

*consulare palatium* in Troina<sup>124</sup>; it describes how Elias Cartomensis learnt Norman customs through courtly circles<sup>125</sup>; and includes an example of the knightly practice of dubbing<sup>126</sup>. As has been seen, the anonymous author appears to have emulated language and royal titles commonly used in Roger II's Latin chancery and ended the *Cronica* with a panegyric honouring Roger II. Indeed, the text's narrative considers his reign in the wider context of the Hauteville's rise to power and their conquest of southern Italy and Sicily.

Nonetheless, it is important to consider that the *Cronica* lacks both a preface and a dedication meaning that there is no unequivocal evidence of the author's intention. Indeed, this can be said of a majority of Rogerian-era texts. The king seldom appears in more than the beginning or ending of such works, and evidence for his (or his administration's) direct involvement is confined to the works of Neilos Doxapatres<sup>127</sup>, al-Idrīsī<sup>128</sup>, and al-Ḥanash<sup>129</sup>. However, even within these

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124) V fol. 294r col. I: *Qui tota die pugnando postquam (plusquam V) nichil proficerant immodicam fossam inter consulare palacium et reliquam partem civitatis consulis adventum metuentes tota nocte fabricaverunt.*

125) V fol. 297v col. II: *Helyas, qui prius fuerat Sarracenus, sed tunc fide catholicus [sic] et gentilis gentis extirpator magnanimus, usum milicie iuxta morem Normannorum satis curialiter electus.*

126) V fol. 290r cols. I–II: *Ut vero Guillelmus et Drogus qui priores natu habebantur in etate idonea pervenerunt, multiplicatis in eis tam viribus corporis quam virtute animi, arma militaria a patre suo acceperunt et ab eodem honorifice, ut tales et tanto viro genitos decebat, milites ordinati sunt.*

127) "My most all-noble lord, concerning the matter about which you wrote to me, I recall that I wrote to your highness when I was in the castle of Palermo, although it was not as broad-ranging as what you have now asked ... I shall try as succinctly as possible to clearly set out in writing everything that has been commanded of me", cited and trans. in: James MORTON, *A Byzantine Canon Law Scholar in Norman Sicily: Revisiting Neilos Doxapatres's Order of the Patriarchal Thrones*, *Speculum* 92 (2017) p. 724–754, at p. 724.

128) "[Roger] commanded that a book be written ... of the nature of the countries and the lands, their nature and nations and places and situation of the lands, their seas and mountains, their crops, the sorts of buildings and the other peculiarities found there, the employments of men in each, the merchandise that was imported to and exported from each, the marvels that were reported and related about each, and where it was in the seven climate zones, along with reports about the condition of its people: their appearance, their nature, their faith, their clothing and ornaments, their languages. And he ordered the book be called the *Kitāb nu-zhat al-mushtāq*", trans. in: MALLETT, *The Kingdom of Sicily* (as n. 119) p. 146f.

129) "[George of Antioch] ordered one of [Roger's] secretaries, called al-Ḥanash ('the Snake'), to compile a biography of him", trans. in: JOHNS, *Arabic Administration* (as n. 84) p. 82. It has also been argued that the so-called 'Madrid