



THE EMBASSY OF LIUDPRAND
 THE CREMONESE BISHOP
 TO THE CONSTANTINOPOLITAN
 EMPEROR NICEPHOROS PHOCAS
 ON BEHALF OF THE AUGUST
 OTTOS & ADELHEID

Liudprand, bishop of the holy Cremonese church, wishes, desires, and hopes that the Otronians, the utterly unconquered, august emperors of the Romans, and the most glorious august empress Adelheid¹ may always be well, prosper, and triumph.

1. What the reasons were why you did not receive a letter or a messenger from me sooner, the following explanation will make plain. We arrived in Constantinople on the day before the nones of June (968) and, as an insult to you, we were received in a shameful way, rudely and shamefully handled. We were closed into a certain mansion, quite big and open, which neither protected from the cold nor kept out the heat; armed soldiers were stationed there as guards, who forbade all my people from leaving and others from

1. Widow of the Italian king Lothar who married Otto I in 951, bore him Otto II and Mathilda, was crowned empress in 962, and wielded great power until her death in 999. Liudprand mentioned her in *Kerithion* 4.13. He was hostile to her father Rudolf (*Kerithion* 2.60–67).

entering. This house, open just to us who were shut within, was so remote from the imperial palace that one became short of breath not by riding there, but even by walking. It added to our disastrous position that the wine of the Greeks was undrinkable for us because of their commingling pitch, pine sap, and plaster in it; for that house was waterless, and we could not even extinguish our thirst with water that we would buy with the money that had been given us. On top of this great woe was placed another woe; a man, that is, the guardian of the house,² who oversaw the daily expenses, one whose equal, if you seek him, will be found, perhaps, in hell, but not on earth. For like a flooding torrent he poured onto us whatever calamity,³ whatever robbery, whatever cost, whatever sorrow, whatever misery he could dream up. Never in 120 days did a single one pass that did not provide us with a moan or sorrow.⁴

2. On the day before the nones of June, as we wrote above, we arrived at Constantinople, before the Carcan gate,⁵ and we waited with our horses until the eleventh hour,⁶ under rain that was not light. At the eleventh hour, since Nicephoros did not consider us worthy to ride horses that your clemency had outfitted with such elegance,⁷ he ordered us to come in, and we were led to the aforementioned ugly, waterless, wide-open marble house. On the eighth day before the ides, the Saturday before Pentecost,⁸ I was led into the presence of the emperor's brother Leo, the chief of staff at the court and minister, where we were exhausted by a great altercation over your imperial title. For he called you not "emperor,"

2. The text here is corrupt.

3. Is 30.28.

4. From June 4th to October 2nd, according to Liudprand's own account.

5. Close to the Great Palace, the main imperial residence.

6. Following classical tradition, the Byzantines divided daytime into twelve hours that expanded and contracted in length according to the season and latitude. Thus Liudprand waited until almost dusk. See also *Kerithion* 5.21, n. 37.

7. Horses, especially the magnificent ones that Otto seems to have furnished his messengers, conferred status to their riders, and Nicephoros deprived the visitors of a chance to flaunt their mounts.

8. An important Christian holiday observed fifty days after Easter to celebrate the apostles' mission. In 968 Pentecost fell on June 7th.

that is, βασιλέα in his tongue, but rather, out of disdain, ῥήγα, that is, “king” in our tongue. When I answered this by saying that the meaning was the same even if the signifier is different, he told me I had come not for the sake of peace, but to squabble; and thus, rising up in rage, he accepted your letter in a truly insulting way, through an interpreter and not into his own hands. And what a man was Leo, fairly imposing, falsely humble, one who would pierce the hand of a man who leaned against him.⁹

3. On the seventh day before the ides, the holy day of Pentecost itself, I was led before Nicephoros¹⁰ in the residence called Στεφάνα, in Latin the “Crown Palace”;¹¹ he is a quite monstrous man, dwarfish, with a fat head, and mole-like by virtue of the smallness of his eyes, deformed by a short beard that is wide and thick and graying, disgraced by a finger-like neck, quite like Hyopas because of the abundance and thickness of his hair, in color quite like the Ethiopian whom you would not like to run into in the middle of the night,¹² with an extended belly and scrawny buttocks, very long hips measured against his short height, small legs, flat feet, dressed in an ornamental robe, but one old and, by reason of its age and daily use, stinking and faded, with Sicyonian footgear on his feet,¹³ provocative in his speech, a fox in his slyness, a Ulysses in his perjury and mendacity. My lords the august emperors always seemed handsome to me, but how much more handsome you seem after him! Always you seemed elegant, but how much more elegant after him! Always you seemed mighty, but how much mightier after him! You always seemed nice, but how much nicer after him! You always seemed full of virtue, but how much more virtuous after him! There sat on the left, not aligned with him but far behind.

9. A reference to Is 36:6, where the Assyrian general advancing on Jerusalem likened Egypt, unreliable ally of Judah, to a flimsy walking stick.

10. After a brilliant military career Nicephoros II Phocas, acclaimed by the troops in Cappadocia, entered Constantinople and ruled Byzantium, 963–69. To sustain a connection with the legitimate Macedonian dynasty, he kept Basil II and Constantine VIII, sons of Theophano and his predecessor Romanos II, in the palace.

11. There was a Coronation Hall in the Great Palace.

12. Juvenal, *Satires* 5:53–54.

13. Considered unmanly by Cicero, *De oratore* 1:54:231.

two small emperors, once his rulers, now subject to him. This was the beginning of their narrative:

4. “We should have, indeed we wished to welcome you kindly and magnificently; but the impiety of your lord does not permit it, a man who arrogated Rome to himself with a hostile occupation, who took it by force from Berengar and Adalbert,¹⁴ against all law and custom, who killed some of the Romans by the sword, others by hanging, deprived others of their eyes, consigned still others to exile, and on top of that attempted to subdue to his power the cities of our empire by murder and arson.¹⁵ And since his wicked scheme could not have the desired outcome, having faked peace, now he sent us you, as a κατάρκτορον, or spy, an instigator and agent of his malice.”

5. To which I replied: “My lord did not invade the Roman city by force or in a tyrannical way, but rather he freed it from the yoke of the tyrant, or tyrants.¹⁶ Were not effeminates lordling it over Rome,¹⁷ and, what is more serious and sordid, were not whores doing the same? Back then, I think, your power was snoozing, along with that of your predecessors, who in name alone, and not in actual fact, are considered emperors of the Romans.

“If they were powerful, if they were emperors of the Romans, why were they leaving Rome to the power of the whores? Were not some of the most holy popes expelled, others so cast down they did not have enough to pay their daily expenses or for charity? Did not Adalbert send a libelous letter to Romanos and Constantine,

14. Adalbert (†c.975) and his father Berengar II (†966) were the kings of Italy whom Otto I subjected in 951 and deposed in 962, but who provided continuous resistance thereafter. Their control of Rome was always nominal (see *Concerning King Otto* 15). Liudprand recorded their deeds in *Retribution* 5.

15. In 965 Otto I had crushed a revolt against “his” pope, Leo VIII (*Concerning King Otto*, 17–18). In 967 and 968 he had campaigned, with modest success, in Byzantine Italy. The failure of the 968 attack on Bari did not alter Byzantine opinions of this hostile deed.

16. Liudprand often portrayed the doings of powerful Roman clans as immoral and Rome as needing a purifying external intervention, like Otto I’s in 962. See G. Arraldi, “Liudprando di Cremona: un detrattore di Roma o dei romani?” *Studi romani* 53 (2005): 12–90.

17. See Is 3:4.

your imperial predecessors? Did he not strip the churches of the most holy apostles with his robbery? Which of you emperors, led by zeal for God, bothered to avenge such an unworthy crime and return the holy church to its proper condition? You neglected to, but my lord did not neglect it, he who, arising from the ends of the earth and coming to Rome,¹⁸ cast out the impious ones and returned every right and privilege to the vicars of the holy apostles. Afterwards, following the decrees of the Roman emperors Justinian, Valentinian, Theodosius,¹⁹ and others, he felled, throttled, hanged, and relegated to exile those who rebelled against him and the apostolic lord, people who were violators of oaths, sacrilegious, torturers of their apostolic lords, or robbers. If he had not done these things, he would be an impious, unjust, cruel tyrant. It is manifest that Berengar and Adalbert, having become Otto's soldiers, took the golden scepter of the Italian kingdom from his hands and, in the presence of your servants who are alive to this day and live in this city, promised loyalty by swearing an oath.²⁰ And since, with the devil instigating, they perfidiously violated it, he rightly deprived them of the kingdom as deserters and rebels against him, which you would do, too, to any subjects who afterwards became rebels."

6. "But," he said, "a soldier of Adalbert's does not acknowledge this version." To which I answered: "If he contradicts it, one of my soldiers will demonstrate that it is so in a duel tomorrow, if you order it."

"It may be that he did these things, as you say, rightly," he said. "Now explain why the boundaries of our empire are attacked by war and fire. We were friends, and thought of making an indissoluble alliance by marriage."

7. "The land," I said, "which you relate as being part of your

18. See Jer 6.22.

19. Famous late antique emperors who added to the corpus of Roman law.

20. This emphasis on the feudal bonds (sworn at Augsburg in 952) between Otto and Berengar and Adalbert reminded readers of the inappropriateness of the vassals' later behavior, and the righteousness of Otto's actions toward them. *Rerihition* 5:12-14 was more ambiguous about the nature of Otto's settlement with Berengar.

empire, the indigenous people and language show to be part of the Italian kingdom. The Lombards held it by might, and Louis, the emperor of the Lombards and Franks, freed it from the hand of the prostrated Saracen hordes.²¹ Landulf, prince of the Beneventans and Capuans,²² subjugated it by force to himself for seven years, nor would it have escaped the yoke of subjection to him and his successors up to the present day, if the emperor Romanos had not bought the friendship of our King Hugh by handing over a vast sum—and this was the reason why he united in marriage his nephew and namesake to the illegitimate daughter of our King Hugh.²³ And as I see it, you ascribe to my lord not kindness, but powerlessness, because after acquiring Italy and Rome he left them to you for so many years. The alliance of friendship that you say you wanted to make by marriage, we consider a fraud and a trick; you demand a truce that no real reason compels you to demand, nor us to grant. Truly, so that lies may be removed, let not the truth be silent. My lord sent me to you so that, if you want to hand over in marriage to his son, my lord Otto the august emperor, the daughter of the emperor Romanos and the empress Theophano, you affirm it to me by oath, and I, by way of recompense for this concession, will affirm by swearing an oath that my lord will do and observe this-and-that. But my lord now proffers an excellent guarantee of friendship to your brotherly highness, since he has subjected all Apulia²⁴ to your power, thanks to my intervention,

21. The Carolingian ruler of Italy Louis II (850-75) captured Bari from the Arabs in 871. Westerners often called Muslims Saracens, thus assigning them biblical origins (related to Abraham's wife Sarah).

22. Landulf II (†943) succeeded in re-establishing Beneventan rights to rule northern Apulia in the 920s. Benevento and Capua were important cities (and states) in the Lombard area of southern Italy. After 900 they were ruled by members of the same family, in effect fusing together. See *Rerihition* 4:9 for some context.

23. Romanos II (†963) married his son to a daughter of King Hugh of Italy in 944; *Rerihition* 5:15, 5:20.

24. This Byzantine-ruled province in southeastern Italy was contested between southern Lombard rulers, Arab invaders, and occasionally western emperors. Compared to southwestern Italy, Apulia was less Hellenized, as large segments of it had been subject to the dukes of Benevento in the eighth and ninth centuries.

to whose instigation instead you say a misdeed is due. There are as many witnesses to this as there are inhabitants in all Apulia."²⁵

8. "The second hour," Nicephoros said, "is now past."²⁶ We are now to celebrate the *προέλευτος*, that is, the procession. We do what is now scheduled; against these assertions of yours, if it proves opportune, we shall answer later."

9. It does not bother me to describe this *προέλευτος*, and it will not bother my lords to hear of it. A copious multitude of merchants and common people, decked out with quite thin little shields and cheap spears, gathered for this solemnity to welcome and praise Nicephoros, occupied the sides of the roads forming walls, almost, from the palace of Nicephoros to Sancta Sophia. That the larger part of this mob had proceeded to this praise session with bare feet increased the whole event's shamefulness: I believe they thought they could better adorn their holy *προέλευτος* this way. But even his nobles, who crossed through the same plebeian and barefooted multitude with him, wore oversized tunics much tattered by age. They would have marched much more decorously wearing their everyday clothes: there was no one there whose ancestor owned the tunic when it was new.²⁷ No one was decorated with gold there, no one with jewels, except Nicephoros alone, whom the imperial ornaments, cut and made for the physiques of his predecessors, rendered uglier. By your health, which is dearer to me than my own, a single one of the costumes of your nobles is more costly than one hundred of those, and more! I was led to that *προέλευτος* and placed in a higher place, next to the *psalms*, or chanters.

10. While that monster proceeded, almost crawling, the adulating *psalms* called out: "Here comes the morning star, there arises Eous, he reflects the sun's rays with his glare, the pallid death of the Sarcens, Nicephoros the *μέδων*" (that is, the "prince"). And they sang

25. Liudprand's claims to intercession in southern Italy are not substantiated elsewhere.

26. It was roughly 8:00 A.M. See n. 6 above.

27. The Byzantine aristocrats' antique attire conferred authority. In the west, new clothes did the same.

on, "*Μέδωντι*" (that is, "to the prince") "Nicephoros, may there be *πολλὰ ἔτη*" (that is, "many years"). "O nations, worship him, adore him, and to him alone bow your necks!"²⁸ How much more accurately they might have sung: "Come, burnt cinder, *μέλας*,²⁹ old hag in your walk, elfin in your expression, boor, jungle-wanderer, goat-footed, horned, double-limbed, bristly, wild, bumpkin, barbarian, hard and hairy one, rebel and Cappadocian!"³⁰ Thereupon, puffed up by those lying songs, he entered Sancta Sophia with his lords the emperors following him from far off and prostrating themselves on the ground in a kiss of peace. In the church his armor-bearer with an arrow for a pen set down the era that was under way, doubtless in which time he had begun to rule, and in this way any who did not see it understand what era it is.³¹

11. That same day he ordered me to be his dinner guest. He did not, however, consider me worthy to be placed before any of his nobles, so I sat fifteenth from him, and where there was no tablecloth.³² Of my party, not only did no one sit at table but none even saw the house in which I was dinner guest. At this dinner, quite foul and repulsive in the manner of all drunkards' gatherings, impregnated with oil and sprinkled with a really awful fish sauce,³³ he

28. A fairly accurate representation of the formal acclamations offered to Byzantine emperors on ceremonial occasions. On such events, see A. Berger, "Imperial and Ecclesiastical Processions in Constantinople," in *Byzantine Constantinople*, ed. N. Necipoglu (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 73–87.

29. "Dark one."

30. For the implications to postclassical audiences of being from Cappadocia, see R. Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow: Roman Kule and Great Culture in Cappadocia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), chapter 1.

31. Perhaps an echo of ancient Roman timekeeping practices whereby nails were affixed in the wall of the Capitoline temple of Jupiter. Elsewhere (*Retribution* 3.37) Liudprand called Constantinople's grandest church by its traditional Greek name, Hagia Sophia.

32. Rank and ceremonial order mattered to tenth-century aristocrats, and his seating was an issue that Liudprand knew would strike a chord with his western audience; see H. Fichtreanu, *Living in the Tenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 8, 32–33.

33. *Gannu* was the ketchup of the ancient world, made of fermented fish parts. It was industrially produced in postclassical Italy, though Liudprand affects the disgust

asked me a lot of questions about your power, and a lot about your realms and soldiers. When I would answer appropriately and truthfully, "You lie!" he said; "the soldiers of your lord are ignorant of horse-riding and do not know about infantry combat! The size of shields, the weight of breastplates, the length of swords, and the heft of helmets does not allow them to fight in either way!" Then, chuckling, he said, "Also their gullets' voracity prevents them, that is, the gluttrony of their stomachs; their gut is their god,³⁴ their courage is debauchery, their steadfastness is drunkenness, going without rations is their undoing, and fear is their sobriety. Nor is there a large number of fleets afloat on the sea serving your lord; to me alone belongs the steadfastness of sailors, to me who will attack him with fleets and demolish his maritime cities in war and reduce to ashes those that are close to rivers. Who, I ask, can resist me even on land, with scanty forces? Otto's son was not absent, his wife was not missing, the Saxons, Swabians, Bavarians, and Italians were all with him; yet when they both did not know how and were not able to take one tiny city that resisted them, how will they resist me when I arrive, followed by armies numerous

³⁴as are the crops of Gargarus, as are the grape bunches on Methymna, as are the stars in the sky, as are the waves in the sea?"³⁵

12. He did not permit it when I wanted to respond to this and throw out a counter-argument worthy of his inflation; instead he added, as if to insult us: "You are not Romans, but Lombards!" Though he wanted to say something beyond this and waved his hand so that I would be quiet, I spoke out, upset: "The annals recognize that fratricidal Romulus, from whose name they are called

of a northern European landlubber. But the sauce was known to the monks of St. Gall: see J. Koder and T. Weber, *Liudprand von Cremona in Konstantinopel* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1980), 87.

³⁴ Phil 3:19.

³⁵ Liudprand quotes Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1:57–59. In the reported speech Nicephoros refers to Byzantine amphibious operations in Sicily and southern Italy between 964 and 967. In spring 968 Otto abandoned his siege of Bari, crucial administrative center and port in Byzantine Italy, but a second attack on Calabria followed the same year.

Romans, was born to a whore, that is, he was generated in defilement; and he made a refuge for himself where he welcomed defaunted debtors from foreign climes, runaway slaves, murderers, and people who deserved death for their crimes, and he attracted such a throng of such people that he called them Romans; from this aristocracy there arose those whom you call *cosmocrators*, or emperors.³⁶ We, that means the Lombards, Saxons, Franks, Lotharingians, Bavarians, Swabians, Burgundians, so disdain them that we utter no other insult than 'You Roman!' to our enemies when aroused, and we understand that single term, the name of the Romans, to include every baseness, every cowardice, every kind of greed, every promiscuity, every mendacity, indeed every vice.

"Since you say we are unwartlike and ignorant of riding skills, if the sins of the Christians merit that you persist in this harshness, the coming wars will demonstrate what type of men you are and how pugnacious we are."

13. Nicephoros, angered by such words, called for silence with his hand and ordered the long, narrow table removed and myself returned to the hated house or, if I were to speak more truthfully, prison. There, after two days I was afflicted by such a deep prostration, first through my indignation and then the heat and thirst, that there was no one among my retainers who did not fear his last day approached after having drunk from my same cup. Why, I ask, did they, too, not fall ill, whose drink was brine in lieu of fine wine, whose bedding, in lieu of hay, straw, or even earth, was hard marble, who had stone in lieu of a pillow, whose wide-open house did not protect from heat, rain, or cold? Even health itself, poured over them, could not save them if it wanted to!³⁷ Therefore, debilitated by my own suffering as well as that of my men, having summoned the guardian, or rather my persecutor, I arranged, not just by pleas but by paying a price, that he would deliver to the brother of Nicephoros my letter, saying things like this:

³⁶ Liudprand drew on Paul the Deacon, *Historia Romana* 1:1–2. But even in antiquity Rome's founding myths were sometimes demigrated (e.g., Livy, 1:4–7).

³⁷ Terence, *Adlphoe* 701–62.

14. "Bishop Liudprand to Leo, chief of staff and minister *rou* ὄποιου:³⁸ The sufferings which I am undergoing here will not wear me out if the most serene emperor is thinking of granting the request on account of which I came; only that through a letter from me and a messenger my lord Otto should be told that I am not delaying the matter here. But if the emperor considers the matter differently, there is here a freight ship of the Venetians, which hastens to depart; let him permit me, sick as I am, to board it so that, if the time of my collapse were to arrive, at least my corpse may be welcomed by the land of my birth."

15. When he read this, he ordered me to come to him after four days. There sat with him to debate your matter men very learned according to their tradition, strong in their Greek language, Basil the head of the imperial bedchamber, the first secretary, the chief of the imperial wardrobe, and two teachers. This was the beginning of their narration:

"Explain, brother, what the cause might be that you wore yourself out to announce." When I spelled out to them the recompense of kinship which would be the opportunity for endless peace, they said: "It is unheard-of for the *porphyrogenia* of a *porphyrogenitus*, that is, the daughter born in the purple to one who was himself born in the purple, to be mixed up with the peoples.³⁹ Truly, since you seek such a rarefied thing, you will receive what pleases you only if you give what is appropriate, that is, Ravenna and Rome with all the lands, uninterrupted, which extend from there to us here. If you in fact desire friendship without kinship, let your lord allow Rome to be free, and also let him hand over into their original slavery the Capuan and the Beneventan princes, formerly slaves of our holy empire and now rebels against it."⁴⁰

38. The "logothete of the drome" was a title that referred to responsibility for the public postal system and, by extension, foreign affairs and communications. See D. Miller, "The Logothete of the Drome," *Byzantion* 36 (1966): 438–70.

39. In *Retribution* 1:6–7 Liudprand explains the term *porphyrogenitus*: "Peoples" here means foreign, non-Byzantine, or barbarian populations.

40. H. Mayr-Harting, "Liudprand of Cremona's Account of his Legation," *English Historical Review* 116 (2001): 539–56, thinks that the real purpose of this text was to

16. To them I said: "Even you are not unaware that my lord has mightier Slavic peoples under him than the king of the Bulgarians, Peter, who led off in marriage the daughter of the emperor Christopher!" "But Christopher," they said, "was not born in the purple."

17. "In truth," I said, "whom does Rome serve, that you clamor for it to wish to be freed? To whom does she pay tribute? Was she not serving whores before, and, with you snoozing and certainly not showing any valor, did not my master, the august emperor, free her from so base a form of servitude? As he was *cosmorrator*, the august emperor Constantine, who built this city on his own name, contributed many gifts to the holy apostolic Roman church, and not just gifts in Italy, but in almost all the western kingdoms and in the eastern and southern ones, too, namely, in Greece, Judea, Persia, Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Egypt, and Libya, as testify his charters that are in our possession.⁴¹ Rightly my lord handed over to the vicar of the most holy apostles whatever belonged to the church of the most holy apostles in Italy, and Saxony, Bavaria, and all the kingdoms of my lord; and if it happened that my lord kept back anything from all of these, whether cities, manors, soldiers, or a single family, then I have denied God.⁴² Why does not your emperor do the same thing, so that he returns to the church of the apostles its properties that are in his realms and thus renders richer and freer that church which, through the toil and generosity of my lord, is already rich and free?"

18. "But he will do that," said Basil, the head of the imperial bedchamber, "when he makes Rome and the Roman church oblige these southern Lombard princes to support Otto instead of Byzantium. Pandulf Ironhead (†981) ruled Capua and Benevento alongside his brother, Landulf (†969). They entered Otto's allegiance early in 967; in recompense, Pandulf also received the central Italian states of Camerino and Spoleto.

41. An early reference to the *Donation of Constantine*, an eighth-century forgery designed to increase papal jurisdiction, which became an instrument of papal propaganda in the high Middle Ages.

42. After the hints in chapter 5, here Liudprand refers explicitly to the *Privilegium Ottonianum* of February 962, whereby the freshly crowned emperor reaffirmed Carolingian grants of land and rights to the papacy.

dient to his nod." Then I said, "A certain fellow, having suffered much harm from another, approaches God with these words: 'Lord, avenge me of my enemy!' God answered him: 'I will do it,' he said, 'on the day when I will give to each according to his deeds.' But the fellow replied, 'How late!'"⁴³

19. Then all except the emperor's brother left the disputation shaking with laughter, and ordered me to be led back to the hated house and to be guarded with great care until the feast day of the holy apostles, celebrated by all clerics.⁴⁴ On that feast day I was quite sick, but nevertheless he ordered me and the messengers of the Bulgarians, who had arrived the day before, to meet him at the Church of the Holy Apostles. When, after the wordiness of the chants and of the celebration of the masses, we were invited to table, he placed the messenger of the Bulgarians, shorn in the Hungarian style, girt with a bronze chain, and—as my mind suggested to me—not yet baptized, at the furthest end of the table (which was long and narrow) but closer than me to himself, obviously as an insult to you, my august lords. For you I underwent contempt, for you I was disdained, for you I was scorned; but I give thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ, whom you serve with your whole spirit, that I was considered worthy to suffer insults in your name. Truly, my lords, I left that table considering the insult not to me, but to you. As I sought to leave, indignant, Leo, the chief of staff and brother of the emperor, and the first secretary, Simon, followed behind me, howling: "When Peter the emperor of the Bulgarians led off Christopher's daughter as spouse, symphonies, that is, accords, were written and sealed with oaths, so that we would give precedence to, give honor and favor to the Bulgarians' apostles, that

43. The joke weaves together citations of Lk 18:3 and Ps 61:13.

44. The feast of the apostles Peter and Paul (June 29th) should not have required much explanation, but its date fits most tidily into the narrative (the next firm date, thirteen days before the calend of August, comes in chapter 29). The feast of the Transfiguration would make more sense, as it was less well established and was not universally accepted in the west until the 1400s. Leo VI introduced it to Constantinople, though it was not unknown there beforehand. Traditionally it was celebrated on August 6th, too late for the logic of the narrative.

is, the messengers, above the apostles of all the other nations. That apostle of the Bulgarians, though he is, as you say (and it is true), shorn, unwashed, and girt with a bronze chain, nevertheless is a noble, and we judge it unpropitious to give precedence over him to a bishop, especially one of the Franks. And since we perceive you bear this without dignity, we will not allow you to return to your hostel now as you think, but will force you to savor the food with the slaves of the emperor in a certain cheap inn."

20. To them I answered nothing because of a boundless pain within my heart; but I did what they had ordered, considering dishonorable a table where precedence is given to a Bulgarian messenger over not me, that is, Bishop Liudprand, but over one of your messengers. But the holy emperor alleviated my pain with a great gift, sending me from his most refined foods a fat goat, one of which he himself had eaten, totally overloaded with garlic, onion, leeks, drowned in fish sauce, which I wish could appear on your own table, my lords, so that, whatever delectables you did not believe fitting for a holy emperor, at least, after having seen these ones, you might believe it.

21. When eight days had passed, once the Bulgarians had gone, thinking I would esteem his table highly, he invited me, still quite sick, to eat with him in the same place. The patriarch was there, along with many bishops, in whose presence he proposed to me many issues concerning the Holy Scriptures, which I elegantly explained with the Holy Spirit inspiring me.⁴⁵ And suddenly, so as to make a joke of you, he asked what councils we accept. When I answered the Niccan, Chalcedonian, Ephesian, Antiochene, Carthaginian, Ankaran, and Constantinopolitan, he said, "Ha! Ha! He! You forgot to say the Saxon one! If you ask why that one is not in our books, I answer because it is primitive and it could not yet make it through to us."⁴⁶

45. Patriarch Polyeuktos (†970), whose long tenure was characterized by testy relations with the emperor Nicephoros.

46. The humor depends on historical knowledge of the antiquity of eastern Mediterranean Christianity compared with the more recent christianization of Sax-

22. To that I answered: "In whatever limb illness prevails, there it must be driven out by cauterization. All the heresies originated from you, and they flourished among you; they were stifled, they were killed by us, that is, the westerners. Roman and Pavian councils, although held often, we shall not count here. But it was a Roman cleric, later the universal pope Gregory, who is called *Dialogus* by you, who freed Euty chius, heretical patriarch of Constantinople, of his heresy.⁴⁷ That same Euty chius not only said, but even taught, proclaimed, and wrote, that at our resurrection we would assume flesh that is not real, as we have here on earth, but some-how imaginary; his book of error was incinerated by Gregory in an orthodox way. But Ennodius, the Pavian bishop,⁴⁸ was sent here, to Constantinople, by the Roman patriarch, on account of a certain other heresy, which, once he had suppressed it, he reshaped into an orthodox and catholic form. After it accepted news of holy baptism and of God, the Saxon nation was never stained with heresy so that a council was held there to correct error, since there was none. As you call the faith of the Saxons primitive, I confirm the very same thing. For among them the faith of Christ is always primitive and not old, where good works follow upon belief; here the faith is certainly not primitive, but old, where belief does not unite with good works but instead is disdained on account of its age, like some old garment. But I know for sure that a council was held in Saxony, wherein it was discussed and established that it is more honorable to fight with spears than with pens, and to accept death before turning one's back on the enemy; and your army is now learning all about it." In my heart I said, "And how pugnacious the Saxons are, may the outcome itself show!"

23. He ordered me to rush to him in the palace in the afternoon

any. The seven late antique "Ecumenical Councils" to which Liudprand referred had established the framework of Christian belief and practice. Under Otto numerous councils in Saxony focused on the Slavic missions.

47. Before becoming pope (760-4), Gregory the Great had been papal legate to Byzantium and had opposed Patriarch Euty chius's (758-2) teachings on the resurrection.

48. A competent aristocratic administrator and writer, who died in 521, and had been papal legate to Constantinople.

of that same day, though I was weak and beside myself to the point that women I met in the street who earlier with wondering minds called out, "Mana! Mana!" now, pitying my pitiful condition, beating their breasts with their fists, would say, "Ταρνευέ και τολάα τρωπέ!"⁴⁹ May what I prayed for, with my hands outstretched to the heavens, both for Nicephoros as he approached, and for you, who were absent, come true! Still I want you to believe me that he induced me to no small laughter, sitting as he was, quite tiny on a quite big, impatient, and unbridled horse. My mind pictured to itself that kind of doll your Slavs tie onto the young horse they send out unbridled to follow the lead of its mother.

24. Once these things had been done, I was led to the aforementioned hated house, to my fellow citizens and roommates, by now five lions, where I was granted conversation with no one except my people for over three weeks. Because of this, the notion that Nicephoros wanted never to send me home formed in my mind, and measureless sadness piled illness on illness in me, so that I would have died if the Mother of God had not obtained reprieve through her prayers from her Creator and Son, which was revealed to me by a vision, not an imaginary one but a real one.

25. During these three weeks Nicephoros held a *metastasis*, or prolonged stay, outside Constantinople at a place called *Eis πρύγυς*, or "At the Springs,"⁵⁰ and he ordered me to come there. And though I was so sick that not just standing but even mere sitting seemed a heavy burden to me, he required me to stand before him with my head uncovered, which was entirely wrong for my bad health. And he said: "The messengers of your King Otto, who preceded you last year, promised me with an oath—and the documents of the oath-taking are available here—that he would never scandalize our empire in any regard. Do you want a greater scandal than that he calls himself emperor, and usurps for himself the *themes* of our em-

49. "Wiserable and unhappy man!" The earlier utterance is obscure; it may mean, "O my mother;" but clearly was intended to convey admiration for the bishop's physical appearance.

50. Across the Golden Horn from the Great Palace.

pire;⁵¹ Both cannot be tolerated, and, if both are unsupportable, this is not tolerable, indeed impossible even to hear about: that is, that he names himself emperor. But if you confirm the same oaths that your predecessors did, the majesty of our empire will quickly send you home prosperous and rich." He did not say this because he hoped that you would observe the terms, if my stupidity had accepted them, but he wanted to have in his hands something he could show in future times to his own credit and our dishonor.

26. To which I replied: "Recently my most holy lord, because he is very wise and full of the Spirit of God, foreseeing what you assert, lest I should cross the boundaries which he established for me, wrote out an ἐντόλμα, or document of instruction, which he even marked with his own seal, lest I should do differently.⁵² You know, my august lord, in what a spirit of trust I say this—let the ἐντόλμα be brought into our midst, and whatever it instructs I will confirm to you by an oath. If these aforementioned messengers promised, swore, undersigned things exceeding the orders of my lord, it is as Plato said, 'checking the facts rests on the chooser, God is beyond blame.'⁵³

27. Once these things were finished, he came to the subject of the most noble princes, the Capuan and Beneventan, whom he named slaves and on account of whom a deep-seated pain wracks him. "Your lord," he said, "accepted under his tutelage my slaves; if he does not send them back and restore them to their original slavery, our friendship will fall away. They themselves petition to be received into our empire; but our empire rejects them so that

51. Byzantine military/administrative districts were called *themis* after the seventh century. The *themis* in question, Langobardia (now Apulia) and Sicilia (now Calabria), were creations of the late 800s (see Loud, "Southern Italy," 624). In 967 Otto's Venetian intermediaries and Nicephoros's envoys had met in the southern Balkans; see below, chapter 31.

52. Evidently Otto's prior Venetian messenger had promised more than Otto intended to deliver. The use of letters of instruction like Liudprand's here had begun under the Carolingians; see D. Queller, *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 123–25.

53. *Republic* 10.617c.

they may learn and experience how dangerous it is for slaves to elude masters, to flee slavery. And it is more proper for your lord to hand them over as a friend than for him to send them to me against his will. They will plainly learn, if life lasts, what it means to trick a master, what it is to desert slavery; and, as I believe, they are even now feeling what I am talking about, with our troops who are beyond the sea executing the order."

28. He did not permit me to reply to these words, but, though I was desirous of leaving, he ordered me to return to his table. There his father sat down, a man, it seemed to me, born a hundred and fifty years before. In their praises, or rather venting, the Greeks sang out, asking God to multiply his years, just as his sons. From this we can discern how ignorant the Greeks are, how enamored of their glory, what adulators, how greedy. They wish upon an old man, indeed a walking corpse, what they certainly know nature itself will not allow; and the walking corpse rejoices that these things are wished upon him which, he knows, God would not do, and which would not be good for him, but bad, even if God did do them. Why, I ask, did they call out at Nicephoros to rejoice in the titles "peaceful" and "morning star"? Believe me, it is not praise, but insult, to call an impotent man virile, an ignorant man wise, a short man great, a black man white, a sinner saintly. And whoever enjoys being acclaimed more for others' deeds than for his own is most like those birds whose vision the night illuminates and the day blinds.

29. But let us return to the matter at hand. At this dinner he ordered to be read aloud the homily of the blessed John Chrysostom on the Acts of the Apostles, something he had not done before.⁵⁴ After the end of this reading, when I asked for license to return to you, nodding with his head that it would be done, he ordered me to be taken back by my persecutor to my fellow citizens and roommates, the lions. When this was done, I was not again received by

54. St. John Chrysostom (†407), "the golden-mouthed," was one of the most prolific late antique theologians, one of the Greek Church Fathers.

him until the thirteenth day before the calends of August, but I was carefully guarded lest I might benefit from the speech of anyone who could tell me of his deeds. Meanwhile he ordered Grinnizo, Adalbert's messenger, to come to him, whom he ordered to return with his naval expedition.⁵⁵ There were twenty-four warships,⁵⁶ two ships of Russians,⁵⁷ two Gallic ships; I do not know if he sent more that I did not see. The strength of your soldiers, my lords, august emperors, does not need to be encouraged by the impotence of enemies, which it has often proved against those peoples, even the least of which, and the ones weakest by comparison with the others, cast the Greek power down and made it tributary: for just as I would not frighten you if I spoke of the Greeks as very strong people, similar to Alexander of Macedon, so I will not egg you on if I tell of their impotence, which is very real. I want you to believe me—and I know you will believe me—that forty of your men could kill off all that army of theirs, if a moat and walls did not prevent it. As I see it, he placed at the head of his army a sort of man—I called him “sort of man” since he ceased to be male and did not become a woman—to insult you.⁵⁸ Adalbert informed Nicephoros that he had eight thousand armored men with whom, and with the Greek army helping, he said he would put you to flight or overwhelm you; and he asked your imitator to send him money with which he would induce them to fight more eagerly.

30. But now, my lords, “see the snares of the Greeks and learn all of them from this one crime.”⁵⁹ Nicephoros gave to that slave, to whom he entrusted the mustering and leadership of the army, a

55. To create difficulties for Otto, Nicephoros kept diplomatic ties with Berengar's son Adalbert, a focus of anti-Saxon sentiment in Italy.

56. Medieval seacraft were flexible, and these *skandina* could serve multiple purposes (e.g., as transport vessels). They were oar-powered.

57. Probably the Varangian guard, elite mercenaries recruited in the Scandinavian settlements on Russia's rivers.

58. Eunuchs were much used in Byzantine administration because of their inability to form biological families, and thus because of their presumed greater loyalty to the emperors.

59. Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.65–66.

quite large sum of money for this reason: so that, if Adalbert came to him with seven thousand armored men and more, as he had announced, then he should distribute that gift to them, and Cona, his brother, should attack you with his own and the Greek army, while Adalbert should be carefully guarded at Bari until his brother returned, having obtained victory; but Nicephoros also ordered that if, when Adalbert arrived, he did not lead that many thousand men, then he should be seized, subdued, and handed over to you when you arrived there, and, on top of that, the money which was supposed to go to Adalbert should be given into your hands.⁶⁰ O great warrior! O loyal man! He seeks to harm the one for whom he prepares a defender, and he prepares a defender for the one he desires to destroy! To neither is he loyal, to both disloyal; he does what he did not need to do, he needs to do what he did not do. But let that be: he did what suits the Greeks! Let us return to our subject.

31. On the fourteenth day before the calends of August, with me looking on from that hated house, he sent off that hodge-podge naval force. On the thirteenth, a day when the lighthearted Greeks celebrate the ascension of the prophet Elijah to the heavens with stage performances, he ordered me to come to him.⁶¹ And he said to me: “Our empire plans to lead its troops against the Assyrians, not against those who worship Christ, as your lord does.⁶² Last year I wanted to do this very thing, but having heard that your lord wanted to invade territories of our empire, having let off the Assyrians, we turned the reins back toward him. Dominic the Venetian, his messenger, met us in Macedonia and, through much hard work and sweat, tricked us by swearing an oath stating that your lord never would plan such a thing, let alone do it, so that we returned home. Go back, therefore” (and when I heard that I quietly

60. Adalbert did not in fact show up with an army at Bari; Otto's troops chased him north through the Apennines in summer 969.

61. This feast occurred on July 20th.

62. The Byzantine army was on the offensive against its Islamic neighbors in eastern Anatolia in the 960s, and Antioch, the major city on the southern edge of the Taurus range, fell to Byzantium in 969. To call Byzantium's eastern neighbors Assyrians gave the war biblical overtones.

said, "Thank God"), "and tell your lord this-and-that; if he makes me his drinking companion, then come back."

32. "Let your most holy imperial authority order me," I said to him, "to fly back quickly to Italy, and be sure that my lord would carry out what your imperial authority wants, and I shall return to you, happy." With what thoughts I said this did not, alas, escape him. For, chucking, at the same time he nodded his head and, with me bowing to the ground and proceeding outside, he ordered me to stay outside and to come to another dinner reeking of garlic and onion, smeared with oil and fish sauce. That day, by great pleas I managed things so that my gift, which he had often disdained, he finally condescended to accept.

33. Thus with us sitting at a table that was long without width, covered over its width with a drape, but almost bare on its extremities, he made fun of the Franks—under which name he understood both the Latins and the Germanic peoples; and he asked me to explain in what place my city and bishopric lay and what name it enjoyed. To that I answered: "Cremona, a place quite close to the Po, king of Italian rivers."⁶³ And since your imperial authority prepares to send war ships there—let it be advantageous to me that I saw you, let it be useful to have met you—give that place peace, so that, through you, it may live on a bit longer, as it cannot resist you!" But that sly fellow recognized I said that εἰρωυκῶς,⁶⁴ with lowered eyes he promised he would do it and he swore to me on the power of his imperial rule that I would undergo nothing bad, but would, as I wished, quickly arrive at the port of Ancona with his war ships; and he swore it to me, having struck his breast with his fingers.

34. Notice how impiously he perjured himself. These things were done and said on the thirteenth day before the calends of August, on the second day of the week; from that day until the ninth I received no stipend from him, when there was such a shortage in Constantinople that with three gold coins I could not refresh my twenty-five followers and the four Greek guards at one dinner. On

the fourth day of that same week Nicephoros left Constantinople, heading for the Assyrians.

35. On the fifth day of the week his brother summoned me and began thus: "With the holy emperor having departed, I remained at home today to carry out his dispositions; now, if the desire of seeing the holy emperor grips you, and if you have anything that you have not yet said, state it plainly." To whom I said: "I have no reason either to see the holy emperor or to tell new things; I ask this one thing, according to the promise of the holy emperor: namely, that I may be conducted to the port of Ancona by war ships." Once he heard this, as the Greeks are always ready to swear on other people's heads,⁶⁵ he began to swear he would carry it out, swearing by the head of the emperor, by his own life, by that of his children—and may God protect them according to what truth he spoke! When I said, "When?" to him, "As soon as the emperor has left," he answered, "For the commander,⁶⁶ under whose hand is all power over ships when the holy emperor has left, will take care of you." I left him, happy, toyed-with by that hope.

36. After the next day, that is, Saturday, Nicephoros ordered me to hasten to Umbria, a place eighteen miles from Constantinople;⁶⁷ and he said: "I thought a somehow great and honest man had come here so that, having carried out my will in every regard, you would institute a perpetual alliance between your lord and me. And since you do not want to do this because of the hardness of your heart, just one thing I would obtain, which you can do with just cause, namely, arrange that your lord will bring no aid to the Capuan and Beneventan princes, my slaves, against whom I am preparing to fight. Let him who does not give his own property at least surrender ours. It is well known that their forefathers and ancestors bore tribute to our empire; but the army of our empire will work those two into doing the same thing in a short time."⁶⁸

65. Juvenal, *Satires* 6.16–17.

66. *Dromingarios* was the normal title of the main Byzantine naval commander.

67. The palace of Brinas lay on the Asian side of the Sea of Marmara.

68. The coastal duchies of south Italy, dependent on overseas commerce, exposed to Byzantine naval incursions, had deeper traditions of friendship with Byzantium

63. Virgil, *Georgics* 1.482.

64. "In an ironic way."

To which I replied: "In the first place, those princes are nobles and soldiers of my lord, who, if he detects your army rushing on them, will send them troops with whom to crush yours, and they will succeed in taking from you the two *themis* which you hold across the [Adriatic] sea."

Then, all agitated and puffed up like a toad: "Leave!" he said. "On myself, on my parents who made me such as I am,⁶⁹ I will arrange things so that your lord worries about something other than defending runaway slaves!"

37. And as I was going out, he ordered the interpreter to make me his table guest; and, having summoned the brother of those same princes and Byzantius of Bari, he ordered great insults to be vomited forth against you and the Latin and German peoples.⁷⁰ Truly, when I left that vile dinner, they secretly sent messengers after me and swore that they, who had been howling, had said all that not spontaneously but at the emperor's bidding and because of his threats.

But at that same dinner the same Nicephoros asked me whether you had preserves, that is, hunting grounds, or if, instead of preserves, you had wild donkeys or other animals.⁷¹ When I affirmed to him that you had preserves, and animals in the hunting grounds, with the exception of wild donkeys, he said: "I will lead you to our preserve, whose enormity, as well as the wild, that is woodland, donkeys, you will marvel to see." Thus I was led to a rather big

and had indeed paid tribute in the ninth and tenth centuries, although Gisulf I of Salerno (†977) never acknowledged Otto's sovereignty. But for the inland politics (like Capua and Benevento) tribute payment was untraditional.

69. Virgil, *Aeneid* 10:597.

70. Southern Italian rulers periodically visited Constantinople (Guaianar I of Salerno in 887, Landulf I of Benevento in 910), and Byzantium supported a group of expatriate aristocrats. Here Liudprand referred to Romuald, brother of Pandulf I of Capua-Benevento. Given the cooperative nature of rule in that principality, a brother had a credible claim to power, and might become a useful diplomatic lever for the Byzantines.

71. Since Roman times, well stocked hunting grounds and dominion over exotic animals contributed to the stature of the powerful. See P. Dutton, *Charlemagne's Mistake* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 43–68, for some early medieval context.

preserve, hilly, overgrown, unpleasant, and as I was riding with a hat on, when the chief of staff saw me from far off, he quickly sent me a directive through his son that it was unlucky for anyone wearing a hat instead of a hood to enter wherever the emperor was. To him I said: "Our women ride wearing tiaras and hoods; we men ride wearing hats. Nor is it proper for you to compel me to change my ancestral custom here, since we allow your ambassadors to keep your ancestral customs when they visit us. For with us they ride, walk, and sit at table long-sleeved, wrapped up, with brooches, long-haired, wearing a long tunic, and, something that seems especially unseemly to all of us, they alone kiss our emperor with uncovered heads," and I quietly added, "May God not permit them to do it any more!"⁷²

"Go back then!" he said.

38. When I was doing just this, there rushed toward me some of those creatures they call wild donkeys, mingled with some wild goats. But, I ask, what kind of wild donkeys? The very same kind as are tame at Cremona. The same color, the same shape, the same ears, equally vocal when they begin to bray, not uneven in size, the same speed, equally tasty for wolves. When I saw them I said to my Greek riding companion: "I never saw such creatures in Saxony." "If," he said, "your lord shall be kind to the holy emperor, he will give him many of these animals, and it will be no small glory for Otto, when he shall possess what none of his predecessors in lordship even saw." But believe me, my august lords, my brother and fellow lord bishop Anthony can give you some that are not inferior, as prove the markets that are held in Cremona, but those go about that are called domesticated, not wild donkeys, and are not bare-backed, but bearing loads.⁷³ But when the words written

72. As Liudprand had some familiarity with imperial etiquette, his *faux pas* cannot have been innocent (see *Reritio* 6:5). He knew that western elites considered their attire an indispensable part of their persona, a message about their identity, and expected this account to scandalize his readers.

73. Liudprand disapprovingly referred to Bishop Anthony of Brescia (†969) in *Reritio* 5:29.

above were announced to Nicephoros, he gave me license to go, having sent me two wild goats. The following day he, too, left for Syria.

39. But I ask you to note why he led the army against the Assyrians just now. The Greeks and the Saracens have books that they call ὁράσεις, or visions, of Daniel, and I call Sibylline books, in which it is found written how many years a certain emperor may live, what the nature of future times under his rule may be, whether peace or hostility shall prevail, whether things shall favor or hamper the Saracens.⁷⁴ In them you read that in Nicephoros's times the Assyrians shall not be able to resist the Greeks and he will live for seven years only: after his death an even worse emperor—though I doubt one could be found—and more of a weakling is supposed to arise, in whose reign the Assyrians are supposed to prevail, so that they are supposed to acquire everything by force, right up to Chalcedon,⁷⁵ which is not at all far from Constantinople. They both pay close attention to the schedules; for one and the same reason the Greeks, encouraged, now hound their enemies, and the Saracens, dispirited, do not resist, awaiting the time when they in turn shall hound their enemies and the Greeks again will not resist.

40. But a certain Hippolytus, a Sicilian bishop,⁷⁶ wrote the very same thing about both our bishop and our people—I now call “our” any people that is subject to your empire—and I wish it may turn true, what this man wrote about the present times! According

74. Apocalyptic literature based on the more future-looking sections of the book of Daniel was always popular in Byzantium, and in the 600s would have had special resonance for Macedonian loyalists seeking to undermine Nicephoros Phocas's reign: see P. J. Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 96–104, 120–21. Such prophetic literature was equally popular in the west. One such text was called “Prophecies of Daniel.” The *Sibylline Books* were a collection, much varied over time, of ancient, late antique, and later prophecies, with political and eschatological overtones, that enjoyed great popularity throughout the Middle Ages.

75. Across the Sea of Marmara from Constantinople and famous in Christian history for a council held there in 451.

76. Alexander, *Byzantine Apocalyptic Literature*, 100–101, argues that “Hippolytus” was an inference by Liudprand on the authorship of anonymous eschatological tracts.

to what I heard from men who have knowledge of these books, the rest of what he wrote has been fulfilled up to now. And we shall offer here one of his many sayings in the midst of this account. For he says that scripture shall now be fulfilled which says, λέων καὶ ὄκνυμος ὁμοδιώξουσιν ὄναρον in Greek, and in Latin, “The lion and the cub together shall exterminate the wild donkey.”⁷⁷ Its interpretation according to the Greeks: the lion, that is, the emperor of the Romans or Greeks, and the cub, that is, the king of the Franks, together in these current times shall exterminate the wild donkey, that is, the African king of the Saracens. This interpretation does not seem to me true since the lion and the cub, though unequal in size, still are one in nature, species, and habits; and, as my knowledge suggests to me, if the lion should be the emperor of the Greeks, it would not be likely that the cub would be the king of the Franks. Although both may be men, just as both the lion and the cub are animals, nevertheless they are as distant in customs, I do not say as one species is from another, but as tangible things are from intangible ones. The cub is removed from the lion in nothing but age; the same shape, the same ferocity, the same roar. The king of the Greeks is long-haired, tunic-wearing, long-sleeved, hooded, lying, fraudulent, merciless, fox-like, haughty, falsely humble, cheap, greedy, eating garlic, onions, and leeks, drinking bath-water; by contrast the king of the Franks is nicely shorn, in attire that differs from women's clothing, hat-wearing, truthful, guileless, quite merciful when appropriate, strict when necessary, always truly humble, never cheap, not a consumer of garlic, onions, and leeks so that he might thereby spare animals and accumulate money, having sold them instead of eating them. You heard the difference: do not accept this interpretation, for either it is about the future or it is not true. For it is impossible that Nicephoros, as their lies assert, might be the lion, and Otto the cub, who together exterminate everything.

77. In Byzantine apocalyptic writings, the wild donkey was associated with Arabia and Islam: see W. Brandes, “Liudprand von Cremona und ein bisher unbeachteter West-Östliche Korrespondenz über die Bedeutung des Jahres 1000,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 93 (2000): 447.

For the Parthian shall drink from the Arar River in exile, or Germany of the Tigris,⁷⁸ and both shall wander across the other's borders before Nicephoros and Otto come together in an alliance and unite by treaty.

41. You heard the interpretation of the Greeks; now listen to that of Liudprand the Cremonese bishop. I say—and I do not only say, but I assert—if that scripture is to be fulfilled in the current times, the lion and the cub, father and son, Otto and Otto, unequal in nothing, distant from each other in age alone, together in this present time shall exterminate the wild donkey; that is, the woodland donkey Nicephoros, who may fittingly be compared to a woodland donkey on account of his empty and mindless vainglory and the incestuous marriage with his mistress and co-godparent.⁷⁹ If this wild donkey is not now exterminated by our lion and cub, Otto and Otto, the father, that is, and the son, the august emperors of the Romans, what Hippolytus wrote will not prove true. The interpretation of the Greeks, outlined above, is to be discarded. But, O good Jesus, eternal God, Word of the Father, who spoke to us unworthy ones not by a voice, but by inspiration, may you will no other interpretation than mine to be accurate for this prophecy. Order that this lion and this cub exterminate and humiliate this wild donkey in his body, so that, returning to his place and subjected to his lords, the emperors Basil and Constantine, his soul may be saved on the day of the Lord.

42. Yet the astronomers pronounce this same outcome about you and Nicephoros. It is a thing I call astounding. When I talked it over with a certain astronomer, who accurately described your

78. Virgil, *Bucolics* 1.61–62. Such thirsty migrations are deemed most unlikely.

79. Theophano (fl. 976) was the widow of Romanos II whom Nicephoros married in 963, shortly after attaining power. She fostered his fall, perhaps imagining that the pious John Tsimiskes would marry her. But her second marriage had incurred ecclesiastical disfavor, and she was banished. Nicephoros, whose career flourished under Romanos II, was godfather to Theophano's children and as such a member of her family; debarred by canon law from marrying her. This is why Liudprand called the liaison adulterous (see 52, below) and incestuous (here), and made fun of the relationship, especially Theophano's position of authority over her second husband, by calling her "mistress" (*domina*) of her husband.

appearance and customs, my august lords, and those of your august peer, he also outlined all my past as if it were present.⁸⁰ Nor did he omit anything regarding my friends or enemies, about whom my mind suggested to me that I ask, whose condition, appearance, and habits he did not describe. He predicted for my future every calamity that later struck me during this trip. But let everything he said be a lie; I ask that only one thing be true, namely, what he predicted you would do to Nicephoros! If only it would be, if only it could be! Then I would consider the harm that has happened to me as nothing.

43. The same Hippolytus also writes that not the Greeks, but the Franks shall crush the Saracens. Three years ago the Saracens, encouraged by this reading, prepared war against Manuel the patrician, nephew of Nicephoros, in the Sicilian sea near Scylla and Charbdis.⁸¹ When they had squelched his numberless troops, they captured him and hanged him with his head severed. When they captured his companion of equal rank, who was of the neutered gender, they did not deign to kill him, but they sold him, broken and worn by his long captivity, for such a price that no one of sound mind would possibly ever pay it for that type of person.

Nor was it with dampened spirits that a little later they rushed, emboldened by this same reading, against the commander Exaconta; when they turned him to flight, they mangled his troops in every way.

44. But there is something else that propels Nicephoros to lead troops against the Assyrians now. For at the present time, with God ordaining it, famine consumes every region of the Argives⁸² so that a gold coin could not buy two Pavian measures of grain, and this in places where abundance usually reigns. An infestation of mice augmented this scourge, but Nicephoros further exacer-

80. Liudprand's secret knew not just about Otto I and Adalheid, but also about their heir Otto II, who had been crowned co-emperor on Christmas Day 967, aged 12.

81. The Straits of Messina. The debacle Liudprand describes took place in 964. A Byzantine expedition to bolster the last Sicilian strongholds against the Arabs was routed on land and at sea.

82. An old-fashioned, classicizing way of naming the Greeks, or Byzantines.

bared it because at harvest time, with the landowners complaining, he amassed crops from every land, having paid a tiny price. When he did the same thing near Mesopotamia, where an abundance of crops grew in the absence of mice, he could have equaled the multitude of sand grains in the sea with the abundance of the harvest he stockpiled.⁸³ Therefore, when famine raged horribly everywhere, through his mean deal, with the pretext of war he gathered to himself a militia of eighty thousand mortal men, to whom throughout a whole month he sold for two gold coins what he had bought for one. These, my lord, are the things that drove Nicephoros to lead troops against the Assyrians now. But what kind, I ask, of troops? Truly, I answer, not men but hominids, whose mouth is as foul as "their right hand is cold in war."⁸⁴ Nicephoros did not mind their quality, but only their quantity; and too late will he regret just how dangerous that miscalculation shall prove for him, when they, unwarlike but encouraged by their numbers, shall be crushed by a few of our troops, knowledgeable in war, indeed, thirsting for it.

45. While you besieged Bari, a mere three hundred Hungarians surrounded five hundred Greeks near Thessalonica and led them off captive to Hungary.⁸⁵ That exploit, since it worked so successfully, drove two hundred Hungarians to do the same in Macedonia, not far from Constantinople; since they imprudently returned on a narrow path, forty of them were captured whom now Nicephoros, having removed them from captivity and dressed them in most precious clothes, trained as protectors and defenders of his person, leading them with him against the Assyrians. You can truly discern what sort of army is his from this, since those who outclass the others are Venetians and Amalfitans.⁸⁶

83. The Mesopotamian *theme* defined the easternmost Byzantine-held territory in Anatolia, whence very successful campaigns against the Caliphate's Syrian provinces were launched in 968–69.

84. Virgili, *Annali* 11.338–39.

85. Otto's ability to stem Hungarian raids into his realm is contrasted here with Hungarian successes in the southern Balkans, subject to Byzantium.

86. Venice and Amalfi were ports in Italy whose warm relations with Byzantium afforded them commercial advantages; but merchants were not expected to make good soldiers.

46. Now, forgetting all these things, consider what happened to me. On the sixth day before the calends of August, outside of Constantinople at Umbrias I received permission from Nicephoros to return to you. And when I reached Constantinople, the eunuch Christopher the patrician, who managed affairs in Nicephoros's place, informed me that I could not leave then as the Saracens had taken over the sea and the Hungarians the land: it remained for me to wait until they retreated. But both, alas, were lies! Then guards were posted who forbade me and my party to exit from the house. Seizing the paupers of Latin tongue who came to me for the favor of alms, they beat them and took them into custody; they did not allow my grecologue, that is, a man versed in the Greek tongue, to go out, not even to buy supplies, but only the cook, ignorant of the Greek tongue, who conversed as a buyer with the seller not by signs of signs, but with movements of the fingers or the head, and who bought as much food with four coins as the grecologue with one.

And when one of my friends would send spices, breads, wine, and apples, the guards sent the messengers away overwhelmed by slaps, having spilled everything onto the ground. And unless divine mercy had set a table for me against those who torment me, that form of death they had prepared for me would have been accepted; but the One who permitted my temptation mercifully gave me endurance. This kind of danger vexed me in Constantinople from the second day before the nones of June to the sixth before the nones of October, that is, for one hundred and twenty days.

47. Truly, so as to increase my calamities, on the feast of the Assumption of the holy Mother of God and Virgin Mary⁸⁷ there arrived, bearing no good omens for me, the messengers of the apostolic and universal lord Pope John, with letters through which they prayed Nicephoros, the emperor of the Greeks, to form kinship and a firm alliance with his beloved spiritual son Otto the august emperor of the Romans. I, who so often seem wordy and

87. August 15th. Throughout the *Embassy* Liudprand employed the Christian high feasts to anchor the chronology: Pentecost, the Apostles' feast, the Assumption, and St. John's feast day gave the reader a sense of the length of time elapsing between events.

long-winded on other topics, seem as dumb as a fish on the subject of how this phrasing, these titles, sinful and rash according to the Greeks, did not cause the death of their bearer, why they did not choke him before he read them out. The Greeks scolded the sea; even more they cursed its calm surface, wondering why it could bear this sin, why the waves had not opened up and swallowed the ship. "It did not trouble him to refer in writing to the emperor," they said, "to the only universal, august, great emperor of the Romans, Nicephoros, by the title 'of the Greeks,' and to some poor barbarian fellow by the title 'of the Romans!' O heavens! O earth! O sea!"⁸⁸ But what," they said, "shall we do to these wicked criminal men? They are poor, and, if we kill them, we shall pollute our hands with plebeian blood; they are ragged, they are slaves, they are peasants, and, if we whip them, we will dishonor not them but ourselves, since they are unworthy of the golden Roman whip and of any such torments. O, if only one were a bishop, the other a margrave! After the string of flexible branches, after the plucking of their hair or beards, sown up into leather sacks they could be sunk in the sea. But let them be spared," they said, "and until the most holy emperor of the Romans, Nicephoros, learns of these evils, let them waste away under heavy guard."

48. When I learned all this, I considered them happy because they were poor men, and myself unhappy because rich. When I was at home, my own will excused me for my poverty, but once I was in Constantinople, fear itself said I had the wealth of Croesus.⁸⁹ Always poverty had seemed burdensome to me; now it seemed light, now accepted, now something to be embraced—to be embraced because it did not allow its adepts to be destroyed, its subjects to be whipped; and since this poverty defends its own only at Constantinople, may it be beloved there alone.⁹⁰

49. Therefore, with the apostolic messengers hauled off to pris-

88. Terence, *Adlphoe* 790.

89. A proverbially rich king of ancient Lydia.

90. Tenth-century Byzantine politics included disagreements on the "poor church," or whether clerics should have access to economic privileges and wealth.

on, that official letter was sent to Nicephoros in Mesopotamia, whence the one who bore the message of reply did not return until two days before the ides of September. On the day when he returned he avoided me; after two days, that is, on the eighteenth day before the calends of October, by pleas and gifts I arranged to worship the life- and health-giving wood;⁹¹ there, in such a great tumult of worshipers, hidden from my guardians, certain people approached me who turned my sad mind to glee with furtive conversations.⁹²

50. On the fifteenth day before the calends of October, I was called, halfway between life and death, to the palace. And when I came into the presence of the eunuch Christopher the patrician, he rose to greet me with three others, welcoming me kindly. The beginning of their report went like this:

"The pallor around your mouth, the thinness in all your body,⁹³ the shaggy hair, the beard, unkempt by your standards, make clear that immense distress is in your heart, because the time for your return to your lord has been postponed. Truly, we pray you not to grow angry with the holy emperor or with us: we will now relate the cause of your delay. The Roman pope—if indeed he should be called pope, who gave communion and celebrated services with the apostate, adulterous, sacrilegious son of Alberic⁹⁴—sent a letter to our most holy emperor, which was worthy of himself but unworthy of the recipient, calling the emperor 'of the Greeks' and

91. A relic of the holy cross, perhaps one in the Great Palace of the emperors or in Hagia Sophia. The Exaltation of the Cross was celebrated on September 14th.

92. Perhaps these were Macedonian loyalists, displeased with Nicephoros's usurpation, with whom Liudprand had formed contacts during his earlier Constantinopolitan visits. Local friendships are also mentioned in chapters 29 and 46. See M. Linzel, *Studien über Liudprand von Cremona* (Berlin: Verlag Dr. Emil Ebering, 1933), 48.

93. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 2.775.

94. Alberic (†954) was a member of the most powerful Roman clan and was one of the "tyrants" whom Liudprand chastised in chapter 5. Alberic's son Octavian (†964) became Pope John XII in 955. John XIII (†972) sent the letters in question; he was a close ally of Otto I, and had crowned Otto II emperor nine months earlier. His ecclesiastical career before his pontificate required acknowledgement of the sometimes scandalous John XII.

not 'of the Romans'; it is not ἀφ' ἑσθ' ἡμῶν⁹⁵ that it was done with your lord's advice."

51. "What words," I said to myself, "do I hear? Let me die: it is beyond doubt I will now take the short road to the guardhouse!" "But listen," they said, "we know you want to say the pope is the most stupid of all men; say it, and we, too, profess it." But I said, "I will not utter it." "Then listen: the empty-headed and bungling pope is ignorant of the fact that holy Constantine translated the imperial symbols here, and brought the entire senate and the whole Roman knighthood, and left at Rome only lowly dependents, that is, fishers, food-peddlers, bird-hunters, bastards, plebeians, and slaves. Never would the pope write such things unless with the instigation of your king; and how dangerous it was for both of them, unless they take it all back, the coming times will prove."

"But the pope," I said, "noble in his simplicity, thought that to write such a thing was praise for the emperor, not insult! We certainly know Constantine the Roman emperor came here with the Roman knighthood and founded this city in his own name; but since you have changed the language, customs, and dress, the most holy pope thought the name of the Romans would similarly displease you, as does their costume. If life abides with him, he will make this clear in future letters, whose opening address will be this: 'John the Roman pope to Nicephoros, Constantine, and Basil, the great and august emperors of the Romans.'" Why I said this, I ask that you note well.

52. Nicephoros rose to the pinnacle of power by perjury and adultery. And since the well-being of all Christians falls under the responsibility of the Roman pope, let the lord pope send a letter much like a tomb to Nicephoros, for tombs are all white outside⁹⁶ but inside are filled with the bones of the dead. Within, the letter should scold him about the perjury and adultery through which he attained lordship over his lords; it should invite him to a council

95. "Uncertain."

96. *Mf* 23.27.

and threaten anathema if he were not to come. If the opening address is not as I suggested, it would never be delivered to him.

53. Now let us return to our subject. When the aforementioned princes heard my promise about the opening address, thinking it contained no trickery, they said: "We give you thanks, O bishop; it is proper for your mediating wisdom to intercede in these important matters. You alone among the Franks do we like, but when they have rectified their depravities, with you exhorting them, we shall like the rest of them, too, and when you come to us again you shall not leave without gifts." Quietly I said, "Nicephoros will give me a golden crown and scepter if I ever come here again!"

"But tell us," they said, "does your lord wish to establish an alliance by marriage with the most holy emperor?" "When I came here, he wanted to," I said; "but as he has not received any letters, though I have been tarrying here a long time, he thinks me imprisoned and fettered by you σφάλλμα, that is, wrongly; now his whole spirit seethes, as she-ions do when their cuts are stolen,⁹⁷ and until he shall have taken revenge with righteous harshness, he both abhors the marriage and boils over with rage against you."

"If he shall try anything," they said, "neither Italy, we declare, nor even impoverished, furry, that is to say, leather-clad Saxony, where he was born, shall afford him refuge;"⁹⁸ through our money, which gives us power, we shall induce all the nations to attack him and we shall shatter him like some ceramic, that is, a pottery vase that cannot be fixed once broken. And since we think you have bought certain cloaks for his splendor, we decree that they be brought forth here; the ones that are suited to you shall be marked with a lead seal and left to you; and those which instead are κοινώμενα, that is, articles forbidden to all nations except us Romans, shall be seized, once their price has been reimbursed!"

54. When this was done, they took from me five very precious purple robes, judging that you and all the Italians, Saxons, Franks,

97. *Hos* 13.7.8.

98. Liudprand stressed the "barbaric" attire of northern Europeans to contrast with the silks over which argument was about to erupt.

Bavarians, Swabians, indeed all the nations, are unworthy to go about decked out in cloth of that quality. But how unsuitable and how insulting it is that soft, effeminate, long-sleeved, tiara-wearing, hooded, lying, unsexed, idle people strut around in purple, while heroes, that is, strong men, who know war, full of faith and charity, in submission to God, full of virtues, do not! What is an insult, if that is not?⁹⁹

"But where," I said, "is the emperor's word of honor? Where the emperor's promise? For when I bade him farewell, I asked that he allow me to buy cloths at whatever price for the honor of the church,¹⁰⁰ and he said, 'Whichever ones and however many you want,' saying, *πολύτῳ καὶ ποσότῳ*, that is, 'quantity and quality.' He plainly did not make a distinction by saying, 'with these and those excepted.' His brother Leo, the chief of staff, is a witness; the interpreter Euodisius, John, and Romanos, are witnesses; and I myself am witness, who would have understood what the emperor said even if the interpreter had been absent."

"But those things are *κονυόμενα*, that is, forbidden," they said, "and if the emperor said what you claim he said, he could scarcely intend such cloths as you dream of; for we ought to outclass other nations in dress just as in wealth and wisdom, so that those who have a unique grace in their virtues may have also a unique beauty in their clothes."

55. "In what way can this attire," I said, "be considered unique, when in our countries cheap women and parasitic dependents use them?" "Whence," they said, "do they come to you?" "Through the Venetian and Amalfitan traders," I said, "who support their lives with our foodstuffs by bearing such cloth to us." "Well, they will not do it any longer," they said; "they will be closely scrutinized, and, if any one is found with this type of thing, he will pay the penalty, beaten with sticks, his hair shaved off."

99. Terence, *Andria* 237.

100. Though Liudprand uses the term "pallium" (see *Concerning King Otto*, chapter 22), he seems to mean a silk tapestry, a popular decoration in western churches, rather than clerical attire.

"In the time," I said, "of the emperor Constantine of blessed memory I came here, still a deacon, not a bishop, and not sent by an emperor or a king but by the margrave Berengar, and I bought many more, and more precious, cloths than these, which were neither scrutinized nor seen by the Greeks, nor marked with lead.¹⁰¹ Now that, with God granting it, I am a bishop and sent by the magnificent emperors Otto and Otto, father and son, I am so greatly disgraced that my cloaks are marked in the way of the Venetians' and those that seem of a certain price are confiscated even though they are being carried back for use in churches entrusted to me. Will you not tire of insulting me, indeed of insulting my lords, for whose sake I am insulted to the extent that I am kept under guard, that I am tormented with hunger and thirst, that I do not return to them but am detained here, until finally, on top of the affronts against them, you despoil me of my own goods? Confiscate only the ones that were bought; at least release those that were given as gifts by friends!"

"The emperor Constantine," they said, "a mild man, one who always stayed in the palace, made the nations friends of his by that kind of thing. Nicephoros instead is a *basileus*, a *ταχύχειρ* man, that is, one eager for combat;¹⁰² he avoids the palace like the plague, and he is called by us almost a lover of rivalry and an argumentative fellow; he is one who does not make the nations friendly to himself by paying them, but by terror and the sword he makes them subject to himself. And, so that you may recognize how highly we esteem your lords the kings, those cloths of this color that were given, and those that were bought, shall return to us in the same way."

56. Once these things had been said and done, they gave me a *χρυσοβόλον*, that is, a letter written and sealed in gold, to be brought to you; but to my mind it was not worthy of you. For they produced another letter sealed in silver and said: "We judge your pope unworthy to receive an imperial letter; the chief of staff,

101. He had come in 949, sent by Berengar just before King Lothar's death: see *Retribution* 6.

102. Literally, "quick-handed."

the emperor's brother, sends him a quite appropriate letter, not through his poor messengers, but through you, to the effect that he should recognize he is thoroughly ruined unless he recants."¹⁰³

57. When I received this letter, they dismissed me, saying farewell to me, giving me quite cheerful, quite loving kisses. But while I was withdrawing, they sent a message after me quite worthy of them, if not of me, to the effect that they would only furnish horses to me and my followers, but none for the baggage; so that, greatly troubled, as the situation required, I gave to my δαούστη, that is, my guide, property priced at fifty gold pieces.¹⁰⁴ And as I did not have anything with which I could repay Nicephoros for his evil deeds then and there, I wrote these verses on the wall of my hated house and on the wooden table:

Do not trust the word of the Argive; let it remain far from you,

O Latin,

To believe it, and remember not to meditate on their words!

If he can win thereby, in what a holy way does the Argive perjure himself!

With veined marble this lofty house lies open with high windows,

This waterless house, accessible only to its prisoner,

Welcoming the cold, nor repelling the rage of summer's heat;

From Italy Liudprand the prelate in the city of Cremona,

Having reached Constantinople for the love of peace,

Was shut in here for four summer months.

The emperor Otto descended on Bari,

Seeking by blood and fire together to subject those places to himself,

But the victor returned the Byzantine cities through my pleas.

Lying Greece promised him a daughter-in-law:

If only she had never been born! Neither would it pain me to have come,

Nor, O Nicephoros, would I have measured your spite,

103. Rather than John XIII's association with his predecessor (above, chapter 50), it was his creation of an archbishopric at Benevento, and the attendant subordination of Apulia's bishoprics to an archbishop whom Byzantium did not control, that disturbed the Byzantines. See chapter 62 below.

104. Perhaps to hire additional beasts of burden. Or perhaps property that Liudprand lost "on duty" and that he hoped to have reimbursed.

You who prohibit a stepdaughter to unite with the son of the master:
Now the day is imminent when, incited by harsh furies,
Let God not prevent it, Mars will rage through the whole globe,
And through your crime the peace everyone longed for shall fall
silent.¹⁰⁵

58. Having written these verses, six days before the nones of October, at the tenth hour, I departed with my guide by boat from that city once most opulent and flourishing, now starving, perjured, lying, fraudulent, rapacious, greedy, stingy, dinner-driven; and in forty-nine days by donkeyback-riding, by horseback-riding, by walking, fasting, thirsting, sighing, crying, moaning I came to Naupactis, which is a Nicopolitan city.¹⁰⁶ There, when my guide abandoned me, he commended me to two messengers who would lead me to Otranto¹⁰⁷ across the sea, having embarked me on two small ships. And since by the terms of the *entolhina*, or written instructions, they did not have the right to requisition supplies from the Greek princes, everywhere they were spurned, and we were not nourished by them, but they by us. How often did I mull over that Terentian verse within my head: "Those you send as defenders need a protector themselves."

59. Thus, having departed from Naupactis nine days before the calends of December, in two days I reached as far as the river Euenos, since my companions did not stay in the ships, which could not hold them, but followed along the shore.¹⁰⁸ Having been deposited at the Euenos river, we saw that Patras¹⁰⁹ lay on the other shore of the sea, eighteen miles distant. The site of an apostle's

105. Liudprand cites his contemporary Rather, bishop of Verona, Virgil, and Juvenal, in this lyric.

106. Naupactis lies on the northwestern rim of the Gulf of Corinth, in mainland Greece. Details on Liudprand's travels are in M. McCormick, *The Origins of the European Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 447, 462–64, 490–91, with maps on pp. 487, 532.

107. On Italy's Apulian coast, under Byzantine control.

108. The short Euenos River rises from the southern Pindus and discharges into the Gulf of Patras between Naupactis and Missolonghi.

109. An Ionian port in Peloponnesian Greece, traditionally regarded as the site of the martyrdom of the apostle Andrew; see chapters 51–65, "The Acts of Andrew," in

passion that we had visited and worshiped on the way to Constantinople, we now neglected to visit and worship—I confess my sin! The inexpressible desire to return to you and see you, my august lords, caused this; and if it had not been for this one thing, I think I would have suffered eternal death.

60. For a south wind strove against me, fool that I am, and churned up the sea with waves from their deepest abodes. And since it did this for consecutive days and nights, on the day before the calends of December (the very day of the passion, that is)¹¹⁰ I understood that this was happening to me on account of my crime. "Vexation alone will make you understand what you hear."¹¹¹ Hunger oppressed us powerfully; the inhabitants of the land were thinking of killing us so as to take away our things from us; lest we escape, the sea churned with waves. Then, turning to us, I said: "Saint Andrew the apostle, I am a servant of your fellow fisherman, fellow brother, and fellow apostle Simon Peter. I did not disdain the site of your passion nor turn from it out of haughtiness; a burning longing for a glimpse of the august ones, my love of the august ones, drove me to return home. If my sin moved you to indignation, let the worthiness of my august lords elicit your mercy. You do not have anything to grant your brother; instead, grant something to the august Ottos who love your brother by clinging to him who knows all. You know with how much labor and sweat, by how many vigils and expenses, they enriched, honored, exalted, and returned to its proper state the Roman church of your brother the apostle Peter, having torn it from the hands of the impious. If my deeds cause my downfall, let their merits free us; and do not cause sorrow in this circumstance, that is, in regard to me, whom they sent, to those Ottos whom your brother in faith and blood,

The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation, trans. J. K. Elliott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

110. St. Andrew's martyrdom was celebrated on November 30th.

111. Is 28:19. At the end of his text Liudprand turns to Jewish prophetic literature to enhance the dramatic impact of his woeful tale.

the apostle Peter, prince of the apostles, desires in other regards to rejoice and prosper."

61. This, my lords august emperors, in all truth is not adulation, nor do I now sew a pillow under my elbow,¹¹² it is true, I say. After two days, the sea was calmed by such tranquility, through your merits, that, when the sailors fled from us, we sailed ourselves to Leucada, that is, a hundred and forty miles, suffering no harm or difficulty except a little bit at the mouth of the river Acheloois where the wave of the sea beats back its swift current.¹¹³

62. Therefore, most potent august ones, how will you recompense the Lord for all these things by which he rewarded you through me? I will tell you how. This God wants, this he seeks; and, although he can do this without you, nevertheless in this case he wants there to be *hypurigos*, that is, assistants. For actually he gives that which is offered to him, and protects what he demands from us, so that he may crown what he achieves with it. I ask you to pay attention.

Since Nicephoros is a man impious toward all churches, out of that hatred which he feels abundantly towards you he ordered the Constantinopolitan patriarch to expand the Orantine church into an archbishopric, and to forbid the divine mysteries to be celebrated any longer after the Latin manner in all Apulia and Calabria,¹¹⁴ but only after the Greek. He says past popes were merchants who sold the Holy Spirit, by whom all things are given life and ruled, "who fills the earth and has knowledge of the voice,"¹¹⁵ who is coeternal and consubstantial with God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, without a beginning, without end, eternally true, whose price cannot be evaluated but who is acquired by the pure of heart

112. See Ezek 13:18.

113. The Acheloois flows from the Pindus into the Gulf of Patras near Missolonghi. Leucada (or Santa Maura) lies between Corfu and Cephalonia, close to Paxos, where Liudprand spent some time: see *Rehibition* 31.

114. Byzantine-ruled province in southwestern Italy where Greek was the prevalent spoken language, unlike Apulia. There is no Byzantine evidence for this unlikely provision.

115. Wis 1:7.

for as great a price as they can afford. Therefore Polyuktos, the Constantinopolitan patriarch, wrote a privilege for the Otrantine bishop, according to which, by his authority, that bishop should have the right to consecrate the bishops of Acerenza, Tursi, Gravina, Matera, Tricarico, all sees where it is manifest that consecration pertains to the apostolic lord.¹¹⁶

But why do I rehearse this, since the very Constantinopolitan church is rightly subject to our holy catholic and apostolic Roman church? We know, indeed we observe, that the Constantinopolitan bishop does not use the pallium unless with our holy father's permission.¹¹⁷ In fact, when that most impious Alberic, whom greed had filled, not drop-by-drop, but as a rushing torrent, usurped the Roman city to himself, and held the apostolic lord under lock and key as if he were his personal slave, the emperor Romanos established his son the eunuch Theophylact as patriarch,¹¹⁸ since the greed of Alberic was not concealed from him, having sent him to quite large gifts, he caused a letter to be sent in the pope's name to the patriarch Theophylact; by the authority of this letter first he, then his successors, used the pallium without the permission of the popes. Out of this disgraceful transaction the execrable custom arose that not only patriarchs, but even the bishops of all Greece use pallia. How wrong this is it is not the task of the critic to say.

My advice is that a holy council be held, and that Polyuktos be called to it. If he does not wish to come and correct his *sphalmata*, that is, his vices, as described above, according to the canons, let what the most holy canons decree be done to him.

116. The Adriatic port city of Otranto was more securely Byzantine than the inland towns mentioned here, and its bishop was more likely to advance Byzantine interests. In 968 Otto's creature John XIII had elevated Benevento to archiepiscopal status, giving it authority over Byzantine-controlled bishoprics in Apulia, and this was the Byzantine retaliation, inspired by Patriarch Polyuktos; see Loud, "Southern Italy," 630–33.

117. Eastern archbishops never had received their pallia (here the liturgical vestment) from Rome. See n. 100 above on the pallium.

118. Romanos I's 16-year-old son, long groomed for the post, became patriarch in 933. After his death in 956, and the end of his father's regime, he was denigrated as frivolous and irreverent.

In the meantime you, most potent august lords, should work at what you began. Execute things so that, if Nicephoros, whom we resolved to censure according to the canons, does not wish to obey us, let him hear from you, whose troops that mummy does not dare to face. That, I say, is what the apostles, our lords and fellow soldiers, want us to do. Rome ought not to be treated basely by the Greeks because the emperor Constantine left the place; rather, it should be all the more greatly worshiped, venerated, and adored because the apostles, the holy doctors Peter and Paul, went there. But let it suffice to me to have written about these things until, with God granting it through the prayers of the most holy apostles, I, who have been snatched from the hands of the Greeks, come to you; and then let it not be tiresome to say out loud what it is now annoying to write here. Now let us return to our subject.

63. Eight days before the ides of December we came to Leucada, where we were most inhumanely received and treated by the eunuch-bishop of that place, just as we were everywhere else by the others. In all of Greece I did not discover any hospitable bishops—and I speak the truth, I do not lie. They are rich, but they are poor: rich in gold coins filling a bulging chest with which one gambles; poor in servants or tools. They sit at bare, small tables, serving themselves ash-baked bread, and then not drinking, but sipping bath water in a tiny glass.¹¹⁹ They themselves do the selling and buying for the household; they open and close their own doors; they themselves are the table servants, the stable hands, the capons—ha! I had meant to write *cappons*, but truly the thing itself, which is true, compelled me to write the truth, even involuntarily. For we say that they are capons, that is, eunuchs, which is not canonical; and they are also *cappons*, that is, innkeepers, which is also against the canons—whose tough dinner is introduced by and concluded with lettuce, "lettuce of the sort that used to end the

119. Such parsimonious behavior would be particularly praiseworthy during the Advent fasting season, the very time of Liudbrand's visit to Corfu. Liudbrand objected to the temperature of the water, to him suitable for bathing but not drinking (see also chapter 40 above). On the temperature of drinking water, see P. Squariti, *Water and Society in Early Medieval Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 38–41.

dinners of our ancestors."¹²⁰ I would judge such paupers happy if they imitate the poverty of Christ in this; but a "holy hunger for gold"¹²¹ and a cold coin motivate them. Even so, may God spare them! I think they do this because their churches pay tribute. The Leucadan bishop swore to me that every year his church must pay Nicephoros a hundred gold coins, and the other churches more or less the same, according to their wealth. And how unjust *that* is the deeds of our most holy father Joseph demonstrate, he who permitted the land of the priests to be free from tribute although he subjected all Egypt to tribute to the pharaoh during a time of famine.¹²²

64. Thus, nineteen days before the calends of January, leaving Leucada and sailing ourselves—since, as we wrote above, the sailors had fled—fifteen days before the kalends we reached Corfu. There, before our disembarkation from the ship a certain officer ran toward us named Michael Chersonitis, that is, from the place called Cherson,¹²³ a man with a white head, a cheery face, good with words, always jolly with laughter but, as became clear later, a devil in disposition.¹²⁴ God actually showed me this by clues that would have been obvious if my mind had been able to understand them. For, as soon as he gave me the kiss of peace, a sentiment he did not bear in his heart, the whole island of Corfu, which is large, shook; nor just this once, but it quaked through and through three times that same day.¹²⁵ After four days, that is, on the eleventh before the calends of January, while, seated at table, the man who was lifting his heel against me was eating bread,¹²⁶ the sun, ashamed of

120. Martial, *Epigrams* 13:14.

121. Gn 47:22.

122. In the Crimea.

123. For attempts at a "who's who" for this section see R. Morris, "'O Michaels Michaelēs': A Problem of Identification in Liudprand's *Legatio*," *Byzantion* 51 (1981): 248–54. This Michael seems to have been the governor of the Byzantine theme of Cephalonia.

124. No one else seems to have recorded this earthquake; see E. Guidoboni, *Catalogue of Ancient Earthquakes in the Mediterranean Area Up To the 10th Century* (Rome: Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica, 1994), 398–401.

126. Ps 41:7; Augustine, *City of God* 17:18.

a crime so unworthy of its light, hid its rays, underwent an eclipse, and terrified that Michael, but still did not change him.¹²⁷

65. So I will say what I did for him for the sake of friendship and what I received from him by way of recompense. When I was going to Constantinople, I gave his son that most precious shield of yours, gilt and embossed with marvelous craft, which you, my august lords, gave me with other gifts so that I could give it to my Greek friends; now, returning from Constantinople, I gave a most precious cloak to the father. For all of these things he gave thanks as follows: Nicephoros had written that, at whatever hour I should reach him, he should transport me without delay on a war ship to Leo the imperial wardrobe-keeper; this he did not do, but instead he kept me for twenty days, and not at his but at my own expense, until a messenger came from the aforesaid chamberlain Leo, who chastised him because he detained me. And so, when he could no longer bear my pleas, my laments, and sighs, he gave up and he entrusted me to a man so unjust and wicked that he would not even allow me to buy supplies until he had received from me a fine cauldron worth a pound of silver; and when after twenty days, I departed from there, that same custodian to whom I had given the cauldron ordered the ship's captain to allow me to die of hunger, after having cast me off behind the *acrotiria*, that is, a certain promontory. He did this because he turned over my cloaks in case I had hidden any purple ones, and though he wanted to receive one of them, he did not get it.

O Michaels, Michaels! Where did I ever meet such men as you, all at the same time? My Constantinopolitan guard Michael commended me to his rival Michael, from bad to worst, from worst man to unjust one. My guide was called Michael, too, a straightforward man whose holy simplicity harmed me almost as much as these ones' perversity. But from these puny Michaels I ran into you,

127. An eclipse was visible throughout Europe on December 22, 968; see D. Shove, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets, AD 1–1000* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell Press, 1984), 234–36. It was supposed to have terrified an Otronian army in Calabria; Liudprand may have been gently teasing Otto by evoking it.

great Michael, half-hermit, half-monk.¹²⁸ I say, and I say it truly: the bath you assiduously drink for the love of John the Forerunner will not aid you.¹²⁹ Those who falsely seek God never deserve to find . . .

128. Perhaps St. Michael Maleinos, uncle of Nicephoros Phocas and idiotyhythmic monk.

129. Drinking tepid water, rather than wine, might win the approval of John the Baptist, considered the ideal ascetic in monastic literature.

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