

Book II

If one seeks to find out those things which occurred in Apulia and Calabria, these have in part, even if not completely, been set down. We shall now turn to describing what took place in Sicily, once again seeming to make a digression, but recording matters in the same style. For you should know that everything is written down in its right place, depending on when it happened, so that the proper sequence of events is recorded and something which occurred first is described before the events which then came subsequently.

For when Count Roger first left to wage war in Sicily he did not desert what he had in Calabria, but when circumstances there were unfavourable he left his army in Sicily and meanwhile returned to look after his affairs [on the mainland]. Indeed he brought help on many occasions to the duke his brother, or undoubtedly gave him advice on weighty and difficult matters when he went to Apulia, as a mighty knight [*strenuus miles*] and man of sound judgement should.

(1) While he was staying at Reggio with his brother the duke, that most distinguished young man Count Roger of Calabria heard that Sicily was in the hands of the unbelievers. Seeing it from close at hand with only a short stretch of sea lying in between, he was seized by the desire to capture it, for he was always eager for conquest. He perceived two means by which he would profit, one for his soul and the other for his material benefit, if he brought back to Divine worship a country given over to idolatry, and if he himself possessed the temporal fruits and income from this land, thus spending in the service of God things which had been unjustly stolen by a people who knew Him not.

Turning these matters over in his mind, he hurried to put his intentions into practice. With just sixty knights he took ship upon that short but most dangerous stretch of sea between Scylla and Charybdis, transported his force of troops across it and set off to reconnoitre Sicily. Near the harbour where they landed is a populous city, which takes its name from the word *messe*, because that portion of the crops [*messes*] of the whole region which was in antiquity paid to the Romans as tribute used to be collected there. The citizens

of that town, of whom there were a huge number, were very angry when they realised that their enemies had invaded their territory, and in particular because they saw how few they were. They hurried from the city gates as fast as they could and went out to engage them. The count, who was most cunning and experienced in battle, at first feigned fear. Then after he had led them some way from the city he attacked, charging them savagely, and put them to flight. Cutting down the stragglers, his fearsome and threatening gaze pursued the fugitives all the long way back to the city gate. Taking the equipment and horses which they had abandoned, he boarded his ships and returned to his brother the duke at Reggio.

(2) Duke Robert and his brother Count Roger returned to Apulia to winter in that region. He had been gone from there for quite some time, and as a result when he returned he found that nearly everyone had been plundering his property which was [in consequence] in great disorder. He spent the whole winter carefully restoring and refurnishing it back to its original state. The princes of Apulia rejoiced in his new ducal title. He gave gifts to many people, warning them that he would be launching an expedition against Sicily that next summer.

(3) Count Roger left the duke in Apulia and returned to Reggio in the week before Lent. There he was approached by Betumen [*Ibn-Thimna*], an emir of Sicily, who had fled to Reggio after he had been defeated in battle by a certain prince called Belcamed [*Ibn-Hawwas*] because he had killed his sister's husband, a distinguished young man of his people called Benneclerus. Betumen urged the count, with many arguments, to attack Sicily.

(4) The count rejoiced greatly in his arrival, received him honourably, and once the winter was over, followed his advice and invaded Sicily. He crossed the Straits and landed at Clibano with a hundred and sixty knights and Betumen himself, since the latter knew the country. He set off to raid Milazzo, with Betumen, the man who had fled to him, as his guide. Marching at night not far from the city of Messina, he encountered a certain Saracen, the brother of Benneclerus, for whose death Betumen had been driven from Sicily. This man was extremely well-known among his own people for his warlike exploits. Indeed, when he had learned, on the previous evening, that the count had landed in Sicily with his

troops, he felt that his own forces were more than sufficient [to deal with them]. So he left Messina by night, going to attack the enemy and by defeating them gain a name for himself through his prowess. Count Roger rode in the lead in front of his companions, eyes intently scanning all around him. He was unarmed except for his shield and the sword hanging from his belt - a squire [*armiger*] followed with his armour. When by the light of the moon he observed the enemy's arrival, he had gone too far in front of his squire to take his armour from him, indeed it was possible that the latter, if he had seen anything in the darkness, had fled. So he put on speed and charged his enemy, armed only with a sword. He killed him with a single blow, cutting him in half. The body lay in two pieces - the horse and personal effects he gave to one of his men. He marched as far as Milazzo and Rametta, gathering a great deal of booty, then he returned to make camp at the three lakes near the Straits which are called Praroli. The next day he went on to the coast where he transferred the plunder which he had gained to his ships. to be carried back to Reggio.

(5) The people of Messina thought that because some of his men had re-embarked on the ships they could easily defeat his divided forces. Cavalry and infantry left the city and marched out to attack him. Now in fact, because the wind was unfavourable, no armed men had boarded the ships. When Count Roger realised that they were advancing against him, he sent out ahead his nephew Serlo, the son of his brother Serlo (whom we mentioned above at the end of Book One), with instructions that if they wished to flee, as indeed they did, they should be allowed to do so. He himself pursued them at great speed while they attempted to flee, and intercepted them to such effect that scarcely one among the whole multitude escaped.

(6) While the people of Messina tearfully mourned their dead, the count marched past the city and went to set up camp at the Isola San Iacinto, which was only a short distance from Messina. He set off to attack the city at daybreak, knowing its forces to be much depleted. But although those who now survived in Messina were few in number, they and their women along with them defended their towers and ramparts as though for life itself. The count, worried that the whole of Sicily would be roused by this exploit and fall upon him, returned to his tents and began to consider his return to Reggio. The sea was very rough and

made the return journey perilous, so the count took a wise decision and decided to give all the booty which he had captured to finance the rebuilding of the church of St. Androni(c?)us near Reggio, which had recently been destroyed. It was, we believe, through the merits of this saint that the wind blew favourably and made the sea sufficiently calm for sailing, allowing them to cross safely.

(7) It may seem that by giving the booty to God they acted against canonical sanctions, for it is said that: 'Who sacrifices a victim which is stolen or from the property of the poor is as one who sacrifices the son in the sight of the father' [cf. *Ecclesiasticus*, xxxiv.24]. But since this statement is particularly applicable to the property of the poor of Christ, of whom it is elsewhere said: 'Blessed are the poor of spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven' [*Matthew*, v.3], we do not think it absurd [to take] from those who trust in God neither through their mouths nor in their hearts. Indeed it does not seem unreasonable to give what has been taken away from those who use things ungratefully, in that they do not recognise the Giver.

(8) Count Roger spent the whole of March and April in Calabria, arranging matters carefully and gathering ships and other supplies in preparation for another expedition to Sicily. At the beginning of May the duke arrived at Reggio with a large force of cavalry and had the fleet put to sea. Hearing that an expedition against the island was imminent, Belcamed, the Emir of Sicily, sent some ships (which they call *catti*) from Palermo to the Straits to hinder the enemy's crossing. They interrupted the passage for some days, for although our fleet was the more numerous, theirs was better furnished with more powerful ships. Our men had then only *germundi* and galleys, the Sicilians however had *catti*, *golafri*, dromonds and ships of various other types.

(9) The duke saw for himself that the crossing was being held up. Taking the advice of the count his brother and the wise men of the army, he invoked Divine aid. He ordered the army to trust in their priests, receive penance and all to take communion. He himself and his brother vowed that, if the land should with Divine assistance be made subject to them, they would henceforth be [even] more devoted to God, keeping unswervingly in mind what is written: 'in all your affairs take God as your helper, and you will have a favourable

outcome'. And since no plan can succeed which is [directed] against the Lord and no difficulty cannot be overcome when the Holy Spirit is present as one's helper, they begged God with tearful devotion to be their guide and strongest governor in all that they intend to do.

(10) Seeing their enemies facing their army on the other shore and no prospect of doing anything, Count Roger resorted as was his custom to cunning proposals, as if he had read, 'What is to be done? Success falls to the crafty weapons'. He gave this advice to the duke, that the latter should remain there with his army and show himself to the enemy; meanwhile he himself with a hundred and fifty knights would go to Reggio, there board their ships under the cover of darkness, cross the sea while the enemy was unaware [of their presence] and invade Sicily. The duke, who was afraid of losing his brother, refused to allow this, saying that had no wish to gain anything from his brother's death but rather placed his brother's life before all prospect of gain. Sending his ships on ahead to Reggio, the count followed with three hundred knights, and as a man most bold in military matters and always one to attempt great things, he crossed the sea safely while his enemies were off guard and reached a place called Tremestieri. Sending his ships back to prevent any of his men taking refuge in them, he marched to attack Messina. Finding it unguarded, for he had already destroyed the defenders, he captured the city and demolished its towers and ramparts. Those whom they found there were killed, though some fled to the Palermitan ships. [This occurred] in the year from the incarnation of the Lord 1061.

(11) Among those [who fled] from Messina was a certain young man from among the more noble citizens of the town who had a most beautiful sister. He tried to take her with him as he fled, but the girl was a dainty and delicate young thing, lacking in energy, and what with fear and the unaccustomed pace began to flag. Her brother tried gently to encourage her to [continue] her flight but with no success. So, seeing her strength failing and not wishing to leave her to the Normans for one of them to rape, he drew his sword and killed her. Although he shed tears for his beloved sister (for she was his only one), he preferred to be his sister's slayer and to mourn her death rather than that she should

involuntarily contravene her own law and be defiled against her will by someone from another law.

(12) After Messina had been captured the Palermitans realised that they had been tricked by the enemy. Fearing that if they remained there much longer the sea might grow rougher and force them aground to be annihilated by their enemies, and in some confusion, they set sail back whence they had come. Count Roger sent the keys of the captured city to the duke, telling him to hurry to him now the seaway was secure. So, with the sea cleansed of their enemies and the crossing now feasible and no longer dangerous, the duke came with his whole army to Messina after an uneventful journey. Finding his brother safe, they were [both] overjoyed.

(13) The two brothers spent eight days carefully arranging matters there. Once the city had been organized to their satisfaction and a garrison installed, they left their ships there and set off for Rametta with their mounted troops. The Ramettans were already well aware that this little band of their enemies had slain the mighty host of warriors from Messina, and were terrified that should they go out to meet their enemies advancing upon them the same thing would happen to them. They therefore sent envoys asking for peace, surrendering themselves and their city and swearing fealty with oaths taken on their books of superstitious law.

(14) The brothers left, rejoicing greatly at this happy ending and, realising how feeble these people were, became bolder and chose to bivouac near Tripi. The next day they came to Frazzano, and then from there to the plain of Maniace. The Christians who had stayed in the Val Demone had paid tribute to the Saracens. They were overjoyed at the arrival of [other] Christians and rushed out to meet them, bringing them many offerings and gifts. They claimed as an excuse [for their previous conduct] with regard to the Saracens that they had done this not for love of them but to protect themselves and what was theirs, and now they would serve the brothers with unbreakable fealty. Both brothers treated them with the utmost kindness, promising to confer many benefits upon them if God should grant the country to them. Leaving them thus in peace, they themselves directed their march towards Centuripe.

(15) But though they were well aware of their valour [*strenuitas*] the inhabitants of Centuripe were not deterred by the prospect of death and, since they had no wish at all to serve them, manned their ramparts in defence of their city. Our men attacked the city bravely, but when they saw their men were being harassed by slingers and archers, and would be unable to achieve anything against the town without heavy casualties, the brothers called off the assault, particularly since they had heard that the Saracens were nearby and threatening battle. They wanted to keep our men unwounded and their numbers undiminished to face them.

(16) So they left Centuripe and set up their tents elsewhere, pitching camp in the plain of Paternò, which was wide and suitable for a battle. They waited there for eight days, hoping that the encounter offered by the Saracens would take place there. But when they learned from the scouts of Betumen, who had fled to the count at Reggio and now accompanied them as their faithful lieutenant and guide, that the battle was not going to take place immediately, they marched on further to S. Felice and camped near the underground caves. These they attacked, beginning with the largest, killing many of the inhabitants. Then they went on to the mills on the bank of the river below Castrogiovanni which is called in their language *Guedetani* [*Wadi-et-tin*], which in Latin translation means 'marshy river', and there they pitched camp.

(17) Finally Belcamed, accompanied by a great multitude of Africans and Sicilians, offered battle to his enemies, as he had intended to do for a long time, in the year from the Lord's Incarnation 1061. The duke then divided his army in half - he had only seven hundred men - and he drew them up in two divisions. He entrusted one of these to his brother, to lead on ahead as he usually did and attack the enemy. He himself followed close behind with the other, encouraging his men with fiery words. Belcamed, who had fifteen thousand armed men, similarly divided them, into three divisions. The first of these charged boldly at the enemy and started the battle. Our men, as was their custom, fought valiantly in this opening clash and killed many of the enemy, the rest of whom turned and fled. They pursued the defeated towards Castrogiovanni and killed up to ten thousand of them. So victory was gained and they secured such great spoils that a man who had lost one horse in

the battle received ten for one; undoubtedly the army as a whole similarly enriched itself. The next day they moved camp to a place between Castrogiovanni and Naurcio, but they stayed there only one night and then on the following day pitched their tents on Monte Caliscibetta. However since the mountain was narrow and not really enough to hold the army, they then marched on to Campo di Fonti. Disliking a quiet time and anxious for action, Count Roger led three hundred *juvenes* on a combined raid and reconnaissance mission towards Agrigento, spreading fire and destruction throughout the province. On his return he resupplied the whole army from his spoils and plunder. They remained there for a month and devastated the entire province with a series of raids, but they could not overcome Castrogiovanni. In that year the duke founded the *castrum* of S. Marco.

(18) Aware of the approach of winter, they abandoned the expedition. They left Betumen to hold Catania as their loyal subject (for this was rightfully his anyway), and he could do damage in Sicily in the intervening period. They themselves returned to Messina, which they furnished with a garrison of knights along with the supplies which they would need, and then they crossed the Straits. The duke went to winter in Apulia while the count remained in Calabria. In the middle of winter, in fact before Christmas, he crossed the sea once more with two hundred and fifty knights and raided as far as Agrigento, frightening the whole country. However the Christians of these provinces were very happy to flock to him and joined him in many of his operations. He then went to Troina, to be joyfully welcomed by the Christians who dwelt there. He entered the town and made it subject to him, and there he celebrated the birth of the Lord.

(19) A messenger arrived from Calabria to inform him that Abbot Robert of St. Euphemia had brought his sister Judith back from Normandy. (She was a descendant [*neptis*] of the Count of the Normans). The abbot had sent this messenger to Roger to tell him to hasten back for their marriage. Hearing this the Count was overjoyed, for she was beautiful and of distinguished birth, and he had wanted her for a long time. He returned to Calabria as fast as he possibly could, hastening to see the the girl he had for so long desired. He came to the Valle delle Saline, was formally betrothed to the girl at San Martino and then took her, along with a great crowd of musicians, to Mileto where their marriage was celebrated.

(20) Once it was consummated, he remained there for a little while with his wife, but he had no intention of abandoning his purpose. Once his army was ready he was not a bit deterred by his wife's tearful pleas, but, leaving the young woman in Calabria, invaded Sicily once again, taking with him the squire Roger as the duke's representative. Betumen the Saracen was summoned by messenger from Catania, and, with him in his company, he went to besiege Petralia. Its citizens, both Christians and Saracens, discussed the matter together and made peace with the count, surrendering their *castrum* and themselves to his rule. The count arranged matters in the *castrum* as he wanted, stationing both knights and paid troops [*stipendiarii*] there, and then went to Troina which he also garrisoned. Instructing Betumen to act on his behalf and to put pressure on the Sicilians, he hastened back to Calabria and to his wife who was eagerly awaiting him. Anxious as she was for his safety, she greatly rejoiced at his arrival.

(21) Since he had only the one *castrum* over which to rule, Mileto - for he had received nothing else from his brother - he now sought what the latter had promised him when, at the latter's request, they had been reconciled to each other at Scalea, namely half of Calabria. He did this in particular since he needed to provide a fitting marriage portion for his young wife, since the girl was of such distinguished birth. But the duke, while generous with money, was stingy in giving out the smallest portion of land, and made use of all sorts of roundabout ways to drag matters out. The count knew how clever his brother was, and did not want to be fed lies for ever and ever, and so he sought the opinion of leading men throughout Apulia, to obtain what had been promised to him. When this too got him nowhere he became enraged and abandoned his brother, breaking the treaty which they had between them. He went to Mileto and manfully garrisoned the *castrum*, recruiting the best knights from every part to oppose his brother. But, even though it was widely acknowledged that his brother had acted unjustly towards him, he observed proper legal norms and refrained from any injury to his brother for forty days. This was in case the latter should come to his senses within this period and then complain that he [Roger] had injured him. The count preferred to be considered the injured party, and that his brother should be blamed for the harm caused by this dispute, rather than it should be twisted back against himself.

(22) Betumen travelled through Sicily and, as he had been asked by the count, did what he could to draw men into fealty to our race. He launched raids to harm those whom he was unable to persuade. While he was marching to attack the *castrum* of Entella, which had formerly been his, a certain Nichel, a powerful man who had once been one of Betumen's knights in this *castrum*, deceitfully sent him a peace offer. He proposed that Betumen should come with only a few men to a predetermined spot to talk to the people of Entella, implying that the latter wished to be reconciled to him. Since, when in former times relations between them had been good, they had received many benefits from him, Betumen did not suspect treachery and was therefore willing to come to the rendezvous in the manner in which he had been instructed. However the people of Entella, under Nichel's leadership, conceived a treacherous and poisonous plan. First, they speared his horse with a javelin, since otherwise, if its rider received the initial wound and thus discovered their deceit, an unharmed horse might enable him to escape even though he was wounded. Once they had unhorsed him, they then stabbed him as he lay on the ground, forcing him to breathe his last in a pool of blood. The Normans who had been sent by the count to the *castra* of Troina and Petralia were mightily upset to hear of this, since they had been very much under the protection of his name. They abandoned the fortresses which had been entrusted to them and returned to Messina.

(23) The duke was furious that his brother had left him, gathered an army and went to besiege him in Mileto, in the year from the Lord's Incarnation 1062. Although he was at the time suffering from some sort of fever, the count was at Gerace where he had been called to deal with various matters. There not only was he ill but, through some unknown contagion in the air, he lost some of his men. However when his brother arrived as though he was an enemy, he rushed furiously to Monte Sant'Angelo and attacked and cast down with his mighty lance many of his brother's army. After this attack he prevented them for a long time from making camp, as they had intended, on this mountain, and indeed on the next one too, which was called Monte Verde. The city was however besieged, and on both sides youth and a desire for praise led many to attempt warlike exploits. While so many were in consequence charging into the fight a young man on the count's side called Arnold, who was his young wife's brother, a man well-suited to the profession of arms, was cast down

while he attempted to strike down another and, sad to say, was killed. As a result there arose the most appalling grief and lamentation, not just among those whom he was helping but even amongst those outsiders who were attacking them. While his sister was celebrating his funeral, and he was then buried with appropriate ceremony, the count, who grieved for him no less than did the young man's sister, sought vengeance for him. He attacked the enemy and struck down and killed many of them. Seeing his men suffering every day from such encounters and gaining little advantage, the duke built two siege castles [*castella*] in front of the town, reckoning that hunger and exhaustion could more easily weaken the defenders. The count however harassed these *castella* daily. When he knew the duke to be in one, he attacked the other. When he saw him go to aid the first one he abandoned that and went straight through the city to the other, and so was continually changing his position.

(24) One night he left Mileto with a hundred knights and went to Gerace. Entering the city which was surrendered to him by the inhabitants, he prepared it for the use of his men. Hearing this the duke was suffused with rage and, after garrisoning the *castella* which he had built next to Mileto, he led his entire army to Gerace and set up his tents around the city. Some of the inhabitants of Gerace had sworn fealty to him. They did not however surrender the city for him to do with it as he wished, lest perhaps he should construct a citadel in it which would make them all henceforth entirely subject to his wishes. Now the duke was friendly with one of the leading men of the city, whose name was Basil, and was invited by him to dinner. He covered his head with a hood to prevent anybody seeing who he was, entered the city and went to the latter's house [*palatium*] to eat. He went in, and while the meal was being prepared chatted with his host's wife, Melita, quite unaware that anything was amiss. The citizens had however been informed by one of the servants from the house that the duke was inside the city and, suspecting treason, were very much disturbed. The whole city was in an uproar, with everyone running about all over the place. They [then] rushed fully armed to the house in which he was, intending to attack it and drag him out. The man who had invited the duke knew the lawlessness of his fellow citizens, and knew also that he would be unable to resist them. But as he fled to a church, trying to save his life, he was struck down and killed by the sword of one of his fellow townsmen. His

wife was treated so vilely by the citizens that she was impaled with a stake from the anus through to the breast and forced to end her life with a shameful death.

Seeing this the duke despaired of his life, which is not to be wondered at; especially since he saw citizens perishing in such a savage way from the cruel swords of their fellow citizens, friends at the hands of friends, upper-class at those of the lower, forgetful of any benefits that they had previously received. He who had once been the destroyer of many thousands stood like a soldier who was unprotected and without his weapons amid the threats of his furious enemies, and the leonine ferocity which had been to some extent part of his nature was transformed into a lamb-like gentleness. But when he saw that all the more sensible people, insofar as they foresaw the outcome of the situation, were doing their best to to restrain the extraordinary fury of the ignorant mob (which had little foresight about what advantage or disadvantage might accrue to them if he were killed), the duke's spirits were considerably restored. He spoke to them with these words. 'Do not', he said, 'be falsely overjoyed, lest the wheel of fortune, which at the moment favours you and is against me, turns in future so that its shows its adverse face to you, since nobody enjoys any advantage without divine favour. You should discuss among yourselves the circumstances through which you have me in your power, for I was not brought to be present here through your own strength, nor did I enter the city to plot some harm against you. Some of you have done fealty to me; and I have made an agreement with you, which I do not believe that I have in any way violated. Perhaps your fealty is to your advantage and provides you with an opportunity, since its strength is known to us, and makes you acceptable to us and more deserving of reward. There is no merit in so many thousands of men depriving a single and defenceless person of his life, [especially] when this has come about not through military prowess but by chance, and by dishonestly breaking a treaty. Nor, I think, will it profit you any more than it will me, for my death will not remove my people's yoke, but rather to revenge me they will become an even greater and more burning menace to you. There are indeed knights who are most loyal to me, there are my brothers and my kinsmen, and if you should perjure yourselves and pollute your hands with my blood, there will be no way that you will be able to make your peace with them. Furthermore what you have done will become common knowledge through every land, and not just you but all your descendants

will incur eternal shame for your perjury, particularly if you were to strike me down without hearing or proper judgement!' After this speech the wiser men of the town were better disposed towards him, and quelling the rioting mob they placed the duke in custody until they could decide what was to be done with him.

(25) Meanwhile the duke's army, camped outside the gates, heard that he had been so unluckily taken prisoner and were extremely disturbed. They were arguing among themselves, not at all sure what should be done, but finally wiser counsel prevailed and they hastily sent envoys to his brother the count to inform him what had happened. They knew him to be strictly law-abiding, and even though he was in dispute with his brother for breaking their agreement, he would however think on their blood relationship and love his brother as a brother. Putting this before his own advantage and forgetting all injury done to him, he would go to save him when he was placed in such danger. So they asked his brother to come and bring help as a brother should to the man in this perilous position; and they promised that once the duke was rescued they would help him to secure his rights in the dispute between the two of them.

(26) Disturbed by the dark rumours of his brother's misfortune, and indeed quite moved to tears by thought of their blood relationship, the count humbly begged his men to hurry and rescue his brother. He took up arms and rushed as fast as he could to Gerace. There he asked the inhabitants to come outside the walls and talk to him, and gave them safe-conduct to do so. There he spoke as follows. 'Well, my friends and *fideles*', he said, 'I do indeed begin to realise your loyalty, and I am most grateful to you for recognising my brother when he came into your besieged town, capturing him, and for staying loyal to me. Your loyalty towards me has been shown in this important matter, but I do not want to be revenged upon him through your hands or weapons, as you suggest. He has so roused my anger that I shall not be satisfied if he meets death from any other arms than my own. If you think that by doing this killing you are serving me, and ingratiating yourselves with me, you should know that I entirely forbid it. So hurry and hand my enemy over to me. It should be enough that you will be the first to know of his suffering. I shall do as you advise and make him finish his life in agony. Let's have no delay in handing him over, for I shall gain no advantage

from the siege of this city until I avenge the injuries that I have received from him. Indeed his whole army will abandon him, unable to bear his crimes any more, transfer their fealty to me and choose me as duke. I was judged unworthy to hold even a little land under him, but once he is dead I shall, with luck, take over all the rights which were formerly his! I am not the sort of man whom you can delay with tricks. If you try to put things off any longer then your vineyards and olive groves will be destroyed. We shall besiege your city, and when our siege engines appear no defence will avail you and it will fall. If you resist us and are captured then you will be treated as enemies, and will be tortured like him'.

After hearing this speech the inhabitants of Gerace were terrified. With his permission they went back to the town to inform their fellow citizens and discuss with them what to do. Once they had taken counsel, and being uncertain whether what they had been told by the count was derived from his concern to rescue his brother or really was the result of hatred, they sought an oath from the duke that if they released him, and he should escape his brother's threats, then never while life was granted to him would he have a citadel built within their town. Little realising the duke's cunning, they were deceived by this oath and left lamenting, for not long afterwards the count, who had not sworn, did what the duke had sworn not to do. After receiving the oath they led the duke outside the town and returned him to the Normans, many of whom were crying tears of joy. They promised, affirming many times over, that they would in future be faithful subjects to both of them.

(27) When the duke and count saw each other - as once Joseph and Benjamin - a sight they had hoped for but not expected, until fortune had turned to the better, they burst into tears and eagerly embraced each other. The duke swore to the count that he would no longer retain what he had previously promised him. Following the duke as far as San Marco, the count then went to Mileto. When the count's knights who were at Mileto heard that the duke was being held prisoner, they attacked and captured the siege-castles that he had established next to the town. Holding the knights whom they found there as prisoners, they garrisoned the castle which he had built at Sant'Angelo; the other, which was less strong, they destroyed. Thinking that she was a widow, the duke's wife fled to Tropea.

(28) Hearing of this the duke, mindful of this ill rather than of the benefits [he had received], was extremely angry and refused to fulfil the agreement as he had promised to his brother, until the *castellum* of Sant'Angelo and the knights who were being held prisoner were restored to him and he received justice for the injury done to him. The count wished to deprive his brother of any excuse for doing as he [actually] wished, and so he returned the knights and restored the *castellum* and everything contained therein. But, when this seemed to have no effect in softening his brother's heart so that he himself should have justice, he gained entry to the *castrum* of Mesiano through the treachery of the inhabitants and sent his defiance to the duke. As a result, seeing the best *castrum* which he had in that region taken away from him and knowing that the whole of Calabria could easily be destabilised through this, the duke came to an agreement with his brother in the Val di Crati and shared Calabria with him. He then went to Apulia and the count returned to that part of Calabria which he had received. Since he saw that, because of the trouble which had previously occurred between him and his brother, he was ill-supplied with horses, clothing and arms, he went through the whole of Calabria to seek tribute from all the inhabitants. Coming to Gerace, he decided to establish a castle [*castellum*] outside but near the city, that he might extort more from its inhabitants since he felt them to be traitors and thus hated them more than other people. The people of Gerace objected on the grounds of the oath sworn to them by the duke. The count replied, 'Since half of Gerace is mine, the duke can observe the terms of his oath in his part, and not break them, but I am not constrained by any oath or promise which I have made in my part'. Realising that they had been deceived by the duke's cunning, the inhabitants of Gerace then abandoned their foolishness. They made an agreement with the count, and stopped him building the *castellum* which he had begun through money rather than arms.

(29) Now abundantly supplied with arms, horses and the other things he needed, and the land which fell to his share, the count made careful arrangements with his *fideles* and once again set off to attack Sicily with three hundred men. He took with him his young wife, although she was fearful and, insofar as she dared, reluctant. He came to Troina and was once again welcomed there by the Greek Christians who had received him previously, though not with such enthusiasm as the first time. Although the city was already strongly

defended because of the mountain on which it is sited, for his own purposes he made it even stronger, and then leaving his wife there with a few men, he set off to attack the other *castra* round about. The Greeks are indeed the most treacherous of people. So one day, for the sole reason that the count had billeted his knights in their houses and they were thus fearful for their wives and daughters, and when the count had gone to assault Nicosia, they launched an attack on the few people who remained with the countess, reckoning that they could easily overcome them, and either drive them out or kill them, and thus lift their yoke from their necks. But our men, although few, were very much on the alert and ready for action. When they knew there was trouble they sprang to arms, eagerly defending their lady and fighting for their own lives. They resisted fiercely until night brought the battle to a halt. The count was informed of what had happened by a messenger, rushed there as fast as he could and attacked the Greeks, though for a while he made little progress. With the city now cut in two, the Greeks built a barricade for their protection between themselves and the Normans. The Saracens from the neighbouring *castra*, who were about five thousand in number, were overjoyed to hear that the Greeks were fighting with our troops and moved rapidly to help them. Their assistance greatly benefited the Greeks.

Our men fought on the defensive for a long time, cooped up on the hilltop by their attack. They were unable to seek provisions through plundering raids as was their custom, and as a result they were seriously affected by hunger and by the heat of constant fighting and guard duty, which was not at all to their taste. Everybody was placed in a very dangerous position, for even the count had scarcely anything which might serve him, let alone his wife and soldiers [*armigeriis*], for food. For the time being they were kept within the city defending the hilltop, for if they went outside to forage they were visible to every eye. If he went out with a few men to try to plunder they would be captured; and so he was discouraged from doing anything by the danger threatening. As a result there was such poverty among them that nobody could get anything from anyone else, either by stealing or, in the event that feelings of kindness prompted generosity, by begging, or as a loan. All, from the count to the lowliest follower, were equally weighed down with want. They were so short of clothes that the count and countess only had one cloak between them, and they used it alternately, depending on which of them needed it more. However the Greeks and

Saracens, with the whole country supporting them and furnishing what they wanted, were fed in abundance. They had no need to search for food or to roam around anywhere, since all Sicily provided the supplies which they needed, which were eagerly brought in from other areas. Although our men were in great want, and were becoming weaker with hunger, the strain of guard duty and the heat, they kept up their spirits and pretended to be cheerful, both in appearance and in speech, hiding their weakness in case they discouraged each other. But the young countess, although she could quench her thirst with water, did not know how to cure her hunger, except with tears and by sleep, for she had nothing else! The enemy's attack prevented them from remedying their ever-present problem of lack of food (except in this way). But from time to time, weak as they were, they rushed to arms, even when they were not under attack, for their inborn fierceness sensibly manifested itself to prevent the enemy destroying them.

(30) Battle was joined one day, and to assist his men the count rode on his horse into the midst of his enemies. The latter recognised him, attacked him fiercely and transfixing his horse with their spears; both he and the horse fell to ground. They seized him with their hands, trying to drag him to a safer place in which they could wreak their vengeance on him, like a bull being dragged to be a reluctant sacrificial victim. In this perilous situation the count, mindful of the strength he once had, wielded the sword which he carried in his belt as though he was cutting a grassy meadow with a scythe, swinging it vigorously all around him. He killed a number of men, and was saved by the help of God and his own right arm. He made such a slaughter of his enemies that the bodies of the men he had slain lay round about him like trees in a thick forest uprooted by the wind. The remaining enemy retreated to their fortress. He himself did not wish to be seen hurrying away as if he was afraid, and so, with his horse dead, he walked back towards his men carrying the saddle.

Our men remained in this difficult position for four months. However the very harsh winter which that year struck this region proved to be the opportunity for their liberation and for their enemies' downfall. For because of the proximity of Mount Etna, which lies not far away in the same area, there is at some times a fierce heat from the burning of hot sulphur in the mountain, and occasionally at other times there can occur torrential storms,

with high winds, snow, and hail. For this reason, when the cold wind was blowing our enemies, accustomed to warm themselves up with hot baths, tried to keep up their body temperature by drinking wine. Because of the wine, which usually sent them to sleep, their sentries watching the city started to become careless. When our men realised this, they themselves deliberately began to appear slack, and although they were [actually] keeping a very sharp watch, they omitted the usual sentry-calls, so that by this trick - pretending that they were not keeping guard - they could give their enemies a greater feeling of security. One night the count, who never avoided any duty, was keeping watch with his troops. The enemy forces were deep in sleep among their fortifications and in all that great multitude there was no one at all bothering to keep watch. Under cover of a freezing fog which was ideally designed for his purpose, he [and his men] stole silently into their camp. Falling on the unprotected men sword in hand, they seized their fortress. Many of the enemy were killed and many others captured; the rest sought refuge from the invaders in flight. Porinus, who had been at the head of this treasonable conspiracy, was hanged along with his principal accomplices. His life was forfeited as an example to others. Many other people were punished in various ways. Our men secured great booty through this victory, and after being in such want they now had a surfeit of corn, wine, oil and everything else that they needed, so that this could rightly have been described with words similar to those of Elisha at Samaria, who after suddenly being granted abundance was inspired by God to say: 'tomorrow about this time shall a measure of corn be sold for a shekel in the gate of Samaria' [*II Kings*, vii.1], since the day before nothing could be got even for a great price.

(31) With matters arranged to his satisfaction, and the city of Troina now securely under his control, the count left his wife and troops there, and set off for Calabria and Apulia to secure replacements for the horses which they had lost. Although she was still a very young woman, his wife took charge of the *castrum* with great energy and care, going round it daily to see what needed to be done and ensuring that they remained on their guard. She encouraged the others whom her lord had left behind when he went away, and to ensure that they served her properly she spoke kindly to them, promising them many rewards when her lord returned. But she reminded them not to act carelessly now that the danger was over, in case something similar happened again.

(32) The count returned from Calabria and Apulia, laden like the busiest of bees with the supplies that were needed for his troops. and all his men rejoiced at his arrival. He brought them horses and all the other things which their duties required. A few days later, once the horses which he had brought were fully fit, he learned that some five hundred Arabs and Africans who had come from their homelands to aid the Sicilians as mercenaries were stationed at Castrogiovanni. Wanting to know how effective their forces were, he led his army out against them. He sent his nephew Serlo out ahead with thirty knights to make a demonstration in front of the *castrum* to encourage the enemy to sally forth to battle. He and the rest of his men lay hidden elsewhere in ambush. His men were deliberately to feign terror and flee, to get the enemy to launch a fierce pursuit. He then hoped to charge them from ambush and secure an easy victory since they would be a long way from their camp. The Arabs who were in the *castrum* saw them coming from a long way off and stormed out to attack them, meeting them and driving them back in flight, inflicting such injury upon the knights that by the time that they had arrived at the place of ambush only two of them were still unwounded. When the count saw that some of the men he had sent out ahead had been captured and others laid low, he charged forth from ambush like a lion and rushed down upon his foes. Battle commenced; and both sides fought bravely. Finally, after a long and fierce encounter, God favoured the count and he gained the victory, putting the pagans to flight. He pursued the enemy for more than a mile as they fled. He returned to Troina laden with spoil, and the city was filled with rejoicing.

Wishing to do the Sicilians as much harm as possible he set out to plunder Calavuturo. Returning from there past the battlements of Castrogiovanni, he did his best to lure the Arabs out from the *castrum*, and brought back a great deal of booty. Desiring to find out about the more distant parts of Sicily, he went further afield, as far as Butera where he captured a many cattle, and then, bringing many prisoners with him, he made camp at Anator. The next day however, since because of the length of the march, the summer heat and the shortage of water he had lost a lot of horses, he retreated to S. Felice where he spent the night, and then went on to Troina.

(33) In the year from the incarnation of the Word 1063 it was announced that the Africans and Arabs, along with the Sicilians, had gathered a large army and arrived to wage war on the count. The count eagerly marched out against them with his men, and climbed to the summit of the mountain above the River Cerami in order to observe them better. He saw them across the river on another mountain top, looking at him in their turn. His men did not cross towards them, nor they towards his troops, and it was the Saracens who were the first to change their position, withdrawing to the camp where they were based. The count meanwhile withdrew to Troina.

So for three days, with the river in between them, they stared at each other, with neither daring to cross the river towards the other. On the fourth day the Saracens, not wishing to seem to be withdrawing to the rear any longer, moved their camp and set it up on the mountain on which they had for the previous three been drawn up. Our men were in turn reluctant to allow the enemy to remain any longer so close to them without being attacked. They confessed to God with great devotion, in the presence of the priests, received penance, and then, commending themselves to God's mercy and trusting in His aid, marched out to attack the enemy. But when they had got halfway a message arrived that their enemies had attacked Cerami. The count directed his forces there, sending his nephew Serlo on ahead with thirty-six knights to enter the camp and [then] continue to defend it until he himself should arrive. He followed with one hundred knights - for he had no more. Serlo entered the camp, not waiting for his uncle's arrival within the walls, bursting through the gates like a raging lion and inflicting great casualties on them. Even though they numbered three thousand, in addition to the infantry - of whom there were an infinite number - wonderful to say, he put them to flight with his thirty-six knights.

From this fact we can see clearly that God was the protector of our side. For human agency would not have been able to accomplish so great a feat and one unheard of in our time, nor indeed even dare to try. If however we are amazed at this we should consider the words of the prophet, 'How may one man defeat a thousand?' [*Deuteronomy*, xxxii.30], for this we understand once occurred with the children of Israel, and we can, without lying, reply for us (as for them) with the words of this same prophet: 'Since their God punished

them, and because of their sins the Lord shut them into a dungeon with the keys of his anger'. Their God, I say, not because they recognised him by worshipping him, but since, although they were unworthy by denying the existence of their Creator, they were however his creatures. Their God, I say, following that which we are taught by the Apostle, where he says: 'For the same Lord is rich unto all that call upon him' [*Romans*, x.12] It may be that someone, analysing this sentence, tries to develop and adapt it, saying, 'If God is rich in those who invoke him, then it must follow that He is poor in those who do not invoke him'. But one must reply that, 'because God suffers neither increase nor decrease, now does His nature become greater or smaller, but He remains always in the same condition and can be equal in everything'. If however we talk about poverty, we must [therefore] conclude that it does not apply to Him but rather to those who show themselves unworthy, on whom however God will bestow the riches of His mercy.

The count meanwhile followed after his nephew with a hundred knights. Arriving at Cerami he realised that his nephew had already defeated the enemy. While he considered whether to press on to inflict an even greater defeat upon them some of his men became fearful. They urged that the victory which God had accomplished through his nephew was sufficient, and if they were to continue the pursuit then their luck might change and disaster might ensue. But when asked by the count [for his opinion] Roussel de Bailleul replied fiercely that he would never again help him, either here or anywhere else, unless he brought the enemy to battle. When the count heard this he was angry and sternly reprimanded the faint-hearted. He marched in haste towards the enemy's camp (where they had taken refuge) to offer battle to them. The latter took heart once more and, dividing their forces into two, charged forth bravely against our men. The count also split his forces, entrusting one division, the advanced force, to his nephew, Roussel and Arisgotus of Pucheil. ¹ He himself followed with the other division, and, asking God for His aid, he marched thus into battle. However their first line, who wanted to seize a hill overlooking our men, avoided Serlo and our advance guard and instead charged our rear division which the count commanded. The Count and Roussel of Bailleul saw that their men were more scared than usual because of the truly terrifying numbers of the enemy, and so they sought to allay their

fears with these words of encouragement: 'Keep up your spirits, you brave Christian knights. We all carry the emblem of Christ, and He will not, unless He is wronged, desert this symbol. Our God, the God of gods, is all-powerful; the man who does not trust in him relies entirely on his human power and the strength of his arm. [But] all the kingdoms of the world are subject to our God, and He will deal with them as he wishes. These people are rebels against God, and whatever power which [they have] does not come from God and will speedily be exhausted. They rejoice in their own courage, we however are safe under God's protection. Nor is it right to have doubts, for it is certain that with God going before us we shall be irresistible: hence Gideon defeated many thousands of enemies with only a few men, since he never doubted in God's help'.

They were hastening towards the battle when there appeared a knight, splendidly armed and mounted on a white horse, carrying a white banner surmounted by a brilliant cross fixed to the top of his lance. He rode in front of our line as if trying to make our men more eager for battle, and then he made a mighty attack upon the enemy just where their ranks were thickest. When our men saw this they were overjoyed, and cried out repeatedly to God and St. George. They were overcome with emotion and burst into tears at such a sight, enthusiastically following the figure in front of them. Many of them saw the banner with the cross hanging from the top of the count's lance [too], which could not have been placed there except through Divine power. Urging on his front line, the count fought with *Arcadius* of Palermo, who, fully-armed and clad in a magnificent mailed hauberk, was riding gallantly in front of his own troops to challenge our men. The count charged furiously down upon him, overthrew him with his lance and killed him, thereby terrifying the rest of his men. Among his own men *Arcadius's* military prowess was quite outstanding, and they believed both that nobody could resist him in battle nor that any weapon could penetrate the hauberk in which he was clad, unless perhaps a sneaky thrust could slide between two of the iron plates which were linked together over the joints - thus overcoming him by cunning rather than strength. Both sides now fought bravely, and our men, whose numbers were few, were so hampered by the huge enemy force with whom they were intermingled that scarcely any of them could break out of the melee, or not without hacking

¹ Or possibly 'of Pozzuoli'.

their way free with their weapons. But finally the enemy saw that our men were scattering the dense formation of pagans and Sicilians by whom they were at one and the same time both confronted and surrounded - just as thick clouds are broken up by a furious wind and the swiftest hawks scatter a helpless flock of birds, Exhausted by the long battle, they were unable to withstand our men's attack any longer and strove to flee rather than fight. Our men pursued them boldly and slew them as they retreated, and, now victorious, they killed some fifteen thousand of the enemy.

Laden with the spoils of victory our men now retired to the enemy's camp. There they made their quarters in their tents and took for themselves the camels and everything else which they found there. The following day they attacked the twenty thousand infantry who had fled to the rocks and crags of the mountain, killing most of them and selling the defeated survivors for a huge sum of money. But after remaining there for a while they were overcome by the smell of the decomposing bodies of their dead enemies, and recoiling from the stench they returned to Troina.

The count knew that the protection of God and St. Peter had granted him this great victory, and in token of his gratitude for the benefits which he had received from them he sent one of his men called Meledius to Rome, to present to Pope Alexander (who at this time was acting in a wise and catholic manner as St. Peter's representative) four camels which were among the booty he had seized from the enemy during his triumph, as a mark of his victory. The pope rejoiced, more from the victory granted by God over the pagans than from the gifts brought to him. He sent his apostolic blessing and, by the power which he exercised, absolution for their sins - provided that they were in the future repentant - to the count and to all those aided him in taking Sicily from the heathen and keeping what had been conquered for the Christian faith in perpetuity. By his apostolic authority he sent from the Roman see a banner; with this reward, and trusting in St. Peter's protection, they would in future be able to attack the Saracens in greater safety.

(34) The merchants of Pisa had been accustomed to make frequent visits in their ships to Palermo for the sake of trade. Wishing to avenge certain injuries which they had suffered from the Palermitans, they gathered a fleet from far and wide and set sail across the sea to

Sicily. They reached a port in the Val Demone and sent an envoy to the count, who was staying at Troina. His message asked that the count ride with his army to join them at Palermo where they would assist him to capture the city, seeking no reward for themselves except revenge for the injury which had been done to them. The count was busy with a number of matters and was reluctant to go forth immediately. He sent instructions to them to wait for a little while until he had dealt with those matters with which he was at present engaged. The Pisans were however customarily more given to commercial matters rather than warlike campaigns, and were reluctant to wait in case they should thereby be deprived for some time to come of their accustomed profits. They decided therefore to make a vain attack upon Palermo and set sail for that place. They were however terrified by the huge number of the enemy and were reluctant to disembark from their ships, so all they did was to cut down the chain which closed off the port from one shore to the other, and thinking, in the way that their people usually did, that this was a great deed, they returned to Pisa.

(35) Seeing that summer was approaching, when the heat from the burning sun would prevent most of his cavalry from making plundering raids, the count planned to use this unfavourable summer period to go across to visit his brother, the duke, in Apulia. But, to ensure that his wife and the knights remaining with her were not left without some means of support [*absque stipendiis*], he led his army to raid Golisano one day, Brucato another, and Cefalù on a third, and in this way filled Troina with a plentiful supply of good things. He repeatedly warned his knights to keep the most vigilant guard on the city, to take stringent precautions against an enemy attack, and, should they for some reason make a sortie, not to go very far outside the town. He then went to Apulia to plan with his brother what their next step would be. After a lengthy discussion between the two of them the count received a reinforcement of a hundred knights from him and returned to Sicily. He then set off with two hundred knights to raid into the province of Agrigento. On their return he ordered the bulk of his knights to go on ahead with the plunder, while he divided the remainder into two covering forces in case of any enemy attack on them, either from the front or, in particular, from the rear.

The Africans and Arabs wanted revenge for the defeat at Cerami and, if fortune should favour them, to recover something of the reputation that they had lost there. Learning from messengers that the count and two hundred picked knights had gone to raid them, they secretly placed men in ambush on the road by which they had to return. When our advanced force came to this place they charged forth from hiding, and our men, forgetting the manly bravery which they had in the past usually displayed, acted in a craven manner, hoping to escape from their deadly plight by flight rather than fighting back. They climbed up a mountain which was surrounded on every side by precipitous drops, braving the narrow and lonely path up in their quest for safety. The enemy meanwhile killed some of the knights who were guarding the booty and carried it off. The count, who was following behind, heard the uproar and flew to the scene. When he found out what had happened he was highly indignant and filled with rage. He did his best, yelling at the top of his voice, to summon his men back from the mountain which they had climbed, so that they might join him in exacting revenge from the enemy, but in vain. Finally he himself climbed up Monte Turone and addressed his men individually, each by his own name, to prevent them from making excuses for themselves at a later date. He attacked them in the following words: 'O you most brave men', he said, 'have you so exhausted your strength that having failed to accomplish any noteworthy feat of arms and sunk to the depths by deserting in the most rotten manner, you cannot now pull yourselves together! Let us remember your ancestors, and the courage [*strenuitas*] which our race once used to have and [indeed] for which it was renowned, and avoid the scorn of those in the future. Remember how many thousand enemies you defeated at Cerami with fewer men than there are here now. Fortune favoured you then, it will act in the same way here and now as it did formerly. Get back to your former valour - by acting bravely and [gaining] the victory after your flight your reputation will be restored'.

He addressed them at length, saying these and many other things as well, and, as soon as he had rallied them with this sort of encouragement, he hastened to battle and engaged the enemy. Through this brave action the people in rebellion against God were defeated, and the stolen booty was recovered. After securing this triumph our men were [indeed] laden with the spoils of victory. They returned to Troina, joyful except for the death of

Walter de Similia, a man highly-regard for his military exploits and, sad to say, in the flower of his youth. Fighting bravely, he had been struck down by the enemy and killed, and was greatly mourned.

(36) Duke Robert was in Apulia when he found out that his brother was being harassed by numerous enemy attacks in Sicily. He was not unwilling to take his share in the profits [there], but also wanted to play a part in the work, and so he raised a large army from Apulia and Calabria, and marched towards Sicily. Hearing of his brother's arrival, the count went swiftly and most joyfully to meet him at the Calabrian city of Cosenza. They then marched on [together], and in the year from the Lord's Incarnation 1064 crossed the Straits of Messina with five hundred knights. They travelled unscathed right through Sicily, with nobody daring to do anything to stop them, until they came to Palermo. On the duke's instructions, which he afterwards regretted, they pitched their tents on a mountain which later became known as Monte Tarantino because of the number of tarantulas there. The mountain was covered with them, and they were a sore trial to the army. These tarantulas have a disgusting effect on both men and women, although to those who have escaped this it seems a source of humour. The tarantula is an insect, related to the spider, but whose sting is poisonous; all those whom it does sting it fills with a great and deadly wind. They cannot get rid of this wind, which bursts noisily and disgustingly from their behinds, and unless a heated vessel or something else boiling hot is speedily applied, they are said to be in deadly danger. Some of our men suffered from this disgusting affliction, and finally they decided to change their campsite to somewhere which was still near the city but safer. There they stayed for three months, but the inhabitants of Palermo fought back bravely and they achieved very little against it, although they harassed it by plundering many of the neighbouring places round about it. Once they realised that they would be unable to conquer the city, at least at that time, they moved their camp [again] and went to attack Bugamo. The citizens of that *castrum* put up only a feeble resistance, and they razed it to the ground, bringing back all the inhabitants, including the women and children, as captives, along with their property. They then wanted to return to Calabria, and so they pitched their tents not far from the city of Agrigento, for this was their most direct route. The inhabitants of that city were far too confident in their own strength, and shouting noisily they burst forth from the

gates and attacked them. But their rash assault was beaten off by their enemies, who as they fled pursued them right up to the gates of their city. The duke then left, and after his arrival in Calabria he brought the expedition to an end. He had the people of Bugamo, whom he had taken prisoner, brought to Scribla, the place which he had previously abandoned, and restored it by settling them there.

(37) In the year from the Incarnation of our Lord 1065 he destroyed the *castrum* of Policastro, and settled all its inhabitants at Nicotera, which he founded in that same year. Before Duke Robert went to Palermo and set his tents on Monte Tarantino next to that city, he and count Roger had previously stormed the *castrum* of Rogel [Rogliano?] in the province of Cosenza and imposed their rule over it. In that same year the duke went to attack a *castrum* called Ajello, [also] in the province of Cosenza, and besieged it for four months. However, since their enemies had pitched their tents very near the *castrum*, the inhabitants of Ajello made a sortie, in an attempt to hurl their slingshots and arrows further [into it], and both sides fought bravely, with each suffering casualties. Our men became extremely angry, and while they were attacking the enemy where their ranks were thickest and striving to break through them, Roger, son of Scolcandus, was hit by a javelin and thrown from his horse. When his nephew Gilbert tried to rescue him he too was unhorsed, and both were killed. The duke and his whole army were saddened by their deaths, for they were among the *familiares* who were most dear to him. He ordered that their bodies be buried at St. Euphemia, where he had recently founded an abbey in honour of the Holy Mary, Mother of God; he gave their horses and other property to this same church for their salvation.

(38) Determined to conquer Sicily, Count Roger was anxious not to remain inactive, but travelled everywhere, spreading terror with frequent raids. As was his custom, he was always busy, so much so that neither strong winds nor the darkness of night could discourage him, for he moved from one place to another, taking charge of everything himself. His presence more than anything else terrified the enemy. They were so scared by his frequent and rapid movements that they thought him always to be there. But since, when the enemy did realise that he was absent, our men were gravely threatened by hostile

incursions, he founded a *castrum* at Petralia, in the year 1066 from the Lord's Incarnation, building towers and carefully establishing bastions outside the gate. There he could, if circumstances forced him to, easily take refuge, and from there the places round about could be laid waste and more effectively and quickly brought under his rule. Indeed from there he could dominate the greater part of Sicily and impose his yoke and lordship over it. For the natural and customary inclination of the sons of Tancred was always to be greedy for rule, to the very utmost of their powers. They were unable to put up with anybody in their vicinity holding lands and possessions without being envious and immediately seizing these by force and rendering everything subject to their authority.

(39) Duke Robert possessed this characteristic even more than the others. Thus he attempted to make his nephew, Geoffrey of Conversano (his sister's son) render service to him for Montepeloso, as for the many other *castra* which he held from him; even though Geoffrey had not received either it or the others from him, but had gained them from his enemies through his own energy [*sua strenuitate*], and without help from the duke. When he refused to do this the duke set off with his army and went to besiege the *castrum*. Many warlike deeds were performed on each side, but finally the duke forced him to promise to do service from this *castrum* as for the others.

(40) In the year 1068, seeing that fortune favoured him in all that he attempted, the duke marched to besiege the renowned city of Bari both by land and sea. He was already close at hand for it was not far from Montepeloso. Bari had formerly been in rebellion against the Emperor of Constantinople and allied with the duke, but the emperor had recovered its loyalty by making various concessions, and it was this which had led Robert to besiege the city. Since a corner of that city projects out into the sea, he placed himself with his cavalry on its landward side, blockading it from one shore to the other, with his ships spread across the sea and securely bound together with iron chains and so making a barrier [there]. Thus he had the city surrounded and prevented any escape from it on either side. He had two bridges built, placing one on the shore on each side [of the city], projecting way out into the sea and attached to the ships on each flank by ropes, so that, if the Bariots should direct any attack against the ships, then his soldiers could bring them help speedily and by a direct

route. However the Bariots wanted to show that they were not intimidated by what the duke had done and that they held his siegeworks in contempt. They hung out their most valuable treasures on display and shouted insults at Guiscard. They trusted in [the strength of] their bastions and had no fear of losing their property. However such things did not discourage Guiscard from what he intended, but rather heightened his ambition and greed. The more they boasted of the riches within the walls, the fiercer his hope of gain became. His mind remained staunchly fixed on what he had begun, and he replied to them by laughing. 'Those things which you have shown me', he said, 'are mine, and, since you have presented them to me of your own free will, I thank you. Keep them safe for the time being. You will certainly lament their loss, for in the future I shall give them away generously'.

It was in this way that he encouraged his men to storm the city, and he inflamed them with his promises - the reward for their hard work and privations had been shown to them from inside the walls! He did his best to strike fear into his enemies by, at one and the same time, marching round the walls, throwing up ramparts, surrounding the city with earthworks, building battering rams and other machines which would be needed for the city's capture, marshalling his own men and harassing the enemy.

The people of Bari realised that the duke remained absolutely firm in his purpose (far more so than they thought he would) and that, surrounded as they were by enemies, there was no way that they could bring food into the city, which was burdened with a large number of non-combatants, namely women and children. Unable to do anything by force, they resorted to treachery, and prepared a plot against the duke's life. They came to an agreement with a dubious character whom they paid to sneak out of the city and try to kill him with a javelin. This man, Amerinus, was seized by covetousness and, deceived by avarice. He hurried to carry out this wicked deed, which to him then seemed noble, for he had been misled by the great cunning of learned men. He took a javelin which had been dipped in poison and left the city. Throwing stones over the walls at the enemy with a slingshot, as if he was one of our own men, he avoided the pickets and approached our camp. In the evening, as the sun was fast setting, the duke was sitting at dinner in his bivouac, which had been built from branches and leaves. The assassin approached from the

rear and made a hole between the branches of the wall. Believing that he had a clear idea of the duke's position, both by looking and by the sound of his voice, he hurled the javelin which he carried, but, although it tore the duke's clothing, God protected him and he was unhurt, while the javelin buried itself in the ground. The assassin's attack had been in vain, but believing the duke to have been hit (and now without his javelin) he realised that there was nothing left to him but to flee, which he did as fast as he could, racing back into the city. Once the duke's officers [*ministri*] were aware of this treachery, they rushed outside, appalled by what had happened. They posted guards and pickets round the duke with more than usual care, and, on his order, brought masons who at dawn immediately built a stone house for him.

(41) Count Roger had meanwhile remained in Sicily, and distinguished himself in frequent and warlike raids. Striving to make the land subject to himself, he cared little for any exertion, which for the most part caused harm to the other side [rather than to him]. He could not tolerate peace, and as a result he inflicted such damage that the enemy were terrified, and scarcely felt safe anywhere, even in their fortresses. They were afraid all the time, night and day, morning and evening, in cold weather or hot. Because of this the Sicilians took counsel among themselves, and decided to put an end to this rather than remaining any longer leading such an unhappy and fear-filled life. So they prepared to try the fortunes of war against the count, and while he was raiding near Palermo they suddenly attacked him at Misilmeri with a vast army recruited from every possible place. This was in the year from the Incarnation of the Word 1068. The count saw them from afar, and roared [his defiance]. He gathered all his men together in a body, and laughing the while said to them: 'you noble men, born of noble ancestors! Fortune favours you, for the booty which you have long been seeking is now put in front of you, saving you further labour and tiresome travel to secure it. Behold the booty given to us by God! Take it from those who are unworthy of it. Let us use it, dividing it up as the Apostles did, to each according to his labour. There is no need to be afraid of those whom you have defeated on many previous occasions. If they have changed their leader they are still the same people, of the same quality and the same religion as the others. Our God however also remains immutable, and, if our trust in our Faith does not waver, then neither will He change His decision to help us

to victory'. After saying this he carefully drew up the battle line and our men fought with the enemy. Our people behaved bravely, and the enemy were so comprehensively defeated that there were hardly any survivors from that great multitude to carry back the news of the disaster to Palermo, and our men were indeed richly endowed with the spoils of victory.

(42) It was the Saracens' custom to bring with them, when they went on a journey of any length, pigeons, which at home were fed on corn mixed with honey. The male birds were kept in cages, and when there was some change of fortune which they wished to make known at home, they wrote the news down on pieces of parchment [*chartulis*] which they hung round the birds' necks, or under their wings. They then let the birds loose, and the latter would hurry home bringing the news of what had happened to their absent friends and whether they were successful. The little birds could not read, but would hurry home, bringing the parchments with their messages, in search of the sweet honeyed grains on which they were so often fed. The count captured the cages with these birds along with the rest of the spoils. Dipping the parchments in blood, he released the birds, and thus informed the Palermitans of the misfortune which had occurred. The whole city was thunderstruck; the tearful voices of women and children rent the air and rose to the heavens. Our people rejoiced, theirs brought forth sadness.

(43) At this time a certain Greek called Argerizzus governed the city of Bari for the emperor. After discussing the place's situation with the other citizens, he set down its and their parlous position under enemy attack in writing and ordered a man to leave the city secretly by night and go to Diogenes in Constantinople. He was to let the emperor know that the city, which alone remained faithful to him, was harassed on every side by enemy attacks and, unless help was brought speedily, would be lost. It had already been under siege for three years, and the citizens had finally become disheartened and were prepared to surrender. If he did not retain it there would be no further hope of recovering the province which had been seized by the enemy.

The envoy faithfully fulfilled his instructions, speedily accomplished his long journey and came to Constantinople. He went to show the emperor the letter he carried, and backed up the letter by exhorting him verbally to send help. The emperor read the letter he had

received, and then had a fleet prepared which he sent to Durazzo. In command of it he placed Joscelin of Corinth, a man of the Norman race who held senior rank in the imperial palace, since he was both a mighty warrior and a cunning diplomat. He gave him a substantial force with which to bring help to the Bariots.

On the emperor's order the envoy then returned to Bari, and passing through the enemy entered the city secretly, just as he had left it. He revealed what had taken place and the signal by which they would know when the relief was getting close. He instructed them to make a similar signal to those who were approaching, namely that they should light a fire on one of the bastions, to ensure that the relieving force came to the right harbour. The Bariots were overjoyed by this message, and anticipated what needed to be done (for to someone who wants something nothing can ever be done too fast). They lit the fire the next night and noisily rejoiced, singing and shouting, more than they were accustomed to do. Our men wondered what this portended; a number of possibilities were canvased and there was widespread discussion, but the more experienced men realised the truth, that they were expecting a relief force by sea.

Count Roger of Sicily had however arrived with a large number of galleys [*plurimo remige*] to assist the duke his brother, at the latter's request. He was fierce as a lion in battle, but was also ruled by prudence and was [thus] granted fortune's favour. He arranged this matter cunningly - ordering a patrol boat to go out every night to see if the expected ships were approaching. Lo and behold, on one of these occasions, in the middle of the night, lights were seen, shining like stars on the topmast of every vessel. When this was reported to the count he hurried out to meet the enemy with his squadron as fast as possible, reckoning that he himself had enough ships [to do this]. Seeing the enemy closing in, the Bariots, who had been rushing around with joy, realised that they could do little to counter this. The count saw that he was close to the ship of Joscelin, the enemy leader, which was distinguished from the rest by having two lanterns, and ordered his men to attack it. A fierce battle was joined, and during it some of our men rashly boarded their ship. Such was their weight (with their armour), all on one side of the ship, that they fell overboard and a hundred and fifty men in armour were drowned. The count still fought and defeated

Joscelin, the latter was taken a prisoner on board his ship, and he returned gloriously and triumphantly to his brother.

The duke meanwhile was extremely anxious, fearful that he might lose his brother in this battle, for he himself was unable to help him, and he was the only brother left to him, the others being now dead. When it was announced that the count was returning safe and victorious, the duke alleged that he would not believe this until he had made certain with his own eyes. Once he had seen that he was safe, he burst into tears. The Count sent Joscelin, who was splendidly garbed in the Greek fashion, a captive to the duke, as a present.

So the Bariots, whose hopes had been dashed and were unable to withstand their enemies any longer, surrendered and made a treaty with the duke, in the year of the lord 1071. The duke, whose wish had now been achieved, thanked his brother and his whole army; then, arranging matters in the city to his satisfaction, he sent his brother ahead to Sicily and a little while afterwards set off with his main army for Palermo. He stayed at Otranto for the whole of the months of June and July. There he had a hill levelled, to make access to the sea easier, and loaded the horses on board ship. His activities quite terrified the people of Durazzo who were afraid that he and his army would cross the sea and attack them. So they sent a mule and a horse as presents to him, using this as a pretext to do some spying.

(44) At about that time Costa Condomicita, who had previously obtained Stilo from the duke through trickery, was reconciled with him and returned the *castrum* to him, for he was afraid that the duke was only pretending to sail to Sicily and would actually turn aside to besiege Stilo. He explained that what he had done had been the result of provocation and the injuries which he had received. For the duke had appointed a certain Costa Peloga as governor [*stratigotus*]. The latter grew very proud and inflicted many injuries on noble men and women, not even sparing his own relations. Among other things he had a noblewoman called Regina, who was Costa Condomicita's grandmother, arrested and savagely beaten, because he wished to extort from her a golden hen and chicks which she was alleged to possess. Costa Condomicta was detained in the duke's service at Isola, near Crotone. When

he was informed of what had happened, he thought over the injury done to his grandmother and then, feigning illness, he requested the duke's permission to return home to be cured. He arrived back in Stilo on Christmas Eve. Hearing of his arrival, the governor sent a servant to him with a gift of fish, and asked how matters stood with the duke. Costa Condomicita, as if he had no evil intent, concealed his anger and sent back his thanks. But he had not forgotten what he was plotting, and after he had dined he went round in secret to the leading men of the town, outlining his grievance about the injuries done to him and his grandmother. They replied that what had happened to him had been his own fault - for they knew that the duke [relied] on his support and ability. He did not make any excuses, but said that he was sorry for what he had done, and promised that just as he had previously given it [Stilo?/his loyalty? to the duke - *the text is defective here*] so he would now, if only he could obtain their assistance, he would retract it. As a result many people pledged themselves to him, and he passed a sleepless night, binding everyone he could to his cause. At daybreak all those who did not know of this plot were busy in church praising God, as they should have been on that particular day. But Costa Condomicita and some thirteen men who had been watching from the windows, carrying swords beneath their cloaks, went on his signal to the gate of the citadel [*castellum*]. The doorkeeper, who suspected nothing, opened the gate to them as though they were friends. He and his allies went in and entered the governor's lodgings, seizing any weapons they found there. They rushed in as fast as they could, intending to seize the governor as he went to church. However, hearing yelling all around him, the governor realised that he was being ambushed and jumped through a window. Falling headlong, he tried to run away and escape but was seized by the citizens, all of whom loathed him, and brought back. Costa Condomicita wanted to spare his life since he was one of his blood relations, but the people condemned him and put him to death, and thus he expiated by his sufferings the cruel punishments which he had [previously] inflicted on others. Those whom he had imprisoned were set free, and the inhabitants openly abandoned their fealty to the duke. The result was that rebels caused a great deal of trouble in a number of places in Calabria for nearly six years.

We have set down this story so that those in authority may be warned not to allow the loyalty of their subjects to be alienated by unworthy servants.

(45) After gathering supplies and preparing everything which was needed for the expedition, the duke followed his brother, whom he had sent on ahead, and came to Catania where the count then was, on the pretence of attacking Malta and of not being concerned with Palermo. But instead, urged on by his brother, he went from there with a large force of cavalry, infantry and ships, and came to Palermo. His ships blockaded the city from the ocean; he placed his brother the count and those who served in his train on one side while he himself threatened the walls from the other flank with the Calabrians and Apulians.

For five months the enemy kept up a keen and vigilant defence of the city. He and his brother were nonetheless determined to attack it, and he watched eagerly for an opportunity to storm it. Both were inflamed with equal enthusiasm; they went everywhere, drawing up their men, organising everything, threatening the enemy, providing their own men with a great many things and promising them more, usually in the lead, and never abandoning what they had started. After most skilfully constructing siege engines and ladders to scale the walls, the duke stealthily entered the gardens on the sea side where the fleet was, along with three hundred knights, intending to storm the city. He instructed his brother to do the same thing on the other side where he was. On his signal the men he led acted speedily and forced their way in with a great cheer. The whole city rushed to arms and rushed to their defence posts, even though they were terrified by the assailants' noise. A section of the wall which they had not been worried about had been foolishly left unmanned; Guiscard's men placed their ladders there and scaled it. The outer city was captured, and the iron gates were opened for their comrades to enter. The duke and count, with their whole army, took up position inside the walls.

The inhabitants of Palermo were thus outmanoeuvred, and realising that the enemy was now inside the walls and to their rear they fled back into the inner city. Night put an end to the battle. Next morning a truce was agreed and their leaders came to talk to the two brothers. They told them that they refused absolutely to abandon or to act in breach of their own faith. But provided that they were sure that they would not be forced to do this, and that they would not be oppressed with new and unjust laws, then, since their present

situation left them with no choice, they would surrender the city, serve them faithfully and pay tribute. They promised to ratify this on oath in accordance with their law.

The duke and count rejoiced and gladly accepted the terms which were offered, in the year from the Incarnation of the Lord 1071. After securing this they first, as faithful observers of Scripture, which says: 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all shall be added unto you' [*Luke*, xii.31], restored to the catholic faith the church of the most holy Mother of God, Mary, which had in the past been the cathedral but had been later profaned by the impious Saracens and turned into a temple of their superstitious belief. They enriched it with an endowment and church ornaments. They recalled and restored the archbishop, who had been expelled by the infidels and who, although he was a Greek and a timid man, had been celebrating the Christian religion as best he could in the poor church of St. Cyriacus. Then, after strengthening the citadel and arranging matters in the city as he wished, retaining it in his own hands, he conceded to his brother in return for his help the Val Demone and all the other parts of Sicily which they had conquered, to hold from him, as he had promised he would, nor did he seek to be false to his promise.

(46) While these things were going on Serlo, son of Serlo and nephew of these two leaders - of whom we made mention previously - remained at Cerami on the orders of the duke and the count to protect the region against raids from the Arabs who were at that time still garrisoning Castrogiovanni. For, with the consent of the duke and the count, half of all Sicily had fallen to his share and that of Arisgot of Pozzuoli, and had been divided between them. The latter was their blood-relation, and they were both men equally distinguished by their skill at arms and in counsel. However the Arabs stationed at Castrogiovanni were greatly threatened by Serlo's energy [*strenuitas*] since he launched many attacks against them, and they strove to encompass his ruin, both by force of arms and by treachery. Hence, in order to deceive him more easily, a certain Saracen called Brachiem [*Ibrahim*] made an agreement with Serlo, and each verbally took the other as his adopted brother, as was the custom of their people. Then he arranged with his own people to betray him, and to deceive him [further] sent Serlo suitable gifts and friendly messages, among which he told him this: 'let my adopted brother know that, on such and such a day, in a deliberate act of vainglory, a

group of only seven Arabs will probably be making a foray into your land to plunder'. When Serlo heard this he thought it was ridiculous, and took no precautions at all, not bothering to summon anybody from the neighbouring *castra* to help him, while he himself rashly went out to hunt.

But the Arabs who had prepared this treacherous scheme left Castrogiovanni with seven hundred cavalry and two thousand footmen, and placed them in ambush in places of concealment not far from Cerami. They sent a group of only seven knights, as Brachiem had told Serlo, out to plunder to draw Serlo out of Cerami. Serlo heard the uproar coming from the cries of the inhabitants of the district as he was out hunting. Since he was unarmed he sent a messenger to Cerami to bring back his armour and to summon his men, meanwhile, spurred on by the noise of the attack, he went to see what was going on. When it was reported to him that seven horsemen were out plundering, he trusted his adopted brother's information more than he should have done. Seizing the armour which had been brought out to him, he pursued them rashly and rode into the ambush. Seeing his enemies charging from ambush and hearing the horrid clash of arms at his rear, Serlo refused to rely on flight, even though he had only a minimal force with him, but he and his few companions made their way to a rock, which from that day onwards was known as 'Serlo's rock'. He climbed up it, placed his back to it like a wall and, with no help in prospect from any direction, stood at bay. Finally he was struck down and killed, and of all those who were with him only two, who lay hidden among the bodies of the dead, survived. Serlo was disembowelled and the Saracens tore out his heart and are alleged to have eaten it, so that they might share in the bravery for which he had been famed. They sent the severed heads of those who had been slain as a present to their king in Africa, but Serlo's head was placed on a pike and carried through the city squares, with a herald announcing that the man who more than anybody else had threatened Sicily had been conquered by his enemies; with nobody else like him surviving, Sicily could certainly rejoice at his death.

But when this news was announced to our leaders at Palermo, the whole army was devastated. The count was stricken with grief at the loss of his nephew. The duke wanted to put an end to his brother's lament and urged the count to hide his sorrow and behave like a

man: 'Women are allowed to be sorrowful', he said, 'we however should put on our armour and take revenge'.

Thereafter both brothers acted separately and strove to forward their own individual interests, except that when it was really necessary and one was asked by the other, each of them went to bring help to the other. We shall now put an end to this book and commence another, and we shall change our style as the subject matter dictates, as we follow each of them, sometimes separately and at others acting together.