MEDIEVAL AMALFI and its DIASPORA

800–1250

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PATRICIA SKINNER

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In memory of Irene Skinner (1930–2010)

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Preface

The sun in Amalfi takes its time to rise, gradually lifting over the mountainous slopes to the east of the city and creeping down from the rooftops to slowly bathe the western side of its central piazza with light. In the morning, local people go about their business, sit in the cafes on that sunlit side of the square, take a coffee, swap gossip, and observe the pedestrian and wheeled traffic crowding the narrow, snaking central street, the cars and vans haphazardly controlled in their single-lane flow by a traffic light system at top and bottom. The interval between light changes often allows for protracted conversation, turning off engines, and getting out for a quick cigarette before moving on. Midday sees the rush to finish business and get home during the heat of the afternoon, whilst the many tour coaches visiting the city pour out their visitors for guided walks up and down the street (perhaps taking in the last remaining working paper mill, a reminder of a product for which the city was famous in the later Middle Ages) and into the city's magnificent cathedral and cloister before adjourning for lunch. By late afternoon a second wave of tourists might arrive, and the shadows lengthen from west to east. The shade envelops the morning cafes, and the sun worshippers and people watchers instead begin to flock like so many birds onto the cathedral steps, a natural raked theatre from which the evening *volta* may be conveniently observed and commented on. The heat in spring and autumn often builds clouds and might set off sudden and dramatic rain showers, sending all scurrying for shelter and emptying the central space. Listen carefully and you will hear the torrent of water rushing down under the central street, built over the stream which originally split Amalfi into two halves. The evening walk—whether in town or along the promenades along the seafront to west and east—concludes with shopping and a retreat home to enjoy dinner. The city goes to bed early, and sleeps late, waiting for the sun to arrive again the next morning.

Observing this daily rhythm, it is as if the city is held in a timeless routine dating back centuries. Follow the myriad alleys and steps running upwards at right angles off the main street, and the medieval city soon reveals itself, with archways held up by stout, reused stone pillars, and the unmistakable aroma of covered tunnels and damp spaces, which the sun never has the chance to dry out, between the close-packed houses. Climb further and the rooftops begin to spread out below, and pathways lead to other settlements along the coast. Walk east from Amalfi to neighbouring Atrani, avoiding the modern highway, and it is easy to see why the packhorse and the donkey are still familiar sights in this region. Walk west and the challenging climb has anyone without 'gambi amalfitani [Amalfitan legs]' gasping for breath at the steepness of the hill up which local inhabitants march with a purpose and level of fitness honed by the necessity of negotiating the daily walk down and back, whether to the town or to their small terraced vineyards and lemon groves, interspersed with grazing grounds for sheep and goats.

It is hard to imagine that Amalfi was ever anything other than a small, parochial place, cut off by those mountains from the communications routes of Roman and medieval Italy, and literally bypassed by the ancient road system. Yet in the ninth and tenth centuries, Amalfi was at the centre of a duchy encompassing most of the southern half of the peninsula on which it stands, and lay at the heart of one of the most extended and cosmopolitan merchant networks in Europe. Its men, we are told, travelled to Spain, North Africa, Egypt, the Holy Land, the Byzantine empire, and possibly beyond. Amalfi gained a reputation among contemporaries as a centre of the luxury goods trade, with repeated references throughout the tenth to thirteenth centuries from the pens of outsiders to its treasures. Yet the city's history would possibly not have suggested such prominence—Amalfi boasted no significant antiquity, like nearby Naples, nor was it obviously on any lines of communication within southern Italy, like its neighbour, Salerno. But for some reason, neither Naples not Salerno gained the reputation for commercial activity that Amalfi did (despite clear archaeological evidence that Naples, at least, periodically enjoyed imports from other parts of Italy and the Mediterranean).[1] The assessment of two distinguished scholars is simply that 'Amalfi si proiettò sul mare; Napoli se ne ritirò', but even here they were introducing a series of articles on what made *Naples* different from the rest of Campania. And Salerno, as we shall see, is characterized as having relied upon imported Amalfitan residents to boost its economy.[2]

This book is about Amalfi and that diaspora of Amalfitans who left in search of business opportunities between the ninth and the thirteenth centuries. I use the term 'diaspora' deliberately but am not the first to employ this term to refer to the Amalfitans.[3] The word is full of significance for Jewish historians, employing it to describe both the Jews exiled from Jerusalem in ancient times and, more recently, those Jews living outside modern-day Israel. The literal meaning of 'diaspora'—'scattered'—neatly conveys the idea that whilst some may have scattered by choice, others were forced to leave, and this is an idea I wish to pursue—to what extent was leaving Amalfi a choice? What circumstances might surround such departures, and how permanent was the displacement of these Amalfitans from their homeland? The diasporic framework is also useful in that it reminds us that Amalfitans had at least some connections with the mobile Jewish community in the Mediterranean, and that this may have contributed to their willingness to move in search of new opportunities outside their homeland.

[1] P. Arthur, *Naples: From Roman Town to City State* (London: British School at Rome, 2002), summarizes much of the archaeological data.

[2] Quote in E. Cuozzo and J.-M. Martin, 'Il particolarismo napoletano altomedievale', *MEFRM* 107 (1995), 7–16, at 10. G. Galasso, 'L'eredità municipale del ducato di Napoli', *MEFRM* 107 (1995), 77–97, at 87, concurs that whilst Naples was an important commercial centre and port, 'navigazione e commercio sono una qualificazione solo secondaria della sua struttura sociale' by comparison with the other Campanian cities.

[3] The term 'diaspora' has previously been used by Gerardo Sangermano as a way to describe the Amalfitans outside Amalfi, albeit at a specific date and time: G. Sangermano, 'La diaspora degli Amalfitani dalla fine del ducato indipendente alla crisi del Vespro: Il problema della loro presenza nei porti siciliani nella dialettica dei rapporti fra Amalfi e Genova', in *Genova e Genovesi a Palermo (21–23 marzo 1980)* (Genoa: SAGEP, 1982), 35–51.

It is important to ask these questions, for the significance of Amalfi for the history of Mediterranean commerce cannot be understated—it is a commonplace among historians of this city to attribute to it a precocious but ultimately doomed prominence. Where Amalfitans went, so the argument goes, the Venetians, Pisans, and Genoese followed, and then eclipsed the southern pioneers with their greater maritime resources, or more sophisticated maritime contracts, again based on Amalfitan prototypes. Whilst this book will revisit those arguments, it is not simply a study of the city's commercial life, but of the people and networks underpinning the economy and political life of the duchy as a whole.

It is of course not the case that Amalfi has been neglected in the historiography—far from it. The city's medieval history has attracted the attention of scholars, both local and international, since at least the nineteenth century. The seminal (but not the earliest) work, which long shaped subsequent interpretations of the city's history well into the twentieth century, was that of Matteo Camera,[4] strongly imbued with the *campanilismo* of the local historian, but nevertheless a substantial survey not only of medieval Amalfi but its subsequent history up to the eighteenth century. The latter part of volume ii of the work consists of a gazetteer of the main settlements across the duchy, highlighting surviving monuments, and a section on the natural environment and the major industries (agriculture and clothmaking). The value of Camera's work lays also in its inclusion of primary sources, some of which do not appear in any other editions. Running through the book also is that contrast that we have already met between Amalfi's medieval history and its modest contemporary dimensions as a city, which was explained, Camera argued, by a massive tidal wave engulfing much of the lower city in the mid-fourteenth century. 'L'odierna Amalfi non è più quella del medio evo', he comments.[5] We shall return to this point, but it is worth noting here because the apparent mismatch between early medieval Amalfi's splendour as a city state and its later decline has dominated the historiography ever since, with various theories being put forward to explain this apparent decline.

Camera's work was not without its critics: Michail Berza, for example, writing on Amalfi's early history, criticized it as 'unusable...due to its lack of critical approach'.[6] Berza himself focused on the early history of the city and its formation as an independent polity in the 830s and its golden age in the ninth and tenth centuries in a major article published in 1938.[7] Amalfi's significance, for him, lay in the contribution its history could make to the then still-new debates surrounding Henri Pirenne's controversial thesis on the closure of Mediterranean trade routes after the rise of Arab power. For Berza the duchy's 'decline' set in after its submission to the Norman conquerors of southern Italy in 1073, a logical conclusion for a Byzantinist to draw, given the rapidly worsening relations between the

[4] Camera, *Memorie*.

[5] Camera, *Memorie*, i. 22.

[6] M. Berza, 'Un autonomia periferica bizantina: Amalfi (secolo VI–X)', in *Atti del V Congresso internazionale di studi bizantini (Roma, 20–26 settembre 1936), I: Storia, filologia, diritto* (Rome: Tipografia del Senato, 1939), 25–31, at 25.

[7] M. Berza, 'Amalfi preducale (596–957)', *Ephemeris Dacoromana*, 8 (1938), 349–444.

Normans and the Byzantine empire in the 1080s, and Amalfi's previous, documented relations with the eastern empire.[8] This explanation is still routinely rehearsed, and once more highlights the dichotomy in Amalfi's history, for historians of southern Italy have demonstrated not fracture, but high levels of continuity at the local level, before and after the Norman takeover.[9]

The individual elements of the city's history—studies of local families,[10] of the topography of the medieval city,[11] its artistic and architectural heritage,[12] its religious life,[13] and of the Amalfitans' foreign connections,[14] have all found their students. This is not least because the written source materials, most notably hundreds of private documents, have long been available in accessible editions,[15] and the ongoing work of the Centro di Cultura e Storia Amalfitana has led to more collections being identified and published. Yet there has been no study bringing all these elements together. An international congress of 1973 certainly reflected the major strands of research at that point by both Italian and non-Italian scholars, but lacked a closing *discorso* to draw out points of intersection between the (undoubtedly valuable) papers.[16] The closest thing to an integrated history of the duchy published thus far is the two-part work *Amalfi medievale*, a collaboration between Mario Del Treppo and Alfonso Leone, published in 1977, and Ulrich Schwarz's political survey of the duchy published in 1978 as an introduction to his edition of the *Chronicon Amalfitanum* (and then republished in Italian translation without the edition in 1980).[17] Although clearly written independently, these two works

[8] These attracted the attention of Byzantinists from a relatively early date: A. Hofmeister, 'Zur Geschichte Amalfis in byzantinischer Zeit', *Byzantinische-neugriechische Jahrbuch*, 1 (1920), 94–127 and 'Stammreihe der Herzöge von Amalfi aus dem Hause des Muscus *comes*', *Byzantinische-neugriechische Jahrbuch*, 4 (1923), 328–39. See also M. Balard, 'Amalfi e Byzance', *Travaux et mémoires*, 6 (1976), 85–95. The Amalfitan foundation on Mt Athos, another link with Byzantium, will be discussed in Ch. 9.

[9] It is interesting that an Italian historian, Giuseppe Galasso, took a much more optimistic view of activity after the Norman takeover: 'Il commercio amalfitano nel periodo normanno', in *Studi in onore di Riccardo Filangieri*, i (Naples: L'Arte Tipografia, 1959), 81–103. Paul Oldfield asks whether the Normans stifled urban autonomy, with some surprising conclusions, but suggests that Amalfi's activities were refocused on traditional overland trade within southern Italy after the 11th century: *City and Community in Norman Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 216–17.

[10] Hofmeister, 'Stammreihe'; A. Cerenza, 'Pantaleone comite, un grande amalfitano dimenticato nella sua terra', *RCCSA* 1 (1981), 34–65.

[11] Camera, *Memorie*, i. 22–50; G. Gargano, *La città davanti al mare*: *Aree urbane e storie sommerse di Amalfi nel medioevo* (Amalfi: CCSA, 1992).

[12] Jill Caskey, *Art and Patronage in the Medieval Mediterranean: Merchant Culture in the Region of Amalfi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[13] See Ch. 5, with relevant bibliography.

[14] See Chs. 9 and 10, with relevant bibliography.

[15] The sources will be discussed in Ch. 1.

[16] *Amalfi nel Medioevo: Convegno internazionale, 14–16 giugno 1973* (Salerno: Centro 'Raffaele Guariglia' di Studi Salernitani, 1977).

[17] M. Del Treppo and A. Leone, *Amalfi medievale* (Naples: Giannini Editore, 1977): the work consists of Del Treppo's essay 'Amalfi—una città del mezzogiorno nei secoli IX–XIV', 1–175, and Leone's 'Amalfi e il suo commercio nel XV secolo', 177–310, with a combined bibliography and index at the end of the book. Del Treppo's section is a revised and expanded version of his contribution to *Amalfi nel Medioevo*, 17–175. Crucially, the later version includes a new section positing an Amalfitan 'model'. All references will be to the later version of the essay. U. Schwarz, *Amalfi im frühen Mittelalter (9.–11. Jahrhundert)* (Tübingen: Max Niermayer Verlag, 1978) and *Amalfi nell'alto medioevo* (Amalfi: CCSA, 1980; 2nd edn. 1985).

complement each other in their coverage, as Del Treppo and Leone's focus is on the economics and social structure of the duchy, whilst Schwarz reconstructs the history of its rulers. Notably, the Italian work raises some doubts about Amalfi's reputation as a great commercial city: internal documents, Del Treppo comments, leave us with the paradox that 'Amalfi non è una città di mercanti'—the merchants, he suggests, were indeed those found abroad. His study therefore perpetuates the city–diaspora dichotomy.[18]

These two works were published over thirty years ago. Within and outside Italy, scholarship has since embraced new theoretical tools now commonplace in medieval history, such as the insights brought by gender studies, readings of texts as literary constructions rather than simply factual statements, communications histories, and, most recently, the incorporation of material culture as something more than simply an addition to a predetermined narrative driven by written sources. Nor has the problematic issue of identity—another theme of recent studies—been directly addressed by Amalfitan historiography, and yet this arguably forms one of the most interesting elements of the Amalfitans' history. How did movement affect the identity of Amalfitans, and were they changed by the process? Did their experience of other cultures mean that they altered their perceptions and literally became 'other' to their compatriots?

Amalfi as a place, and groups of Amalfitans living outside the city or duchy, have often been treated in isolation from each other, but we cannot fully understand the historical significance of this tiny centre without addressing and rectifying this dichotomy in its treatment.[19] Here I aim to present a holistic, people-centred study, encompassing everything from local families and their status within the community, to the means by which local landed resources (including those controlled by women) were exploited to support both regional and international trade, to the ways in which status was expressed through material culture, and how that in turn formed the centre of many outsiders' views of the city. Only then will it be possible to resolve some of the older controversies about the rise and so-called decline of Amalfi, and to address the 'Amalfitan paradox'—that this was clearly a mercantile city but its merchants are largely invisible in the local archives.

[18] Del Treppo, 'Amalfi', 82.

[19] As will become apparent, I do not share Armand Citarella's pessimism that 'any attempt to resolve the problem of Amalfi's commerce through its local documents will fail': A. O. Citarella, 'Amalfi e Salerno dopo la venuta dei Normanni', *RCCSA*, ns 7 (17 of entire series) (1997), 89–101, at 91.

Acknowledgements

That this book has finally seen the light after years of preparation is due to several interlocking factors. The first was my decision to take a break from the life of a professional academic from 2007 to 2011. The intervening years were interesting, as new jobs were tried out and projects overhanging from my career as a Reader finally came to fruition and closure. Only in 2009 did the way finally clear to restart a project that had existed in note form since 2004 (and in my head since 1986, but I was wisely diverted down another road to work on Gaeta instead). The lengthy gestation of the project has meant that I have been able to revisit those notes unencumbered and to write a book that reflects—I hope—the increased thinking time that went into it.

The second motivating factor has been those academic friends and colleagues who in 2007 sent messages of goodwill for the future, all of which were presented to me by Dr Tehmina Goskar (my one research student so far, who will be a hard act to follow), in a book made of Amalfitan paper and leather. Buoyed up by so much Amalfi-related goodwill—and the exceptionally generous gift by Dott. Giuseppe Cobalto of editions of many of the documents made to me when I visited the Centro di Cultura e Storia Amalfitana—I found this book much easier to write than I had anticipated, and I am grateful to all those who hoped I would complete it. I am especially indebted to Chris Wickham, whose guidance and friendship I have been fortunate to enjoy since undergraduate days; to David Abulafia, who has constantly encouraged my efforts in medieval Mediterranean history; to Graham Loud, whose unparalleled knowledge of the southern Italian documents has been generously shared on more than one occasion; and especially to Liesbeth van Houts and Joanna Drell, for giving me the confidence to return to the fray, and to Liz Herbert McAvoy at Swansea University for making re-entry possible by 'adopting' me into the research community there. Thanks must also go to Christopher Wheeler, Stephanie Ireland, Rowena Anketell, and the staff at Oxford University Press for seeing me into print, and to the three anonymous readers, to whose thoughtful suggestions I hope I have responded appropriately. Financial assistance for much of the research came from the Leverhulme Trust in the form of a project grant, and the British Academy, whose Small Research Grant enabled me to prepare Chapter 10. Most of all, I owe a huge debt to my husband and son, enthusiastic companions on field trips and constant supporters throughout.

I first discovered Amalfi on holiday with my mother in 1987: she did not live to see this lifetime's project completed, but without her inspired and courageous decision to ship us both off to live out a Mediterranean adventure on the island of Crete for two years in 1981 it would never have been written.

Patricia Skinner

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Contents

List of Maps xvi
List of Figures and Tables xvii
List of Abbreviations xviii

PART I AMALFI

1. The Problem of Information 3
2. Setting the Scene: Landscape and Urban Settlements 19
3. Inhabiting Amalfi: The Structures of Society 32
4. Exploiting Amalfi: Land, Production, and Enterprise 58
5. Religious Life: Church and Community 80
6. Ruling Amalfi: The Components of Power 112

PART II AMALFITANS

7. Families and the Ties of Kinship 151
8. Leaving the City: The Amalfitan Diaspora in Italy 179
9. Leaving Italy: Amalfitans in the Eastern Mediterranean 212
10. Expanding Horizons: Amalfitans in the Western Mediterranean 234

Conclusion: Challenging the Dichotomy 249

Appendix: The Rulers of Amalfi, 839–1250 254
Bibliography 257
Index 275

List of Maps

Map 2.1 Amalfi and its territory 21
Map 8.1 The Amalfitan diaspora in Italy 180

List of Figures and Tables

Fig. 1.1 The scribal family of Ursus, imperial *dissipatus* 9
Fig. 3.1 The Benusi (and variants) family 47
Fig. 5.1 Sergius son of Ursus and his kin 85
Fig. 7.1 The family of Count Mauro 155
Fig. 7.2 The family of Mauro the monk 156
Fig. 7.3 The early family of Count Pardus 157
Fig. 7.4 Proposed genealogy of Count Pardus' family 158
Fig. 7.5 The family of Count Pulcharus 159
Fig. 7.6 The connections between the family of Count Leo and the Iactabecte clan 164
Fig. 7.7 The *de domna Blatta*/Rufolo putative family link 166
Fig. 8.1 The Ingeniosus family 188
Fig. 8.2 The Ioncatella family 190
Fig. 8.3 The Sfagilla family 192

Table 3.1 Mapping counts in Amalfitan charters, 860–1200 50
Table 4.1 Church property in Amalfitan charters 60
Table 4.2 Mill transactions and prices 71
Table 4.3 Distribution of trips away and land transactions, eleventh century 78
Table 4.4 Distribution of trips away and land transactions, twelfth century 78
Table 4.5 Business days in Amalfi 78
Table 5.1 Archbishops of Amalfi 96
Table 5.2 Bishops of Minori 100
Table 5.3 Bishops of Ravello 102
Table 5.4 Pope John VIII's letters concerning Amalfi 109
Table 6.1 Number of judges signing transactions by decade 130
Table 7.1 Inherited property at Amalfi 175
Table 8.1 Associations between Amalfitan and Atranian families within Salerno 187

List of Abbreviations

ASCL	Archivio Storico per la Calabria e la Lucania
ASPN	Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane
Camera, *Memorie*	M. Camera, *Memorie storico-diplomatiche dell'antica città e ducato di Amalfi*, 2 vols (Salerno: Stabilimento Tipografico Nazionale, 1876–81; repr. Amalfi, 1999)
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis
CCSA	Centro di Cultura e Storia Amalfitana
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CDA	*Codice Diplomatico Amalfitano*, ed. R. Filangieri di Candida, 2 vols (Naples: Silvio Morano, 1917; Trani, Vecchi 1951) (references to vol and doc. no. unless otherwise stated)
CDB	*Codice Diplomatico Barese*, 10 vols (Bar, 1897–1927) (references to vol. and doc. no. unless otherwise stated)
CDP	*Codice Diplomatico Pugliese*, xx. *Le pergamene di Conversano I, 901–1265*, ed. G. Coniglio (Bari, Società di Storia Patria per la Puglia, 1975)
CDV	*Codice Diplomatico Verginiano*, ed. P. M. Tropeano, 13 vols (Montevergine: Edizioni Padri Benedettini, 1977–2000) (references to vol. and doc. no. unless otherwise stated)
Cod.Cav.	*Codex Diplomaticus Cavensis*, i–viii, ed. M. Morcaldi et al. (Milan, Naples, Pisa, 1873–93); ix–x, ed. S. Leone and G. Vitolo (Badia di Cava, 1984 and 1990) (references to vol. and doc. no. unless otherwise stated)
CP	*Il Codice Perris: Cartulario Amalfitano*, ed. J. Mazzoleni and R. Orefice, 5 vols: (Amalfi: CCSA, 1985–9) (references to vol. and doc. no. unless otherwise stated)
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
EHR	*English Historical Review*
EME	*Early Medieval Europe*
FSI	Fonti per la Storia d'Italia
Fusco	'Elenco delle pergamene già appartenenti alla famiglia Fusco ed ora acquistate dalla Società Napoletana di Storia Patria', *ASPN* 8 (1883), 153–61, 332–8, 775–87; 12 (1887), 156–64, 436–48
JMH	*Journal of Medieval History*
Mansi	*Le pergamene del Fondo 'Mansi' conservate presso il Centro di Cultura e Storia Amalfitana*, ed. C. Salvati and R. Pilone (Amalfi: CCSA, 1987)
MEFRM	*Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Moyen Âge*
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*
PAVAR	*Le pergamene degli archivi vescovili di Amalfi e Ravello*, ed. J. Mazzoleni et al., 8 vols (Naples, 1972–83) (references to vol. and doc. no. unless otherwise stated)
PBSR	*Papers of the British School at Rome*
Pilone	R. Pilone, 'Integrazioni alle fonti documentarie amalfitane', *RCCSA* 9, no. 17 (1989), 7–40

PVM	*Il pergamene dell'Archivio Vescovile di Minori*, ed. V. Criscuolo (Amalfi: CCSA, Fonti 5, 1987)
QFIAB	*Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*
RA	Ulrich Schwarz, 'Regesta amalfitana: Die älteren Urkunden Amalfis in ihrer Überlieferung', published in three parts in *QFIAB* 58 (1978), 1–136; 59 (1979), 1–157; and 60 (1980), 1–156 (refs. to part and document unless otherwise stated)
RCCSA	*Rassegna del Centro di Cultura e Storia Amalfitana*
RIS	*Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*
RN	*Regesta Neapolitana*, ed. B. Capasso, in *Monumenta ad Neapolitani Ducatus Historiam Pertinentia*, II/i (Naples: F. Giannini, 1885)
RNAM	*Regii Neapolitani Archivi Monumenta*, 5 vols, ed. M. Baffi et al. (Naples: Regia Tipographia, 1847–54) (references to vol. and doc. no. unless otherwise stated)
SGA	*Le pergamene del monastero di S. Gregorio Armeno di Napoli*, ed. J. Mazzoleni (Naples: Università degli Studi, 1973)

PART I

AMALFI

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1

The Problem of Information

Reconstructing the history of Amalfi and its diaspora presents a considerable challenge to the historian due to the fragmented nature of the subject and thus the very many places where information may have to be sought. Amalfitan history, by its very nature, is a Mediterranean history, and reflects the cultural diversity of the Middle Sea: in Part II of the present work we shall be consulting external sources produced by Christian, Jewish, and Muslim authors, emanating from all corners of the Mediterranean littoral. These will be read closely, and their veracity discussed, at the point they appear in the present work. In this chapter, I confine myself to an examination of the notable local sources for Amalfitan history. These have been magisterially reconstructed by generations of editors, and the circumstances of their production and preservation are as much a part of the history of Amalfi as the information that they contain.

Like many cities of medieval southern Italy, Amalfi itself boasts a significant corpus of surviving documentary evidence in the form of legal charters, original and copied. These are supported by codifications of local law, hagiographic texts relating the intervention of local saints, the material evidence of standing buildings and extant portable objects made in or with links to the city, and a body of written chronicles and historical accounts which might or might not have the city as their focus. These materials allow for a detailed discussion of the internal social and political life of Amalfi, although their limitations rest in the fact that few medieval sources were produced to answer some of the questions we might pose of them. Moving to the issue of information about the Amalfitan diaspora, the problem of fragmentation becomes manifold, as sources from a wide geographical area need to be mined for sometimes tiny and isolated tangential details indicating an Amalfitan presence. In this chapter the sources used and methodological issues surrounding their information will be discussed.

THE CHARTERS

Italy was at the centre of written culture in medieval Europe. It was here that the legacy of the Roman past was strongest, and here that the habit of recording legal transactions in writing remained most enduring.[1] Thus it is that we have huge

[1] A. Petrucci, *Medioevo da leggere* (Turin: Einaudi, 1992), 5, describes the Italian middle ages as 'un'età documentaria'. See also the essays by A. Petrucci and C. Romeo in *'Scriptores in urbibus':*

numbers of such written transactions, enabling us to view at least one part of the inhabitants' lives, albeit through the eyes of a scribe adhering to a predetermined style and structure of writing.

The Amalfitan collection of charters is neither the earliest nor the largest surviving corpus in southern Italy: it is dwarfed by the archive preserved at the abbey of the Holy Trinity at Cava (much of which relates to the history of nearby Salerno, and which will itself be utilized to track some of the diaspora of Amalfitans we seek), and dates only from *c.*860, whereas the earliest Cava documents date from nearly a century earlier.[2] A campaign of editing the Cava charters began in the 1860s,[3] and was mirrored by the earliest attempt to bring the Amalfitan documents to a wider scholarly audience in the seminal work of the local historian Matteo Camera, who published his *Memorie storico-diplomatiche dell'antica città e ducato di Amalfi* in the late nineteenth century.[4] The first stage in the systematic publication of the Amalfitan charters did not take place until 1917, when Riccardo Filangieri di Candida published the first volume of the *Codice Diplomatico Amalfitano*, followed by a second volume in 1951.[5] In the extraordinarily lengthy interval between the publication of the two volumes, disaster struck the Amalfitan documents, as many were burnt in the fire at the Naples State Archive in 1943. Thus it is no longer possible to consult the originals of many of the edited charters in the *CDA*.[6] However, this core collection would soon be added to by editions of the episcopal archives at Amalfi and Ravello,[7] and then, following the compilation of an extensive register of Amalfitan documents by the German scholar Ulrich Schwarz,[8] by the systematic campaign of work conducted by the Centro di Cultura e Storia Amalfitana on other local

Alfabetismo e cultura scritta nell'Italia altomedievale (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992), some of which were published in English translation in A. Petrucci, *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy*, ed. and trans. C. M. Radding (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); M. Costambeys, *Power and Patronage in Early Medieval Italy: Local Society, Italian Politics and the Abbey of Farfa, 700–900* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 19–47, reflects on the production of written charters in central Italy, whilst N. Everett, *Literacy in Lombard Italy, c.568–774* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003) explores writing within and outside charter production.

[2] Petrucci and Romeo, 'Scrittura e alfabetismo nella Salerno del IX secolo', in *'Scriptores in urbibus'*, 143–94, reflects on this rich archive.

[3] *Cod.Cav.* i—x. This takes the edition up to the year 1080—the rich content of the later documents has yet to be published, although it has been extensively mined.

[4] Camera, *Memorie*.

[5] *CDA*.

[6] Volume i of *CDA* consists of 122 original documents from Sta Maria Fontanella, 22 cartulary copies from the same house, 68 original documents from the archive of S. Lorenzo, 20 from the *Antico Fondo* of Amalfitan charters in the Naples State Archive, and 14 from the same archive's *Monasteri Soppressi* series.

[7] *PAVAR*. Prior to the publication campaign the archive at Amalfi had received attention from Robert Brentano: 'The archiepiscopal archives at Amalfi', *Manuscripta*, 4 (1960), 98–105; and 'Sealed documents of the medieval archbishops of Amalfi', *Mediaeval Studies*, 23 (1961), 21–46. The latter article is extensively recapped in Brentano, *Two Churches: England and Italy in the Thirteenth Century* (Los Angeles: UCLA Press, 1968), 306–16.

[8] RA. Importantly, Schwarz identified copies of lost originals as well as previously unpublished documents.

archives, of both original and transcribed charters, from surviving and suppressed monastic houses.[9] This is still ongoing, with odd charters still being discovered and edited.[10]

The result of this campaign is that there are over 1,000 edited documents or fragments of documents relating to Amalfi at the historian's disposal for the period between 800 and 1250. They have been preserved for us in a number of archives, primarily reflecting the rich ecclesiastical landscape in the duchy. By the end of the eleventh century, the Amalfitan peninsula was dotted with tiny episcopal sees at Amalfi itself, Ravello, Minori, and Scala. In addition, there were several major monastic houses, such as St Laurence, Sta Maria Fontanella, and SS Ciricus and Iulicte, which enjoyed lengthy patronage during our period. Each of the many monasteries and convents in the duchy had its own archive, but these documentary collections were subject to the vicissitudes experienced by the houses themselves. For example, the unification of the communities of St Thomas, St Angelus, and Sta Maria Fontanella in the thirteenth century, and their transfer to the monastery of SS Ciricus and Iulicte, from which the Benedictine monks were vacated and moved in turn to Sta Maria, resulted in the documents of all four houses becoming united and mixed up in SS Ciricus and Iulicte's archive (the monks moving without their charters). Although the new combined archive was ordered and numbered, its editors point out that some seventy documents held there are now of uncertain provenance.[11] This has an impact on what we can say about the lay communities who interacted with these houses. A significant number of charters in the Cava archive itself also relate to Amalfi, and further resources come from private family archives, such as those of the Fusco and Mansi families, the latter only recently edited.[12]

Petrucci classifies medieval documents as public (those emanating from a national or sovereign authority such as pope or king or emperor), semi-public (issued by local rulers and dignitaries representing the sovereign), and private (issued by individuals and dealing with their own affairs).[13] In Amalfi, as we shall see, the distinction between these categories was often hard to draw (the dukes of Amalfi would surely have seen themselves as sovereign during the duchy's autonomy, but been viewed by the popes only as local rulers), but typically they provide us with a great deal of information beyond that of the actual transaction that they record (perhaps the least informative are in fact the higher-level 'public' documents of popes and emperors). For example, if a piece of property was being transferred, the document might include its precise location expressed in terms of who owned or held land at its boundaries, and the type of use it was suitable for. Often, the

[9] *CP*; *Gli archivi dei monasteri di Amalfi (S. Maria di Fontanella, S. Maria Dominarum, SS. Trinità) 860–1645*, ed. C. Salvati and R. Pilone (Amalfi: CCSA, 1986); *PVM*; *Le pergamene amalfitane della Società Napoletana di Storia Patria*, ed. S. Palmieri (Amalfi: CCSA, 1988).

[10] Pilone provides editions of 44 extant documents in the Fondo Mansi at Cava.

[11] *Gli archivi dei monasteri di Amalfi*, ed. Salvati and Pilone, 8–9. On the reorganization under Archbishop Philip Agustariccio, see Brentano, *Two Churches*, 285–7.

[12] Fusco; *Mansi*.

[13] *Medioevo da leggere*, 6.

vendor or donor would state where and how they had obtained the property, whether through inheritance from a relative and/or purchase or gift from another individual or group. The record might also state who else in the family had an interest in the property, even if the transaction itself was carried out by an individual on their behalf. If others were represented, their reason for not acting directly—such as being underage or absent on business—might be explained and recorded, and this has provided the present study with considerable evidence about the social composition of the Amalfitan community, as well as its mobility. All of these pieces of information, ultimately, were intended to protect the recipient from unexpected claims from the donor's kin, through a clear rehearsal of the right of the donor to alienate the property. But for us this means each charter is potentially a mine of detailed information about land, its exploitation, the patterns of landholding in a particular location, the family and other relationships of the main actor, and some indication of their social status through the use of marriage, inheritance, nomenclature, and titles.

Most documents are also dated to the day or month, and many contain references to the current ruler of Amalfi, the place the document was drawn up, and information as to who wrote it. This is important, for it provides a useful political framework within which to understand the transaction itself: the absence of reference to the current ruler, for example, is often interpreted as a sign of political uncertainty, with the scribes and their customers unclear as to who was in charge. The dating clauses are also a neglected but highly charged element of the information we have, as we shall see. Based on a survey of dating clauses it is possible to argue that business transactions in medieval Amalfi revolved around certain key dates. Chapter 4 will elaborate on this point with reference to the transactions themselves, but one reason which might be suggested for these concentrations of recording activity may be the availability of a suitably competent scribe. It is worth pausing, therefore, to explore this group of Amalfitans in more detail.

Scribes and notaries

In a society where documents had never lost their importance, the scribe was potentially a man of some social standing. His literacy skills and knowledge of the legal terminology required to ensure that a record remained valid against challenges imbued the scribe with a power whose shape and form has rarely been acknowledged, for all that the use of the written word has garnered attention from generations of medieval historians. Who were the scribes of Amalfi? Frustratingly, their very standing and use of their occupational titles mean that the scribes of Amalfi were among the most reticent when it came to identifying themselves fully, somewhat ironic when compared with the often tendentiously-long strings of self-identification insisted upon by their clients (discussed in Chapter 7), and so we cannot examine all of their histories with the precision we should like. It is useful, however, to note the numbers: three scribes documented as active in the sparsely documented ninth century, twenty-one in the tenth, forty-one in the eleventh, and

sixty-eight in the twelfth.[14] Secondly, although several scribes are visible in multiple documents over extended periods, writing whole series of documents, most appear only once or twice. Nevertheless, an important trend is revealed if we compare number of scribes to number of documents: although they both increase in number, there are proportionately *fewer* scribes by the twelfth century, suggesting that the role may have become more regulated, and/or that the profession was becoming more exclusive.[15]

That is not to say that some 'official' capacity was lacking in the earlier period: a series of four documents from 907 to 931 were all written by 'Leo, scribe of this city', and a series of four from 939 to 947 by Constantine and four more by Guttus from *c.*982 to 988, were both denoted in the same way.[16] That the profession had some status from an early date is also indicated by the fact that some scribes use a patronymic, and it is clear that some families passed on the profession to sons, nephews, or even brothers.[17] Even so, their social background is hard to pin down, and we cannot assume that they were of similar rank to their clients, even if there appear to be some clear ties between certain scribes and those for whom they wrote. Some evidence of formal training is also visible: in 1005 Leo the scribe completed a document written by Rigi, his 'disciple', and in 1007 another written by his pupil John son of Leo (his own son?).[18]

The title 'curial', already visible at Amalfi itself by the end of the tenth century,[19] suggests a survival of the earlier, Byzantine notarial culture within the region, and was borne by at least five men in the eleventh.[20] One of them, John, later bears the

[14] H. Taviani-Carozzi, *La Principauté lombarde de Salerne (IXe–XIe siècle)*, 2 vols. (Rome: École française de Rome, 1991), i. 542, also notes an increase in the number of notaries between the 10th and 11th centuries: unfortunately, her survey ends in 1050, with an apparent decline in numbers—she attributes this to the emergence of scribes attached to powerful individuals and institutions.

[15] The 23 scribes visible for just 57 documents in the period 1200–50 do not undermine this suggestion, as many were priests, and others termed themselves 'public'.

[16] Leo: *CDA* i, 1–3 and ii, 585. Constantine: *CDA* ii. 586 (= *CP* i, 32); *CDA* i, 4, 5, and 6. Guttus: RA ii, 16 and 21 (pp. 62–3 and 68–70), *Cod.Cav.* ii, 394 and 398. The description continued in the 11th century, e.g. Ursus described himself thus in 1013: *Cod.Cav.* iv, 670.

[17] e.g. in the 10th century Ursus (second of that name to appear) completed a document written by his nephew, Leo: *Cod.Cav.* ii, 386 (986), and it is likely that Leo, son of Guttus, writing in 998 (*PAVAR* i, 1) was indeed the son of the Guttus who wrote four documents in the 980s (see n. 16). Guttus completed his son's document in 1012: *CDA* i. 30. In 1011 Constantine the scribe completed a document written by his brother Sergius (this fraternal reference, however, may not necessarily be read as a blood relationship): *PVM* 8. Ursus scribe, son of Constantine, curial, appears in 1025: *Cod. Cav.* v, 777. John the scribe, son of Sergius, completed documents written by his sons John in 1029 × 1059: *PAVAR* i, 11, and Sergius in 1046 and 1047: *CDA* i, 59 and *PAVAR* i, 16; and Constantine the scribe, son of John curial, appears in 1031: *Cod.Cav.* v, 833.

[18] *CP* i, 73; *CDA* i, 22.

[19] Ursus *curialis* son of Constantine: *CP* i, 66 (992); John *curialis* and Leo *curialis* (*CP* i, 80 (998). Note that Ursus also appears titled 'scribe': *CP* i, 2 (992?), and that John and Leo appear as witnesses, rather than writing the document in 998.

[20] Constantine, *CP* i, 58 (1019); Gregory scribe and curial, *CP* i, 81 (1025); Philip curial son of Constantine curial, *CP* i, 35 (1036); Fortunatus deacon and curial, *CDA* i, 66 (1058); John, *CDA* i, 66 (1058), *CP* i, 65 (1059), *CDA* i, 68 (1061), *CP* i, 76 (1062), 49 (1067), and 48 (1068). P. Toubert, *Les Structures du Latium médiéval* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1973), i. 114, sees them as a direct survival from the Byzantine era, citing the study by R. Filangieri, 'I "curiales" di Amalfi', *Bollettino di bibliofilo*, 2 (1921), 277–87.

title 'judge and curial'.[21] This overt development of the scribe into something closer to legal expert was a familiar pattern in eleventh- and twelfth-century Italy,[22] but seems somewhat rarer at Amalfi.

A survey of our documented scribes reveals that several bore Byzantine honorific titles. Leo bore the title protonotary and imperial *dissipatus* in 1098; Ursus, son of John judge and curial, had the same title in 1101; Pantaleo son of Ursus, active from 1102 to 1123, was an imperial patrician; whilst John *comite* bore the title *protospatharius* in 1128.[23] What is striking about these is that they date well after the period when Amalfi had any strong ties with Byzantium (although Leo's title may well have links with the brief resurgence of Amalfitan autonomy under Marinus Sebastos), and may reflect a conservatism within this group which also manifested itself in the ways they drew up documents.[24] Although judges are documented earlier on at Amalfi (we shall return to their role in Chapter 6), it may be significant that the combined title with curial only appears after the Norman takeover of the city, perhaps an attempt at fostering promotions among the city's professional class? If so, the experiment seems to have failed, as no twelfth-century person bears this combination of titles. We do, however, see a clear mushrooming of centres where business was done within the duchy, as well as the increase in transactions that needed recording.[25] In Ravello, two cousins, both named John, dominate the scene in the first three decades of the century,[26] but after the creation of the Norman kingdom we meet two men described as judge and scribe, suggesting that the administrative needs of the kingdom saw a revival of the legal role of the scribe. It may also be coincidence that our first documents written at Atrani also date from around 1130.[27] By the twelfth century we also see scribes apparently based in outlying centres, including rural locations such as Scala and Lettere.[28] In the case of Tramonti, the novelty of having a local notary was not lost on Jordanus, describing himself as 'secundus' in 1127, presumably following on from his colleague Leo son

[21] *CDA* i, 81 (1087), acting as a witness. He appears with the same title in *CP* i, 82, erroneously dated by its editors to 1006 but more likely to date from 1078 or 1093.

[22] Powerful guilds of notaries even contested local power, e.g. at Bologna: B. R. Carniello, 'The rise of an administrative elite in medieval Bologna: notaries and popular government, 1282–1292', *JMH* 28 (2002), 319–47.

[23] Leo: *CP* i, 90 and 91; Ursus: *PVM* 37; Pantaleo: *CDA* i, 100, 108, and 109, *CP* i, 98, *CDA* i, 123; John: *PVM* 45. The latter case, however, may be a misreading of *protonotarius*, a title John bore in other documents: *CP* i, 119 (1128), *CDA* i, 138, 141, and 142, *CP* i, 130 (1138).

[24] *Dissipatus/dishypatos* was a Byzantine honorific title, ranking below *protospatharius* but above *spatharokandidatos*. On Amalfitan conservatism expressed in script, Brentano, *Two Churches*, 298–9.

[25] In terms of activity, Taviani-Carozzi notes a similar phenomenon at Salerno: *Principauté*, 544–6.

[26] Both using the locative surname *da Turano*.

[27] Written by John, son of John the curial, possibly the great-uncle of Manso, discussed on pp. 9–10: *PAVAR* i, 36, and *CDA* i, 133. Sergius, curial, was active 1133–45 (*CDA* i, 137 and 146, *CP* i, 132), alongside Mastalus the priest (*CDA* i, 137: he completed Sergius' document, 139, 140, 144, and 145, *CP* i, 126).

[28] Scala from 1127 (John son of Stephen Alamanni, priest and scribe: *CDA* i, 129); Lettere from 1139 (Leo the priest: *CDA* i, 143 and 151). Prior to this, inhabitants of outlying settlements such as Lettere had come to Amalfi to draw up their documents, as *CDA* i, 39 (1033) and *PAVAR* i, 18 (1061) illustrate.

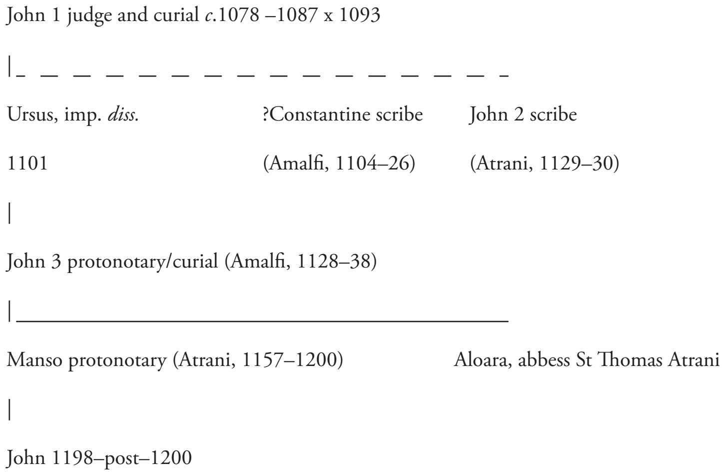

Fig. 1.1 The scribal family of Ursus, imperial *dissipatus*

of Leo, who was active in the early years of that decade.[29] Notable in this context is a family of scribes emerging at Atrani and apparently dominating the writing of documents in that centre (Fig. 1.1).

Between 1157 and 1200 Manso, son of John the curial, son of Ursus, imperial *dissipatus*, wrote over thirty documents, including signing a few prepared by his own son John. We have already met his grandfather Ursus, the *dissipatus*, himself the son of John, judge and curial, and the family may have had an early presence in Atrani with John the scribe in 1129–30.[30] Ursus's son John was also active in Amalfi in the mid-twelfth century.[31] Manso's own career started in 1157, writing documents completed by John the priest.[32] Manso himself wrote some thirty-five documents in Atrani in the period up to 1200.[33] Of these, over half recorded gifts and leases to and by the monastery of SS Ciricus and Iulicte.[34] The remainder featured a variety of high-status owners managing their property in the eastern part of the duchy of Amalfi, often connecting two or three documents in clusters of business with a relatively stable group of witnesses. Manso's dominance possibly owed

[29] Leo (1121–4): *CP* i, 108 and 107, *PAVAR* i, 31. Jordanus: *CDA* i, 130.

[30] *PAVAR* i, 36; *CDA* i, 133.

[31] John was active 1125–38, described as 'scribe and protonotary, son of Ursus curial'. This suggests that there was a clearly-defined promotion route, and that once Ursus became *dissipatus*, John could advance to curial, and Manso a protonotary. Documents: *CDA* i, 126 and 128; *CP* i, 119 and 124; *PAVAR* i, 38; *CDA* i, 138, 141, and 142; *CP* i, 130.

[32] *CDA* i, 163 and 167 (the latter reads 'Mauro', easily confused in transcription with 'Manso').

[33] In chronological order they are: *CDA* i, 168; *PAVAR* ii, 59; *PVM* 61; *PAVAR* i, 48; *CDA* i, 177 and 179; *CP* i, 149; *CDA* i, 181; *PAVAR* i, 51; *CDA* i, 186, 187, and 188; *PAVAR* i, 52 and 55; *PVM* 70; *CDA* i, 202, 205, 207, 208, 217, and 218; *PAVAR* i, 62; *CDA* i, 221, 223, 224, 225, 230, 231, and 232; *PAVAR* i, 69; *PVM* 85; *CDA* i, 241, 242, and 246.

[34] A similar association with SS Ciricus and Iulicte, and with the bishopric of Minori, led me to identify Constantine, son of John curial, active 1104–26 as Ursus' brother, although he was based in Amalfi: *CDA* i, 102 and 104; *CP* i, 97; *PVM* 27; *CDA* i, 111, 116, and 118; *PAVAR* i, 33.

something to the fact that neighbouring Minori does not appear to have had its own local scribe—the only document apparently issued there is a grant by the bishop in 1144—and that his own family's wealthy background (landowning in both Amalfi and Minori)[35] attracted clients of similar social status to his own. As he grew older in the 1190s, we see him still completing or authenticating documents written by his own son, John.[36] One reason for a scribe's repeated appearance in the document was a close relationship with a certain client or group of clients, and this can sometimes assist us with identifying scribes sharing the same name as more than one individual. Examples from the tenth and eleventh centuries will serve to illustrate this point. The first is that of men with the sole name Ursus in the tenth century. Based on an analysis of the recurring names within both the body and witness lists of documents written by 'Ursus the scribe', for example, it appears that there were two separate men of that name working in Amalfi from 953 to 976, and then from 982 to 995. (The temporal break, too, is indicative of a change.)[37] Furthermore, some of the men in our list may have had ties with major religious houses, and those institutions were responsible for the preservation of many of the charters still surviving. For example, 'John the scribe' wrote some twelve documents from 971 to 994, nine of which are preserved in the *Codice Perris*, the archive of the convent of St Laurence, and nine of which relate to ecclesiastical property in some way.[38] A small pool of witnesses also seems to be associated with his documents. A similarly limited group of witnesses appears in eighteen documents written by John, son of Sergius, over a period of nearly forty years. What is striking about his collection, extending from *c.*1030 to 1070,[39] is that he seems to have worked for small-scale clients, and/or those coming to Amalfi from outlying areas. This was, either way, an unsettled period in Amalfitan history, and seven of his documents do not include any kind of clause indicating who was ruling at Amalfi. It is possible that the instability led John and his son Sergius (for whom he completed two documents) to travel around the duchy rather than their clients coming to the city. If this was the case, the 'witnesses' may well have been to the writing-up of the document, rather than the transaction itself, since certain names occur repeatedly in the sample. That there could be some delay between transaction and written document is illustrated by a few charters which appear to be regularizing matters, for example one of 1070 which confirms two sales a year apart, or another which in 1085 corrected the name of the buyer, wrongly recorded

[35] His sister Aloara was abbess of the family foundation of St Thomas in Atrani: *CDA* i, 211 and 242.

[36] *CDA* i, 242 and 246; *PAVAR* i, 69; *PVM* 85.

[37] Ursus 1: *CDA* ii, 587; *Cod.Cav.* iv, 586 (there wrongly dated to 1006); *CP* i, 60, 29, and 59; RA ii, 10, pp. 52–3; *Cod. Cav.* ii, 252; *CDA* i, 8; *Cod.Cav.* ii, 270, 290, and 291. Ursus 2: RA ii, 17; *CP* i, 25; RA ii, 19; *CP* i, 11; *Cod.Cav.* ii, 386; *CP* i, 79.

[38] In date order *CP* i, 63, 21, and 5; *PVM* 5; *CP* i, 30; *CDA* i, 13; *CP* i, 67 and 26; *CDA* i, 14; *CP* i. 9, 19, and 69.

[39] Some of the documents are insecurely dated, making this range an estimate. In putative date order they are: *PAVAR* i, 11 (dated 1029, but RA i (p. 126), places it in 1059); *CDA* i, 38, 39, 40, 48, and 50; RA i, 21 (pp. 123–4); *CP* i, 61; *Cod.Cav.* vi, 967; *CDA* i, 59; *PAVAR* i, 16 and 17; *Cod.Cav.* viii, 1305; *PAVAR* i, 18; *CP* i. 50; *Cod.Cav.* viii, 1347; *CP* i, 44.