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# The *Cronica Roberti Biscardi et fratrum ac Rogerii Comitis Mileti*: New Considerations on a ‘Forgotten’ Source for the Norman Conquests in Southern Italy and Sicily

By

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## Introduction

In his *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia*, Michele Amari (d. 1889) drew on a Latin text which described the Norman conquests in southern Italy and Sicily. In doing so, he noted that, while its narrative related events in much the same way as the *De rebus gestis* of Geoffrey Malaterra (d. < 1101), he believed it to be an important source for the history of the Normans in the south. In particular, he stressed that it may have been written in Sicily during the reign of its first king, Roger II (r. as count of Sicily 1105–1130, thereafter as king of Sicily 1130–1154). As such, Amari posited that it would appear to offer a unique mid-twelfth century perspective on the events of fifty years earlier, and represent the only Latin chronicle of its type to have been produced on the island of Sicily during the time of the Norman kingdom<sup>1</sup>.

Up until the early twentieth century, scholars routinely consulted the source. However, in recent years, it has gained a reputation as a problematic text. Due to similarities with the *De rebus gestis* of Geoffrey Malaterra, it has been dismissed as a ‘derivate 13<sup>th</sup>-century

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1) Michele AMARI, *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia* (hereafter SMS<sup>2</sup>), 3 vols. (1854–1872, repr. and ed. by Carlo Alfonso Nallino, 1933–1939) 3,1 p. 27, n. 1.

work' and has been largely ignored within historiographical debate<sup>2</sup>. However, to a large extent, critical disregard of the source is intimately connected with long-held questions concerning the text's narrative. This article will seek to explain these misconceptions and address these concerns via a deliberately selective approach. With an eye to how the text's manuscript tradition preserves processes of textual evolution and change, it will draw upon textual evidence to elucidate long-standing questions of dating and authorship<sup>3</sup>. In doing so, it will seek to move beyond analysing the text by reference to its usefulness as a source for chronological questions alone. Rather, by considering its broader implications, this article will suggest that a new investigation cannot only resolve vexed questions regarding the source itself, but also shed new light on key debates concerning the historiography of both the Norman conquests and the emergence and consolidation of the Norman kingdom after 1130.

### Title and Editions

The text was first published in Giovanni Battista Caruso's (d. 1724) *Bibliotheca Historica Regni Siciliae* of 1723, as the *Anonymi Historia Sicula a Normannis ad Petrum Aragonensem*<sup>4</sup>. Three years later, Ludovico Antonio Muratori (d. 1750) modified this title to *Anonymi Vaticani Historia Sicula* in his draft papers for the *Rerum Italicarum scriptores*<sup>5</sup>. Yet, in the printed edition of 1726, it appeared as *Anonymi Vaticani Historia Sicula ad Petrum Aragonensem*<sup>6</sup>. The text continues to be best-known by this title even if neither Caruso's nor Muratori's titles have any support in the manuscript tradition.

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2) See the introduction in: Amatus of Montecassino, *The History of the Normans*, trans. and comm. by Prescott DUNBAR / Graham A. LOUD (2004) p. 18.

3) For an overview of the textual narrative, see John ASPINWALL / Alex METCALFE, *Norman Identity and the Anonymous Historia Sicula*, in: *Sicily: Heritage of the World*, ed. by Dirk Booms / Peter Higgs (British Museum Research Publications 222, 2020) p. 115–123. A new edition and English translation of the text is currently in preparation by John Aspinwall, Alex Metcalfe, and John Thorley.

4) *Anonymi Historia Sicula a Normannis ad Petrum Aragonensem*, ed. Giovanni B. CARUSO, in: *Bibliotheca Historica Regni Siciliae* 2 (1723) p. 829–859.

5) Modena, Biblioteca Estense universitaria, Archivio Muratori 19.13.a fol. 13v.

6) *Anonymi Vaticani Historia Sicula a Normannis ad Petrum Aragonensem*, ed. Ludovico A. MURATORI, in: *RIS*<sup>1</sup> 8 (1726) p. 740–780.

The oldest Latin manuscript, Vat. lat. 6206 (hereafter V), dates to the mid-fourteenth or early-fifteenth century and has no title<sup>7</sup>. Indeed, the only Latin manuscripts to have titles are early modern. In the sixteenth-century Vat. lat. 4936 (hereafter V<sup>1</sup>), the text is called the *Cronica Roberti Biscardi, ac fratrum, ac Rogerii Comitis Mileti*<sup>8</sup>; in a copy dated to 1548, Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS. XXII.52 (hereafter N), the *Chronica Roberti Viscardi, et fratrum, ac Rogerii Comitis Mileti*<sup>9</sup>; in the sixteenth- or seventeenth-century Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS. lat. 5911 (hereafter P<sup>1</sup>), the *Cronica Roberti Biscardi et fratrum ac Rogerii Comitis Mileti*<sup>10</sup>; in the sixteenth- or seventeenth-century Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS. lat. 6176 (hereafter P<sup>2</sup>), the *Chronica Roberti Biscardi et fratrum ac Rogerii Comitis Mileti*<sup>11</sup>; in the seventeenth-century Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, V.G. 31 (hereafter N<sup>1</sup>), the *Cronica di Roberto Guiscardo*, the *Chronica de Normanni o Guiscardi come nel seguente Indice si registra*, and the *Chronica Roberti Viscardi et fratrum ac Rogerii Comitis Mileti*<sup>12</sup>; in a seventeenth-century Italian translation preserved in Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, MS. 277 (hereafter R), the *Cronache di Roberto Biscardi et fratelli. ed Rugerio Conte di Mileto*<sup>13</sup>. The text's Middle-French translation, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS. fr. 688 (hereafter P), dates from the mid- to late-fourteenth century and is split into two books which are individually denominated in rubric<sup>14</sup>. The first book is titled, *De. iiii. noble Baron de Normendie, liquel estoit pere Robert*. The second, *Ci se comence secont [livre] de l'amirabile duc Viscart. [capitule] .i*<sup>15</sup>. This translation was also described as the *Ystoire* by Amatus of Montecassino's (d. < c. 1080)<sup>16</sup> fourteenth-century translator<sup>17</sup>. Despite this, Jacques Joseph Champollion-Figeac (d. 1867)

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7) Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 6206 fols. 290r col. I–298v col. II.

8) Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 4936 fols. 1r–27v.

9) Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale “Vittorio Emanuele III”, MS. XXII.52 fols. 1r–33r.

10) Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS. lat. 5911 fols. 1r–45v.

11) Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS. lat. 6176 fols. 31r–76r.

12) Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale “Vittorio Emanuele III”, V.G. 31 fols. 1r–34v.

13) Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, MS. 277 fols. 147r–165r.

14) Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS. fr. 688 fols. 199r col. I–212v col. II.

15) P fol. 199r col. I.

16) Amatus of Montecassino, *The History of the Normans* (as n. 2) p. 19–21.

17) Aimé du Mont-Cassin, *Ystoire de li Normant*. Edition du manuscrit BnF

adapted the Latin titles of the early modern manuscripts for his 1835 edition of the Middle-French text. In doing so, he referred to the text as *La chronique du Robert Viscart et de ses Frères*<sup>18</sup>.

An immediate concern is that the text has no single title, but has instead accumulated a variety of competing titles since the early modern period. A key problem with this is that Caruso's and Muratori's titles are misleading. Whereas the medieval manuscripts conclude during the reign of King Roger II, the early-modern manuscripts continue into the thirteenth century. By referencing this continuation in the title of their editions, Caruso, and later Muratori, began a long-standing tradition in which this later section was unquestioningly seen as a constituent part of the text. As will be demonstrated, this cannot be assumed. Neither are the titles *Historia Sicula* or *Anonymus Vaticanus* any more helpful. While the eighteenth-century editions only relied on the Vatican manuscripts, the text survives in manuscript versions outside the Vatican Library, and *Historia Sicula* is the title of numerous other texts<sup>19</sup>. As such, it would be helpful if a suitable modern title were to be established.

It is immediately striking that the early-modern and the Middle-French witnesses all refer to Robert Guiscard and allude to the other Hauteville brothers. In view of this, it seems reasonable to assume that, if the text had ever been assigned a title, it may have referred to its main protagonists. As such, in the absence of any more credible alternatives, the text's title will be based on the one title that is common to nearly all the early-modern manuscripts and which also draws some support from the Middle-French translation: *The Cronica Roberti Biscardi et fratrum ac Rogerii Comitis Mileti*.

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fr. 688, par Michèle GUÉRET-LAFERTÉ (*Les classiques français du Moyen Âge* 166, 2011) V,27 p. 407 and V,28 p. 411.

18) *L'Ystoire De Li Normant et La Chronique de Robert Viscart*, par Aimé, moine du Mont-Cassin, par Jacques Joseph CHAMPOLLION-FIGEAC (1835) p. 261–313.

19) For example, Bartholomaei de Neocastro *Historia Sicula* (aa. 1250–1293) a cura di Giuseppe PALADINO (RIS<sup>2</sup> 13/3, 1921–1922); Nicolai Specialis *Historia Sicula ab anno MCCLXXXII. ad annum MCCCXXXVII.*, in: *Bibliotheca Scriptorum qui res in Sicilia gestas sub Aragonum imperio retulere ... 1. Instruxit adornavit atque edidit Rosario GREGORIO (1791) p. 283–508; Michaelis Platiensis *Historia Sicula ab anno MCCCXXXVII. ad annum MCCCLXI.*, *ibid.* 2 (1792) p. 1–106; *Anonymi Historia Sicula*, *ibid.* p. 269–423.*

## Textual Narrative and Continuation

All versions of the *Cronica* begin with an account of the origins of the Hauteville kin-group in Normandy. Here, the *Cronica* recalls how the “noble” (*nobilis*) and pious Tancred de Hauteville raised his sons and dubbed them as knights, before they elected to leave Normandy for Apulia, despite their love for their *patria*<sup>20</sup>. The text then traces the early exploits of the Normans in southern Italy and Sicily under their leaders William ‘Iron Arm’ (r. as duke and master of Italy, and count of all the Normans in Apulia and Calabria 1042–1046), Drogo (r. as duke and master of Italy, and count of all the Normans in Apulia and Calabria 1046–1051)<sup>21</sup>, and Humphrey (r. as count of Apulia and Calabria 1051–1057) by recalling their mercenary careers for the princes of Capua and Salerno, their participation in the ill-fated Maniakes expedition and, finally, their establishment of strongholds on the mainland around Melfi. Here, the anonymous author stressed that the Normans were God-sent deliverers from the chaos of Byzantine rule<sup>22</sup>, and “Muslim wickedness” (*Sarracenicæ pravitatis*)<sup>23</sup>. True to form, their successors, Robert Guiscard (r. as duke of Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily 1059–1085) and Roger I (r. as count of Sicily 1071–1101), waged war against “pagan darkness” (*pagana caligo*) in Sicily<sup>24</sup>. Robert Guiscard was regarded as the “glory of the Norman people”<sup>25</sup>, while following his death at Mileto, Roger I was received by God to sit among the blessed<sup>26</sup>. In all the text’s manuscripts the account of the conquest period is followed by a rare reference to Adelaide del Vasto (r. as regent of Sicily 1101–1112, thereafter queen consort of Je-

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20) V fol. 290r col. II.

21) For a discussion of the title, *dux et magister Italiae comesque Normannorum totius Apuliae et Calabriae*, see Ferdinand CHALANDON, *Histoire de la domination normande en Italie et en Sicile* 1 (1907) p. 110, n. 3.

22) V fol. 290v col. I.

23) V fol. 290r col. I.

24) V fol. 292r col. II.

25) Indeed, the anonymous author dedicated his only piece of verse to Guiscard: *Optimus ille ducum Normanne gloria gentis, / miles milicie decus, exemplum probitatis, / viribus expertus validis, animoque Robertus / Biscardus cunctis animosior atque secundus / nulli* (V fol. 292r col. II).

26) Concerning the death of Roger I, the text notes: *tandem necessaria humane conditionis lege naturalem in ea dissolucionem operante, illam illuxtram animam tanta conlustracione ut meritorum* (N fol. 29v inserts: *agmine insignitam ad desiderata beatorum*) *collegia ante conspectum divine magestatis expirando delegavit* (V fol. 298v col. I).

rusalem 1112–1117) and the short reign of Simon (r. as count of Sicily 1101–1105) who, so the anonymous author claims, was faced with difficulties in Apulia<sup>27</sup>. Thereafter, they chart the succession of Roger II who would become the *rex Sicilie Tripolis Africe potentissimus*<sup>28</sup>. The medieval manuscripts (V and P) close with a first-person epilogue in which the anonymous author claims that even Cicero would not have been able to sufficiently praise King Roger's virtues<sup>29</sup>.

In V, this self-referential passage is closed by a final exhortation adapted from St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: "Truly I say to you, while we have opportunity, let us do good works to all"<sup>30</sup>. Immediately after this, a break of two blank lines separates the text from a version of the so-called *Annales Siculi*. This begins with an account of a semi-legendary Muslim raid on Syracuse in 1027, and stretches up until Charles of Anjou's (r. as king of Sicily 1266–1285) invasion of Sicily in 1265.

All the *Cronica*'s early modern manuscripts include a 1,266-word section that extends the narrative from the mid-1100s up until Peter of Aragon's (r. as king of Sicily 1282–1285) conquest of the island. This continuation begins with the death of Count Roger I in 1101 (around fifty years before the last event mentioned in the preceding part of the *Cronica*), and continues up until the Aragonese conquest of the island in 1282. However, the continuation is stylistically distinct from the preceding narrative and has no basis in the medieval manuscript tra-

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27) For Adelaide see n. 57. Concerning the reign of Simon, the text describes how following the death of Roger, *Simon filiorum primogenitus regimem consulatus accepit. Qui per paucos vivens annos graves ab Apulis mutationes/inritaciones (?) sustinuit* (V fol. 298v col. II). Cf. the readings given in V<sup>1</sup> fol. 24v, and N fol. 29v whereby *mutationes/inritaciones* is replaced by *inquietaciones* and *infectiones* respectively.

28) V fol. 298v col. II. As p. 590f.

29) See below p. 587f. The *Cronica*'s concluding passage is also found as a continuation to Malaterra's *De rebus gestis* in a fifteenth-century manuscript held in the Bibliothèque municipale de Besançon (MS 675 fol. 98r, hereafter B); in a fourteenth-century manuscript of the Società Siciliana per la Storia Patria in Palermo (MS I B 28 fol. 29v, hereafter Pan), and in a sixteenth-century manuscript from the Biblioteca Comunale in Palermo (MS. Qq. E.165 fols. 137v–138r, hereafter Pan<sup>1</sup>). These passages were adapted by the author of the *Epistola fratris Conradi*, a manuscript copy of which is preserved in Palermo, Biblioteca Comunale, MS. Qq. D.47 fols. 89r–v (hereafter Pan<sup>2</sup>). The author is currently preparing a new critical edition and English translation of the text which will be published in 2024.

30) *Amen dico vobis dum tempus habetis operamini bonum ad omnes* (V fol. 298v col. II). The Middle-French translation ends with the words: *Explicit liber. Deo gratias* (P fol. 212v col. II; Chronique de Robert Viscart [as n. 18] p. 313).

dition. In the early modern manuscripts, V<sup>1</sup>, P<sup>1</sup>, P<sup>2</sup>, and R, the text is seamlessly attached to the preceding part of the *Cronica*<sup>31</sup>. However, that the two texts are unconnected (or were not thought by medieval and early modern copyists and editors to be linked), is indicated by the fact that in N and N<sup>1</sup> the text comes after a line-break in the Latin<sup>32</sup>. Moreover, a colophon in V<sup>1</sup> implies that questions concerning the connection between the texts had also been specifically reflected on by a later commentator<sup>33</sup>.

While not part of the *Cronica*'s narrative, the continuation is nonetheless notable for its report on the governance of George of Antioch (d. 1151/52) who is said to have instructed Roger II and governed the "realm of Italy" (*regnum Italiae*) from Palermo<sup>34</sup>, and includes an early reference to King William I (r. 1154–1166) as 'the bad' because of "his tyranny over the entire church that destroyed the people of God", and to King William II (r. 1166–1189) as "the good, who reverently built many churches for God and the honour of saints such as Santa Maria at Monreale"<sup>35</sup>. The text is also significant for its focus on Frederick II (r. as king of Sicily 1198–1250, and Holy Roman Emperor 1220–1250), and notably claims that Joachim of Fiore (d. 1202)

31) V<sup>1</sup> fols. 24v–27v; P<sup>1</sup> fols. 41r–45v; P<sup>2</sup> fols. 71r–76r.

32) N fol. 29r; N<sup>1</sup> fol. 31v.

33) V<sup>1</sup> fol. iiiir: *Questo autore cita le croniche del Conte Ruggiero al fol. 24 e di Guglielmo il buono fol. 25 onde si vede che non è coetaneo.*

34) The complete passage reads: *Post mortem comitis Rogerii, comitis Mileti ... successit Rogerius sibi filius suus sub gubernatione Georgii Admirati existentis in civitate Panormi et dominabatur per totum regnum Italiae* (N fol. 29v and V<sup>1</sup> fol. 24v). For George of Antioch, see Léon-Robert MÉNAGER, *Amiratus – Ἀμυράτς. L'Émirat et les Origines de l'Amirauté (XI<sup>e</sup>–XII<sup>e</sup> siècles)* (1960) p. 44–54; Fulvio DELLE DONNE, *Giorgio d'Antiochia*, in: DBI 55 (2001) p. 347–350.

35) The author writes that Roger II died *relinquens in successorem suum legitimum Guilielmum malum qui sua tyrannide totam ecclesiam et Dei populum destruebat. De quo Guilielmo pessimo natus est Guilielmus bonus, qui multas ecclesias ad Dei et sanctorum reverenter honorem construxit, videlicet ecclesiam Sanctae Mariae de Monriale et quamplures alias* (N fol. 30r and V<sup>1</sup> fol. 25r). For the classic articles on these cognomens, albeit without the evidence from the continuation, see Horst ENZENSBERGER, *Der "böse" und der "gute" Wilhelm. Zur Kirchenpolitik der normannischen Könige von Sizilien nach dem Vertrag von Benevent (1156)*, DA 36 (1980) p. 385–432, in particular p. 386–396; Graham A. LOUD, *William the Bad or William the Unlucky? Kingship in Sicily 1154–1166*, *Haskins Society Journal* 8 (1996) p. 99–113. More recently, Pietro COLLETTA, *Genesi e tradizione del mito di Guglielmo II "re buono" (secc. XII–XIV)*, in: *Il Regno di Sicilia in età normanna e sveva: Forme e organizzazioni della cultura e della politica*, a cura di Pietro Colletta / Teofilo De Angelis / Fulvio Delle Donne (*Mondi Mediterranei* 6, 2021) p. 49–107.

had predicted that Frederick's mother Constance (r. as queen of Sicily 1194–1198) had been made pregnant by the devil – the continuer explaining that the events of history justified this assumption<sup>36</sup>.

There are few clues as to who may have composed or compiled this continuation. The author supported the regnal claims of Charles of Anjou (r. as king of Sicily 1266–1282, thereafter contested until 1285) and frequently denounced rulers whom he perceived to have infringed on the rights of the South-Italian church – a point he emphasised by referring to them with the word *tyrannus*<sup>37</sup>. If such clues point to an ecclesiastic, a faint hint of his monastic connections may be contained in his reference to the French monks that Charles established at the Cistercian abbey of Santa Maria della Vittoria in the Abruzzi near Scurcola Marsicana<sup>38</sup>. If the author was indeed a Cistercian, this may explain his reference to the prophecies of Joachim of Fiore<sup>39</sup>. More certainly, the continuation's last datable event is for August 1282, and it makes no mention of the death of either Charles of Anjou (d. 7 January 1285) or Peter of Aragon (d. 11 November 1285). This might imply that it was assembled at some point between August 1282 and January 1285. This decisive period marked the beginning of the Sicilian Vespers (1282–1302) and the collapse of political unity between the south Italian mainland and Sicily – an event which may have influenced its composition.

### Authorship

The anonymous author who wrote the pre-continuatio section of the text left few biographical clues. He claimed that Count Roger I piously protected orphans, widows and the poor, while founding churches

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36) V<sup>1</sup> fols. 25r–v, and N fol. 31r.

37) This reading is found in: P<sup>1</sup> fol. 42v.

38) The Cistercian abbey of Santa Maria della Vittoria and its contingent of French monks has been discussed in Caroline BRUZELIUS, *Trying to Forget: The Lost Angevin Past of Italy*, in: *Memory and Oblivion: Proceedings of the XXIX<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the History of Art held in Amsterdam, 1–7 September 1996*, ed. by Wessel Reinink / Jeroen Stumpel (1999) p. 735–743; Maria Letizia DE SANCTIS, *L'abbazia di Santa Maria di Realvalle: una fondazione cistercense di Carlo I d'Angiò*, *Arte medieval* 7,1 (1993) p. 153–196.

39) Fulvio Delle Donne has identified references to Joachim's prophecies from around the 1260s, cf. *Breve chronicon de rebus Siculis*, ed. Fulvio DELLE DONNE (Edizione Nazionale dei Testi Mediolatini d'Italia 42, 2017) p. 10–15.

modelled on those of France<sup>40</sup>. The text's Middle-French translator recalled that Roger organised the church according to the customs of the religious orders of France<sup>41</sup>. Such allusions may refer to the establishment of the Cistercian order in the kingdom during the reign of King Roger II and offer a veiled hint as to the anonymous author's own monastic origins<sup>42</sup>. It can also be noted that the anonymous author's present-tense claim that Normandy memorialises Tancred de Hauteville's piety may indicate that he could claim a connection to the region<sup>43</sup>. This may also be inferred through his use of possessive determiners when talking about the *Normanni* which he does forty-five times in total<sup>44</sup>. He did not use possessive determiners when describing the *Latini* and, in three instances he attempted to differentiate between the *Normanni* and the *Latini*<sup>45</sup>.

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40) *Iuxta gallientum religiose atque decenter ordinando* (V fol. 298v col. I). Jakub Kujawiński has proposed that this reading should be amended to *juxta Gallie ritum*, see Jakub KUJAWIŃSKI, *Saved in Translation*. Vernacular translations from Paris, BNF, fr. 688, as witnesses of lost texts, manuscripts and readings, in: *Transmission of Knowledge in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by Outi Merisalo / Miika Kuha / Susanna Niiranen (Bibliologia 53, 2019) p. 115–129, at p. 121, n. 15.

41) *Et secont l'usage de France les ordena religioisement* (P fol. 212r col. II).

42) There is a large body of secondary literature on the establishment of the order in the kingdom. For example, Giovanni FIORE, *Della Calabria illustrata* 1 (1691) p. 139; G. OCCHIATO, *La SS. Trinità di Mileto e l'architettura normanna meridionale* (1977); Pietro DE LEO, *L'insediamento dei cistercensi nel „Regnum Siciliae“: i primi monasteri cistercensi calabresi*, in: *I cistercensi nel mezzogiorno medioevale*. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studio in occasione del IX centenario della nascita di Bernardo di Clairvaux (Martano – Latiano – Lecce, 25–27 febbraio 1991), a cura di Houbert Houben / Benedetto Vetere (Pubblicazioni del Dipartimento di Studi Storici dal Medioevo all'Età contemporanea 28, 1994), p. 317–352, at p. 320–328; Graham A. LOUD, *The Latin Church in Norman Italy* (2007) p. 486f.

43) *Quod tota Normandie cui maxime credendum est de hoc generaliter et sine aliqua contradictione et refertur et testatur* (V fol. 290r col. I).

44) V fol. 292v col. II; fol. 294r cols. I–II; fol. 294v cols. I–II; fol. 295r cols. I–II; fol. 296v cols. I–II; fol. 297r col. I; fol. 297v col. II; fol. 298r cols. I–II. Possessive determiners are used nine times in the Middle-French translation. *Chronique de Robert Viscart* (as n. 18) p. 279–281, 288–291.

45) In the first example, *Anonymus* explains how the Byzantines distrusted both the *Normannigenae* and the *tota Latina gens* (V fol. 296r col. II). On the same folio, he also speaks of the *Normanni* in contrast to *omne alii Latini*. In the third instance, *Anonymus* notes that Bari had never experienced Latin rule, while the name of the Normans was despised above all (*ante illa tempora Latine subiectionis ignaram super omnia Normanni nominis invidam*) (V fol. 294v col. II).

## A 'Sicilian' Text?

The *Cronica* contains few clues about the author's location or geographical frame of reference. However, *Anonymus* did claim that news of the Normans' first victories in Sicily<sup>46</sup> spread "from here beyond Faro" (presumably the Punta del Faro to the north east of Messina) in a speech placed in the mouth of Count Roger I<sup>47</sup>. With an eye to this, it is notable that the anonymous author referred to seventeen cities in Sicily and fourteen in mainland southern Italy. Of the fourteen on the mainland, he only described the geographical situation of Bari<sup>48</sup>.

Of the seventeen cities mentioned in Sicily, *Anonymus* only commented on the geographical situations of Trapani and Palermo. Concerning the former, the *Cronica* describes its natural and man-made fortifications, and a strip of pasturage that extended along a narrow spit into the sea. It notes that: "Trapani was built on the brow of a hill, and was so well defended naturally by a steep slope on all sides that the inhabitants never feared an attack by anybody at whatever time"<sup>49</sup>. In another section it describes how: "there was a plain near Trapani, long and surrounded by the sea almost on all sides. Since the people of Trapani did not have access to other places because the army prevented them, each day they led their cattle and their flocks here for pasture"<sup>50</sup>.

However, it is unlikely that these descriptions indicate that their author was familiar with either city: not only are they generically vague,

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46) For an overview of the first activities of the Normans on the island, see Alex METCALFE, *The Muslims of Medieval Italy* (The New Edinburgh Islamic Surveys, 2009) p. 88–111, particularly p. 93–95.

47) *Hic et ultra Farum* (V fol. 294r col. II).

48) V fol. 294v col. II.

49) *Erat autem Traianum in supercilio montis constitutum tantoque naturaliter ex omni parte precipitio munitum, quod nullius gentis, quandocumque foret, timere videbatur accessum* (V fol. 290v col. II). The anonymous author appears to be referring to the ancient settlement of Eryx which occupied Monte San Giuliano. This was referred to as 'Old Trapani' into the nineteenth century. See George DENNIS, *A Handbook for Travellers in Sicily: Including Palermo, Messina, Catania, Syracuse, Etna and the Ruins of Greek Temples* (Murray's Handbooks for Travellers, 1864) p. 159 col. II.

50) *Erat autem campus iuxta Trabulum in longitudinem porrectus fere undique a mari colluxtratus. Huc Trabulenses, quoniam ad alia prohibente exercitu sibi transitus non patebat, omni die boves et pecora sua pascenda deducebant* (V fol. 296r col. I).

but they also evoke Geoffrey Malaterra's description<sup>51</sup>. However, in the case of Palermo, the *Cronica* is the only narrative source of the Norman period to give an informed description of the city's fortified structures: "to remove the license for injuries, they quickly constructed two fortified *castra*, one next to the sea and the other in the place which is called Galca"<sup>52</sup>.

The *castrum iuxta mare*, refers to the *Castellammare* on the harbour which was probably built on a fortified Muslim-period structure that guarded the entrance to the port<sup>53</sup>. The word *Galca* may derive from the Arabic *halaqa* – to enclose or to encircle – and refers to the former acropolis upon which the Normans built their palace on the remains of Byzantine and Muslim-era structures<sup>54</sup>.

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51) De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae comitis et Roberti Guiscardis ducis fratris eius, auctore Gaufrido Malaterra monacho Benedictino, a cura di Ernesto PONTIERI (RIS<sup>2</sup> 5/1, 1925–1928) III,11 p. 62–64, at p. 63: *Ab hac eadem urbe strictior sinus terrae ab utroque latere, mari urgente, longius in mare porrigitur, paucis uberrimis abundans.*

52) *Ad removendam iniuriam [sic] licenciam duo fortissima castra, alterum iuxta mare, alterum in loco, qui dicitur Galca, brevi tempore constituerunt* (V fol. 295v col. I). See also *Chronique* de Robert Viscart (as n. 18) p. 296.

53) For this structure, see Pseudo Ugo Falcando, *De rebus circa regni Siciliae curiam gestis. Epistola ad Petrum de desolatione Siciliae*, ed. Edoardo D'ANGELO (Edizione nazionale dei testi mediolatini 36, 2014) p. 146, 190, 238, 242, 296, 310, 341, 344; Petrus de Ebulo, *Liber ad honorem Augusti sive de rebus Siculis*. Codex 120 II der Burgerbibliothek Bern. Eine Bilderchronik der Stauferzeit, hg. von Theo KÖLZER / Marlis STÄHLI (1994) fol. 98r. A pre-Norman structure may be represented in the *Kitāb al-gharā'ib*, *An Eleventh-Century Egyptian Guide to the Universe. The "Book of Curiosities"*, ed. and trans. by Youssef RAPOPORT / Emilie SAVAGE-SMITH (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies 87, 2014) fols. 32B–33A, p. 464.

54) See Pseudo Ugo Falcando, *De rebus circa regni Siciliae curiam gestis* (as n. 53) p. 132, 168, with notes on p. 359, 364. The fourteenth century *Chronicon Siculum* uses the word *Galea*: Anonymi *Chronicon Siculum*, in: *Bibliotheca Scriptorum* 2 (as n. 19) p. 124. There is a vast body of literature on this question, see amongst others Vincenzo DI GIOVANNI, *La topografia antica di Palermo dal secolo X al XV* (1890) p. 249f., 430–437; Elena PEZZINI, *Palermo in the Twelfth Century: Transformation in forma urbis*, in: *A Companion to Medieval Palermo. The History of a Mediterranean City from 600 to 1500*, ed. by Annliese Nef (Brill's Companions to European History 5, 2013) p. 196–230; Ruggero LONGO, "In loco qui dicitur Galca": New Observations and Hypotheses on the Norman Palace in Palermo, *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies* 3 (2016) p. 225–317. Most recently, Theresa JÄCKH, *Raumgeschichte einer Hauptstadt. Palermo unter muslimischer und christlicher Herrschaft ca. 800–1200* (Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom 144, 2023) p. 154–157, 216.

### Allusions to the Kingdom of Sicily

A distinctive feature of the *Cronica* is its frequent allusions to the Kingdom of Sicily which had been founded in December 1130. In particular, the text regularly describes the first generation of Hauteville rulers using language that speaks to their descendants' royal status. The marriage of Count Roger I and his first wife Judith d'Évreux (d. 1076) was celebrated with regal splendour<sup>55</sup>; Robert Guiscard is referred to as majesty (*maiestas*) and the equal of kings<sup>56</sup>; Count Roger I's third wife Adelaide (r. as regent of Sicily 1101–1112) is claimed to be of the noble blood of Charlemagne<sup>57</sup>; and Tancred's, Moriella's, and Fressenda's noble origins are emphasised<sup>58</sup>. In numerous sections the anonymous author also pre-empts the consolidation of the kingdom. For example, the Byzantine general Maniakes (d. 1043) is described as having had the authority of the emperor in Sicily which is referred to as the *regnum*<sup>59</sup>; the text refers to royal infrastructure close to Nicotera<sup>60</sup>; and Palermo is described as "the royal city and

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55) V fol. 293r col. I: *Mellitum veniens (vehemens V) cum dilecta sibi nupta regio apparatu nupcias celebravit.*

56) V fol. 292r col. II: *Nec primum similem poterit nec habere sequentem / regibus exceptis eadem quos duxit origo / per quos diluerit (diluitur V) faex (fetum V) et pagana (pagnana V) caligo.* In V, this last hexameter is dislocated from the poem, and is found at the bottom of the same folio. However, here, it makes little sense in terms of the textual narrative (an account of the capture of Nicastro by Greek Christians), and forms the poem's ending in all the other manuscripts. It is possible that the poem's reference to kings fighting against pagan darkness may allude to royal involvement in the Second Crusade under Louis VII of France and Conrad III of Germany.

57) V fol. 298v col. I: *Errabergi uxore illius defuncta, duxit alteram a nobilissimo Karuli (Karulo V) Magni sanguine ducentem prosapiam in partibus Lorbardine oriundam (oriundem V) et studiose a parentibus enutritam et honestis moribus informatam, cuius nomen fuit Aeles Mabissa.* This would seem to be a corruption of *Marchesa Adelasia*.

58) For Tancred, the author notes that: *Fuit in partibus Normannie non longe a civitate Costancie, miles quidam nomine Trankedus genere nobilis et morum honestate preclarus* (V fol. 290r col. I). On the same folio, he describes Moriella as his *uxor nobilissima*, and claims that Fressenda was *genere et moribus insignis*.

59) V<sup>1</sup> fol. 2r: *iuxta praeceptum Maniaci, qui in eodem regno vicem imperatoris obtinebat.* In V, *regno* is replaced by *negocio* (V fol. 290v col. I).

60) V fol. 298r col. I: *in remenso itinere prope regiam ecclesiam quandam in honorem sancti Nicolay, et aliam in honorem sancti Gregorii consecratam furibundus devastavit.*

the mistress of the whole kingdom” (*Panormum urbem regiam totius regni dominam ... tradiderunt*)<sup>61</sup>.

It also appears significant that the *Cronica*’s only piece of hexameter verse refers to Robert Guiscard as a “model of probity” (*exemplum probitatis*)<sup>62</sup>. This phrase was used in Innocent II’s (sed. 1130–1143) papal bull which confirmed King Roger II as king of Sicily, duke of Apulia and prince of Capua:

Robert Guiscard, duke of Apulia, your predecessor, manfully destroyed the great and powerful enemies of the church, and left to his posterity a name worthy of remembrance, and a model of probity (*exemplum probitatis*) to be emulated<sup>63</sup>.

This document had been drafted by Sicilian and papal scribes at Mignano on 27 July 1139. Innocent’s bull also used the adjectives strenuous (*strenuus*), and manly (*virilis*), and described Guiscard as

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61) V fol. 295v col. I. For a general overview of *laudes civitatum*, see Elisa OCCHIPINTI, Immagini di città: le laudes civitatum e la rappresentazione dei centri urbani nell’Italia settentrionale, *Società e storia* 14 (1991) p. 23–52; Paul OLDFIELD, Urban Panegyric and the Transformation of the Medieval City, 1100–1300 (2019). For praises of Muslim Palermo, Mirella CASSARINO, Islamic Palermo Experienced and Imagined, in: *A Companion to Medieval Palermo* (as n. 54) p. 89–132.

62) V fol. 292r col. II. The use of the phrase *exemplum probitatis* is relatively rare in twelfth century chronicles. It is frequently connected to descriptions of martial prowess and wise rulership. For example, an anonymous eleventh century English poem uses *exemplum probitatis* to describe King Harold Godwinson (r. as king of England 1066) and his pledge of loyalty to King Edward (r. as king of England 1042–1066): *Principibus reliquis sit in exemplum probitatis. / Istud idem cunctis imitantibus Anglicus orbis, / gaudet in Eduardo festivo rege decoro. / Pax antiqua suos rediens sic visitat Anglos, / aufugiunt rixae, discedunt bella, furorque / omnis frigescit, tellus pontusque quiescit, / ac passim laetis celebrantur festa choreis*, cited in: Henry SUMMERSON, Tudor antiquaries and the *Vita Edwardi regis*, *Anglo-Saxon England* 38 (2010) p. 157–184, at p. 171f. Geoffrey of Monmouth (d. 1155) placed the phrase in the mouth of the Roman commander Lucius Hiberius before his battle with Arthur. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain: An edition and translation of the De gestis Britonum (Historia Regum Britanniae)*, ed. and trans. by Michael D. REEVE (2007) p. 239.

63) *Robertus Biscardus, predecessor tuus dux Apulie, magnificos et potentes hostes ecclesie viriliter expugnavit et posteritati sue dignum memoria nomen et imitabile probitatis exemplum reliquit* (Hartmut HOFFMANN, Langobarden, Normannen, Päpste. Zum Legitimationsproblem in Unteritalien, *QFIAB* 58 [1978] p. 137–180, at p. 177f.). The full document has been translated into English in: Graham A. LOUD, Roger II and the Making of the Kingdom of Sicily. Selected sources translated and annotated (Manchester Medieval Sources, 2012) p. 310–312.

the vanquisher (*extirpator*) of Christ's enemies. These adjectives are frequently used in the *Cronica* which also describes William and Drogo as the *extirpatores* of the church's enemies<sup>64</sup>. Equally, the *Cronica's* use of the adjectives glorious (*gloriosus*) and most glorious (*gloriosissimus*) reflects language that was used in the Sicilian chancery from the late 1120s<sup>65</sup>. Indeed, by drawing on readings given in both

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64) V fol. 290r col. I; fol. 291r col. II; fol. 294r col. I; fol. 297v col. II.

65) Malaterra had used the superlative *gloriosissimus* once when describing Count Humphrey. Geoffroi Malaterra, *Histoire du Grand Comte Roger et de son frère Robert Guiscard I: Livres I et II*, éd. par Marie-Agnès LUCAS-AVENEL (2016) I, 18 p. 189. Malaterra had used *gloriosus* twice. In the first instance he used it to describe the capture of Joscelin of Corinth. See *ibid.* II, 43 p. 375. In the second instance, he used it to describe Roger I in the context of King Coleman's (r. as king of Hungary 1095–1116) marriage to his daughter. See *De rebus gestis* (as n. 51) IV, 25 p. 102–104, at p. 102. *Magnificus*, *gloriosus* and *gloriosissimus* were not used to refer to Roger I in his charters. Nonetheless, *gloriosissimus* was probably used for a brief period between January and August 1094 in connection with Robert Guiscard (although evidence for this is largely preserved in later 'forgeries'): *Documenti latini e greci del conte Ruggero I di Calabria e Sicilia*, edizione critica a cura di Julia BECKER (Ricerche dell'Istituto Storico Germanico di Roma 9, 2013) no. 40 (January–6 March 1094) p. 165–168; no. † 41 (1094) p. 169–171; no. † 42 (August 1094) p. 172–177; no. † 43 (August 1094) p. 178–181; no. 47 (1094) p. 190–192. For the use of *magnificus* in the *Cronica*: V fol. 290r col. I. For *gloriosus*, see V fol. 295v col. I; fol. 297r col. I; fol. 297r col. II. For *gloriosissimus*, see V fol. 290r col. II; fol. 291v col. I; fol. 292v col. II; fol. 294v col. I; fol. 294v col. II. The words *magnificus*, *gloriosus* and *gloriosissimus* were frequently used to describe King Roger II within his royal charters. *Rogeri II. Regis Diplomata Latina*, ed. Carl-ricard BRÜHL (Codex Diplomaticus Regni Siciliae 2/1, 1987) no. 10 (Messina) [Savona], May [June] 1128) p. 24–26; no. † 11 (Palermo, 15 May 1129) p. 29–35; no. 12 (Troia, [November] 1129) p. 35–38; no. † 13 (Messina, November–December 1129) p. 38f.; no. 14 (Palermo, 30 December 1129) p. 40–42; no. † 15 (Messina, 5 October 1130), p. 43–45; no. † 18 ([Troia], [15 September] 1131), p. 50f.; no. 20 (Bari, 22 June 1132) p. 54–56; no. 24 (Messina, 26 February 1133) p. 66–68; no. 30 (Gravina, 30 September 1133) p. 84–86; no. 31 (Salerno, 16 October 1133) p. 87–89; no. 32 (Salerno, 24 October 1133) p. 89–91; no. 35 (Palermo, 28 January 1134) p. 98–101; no. 36 (Palermo, 29 April 1134) p. 101–103; no. 37 (Salerno, 21 July 1134) p. 104–106; no. 38 (Salerno, 21 July 1134) p. 106–108; no. 40 (Melfi [?], 24 August 1135) p. 111–113; no. † 41 (Palermo, 10 October 1135) p. 113–115; no. 48 (Palermo, 28 April 1140) p. 133–138; no. 49 (in the area of Chieti, [27] August 1140) p. 139f.; no. † 50 (in the area of Chieti, August 1140) p. 141–143; no. 53 (Ariano, July 1142) p. 148f.; no. 55 (Palermo, April 1143) p. 152f.; no. † 56 (Messina, May 1143) p. 154f.; no. 57 (Messina, July 1143) p. 156–162; no. † 58 (Messina, July 1143) p. 163–166; no. 59 (Capua, November 1143) p. 166–170; no. † 60 (Salerno, November 1143) p. 170–172; no. † 61 (Palermo, March 1144) p. 173–176; no. 64 (Messina, 18 October 1144) p. 183–186; no. 66 (Messina, 3 November 1144) p. 189–192; no. 67 (Messina, 5 November 1144) p. 193–197; no. 68 (Palermo, July 1145) p. 197–200; no. † 70 (Palermo, August 1146) p. 203–205; no. 71 (Palermo,

the medieval and early modern manuscripts, the *Cronica* can be seen to describe King Roger II as: *prius tantum comes, postea Dei nutum incomparabili eius sapientia operante dux ferocis Apulie et Capue principatus, ad ultimum rex Scicilie*<sup>66</sup>. This echoes a style that was used in chancery documents after 1135: *Rogerus divina favente clementia rex Sicilie, ducatus Apulie et principatus Capue*<sup>67</sup>.

To this evidence can also be added the anonymous author's ambiguous present-tense epilogue which strongly suggests that Roger II's deeds had not yet reached their final conclusion:

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September 1146) p. 205f.; no. 72 (Terracina, November 1147) p. 207f.; no. 73 (Terracina, November 1147) p. 209–211; no. † 74 (12 December 1147) p. 211–214; no. 75 (Palermo, [February] 1148) p. 214–216; no. † 76 (Palermo, July 1148) p. 217–223; no. † 78 (Salerno, [September?] 1149) p. 224–228; no. † 79 (Palermo, October 1151) p. 228–233; no. † 80 (Messina, 4 June 1155) p. 233f. Of these, after 1140, certain charters include *gloriosissimus* in Roger II's signing statement. See: no. 49, no. † 50, no. 57, no. † 58, no. 59, no. † 60, no. † 61, no. 64, no. 66, no. 67, no. † 70, no. 71, no. 72, no. 73, no. † 74, no. 75, no. † 76, no. † 79, no. † 80. The use of *gloriosus* in Roger II's signing statements is confined to two charters: no. 53, no. 55. For the use of *magnificus* in Roger II's signing statements; no. 68, no. † 70, no. 71, no. † 74, no. 75, no. 77, no. † 80. Two charters of Roger II's son, Roger III, also refer to Roger II as *gloriosissimus* and *magnificus*. See *ibid.* no. I ([Trani], June 1139) p. 237f.; no. III (30 March 1147) p. 240f. The charters of King William I replicated the use of *magnificus*, *gloriosus* and *gloriosissimus* as found in the charters of Roger II: Guillelmi I. Regis Diplomata, ed. Horst ENZENSBERGER (Codex Diplomaticus Regni Siciliae 3, 1996) no. † 1 (Palermo, April 1154) p. 3–6; no. 2 (Palermo, October 1154) p. 7f.; no. 4 (December 1154) p. 11–14; no. 6 (Salerno, March 1155) p. 16–19; no. 7 (Salerno, March 1155) p. 20–23; no. 8 (Palermo, May 1155) p. 23–26; no. 12 (Benevento, June 1156) p. 32–36; no. 13 ([Capua], 7 July 1156) p. 36f.; no. 14 (Salerno, July 1156) p. 38–41; no. 15 (Palermo, August 1156) p. 42–44; no. 16 (Palermo, September 1156) p. 44–46; no. 17 (Palermo, November 1156) p. 47f.; no. 18 (Palermo, November 1156) p. 49–53; no. 19 (Palermo, May 1157) p. 53–55; no. † 20 (Palermo, May 1157) p. 55–58; no. 22 (Palermo, December 1157) p. 60–64; no. 24 (Palermo, [before September] 1158) p. 66f.; no. 25 (Palermo, January 1159) p. 68–70; no. 27 (Palermo, June 1159) p. 72–74; no. † 28 (Palermo, May 1160) p. 75–77; no. 29 (Palermo, May 1160) p. 78f.; no. † 30 (Messina, 20 August 1160) p. 80–82; no. 33 (Palermo, March 1166) p. 88–90; no. † 35 (Palermo, April 1154) p. 97f. The *Cronica* also describes Count Roger I by using the adjective *illustris*, V fol. 298v col. I. Dated to 1122, a sixteenth-century translation of a Greek charter of Roger II for the abbey of Santa Maria del Patire at Rossano uses similar terminology to describe the king. This has been discussed in: Hubert HOUBEN, Roger II of Sicily: A ruler between east and west, trans. by Graham Loud / Diane Milburn (Cambridge medieval textbooks, 1997, repr. 2002) p. 50.

66) V fol. 298v col. II; V<sup>1</sup> fol. 24v; N fol. 29v. As p. 590f.

67) The first use of this title is recorded in a 'forged' Palermitan charter for 10 October 1135: Rogerii II. Regis Diplomata Latina (as n. 65) no. † 41 p. 113–115.

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 ...".

Amari was certainly correct to assume that *Africa* could be used to refer to the geographical region. In the classical period, the term *Africa Proconsularis* was used to refer to a portion of the North African coast, comprising the territory of present-day Tunisia, the northeast of Algeria, and the coast of western Libya. Following the Muslim conquests of the seventh century, an area which roughly comprised this region came to be known as *Ifriqiya* in Arabic. This usage is reflected in the Latin chronicle evidence. In the twelfth century, Robert of Torigni (d. 1186) used *Affrica* to clarify the geographical location of Tripoli when he noted that: *rex Rogerius Siciliae Tripolitanam provinciam in Affrica super paganos cepit*<sup>71</sup>. Romuald of Salerno's (d. 1181/82) *Chronicon*<sup>72</sup>, Henry Aristippus' (d. 1162) translation of Plato's *Phaedo* also use the word *Africa* to describe this geographical region, as did the *Chronicon ducum et principum Beneventi, Salerni et Capuae et ducum Neapolis*<sup>73</sup>.

However, what Amari had failed to consider was that, while it is possible that the *Cronica*'s author was using *Africa* to distinguish Tripoli from its namesake in the Holy Land, in the twelfth century, *Africa* was also frequently used to refer to al-Mahdīya.

For example, a twelfth-century manuscript version of Robert of Torigni's text notes that *Affrica* was the name of both a city and the province<sup>74</sup>, while the continuer of Sigebert of Gembloux (d. 1112) claimed that *Africa* was one of the principle cities of the region<sup>75</sup>. Hugo

71) The Chronicle of Robert of Torigni, abbot of the monastery of St. Michael-in-Peril-of-the-Sea, ed. by Richard HOWLETT (*Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* 82/4, 1889) p. 153.

72) Romualdi Salernitani *Chronicon*, ed. by Carlo A. GARUFI (RIS<sup>2</sup> 7/1, 1905–1935) p. 226f.: *Et quia cor magnificum et dominandi animum semper habuit, dominio Siciliae et Apuliae nequaquam contentus, maximum navalem preparavit exercitum, quem cum multis militibus in Africam mittens, ipsam cepit et tenuit. Susas Bonam Capsim Sfaxim et Tripolim expugnavit.* In the oldest manuscript version of Romuald's *Chronicon* in the Vatican Library, a medieval commentator understood the term *Africa* to relate to the geographical region: Arch. Cap. S. Pietro, E.22, fol. 97v col. I.

73) *Phaedo* interprete Henrico Aristippo, ed. Lorenzo MINIO-PALUELLO (*Corpus Platonicum Medii Aevi. Plato Latinus* 2, 1950) p. 90; *Chronicon Ducum et Principum aliquot Beneventi et Principum Salerni*, ed. Camillo PELLEGRINO, in: *Historia Principum Langobardorum* 1 (1643) p. 259–262, at p. 261.

74) The Chronicle of Robert of Torigni (as n. 71) p. 153, n. 1.

75) *Continuatio Praemonstratensis*, ed. Ludwig BETHMANN (MGH SS 6, 1843) p. 417–456, at p. 454: *Rogerus rex Siciliae exercitum navalem direxit ad fines Africae; captaque insigni civitate quae dicitur Affrica, Suilla, Asfax, Clippea, aliisque castris pluribus, archiepiscopum Affricae, qui sub servitute Romam venerat consecrandus, ad sedem suam remittit liberum.*

Falcandus (d. < 1169) also understood the word *Africa* as a reference to al-Mahdīya<sup>76</sup>. Such a usage was also employed by the authors of the *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, and the *Chronica Romanorum pontificum et imperatorum ac de rebus in Apulia gestis*<sup>77</sup>. Beyond the Norman period, the *Epistola* of the monk Conrad (fl. 1380–1395?) used *Africa* in the same context, and so did Andrea Dandolo in his *Chronicon Venetorum*<sup>78</sup>. Indeed, Ralph Niger (d. c. 1217) referred to al-Mahdīya as the *Africa civitas*<sup>79</sup>. Along with such examples, it should also be considered that the *Cronica*'s anonymous transcriber also completed a version of the *Annales Siculi* which are preserved in V. In doing so, he claimed that King Roger had conquered *Africa* (that is, al-Mahdīya), in July 1148<sup>80</sup>.

Regardless of this evidence, and perhaps owing much to the introduction of commas in Caruso's defective transcription, Amari and Heskell either missed or failed to realise the importance of the *Cronica*'s reference to King Roger II's apparent kingship over *Africa* in the anonymous author's panegyric-like conclusion:

Huic<sup>a</sup> successit ille hominum maximus et<sup>b</sup> plusquam  
homo, iustitiae<sup>b</sup> unicus leo et pacis firmamentum<sup>c</sup>: Roge-

a) Hic *V<sup>1</sup> P<sup>1</sup>*. b–b) *deest V Pan Pan<sup>1</sup> B Pan<sup>2</sup>; sequitur* ade dilectus et benedictus *V*; a deo *N*; a deo dilectus et benedictus *B Pan Pan<sup>1</sup>*; benedictus a domino *Pan<sup>2</sup>*. c) fundamentum *Pan<sup>2</sup>*.

76) Pseudo Ugo Falcando, *De rebus circa regni Siciliae curiam gestis* (as n. 53) p. 56: *Tripolim namque Barbarie, Affricam, Faxum, Capsiam aliasque plurimas barbarorum civitates multis sibi laboribus ac periculis subiugavit.*

77) Die Chronik von Montecassino (*Chronica monasterii Casinensis*), ed. Hartmut HOFFMANN (MGH SS 34, 1980) III,71 p. 453; *Chronica Romanorum pontificum et imperatorum ac de rebus in Apulia gestis*, ed. Augusto GAUDENZI, in: *Ignoti monachi Cisterciensis S. Mariae de Ferraria chronica et Ryccardi de Sancto Germano Chronica priora* (Società napoletana di storia patria. Monumenti storici 1/3, 1888) p. 1–46, at p. 13, col. I.

78) *Epistola Fratris Conradi Dominicani prioris conventus Sanctae Catharinae in civitate Panormitana ad B. episcopum Cathanensem, sive brevis chronica ab anno 1027. ad annum 1283*, primum impressa a Joanne Baptista DE GROSSIS in *Cathana Sacra*, in: Giovanni B. CARUSO, *Historiae Saraceno-Siculae Varia Monumenta, Quibus accedit Breviarium historico criticum* (1720) p. 47–50, at p. 48; *Andreae Danduli ducis Venetiarum Chronica per extensum descripta*, aa. 46–1280 d.C., a cura di Ester PASTORELLO (RIS<sup>2</sup> 12/1, 1938–1958) p. 243 ad a. 1148: *Rogerus rex Siciliae rapit insignem civitatem in Africa, que dicitur Africax.*

79) Radulfi Nigri *Chronica*. The Chronicles of Ralph Niger, ed. by Robert ANSTRUTHER (1851) p. 84.

80) V fol. 298v col. II.

rius mundi admiratio, virtutum omnium splendor<sup>d</sup> et prae<sup>e</sup> regibus<sup>e</sup> heres<sup>f</sup> sapiens et<sup>f</sup> immensus omnia<sup>g</sup> prius tantum<sup>h</sup> comes, postea Dei nutu<sup>i</sup> tum<sup>i</sup> incomparabili eius<sup>j</sup> sapientia operante dux<sup>k</sup> ferocis Apulie et Capue principatus, ad ultimum rex Scilie<sup>l</sup>, Tripolis, Africe potentissimus fines imperii sui longe lateque multiplici terrarum<sup>m</sup> acquisitione ampliavit.

[Simon] was succeeded by the greatest of men, and more than a man, the single lion of justice and foundation of peace. Roger, the admiration of the world, the splendour of all virtues, and the wise and great heir in all things above all other kings. First merely a count, afterwards by the will of God and the working of his incomparable wisdom [he became] duke of fierce Apulia and the *principatus* of Capua and, finally, the most powerful king of Sicily, Tripoli, [and] Africa; with the acquisition of many lands he extended the vast borders of his empire.

The Middle-French account preserved in P similarly recorded:

That great man Roger succeeded [Simon], and he was more than a man, a lion of justice and a defender of peace. He was a wonder of the world, a man of shining virtue, wise and great above all other kings. First, he was count, and then by the will of God and by his own wisdom he became duke of Apulia and prince of Capua, and finally he became king of Sicily, of Tripoli and of Africa, and the boundaries of his kingdom were greatly extended<sup>81</sup>.

d) spendor V. e–e) perragibus V. f–f) *deest* V<sup>1</sup> P<sup>1</sup> P<sup>2</sup>. g) qui V<sup>1</sup> P<sup>1</sup> P<sup>2</sup>. h) tamen V N N<sup>1</sup> Pan Pan<sup>1</sup> B Pan<sup>2</sup>. i–i) multum Pan Pan<sup>1</sup> B; imitator V<sup>1</sup> P<sup>1</sup>. j) *deest* V<sup>1</sup> P<sup>1</sup> P<sup>2</sup>. k) dignus V. l) *sequitur* et V<sup>1</sup> P<sup>1</sup> P<sup>2</sup>. m) terrae V<sup>1</sup> P<sup>1</sup> P<sup>2</sup>.

81) *Après cestui subcédi cellui grant home, et plus que home, lyon de justice et fermement de paiz, Rogier, loquel fu merveille de lo munde et respendor de toute vertu, et sur touz autres roys sage et grant, loquel premérement fu conte, et puiz, par la volenté de Dieu et par sa sapience, fut duc de Puille et prince de Capue, et à lo ultime fu roy de Sycille, de Tripolle et d’Affrica, et li fin de son royalme multiplica longuement* (P fol. 212v; Chronique de Robert Viscart [as n. 18] p. 313).

In the early-modern manuscripts, imprecise punctuation makes it unclear whether the text can be translated to read “most powerful king of African Tripoli” or, “most powerful king of Sicily, Tripoli and Africa”<sup>82</sup>. Nevertheless, readings in all the manuscripts afford Roger a title which refers to *Africa*. This observation is significant not least considering its implications concerning how the boundaries of Roger II’s kingship were understood by both his central administration and foreign contemporaries.

For the purposes of this argument, it will suffice to say that the development of the Norman administration from at least the 1110s<sup>83</sup>, saw a professional and salaried bureaucracy set about confirming and renewing a variety of legal rights and privileges in documentary form. Between October 1144 and June 1145, the royal *dīwān* confirmed and revised at least 122 conquest-era grants of land<sup>84</sup>. From the 1140s onwards, it also compiled record books of Sicily’s Arabic boundary descriptions, lists of men, mainland grants, services owed in Capua, Apulia and the Abruzzi, and assembled an inventory of the possessions of the Cappella Palatina and the Ifrīqiyan church<sup>85</sup>. Legal questions concerning rights and privileges even extended to the king himself: royal administrators made numerous attempts to define aspects of Roger II’s kingship in writing. For example, the oaths Roger swore at his coronation were preserved in his coronation ordo<sup>86</sup>, and his legal reforms were codified in a legal document<sup>87</sup>. As part of

82) For example, see V<sup>1</sup> fol. 24v, and N fol. 29v.

83) Vera von Falkenhausen, *Testo e contesto: un “katonoma” inedito della contessa Adelasia per il monastero di Bagnara (settembre 1111)*, in: *Ingenita curiositas – Studi sull’Italia medievale per Giovanni Vitolo 3*, a cura di Bruno Figliuolo / Rosalba Di Meglio / Antonella Ambrosio (2018) p. 1273–1290.

84) Jeremy Johns, *Arabic Administration in Norman Sicily. The Royal Dīwān* (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization, 2002) p. 115–143.

85) For editions of these documents see, *Catalogus Baronum*, a cura di Evelyn Jamison (Fonti 101,1, 1972); *Inventarium thesauri sacrae Africanae ecclesiae, et inventarium thesauri ecclesiae Sancti Nicolai*, in: [Aloisio Garofalo], *Tabularium regiae ac imperialis capellae collegiatae Divi Petri in regio Panormitano palatio* (1835) p. 34–36.

86) Reinhard Elze, *The Ordo for the Coronation of King Roger II of Sicily: An Example of Dating from Internal Evidence*, in: *Coronations: Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual*, ed. by János M. Bak (1990) p. 165–178.

87) Kenneth Pennington, *The Birth of the *Ius commune*: King Roger II’s Legislation*, *Rivista Internazionale di diritto commune* 17 (2006) p. 23–60; Kenneth Pennington, *The Constitutiones of King Roger II of Sicily in Vat. lat. 8782*, *Rivista Internazionale di diritto commune* 21 (2001) p. 35–54. The dating of the *Constitutiones* has been disputed in: Ennio Cortese, *Il diritto romano in Sicilia prima e*

these efforts, royal administrators also endeavoured to conceptualise Roger's authority in a standardised series of Latin, Greek, and Arabic titles<sup>88</sup>. However, in doing so, a vexed question concerned the geographical extent of Roger's rulership.

In September 1130, and in the aftermath of Roger II's conquests in Apulia, the anti-Pope Anacletus II (sed. 1130–1138) granted Roger the "crown of Sicily, Calabria, Apulia and all [his] lands" (*coronam regni Sicilie, et Calabriae, et Apulie, et universe terre*)<sup>89</sup>. It was perhaps with an eye to Roger's claim to kingship "in all his lands" that in a letter dated to 1137–1138 the Fāṭimid caliph al-Ḥāfīz (r. 1132–1149) addressed Roger as: "the king of the island of Sicily, Lombardy, Italy, Calabria, Salerno, Amalfi, and that which is attached to them"<sup>90</sup>. Alexander of Teleso (d. > 1143) had also expressed a similar opinion a year earlier when he noted that the brother of Roger II's mother Adelaide, Henry del Vasto (d. > 1141), had suggested that the kingdom should not only be "restored" around Palermo, but also extended to the other regions under Roger's control<sup>91</sup>.

However, a Sicilian kingship *sine termino* was not only inflammatory to the rival-pope Innocent II (and the independently minded cities of the Sorrento Peninsula), but also to the German and Byzantine emperors who both possessed claims to the *regnum Italicum*. Thus, Roger II was compelled to spend much of the 1130s quelling mainland rebellion and was confronted with a German invasion in 1137<sup>92</sup>. In the

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dopo l'istituzione del Regno, in: *L'heritage byzantin en Italie (VIII<sup>e</sup>–XII<sup>e</sup> siècle) 2: Les cadres juridiques et sociaux et les institutions publiques. Études réunies par Jean-Marie Martin / Annick Peters-Custot / Vivien Prigent (Collection de l'École française de Rome 461, 2012) p. 11–21.*

88) JOHNS, *Arabic Administration* (as n. 84) p. 268–274.

89) HOFFMANN, *Langobarden, Normannen* (as n. 63) p. 174.

90) *Al-malik bi-jazīrat Ṣiqillīya wa-nkūrīyāta [Ankabardata] wa-ṇṭaliyya [Italiyya] wa-Qalawriyya wa-s.t.r.lū [Salārnū] wa-Malfa wa-mā inḍāfa ilā dbālika*, cited in: Jeremy JOHNS, *The Arabic Inscriptions of the Norman Kings of Sicily: A Reinterpretation*, in: *Nobiles Officinae: perle, filigrane e trame di seta dal Palazzo Reale di Palermo 2*, a cura di Maria Andaloro (2006) p. 324–337, at p. 325.

91) *regnum ipsum non solum ibi modo restitatur, sed in ceteras etiam regiones, quibus iam dominari cernitur, dilatari debeat* (Alexandri Telesini abbatis ystoria Rogerii regis Sicilie Calabriae atque Apulie, testo a cura di Ludovica DE NAVA / commento storico a cura di Dione CLEMENTI [Fonti 112, 1991] II,2 p. 23–25, at p. 25). The *Annales Palidenses* also refer to Roger II as *Rex Apuliae*, *Annales Palidenses auctore Theodoro monacho*, ed. Georg H. PERTZ (MGH SS 16, 1859, p. 48–98), at p. 79 (§ 12), p. 88 (§ 3).

92) For contemporary criticism of Roger II, see the analysis given in Helene WIERUSZOWSKI, *Roger II of Sicily, Rex-Tyrannus*, in *Twelfth-Century Political*

subsequent peace negotiations of 1139, both pope and king agreed a compromise: Sicily's kingship was territorially delineated between the titles afforded to the "kingdom of Sicily, the dukedom of Apulia, and the principality of Capua" (*regnum Sicilie, ducatus Apulie, et principatus Capue*)<sup>93</sup>. This division would persist beyond the end of the Norman period and influence the development of royal rule in both Sicily and southern Italy<sup>94</sup>. Nonetheless, despite the theoretical idea that the Norman kingship was confined to Sicily, this does not appear to have applied to the king's conquests in Ifrīqiya.

The most significant scholarly investigation of this issue was undertaken in 1987 by Jeremy Johns who noted:

"there is ... no doubt that, from 1149 until 1155 or later, the Sicilian ruler did consider himself to be king of Africa, and did, on at least one occasion, experiment with that title"<sup>95</sup>.

Two Ifrīqiyan dinars refer to both Roger II and William I as *malik*<sup>96</sup>. One dates from between May 1148 and May 1149 and the other from between March 1154 and March 1155. The so-called Grisandus Inscription, placed in the Palermitan church of San Michele Arcangelo in May 1149, also refers to Roger as *malik of Africa* in both Arabic

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Thought, *Speculum* 38 (1963) p. 46–78.

93) HOFFMANN, Langobarden, Normannen (as n. 63) p. 177. Snorri Sturluson understood that Roger II (Róðgeirsson) was king of Sicily (*Sikiley*), but also appears to have suggested that his kingship did not encompass Apulia (*Páll*), or the islands of the Greek Sea (*Griklands haf*), cf. Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla* 3, trans. by Alison FINLAY / Anthony FAULKES (Viking Society for Northern Research, 2015) p. 151.

94) For a recent discussion of such dynamics herein, see Hervin FERNÁNDEZ-ACEVES, *County and Nobility in Norman Italy: Aristocratic Agency in the Kingdom of Sicily, 1130–1189* (2020) particularly p. 27–58, 167–178.

95) Jeremy JOHNS, *Malik Ifrīqiyya: The Norman Kingdom of Africa and the Fāṭimids*, *The Journal of Libyan Studies* 18 (1987) p. 89–101, at p. 90. See also, Giuseppe LA MANTIA, *La Sicilia ed il suo dominio nell'Africa settentrionale, dal secolo XI al XVI: Documenti e nota bibliografica*, *Archivio Storico Siciliano* 44 (1922) p. 154–265; David ABULAFIA, *The Norman Kingdom of Africa and the Norman Expeditions to Majorca and the Muslim Mediterranean*, in: *Anglo-Norman Studies VII: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1984*, ed. by R. Allen Brown (1984) p. 26–49; Georges JEHÉL, *L'Italie et le Maghreb au Moyen Âge. Conflits et échanges du VII<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle (Islamiques)*, 2001) p. 52.

96) JOHNS, *Arabic Administration* (as n. 84) p. 268, 272f.; METCALFE, *The Muslims of Medieval Italy* (as n. 46) p. 171.

and Judeo-Arabic<sup>97</sup>. Indeed, an anonymous poem, composed between 1147 and 1151, suggests that efforts to conceptualise Roger's rule in Africa had been recognised in other parts of the Norman world: composed in Rouen, it seems to imply that its author understood Italy, Sicily, and *Africa* to be component parts of Roger's kingdom<sup>98</sup>.

The suggestion that Roger and his administration experimented with some form of title that recognised his rule in *Africa* is also implicit in other sources. In 1558, Tommaso Fazello (d. 1570) commemorated Roger II by drawing on two epithets: *Rogerus in Christo pius, potens rex et Christianorum adiutor / Appulus, & Calaber, Siculus mihi servit, & Afer*<sup>99</sup>. By 1643, and without reference to Fazello, Rocco Pirri (d. 1651) claimed that these phrases had become associated with an inscription which adorned his tomb<sup>100</sup>.

Regardless of the veracity of this account, this latter epithet had long been associated with Roger II by a variety of medieval chroniclers. For example, Ralph of Diceto (d. 1202) – who may have drawn on Roger II's magister Thomas Brun (fl. 1137–1154) as a source – uses an almost identical *monosticum*: *Apulus et Calaber, Siculus mihi servit et Affer*<sup>101</sup>. Ralph Niger claimed that this phrase was engraved on

97) JOHNS, Malik Ifrīqiyya (as n. 95) p. 89–101.

98) *Regnat Rogerus victor, sapiens, opulentus. / Tu Rogere potens, tu maxima gloria regum; / Subditur Ytalia et Siculus, tibi subditur Afer; / Grecia te timet et Syria, et te Persa veretur; / Ethiopes, Albi, Germania, Nigra, requirunt / Te dominante sibi, te protectore, tueri. / Vera fides et larga manus tibi sceptrum dedere; / Tu [sic] dignum imperio solum dijudicat orbis*, cited in: Charles RICHARD, Notice sur l'ancienne bibliothèque des échevins de la ville de Rouen, Précis analytique des travaux de l'Académie royale des Sciences, Belles-Lettres et Arts de Rouen pendant l'année 1844 (1845) p. 127–182, at p. 163.

99) Tommaso FAZELLO, *De Rebus Siculis Decades Duae* (1558) p. 444.

100) Pirri claimed that the tomb's other inscription read: *Si fastus homines, si Regna, & stemmata ludunt / Non legum, & recti si: norma Rogerius istis / Est lusus rebus, Comite a cognomine natus: / Virtutum hic splendor situs est, diademaque Regum / Vix. an. 59 Regni 24 obiit 1154*, cited in: Rocco PIRRI, *Chronologia Regum, penes quos Siciliae fuit imperium ...* (1643) p. 28. The *Cronica* uses both *virtutum* and *splendor* in describing Roger II, cf. V fol. 298<sup>v</sup> col. II (as p. 590f.). This inscription had also been mentioned by Francesco Baronio Manfredi (albeit with an incorrect year date: *Vix. an. LIX. regni XXIII. obiit 1194*), and he claimed that it was positioned beneath the tomb's columns: Francesco Baronio MANFREDI, *De Maestate Panormitana* 4 (1630) p. 192. It is possible that they were lost during Ferdinando Fulga's remodelling of Palermo's cathedral as they are not mentioned in: Francesco DANIELE, *I regali sepolcri del Duomo di Palermo riconosciuti e illustrate* (1784) p. 13–28.

101) Radulfi de Diceto decani Lundeniensi opera historica. The historical works of Master Ralph de Diceto, dean of London 2, ed. by William STUBBS (Re-

Roger II's seal<sup>102</sup>, while Gervase of Tilbury (d. 1220), the *Annales Palidenses*, Snorri Sturluson (d. 1241), and Andrea Dandolo (d. 1354) reported that it was inscribed on Roger II's sword<sup>103</sup>. This claim was also repeated – complete with an illustration – by Sebastian Münster (d. 1552)<sup>104</sup>.

Indeed, this phrase was sufficiently well known in the twelfth century to have been re-used in hexameter. Godfrey of Viterbo (d. c. 1191/92) – who was present during two German legations to the Norman court in Palermo, and probably also at the negotiations for the peace of Venice in 1177<sup>105</sup> – placed a similar phrase in a poem that recalls the deeds of Robert Guiscard and King Roger II<sup>106</sup>. Peter of Eboli (d. 1220) echoed this hexameter in his *Liber ad honorem Augu-*

rum Britannicarum medii aevi Scriptores 68,2, 1876) p. 276: *Rursus tempore regis Willelmi I. quidam alii Normanni Normanniam relinquentes, Apuliam, Calabriam, Siciliam, Affricam subjugaverunt, sicut testatur monosticum illud Rogeri regis, "Appulus et Calaber, Siculus mihi servit et Afer"*. Roger II's *magister*, Thomas Brown/Brun, may have served as one of Ralph's sources, see Antonia GRANSDEN, *Historical Writing in England c. 500 to c. 1307* (1974, repr. 1996) p. 197.

102) Radulfi Nigri *Chronica* (as n. 79) p. 84: *Rogerus adeptus est Calabriam et Siciliam et Apuliam, et Africam civitatem: Unde et circumscriptio sigilli eius erat: "Apulus et Calaber Siculus mihi servit et Afer"*.

103) *Annales Palidenses* a. 1154 (as n. 91) p. 88: *Anno Domini 1154. Rozierus rex Apulie per manum bellicam plures subdidit alienigenas, adeo ut sicut inscriptio regalis declarat ensis, sibi: Apulus et Calaber, Siculus serviret et Afer*; Snorri Sturluson, *The Heimskringla*; or, *Chronicle of the Kings of Norway* 3, trans. Samuel LAING (1844) p. 154f.; E Gervasii Tillberiensis *Otiis Imperialibus*, ed. Felix LIEBERMANN / Reinhold PAULI (MGH SS 27, 1885, p. 359–394), at p. 381: *rex Rogerius in gladio suo inscribi iussit istud triumphale ac apoforeticum: Appulus et Calaber, Siculus michi servit et Afer*. Andrea Dandolo, *Chronica* (as n. 78) p. 243: *in suo inscripsit gladio: Apulus et Calaber, Siculus michi servit et Afer*. For the ceremonial use of engraved swords in the Holy Roman Empire, see Mechthild SCHULZE-DÖRRLAMM, *Das Reichsschwert. Ein Herrschaftszeichen des Saliers Heinrich IV. und des Welfen Otto IV.* (Monographien des Römisch Germanischen Zentralmuseums 32, 1995).

104) Sebastian MÜNSTER, *Cosmographia. Beschreibung aller Lender* (1544) p. CXXXI.

105) Loren J. WEBER, *The Historical Importance of Godfrey of Viterbo*, *Via* 25 (1994) p. 153–195, at p. 164.

106) Gotifredi Viterbiensis *Pantheon*, ed. Georg WAITZ (MGH SS 22, 1872, p. 107–307), at p. 254: *Robertus Viscardus obit tandem sine prole; / Rogerius iermannus ei succedit honore, / Climata Siciliae possidet atque fovet. / Rogerius Paganus erat de more vocatus, / Rogerius de Rogerio comes est generatus, / Gemma sui generis, et probitate caput. / Gemma fuit, regnare sui meruit probitate, / Apulus, et Calaber fit ei subiectus, et Afer: / Quod loquor ecce patet, terra subacta iacet. / Rogerii regis hic tempus et acta relinquam.*

sti<sup>107</sup>, while similar constructions (albeit without reference to *Africa*) have also been identified in both the *Carmen de Hastinae Proelio*<sup>108</sup> and the *Introductio monachorum*<sup>109</sup>.

The evidence is not limited to chronicle material. In a Latin charter that appears to have been destroyed in the Second World War, Roger II was specifically described as: *dominus noster Syclie et Ytalie nec non et tocius regni Africe serenissimus et invictissimus rex a deo coronatus pius felix triumphator semper augustus*<sup>110</sup>. No further extant charters refer to this title. Nevertheless, a charter from the reign of King William I, dated to just months after his father's death, describes the new king as *rex Italiae, Siciliae et Africae*. It is conceivable that this title was carried over from the Rogerian period, and would be used in a further eight charters up until the conquest of Norman Africa by the Almohads<sup>111</sup>.

Within this body of evidence, the *Cronica* has previously been unrecognised. Yet, quite irrespective of the debate concerning the precise meaning of *Africa* – whether *Africa* was used to refer to the region or the city of al-Mahdiyya – the *Cronica*'s use of a royal title is significant: not only would it appear to locate the text within a clearly-defined temporal period, but it would also suggest that its author was aware

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107) Petrus de Ebulo, Liber ad honorem Augusti (as n. 53) p. 197: *Hec, quantum Calaber seu quantum debeat Afer, / Apulus aut Siculus debeat, orbis habet.*

108) The *Carmen de Hastinae Proelio* of Guy, Bishop of Amiens, ed. and trans. by Frank BARLOW (Oxford Medieval Texts, 1999) p. 14, ln. 259: *Apulus et Calaber, Siculus, quibus iacula fervunt.*

109) *Introductio monachorum*, in: *Chroniques latines du Mont Saint-Michel (IX<sup>e</sup>–XII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, éd. Pierre BOUET / Olivier DESBORDES (Les manuscrits du Mont Saint-Michel – Textes fondateurs 1, 2009) p. 202–223, at p. 203: *ut testimonio sunt Cenomannicus pagus, Anglica regna, Campania, Apulia, Calabria, Sicilia aliaque plura ab eis armis adquisita diversis temporibus.*

110) Karl Andreas KEHR, *Die Urkunden der normannisch-sicilischen Könige. Eine diplomatische Untersuchung* (1902) p. 246f., n. 3. It is possible that this charter was part of the archive destroyed by the Wehrmacht in April 1943, see Arnold ESCH / Andreas KIESEWETTER, *Südtalien unter den ersten Angiovinen: Abschriften aus den verlorenen Anjou-Registern im Nachlaß Eduard Stamer*, QFIAB 74 (1994) p. 646–663.

111) I am grateful to Graham Loud for pointing out that this would seem to be a peculiarity of a single place, Molfetta, and perhaps also of a single scribe, a certain Alfanus. For these charters, see Francesco CARABELLESE, *Le carte di Molfetta (1076–1309)* (Codice diplomatico Barese 7, 1912) nos. 22, 24–29, 34. They have now been contextualised as part of a broader study in: Matthew KING, *The Norman Kingdom of Africa and the Medieval Mediterranean* (Diss. Minnesota, 2018) p. 246.

of the implications of using this term. Herein, while the differences between the early modern and medieval manuscripts suggest it would be safer to not entirely discount a composition date as early as June 1146, the only, albeit limited, evidence for the use of a Norman-African title can be noted for the period which followed the conquest of al-Mahdīya in July 1148.

### Concluding Thoughts: The *Cronica* within the Historiography of the Norman Kingdom

The evidence indicates that the *Cronica* was assembled in the mid-twelfth century during the reign of Sicily's first Norman king, Roger II. This is significant, not least as a broader recognition of such a dating argument would do much to refine the current parameters of Siculo-Norman historiography. In what follows, the implications of this will be elucidated with a clear focus on its relevance for a number of key historiographical debates.

Over the last two decades, a host of influential studies have shown how the challenges associated with governing a majority Muslim population, that also included Greek and Arabic speaking Christians, Latin Christians, and Jews, required the emergence of a royal administration, the royal *dīwān*, that was fundamentally different to any other “Norman” or, indeed, “western European” precedent. Highly centered in the capital city of Palermo and staffed by Greek and Arab-Muslim officials, it drew on models of rulership known from Arab-Muslim and Byzantine dynasties and made use of Arabic, Greek, and Latin. It has been held that the *dīwān*'s royal officials oversaw and tightly regulated multifaceted aspects of royal representation and rulership as part of a “cultural-engineering” project, which sought to emphasise the primacy of royal power and authority over the island and its peoples<sup>112</sup>. Thus, it has been held that such dynamics bequeathed a remarkable cultural legacy.

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112) Jeremy JOHNS, Cultural engineering in Norman Sicily, *Apollo* (June 2016) p. 80–85. See also William TRONZO, The Mantle of Roger II of Sicily, in: *Robes and Honor. The Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. by Stewart Gordon (The New Middle Ages Series, 2001) p. 241–253; Jeremy JOHNS, The Arabic Inscriptions (as n. 90) p. 324–337; IDEM, The Bible, the Qur'an and the Royal Eunuchs in the Cappella Palatina, in: *Die Cappella Palatina in Palermo – Geschichte, Kunst, Funktionen. Forschungsergebnisse der Restaurierung*, hg. von Thomas Dittelbach

In the study of extant material evidence, recent debate has tended to interpret such material by reference to an overarching theory of palace culture centred around Palermo<sup>113</sup>. As such, textual production across Latin, Greek, and Arabic after 1130 has often been contextualised with an eye to administrative efforts to build a coherent corpus of reference which allowed Roger to conceptualise his kingdom in both space and time. Between 1139 and 1154, al-Idrīsī (d. < 1165) produced an Arabic geography which contained descriptions of the internal arrangements of Sicily and other countries of the world, illustrated with a series of maps, and complemented by a silver Ptolemaic planisphere<sup>114</sup>. In around 1153, a trilingual Psalter translated the liturgy

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(2011) p. 198–216; Thomas DITTELBACH, *The Ruler's Throne – Topology and Utopia*, *ibid.* p. 534–543; William TRONZO, *Restoring Agency to the Discourse on Hybridity: the Cappella Palatina from another Point of View*, *ibid.* p. 229–237; Jeremy JOHNS, *A Bronze Pillar Lampstand from Petralia Sottana, Sicily*, in: *Metalwork and Material Culture in the Islamic World. Art, Craft and Text. Essays Presented to James W. Allan*, ed. by Venetia Porter / Mariam Rosser-Owen (2012) p. 283–300; Dawn MARIE-HAYES, *The Political Significance of Roger II of Sicily's Antiquated Loros in the Mosaic in Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio, Palermo*, *Allegorica* 29 (2013) p. 52–69; Jeremy JOHNS, *Arabic Inscriptions in the Cappella Palatina: Performativity, Audience, Legibility and Illegibility*, in: *Viewing Inscriptions in the Late-Antique and Medieval Mediterranean*, ed. by Antony Eastmond (2015) p. 124–147; William TRONZO, *The Artistic Culture of Twelfth-Century Sicily, with a Focus on Palermo*, in: *Sicily and the Mediterranean. Migration, Exchange, Reinvention*, ed. by Claudia Karagoz / Giovanna Summerfield (2015) p. 61–76; Isabelle DOLEZALEK, *Arabic Script on Christian Kings. Textile Inscriptions on Royal Garments from Norman Sicily (Das Mittelalter, Beiheft 5, 2017) particularly* p. 123–189; Thomas DITTELBACH, *Counter-narratives in 12<sup>th</sup> century Norman art and architecture*, in: *Urban Dynamics and Transcultural Communication in Medieval Sicily*, ed. by Theresa Jäckh / Mona Kirsch (*Mittelmeerstudien* 17, 2017) p. 141–157. Most recently, Emily A. WINKLER / Liam FITZGERALD, *The Story of Designing Norman Sicily*, in: *Designing Norman Sicily: Material Culture and Society*, ed. by Emily A. Winkler / Liam Fitzgerald / Andrew Small (*Boydell Studies in Medieval Art and Architecture* 18, 2020) p. 1–14.

113) For a critical overview of this debate and its implications, see John ASPINWALL / Theresa JÄCKH, *Multiculturalism and Power Relations. Reframing Norman Sicily*, in: *Norman Connections. Normannische Verflechtungen zwischen Skandinavien und dem Mittelmeer*, hg. von Viola Skiba / Nikolas Jaspert / Bernd Schneidmüller (2022) p. 292–311. See also, John ASPINWALL, *The Lion, the Camel, and the Cassa of Terracina: Transfer and Exchange on the Borders of Norman Italy*, in: *Borders and the Norman World: Frontiers and Boundaries in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Dan Armstrong / Áron Kecskés / Charles C. Rozier / Leonie V. Hicks (2023) p. 331–358.

114) Al-Idrīsī. *La Première géographie de l'Occident*, par Henri BRESCH / Annie NEF (1999) particularly p. 58–60, 306–310, 312f., 378f.

into Latin, Greek, and Arabic<sup>115</sup>. Neilos Doxapatres composed a Greek ecclesiastical history, the *Notitia patriarchatum*, and Philagathos of Cerami (d. < 1154) composed Greek homilies, at least ninety sermons, and possibly a lost grammatical textbook, a hagiography of St. Bartholomew of Simeri, and a verse introduction to Symeon Seth's (d. c. 1110) *Stephanites* and *Ichnelates*<sup>116</sup>. Alexander of Telese produced a Latin biography of Roger II<sup>117</sup>, while a certain al-Ḥanash wrote a lost biographical work in Arabic<sup>118</sup>. To these can be added a host of theological and scientific works, hagiographies, and a corpus of Arabic and Greek poetry<sup>119</sup>.

115) London, British Library, Harley MS. 5786 fols. 1r–174v.

116) The Greek homilies have been edited in: Theophanis Ceramei, archiepiscopi Tauromenitani Homiliae in evangelia dominicalia, et festa totius anni; Graece et Latine nunc primum editae & notis illustratae, ex multorum mss. fide, cum Vaticano exemplari collatae, a Francisco SCORSO Panormitano (1644). See also Filagato da Cerami, Omelie per i Vangeli domenicali e le feste di tutto l'anno 1: Omelie per le feste fisse, a cura di Giuseppe ROSSI TAIBBI (Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici. Testi 11, 1969); Stefano CARUSO, Le tre omilie inedite "Per la domenica delle Palme" di Filagato da Cerami (LI, LII, LIII Rossi Taibbi), *Epeteris Hetaireias Byzantinôn Spoudôn* 41 (1974) p. 109–127; Bruno LAVAGNINI, Profilo di Filagato da Cerami: con traduzione della Omelia XXVII pronunciata dal pulpito della Cappella Palatina in Palermo, *Bollettino della Badia greca di Grottaferrata* 44 (1992) p. 231–244. For the hagiography of St. Bartholomew of Simeri, see Gaia ZACCAGNI, Considerazioni sulla paternità del *Bios* di san Bartolomeo da Simeri, in: *Liturgia e agiografia tra Roma e Costantinopoli. Atti del I e II Seminario di Studio Roma-Grottaferrata 2000–2001*, a cura di Krassimir Stantchev / Stefano Parenti (*Analekta kryptopherres* 5, 2007) p. 33–44.

117) Alexandri Telesini abbatis ystoria (as n. 91).

118) Al-ḥanash is also attested as a toponym in twelfth-century Sicily near Cefalù: *ḥārik bi'r al-ḥanash / terterus putei serpentum* (I Diplomi greci ed arabi di Sicilia, pubblicati nel testo originale 1, tradotti ed illustrati da Salvatore CUSA [1868] p. 179–244, at p. 186, 223). The implications of this have been explored in: Alex METCALFE, *De Saracenicis in Latinum transferri: Causes and Effects of Translation in the Fiscal Administration of Norman Sicily*, *Al-Masāq* 13 (2001) p. 44–86, at p. 58.

119) Karla MALLETT, *The Kingdom of Sicily 1100–1250: A Literary History* (The Middle Ages Series, 2005) p. 98–101, 139–145. The Greek poem on George of Antioch's tomb has been edited in: Appendix ad *Tabularium regiae ac imperialis Capellae divi Petri in regio palatio Panormitano, curis Nicolai BUSCEMI* (1839) p. 12–14. See also Giuseppe COZZA-LUZI, *Delle epigrafi greche di Giorgio Ammiraglio, della madre e della consorte*, *Archivio storico siciliano* N. S. 15 (1890) p. 22–34; Augusta ACCONCIA LONGO, *Gli epitaffi giambici per Giorgio di Antiochia, per la madre e per la moglie*, *QFIAB* 61 (1981) p. 25–59. For the so-called *Tristia Ex Melitogauda*, see *Tristia Ex Melitogauda. Lament in Greek Verse of a XIIth-century Exile on Gozo*, ed. and trans. by Joseph BUSUTTIL / Stanley FIORINI / Horatio Caesar Roger VELLA (2010). Marc Lauxtermann has argued that

By considering these works together, there has been a tendency to assume that they are representative of a wider cultural and intellectual break with the Norman past on the island of Sicily. It has been held that they imply that textual production after 1101 was confined to Greek and Arabic works, and that the political imperatives of the newly-founded kingdom meant that scholars or patrons were reluctant to confront the thorny issues of the conquest period. Thus, it has been concluded that there is no evidence for an interaction with the Norman past in twelfth-century Sicily<sup>120</sup>.

Now, to return to the *Cronica*, it seems to allude to a somewhat different picture. Namely, it constitutes a Latin source which was produced in Sicily during the reign of King Roger II. Moreover, it chronicles the Norman conquests, by presenting the divinely-inspired nature of their mission<sup>121</sup>. As has previously been noted, Amari believed that the *Cronica* may have even been commissioned or patronised by Roger himself. This conclusion may well have been grounded in the *Cronica*'s references to courtly apparatus and traditions. For example, the text uses the verb *laudare* to describe the act of praising Roger II<sup>122</sup>; it refers to Count Roger I's *legati*<sup>123</sup> and a

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the anonymous writer was exiled on Malta, not Gozo. Marc D. LAUXTERMANN, Tomi, Mljet, Malta: Critical Notes on a Twelfth-Century Southern Italian Poem of Exile, *Jb. der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 64 (2014) p. 155–176. For the editors' response, see Stanley FIORINI / Horatio VELLA, Reaction to *Tristia ex Melitogaudo*: A Response, *Literatūra* 58,3 (2016) p. 75–87. See also Bruno LAVAGNINI, Versi dal carcere di un anonimo poeta italo-bizantino di età normanna (1135–1151), *Rivista di Studi bizantini e slavi* 2 (1982) p. 323–331; Marcello PUCCIA, L'anonimo *Carne di supplica a Giorgio di Antiochia* e l'elaborazione dell'idea imperiale alla corte di Ruggero II, in: *Byzantino-Sicula V: Giorgio di Antiochia. L'arte della politica in Sicilia nel XII secolo tra Bisanzio e l'Islam. Atti del Convegno Internazionale* (Palermo, 19–20 Aprile 2007), a cura di Mario Re / Cristina Rognoni (Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neellenici "Bruno Lavagnini", Quaderni 17, 2009) p. 231–262.

120) This question has been notably explored in: Thomas S. BROWN, The Political Use of the Past in Norman Sicily, in: *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. by Paul Magdalino (1992) p. 191–210. See also Graham LOUD, History Writing in the Twelfth-Century Kingdom of Sicily, in: *Chronicling History: Chroniclers and Historians in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Sharon Dale / Alison Williams Lewin / Duane J. Osheim (2007) p. 29–54.

121) For example, see n. 23.

122) V fol. 298v col. II (as p. 590f.). For an investigation of royal praises in Sicily, see Ernst H. KANTOROWICZ, *Laudes regiae: A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Mediaeval Ruler Worship* (University of California publications in history 33, 1946, repr. 1958) p. 157–168.

123) V fol. 293r col. I: *audito, quoniam legati sui de Normannia quesitam sibi uxorem adduxerant*.

*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

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 king<sup>130</sup>, 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)<sup>131</sup>. 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 foundations<sup>132</sup>. 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

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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.

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 heresy<sup>133</sup>. 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 documents<sup>134</sup>.

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 education<sup>135</sup>. Indeed, in 1117 Roger confirmed a privilege by substituting his signature for a cross, and may have traced an autograph of 1124 from a temple<sup>136</sup>. 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 Arabic<sup>137</sup>. 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.

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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.

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 communities<sup>138</sup>. 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 king<sup>139</sup>. For Romuald of Salerno, Roger II's last years were occupied by his efforts to convert Jews and Muslims to Christianity<sup>140</sup>, and Odo of Deuil (d. 1162) maintained that Roger had even offered to join the Second Crusade<sup>141</sup>. Indeed, from the twelfth century, legal documents began

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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*<sup>2</sup> 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:

to infer that his authority derived from his ancestors' restoration of Christendom on the island<sup>142</sup>, while Hugo Falcandus also stressed Roger's connection to this aspect of the region's past: "Since he [Roger II] descended from Norman origin, and having knowledge of how the Frankish people excelled all others in the glory of war, he loved those from north of the Alps and was inclined to honour them"<sup>143</sup>.

However, even accepting such evidence, as with the vast majority of Rogerian-era texts, there is no evidence to suggest that the king or his administration were involved in the *Cronica's* composition, approved of its content, or even knew of its existence. Rather, the *Cronica* is significant as it fits within a broader body of evidence which suggests that scholarship should reconsider key narratives which have been formative for Sicilianist scholarly discourse; the idea of a trilingual and interwoven society that – even at court – appears to have been divided on a linguistic basis – and that the central administration closely controlled textual production as part of this cultural programme. As such,

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The Later Crusades 1189–1311, ed. by Robert Lee Wolff / Harry W. Hazard (1962) p. 3–42; Luigi Russo, Bad Crusaders? The Normans of Southern Italy and the Crusading Movement in the Twelfth Century, in: *Anglo-Norman Studies* 38. Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2015, ed. by Elizabeth van Houts (2016) p. 169–180; Joanna DRELL, Norman Italy and the Crusades. Thoughts on the 'Homefront', in: *Crusading and Pilgrimage in the Norman World*, ed. by Kathryn Hurlock / Paul Oldfield (2015) p. 51–63; Paula Z. HAILSTONE, Recalcitrant Crusaders? The Relationship Between Southern Italy and Sicily, Crusading and the Crusader States, c. 1060–1198 (*Advances in Crusades Research*, 2020). Relating to the kingdom's connections to the crusading movement it can also be noted that the *Cronica* draws a number of thematic comparisons with the *Quantum praedecessores* which had been issued by Pope Eugenius III (sed. 1145–1153) in December 1145. This would seem to support, or at least not contradict, a mid-twelfth century dating argument. Indeed, the *Cronica* claims that the miraculous knight who aided the Normans at the battle of Cerami in 1063 carried a banner adorned with a red cross. William of Tyre reports that the Templars began to use this symbol during Eugenius' pontificate, cf. *Willelmi Tyrensis archiepiscopi Chronicon*, ed. by R. B. C. HUYGENS (CC Cont. Med. 63–63A, 1986) XXII,7, p. 554.

142) For example, see Annick Peters-Custot's study of how such ideas informed the editing of conquest-era charters during the twelfth century: Annick PETERS-CUSTOT, *L'historiographie des actes de la pratique: l'écriture de la conquête normande dans les actes de Sicile et de Calabre du milieu du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle au début du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, *Tabularia* 15 (2015) p. 17–37.

143) Pseudo Ugo Falcando, *De rebus circa regni Siciliae curiam gestis* (as n. 53) p. 56: *Transalpinos maxime, cum ab Normannis originem duceret, sciretque Francorum gentem belli gloria ceteris omnibus anteferri, plurimum diligendos elegerat et propensius honorandos*. A similar claim was made in Odo of Deuil, *De profectione Ludovici VII in orientem* (as n. 141) p. 11.

the *Cronica* is representative of a period in which a newly-established royal court was witness to cultural production – in its broader sense – without necessarily directly patronising it.

If we, thus, accept that the *Cronica* not only represents a Latin history of the ruling family, but also a piece of crucial evidence for literary production in this period, the text not only has a clear importance for studies concerning the Rogerian court and its culture, but also has a direct bearing on research relating to the rise and fall of the Norman kingdom. Herein, it is impossible to know if the *Cronica*'s anonymous author was informed or influenced by the ideas and events of twelfth-century Sicily and the wider Mediterranean. Nonetheless, what can be more confidently assumed is that the *Cronica* offers an important clarification to long-held assumptions that the period following the foundation of the kingdom in 1130 marked a complete cultural and intellectual break with the island's Norman past. Instead, the text suggests that in the period after the conquest, this narrative retained a vitality that was refreshed by contemporaneous events. It is the study of the links between such events and the written word that may not only shine new light on the conquest itself, but also on how its memory and memorialisation shaped the emergence and future direction of the Norman kingdom under the Hauteville's royal successors.

### Summaria

Die normannischen Eroberungen in Süditalien und Sizilien gipfelten 1130 in der Gründung eines neuen Königreiches und führten zu einer grundlegenden Verschiebung der politischen, religiösen und kulturellen Grenzen im zentralen Mittelmeerraum. Während der letzten Jahrzehnte ist dieser formativen Phase verstärkte Aufmerksamkeit zugekommen, was zu neuen Forschungen über diese Entwicklungen sowie zu Editions- und Übersetzungsvorhaben zu den relevanten, teilweise weiterhin unedierte Quellen geführt hat. Dabei wurde eine anonyme Chronik jedoch beinahe vollständig übersehen: die *Cronica Roberti Biscardi et fratrum ac Rogerii Comitis Mileti*, auch bekannt als *Historia Sicula* oder *Anonymus Vaticanus*. Der Text beschreibt den Aufstieg der Normannen in Süditalien, ihre Unterwerfung des muslimisch beherrschten Sizilien und schließt mit den militärischen Kampagnen Rogers II. in Nordafrika. Die Chronik wurde von For-

schenden zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts bisweilen noch konsultiert; weil sie aber als eine Kompilation des 13. Jahrhunderts galt, wurde sie bisher weder als eigenständiger Text ernstgenommen noch in die historiographische Tradition der normannischen Herrschaftszeit eingebettet. Der Aufsatz postuliert dagegen, dass die *Cronica* um die Mitte des 12. Jahrhunderts geschrieben wurde, und arbeitet außerdem heraus, dass sich im Text durchaus eigenständiges Material und wertvolle Bewertungen finden, die auch dazu dienen können, einige Parameter des derzeitigen historischen Diskurses zu reevaluieren.

The Norman conquests in southern Italy and Sicily brought about the foundation of a new kingdom in 1130 and, as a consequence, fundamentally redefined the cultural, political, and religious frontiers of the Mediterranean. Within the past decades, the study of this formative period has been enriched by a plethora of new translations, and critical editions of many sources for these events. However, despite this, modern scholarship has almost entirely overlooked an anonymous chronicle, the *Cronica Roberti Biscardi et fratrum ac Rogerii Comitis Mileti* – also known as the *Historia Sicula* or the *Anonymus Vaticanus*. The *Cronica* charts the Normans' rise to power in southern Italy, their conquest of Muslim Sicily, and concludes with Roger II's campaigns in North Africa. It was frequently consulted by historians up until the early-twentieth century, however, in the modern period it has fallen from scholarly favour and often dismissed as a derivative thirteenth-century work. Thus, it has seldom been considered within historiographical debate. This article seeks to demonstrate how such neglect is undeserved: not only does a close textual analysis indicate that the *Cronica* was composed in mid-twelfth century Sicily, but also suggests that it can offer new evidence which can redefine the parameters of current scholarly discourse.