1169–1171: The Canons of Cefalù on the Significance of their Cathedral for the Norman Kingdom of Sicily

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Abstract: On the eve of William II's reign in Sicily (r. 1166–1189, independently from 1171), the canon chapter of Cefalù implored the king to transfer the remains of his grandfather, King Roger II (r. 1130–1154) from Palermo to Cefalù. This first king of the new Sicilian Kingdom had founded the bishopric of Cefalù in 1131. The design of the sumptuous cathedral is often considere a prime example of the so-called Arab-Norman style visualising the multicultural heritage of the island. This article examines the reasons why the building remained unfinished and how it reveals tensions between high-ranking Latin dignitaries as well as a shifting focus in royal representation.

Source

Maria Valenziano, Crispino Valenziano, Yvonne Labande-Mailfert: La supplique des chanoines de la cathédrale de Cefalù pour la sepulture du roi Roger, in: *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 81 (1978), pp. 3–30, at pp. 7–8, trans. Alexandra-Sophie Popst.

Huic est, clementissime rex et dominator iustissime, quod nos supplices et fideles vestri, nudis pedibus, flexis genibus, humentibus occulis, fusis lacrimis, contrito corde, humili prece, regie maiestatis pietati supplicamus ut ea que gloriose memorie avus vester rex R(*ogerius*) *vir tam magnificus, tam famosus, tam discretus, tam catholicus, religionis amore succensus, pro sua parentumque suorum salute, et regni sui quod vestrum est stabilitate, ecclesie nostre concessit, et in iure eiusdem ecclesie contulit* (…).

This is what we, your loyal supplicants, with our feet naked, our knees bent, our eyes cast down and dimmed with tears, and with a sorry heart, beseech you, most merciful king and righteous lord, and implore by the piety of your royal majesty, so that the wish of your grandfather Roger in glorious memory—a man so generous, so famous, so considerate, so faithful, and burning with love to God—expressed for his own salvation and that of his relatives and the stability of his kingdom, which is now yours, granted to our church and conferred upon her according to the legal right of the church (…).

Manifestum est omni regno vestro quod felicis memorie avus vester rex Rogerius civitatem Ceph[*aludi*] *a fundamento reedificavit et ecclesiam in honore sancti Salvatoris cum multa expensa ibi*

It is manifest to your whole kingdom that your grandfather, King Roger in blessed memory, had the city of Cefalù rebuilt from the ground and founded a church in honour of the Holy Saviour at great expense. For this church he had

construxit, in qua duo lapidea monumenta cum summa diligentia fabricari fecit, ad hoc ut corpus suum in uno eorum et filius suus qui post eum regnaturus erat in altero sepelirentur, et hoc suum propositum Dei amore preeunte fuit principalis causa quare civitatem Cephaludi reedificavit et ecclesiam ibi fundavit. (…) Sublatis enim ab ecclesia monumentis, quid aliud nobis restat nisi ut ecclesia a fundamento subvertatur? Nam destructa operis principalis causa, consequens est ut et opus destruatur; destructo enim precedenti destruitur et consequens.

diligently built two stone tombs so that his body might be buried in one of them and the body of his son, who would rule after him, in the other. This was the main goal in his love for God and the reason for the rebuilding of Cefalù and the foundation of the church. (...) With the tombs taken from the church, what would remain except that the church be toppled from its foundation? If the main purpose of the work is destroyed, the work itself is destroyed; in destroying the former, one inevitably destroys the latter.

Authorship & Work

[§1] This petition by the chapter of Cefalù was addressed to King William II of Sicily (r. 1166–1189), shortly before he began his independent rule in 1171. His grandfather, King Roger II (r. 1130–1154), had founded the bishopric with the support of anti-pope Anacletus II (sed. 1130–1138), roughly six months after his coronation on Christmas Day 1130.[1] Augustinian canons from S. Maria di Bagnara subsequently settled there. The petition bears no signatures but was likely written by the chapter itself, as the letter is written from their perspective.[2] It was probably the chapter's bishop Boso (sed. 1169–1171) who authored the petition and had it sent to the court shortly after his episcopal consecration.[3] Boso might have been among the first canons to populate the new bishopric in Cefalù. Before his election, he appears in the sources as *cancellarius*, having gained experience in the bishopric's administration beforehand. Thirty-eight years after the foundation of the bishopric, Boso was elected its first bishop.[4]

[§2] The petition conveys how the chapter related to the canonical challenges faced by their bishopric after their founder's death in 1154. As the foundation had been authorised by anti-pope Anacletus and his decision had been reversed after his death in 1138, the consecration of both the cathedral and its bishop remained pending for four decades. The chapter's agency and prestige were therefore sharply curtailed.[5] The petition was intended to remind the king of the bishopric's situation, and it supplies evidence for the strategies employed by a group of canonical stakeholders struggling to fulfil their duties to their founder when faced with competing aspirations, specifically in the capital of the kingdom: while the chapter of Cefalù awaited the consecration of both their cathedral and their bishop as well as the transfer of Roger II's remains, the archbishopric of Palermo had become the preferred location of royal commemoration.[6] In addition to documenting the chapter's desire to honour Roger II's

[1] Johrendt, Schisma, pp. 128–140.
[2] Cf. the reference to "our bishop" Boso in: Valenziano, Valenziano, Labande-Mailfert, Supplique, p. 8: "domnus B(oso) episcopus noster tunc domus nostre cellerarius." The editors believe in the authenticity of the document, cf. ibid., pp. 3–8.
[3] Valenziano, Valenziano, Labande-Mailfert, Supplique, p. 6; Johnson, Last Portraits, pp. 258–259.
[4] Pirri, *Sicilia Sacra* II, cols. 890–891; *Italia Pontificia* X, ed. Girgensohn, no. 2 (23 Nov. 1169), p. 364; Johnson, Episcopal and Royal Views, p. 119; Longo, Capitummino, Frammenti, p. 345.
[5] Johrendt, Schisma, pp. 160–161; Loud, *Latin Church*, pp. 254–255.
[6] Pezzini, Transfomations, pp. 200–206; Jäckh and Kirsch, Dynamics, pp. 11–12; Ehlers, Rechtsräume, p. 41; Oberste, Einführung, pp. 7–8; Oberste and Ehrich, Einführung, p. 7.

memoria as well as their wish to bury him within his monument in Cefalù, the petition contains a striking narrative on the function the king may have intended for the bishopric at large: the canons emphasise that the foundation of Cefalù counts among Roger II's most crucial decisions, which aimed to support the Latin Church in Sicily for the first time since the days of Gregory I (sed. 590–604).[7]

Content & Context

[§3] The petition can be dated to the years between 1169 and 1171 as it mentions both Boso's consecration in 1169 and William II's *adolescentia*, which lasted until 1171. The motivation behind the letter can be understood from several events leading up to its composition. In 1145, Roger II had ordered the creation of two porphyry sarcophagi, intended to both house his earthly remains and to remind posterity of his name.[8] However, when he died in 1154, he was buried instead in Palermo cathedral where a number of additional members of the royal family had found their final resting place. At that point, Cefalù cathedral was neither finished nor consecrated: the building was consecrated in 1166, its bishop in 1169. Moreover, a powerful earthquake in early 1169 severely damaged Palermo cathedral, which might have prompted the chapter in Cefalù to remind the court of their existence. Archbishop Walter of Palermo (sed. 1169–1190) began a large reconstruction effort immediately after his consecration in November 1169, which encompassed the reorganisation of royal burials within the cathedral, originally gathered in S. Magdalene's chapel by Queen Elvira (ca. 1000–1135), among which were the graves of Queen Elvira herself, her four sons Alphonso, Henry, Tancred, and Roger as well as Queen Sibylla (r. ca. 1126–1150).[9] The canons in Cefalù might have understood this as an opportunity to catch up with the competition and to provide for royal burials while the cathedral in the capital remained under construction.

[§4] It remains unclear where the bodies of Roger II and his family were stored during the renovation of the new cathedral in the capital—apparently, they were not transferred to Cefalù even then. In view of this, it seems understandable that the chapter reached out to the court: they asked the king to transfer their founder's remains to their cathedral shortly before the king would commence his independent reign while the cathedral in the capital was a construction site. They clearly viewed this as an opportunity to convince William II to allow the remains of Roger II to be buried—at last—in the monument he had built for that exact purpose. To this end, the chapter composed a petition containing an assertive and urgent description of Roger's wishes and intentions regarding Cefalù.

[§5] The petition begins with the observation that just government relies on comprehensible decision-making by the king: only by honouring his predecessors' laws could he grant stability and security to his realm. Therefore, William II would need to fulfil his grandfather's wishes and have him buried in Cefalù cathedral where the canons had prepared sumptuous memorial rites in honour of its founder. Keeping the chapter from fulfilling their responsibility to Roger II would be tantamount to the destruction of their church.[10]

[7] Loud, *Latin Church*, pp. 2–3; Prigent, Eastern, pp. 18, 26–34; Longo, First Norman Cathedral, pp. 19–20.

[8] *Rogerii II regis diplomata*, ed. Brühl (Codex diplomaticus Regni Siciliae: Series 1: Diplomata regum et principum e gente Normannorum 2,1), no. 68, p. 199: "Sarchofaga vero duo ad decessus nostri signum perpetuum conspicua in prefata ecclesia stabilimus fore semper mansura, in quorum altero iuxta canonicorum psallentium chorum post diei mei obitum conditus requiescam, alterum autem tam ad insignem memoriam nostri nominis quam ad ipsius ecclesie gloriam stabilimus decoris."

[9] Longo, First Norman Cathedral; Kamp, Prosopographische Grundlegung, pp. 1015–1016; Brodbeck, Origins, pp. 387–388; Sola, Tombe, p. 152; Poeschke, *Regum Monumenta*, p. 28.

[10] Valenziano, Valenziano, Labande-Mailfert, Supplique, pp. 7–8.

Contextualization, Analysis & Interpretation

[§6] The following paragraphs will investigate which roles the bishopric and the cathedral of Cefalù were originally intended to play for the kingdom of Sicily. First, they will examine the location the significance of the bishopric's foundation during Roger II's early reign against the backdrop of Muslim and Christian rule on the island (§§7–8). Second, they will analyse the part the monumental burial space was to play during the establishment of Latin government, specifically from the perspectives of both the court and the chapter (§§9–11). In conclusion, they will assess the representative aspects portrayed by the cathedral within the latter part of the 12th century. Special emphasis is placed on the design vocabulary of Siculo-Norman architecture and its development (§§12–16).

[§7] Cefalù lies at the foot of a massive cliff for which the city is named (from Greek κέφαλος, "head").[11] During the periods of Byzantine and Muslim rule, the strategically relevant location experienced heavy fortification, shielding the northern Sicilian coast against naval attacks.[12] The city conveniently lies half-way between the ports of Messina and Palermo. During the Norman conquest, Count Roger I of Sicily (r. 1091–1101) captured the town in 1081/82 and had its fortifications razed.[13] Thus, he succeeded in occupying a site which functioned as a strategic hub between the fortress in Castrogiovanni (Enna), in the heart of the island, and the northern coastline.[14]

[§8] The enlargement of the city of Cefalù and the erection of the new church of SS. Salvatore count among the first large-scale building measures taken on by the new king Roger II, whose coronation was made possible by the papal schism between Anacletus II and Innocent II (sed. 1130–1143).[15] A mere six months after his coronation on Christmas Day in 1130, Roger II began to develop an ecclesiastical hub on the northern coast of Sicily that would be subjected to the diocese of Messina. A charter issued in 1145 granted the future bishop of Cefalù the position of lord of the city and endowed the cathedral with two tombs to house the remains of the king and his son, rooting his memory and the representation of the young monarchy within the monument.[16]

[§9] The king and his Latin counsellors were aware of the need to establish structures strengthening the new monarchy.[17] The foundation in Cefalù underlines this: Sicily had been part of the *dār al-Islām* from the ninth to the eleventh centuries. Christian communities that had settled predominantly outside urban centres around churches *extra muros* were mostly of Greek rite.[18] After the destruction of the fortifications in Cefalù in the wake of the city's conquest, the rebuilding of the town involved lavish displays of royal splendour.[19] The architectural prominence of the cathedral in Cefalù reflects the commemoration of the kingdom's first monarch. The church in front of the cliff is widely visible even from afar. Its spatial position embeds it within the monumental topography of Sicily, functioning as a visual anchor as well as evidence for early royal endeavours to establish new episcopal structures on the island.

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[11] Pirri, *Sicilia sacra* II, col. 885; Borsook, *Messages*, p. 7; Krönig, *Cefalù*, p. 5.
[12] Passafiume, *Origine*, cap. II; Pirri, *Sicilia sacra* II, col. 885; Alfano, Diocesi, pp. 1–3.
[13] Pirri, *Sicilia sacra* II, cols. 885–886; Alfano, Diocesi, p. 3.
[14] Alfano, Diocesi, pp. 2–3.
[15] Romuald of Salerno, Annales, ed. Arndt (MGH SS 19), p. 419; Houben, *Roger II.*, pp. 52–62; Houben, *Latin Church*, pp. 1–2; Rosso, Empire, pp. 29–30; Broekmann, *Rigor Iustitiae*, pp. 125–128; Johrendt, Schisma, p. 144.
[16] *Rogerii II regis diplomata*, ed. Brühl (Codex diplomaticus Regni Siciliae: Series 1: Diplomata regum et principum e gente Normannorum 2,1), no. 68, pp. 198–200; Krönig, *Cefalù*, p. 6; Alfano, Diocesi, pp. 3–5; additionally Ehlers, Raumerschließung, p. 22, and Ehlers, Rechtsräume, pp. 33–34, on the control of conquered territory through the introduction of ecclesiastical structures.
[17] Loud, *Latin Church*, pp. 58–59.
[18] Pezzini, Transformations, p. 204; Borsook, *Messages*, p. 52; Loud, *Latin Church*, pp. 3–5.
[19] Alfano, Diocesi, pp. 2–4.

[§10] The canons' petition frames the foundation of Cefalù as a crucial moment in Roger II's reign.[20] They emphasise specifically that Roger's regnal representation as expressed by the foundation of the bishopric and the erection of the monumental burial ground could only succeed if his successors and heirs acted in accordance with his wishes.[21] The chapter thus presents their bishopric as a stabilising factor and asks for its preservation. The canons clearly feared that another church might absorb the function originally intended for Cefalù. In order to convince William II of the value of the burial monument within their cathedral, the chapter dedicated part of its letter to describing an extensive memorial liturgy to be performed during the Eucharist.[22] Each mass would incorporate the memorial rites for the deceased king whose symbolical presence in his foundation would thus be assured. These preparations had as of yet been in vain, as evidenced by the canons approaching King William II on the eve of his independent reign: while the chapter in Cefalù stood convinced of its responsibility towards the first monarch's liturgical and representative memory, architectural and iconographical processes employed to stage the kingdom had mainly been installed in the capital.[23] The kings, their counsellors as well as the bishops and archbishops in the kingdom had been instrumental in developing a design language for sacral architecture to represent the young monarchy. During this process, new locations were developed and the bishopric of Cefalù, waiting for its consecration, faded into obscurity.

[§11] The letter's line of argumentation reveals how acutely the chapter feared the loss of its tombs. The canons stress the fact that the removal of the sarcophagi would be tantamount to the destruction of their entire church, which shows that they understood their bishopric and its endowment with the first royal burial ground in the kingdom as a tool to stabilise the monarchy.[24] From this perspective, the letter has a virtually tragic note to it: in reminding the king of the elaborate and politically self-confident plans King Roger II had intended the bishopric to be a part of, it highlights the insufficient appreciation Cefalù received by succeeding kings, which the canons viewed as a threat to the monarchy at large.[25] This lack of appreciation manifests itself in the materiality of the church as well: the mosaics are limited to the choir, while the nave bays remain devoid of décor elements and were apparently finished in

[20] Valenziano, Valenziano, Labande-Mailfert, Supplique, p. 7: "Manifestum est omni regno vestro quod felicis memorie avus vester rex Rogerius civitatem Ceph[aludi] a fundamento reedificavit et ecclesiam in honore sancti Salvatoris cum multa expensa ibi construxit, in qua duo lapidea monumenta cum summa diligentia fabricari fecit, ad hoc ut corpus suum in uno eorum et filius suus qui post eum regnaturus erat in altero sepelirentur, et hoc suum propositum Dei amore preeunte fuit principalis causa quare civitatem Cephaludi reedificavit et ecclesiam ibi fundavit."

[21] Valenziano, Valenziano, Labande-Mailfert, Supplique, p. 7: "Iusticie quoque ac rationis ordo suadet ut qui sua successoribus desiderat mandat[a] servari veritatem et statuta decessoris sui ipse custodiat. Quod si negligitur cuncta in confusione deveniunt dum alter destruit ea que custodiendo alter edificat. Si igitur in rebus secularibus suum cuique ius et proprius ordo servandus est, quantomagis in ecclesiasticis dispositionibus nulla debet induci confusio?"

[22] Valenziano, Valenziano, Labande-Mailfert, Supplique, p. 8: "Iterum alia vice cum pater vester Cephaludo transiret et in ecclesia ante sepulchrum patris sui staret, coram multis personis ordinavit et precipit huic episcopo nostro adhuc electo, et quibusdam aliis de fratribus nostris, ut postquam patris sui ibi sepultum foret omnis populus civitatis cum ad altare causa offrendi accederet, in dextra parte ante sepulchris patris sui omnes transirent, ut orarent pro anima eius; in redeundo vero ab altari a sinistra parte iuxta alterum sepulchrum redirent, ut similiter orarent pro ipsius anima qui in eo sepeliendus erat. Et ita ut ipse precepit usque modo fit in ecclesia. Et hec fuit ordinatio et preceptio patris vestri post obitum avi vestri."

[23] On the construction undertaken in Palermo during the reign of Roger II, see di Liberto, Architecture, pp. 139–141; Hadda, Architectural Heritage, pp. 329–331; Pezzini, Transformations, pp. 204–227.

[24] Valenziano, Valenziano, Labande-Mailfert, Supplique, p. 8: "Sublatis enim ab ecclesia monumentis, quid aliud nobis restat nisi ut ecclesia a fundamento subvertatur? Nam destructa operis principalis causa, consequens est ut et opus destruatur; destructo enim precedenti destruitur et consequens." Ibid., p. 7: "rex R[ogerius] (…) pro sua parentumque suorum salute, et regni sui quod vestrum est stabilitate, ecclesie nostre concessit."

[25] Valenziano, Valenziano, Labande-Mailfert, Supplique, p. 8.

a lower height than originally intended.[26] Regarding the extent of the destruction Palermo cathedral suffered due to the earthquake, the canons in Cefalù were obviously hopeful that their burial ground would come to fulfil its purpose at last. However, the foundation of Monreale around 1172[27] effectively laid the ground for another competing project, making it even more unlikely that Cefalù would ever be used as a royal burial site. Roger II's successors had shifted their attention towards other representative churches which would satisfy this purpose instead. This would likely have been the primary motivation for the canons to write to the king.

[§12] In addition to their liturgical dimension, the design of the sarcophagi speaks to their representative function within the monarchy. The ostentatious and luxurious design and ornamentation of this funerary architecture attests to its high status within regnal representation. The sarcophagi are fashioned from porphyry: this rare and expensive material evokes the colour and imagery of the Roman Empire and became popular for the design of papal tombs at the time.[28] The Eastern Roman Empire in particular had favoured the purple stone in its funerary monuments, among these the sarcophagi of Saints Helena and Constantia, which by the 12th century stood in the Lateran, are most prominent. Ensuing Byzantine dynasties are well known for their lavish usage of porphyry as well.[29] However, the type of cylindrical sarcophagus fashioned completely from porphyry, as is the case with Roger II's tombs in Cefalù, was something new entirely within the framework of Latin-Christian rule, and this style of monument would catch on for the royal houses in Sicily until the arrival of Charles of Anjou (r. 1266–1285). The colour purple had been utilised by pre-Christian Roman, as well as later Eastern Roman Emperors. In its spatial design of royal commemoration, the Sicilian court drew on this inspiration.

[§13] The porphyry sarcophagi were positioned within mosaicked choirs in both Cefalù and Monreale cathedrals. Their visual staging has been interpreted in earlier publications as having been purposely derived from Eastern Roman traditions.[30] Mosaics were applied throughout Siculo-Norman architecture, such as in the Martorana church, the Palatine Chapel, and additional rooms in the Norman palace. Their popularity and the import of necessary materials and artisans were facilitated and fostered by Roger II's chief counsellor George of Antioch (fl. ca. 1090–1152).[31] Beginning in the 1140s, additional ornamentation such as muqarnas and intarsias were adopted to decorate palaces and churches, documenting cultural exchange between the Sicilian Kingdom and the Fāṭimid court in Cairo.[32] However, recent publications have emphasised that such elements within the visual vocabulary of southern Italian rulership cannot be reduced to essentialist roots of Byzantine or Muslim origin nor be understood as evidence for the ruling actors' tolerance towards their non-Christian subjects within the

[26] Krönig, *Cefalù*, pp. 8–16.
[27] On the founding date of Monreale, see *Willelmi II. regis diplomata*, ed. Enzensberger, no. 89, p. 5: William II's 1176 endowment charter emphasises that he had founded the abbey at the start of his independent reign. He began to issue charters independently early in 1172, cf. Fazello, *De rebus Siculis*, p. 470: "Cum Adolescere cepisset, religioni addictus patris thesauris in arce repeteris ad sacras aedes erigendas totus incubuit."; Brodbeck, *Saints*, p. 17; Schlichte, *Wilhelm II.*, pp. 186–189; Borsook, *Messages*, p. 52.
[28] Borgolte, *Petrusnachfolge*, pp. 151–162; Poeschke, *Regum Monumenta*, pp. 70–71; Loud, *Latin Church*, p. 180; Rehberg, Herrscher, pp. 46–47. Cf. Ermischer, Porphyra, pp. 70–71, on the significance of the colour purple and porphyry in the context of *translatio imperii*; on porphyry tombs during classical antiquity and their reception cf. Malgouyres, *Porphyre*, pp. 66–75.
[29] Borgolte, *Petrusnachfolge*, p. 169; Körner, *Grabmonumente*, p. 80; Del Bufalo, *Porphyry*, p. 165.
[30] Cf. Brodbeck, Saints, pp. 1–2, and Borsook, *Messages*, p. XXIII, on Demus, *Mosaics*; Kitzinger, *Mosaici*; cf. additionally Winkler and Fitzgerald, Introduction, p. 5; Reilly, Visual, p. 35.
[31] Tronzo, Object-Enigma, pp. 197–208; Brodbeck, *Saints*, pp. 40–41, 228–230; Borsook, *Messages*, pp. 3–4; di Liberto, Architecture, pp. 139–141; more broadly cf. Fein, *Emiral Patronage*.
[32] Winkler and Fitzgerald, Introduction, pp. 4–5; Longo and Anzelmo, Creation, pp. 267–280; Abulafia, Kingdom, pp. 15–16.

kingdom.[33] The transcultural design of Siculo-Norman architecture and material culture evolved despite the increasing marginalisation of Sicily's Muslim population.[34] Cultural techniques which have been categorised as Islamic or Byzantine in older publications had not been merely copied, but rather adopted within new frameworks which had little to do with their original connotation.[35] The ruling actors developed a visual language which did not correspond to the Latin-Christian character of their monarchy—a testament to the complex interreligious dynamics within the kingdom: the elements used to construct and embellish royal tombs and cathedrals document a continuous and intense discourse between the palace and newly applied cultural techniques of varying origins.[36] Through this exchange, the original content of acquired elements was transformed and adapted and integrated into the framework of Latin-Christian rule.[37] The foundation and design of sumptuous architecture, and of funerary cathedrals in particular, served as a device to exert Latin-Christian dominance both through the use and the symbolical interpretation of the adopted cultural techniques.[38]

[§14] The canons pleaded emphatically with the court to be allowed to bury their founder—and they did so not merely because of the liturgical function of the founder's tomb, but also because they were deeply aware of the significance of royal commemoration and its monumental realisation. The choice of such burial structures and sites was not set in stone but had to correspond to later preferences and needs of succeeding monarchs as well as evolving architectural styles in the kingdom. The design language of Siculo-Norman architecture and material culture did not emerge as a static picture of transcultural hybridity, reflecting the socio-religious diversity and harmonious integration of various social groups under Norman rule. In fact, the specific visual language evolved and adapted in accordance with needs and sites preferred by succeeding monarchs: the pictorial programme of the Cefalù mosaics, for example, refers to Roger II's alliance with King Louis VII of France (r. 1137–1180) as well as traditions of the early Christian church since Roger was in conflict with the curia at the time.[39] Monreale, on the other hand, showcases William II's excellent rapport with Rome as well as his successful alliances with King Henry II Plantagenet (r. 1154–1189) and emperor Fredrick I Barbarossa (r. 1152–1190), which found expression through the mosaics of canonised popes as well as Angevin and German saints.[40] The architectural style had been updated and somewhat unified: this is evident from the almost perfectly balanced symmetry between Greek and Latin saints and the translation of muqarnas as known from the Palatine Chapel into a coffered ceiling painted with golden stars.[41] This style developed according to representative needs of Latin-

[33] Winkler and Fitzgerald, Introduction, pp. 1–4; Brodbeck, *Saints*, pp. 1–8; Burkhardt and Foerster, Introduction, pp. 8–18; Aspinwall and Jäckh, Multiculturalism, pp. 294–297; cf. Horden, Maritime, pp. 74–75, on capacities of cultural exchange in the context of their application and its ritualistic charge.

[34] Metcalfe, *Muslims*, pp. 142–147; Houben, Toleranz, pp. 197–198; Houben, *Venosa*, pp. 55–56; Fitzgerald, Imperial, p. 126; Kamp, *Prosopographische Grundlegung*, p. 1022; Engl, *Verdrängte*, pp. 300–301.

[35] Winkler and Fitzgerald, Introduction, p. 5: "The intention of this multi-ethnic appropriation project was to affirm the king's right to rule over the various peoples of his kingdom, by creating a common visual language that could be understood by all the communities that made up the *'populus trilinguis.'* (…) Therefore, like the *regnum* itself, Siculo-Norman material culture was an entirely new and unique foundation, a product of the intense cross-cultural interplay and exchange that has come to define not only Roger II's rule, but the entire history of the Norman kingdom of Sicily." Cf. Grabar, *Dome*, p. 36, and more broadly Grabar, *Mediation*.

[36] Reilly, Visual, p. 43.

[37] Horden, Maritime, p. 76; Reilly, Visual, pp. 32–35.

[38] Plassmann, Akkulturation, pp. 439–440; Plassmann, Shifting Identities, pp. 251–258.

[39] Brodbeck, *Saints*, p. 242; Johnson, Episcopal and Royal Views, pp. 119–120.

[40] Brodbeck, *Saints*, pp. 89, 94–109.

[41] Krönig, Cathédrale, p. 88; Krönig, *Monreale*, pp. 165–172; Johnson, Last Portraits; Johnson, Episcopal and Royal Views, pp. 118–120; Brodbeck, *Saints*, pp. 239–242; Abulafia, Kingdom, pp. 15–16.

Christian rule without offering direct insights into the social realities of the kingdom's non-Christian subjects.[42]

[§15] Since the mosaics in Sicily were not copied from Eastern Roman programmes but instead adapted and tailored towards the individual reigns of each founder, the spatial and decorative design of the cathedral of Cefalù and its burial site no longer matched current representative aims during William I's and William II's reigns. These needs were channelled into the Palatine Chapel, Monreale cathedral, and the Zisa and Cuba palaces instead.[43] William II seems to have had no intention of fulfilling his predecessor's wishes in order to reap what his forebears had sown, as the letter frames it.[44] On the contrary: the design of new sacral spaces offered opportunities to immortalise outstanding achievements and characteristics of individual rules.[45] The canons of Cefalù quite correctly assessed the meaning of episcopal foundations and the construction of cathedrals and funerary monuments as tools for monarchical representation—this function, however, would be implemented at different sites.[46] The sarcophagi in Cefalù remained empty until emperor Fredrick II (r. 1199/1212/1220–1250) brought them to Palermo to be integrated into the burial space within the capital's cathedral. Norman-Staufen rule in the kingdom continued to manifest itself through the ostentatious and sumptuous iconography and architecture realised for public spaces.[47]

[§16] The architectural presence of these monumental burial cathedrals counts among the Latin-Christian royal and later imperial reigns' tools of spatial staging. The fact that Roger II's successors relinquished his plans in Cefalù therefore had nothing to do with a lack of interest in sacral architecture as a means of representing and consolidating Sicilian rule. On the contrary, both William II and Frederick II continued to regulate ecclesiastical structures within the kingdom through the foundation and endowment of influential archbishoprics. The canons' arguments thus came to nothing: Monreale and Palermo instead were established as main sites of sovereign representation. However, the evolution of the visual language and design of the architectural programme attests to a continuous discussion about cultural vocabularies. These witnessed complex processes of acquisition and appropriation within the interreligious dynamics of the kingdom as well as in exchange with the Eastern Roman and the Fāṭimid courts. These developments were negotiated by the ruling actors: by the kings, their counsellors at the culturally diverse court at Palermo,[48] and by the archbishops and bishops of the kingdom. This aggravated competition between sites of monarchical representation. The evolution of visual imagery at the court documents how courtiers and clerics influenced how cultural vocabularies were shaped and interpreted within the kingdom by consciously integrating specific architectural elements of different origins. However, in marked contrast to the topical description of Norman Sicily as a socio-religious melting pot, the diversity of Siculo-Norman visual imagery does not allow us to infer how the Norman elites treated the social groups of different religions, ethnicities, and languages within the kingdom.

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[42] Houben, Between, pp. 32–33.
[43] Johnson, Views, pp. 118–119; Borsook, *Messages*, p. xxii; Brodbeck, *Saints*, pp. 2–13, 230–238; Reilly, Visual, pp. 34–35; Tronzo, Object-Enigma, pp. 197–201.
[44] Valenziano, Valenziano, Labande-Mailfert, Supplique, p. 7: "Vestrum est enim rigare et nutrire quod alii plantaverunt ut quidem fructum reddat secunda gratia nutritore quem re[por]tatura est prima gratia plantatori."
[45] Brodbeck, *Saints*, pp. 57–84, 92–101.
[46] Brodbeck, *Saints*, pp. 202–205; Schlichte, *Wilhelm II.*, pp. 115–117; Loud, *Latin Church*, pp. 336–337; Poeschke, *Regum Monumenta*, pp. 189–190.
[47] Sciascia, Stage.
[48] Houben, Between, pp. 29–33; Metcalfe, *Muslims*, pp. 141–159.

Edition(s) & Translation(s)

The original petition is kept in the cathedral archive in Cefalù.[49] The text was transcribed in the eighteenth century; the transcript is kept in the Biblioteca Comunale at Palermo under the signature Qq H7. The petition is quoted in the reports on the opening of the tombs in Palermo in 1781 by Francesco Daniele,[50] Rosario Gregorio,[51] and Rocco Pirri[52].

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[49] Valenziano, Valenziano, Labande-Mailfert, Supplique, Tafel I–III.
[50] Daniele, *Regali*, S. 16–18.
[51] Gregorio, *Discorso*, S. 702–703.
[52] Pirri, *Sicilia Sacra* II, Sp. 892.

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