the people who will succeed. You are eternal, for you will in future reign with Him who is Eternal. Thus you should not fear, nor [show that] you are afraid, but remember Abraham, who with three hundred servants attacked and slew four kings, and seized their riches, and as he was returning from the slaughter of the four kings he was met by Melchisedech, the King of Salem, who offered him bread and wine, and gave him his blessing.⁸ So it is with you. Overcoming the four capital sins through the strength of the Trinity, the King of Salem, that is the king of justice, the true priest Jesus Christ, will meet you, offering the bread of eternal fulfilment and the wine of perpetual redemption. He will, in addition, administer his blessing, so that you will no longer be in thrall to the sins of the flesh’.

Of the Battle which took place between the Christians and Saracens

After these words, everyone seized their arms with enthusiasm. They drew up their battle line, few as they were, and marched most joyfully against the enemy. When our Christian forces reached the plain where the barbarians were stationed, the latter pretended to be afraid and fled. Our knights pursued them until they had gone way ahead of the sergeants, so that, since the knights were separated from the infantry, the enemy might kill them with their arrows, without fear of arrow fire in return, while they might strike down the infantry with swords, arrows and iron maces

⁷ *I Maccabees*, iii.18.

⁸ *Genesis*, xiv.14-20; *Hebrews*, vii.1.

without fear of the lances and swords [of the knights]. Furthermore, once they were the length of the plain apart from each other, the Saracens who lay in ambush sprang forth from their hiding places. The knights and infantry were divided in two distinct bodies, so that neither could provide support and help for the other. Thus a most hard and unequal battle began, for our men comprised no more than a hundred and thirty knights and three or four hundred infantry, and they were wretchedly separated from each other. However, neither the multitude of the pagans nor the quiverfulls of arrows terrified our men, who strove to pierce the sides of the Saracens with their lances or to strike them with blows from their swords. Thus those who had been struck down fell, the wounded cried out, and the gravely-wounded shed their blood, while the dead descended into hell. The hearts of the uncircumcised were cast down and their lips were silent, seeing so few knights able to resist such a vast number. Since the attack and onrush of the Turkish knights was unable to carry the day, once they had killed the sergeants they congregated into one great mass. With much shouting and whooping, they surrounded our men on every side and made a coordinated attack upon the Christians. As a result the knights of Christ were swamped by the crowd of barbarians. They were trapped in one place, and they were unable to force their way out to make their escape, either with charges on their horses or with blows with their lances. What a cruel spectacle, and one to make all Christians lament! They stood like holy lambs, without bleating, among the ravening wolves. They were about to be given to God, as though, with the sun becoming hot, Divine fire was about to consume the sacrifices of the peaceful, for although it was then spring, summer was approaching. The flowers of the vine (that is the Church) were giving out their scent, and the sheltered garden irrigated by this spring brought forth of its own free-will the reddest and sweetest of roses among the whiteness of the lilies that had lain there up to this time. The enemies of the saints, hateful to God, attacked these holy ones from every side; they shot some full of arrows and inflicted [further] wounds on those already wounded, killed some with the sword and battered others with iron maces. Amidst all this, the Master of the Temple saw that they were facing certain death and that no hope was left. Wounded by mace blows, he fled and escaped with his life.

The Death of the Master of the Hospital

The Master of the holy house of the Hospital, a pious man and always overflowing from his vitals with mercy, stood firm lest he lose this present crown or anything threaten the prospect of Eternal reward. Since perfect charity sent him forth free from fear, this victorious athlete [of Christ] was not dismayed by the thousands of people who surrounded him, for he saw in his mind's eye the reward for his labours in Heaven. Shot through with the sharpest arrow wounds from every side and covered in his own blood, he was then run through with a lance in the centre of his chest. His head was cut off, and thus he glorified God in triumph as a martyr. How dreadful! They killed the father of orphans, the support and visitor of the sick, a man generous in giving alms, victor over his flesh and sins, the representative of God's forerunner,⁹ the friend of God and the saints. You poor members of Christ, lament over this, what will you do having lost your head? O daughters of Galilee and Nazareth (that is of transmigration and purity), begin your lamentations, since the lover of chastity and purity has migrated to Heaven in Cana of Galilee (that is the place of transmigration), so that you Jerusalem (that is the vision of peace) might be made peaceful.¹⁰ Woe unto thee Tiberias, 'woe unto thee Bethsaida',¹¹ for between the mountains of your pride the humble protector of the humble has been slain. Meanwhile weep, for you are the reason and the occasion for this sorrow. Alas, alas, who could describe or think on such sadness? Fear should take hold [even] of the hearts of the saints when they have seen some men standing drenched in their own blood, others laying there crushed by the weight of their dying brethren; here some drinking their own blood and dying parched from thirst, while over there others pull darts from their own bodies and draw out their life along with the arrows

Of the Wonderful Fight by Two of the Knights

Almost everyone had been swallowed up by a most cruel death, but there remained among the rest two, with whose help the remained held out. They stood and resisted, bravely fighting the enemy. One of them was called James of Mailly, the

⁹ The Hospital was dedicated to St. John the Baptist, who foretold the coming of Christ.

¹⁰ The symbolism is obscure, but the author appears to be comparing the death of the Master of the Hospital with that of Christ. Cana in Galilee was the site of what John's Gospel describes as Christ's first miracle, the changing (or transmigration) of water into wine, *John* ii.1-11.

¹¹ Cf. *Matthew*, xi.21.

Marshal of the Temple, a mighty man at arms, the other was a knight-brother of the Hospital called Henry, a most valiant warrior. Of these men, the first was a most noble warrior, like a savage lioness whose young have been taken, tearing and digging with its claws and chewing with its cruel mouth whatever shall be its target, so our standard bearer courageously struck whomever he could reach, casting them down in ruinous death and hastening them to damnation. As the cruel boar surrounded by dogs bites with his teeth and tears to pieces any who get in his way, so our most fierce champion(s) cut down and killed these most unholy murderers and sent them to Hell. They struck down those who were in front of them, and the children of Ishmael realised that they could not get close to them without deadly danger. So the sons of Babylon and Sodom stood back, hurling spears, darts and arrows at the martyrs of Christ, aiming to inflict death upon them. They received their wounds rejoicing that they deserved to receive the crown of life. Finally these renowned warriors and friends of God were exhausted by the weight of their struggle, and attacked by a horde of armed men they came to a glorious end, rejoicing in the martyrdom of Christ. Then the heirs of Canaan, yelping like dogs, and making a terrible noise from their polluted mouths all over the battlefield, cried out: 'They are beaten, the people who were alive are beaten'. And although they did not dare to face the living at close quarters, they approached those who lay lifeless, and cut them uselessly to pieces, scattering the remains over the field.

With all their opponents either dead or prisoners, the sons of Edom returned by the place called Till, where the Jordan flows into the Sea of Galilee, on the road between Tiberias and Jaffa, near the table (from which they were not about to dine) where the Lord Jesus had fed five thousand people from five loaves and two fishes.¹² They spent the night there, and divided up the plunder from the holy ones with their bloodstained hands. And on 1st May, the day when they were accustomed to gather flowers and roses, the men of Nazareth gathered up the bodies of the Christians, and buried them in the cemetery of St. Mary of Nazareth, and they uttered a great lament over those who had been killed, saying: 'Alas, alas! What has happened to us? O daughters of Nazareth and Galilee, multiply your lamentation, increase your wailing, for your sorrow is incurable. O Sion, mirror of the highest King, announce in

¹² *Mark*, vi.35-44; *Luke*, ix.10-17; cf. *Matthew*, xv.32-8.

Jerusalem and in Judea what you have seen, so that they too may take up the lament, for ruin and desolation threatens them [also]’.

Count Raymond of Tripoli was sickened unto death by what had happened, and he said: ‘So that nobody shall think that this took place because of me or through my doing, I shall go and make myself subject to the king and queen, and the lords of Jerusalem, and I shall henceforth do what they tell me’. Hence those who were left, namely the Archbishop of Tyre, the Archbishop of Nazareth and the Master of the Temple, sent envoys to the king in Jerusalem, saying: ‘The count is extremely sorry about the deaths of the Master of the Hospital and the others; and hence he will come with us to Jerusalem, forget all about past disputes, and render himself subject to you. You would do well to honour him by meeting us’. On hearing this, King Guy de Lusignan rose up with a multitude of knights and Turcoples, and went out to the count. The king and the count met each other in the great plain of Dotaym, next to the cistern of Joseph. In the presence of the bishops, the knights of the Temple and Hospital, the barons of the land and all its people, who were there rejoicing, they both dismounted, embraced and kissed each other, and they went side by side together into Jerusalem. There they forgave each other their quarrels, and the count did homage to the king and queen. When all these matters had been settled, and he had adored the life-giving Cross, the count returned to Tiberias. Meanwhile the king remained in Jerusalem, intent on mustering his army.

The Mustering of the Two Armies

In the year of the Lord’s Incarnation 1187, the King of Syria [*Saladin*] gathered together an army as numerous as the sands of the seashore in order to wage war on the land of Judah. He came up to the Jaulan, across the [*Jordan*] River, and there made camp. The King of Jerusalem also gathered his army from all of Judea and Samaria. They assembled and pitched camp near the springs at Saffuriyah. The Templars and Hospitallers also assembled many people from all their castles and came to the camp. The Count of Tripoli likewise rose up with all his people, whom he collected from Tripoli and Galilee and came into the encampment. Prince Rainald of Montreal also came with his people, as did Balian of Nablus [*Balian d’Ibelin*] with his men, Rainald of Sidon with his, and the lord of Caesarea in Palestine [*Walter Grenier*] with his people. Not a man able to march to war remained in the cities, towns, or

castles without being urged to leave by the king's order. Nor was this host sufficient for them, for they opened the treasure of the King of England and they gave a fee [*stipendium*] to everyone who could bear a lance or bow into battle. The army was very numerous: 1,200 knights, innumerable Turcopoles, and 18,000 or more infantry. They gloried in their multitude of men, the trappings of their horses, and in their hauberks, helmets, lances, and golden shields, but they did not believe in God, nor place their hope in the salvation of Him who is the protector and saviour of Israel. Rather, they were taken up with their own thoughts and grew vain.

The Wood of the Lord is borne to the Battle

They sent to Jerusalem to ask the Patriarch to make haste and bring the precious Wood of the Lord with him to the camp. But since he had long ago lost the light of the eyes of his heart, like Eli of Shiloh with his sons Hophni and Phineas,¹³ he appointed the Bishop of the church of Lydda and the Bishop of Acre to be the bearers and guardians of the Lord's Cross, hoping that if everyone was to be killed or captured then he would find a means of escape, but God's will was such that he fell backwards from the position that by chance he unworthily possessed.¹⁴

Meanwhile, the Syrians crossed the Jordan, overran and laid waste the area around the springs of Cresson, from Tiberias to Bethany, and the mountains of Gilboa and Jezreel, up to Nazareth and around Mount Tabor. Since they found the region deserted by [its] men, who had fled from fear of them, they set fire to the threshing floors and threw everything they could find into the flames. The whole region burned in front of them like a ball of fire. Not satisfied even with this, they ascended the holy mountain to the most sacred spot on which our Saviour, after the appearance of Moses and Elias, showed his disciples Peter, James, and John the glory of the future Resurrection in his Transfiguration.¹⁵ The Saracens defiled this place, which the Prince of the Apostles had, after seeing the glory of eternal light, praised; for wishing

¹³ See *I Samuel*, chaps. ii-iv; n.b. chap. ii.12: 'Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord.'

¹⁴ A reference to the Patriarch Heraclius' death during the siege of Acre in 1190.

¹⁵ Mount Tabor. Cf. *Matthew*, xvii.1-9; *Mark*, ix.2-8; *Luke*, viii.28-36.

to live there he said, ‘it is good for us to be here’,¹⁶ not knowing what the future held from what he saw at that time.

The Attack on Tiberias

After these advance parties had spread destruction, Saladin and his whole army crossed the river. He ordered his forces to push on to Tiberias and attack it. On Thursday, 2nd July, the city was surrounded by archers, and battle was joined. And since the city was not strongly fortified, the countess¹⁷ and the men of Galilee sent messengers to the count and to the king with this message: ‘The Turks have surrounded the city. They have attacked us and already breached the walls; now they are entering the town. Send help at once or we shall be taken and made captive’.

The Syrians fought and won. When the men of Galilee saw they could not hold out, they yielded the ramparts and the city. They fled before the pagans into the castle, while the city was taken and burned. But since the King of Egypt heard that the Christian army was approaching against him, he was reluctant to besiege the castle. However he declared: ‘So be it! They are my prisoners’.

The Advice of the Peers and that of the Count of Tripoli

Towards evening on Thursday, 2nd July, the King of Jerusalem heard the Galileans’ letter [read], and summoned all the leaders of the army so that they might give counsel as to what should be done. They all advised that at dawn they should march out, accompanied by the Lord’s Cross, ready to fight the enemy, with all the men armed and drawn up in battle formation, and they would proceed to the relief of the city of Tiberias. When the Count of Tripoli heard this, he said: ‘Tiberias is my city and my wife is there. None of you stand to lose so much as do I. Nobody is so fiercely attached, save to Christianity, as I am to the city, nor does any of you want to aid and support the town as much as I do. However neither we nor the king should move away from water, food, and other necessities to lead such a multitude of men to die from solitude, hunger, thirst, and scorching heat. You are well aware that since the heat is searing and the number of people is large, they could not survive half a day

¹⁶ *Matthew*, xvii.4.

¹⁷ Eschiva, wife of Raymond III of Tripoli, and heiress to the principality of Galilee.

without an abundance of water. Furthermore, they cannot reach the enemy without suffering greatly from the lack of water, which would lead to the destruction of both men and their horses. Stay, therefore, at this midway point, close to food and water, for certainly the Saracens have risen to such heights of pride that when they have taken the city, they will not turn aside to left or right, but will hasten straight through the vast empty space towards us and challenge us to battle. Then our men, refreshed and filled with bread and water, will cheerfully set out from camp for the fray. For indeed both we and our horses will be fresh, and we will be aided and protected by the Lord's Cross. Thus we shall fight mightily against these infidels who will be wearied by thirst and who will have no place to refresh themselves. Thus, if the grace of Jesus Christ truly remains with us, you shall see the enemies of the Cross of Christ taken captive, or else killed by sword, lance, or thirst, before they can either reach the sea or retreat to the river. But if anything should happen to go wrong, which God forbid, we have our ramparts here to which we could flee if we needed to'. However, since they were about to be betrayed into the hands of wolves, they attacked the count by charging him with the proverb about the wicked wolf, saying, 'hitherto he has hidden in a wolf skin'. Thus the saying of [the book of] Wisdom was fulfilled in them: 'Woe to the land whose King is a child and whose citizens dine in the morning'.¹⁸ For our young King followed youthful counsel, while our citizens, in hatred and jealousy, ate their neighbours' meat. They ignored the advice that would have saved them and others, and because of their foolishness and simple-mindedness they lost the land, the people, and themselves.

The Dispositions of the Armies

On Friday, 3rd July, therefore, they marched out by detachments, leaving behind the necessities of life. The Count of Tripoli was in the vanguard, as befitted his rank. The others followed on his left or right, according to the custom of the land. The royal squadron and the squadron of the Holy Cross followed and, because of the lie of the land, the Templars came last, for they were the army's rearguard.

They marched to Saffuriyah so that, as was said before, they could go on to Tiberias. Three miles from the city they came to a hamlet called Marescallia. At this

¹⁸ *Ecclesiastes*, x.16

place they were so harried by enemy attacks and by thirst that they wished to go no further.

They were going to pass through a confined, rocky area in order to reach the Sea of Galilee, which was a mile away. For this reason the Count sent word to the King: ‘We must hurry and pass through this area, so that we and our men may be safe near the water. Otherwise we will be in danger of making camp at a waterless spot’. The King replied: ‘We will pass through at once’.

The Turks were meanwhile attacking the army’s rear, so that the Templars and the others in the rearguard were barely able to struggle on. Suddenly, as punishment for our sins, the king ordered the tents to be pitched, and so we were betrayed to our death. When the count looked back and saw the tents pitched, he exclaimed: ‘Alas, Lord God, the battle is over! We have been betrayed unto death. The kingdom is finished!’ And so, in sorrow and anguish, they camped on a dry site where, during the night, there flowed more blood than water. So that lonely and wretched night passed, while the Christians lost their courage as they grew thirsty; nor should that night, on which the light of the Christians was obscured, be counted among the nights of the year, nor numbered among the days of the months. Oh what a bitter dwelling place was that in which there was no turning aside of death! This was a camp of disaster and thirst, where the leaders of Israel turning aside through their desire for water.¹⁹

The sons of Esau [*the Muslims*] surrounded the people of God and set fire to the desert [brush] round about them. Throughout the night the hungry and thirsty men were harassed further by arrows and by the heat and flames of the fire. Oh what a miserable rest on such a long and lonely journey! Perhaps they did not recollect the hand of God, which redeemed Israel from the power of tribulation. Certainly he stood as the redeemer of captives in the midst of the people: namely as the tree of safety, on which the brazen serpent was hung, so that He might free those looking on from the bites of the poisonous serpent.²⁰ Perhaps they did not see nor consider [this], since the dark night of unbelief had made their faith prisoner, and the blindness of envy had

¹⁹ The Latin has a rather clumsy word play through the repetition of *declinatio* (‘turning aside / avoidance’),

²⁰ Cf. *Numbers*, xxi.8-9.

hardened their hearts. ‘They did tear, and ceased not’,²¹; they cried out, but He did not make them safe, since ‘the strangers’ have lied to the Lord, and are ‘afraid out of their close places’.²² He did not hear their cries, since prayer is not precious in the mouth of a sinner. That night God did indeed give them the bread of tears to eat and ‘the wine of compunction to drink’.²³ He covered them with a garment of grief and anxiety; He scourged them with ‘the chastisement of cruel one’,²⁴ but they refused His discipline.

The Slaughter of the Infantry

Finally, in that place of affliction and humiliation, after the clouds of death had opened, light dawned on a day of sorrow and tribulation, of grief and destruction. When day had dawned, the King of Syria left the city of Tiberias and with his whole army came up to the camping ground to give battle to the Christians. He now prepared to attack our men.

Our men formed their battle lines and hurried to pass through this region in the hope that when they had regained a watering place and had refreshed themselves, they could attack and fight the foe more vigorously. The Count moved out to take a place which the Turks had already begun to approach. When our men were arrayed and grouped in battle formation the infantry were ordered to take positions protecting the army from the enemy’s arrows, so that the knights would be shielded from the enemy’s archers and the infantry would be protected from an enemy charge by the lances of the knights. Thus, with each providing protection for the other, they would both be safe.

By this time the Saracens had already arrived. The infantry, banded together in a single wedge-shaped formation, and clambered at full speed to the very summit of a high mountain, leaving the army to its fate. The king, the bishops, and others sent word, begging them to return to defend the Wood of the Lord, the heritage of the

²¹ *Psalm*, xxxiv.16 (Vulgate), xxxv.15 (AV).

²² *Psalm*, xvii.46 (Vulgate), xviii.44 (AV); cf. *II Samuel*, xxii.45. There may also be an echo (in a contrary sense) of *I Chronicles*, v.20: they cried to God in the battle, and he was intreated of them; because they put their trust in Him’.

²³ This conflates *Psalm*, lix.5 (Vulgate), lx.3 (AV), ‘wine of compunction’, and *Psalm*, lxxix.6 (Vulgate), lxxx.5 (AV): ‘bread of tears’.

²⁴ *Jeremiah*, xxx.14.

Crucified, the Lord's army, and themselves. They replied: 'We are not coming because we are dying of thirst and we will not fight'. The command was given a second time, and once more they persisted in their refusal.

Meanwhile the Templars, Hospitallers, and Turcoples were engaged in a fierce rearguard action. They could not win, however, because enemies sprang up on every side, shooting arrows and wounding the Christians. When they had advanced a short distance, they shouted to the king, asking for some help. The king and the others saw that the infantry were not going to return and that they themselves could not hold out against the Turkish arrows without the sergeants. Accordingly, by the grace of the Lord's Cross, they ordered the tents to be put up, in order to block the Saracen charges and so that they could hold out more easily. The battle formations were, therefore, broken up. The units gathered around the Holy Cross, where they were confused and intermingled here and there. The men who were with the Count of Tripoli in the first line saw that the king, the Hospitallers, the Templars, and everyone else were jumbled together and intermingled with the Turks. They also saw that there was a multitude of the barbarians between them and the king, so that they could not get through to return to the Lord's Cross. They cried out: 'Those who can get through may go, since the battle is not going in our favour. We have now lost even the chance to flee'. Meanwhile, thousands and thousands of Syrians were charging at the Christians, shooting arrows and killing them.

The Death of the Bishop of Acre

In the meantime, the Bishop of Acre, the bearer of the Lord's Cross, was mortally wounded. He passed on the task of bearing the cross to the Bishop of Lydda. A horde of pagans charged the infantry and pitched them from the top of the steep mountain to whose summit they had previously fled. They destroyed them, taking some captive and killing others. And indeed, they showed themselves deserving of such a death, for they sought to be exalted by pride, and then abandoned the Cross of Christ's humility.

Seeing this the count and his men, along with Balian of Nablus, Rainald of Sidon, and the other *Pullani*, who were still mounted, turned tail. The speed of their horses in this confined space trampled down the Christians and made a kind of bridge,

giving the riders a sort of level path. In this manner they got out of that narrow and rocky place by fleeing over their own men, over the Turks, and over the Cross. This was how they escaped with only their lives.

The Capture of the Holy Cross, King Guy and the Others

The Saracens gathered around the Wood of the Lord, the king, and the rest, and destroyed the church. What more can be said? The Saracens triumphed over the Christians and did with them as they pleased. Dear me. What can I say? It would be more fitting to weep and wail than to say anything. Alas! Should I describe with impure lips how the precious Wood of the Lord, our Redeemer, was seized by the damnable hands of the damned? Woe to me that in the days of my miserable life I should be forced to see such things. Woe indeed to the sinful people, a people burdened by evil, through which the Christian faith was totally blasphemed, and for which Christ was once more forced to be scourged and crucified. O sweet and pleasant Wood, moistened and washed by the Blood of the Son of God! O gracious Cross, in which our salvation rests, and through which the contract with death is cancelled, and the life that has been lost is restored in the hereafter! Why should I live further when the Wood of Life has been taken away? And indeed I believe that it has been taken away, since the faith of the sons of the Cross has disappeared, ‘for without faith it is impossible to please God’.²⁵ Woe unto us, miserable people who because of our sins have lost our protection! The Wood of our salvation is therefore taken away, a thing of worth shamefully carried off by the unworthy, alas, alas! Nor is it to wondered that they lost the corporal substance of the holy Cross to the valour of their earthly enemies, for through their lack of good and just behaviour they had already spiritually forfeited their judgement and courage. All you who love the Cross should weep and lament over this; hold the True Cross in your hearts with true and unbroken faith, and take comfort in the hope that the Cross will not desert those who believe in it, unless they desert it first.

What more? The Cross was captured, along with the king, the Master of the Knights of the Temple, the Bishop of Lydda, the king’s brother, the Templars and Hospitallers, and the Marquis of Montferrat. Everyone else was killed or captured.

²⁵ *Hebrews*, xi.6

The entire Christian army was made miserable through death, captivity or wretched flight, while their enemies brought them low and divided up the spoil. God humbled his people, tilting the chalice in His hand and pouring out the wine of bitterness, right down to the dregs. Nevertheless, these dregs were not exhausted. The Saracens also drink from this same chalice the dregs of damnation, right to the bottom. Concerning this, the Prophet David lamented, saying: ‘They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage, they slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless’. Until when, O Lord, will they do this? ‘Until the pit be digged for the wicked, and judgement shall be returned unto the righteous’. Then indeed, ‘He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them (namely the Saracens) off in their own wickedness’.²⁶ O prophet, what are you saying to us? You who are the trees in the house of the Lord and who flourish in his forecourts, ‘O come, let us sing unto the Lord, for the Lord is a great God,’²⁷ for he does not reject his people, nor abandon His heritage.

The next day Prince Rainald of Montreal was killed. The Templars and Hospitallers were ransomed from the other Turks and were [also] killed. Saladin gave orders that the Countess and the men who were in the citadel of Tiberias might leave that fortress and that, having received a safe-conduct, they might go in peace wherever they wished. This was done. The city was relinquished. Saladin entered it, fortified the citadel, and went on to Saffuriyah. On the site where the Christian army had formerly camped, the King of Syria ordered his tents to be pitched, and thus he gained the field and the place of [their] abode from the defeated Christians. He remained there for several days, gleefully celebrating the victory. He divided the heritage of the Crucified, not among the [rightful] heirs, but rather among his execrable emirs and leaders, giving to each his proper portion.

Now we shall be silent concerning Saladin and his deeds, and how he marched through the region of Phoenicia up to the Dog River and ravaged it, while we describe how his brother Saphadin and others invaded the region of Jerash and the land of the Philistines.

²⁶ *Psalm*, xciii (Vulgate), xciv (AV).5-6, 13, 15, 23.

²⁷ *Psalm* xciv (Vulgate), xcv (AV).1, 3.

The Invasion of Saphadin

Saphadin, the brother of Saladin,²⁸ heard how the Christians had been defeated. (This Saphadin and the army which he had led from Egypt had previously been put to flight by the remaining men of Jerusalem and the inhabitants of the region of Jerah and Philistia). He returned and rose up with a great multitude, whom he had mustered from Alexandria, Babylon²⁹ and Campus Tafneus, against the whole area from Daron and Gaza as far as Jerusalem, and in a circuit as far as Caesarea, destroying all the towns and castles, killing or enslaving the inhabitants, taking every man's home, and making a large part of these lands subject to his emirs. Since he was unable to storm Ascalon, the noblest city of Palestine, which was furnished with very strong walls and high towers, nor the citadel at Gaza, which belonged to the knights of the Temple, he marched on the castle of Ibelin, destroyed it and consigned it to the flames.

The Capture of Jaffa

He then came to Jaffa, which was defended neither by walls nor by a garrison, for those who were strong and valiant had fled by sea to the city of Tyre. He captured this town with a multitude of men and women to whom flight had been impossible and who had lacked the price for the passage on a ship. He made a great and wretched slaughter throughout the region, and an intolerable smell rose from the bodies of the Christians, since there was nowhere in all the land where putrid and stinking bodies were not lying, for there was nobody to bury them. All those who did not experience the sword and arm of the profane fled to Jerusalem, to save their bodies, at least for a while. But by fleeing from the steel of the Babylonians, they rushed into a brass fortress from their sins, which they carried with them, when they would have been better leaving them in the fields with the Babylonians.

Saphadin then marched through that whole region, came to a castle called Mirabel, and laid siege to it. He set up his siege engines, and for some days attacked the defenders most fiercely. When the men who were in the fortress say that they could not hold out, they were moved by pity for their wives and children, and asked

²⁸ al-‘Ādil ibn Yusuf (d. 1218)

²⁹ Often used to refer to Cairo in the Middle Ages.

for mercy. Saphadin gave them safe-conduct, then sent them out of the castle, but gave them an escort of 400 élite Turkish troops, lest they be killed by the Saracens on their journey. These guides led them in safety to the abbey of St. Samuel, which is sited on Mount Sylus, two miles from Jerusalem. They then brought them to the Mount of Joy near Jerusalem, but were attacked and put to flight by the Templars and the men of Jerusalem, and many of those who were wounded fell as they descended Mount Modin. Thus they returned in confusion.

However, Saphadin remained steadfast against the Church of Christ in his evil pride, and he sent out his most wicked servants to lay waste all the hills of Bellem to the south and west of Jerusalem. And since the Saracens who were with Saladin invaded the land of Jerusalem from various directions, it seems right to us to outline [this] succinctly ³⁰ in a brief and unpolished account, and to explain what took place, for those who do not know or did not see this.

With the Christians thus defeated, Saladin sent out his army so that each [of its leaders] with his men went forth to seize the region that he knew had been allocated to him by driving out those who lived there. They marched out with the utmost speed and occupied the whole land, to prevent anybody [there] gaining help, either for himself or for anyone else. Hence they spread out over the whole land like locusts. However, in the first place and ahead of everyone, the greedy Turcomans and Bedouins sought the goods of the Christians. They invaded the plain of Sharon, where all the animals of the land had been collected to take refuge, and swarmed over it, inflamed with the desire to seize them, savagely attacking and killing the inhabitants so that they could seize their property. These people do not dwell in houses or castles, but are so addicted to robbery that they make a living through theft from other people. They spread out and destroyed all the isolated settlements, from Mount Carmel (which is called Caiaphas, and at the summit of which is the church of St. Elisha the Prophet, and on a high rock which looks towards Tholomeis there is a marker which is used for navigation) past Arsuf to Jaffa, Lydda and the town of Ramla, killing the servants of Christ and plundering their property.

³⁰ *summatim perstringere*, a noticeably classical usage, reminiscent of Cicero and Suetonius, see the comments by Thomas Wiedemann in *The History of the Tyrants of Sicily by 'Hugo Falcandus' 1154-69*, trans. G.A. Loud & T.E.J. Wiedemann (Manchester 1998), p. 45

The Capture of Nazareth

Other Muslims went up to Nazareth (which means ‘the flower’ or ‘cleanliness’) and sacked the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, spilling the blood of the Christians who had taken refuge there because it was fortified. This holy church is renowned throughout the world and honoured by the faithful because of the sweetness of the Divine Word incarnate. Here, so the Gospels tell us, the Word of the Father was made incarnate, assuming that which it was not, while remaining that which it was. He began to live in this place, which knew Him not; and to be called a Nazarene,³¹ the ineffable name of whom is renowned among all creatures in Heaven and on earth as the medicine of salvation.³² O Lady, from whose sweet name pours light, safety and hope of pardon to sinners, [this is] the place where you received from the mouth of the Angel Gabriel Him through whom Eve is changed for the better, and through whom the world has been redeemed, and in this place you received such great bounty that you were called the Mother of God. Will you explain why you have allowed this place to be defiled by the unbelievers? Surely she has not abandoned [it], but she has washed and purged [it], and cleansed [it] from evil guardians³³ through infidel agents, until suitable guardians shall be chosen, and be settled there according to the will and disposition of the glorious Virgin.

After the city had been destroyed and the holy places defiled, the sons of Sodom took up their journey across the rocky mountain that is called ‘the Pass of the Lord’, so it is called in the Gospel, because the Pharisees, angry at the words of Jesus, ‘thrust him out of the city and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong’.³⁴ Then crossing the very wide plain which is between Mount Tabor and Legion,³⁵ they spread out into the countryside, plundering everything, and hastening from Mount Caim and the castle of the Knighthood of the Temple that is called Faba, as far as Legion and Jezreel. Nobody resisted them, and they marched along the narrow mountain road, and past

³¹ Cf. *Matthew*, ii.23.

³² This phrase is a reference to the Eucharist; it was first used by Ignatius of Antioch in his letter to the Ephesians c. 107; [Greek: φάρμακον ἀθανασίας] ‘All creatures in Heaven and on earth’, quoting *Revelation*, v.13; cf. also *Philippians*, ii.10.

³³ *Cultores*: this could also be translated ‘worshippers’, or even ‘husbandmen’ or ‘inhabitants’.

³⁴ *Luke*, iv.29.

³⁵ This a reference to the place where Jesus cast out devils from a man into the Gaderene swine: ‘And he asked him, what is thy name? And he answered saying, my name is Legion, for we are many’, *Mark* v.9, *Luke*, viii.30.

the church of the Blessed Job (which name means Lamentation). They had not indeed heard of Job, who lamenting bore [the burden of] our sins, nor either [did they know] the One who by means of the fragile vessel that is this human condition, scraped clean the diseased fluid of our sins, which Adam had created by his disobedience. He fulfilled the commands of the Father by offering a living sacrifice of His own flesh, to wash away the corruption of our sins. From there they climbed up to the great plateau of Dothan, wondering at the cistern of Joseph, and discussing his betrayal, and how he had through his foresight freed Egypt from the threat of famine.³⁶ They did not however respect our Joseph [Christ], who was sent by the Father from the heavenly mountains his brothers (that is, to the Jews), not realising that he had been sent into the plain of our mortality, and through his betrayal and sale, death and Resurrection, had cleansed the world from danger through the Divine Word.

Concerning Samaria and Nablus

They ravaged the land as far as Mount Someron, the former Samaria, the royal city in Israel, from which mountain that whole region receives the name of Sorek. From thence the Lord said, through the prophet, ‘I have planted a vine in Sorek’.³⁷ And lest it be doubted by anyone of what vine he was speaking, he explained this saying: ‘for the vine of the Lord Sabaoth is the house of Israel’.³⁸ Now indeed it is called Sebastea, and the relics of John the Baptist, and of Zachary and Elizabeth his parents, are buried there, as well as those of many other prophets. They found the bishop there, a very kindly and decent man, on whom they inflicted many insults, to make him reveal the treasures of the church, as ‘pearls before swine’.³⁹ Finally, when they had obtained what they sought – he was by then naked and had been savagely flogged – they gave him a safe-conduct and sent him to Acre. The sons of Babylon then hastened to destroy Nablus, but since all the men of that city had fled to Jerusalem, abandoning all their property, they found nobody there, apart from a few poor men whom they had left in the citadel to guard the goods of the burgesses, which had been carried into the citadel. These they expelled, and thus they took possession of both citadel and the town.

³⁶ Cf. *Genesis*, xxxvii.20-8; xli.53-7.

³⁷ This conflates *Jeremiah*, ii.21: ‘I had planted thee a noble vine’, with the reference to Delilah ‘a woman in the valley of Sorek’ in *Judges*, xvi.4.

³⁸ A slight misquotation of *Isaiah*, v.7: ‘For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel’.

³⁹ *Matthew*, vii.6.

Nor indeed were they satisfied by the infliction of all these evil deeds. Thirsting for booty, and anxious to see the mountains of Jerusalem, they marched rapidly past the church [dedicated] to the name of the Saviour at the foot of Mount Garizim, built above the well of Jacob, next to the little estate that Jacob gave to Joseph his son, above which the Lord, when he was tired from his travelling, sat talking with the Samaritan woman, she telling him everything she had done.⁴⁰ Then they climbed up into the mountains, destroying all the castles and villages of the Franks in that region, and they hastened to devastate all the land as far as Jerusalem, killing everybody they could find and plundering. Others made their way on the far side of Mount Tabor, by Eudor and Naun, and through the midst of the plain that is between Mount Tabor and Belvoir, as far as Bethsan, and then through the Jordan valley as far as Jericho and the place where our Saviour fasted for forty days and nights, so as gently to teach us to overcome through fasting the temptations of the devil and the sins of the flesh.⁴¹ They wasted this area, killing or driving out the inhabitants. They then climbed into the mountains to the castle of the knights of the Temple that is located in a place named Maledoim (in Latin it can also be called ‘the rise of the red’ or ‘the ruddy’, on account of the blood that was often spilt there by thieves), or as we say ‘the red cistern’. Finding nobody there, they took possession of it. So they ravaged the mountain region all around Jerusalem, and nobody could enter or leave the city without risking death. Jerusalem was thus hemmed in on all sides and blockaded, though not yet under siege. The inhabitants waited fearfully, their morale sapped by the prolonged expectation of attack and the fear of famine developing.

The Capture of the City of Acre

After describing these events, let us turn our pen to the head of this great evil. After achieving this great massacre of the Christians, the heart of Saladin was puffed up, and in his excess of pride he believed that he was raised up to the stars, by a damnable ascent. He ordered the dukes and leaders of his army to be summoned to him. He addressed them proudly thus: ‘God who is great and Mohammed, whom I serve and whose law I obey, has given into my hands the courage and hope of the Christians, namely the Cross, and their king, leaders, knights, archers and

⁴⁰ *John*, iv.6-29.

⁴¹ *Matthew*, iv.2.

infantrymen. And thus all this land full of riches lies before your eyes, bereft of prince and defender. Arise therefore, you brave men, my warriors, and make the land and its fortresses subject to my rule'. So at that moment the king of Damascus ordered his camp to be moved towards Acre, so that if anybody from the Christian population was left, he would either be made to bow his neck before the wicked deity Mohammed or be struck down with the sword. ⁴²

Meanwhile, on hearing the royal order, and with the Persians ululating with joy, the army of the barbarians arose and began its march on Acre. When the army approached the city, the few of its inhabitants who were left out of the many [who had once been there] came out to meet Saladin, crying out to him, begging to [be allowed] to give their hands to him. ⁴³ The king of Syria now realised that they were men of simple nature, carrying their souls in their hands, for they were unused to warfare, and he promised them safety and protection for their lives, saying: 'Let all those to whom my rule extends now know that the people of Acre have found the clemency of my piety, so therefore if any of the Saracens brings injury or harm to either the person or the property belonging to any of the Christians, he should know that he risks a painful death, for having contravened my authority'.

Once the city was captured, he gave those among the Christians who wished to depart either by land or sea permission to do so; those who wanted to remain under his protection could stay there safely and securely. Anybody who wished, shamefully and at the instigation of the Devil, to deny with soiled mouth [belief in] the Son of God and the Cross of His victory, would (after they had been circumcised) receive from this same Saladin a silk jerkin and trousers embroidered with gold, a horse and arms. Then drunk with slaughter, and still thirsting for the blood of the Christians, Saladin the king of Babylon left one of his sons to take charge of the city. He himself, with his evil mind aroused, journeyed into the land of Phoenicia, hoping to make this region and its cities subject to him and to acquire it with great ease for his erroneous faith, intending if he could to destroy the name of the Cross with the inhabitants of that land.

⁴² This of course misunderstands the Prophet's significance to Islam.

⁴³ As a sign of surrender.

Concerning Tyre and Sidon

He then journeyed with great speed into the district of Tyre, which city is strongly fortified with very powerful walls and high towers, and is protected by the sea round about it. The rage and grief of Christianity also furnished it with wisdom and courage, through a nobleman, a marquis who was warlike and valiant in battle, and manly in heart, word and deed, and who could neither be moved by threats nor tricked by soft words.⁴⁴ He was found to be in every way proven and ready. Saladin passed through the coastal cities, namely Sarepta (where Elias was once sustained by a widow at a time of famine with a little quantity of flour and a smear of oil),⁴⁵ Sidon, Beirut and Byblos, and destroyed them with his ferocity.⁴⁶ The inhabitants were driven away or taken into captivity. He installed garrisons of his men, and rapidly retraced his steps. He remained for a few days at Acre, and he ordered his army, which had been spread out through the land of Galilee and Samaria to muster, in order to help his brother Saphadin, who was in the plain of Jerash around Ascalon. They marched from Acre and covered the surface of the land like locusts from the Great Sea as far as Jerusalem, for so great was the host of Saracens that they were as the sands on the seashore, which nobody can count.

The Attack on Ascalon

The king of Egypt then laid siege to the city of Ascalon. He set up siege engines, and began to fight with the fiercest of hearts. However, although the people of Ascalon were few, they were stout of heart, and they trusted in the strength of their walls, and they defended themselves manfully for two weeks. Realising the determination of the Christians, Saladin set up ten catapults [*ballistae*] to throw stones, so that he could attack the city wall, day and night, from afar and without danger to his men, and demolish it. They thus stoned the walls and towers of the city unceasingly, until they had reduced them to rubble. Meanwhile the king of Babylon sent envoys to the Templars who were in the citadel at Gaza, where once Saladin, the strongest of men, had after regaining his strength overthrown the palace where his enemies were gathered together, and been victorious in death, for both he and his

⁴⁴ Conrad of Montferrat.

⁴⁵ *I Kings*, xvii.11-14; cf. *Luke*, iv.26.

⁴⁶ Sidon was captured on 29th July and Beirut on 6th August 1187.

enemies were crushed by the weight of the ruins, and so he died triumphant.⁴⁷

Saladin told the Templars:

‘Look about you and consider fully what you are going to do, and take careful thought [how you will secure] your life and safety. For you can see with your own eyes that God had given the land into my hands. However, I shall grant you mercy; if you abandon the citadel you shall save your lives and receive a safe conduct, and be safe and unharmed’.

They, however, had trust in the strength of Ascalon, and replied, ‘we shall depend on what happens at Ascalon.

Meanwhile the wall of the city was overcome, and more or less demolished, enabling the Saracens, should they wish to and dare, to enter over a level space and attack the Christians. Saladin was however afraid that any delay would cause him problems, and so he appealed to the ears of the Christians by means of the king, whom he held prisoner in chains there, and the latter’s brother and his other captives. He offered them terms, namely that since they could have no help or assistance from other Christians, either by land or sea, they and all their people could depart in peace provided that they surrender the city. The people of Ascalon then met together to consider what they should do to ensure their own safety and that of the prisoners who were in chains. They realised that they lacked the strength to defend the city, and so they made this offer:

‘We do indeed know your determination and the great power that God has allowed you [to have] in this land. As Christians we should indeed suffer death and tribulation for the name of Christ, opening the way to the kingdom of Heaven. However, it is pleasing to those whose faith is still weak, and to not a few others, for whom we should have compassion out of fraternal love, to receive the right hand of agreement from you, on condition that you release and restore to us the king, the bishop of St. George,⁴⁸ the king’s brother, and twelve [others] of the nobles who are prisoners. Grant to us forty days, during which we can sell our property and make preparations, and allow a hundred

⁴⁷ *Judges*, xvi.21-30.

⁴⁸ The bishop of Lydda.

families who want to remain in the city [to do so] under your protection. Once that time has elapsed, allow the remainder with all their people to go in safety to Tripoli’.

This speech found favour in Saladin’s eyes, and he gave instructions that the offer from the people of Ascalon be freely accepted.

On Saturday 4th September in the year 1187, at the ninth hour, the sun was obscured, and during this eclipse the nobles of Ascalon left the city and came to the camp of the Egyptians, and there in the presence of the Saracens both the Christians and the princes of the Damascenes swore an oath that this agreement would be upheld. The next morning they gave the keys of the city of Ascalon to the Saracens, Turks were installed inside the gates, and Saladin made arrangements for the city as he wished. And since the city of Ascalon was like a fortress and a bastion to the land of Jerusalem, when news that it had been captured, despite its powerful defences, reached Jerusalem, this completely sapped the courage of its inhabitants, who mourned most sadly the loss of their strength, for they knew that what he had done to Ascalon, he would do and worse to Jerusalem.

The Destruction of Bethlehem and the Siege of Jerusalem

After seeing to the city [of Ascalon], Saladin then collected his forces together and ordered his emirs and leaders to draw up the army and to march into the hills around Jerusalem bravely and spreading terror by their attack. The army set out and marched through the plans as far as Beitgibrin, that is Beersheba, namely the seventh well, which is so called because of the seven lambs that Abraham sacrificed there, or ‘the well of the oath’ because Abraham and Abimelech, the king of Jerash made a sworn treaty there.⁴⁹ It was included in this treaty that the faithful should enter upon the seventh spring, that is baptism, for what was sworn through the power of the seven-formed Holy Spirit,⁵⁰ would be blessed and consecrated. Saladin, however, sent envoys to the Hospitallers who were in the citadel at Bethlehem, telling them that if they surrendered the castle to him, they would be allowed to leave in peace, along

⁴⁹ *Genesis*, chapter xxi.22-31.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Revelation*, iii.1, v.6; cf. also *Isaiah*, xi.2. This ‘seven-formed Holy Spirit’ was also evoked in the ceremony whereby the pope was formally installed in office at the Lateran Palace, *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. L. Duchesne (2 vols., Paris 1886-92), ii.296.

with the others who had [already] departed. They replied saying, ‘we shall wait to see what happens at Jerusalem’. The sons of Babylon then set out once more on their march through the hills to Jerusalem, chattering away to each other and blaspheming with their filthy mouths the name of Christ and the Cross of our redemption.

These were the holy places in the territory of the Holy City of Jerusalem that were destroyed and left desolate by the unbelievers: in Bethlehem, the city of David, the noble manger where the glorious mother, Virgin at His birth and Virgin after His birth, through the workings of the Holy Spirit gave birth, without lamentation or suffering corruption, to the Son of God, her Creator and that of all people. The Virgin gave birth joyfully, with the angels rejoicing, and with her chaste hands she placed Him wrapped in linens in that crib that was the seat of God, the second resting place after Heaven, [providing] the means of life for the ox and the ass, that is to say for the Jew and the Gentile. Others hastened to the holy mountain of Shiloh, where once the children of Israel erected that wonderful tabernacle with its tools. In this place St. Samuel, the gentlest and most holy of all the prophets, was called by God from Heaven, ‘Samuel, Samuel’, and with his innocent mouth, free from all filthy contagion from the world he replied, ‘Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth’. ⁵¹ Now a monastery of Praemonstratensian canons has been built here, whose prayers are joined with those of Moses and Aaron as they seek pardon before God for our sins. ⁵² The prophet David lamented this destruction in a Psalm, when he said: ‘God forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh’. ⁵³ Here therefore is a true prophet, whose words did not fall to earth, since whatever he prophesied was proven by actual events. Thus he judged the children of Israel in Masphat. ⁵⁴ And that we should know by what judgement he judged them, the Hebrews say that the water in Masphat where curses were heaped up in front of the Lord was such that if an idolater took a draught of it and tasted of it in the presence of the Lord and the prophet Samuel then his lips would be stuck together so that they could never afterwards be separated one from another. An idolater identified in this way would [then] be stoned by all the people on the order of the

⁵¹ *I Samuel*, iii.10.

⁵² The abbey of St. Samuel of Montjoie, founded by Baldwin II, was the only Praemonstratensian house in the kingdom of Jerusalem.

⁵³ *Psalm*, lxxvii.60 (Vulgate); lxxviii.60 (AV).

⁵⁴ *I Samuel*, vii.6.

prophet and according to the Law, lest others be led astray by his example and worship empty images instead of God.

Some [of the Muslims] also destroyed Bethany, which is translated as the ‘house of obedience’, where the Lord called Lazarus with a loud voice from his tomb, four days after his death, in response to the humble prayers of Mary and Martha his sisters, taking our mortality upon himself and lamenting our miserable fate.⁵⁵ There too the Lord was invited to a feast by a Pharisee, and was humbly anointed by Mary with costly ointment of spikenard, kissing his feet and washing them with tears.⁵⁶ Others describe how the Lord entered this fortified town (*castellum*), and Martha received him in their house, and while ‘she was cumbered with much serving’, her sister Mary chose to sit at the feet of the Lord as he spoke to those listening, for the Lord said, ‘but one thing is needful’.⁵⁷ Others indeed ravaged the most holy Mount of Olives, where the Lord, so it is read in the Gospel, was accustomed frequently to sit with his disciples, to pray and teach the works of mercy. On that mountain is built the church where our Lord Jesus Christ, on the fortieth day of his Resurrection, ascended into Heaven with his disciples looking on.⁵⁸ In the midst of this a work of wonderful circularity and beauty was constructed, where stood the feet of the Lord, at which place faithful Christians can see the imprint of the Saviour’s tread, which they kiss with great veneration. Among the other places that the infidels also polluted with their profane hands was the church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Josaphat, which they destroyed, defiling that glorious place where the holy Virgin Mother of Christ is buried, which is venerated and properly praised by all Christians, with many filthy actions. Above her tomb a work in dressed stone [*opus quadratus*] had been built, beautifully decorated with a wonderful variety of gold, silver and engravings.⁵⁹ Here also, on the other side of the brook of Kedron, is the place called Gethsemane where lies the garden into which Jesus entered with his disciples, after celebrating the supper of the new sacrament. There he warned his disciples to pray

⁵⁵ *John*, chapter xi. A nunnery dedicated to Lazarus was founded here by Queen Melisende of Jerusalem between 1138 and 1144.

⁵⁶ *Mark*, xiv.3.

⁵⁷ *Luke*, x.38-42.

⁵⁸ *Acts*, i.9-10.

⁵⁹ The Benedictine abbey of St. Mary of Josaphat was established here on the site of an older, ruined church about 1111.

lest they enter into temptation. ⁶⁰ A church dedicated to the Saviour has been built in this place, because the Saviour and Redeemer prayed there to God the Father for the salvation of the human race.

The Appalling Distress of the People of Jerusalem

The Holy City of Jerusalem was besieged on 20th September. It was surrounded on every side by the unbelievers, with loud trumpet calls, terrible weapons, crying out and noisily chanting, ‘Hai, hai’, and surrounding it with their banners unfurled on all sides. The city was disturbed by the noise and tumult of the barbarians, and for some hours its inhabitants cried out; ‘True and Holy Cross and Sepulchre of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, protect the city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants’. Battle was then joined and both parties began to fight bravely. But since this led to so much unhappiness, and sorrow and sadness, we shall not recount in detail all the attacks and raids of the Turks, by which for two weeks they wore down the Christians, just as we omit those other deeds which would be tedious to narrate and without purpose either to write or to hear. Who indeed, when religion was faced with such terrible grief, would not abandon everything and burst into tears when he saw monks and canons, priests and levites, hermits and anchorites, worn out by old age, donning armour and carrying weapons to defend the Holy of Holies and the heritage of the Cross? There [one could see] crowds of widows, orphans and boys stretching out their arms to the Lord in the churches and squares, with desperation in their faces, their innocent mouths crying out tearfully, continually begging for Divine mercy and the protection of the saints. What tongue could tell how many of the Saracens were transfixed by spears and arrows, losing the breath of life and finding a death that was everlasting? Who indeed could describe how a nephew of Saladin, led astray by pride, and nobly clad in silk garments right down to the hooves of his horse, decorated with gold like women’s mirrors, and ornamented through the awful hubris of his soul, was struck down by a sergeant outside St. Stephen’s gate, and being slain perished miserably. Or who could recount how many Christians were wounded by the missiles of their enemies and forfeited for Christ’s sake their life in this world, but thereby gained eternal life? During these days when God seemed to be in charge of the city, who could say why one man who was hit died, while another was wounded

⁶⁰ *Matthew*, xxvi.41; *Mark*, xiv.38; *Luke*, xxii.40.

but survived? Arrows fell like drops of rain, so that nobody could show a finger above the ramparts without being wounded. There was indeed such a multitude of wounded men that all the doctors and the hospitals of the city were barely enough to extract the missiles from their bodies. I myself who tell this story was wounded in the face by an arrow that struck the bridge of my nose, and while the wooden shaft was removed, the metal [tip] remains there to this day. The people of Jerusalem fought bravely for a week, while the [enemy] army remained outside the Tower of David.

Saladin then saw that he was making no progress, nor indeed was he able to do the city much harm, and so he and his men began to circle the walls, looking for the city's weak points, and for a place where he could set up his siege engines without fear of the Christians, the more easily to attack the city. And since he was the son of that person who, in the pride of his damnable mind sought to place his throne on the north side so that he would rule not under God but against God, and so would be similar to the all-Highest,⁶¹ he found a corner of the city on the north side that was weak and thus suitable for the accomplishment of his wicked designs. At dawn on a certain day the king of Egypt, that is Saladin, ordered his camp to be moved without any noise or commotion and had their tents pitched in the valley of Josaphat, on the Mount of Olives and Montjoie and throughout the hills in that area. When dawn came and the darkness of the clouds had disappeared, the men of Jerusalem looked out and saw that the Saracens were taking away their tents as if they were leaving. They were filled with joy and said: 'the king of Syria is retreating, because he was unable to destroy the city as he intended'. But once they realised the truth, this rejoicing was turned into grief and lamentation.

The tyrant now ordered siege engines to be built and catapults to be set up, while at the same time instructing that the branches of the olives and other trees be gathered and piled up between these engines and the city. That evening he ordered his army to take up their weapons and those detailed to breach the walls to set off with their iron tools, so that everyone would be ready at the foot of the walls before the Christians could do anything to prevent this. This most cruel of tyrants also drew up almost ten thousand cavalry, heavily-armed with lances and bows, to prevent the men of the city from making a sortie. He stationed another ten thousand or more men with

⁶¹ Saladin is therefore the son of Satan.

bows for shooting arrows under cover of shields and targets, while he kept the remainder with him and his lieutenants around his siege engines. Once his men had been arrayed in this way, they began at dawn to undermine the corner tower, while attacks were made all around the wall circuit, the archers shot their arrows, and those who were in charge of the siege engines launched a hail of rocks. Meanwhile the men of the city, who were not expecting this attack, had left the city and its walls unguarded while, tired and exhausted, they slept until daybreak, for ‘except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain’.⁶²

At sunrise those who were sleeping in the towers were startled by the noise of the barbarians, and when they saw what was happening they were astonished, and stupefied by fear. They cried out like madmen through the city: ‘Men of Jerusalem, run and hurry to help us, for the walls have been breached, and the foreigners are entering’. Once the people were aroused, they rushed through the city, [fighting] as valiantly as possible, but they were unable to drive the Damascenes away from the walls, despite throwing darts, spears and stones, shooting arrows and pouring molten lead and bronze. The Turks continued a ceaseless bombardment of the ramparts with their stones, and they showered the area between the main wall and the outer defences with stones and what is called Greek fire, which burns wood and stone and whatever else it touches. The archers shot a hail of arrows continuously from all sides, while their other men were boldly breaking down the walls.

Meanwhile the men of Jerusalem took counsel and decided that all those who had horses and weapons should make a sortie through the gate that leads to [the valley of] Josaphat, so that if God allowed them they might drive their enemies some way back from the walls. But they were prevented by the Turks stationed on horseback and were wretchedly driven back, while all along the walls the defenders were crying out: ‘Holy Mary, Holy Mary, help us’. After that the Christians were unable to make a further sortie. There was therefore lamentation, wailing and the noise of weeping, and garments were rent asunder in grief and sorrow all through the churches and squares [of the city]. Some indeed were lamenting for the holy city, the Sepulchre of the Lord and the most holy mountain of Calvary, where the blood of propitiation for the salvation of the human race was shed; others were however mourning their brothers

⁶² *Psalm*, cxxvi (Vulgate), cxxvii (AV).1.

and friends who had been killed, or who were threatened by death, while some were lamenting their sons who had already been laid low by the missiles of the barbarians – all the rest bewailed the danger of death or captivity which now threatened both them and their fellows indiscriminately.

The Chaldeans fought savagely day after day, and held the upper hand. The Christians were now weakening, so that barely twenty or thirty men appeared to defend the walls of the city; nor could any man be found in the whole city who was brave enough to stand guard for a night, even for a reward of a hundred bezants. Indeed, with my own ears I heard the voice of a herald proclaiming, between the great wall and the outer works, on behalf of the lord patriarch and the other great men of the city, that if fifty strong and brave sergeants could be found who would volunteer to take up arms and stand guard that night at the corner that had previously been destroyed, they would receive five thousand bezants, but such men could not be found. However, nearly everyone shared a common determination, namely to die in the faith of Christ in the holy city and in all sincerity, and thus each person would obtain his own portion of the Promised Land, in which his corpse might lie, trodden under foot by the gentiles, for Christ's sake. Woe unto me, miserable wretch, and weaker than all sinners, that I did not receive my portion of the Holy Land through such a rope of measurement! While this was going on, the men living at Jerusalem, preferring their earthly life of sin rather than loving Christ, thinking of their beautiful wives, their sons and daughters and indeed the mammon to which they were in thrall, discussed how they and all their dependants might escape, while abandoning the Holy City and its sacred sites.

Of the Tribute imposed upon the People of Jerusalem

Meanwhile they sent envoys to the king of Syria, begging him to temper the anger [he held] in his heart against them, and to make an agreement with them, as he had done with other people. However, he refused, and he is said to have given this reply: 'I have frequently heard from our wise *fakirs* that Jerusalem cannot be cleansed unless it is washed with Christian blood, and I wish to take their advice about this'. And thus they returned in a state of uncertainty. They then sent other men, Balian and Renier of Nablus, and Thomas Patrick, offering a hundred thousand bezants, but he did not wish to receive this, and they returned with their hopes in tatters. So they sent

these men back once again, along with others, begging that Saladin should say what terms he wanted, and if these could be met then they would be, if not they would hold out to the death. After taking advice, he imposed the following tribute upon Jerusalem: that every male of ten years and over should pay ten bezants for his freedom, every woman five, while one bezant should be paid for each boy of seven years or less, and once they had thus been liberated from servitude, they would be free to depart in safety with their people to wherever they wished. If however this treaty was not pleasing to the people of Jerusalem, or if there were people who did not possess ten bezants, then they would become the booty of their enemies, to be slain by the sword. This offer was therefore pleasing to the lord patriarch and to the other people who had money. What an extraordinary deed! Who has ever heard of such a thing? An heir paid a ransom so as to be driven from his patrimony. Some indeed objected, wishing to fight to the death, lest they dishonour their forefathers by their shameful cowardice, and lose their inheritance in chaos and shame for their wickedness. There were those, however, who preferred not to be heirs and to lose their patrimony by furnishing the price with shameful wickedness. The prophet Jeremiah mourns these matters, through lamentation and the emendation of such errors if this was possible, when he says: ‘How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people’.⁶³ Five things are commemorated here, namely sitting in judgement, loneliness, fullness, widowhood and rulership. For the city sits as a judge, giving unjust judgement. It sits in ashes, and in the pollution of its wickedness, for if it stood up in the strength of equity, it would undoubtedly fight against its evil enemies. It is said to be alone because it is without the help and protection of God, without true adherents of Christ, thus it is separated from the love and proximity of God, whence Solomon: ‘Woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up’.⁶⁴ It is full of people, a wicked, unruly and impenitent people, a people of great wickedness; hence Isaiah says: ‘this people with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart from me’.⁶⁵ It is commemorated as a widow [having lost] both its pontifical rank and royal power; it is widowed [too] because it has lost the ring of faith; and it is widowed since through the entry of the Saracens it has forfeited

⁶³ *Lamentations*, i.1.

⁶⁴ *Ecclesiastes*, iv.10.

⁶⁵ *Isaiah*, xxix.13.

its contract with its husband Christ. And it is said to be a ruler (*domina*), since all the tribes of the land are gathered under its wing.

On Friday 2nd October this treaty was read out through the streets of Jerusalem, so that everyone might, within forty days, furnish for himself and pay to Saladin the aforesaid tribute for his own freedom. When they heard this, the common people throughout the city wailed in lamentation, saying: ‘Woe, woe, unto us who are wretched, what shall those of us who have no gold do [now]? We would have preferred, and it would have been better for us, to have died for Christ in this holy city, rather than to abandon the land of promise to be slaves subject to the harsh rule of the polluted and unclean Turks and Saracens’. Who would ever have thought that such wickedness could be perpetrated by Christians, and that the Sepulchre of the Resurrection of Christ, the noble Temple, the most holy Mount Sion and the other holy places would willingly be placed in the hands of the gentiles? For shame, for there is no shame comparable to this! We read that the Jews never deserted the Holy of Holies without a fierce battle and the shedding of blood. May those most evil traffickers who have sold Christ and the holy city perish, like that wicked merchant who was hanged and ‘burst asunder in the middle’,⁶⁶ and what is worst, all the bowels of his wickedness were scattered on these people, as they are on those who exact presents for the imposition of hands and the sacraments of the Church. Concerning these, Jeremiah once again says: ‘even the sea monsters draw out their breasts’, that is they show by their actions the inner workings of their minds; ‘and they give suck to their young ones’,⁶⁷ namely a bad conscience and the concupiscence of their avarice, so that in a foreign land as in that one, they seek to deceive their neighbours with false weights and all sorts of oaths. A witch indeed has the face of a human being, but its body and speech reveal it as a beast. ‘Let their children be fatherless and his wife a widow, let his children be continually vagabonds’,⁶⁸ for they are unwilling to protect His inheritance and that of the Cross, despite the example of good behaviour and virtuous life given by their forefathers.

⁶⁶ *Acts*, i.18; cf. *Matthew*, xxvii.5: the reference is of course to Judas Iscariot.

⁶⁷ *Lamentations*, iv.3.

⁶⁸ *Psalms*, cviii (Vulgate), cix (AV).9-10.

How the city of Jerusalem was betrayed to Saladin

Thus on the third day of October, in the 1187th year from the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, Jerusalem was alas betrayed by wicked Christians into the hands of the evildoers, whence indeed:

‘Thirteen years before the year twelve hundred

The third dawn broke in October, and lit up the holy city,

The fifth day before the Ides of October, and the Dominical letter D,

The city was ruined on the Sabbath day, and the unbelievers

Mocked the Sabbath in the hearts of Christians.’

The gates were shut and guards were posted. Then those ministers of wicked error, the *Alpachini* and *Cassini*, [that is] the bishops and priests according to the faith of the Saracens, climbed up first to the Temple of the Lord, which they call Beithhalla, and through which they have great faith that they will be saved. They did this ostensibly to pray and for religious reasons, intending to cleanse what in fact they polluted with filthiness and horrible bellowings, hailing the law of Mohammed with their unclean lips, crying ‘Allah al-akbar, Allah al-akbar’. They defiled all the places which are contained within the Temple [Mount]; namely the place of the Presentation, where the glorious Virgin and Mother Mary gave the Son of God into the hands of the righteous Symeon, so that he might present Him to the Lord according to the law of Moses; and the place (known as that of the confession) that lies opposite the gate of Solomon, where the Lord saved the woman caught in adultery from being stoned under the harsh law of the Jews, changing judicial condemnation into mercy, and the law into forgiveness, by writing with his finger on the earth, ‘he that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone against her’.⁶⁹ There was also the place on the eastern side from where the Jews threw James the Just, the brother of the Lord, from the Temple battlements, both because of his facial resemblance [to Christ] and because of the Word and testimony of Jesus Christ, and killed him by striking him with a fuller’s mallet.

⁶⁹ *John*, viii.7.

The Overthrow of the Golden Cross

To the accompaniment of loud shouting and mockery of those who adored the Cross, they threw the golden cross, along with others from all over the city, tied together with ropes, from the battlements of the Temple [mount], to the shame of the Christians, who wept, tore their hair and rent their clothes, beating their breasts and heads, in their grief, sadness and the great anxiety in their hearts, which came close to ceasing. They stationed guards to prevent any Christians entering the entrance to the Temple enclosure, about which Jeremiah said: ‘The Lord has cast off his altar, he has abhorred his sanctuary’, and also, ‘For the sins of the priests and the wickedness of the people, they have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as in the day of a solemn feast’. ⁷⁰ Saphadin, however, ascended the holy Mount Sion from the other side, and he and his men were not afraid to pollute its holy sites with their impurities, such as eating, drinking and self-indulgence (*luxuria*). This included the church that had been sanctified by the visits and prayers of the Apostles and of the glorious Virgin Mary after the Lord’s Ascension, the coming of the Holy Ghost to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, the Dormition of Mary, and the greeting by the Lord after the Resurrection, saying to his disciples, ‘peace be unto you’. ⁷¹ Meanwhile the Sepulchre of the Lord was stripped and despoiled of all its decoration, and was left open, allowing all Christians and Saracens to enter indiscriminately. Even the place where the traces of the Cross of our redemption appear on the holy mountain – there being a great fissure on the right-hand side of that rock where blood and water flowed from the Saviour’s side while he was hanging on the Cross onto the earth, was stripped and despoiled.

How Saladin gained almost all the land of Judea

Our people had held the city of Jerusalem for about eighty-nine years, from the time when the victorious power of the Christians had recovered both it and Antioch. The Gentiles had previously possessed it for some 360 years. ⁷² Within a brief space of time Saladin had gained almost the whole of the kingdom of Jerusalem,

⁷⁰ *Lamentations*, ii.7, but also misquoting *Lamentations*, iv.13: ‘For the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests’.

⁷¹ *Luke*, xxiv.36.

⁷² Another manuscript says ‘forty years’. Jerusalem was in fact under Muslim control from 637 until 1099, thus 462 years.

mightily upholding the law of Mohammed, and through his deeds doing his best to exalt it above the Christian religion. While these events were taking place, the archbishop of Tyre took ship and brought the news of this terrible disaster to the Christian world, rousing innumerable people to tears and many to seek revenge. The first among all these was the mighty Count Richard of Poitou, who took the cross to avenge the injury to the [True] Cross, and because he was the first of all, he set the example [for others] through his action. Similarly his father King Henry, who was now approaching old age, along with King Philip and almost all the magnates of both kingdoms took the cross at Gisors. There was universal enthusiasm for this great enterprise, and even in the cloisters men cast off their cowls and left for the camp. The Emperor Frederick and his men also received the cross. Marching through Hungary to Constantinople, he had in his company seven bishops, along with an archbishop, two dukes, nineteen counts, three margraves, three thousand knights and around eighty thousand others. His army suffered heavy attacks from the Sultan of Iconium, before taking Iconium by storm. Then, after arriving in Armenia, the emperor was drowned in the River Selef, and his son the Duke of Swabia took command of the army. The news of the drowning of the emperor overjoyed the Turks who were besieged in Acre by the Christians, and saddened the Christians who were greatly in need while they conducted the siege, almost to the point of demoralisation.

Saladin released King Guy after he had been held at Damascus in chains for almost a year, on condition that he abjure the kingdom and immediately cross the sea into exile. When the king came to Tyre, the marquis [*Conrad of Montferrat*] would not admit him. From there he went to Acre, accompanied by the Pisans and a considerable army, and laid siege to the city by land and sea. The first to arrive at this siege was a fleet of northerners, numbering twelve thousand men. Then James of Avesnes arrived, and pitched his tents opposite the ‘accursed tower’, while the Templars turned up a little while later. Many people now arrived from the kingdoms of the French and English, not waiting for their kings. Among these were the bishop of Beauvais ⁷³ and his brother Count Robert. The Count of Brienne, the Count of Bar and many Flemings came. From Germany there came a certain Landgrave with men from Swabia, who persuaded the marquis who was in dispute with King Guy to come

⁷³ Philip of Dreux, Bishop of Beauvais 1175-1217: the ‘Itinerary’, Bk. I c. 29, described him as ‘a man more devoted to battles than books, who revelled in knightly pursuits’.

to Acre. ⁷⁴ The Christians attacked the neighbouring forts of the gentiles, but were themselves harassed by the townspeople, and many people on both sides were slain. Among those who died was Gerard de Ridfort, the Master of the Temple. ⁷⁵

While a certain German and his companions were chasing an escaped horse, a great shout suddenly announced that the besieged townsfolk had made a sortie to plunder the baggage. Then the order of battle was thrown into confusion, the [usual] formations were scattered, signals were ignored, and the leaders of the army were forced to flee. In this confusion the Turks recovered their courage, and many of our men were struck down. ⁷⁶ However, the Christians were growing stronger day by day, even though they suffered frequent and heavy losses at the hands of the Turks as they strove to surround the city with trenches. Meanwhile the Turks within Acre were suffering from hunger, and they offered to surrender the city to the besiegers. Saladin sent fifty galleys to their help, laden with men, food and weapons, which captured or dispersed our galleys, and they captured one of our ships laden with foodstuffs and brought it into the city. The men they found on board this ship were hanged all along the walls. This took place on the feast of All Souls. ⁷⁷

At Easter the marquis, who had returned to Tyre to repair his ships, returned from there with a large force of men, well-armed and supplied. The besieged, however, refused to allow him free passage by sea, and set out to meet him with their galleys, intending to fight a naval battle. But, through the will of God, victory was granted to the Christians. Meanwhile the Turks who were besieging the Christians from the outside filled in our ditches with earth and launched fierce attacks on those of our men who were stationed inside. Thus no safety or peace was vouchsafed [to them], for they were menaced on all sides, being both overlooked by those who were besieged in the city while the menace of Saladin's army continually lay over their heads from the other side, and their galleys stood in ambush on the sea. Our men built three wooden towers, and once they fiercely attacked the city from them, the people within offered to surrender, provided that they might leave freely and also

⁷⁴ 'Itinerary [of King Richard]', Bk. I c. 29, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, pp. 76-7. The landgrave was Ludwig III of Thuringia.

⁷⁵ The Muslim sources date this battle to 4th October 1189.

⁷⁶ A very compressed summary drawn from 'Itinerary', Bk. I cc. 29-30, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, pp. 79-80.

⁷⁷ 1st November 1189.

were given the opportunity to take away their goods. Our men were unwilling to allow this, and then, lo and behold, the Turks on the outside rushed the ditch and attacked our men in the rear. While they were defending themselves from those who were charging them, enemy fire burned our machines. All efforts to extinguish this proved hopeless, we lost through mischance our hope of victory.

The people in the town were hard-pressed by hunger, and ate their horses and other types of beast, despite the prohibition of Muslim law. They also threw the important Christians who had been held captive over the walls, dead. Three laden ships arrived for those in need, but they sailed so swiftly towards the city that the sailors suffered shipwreck. Saladin gathered his whole army from all of his kingdoms, and fiercely attacked our men for a week over Pentecost,⁷⁸ but when the Christians manfully resisted each and every attack many of the Turks returned to their homelands. One of Saladin's sons was killed there by a crossbow bolt. This and the setbacks to their attacks depressed and frightened the enemy army. However, since the townspeople were suffering from hunger, the sultan assisted them, sending them twenty-five boatloads of supplies, but two of them were wrecked between the 'Tower of the Flies' and a nearby rock.⁷⁹ On St. James's Day,⁸⁰ while our army was relaxing and taking its ease, the common people set up a commotion and without the guidance of the princes, and in defiance of the patriarch's prohibition, rashly burst forth against the enemy's fortresses, without orders and more concerned with gaining plunder than fighting. Seeing these mobs coming forth, the infidels deliberately retreated a little way, without carrying off their baggage or tents. The Turks, along with the Sultan's nephew Thecahadin,⁸¹ then rushed from their hiding places and easily defeated the rash, scattered and foolish mob, killing some 5500 of them. The [Christian] force was more or less routed, but they were greatly assisted by Master Ralph of Hauterive, archdeacon of Colchester, a man who later performed many noteworthy deeds, but then made a joyful end to his days during this same siege.⁸²

⁷⁸ 20th May 1190.

⁷⁹ 'Itinerary', Bk. I cc. 38-9, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, pp. 93-4

⁸⁰ 25th July.

⁸¹ Takī-al-Dīn 'Umar, the son of Saladin's elder brother Shāhanshāh.

⁸² 'Itinerary', Bk. I c. 40, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, pp. 94-6. He was also mentioned by Roger of Howden in the list of those who died on the Crusade he gave in his *Gesta Regis Ricardi*, in *Gesta Regis Henrici II Benedicti Abbatis*, ed. W. Stubbs (2 vols., Rolls Series, London 1867), ii.147. Ralph

With our men suffering daily tribulations, the Lord brought to them powerful assistance from the very ends of the earth, distinguished men who were formidable in battle, archbishops, bishops, dukes, counts, marquises, barons, knights, and a multitude of other people from every land, too many indeed to be numbered. Before the arrival of Kings Philip and Richard, our army was commanded by Count Henry of Champagne, who was their nephew, and who was afterwards chosen to become king [of Jerusalem]. The Duke of Swabia, the son of Frederick, came to Acre with the Germans on the prompting of the marquis. He was the sower of dissension, for with his help the Marquis of Montferrat aspired to the throne, because he had taken the wife of Humphrey from her husband, who had become the heiress of that land by right of succession.⁸³

Certain miraculous events took place during the siege of Acre. A stone-thrower of the townspeople damaged all our siege engines with its missiles, but one of our men whom it struck survived uninjured. A dart hurled from inside the city penetrated the armour of another of our people, but was unable to penetrate an amulet containing the name of God which was hanging on his chest.⁸⁴ A knight who had gone out unarmed to answer a call of nature was attacked by a Turk with a spear, but felled him with a stone.⁸⁵ Ivo of Vieuxpont, who was sailing to Tyre in a little ship accompanied by only ten companions and three sailors, killed eighty pirates with a two-headed axe.⁸⁶ A certain emir tried to burn our siege-engines with Greek fire, but succeeded only in setting light to his own genitals.⁸⁷ A Turk who was bringing Greek fire [into the city] by swimming was captured by our men in a net.⁸⁸ Another Turk tried to urinate on the Lord's Cross, but was struck in the groin by a dart. There was a naval battle between the Turks and our men; and while our people strove to capture the Tower of the Flies with towers and siege-engines placed on the galleys, our

was a nephew of Gilbert Foliot, Bishop of London 1163-87, who became archdeacon of Colchester in or before 1186.

⁸³ Isabelle, younger daughter of King Amalric, had been betrothed to Humphrey of Toron in 1180, when she was only eight, although the marriage was not formally celebrated until the autumn of 1183. After the death of her elder sister Sybilla, an episcopal court annulled this marriage, on the grounds that she had not consented to the marriage (her mother Queen Maria Comnena was a key witness), and despite the attempts of Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury to stop the proceedings. She was promptly married off to Conrad, as is mentioned disapprovingly below.

⁸⁴ 'Itinerary', Bk. I c. 47-8, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, pp. 103-4.

⁸⁵ 'Itinerary', Bk. I c. 49, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, p. 105.

⁸⁶ 'Itinerary', Bk. I c. 53, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, p. 108.

⁸⁷ 'Itinerary', Bk. I c. 54, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, p. 109.

⁸⁸ 'Itinerary', Bk. I c. 55, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, pp. 109-10

machines were burned.⁸⁹ The townsmen also burned the battering ram of the Archbishop of Besançon with Greek fire, with the loss however of their men. A fleet of fifteen ships was sent to the townsmen from Alexandria, but many were lost.⁹⁰ Our men then arranged themselves to fight Saladin, under the leadership of Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury,⁹¹ and Saladin and his men retreated to the hills. When some of our men went towards Cayphas [Haifa] to gather supplies and were on their way back, they suffered heavy attacks from the Turks, but as they yielded to the attack, Geoffrey of Lusignan, the brother of King Guy, along with five picked knights, charged the enemy on the bridge that they were occupying.⁹² So that he might acquire the kingdom, the marquis wickedly married the heiress to the kingdom, the wife of Humphrey (who was still alive). Once she was in his power through marriage, he returned to Tyre with his wife, promising under oath that he would furnish supplies for the army. But heedless of this agreement, he was unwilling to send food to the army as it was suffering from hunger.⁹³

Seeing and hearing that the army was completely given up to taverns, whores and games of dice, Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury became discouraged in spirit and tired of life; suffering from a burning fever, he fell asleep in the Lord there.⁹⁴ Meanwhile our army suffered continuously from a terrible famine. For a measure of a *moggia* of corn, which could easily be carried under an arm, was sold for a hundred gold coins, a hen for twelve shillings and a sheep for six pence.⁹⁵ Some of those who were dying of hunger devoured the bodies of horses with their intestines. A horse sold for more dead than alive. The starving gnawed bones that had [already] been chewed by dogs. Around an oven many people gave way to anger, quarrels, disputes and even fights. Others rushed to the bakery, yelling: 'here is money, here is whatever you want for the price of bread, if you can only give me plenty of bread'.⁹⁶ A person who had some food ate it in secret. Those who were delicate ate even herbs as a delicacy. Noblemen stole, since they [otherwise] lacked the means to live, and the pangs of

⁸⁹ 'Itinerary', Bk. I c. 58, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, pp. 113-14.

⁹⁰ 'Itinerary', Bk. I cc. 59-60, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, pp. 115-17. Thierry of Montfaucon was Archbishop of Besançon 1180-91.

⁹¹ Baldwin, Bishop of Worcester 1180-4 and Archbishop of Canterbury 1184-90.

⁹² 'Itinerary', Bk. I c. 62, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, pp. 119-21.

⁹³ Cf. 'Itinerary', Bk. I c. 64, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, pp. 125-6.

⁹⁴ Cf. 'Itinerary', Bk. I c. 65, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, p. 126. He died 19/20th November 1190.

⁹⁵ 'Itinerary', Bk. I c. 66, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, p. 127.

⁹⁶ 'Itinerary', Bk. I c. 71, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, p. 130.

hunger led many to apostatise. Two companions bought thirteen beans for a penny. Those who were hungry ate meat during Lent.⁹⁷ Curses never ceased to be poured upon the marquis, who was the cause of this great scarcity. Moreover, continuous rain led to serious illness spreading among the men, so that their whole bodies became distended as though they had dropsy; and thus the people perished through rain and hunger.⁹⁸ Finally, on the urging of the bishop of Salisbury and others,⁹⁹ the rich made a collection, from which the poor might be relieved. After the arrival of a ship, what was sold yesterday for a hundred gold coins was today sold for [only] four. A certain Pisan corn chandler wanted to preserve his corn for a future day, that he might sell it more dearly, but it happened that his house where the corn was stored was burned down. From then on everybody did indeed provide food for the needy.¹⁰⁰

After Easter in the year from the Incarnation of the Lord 1191, first King Philip of France arrived at Acre and not long afterwards, around Pentecost,¹⁰¹ King Richard of the English came. If anyone wishes to know more about the course of their journey and what they did during that journey, or how they captured Acre and the many battles they fought in that land against Saladin, or the reason why King Philip returned home, let him read the book which the lord prior of Holy Trinity, London, had translated from French to Latin, with a pen that was both elegant and truthful.¹⁰²

[*The work concludes with the letter sent by Frederick Barbarossa to Saladin in 1188, threatening to wage war upon him, taken from ‘The Itinerary of King Richard’*].¹⁰³

⁹⁷ ‘Itinerary’, Bk. I cc. 69, 73-5, 77, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, pp. 129, 131-4.

⁹⁸ ‘Itinerary’, Bk. I c. 70, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, p. 129.

⁹⁹ Hubert Walter, Bishop of Salisbury 1189-93 and Archbishop of Canterbury 1193-1205.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Itinerary’, Bk. I cc. 78-81, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, pp. 135-7.

¹⁰¹ 2nd June.

¹⁰² This refers to the fact that much of the *Itinerary* by Richard de Templo was based upon the earlier French verse account of Richard’s Crusade by Ambroise.

¹⁰³ ‘Itinerary’, Bk. I c.18, translated Nicholson, *Chronicle*, pp. 49-51.