

may refer to “people of love”, but can also denote capriciousness and vanity and can be used to describe followers of Islam whose religious tenants border on heresy¹³³. Jeremy Johns has even suggested that Muslim officials in the *dīwān* disguised criticisms of the king in their ‘ālamāt (programmatically and difficult-to decipher Arabic signatures) which they used on royal documents¹³⁴.

This certainly raises a number of questions that not only concern the extent to which Roger II and his administration directly participated in such projects. It is also unclear who the intended recipients of such texts were, and also who would have been able to understand their linguistic and cultural nuances. Indeed, there is some debate as to the king’s level of literacy. Alexander of Telesē may have praised his fastidious attention to the kingdom’s accounts, but he also noted that he was educated by his mother – a remark which would seem to imply that he had received no formal education¹³⁵. Indeed, in 1117 Roger confirmed a privilege by substituting his signature for a cross, and may have traced an autograph of 1124 from a temple¹³⁶. Moreover, a range of source material suggests that Roger II’s chief ministers Christodoulos (d. c. 1125) and George of Antioch were fluent in Greek and Arabic, but it is unclear whether, or to what extent, they accessed Latin or had mastered a literary level of Greek or Arabic¹³⁷. Such debates feed into a wider discourse concerning the reception of the kingdom’s cultural works. Namely, it seems highly unlikely that individuals could have accessed inscriptions and visual imagery across Arabic, Greek, and Latin. Thus, rather than an expression of unity, royal art and architecture appear to have literally depicted or, at least was unable to overcome, the kingdom’s division and separation. In such a respect, Amari may have been correct to assume that, vis-à-vis comparable examples, the *Cronica* may have held a special significance for King Roger or the kingdom’s growing number of Latin lords.

133) Ignaz GOLDZIEHER, *Ahl al-ahwā’*, in: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* 1, ed. by Peri Bearman / Thierry Bianquis / Clifford E. Bosworth / Emeri Johannes Van Donzel / Wolfhart P. Heinrichs (1960) p. 257.

134) JOHNS, *The Bible, the Qur’ān* (as n. 112) p. 567.

135) *Alexandri Telesini abbatis ystoria* (as n. 91) I,3 p. 7f.

136) This has been discussed in: METCALFE, *Muslims and Christians* (as n. 130) p. 102–104, 111–113. This is in contrast to his son and successors, see *ibid.* p. 102–106.

137) For a discussion herein, see JOHNS, *Arabic Administration* (as n. 84) p. 80–84.