

texts, there is little evidence to suggest that Arabic or Greek speakers in the royal *dīwān* exerted a strong influence over their textual content. For example, al-Idrīsī's claim that King Roger II was guided by the righteousness of his religion may have been a subversive criticism of the king¹³⁰, and Neilos Doxapatres reasoned that the patriarchate of Constantinople should have primacy over Christendom (thus implying that this jurisdiction should also extend to Sicily and southern Italy)¹³¹. Comparable examples are found in other texts. Despite being a plea for readmission to the royal court addressed to George of Antioch, the *Tristia ex Melitogaudo* characterised the king as a capricious peacock who comes to realise how his wealth and power are based upon insecure foundations¹³². The poet al-Atrābanishī described the Favara palace using the language of division and separation and described it as harbouring the *abl al-abwā'* – this ambiguous term

Skylitzes' (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. Graec. Vitr. 26-2) was copied in Messina under the direction of George of Antioch in the 1140s. Nonetheless, this conclusion has failed to command scholarly support. See Santo LUCÀ, *I Normanni e la 'rinascita' del secolo XII*, Archivio storico per la Calabria e la Lucania 60 (1993) p. 1–91, particularly p. 36–63; Santo LUCÀ, *Dalle collezioni manoscritte di Spagna: libri originari o provenienti dall'Italia greca medievale*, Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici 44 (2007) p. 38–96, particularly p. 78–80; Elena N. BOECK, *Imagining the Byzantine Past: The Perception of History in the Illustrated Manuscripts of Skylitzes and Manasses* (2015), particularly p. 69–71. Other studies have proposed a range of dates between the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries: Kurt WEITZMANN, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex. A Study of the Origin and Method of Text Illustration* (Studies in Manuscript Illumination 2, 1947) p. 42–55; Vera von FALKENHAUSEN, *Friedrich II. und die Griechen im Königreich Sizilien*, in: Friedrich II. Tagung des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom im Gedenkjahr 1994, hg. von Arnold Esch / Norbert Kamp (Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom 85, 1996) p. 235–262, especially p. 244; Vasiliki TSAMAKDA, *The Illustrated Chronicle of Ioannes Skylitzes in Madrid* (2002) p. 15–19; John Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057*, trans. by John WORTLEY (2010) p. xxx–xxxiii; Vasiliki TSAMAKDA, *Historical Writings*, in: *A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts*, ed. by eadem (Brill's Companions to the Byzantine World 2, 2017) p. 114–135.

130) Alex METCALFE, *Muslims and Christians in Norman Sicily: Arabic-Speakers and the End of Islam* (Culture and Civilization in the Middle East, 2003) p. 101f.

131) For an analysis of this, see MORTON, *A Byzantine Canon Law Scholar in Norman Sicily* (as n. 127) p. 737–742. Here, Morton noted that “it must be emphasized that Roger did *not* ask Neilos to write the work. Roger clearly asked questions and demanded a response, but this by no means implies that he told Neilos exactly what to write or how to write it”, *ibid.* p. 738f.

132) For such criticisms of Roger II, see *Tristia ex Melitogaudo* (as n. 119) p. 34–39. For the likening of the king to a peacock, see *ibid.* p. 98–103.