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THE FIRST CRUSADERS' JOURNEY ACROSS THE BALKAN PENINSULA

Byzantine provincial history is a subject of which our knowledge is curiously fitful and uneven. Byzantine historians took little interest in any event that took place outside of Constantinople except on the battlefronts. It is only from casual references in biographies of the Saints or in letters of provincial officials that we can derive any picture of life in the provinces in normal times. We are no better served from Byzantine sources even when times were abnormal. The story of the journey across the Balkans of the men of the First Crusade is therefore interesting not only because its events set the tone of subsequent Greco-Frankish relations but also because it gives us a brief glimpse of the provincial organization of Byzantium operating in a time of crisis.

It is a story for which we are almost entirely dependent on Frankish sources. The Byzantine sources tell us almost nothing. Anna Comnena, who might have been expected to be more informative, mentions the arrival of certain leading Crusaders on the coast of Epirus and gives details of some skirmishes there, but has nothing more to say of them or of other Crusaders until they appear one by one at Constantinople. She never tells us that some of the armies entered the Empire at Belgrade and never even hints that there were any difficulties between the Franks and the Imperial officials during the journeys across the Balkans. There is no need to look for an elaborate explanation of her omissions. She was herself present at Constantinople at the time and no doubt saw the Court records. For affairs in Epirus she had personal informant, her cousin John Comnenus, who was Duke of Dyrrhachium at the time; but she had no personal

source in any other district and either did not trouble or did not have an opportunity to see what records about the provinces existed. One interesting indication of her father's policy that she gives us may for this reason be unreliable. She seems to have assumed, and suggests that he assumed that the Crusaders would all arrive in the Empire at Dyrrhachium or at some other Epirote port. It was to Dyrrhachium and to Valona that he sent the high officials that were to greet the Franks and to conduct them across the country. The arrival of Crusaders at Belgrade may have been something for which he had made no provision ⁽¹⁾. On the other hand the instructions that, according to Anna, Alexius gave to his officials, were certainly those that they tried to carry out ⁽²⁾.

The only other reference of any interest from Byzantine sources is to be found in a letter of the Archbishop Theophylact of Bulgaria. He talks of the « passage or invasion of the Franks — I do not know how to describe it »; he complains how busy and distracted he has been made by it all, and adds that « now we are used to Frankish vexations and bear our misfortunes more easily. » Theophylact probably wrote from his metropolis, Ochrida, through which most of the Frankish armies coming from Epirus passed; but we cannot tell when exactly the letter was written ⁽³⁾.

It is the Latin chroniclers on whom we must mainly depend for our story. Of their accounts the most sober is that of Fulcher of Chartres, which is also for our purposes the least interesting, as the party with which he travelled crossed the peninsula without any unpleasant incident. Raimond of Aguilers and the anonymous author of the *Gesta Francorum* provide more colourful eye-witness narratives, which, when due allowance is made for their personal loyalties and their passionate prejudice against the Greeks, must be regarded as reliable. But the fullest account, and the only one to deal with the parties that travelled by the Belgrade route, is that

(1) See below, p. 210.

(2) ANNA COMNENA, *Alexiad*, X, 5, 7, 8; ed. Leib, vol. II, pp. 206-10, 213-20. See below, p. 210.

(3) THEOPHYLACT, Archbishop of Bulgaria, *Epistolae*, in MIGNÉ, *Patrologia Graeco-Latina*, vol. CXXVI, coll. 324-5.

of Albert of Aix. Albert's reputation as a historian suffered greatly during the last century, largely because (like most of his critics) he never himself visited the East and because he depended on informants of uneven quality and was ready to believe in events that have since been proved legendary. But his accounts of Peter the Hermit's journey and of Godfrey of Lorraine's were clearly provided by eye-witnesses. Details such as the length of time spent in travelling from one town to another are convincing. If we make the usual allowances for prejudice and hero-worship we can arrive at a coherent and acceptable narrative. These four chronicles are our primary Latin sources; later writers derived their accounts from one or other of them.

In the spring of 1096, when the Emperor first became aware of the projected Crusade, the Balkan provinces of the Empire were in a state of comparative tranquillity. The Petchenegs had been crushed in 1091, and the Polovtsian invasion of 1094 had fizzled out. The Serbs still continually invaded the Empire from the north-east; but they did not affect the security of the two great roads across the peninsula, the Via Egnatia that ran from Dyrrhachium through Ochrida and Vodena to Thessalonica and on through Mosynopolis and Selymbria to the Capital, and the north road from Belgrade, Nish, Sofia, Philippopolis and Adrianople. But it was necessary, for security, to keep garrisons in the larger towns and particularly on the frontiers. For the western half of the Balkans, where the population was mainly Slav and the chief foreign enemy the Serbs, Turkish mercenaries, especially Petchenegs, were employed. These seem to have been, like the Turkish soldiers of today, troops that obeyed blindly and literally the instructions of their officers.

Alexius must have heard the first news of the gathering of the Crusading armies from Italy; and he anticipated that they would all travel across the Adriatic. During the first half of the eleventh century pilgrims from the west had usually come through Hungary and entered the Empire at Belgrade, thus avoiding a sea-passage. But owing to the situation further east the numbers of pilgrims had declined; and rebellions and Petcheneg invasions in the Balkans had probably inclined the few that made the pilgrimage to prefer

the Adriatic route, particularly after the report of the difficulties of the great German pilgrimage of 1064-5 when crossing the Balkans had been published in the west⁽¹⁾. The Byzantine authorities did not therefore expect any parties to arrive by that route and made no arrangements for them. But special preparations were made to deal with the armies landing from Italy in Epirus. The problem was to feed them and to prevent them from raiding the countryside through which they passed. The Emperor sent high officials, accompanied by Latin interpreters and by mercenary troops, to Dyrrhachium and to Avlona, with orders to give the Franks a friendly welcome, to collect provisions with which to supply them at every big centre, and to watch them discreetly and if they left the road to pillage to push them back with light skirmishing⁽²⁾. The Duke of the Dyrrhachian theme, at that time the Emperor's nephew John Comnenus, was to supervise their landing⁽³⁾. We shall see how carefully these instructions were carried out. Alexius probably did not expect the Crusaders to arrive till after August 15, the date suggested by Urban II for their departure from their home.

But the first of the Crusaders to enter the Empire did so earlier and at Belgrade. These were the rabble led by Walter Sans-Avoir, who had parted from the main body of Peter the Hermit's expedition at Cologne in April, 1096, and had crossed into Hungary on May the 8th. To follow the story it is necessary to try to reconstruct the chronology. To judge from Peter the Hermit's time-table, which has been carefully worked out by Hagenmeyer⁽⁴⁾, his army must have marched from 30 to 40 kilometers a day. Walter was impatient, — he had left Peter because he chafed at the delay, — and his army, being comparatively small, would not have to stop so long

(1) The *Annales Altahenses Majores*, which gave the account of the pilgrimage, were probably published in about 1085. (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, vol. 20, p. 815).

(2) ANNA COMNENA, *Alexiad*, X, 5; ed. Leib, vol. II, p. 209.

(3) *Ibid.* X, 7, p. 213, where we find John Comnenus receiving Hugh of Vermandois. The admiral, Nicholas Mavrokatakalon, was watching the coasts.

(4) HAGENMEYER, *Le Vrai et le Faux sur Pierre L'Hermitte*, trans. Raynaud, pp. 196-201.

for revictualling as Peter's was obliged to do. The Hungarians were friendly and helpful; and though the roads were worse than the Byzantine, the distance across the country was less than 500 kilometres. We may assume that he reached the further frontier before the end of the month. His army crossed the river Save which formed the frontier from Semlin to the Imperial fortress of Belgrade without incident.

Belgrade was in the theme of Bulgaria, whose governor resided at Nish, rather more than 200 kilometres to the south-east. He was an official of no great distinction called Nice-tas⁽¹⁾. His lieutenant at Belgrade (probably the commander of the garrison), clearly had had no instructions how to deal with such a situation, and therefore refused to revictual this disreputable mob. Walter and his troops at once began to pillage the countryside. The commander resorted to arms and slew a number of the pillagers; and others were burnt alive in a church. Sixteen of Walter's men who were still on the Hungarian side of the Save started to pillage there and were captured by the Hungarians and stripped of their clothes and their arms, which were hung on the walls of Semlin as a warning to others. Walter was eventually able to continue with his army on his way to Nish, where, we are told, he was well received by the Governor and sent on under escort to Constantinople. He had reached Philippopolis by July, — his uncle, Walter de Pezejo (or Poissy), died there that month, — and he must have arrived at Constantinople by the middle of the month⁽²⁾.

The time-table makes it clear that he must have delayed somewhere on the way. We may therefore reconstruct the

(1) The Latin chroniclers call him Nichita. He is also known to us from one seal, given in SCHLUMBERGER, *Sigillographie de l'Empire Byzantin*, p. 239. He must not be confused with Leon Nikerites, Duke of Paristrion, with whom CHALANDON, *Alexis I^{er} Comnène*, p. 167, n. 4, identifies him. See BANESCU, *Changements Politiques dans les Balkans*, in *Académie Roumaine, Bulletin de la Section Historique*, vol. X.

(2) ALBERT OF AIX, I, 6-7. *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades, Historiens Occidentaux*, vol. IV, pp. 274-6. ORDRIC VITALIS, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, IX, 6, in MIGNE, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. CLXXXVIII, coll. 661-5.

story in the following manner. The commander at Belgrade sent at once to warn Nicetas of what was happening; and Nicetas sent on at once to ask for instructions from Constantinople. A messenger travelling post-haste could probably reach the Capital from Nish and return with an answer in about twelve days⁽¹⁾. Walter probably spent three or four days at Belgrade and took about seven days to reach Nish. Nicetas probably kept him there about a week, till his order came from Constantinople and he could then arrange for the escort. No doubt some responsible officials travelled with the returning messenger, which may have slowed his journey. The orders were clearly similar to those sent to Dyrrhachium; and the remainder of Walter's journey proceeded in an orderly manner. If he left Nish in the second half of June the time-table would fit.

From Walter Nicetas must have learnt that Peter the Hermit and his army were following. Accordingly, he moved to Belgrade and made contact with the Hungarian governor of Semlin. Peter arrived at Semlin, (according to Hagenmeyer's calculation)⁽²⁾, on June 20th. His army was far larger than Walter's, numbered some 40,000 souls, and therefore more alarming to the local authorities. They had good reason to be alarmed; for the army, in spite of kindly treatment by the Hungarian king, was truculent and suspicious. A riot started over the sale of a pair of shoes⁽³⁾. Already rumours were spread of the sufferings of Walter's men; the crusaders saw the arms of the sixteen stragglers hanging on the walls of Semlin; and they knew that the Governors of Semlin and Bulgaria were in touch with each other and suspected a hostile plot. In consequence, possibly against Peter's wishes, they attacked Semlin and even captured the

(1) According to JINČEK, *Die Meerstrasse von Belgrad nach Constantinopel*, p. 9, the Tartars who carried the Austrian diplomatic mail took five days from Belgrade to Constantinople, travelling at full gallop with relays. The Byzantine roads were better than the Ottoman, though the relays probably were not as well organized. Six days would be an ample allowance for a special messenger from Nish to the Capital.

(2) HAGENMEYER, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-201. I accept suggested dates.

(3) KAUFMANN in *Byzantin. Zeitschrift*, vol. VII, (1898), p. 89.

citadel, which was well stocked with provisions. Then, fearing the vengeance of the Hungarian king, Peter led the army across the Save on June 26th. Nicetas was thoroughly frightened. He retired to his headquarters at Nish, while the civilian population left Belgrade. Meanwhile he ordered the Petcheneg frontier guards to try to canalize the crossing of the Franks to one ford. The Crusaders resented this. They sank some Petcheneg boats and killed the captives that they made. They then entered Belgrade and burnt it after a wholesale pillage. Then they marched on for seven days through the forests to Nish, arriving there on July 3rd.

Nicetas had a strong garrison at Nish but, after providing troops to escort Walter, cannot have had enough to spare to escort Peter also. He had, however, sent to Constantinople, probably on the first news of Peter's approach through Hungary, to ask for officials and troops to escort the newcomers⁽¹⁾. He had also strengthened his forces by recruiting additional Petchenegs and Hungarians locally⁽²⁾. Peter on arriving at Nish sent to Nicetas to ask for provisions, which were granted to him when he handed over hostages; and the inhabitants treated the army kindly, even giving alms to the poorer members. But next morning, when the hostages had been returned and Peter had already started on his way, some of his Germans, who had quarrelled with a Bulgar the night before, burnt down some mills. Nicetas at once attacked the Crusaders' rear presumably to secure further hostages. Peter twice tried to pacify him and save the situation. Each time his attempts were foiled by irresponsible groups among his followers. There were a series of battles in which the Crusaders were scattered. Some 10,000 were slain or captured, — some of the captives were still detained there when Albert wrote, — and Peter's money-chest was lost. The army gradually reassembled on the road to Sofia. At Bela

(1) The escort sent from Constantinople met Peter at Sofia, probably on July 9th or 10th. It was probably a mounted escort, but even so it must have left the Capital before the end of June. Nicetas must therefore have sent for it as soon as Peter arrived at Semlin, if not before.

(2) Albert of Aix says that Nicetas had acquired these additional troops, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

Palanka, being again short of food, it took the local harvest. At Sofia, where it arrived on July 8th, the Imperial escort met it, with orders to supply it with food and to see that it never delayed anywhere for more than three days. At Philippopolis the inhabitants were so struck by the miserable state of the army that they freely gave alms to it. A second Embassy met Peter outside Adrianople, bearing the Emperor's pardon for his misdeeds. Peter wept on receiving it. He arrived at Constantinople without further incident on July 30th (1).

The Imperial government had learnt its lesson. When Godfrey of Lorraine and his army arrived at Belgrade in mid-autumn, things were ready for him. Belgrade itself was deserted, as a result of its burning by Peter. But a messenger went at once to Nish, where an escort was waiting; which at once set out to meet him. It joined him half way between Nish and Belgrade, and thenceforward accompanied him. There was no unpleasant incident till Godfrey reached Philippopolis, where he heard a rumour that Hugh of Vermandois was being kept a prisoner by the Emperor. As a reprisal he started to pillage the countryside on the road to Adrianople. There were skirmishes with his escort; but it seems that he was prevented from doing much damage, till he arrived at Selymbria, where he pillaged the country for eight days before proceeding to Constantinople (2). What happened there lies outside of the scope of this discussion.

The Belgrade route was not used again till the German Crusade of 1101. Meanwhile the Adriatic route was in full use. In the early summer of 1096 a number of Lombard Crusaders kept arriving in Epirus and travelling along the Via Egnatia to Constantinople. They came in small groups; and their journeys seem to have been well-conducted. The first great magnate to land in the Empire was Hugh of Vermandois, brother of the King of France. Before leaving

(1) This is a rough summary of Albert of Aix' account, *op. cit.*, I, 7-14, pp. 275-83. Albert makes the first imperial envoy bring the pardon, but the Emperor could not have heard so soon of the missives at Nil. The message, which is convincing, was clearly brought by the second embassy.

(2) ALBERT OF AIX, *op. cit.*, II, 7-8, pp. 304-5.

France he had sent a grandiose letter to the Emperor demanding to be received as befitted his high rank, and from Bari, just before he embarked to cross the Adriatic, he sent a similar message to the Duke of Dyrrhachium. Alexius thus had time to plan for his arrival; and John Comnenus at Dyrrhachium and the Admiral Nicholas Mavrokatalon were told to watch carefully for him. Hugh's actual arrival was something of an anti-climax. His army was not large and he lost some ships by shipwreck. He himself was forced by the weather to land near Cape Palli, to the north of Dyrrhachium. The Duke at once sent envoys to bring him to Dyrrhachium, where he kept him in comfort, but not, so Anna significantly tells us, in complete liberty, while the Emperor dispatched a high official, Butumites, to accompany him to Constantinople. Hugh set out when Butumites arrived, but was made to travel by a roundabout route through Philippopolis, so that he should not meet the crowds of Crusaders travelling along the Via Egnatia. He reached the Capital without mishap (1).

The next great lord to arrive was Bohemond of Taranto, with an army of Normans far larger than Hugh's. Bohemond himself landed at Kavaia, just south of Dyrrhachium; but contingents of his army landed at various points along the coast, between Dyrrhachium and Avlona (2). This was no doubt the result of an arrangement with the Byzantine authorities; for when Richard of the Principate attempted to land further to the south, near Chimarra, he was stopped by the Byzantine navy; and a skirmish followed, which is related at great length by Anna Comnena, who was deeply stirred by the exploits of the Admiral's son Marianos. Richard and his company were eventually allowed to land (3). The Nor-

(1) ANNA COMNENA, *Alexiad*, X, 7, ed. Leib, vol. II, pp. 213-5. These crowds were presumably the Italian pilgrims mentioned above p. 212.

(2) Anna Comnena says that Bohemond landed at Kavalion, (*Alexiad*, X, 8, ed. Leib, vol. II, p. 215). ALBERT OF AIX, *op. cit.*, p. 312, says that his troops landed at Dyrrhachium and Avlona. The *Gesta Francorum* does not specify any locality.

(3) ANNA COMNENA, *Alexiad*, X, 8, ed. Leib, pp. 215-20. I cannot think why CHALANDON, *Première Croisade*, p. 134, believes that Anna invented the story of this battle. Her account is so circumstantial

man troops assembled after their landing in the valley of Dropoli, near Argyrocastro, and then crossed the Pindus to Castoria, where they spent Christmas and found difficulty in securing provisions owing to the fear of the inhabitants. They therefore took what they wanted. On their way on towards Thessalonica they destroyed a heretic Paulician village. They rejoined the Via Egnatia before reaching the river Vardar. It is difficult to understand why Bohemond chose to travel by this route right across the Pindus in mid-winter; nor is it possible to trace the route. Probably he took the road that runs just inside the present Albanian frontier north-eastward to Koritsa and then turned east up the higher reaches of the Devol; but even so he would have to cross land well over 1000 metres above sealevel—an arduous undertaking in December. Presumably the Byzantine authorities approved of his route. They may have suggested it, so as not to overstrain the resources of the towns on the Via Egnatia. But imperial ambassadors only met him at Thessalonica; and the story in the *Gesta* gives the impression that there was no Byzantine escort with him till he reached the Vardar. Otherwise provisions would have been available at Castoria and the heretic village would not have been attacked. But at the Vardar a Petcheneg escort began to accompany them. Bohemond and the main part of his army hurried on across the river. But the Count of Russignolo, and his brothers stayed behind. The Petchenegs undoubtedly had orders not to allow Crusaders to delay more than three days at any one place. They therefore attacked the Count. He was rescued by Bohemond's nephew Tancred, who returned across the river. The Petchenegs were driven off. Some were captured and brought before Bohemond. They told

that she must have received it from an eye-witness, probably from Marianos himself. She dates it on Saint Nicholas's Day, December 6th. Chalandon, however, refers to the battle in connection with Raymond of Toulouse (*op. cit.* p. 139) with whom he identifies the 'Count of Preventza'. Grégoire has shown that the count is Richard of the Principatus (in *Byzantion*, vol. III p. 311).

In view of M. Maricq's communication to the VII Congress of Byzantines studies, the episode as I have given it stands in need of correction. (A. MARICQ, *Bull. Acad. Belg., Lettres*, 5^e série, 34 (1948), pp. 463-480: the count is 'count of Brabant' (Alost).

him that they were carrying out the Emperor's instructions. This battle took place on February 18th. Bohemond had taken seven weeks to go from Castoria to the Vardar—a distance as the crow flies of only some 130 kilometres⁽¹⁾.

It was soon afterwards, probably between Thessalonica and Serres, that envoys from Constantinople met Bohemond. The *Gesta* says that they were headed by a Curopalates⁽²⁾. Henceforward provisions were amply supplied. At Serres Bohemond even returned to the Curopalates all the beasts that his soldiers had stolen; and all went well for the remainder of the journey to the Capital. Tancred and many other knights would have liked to indulge in more raiding, but Bohemond forbade them⁽³⁾.

The two most distinguished of the Crusaders, Raymond, Count of Toulouse, and Adhemar, Bishop of Le Puy, whom Pope Urban had named as leader of the movement, chose a different route. They travelled by land round the head of the Adriatic and then came down the coast of Dalmatia. It was already winter when they reached Istria; and the forty days that their armies spent in the bad mountain roads of Croatia and Dalmatia were acutely uncomfortable. The natives would not trade with them and killed any stragglers. When they at last reached Scutari, Raymond met Bodin, one of the leading princes of Serbia, who gave him permission to buy provisions locally. But none were obtained. Soon afterwards they crossed into the Empire and were welcomed by John Comnenus. They hoped that their troubles were over. The brother of the Bishop of Le Puy, who was ill, was left at Dyrrhachium to recover under John's care.

From Dyrrhachium they took the Via Egnatia for Con-

(1) Bréhier in his edition of the *Gesta*, p. 24, n. 3, charitably supposes that the Petchenegs were misrepresenting the Emperor's instructions. But delay on the road was expressly forbidden by his orders to Peter's escort. See above, p. 210.

(2) The Curopalates was not now, as Bréhier suggests, *op. cit.*, p. 25, n. 6, necessarily a member of the Imperial family.

(3) *Gesta Francorum*, ed Bréhier, pp. 20-8. Both Raoul of Caen, *Historiens Occidentaux*, vol. III, pp. 613-5, and Baudri of Bourguell, *op. cit.* vol. IV, p. 24, tell of Bohemond's disagreement with Tancred and his other knights.

stantinople. A Petcheneg escort went with them, with instructions to keep them to the road. The Crusaders resented finding these mercenaries watching them, as Raimond d'Aguiers says, «before and behind them, to the right and to the left.» There were skirmishes, in which two leading knights, Rainald Pontius and his brother, lost their lives; and, more unfortunately, as they were crossing Macedonia, Bishop Adhemar himself strayed from the road and was at once attacked by the Petchenegs, who wounded him but eventually restored him to the army. Adhemar, a wise and fair-minded man, seems to have borne no malice from the incident; but the army was profoundly shocked. At Vodena there was another skirmish. Adhemar had to be left behind at Thessalonica, to recover from his wounds; and the Provençals lost his restraining influence. But there was no serious trouble again till they reached Rusion (Keshan, in Thrace). There, considering the townspeople unfriendly, they attacked the walls, crying «Toulouse, Toulouse,» forced an entry and sacked the whole place. At Rodosto another Imperial envoy met them and urged the Count of Toulouse to hurry ahead of his troops to the Capital. As soon as he left, his army again attacked the inhabitants. But now there were strong Byzantine forces at hand. These fell on the Provençals, routed them and captured their baggage. The Provençals, unable to realise that they were themselves to blame, believed that Raymond had been lured away so that they could be destroyed while leaderless. Raymond, hearing the news at Constantinople, took the same view and was therefore even more suspicious and truculent in his negotiations with the Emperor. His army, somewhat cowed, seems to have waited at Rodosto till it was rejoined by Adhemar, who led it on to Constantinople and whose tact smoothed over many of the difficulties there (1).

Robert, Count of Flanders, crossed over from Apulia in the course of the winter and seems to have had an easy and uneventful journey to Constantinople (2). The last big com-

(1) RAIMOND D'AGUIERS, *Historiens Occidentaux*, vol. III, pp. 235-8. His account is very bitter against the Byzantines; but it is easy to see what really happened.

(2) FULCHER OF CHARTRES, ed. Hagenmeyer, p. 168.

pany of Crusaders to arrive was that led by Count Robert of Normandy and his brother-in-law, Count Stephen of Blois. They had spent the winter in Southern Italy; and many of their followers had been discouraged and returned home. When eventually they embarked, the first ship to leave the port sank with 400 passengers, a disaster which caused more desertions from the army. The other ships took four days to make the crossing; and the passengers disembarked in two harbours near Dyrrhachium, and proceeded by land to the city. From there they took the Via Egnatia eastward. They seem to have had no trouble at all with the Byzantines on the journey. Their only difficulties were due to the spring floods that had swollen the rivers in Macedonia. Some men were drowned when crossing a river that Fulcher of Chartres calls the Daemon (1). They stayed for four days at Thessalonica, and then continued by the Via Egnatia to Constantinople. Everything had gone smoothly. Stephen of Blois was delighted with everything Byzantine (2); while the chronicler Fulcher had no complaints to make and even thought it natural that the Crusaders were only allowed into Constantinople in batches of five or six (3). —This is the more remarkable as the northern French of that time were not a very orderly race; nor were Robert nor Stephen leaders that ever showed much power of leadership. By now the Byzantines had thoroughly organized their arrangements for provisioning the Crusaders, while the officials escorting this army must have been men of wisdom and tact.

It is pleasant to end on a peaceful note; though it must

(1) This river is usually identified with the Devol or with the Shkumba. But the Via Egnatia does not cross either of these rivers. It must have been some small tributary of the latter, liable, as all such mountain torrents, to sudden and devastating floods.

(2) Stephen of Blois' letter written on the journey is lost, but his letter from Constantinople, which refers to it, shows him to be delighted with the treatment that he received, HAGENMEYER, *Kreuzzugsbriefe*, pp. 138-40.

(3) FULCHER OF CHARTRES, ed. Hagenmeyer, pp. 163-76. Fulcher's account is very accurate in its geographical details and gives a full description of the accidents suffered by the army. He would certainly have reported any trouble with the Byzantines.

be confessed that the Crusade of 1101 produced a fresh crop of troubles. But the whole story does credit to the efficiency of the Byzantine administration. Alexius had been faced with a tricky problem. Crusading armies of this type were not at all what he had wanted. No one really cares to have a large foreign army in his territory, even if it belongs to a nominal ally. But he could not afford to offend them, especially as he was short of troops for the defence of the provinces. Moreover, they might well be of use to him. He had to convey them quickly and safely across his Empire. The main problem was how to feed them. The Crusaders travelled without commissariat trains. They expected to live on the country. But to provide sufficient food for a whole army at short notice is never easy; and in the Middle Ages it was particularly difficult in winter and early spring. It was probably in order to wait for the gathering of the harvest that Urban II had suggested August 15 as the earliest date of departure from the west. Yet if food was not provided trouble at once began, with a series of raids and then reprisals. We cannot estimate the exact size of any of the Crusading armies. Peter's was said to number 40,000 men; of which only a smallish proportion were actual soldiers. This figure may well be an exaggeration; and Peter's was probably the largest of the armies⁽¹⁾. But even if Godfrey had less than the 10,000 knights with which Anna credits him⁽²⁾, and Bohemond less than the 500 lords that followed him according to the Chronicle of Lucca⁽³⁾, their armies, and Raymond's, must, with the non-combatants included, have approached 10,000 each, though Hugh's and the two Robert's were considerably smaller⁽⁴⁾. About 70,000 to 100,000

(1) ALBERT OF AIX, *Historiens Occidentaux*, p. 281. Anna credits him with 80,000 infantry and 100,000 cavalry. *Alexiad*, ed. Leib, vol. II, p. 210.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 220. She gives him 70,000 infantry in addition.

(3) ANNA, *op. cit.*, p. 215, says that his forces were too many to be counted.

(4) The size of the Crusader armies is discussed by Stevenson in *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. V, pp. 297-8. He estimates that each leader had 2000 to 3000 men, basing his figure on Raimond of Aguilier's statement that there were 12,000 combatants at the siege

persons must have crossed the Balkan peninsula in 1096 to 1097; and the problem of provisioning them must have been enormous. Stocks had to be collected at all the centres along the main-roads; and it could not be foreseen when they would be required nor in what quantities. The Crusaders were obliged to raid the countryside for food on remarkably few occasions, — Walter and Peter at Belgrade and Peter at Bela Palanka, all under unusual circumstances: and Bohemond at Castoria. — Otherwise the extraordinary task of feeding the armies was achieved without mishap. No Crusader was lost from starvation while crossing the Balkan provinces of the Empire. The policing of the routes was equally difficult, owing to the Emperor's shortage of man-power. It was only at places like Nish or Rodosto, where he had concentrations of troops, that he could seriously punish raiding. The Petcheneg escorts could only act as police; and he could not always supply them. They were useful for the purpose because they obeyed orders blindly; but they must have irritated the Crusaders because of their inflexibility and imperviousness to argument. Anyone who has strayed by mistake into a Turkish military zone will understand the Crusaders' feelings. Much, too, must have depended on the personality of the envoys sent to greet and accompany the Crusaders. They seem to have done their work well, in different circumstances.

None the less, the methods with which the Byzantine administration faced the problems caused by the coming of the Crusaders were wise and not unsuccessful. Nowadays, when so many countries have learnt what is involved by the presence on their soil of foreign armies, officially allied but on a lower level of civilization, historians must admire the tact, the patience and the good-sense shown by Alexius, and the efficiency of his governmental machine.

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of Jerusalem. But the non-combatants were numerous; and by then many troops had gone off on other expeditions, or had settled elsewhere; and there had been considerable losses. I consider his estimate over-cautious.