Twitter Thread by Ranjith Kollannur



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A band of brothers who set out to conquer the countryside and ended up ruling half a country for a century.

Story in the evening ...

> Seizing the throne from his under age nephew, this young prince converted his kingdom into a military state with his innovations in warfare and consistent war efforts, setting its stage for global domination.
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> Story in the evening ... https://t.co/9EfejciI8s
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> — Ranjith Kollannur (@Arby_K) November 27, 2020

Tancred de Hauteville was a Norman noble who lived in Normandy in early 1000s. But this thread isn't about him, but his sons who went to Italy. Italy at the time was a divided peninsula, with Frankish, Lombard, Byzantine and Muslim rulers. 1/10



In 1017, invited by a rebellious Lombard noble in Byzantine Italy, the first set of Normans would clash with Basil Boioannes, Catepan of Byzantine Italy. Though the Byzantines woud win the Battle of Cannae, it would be the start of a period of Norman adventurism in Italy. 2/10



In 1030, as a reward for helping retake Naples, Duke Sergius would give Norman Rainulf Drengot the County of Aversa. It was for Rainulf's court that the sons of Tancred, Guillaume and Drogo, would depart in 1035. In 1038, they would join the Byzantine invasion of Sicily. 3/10



Guillaume would emerge as the leader of the Norman mercenaries during the Siege of Syracuse. In 1041, he would defeat the Byzantine contingent which included the Varangian Guards led by Harald Hardrada, future King of Norway, and become

the Count of Apulia. 4/10



As vassals of Salerno, Guillaume would be succeeded by his brother Drogo in 1046 and after his assassination by another brother, Onfroi. But as the Norman power grew, Pope Leo IX would organize an alliance to counter them in battle. 5/10



Onfroi would emerge victorious in the Battle of Civitate. He would be ably supported by his younger brother, Robert, and Rainulf Drengot's nephew, Richard. The following years would see Norman expansion in Italy, with Richard conquering Capua. 6/10



On Onfroi's death in 1057, Robert "Guiscard" would be elected as the new Count. Robert, with his younger brothers, would conquer most of the southern half of the Italian peninsula and Sicily, ejecting Byzantines in 1071 & Lombards in 1076, with the help of Richard of Capua. 7/10



In 1063, Roger, the youngest of the Hauteville brothers, would defeat Emirate of Sicily in battle initiating the conquest of the island. Acting as his brother's vassal initially, he would conquer the island in 1091 and follow it up with the conquest of Malta the same year. 8/10



With the Guiscard line ending in Apulia after couple of generations, Roger's grandson, would be crowned King of Sicily in 1130, to which he would add parts of North Africa. But by 1194, the Hauteville lines had ended, with the Holy Roman (German) Emperor conquering Sicily. 9/10



A son of Guiscard would created a Crusader state in Antioch that would last till 1268. But the kingdom the band of brothers created in Italy would persevere, divided into two at various times, till Giuseppe Garibaldi and his Expedition of the Thousand in 1860. 10/10

