

As I deem the eloquence of Cicero insufficient to praise him and remember the deeds of his great goodness, I, who am no one, would dread to attempt bearing a burden of such gravity that is still unknown to me in the present time<sup>68</sup>.

### Norman Africa: Dating the *Cronica*

Champollion-Figeac was sceptical that this final section of the text was originally part of the *Cronica*. For this reason, he suggested that the main body of the work was written during the conquest period. Michele Amari and then later Alex Heskell disagreed with this interpretation and considered the work to be a coherent whole. However, even if this epilogue was a later addition, then it and broader allusions to the kingdom would at least indicate that the existing work was put together after 1130 and before Roger II's death in February 1154. Nonetheless, as will now be shown, it is also tempting to suggest that a more precise dating argument can be drawn by reference to the Normans' military interventions in North Africa between 1123 and 1160.

Michele Amari believed that the *Cronica* described the Norman capture of Tripoli in June 1146 without reference to the capture of the city al-Mahdīya in July 1148: "I date [the text] to 1146, as it mentions the conquest of Tripoli, but not that of al-Mahdīya and the entire coastline, which followed 1148"<sup>69</sup>. Thus, Amari believed that the text had been composed between these two dates. This theory was accepted by Heskell who noted that: "Amari has referred to the year 1146, because the conquest of Tripolis (1146) is mentioned, but not that of al-Mahdīya and the whole seacoast (1148)"<sup>70</sup>.

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68) *Ad cuius laudes, et gesta probitatis singulariter referenda, quoniam Ciceronis eloquenciam insufficientem fuisse reputo, ego qui fere nullus sum tante gravitatis bonus michi adhuc incognitum in presenti temptare formido* (V fol. 298v).

69) AMARI, SMS<sup>2</sup> (as n. 1) 3,1 p. 27, n. 1: "Pongo la data 1146, poichè vi si accenna il conquisto di Tripoli, non quel di Mehdià e di tutta costiera che seguì il 1148".

70) ALEX HESKELL, *Die Historia Sicula des Anonymus Vaticanus und des Gaudfredus Malaterra. Ein Beitrag zur Quellenkunde für die Geschichte Unteritaliens und Siziliens im 11. Jahrhundert* (Diss. Kiel, 1891) p. 6: "Amari hat für dieselbe so etwa das Jahr 1146 in Anspruch genommen, weil zwar die Eroberung von Tripolis (1146), nicht aber die von Mehdià und der ganzen Seeküste (1148) erwähnt wird". CHARLES D. STANTON, *Anonymus Vaticanus: Another Source for the Normans in the South?*, *The Haskins Society Journal* 24 (2012) p. 79–93, at p. 84, translated the important phrase as: "Roger ... king of Sicily [and] the most powerful [ruler] of Tripoli in Africa ...".