

# 1142? The Rise and Fall of Focerò in a Greek Petition to King Roger II of Sicily

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**Abstract:** This Greek petition from Norman Sicily under king Roger II (r. 1130–1154) reports back on events in the post-conquest period of the 1090s when the king's father, count Roger I (d. 1101) was establishing and re-organising a rudimentary form of administration over lands and men on the island. The petition not only sheds light on these processes, but it also recalls that there had been serious and sustained rebellions in Calabria and Sicily against the authority of Roger wife, Adelaide (r. 1101–1112), the mother of the future king, Roger II. During this time, a new settlement of Focerò, where many families had been ordered to live and work, had been repeatedly attacked and destroyed.

## Source

Archivio capitolare della Cattedrale “Arca Magna” di Patti, Fondo Carpetazza, fol. 20. Edition: *I diplomati greci ed arabi di Sicilia*, ed. Salvatore Cusa, Palermo: Lau, 1868–1882; repr. Cologne and Vienna: Böhlau, 1982, pp. 532–535. Re-edited on the basis of the manuscript and translated by Alex Metcalfe. The new edition reproduces lacunas and spacings within the lines. The gaps between the paragraphs, however, are not found in the manuscript, which has a continuous text without paragraph breaks. Greek text that is underlined by dots is now either missing or illegible, and the reading given follows that in Cusa's edition.

+ Ῥωγερίου τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου, καὶ ἀγιοτάτου  
καὶ κραταιοῦ ῥηγὸς καὶ νοητοῦ πάντων<sup>a</sup> τῶν  
χρ<sup>i</sup> στιανῶν πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη, + γίνωσκε ἅγιε  
αὐθ[έν]τ[α] ὅτι ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς τοῦ μακαρίου<sup>β</sup>  
κ[αὶ] ἀγιοτάτου ἡμῶν αὐθ[έν]τ[ου] τοῦ πατρός  
σου κρότον μέγαν ἐποίησεν ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ ἐμβολὰ  
οἰ<sup>β</sup> λεγομένη<sup>γ</sup> Κατοῦνα· ἀντίκρης Τραγίν[ας],  
καὶ ἐσώρευσεν τοὺς ἄρχοντας Καλαυρίας καὶ  
Σικελίας<sup>δ</sup> καὶ ἔκροσεν πρεκόνην ἐν ἡμέρᾳ  
τετάρτ[η]· ἀκούσατε ἄρχοντές Καλαυρί[ας]  
καὶ Σικελίας, ὅς<sup>ε</sup> οἷος δ' ἂν φανῇ ἔχοντα  
περισσώτερον υελλάνον εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτοῦ  
πλατεῖαν ἢ σμίζει· ἢ ἁλλάζει, ἢ σινόρον  
χώρας καταλήσει, ἵνα ἔχων ἐξουσίαν παιδία  
τῶν παιδίων μου, ἢ<sup>ε</sup> μενγγλαβίζειν καὶ  
πομπεύειν τοὺς ἄρχοντας αὐτὸν· κ[αὶ] [...] περὶ

May the years of Roger—the most  
revered, most holy, most powerful king  
and defender of all the Christians—be  
many! Know, holy lord, that in the times  
of our blessed and most holy lord your  
father, he caused a great clamour in the  
stretch of land called Katouna<sup>d</sup> opposite  
Tragena [Troina] where he convened the  
archons of Calabria and Sicily. Then, on  
the fourth day he announced a  
proclamation: “Archons of Calabria and  
Sicily! Listen! Whoever appears to have  
more villeins on his own register [than he  
ought to], or confuses or changes or  
destroys a land boundary, [then] my  
descendants *have the authority* to flog

<sup>a</sup> Cusa, *I diplomati*, reads πάντων.

<sup>b</sup> Sic.

<sup>d</sup> For references to Κατοῦνα (“encampment,” “garrison,” “barracks”) as a Sicilian toponym (e.g. Κατοῦνας Μανιάκου), see Caracausi, *Lessico*, pp. 283–284; Uggeri, *I castra*, pp. 319–336, at pp. 335–336.

αὐτ[οῦ] [.....]αγμα καὶ τοῦ <sup>c</sup> τὸν δὲ τερρέριν  
στ[αυ]ρώ[ν]ειν |<sup>9</sup> εἰδ'ὡς κορεύγειν καὶ δοδὴν  
καλάμην εἰς τὸ χαίρειν καὶ φροστεύγειν ἐκ τήν  
χῶραν· τοῦ |<sup>10</sup>

and parade these archons; to tonsure  
landholders in the form of a cross; cane  
them, and to dismiss and banish them  
from the land!”

του γέγωνε ἐν ἡμέρα Δ' κ[αὶ] πάλιν τῇ ε' ἡμέρα  
τὸ αὐτὸ πρεκόνην· καὶ τῇ σ' ἡμέρᾳ |<sup>11</sup> ο αὐτὸ  
τὸ αὐτοῦ<sup>e</sup> τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἔδωκ[ε] τὸ πρεκόνην,  
καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν προστάττω τὸν νοτάρ[ιον] Φί  
|<sup>12</sup> λιππον τὸν Κολοκίν[θον] τὸν ἐν τῷ ἄσται  
Γερακίου καὶ Φίλιππον Καμινήτην καὶ  
Ἀνδρέαν Γερα |<sup>13</sup> κιτάνον· Ὅπου δ' ἂν μοῦ  
εὔρωσιν ἀνθ[ρωπ]ον ξένον τ[ε] Καλαυρόν καὶ  
Σικελὸν· ἵνα ἔχων ἐξου |<sup>14</sup> σίαν παρ' ἐμοῦ τοῦ  
κόμητος τοῦ σουρεῦσαι αὐτοῦς καὶ  
οἰκοδομῆσαι τὸν Φωκαιρὸν κά |<sup>15</sup> στρον· καὶ  
ἵνα μοι ποιήσει πύργον ὃ τι να τὸν υλέπω ἀπὸ  
τοῦ Μυλίτον + καὶ οἴος δ' ἂν |<sup>16</sup> τερρέρης φανῇ  
ποιοῦνταν δύναμιν εἰς τοὺς ἐμοὺς δουλευτάς  
τὸ ἐγὼ Ρωγέρ[ιος]<sup>f</sup> προ |<sup>17</sup> στάττω ἵνα ἔχω ἢ  
ἐξουσίαν ἢ ἐμοὶ δουλεύται τοῦ υάλλειν  
λισιδ[αν] εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν αὐχέναν, καὶ |<sup>18</sup> μου  
φέρνειν ἔμπροσθεν, ταῦτα ἐκηρώθ[η]  
ἐβουλώθ[η] τῇ ἐμοὶ διακήρω βούλλ[η], καὶ  
ἀπεδώθ[η] ἐχ τοὺς ἐμοὺς δουλευτάς +

He made this same proclamation three  
times on the fourth day, and again on the  
fifth—and on the sixth day. “Henceforth,  
I order the notary Filippus Kolokinthos in  
the town of Geraki [Gerace] and Filippus  
Kaminétes and Andreas of Gerace that  
wherever they find an unregistered  
(*xenos*) Calabrian or Sicilian villein  
(*anthrōpos*), of mine they have the  
authority from me as count to gather  
them together and to build a walled  
settlement (*kastron*) at Fōkairos  
[Focerò], and to make me a tower that I  
can see from Mileto! And if any  
landholder (*terrērēs*) should appear to  
exert control over my vassals (*doulevtas*),  
then I, Roger, order that my vassals  
should have the authority to put a chain  
on their neck and to bring them before  
me! This wish is announced and declared  
on my authority and conceded to my  
vassals!”

οὗτος ὑπῆρχε ὁ πρόλογος καὶ ἡ πρόστάξεις  
τοῦ ἁγίου αὐθ[έν]τ[ου] ἡμῶν τοῦ π[ατ]ρ[ό]ς |<sup>19</sup>  
σου, τῶν καιρῶν ἐκείνων· καὶ ἀφῆκέν σοι εἰς  
ἀνάμνησιν ἐκ πάντ[ω]ν τῶν τερρερίων + |<sup>20</sup>  
ταῦτα γοῦν νοτ[άρι]ος Φίλιππος τοῦ  
Κολοκίνθ[ου] καὶ Φίλιπ[ος] Καμινίτις  
ἀκούσας τὴν τοιαύτην πρό |<sup>21</sup> σταξιν παρὰ τοῦ  
ὑπερ λάμπρου ἁγίου αὐθ[έν]τ[ου] ἡμῶν τοῦ  
π[ατ]ρ[ό]ς σου, ἐσουρεύσαμεν φαμίλιες Φ'  
ἀπὸ τοῦ Λωίριν ἀχρι τοῦ Μιλαίου<sup>g</sup> τοῦ  
ἀντικρεῖς<sup>h</sup> τοῦ Ἀγίου Μάρκου εἰς τὸν  
Φωκαιρὸν, καὶ μετὰ |<sup>22</sup> τοῦ σουρέυσαι αὐτοῦς·  
ἐζήτησαν ὁ λαὸς χωράφια εἰς τὸ σπέρνῃν καὶ  
ζῆν + καὶ ἀπῆλθομ[εν] εἰς τὸν |<sup>23</sup> ἅγιον  
αὐθ[έν]τ[α] τὸν π[ατέ]ρα σου καὶ ἐδείξαμεν τὸ  
ζητούμενον παρὰ τοῦ λαοῦ, Καὶ ἐπρόσταξεν ὁ  
ἅγι |<sup>24</sup> ος αὐθ[έν]τ[ης] ὁ π[ατ]ρ[ή]ρ σου ιβ'

This was the proclamation (*prologos*)  
and command of our holy lord your  
father in his days, and he left it for you as  
a reminder for all the landholders. And  
so, when the notary Filippus Kolokinthos  
and Filippus Kaminítis heard this  
command from our excellent holy lord  
your father, we gathered together at  
Fōkairon [Focerò] five hundred families  
from Libiri [Oliveri] as far as Milaios  
opposite San Marco. After they had  
brought them together, the people asked  
for fields to sow and for their livelihood,  
so *we went to* the holy lord your father  
and showed him what had been requested  
by the people. Thus, the holy lord your

<sup>c</sup> The reading of the superscripted addition in the manuscript is tentative.

<sup>e</sup> Cusa reads ἡμέρα τὸ αὐτοῦ.

<sup>f</sup> Cusa reads Ρωγέρης.

<sup>g</sup> Cusa reads Μιλέου.

<sup>h</sup> Cusa reads ἀντιχρεῖς.

ἄρχοντας εἰς τὸ διαχωρῆσαι [τὴν] χώραν τοῦ  
Φωκαιροῦ

καὶ οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ διαχωρήσαντες τὴν χώραν  
τοῦ Φωκαιροῦ· ὁ κύρις<sup>i</sup> Γεώργιος ὁ θεῖος  
τοῦ κυρίου Εὐγενίου το ἀμμηρὰ<sup>j</sup> <sup>25</sup> καὶ ὁ κύριος  
Μέλις ὁ Φράνγκος τῆς Τραγίνας καὶ ὁ  
ἀριφεις μέτους<sup>j</sup> Μαρσατίνους τῆς Τραγίνας·  
Πέ<sup>j</sup> <sup>26</sup> τρος Φιλονίτ[ης] τῆς Κατούνας τοῦ  
Μανιακῆ· νοτάρης Λέων τοῦ Ἀδριάνου·  
Υασίλις Τριχάρις <sup>27</sup> τοῦ Ἁγίου Μάρκου·  
Μενγλαβίτ[ης]<sup>k</sup> τοῦ Ἁγίου Μάρκου· Μουλῆς  
τοῦ Μαύρου Χώματο[ς]· ὁ ἡγούμενος τ[ῆς]  
Γαλάτης καὶ ὁ ἡγούμενος<sup>o</sup> τοῦ ἀρχιστρατήγου  
Μιχαήλ· νοτ[άριος] Λέων ὁ Σακκάς καὶ ὁ  
νοτ[άριος] Φίλιππος<sup>o</sup> <sup>28</sup> ὁ Κολούκιν[θος]

οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ ἄρχοντες οἱ διαχωρήσαντες τὴν  
χώραν τοῦ Φωκαι[ροῦ]· [*ἄρχεται οὕτως*]<sup>m</sup> <sup>29</sup>  
ἀπὸ τὰ βοτάνια, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ υλόρου καὶ  
ἀναναίνει εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν θ[εοτό]κον τοῦ ματαί  
<sup>30</sup> νου· καὶ ἀπὸ σώζει εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν  
Ἱερουσαλήμ, καὶ καταναίνει ἐκ τὰ ἀγριακὰ  
[καὶ] <sup>31</sup> ἐκ τὸν χέτην ἄχρι εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν  
ἐκκατερίνην καὶ ἀποσώζει εἰς τὸν ποταμὸν τοῦ  
μαύρου <sup>32</sup> χώματος·<sup>n</sup> καὶ ἀπὸ τὸν ποταμὸν  
ἀναναίνει [εἰς] τὴν πέτραν· ἄχρι τῆς τραχίας·  
καὶ <sup>33</sup> ἀπὸ σώζει εἰς τὸν βασιλικὸν δρόμον +  
καὶ πάλιν ἀπέρχεται τὸν βασιλικὸν δρόμον ἄχρι  
<sup>34</sup> εἰς τὸ κισσόπετρον· καὶ ἀπὸ τὸ  
κισσόπετρον ἀπέρχεται ἄχρι εἰς τὰ τρία  
πηγάδια + <sup>35</sup> καὶ ἀπὸ τὰ τρία πηγὰδια [εἰς] τὸ  
βασιλικὸν πηγαδ[ιον] ὃ ποὺ ὑπάρχει ἡ  
Διακράτης[η]<sup>o</sup> <sup>36</sup> τοῦ μουντου ἀλνάνου + καὶ  
καταναίνει [εἰς] τὴν ἐγείρον εἰς τὸ σίνονρον τῶν  
μοναχῶν <sup>37</sup> πᾶκτων + καὶ ἀπὸ τακεῖ[θεν]  
καταναίνει ἄχρι τοῦ ποταμοῦ· καὶ ὑάλλει τὸν  
ἄγιον <sup>38</sup> πέτρον ἔσω + καὶ πάλιν ἀπὸ τῶν

father ordered twelve archons to define  
the land of Focerò.

Those who defined the land of Focerò  
are: Geōrgios, uncle of lord (*kuris*)  
*Eugenios* the *amīr*; lord Melis the Frank  
from Traginas [Troina]; Arifis with those  
from Marsatinos at Troina; Petros  
Filonitēs from Katouna tou Maniakē  
[“the encampment at Maniace”]; the  
notary Leo of Adriano [Adrano]; Vasilis  
Tricharis of San Marco; the bodyguard  
(*manglabitis*) of San Marco; Moules of  
Mavrochóma; the abbot of Galatē [Galati  
Mamertino]; the abbot of the Archangel  
[*archistrategos*, lit. commander-in-chief  
i.e. of the angelic forces] Michael;<sup>l</sup> the  
notary Leo Sakkas, and the notary  
Filippos Koloukinthos.

These are the archons who defined the  
land of Focerò. *It [the boundary] begins  
thus*: from Ta Botánia [“The Herbs”] and  
from Brolo, it goes up to the Holy Virgin  
of Matainos and leads towards holy  
Jerusalem; it goes down from the  
uncultivated countryside and from the  
ridge as far as St Catherine’s and comes  
to the river of Mavrokoma; and from the  
river, it goes up to the rock as far as  
Trachia, and continues to the imperial  
road, and then it leaves the imperial road  
[and goes] to Kissopetron [“Ivy Rock”].  
From Kissopetron, it goes to the three  
springs, and from the three springs to the  
imperial spring where there is the district  
(*diakratēsis*) of Montalbano; then it goes  
down to the perimeter, to the boundary of  
the Patti monks, and then down as far as  
the river and includes St Peter’s within it;  
then, back from the river, *it goes up the*

<sup>i</sup> Cusa reads κύριος.

<sup>j</sup> Cusa reads ἀριφεισμέτους.

<sup>k</sup> Unclear reading that appears as either a double gamma or a gamma-lambda monogram. Cusa reads Μενγλαβίτης.

<sup>l</sup> Possibly a reference to the monastery of Santissima Trinità at Mileto that was known as the abbey of San Michele Arcangelo in the decades after its foundation by Roger I in 1081.

<sup>m</sup> From here to the end of the line are two interlinear tears in the manuscript that slightly obscure the lower parts of the letters in the personal name, Φίλιππος and the place name, Φωκαι[ροῦ]. The phrase ἄρχεται οὕτως in line 28 is entirely missing due to a lacuna. Here, its restoration by Cusa seems justified. Indeed, in cases where the original Greek is now obscure or missing, but was once legible to Cusa, the text and translation appear in italics..

<sup>n</sup> Cusa reads τοῦ μαύρου κόματος.

<sup>o</sup> Cusa reads διακράτησης.

ποταμόν ἀναυαίνει τὸν βουνὸν τοῦ ἁγίου ἐπὶ  
 |<sup>39</sup> κοῦ καὶ ἀποσώζει εἰς ταῖς ῥήζες πλησίον  
 τοῦ Φωκαίρου καὶ ἀπὸ τὸν Φωκαίρον καὶ |<sup>40</sup>  
 ταυαίνει τὸν χέτην ἄχρι εἰς τὸν σταυρόν τοῦ  
 χαλινζετέρει καὶ ἀποδιδῇ εἰς ταῖς Λ' |<sup>41</sup>  
 Δρεΐαις· καὶ ἀπὸ ταῖς Λ' δρεΐαις πάλιν  
 καταυαίνει τὸν ῥίακα ἄχρι τοῦ ποταμοῦ |<sup>42</sup> τῶν  
 υοτανιών· καὶ ἀποδιδῇ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν ὅθεν  
 καὶ τὴν ἔναρξιν τῶν ση |<sup>43</sup> νόρων ἐποιήσαν οἱ  
 ἄρχοντες τοῦ ἔσταν τοῦ Φωκαίρου,

καὶ ὁ ἅγιος ἡμῶν αὐθ[έν]τ[ης] ἔσταν |<sup>44</sup> ξεν καὶ  
 ἐνευαίωσεν τὴν διαχώρησιν ἥνπερ  
 ἐδιαχώρησαν οἱ τίμιοι ἐνδοξότατοι αὐτοῦ |<sup>45</sup>  
 ἄρχοντες τοῦ ἔσταν τοῦ Φωκαίρου, ἕως τῆς  
 συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος, ἀμήν + |<sup>46</sup> καὶ ἄνα  
 πέντε ἐνιαυτοὺς ἵνα μου δουλεύει ὁ καθῆς  
 κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτοῦ δύναμιν· |<sup>47</sup> καὶ μετὰ  
 ὀλίγα ἔτη τέλος τοῦ υἱοῦ ἔχρισεν ὁ μακαρίτης  
 [καὶ] ἅγιος ἡμῶν αὐθ[έν]τ[ης] ὁ π[ατ]ήρ σου·  
 καὶ ἐμορτέυει |<sup>48</sup> ἐν Καλαυρία καὶ Σικαιλία τῆς  
 ἁγίας αὐθ[έν]τ[ρίας] τῆς μητρός σου καὶ  
 [ἀπ]ελ[ύθη] τό κάστρον τοῦ Φωκαίρου διὰ<sup>p</sup> |<sup>49</sup>  
 σῶν ἀρχόντων οὓς ἐπικράτουσαν τὴν καιρὸν  
 ἐκεῖνον τὴν χώραν καὶ πάλιν<sup>q</sup> μετὰ θε[ο]ν ἡ  
 ἁγία αὐθ[έν]τ[ρία] ἡ μ[ητ]ρά σου ἐνίκησεν  
 τοὺς τερρερίους, καὶ ἀνοικοδόμησεν |<sup>50</sup> [πάλιν  
 τὸν]<sup>r</sup> Φωκαίρον Β' ἄχρι εἰς τὰς Γ' φορὰς, καὶ  
 ἡς τὴν τρίτ[ην] φορὰν κατάλυσεν αὐτὸ ὁ Ἄλ |<sup>51</sup>  
 κέρης,<sup>s</sup> καὶ ὑπάρχει ἔρημον τὸ κάστρον ἀπὸ  
 τῆς κυμήσεως τῆς αὐθ[έν]τ[ρίας], καὶ  
 ἐξόρησαν τοὺς |<sup>52</sup> [βελλάνους ἀπὸ τοῦ]<sup>t</sup>  
 Φωκαίρου οὓς ἐκατοίκουν εἰς τὴν χώραν ὁ  
 Ἀλγέρις· Διὰ τὸ ὄνομα |<sup>53</sup>

[.....]<sup>v</sup> ἐμήρασαν αὐτοὺς [.....]<sup>w</sup>  
 αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν νύαν· καὶ εἰς τὸ Λι |<sup>54</sup>  
 [βίριν.....]<sup>x</sup> καὶ εἰς τὸ ἅγιον Πέτρον

hill of St Epinikos (*agios epinikos*) and  
 continues to the vines near Focerò; and  
 from Focerò it goes down to the ridge to  
 the cross of Chalinzeteri and comes out at  
 “the thirty trees.” And from “the thirty  
 trees” it goes back down the stream as far  
 as the river of Ta Botánia and then comes  
 out at the sea where the start of the  
 boundaries is that the archons of Focerò  
 made.

Our holy lord confirmed and established  
 the division of land that his honourable  
 distinguished archons who were at  
 Focerò defined until the end of time.  
 Amen. And, for five years, each man  
 gave labour services to me according to  
 his own ability.<sup>u</sup> After a few years, our  
 blessed and holy lord your father reached  
 the end of his life and there was a  
 rebellion in Calabria and Sicily of the  
 holy lady your mother, and [*the kastron*  
*of Focerò was destroyed by*] your  
 archons who lorded over the land at that  
 time; and again with [the help of] God  
 the holy lady your mother defeated the  
 land holders and rebuilt Focerò a second  
 time, and then a third time. And on the  
 third time, Alger[iu]s destroyed it, and  
 the *kastron* became deserted after the  
 death of the holy lady, and they drove out  
 the *villeins* from Focerò whom they  
 settled on the land. Alger[iu]s, in the  
 name

[.....] they divided them  
 [.....] them to Bina and Li[biris]  
 [.....] and to St Peter's  
 [.....] and to Mavrochóma and to

<sup>p</sup> 60mm of text is missing from two lacunas in manuscript. Cusa reads ἀπελύθη τό κάστρον τοῦ Φωκαίρου διὰ.

<sup>q</sup> Lacunas in manuscript from the line above obscure the upper parts of the text, which is only legible with difficulty.

<sup>r</sup> Cusa reads πάλιν τὸν.

<sup>s</sup> Cusa reads Ἀλγέρης.

<sup>t</sup> Here, the manuscript is severely damaged; 55mm of text is either missing or illegible. Cusa reads βελλάνους ἀπὸ τοῦ.

<sup>u</sup> It is unclear to whom “to me” refers. While it is very likely to refer to Roger I, a more literal reading would suggest that the author of the petition was himself a key landholder at the time of the revolt who had been dispossessed of his villeins as a result of the turmoil.

<sup>v</sup> 60mm lacuna.

<sup>w</sup> 45mm lacuna.

<sup>x</sup> 90mm in manuscript text illegible. Cusa reads λιβίριν for the first word of the line.

[.....]<sup>y</sup> καὶ εἰς τό Μαυρόν χοῦμαν [καὶ]  
 εἰς τὰ <sup>55</sup>  
 [.....]<sup>z</sup>  
 [μενγγλαβίζεται]<sup>aa</sup> καὶ <sup>56</sup>  
 [.....]  
 .....  
 ..]<sup>bb</sup> |<sup>57</sup> [.....]<sup>cc</sup> κατούνομα αὐτό· ὁ  
 παπᾶς υασιλείς υἱὸς τοῦ μαυρο <sup>58</sup>  
 [.....]<sup>dd</sup>  
 [ἄνθρωπος σου]<sup>ee</sup> μος [...] καὶ ἄλλοι ἕτεροι  
 πολλοὶ, ὅθεν καὶ [...] <sup>ff</sup> |<sup>59</sup> [.....]<sup>gg</sup> ἅγιε  
 αὐθ[έν]τα ὅτι ὅπερ ἐμουρδουννίας φουερὸς  
 ὑπῆρχεν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῇ Καλα <sup>60</sup> [βρίας]  
 [.....]<sup>hh</sup> σικελία[ς] καὶ ἀλλὰ ἡ ἁγία  
 αὐθ[έν]τ[ρι]α ἡ μ[ητ]ρά σου ὥς σκεύη  
 κεράμεωσ συνέτριψεν αὐτόν, <sup>61</sup> [.....]<sup>ii</sup>  
 αὐτόν εἰς τὸν καιρόν τῆς ἁγίας αὐτῆς  
 υασιλεί[ας], καὶ οὐκ ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τοῦ <sup>62</sup>  
 [.....]<sup>jj</sup> ἀργεύων τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ  
 μόνον<sup>kk</sup> ἀφορμῇ ἦτον πρὸς αὐτόν διὰ ἕναν  
 υελλάνον <sup>63</sup>  
 [.....]<sup>ll</sup> [.....]<sup>mm</sup>  
 [ἔχεις τοὺς βελλάνους]<sup>nn</sup> σου τοὺς  
 ἐκατήρπαξεν τυραννικῇ <sup>64</sup> [.....]<sup>oo</sup> τοὺς  
 ἀπὸ τῆς κυμήσεως τῆς ἁγίας αὐθ[εν]τ[ρίας]  
 τῆς μ[ητ]ρ[ὸ]ς σου ἄχρι τῆς ση <sup>65</sup>  
 [.....]<sup>pp</sup> καυχᾶ τε καὶ λέγει συν τῷ  
 συγγενῇ<sup>qq</sup> αὐτοῦ τοῦ γημοῦντου, ὅτι οὐκ ἐστὶν  
 ἐν τῷ <sup>66</sup> [.....]<sup>rr</sup> καιρῷ τούτῳ ἄρχων ἵνα  
 με ἀποβάλει<sup>ss</sup> οὔτε ὁ ῥηγᾶς ἀφ' ἐαυτοῦς τοῦ

[.....]  
 whip and  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....] the register  
 (*katounoma*)... the priest Basileis, son of  
 Mavro[s]  
 [.....] *your*  
*villein* [...] and many others besides. And  
 hence [.....] holy lady because  
 there was great turmoil in the whole land  
 of Calabria [.....] Sicily, but the  
 holy lady your mother smashed him like  
 a ceramic pot [.....] him at the  
 time of her holy rule, and there is not at  
 this time [.....] *absenting his*  
*name only* was a means for him through  
 a villein [.....]  
 [.....] *you have your*  
*villeins* whom the tyrannical [...] usurped  
 [.....] seized them after the death  
 of the holy lady your mother until your  
 [.....] *he boasts and says with his*  
*brother in-law (sungenis) Gēmoutos*  
 [Guimond] that at this [.....] time  
*there is not an archon to expel me*, either  
 their own king [.....][.....] *the lord*  
*against him because of the plundering*  
*that he had done of Focerò, and he seized*  
 all the land of Focerò because of its poor  
 condition that a knight (*kaballaris*) in

<sup>y</sup> 45mm lacuna.

<sup>z</sup> 150mm lacuna.

<sup>aa</sup> The reading here follows that of Cusa. The manuscript text is unclear.

<sup>bb</sup> An entire line of about 270mm of text is illegible.

<sup>cc</sup> Lacuna followed by 85mm of illegible text. Cusa reads [λι]βίρην for the first word of the line.

<sup>dd</sup> Lacuna followed by 150mm of illegible text.

<sup>ee</sup> Illegible. Reading follows Cusa's.

<sup>ff</sup> Lacuna in manuscript.

<sup>gg</sup> 35mm of text is missing.

<sup>hh</sup> 40mm of text missing. Cusa reads Καλαβρίας και Σικελίας which makes sense in the context, but which would be too short to fill 40mm of missing text if unabbreviated.

<sup>ii</sup> 35mm of text is missing.

<sup>jj</sup> 35mm of text is missing.

<sup>kk</sup> This phrase follows Cusa's reading. It is difficult to read due to the darkening of the parchment.

<sup>ll</sup> 90mm of the manuscript text is illegible here.

<sup>mm</sup> 100mm of text is illegible due to darkening of the parchment.

<sup>nn</sup> The reading here follows Cusa's.

<sup>oo</sup> 55mm lacuna.

<sup>pp</sup> 50mm lacuna.

<sup>qq</sup> Text illegible due to darkening of the parchment. The reading here follows Cusa's.

<sup>rr</sup> 40mm of text is missing.

<sup>ss</sup> Text barely legible due to the darkening of the parchment. The reading here follows that of Cusa.

[.....]<sup>tt</sup> τοῦτου |<sup>67</sup> [.....]<sup>uu</sup> ὁ αὐθέντης πρὸς αὐτὸν  
διὰ τὴν ἀρπαγὴν ἣν πέπραχεν<sup>vv</sup> τοῦ Φωκαίρου  
καὶ ἐκατήρ- |<sup>68</sup> παξεν [.....]<sup>ww</sup> τὴν χώραν τοῦ  
Φωκαίρου ὅλην ὑπὸ τῆς πονηρίας αὐτῶν ὅτι  
καυαλλάρισ ἵνα |<sup>69</sup> [.....]<sup>xx</sup> σει τριῶν  
ἡμερῶν τὴν διακράτησιν τῆς χώρας  
[.....]<sup>yy</sup> ἐπλούτησεν ἅγιε  
αὐθέντα<sup>zz</sup> [.....]<sup>aaa</sup> |<sup>70</sup> Φωκαίρου  
τοὺς χριστιανοὺς ὅτι καὶ ὁ ἄρχοντας σου καὶ οἱ  
στρατηγί σου ἐδείλυσαν |<sup>71</sup> τὰ κακὰ τοῦ,

μόνον ἅγιε αὐθέντα εἰ<sup>bbb</sup> μὲν τὸν θέλεις  
κακοποιῆσαι διὰ τὰ σφάλματα |<sup>72</sup> αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν  
παρακοὴν τὴν ποιεῖ πρὸς τὴν ἁγίαν σου  
βασιλείαν, οἱ ἀδικία τοῦ ὅρου τοῦ |<sup>73</sup> κόνδου  
ἄρκει τοῦ, στείλας τὸν αὐθέντον μου τὸν  
δοῦκαν καὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐμέν ὁ |<sup>74</sup>  
γράψας ταύτην τὴν ἐπιστολήν, καὶ ἀπεσώθη  
πρὸς σε τὸν ἅγιόν μου αὐθέντα σὺν τοῦ ἐμοῦ ἀ-  
|<sup>75</sup> δέλφου Ἰωάννου, καὶ ἵνα θαυμάσεις καὶ  
ξενιαστής ἐκ τὴν ζημίαν ἣν πέπρακεν |<sup>76</sup> πρὸς  
σὲ τὸν ἅγιον ἡμῶν αὐθέντα καὶ ἵνα ὑπάρχωμεν  
καὶ ἡμεῖς οἱ δοῦλοι τῶν δούλων σου |<sup>77</sup> πρὸς σέ  
ἀληθινῇ καὶ πίστει ἔχομεν καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ  
σφάλματα τοῦ Ἀλκέρη |<sup>78</sup> εἰς τὸ σου ὑποδεῖξαι  
καὶ ἄτονον μὲν γράφονταν, ἀλλὰ ἕως ὁδοῦ ὁ  
σκόπος + |<sup>79</sup>

[.....] τῆς σικίας νικηφόρος, νικόλαος  
λύτρης, ἀρκάδιος μαστοῦκας, ἀρκάδιος |<sup>81</sup> τῆς  
βίνας, λέος τοῦ γεροῦ μουλέ, λέος  
λουπουλίτης, νικόλαος λουπολίτης, σέργης  
λουπολίτης, |<sup>82</sup> βασιλὶς λουπολλίτης, λέος  
ἀνεψιὸς τοῦ κοχαλλήτη, οἱ παῖδες τοῦ γεροῦ  
οὐρσου τοῦ βαπτήστα.<sup>ddd</sup>

order to [.....] within three days the  
definition of the land  
[.....] enriched the holy  
lord [.....] the Christians  
of Focerò because both your archons and  
your officials (*stratēgi*) made his evil  
deeds clear.

But, holy lord, if you wish to punish him  
for his errors and for the disobedience  
that he does against your holy authority,  
[then] the injustices of his short rule  
(*horos*) are sufficient. Let my lord send  
the duke (*douka*)<sup>ccc</sup> and your archons and  
me, who has written this letter  
(*epistolē*), which was conveyed to your  
holy lordship by my brother Ioannes, so  
that you might marvel and be astonished  
at the damage that he has done to you, our  
holy lord; and we shall be servants of  
your servants for you in truth and in faith.  
We have many other crimes (*sfalmata*) of  
Alkeri [Algerius] to reveal to you, but it  
would be tedious to write them down,  
although that is the intention. +

[.....] of Sikias, Nikēforos;  
Nicholas Lytris; Arkadios Mastoukas;  
Arkadios of Bina; Leo, son of elder  
Moule; Leo Loupoulitēs; Nicholas  
Loupolitēs; Sergis Loupolitēs; Basil  
Loupollitēs; Leo, nephew of Kochallēti;  
the sons of the elder, Oursos, *son of*  
*Baptēsta*.

<sup>tt</sup> 20mm gap. Possibly a word has been erased here.

<sup>uu</sup> 20mm of text is missing.

<sup>vv</sup> Cusa reads πέπρακεν.

<sup>ww</sup> 25mm missing.

<sup>xx</sup> 40mm missing.

<sup>yy</sup> 95mm missing.

<sup>zz</sup> Text obscured by a tear in the manuscript.

<sup>aaa</sup> 90mm tear in the manuscript.

<sup>bbb</sup> The first half of the line is largely illegible due to water damage on the text.

<sup>ccc</sup> Probably a reference to Roger III, son and heir of king Roger II and duke of Apulia, who died in 1148. He was mainly attested on the mainland, but appears administratively active in Sicily in a charter of Roger II from July 1143 in Messina. See *Rogerii II. regis diplomata*, ed. Brühl, no. 57, pp. 156–162.

<sup>ddd</sup> Illegible. Reading follows that of Cusa.

## Authorship & Work

[§1] This letter or petition (*epistolē*) is kept in the Archivio capitolare in Patti (province of Messina), Sicily.<sup>1</sup> Its author, who was probably the petitioner, is unknown. However, it may be supposed from a self-reference in the text that he was probably a Greek-speaking notable/notary from Calabria or, more likely, from north-eastern Sicily where the main events related in the document occurred.<sup>2</sup> Based on a charter from December 1142, which may well have arisen as a response to this petition, we might tentatively infer that the document was composed not long before.<sup>3</sup>

[§2] The text was written in a careful hand in Byzantine Greek from south Italy and it was embellished with intricately drawn banners at the top and towards the foot of the parchment. It shows clear traces of Byzantine diplomatic: a striking example is the acclamation in the opening line wishing that the years of the king be many, which dates back to Late Antiquity and was mainly associated with pre-eleventh-century contexts in Byzantine diplomatic, sigillography and epigraphy.<sup>4</sup> The textual structure adheres to broadly conceived norms in documents of this type with an *invocatio*, *arenga*, *promulgatio*, *narratio*, followed by a dispositive section containing a boundary definition (*διαχωρισμός*) and then an appeal to the ruler to reclaim his rightful lands. It ends with an incomplete witness list.

[§3] The parchment has been stained dark in many places by severe water-damage, such that the text is often illegible. In several parts, particularly towards the left-hand margin, the document is also lacunose. Much of the damage to the integrity of the document occurred before Salvatore Cusa's *editio princeps* was published between 1868 and 1882.<sup>5</sup> The water-damage may perhaps be attributed to the period of renovation of the archive in the 1960s and 1970s during which it was flooded. In any event, more of the text was legible to Cusa in the mid-to-late 1800s than it is now.

## Content & Context

[§4] The petition was made for the attention of the king Roger II (r. 1130–1154), but opens with a brief retrospective report set in the time of his father, Roger I (d. 1101). For the purposes of summary and analysis, the petition can be divided into three linked sections. First, it reports that an assembly of lords was held near Troina in north-east Sicily by Roger I, the count of Sicily and Calabria. Out of his concern for territorial organisation of the area and its labour force, he ordered that a cadastral survey of the population be conducted from Oliveri to San Marco [d'Alunzio], such that any “villein” whose name did not appear on a landholder's register would be sent to live in the estate of Focerò where there was a walled settlement (*kastron*) and where a tower (*purgos*) was to be built. Second, some 500 families were to be relocated there; thus, the extensive boundaries of the estate with lands for them to work were defined by a dozen named *archons*. Then, after Roger I's death, a revolt led by notables (*archons*) broke out against his wife and regent, Adelaide del Vasto (d. 1118). A focal point of

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<sup>1</sup> Archivio capitolare della Cattedrale “Arca Magna” di Patti, Fondo Carpetazza, fol. 20. Manuscript dimensions: 315mm by 800mm; the average line length of text is 270mm.

<sup>2</sup> Fasolo, *Alla ricerca*, p. 9, suggests that the first-named witness of the document, Nikiforos, may have been its author and the petitioner.

<sup>3</sup> See [§5] for references.

<sup>4</sup> For diverse references to the *polla ta eté tou basileōs* acclamation, see Strinna, *Earliest Charter Sources*, pp. 339–340.

<sup>5</sup> *I diplomati*, ed. Cusa, pp. 532–535, with a summary at pp. 705–706; reprinted in Fasolo, *Alla ricerca*, no. 2, pp. 34–36. Register: Caspar, *Roger II*, p. 547 (no. 149); Collura, *Appendice*, vol. 2, pp. 545–625 at p. 612; Girgensohn and Kamp (eds), *Urkunden*, no. 37, p. 18; Catalioto, *Vescovato*, p. 211.

the violence was Focerò itself, which was sacked, rebuilt, and destroyed again, even though Adelaide was eventually victorious over the rebellious landholders (*terrerioli*). A couple of decades or more later, the troubles in the area were still in evidence as the petition denounced the misdeeds of a certain lord, Algerius (a.k.a. Alcherios, Alcheris), against king Roger II, and appeals to the king to regain his possessions.

[§5] No dates are cited in the document.<sup>6</sup> However, mention is made of Roger I's death in 1101, prior to which the assembly in Troina had been convened; Focerò had been settled with families of non-registered villeins who had worked there for a few years before the count passed away, and his wife's regency began. Working backwards from the time of Roger's death in 1101, it is likely that the survey of villeins and their resettlement occurred around 1095–1096. Moreover, two later documents, at least one of which is dated to December 1142, were likely composed in response to the petition itself, which may thus have been written in the preceding months and probably no later than December 1142.<sup>7</sup> The petition thus retrospectively reports events from the time of count Roger I in the mid-1090s and the regency of his wife, Adelaide in the early 1100s. In addition, the reference to the *δοῦκας* in line 73, recalls the time of Roger III (r. c. 1135–1148) as duke of Apulia under Roger II as king (r. 1130–1154), probably in the late 1130s or very early 1140s.

[§6] The geographical identification of Focerò and its boundaries has been carefully and convincingly made by Michele Fasolo based on toponyms and landscape features cited in later documents from the Patti archive.<sup>8</sup> To date, the site, which has almost no extant remains above ground level, is unexcavated.<sup>9</sup> The etymology of Focerò/Fōkairos is unclear, but it might be connected to a nearby micro-toponym, Fossa (delle Neve). The latter, which is frequently found in toponym compounds probably derives from the Latin/Greek *φόσσα* (Latin, *fossa* “trench”) or *φοσσάτον* (Lat. *fossatum*) “army camp.” An alternative derivation from the Greek *φῶς* (“light,” “torch”), might suggest that there was a fire-tower used for signalling. If so, it could explain Roger's claim that he wished to see it from Mileto, his Calabrian headquarters, some 120 kilometres away.<sup>10</sup>

## Contextualization, Analysis & Interpretation

[§7] The following paragraphs will focus on the petition's *narratio* to discuss the broader topic of land administration in the early post-conquest period of Norman rule from 1091 onwards, when the fall of Noto marked the end of Norman-led campaigns to conquer Muslim Sicily that had begun some three decades before. Following the death of Robert Guiscard in 1085, his younger brother, count Roger of Sicily and Calabria, became the most powerful lord in a

<sup>6</sup> The date of 2 November 1141 given by Caspar is without justification, see Caspar, *Roger II*, p. 547.

<sup>7</sup> Collura, *Appendice*, no. 4, pp. 609–614; reprinted in Fasolo, *Alla ricerca*, nos. 3 and 4, pp. 36–38; Sidoti and Magistri, *Diocesi*, vol. 2, pp. 225–227; Garufi, *Censimento*, no. 2, pp. 90–91; reprinted in Catalioto, *Vescovato*, pp. 213–215. Register: Dölger, *Beiträge*, no. 40, p. 169; Girgensohn and Kamp, *Urkunden*, nos. 38 and 40, pp. 18 and 19.

<sup>8</sup> Fasolo, *Alla ricerca*, especially pp. 21–32; for aerial photographs and maps reconstructing the boundaries, see pp. 60–67.

<sup>9</sup> The co-ordinates of the peak of Monte Saraceno, which is 1,090m high in the Nébardi mountains are: 38.09161736163795, 14.924540810875808. The identification of Focerò is the subject of Michele Fasolo's short monograph, so it will not be repeated here. I am grateful to the author for taking me and my postgraduate students to the top of the site between Monte Fossa delle Neve and Monte Saraceno, which is the most likely location of the aforesaid watchtower. If there were a signalling system, it would probably have been routed via one of more of the Aeolian Islands which are visible from southern Calabria as far north as Amantea.

<sup>10</sup> On the use of fire-towers as signalling systems in Byzantine Sicily, see Modeo and Cutaia, *Sistema*, pp. 297–328. A strong counter-argument may be made against the putative existence of a fire-tower at Focerò since the common Latin noun *fossa* may also refer to “a ditch,” “trench” or “fosse,” and is frequently found in micro-toponym compounds.

politically fractured island marked by long absences of a clear ruling authority. To understand the documentary value of the petition, its contents will be matched with what we know from other sources about land administration under Roger I (§§8–13) and during the minority of his wife and son (§§14–15).

[§8] From around 1093, the documentary record for Sicily shows systematic and sustained efforts by count Roger to organise a stable basis for his rule. Central to this were concessions of lands and men to his supporters, the main recipients of which were newly founded Latin-rite churches, abbeys, and monasteries, as well as some older Basilian houses. Most relevant for our document was the foundation and unification of the Benedictine abbeys of San Bartolomeo at Lìpari and San Salvatore at Patti under a single abbot at Patti itself.<sup>11</sup> The former had been founded by Roger and his brother, Robert, in or before 1085; the latter was founded in 1094 by Roger himself. With the patronage of the count, his wife Adelaide del Vasto (d. 1118), and, later, their son Roger II, Lìpari–Patti became one of the most powerful landholders in the Val Démone region of north-east Sicily. Its *castella*, *castra*, and *casàlia* with their population of Christians and a minority of Muslims were scattered along the north-east coast and in the hinterland of the Nébrodi mountains.

[§9] Besides the count and ecclesiastical institutions, there were other landlords in the area. Among these was a certain Algerius of Ficarra (*de Ficaria*).<sup>12</sup> The settlement of Ficarra lies to west of Patti and its lands were contiguous with those of Focerò.<sup>13</sup> As such, Algerius of Ficarra is a good candidate for the rebel of the same name in the petition. His ethnicity is uncertain, but his brother-in-law had a Norman name: Gemontos; that is to say, Guimond. Algerius' son had a Greek name: Alexios.<sup>14</sup>

[§10] The regulation and recording of grants were urgent post-conquest concerns. In this period, there is no evidence for centralised forms of governance, but rather as localised attempts to impose order over an old guard of existing institutions, notables, and local strongmen as well as over a new cadre of recently empowered lords who were, in many cases, from outside Sicily. The island's former administration at Palermo under the Muslim rulers had broken down by the 1050s, and Sicily's different languages, customs, faiths, and traditions served only to compound the potential for disorder and chaos. Indeed, in the petition, the dire threats directed by Roger I to those who transgressed his post-conquest authority perhaps express the count's anxieties about ruling effectively without recourse to violence against his own lords.

[§11] Roger I's primary base in Sicily was at Troina, but his rulership was polycentric and itinerant, an important feature of which was the convening of assemblies. In the petition, the comital assembly near (but not *in*) the town is the only description we have of such a gathering. It also makes an important connection between the function of these assemblies and the keeping of “villein” registers. Such registers were vital to record-keeping and became a central plank of the comital and, later, royal fiscal administration in the offices known as the *Dīwān al-ma'mūr* and *Dīwān al-tahqīq al-ma'mūr*. However, back in the 1090s—according to Roger I's words in the petition—lords kept their own registers against which checks could be made. On the other hand, boundaries were said to be indicated by physical markers, and no mention was made of

<sup>11</sup> Girgensohn and Kamp, *Urkunden*, no. 5, p. 11; Pirri, *Sicilia sacra*, vol. 2, pp. 770–771; White Jr, *Latin Monasticism*, pp. 82–83.

<sup>12</sup> For a denunciation of Algerius of Ficarra, probably from late 1142, see Archivio Capitolare della Cattedrale “Arca Magna” di Patti, Fondo Carpetazza, fol. 17; edition in Collura, *Appendice*, no. 4, pp. 609–614, reprinted in Fasolo, *Alla ricerca*, p. 36. For a tentative identification of Algerius with Gervasius in a donation of Adelaide's from 1111, see von Falkenhausen, *Regentschaft*, p. 98.

<sup>13</sup> Fasolo, *Alla ricerca*, p. 67.

<sup>14</sup> For the mention of his brother, Alexios, in a boundary description of Focerò from December 1142, see *I diplomati*, ed. Cusa, pp. 525–527, here at p. 526; reprinted in Fasolo, *Alla ricerca*, p. 39.

any written record. These claims are at least partially true based on our understanding of the comital documents from the early-to-mid-1090s when lists of household heads of families that had been granted from the comital demesne were written out in Greek and Arabic by the count's scribes.<sup>15</sup>

[§12] One of the most important early registers related to a large grant in favour of the Benedictine abbey of Sant'Agata at Catania in February 1095.<sup>16</sup> It recorded the names of 390 men in Arabic, but it also referred back to "other registers of my lands and of my landholders (τερρερίων) written at Mazara in 1093."<sup>17</sup> When this same register came to be renewed in 1145, the processes of compiling, cross-checking, and copying older registers were made explicit: the church was entitled to those named on the list provided that they were not also cited in any royal register from the *Dīwān al-ma'mūr* or in any landholders' registers (*ġarā'id al-tarrārīya*).<sup>18</sup> If there were any discrepancy of named villeins between different lists, those named would revert to the ruler. Finally, in an oblique reference to the issuing/checking of registers at Mazara in 1093, the list from 1095 was said to have been copied out from one written two years previously. The lists thus served as written instruments of legal entitlement: any villeins whose names were duplicated, were not registered, or were incorrectly registered, were automatically the property of the ruler. But in a region where the rural labour force was essential to make lands productive, and where manpower was in short supply, landholders stood to make catastrophic losses of villeins in a population survey and register-check, such as that announced by Roger I at Troina, if they could not corroborate their claims in writing.

[§13] In the post-conquest period until the establishment of a kingdom in 1130, the rulers relied on a small group of functionaries who were responsible for drafting the outputs of the comital administration, perhaps even with a view to some eventual re-establishment of centralised authority. In Sicily, those who can be identified by their names on charters were often "Greeks" from the Val Démone, particularly around Troina itself.<sup>19</sup> The personal names of the twelve archons who defined the boundaries of Focerà were overwhelming Greek. Among the archons, three were notaries; two were abbots; one was a "Frank;" one had a name derived from Arabic (Moules, from Mawlā) that was often used by Christians, and another was a personal guard known only by his Byzantine military title: *manglabitēs* (μενγλαβίτης). A certain Giorgios was named as the uncle of Eugenios "the amīr" a.k.a. "the notary," who was one of the most prominent functionaries in the entourage of Roger I and Adelaide.<sup>20</sup> The list of witnesses at the foot of the petition all had Greek names with the exception of "Moulé/Mawlā." As for the "villein" population of the area, this may be gauged by an in-house register compiled by the church at Patti that listed the names of 377 tax-payers in the settlements of Naso, Fitalia, Librizzi, and Panagia.<sup>21</sup> Slightly fewer than one-quarter were Muslims and had Arabic names; the rest were presumably Christians and had Greek names, but for about ten per cent or so who had Frankish or (non-Islamic) Arabic names.<sup>22</sup>

[§14] As this petition makes clear, it would be wrong to assume that the post-conquest organisation of lands, men and lords was an orderly and peaceful process, especially after the death of count Roger in 1101. The cause of the initial uprising of lords (*archons*) at Focerà is

<sup>15</sup> Johns, *Arabic Administration*, pp. 42–63 for early registers of men, and pp. 39–42 on division of the land.

<sup>16</sup> *I diplomī*, ed. Cusa, pp. 541–549.

<sup>17</sup> *I diplomī*, ed. Cusa, p. 548.

<sup>18</sup> *I diplomī*, ed. Cusa, pp. 563–585, here at pp. 594–595.

<sup>19</sup> Takayama, *Administration*, pp. 25–46; Johns, *Arabic Administration*, pp. 63–90.

<sup>20</sup> On the career of Eugenios from 1092–c. 1105, see Takayama, *Administration*, pp. 31–32, 36, 44, 54, 67, and 91; see also Johns, *Arabic Administration*, pp. 69, 72 and 317.

<sup>21</sup> A poor reading of the document was made by Garufi, *Censimento*, pp. 92–100; this was reproduced verbatim in Catalioto, *Vescovato*, pp. 216–220.

<sup>22</sup> For an onomastic analysis, see Metcalfe, *Muslims*, pp. 78–84.

not made explicit. However, it is quite likely that lords in the area had lost control over important sources of manpower for their lands. Given that 500 families (perhaps as many as 2,000 people if the figure is to be taken at face value) were transplanted to live and work within the extensive boundaries of Focerò, paying their rents and taxes to the count as lord, then a politico-economic motive for action might suffice. However, the petition also states that a revolt against Adelaide broke out across Calabria and Sicily in what seems to be against her personal authority as regent. If so, then this challenge was an existential threat to the wider rule of the Normans in Sicily and Calabria since she was also mother to Roger's two infant sons—Simon and Roger.

[§15] There are important hints of this rebellion during the minority of Roger I's sons in other sources too. The earliest is a legal case from 1123 in which we learn of “the uprising of the landholders” (τοῦ μούρτου τῶν τεῤῥερίων) and the recapture of Ciminna, a mere 30 kilometres to the east of Palermo as the crow flies.<sup>23</sup> Jeremy Johns may be right to suggest that the same rebellion was responsible for the fall of the stronghold of Qal'at al-Širāt and its reconstruction at Collesano, 60 kilometres due east of Palermo.<sup>24</sup> Finally, in a section of the anonymous chronicle known as the *Historia Sicula* or *Anonymous Vaticanus* which is datable to the later 1140s or early 1150s, we find a cryptic remark about the death of Simon in 1105, who was about twelve or thirteen at the time, following *inritationes* (“stirrings,” “incitements,” or perhaps “uprisings”) at the hands of the Apulians.<sup>25</sup>

[§16] In sum, the importance of this petition, which has never been translated, has long been recognised by historians for what it says of the operations of Roger I's comital administration in its shift from memory to written record; the complex post-conquest history of the Val Démone and diocese of Troina–Messina through its rich archive of charter materials; the political theatre of assemblies of lords; the local notables and strongmen, some of whom defined the lands of Focerò, while others sought to destroy it, and the deadly rivalry over lands resources between lords and the rulers. Finally, its importance lies in what it tells us of the hitherto unsung hero of the piece in the guise of the regent Adelaide whose success in defeating the landholders was a *sine qua non* for the continuity of Norman legacy in Sicily and Calabria. As such, the petition grants an unprecedented insight into the complex history of early Norman Sicily during its long transition from a region under Muslim rule to a Christian kingdom.

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<sup>23</sup> *I diplomî*, ed. Cusa, pp. 471–472 at p. 471 (line 12). On the south Italian Greek noun, μούλτος, for “uprising,” see Caracausi, *Lessico*, p. 393.

<sup>24</sup> Johns, *Arabic Administration*, p. 64, citing al-Idrīsī.

<sup>25</sup> *Historia Sicula*, ed. Delle Donne and Brescia, pp. 212–213: “Qui [Simon] per paucos vivens annos graves ab Apulis inritationes sustinuit.” The death date of 28 September 1105 is given in *Necrologia Panormitana*, ed. Winkelmann, p. 473.

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