

Dudo of St Quentin:

[Preface and reasons for writing:]

I want to render you certain, so that you do not suppose that I willingly stuck to this work; or that I began it of my own free will. Two years before his death, as frequently was my habit I was with the exceptional duke RICHARD. son of MARQUIS WILLIAM, wanting to render to him my obligation of service; because of the innumerable boons, which without any merit of my own he had deigned to bestow upon me. Approaching me one day, he began to embrace me with the arms of a most compassionate love; and to attract me with his most charming speeches, and to soften me up with delightful entreaties; nay rather to denounce me and to swear in charity that if I had been capable of any consideration, I would have attended to his long-desired intentions, that is to say that I would have described in writing the customs and deeds of the Norman land, yea indeed the rights which [Richard's son Richard] asserted in the realm of his great-grandfather ROLLO. I was astounded as though out of my senses. and denying these requests for a number of days I refused. But at length moved by so much beseeching, and fatigued by so many entreaties; with difficulty I bent my intention to having the weight of so great a burden laid on my shoulders. And although it kept being publicly declared that it was beyond the possibility of my strength to recount all this; I did lay the yoke of that great burden on my neck. become an imitator of that command; which instructs us to stand firm to act manfully and to be strong moreover that all our deeds be done in charity.

Our inexperienced pen had not yet reached the first parts of the work when alas what grief a tearful report announced that Richard a leader for the whole world had died. In grief for this leader I would have postponed this entire project because of the very great weeping and unbearable wailing, which were not only tormenting my heart, but also battering the limbs of my whole body, had it not been hurried on by his most distinguished son the still surviving patrician RICHARD and by the extraordinary count Rodulf. Both keep persisting in entreaties that I carry out what duke Richard of memorable life had enjoined by his own entreaty and keep calling me to witness lest the intention which I had pledged to him seem to be defiled transformed into the vice of double-tonguedness by any filth of falsehood, rather than to be valued in the deep marrow of my understanding. Assenting to their injunctions and entreaties I have carried out the labour although it boasts neither the dialectics of syllogism nor rhetorical arguments. I have disposed to send it to your majesty so that the falsities might be lopped off; and if there be any truthfulness in it, it be confirmed by your authority in order that the marvellous recompenser of rewards who has placed the exceptional marquis Richard in the paradise of his glory, might establish you adorned with an everlasting garland among the choruses of all the saints as a senator of the heavenly court, just as he has raised you up as a pillar of his holy church.

A Verse to Richard, son of Richard the Great.

O you as magnanimous compassionate moderate
O you as extraordinary god-fearing
O you as eminent upright kind
O you as wonderful good and righteous
O you as peace-making and as the progeny of god
O you as generous Sacred moderate
O you as very bright merciful Richard
O you as patient judicious Richard
O you as extremely celebrated graceful Richard
O you as a judge mild Richard
O you as deserving charming Richard
All nations do fittingly celebrate
Discreetly remember what you perceive in this book.
Feed your heart and breast on what has been recounted
So that you might have the strength to fasten upon these things
I beg with a humble prayer
That you might approve these quivering beginnings
So that I might make known if I am able in a prosaic plotline
The actions and events of affairs. briefly the ignorant [misfortunes
Which mad barbarism brought about under duke Anstign
And which under ROLLO Christ-worshipping in the end
And how his offspring WILLIAM did good in the entire empire
Having calmed it by means of the law.
And indeed how the fertile land of the Norman populace rested by right
Throughout fruitful years in the peaceful time
Of that highest patrician and compassionate Christ-worshipper
Richard known for his merit in heaven above
While you god who alone are always at hand perceiving all things
Reign and live and abide without end

Chapter 10: Rollo sees the town of Rouen and determines to settle there in fulfilment of his dream-vision

Thus in the eight hundred seventy sixth year from the lord's incarnation, noble Rollo, forsaking the bed of the River Schelde on the advice of his *fideles*, launched his sails before the ship-bearing winds and came by ship to Jumieges, having traversed the deep where the cerulean whirlpool of the Seine, flowing with its crystal-clear courses and lapping the fragrant grasses of its elevated banks and, going to the open main of the inundating sea, discharges itself, and is often repelled, according to the intervals of the moon, by a more swollen billow of the sea itself.¹ And seeing the monastery of Saint Peter and reckoning the place to be holy and embellished with abodes of monkish habitation, he hesitated to linger there, but steered his ships to the other side of the river, to the chapel of Saint Vedast, and he placed upon the altar of Saint Vedast the body of a certain virgin, Hameltrude by name, which he had carried there with him, and a name from the virgin's name has forever stuck to this chapel. And that place is called at Saint Hameltrude by the residents.

Thus the inhabitants of Rouen, poor men and destitute merchants, and the dwellers in that region, hearing that a plentiful multitude of Normans was at Jumieges, came of one mind to Bishop Franco of Rouen, in order to take counsel about what to do. But Franco immediately sent to Rollo, that he might give a guarantee of safety to himself and to those abiding in the district. Truly Rollo, ascertaining that there lingered in the town and in its territory none except a defenceless mass, gave the bishop a guarantee of safety on the strength of his own assurance. And then, pursuing a course of navigation beneficial to himself, he came to Rouen and secured his ships, plentifully furnished with a very large² war band, at the gate which is connected to the church of Saint Martin. Moreover, coming down off the ship and surveying the town at a swift pace, he saw its monuments laid in ruins, and large stones torn away from sanctuaries, churches shaken from their foundations and walls smashed on every side, and a small and defenceless band, and he began to be perplexed in spirit. And to fasten his sight in sole contemplation,³ recalling the vision which he had had beyond the sea.

¹The Seine river rises in Burgundy and flows through Champagne, the Ile-de-France and Normandy into the English Channel. The name of the river is said to mean 'to curve', for the course of the river is extraordinarily winding. One result of the sharp twists and turns of the river's flow, has been the creation of extremely steep promontories along certain sections of the riverbank. Another feature of the Seine that also results from its extraordinary curviness is that, when the great tides are running, the seas entering the Seine estuary from the English Channel overwhelm the normal flow of the river current, reversing it and causing a powerful and dangerous rush of waters, called a 'mascaret.'

²Preferring the 'plurimo' of Rouen 1173 and other witnesses.

³Preferring the 'intuitu' of Bern 390 and other witnesses.

Apostrophe

Oh Rollo, mighty duke and most superior leader,
Through Christ's gift this town will flourish under your leadership,
It will be built at a future time, once the realm has been calmed by peace,
Once the Franks have been devoured by war, and the populace broken.
Behold the mount⁴ of the church where you kept seeing yourself rejoice,
Behold here the font of the bath where you were cleansed of leprosy.
This fatherland is to be built by your followers, themselves renewed in the font.
To the peoples in that town you will give laws and alliances
And rights likewise, with the fear of strict penalty.
Marvellously, then, in the coming time of your descendants
Fierce ages will grow tame, wars having been banished,
And ungodly fury, sitting on its arms, will challenge no one
With its cry, the strength of ungodliness having been undone.
Rather, let the fierce wolf graze at the same time in the sheep's field.

[11] Franks, Burgundians and Aquitanians cannot prevent Rollo and his followers from conquering the future Normandy

Having returned thence to the boats, he is planning in his sagacious mind what he should do, with the advice of his men, having called together the leaders. Then his followers, as though prescient of the future and imbued with a presentiment of divine inspiration, have said aloud to Rollo: "This land is plentifully furnished with an abundant supply of all the fruits of the earth, shady with trees, divided up by rivers filled with fish, copiously supplied with diverse kinds of wild game, but empty of armed men and warriors. We will subordinate this land to our power. And we will claim this land as our allotment,⁵ we will obtain through battle both villages and fortresses⁶ and towns large and small of neighbouring peoples, so that the distant throngs we have left behind may rest. Perhaps the explanation of your vision referred to this territory." Thus gladdened by his followers' replies, with ships untied Rollo is carried upstream from Rouen towards Pont de l'Arche, to a place called Damps.

Thereupon does common talk, because it is privy to affairs everywhere, announce that the Normans, collected into an innumerable multitude in the bed of the Seine, are at the cross-roads of Francia.⁷ But the Franks, as stupefied by their arrival as by the sudden

⁴Preferring the 'mons' of CC 276.

⁵Sors.

⁶Castra.

⁷Damps, where Rollo's band was encamped, lay at the confluence of the rivers Seine and Eure.

sound of thunder, have come upon the point of descent of the river Eure, along with Anstign (who has been summoned there, himself formerly an invader of Francia) and with an assembled army of vast multitude. Then Ragnold, prince of all Francia, said to Anstign, that exciter of all vileness: "You, begotten of that nation, give us advice about these matters." Replying forthwith to count Ragnold, Anstign put this forward: "If you had sought advice from me with three days notice, advice resulting from thorough consideration, then I would have given it to you. Just send ambassadors to them to find out what they themselves say." Then Ragnold: "Go swiftly, we pray, to find out their purpose." Anstign replied: "I will not go alone." On the contrary, they sent with him two warriors skilful in the Dacian language.

Coming upon the riverbank, they stood still, saying: "Counts of royal power command you to say who you are, and whence you have come, and what you are planning to do." Truly they replied: "We are Danes. Carried here from Dacia, we have come to take Francia by assault." Yet they: "What authority does your lord discharge?" They replied: "None, for we are of equal power." Then Anstign, wishing to know what they would say about himself, said: "Whose reputation has prompted you to come here? Have you ever heard anything about a certain Anstign, born in your homeland, who sailed here with a numerous war band?" They replied: "We have heard of him. For he was augured to be a good man and he made a good beginning, but he chose an evil end and finish." Again Anstign: "Are you willing to lower your necks before king Charles of Francia, and to devote yourselves to his service, and to draw many favours⁸ from him?" They replied: "We will never subjugate ourselves to anyone nor cling to anyone's service nor take favours⁹ from anyone. The favour¹⁰ that would please us best is the one that we will claim for ourselves by force of arms and in the hardship of battle." Then the Franks: "What are you going to do?" After this, the Dacians: "Go away, the sooner the better, and do not stand there any longer, for we care nothing for your double-talk, nor are we going to reveal to you what we shall do."

But, going away, they promptly reported to the army what they had heard. But Ragnold said, turning towards Anstign: "Does it seem to all of you that a war will be started? You men are of their nation, you are not ignorant, through your own practice, of battling in the style of the Danes, tell us what should we do?" Then Anstign, bolstered by poisonous and fox-like skill, is addressing the army: "If this nation, so strong in the flower of youthful age, so well-versed in arms, and tested in many many battles, is attacked, great peril will be created for us." Then a standard-bearer of the Frankish host, named Rotland, is said to have said: "Why are you all looking to this man? A wolf will never be captured by a wolf, nor a fox by a fox." Spurred on by these words, Anstign has said: "From now on, war will not be reviled by me."

⁸Beneficia.

⁹Beneficia.

¹⁰Beneficium.

Meanwhile Rollo and those who were with him have made for themselves a fortification, and an obstacle after the fashion of a fortress¹¹ (which is visible to the present day), defending themselves behind a circular bulwark of rent earth, and leaving ample space to act as a gate. Truly the Franks have come at dawn to the church of St. Germanus and, hearing mass there, they partake of the body and blood of Christ. Riding hence, seeing the boats on the riverbank, and the Dacians in the fortification of rent earth, they have attacked the ample entrance-gate alone. But the Dacians have lay down inside, spread out in every direction on the ground of the fortress, and have covered themselves completely with their shields. Rotland, Ragnold's standard-bearer, has violently rushed upon them through the ample entrance of marvellous breadth, along with the battle-line that was advancing in front of the army, and he has begun to subdue them. But the Dacians, rising up, in a moment have slain Rotland and his attendants. Contemplating all the dead there, Ragnold and Anstign and the other counts have taken flight, turning their backs, joyful.

Rollo, having immediately called together those who were returning from the fleeing enemy, has said: "What evil have we done to the Franks? Why did they leap upon us? For what reason have they preferred to strike us down? It is they who have initiated this evil, the fault is the attacker's, not the defender's, the audacity is his who wishes to strike, not his who defends himself. Henceforth, whatever evil we might do to them, we will be committing because their own deeds were a cause of offence. Ho! let us occupy their fortresses¹² and towns. In return for their offences, let us return like for like, now that such great evils have accumulated."

Having left behind the fortification of turned-up earth, with duke Rollo's encouragement they have first attacked the inhabitants of Meulan, sailing with a swift course.¹³ With the leaders killed, they quickly destroy Meulan, and they have layed waste the entire province. But count Ragnold is trying to attack them a second time, with an army greater than the one assembled earlier. However the Normans have lay themselves down, massing closely together, so that their total number would be supposed very small. Ragnold begins a war there that will not favour his own fortune. Truly the Dacians, proceeding unshattered through Ragnold's battle-array, have been overthrowing very many opponents with rough lashings. Moreover Ragnold, seeing his followers wanting, has begun to flee with a swift course. A certain Seine fisherman, associated with Rollo, has stopped him and killed him, pierced through with his spear. Seeing their lord dead, Ragnold's men have made for their horses, turning in flight. Then Rollo, pursuing them, has killed many and has led many more captive to his ships. And he has said to his assembled fideles: "Go, let us sail now to Paris and seek those citizens who have fled from this battle."

¹¹Castrum.

¹²Castra.

¹³Meulan lies on the Seine, just a few miles north of Paris.

Thus the Normans have untied their ships from the bank at Meulan and, surrounding Paris, have besieged it and have depended upon the booty of that province for carrying on the siege. As Rollo lingers long at the siege of Paris, the booty, seized in far-off regions, has been running out. The Normans instantly make for the Bessin¹⁴ and, seizing all its booty, have begun to storm the city. However the citizens have resisted them like an enemy so that they would not stay there, they have even captured Botho, that extraordinary Norman count. The Normans, grieving over Botho, have sent to the people of Bayeux to say: "If you return Botho to us, we will give you a guarantee of safety for one year." The people of Bayeux, drawn together in deliberation, have said to one another: "It is better for us to rest for the year than to pass the entire time in battle for the sake of a single count."

Thus, once the guarantee of security has been given, they have returned Botho, that extremely fierce warrior. But once Rollo has passed a year besetting Paris in the siege, he makes for Bayeux, and he has taken possession of it by force and has utterly destroyed the entire city and has claimed for himself captives and spoils from the whole region. Glad, he has at one time even brought with him the daughter of prince Berengar, the maiden Popa, beautiful in appearance, grown strong from the arrogant blood of a very powerful man, and has joined her to himself in sexual union.¹⁵ And he has sired by her a son named William.

Afterwards, remaining near Paris, he has sent his army to Evreux to capture the city and the bishop. Coming to the city, the army has attacked it and has seized spoils and very many of the populace. But the bishop, Sebar by name, has by God's will escaped. And they have laid waste the whole land, seizing the spoils of the district,¹⁶ and have immediately come back to Paris. Thus terrified by such things, very many of the peoples of Francia have been paying tribute to Rollo, though very many have been resisting him.

But the Angles, hearing that Rollo had besieged the town of Paris and was held fast, entwined in Frankish affairs, and estimating that he would not come to the assistance of his friend king Athelstan, casting off their promise, presumptuously began to grow haughty and to contend against the king, dealing blows in unsuitable wars. Truly the English land was being layed waste by the armies of the king and his opponents. Since he did not have the wherewithal to resist the presumption of the Angles, the most Christian king Athelstan sent a certain count to Rollo, then fighting out the war around the walls of the town of Paris. Coming to him, speaking with lowered countenance, the count put forth: "Athelstan king of the Angles sends you the dear present of inextricable friendship. At one time, my lord, you and Athelstan, peace-making king of the Angles, pledged an

¹⁴The Bessin is the pagus or territory of the town of Bayeux, on the Cotentin coast.

¹⁵The term 'connubium' employed here by Dudo is the same word used twice by Dudo to describe the wanton and lascivious sexual excesses of Dacian youths (see chapters 1 and 3).

¹⁶Pagus.

alliance of mutual aid that whichever of you might be in need of help, he would be strengthened by the other's support and whichever of you unfavourable fortune might trample, the other would come to his assistance. Wherefore, overwhelmed by an unexpected rising of the treasonous Angles, he prays you to fleetly assist him with your might, greater than that of all others, because the Angles, knowing you to be hindered by the matter of the Frankish war, do not reckon that you will advance any closer to my lord's assistance." But Rollo bestowed upon the king's ambassador whatever was needed and ordered him to wait for three days. And he began to examine with the assembled magnates what to do about the matter.

And at once he has sent to the princes of the city either to surrender it to him or to give him hostages or to prepare themselves for a diligent defence. However the citizens have not been willing to surrender the town to him or to give him hostages, but they are hastening to prepare themselves for the battles of the coming day. Truly, rising at dawn at the time of the continuous conflict, Rollo has begun the day's combat and, for an entire day, has cast down citizens in battle. Seeing, however, that he has not captured the town through battle, at nightfall he has equipped his ships with sails and has left Paris behind and has come as quickly as he could to the land of the Angles, with king Athelstan's ambassador. And he has sent that ambassador to the king and has notified him that he is there to help. Then king Athelstan, gladdened by the ambassador's words, has called for his abundantly large army and has proceeded hastily to meet duke Rollo. The two have met, embraced and kissed extremely amicably.

Immediately, Rollo has begun to address the king in a gracious voice: "I render to you, lord king, completely deserved thanks, for you sent to me among the Walgri twelve ships filled with distinguished warriors and the same number loaded with grain and wine and lard." Then the king has said in a prophetic voice: "I owe you the very greatest thanks for, because of me, you left behind a realm given to you by God and hastily came to my assistance. You are not ignorant of the reason why I have sent for you to aid me? This realm, which I rule and profit, is being layed waste, and the dignity of my rule being brought to nothing, for the Angles, elated and corrupted by rash haughtiness, are unwilling to obey my commands. Falling away from me, they have conspired among themselves and, rejecting me and my service, account me of slight value, indeed even snatch for themselves the profits of my small towns.¹⁷ Thus I pray you to help me dash them to pieces and scatter them and crush them and tread down their insolent strength, so that they be brought back, even if unwilling, to my service and sharply undergo whatever punishment they deserve. Therefore I will give you the moiety of my realm, and I will of my own accord grant you half the store of all my household furnishings. And, thus bound by an indestructible alliance of united friendship, let us together hold the

¹⁷Oppida.

realm and administer its goods, and those of the whole office.”¹⁸ Thus, king Athelstan has given Rollo half the realm, and the moiety of his own goods.

Duke Rollo has immediately replied to the king: “It is for you, lord king, to command, and for me to obey. I will crush whomever you wish, I will destroy whomever you may desire. I will destroy their large towns and I will set fire to their villas and small towns, I will trample and scatter them, I will subordinate them to you and kill them, I will take their wives and offspring captive and I will devour their herds.” Having mutually brought these discussions to a close, they proceed (of one mind) against the Angles who are opposing the king. Truly, Rollo has prosecuted many battles against the Angles and has besieged their towns. He has pillaged many of those towns, consumed by fire. Moreover the Angles, seeing that they have not been prevailing against the king but, failing, have been being destroyed, have come to Rollo and have said on bended knees: “Mightiest of the Dacians, we are prepared¹⁹ to be reconciled and united with king Athelstan for, inadvisedly, we have transgressed against the king, rupturing the ties of fidelity which we had promised him. We will give him sureties²⁰ that our trust will be preserved and faithfully serve him from now on, devoting ourselves to him of our own accord.”

Truly, hearing this, Rollo has gone to king Athelstan and announced to the king what the Angles had reported. Then the king, moved by the dutifulness of his one-time followers, has said: “If you so advise, my friend, I will accept them back into our service after they have given sureties, so that the state be scourged no longer.” Then Rollo: “Do accept those sureties, lord, that they will abide strictly by their promise to you; even I, a foreigner who does not know the customs of the Angles, will accept for myself sureties of lasting fidelity.” At once each offending Angle, obligingly bearing responsibility for the offence and the repentance, has given one pledge to the king and another to Rollo. And so, formerly lashed by Rollo, they have become calm, pacified by him as well. Moreover the king, estimating that Rollo will linger for all time in the English land, is specifically designating for Rollo the moiety of his realm, namely large towns and fortresses,²¹ villas and small towns,²² halls and palaces and his own household goods, yea indeed he is begging Rollo to allow himself to be redeemed in the sacred font and purified of his offences.

However Rollo, always mindful of his vision, has not assented to the king’s prayers. But, bringing his share of the sureties before the king, he has said with a serene countenance:

¹⁸Honor.

¹⁹Preferring the addition of “parati sumus” by BN nal 1031.

²⁰‘Obses’ can mean either surety/pledge, or hostage. Dudo sometimes uses feminine and sometimes masculine forms to modify the word. It appears that the guarantees given by the rebellious Angles consisted both of goods in general (for which Dudo uses the feminine) and of the male offspring of the rebels, who were given as hostages.

²¹Castra.

²²Oppida.

“I have, my lord king, returned like for like in return for the goods which you laid out for me in the territory of the Walgri. The realm which, beyond those goods, you have given me, I return to you with this sword, which has twelve pounds of gold in its hilt. Indeed, bid that the hostages who are mine by right, and who are right here, be taken back, being careful lest the treachery of their fathers and grandfathers, rejecting you, ensnare you again. I will swiftly return to Francia and destroy and crush, scatter and conquer my foes. I only pray that, should any men prefer to follow me, you not hold them back.” However the king, marvelling and giving thanks for these words, has said: “Most mighty duke, part of my soul, I will go with you. For you I will abase the king, dukes and counts.” Rollo has replied: “In no wise, lord, must you leave your realm, which you ought to rule and profit with continual aid.”

Amicably leaving the king, Rollo immediately comes across the deep to the Frankish realm with an indescribable multitude of assembled youths. Immediately dividing the counts of his army, he has sent some swiftly sailing to take booty from the provinces lying along the bed of the Seine, others along the flowing Loire, others along the torrent of the Gironde. However, coming himself once more to Paris, he has begun to storm the town and to lay waste the land of his foes. However king Charles, hearing that Rollo had subjugated the realm across the sea, so weakened by unsuitable wars, to the king and to himself, with the advice of the Franks asks bishop Franco of Rouen, now associated with Rollo, to come to him. Suffering greatly over the extreme poverty of his realm, he has said to the company of Franks, assembled in order to take counsel about the pagans’ great insolence, and to bishop Franco, who has already been called: “The realm which I to rule is deserted. The land is not rent by the plough, the state is both taken captive and destroyed. I am unable to hinder Rollo, for I am daily deprived of my followers. Wherefore am I asking and deprecating your paternal holiness to obtain for us from Rollo a negotiated peace of three months and if, perhaps, during that time he should wish to become a Christian, we will give him the very greatest favours²³ and repay him with great gifts.”

Truly Franco, having returned to Rouen after hearing this, has said to duke Rollo with must humble prayers: “The king of the Franks enjoins you to give them a three-month peace; perhaps some advantageous measure will be enacted between you and him.” Moreover, when he had heard this, with the deliberation of his followers Rollo gave the king a three-month pact. Truly for the interval of this very briefest time, the land was at rest from the pagans. However the Burgundians, namely Richard, and Ebalus count of Poitou, hearing that the unwarlike Franks, feeble in arms and almost womanish, had requested safety from Rollo, sent to the king and counts, saying: “Why do you allow the land you hold to be layed waste by pagans? Why do you not help those over whom you ought rule and whom you ought to profit? And why do you not resist this nation,

²³Beneficia.

banished from its own territory? If you would like, we will aid you and will willingly be at your side if perchance some war should assail you." But the Franks, irritated by these insolent words, began to wage war again on the pagans once the term of the peace had run out.

At once Rollo, reckoning that he was counted cheap by the Franks because of the safety which he had given them, began to mangle and destroy and obliterate the populace, by savagely and cruelly laying waste their provinces. His followers, however, proceeding into Burgundy and sailing through the Yonne into the Séone and, laying waste the lands adjacent to those torrents on all sides all the way to Clermont-Ferrand, attacked the province of Sens²⁴ and, pillaging all around, came back to meet Rollo at St.-Benoît-sur-Loire. Rollo, however, seeing the monastery of St. Benoît, was unwilling to defile it, nor did he suffer that province to be pillaged because of St. Benedict. Indeed, going to Etampes he ruined all the nearby land, took very many captives, took booty from neighbouring lands, coming thence to Villemeux, and then hastened to return to Paris.

But, seeing the strongest Frankish fighting men and the fiercest Burgundian combatants entirely annihilated, rustics, assembling an incomprehensibly numerous multitude fruitlessly bearing unaccustomed arms, are trying to attack Rollo. However Rollo, looking back, has seen the air full of dust and thickly clouded by the repeated charge of foot-soldiers; he has said to his assembled leaders: "A crowd, whether of foot-soldiers or horsemen I know not, is following us; let our foot-soldiers swiftly make for the road, while the horsemen remain with us, so that we might see how much courage they have, those who wish to ruin us." However as Rollo waits with the horsemen, the rustics, horsemen with foot-soldiers, have drawn near. At once Rollo has rushed upon the villagers²⁵, and has overthrown and crushed them to their utter destruction by a cruel violent death. The great carnage completed, he has gone back to his followers.

But afterwards, burning with a great fury and inflamed²⁶ with passion towards his foes, Rollo has made like an enemy for the city of Chartres and has remained with a great army, laying waste the county of Dunois and the Chartrain.²⁷ But a certain most religious bishop, named Uualtelmus, has had charge of the town. He, lamenting and wailing and earnestly engaging in uninterrupted prayers, has sent for Richard duke of the Burgundians and for Ebalus count of Poitou to come, for the love of God, to the assistance of that town, fallen prey to imminent death.

²⁴The river Yonne, a tributary of the Seine, leads into Burgundy, through Sens and Auxerre, to rise in the heart of that province in the Morvan mountains near Autun. However, the Yonne does not intersect the Séone nor does the Séone lead to Clermont-Ferrand, nor does Clermont-Ferrand lie in Burgundy, but rather in the Auvergne.

²⁵Villani.

²⁶Preferring the 'flagrans' of Rouen 1173 and other witnesses.

²⁷The county of Dunois, with its seat at Châteaudun, lies immediately to the south of the Chartrain, the region around Chartres.

The Liberation of Chartres

However, he has also sent ambassadors with this sorrowful message to the Franks. Keeping close to count Richard, they have swiftly attacked Rollo, who was then battling around the walls of Chartres. But, struggling valiantly against them, Rollo has rushed steadily upon them and has vanquished them in his accustomed manner in the first effort of the war. But the Franks and the Burgundians, recovering their strength and taking the risk a second time, attack Rollo, who is roughly opposing them. Therefore, with very many Christians and pagans now fallen, each army has been standing its ground in the battle, procuring life for itself through exchanged blows, when suddenly bishop Uualtelmus, crowned with the episcopal mitre as though about to celebrate mass and carrying in his hands a cross and the tunic of the sacrosanct Virgin Mary, bounding forth from inside the city surrounded by iron-clad battle-lines and followed by the clergy with the citizens, lashes the backs of the pagans with spears and swords. Rollo, however, perceiving that he is now between two armies and is not prevailing, and that his followers are waning, has begun to turn away from them, passing through their midst, lest he fall prey to death.

Apostrophe

Rollo, mighty and powerful and vigorous and most fierce in arms,
Do not feel ashamed if you now are considered a runaway.
No Frankish or Burgundian assembly
Of manifold nations and hosts puts you to flight, fells you,
But the nourishing tunic of the Virgin mother of God and
Likewise amulets and relics and the reverend cross
Which the reverend prelate carries in his worthy hands.
Your will is still in your ability, as it was in the past,
And now your will and your ability shall go forward legally
And shall recognize, at this very moment, your human ability and will.
Your will shall now regard your ability as its ally
And your ability shall itself stand ready for your will as its ally.
And once these two, which had been separated, have been united,
You will either bring to pass, or not, whatever you will,
But without them, you will accomplish nothing.
Each often obtains its ally violently,
Each often resists its ally behind an impetuous barrier,
As nature, which endures the sad condition of a human creature
Because of its ally, preserves some harmony.

Another Apostrophe to Rollo

Fortune has harassed you with many complaints,
Whence you have endured many kinds of threats and very great hardships.
Forthwith will it thenceforth offer you better things, with everlasting success,
Joyous things will now follow so many rough ones, tolerated for so long.
After this you will gather in long-lasting joys, grief conquered.
Thus far hardship has driven you about, an author of war.
After these griefs you will have enough of the gifts of repose,
For indeed many rewards take form as a result of burdensome hardship.