TAM GRECOS QUAM LATINOS

A Reinterpretation of Structural Change in Eastern-Rite Monasticism

in Medieval Southern Italy, 11th-12th Centuries

by

James Deas David Jack Morton

A thesis submitted to the Department of History

In conformity with the requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

Queen’s University

Kingston, Ontario, Canada

(June, 2011)

Copyright © James Deas David Jack Morton, 2011
Abstract

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries southern Italy passed irrevocably out of Byzantine control and into Norman control, at roughly the same time as the Roman papacy and the Christians of the East were beginning to divide into what we now know as the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches. Historians have typically viewed the history of southern-Italian monasticism in this period around the notion of a cultural conflict between Latins and Greeks, either arguing for or against the idea that the Italo-Normans had a policy of ‘latinisation’ with regards to Eastern-rite monasteries. This thesis will argue, however, that this conceptual framework obscures more important long-term economic and social factors that affected Germany, Italy and Byzantium alike.

Having outlined the political and social context of southern-Italy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 will demonstrate the manner in which southern-Italian monasticism was firmly embedded into a network of cultural and social contacts in the broader Mediterranean world, and especially with Byzantium, even during the Norman domination. Chapter 3 will focus on the fundamental patterns of southern-Italian monastic change in the early Middle Ages, emphasising the gradual movement from informal asceticism to organised monastic hierarchies. Chapter 4 will set forth the essential irrelevance of viewing this structural change in terms of ‘Latin’ and ‘Greek’ identities, underlining the point that the distinction is largely meaningless in the context of monastic change. Chapter 5 will explain by contrast the far greater significance of economic and social expansion to monastic change in both ‘Latin’ and ‘Greek’ areas of the Mediterranean, and especially southern Italy. Finally, Chapter 6 will show that consolidation in southern-Italian monastic structures was not simply part of a centrally-directed papal reform movement, but part of a wider range of innovations undertaken on a local basis.
throughout the peninsula and the rest of the Mediterranean, with a considerable range of influences.

An extensive selection of literary and documentary evidence will be examined in both Latin and Greek, with an especial focus on the monastic and ecclesiastical archives of southern Italy.
Acknowledgements

In spite of the many hours that I spent writing in solitude, there are several people without whom this thesis would not have been possible. Firstly I must thank my supervisor and compatriot, Dr Richard Greenfield, for his guidance and well-placed words of advice, and for encouraging me in my ideas and interests. More generally, Dr Greenfield has been invaluable in helping me adapt from my undergraduate training in Classics to my current work in Byzantine Studies. I must also thank my other tutor at Queen’s University, Dr George Bevan, who has helped me to appreciate the fascinating period of Late Antiquity and the early years of Byzantium. I am also indebted to Dr Christos Simelidis, who gave me my first lessons in Byzantine literature, and Mr Nicholas Purcell of St John’s College, Oxford, who has played perhaps the greatest role of all in my academic formation.

I am extremely grateful to those who have supported me along the way: my friend and fellow classicist Thomas Coward of King’s College London, who has been a good comrade to me over the years and always willing to listen to my ideas and patiently give his advice; my friends here at Queen’s, particularly the Classics graduate students who shared an office with me and helped to preserve my sanity while I researched and wrote this thesis; and my family, especially my mother Jane of eternal memory.

I owe my deepest gratitude to the Canadian Rhodes Scholars’ Foundation, whose generous funding has allowed me to pursue my studies in Canada. In addition I must thank the hard-working employees of the university library, without whose tireless efforts in supplying me with inter-library loans from across the world I could not have hoped to complete this thesis.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ii  
Acknowledgements iv  
Table of Contents v  
Abbreviations vii  
Maps ix  
Note on Translation and Transliteration xiii  
Chapter 1: Introduction 1  
  The Significance of Southern-Italian Monasticism 2  
  Development of Scholarship 4  
  Key Currents in Recent Historiography 8  
  A New Direction in Research 10  
Chapter 2: Geopolitical Background and Context 12  
  The Seeds of Conflict 12  
  The Normans Arrive 15  
  Ethnic and Cultural Contours 18  
  Summary: Conditions for Contest 22  
Chapter 3: Plying the Mediterranean Fabric 24  
  Demographic and Economic Expansion 25  
  Italy and the Byzantine Mediterranean 28  
  Monastic Networks between East and West 32  
  Summary: A Mediterranean Locale 38  
Chapter 4: Patterns of Monastic Change 39  
  Loose Beginnings: Early Monastic Development, 9th-10th Centuries 40  
  Early Expansion and Consolidation, ca. 1000-1036 43  
  Raiding and Restructuring, ca. 1037-1100 45  
  New Greek Monastic Structures in Sicily and Southern Italy, 12th Century 49  
  Summary: Framing the Stages of Monastic Development 53  
Chapter 5: The Emergence of Greek and Latin Identities 55  
  ‘Greek’ and ‘Latin’ Christianity in Southern Italy 55  
  Politics and the Shaping of Cultural Identities 61  
  The Curious Case of Nilus Doxapatres 66  
  Summary: Beyond the Latin-Greek Divide 70
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AASS</td>
<td>Acta Sanctorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Analecta Bollandiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessiones</td>
<td>Accessiones ad Historiam Abbatiae Casinensis, ed. E. Gattula, Venice (1734).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJA</td>
<td>American Journal of Archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANS</td>
<td>Anglo-Norman Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aversa</td>
<td>Codice diplomatico normanno di Aversa, ed. A. Gallo, Naples (1927)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badia di Cava</td>
<td>Mattei-Cerasoli, L. ‘La Badia di Cava e i monasteri greci della Calabria superiore’, Archivio storico per la Calabria e la Lucania 8-9 (1938-9): 167-82, 265-85; 279-318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMGS</td>
<td>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BZ</td>
<td>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbone</td>
<td>Robinson, G. History and Cartulary of the Greek Monastery of St. Elias and St. Anastasius of Carbone, 3 Vols., Rome (1928-30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carte</td>
<td>Carte Latine di abbazie calabresi, ed. A Pratesi, Vatican City (1958)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDB</td>
<td>Codice diplomatico barese, 19 Vols., Bari (1897-1950)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>Codice Diplomaticus Cavensis, ed. M. Morcaldi et al., 8 Vols., Milano (1876-93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDP</td>
<td>Codice diplomatico pugliese (continuazione del Codice diplomatico barese), 4 Vols., (1975-94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHR</td>
<td>Church History Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOP</td>
<td>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EHR</td>
<td>English History Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallucanta</td>
<td>Le pergamene di S. Nicola Gallucanta (secc. IX-XII), ed. P. Cherubini, Salerno (1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOTR</td>
<td>Greek Orthodox Theological Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHR</td>
<td>International History Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>Italia Pontificia, ed. P.F. Kehr, 10 Vols., Berlin (1905-75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS</td>
<td>Italia Sacra, ed. F. Ughelli, 10 Vols., Venezia (1717-21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JGR</td>
<td>Zachariä von Lingenthal, K.E. <em>Jus Graeco-Romanum</em>, 7 Vols., Leipzig (1856-84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JMH</td>
<td><em>Journal of Medieval History</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSAH</td>
<td><em>Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JTS</td>
<td><em>Journal of Theological Studies</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCSM</td>
<td>Misc., Centro di Studi Medievali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGH</td>
<td><em>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGH SS</td>
<td><em>Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Migne, J.P. <em>Patrologia Latina</em>, 221 Vols., Paris (1844-55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REB</td>
<td><em>Revue des études byzantines</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register</td>
<td><em>Das Register Gregors VII</em>, ed. E. Caspar, Berlin (1920-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEER</td>
<td><em>Slavonic and East European Review</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td><em>Studies in the Renaissance</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td><em>Sicilia Sacra</em>, ed. R. Pirro. 2 Vols., Palermo (1733)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus</td>
<td>Trinchera, F. (ed.) <em>Syllabus Graecarum membranarum</em>, Napoli (1865)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Théotokos</td>
<td><em>La Théotokos de Hagia-Agathè (Oppido) (1050-1064/1065)</em>, ed. A. Guillou, Vatican City (1972)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T&amp;M</td>
<td><em>Travaux et mémoires</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tremiti</td>
<td><em>Codice diplomatico del monastero benedettino di S. Maria di Tremiti (1005-1237)</em>, ed. A. Petrucci, 3 Vols., Rome (1960)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maps

1. Southern Italy – Major Cities and Monastic Centres
2. Southern Italy – Regions
3. Byzantine Mediterranean – Major Cities
4. Byzantine Mediterranean – Regions and Holy Mountains
Note on Translation and Transliteration

Where necessary I have provided English translations of ancient and modern quotations and terms in the main body of the page, with the text in the original language supplied in the footnotes below. It must be noted that many medieval Latin and Greek documents contain solecisms, misspellings and grammatical errors, which I have deliberately left alone. All translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own.

Regarding transliteration, Medieval Greek sadly has no standard written form in the Latin script, unlike Classical Greek, which has relatively straightforward rules of conversion into Latin spelling. The matter is complicated by the fact that some of the more notable proper nouns, such as ‘Comnenus’ or ‘John’ have traditionally been written in latinised or anglicised forms and would, at any rate, be quite aesthetically displeasing if written as ‘Komnenos’ or ‘Ioannes’. Place names are also problematic: readers who are unfamiliar with Bačkovo would be able to locate it by its modern name on a map, whereas its Byzantine name of Petritza would prove much more confusing. On the other hand, Dyrrachium is more recognisable by its Byzantine name than by its modern name of Durrës.

Consequently, I have transliterated personal names into appropriate latinised/anglicised spellings as consistently as possible. I have followed the same rule with place names, except in those cases where the classical or Byzantine names are so obscure as to be unhelpful, in which case I have given the modern form. The names of monasteries have been translated into English (e.g. ‘Holy Saviour’ instead of ‘S. Salvatore’), with the exception of more easily recognisable technical words such as ‘Theotokos’. Other technical Byzantine vocabulary, such as ‘ktistes’ and ‘strategos’, has been transliterated directly from the Greek spelling so as to avoid confusion.
Chapter 1
Introduction

In 1086, the Norman Duke Roger Borsa granted Bishop Walter of Malvito in Calabria episcopal authority over the priests of his diocese, “as much over the Greeks as the Latins... to pertain to the single faith of the churches.” In southern Italy we see the stark juxtaposition of two cultures and one religion in a crucial era for European Christianity. The eleventh and twelfth centuries were the time of the ‘Great Schism’ between the Latin Church of Rome and the Greek Church of Constantinople, a schism that would eventually lead to the modern-day Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches respectively.

Traditionally the Schism has been dated to 1054, though most historians today prefer to think of it more as an evolving series of conflicts, and many would rather downplay the significance of single dates and events. Nonetheless, the notion of opposing eastern and western (or Greek and Latin) Christianities is one that finds its roots in this period of the Middle Ages, especially from the eleventh century on. It is a crude notion, but interesting in that it highlights the fact that the eleventh and twelfth centuries were a time of significant development and change in Europe. This did not merely consist of economic and intellectual expansion, but also in a growth of self-awareness and self-definition. There was political change, as the power of the Byzantine Empire gradually receded from western Europe and the influence of western European countries began to be felt more strongly in the Byzantine East. At the same time, Christianity itself was developing; outside the traditional hierarchy of the Church, monasticism was growing and becoming a more

---

1 “Tam Grecos quam Latinos... ad solam religionem ecclesiarum pertinere”: Recueil 63.
dominant force in medieval society. Monastic centres throughout Europe, such as Cluny in Burgundy or Mount Athos in Greece, gradually became more influential in shaping patterns of change.

Both ‘Greeks’ and ‘Latins’ experienced the social and religious changes of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and nowhere is this clearer than in southern Italy itself. Roger Borsa appointed a Latin-speaking French bishop to see to the common faith of the Greek and Latin churches of Malvito, and the act is intriguing in that it recognises a difference while at the same time affirming unity. How is the relationship between the two groups to be understood in light of the emerging schism in Christianity? Or, perhaps more pertinently, how is the ‘Great Schism’ to be understood in light of the relationships that we see in southern Italy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries?

**The Significance of Southern-Italian Monasticism**

Southern Italy is a particularly interesting subject of study in the cultural-religious context for a number of reasons. To begin, it lay across several cultural fault lines, between the Byzantine, Germanic, Arabic and Hispanic worlds. This is not simply a geographic observation; thanks to migrations and conquests, southern Italy and Sicily were home not only to the descendants of the classical Italians, but also to Lombards, Greeks, and North-African Arabs, among various other ethnic and cultural groups. Throughout the early Middle Ages the area was ruled by Arab *emirs*, Lombard *gastalds* and Byzantine *strategoi*. As communication and travel became more frequent in the eleventh century, the peninsula also became host to northern-European mercenaries, most notably the Normans, who managed to establish themselves as the absolute rulers of the land. Southern Italy and Sicily easily rivalled the crusader states of the Levant as cultural ‘melting pots’.
Southern Italy is an especially fruitful area for study on account of its great monasteries, whose archives have preserved an unmatched quantity of documentary evidence for the early Middle Ages. The cartularies and archives of Monte Cassino, Cava, Tremiti, Rossano, Carbone and others have provided historians with a wide variety of legal documents, many of which were intended to support the monasteries’ financial and property rights, but which often shed light on subjects ranging from international diplomacy to simple piety and devotion. Furthermore, the Byzantine and Arabic legacy of literary culture allowed the new Norman rulers to develop sophisticated chanceries – relying initially on native Greeks and Arabs, for the most part – that produced a great quantity of surviving documentary evidence. In addition to these rather prosaic texts, southern Italy could also boast of great literary figures such as the monk Amatus of Monte Cassino and the poet William of Apulia, whose knowledge of contemporary events is often impressive.

The monasteries of southern Italy are important not just for preserving evidence of the period, but also for their own role in the historical process of cultural contact and the development of identity. At a fundamental level, the routine of monastic life required a certain degree of literacy (however basic) in order, for example, for monks to read or sing in the liturgy; as Peter Charanis put it, “illiterates might enter a monastery, but as monks they could not remain illiterate.”\(^3\) This is something of an exaggeration, since not all monks would need to serve in a literate capacity, yet on average a monastic community could be expected to be relatively highly educated. The Byzantine Empire had maintained a strong tradition of secular education, it is true, but in most of Western Europe the monastery was the centre of intellectual life. Monasteries also played a prominent role in contemporary economic developments that would shape western-European society in the later Middle Ages; monasteries such as Cluny in Burgundy, Monte Cassino in Italy and the Great Lavra on Mount Athos were among the greatest landowners of the time. Thus

monasteries are significant as focal points of cultural dialogue and as mechanisms of economic and social change.

Unfortunately for historians of the English-speaking world, the majority of the most detailed studies of southern Italy are (perhaps unsurprisingly) written in Italian for an Italian audience, while a great proportion also exist in German and French. Though there are broader works by historians such as Graham Loud and David Abulafia in English, these are in the minority. An unhappy consequence of this fact is that the history of the southern Italian monasteries is generally only read in the specific context of Italian history, and often in light of later events such as the Italian unification. As a result, broader religious histories (especially in the realm of Byzantine Studies) rarely take full advantage of this rich area of study.

Development of Scholarship

It is important to note that historical scholarship on the Eastern Roman Empire in the Middle Ages has been strongly shaped by the religious and cultural history of Europe since the Schism itself. By the end of the Middle Ages, most Eastern Orthodox Christians came under the rule of Islamic states such as the Ottoman Empire and the Golden Horde, and so there was little, if any, historical scholarship from the Orthodox Christian perspective until the heyday of the Russian Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As far as western-European scholarship was initially concerned, much was of the polemical rather than strictly historical nature. Indeed, the very term ‘Byzantine’, first used in the sixteenth century, is an implicit denial of the Empire’s continuity with the Classical Roman Empire.¹

¹ See C.R. Fox, ‘What, If Anything, Is A Byzantine?’ (1996). My own use of the term ‘Byzantine’ is a grudging concession to historiographical convention; a better term might be ‘Eastern Roman’. 
As a consequence of the crusades and Italian maritime trade, there were several notable western scholars towards the end of the Middle Ages who wrote on Eastern Christianity. The Venetian crusading propagandist Marino Sanudo Torsello (c. 1270-1343) is an interesting case in point. Sanudo spent a considerable amount of time in the Latin Empire of Romania and, in works such as his *Secreta Fidelium Crucis*, launched scathing attacks on the ‘schismatic’ Greeks and discussed the possibility that a future crusader state would be in the position to ‘return’ all Eastern Christians to fidelity to the Roman Church.\(^5\) In the closing years of the Byzantine Empire there were renewed attempts to achieve ecclesiastical union, notably at the Council of Florence in 1438-9. It was a necessary corollary of such efforts that attempts be made to study different religious practices, though it need hardly be said that these endeavours were not entirely disinterested.

The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and of Morea in 1460 is usually marked out as a cause of an exodus of Byzantine scholars from Greece to Italy. The reality is somewhat more complicated than that; George Gemistus Pletho (c. 1355-1452/4), for instance, the notable Byzantine scholar, Platonist and pagan revivalist, accompanied the Byzantine delegation to the Council of Florence, where he met Cosimo de’ Medici and influenced him to establish a Platonist school that would translate a range of Platonic and Neoplatonic works into Latin. He remained in Italy for several years after the conference to deliver lectures, and was undeniably one of the most important figures of the early Italian Renaissance.\(^6\)

At any rate, the decline of Byzantine power and the rise of the Ottoman Empire led to a significant encounter between Byzantine and western scholars. Figures such as Cardinal

Bessarion and Demetrius Cydones, Greek converts to Roman Catholicism, introduced the West to a considerable amount of Greek literature and culture. Theirs was a substantial contribution to classical studies in western Europe, and the flight of Byzantine intellectuals from the Turkish advance is generally recognised as an important stimulus of the Renaissance. Nonetheless, such figures were, by their very nature, obliged to cater to a Frankocentric, Roman Catholic perspective. The Byzantine Empire as a political or cultural entity was denied a voice of its own in a hostile West, while Christians under Islamic rule were not in a position to make themselves heard either.

Yet, although the Greek Christians of the Balkans were under Ottoman occupation and so largely cut-off from western scholarship, the Greek Christians of Italy were not. Some Greek monasteries such as the Theotokos of the Patiron in Rossano and Grottaferrata near Rome remained Greek in language and rite as late as the nineteenth century, even though they were under the jurisdiction of the Roman papacy. The copious archives of such monasteries, among others, were studied by Roman Catholic scholars such as Ferdinando Ughelli and Roccho Pirro in the eighteenth century.\footnote{Italia Sacra (1717-21) and Sicilia Sacra (1733) respectively.}

These efforts were part of a broader period of Post-Reformation Catholic history that saw the compilation and publication of a wide variety of ecclesiastical documentation and literature, such as the work of the Bollandists from the seventeenth century on the study of hagiography, whose \textit{Acta Sanctorum} remains a crucial resource for medievalists. Perhaps the most famous work is the colossal \textit{Patrologiae Cursus Completus}, published in separate Greek and Latin editions from 1844 to 1866 by Jacques-Paul Migne’s Imprimerie Catholique. The nineteenth century also saw a greater interest among western Europeans in the editing and publication of Byzantine texts, especially German philologists such as Immanuel Bekker. Similarly there was a greater drive to
study the Byzantine-rite monasteries of southern Italy (some of which were still in existence), with the production of great works such as Francisco Trinchera’s *Syllabus graecarum membranarum* of 1865, a collection of documents that remains invaluable to the historian even today.

The early twentieth century was the dawn of a new era in ecclesiastical relations with the growth of the ecumenical movement. As the various Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox Churches began to engage in dialogue with the serious hope of rapprochement and even unification in many quarters, religious historians such as Francis Dvornik came to examine the Great Schism anew. From the secular perspective, many historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries became interested in medieval history as part of the contemporary trend of nationalism. The conquests of the Normans and the crusaders, for instance, could be seen as the early achievements of the nascent French nation. Southern Italy became a significant object of study by western historians such as Ferdinand Chalandon, whose 1907 work *Histoire de la domination Normande en Italie et en Sicile*, while outdated in many respects, remains an important starting point for students of Norman history in the Mediterranean. Likewise a growing interest in Byzantine Studies led to a greater awareness of the diverse nature of Italy’s past, inspiring Jules Gay to embark on a thorough examination of the Byzantine Empire’s time in Italy in his 1904 work *L’Italie méridionale et l’Empire Byzantine*.

However, at a time when Orthodox and Eastern European consciousness was still not well represented in historical scholarship (a situation that arguably persists today), many of these works suffered from a skewed perspective; the history of southern Italy was viewed as a part of a

---

8 For a good overview of twentieth-century ecumenical efforts, see M. Fouyas, *Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and Anglicanism* (1984).
grander narrative of Italian history in which ‘foreign’ elements – such as the Byzantine Empire – were gradually (and somewhat ironically) expelled by groups such as the Normans and the Angevins, a process that would finally culminate in the Risorgimento and the unification of Italy in 1871. The problem inherent in this perspective is that it assumes that the future of Italy as a unified western-European nation was inevitable, and that this was somehow the peninsula’s ‘natural’ state. This has contributed to the compartmentalisation of medieval scholarship, in which historians of the medieval West are largely unaware of the relevance of the Byzantine Empire, and Byzantinists generally restrict their own area of investigation to the Balkans and Asia Minor.

**Key Currents in Recent Historiography**

The Frankocentric, western-European perspective has shaped one of the biggest debates of southern-Italian medieval history – the problem of ‘latinisation’. The question, briefly put, follows these lines: since Italy was removed from the Byzantine orbit and became a fixture of Latin Europe, and since the papal reform movement and the Schism saw the triumph of Latinism in the Roman Church, did the Norman conquerors of southern Italy and Sicily make it their deliberate policy to replace Greek and Arabic culture with Latin culture? The fundamental affirmation of such a policy was made by Léon-Robert Ménager in his influential 1958 article ‘La “byzantinisation” religieuse de l’Italie méridionale (IXe-XIIe siècles) et la politique monastique des Normands d’Italie’. The wording even of the title is instructive, implying that southern Italy had been ‘byzantinised’, and that the Normans had a deliberate policy to ‘un-byzantinise’ (and thus to ‘latinise’) the region through Latin-rite monasticism.

It must be said that the tides have somewhat turned against Ménager’s argument, as various scholars such as Vera von Falkenhausen, Hubert Houben and Graham Loud have highlighted the
non-Latin elements of Italo-Norman society, which were many and pervasive.\textsuperscript{10} A number of factors have contributed to this heightening awareness, notably the weakening of the Pirenne Thesis, which, in Warren Treadgold’s striking words, “has become so famous for being wrong as to discourage scholars from risking comparably ambitious theories of their own.”\textsuperscript{11} In fact, some scholars have embarked upon ambitious lines of research, especially as it is becoming increasingly clear that the Mediterranean world in the early Middle Ages was nowhere near as disconnected as was once thought.

The pioneering work of Fernand Braudel and other proponents of the French Annales School of historiography paved the way for much broader, all-encompassing studies of Mediterranean history. In recent years this has inspired extremely important works such as Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell’s masterpiece \textit{The Corrupting Sea}.\textsuperscript{12} Horden and Purcell’s thesis is that, far from being a divisive factor, the Mediterranean Sea served to join a network of interconnecting coastal ‘micro-regions’ within which travel and communication were frequent and natural. Though more a study of historiographical methodology than of specific historical narratives, their insights are important and deserving of consideration by historians of medieval southern Italy.

Scholars of southern Italian history have, to a large extent, come to appreciate the value of new perspectives of social and cultural history. Graham Loud’s significant 2007 study \textit{The Latin Church in Norman Italy}, for example, treats Eastern-Christian influences on the Latin Church in an admirable manner; some Byzantinists such as Rosemary Morris and John Thomas have also shown a good awareness of the importance of the Eastern-rite monasteries of Italy and Sicily.\textsuperscript{13}

\begin{itemize}
\item See e.g. various articles in G.A Loud and A. Metcalfe (edd.), \textit{The Society of Norman Italy} (2002).
\item E.g. R. Morris, \textit{Monks and Laymen in Byzantium} (1995); J.P. Thomas and A. Hero, \textit{Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents} (2000) include documents from the Holy Saviour of Messina in their collection
\end{itemize}
Nonetheless, old habits die hard in scholarship. Western medievalists and Byzantinists frequently continue to ignore one another; in Jonathan Phillips’ recent work *Holy Warriors* (a history of the Crusades), for example, the Byzantines make only brief cameo appearances in a very Frankocentric narrative, in spite of the fact that other crusade historians such as Jonathan Shepard and Jonathan Harris have highlighted the necessity of addressing the role of Byzantium in the crusades.\(^{14}\) Regarding Italian historiography, some historians continue to make claims such as Girolamo Arnaldi’s that the Normans “imported the feudal model in its purest state into the Kingdom of Sicily”\(^{15}\) – a statement that seems remarkably divorced from the weight of historical evidence.

A New Direction in Research

The debate over ‘latinisation’ persists as a defining factor in historiography, and modern scholars must still address the question of whether the Normans deliberately attempted to latinise the churches and monasteries of southern Italy. However, rather than attempting to answer the question afresh, it would be fitting to reconsider the nature and validity of the debate. Is ‘latinisation’ the best way in which to frame historical research on the Greek monasteries of southern Italy? Is it even the best way in which to frame the broader subject of the Great Schism?

Taking a more balanced perspective on the evidence, one is forced to conclude that it is not. The eleventh and twelfth centuries were a time of profound development in Europe, and one aspect of this development was the emergence of a new awareness of identity and definition, both of the self and of the other. The historical processes at work in the religious life of southern Italy and the Mediterranean world as a whole embraced economic, social and political change as much as they of Byzantine *typika*, despite technically being a Norman foundation.


did theological debate. Indeed, the very categories of ‘Latin’ and ‘Greek’ Christianity emerged as a result of these varied historical processes, and are more a phenomenon of post-factum perception than of real historical causation. As it will become clear, it is far more profitable to view the changes in the Greek monasticism of southern Italy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in administrative and economic terms, terms that invite a positive comparison both with northern Europe and with the Byzantine Empire alike. Such a perspective will be much more profitable not only in understanding the situation of Greek monasticism in Italy, but also in understanding the historical process that we call the ‘Great Schism’.
Chapter 2
Geopolitical Background and Context

Although the conflict between Rome and Constantinople is often framed in the language of culture and ethnicity, it is important also to realise the political context of southern Italy in the eleventh century. On a local level, political and ethnic identities did not always match up exactly with modern assumptions – many Latin Italians were faithful Byzantines, for example. Indeed, even the categories of ‘Latin’ and ‘Greek’ are quite insufficient to describe the range of ethnic and cultural groupings present in eleventh-century southern Italy. On a broader level, however, the peninsula consistently served as a flashpoint in disputes between Germany and Byzantium; the Norman conquest would complicate this picture considerably.

The Seeds of Conflict

In the Historiarum Libri Quinque of Rodulf Glaber, an eleventh-century French monk of the abbey of Cluny, Pope Benedict VIII (1012-1024) is portrayed telling the early Italo-Norman leader Rodulf that he was angry about the “Greek invasion of the Roman empire, and deplored the fact that there was nobody in all his lands who could fight off the men of this foreign race.”16 No doubt Glaber believed that the ‘Greeks’ were aliens to be expelled, though modern scholars should refrain from accepting this view too readily, since it has little basis in historical reality. Nonetheless, as Benedict’s supposed outburst demonstrates, it is important to understand political developments in the period in order to understand monastic and ecclesiastical developments.

There had, of course, been a Greek population (of varying sizes) in southern Italy and Sicily since the archaic period of classical antiquity. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476,
Justinian’s reconquests regained much of Italy for the Eastern Empire, though, with a brief exception during the reign of Constans II (r. 641-668) when the court moved to Syracuse, Roman imperial power would henceforth reside in Constantinople. Italy was overseen by the Exarchate of Ravenna. The combined pressure of further Balkan migrations in the later seventh century and sweeping Arab conquests in the eighth meant that Byzantine control of Italy weakened significantly. Lombard principalities and duchies were established in Capua, Salerno and Benevento in the south of Italy, while the north became the base for their nominal suzerain, the Lombard Kingdom of Italy.

Nonetheless, Justinian’s conquests were less ephemeral that many have assumed; the Exarchate of Ravenna survived until the Iconoclast controversy and fell in 751. Until that time, the Roman papacy had looked to Constantinople for political authority, not to Germany as in later years. The eighth-century controversy brought not only doctrinal schism between the temporarily iconoclastic See of Constantinople and the iconophile See of Rome, but a long-term jurisdictional conflict. In 740, Emperor Leo III (717-741) transferred those parts of Italy still under effective Byzantine control (that is to say, Sicily, Calabria and Apulia) from the jurisdiction of the Roman papacy to that of the Constantinopolitan patriarchate. This affront to the papacy would not be forgotten.

The Lombard Kingdom became a Carolingian vassal in 774 and was later inherited by Otto the Great (936-973), creating a long-term threat to Byzantine influence in the peninsula from north of the Alps. In the same period, pressure from the Muslims of Africa and Andalusia saw the gradual loss of Sicily from 826, with Taormina finally falling in 902. Now with only the two southern

17 For an overview of the Byzantine papacy, see A. Ekonomou, Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes (2007).
provinces of Italy – Calabria and Apulia (known as ‘Longibardia’ by the Byzantines) – under Byzantine control, the imperial command structure was reorganised with the creation of the Catepanate of Italy in c. 965. Now the individual strategoi (military governors) of each province would answer to the katepano (supreme governor) in Bari. The catepans were appointed by the Byzantine emperor and rotated on a frequent basis, often being drawn from areas as far afield as Armenia.

The later tenth and early eleventh centuries were a time of aggressive reconquest on the part of the Byzantine Empire, as the efficient and ruthless emperors Nicephorus II Phocas (963-9), John I Tzimisces (969-76) and Basil II ‘the Bulgar-Slayer’ (976-1025) overcame enemies both internal and external. In addition to the reincorporation of Georgia, Armenia, northern Syria, Bulgaria and Serbia within the empire, the Byzantine frontier in Italy was pushed far north into the Abruzzi by the vigorous catepan Basil Boiannes (1017-27), after whom the area would later become known as the ‘Capitanata’ (a corruption of ‘catepanate’).

At the same time as the reassertion of Byzantine power in the Balkans and southern Italy, a certain jostling between the papacy and Constantinople becomes visible. In May 969, Pope John XIII (965-972) raised the Lombard see of Benevento to archiepiscopal rank, putting it at the head of three suffragan sees that actually lay within Byzantine territory. John XIV (983-984) added three more Byzantine sees to Benevento, while John XV (985-996) gave Salerno jurisdiction over four sees in Byzantine Lucania and Calabria. Such moves were, however, relatively meaningless unless the Byzantines could be evicted from those areas. Constantinople seems to have attempted to counter Rome’s jurisdictional infringements by promoting the claims of sees in their own Italian provinces. A series of Latin bishoprics were promoted to archbishoprics: Taranto (978),
Basil II likely had such problems in mind in the final years of his life, as he contemplated the reconquest of Italy. In 1024, Patriarch Eustathius of Constantinople wrote to Pope XIX to suggest that “with the consent of the Roman bishop the Church of Constantinople shall be called and considered universal in her own sphere, as that of Rome is in the world.” This was likely an attempt to forestall further jurisdictional conflict and, though Pope John was inclined to agree, he was soon dissuaded by ferocious lobbying from the monks of Cluny, strong supporters of Roman primacy. Basil was also planning a full-scale invasion of Sicily, though his death in 1025 meant that this would be postponed until the time of Michael IV (1034-41), who sent the general George Maniaces with an expeditionary force in 1037. The campaign was initially very successful, but political machinations in Italy and Constantinople provoked Maniaces to rebel and make an unsuccessful bid for the Byzantine throne.

The Normans Arrive

One factor that had enabled (and indeed encouraged) the Byzantine army to make such rapid conquests was the growing use of mercenary soldiers, especially from northern Europe. Maniaces’ expeditionary force, for example, included the future Norwegian king Harald Hardrada, who was given the prominent Byzantine court title of spatharokandidatos. Maritime travel had evidently become easier and pilgrimage to the Holy Land (which would inevitably involve travelling through the Byzantine Empire) more frequent; combined with excellent opportunities for

---

18 For the jurisdictional conflict in general, see G.A. Loud, *The Latin Church in Norman Italy* (2007): 32-5; C.G. Mor, ‘La lotta fra la chiesa greca e la chiesa latina in Puglia nel secolo X’ (1951).
19 “Circa annum igitur Domini millesimum vicesimum quartum, Constantinopolitanus presul cum suo principe Basilio alii que nonnulli Grecorum consilium iniere quatinus cum consensu Romani pontificis liceret ecclesiam Constantinopolitanam in suo orbe, sicuti Roma in universo, universalem dici et haberi”: Glaber 4.1.
20 Cecaumenus, *Strategicon* 81.
mercenary service, this brought groups such as the Normans to the Mediterranean. The Normans’ first significant appearance was in c. 1016, when a rebellious Lombard nobleman of Bari named Melus employed a band of Norman pilgrims to aid his fight against the Byzantine government. Nonetheless, the Normans soon hired their services out to the independent Lombard states and to Byzantium itself, taking part in the attempted reconquest of Sicily in 1037-40.

Though mercenaries at first, the Normans soon came to settle in Italy. In 1030, Duke Sergius of Naples granted the fief of Aversa and the hand of his sister (the regent of Gaeta) in marriage to the Norman Rainulf. More Normans came to seek their fortunes in Italy over the years, and many took part in the Byzantine expedition to Sicily, including the famous Hauteville brothers William, Drogo and Humphrey (who would later be joined by Roger and Robert ‘Guiscard’). When they were not serving as mercenaries, the Normans could often be found raiding, and eventually proved to be such a concern that the Byzantine catepan Argyrus was able to organise a grand anti-Norman alliance with the papacy and the German Holy Roman Empire in 1051.

However, the crushing Norman victory over Pope Leo IX at the Battle of Civitate in 1053 led to a dramatic change in the diplomatic situation. Rome’s previously cooperative relations with Byzantium were savaged by Cardinal Humbert’s excommunication of Patriarch Michael Cerularius (1043-1059). Meanwhile the Norman power was evidently so great that successive popes preferred to deflect their attentions rather than to fight them. At the Council of Melfi in 1059, Pope Nicholas II invested the Norman Robert Guiscard as duke of Apulia, Calabria and Sicily, which were theoretically papal possessions under the terms of the famously fraudulent Donatio Constantini.21 These lands were under Byzantine and Arab rule, and so would first have

---

21 For Robert’s oath of fealty to the papacy, see Lib. Cens. 1.422. Known perhaps as early as the ninth century, the Donatio Constantini was only proven to be a forgery in the fifteenth century; see J.M. Levine, ‘Reginald Pecock and Lorenzo Valla on the Donation of Constantine’ (1973).
to be conquered.

With the fall of Bari in 1071 Robert Guiscard and his brother Roger were finally in control, albeit extremely tenuously, of all of southern Italy, though certain enclaves such as the pro-Byzantine city of Amalfi would hold out for some years. Though the papacy gained some slight respite from Norman depredations, and though it was at last able to incorporate southern Italy and Sicily within its jurisdiction, the solution was by no means permanent – the German and Byzantine empires were keen to assert their own authority in Italy, and Norman power was unstable and their politics unpredictable.

From 1081 to 1085 Robert Guiscard fought a war against Emperor Alexius I Comnenus (1080-1118) in order to place a pretender (supposedly Michael VII Ducas) on the Byzantine throne; he had the support of Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085), who asked all who were to take part in Guiscard’s war to do so in a penitential and faithful spirit – an interesting foreshadowing of crusading vocabulary some fifteen years later. This was to be a failure, and Pope Urban II (1088-1099) would take a much more conciliatory approach to Byzantium. This approach was epitomised by the First Crusade (1096-1101), a well-meaning gesture, but one that misfired enormously as western secular and ecclesiastical interests were brought into direct conflict with Byzantine interests in the eastern as well as the western Mediterranean. This conflict reached a climax when Bohemond of Taranto, son of Robert Guiscard and briefly a prince of Antioch, persuaded Pope Paschal II (1099-1118; a “weak, touchy man, with none of his predecessor’s sagacity”, in the words of Steven Runciman) to sanction a ‘crusade’ against the Byzantine Empire in 1107-8. The war was a humiliating failure for Bohemond, but it underlined the fact that

---

22 Register 8.5-6.
attempts at ecclesiastical union were bound to founder on the rocks of western political ambitions.

The death of Count Roger I of Sicily (Robert Guiscard’s brother) in 1101 ushered in a regency for his son Simon under his wife Adelaide, though Simon died in 1105. His second son Roger II came of age in 1112; when Duke William II of Apulia died in 1127, Roger claimed all the Hauteville possessions in Italy and spent the next three years fighting to conquer them. This caused so much friction that, in 1128, Pope Honorius II (1124-1130) even preached a crusade against Roger. Upon Honorius’ death in 1130 and the onset of a papal investiture crisis, the anti-pope Anacletus II crowned Roger as the first King of Sicily. Though Anacletus was eventually defeated, and though it was resented by the papacy, Byzantium and the German empire alike, the new Kingdom of Sicily became a fait accompli in the Mediterranean world. It would remain a thorn in many people’s sides until it was inherited by the Hohenstaufen Henry I in 1194.

Ethnic and Cultural Contours

In addition to the political history of southern Italy in this period, it is worthwhile to make a few observations about the ethno-cultural make-up of the area on the eve of the Norman conquest. One should be wary of accepting too literally the division of southern Italy into areas of ‘Latin’ and ‘Greek’ culture, for the evidence reveals that the reality was far more diverse.

The vast majority of Latin inhabitants were Germanic Lombards, concentrated predominantly in Campania, the Abruzzi and Apulia around the Principality of Salerno and the Duchies of Capua and Benevento. The Duchies of Amalfi and Naples had remained free of Lombard political and legal control, though they were by no means isolated from the Lombards; many Amalfitans, for example, settled in the Principality of Salerno.\(^{24}\) Nor were Latin communities entirely distinct

from Greek, as various legal documents make clear; Taranto in Apulia, for example, was home to both Greek and Lombard residents, and indeed both communities were under the jurisdiction of a Latin-rite bishop even under the Byzantine Empire. A similar situation prevailed at Brindisi.

By the eleventh century the predominantly Greek areas of southern Italy were Calabria, the Terra d’Otranto in Apulia and Sicily (especially the eastern Val Demone). Calabria and Sicily had always had some Greek inhabitants, though the number had certainly waned since Late Antiquity. Nonetheless, various Byzantine governments had something of a penchant for population transfers, and, as the Empire was recovering in the ninth and tenth centuries from the crises of Iconoclasm and the Arab conquests, large numbers of Greek and Slavic settlers were sent to Calabria and Gallipoli. There is the famous case, for instance, of the three thousand slaves owned by the Peloponnesian noblewoman Danelis, who were freed by the emperor Leo VI (886-912) and dispatched to cultivate lands in Apulia.

While the general classification ‘Greek’ is broadly applicable for such communities by the eleventh century, they were by no means all from Greece. The Arab conquests of the seventh century led many residents of Egypt and Syria, especially monks, to flee westward to Carthage and then to Sicily and Italy. This was the case for a group of monks from the famous monastery of St Sabas in Palestine in the 640s who eventually established themselves on the Aventine Hill in Rome. The fact that the monastic archives have preserved large quantities of early documentation makes it possible to see how much impact these relatively early immigrants from the Levant had on religious and social life in early-medieval southern Italy. For example, Giannino Ferrari’s linguistic study of private documents from southern Italy noted a connection

E.g. Mentions of Greek and Lombard names among the city’s monks: Syllabus 21-2.
Theophanes Continuatus 321.
between Italo-Byzantine formulas and the formulas of Greek papyri from Egypt, while it would seem that at least some Greek monasteries in Sicily and Calabria used the Antiochene and Alexandrian liturgies. Moreover, the oldest surviving manuscript to contain these liturgies is from Sicily, the Rotulus Messanensis of the twelfth-century monastery of the Holy Saviour in Messina.30

There were clearly immigrants from other parts of the Byzantine world, too. In Oppido, a Calabrian town refounded by the Byzantines about 1044, documents mention men with names such as ‘Ocanus’, ‘Cappadocian’, ‘Anthony the Khazar’ and ‘Mamur’.32 Though onomastic evidence is not clinching proof that any of these men were themselves Cappadocians, Khazars or Arabs, evidently there must have been some diversity in their family histories. Some high-ranking Byzantine officers appointed to Italy from outside were also non-Greeks, such as the Armenian strategos Symbaticius (9th-century) and the Armenian catepans John Curcuas (1008-1010) and Leo Tornicius Contoleon (1017).

In addition to variations within the Greek and Latin communities, there are indications of other ethnic and cultural groups in the peninsula as well. Sicilian and North-African Arabs are perhaps the least surprising of these; as late as 1023, the city of Bari (headquarters of the Byzantine catepan) was besieged by Emir Al-Akhal of Sicily, for instance. Documents provide evidence for Jewish inhabitants of some cities as well, such as one Theophylact ‘the Hebrew’, who bought several vineyards near S. Angelo di Rascla in the 1030s.33 In the 1160s, Benjamin of Tudela, the

---

29 G. Ferrari, I documenti greci medioevali di diritto privato dell'Italia meridionale (1910): 4.77-140.
31 Theotokos 27.
33 Syllabus 26, 31.
Jewish traveller from Navarre who wrote about Jewish communities in the Mediterranean, gave the approximate sizes of each Jewish community in southern Italy and Sicily: five thousand in Naples, one thousand five hundred in Palermo, five hundred in Otranto, three hundred in Taranto, and two hundred in Trani and Melfi. Unfortunately it is unclear whether these are numbers of individuals or of families (more likely the former), though in either case these would have been very significant populations.34

Even Slavic tribes from across the Adriatic Sea left their mark on southern Italy. The Gargano peninsula was home to Serbian settlements at Devia and Peschici in the eleventh century, whose župans (chieftains) make numerous appearances as signatories to documents in the archives of the monastery of S. Maria di Tremiti, as highlighted by André Guillou.35 The trans-Adriatic slave trade brought many Slavs to Italy as well;36 it is, after all, from the word ‘Slav’ that modern romance languages derive the word ‘slave’.37 During the Norman conquest of Calabria, Robert Guiscard enlisted the help of some local Slavs in foraging since they were “well-acquainted with the whole of Calabria”,38 and his brother Roger was even ambushed by a group of Slavs in Sicily.39 Slavic populations made an onomastic mark, too: place names such as ‘Sklavoutzi’ and ‘Sklavopetrosos’ appear in documentary sources in Calabria, for instance.40 Such populations were not always Serbs: five Bulgarians and a Vlach were confirmed as possessions of the monastery of Imperial St Peter in Taranto in 1114.41

36 Such as an unmarried servant “ex genere Sclavorum” promised in a marriage contract of 1057 from Bari: CDB 4.36.
38 “Totius Calabriae gnaros”: Geoffrey Malaterra, De Rebus Gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae Comitis 1.16.
39 Malaterra 3.15.
40 ‘Σκλαβούτζη’, ‘Σκλαβωπέτροσ[ου]’: Saint-Jean-Théristès 1, 10.
41 Accessiones 1.231-2.
Finally, not only was there a wide range of ethnic and cultural groupings in southern Italy at the beginning of the eleventh century, but there are signs of a certain Byzantine ‘chic’ among the fashions of the local aristocracy. Perhaps the best example is offered by Melus, the Lombard nobleman of Bari who rebelled against the Byzantine Empire in the early eleventh century. Although the written sources all agree that he was ethnically a Lombard, his name is based on the Armenian name ‘Mleh’ (‘Melias’ in Greek). What is more is that, when the Norman pilgrims first met him at Monte Gargano, they saw “a man clothed after the Greek fashion,” according to William of Apulia, while the Anonymi Barensis Chronicon goes so far as to say that he was wearing a turban like the Greeks do. It is worth remembering that Melus’ son Argyrus (a Greek name) became one of the most famous of all the Byzantine catepans (1051-1057). The names that appear in the signatures of various legal charters (among which we find another Melus in 1147) are further indicators of what Graham Loud terms “onomastic fashion among the indigenous inhabitants.” Thus, while historians might divide the populations of southern Italy into ‘Latins’ and ‘Greeks’ for convenience’s sake, one should bear in mind that the reality was far more nuanced and diverse. A person may technically be a ‘Latin’ and yet adopt a Byzantine cultural identity.

**Summary: Conditions for Contest**

In sum, there are several important factors to bear in mind while considering the development of Byzantine-rite monasticism in southern Italy during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, not the least of which is that the peninsula was ‘liminal’ in virtually every sense. The incursions of Lombards and Arabs in the earlier Middle Ages had turned Sicily, Calabria, Apulia and Campania

---

44 Anonymi Barensis Chronicon 3.
45 *Syllabus* 143.
into an ethnic, religious and political battleground; in the tenth century, an already chaotic geopolitical situation was further complicated by the powerful assertion of imperial claims by the Byzantine and German empires.

Such an environment provided ideal conditions for jurisdictional contest between Rome and Constantinople, as well as military agents in the form of the Normans and the Germans, not to mention further opportunities for expansion in Arab Sicily. The question, then, is how significant the political and cultural aspects of the Norman conquest were in the contest between the Churches, and how this background is reflected in the changes in Byzantine-rite monasticism in southern Italy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.
Chapter 3
Plying the Mediterranean Fabric

Southern Italy is one of those regions that are often referred to as ‘frontier areas’, or ‘peripheral territories’, which have become fashionable as objects of research in recent historiography. It is a place that is studied because it is an area in which cultures meet in a curious social collision, a sort of historical oddity. This, at any rate, is the basic impulse behind their examination; on closer inspection, a more complicated situation becomes clear. In an interesting and thought-provoking article on the study of historical frontiers, David Abulafia even seems to come close to undermining the conceptual basis of such work: “In general we could say that the ‘medieval frontier’ was not so much an identifiable phenomenon, a hard fact, as it is a conceptual tool used by historians...”

The source of Abulafia’s discomfort is the fact that, although hard and recognisable political boundaries did exist in the forms of road markers, customs houses and so on, there was a surprising amount of interconnection between different regions. Indeed, the definition of a frontier generally depends on perspective – if one tries hard enough, one could call almost any part of the world a ‘frontier’ or its opposite. Thus categorising the region as a ‘frontier’ conceals its own character as a node in a broader network of cultural interaction.

The Mediterranean Sea is an area that, in the Middle Ages, was arguably defined more by its role in connecting different landmasses than in dividing them, as Horden and Purcell have demonstrated in intricate detail. In their own words, “time and again in Mediterranean history, supposed landlubbers take to the sea with a success that astonishes historians because they forget the sheer normality of engagement with maritime activity.” It is important to understand this

broader Mediterranean context, since there are visible trends that invite profitable comparison and contrast between different areas. Southern Italy was an integral part of the nexus of the Mediterranean, with connections to the Byzantine world that were at least as strong as, if not more than, its connections to northern Europe. This point will prove invaluable in understanding the structural development in southern-Italian monasticism.

**Demographic and Economic Expansion**

One of the most notable, and perhaps most significant, characteristics of European and Mediterranean society in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was that it was much larger than before. While notions of the early-medieval ‘Dark Ages’ have largely been dispelled by important works such as Michael McCormick’s *Origins of the European Economy*, it is true that there was a substantial decline in population from a peak during the Roman Principate. Between the sixth-century plague of Justinian’s reign and the ravages of the Black Death in the fourteenth century the population never expanded at such a large rate as it did in the High Middle Ages.

There are a number of interesting markers of this population growth. Several historians have pointed to the large increase in the number of churches and monasteries in the tenth and eleventh centuries.\(^\text{48}\) When many new churches are planted in previously underpopulated areas such as the German forest or the Italian marshlands it is a reasonable assumption that they were to serve new communities. The tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries were a time of clearance and land reclamation, with the result that some have called this the ‘Age of Clearance’. In Robert the Monk’s account of Urban II’s speech at the Council of Clermont he even has his speaker remark upon the fact that there is not enough land or food for the population in France and Germany, with

the result that the people end up fighting one another constantly.\textsuperscript{49} Neither was this limited to northern Europe: after the Byzantine annexation of Bulgaria in 1018 there was a dense reoccupation of land south of the Haemus mountain range, while in Macedonia shepherds and woodcutters were obliged to seek new pastures and forests as hillsides began to be occupied.\textsuperscript{50}

Southern Italy was no exception, and indeed may have been in the forefront of expansion and land clearance. Montanari identified seventy-three extant agrarian contracts from northern Italy in the tenth century;\textsuperscript{51} Vitolo points out that, by contrast, the Principality of Salerno alone had at least ninety-one agrarian contracts from the same period, to look at just the \textit{Codex Diplomaticus Cavensis}.\textsuperscript{52} Laiou and Morrisson point to a growth in secondary output as well: “The fragmentary record shows that almost all the cities for which we have any kind of archaeological information were also centers of production, and that among them many more cities than we realized had large-scale production of some of these items, for the market.”\textsuperscript{53}

Expansion in farmland was accompanied both by growth in existing cities and the creation of new ones. The Cadaster of Thebes, part of an eleventh-century Byzantine land register (known as a \textit{praktikon}) listing villages and individual heads of household, shows evidence of an increase in the number of households and a reduction in the size of plots, implying an intensification of land exploitation.\textsuperscript{54} In Italy there were a number of new cities founded by the Byzantine authorities such as the famous Troia in the Tavoliere plain in the Capitanata, founded by the catepan Basil Boiannes in c. 1020.\textsuperscript{55} There are many new city names that clearly had no relations to antiquity,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{49} Robert the Monk, \textit{Historia Iherosolimitana} 1.1.
\item \textsuperscript{50} A.E. Laiou and C. Morrisson, \textit{The Byzantine Economy} (2007): 92-3.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Vitolo (1990a): 83-4.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Laiou and Morrisson (2007): 131.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Laiou and Morrisson (2007): 92-3; cf. N. Svoronos, ‘Recherches sur le cadastre byzantin et la fiscalité aux XIe et XIIe siècles’ (1959).
\item \textsuperscript{55} See P. Oldfield, ‘Rural Settlement and Economic Development in Southern Italy’ (2005).
\end{itemize}
such as Conversano, Giovinazzo and Polignano. The creation of new sees can also give some indication of change in the urban landscape, since (in principle) there should be one bishop per urban centre; thus the founding of new sees such as Umbriatico, Cerenzia, Isola Capo Rizzuto, Sila, Rossano and Amantea in Calabria indicates a degree of demographic growth there. One might also point to a strengthening of civic identity as evidenced by the new urban chronicles of the eleventh and twelfth centuries from cities such as Bari, Cassano, Troia, Catanzaro and others.

Needless to say, medieval cities were nowhere near the magnitude of modern cities; with the exception of Constantinople, hardly any cities could even hope to reach the size of modern towns. However, cities probably only accounted for a small proportion of a region’s population, and their significance lies in their relationship to surrounding settlements. In southern Italy historians have noted the phenomenon of incastellamento, the fortification of villages and small towns in strategic locations. These fortified towns (castella) would serve as administrative centres and the abodes of local aristocrats, while agricultural communities would live in villages (casalia) in the surrounding area. Cities, then, are not in themselves proof of a rising population; they do show, however, the consolidation of regional administration in local centres. Combined with increasing reclamation of agricultural land, incastellamento is a sign of social and economic growth. Furthermore, southern-Italian castella bear much comparison with Byzantine kastra in the Balkans and Asia Minor, which served a similar purpose.

What is important to note is that, in varying degrees, these demographic trends are visible from France through to Greece. Lefort and Martin observe that “one does not see, in particular, that in these questions there was any single Byzantine uniqueness by comparison to the western

57 See e.g. C. Foss, ‘Archaeology and the “Twenty Cities” of Byzantine Asia’ (1977).
Mediterranean. To the contrary, one is struck by the identity of effort made and results obtained in the countries of the northern shore of the Mediterranean between the eleventh and the thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{58} The fact that these various areas of the Christian Mediterranean all experienced broadly comparable social and economic conditions is of great importance in studying the structural development of monasticism in each place.

**Italy and the Byzantine Mediterranean**

Not only were there common trends across the Mediterranean, but there were also increasing connections and points of contact between Italy and both Byzantine and Islamic lands. Although no Mediterranean shipwrecks have been dated to the eighth century, their numbers increase notably in the ninth and tenth centuries.\textsuperscript{59} Likewise, in the tenth century, new harbour towns appeared on the Apulian coast to facilitate trans-Adriatic communication such as Polignano, Giovinazzo, Molfetta and Monopoli.\textsuperscript{60} Even some of the more inland cities would appear to have had substantial economic ties to the opposite coast of the Balkans: as late as 1060, when Robert Guiscard laid siege to the city of Troia, the inhabitants attempted to buy him off with “all the customary tribute and to add to this gold and horses from Greece,” according to Amatus of Monte Cassino.\textsuperscript{61}

There are many more signs of commercial links between Italy and Byzantium. There have been extensive finds, for instance, of glazed Corinthian ceramics in Bari and Calabrian Scribla; given the nascent state of Byzantine archaeology, there is likely much more waiting to be uncovered.\textsuperscript{62}


\textsuperscript{61} Amatus of Montecassino, *Storia dei Normanni* 5.6.

\textsuperscript{62} Martin and Noyé (1989): 60.
Most convincing of all, however, is the fact that southern Italy in the eleventh century was positively flooded with low-denomination Byzantine coinage, mostly from the imperial mint in Thessalonica. These are frequently mentioned in literary and documentary sources from southern Italy and are generally marked out by the names of the emperors by whom they were issued, such as ‘michelati’ and ‘romanati’. In Calabria, Byzantine bronze coins were in wide circulation until at least the end of the eleventh century.  

Certain cities, notably the coastal duchies of the Tyrrhenian coast, were especially oriented towards maritime trade; Tangheroni refers to Amalfi as “a sort of Christian port in the Islamic world...” Amalfi was not just a port in the Islamic world, however – the city was also firmly in the Byzantine world. Anna Comnena mentions in passing an Amalfitan trading colony at Dyrrachium, while Amalfi was one of the first Italian cities to have its own quarter in Constantinople. The Amalfitan nobleman Pantaleone Mauro is well known for arranging for the production of bronze doors at Constantinople which were then shipped to Italy and may be found at Amalfi, Monte Cassino and St Peter’s in Rome. On the subject of Amalfitan trading colonies in the Byzantine empire, Gerald Day underlines the chrysobull of Alexius Comnenus in 1082 in which he cemented the anti-Norman alliance with Venice: Alexius instructs all Amalfitans who had workshops in the empire to pay three hyperpyra each year to the Venetian Patriarch of Grado. As Day puts it, “it is important... that the Venetian patriarch was considered by the Greek government to be the ecclesiastical superior of other Byzantine cities in Italy, even though by this time they had fallen to the Normans.” The Patriarchate of Grado was also, of course, a Latin see under the Church of Rome.

65 Anna Comnena, Alexiad 5.1.1.
In addition to Greece and Constantinople, there are discernible links between Italy and the Dalmatian coastline, which was inhabited by a mixture of Slavic tribes and pre-Slavic Latin inhabitants. Dalmatia itself was something of a liminal region between Byzantium and the Latin West. Although Byzantine political power in the early eleventh century extended (at least theoretically) along the entire coastline, the Church of Rome had ecclesiastical jurisdiction as far as Dioclea. This could produce some interesting results, as in the case of the late eighth-century Evangelarium Spalatense from Split, which contains the Greek opening of St John’s Gospel written in the Latin script and running for three pages. Dioclea itself became a battleground between Rome and Constantinople; the region contained portions of the Roman archdiocese of Split and the Constantinopolitan archdioceses of Dyrrachium and Ohrid; Dioclea’s ruler, Michael I, wanting to give legitimacy to his tenuous and brief independence from Byzantium, turned to the papacy, which raised the city of Antibari (literally ‘Opposite Bari’) to archiepiscopal rank in 1066/7. In about 1075, the Norman count Amico of Giovinazzo campaigned against the Croatian king Peter Krešimir in Dalmatia on behalf of Pope Gregory VII.

There were economic links between Italy and Dalmatia too. In 1050 The monastery of S. Maria di Tremiti was given the church of St Sylvester on the island of Biševo by a hieromonk from Spalato named John Cherlicco. The document recording this transaction was witnessed by five Slavic župans named Radabano, Tichano, Bodidrago, Sedrago and Bergoy, who were all based in the Gargano peninsula in Italy. Bergoy calls himself iudex Maranorum, suggesting perhaps that the Byzantine authorities had recognised him as an imperial representative in the Italian town of Varano. As David Abulafia has highlighted, the Dalmatian coastline was also the scene of protracted struggles between Venice, Byzantium and the Normans over maritime commerce, and

---

70 *Tremiti* 42.
Ragusa was even drawn into Robert Guiscard’s war of 1081-5 on the Norman side. Conversely, some Italians also fought on the Byzantine side in Balkan Wars. One of the Byzantine generals who suppressed the rebellion of the Bulgarian Constantine Bodin, for instance, was called ‘Longibardopoulous’ (‘Son of a Lombard’), a name strongly suggesting an Italian family history in the same way that Norman families in Byzantium often took the name ‘Frankopoulous’. Even Italo-Normans would enter Byzantine service in significant numbers, as Jonathan Shepard has detailed at length.

Italy had a firm place within the Byzantine mindset, and it was a mindset that was even reflected among many Italians, both Latins as well as Greeks. Amalfi is certainly one of the best examples; Nicetas Choniates, as late as the early thirteenth century, speaks of the Amalfitans as “nourished on Roman [i.e. Byzantine] customs”. Yet there are many other good cases of Latin Italians who adopted Byzantine customs – in 1053, the catepan Argyrus (himself a Lombard) rewarded the (Latin) bishop Genesius of Taranto for his fidelity and for the oikeiosis that he displayed towards the Romans [Byzantines], an oikeiosis that he had received from his ancestors. Oikeiosis was the language of the family household used to express the relationship between the Byzantine emperor and his subjects.

If any further evidence were needed that there was a strong maritime connection between Italy and Byzantium, Anna Comnena provides a fascinating glimpse from the early twelfth century. She recounts how, in 1108, Alexius Comnenus had set up his headquarters at Thessalonica to fight against Bohemond’s ‘crusade’. Alexius disagrees with the manner in which the Megas Doux Isaac

---

71 Apulia 4.220, 5.245.
72 Scylitzes Continuatus 165-6.
73 Shepard (1993).
74 “ἡθεσιν ἐντεθραμμένοι Ῥωμαϊκοῖς”: Nicetas Choniates, Historia 552.
75 Carbone 5.
Contostephanus has arranged his fleet: “Having drawn a map of the coast of Longibardia and Illyria and marking the harbours on either side, he sent it to Contostephanus showing him in writing where he should deploy his ships and from where he could with a fair wind intercept the Celts [i.e. Normans] as they crossed.”77 The fact that the emperor was able to draw a map detailing maritime infrastructure from his base on the other side of Greece implies that not only was the connection between Italy and Byzantium strong, but also that it was organised at the highest levels of the imperial government.

Monastic Networks between East and West

When set in the context of such a strong Mediterranean fabric of travel, it should come as no surprise that there were also strong networks of monastic contact. This contact took many forms: pilgrimage (both eastward and westward) was a predominant motivation for travel, though the desire to find solitude (in the case of hermits), the invitations of admiring lay people (including both German and Byzantine emperors) and the depredations of war and famine were also significant factors.

Although Abulafia asserts that “the [Byzantine] empire was like an onion”, with southern Italy being essentially just another defensive layer upon it,78 the journeys of Italian monks show that there was in fact a shared monastic society, or at least a network, across the sea. Indeed, there are several notable examples of Greek monks from Calabria making journeys to Greece, Constantinople and the East. Unfortunately, due to the fact that the majority of surviving evidence before the eleventh century is hagiographical, it is only possible to focus on a few notable saints; however, their journeys indicate certain patterns of travel, and often mention (or imply) unnamed

77 ἀπέστειλε τῷ Κοντοστεφάνῳ ὑποδείξας ἐν γράμμασι καὶ ὅπη δεῖ προσορμίσαι τὰς ναῦς καὶ ὅθεν οὐρίου τύχοι τῶν διαπλῳζομένων Κελτῶν εξορμῶν.”: Alexiad 13.7.4.
travelling companions. Michel Kaplan remarks that “pilgrimage would appear to be one of the, if not necessary, then at least useful and very generally present, stages in the itinerary of sanctity... of the Byzantine saint.” Though these are, to an extent, literary motifs of hagiography, the fact that a saint was expected to travel a lot indicates that it must have been possible and at least relatively common; certainly a saint’s reputation was supposed to spread beyond his homeland.

There are many good examples of travelling monks from southern Italy. St Elias the Younger, founder of the monastery of the Salinas in Calabria in the ninth century, visited famous monasteries in the Levant and received the monastic habit from the patriarch of Jerusalem (a mark of the Egyptian and Palestinian influences on Sicilian monasticism, no doubt). Towards 880 he returned to Sicily where he met his disciple Daniel, and then travelled to Sparta in the Peloponnese and Butrinto in Epirus, where they were arrested on suspicion of being Arab spies. After being released, they went on pilgrimage to Rome, returned to the Peloponnese and then settled in the monastery of the Salinas. His travels were not over, however: in 902, at the request of the emperor Leo VI (886-912), Elias visited Constantinople, before finally dying in Thessalonica at the age of seventy nine in 903.80 Another monk known to have travelled around the empire was St Fantinus (c. 927-1000), a monk of Mercurion in Calabria, who travelled around the Peloponnese, Attica and Thessaly, before finally dying, like Elias, in Thessalonica.81

A monk did not even have to cross the sea to have his presence felt in Greece and Constantinople. St Nilus of Rossano, famous for his encounters with Latins such as St Adalbert of Prague and the German emperor Otto III, not to mention his foundations such as Grottaferrata, was apparently known by reputation even on Mount Athos, the heartland of Orthodox monasticism. In an

80 Vita di Sant’ Elia il Giovane.
81 Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae 224.
interesting tale from Nilus’ *Vita*, the saint decided that he should teach the monks of the monastery of St Adrian of Rossano the value of humility and submission. He instructed them to go to their vineyard and cut down all the vines that they did not need for themselves; this caused great surprise, so much so that “when news of this work spread abroad, even to the Holy Mountain itself and to Sicily, nobody was able to comprehend the reason for the act.”

More interesting still is the fact that the Norman conquest does not seem to have had a significant impact on monastic links between Italy and Greece. Bartholomew of Simeri, founder of the Patiron monastery of Rossano, is an excellent example. After Bartholomew had founded the monastery, he travelled to Rome in 1105, where Pope Paschal II granted it a bull of exemption, and then travelled to Constantinople with the permission of Duke Roger Borsa of Apulia and Calabria in order to collect books and liturgical items for the foundation. In Constantinople Bartholomew was received with great honour by Alexius Comnenus and received lavish gifts of icons, manuscripts and vestments. Bartholomew’s *Vita* goes on to say that a Constantinopolitan senator named Basil Calimeres invited him to go to Mount Athos in order to reform and improve the monastery of St Basil; this, the hagiographer explains, is why “up to the present day, so they say, the monastery is called ‘tou Kalabrou’ ['of the Calabrian'] among the locals.”

Unfortunately it is impossible to say anything more about this particular monastery, though there were clearly other Italian connections with Mount Athos. Like the monastery ‘tou Kalabrou’, documents of the tenth and eleventh centuries mention a monastery ‘tou Sikelou’ (‘of the Sicilian’); one of its abbots carried the very Italo-Greek name of Fantinus. There was even a

---

82 “τούτου οὖν τοῦ ἔργου περιφήμου γεγονότος καὶ ἕως αὐτοῦ τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὄρους καὶ ἕως τῆς Σικελίας οὐφεὶς ἠδυνήθη καταλαβέσθαι τοῦ πράγματος τὴν αἰτίαν...”: *Life of St Nilus of Rossano* 88-9.
83 See below, p. 51.
Latin monastery on Mt Athos in these centuries, a Benedictine-rite foundation established by the Amalfitans. George the Hagiorite, author of a Georgian *Vita* of c. 1045 of SS John and Euthymius, the founder of the Iviron monastery on Mt Athos, speaks of the arrival on the mountain of a monk called Leo, brother of the duke of Benevento, with six disciples. Leo established the monastery of S. Maria of the Amalfitans, probably between 985 and 990, and George comments that the monks there live “an upright and solemn life...”

The Amalfitans seem to have blended in quite well on the Holy Mountain. Their abbots appear as witnesses to several tenth- and eleventh-century Athonite acts, signing their names in Latin. In one interesting case in 1087, a decision of the Protos Sabbas with regards to the monastery of the Chaldaeans, Abbot Biton of the Amalfitans appears as the second signatory on the document, signing his name in the Greek language but in the Latin script: “[Biton] monachos ke kathigoumenos tis monis ton Amalfinon ikia chiri ypegrapsa.” Perhaps he was familiar with spoken, but not written, Greek. The Amalfitan monks appear as signatories to several more documents, and their monastery is last mentioned in a chrysobull of Alexius III in 1198.

The traffic was not all one-way, either. When historians manage to see past the fog that the ‘Schism’ of 1054 has put before their eyes, contemporary evidence reveals that there was a considerable flow of travellers from Greece and Asia towards Italy and the West, with the result that there were many oriental monasteries in places that might be surprising. Bishop Gerard of Toul (963-994) endowed a mixed monastery for Greek and Scottish (or perhaps Irish) monks in his diocese in Lorraine: “Gathering together not a modest mixture of both Greeks and Scots... he had set up separate altars in the oratory, where they might make their supplicatory prayers to God

---

87 *Philothée* 1.
88 *Chilandar* 3-4.
according to the custom of their homeland.”

The shrine of the Apostles at Rome was a notable destination for pilgrims, and was the home to several Greek and oriental monasteries in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Like Toul, Rome also became home to a mixed Latin-Greek monastery, the famous SS Boniface and Alexius, established by Pope Benedict VII (974-983). Its first abbot was the Chalcedonian Archbishop Sergius of Damascus, perhaps driven out of his see by his Monophysite rival, who came to Rome in 977, and his tomb is still visible in the monastery. Various Greek visitors to Rome can be named in the tenth and eleventh centuries including St Symeon the Hermit (who travelled through France, Spain and Britain), the bishop Barnabas (who became a monk in Dijon and died in 1031) and of course St Nilus of Rossano, founder of Grottaferrata.

SS Boniface and Alexius was founded in an era when Byzantium’s influence at Rome was increasing, to be sure; in 999 Metropolitan Leo of Synada, the Byzantine representative in Rome, wrote enthusiastically to the Patriarch of Constantinople about the possibility of bringing the papacy back round to its former loyalties to Byzantium. However, even after the German-inspired reformers established themselves in Rome, and even after the confrontation of 1054, Byzantine monks continued to go on pilgrimage to Rome and the West. The Vita of St Lazarus of Mount Galesion provides ample testimony to this effect. Lazarus was from western Asia Minor, near Magnesia on the Maeander, and at the age of eighteen in about 984/5 he set out for Chonae, and over the next several years travelled to Attalia in Pamphylia (where he became a monk) and eventually, between 991 and 993, to Jerusalem.

89 “Coetum quoque Graecorum ac Scotorum agglomerans non modicum... statuerat divisis altariis in oratorio, ubi Deo supplices laudes persolverent more patrio”: Vita S. Gerardi episcopi Tullensis 19.
90 For more detail on the fascinating monastery of SS Boniface and Alexius, see J.-M. Sansterre, Les moines grecs et orientaux à Rome aux époques byzantine et carolingienne (1983).
92 Leo of Synada, Ép. 10.
Lazarus’ *Vita* reveals some interesting details – on his way to Jerusalem (which at the time was under Fatimid control), he fell in with a group of Cappadocian pilgrims, indicating that these journeys were not always solitary. On his way back from Jerusalem to Ephesus in about 1009, he encountered a group of western pilgrims who were returning from Jerusalem to Rome. Though Lazarus himself decided at one point to travel to Rome with a group of other monks, eventually he decided to settle on Galesion where he established his first monastery. The principle source of funding, by coincidence, was a wealthy lady called Iouditta who originated in Calabria. When Lazarus was seeking a hermitage in which to live as a solitary, he found a cave that had been occupied by a monk called Paphnutius. This Paphnutius was an Athenian who had left Greece when he was young and set off for Rome where he became an ascetic, though after falling prey to a demon he set out for Galesion where he eventually died.93

Lazarus’ *Vita* is full of such interesting details, which together create the impression of a rather dynamic world of monastic travel. Lazarus was by no means the last monk to wish to travel to Rome; Robert Guiscard understood that he could find Greek monks at the shrine of the Apostles in the late 1070s, where he sent agents to find a suitable person to impersonate Emperor Michael VII Ducas.94 Later travellers included monks such as Cyril Phileotes (d. 1110) and his disciple and hagiographer Nicholas Catascepenus, who writes that Cyril wanted to go there “for the sake of venerating the Holy Apostles.”95 Far from the spirit of schism that many medievalists unconsciously imagine when describing the state of Christianity in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, there were considerable networks of monastic contact – and we have scarcely even touched upon western-European pilgrimage to Jerusalem in this era, which perforce brought monks and laypeople through Byzantine territory.

93 Gregory the Cellarer, *The Life of Lazaros of Mt. Galesion*.
94 *Alexiad* 1.12.
95 “χάριν προσκυνήσεως τῶν ἁγίων Ἀποστόλων”: *Vie de saint Cyrille le Philéote* 101.
Summary: A Mediterranean Locale

The idea of southern Italy as a frontier region is a problematic one. In a sense it is positive in that it highlights the fact that the peninsula was not just a generic part of the ‘Latin West’, yet at the same time it obscures the fact that it was closely woven into the fabric of the Mediterranean world. This context of regional interconnection is extremely important to bear in mind.

The eleventh and twelfth centuries saw considerable growth in population and a substantial accompanying economic expansion. This is a trend that is clearly visible, to varying degrees, from northern Europe all the way to Greece and Asia Minor in this period. At the same time, although it had never completely died off, maritime travel was becoming easier and much more frequent – a trend that would only grow with the creation of the crusader states in the Levant. One consequence that is not always realised was that, on the eve of the Norman conquests, southern Italy was more closely tied-in to the Byzantine Empire than it had been for several hundred years, and this would leave a powerful legacy both for southern-Italian monasticism and society in general.

The realisation of such a strong social, economic and cultural network across the Mediterranean world is not just an intriguing irrelevance, but should make a significant impact on studies of medieval history. What affects one region will, by virtue of inter-regional connections, affect other regions as well, and comparison of different regions will prove enlightening. In the matter of the structural change of southern-Italian monasticism, the Mediterranean context is of great import.
Chapter 4  
Patterns of Monastic Change

The monastic history of southern Italy in this period is as complicated and diverse as its ethnic history. It encompasses not just the history of abbeys and priories, but also the wanderings of famous saints and even social movements. In the modern western context, monasticism is often conceived in terms of ‘houses’, fixed establishments in which communities of monks or nuns live in obedience to a rule such as that of St Benedict. This was true of western-European monasticism, especially towards the end of the Middle Ages, but Byzantine and oriental monasticism has always been, and still is, far more varied.

Besides the koinobion (a monastic community living according to a common rule, generally unique to that particular monastery), a phenomenon often attributed to St Pachomius the Great of Egypt (c. 292-396), there existed two broad types of monastic foundation, the lavra and the kella. The lavra consisted of a community of monks who would live near to one another and partake in important liturgical services together, but who would otherwise live by their own personal rules. A kella, on the other hand, was a rejection of community; usually it would be no more than a cave or hut inhabited by a monk (perhaps with a disciple as well). The celliote monks are also known as ‘anchorites’, from the Greek word ‘anachoresis’, meaning ‘withdrawal [from the world]’. Southern Italy was home to all of these types of monastic life, and various shades in-between.

Nonetheless, despite this diversity, it is possible to discern broader rhythms across the longue durée of early-medieval history. It is not quite possible to refer to these as cycles, since they did involve change, but it was a patterned change. On a basic level, periods of economic and political

---

disruption are accompanied by similarly disrupted monastic life; large institutions break down through a lack of resources or hostile attack, while many monks are forced to leave their homeland in order to find security. As political powers reassert themselves and attempt to restore peaceful conditions (as when the Byzantines created the catepanate of Italy, for example), monastic communities become more settled and generally better organised. Better organisation, combined with political economic developments, will in turn lead to innovation and change in monastic life in general.

Loose Beginnings: Early Monastic Development, 9th-10th centuries

The turbulent history of southern Italy in the wake of the Lombard and Arab invasions seriously disrupted the ecclesiastical and monastic life of the region from the sixth century onwards. St Benedict of Nursia (480-547) had established a monastery at Monte Cassino in c. 529; though he himself does not seem to have intended to found an ‘order’ in the sense that later reformers of the Roman Church came to understand the term, his foundation would be one of the most influential monasteries in the medieval West. Even so, the monastery had to be abandoned in 581 during the Lombard invasions, and would only be refounded by Petronax of Brescia in 718. It would later be captured by the Saracens in 883, and the monks fled to Teano in Campania, where they remained until the time of Abbot Aligernus (949-986). In this period, it will be remembered, Byzantium was beginning to reassert its power and was drawing the Lombard states of southern Italy into its diplomatic orbit. Though Monte Cassino had previously been under Carolingian influence, and though it was Latin-rite, Bloch observes that “it is quite obvious that in this period of renascent power the Byzantine emperor had taken over the task of the German emperor as protector of the two Benedictine monasteries in Campania [the other being S. Vincenzo al Volturno]…”

97 The earliest account of St Benedict’s life is to be found in the Dialogues of Pope Gregory I. For a full account of Monte Cassino’s monastic history, see H. Bloch, ‘Monte Cassino, Byzantium and the West in the Earlier Middle Ages’ (1946).

As far as Greek monasticism in the centuries before the Norman conquest was concerned, *instabilitas* was very much the order of the day. All of the great Greek monasteries of southern Italy, such as Rossano, Messina, Carbone, Kyr-Zosimo and so forth, date from the eleventh century and later. In the ninth, tenth and early-eleventh centuries the vast majority of evidence comes from the *Vitae* of Calabrian and Sicilian saints, of which there are a great number. With the gradual Islamic conquest of Sicily in the ninth and tenth centuries, Graeco-Christian culture (a very loose term, as we have seen) became concentrated in the north-eastern corner of the island, around the Val Demone, and from there many monks crossed the Straits of Messina to the Calabrian mainland. The question of whether this was part of a ‘byzantinisation’ of Calabria is not relevant here; suffice it to say that there was a clear movement of Greek-speaking Sicilians towards the Italian mainland and further north.

The *Vita* of St Elias the Younger (823-903) gives the earliest example of this movement.99 Born in Enna in central Sicily, the saint was twice captured by Arab pirates, though he eventually regained his freedom and travelled widely in the Eastern Mediterranean, receiving the monastic habit from the patriarch of Jerusalem. Eventually Elias founded the monastery of the Salinas near Reggio di Calabria, though he preferred to live as an anchorite in the mountains nearby. Another St Elias, called Spelaeotes (864-960), was actually from Reggio, though he established a monastery in Taormina in Sicily; later he travelled to Rome and became the spiritual father of a hermit named Ignatius. Eventually he returned to Reggio and was made abbot of the Salinas by Elias the Younger; like Elias, however, he preferred to retire to a hermitage with two other monks near Melicuccà.100

---

99 *Vita di Sant’Elia il Giovane.*
100 *Vita et Conversatio Sancti Patris Nostri Eliae Spelaeotae.*
Sometimes entire families were involved in monastic ventures; St Christopher and his two sons SS Sabas and Macarius originated from Collesano, near Palermo in Sicily. They were monks at St Philip of Argira on Mt Etna, but in 940/1 they moved to northern Calabria with some fellow monks to escape a famine on the island, where Christopher founded a cenobitic monastery dedicated to St Michael at Mercurion.\textsuperscript{101} Later his son Sabas would found a cenobium at Lagonegro in Lucania, a sparsely-populated area between Apulia and Calabria that would eventually become a separate \textit{thema} (province) in the later tenth century. Under Sabas’ guidance the monks would found yet another cenobium on the bank of the Sinni river in Lucania, in the Latinianon region (the name no doubt reflecting the liminal nature of the area between Greek- and Latin-speaking areas).

There are many other examples of such itinerant saints, men such as St Luke of Corleone, St Luke of Demenna (also known as ‘of Armento’), St Vitalis of Castronuovo, St Elias of Castrogiovanni and, later, St Nilus of Rossano. What these men’s monastic foundations all have in common is their ephemeral nature – just as in the case of the Desert Fathers of late-antique Egypt, disciples would gather around particular \textit{people} rather than institutions. Indeed, before the eleventh century the very idea of a Greek monastic ‘institution’ might almost seem to be a contradiction in terms. That is not to say that there was no organisation; clearly there was some, since we hear of dependent monasteries (\textit{metochia}) and loosely defined congregations of monastic communities. St Elias Spelaeotes and his companion Arsenius, for example, lived “in the \textit{metochion} of the holy monastery of Saint Lucia, which is called Mindinon.”\textsuperscript{102} They also seem to have owned land; emperor Leo VI donated “properties and sufficient revenues” to the monastery of the Salinas.\textsuperscript{103} Nonetheless, there is almost no comparison to the institutional organisation of famous monasteries

\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Historia et Laudes SS. Saba et Macarii}.
\textsuperscript{102} “ἐν τῷ \textit{μετοχίῳ} τῆς εὐαγοῦς μονῆς τῆς ἁγίας Λουκίας, τῷ λεγομένῳ Μίνδινον”: \textit{Vita di S. Elia lo Speleota} 14.
\textsuperscript{103} “κτήματα καὶ προσόδους ἱκανὰς”: \textit{Vita di S. Elia il Giovane} 75.
such as Cluny or Gorze, at least before the twelfth century; in many cases these monasteries seem to vanish from the sources after the death of their founders, whether it be as a result of raids, famine, pressure from rival landowners or simply a lack of monks.

**Early Expansion and Consolidation, ca. 1000-1036**

As the Byzantine Empire pushed forward its frontiers in southern Italy, it also made an attempt to consolidate the Church in the region. Aside from the Latin sees raised to archiepiscopal rank mentioned above, several new sees were created; in Calabria, the dioceses of Malvito, Martirano, Bova and Oppido date to the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, while in Apulia Otranto was made an archiepiscopal see with the (slightly awkwardly placed) suffragans of Acerenza, Tursi, Gravina, Matera and Tricarico in Calabria and Lucania. An episcopal see generally represents a significant centre of population, and so the creation of new sees is, with some exceptions, usually a sign of demographic growth.

The early eleventh century also saw some of the more permanent Greek monastic structures emerge, notably the monastic community of Carbone in Lucania. Though the famous monastery of St Anastasius is first mentioned in a document of 1056, the broader community of monastic establishments had been created by St Luke of Demenna/Armento, who died there in 993. One of the earliest documents in the cartulary of Carbone is the will of one of his successors, Blasius of Armento, in 1041, conferring a considerable list of lands, churches and monasteries to members of his own family (even though this was technically uncanonical). The very first document in the cartulary is a will of one Cosmas, monk and abbot of St Benjamin (near Carbone), giving his monastery to his brothers Theodore and Nicholas as early as 1007. St Benjamin was given to the

---

monastery of SS Elias and Anastasius of Carbone in 1080 by Giamarga, the Lady of Tygane.\textsuperscript{106}

In addition to local structures, the Byzantine imperial authorities seem to have taken a greater interest in both Greek and Latin monasteries. The Greek monastery of St Peter in Taranto gained the epithet ‘imperial’ some time before 1035,\textsuperscript{107} and it was not the only one: as Borsari points out, although it is not explicitly mentioned in the \textit{Vita} of St Elias of Castrogiovanni, the monastery of the Theotokos in the Calabrian \textit{tourma} (district) of the Salinas was also ‘imperial’.\textsuperscript{108} This designation apparently denoted a favoured status involving exemption from certain financial duties.

Another interesting point is that, as the Byzantines tightened their grip on southern Italy, Greek monasteries were not the only ones to benefit financially. In the first two decades of the eleventh century the Byzantine catepans confirmed the possessions of the monastery of Monte Cassino (in the Lombard principality of Capua) in Byzantine territory.\textsuperscript{109} In an act of 1018 that survives only in Latin in the \textit{Registrum} of Peter the Deacon, the emperor Constantine VIII, brother of Basil II, ordered the catepan Basil Boiannes to make sure that nobody appropriate the possessions of churches in Italy, “and especially of St Benedict [of Monte Cassino]”.\textsuperscript{110} This was the same year in which the Lombard revolt led by Melus of Bari was defeated, and so it is understandable that authorities might have been worried about the plundering of Lombard property. It is true that Peter the Deacon is rather notorious for falsifying entries in his \textit{Registrum}, though in this case there does not seem to be any reason to doubt the authenticity of the act. Indeed, it fits rather well in the context of other such acts.

\textsuperscript{106} \textit{Carbone} 6, 2, 1, 11.
\textsuperscript{107} Though the monastery dates to before 975, the epithet ‘βασιλικὴ’ appears in a donation to the monastery by the Lombard Sardus: \textit{Syllabus} 27; cf. 30.
\textsuperscript{109} E.g. \textit{Syllabus} 11, 12, 14.
\textsuperscript{110} “Et precipue sancti benedicti”: \textit{Syllabus} 17.
Raiding and Restructuring, *ca.* 1037-1100

Nonetheless, the period of monastic prosperity briefly ushered in by the Byzantine resurgence was soon cut short, though not simply by Lombard rebellions or the failed invasion of the German emperor Henry II in 1022. Rather, it was the mercenary soldiers from Normandy and northern Europe who are particularly blamed by southern-Italian sources for widespread plunder and rapine. Monastic chronicles are (understandably) severe in their criticism of the Normans; the early twelfth-century chronicler of St Vincent on Volturno makes an implicit comparison between the raids of the Normans and those of the Arabs in the ninth and tenth centuries.\[^111^\] Two documents from Salerno, in 1041 and 1044, reveal that Norman soldiers had taken over the Nocera region for an extended time and were simply stealing the revenues of a church owned by the monastery of St Maximus in Salerno.\[^112^\] In 1061, the *spatharokandidatos* John, a landowner in Lucania, gave a ruined monastery to Abbot Hilarion of Carbone, bemoaning the destruction brought about by Norman bandits.\[^113^\]

One problem was that, until the late eleventh century, the Normans were extremely disunited, and even the Hauteville brothers had difficulty ensuring that the minor Norman nobility respected monastic property. The Norman counts of the Adriatic coast seem to have been particularly badly behaved; in a document from Venosa of 1063, Count Robert of Loritello, Count Amicus of Giovinazzo, Count Richard of Andria, Count Geoffreý of Conversano, Count Peter of Lesina and one Count Robert declare to Robert Guiscard that they have restored two fisheries at Varano and Lesina to Ursus, abbot of Banzi, not to mention the monastery of Banzi itself.\[^114^\]

Despite the banditry of the Normans, once they had completed the conquest of southern Italy and

\[^111^\] *Chron. Vult.* 1.231.
\[^112^\] *CDC* 6.270-3 no. 985, 264-6 no. 1041.
\[^113^\] *Carbone* 8.
\[^114^\] *Recueil* 12.
Sicily in 1072, and once Robert Guiscard and his successors began to assert their central authority, the Norman nobles eventually had to transform themselves from plunderers to patrons.

Even while some Normans were engaged in raiding Byzantine and Lombard lands, others were beginning to endow their own religious institutions in their newly won territories. At Aversa, the first Norman fief in Italy (gained in 1030), the nunnery of St Blaise is documented in 1043.\textsuperscript{115} It is clear that the Latin monastery of the Holy Trinity at Venosa, which would become a major institution, was founded before 1053, when Drogo d’Hauteville, styled as ‘Duke and Master of Italy’, gave the abbey possession of a third of the town of Venosa as well as two monasteries dedicated to St George and the churches of St Peter, St Benedict, St Nicholas and St John, all in the vicinity of Venosa.\textsuperscript{116}

However, with the establishment of new Latin monasteries in formerly Byzantine territories, the question of ‘latinisation’ comes to the fore. As proponents of Norman latinisation point out, in taking the recently-founded monastery of S. Maria de Matina under papal protection on 30\textsuperscript{th} September 1067, Pope Alexander II instructed Robert Guiscard “that he should build Latin monasteries out of the monasteries of Greek monks with the blessing and with the authority of of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul.”\textsuperscript{117} However, historians should be cautious of reading too much into such a statement. Firstly, it is only the view of one pope during a time of intense anti-Byzantine hostility; others would take much more conciliatory attitudes towards the Greek rite in southern Italy, such as Pope Urban II, who gave it his full approval, seemingly even in the matter of azymes and the Greek refusal to add the filioque to the Creed.\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{115} Aversa 45.
\textsuperscript{116} “Dux et magister Italie”: Recueil 1.
\textsuperscript{117} “Ut de monasteriis Grecorum monachorum edificaret Latina monasteria cum benedictione et cum auctoritate beatorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli”: Carte 3.
\textsuperscript{118} Runciman (1955): 76; cf. Anselm of Canterbury, De Azymo et Fermento, PL 158. Anselm of Canterbury was present at the Council of Bari and took the view that, even though Latins and Greeks differed
the document in which Alexander was supposed to have ordered this has been questioned; its editor, Alessandro Pratesi, considered it to be a forgery, while Ughelli suggested that it was a real bull, but with later interpolations.\textsuperscript{119} Thirdly, there are no clear cases in which the Normans actually carried out such a policy.

It is true that the Normans created new Latin monasteries in Byzantine areas, such as the Holy Trinity of Venosa in Lucania (c. 1040) or S. Maria di Camigliano near Scribla in Calabria (1054). It is also true that many Greek monasteries were donated to Latin houses such as Monte Cassino and Cava;\textsuperscript{120} Robert Guiscard’s first monastic foundation was S. Maria di Sant’Eufemia, near Nicastro in Calabria in 1062, which he established in the ruins of a deserted Greek monastery. The monastery’s first abbot was Robert de Grandmesnil, formerly abbot of St Evroul in Normandy, and it received several monasteries and churches in the area, many of which must have been Greek.\textsuperscript{121} Even the notable Greek monastery of Kyr-Zosimo in Lucania was donated “with all its men and other possessions and cells, which in Greek are called \textit{metochia}” to the Holy Trinity of Cava by Hugo Chiaramonte in 1088,\textsuperscript{122} and by the early twelfth century the monastery had Latin priors. Henri Chalandon called this trend of assigning Greek houses to Latin abbeys a “general liquidation of Greek convents.”\textsuperscript{123} Colin Morris follows this line, observing that “the evidence justifies us only in finding vigorous Latinization on the mainland...”\textsuperscript{124}

It is hard to understand how the evidence could possibly justify such a view. Morris is a historian of the western-European Church in general, and so it is likely that he has stepped beyond his area

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{IP} 10.91 no. 2.
\textsuperscript{120} See e.g. H. Houben, \textit{Mezzogiorno normanno-svevo} (1996): 35-6.
\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Recueil} 11; Orderic Vitalis, \textit{Historia Ecclesiastica} 2.98-104; Malaterra 2.19.
\textsuperscript{122} “\textit{Cum hominibus et alii pertinentius suis et cellis, que grece dicitur metochia}”: \textit{Badia di Cava} 1.
\textsuperscript{124} Morris (1989): 142.
of expertise in this remark. As several scholars have pointed out, the simple fact that many Greek monasteries were integrated into Latin administrative structures does not mean that they were converted to the Latin rite. St Elias at Melicuccà is an excellent example: though it was donated to Sant’Eufemia by Robert Guiscard as part of that monastery’s original endowment, St Elias was still a Greek monastery in the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{125} Indeed, Hubert Houben asserts that “we must presume that... at Kyr-Zosimo, in the eleventh to twelfth centuries, Greek and Latin monks lived together.”\textsuperscript{126} This is not as far-fetched as it might seem: as late as 1210, the rather anti-Greek Pope Innocent III wrote to the archbishop of Conza, lamenting the fact that Greek and Latin priests were celebrating the Divine Liturgy together in many churches, and that one priest might even celebrate according to both rites.\textsuperscript{127}

In fact, the extension of Latin administrative structures into Greek monastic territory probably had a beneficial effect on Greek monasticism. Whereas the vast majority of Greek monasteries before the Norman conquest were ephemeral entities that might vanish after their founder’s death, “subjecting Greek monasteries to Latin ones might actually help them to survive,” as Graham Loud argues.\textsuperscript{128} One need not be so equivocal as Loud – the documentary and literary evidence leaves no room for doubt that this practice did help them to survive in the long term. Ironically, some of the strongest proponents of the latinisation theory tacitly acknowledge this fact in the qualifications that they append to their arguments. Décarreaux, for instance, claims that “[the practice of] attaching Greek monasteries to Latin monasteries as far away as Cava or Monte Cassino was nothing more than an indirect, slow and insufficient method of latinisation.”\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{125} Messina 9.
\textsuperscript{126} “Dobbiamo presumere... che a Cersosimo, nei secoli XI-XIII, vivessero sia monaci greci che latini”: Houben (1996): 40.
\textsuperscript{127} PL 214,909.
\textsuperscript{128} Loud (2007): 86.
\textsuperscript{129} “Rattacher des monastères grecs à des monastères latins aussi éloignés que Cava ou le Mont-Cassin n’était qu’une méthode indirecte, lente et insuffisante de latinisation”: J. Décarreaux, Normands, papes et moines (1974): 89.
Perhaps the slowness and insufficiency ought to lead one to question whether it really was such a method at all.

New Greek Monastic Structures in Sicily and Southern Italy, 12th Century

Although the death of Robert Guiscard in 1085 ushered in several decades of dynastic in-fighting amongst his successors, the Norman domains in Sicily and Calabria under Count Roger I remained relatively stable and provided the foundation for Roger II’s eventual bid for the royal title in 1130. Yet, when Roger I initially came into power in Sicily and Calabria in 1072, the Christian church in the island seemed to be in decline. There were clearly still substantial numbers of Christians there – the support given to Roger’s invasion by the Christians of the Val Demone was crucial to Norman victory. Neither do Christians seem to have been entirely marginalised; when Roger attacked the town of Petralia near Catania, Geoffrey Malaterra states that “its citizens, both Christians and Saracens, discussed the matter together and made peace with the count, surrendering their castrum and themselves to his rule.” Nonetheless, the Christian Church in Sicily was extremely disorganised and clearly not sufficient for the wishes of either the Normans or the papacy; when the Normans took Palermo from the Arabs, they found that the archbishop, “though a timid man of the Greek race, had been celebrating the Christian religion as best he could in the poor church of St Cyriacus.”

After the Norman conquest, this situation rapidly changed. By the beginning of the twelfth century the evidence for monastic establishments increases sharply, as does the number of monasteries. In the valley of Demenna alone one finds Greek monasteries such as Sant’Angelo of Brolo (1085), St Philip of Demenna (1090), the Theotokos of Mili (1090), St Michael of Troina

130 “Porro cives, ex parte Christiani et ex parte Sarraceni, consilio invicem habito, pacem cum comite facientes, castrum sesque dictioni suae dedunt”: Malaterra 2.20.
131 “In paupere ecclesia sancti Cyriaci - quamvis timidus et natione graecus - cultum Christianae religionis pro posse exsequebatur”: Malaterra 2.45.
(1092), the Holy Saviour of Placa (1092), SS Peter and Paul of Itala (1092), St Nicander of S. Nicone near Messina (1093), St Elias of Ebulo (1094), the Theotokos of Massa (1099), the Theotokos of Mandanici (1100), St Philip of Messina (1100), and St Gregory near Gesso (1101).132 Of the twenty or so Greek monasteries founded during the reign of Roger I, the count was personally involved in the creation of fourteen of them.133 There was also some Latin immigration to Sicily, especially from Normandy and France, and by the beginning of the twelfth century there were four large Benedictine abbeys in Sicily, at Lipari (1085), Catania (1091), Patti (1094) and S. Maria della Scala in Messina (1095).

When describing the growth and restructuring of monasticism in southern Italy under the Normans in the twelfth century, it is extremely difficult to separate it from Sicily. Just as Byzantine monasticism of the ninth and tenth centuries had been influenced by monks travelling from Sicily, so now the monasticism of Sicily was influenced by that of Calabria (and vice versa). As Pierre Batiffol poetically described it, when the Normans captured Rossano in 1060, “the mountains that were neighbours to the town and that protected it were, as in the times of the great saint Nilus, filled with monastic lavras that made it a veritable Holy Mountain.”134 In the later years of the eleventh century, one of these lavras was home to the hermit St Bartholomew of Simeri (d. 1130), a Greek monk who became so popular that he drew a large number of disciples to himself (much against his own will). Though at first he tried to escape further into the wilderness, his Vita says that he had a vision in which the Theotokos instructed him to found a “college of souls”,135 and so founded the monastery of the Hodegitria of the Patiron near Rossano.

134 “Les montagnes qui avoisinent la ville et que la protégeait, était, comme au temps du grand saint Nil, remplies de laures monastiques qui en faisaient un véritable ἅγιον ὄρος”: Batiffol (1891): 3.
135 ὄντων φροντιστήριον”: Il Bios di San Bartolomeo da Simeri 16.
The Patiron monastery would become one of the greatest Greek monasteries of Norman Italy, and
was largely funded by Roger I’s Greek chamberlain, the amiratus Christodulus. In 1105 St
Bartholomew travelled to Rome where he obtained exemption from the authority of Archbishop
Nicholas Malaeinus of Rossano; the monastery would be directly under the jurisdiction of the
Roman papacy, after the fashion of western-European monasteries such as Cluny at Dijon.

Shortly before his death, in about 1130, St Bartholomew was invited by King Roger II to found a
monastery at Messina, across the straits from Reggio di Calabria. This was to be the famous
Holy Saviour of Messina, and it would appear that it was deliberately established to be at the head
of a large congregation of Greek monasteries in both Sicily and Calabria. In a series of eleven
royal diplomas, Roger II extended the Holy Saviour’s jurisdiction – in some cases legal, in others
spiritual – over a range of monasteries, metochia, fields, villages, and even the sea (with the
exception of cases of murder). The foundation document of 1133 names eighteen houses in
Sicily and four in Calabria that were to be subject to the Holy Saviour as metochia, while the
archimandrite would exercise spiritual and disciplinary rights over thirteen houses in Sicily and
three in Calabria that would be free to elect their own abbots. In the typikon of St Luke, the first
archimandrite of the Holy Saviour, it is expressly stated that subject monasteries should have a
minimum of six monks and a maximum of twelve. This is a startling degree of centralisation for a
Greek monastery in southern Italy, and it is reasonable to assume that it was aimed at ensuring the
stability and sustainability of the dependent houses.

Confronted by these facts, Ménager, followed by scholars such as Morris, argued that the Norman

136 Mentioned in a colophon by the anonymous scribe of Vat. Graec. 2050, fol. 117.
137 Il Bioso di San Bartolomeo da Simeri 30.
138 S. Rossi, ‘La Prefazione al “Typicon” del monastero del SS. Salvatore da Luca primo Archimandrita’
(1902): 83; SS 2.974-6; for legal jurisdiction over the sea, Vat. Lat. 8201, fol. 71M 170.
policy in Sicily was markedly different to that on the mainland, and that there was a clear attempt to latinise the mainland in order to encourage Greek Christians to emigrate to Sicily. However, such a claim is belied by the fact that similarly centralised Greek monastic structures emerged on the mainland in Calabria and Lucania. SS Elias and Anastasius of Carbone in Lucania is an interesting case in point: Gertrude Robinson’s excellent edition of the monastery’s cartulary effectively reads as a massive list of property acquisitions throughout the twelfth century, many of which were granted by Norman/Latin nobles such as Bohemond of Taranto, Richard the Seneschal, the families of Hugo Chiaramonte and Walter Sorus, Richard Charenga and others. As late as 1192, the Patiron monastery of Rossano was, like its daughter house of the Holy Saviour in Messina, put at the head of an archimandritate, and became the focal point for Greek monasticism in northern and central Calabria. Rather than Greek monasticism being sidelined to Sicily, this is an apparent case of a Sicilian structure being imported to the mainland.

Furthermore, in an intriguing twist to the argument that Greek monasteries were ‘latinised’ by being put under the jurisdiction of Latin abbeys, the Greek monastery of Carbone took at least one Latin foundation under its own wing: in 1126, Bohemond (the son of the Bohemond of Taranto that captured Antioch in the First Crusade) describes how a convent in Taranto had been put under the supervision of a nun named Aloysia (certainly not a Greek) on the advice of Archbishop Reynald of Taranto. However, Aloysia went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and so Bohemond put the administration of the convent into the hands of the Greek Abbot Nilus of Carbone. Carbone, along with great monasteries such as the Patiron of Rossano and the Holy Saviour of Messina was at the head of a large congregation of monasteries and metochia, and it seems indisputable that it was trusted to bring stability and prosperity to the properties that it oversaw. It

141 Carbone 28.
is a clear demonstration that, far from being threatened by the Norman kingdom, Greek monasticism benefited greatly in terms of organisation and longevity.

**Summary: Framing the Stages of Monastic Development**

Although the anchoritic and lavriote styles of monasticism remained extremely common, the eleventh early twelfth centuries saw the rise of considerably greater and more centralised (to varying degrees) monastic networks focused on monasteries such as Monte Cassino and the Holy Saviour of Messina. These monasteries enjoyed more hierarchical relationships and with a greater variety of other monasteries than before. In addition, not only did these monasteries own more ecclesiastical and secular property than before, but they were clearly becoming much better at documenting their rights of ownership; a glance through collections such as Trinchera’s *Syllabus* or Robinson’s *History and Cartulary* reveals that the number and concentration of extant documents increases dramatically from the 1050s on.

This sense of patterned change is not itself a novel one, though the frame is. Historians such as Ménager and Décarreaux have framed the history of southern-Italian monasticism in this period in terms of cultural shifts (from Latin to Greek and then back to Latin), while others, such as Chalandon and Bloch, prefer to frame it in terms of political power, with monasteries being pawns in battles between the great powers. Both of these are valid to some extent, though neither can fully account for the visible developments in monasticism; in some cases, they are actually contradicted by developments. The more common pattern, however, is one of disruption followed by re-consolidation, tempered and guided (though not controlled) by contemporary political and cultural trends. Through this pattern, it is clear that monastic structures in southern Italy became increasingly sophisticated and hierarchical as the Middle Ages progressed. In order to understand

---

142 Chalandon (1907); Bloch (1946).
the pattern of change, however, it is necessary to understand the broader context in which it occurred.
Monastic change in the Middle Ages was clearly structural, and clearly occurred over a long period of time, even if it is most obvious under the Norman and later the German rulers of southern Italy. Yet how far is this related to the cultural and religious identities of ‘Latin’ and ‘Greek’? This ought to be a defining question for any debate concerning the ‘latinisation’ of southern-Italian monasticism under the Normans, since proponents of the theory argue that ‘Latin’ and ‘Greek’ religious identities were the driving force behind monastic structural change.

On examining the history of Greek and Latin religious and cultural identities more closely, it becomes clear that here too there was a gradual development over time, finally crystallising in the modern association of ‘Latins’ with Roman Catholicism and ‘Greeks’ with Eastern Orthodoxy. In reality, the religious and cultural identities by which historians – even astute and progressive ones such as Graham Loud and Vera von Falkenhausen – tend unconsciously or otherwise to frame the history of southern-Italian monasticism postdate many of the most significant structural changes of the period. Rather than being causes of political and ecclesiastical divisions, it is much more profitable to view such identities as consequences.

‘Greek’ and ‘Latin’ Christianity in Southern Italy

Giampiero Galasso, in describing the state of southern Italy at the beginning of the eleventh century, asserts that “[Byzantium] threatened the Catholic character of the Italian areas where it dominated...” Galasso uses the word ‘Catholic’ in opposition to the phrase ‘Greek Orthodox’, an undeniable anachronism that would have been understood neither by the Roman Papacy nor by the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Galasso is essentially referring to the Latin/Greek divide in the

---

same spirit as the Cluniac historian Rodulf Glaber did in the eleventh century. Yet the character of southern-Italian Christianity, both within areas where Byzantium dominated and without, was nowhere near as divided as such remarks assume.

By the beginning of the thirteenth century the Cistercian Order had taken a strong root in the Norman Kingdom of Sicily, with about fifteen major abbeys throughout southern Italy. However, until approximately 1150 the most important Latin proprietary monasteries – Monte Cassino, Cava, Venosa, Lipari, Catania and so forth – had all been of the Benedictine rite. As noted above in Chapter 2, some historians think that these monasteries had a powerful impact on Greek abbeys; according to White, “it can hardly be denied that the structure of the Sicilian Basilianism was Benedictine.”

Many scholars like to see the Benedictines as being the embodiment of the Latin West, and often cite the famous case of St Nilus of Rossano’s visit to Monte Cassino in c. 980 as a case study of an archetypal encounter between Greek and Latin Christians. Nilus chanted an all-night vigil at the monastery, including Greek hymns of his own composition to St Benedict, and proceeded to answer questions about the difference between Latin and Greek customs from the resident monks. With such paradigms in mind, it is easy to see how the theory of the ‘Benedictinisation’ of Greek monasticism serves as a cipher for the ‘latinisation’ argument.

Nonetheless, great Benedictine abbeys such as Monte Cassino are not so representative of Latin

---

144 See above, p. 12.
147 For a general account of the visit, see O. Rousseau, ‘La visite de Nil de Rossano au Mont-Cassin’ (1973).
Christianity in southern Italy as one might assume. Even at the height of the Benedictines’ twelfth-century prosperity it is probable that a majority of Latin monasteries did not follow their rule, and the number of known Benedictine monasteries at the beginning of the eleventh century could literally be counted on one hand. The monasteries of SS Mary and James on the Tremiti islands off the Gargano peninsula (founded ca. 1005) and of St Benedict of Conversano (before 957) followed the Benedictine rite, though even in these monasteries the Rule of St Benedict is not actually mentioned until 1040 and 1092 respectively. The great majority of Benedictine foundations date to the period after the Norman conquest and even then account for a minority of Latin monastic establishments. It is easy to surmise why the Benedictine Rule was favoured at first – in a time when there was a desire for larger monastic houses to enjoy stability and a structured life, the Benedictine Rule was the only obvious model in southern Italy.

As Valerie Ramseyer’s excellent study of Christianity in the Principality of Salerno has demonstrated, the Latin Christians of southern Italy were very frequently the exceptions to the rule in the Church of Rome. Indeed, many of the rules put forward by papal reformers in the eleventh century were precisely intended to standardise an eclectic and somewhat amorphous religious landscape. For one thing, contemporary technical language was extremely loose and frequently interchangeable. Even the word ‘episcopus’, which ought to mean ‘bishop’, is at times uncertain; consider Domnus Cennamus, the head of the monastery of St Michael the Archangel on Mt Aureo, who in 1010 is called a bishop, or Theodore, referred to as both bishop and rector of St Sophia in Salerno between 1039 and 1063. Neither was a cathedral church.

There is also frequent vacillation in both Latin and Greek documents between the terms ‘ecclesia’

148 *Tremiti* 2.89; *CDB* 20.53.
and ‘monasterium’: St Sophia in Salerno is sometimes called a church, sometimes a monastery. As late as 1092, the monastery of the Holy Trinity of Cava is still referred to as a ‘church’ in an act of donation; interestingly, the donors were William and Roger de Fabali (apparently Latins) and the recipient a Latin monastery, yet the act was written and signed in Greek. Compare this to the monastery of St Anastasius of Carbone, referred to as a ‘church’ in 1056 even while its overseer is called ‘abbot’. Similarly in 1108, a Norman noblewoman called Trotta donated the ruined ‘church’ of St Nicholas of Pertosa to Carbone; later in the act it becomes clear from the description that this is a monastery, not a church. Even in legal documents both Latin and Greek Christians of eleventh-century southern Italy demonstrate a carefree approach to definition and categorisation. At any rate, Greek and Latin monastic foundations in this period generally defied categorisation. In their discussion of Calabria, McNulty and Hamilton note that “the most vital form of the religious life... was that of the hermits, who lived either in solitude or in loosely organized lauras.” Their description might be extended across much of southern Italy.

Even in liturgical life it is evident that Latins and Greeks were not so sharply defined as one might expect. Giovanni Vitolo has noted that calendars and liturgies from Benevento, Calabria and Naples often contain both Greek and Latin elements, and even bilingual hymns. In some of the few extant liturgical books from Benevento there are features characteristic of the Byzantine liturgy such as a sermon following the Gospel reading and lessons taken from the Book of Prophets. Greeks were not just limited to Byzantine lands, and there is ample evidence for Greeks and Greek monasteries throughout Lombard Italy as well, of which St Nicholas of

---

151 CDC 2.317, 4.764.
152 Syllabus 55.
153 Carbone 6, 17.
154 McNulty and Hamilton (1964): 182.
Gallucanta in the Cilento peninsula is a well-known example. St Nicholas was patronised by the local Salernitan count Adelbertus, receiving many donations over the years. In 1097, Adelbertus’ son donated all his property to the Greek monastery and became a monk there himself. In the Principality of Salerno, the churches of St John in Vietri and St Sophia in Salerno would appear to have alternated between Latin and Greek rectors. As Ramseyer concludes, “Some practices now identified as Greek or Eastern were, in fact, indigenous to southern Italy. Clerical marriage, baptism by priests as well as bishops, and the performance of baptisms on the Epiphany, Easter and the Pentecost were all common practices dating back to the earliest days of Christianity.”

Eleventh-century Christians in southern Italy did see a difference between Latin and Greek customs, it is true. There is the very interesting case of Count Guy of Pontecorvo in the Duchy of Capua, founder of the monastery of St Paul de Foresta. Guy gave the monastery to a community of Greek monks headed by one Abbot Jacob in 999. In the foundation charter of the monastery, Guy attempts to forbid the latinisation of the monastery in the following terms: “Whoever henceforth should desire to change this rule which is called Attic [i.e. Greek] into Latin, let him be accursed and excommunicated by God the all-powerful Father and... let him be condemned by our Lord Jesus Christ, and let him be cast by the Holy Spirit into the lowest pits of hell.” The distinction could hardly be clearer, but what sort of a distinction was it?

Firstly, it is interesting to note that the ‘rule’ is called ‘Attic’, not ‘Basilian’. The reference to St Basil of Caesarea would become more common in the later eleventh century and especially in

---

158 Gallucanta 123; cf. the case of the monastery of Kyr-Zosimo above, p. 48.
159 CDC 2.276, 323, 382, 6. 977, 7.1147.
161 “Quicumque exinde hanc regulam quod dicitur Atticam in latinam convertere voluerit, maledictus et excommunicatus fiat a deo patre omnipotente et a... domino nostro Iesu Christu fiat condemnatus, et a Spiritu Sanctu fiat confusus in ima tetri produnda inferni”: Historia Abbatiae Casinensis 1.293-4.
modern scholarship; Mario Scaduto characterises all of Greek-Sicilian monasticism as ‘basilian’ in the title of his book, for instance. However, texts generally speak of the rule of St Basil by way of a Greek analogy to the Rule of St Benedict. In 1060, to take one example, a Norman lord gave a church in Apulia to the Benedictine abbey of S. Maria di Tremiti, saying that it could be governed by the rule of either St Benedict or of St Basil. That is, however, a very specific context – the monastery was a *cenobium* being donated to a Benedictine abbey. There is no real comparison to Count Guy’s reference to an ‘Attic’ rule; for one thing, there was no formal ‘Attic Rule’, nor any formal ‘Latin Rule’. If it were a reference to the Rules of St Basil and St Benedict, one would expect there to be a reference to those saints by name, since, in the year 999, the Rule of St Benedict was nowhere near common enough to be referred to in such general terms. The assumption must be that it is a reference to language rather than to formal monastic systems, and indeed the word ‘Attic’ was a relatively common, if somewhat classicising, term for the Greek language.

It would be reasonable to say that, from the perspective of southern Italians in the eleventh century and before (and perhaps after, too), the main conceptual difference between a ‘Latin’ and a ‘Greek’ Christian lay in language and custom, not in religion. In a famous encounter at Valleluce between St Nilus of Rossano and St Adalbert of Prague (c. 956-997), the hagiographer John Canaparius recounts a conversation between the two men concerning their respective origins. Nilus remarks that “as this appearance and the hairs of my beard bear witness, I am not a native but a Greek man.” Among Greek writers, the term ‘Latin’ is very rarely used before the twelfth century. Alexander Kazhdan has observed that it is very uncommon in hagiography, and that all the examples are from southern Italy and serve to contrast the Latin language with the Greek.

---

162 Tremiti 2.69.
163 “Etenim ut iste habitus et barbae pili testantur, non idigena sed homo Graecus sum”: Vita S. Adalberti Episcopi 15.
Among mainstream Byzantine historians the tendency before the late eleventh century was to refer to western-Europeans by specific ethnonyms and toponyms such as ‘Alamans’, ‘Vandals’ and ‘Italians’; Michael Attaliates does use the term ‘Latins’ in the later eleventh century, though this usually seems to denote Normans. Anna Comnena would seem to be the first Byzantine historian to use the term ‘Latins’ to refer to western-Europeans as a collective group, though she was writing in the context of the First and Second Crusades.

While distant writers in northern Europe such as Rodulf Glaber might be vociferous in their denunciation of ‘Greek’ and ‘Eastern’ practices, it is not at all clear that the pre-Norman Latin Christians of southern Italy distinguished themselves from Greek Christians in any significant ways. Even the famous account of St Nilus of Rossano’s discussion with the monks of Monte Cassino ends with an affirmation that the Rule of St Benedict and the customs of Greek Christianity were equally valid. This is not to say that there were no distinctions at all between Latins and Greeks – evidently there was a noticeable linguistic difference, and certain distinctions in customs and appearance, as Nilus remarks upon with regards to his beard and clothing. However, considering the willingness for various cultural groups to adopt the names, dress and even laws of other cultural groups in southern Italy, one might question the importance of these distinctions. Moreover, compared to the rigorously structured Rules and Orders of the papal reformers, Latin and Greek monasticism in pre-Norman southern Italy had much in common, not least their shared eccentricity.

**Politics and the Shaping of Cultural Identities**

Alexander Kazhdan’s observations regarding the development in Byzantium of the concept of the monolithic ‘Latin West’ are extremely pertinent. The eleventh and twelfth centuries saw considerable development in the political alignments of the Mediterranean world. This is an
important point in the question of ‘latinisation’; how far does political change correspond to
cultural or religious change? By the end of the Middle Ages, and especially after the Fourth
Crusade, Byzantium would become almost exclusively associated with the ‘Greek Church’, while
western Europe would be identified as the realm of the ‘Latin Church’. Nonetheless, this was the
culmination of a process dominated by political struggle.

While modern historians frequently cast the Byzantine Empire in the mould of a ‘Greek Empire’,
its identity in the Mediterranean world of the eleventh century was rather more complex. It is a
cliché nowadays to point out that the Byzantines referred to themselves not as ‘Byzantines’ but as
‘Romans’, and their empire as ‘Romania’. This is important, since the concept of the Roman
Empire had political, not ethnic, associations in the medieval mind. What is not always
appreciated is that many western-European contemporaries also referred to Byzantium in this
manner. William of Apulia, Lupus Protospatharius, Geoffrey Malaterra, and even crusade histories
such as the Gesta Francorum and Ralph of Caen’s Gesta Tancredi (written from an undeniably
hostile viewpoint) all refer to Byzantium as ‘Romania’ as a matter of course.\footnote{E.g. Apulia
3.9, 99; Lupus Protospatharius a.1066; Malaterra 3.24, 30, 4.24; Gesta Francorum et
Aliorum Hierosolimitanorum 1.2, 2.7, 4.10, 6.16; Ralph of Caen, Gesta Tancredi 10, 123, 141, 147 etc.}
What is striking
about this is that the viewpoint of these Lombard and Italo-Norman writers contrasts starkly with
that of Rodulf Glaber, Liutprand of Cremona and other pro-German (or, in later periods, pro-
crusader) writers who characterised the Byzantines as Greeks invading the Roman Empire.

Much attention has been drawn to the episcopal sees in Italy and Sicily that were ‘latinised’ by the
Norman conquerors in the eleventh century. While bishops in much of Apulia and Lucania had
been Latins under the Byzantine Empire anyway, in areas such as Calabria and Sicily the bishops
were Greek. Most of these sees would continue to have Greek bishops for the foreseeable future,
recognising papal jurisdiction, though there were some notable exceptions, generally in the Terra d’Otranto and northern Calabria. There was a Latin archbishop in Otranto in 1067, though this appointment may have been for reasons of political security – not only was the area Greek and had close ties to Greece, but the last Greek archbishop is known to have been in Constantinople only the year before.\textsuperscript{166}

A more famous example is Basil of Reggio.\textsuperscript{167} For some time historians thought that Basil had been ejected from his see by the Normans in 1078,\textsuperscript{168} though a rather acerbic re-analysis of the primary sources by Daniel Stiernon demonstrated that Basil had never been to Reggio before.\textsuperscript{169} In 1079, eight years after the fall of the last Byzantine city in Italy to Robert Guiscard, Metropolitan Stephen of Reggio di Calabria died. The synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople named the hieromonk Basil as the new metropolitan, and he actually attempted to take possession of his see, though on his arrival he found a Norman named Arnulf in his place. Considering the Hautevilles’ stormy relationship with Byzantium (which was to turn to war once again in 1081), it is no great surprise that they would forestall an episcopal appointment by Constantinople. Stiernon comments that “the latinisation of the see was accomplished.”\textsuperscript{170}

Basil returned to Dyrrachium in the Balkans, though when, in 1089, Alexius I Comnenus wanted to discuss ecclesiastical relations with Pope Urban II, Patriarch Nicholas III Grammaticus (1084-1111) sent him and Archbishop Romanus of Rossano to meet the pope. It is interesting to note, incidentally, that Rossano was under Norman control at the time; Romanus was apparently one of

\textsuperscript{166} IP 9.409.
\textsuperscript{167} For the fascinating correspondence surrounding this event, see E. Boulismas, ‘Νικόλαος ο Γραμματικός Κωνσταντινουπόλεως και οι άντιπαπαι Ουρβανός και Κλήμης ή τρεῖς ἐπιστολαί τῆς ΙΑ’ Ἑκατονταετηρίδος’ (1877).
\textsuperscript{168} E.g. P.F. Russo, ‘L’ultimo metropolita greco di Reggio’ (1953).
\textsuperscript{169} D. Stiernon, ‘Basile de Reggio, le dernier metropolite grec de Calabre’ (1964).
\textsuperscript{170} “La latinisation du siège était accomplie”: Stiernon (1964): 197.
several southern-Italian Greeks to maintain links to Constantinople. Rather than discussing ecclesiastical relations, however, Basil had a rather stormy conversation with Urban about his see at Reggio. According to Basil, Urban told him that, if he were to submit himself to the papacy, then he would receive his church. Urban, it must be said, was one of the more open-minded popes as far as the Byzantine Empire was concerned, yet his blunt answer to Basil demonstrates the general attitude of both the Roman Church and Norman rulers towards Greek bishops in the eleventh and twelfth centuries – loyalty was the key factor, not conformity.

At any rate, many sees would remain Greek for the foreseeable future. Gallipoli is a good example: with the exception of one Latin bishop called Baldric in 1115, it only became a Latin see in 1513. Even in dioceses where Greek bishops were replaced by Latins, that does not in itself mean that they became ‘latinised’. The priests in churches often remained Greek. For example, when Roger Borsa, Duke of Apulia (1085-1111), appointed Bishop Tristan of Tropea in Calabria, he subjected the clergy of the former see of Amantea to him, noting that they were all Greeks. In confirming the rights of the archbishop of Cosenza in 1113, Duke William II of Apulia (1111-1127) included jurisdiction over all priests, both Greek and Latin. Innocent III’s outrage at the fact that Greek and Latin priests were celebrating the Divine Liturgy together in the archdiocese of Conza has already been noted.

In fact, there is surprisingly little evidence for theological disputes in southern Italy even in the twelfth century. There are some isolated anecdotes in the biographies of St Luke, bishop of Isola

171 Another notable example is St Bartholomew of Simeri, founder of the Patiron monastery of Rossano, who went to Constantinople in 1105 in order to gather books and liturgical items.


173 IS 9.428.


175 Above, p. 37.
Capo Rizzuto in Calabria (d. 1114) and St Bartholomew of Simeri. Luke’s biographer, who was writing very soon after his death, records that he had a dispute with some Latins over the vexed question of the use of unleavened bread (azymes) in the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{176} Even so, Count Roger kept him as bishop the whole time. Bartholomew of Simeri was accused by two Latin monks from S. Angelo of Militino of financial corruption and heresy, though ultimately he was exonerated and came to be held in high esteem by King Roger II.\textsuperscript{177}

Historians often think of the events of 1054, when Cardinal Humbert of Silva-Candida had a series of fierce arguments with Patriarch Michael Cerularius resulting in mutual excommunications. What they often fail to appreciate is just how unusual an event this was for the time – unusual both because it focused on questions of specific liturgical practice and because many other figures of the time preferred to play down the importance of such disputes. Patriarch Peter of Antioch, for example, wrote to Michael Cerularius to criticise his attacks on Latin liturgical practice as misguided.\textsuperscript{178} Michael Attaliates, writing soon after the Norman conquest of Italy, censures the former Byzantine catepan Michael Ducianus for alienating the “Latins and Albanians [Normans] who share equal citizenship with us, as well as our religion.”\textsuperscript{179}

Moreover, the century would close with enormous efforts towards ecclesiastical unity between Rome and Constantinople. Aside from the (ultimately abortive) council of 1089, Urban II held a council at Bari in 1098 in order to help integrate the Greek churches of southern Italy into the Roman Church. There was almost no controversy over matters of ritual, even the azymes – the Greeks would continue as they were. They were even allowed to forego the addition of the

\textsuperscript{176} Vita di S. Luca 106-8.
\textsuperscript{177} Il Bios di San Bartolomeo da Simeri 28.
\textsuperscript{178} PG 120.751-819.
\textsuperscript{179} “τῆς ἰσοπολιτείας ἡμῖν συμμετέχοντες, ὡς καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς θρησκείας, Ἀλβανοὶ καὶ Λατῖνοι”: Michael Attaliates, Historia 9.
The most momentous event, however, was the undertaking of the First Crusade in 1096. Although the military intrusion of the Church of Rome into lands that were traditionally in the Byzantine sphere of influence would ultimately lead to crisis and confrontation, the original intention had been to defend Greek and Eastern Christians from Islamic attacks. Thus Fulcher’s version of Urban’s famous sermon at Clermont:

“As the most of you have heard, the Turks and Arabs have attacked them and have conquered more and more of the territory of Romania as far west as the shore of the Mediterranean and the Hellespont, which is called the Arm of St. George... On this account I, or rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to publish this everywhere and to persuade all people of whatever rank, foot-soldiers and knights, poor and rich, to carry aid promptly to those Christians and to destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends.”

When Rome next came to quarrel with the Eastern Churches, over the Patriarchate of Antioch in 1099, the ‘crusade’ of Bohemond of Taranto in 1107 and later, it would consistently be in the context of strife caused by the competing aims of Byzantium, the crusader states and the German empire. The modern religious distinction between Latin and Greek Christians emerges from a cluster of political distinctions, yet these were generally only clear at the extreme edges (especially in Germany and northern Europe). In southern Italy the political distinction between Latins and Greeks was extremely blurred indeed.

The Curious Case of Nilus Doxapatres

Roger II’s Norman Kingdom of Sicily provides one of the more interesting demonstrations of its place at the heart of the Mediterranean world. In political terms, the Kingdom of Sicily was a thorn in the side of most great powers of the day. Roger II had supported the antipope Anacletus II

---

180 Runciman (1955): 76.
181 "Sicut plerisque vestrum iam dictum est, usque mare Mediterraneum, ad illud scilicet quod dicunt Brachium S. Georgii, Turci, gens Persica, qui apud Romaniae fines terras Christianorum magis magisque occupando... Qua de re supplici prece hortor, non ego, sed Dominus, ut cunctis cuiuslibert ordinis tam equitibus quam peditibus, tam divitibus quam pauperibus, edicto frequenti vos, Christi praeeones, suadeatis, ut ad id genus nequam de regionibus nostrorum exterminandum tempestive Christicolis opitulari satagant": Fulcher of Chartres, Historia Hierosolimitana 1.3.4.
from 1130 to 1138 against Innocent II, with the result that the latter excommunicated Roger in 1139. Considering the attacks of Robert Guiscard and his son Bohemond, and the continuing refusal on the part of the Norman princes of Antioch to comply with the Treaty of Devol, the Comneni emperors of Byzantium were no friends to Roger. Like the Byzantines, the German empire also claimed to rule over southern Italy, and the existence of an independent kingdom there was unacceptable to the Holy Roman Emperor. The Byzantines and Germans even managed temporarily to overcome their mutual rivalry in order to oppose Roger: John Comnenus formed anti-Norman alliances with both Lothair II and Conrad III in the 1130s and 1140s. While Manuel Comnenus was occupied in protecting his empire as the Second Crusade passed through in 1145, Roger took the opportunity to raid Corfù, Corinth, Athens and Thebes.

In spite of Roger’s political isolation, the Norman court at Palermo continued to be a centre of cultural patronage, attracting some surprising figures to Sicily. One of these figures, who has not received nearly the attention that he deserves, is Nilus Doxapatres. Nilus was a monk from Constantinople who travelled to Sicily where he became an archimandrite; Ciggaar proposes that he may be identified with the notary Nicholas Doxapatres, who had worked in the service of Patriarch Leo Styppiotes of Constantinople (1134-1143), though this is uncertain.

At Roger’s behest Nilus produced a large theological treatise entitled *On the Economy of God*. Though this work has received some attention with the recent production of a critical edition at the Catholic University of Leuven, his work *On the Order of the Patriarchal Thrones* must be read in a 1902 edition produced by a German orientalist who published the Greek text in parallel with a later Armenian translation. The work is a rather basic outline of the Pentarchy, listing the

---

various dioceses of each patriarchate with the exception of the Church of Rome, whose dioceses are outlined more vaguely; it also describes the patriarchates’ relations with one another. Not only does Nilus argue that Constantinople should have primacy over the Church on account of the fact that Emperor Constantine the Great made it the capital of the Roman Empire, but his introduction reveals that Roger had been in correspondence with Nilus and that it was Roger’s curiosity that prompted him to write it: “I recall that I wrote in reply to you when I was in the castle of Palermo, except you were not asking such a broad question as you are now. Now there are many questions and a need for a more sophisticated essay and explanation.”

The fact that Roger II of Sicily, an enemy of Byzantium and adherent of the Church of Rome, should commission a Greek monk from Constantinople to write an essay on Constantinopolitan primacy has proved confusing to many scholars. Hubert Houben believes that “one cannot rule out that Roger had ordered the work to be written as a threat to Rome that he might eventually make the bishoprics of his kingdom subject to the Patriarch of Constantinople...” As Houben realises, however, this would hardly be credible. Paul Magdalino wonders if it was an attempt towards more cordial relations with Byzantium or if it was part of a policy to reform the relationship between Church and State in Sicily along Byzantine lines; ultimately he concludes that it was more likely “a move to conciliate Roger’s Orthodox subjects at a time when they were under increasing pressure from an aggressive papal monarchy.” This is not a very satisfying proposal, however; aside from the fact that the papacy was not aggressive towards the Greek Christians of the Kingdom of Sicily (or at least, not until much later in the century), it is hard to see how Nilus’ essay would have been conciliatory in any practical manner.

185 “περὶ ἡς μοι ἔγραψας ὑποθέσεως, μέμνημαι ὅτι ἐν τῷ καστελλίῳ Παλόρμῳ ὁ Νιλός ἔγραψα πρὸς τὴν σὴν ἀντίληψιν, πλὴν οὐχ οὕτω πλατύτερον ὡς νῦν ἠρώτησας, νῦν δὲ πολλὰ εἰσὶ τὰ ἐρωτηθέντα καὶ χρεία λεπτοτέρας γραφῆς καὶ διηγήσεως”: Nilus Oxypates, Τάξις τῶν πατριαρχικῶν θρόνων 1.
It is necessary to realise the liminal position of Sicily in the early twelfth-century Mediterranean: while the Norman kingdom was hostile to Byzantium, it was not a fully committed part of the German-papal axis that promoted the absolute political power of the Papacy in conjunction with that of the Holy Roman Empire. There is not enough evidence to suggest that this essay was part of any substantive foreign or domestic policy on Roger’s part. All that one can say is that he was interested to read what a Greek monk from Constantinople had to say about the organisation of the Church, and what Nilus did have to say is quite revealing for the subject of Latin and Greek Christianity in southern Italy.

Nilus quotes at length from the famous (so-called) twenty-eighth canon of the Council of Chalcedon, and then comments:

“You see how from the present canon those who say that Rome should be honoured on account of St Peter are clearly foolish in their argument. Look – this canon of the holy synod says that Rome has honour on account of being the imperial city. For until then and for many years the emperor there was sent by the emperor of Constantinople. And since it stopped being imperial through being captured by foreigners and barbarian Gothic tribes, and is now held by them, in falling from that imperial status it also falls out of the first rank.”

Nilus does not once mention doctrinal or liturgical differences between Rome and Constantinople; rather, he conceives of the difference entirely in imperial terms: “For Rome was formerly the imperial city of Christendom, but later it became Constantinople instead, and so naturally both the pope is ecumenical and the bishop of Constantinople is ecumenical, though the other three are not ecumenical...” Nilus sees the whole question of schism between Rome and Constantinople in

188 "ὁρᾷς ὅπως ἀπὸ τοῦ παρόντος κανόνος κανόνος προφανῶς ἠλέγχονται ληροῦντες οἱ λέγοντες προτιμηθήναι τὴν Ῥώμην διὰ τὸν ἅγιον Πέτρον. ἵδιον γὰρ προφανῶς ὃ κανόνις ὁ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως βασιλέως ἐπέμπετο. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐπαύθη τὸ εἶναι βασίλεις διὰ τὸ ὑπὸ ἀλλοφύλων αἰχμαλωτισθῆναι καὶ βαρβάρων ἐθνῶν Γοτθικῶν, καὶ νῦν ὑπ’ ἐκείνων κατέχεσθαι, δῆθεν ὡς ἐκπεσοῦσα τῆς βασιλείας ἐκείνης ἐκπίπτει καὶ τῶν πρωτείων". Doxapatres 23-4.

189 Ἰβασίλισσα γὰρ ἡ Ῥώμη ἦν τῆς οἰκουμένης πρότερον, ἐπάνω ὄστερον ἡ Κωνσταντινούπολις, εἰκότως καὶ ὁ πάπας οἰκουμενικὸς καὶ ὁ Κωνσταντινούπολεως οἰκουμενικὸς, οὐ μήν καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι τρεῖς οἰκουμενικοὶ": Doxapatres 25-6.
‘imperial’ terms, as a contest between the German-backed papacy based in Old Rome, and the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the new capital of the Roman Empire. This imperial element had been present in earlier attempts at conciliation between the Churches: Basil II had suggested that Rome and Constantinople divide the Church up along political boundaries,\textsuperscript{190} while both Alexius and Manuel Comnenus proposed that Popes Paschal II and Alexander III crown them as emperors of the West as part of Church union negotiations.\textsuperscript{191} The Byzantines do not seem yet to have grasped the reform papacy’s peculiar fusion of theological assertion and political pretension.

Nonetheless, the Norman Kingdom of Sicily lay outside the imperial contest between Germany and Byzantium and the concomitant dispute over the universal jurisdiction of the papacy which, in the early twelfth century, were still closely associated. The contest between Latin and Greek empires did not affect the Norman kingdom insofar as it was not committed to either side; neither was it committed to the dispute between rival imperial claims of Rome and Constantinople.

**Summary: Beyond the Latin-Greek Divide**

The modern concept of separate Latin and Greek Christianity is the result of long-term political and structural change that, ultimately, would also lead Rome and Constantinople down separate theological paths concerning the primacy of the pope. Southern Italy and Sicily lacked such a concept of culturally divided Christianity at the opening of the eleventh century, and it would continue to be absent over the course of the twelfth century. As a dominion founded gradually outside the realm of German-Byzantine imperial conflict, the Norman Kingdom of Sicily was not ideologically committed to a similar contest between Latin and Greek Christianity within its own borders, with the result that King Roger II could ask a Constantinopolitan monk a series of

\textsuperscript{190} See above, pp. 14-5.
questions about ecclesiology and receive a frank, detailed answer in an apparently constructive atmosphere.

The consequences for the history of Greek monasticism in southern Italy are significant. The debate over ‘latinisation’ can be discarded as irrelevant – there was no conscious policy on the part of the Norman rulers to sideline Greek monasticism because it was Greek. While Greek Christianity would eventually decline over several hundred years, this was the result of gradual demographic change, not Norman hostility. The changes in monasticism in this period were predominantly structural, and it is possible to rule out any kind of anti-Greek sentiment in these structural changes. In fact, they left Greek monasteries stronger than ever before. It is necessary to look elsewhere for the factors that caused and shaped the process of monastic development in southern Italy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.
Chapter 6
Monasteries and the Land

If cultural and theological differences did not motivate the structural changes in southern-Italian monasticism, whether it be Latin or Greek, there was one far more fundamental concern. Historians do not have to look very far in extant sources – both literary and documentary – to see what matters exercised contemporary actors and observers. It may seem vulgar or disappointing, but the one that recurs almost constantly is money.

Southern Italy, like Macedonia and Chalcidice in Greece, is notable for leaving some of the best legal and financial documentation of the High Middle Ages, due in no small part to the Byzantine and Islamic administrative legacies in the area. In a sense there is an obvious bias in the evidence, since acts that do not concern property have generally not been preserved. Nonetheless, the fact that such documents have been preserved at all is an indication of their perceived importance; moreover, historians and even hagiographers at the time remarked upon what a serious issue money was both to lay and ecclesiastical authorities, not to mention the monks themselves. Michael Attaliates, for example, writes of how Isaac I Comnenus tried to deal with monks who were “already sick with greed and becoming obsessed with owning [property].”

Attaliates’ imagery is perhaps overly emotive, overlooking the role played by emperors and noblemen such as himself in enriching the monasteries, and is a standard literary topos. Even so, his remarks underline the obvious point that monastic archives preserve evidence for property acquisition and development on a truly impressive scale. Some caveats must be added – the number of wealthy monasteries was proportionately small, and these often gained part of their wealth through the ownership of other monasteries. However, taken as a whole, monasteries

192 “ἀπληστίαν ἤδη νοσήσαντες καὶ εἰς ἐξιν τοῦ πάθους γινόμενοι”: Attaliates 61.
accounted for a substantial portion of the economy in southern Italy, Byzantium and western Europe, and this point is crucial in understanding the patterns of structural change in southern Italy.

**Quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia?**

St Augustine’s famous question from his *City of God* (“What are kingdoms, if not robbery on a grand scale?”) is a challenge that vexes political scientists to the present day.\(^{193}\) Whatever the philosophical ramifications, it nonetheless highlights the importance of taxation to rulers in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. The defining quality of kings was their ability to extract taxes from their subjects, and naturally they would want to be able to maximise the fiscal revenues that their subjects could potentially supply.

In an era of rising population one of the principle driving factors of economic growth was the need to clear waste land and bring it into profitable cultivation. Many cities in southern Italy had been completely abandoned after the plague of the sixth and seventh centuries; some areas, such as the Tavoliere plain in northern Apulia, were virtually unpopulated until the eleventh century. In other areas there simply were not enough people in the eighth and ninth centuries to require the use of all available land; the unused land was known in Latin as ‘*incultum*’ and in Greek as ‘*klasma*’. *Klasma* was the specific Byzantine administrative term for plots that were not subject to tax and that would revert to state ownership after thirty years on account of the fact that it was not being cultivated.\(^{194}\)

As Byzantine and local officials planted new urban settlements in such areas, it was necessary to

\(^{193}\) Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 4.4.

\(^{194}\) For a list of Greek economic terms and their definition, see A. Harvey, *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire* (1989): xiii-xvi.
find stable means to develop uncultivated land in order to support the new cities; conversely, it
was necessary to encourage settlement in order to support the cultivation of land. In broad terms,
this would become a virtuous circle of sustained demographic and economic growth. As Laiou
and Morrisson emphasise, “if there was a sustained population rise... then necessarily the value of
land relative to the other factors of production (labor and capital) would increase...”195 The
development of land would cause its value to increase even further, a fact of some significance
both to private landowners who would be able to profit from its exploitation and also to the
Byzantine *genikon sekreton* (state fiscal department) that would be able to extract more taxes and
services.

It is hard to deny that agriculture could be extremely profitable indeed, more so than any
commercial or industrial venture. In his study of the English gentry in the early industrial era,
Gordon Mingay noted that even in 1801 the top landowners in Britain earned an average of eight-
thousand pounds a year, as opposed to an average of two-thousand-six-hundred pounds for the top
bankers.196 In the imperial court of Byzantium or the seigneurial society of Norman Italy one
could expect an even greater income bias towards landownership. Though there is not enough
space to give a detailed account of agricultural profits here, the case of the *brebion* (inventory) of
the metropolis of Reggio di Calabria is instructive. André Guillou produced an excellent study of
this seven-metre parchment roll, dated to c. 1050, which is a sort of account book concerning the
metropolis’ mulberry trees, whose leaves are vital nutrition for the silkworm. The *brebion*
mentions two other such inventories regarding cereals and wine production, though these are
unfortunately lost. The document is well organised, referring to *periorismoi* (boundary surveys) of
the institutions dependent upon the metropolis and distinguishes between fully-grown mulberry

trees that require no further investment and those that are too young to be taxable. Guillou sees this as “indicative of rational management and a specialised staff.”\textsuperscript{197} Based on his analysis of the surviving parts of the \textit{brebion}, he determined that there were 8,107 mulberry trees, which brought in an income of 2,085 gold taria, or somewhat more than 521 Byzantine nomismata, each year.\textsuperscript{198} Considering that the \textit{brebion} is missing sections from the top and the bottom, and that it only mentions mulberry trees in southern Calabria, the total income was likely rather higher.

These are significantly high numbers; the potential profits from efficient land-exploitation were evidently substantial. The metropolis of Reggio was one of Calabria’s biggest landowners, if not the biggest, in the Byzantine era, and it is true that it was able to take advantage of a particularly valuable commodity. Nonetheless, other types of land were also desirable for their potential profitability, something that is reflected in several acts from southern Italy. For instance, in 1066, Robert Guiscard confirmed the property of the \textit{protosynkellos} Calocyrus of Tropea and gave him to the right to build mills and anything else that he might need on his property; more explicitly, in 1082, Guiscard gave the monastery of St Lawrence of Aversa the property of Tristan of Mileto, adding the right for the monks to create villages, bring in labour forces, plant vines and fruit trees, and to build mills in any of their dependencies.\textsuperscript{199} The fact that permission is explicitly granted suggests that the opportunity to do such things was actively sought out. In 1061, the \textit{spatharokandidatos} John gave Abbot Hilarion of Carbone a ruined monastery whose property had fallen into decay (presumably as a result of the Normans’ depredations). While he himself was not able to restore the land to profitability, it would seem that Carbone was both able and willing.\textsuperscript{200}

\textsuperscript{197} A. Guillou, ‘Production and Profits in the Byzantine Province of Italy (Tenth to Eleventh Centuries)’ (1974c): 93.
\textsuperscript{198} A. Guillou, \textit{Le brébion de la métropole byzantine de Région (vers 1050)} (1974d): 2-16.
\textsuperscript{199} \textit{Recueil} 17, 40.
\textsuperscript{200} \textit{Carbone} 8.
Surviving documents from the Greek monastery of St John Theristes in Stilo in Calabria (not exactly one of the biggest monasteries in Italy) add more interesting detail: two acts record the ‘gift’ of fallow fields in return for ‘blessings’ of 2 nomismata and 4 taria in 1113/4 and 1154 respectively. More remarkable still, in 1159, Nicholas Erebinthes and his wife Purpura gave the monastery a fallow plot at Arsaphia as security for a loan of 50 taria for the period of six years, after which they were obliged either to repay the loan or to sell the land permanently to the monastery for 4 taria.\textsuperscript{201} The fact that the monastery was engaging in this sort of transaction is testimony not only to the value of potentially cultivable land but also to the sophistication of the property market in southern Italy.

There are clear markers that the agricultural economy in general was becoming stronger and more profitable, such as an increasing regional crop specialisation. As Laiou and Morrisson point out, “trade in agricultural products... is an essential component in the growth of agricultural production.”\textsuperscript{202} Michael Choniates (1175-1204), in an interesting letter of complaint regarding tax-collectors to the protasekretis Demetrius Drimys, asks rhetorically: “What do you [in Constantinople] lack? Are the wheat-bearing plains of Macedonia, Thrace and Thessaly not farmed for you? Is the wine of Euboea, Ptelion, Chios and Rhodes not pressed for you? Do our Theban and Corinthian fingers not weave your garments? Do not all the rivers of goods run together to the imperial city as if to a single sea?”\textsuperscript{203} Although somewhat rhetorical, the imagery is indicative of a profitable agricultural economy based on regional specialisation.

\textsuperscript{201} Saint-Jean-Théristes 8, 23, 30. The term used to denote the monastery’s payment for its property purchases, ‘εὐλογήαν’ (sic), is amusingly euphemistic.

\textsuperscript{202} Laiou and Morrisson (2007): 97.

\textsuperscript{203} “τίνος γὰρ καὶ σπανίζετε; οὐκ Μακεδονίας καὶ Θρᾴκης καὶ Θετταλίας πυροφόροι πεδιάδες ὑμῖν γεωργοῦνται, οὐχ ὑμῖν ληνοβατεῖται οἶνος ὁ Εὐβοικὸς καὶ Πτελειτικὸς καὶ Χιοῖς καὶ Ρόδιος, οὐ τὰς ἀμπεχόνας ὑμῖν ἱστουργοῦσι Θηβαῖοι καὶ Κορινθίοι δάκτυλοι, οὐ χρημάτων πάντες ὁμοῦ ποταμοὶ ὡς ἐς μίαν θάλασσαν τὴν βασιλεία πόλιν συρρέουσιν;”: Michael Choniates, Ep. 50.
What is more is that there was a noticeable desire for the cultivation of new lands both among local landowners and even imperial and royal administration. It is easy to point to acts of property donation or sale – many historians have already done this. What is important to emphasise is that this was not always just an act of generosity; there is much evidence to show that both Byzantine and Norman authorities wanted the recipients of property to develop it. Sometimes the acts themselves state why a piece of land was given out; in 1105, for instance, Duke Roger Borsa gave the bishop of Troia in Apulia some land “to settle peasants on”. The Byzantine state had, for its part, the controversial institution of the charistike by which monasteries that were unable to cultivate their own lands were put under the management of wealthy lay landlords who would be able to exploit the property more efficiently. The famous polymath Michael Psellus was a charistikarios with responsibility for the land of the monastery of Medikion in Bithynia, and promises to buy animals, plant vines, divert rivers and dramatically increase the wheat yield. The charistike was a mixed blessing, it is true (we shall return to this later), but in principle it demonstrated the emperor’s desire for monasteries to be able to cultivate their land properly.

Other acts reveal concerns more implicitly; in a charter of liberties granted to the monastery of St Lawrence of Aversa in 1100, the bishop of Troia stipulates that, while the inhabitants of the monastery’s casalia were free to sell or donate their goods, they could only sell them to relatives or to holy places. They could leave the casale, but only by paying an exit fee. Thus the peasants were encouraged to stay, but if they did leave then there was an assurance that somebody else would take on and develop their property.

Byzantium left a strong legacy in southern-Italian land cultivation in the form of its cities. Unlike

---

204 “Rustici coadunandum”: CDP 21.36.
205 For the charistike, see P. Lemerle, ‘Un aspect du rôle des monastères à Byzance’ (1967).
206 Michael Psellus, Mesaionike Bibliothekē 5.29.
more decentralised states, the Byzantine Empire had the ability and will to establish urban centres through the public work of *kastroktisia*. This was especially apparent in the Capitanata, though it is also mentioned in Apulia and Calabria. Examples include Troia, Gravina, Tricarico, Tursi, Melfi, Dragonara, Montecorvino, Civitate, Cisterna and many others. As Jean-Marie Martin has observed, “In the mind of the imperial authorities these new administrative centres went with or before the settlement of a neighbouring rural population. Thus, their establishment reveals the pattern that the authorities intended with regard to that settlement.” While *kastra* were important in terms of defence, it must be remembered that they always entailed a network of surrounding villages and estates, with the result that the foundation of new *kastra* entailed the cultivation of new land. Combined with the fact that the Norman conquerors in many cases literally inherited the Byzantine local administration, it must be said that the Byzantine imperial desire for land cultivation had a significant impact on southern Italy in the long term. The Norman creation of a feudal seigneurly in parallel to pre-Norman urban society only heightened the desire for intensified agricultural exploitation in the peninsula.

**Monastic Property – Weakness and Opportunity**

In Byzantium and southern Italy there were effectively three major sets of landowners – the lay aristocracy, the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the monasteries. Although Byzantium had traditionally based its fiscal system on the *chorion*, the rural village composed of peasant freeholders, the tenth century was characterised by the rise of the ‘*dynatoi*’, or powerful landowners, whose property was cultivated predominantly by *paroikoi* (rent-paying peasants; in the case of ecclesiastical land, these were known as *klerikoi*). Nicholas Oikonomides has even put forward the case that the independent smallholder had become a minority in the Byzantine

---

The dynatoi had always existed, but it was felt that their power had noticeably increased as Byzantine imperial borders expanded. Several emperors addressed the matter in legislation. Romanus I Lecapenus’ novella of 935 classified bishops and abbots among the dynatoi and specified that monasteries were not to accept donations of land from peasants who wanted to become monks. Every emperor up to Basil II, with the single exception of John Tzimisces, attempted to mitigate the rise of the dynatoi. However, the predominance of powerful landowners – a feature of the late Roman Empire in classical antiquity – was an irreversible trend at the time, partly aided by the emperors themselves who created vast imperial estates in newly conquered borderlands and granted land as rewards to their supporters. Earlier historians believed that this trend was a negative one for the Byzantine economy; for example, in describing the rise of monastic proprietors, Peter Charanis wrote that “the major sufferers were the peasant proprietors and eventually the State itself. There were emperors... who tried to check this evil. Some even resorted to confiscations. But, in the end, the monks won.” Some monks certainly did ‘win’, though in many cases they did so with the encouragement of the aristocracy and rulers in both Byzantium and southern Italy. Yet was this necessarily such a bad thing?

If there was a sustained population increase accompanied by a sustained increase in land value, as argued above, then both individual proprietors and state authorities would wish to see more land brought into cultivation. By virtue of superior capital, a wealthy landowner could make more improvements to more land than a peasant proprietor could. Although there was no farming on the scale of ancient Roman latifundia, landlords could make substantial improvements to agricultural

---

210 JGR 3.310.
infrastructure (as Michael Psellus promised to do for Medikion),\textsuperscript{212} and indeed this is sometimes expressly mentioned in surviving deeds from southern Italy: in 1084, for example, one Stratelates the son of John gave Nicholas the son of Leontitzes a cave at Cava in order for him to build an olive press there.\textsuperscript{213} As for the peasants who became \textit{paroikoi} of the landowners, though they may have lost their control over the profits of their labour, they might at least have benefited from their landlord’s ability to insulate them from the effects of famine, poor harvests and imperial tax-collectors.

Large estates, then, could be more attractive on account of their greater profitability. Yet the fact that monasteries could be counted among the biggest landowners of the time may raise some eyebrows when one considers the monk’s traditional renunciation of property. That was certainly the case in contemporary times after the 2008 scandal in which the Athonite monastery of Vatopedi was found to have some of Greece’s sharper and better-connected property dealers, leading to considerable criticism of its abbot Ephraim in the Greek media. Nonetheless, as Rosemary Morris has shown in her study of Byzantine monastic patronage, the role of Byzantine monks in the agricultural property market was, in a practical sense, unavoidable: in seeking isolation from the world, they needed to cultivate their own land in order to support themselves, especially as their monastic houses attracted more members.\textsuperscript{214} One may go further than Morris and argue that it was, moreover, economically beneficial in several ways.

Although the eleventh and twelfth centuries saw some monasteries become extremely large, it must be remembered that most began as small units, often with a single hermit who drew one or two disciples to himself. Sometimes people would build a \textit{kella} on their own property and become

\textsuperscript{212} See above, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{213} \textit{Syllabus} 48.
a sort of freelance monk, as Basil II indicates in a novella of 996 prohibiting small landowners from doing:

“It has been found that, so they say, in many villages, some villager has built a church on his own property and marked off the boundaries of this same part [with the consent of his fellow villagers], and that he has become a monk and established himself in it for life, and then another villager has done the same thing and yet another and they have become two and three monks there.”

A similar picture emerges from southern-Italian hagiography, although it is often the case that the saint goes in search of eremía (isolation). Once in the wilderness the hermit must clear some land in order to grow food to support himself, but when more disciples came to join him it would be necessary to cultivate even more land. This could have a surprisingly large effect even in the short term. Guillou and Holtzmann published an interesting act of the catepan Basil Boiannes of 1023, recognising the monastery of the Theotokos of Tricarico as the owner of a chorion on the border between Lucania and Apulia. In 983 a monk called Jonas had donated a piece of incultum land to the monastery, and the abbot Cosmas had installed some freedmen there to cultivate it. By 998 this had become a fully fledged, taxable community and was recognised as such by the authorities. Similar examples of land clearance and cultivation appear in the Vitae of other Byzantine saints such as Luke of Demenna, Lazarus of Galesion, Cyril Phileotes and so forth. As Morris comments, “Not only did the holy men act as oases of spirituality, but their clearances, initially on a small scale, probably added up to a considerable contribution to the increase of lands under cultivation in the more intractable parts of the empire.”

In one sense, the fact that monks did not (theoretically) own personal property was a substantial

---

215 “εὑρίσκεται γάρ, ὡς λέγουσιν, εἰς πολλὰ τῶν χωρίων, ὅτι ἐποίησε τις χωρίτης ἐκκλησίαν εἰς τὸν ἴδιον τόπον καὶ ἀφώρισε ταύτῃ τὴν ἰδίαν μοίραν [βουλόμενον καὶ τῶν συγχωριτῶν αὐτοῦ] ἐγένετο δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς μοναχὸς καὶ ἐκάθητο ἐν αὐτῇ ἓως ἐξή, ἐποίησε δὲ αὐτὸ καὶ ἄλλος χωρίτης καὶ ἐπτερος ὁμαίως καὶ ἐγένετο δόο καὶ τρεῖς ἐκεί μοναχοί.”: JGR 3.313.


benefit to long-term agricultural expansion, since there could be no question of dividing land and goods between heirs, the property rather belonging to a community than any one individual. Even in the case of the five Greek ‘proprietor-monks’ of southern Italy, the curious anomalies noticed by Guillou, the monks’ property eventually ended up either in the hands of the ecclesiastical hierarchy or monastic establishments. Thus the monastery could serve as a sort of agricultural co-operative, giving it (again, in principle) an institutional permanence that secular property development did not have. In some places monasteries were even akin to corporations insofar as their property was owned by lay shareholders, as in the case of the Greek monastery of St Nicholas of Gallucanta in the Cilento peninsula. Various local Lombard nobles owned shares in the monastery, and from 1111 to 1114, as the papal reformers’ doctrine of *libertas ecclesiae* began to take hold, surviving deeds show them selling out their shares to the monastery of the Holy Trinity of Cava.

The difference between a monastery and a corporation, however, is that a monastery has no profit margin – revenues in kind are used for the support of the monks and pilgrims, whereas revenues in cash are free to be invested in further improvements or acquisitions with the result that, as Morris underlines, “with the steady influx of both cash and manpower and with considerable legal flexibility at their disposal, the more successful monasteries of the tenth and eleventh centuries were, without doubt, among the most expansionist of the landowners of the time.” The monasteries of Mount Athos, whose archives preserve the best contemporary documentation for monastic landholding, reveal this fact starkly: even after the Athonite monastery of Iviron lost eleven of its twenty-three Macedonian estates to confiscations to fund Alexius Comnenus’ military and political reorganisations in the early twelfth century, Alan Harvey estimates that it

---

was still in possession of a staggering 90,000 *modioi* of land.\textsuperscript{221}

Even so, the number of successful monasteries was proportionately small, since they were in most cases almost completely informal. Before the twelfth century it would be more appropriate to refer to the majority of monasteries as ‘communities’ rather than ‘institutions’: when the majority of foundations consist initially of one, two or three people, there is no guarantee that they will last much beyond the death of their founders, and indeed the sources contain many such examples.\textsuperscript{222} Alternatively a monastery might run short of the necessary capital to develop its land, if for example a lay founder over-endowed it, a situation envisioned in a *novella* of Nicephorus I Phocas in 964.\textsuperscript{223}

Thus the work of a monastic community in developing land could go to waste. A very clear example comes in a deed from Lucania in 1108, in which the Norman noblewoman Trotta donates the land of Muromano to the Greek monastery of Carbone. The land contained the ruined churches of St Nicholas of Pertosa and St Catherine, and chapels to St George, St Julian and St Euphemia. Trotta arranged for the churches (which, by their description, were in fact monasteries) to be rebuilt, and stipulates how many *paroikoi* should be brought in by Carbone, the clear implication being that the land was deserted.\textsuperscript{224}

**Exploiting Monastic Potential**

Thus it is that a monastic community had the ability to become a major economic force if only it could overcome its weaknesses. Contemporaries certainly realised this, both among the lay

---

\textsuperscript{221} A. Harvey, ‘Land, Taxation and Trade in the Eleventh-Century Monastic Economy’ (1994): 132. One *modios* was equivalent to about one-tenth of a hectare, meaning that Iviron possessed approximately 35 square miles of property in Macedonia.

\textsuperscript{222} See above, pp. 40-4.

\textsuperscript{223} *JGR* 3.292-6.

\textsuperscript{224} *Carbone* 17.
aristocracy and the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In order to realise their potential as land developers, monastic houses required both stability and capital, which had to come from somewhere.

In Byzantium, many monastic houses were proprietary foundations established as a sort of trust by a wealthy ktistes (founder), a situation somewhat reminiscent of the eigenkirche of Germany and northern Europe. The foundation’s owners might even appoint the clergy. This happened in southern Italy too, as in the case of St Nicholas of Gallucanta in the principality of Salerno, part-owned by several local Lombard nobles who appointed Greek abbots such as Eupraxis and Theophilus. However, such monasteries were by no means secure; Gregory Pacurianus’ typikon (foundation charter) for his monastery of the Theotokos at Bačkovo expressly censured the proprietary model of monasticism on the grounds that it condemned the foundation to bitter litigation among the ktistes’ heirs over rights of ownership.

Hence, in the tenth century, the phenomenon of the charistike grant emerged in the Byzantine Empire. In theory, the administration of the monastery and its property would be granted to a wealthy layperson (or sometimes to a bishop or other church functionary, in which case the process was called ‘epidosis’) who would have the capital and the expertise to develop the monastery’s potential and support its functions, leaving the monks free to concentrate on the spiritual life. The recipient of the charistike, the charistikarios, did not become the monastery’s owner, just its manager. As John Thomas notes, “the program was ideally suited as a vehicle to overcome the legal difficulties of arranging for the restoration of ruined ecclesiastical institutions.”

---

225 Gallucanta 40, 63, 76, 125.
226 Pakourianos 1179-89.
Such was the theory, and some charistikarioi did indeed carry out their duties conscientiously, such as Michael Psellus promised to do. Even in the twelfth century, ecclesiastical writers such as Eustathius of Thessalonica thought that it could be extremely beneficial to a monastery. However, it is obvious that people did not always have the monastery’s best interests at heart when granting a charistike. Sometimes a monastery was granted out not because it was poor, but rather because it was wealthy – the charistikarios would get to keep the profits all the same.

As early as 999 the Italian catepan Gregory Trachaniotes granted the monastery of St Peter in Taranto to the spatharokandidatos Christopher in return for his support against the Arab Sicilians, “so that you might adorn it and hold it for your own administration and use without [official] interference.” Though the document makes the excuse that the act is for the improvement of the monastery, it also makes it quite clear that it was a reward for Christopher. The implication is that St Peter of Taranto would be a good source of profit, and mention is made of exkousatoi, meaning that the monastery was an even more profitable opportunity than normal. Such lay exploitation would eventually become extremely unpopular in some circles, and indeed the clearest surviving evidence for the charistike comes from its most vociferous opponent, the Greek Patriarch John V of Antioch (‘the Oxite’), who wrote a blistering attack on the institution and its abuses in the opening years of the twelfth century.

Church authorities realised the potential of the monasteries as well. In the case of St Lazarus’ three monastic foundations on Mount Galesion, the monks became so worried about the prospect

---

228 Eustathii Metropolitae Thessalonicensis Opera 244.33-61.
229 “καὶ καλλιέργης αὐτῶ· καὶ ἔχης αὐτῶ εἰς διοίκησιν· καὶ χρείαν ὑμῶν ἀπερικόπως”. Syllabus 9.
230 The exkousēia was a concession by the Byzantine state to a landowner involving either complete exemption from taxation or the right to collect taxes from his own peasants (paraikoi) for his own enjoyment. In the latter case, the tax-paying paraikoi were known as exkousatoi. See Oikonomides (1996).
231 John the Oxite, Oratio de Disciplina et de Monasteriis Laicos non Tradendis, esp. 10.278-85.
of the metropolitan of Ephesus seizing control of the communities (built on land that the metropolis claimed to own) that they persuaded Lazarus to found a ‘back-up’ monastery, that of the Theotokos of Bessae.  

An interesting manuscript colophon written by a monk of the Patiron monastery at Rossano in 1105 gives a glimpse into a similar situation in Calabria. The monastery had come under pressure from Archbishop Nicholas Malaeïnus of Rossano, a member of a long-standing and wealthy family of Greek-Calabrian aristocrats who continued to prosper under the Normans. The monastery’s founder, St Bartholomew of Simeri, had obtained a bull of exemption for the monastery from Paschal II. The last few lines are written in cryptogram: “In the same year Bohemond returned to Calabria, fleeing from the face of Alexius [Comnenus]. From then the holy monastery found respite from the hands of the Malaeïni; for Archbishop Nicholas Malaeïnus besieged it vigorously along with his clan.” Whether or not the anonymous monk is speaking of a literal siege or using it as a metaphor for more general pressure, it gives a good impression of how much a local hierarch – and, which is equally significant, the rest of his family – wanted to seize control of a potentially profitable monastic foundation. Moreover, it indicates the extent to which monasteries had to fear rapacious Greeks as well as Latins under the Norman rule.

Summary: The Economic Question

There was no shortage of people who saw the possible profits to be earned from monastic property and the fundamental weaknesses that could be exploited. The agricultural economy was expanding considerably, and the nature of the monastic community allowed to it be particularly

---

232 Life of Lazarus 52.

enterprising in the role it played in land development. While some might object that monasteries were not ‘supposed’ to be run as businesses, this very fact could, paradoxically, make them one of the most dynamic sectors of the rural economy. It is not a coincidence that the best documentary evidence for the agricultural economy in this period, both in Italy and in Greece, is to be found in monastic archives.

It was a fact that was not lost on contemporaries, who could see both the problems and the opportunities. A monastic community might grow, clear land, and cultivate new crops, but if the community died then their efforts would go to waste. Alternatively, a powerful aristocrat might take charge of its administration and run it for his own profit. This situation was born out of the developing Mediterranean world of the early Middle Ages; in a time of political change within both the Byzantine imperial establishment and the Roman papacy, not to mention a time of quickening societal change, the *status quo* could not continue.
Chapter 7
Regional Approaches to Monastic Change

Although there were already models for change in monasticism in the tenth century (perhaps stretching back even earlier) such as the nascent federation of monasteries on Mount Athos and the more centralised Benedictine congregations of Monte Cassino and Cava, it was in the eleventh century that more generalised calls for change were made. Historians often use the word ‘reform’ to describe ecclesiastical changes in this period, most notably in the case of papal reform; more recently some byzantinists such as John Thomas have argued for a parallel Byzantine reform movement.234

Yet ‘reform’ is not the mot juste, implying as it does a coherent and centrally directed programme of improvements. This may well be appropriate in some instances, such as the nature of the papal office or the attempts to eradicate simony and clerical marriage, and indeed there were attitudes towards the Church that came to influence many areas. However, in the case of monasticism, even though there were clear patterns of structural development,235 it is rather the case that changes were provoked by similar impulses and conditions than directed by a single authority.

The Cluniac Solution – Libertas Ecclesiae

The idea of ecclesiastical reform is most closely associated with the Roman papacy, and with German or German-influenced individuals such as Pope Leo IX, Cardinal Humbert of Silva-Candida and Pope Nicholas II, “an inner circle of non-Roman northerners, even Rhinelanders,” as Papadakis and Meyendorff put it.236 The heart of monastic reform was the abbey of Cluny

---

234 E.g. J.P. Thomas, ‘Documentary Evidence from the Byzantine Monastic Typika for the History of the Evergetine Reform Movement’ (1994). Thomas argues that the monastery of the Theotokos Evergetis in Thrace was, like Cluny, a centre for monastic reform.

235 See above, ch. 2.

(founded in 910 south of Dijon), though there were other notable reform monasteries such as Brogne (founded c. 910 near Namur) and Gorze (founded in c. 933 near Metz). Cluny, however, was a special case in that it had an enormously centralised administration and, by 1024, had complete exemption from episcopal jurisdiction, being placed directly under the papacy. By the late eleventh century Cluny had approximately two-thousand dependent monasteries forming “a vast monastic empire... an authentic paradigm of monastic freedom and ecclesiæ libertas.”

The rallying cry of Cluniac monastic reform was ‘libertas ecclesiae’, ‘the freedom of the Church’. The reformers rejected the corruption of eigenkirche and all its accompanying evils such as simony and lay people profiting from church property, setting in motion the movement of ‘restitution’. This is an interesting microcosm of the papal reformers’ more general approach to authority in the Church as a whole: since the Church must be free from the control of worldly powers, it follows that it must have freedom and power over its own institutions. However, this power was seen not just in a spiritual or jurisdictional sense, but in terms of literal property ownership as well. Hence churches and monasteries that had never been owned by ecclesiastical institutions in the past were ‘restored’ to the ownership of institutions such as Cluny. Since lay possession had been prohibited, this was effectively a one-way process of property accumulation.

This bears some comparison to the logic of the Dictatus Papae, the manifesto appearing under the name of Gregory VII in 1075: if the Church is to have spiritual authority over the secular world, then ipso facto it must have political authority as well, since the spiritual is the highest form of authority. Hence it is claimed that the pope may depose emperors, absolve subjects of their oaths of fealty, and even that the pope is the only person allowed to wear imperial insignia. 238 The

238 Register 202-8.
ultimate goal was to free the Church of secular interference, though one of the greatest effects was
to contribute to the centralisation of Latin Christendom around the papacy and the monastic
structures that were under its immediate oversight. Even so, in the eleventh century the complete
centralisation even of the Latin Church still lay some way in the future.

The reformers certainly had an influence on southern Italy, especially as figures such as Abbot
Desiderius of Monte Cassino were destined to play large roles in papal reform. Reformed
monasticism even spread to the Italo-Greek eremitical traditions of Calabria, when, in 1091,
Bruno of Cologne accompanied Pope Urban II to southern Italy. He founded a hermitage, S.
Maria di Turri, near Mileto in Calabria, which would generally be referred to as ‘S. Maria of the
Hermits’, and Hubert Houben sees the possible influence of “the nurturing presence of Greek
monasticism” in Bruno’s enterprise.239 Yet the hermitage had a noticeably reformist twist to it –
Bruno’s successor Percy Lanvinus founded a monastery of St James near Squillace “so that the
brothers who are not strong enough to bear the austerity of solitude could serve the all-powerful
God nearby according to the rule of blessed Benedict.”240

Furthermore, Thomas has seen the reformers’ influence even in dealings with the Greek
monasteries of southern Italy. When the Norman noblewoman Trotta gave up several
ecclesiastical properties to the Greek monastery of Carbone in 1108, she stated that it was wrong
for a layperson to own a monastery, prompting Thomas to remark that “such sentiments could not
have come from a Greek philanthropist of Byzantine times. The author’s use of the Greek
language and the traditional technical vocabulary do not obscure the influence of the Gregorian
reform movement in respect to voluntary renunciation of proprietary rights in ecclesiastical

240 “Ut fratres, austeritatem eremi ferre non valentes, iuxta beati Benedicti regulam illic possint
omnipotenti Deo deservire”: PL 163.452.
Some Byzantine Solutions – Autodespoteia and Autexousia

Nonetheless, although the Cluniac reform movement provides a clear and relatively well articulated programme of monastic structural change, it should not be allowed to obscure developments in other areas of the Mediterranean. While the papal reformers may be the most obvious agents in the eyes of western medievalists, they were by no means alone in attempting to find a solution to the problems of monastic prosperity and independence. Many Byzantines, from emperors to founders, tried to resolve these difficulties, and the most obvious success story is the federation of monasteries on Mount Athos.

The early history of the monastic communities on Mount Athos is rather unclear. It may well have begun as a scattered collection of hermits akin to those of Calabria and Lucania; ninth-century hagiographies speak of it as a place of tranquillity and refer to it in terms befitting a centre of asceticism. Metropolitan Kallistos Ware highlights an important turning point: traditionally, when the emperors had addressed the monks of Athos, they had referred to them in general as a collective. However, when St Athanasius the Athonite founded the Great Lavra in 964, he obtained imperial patronage for his monastery from Nicephorus Phocas, which, as in the case of St Peter of Taranto at a similar time, gained the epithet ‘imperial’.

By placing a monastery directly under imperial patronage, its founder could guarantee protection from a powerful patron without the attendant risks of that patron meddling in its affairs, since the emperor was too far away and had no particular need to meddle. Eventually we see monastic

243 E.g. Lavra 1.9; K. Ware, ‘St Athanasios the Athonite’ (1994): 5.
typika that specifically set out a status of autexousia for the monastery, which is to say that it would have control over its own property. Thomas believes that the independent monasteries may have developed out of imperial patronage such as that obtained by St Athanasius for the Great Lavra on Mount Athos;\textsuperscript{244} certainly Athanasius’ typikon states that the emperor granted the monastery to him as his personal property.\textsuperscript{245} At any rate, in Gregory Pacurianus’ typikon for the monastery of the Theotokos at Bačkovo (1083), the concepts of autodespoteia (self-management) and autexousia (self-ownership) are clearly articulated with warnings against the exactions of both the Church hierarchy and the lay aristocracy.\textsuperscript{246} Pacurianus also establishes a clear administrative structure within the monastery that is intended to be self-sustaining and independent from outside interference.

Another novel and defining feature of Mount Athos was (and is) the Protaton, the central administration of the community of monasteries headed by the Protos (literally ‘first man’). This is not really comparable to the congregations of the great Benedictine houses, since the structure is federal rather than pyramidal. The federation would seem to pre-date the great monastic houses of Mount Athos, since in 908 a monk called Andrew with the title of protos hesychastes (‘first hermit’) made a complaint about the encroachments of shepherds from mainland Chalcidice onto Mount Athos.\textsuperscript{247} The Protaton oversaw relations between monasteries and matters of property rights, effectively serving as a government for the peninsula.

Mount Athos is certainly the most famous Byzantine monastic centre and its monasteries undoubtedly some of the wealthiest, owning properties across Chalcidice and Macedonia. Even

\textsuperscript{245} Ath. Typ. 12.
\textsuperscript{246} Pakourianos 3.
\textsuperscript{247} Protaton 2.
the Benedictine monastery of S. Maria of the Amalfitans possessed extensive estates, and it was wealthy enough to pay 24lb of gold for the estate of Platanos in eastern Macedonia in 1081.\textsuperscript{248} Yet, as Alan Harvey points out, “a more important way in which monasteries expanded their landed wealth was through the acquisition of other monasteries.”\textsuperscript{249}

Others have described the possessions of Byzantine monasteries elsewhere, especially Rosemary Morris, so there is no need to go into a detailed description here save to say that they were extremely extensive. Moreover, Konstantinos Smyrlis has noted “the introduction of more elaborate management techniques from the eleventh century on,”\textsuperscript{250} allowing such independent monasteries to exploit their land more fully. Another important point to note is that, although Athos is easily the best documented case, it was by no means the only such monastic federation in Byzantium. By the end of the eleventh century at the latest there was a Protos of Mount Ganos in Thrace, of Mount Latros in Bithynia, and quite probably also of the ‘Mountain of the kellia of Zagora’ (i.e. Mount Pelion in Thessaly).\textsuperscript{251}

With the proliferation of new structures for monastic communities, John Thomas also sees a Byzantine parallel to the papal monastic reform movement in the West. Thomas identified Metropolitan Leo of Chalcedon, mentioned by Anna Comnena as an opponent of Alexius Comnenus’ confiscations of ecclesiastical property,\textsuperscript{252} and John the Oxite as main figures in this movement, though, just as the western Church had a monastic centre in Cluny, so Thomas saw a Byzantine monastic centre of reform. The monastery of Theotokos Evergetis in Thrace, he says, ‘was the mother house of the Byzantine monastic reform, which was to sweep the empire in the

\textsuperscript{248} \textit{Lavra} 42.1.233-5.
\textsuperscript{249} Harvey (1994): 128.
\textsuperscript{251} Morris (1995): 50.
\textsuperscript{252} \textit{Alexiad} 5.2.4-6. Anna also refers to “members of the Chalcedonian’s party” (“οἱ τῷ τοῦ Χαλκηδόνος μέρει προσκείμενοι”).

93
twelfth century.” Thomas has some compelling arguments: figures such as Leo the Chalcedonian and John the Oxite clearly did spark a debate within the Byzantine Church and there clearly was a heightened concern over matters such as the *charistike*. It is even clear that some *typika*, such as those for the Theotokos Kecharitomene and Kosmosoteira, copy virtually verbatim from sections of the Theotokos Evergetis’ *typikon*, as Thomas emphasises.

However, one cannot accept the argument that the Byzantines had any sort of reform *movement* comparable to that in the west. For one thing, the *charistike* did not go away, and would be praised by the likes of Metropolitan Eustathius of Thessalonica in the later twelfth century as potentially quite a good thing. Secondly, there is no evidence for centrally directed change as in the case of the papal reform movement. Rather, change came about as a result of individual founders being inspired by the examples of others. The change also varied considerably from one part of the empire to another. In reality, Byzantine monasticism had been adapting organically and erratically to its changing challenges and opportunities for several centuries, and it is not possible to characterise these as a single conscious movement.

**Monastic Reform in Southern Italy?**

Given the strong cultural connections between the different parts of the Mediterranean, it should come as no surprise that the developments in Greek monasticism in southern Italy show signs of influence from all these quarters. The Benedictine congregations of Monte Cassino, Cava, Venosa and others grew considerably; a study by Heirich Dormeier calculated that, from 1038 to 1126, Monte Cassino received 193 donations of churches, of which 186 came from laypeople. The Benedictine order spread rapidly (if not perhaps as much as is sometimes assumed), and notable

---

reformers such as Bruno of Cologne and Bernard of Clairvaux spent time in southern Italy.

However, that should not obscure the fact that many other types of monastic structure appeared in southern Italy at the time. The monastery of SS Elias and Anastasius of Carbone, for instance, appears like the Theotokos Evergetis of Thrace, as an independent, self-administering foundation in possession of various lands and other monasteries, sometimes bought, and sometimes offered by the local Norman aristocracy. Like St Athanasius of the Great Lavra, the abbots of Carbone had personal ownership of the monastery; unlike the Lavra, the position of abbot of Carbone was passed from one family member to another until at least 1059 as an inheritance.256

Like Mount Athos, southern Italy had monastic federations in Sicily and Calabria; unlike Mount Athos, these were based at particular monasteries, the Holy Saviour of Messina and the Patiron of Rossano. Mario Scaduto stated that “in a word the structure of basilian monasticism in Sicily was Benedictine. But the idea of a monastic congregation was a consequence of the new conditions of the religious life of the time, which not even eastern monasticism could escape.”257 Scaduto is right to note that eastern monasticism was becoming similarly structured, though in truth it must be said that the archimandritates of Messina and Rossano were not Benedictine, or at least differed in crucial ways. For one thing, the archimandrite did not have jurisdictional authority over any monasteries except for the ones directly dependent on the Holy Saviour (*metochia*), and there does not seem to have been any uniform Rule. Furthermore, the *typikon* of the Holy Saviour of Messina contains the interesting and revealing statement that its founders were “selecting [customs] from the various *typika* of the monastery of Studium, the Holy Mountain, of Jerusalem,

---

256 *Carbone* 1, 2, 7.
257 “In una parola la struttura del monachismo basiliano in Sicilia era benedettina. Ma l’idea delle congregazione monastiche e una conseguenza delle nuove condizioni della vita religiosa del tempo, alla quale neppure il monachismo orientale seppe sottrarsi”: Scaduto (1982): 188.
and of certain others.” They probably were aware of the Latin monastic reformers, but they were also aware of various other precedents from across the Byzantine Mediterranean.

It is a simple fact that, just as it is difficult to categorise and label southern-Italian monasticism at the opening of the eleventh century, so it is difficult to define the patterns of structural change in the Greek monasteries as being part of any one movement or other. While it is relatively clear that monks faced the same or similar challenges from the Rhineland all the way to Anatolia, change generally occurred on a local level in the context of local conditions (as well as broader regional conditions). Valerie Ramseyer puts it well: “In the end, ecclesiastical reform in southern Italy was a complex and heterogeneous process that grew out of a web of interested parties, found both inside and outside the region, including popes, lay rulers, bishops, abbots, and the local clergy and laity.” One might add that many of these were not even acting as conscious agents of reform. Many were acting in the interests of economic growth, political stability, or sometimes out of a simple desire to see a local monastery do well; among the latter we may count, for instance, the Norman Lord Alexander of Senise, who gave a ruined monastery to his spiritual father, the Greek Abbot Blasius of Carbone, in 1093.

The decentralised nature of monastic change was especially true in Norman Italy, which was not forged into a properly unified state until Roger II had himself crowned as King of Sicily in 1130. Even then his domains were not as consolidated as he might have liked, especially if one considers the fact that the Norman nobles Robert of Loritello and Alexander of Gravina would invite the Byzantine emperor Manuel Comnenus to invade Italy in 1154. With Norman domains

258 “συλλεξάμενοι ἐκ διαφόρων τυπικῶν τῆς Στουδίου μονῆς, τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὅρους, τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων, καὶ ἑτέρων τινῶν”: Rossi (1902): 83.
260 Carbone 14.
split between the predominantly Muslim and Greek island of Sicily and a mainland shared by Greeks, Lombards, Normans, city states and counties, it should come as no surprise that there was no clear-cut Norman ‘policy’ towards Greek monasticism.

What is more, the Italo-Norman lands do not fall easily into the paradigm of schism between the Byzantine Patriarchate of Constantinople and its fellow, Byzantine-influenced patriarchates in the East on the one hand, and the combination of the German empire and the Roman papacy on the other. The Normans were occupying space claimed by both Germans and Byzantines, and had a tenuous legitimacy as its rulers, a legitimacy that had twice to be won at the point of the sword – first by the Hauteville brothers and later by Roger II. Though under papal jurisdiction, the Normans’ relationship with the papacy and with Germany could be just as violent as their relationship with Byzantium, and sometimes more so.

**Summary: Decentralised Centralisation**

The need for monastic change was realised throughout the Mediterranean world, and as medieval society gradually expanded it was necessary for the informal structure of monasticism in previous centuries to become more formalised and, in many cases, centralised. However, in the period of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the nature of monastic structural development was predicated on local economic, political and social conditions, with the result that it is impossible to fit it all into a straightforward narrative of reform.

While areas of Germany and northern Europe proved to be fertile ground for a strong monastic reform movement that gradually took hold in the Roman papacy over the course of the eleventh century, Lorraine and the Rhineland were by no means representative of Europe as a whole. In Byzantium and southern Italy it is possible to see a range of authorities, be they ecclesiastical, lay
or monastic, attempting to give monasticism a more permanent and stable character through independent administration, the assignation of small monasteries to the ownership of larger, more prosperous monasteries, and so forth. However, while there was certainly much cross-fertilisation of ideas between regions, nonetheless, there was also considerable variety.

In addition, these cautionary notes should also be a warning against taking accepted categories and perceptions of the post-medieval world and applying them to the High Middle Ages. The regionalism that becomes clear in the different paths of monastic change do not fit well with the idea of a fundamental divide between Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, or even between Latin and Greek Christianity. Those defining oppositions were as much results of events in this period as they were causes.
Chapter 8
Conclusion

Monasticism was a dynamic part of medieval religious life, capable of revealing much of significance about the Church, economy, society, and even politics of the time. Historians have known this for some time, though often without realising the broader application of the principle: western medievalists are content to focus on the abbeys of northern Europe, while byzantinists for their part can be equally cloistered at their end of the Mediterranean. Yet the Greek monasteries of southern Italy defy such compartmentalisation, and attempts to categorise their place in a Church experiencing schism show the need to take a more long-term view of history, such as Fernand Braudel and the Annalistes have advocated.

Much of the historian’s work consists not just of finding the right answers, but of finding the right questions. If the wrong question has been asked, then it does not matter how intelligent the analysis may be – the answer will still only be of limited use in understanding a historical period. In spite of considerable progress over the last thirty to forty years, the question of the Greek monks of southern Italy has remained the same – what happened to them when they were conquered by a Latin power? Was there a process of ‘latinisation’? Such questions are premised on a short-term, anachronistic view of history that assumes that the words ‘Latin’ and ‘Greek’ are more meaningful as cultural and religious definitions than they really were. An essential aspect of investigating the change in Greek monasticism in southern Italy is to re-evaluate the way in which the investigation may be framed.

The Norman conquest of southern Italy and Sicily, and Robert Guiscard’s subsequent attempt to seize the Byzantine throne, must be set against the background of an imperial contest between the
German Holy Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire, two competing Roman Empires whose conflicts were complicated by the developing nature of the Christian Church. As the German emperors became more assertive and introduced greater German influence on the Roman papacy in the course of the eleventh century, the papal office itself began to adopt aspects of the German imperial identity. In spite of the gradually developing theological implications of the papacy's evolving political identity, Byzantines of the twelfth century such as Nilus Doxapatres still viewed the question in the political terms of a struggle between imperial capitals. This was to have a significant long-term impact on the identity of the Roman papacy and the Patriarchate of Constantinople – both of them essentially imperial Churches – with the eventual result that the Latin and Greek political identities of Germany and Byzantium would merge with Latin and Greek religious identities.

Norman Italy, on the other hand, was not an easy part of this paradigm. At the heart of the Mediterranean world, it was certainly not isolated from the societies around it; rather it was part of a well connected nexus of micro-regions as Horden and Purcell have argued. Yet, within southern Italy, the categories of ‘Latins’ and ‘Greeks’ break down under examination. For one thing, the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the people on the peninsula were immensely more varied than such terms imply. True, there were linguistic and cultural differences (though even these become surprisingly blurred in documentary sources), yet in religious terms there was far more to unite the Latin and Greek communities than to divide them. Eventually contemporaries in southern Italy would, it is true, begin to adopt the model of the monastic rule, though even here the main distinction was between the *regula sancti Benedicti* and the *regula sancti Basili*, placing Greek monasticism on a conceptual par with Latin.

There was, indeed, a pattern of structural change in monasticism that is visible in both Greek and
Latin communities across Europe and the Mediterranean. Monastic communities moved gradually from informal, decentralised groups to much more permanent models. The underlying motives – the need for economic, political and social stability – were essentially the same in every case, whether Latin or Greek. That is to say, the development in monastic structures was primarily predicated on long-term factors that are visible throughout the Mediterranean region, not on individual actors or movements. It is this general search for stability and permanence that must frame our studies of medieval monasticism, not some anachronistic notion of conflict between Latin and Greek Christians. If anything, Greek Christians in southern Italy benefited from the Norman conquest just as much as Latin Christians did.

Obviously the change was not uniform throughout the world, and the progress motivated by universal factors was characterised by local circumstances. Within Germany and the papacy these involved the development of a centralising ideology of papal primacy over bishops and emperors; in Byzantium the same conditions for a mixture of ecclesiastical and political power did not exist, with the result that new monastic structures were more decentralised, often operating on more of a federal model, and almost always varying in character from region to region. In southern Italy it is possible to see all of these influences, both the centralising tendencies of the papacy and the looser, more autonomous tendencies of Byzantine Christianity. At the same time, the political disunity of the peninsula resulted in many of the developments being ad-hoc local affairs, finally leading to somewhat grander and more sophisticated models such as the Archimandritates of Rossano and Messina.

The schism between the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches is a modern concept, and though it is an undeniable reality in the present day, it should not be allowed to colour our view of medieval Christianity. For the monks of southern Italy and Sicily, their identity as Roman
Catholics was far off in the future, and would have made little sense from their own perspective.
Bibliography

Primary Sources

Literary Sources

Amatus of Monte Cassino, Storia dei Normanni di Amato di Montecassino, ed. V. de Bartholomeis, Rome (1935).

Annales Casinenses, MGH SS 20.772-824.

Annales Pegavienses, MGH SS 16.234-70.

Anonymi Barensis Chronicon, ed. L. Muratori, Milan (1724).

Attaliates, Michael, Michaelis Attaliatae Historia, ed. I. Bekker, Bonn (1853).


Canaparius, John, Vita S. Adalberti Episcopi, MGH SS 4.574-620.

Catascepenus, Nicholas, La vie de saint Cyrille le Philèote, moine byzantin († 1110), ed. and trans. E. Sargologos, Brussels (1964).

Cecaumenus, Strategicon, edd. W. Wassiliewsky and V. Jernstedt, St Petersburg (1896).

Cedrenus, George, Compendium Historiarum, 2 vols., ed. I. Bekker, Bonn (1838-9).

Choniates, Michael, Μιχαήλ Ακομινάτου τοῦ χωνιάτου τὰ σωζόμενα, 2 Vols., Athens (1879-80).


Chronica Monasterii Casinensis, ed. H. Hoffmann, Hanover (1980).

Chronicon Vulturnense, ed. C. Federici, 3 Vols., Rome (1924-38).

Cinnamus, John, Epitome rerum ab Joanne et Manuele Comnenis gestarum, ed. A. Meineke, Bonn (1836).


Doxapatres, Nilus, Τάξις τῶν πατριαρχικῶν θρόνων, ed. F. Finck, Vagharshapat (1902).

Good Counsel Never Comes Amiss. Nilus Doxapatres and the De Oeconomia Dei: critical


*Historia Abbatiae Casinensis*, ed. E. Gattola, Venice (1733).


Peeters, P. ‘Histoires monastiques géorgiennes’, *AB* 36-7 (1917-9): 5-318.


*Vita et Conversatio Sancti Patris Nostri Eliae Spelaeotae*, AASS, Sept. 3.848-87.


*La Vita di Sant’Elia lo Speleota secondo il Codice Criptense B b*, ed. V. Saletta, Rome (1972).


**Documentary Sources**

*Accessiones ad Historiam Abbatae Casinensis*, ed. E. Gattula, Venice (1734).


Codex Diplomaticus Cavensis, ed. M. Morcaldi et al., 8 Vols., Milan (1876-93).


Codice diplomatico normanno di Aversa, ed. A. Gallo, Naples (1927).


Das Constitutum Constantini, MGH 10.56-98.

Di Meo, A. Annali critico-diplomatici del Regno di Napoli della mezzana età, 12 Vols., Naples (1795-1819).

I diplomi greci ed arabi di Sicilia, ed. Salvatore Cusa, Palermo (1868-82).


Italia Pontificia, ed. P.F. Kehr, 10 Vols., Berlin (1905-75).

Italia Sacra, ed. F. Ughelli, 10 Vols., Venezia (1717-21).

Lake, K. and Lake, S. Monumenta Palaeographica Vetera: Dated Greek Minuscule Manuscripts to the Year 1200, 10 Vols., Boston (1934-45).


Prologo, A. *Le carte che si conservano nell’Archivio del Capitolo metropolitano della città di Trani (dal IX secolo fino all’anno 1266)*, Barletta (1877).


*Das Register Gregors VII.*, ed. E. Caspar, Berlin (1920-3).


Secondary Literature


Dale, S., Williams Lewin, A. and Osheim, D.J. (edd.) *Chronicling History: Chroniclers and Historians in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, University Park, P.A. (2007).


Ferluga, J. Byzantium on the Balkans, Amsterdam (1976).


Grabar, A. ‘God and the “Family of Princes” Presided over by the Byzantine Emperor’, in J.


Conquerors and Churchmen in Norman Italy, Aldershot (1999b).
The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest, Harlow (2000).


‘The Byzantine Background to the First Crusade’, Canadian Institute of Balkan Studies (1996):


Mor, C.G. ‘La lotta fra la chiesa greca e la chiesa latina in Puglia nel secolo X’, Archivio storico pugliese 4 (1951): 58-64.


Oikonomides, N. Fiscalité et exemption fiscale à Byzance (IXe-Xle s.), Athens (1996a).


Waha, M.d. ‘La hache qui façonne l’eau. Infrastructures du transport maritime et développement


Ware, K. ‘St Athanasios the Athonite: Traditionalist Or Innovator?’ in A. Bryer and M. Cunningham (edd.), Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism, Aldershot (1996): 3-16.


