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Book III

We have indeed promised to write about the difficult tasks undertaken and the famous victories won by the two brothers, Duke [Robert] Guiscard and Count Roger of Sicily - sometimes acting together, sometimes separately, depending on what they did. If I possessed a flow of clear poetic talent then it would be an exciting project, with the pen of a distinguished philosopher writing of matters which are in themselves celebrated and clearly remembered. This would avoid the crystal-clear stream being shunned, even by those who are thirsty, when they reach out to draw from it, because of the rank smell of a homely vessel. But not all of us use golden pipes to provide drinking water, for we are prevented by poverty, and sometimes lead pipes are quite adequate to let one taste sweet water. Thus the reader who tries to examine the sequence of past events should give his attention, not to elaborate literary embellishments, but rather to the splendid victories of men who deserve to be remembered. For those things which are included are discussed below, not for my own or for your glorification, but for that of the men who have earned this praise by their deeds.

By the prince's command the time for writing is at hand. I have previously failed to drink of this stream through my neglect. Now the pressing haste of this same prince prevents me from returning to the spring from which I may draw the clear water that there flows forth.

(1) Thus Roger, that most celebrated prince of Sicily remained on the island when, after the capture of Palermo, the army was disbanded by his brother the duke, who left Sicily to tend to his own affairs in Calabria and Apulia. On his brother's departure Roger retained a small section of the army which he persuaded to stay, partly with money and partly through promises, and the duke agreed to this. He pressed forward the conquest of Sicily by attacks on every side, and his perpetual raids caused a lot of damage. Although previously, when he had shared his conquests with his brother, he had acted with the utmost valour; now that he knew that everything which he gained fell to his share alone, he was like a raging lion, eager for plunder, impatient of peace, appearing everywhere, the first to be present when some especially dangerous mission was undertaken, and refusing to abandon any operation once it was set in motion. In the year from the Incarnation of the Lord 1072 he established

two castles [*castella*], one at Paterno to threaten Catania, the other at Mazzara to ravage the district round about.

Meanwhile the duke went from Sicily to Calabria, and there he set up a citadel in Rossano, a city in that province, much to the anguish of the citizens.

(2) Gisulf, the Prince of Salerno, the brother of Sichelgaita, Duke Guiscard's wife, wanted to subject all the coastline from Salerno right down to the port called *Fici*, Areco and S. Euphemia to his rule. Hearing that part of this area was daily being invaded by Guiscard, he began to behave in a most unfriendly manner towards the duke. He treated those of his men whom he could capture with brutality, and did not conceal his hostility to our people. At first Duke Guiscard, who had promised friendship to him, bore this patiently. He sent envoys to arrange a meeting, to persuade Gisulf to adopt a more prudent course than the one he had adopted. But when he realised the evil that was lodged in the prince's heart, and that the more he tried to be conciliatory the worse the prince's behaviour became, then he renounced the treaty between them and prepared for inexorable hostilities towards the man who had proved to be hostile to him. Since trouble had [also] arisen between him and Richard, Prince of Aversa and he feared that Gisulf might go to the latter's aid against him, he concluded a peace treaty with him; and among its provisions was that Richard would aid *him*. He then set off with a large army to besiege Salerno.

(3) The Amalfitans loathed Gisulf - for indeed they feared that they would be punished by him, because they had murdered his father, and they resisted his attempts to subjugate them by force. They were asked by the duke to render naval assistance to him while he besieged the city. The leading men, with the agreement of the other citizens, hastened to talk with the duke. He did his best to secure an alliance, through cunning deals with those who were prepared to agree, and with terrifying threats to those who were not, and finally he forced them into it. If they were protected by the duke against Gisulf, it was agreed that Amalfi would become subject to him by hereditary right. The duke promised them everything which they sought. Then, leaving part of his army to besiege the city, he took the rest along with him, as well as the men who had previously come to [talk to] him, and went to Amalfi. The city was handed over by its citizens, and on receiving it he had four citadels

[*castella*] built there and garrisoned by his soldiers. He then returned to Salerno with a strong force of Amalfitans.

(4) The duke blockaded Salerno with his ships and infantry, and had a cavalry force on hand as well. He launched frequent and terrifying attacks upon the city from every side. He sapped its strength - he and his men prevented anybody from bringing in food; and indeed he induced such a famine that those trapped within were eating cats or mice, or so we have gathered from those who were present there.

Abelard, the son of Count Humphrey, the duke's nephew, had gone to Salerno to help Gisulf, for he hated the duke because the latter had deprived him of his birthright. But under pressure of hunger he secretly left Salerno by night and went to the city of Santa Severina in Calabria, to make attacks on the duke from there. However the duke sent a message to his brother in Sicily, instructing him to go to besiege their nephew Abelard at Santa Severina, which he did.

He himself relentlessly continued the attack upon Salerno, and in the end he forced it to surrender. He allowed Gisulf, who was his brother-in-law and the uncle of his children, to leave and go wherever he wished. The city however he retained in his power, furnishing with citadels and defences as he thought fit.

(5) Unable to bear inactivity, Guiscard neglected no task when there was hope of some advantage, and he went to besiege his nephew Abelard at Santa Severina, where he had sent his brother on before him. Finding that his brother had on his instructions besieged the city from one side, he established himself on the other. Abelard made daily sorties from the city, challenging our men to battle, and with fierce and frequent battles between each side many warlike exploits took place.

Seeing that he was not accomplishing much against the city, the duke discussed the matter with his men and established three [siege] castles [*castella*]: he entrusted one to Hugh Falloc, another to Rainald de Simula and the third to Herbert, Hugh's brother, and to Custinobardus, brother to Rainald. Then he disbanded the army and retired to Apulia, where

not long afterwards he captured Count Herman, Abelard's brother, in a battle at Canne. He sent him to his brother Roger to be imprisoned in the tower at Mileto.

(6) While Herman was being made to suffer in chains in a dark dungeon, Abelard was moved by pity for his brother and came to an agreement with the duke, surrendering the city to him in return for his brother. The duke gave his word that when they came to Gargano, for so the *castrum* was called, his brother would be set free and returned to him, but in fact he intended a piece of cunning trickery. Heedlessly, and paying no attention to his deceitful words, Abelard abandoned the city and surrendered it to the duke. He stayed with him for a quite a long time, but waited in vain for his brother's release.

When he arrived at Rossano he spoke sharply with the duke because the affair had been so protracted, and urged him to hasten on to Gargano. Then indeed the duke revealed his trick: for he said that he would not be going to the place which he had specified for at least seven years! After denouncing the cunning proposal which had deceived him and having long arguments with the duke, Abelard went angrily to Apulia, and he and his men took over the *castrum* of Sant'Agata, intending to foment rebellion. The duke knew that he would try this, and that he would do his best to rouse the whole of Apulia against him, so he raised an army, followed him, and laid siege to it. But the *castrum* was very strongly defended both by nature and man-made fortifications, and after persisting with the attack for a considerable time he became worried that his men were suffering more losses from the brave resistance of the garrison than was justified by the progress made against the *castrum*.

However, Abelard's distress at the loss of his brother was growing by the day; for the chains which bound his brother pressed just as much on him, at least in his mind. As a result he repeatedly tried to improve his brother's lot through negotiation, but the only way he could obtain his brother's release was by the surrender of the *castrum*, and he would then be allowed to leave. This was [indeed] how he recovered his brother, and they both of them took their leave. They put to sea and sailed to the Emperor of Constantinople, and there they ended their days.

(7) Roger, the renowned prince and conqueror of Sicily, remained on the island, and in every enterprise he behaved valiantly, for no pleasure could hold him back, nor make him avoid the enemy. Indeed neither want, hard work, enemy threats, the prospect of battle at any moment, the need to be on one's guard nor bad weather discouraged him from his task. The greater the difficulties which faced him, the more his resolution hardened. This resolve was, as is the way with men, fixed in his heart by desire for rule, and he strove to conquer rather than be conquered. Although he wanted success everywhere, he was particularly anxious to gain possession of Castrogiovanni, for he knew that if he could secure this place he could then use to as a flail to thrash all Sicily into obedience to him. With this aim firmly in mind, in the year from the Incarnation of the Word 1074 he established a castle on Monte Calascibetta and furnished it with knights and all the other things it needed, which placed Castrogiovanni very much under threat.

(8) Saracens from Africa, from the household of King Temin and acting on his instructions, prepared their ships and letting the wind fill their sails, set off on a piratical attack against the coasts of Sicily and Calabria. Hence on St. Peter's eve in June [28th June] they landed by night at Nicotera. They caught the citizens unsuspecting, because they were heavy with wine and sleep after joyfully celebrating that festival, as was their custom. They slew some while they were half-asleep and captured others. They dragged the women and children, and everything else that could be taken away, as plunder to their ships, and they burned down the entire *castrum*. Then they rowed off hurriedly out to deep water. The next day they returned to the seashore and threw from their ships some boys and people of the feebler sort in return for a ransom from friends who wished to redeem them. Some of the people were therefore freed; the others (all those who seemed to have some use) they took away. Thus, letting the wind fill their sails, they set out joyfully to see once again the homeland from which they had come.

(9) In the year from the Incarnation of the Lord 1075 they boarded their ships and set off to try their fortune [once again] in Sicily. Since the previous year at Nicotera everything had gone just as they wanted and greed and avarice made them extraordinarily insolent, they thought (in vain) that things would turn out the same way. They sailed round the island

and eventually landed at Mazzara. They left their ships and, making a fierce attack, broke into the city - however there was a castle within, which they attacked bravely and laid siege to for some eight days.

The count was informed by a messenger that the castle was being threatened by his enemies. He secretly entered this castle at night with an armed escort and, charging forth from the gates without delay, encountered the enemy in the city square in front of the citadel. Acting with his customary bravery he emerged the victor, slew many of them, put the others to flight and chased those who were left right down to the sea. Mazzara was thus snatched from the enemy by the count's valour. The few who escaped took the dreadful tidings back to Africa. Hence fickle fortune, by first tricking men with a lucky success, mocks the unwary by deceiving them with the hope of repeating earlier events.

(10) The count then left Sicily to go to Calabria where he was called for urgent reasons. He appointed Hugh of Gercé, to whom, because of his valour and because he was from a distinguished family from the province of Maine, he had given Catania, along with his daughter by his first wife, to look after Sicily. The count ordered him not to leave the city and pursue the enemy, even if Bernavert [*Ibn-el-Werd*] who was staying nearby at Syracuse should launch a raid against him, for he feared the latter's cunning stratagems. But the mind of the young man was burning with warlike ambition and he was anxious for praise. Ignoring the fact that this had been forbidden him, he started thinking that he might perform some noble deed to enhance his military reputation before the count returned. So he went to Troina, and from there brought the latter's son Jordan along with the count's military household to Catania.

Benarvert then gathered together a huge army of picked soldiers and, moving by night to a place of concealment not far from Catania, lay hidden in ambush. Thirty knights were sent on ahead to Catania who challenged the men there to battle and then drew them away from the city by flight. Hugh and Jordan were keen to fight and, to encourage their men for battle, made a vigorous sortie from the city. They sent out thirty picked knights to scout in case of ambush and they themselves hurried carelessly on behind. The scouts out in front passed the ambush place but, when those who followed behind had reached that spot, the

ambushers sprang out and charged down on their enemies like a whirlwind. The people who had gone on ahead saw the ambush in their rear and realised that they would be unable to rejoin their comrades since the enemy was in the way, so they fled to Paterno and thus escaped. Our men endeavoured to fight bravely, but Hugh, the count's son-in-law, was killed while Jordan, unable to hold the enemy back, escaped with a few men to Catania. Benervert returned joyfully to Syracuse with his booty.

The count meanwhile heard news of this from a messenger and hastened to return. In the year from the Incarnation of the Word 1076 he raised an army against Bernavert, attacked a *castrum* called Zotica [*Judica*], razed it to the ground, killing the men and sending the women to be sold in Calabria. But the prince sought a fuller revenge than this, for he was extremely upset and depressed by the killing of his son-in-law, and this could be cured only by exacting full retribution. So he marched into the district of Noto destroying everything in his path and burning all the corn (for it was harvest time and it could not be carried off). He had this done far and wide all over Sicily and as a result there was in this year a great shortage in the island:

So famine arises, since his revenge took away the bread.¹

(11) When a thousand years from the Incarnation had passed,
 And to this thousand another seven times eleven had been added,
 The count led an expedition in the month of May.
 The ships set sail on the deep, with the breeze blowing them on,
 The trumpets sound, the deep resounds with joyful brass:
 Alexander the Great's fleet was not more beautiful.
 The wind laughs with fortune; warlike youth rejoices;
 Learned men sing of this; the drums resound.
 They journey to attack Trapani; there is no swell at sea.
 Now the count, with warlike expression, crosses with his cavalry
 Both foothills and the steep sides of rocky mountains,

¹ In the original this line of verse is a dactylic hexameter.

Escorted by a large force of brave young men.
 When the sun touches their shields, shining with gold,
 And their gleaming helmets, it dazzles the sight of those who watch.
 Every mountain becomes brighter than the shining stars
 The horses chafe, and as they neigh the mountains echo back.
 The wind blows softly and a thousand banners flap.
 A fearsome sight, they hasten on to Trapani;
 Their enemies see them and tremble at the press of weapons.
 By land and sea the trumpets ring out, inspiring fear,
 And the noise rises up to Heaven. The enemy below shakes in fear.
 They gird the city round about, both by land and sea.
 The sailors, concealed by their sails, drop anchor;
 Some of the cavalry cut down branches, others pitch their tents
 Often they run to battle where they fight bravely.
 The enemy is determined to defeat them but is decisively beaten.
 There is lamentation in the town after the conflict,
 And our men cause the lyre to sound.
 The enemy doubt their strength and finally seek peace,
 The count agrees. They surrender the town and submit to his authority.
 They agree to a treaty in their traditional way, but they also lament.²

From this same city a peninsula juttet out a long way into the sea, from a narrow neck with sea on each side, and on it were rich pastures. The cattle and other animals of the city customarily grazed there in time of war. Our men could thus see them across the neck of the peninsula as they went out there every day, in the traditional manner when enemies were around, and with the greed ingrained in their people they began to think whether they could find an opportunity to get their hands on them.

The count's son Jordan set out to fulfil this plan, for he was certain that by doing so he would gain a greater military reputation than anyone else. So finally, as he was the rashest

² In the original these verses are in the metre known as trochaic tetrameter catalectic.

of men and greedy for praise, he took counsel with those of his household but failed to inform his father, and selecting one hundred knights he embarked one evening on board ship. During the night he invaded the peninsula. They landed from the ships and went ashore, and before it grew light he concealed himself in ambush in a hollow on the peninsula. As night ended and the land became bathed in bright sunlight, everyone in the city went out as was customary and spread out through the peninsula in search of pasture. From where he was hiding in ambush Jordan watched his prey going further and further from the city, and then he sprang like a lion from his lair and attacked. He went right up to the city gate gathering his prizes, and hastened to threaten the town itself by landing men from his ships. However the citizens, seeing the peninsula unexpectedly invaded by the enemy, rushed to arms: they launched a tremendous attack, and rashly followed their enemies at least ten miles from the city in their attempt to rescue the captured beasts. When he saw how far they had gone from the city, Jordan abandoned his prizes and charged like a savage lion at the enemy. Battle was engaged and both sides fought with the utmost ferocity, but Jordan, who was a most successful general, raised the morale of his men with rousing words of encouragement and through his bravery killed many of the enemy, put the rest to flight and emerged the victor. He pursued the fugitives, spreading death among them, right up to the city gate. He thus returned to his ships taking all the booty he wanted, and returned unharmed and in triumph to his father. It was the terror caused by this exploit that forced the city to surrender, as indeed we mentioned above.

After taking the city, the count enforced his rule by the construction of a citadel and other defences, surrounding them on all sides by towers and bastions, and furnishing them with soldiers and all the supplies that were needed. But the surrounding district was filled with strong fortifications and very well defended, so it continued to resist him and the war continued. The count remained indefatigable, and launched numerous raids in his attempt to extend his rule over the whole area. In a brief space of time he besieged a dozen of the principal *castra* and forced them to surrender to him. He distributed these, and everything which pertained to them, to be held by his knights from him. Then he thanked his army for the service which it had rendered him and disbanded it, while he himself took a short break from his labours at Vicari.

(12) At that time a Saracen called Bechus [*Abu-Bekr*] possessed Castronovo and was dwelling there. He was a man of great, indeed overwhelming, arrogance; and this and his unpredictability, as well as various insults he had inflicted upon them, had rendered his subjects unfaithful. One day he lost his temper with a certain miller, summoned him to his presence and had him shamefully flogged. The latter pretended that this was a matter of little importance to him, but in fact he was determined to have revenge for such a dreadful dishonour, and he quietly mulled over various schemes to pay him back for the ill-treatment which he had received, either with some damage to his property or, even better, some physical injury. And so it turned out, for he secured accomplices from among his fellow-subjects and one evening he rushed up and seized the rock which overlooked and commanded the whole *castrum*. Sending an envoy to the count at Vicari, he informed him that he had done this through loyalty to him and asked that he hasten to his assistance. On receiving the messenger the count was overjoyed and immediately set off there with all the men that he had. Meanwhile Bechus tried to persuade the miller with all sorts of bribes and promises to desist from his endeavour and be reconciled with him, but when this did not work he then attempted to storm the position, but also in vain.

The count arrived nearby and confirmed the miller's loyalty to him with promises of very generous treatment. Since there was no direct route from where our men were by which they could reach him, the miller let down a rope from on high and hauled some of them up to him. Seeing our troops joining the miller on the rock, Bechus lost all hope of keeping the *castrum*. Indeed in his terror he simply abandoned it, and fled away, taking with him everything which could be carried. The citizens made peace with the count and received him inside the *castrum*. Once he had obtained the *castrum* the count put it in a state of defence and organised it as he wanted. He granted the miller his freedom and furnished him with all sorts of rewards, to provide a good example for others who might attempt similar schemes.

(13) In that same year a Greek came to the duke in Apulia, claiming to be Michael, the Emperor of Constantinople, and seeking his help to recover the palace from which, so he said, he had been driven out on Good Friday through the disloyalty of his men and forced

by violence to become a monk. The only reason for this had been because he had agreed to the marriage of the duke's daughter to his son. To prevent his son from having any hope either of regaining the palace or of begetting offspring from the wife he had married, the boy had shamefully been made a eunuch and sent into lifelong exile. Another man had been installed in the palace in his place, but he had not been selected from one or other of the families descended from the ancient emperors, to whom the dignity belonged by hereditary right. The Greeks however were afraid that if heirs who were born from a wife from our race were to grow up in the palace, then an opportunity would be created for our people to come there freely; and a people who were customarily devoted to luxuries and self-indulgence rather than to warlike exercises would be trampled under foot by the valour [*strenuitas*] of our men and made their subjects. They were careful to keep the duke's daughter shut up under strict guard to prevent her marrying any powerful man. Since she had once been married to the hereditary emperor and had worn a crown in the palace, some hereditary right to that palace might be claimed by the person to whom she was married.

Michael however had, or so he claimed, left the monastery in which he had been forced to become a monk, abandoned his habit and fled to Apulia. On his arrival there he was received by the duke with imperial honours, and on the duke's order was meticulously greeted with the imperial processions and ceremonies throughout all the towns of Apulia and Calabria. The duke was doing all this quite deliberately, but not because it was his intention to restore him to the palace. He had undoubtedly heard that his son-in-law had been made a eunuch; hence the chance of having children by his daughter, to whom the palace would belong by hereditary right, had been lost. He was in fact making this effort with the secret intention that when, acting in Michael's name and with the help of the latter's supporters, the Greeks had easily been defeated and he had reached the imperial palace, he would seize the crown, sceptre and imperial regalia and make himself emperor. However he promised that he would aid Michael, and kept the latter with him for two years and more, giving him the honours which he had first received, until everything which was needed for such a great undertaking had been made ready. There were also a number of people with the duke who had served in the palace in the time of the Emperor Michael and who had known the latter by sight, and who knew that this man was very little like him. However they

alleged, although untruthfully, that the two were identical, in the hope that the duke would rewarded them for this. The duke was unsure whether or not he was genuine, but when mutterings arose among his men about this matter, the project was continued without diminution . He always finished what he had started, and so since he made no public doubts that this was true, he claimed that there was nothing to be doubtful about. His support of this view was quite calculated, and he won over his men, since he had no wish for them to urge him against the enterprise.

(14) Arranging matters as follows, but keeping his plans secret,

He sweats over the preparations to win Byzantium for himself

From lands all about he seeks raw materials:

Nothing is overlooked, no matter, however humble, ignored,

Things which were formerly despised now seek to play a useful part.

The most skilful woodcutters are summoned;

The carpenters' art is brought together from lands all around.

Trees are cut down and fall: they are cut up and the woodworkers

Plane the planks. The smith brings iron to the fire.

The anchor is forged, a mould for nails is prepared.

The hull of the ship is built, fastened together by the nails.

Some men fill the gaps in the lower part with down,

And then others hasten to cover this over with liquid pitch.

Some stitch the sails, others devote their attention to the ropes.

A whole fleet is made ready, not just the one ship is prepared.

Our hero is eager and determined to make its numbers grow.

With everything ready and the ships equipped with care,

The fleet sails over the liquid sea to Otranto. ³

(15) Meanwhile, as these matters were being dealt with, in the year from the Lord's coming 1078 the Count was besieging Taormina. He constructed twenty-two little castles, connected one to another with ditches and ramparts, and blockading it from the sea with his

³ Leonine dactylic hexameters.

naval forces, preventing access to the *castrum* from any quarter, should the enemy wish to bring anything in or take it out. One day the count was seen going from one camp to another along a rocky mountain slope with only a small escort. A group of Slavs [*Sclavi*] concealed among the myrtle thickets charged out while he was traversing a narrow defile, and had not a man called Eviscardus, a Breton, heard the clash of arms and placed himself between the count and his enemies, then the count's enemies would, so they say, have vanquished him. But God, who alone sees into men's hearts, knowing the prince's virtuous purpose and the good deeds he had already accomplished and those which he would perform in the future, brought him another fate than that which seemed probable. For indeed it is written: 'There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel, against the Lord' [*Proverbs*, xxi.30].

(16) However in rendering his lord such loyal service, Eviscardus was killed, and while our men were rushing to arms the enemy escaped across the slopes of the rocky mountain. So the death of Eviscardus helped God to save the life of the Count. The count however rewarded his loyalty in the proper manner; his body was buried honourably and (not undeservedly) the count gave many gifts to the poor and to holy places for the redemption of his soul.

Marching with a force of infantry over both hills and valleys, the count allowed nobody of that superstition between the mountain which is called *Gibel* by the inhabitants (but which we call Etna) and Troina to remain unpunished.

At his burial there was great lamentation by the soldiers,
 For by his merit the Breton was dear to everyone.
 May the reward for his faithfulness be to obtain peace
 Since by his death the count was granted life!
 In showing himself so loyal how different he is from Judas:
 The latter, by selling God, and afterwards hanging himself,
 Purchases death and is branded with his treason:
 Eviscardus gave himself to the enemy's knife for another
 His hope was to save his lord and gain reward for himself.
 These two ought not to be considered equals in virtue.

One was a traitor; the other strives to save,
 He will receive an angel's wing, the other will go to hell.⁴

(17) Fourteen of the ships which they call *golofri* which had been sent from Africa by King Thimin to range the sea as pirates, came to Taormina. They were spotted there by our men at dawn, anchored some way out to sea. However, our ships were not ready to go to sea, for their tackle [*armamenta*] had been disembarked. So the count sent out a scout [*latro*] to inquire who they were, the reason why they had come, and whether they had done so as enemies or in peace. He warned them that if they had committed any harm within his jurisdiction, be it great or little, or if they should [in future] dare to attempt any such thing, then they would not escape him unscathed.

They denied, under solemn plea and oath of their law, that they had plotted anything evil against those places under his rule, but claimed that they had been sent on the order of King Thimin to practise piracy at sea against those whom they might meet; and if it should be necessary, they were ready to enter his service. They were told, at a friendly meeting on the first of their ships, that if they were lacking food or other supplies, these would be supplied through the count's generosity. They agreed to this suggestion, and a treaty was agreed. They prepared to come nearer shore, but then the wind changed, blowing their ships (with them on board) out to sea, and they were quickly driven out of sight of our men.

So the wind prevents the approach of those whom he invited;
 And the breeze stops him from giving what he promised to give.

(18) But the count was determined on those plans hitherto denied:
 He lays siege and fights, the fortress resists as best it can.
 Battle is given: the count strives to continue his action:
 Although he is bound by care, yet nothing tires him out.
 He urges and encourages, courageously threatening his enemies;
 He gives [rewards], promises to give them, and forgoes no effort.
 In encouraging his fellows, he is shown to be the first,

⁴ Leonine dactylic hexameters again, cf. c. 14.

And he is a consolation to his brothers when there is a battle,
 He leads from the front and is the last to return home.
 Otto [goes out] to scout ahead, then Elias,
 Arisgot is third, Jordan refused to be
 Far behind: the count's conduct has given heart to his fellows.
 He has issued an order to stop the enemy seeking food;
 Thus are they defeated. Our men rejoice in guard duty.
 The enemy are denied the water which is abundant on the mountain,
 From nowhere do they gain supplies; and then their stocks diminish,
 Thus the enemy's hunger grew, and he did not offer battle,
 His courage shrinks. The enemy, already almost defeated, does nothing.
 He feels safe where a wall surrounds him,.
 But is scared to take a step outside to give battle.
 When bread runs out, the starving populace is overcome.
 So the count is summoned, he gains the *castrum* for his own;
 The walls of Taormina are humbled beneath the laurel tree.
 A treaty is drawn up, the enemy laments in receiving their enemy;
 But although they lament, they dissimulate and do not reveal
 Why they lament to our men, which is because their enemy was joyful.
 If fortune is thus different, it is however one and the same:
 Sadness is the lot of one side, rejoicing is seen among the other.
 It was the sixth month, in which the fiery sword is visible.
 He began the siege in Pisces, and ended it as Leo rises. ⁵

- (19) Having received such assistance from the Divinity
 Roger had no wish to appear ungrateful.
 He began to ponder how he might make suitable recompense.
 Gathering masons from wherever he could find them
 He laid the foundations of a church in the city of Troina.

⁵ Again, leonine dactylic hexameters.

He concentrates his efforts on this, and so he soon completes it.
 Sections of roof were placed over the church;
 The walls were painted in various colours,
 And it was consecrated in honour of the Virgin Mother.
 It was endowed with many gifts, lands and tithes:
 It abounded in ornaments and all sorts of rich things.
 The bishop's throne is raised up with its symbols.
 The holy clergy are increased in number, so far as revenue allows.
 Vessels for the altar, and more than enough vestments for the clergy:
 Candlesticks, crosses, books, caskets, thuribles;
 Bells to call the people are fashioned from metal:
 They give out a sweet melody, ringing beautifully together,
 The holy clergy sing hymns of divine praise.
 The bishop sows the Word of holy law among the people:
 Divine worship is increased by more believers.
 To whom should these matters be attributed except so great a prince?
 Who has restored the holy law where it was formerly in ruins;
 Whose power did all this and set this law in place?
 We shall continue the course of our book; for now this is enough,
 To labour matters further would be tedious.
 Another pen shall describe it, if anything is left to tell.
 Rejoice, O happy city of Troina! Give to that name proper praise!
 In you divine religion was first restored!
 Messina has been linked [with you] and serves the same saint.⁶

(20) In the year from the Incarnation of the Word 1079 the people of Jato, as obstinate as the mountain on which they lived and detesting the yoke imposed by our people, refused to pay the service and tax [*census*] which had been agreed. There was quite a multitude of them settled there, for there were some thirteen thousand families. The count sent envoys to

⁶ Trochaic tetrameter catalectic.

them, first soothing them with honeyed words, then concentrating their minds with threats, to stop them rebelling against him. When this accomplished nothing he brought up his troops and attacked those whom he was unable to subdue through bribes or menaces, to make them submit through the use of force. But the mountain on which they lived was guarded on every side by a sheer drop and the climb up was impossible except for one narrow path which had been artificially carved out to allow the citizens to enter and leave. This entrance was protected by a gate placed at the top of the path and by a wall which extended for some distance on either side. Since the considerable size of the mountain prevented him from a very tight blockade, he set up bases in those places which he felt to be the most suitable for launching raids against the enemy.

Now the people of Jato, as if they were fighting for dear life, made thorough and energetic efforts in everything they could, leaving nothing undone. They went the rounds of their fortifications, strengthening those positions in which they had less confidence, and thereafter staying tirelessly at their posts. Since they kept their herds and flocks with them in secret places and caves on their mountain, safe from hostile incursions, and hence they were not afraid of them being captured by their enemies, they remained even more stubborn. But the more that the count saw them remain vigilant in their own defence (and as a result he realised that he could do them no real harm), the more fiercely his anger burned. Far from being deterred by the task, he immediately strove to use every possible means to secure success. He left the Sicilian knights, on whom he had previously bestowed properties in those parts of the island which he had conquered, at Partinico and Corleone, ordering them to keep up the pressure on the people of Jato. He himself went with the Calabrians to besiege Cinisi, which had also rebelled against him. And so at one and the same time he conducted two separate sieges in the same area, and maintained them both most effectively. He moved very shrewdly from one to the other, eagerly pursuing and encouraging them, dealing with every matter himself, leading attacks on the enemy, frightening them sometimes through feints and sometimes by raids, cheering up his own men by generous gifts and even more generous promises to enhance their loyalty to him, and he continued to do the enemy damage.

(21) It was the sixth month; summer marks the campaigning season:
 One looks for ways to do damage, the other seeks to make him retreat.
 They inflict injuries and receive them. So they pursue each other;
 The enemies remain at each others' throats, both equally determined.
 It was harvest time; this proves a problem for their weary troops.
 The crops are burned: this event perturbs the people of Jato.
 He now attacks the men of Cinisi, and their situation becomes grave .
 They take counsel, preparing to save the harvest;
 But when force fails, they seek to secure this through diplomacy.
 They meet the count and try to appease him,
 They make a treaty; they abandon trickery as their defence,
 Their crops are saved and they are reconciled to the count.⁷

(22) Meanwhile, news of the reputation for valour [*strenuitas*] of Count Roger of the Sicilians came to the celebrated Count Raymond of Provence. Hearing of this, he sent envoys of a rank suitable for such an important matter to this great prince, asking that he might be joined in marriage to Matilda, the count's daughter by his first wife, a young but very beautiful girl. The count acceded to this request, and the agreement was subsequently confirmed by oaths from both parties. Once the nuptial day was decided, the count rewarded the envoys who had come with many gifts, as was the custom. They then made a speedy return to their lord and informed him that his request had been granted. He was extremely pleased by this, for the tidings of her beauty which he had heard from them left him burning with love and desire for her - and when he was informed of the date for their marriage he was at pains to bring forward the day of his departure for Sicily.

On his arrival the count received him with proper ceremony. The agreements were renewed and the girl's dowry was recorded in a chirograph document. The betrothal [*sponsalia*] was celebrated in the presence of bishops from both parties, with prayers by the bishops and holy and catholic rites. The bond between the young man and woman developed little by little, and then (as is customary) grew immeasurably after their first

⁷ Leonine dactylic hexameters.

night together.

The marriage was celebrated with elaborate and costly ceremonies, and afterwards the bride's father kept his son-in-law with him for quite some time. But eventually he showed his affection with generous gifts, as the occasion demanded, both to him and to those who accompanied him, one for each of them according to what he knew of their rank, and with the ships now ready and the sea calm, he took leave of him and his daughter. With sails very carefully set and a following wind, they quickly returned to whence they had come, taking the bride with them.

(23) The daughter forsook her father, and was not ashamed to leave her mother;
 She delights in her union with a foreign count.
 She leaves the land where she was raised and somewhere else gains her,
 Many mothers suffer this fate when their daughters grow up,
 Nor is the one who has been brought up gone into the possession of a friendly
 relative.
 She is now under the authority of a foreigner rather than her father.
 Neither do I condemn this overmuch, although I portray such things;
 Nor do I avoid it by omission, since she does this joined to a husband
 [Whom] she loves and by entering into a fair and charming agreement.
 For those whom the law has joined, no sentence can put asunder:
 That issue should grow, because by not doing this the race would perish.
 A virgin is given forth and joined to her first man,
 By such an event two may become as one flesh.
 Divine law orders this, not anything strange.
 Scripture shows us those things which the future brings:
 She who is joined as a wife in a stronger love
 Thinks less of her father - she even thinks less of her mother,
 Hence the lineage is preserved by this law of marriage.

(24) Meanwhile Robert, the most celebrated Duke of the Apulians and of Calabria was daily encouraged by Michael, the man who had fled to him, to turn his attention to the

enterprise which he had begun against Romania, and in the year from the Lord's Incarnation 1081 he came to Otranto. Money had been allocated for the expedition on the scale necessary for such an undertaking. He sent fifteen ships on ahead across the sea to capture a town so that, when he and the rest of the army followed, possession of this would, in the event of enemy attack, protect the ordinary people who made up the bulk of the expeditionary force. The advance party set sail and reached Corfu during the night. The island was reconnoitred from some distance away at sea but, not liking the look of the considerable number of the enemy whom they saw there, they did not dare to disembark from the ships. Instead they hastened back to the duke and announced that things looked favourable provided that there was a larger army available.

The duke was very pleased by this news, led his troops on board the ships and hastened to cross over with his whole fleet as fast as possible. Many of his friends who were staying behind, to whom he had consigned the duty of guarding Apulia and Calabria, were much upset by the fear that he and those whom he had with him might be lost, and indeed their feelings moved them to open tears. Meanwhile some of those knights who were travelling with him were so dreadfully beset by apprehension of what the enterprise might bring that they trembled abjectly, as though they were afflicted with some sort of fever. For the duke was extraordinarily bold and determined in military matters, and this was abundantly clear to many of the army, even if all the rest kept it quiet. It could in particular undoubtedly be realised from this fact; that he dared to undertake a war with only a small force against so populous an empire and an emperor so well provided with troops, against so many thousands of enemies, and he expected to defeat them. (Those who were present during this affair have testified that he had with him no more than 1300 fully armed knights). However, while to the observer's eye the forces which now assisted him in this affair were, in terms of numbers, by no means sufficient; in his opinion ingrained warlike spirit seemed to provide sufficient strength, even though the forces of the enemy were more numerous. He maintained an air of confidence which raised the spirits of his men, whom fear had rendered downcast. He encouraged them through gifts and by making promises that they would in the future gain both property and treasure if he did successfully conquer that land - provided that they chose to act boldly with him. By doing this he made them

keener to take part in his expedition and to brave the dangers which had seemed so terrible as to discourage them.

Thus, once appropriate forces to give hope of success in such a great enterprise had been prepared, the ships were carefully rowed out to sea, where a gentle wind blew and filled the sails, taking them to a port suitable for disembarkation. Part of the fleet then landed at a port called Herico. After this it went on to a suitable part of the coast, where the River Vojutza flows into the sea. The duke took possession of this stretch of coast and disembarked. As soon as his feet touched dry land and he had looked around this pleasant area, he is alleged to have said to his men: 'Bravest of knights, and not unworthy heirs of the reputation of your predecessors; for this is an inheritance equal to you, though to acquire it you will have to resort to arms! Don't be frightened by a vile and feeble mob, however numerous it may be, or the noise of a horde of enemies; but take encouragement from the appearance and fertility of the enemy's land, which you will acquire as your own hereditary possessions. This beautiful and fertile region will belong to you after the battle, provided that you act bravely'.

Saying this, he captured by storm a fortress called Casopoli on the island of Corfu, and another fortress [*castrum*] which took its name, Corfu, from the island itself, and he made them and the whole island subject to him. Then he set out and immediately went to besiege a city called Avlona, near the Campi Emazi, since it lay very close to the coast where he had landed. Hearing of the duke's arrival, the citizens were absolutely terrified by his presence, and having little confidence in their own strength they surrendered both themselves and their city to his rule. A fortress called Canna, which was very close to the city, surrendered shortly afterwards. Its garrison were also unnerved by the duke's presence, and particularly because Avlona, which was a better provided with troops, had already capitulated.

- (25) Acknowledging that fortune is being very good to him,
 The duke directs his attentions to many other places.
 He besieges the walls of Durazzo from every side,
 With a well-equipped army.

So, the city trembled; besieged by its enemies,
 Its strong walls have lost faith in themselves;
 Fearsome missiles land on the citizens:
 Bringing death to them, one after another.

But though terrified by their enemies,
 The Greek people are worn down even more by hardship,
 Nor do they take revenge for severe wounds,
 For fear has sapped their strength.

A message is sent to Constantinople,
 Saying that the enemy is outside in battle array
 They entreat them to come to the rescue
 Or they will be conquered by their enemies.⁸

(26) After receiving the unwelcome news of the presence of these enemies, the emperor summoned his army by written messages [*chartulis*], despatched throughout his empire, and prepared to march with thousands of men against an enemy who were less numerous, though better furnished with valour [*strenuitas*]. He believed that the huge number of his men would enable him easily to overcome our troops, and so he sent a message to the Venetians to join him at Durazzo with a powerful fleet. His plan was that if, after he had defeated them, our men tried to get away by sea, the Venetians would engage them in a naval battle, and once they had been intercepted they would speedily perish. The Venetians fulfilled his orders faithfully, and three days before the target date the emperor had set for them they were spotted by our men as they approached some distance away out to sea. At the sight of them our troops rushed to arms, and they immediately hastened out to begin the battle at sea with their enemies. A bitter encounter continued throughout the whole day.

⁸ The verse form of the original is called the Second Asclepiad: used by Horace in part of his *Odes*. The first three lines of each stanza are in Asclepiad form, the fourth line is a glyonic.

In the cool of evening, as the sun was setting and seeming to sink into the ocean waves, our men's valour was prevailing over the enemy. With their strength exhausted, the Venetians promised to give in and asked for a truce until dawn, when they would make a treaty with the duke on his terms. Our men rashly agreed to what they sought, and as a result the battle was broken off by both sides. Our men returned to their port.

Tricked by this false promise, our men spent the night exulting, as though they had really won a victory over the enemy, while the Venetians, left unmolested until the morning, brought ample supplies to their ships, and protected by the silence of the night made repairs. The worst of their deception was that they cunningly took two or three men from each ship and furnished them with stones and javelins to hurl, preparing themselves for further combat rather than surrender.

At first light, quite oblivious to this deceit, the duke sent some leading men from his army to receive the surrender which they had promised to make (saving all their personal property), and ordered that they be brought to him. But, far from surrendering, the Venetians met those who came to them with weapons. When they launched a serious attack against them our men declined battle, for they had come unprepared, and the Venetians reached the port of Durazzo safe from our forces and with virtually no damage. Since they had now had free entry to the city, the sailors consulted together with the citizens and the citizens with the sailors, and they spent the whole day in discussion. More or less in the middle of the night, they donned their arms by moonlight. The ships moved rapidly away from the shore, and at the trumpets' sound they set out to offer battle to our men. Our men rushed to engage them and both sides fought fiercely. But the Venetians, using hidden pipes, spread artificial fire, the sort called 'Greek fire' which water cannot extinguish, onto the sea, and they treacherously set fire to one of our ships, of the type called a 'catt', as it floated on the waves. But once our men had realised this trick they launched an attack, and despatched a ship of theirs, a very expensive one, to the bottom. So, with one loss set off against another and each side easily gaining some revenge, both sought to break off the battle, for our men were scared of their stratagems and theirs were afraid of our valour. The Venetians returned to the city's port, from whence they had came, our men remained where

they had first lain.

(27) It was now early October. The next day at dawn, while part of our army was preparing to go out in search of food, they saw some distance away banners waving from the tops of spears, and realised that this was the emperor advancing upon them with a vast army. There was confusion and clamour in the camp. Some people were terrified, but others, stouter of heart, encouraged the less valiant and gave them strength. The duke saw that battle was imminent, and decided to force his army to fight more fiercely for him by removing all hope of flight. So he burned all his ships which lay safely at sea, to prevent the cowardly avoiding the savage battle with which our men were threatened by fleeing to them in the hope of being carried home. Approaching very close to the camp of our men - indeed only about four furlongs [*stadii*] lay between them - the emperor pitched camp. His army established itself all around, but that day nobody from their side tried anything against our men or anybody from our men against them.

The following night the duke took the first watch and his son Bohemond the second, from midnight until it grew light. In the dawn twilight next morning the duke and all our men rose up and heard the celebration of the Mass and hymns to God with great devotion, humbly confessing their sins to the the priests, and being strengthened with the mysteries of Holy Communion. Then, with the battle lines drawn up, they advanced slowly and in tight formation to battle. The emperor came to meet them, and such was the multitude crowding around him that it seemed that there was no hill high enough to allow the more distant parts of his army to be visible from it. The English whom they call Varangians had requested the emperor that they form the vanguard, for these men enjoy being in the forefront. They started the battle by making a fierce attack in two columns, and at first the situation was very unfavourable for our men. But one of our squadrons attacked them on their unprotected flank and this gallant attack forced them, wounded and terrified by the assault, to flee towards the church of St. Nicholas which was nearby. Looking to save their lives, some of them, indeed as many as could fit in, entered the church, while others from this great multitude clambered onto the roof which then collapsed under their weight, thus hurling them on top of those down below. In the crush both groups were suffocated. Seeing

the Varangians, in whom his chief hope of victory lay, totally defeated and our pursuing forces resolutely advancing against him, the emperor was terrified and chose flight rather than battle. The entire Greek army, abandoning its tents and all its other equipment, fled, with every man trying to outdo the other in their haste to run away. Our men were thus victorious, but the duke restrained them and they did not pursue the fugitives very far. They returned to the enemy's camp and the duke took up residence in the emperor's tents; those of the others who got there first seized the best quarters and booty.

Seeing that winter was threatening - for this was the month of October - the duke then marched to the River Daemoni and built his winter-quarters there: these took their name from him and the place was called Monte Guiscard. From there however he marched out daily towards Durazzo with armed parties, and frequently caused a lot of damage with his raids. Unable to resist his pressure, a number of castra in this province concluded agreements with him, surrendered, and joined his side.

(28) There was at that time in Durazzo a Venetian of noble birth named Domenico, to whom had been entrusted the guard of an important tower. Through idle conversation with him, the duke realised something of his disposition, and then cautiously began to explore various deals through which the city would be betrayed. He was careful to do this through intermediaries, and only very occasionally in person, to prevent the treachery that they were concocting being discovered by other people. The Venetian's mind was riddled with greed and easily corrupted by those making promises which played on both his avarice and lust; thus he took the slippery path from good and honest intentions down to much worse ones. Finally, in answer to his request, the duke promised to give him the hand in marriage of his shapely and beautiful niece, the daughter of his brother Count William of the Principate, along with her hereditary property. The duke used this bribe to get what he wanted, and both parties swore oaths, Domenico to betray the city, the duke swearing to give him his niece. The deal was to be concluded in the very near future by the betrayal of the city to those outside.

Now certain of obtaining the city, the duke made wooden ladders to climb the walls, while to assist him the Venetian placed rope ladders on the wall for the enemy scaling

party. And since as is written in Scripture: 'No enemy is more dangerous to the wicked than the enemy within', ⁹ the opportunity to break into the city was given to the enemy by the man who ought to have been its defender. The whole city was roused by the fearful din of frequent shouts in the name of 'Guiscard' and trumpets blowing. The citizens rushed to arms, unaware that their enemies were already within the walls and had taken station in the highest tower, and all their efforts to expel them were in vain. They made three attempts at this but their resistance was unsuccessful, and finally they were forced to come to an agreement and surrender, bowing their necks to the duke's rule.

(29) After gaining the city and making the arrangements he wanted, the duke entrusted rule over it to Fortimundus de Rosana; he himself set out with his army to conquer the entire province and make it subject to him. Hence, coming to a city called Castoria which refused to submit to his authority, he laid siege to it, enclosing it from every side, and remained there attacking it for some time, uttering frightening threats and also trying to win it over with bribes, and he inflicted a lot of damage. Three hundred Varangians were stationed in that city, sent there to guard it by the emperor, and their work and vigilance contributed not a little to the defence. But when they saw our men persisting in the attack, and fearing that siege engines would appear which would hasten the city's fall (after which they foresaw that any treaty they might obtain for themselves would be on much worse terms), they made an agreement to surrender. As a result of the city's capture the whole province round about, with all the nearby fortresses within its jurisdiction, were conquered. The duke received all those who came over to his side with the utmost ceremony and rewarded them with presents, and he paid a great deal of attention to their advice in everything which was done. He did this as a quite deliberate policy, with the intention that when others heard about it they might the more easily brought over to his side. Meanwhile fear of him made the whole empire including its capital city, tremble.

(30) While the duke was thus engaged in Romania, and Count Roger of Sicily was busy

⁹ This does not in fact seem to be a Biblical quotation.

looking after his brother's affairs as though they were his own in Calabria and Apulia, that foe to the Christian name Benarvert was causing a lot of problems in Sicily. For this prince of Syracuse and Noto was a cunning man, experienced in military matters, brave and crafty, saying one thing but keeping his plans to himself and doing another, and all the Saracens who were still putting up a fight in Sicily relied on his leadership. He used all sorts of cunning ploys against a certain pagan called Benthumen whom the count had appointed as the governor of the city of Catania, seeking to persuade him to betray the city through many offers of bribes and property. Now this pagan met his co-religionist and, blinded by avarice and forgetful of the oaths of fealty which he had made to the count, agreed a date, and treacherously allowed Benarvert and a host of his men into the city at night, thus earning for himself for ever the name of traitor. What had happened here resounded through the whole island. The Christians were greatly embarrassed because such a wicked and treacherous deed had been perpetrated among them; however the Saracens rejoiced far and wide at the mockery such ignominy had brought to the Christian name.

The count's son Jordan, Robert de Sourdeville and Elias Cartomensis then raised an army and set out for Catania. Elias was a convert from the Saracens to the Christian faith, and was afterwards brutally slain by his own people at Castrogiovanni. Since he refused to deny that faith and become an apostate, he thus ended his life most admirably as a martyr. Hearing of their approach from the scouts whom he had sent out everywhere to keep an eye on matters, Benarvert drew up his forces for battle and hastened to meet the enemy outside the city. He placed his infantry, nearly twenty thousand strong, on his right flank a little way in front of the enemy, while he himself with his mounted troops remained on the left wing awaiting them. Our men, who had only a hundred and sixty knights, did not hesitate but marched into battle, calling on God to assist them. When the infantry still stood fast and refused to give way, even on their third attack upon them, they turned away from them and charged the cavalry. After a fierce battle and suffering many casualties, the latter turned and fled. Our men pursued them, killing the stragglers, and driving them right back to the city gate. Benarvert barely escaped during this flight, and there was huge slaughter among the infantry. Our men then pitched their tents outside the city and besieged it closely. Benarvert fled the city secretly at night, along with the pagan traitor, and took refuge at Syracuse. But

when this pagan traitor demanded the reward he had been promised, Benarvert had him beheaded, in case he betray Syracuse as he had Catania.

(31) A certain ordinary knight [*gregarius miles*] called Ingelmarius had served the count for a long time. The count wished to reward this service properly, for such was his custom, and he saw in him a man of great and warlike valour [*militaris strenuitas*]. For this reason, and despite the latter's low birth, he gave him in marriage the widow of his nephew Serlo, who had been killed in Sicily by the Saracens, along with all the dower which belonged to her. She was extremely reluctant, for she was a woman of most distinguished ancestry, the daughter of Count Rodulf of Boiano, but the count did this precisely so the social status of the knight among his companions might be, at least to some extent, enhanced. The marriage was solemnly celebrated at Geraci, a quarter of which came to him from his wife's dowry. But now Ingelmarius abandoned the good conduct of his previous lowly career and forgot his humble birth. He thought that the nobility of his wife rubbed off on him and that he was now the equal in birth and status of her former husband, and so he boastfully sought for himself more than was proper.

The count had begun to make Geraci defensible by building a keep [*turris*] there. Ingelmarius carried this work on for a time, while concealing what he was doing, and he made this keep exceedingly strong. He curried favour with the people of Geraci through bribes and flattery, and made a treaty of friendship with them, confirmed by oaths on each side. When this was announced to the count, the latter realised his presumption, and was afraid that in the future his confidence in the [strength of the] tower might make his behaviour even worse. So he ordered him to cut down the keep to the level of a simple private house, and rebuked him for daring to act as he had without asking his permission. But Ingelmarius had been plotting with the men of Geraci who had promised openly to assist him, and forgetful of the benefice granted to him, as is the way with low-born people, he shamefully chose not to obey the count but to rebel against him. When the count discovered this, he ordered the men of Geraci to destroy the keep and hand Ingelmarius over to him as a prisoner. They refused to do this, not through loyalty to Ingelmarius but because their people all hate those of our race and prefer there to be discord among us

rather than peace. The count observed legal forms and sent his disavowal from that time forth [*diffidentia in posterum*] to his former vassal [*homo*]. He then raised an army and went to besiege Geraci.

Ingelmarius retained the inhabitants of Geraci as accomplices in his folly for quite a while through the adroitness of his flattery. But, when they saw that they were being pressed closely both without and within by the count, they began to tire of this rash scheme and grow mutinous. Ingelmarius realised this, and was terrified that they make an agreement with the count and hand him over to him. So he left the town and made his escape. His wife was abandoned to the count's mercy, but because of the latter's regard for his nephew, whose wife she had been, she was allowed to keep all the property which her [first] husband had brought to her. The count was reconciled with the Greeks and regained Geraci.

(32) In this same year, after stockpiling large sums of money, the count recruited skilled masons from all over his lands and started building operations at Messina. He laid the foundations of a citadel [*castellum*] and towers there, and appointed competent officials to supervise the workmen in this undertaking. Furthermore he himself went to inspect matters, and through his personal encouragement got them working faster; thus in a short time he completed a keep [*turris*] and an immensely high rampart, both of admirable workmanship. Since he reckoned that this was, more than all the other cities which he held, the key to Sicily, he was careful to keep it strictly guarded under trustworthy officers. He also built, on a lavish scale, a church in that city dedicated to St. Nicholas, which he generously endowed with towers and other properties, appointing clerics to serve there, and making it suitable to be the seat of a bishop; however he united it with the cathedral of Troina.

(33) Meanwhile, in the year from the Incarnation of the Word 1082, that most famous of princes Robert Guiscard, Duke of Calabria and the Apulians, who had by his gallant conduct conquered all the land of the Bulgarians, received anxious letters from Gregory, Bishop of the Roman See, which begged and prayed that he would come to the help of the Holy Roman Church. For, as a result of certain disputes between them, Henry, the Emperor of the Germans had come to Rome with an army. After a long siege, fortune aided him and

he broke into the city, made an alliance which won over the leading men of Rome, and closely besieged the Pontiff who had taken refuge in a certain tower called the Tower of Crescentius. What is quite shocking to say, he installed another man in his place in the see of St. Peter, namely the Archbishop of Ravenna, named Humbert [*sic*], ¹⁰ an unheard of thing and quite against the Sacred Canons! Gregory was so closely blockaded that nobody was able to gain access to him.

The duke would have preferred to devote all his energies to the enterprise which he had begun. But when he heard of the disastrous situation of our Holy Mother Church, and that the lord to whom he had given his fealty, whom he legally served, and from whom he acknowledged that he held everything that he possessed, was in such a parlous position, he chose to postpone his own concerns, dear as they were to him, and to use his resources for the service of Holy Mother Church and his lord. Thus he entrusted the task of finishing what he had begun to his son Bohemond, that most valiant of knights, whom he left in overall charge of his troops, while he himself with only a few men set off for Apulia, sailing across a calm sea to Otranto.

(34) At that time a number of people in Apulia, grown arrogant through the duke's absence, had conspired against him, hoping to seize those things which were rightfully his. They thought that, because he was busy with other matters, he would not bother once more to return there. Thus Geoffrey of Conversano had laid siege to the city of Oria, not far from the Taranto district, and had caused a great deal of harm by his extremely troublesome behaviour.

Landing at Otranto and hearing that this city was menaced by siege, the duke hurried to reach there with his tiny force. A messenger informed those who were directing the siege of the duke's approach and, terrified by his presence, they abandoned their undertaking and raised the siege, even though their forces were numerous. They all fled in haste and escaped to their homes. Meanwhile the citizens, who had thus been rescued from the siege which had threatened them, rushed out to meet the duke, and joyfully welcomed him with every mark of respect. Throughout Apulia and Calabria the revolts which disloyalty had stirred up

¹⁰ Guibert of Ravenna, the anti-pope Clement III (1080-1100).

were quelled by his presence, and under his gaze things were so quite that it was as if these rebellions had never happened.

(35) Having summoned his brother from Sicily and raised a large army, the duke marched on his nephew Jordan, the Prince of Aversa, and ravaged the harvest. There had previously been a number of disputes between them which had caused this hostility, and the prince's anger had become so heated that he had recently, to the detriment of the pope, dared to become the vassal of the emperor and undertaken to do him service for his land. The duke came with his army to the city of Capua and the *castrum* called Aversa and remained there for eight or more days, inflicting a great deal of damage on the whole district. The prince fought back but was unable to drive him away. But since Jordan was a most skilled knight, and had equally skilful men with him, there was heavy fighting between the two of them. The duke then returned home, but sent out written instructions throughout Apulia and Calabria to gather money and supplies for an army which would march with him against the emperor in Rome next summer.

(36) The count had been asked by his brother, when the latter had just returned from Bulgaria, to march with him. He went to Apulia, leaving the guardianship of Sicily to his son Jordan, forbidding anyone to dare to disobey his orders.¹¹

Jordan was his son by a mistress. He was however strong both in body and mind, and greedy for rule and for the glory gained by mighty deeds. The young man had previously, by the advice of his wicked followers, kept such thoughts quiet within his own breast while he hatched a plot to rebel, but now, with his father absent, there seemed to him to have arisen an opportunity for his evil plan. He cunningly gathered a number of people round about him and, while not yet revealing his intentions, estranged their loyalty through devious means, with the result that they were prepared to act as his accomplices in carrying out whatever project he had first initiated. At last he revealed the long-planned plot to those whom he had deluded by such methods, and while some of them were unhappy with this, it was welcomed by many. He wickedly urged anybody who was unwilling to join in with them

¹¹ The text reads *audierat* which is nonsensical. I have assumed that this is a misreading for *audebat* or *ausus erat*.

and their plans not to break the the sworn agreement [*fides*] that they had pledged. This was in accord with the oath made to his father, by the terms of which the latter had ordered everyone to obey Jordan's wishes and instructions. Jordan made generous promises and secured the agreement of many to his evil plan to take control of more of his father's possessions than had been granted to him by the latter, or indeed was proper. For he seized for himself the castrum of S. Marco and Mistretta, and, openly showing his disloyalty, launched plundering raids throughout the region from these places. He marched in battle array on Troina, intending to carry off his father's treasures which were kept there, but his plan was thwarted and he returned empty-handed, for when his disaffection was revealed those loyal to the count [*fideles comitis*] gathered there and fought him off, driving him away from that district.

When this was announced to his father, he returned in haste. Wise man that he was, he took great care to prevent his terrified son defecting to the Saracens, who were still resisting him. He concealed his anger towards him, ascribing what his son had done to his youth, and that it was therefore worthy of forgiveness. When it was announced to the son that his father was taking what he had done lightly, he had little thought for those who were with him, but tearfully agreed a truce and went to meet his father.

Disguising his anger for the time being, his father greeted his son on his arrival with a friendly face. But after a few days his father looked to the future, seeing that if those who had been accomplices in giving such advice to his son should survive unscathed then others would be persuaded to try something similar. Unknown to his son, he had the twelve principal figures in this conspiracy brought to him one after another, and then deprived of their eyes. Once he had done this, he also had his son arrested, threatening to treat him in the same way, as justice dictated. This was in fact a pretence, with the intention of frightening him into avoiding any such action in future, and the count was duly restrained by his *fideles*, whom he had deliberately forewarned to act in this manner. His son was petrified, as indeed was necessary to instill in him the proper obedience: for discipline and the rigour of justice have communion with peace, as is attested by the Psalmist, who says: 'Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other'

[*Psalm*, lxxxiv.11]. For mercy should be so exercised that justice is not more lax than is proper, lest crimes grow too numerous. Hence the careful father acted as a wise doctor by such severity, for by inducing terror in this his son he guided him away from evil.

(37) In the year from the Lord's Incarnation 1084, after everything had been prepared with great care, the duke marched on Rome with a large army of mounted troops and huge forces of infantry. He aimed to free Pope Gregory (who was called Hildebrand before he received the papacy) from the siege mounted by the emperor and the treacherous Romans, and, if necessary, to fight with lion-like ferocity against that Caesar, should he not retreat.

When he had come close to his goal, and [not] wishing to march recklessly onwards, he sent out a thousand picked knights with the same number of banners, and ordered a further force of three thousand men to follow on foot. He himself followed cautiously with the rest of his army, placing the infantry, the weaker section, at his front. He had indeed heard that the emperor's knights had marched out to attack him from the direction of the aquaduct. But in fact this information was false, for the emperor had not expected anything like this and had previously sent many of his army away. He himself had remained in Rome, keeping with him only a minority of his troops. When he realised that his enemies were approaching, he abandoned the city, for his own forces by no means strong and he feared the treachery of the Romans, even though they promised that they would stand with him and not let him down. Thus within three days he ceded the place to his enemies, albeit very unhappily, and retreated. The duke meanwhile enjoyed a free passage to the city, meeting none of the resistance that he had expected, and pitched camp next to the aquaduct, before the gate which lies on the Via Tusculana. He remained there for three days, making a reconnaissance of the city from every side. He then marched at dawn with thirteen hundred knights to the gate which is called S. Lorenzo, under the aquaduct next to the Tiber. He had noticed that this was poorly guarded, for nobody expected an attack on that side. Ladders were put silently in place, and he scaled the walls. Using steel to open the gates and then bringing his men in, he marched through the city squares to the bridge where his [main] army was waiting, with his men shouting their war cry 'Guiscard' and terrifying the citizens. The gates were not simply opened but battered down by main force, and his men entered

and stormed into the city. His attack moved directly on to the Tower of Crescentius and rescued the pope, who was brought out from there with the respect which was proper, and restored to the Lateran Palace. There first the duke and thereafter the whole army accorded him the traditional honours, prostrating themselves at his feet with gifts, and they brought a large amount of treasure there.

The Romans then regrouped their forces and conspired together. Three days later they gathered in the city squares and tried to attack our men. The city was filled with noise and shouting. Our men hastened from the tables where they were sitting and rushed to arms. One enemy charged upon the other, and battle line clashed with battle line. The duke's son Roger with a thousand knights was, unknown to his father, beset by the Romans outside the city, and immediately flew to the attack. However the Romans put up a brave resistance and none of the assaults were successful until the duke cried 'fire', set light to the city and subjected it to both flame and sword. Unable to stem the blaze, the Romans at last turned and fled. The duke pursued the fugitives to the bridge, killing the stragglers, and with the wind fanning the flames, the greater part of the city was burned down. Our men returned victorious to the Lateran.

With their enemies threatening them from within the walls and harassed by their forays, the Romans were unable to muster further resistance. So the more prudent men of the city discussed the matter among themselves and wisely chose to make a treaty of reconciliation with the pope, for they saw no advantage in prolonging the disaster further or in provoking the enemy's sword. So they sought peace and went to a parlay, there made a number of excuses to mitigate their deceit and, having sought pardon, were reconciled. They pledged themselves on oath to obey the pope and the duke. Our men then retired and the city was freed from the disastrous presence of its enemies. Realising the perfidiousness of the Romans and afraid that he might once again be hemmed about by siege, the pope took the advice of those faithful to him, which was to leave the city for a time. He preferred to avoid the treachery of the Romans rather than remaining there. He gave them a free choice of what to do in this time of danger, whether or not they faithfully observed the terms which they had promised to keep, but he himself left for Apulia with the duke and

went to Benevento. As a result he remained in the Apulian region for the rest of his life, and never saw Rome again.

(38) Rome, you were once warlike, and powerful throughout the whole world,
 Making the necks of the proud bend, you spread over every region!
 You issued laws and controlled everything with your reins.
 Dukes, princes and empires trembled before you.
 The necks of kings were bent, tamed by your thongs:
 Proud as they were, they could not resist, terrified by your sword.
 You disposed as you wanted. You deposed
 Proud dukes and princes, making them humble slaves.
 You ruled through these means, having honest judges,
 And while you pursued justice, you enjoyed the fruits of prosperity.
 All the kings on earth sought laws from you:
 The judgements which you gave remained unchallenged.
 But now, not long ago after abandoning this behaviour,
 You are entangled through your wickedness in disgraceful activities;
 As this wickedness becomes known you are unhappy and despised.
 Now nobody fears you and your people show their backs to everyone:
 Your weapons are blunted and lack an edge.
 Your laws are depraved and full of falsehoods!
 In you every vice flourishes: self-indulgence, avarice,
 Bad faith, disorder and the disease of simony
 Increase by leaps and bounds. Everything is for sale.
 Through you holy order collapses, and first the flood bursts forth.
 One pope is not enough, you rejoice in two men so clad.
 Your loyalty is made more secure by the giving of bribes.
 While a man hands them out, you fight his enemy,
 But, if these payments cease, then you withdraw your forces.
 You threaten one man with another, thus you fill your money bags.
 You spread error throughout the world by fomenting this schism.

If your earlier enthusiasm for righteous behaviour had not ceased,
 Then no king could have secured a victory over you.
 Now indeed it is a Norman knight who defeats and masters you.
 Does not the sacred presence of the Apostles terrify you?
 Do not the relics of the saints recall you from what you have begun?
 Once you were a fountain of all praise, now you are a pit of deceit:
 Your good character has disappeared and your morality is corrupted,
 You are devoted to evil practices, and there is no shame on your brow.
 Peter, supreme shepherd, rise up and put an end to such things!

(39) While the duke was busy at Rome on the pope's behalf, his son Bohemond was behaving valiantly [strenue] in Bulgaria, where he had been left by his father, and was efficiently fulfilling his role as his father's representative. He besieged a city called Artta, made determined assaults upon it, and strove with every possible means to capture it. When the emperor heard that this city under his rule was menaced by his enemies and that the duke, whom he greatly feared, had gone away, he restored his forces in the latter's absence and raised and equipped a large army for the relief of that city. On his arrival Bohemond began the encounter by launching an attack, and battle was joined. At the first engagement those in the vanguard were struck down and killed and, terrified by this sight, those behind fled. As soon as the first men fled, the emperor found it expedient to do so as well, and on his flight Bohemond was left victorious.

(40) The news of this was given to the duke on his glorious and triumphant return from Rome, and he rejoiced greatly in the knowledge that his son was in no way inferior to himself, and in particular he was pleased because he and his men had secured such tremendous and glorious renown by putting both emperors to flight at one and the same time. On his arrival in Apulia he summoned his officials from all over that region, and made the most careful dispositions among his men, with the intention of hastening to Greece with a powerful army to complete the task which he had begun there.

In the month of September ships from throughout Apulia, Calabria and Sicily gathered at Otranto. Troops and supplies were embarked, a favourable wind blew, and he

landed at the port he had chosen where he rejoined his son and the men whom he had left in these far-away parts anxiously looking for his return. He himself appeared very glad to be back. He then put into practice what he had come for. His return threw the whole land into turmoil, with his attacks on its cities, his energy in sieges and untiring determination. He was the first in battle, always on the lookout, now instilling terror through his threats, and then offering honeyed inducements, devoting all his energy to making the empire tremble before him.

(41) It seems to us proper to insert into this work a miraculous sign which was seen throughout the whole of Apulia, Calabria and Sicily, particularly because we think that we on our part are not in ignorance of what such a sign portended. In the year from the Incarnation of the Word 1084, on 6th February, between the sixth and the ninth hour, the sun was hidden for the space of three hours, to such an extent that people who were hard at work inside their houses were unable to finish during that period what they had begun without lamps being lit, and those who wanted to go from house to house used lanterns or torches. This event terrified many people.

But before a year had gone by, the significance of this eclipse, at least in our opinion, declared itself to the majority of people with absolute clarity. For in that same year the venerable Pope Gregory (whom we discussed above) sought a cure from the doctors for his illness, but such medicines were in vain, and he died. In July the duke, and on 9th September the most renowned King of the English and Normans, Duke William, also died.

The duke's widow Sichelgaita and his son Roger, who was at that time also present among the Bulgarians, and the other barons carried out his funeral ceremonies with the proper honours, not undeservedly. They brought his body back across the sea and buried it at Venosa. Freed by the departure of its enemies, Greece rejoiced in peace. [However] the whole of Apulia and Calabria were in confusion.

(42) For the brothers Roger and Bohemond quarrelled among themselves, both seeking the ducal office, and many people sought their own advantage, looking to profit first from one and then from the other. The loyalty of many Apulians, insofar as they had any, became

clear with this trial. Roger was eventually made duke with the help of his uncle Count Roger of the Sicilians who, while his brother was still alive, had promised that he would do this. All the *castella* of Calabria in which up to now Count Roger held only a half share were granted to him by his nephew in full ownership, and handed over to him.

Now the last day of the great a prince whom I have been discussing makes a suitable end to a book, or so it seems to me. I ought therefore to finish this book here, so that a new book may follow in which I shall discuss both the new duke and the count.