

As a Latin conquest history of the Hauteville family, the *Cronica*'s themes and language would have been more likely to be understood by Roger than the kingdom's Arabic or Greek facets which continue to pose a series of linguistic and cultural challenges even for experts. Moreover, as one of the only texts which may have been understandable to the king and his *nobiles*, its genre and content carry an obvious importance to the embryonic kingdom. Contemporaneously, the events of the Second Crusade (1147–1149) had redefined how religious warfare was perceived and practised in the Latin West, Byzantium, and the Islamic world. At the same time, Roger's expeditions in Ifrīqiya marked the Hautevilles' first victories in Muslim-held lands since the Norman conquest of Sicily, at a time in which the forces of 'Latinisation' had begun to increasingly consolidate their hold over Sicily at the expense of its Muslim communities¹³⁸. Such processes were chronicled from the vantage of the thirteenth century by Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233) who traced the decline of Muslim life on the island to the apostasy trial against the courtier Philip of al-Mahdiyya (d. > 1154) which, so he claimed, was personally conducted by the king¹³⁹. For Romuald of Salerno, Roger II's last years were occupied by his efforts to convert Jews and Muslims to Christianity¹⁴⁰, and Odo of Deuil (d. 1162) maintained that Roger had even offered to join the Second Crusade¹⁴¹. Indeed, from the twelfth century, legal documents began

138) METCALFE, *Muslims of Medieval Italy* (as n. 46) p. 221–227.

139) For a new analysis of these events, see Theresa JÄCKH, *Verbrechen und Strafe im normannisch-staufischen Königreich Sizilien: Der Fall des Philipp von al-Mahdiyya*, *DA* 76 (2020) p. 23–60. This has also been explored in: JOHNS, *Arabic Administration* (as n. 84) p. 215–218; Joshua C. BIRK, *Norman Kings of Sicily and the Rise of the Anti-Islamic Critique: Baptized Sultans* (2016) p. 139–172.

140) Romualdi Salernitani *Chronicon* (A. m. 130–A. C. 1178), a cura di Carlo A. GARUFI (*RIS*² 7/1, 1928) p. 236: *Circa finem autem vite sue secularibus negotiis aliquantulum postpositis et ommissis, Iudeos et Sarracenos ad fidem Christi convertere modis omnibus laborabat, et conversis dona plurima et necessaria conferebat*. Romuald further noted that Roger inspired dread in the Greeks and Muslims, *ibid.* p. 237. Roger's apparent later piety was also reflected on by the author of the *Annales Palidenses* who claimed that he became a monk before his death. *Annales Palidenses auctore Theodoro monacho* (as n. 91) p. 88 (§ 3): *Denique insertus ordini monachorum artissime viventium, quo ante profecerat in seculo, eo amplius ex tunc placere studuit Christo, et post modicum defunctus feliciter mundi huius erummas evasit*.

141) Odo of Deuil, *De profectione Ludovici VII in orientem*, ed. with an English Translation by Virginia Gingerick BERRY (1948) p. 10f. For questions concerning crusading in Norman southern Italy, see Helene WIERUSZOWSKI, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily and the Crusades*, in: *A History of the Crusades* 2: