

**THE TWELFTH-CENTURY NORMANS IN SOUTHERN ITALY AND  
SICILY: ROMANCES, ARCHITECTURE, AND COSMOPOLITAN  
SPACES**

by

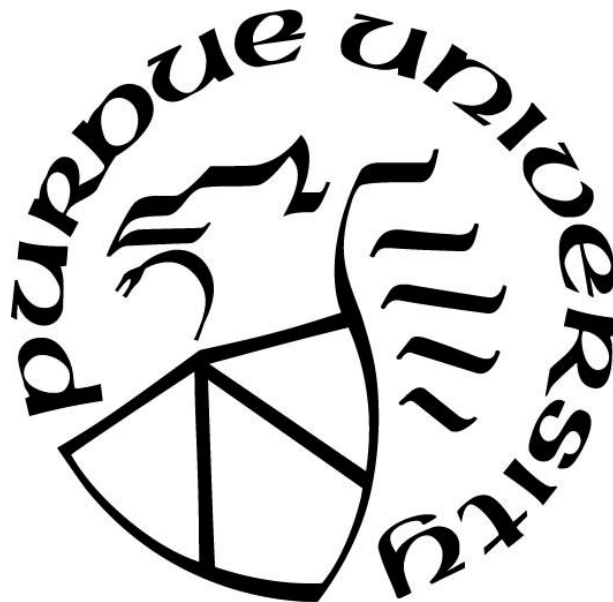
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*To Myself: I did it!*

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## ABSTRACT

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Title: The Twelfth-Century Normans in Southern Italy and Sicily: Romances, Architecture, and Cosmopolitan Spaces.

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During the twelfth century, the Norman monarchy in southern Italy and Sicily created a cosmopolitan culture that promoted connectivity, rather than domination, between the various kingdoms of the Mediterranean and Europe, in particular, those of the Byzantine Empire and of Fatimid Egypt. Rather than exhibiting *translatio imperii*'s unidirectional movement from east to west, the Normans in southern Italy created what I term *translatio normannitatis*; a multidirectional flow between east and west, which helped to circulate people, goods, and ideas. Using post-colonial and spatial theories, this dissertation explores the Norman monarchy's claim to be the successors of Troy and Rome, a vital element to their development of *translatio normannitatis*, as well as examining how texts and religious structures associated with the Norman kingdom in southern Italy and Sicily both reflect and endorse the cosmopolitan culture that the Normans created. Close readings of two romance texts — *Cligés* and *Guillaume de Palerne* — and the Norman monarchy's chapel in Palermo, Sicily — the Cappella Palatina — demonstrate the blending of European, Byzantine, and Islamic cultures fostered under Norman rule. The study of this unique place and time period, and its cosmopolitan atmosphere, creates a fuller picture of the medieval period, reveling its heterogeneity and combating modern tendencies to underestimate the intercultural nature of the medieval Mediterranean and Europe.

## INTRODUCTION: THE NORMANS IN SOUTHERN ITALY AND SICILY

The dissertation that follows focuses on the Norman kingdom in southern Italy during the twelfth-century and the literature and architecture created under their influence. Invoking their status as the successors to the empires of Troy and Rome, the Norman monarchy became a force of cultural connectivity, rather than one of pure cultural domination, between east and west; a circular movement of people, goods, and ideas that I call *translatio normannitatis*. The Norman monarchy of southern Italy helped lead a cosmopolitan people, who both gave and took from the cultures they were acquainted with. In his discussion of culture and space, Homi K. Bhabha argues that in nations' border areas people are objects, that they are acted upon by larger forces, including international, political, cultural, and economic. These forces, "[give] the discourse an authority that is based on the pre-given or constituted historical origin in the past...the people are also the 'subjects' of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary presence of the nation-people...as that sign of the present through which national life is redeemed and iterated as a reproductive process."<sup>1</sup>

Bhabha's idea of discourse applies to the Normans' own national myths and preoccupations with origin — in this case, Troy and Rome — that are expressed in the literature and architecture of the Norman monarchy in Sicily and Southern Italy. The authority the Trojan and Roman mythology confers allows, first, the original Normans in Normandy to incorporate multiple people and languages – Franks, Vikings, Bretons, etc. — into a more cohesive Norman people. Later, as small groups of Normans moved south to Italy, those Normans utilized the

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<sup>1</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994): 145. I do not wish to address the question on medieval nationhood here; however, I believe Bhabha's definition is applicable to the borderlands of spaces that may not fit the definition of the modern nation-state.



architecture, languages, and knowledge of the Mediterranean basins' other kingdoms and people, particularly those of Byzantium and Islamic lands, in their own culture.

The second half of Bhabha's statement concerns the population as subjects. These people live in a specific time and place under a specific government. In Normandy, characterizing themselves as the inheritors of the Trojan and Roman empires, the Normans created a unified (relatively speaking) region, culture, and language; however, for the Normans in Southern Italy, this was not necessarily the case. While Normans might justify their conquest of Sicily, Apulia, and Calabria, and still consider themselves descendants of Troy and Rome, they were also willing to incorporate the architecture and symbols of power from people with, and without, similar ties to the same myths. The Byzantines considered themselves the true continuation of the Roman Empire, but it was the Normans who used their mosaic styles and artists, bought their silks and goods, and incorporated their visual style into buildings.<sup>2</sup> But when the Normans channeled Byzantine power, it was the current practices and ascetics of medieval Byzantium, not Byzantium, the new Rome. Byzantines might have interpreted their own practices through that lens, but that does not mean the Normans did.

The Normans also borrowed from Fatimid Egypt and other Islamic cultures in and around the Mediterranean, who did not draw on the myth of Troy and Rome either; that is not what their rulers' power and legitimacy derived from. For the Byzantines and Muslims living under Norman rule in Italy, the Byzantine and Muslim presence was not erased, but, rather was sustained through

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<sup>2</sup> In regards to Byzantium and Rome: "Byzantium never existed. No emperor, no subject called himself "Byzantine." It was the "Roman" empire, the emperors were Romans, as were its law, its institutions, and its citizens. Byzantium's self-image as "Greek" is a relatively late — twelfth century — development, and at least in part a response to western insistence on linguistic ethnicity as an element of self-understanding. But the society that centered around the Aegean basin and reached from Italy to Armenia was a distinctively "medieval version of the old Roman empire." Michael McCormick, "Byzantium and Modern Medieval Studies," in *The Past and Future of Medieval Studies*, ed. John Van Engen (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994): 59-60.

trade, literature, and architecture — the Normans literally incorporating the styles and foundations of these people into their own aesthetics. For twelfth-century Normans in Southern Italy, their rule does not really fit the binary division of Bhabha's object/subject. For the Normans, while Troy and Rome might serve as the base of their power, the Normans were open to using the symbolic power of other ethnic, religious, and cultural groups.

Some might consider the Normans' inclusion of Islamic and Byzantine cultures in the Normans' own culture as another example of appropriation. Cultural appropriation erases and diminishes the culture and its aspects that it borrows, but the Normans' actions in Southern Italy do not reflect that kind of erasure or diminishment. They included Islamic and Byzantine symbols in their sacred spaces, they included those from different religious backgrounds at the highest levels of the government, they bought Islamic and Byzantine luxury goods, they hired their artisans, they learned their languages, and they read and translated their texts. They recognized the status, power, and beauty within these non-European cultures, and the Normans incorporated too much and too deliberately. For example, the Norman chapel the Cappella Palatina combines Byzantine mosaics and an Islamic architectural form, the *muqarna*, in a Latin Christian chapel; this deliberate bricolage does not reflect the kind of cultural domination associated with appropriation. While Normans in mainland Normandy and Britain used other cultures within their own, they did not do so to same extent, and not with groups who did not practice Latin Christianity. In twelfth-century southern Italy under the Normans, it was a place and time of relative tolerance and openness to different peoples, cultures, and, to a certain extent, religions. While the Normans used their claim as the new Troy and Rome as the basis for their conquest of Italy, they become members of the larger Mediterranean community rather than simply another empire.

Before continuing, I want to clarify the scope of the project. The dissertation focuses on the literature and architecture created for, and by, the medieval elite. While trying to understand the place of the Italian Norman kingdom during the twelfth-century within its broader historical moment, an inclusive history of the Normans and their expansion during this time period is not possible. I also do not take into account many of the political facets of the Normans' expansion and occupation of land in southern Italy that do not directly pertain to the literature and architecture discussed here. For example, when analyzing the unique architecture of Sicily and Southern Italy that developed under the Normans, I focus on the larger cultural message of the structures and the motivations of those involved in their creation — largely the nobility and high ranking members of the clergy and government; I do not discuss the historical treatment of the larger Greek and Arab populations under the Normans. This is not to say that the larger political or social aspects of the Normans' actions and the relationship of those actions to the literature and architecture are entirely ignored. The political and its institutions can never entirely be separated from the cultural moment; all culture, is in some sense, political. I try to emphasize throughout the dissertation that the Italian Norman kingdom during the twelfth century was by no means a paragon of tolerance and benign rule, and I do not wish to turn Norman Italy into a city on a hill.<sup>3</sup> However, the romances and architecture analyzed here reveal a monarchy and a society that was more multicultural and open than others in the same time period. There was something innovative about

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<sup>3</sup> Sharon Kinoshita reminds us that Kathleen Biddick makes this point particularly well, when she “cautions against the hazy romanticism of casting the European middle ages as a Golden Age of peaceful coexistence, warning that behind scenarios of *convivencia* lurk repressed histories of trauma and violence. Denying these histories, she suggests, circumscribes the middle ages as a site of fantasy and nostalgia, at the price of ignoring the continuities between medieval and modern barbarism.” Sharon Kinoshita, “The Romance of MiscegeNation: Negotiating Identities in *La Fille du comte du Pontieu*,” in *Postcolonial Moves: Medieval Through Modern*, ed. Patricia Clare Ingham and Michelle R. Warren (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): 125-126. The medieval period should no more be used as a golden age than American in the 1950's.

the Normans' reworking of the Trojan and Roman myth to create a multi-directional movement in the Mediterranean between kingdoms.<sup>4</sup>

My original proposal included a comparison between Normandy and Norman Sicily, as well as Anglo-Norman England; however, while comparing twelfth-century Normans as a whole may make for a fascinating book, I did not feel it could be adequately examined in this dissertation.

<sup>5</sup> Throughout then, when I refer to the "Normans," I am limiting the definition to the Normans who governed, lived, or had some connection with the Norman kingdom in Sicily and Southern Italy during the twelfth century; when Anglo-Normans or Normans residing in Normandy are discussed, I explicitly characterize them as such. Similarly, during the twelfth-century the Normans controlled the island of Sicily and the duchies of Apulia, Calabria, and Naples at various times; for shorthand, I refer to the Normans of Southern Italy or the Normans of Sicily.<sup>6</sup>

A further note on terminology, regarding the characters, authors, and all others who are practitioners of Islam. The distinction between the terms Islam and Muslim is relatively straight forward; Islam refers to the religion and Muslim to those who practice this religion. However, the word Arab can be more fraught. In its narrowest definition, Arab refers to the people who, and the

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<sup>4</sup> I am not the only one who sees the twelfth century as a unique period in medieval history, though Sharon Kinoshita speaks in term of the Mediterranean region: "Nevertheless, there was, I think, something distinctive about the high medieval Mediterranean: between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, multi-lingual and multiconfessional societies flourished in Fatimid Egypt, Norman Sicily, and the Byzantine Empire as well as the Iberian peninsula." While she acknowledges the role the Crusades played in this period, beginning with the sack of Jerusalem in 1099 to the fall of Constantinople in 1204, Europe was not a singular place or people. Sharon Kinoshita, "The Romance of MiscegeNation," 126.

<sup>5</sup> Other scholars see the political and cultural development of post-conquest England and Norman Sicily as different, too. Speaking of Norman kings in Sicily, William I and William II, Lampert-Weissig writes that the two "never knew Normandy and while one can still legitimately speak of the idea of a 'Norman period' and 'Norman kingship,' the nature of life in Sicily during this era should not be conflated with the cultures that developed in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest in England." Lisa Lampert-Weissig, *Medieval Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010): 43.

<sup>6</sup> During the Normans' conquest of the region and their rule, Sicily was most consistently under their control and hosted fewer challenges to Norman rule; at various times, nobles and other kingdoms with land in or near Apulia, Calabria, and Naples, attempted to break away from Norman control. This is why I am using "Sicily" to stand in for the Normans' territorial possessions on the Italian mainland.

culture which, originated in the Arabian Peninsula; but regions and people are often referred to as Arab that are in fact much more heterogeneous. Since multiple ethnic groups that practiced Islam were found throughout the Mediterranean basin during the twelfth-century, including Sicily, I am going to follow Maria Rose Menocal in using the term Islam and Muslim rather than Arab. As she argues, and I agree, the broader term covers the numerous groups in North Africa and the Middle East.<sup>7</sup> The use of the words Saracen and pagan are even more complicated. In the romance *Floire et Blancheflor*, pagan did not just refer to Islam, but to the classical learning from Greece and Rome that Islam preserved.<sup>8</sup> Pagan was not necessarily a pejorative then, but a more general catch-all for peoples, empires, and knowledge that were not Christian. The word Saracen falls in a similar category of ambiguousness: “The term was in fact invented at least two centuries before the start of Islam,” and like pagan, can refer to anyone who does not practice Latin Christianity, including Greek Orthodox Christians.<sup>9</sup> In terms of silk, Saracen covered a range of meanings as well, from clothing to purses to embroidery, in Byzantine, Islamic, and Christian contexts; here, Saracen was “a mark of technical skill,” without any negative connotations.<sup>10</sup> When looking at these terms then, especially as they are used in the romances of chapter two, it is crucial to examine each occurrence on a case by case basis and in the context of the larger narrative.

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<sup>7</sup> Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987): 33. She continues, “All that one can say without much fear of contradiction is that Islam and Arabic culture are not necessarily identical and that at different times and in different places, the nature of the relationship has varied” (34).

<sup>8</sup> Sharon Kinoshita notes, “The word ‘pagan’ persistently used to describe Muslim Spain, collapses the distinction between Islam and classical antiquity. The connection between the two was never more explicit than in this period, when the intense traffic in Arabic translations helped catalyze the Latin West’s rediscovery of Greek philosophy and science.” Sharon Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Differences in Old French Literature*, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006): 85.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel Martin Varisco, *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007): 74. In her work on medieval silk production, E. Jane Burns also notes Saracens’ pre-Islamic roots, and its application to anyone from the non-Latin Christian west, including “Muslim Spain, North Africa, and Constantinople.” E. Jane Burns, *Sea of Silk: A Textile Geography of Women’s Work in Medieval French Literature*, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009): 6.

<sup>10</sup> Burns, *Sea of Silk*, 5.

An examination of the literature and architecture involving the Italian Norman kingdom during the twelfth century is both distinctive and timely. The role of Troy and Rome in the foundational myths of Britain has been the subject of multiple texts, but the empires' role in creating the Norman identity — and in particular, the identity of the Norman rulers of southern Italy — to my knowledge, has not received as much attention in scholarly works.<sup>11</sup> Understanding how the idea of Troy and Rome influenced the formation of kingdoms across the medieval Mediterranean can help highlight the similarities and differences between these governments and cultures, creating a deeper knowledge of the twelfth century as a whole. The multi-disciplinary nature of the dissertation and its combination of literary and architectural analysis is also novel. Though it may seem like literature and architecture are disciplines that are too disparate to meaningfully compare, both use specialized vocabularies and techniques to construct narratives about and around places, people, and cultures in specific times and places.

The remainder of the dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides historical background on the Normans in both Normandy and Southern Italy during the twelfth century. Aspects of post-colonial (specifically cosmopolitanism) and spatial theory (the study of how spaces function on multiple levels, including physically and socially) help explain how the

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<sup>11</sup> Texts on Troy, Rome, and Britain in the medieval period include, but are not limited to: Christopher Baswell, "Troy, Arthur, and the Language of 'Brutis Albyoun,'" in *Reading Medieval Culture: Essays in Honor of Robert W. Hanning*, eds. Robert M. Stein and Sandra Pierson Prior (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005); Sylvia Federico, *New Troy: Fantasies of Empire in the Late Middle Ages*, Medieval Cultures vol. 36 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Kathy Lavezzo, ed., *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*, Medieval Cultures vol. 37 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Kathy Lavezzo, *Angels on the Edge of the World: Geography, Literature, and the English Community, 1000-1543* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006); Sophia Y. Liu, "A Regnal Genealogy in Trouble: The Trojan Myth as a Traumatic National Historiography in Medieval England" (Unpublished Dissertation, Indiana University, 2011); Alex Muller, *Translating Troy: Provincial Politics in Alliterative Romance* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013); Randy P. Schiff, *Revivalist Fantasy: Alliterative Verse and Nationalist Literary History* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011); James Simpson, "The Other Book of Troy: Guido delle Colonne's *Historia destructionis Troiae* in Fourteenth-and Fifteenth-Century England," *Speculum* 73 (1998): 397-423.

Normans employed their origin mythology and its connections to Troy and Rome to create their unique form of *translatio normannitatis*.<sup>12</sup>

Chapter two concerns two romances — *Cligés* and *Guillaume de Palerne* — which are connected to the twelfth-century Sicilian Norman kingdom, whether through the author's personal and professional ties, manuscript history, or the inclusion of goods, characters, and locations associated with the Islamic, Byzantine, and Norman kingdoms.<sup>13</sup> A close reading examines the ways in which the romances both reflect and support the Norman's own cosmopolitan culture in southern Italy.

The last chapter switches genres, from literature to architecture. The majority of the chapter focuses on Normans' official palace chapel, the Cappella Palatina in Palermo, Sicily. In the chapel's use and blending of European, Byzantine, and Islamic craftsmanship and styles, the Cappella physically manifests the cultural cosmopolitanism the Norman monarchy in southern Italy and Sicily helped to foster.

The Norman Italian kingdom during the twelfth century was unique in its heterogeneous population and in its reworking of ancient empires into a circular transfer of people, materials, and cultures around the Mediterranean. This enhanced not just the legitimacy of the Norman monarchy in southern Italy, but created an atmosphere where literature and architecture could incorporate — and celebrate — that interaction between people, materials, and cultures.

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<sup>12</sup> Scholars such as Edward Said, Usha Vishnuvajjala, and John M. Ganim will be particularly helpful in terms of post-colonial and cosmopolitan theory, as Henri Lefebvre, Robert T. Tally Jr., and Molly Robinson Kelly will be for spatial theory.

<sup>13</sup> These romances' connections to the Normans in southern Italy and Sicily, as well as the larger Norman communities in Normandy and Anglo-Norman England, made both *Cligés* and *Guillaume de Palerne* useful texts for the dissertation.

## CHAPTER ONE: TWELFTH-CENTURY NORMANS IN SOUTHERN ITALY AND THE APPLICATION OF THEORY

When the Normans settled in southern Italy and Sicily, their claim to be inheritors of the Trojan and Roman Empires facilitated their physical conquest of the land; but as one of many kingdoms in the Mediterranean, the Normans soon became part of a larger exchange network of material goods, knowledge, and culture. The concept of *translatio imperii* is the medieval phenomenon where countries and their rulers view themselves as the new Troy and Rome. According to this idea, the power, knowledge, and greatness of those fallen empires travels from east to west in a linear fashion.<sup>1</sup> But, as part of the larger Mediterranean community, the Normans used the idea of Troy and Rome not to form a linear pathway, but a circular one, a pathway that I am calling *translatio normannitatis*. With this pathway, the Normans in southern Italy and Sicily facilitated the flow of power, knowledge, and greatness around the Mediterranean — including the Byzantine Empire and Fatimid Egypt — as well as farther north into Europe and then back east. The concept of *translatio normannitatis* appears in both the literature and architecture created by them directly, or by those who were influenced or connected to the Normans. It was this circular flow between the Mediterranean and Europe's various kingdoms that allowed the Normans in southern Italy to foster their own inclusive, cosmopolitan culture.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Douglas Kelly, there are three types of translation in Old French romances — translation, adaptation, “and allegorical or extended metaphorical discourse.” Douglas Kelly, “Honor, Debate, and *Translatio imperii* in *Cligés*,” *Arthuriana* 18, no. 3 (2008): 291. *Translatio imperii* specifically is the idea that the power and knowledge of Ancient Greece, Troy, and Rome passed from those former empires to the kingdoms of western Europe. Sylvia Huot, “The Manuscript Context of Medieval Romance” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta L. Krueger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 63-64. The concept is both translated, adapted, and allegorized in Old French romances; for example, multiple texts incorporate ideas and concepts from Ovid, either through direct references or through plot and allusions.



To understand how the Normans participated in the larger circular movement around the Mediterranean, and how specific romances and physical structures were both creations, and reflections, of that exchange, aspects of both post-colonial and spatial theories will be useful. Post-colonial theory, specifically the concept of cosmopolitanism, illuminates how people of various religions, ethnicities, and languages interacted under the Norman's rule in Italy, and how those interactions influenced the Normans' innovative blending of those groups within their kingdom.<sup>2</sup> Spatial theory illuminates how the Normans used the vacuum left by the Trojan and Roman empires to carve out their own kingdom in southern Italy and Sicily, and how the Normans' religious structures physically manifest this larger space. Spatial theory is also useful in analyzing the movement and interactions of materials and characters in multiple twelfth-century romances connected with the Norman kingdom in southern Italy and Sicily. The third section of the chapter focuses on the relationship between literature and architecture. Both disciplines use specialized terminology to describe the smaller pieces and patterns of a larger whole, and can offer similar insights into the social and cultural dynamics that produce them. Both offer constructions of spaces, whether physically or verbally, that can also be analyzed using their specific vocabularies — whether discussing metaphor and allusions, transepts and vaulting. However, a brief historical

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<sup>2</sup> Cosmopolitanism posits that people are not merely members of smaller communities, such as their family and city, but have broader ties to people and cultures on a national and global level. According to Kwame Anthony Appiah: "People are different...and there is much to learn from out differences. Because there are so many human possibilities worth exploring, we neither expect nor desire that every person or every society should converge on a single mode of life." Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanisms: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006): xv. Acknowledging the value of these different people, cultures, and experiences, and studying how that acknowledgement was and was not expressed, is incorporated in applications of the theory to the history, literature, and art of the medieval period as well. Marla Segol "Medieval Religious Cosmopolitanisms: Truth and Inclusivity in the Literature of Muslim Spain," in *Cosmopolitanism and the Middle Ages*, eds. John M. Ganim and Shayne Aaron Legassie, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 81-82. The term cosmopolitan has been tied to anti-Semitism, particularly in regards to Hitler and Stalin. That people should be loyal or invested in communities beyond their own nation-state and its ruler went against both men's nationalist ideals. However, the concept of cosmopolitanism as it is discussed and written about today, including its applications in the medieval period, has divorced itself from its association with two of the twentieth-century's worst human beings. Appiah, *Cosmopolitanisms*, xvi.

background of the Norman kingdoms in both Normandy and southern Italy — how they began, how they developed, and how their mythologies incorporated the idea of Troy and Rome — will be helpful. Before providing historical background on the Normans in southern Italy, it is necessary to present a brief history of how the original Normans first arrived in Normandy, and how their origin stories influenced later Normans who chose to pursue a life outside northern Europe.

### **A Brief History of the Normans in Normandy**

In present day France, Normandy is a province in northwestern France lying along the English Channel, famous as the site of the D-Day landings during WWII and home of Mont Saint-Michel monastery. But in the ninth century, the first Scandinavians (Vikings) appeared in the region and began sailing up the Seine, sacking villages, monasteries, and cities along the river.<sup>3</sup> In Paris, Frankish king Charles the Simple, sick of the raids and the threat the Vikings posed to the city of Paris, decided to deal with the Vikings by removing their need for raiding, and granted them lands in Neustria (Normandy) around 911. There, the Scandinavian raiders, along with Breton and Frankish settlers, became ‘the Normans,’<sup>4</sup> a heterogeneous mix of people and cultures, united more by their common ties to place – the lands of Normandy – than any actual common ancestors. As Amanda Jane Hingst writes: “The Normans as a people gave their name to their homeland while at the same time this land provided an identity to its inhabitants...The transition from Neustria to Normandy was not, therefore, simply a change of name. It gave birth to a new people, one defined by a historical association with a particular place, the duchy of Normandy.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> François Neveux, *A Brief History of the Normans: The Conquests that Changed the Face of Europe*, trans. Howard Curtis (London: Constable and Robinson, 2006): 54.

<sup>4</sup> Amanda Jane Hingst, *The Written Word: Past and Place in the Work of Orderic Vitalis* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009): 26.

<sup>5</sup> Hingst, *The Written Word*, 29-30. François Neveux elaborates: “Whatever it is cannot be explained by heredity. There is no biological connection between the Scandinavians of the eighth century and the Normans of the eleventh century. Some Scandinavians did indeed settle in Normandy, but we now know, thanks to archaeological excavations,

The Normans were in some sense then, never a homogenous group even before the creation of their kingdom in Italy;<sup>6</sup> the Normans provided an overarching identity to a particular place, creating a united people, but they were a people who incorporated multiple ethnic and cultural backgrounds within a given space.<sup>7</sup>

While this is a brief historical sketch of Normandy's inception, the myths that grew up around the first Viking settlers and the region's inhabitants are just as important as their histories' more factual aspects. Like many medieval people, the Normans sought to connect themselves with the great empires of the past, particularly Troy, and portray themselves as the new heirs and progenitors of western civilization. These myths are legitimized, in part, by their inclusion in Norman histories<sup>8</sup> composed during the eleventh and twelfth centuries by Latin clerics, such as Orderic Vitalis, William of Jumièges, and Dudo of Saint-Quentin.<sup>9</sup> Both Dudo and William of

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that there were not many of them. They merged into the surrounding population, marrying local women, and were quickly 'gallicized,' even abandoning the use of their language after the middle of the tenth century." Neveux, *A Brief History of the Normans*, 194.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Magdalino writes on the Normans' origins and their ability to synthesis multiple cultures while maintaining their independence: "Their [Normans'] impact on Italian and Byzantine history reflected both their Viking origins and their Frankish background...[they] strenuously resisted commitment to any of the powers who engaged their services, whether Byzantium, the papacy, the Lombard princes of Capua and Benevento, or the Apulian rebels against Byzantine rule...On the other hand, they were thoroughly rooted in the post-Carolingian culture of knightly honour and religious reform; they had strong territorial instincts, and they expressed their territoriality by reproducing the structures of lordship and vassalage which they had brought with them from 'feudal' France." Paul Magdalino, "The Medieval Empire (780-1204)," in *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, ed. Cyril Mango (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002): 189.

<sup>7</sup> As Adele Cilento and Alessandro Vanoil point out, the Normans in Normandy were no longer Vikings but neither were they entirely Frankish: "They were a new people, able to bring elements of change to the regions they conquered, yet at the same time maintaining legal, social, and ecclesiastical continuity...The Normans were thus able to achieve an ethno-cultural fusion of their own traditions with those of the people they conquered. This was a process that recent historians prefer to define not as assimilation but as the formation of a new identity that combined the character and customs of both Vikings and Franks." Adele Cilento and Alessandro Vanoil, eds., *Arabs and Normans in Sicily and the South of Italy* (New York: Riverside Book Company, 2007): 162.

<sup>8</sup> While these texts are referred to as histories, during the medieval period history "...was by definition a mixture of fact and legend since the Latin word *historia* meant both history and story during the medieval period." Fiona Tolhurst, "The Great Divide?: History and Literary History as Partners in Medieval Mythography," *Réflexions Historiques* 30, no. 1 (2004): 8. The Latin histories concerning the Normans exemplify this interplay between fact and fiction, including information on the Normans' origin myths that involve dreams and visions.

<sup>9</sup> The first text was Dudo of Saint-Quentin's *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae ducum* (*On the Customs and Acts of the First Norman Dukes*) composed around 1000, followed by William of Jumièges's text *Gesta Normannorum ducum* (*Deeds of the Norman Dukes*) that was begun around 1050. Moving to the twelfth century, Orderic Vitalis wrote his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (*Ecclesiastical History*) over twenty-five years, starting around 1114. Leah Shopkow,

Jumièges' (whose text in fact reworks parts of Dudo's narrative) claim that the Normans descended from Antenor, a Trojan exiled during the war with Greece and who first settled in Germany before moving north to Dacia (Denmark).<sup>10</sup> When Denmark became too crowded, the eventual founder of the Normans and descendant of Antenor, Rollo, left, sailing first to England. There, as the myth states, Rollo had a prophetic dream of a Frankish mountain, a flowing spring, and different species of birds harmoniously flocking together around the mountain and its spring. Rollo was to build a new home in Francia (the mountain), convert to Christianity (the spring), and bring people of different regions to live under his rule (the various birds). Based on this dream, Rollo sailed for Francia, and it was to Rollo that Charles the Simple granted Neustria (Normandy). Rollo and the Danes that traveled with him, as well as Frankish and Breton descendants living in the area previously, became the Normans.<sup>11</sup> Another Norman historian, Orderic, writing slightly later, simplified the narrative passed down from Dudo and William, but the basic elements remained. Antenor fled from Troy, sailed north with his men, and it was Antenor's son Danus, from whom the Danes and Rollo, descended.<sup>12</sup> The myths of the Normans' origins and their founding leader Rollo trace directly back to Troy.<sup>13</sup> As Barbara Fuchs points out, the Normans were far from the only medieval group of people who claimed to descend from Troy and Rome: "What makes the cultural legacy so particularly fascinating is the extent to which it is contested by nations attempting to distinguish themselves from each other even as they claim the same imperial

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*History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1997): 38-46.

<sup>10</sup> Hingst, *The Written Word*, 25-26.

<sup>11</sup> Hingst, *The Written Word*, 25-26.

<sup>12</sup> Hingst, *The Written Word*, 26-27.

<sup>13</sup> It is interesting that the legends surrounding Rollo and the Danes settlement of Normandy do not specifically connect back to Rome; however, the Normans have another origin myth that does, though it is not quite so well known. In William of Jumièges' history, Rollo was not the only, or even the first, Dane to head south in search of less crowded territory. A Dane named Hastings, along with a large group of men, some Danes and some not, wreaked havoc in Francia, then turned towards Rome. Fooled into believing the city of Luna was Rome, Hastings and his band turned back north.

legacy.”<sup>14</sup> For example, Britain also claimed their nation was founded by refugees from the ancient world, and the connection between Troy, Rome, and medieval Britain has been well studied.<sup>15</sup> One question is why multiple kingdoms wanted to be seen as inheritors of the Trojan and Roman empires; <sup>16</sup> the Normans claimed a direct link to Troy and Rome, through Antenor and Hastings, and in his history Dudo paints Rollo as the new Aeneas.<sup>17</sup> The journey from Denmark to Normandy mirrors the journey from Troy to Rome, and Rollo’s descendants created an empire that also was known for its militarism, the geographic and cultural diversity of the areas they came to rule, and strong networks of trade. However, the Normans in southern Italy and Sicily were innovative in how their appropriation of the Troy and Rome mythos was manifested, creating a kingdom that took the idea of power and knowledge inherited from Troy and Rome, and instead of locating it only in the west, helped create a circular movement from east to west and then back east, creating a cosmopolitan kingdom that included people and cultures that were neither European nor Latin Christians.

### **The Normans in Southern Italy and Sicily**

Before moving on, a brief history of the Norman kingdom in Italy will contextualize their use of Troy, Rome, *translatio normannitatis*, and the cosmopolitan literature and architecture they created. The Normans not only conquered land in England in 1066, they also had a kingdom in

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<sup>14</sup> Barbara Fuchs, “Imperium Studies: Theorizing Early Modern Expansion,” in *Postcolonial Moves: Medieval Through Modern*, eds. Patricia Clare Ingham and Michelle R. Warren (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): 73. Fuchs argues for the terminology imperium studies rather than post-colonial, to acknowledge the idea of Troy and Rome’s legacy in future empires creations and myths (72-74). For clarity and consistency, I am going to continue using the more well-known term post-colonial.

<sup>15</sup> For a list of texts on Troy, Rome, and Britain, please refer to footnote eleven in the “Introduction.”

<sup>16</sup> Claiming a link to Troy and Rome is not limited to European kingdoms either. The Islamic Abbasid caliphate, as well as the Carolingians and Byzantines all claimed their empires descend from Troy and Rome. Paul Magdalino, “The Medieval Empire (780-1204),” in *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, ed. Cyril Mango (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002): 171.

<sup>17</sup> Shopkow, *History and Community*, 150.

Southern Italy, including the island of Sicily.<sup>18</sup> As the Normans' history in southern Italy is less well known than that of the Normans in Normandy and England, it requires a more thorough discussion of how and why the Normans traveled south to Italy. In Normandy, the nobility lived under the rule of feudalism<sup>19</sup> and primogeniture, a family's lands passed down to the eldest son.<sup>20</sup> This left later sons to make their living through war and knighthood or the church. However, some of these younger Norman sons preferred to seek their fortunes outside the boundaries of Normandy and its somewhat limited occupational offerings, and traveled south. It was this combination of

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<sup>18</sup> When English king Edward the Confessor died without leaving a clear heir to the English throne, Norman Duke William I invaded England in 1066, defeating Harold Godwin at the Battle of Hastings. Christopher Daniell, *From Norman Conquest to Magna Carta: England 1066-1215* (New York: Routledge, 2003): 8.

<sup>19</sup> As academics such as Susan Reynolds have pointed out, the reality of feudalism was never that simple. Reynolds argues that most the standard concepts and vocabulary of medieval feudalism — like those outlined above — developed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as scholars studied Roman law and later medieval property laws, rather than “property in general or the structure and bonds of society.” Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994):6. These scholars particularly neglected the documentary evidence that governed land and societal relationship in the earlier medieval period: “The elements of hierarchy that can be detected here are social and governmental, not — except in the case of more or less unfree peasants — a matter of property rights. The sources do not suggest that nobles and free men thought of their property as having originated in a grant from a king or other lord, except, of course, when one of them had just received a grant of land in addition to what he had inherited from his ancestors. Even then, if the grant was made *in proprietatem*, *in proprium*, or *in alodum*, it was not conditional or contractual except in so far as all political relations were implicitly contractual.” Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, 61. For example, that Rollo was granted Normandy by the French king and performed homage for it does not necessarily mean Rollo felt any kind of feudal obligation to the French. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, 136-37. And though “The dukes of Normandy accepted the general suzerainty of the Capetians, occasionally invoking their aid when it seemed useful... While the Capetians remained weak, their claim to suzerainty was too nebulous to cause concern, though the dukes were careful to do only border homage, thus suggesting that they controlled Normandy through right of conquest rather the grace of the Capetians...” Lindy Grant, *Architecture and Society in Normandy 1120-1270* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005): 9.

<sup>20</sup> Lords in the eleventh century brought more land under their control than before and the size of their landholdings grew, a type of administration called a ban: “Lords with the ban relied in the first place on their control of peasants and their holdings and the extraction of due and services from them. When they extended their power over alod holders they did so by imposing rather similar controls, dues, and services on them. The development of banal lordship and its extension over free landowners is one sign of pressure on all property.” Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, 130. This pressure on land, and the increasing lack of it to be passed down or granted, was part of what drove Norman expansion. Those who invaded England with William the Conqueror in 1066 were rewarded with land in England, and the opportunity for land contributed to Normans who traveled south to Italy. The issue of primogeniture, in which land is given to the oldest son in order to keep landholdings large, is also complicated. There are more records of it during the thirteenth century, but this is just as likely to be a result of an increase in the use of written records than a reflection of changes within the system of land inheritance itself. As Reynolds states, “It is hard to find evidence of the consistent application of any of the supposed rules of feudal inheritance in this period...” That younger sons were being divested of land and the living it offered them, resulting in their movement south, cannot be discounted any more than it can be proven; it remains a possibility. Unlike many of the duchies and counties of France, Normandy instituted “fixed quotes of service” following the Norman Conquest in 1066; better record keeping may explain this increase rather than an actual change in social and land management practices. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, 307.

land, warfare, and general fortitude that drove the first Normans south.<sup>21</sup> One of the first families that journeyed there, and from which the Norman Sicilian kings would ultimately descend, was the Hauteville's. Tancred Hauteville, a Norman noble holding lands near Hauteville in Normandy, married twice, producing twelve sons in total.<sup>22</sup> William, Drogo, and Humphrey all went to southern Italy to make their fortunes, and their half-brother, Robert Guiscard, followed.<sup>23</sup>

The southern Italy Roger Guiscard arrived in was in a transitional period marked by violence, various groups vying for control of the region with its resources and location as a center of trade and travel. The Lombards — Latin Christians from northern Italy — were looking to move south; the Byzantine Greeks, who practiced Orthodox Christianity, had held the region earlier before losing it to Islamic rulers;<sup>24</sup> the Franks, from the French kingdom, as well as the Germans,

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<sup>21</sup> Paul E. Chevedeen argues that the Normans came south not as mercenaries, but crusaders. For Pope Urban, the crusade he preached to re-take Jerusalem was the last in a series of three: the Normans in Sicily, incursions by Castilian and Catalan forces into the Iberian Peninsula, and then Jerusalem. Paul E. Chevedeen, "A Crusade from the First": The Norman Conquest of Islamic Sicily, 1060-1091," *Al-Masāq* 22, no. 2 (2010): 191. However, Alex Metcalfe argues that while Normans did conquer the island from its Muslim rulers and population, "the conquest is not generally considered to be a crusade. Apart from the fact that it pre-dated the call for the First Crusade in 1095, there were no overtly religious motives for the Normans' intervention in Sicily in the sense that they did not set out to conquer the island *because* it was Muslim." Alex Metcalfe, *The Muslims of Medieval Italy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009): 88. I agree with Metcalfe that the Normans were not crusaders: their reasons for conquering Sicily had more to do with a fortuitous opportunity to seize land and power, rather than regaining the island for Christians. And, as several scholars have stated, multiple groups who were fighting for control of the island recruited the Normans as mercenaries.

<sup>22</sup> Their names were: William, Drogo, Humphrey, Geoffrey, Serlo, Robert, Mauger, William, Aubrey, Humbert, Tancred, and Roger. Jeremy Dummett, *Palermo, City of Kings: The Heart of Sicily* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2015), 24. For more on the Hauteville's, see Hubert Houben, *Roger II of Sicily: A Ruler Between East and West*, trans. Graham A. Loud and Diane Milburn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 8-11.

<sup>23</sup> Donald Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 10. There was no brotherly love waiting for Robert when he arrived; this was an everyone for himself situation. For a detailed description of the first Normans' arrival in southern Italy during the eleventh century, including members of the Hauteville family, see Hubert Houben, *Roger II of Sicily: A Ruler Between East and West*, trans. Graham A. Loud and Diane Milburn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>24</sup> After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Goths ruled Sicily until it passed to Byzantium in 526. Adele Cilento, and Alessandro Vanoli, eds., *Arabs and Normans in Sicily and the South of Italy* (New York: Riverside Book Company, 2007): 29. Originally, "Greek interest in the region went back to the original colonies of the eighth century BC. From this point of view, the Greeks considered the Lombards every bit as much in need of being subjected to imperial authority as the Muslims or the Normans." Donald Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 13. However, much like Normans mercenaries were brought in to resolve conflicts between groups vying for control of the island in the tenth century, the Byzantines were being riven by internal conflicts and revolts. Cilento and Vanoli, eds., *Arabs and Normans in Sicily*, 29-30.

wanted access and control of the area as well. Immediately preceding Norman rule, various Muslim factions ruled Sicily, practicing different sects of the Islamic faith and struggling to maintain a unified hold on the island.<sup>25</sup> While the Fatimid dynasty, based in Cairo technically ruled, they had largely ceded control to the Kalbid dynasty in Palermo.<sup>26</sup> This did not mean the Kalbid dynasty lacked competition; other Muslim groups on the island involved in the power struggle included Shiites, Sunnis, Yemenis, Persians, and Berbers.<sup>27</sup> By the beginning of the tenth century, the island was under Muslim control. But this did not mean the island was free from conflict. The Fatimids, a dynasty that ruled Egypt and portions of North Africa during the tenth and eleventh centuries, entered the conflict for Sicily in the early tenth century, and “the rebellion, as usual, turned into a battle between Arabs, who were loyal to Baghdad and the Sunni tradition, and Berbers, who were in large part loyal to the Fatimids.”<sup>28</sup> As the tenth century continued, the Fatimid’s focused on maintaining their hold on Egypt, and Sicily gained a measure of independence; various small kingdoms and leaders took the place of a stronger central government on the island, largely under the Kalbid emirate.<sup>29</sup> Adele Cilento and Alessandro Vanoli summarize the situation well: “By now it should be clear that the Islamic conquest of Sicily was neither brief nor systematic. Many areas remained independent for a very long time, and many places that were conquered suffered reverses accompanied by often violent internal revolts.”<sup>30</sup> This political chaos in Sicily aided the Normans’ conquest of the island, though the same in-fighting the island experienced under Islamic rule would also plague the Norman monarchy as well.

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<sup>25</sup> Dummett, *Palermo*, 24.

<sup>26</sup> Dummett, *Palermo*, 19.

<sup>27</sup> Fracine Prose, *Sicilian Odyssey* (Washington D. C.: National Geographic Society, 2003): 72.

<sup>28</sup> Cilento and Vanoli, eds., *Arabs and Normans in Sicily*, 37.

<sup>29</sup> Cilento and Vanoli, eds., *Arabs and Normans in Sicily*, 40-42.

<sup>30</sup> Cilento and Vanoli, eds., *Arabs and Normans in Sicily*, 83.



Time and myth have obscured when and how the Normans first became involved in the conflicts in Southern Italy and Sicily. There is the popular tale that while worshipping at St. Michael's shrine at Monte Gargano in Italy, the Normans encountered a party of Lombards.<sup>31</sup> Hearing about their desire to free Sicily from Greek rule and restore Latin Christianity to the island, the Normans agreed to fight for the Lombard's cause. Lack of payment and infighting among the Lombards however, turned the Normans into independent mercenaries again.<sup>32</sup> There is another version in which the Normans were first recruited by the Byzantines to help re-take the island from its Muslim inhabitants, with the first Normans reaching Sicily around 1038. However, because of conflict among the Byzantines, the Normans abandoned the Byzantine cause, left Sicily, and returned to southern Italy.<sup>33</sup> Much like the myths of the Normans' settlement in northwest France, the story of the Normans' first encounters with the kingdoms and rulers of southern Italy remain murky and conflicting.

However, whether the Normans first fought with the Byzantines or Lombards, it does seem clear that it was ultimately the island's Islamic rulers who unleashed the full military and political might of the Normans on Sicily. The Fatimid caliph in Egypt were Ismaili Shi'is, but the Muslims already living in Sicily when the Fatimids gained control were mostly Sunni. They regarded the caliph in Baghdad as their actual ruler and were not pleased to be living under the Egyptian caliph.<sup>34</sup> Eventually, Sicily became less centralized under the Kalbid's rule and various leaders took control of different sections of the island. It was one of these leaders, Ibn Thumnah, Emir of Siracure, who in 1061 asked the Normans for assistance in ousting his two co-rulers.

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<sup>31</sup> Houben, *Roger II of Sicily*, 8.

<sup>32</sup> Donald Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 11.

<sup>33</sup> John Keahey, *Seeking Sicily: A Cultural Journey Through Myth and Reality in the Heart of the Mediterranean* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011): 129.

<sup>34</sup> Jonathan Bloom, *Arts of the City Virtuous: Islamic Art and Architecture in Fatimid North African and Egypt* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007): 189-90.

Unfortunately for Thumnah, the Normans, now led by Robert Guiscard's son Roger, did not stop there:

In exchange, he (Thumnah) would give Roger the eastern half and access to the entire coastline facing the Italian peninsula. According to Norman chroniclers, Roger put together an army of several dozen knights and, along with Thumnah's forces, took Messina easily. Within a decade, the Normans had dominated their Arab allies as well as conquering their Arab opponents. Not satisfied with taking just the eastern half, Roger rode into Palermo in early 1072.<sup>35</sup>

It would take another thirty years before Roger's son, Roger II, controlled all of Sicily, and it was not until 1130 that he was crowned king. But it is an impressive rise in fortune: descendants of a minor Norman noble became kings of Sicily and Southern Italy. It is no wonder that the Normans are described as "parvenus"<sup>36</sup> and "the Hells Angels of the medieval world,"<sup>37</sup> quickly moving into new territories and up the political hierarchy.

However, the creation of Norman Sicily and Roger II's kingship was neither easy nor assured. The early years of the Normans' presence was marked by multiple Norman lords fighting for, acquiring land, and seeking to hold it; the independent spirit of these nobles continued to trouble the monarchy, especially at the kingdom's beginning.<sup>38</sup> An unhealthy dependence between

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<sup>35</sup> Keahey, *Seeking Sicily*, 129.

<sup>36</sup> Bloom, *Arts of the City Virtuous*, 190.

<sup>37</sup> Prose, *Sicilian Odyssey*, 72.

<sup>38</sup> Both the Papacy and the Norman nobles both helped to drive conflict in southern Italy during the Normans consolidation of power in the region, as well as once the Norman monarchy was established. In 1127, Pope Honorius II fermented rebellion in Apulia, and according to the chronicler Alexander of Telese, convinced several nobles to join the revolt, including, "Grimoald, prince of Bari, Geoffrey, count of Andria, Tancred of Conversano, and Roger, count of Oria...together with Robert of Capua and Alife." Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, 44. Alex Keller sums it up thusly: "The Norman monarchy had never really won the support of the most influential class, the Norman barons, who accepted no loyalty beyond their own families — if that — and resented the upstart Hautevilles, their obscure upstart advisers, and the professional officials through whom they ruled. With the end of the Kingdom, and of the Court of Palermo, there was an end to patronage, and to the intellectual life and artistic work of the capital." Alex Keller, "The Normans in Sicily," *History Today* 6, no. 4 (1956): 243. However, in the context of other twelfth century monarchs, the Norman monarchy's contentious relationship with their nobility is not dissimilar to other the relationship between nobles and monarchies during this period. For example, the conflict between Stephen and Matilda of England divided nobles on both sides of the channel during the first half of the twelfth century.

the Papacy and the Normans rulers would also create conflict and political maneuverings, as one group looked to dominate the other. Robert Guiscard reached an agreement with Pope Nicholas II, as Guiscard looked to solidify his claims against the other Norman lords, as well as the Lombards, Franks, Germans, Muslims. In return for recognizing the Normans' right to rule in Southern Italy, the Latin Church would gain an important ally in the region and a foothold to enhance its own prestige and power. When Robert died in 1085, his son Roger took over his father's role, and became Duke of Apulia, later Roger I.<sup>39</sup> Much like Robert's dealings with Nicholas II, Roger I reached a similar agreement with Pope Urban II; in return for Roger's support of the papacy, Urban acknowledged Roger's legitimacy to rule, even allowing him to run the church and its appointments in Roger's lands.<sup>40</sup> Upon the death of Roger I, his son Roger II did not just maintain the lands and titles inherited from his father, but actively acquired the lands and titles of other Norman lords in the region. This provoked the ire of the new Pope, Honorius II, who disliked forfeiting so much of the church's power to the secular Normans, and it was not until 1128 that Honorius II agreed to legitimize Roger II's kingship. Further turmoil between the Roger II and the papacy came during the papal schism between Anacletus II and Innocent II.<sup>41</sup>

The Norman kingdom in Sicily and Southern Italy did not last long. After Roger II's death in 1154, his son William I became king, followed by William II in 1166. But rising tensions between different religious and ethnic groups, as well as rebellious Norman nobles in mainland southern Italy, increasingly plagued the monarchy. When William II died without an heir in 1189,

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<sup>39</sup> Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, 16.

<sup>40</sup> Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, 28.

<sup>41</sup> Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, 52. Roger agreed to support Anacletus II's claim to the papacy in return for Anacletus' acknowledgement of Roger as King of Sicily, Calabria, and Apulia, but with Anacletus' death in 1138, Innocent II was not inclined to look kindly upon Roger II or his upstart kingdom. Though they would eventually come to an agreement, Innocent recognizing Roger's kingship in return for Roger's loyalty and vassalage to the Papacy, relations between the leadership of the Roman church and Roger II would always be strained (52).

his Aunt Constance, daughter of Roger II, and her husband, the German Emperor Henry Hohenstaufen, gained control.<sup>42</sup> The reign of the Normans was over. The rule of the German Hohenstaufen would be followed by French and Spanish rule before Italian unification in the nineteenth century.<sup>43</sup> Scholars debate whether Norman rule was a progressive period of cultural and religious openness, or whether Roger II and his successors fell somewhere in between, and if so, exactly where they fell. Jean-Marie Martin says, “we must not think of Norman Sicily as a paradise of tolerance, because tolerance was not a concept of that era. Rather, the Kingdom of Sicily was the meeting point of three cultures at several levels.”<sup>44</sup> On Norman Sicily’s multiculturalism, Donald Matthews considers it as a “transitory phenomenon, and it is unlikely that there was ever any genuine interest in fostering intercultural relations or protecting minority cultures,” though he concedes that “since there was no deliberate policy to impose uniformity, it only came about as an indirect consequence of increasing self-confidence on the part of the Latin.”<sup>45</sup> However, in her work on medieval Mediterranean and French romance, Sharon Kinoshita takes a more positive view on the marriage of cultures and religions in the twelfth-century medieval Mediterranean:

The treasured place accorded silks like Enide’s in vernacular French culture squares poorly with the assumption that medieval Christian-Muslim relations during this age of crusades were exclusively, or even predominantly, conflictual. Following the routes that brought *soie d’Aumarie* to Latin Europe allows us to reimagine the denizens of the medieval Mediterranean not (only) as Christians and Muslims, but as kings,

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<sup>42</sup> For more on the transition from Norman to German rule in southern Italy and Sicily, see Maureen C. Miller, “Italy in the Long Twelfth Century: Ecclesiastical Reform and the Legitimization of a New Political Order, 1059-1183,” in *European Transformations: The Long Twelfth Century*, ed. Thomas F. X. Noble and John Van Engen (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012).

<sup>43</sup> Dummett, *Palermo, City of Kings*.

<sup>44</sup> Jean-Marie Martin, “Political and Religious Models in the Medieval Mediterranean,” in *Symbols and Models in the Mediterranean: Perceiving Cultures*, eds. Aneilya Barnes and Mariarosaria Salerno (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017): 29.

<sup>45</sup> Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, 112-13.

courtiers, diplomats, mercenaries, and merchants, whose experiences, travels, and affinities often crossed confessional lines.<sup>46</sup>

The same reverence for silk, not only because of its monetary value but the fabrics' cultural cache that Kinoshita speaks of in romance literature, is found in *Cligés* and *Guillaume de Palerne*, and these romances' characters' embody the multiple identities Kinoshita outlines. Jeremy Dummett focuses more specifically on Norman Sicily:

A new ruling class emerged of Normans, French, and Lombards, all of whom supported the Roman Church. The Arabs continued to run much of the administration while Arab soldiers were recruited into Roger's army. A number of Greeks with experience of Byzantine government were promoted to prominent positions. Freedom of worship and the right to be judged by their own laws were granted to Latin peoples from the north, Greeks, Jews, and Arabs. In this way Norman adaptability and openness to other cultures created strength out of diversity.<sup>47</sup>

My own views align more closely with those of Kinoshita and Dummett; while we cannot view the relations between the Norman rulers and their Latin, Greek, and Muslim subjects by modern standards of tolerance and multiculturalism, neither can we view the Norman monarchy in southern Italy as specifically promoting intolerance and uni-culturalism either.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Sharon Kinoshita, "Almería Silk and the French Feudal Imaginary: Toward a "Material" History of the Medieval Mediterranean," in *Medieval Fabrications: Dress, Textiles, Clothwork, and Other Cultural Imaginings*, ed. Janet E. Burns (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 167. Kinoshita continues, "The example of Roger II suggests an alternative mapping which casts western Europe itself as peripheral to the "shared culture" of the medieval Mediterranean. In this conceptual reterritorialization, the Iberian Peninsula and Norman Sicily—marginalized precisely because their political, social, and cultural hybridity squares so poorly with the genealogy on the modern nation-state—may be recorded as the Latin West's privilege points of access to the medieval Mediterranean" (174).

<sup>47</sup> Dummett, *Palermo*, 31. This is not completely unlike the type of administration and lifestyle that existed in Sicily under its Islamic rulers. Followers of the Christian and Jewish faiths were acknowledged and allowed to practice their religions. Dummett, *Palermo*, 19-20.

<sup>48</sup> Many Muslims lived on Sicily's western side and worked in agriculture, while another group worked under the Norman monarchy. Muslims in Norman Sicily did retain a level of independent governance and leadership "under local commanders call *qā'id*s and religious judges (*qādis*) who settled matters of religious and legal dispute." Sarah Davis-Secord, "Muslims in Norman Sicily: The Evidence of Imām al-Māzarī's Fatwās" *Mediterranean Studies* 16 (2007): 49. Alex Metcalfe also iterates the importance of Muslims in Norman Sicily, who were "vital to the island's economy, in both rural agriculture and urban trades and manufacturing, as well as providing skilled craftsmen, merchants and products for export." They also had a profound impact on the island's culture and the larger Mediterranean as well, especially with the support of the Norman monarchy, "[making] Sicily a key link in the transfer

The Normans' ability to incorporate the culture and architecture of the lands they ruled marked their tenure in Normandy as well: "The Normans consolidated their power through their ability, noteworthy wherever they penetrated, to assimilate whatever was useful from the cultures of the peoples they conquered or those of their new neighbors."<sup>49</sup> In southern Italy, it meant incorporating the architecture, administration, and culture of the Byzantine Greeks and Muslim rulers who had previously inhabited the island.<sup>50</sup> This ability to adjust and incorporate aspects of their own culture with those they encountered provides a common thread between Rollo and Roger II. But while there was little, if any, genetic link to unify these groups of Normans and how they reacted to the different people they came into contact with, they were linked by how they used the idea of Troy and Rome to justify their expansion.<sup>51</sup> All three groups — the Normans, Anglo-Normans, and Normans in Sicily — laid to claim to the legacy of the Trojan and Roman empires, whether through Antenor or Aeneas. Though Troy and Rome may have fallen, the knowledge and power they possessed was transferred to the Norman people. How they used the heritage from Troy and Rome differed between England, Normandy, and southern Italy, but they all used the idea to legitimize their rule and, in different ways, blend their own cultures with those of the people

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of knowledge between the lands of Islam and Christian Europe." Alex Metcalfe, *The Muslims of Medieval Italy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009): 142.

<sup>49</sup> Eric Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000): 11.

<sup>50</sup> The financial system in Norman Sicily was largely modeled on the system set up by the previous Islamic rulers, as well as Fatimid, Egypt. The *diwān* was closely associated with the monarchy; its offices were in the palace, "and were staffed by Arabic-speaking eunuchs who were nominally Christian but adhered to Islam." Metcalfe, *The Muslims of Medieval Italy*, 145. The *diwān* illustrates many of the contradictions within Norman Sicily: they based their financial collection and management on a system created by Muslims and employed them, but had to at least appear to adhere to the Christian religion in order to work for the monarchy. "Greek was the language of culture and administration, and Roger had no motive to despise or belittle the advantage this gave him. The Greek population of the island had a tradition of approval for the Normans who had overthrown the Muslim domination...If, like the Muslims, they were eventually edged into a position of inferiority, this took time, and for most the twelfth century they could not have felt particularly threatened." Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, 93-94.

<sup>51</sup> "If an ethnicity is an intermarrying society then it will have common ancestors and, undoubtedly, tends to define itself in terms of its common ancestors and very often some specific 'myth' of origin or of this particular land." Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 168.

where they settled; the Norman mythos operated on both the regional and international levels. But the most deliberate incorporation occurred under the Normans in Sicily, who blended the most disparate (i.e., non-Latin Christian) cultures.

### Post-Colonial Theory and Cosmopolitanism

Tied to the idea of Norman rule in southern Italy and *translatio normannitatis* is the larger theoretical concepts of post-colonialism, including cosmopolitanism. Applying post-colonial theory to the medieval period is largely accepted in academic circles, and is the subject of an increasing number of books and articles.<sup>52</sup> As Lisa Lampert-Weissig points out, the study of medieval texts is inherently connected to colonial movements and attitudes, citing the creation of the Early English Text Society (EETS) in 1864, whose goal was using medieval texts to spread English language and culture throughout the empire, including India.<sup>53</sup> Then there is the medieval scholar and critic D.W. Robertson, who analyzed medieval texts through the western lens of Christian theology and the Bible.<sup>54</sup> Rome's status as a colonial power, one on which many medieval peoples based their own origins, is another area where an application of post-colonial theory may be appropriate.<sup>55</sup> For medievalist trying to incorporate post-colonial theory, many

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<sup>52</sup> Recent major works on post-colonialism in the Medieval Period include Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009); Jeffery Jerome Cohen, *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave, 2001); Kathleen Davis, and Dadia Altschul, eds., *Medievalisms in the Postcolonial World: The Idea of "the Middle Ages" Outside Europe* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2009); John M. Ganim, *Medievalism and Orientalism: Three Essays on Literature, Architecture, and Cultural Identity*, New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Ananya Jahanara Kabir, and Deanne Williams, eds., *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 54 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Lisa Lampert-Weissig, *Medieval Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010); Bruce W. Holsinger, "Medieval Studies, Postcolonial Studies, and the Genealogies of Critique," *Speculum* 77 (2002): 1195-1227.

<sup>53</sup> Lampert-Weissig, *Medieval Literature and Postcolonial Studies*, 26-27.

<sup>54</sup> Alan T. Gaylord, "Reflections of D. W. Robertson, Jr., and "Exegetical Criticism," *The Chaucer Review* 40, no. 3 (2006): 311-33.

<sup>55</sup> Bruce W. Holsinger nicely elucidates this point: "If some medievalists have addressed the colonialist politics of medieval studies past and present, others have begun with the premise that imperialism and colonialism themselves have long historical roots, that postcolonial theory is ideally suited to a European civilization ever aware of the ambivalent imperial legacy of Rome." Holsinger, "Medieval Studies, Postcolonial Studies," 1203.

begin with Edward Said's seminal *Orientalism*. Said's most fundamental idea is that, "The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences...The Orient at large, therefore, vacillates between the West's contempt for what is familiar and its shiver of delight in — in fear of — novelty."<sup>56</sup> From the beginning the West casts the East as the exotic "other," both fetishized and feminine. The East was also associated with Islam, a religion that despite its similarities to Christianity, was considered heretical, a religion of otherness "against which the whole of European civilization from the Middle Ages on was founded."<sup>57</sup> Islam, and the East, became the people, religion, and culture that was the antithesis of Europe, whose quest for religious and cultural hegemony could never incorporate the East and Islam in any meaningful way.

Since the publication of *Orientalism*, the East/West binary Said theorizes has been criticized — or at least nuanced — by scholars in multiple disciplines, but perhaps especially by medievalists. In his study on the impact of *Orientalism*, Daniel Martin Varisco makes a special note of medievalists' issues with Said: "Medievalists in particular have not been enamored with Said's thesis," citing the work of Kathleen Davis, Gabriele Spiegel, and Suzanne Conklin Akbari.<sup>58</sup> Lampert-Weissig also takes issues with the East/West binary Said sets up, arguing that places such as Norman Sicily had "complex hybrid cultures" that simply do not fit within a binary structure.<sup>59</sup> My argument, building off of Lampert-Weissig's ideas, is that Norman writers, or those who were

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<sup>56</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978): 1; 59.

<sup>57</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 70-71.

<sup>58</sup> Daniel Martin Varisco, *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007): 122. For example, in her introduction to *Idols in the East*, Akbari writes, "Orientalism during the Middle Ages is rather different, being far less likely to elicit counter-discourses of resistance, at least in the western European tradition under scrutiny in this study. The case is significantly different in the literature produced in the border territories such as Norman Sicily or post-Reconquista Spain, where "Oriental" subjects might "write back" against the dominant discourse." Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 10.

<sup>59</sup> Lampert-Weissig, *Medieval Literature and Postcolonial Studies*, 13.



connected with the various courts of the Normans, used *translatio normannitatis* to create romances that did not follow the East/West spheres proposed by Said.

One facet of post-colonial theory that provides a helpful lens for examining twelfth-century Normans in southern Italy is the concept of cosmopolitanism, which focuses on how different peoples and cultures interact across various spaces.<sup>60</sup> The word cosmopolitan dates all the way back to the ancient Greek philosopher and writer, Diogenes the Cynic, who is credited with creating the term in an exchange over citizenship and the system of the city-state in ancient Greece. Later, the Stoics saw themselves as cosmopolitan members of the larger Roman Empire; those traveling, or even exiled, to other areas of the Empire, should work to overcome feelings of “cultural dislocation.”<sup>61</sup> Eighteenth century philosopher Emanuel Kant regarded cosmopolitanism as a union between the political and the legal, where people derived their rights from a body larger than individual nations. Later, Marx and Engels tied the theory to the rise of global capitalism and its restriction of the working class.<sup>62</sup> Modern scholar Martha Nussbaum describes a kind of “vertical cosmopolitanism.” People are members of various communities of different sizes and scope (from the self, family, city, nation, world), viewed as a series of circles within circles, from smallest (the self, family) to the largest (nation, world); cosmopolitanism can help us prioritize our role in the largest communities, as members of the global humanity, and reduce the distance between circles.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> These peoples, cultures, and spaces do not necessarily conform to the boundaries or concepts of the nation, and can be an alternative to the idea of the nation: “The sense of the term that all human beings, regardless of their political affiliation, belong to a single community, while ultimately utopian, concurs with the postcolonial critiques of nationalism and the nation-state.” Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds., *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, Third Edition (New York: Routledge, 2013): 64.

<sup>61</sup> John M. Ganim, and Shayne Aaron Legassie, eds. “Introduction,” *Cosmopolitanism and the Middle Ages*, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 10-11.

<sup>62</sup> Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, eds., *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, Third Edition, 65.

<sup>63</sup> Usha Vishnuvajjala, “Loyalty and Horizontal Cosmopolitanism in Chrétien de Troyes *Cligés*,” *Arthuriana* 24, no. 1 (2014): 114-15. I am choosing to use Vishnuvajjala’s summary of Nussbaum, as it is her idea of Nussbaum that drives her own re-thinking of Nussbaum and the concept of horizontal cosmopolitanism.

Re-orienting Nussbaum's theory in an article on the twelfth-century romance *Cligés*, Usha Vishnuvajjala turns the concentric circles of belonging sideways.<sup>64</sup> This "horizontal cosmopolitanism" argues that, "the cosmopolitan individual is a full and responsible member of each of the various smaller groups of which he or she is a part, but also possesses the cosmopolitan quality of being a member of more than one group of the same size or legitimacy, specifically more than one state or nation."<sup>65</sup> Instead of prioritizing membership in one community and group over another, Vishnuvajjala's horizontal cosmopolitanism allows people to retain equal membership in, and loyalty towards, multiple groups at the same time, moving between groups for a variety of reasons, including political, personal, social, and cultural.<sup>66</sup> This horizontal movement is clearly reflected in the politics, society, and culture of the Normans in southern Italy and Sicily. They remained connected with their Norman counterparts in Normandy and in Britain, with Johnna, daughter of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, traveling south to marry the Norman king in Sicily, William II. The large trade fairs in and around Normandy, including the one in Troyes, and the transfer of luxury goods from east to west and back again was another circle that linked Europeans, the Normans in Sicily, the Fatimid empire in Egypt, and the Byzantine empire.

Borderlands also play a role in current cosmopolitan theory. In places where people with different cultures, languages, and religions overlap and frequently interact with each other, they can reflect horizontal cosmopolitanism, with its insistence on membership in, and equality of, a multiplicity of communities:

Perhaps most significantly, the borderland became jointly construed as a place where mental and material cartographies are being recast as a new local cosmopolitanism. This term was not used in its customary sense,

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<sup>64</sup> Vishnuvajjala argues that "In this way, *Cligés* suggests the possibility a type of cosmopolitanism that depends on the differences between and even within cultures, rather than opposing those differences. Vishnuvajjala, "Loyalty and Horizontal Cosmopolitanism," 112.

<sup>65</sup> Vishnuvajjala, "Loyalty and Horizontal Cosmopolitanism," 117.

<sup>66</sup> Vishnuvajjala, "Loyalty and Horizontal Cosmopolitanism," 117.

referring to identification with the fundamental interests of humanity as a whole, free from parochial or national affiliations. Rather, it referred to a congealing in place of many varieties of transnational experience. No longer universal and privileged, cosmopolitanisms are now plural and particular, occurring from the bottom up and grounded in the experiences of migration and diaspora in space. The borderlands' burgeoning cosmopolitanisms do not uphold traditional structures of power and knowledge; instead, they daily reinvent unanticipated pathways for living and original means for personal and collective visioning whose significance is extending far beyond the region of their inception. In short, they are part of a process of reinventing transborder identities and affiliations.<sup>67</sup>

The Normans in southern Italy certainly included non-traditional societal and cultural knowledge and power structures, especially compared to other Latin Christian kingdoms throughout Europe. The Normans palace chapel, the Cappella Palatina, deliberately incorporated designs and forms from Islamic and Byzantine architecture, as well as hiring craftsmen from these areas to execute the chapel's mosaics and woodwork. The romances in chapter two and the kingdoms within them based their power not just on military might; diplomacy plays a significant role, and the relationship between kingdoms traditionally aligned with the 'west' and those with the 'east' was often amicable. For example, in *Cligés* King Arthur of Britain and Cligès, as well as his father, have an excellent relationship with each other. They are connected through marriage and the exchange of luxury goods, including cloth. The Normans' status on the border of Europe, Asia, and North Africa allowed their architecture and literature to circumvent the traditional idea of *translatio imperii*, and create a cosmopolitan monarchy, reflecting a more inclusive kingdom than is traditionally associated with the medieval period.

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<sup>67</sup> Michael Dear, "Creativity and Place," in *Geohumanities: Art, History, Text at the Edge of Place*, eds. Michael Dear, Jim Ketchum, Sarah Luria, and Douglas Richardson (New York: Routledge, 2011):14. While Dear's discussion focuses on modern borders, I think his ideas also apply to medieval border areas and the cosmopolitan spaces they create.

Like post-colonial theory as a whole, scholars dealing with cosmopolitanism in the medieval period stress the need for both grounding the theory in particular historical moments and not allowing the erasure of moments when violence and intolerance occurred. In their introduction, Ganim and Legassie make the point that the Stoics were able to adopt the cosmopolitan philosophy because of their status as male citizens of the Roman Empire and the privileges that position entailed. They argue that the cosmopolitanism of the Stoics — and modern versions of the theory — must be careful to avoid using cosmopolitanism “in a way that privatizes cultural dislocation as a challenge to be overcome, as a set of techniques of self-mastery for a ruling male elite.”<sup>68</sup> The Normans’ use of different architectural and design forms, as well as the way the romances reflect the geography, materials, and cultures of Byzantine and Islamic kingdoms and people, is less about self-mastery for the Norman leadership as it is about inserting themselves into the cultural and material life of the Mediterranean, becoming part of that network even as they sought to expand it farther northwards. However, it is critical to remember the relationship between the Normans in continental Europe and Britain with the Normans in southern Italy. All were part of a larger Norman community: “What is forgotten is that “the nation” was not always—nor is it necessarily now—the most binding attachment for all communities; the religions unified by the same scripture and sacred tongue can be shot through with division; and that people live in the world with longings and aspirations that outstrip and reconfigure the networks of relationships, symbols, and protocols that we mistake for unchangeable realities.”<sup>69</sup> The Medieval period was not just centered around white, European, Latin Christians versus the non- Latin Christian eastern others. The reality was

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<sup>68</sup> Ganim and Legassie, eds., “Introduction,” *Cosmopolitanism and the Middle Ages*, 11.

<sup>69</sup> Ganim and Legassie, eds., “Introduction,” *Cosmopolitanism and the Middle Ages*, 11.

much more complex, and the conflicts of the twelfth century were as much between white, European Christians as between the kingdoms and peoples involved in the Crusades.

### **Spatial Theory**

The idea that a culture could create its specific identity, rooted in a specific location, by incorporating the idea of another place's culture and history, requires a deeper understanding of spatial theory, as well as the concept of place. Let us first consider the difference between the terms space and place. While they may sound similar, space and place are frequently considered different concepts within theoretical literature. In her work on the hero, place, and space in medieval literature, Molly Robinson Kelly argues that spatiality, "...involves the different physical spaces in which the story's action takes place."<sup>70</sup> Spatiality covers issues that include both inside and outside spaces, the physical geography of spaces, and spaces that are both real and imaginary.<sup>71</sup> In this definition, space would include physical spaces built by the Normans in southern Italy, such as the Cappella Palatina, as well as the descriptions of Southern Italy and Sicily in the romance *Guillaume de Palerne*. Place is a more abstract concept. Kelly's definition is again helpful: "A study of literary place deals with how space functions meaningfully and internally within a work, probing its emotional and semantic resonances."<sup>72</sup> This definition can apply not only to place to literature, but to physical buildings as well. If place in literature exposes the more abstract concepts of feelings, values, and interpretation, these same concepts can be used in analyzing the construction and emotions invoked by literal spaces.<sup>73</sup> Various structures built under the Normans

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<sup>70</sup> Molly Robinson Kelly, *The Hero's Place: Medieval Literary Traditions of Space and Belonging* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009): 9.

<sup>71</sup> Kelly, *The Hero's Place*, 9; Robert T. Tally Jr., "Mapping Narrative," in *Literary Cartographies: Spatiality, Representation, and Narrative*, ed. Robert T. Tally Jr. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014): 1-12.

<sup>72</sup> Kelly, *The Hero's Place*, 10.

<sup>73</sup> It is important to note that while space can incorporate ideas of place, it does not always do so; it is much more difficult for place to be separated from space: "...while spatiality does not necessarily take on the characteristics of place, the meaning and values of place must be associated with space. In other words, all place deals with space, and

then, as well as romances written by those connected with them, can be considered spaces and places, depending on how a building is being utilized, how a location is described, and the action that occurs within those specific areas. For example, the description of the palace in *Guillaume de Palerne* creates a physical setting, but that physical setting and description serves the larger purpose of emphasizing the wealth and trading connections of the Norman monarchy in Sicily. Though the palace is under siege for much of the narrative, the descriptions of its richly decorated rooms and luxurious textiles hint at the power and resources the kingdom can access:

“Atant sont venu en la chambre  
 Qui painte fu et faite a lambre  
 A riches pieres, a esmaus.”<sup>74</sup>

The palace’s display wealth, of which the paneled chamber is just one example, creates a sense of inevitability to Guillaume’s victory over the Spanish: a kingdom whose royal residence is filled with expensive building materials, silk, damask, and other luxury fabrics can summon the resources to achieve victory. The Norman cathedral of Cefalù is a physical space that combines architectural and design elements from Byzantine and Islamic cultures, and the space where Roger II wished to be buried. As a place, it is an assertion of Roger II’s control of the church and his power to appoint Bishops in Sicily, as well as a reflection of the Normans’ acceptance and use of Byzantine and Islamic art; this not only asserts his own legitimacy as ruler, and the legitimacy of the Norman kingdom in southern Italy and Sicily overall, but creates a legitimacy that rests on a

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therefore with elements of spatiality (location, movement, etc.)...Not all space, however, becomes place.” Kelly, *The Hero’s Place*, 12.

<sup>74</sup> *Guillaume de Palerne*, ed. Micha, 7843-45.

“Thereupon they came into the chamber  
 That was painted and covered in paneling  
 With rich stone and with enameling.”

In Sconduto, *Guillaume de Palerne: An English Translation*, 7843-45.

level of multiculturalism and bricolage unique to the Normans in southern Italy during the twelfth century.<sup>75</sup>

One of the most well-known theorists of space and place is Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre outlines three theoretical categories for spaces to operate under and within: domination, appropriation, and *détournement*.<sup>76</sup> For Lefebvre, spaces of domination are both dominating and dominated, and in many ways are similar to spaces impacted by colonialism: “The dominating space is consecrated by violence or religious and political terror. It assumes, even in historical periods, the characteristics of an absolute space that predates history.”<sup>77</sup> This definition does not fit with the structures created under the Norman kings in Sicily studied here, as these buildings were not built with or for the purpose of inciting terror; they were built to display the power of the Norman kings, and that power incorporated the symbols of multiple religions and cultures. They were created to incite awe and reverence for the monarchy that created them, but not terror. These spaces were also not created or seen as outside or predating history; they are very much of a specific historical moment. The idea of the Trojan and Roman empires continuing past their own demises, and the various kingdoms and monarchies that casts themselves as new iterations of these empires might be considered an absolute space that exists outside history. But the very multiplicity of kingdoms and monarchies claiming to be the new Troy and Rome shows that the idea of

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<sup>75</sup> In some ways, Charlemagne’s combination of Ancient Roman and Carolingian cultures is not dissimilar to the twelfth-century Normans in southern Italy; a more detailed discussion of the palace chapel at Aachen — and the relationship between its balcony and the one found in the Norman Cappella Palatina in Palermo, Italy — is found in chapter three.

<sup>76</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment*, ed. Łukasz Stanek, trans. Robert Bononno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014): 89-98. Henri Lefebvre’s more well-known work on space is *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991). However, his work on architecture and space is more pertinent to this dissertation and offers more insights into the structures of Norman Sicily mentioned here and covered in detail in chapter three.

<sup>77</sup> Lefebvre, *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment*, 92.

*translatio* is not outside history, but a continuation of history, part of the continuing myth of empire and power.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, the spaces considered appropriated “[do] not belong to a political power, to an institution as such. No power has shaped it based on the needs of its continued existence...Use value has priority over exchange value.”<sup>78</sup> By this definition, the cathedrals and palaces built under the Norman rulers in southern Italy were not appropriated spaces any more than they were dominating ones. These spaces were at least in part designed to express the power of the Norman monarchs; likewise, their usefulness partly derived from that same expression of power as well. However, a more appropriate term for the spaces the Normans created in southern Italy is Lefebvre’s term for spaces that fall between those which are dominating and those which are appropriating: *détournement*, which he characterizes not so much as a state as an activity.<sup>79</sup> According to Lefebvre, *détournement* “marks the period when domination ceases, when dominated space becomes vacant and lends itself to other forms of domination or a more refined appropriation.”<sup>80</sup> The relatively rapid turnover of power and control of Sicily and various areas in southern Italy means that the land is marked by all those cultures, while it is hard for any single one to establish a lasting, monopolistic hold over the islands’ spaces.<sup>81</sup> Also, frequent contact with other cultures, religions, and kingdoms of the Mediterranean because of travel, pilgrimage, and trade meant that isolation wasn’t possible.<sup>82</sup> For example, the Norman monarchy built the Cappella

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<sup>78</sup> Lefebvre, *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment*, 93-94.

<sup>79</sup> Lefebvre, *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment*, 95.

<sup>80</sup> Lefebvre, *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment*, 98.

<sup>81</sup> The Greeks had held the island for quite some time, and Greek archeological ruins can still be seen in Sicily, particularly in Agrigento at the Valley of the Temples. Muslim rulers displaced the Greeks, and both these, the Greeks, and the Lombards were involved in fighting to maintain or reclaim Sicily as the Normans first began moving into the area.

<sup>82</sup> For example, not every European who went to the Middle East went on crusade: “But those who did undertake the Crusade, and returned, brought back with them new ideas and wider experiences.” Herbert Norris, *Medieval Costume and Fashion* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1999): 28.



on the remains of an Arab palace structure, and its interior blends different cultures and architectural elements. The Normans in southern Italy might be the new heirs of Troy and Rome, but they also inherited the kingdoms and empires that existed in the region before Normans arrived — Byzantines and Islamic — and which both continued to exist even if they no longer possessed Sicily or other territory in Southern Italy. From the beginning of the Normans' presence in the region, the Hauteville family, from which the Norman kings descended, integrated multiple groups of people into the ruling class and government they created in Sicily, an integration that reflected a space marked by *détournement*: “This integration, for which the central point of reference was the new ruling family, was made easier by the fact that this political identity was primarily linked to a territorial element and not to matters of ethnicity/culture...”.<sup>83</sup> The space that the Normans inherited from the rulers and people who had lived there before, the territory they claimed and ruled as the new Troy and Rome, allowed them to create a place that was open to multiple cultures, ethnicities, and religion; here, *what* you do for the Norman kingdom was more important than *who* you were.

### Architecture and Literature

In his book *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment*, Henri Lefebvre defines architecture as, “the production of space at a specific level, ranging from furniture to gardens and parks and extending even to landscapes.”<sup>84</sup> While this is his straightforward definition of what architecture

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<sup>83</sup> Eleni Tounta, “The Norman Conquerors Between *Epos* and *Chanson de Geste*: The Perception of Identities in Cultural Flow,” in *Norman Tradition and Transcultural Heritage: Exchange of Cultures in the Norman Peripheries of Medieval Europe*, eds. Stefan Burkhardt and Thomas Foerster (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013): 125-47.

<sup>84</sup> Lefebvre, *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment*, 3. Lefebvre does not include urban planning and “land use planning” in his definition; since neither of these concepts existed during the medieval period in the ways in which the terms are used today, this is not an issue. While Lefebvre is willing to argue that architecture is a form of communication, he does think that architecture is a text: “It is true that a monument and an architectural space can be read. But that they can be defined as texts is something else entirely. Neither the concept of reading nor that of writing are appropriate for space, nor is the concept of a code, mainly because practice (social and spatial) is not part of those concepts” (124-25). I agree with Lefebvre that a space, including those constructed under the Normans are not texts in the way that romances or histories from the same period are texts; however, I do think that architecture has a

is at the psychical level — the level of space — on the abstract plane, Lefebvre argues that architecture “...is a form of communication. It has an architectural message and a code or codes to decipher it. An architecture can be compared to a language and the act of dwelling to speech. The institution, the social reality, is realized in an event, but that event exists only in and through that reality.”<sup>85</sup> Architecture is therefore a language that needs to be read and contextualized as much as traditional texts.

In her work on Sicily in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Karla Mallette also describes the Normans architecture as having its own unique vocabulary:

The Norman architecture of Sicily represents some of the gems of medieval architecture, outstanding not only for the quality of the construction, but also for the hybrid vocabulary that it uses with a convincing fluency. It demonstrates the methodology by which the Normans who occupied Sicily created a cultural idiom for the state: not by transporting the native cultural forms to a new geographical setting, but by adopting, adapting, and augmenting the cultural vocabulary of the island they had occupied.<sup>86</sup>

Mallette’s description of Norman architecture in Sicily and its multiple influences uses language that mirrors the language used in literary analysis. The buildings built under the Normans utilize a specific “vocabulary,” and their “fluency” in this vocabulary is what makes them unique. In some ways, incorporating the designs and features of the cultures they encountered in Sicily fits the pattern of overall Norman expansion, whether in Normandy, southern Italy, or Britain. For example, after the Norman Conquest, “The new Norman order was powerfully and dramatically asserted through widespread construction of castles, large churches, and other structures that

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vocabulary and language that is conceptually similar to the vocabulary and language used for textual analysis, and that the two subjects can be analyzed in tandem even if they do not correlate exactly.

<sup>85</sup> Lefebvre, *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment*, 53.

<sup>86</sup> Karla Mallette, *The Kingdom of Sicily, 1100-1250: A Literary History*, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005): 24.

eventually figured as prominently in verse literature as on the landscape itself.”<sup>87</sup> Here again is the blending of governments, culture, architecture, and literature that not only marked the Normans’ presence in Britain, but in southern Italy and Sicily as well.

The possible relationship between the romance *Guillaume de Palerne* and the cathedral of Monreale highlights the productive connections that can be made between literature and architecture. *Guillaume* is a late twelfth-century romance composed in Old French, and includes kidnapped royalty, jealous stepmothers, and benevolent werewolves. The cathedral of Monreale was commissioned by the twelfth-century Norman monarch William II in 1174, and is located in the hills just north of Palermo, Sicily.<sup>88</sup> In his article, “*Guillaume de Palerne* and a Monreale Sculpture,” Charles Dunn argues that in Monreale’s cloister, one of the pillar’s capitals features a carving that explicitly references *Guillaume*.<sup>89</sup> Though he does not rule out the possibility of other interpretations, Dunn claims that the man holding the sword is the figure of Guillaume himself, and the creature next to him the werewolf, in his human form the Spanish Prince Alphonse, who saves Guillaume from his uncle’s plan to assassinate him.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Lori Ann Garner, *Structuring Spaces: Oral Poetics and Architecture in Earl Medieval England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011): 180.

<sup>88</sup> Otto Demus, *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950): 114.

<sup>89</sup> John McNeill’s definition of a cloister in the Romanesque style is helpful, and though he does not specifically mention cloisters in Norman Italy, his description of English cloisters mirrors the overall layout of Monreale’s: “Most of what can be said about the Romanesque cloister in England can also be said about its continental counterpart. It generally consisted of four walks with a garth — that is to say, a garden — in the middle. There will have been a basin, well or fountain in the garth providing water for processional use (in particular for aspersing altars) and probably also for irrigating the garden, along with a separate laver or lavabo at which the monks wash their hands before eating.” John McNeill, “The Romanesque Cloister in England,” *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 168, no. 1 (2015): 35-36.

<sup>90</sup> Charles W. Dunn, “*Guillaume de Palerne* and a Monreale Sculpture,” *Medieval Studies* 10 (1948): 215-16. While Dunn is the only scholar to make an explicit connection between a secular romance text and the capitals in Monreale’s cloister, Carl D. Sheppard Jr. has noted the cloister’s mixture of cultural references: “The luxurious monastery of Monreale, especially the cloister, is a fitting expression of this polyglot civilization. The styles and iconography of the sculptures of the cloister show a lack of cohesion. It is as if all the prominent artistic trends and intellectual developments of the twelfth century in Europe and the Byzantine East had been brought together in Sicily and then utilized with little heed for consistency.” Carl D. Sheppard Jr., “Iconography of the Cloister of Monreale,” *The Art Bulletin* 31, no. 3 (1949): 159.



Figure 1: *Guillaume de Palerne* capital in Monreale Cloister<sup>91</sup>



Figure 2: Close up of *Guillaume de Palerne* capital<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Author photo.

<sup>92</sup> Author photo.

Theorizing how a scene from a romance was carved into a column in a Benedictine cloister, Dunn specifically uses the word cosmopolitanism: “Since several of the Monreale sculptures, which were carved *ca.* 1174-1179 by a cosmopolitan groups of sculptors, are clearly secular in subject...it is tempting to see in this group a representation of a legend cognate with that contained in *Guillaume de Palerne*.”<sup>93</sup> The multi-cultural makeup of the craftsmen employed at Monreale is similar to those who helped build the Cappella Palatina and another Norman cathedral, Cefalù.<sup>94</sup> That a secular romance would be referenced in a Benedictine cloister is not entirely surprising: the medieval cloister was not just a space for professed religious, but for various members of the secular world as well. Pilgrims, traveling to sites such as Spain’s Santiago de Compostela, sought shelter at monasteries on their journeys,<sup>95</sup> and in Normandy, jongleurs were connected to specific monasteries.<sup>96</sup> It is quite possible, then, that stories, such as *Guillaume de Palerne*, would have been read or recited within a cloister like Monreale’s. The cloister’s blending of secular and sacred is part of its liminal character; as Michael Camille argues, the space’s physical makeup, particularly its emphasis on arches and doorways, mirrors the cloister’s role as a zone of metaphysical movement.<sup>97</sup> Both monks, pilgrims, and jongleurs moved between the holy world of the cloister and pilgrimage, and the secular world with its romance texts. The carving from *Guillaume de Palerne* in Monreale’s cloister, along with the Cappella Palatina, expresses the Normans’ ability to not only combine artistic traditions from around Europe and the

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<sup>93</sup> Dunn, “*Guillaume de Palerne*,” 215.

<sup>94</sup> Donald Matthew notes the presence of Muslim craftsmen working on the Cappella: “They were certainly employed in Christian buildings as bricklayers or carpenters, and the majority of the building force is likely to have been of Muslim origin, or trained by those with experience of Muslim architecture.” Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, 91. This argues that at least some of those employed to create the Cappella Palatina — as well as Cefalù and Monreale — could replicate what they knew of or had seen in Muslim architecture from the Muslims’ previous rule of the island or other Islamic kingdoms.

<sup>95</sup> Robert G. Calkins, *Monuments of Medieval Art* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985): 80.

<sup>96</sup> Paula Leverage, *Reception and Memory: A Cognitive Approach to the Chanson de geste* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010): 34-35.

<sup>97</sup> Michael Camille, *Images on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 1992): 56.

Mediterranean, but to use that multiplicity of style to create spaces that were both secular and sacred. In this specific capital, the multiple languages, religions, and cultures of those who carved the scene echo the multiple languages, religions, and cultures of the romance; both architecture and literature mirror the best of the twelfth-century Norman monarchy's inclusion — at times even celebration — of the larger medieval world and its people.

## CHAPTER TWO: TWO ROMANCES

The two romances this chapter will discuss, *Cligés* and *Guillaume de Palerne*, were written in and around Norman lands during the twelfth-century.<sup>1</sup> Their characters continuously move from East to West and back again, from Constantinople and Italy, to England, France, and Germany. Their movements both explicitly and implicitly invoke the Normans' role as the new Troy and Rome to legitimize their expansion into Sicily and southern Italy. In his chapter on antiquity romances, Christopher Baswell argues that this particular type of romance "help[s to] provide a mythic prehistory and genealogical source for imperial formation in northwest Europe, especially by recounting episodes in the westward movement of power, or *translatio imperii*, from Troy to

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<sup>1</sup> According to Douglas Kelly, before Chrétien *roman* referred to any text written in French, no matter its genre; after Chrétien, *roman* designated a specific type of narrative.<sup>1</sup> This narrative, Kelly notes, combines Chrétien's *matiere* and *san* into *bele conjointure*: "To summarize briefly: *matiere* and *san* designate, respectively, the source material Chrétien chooses to rewrite and the meaning given to material chosen for its marvelous features. Applying his critical intelligences (*sans*) and artistic effort (*painne*) to rewriting, Chrétien realizes a purpose (*antancion*) by moulding *matiere* and *san* into a coherent, intelligible whole. This whole, which he calls a *bele conjointure*, comes to be known as a *roman*, a word that for him seems to connote a coherent amalgam of marvelous adventures in a sophisticated narrative." Douglas Kelly, "Chrétien de Troyes," *The Arthur of the French: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval French and Occitan Literature*, eds. Glyn S. Burgess and Karen Pratt, *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages IV* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006): 149. Geraldine Heng, while she does not trace the origins of romance to Chrétien de Troyes specifically, notes the important role romance played in the twelfth-century, stating: "If romance did not originate in the Middle Ages - if there never was an 'origin' for romance - it had a powerful, distinct moment of *re-beginning* in early twelfth-century England: a conspicuous moment when a species of magical narrative coalesced in an extraordinary pattern, out of a field of forces in culture and history, to create an exemplar for the romances that followed in the three hundred or more years to come, with an impact that ultimately traveled the well beyond the Middle Ages itself." Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003): 2. While I agree with Heng's assertion about the renaissance of romance writing during the twelfth century, I think this re-birth extends beyond the borders of England to twelfth-century continental romances; and while some of these English and continental romances may reflect issues related to the crusades, I remain unconvinced that the trauma and violence of the crusades is a critical underpinning of the romance genre's rise in the twelfth century. This is not to say that romance was the twelfth century's only literary genre — the *chanson de geste* co-existed with romance during this period; I merely contend that the romance genre would have arisen even if the crusades had not occurred. For a detailed look at the relationship between the romance and *chanson de geste*, see Paula Leverage, *Reception and Memory: A Cognitive Approach to the Chanson de geste* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010); Sarah Kay, *The Chanson de Geste in the Age of Romance: Political Fictions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Rome and thence to France and England.”<sup>2</sup> *Translatio imperii* occurs in other romances besides those of antiquity; for example, in her discussion of Old French literature, Megan Moore includes Byzantium, alongside Troy and Rome, as an empire used in western romances to support and justify the basis of European power.<sup>3</sup> The Normans in southern Italy used their own version of *translatio*, which included references to the Byzantine Empire, to support their reign and create a cosmopolitan culture.

The idea of cosmopolitanism helps further the understanding of *Cligés* and *Guillaume de Palerne* and the romances allusions, geography, and language. Though Marla Segol writes about cosmopolitanism in the medieval period and its relationship to eleventh and twelfth century texts from Islamic Spain, I believe her argument can be expanded to the two romances discussed herein. Discussing the added layers of complexity cosmopolitanism brings to texts, she writes:

It might seem that cosmopolitanism expressed by these texts inheres in a tolerance for ambivalence and contradiction. In actuality, I believe that it is expressed by the very conflicts purposefully cultivated in these texts. They present a dialogue born of juxtaposition, in which placing two contradictory notions side-by-side is a way of posing a question and encouraging a debate. Because these texts do not resolve the questions they pose, the reader is asked to engage them seriously.<sup>4</sup>

This idea of purposeful juxtaposition can be applied to the linguistic, geographical, and religious differences dealt with in these two romances — romances, whose continuous movement in time and space, from east to west, creates a horizontal cosmopolitanism that allows different kingdoms

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<sup>2</sup> Christopher Baswell, “Marvels of Translation and Crises of Transition in the Romances of Antiquity,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, eds. Roberta L. Krueger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 35. Baswell specifically mentions the *Roman de Thèbes*, *Roman d’Eneas*, and *Roman de Troie* in connection with his argument.

<sup>3</sup> Megan Moore, *Exchanges in Exoticism: Cross-Cultural Marriage and the Making of the Mediterranean in Old French Romance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014): 17.

<sup>4</sup> Marla Segol, “Medieval Religious Cosmopolitanisms: Truth and Inclusivity in the Literature of Muslim Spain,” in *Cosmopolitanism and the Middle Ages*, 82.



and peoples to move between communities and cultures. The idea of horizontal cosmopolitanism, which will be explored in greater detail later in the chapter, does not promote the idea of a medieval period free from religious strife, warfare, xenophobia, or racism; but it acknowledges the complexities of medieval identities and the conflicts they created, both personal and within larger cultural, linguistic, and geographic groups to which Segol alludes. It leaves open the possibility that people — including the Normans of southern Italy — could appreciate and incorporate traditions other than their own, without necessarily dominating the spaces and cultures they borrowed from;<sup>5</sup> *Cligés* and *Guillaume de Palerne* present an exchange that is not a vertical hierarchy, but a horizontal continuum they move along.

### **Connections Between the Mediterranean and Europe**

Before moving onto the romances themselves, it is critical to look at the role of the Mediterranean — particularly the Byzantine and Fatimid Empires — and their relationship to both the Norman kingdom in Sicily and western Europe as a whole, in order to understand the relationship between the romances and *translatio normannitatis*.<sup>6</sup> As Suzanne Akbari points out, the Mediterranean is more than the physical sea but a metaphorical location as well: “The Mediterranean is an inland sea, but the term can also be used in a broader sense: to describe the geographical region that includes the sea, its islands, and the surrounding lands; to describe the cultural environment thought to be typical of this part of the world, even...a characteristic way of

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<sup>5</sup> In their discussion of medieval cosmopolitanism, John M. Ganim and Shayne Aaron Legassie emphasize the difference between centrality and domination: “It is worth running the risk of stating the obvious: that centrality does not necessarily denote dominance...”. Ganim and Legassie, eds., *Cosmopolitanism and the Middle Ages*, 6. This distinction applies to the Normans’ situation as well. While the Norman monarchy in southern Italy often made the art, literature, and goods from other Mediterranean and European kingdoms a part to their own identity, that use did not necessarily indicate their desire to dominate the cultures they borrowed from.

<sup>6</sup> *Translatio normannitatis* is the concept introduced in chapter one that the Normans in southern Italy did not simply create a linear path from east to west, from the ancient civilizations, whose knowledge and power they claimed to inherit, to their own lands in the west. Instead, they fostered a circular movement of people, goods, and ideas that moved between and around the Mediterranean and Europe.

thinking and feeling, one determined by the nature of the region itself.”<sup>7</sup> While Akbari is not arguing that the region is a homogenous one, she points out that by its very geographical nature — a large body of water, the lands around it differing vastly in their climates and resources — encouraged different cultures and peoples to interact with each other to survive, trade, and grow. This interaction created a familiarity between those who practiced different religions, spoke different languages, and had different customs.

Trade and the movement of goods were critical in driving the movement of people between the Mediterranean and Europe. If residents in southern Italy wanted the silk produced by the Fatimids in Egypt, the Italians had to interact and trade with merchants from Egypt. And if the Fatimids in Egypt wanted the citrus that grew on Italy’s mountain sides, the Egyptians had to deal with the Italians. In coming to rely on the goods from their Mediterranean neighbors, the residents of the Mediterranean basin became accustomed to these other cultures’ materials, and trade networks continued expanding. In one twelfth century *chanson de geste*, *Charroi de Nîmes*, silk, leather, wool, fur, spices, minerals, and other goods are traded between locations as distant and varied as “France, Lombardy, Calabria, Apulia, Sicily, Romagna, Tuscany, Hungary, Galicia, Poitou, Normandy, England, Scotland, Wales, the Crusader States, and Venice.”<sup>8</sup> Here, as in *Cligés* and *Guillaume de Palerne*, goods and people continually move around the Mediterranean and Northern Europe, even as far east as Hungary and Galicia.

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<sup>7</sup> Suzanne Conklin Akbari, “Introduction: The Persistence of Philology: Language and Connectivity in the Mediterranean,” in *A Sea of Languages: Rethinking the Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History*, eds. Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Karla Mallette (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013): 3.

<sup>8</sup> Sharon Kinoshita, “Beyond Philology: Cross-Cultural Engagement in Literary History and Beyond,” in *A Sea of Languages*, 35. For clarification, Romagna is an area of northeast Italy below Venice, and includes the city of Bologna in its borders; Galicia may refer either to the northwest coast of Spain, where the famous pilgrimage site of Santiago de Compostela is located; or Galicia may refer to a region in the southwest portion of modern-day Ukraine, though at various times throughout its history, the regions has belonged to Poland, Hungary, and Russia. Given the proximity of Galicia to Hungary in the text, the eastern European Galicia seems most likely.

A critical component of this circulation between the Mediterranean and Europe were the fairs held at towns in northwest France, providing a central buying and selling point between east and west. Troyes was home to a large fair which attracted merchants from northern Europe and beyond, developing an international reputation. Part of a larger fair cycle that included other towns in northeast France, Troyes hosted at least two fairs each year, usually in the later summer and early winter months.<sup>9</sup> Fairs were more cosmopolitan gatherings than small local and regional markets, and brought together goods and people from greater distances: “it [the fair] may have been frequented by local people, but its essential business was in commodities of distant origin and between merchants from remote places.”<sup>10</sup> Silk, which is frequently mentioned in twelfth-century romances, and helps link the Normans in Italy to the Fatimid rulers in Egypt and the Byzantine Empire, was a large staple at these fairs.<sup>11</sup> The fair at Troyes was known in Norman Sicily, and was remarked upon in *The Book of Roger*, a geographic treatise commissioned by Roger II of Norman Sicily and written by Muhammad al-Idrîsî, an Islamic geographer. al-Idrîsî specifically mentions Troyes as a rich city, its vineyards, trees, and the variety of goods available there making it a rival of Paris.<sup>12</sup> In addition to its fair, Troyes was also home to the Talmundi school of Rashi, as well as several cannons that were involved in manuscript transmission, creating

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<sup>9</sup> N. J. G. Pounds, *An Economic History of Medieval Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Longman, 1994): 359-360. Created in the twelfth-century’s first half, the fair at Troyes continued to attract buyers and sellers throughout the twelfth century, including traders from Italy from the late twelfth-century. The Troyes cycle of fairs lost its importance in the fourteenth century, and ceased to exist once the Hundred Years War between France and England began.

<sup>10</sup> Pounds, *An Economic History of Medieval Europe*, 358.

<sup>11</sup> As E. Jane Burns notes, the fairs at Troyes, Provins, and Lagny were noted for their sale of silk: “The celebrated Champagne fairs are also known to have participated in a vast network of international trade, featuring a mix of local goods and those imported, largely by Italian merchants, from sites across the Mediterranean. Most prominent among the imported products was fabric, in particular highly prized silk.” Burns, *Sea of Silk*, 149.

<sup>12</sup> Zrinka Stahuljak, Virginie Greene, Sarah Kay, Sharon Kinoshita, and Peggy McCracken, *Thinking Through Chrétien de Troyes* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011): 8. al-Idrîsî, who lived in both Cordoba and North Africa before coming to Sicily, gained his geographic knowledge from other geographic treatises, his own travels, and word of mouth. The final product contains seventy maps with descriptions. W. Montgomery Watt, *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1972): 21.

an atmosphere of learning that included texts in Latin, French, and Hebrew: “Twelfth-century Troyes was not a place that would foster the works of highly specialized logicians, theologians, or scientists. But it was a place where works of specialists could be digested and translated into forms and languages understandable by a broader audience than monks and scholars.”<sup>13</sup> The city where Chrétien, author of *Cligés*, lived and worked then, was a hub of international trade and scholarship, fostering connections to lands and peoples outside its own geographic, linguistic, and cultural corner in northeast France. Chrétien’s ability to move the characters in *Cligés* east, west, and back again, from Constantinople, to Sicily, to Germany, from Britain to France, becomes less puzzling when he is situated within the contexts of twelfth-century Troyes’ cosmopolitan atmosphere.

Cloth, particularly silk, plays a crucial role in *Cligés* and *Guillaume de Palerne*. Its presence not only helps signal a character’s class, but also highlights the social and mercantile connections between Europe, Byzantium, Fatimid Egypt, and their convergence in Sicily and Southern Italy that was enabled under twelfth-century Norman rule. Silk production extends far back before its appearance in romance literature. Sericulture, the growing of silk worms, is first documented in the fourth millennium (B.C.E.) in eastern China.<sup>14</sup> Chinese silk moved west along the silk road through Persia and central Asia, appearing in Ancient Greece and Rome; however, the Byzantine and Islamic empires were the first to not only import raw and finished silk from China, but to also develop their own silk farms.<sup>15</sup> Silk production in Byzantium began during the

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<sup>13</sup> Stahuljak, Greene, Kay, Kinoshita, and McCracken, *Thinking Through Chrétien de Troyes*, 6-7.

<sup>14</sup> Rebecca Woodward Wendelken, “Wefts and Worms: The Spread of Sericulture and Silk Weaving in the West before 1300,” in *Medieval Clothing and Textiles*, eds. Robin Netherton, Gale R. Owen-Crocker, and Monica I. Wright (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014): 60.

<sup>15</sup> Wendelken, “Wefts and Worms,” 63-65. Cultivating Chinese silkworms, sericulture, is a time consuming and delicate process that is restricted to areas with the proper climate and soil. To produce the highest quality silk, the *Bombyx mori*, consumes white mulberry tree leaves before spinning its cocoon, which is then unwound to create silk thread. In order to produce just 5.5 kilograms of thread requires 300-500 moths, who will produce 30,000-35,000 silkworms. The worms create 60 kilograms’ worth of cocoons to be unwound by feasting on 720 kilograms worth of mulberry leaves. Wendelken, “Wefts and Worms,” 62.

fourth century, but was limited to imperial workshops within the royal palace, with weaving done by Christian women (Christian men were later employed as well).<sup>16</sup> As Islam spread throughout the seventh and eighth centuries, the Umayyad Caliphate (based in Syria) also began producing and weaving silk not only in government sanctioned workshops, but in smaller, household workshops as well, employing both Christians and non-Christians. Silk production and weaving spread to Egypt and it was the Fatimid caliphate which began producing silk in Palermo during the ninth and tenth centuries.<sup>17</sup> Southern Spain was one of the most prolific silk producing regions during this period as well, and the crusades only increased demand for the fabric, as returning Crusaders carried the material north through Italy to France and England.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the production of silk itself and its movement between and around Byzantine, Islamic, and European lands mirrors the journeys undertaken by the characters in the twelfth-century romances discussed here. Romance — and the silk materials so frequently found within its pages — are both part of the larger process of *translatio normannitatis* and cosmopolitanism that facilitated the movement of luxury foreign goods across Norman lands and actively incorporated the materials and styles of Byzantine and Islamic cultures into Normans' own wardrobes and domiciles.

The inclusion of borders and other decorative touches in silk clothing and fabrics is mentioned throughout *Guillaume*, such as the garments Guillaume wears as an infant and the clothing he and Melinor wear underneath their disguises later on. The descriptions of this decorative border resembles a design known as *tiraz*. The word refers to bands of embroidery on

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<sup>16</sup> Wendelken, "Wefts and Worms," 66.

<sup>17</sup> Wendelken, "Wefts and Worms," 67-70.

<sup>18</sup> Wendelken, "Wefts and Worms," 74. Jane E. Burns notes this trend as well: "The raising of silk worms and production of silk thread spread widely with the Muslim expansion across North African cities and across the Mediterranean (eight to eleventh centuries) to al-Andalus, Sicily, Cyprus, reaching southern Spain in the eighth century and Sicily in the ninth." Burns, *Sea of Silk*, 20.

cloth, typically silk, often in gold and which frequently included text.<sup>19</sup> *Tiraz* originated in Persia before moving west through Syria and then south to Egypt and the rest of North Africa, as well as Spain and Sicily. It was used by multiple Islamic rulers and caliphates, but “the custom flourished especially under the Fatimids in Egypt, North Africa, and Sicily.”<sup>20</sup> Frequently, the presence of *tiraz* established the importance of the wearer, as well as the giver, by explicitly naming them and including religious inscriptions and blessings on the embroidered *tiraz*.<sup>21</sup> *Tiraz* was well known in Norman Sicily and its silk workshops, and “Extant examples of Sicilian silks, specifically the ‘tapisseries de soie et d’or de Palerme’ (considered to have been made in the Norman royal workshop), take both forms indicated above: appearing either as narrow woven bands of silk and gold or as decorative patterned bands woven into silk fabrics. Some bear Kufic inscriptions, as do related silks produced in Muslim Spain.”<sup>22</sup> It is not unusual, then, to see multiple instances in the two romances of nobility wearing costly fabric, usually silk, with embroidery that echo’s *tiraz*.

The fashion of a character like Guillaume also demonstrates the connections between the rulers of Sicily and Apulia, the other countries and empires around the Mediterranean, and the producers and merchants who traded in such costly fabrics. In *Guillaume de Palerme*, the king and queen of Sicily and Apulia are clearly connected to the countries involved in silk and *tiraz* production and weaving, as they have dressed their son, Guillaume, in the costly fabrics at the story’s beginning. This mirrors the Normans’ own relationship with silk production and trade. In addition to importing silk from across Egypt and across the Mediterranean, the Normans in

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<sup>19</sup> Yedida Kalfon Stillman, and Norman A. Stillman, *Arab Dress, a Short History: From the Dawn of Islam to Modern Times* (Boston: Brill, 2003): 120-21.

<sup>20</sup> Burns, *Sea of Silk*, 52-54.

<sup>21</sup> Stillman and Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 128-29.

<sup>22</sup> Burns, *Sea of Silk*, 49.

southern Italy also started weaving their own silk under Roger II.<sup>23</sup> The quality of fabric young Guillaume wears is recognized by the Roman Emperor and his daughter in *Guillaume*, indicating that Rome is also part of the larger trade routes fabrics traversed in the Mediterranean. Silk and *tiraz* trade and production moved across the Mediterranean not in a straight east to west line, but in a circular flow that incorporated multiple countries and empires, crossing geographical and culture boundaries.<sup>24</sup> The clothing in *Guillaume* is just one example of how the Normans in Sicily and southern Italy participated in the multi-cultural and multi-geographic silk trade, one of the physical manifestations of *translatio normannitatis*.

### **Romance Literature in Norman Italy**

Romance literature, including Arthurian romance, is found in twelfth-century Italy as well, though its texts are perhaps less well known.<sup>25</sup> The first literary allusions to King Arthur are in Latin texts dating from the end of the twelfth century. The stories were brought to north and central

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<sup>23</sup> Janet Snyder writes: "Very high quality silk textiles were not produced on the island until Roger II had ameliorated the quality of his Palermo silk-works 1147 with the addition of silkworkers he stole from Thebes, Athens, and Corinth following the sack of these manufacturing centers." Janet Snyder, "Cloth from the Promised Land: Appropriated Islamic *Tiraz* in Twelfth-Century French Sculpture," in Jane E. Burns, ed. *Medieval Fabrications: Dress, Textiles, Clothwork, and Other Cultural Imaginings* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004): 157. Also in Burns, *Sea of Silk*, 43. The workers kidnapped by Roger were both men and women, and were of multiple ethnicities, including Greeks, and religions as well, including those of Muslim, and Jewish faiths (59).

<sup>24</sup> Patterns and styles of silk frequently crossed geographical boundaries, and pattern and styles are at times, difficult to pin down to one center of production: "Silks woven in Fatimid Egypt can closely resemble those also produced in Fatimid Sicily, for example, a situation rendered more complex because silks were traded and transferred in both directions between these two sites as early as the tenth century." Burns, *Sea of Silk*, 32.

<sup>25</sup> Regina F. Psaki argues that the reliance on classical languages in Italy during the earlier medieval period, rather than a vernacular, is one reason why so much scholarship on Italian medieval texts begin with Dante: "When Chrétien and Marie and Hartmann were writing full-length verse narratives in Old French and Middle High German, there was no parallel extended vernacular production on any topic in medieval Italy. Saint Francis's exalted *Canticle of the Creatures* is one of the earliest vernacular texts, and it dates to 1224. The relative lag in Italian vernacular writing has been explained variously over the years and indeed has recently come to be challenged as a paradigm. A central factor is that the peninsula was strongly multilingual, as much so as medieval Britain or Iberia; with a long presence in Italian territories of populations speaking Greek, Hebrew and Arabic – not to mention French – Latin probably remained a default lingua franca for longer. In fact, some of the earliest evidence for the circulation of the Arthur material in Italy is on the peninsula: Latin, of course, but also Hebrew and Greek." Regina F. Psaki, "Introduction: The Arthur of the Italians," in *The Arthur of the Italians: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval Italian Literature and Culture*, eds. Regina F. Psaki and Gloria Allaire, Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages, VII (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014): 1-2.

Italy first by minstrels, then Provençal troubadours, and finally, with French romance texts themselves.<sup>26</sup> While troubadours and minstrels from southern France most likely carried stories of Arthur to northern and central Italy, the Normans are the most likely candidates for the spread of Arthurian tales in southern Italy. One of the most famous examples of the connections between the Normans of Sicily and the legends of King Arthur is Gervase of Tilbury's *Otia Imperialia: Recreation for an Emperor*. The English Tilbury was employed by William II of Norman Sicily, and included in his writings is the story of King Arthur under Mount Etna. The narrative begins when the Bishop of Catania's servant loses the Bishop's horse. The servant eventually finds the animal in a cave under Mount Etna, a volcanic mountain on Sicily's northwest coast. In the cave, the servant discovers not just the Bishop's horse, but a wounded King Arthur, who fled Britain for Sicily after his final battle with Mordred. Arthur's wounds refuse to close, and the story ends when the servant returns to the Bishop with the horse, as well as gifts from King Arthur.<sup>27</sup> The connection between Mount Etna and Arthur also appears in the thirteenth-century French text *Floriant et Florete*. Arthur comes to Sicily to help the besieged city of Palermo fend off the attacks of Constantinople, and when the knight Floriant is mortally wounded, he follows a white stag to Etna where he encounters Morgan le Fay, King Arthur's sister, who tells him that when Arthur is

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<sup>26</sup> For example, Godfrey of Viterbo's *Pantheon* (composed between 1186 and 1191) reinterprets Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, though Viterbo stops his text after Merlin's prophesies about King Arthur's future greatness, but before Arthur's actual birth. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* was likely an early transplant, especially since it was written in Latin rather than a vernacular. *Gesta Florentinorum*, written in 1231 contextualizes the conflict between the residents of Siena and Florence by comparing the Sienese to "the Britons, who are said to still expect King Arthur" [tamquam Brittoni qui regem adhuc expectare dicuntur Arturum]. Boncompagno de Signa certainly knew the legends surrounding Arthur's death and eventual return when he wrote a model letter from a lecturer to his truant student, "telling him [the student] that he will complete his academic course when Arthur returns to Britain." Edmund G. Gardner, *The Arthurian Legend in Italian Literature* (New York: Octagon Books, 1971 [1930]): 10-11.

<sup>27</sup> Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia: Recreation for an Emperor*, ed. and trans. S. E. Banks and J. W. Binns (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002): 334-36.



mortally wounded, he too, will come to Etna.<sup>28</sup> Edmund G. Gardner highlights these connection between Mount Etna, King Arthur, and the Normans:

The local traditions of Etna are classical, not romantic, and the story – though Gervase attributes it to the natives – could only have originated with the Norman conquerors who, in some way, identified Sicily with the legendary island or vale of Avalon, the “insula pomorum quae fortunate vocatur” of Geoffrey of Monmouth. A trace of the story seems to linger in the name “Fata Morgana” applied to a kind of mirage in the Strait of Messina, which is occasionally visible from the coast of the mainland.<sup>29</sup>

Though Gardner describes the stories of King Arthur and Etna as classical, this is most likely due to the stories’ composition in Latin, rather than a vernacular language.<sup>30</sup> The connection between the Normans in southern Italy and the stories of King Arthur seems clear. Those who had heard the legends of King Arthur in Normandy, and elsewhere in Europe, brought them south to the Norman kingdom in Sicily.

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<sup>28</sup> Gardner, *The Arthurian Legend in Italian Literature*, 13. Tales of King Arthur living under Mount Etna were still being written in the fourteenth century. Guillem Torella’s *La Faula* (c. 1350-1381) tells the story of how Guillem approaches a parrot sitting on a rock, whereupon the rock turns into a whale and carries Guillem to an island. On the island, a French-speaking snake informs him this is the home of Morgan le Fay and King Arthur. The next day, Guillem next rides a horse that appears and finds Morgan le Fey in a beautiful garden. There, she reveals that King Arthur is wounded and Guillem goes to see him. Though he is wounded and in pain, King Arthur is still young, as the Holy Grail nourishes him once a year. The story ends when Guillem leaves Arthur and rides the magic whale home, returning to Majorca. Richard M. Loomis and Laura Hibbard Loomis, *Arthurian Legends in Medieval Art* (Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint, 1975 [1938]): 24.

<sup>29</sup> Gardner, *The Arthurian Legend in Italian Literature*, 13-14. The Fata Morgana mirage occurs when fallible human eyesight is tricked by lights’ passage between air of different temperatures: “In the case of a fata morgana mirage, light reflecting from a distant object such as a ship is bent downward as it passes through the colder, denser air near the surface of the ocean (or sometimes cold land, particularly ice). But your brain places the object where it would be if the light came to you in a straight path—higher than it actually is. This bending effect can even work with the curvature of the Earth if conditions are just right, which is why some fata morgana images can actually be refracted cities and ships from beyond the horizon.” Matt Simon, “Fantastically Wrong: The Bizarre Mirages That Once Scared the Bejesus Out of Sailors,” *Wired Magazine*, 28 Jan. 2015, updated 14 July 2016. URL: <https://www.wired.com/2015/01/fantastically-wrong-fata-morgana/>. See also Marina Warner, *Fata Morgana; or, Castles in the Air*, *Phantasmagoria: Spirit Visions, Metaphors, and Media into the Twenty-first Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006): 95-98.

<sup>30</sup> Arthurian stories in Italian vernacular date from the thirteenth century and Fredrick the II of Sicily’s court, and involve Tristan and Iseult, though whether these tales stem from knowledge of French texts or Italian takes on the legends is difficult to determine. However, it is interesting to note that though stories of Tristan did not appear in Italian until the thirteenth century, documents listing soldiers and landholder from the earlier, Norman period, include various forms of the name Tristan: Torstainus/Tristainus (1022 and 1042); Trostenus/Tristaynus (1096 and 1109); Trostaynus (1122); and Trustanius (1149 and 1151). The name did not appear in norther Italy until later. Gardner, *The Arthurian Legend in Italian Literature*, 11-21.

In addition to the textual evidence that stories of King Arthur were disseminated in Italy, there is physical evidence as well. Two churches, the Cathedral at Modena and the Church of San Nicolo in Bari, both have carved stone bas-reliefs that feature King Arthur. At Modena, the carving dates from the late eleventh century, and shows a castle tower, encircled by a moat, that is under attack. From the battlements of the tower, two figures labeled Mardoc (Mordred) and Winlogée (Guinevere or Queen Guenloie)<sup>31</sup> watch as below, a foot soldier, Burmaltus, fights a knight on horseback, labeled Artus de Bretania (King Arthur of Britain). On the tower's opposite side, another horsed knight, Carrado, fights three additional knights, also on horseback, labeled Galvagus (Gawain), Galvarium, and Che (Sir Kay).<sup>32</sup> Though the carving at Bari is similar, it dates from the early twelfth century and its figures are not labeled.<sup>33</sup> Another connection between King Arthur and Italians is a mosaic at the Cathedral of Otranto in Apulia. Constructed by Bishop Pantaleone from 1163-1166, the mosaic on the cathedral's floor features a figure labeled Rex Arturus riding a horse-like animal.<sup>34</sup> According to Keith Busby, the Norman religious Brother Pantaleone helped create the mosaic.<sup>35</sup> Since both the mosaic in Otranto and the carving in Modena do not depict images that derive from Geoffrey's *Historia*, and the images were also created before Chrétien de Troyes' writings, "It therefore seems reasonable that to conjecture that the source of both the Modena and Otranto images may have been oral tales, brought over the Alps by itinerant

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<sup>31</sup> There is some debate on the identity of the woman watching from the tower. Roger Loomis argues that Winlogée is Guinevere, and that the sculpture is tale from Brittany about her kidnapping and rescue by Gawain. Gardner believes Winlogée is more likely Queen Guenloie from the thirteenth-century Norman romance *Yder*. Gardner, *The Arthurian Legend in Italian Literature*, 4-5.

<sup>32</sup> Gardner, *The Arthurian Legend in Italian Literature*, 4.

<sup>33</sup> Gardner, *The Arthurian Legend in Italian Literature*, 11.

<sup>34</sup> Loomis and Loomis, *Arthurian Legends in Medieval Art*, 36. They identify the animal Arthur rides as a goat. However, other scholars suggest Arthur rides a panther, ram, or bear, or possibly even the mythical Cath Palug. Gloria Allaire, "Arthurian Art in Italy," in *The Arthur of the Italians*, 203.

<sup>35</sup> Keith Busby, "Arthuriana in the Italian Regions of Medieval Francophonia," in *The Arthur of the Italians*, 14.

storytellers and/or Norman craftsmen.”<sup>36</sup> I agree with Busby; though it seems strange that carving and mosaic pre-date textual examples of Arthur, given the length of time necessary to create a manuscript during this time period, an orally transmitted ledger, much more mobile than parchment, could have easily inspired the patron who commissioned the carving or mosaics, as well as the craftsmen who created it. However the stories of King Arthur reached southern Italy, here again is evidence that King Arthur was a familiar figure in southern Italy during the Normans’ reign.

While the romances in this chapter were written by those with ties to the Norman region and post-Conquest England, each includes episodes that occur in southern Italy or the larger Mediterranean. Through the transmission of texts and the Norman invasion of southern Italy and Sicily, the romance genre — including stories of King Arthur and his knights — traveled from west to east, as the legends of Troy and Rome had traveled east to west: *translatio normannitatis* in action. In relation to Old French literature, Megan Moore states “that the Mediterranean provides a geo-cultural space in which identity is not regulated to fictitious feudal borders, but rather created through patterns of patronage and exchange, through trade and warfare.”<sup>37</sup> Supporting Moore’s argument, the Norman identity reflected in *Cligés* and *Guillaume de Palerne* is not confined to one physical landmass, in this case, the kingdom of Norman Sicily; their identity includes the connections forged through trade, marriage, and military deeds from around the larger Mediterranean basin, as well as Europe. The study of romance literature in southern Italy opens up a discourse on the literary and physical connections between regions during the medieval

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<sup>36</sup> Busby, “Arthuriana in the Italian Regions of Medieval Francophonia,” in *The Arthur of the Italians*, 14.

<sup>37</sup> Moore, *Exchanges in Exoticism*, 7. Sharon Kinoshita makes a similar point in her chapter entitled “Beyond Philology,” 36. She writes: “Rethinking the medieval Mediterranean as a transitional space – a contact zone of commercial exchange and cross-confessional interaction – puts pressure, in turn, on traditional views of the Middle Ages as a transitional time – those perilous centuries during which the legacy of classical antiquity hung in the balance until being reanimated by the “rebirth” emanating from northern Italy in the mid-fourteenth century.”

period. Much of medieval scholarship tends to focus on either northwest Europe, Spain, or the Middle East; this makes sense considering academia's requirement of complete mastery on a topic and its tendency to focus on minutia — it is difficult to develop a thorough level of knowledge of multiple regions, languages, and cultures. However, I think remaining within a relatively small geographic area can make it difficult to remember that these regions were connected in multiple ways, and not just by religious violence. Looking at the Norman monarchy in Sicily helps explore one site where connections between multiple regions flourished and created a cosmopolitan culture that blended multiple literary and artistic traditions and forms.

### *Cligés*

Before looking at *Cligés* itself, let us place its author, Chrétien de Troyes, more firmly within the context of the romance genre and highlight his potential ties to the Norman kingdom in southern Italy, as well as in Normandy and Anglo-Norman England. Chrétien spent at least part of his career in the northwest French city of Troyes, writing in the court of the Countess Marie de Champagne, daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine. The connection between Marie and Eleanor means that Chrétien may have spent time in England at the court of Henry II, Eleanor's second husband. According to scholar William W. Kibler, the geographical knowledge and references to England in Chrétien's works, particularly *Cligés*, indicate a familiarity with England borne from first-hand experience.<sup>38</sup> The links between the Norman aristocracy in northern Europe and the Norman kingdom in Sicily are more tenuous, but still there. English king Henry II's daughter, Joanna, traveled to Sicily to marry William II, grandson of Roger II, increasing the possibility that Chrétien

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<sup>38</sup> William W. Kibler, "Introduction," in *Arthurian Romances*, Chrétien de Troyes, trans. William W. Kibler (*Eric and Enide* trans. Carleton W. Carroll), (New York: Penguin, 2004): 5.

would have at least a passing familiarity with the Kingdom of Normandy in Sicily and its cosmopolitan makeup.<sup>39</sup>

Chrétien begins *Cligès*<sup>40</sup> by locating himself within the romance tradition as the author of *Erec and Enide*, and as a translator of other famous romance texts, such as Ovid's *Remedia amoris* [*Commandment*], *Ars amatoria* [*Art of Love*], and various tales from *The Metamorphoses*.<sup>41</sup>

He sets himself up not only as an author of romance himself, but one who draws from earlier romantic texts produced during the Roman Empire:

“Cil qui fist d’ Erec et d’ Enide  
et les comandemanz d’Ovide  
et l’Art d’amors an romans mist  
et le Mors de l’espaule fist,  
del roi Marc et d’Ysalt la blonde  
et de la hupe et de l’aronde  
et del rosignol la muance,  
un novel conte rancomance  
d’un vaslet qui an Grece fu  
del linage le roi Artu.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Joanna was not the only daughter of Henry II and Eleanor to marry outside northern European kingdoms. A daughter named Eleanor married Castile's Alfonso VII. According to Menocal, she “...welcomed visitors from throughout Europe who came to Toledo to drink from its fountains of knowledge — and to take much of that knowledge back to England, France, and Germany. Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History*, 49. Eleanor's daughters seem involved in the creation of multicultural courts across southern Europe.

<sup>40</sup> In brief, *Cligès* is story of the Emperor's son Alexander, who leaves Constantinople for Britain to become a knight of King Arthur. There he falls in love with Soredamors, one of queen's ladies, and together they have a son, Cligès. After the Emperor's death, Alexander's brother, Alis, usurps the throne; but the brothers strike a deal. Alis can remain Emperor but cannot marry. And when he dies the throne will go to Cligès. However, after Alexander's death, Alis breaks his oath and marries Fenice, the German Emperor's daughter. But Cligès and Fenice fall in love, and with the help of a potion created by Fenice's nurse, Alis is tricked into believing his marriage to Fenice has been consummated. Cligès journeys to King Arthur's court to prove himself as a knight like his father, later returning to Greece and Fenice. There, Fenice feigns death with another of her nurse's potions, and Fenice and Cligès escape to live together in a hidden tower. Cligès and Fenice are discovered, and they, along with Fenice's nurse, flee to Britain and the protection of King Arthur. But before Arthur can help Cligès win back his rightful throne, Alis dies from grief, Cligès returns to Constantinople, and marries Fenice.

<sup>41</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, in *Arthurian Romances*, trans. William W. Kibler (New York: Penguin, 2004): 508, note 1.

<sup>42</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, ed. and trans. Laurence Harf-Lancner, Bilingual edition (Paris: Champion Classiques, 2006): 1-10. When referencing the original French poem, line numbers will be cited.

“He who wrote *Erec and Enide*, who translated Ovid's *Commandments* and the *Art of Love* into French, who wrote *The Shoulder Bite*, and about King Mark and Isolde the Blonde, and of the metamorphosis of the hoopoe, swallow, and nightingale, beings now a new tale of a youth who, in Greece, was of King Arthur's line.”

While later in the introduction Chrétien disparages Greece and Rome, who have ceded their power and knowledge to France and Western Europe, that he uses a Roman author, Ovid, to enhance his own reputation as a writer, creates a rift between his stated feelings towards the ancient world and how he uses Troy and Rome in his own texts.<sup>43</sup> Looking at the manuscript record, it too ties *Cligés* with other romances by Chrétien, as well as romances where the Mediterranean basin is a major component of plot and setting. The thirteenth century BnF Fr. 375 includes not only *Cligés*, *Erec and Enide*, *Le Chevalier de la charrette*, and *Le Chevalier au lion*, but *Athis et Prophilias* and *Floire et Blancheflor*, romances which mention Thebes, Troy, Babylon (Cairo), or Alexander the Great. Of the eighteen texts in the manuscript, all eighteen involve the Byzantine Empire or Greek legends. Another thirteenth century manuscript, BnF Fr. 1450 also includes *Cligés*, *Le Chevalier de la charrette*, and *Le Chevalier au lion*, *Erec*, *Perceval*, *Roman de Troie*, *Eneas*, *Brut*, and *Dolopathos*. Again, *Cligés*' manuscript tradition is associated with texts involving Troy, the journey of Aeneas, and the founding of Rome.<sup>44</sup> Scribes — and their patrons — compiling and copying manuscripts in the thirteenth century clearly saw a connection between Chrétien's

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In Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligés*, in *Arthurian Romances*, trans. Kibler, 123. Though Chrétien's *Cligés* is written in verse and Kibler's translation is prose, I elected to use his, as I think it captures the spirit and sense of the original. Page numbers will be cited when referencing his translation, rather than line numbers.

<sup>43</sup> As Michelle A. Freeman notes on the texts Chrétien includes in the beginning of the prologue, "These books could very possibly reflect the cultural context of the speaker through which will pass the Greek and Roman heritage. The poet-narrator stands at the crossroads of poetic activity coming from the Celts, the French, and the Romans influenced by his command of the vernacular." Michelle A. Freeman, *The Poetics of Translatio Studii and Conjointure: Chrétien de Troyes' Cligés*, French Forum Monographs 12 (Lexington, KY: French Forum Publishers, 1979): 25-26. I think this again points to the importance of Troyes, and its connections to the wider world, that contributed to the geographic and cultural scope of Chrétien invokes in *Cligés*, a point on which Sharon Kinoshita concurs: "...this tantalizing bibliography, evoking both Ovid and the Tristan legend in the same breath, underscores the *double* nature of Chrétien de Troyes's literary genealogy, rooted in both Celtic and classical traditions...". Sharon Kinoshita, "The Poetics of Translation: French-Byzantine Relations in Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligés*," *Exemplaria* 8, no. 2 (1996): 333. For more on the transmission of the name Tristan texts featuring him, see Gardner, *The Arthurian Legend in Italian Literature*, 11-21.

<sup>44</sup> Moore, *Exchanges in Exoticism*, 25. Lori J. Walters makes a similar point concerning BnF Fr. 1450 and its inclusion of manuscripts that feature Troy. Lori J. Walters, "Manuscript Compilation of Verse Romance," in *The Arthur of the French*, 471.

treatment of Greece and Byzantium in *Cligés* and other romance texts with Mediterranean references.

Returning to *Cligés*, Chrétien continues his prologue by laying out the premise of his new work, which will involve kings of both Greece and England:

“un novel conte rancomance  
d’un vaslet qui an Grece fu  
del linage le roi Artu.  
Mes ainz que de lui rien vos die,  
orroiz de son pere la vie,  
dom il fu et de quel linage.  
Tant fu preuz et de fier corage  
que por pris et por los conquerre,  
ala de Grece an Engleterre,  
qui lors estoit Bretaigne dite.”<sup>45</sup>

Before Chrétien even reaches the *translatio* motif and the relationship between Greece, Rome, and France, he explicitly connects the rulers of Britain and Greece through their blood ties.<sup>46</sup> The Emperor Alexander (Cligès’ father), while he is connected to King Arthur and Britain, is not a lesser knight or king than Arthur:

“D’Alixandre vos conteron,  
qui tant fu corageus et fiers  
que il [ne] deigna chevaliers  
devenir an sa regïon.  
Oï ot feire menssion  
del roi Artus, qui lors reïnoit,  
et des barons que il tenoit  
an sa compaignie toz jorz,  
par qu’estoit dotee sa corz

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<sup>45</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, ed. and trans. Harf-Lancner, 8-17.

“...begins now a new tale of a youth who, in Greece, was of King Arthur’s line. But before I tell you anything of him, you will hear about the life of his father — his origins and lineage. He was so valiant and bold of heart that, in order to win fame and glory, he went from Greece to England, which in those days was called Britain.”

In Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligés*, in *Arthurian Romances*, trans. Kibler, 123.

<sup>46</sup> Moore notes the rhyme between *Artu* and *Grece fu* in this passage, linguistically highlighting geographic and genealogical ties between Arthur’s court in England and Byzantium. Moore, *Exchanges in Exoticism*, 24. However, Moore goes on to read the rest of the prologue as “a kind of cultural imperialism, in which all things French should supplant all things Greek and Roman” (28). However, I disagree with this reading as the rest of story fails to bear this out. Rather than France dominating Byzantium and Anglo-Norman England, the regions are united by marriage and trade, ruled by monarchs who both know and respect each other.

et renomee par le monde.”<sup>47</sup>

Alexander is brave enough to seek his knighthood at a feared court, and moral enough to know that being the emperor compromises his ability to legitimately and fairly earn his knighthood in Greece – is he knighted because he has truly proven himself worthy, or is he knighted because his fellow knights fear Alexander’s wrath should they refuse to grant him the title? It is a clear conflict of interest. Unlike *translatio imperii*, with its linear transfer of knowledge and greatness from ancient Troy and Rome, through the equality of Alexander and Arthur, Chrétien creates a world where knowledge and greatness are found not just in Britain, but in Constantinople as well, creating the circular movement that is reflected in the concept of *translatio normannitatis*.

Several lines earlier on, Chrétien explicitly uses a traditional *translatio* motif, claiming that the Greeks and Romans' wisdom and courage have left the Mediterranean and traveled north to France:

“Li livres est molt anciens  
qui tesmoingne l'estoire a voire;  
por ce fet ele mialz a croire.  
Par les livres que nos avons  
les fez des anciens savons  
et del siegle qui fu jadis.  
Ce nos ont nostre livre apris  
qu'an Grece ot de chevalerie  
le premier los et de clergie.  
Puis vint chevalerie a Rome  
et de la clergie la some,  
qui or est an France venue.  
Dex doint qu'ele i soit maintenue  
et que li leus li abelisse  
tant que ja mes de France n'isse  
l'enors qui s'i est arestee.  
Dex l'avoit as altres preste,

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<sup>47</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, ed. and trans. Harf-Lancner, 64-73.

“I shall tell of Alexander, who was so courageous and bold that he would not consider becoming a knight in his own land. He had heard mention of King Arthur, who reigned in those days, and of the barons who always accompanied him, making his court feared and renowned throughout the world.”  
In Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, in *Arthurian Romances*, trans. Kibler, 124.



car des Grezois ne des Romains  
 ne dit an mes ne plus ne mains:  
 D'ax est la parole remese  
 et estainte la vive brese.”<sup>48</sup>

The repeated use of “we” and “our” locates the Greeks and Romans’ ancient knowledge and wisdom in Chrétien’s time and place; he is not relying on original texts by these ancient authors but translated versions. Chrétien is at once a part of this transfer of knowledge from east to west, claiming it as his (and Europe’s own) and yet one step removed from it, by working in translation. Though he claims the fame and renown of Rome and Greece have faded completely (not even the remains of a smoldering fire), Greece and its royalty are at the center of the story to come, and its hero, Cligès, never loses his Greek identity. That identity may be tied to King Arthur and Britain, but that tie is not one which diminishes either Greece or Cligès — Alexander and Cligès are just as skilled as knights and rulers as King Arthur. Clearly, the power and pull of Greece is not dead, despite Chrétien claim otherwise. Why Chrétien endorses the concept of *translatio imperii* in his prologue only to follow it with a story which contradicts that very idea is strange. Chrétien’s, while comfortable expressing the equality of east and west in a fictional world, perhaps did not feel so comfortable espousing that same view in the first person prologue. He may also have needed to cater to a patron, one whose *matiere* and *san* Chrétien had to balance with his own, as he explains in the prologue to *Le Chevalier de la charrette*, where he must balance his narrative with the wishes of his patron, Marie of Champagne.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, ed. and trans. Harf-Lancner, 24-44.

“Through the books we have, we learn of the deeds of ancient peoples and of bygone days. Our books have taught us that chivalry and learning first flourished in Greece; then to Rome came chivalry and the sum of knowledge, which now has come to France. May God grant that they be maintained here and may He be please enough with this land that the glory now in France may never leave. God merely lent it to the others: no one speaks any more of the Greeks or Romans; their fame has grown silent and their glowing ember has gone out.”

In Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, in *Arthurian Romances*, trans. Kibler, 123.

<sup>49</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier de la charrette*, trans. William W. Kibler (New York: Penguin, 2004): 207.

Moving beyond the story's prologue, Alexander, Arthur, Cligès are all successful monarchs. It could be argued that King Arthur is the better one — after all, Arthur does not travel to Greece and the courts of either Alexander or Cligès, they come to him; and it is King Arthur who readies an army of knights and ships to assist Cligès in re-claiming the Greek throne from his uncle Alis. However, Alexander and Cligès are not the only rulers whose kingdoms are threatened in their absence; while Arthur is touring Brittany with Alexander, Count Angrès — whom Arthur left as regent — seizes power for himself.<sup>50</sup> And it is Alexander and his knights — from Greece and other countries<sup>51</sup> — who capture Count Angrès and put down the insurrection, returning King Arthur to power. Cligès himself trounces every one of Arthur's knights in a tournament, and even his encounter with Gawain, the best of Arthur's knights, ends in a draw. Cligès proves his skills in battle when he accompanies Arthur throughout Arthur's kingdom, including Britain, France, and Normandy. It is only his love for Fenice that drives Cligès back to Greece. Therefore, despite Chrétien's claims at the beginning of the text, chivalry and strong examples of kingship are very much alive in both west and east, and rulers from both regions face challenges to their thrones and require military aid. *Cligès* does not depict the western King Arthur rescuing inferior eastern rulers Alexander and Cligès; instead, the narrative depicts three rulers who create a circle of aid and military intervention, three strong leaders and knights who are equally skilled. Here is an example not of *translatio imperii*, but *translatio normannitatis*: knightly prowess and able kingship circulate between Britain and Greece, East and West. The two kingdoms are tied together through their shared history, each claiming a lineage that can be traced back to Rome and Troy. But east

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<sup>50</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, ed. and trans. Harf-Lancner, 1050-66.

<sup>51</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, ed. and trans. Harf-Lancner, 1275-89.

and west share equally in claiming this heritage and equally in the transfer of Rome and Troy's knowledge and glory to their own countries and kingships.

In addition to their skills as rulers, Alexander and Cligès Greece and Arthur's Britain reinforce their ties to one another through marriage. Alexander marries King Arthur's niece, Soredamors, and the two worlds of Greece and Britain are united in their son, Cligès. When Alexander and Soredamors return to Greece, the heritage of Troy and Rome moves back east with them, and more importantly, so does the heritage of Britain in the person of their son. Through the character of Cligès, Chrétien "reversed or balanced the tradition of Arthurian-British descent from Troy: by creating Greek descent from Britain, each nation has both the blood and the culture of the other blended in its own."<sup>52</sup> King Arthur's Britain — and Chrétien's France — can no longer trace the knowledge and culture of Troy to Rome and then on to France and Britain in a continuous movement from east to west. Instead, that knowledge and power is present in both locations and in both kings — is it not east *or* west, but east *and* west. In Chrétien's text, *translatio* becomes a circuitous pathway that incorporates the cultures of both Britain and Greece. The movement of nobility between Greece and Britain is centered around diplomacy as well as marriage — movement that is driven by peaceful encounters rather than militant ones. While the Greek and British thrones may be threatened by enemies within their own kingdoms (Count Angrès in Britain and Alexander's brother Alix in Greece), the kingdoms and their rulers are not threatened by each other. The countries rulers don't view one another as 'the other,' antagonists whose different religions and languages prevent meaningful exchange and cooperation. Even though he is related by blood to King Arthur and could make a claim for the British throne — especially after his uncle robs him of his own — Cligès never does. While he is curious to visit Britain and meet King

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<sup>52</sup> Vishnuvajjala, "Loyalty and Horizontal Cosmopolitanism," 121.

Arthur, there is no hint in the text that Cligès' visit will be anything but peaceful. Likewise, when Arthur answers Cligès' call for armed assistance to defeat Alix, there is no indication that once Arthur, with his mighty fleet, has overthrown Alix, that Arthur himself will stay in Greece and attempt to conquer it. In fact, once Cligès receives word that his uncle is dead and he can return to Greece as king, Arthur immediately dismisses the vast army he summoned:

“Tel l’oënt qui de cest afeire  
furent lié, s’en i ot de tex  
qui esloignassent lor ostex  
volantiers, et molt lor pleüst  
que l’oz vers Grece s’esmeüst.  
Mes remeise est del tot la voie,  
car li rois ses genz en envoie,  
si s’en depart l’oz et [retorne].”<sup>53</sup>

The motivations of the men who still want to journey to Greece is not clear; what is clear is that Arthur refuses to impinge on Cligès sovereignty by allowing these men to embark for Greece. Arthur may visit Greece in the future, as Alexander and Cligès visited his court, but (at least at this point in time) he is not willing to do so with an invasion force. With King Arthur's decision to disband his army, the one way transfer of moral and intellectual superiority is transformed into a circular pattern of exchange. While the twelfth-century did include religious violence and crusade, it was also a period whose literature reflected a cosmopolitan view that east and west were not mutually exclusive entities unable to relate and appreciate the one another. It was this kind of cosmopolitanism that the Normans of southern Italy and Sicily embodied.

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<sup>53</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, ed. and trans. Harf-Lancner, 6718-25.

“Many of those assembled were happy to hear this news, but there were many who would gladly have left their homes behind and been happy to sail with the army for Greece. But the expedition was cancelled and the king dismissed his men; the army disbanded and the knights returned home.” In Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, in *Arthurian Romances*, trans. Kibler, 205.

## East to West and Back Again

One of the most distinctive aspects of *Cligés* is the continuous movement back and forth between northern Europe and Greece. The locations are ones the characters are comfortable and familiar with; these landscapes are realistic, rather than demonized lands where the unknown resides. Unlike many of Chrétien's romances, where the land is filled with magical artifacts, dwarfs, giants, and other phantasmagoria, *Cligés* is grounded in realistic space.<sup>54</sup> This realistic space situates the romance firmly in the twelfth century, a world where Norman expansion into southern Italy was partly responsible for enabling the movement between east and west on the roads and seas. When Alexander first journeys from Greece to Britain and King Arthur's court, he and his fellow knights arrive at the port of Southampton. Finding that Arthur is residing at Winchester, the Greek party takes the road to Winchester from Southampton. Chrétien does not invent a route here — there was in fact a road that ran from the coast at Southampton to the city of Winchester.<sup>55</sup> At his leave taking of Arthur, Alexander departs from Shoreham for the journey home to Athens; like Southampton, both Shoreham and Athens were real ports and cities. While Arthur is in Brittany with Alexander, messengers from Britain arrive to deliver news of Count Angrès' betrayal, and the text notes the messengers journeyed from London and Canterbury via Dover, another realistic geographic maneuver. Situating the characters' movements in reality

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<sup>54</sup> *Le Chevalier de la charrette* features a dwarf, sword bridge, and an enchanted kingdom called Gorre; *Yvain*, has a magic rock that creates storms; and *Perceval* contains the grail. Sharon Kinoshita takes up this theme: "Though by and large they remain simple names in the text, their specificity not only contributes to the text's reality effect, but often bears significant symbolic weight as well." In terms of time, the references to travel times between cities and countries "[suggests] a temporal realism consonant with what Jacques Le Goff describes as the emerging conception of "merchant time." Kinoshita, "The Poetics of Translation," 342. For more on the relationship between medieval narrative and geography and space, see Robert T. Tally Jr., "Mapping Narrative," in *Literary Cartographies: Spatiality, Representation, and Narrative*, ed. Robert T. Tally Jr. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014): 3.

<sup>55</sup> The road was constructed during the Roman occupation of Britain and was still in use during the medieval period. Paul Hindle, "Sources for the English Medieval Road System," in *Roadworks: Medieval Britain, Medieval Roads*, eds. Valerie Allen and Ruth Evans (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016): 46. This roughly corresponds to the modern M3.

makes the interaction between them more believable; if Chrétien is being truthful about the text's literal spaces, the human geography and positive interactions between Greece and Britain become that much more credible.

Canterbury and Dover both played a critical role in Anglo-Norman history; Canterbury was the site where Henry II's retainers slew Thomas à Beckett, the archbishop of Canterbury, and the castle at Dover was built by the Normans in the wake of their invasion.<sup>56</sup> While Chrétien claims in the beginning of *Cligés* that knowledge had passed out of the east and settled farther north and west, the movement of both the Greeks and the British within the story defy his own proclamation and *translatio imperii*'s insistence on a unidirectional movement of power and knowledge. Kings and knights, messengers and merchants, cross literal seas and traverse real roads, encountering multiple peoples and cultures along the way. These encounters are largely peaceful; moving between east and west is not about conquering territory, but conducting trade, marriage, and diplomacy in the text. Though medieval romance frequently contains violence, religious conflict, and conversion narratives, *Cligés*' cosmopolitan, realistic spaces broaden the conversation about the Mediterranean basin during the twelfth-century and the multiple interactions its geography fostered.

Perhaps even more critical than the spatial references to sites in Britain are those that reference areas and cities located around the Mediterranean basin and even farther afield. Discussing the translation of medical and scientific texts from Arabic into Latin in relation to Toledo and Seville — both part of Muslim al-Andalusia — as well as Salerno, Sharon Kinoshita notes that, "Counterposed to his prologue, in other words, Chrétien's Mediterranean allusions

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<sup>56</sup> While the site of Dover castle had been inhabited since the Iron Age, it was William the Conqueror who constructed the first wooden castle, which was later re-built of stone by Henry II. English Heritage. "History of Dover Castle." Accessed 15 Aug. 2018. Found at: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/dover-castle/history-and-stories/history>.

disrupt, *en filigrane*, the brazen assertion of the transmission of learning from Greece to Rome to France.”<sup>57</sup> However, I believe that while Chrétien’s frequent reference to the Mediterranean region plays a vital role in freeing the text from *translatio imperii*, the disruption extends beyond al-Andalus and textual translations, to include references to cities and areas where various knights and goods originate. One of the first examples is the list of knights who fight with Alexander for King Arthur in his quest to dispatch the traitor Count Angrès. Three of the knights specifically come from cities or regions located in modern day Greece, places that would have been controlled by the Byzantine Empire during the twelfth century:<sup>58</sup> Athens, Mycene, and Salonica.<sup>59</sup> The cosmopolitanism nature of Alexander’s force extends beyond the borders of Europe and the Byzantine Empire, and he can appreciate the valor and fighting skills of knights from multiple kingdoms and cultures. By giving Alexander such a diverse, cosmopolitan force, Chrétien, as Kinoshita notes, “disrupts” the notion of western superiority, not only in terms of academic and written knowledge, but military prowess as well. The Byzantine Empire is not the feminized other for Chrétien, but a place where many of Alexander’s best knights come from, knights who help defeat King Arthur’s enemy. Like the equality of kinship between Arthur, Alexander, and Cligès, their knights display the same equality of skills — regardless of *translatio imperii*’s purported east/west divide.

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<sup>57</sup> Sharon Kinoshita, “Chrétien de Troyes’s *Cligès* in the Medieval Mediterranean,” *Arthuriana* 18, no. 3 (2008): 52. In the same article, Kinoshita lists each of the Mediterranean cities and countries mentioned in *Cligès* and their roles in medieval trade and production, politics and culture, and their involvement in the crusades. She includes Caesaria, Antioch, Candia, Almería, Morocco, Toledo, and Tudela (49-51).

<sup>58</sup> Paul Magdalino, “The Medieval Empire (780-1204),” *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, ed. Cyril Mango (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002): 188.

<sup>59</sup> Athens is the current capital of Greece; Mycenae (the modern spelling of the region) lies southwest of Athens and is most famous for being the area ruled over by Agamemnon before he left for the Trojan war, and during the brief period after he returned from war before his wife killed him in the bathtub; Salonica is modern day Thessaloniki, a city in Northern Greece on the Aegean Sea.

Addition spatial references situate King Arthur's empire and Cligès home in Greece with cities and regions around the Mediterranean. When Cligès first reaches England, he enters a tournament against Arthur's best knights but disguises his identity, not wanting to receive any favors or advantages as Alexander's son and King Arthur's nephew. After defeating Sagremor the Unruly, Arthur desires to meet the mystery knight and sends his own knights out to locate him. However, Cligès has hidden himself too well, and the messengers return to Arthur, unable to locate him. It is as if instead of merely concealing himself in Britain, Cligès hides in a foreign country:

“Del chevalier li rois se saigne  
quant reconté li fu et dit  
qu'an ne trovoit grant ne petit  
qui sache anseignier son repaire  
ne plus que s'il fust an Cesaire  
ou a Tolete ou a Quandie.”<sup>60</sup>

It is interesting that Arthur does not ask his knights to search for the mysterious fighter in lands closer to home, such as Wales, Scotland, Brittany, or Normandy. One could argue that Arthur chose cities located around the Mediterranean Basin and an Islamic controlled area of Europe, rather than the Celtic regions of Brittany or Normandy, with their close historical ties to Britain, because Arthur views Brittany and Normandy as essentially “British.” Arthur suggests Caesarea, Toledo, and Crete, then, because these areas that are noticeably “other,” noticeably “foreign.” Cligès, and these regions, are so far away culturally and spatially that it becomes a joke when Arthur lists them, as if suggesting his knights look for Cligès in Oz or at Hogwarts.

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<sup>60</sup>Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, ed. and trans. Harf-Lancner, 4726-31.

“The king sent more than twenty young knights to seek him, but Cligès had concealed his tracks so well that they could find no trace of him. King Arthur signed himself with the cross when he learned that neither noble nor commoner could be found who knew where the knight was staying, any more than if he had been in Caesarea, Toledo, or Candia in Crete.”

In Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, in *Arthurian Romances*, trans. Kibler, 180-81. Caesarea is a city located in modern day Israel, located on the Mediterranean coast halfway between Haifa and Tel-Aviv; Toledo is in central Spain, and was under Islamic rule in the twelfth century; and Candia is the modern day city of Heraklion on the northwest coast of Crete, a large island in the Mediterranean south of Greece.



However, when the allusions made by Arthur to these regions and cities are considered in light of the text's other references to the Mediterranean, and considering Arthur's relationships with both Alexander and Cligès, I think there is another meaning behind this list of cities. Arthur does not mention these Spanish and Mediterranean locations because they are "other," but because Arthur views them as familiar spaces. While Arthur himself may not have been to any or all of these places, the people from these areas — as well as the goods that travel to Britain from them — are not unknown to him; they are part of his kingdom's everyday existence. Arthur is uncle to Cligès, who is half Greek, and depends on Cligès father, Alexander for both his military prowess and his friendship. Even if Arthur's tone is sarcastic as he lists the cities, knowing that the mystery knight cannot possibly be as far away as Crete or Toledo, his tone is directed toward his own knights' inability to locate Cligès, rather than mocking the cities themselves. It is familiarity, rather than otherness, that Chrétien creates with Arthur's Mediterranean references.

Part of the reason Arthur is so comfortable mentioning locations outside northern Europe is the trade between the Mediterranean and Britain. The routes of trade, the fairs such as the one at Troyes, and diplomatic ties between the various branches of Norman nobility, all helped to circulate goods between east and west. When Alexander receives permission to journey to Britain from his father, he asks the emperor to provide him with luxury goods:

"Se vos feire volez mon buen  
de ce que je vos ai requis,  
or me donez et veir et gris  
et boens chevax et dras de soie,  
car einçois que chevaliers soie,  
voldrai servir le roi Artu."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, ed. and trans. Harf-Lancner, 140-45.

"If you wish to honor me according to my request, then give me vair and miniver, good horses, and silken cloth; for before I become a knight I wish to serve King Arthur."

In Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, in *Arthurian Romances*, trans. Kibler, 124-25.

Vair and miniver are both furs, and silk was particularly associated with the east. It was an especially valuable import from the Byzantine Empire, Fatimid Egypt, and even Sicily. Alexander specifically asks his father for gifts that are only obtainable from centers of production in the east, yet are highly prized by the nobility in the west. The value of products from the east upsets the traditional understanding of *translatio imperii*, where the transfer of knowledge and power moves unidirectionally from east to west, from Troy to Rome to Britain and France. Instead, the circulation of goods is multi-directional, developing a cosmopolitan atmosphere that creates familiarity with items such as silk. There are goods that the west simply cannot produce, whether because of climate or because they lack the supplies and knowledge. Instead, the east has the knowledge of production and the necessary skills and resources — knowledge and skills which give them power and leverage in the marketplace and in politics.

### **Troy and Rome, Greece and Britain**

The most explicit reference to Troy occurs late in the text, after Cligès leaves Arthur and returns to Greece. There, Cligès and Fenice debate how to escape Alis, Cligès' uncle and Fenice's husband. For Cligès the answer lies north and west, toward the land and the king he has just left.

He compares their arrival in Britain with that of Paris and Helen in Troy:

“Dame, fet il, je croit et cuit  
 que mialz feire ne porriens  
 que s’an Bretaingne en aliens:  
 la ai pansé que vos an maingne.  
 Or gardez qu’an vos ne remaingne,  
 c’onques ne fu a si grant joie  
 Eleinne receüe a Troie,  
 qant Paris lis ot amenee,  
 que plus n’en soit de vos menee.  
 Par tote la terre le roi  
 mon oncle, de vos et de moi.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, in *Arthurian Romance*, trans. Kibler, 187-88; Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, ed. and trans. Harf-Lancner, 5278-88.

In his speech, Cligès unites Greece and Constantinople —the Byzantine empire — with its ancient equivalent, Troy, as well as with the western kingdom of Britain. Not only are Cligès and Fenice like Paris and Helen, but Britain becomes the new Troy and Arthur the new Priam. The Trojan origins of Britain, and the country's founding by Brutus, will be doubled by Cligès, Fenice, and Arthur, including the east in the knowledge and power of Troy and Rome.

After Cligès and Fenice are discovered, they, along with Fenice's nurse, flee to King Arthur in Britain, seeking his aid to recover Cligès throne:

“Et li roi dit que a navie  
 devant Constantinoble ira  
 et de chevaliers emplira  
 mil nes et de sergenz trois mile  
 tex que citez ne bors ne vile  
 ne chastiax, tant soit forz ne hauz,  
 ne porra sosfrir lor assauz.  
 Et Cligès n’a pas oblié  
 que lors n’ait le roi mercié  
 de s’aïde qu’il li otroie.  
 Li rois querre et semondre anvoie  
 toz les hauz barons de sa terre  
 et fet apareillier et querre  
 nes et dromonz, galies et barges.  
 D’escuz, de lances et de targes  
 et d’armeüre a chevalier  
 fet [cent] nez emplir et chargier.  
 Por ostoier fet aparoil  
 li roi si grant que le paroil  
 n’ot ne Cesar ne Alixandres.  
 Tote Eingleterre et tote Flandres,  
 Normandie, France et Bretaigne  
 et tot desi qu’as porz d’Espaigne  
 a fet semondre et amasser.”<sup>64</sup>

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“My lady,” he said, “I am convinced that we could not do better than go to Britain; I thought I would take you there. Now please don't refuse, for the joy in Troy when Paris brought Helen there could not compare to the joy that will be felt for you and me throughout the land of my great-uncle, the king.”

In Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, in *Arthurian Romances*, trans. Kibler, 187-88.

<sup>63</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, in *Arthurian Romances*, trans. Kibler, 187-88.

<sup>64</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, ed. and trans. Harf-Lancner, 6666-89.

Chrétien's description of Arthur's expedition recalls the Greeks' preparations to sail east for Troy; the thousand ships launched to breach the Trojan's mighty walls and rescue Helen have become a fleet of twelfth-century sailing vessels carrying knights' armor. Instead of Agamemnon and Menelaus summoning their allies from around the Mediterranean, it is Arthur who assembles a force of Britons, Normans, and others from around Northern Europe. The comparison of Arthur with Caesar and Alexander further invokes images of ancient Rome and Greece. Through these invocations of Troy, Chrétien ties east and west together in a shared mythic beginning, as the Normans in southern Italy linked the kingdoms of the Mediterranean with each other and with Europe.<sup>65</sup>

### ***Guillaume de Palerne***

*Guillaume de Palerne* is an Old French verse romance dating from the late twelfth century<sup>66</sup> that connects the Normans in southern Italy with the Mediterranean and Europe, a picture

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"King Arthur said that he would take his fleet to Constantinople. He would fill a thousand ships with knights and three thousand with foot-soldiers, until no citadel, borough, town or castle, no matter how high or mighty its walls, could withstand their assault. Cligès did not forget to thank the king for the help he offered him. The king sent for and summoned all the high barons of his land, and he had sailing ships and galleys, transports and barques requisitioned and equipped. He had a hundred ships filled and loaded with shields, lances, bucklers, and armour fit for knights. The king's preparations were on such a grand scale that neither Creaser nor Alexander ever equalled them. All England and all Flanders, Normandy, France, and Brittany, and everyone as far as the Spanish passes, were convened and assembled."

In Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligés*, in *Arthurian Romances*, trans. Kibler, 204. The reference to "the Spanish passes" reflects Kibler's translation, rather than a current geographic location.

<sup>65</sup> In *Spatiality*, Robert T. Tally connects the ideas of narrative and world-making: "Narrative, according to this view, is a form of world-making, at least as much as it is a mode of world-representing, which in the end may come to the same thing. As narrators or writers survey the territory they wish to describe, they weave together disparate elements in order to produce the narrative, and these elements may include scraps of other narratives, descriptions of people or places, images derived from first-hand observation as well as from secondary reports, legends, myths, and invention of the world (that is, the narrative itself), the narrator also invents or discovers the world presented in the narrative. For readers, this narrative makes possible an image of the world, much like that of a map, and the literary cartography present in one narrative can become a part of future surveys, rhapsodies, and narratives, or future narrative maps." In Robert T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (New York: Routledge, 2013): 49.

<sup>66</sup> Sources are not in complete agreement over the exact date, but most put the narrative's composition in the late twelfth through 1200. Charles W. Dunn records ca. 1200 in his article: Charles W. Dunn, "Guillaume de Palerne and a Monreale Sculpture," *Medieval Studies* 10 (1948): 215; Irene Pettit McKeehan lists the twelfth century's later years: Irene Pettit McKeehan, "Guillaume de Palerne: A Medieval Best Seller," *Modern Language Association of America* 41 (1926): 786. And Leslie A. Sconduto believes the composition lies anywhere between 1188 and 1200. Leslie

of multi-directional *translatio normannitatis* that moves characters and goods between east and west.<sup>67</sup> This movement not only emphasizes the military conquest made by the Normans of southern Italy, but the cultural cosmopolitanism that accompanied their expansion, as well as their use of Troy and Rome to justify that expansion.

*Guillaume de Palerne*'s manuscript history, and the ties between members of the nobility mentioned in the text itself, create a connection between Normandy, nearby European kingdoms, the crusader states, and Norman Sicily. Only one manuscript of the poem in its Old French form survives from the thirteenth century: Paris, Arsenal FR. 6565, Folios 77-157, written in the Picard dialect of Old French.<sup>68</sup> In addition to *Guillaume*, another French romance, *L'Escoufle*, is included in the manuscript as well. And while seventeen lines are either missing from the manuscript or unreadable, the overall plot of the story is still easy to follow.<sup>69</sup> Much like Chrétien de Troyes' *Le*

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Sconduto, "Introduction," In *Guillaume de Palerne: An English Translation of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century French Verse Romance*, ed. and trans. Leslie A. Sconduto (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004): 1-10.

<sup>67</sup> In terms of previous scholarship, *Guillaume* has undergone a renaissance in the past few years. A new English translation was published in 2004, and a growing interest in animal studies and identity politics during the medieval period has driven much of the new scholarship. There was little, if any, recent work (that I could find in English or French) that examined *Guillaume* in light of its Norman connections or connections to other Norman related romances within the last decade. For the one of the most thorough treatments of the text, there is Charles W. Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf: A Literary-Historical Study of Guillaume de Palerne* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960). For more modern works on animal studies and/or identity, see Sarah Kay, and Peggy McCracken, "Introduction: Animal Studies and *Guillaume de Palerne*," *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes* 24 (2012): 323-30; Bridget Behrmann, "Quel beste ceste piex acuevre:" Idyll and the Animal in *Guillaume de Palerne*'s Family Romance," *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes* 24 (2012): 331-46; Peggy McCracken, "Skin and sovereignty in *Guillaume de Palerne*," *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes* 24 (2012): 361-75. Randy P. Schiff, "Cross-Channel Becomings-Animal: Primal Courtliness in *Guillaume de Palerne* and *William of Palerne*," *Revivalist Fantasy: Alliterative Verse and Nationalist Literary History* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011): 45-71; Hartley R. Miller, "Hey, you look like a prince!" Ideology and Recognition in *Guillaume de Palerne*," *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes* 24 (2012): 347-60; Leslie A. Sconduto, "Blurred and Shifting Identities: The Werewolf as Other in *Guillaume de Palerne*," *Romance Languages Annual* (1999) 11 (2000): 121-26; Leslie A. Sconduto, "Rewriting the Werewolf in *Guillaume de Palerne*," *Le Cygne: Bulletin of the International Marie de France Society* 6 (2000): 23-35.

<sup>68</sup> There is always the possibility that another manuscript version exists that has not been discovered yet. The dialect of the manuscript brings up two possibilities: that either the scribe was from Picard, or had lived and worked in the region long enough to learn the dialect. Sconduto, "Introduction," in *Guillaume de Palerne: An English Translation*, 2-3.

<sup>69</sup> King Embron, ruler of Sicily and Apulia, and Queen Felise, the Greek Emperor's daughter, have a son, Guillaume. But the infant prince of Sicily is threatened by his uncle, who wants to kill his nephew and usurp the throne. To save him, a werewolf who knows of the uncle's plot, kidnaps Guillaume and carries him to a forest outside Rome, where

*Chevalier de la charrette* is dedicated to Marie de Champagne and his *Perceval* to Philip of Alsace, the anonymous *Guillaume* text acknowledges Countess Yolanda, thought to be the daughter of Baldwin IV, and later aunt to Baldwin VI: Baldwin VI was Count of Flanders and Hainaut, and he was eventually crowned Emperor of Greece.<sup>70</sup> Yolanda's second husband, Hugh Candavene IV, Count of Saint Pol, was actually in Sicily as he journeyed to Palestine for the Third Crusade with the King of France, Philip Augustus, between 1190 and 1191.<sup>71</sup> These connections between

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he is discovered and raised by a kind, but childless, peasant couple. Both Guillaume and the couple have no knowledge of Guillaume's noble origins. Discovered by the Roman emperor while out hunting in the forest, who recognizes Guillaume's nobility, the Roman Emperor takes Guillaume to Rome. There, he falls in love with the Roman Emperor's daughter, Melinor, and she with him; but when she is betrothed to Partenidon, the Greek Emperor's son, Guillaume and Melinor disguise themselves in bear skins, and with the help of the same werewolf who saved the infant Guillaume, flee back to Southern Italy. When they arrive in Palermo, Queen Felise, mother of Guillaume, is under siege from the King of Spain and his son, Brandin, who want Florence, daughter of Embron (now deceased) and Queen Felice, as a bride. Prophetic dreams lead Queen Felise to Guillaume and Melinor, who offers his assistance in fighting the Spanish. Guillaume defeats the Spanish, discovers that he is the long lost son of the King of Sicily, regains his throne, and with the Emperor of Rome's blessing, marries Melinor. The werewolf is revealed as Alphonse, the Spanish King's son by his first wife, who was turned into a werewolf by the King's second wife, Brande, to ensure her own son, Brandin, became the next King of Spain; Queen Brande is summoned to Palermo and restores Alphonse to his human form. The tale ends with three weddings: Guillaume and Melinor marry with the Roman Emperor's blessing, and the Greek Emperor and his son, who had come to Palermo to relieve the siege against his daughter, Queen Felice of Sicily, return to their home with no hard feelings. Alphonse marries Florence, Princess of Sicily and Guillaume's sister; and Brandin, Prince of Spain, marries Alexandrine, Melinor's friend.

<sup>70</sup> Sconduto, "Introduction," in *Guillaume de Palerne: An English Translation*, 3.

<sup>71</sup> McKeehan states that while in Palestine, Candavene fought for the English under Richard the Lionheart, but journeyed to and from Palestine with the French King Philip. Whether Candavene fought with the English or the French in Palestine, he would have been in Sicily with the rest of the French and English Crusaders in late 1190 and early 1191. Irene Pettit McKeehan lists the twelfth century's later years: Irene Pettit McKeehan, "*Guillaume de Palerne*: A Medieval Best Seller," *Modern Language Association of America* 41 (1926): 803. While Philip Augustus and Hugh were in Sicily, political drama involving the Norman Royal, both its Italian and English branches, was ongoing and most likely helped inspire the overall plot of the story. Henry II of England's daughter and Richard's sister, Joanna, had married the Norman Italian King, William II in 1177. When William died in 1189, the couple was childless, and William's cousin Tancred usurped the throne from Joanna, holding both her and her dowry hostage. Tancred was the grandson of Roger II and the illegitimate son of Roger, Duke of Apulia. McKeehan, "*Guillaume de Palerne*: A Medieval Best Seller," 804. To free Joanna and reclaim her dowry, Richard sacked the town of Messina on Sicily's northeastern coast and Tancred surrendered. Much like the end of *Guillaume*, multiple marriages resulted from the conflict. Tancred arranged a marriage between his daughter and Arthur of Brittany, and Richard's fiancé Berengaria of Navarre, along with his mother Eleanor, traveled to Reggio. While Eleanor returned to Normandy, Joanna and Berengaria continued with Richard to Palestine, stopping for her wedding to Richard in Cyprus. Queen Felice's regency after King Embron's in Guillaume death also mirrors the history of the Normans in Sicily. Adelaide, Count Roger's widow, was regent for two of her sons, first Count Simon and after his death, Count Roger; Queen Marguerite, widow of William I, was regent for William II; and Queen Sibilla, widow of King Tancred, served as regent for her son William III. Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf*, 43. Real events in the Iberian Peninsula may also play a role in the construction of *Guillaume*. In 1158, a servant spirited a young Alfonso — later Alfonso VIII of Castile — into hiding when Alfonso's uncle usurped the throne after his brother's death, mirroring the kidnapping of

Yolanda, and other European and Byzantine nobility, point towards an author and/or scribe with specific knowledge of Yolanda's court and family, events in late twelfth century Italy, and background knowledge of the period's romance genre and its motifs. Yolanda and her family are mentioned in multiple manuscripts and were involved in other translation projects as well. Yolanda was no stranger to working with scribes and providing literary patronage: "Besides the anonymous poet who wrote *Guillaume de Palerne*, we know of two writers who worked under Yolanda's patronage: Nicolas of Senlis who translated the *Pseudo-Turpin* from Latin into French for her, and Peter the Clerk of Beauvais, who had numerous translations of Latin works attributed to him."<sup>72</sup> Yolanda and her family were also connected to other members of the nobility who had romances dedicated to them during the twelfth century, including Chrétien de Troyes. Yolanda's nephew, Baldwin VI, was the son-in-law of Marie de Champagne (to whom *Le Chevalier de la charrette* is dedicated), as well as the nephew of Philip of Alsace (credited by Chrétien for providing the material for his *Perceval*). Isabella Vermandois, Philip's wife, is featured in the famous late-eleventh century treatise, *De amore (The Art of Courtly Love)* by Andreas Capellanus.<sup>73</sup> The manuscript with *Guillaume* contains one other romance as well, *L'Escoufle*, which is also dedicated to Baldwin VI himself.<sup>74</sup>

Looking at the numerous geographical, manuscript, and familial ties between *Guillaume* and Yolanda, a scribe or other literate personage, either traveling with her husband, Hugh's, party in Sicily and Palestine, or hearing of the events there upon the party's return, is perhaps the most

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Guillaume from his uncle's wrath by Alphonse, the Spanish prince, in his werewolf form. Sconduto, "Introduction," in *Guillaume de Palerne: An English Translation*, 6.

<sup>72</sup> Sconduto, "Introduction," in *Guillaume de Palerne: An English Translation*, 4.

<sup>73</sup> Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf*, 35.

<sup>74</sup> Sconduto, "Introduction," in *Guillaume de Palerne: An English Translation*, 3.

likely candidate for the narrative's composition and its dedication to the Count's wife Yolanda.<sup>75</sup> While contemporary history might have provided the author and/or scribe with some of his material, multiple scholars have noted the narrative's other themes and possible sources. Werewolves were part of the Latin, Celtic, Scandinavian,<sup>76</sup> and German traditions, and one theory is that it was the Normans themselves who brought the basic structure of the tale south to Italy. Another possibility is that the Normans of southern Italy composed it there themselves, basing their version on an earlier Latin variation and adding romantic and military elements that reflected twelfth-century courtly love and Norman military cultures, as well as elements of Byzantine romances the Normans encountered in Southern Italy.<sup>77</sup> Charles W. Dunn argues that the basis of the story arose from local legends and stories, rather than traveling south from Normandy, and that the story may have been used as political propaganda by the Southern Norman monarchy.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Sconduto, "Introduction," in *Guillaume de Palerne: An English Translation*, 3. Dunn reminds modern readers that the French verb *faire*, meaning to make or to do, carried a different connotation during the twelfth century: "The verb *faire* implied to the twelfth-century audience not, as it might today, the act of creating from the imagination but rather of composing from already existing material or from known events" (25). When the author credits Yolanda with *Guillaume's* creation at the story's end, "The author of *Guillaume* means, then, 'I translated this book from Latin into French, using existing material (*faire*) and turning it into verse suitable for recitation (*diter*).'" Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf*, 25-26.

<sup>76</sup> According to both McKeehan and Schiff, the nineteenth century French medievalist Gaston Paris emphasized the tale's Scandinavian origins, and its possible transmission from Scandinavia to France with the Norman Vikings, citing that Melinor and Guillaume wear white bear skins, which may signify that they are polar bear skins. In Gaston Paris, "La Sicile dans la Littérature Française," *Romania* 5 (1876): 108-113; McKeehan, "*Guillaume de Palerne*: A Medieval Best Seller," 787-88; Schiff, "Cross-Channel Becomings-Animal," 62.

<sup>77</sup> McKeehan writes: "A Latin *estoire* emanating from Sicily or Southern Italy would naturally exhibit those Byzantine, "Late Greek," or oriental qualities that various scholars have discovered in *Guillaume de Palerne*. Also, if it were produced by or for the Norman ruling class, the emphasis on fighting and the war-like character of the hero, which differentiate it sharply from such Byzantine or oriental romances as *Floris and Blancheflur* would be accounted for." McKeehan, "*Guillaume de Palerne*: A Medieval Best Seller," 790.

<sup>78</sup> Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf*, 121. Dunn also notes the frequent contact and textual exchange between northern Europe and southern Italy: "The use of a Sicilian setting and legend by a writer in the service of a countess from Hainaut may be readily explained by the close contact preserved between France and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies during the period of Norman and Hohenstaufen rule. Crusades, adventurers, diplomats, clerics, and merchants all contributed to the circulation in France, even as far north as Flanders (and Hainaut within the Holy Roman Empire) of oral and written reports concerning the fabulous Kingdom of the South" (125).



At the beginning of *Guillaume de Palerne*, one of the first instances of contact between Sicily and Rome occurs early in the narrative, when the Roman Emperor spots Guillaume in the forest outside Rome, where he has been living with a peasant couple since being kidnapped as a baby. Guillaume's physical appearance is enough to convince the emperor that Guillaume is noble, and the clothes the couple discovered him in confirms his noble, though at this point in the story, still unknown, origins:

“— Sire, fait il, tos les plus biax  
C'onques eüst nus damoisiax,  
Trestous vermax et pains a flor  
Et mainte roie d'or entor.  
Onques nus hom plus biax ne vit.”<sup>79</sup>

While the specific style of garment young Guillaume wears is not explicitly named, it is clear that the fabric is not made entirely of gold stripes, but edged in gold. That these golden bands might be *tiraz* — gold embroidery associate with Fatimid Egypt and Sicily — is not improbable. Shortly thereafter, when introducing Guillaume to his daughter Melinor, the Roman Emperor again describes the clothing Guillaume wore:

“Et comme en la forest gardoit  
La vacherie a .I. pseudome,  
Et com de lui li dist la some,  
Tout si commē il l'ot trouvé  
Et autre si bien acesmé  
De riches dras batus a or,  
Com s'il fust fis roi Alphinor  
Qui sire et rois est de Hongrie,  
Qui si est de tos biens plentive;”<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *Guillaume de Palerne: Roman du XIII siècle*, Introduction, Notes, et Glossaire par Alexandre Micha, Comité de Publication des Textes Littéraires Français (Genève: Librairie Droz S. A., 1990): 519-23.

“- Sire, he says, “truly the most beautiful  
That ever had any young nobleman.  
Entirely vermillion with flowers  
And a great numbers of stripes of gold around it.  
No man ever saw anything more beautiful.”

In *Sconduto, Guillaume de Palerne: An English Translation*, 519-23.

<sup>80</sup> *Guillaume de Palerne*, ed. Micha, 670-78. While the cloth here is described as “beaten with gold,” rather than embroidered, this does necessarily preclude the presence of gold embroidery mentioned in the earlier description.

Much later in the narrative while speaking to his mother, Guillaume remembers the clothing he wore as an infant:

“Car bien li membre del vachier  
Qui le norri et ot si chier,  
De ce qu’il dist l’empereor  
Qu’en riches dras, en noble ator  
L’avoit trové petit el bois...”<sup>81</sup>

The last description does not specifically mention the presence of gold cloth or embroidery, but what is significant is that at three different points throughout the text the clothes Guillaume wore is raised. The emphasis serves two purposes: to signal Guillaume’s innate nobility, and to stress the connections between the medieval Mediterranean kingdoms. Gold cloth, and especially gold cloth embroidered with *tiraz*, outwardly manifests Guillaume’s royal birth and legitimizes his rule over Apulia, Sicily, and Rome. While his princely status may have remained unacknowledged for much of his youth, it could not be entirely forgotten or erased as long as the memory of his clothing remained. The emperor and Melinor recognize the fabrics’ quality, but the peasant couple do so as well. Silk was a marker of status and class; not only did the cloth itself travel from Fatimid Egypt to Norman Sicily, but its cultural and class associations did as well, its significance understood

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“How the boy was in the forest watching  
The cows of a good man,  
How he told him the story  
Of exactly how he had found the child,  
And also dressed well  
In rich cloth beaten with gold,  
Just as if he were the son of King Alphinor  
Who is the sovereign and king of Hungary,  
Who is so very abundantly wealthy.”  
In Sconduto, *Guillaume de Palerne: An English Translation*, 670-78.

<sup>81</sup> *Guillaume de Palerne*, ed. Micha, 5909-13.

“For well does he remember about the cowherd  
Who raised him and was so dear to him,  
And about what he told the emperor  
That in rich clothing, in noble finery  
He had found him in the woods when he was little...”  
In Sconduto, *Guillaume de Palerne: An English Translation*, 5909-1.

beyond the nobility who actually wore silks and other fabrics with *tiraz*. The multiple textual references to these clothes, remind the audience of Guillaume’s right to the throne, as well as the connection forged by these fabrics between Norman Sicily and the rest of the Mediterranean region. The connection between nobility, silk, and other fine fabrics further iterates the Normans’ adoption of “eastern” fabrics to signal their own nobility and right to rule.

It is fine fabric that allows the Queen of Sicily and Apulia to recognize Guillaume and Melinor under their disguise of deer skins — and not only recognize them as people, but as members of the nobility. As Guillaume and Melinor sleep in the queen’s garden, the deer skins they are sewn into shrink in the heat, revealing the fine fabrics they are wearing underneath their disguises:

“Mais les piax qu’il orent vestues  
 Erent si por le chaut sechies  
 Et retraites et restrechies  
 Que contreval par les coustures  
 Lor saillent hors les vesteüres,  
 Lor porpres indes et vermeilles.”<sup>82</sup>

The colors of Guillaume and Melinor’s clothing is telling. Purple is a color typically associated with royalty, as dying fabric purple was difficult and costly.<sup>83</sup> The deeper shades of a color — like indigo for blue and scarlet for red — also involved more organic and inorganic materials to produce

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<sup>82</sup> *Guillaume de Palerne*, ed. Micha, 5094-99.

“Now the skins that they had put on  
 Had dried because of the heat  
 And had shrunk and gotten smaller  
 So that toward the bottom by the stitches  
 Were protruding their garments,  
 Their precious crimson, violet and red fabric.”

In Sconduto, *Guillaume de Palerne: An English Translation*, 5094-99.

<sup>83</sup> According to Margaret Scott, the word purple during the medieval period might not refer to the color, but the fabric, denoting that an item was silk. Margaret Scott, *Fashion in the Middle Ages* (Los Angeles: Paul J. Getty Museum, 2011): 119. In this passage, I think *porpres* can be read either way — Guillaume and Melinor wear clothes that include all three colors, or they are wearing indigo and scarlet colored silk. Either interpretation does not change the fundamental argument.

the dyes, and more time and effort spent treating the fabric.<sup>84</sup> For non-nobility, shades of brown, grey, and other “neutrals,” as well as undyed fabric, were more of their standard fare. However strange it must have been for the queen to discover two people dressed as deer in her garden — even taking into account her prophetic dream — Guillaume and Melinor’s clothing solidifies the idea that fabric not only connotes nobility, but that its circulation around the Mediterranean, creates a cosmopolitan culture that could bridge an east/west divide using luxury goods.

Once inside the palace, Guillaume and Melinor are dressed in clothes reflecting their assumed social status. Melinor is clothed in golden silk and white ermine, and Guillaume wears a silk doublet (under jacket) embroidered with gold thread. The golden silk of Melinor’s outfit, and the *orforis* and *samite* that are part of Guillaume’s clothing do more than reveal their status as nobles. In Old French romances, *orforis* can refer to an entire garment “made from cloth of silk and gold,” or “silk and gold banded decorations that characterizes costly cloth and items of courtly dress,” either embroidered or woven.<sup>85</sup> Samite is a specific kind of silk produced in Syria, usually shot with gold and/or silver threads.<sup>86</sup> By incorporating materials from Islamic kingdoms, such as Egypt and Syria, into their own culture and the texts associated with them, the Normans of southern Italy placed issues like religion and language below the status and authority conferred by expensive silks, *tiraz*, and other fabrics. For the Normans,<sup>87</sup> pragmatism and cosmopolitanism, the circulation of goods and fashion around the Mediterranean, marked the twelfth-century. Guillaume and

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<sup>84</sup> To dye fabric a rich scarlet or crimson color, for example, kermes dye was often used, made by grinding up insects that lived on Oak trees, a very expensive method. Scott, *Fashion in the Middle Ages*, 17 and 119.

<sup>85</sup> Burns, *Sea of Silk*, 51.

<sup>86</sup> “Samit,” *Old French-English Dictionary*, eds. Alan Hindley, Frederick W. Langley, and Brian J. Levy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 543.

<sup>87</sup> The Normans of southern Italy were not alone in wearing silks and other fine fabrics; the French Normans and Anglo-Norman nobility also used silk as a status symbol: “We are told by Odericus Vitalis that the French and Norman nobility who assembled to receive William I on his return from the conquest of England, at Easter 1067, “greatly admired the garments of gold tissue, enriched with bullion, worn by the king and his Anglo-Norman courtiers.” Norris, *Medieval Costume and Fashion*, 65.

Melinor's ties to Rome and Sicily, as well as their luxury textiles, make them participants in *translatio normannitatis*.

Expensive silks from around the Mediterranean were not just used in clothing; they were also used in interiors. At two points in the text, the author goes into detail concerning the silk fabric sat upon by the queen of Sicily and Apulia:

“Desor .I. paile de Bisterne  
Sist la roïne de Palerne;”<sup>88</sup>

The second instance uses the exact same phrasing and description:

“Desor .I. paile de Bisterne  
Sist la roïne de Palerne;”<sup>89</sup>

Why does the author feel the need to specify the type and origin of the fabric, and why repeat the point in the exact same language? Much as Guillaume and Melinor's clothing signals their nobility, the silk and other fabric decorating the queen's palace are a sign of her right to rule. This is especially critical given that for much of the text, she is under siege by the Spanish king and his son for refusing to force her daughter into marriage. This blatant disregard for her lands' sovereignty and the personal desires of her daughter makes it crucial for her to reiterate her power, using the implicit message of silk; her role as a queen and a diplomat is reflected in the very expensive materials that surround her. The descriptions of the palace and its silk furnishing in *Guillaume* — including the Bisterne silk — mirrors the actual palace Norman palace in Palermo.

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<sup>88</sup> *Guillaume de Palerne*, ed. Micha, 7591-92.

“On a rich silken cloth from Bisterne  
The queen of Palermo is seated.”

In Scoduto, *Guillaume de Palerne: An English Translation*, 7591-92.

<sup>89</sup> *Guillaume de Palerne*, ed. Micha, 7975-76.

“On a luxurious silken cloth from Bisterne  
The queen of Palermo seated herself.”

In Scoduto, *Guillaume de Palerne: An English Translation*, 7975-76. While Scoduto's translation in these lines differs from the one earlier, the language of the original Old French text in both passages is the same.

Hugo Falcandus, a twelfth century historian, details the Palermo palace in a 1189 letter, writing: “There are many courtyards recessed round about the Palace, finely adorned by tessellated work and gems, furnished with elegance and regal magnificence, hung on all sides with purple draperies, the work on which was famous for its remarkable sumptuousness.”<sup>90</sup> Both the queen in *Guillaume de Palerne* and the Normans of southern Italy and Sicily relied on the circular movement of luxury goods between east and west to enhance their roles as rulers whose cosmopolitan tastes solidify their role in *translatio normannitatis*.

### **Are We There Yet? Movement Between Europe and the Mediterranean**

One of the most striking aspects of *Guillaume de Palerne* is the sheer number of places the text names and the characters’ almost continuous movement across Europe and the Mediterranean basin. Throughout the romance, Guillaume, Melinor, and other members of the nobility, move from east to west and return to the east, in a continuous cycle of kidnapping, war, marriage, and diplomacy, much like the Normans of southern Italy’s own conquest, trade, and politics. But despite the violence in *Guillaume*, the text defies the notion of *translatio imperii* and instead create a multi-direction *translatio normannitatis* that deftly shifts between east and west without necessarily privileging either location. A list of countries, cities, and borders highlights the diversity of *Guillaume*’s spatial reach. In Italy, the narrative includes references to Sicily, Apulia, Lombardy, and Tuscany, as well as Palermo, Rome, Cefalù, Reggio, Benevento, Brindisi, the Straits of Messina, and the Ardaïne Forest.<sup>91</sup> Spain, Greece, Portugal, Hungary, Germany, and Russia are all mentioned at least once, as are the regions and cities of Saxony, Gasconne, Constantinople, Bisterne, Candis, and Carmant. The geographic scope is immense, and while most

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<sup>90</sup> Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf*, 54-55.

<sup>91</sup> The Ardaïne is located near Rome. Sconduto, *Guillaume de Palerne: An English Translation*, 8191-93.

references are to locations in Italy — where the majority of the story takes place — much of Europe and the Mediterranean is represented as well, as far east as Hungary and Greece, as far north as Russia, and as far west as Portugal and Spain. This list defies the notion of the medieval period as spatially insular and isolated, instead creating a picture of a cosmopolitan and worldly period and place.

Looking at the motivation for much of the movement in the text, it is true that war is responsible for a great deal of it. When the Duke of Saxony revolts against the rule of the Roman Emperor, Rome commands forces from across Europe, including knights from Germany, Lombardy, and Tuscany.<sup>92</sup> During the siege of Palermo, knights from across Spain and Italy fight for their respective sides, and Guillaume leads knights from the cities of Palermo, Reggio, Cefalù, Bisterne, Melant, and Candis. However, much more of the characters' travels are undertaken for peaceful purposes, including diplomacy and marriage. The Spanish king's first wife is from the French region of Gascony<sup>93</sup> and his second wife is from Portugal.<sup>94</sup> Brandin, the prince of Spain, marries Alexandrine, a Count of Lombard's daughter; Alphonse, another Spanish prince, marries Florence, Princess of Apulia and Sicily; and Guillaume, Prince of Apulia and Sicily, marries Melinor, daughter of the Roman Emperor. The series of marriages at the narrative's end are their own form of horizontal cosmopolitanism; the nobles who marry become members of multiple communities, those they were born into and those they have married into. For example, the Spanish Prince is now connected to the noble communities of both Spain and Lombard; inter-cultural and spatial interactions are not just marked by violence and misunderstanding.

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<sup>92</sup> *Guillaume de Palerne*, ed. Micha, 1844-49.

<sup>93</sup> *Guillaume de Palerne*, ed. Micha, 7286-91.

<sup>94</sup> *Guillaume de Palerne*, ed. Micha, 284-85.

Only Greece is not directly involved in the ending's multiple marriages. The son of Greece's Emperor was initially going to marry Melinor, precipitating her and Guillaume's flight from Rome disguised in bear skins. However, at the end of the text, the Greek Emperor and his son are content to let Guillaume and Melinor wed each other, as the Greek contingent stays on as wedding guests before returning to Greece. In his study of the Old French and Middle English versions of *Guillaume*, and the connections between animalism and sovereignty, Randy P. Schiff argues that excising Greece from the marriages allows the western powers to exclude the east. This act:

deliberately intensifies *Guillaume de Palerne*'s exclusionist ethos, removing the very name of the Greek prince and fashioning him into a faceless Eastern other doomed to watch the collapse of his planned marriage to the Western imperial princess. By excluding Eastern nobles from the productive play of becoming-animal, *Guillaume de Palerne* and *William of Palerne* each link their identity-play narratives to the larger cultural project of Western consolidation.<sup>95</sup>

However, I take issue with Schiff's reading of the Greek prince as the anonymous other. At the end of the story, Greece remains an empire, and unlike Apulia and Sicily, is not subsumed into the Roman Empire under Guillaume's leadership. The Greek nobility has also already married outside the east, as the Greek Emperor is the father of Apulia and Palermo's Queen. The Greek army is also on equal footing in terms of military strength as its counterparts from further west, and it is the connection between the Greek Emperor and his daughter that sends him to Palermo to defend her sovereignty in the first place. In multiple places throughout the text, the author cannot even find the words to describe the beauty and luxury of the Greek envoy's clothes. One example is when the Greek Emperor arrives in Italy for his son's wedding to Melinor:

“Monté fu l’emperere griex  
Et avec lui estoit ses fix

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<sup>95</sup> Schiff, “Cross-Channel Becomings-Animal,” 71.



Apareilliés molt richement,  
 Que nus ne set dire comment  
 Lor garnement furent ouvré.  
 Tant furent de grant nobleté  
 Ne le saroit nus hom retraire,  
 Et por ce m'en voel atant taire.”<sup>96</sup>

The embroidery on the Greeks’ clothing surpasses the author’s vocabulary — their clothes are so luxurious as to be beyond description. The Greek Emperor and his son are not figures from the east to be pitied, but wealthy, well-dressed, competent warriors and diplomats participating in the cosmopolitan culture of the twelfth-century Mediterranean.

*Cligès* and *Guillaume de Palerne* are two twelfth-century Old French romances connected to the Norman kingdom in southern Italy — not only through their manuscripts and authors, but in the way the narratives’ negotiate the spaces and materials that move across their pages. Characters like Cligès, Fenice, Guillaume, and Melinor travel through the Mediterranean and Europe, sometimes spurred on by war and violence, but more often by marriage, kinship, diplomacy, and trade. The same circular pathway the characters follow is a hallmark of *translatio normannitatis*, when the knowledge, skills, and luxury goods from east and west came together under the cosmopolitan culture the Normans created during their reign in Italy.

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<sup>96</sup> *Guillaume de Palerne*, ed. Micha, 3433-40.

“The Greek emperor had come up  
 And with him was his son  
 Dressed very richly,  
 In such a way that no one can say how  
 Their garments were embroidered.  
 They were of such great nobility  
 That no man would be able to recount it,  
 And because of this I will be silent.”

In Sconduto, *Guillaume de Palerne: An English Translation*, 3433-40.

### CHAPTER THREE: THE NORMANS AND THE THINGS THEY BUILT

When walking into the Cappella Palatina, at first all one can make out is a dim, golden glow. Once the eyes adjust, it is hard for them to settle on any one place or object — the intricacy of the space is overwhelming: there is the elevated throne platform, and the mosaics stretching up to the ceiling above it. The mosaics fill the entire apse and the walls of the nave, depicting scenes from the Bible and religious figures. The floor is covered with tiles arranged in intricate geometric patterns, which lead the eyes towards the front of the church and the altar, above which a large mosaic of Christ gazes down. Finally, there is the nave's ceiling and its wooden *muqarnas*, painted wood that resembles the stalactites of a cave combined with the honeycomb of a bee hive. This is the Cappella Palatina, the chapel attached to the Normans' palace in Palermo, Sicily. Begun by Roger II in the twelfth century, it incorporates Byzantine and Islamic design and architectural elements, including the mosaics' style and substance, the overall floorplan, and the wooden ceiling. The building physically manifests the idea of *translatio normannitatis* that the Normans' cosmopolitan culture helped to create, one that could transition between different communities and artistic registers. The Cappella Palatina, along with the other cathedrals and churches built by the Normans in southern Italy during the twelfth-century, visually represented the Normans' embrace of multiple cultures and their art forms.

This chapter focuses on the Cappella Palatina. The Norman kingdom in southern Italy and Sicily only lasted briefly (approximately 1130 - 1198), but the number of ambitious religious structures built during that time is impressive. In part, this construction was a show of dominance; these large, ornate and highly decorated buildings established the Norman kingdom and the

legitimacy of its line. The need to justify their kingship in Sicily and Southern Italy was a major motivation for Roger II and his descendants to incorporate the art and architecture of the kingdoms who had once controlled the region, and whose cultures still held power and caché in their own right. Sicily had belonged to the Byzantines and Arabs before the Normans took control, but there was no genuine historical basis for Norman kingship in Italy. Anglo-Norman England presented a different scenario. When William the Conqueror invaded England in 1066, the invasion was a massive and all-encompassing takeover, decided in a single battle, and William took over a country with relatively stable political and geographic boundaries.<sup>1</sup> He largely replaced Anglo-Saxons serving in the church, administration, and government with members of the Norman nobility.<sup>2</sup> But Sicily and Southern Italy had never been a completely unified country even before the Normans – Sicily, Apulia, Calabria, Naples, Capua, and Amalfi had changed hands between kingdoms and nobles, lands and leaders added and subtracted.<sup>3</sup> The Normans' presence in southern Italy

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<sup>1</sup> It may be argued that William had a legitimate claim to the English throne, making the Norman conquest of England in 1066 less of a conquest and more of a rightful reclaiming. Even before 1066, there were strong connections between England and Normandy. Edward the Confessor was raised in the Norman court, and his mother Emma was Norman. Christopher Daniell, *From Norman Conquest to Magna Carta: England 1066-1215* (New York: Routledge, 2003): 1. In contrast, the Normans in southern Italy had no ties to the land or its people besides their services as mercenaries. But William's claim to the throne is less straightforward than it appears. William claimed King Edward I promised the throne to him in 1051, and a claim that English lord Harold Godwine promised to honor. However, Harold claimed that on Edward's deathbed, he appointed Harold as his heir. To further complicate the picture, Harald Hardrada of Norway also claimed he was the legitimate ruler of England. Christopher Daniell argues that the conflicting claims between William and Harold were based on differing ideas of oath giving. While Norman culture viewed an oath once given as unbreakable, for Anglo-Saxons, a death-bed oath superseded any previously given promises: "Harold, using Anglo-Saxon tradition, and William, using Norman tradition, each believed they had been legally promised the crown." Daniell, *From Norman Conquest to Magna Carta*, 1-3. That William's mother was not married to his father is sometimes cited as another reason for doubting his right to inherit England's throne. However, as David Bates points out, it was not uncommon in the eleventh century Normandy for children born outside of legal, Christian marriages to be given family names, connecting them to their aristocratic roots, as well as inheriting family property. David Bates, *William the Conqueror* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016): 20-21. William's status as "the Bastard" did not impinge on his aristocratic lineage and rights, any more than the Hauteville's status as minor Norman nobles impinged on their rise to power in Italy.

<sup>2</sup> But like the revolts by nobles against the Norman monarchy in Sicily, William also faced rebellion from Anglo-Saxon nobles, particularly in the north. William's extreme and violent response became known as the "Harrying of the North." Daniell, *From Norman Conquest to Magna Carta*, 14.

<sup>3</sup> The fighting between groups in the region continued under the Normans. Both the Papacy and the Norman nobles helped to drive conflict in southern Italy during the Normans' consolidation of power in the region, as well as once the Norman monarchy was established. In 1127, Pope Honorius II fermented rebellion in Apulia, and according to the

developed gradually, and their rise to power was a slow burn that simmered over the course of thirty years. The Normans frequently used the expertise and knowledge of the area's previous administrations, while still maintaining their Latin, Christian, and Northern European roots. For example, introducing aspects of Normandy's feudal system to Sicily gave the Normans control of the islands' agricultural production and a way to reward their loyal followers;<sup>4</sup> the financial system, however, was largely modeled on one set up by the previous Islamic rulers of Sicily and Fatimid

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chronicler Alexander of Telese, convinced several nobles to join the revolt, including, "Grimoald, prince of Bari, Geoffrey, count of Andria, Tancred of Conversano, and Roger, count of Oria...together with Robert of Capua and Alife." Donald Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 44. Alex Keller sums it up thusly: "The Norman monarchy had never really won the support of the most influential class, the Norman barons, who accepted no loyalty beyond their own families — if that — and resented the upstart Hautevilles, their obscure upstart advisers, and the professional officials through whom they ruled. With the end of the Kingdom, and of the Court of Palermo, there was an end to patronage, and to the intellectual life and artistic work of the capital." Alex Keller, "The Normans in Sicily," *History Today* 6, no. 4 (1956): 243. However, in the context of other twelfth century monarchs, the Norman monarchy's contentious relationship with their nobility is not dissimilar to other the relationship between nobles and monarchies during this period. For example, the conflict between Stephen and Matilda of England divided nobles on both sides of the channel during the first half of the twelfth century.

<sup>4</sup> Chapter One includes a discussion of feudalism and how it evolved and functioned in Normandy, including why it may have driven some nobles from Normandy and surrounding areas to seek their fortunes in Italy. The kind of lordship and land management practices (for the sake of brevity, feudalism) that the Normans brought with them was more complicated than most scholars acknowledge. Because the Normans "nobles did not normally hold land in fief in Normandy and the later ideas about feudal tenure had not yet been worked out, they could hardly have brought anything like what historians call the concepts of vassalage and the fief." Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994): 240. However, as Reynolds claims, when nobles did receive lands — from grants or outright conquest — the rights they exercised over those lands mirrored the rights nobles possessed in Normandy: It seems more probable that the lands and lordships that the more important Normans secured, whether by conquest or grant or a combination of the two, were generally assumed to be the kind of hereditary full property that nobles normally held at home in Normandy." Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, 241. The church and papacy also played a role in the feudalism in Italy under the Normans. Papal recognition of the Norman monarchy in Italy was vital for its survival, and Robert Guiscard and his heirs were invested with land by the papacy throughout the late eleventh and twelfth centuries; however, accepting these lands did not mean that Robert and later Norman monarchs thought of these lands as church property. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, 210. Much like the rights the Norman nobles attributed to the land they received from the monarchy, the monarchy attributed to the lands they received from the church. For the lands of Sicily's Muslim inhabitants, they now found themselves renting land from the Latin church; the Normans' creation of monasteries and churches — especially their large numbers and wealth — meant that Muslims who lived in Sicily had their land "granted from the comital — later crown — demesne to churches along with the estates on which they lived." Alex Metcalfe, *The Muslims of Medieval Italy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009): 114. In this sense, the Normans brought the practice of feudalism — as it concerns a land held by relatively the crown, nobility, or churches rented to those underneath them — south with them to Sicily. But the churches and monasteries in Sicily, while large in numbers and wealth, were small in size and the sheer number of them prevented the concentration of power that similar institutions had in Normandy, according to Donald Matthew. In Sicily, "The basis of the kingdom's prosperity was peasant cereal cultivation rather than organized seigniorial exploitation." The majority of monasteries relied on local, small parcels of land, and even larger monasteries, while they might have property around the island, those individual estates themselves were not large. Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, 78-79.

Egypt, called the *diwān*.<sup>5</sup> The Norman monarchy in southern Italy and Sicily did not create a classless society.<sup>6</sup> But the Normans exposure to, and willingness to work with, other cultures, religions, and ethnicities besides their own, did make their kingship unique during the twelfth century and the medieval period overall.<sup>7</sup>

### **Normans and Architecture: An Overview**

Concerning Norman-Sicilian art in general, Oleg Graber writes, “They [the arts] do not form an eclectic combination of forms from different sources but a genuine entity, illustrating not a clash of civilizations, to use an abominable, recently coined, expression, but a truly operating manipulation and enjoyment of commonly accepted forms.”<sup>8</sup> For example, by depicting himself being crowned by Christ, while wearing the robes of a Byzantine Emperor, Roger II used a Byzantine mosaic style to associate his own rule with that of the still powerful — and much longer established — Byzantine empire.<sup>9</sup> In being crowned directly by Christ, Roger II becomes divinely

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<sup>5</sup> Metcalfe, *The Muslims of Medieval Italy*, 145.

<sup>6</sup> One of the clearest examples of this is the fate of Philip of Mahdia, an admiral of the fleet who had converted to Christianity and was accused of secretly practicing Islam. Towards the end of Roger II’s reign, the islands European population increased, and with it came a decrease in tolerance, especially towards Muslims, and Mahdia’s death is part of this larger trend: “The probable truth of Philip’s case is that he was sacrificed by Roger in a show trial to protect the succession of his son William. Roger was well aware of William’s shortcomings and with the baron gaining in strength he could see dangers ahead. The barons and the Church were united in their anti-Muslim stance and probably demanded some high-profile, pro-Christian sign from Roger.” Dummett, *Palermo*, 45.

<sup>7</sup> Part of this openness may be a matter of birth. Count Roger was the only ruler who had been to Normandy; while later monarchs were aware of their northern roots, and there were strong connections between Sicily, Normandy, and Anglo-Norman England. Roger II and his sons were all born and lived in Sicily and Southern Italy; in particular, William II “had been brought up in a Muslim environment and his Arabic, spoken and written, was fluent.” Dummett, *Palermo*, 53. Growing up surrounded by multiple cultures and religions “resulted in a political orientation and manner of rule that was decidedly non-European” and a monarchy that incorporated aspects of European feudalism, an Islamic accounting system, and a Byzantine naval commander (George of Antioch). Karen C. Britt, “Roger II of Sicily: Rex, Basileus, and Khalif? Identity, Politics, and Propaganda in the Cappella Palatine,” *Mediterranean Studies* 16 (2007): 22.

<sup>8</sup> Oleg Grabar, *Islamic Visual Culture, 1100-1800*, Constructing the Study of Islamic Art, vol. 2 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006): 377.

<sup>9</sup> Prose, *Sicilian Odyssey*, 72.

sanctioned as a ruler, and this imagery allows him II to create a bulwark against detractors who would argue against the Normans' presence in southern Italy and Sicily.<sup>10</sup>

The churches and cathedrals of Norman Sicily were truly amalgamations of architectural styles and art forms, constructed by craftsman and materials from across Europe and the Mediterranean. As modes of representation deliberately chosen by Roger II and his heirs, these structures incorporated the islands' older visual traditions with those the Normans brought with them from the north.<sup>11</sup> The Normans in southern Italy and Sicily used artisans and builders from around the Mediterranean and Europe to complete many of their churches and cathedrals, bringing in "artists, craftsmen and scholars from outside the island — mosaicists from Byzantium, scribes from Fatimid Egypt, silk weavers from Byzantium Greece, porphyry-workers from Rome, sculptors from the Italian mainland and southern France...."<sup>12</sup> However, the Normans were not the only rulers who recruited craftsmen from other geographic areas and cultures. Expensive financial and physically demanding projects, large churches and cathedrals had to bring multiple workers and their skills to bear if these momentous structures were ever to be completed. During the construction of Westminster Cathedral under England's Henry II, skilled labor and materials from across continental Europe and beyond were involved. The timbers used to roof the structure reveal

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<sup>10</sup> This is not to say that the empires and caliphates whose architecture Roger II used were universally viewed as legitimate or accepted. The Latin church viewed their Eastern brethren as not quite Christian, or Christian but not in the correct manner, and the Pope had no tolerance for Islam. Even within Islam itself, the Abbasid (centered in Baghdad) and Umayyad (in Spain) caliphates viewed each other, as well the Fatimids (from Egypt) as illegitimate. But these rulers and their empires had still been in existence longer than Norman Sicily, and were still considered forces to be reckoned with.

<sup>11</sup> "We can only assume that both craftsmen and designs were sought out from the indigenous cultures in which they were produced and imported into Sicily by the king for the express purpose of creating something new, which was nothing less than the visual culture of his kingdom, which itself was something new." William Tronzo, "Byzantine Court Culture from the Point of View of Norman Sicily: The Case of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997): 113.

<sup>12</sup> Jeremy Johns, "Muslim Artists and Christian Models in the Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina," in *Romanesque and the Mediterranean: Patterns of Exchange Across the Latin, Greek, and Islamic Worlds c.1000-c.1250*, eds. Rosa Bacila and John McNeill (New York: Routledge, 2015): 64.

markings “in both Roman and Arabic numerals...Indeed, Europe’s Gothic cathedrals have been called ‘laboratories’ and sites of ‘technological transfer.’ They were enormous temporary communities of diverse practice.”<sup>13</sup> If both Roman and Arabic numerals were used to label building materials, it stands to reason that craftsmen of the Islamic faith, as well as Christians, worked to build what is now thought of as the most English of cathedrals.<sup>14</sup> In this laboratory of construction, cultures had to mix and communicate to accomplish their goal, and while these multicultural laboratories might be temporary, once a craftsman’s role was completed and he returned home, he brought with him not only the new knowledge he gained, but a new awareness of the world and the people beyond his own village, city or town, beyond his race, ethnicity, and religion: cathedrals created diverse practices that were both literal and figurative. This kind of diversity and inter-cultural cooperation is not commonly associated with the medieval period, but these buildings served as “powerful loci of social transformation.”<sup>15</sup> Their construction not only brought together heterogeneous groups of workers, the buildings themselves could be interpreted and appreciated without traditional literacy.

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<sup>13</sup> Spike Bucklow, *The Riddle of the Image: The Secret Science of Medieval Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014): 153. While Bucklow is describing Gothic cathedrals, his ideas also apply to the earlier Romanesque style, whose construction also depended on the skills of workers from multiple areas. Arising in the tenth century, Romanesque built upon the style of Roman architecture, especially its use of stone. William W. Clark, *Medieval Cathedrals* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006): 24. The Normans helped facilitated the transfer of Romanesque from England south the Italy: “...there was an undeniable deepening of the ties between southern Italy and the artistic culture of Europe north of the Alps, where Romanesque originated, and this occurred during the Norman period.” Cilento and Vanoli, eds., *Arabs and Normans in Sicily*, 200.

<sup>14</sup> Connections exist between Norman Sicily’s religious architecture and that of England: “Points of similarity have even been noticed between the surviving Norman cathedrals of Sicily and England. The length of the naves, as at Palermo, the frontal towers of Cefalù, and certain decorative details in the arcading and grouping of capitals can all be matched by English examples. These may be most simply explained as the result of English craftsmen coming to work in the island, though not in gangs since the survival of local building traditions also points to the use of local labourers.” Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, 127. Matthew does not list what these English examples are.

<sup>15</sup> David Turnball, “The Ad Hoc Collective Work of Building Gothic Cathedrals with Templates, String, and Geometry,” *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 18, no. 3 (1993): 322.

One of the main artistic sources for the Normans' borrowing was the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt. Ismaili Shi'is, they ruled North Africa and Egypt between 909 and 1171.<sup>16</sup> Rising to power during the tenth century in Ifriqiya (modern day Tunisia and Algeria) when they allied themselves with Berber tribes, in 973 the Fatimid made Cairo their permanent capital.<sup>17</sup> Though the Fatimid dynasty was relatively short-lived, its architecture and artwork is unique to Islamic culture, in that it depicts figures *and* geometric patterns and designs.<sup>18</sup> Jonathan M. Bloom writes:

In addition to this wide range of media, Fatimid art is notable because many works show a predilection for lively, often naturalistic figural ornament depicting humans and animals engaged in a variety of activities, from wrestling to drinking, hunting to riding. The widespread use of figural ornament, normally rare in Islamic art, has made Fatimid art particularly popular in the West and scholars have spilled a great deal of ink trying to explain what exactly these figures are doing and what they mean.<sup>19</sup>

These figures appear in a variety of media — including wood, ivory, ceramics, and paintings — and on a variety of structures, such as mosques and palaces. The Fatimid influence on Norman Italy in terms of specific features and examples will be discussed in greater detail later on in this chapter.

In addition to architecture, there are other important connections between east and west the Normans in southern Italy and Sicily facilitated. Fatimid ruler al-Hafiz and Roger II exchanged letters and gifts with each other, including a parasol al-Hafiz gave Roger II. Based on epistolary evidence, Roger II reciprocated this gesture, sending gifts to al-Hafiz in return, but as to what

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<sup>16</sup> Ismaili Shi'is claim they descend from Fatima, Muhammad's daughter. The Fatimid rulers considered other dynasties, such as the Abbasid's in Baghdad and the Umayyad in Spain, as illegitimate. Bloom, *Arts of the City Virtuous*, 1.

<sup>17</sup> Bloom, *Arts of the City Virtuous*, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Figures in Islamic art, especially images of the Prophet, are thought to violate the prohibition against idols.

<sup>19</sup> Bloom, *Arts of the City Virtuous*, 4.



Roger II gave to him, the documents do not state.<sup>20</sup> Silk was another commodity that tied Norman Italy with Islamic, Byzantine, and other European kingdoms: “One trans-Mediterranean network of sea routes joined Constantinople, cities in the Levant, and Alexandria with Italy beginning in the eleventh century. Another set of east-west trade routes linked Egypt to Muslim Spain via Muslim domains in Tunisia and Sicily as early as the tenth century. Although most of that silk moved eastward from al-Andalus, some was transported north into Languedoc and France.”<sup>21</sup> Production of silk in Sicily carried on under the Normans in Sicily, and Roger II went so far in 1177 as to kidnap silk workers from the cities of Corinth and Thebes, bringing them back to work in Sicily’s silk factories.<sup>22</sup> One of the most famous examples of silk produced under the Normans’ reign is the mantle of Roger II.<sup>23</sup> The mantle is a vibrant crimson, with a gold geometric pattern along the straight edge and an inscription in golden Arabic script along the curve.<sup>24</sup> A palm tree, also in gold, is in the center of the robe; on both sides of the tree is a figure of a lion crushing a camel.<sup>25</sup> Made from red samite, the type of fabric and dye both point toward the fabric’s origins in

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<sup>20</sup> The parasol’s exchange is found in records left by thirteenth century historian Ibn Hammad. Bloom, *Arts of the City Virtuous*, 190. The exchange of gifts between rulers in Fatimid Egypt and other monarchs was not unknown, as Paula Sanders elaborates: “Like other Islamic rulers, the Fatimids honored officials and visitors to their courts with luxury garments, and they often exchanged precious textiles with other rulers in elaborate reciprocal gift-giving.” Paula Sanders, “Robes and Honor in Fatimid Egypt,” in *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. Stewart Gordon (New York: Palgrave, 2001): 228. For more on the correspondence between al-Hafiz and Roger II, see Jeremy Johns, *The Norman Kings of Sicily and the Fatimid Caliphate*, Anglo-Norman Studies XV (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1993): 145-47.

<sup>21</sup> Burns, *Sea of Silk*, 27.

<sup>22</sup> Burns, *Sea of Silk*, 43.

<sup>23</sup> A mantle is a semi-circular cloak (though it can also be rectangular in shape) that fastens over shoulder. Norris, *Medieval Costume and Fashion*, 21.

<sup>24</sup> The Arabic reads: “This is what was made in the royal *khizanah* (treasury or household), full of the happiness, honor, good fortune, perfection, long life, profit, welcome, prosperity, generosity, splendor, glory, perfection, realization of aspirations and hopes, of delights of days and nights, without end or modification, with might, care, sponsorship, protection, happiness, well-being, triumph, and sufficiency. In Palermo in the year 528 [1133-34].” William Tronzo, “The Mantle of Roger II of Sicily,” In *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. Stewart Gordon (New York: Palgrave, 2001): 243. The inscription does repeat the word ‘perfection’ twice, according to Tronzo’s translation.

<sup>25</sup> There are multiple interpretations for the mantle’s symbolism. William Tronzo argues that the mantle is a sign of Roger II’s power over the Norman Sicily, represented by the lion, while the camel is “the ignoble,” a power that is maintained with the help of the church. Tronzo, “The Mantle of Roger II of Sicily,” 250. Eva R. Hoffman also sees

the Byzantine Empire.<sup>26</sup> The gold and silk fabrics that were part of the mantle's inner lining also indicate the ties between Fatimid silk and the silk workshops in Palermo, according to E. Jane Burns.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to silk and other textiles, pottery was also traded in the medieval Mediterranean, involving kingdoms from around the sea. Traces of *bacini* (pottery incorporated into a wall) were most likely bought from markets in Cairo, and have been found all over Italy, including the cities of Amalfi, Genoa, Pisa, Lucca, Venice, Salerno, Ravello, Rome, and Bologna, as well as the islands of Sicily and Sardinia: clearly there was extensive trade between Fatimid Egypt and the Italian peninsula in cloth and other goods.<sup>28</sup> The crusades also played a role in dispersing items from the Fatimid dynasty around the Mediterranean and north into Europe. For example, a Fatimid

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an element of domination in the mantle's imagery, one that is consistent with other imagery produced by the Normans in Sicily: "Such expropriation finds parallels in other royal Norman works and fits into the overall pattern of Roger's patronage, where Islamic and Byzantine visual motifs were used to glorify the Norman dynasty and the imperial self-image, while at the same time disempowering Islamic and Byzantine hegemony." Eva R. Hoffman, "Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century," *Art History* 24, no. 1 (2001): 30. While I agree that the Norman monarchy borrowed images of power and kingship from Byzantine and Islamic cultures, I do not think the Normans use resulted in the kind of domination and disempowerment Hoffman claims and that Tronzo alludes to. Just because an image is borrowed by one culture from another does not mean the image loses its meaning or its power in the original culture. The Normans' unique blending of images from both Islamic and Byzantine cultures both reference the visuals' original meanings and creates new ones: they create a kingdom that is neither purely European, Byzantine, or Islamic.

<sup>26</sup> Burns, *Sea of Silk*, 43. Samite is a shiny silk fabric and the red dye came from the insects known as kermes; found on oak trees, the dead insects are crushed to make an expensive red dye. Scott, *Fashion in the Middle Ages*, 119. The mantle traveled north, and became the Holy Roman Empire's coronation robe in the sixteenth century. Hugh Honour and John Fleming, *The Visual Arts: A History*, sixth ed. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, 2002): 364.

<sup>27</sup> Burns, *Sea of Silk*, 52.

<sup>28</sup> Bloom, *Arts of the City Virtuous*, 193. *Bacini* could be incorporated into more than just walls, and was up and down the Italian coast during eleventh through thirteenth centuries. One example is found in the church of San Giovanni del Toro in Ravello, Italy, built in the late eleventh century. Its pulpit, known as the Bove family pulpit, and created during the thirteenth century, includes ceramic decorations with ceramic pieces from the Middle East (Iran) and the Islamic Mediterranean (Syria and Egypt), which were made during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Jill Caskey, *Art and Patronage in the Medieval Mediterranean: Merchant Culture in the Region of Amalfi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 121-24. The pulpit not only includes smaller pieces, but larger chunks with clearly legible Arabic writing. Caskey, *Art and Patronage in the Medieval Mediterranean*, 158-59. Caskey argues that reusing Islamic ceramics in Christian churches is not simple appropriation: "Here the attractive products of Islamic craftsmen have been neutralized... But they are not only trophic. Their rendered texts replicate visually the words of the priest reading scripture behind them, and in the case of the *al-baraka* inscription [the word means 'blessing' in Arabic], the meaning of the Arabic is consonant with the sacred Latin utterances of the mass." Caskey, *Art and Patronage in the Medieval Mediterranean*, 163-64. Using *bacini* from multiple Islamic countries, the Bove family pulpit visually represents the co-habitation of the Christian and Islamic faiths within sacred structures.

ewer made from rock crystal came into the possession of Abbot Suger, a key figure in constructing the gothic church of St. Denis outside Paris. The ewer had been in Roger II's possession before he gifted it to Count Thibaut, who in turn passed the vessel on to Suger.<sup>29</sup> The veil of St. Anne is another examples of an object moving between east and west because of crusading. The veil — decorated with medallions, kufic inscriptions, birds, and sphinxes — ended up in the Cathedral of Apt in Provence, France, probably working its way north during the first crusade.<sup>30</sup> The base of the veil is linen, with multiple bands of gold and silk (*tiraz*), and includes the names of two imams.<sup>31</sup> And while the veil was produced in Fatimid Egypt and was supposed to be used as an *abā* (a long robe or mantel worn as an outer garment), it instead became an object of veneration for Latin Christians.<sup>32</sup> The movement of pottery and glass, religious artifacts and textiles, between Fatimid Egypt, the Byzantine Empire, Italy, and northern Europe argues for the presence of multiple connections and trade routes between Islamic, Greek, and Latin cultures during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The Normans of southern Italy used the ties created by trading objects like these, and by bringing in the craftsmen who made them when constructing their own churches and palaces. This blend of materials and workers created buildings that reflected their reliance on *translatio normannitatis* and the cosmopolitan culture it created.

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<sup>29</sup> Bloom, *Arts of the City Virtuous*, 195. Whether the rock crystal vase that ended up with Abbot Suger was produced in Norman Sicily by Byzantine or Islamic artisans or whether Roger II imported it from the Islamic or Byzantine empires is debatable. Jeremy Johns and Elise Monrero argue that, "If rock crystal was indeed carved in Norman Sicily then the technology must have been imported by expert craftsmen, probably from Fatimid Egypt" (5). This makes sense, given that the Norman monarchs utilized the skills of workers from Byzantium, France, Italy, and North Africa. Jeremy Johns and Elise Morero, "The Diffusion of Rock Crystal Carving Techniques in the Fatimid Mediterranean," conference paper, *Beyond the Westerns Mediterranean: Materials, Techniques and Artistic Production* (London: The Courtauld Institute of Art, 20 Apr. 2013): 5.

<sup>30</sup> The lords Simiane and the Bishop of Apt are the likely the men who brought the veil back to Apt, as all three were involved in the first crusade. Janet Snyder, "Cloth from the Promised Land: Appropriated Islamic *Tiraz* in Twelfth-Century French Sculpture," in *Medieval Fabrications: Dress, Textiles, Clothwork, and Other Cultural Imaginings*. ed. Jane E. Burns (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004): 154.

<sup>31</sup> The names of the imams, al-Musta 'li and al-Afdal, help date the veils production to around 1096-1097. Bloom, *Arts of the City Virtuous*, 160.

<sup>32</sup> Bloom, *Arts of the City Virtuous*, 160.

## The Cappella Palatina

One of the most famous Norman structures is the Cappella Palatina. Begun by Roger II and consecrated in 1140, it was part of the Norman palace. Located in the Albergheria district of Palermo, the Norman's capital, the palace complex was chosen for its position at a more defensible, elevated location in the city. Some scholars also claim that the foundations of an older, Arab fortress were located there and may have been incorporated into the structure.<sup>33</sup> The chapel is currently part of a larger complex that houses government offices and spaces, as well as a museum. Approaching the structure from the north today, it is hard to imagine what the original palace looked like during the Norman period, or how the Cappella would have fit into the building's layout.<sup>34</sup> Luckily, a good portion of the Cappella itself remains as it was during the twelfth-century, with some notable exceptions.<sup>35</sup> Before diving into a detailed analysis of the space and its relationship to Norman cosmopolitanism, a brief description of the chapel's overall layout will be helpful.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Hiroshi Takayama, "Central Power and Multi-Cultural Elements at the Norman Court of Sicily," *Mediterranean Studies* 12 (2003): 7; Alessandro Vicenzi, ed. *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo* [*The Palatine Chapel in Palermo*], trans. Lyn Minty, *Mirabilia Italiae Guide* (Trento: Franco Cosimo Panini, 2011): 14.

<sup>34</sup> Dummett, *Palermo, City of Kings*, 162-63.

<sup>35</sup> Some of the mosaics have re-stored or re-touched, parts of the ceiling above the nave's aisles has been re-decorated, and certain items, such as the paschal candle, were likely added at a later date. The biggest controversy though concerns the north wall, and whether or not it held a viewing balcony for the king, allowing him to move from the palace directly to the chapel and view the mass from above.

<sup>36</sup> Several definitions of common architectural features will help illuminate the chapel's description. The main portion of the church is the **nave**; surrounded by the church's aisles, it is where the congregation gathers. The **chancel** is typically located at the church's eastern end, where the mass takes place, and the choir is a portion of the chancel where the service is actually performed. The **apse** is a semi-circular ending on a building, and can also be the chancel and/or choir. Honour and Fleming, *The Visual Arts*, 920-27. There multiple types of **vault** (barrel, cross-vaults, ribs, dome, etc.), but at its most basic, vaulting is "A masonry roof or ceiling constructed on the principle of the arch." Honour and Fleming, *The Visual Arts*, 932. A **transept** is essentially the arms of the church, at a ninety-degree angle from the nave and the choir. Will Pryce, *World Architecture: The Masterworks* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2008): 318 (Glossary).

Stepping through one of two doors at the chapel's western end, one looks down a large, central nave (Image 1).<sup>37</sup> Based on the location of the throne platform, the mosaic program, and the tile patterns on the floor, William Tronzo argues that the chapel entrance changed over time:

the change in the throne platform involved a change in the entrance pattern of the chapel, with an emphasis now on the west and on symmetry — on what one must assume were parallel movements through the two doors of the narthex into the aisles alongside the throne. There is good reason to believe, however, that the original main entrance into the chapel was at the far west end of the south aisle. Not only is this even today the largest doorway into the chapel, it was probably the only door that would have been reached via a monumental public staircase, as the archeological investigation of the architect Valenti has shown. Presumably one entered the palace itself from the south, which is where the public portion of the edifice is believed to have been, proceeded into a large court and then via the monumental stair, into the chapel....<sup>38</sup>

Slobodan Ćurčić also comments at length upon the changes made to the chapel's exterior after the twelfth century. When seen from the courtyard of the palace during the twelfth century, the original two-story chapel façade “would have corresponded to that of a late antique or a Byzantine palace façade, with a series of open arcades supported on a relatively solid ground floor;” However, the addition of a “three-storied late Renaissance Cortile ‘Maqueda’ constructed in 1600” currently masks much of the original exterior design and layout.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Slobodan Ćurčić, “Some Palatine Aspects of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers: Studies on Art and Archeology in Honor of Ernst Kitzinger on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday* 41 (1987): 129.

<sup>38</sup> William Tronzo, “The Medieval Object-Enigma and the Problem of the Cappella Palatine in Palermo,” *Word and Image* 9, no. 3 (1993): 223. Despite the changes to the Cappella's entrances, the overall effect of the building's layout, mosaics, tiled floors, and ceiling remain undiminished.

<sup>39</sup> Ćurčić, “Some Palatine Aspects of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo,” 126.

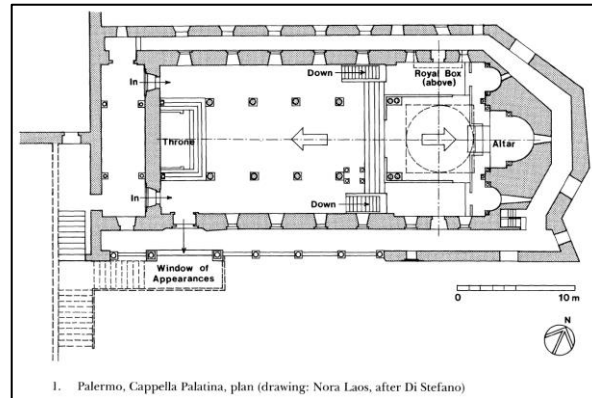


Figure 3: Overview of the Cappella Palatina<sup>40</sup>

Two aisles run along either side of the nave, each aisle separated from the nave by four columns.<sup>41</sup> Walking east/northeast down the length of the nave brings one to the choir and the main apse. Four stairs lead from the nave up to the choir, and several additional stairs lead from choir into the apse. On the northern wall of the choir area is the location where the king's balcony overlooked the chapel. Where the choir meets the nave on the right hand side of the chapel stands an elevated lectern (ambo), with a large, intricately carved paschal candelabrum immediately to the lectern's left.<sup>42</sup> Before the choir on either side of the nave, staircases lead down to a pseudo-crypt.<sup>43</sup> Standing at the foot of the choir looking back down the nave to the west, a throne platform lies on the western wall between the two doors, a large mosaic of Christ *Pantocrator* (Christ as all powerful and mighty) dominates the wall above and behind; five stairs lead up from the floor of the nave to the throne platform.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Ćurčić, "Some Palatine Aspects of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo," 129.

<sup>41</sup> Cilento and Vanoli, eds., *Arabs and Normans in Sicily*, 258.

<sup>42</sup> Both the lectern and the candelabrum were added after the twelfth-century, and as such, will not be discussed in detail.

<sup>43</sup> Since the crypt is not technically below ground level but merely underneath the church itself, it is referred to as pseudo.

<sup>44</sup> During the reign of Roger II, the mosaic of Christ, Peter, and Paul directly behind and above the throne platform was not there; this was added later in the twelfth-century under William I and William II. William Tronzo also notes that, "The great slabs of marble and porphyry that now make up the throne sides came from the chancel barrier in the seventeenth century....". Tronzo, "Byzantine Court Culture from the Point of View of Norman Sicily," 110.

The chapel's floors are covered in tilework, intricate patterns of squares and rectangles stretching down the two aisles, the nave, and into the choir. Within these larger shapes are complicated and varying geometric designs and animals: stars, squares, rectangles, circles, and diamonds that overlap and interlock. The nave's ceiling consists of a series of *muqarnas*, wooden shapes resembling stalactites and honeycombs, painted with secular images and kufic script. The walls of the chapel are covered with mosaics; the nave's mosaics' display scenes from the Bible, while around the altar and apse are scenes that specifically depict Jesus' life, as well as other saints and religious figures.<sup>45</sup> There are three more mosaics of Christ *Pantocrator* in the Cappella, one behind the altar, one inside the apses' dome, and one in the south transept.

### The Mosaics

The mosaics of the Cappella are largely Byzantine in their style and layout, though there are important ways in which they differ from those in a Latin church. Christ *Pantocrator* ("all powerful" in the Greek language), an image which originates in Byzantine churches during the sixth and seventh centuries,<sup>46</sup> appears four times in the Cappella: twice in the apse, once in chapel's south transept, and once above the throne platform.<sup>47</sup> The nave of the Cappella features scenes

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<sup>45</sup> Once again, the mosaics along the nave's wall were added under William I and William II. The chapel walls during Roger II's day may have had some kind of "ornamental decoration, and then on top of that, tapestries, at least on special occasions." Tronzo, "Byzantine Court Culture from the Point of View of Norman Sicily," 110.

<sup>46</sup> Dummett, *Palermo, City of Kings*, 161.

<sup>47</sup> Donald Matthew calls attention to the Byzantine emperor's use of the *Pantocrator* and the connection between the mosaics of Norman Sicily and Greek craftsmen: "It is also worth drawing attention to the foundation at Constantinople in 1136 of a great new church dedicated to the Pantocrator by the emperor John Comnenus and his wife, where John was also buried in 1143. This church had a great mosaic of the Pantocrator above the entry, and the mosaicists working in Sicily in the 1140s would have known this and probably used it as a model...The earliest datable mosaics put up for Roger are not those of Cefalù but those in the cupola of the palace chapel, dated 1143 by a Greek inscription which gives the year in Greek style, 6651. The decoration of a cupola with mosaic follows a well-established tradition of Byzantine art, and the marked Greek accent in the chapel occurs even more firmly in the church of the 'Martorana', built around the same time by Roger's minister, George of Antioch...The evidence of the Greek inscriptions, the Greek iconography and the Greek saints depicted in the earliest datable decoration points inconvertibly to the engagement of Greek workmen at Palermo in those years. To realise his ambition for visual magnificence, the king had no alternative but to obtain the men required for Constantinople." Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, 198-99.

from both the Old Testament and the lives of St. Peter and St. Paul, which is not inconsistent with the layout of mosaics in Byzantine churches.<sup>48</sup> But the Cappella's mosaics are not mere copies of their Byzantine cousins in either form or content, or even of mosaics found in Latin churches. For one thing, the mosaics' style in the Cappella is inconsistent: the mosaics in the eastern portion of the church are much more Greek in their construction and appearance, while those in the nave and aisles align more closely with those found in Latin churches.<sup>49</sup> This supports the idea that while Byzantine artists began the mosaics, starting with those in the apse that were installed beginning during Roger II's reign, local craftsmen began to play a larger role in the mosaics design and installation as time went on, and had more control over the mosaics installed in the nave and aisles under William I and William II.<sup>50</sup> In Byzantine churches, mosaics are most often located in apses, domes, and vaults, only occasionally appearing in the nave; in the Cappella, however, mosaics extend far beyond the altar area.<sup>51</sup> But the Cappella does not mirror Latin churches either, where the walls of the nave would have been decorated not with mosaics but with frescos.<sup>52</sup> Another differences between Byzantine and Latin Church styles and the mosaics in the Cappella is that there are no scenes of Christ's death, or the deaths of St. Peter and Paul; instead, Christ enters Jerusalem, but the mosaic scheme does not continue to his death. Christ does not die within the Cappella's mosaics, and it was equally important for Roger II that the Norman monarchy be seen

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<sup>48</sup> Eve Borsook, *Messages in Mosaic: The Royal Programmes of Norman Sicily (1130-1187)* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998): 32.

<sup>49</sup> Borsook, *Messages in Mosaic*, 39.

<sup>50</sup> Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 8. As Jeremy Johns explains, local artisans working under those from around the Mediterranean: "Local Sicilian craftsmen presumably participated as assistants and labourers from the outset, and seem to have gradually assimilated the ideas and techniques introduced by their foreign masters, so that by the 1170s and 1180s, in William II's great church and palace complex at Monreale, forms and motifs first imported under King Roger..." were even more synthesized than in the Cappella. Jeremy Johns, "Muslim Artists and Christian Models in the Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina," *Patterns of Exchange Across the Latin, Greek, and Islamic Worlds c.1000-c.1250*, eds. Rosa Bacila and John McNeill (New York: Routledge, 2015): 64.

<sup>51</sup> Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 7-8.

<sup>52</sup> Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 29.



as eternal too — and not just for the island’s Christian inhabitants, but its Greek and Islamic ones as well: “The Palatine Chapel was therefore conceived as a place of representation in which the king manifested to visitors his military power and geographical and cultural collocation of his realm between East and West, Islam and Christianity; two worlds of whose languages, art forms and cultures he was the undisputed master.”<sup>53</sup> In re-working images from different cultures, such as the Byzantine Christ *Pantocrator*, within their palace chapel, the Norman kings channeled multiple cultures into the visual presentation of their kingdom.

Let us look at several significant mosaics in the Cappella’s eastern transept and apse. In the large dome above the altar is one of the Cappella’s four mosaics which depict Christ *Pantocrator*. The mosaic shows Christ from the chest up, with long brown hair and a full beard, a stern expression on his face. He holds a closed Bible in one hand and raises the other in blessing and command, a Greek inscription around his head.<sup>54</sup> A blue robe is draped around his shoulders with a patterned, golden robe underneath. The *Pantocrator* was an important symbol of the Norman monarchy in Sicily and equally potent for Byzantine emperors. Placing a large mosaic of Christ as the all-powerful judge in the apse of cathedrals and churches watching over the clergy and congregation, the *Pantocrator* is the divine version of Norman and Byzantine kings themselves, powerful rulers in total control of their territory and its inhabitants. In the Cappella, the Norman kings incorporated the image of the *Pantocrator* and his associations with power and control, even if the rest of the chapel is not traditionally Greek in layout or design.

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<sup>53</sup> Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 9. William Tronzo reaches a similar conclusion about the Cappella’s overall function, stating, “It was not just that Roger’s chapel brought together different art forms, therefore; it actually yoked together culturally distinct groups of people in the service of the king, reiterating in microcosm the very structure of Roger’s state.” Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom*, 61-62. Also see Johns, “Muslim Artists and Christian Models in the Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina,” 59-89.

<sup>54</sup> The inscription reads, “Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.” Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 124.



Figure 4: Christ *Pantocrator* inside the Dome of the Cappella<sup>55</sup>

There are more connections between the mosaics in the dome of the Cappella and Byzantine models. To the right of Christ *Pantocrator* is the angel Uriel, whose inclusion is part of the Byzantine tradition, and Uriel himself is dressed as a Byzantine Emperor.<sup>56</sup> Both Uriel and the angel Michael (pictured underneath and to the left of Christ) wears a *loros*, a Byzantine style of tunic connected with the imperial court.<sup>57</sup> The *loros* (plural *lori*) is a full length tunic of leather or thick silk, heavily embroidered. The fabric could either be wrapped around the body or pulled over the head and began incorporating jeweled collars during the tenth century. Both Uriel and Michael's garments are richly embroidered — possibly jeweled — and drape around the front and

<sup>55</sup> Author photo.

<sup>56</sup> Uriel is mentioned in the Book of Enoch, Books which are non-canonical in both the Jewish and Western Christian traditions. Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 123. Almost directly underneath Christ, the angel Michael also appears to wear a *loros*.

<sup>57</sup> Jennifer L. Ball, *Byzantine Dress: Representations of Secular Dress in 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Century Painting* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005): 12.

rear of their bodies. In the Hagia Sophia, both the Empress Zoe and Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos are depicted wearing *lori*,<sup>58</sup> and the tenth-century Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII also wears a *loros* in his coronation portrait.<sup>59</sup> By depicting multiple angels in the heavenly court surrounding Christ — one of whom is not even part of the Latin Christian tradition — wearing richly decorated cloth in a style that mirrors images of imperial Byzantium and its rulers, was a deliberate gesture by Roger.<sup>60</sup> In his palace chapel, the religious seat of his family and kingdom, he is cast not only as the ruler of the islands' Latin Christian population, but its Greek population as well: "Greek was the language of culture and administration, and Roger had no motive to despise or belittle the advantage this gave him."<sup>61</sup> Including symbols of power and authority from multiple kingdoms around the Mediterranean increased Roger's own authority not just within his domain, but broadcast the Normans' legitimacy in southern Italy and Sicily around the Mediterranean and Europe. But the mosaics of the Cappella, including the *Pantocrator* in the dome, are not pure or slavish copies of Byzantine ideals, and the *Pantocrator* in the apse's dome is in some ways, uniquely Norman: "As Byzantine tradition demands, the right half of the face (as viewed by an observer) is slightly larger than the left half, but the absence of a central hair parting identifies this particular image as typical of the Norman period."<sup>62</sup> These Norman stylistic features carry over to the *Pantocrator* directly behind the altar.

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<sup>58</sup> Ball, *Byzantine Dress*, 12.

<sup>59</sup> Elizabeth Piltz, "Middle Byzantine Court Costume," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997): 41.

<sup>60</sup> It is especially significant considering that *loros* were worn at Easter — one of Greek Orthodoxy's most important holidays — as well as when the Emperor met with foreign diplomats. The *loros* conveyed the king's power on earth, as well as his ties with heaven and its power.

<sup>61</sup> Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, 93-94.

<sup>62</sup> Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 124.

This Christ has a similarly styled hair and beard, as well as a blue robe draped around him. His left hand is also raised in blessing (or perhaps, admonition), though this time the Bible is open and contains both Greek and Latin text.<sup>63</sup>



Figure 5: Christ *Pantocrator* behind the Cappella's altar<sup>64</sup>

Of all the mosaics in the Cappella, including the four *Pantocrators*, the Christ behind the altar is the only one that vaguely references Christ's death, with a cross, dove, crown of thorns, spear, vinegar, and sponge arranged on their throne above his head. The reason for this may be the location of this particular mosaic. Close to the king's royal balcony and at the center of the mass, "the instruments of Christ's Passion are also portrayed as instruments of royal power, and suggest that the king holds absolute power on Earth."<sup>65</sup> Here again, the Norman monarchs' utilized the Cappella's visual layout to project their own sovereignty and the cosmopolitan nature of their rule.

<sup>63</sup> Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 115. The text in the Bible reads "I am the light of the world" (115).

<sup>64</sup> Author photo.

<sup>65</sup> Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 115. A discussion of the royal balcony at the Cappella, and its possible ties to Charlemagne's palace at Aachen and the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, is included later in the chapter.

There is one final Christ *Pantocrator* in the eastern portion of the church, on the south transept's wall. The mosaic has the same full beard, long hair, and blue robe of the *Pantocrator* mosaics in the dome and behind the altar. This Christ, too, holds an open Bible, and written in Greek is "I am the light of the world: he who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."<sup>66</sup> Just as Christ was perceived by Christians as the light of the world, Roger II and his heirs also hoped to be viewed as such, divinely sanctioned rulers of Sicily and Southern Italy. Trying to legitimize their kingdom and their rule, the symbolic force of these four mosaics reflect how the Norman monarchy themselves wished to be viewed – as more than merely human sovereigns, but ones that could both bless and admonish the subjects under them. Using largely Byzantine mosaic models, the Norman kings' drew on both the power and longevity of the Byzantine Empire, indicating their willingness to embrace cultures and artistic traditions that were not part of the Latin, northern European inheritance that Roger II and his sons descended from.

Like the *Pantocrator* mosaics, with their combination of Byzantine and Norman elements, other mosaics near the altar incorporate Byzantine and Islamic figures and traditions. On the transept's north wall is a reference to the Eastern Orthodox Church. While Roger II was king, there was probably a mosaic of St. Peter and St. Paul in the space; however, late in the twelfth-century the mosaic of St. Peter was changed to a figure of St. Andrew instead: "St. Andrew was venerated as founder of the Church of Constantinople, and his presence here can be interpreted as the result of a political decision to attribute equal dignity to the Catholic church (represented by Paul) and the Byzantine church (represented by Andrew)."<sup>67</sup> In the increasing political turmoil of the twelfth century and the reigns of William I and William II, the Norman monarchy may have wished not

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<sup>66</sup> Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 95.

<sup>67</sup> Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 75.

only to utilize Byzantine images for the political and cultural caché they brought to Norman Sicily, but as a means of strengthening and/or placating the rulers of the Byzantine empire itself.<sup>68</sup> There is a practicality to Norman rule in southern Italy and Sicily, as well as a cosmopolitan, cultural openness.

The mosaics in the altar area not only incorporate Greek images, but Islamic ones as well. St. Theodore wears leggings with “a decorative motif reminiscent of Arabic inscriptions found elsewhere in the chapel,” and Saints Demetrius and Mercurius’ shields have Arabic-style inscriptions.<sup>69</sup> Whether the Greek artisans who installed the mosaics were responsible for including the pseudo-Arabic, or whether the order came from the Norman court, the Cappella Palatina not only incorporates artistic traditions and languages from outside the Christian tradition, be it Latin or Greek Orthodox, but Islamic traditions as well. The acceptance and tolerance of different religious traditions the Normans reveal by using Arabic and Arabic-style inscriptions, demonstrates a level of religious tolerance that is not commonly associated with the medieval period.

The mosaics of the nave are equally fascinating. Likely added during the reigns of William I and William II according to William Tronzo, their construction still falls within the twelfth century time period that is the focus of this dissertation. The nave’s mosaics depict scenes from

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<sup>68</sup> However much the Norman monarchy in Sicily and Southern Italy borrowed the imagery and architecture of the kingdoms around the Mediterranean, this does not mean they did not seek to expand their own territory or that conflicts with other kingdoms ceased with the creation of the Norman monarchy. Under Roger II, coastal towns in modern day Algeria and Tunisia came under Norman control and he conducted raids into Byzantine territory as well. The ports in North Africa did not remain under Norman control long, but were lost under William I, though both he and William II continued harassing Byzantine territory. Keller, “The Normans in Sicily,” 239. William I faced a major revolt from his own nobles in 1155, as well as Pope Adrian IV’s creation of conflict between William I and the Germans under Frederick Barbarossa. The Byzantine Emperor Manuel struck at Norman areas on the Italian mainland, including Bari and Apulia. Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, 61-62; 268-69. And while William II maintained better relationships with the Germans and the papacy, he continued Roger II’s policy of raiding, attacking Egypt and other North African areas, Greece, and even went as far west as Spain. Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, 276.

<sup>69</sup> Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 76-77.



the Bible's Old Testament, as well as the lives of St. Peter and St. Paul, and there are multiple figures who incorporate Byzantine and Islamic styles of dress. On the north wall is an image of St. Peter resurrecting Tabitha.



Figure 6: St. Peter resurrects Tabitha, north wall of the Cappella<sup>70</sup>

Her clothing is distinctive from the three women behind her; while her companions wear hooded cloaks or veils over long tunics, Tabitha's cloak has an embroidered collar, and the embroidery matches the pattern on her turban, a close fitted circular cap with fabric extending from the back of the cap and hanging past her shoulders.<sup>71</sup> The rich red and gold fabric is similar to Roger II's mantle, which scholars such as E. Jane Burns have tied to trade between Norman Sicily and Byzantium, and possibly silk workshops in Fatimid Egypt as well.<sup>72</sup> Tabitha's tight fitting turban,

<sup>70</sup> Author photo.

<sup>71</sup> The type of turban here "refers to any hat made of wrapped cloth, as opposed to a hat with a substructure covered with fabric or a sewn cap of some kind." Ball, *Byzantine Dress*, 65.

<sup>72</sup> Burns, *Sea of Silk*, 43 and 52.

with its fabric extension, resembles the style worn in a twelfth-century painting in the Hagios Nikolaos tou Kaznitze church in Kastoria.<sup>73</sup> In that image, the wife of a prominent church donor, Anna Kaznitze, wears an embroidered turban; the portion that hangs over her shoulders has both tassels and *tiraz*.<sup>74</sup> While Kastoria (located in modern day Greece) was under Byzantine rule during this period, the area was formerly under Bulgarian control: “From 1018, when Basil II regained Thrace, Bulgarians continued to live in Kastoria under Byzantine rule and reflected Bulgarian culture among others in this period.”<sup>75</sup> So while Kastoria was on the border of the Byzantine Empire, its residents still wore fashions from Constantinople, and vice versa.<sup>76</sup> Of even greater interest is the Normans’ connection to Kastoria, which they ruled from 1082 to 1093, when it was recovered by the Byzantines.<sup>77</sup> Based on the similarities between the turban and collar Tabitha wears in the Cappella’s mosaic, Byzantine fashions, and the links between lands controlled by both Byzantines and Normans during this period, it is certainly possible that the mosaic of Tabitha incorporates Byzantine-style clothing. Not only does Byzantine fashion in the Cappella demonstrate the Normans’ inclusion of other cultures’ symbols and fashion, it also highlights the trade relationships within the larger Mediterranean community. Byzantine cloth and luxury items circulated between kingdoms and cultures, regardless of those whether kingdoms and cultures practiced the same religion or spoke the same language; the cosmopolitan nature of these goods

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<sup>73</sup> Ball, *Byzantine Dress*, 69.

<sup>74</sup> Ball, *Byzantine Dress*, 70-71.

<sup>75</sup> Ball, *Byzantine Dress*, 69. The Normans had a similar relationship with other areas of the Byzantine Empire, including Dalmatia. Normans from southern Italy began raiding in Dalmatia beginning in 1074, and “At times, the Byzantine government authorized the Normans to rule Dalmatia in its name,” though the Byzantines never surrendered their ultimate right to rule the area. Jean W. Sedlar, *East Central Europe in the Middle Ages, 1000-1500*, A History of East Central Europe, vol. 3. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993): 371-72.

<sup>76</sup> Ball, *Byzantine Dress*, 57

<sup>77</sup> Ball, *Byzantine Dress*, 69.



superseded such concerns, and designating products as eastern and western was less important than their metaphorical message of wealth and power.

Another mosaic on the nave's north wall features figures who also wear non-Western dress, the panel depicting Peter and Paul arguing with Simon Magus, while Nero and his courtier look on.



Figure 7: Simon Magus and Nero, north wall of the Cappella<sup>78</sup>

The seated Nero wears several layers of cloaks and tunics; the under layer is white, the robe is patterned with a band of embroidery on the bottom hem and at the cuffs, and over both is a blue cloak with the same embroidery as the robe. He also wears decorated red slippers and a fitted red cap. Simon Magus, standing to Nero's left, wears a cloak of white too, with a purple tunic

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<sup>78</sup> Author photo.

underneath, embroidered at the collar and cuffs. Focusing on Nero first, his red slippers appear to have both embroidery and possibly even a cluster of four pearls; these shoes do not look dissimilar to ones worn by members of the Byzantine imperial court, whose jeweled slippers were called *tzangia*.<sup>79</sup> An illumination from a thirteenth-century manuscript created in Acre presents Alexander the Great in the clothing of a Byzantine Emperor, his red slippers covered in pearls.<sup>80</sup> Moving to Simon Magus, the deep light purple color of his tunic — almost a mauve — is another allusion to imperial Greece. The purple color was created using a rare dye, referred to as either Tyrian purple, royal purple, Byzantine purple, or imperial purple, names that denote its connection to Byzantine's imperial family.<sup>81</sup> Both Nero's robe and cloak, as well as Simon Magnus' tunic, have gold embroidery along the cuffs, collars, and hems; reminiscent of *tiraz*, the golden bands of embroidery that decorate silks and other fine fabrics, the embroidery was associated with Islamic kingdoms, including the Fatimid's.<sup>82</sup> The figures in these particular mosaics combine both Byzantine and Islamic items of clothing in a Latin Christian chapel. The Cappella is not just synthesizing architectural details that would be difficult for laymen to recognize as particularly Byzantine, Islamic, or European. Luxury clothing items — and their cultural associations — are much more likely to be recognized by people who could afford such items, as well as by those who could not purchase them but still saw them worn by others. With these mosaics, the twelfth-century Norman monarchy created a visual representation of the cosmopolitan culture that flourished under their rule, broadcasting that culture to everyone who viewed the Cappella.

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<sup>79</sup> Ball, *Byzantine Dress*, 13.

<sup>80</sup> The image appears in the *Book of Ancient Histories*, a manuscript created around 1286, and which currently resides in the British Library (British Library, Add Ms. 15268). Scott, *Fashion in the Middle Ages*, 104.

<sup>81</sup> Made from the murex, a type of sea snail, Phoenicians were the first people to create the dye in Tyre. Burns, *Sea of Silk*, 186.

<sup>82</sup> Burns, *Sea of Silk*, 52.

Moving to the nave's south wall is another mosaic of interest, featuring St. Radegund, the wife of the French king, Clotaire I. St. Radegund left the secular life behind her after her husband's death, and began a nunnery at Poitiers. However, in the Cappella's depiction, she is not dressed as a French queen, or even a French nun, but an empress of the Byzantine court.<sup>83</sup> In the image, she wears a white under-tunic, a dark blue robe topped with a *loros*, and her crown is clearly a Byzantine *stemma*. Like the *loros* worn by Uriel and the angel Michael on the Cappella's dome, St. Radegund's *loros* falls down the center of her body and loops around her waist. Along the vertical portion of the fabric is an alternating pattern of green diamonds and blue squares, possibly emeralds and sapphires.<sup>84</sup> Her *stemma* — a jeweled, round or semi-circular Byzantine crown, with pendants dangling from the crown's main body — also has jewels, both rubies and emeralds.<sup>85</sup> At least two pendants frame St. Radegund's face. In addition to the Byzantine clothing and crown, the image also includes Islamic styles of dress. At the hem and cuffs of the blue robe are bands of embroidered *tiraz*, characteristic of luxury silk fabrics that circulated around the Mediterranean and were produced in Fatimid Egypt and other Islamic kingdoms.<sup>86</sup> The blue robe itself resembles a *divetesion*, a long, silk garment worn under a *loros* by the Byzantine emperor and high ranking courtiers.<sup>87</sup> This specific mosaic's unique combination of luxury textiles and fashion from Byzantine and Islamic areas demonstrates the circular trade of these goods around the Mediterranean; and not only the Norman nobility's familiarity with the materials, but their understanding of the implicit message of power behind them.

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<sup>83</sup> Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 86.

<sup>84</sup> According to Jennifer Ball, *loros* could include jewels. Ball, *Byzantine Dress*, 12.

<sup>85</sup> Ball, *Byzantine Dress*, 13.

<sup>86</sup> Stillman and Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 122-28.

<sup>87</sup> Ball, *Byzantine Dress*, 40.

Like the mosaics in the nave, those above the throne platform at the Cappella's western end were most likely also added after Roger II's death.<sup>88</sup> Above the throne platform, is the Cappella's fourth Christ *Pantocrator*, flanked by Saints Peter and Paul, and the angels Michael and Gabriel. Beneath these figures, two lions are on either side of the mosaics that make up a portion of the throne platform.



Figure 8: Christ *Pantocrator* above the Cappella's throne platform<sup>89</sup>

This mosaic both departs from, and aligns itself with, the other three *Pantocrators*. The hair and beard are almost identical to those featured at the church's other end. Christ's left hand is raised in blessing and he holds a closed Bible in the right hand. However, rather than showing just the head and torso, this Christ is literally enthroned, visually mirroring the Norman kings who sat on the throne below. Beside the seated Christ are Michael and Gabriel, Peter and Paul, blessing the

<sup>88</sup> Whether the mosaic plan and layout for the entire chapel had been designed at the beginning of the Chapel's construction under Roger II and were simply not finished before he passed, or whether they were designed over a longer period of time, is under debate. This particular mosaic of Christ was mostly likely installed in around 1180. Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 73.

<sup>89</sup> Author photo.

Norman kings and linking the power and legitimacy of the Latin Church with the Norman kingdom in southern Italy and Sicily at large. The lions underneath are one of the heraldic devices of the Normans, and the lions' layout in the mosaic echoes Islamic silk patterns.<sup>90</sup> Known as *Soie d'Aumarie*, this style include patterned silks with roundels (known as *pallia rotate* in Latin), and frequently pictured animals such as peacocks, lions, griffins, and harpies, either back to back (addorsed) or facing each other (confronted), with a tree between them.<sup>91</sup> Though the lions in the Cappella are not separated like this, they face each other in a way that is similar to the patterns found on this type of silk. The mosaic above the throne platform creates yet another link between the Normans, the Latin Church, the Byzantine Empire, and Islamic kingdoms. It is a visual representation of Normans' cosmopolitan culture, one that could incorporate the art and symbolism of non-western, non-Christian cultures within a single space.

### **The Balcony**

One of the most debated features of the Palatina is the possibly presence of a balcony on the transept's northern wall during the Norman period.<sup>92</sup> Though it is no longer there today for structural reasons, replaced first by four windows and later changed to a blind arch, some scholars believe that during the Normans' rule, this wall had a wooden balcony that allowed the King to hear mass from above, and that led directly from the chapel to his apartments in the royal palace.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 37.

<sup>91</sup> Sharon Kinoshita, "Almería Silk and the French Feudal Imaginary," 168. Kinoshita goes on to note: "The circular designs giving *pallia rotate* their name appear ca. 700 on silks from Baghdad, Iran, Alexandria, and Byzantium. The figures they contain are even older, derived from the ancient Near East, transmitted through Alexander's empire and its successor states to Byzantium and Sassanian Persia, and disseminated by the spread of Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries" (173). This provides multiple routes for the design to have entered Norman Sicily.

<sup>92</sup> Tronzo thinks there was also a balcony "to the northeast" (currently where mosaics from 18<sup>th</sup> century are), and where the court's women could view church. He argues this makes church more uniform in feeling with the two balconies balancing each other in some sense. Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom*, 49-54.

<sup>93</sup> Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 74; Ćurčić, "Further Thoughts on the Palatine Aspects of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo," 525-33.



Figure 9: The triangular opening shows where the balcony would have been<sup>94</sup>

The role the king's viewing balcony played in the Cappella's function and its symbolism is most clearly articulated by William Tronzo, one of the main voices arguing for the balcony's existence. According to Tronzo, the balcony "placed the king on the level with and integrated into Christ's life, which he, in an important sense, completed."<sup>95</sup> As Roger II and his descendants stood in the balcony, they looked across the church and saw mosaics of Jesus' Transfiguration and Entry into Jerusalem.<sup>96</sup> Like Christ himself, transformed from a Jewish carpenter into the Son of God, the Norman kings had been transformed from mercenaries fighting in others' conflicts for control of Sicily and Southern Italy, to rulers in their own right; their entry into the sacred space from the palace is replicated across the chapel by Jesus' procession into the city of Jerusalem. The clergy and congregation, gazing up at the king on the balcony from below, saw mosaics of the Holy Warriors on the wall beneath the balcony.<sup>97</sup> For the congregation below, the Norman kings were

<sup>94</sup> Author photo.

<sup>95</sup> Tronzo, "Byzantine Court Culture from the Point of View of Norman Sicily," 109.

<sup>96</sup> Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom*, 55.

<sup>97</sup> Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom*, 55.

the island's own holy warriors, reclaiming the territory from the previous rulers with God's blessing. But the image of the divinely sanctioned warrior kings that the placement of the balcony and the mosaics around it create is complicated by the balcony's function within the Cappella as a whole.

One question that is frequently raised concerning the Cappella is why there would need to be a viewing balcony above the altar area if there was already a throne platform at the western end of the church, which faced the altar directly. For some scholars, the chapel's layout — the inclusion of a balcony and a throne platform — is because the space served two purposes; one was the viewing of the Latin mass from the balcony, and the second was the practice of *Proskynesis*, a bowing ceremony that was part of the Byzantine tradition, and which utilized the throne platform.<sup>98</sup> As a smaller palace chapel, the king could view the mass from his private balcony on the Cappella's north wall and retreat back to the palace, remaining aloof and above the court.<sup>99</sup> However, for the king, the east to west axis of the chapel was not about seeing the mass.<sup>100</sup> Rather, the king greeted courtiers, diplomats, and other members of the administration from the throne. As the king stood on the platform, they filed pass, and bowed before him (*Proskynesis*). The throne — and the ceremony it facilitated — supported the image of Roger II and his heirs as the supreme rulers of Sicily, an image created by the balcony, its surrounding mosaics, and the throne platform.<sup>101</sup> And by incorporating a Byzantine practice into the chapel's space, it opens up the

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<sup>98</sup> Ćurčić, "Some Palatine Aspects of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo," 128.

<sup>99</sup> Charlemagne's palace at Aachen and the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople both have balconies that are in many ways similar to the one that existed in the Cappella. A more detailed discussion of these two structures is included later in this chapter.

<sup>100</sup> Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom*, 22.

<sup>101</sup> Ionna Rapti connects *proskynesis* and the Hagia Sophia: "Architectural fittings and furniture specifically fashioned as settings for kingly appearances are known to have been used in royal ceremonies. The Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies* mentions that the emperor receives the respect and the *proskynesis* of the dignitaries on the *sellion*, a portable throne set at the east end of the south aisle of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople." Ionna Rapti, "Featuring in the Kingdom: Rituals of Coronation and Burial in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia," in *Court Ceremonies and Rituals*



Cappella — and Norman rule — as more than merely replacing the people, cultures, and religions that came before: it demonstrates an acceptance and a willingness to incorporate mores and rituals that did not travel south from Normandy, or from Northern Europe at all. In the Cappella, the militant, Christian image of Norman kingship in Sicily produced by the balcony and mosaics is tempered by the Byzantine right of *Proskynesis* that takes place within the same space. William Tronzo also sees the nave's ceiling above the throne platform, to be discussed shortly, as increasing the multi-cultural aspect of the chapel: "With its viewing balcony and low, wide throne platform, *muqarnas* vault and tapestry-lined walls, on the other hand, the nave of the Cappella Palatina must have resembled the noble reception hall of a Fatimid palace more than anything else."<sup>102</sup> Like the capital featuring an image from the romance *Guillaume de Palerne* in Monreale's cloister, here is another space the Normans' in southern Italy created that was both sacred and secular. The balcony, throne platform, and mosaics cannot be viewed by themselves, but as part of the Norman kings' larger cosmopolitan philosophy that incorporated the images, objects, and symbolism from kingdoms around the Mediterranean.<sup>103</sup>

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*of Power in Byzantium and the Medieval Mediterranean: Comparative Perspectives*, eds. Alexander Beihammer, Stavroula Constantinou, and Maria G. Parani (Leiden: Brill, 2013): 304. Though the Norman monarchs' throne was not temporary, as was the Byzantine emperors, it does not seem improbable given the Cappella's layout and the throne placement — not to mention its Byzantine style mosaics and fashion allusions — that the Norman kings in twelfth-century Italy incorporated *proskynesis* into their own governing practices.

<sup>102</sup> Tronzo, "Byzantine Court Culture from the Point of View of Norman Sicily," 111-12.

<sup>103</sup> After the death of William II in 1189, the Norman monarchy in Sicily and southern Italy did not simply disappear: "Remarkably in the circumstances, the kingdom did not collapse. There was less evidence than in 1155 [after the death of Roger II] of any eagerness on the part of the nobles to seize the opportunity for purely local advantages: instead, there were only rival bids for the whole monarchy." Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, 281. Perhaps the question to ask is not why the Norman monarchy in southern Italy and Sicily only lasted so long, but how it came about in the first place — and why it lasted as long as it did. That minor nobles from Normandy were able within a relatively short time to transition from mercenaries to monarchs is incredible. That once they gained power, they did not fully "Normanize" the island, but kept at least some of the administrative and artistic traditions of the island's former rulers, creating a cosmopolitan culture that navigated between Europe and the Mediterranean, is stunning. The Norman kingdom did not collapse because of their cultural blending, but rather because William II died without producing a son, leaving a clear heir to the throne. Within seventy years, England had undergone two political crises when Edward the Confessor died without a son in 1066 and when Henry I died without one in 1135: the first resulted in the Norman conquest of England, the second in a seventeen-year civil war, at the end of which England became part of the larger Norman/Angevin empire.



One of the most convincing counter arguments against the balcony's existence is the lack of similar balconies in chapels from the same period. However, two examples do exist, and there is a case to be made for their possible influence on the palace chapel in Palermo. The first is the eighth-century palace chapel of Charlemagne in Aachen. The Normans borrowed heavily from the culture of the Carolingian Empire when they first settled in Normandy, and it is not impossible to think that the Normans would have seen the palace chapel in Aachen, incorporated it into their cultural memory, and drew upon it when they went south and constructed the Cappella. Both chapels had balconies, and both Charlemagne and the Norman monarchy in Sicily and southern Italy combined multiple architectural styles to invoke their connections to antiquity. Aachen's chapel was part of the larger palace complex and had multiple functions: to host the Holy Roman Emperor's coronations, hold religious services, and serve as the burial place of Charlemagne.<sup>104</sup> On the chapel's first floor was one altar, with another on the second floor above it in an open gallery. On the second floor across from the two altars was Charlemagne's throne. The second floor's altar was dedicated to Christ; by elevating himself to the level of this altar, Charlemagne promoted the visual and metaphorical links between himself and Christ, similar to the connection the Norman monarchs' created between their presence in the balcony of the Cappella and the mosaics of Christ that surrounded them.<sup>105</sup> The structure of Aachen's chapel is closely related to Roman prototypes as well:

The 6<sup>th</sup>-century Byzantine basilica of San Vitale at Ravenna, which was built in the reign of the Emperor Justinian. This choice of prototype was deliberate — by referencing San Vitale, Charlemagne was laying claim to imperial authority. The form of the building also assisted in the practical

<sup>104</sup> W. Eugene Kleinbauer, "Charlemagne's Palace Chapel at Aachen and Its Copies," *Gesta* 4 (1965): 2.

<sup>105</sup> Rita W. Tekippe, "Copying Power: Emulation, Appropriation, and Borrowing for Royal Political Purposes," *Visual Resources* 20, no. 2-3 (2004): 148. Mayke de Jong discusses the connections between the balcony and its role as a solarium. See Mayke de Jong, "Charlemagne's balcony: The Solarium in Ninth-Century Narratives," in *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe*, eds. J. R. Davis and M. McCormick, New Directions in Early Medieval Studies (London: Ashgate, 2008): 276-89.

running of grand ceremonies, with the domed octagonal core allowing subjects to crowd into the imposing building that functioned as both royal court and church.<sup>106</sup>

In fact, actual capitals and pillars from antiquity were brought from Ravenna, in northern Italy, to Germany and incorporated into Aachen.<sup>107</sup> Like the Cappella, Aachen's palace chapel may also have been connected to the palace itself, another instance of a monarch combining secular and sacred spaces, evoking their ties to antiquity in a Latin Christian church.<sup>108</sup> Like Charlemagne at Aachen, the Norman monarchy in southern Italy and Sicily combined imagery and forms from other buildings and cultures to enhance their own status as rulers, invoking their connections to ancient Rome and Christ.

Another possible influence on the presence of a balcony in the Cappella is the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. The Hagia Sophia, meaning Church of the Holy Wisdom, was built in the sixth century, and featured a balcony for the emperor.<sup>109</sup> Heinz Kähler elaborates: "The eastern bay of the gallery was reserved for imperial use. The door to the right of the John Comnenus panel communicated by means of a wooden staircase with a kind of bridge that led to the adjoining Imperial Palace. In this way the emperor was able to come to Hagia Sophia without being seen by the public, and he usually listened to the service from the gallery."<sup>110</sup> Like Charlemagne and the Normans of southern

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<sup>106</sup> Pryce, *World Architecture*, 52.

<sup>107</sup> Judith Herrin, *Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007): 69.

<sup>108</sup> Looking at the remains of the physical structures at Aachen, Rosamond McKitterick writes: "What is nevertheless clear from the excavations, despite the uncertainty about the dating, is the massive proportions of these buildings, and the relationship between the royal residence and the chapel, reminiscent of the arrangements of royal residences in relation to church or mosque and place for public access to the king in Byzantium, Rome and the Abbasid courts." Rosamond McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2008):169.

<sup>109</sup> Pryce, *World Architecture*, 48.

<sup>110</sup> Heinz Kähler, *Hagia Sophia, with a Chapter of the Mosaics by Cyril Magno*, trans. Ellyn Childs (New York: Frederick A. Fraeger, 1967): 59. Rowland J. Mainstone talks about a similar connection between the eastern gallery and the palace, but later states that the south gallery was where emperor viewed mass, as the south gallery also had connection to outside. Rowland J. Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure, and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1997): 225-32.

Italy, the Byzantine rulers combined secular and sacred spaces within their palaces and chapels. While both the balcony at Aachen and the one at Hagia Sophia present interesting parallels to the Cappella's possible balcony, the connection between Norman Italy and the Byzantine Empire is stronger; Hagia Sophia seems the more likely inspiration for the Norman monarchy's own chapel balcony. Perhaps Byzantine workers, constructing the Cappella's mosaics, brought with them knowledge of the chapel balcony from their famous church in Constantinople, and through collaboration with the Palatina's other craftsmen and architects, a similar balcony became part of the Norman's palace chapel.<sup>111</sup>

### **The Nave's Ceiling**

While the eastern end of the church has strong affinities with Byzantine culture, the nave is a different story. The nave's ceiling is covered with a series of *muqarnas*, a type of ornamental, Islamic architectural feature, typically "formed by corbelled squinches of several layers of brick, scalloped and resembling natural stalactites."<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> For more on the connections between the Normans' Cappella Palatina and the Cathedral of Monreale (both built during the twelfth-century in Norman Sicily) and Byzantine architectural practices, see Kidson, *The Medieval World*, 73-74.

<sup>112</sup> Honour and Fleming, *The Visual Arts*, 927. The muqarnas of the Cappella differ slightly in their construction. Rather than being sculpted or molded from brick and plaster, they are constructed solely of wood: "The entire ceiling is supported by an assembled framework. The wood panels are therefore installed over a supporting structure, also in wood." Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 41.



Figure 10: The *muqarnas* on the ceiling of the Cappella's nave<sup>113</sup>

Within the geometric shapes formed by the squinches<sup>114</sup> are figures enjoying the pleasures of courtly life, such as drinking, dancing, and singing, while Kufic words of blessing circle the images. Before looking in greater detail at the Cappella's *muqarnas*, let us first examine the styles' origins and how they became part of the Normans' palace chapel. On the creation of *muqarnas* as a form — the where, as well as the when — there is no scholarly consensus. Oleg Grabar believes that the design originated in tenth century Iran, spread to Egypt during the tenth and eleventh centuries, and traveled west in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when it was used in both Muslim and Christian buildings, secular as well as religious.<sup>115</sup> Jonathan M. Bloom argues that Syria is one possible origin for the design; but concerning the style of *muqarnas* in Egypt — which is the most likely source of the style for those in the Cappella — Bloom states that they traveled from southern to Northern Egypt along Islamic pilgrimage routes and then onto Sicily.<sup>116</sup> There

<sup>113</sup> Author photo.

<sup>114</sup> Specifically, there are twenty panels of eight-pointed stars; twenty-two panels with small domes around them; nine rhomboid panels in middle of the ceiling down its length; the stalactites that descend from the ceiling are pyramid shaped. Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 41.

<sup>115</sup> Grabar, *Islamic Visual Culture*, 376.

<sup>116</sup> Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Introduction of the Muqarnas into Egypt," *Muqarnas* 5 (1988): 27.

are several specific buildings that incorporate *muqarnas* in North Africa, some within areas ruled by the Fatimid dynasty, that have been linked with the form and style of those in the Cappella. One of these examples is from the city of Fustat, located south of Cairo along the Nile River. There, the Bath of Abu'l – Su'ud from the eleventh century had *muqarnas* similar to the Normans' palace chapel not only in construction, but in the types of images as well, including those with birds, a drinker, and a dancer. In Fez, the al Qarawiyyan mosque contains *muqarnas* from the twelfth century in the nave's vault; while these do not have any figures, the style of cusped compartments are similar to the Cappella's.<sup>117</sup>

There are additional links between the *muqarnas* in Norman Sicily, which are made entirely of wood, and styles of woodwork found in Egypt under the Fatimid reign. The Western Palace, part of the Great Palace complex in Cairo, incorporated woodwork that echoes the style used as part of the Cappella's ceiling.<sup>118</sup> The beams from the palace "are typically carved with narrow foliate borders enclosing a frieze of alternating lobed octagons and hexagons formed by a continuous strapwork fillet. Typically, each octagon contains a single animal or human figure while each hexagon contains a pair of figures, engaged in such courtly activities as music-making, dancing, hunting, or drinking. Traces of colour indicate that the carving was once emphasized with paint."<sup>119</sup> The connection between the painted *muqarnas* in the Cappella and those in the Fatimid's palace is further supported by Bloom's assertion that the woodwork of Fatimid and Norman

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<sup>117</sup> Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom*, 58-59. While William Tronzo feels that the al Qarawiyyan mosque is a possible source, Jonathan Bloom feels there is not enough evidence to support the comparison. Bloom, *Arts of the City Virtuous*, 192.

<sup>118</sup> The Western Palace was built by al-'Aziz, and heavily renovated in 1058. Though it was destroyed in late 12<sup>th</sup> century by Saladin, the remains were purchased by sultan Qala'un in 1283. Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar, and Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, eds., in *Islamic Art and Architecture, 650-1250* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001): 201. Scholars are able to study the woodwork, as the sultan Qala'un re-used wood from the Fatimid's Western Palace. Under the sultan, the carved woodwork ended up on the ceiling, covering beams or between the beams of his own thirteenth century complex. Bloom, *Arts of the City Virtuous*, 67-68.

<sup>119</sup> Bloom, *Arts of the City Virtuous*, 67-68.

Sicily's were connected. Bloom points specifically to the stylistic similarities between the doors of the Santa Maria della' Ammiraglio in Palermo, which were supposedly carved by Fatimid craftsmen, and the doors at the Shrine of Sayyida Nafisa.<sup>120</sup> I would argue that the example of these doors, as well as the examples listed above, demonstrate a link between the decorative styles, artisans, and materials employed by the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt and the Norman monarchy in Sicily and southern Italy. Though Bloom does acknowledge that there are similarities between the doors, he feels that the traffic in artisans/and or materials could have gone in either direction: the doors could have been made in Egypt and sent to Sicily, or Egyptian artisans could have built the doors in Sicily itself.<sup>121</sup> However, there are additional connections that point to artisans from the Fatimid's court (or North Africa at large) traveling to Norman Sicily. Certain scenes depicted on the Cappella's ceiling resemble Fatimid luster-painted ceramics, though not all of the ceiling's images fit within traditional Islamic motifs.<sup>122</sup> Whether craftsmen from Egypt journeyed to Norman Sicily to build the Cappella's *muqarnas*, or whether they were built by Norman and Byzantine craftsmen who had seen the style in Egypt, there is clearly an affinity between the *muqarnas* of Egypt and those in the Cappella Palatina.

Let us examine the ceiling's specific images and words, and consider why Roger II might have installed a ceiling based on Islamic mosque and palace decorations in his own chapel. While

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<sup>120</sup> Santa Maria Dell' Ammiraglio (St. Mary's of the Admiral, sometimes known as Martorana) was founded in 1143, built by George of Antioch who served as an admiral under Roger II. George of Antioch was himself of the Greek Orthodox faith. Before coming to Sicily in 1114 and becoming part of Roger II's administration and military, George worked for the Zirid's in Tunis. Reflecting Norman Sicily's multi-cultural administration, the Santa Maria's charter is written in both Greek and Arabic. Ernst Kitzinger, *The Mosaics of St. Mary's of the Admiral in Palermo, with a Chapter on the Architecture of the Church* by Slobodan Ćurčić (Washington D. C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1990): 15. The set of double doors at Martorana are carved wood, with twenty-eight panels decorated with geometric shapes and swirls. Bloom argues that these doors could have been imported to Sicily from Egypt or made in Sicily by Egyptian worker. Bloom, *Arts of the City Virtuous*, 192.

<sup>121</sup> Bloom, *Arts of the City Virtuous*, 192.

<sup>122</sup> Images that are similar include dances with veils, while the image of a warrior on horseback spearing a creature — possibly a dragon — is not one found on Fatimid ceramics. Ettinghausen, Grabar, and Jenkins-Madina, *Islamic Art and Architecture*, 299.

the mosaics of the Cappella are religious, combining Byzantine and Latin Christian imagery, the *muqarnas* of the nave, in both construction and imagery, show scenes of Islamic courtly life. There is an Arabic *qayna* entertainer, whose skills included dancing, singing, other forms of music, and writing poetry; a figure playing an Islamic square drum;<sup>123</sup> a *Nadim*, who was the king's drinking companion, responsible for entertaining the king and his guests;<sup>124</sup> and another figure wearing a *qalansuwa*, a red, Arabic style hat that was cone shaped.<sup>125</sup> Another one of the *muqarnas* contains an image of a couple riding a camel, a reference to the twelfth-century Arab love story, Diwan and Majnun (Layla and Majnun), by the Persian poet Nezami.<sup>126</sup> The combination of Islamic dress, instruments, and cultural figures further broadens the space of the Cappella to kingdoms and cultures around the Mediterranean, even those which are not Christian, either Latin or Greek Orthodox. That a twelfth-century monarch and his descendants in southern Italy and Sicily included Islamic figures in their palace chapel demonstrates a level of cultural and religious tolerance and cosmopolitanism that is not often associated with the medieval period.

In addition to the figures with clear parallels to Islamic culture, there are two images whose origins, and interpretations, are not as straightforward. On a *muqarna* located near the Cappella's north wall is the image of man holding two crosses, reciting a prayer in Arabic that asks for God's blessing on a king. Alessandro Vicenzi states:

The figure could represent a priest or a bishop performing a ritual blessing of the king, but the man's features are reminiscent of those of the king

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<sup>123</sup> The tradition of *qayna* entertainer began in Baghdad in the eighth century before moving on to other Islamic courts, including the Fatimid court in Cairo. Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 48-49.

<sup>124</sup> Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 50.

<sup>125</sup> Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 58. For a highly detailed analysis of the fashion on the nave's ceiling, see Francesca Manuela Anzelmo, "Dress and Textiles in the 12<sup>th</sup>-Century Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo," in *Romanesque and the Mediterranean: Patterns of Exchange Across the Latin, Greek, and Islamic Worlds c.1000-c.1250*, eds. Rose Bacile and John McNeill (New York: Routledge, 2015). 91-127.

<sup>126</sup> Diwan and Majnun is the story of Qays and Diwan, who love each other but are forbidden from marrying. Qays goes mad, people begin to calling him Majnun, and he moves to the desert to write poetry for her. The story is the basis for Eric Clapton's famous song, Layla. Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 45.

portrayed directly above this panel. It is possible, therefore, that the image depicts the king himself performing a ceremony of blessing. The problematic interpretation of this image, which associates an Islamic religious formula with a Christian religious rite, underlines the unique blend of cultures found in the Palatine Chapel.<sup>127</sup>

If this image does depict Roger II blessing himself, his own kingship, and the Norman monarchy in Sicily as whole, it is interesting that he chose a blessing in Arabic. Rather than using Latin — or even Byzantine— imagery, rather than using the Latin or Greek languages, the ceiling of the Cappella's nave uses the imagery and language of the Islamic world.

Another image that warrants closer attention is that of a ruler, sitting cross legged on a low platform and wearing a caftan and a three-pointed crown,<sup>128</sup> flanked by two servants standing on either side. The way the central figure is seated, as well as his style of dress, is Islamic; but his face, beard, and hairstyle are European. Some scholars have identified the figure as King Roger II himself.<sup>129</sup> Around the images in the *muqarnas*' central stars are Kufic words, including health, blessing, good fortune, power, magnificence, prosperity, and perfection. William Tronzo argues that these words should be read individually, rather than as a single string. Together, the words signify to those who visit the Cappella what kind of king Roger II is, and the Norman cosmopolitan culture of his kingdom.<sup>130</sup> The palace chapel of the Norman monarchy in Sicily and southern Italy combined architecture and images from Fatimid Egypt, the Byzantine Empire; Roger II and his heirs recognized that their own fortunes and magnificence depended on the circular movement of goods, people, and cultures around Europe and the Mediterranean. This circular movement which characterizes *translatio normannitatis* allowed the Normans to embrace the cultures of their

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<sup>127</sup> Vicenzi, ed., *La Cappella Palatina a Palermo*, 44.

<sup>128</sup> This particular figure is repeated on the ceiling seven times.

<sup>129</sup> William Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom*,: 59.

<sup>130</sup> The specific words on the ceiling, as well as the way they are presented, do not have any known parallel within the Islamic world. Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom*, 60-61.



neighbors. At times, the lack of clear interpretations about the Cappella, and the Norman's rule in southern Italy and Sicily as a whole, seems too frustrating for academic study. As Slobodan Ćurčić remarks:

Yet, not with-standing the abundance of its apparent information potential, the Cappella Palatina is also surprisingly silent in matters where our expectations are at their heights. Worse yet, it also presents a surprising amount of evidence that can yield — and on occasion has yielded — contradictory conclusions as to what the persevered information may actually signify.<sup>131</sup>

But it is this very contradictory nature that makes the Cappella, and the twelfth-century Normans in southern Italy, so exciting and worth studying.

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<sup>131</sup> Ćurčić, “Further Thoughts on the Palatine Aspects of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo,” 525.

## CONCLUSION

The Norman monarchy in twelfth-century southern Italy and Sicily defies common stereotypes about the medieval period. Rather than a site of continuous conflict between east and west, the Normans' created a cosmopolitan space where people, goods, knowledge, and art from around the Mediterranean and Europe intersected and influenced each other. *Translatio normannitatis*, the circular pathway that marked this movement under the Normans, allowed for the creation of literature and architecture that crossed religious, language, and cultural boundaries. This dissertation has focused on romances and architecture produced by the Normans of southern Italy, or those associated with them; but not all the written texts composed during this period were in Old French. The Normans were critical in the translation and spread of Arabic scientific texts during the eleventh through thirteenth centuries, but Arabic texts also influenced, and were incorporated, into courtly poetry and troubadour lyrics, whose imagery, motifs, and language were frequently incorporated into twelfth century verse and prose romances.<sup>1</sup> As Maria Rosa Menocal argues, Arabic literature has an important role to play in the larger discussion of medieval literature.<sup>2</sup>

While those who worked in and around the Norman courts in Normandy, Anglo-Norman England, and Italy during the twelfth century were writing romances that included Muslim countries and their inhabitants, Muslims were writing about the Normans too. Most of the texts

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987): 93.

<sup>2</sup> She writes: "the exclusion of the Andalusian and Sicilian Arabic literary world from the general medieval European frame of reference has affected more than just the question of origins. It has also prevented much potentially valuable comparative study from being carried forwards, for although comparative work is not ultimately separable from genetic questions in this realm, studies whose focus is synchronic can produce insights other studies may overlook, because of the differences in focus." Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History*, 93.

concern the Normans in Sicily and southern Italy, and they cover a broad range of topics and viewpoints; there are geographies and travel narratives, poems, scientific works, and letters. Some authors endorse the Norman presence, while others long for a return to Islamic control of the island. The Normans monarchs of southern Italy were often the topic of Arabic poetry during this period, whether in praise or in anger. One of the most complimentary works is a poem by Al-Atrabanishi about Roger II's palace at Favara:

“Oh, Favara of the two seas! in you, desires converge!  
In you life is pleasant, your view majestic ...

How glorious is the sea of the two palm trees, and what the sea surrounding it  
contains:  
it is the greatest of all places

It is as if your waters, where they flow together, in their clarity  
were melted pearls, and the land were dusky skin...”<sup>3</sup>

As was discussed in chapter three, the Normans' combined European, Islamic, and Byzantine architectural styles in their religious buildings, and in the case of the monarchs, in their personal palaces and pleasure gardens. Roger II and his descendants created built multiple palaces in and around Palermo, including La Cuba, La Ziza, and Favara. Here, Al-Atrabanishi employs metonymy to praise Roger, celebrating him through his architectural achievements; “You” and “your” is both the palace itself and life in Sicily under Roger II. Palm trees were a symbol frequently used by the Normans in Italy, and appear in the mosaics decorating the Hall of King Roger in the royal palace in Palermo, as well as on Roger II's coronation mantle, which features a palm tree surrounded on both sides by a lion attacking a camel. The most fascinating portion of the poem is the comparison of the land of Sicily with dusky skin. Old French romance — as well as medieval romances in other languages — typically highlight the pale complexion of its

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<sup>3</sup> Al Atrabanishi, qtd. in Karla Mallette, *The Kingdom of Sicily, 1100-1250: A Literary History*, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005): 139-40.

characters, especially women; even non-European princesses are described with fair skin. But in contrast to the typically pale women of romance, Al-Atrabanishi describes Sicily and its people as darker. Under Roger II and the Norman monarchy's cosmopolitan culture, where Muslim and orthodox Christians served in the government and administration, where Arabic learning and texts were respected and translated, dusky skin had a place in the halls of power; it was, in fact, the very blending of people that made Norman Sicily so distinctive for its time.

Al-Atrabanishi was not the only Arabic poet who praises Roger II; Al-Buthayri, who lived in Sicily during the Norman period, did the same. He writes:

“...No living is serene, save  
in the sweet heights of Sicily

In a dynasty that rivals  
the empires of the Caesars...

And from the mouths of the lions in his fountain  
the waters of paradise gush forth

And spring dresses the land  
with its beauty in radiant cloaks,

and transforms it, and crowns its countenance  
with bright and bejeweled garments

They perfume the eastern breeze  
At morning and evening”<sup>4</sup>

Here again are the Norman lions, this time as fountains, and the land is dressed with gems and luxury fabrics, largely produced in eastern lands, that were traded in and through the Mediterranean basin, trade in which the Normans' played a critical role. Most tellingly, the Normans are the new Roman Empire, their king the progenitor of a new line of Caesars. The monarchy of twelfth-

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<sup>4</sup> Al-Buthayri, qtd. in Karla Mallette, *The Kingdom of Sicily*, 141-42.

century Norman Italy did not create a paradise. They did, however, create a cosmopolitan space where narratives — both textual and architectural — could be seen and hear

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