

**Byzantium, Political Agency, and the City:  
A Case Study in Urban Autonomy During the  
Norman Conquest of Southern Italy**

by

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## **Abstract**

At the turn of the first millennium, a group of Norman adventurers arrived in the Byzantine territories of southern Italy and within a century had conquered the entire region, putting an end to imperial rule in the *Mezzogiorno*. This thesis examines the reactions of cities to the Norman Conquest as imperial forces crumbled in the face of their advance. After centuries of Byzantine rule in the region, urban polities had grown accustomed to a mode of government that acknowledged the legitimacy of popular political participation, which may have had its roots in the often ignored republican heritage of citizens of the Eastern Roman Empire. The presence of political agency challenges our conception of imperial authority as tyrannical and unresponsive. In the final analysis, cities exhibited hitherto unacknowledged political agency as they sought to defend their urban autonomy during the transition to Norman rule at the close of the eleventh century.

**Keywords:** Byzantine Italy; Political Agency; Urban Autonomy; Imperial Authority; Eleventh Century; Republicanism

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## Abbreviations

<i>Alexiad</i>	Anna Comnena. <i>Alexiade (règne De L'empereur Alexis I Comnène, 1081-1118)</i> .
Amatus	Amatus of Montecassino. <i>The History of the Normans</i> .
<i>Ann. Bari</i>	"Annales Barenses" in W.J. Churchill, "The Annales Barenses and the Annales Lupi Protosptharri: Critical Edition and Commentary."
<i>Ann. Lupi.</i>	"Annales Lupi Protosptharri" in W.J. Churchill, "The Annales Barenses and the Annales Lupi Protosptharri: Critical Edition and Commentary."
<i>Anon. Bari</i>	<i>Anonymi Barensis Chronicon (855-1149)</i> .
Aristakes	Aristakes Lastivertc'i. <i>The History</i> .
Attaleiates, <i>Diataxis</i>	Michael Attaleiates. <i>Diataxis :: Rule of Michael Attaleiates for his Almshouse in Rhaidestos and for the Monastery of Christ Panoiktirmon in Constantinople</i> .
Attaleiates, <i>Hist.</i>	Michael Attaleiates. <i>The History</i> .
Attaleiates, <i>Ponema Nomikon</i>	Michael Attaleiates. <i>Ponema Nomikon</i> .
<i>CDB I</i>	<i>Codice diplomatico barese. I. Le pergamene del Duomo di Bari (952-1264)</i> .
<i>CDB III</i>	<i>Codice diplomatico barese. III. Le pergamene della Cattedrale di Terlizzi (971-1300)</i> .
<i>CDB IV</i>	<i>Codice diplomatico barese. IV. Le pergamene di S. Nicola di Bari. Periodo greco (939-1071)</i> .
<i>CDB V</i>	<i>Codice diplomatico barese. V. Le pergamene di S. Nicola di Bari. Periodo normanno (1075-1194)</i> .
Choniates	Niketas Choniates. <i>O city of Byzantium : annals of Niketas Choniates</i> .
<i>Chron. Ahimaaz</i>	Ahimaaz ben Paltiel. <i>The Chronicle of Ahimaaz</i> .
<i>Chron. Cas.</i>	<i>Chronica Monasterii Casinensis</i> .
<i>Chron. Sal.</i>	<i>Chronicon Salernitanum: A Critical Edition with Studies on Literary and Historical Sources and on Language</i> .
<i>DAC</i>	Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos. <i>The Book of Ceremonies: with the Greek edition of the Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae</i> .
<i>DAI</i>	Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos. <i>De Administrando Imperio</i> .
Erchempert	Joan Rowe Ferry. "Erchempert's History of the Lombards of Benevento: a translation and study of its place in the chronicle tradition."

Falcandus	Hugo Falcandus. <i>The History of the Tyrants of Sicily by 'Hugo Falcandus' 1154-69.</i>
<i>Gesta Tancredi</i>	Ralph of Caen. ' <i>Gesta Tancredi</i> ' of Ralph of Caen: <i>A History of the Normans on the First Crusade.</i>
Kekaumenos	Kekaumenos. <i>Raccomandazioni e consigli di un galantuomo: Strategikon.</i>
Kinnamos	Ioannes Kinnamos. <i>The Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus by John Kinnamos.</i>
Leo the Deacon	Leo the Deacon. <i>The History of Leo the Deacon: Byzantine Military Expansion in the Tenth Century.</i>
<i>Listes</i>	Nicolas Oikonomidès. <i>Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe et Xe siècles: Introduction, texte, traduction et commentaire.</i>
Liudprand, <i>Relatio</i>	"The Embassy of Liudprand the Cremonese Bishop to the Constantinopolitan Emperor Nicephoros Phocas on Behalf of the August Ottos & Adelheid" in Liudprand of Cremona. <i>The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona.</i>
Malaterra	Gaufredo Malaterra. "De Rebus Gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae Comitis et Roberti Guiscardi Ducis Fratris Eius :: The Deeds of Count Roger of Sicily of Calabria and Sicily and of Duke Robert Guiscard, his brother."
Mystikos, <i>Ep.</i>	Nicholas I Mystikos, Patriarch of Constantinople. <i>Nicholas I Patriarch of Constantinople: Letters: Greek Text and English Translation.</i>
<i>ODB</i>	<i>The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium.</i>
<i>PBW</i>	<i>Prosopography of the Byzantine World (2011).</i>
Psellos, <i>Chr.</i>	Michael Psellos. <i>Fourteen Byzantine rulers: the "Chronographia" of Michael Psellus.</i>
Psellos, <i>Historia Syntomos</i>	Michael Psellos. <i>Michaelis Pselli Historia Syntomos.</i>
Romuald	Romuald of Salerno. "Chronicon sive Annales, 1153-69." In <i>The History of the Tyrants of Sicily by 'Hugo Falcandus' 1154-69.</i>
Skylitzes	Ioannes Skylitzes. <i>A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811-1057.</i>
Sky. Cont.	Ioannes Skylitzes Continuatus. <i>Ἡ συνέχεια τῆς Χρονογραφίας τοῦ Ἰωάννου Σκυλίτση.</i>
Telese	Alexander of Telese. "The Deeds done by King Roger of Sicily."
<i>Translatio S. Nich.</i>	<i>Saint Nicholas: His Life, the Translation of his Relics and his Basilica in Bari.</i>
Trincheria	Francesco Trincheria. <i>Syllabus Graecarum membranarum.</i>

<i>Vita Christophoros</i>	Habib Zayat. "Vie du patriarche melkite d'Antioche Christophore (+967) par le protospathaire Ibrahim b. Yuhanna, Document inédit du X <sup>e</sup> siècle."
<i>Vita S. Nilos</i>	St. Nilos of Rossano. <i>Vita di San Nilo abate: fondatore della Badia di Grottaferrata.</i>
Will. Apulia	William of Apulia. "The Deeds of Robert Guiscard."
Yahyā	Yahyā of Antioch. <i>Histoire De Yahya-ibn-Said d'Antioche, Continueur De Said-ibn-Bitriq.</i>
Zonaras	Ioannes Zonaras. <i>Epitome Historion.</i>

## Introduction

In the late summer of 1155, a Byzantine army, under the command of the *sebastos* Michael Palaiologos and the disgruntled nephew of King Roger II of Sicily, Robert Bassonville arrived outside the city of Bari (the Greek, *Varis*).<sup>1</sup> The inhabitants, were divided in their loyalty to their Sicilian overlords, so when Palaiologos addressed the Baresi with promises of the benefits of imperial rule, some listened; when gold was offered to sweeten the deal, they acted. A large portion of the inhabitants went over to the Byzantines, while the Sicilian garrison, along with their remaining supporters, retreated to the city's citadel. The sources record the divisions in the city that this golden ruse created: "it was really something worthy of wonder, to see those lately united in race and purpose today sundered by gold as if by a wall, feeling hatred toward one another and already divided by deeds. So things went there."<sup>2</sup> The citadel was breached shortly thereafter and the city was captured by the Byzantines. The Baresi had not known a Byzantine government since the city fell in 1071 to the Norman Duke, Robert Guiscard, however, rather than celebrating their return to the empire, the inhabitants instead took steps to guarantee their autonomy. Turning against the city's citadel, "they demolished it to the foundation and got rid of it, although the general was strongly opposed to this and asked to purchase it for much money."<sup>3</sup> However, their renewed independence was not to last. Several years later, when Bari returned to Sicilian dominion, King William I 'the Bad,' beheld the ruined foundations of his royal citadel and said: "My judgment against you will be just: since you refused to spare my house, I will certainly not spare your houses; but I will allow you to leave freely with your property."<sup>4</sup> The Baresi were given two days to evacuate before William tore down the city's walls

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<sup>1</sup> Primary account: Kinnamos IV.1-3, pp.106-110; Choniates II.91, p.53; Falcandus 8, pp.73-74; Romuald, pp.223-224. See also the summary in: J.J. Norwich, *The Kingdom in the Sun, 1130-1194* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 187.

<sup>2</sup> Kinnamos IV.3, p.109.

<sup>3</sup> Kinnamos IV.3, p.110.

<sup>4</sup> Falcandus 8, pp.73-74.

and leveled their homes, leaving only the cathedral of St. Nicholas standing. The sources explain: “that is why the most powerful city in Apulia, celebrated by fame and immensely rich, proud in its noble citizens and remarkable in the architecture of its buildings, now lies transformed into piles of rubble.”<sup>5</sup>

The Baresi had an uneasy relationship with authority and jealously guarded their autonomy. The royal citadel that they destroyed, at the cost of their homes, was a hated symbol of subjugation. Indeed, two decades earlier, in 1132, they killed the Saracen workers sent to construct the fortress and extracted a promise from the King not to continue with the project, a promise that he ultimately broke.<sup>6</sup> Earlier still, in 1087, sixteen years after the end of the Byzantine presence in southern Italy, the Baresi levelled the city’s *praetorium*, the seat of imperial power in the *Mezzogiorno*, in order to make room for the construction of the cathedral of St. Nicholas.<sup>7</sup> The city’s annals similarly record the tension between citizens and the imperial and later ducal power structures that they inhabited, as the Baresi asserted their autonomy. The Baresi were not alone in these expressions, as city after city, throughout southern Italy sought to have their voices heard, first under the Byzantines and then later under their Norman conquerors. This thesis is the story of these voices and the urban autonomy that such assertions of popular opinion and action exemplified, as it existed under Byzantine rule in southern Italy during the Norman Conquest of the region, in the eleventh century.

## **What does a medieval state look like?**

In the course of this investigation into urban political agency, this thesis speaks to ongoing debates about the nature of imperial authority throughout the Byzantine Empire. Fundamental to these debates is the nature of the relationship between the Byzantine

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<sup>5</sup> Falcandus 8, p.74.

<sup>6</sup> Telese II.34, 49, pp.16, 19.

<sup>7</sup> *Translatio S. Nich.* 18, pp.65-66.

state, broadly conceived, and its citizens.<sup>8</sup> The image of Byzantium as an autocratic, absolutist state and the negative connotations associated with it can be traced back to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century critiques against French absolutism. The French historian Charles Le Beau and the English Romanist Edward Gibbon both directed critiques against the Byzantine emperors. A young Karl Marx, echoing his philosophic father, Hegel, went so far as to call the empire the “worst state.”<sup>9</sup> Similarly, others writing in the twentieth century have read totalitarian aspects in the Eastern Roman Empire and drawn comparisons with Tsarist and later, Soviet, Russia.<sup>10</sup> There has been a tendency to associate Byzantium with a strong tyrannical central government, in short everything that we moderns find odious.<sup>11</sup>

The picture on the ground, however, is a much more nuanced affair. Recent historiography has pointed to the central role played by the Byzantine capital, Constantinople. The ‘Queen of Cities’ or just plain ‘The City’ as it was sometimes called, was the cultural, economic and political centre of the empire, a bias that is well represented in the primary sources.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, it has been argued that the capital stunted

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<sup>8</sup> On states, ancient and medieval, see the discussion in: Jack A. Goldstone and John F. Haldon, “Ancient States, Empires, and Exploitation: Problems and Perspectives,” in *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium*, eds. Ian Morris and Walter Scheidel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3-29. Haldon, in the same volume, questions whether Byzantium was in fact an empire. See: John F. Haldon, “The Byzantine Empire,” in *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium*, eds. Ian Morris and Walter Scheidel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 205.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Kazhdan and Giles Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium: An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1982), 10. Hegel said of the Byzantine Empire: “Its general aspect presents a disgusting picture of imbecility; wretched, nay, insane passions, stifle the growth of all that is noble in thoughts, deeds, and persons.” G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History with prefaces by Charles Hegel and Translator, J. Sibree, M.A.* (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001), 358.

<sup>10</sup> See for example: Ihor Ševčenko, “Was there totalitarianism in Byzantium? Constantinople’s control over its Asiatic Hinterland in the early ninth century,” in *Constantinople and its Hinterland: Papers from the Twenty-seventh symposium of Byzantine Studies, Oxford, April 1993*, eds. Cyril Mango and Gilbert Dagron (Aldershot, UK: Variorum, 1995), 91-105; Alexander P. Kazhdan, “The Emperor’s New Clothes?” *History Today* 39:9 (Sept. 1989), 26-34.

<sup>11</sup> For a more recent use of Byzantium as a foil in contemporary debates, see the critique of a recent essay by Saba Mahmood in: Dimitris Krallis, “The Critic’s Byzantine Ploy: Voltairean Confusion in Postsecularist Narratives,” *boundary 2* 40:1 (2013).

<sup>12</sup> Ihor Ševčenko, “Constantinople as Viewed from the Eastern Provinces in the Middle Byzantine Period,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. ¾, Part 2. Eucharisterion: Essays presented to Omeljen Pritsak on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students (1979-1980), 712-747.

the growth of urban centres in its hinterland following the loss of the Egyptian and Syrian provinces in the seventh century.<sup>13</sup> The argument has been extended to include expressions of imperial authority. According to this view, the political power of the centre diminished substantially the moment one left the capital. Even in the empire's core provinces, so the argument goes, the state footprint was restricted to the extraction of taxes and the preservation of the monopoly on sovereignty.<sup>14</sup> A similar view has been made for the frontier regions of the empire.<sup>15</sup>

This minimalist account, while important as a corrective to the image of the omnipotent and omnipresent Byzantine state, moves the pendulum too far in the other direction. While the enlightenment era caricature and its Soviet era reiteration outlined above is out of proportion, there is at least some basis for the re-examination of the role of the Byzantine state in society that focuses on its bureaucratic nature. The *Diataxis* of the eleventh-century judge and historian, Michael Attaleiates is illustrative of this tendency. The document, issued in 1077, contains the monastic rule for his almshouse in the city of Raideustos, located three days east from the Byzantine capital, and for the monastery of Christ *Panoiktirmon* in Constantinople itself. In addition to the details surrounding the daily lives of the monks and the administration of property, the document contains copies of two *chrysoboulla* from the emperors Michael VII Doukas (r.1071-1078) and Nikephoros III Botaneiates (r.1078-1081). The preambles are illustrative of the scope of the bureaucracy involved, and are worth quoting at length:

Copy of the emperor, lord Michael [VII] Doukas, which was registered at the office of the *genikos logothetes* in the month of March of the thirteenth indiction, at the office of the *oikeiaka* on March 28 of the thirteenth indiction, at the office of the *sakellei* in the month of March of the thirteenth indiction, at the *oikonomion* of

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<sup>13</sup> Michael Angold, "The Shaping of the Byzantine 'City'," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 10 (1985), 1-6.

<sup>14</sup> Leonora Neville, *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society, 950-1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Eastern frontier: Jean-Claude Cheynet, "Les limites de pouvoir à Byzance: une forme de tolerance?" in *Anochē Kai Katastolē Stous Mesous Chronous : Mnēmē Lenou Maurommatē (Toleration and Repression in the Middle Ages)*, ed. by K. Nikolau (Athens: Ethniko Hidryma Ereunōn, Institutouto Vyzantinōn Ereunōn , 2002); Western frontier, and Italy in particular: Catherine Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976-1025)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 429-447.

pious institutions on March 30 of the thirteenth indiction, and at the office of the *stratotikos logothetes* on April 14 of the thirteenth indiction.<sup>16</sup>

The preamble to Botaneiates' *chrysoboullon* is virtually identical and reveals the same level of bureaucratic proceduralism, as the document is deposited in the various offices.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, the *chrysoboulla* set out to protect the properties from interference by "judges, fiscal agents, *strateutai*, *orthotai*, magistrates registrars, tax collectors and all their subordinates... as if by a great fortress which is impregnable on all sides;" there are also provisions barring the billeting of soldiers.<sup>18</sup> As a member of the imperial administration, Attaleiates would have been well informed of the possibilities for imperial interference in his foundations and the documents are a testament to the sheer scope for state intrusion and the extent of imperial authority.<sup>19</sup>

The presence of the state and its apparatus was not just concentrated at the imperial centre, but also at the periphery and in Italy in particular. The cartulary evidence for the city of Bari, the administrative capital of Byzantine Italy, reveals a polity in constant contact with the imperial centre. The succession of emperors is dutifully recorded by the city's annalists, as well as the sometimes dramatic circumstances surrounding their rise and fall. For instance the blinding of the emperor Romanos IV Diogenes (r.1068-1071) following the treachery at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 is recorded in detail in the Italian annals and chronicles.<sup>20</sup> This should not be altogether surprising, given that Constantinople ensured that provincial outposts knew who held the imperium. The eleventh-century Hebrew *Chronicle of Ahimaaz* records on the death of the emperor Basileios II (r. 976-1025) that: "it was the custom of the emperors of Constantinople, whenever an emperor died, to make proclamation by letter, in Bari,

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<sup>16</sup> Attaleiates, *Diataxis* INV 10, p.361.

<sup>17</sup> Attaleiates, *Diataxis* INV 11, p.363.

<sup>18</sup> Attaleiates, *Diataxis* INV 10, p.361-362. These passages are repeated verbatim in Botaneiates' *chrysoboullon*: Attaleiates, *Diataxis* INV 11, p.365-366.

<sup>19</sup> For the life of Attaleiates: Dimitris Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline in Eleventh-Century Byzantium*. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies Volume 422: Medieval Confluence Series Volume 2 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), 1-42.

<sup>20</sup> *Ann. Lupi*. 177; Will. Apulia Book III, pp.29-31; Amatus I.12-13, p.48. In fact, William of Apulia interrupts his account of the siege of Bari in order to recount the events in question.

giving the day and time when he had passed.”<sup>21</sup> The existence of local regnal lists only further underscores this trend.<sup>22</sup> Byzantine Italy was therefore, firmly integrated into the communication networks of the day.<sup>23</sup>

There is also significant evidence for the presence of an extensive bureaucracy in the provinces. While this will be more fully expanded upon in Chapter 1, it is worth noting here that each city had its own representative of the imperial administration and that large centres, such as Bari and Reggio, boasted much larger bureaucracies. These were bureaucracies that the inhabitants of Byzantine Italy turned to when they sought to record land transfers and settle disputes.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the presence of the administrative structures was not passive; the penitent bringing a suit for judgement to the local bureaucrat needed to know not only which official to approach, but also the proper forms with which to present the suit. Understanding the terms of reference was therefore not neutral. It changed provincial society and implicated it in the Byzantine polity because it required accepting a discursive culture of petition and response, and the principles that underpinned it. In other words, agreeing to play by the rules of the game required the *prima facie* acceptance of the game.<sup>25</sup> While it is true that much of the lower ranks of the bureaucracy were drawn from the local population, they were nonetheless absorbed into the imperial *taxis*, holding Byzantine ranks and titles, drawing salaries and otherwise acting within a Byzantine, bureaucratic, cultural milieu. It is significant that even the great

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<sup>21</sup> *Chron. Ahimaaz* 13b, p.85.

<sup>22</sup> Michael McCormick, “The Imperial Edge: Italo-Byzantine Identity, Movement and Integration, A.D. 650-950,” in *Studies on the Internal Diaspora of the Byzantine Empire*, eds. Helene Ahrweiler and Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998), 47.

<sup>23</sup> See McCormick, “The Imperial Edge,” 31-45. McCormick argues for the integration of the Italian periphery into the empire partly by charting the movement of people between the periphery and the centre. This “kinetic integration,” as he calls it, served to further integrate Byzantine Italy into the empire.

<sup>24</sup> Rosemary Morris, “Dispute Settlement in the Byzantine Provinces in the Tenth Century,” in *The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe*, eds. Paul Fouracre and Wendy Davies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 125–147. See also: Patricia Skinner, “Urban Life in Apulia in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 66 (1998), 159-176.

<sup>25</sup> See Ando, who notes in Late Antique disputes over a community’s responsibilities for road maintenance: “a bureau of roads was required to talk to a bureau of roads.” Clifford Ando, “The ambitions of government: Territoriality and infrastructural power in ancient Rome,” (Paper presented at The Center for Historical Research, Ohio State University, on 31 January, 2014), 31.

rebel Melos the Lombard, who twice rose against Byzantine rule during the first two decades of the eleventh century, was described as being “clad in the Greek manner.”<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the ease with which the Lombard patriarch Nicholas I Mystikos and the Calabrian disciple of Michael Psellos, Ioannes Italos transitioned from the Italian periphery to the Constantinopolitan centre further demonstrates this phenomenon.<sup>27</sup> Byzantine culture had a powerful draw, which endured even after the end of imperial rule in the *Mezzogiorno*, as can be seen in the many charters that continued to date according to Roman tax indictions and the rule of Byzantine emperors, well into the Norman era.<sup>28</sup> Ultimately, Byzantine rule and the bureaucratic structures that accompanied it had a profound effect on the region which persisted and penetrated local modes of thought.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, the identity that provincials accessed was one that celebrated their connection to the Old Rome of Romulus and Remus. A fact frequently overlooked, carefully avoided or simply ignored in studies of Byzantium, is that the Byzantines did not call themselves ‘Byzantines’, instead calling themselves ‘Romans’. The people that inhabited what we call today the Byzantine Empire, and what they called Romanía, saw themselves as direct descendants and inheritors of Old Rome and the political traditions that were associated with it. Their state was the *res publica*, or *politeia*, whose legitimacy

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<sup>26</sup> Will. Apulia Book I, p.3.

<sup>27</sup> Nicholas I Mystikos: Alexander Kazhdan, s.v. "Nicholas I Mystikos." In *ODB*: Oxford University Press, 1991; Ioannes Italos: Alexander Kazhdan, s.v. "John Italos." In *ODB*: Oxford University Press, 1991. See also: McCormick, "Imperial Edge," 39-45, who in addition to Mystikos and Italos also notes the rise of Ioannicius of Ravenna from bilingual secretary for the exarch, to palace official of Justinian II in addition to the prelates of Syracuse, Theodore and Gregory Asbestas.

<sup>28</sup> For example, private charters in the Apulian city of Trani dropped any reference to their Norman overlords after the 1080s and returned to the Byzantine practice of dating: Paul Oldfield, "Urban Government in Southern Italy, c. 1085-1127," *English Historical Review* CXXII, 497 (2007): 592. On the enduring Byzantine influence more generally, see the discussion in: Jean-Marie Martin, "L'empreinte de Byzance dans l'Italie normande. Occupation du sol et institutions," *Annales* 60 (2005), 733-766.

<sup>29</sup> See also Woolf, who charts the Romanization of another province, Gaul. Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: the origins of provincial civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

was based on the consent of the people.<sup>30</sup> New research has shown that maintaining the good opinion of the citizens of the empire was crucial for securing one's place on the throne.<sup>31</sup> Each citizen of the empire saw themselves as a political agent with an important role to play as legitimizer of his ruler, a role that was not challenged by the surviving sources. In other words, political power flowed upwards from the people, and not downwards from the emperor as has been hitherto argued: the emperor was the servant of the people, not the other way around.<sup>32</sup> The picture that begins to emerge here is that the image of Byzantium as a multiethnic empire, with a divinely appointed emperor that held unquestioned sway over the population, must give way to the possibility of a pre-modern national community called 'Romanía' that was served by an emperor and state apparatus that was based on a common Roman, republican, heritage.

This thesis, however, does not attempt to definitively address the still new and perhaps controversial question of a Byzantine nation state. Rather, it takes a small step in that direction through a case study of Byzantine Italy during the eleventh-century

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<sup>30</sup> Anthony Kaldellis, "From Rome to New Rome, from Empire to Nation-State: Reopening the Question of Byzantium's Roman Identity," in *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, eds. Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 387-404. Idem., *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 42-119.

<sup>31</sup> See especially: Anthony Kaldellis, "How to usurp the throne in Byzantium: The role of public opinion in sedition and rebellion," in *Power and subversion in Byzantium: papers from the 43rd Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 2010*, eds. Dimiter Angelov and Michael Saxby (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 43-56. But also Krallis on this republicanism in action in Attaleiates' History: Dimitris Krallis, "'Democratic' Action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium: Michael Attaleiates's 'Republicanism' in Context," *Viator* 40, no. 2 (2009). See also Morris who looks at the efforts of the emperor Ioannes Tzimiskes to scrub his image following his murder of his predecessor: Rosemary Morris, "Succession and Usurpation: Politics and Rhetoric in the Late tenth century," in *New Constantines. The rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries. Papers from the Twenty-Sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. Paul Magdalino (Ashgate: Aldershot, 1994). See Krsmanović for the creation of a dynastically valid public image by the emperors Basil I and Nikephoros III Botaneiates: Bojana Krsmanović, "Legendary genealogies of Byzantine Emperors and Their Families," *Zbornik radova Vizantoloskog Instituta* 41 (2004), 71-98.

<sup>32</sup> Compare the Arab view of Heraclius whose status as an ideal ruler who is compassionate to his subjects, is used to add legitimacy to the then new prophet, Mohammed: Nadia Maria El-Cheikh, "Muhammad and Heraclius: A Study in Legitimacy," *Studia Islamica* 89 (1999): 5-21, esp. 8-9. Another key aspect of this legitimacy was the strength of the emperor, rather than dynastic considerations: Idem. *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*. Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs XXXVI (Cambridge: Distributed for The Center for Middle Eastern Studies of Harvard University by Harvard University Press, 2004), 88-89.

Norman Conquest. Byzantine subjects of the *Mezzogiorno* saw themselves as political agents, informed perhaps by the political role of their Latin, Roman forbearers. This political agency and attendant urban autonomy manifested themselves in a variety of different ways, depending on the particular circumstances. As such the terms are applied to a broad range of activities: self-expression, self-definition, independent decision making, and even self-rule can all serve as signifiers of political agency and urban autonomy. However, what did this political agency and urban autonomy look like? Moreover, what implications does this have for conceptions of imperial authority on the western periphery? In the process of answering these questions, this thesis will reveal that political agency and urban autonomy were alive and well in Byzantium's westernmost province and further that they manifested in a variety of different ways. The emerging vibrant Italian urban body politic suggests that our conceptions of imperial authority will need to be revised in order to take into account the political role that Byzantine citizens occupied.

The eleventh century forms the scope of this inquiry for a number of different reasons. On the one hand, the arrival of the Normans in the region during the early decades of the eleventh century and their subsequent conquest of Byzantine territories provides an excellent opportunity to study urban political agency as city after city sought to navigate the transition to Norman rule with as much autonomy as possible. Moreover, the eleventh century marked the political and military apogee of Byzantine power in the Italian peninsula. Therefore, penetration of administrative structures would have been at their most extensive, as would the consequent effects on indigenous political modes of thought. Furthermore, this period encompassed a high point of economic expansion that created a foundation for political agency as newly prosperous classes gained access to

the corridors of power for the first time, and the political agency that that access entailed.<sup>33</sup>

The political agency that manifested itself during the eleventh-century transition from Byzantine to Norman rule has been hitherto ignored by scholars. Indeed, according to one important historian of southern Italy, byzantinists have remained relatively mute on what has been anachronistically called the 'Katepanate of Italy'.<sup>34</sup> The Adriatic Sea has proven to be a greater barrier to modern-day historians, than it ever was to the Byzantines themselves. While this is not altogether surprising from a disciplinary perspective, given the different language requirements involved in the study of this region's history, there have nonetheless been two important exceptions: André Guillou and Vera von Falkenhausen have written extensively on the administrative structure, culture, and society of Byzantine Italy in a number of seminal articles and monographs. Their work, however, has often treated the region in isolation from the rest of the empire.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, when it sought to integrate Italy into imperial structures, the

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<sup>33</sup> For economic growth see: Alan Harvey, *Economic expansion in the Byzantine Empire, 900-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); For agricultural growth see: John Haldon, "Cappadocia will be given over to ruin and become a desert.' Environmental evidence for historically-attested events in the 7th-10th centuries," *Byzantina Mediterranea: Festschrift für Johannes Koder zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Ewald Kislinger (Wien: Böhlau, 2007), 215-230; For the scientific presentation of this data see: Ann England, et al., "Landscape Change in Cappadocia (central Turkey): a Palaeoecological Investigation of Annually Laminated Sediments from Nar Lake," *The Holocene* 18, no. 8 (2008), 1229-1245; For demographic growth see: Gilbert Dagron, "The Urban Economy, Seventh-Twelfth Centuries," in *The Economic History of Byzantium: from the seventh through the fifteenth century*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou, et al. (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002), 1: 401-403; Merchants and tradesmen were first admitted into the Senate during the second half of the eleventh century: Dagron, "The Urban Economy," 1:415.

<sup>34</sup> On the silence of byzantinists: André Guillou, "Notes sur la société dans le katépanat d'Italie au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *Studies on Byzantine Italy. Collected Studies Series 3* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1970), 439. The 'Katepanate of Italy' corresponded to the collective of Byzantine territories in southern Italy. On the use of the term 'Katepanate' see: Alexander Kazhdan, s.v. "Katepanate." In *ODB: Oxford University Press*, 1991.

<sup>35</sup> See especially the articles collected in André Guillou, *Studies on Byzantine Italy, Collected Studies Series 3* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1970). See also the classic study by Vera von Falkenhausen, *Untersuchungen über die byzantinische Herrschaft in Süditalien vom 9. bis ins 11. Jahrhundert*. Schriften zur Geistesgeschichte des östlichen Europa 1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1967; and the same in Italian idem, *La dominazione bizantina nell'Italia meridionale dal IX all'XI secolo* (Bari: Ecumenica Editrice, 1978).

discussion remained in the realm of high politics, losing sight of life on the ground.<sup>36</sup> More recently, important work has been done by byzantinists Jean-Marie Martin and Ghilsane Noyé, and medieval italianists G.A. Loud and Barbara M. Kreutz, which while truly valuable as general studies, has not sought to specifically interrogate urban political life.<sup>37</sup>

The closest attempt to answer such questions about southern Italy has come from Paul Oldfield. His work, however, focuses on the post-Norman reality given that he sees the Norman invasion as a catalyst for urban autonomy.<sup>38</sup> According to Oldfield, the period following the death of Robert Guiscard in 1085 “saw a general weakening of central authority in the South Italian peninsula from which emerged a variety of urban governments structured by local influences and with differing levels of popular participation.”<sup>39</sup> Here, I argue that the popular participation that he identifies, at least in formerly Byzantine territory, had its roots in an earlier period. Indeed, at the very least the repeated rebellions against different aspects of Byzantine policy and rule that occurred in the lead-up to the Norman Conquest are suggestive of a certain degree of local autonomy and call for further investigation of what may have been interesting Italian, but at same time Byzantine outbursts of political activity.<sup>40</sup>

This political activity, and the agency for which it is a mirror, can be found throughout the sources available to the historian of Byzantine Italy, which are fortunately

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<sup>36</sup> For example: Vera von Falkenhausen, “Between Two Empires: Byzantine Italy in the Reign of Basil II,” in *Byzantium in the Year 1000*, edited by Paul Magdalino (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003), *passim*. Historical agency rests in the hands of emperors, princes, popes and so on, while local populations, though acknowledged are driven along by events.

<sup>37</sup> For example: Jean-Marie Martin, *La Pouille du VI<sup>e</sup> au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*. (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1993). Barbara M. Kreutz, *Before the Normans: Southern Italy in the ninth and tenth centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1991); Idem. and Ghislaine Noyé. “Les campagnes de l’Italie méridionale byzantine (Xe-XIe siècles). *Mélanges de l’Ecole française de Rome. Moyen-Age, Temps modernes* 101, no. 2 (1989): 559-596; G.A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest* (Harlow, England; New York: Longman, 2000).

<sup>38</sup> Paul Oldfield, *City and Community in Norman Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>39</sup> Paul Oldfield, “Urban Government in Southern Italy, c. 1085-1127,” 607.

<sup>40</sup> Jean-Claude Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance 963-1210* (Paris: Publ. de la Sorbonne, 1990), 21, 30, 35, 53, 57-58, 63.

more numerous and extensive than for any other province of the empire.<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, despite the widespread availability of these sources, they have remained hitherto untapped as sources of political agency and urban autonomy. Bari, the centre of Byzantine imperial power in Italy, and the province of Apulia in general, are particularly well served by the extant annals, namely the *Annales Barenses*, the *Annales Lupi Protospatharii*, and the *Anonymi Barensis Chronicon*. These sources collectively provide otherwise unattested details for the tenth and eleventh centuries and are especially valuable for an accounting of the provincial Byzantine administration and other local notables. Moreover, the arrival of the Normans in the eleventh century occasioned the creation of a number of narrative works celebrating their conquest of the region. William of Apulia and the monks Amatus of Montecassino and Gaufredo Malaterra each wrote contemporary accounts of the rather eventful entry of the Normans into southern Italy during the eleventh century.<sup>42</sup> While the focus of these works is on the Norman leadership, with Robert Guiscard and the Hauteville clan figuring prominently, there nonetheless emerges a detailed picture of the region as it is being conquered. The twelfth-century consolidation of Norman rule, and the resistance that it engendered, are covered in the chronicles by Alexander of Telesse and more critically by Hugo Falcandus. Additionally, the charters contained in the *Codice diplomatica barese* series provide a fine-grained look at Byzantine provincial administration in action. The western sources are rounded out by Erchembert's History of the Lombards, which records the first tentative steps of the Byzantine reconquest of Italy in the ninth century and the *Chronicon Salernitanum* which provides details on the establishment of the office of the *katepano* in the tenth century. Lastly, the Life of St. Nilos of Rossano details a number of moments of resistance to imperial rule, while the account of the translation of the relics of Saint Nicholas of Myra contributes to the picture of Bari as home to an autonomous polity.

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<sup>41</sup> Vera von Falkenhausen, "The South Italian Sources," in *Byzantines and Crusaders in non-Greek Sources, 1025-1204*, edited by Mary Whitby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 95-99.

<sup>42</sup> For an introductory discussion of these historians see: K.B. Wolf, *Making history: the Normans and their historians in eleventh-century Italy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995). 87-171. While the bibliographical information on William of Apulia is meagre at best, some have noted a possible pro-Byzantine bias: Paul Brown, "The Gesta Roberti Wiscardi: A 'Byzantine' history?" *Journal of Medieval History* 37, 2 (2011), 162-179.

While the Italian provinces do not appear to have been a subject of central concern for Byzantine historians writing from the heartland of the empire, there is nonetheless material of value to be found within eastern sources in Greek. For instance, while the *Synopsis Historiōn* of Ioannes Skylitzes only mentions Italy four times, the work nonetheless provides important context for events on the western periphery.<sup>43</sup> Of similar value are the *Chronographia* of Michael Psellos, the *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates, and the *Strategikon* of Kekaumenos, while the writings of Niketas Choniates and Ioannes Kinnamos extend this context into the twelfth century. The *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene, on the other hand, contains a great deal of detail on the Duke Robert Guiscard and his Norman compatriots, who are so important to the history of southern Italy. The comparative perspective of the eastern periphery and Antioch in particular are provided by Yaḥyā of Antioch and Nikephoros Bryennios. Lastly, small but crucial details on the role of the Italian provinces within the empire can be found in the *Taktikon Escorial*, a tenth-century list of court precedence, as well as the *De Administrando Imperio* and the *De Ceremoniis*, two manuals commissioned by the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (r.945-957) on foreign policy and court ceremony, respectively.<sup>44</sup>

This thesis begins in the sixth century with the Lombard invasion of the Italian peninsula, and lays out the historical context for the Norman Conquest at the close of the eleventh century. Chapter 1 records the resurgence of imperial power in southern Italy, following the course of sixth-century Lombard invasions and ninth-century Arab raids, and brings the story to the turn of the millennium, before turning to an analysis of the people and government of Byzantine Italy. Ultimately, this excursus will provide the foundation and context for discussions of autonomy and the administrative structures in which it functions. Chapter 2 examines the response of cities to the Norman Conquest, tracing a peculiarly urban political consciousness in the lands of the *katepano*. Chapter 3 takes a closer look at the city of Bari, and the role of factionalism in urban government during the final Norman siege of the Byzantine capital, before turning to an in depth look at the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas of Myra and the urban political autonomy and sense of collective identity that this episode exemplifies. Lastly, the Conclusion

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<sup>43</sup> Falkenhausen, "Between Two Empires," 137-8.

<sup>44</sup> Please see the Bibliography for complete details of primary sources, which are omitted here for reasons of space.

brings into focus these findings and provides an outline of the Byzantine Italian urban polity and its significance both in and of itself and in the context of Byzantine studies.

Within several years of the 1156 destruction of Bari by the Sicilian King, William I 'the Bad' there is evidence of the beginnings of repopulation.<sup>45</sup> The cathedral of St. Nicholas, which was spared the city's fate, formed the nucleus for the resettlement as the Baresi returned to their homes. Despite being scattered throughout the region, there existed enough of a corporate civic identity among former inhabitants to undergird the refounding of the city.<sup>46</sup> This civic identity and the attendant quest for urban political autonomy that flowed from it, forms the subject of what follows.

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<sup>45</sup> *CDB V*, 117.

<sup>46</sup> For a former Baresi living in the nearby city of Giovinazzo see: *CDB V*, 114. Compare also the implicit corporate identity of Byzantine refugees that fled the seventh-century Persian conquest of the Roman Near East. The refugees did not represent a cross-section of Byzantine society, but those who stood to lose under the new leaders, especially Chalcedonian Christians that arrived in Alexandria. See: Clive Foss, "The Persians in the Roman near East (602-630 AD)," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Third Series* 13:2 (July 2003), 149-170.



**Figure 1: Map of Southern Italy<sup>47</sup>**

<sup>47</sup> Map adapted by the author from: "Map of Italia meridionale.svg," *Wikicommons*, accessed 14 April, 2014, [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_of\\_Italia\\_meridionale.svg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Italia_meridionale.svg). With reference to: Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 309, Map 1; Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire*, 431, Map 4.

## Chapter 1.

# Room to Manoeuvre: Provincial Administration and the Limits of Imperial Authority

We think that Catepan means, in Greek, 'before all'. Whoever holds that office among the Greeks acts as the people's governor, arranging everything and dealing 'before all' with each person as they deserve.<sup>48</sup>

William of Apulia, the eleventh-century chronicler of the Norman Duke, Robert Guiscard, recognized the *katepano* as the emperor's man on the ground in the *Mezzogiorno*. However, the picture is more complicated than that. William's etymology reveals a mode of rule that was based on merit and justice. Instead of a proconsular model of arbitrary rule, Byzantine Italian subjects could expect to be dealt with justly, and have their issues dealt with on their merit.<sup>49</sup> What follows is an analysis of Byzantine rule and imperial authority in southern Italy and the administrative structures that underpinned it. Before proceeding, however, an exposition of the political and historical context of the Byzantine presence in the region is presented, taking the story from the sixth century to the eve of the Norman Conquest around the turn of the millennium, thereby charting the resurgence of imperial authority in the region. Thereafter a fine grained look at the economic, demographic and social situation of the region is provided before turning to an examination of Byzantine administrative structures and the realities of imperial authority on the western periphery. This historical, economic, and social context will provide the foundations for discussions of political agency and urban autonomy that will follow in subsequent chapters. Ultimately, the realities of Byzantine provincial administration created the space for the political agency and urban autonomy that forms the subject of this thesis. What this chapter will reveal is a prosperous yet

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<sup>48</sup> Will. Apulia Book I, p.5. This passage is taken by Brown as evidence of William of Apulia's possible Greek heritage. See Brown, "The Gesta Roberti Wiscardi: A 'Byzantine' history?" 168-169.

<sup>49</sup> For an eleventh-century articulation and definition of justice, see: Attaleiates, *Ponema Nomikon*

restive region, conscious of its political agency and governed with an eye to the pragmatic by the Byzantine *katepanoi* sent to from Constantinople.

The Lombard invasion of the Italian peninsula of 568 had, by the eighth century, reduced the Byzantines to central and southern Calabria, the very tip of the Salento peninsula (i.e. the 'heel' of Italy) and Sicily. Despite determined Byzantine resistance, everything north of Otranto in Apulia, and all of northern Calabria were taken by the Lombards. The Italian peninsula was divided politically between a Lombard kingdom in the north, the duchy of Spoleto in the centre and the duchy of Benevento in the south. The northern kingdom fell to Charlemagne and his Franks in 774, with the duchy of Spoleto following soon afterwards in 776, however, the southern duchy of Benevento was able to retain its independence. The fact that the Lombards never conquered Rome and its environs, and thus never had access to the easiest route south, may have been an important factor here.<sup>50</sup> A period of relative stability endured until the Islamic invasion of Sicily in 827, occasioned by the revolt of a disaffected Byzantine *tourmarch* named Euphemios.<sup>51</sup> The conquest of Sicily was largely completed by 902 with the fall of Taormina, however, Byzantine power was not totally extinguished on the island until the fall of the last remaining fortress of Rametta in 963/5.<sup>52</sup> The island would serve as a base for Muslim raids on southern Italy. A short-lived emirate established in Bari in 847 following the treachery of Muslim mercenaries hired by the local commander only increased the devastation.<sup>53</sup> Concurrently, the duchy of Benevento descended into civil war and the region split into rival duchies based in Benevento, Salerno and later Capua; the use of Muslim mercenaries only deepened the chaos. Bari was eventually retaken by

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<sup>50</sup> Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 14-15.

<sup>51</sup> For the primary account see: Skylitzes III.20-21, pp. 48-50. Fearing disfigurement, Euphemios rebelled and invited an Arab army to Sicily on the condition that he be made *basileus* of the island. On his imperial aspirations see: Vivien Prigent, "La carrière du tourmarque Euphémios, basileus des Romains," in *Histoire et culture dans l'Italie byzantine*, ed. André Jacob et al. Collection de l'Ecole française de Rome 393 (Rome: L'Ecole française de Rome, 2006), 279-317.

<sup>52</sup> Giovanni Uggeri, "I castra Bizantini in Sicilia," in *Histoire et culture dans l'Italie byzantine*, ed. André Jacob et al. Collection de l'Ecole française de Rome 393 (Rome: L'Ecole française de Rome, 2006), 334. The Byzantine sources detail the failed campaign of the *patrikius* Manuel Phokas to relieve the Arab siege of Rametta: Skylitzes XIV.9, p. 256; Leo the Deacon IV.7-8, pp. 115-117. Manuel was beheaded by his Muslim captors: Liudprand, *Relatio* 44, p. 265.

<sup>53</sup> Pando, the local commander, was later tortured and possibly drowned by the locals for his troubles: Erchempert 16, pp. 145-6. The standard work for the emirate remains: Giosuè Musca, *L'emirato di Bari 847-871*. Nuova biblioteca Dedalo 138 (Bari: Dedalo, 1992).

a Frankish expedition led by Louis II in 871 and reintegrated into the principality of Benevento.<sup>54</sup> In 876, Bari was turned over to the Byzantine commander of Otranto, the *strategos* Gregory, by the Lombard garrison there, reportedly out of fear of Muslim raids.<sup>55</sup> The city would serve as the nucleus for the resurgence of Byzantine power in Apulia, resulting in the short-lived conquest of the city of Benevento in 891.<sup>56</sup>

Muslim raids continued throughout the tenth century, but would never again threaten to establish permanent footholds on the mainland.<sup>57</sup> This was occasioned as much by the series of treaties between the rulers of Sicily, their Fatimid overlords and the Byzantine emperors, as by internal divisions within the Muslim polity during the early decades of the century.<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, the division of Lombard power in the south had settled into a showdown between Benevento-Capua and Salerno. This disunity meant that the Byzantine presence would only suffer minor setbacks from that quarter.<sup>59</sup> Efforts by the Holy Roman Emperors Otto I and his son Otto II were equally ineffectual, even though Otto II did invade Apulia as far south as Bari, which he briefly besieged “with no results.”<sup>60</sup> Raids from Sicily would resume in earnest in 976, with a serious attack occurring on the outskirts of Bari in 988 that “depopulated the suburbs.” Matera was sacked in 994 after a four month siege.<sup>61</sup> However, while these attacks were serious

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<sup>54</sup> *Ann. Lupi* 37. Louis II was led to understand that despite his help, his presence in southern Italy was not welcome. The prince of Benevento took him prisoner and extracted a promise that he never return to the city in exchange for his release. For this episode see: Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 18.

<sup>55</sup> *Ann. Lupi* 38. Erchempert 38, 186-187. Gregory also held the rank of *baioulos*. See also: Vera von Falkenhausen, “Bari bizantina: profilo di un capoluogo di provincia (secoli IX-XI),” in *Spazio, società, potere nell'Italia dei comuni*, ed. Gabriella Rossetti. Europa mediterranea 1 (Naples: Liguori, 1986), 198.

<sup>56</sup> Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 15-19. Falkenhausen draws the useful comparison between Bari and Ani as centres of Byzantine expansion. Falkenhausen, “Bari bizantina,” 198.

<sup>57</sup> The last Muslim foothold was dispatched in 915. See: Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 20.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-21. *Ann. Lupi* 50: “the Agarenes evacuated Garigliano.”

<sup>59</sup> Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 23.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-4; *Ann. Lupi* 74.

<sup>61</sup> *Ann. Lupi* 90, 96.

enough to warrant attention from the imperial centre, they did not constitute existential threats to Byzantine authority.<sup>62</sup>

In fact, the greatest challenge to Byzantine power during the tenth century was not external, but internal, as the inhabitants of southern Italy registered their displeasure in a number of revolts. Muslim raids, and in particular the failure of the Byzantine provincial administration to protect the population from them, led to increased dissension among the people. In 965-966, following the debacle of Manuel Phokas' failed invasion of Sicily, the people of Rossano rose in revolt in the face of requests by the *magistros* Nikephoros Hexakionites to build ships and man them; led by the *protospatharios* Gregorios Maleinos, a member of one of the leading local families, they burned the ships and killed their captains.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, in the early 980s parts of Apulia rose in revolt in response to increased financial exactions; the *patrikios* Kalokyros Dephinas had to intervene militarily against the city of Ascoli.<sup>64</sup> While these two events were local affairs and thus not in and of themselves a great danger to the Byzantine presence in southern Italy, they are nevertheless indicative of the importance of local power centres and the presence of political agency. The need of the Byzantine administration to draw their resources directly from the population meant that taxation could and did fall more heavily

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<sup>62</sup> Nikephoros II Phokas sent an expeditions to recapture Sicily during in 964 or 965 [Skylitzes XIV.9, p.256; Leo the Deacon IV.7-8, pp.115-117], while Basil II was planning his own expedition before he died in 1025 [Ann. Bari. 17; Skylitzes XVIII.47, p.348] and Georgios Maniakes was dispatched in the summer of 1038 by Michael IV: Psellos, *Chr.* VI 76-89, pp.192-199 ; Skylitzes XIX.16, p.380; Attaleiates, *Hist.* III.1, pp.10-13; Will. Apulia Book I, pp.7-8; Malaterra I.7-8, pp. 6-7; Amatus II.8-10, 14-15, pp.66-69; Ann. Lupi. 138; Anon. Bar. 148.

<sup>63</sup> For the primary account see: *Vita S. Nilos* §10, pp.84-89; See also the summaries in: Vera von Falkenhausen, "A Provincial Aristocracy: The Byzantine Provinces in Southern Italy (9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Century)," in *The Byzantine Aristocracy: IX – XIII Centuries*, ed. Michael Angold. BAR International Series 221 (Oxford: BAR, 1984), 224; Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 21; Telemachos Lounghis, "La révolte à Rossano de Calabre l'an 965," in *Byzantina Europaea. Księga jubileuszowa ofiarowa profesorowi Waldemarowi Ceranowi*, eds. Maciej Kokoszko and Mirosław Jerzy Leszka. Byzantina Lodziensia 11 (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2007), 367-375; Following the intervention of St. Nilos, the Rossani were pardoned, having only to provide financial compensation for the damage done. There is no evidence to support the identification of this Calabrian family of Maleinos, with the Maleinos family of Asia Minor, though it cannot be discounted: Falkenhausen, *La dominazione bizantina*, 154.

<sup>64</sup> Ann. Lupi. 85-6; Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 30. Fortunately, Bari, which had also rebelled, was betrayed to the *patrikios* by two brothers, Sergio and Teofilatto.

on citizens of Byzantine Italy, than in other parts of the empire.<sup>65</sup> Even when resources went directly to self-defence, as in Rossano where local levies went to ships for defence against Arab raids, or in the above cited Apulian example, where funds bolstered defences against Frankish incursions, local residents frequently protested, sometimes violently.<sup>66</sup> When in the eleventh century, revolts grew more severe, for instance during the twin rebellions of the Lombard Melos, Byzantine provincial authorities were able to suppress them, though with some effort, and the chaos engendered made the conquest of southern Italy that much easier for numerically inferior Norman invaders.<sup>67</sup>

On the eve of the eleventh-century Norman Conquest, southern Italy was thus a politically fragmented place while Sicily had passed completely over to Muslim control. By the time the Normans landed on the island in the late eleventh century, only a small orthodox Christian community based in the Val Demone remained and they are attested paying the *jizyah* or head tax.<sup>68</sup> On the mainland, however, the Byzantines had extended their control northward and consolidated their hold on Apulia and Calabria. In Campania, the Lombards had once again splintered into three separate principalities based around Benevento, Capua and Salerno. On the west coast, the cities of Amalfi, Gaeta and Naples were effectively independent, despite acknowledging nominal suzerainty of the Byzantines. The population over whom the Byzantines claimed dominion was restive, due not only to the precarious security situation brought on by Muslim raids and Lombard and Frankish invasions, but also due to the financial demands placed upon

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<sup>65</sup> DAC II.50, p.697: "the *stratego*i of the West were not paid a salary since they received from their own themes their customary payment each year." In the east, salaries or *roga*, were distributed directly from the emperor yearly on Palm Sunday: Paul Lemerle, "'Roga" et rente d'Etat au Xe-XIe siècle," in *Le monde de Byzance. Histoire et institutions*. Variorum Collected Studies Series 86 (London: Variorum, 1978). Taxation in the Italian themes was mainly assessed on an indirect basis. See: Jean-Marie Martin, "Les thèmes Italiens: territoire, administration, population," in *Histoire et culture dans l'Italie byzantine*, ed. André Jacob, et al. Collection de l'Ecole française de Rome 393 (Rome: L'Ecole française de Rome, 2006), 545-6.

<sup>66</sup> The Baresi annals reveal a steady bloodbath of local officials. *Ann. Bar.* 19 (a *krites*). *Ann. Lupi.* 89 (a *protospatharios*), 92 (two *exkoubitoi*), 97 (another *exkoubitos*), 135 (a *krites*).

<sup>67</sup> Melos, one of the most important Lombard notables of Byzantine Italy rose in rebellion between 1009 and 1011, and again in 1017-1018. For the bibliography of the rebellion see: Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 35.

<sup>68</sup> Based in the northeast portion of the island, these Christians would serve as important local allies during the conquest of the island by the Normans. Amatus V.25; Malaterra II.18. See also the discussion in: Loud, *the Age of Robert Guiscard*, 151-3.

them to deal with these threats. However, that such restiveness, and the urban autonomy for which it becomes a mirror, was possible at all speaks to the nature of a provincial administration that, however unwillingly, allowed expressions of dissent to occur.

The provincial administration of southern Italy, like other areas of the empire, was organized according to the *theme* system. This form of militarized provincial administration grew out of the crisis of the seventh century and evolved over time, adjusting over the years to accommodate the changing situation on the ground.<sup>69</sup> In Italy, by the eleventh century, there were three *themes*: Longobardia in the east, based around the city of Bari, Calabria in the west, based around Reggio, and a smaller *theme* in the northwest of Byzantine territory called Lucania. This last provincial division was only a recent foundation, coinciding with the resurgence of Byzantine power in the region during the tenth century.<sup>70</sup> Administrative arrangements mirrored physical realities: Longobardia was made up of plains and low plateaus, while Calabria and Lucania were generally mountainous.<sup>71</sup> On a further demographic level, Longobardia was in the main populated by Latin speakers, who followed the western catholic rite and were judged according to Lombard Law. Calabria and Lucania, on the other hand, were mainly hellenophone, followed the eastern orthodox rite, and were under the jurisdiction of Byzantine law.<sup>72</sup> While there were of course exceptions, for instance Bari had a great

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<sup>69</sup> On the gradual evolution of the 'theme system' see: Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon, *Byzantium in the iconoclast era c.680-850: a history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 723-771.

<sup>70</sup> While the earliest attestation of Lucania appears in 1042, Guillou has argued convincingly for a c.975 foundation: André Guillou, "La Lucanie byzantine: Etude de géographie historique," in *Studies on Byzantine Italy. Collected Studies Series 3* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1970), X: 119-149. Martin has argued against the early foundation and doubts its existence beyond 1051: Martin, "Les thèmes Italiens," 528.

<sup>71</sup> Longobardia and Calabria see: Martin, "Les thèmes Italiens," 547; For Lucania, see: Guillou, "La Lucanie byzantine," 134-143.

<sup>72</sup> Martin, "Les thèmes Italiens," 548-9. See also: Angelika E. Laiou, "Institutional Mechanisms of Integration," in *Studies on the Internal Diaspora of the Byzantine Empire*, eds. Helene Ahrweiler and Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998), 161-181. Laiou argues that while Byzantine law was broadly applicable to all, legal practice governing "internal foreigners" was pragmatic and flexible, taking into account local customs. To quote Laiou, who quotes the thirteenth-century Archbishop of Ohrid: "sometimes it is necessary to permit even barbarian, foreign customs." *Ibid.*, 166.

deal of bilingual residents reflecting its role as a provincial capital, these generalizations held generally throughout the region.<sup>73</sup>

Economically speaking, contrary to the contemporary image of the *Mezzogiorno* as a poor and backwards place, the region on the eve of the Norman invasion was on the rise, and by the standards of the day, prosperous.<sup>74</sup> Despite the need of the provincial administration to support itself on local tax revenues, the Italian *themes* had historically been net contributors to the imperial fisc. The *De Administrando Imperii* records that “they used to remit annually to the emperor the sums due to the treasury.”<sup>75</sup> The eleventh-century historian and judge, Michael Attaleiates, speaking about Sicily and its loss to the Arabs in particular, reported that it was “a place so large, famous, endowed with the greatest cities along its coasts, and lacking in no resource.”<sup>76</sup> In Calabria, there is evidence of extensive viticulture; the *Vita* of St. Nilos of Rossano records an episode that occurred in c.1004, where the saint led his fellow monks in cutting down vines surplus to their needs: “they cut from morning until the third hour.”<sup>77</sup> Moreover, a *brebion*, essentially a tax roll, dated to c.1050 in the Calabrian capital of Reggio, notes the presence of significant numbers of mulberry trees, an essential requirement for the production of silk. There is indirect evidence for lesser numbers in Longobardia.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, archaeological surveys in the Salento peninsula reveal growing rural settlements, coinciding with the turn of the millennium, while excavations at the port of Otranto expose a city fully engaged in the Mediterranean economy.<sup>79</sup> Even recent foundations such as Troia in northern Apulia, established in 1019, were flourishing by

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<sup>73</sup> The presence of substantial Jewish, Slav, and Armenian immigrants only further complicate the picture. Jews: Martin, *La Pouille*, 492-503; Slavs: Martin, *La Pouille*, 504-509; Armenians: Martin, *La Pouille*, 518-520.

<sup>74</sup> Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 48.

<sup>75</sup> *DAI*, 27, p.113.

<sup>76</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.* III.2, p.13.

<sup>77</sup> *Vita S. Nilos*, §8, pp.66-67; André Guillou, “Production and Profits in the Byzantine Province of Italy (Tenth to Eleventh Centuries): An Expanding Society,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974), 92.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 93-95.

<sup>79</sup> Paul Arthur, “Economic expansion in Byzantine Apulia,” in *Histoire et culture dans l’Italie byzantine*, ed. André Jacob et al. Collection de l’Ecole française de Rome 393 (Rome: L’Ecole française de Rome, 2006), 391-2 (rural settlements); 399-400 (Otranto).

the late-eleventh century.<sup>80</sup> While the waves of city building undertaken by the Byzantine provincial administration during this period can be largely attributed to defensive measures, the number of foundations points at the very least to an increase in the population.<sup>81</sup> Lastly, discoveries of numerous issues of bronze *folleis* reveal an increasingly monetized society that, unique to Western Europe during this period was minting its own gold coin, the *tari*, at Amalfi.<sup>82</sup> Thus, despite the instability caused by continuing Arab raids, the *Mezzogiorno* at the turn of the millennium was characterized by a growing prosperity.

Byzantine provincial administration was based on the city. A fortified city or town, called a *kastron* (κάστρον) or *asti* (ἄστυ), or in more peripheral areas, called a *kastellion* (καστέλλιον), formed the nucleus of a given territory.<sup>83</sup> Villages and their territories were called *chorion* (χωρίον) and were delimited by the imperial administration; these territories formed the basis of not only sub-thematic administration, but also taxation.<sup>84</sup> We know for instance, the precise delimitations (*synora*) of Troia, discussed above; the foundation document traces a detailed circuit that encompasses an area that was 45 km at its longest.<sup>85</sup> Similar details are also known for Tricarico in the Basilicate.<sup>86</sup> As was the case throughout the empire, taxation in Byzantine Italy was assessed collectively upon

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<sup>80</sup> Paul Oldfield, "Rural settlement and economic development in Southern Italy: Troia and its contado, c.1020 - c.1230," *Journal of Medieval History* 31 (2005), 327-345.

<sup>81</sup> Martin, "Les thèmes Italiens," 524-527.

<sup>82</sup> Circulation of bronze coins: Arthur, "Economic Expansion," 400-1; Gold coins: Loud, *the Age of Robert Guiscard*, 50-1. It appears that the *tari* was most common in Calabria, whereas the Byzantine gold coin, the solidus, was imported from the heartland of the empire and was more prevalent in Apulia: G.A. Loud, "Coinage, wealth and plunder in the age of Robert Guiscard," *English Historical Review* 114, 458 (1999), 819-821. The Amalfi gold coin, beginning in c.960, circulated alongside the Sicilian quarter-dinar coins that they imitated. For an excellent survey see: Cécille Morrisson, "Byzantine Money: Its Production and Circulation," in *The Economic History of Byzantium: from the seventh through the fifteenth century*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou, et al (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002), 3: 957-961.

<sup>83</sup> Martin and Noyé, "Les campagnes de l'Italie méridionale, 522.

<sup>84</sup> André Guillou, "Des collectivités rurales à la collectivité urbaine en Italie méridionale byzantine (VIe-XIe s.)," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 100-1 (1976), 322.

<sup>85</sup> Trinchera 18; French translation from the Greek: "Acte de délimitation du territoire de la nouvelle cité de Troia (juin 1019)," trans. Jean-Marie Martin, in *Économie et société à Byzance: (VIIIe - XIIIe siècle): textes et documents*, ed. Sophie Métivier. Byzantina Sorbonensia 24 (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2007), 285-286. See also: Oldfield, "Rural settlement and economic development in Southern Italy," 333.

<sup>86</sup> Martin, "Les thèmes Italiens," 523.

each settlement and as such its payment was the collective responsibility of its residents. In August of 1016, Kinnomos the *kalligraphos* remitted thirty-six nomismata to the then *katepano* Basil Mesardonites in Bari, on behalf of the *kastellion* of Pelagiano near Taranto; the receipt for which is still extant.<sup>87</sup> Making the collection and remittance of taxes to the imperial fisc a collective responsibility would have, on the one hand, made things more efficient for the provincial administration, but may also have provided a foundation for the collective political action to be considered below.<sup>88</sup>

While this administrative schema may suggest a great deal of homogeneity within southern Italy, the reality on the ground was one of diversity. As noted above, the region was divided by rite and by language, however, the differences extended into demography and the attendant social structures of the region. In terms of demographics, Byzantine southern Italy can be divided into three different regions: the ancient Greek zone of central and southern Calabria; a densely populated Lombard area in central Apulia and the newly colonized (and reconquered) zones in the Capitanata, Lucania and northern Calabria.<sup>89</sup> The human geography of central and southern Calabria at the beginning of the eleventh century reflected its historical exposure to the tenth century Arab raids; those settlements that remained were the least exposed and as such the oldest, and richest. Cities were walled; villages were typically nucleated and unwalled, usually situated on a hill or terrace and sometimes protected by a tower.<sup>90</sup> Lombard Apulia on the other hand was marked by the high concentration of people in large agglomerations of *kastra* and *choria*, usually unfortified. However, while the less mountainous nature of the area probably facilitated the spread of settlements, they were nonetheless constrained by their dependence on well water.<sup>91</sup> Newly colonized areas on the other hand reflected their status as peripheral zones. Except for a few larger centres, the population was diffuse, often living in small *choria* centred on a lone church. In contrast to central and northern Italy where rural populations clustered into fortified

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<sup>87</sup> Trinchera 16; Guillou, "Des collectivités rurales," 320.

<sup>88</sup> Taxation itself could become a flashpoint for resistance and a catalyst for collective action. See for example: Neville, *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society*, 115-117.

<sup>89</sup> Martin and Noyé, "Les campagnes de l'Italie méridionale byzantine," 575.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 566-568.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 568-569.

settlements independently, in the *Mezzogiorno* the phenomenon of *incastellamento* was directed by the provincial administration in the foundation of new fortified settlements.<sup>92</sup> This material transformation of the provincial landscape carried with it juridical, social and cultural consequences as frontier populations were forced into Byzantine molds.<sup>93</sup> The first wave of settlements occurred in the late ninth and early tenth centuries around Bari in Apulia and La Sila in Calabria and served to consolidate recent Byzantine gains. The second wave unfolded in the early tenth century and reinforced the thematic divisions on the Italian landscape; for instance, the *thematic* capital of Reggio was re-established by the *katepano* Basil Boioannes during this period.<sup>94</sup> The last wave, during the early eleventh century, saw the multiplication of cities in frontier zones as a defensive measure against increasing Norman encroachment: this was when the double line of fortified towns in the Capitanata was founded, of which Troia was but one.<sup>95</sup>

Turning to social structures, there may have been a tendency to larger land holdings in Calabria, especially among ecclesiastical institutions while in Apulia, small landholders formed the norm.<sup>96</sup> The social relations and the attendant balance of power thus may have tilted towards the large landholder in Calabria, while in Apulia the social landscape was much flatter; indeed, the ninth century episode of the emirate of Bari seems to have largely erased the local Lombard aristocracy.<sup>97</sup> Thus, whatever notables did exist in the early eleventh century were either newly minted locals, often in a relationship of direct dependence to the Byzantine fisc, or eastern imports. The notables of the region can be classified into three basic classes: members of the princely families of the adjacent Lombard principalities; the local leading citizens; and the high-ranking Byzantine officials that made up the top tier of the local administration, such as the

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 570-575.

<sup>93</sup> Ando, "The ambitions of government," 6-16.

<sup>94</sup> *Ann. Bar.* 17

<sup>95</sup> Martin, "Les thèmes Italiens," 524-528. Compare Ando who argues that the extension of infrastructure to peripheral areas made those areas visible to the centre while replicating the same centre/periphery dynamic between the new cities and their hinterland that obtained between the metropole and the provinces: Ando, "The ambitions of government."

<sup>96</sup> Martin and Noyé, "Les campagnes de l'Italie méridionale byzantine," 589-593. The evidence for this is not conclusive.

<sup>97</sup> Martin, "Les thèmes Italiens," 549.

*strategoï* or *katepanoi*.<sup>98</sup> By the beginning of the eleventh century, Calabria, Lucania and Longobardia, had only recently left the jurisdiction of the Lombard principalities and as a consequence, many local power structures remained in place during the first few years of Byzantine dominion. They were treated as local clients by the imperial centre and either liquidated when the chance arose, or absorbed into the Byzantine *taxis*, where they gained titles, dignities and often a gilded exile at the Constantinopolitan court, although, they did not all go peaceably.<sup>99</sup> Similarly, other members of the Lombard upper classes secured positions for themselves within the provincial administration. In practice, all but the highest imperial officials were drawn from the local population, as attested by the cartulary evidence. For instance, *tourmarchs*, who by the early eleventh century, had supplanted the judicial role of the *gastaldus*, were routinely drawn from the pool of local notables: names such as Lupo and Romoaldus are indicative of the practice.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, the *ek prosopou*, seemingly a subordinate of the *tourmarch*, was occupied by the likes of Alfaranus and Mel.<sup>101</sup> The trend continues among the lower ranked *spatharioi*.<sup>102</sup>

*Strategoï*, *katepanoi*, and *doukes* were sent directly from Constantinople and acted as provincial governors, holding both military and administrative functions as the highest powers of the land. During their assignments they were expected to maintain a professional detachment, in order to prevent the creation of personal powerbases

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<sup>98</sup> Falkenhausen, "A Provincial Aristocracy," 211.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 215-216. The case of Landulf I, Prince of Capua and Benevento (910-943), is illustrative. He was a local client who held the rank of *patrikios* and *antypathos*. He rebels against the local *strategos* Urseleon, killing him in an April 921 battle outside Ascoli and justifies himself as an 'avenger' of his 'crimes.' He is offered Urseleon's position, but he does not appear to have liked the conditions of evacuating his forces and sending further hostages to Constantinople, as he appears in another rebellion in 926. Primary account of the rebellion appears in: Mystikos, *Ep.* 82, 85, pp. 339-343, 345-347; *Ann. Lupi.* 53, p. 353. Secondary account in: Falkenhausen, "Provincial Aristocracy," 216; Loud, *The Age of Guiscard*, 21-2.

<sup>100</sup> For example, the following are signed by a *turmarcha*: *CDB I*, 9, 12; *CDB III*, 11; *CDB IV*, 9, 24, 27. For discussion see Martin, "Les thèmes Italiens," 531-535.

<sup>101</sup> *CDB I*, 14; *CDB IV*, 17; Martin, "Les thèmes Italiens," 534-535.

<sup>102</sup> Siphandus, *spatharius et iudex*, for example: *CDB I*, 1. The *spatharii* do not appear to have had any function in this period in Italy, and was by the eleventh century, looked down upon at the imperial centre: Alexander Kazhdan, s.v. "Spatharios," In *ODB*: Oxford University Press, 1991.

throughout the empire.<sup>103</sup> To that effect the most senior postings typically lasted for only a few years and officials were forbidden from owning property within their jurisdiction.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, many of the occupants of these positions came from some of the most prestigious families of the empire: there were, for example, three Argyroi and two Dokeianoï, as well as a number from some lesser families such as a Delphinas and Tornikios.<sup>105</sup> The prestige of these positions can be further seen in their placement in the courtly lists of precedence; the late tenth-century *Taktikon Escorial* has the *katepanoi* and *strategoï* in the second highest class of officials, with the *katepano* just above the *doux* of Thessaloniki, the empire's second largest city.<sup>106</sup>

Imperial power on the western periphery was exercised primarily through the office of the *katepano*. The office itself was created as part of administrative reforms begun under the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (r.963-969) and completed under Ioannes Tzimiskes (r.969-976). *Katepanoi*, also termed *doukes* in places, were senior military commanders with broad gubernatorial powers over their commands. By the rise of Basileios II (r.976-1025), there were three in the east based on Antioch, Mesopotamia and Chaldia. Another two were later added in Iberia, modern day Georgia and the Armenian kingdom of Vaspurakan. In the west, *doukes* are attested for Thessaloniki and Adrianople, while we also find a *katepano* for Bulgaria.<sup>107</sup> The *katepano* of Italy is first

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<sup>103</sup> The imperial centre was sensitive to the creation of alternative power centres. See for instance the case of Basil II (r.976-1025) who in 1001 was returning from campaign through Cappadocia, along with his army and was fed and housed on the estates of Eustathios Maleinos, possibly the richest man in the empire. The magnate's ability to pay for the provisions for an entire army, without hardship, was seen as a threat by the emperor. Maleinos was imprisoned and his properties reverted to the imperial fisc upon his death: Skylitzes XIII.21, pp.322-323.

<sup>104</sup> Falkenhausen, "Provincial Aristocracy," 211-213. While the principle that stated a governor should not be a native of one's theme was generally observed (except for two, rather, special cases), there were ways around the rule governing property ownership, although there could be consequences if caught. See also: McCormick, "The Imperial Edge," 38-40. McCormick, notes that the flow of personnel between Byzantine Italy and Constantinople would have been regular and routine. He further argues that the line between local recruit and outside appointee may not have been so strictly adhered to.

<sup>105</sup> Argyroi: Marianos Argyros (*strategos of Calabria and Longobardia*); Basil Mesaridonites (*katepano*); Pothos Argyros (*katepano*); Dokeianoï: Nikephoros Dokeianos (*katepano*); Michael Dokeianos (*katepano*); Kalokyros Delphinas (*katepano*); Kontoleon Tornikos (*katepano*). For full biography and bibliography see, respectively: Falkenhausen, *Untersuchungen über die byzantinische Herrschaft in Süditalien*, 81, 86, 88, 89, 89, 84, 86.

<sup>106</sup> *Listes* pp.262-264.

<sup>107</sup> Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire*, 301-302.

attested between 971 and 975 in the *Taktikon Escorial* as part of the orders of precedence.<sup>108</sup> However, the earliest attested presence of a senior commander performing the functions of the *katepano*, that is having broad gubernatorial powers over all Byzantine possessions in southern Italy, can be found in 965 with the appointment of the *magistros* Nikephoros Hexakionites.<sup>109</sup> It is difficult to chart the exact relationship between the *katepano* and the *strategoï* listed as heads of each of the south Italian themes. The *Taktikon Escorial* lists the *katepano* well above the Italian *strategoï*, however, it is not clear what firm conclusions one can reasonably draw from what is in essence a tenth-century seating chart about the actual provincial administration.<sup>110</sup> Both the *katepano* and the *strategos* of Calabria – the *strategos* of Lucania is very poorly attested – had sizeable bureaucracies at their disposal which suggests comparable administrative roles.<sup>111</sup> It is clear however, that the *katepano* had military and civic pre-eminence in the theme of Longobardia, where he was headquartered. However, given the *katepano*'s control of central imperial *tagmatic* troops, that pre-eminence may have extended over the *strategoï* of the themes of Calabria and Lucania, but there is, however, no hard evidence for this.<sup>112</sup>

In practice, rather than acting as the long hand of Constantinople, it seems that in Italy at least, the *katepanoi* were granted considerable freedom of action. Taking the case of Eustathios Palatinos, a *protospatharios* and *katepano* for the years 1045 to

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<sup>108</sup> *Listes* pp. 262-264.

<sup>109</sup> Vitalien Laurent, "Contribution à la prosopographie du thème de Longobardie. En feuilletant le Bullaire," in *Byzantino-Sicula II. Miscellanea di scritti in memoria di Giuseppe Rossi Taibbi*. Quaderni dell'Istituto Siciliano di studi bizantini e neoellenici 8 (Palermo: Istituto siciliano di studi bizantini e neoellenici, 1975), 315-316. There is also the *magistros* Eugenios, who was recalled for his cruelty by the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas towards the end of his reign, however, it is difficult to ascribe a more precise date. *Chron. Sal.* 176; Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire*, 432.

<sup>110</sup> *Listes* pp. 262-264.

<sup>111</sup> Martin, "Les thèmes Italiens," 536.

<sup>112</sup> The *katepano* Michael Dokeianos led many Rus and Opsikanoi into battle in 1041 [*Ann. Bar.* 21], while the *katepano* and *protospatharios* Michael arrived in 1032 with the Anatolikoi [*Ann. Lupi.* 130]. Martin argues strongly against any kind of practical hierarchy: Martin, "Les thèmes Italiens," 537.

1046, we see a governor operating with a clear sense of his independence.<sup>113</sup> In December, 1045, Palatinos issued a *sigillion* rewarding a Lombard judge (*krites*), named Byzantios for his recent service against the Normans, the rebellion of Georgios Maniakes, and the escort of the newly arrived *katapano* from the main Adriatic port of Otranto, north to his headquarters in Bari.<sup>114</sup> For his service Byzantios is awarded two villages and all the future taxes and corvée due to the imperial fisc are transferred to him.<sup>115</sup> Additionally, he is given the right of judgment, according to Lombard law, except in the case of murder, which is retained by the imperial authorities.<sup>116</sup> In all, a rich prize indeed. We know precious little about this Byzantios, beyond what is contained in this *sigillion*.<sup>117</sup> That he was already a man of some means is evidenced by his ability to place significant, presumably military aid, in the service of the empire. The imperial authorities, during this period were in need of friends like Byzantios. In September of 1042, the *katapano* Georgios Maniakes rebelled in response to intrigues made against him at Constantinople.<sup>118</sup> He caused significant disruption to the Byzantine position in southern Italy before crossing to Dyrrachion/Durazzo to march on the imperial capital; indeed, the office of the *katapano* remained vacant for two years until the arrival of

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<sup>113</sup> *PBW*, accessed 14 January, 2014, "Boulloterion 51," <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/boulloterion/51>. See also: Falkenhausen, *Untersuchungen über die byzantinische Herrschaft in Süditalien*, 92.

<sup>114</sup> Jacques Lefort and Jean-Marie Martin, "Le sigillion du catépan d'Italie Eustathe Palatinos pour le juge Byzantios (décembre 1045)," *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Moyen-Age, Temps modernes* 98, no. 2 (1986), 525-542; Byzantios was a common name of local, Lombard, provenance. Its popularity naturally diminished following the Norman Conquest: Jean-Marie Martin, "Anthroponymie et onomastique à Bari (950-1250)," *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Moyen-Age, Temps modernes* 106, no. 2 (1994), 683-701.

<sup>115</sup> The otherwise unknown villages of Phoulianon and Deiarborei. The latter village is deserted; however, Byzantios is granted the further right to place settlers there. Also note that taxation was attested collectively, according to the usual Byzantine practice. See discussion in: Guillou, "Des collectivités rurales," 320.

<sup>116</sup> Discussion of rewards: Lefort and Martin, "Le sigillion du catépan d'Italie," 536-541.

<sup>117</sup> There are a number of judges that have the name Byzantion attested in the cartulary evidence (*CDB IV*, 22, for instance), however, it is impossible to make a definite identification. See: Lefort and Martin, "Le sigillion du catépan d'Italie," 536.

<sup>118</sup> Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 48. Cheynet neglects the western sources for this rebellion, see: *Ann. Bari*. 31; *Ann. Lupi*. 143; Maniakes' rebellion failed and he died in battle en route to Constantinople. His head was paraded on a lance along the *Mese*, the main artery in the Byzantine capital. Aristakes records that his soul was harvested by a powerful angel, and that he fell in battle despite being unwounded. See Aristakes 10.46-48.

Palatinos.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, while Normans were as yet unable to successfully besiege major towns, they controlled many of the smaller ones and judging by the aforementioned need of an escort, constituted a significant threat in Longobardia.<sup>120</sup> While the granting of rewards for service by the Italian *katepano* is not unique – a Christophoros Bocomakè was similarly awarded the Tarantine monastery of St. Peter in 999 for his earlier service against Arab raids – what is unique is that Byzantios was granted his judicial privileges without reference to the imperial centre.<sup>121</sup> In other words, it was unheard of for the Byzantine state to so completely relegate its jurisdiction to a private individual. This *sigillion* demonstrates, not only the precarious position that the imperial authorities found themselves in Italy during the eleventh century, but more importantly, that the *katepanoi* were given wide latitude to maintain the Byzantine presence in the *Mezzogiorno*.

However, this is not to say that they had complete *carte blanche*; provincial governors could be, and often were, recalled. Eustathios Palatinos, the *katepano* from 1045-1046, was relieved by his successor Ioannes Raphael, who arrived in Bari with a contingent of Varangian reinforcements following his predecessor's defeat by the Normans at the southern Apulian city of Taranto.<sup>122</sup> The emperor Michael IV the Paphlagonian (r.1010-1041) recalled Michael Dokeianos following his defeat at the hands of the Normans, first in March 1041 near the river Olivento, between Melfi and Lavello, and then seven weeks later in May near Cannae.<sup>123</sup> Military success seems to have been a condition of employment. In what may be an apocryphal story, a century and a half earlier, during the reign of the empress Irene (r.797-803), the *patrician* Narses failed to send the then standard tax returns to Constantinople, having instead spent it on defence. In response, the empress sent him a spindle and distaff and told him to: "take

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<sup>119</sup> Maniakes killed his replacement Pardos in 1042 [*Ann. Lupi* 145; Skylitzes XXI.3, pp.400-403; Psellos *Chr.* 6.80], while his successor, Basil Theodorokanos, only stayed for two months in the spring of 1043 [*Ann. Lupi* 145; *Anon. Bar.* 151].

<sup>120</sup> Loud, *the Age of Robert Guiscard*, 100. Bari itself was briefly besieged in 1043: Will. Apulia Book II, p.16; *Anon. Bar.* 151; Lefort and Martin, "Le sigillion du catépan d'Italie," 533.

<sup>121</sup> Christophoros Bocomakè: Trinchera, 10. For further examples see: Martin, *La Pouille*, 301. On the peculiarity of the judicial privileges see: Lefort and Martin, "Le sigillion du catépan d'Italie," 541-2.

<sup>122</sup> *Anon. Bar.* 151; *Ann. Lupi.* 147.

<sup>123</sup> *Ann. Bari* 20, 21, 23; *Ann. Lupi* 137; Skylitzes XXI.3, pp.400-403; Amatus II.24, p.73. Dokeianos' military failures didn't end his career; he would later fall in battle against the Pechenegs in 1050: Attaleiates, *Hist.* VII.5; Skylitzes XXI.22, pp.436-439.

these, your proper instruments; for we have judged it fit that you should spin, rather than that as a man of arms you should defend and guide and do battle for the Romans.”<sup>124</sup> Efficient administration was obviously also expected. The only other recall on record is that of Basil Boioannes, who after a decade in office (the longest on record) received an imperial *mandaton* conferring the office of *katepano* on his replacement Christophoros Burgaris. There is no question surrounding his record; the local annals refer to him as ‘Vulcanus’ while Skylitzes notes that he “brought all of Italy as far as Rome under the subjection to the emperor.”<sup>125</sup> It’s quite possible that Boioannes was a victim of his own success and was recalled in order to prevent him from becoming too entrenched.

Imperial authority was exercised through a variety of different means and demonstrated not only the latitude discussed above, but also a great deal of adaptability. When faced with challenges to imperial authority, mercy could form the rule. When the people of Rossano rose up against the local authorities who had perhaps demanded too much in terms of material tribute, the Calabrian governor pardoned them, asking only for financial compensation for the damage done.<sup>126</sup> In other situations, however, violence would be employed. The Annals record numerous examples of executions: the *patrician* Ioannes Ammiropoulos killed Leo of Cannae and Nicholas the *krites*, for a murder committed two years prior in 987;<sup>127</sup> Dattus, the rebel Melos’ brother-in-law, was paraded on an ass into Bari in 1021, a Byzantine custom, and later executed;<sup>128</sup> four men were hanged on the walls of Bitonto by the *katepano* Michael Dokeianos in 1041.<sup>129</sup> In contrast, the *katepano* could issue rewards for loyal service, as seen in the cases of the judge Byzantios and Christophoros Bocomakè discussed above. Imperial authorities could even purchase their enemies when the situation arose, as they did when they purchased the loyalty of Argyros, the son of Melos, who had been acclaimed prince and duke of Italy by the Normans and the militia of Bari; for the price of the titles of *vestes*

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<sup>124</sup> *DAI*, 27.

<sup>125</sup> *Ann. Bari* 17; Skylitzes XXI.3, pp.400-403.

<sup>126</sup> See above, nt.63, for bibliography.

<sup>127</sup> *Ann. Lupi* 91.

<sup>128</sup> *Ann. Lupi*. 115; Amatus I.26, p.53. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 67-8.

<sup>129</sup> *Ann. Bar.* 20.

*patrikios*, and *antipathos*,<sup>130</sup> he returned to the imperial fold.<sup>131</sup> A similar attempt failed with Georgios Maniakes in 1043 who instead killed the imperial envoy sent to negotiate with him, while an effort vis-à-vis the Norman Duke, Robert Guiscard, only bought the Empire a decade before he invaded Byzantine possessions in the Balkans.<sup>132</sup> What all the above examples demonstrate, is that imperial rule in the *Mezzogiorno* was based on pragmatism; when faced with serious threats to its authority, as in the case of the revolt in Rossano, Georgios Maniakes' rebellion, Argyros, son of Melos' insubordination and Robert Guiscard's outright hostility, the tendency was to negotiate, while in minor cases of normal justice, the response could be a brutal performance of imperial wrath.

Such pragmatism should not be taken, however, as unique to the imperial periphery. It was also on display within the core provinces of the empire. The city of Raidestos was located three days east from Constantinople along the Via Egnatia, the main military highway that cut through the Balkans and ran from Dyrrachion/Durazzo on the Adriatic coast, all the way east to the Byzantine capital. In 1077, at the urging of the

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<sup>130</sup> Byzantine titles were not merely honorific, but carried with them a yearly salary or *roga*, distributed to the recipient every year on Palm Sunday by the emperor himself. The amounts for these titles in particular were not standardized, but a *chrysoboullon* to Robert Guiscard, arranging the marriage of his daughter to the emperor's son, granted him 200 pounds of gold (*litra*) per year. Using this measure, Argyros' titles would have given the son of Melos, 24 pounds or 1728 *nomismata* per year. See: Paul Lemerle, "'Roga" et rente d'Etat au Xe-XIe siècle," 94; Nicolas Oikonomidès, "Title and Income at the Byzantine Court," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829-1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1997), 205-206.

<sup>131</sup> *Ann. Bar.* 25-29. On Argyros, son of Melos, see: Demetrios Kassapides et al., "Argyros/Argyropoulous, House," in *Encyclopedic Prosopographical Lexicon of Byzantine History and Civilization*, ed. by Alexis G. Savvides and Benjamin Hendrick, vol. 1 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepolis, 2007), 362-365. Argyros' defection was greatly resented by the Normans; Amatus reports, in a chapter laconically titled "How the Normans made Argyros their prince and then did not want him," that one of the Norman leaders had to be restrained from killing him: Amatus II.28, p.75.

<sup>132</sup> Maniakes: *Ann. Bar.* 31; William of Apulia reports that he filled the envoys mouth with horse dung, before executing him in a stable: Will. Apulia Book I, p.14. Psellos puts the blame squarely on the shoulders of the envoy, Pardos, whom he calls a "parvenu" with no experience in these sorts of missions. Psellos, *Chr.* 6.80, p.194. Guiscard: Hélène Bibicou, "Une page d'histoire diplomatique de Byzance au XIe siècle. Michel VII Doukas, Robert Guiscard et la pension des dignitaires." *Byzantion* 29/30 (1959/60), 43-75. See also Laiou, who examines Michael VII's *chrysoboullon* to Guiscard and notes the reciprocal expectations contained between the emperor and other parties: Angelika Laiou, "The Emperor's Word: Chrysobulls, oaths and synallagmatic Relations in Byzantium (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c.)," *Travaux et Memoires* 14 (2002), 347-359. See also Krallis, who extends the parties to include the Byzantine body politic: Dimitris Krallis, "'Democratic' Action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium," 45, nt. 55.

wife of the local dynast Ioannes Batazes, the city elected to join the rebellion of Nikephoros Bryennios, a relative of her husband.<sup>133</sup> The inhabitants tore down the *phoundax*, the silo for the imperial grain monopoly, attacked the nearby fortress of Panion which had remained loyal to the emperor, and fortified the city's harbor in anticipation of an attack by imperial forces. The historian and judge, Michael Attaleiates, who is our source for this uprising, describes the events succinctly: "simply put, everything was in great turmoil and confusion."<sup>134</sup> Attaleiates was present in the city before the inhabitants moved to open revolt and was tipped off to the conspiracy by one of his clients. After some tense moments at the city's gates, he managed to negotiate his free passage out of rebel territory and made his way to the capital. Upon his arrival he went straight to the palace and spoke with the *logothetes* Nikephoros who was entrusted with the public administration, and urged him to immediately dispatch *chrysoboulla* to Raideostos and the surrounding cities "and secure its loyalty with displays of compassion and understanding" while at the same time calling up the army; done swiftly, according to Attaleiates, these actions could stem the flow of cities to the rebel's side.<sup>135</sup> The *logothetes* failed to act quickly and the rebellion took root, however, Attaleiates' suggestion speaks to recognition by those in the imperial administration of the value of pragmatism. Denying the rebel allies so near the capital through the dispatch of a simple communiqué offering concessions and, one must assume, bribes was vastly preferred over the material and social disruption caused by imperial troops.

Imperial government not only left its mark on the people over whom it governed but also on the physical landscape. In an effort to cement Byzantine claims to the newly reconquered territory of the *Mezzogiorno*, and provide a useful outlet for a growing population, recall that the provincial government undertook several waves of city building. Additionally, the *katepano* and the imperial authority that he represented was a prominent feature on the urban landscape of Bari. In 1011, the *katepano* Basil

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<sup>133</sup> On the Batazes's as local dynasts see: Michael Angold, "Archons and Dynasts: Local Aristocracies and the Cities of the Later Byzantine Empire," in *The Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries*, ed. Michael Angold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 241-242.

<sup>134</sup> Primary account: Attaleiates, *Hist.* XXXI.1-12, pp.443-463; for a discussion of this event see: Dimitris Krallis, "'Democratic' Action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium," 35-53. Quote: Attaleiates, *Hist.* XXXI.8, p.455.

<sup>135</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.* XXXI.4, p.449.

Mesardonites completed construction on the city's *praetorium*, the fortified compound that housed the province's administrative apparatus and was a normal feature of Byzantine cities in the east.<sup>136</sup> The surviving dedicatory inscription notes the construction of a fortified arch, a vestibule, a garrison and a church dedicated to the Byzantine warrior saint, St Demetrios, all constructed of stone.<sup>137</sup> Three more churches would appear over the years, St. Sofia, St. Basil and St. Eustratios.<sup>138</sup> The compound would also have contained a prison, the courts, the tax-registrar, the bureaucracy and offices, and served as the residence of the *katepano*.<sup>139</sup> Located near one of the city's two ports, on the site of the present day cathedral of St. Nicholas, the *praetorium* would have been a physical reminder of Byzantine dominion in Apulia. Indeed the presence of churches dedicated to the most important Byzantine military saint (St. Demetrios), and to the most holy church in Byzantium (Hagia Sofia) could only serve to symbolically evoke Byzantine military and cultural hegemony over the mainly Lombard population of Longobardia.<sup>140</sup> However, this hegemony was not without its cracks; indeed, the *praetorium* was constructed as a response to a recent rebellion by the Baresi.<sup>141</sup> Moreover, it would serve as a locus of resistance: it is certainly no accident that the cathedral, consecrated in 1089 to house the relics of St. Nicholas of Myra should be built on its ruins.<sup>142</sup> Once rid of this symbol the Baresi did not want it to return, and a century later reacted violently against the Saracen workers sent to build a citadel near their city by the Norman King Roger II of

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<sup>136</sup> A *praetorium* was one of the few public buildings normally found in a Byzantine city: Charalambos Bouras, "Aspects of the Byzantine City, Eighth-Fifteenth Centuries," in *The Economic History of Byzantium: from the seventh through the fifteenth century*, eds. Angeliki E. Laiou, et al. (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002), 2: 524-525.

<sup>137</sup> André Guillou, "Un document sur le gouvernement de la province: L'inscription historique en vers de Bari (1011)," in *Studies on Byzantine Italy*. Collected Studies Series 3 (London: Variorum Reprints, 1970), VIII: 1-22.

<sup>138</sup> Falkenhausen, "Bari bizantina," 199.

<sup>139</sup> Guillou, "Un document sur le gouvernement de la province," 11.

<sup>140</sup> The third-century St. Eustratios, as one of the Five Martyrs, was similarly important, as was St. Basil, carrying the name of two of the most successful Byzantine emperors, but was also championed by Leo VI, the Wise, in the sixth century.

<sup>141</sup> Melos rose twice in rebellion, first in 1009-1011 and then again in 1017-1018. Bari was besieged for 61 days in 1011-13 by Basil Mesardonites before surrendering on April 20. For bibliography see: Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 35.

<sup>142</sup> *Vita. S. Nich.* 15, p.64

Sicily.<sup>143</sup> This jealously guarded independence, and the collective autonomy that it suggests, becomes even clearer during the Norman Conquest.

This chapter has charted the resurgence of Byzantine rule in the *Mezzogiorno*, following the setbacks to imperial fortunes caused by the sixth-century invasion of the Lombards, as well as the Muslim raids that reached their height in the ninth and tenth centuries. Around the turn of the millennium, imperial rule extended over all of southern Italy, with the exception of Sicily which was never to return to Byzantine control. The failure to recapture Sicily, despite repeated attempts, meant that Muslim raiders had a nearby base with which to threaten Byzantine inhabitants of the mainland that the provincial administration was powerless to combat. Taxes were increased, but this only caused more discontent as the raids continued to threaten the region's newfound prosperity. Imperial authority, and the expansive state apparatus that served it, was ubiquitous in the region. Imperial officials, drawn from the local population were in every city, registering land transfers, maintaining tax registers, and settling disputes while the *katepanoi* operated on a regional level, founding cities and defending Byzantine interests in the region. On a social level, this may have had a profound effect on indigenous modes of thought as locals navigated a discursive culture of petition and response. Imperial authority operated pragmatically – “dealing ‘before all’ with each person as they deserve” as William of Apulia noted at the outset of this Chapter – and this created the space for dissent.<sup>144</sup> Ultimately, this ‘space’ was also where political agency and urban autonomy found its expression, the examination of which forms the subject of what follows.

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<sup>143</sup> Telese II.34, p.16. The Baresi were initially able to fend off efforts to build a citadel, by negotiating with King Roger II while he was in a position of weakness during a rebellion. Roger II later returned once the rebellion was put down and pushed through the construction. Telese II.49, p.19.

<sup>144</sup> Will. Apulia Book I, p.5

## Chapter 2.

### The *Mezzogiorno* in Change: The Norman Conquest and Urban Autonomy

Tuesday, February 12, 6553 (= 1045), Indiction 13, the inhabitants of the cities of Brindisi, Lecce, Otranto, Oria, and their rural communes (οἱ χωριῖται) came to Nardò; there they took a large quantity of cloths, cattle, and other goods, and also books; in short, they devastated the whole town of Nardò and killed many of its inhabitants; they remained there two days. After the two days, the people from the city of Gallipoli and its rural communes arrived and took all that was left. Nardò, which was the source of supplies of all the cities and their rural communes, has remained, thanks to divine Providence, the most wealthy in wheat, wine, meat, fish, vegetables, and all other produce.<sup>145</sup>

The above annalistic entry is preserved as a palimpsest and was published by the French byzantinist André Guillou as an appendix entitled “Brigandage among the cities in the Theme of Longobardia.” Guillou treats this as evidence of “the coherence of the urban center” but leaves unexamined the implications of such coherence.<sup>146</sup> What these acts of ‘brigandage’ represent is not just the cities’ ‘coherence’ but also their political agency. While there is no evidence for the reasons that led a collection of some of the major cities of southern Apulia to turn against one of their neighbours, this was a time of disturbances caused by the arrival of the Normans. Indeed, recall that also in 1045, the newly arrived *katepano*, Eusthatios Palatinos needed a military escort in order to reach his new posting in Bari.<sup>147</sup> Nardò was rich in supplies and the so-called ‘brigands’ made sure to secure “large quantities of cloths, cattle, and other goods, and also books,” which could only have helped them survive these uncertain times. The rapid eclipse of imperial authority that followed the first Norman successes in the fourth decade of the first millennium opened the way for urban polities to exercise their political

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<sup>145</sup> Guillou, “Production and Profits,” Appendix II, 106-107.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>147</sup> See above, pp.28-30.

agency as they sought to defend their autonomy. Cities and towns across the *Mezzogiorno* alternatively resisted, surrendered, negotiated and rose up again as each urban polity charted their own way forward in shifting circumstances. What follows is an exposition of these uncertain times and an analysis of the reaction of urban polities to the disturbances caused by the Norman invasions. Ultimately, as imperial authority melted away in the face of the Norman advance, the cities of Byzantine Italy behaved as autonomous collectives that acted to defend their own local interests.

The origins of the Normans were a subject of myth-making by their chroniclers. Amatus of Montecassino, wrote after 1080 that they originally hailed from an island called 'Nora', from which they took their name. This "very robust and strong people" had outgrown their homeland, and taking up arms, had "scattered throughout the world and made their own way."<sup>148</sup> William of Apulia has them descending upon the frontiers of Italy from the "boreal forests" and notes that their name means "men of the north wind."<sup>149</sup> Gaufredo Malaterra, on the other hand, claims that the Normans originally emigrated from Norway, before settling in Gaul; King Louis II of Francia feared the bloodshed that would result in any effort to expel them.<sup>150</sup> They were alternatively celebrated and feared as great warriors and could be found scattered throughout the Mediterranean world.<sup>151</sup> While there are competing stories of the arrival of the Normans in southern Italy, we know that when the Normans eventually made their way to Italy they were to leave an indelible mark on the region.<sup>152</sup>

While the presence of the Normans in the *Mezzogiorno* is attested as early as the year c.1000, they did not begin to make serious problems for the Byzantines until

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<sup>148</sup> Amatus I.1-2, pp. 45-6.

<sup>149</sup> "homines boreales" Will. Apulia, Book I, p. 3. Malaterra similarly associates them with the wind, claiming that 'north' in the English language means "the northern wind" [*aquilonis plaga*]. Malaterra I.3, p. 4.

<sup>150</sup> Malaterra, I.1-2, pp. 3-4.

<sup>151</sup> The Normans, alternatively known as Franks, Goths or Latins, were no strangers to the Byzantines; many found fame and fortune as their allies and enemies. See for example: Jonathan Shepard, "The uses of the Franks in eleventh-century Byzantium," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 15 (1993): 275-305. On the career of Roussel de Bailleul/Rouselios in particular, see: Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the politics of imperial decline*, 157-169.

<sup>152</sup> See the excellent discussion and bibliography in: Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 60-66.

several decades into the second millennium.<sup>153</sup> When they first arrived in the south of Italy they worked as mercenaries for various local lords, who quickly grasped their military value. The rebel Melos employed them during his second revolt against the Byzantines that ended in defeat in 1018.<sup>154</sup> The Norman survivors found work with the Prince of Benevento, the Abbot of Montecassino, the Prince of Salerno, Guaimar III and by the newly restored Duke of Naples, Sergius IV who installed them at Aversa in 1030.<sup>155</sup> Despite their service against his rival, the Prince of Capua, the relationship between the Normans and Guaimar III appears to have deteriorated. So when the Byzantine emperor's representative, Georgios Maniakes requested troops for an attack on Sicily, the Prince leapt at the opportunity to rid himself of his Norman problem; the two Hauteville brothers, William and Drogo were among the contingent.<sup>156</sup> The 1038 campaign against Sicily was initially successful; according to a number of the Greek sources, the Byzantines took thirteen cities and occupied the whole island.<sup>157</sup> Maniakes was, however, recalled to Constantinople in 1040/1 due to political intrigues in the Byzantine capital, and the hard fought gains on the island were soon lost.<sup>158</sup>

Before Georgios Maniakes was recalled, however, he managed to run afoul of the Normans in his army.<sup>159</sup> A north Italian named Arduin was attached to the Norman contingent, either as a liaison – for he spoke Greek – or as one of their commanders.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Amatus I.17, pp.49-50; Oldfield, *City and Community in Norman Italy*, 17.

<sup>154</sup> For the bibliography on Melos' rebellion see: Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 35.

<sup>155</sup> Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 74-75.

<sup>156</sup> Malaterra I.6-7, pp.5-6.

<sup>157</sup> Skylitzes XIX.16, p.380; Zonaras 17.15.6. Malaterra would have you believe that this feat was accomplished singlehandedly by the Norman contingent in Maniakes' army.

<sup>158</sup> Skylitzes XIX.20, pp.382-383; Attaleiates writes that "had Georgios Maniakes, who had been entrusted with the overall military command, not been slandered that he was seeking to usurp the throne and removed from his command, and had the war not been assigned to others, that island would now be under Roman rule." Attaleiates, *Hist.* III.1, pp.10-13.

<sup>159</sup> That Maniakes was still in overall command during this episode is argued, convincingly by J.J. Norwich and echoed by G.A. Loud: J.J. Norwich, *The Normans in the South, 1016-1130* (London: Longmans, 1967), 58; Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 79.

<sup>160</sup> Amatus relates that he was "a vassal of St. Ambrose Archbishop of Milan." St. Ambrose of course, lived in the fourth century and was bishop of Milan for 374-397. The reference is to his status as patron saint of the city: Amatus II.14, p.68; On Arduin's knowledge of Greek, see: Malaterra I.8, p.7; His status as leader of the Normans is only attested in the Greek sources and probably reflects his role as a liaison between the Byzantines and the Normans: Attaleiates, *Hist.* III.1, pp.10-13; and Skylitzes XXI.3, p.400.

There arose a dispute over the division of the spoils and Arduin was sent to resolve the issue with the Byzantine commander, either Maniakes or one of his subordinates, the sources disagree on the point.<sup>161</sup> The sources do agree however that having been flogged and humiliated he left the Sicilian expedition enraged and began plotting his revenge.<sup>162</sup> Arduin proceeded to ingratiate himself with the new *katepano*, Michael Dokeianos, who had arrived to replace the disgraced Maniakes. He plied the Byzantine official with gold and according to Amatus, “he was well received, elevated to high honour, and made prefect of many cities.”<sup>163</sup> In particular, he was made *topoteretes* of the northern Apulian city of Melfi, a recent foundation of Basil Boiannes in the Capitanata.<sup>164</sup> Arduin used this opportunity to ingratiate himself with the inhabitants, throwing lavish banquets and empathizing with their troubles: “he uttered words of compassion, pretending that he was distraught at the grievances that they suffered from Greek lordship and the insults the Greeks gave their women;” consequently, “they all wanted Arduin, this saint-like person as their lord. They told him that they would obey him.”<sup>165</sup>

Arduin was tapping into a deep vein of resentment against the imperial authorities that was felt throughout Byzantine Italy. This discontent was rooted in what were seen as burdensome demands for men and material for the planned invasion of Sicily and ultimately provoked autonomous action on the part of urban polities that sought to have their displeasure addressed. Indeed, the Prince of Salerno was not the

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<sup>161</sup> Amatus has the dispute arise over one horse, which Arduin refused to hand over, while Skylitzes reports that it was over monthly wages. Malaterra says that it was generally over booty. Amatus II.14, p.68; Skylitzes XXI.3, pp.400-401; Malaterra I.8, p.7. Only Malaterra specifically names Maniakes as the culprit, while Skylitzes, along with William of Apulia, blames his successor in the office of *katepano*, Michael Dokeianos. Will. Apulia Book I, p.7-8.

<sup>162</sup> Amatus II.14, p.68; Skylitzes XXI.3, pp.400-401; Malaterra I.8, p.7; Will. Apulia Book I, p.7-8.

<sup>163</sup> Amatus II.16, p.69.

<sup>164</sup> *Anon. Bar.* 150; On Melfi, see: Jean-Marie Martin, “Les villes de l’Italie byzantine (IXe-XIe siècle),” in *Hommes et richesses dans l’empire byzantine*, ed. Catherine Abadie-Reynal et al. Réalités byzantines 3. (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1991), 2: 35-37. On the function of the *topoteretes*, see: Jean-Claude Cheynet, “Toparque et topotèrètès à la fin du 11e siècle,” *Revue des études byzantines* 42 (1984), 221-225. Cheynet doesn’t touch on the Italian themes, but argues that they may have taken on some administrative functions, in addition to their military duties, during the Seljuk invasions. There is evidence for both functions in western context: there is a Ligorios in 1018 who fought a battle at Trani [ *Ann. Lupi.* 113] and a Bizantius in Bari who signed a charter in 1021, authorizing the division of some rural property between two cousins [ *CDB IV*, 15].

<sup>165</sup> Amatus II.6, p.69.

only one to supply troops for the assault on Sicily; according to Amatus: “the Apulians and Calabrians were obliged by the emperor’s money to take part in this arduous campaign, and this stirred up the people and the nobles.”<sup>166</sup> And stirred up they were – in 1040, Bari itself was rocked by a revolt by the local militia, or *konteratoi*, led by an imperial *krites*; the inhabitants took advantage of the absence of the *katepano* to assert their autonomy and voice their displeasure at imperial impositions. Argyros, the son of the rebel Melos, used this opportunity to take control of the city.<sup>167</sup> This discontent with Byzantine rule, taken together with the fact that southern Italy was largely denuded of troops for Maniakes’ 1038 invasion of Sicily, made Byzantine territories an easy and tempting target for the Normans.<sup>168</sup>

Notwithstanding this discontent, inhabitants of Byzantine Italy were not ready to completely throw in their lot with the Normans and resisted making a final break with the imperial authorities. Arduin, using a fabricated trip to Rome as an excuse, instead travelled to the Norman base of operations at Aversa, and recruited them for the invasion of Apulia.<sup>169</sup> Arduin’s charge, Melfi, was the site of the first blow; he entered the city at night with the Normans whom he asked to “effect peaceful occupation.”<sup>170</sup> In a display of collective action, the inhabitants armed themselves and prepared to defend their city but Arduin addressed them, building on the relationship that he had already established with them, and claimed that he was there to liberate them: “these men are not the enemy but great friends... [and] have come to loosen the yoke which bound

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<sup>166</sup> Amatus II.8, p.66. The term “obliged” used here is a curious one. The 14<sup>th</sup> C. French is “estoint constreint,” literally “they were constrained by” the emperor’s money. This may suggest that money had already changed hands and that the Apulians and Calabrians were thus obliged to follow through with their commitments. However, without the original Latin source, this is merely conjecture.

<sup>167</sup> Compare this uprising with that of Rossano, which rebelled when faced with what they considered to be onerous naval levies; see above: pp.19-20. The *konteratoi* affair will be dealt with more fully below, in Chapter 3. Bari was never completely at peace. For example, the annalistic sources attest to tit for tat violence from 982 to 989: *Ann. Lupi*. 82, 89, 91, 92; Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 30.

<sup>168</sup> Malaterra I, p.8. Taken together with the other sources, Malaterra’s comment that all was peaceful should be taken with caution. See also discussion in: Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 79-80.

<sup>169</sup> Amatus II.17, p.69-70.

<sup>170</sup> Amatus II.19, p.70.

you.”<sup>171</sup> Recognizing that they perhaps had little choice given that their own commander had betrayed them and moreover that the enemy, perhaps numbering as many as 300 Normans, was already in the city, the Melfitani yielded: “each side took an oath to preserve the peace faithfully.”<sup>172</sup> The next morning found the Normans on a spree: “happy and joyous they went riding here and there on their horses.”<sup>173</sup> They attacked and looted the nearby cities of Venosa, Ascoli, and Lavello, which prompted a response from the imperial authorities. A hastily dispatched army, under the personal command of the *katepano* Michael Dokeianos, was defeated on 17 March, 1041; a second, much larger army, was defeated several weeks later, on 4 May, while a third battle was fought on 3 September that resulted in yet another defeat for the Byzantines. The new *katepano*, sent to replace Dokeianos, was captured; ‘Exaugustus’ Boiaonnes was “led in chains...walking before the victor’s horse, since his enemy wanted to emphasize the scale of his triumph.”<sup>174</sup> With imperial forces in disarray, the main fortified cities of Apulia came to terms with the Normans, Bari included, where Argyros, son of Melos, moved to secure his hold on the city.<sup>175</sup> In 1042, with the support of the Normans, Argyros was elected *princeps* and *dux* of Italy, marking the beginning of the end for the Byzantines in the *Mezzogiorno*.<sup>176</sup>

While Byzantine forces seemed to be unable to halt the Norman advance, it appears that their former subjects had resolved to mount their own defence, thereby

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Amatus II.18-19, p.70; William of Apulia has them capture the city, while Malaterra, incorrectly states that the Normans built the city: Will. Apulia Book I, p.8; Malaterra I.8, p.7.

<sup>173</sup> Amatus II.20, p.70.

<sup>174</sup> *Ann. Lupi*. 137-8; *Ann. Bar.* 21-24; *Anon. Bar.* 150-151; Amatus II.21-26, pp.71-75; Will. Apulia Book I, pp.8-12; Malaterra I.8-10; Skylitzes XXI.3, pp.400-403; Quote: Will. Apulia Book I, p.12.

<sup>175</sup> Will. Apulia Book I, p.12; *Ann. Bar.* 25.

<sup>176</sup> Falkenhausen, *La dominazione bizantina*, 97-98; “Princeps et dux Italiae; Loud and Norwich both emphasize, correctly, that the Normans success depended on the restiveness of population. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 92-94; Norwich, *The Normans in the South*, 62-63.

asserting their autonomy.<sup>177</sup> According to Malaterra, the ‘Lombards’ of Apulia had “conceived a secret plot to murder all the Normans throughout Apulia on the same day.”<sup>178</sup> The uprising was planned for the feast day of St. Lawrence the Martyr, 10 August.<sup>179</sup> On the appointed day in 1051, Count Drogo entered a church in the city of Montillaro; Drogo Hauteville had been Count and overall leader of the Normans for five years following the death of his brother William Bras-de-fer.<sup>180</sup> The sources disagree on whether he came at night, or at daybreak, but agree that he was cut down in an ambush as he entered the church; Amatus identifies the assassin as Riso, an intimate to the Count.<sup>181</sup> According to Malaterra, “many others in Apulia met their end in this conspiracy.”<sup>182</sup> Drogo’s brother Humphrey succeeded him as Count and set to work punishing his brother’s assassins: “he inflicted all sorts of tortures... and after a while the anger and grief he felt in his heart were quenched by their blood.”<sup>183</sup> The significance of this uprising rests in its scale; according to Malaterra the plan encompassed all the Normans of Apulia. Given that the Normans were only in effective of control of northern Apulia at this time, the area of effect can be reduced, a fact supported by the location of Drogo’s assassination, Montillaro, located on the northern border of Apulia with Benevento. Nonetheless, this is a large area for such a conspiracy. The episode at Montillaro involved the collusion of at least a portion of the residents, indeed, Malaterra mentions explicitly the presence of accomplices and that only a few members of Drogo’s

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<sup>177</sup> Primary accounts of the conspiracy: Amatus III.19,22, pp.92-94; Malaterra I.13, p.9; Will. Apulia Book II, p.18; *Ann. Lupi*. 154; *Anon. Bar.* 151. The ‘Lombards’ may have been inspired by the actions of Abbot Richer, of the Abbey of Montecassino, who had managed to expel the Normans from the *Terri Sancti Benedicti* in 1045. The expulsion was precipitated by the massacre of a party of Normans that had come to pray at a church in the city of S. Germano; a battle followed, where God himself appeared, with St. Benedict acting as a standard bearer, and the Normans were routed. The Abbott subsequently fortified his lands against any further encroachments. Primary accounts: Amatus II.42-43, p.83; *Chron. Cas.* II.71, pp.309-312; see also: Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 102; Idem., “Continuity and Change in Norman Italy,” in *Conquerors and Churchmen in Norman Italy*. Variorum Collected Studies Series CS658 (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1999), V:333-343; H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius: Montecassinno, the Papacy, and the Normans in the Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 113-114.

<sup>178</sup> Malaterra I.13, p.9.

<sup>179</sup> Amatus III.22, p.94.

<sup>180</sup> *Ann. Lupi*. 149.

<sup>181</sup> Amatus III.22, p.94.

<sup>182</sup> Malaterra I.13, p.9.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

entourage managed to escape.<sup>184</sup> It is safe to assume that a comital escort would have been sizeable, so there must have been a great deal of accomplices; the subsequent siege by Drogo's vengeful brother Humphrey would surely have made converts out of the remainder. While the sources are short on specifics of this conspiracy outside of Montillaro, if this kind of urban collective action was replicated across the region, then it would represent a significant moment of resistance to Norman efforts to curtail political autonomy on both a civic and regional level.<sup>185</sup>

The following year, in 1052, the city (*kastron*) of Bisignano, located in northern Calabria, was the site of an interesting encounter between the inhabitants and Robert Guiscard.<sup>186</sup> Bisignano, located within twenty kilometres of Guiscard's first base in the region, was "rich in gold, animals, and precious cloth," and therefore made a tempting target for the newly arrived Norman.<sup>187</sup> Guiscard was in no position to capture the city by force; Bisignano was a major town and probably walled, while the Norman could better be described as a brigand during these early years, rather than the feared warlord that he would become.<sup>188</sup> The most prominent citizen of the city, Peter de Tira, is described as the wealthiest inhabitant; Malaterra uses the rather picturesque phrase "rolling in money."<sup>189</sup> He is also described as the leading citizen of the city, while one chronicler

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> The people of Apulia would soon after appeal for help from the pope: Will. Apulia Book I, p.17; Malaterra I.14, p.9. William of Apulia records that the "rebel *kastra* everywhere helped the Germans and gave them [the Normans] no provisions or material help." Will. Apulia Book I, p.19.

<sup>186</sup> Primary sources for this episode are: Malaterra I.17-18, pp.11-12; Amatus III.10, p.89; Kekaumenos II.85, pp.126-128; Leo of Ostia also records the incident, but is omitted here due to its similarity to Amatus' account. The *Alexiad* also contains a similar story, but instead of Peter de Tira, the Guiscard's victim is changed to William Mascabeles: *Alexiad* I.11, pp.38-42. For a discussion see: G.A. Loud, "Anna Komnena and her Sources for the Normans of Southern Italy," in *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages: Essays presented to John Taylor*, eds. Ian Wood and G.A. Loud (London: The Hambleton Press, 1991), 54-57.

<sup>187</sup> Quote: Amatus III.10, p.89; According to Malaterra, when Guiscard first arrived in Calabria, probably in 1048, he was first installed in the Crati valley, but that location proved to be unhealthy and malarial. He soon moved with his men to a hilltop site at San Marco, some 20km southwest. Malaterra I.12, 16, pp. 9, 10.

<sup>188</sup> Kekaumenos also notes the presence of a moat: Kekaumenos II.85, pp.126-128. Amatus states that Guiscard "was poor so he became a brigand because his knights were few and there was little money in his purse." Amatus III.8, p.88.

<sup>189</sup> Quote: Malaterra I.17 p. 11; Peter de Tira is also called Peter, son of Tyre, and Teras the Calabrian, depending on the source.

refers to him as the city's guardian (*phylax*).<sup>190</sup> Indeed, according to Malaterra, "he and Guiscard were in the habit of having frequent meetings, as though at court, to discuss the various disputes which occurred between their men."<sup>191</sup> Peter is clearly a representative, if not the outright leader of the city and while he is not attested as having a Byzantine title, it would be odd that someone of his stature (i.e. wealth and power) should remain outside the imperial *taxís*, especially given that he makes it into the personal memoirs and accounts of a Byzantine author and former general from across the Adriatic.

The episode in question occurred during one of these 'meetings.' Guiscard laid a trap for Peter de Tira in an effort to extract not only a significant amount of money from the city's guardian, but also to conquer the city. The two men arranged to meet in a neutral location; Malaterra and Kekaumenos both agree that it was directly outside the city, while Amatus merely states that it was a secure location.<sup>192</sup> By all accounts, the two men met and parleyed away from their entourages at Guiscard's request, reportedly out of fear for his own safety. Once alone, Guiscard overpowered Peter and took him prisoner; Malaterra has the Norman throw de Tira dramatically over his shoulders and run towards his men who, at a prearranged signal, rushed to his defence. The Norman then took Peter to his base at San Marco, where he proceeded to extort a sizeable ransom from him; however, despite Guiscard's efforts, he was not able to gain possession of Bisignano because the citizens "would not agree to this."<sup>193</sup> However, Guiscard was able to apply some pressure on the city, by subjecting them, and the surrounding cities, to daily raids. Ultimately, they capitulated and the citizens of Bisignano and the nearby cities of Cosenza and Martirano made a treaty with Guiscard

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<sup>190</sup> Guardianship: Kekaumenos II.85, pp.126-128.

<sup>191</sup> Malaterra I.17, p.11.

<sup>192</sup> Kekaumenos states that they met near the city's moat, while Malaterra says that the exchange occurred in the plain outside the city. Malaterra I.17, p.11; Amatus III.10, p.89; Kekaumenos II.85, pp.126-128. The *Alexiad* records that they met in the marshy valley between two hills: *Alexiad* I.11.5, p.40.

<sup>193</sup> Malaterra I.17, pp.11-12. The eastern sources mention that he was tortured; Kekaumenos obliquely states the he was subjected to 'torments,' while the *Alexiad* has Guiscard exchange each of de Tira's teeth for gold and once he had run out of teeth (and gold), he blinded him. However, Komnena was most likely conflating Guiscard's capture of Salerno in 1077 with this one: Kekaumenos II.85, pp.126-128; *Alexiad* I.11.8, p.42. Loud, "Anna Komnena and her Sources," 56.

whereby they retained possession of their *kastron*, while owing the Norman tribute and service.<sup>194</sup>

The events at Bisignano are significant, not only because they represented an early success for Guiscard in Calabria and boosted his reputation, but also because they featured an urban polity acting collectively to defend its interests. Once Peter de Tira was removed by Guiscard, we see the citizens of Bisignano taking their affairs in hand; Malaterra states that while in captivity Peter “was unable to hand over the *kastron*, for the citizens would not agree to this.”<sup>195</sup> De Tira was not on hand to direct the actions of the city and as such was not able to apply whatever pressure his position would normally allow. Without him, the citizens looked to their own interests, which were in this case, not to surrender their city to Guiscard. While the inhabitants were ultimately pressured by Guiscard through his raids to change their minds, they were nonetheless able to negotiate their capitulation. This was not the wholesale surrender that Guiscard had envisioned, but a negotiated settlement. The people acted in cooperation with the neighbouring cities, perhaps reflecting their common bonds with them, forged under years of Byzantine rule. Together they were able to present a stronger front to the Normans, thereby softening the terms of their surrender.<sup>196</sup> Ultimately, without Peter de Tira, the citizens of Bisignano and surrounding cities were able to act collectively in order to defend their interests, even when presented with a losing battle.

Even once conquered, cities could still offer resistance to their Norman overlords. The city of Neocastrum, literally ‘new castle’ so possibly a new foundation, located on the Gulf of Lamezia in southern Calabria, was subjugated by Robert Guiscard during his first foray into Calabria in 1057. The city surrendered to him, along with the cities of Maida and Canalea on Guiscard’s return journey from Reggio, which he had reconnoitred but failed to besiege.<sup>197</sup> A year later, when Guiscard and his brother the

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<sup>194</sup> Malaterra I.17, p.12. The capitulation of Bisignano and the surrounding cities appears only in Malaterra.

<sup>195</sup> Malaterra I.17, p.12.

<sup>196</sup> The people of Bisignano, Cosenza and Martirano were able to retain control of their cities, while they swore oaths and provided hostages, promising to provide tribute and service. All else being equal, these were fairly generous terms. Malaterra I.17, p.12. In any event, the Normans lacked the manpower to leave a proper garrison.

<sup>197</sup> Malaterra I.18, p.12.

Count, Roger were “at loggerheads with each other” over the division of spoils, the people of Calabria began to “throw off the Norman yoke, and refused to pay the tribute and service which they had sworn to give.”<sup>198</sup> The inhabitants of Neocastrum made an agreement with the Normans to surrender their fortifications, but instead laid a trap and “simulating good faith... that same day they slew the sixty Normans who had been left as its garrison.”<sup>199</sup> The inhabitants of Neocastrum, thus took advantage of the chaos caused by the dispute between the two Hauteville brothers to remove their oppressors and regain their autonomy. While the ultimate fate of Neocastrum is obscure, the collective action involved in conceiving of and executing their deception and subsequent revolt is indicative of a political agency, based on the city.

The city of Gerace, located in southern Calabria, was the site a number of moments of resistance to the Normans.<sup>200</sup> In 1059, the *ek prosopou* of the city and the Bishop of Cassano raised a very large army and marched against the Norman *kastron* of San Martino in the Saline Valley; their forces were surrounded and destroyed by Guiscard’s brother and future Count of Sicily, Roger.<sup>201</sup> Three years later, in 1062, the city became embroiled in a dispute between the two Hauteville brothers, as the Count Roger rose in rebellion against Guiscard in an effort to force the Duke to honour his earlier commitments; Malaterra states that “the duke, while generous with money, was stingy in giving over the smallest portion of land.”<sup>202</sup> Roger had travelled to Gerace with

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<sup>198</sup> Malaterra I.28, p.15.

<sup>199</sup> Malaterra I.28, p.15.

<sup>200</sup> According to legend, the city was founded in the tenth century by the inhabitants who were fleeing a 915 Saracen attack of the coast. They were reportedly led to the site by a hawk, and hence its name: *ἰέρπεξ*, which means ‘hawk’. In fact, archaeological evidence points to a Neolithic settlement. “Storia,” accessed 24 April, 2014, Sito ufficiale di Città di Gerace, [http://www.comune.gerace.rc.it/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=21&Itemid=105](http://www.comune.gerace.rc.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21&Itemid=105).

<sup>201</sup> Malaterra I.32, pp.15-16. Malaterra has “*praesopus*,” but given his unfamiliarity with Byzantine titles, this is probably a mistake. The title *ek prosopou* is much more likely. The only Byzantine title that he uses in his chronicle is that of *patricius* [Malaterra IV.2, p.66], and then only once. Given that Malaterra was an emigrant to southern Italy, this is not altogether surprising (he states that he is from “beyond the Alps” [Malaterra Preface, p.2]). For the role of the *ek prosopou* during this period, see: Martin, “Les thèmes italiens,” 534-535.

<sup>202</sup> Malaterra II.21, p.24. Guiscard would eventually be forced to honour an earlier agreement that granted Roger possession of the southern half of Calabria. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 132.

one hundred knights, fleeing his brother's siege of Miletto.<sup>203</sup> Guiscard followed angrily with his entire army and laid siege to the city. Despite having surrendered to Roger, the Geraci appear to have had divided loyalties: Malaterra states that "some of the inhabitants of Gerace had sworn fealty" to the Duke; given that Guiscard was "suffused with rage" when he heard the news, it is likely that the city had previously been in his possession. At issue appears to be the fear that Guiscard would construct a citadel in or near their city "which would make them all henceforth entirely subject to his wishes," something that the inhabitants could not abide and as such they refused his demands for surrender.<sup>204</sup> Notwithstanding this opposition, or perhaps because of it, Guiscard entered the city in disguise in order to meet with one of the leading men of the city, Basil, who had invited him to dinner. Basil, judging by his name was a member of the Greek community and most likely part of the former Byzantine administration in the city; his wealth would indicate that he had at the very least done well under the empire.<sup>205</sup>

Unfortunately, Malaterra doesn't indicate what the subject of the dinner conversation was to be – they never got to dinner – but the Geraci certainly had their own opinions on the matter at hand. One of Basil's servants tipped off the Geraci to the presence of the Duke in the city and "suspecting treason, were very much disturbed." This was an understatement; the town was in an "uproar" and rushed, fully armed, to Basil's house. The Duke was oblivious to the danger and was chatting amicably with his host's wife, Melita as the meal was being prepared. The "ignorant mob" struck Basil down with a sword as he attempted to flee to the sanctuary of a church, while his wife was impaled on a stake. There ensued a fearful scene of friends killing friends, and the lower classes killing the upper, while Guiscard is described as despairing of his life.

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<sup>203</sup> This episode is record solely by Malaterra: Malaterra II.24-27, p.25-27.

<sup>204</sup> Urban polities objected quite strongly to the construction of citadels and giving up control of their defences. Bari would kill the Saracen builders sent by King Roger II to build a citadel during the twelfth century, a battle that they would ultimately lose: A citadel would be constructed by King Roger II, but not without meeting significant resistance from the locals: Telese II.34, 49, pp. 16, 19. Similarly, Bohemund, Robert's son and heir would be able to gain the loyalty of the citizens of Consenza by promising to destroy the citadel built there by his father. Malaterra V.10, p.70.

<sup>205</sup> Malaterra says that they ate dinner at his 'palatium' or palace [Malaterra II.24, p.25]. The lack of a Byzantine title in the account is not evidence that he was not part of the Byzantine *taxis*, given Malaterra's evident unfamiliarity with them; for example, he garbles *ek prosopou* into *praesopus* [Malaterra I.32, p.15]. See nt.201 above.

Malaterra's description of Guiscard during these tense moments is worth quoting at length:

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.<sup>206</sup>

The great Norman Duke, who was said to have caused both the Franks and Greeks to quake in their boots, was brought low by a mob.<sup>207</sup>

While there is a certain amount of *Schadenfreude* to be felt for the situation that Robert Guiscard found himself in, there is nonetheless a great deal to be learned from the mêlée. Malaterra refers to the fighters as an “ignorant mob,” with citizens attacking their fellow citizens, friend against friend, and so on. In contrast to the tumult, Malaterra observes that “the more sensible people... were doing their best to restrain the extraordinary fury of the ignorant mob;” he writes later of “the wiser men of the town.”<sup>208</sup> Our source posits a division in the city, with one faction wanting the death of Guiscard, in order to prevent the construction of a citadel, and another seeking to respect their sworn fealty to the Duke. However, Malaterra's hostility towards the “ignorant mob” and its juxtaposition against the “wiser men of the town” is based more on his own distaste for the Calabrians, whom he calls elsewhere “a most untrustworthy people,” than on the composition of the fracas.<sup>209</sup> Cooler heads would prevail – those “wiser men of the town” – and Guiscard was taken into custody, however, not before he delivered a speech to the “more sensible people.” The Norman Duke took a rather stiff tone with them, telling not to be “falsely overjoyed, lest the wheel of fortune, which at the moment favours you and is against me, turns in future so that it shows its adverse face to you, since nobody enjoys any advantage without divine favour.” He proceeds to tell them that he had not come to plot against them, and highlights the oath of fealty that many of them had taken to him. Not having anything to lose must have freed his tongue for Guiscard points to the

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<sup>206</sup> Malaterra II.24, p.25.

<sup>207</sup> *Gesta Tancredi* I, p.21.

<sup>208</sup> Malaterra II.24, p.25-6.

<sup>209</sup> Malaterra I.28, p.15; he has the same words for the Greeks, whom he calls the “most treacherous” [Malaterra II.29, p.28] and the Lombards who are the “most untrustworthy” race [Malaterra I.6, p.6].

vengeance that his people would extract from the Geraci, and ends with a threat: “should you perjure yourselves and pollute your hand with my blood... not just you but all your descendants will incur eternal shame for your perjury.”<sup>210</sup>

The Duke’s men, by this time, had heard the news that Guiscard had been taken prisoner by the city’s inhabitants. Not wishing to risk a rescue they appealed to the Duke’s brother Roger who, at least nominally, had dominion over the Geraci.<sup>211</sup> Upon hearing the news, the Count took up his arms and hurried to the city; the sources are not clear on where he had been during these events. Roger arrived and asked to speak with the inhabitants, giving them safe passage to travel outside the walls of their city. The Norman Count greeted them as “friends and *fideles*” and thanked them for their loyalty in recognizing and capturing his enemy for him, but forbade them from harming his brother, claiming that Guiscard “had so roused my anger that I shall not be satisfied if he meets death from any other arms than my own.” And in what was becoming an Hauteville family tradition, he threatened the Geraci: “if you try to put things off any longer 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... you will be treated as enemies, and will be tortured.”<sup>212</sup> The terrified embassy returned to their city and informed their fellow citizens of the Count’s demands. Ultimately, they decided to release Guiscard, but not before they extracted an oath from the Duke that should he survive his brother’s wrath, that he would never construct a citadel in their city.<sup>213</sup> The Hauteville brothers reconciled soon after with Guiscard agreeing to share Calabria with Roger. Perhaps reflecting the realities on the ground, they also chose to divide the city of Gerace between themselves. Count Roger would return soon after, and begin construction on a castle (*castellum*) outside the city walls in an effort to “extort” a greater tribute from them. Realizing that the oath that they had extracted from Guiscard was

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<sup>210</sup> Malaterra II.24, p.26.

<sup>211</sup> Malaterra II.25, p.26.

<sup>212</sup> Malaterra II.26, pp.26-27.

<sup>213</sup> The Geraci were not convinced that Roger’s anger was feigned or genuine: Malaterra II.26, p.27.

worthless, they acquiesced and agreed to the tribute, thereby halting the construction of the castle.<sup>214</sup>

The significance of the events at Gerace rests in the actions of the city's inhabitants in the absence of imperial leadership and the discursive strategies that the Hauteville brothers employed to free their hostage. Byzantine control of the region had by this point effectively collapsed, yet the same cannot be assumed about Byzantine memory, identity, or Constantinopolitan influence. The thematic capital of Reggio surrendered in 1059, and the last remaining centre of imperial resistance at Squillace was evacuated soon afterwards.<sup>215</sup> The *ek prosopou* of Gerace appears to have perished along with the Bishop of Cassano and their army during the last Byzantine counter-attack – Malaterra states that “scarcely no one escaped”<sup>216</sup> – and no replacement is attested. The Duke's friend Basil may have filled this vacant position, but there is no evidence for this. However, even if this was the case, his death at the beginning of the crisis meant that the city was without an effective leader, and decision-making appears to have devolved into factionalism. Malaterra's distinction between an “ignorant mob” and the “wiser men of the town,” along with Guiscard's choice in directing his address to the “more sensible” of the lot, suggests that factions had formed according to whether they thought the Norman Duke should die or not. This division notwithstanding, the town appears to have been united in their desire to retain what autonomy they did possess under Count Roger's suzerainty, demonstrated by their hostility to the construction of a citadel by the Duke, and their compromise with the Count some time later. The threats levelled against the city by both Hauteville brothers served to bridge the gap between the factions; self-preservation proved to be a source of common ground amongst the Geraci. Ultimately, the city of Gerace was forced to act collectively, in absence of imperial leadership, in order to retain what limited autonomy they could salvage.

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<sup>214</sup> Malaterra II.28, pp.27-28. Roger “felt them [the Geraci] to be traitors and thus hated them more than other people.”

<sup>215</sup> Fall of Reggio: Malaterra II.34, p.16; Evacuation of Squillace: Malaterra II.37, p.17.

<sup>216</sup> Malaterra I.32, pp.15-16.

The city of Brindisi was located over 100 kilometres southeast from the Byzantine capital of Bari, along the Adriatic coast. In 1070, the year in which the following episode took place, most of Apulia had already fallen and Bari was under siege by the Normans; Brindisi was one of the few cities still offering organized resistance.<sup>217</sup> Brindisi had recently been resupplied by the *katepano*, Abulchares, who had travelled throughout Apulia organizing the defences of the remaining cities still loyal to Constantinople before his death in 1068.<sup>218</sup> The *strategos* Nikephoros Karantenos was the Byzantine officer put in charge of the defence of the city; if he was appointed by Abulchares, then he could have been appointed as early as 1064, when the *katepano* first arrived in the region, or as late as 1068, in which case he would have had at least some time to prepare for the arrival of the Normans. In the month of January, in 1070, the sources report that the city was being besieged by the Normans and that Karantenos despaired of retaining Brindisi for the empire. The *strategos* then hatched a plan, wherein he invited the Normans to negotiate the handover of the city. Their arrival took them up a staircase or ladder, where Karantenos received them, one at a time and killed them, one at a time; in the end he killed 83 of them.<sup>219</sup> The *strategos* then took a ship across the Adriatic to Dyrrachion/Durazzo, and travelled directly to Constantinople, taking the heads of the slaughtered Normans with him as a kind of macabre curriculum vitae which he presented directly to the emperor, Romanos IV Diogenes (r.1067-1071). Two years later, Karantenos is attested as the *doux* of Skopje, in Byzantine Bulgaria, which represented

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<sup>217</sup> Primary account: *Ann. Lupi*. 178-179; *Anon. Bar.* 60.4-7; *Sky. Cont.* 169.5-19; See also: Richard Bünemann, "L'assedio di Bari, 1068-1071: Una difficile vittoria per Roberto il Guiscardo," *Quaderni medievali* 27 (1989), 54-55. The Siege of Bari will be dealt with fully in Chapter 3. Brindisi had previously been captured by Guiscard in 1062, and it is not clear when it returned to Byzantine control: *Ann.*, *Lupi*. 167.

<sup>218</sup> *Sky. Cont.* 168.26-169.1; *Anon. Bar.* 152-153; Abulchares was probably of Arab origins. Falkenhausen, *La dominazione bizantina*, 99.

<sup>219</sup> There is some disagreement on the numbers of dead: the two western sources both suggest the number 83 (40 Normans and 43 of their sergeants or servants (*ministres*)), while the sole eastern source rounds up to 100. Given the agreement of the two western sources, I prefer the lower number of 83.

quite the promotion.<sup>220</sup> The new *doux's* good fortune notwithstanding, the inhabitants of Brindisi seem to have been abandoned by their commander and left to fend for themselves. A similar situation occurred in Reggio in 1059, when the city's garrison negotiated free passage for themselves and abandoned the city to its fate; Reggio was forced to surrender, as the Brindisi must have done.<sup>221</sup> Robert Guiscard interrupted his supervision of the siege of Bari and descended in person to put an end to the siege at Brindisi, entering the city in late 1070 or early 1071. Ultimately, Brindisi would later serve as a launching point for Guiscard's second expedition against Byzantium's Balkan possessions.<sup>222</sup>

The evacuation of imperial troops from Brindisi and Reggio was in keeping with Byzantine realism when faced with a losing situation. In 1083, the city of Larissa located in Thessaly, was being besieged by Guiscard's eldest son Bohemund. The city was in dire straits, and the Byzantine commander sent a message to the emperor seeking aid, writing: "Your Majesty: unless you hurry with all speed to deliver us from this peril (for we cannot hold out any longer against so great a burden of war and famine) you, our emperor, if you do not bring aid quickly when you have the power to do so, you will be the first to be charged with treachery."<sup>223</sup> While the commander may have taken some

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<sup>220</sup> Skopje, the capital of the present day Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), was the capital of the *doukaton* of Bulgaria. The city was at the end of a major north-south artery that began at the Danube. Past Skopje lay the plains of Thessaloniki and the heartland of the empire. The importance of the position was reflected in its subordinates: the *stratego*i of Ochrid, Devol and Kastoria all reported to him. Anna Avramea, "Land and Sea Communications, Fourth-Fifteenth Centuries," in *The Economic History of Byzantium: from the seventh through the fifteenth century*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou, et al. (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002), 1: 66; Bojana Krsmanović, *The Byzantine Province in Change (On the Threshold Between the 10th and 11th Century)* (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Institute for Byzantine Studies; Athens: National Hellenic research foundation, Institute for Byzantine Research, 2008), 192-194.

<sup>221</sup> Siege of Reggio: Malaterra I.34,37, pp.16,17; Amatus IV.3, p.112; the garrison evacuated to nearby Squillace, where they were followed by Guiscard's forces. Faced with the same losing situation, the remaining Byzantine forces evacuated that city and left Italy for good.

<sup>222</sup> *Ann. Lupi*. 213; Will. Apulia Book V, p.59.

<sup>223</sup> *Alexiad* II.5, pp.22-27.

liberties in being so forthright, it was understood that a soldier's duty only went so far. Final responsibility rested with the emperor.<sup>224</sup>

At about same time as Bari succumbed to Norman siege in 1071, the Byzantine city of Stilo in southern Calabria, was the site of a revolt against the Duke Guiscard. It so happened that Costa Condomicta, a member of one the leading families of Stilo was away in the service of the Duke at Isola, near Crotone, also in Calabria.<sup>225</sup> Condomicta had previously rebelled from Guiscard, taking Stilo with him, but had reconciled with the Duke and returned the city to him. In Condomicta's absence, a certain Costa Peloga was made governor of the place.<sup>226</sup> Peloga was not a popular governor; indeed, Malaterra concludes his account of this episode with a warning: "so that those in authority may be warned not to allow the loyalty of their subjects to be alienated by unworthy servants."<sup>227</sup> Peloga inflicted "cruel punishments" and "injuries" on the inhabitants, not even "sparing his own relations."<sup>228</sup> Particularly galling to Condomicita was the insult done to his grandmother Regina, who was arrested and beaten, allegedly for her "golden hen and chicks."<sup>229</sup> When word reached him, Condomicita feigned illness and returned home. Upon his arrival, he concealed his intentions from Peloga and canvassed the leading men of the city for their support. In exchange for their assistance, Condomicita promised to aid them in throwing off the Norman yoke – he brought them under Norman dominion,

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<sup>224</sup> The forwardness of Leon Kephalas, the governor of Larissa, may have been aided by the fact that he was the son of a servant of the emperor's father. *Alexiad* II.5, p.23. The missive doesn't appear to have damaged his prospects as attested by the numerous donations of properties he received. See: *PBW*, accessed 31 March, 2014, "Leon Kephalas, *vestarches* and *primikerios* of the *vestiaritai*," <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/143402>.

<sup>225</sup> Primary account of the episode: Malaterra II.44, p.39-40.

<sup>226</sup> Malaterra calls him *stratigotus* a corruption of the Greek, *strategos*. The Normans continued to use Byzantine titles well after the conquest. For instance, the title *katapano* continued in use in Bari for some time, but referred to a much more subordinate position. G.A. Loud, "Byzantine Italy and the Normans," in *Conquerors and Churchmen in Norman Italy* Variorum Collected Studies Series CS658 (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1999), III:223. Malaterra doesn't indicate whether Peloga was originally from Stilo or not, but his name alone indicates that he was Greek and most likely a member of the indigenous population. Given that Peloga was a blood relation of Condomicita, it seems likely that he was.

<sup>227</sup> Malaterra II.44, p.40.

<sup>228</sup> Malaterra II.44, p.39.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

therefore he could bring them out.<sup>230</sup> The next day, Christmas day as it turns out, the plotters moved against the governor. After a short chase, Peloga was seized and put to death by the inhabitants, despite the protests of Condomicita who appeared to be having second thoughts about killing his blood relation. The inhabitants renounced their fealty to the Duke and remained in rebellion for nearly six years, causing “a great deal of trouble.”<sup>231</sup> The leading men of Stilo, never quite comfortable under the Normans, took advantage of the insult caused to their erstwhile rebel leader, Condomicita, and maneuvered their way to more autonomy, securing freedom of action for at least the next six years, while at the same time taking revenge on the ‘unworthy servant’ who tyrannized them. While Byzantine Italy was mostly in Norman hands, memories of Byzantium had not necessarily faded.

Such expressions of urban autonomy were not necessarily a phenomenon restricted to the imperial margins, indeed, they can also be found within the core provinces of the empire, in the very shadow of the Byzantine capital. Their presence at both the centre and the periphery is suggestive of the prevalence of byzantine modes of thought on political agency. In 1077, recall that the city of Raideostos rose against the emperor and joined the rebellion of Nikephoros Byrennios.<sup>232</sup> The inhabitants were led in to rebellion by the wife of the local dynast, Ioannes Batazes, who was related to the rebel through her husband; she “managed to furtively convince many of the citizens of Raideostos with gifts and promises to side with her and join the conspiracy.”<sup>233</sup> Many inhabitants must have been motivated by dissatisfaction over the recent imposition of an imperial grain monopoly.<sup>234</sup> Agreement, however, was not unanimous in the city; Michael Attaleiates, the historian and judge who is also the source for this episode, came down firmly on the side of the emperor. Like Batatzina, Attaleiates was a local landowner, with

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<sup>230</sup> The text is garbled at this point, but given the context of the passage and the subsequent outcome of the episode, it is very likely that Condomicita promises to remove his support for the Duke’s dominion in Stilo. Having made this commitment, he was able to pledge many more people to his cause.

<sup>231</sup> Malaterra II.44, p.39.

<sup>232</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.* XXXI.1-8, pp.443-455. See also: Dimitris Krallis, “‘Democratic’ Action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium,” 35–53.

<sup>233</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.* XXXI.3, p.447.

<sup>234</sup> Raideostos may have hoarding grain in violation of imperial policy. Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline*, 23-24.

substantial investments in the area and could access his own patronage network in the city.<sup>235</sup> Indeed, he was alerted to the conspiracy by one of his clients, an unnamed conspirator who “owed” him a favour.<sup>236</sup> However, whatever loyalty he may have commanded from his position, both as a local potentate and as a member of the imperial administration does not appear to have been sufficient to turn public opinion to the imperial cause, and Attaleiates was forced to flee the city and return to the capital.<sup>237</sup> Once the citizens had declared openly for the rebel Bryennios, they tore down the *phoundax*, the silo for the imperial grain monopoly, attacked the nearby fortress of Panion which had remained loyal to the emperor, and fortified the city's harbor in anticipation of an attack by imperial forces.<sup>238</sup> The significance of this episode rests first of all in the decision making process that the inhabitants took to join the rebellion. While Batatzina played a crucial role as the leader and instigator of the move, she nonetheless was required to consult with and convince the inhabitants to join her cause, thus ascribing agency to her fellow citizens. Moreover, her efforts were not completely successful; Attaleiates cannot have been the only holdout. However, once the decision had been made, the inhabitants of Raidestos, acting as a corporate body clearly identified and acted on their local interests, namely destroying the *phoundax*, assaulting nearby Panion and fortifying the harbor. The towns and cities of Thrace came out substantially in favour of Bryennios – Anna Komnene records that the citizens emerged with arms raised in acclamation – and one can imagine that similar deliberations were occurring throughout the region.<sup>239</sup> In Raidestos to be sure, the people deliberated and acted as an autonomous urban polity and rebelled based on their terms, much like many of their Italian cousins who acted to defend the autonomy of their own cities, against the Norman advance.

In the final analysis, the arrival of the Normans in southern Italy and their subsequent revolt and conquest of Byzantine southern Italy revealed urban polities

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<sup>235</sup> On Attaleiates' investments and overall connections to Raidestos, see: Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline*, 16-29.

<sup>236</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.* XXXI.3, p.447.

<sup>237</sup> Attaleiates, perhaps naively, “trusted in the loyalty of the citizens of Raidestos, that the town would remain firm in its loyalty to the rulers out of gratitude.” Attaleiates, *Hist.* XXXI.2, p.447.

<sup>238</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.* XXXI.8, p.453-455.

<sup>239</sup> Krallis, “‘Democratic’ Action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium,” 46; *Alexiad* I.4.3, p.18.

exercising their political agency in the defence of their autonomy. The cases of Montillaro and Neocastrum, where locals lashed out violently against the Norman invaders, are evidence of the lengths to which urban polities would go to defend their independence. In Gerace and Bisignano, even when faced with losing propositions the inhabitants acted collectively to soften the imposition of Normans rule and secure what autonomy they could. Moreover, the cases of Brindisi and Reggio demonstrate, along with Larissa in Thessaly, that inhabitants were largely on their own when their imperial garrisons decided that duty had been sufficiently served and fled. Ultimately, the role of different indigenous factions was instrumental in local decision making processes in both western and eastern milieus, as was seen in Stilo and Raidestos respectively. This factionalism, and the political agency that supported it, is even more apparent in the Byzantine provincial capital of Bari, which forms the subject of the next chapter.

## Chapter 3.

# The City of Bari: A Case Study in Urban Political Agency

Crowds came from every side, now of men, now of women, as if they were making a procession. Monks, priests, and all kinds of people came weeping to beg Argyritzos to deliver the city from the Normans. Argyritzos turned a deaf ear to their pleas, and wished neither to see nor to hear them, for by no entreaty did he intend to abandon what he decided upon. Almost four years had passed while they suffered this tribulation, and now through the actions of Argyritzos they were delivered. On the Saturday before Palm Sunday the glorious duke entered the city of Bari. He had grown thin from Lenten fasting but found new strength in the Easter Feast.<sup>240</sup>

The 1071 Norman conquest of Bari is taken as the definitive and uncontroversial end of Byzantine rule in the *Mezzogiorno*, and this is true as far as it goes.<sup>241</sup> However, the end of Byzantine political domination did not spell the end of the Byzantine influence in the region. Recall that many charters in the region continued to be dated according to tax indiction and imperial reign; the cultural impact of Byzantium on southern Italy was significant.<sup>242</sup> An important part of that impact was evidenced in the implicit recognition of the legitimacy of popular political agency and the expectation that all citizens had a right to participate in urban decision making processes.<sup>243</sup> These discursive processes and the foundation of political agency which supported them were on full display in the Byzantine provincial capital of Italy, Bari. The final Norman siege of the city revealed the presence of factionalism, as different groups argued over whether to continue resisting or to capitulate. Ultimately, the political agency of many of the inhabitants was frustrated

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<sup>240</sup> Amatus V.27, pp.145-146.

<sup>241</sup> See for example, Falkenhausen, "The South Italian Sources," 95.

<sup>242</sup> See discussion in the Introduction, especially pp.6-8.

<sup>243</sup> Krallis, "'Democratic' Action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium," 35-53; On the Roman Republic as a form of democracy, see: Fergus Millar, *The Crowd in Rome in the Late Republic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 197-226; Psellos, *Historia Syntomos*, 8, p.7.

as their autonomy was ransomed to the Norman Duke; however, it is not the final resolution that matters, but the process. Popular participation in decisions of collective concern was on full display, not only during the siege itself, but also sixteen years later, when in 1087 a group of sailors returned to Bari with the relics of St. Nicholas. The outcome was different this time, but the phenomenon was the same. However, before turning to Santa Claus and his bones, this chapter will examine the siege of Bari and the factionalism that emerged during the Norman investment of the city, thereby exposing popular decision making processes and the political agency that served as their foundation.

By the time of the final siege in 1068, Bari had already come under considerable pressure from the Normans who had targeted it ever since their arrival in the Italian peninsula. The Baresi may have in fact paid tribute to the Normans along with “all the fortified cities of Apulia,” following the defeat and the capture of the *katepano* ‘Exaugustus’ Boioannes, in September of 1041.<sup>244</sup> The city had even already undergone a short siege by the Normans who along with the Prince of Salerno, Guaimar III spent five days below the walls of Bari in January of 1043 before retreating, having “ravaged the fields and suburbs.”<sup>245</sup> The Normans recognized the city as the key to Byzantine power in the *Mezzogiorno* and at the Council of Melfi in September of 1043 conceived of their strategy for the conquest of the Italian mainland with that in mind; Bari would be left for last, as the Normans made pushes from both the south and the north to encircle the city.<sup>246</sup> As the seat of the *katepano*, Bari was an important political target for the Normans; a victory there would not only put an end to the last significant Byzantine outpost on the mainland, but also make possible a future assault on Dyrrachion/Durazzo across the Adriatic and open the *Via Egnatia*, the ancient military highway that led directly to Constantinople.<sup>247</sup> Moreover, Bari was an important cultural and economic centre.<sup>248</sup> William of Apulia remarked that “there was no city in Apulia which exceeded

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<sup>244</sup> *Ann. Bari* 23-5; *Ann. Lupi*. 138; Skylitzes XXI.3, pp.400-403; Will. Apulia Book II, p.22.

<sup>245</sup> Will. Apulia Book II, p.16; *Anon. Bar.* 151.

<sup>246</sup> Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 99.

<sup>247</sup> On Bari as a stepping stone for an assault on Byzantium: Richard Bünemann, “L’assedio di Bari, 1068-1071,” 42. On the *Via Egnatia*: Anna Avramea, “Land and Sea Communications,” 1: 68-72.

<sup>248</sup> Falkenhausen, “Bari Bizantina,” 195-227.

the opulence of Bari...wealthy and strongly-defended” and further “that by overcoming the rulers of so great a city he might therefore terrify and subject the lesser towns, for of all the cities along the Apulian coast, Bari was the greatest.”<sup>249</sup> William of Apulia, and presumably the Normans whose plan he reports, recognized the towns and cities of the *Mezzogiorno* as calculating agents, susceptible to the pressure inherent in the fall of a provincial capital. Ultimately, the capital of the *katepanoi* offered a tempting and strategically important target.<sup>250</sup>

However, Bari was not an easy nut to crack. The city sat on a short peninsula that jutted into the Adriatic Sea and as such was bordered on three sides by the sea. The landward approach was guarded by a short land wall that was easily manned by a small garrison.<sup>251</sup> Bari had seen its share of conquerors leading up to the Norman siege, but very few had taken the city by storm. The 847 capture of the city by Muslims had been accomplished by treachery. In 876 the inhabitants surrendered the city to the Byzantines, in 982 it was betrayed into the hands of the *katepano* Kalokyros Delphinas, it surrendered to the *katepano* Basil Mesardonites after a sixty-one day siege in 1013, and then to Argyros, the son of Melos, in 1040.<sup>252</sup> Bari had been besieged, to no effect by Otto II in 969; by the qa'id Saphi in 1003, when it was relieved by the Venetians; by Rayca and the qa'id Jacfar in 1023 for one day, and by the Normans and the Prince of Salerno in 1043 for five days.<sup>253</sup> Only in 871, when the emirate of Bari was crushed by the Franks, was the city taken by storm.<sup>254</sup> As the seat of Byzantine authority in the *Mezzogiorno*, the city could only have been strengthened since then, especially since

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<sup>249</sup> Will. Apulia Book II, pp.26-27.

<sup>250</sup> Primary sources for the siege: Amatus V.27, pp.143-144; Will. Apulia Book II, pp.27-28, Book III, pp.31-32; Malaterra II.40-43, pp.36-39; *Ann. Lupi.* 176-181. See also the summary in: Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 134-36.

<sup>251</sup> Bünemann, “L’assedio di Bari,” 42.

<sup>252</sup> 847: Erchembert 16, pp.145-147; 876: *Ann. Lupi.* 38; Erchembert 38, pp.186-187; 982: *Ann. Lupi.* 85; 1013: *Ann. Bar.* 15; 1040: *Ann. Lupi.* 136; *Ann. Bar.* 19. It is not clear whether this is an actual siege, as the *Ann. Lupi.* describes it, or some kind of factional dispute as it appears in the *Ann. Bar.*

<sup>253</sup> 969: *Ann. Lupi.* 75; 1003: *Ann. Lupi.* 101; *Ann. Bar.* 13; 1023: *Ann. Lupi.* 118; 1043: Will. Apulia Book II, p.16; *Anon. Bar.* 151.

<sup>254</sup> *Ann. Lupi.* 37.

the addition of the fortified *praetorium* by Basil Mesardonites in 1011.<sup>255</sup> Moreover, while the Normans had been extremely successful in capturing cities throughout southern Italy, their experience of besieging fortified towns was limited to Messina in 1061, where the garrison had been mostly killed during a poorly executed sally; the Baresi would not be beaten so easily.<sup>256</sup>

The siege began in earnest on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1068. Duke Robert Guiscard had just finished suppressing a widespread revolt against his authority by his Norman vassals, including members of his own family that was financed by Byzantine authorities in Dyrrachion/Durazzo.<sup>257</sup> Central imperial authority was absent on the mainland as the last *katepano*, Abulchares, had died organizing the defence of the few remaining cities still under Byzantine control earlier in 1068.<sup>258</sup> Abulchares must have done his job well, because despite the absence of the *katepano* – or perhaps because of it – the Baresi faced the Normans with defiance, instead of fear.<sup>259</sup> Malaterra reports that the Baresi “were not intimidated” and that “they held [Guiscard’s] siegeworks in contempt. They hung out their most valuable treasures on display and shouted insults.”<sup>260</sup> In response to Guiscard’s demands, William of Apulia reports that the Baresi “made a disdainful response to the duke,” while Amatus of Montecassino explains that they “did not want to

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<sup>255</sup> See above: pp.33-34. The *praetorium*, located within the city’s walls, may have been part of a general programme of fortification of the city by the *katepano*. The twelfth-century destruction of the city by King William I ‘the Bad’ makes any archaeological confirmation of this conjecture, difficult.

<sup>256</sup> Malaterra II.5-10, pp. 20-21. Guiscard had also forced the surrender of Reggio in 1060. However, Reggio was surprised during the harvest and was thus short of foodstuffs from the beginning. The two leaders of the garrison negotiated free passage for themselves and their men before fleeing to the nearby *kastron* of Squillace. Denuded of troops, the city surrendered soon thereafter. See: Malaterra I.34, p.16.

<sup>257</sup> Will. Apulia Book II, p.26; Amatus V.4, pp.133-134; Malaterra II.39, p.35-36; Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 133-134. Following the death of the previous *katepano*, Abulchares, Perenos, the *doux* of Dyrrachion/ Durazzo was also appointed *doux* of Italy. According to the sources he was not able to cross the Adriatic Sea in order to take up his command: Falkenhausen, *La dominazione bizantina*, 99.

<sup>258</sup> *Anon. Bar.* 152-153; Abulchares was probably of Arab origins. Falkenhausen, *La dominazione bizantina*, 99.

<sup>259</sup> Abulchares was apparently appointed *stratego* and sent troops to defend the towns and cities, Bari among them. See: Sky. Cont. 168.26-169.1.

<sup>260</sup> Malaterra II.40, p.36.

abandon their loyalty to the emperor.”<sup>261</sup> Not one to be discouraged, Guiscard began the siege by erecting ramparts and earthworks below the walls, while building numerous, and diverse siege engines in preparation for a general assault.<sup>262</sup> Both William of Apulia and Amatus of Montecassino stress that the assault began soon after the start of the siege. Amatus reports that “when [Guiscard’s] knights attacked, the people of Bari came forth. However, more came forth to die than to give battle;” nonetheless, the Normans were unable to effect a breach.<sup>263</sup> William of Apulia, on the other hand presents the Baresi as slightly more effective defenders, describing the siege as a contest between two wild boars, “both resisting fiercely and neither willing to give way” and further that “the Normans charged fiercely, and no less fiercely did the citizens resist.”<sup>264</sup> The Norman duke did not neglect the battle at sea either, and “filled the sea with ships brought by the Calabrians.”<sup>265</sup> Guiscard had his forces blockade the city’s ports, connecting his ships together by means of iron chains with bridges leading from shore as a means to bring reinforcements to bear quickly. However, the Baresi sallied forth and destroyed the bridges.<sup>266</sup> The *katepano*, Stephan Pateranos, attempted to assassinate Guiscard, sending “a knight from foreign parts on whom the duke had previously inflicted a grave affront,” named Amerinus. His aim, not being equal to his rancor, was not true and the poisoned javelin narrowly missed Guiscard, passing

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<sup>261</sup> Guiscard demanded of the Baresi the house of Argyrus, which was located on a high point in the city. By holding the high ground, Guiscard hoped to control the city. *Wil. Apulia* II, p.26-27; Amatus V.27, p.143.

<sup>262</sup> Will. Apulia Book II, p.27: mantlets, siege-towers, and stonethrowers; Malaterra II.40, p.36: earthworks, battering rams, and ‘other machines’; Amatus V.27, p.143: siege-castles and catapults. The Normans had clearly learned a great deal of siege craft since their arrival in Italy. Bünemann suspects that they may have had help from the indigenous population, but the sources do not address it: Bünemann, “L’assedio di Bari,” 50.

<sup>263</sup> Amatus V.27, p.143.

<sup>264</sup> Will. Apulia Book II, p.27.

<sup>265</sup> Will. Apulia Book II, p.27.

<sup>266</sup> The nature and character of the naval blockade is a matter of some dispute between the sources. Both Malaterra and Amatus highlight the effectiveness of the blockade, while only William of Apulia reports that the Baresi were able to break through. Despite William’s evident pro-Byzantine bias I accept his account given the apparently open communications between Bari and Constantinople, the likely presence of Byzantine naval forces in the Adriatic and Norman inexperience at sea. Will. Apulia Book II, p.27; naval concerns: Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 135; William’s pro-Byzantine bias: Brown, “The Gesta Roberti Wiscardi: A ‘Byzantine’ history?” 162-179.

harmlessly through his cloak. Not wishing to take any more chances, Guiscard ordered that a stone hut be built to replace his quarters built of “leaves and branches.”<sup>267</sup>

Despite the problems that the empire was having on its eastern front – the emperor Romanos IV Diogenes (r.1068-1071) was on constant campaign against the Seljuks during the siege – the Byzantine emperor was apparently able to send aid.<sup>268</sup> Amatus relates that Byzantios, the leader of the pro-Byzantine faction in the city (more on him later), travelled to Constantinople to plead for aid; he returned to Bari in 1069 accompanied by the *praetor* Stephen Pateranos and the new *katepano* Avartutele, who carried with them a great deal of money for the defence of the city.<sup>269</sup> Soon after, a second fleet arrived, at the urging of the *katepano*, with grain and a relief force, but they were defeated, along with a great many Baresi.<sup>270</sup> A final fleet set out early in 1071, led by Joscelin of Molfetta, the former Norman rebel and Guiscard’s father-in-law; he had fled to Constantinople following the failed rebellion. However, the fleet was intercepted by a Norman naval squadron commanded by Guiscard’s brother, Count Roger of Sicily during a night attack. Despite their inexperience, the Normans emerged victorious from the encounter, marking their first naval victory.<sup>271</sup> Joscelin’s flagship was taken and he, along with his war chest, was taken to Guiscard as a present. One can only imagine that family reunion. Exhausted after three long years of siege, and with no further expectation of relief from Constantinople, Bari surrendered on 16 April, 1071. Amatus records that

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<sup>267</sup> Will. Apulia Book II, p.28; Malaterra II.40, p.36.

<sup>268</sup> For the primary account of Romanos IV Diogenes’ eastern campaigns see: Attaleiates, *Hist.* XVI-XX, pp.169-304; Psellos, *Chr.* VII., pp.350-366.

<sup>269</sup> Amatus is the only source for this relief fleet: Amatus V.27, p.143-144. The *katepano* Avartutele is attested only in Amatus and only in this one episode; it may have been a transcription error for the previous *katepano*, Abulchares, although he had died before the siege began. While Pateranos is not attested as a *katepano* or *doux*, he fulfills the role of one, at least from the point of view of William of Apulia who sees him as some kind of leader: Will. Apulia Book II, p.28; Falkenhausen, *La dominazione bizantina*, 99-100.

<sup>270</sup> Amatus is again the only source for this relief force: Amatus V.27, p.144-145.

<sup>271</sup> The Norman’s inexperience is captured nicely by Malaterra who notes: “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.” Malaterra II.43, p.38. William of Apulia notes that Guiscard “greatly rejoiced at the novelty of this naval victory, hoping in consequence that he and the Normans might in future engage in battle at sea with more hope of success.” Will. Apulia Book III, pp.31-32.

when Guiscard entered the defeated city on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, the Duke “had grown thin from Lenten fasting, but found new strength in the Easter Feast.”<sup>272</sup>

The significance of the siege rests not only in what it shows about an urban polity straining collectively against a common foe, but more importantly, what it brings to light about the internal governance of a city. Amatus’ account of the siege is unique in that it reveals the presence of at two factions in Bari during the siege. A pro-Byzantine faction led by Byzantios Guirdeliku, and a pro-Norman faction led by Argyritzos the son of Giannazzo.<sup>273</sup> Byzantios carried the rank of *patrikios* and counted the *katepano* amongst his friends; Amatus reports that he had the favour of the emperor in Constantinople, a claim supported by his successful aid mission on behalf of the besieged city. He could also count on the support of at least one of the local families.<sup>274</sup> Argyritzos on the other hand, had “more friends and relatives than Byzantios” – William of Apulia calls him the “leading citizen of the town” – and, at least towards the end of the siege, styled himself *patrikios* and *antipathos*, thereby associating himself with Byzantine power, even if he would not submit to it.<sup>275</sup> Amatus reports that following the initial assault of the city and the subsequent naval blockade, Byzantios travelled “without delay” to the emperor in Constantinople in order to plead for aid directly.<sup>276</sup> Argyritzos passed this information on to Guiscard, who dispatched a squadron of galleys to intercept this mission, but was unsuccessful in stopping him. This occurred sometime early on in the siege, before the first relief fleet arrived in 1069 and thus may represent a preexisting relationship between the Normans and Argyritzos. The enmity between these two factional leaders degenerated into open urban warfare shortly thereafter, and Byzantios was killed on 18

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<sup>272</sup> Amatus V.27, p.146.

<sup>273</sup> Despite their allegiances, Argyritzos was of Greek origin (son of Ioannikios): Falkenhausen, *La dominazione bizantina*, 174. While the Byzantios was of Lombard stock; the name Byzantios is only attested amongst the local Lombard population: Martin, “Anthroponymie et onomastique à Bari (950-1250),” 683-701.

<sup>274</sup> The Malapezza family would suffer for their allegiance to Byzantios with the destruction of their homes. Amatus V.27, p.144; *Anon. Bar.* 153.

<sup>275</sup> Amatus V.27, p.144; Will. Apulia Book III, p.32; *CDB IV*, 45.

<sup>276</sup> Amatus V.27, pp.143-144.

July, 1070, en route to the *katepano's* house by men sent by Argyritzos; his death is recorded in the Baresi annals as a treacherous assassination, and a murder.<sup>277</sup>

While the death of Byzantios was an important event in the history of Bari, as its appearance in the annals attests, it also had a significant impact on the governance of the city. In the aftermath of the assassination, power seems to have swung decisively away from the pro-Byzantine faction and the Byzantine government represented by the *katepano*. Amatus relates that “as these events were occurring, men began to leave the *katepano's* court and to frequent the palace of Argyritzos.”<sup>278</sup> It appears that Byzantios formed an important power base for the *katepano*, for without his leadership many chose to stand with the other side. The new *katepano* was not able to maintain the loyalty of many of the citizens on his own, which is not altogether surprising given that he had only recently arrived.<sup>279</sup> Argyritzos did not remain passive during these events, but actively fostered the allegiance of the people: he “encouraged his companions, aided the lesser people, gave provisions to the poor, incited them to be loyal to the Duke, and promised them gifts.” He was aided by the Duke who sent a ship of provisions to the city, and allowed Argyritzos to claim the credit for it; Guiscard similarly sent cash.<sup>280</sup> This was in keeping with Byzantine charitable norms, where the rich and powerful were expected to help the less fortunate. Attaleiates writes that the poor and unemployed of Constantinople were in the habit of loitering around the houses of the rich in expectation of a handout, blithely called the ‘Jesus Tip’; even the emperor was expected to hold out an “abundant hand” as a matter of course.<sup>281</sup>

Despite all these efforts, Argyritzos was still not able to claim the loyalty of the entire city. Notwithstanding the removal of Byzantios, and the flight of many of his supporters to the pro-Norman camp, he continued to encounter dissent. The supplies brought by the first relief fleet must have bought at least some loyalty to the *katepano*, who, it should be recalled, brought them to the beleaguered city. Amatus records that

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<sup>277</sup> Amatus V.27, pp.143-144; *Anon. Bar.* 153; *Ann. Lupi.* 180;

<sup>278</sup> Amatus V.27, p.144.

<sup>279</sup> Recall that Stephan Paterenos and Avartutele arrived with the first relief fleet in 1069. See above and discussion above: nt.269.

<sup>280</sup> Amatus V.27, p.144.

<sup>281</sup> Attaleiates, *Hist.* XXVI.8, XXXIII.4, pp.385, 503.

“the people” petitioned the *katepano* on two more occasions, seeking relief from the siege. These petitions would ultimately end with naval defeats for the Byzantine relief fleets, and the people finally turned to Argyritzos: “Monks, priests, and all kinds of people came weeping to beg Argyritzos to deliver the city from the Normans.”<sup>282</sup> However, this plea should not be taken as an indication of allegiance to Argyritzos or to his cause. The entreaty came only once he had sent his daughter as a hostage to the Norman Duke and let it be known that he intended to surrender the city to the Normans. Moreover, it should be noted that before he did so, “he climbed up with his men into a high tower which he held for the duke,” thereby protecting himself from any ‘objections’ that may have come from the Baresi.<sup>283</sup> Therefore, despite the assertion of William of Apulia that as a leading man he was able to “influence the minds of the lesser to persuade them to do” as he wanted, Argyritzos did not deliver a willing populace into the hands of the Normans, but was nonetheless able to impose his will on the city.<sup>284</sup>

Robert Guiscard had a history of buying off cities, whenever he could avoid a protracted siege or risky battle.<sup>285</sup> In the case of Bari, however, Amatus’ account reveals the presence of pre-existing factional rivalries that complicated such tactics, and confirm the importance of opposing factions in city politics. This was recognized by the newly arrived *katepano* who appears to have cultivated a relationship with the leader of the pro-Byzantine faction, Byzantios, in order to place his authority on a firm foundation. Byzantios, in essence, gave the city to the *katepano*, much like Argyros had a generation earlier, when he defected from the Normans in exchange for titles and the benefits that a close relationship with Constantinople could provide.<sup>286</sup> However, it appears that Bari was not Byzantios’ to give. Argyritzos was able to profit from the

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<sup>282</sup> Amatus V.27, pp.145-146.

<sup>283</sup> Amatus V.27, pp.145. It’s quite possible that this is the “house of Argyros” that William of Apulia mentions as Guiscard’s demand to the city of Bari. In which case, it would have occupied a commanding position within the city: Will. Apulia Book II, p.27.

<sup>284</sup> Will. Apulia Book III, p.32.

<sup>285</sup> For example, during the 1079-80 revolt of the Norman counts against Guiscard, William of Apulia writes that the Duke relied on both martial and diplomatic methods to recapture rebel cities: “Astute and brave, he knew both methods [force of arms or cunning]. He seized the castles of some and with honeyed words persuaded others, who would never have yielded to force, to surrender.” Will. Apulia Book III, p.41.

<sup>286</sup> See the brilliant career of Argyros in: Guillou, “Production and Profits,” Appendix III, 108.

stresses caused in the city by the siege, and tap into a ready supply of outside aid. In exchange for feeding information to Guiscard, he was able to gain provisions and money for himself and his entourage thus elevating his position in the city. The murder of Byzantios and the subsequent failed relief attempts by the *katepano* and Constantinople only further solidified his position. It is no accident that William of Apulia called him “leading citizen” only at the end of the siege.<sup>287</sup> However, his triumph on the parapets of the city, while final, was not a victory for Bari urban autonomy. Argyritzos had to barricade himself in a high tower with his men before he was able to hand the city over to the Normans. His victory was a personal one, as we find Argyritzos entrusted with the city of Bari some years later.<sup>288</sup> Ultimately, what is significant here is that even though the autonomy of the Bari was ransomed to the Normans and their political agency frustrated by the machinations of Argyritzos, the interplay of the city’s factions revealed a body politic confident in its political voice.

The factionalism that emerges during the siege of Bari has its parallels on the eastern periphery in the events leading up to the tenth-century siege of Antioch, and its immediate aftermath.<sup>289</sup> The ascension to the throne of the commander of Byzantium’s eastern armies, the *domesticos ton scholon* Nikephoros II Phokas (r.963-969), saw an acceleration of Byzantine conquests in northern Syria.<sup>290</sup> Byzantine forces had already made significant inroads against the Arabs of the region under the previous emperor: the city of al-Hadath (the Greek *Adana*), which controlled access through the Taurus mountains into Byzantine territory, was razed in 957; Crete was invaded in 960, and its capital Chandax captured the following year, while Aleppo was captured and sacked in

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<sup>287</sup> Will. Apulia Book III, p.32.

<sup>288</sup> Will. Apulia Book III, p.40.

<sup>289</sup> Primary sources for the siege of Antioch: Leo the Deacon, IV.10-11, V.1, 4-5, pp.119-120,123-125,132-134; Skylitzes XIV.15-17, pp.259-262; *Yahyā* 822-823.

<sup>290</sup> Upon the death of the emperor Romanos II (r.959-963), Phokas stepped in to ‘guarantee’ the rights of Romanos’ children and rightful heirs, the future emperors Basil II and Constantine VIII, who were then minors. On his rebellion see: Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 20-21. Garrood argues that the push into the region was directed towards the capture of Kilikia; the capture of cities in the region and the defeat of the Hamdanids were incidental to that goal. For the argument and decent summary of the campaigns see: William Garrood, “The Byzantine Conquest of Cilicia and the Hamdanids of Aleppo, 959-965,” *Anatolian Studies* 58 (2008), 127-140.

962.<sup>291</sup> The Byzantine push into the region seems to have been accompanied by ethnic cleansing, as the inhabitants were massacred and mosques destroyed by the invading armies.<sup>292</sup> When news spread to Arab territories, it caused religious violence as far away as Egypt as Muslims retaliated against Christians and their churches, while the Arab population of the border regions fled from the advancing Byzantine armies.<sup>293</sup> This would surely have exacerbated tensions between Greek Christians and Arab Muslims still living in the region.

In the lead-up to the siege of Antioch, the sources reveal a city rent by internal divisions. While the city had been in Hamdanid hands since its conquest by the emir of Aleppo in 944, Ali ibn Hamdan, more popularly known by his *nom de guerre* Sayf al-Dawla (Sword of the Empire), the city did not appear to have been altogether pleased with the arrangement.<sup>294</sup> As recently as 965, the Antiochenes had rebelled against the Hamdanid governor, Fath and delivered the city to a Tarsan refugee, Rachiq-an-Nasimi. One of the local notables, Ibn-al-Ahwazi supported him and helped him rule the city. Aided by a number of Dailamite defectors from the Hamdanid forces, they besieged Aleppo's citadel for three months, before being driven off; Rachiq's death during the siege seems to have ended the revolt.<sup>295</sup> During this rebellion, the Christian community appears to have remained loyal to the Hamdanids; the Melchite patriarch, Christophoros is reported to have fled to the monastery of St Symeon the Stylite in Aleppo in order to forestall any charges of complicity in the treason by Sayf al-Dawla.<sup>296</sup> The leading

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<sup>291</sup> al-Hadath: Yaḥyā 774. Crete: Yaḥyā 782-3; Skylitzes XII.4, pp.240-241; Leo the Deacon I.3-9, II.6-8, pp.60-69, 76-81; Attaleiates, *Hist.* XXVIII.1-8, pp.407-417. Aleppo: Yaḥyā 784-7.

<sup>292</sup> Leo Phokas "left for Syria, where he massacred a great number of inhabitants." [Yaḥyā 779], while in Crete, Nikephoras Phokas "destroyed all the mosques that he found." [Yaḥyā 782]. See also: Yaḥyā 825-826, where harvests are deliberately burned by Nikephoros in order to starve the people.

<sup>293</sup> Cairene sectarian violence: Yaḥyā 779-780, 782-783; evacuation of northern Syria: Yaḥyā 794.

<sup>294</sup> "sabre de l'empire": Yaḥyā 728.

<sup>295</sup> Yaḥyā 797-798. The Antiochene notable who rebelled along with Rachiq, was executed along with Dizber, the leader of the Dailamite forces at Aleppo soon after: Yaḥyā 805.

<sup>296</sup> On the survival of the Melchite church in the near east in general and the Antiochene situation in particular see: Hugh Kennedy, "The Melkite Church from the Islamic Conquest to the Crusades: Continuity and Adaptation in the Byzantine Legacy," in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Mideast*. Variorum Collected Studies CS860 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), VI:335-339.

Antiochene rebel, al-Ahwazi searched for him, but to no avail.<sup>297</sup> The patriarch appears to have been something of a client of the Hamdanid ruler; Christophoros' hagiographer reports that Sayf al-Dawla supported him during his election to the patriarchal throne and later lowered the Melchite community's *jizyah* or head tax at this urging.<sup>298</sup>

This loyalty, however, unfortunately cost the patriarch his life. Despite the successful intercession by Christophoros with Sayf al-Dawla to treat the conspirators mercifully, the patriarch had nevertheless made some powerful enemies among the Antiochene notables. The Arab Melchite Yaḥyā of Antioch, the source for these events, reports that the conspirators were jealous of the influence that the patriarch had on the Hamdanid ruler, and this intercession only further exacerbated these feelings.<sup>299</sup> So when Sayf al-Dawla died on 8 February 967, the patriarch lost his patron and protector. Christophoros' position became even more precarious when the city's Hamdanid governor left Antioch for Aleppo in order to transport Sayf al-Dawla's remains to their final resting place in Mayyafariqin; the inhabitants rebelled once again and took control of the city, swearing never to allow entry to another Hamdanid.<sup>300</sup> Christophoros was now exposed and three Antiochene Muslim notables, Ibn-Manik, Ibn-Mohammed and Ibn-Di'amah, conspired together to do away with him. Despite being warned of the plot by his Muslim friend Ibn-Abdul' Omar, the patriarch accepted an invitation to the house of Ibn-Manik where he was accused of conspiring with the Byzantines, a charge he denied, and was killed by a group of Khorasanians that the conspirators had retained for just such a purpose. The patriarch's head was severed from his body and burned in the oven used to heat Ibn-Manik's bath, while his body was taken straightaway to the 'Gate of the Sea' and tossed into the river Orontes.<sup>301</sup>

Eight days later, the patriarch's body was discovered by the Antiochene Christian community on an island in the river and was secretly interred in the monastery of

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<sup>297</sup> Yaḥyā 798.

<sup>298</sup> *Vita Christophoros* 3, 10, pp.25, 37-38.

<sup>299</sup> Biography of Yaḥyā see: Lawrence I. Conrad, s.v. "Yaḥyā of Antioch," *ODB*: Oxford University Press, 1991. Yaḥyā 806-807.

<sup>300</sup> Yaḥyā 807.

<sup>301</sup> Yaḥyā 807-809. The Khorasanians had stopped in the city on their way to raid Byzantine territory. Christophoros was assassinated on 22 May, 967.

Arsenius located outside the city walls.<sup>302</sup> Following the Byzantine capture of the city on 28 October, 967, the patriarch's assassins were captured and punished: Ibn-Manik was chopped up and tossed from the same "Gate of the Sea" that Christophoros' body was ignominiously thrown, Ibn-Mohammed died in prison, while Ibn-Di'amah was tied to a rock and thrown into the river Orontes to drown.<sup>303</sup> These events are evidence of factionalism within the city, divided along pro- and anti-Hamdanid lines. The Arab Muslim notables appear to have greatly resented their Hamdanid overlords, as suggested by their repeated rebellions against the governors of Sayf-al-Dawla. The Melchite community, on the other hand, enjoyed a protected status under the patriarch's patron, Sayf-al-Dawla, which was a sore point for the Arab Muslim community in Antioch. Military successes by Byzantine armies in northern Syria, and the deliberate policy of pushing out Muslim populations from lands that they conquered would have only heightened the divisions between the different communities. Moreover, there may have been some truth in Ibn-Manik's accusation of Byzantine complicity against the Melchite community, if not the patriarch, although there is no evidence for it. In any case, the death of Sayf-al-Dawla created a window of opportunity for the Arab Muslim faction to do away with their adversary, the patriarch. While there are no reports of general violence against the Melchite community, it is worth noting that the patriarch's body was buried in secret outside the city and that the patriarchal throne remained vacant for over two years following the death of Christophoros.<sup>304</sup> The Melchites eventually found protection under Byzantine dominion; during their capture of Antioch, Christians were singled out for preferential treatment, while everyone else was thrown into prison.<sup>305</sup> They also received vengeance for the death of their patriarch as the conspirators were captured and punished by imperial authorities. The Melchites had successfully navigated the transition from favoured faction of Sayf-al-Dawla, to favoured faction of his worst enemy, the Byzantines.

The patriarchate, however, was not able to maintain the good graces of the imperial administration in Constantinople and after over one hundred years of Byzantine

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<sup>302</sup> Yaḥyā 810.

<sup>303</sup> Yaḥyā 824-825.

<sup>304</sup> Yaḥyā 810.

<sup>305</sup> Yaḥyā 823.

rule, the relationship had soured. In 1074, three years following the treason on the field of battle at Manzikert, and the military collapse of the eastern frontier to the Seljuk Turks that followed it, a new *doux* was posted to Antioch.<sup>306</sup> Isaakios Komnenos, the elder brother of the future emperor Alexios I Komnenos (r.1081-1118), was sent by the reigning emperor, Michael VII Doukas (r.1071-1078) to replace the current *doux*, the *magistros* and *kouropalates* Katakalon Tarchaniotes.<sup>307</sup> Antioch was in ferment, and Katakalon was “able only with difficulty to stem the movements of sedition that had broken out.” Moreover, a former compatriot of the deposed emperor Romanos IV Diogenes (r.1068-1071) had established himself in the nearby Taurus Mountains with a force of Armenians and was threatening imperial possessions in the region.<sup>308</sup> The source of the disturbances was identified by the emperor as the patriarch Aimilianos, although, this may have had more to do with the *logothete* Nikephoros who was “from past times negatively disposed towards the patriarch.” In any event, Isaakios Komnenos was dispatched with orders to recall the patriarch to the capital. The city was divided among the supporters of the patriarch and those that favoured the notables. Fearful of the power that the patriarch held among the inhabitants, the *doux* created a ruse that drew Aimilianos away from the city, where he could not rely on his supporters. Divorced

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<sup>306</sup> Turkish penetration into the empire’s core Anatolian provinces was a long term process that reached its height in 1091. See: Jean-Claude Cheynet, “La résistance aux Turcs en Asie Mineure entre Manzikert et la Première Croisade,” in EYΨYXIA: mélanges offerts à Hélène Ahrweiler, ed. Michael Ballard (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1998), 1:131-47.

<sup>307</sup> Primary account of this episode: *Bryennios* II.28.10-29.27 (translation from Greek provided by Dimitris Krallis); Katakalon is not attested as a *doux* of Antioch per se, but according to Bryennios he took over his father’s responsibilities as *doux* when he died. His father, Joseph, was rewarded with the appointment the *doukate* of Antioch after siding with the Doukai during the treason at Manzikert. Katakalon’s career doesn’t seem to have been hurt by this episode; he attested as the *doux* of Andrianople during the rebellion of Bryennios in 1078, and as an attendee at a 1098 synod held at the Blachernai in Constantinople. See: *PBW*, accessed 12 April, 2014, “Joseph Tarchaneiotas, *proedros* and *doux* of Antioch,” <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/107457>; *PBW*, accessed 12 April, 2014, “Katakalon Tarchaneiotas, *doux* of Antioch,” <http://db.pbw.kcl.ac.uk/pbw2011/entity/person/111584>.

<sup>308</sup> Philaretos Brachamios eventually submitted to the emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates (r.1078-1081) who deposed Michael VII Doukas (r.1071-1078), who he held responsible for the fall of his benefactor: Attaleiates, *Hist.* XXXV.10, pp.548-551.

from his power base, and with the city gates barred against him, the patriarch was forced to accept his recall to Constantinople.<sup>309</sup>

However, that was not the end of the disturbances as the city remained divided. The newly prosperous classes, most likely those who previously supported the patriarch, rebelled and armed the crowd because they “burned with envy for those in power.” They barricaded the *doux* in the city’s citadel and attacked and killed the ruling classes, looting many of their homes in the process. Komnenos was able to put down the revolt by calling in reinforcements from nearby towns, but there was clearly a crisis of popular legitimacy in the city. It is clear from this account that the imperial administration, the source’s “ruling class,” had lost the support of not only “those who had recently risen in status,” but the lower classes as well, who were only too happy to vent their frustrations against their betters. However, the crowd is no mob, killing indiscriminately; once armed they struck surgically at the *doux*, whom they barricaded in the citadel, and killed “some” of the ruling class, looting their houses in the process. Without any other legitimate outlet for their discontent and this may have been a role played by the departed patriarch, the people turned to the only method for communicating their discontent: violence. Moreover, their deliberate acts demonstrate, on the one hand, their displeasure with the imperial administration, but also point to a possible explanation for this displeasure. It is revealing that the crowd is armed by the newly prosperous classes and that the crowd targets the homes of the ruling classes, in addition to their persons. Evidently, the material benefits of Byzantine administration were not flowing equally, or fast enough for some Antiochenes. This economic explanation is further supported by Komnenos’ ultimate solution to the discontent. In order to ingratiate himself to the inhabitants, the *doux* led a sortie against a passing force of Seljuks whose raids would surely have had significant adverse economic effects on Antiochene interests.<sup>310</sup> While the *doux* may have been captured during the action, and his force defeated, he evidently got points for

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<sup>309</sup> Aimilianos evidently did not forget his removal from the patriarchal throne by the emperor. Along with the metropolitan of Ikonion, he led the clergy and officials in their acclamation of the new emperor, Nikephoros III Botaneiates (r.1078-1081), in the Hagia Sophia: Sky. Cont. 178.1-3.

<sup>310</sup> See for instance, the effects of Seljuk raids on Asia Minor: Cheynet, “La résistance aux Turcs en Asie Mineure entre Manzikert et la Première Croisade.” The inhabitants of Myra in Asia Minor, considered below, are attested as only recently having come down from their hideouts before the arrival of the Baresi tomb-raiders: *Translatio S. Nich.* 1, 5, pp.53, 57; Cheynet, “La Résistance Aux Turcs En Asie Mineure Entre Manzikert Et La Première Croisade,” 1:131–147.

trying because the inhabitants immediately dispatched gold to pay for his ransom. Ultimately, the *doux* is able to quell the discontent in the city, not through repression, something that Komnenos explicitly acknowledges when he sought to “befriend the Antiochenes,” but by instead listening to, and attempting to address their concerns.

Factionalism was not new to the city of Bari. The annals record a number of different power centres active in the city over the years. Argyros, the son of the Lombard rebel Melos, is perhaps the representative of the most significant one. Argyros had been deported to Constantinople by the *katepano* Basil Mesardonites along with his mother Maralda as hostages following the first defeat of his father in 1011. Melos was finally defeated in 1018 and fled to the court of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry II where he died on 23 April, 1020 trying to raise an army for another attack on Byzantium’s possessions in southern Italy.<sup>311</sup> However, with his death, Argyros was free to return to Italy along with his family in 1029 and by 1042 his star had risen to such an extent that he was elected “Prince and Duke of Italy” by the Baresi and the Normans.<sup>312</sup> However, before he had reached such lofty heights, Argyros took advantage of the power vacuum created by the death of the *katepano*, Nikephoros Dokeianos in the city of Ascoli on 9 January, 1040.<sup>313</sup> The provinces of southern Italy were already restive when the *katepano* died because of levies imposed by the Byzantines for Maniakes’ 1038 invasion of Sicily.<sup>314</sup> Amatus records that “the Apulians and Calabrians were obliged by the emperor’s money to take part in this arduous campaign, and this stirred up the people and the nobles.”<sup>315</sup> In the month of May, tensions boiled over as two Byzantine officials were killed by the *konteratoi*, the local militia.<sup>316</sup> Before his death, the *katepano* had gathered the *konteratoi* around himself, presumably in an effort to forestall any rebellious thoughts on the part of his subjects. That he died in Ascoli, instead of at his

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<sup>311</sup> Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 67-68.

<sup>312</sup> Falkenhausen, *La dominazione bizantina*, 97-98; “Princeps et dux Italiae.” *Ann. Bari* 25; *Ann. Lupi*. 140; *Anon. Bar.* 151.

<sup>313</sup> *Ann. Bari* 19; *Ann. Lupi*. 135-136.

<sup>314</sup> Invasion of Sicily: Psellos, *Chr.* VI 76-89, pp.192-199 ; Skylitzes XIX.16, p.380; Attaleiates, *Hist.* III.1, pp.10-13; Will. Apulia Book I, pp.7-8; Malaterra I.7-8, pp. 6-7; Amatus II.8-10, 14-15, pp.66-69; *Ann. Lupi*. 138; *Anon. Bar.* 148.

<sup>315</sup> Amatus II.8, p.66. See nt.166 for discussion of this passage.

<sup>316</sup> *Ann. Lupi*. 135.

headquarters, could indicate that the *katepano* had already lost control of the situation in Bari. In any event, the annals report that following a short siege, the *konteratoi* entered Bari on 25 May, led by a certain Musondo, along with none other than Argyros, who had somehow managed to place himself amongst the leaders of this revolt. Once inside the city, Argyros moved against Musondo, wounding him and “binding his hands, threw him into prison with Giovanni of Ostuni, and all the *konteratoi* were dispersed.”<sup>317</sup> The fact that Argyros was able to imprison Musondo, and survive, demonstrates that he must have had supporters among the *konteratoi*. Moreover, the fact that Argyros was able to then disperse the *konteratoi* shows that his support base extended even further among the Baresi. This episode demonstrates that there existed numerous factions that only emerged in the absence of a representative of the imperial centre, but which must have been present prior to the death of the *katepano*. The new *katepano*, Michael Dokeianos, presumably a relative of his predecessor, arrived in Bari six months later and immediately executed four people thereby reasserting Byzantine dominance in the city.<sup>318</sup>

Factional lines did not remain static in the city, but changed according to shifting circumstances. In 1045, Argyros returned along with his family to Constantinople with the *patrikios* Constantine Chagé, who had accompanied the new *katepano*, Eustathios Palatinos to Bari.<sup>319</sup> Argyros appears to have made his mark at the imperial centre, for Skylitzes records that he advised the emperor during the siege of Constantinople by Leo Tornikos and led the sole sortie against the rebel army, doing “great harm” to the enemy.<sup>320</sup> He returned to Italy in 1051 with the additional title of *magistros*, however, in his absence other factions had risen to prominence. Argyros arrived in Otranto, the main Byzantine port on the Adriatic and travelled directly to Bari, however, his entry to the city was barred by a certain Adralisto and the brothers Romaldo and Pietro, who appear to

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<sup>317</sup> *Ann. Bar.* 19; Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 47.

<sup>318</sup> *Ann. Bar.* 20; Dokeianos the younger came directly from Sicily and was most likely accompanied by substantial troops. This would have smoothed his arrival in Bari.

<sup>319</sup> *Anon. Bar.* 151; *Ann. Lupi.* 147. Chagé was the leader of Kibyrrhaioton *theme*, stationed in Attaleia, and Admiral of the fleet. He is attested as something of a naval hero, having defeated a number of Saracen pirates: Skylitzes XIX.9, p.376, XXI.4, p.404. It is unclear why such a high ranking Byzantine official is being used to deliver Palatinos and fetch Argyros, but may speak to the esteem of his charges if nothing else.

<sup>320</sup> Skylitzes XXI.8, pp.414-415; *Anon. Bar.* 151.

represent a prominent faction.<sup>321</sup> Fortunately, Argyros still retained a great deal of loyalty among the people of the city for “the Baresi received him without the consent of Adralisto and the others.”<sup>322</sup> Argyros’ entrance to the city was not without opposition, however, as two inhabitants were killed, Liboni and Mele Malapezza, while the Jewish quarter was put to the torch.<sup>323</sup> Ultimately, Argyros would arrest the brothers Romoaldo and Pietro and deport them to Constantinople in chains, while Adralisto would escape to Norman Count Humphrey.<sup>324</sup> Argyros was able to reassert his dominance and put down the factions that had risen to prominence in his absence, a dominance that he was apparently able to retain until his final journey to Constantinople in 1055.<sup>325</sup>

The curious events surrounding the arrival of the relics of St. Nicholas in Bari in 1087, two years after the death of Duke Robert Guiscard, reveal an urban polity acting collectively to pursue and defend their own local interests. Following the siege of Bari and the effective end of the Byzantine dominion in southern Italy, the city and its citizens continued to act collectively in defence of their interests. In the immediate aftermath of the siege, Guiscard turned his attention to Sicily and its conquest. However, in order to successfully besiege Palermo, he would require ships and sailors, something that the Baresi could provide; indeed this may have been a key reason for the siege in the first place.<sup>326</sup> This need, plus the fact that the city was not conquered by force but by treachery, put the Baresi in a position to extract certain concessions from Guiscard, despite their status as a defeated city. In exchange for following “him wherever they saw him go,” Guiscard returned their “fields, estates and farms,” allowed those that wished it to return to Byzantine territory along with the last *katepano*, Stephen Pateranos, and

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<sup>321</sup> Adralisto owned a number of houses in Bari so must of have been of some means. His fortunes appear to have rebounded following the death of his supporters at the court of the *katepano* in 1038; his house was torched along with that of his cousin Leo. In 1047 he feuded with and captured the Alfaraniti, as well as burning the house of Iannes Hikanatos. *Ann. Bar.* 149, 151. He may have been related to the important Anatolian family Adralistoi, which were connected to the Phokas. See: Jean-Claude Cheynet, “Les Phokas,” in *Le traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963-969)*, eds. by G. Dagron and H. Mihaescu (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1986), 311 and note 74.

<sup>322</sup> *Ann. Lupi.* 153.

<sup>323</sup> *Anon. Bar.* 151.

<sup>324</sup> *Ann. Lupi.* 153.

<sup>325</sup> *Ann. Bar.* 152.

<sup>326</sup> Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 137.

promised not to build a citadel or establish a garrison in their city, a promise that would be kept until the twelfth century.<sup>327</sup> Moreover, Bari would be ruled by one of their own, Agyritzos, the leader of the pro-Norman faction in the city.<sup>328</sup> These must be the “extravagant promises” that Guiscard made to the pro-Norman faction during the siege reported by William of Apulia.<sup>329</sup>

Bari would honour its commitments – to a point – and the sources find the Baresi participating in numerous battles alongside their Norman conquerors. Immediately after the siege in 1071, they mustered in the city of Reggio, and along with other Calabrians, Greeks and Normans, followed Guiscard to Sicily to participate in the siege of Palermo, possibly providing the ships needed to press the siege.<sup>330</sup> Once Palermo was captured, the Baresi continued on to the city of Melfi, whence Guiscard pursued his conquest of Apulia.<sup>331</sup> Amatus of Montecassino records that the Duke would also visit Bari on occasion; he convalesced there in 1073, and visited the city on a tour of his realm not long after.<sup>332</sup> In 1079, Bari rose in rebellion, joining in the general uprising against Guiscard that spread through nearly all of southern Italy. They were defeated, however, in battle outside their very own walls, and besieged. The city was forced to surrender in 1080.<sup>333</sup> Possibly with this betrayal in mind, the Duke extracted significant tribute from the city in 1083 and 1084; the exaction of ‘many torments’ would add to the imposition.<sup>334</sup> During the Norman siege of Dyrrachion/Durazzo, a deserter from Bari

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<sup>327</sup> Will. Apulia Book III, pp. 32, 36. Not all the remaining Greeks returned to imperial: Falkenhausen, “Provincial Aristocracy,” 225; Promise not to leave a garrison: Malaterra IV.10, p. 36. A citadel would be constructed by King Roger II, but not without meeting significant resistance from the locals: Teleso II.34, 49, pp. 16, 19.

<sup>328</sup> Will. Apulia Book III, p.40.

<sup>329</sup> Will. Apulia Book II, p.28.

<sup>330</sup> Will. Apulia Book III, p.34. The annals have Guiscard travelling to Sicily with 58 ships, but do not specify their origin: *Ann. Lupi* 182. The Normans would not have their own naval capabilities until the battle of Corfu:

<sup>331</sup> Will. Apulia Book III, p.36.

<sup>332</sup> Amatus VII.7, 25, pp.167, 177.

<sup>333</sup> Will. Apulia Book III, p.40-43. *Ann. Lupi* 191, 195. For an alternate account of the rebellion, see: Amatus VII.2, pp; 165-166.

<sup>334</sup> *Anon. Bar.* 1083/4. The tributes were associated with Guiscard’s invasion of Byzantium’s Balkan territories.

served as envoy between the Duke and a disgruntled Venetian named Domenico, who betrayed the Balkan port to the Normans.<sup>335</sup>

Following the death of Robert Guiscard in 1085, Bari does not reappear in the narrative sources again until 1087, when the annals report that “in the month of May, the body of the most blessed Saint Nicholas Archbishop of Myra, was taken from the afore-said Myra by a few Baresi, and brought to Bari, the head of all the cities of Apulia.”<sup>336</sup> The incident is recounted in detail by the Benedictine monk Nikephoros, whose account can be dated to the following year and is thus near contemporary. An additional account also survives by the archdeacon John, written by 1089, but is so similar to the account by Nikephoros as to raise the possibility that they may have worked from the same source.<sup>337</sup>

Nikephoros recounts that a group of sixty-two sailors, forty-two hailed from Bari, dropped anchor in Myra, a port city on the southern shores of Asia Minor, on their return trip from Antioch.<sup>338</sup> Hearing that the Venetians were planning a similar expedition, these Baresi sought to claim the remains of the fourth-century Saint Nicholas for themselves and their city.<sup>339</sup> Nikephoros claims that their motivations were unselfish, and that their journey was divinely inspired while the sailors alternatively defended their quest as a mission from the Pope, sanctioned by the saint himself, who had appeared to them in a vision.<sup>340</sup> However, the sailors’ claims were probably mere inventions designed to deceive the monks guarding the relics, rather than indications of any premeditation;

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<sup>335</sup> Primary account of the siege: Will. Apulia Book IV, p.54-55; Malaterra III.25-28, pp.55-58. Malaterra does not record the presence of a Baresi envoy, but confirms the overall account of William of Apulia. The Venetians had long been allies of the Byzantines in this region, where their interests coincided in maintaining the security of the Adriatic. It is not by accident that the Adriatic was also called the ‘Bay of the Venetians’: Falkenhausen, “Between two Empires,” 135.

<sup>336</sup> *Ann. Lupi*. 218.

<sup>337</sup> H.E.J. Cowdrey, “Appendix IX: Events at Bari in 1086-7,” in *The Age of Abbot Desiderius: Montecassino, the Papacy, and the Normans in the Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 263.

<sup>338</sup> Cowdrey, “Events at Bari in 1086-7,” 264.

<sup>339</sup> *Translatio S. Nich.* 1, p.54.

<sup>340</sup> *Translatio S. Nich.* 3, 10, pp.55, 60-61.

indeed, the seemingly improvised arrival of the relics in Bari certainly suggest this.<sup>341</sup> Rather, the sailors appear to have been taking advantage of the chaos caused by the “foreign and infidel hordes” who had overrun Asia Minor in successive waves following the Byzantine defeat at Manzikert; the citizens of Myra had only recently returned from their mountain hideouts.<sup>342</sup> Arriving in Myra, the sailors travelled straight to the sanctuary that held the remains of the saint. Their cover, however, was immediately blown by the monks guarding the tomb who accused them of wanting to remove the saint to their own city. The sailors proceeded to alternatively threaten, cajole, and lie in an attempt to get their hands on the saint. The tomb raiders may have had the help of an inside man: one of the monks left with them on their ship, and was heckled and attacked by the townspeople of Myra, who tried to stop the ship by taking hold of the oars and rudder.<sup>343</sup> The Baresi then boarded their ship with the remains of the saint, making their way past the townspeople who had gathered after the being alerted by the monks, and made the rather circuitous journey back to southern Italy.

The arrival of the sailors in the city of Bari, along with their sacred cargo, followed a short stop at the harbour of St. George some four miles distance from the city in order to build a “most beautiful casket” and caused quite a stir.<sup>344</sup> The translation of the relics of St. Nicholas was the occasion of a heated discussion on the placement of the saint’s remains and is evidence of a body politic, conscious of the role of individual citizens in civic decision making processes. Some called for a new sanctuary to be built on the site of the former Byzantine *praetorium*, as the sailors had taken a solemn vow to do, while others called for them to be placed in the Cathedral. What is interesting in this discussion is that no social or economic distinction is made between the various townspeople; no leading men emerge to direct the discussion, nor do any factions

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<sup>341</sup> Cowdrey, “Events at Bari in 1086-7,” 265. Pope Victor III would call for an expedition against Muslim North Africa in August of 1087, so the sailors were not stretching the truth all that far when they claimed to be on a mission from the Church: thoughts of crusading were in the air.

<sup>342</sup> *Translatio S. Nich.* 1, 5, pp.53, 57; Cheynet, “La Résistance Aux Turcs En Asie Mineure Entre Manzikert Et La Première Croisade,” 1:131–147.

<sup>343</sup> *Translatio S. Nich.* 6, 10, pp.57, 61.

<sup>344</sup> *Translatio S. Nich.* 15-16, pp. 63-65.

develop, beyond advocating for one option or the other.<sup>345</sup> The only distinction that is made in the text is that between the sailors who had translated the relics and the townspeople who receive them; it seems that an ad hoc popular assembly was formed at the harbour, and that it was open to all citizens. Recall the case of Raideostos, which similarly deliberated and later acted as a body politic as they elected to join the rebellion of Nikephoros Bryennios; even though the local dynast Batatzina played a prominent role in the deliberations, once decided the citizens acted in concert to advance and protect their own local interests, much as the Baresi were beginning to do at the harbour.<sup>346</sup> In anticipation of a decision, the sailors placed the remains in the care of the abbot of St. Benedict, Elias, the future archbishop of Bari, and kept the monastery under guard “lest they be deprived of the holy relics by some stratagem.”<sup>347</sup>

The townspeople had immediate cause to defend the relics, for upon hearing of their arrival, Archbishop Ursus immediately travelled from nearby Canosa to Bari to take possession of the holy cargo, but was repulsed by the “sailors and the townspeople.”<sup>348</sup> The archbishop’s position had recently suffered a blow with the death of his sponsor, the Duke Robert Guiscard two years previous and was seeking to buttress his authority in Bari; the arrival of the relics provided just such an opportunity.<sup>349</sup> The people of Bari, sent “prudent and wise men” to the archbishop in an effort to dissuade him from his plan, but were unsuccessful.<sup>350</sup> As with the ad hoc popular assembly held at the harbour, this embassy is evidence of an urban collective acting together to protect their interests, in this case, from an outside force: the archbishop. They would shortly have the opportunity

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<sup>345</sup> Previous scholarship had mistakenly identified elements of a class struggle between a pro-Norman noble faction and a mercantile Byzantine faction, roughly analogous to those represented by Argyritzos and Byzantios during the siege of Bari. However, the sources do not bear this out. See discussion in: Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 115-127. Similar ecclesiastical divisions have also been discounted. See discussion in: Cowdrey, “Events at Bari in 1086-7,” 265-266.

<sup>346</sup> For discussion and further examples, see: Krallis, “‘Democratic’ Action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium,” 35–53.

<sup>347</sup> *Ann. Lupi.* 223; *Translatio S. Nich.* 16, p.65.

<sup>348</sup> *Translatio S. Nich.* 17, p. 65.

<sup>349</sup> Guiscard had personally ensured the appointment of his clerical *familiares*, Ursus of Rapolla, during his June 1080 meeting with the Pope, Gregory VIII. See: Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 243.

<sup>350</sup> *Translatio S. Nich.* 17, p. 65.

to defend their interests with force, as following the failure of the ambassadors, the archbishop sent an armed party to capture the relics by force of arms; two of archbishop's men and one of the townspeople were killed in the resulting mêlée. The Baresi, fresh from victory removed the relics from the monastery of St. Benedict and translated them to the chapel of St. Eustratios, located in the *praetorium*. The chapel, along with the other three Byzantine era chapels of St. Demetrios, St. Basil and St. Sophia were razed to create room for the new basilica that would house the relics; an armed guard remained in place to prevent thefts.<sup>351</sup>

This curious episode in the history of Bari is revealing for a number of reasons. The arrival of the remains of St. Nicholas reveals an urban collective acting together to identify and defend their own interests. They debate the disposition of the relics freely and are un-swayed by outside interference. The nominal overlords of Bari, the Normans, are in fact completely absent from all of the accounts and the one outsider who attempted to interfere, the deceased Duke's man on the ground, the archbishop Ursus, is categorically repulsed in both word and deed. The Baresi instead entrust their relics with a local cleric, the future archbishop and at the time abbot of St. Benedict, Elias. Moreover, the people decide together to build the new crypt in the *praetorium*, making sure to guard the relics carefully until it is built. In the process the Baresi razed the four Byzantine chapels, signalling in deeds, if not in words, a certain break with the eastern empire. Ultimately, the move to bring the relics of St Nicholas was a positive one, even if it was not premeditated. Now that Bari was outside the empire, the city was no longer able to compete economically with Venice, which now had better access to Byzantine markets; the Baresi acted to defend those interests when the opportunity presented itself. The revenues that the waves of pilgrims brought in would help offset these losses at precisely the time they were needed most.<sup>352</sup>

This chapter has exposed the role of factionalism in the deliberative processes that constituted urban governance. The siege of Bari revealed the presence of pro-Byzantine and pro-Norman factions engaged in various expressions of political agency.

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<sup>351</sup> *Translatio S. Nich.*, 18, pp.65-66. The account by the archdeacon John diverges at this point and has the people place the relics in the church of St. Stephen the proto-Martyr.

<sup>352</sup> Geary sees this economic motive as the primary one: Geary, *Furta Sacra*, 124-127.

While each group sought to have their individual agendas realized, ultimately, the pro-Norman faction was victorious and the political agency of many Baresi was frustrated as Argyritzos ransomed the city's autonomy to the Norman Duke. This factionalism wasn't new to the city and became more pronounced as imperial authority withered in the Byzantine provincial capital in the 1040s. In the absence of strong imperial leadership, different factions emerged and vied for political dominance in the city. In the end, Argyros, son of the Lombard rebel Melos, emerged victorious, securing increased urban autonomy for the city, while maintaining strong ties to the imperial centre, highlighting the strong cultural draw of Constantinople on the western periphery. External factors could have a significant effect on urban polities, as seen in the case of Antioch. There, the patriarch's power in the city relied on his relationship to the Hamdanid ruler; the shift to Byzantine rule saw the imposition of the imperial will on the city. The new *doux* was able to sideline the patriarch and reassert imperial authority on the city through the cultivation of a new relationship with the Antiochenes, thus implicitly validating the political agency of the inhabitants. Political modes of thought that emphasized a role for popular political agency survived in to the Norman period, as was seen in the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas in 1087. There, the political agency and urban autonomy expressed during an ad hoc popular assembly carried the day, as the will of the inhabitants was realized in the face of outside political interference. In the final analysis, the citizens that inhabited the city of Bari conceived of themselves as political agents, whose participation in deliberative urban decision making processes was seen as both legitimate and expected.

## Conclusion

In the summer of 921, the Constantinopolitan patriarch, Nicholas I Mystikos, sent a letter to “the priests, archpriests, nobles and the general body of the people of Longobardia.”<sup>353</sup> The patriarch, who was himself a transplanted Lombard, was acting in the capacity of emissary to the people of Italy and was responding to their recent petition to make Landulf I of Capua *strategos* of Longobardia and to plead forgiveness for their rebellion. Landulf had recently led a rebellion against the Byzantine administration in Italy, even killing the highest Byzantine official in the region, the *strategos* Urseleon at a 21 April battle outside of Ascoli. In an effort to contain the situation, the patriarch had addressed an earlier letter to the rebel Landulf, forgiving him his trespasses and granting him Urseleon’s position as military governor of the region. In return, the emperor demanded through the patriarch that Landulf surrender the cities he had occupied, swear fealty to the emperor and send another son to Constantinople as a hostage, to join the one already there.<sup>354</sup> The rebellion evidently caused a flurry of missives back and forth between Constantinople and Italy; indeed, two responses are preserved among the surviving letters of Mystikos to the Archbishop of Otranto and the *protospatharios* Gaidon, a Lombard noble.<sup>355</sup> The significance of these events rests not so much in the extent of pragmatism with which the imperial centre dealt with rebellion on the western periphery, rather it is the approach taken by the patriarch. Mystikos addressed his letter to “both rulers and ruled,” the entire body politic of Italy, thereby acknowledging the importance of all levels of society for imperial rule. Moreover, the patriarch’s response speaks to the reciprocal relationship between the emperor and the inhabitants of the western periphery, offering forgiveness in exchange for loyalty. The

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<sup>353</sup> Mystikos, *Ep.* 85, pp.344-347. See above, nt.99 for a discussion of this rebellion and bibliography.

<sup>354</sup> Mystikos, *Ep.* 82, pp.338-343.

<sup>355</sup> Mystikos, *Ep.* 83, 84, pp.342-345. Mystikos refers to “the other letters sent to me by the inhabitants of your country,” i.e. Italy.

imperial centre was willing to grant everything that the people of Italy desired, complete forgiveness and the elevation of their chosen leader, the rebel Landulf, to the governorship of Longobardia; the only condition that is made is their consent, that is, the consent of the governed.

Many scholars have taken offers of forgiveness such as these as signs of weakness on behalf of the imperial centre, pointing to the low priority that the south Italian territories must have been for the Byzantine emperors.<sup>356</sup> Constantinople certainly had its hands full during the first half of the tenth century and it is doubtful that the emperor could have spared many troops to send to Italy; indeed, when the military situation finally stabilized at the imperial centre, only a small force of 1,453 cavalry, and 415 Rus infantry were dispatched.<sup>357</sup> Given the strategic situation, calls by the patriarch to “do those things which are for your salvation, your interest, and your settled peace and prosperity” and the implicit threat that such a call contained, must have rung hollow to his Italian audience.<sup>358</sup> However, notwithstanding the real and perceived weakness of Constantinople, the flip-side of central imperial weakness has been left completely unaddressed in the scholarship on the region, that is, the political strength of the inhabitants of the empire’s periphery. The mere request for a change in leadership in the same breath as a plea for forgiveness is indicative of a mature body politic, confident that their request would at the very least be heard, if not acceded to. The inhabitants of the *Mezzogiorno* saw their relationship between themselves and the centre as one of consultation and not of dominion *tout court*. They had a role to play in the governance of the empire and they expected their voices to be heard and at the very least acknowledged by the emperor.

This case study has argued that popular political agency was alive and well in Byzantine southern Italy. Following its ninth-century nadir, Byzantine power rebounded

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<sup>356</sup> Loud notes that Byzantium was a “contemporary super-power” with more problems than resources and classified Italy as ‘low-priority’: Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 22. Holmes similarly calls the region “a backwater...more accustomed to soaking up pressure from outside than launching attacks on its enemies.” Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (926-1025)*, 433.

<sup>357</sup> *DAC* II.44, pp.660-661.

<sup>358</sup> Mystikos, *Ep.* 85, pp.346-347.

and imperial authority spread throughout the southern Italian peninsula. By the arrival of the Normans at the turn of the millennium, the provincial administration was thick on the ground, with imperial officials in every city, recording land transfers, settling disputes, and collecting taxes, amongst other official acts. The medieval Byzantine state, in other words, was pervasive. Moreover, the presence of these bureaucrats was not neutral; rather it had an important effect on local modes of thought and behavior that lasted well past the end of Byzantine dominion in the *Mezzogiorno*. Southern Italians may have accessed a Byzantine identity that looked to their Roman heritage of the *res publica*, what the Byzantines called *politeia* and as such may have seen themselves as having an important role in the political process. This political role was facilitated by the ranking Byzantine official in the region, the *katepano*, who was granted a great deal of freedom of action by the imperial centre and used that discretion to deal pragmatically with the inhabitants of Byzantium's westernmost province.

When the Normans first arrived in the region from northern France, southern Italy was materially prosperous, but politically restive. The population was expanding, along with the economy, as southern Italy took part in a Mediterranean-wide recovery. However, Muslim raids from Sicily and North Africa, and the failure of the Byzantine provincial administration to protect their Italian subjects saw an increase in popular discontent; increased taxation certainly did not help the situation. By the fourth decade of the new millennium, when the Normans rebelled against their former Byzantine masters and began carving out their own domain, southern Italians were ready to listen. The quick defeat of Byzantine forces in Apulia saw many of the major cities on the Adriatic coast come to terms with the Normans. However, as the Normans slowly advanced and consolidated their hold on the region, cities and their inhabitants put up their own defence as they sought to preserve some degree of autonomy. Resistance took a number of different forms depending on the circumstances; some slaughtered their Norman garrisons, while others directed their wrath against the leadership; some were initially successful in preventing the construction of citadels, while others acquiesced in the face of a losing situation. Even though Byzantine forces were ultimately unsuccessful in their efforts to halt the Norman advance, they generally went down fighting; Reggio and Brindisi were the exceptions, and not the rule. In the capital city of Bari, where the *katepano* had his headquarters, the collective autonomy that was visible during the final

Norman siege of the city from 1068 to 1071, could still be found there sixteen years later, when a group of sailors returned home from the city of Myra, with the relics of St. Nicholas. Ultimately, the modes of thought that underpinned the Baresi's understanding of themselves as political agents outlived the Norman Duke who 'conquered' them and could be seen on the docks of their city as they assembled to decide on the fate of their sacred prize.

A key goal of this study has been to offer a corrective to the image of Byzantium as an empire with a strong and often tyrannical central government that left no room for popular political autonomy. Contrary to this view, the emperor, and by extension, his representatives were expected to consult with their subjects or at the very least, take their interests into account. In Byzantine southern Italy, city after city acted to defend their interests against the Normans as they advanced across the peninsula. However, this is not to say that the imperial centre was so weak on the periphery that the will of the emperor could not be felt. Whether through inducements, as in the case of Argyros and others who received imperial titles and rewards, or through terror, as in the case of the nameless victims of imperial wrath who were hanged from the walls of Bitonto by the newly arrived *katepano*, imperial will existed alongside the state apparatus that facilitated it, even at the edges of empire. However, this study was limited to highlighting the presence of political autonomy on the western frontier and leaves unanswered the exact relationship between the imperial centre and the periphery. Furthermore, while this examination has proceeded under the assumption that southern Italians drew on a common Roman heritage of political agency based on the *res publica*, the evidence for this at the moment is merely suggestive, not definitive. More work is clearly needed on provincial identities; did provincials see themselves as Byzantine citizens, fully invested in the empire, or as merely subjects to it? What role did their Roman heritage play in their expressions of political agency? Additionally, the eastern periphery is ripe for a similar study where expressions of political agency can also be found in abundance, but remain as of yet unexamined; the Armenian cities of Ani and Arcn show especial promise. Moreover, the presence of political agency on the imperial frontiers has consequences for the core of the empire; if political agency is a product of Byzantine administration, then the phenomenon should *a fortiori* be present at the centre, where the imperial will would be most keenly felt. Lastly, the scope of this study has been the

eleventh century, but it is clear from the events leading up to the destruction of Bari by King William I 'the Bad' in 1156 that opened this thesis, and the 921 letters of Nicholas I Mystikos that closed it, that political agency in the *Mezzogiorno* was not limited to the years of the Norman Conquest. The phenomenon of political agency, within the Byzantine imperial framework, was much more widespread than has been previously acknowledged in the scholarship.

As moderns of a particular western mindset, we tend to equate democracy with the act of voting, as if the simple act of trotting off to the voting booth every four years is all that is required to guarantee the robustness of our democratic way of life. However, while voting may be a necessary component of our modern conception of democracy, on its own, it is hardly sufficient. In addition to the usual institutions, and requisite checks and balances, there needs to be a commitment to the principle of popular legitimacy. This study has revealed a number of medieval voices seeking to have their voices heard by the imperial centre. If the reply by the patriarch Nicholas I Mystikos to the people of Longobardia is any indication, those voices were heard and often given their due. In a way, this thesis has been a case study of democracy, just without the voting. While Byzantines would react strongly against the term, eschewing the connotations of social chaos and mob rule, the underlying notions of political agency and popular legitimacy contained in our modern understanding of democracy would have rung true to them. It is hoped that this study has lifted the hush that was imposed on the inhabitants of Byzantine Italy first by conquest, then by scholarship and reinforced to us moderns the importance of heeding the voices of the people.

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