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ACCIDENT, OPPORTUNITY, AND FAMILY TIES:
NORMAN "STATE-BUILDING" IN SOUTHERN ITALY 999-1085

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ABSTRACT

Accident, Opportunity, and Family Ties: Norman "State-Building" in Southern Italy 999-1085 analyzes the slow and tumultuous takeover of southern Italy and Sicily by Norman immigrants in the eleventh century. Inheriting from their forebears in Normandy a uniquely flexible definition of kinship, these invaders were highly adaptable to the chaotic political landscape of Italy in the High Middle Ages. Entering the scene as mercenaries, pilgrims, and adventurers seeking glory, over the course of the eleventh century they became bandits, then landowners, then counts beneath the native rulers, and finally achieved the status of ducal powers. With no apparent plan leading to this conquest, and many signs that they were possessed of a peerless ability to take advantage of their neighbors' disorder, the Normans under the (in)famous Robert Guiscard and his family created a powerful duchy, and by the middle of the twelfth century the Kingdom of Sicily, which would exert considerable influence over the affairs of the great powers of the papacy, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Byzantine Empire throughout the Crusader Era. The translation of social values, particularly the role of kinship between the Norman rulers, and how these values affected the course of the conquest and its aftermath are the subject of this thesis.

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Introduction

In this province [Normandy] there is a city called Coutances, and in its territory there is a village named Hauteville; called thus not so much because of the height of any hill upon which it is situated but rather, so we believe, as an omen predicting the extraordinary fortune and great success of the future heirs of this village, who with the help of God and their own strength raised themselves step by step to the highest of ranks.¹

The events of the eleventh century in Europe, Asia Minor, and the Levant have cast long shadows in Western history. The First Crusade, Duke William II of Normandy's conquest of England, the rise of the reformist papacy, and the effective Christianization of the continent in all but its most remote corners all created the environment in which proto-national entities recognizable to modern eyes could finally begin to exist. Involved in these changes, indeed in both the participatory and geographical center, were a group of Norman exiles, adventurers, glory-seekers, and their relatives who achieved virtually complete control of the Italian peninsula south of the Papal States, and by the end of the eleventh century Sicily as well. As part of the expansion of the Normans from their homeland, they migrated to Italy decades before their original duke led his great and successful expedition into England, yet the parallel expansions did not culminate in the same end.

Given the similarity of time and origin, these expansions might be expected to be executed in a like manner, with similar goals. The differences, however, are

¹ Malaterra I:3 (4) "In qua quidem provincia civitas est, quae Constantinum dicitur, in cuius territorio villa est, quae Altavilla nuncupatur, non quidem tantum pro excellentia alicuius montis, in quo sita sit, quantum, ut credimus, aliquo auspicio ad considerationem praenotantis eventus et prosperos successus eiusdem villae futurorum haeredum, dei adiutorio et sua strenuitate, gradatim altioris honoris culmen scandentium."

overwhelmingly apparent and leave little room for close comparison. Duke William prepared for his conquest, surrounded himself with retainers who regarded themselves as his kinsmen (either genuinely or by somewhat obscure degrees), and the Duke moreover had at least a tenuous political justification for his invasion in his descent from Richard II, brother of Emma of Normandy. As the sole leader of the invaders, he exercised complete control over the course of his efforts and could effectively make a coherent dominion out of his conquests.

The Italo-Normans, on the other hand, did not enter Italy in a single cohesive group. They had no central leadership until well after they had become landowners, and they often fought among themselves as well as with the neighboring lords. Their so-called "conquest", a highly misleading term, occurred in stages that had little if any coherent plan behind them, and were brought on as much by favorable political circumstances as any conscious efforts on their part. Italy, divided into Lombard principalities, papal lands, and Byzantine catepanates, was a land constantly tearing at itself. Moreover the Emirate of Sicily, controlled by the Muslims since the mid-tenth century, was a perpetual menace to the peninsula, as were the predominantly Muslim pirates operating in the Tyrrhenian Sea. The Ottonian/Salian emperors held traditional authority over most of Italy, but rarely were in a position to affect events unless they personally ventured there. The Norman invasion, if such it can be called, resembles more the arrival and settlement of the Vikings who were to become Normans over the tenth century, for they arrived in a land that, though not uninhabited was still vulnerable to the incursion of a new power bloc much like their forebears. It is also unlike the origins of Normandy, in that the Normans brought a certain set of values that had successfully

created power in Normandy to a situation very different from their homeland, with mixed results more divergent than similar to those in the north.

Approach

Studies of the Italo-Normans to date have largely focused on the events after their arrival, thereby laying aside questions of their heritage except as it pertained to their reasons for migrating to Italy. This is not unreasonable, after a fashion, possibly because the Normans lost whatever cultural distinctiveness they possessed from their Italian neighbors relatively quickly, within three or four generations in most cases, and secondly because the solidification of Normandy and Anglo-Norman England as polities by the end of the eleventh century effectively ended any further migration into the peninsula. It is also true that the conditions in Italy were more fractured and complex than those in much of northern Europe, and the arrival of the Normans added to this chaos more than it did bring any semblance of new order, thus making intermarriage and acculturation more critical to stabilization.² At the same time, the players in this drama were drawn from noble families that were not related to or within orbit around the elder ducal family, and so what they accomplished in Italy did not necessarily reflect upon Norman power structures back home. What is pertinent, however, is how they reacted to the environment and shaped these kinship structures in the same manner that served the dukes so well from the time of Richard the Fearless on, so that they relied on a firmer sense of familial

² Loud, Graham. "Continuity and Change in Norman Italy: the Campania during the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries." *Journal of Medieval History* (1996): 313-343

obligation whether or not related by blood to guide their actions than their contemporaries.

This subject has been approached with the intent of bringing together the work of Eleanor Searle on familial politics in Normandy with Graham Loud's extensive treatment of the Italo-Norman "achievement". Their works form the core of the secondary research that will support the examination of the primary sources, those of Amatus of Montecassino, Gauffredo Malaterra, and William of Apulia plus diverse clerical accounts and chronicles, by demonstrating a central sense of relationships that Normans relied upon between themselves and others that shaped the course of their takeover. Despite the propagandist, panegyric, and polemical formulae of the primary sources, there are correlations beyond the textual contained within that offer a prosopographical portrait of them as something akin to a distinctive "people".³ This evidence is aided by the fact that these primary accounts were written in complete independence from each other. R.H.C. Davis' theory that Norman histories, whether in southern or northern Europe, were written with the conscious or unconscious intent of forging a "national myth" to legitimize Norman rule while any cultural specifics were in decline, while pertinent insofar as the ultimate dissolution of identity within the new cultural forms, nevertheless does not mitigate the immediate sense of the invaders as revealed in the sources and the initial generation that brought change to the region.⁴ The range of this study will proceed from the first arrival of Normans in 999 to the death of Robert Guiscard, though reference

³ Wolf, Kenneth. *Making History: The Normans and their Historians in Eleventh-Century Italy* (1995). pg. 5

⁴ Davis, R.H.C. *The Normans and their Myth* (1976). pp. 49-68

will also be given to the later creation of the Kingdom of Sicily and the legacy of Guiscard, particularly through his sons.

Chapter 1 of this thesis, "Men of the North Wind", is primarily concerned with the translation of culture traits from Normandy into Italy, including the background of their migration and the practices involved. This will also approach the grand question of Norman identity and the theory that the historical accounts were inventions of their authors to sustain a notion of "Norman-ness", as mentioned above. The two most important concerns of this chapter are the Norman acquisition of power through manipulation of kinship structures in Normandy and abroad, and the cooperative (if coercively so) nature of the "Norman achievement" in southern Italy.

Chapter 2, "An Undisciplined and Alien People", the title of which is taken from Pope St. Leo IX's own correspondence to refer to his Norman captors in the aftermath of the Battle of Civitate, will demonstrate how the two appellations are, in their fashion, astute. The elements of cohesion and cooperation that are mentioned in the first chapter were not a matter of simple self-discipline but of mutual and mostly ethnically segregated self-interest, against the posit of Lucien Musset that the Normans were, from the first, *une clientele*.⁵ They were cooperative as far as they acknowledged mutual enemies, whether hostile Franks or papal armies, and as far as there was above all land and booty to be gained. This mercenary cohesion was still far greater the fractious Italian

⁵ Musset, "L'Aristocratie Normande au XI siecle," in *La Noblesse au Moyen Age X-XV Siecles*, ed. Philippe Contamine, 96: "*La classe dirigeante Normande, c'est d'abord une clientele...*" Musset's article follows the line of argument that the Normans adopted Carolingian customs and institutions, becoming as it were "more Frankish than the Franks" and readily integrating the Franks and Bretons into their relational structure, based on the ducal family's dealings with the Belleme and de Tosny families. It is more plausible that the Normans considered their neighbors competitors and enemies through at least the tenth and eleventh centuries, making exceptions only in the spirit of practical power-brokering. For this, see Searle 239-242

nobility and their rivals the Greek catepans, furthering their distinction from the Italian status quo. The development of the Norman polity in Italy will further be shown to diverge from its parent culture by virtue of the geographical realities of the peninsula, leading to a very different fragmentation of Norman interests.

With the final chapter, "A Norman Realm" the relationships that to this point had been primarily focused internally among the invaders will be examined in their external dimension. In the time after Robert Guiscard's investiture as duke, the course of the familial manipulations brought from Normandy were accelerated by the pace of his growing power. The topography of these changes differs a great deal from Anglo-Norman England, where William purged almost the entirety of the island's leadership to create his rule. By contrast, the Normans in Italy left some of the resident Lombard princes in place to govern under them, and the ecclesiastical leadership was not replaced to anywhere near the same degree by Norman bishops as occurred in England.

There are several questions that this thesis will attempt to approach: How did the Norman takeover of Italy and Sicily resemble the establishment of Normandy, if at all, and how did it differ? How did the family and regional politics of Normandy, from Rollo to Robert the Magnificent (the period before and during the primary phase of Italian invasion), affect the cultivation of power among the Italo-Normans? Did these forms succeed, or was it inevitable that any Norman-specific character to their kind of rule, if such existed, be superseded by the native Italian traditions and political molds? And finally, was there really something particularly "Norman" about the Normans?

Chapter 1

"Men of the North Wind"

In the language of their native country the wind which carries them from the boreal regions from which they have departed to seek the frontiers of Italy is called "north", and the word "man" is used among them to signify "*homo*"; thus they are called "Normans", that is "men of the north wind".⁶

The explosive and stupendous success of the Norman expansion in the eleventh century fundamentally shifted power politics throughout Europe. William II, Duke of Normandy, became William I, King of England, while southern Italy and Sicily were slowly brought under the control of Norman adventurers and expatriates. Normans also participated in smaller numbers in the *Reconquista*, and at the end of the century Norman notables from the north and south led and fought in the First Crusade. Wherever they went, the Normans proved capable of facing almost any force existing in Europe, militarily and politically.

The key to Norman power, however, was not just their skill on the battlefield (although this was considerable). The first century of Normandy's existence was a dangerous time for the warleaders of Rouen.⁷ They faced both the hostilities of the neighboring Franks and Bretons and the fractious politics of the various chieftainships

⁶ William of Apulia, Book I (3) 'Hos quando ventus, quem lingua soli genialis nort vocat, advexit boreas regionis ad oras a qua digressi fines petiere latinos, et man est apud hos, homo quod perhibetur apud nos, Normanni dicuntur, id est homines boreales.'

⁷ The title duke (*dux*), while used by scribes and historians, was not applied officially by the Rouennais lords until at least the time of Duke Richard II (r. 996-1026); warleader is a more accurate description (because formal titles were as yet not used in general by the Normans), as it connotes the element of choice of a collective leader by the nobility within the area under the "ducal" family's direct control, which was until the eleventh century effectively only Upper Normandy. This aspect of chosen leadership is a core concern of this thesis. See Searle, Loud,

existing in the Viking colony that was becoming a genuine duchy, these chieftainships having formed throughout the early stages of the Viking settlement. The Normans inherited a legacy of expansive and competitive kinship relationships, or "predatory kinship" as Searle calls it, and such kinship was adaptable and fluid as a tool to increase the sphere of influence of the descendants of Rollo.⁸ Political marriage, as prevalent among the Normans as among other peoples, did not necessarily carry the same expectations beyond the arrangement between the parties. For instance, the tenth century lords of Rouen, Rollo, William Longsword, and Richard I, all truly or allegedly married Frankish wives, but none of their successors were born to these women and they remained shadow-figures in the chronicles written of the Normans.⁹ This signifies that the possibility of a Frankish inheritor to Rollo's line was unpalatable to the chieftains who chose their overall leader, and that such marriages were merely for the benefit of peaceful relations with the Frankish lords. This does not suggest a pattern of direct filial loyalty but a pragmatic assessment of the needs of a political power just coming into its own. Succession was a matter of designation by the ruler, then acceptance by the sub-leaders and chieftains, and then a form of *parage* to dispense the patrimony among non-inheritors. It is in the element of choice, which was not only on the part of the reigning *dux* but also his chief supporters to support the naming, that this broad definition of kinship that is only partially related by blood allowed the Normans to build an effective "state" in Normandy.

⁸ Searle, Eleanor. *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power, 840-1066* (1988). Introduction

⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 93

Norman Identity and "National Myth"

A problem in establishing the Norman character of the takeover is the occasional ambiguity of the ethnic terms employed by the primary sources. William of Apulia uses the term *Normanni*, *Franci*, and *Galli* to describe the invaders, though *Normanni* is used more often than the other two terms combined.¹⁰ Further, William used a number of flourishes in describing all of the peoples that participated in his narrative, calling the Germans *Suevi* (Swabians), the Greeks *Argi* or *Danai* or *Achivi* (Argives, Danaens, and Achaeans), and even referring to the Italians as Samnites and Ausonians. Any charge that William had no idea of how Normans differed from other peoples cannot rest on his use of language alone. Gauffredo Malaterra sharply divides his Normans from Franks and Gauls, using *Normanni* 43 times, *Franci* 10 (and then never in association with an identifiable Norman figure), and *Galli* once only, in referring to their place of origin in what had been known as Gaul.¹¹ As Amatus' original Latin is no longer extant (and the earliest copy is in fourteenth-century French), an examination of his specific ethnic vocabulary is not possible, given that by that era there was no effective distinction between the inhabitants of Normandy and the rest of France, but the translation does indicate that he too had a clear idea of the differences between Franks and Normans.¹² Using a literary conflation of the Normans with the Franks, as later the Arabs would confuse the two in the Levant because of the overwhelmingly Franco-Norman nature of the occupation, does not necessarily indicate that the two were indistinguishable from each other beyond the basic scheme of geographical origin.

¹⁰ *Normanni* is used 57 times, *Franci* 10, and *Galli* 34

¹¹ Malaterra, I:1, "*Normanni patria quaedam est in partibus Galliae...*"

¹² Amatus' French translator uses Norman 246 times, with Gaul or Frank used only 4 times each.

The artificial and arbitrary nature of calling any group a "people" is exacerbated in the case of the Italo-Normans in that they not only employed non-Normans who came from the north in their plans but also aliens that they met in Italy. As William of Apulia notes, "if any malefactor from the neighborhood fled to them, they freely received him. They taught their own language and customs to those who joined them, creating a single, seemingly united people".¹³ Guiscard's own band of "malefactors" in Calabria, before he rose to personal prominence, were Slavic immigrants, "so loyal to him that they might have been brothers".¹⁴ There is a distinction, however; these non-Norman participants, whatever their identity, are never in positions that compete with the Normans themselves, nor are they mentioned after their active context.¹⁵

In terms of numbers, the question of the actual Norman ethnic make-up of the invasion is one that cannot be answered definitively. L.R. Menager's study of the anthroponyms and cognomina of identifiable foreigners in eleventh and twelfth-century south Italian documentation revealed a probable two-thirds to three-quarters (depending on the focal criteria) of the individuals involved came from Normandy. The non-Norman French names that appear are largely from Maine and Brittany, neighboring provinces of Normandy that were certainly within its sphere of influence socially and culturally to a

¹³ Amatus, I.165-8, "*Moribus et lingua, quoscumque venire videbant, informant propria, gens efficiatur ut una.*"

¹⁴ Malaterra, I.16, "...*quos quasi fratres fidelissimos...*"

¹⁵ Robert Guiscard's Slavic associates never appear again after the Battle of Civitate in 1053, and even there their presence is only implied. Other characters, such as Tristan of Brittany (the "Norman" lord of Montepeloso after 1042) are rarely mentioned beyond the bare fact of their existence.

degree and likely to have sons who desired the same fame and glory sought by the Normans.¹⁶

The Norman "hegemony" envisioned by the contemporary chroniclers, which Davis dismisses as a mere "national myth" propounded by the Norman, English, and Italian writers of the time in praise of their lords' successes, should not perhaps be taken so lightly.¹⁷ Some of these elements, perhaps most, are unquestionably propaganda or at the very least embellishments; this does not take away from the more remarkable features of the Norman takeover found in the chronicles. The Normans may or may not have been the military juggernauts that Malaterra and William (and to a degree, the clerical chroniclers of the First Crusade) so cheerfully made them, but it cannot be doubted that they had a very deep-seated tradition of combat training, particularly the close-order heavy cavalry fighting called *conroi*, and their victories at Civitate, Durazzo, and later at Antioch, if the accounts are even partially true, were definite feats of skill (and luck).¹⁸ In judging these victories, however, it must also be taken into account the acts of the individuals involved; the chroniclers were more concerned with the deeds of Robert Guiscard, Roger of Sicily, and other notables as symbolic of the whole than with the general group. This makes it difficult to separate what was achieved on the battlefield by the Normans' armies, and what may or may not have been accomplished by individuals.

¹⁶ L.-R. Menager. "Pesanteur et etiologie de la colonisation normandes de l'Italie". *Roberto il Guiscardo*. pp. 189-214

¹⁷ See footnote 5.

¹⁸ Harari, *Special Operations in the Age of Chivalry, 1100-1550*, Chapter 2; the subject of Antioch's capture has generated numerous studies as the central and most crucial battle in the First Crusade, and as the achievement of Bohemund of Taranto in gaining a principality to rival his half-brother Roger Borsa's inheritance of Guiscard's duchy. The politics aside, Bohemund's abilities as a warleader up to the gates of Antioch, his stratagem in taking the city, and his command of the following rout of Kerbogha's host are well attested.

It is probably accurate to consider Robert Guiscard and his son Bohemund among the great military minds of their generation, so their participation in the battles listed above (always alleged as positions of command, if not overall leadership) may have reflected their personal skills and charisma as much as their armies' strength.¹⁹

Cohesion, Coercion, and Choice

The power of the Duke of Normandy rested on his kinsmen, and theirs on him. It was thus of monumental importance that some measure of control be exercised to ensure the connection between them. As an example, Richard I's consort/wife Gunnor was the linchpin of the network that would prove so instrumental to William II's accession and conquest.²⁰ Through her brother Herfast, two of her sisters, and five nieces, William's line and those of Beaumont, fitzOsbern, Giffard, Montgomery, and numerous other primary and lesser nobles who benefited from the conquest all had ties along matrilineal lines. This isolated these comital families from issues of succession (which came through the patrilineal choice mechanic) while retaining the important familial dimension that helped ensure that the kinsmen would be reliable as cousins to the king/duke.²¹ This reliance, however, was a tree that had to be constantly tended and often pruned, and in this the Italo-Normans differed a great deal from their fellows in the north.

The kinship network in Italy was more fragmented and concentrated itself in more than one viable location, namely Aversa and Melfi in the beginning, and between two

¹⁹ Given the fact that the Normans were outnumbered in southern Italy, and the Latin Christians even more so during the First Crusade, the abilities of the commanders involved should be considered among the most decisive elements in the victories both groups achieved.

²⁰ Searle, 100

²¹ Ibid. 102

primary families, the Drengots and the d'Hautevilles, along with numerous smaller satellite warbands. Furthermore, the competing circumstances of war with the Muslims, the Byzantines, and the burgeoning conflict between Rome and the German emperors altered the orbits in which the different families revolved around each other. A disenfranchised son might take up with another family or unrelated power; with Robert Guiscard's ascendance to dukedom, for instance, there were several displaced nobles, among them family members, that could effectively act on any grudges incurred.²² This is in contrast to the state of affairs in Normandy, in which the ducal family could more easily seize assets and render troublemakers unable to obstruct them, as such persons would have no easily-accessible recourse to others for aid. Adding to this complexity, the Italo-Normans' small numbers in relation to the subject peoples forced them to integrate the natives into their network with fewer reservations over time than in Normandy.

Though Norman succession was not always a smooth process, as proved by the tumult surrounding the minority of William II upon the death of Duke Robert, there were controls in place that often functioned not only to assure a proper inheritance, but also to ensure that non-heirs would either be rendered powerless or bound to support the main inheritor. The *parage* system, slow to be replaced especially in the western part of the duchy, remained as it was until it was no longer possible for patrimonies to remain effectively partible precisely because it had this salutary effect.

There are two aspects of this perspective that are pertinent to this study. The first is the question of succession, marriage, and legitimacy within the internal family dynamic, and what might be called selective kinship. Children in the ducal family were

²² Loud, Graham. *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest* (2000). pg. 293

not destined to inherit any part of the duchy. *Apanage* was not an inevitability, as it could be dangerous to the primary heir's position, but was sometimes adopted. The successor had to be chosen and accepted by the duke's supporters, arranged, and provided for in such a way that the designated heir would face as few challenges as possible from siblings and half-siblings. To limit internal strife between brothers, there were three primary methods the dukes employed to reinforce the main heir's position.

1) A new marriage to a higher-status wife could effectively delegitimize previous offspring, whether or not sired in proper Christian marriage (which did not become a commonplace among the Normans until the eleventh century).²³ It offered at the very least a strong religious excuse to disinherit sons. The lack of acknowledged children by Frankish wives in the tenth century is a sign, not that there was no issue from them, but that the emerging power of the Rouennais leaders could not afford Frankish blood if it was to retain the respect and support of the other chieftains in Normandy, and thus any Frankish progeny were not worth mentioning within the "mythic cycle" of Normandy's origins as presented by Dudo of Saint-Quentin.²⁴ This is further reflected in the use of natural daughters or those born to lower-status consorts to seal the lower rung of loyalties with local chieftains, giving them claims to ducal familiarity if not translatable power as a result.

²³ Malaterra, on Tancred d'Hauteville, I.4; Note the censure of concubinage. Tancred's insistence on a second marriage did not invalidate his first children, as Serlo I appears to have been his primary inheritor; the reference to the second wife Fresenda's good relationship with her predecessor's children might be interpreted as a nod in this direction.

²⁴ Searle, 93-94

2) Buying out a share in the inheritance. Mauger, son of Richard I, was rendered harmless to Richard II through payment of a generous amount of money to seek out a respectable marriage outside of Normandy; this is similar to Henry I's original arrangement with William Rufus and Robert Curthose in the eleventh century regarding the inheritance of William the Conqueror. Though in this latter case the end result was Henry's ascendance as King of England, the fault was not in the system but the complex relationship between William's sons and the exigent circumstances of their succession crisis.

3) Consecrating a child to the clergy. Most famous of these is Robert, son of Richard I, who was created Archbishop of Rouen sometime in the late 980s and held the archiepiscopal see for fifty years. In this he could wield an impressive amount of authority that was technically unconnected though strongly supportive of the rule of his brother, Richard II, and as with Mauger it removed him from the question of succession.

The second and third methods do not seem to have been used as much as the first in Italy, but at the same time it is worth considering that a certain amount of sophistication and longevity was required within the ducal family's relational structure before such steps could be undertaken, as opposed to the "simplicities" of political marriage. Buying off potential heirs was impractical, as throughout the conquest the prospects in Italy were too perilous to indulge, and too unstable to trust.²⁵ Devoting a child to the clergy was similarly complicated, in that the changes the Normans brought to

²⁵ One reason that Drogo d'Hauteville may have been miserly with the newly-arrived Robert in granting him so minor a hold as Scribla to start his career may well have been that he had nothing else to offer, meaning that buying him off was not a palatable option. See Loud 2000, pg. 112

the bishoprics were delicate, and subject both to the papacy's growing resistance to simony and the local traditions that, if upset, could lead to more unrest.²⁶ The complexities of the peninsular politics, and the other ways in which the takeover of southern Italy differed from the establishment of Normandy, abrogated the resources available to most families to effectively buy out non-inheritors; as demonstrated with Robert Guiscard's initial "holding" of Scribla, even those with strong kinship claims could not necessarily gain an advantage depending on the circumstances. As for clerical placement, which will be discussed later, Norman replacement of clergy with family members, or even for the most part close allies, was virtually absent in comparison to Normandy and England.

The other way in which this selective leadership property is pertinent is to consider the measure of choice, or popular support of the warrior-nobility, that created "official" leaders among the Normans. It must be remembered that until Robert Guiscard's investment as Duke of Apulia and Calabria in 1059, the leadership of the overall Norman network in Italy was ostensibly a council of twelve equals, lords of the various important townships and *castella* held by the Normans.²⁷ Guiscard's acknowledgment as duke, and to a lesser extent Richard Drengot's as Prince of Capua, by Pope Nicholas II in 1059 and Guiscard's acclaim by his army placed him in a superior

²⁶ Loud, Graham. *The Latin Church in Norman Italy* (2007). pg. 364. Southern Italian clergy, aside from the important archbishoprics, had little political influence, primarily because the bishoprics were so numerous and so small that churchmen rarely had the resources to have an impact beyond their immediate localities. This is pertinent as far as the usefulness of any ducal appointees is concerned.

²⁷ Those attested were, originally: William d'Hauteville (Ascoli), Drogo d'Hauteville (Venosa), Richard Drengot (Aversa), Asclettin Drengot (Acerenza), Tristan of Brittany (Montepeloso), Arnolin (Lavello), Hugh Tudebode (Monopoli), an otherwise unmentioned Rodulf (Canne), Peter, son of Amicus (Trani), and his brother Walter (Civitate); the lords of the last two *castella*, at Grumento and Sant'Arcangelo, are unknown.

position over his ostensible "equals" who had been leading the Normans. This resonates with the cycle of Dudo in the pre-Normandy narrative, in which the arriving Rollo and his fellow Vikings say to Anstign, sent as a Viking envoy to determine their intentions by the Frankish king:

"We are Danes. Carried here from Dacia, we have come to take Francia by assault." Yet they [Anstign]: "What authority does your lord discharge?" They replied: "None, for we are of equal power."²⁸

Note that there is no affirmation of any role of leadership for Rollo himself at the time. The "ducal" family of Normandy, from the Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte onward, relied upon the support of the chieftains who were under their control, and their authority depended on maintaining that support, in order to hold any status of leadership. For most of the tenth century the warleaders only exercised control over Rouen and its close environs. Holding Rouen was key, as it commanded trade on the Seine and therefore kept pressure on Isle de France. They also slowly gained control through marriages of lower-status or illegitimate daughters to the chieftains of estates to the west and east. The main body of Normans was not at that time a single polity but numerous independent warbands, united only as far as the Frankish and Breton threats loomed over them. Otherwise, they were of no mind to follow Rouen's commands without some incentive.

The same was true for the Italo-Normans. Cohesion applied best when a significant territorial or political threat existed, or when the territorial rulers were relatively coeval, and otherwise had to be coerced with promises, military strength, or

²⁸ Dudo of St. Quentin. *De Moribus et Actis Primorum Normanniae Ducum*. Tr. E. Christensen. 11

kinship obligations. Roger I's dispute with Robert over the dispensation of Calabria is a case in point. While usually a close supporter of his elder brother, the siblings were occasionally at each others' throats over credit and spoils. What mostly bound the Normans was the desire for wealth. Though land was effectively wealth, it was never mentioned in the chronicles as a direct motive, which is natural in that, unlike Normandy, the invaders were entering a land already ruled by others and in which arable and profitable land would be jealously guarded.²⁹ Given their mercenary start on the peninsula, and the independence of many of the Norman bands, the expectation was rather to gain booty first, until the prominent families of Richard and Robert gained their significant holdings. That these two bloodlines consolidated almost all of the conquered territory suggests that they were among a minority with the ambition to rule rather than merely reap the profits of plundering Italy. Like their Viking forebears, Italo-Norman leaders knew well the benefits of distributing their plunder equally to their immediate following, keeping a strong hold on the loyalties of their henchmen at every opportunity. Guiscard, after taking effective leadership of the Normans in the 1050s, was careful about giving equal shares of loot, "cherishing each of them [his supporters] equally and himself being cherished by all", almost certainly the incentive that led his men to acclaim him duke independently of the pope or other leaders.³⁰ It also resonates with a practice later infamous on the First Crusade, as captured booty became the property of the first to claim it.³¹

²⁹ Searle, 3

³⁰ William, II: "*Quodque capi poterat dum dividit omnibus aequae, omnes sunt cari sibi, carus et omnibus ipse.*"

³¹ Malaterra, III.27; this practice was most graphically displayed by the chroniclers of the First Crusade in the conquest of Jerusalem. See Guibert of Nogent, *Dei Gesta per Francos*, 213

The Pilgrims, the Migrants, and the Miscreants

We can reduce the sorts of Normans who came into Italy to three broad categories: those that came to Italy as pilgrims, those that emigrated in search of wealth or "adventure" unavailable in Normandy, and exiles from the duchy. In the narrative carried by the primary sources, when collated, it was pilgrimage that began the immigration, immigration that began conquest, and the coming of the exiles resulting from William II's accession that largely spelled the end of Norman arrivals to Italy.

The element of Norman piety is little discussed outside of the spectacular demonstration that was the Crusades. With few doubts, and those only in regards to Gauffredo's account, the main chronicles of the Norman takeover were written before the completion of the First Crusade.³² Amatus' record was certainly written before Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino became Pope Victor III in 1086, and William of Apulia makes reference to Pope Urban II in the preface to his work and "the Gallic race [who] wanted to open the roads to the Holy Sepulchre", which places the *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi* between the Council of Clermont and the Conquest of Jerusalem (1095-99).³³ In any case, these were all completed after Italy and Sicily were dominated by the Normans, and they are not principally concerned with the ways in which the conquerors expressed their devotion to the church, beyond the standard formulaic panegyricisms associated with "conquering heroes". The degree to which Guiscard and his contemporaries were

³² Gauffredo's chronicle ends in 1099 and makes no mention of Roger I's death in 1101 or the completion of the Crusade.

³³ William of Apulia, III: "*Gens nisi Gallorum, quae gente potentior omni viribus armorum, nutu stimulata superno, hanc libertati superato redderet hoste, quae spirante Deo sanctas aperire Sepulcri est animata vias longo iam tempore clausas.*" Urban's death on 29 July, 1099, two weeks after the conquest of Jerusalem, is not mentioned.

"pious Christians", beyond their utilization of the common practices of monastic and clerical patronage, is shrouded by their secular deeds.

In any case, pilgrimage was both a potent institution in Normandy and the means through which the first Norman contacts with southern Italy were allegedly forged. Amatus of Montecassino recorded that "before the year 1000" a group of forty Normans, returning from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, were diverted by a Muslim siege of Salerno. If the date that Amatus quoted, and Guaimar III was the Prince of Salerno at the time as he similarly attested, then this event can only have occurred in 999, the year Guaimar succeeded his father.³⁴ The Normans defeated the Muslims, and when they refused to remain and protect the city, they were encouraged to recruit their countrymen and send them to southern Italy, "the land flowing with milk and honey and so many good things".³⁵

The next mention of pilgrimage is attested by William of Apulia, in which a group of Normans on pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Michael on Monte Gargano are drawn into the rebellion of Melus against the Byzantine presence in Apulia, sometime around 1016.³⁶ Amatus does not mention pilgrimage, but the incident in which Melus is introduced in his chronicle includes the arrival of Gilbert Buatere and his fellows, including Rainulf Drengot.³⁷ There was a resonance between Mont-Saint-Michel on the westernmost frontier of Normandy and Monte Gargano, as both were consecrated to St. Michael, that appealed to the Normans, and between its proximity to Rome and the ease

³⁴ Loud 2000, 63

³⁵ Amatus I.19

³⁶ William, I: "*Ibi quendam conspicientes more virum Graeco vestitum, nomine Melum.*"

³⁷ Buatere's tale is confused, as is his relationship to Rainulf, the eventual first Norman count of Aversa in 1030.

of taking the crossing from Bari or Brindisi to the eastern Mediterranean in order to shorten the path to Jerusalem, southern Italy was a popular destination and way station for pre-Crusade pilgrimage.³⁸ It is therefore not impossible that Gilbert's exile may have led him eventually onto the route of pilgrimage before being derailed by the possibilities in Italy.

The overpopulation of Normandy that may have been responsible for much of the migration of gentrified sons, and attested to by Amatus and Malaterra, is one of the more prominent theories for the Norman emigration to Italy and hardly unreasonable. *Parage* tenure, as mentioned above, dominated much of western Normandy in the eleventh century, as opposed to the eastern parts of the duchy such as the *Pays de Caux*, in which primogeniture was generally the rule and raised its own issues of succession. This put much pressure on large families with small patrimonies such as that of the d'Hautevilles.³⁹ Not only did all the sons inherit at the sufferance of the primary heir chosen by the father, but enough of the assets had to be reserved for any daughters' dowries. This was exacerbated by the relative insularity of Normandy, as intermingling with outsiders like the Franks was not precisely encouraged to retain the trust of allies and kinsmen, not to mention the expanding power of the ducal family. *Parage* under a leading inheritor was one part of the system that created bonds of interdependence between siblings in the first century of Normandy's existence, as the heir could make effective choices in limiting undesirable kin from receiving the richer parts of the

³⁸ Loud 1996, 19

³⁹ Regarding the chroniclers' perception of Norman overpopulation, see Malaterra, I.4:9; Amatus I. For the question of primogeniture, see Loud 1996, 18

patrimony, much as William II would check his retainers' power by separating their land grants.

Exile provided some of the early leaders of the Italo-Normans, and reinforced the Norman presence in the peninsula at various times. The earliest named individuals to come to Italy were the kin-group of Rainulf Drengot, who would become the first Count of Aversa in 1030. Rainulf and his brethren arrived in Italy after one of them, Gilbert Buatere (or Osmund Drengot; the identity of the individual is not precisely clear), killed a member of Richard II's court in the duke's presence and was thereafter sent into exile, or *ullac*.⁴⁰ From Richard II to William II, exile was the preferred punishment for those that crossed the duke, because it effectively removed the offenders from sight and sidestepped any vengeance-seeking relatives (another indicator of the power of Norman kinship). Once again, the political insularity of Normandy from the Frankish kingdoms further assured that exiles would not stir up trouble down the road, and if they did there would be little support from their kinsmen if they brought with them foreign, and likely Frankish soldiers to fight for them. Exile provided Italy with several infamous people, such as the murderers of Mabel of Belleme, but also brought the renowned choir of St. Evroul to the south when Robert de Grandmesnil, its abbot, was himself exiled in 1061.⁴¹ This option, however, was a perilous one for the Italo-Normans themselves. Surrounded by hostiles, outnumbered, and without a single completely uncontested leader until the coalescence of the Kingdom of Sicily, exile or even "mercy" to upstarts could and did afflict the Norman leadership with long-term difficulties. Such castoffs could seek succor from the

⁴⁰ Searle, 167

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 188

Lombards, the Greeks, or even the German emperor or papacy and continue to agitate against their former lieges in comparable safety. This seems like a long-term weakness of Guiscard's rule, in that he allowed Abelard, son of his brother Humphrey whose land he had taken, to time and again stir rebellions in Apulia.⁴²

⁴² William of Apulia II, line 451

Chapter 2

"An Alien and Undisciplined People"

I have seen an undisciplined and alien people with incredible and unheard-of rage, rise up in every direction against the church of God with more than pagan impiety; killing Christians and afflicting many with novel and horrible tortures leading to the very expiration of their lives; sparing, with respect for the fragility of humanity, not infants, old people, or women; despoiling, burning, and tearing down the churches of the saints, recognizing no distinction between the holy and the profane.⁴³

At the core of Eleanor Searle's concept of predatory kinship and power among the Normans as it related to their distinctiveness was this formula: "the essence of being a Norman was to be a warrior (and therefore at peace only with one's allies), and to have a common leader *by choice*, to be engaged in a common enterprise, and by these things to carry the mark of a common identity, *Normannitas*."⁴⁴ From Rollo to William II, the Norman leaders used these qualities to acquire full control of Normandy and the Frankish peasants of the land, accepting only as much Frankishness as needed to negotiate with their neighbors and integrate the institutions that would secure their power in England and on the continent, most particularly the motte-and-bailey castle.⁴⁵ By the time William stood victorious on the field at Hastings, the overall construction of Norman society appeared different from the outside in that it was now an "official" polity under a legitimate and formidable central leader, but at its heart contained the same basic elements that William's predecessors had used to create his power base since the early

⁴³ Letter from Pope St. Leo IX to Emperor Constantine Monomachos (1054): "videns indisciplinatum et alienum gentem incredibili et inaudita rabie, et plusquam pagana impietate adversus Ecclesias Dei insurgere passim, Christianos trucidare, et nonnullos novis horribilibusque tormentis usque ad defectionem animae alligere, nec infanti, au seni, seu feminae fragilitati aliquo humanitatis respectu parcere, nec inter sanctum et profanum aliquam distantiam habere" The letter was written while Leo was in Norman captivity.

⁴⁴ Searle, 244

⁴⁵ R. Allen Brown, *The Normans and the Norman Conquest*, 84-85

tenth century. His fellow nobles maintained a military hold on England through a network of fortresses and demesnes, and enriched by these lands they remained loyal to the new king and his heirs, ready to offer their support in the choice of the new duke, even when this contributed to the chaos of the Anarchy. The kinship structure in Normandy stretched and tore at the seams when transplanted in Italian soil, with the result that the vicissitudes of external patronage, political and geographic fragmentation, family rivalries, and self-interest broke the momentum of the Norman takeover in Italy that otherwise might have resembled William the Conqueror's exploits in England more completely.

As far as these essential qualities were sustained, the Normans in Italy were a distinct people in many of the same ways. Their warrior ethos cannot be doubted, nor can their ability to choose their leaders, in the range of Lombard and Greek overlords they accepted before 1042 and the nobles they chose from among themselves at Melfi from that time onward until Robert Guiscard's ducal accession in 1059. This is not to say that they so easily came to common agreement on that leadership, as evident when Guiscard seized his brother Humphrey's assets after the latter's death. What was most often lacking, however, was a common enterprise. The diffusion, even attenuation of their power throughout southern Italy, the slowness of the conquest brought on by difficult terrain and political realities, and the nature of the Normans' warband-structure inhibited their consolidation for decades. The disunity of their rivals threw no great obstacle in their path. Conquest as such was not yet a plan among them, and certainly not a unifying principle. Only after the Battle of Civitate in 1053 would the Normans gain enough territory that expansion and control of the provinces became a very real possibility.

Because Normandy at its acquisition by Rollo could offer no resistance to its new masters, the slow process of gathering a ducal power base was not offset by external conflicts that could have altered its course. In Italy, by contrast, the pressures of their neighbors and the fragmented bands of Norman independents that roamed like bandits outside of the Norman-

controlled cities forced the Norman counts to constantly watch their borders as well as each other. The Norman counts in Italy had no time to do what the dukes in Normandy had done by limiting the opportunity to challenge their personal influence.

Lombard Patronage of the Normans

Until they had fully established themselves as rulers, the earliest Normans to arrive in Italy the earliest were, like the pilgrims of Salerno, engaged in military aid to the Lombard and Byzantine princes of southern Italy. This variety of patrons led to a dizzying series of conflicts, upsets, betrayals, and bargains, and certainly helped create the Norman resistance to centralization. After an unsuccessful attempt to invade Apulia under the aforementioned Melus in 1018, the Normans were scattered across southern Italy, becoming over the 1020s the means *par excellence* of enforcement in the growing disputes between the Lombard princes.⁴⁶ When Sergius IV, Duke of Naples, recovered his city from Pandulf IV of Capua, after the latter had alienated all of his other allies, he installed a force of Normans in his service in the newly-built fortress of Aversa, and gave their leader Rainulf Drengot the right to levy tribute on the prosperous district surrounding it. Norman settlement had begun.⁴⁷

Up to this point, the narrative of the Normans as compared to their ancestors in the north is very similar, in that once proved capable of alliance with the resident power of the region they were granted the ability to spread their wings to benefit their patron's interests. But Aversa, for all its wealth, was not Rouen, and Rainulf was not Rollo. Salerno, Capua, Benevento, and Montecassino each had contingents of Norman mercenaries, none of which were bound to "Count" Rainulf Drengot and all of which fought against each other in the name of their

⁴⁶ Loud 2000, 70

⁴⁷ Amatus I.42

employers as easily as they battled the forces of the Lombard princes themselves. Indeed, according to William of Apulia:

The Normans never desired any of the Lombards to win a decisive victory, in case this should be to their disadvantage. But now supporting the one, and then aiding the other, they prevented anyone being completely ruined. Gallic cunning deceived the Italians, for they allowed no one to be at the mercy of a triumphant enemy.⁴⁸

This passage cannot be taken quite at face value, written as it was well after the event and also taking place in the more amorphous stage of the Norman's ascendance. Yet it is not impossible that the Normans, at least some of whom were certainly related, would see it as advantageous to benefit over the long term from their patrons' conflicts. Securing the loyalty of Norman fighters, however, was no simple prospect. When Rainulf was invested with Aversa, the pact with Sergius was sealed with a marriage to the latter's widowed sister. Upon her death (the date of which is nowhere recorded), Rainulf turned the tables on the duke of Naples by making an alliance with Pandulf, the very man whose expulsion had secured Rainulf his *castella*.⁴⁹ The same perception of marriage relations possessed by the Normans in their homeland extended to their dealings with the native Italian peoples, meaning that such unions in no way guaranteed permanent loyalties between the Normans and their patrons. Marriage ameliorated immediate hostilities but made familial obligations possible, not a given understanding (see Chapter 1).

Despite the unsuccessful rebellion of Melus in 1018, there was no bitterness between the Byzantines and the Normans in general. Twenty years after the revolt, with the peace of Emperor Basil II after defeating the Bulgars reigning over his Empire, attention was paid again to the Muslim occupation of Sicily. Now able to send troops from Byzantium to Apulia, including a contingent of the Varangian Guard (who incidentally were commanded by the future Norwegian

⁴⁸ William of Apulia I, lines 156-161; see also Gauffredo Malaterra I.6

⁴⁹ Amatus I.42-45

king, Harold Hardrada) and the experienced general Giorgios Maniakes, the emperor made a request of the Lombard princes to supply troops to support the effort.⁵⁰ Guaimar IV of Salerno, one of the principal employers of Norman troops, sent 300 of the newcomers to join the expedition, among them the first of the Hautevilles to enter Italy, William Iron-Arm and Drogo.⁵¹ Such a force of mercenaries was impressive for the size of the city-state even if when compared to the imperial army it was relatively small. It has been theorized that Guaimar was relieving himself of some of the more troublesome and/or ambitious of the Normans.⁵²

Though promising at first, the imperial expedition to Sicily failed to secure the island, and the imperial troops withdrew. There is no sign that the Normans, despite the embellishments of the chroniclers, had any direct impact on the course of the attempt. There were longer-term Norman benefits for those who had participated in the attempted expedition to conquer Sicily, when they came into contact with a Milanese commander, Arduin, who would lead them on to the next phase of the takeover, namely the acquisition of northern Apulia.⁵³ Once this phase was over in the 1050s, the Normans would no longer need others to employ them, but would increasingly serve their own princes and interests.

Fragmentation

After the expedition to Sicily, Arduin was made a commander of the guard in the city of Melfi, and with Norman allies culled both from those that had accompanied him in Sicily and recruits from Aversa, he seized the city in 1041.⁵⁴ From Melfi the Normans expanded north and east, in the process defeating a Byzantine army hastily assembled to stop them. They moved south, and defeated a vastly larger Byzantine force near to the site near to Barletta where the

⁵⁰ Loud 2000, 78

⁵¹ Amatus II.8

⁵² Loud 2000, 77

⁵³ Amatus II.14; Gauffredo Malaterra I.8; William of Apulia I, lines 206-221

⁵⁴ Amatus II.19

Normans had been defeated in 1018. By autumn of that year they had defeated another army at Montepeloso and captured the catepan, Exaugustus. These successes led the coastal towns and cities to abandon their alliances with the Empire and make agreements with the Normans.⁵⁵

During this campaign, Arduin fell out of the chronicles mysteriously, and was replaced by Prince Atenulf of Benevento.⁵⁶ William of Apulia hints that this leadership was the result of a bribe, Atenulf having, "perhaps given them gold or silver and thus led them to renege on a prior agreement", namely the plan to choose at this stage a leader from among themselves.⁵⁷ This seems somewhat improbable, considering what occurred shortly thereafter, when after the Battle of Montepeloso Atenulf retired to Benevento without having shared the profits of ransoming captives such as the Byzantine leader, and the Normans then took Argyrus, the son of Melus, as their new leader.⁵⁸ In 1042 Argyrus abandoned the Normans in order to receive imperial patronage.⁵⁹ According to William of Apulia, the emperor bribed Argyrus to lure him back to loyalty.⁶⁰ This act was deeply resented by the Normans, some of whom had to be restrained from killing him.⁶¹ Argyrus' desertion led to at last to the Normans' election of a leader from among themselves: William "Iron-Arm" d'Hauteville, who had distinguished himself as a veteran of Sicily and in the Apulian campaign the year before.⁶² At the same time, the most prominent of the Norman leaders distributed the towns they had taken in Apulia (as is discussed earlier), asking Guaimar of Salerno to give his blessing to the arrangement to enable his support by making him the virtual "Duke of Apulia". The alliance with Salerno afforded to the Apulian Normans the

⁵⁵ William of Apulia I, lines 398-401. The towns named were Bari, Monopoli, and Giovenazzo; the *Annales Barenses* added the town of Motera.

⁵⁶ William of Apulia I, line 324; Amatus II.27

⁵⁷ William of Apulia I, lines 317-318. "quos forsitan ipse vel aurum dando vel argentum, pacti mutare prioris compulerat votum"

⁵⁸ William of Apulia I, lines 414-440; Argyrus was the son of the same Melus whose rebellion against the Byzantines of Apulia with Norman support was crushed in 1018, and whose contact with the Normans may have played its part in beginning the series of events leading to the Norman takeover.

⁵⁹ William of Apulia II, lines 38 - 56

⁶⁰ William of Apulia II, lines 57 - 66

⁶¹ Amatus II.28

⁶² Loud 2000, 95

same legitimization that Rainulf had enjoyed under the overlordship of Capua. Within a generation, both of these Lombard principalities would be ruled by the Normans who had formerly served them - that is the Norman leaders Richard I in Capua and Robert Guiscard in Salerno.

Thus, at the end of 1042, there were two primary areas existing in southern Italy that were Norman-controlled: the first was area of the Campania under Rainulf's control, and the second the Apulian towns with William Iron-Arm as the "first among equals" among them; both Rainulf and William accepted a form of overlordship from Lombard princes, with Rainulf acting under the auspices of his personal arrangement with Pandulf IV of Capua and the general Norman agreement with Guaimar IV. Melfi was held in common among the Apulians, as the principal stronghold where they could meet and collaborate.⁶³ This arrangement would frame the political situation into the time of Duke Robert Guiscard's rule of Apulia.

Family

One of the most exceptional details regarding the Norman takeover was the prominence of the scions of the Hauteville family. Out of the fourteen known children of Tancred of Hauteville in Normandy, eight sons and one daughter were involved directly with the conquest. Three of his sons, William Iron-Arm, Drogo, and Humphrey, succeeded each other as Count of Apulia, the *de facto* position of leadership of the Apulian Normans established after 1042. It was this position that would be Robert Guiscard's after Humphrey's death in 1057. Robert, a younger half-brother of Humphrey, took this position over the head of Humphrey's son Abelard (who would thereafter be an enemy of Guiscard). Geoffrey, the last of Robert's elder half-brothers to arrive in the Mezzogiorno, arrived late with Robert's brothers Mauger and William (of the Principate), and thus was not in a position to challenge Guiscard's position, nor did he seem

⁶³ Loud 2000, 98

inclined to do so.⁶⁴ Mauger and William were granted or inherited lands from Humphrey before his death, the former's lands passing on to Geoffrey later, while William of the Principate's lands becoming a minor patrimonial realm until the consolidation of the duchy later in the century. Roger, the future Count of Sicily and father of King Roger II of Sicily, arrived last and became an important fixture of the later parts of the Calabrian and Sicilian campaigns, possessing much of the same charisma and talent as his older brother. Finally, Tancred's daughter Fressenda was married to Richard of Aversa in the early 1050s, easing tensions between Richard and the Apulians.⁶⁵ From the comfortable perspective of the historian, the almost preternatural success of this single family, of little outward influence in their homeland, is impressive. Even if only Robert and Roger (and their sons) cast long shadows over the future of southern Italy, all of them contributed very significantly to the overall effort. Often, they at least superficially supported one another, if only to maintain a hegemony over the other Apulian Norman camps; just as often, they were impediments to each other.

In the previous chapter, the Norman methods of limiting disputes between sons were outlined. Obviously, as conquerors, the Normans in Italy did not have the same opportunity to manage such accommodations, particularly with so many of the same family and generation participating at such a high level in politics and war. Thus, though William Iron-Arm, Drogo, and Humphrey, as the senior d'Hautevilles in the peninsula, were brought up together and maintained what appears to be an amicable relationship, they seem to have held their younger siblings under suspicion.⁶⁶ The sources, particularly Malaterra and William of Apulia, make clear that the brothers did not enjoy a completely smooth relationship between each other. Robert, of course, seems to have been at the center of such suspicions, and the elder brothers were not alone in

⁶⁴ Norwich, John Julius. *The Normans in the South 1016-1130* (1967). pp 115-117

⁶⁵ Amatus II.45

⁶⁶ The brothers' training and upbringing are mentioned by Gauffredo Malaterra, I.4, and can be assumed to be that which was standard for a *conroi*.

treading lightly around Robert's apparent ambition and cunning. William of the Principate and Roger both were sometimes at odds with Robert, separately and at times conjointly but it was particularly Roger who could be problematic for Robert, as he virtually repeated the meteoric rise of his elder brother in his own subjugation of Sicily. The building blocks of Norman practices of kinship remained, but the political situation in Italy was often dictated more by the relations with the non-Normans than the internal dynamic, for the fact remains that the talented d'Hautevilles remained at the top of the political pile, able to maneuver around each other's stratagems as readily as their outside opponents. Despite the tumults, there is no evidence that any of the prominent Norman leaders were ever involved in the deaths of any of the others, though the chroniclers' venom was monolithically turned against the Lombards and Greeks and thus it is not impossible that such could have happened.

Robert Guiscard's marriages and issue followed a familiar pattern of Norman manipulation, and are notable for their eventual impact. His first wife, Alberada of Buonalbergo, brought with her a substantial number of knights (200) and her nephew Gerard, who had made the marriage in the first place and remained, to the end, an unshakable ally of Guiscard.⁶⁷ With them, the then all-but impoverished Robert had the resources to surge forward in subjugating Calabria.⁶⁸ Alberada was the mother of Bohemund of Taranto, later Prince of Antioch. The association with Gerard had a further salutary effect, namely that Gerard never once rebelled against Guiscard, even after his aunt was repudiated and Robert married Sichelgaita of Salerno. The reason for this repudiation, that Robert and his wife were within a forbidden level of consanguinity, is often cited as a political excuse, given that Sichelgaita was the daughter of Guaimar IV, Prince of Salerno and not the aunt of a minor though seemingly devoted lesser

⁶⁷ Loud 2000, 113

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 114

lord.⁶⁹ Sichelgaita brought much greater prestige along with whatever dowry Guaimar awarded as part of the *morgengab*, the Lombard custom of marriage price, cementing Robert's legitimacy when he captured Salerno in 1077.⁷⁰ Robert's second marriage, in this regard, gave him the highest-ranked Italian wife to date among the Normans.

It is not impossible that Guiscard and Alberada were in fact related, though the primary obscurity is the lack of information regarding Robert's mother Fressenda. Given the substantial changes between his first marriage in 1051 and the second in 1058, when Robert passed from virtual rags to very real riches and was on the cusp of being acknowledged as Duke of Apulia/Calabria, it would seem more likely that Robert was aware of his future prospects and married Sichelgaita to open a way to the Salernitan throne, with any consanguinity merely a convenient and by no means particularly dishonorable excuse to divorce Alberada.⁷¹

It is also possible to see Robert taking thought to the future of his children. Bohemund, as the offspring of Alberada, was disenfranchised by the first of Sichelgaita's sons, Roger Borsa, despite his seniority and close working relationship with their father. Bohemund was Robert's right hand during his invasion of the Balkans, earning renown and experience that would translate to his great eminence in the First Crusade, but he was not his father's heir. This echoed the acts of the dukes of the north in limiting the squabbles of their sons, Bohemund inheriting only that which had been taken from Byzantium by his own arms, and possibly the dream of conquering and ruling Constantinople that Guiscard apparently had for him. Had these Adriatic possessions not fallen back under Greek control so quickly, it is likely enough that Bohemund and his half-brother may not have fallen to fighting each other so readily. In the same way, Guiscard may well have desired his ultimate heir to benefit from his half-brother's great experience, and for the latter

⁶⁹ Loud 2000, 128

⁷⁰ Drell 1999, 202

⁷¹ Loud 2000, 127

to support Roger's realm in the knowledge that he had the skill to secure his own great patrimony without encroaching on his father's patrimonial wishes.

Guiscard's intent may have been to place his central power base, southern Italy, in the hands of the child with the most significant political lineage, and place his long-term plans with the one most adequate to carry them out, namely Bohemund. The choice is just that, an informed decision as to the question of succession reflecting the practical concerns of subduing a long-rebellious power base in Italy and the continuance of Robert's imperial aims, with an eye toward keeping both goals separate and unable to interfere with each other. But by this time, the element of choice had fallen upon the duke himself, and no longer demanded the approval of the counts and supporters whose loyalty was now assured, if at all, only by their own self-interest.

Topography, Environment, and Geographical Fragmentation in Southern Italy

Though agriculturally rich, southern Italy presented several environmental challenges to the Italo-Normans, and other factors beyond the political realities affected fragmentation in southern Italy. In northern France, the Normans had the virtue of controlling traffic along the Seine and the harbors at its mouth; furthermore, the Normans there began as a seafaring people with contacts throughout the northern seas and with the various Viking realms and entrepôts on every shore. Normandy was also a relatively flat and open territory. By contrast, there was no particular area in Italy that could command such a political, economic, or military advantage, and in the Mediterranean they had no close contacts with familiar cultures. Aside from the port cities, no target for conquest could offer a region-wide benefit. The rich and desirable settlements lay on the coastlines, forcing the Normans to adopt naval warfare and trade in order to seize these towns and cities. This took them some time to adapt to and left them vulnerable to the stronger maritime powers such as Venice and the Byzantine navy, as would be evident with Robert's invasion of the Balkans. Though descended from Vikings, the Normans were no longer accustomed to such

warfare, which in any case differed in the Mediterranean as compared to northern waters where their forebears raided, especially because they became actual settlers and lords, not merely raiders and traders.

This lack of natural features that would facilitate domination was only partially compensated by the *incastellamento*, or the fortifying of villages for the sake of holding off raids by Muslims, bandits, and the Normans. *Incastellamento* that became an iconic characteristic of the Norman period in Italy, though these forts only provided for the immediate defense of a settlement in and of themselves, not territorial superiority except when they were built in great numbers. In the 1040s, Abbot Richer of Montecassino constructed 20 *castella* on the *Terra Sancti Benedicti*, rendering the great monastery largely protected from Norman incursions thereafter, but this was a concentration of fortifications defending an area roughly 800 km², with the *castella* rarely more than 5 km apart and thus easily able to reinforce one another.⁷² The traditional protection of Montecassino by the princes of Capua or Salerno also gave it some insulation from the primary Norman leaders and their armies, until the monastery began to gain favor with them under Abbot Desiderius. Few if any other areas in southern Italy could boast of protection anywhere near this scale.

The lack of terrain that would enable local or even regional dominance also robbed the Italo-Normans of a primary building block of their forebears' power base in Normandy: they were in no position to put direct pressure on trade. Italy's narrow geographical profile, politically fractured nature, and the fact that the political boundaries were not defined specifically by geography offered no chance for the Normans to take control of traffic. The marshes of Apulia, the mountains of the Apennino Meridionale, and the lack of great navigable rivers further broke up potential routes of transport to exploit. On the other hand, while the terrain was difficult to

⁷² Loud, Graham. "The Liri Valley in the Middle Ages". *Montecassino and Benevento in the Middle Ages* (2000). I.7-19

surmount, it did allow them greater ease in taking over settlements, as most were not in a position to be reinforced by neighbors quickly enough to stymie the Normans' own attempts at fortification. This situation cannot be completely dismissed in light of the modern impoverishment of the *Mezzogiorno* and its lack of influence in Italian politics today, which persist despite technological and developmental advances.

The grant of Aversa in 1030, along with the seizure of Melfi by the Normans in 1041, established the two main centers of Norman control that would exist until the full consolidation of Norman power under Roger II of Sicily in 1130. The other townships in southern Italy, as divided among the primary Norman leaders in 1042 found it most advantageous to align themselves either with the Aversan count or the Hautevilles, at first. This alignment altered the landscape of the kin-group alliances available to each center of power. The Apennines cleanly divide the Campania from Apulia, without the fertile plains of both provinces abutting each other and thus leaving the agricultural cornerstone of wealth unthreatened by each party. Though the mountains were ultimately no real hindrance to Robert's takeover of rugged Calabria, he and Richard of Aversa could contentedly conduct their own conquests without fear of interference from each other. Richard had his eyes set upon Capua, and eventually the southern portions of the Patrimony of Saint Peter, all well away from the main areas of interest to the Hautevilles, namely Calabria and later Sicily.

Related to this political separation was the geographical impact on the takeover itself. Normandy was generally flat, bounded by ocean on the north and by the hills of modern day Manche in the south, with little in between. The tectonically shifting landscape of the Italian peninsula was completely different. Areas such as the Calabrian lowlands were malarial and unhealthy and forced Guiscard's migration from one *castrum* to another in the early stages of his

rise to power to preserve his limited following.⁷³ The various uprisings that occurred both before and after southern Italy achieved its official ducal status in 1059 were helped by the fact that Norman garrisons meant to hold conquered towns could not be reinforced quickly in the mountains from the already-limited pool of soldiers available to the Normans (though this also isolated such communities from each other, as mentioned previously).⁷⁴ Over the course of his reign, Robert Guiscard resorted to concessions as often as naked force to avoid stretching himself too thin.

What this means is that the Italo-Normans had no single advantageous position which could offer unassailable security and control on a regional scale. Normandy's initial strength and long-term prospects rested very solidly on the control of Rouen, which commanded the Seine and placed pressure on the Ile de France. No such place existed in southern Italy. Its narrow profile and numerous ports, though rich and worth conquering, had to be taken piecemeal and secured bit by bit as the takeover crawled along.

Advantages of Self-Interest and Gain

Despite political and topographical pressures, the Normans in Italy had a number of advantages in their conquest. There is one unequivocal fact about the Norman incursion: the northmen found in southern Italy a land of fantastic wealth, and by virtue of its political divisiveness these riches could be exploited and taken virtually at will. The *Mezzogiorno* was agriculturally very rich, and with important ports such as Bari and its proximity to Sicily, despite the latter's Muslim orientation until Roger's conquest, the provinces of Apulia and Calabria and their neighbors enjoyed the fruits of Mediterranean trade.⁷⁵ This, if anything, encouraged the

⁷³ Gauffredo Malaterra I.16

⁷⁴ William of Apulia III, lines 539-687

⁷⁵ Loud, Graham. "Coinage, Wealth, and Plunder in the Age of Robert Guiscard." *The English Historical Review* (1999).

Normans to entrench themselves in the face of indigenous aggression, and to ignore the more important princes' attempts to consolidate their fellows.

Gauffredo Malaterra and William of Apulia both attest to the economic desires of the Normans, even while attempting to cast this in the best possible light for their patrons. Malaterra in particular attests: "They [the sons of Tancred] were unable to put up with anybody in their vicinity holding lands and possessions without being envious and immediately seizing these by force".⁷⁶ The statement certainly extended to the Normans as a general rule, but in the case of the Hautevilles it also included each other's assets. A case in point is seen the beginning of the Guiscard's career. Upon his arrival in the Mezzogiorno, Robert approached his brother Drogo, the successor of William Iron-Arm as count of Apulia, with the expectation of receiving an estate of his own. Instead, Robert was dispatched to a minor fortress in the marshes of Calabria (Scribla), and forced to support himself and his few followers through brigandry and pillage until he had forged his own independence; Drogo's meager offering of Scribla is portrayed as the action of a miser.⁷⁷ This sort of act was then repeated once Roger d'Hauteville joined in the Norman conquest, as Robert, "fearing that his brother might rise up against him, [he] wanted to force him through poverty to be content to remain with only a small following under his wing".⁷⁸ Robert and Roger, the ultimate "winners" of the Norman takeover in creating first the Duchy of Apulia and then the Kingdom of Sicily, had a great deal to gain. But each was forced into direct competition with each other and their family.

This was a common characteristic of the Norman conquest. Though the Normans could be united temporarily with a strong enough inducement, such as a hostile papal army, they were independently seeking their fortunes in the Mezzogiorno and nearly always put their own goals

⁷⁶ Malaterra II.38 "neminem terras vel possessiones habentes ex proximo sibi absque aemulatione habere paterentur, quin vel ab ipsis confestim subiecti deservirentur, vel certe ipsi omnia in sua virtute potirentur"; William of Apulia I, lines 140-144

⁷⁷ Amatus III.7; Gauffredo Malaterra I.16

⁷⁸ Malaterra I.23; "unde, et ne contra se insolesceret metuebat, et, ut paucis contentus secum moraretur, penuria cogere volebat"

before all other conditions. The mechanism of choice in Norman leadership did not function so well in Italy without a clear authority that possessed a singular advantage over his peers, one that could ensure through previous tending of relationships that his supporters would rally behind his selected heir. At Normandy's inception, for example, Rollo was selected by a particularly strong warband in control of the critical location of Rouen, granting him a powerful base of resources with which he and his successors could build a "state".⁷⁹ He was only one among many chieftains in the land, but one with a decided edge over the others. By contrast, the Norman warbands of Italy were more divided. On the one hand, as mercenaries, they had numerous princes to choose from as patrons. And if there were no familial ties from their homeland there was no particular reason to choose a Norman employer, once they became available, over the more settled Lombard or Greek rulers. On the other hand, the apportioning of land during the conquest in 1042 (among the leading Norman princes) also created centers that rapidly clustered around the two great camps in Apulia and the Campania. Although they would be less inclined overall to contend with each other than with non-Norman polities through the rest of the century, while the Byzantine and Lombard princes remained strong enough to defend their holdings from being added to the Normans' assets this attenuation of Norman strength told against any consolidation.

⁷⁹ Searle, Chapter 7

Chapter 3

A Norman Realm

A monk of the monastery of St. Lupus, which is within the city of Benevento, remained in church after Matins to say his prayers. Suddenly he fell asleep. Then in a vision he saw two fields filled with people. One of the fields was very large and the other was smaller. The monk greatly wondered at this and asked himself from whence came such a great multitude. Then one person from the multitude came forth and said to him: "These are the people whom the majesty of God has placed under Robert Guiscard, and the larger field contains the people who are to be his subjects but as yet are not his subjects."⁸⁰

With the apportionment of authority in the early 1040s, the Normans continued to act largely as agents for the Lombard princes, their own towns functioning as fortified *castella* to fall back upon. The deaths of Rainulf of Aversa and William Iron-Arm in 1045 caused a great deal of internal politicking for the rest of the decade and into the 1050s, when at last Richard Drengot took over the rule of the Campanian Normans after being released from Drogo d'Hauteville's confinement and marrying his sister Fressenda. In this period of chaos, the more independently-minded Normans increased their ravages, particularly around Benevento and Montecassino.⁸¹

The official status of the Norman lords in southern Italy was vague, mostly because of the overlapping and contentious authorities claimed between the Lombard princes and the two emperors. Because of this, the titles that they assumed rested on their ability to resist any challenges to it, or failing that to gain the acceptance of a "higher" authority, such as an emperor or the pope, and thus be legitimized. For much of the 1040s and into the 1050s the Norman

⁸⁰ Amatus V.2 'Un moine de monastier de Saint-Lope, loquel monastier est dedens la cite de Bonivent, puiz matutines remest en l'eglize pour dire orations. Et subitement s'endormi, et vit en avision dui camp plein de pueple, de liquel camp l'un paroit moult grant et l'autre menor. Et moult s'emerveilla lo moine, et demanda en soi-meisnes dont estoit tant de pueple. Alore vint un a lui, et lui dist: "Ceste gent sont cil que la majeste de Dieu a subjette a Robert Viscart; et cest plus grant camp est de la gent qui a lui doivent etre subjette, mes encore non lui est subjette".'

⁸¹ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, ed. H. Hoffmann (*Monumenta Germaniae Historia* SS 34) II.71, p. 309

leaders were striving to assert proper, recognized authority.

The first case of this occurred in 1046, when Emperor Henry III came to southern Italy to sort out the claims of the Lombards. He stripped Guaimar of Salerno of his pretended title to Apulia and Capua, and reinstated the exiled Capuan prince Pandulf IV. At the same time, he confirmed the possessions of Rainulf II of Aversa (the nephew of Rainulf I and short-lived successor of his cousin Asclettin) and Drogo, making them official "counts" and altering the balance of power in the region.⁸² In effect, Norman demesnes were sanctioned as independent entities, as long as presumably they did not ruffle the feathers of the Holy Roman Emperor when the latter might make a foray into his Italian lands. At the same time Salerno's advantage, forged by his alliance with the Normans, waned and left Guaimar vulnerable to the growing encroachment of his newly-minted comital neighbors.

The Battle of Civitate

The real turning point to the Norman "invasion" and search for this legitimacy was the one and only time that the various powers so disturbed by their presence united and tried to eject the Normans forcibly from the peninsula. At the head of this coalition was Pope St. Leo IX, who succeeded to the Throne of St. Peter in 1048, when the Norman presence was beginning to reach its height. The pope, alarmed at the Normans' growing power and responding to a Byzantine call to move against them, perhaps in the hopes of alleviating the escalating rift between the Eastern and Western Church, elected to act.⁸³

Up to this point, while the Normans had succeeded in taking control of much of northern Apulia, and were making headway in Calabria and the Campania, they were not truly masters on par with the older princes. Most of their acquisitions had come through service to their Lombard

⁸² Amatus III.1-3

⁸³ Loud 2000, 118. Argyrus (mentioned below) returned from Constantinople as the new catepan in Apulia and immediately opened a dialogue with the pope for a joint effort against the Normans.

and Greek patrons, and though desirable had not been taken solely on personal initiative. The 1040s brought an influx of Norman blood, namely those displaced by Duke William's efforts to bring order and shore up his authority in the duchy after Robert the Magnificent's death while on pilgrimage in 1035, but alongside these exiles also came the most significant of the adventurers seeking opportunity in the wake of the initial takeover, namely the younger d'Hautevilles.

In 1053, Pope Leo assembled a combined force of Beneventan, Fermese, Capuan, and Swabian soldiers (these last brought from Worms after an unsuccessful bid for sterner aid from Henry III) in an attempt to shove the Normans out of Italy once and for all.⁸⁴ Added to this coalition, the Byzantine catepan Argyrus, former patron and employer of Norman mercenaries, began to march north from Apulia with a Greek army to come to help of the papal forces. In the face of this threat, even the stubborn and rapacious Norman warbands that were responsible for much of the enmity behind this warfare were forced to band together with the Norman princes among them that they had largely ignored to defend themselves from Leo's forces.

The battle also signaled the beginning of the end for the Normans' intransigence with their own nobles as well as their neighbors. In many ways, the anti-Norman coalition was formed because of the rapacity of the Norman warbands that refused to submit to the various nobles among their people, which conversely forced them all to work together when the threat emerged. The fortification of the *Terra Sancti Benedicti* had come about precisely because of attacks by these Normans.⁸⁵ The counts of the various conquered cities had no great leverage to bargain with the more independent leaders, who could terrorize the more remote communities not under firm control with impunity. This event allowed the principal contenders for control of Apulia, Peter and Walter (the 'sons of Amicus', who were also distaff relations of the d'Hautevilles), Richard of

⁸⁴ William of Apulia II, lines 149-176

⁸⁵ Amatus III.16

Aversa from the Campania, and Robert Guiscard from Calabria (likely still on shaky terms with his brother Humphrey, after the disagreement implied in Gauffredo Malaterra's account over Robert's marriage to Alberada of Buonalbergo) to sweep up these groups and join the Apulian Normans to meet the pope's army, creating for the first time a consolidated Norman army.⁸⁶

Humphrey, Richard, and Robert commanded the Norman army, estimated at 3,000 cavalry with 500 infantry vs. 6,000 mixed mounted and dismounted aggressors on the side of Leo.⁸⁷ The Normans were hardly eager to battle this force, but their attempts to reach an accord failed and, with what might be called typical Norman boldness, they attacked the papal army before they were forced off the battlefield by lack of surprise. Another factor weighing on the Normans was the approach of the Apulian Greek forces under Argyrus, which to head off they had met the papal host at Civitate in the first place. What took place was one of the most decisive battles of the age, with the Normans victorious after a vicious and difficult struggle, and as a result the pope was in their hands.⁸⁸ This victory bought the Normans a long reprieve from further entanglements, as Leo was not long for the world and any hopes of German or Byzantine involvement disintegrated with both emperors fully invested in propping up their final years of rule.

The Battle of Civitate was in many ways end of one era and the beginning of another in the Italian chapter of the Norman expansion, but like all chapters in history it was not a clean transition. It effectively ended all attempts to eject the newcomers from the peninsula, but it did not further legitimize their extant holdings, which rested on the vicissitudes of the German emperor's position.⁸⁹ It did signal that the Normans were not to be trifled with, and that even

⁸⁶ Malaterra I.14; Loud 2000, 119

⁸⁷ William of Apulia II, lines 82 - 266; Amatus III.39 - 41

⁸⁸ Pope Leo's captivity lasted nine months in Benevento, and the Normans are recorded as being honorable in their treatment of the pontiff, however favorable the terms that they imposed on Leo. He would die in Rome a month after being escorted back to the Eternal City by his captors.

⁸⁹ As Henry III was only a few years away from death, and Henry IV a mere child and bound for a struggle to ascend to his throne, the stability of the emperor's support was hardly trustworthy.

determined and inveterate soldiers (something the Normans' foes for the most part lacked) were not going to easily dislodge them. Even so, the Norman position remained a tenuous one, balanced precariously between the array of external foes and internal desire for further expansion.

It was the period between Civitate and the investment of Robert Guiscard by Pope Nicholas II that the greatest alterations to the Normans' internal arrangements as a culture occurred, when Robert and Richard of Aversa became, for all intents and purposes, the overlords of the Norman encroachment, the independence of other Norman bands was effectively ended, and the relationship between the Normans and their neighbors became more genuinely "state-like".⁹⁰ By this time, however, the "invasion" no longer resembled the creation of Normandy any more than it did the conquest of England. As with William II's conquest, however, the Italo-Normans still maintained recognizable links with the ideology that forged their homeland that they continued to use, in an adapted form, to create their realms in Italy. In Normandy, the mechanism of choice was of monumental importance to the ducal line in its formative period, the chieftains giving authority to the Rouennais warleaders in exchange for their support locally to defend or recognize the claims of such followers. In this way the cycle, once begun, quickly became self-sustaining as it caused the dukes to accrue more and more influence from the original grant of land from Charles the Simple to the eventual extent of the duchy. In Italy, this apparatus was plotted along a more rugged path, lacking a focal point into which all the *comites* and warleaders' hopes could be poured into.

A New Regime

After Civitate, not only were the Normans effectively militarily insuperable, but they were given a substantial window of opportunity to expand. Leo IX died in 1054 after his captivity and reinstatement by the Normans, the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Monomachos died in

⁹⁰ Loud 2000, 130 - 132

1055, and the Holy Roman Emperor Henry III passed in 1056. These deaths created substantial confusion in their respective spheres, and southern Italy was left alone. In the meantime, while progress remained slow, the Normans began to redefine themselves as territorial lords.

The most significant part of this change was the difference in the Normans' relationship with Salerno. Previously ally and overlord of both the Campanian and the Apulian Normans, Guaimar of Salerno had overreached himself in trying to make bids on Capua and Apulia, and his principality was beginning to collapse internally.⁹¹ When Amalfi rebelled against his authority, Guaimar was unable to pay for the support of the Norman princes to end the rebellion. This was exacerbated by increasing demands for "tribute" from the Normans from their own towns and their allies, demands that echoed "customary gifts" that both Richard of Aversa and Humphrey d'Hauteville were used to receiving from Guaimar when his relatives squabbled over his patrimony.⁹² When these were refused, they began to infringe on Salernitan holdings, aided by the newly-arrived William d'Hauteville (William of the Principate). It is possible at this point that Humphrey was attempting to bud a new Norman principality for his brother, now that the existing possessions of the Apulians were profitable enough to share.⁹³

At this point, Robert Guiscard began making true advances toward his eventual ducal status, which meant an abandonment of some of the principles that bound his people together. The death of Humphrey in 1057 gave Guiscard the opportunity to become the overall leader of the Apulians, over the head of Humphrey's son Abelard. This act was the first to signal the sea-change in the Normans' internal relations, as Robert Guiscard would be plagued by Abelard's rebellions for the rest of his career while doing nothing to curb his nephew's designs, restoring Abelard from exile the first time and giving him lands, and until 1080 apparently unwilling to

⁹¹ Guaimar IV, Prince of Salerno and a relatively steady supporter of the Normans, died in 1052, leaving a province weakened by his claims over Apulia with the d'Hautevilles' acceptance and a long-standing conflict with Capua. His brother Guido contested the inheritance of Gisulf II, Guaimar's son, and the Normans demanded much from either party when approached for help to secure any claims.

⁹² Amatus III.28, 30, 33, and 35

⁹³ Loud 2000, 122

punish him again.⁹⁴ This also extended to Abelard's conspirators, leading to the question of whether Robert was showing untoward lenience to the rebels out of a sense of lordly or familial magnanimity or from the same sense of attempting to rein in possible reprisals from the conspirators' kinsmen that was exercised by the dukes of Normandy. But though it is difficult to assess in the end due to the paucity of information, it would seem likely that such displays of restraint, whether or not they came from compassion or political generosity, were not appropriate to a fresh regime still establishing itself.

The immediate result of Robert's takeover of Humphrey's lands was a call to arms in late 1057, when Robert marshaled not only the military strength he possessed from his own territory and that of Humphrey, but the rest of the Apulian Normans, to strike deep into the south of Calabria, to Squillace and around the "toe" of the peninsula to Reggio. This was made possible with the inducement of substantial booty to be gained. While unable to secure Reggio, Guiscard's expedition was otherwise largely successful, granting him more of a hold on the Apulians' loyalties. In addition he had his brother Roger, also new to the peninsula and spoiling just as Robert was for a realm of his own, and the resulting competition led to a disagreement over the disposition of Calabria between them. While the reason for this friction is that, "He [Robert] acted in an ill-advised manner towards him [Roger], and while generous to others began to be stingier with him than was proper," is reasonable to assume up to a certain point given the apparent suspicions Robert's elder brother's held for him, the truth may be more complex.⁹⁵ As with Drogo d'Hauteville's seeming miserliness with Robert upon the latter's arrival in Italy, Robert may simply not have had the ability to endow his brother with any new lands and troops. The pattern of seizing a town or fort and ravage the region surrounding it to force nearby towns to pay tribute,

⁹⁴ Loud 2000, 239

⁹⁵ Malaterra I.23. "Ille vero, pravorum consilio usus versus eum, cum caeteris largus esset, illi strictior quam oportebat esse coepit."

required him to spread his already limited forces between numerous garrisons, resources that even his growing power could not afford to pass along.

The year 1059 effectively created Robert Guiscard as the Duke of Apulia and Calabria, and by this time his conquest, as far as it could be considered such, was virtually complete.⁹⁶ Reggio and Squillace surrendered not long afterward, but southern Apulia remained in the tenuous possession of the Byzantine Empire. Over the next twelve years, culminating in the sack of Bari in 1071, Robert would finally end any form of Greek political domination on the peninsula. In terms of religion, while it is effectively true that the Greek Rite was no longer practiced in Italy (though it would continue in Sicily) some towns and bishoprics successfully retained Eastern clergy as conditions for their peaceful surrender to the Normans.⁹⁷ This form of subjection alleviated the need for Norman garrisons, as long as they rendered tribute to Guiscard and acknowledged his rule.

This level of conquest, capped by the more or less simultaneous takeovers of Capua by Richard of Aversa and Salerno by Robert Guiscard, ended the period in which collective leadership still applied. First, of course, all of the elder d'Hautevilles were dead, as well as most of the Norman counts that divided up the spoils of 1042. Richard I, though not without Norman rivals, was unhindered by large-scale rebellions like those Robert suffered, in part because Richard had a smaller ring of kin-group relationships and a much smaller territory. Apulia/Calabria was too expansive and rugged for Guiscard to exercise complete control while he lived, which made his rule and that of his successor Roger Borsa turbulent and wracked with rebellion.

⁹⁶ Loud 2000, 130

⁹⁷ Ibid., 132

Conclusions

When Robert Guiscard became "by the grace of God and St. Peter Duke of Apulia and Calabria, and in future, with the help of both, of Sicily", he achieved a genuine, though not uncontested, chairmanship over the Norman nobility that translated into genuine power over nearly all of southern Italy.⁹⁸ This would lead to his eventual attempt to topple Byzantium by invading the Balkans, which though successful in the short-term never achieved its goal, neither before Guiscard's death nor in the career of his equally powerful and clever son Bohemund.

His leadership did not achieve, as it did among the dukes in Normandy, an invincible Norman culture bloc distinct from other groups. What was built upon the old principles of family power-brokering created their authority, but the Hautevilles and their contemporaries could not ignore the need to include non-Normans into the segmental family structure that built into the network of kinships that brought them to power. The adaptability brought on by this recognition of the practical concerns of power-building allowed the Normans to successfully conquer but not remain wholly separate from their former patrons and neighbors for long.

The original Normans had the benefit of immigrating to a largely unoccupied land, and had every reason to exclude outsiders. The Italo-Normans, though they could not avoid the fact that their land of opportunity was inhabited, nevertheless they could put distance between themselves and others by acting in their mercenary capacity. This offered the benefits that they had a power structure that they could manipulate once they were entrenched in the politics through working for their various patrons.

⁹⁸ *Le Liber Censum de L'Eglise Romaine*, ed. P. Fabre (1905), i, pp. 421 - 422; trans. Graham A. Loud

The importance of understanding the means by which the Normans obtained power in southern Italy is to map out the far-reaching impact of their expansion from their homeland. The military prowess of the Normans helped redefine the medieval battlefield, leading to the dominance of heavy cavalry and the chivalric ideal that remained strong into the modern age. In England, they created the basis for a lasting nation; in Italy and Sicily, they created a buffer between Byzantine Greece and Latin Rome and between Muslim North Africa and Europe, and facilitated the exchange of crusaders and the ideas they brought from the Levant to the West. The key to their success was not just their effective, ruthless, and creative leadership, it was also due to their ability to manage familial relations to manipulate the political climate to their advantage. They created kinship ties with other rulers and subordinate leaders to forge bonds of loyalty and reciprocal strength, and hedged out competition within their own families by redirecting or otherwise eliminating the power bases of their rivals. These measures required more than just a clever mind for politics and the opportunity to take them, they also required time, finesse, and a lack of external upsets to groom properly.

Without a single concentrated area for one particular group of Normans to rise above the others and take control, without great numbers on their side, and without a stable territory that was not under constant external threat, the Normans could only expand in an incremental fashion. Bit by bit, they forged on the individual level the relationships they needed to survive, and only through the vagaries that accompanied the decisions of individuals such as Robert Guiscard were they able to turn from being independent warbands into a genuine polity. The problems that the macrosegment of this polity never disappeared, undermining the ability of the Normans to maintain any cohesiveness and broad loyalty without significant inducements of riches or the uncontested strength of their lords.

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