

»Byzantine« versus »Imperial« Kingdom: How »Byzantine« was the Hauteville King of Sicily?*

The extent to which the Byzantine political model influenced the kingdom of the Hauteville dynasty in Southern Italy and in Sicily is still the subject of debate¹. Some examples of the Byzantine influence on the so-called »Norman« monarchy of Sicily are so obvious that this influence is considered dominant even if the concept of Byzantine inheritance is still an intensely discussed topic, in particular in art history². Nevertheless, the iconographic examples include the famous mosaics showing the Hauteville king as a *basileus*, found in the Palermitan church of Santa Maria dell’Ammiraglio (the so-called »Martorana church«, built by Georg of Antioch around the middle of the 12th century, fig. 1)³, as well as in the Monreale cathedral, which was commissioned by King William II (1166-1189) at the end of the same century⁴. In both cases, the king is wearing the renowned imperial garments, known as the *loros* and *kamelaukion*, as he is being crowned by Christ (in the Martorana church) and by the *Theotokos* – the Mother of God – in Monreale. In addition to these two famous examples, the Byzantine influence on the Hauteville kings can be found in areas beyond the iconographic field. For instance, we see it in the Hauteville kings’ reliance on Greek notaries to write public deeds, such as the *sigillion*, according to Byzantine formal models⁵. Another example is the Greek signature of Roger II, which, in presenting the king as a protector of the Christians, evokes imperial pretensions⁶. Also of note is the Greek *intitulatio* of the same king celebrating the building of a hydraulic clock (now lost)⁷, as well as the presence of a Byzantine cleric from Constantinople at the king’s court in Palermo: the deacon Nilos Doxopater, who wrote a treatise on ecclesiastical geography that followed



Fig. 1 King Roger II crowned by Christ. S. Maria dell’Ammiraglio (Martorana Church), Palermo, mid-12th century. – (After Kitzinger, The mosaics).

* It is well known that the kings of Sicily never emphasized their modest origins, which certainly were part of their motivations to create a particular culture of royal representation since they could not afford to support their position upon a glorious genealogy. Nevertheless, I prefer the use of this dynastic term to avoid that of »Norman« which does not sound appropriate to qualify neither the kingdom, nor the kings themselves.

1 See the bright synthesis made by Hubert Houben (Roger II above all the chapter »Herrschaftrepräsentation« 120-135) and Jeremy Johns (Arabic Administration in Norman Sicily).

2 The question of the »Byzantine inheritance« in Norman Sicily has been mostly addressed in connection with the disputed problem of the iconographical models in the *Cappella Palatina* in Palermo and in the Cathedral of Monreale, and for the place of Constantinople as origin of these models. Important art historians took part in these discussions such as Tronzo (The Cultures of His Kingdom), Demus

(The Mosaics of Norman Sicily), Kitzinger (The mosaics) and, recently, Dittlbach (*Rex imago Christi*). A very clear and impressive summary of the discussions and of the concepts used (inheritance, hybridity, *aemulatio*, tradition, innovation) is to be read in Dittlbach, Tradizione e innovazione.

3 See Kitzinger, The mosaics.

4 See Brodbeck, Les saints de la cathédrale de Monreale.

5 See Breccia, Il *sigillion*.

6 Ρογέριος ἐν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ εὐσεβῆς κραταιὸς ῥῆξ καὶ βοηθὸς τῶν χριστιανῶν: »Roger, pious and powerful king in Christ our God, and protector of the Christians«.

7 ὁ κραταιὸς δεσπότης Ρογέριος ῥῆξ ἐκ Θεοῦ σκηπτροκράτωρ: »the master, powerful Roger, king ruling thanks to the sceptre held by God«. – S. Guillou, Recueil des inscriptions grecques 217.

the Byzantine tradition by organizing episcopal sees along hierarchical lines and by placing the bishops of Sicily, Apulia and Calabria under the authority of the Constantinopolitan patriarchate rather than under that of the pope⁸.

Although these are notable examples, it is still possible to argue that the influence of this Byzantine »imperiality« on the Hauteville dynasty has been overemphasized, if not »over-constructed«. After all, what does it mean for a Western sovereign to style himself as a Byzantine emperor in the 12th century? Perhaps less than has been claimed. In the pages below, I will discuss what I see as two important limits to the Byzantine influence on the Hauteville monarchy. The first involves the extent to which the Hauteville kings assumed the sacrality of the Byzantine emperors. Detailed studies conducted by Mirko Vagnoni on the Norman king's representations have clearly demonstrated that these kings did not claim to be Christ's image and representative on earth, as the Byzantine emperors did⁹. Nor did the Norman kings ever assume the imperial title, neither in Greek nor in Latin. The second and more important limit is that the Byzantine representation of the king was only one out of numerous ways in which the Norman kings presented themselves. These kings also incorporated Islamic or Western elements in their self-representations. For example, they had three *intitulationes*, one Latin, one Greek and one Arabic. They lived in Islamic palaces and Roger II had a beautiful mantle covered by lions in an Islamic style. This willingness of the Hauteville dynasty to draw at the same time from many different influences is what makes studying them such a challenge: scholars must have a simultaneous and deep knowledge of

the Islamic, Byzantine and Western cultures of the medieval period.

Thus, to gauge the Byzantine influence on the Hauteville kings, we must first examine the whole question of imperial symbols that they used to express their royal power, both in terms of visual or rhetorical representations, as well as in terms of pragmatic uses. This approach aligns with that adopted recently by scholars interested in the development of the monarchical states in the Christian West from the 12th century onwards. These monarchies seem to be characterized by an attraction for, if not a submission to, the imperial ideology. With respect to these political realities, Gilbert Dagron's illuminating article »Empires royaux, royautés impériales«¹⁰ has been viewed by scholars as path-breaking because of the way he compares empire and kingdom. He presents a clear schema of the differences between these two political concepts, while simultaneously highlighting how historical forces introduce nuances in their expression. Dagron's work provides a useful framework for analysing what he calls »imperial royalties« such as those created by the Hauteville monarchs when they incorporated elements of the Byzantine model of empire into their political expressions.

The chart below summarizes the main differences between empire and kingdom according to Dagron:

My methodological approach is simple. First I will identify most of the examples (I say »most« because I cannot pretend to be exhaustive in this brief presentation) of the Hauteville re-use of imperial themes. I will then organize them according to Dagron's categories to the extent that they conform to his schema.

Empire	Kingdom
A world	A country
Vagueness regarding membership/non-membership	You are in, or you are out
The empire is first of all a belief. The real frontiers are internal and have to be ruled.	The kingdom is first of all a territory. The frontiers are external and need to be defended.
The emperor stays in his palace (sometimes even hidden).	The sovereign is a »wanderking«, especially on the frontiers.
The empire is an historical fate, a destiny.	The kingdom is a biological reality (the king's body).
The imperial throne is acquired through election	The royal throne is acquired through hereditary rights
Acclamatio	Inheritance
Divine adoption, personal ties with God, Old Testament model	Blood, human filiation, Christ as model (<i>imitatio Christi</i>)
From the 9 th century on: <i>in utero</i> unction (<i>porphyrogenesis</i>)	From the 8 th century on: unction due to a Church prelate
Crowning	Anointment
Imperial sacrality (Roman triumph)	Royal sanctity (princely mirror)
Caesaropapism	Royal theocracy
The sovereign's agents are officers: power is to be delegated.	The sovereign's agents are dignitaries: power is to be split.
The emperor is a lawmaker.	The king is a judge.

8 Peters-Custot, Les Grecs 336-337. – Nef, Conquérir et gouverner 198. – Peters-Custot, Cultural policy.

9 Vagnoni, La sacralità regia.

10 Dagron, Empires royaux, royautés impériales.

The Empire is, above all, a belief

The main difference between empire and kingdom is that the former claims to be universal although such a claim is a fiction – the first product of an ideology that aims to successfully disconnect the ideal (the Eastern Roman Empire is a universal entity) from reality (the Eastern Roman Empire never encompassed the entire known world). In the Byzantine world, this essential idea of the emperor's worldwide sovereignty was in evidence even when the Islamic conquest and then Charlemagne's imperial coronation deeply contradicted this universal pretension. Over time, however, claims to universality took on a new meaning, that of »ecumenicity«, which treated external frontiers as blurred realities (the territorial frontiers were rarely addressed in the documentation) and which focused only on internal frontiers, such as those between different groups, ethnic groups, religions, etc., among the people subject to the emperor¹¹.

Thus, according to Byzantine imperial logic (and, in fact, according to all imperial logic), the more that a state acknowledged internal diversity, the more its sovereigns were considered ecumenical. This universality became more of a political notion than a geographical one. It resulted in more emphasis being placed on creating a political order than on territorial expansion. As for the case of outside sovereigns, this logic dealt with them by placing them into a hierarchy according to their degree of submission to the »unique« emperor, the *basileus autokrator* of the Romans.

Such was the Byzantine model. But what about the Hauteville kingdom of Sicily? What were its internal components and how did it approach what Dagron calls the »internal frontiers« between the different groups of people who lived within its borders?

The Norman realm of Sicily: a territorial and cultural mosaic

Norman Italy was far from being a unified territory, not even politically. This regional diversity predated the Norman Conquest, and the conquest itself, rather than weakening this diversity, reinforced it¹². Indeed, plurality was inscribed on the landscape in such a way that the geographical distribution of the different groups can be easily mapped. I have no intention of denying the reality of individual and collective mobility, as we shall see. Still, at a macro-geographical scale, linguistic, ethnic and religious communities were situated in

clearly delineated areas, which did not exactly correspond to the political entities¹³. These areas at the time of the conquest were:

- A so-called »Longobardian« Southern Italy (the word »Longobardian« has no ethnic connotation)¹⁴. This region included the principalities of Salerno and Capua-Benevento as well as most of Byzantine Apulia, known as the »theme of Longobardia«, and later as the »Catepanate of Italy«. The population there lived mainly under Longobardian law, wrote documents in Latin, and were Christian – mostly of the Latin rite (even if the ecclesiastical policy was quite complex between the papacy and the Byzantine emperors).
- A »Byzantine« Southern Italy, or at least an Italo-Greek one, which includes Southern and Central Calabria, the Southern part of Apulia (called Salento) and a residual Christian population in the Northeast of Sicily, in the region called »Val Demone«. Whether under Byzantine authority or not, these zones had Greek-speaking populations, lived under Byzantine law, and confessed Christianity according to the Eastern tradition.
- A very small »Roman« Southern Italy, exclusively based upon the Tyrrhenian dukedoms (Naples, Amalfi, Gaeta), where the population was distinguished by specific characteristics such as the practice of Roman-Justinian law and some cultural pretensions linked to social selection criteria (a sort of snobbery), grounded in what is known as »Neapolitan pseudo-Hellenism«¹⁵.
- And finally the island of Sicily, which, at the time of the Norman Conquest, was split between rival emirs in what has been called a »taifa« system (in parallel with the *taifas* of the same period in Spain), and which was inhabited by an Arabic-speaking and mostly Muslim population, living under Islamic law.

Mobility amongst these populations certainly nuanced this general landscape. For instance, merchants coming from the Tyrrhenian dukedoms were present in Byzantine Calabria and in the Longobardian principality of Salerno. Documents reveal a notable northward migration of Italo-Greek peoples in the 970s, where they created Greek-speaking »enclaves« in Southern Basilicata¹⁶, Taranto¹⁷, and, to a lesser extent, in Rome and Naples¹⁸. For administrative and political reasons, the Byzantine population of Longobardian Bari in Apulia was important in the first half of the 11th century. However, generally speaking, the different populations adhered to different territories. The imperial logic preserved this pluralism in the

11 Dagron, *Empires royaux, royautés impériales* 391-392. – S. also Dagron, *L'œcuménicité politique*. – For the Hauteville kingdom, Nef, *Imaginaire impérial*.

12 On this story s. Martin, *Italie normandes*. – Les Normands en Méditerranée. – Taviani-Carozzi, *La terre du monde*. – Martin/Cuozzo, *Cavaliere alla conquista del Sud*. – Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs* 225-233. – On the Hauteville conquest of the island of Sicily, s. Nef, *Conquérir et gouverner* 21-63.

13 See Peters-Custot, *Convivencia between Christians*.

14 See the paper proposed by Jean-Marie Martin at the 21st Giornate normanno-sveve which took place at Melfi, october 13-14 2014, with the general

theme: »Civiltà a contatto nel Mezzogiorno normanno svevo: economia, società, istituzioni«. Martin's contribution was entitled: »Le popolazioni latine dell'Italia meridionale: Longobardi e Romani« (to be published).

15 Martin, *Hellénisme politique*.

16 Peters-Custot, *Le monastère de Carbone*. – Di Lorenzo/Martin/Peters-Custot, *Le monastère de S. Elia di Carbone*.

17 Martin, *Κίνναμος Ἐπίσκοπος*.

18 Peters-Custot, *Le monachisme byzantin de l'Italie méridionale*.

two broader zones: the *dhimmi* status gave a juridical condition to the Jewish and Christian population of Islamic Sicily, while the Byzantine administration accepted the practice of Longobardian law¹⁹.

The conquest of Greek-speaking Southern Calabria and the Southern part of Apulia took place under the supervision of two of the most important members of the Hauteville family: Duke Robert Guiscard and his young brother, Count Roger I. The latter also led the conquest of Sicily, which lasted many years²⁰. The following governance of these two parts of the future »Norman« realm²¹ was centralized, and retained the previous public authority, which was of Islamic and Byzantine origins. By contrast, authority in the northern territories underwent fragmentation due to longer military expeditions, led by different lords, at Aversa, Capua, Salerno and in Byzantine Apulia. This process gave rise to a landlord system quite similar to the recently imported Western feudal system. Even after the royal unification of the Norman territories in 1130, following a difficult three-year war against those Apulian cities and lords reluctant to submit to Roger II, the sovereign failed to subjugate these regions and their feudal *milieu*. However, the principality of Taranto, in Norman Apulia, probably maintained some administrative and ideological inheritance of Byzantine origins, led by the Hauteville Prince of Taranto, Bohemond, a son of Robert Guiscard. Naples was the last territory to surrender, long after the birth of the kingdom, in 1137. This original zone maintained its politically-distinctive characteristics even after the Hauteville period, opposing the papacy and the Anjou dynasty in the second half of the 13th century²². Naples is a particular illustration of a reality common to all the territories under the Hauteville power: the initial mosaic did not dissolve under the Norman monarchy. Shall we interpret this phenomenon as a lack of ability to integrate, or as a lack of will, or as a combination of both? We must keep in mind that the subjected populations of Norman Italy were not minorities, at least from a demographic point of view: in Sicily or Calabria, for example, the conquerors always remained a numerical minority.

The main Norman territories were thus united through a common enterprise of conquest, one that gradually submitted to a single family's power, even as other »Norman« lords resisted. This political entity was pragmatically constructed out of a great variety of juxtaposed territories. The only thing

uniting them was the sovereign himself. We should not claim that such a construction was untouched by imperialist intentions. The conquests led in Tunisia, or against the Byzantine Empire itself, reflected a conquering logic. Nevertheless, the king's political agenda was mostly focused on ruling over the mosaic of internal diversity.

The politics of culture

Since my area of expertise lies in the subject of the Greek communities of Norman Italy, I will mainly address the question of the administration of this population. Nevertheless, I will draw on the work of Annliese Nef on Norman Sicily²³ to broaden the approach of historians, including myself, who have tended to artificially disconnect Sicily from Calabria even though these were unified under the Hauteville administration.

The question is whether there were different Norman political practices for each category of population (Greek, Sicilian, Jewish and »Latin« people). Or was there a common policy towards the different groups, which could have known variations (Muslims should not be treated like Christians) but which belonged to an identical ideological construction?

Regarding the political attitude towards the Italo-Greek populations in the County of Calabria (then County of Sicily) and in the kingdom of Sicily, the fact that they did not undergo a »Latinisation« process, above all in the religious field, is now largely accepted²⁴. Christians who lived according to the Eastern rite were not forced to »convert« or become Latinised. The peculiarities of the Eastern ecclesiology – such as the ordination of married men – were duly maintained and respected, and even inserted in the king's law. In fact, the sons of Greek priests were included by the king in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, as evidenced by a few Hauteville deeds regarding the foundation or re-foundation of episcopal sees in Calabria, which express the fact that the bishop's jurisdiction includes the Greek priests' sons²⁵. It is important to note that these documents were the product of the sovereign's decision in his capacity as head of the realm's church.

Yet, we cannot deny the existence of an ecclesiastical and monastic policy of the Hauteville sovereigns, consecrated by the so-called *Apostolica Legazia* privilege, given by the pope

19 Lefort/Martin, Le sigillone du catépan d'Italie.

20 For Roger I, the latest biography has been written by Julia Becker: Becker, Graf Roger I. von Sizilien. – S. also, by the same scholar, the recent publication of the Great Count's deeds: Becker, Edizione critica.

21 A significant part of the invaders were not »Norman« at all, s. Ménager, Pesanteur et étologie.

22 See Feniello, Napoli 1343 52-63.

23 Nef, Conquérir et gouverner. – Peters-Custot, Construction royale et groupes culturels. – S. also Nef, Imaginaire impérial.

24 Peters-Custot, Les Grecs 289-306. – Peters-Custot, Bruno en Calabre 44-54.

25 E.g., the re-foundation deed of Squillace's see, dated 1096, by Count Roger in Becker, Edizione critica, deed nr. 54. 212-217, here 215: *Item concedo illi [the bishop of Squillace] omnes presbiteros grecos cum filiis et filiabus eorum, sicuti sunt scripti in privilegio eorum. Concedo item omnes leges episcopales,*

sicuti concessi ecclesie Melitane et Messane ad faciendam iusticiam secundum canones et sanctiones patrum, tam de grecis quam de latinis, per totam parochiam suam. – Another example is in the redefinition of the jurisdiction of Cosenza's bishop, again in Calabria, by the duke of Apulia, Guillaume, dated 1113, and mentioning the Latin and Greek priests of the episcopal see, *et cum omnibus rebus eis pertinentibus et filiis atque hereditatibus eorum.* The deed has been lost, but is known through Frederick II's confirmation, dated 1223 (Huillard-Bréholles, Historia diplomatica II 1, 390). – Let us quote a deed from Empress Constance, Henry VI's widow, for the archbishop of Taranto, dated December 1197: *Sacerdotes pretera tam Latinos quam Grecos et alios clericos tue diocesis eorumque filios post sacros ordines genitos et iurisdictionem plenariam super ipsos tibi et ecclesie tue concedimus,* in Kölzer, Die Urkunden der Kaiserin Konstanze, deed nr. 44. 136-144, here 142, l. 9-10.

to Count Roger I at the end of the 11th century (1098). This explicitly identified the count, and later the king, as the pope's permanent legate in Sicily and in Calabria²⁶. We will later see this position as an influence on – or a condition for – the Hauteville imperial ideology.

The result was clear: Christianity, throughout Norman Italy, was diverse and would remain so. Was this the result of a conscious, flexible policy? Eastern Christianity was preserved and even sustained (I need only mention here the foundation of the great Archimandritate of SS. Salvatore di Messina²⁷) not as an Italo-Greek church, but as a part of the prince's church. The counts and kings made poor use of diversity, not due to a lack of political awareness, but due to a lack of utility. I am more and more convinced that we should not speak of an »Italo-Greek church« under the Hauteville. The Italo-Greek ecclesiastical structures, and the Christians themselves, were simply one part of a whole – the king's church. In fact, »king's church' sounds, to me, like a more useful expression.

Some other aspects of the Norman government also indicate that there were no specific policies towards the Greek populations of the kingdom: Byzantine law remained in use, the Italo-Greek notarial *milieu* maintained the writing of Greek deeds, and even the Norman lords used these notaries to produce valid deeds²⁸. Greek-speaking writers were in the majority in some Calabrian towns, even in the beginning of the 13th century, compelling the lords to engage the service of Latin monks to write Latin deeds for them. For example, in 1217, Andrea di Pagliara, lord of Mesoraca in Calabria, has a deed been written for him by Guillaume, monk of the Cistercian abbey of S. Angelo di Frigilo, only after getting approval from the town's Greek notary, *Peregrinus*, who could not write in Latin²⁹. The Italo-Greek subjects of the Hauteville were not subjected to a particular policy, except when taking account of their ecclesiastical peculiarities. So toward this population, the Hauteville's slogan could be: »an indifferent difference«. This mischievous expression may reflect the awareness of the Christian unity inside the kingdom. It obviously cannot be conceived as appropriate to the situation of the Muslims, even if numerous common elements can be seen between the two subgroups.

A particular case: the court milieu

Were the Greek members of the Hauteville court considered the representatives of a distinct community (that of the Greeks of Norman Italy)? Were they part of a lobby inside the

court? Can we detect a link between their presence – or their absence – at the court, and the king's general policy toward their community?

The Palermitan court kept various sorts of Greek-speaking individuals: a first, well-educated group represented the high-level cultural *milieu* that each sovereign needed to support his action and his representation, both ideologically and politically. A second group, less prestigious, wrote the Greek deeds of the count and later the king³⁰, and led the king's current administrative actions.

Beside this group of the sovereign's servants, the Norman court actually contained a smaller circle of intellectuals speaking high-level Greek. There was certainly no sense of identification with the Italo-Greek population, since they were only rarely of Italo-Greek origin; Nilos Doxopater and Georges of Antioch³¹, the most representative members of this *milieu*, belonged to this category of refugees. Their presence at Palermo, together with many intellectuals from the Islamic world, demonstrates above all how attractive the Hauteville court was for Greek-speakers and other individuals around the Mediterranean. Their activity at Palermo was thus a key element of a Norman political ideology aiming to configure an international profile.

Below this upper-class group, there was a second group that brought together notaries and administrative agents. Their appointments were linked to their linguistic and diplomatic skills; they were bilingual or even – at least some of them – trilingual. As long as the chancery was actually trilingual (I will not address the expression's relevance, which was most criticized), Italo-Greeks notaries had their part in it, justified by their technical skills, and in the technical service of the sovereign. After King Roger II's death in 1154, his successors took into account the striking weakening of the Greek-speaking element in the kingdom, which followed the unification of 1127 when Roger II brought Apulia under his jurisdiction. According to Annliese Nef, William II even favoured an Islamisation of the court and the administration³². Therefore, the knowledge of Greek, which previously was an advantage for having a career in the central administration, became less useful. So even if Greek language and culture remained alive at the court after 1154, the decline of the Italo-Greek element in the circles of power reveals how this group never exerted political pressure and was never a power lobby. Moreover, without any documentation, it seems doubtful that these notaries and administrative agents would have been aware that they shared a common identity with the other Italo-Greeks of the kingdom. Given that the social

26 The most importance study on this subject remains that of Salvatore Fodale: Fodale, *Comes et legatus*.

27 See Scaduto, *Il monachesimo basiliano*. – von Falkenhausen, *L'archimandritate del S. Salvatore*. – Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs* 296-306.

28 Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs* 375-399.

29 Pratesi, *Carte latine*, deed nr. 110. – From then on, Brother Guillaume will write all the Latin deeds of Mesoraca till 1219, always with the Greek notary's approval: Pratesi, *Carte latine*, deeds nr. 112-113. 119.

30 See Brühl, *Diplomi e cancelleria*.

31 Upon Georges of Antioch, s. De Simone, *Il mezzogiorno normanno-svevo* 261-293. – Nef, *Conquérir et gouverner* 311-314. – Re/Rognoni, *Giorgio di Antiochia. L'arte della politica in Sicilia*.

32 Nef, *Conquérir et gouverner* 328f. – S. also Johns, *Arabic Administration in Norman Sicily*.

barriers were stronger than their cultural consciousness, and even though their social status depended on this very same cultural background, their loyalty and identification lay with the court culture and environment, rather than with the Italo-Greek community.

Nevertheless, from the time of Count Roger I, even before a real chancery was established and until the end of the Hauteville dynasty, this multilingual court was able to write royal deeds in the three main languages considered to be the languages of the king: Latin, Greek and Arabic. This multilingual written practice was well known and much studied, and was most typical of the Western area. The historical works that focused on this notarial and diplomatic production shed light on many of its salient features³³.

First, at the beginning of the Norman Conquest, the written language was determined by the use of notaries found *in situ*: The conquerors, indeed, did not yet have a rich notarial tradition, and the language used for written matters was determined by the geographical context: Latin in Apulia, Greek in Calabria, Arabic in Sicily etc. Moreover, for some kinds of documentation (such as lists of peasants or land inventories), the count or duke had to rely on local communities' cooperation. In that case, the practical provisions were directly registered in the language of the partners of the sovereign's agents³⁴.

Subsequently, when a linguistic choice emerged, thanks to the appointment of notaries by the public authority, this choice was derived less from the beneficiary's language than from the category of the respective deeds. For example, the public deeds concerning ecclesiastical policy were mostly written in Greek for Calabria and Sicily, even if the beneficiary was not Greek-speaking (such as a Latin monastery or bishop). This thematic specialization of the Greek language in public deeds found an echo in high-level literature written in Greek, which was more or less dedicated to ecclesiastical matters – and not theological ones, as is some times alleged³⁵). On the contrary, the Arabic language was used in Sicily mostly for tax matters. The linguistic monopoly in both fields could be associated with specific legacies provided by both previous administrations found on the spot by the Norman conquerors: the Islamic one and the Byzantine one.

There was thus a functional use of written languages, bound to ideology, since the written language of public authority cannot be distinguished from the political forms it conveys. By using the Greek language, the Norman counts and kings also seized the archetypal form of the Byzantine public deed: the *sigillion*, a formal written translation of the

Byzantine imperial authority. This was not a naive selection: the linguistic choice was not, at this time, linked to practical constraints any more, but proceeded from political choice, since language expresses, beyond the words, a political ideology³⁶.

The multilingualism of the chancery did not imply the same about the deeds themselves. Recent studies of the written production of the count and later king of Sicily have revealed a sort of fragmented use of languages, functionally based, as mentioned³⁷. But the small number of truly multilingual documents – which present the same text in two different languages – reflects a clear choice: not to have the sovereign's word translated. The Latin monasteries or bishops, for example, could not gain a direct understanding of the Greek deeds produced for them without the intermediation of this exclusive group of bilingual individuals – the bilingual public agents. Besides, to write in Greek or in Arabic could make it difficult to produce forgeries. In a word, for all these reasons, we can assume that there was a real policy of public deeds that was based on ideology. It was not a linguistic policy, since the counts and kings never promoted multilingualism in their territories, but on the contrary created a sort of monopoly on multilingualism, in order to maintain a public monopoly on common authority³⁸.

There was undoubtedly a capacity, or at least a will, in the Hauteville government to maintain and preserve the initial and internal diversity of population in the kingdom. It can be seen as the imperial ideology of ecumenism, shared by most of the imperial structures, such as the Byzantine one. It also had the pragmatic advantage of maintaining control over all the different population groups, without promoting any single one, but keeping them all divided. Juxtaposition is the master word of such a construction, maintained by the figure of the sovereign and by his ability to secure the populace's belief in him. The making of a consensus was a necessity, and such a necessity was also a weakness.

The emperor is the elect

Let us return to Dagron's study: theoretically, the imperial office was attained through election whereas royalty preferred the hereditary system. Nevertheless, neither of the two systems of power-transfer was sufficient on its own: election created a lack of stability, and hereditary rights created a lack of legitimacy³⁹. That is why history softens the contrasts delineated by theory. In the Byzantine world, the introduction

33 For the most recent approach of this subject, s. Peters-Custot, Multilingualism, and all the papers regarding Southern Italy and Sicily in the collective volume G. Mandalà / I. Pérez Martín (eds), Multilingual and Multigraphic Documents and Manuscripts of East and West, Madrid (soon to be published). – Some important elements are to be found in Nef, Conquérir et gouverner 73-116, focused on the chancery's production for Sicily.

34 Nef, Conquêtes et reconquêtes médiévales. – Peters-Custot, Comportement social. – Peters-Custot, Les *plateae* calabraises.

35 Nef, Conquérir et gouverner 202.

36 The best study on this theme remains that of Gastone Breccia: Breccia, Il *sigillion*.

37 Peters-Custot, Multilingualism. – Nef, Conquérir et gouverner 73-116.

38 On the subject s. Nef, Peut-on parler de «politique linguistique».

39 Dagron, Empires royaux, royautés impériales 395.

of *porphyrogenesis*, under the Macedonians' rule, became a solution, mixing divine election with inheritance. For the Western kings, the anointment expressed God's choice, according to the model of God's choosing David by anointing him through the hands of the prophet Samuel. But at the same time, this ceremony strengthened a form of clerical power, not that of a particular bishop and not that of a particular king, but of the institution »church« towards the institution »kingdom«. We will address this point through two elements: Roger II's coronation in 1130, and the ecclesiastical position of the Hauteville king.

1130: Roger II becomes a king

My intention here is to elucidate all the steps by which Roger II gained access to the royal throne through an examination of two official (or nearly-official) sources that reveal the sovereign's ideas about his royal power: the narration by Alexander of Telesse, on the one hand⁴⁰, and the liturgical *Ordo* undoubtedly made for the coronation ceremony (or written afterwards to tell how the ceremony should have been), on the other.

As a matter of fact, all the documentation, including other testimonies such as Orderic Vital's *Historia Ecclesiastica*⁴¹, the *Chronicon Beneventanum* from Falco of Benevento⁴², or later, the anonymous *De rebus circa regni Siciliae curiam gestis*⁴³, describe a two-step process for Roger II's ascent to the royal throne: inheritance and then conquest. First, Roger's territorial rights were linked to his right of succession, gained after the death, without male heir, of his cousin's son William, the Duke of Apulia, in 1127. This, however, was not sufficient and, in order to have his rights respected, Roger had to obtain, through warfare, the submission of the Apulian lords, some of whom were rejecting his authority. Alexander of Telesse justified the legitimacy of Roger's territorial domination by citing the paternal inheritance, the conquest and the collateral relative's inheritance. The existence of this text suggests that help from apologists was needed in order to legitimise Roger's claim to authority⁴⁴.

Once the conquest was completed, the count of Sicily, also duke of Apulia, gained an indisputable authority over a large and diverse group of regions. The nature of his new power needed to be addressed and, above all, Roger's *intitulatio* had to be coherent with the reality of his new power. According to Alexander of Telesse, this need to align Roger's new power with his title led his entourage to suggest that he adopt the royal title⁴⁵. When Roger first submitted this proposal to his

barons at a gathering at Salerno (the Apulian dukedom's capital city), the proposal was warmly received by all⁴⁶. Then, the decision was definitively taken at Palermo. In fact, on the return trip from Salerno to Palermo – the latter was already the capital of the Sicilian county – Roger announced the date of his crowning (Christmas day). He also commanded all persons in charge of any function or power to go to Palermo. When he reached Palermo, an extraordinary crowd of people from all levels of society had already gathered to discuss Roger's decision. Once again, the sovereign obtained the unanimous approval of the people⁴⁷.

Alexander's narration presents three major steps in the building of a consensus that involved an ever-increasing number of people being consulted: the count's restricted circle, then the barons, then the people. This followed a three-step sequence: *designatio*, *consensus*, *collaudatio*⁴⁸. This narration affirms the way in which, in the Middle Ages, royalty needed a process of effective recognition⁴⁹, one that united election by the people (the German way) with *acclamatio* (the Roman model).

The role played in the process by the city of Palermo was significant, as it deprived Salerno of its previous role as capital. Alexander of Telesse marked the new capital city of the new king with many signs of legitimacy, both in the process of founding the royalty (Palermo is the place where the people's *acclamatio* creates a monarchy, and where the coronation ceremony takes place), and in the historical justification of the process. In the first step of the narration, that of the *designatio* by Roger's *entourage*, the choice of Palermo as the future capital city was justified *via* a curious historical allegation:

Qui etiam addebant quod Regni ipsius principium et caput Panormus Siciliae metropolis fieri deceret, quae olim sub priscis temporibus super hanc ipsam provinciam Reges nonnullos habuisse traditur, quae postea, pluribus evolutis annis, occulto Deo disponente iudicio nunc usque sine regibus mansit.

This theme of the choice of capital came back during the barons' meeting at Salerno: *precibus insistunt ut Rogerius Dux in regiam dignitatem apud Panormum Siciliae metropolim promoveri debeat*. Later, Palermo was closely associated with the king and the kingdom at the very moment of Roger's anointment: when the count is anointed, the whole city is crowned: *Inaestimabiliter quidem tota coronabatur civitas, in qua non nisi gaudium et lux erat*. The true queen is the city – Roger's wife is completely omitted.

40 Alex. Teles. II c. 1-6. – Alex. Teles. II c. 1-6 (De Nava/Clementi 23-26).

41 Ord. Vital., t. 6: lib. XII c. 44 (Chibnall 366); lib. XIII c. 11 (418). c. 15 (432-434).

42 Falco of Benev. 108.

43 Pseud.-Hugh Falcandus 2, 1 (D'Angelo 54).

44 Same appreciation in Ménager, L'institution monarchique 328.

45 Illuminating is Alex. Teles. II c. 1 (De Nava/Clementi 23): *sepissima [...] coepit suggeri collocutione, videlicet ut ipse [Roger II] qui tot provinciae Siciliae, Cala-*

briae, Apuliae caeterisque regionibus quae poene Romam usque habentur, Domino cooperante, dominabatur, nequaquam uti ducalis sed regis illustrari culminis honore deberet.

46 Alex. Teles. II c. 2 (De Nava/Clementi 24-25).

47 Alex. Teles. II c. 3 (De Nava/Clementi 25).

48 Ménager, L'institution monarchique 445-447.

49 Ménager, L'institution monarchique 320.

Thus, the official (or almost official) account of the process that created a new Western kingdom in 1130, that of Sicily, mixed features linked to the Western, German-style royalty, and imperial elements marked by *romanitas*, the Roman legacy of which the Byzantine Empire declared itself the only heir and repository. The role played by Palermo, in contrast, proclaimed continuity with the Islamic tradition of making that town the island's capital (under Byzantine rule Syracuse was Sicily's main city). In this way, we can see the juxtaposition of different, if not contradictory influences in the birth of the Medieval »Norman« State.

Regarding the ceremony itself, all the sources refer to an unction, i. e. anointment by an archbishop, certainly the archbishop of Palermo. It is coherent with Pope Anaclet's bull, dated 27 September 1130, in which the pope provided his set of orders for the coronation ceremony⁵⁰: the diploma pointed out that all the liturgical action would be in the hands of the future kingdom's prelate – a point that was certainly Roger's request, since he was anxious not to owe anything to the pope. Alexander of Teles's narrative provides no details of the ceremony itself:

*Cum ergo Dux, ad ecclesiam archiepiscopalem more regio ductus ibique unctione sacra linitus, regiam sumpsisset dignitatem non potest litteris exprimi, immo mente extimari que et qualis quantave eius tunc esset gloria, quam magnus in regni decore quamque etiam in divitiarum affluentis admirabilis*⁵¹.

We may point out the expression *more regio*, »in a royal manner«, to describe the procession leading the duke of Apulia to the cathedral. In fact, the procession certainly followed the route used by the Sicilian emirs to go from the Palace (taken over by the Hauteville when they conquered the city) to the main mosque (the former Byzantine cathedral, turned into a mosque and re-transformed into a cathedral after the Norman Conquest). There again, the complex history of the island superimposes many levels of influence, continuities and ruptures.

Later in his text Alexander returns to this procession, to which he pays more attention than to the actual ceremony:

Palatium quoque regium undique interius circa parietem pallatium glorifice totum rutilabat. Solarium vero eius multicoloriis stratum tapetis terentium pedibus largifluam praestabat suavitatem. Euntem vero Regem ad ecclesiam sacrandum, universis eum dignitatibus comitantibus, immen-

sus etiam equorum numerus ex parte altera ordinate procedens sellis frenisque aureis vel argenteis decoratus secum comitabatur.

This return to the procession, the buildings and the people around the ruler, confirms the narrative's attention to the places that were affected and modified by the transformation of the duke into a king. This association between space and sovereign can be seen as a Byzantine manifestation (the association between the *basileus* and his palace and capital city, where he stays, often hidden, almost permanently, since it is the place where God's choice and the election of the new emperor was made⁵²) and a royal sign (the kingdom and the king's body are one whole, and what changes the latter, affects the former).

According to Gilbert Dagron, the anointment is a matter of royalty⁵³. Besides, according to the liturgical *Ordo* thought to have been created for Roger II's coronation, the liturgy followed the royal ritual, and not the imperial one. For this part, I am indebted to Reinhard Elze's works on the subject⁵⁴. To briefly summarise a complex situation, Elze, who specialises in the Roman-Germanic pontifical (»Pontifical romano-germanique«, PRG), found and studied five manuscripts of the PRG that had been written in the Hauteville kingdom of Sicily (in Montecassino, Monreale, Syracuse and Messina⁵⁵) and which copied the same unique version of the PRG for the royal coronations, known to have been established in the 11th century⁵⁶. All these Sicilian manuscripts present the same variations from the 11th-century model and some of these specific versions (which are absent from all the other manuscripts of the PRG) suggest that the ceremony had been adapted for Roger II's coronation and anointment⁵⁷. In conclusion, the ceremony of Roger II's coronation followed the royal *Ordo*, and not the imperial one, while the imperial *Ordo* was known and copied in the Hauteville kingdom, but not used. Only the royal *Ordo* was adapted for Roger II: the Sicilian sovereign wanted to be a king and never pretended to be an emperor.

In the royal *Ordo* adapted for Roger II's coronation, Elze noticed that Chapter 21, which describes the transmission of the *regalia* to the new king, does not evoke the usual insignia, *sceptrum* and *baculum* (that is to say the sceptre and the rod) but explains that the king was given *sceptrum* and *regnum*⁵⁸. Peter Schramm identified the *regnum* with the orb⁵⁹, an ex-

50 Italia Pontificia 8, deed nr. 137, 37. – S. also Caspar, Roger II, 96-97. 506-508. – According to Kantorowicz, the anointment ritual is restricted to the kings of France and of England, and to the German emperor, but the princes of Capoue and Salerno had gotten it, and perhaps the prince of Benevento (Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae* 259-260).

51 Alex. Teles. II c. 4 (De Nava/Clementi 25).

52 On the permanent presence of the *basileus* in the imperial capital, Constantinople, from Theodosios the Great's reign, s. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale* 85-86. – S. also Becker, *Dieu et le couronnement* 151.

53 Dagron, *Empires royaux, royautés impériales* 395.

54 Elze, *Zum Königtum Rogers II. von Sizilien*. – Elze, *Tre Ordines*. – Elze, *The Ordo for the coronation*. Elze, *Der normannische Festkrönungsort*.

55 These manuscripts are: Bibl. Casatanese, cod 614 (Montecassino, around 1200, in Beneventan script); Vat. lat. 6748 (13th century, Monreale); Vat. lat. 4746 (13th century, Syracuse); Madrid, Bibl. Nacional Cod 678 (14th century, Messina) and Madrid Bibl. Nacional 742 (12th-13th centuries, Messina).

56 Elze, *Zum Königtum Rogers II. von Sizilien* 108.

57 The complete demonstration can be found in Elze, *Zum Königtum Rogers II. von Sizilien* 109.

58 Elze, *Zum Königtum Rogers II. von Sizilien* 108-110.

59 Schramm, *Sphaira, globus, Reichsapfel* 128.

planation subject to discussion⁶⁰, but which is confirmed by some representations of the Sicilian king with an orb (such as a bull of Roger II and a seal of William II). Let us specify that, according to Schramm's studies, the orb, which had been a monopolistic attribute of the emperor, began to be associated with kings from the middle of the 11th century onwards, initially in England⁶¹ and in the connected kingdom of Denmark⁶², but then also in the 12th century that is our focus, in the southern parts of Western Christianity, in the kingdoms of Castile and Sicily. Here, a remarkable coherence – both chronological and historical – is to be seen between the end of the imperial monopoly of the orb, the representations of some Western kings (themselves connected by marital alliances) with the orb, and Roger II's *Ordo*. We should, in any case, address the equivalence between orb and empire. While it is perhaps unwise to draw juridical conclusions from iconographic representations, I would like to emphasise the possibility that all the attributes connected to the empire (everything that I will term »imperiality«) could be used by the king to express – instead of an inveiglement of the imperial dimension – the notion of sovereignty which could not be expressed by a particular word before the remarkable increase of the juridical theory of royal power, from the 13th century onwards⁶³. To summarise these complex notions, it may be possible that the »imperial« attributes could be used to express sovereignty in a Roman manner, more than an endorsement of empire by kings⁶⁴.

To conclude, in the modalities of ascent to the royalty, as well as in the liturgical choices made for the coronation and anointment, the Hauteville and their circle brought into play a mix of imperial influences – sometimes Byzantine, sometimes not – and royal references. They convey the image of the elected sovereign, chosen by the people, by the *maior pars* of the society, and above all by God, as an emperor must be (a Frankish king, too), as well as the image of the hereditary king. The sovereign is crowned like an emperor and anointed as a king. He remains in his palace – a previously Islamic one – and his territory is assimilated to his capital city, like a Byzantine emperor in Constantinople. But at the same time, his kingdom and his people are connected to the modifications of his body, like a Frankish king. In any case, the Hauteville sovereign never asked for the imperial title: imperial references were inserted in a royal frame.

Fig. 2 *Basileus* Constantine VII crowned by Christ. Ivory, around 945. Puchkine Museum, Moscow.



The sovereign as chief of his church

Regarding the sovereign's representations, the Hauteville king was undoubtedly – in the Byzantine-style images – an elect of God, directly crowned by Christ, as already stated previously when discussing the Martorana and Monreale mosaics. The first of these, especially, is fascinating from the point of view of the Byzantine influence: it is the true copy of a piece of carved ivory, dated from the middle of the 10th century, nowadays kept at the Puchkine Museum, in Moscow, which shows the very same scene with the *basileus* Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos, *autokrator* of the Romans. The similarity in style between these two masterpieces has been convincingly demonstrated by Ernst Kitzinger (fig. 2)⁶⁵. In Roger II's time, the *basileis* did not wear the same style of imperial garments worn two centuries earlier. Whatever the degree of sacrality the king's image may convey – a degree that is the object of debate and important studies, particularly by Mirko Vagnoni⁶⁶ – the copy of an ancient Byzantine model, outdated from the point of view of the contemporary Constantinopolitan customs, allowed the king to maximize the purely symbolic value of this reference to Constantine VII; his recognition as

60 The signification of »orb« for *regnum* is attested only in the Sicilian *Ordo* for Roger II, whereas Schramm noticed that *regnum* sometimes mean »royal crown« in the Merovingian period (128 n. 7) and from the 9th century on, »papal tiara«. Nevertheless, in Roger II's *Ordo*, the *regnum* cannot be a crown since the crown is given afterwards to the king, after the sceptre and the *regnum*.

61 See Harold's representation as a king in majesty in the Bayeux tapestry.

62 Schramm, Sphaira, globus, Reichsapfel 143.

63 I would like to connect this assumption with the hypothesis of a Sicilian origin (under the Hauteville's reign) of the famous expression *rex imperator in regno suo* used for the French kings from the beginning of the 13th century on (s. Calasso, *Origine italiana*).

64 Same reflexions in Ménager, *L'institution monarchique* 315-316.

65 Kitzinger *The mosaics* 192-194. – On the piece of ivory kept in the Puchkine Museum s. Cutler, *The Hands of the Master* 203-235.

66 Vagnoni, *La sacralità regia*.

the *basileus*' heir, even if Constantine was a bastard, was a key-moment that had helped generate the notion of *porphyrogenesis*. However, this public iconography of the sovereign had nothing to do with negation of hereditary rights to the throne. The choice of a Byzantine iconographic code suggests that the message was directed at the ecclesiastical authority, and was clearly linked to the Hauteville's claim not to depend on the pope, in contrast to the juridical reality. In fact, as is well known, from 1059 on – and therefore long before the foundation of the Kingdom of Sicily – the Hauteville sovereign was *de jure* submissive to the pope, since the 1059 Council of Melfi established that Robert Guiscard (and all his successors) would hold in fief for the pope all the territories he had already acquired and would later conquer⁶⁷. But the sovereign never stopped demonstrating that he was, *de facto*, free from all external power, including that of the pope. According to Ernst Kantorowicz' study of the *Laudes Regiae*, specific features of a Palermitanian manuscript, dated from the 15th century, but attributed to 12th century Sicily, may confirm from a liturgical point of view this peculiar royal autonomy of the sovereign from ecclesiastical power⁶⁸.

We saw that Roger I, as count of Calabria and Sicily, obtained from the pope in 1098 an essential privilege, that of the *Apostolica Legazia*. The papal bull only confirmed *de facto* his situation, since the count did not seek papal approval and handled the Sicilian episcopal sees according to his will. As early as 1082, Roger I began rebuilding the Sicilian ecclesiastical network that had been entirely destroyed in the Islamic years, and started demarcating the frontiers of the new episcopal see of Troina⁶⁹. In the »Norman« Mezzogiorno, the Hauteville's ecclesiastical status had been built in a practical manner, linked to circumstances and to the pontifical incapacity – or lack of will – to make the pope an essential protagonist in the region. The papacy was actually very busy, and perhaps was quite satisfied to have a count, seen as the pope's trustee, taking care of the ecclesiastical network to be restored.

After the papal confirmation of 1098, the Hauteville sovereign officially earned complete authority and autonomy over ecclesiastical matters, first only in Sicily and Calabria, and then for all the royal territories⁷⁰. The agreement signed in 1156 between King William I and Pope Adrian IV, known as the »Concordat of Benevento«, did not really destroy this authority since the king was in a position of strength compared to the pope. Afterwards, the »Concordat of Gravina«, signed by Pope Celestine III and King Tancred in 1192, considerably

reduced the sovereign's power over the kingdom's Church. However, it never was recognized by the Hohenstaufen, who seized the Sicilian throne in 1194 and considered Tancred an usurper. This was not the only reason for the Hohenstaufen to deny any legitimacy in the Concordat of Gravina: the treaty was based on the fact that the legitimacy of the Sicilian sovereign did not come from the inherited lineage, but from the papal investiture which followed the renewed homage due to the pope. For the Hohenstaufen dynasty, this was not acceptable. On the contrary, in 1156 the Concordat of Benevento stipulated that the king could rule without papal agreement⁷¹.

The Sicilian king could define the episcopal sees and the jurisdictional territories of the bishops⁷², as well as appoint the bishops and the most important abbots⁷³. At the same time, he avoided introducing tithes on private incomes (which were absent from Islamic Sicily as well as from Byzantine Calabria) but instead found other ways of enriching the churches, keeping them under his control⁷⁴. There was an ecclesiastical and monastic policy, but no religious policy: the sovereign never interfered in the dogmatic debates, such as the question of married priests or other affairs that could lead to argument, given the presence of an important Byzantine population. Although he became involved in the management of bishoprics and monasteries, he handled the Greek institutions just as he governed the Latin ones, without making any distinction between them. In the Middle Ages, these actions always came under the normal policy of sovereigns who pretended to be the heads of their respective churches – not in a feudal manner, but as an expression of public authority. The Hauteville king was, at this time, far from being the only one to claim a complete autonomy of his ecclesiastical power since, for example, the English king did the same⁷⁵. But such claims were still linked to the imperial model and ideology, that of the first Christian emperors such as Constantine and Theodosius, as demonstrated by the iconographical choices made to represent this status, an which attests the value of the Byzantine »patronage« upon such an ecclesiastical rule. For the corresponding images, the best model was the Byzantine one. As a *basileus*, King Roger was directly crowned by Christ, thus taking his power from a non-earthly authority. This adapted Byzantine ideological model contributed – alongside other inherited models like the Islamic image – to the Norman king's sacral dimension.

67 The text of this decision is to be seen in Ménager, Recueil des actes 30-32, deed nr. 6. – For a rich comment, s. Ménager, L'institution monarchique 308-310.

68 Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae* 251-264, explains in a chapter devoted to the Norman Kingdom of Sicily the specific features of the Sicilian *Laudes Regiae* at the end of the 12th century and in particular the acclamation of the king as *dominus, rex, rector et gubernator* (255) and the lack of acclamation to worship the pope or any other member of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

69 Malaterra, *De rebus gestis III* 13 (Pontieri 67-68). – The count had already chosen Troina's bishop, Robert, and shortly beforehand he created the sees of Messina (Malaterra, *De rebus gestis III* 32 [77]).

70 Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs* 244-246. – Ménager, *L'institution monarchique* 311-313.

71 See Baaken, *Ius Imperii ad Regnum* 31-79.

72 For the Sicilian sees, s. Nef, *Géographie religieuse*. – Nef, *Conquérir et gouverner* 448-455. – For the Calabrian sees, Peters-Custot, *Les remaniements de la carte diocésaine*.

73 Malaterra, *De rebus gestis IV* 7 (Pontieri 88-89).

74 See Toomaspoeg, *Decimae*. – My commentary with some corrections: Peters-Custot, *Review Toomaspoeg*.

75 Fodale, *Comes et legatus* 101-102. – Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs* 241 and n. 31. – For a broader analysis, s. Ménager, *L'institution monarchique* 319-320.

Conclusion: delimiting the features of a »Byzantine king«

The imperial status denied

Many elements presented here have shown that the Sicilian sovereign never staked a claim to the imperial title held by the German emperor. The coronation *Ordo* written for Roger II's ascent to the throne was a royal one, one that respected the typical stages of a Western royal prince. Nor did the Norman kings take the title of *basileus*, which was monopolized by the Byzantine emperors. Instead, they adopted the classical title of *rex* written in Greek letters (ῥήξ), which was the Byzantine title given to Western sovereigns⁷⁶. At the same time, the Hauteville kings never took the title of *emir of caliph*, but with the same wisdom preferred that of *malik*⁷⁷. Nevertheless, Roger II's Greek intitulation reflects this mix— one that combines a surface denial of empire in its most obvious expressions and subtle references to a possible imperality of the sovereignty. It also expresses the imperial dimension of *regalitas*⁷⁸.

Combining inheritances

The Sicilian royal ideology aimed to mix every possible expression of an imperial sovereignty, thanks to the multiple inheritances that the kings gained from their territories. The Norman king's multifaceted image has led to problems of interpretation, and has made it difficult to provide a synthetic approach to its representations. In her masterful study on Norman Sicily and the king's images⁷⁹, Anliese Nef, by restricting her research to the »elements commonly considered as »Islamic« ones«, excludes many of the sovereign's representational forms that were not Islamic. However, the Norman kings' issue was not only how to rule over Islamic Sicily, but also over Latin Apulia and Byzantine Calabria⁸⁰. The problem is: how does one provide an interpretative synthesis of this triple-faced representation from an ideological point of view? Isolating the Islamic or the Byzantine elements of this multifaceted image would not permit a global approach, which still needs to be done.

An example from epigraphic production is the famous trilingual inscription on the hydraulic clock at Palermo, which was a glorification of the Norman king (fig. 3)⁸¹. Yet it pre-



Fig. 3 Inscription for a hydraulic clock built by King Roger II. Palermo, Cappella Palatina, a. 1142.

sented a very brief, plain and little-inspired Latin text⁸². The Arabic and Greek texts, in contrast, both included a quite dignified royal title. For Nef, the Arabic title indicates the »figure of a learned sovereign, devoted to the kingdom's protection, who rules the hours as well as his administration«⁸³. The Greek part of this inscription does the same⁸⁴: This Greek text was as complex and broad, with a splendid title (ὁ κραταῖος δεσπότης Ῥογέριος ῥήξ ἐκ Θεοῦ σκηπτροκράτωρ, or »the master, powerful Roger, king ruling thanks to the sceptre held by God«) giving the king the function of the wise sovereign who rules the water's stream and produces an infallible knowledge of the hours: this is regarded as a new miracle (ὧ θαῦμα καινόν)⁸⁵. The Greek and Arabic versions are the same, and both glorify the king, as opposed to the Latin version. The Greek and Arabic languages can both be considered to be the languages of power and solemnity, reflecting the greatness of the king's *krateia*: they convey the royal ideology. This is no coincidence, considering that they are the languages of the two great Mediterranean imperial worlds: the Islamic and the Byzantine.

The two imperial worlds, and not the three imperial worlds: in fact, we should notice how rare, if not absent, were the borrowings of a specific Western Imperial way-of-being, if such a thing existed. Charlemagne and the Carolingians, the Ottonians and the Germanic Emperors rarely provided images and references to the Sicilian king. Perhaps this was linked to a wise and cautious attitude regarding the pope. So the Hauteville drew their references from the Islamic and Byzantine imperial stocks. It was not only a question of im-

76 Martin, L'Occident chrétien.

77 Nef, Conquérir et gouverner 186.

78 See Ohnsorge, Byzanz und das Abendland 47, speaking of the »kaisergleichen Rang des rex«.

79 Nef, Conquérir et gouverner.

80 Peters-Custot, Construction royale et groupes culturels.

81 This inscription is in Guillou, Recueil des inscriptions grecques, nr. 198. 216-218.

82 *Hoc opus horologii precepit fieri dominus et magnificus rex Rogerius anno incarnationis Dominice MCXLIII mense Martio indictione V, anno vero regni ejus XIII. Feliciter* (Guillou, Recueil des inscriptions grecques, nr. 198. 217).

83 The Arabic text can be translated such as: »The royal, revered, supreme majesty of Roger (may God perpetuate his days and help his banners!) has ordered the edification of this machine in order to mark the hours in the capital of Sicily, protected by God, in the year 536.« I borrowed this text from the French translation mentioned in Guillou, Recueil des inscriptions grecques 217.

84 Peters-Custot, Construction royale et groupes culturels.

85 ὧ θαῦμα καινόν· ὁ κραταῖος δεσπότης // Ῥογέριος ῥήξ ἐκ Θεοῦ σκηπτροκράτωρ // Τὸν ῥ(οῦ)ν χαλινὸς τῆς βε(οῦ)σης (οῦ)σίας // Γνώσιν νέμων ἀπαιστον ὠρῶν τ(οῦ) χρόν(ου) // τῷ β' τῆς βασιλείας χρόνω μηνί Μαρτίῳ // ἰνδ(ικτιωνος) ε' ἔτ(ους) ζχν'.

age: they ruled according to imperial principles, such as the »internal frontiers«. The governing practices and the imperial expressions of their power are coherent. In this context, the Hauteville king reflects the reality of what Annliese Nef has called »a *koinè* of the sovereignty« in which, at this time,

you could not do without Byzantium⁸⁶. The Sicilian king was no more a Byzantine sovereign more than an Islamic one. He pretended to reign *imperialiter*⁸⁷. This was not of the greatest originality at this time, but his way of doing so was of the highest creativity.

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86 »Ohne Byzanz keine Kaiserpolitik«, as wrote Werner Ohnsorge, Byzanz und das Abendland 47.

87 The »imperial kingdoms« are indeed the main objects of a five-year research programme, *Imperialiter*, which aims at considering all the expressions of such

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