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Contriving Coexistence:
Muslims and Christians in the Unmaking of Norman Sicily

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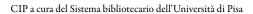CHARLES DALLI
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ABSTRACT

The historical drama characterizing the failure and collapse of the composite society of Latin Christian Sicily, culminating in the eradication of Islam under Frederick II, is accentuated by the long-standing impression that the Norman rulers had successfully transformed the island kingdom into a stable haven of multicultural coexistence in the preceding century. Historians may have to steer a middle course between two extremes. To reduce the Sicilian experience to a clash of civilizations would be a falsification of the past. To uphold Sicily as a successful case study of *convivencia* may be similarly reductionist, if not equally false. Whilst the image of Sicily as a haven of multicultural coexistence does not correspond completely to the documented realities of the island kingdom, it may also distort the investigation of the final decades of Islam in Sicily by artificially equating the collapse of a multicultural society with a breakdown of a benevolent regime of *convivencia* whose character and very existence remain open to historical debate.

Matul is-snin, l-istorjografija ta' Sqallija jidher li nisslet l-impressjoni li l-ħakkiema Normanni kienu rnexxielhom tabilħaqq jibdlu mill-qiegħ is-saltna tagħhom fil-gżira f'benniena ta' koeżistenza multikulturali. Dan it-twemmin affetwa mill-qrib l-istudju tal-ġrajjiet storiċi marbutin mat-tmiem tas-soċjetà mħallta ta' Sqallija Latina Kristjana, ġrajjiet li wasslu fost kollox għall-qerda ta' l-Islam taħt Federiku II. Biswit għażla bejn żewġ estremi, x'aktarx li l-istoriċi jsibu li l-aħjar triq li għandhom jieħdu hija t-triq tan-nofs. Li wieħed iqis l-esperjenza multikulturali ta' Sqallija Normanna bħala eżempju tajjeb ta' xi ġlieda bejn ċiviltajiet differenti, jaf ikun falsifikazzjoni ta' l-istorja. Mill-banda l-oħra, li wieħed iqis lil Sqallija Normanna bħala każ ċert ta' għajxien multikulturali li rnexxa, aktarx li jkun qed jixhed twemmin riduzzjonista jekk mhux ukoll falz. Fin-nuqqas ta' qbil dwar l-eżistenza nnifisha ta' din il-benniena multikulturali, id-dibattitu storiku jieħu bixra aktarx artifiċjali. Fil-waqt li x-xbieha ta' Sqallija bħala xi benniena multikul-

turali m'hix imsejsa għal kollox fit-tagħrif dokumentat, jista' jkun ukoll li fir-riċerka dwar l-aħħar kapitlu ta' l-Islam fil-gżira, il-waqgħa ta' reġim benevolenti misthajjel li ta wens lil komunitajiet differenti biex jgħixu flimkien, jibda jitqies bi żball bħala r-raġuni tat-tmiem ta' l-hekk imsejħa soċjetà multikulturali Normanna.

"Hactenus urbs felix, populo dotata trilingui, corde ruit, fluitat pectore, mente cadit" lamented Peter of Eboli in his *Liber ad honorem Augusti*, perhaps echoing the *Siculi trilingues* mentioned by Apuleius in the *Metamorphoses* (xi, v, 2). The verse encapsulates the plight of the Sicilian capital, unexpectedly witnessing the end of an era with the premature death of the Norman king, William II "the Good". The image of a trilingual Palermo enshrined in Peter's panegyrical verse to Emperor Henry VI Hohenstaufen, king of Sicily, has long been cited as a contemporary expression of the multicultural realities of 12th-century Sicily. Though the poet's aptly-chosen words *populo dotata trilingui* claimed to describe a multicultural reality which in fact was fast coming to an end, they also evoked an essential aspect of the legacy which Henry reclaimed on behalf of his Norman wife – namely, Latin Christian lordship over a composite society made up of diverse Latin, Greek and Arab Christian, Muslim and Jewish elements.

Sicily's evolution from the early 12th to the late 13th centuries was marked by a fundamental shift from a richly-variegated cultural spectrum to a severely reduced one, due to the marginalization or total elimination of formerly significant cultural elements. The island's Greek Christians were gradually marginalized, while its severely diminished Muslim population was finally eradicated through systematic deportation. The cultural mosaic was even richer, if one takes into account the various hues composing each main element in the spectrum: just as the term "Latin Christian" in 12th-century Sicily not only denoted the "Norman" master, but also the numerous settlers from all over Italy as well as north of the Alps, the terms "Greek Christian" and the "Muslim" did not involve cultural monotypes, but may actually express complex cross-cultural realities, for instance as implied by some indications of Greek-Arabic bilingualism among the island's Christians[1].

After 1300, the surviving exception to the Latin Christian monocultural block which had taken shape was represented by the island's Arabic-speaking Jewish communities. This image of a "trilingual kingdom" in transition from a multicultural mosaic to a quasi-monocultural situation, poses an interesting challenge for historians today. In rightly questioning the validity of the theory of a clash of civilizations, scholars have come up with a variety of responses. Making the case for the "dignity of difference", a distinguished author on globalization has proposed "locating the celebration of diversity at the very heart of the monotheistic imagination"[2]. In particular, historians of Sicily will want to emphasize the evidence for cultural interaction and interdependence, but they are also bound to question the extent to which 12th- and 13th-century Sicily may realistically be depicted as a tolerant haven of multicultural coexistence, or *convivencia*.

Convivencia

Whilst the multicultural character of Norman and Hohenstaufen Sicily has long been confirmed[3], partly thanks to the surviving accounts and documentation in different languages concerning the island's diverse religious and cultural communities, few historians today would comfortably adopt the modern model of *convivencia* to depict the island's history. Indeed, recent research has illustrated the painful evolution, culminating into the "ultimate failure" of the policy of *populus trilinguis*[4]. As a modern construct, the concept of *convivencia* helps to bring together a set of elements which express the challenges and opportunities faced by different social, ethnic, cultural and religious groups sharing common geographical contexts across determined periods of time. But it can easily lead to a poetic interpretation of the past, making this concept a problematic historical tool. Moreover, it is unrealistic to expect readers of history books to redefine in pre-modern terms the meanings of the constituent elements in this formula which have become value-laden in modern contexts. One frequently-cited definition of *convivencia* mentions as its key features "mutual interpenetration and creative influence, even as it also embraces the phenomenon of mutual friction, rivalry, and suspicion"[5]. One might add that it is only academic historians who would normally emphasize the second part of the formula too – namely, the confrontational elements; and it seems to be the general tendency to concentrate on the more positive aspects by which culturally diverse groups come closer together, even perhaps to the point of overlapping into a state of quasi-assimilation. *Convivencia* has come to represent toleration of the 'other'[6], whoever that might actually be, but some of its major exponents have stressed that it is a culturally dynamic product which has both collaboration and conflict inbuilt in it. Mediterranean history is unquestionably rich in examples of reciprocal toleration. Nevertheless, failure to draw a clear distinction between medieval practices of toleration, and the modern value of tolerance, may render the application of the concept even less acceptable. The term was promoted in Spanish historiography from the linguistic field to encompass a much wider definition of cultural behaviour; it was employed to study the impact of Muslim and Jewish cultures on the dominant Christian culture, but it also came to be perceived as a convenient tool to study the fate of subordinate communities[7].

The similarities between the two former western European provinces of Dar al-Islam, al-Andalus and Sicily, warrant comprehensive investigation. Be that as it may, the study of multicultural examples in Sicily may not progress all that much through comparisons with the Iberian peninsula, if a model formulated in a particular historiographical framework with the "Spanish" evidence in mind, and a much-criticized model at that, is taken out of context and applied in the Sicilian case. The concept of *convivencia* is remarkable for being one of those marketable products which have emerged from the pages of history books to find their place across all the social sciences, and come to enjoy a general currency well beyond the original boundaries of their historical context. Critics of the model of *convivencia* have dismissed it as a myth, suggesting alternative

interpretations, but historical dismissals have hardly ever sufficed to withdraw a wide-ly-applied concept from general usage. It is doubtful whether the concept, so deeply rooted in the modern historiographical debate on the making of Spain, may really be exported to other contexts whilst doing justice to the original elements which helped shape it, not to mention the spirit within which it was fashioned[8]. Moreover, there is a clear problem in applying a concept such as *convivencia* to the study of multicultural contexts across the Mediterranean by default. Neither the case for *convivencia*, nor the criticisms it has drawn since its formulation, can be properly presented within the limits of this contribution.

Muslim Sicily has for long been regarded as a close parallel to al-Andalus. The Valencian Ibn Jubayr himself compared Sicily to his native Spain, exclaiming:

> It is enough to say it is a daughter of Spain in the extent of its cultivation, in the luxuriance of its harvests, and in its well-being, having an abundance of varied produce, and fruits of every kind and species[9].

Ibn Jubayr's text, recording his visit in December 1184, where he stayed in "a hostel used by Muslims", is a remarkable eyewitness account of Sicily's numerous Muslim population now subjected to Christian rule. The traveller lamented the fact that this "daughter of Spain" was now

> ...filled with the worshippers of the Cross, who promenade in its upper districts and live at ease in its sheltered parts. The Muslims live beside them with their property and farms. The Christians treat these Muslims well and 'have taken them to themselves as friends', but impose on them a tax to be paid twice yearly, thus taking from them the amplitude of living they had been wont to earn from that land.

Contrary to Christian Messina, where Muslims were so rare that Ibn Jubayr experienced the solitude of a lonely Muslim stranger, Palermo had well-peopled Muslim quarters more than a century into Norman rule: "It has Muslim citizens who possess mosques, and their own markets, in the many suburbs. The rest of the Muslims live in the farms (of the island) and in all its villages and towns, such as Syracuse and others"[10]. Ibn Jubayr was also careful to note the practice of Islam in Sicily:

> The Muslims of this city preserve the remaining evidence of the faith. They keep in repair the greater number of their mosques, and come to prayers at the call of the muezzin. In their own suburbs they live apart from the Christians. The markets are full of them and they are the merchants of the place. They do not congregate for the Friday service, since the khutbah is forbidden. On feast-days (only may) they recite it with intercessions for the ꜤAbbasid Caliphs. They have a qadi to whom they refer their lawsuits, and a cathedral mosque where, in this holy month [Ramadan] they assemble under its lamps. The ordinary mosques are countless, and most of them are used as schools for Koran teachers. But in general these Muslims do not mix with their brethren under infidel patronage, and enjoy no security for their goods, their women, or their children[11].

An argument can plausibly be made for a degree of cultural fusion in specific sectors of Sicilian life from the 10th to 12th centuries. For instance, the apparently numerous intermarriages between Muslim men and Christian women, mentioned in 973 by Ibn Hawqal, may serve as a notable but not necessarily isolated example of this merging of diverse elements:

> Most people from the forts, the remoter parts and the villages are bastardised Muslims [*mušaʿmidūn*] and think that marriage to Christians is [allowed] provided that their male child follows the father by being a bastardised Muslim, and that a female [child] becomes a Christian with her mother[12].

More than two hundred years separated Ibn Hawqal's visit from that of Ibn Jubayr, but the latter also had an interesting anecdote to tell concerning the dynamics of family relationships.

> Should a man show anger to his son or wife, or a woman to her daughter, the one who is the object of displeasure may perversely rush into a church, and there be baptised and turn Christian. Then there will be no way for the father to approach his son, or the mother her daughter.

This remarkable strategy in which the purportedly weaker elements in the household made use of religious conversion, or the threat of it, to defy the authority of a husband or a parent, was a source of great worry for the Muslims of Sicily, forcing them to be "most watchful of the management of their family, and their children, in case this should happen"[13].

The late 12th-century visitor Ibn Jubayr was to note again the role of women in bridging the cultural divide in Palermo:

> The Christian women of this city follow the fashion of Muslim women, are fluent of speech, wrap their cloaks about them, and are veiled. They go forth on this Feast Day dressed in robes of gold-embroidered silk, wrapped in elegant cloaks, concealed by colored veils, and shod with gilt slippers. Thus they parade to their churches, or (rather) their dens, bearing all the adornments of Muslim women, including jewelry, henna on the fingers, and perfumes[14].

The island's Arabic-speaking Christian and Jewish communities may serve as other significant examples of fusion; nevertheless, while significant research has unearthed the records which document the symbiosis between the Arabic and Jewish elements in Sicily, much more limited records survive with regard to the practice of Christianity in Arabic[15].

In general, recent research on Sicily has cast a sympathetic yet skeptical glance at the opportunities for cultural fusion on either side of the Norman conquest. The notion that the cultural achievements of Norman and Hohenstaufen rule had deeper roots in the Regno's sociological realities is difficult to dispel altogether, as though the myth of Norman achievement blocks the full acknowledgment of 12th-century Sicily as a colonial society characterized by substantial Latin Christian settlement, and the survival in

a subordinate state of a large population of Muslims. The Latin Christian ruling class exercised its hegemonic power over a composite population made up mainly of Muslims, Greek Christians, and Jews, whilst creating the right framework for the substantial influx of settlers from the Italian peninsula and beyond the Alps[16]. There evolved a two-tiered society in which free Latin Christian communities of "Lombards" and other settlers peopled the new towns of Sicily, whilst at the lower level, Muslim peasants were enclaved in extensive latifundial establishments which were the hallmark of Sicily's feudally governed colonial economy and society[17].

Acknowledging that Norman Sicily was a feudal and colonial society based on the fundamental inequalities between the victors and the vanquished should not necessarily lead to a disavowal of its multicultural qualities. However, it does enable a different perspective by drawing an important distinction between multicultural practices or manifestations, and *convivencia*. For while the various cultural and religious elements making up the social spectrum of high medieval Sicily coexisted under Latin Christian rule in the period 1072-1250 (and these included subject communities of Muslims, Jews, and Christians), it is also clear that they were not defined by their coexistence. The pieces of the cultural mosaic were placed side by side, but by and large they stayed apart, and generally did not fuse together to create one whole[18].

Despite the startling indications of Norman and Hohenstaufen multicultural tastes and practices inside the precincts of their royal palaces, served by an international entourage which included Muslim court servants and bodyguards, the realities of subjection within and beyond the palace walls suggested that the Christian rulers of Sicily were equally at home in their own world and time[19]. The cultural mosaic of the Norman Regno, showcased with exceptional splendour in Roger II's Cappella Palatina, was not an isolated attempt to define an identity for the new kingdom. There was, no doubt, an extraordinary attitude towards non-Christian culture, scholarship and artistic achievement. Commenting on William II's fondness of his Muslim doctors, Ibn Jubayr remarked:

> He pays much attention to his (Muslim) physicians and astrologers, and also takes great care of them. He will even, when told that a physician or astrologer is passing through his land, order his detainment, and then provide him with means of living so that he will forget his native land. May God in His favour preserve the Muslims from this seduction[20].

The king was a subject of Ibn Jubayr's admiration. "One of the most remarkable things told of him is that he reads and writes Arabic". Moreover, "the handmaidens and concubines in his palace are all Muslims". One of the strangest things told us by this servant, Yahya ibn Fityan, the Embroiderer, who embroidered in gold the king's clothes, was that the Frankish Christian women who came to his palace became Muslims, converted by these handmaidens. All this they kept secret from their king. Of the good works of these handmaidens there are astonishing stories. Apparently, when a terrifying earthquake shook the island, this polytheist in alarm ranged round his palace, and heard nothing but cries to God and His Prophet from his women and pages. At sight of him,

Convivencia

they were overcome with confusion, but he said to them: "Let each invoke the God he worships, and those that have faith shall be comforted"[21].

In Ibn Jubayr's words, the royal establishment was staffed with Muslims:

> The pages, who are the leaders of his state, and the managers of his affairs, are Muslims, there being none who do not, voluntarily and for a heavenly reward, fast in the holy month, and give alms that they might be nearer to God. They redeem prisoners and bring up their young ones, arranging for their marriage and giving them assistance, and doing all the good they can. All this is done by Great and Almighty God for the Muslims of this island and is one of the mysteries of His care for them[22].

Indisputably the Norman rulers took pride in the fact that their charters were ceremonially published in Latin, Greek and Arabic, and the oriental imagery adopted in their cultural representation became a source of international prestige. Equally important for the Norman regime's ability to govern the land, defend the new polity and reap the full benefits of a rich agricultural economy, was the acknowledgment that they, the victors were, for some time and to varying extents, dependent on the cooperation of the vanquished; the "magnanimous" policies of the Norman conquerors towards their subject communities when they took control of Sicily were evidently guided by the pragmatic realization of the value of Muslim manpower.

Recent investigations of a notable Iberian case-study of Christian and Muslim "victors and vanquished" in Aragon suggests *conveniencia* as a more plausible alternative to *convivencia*[23]. The balance of evidence on the condition of Muslims in late 12th-century Sicily invites comparison; for a solid argument may be made that it was *conveniencia* that dictated the Crown's pragmatic approach towards their town-based Muslim subjects, and the attitude seems to have been reciprocated by them. But it is unclear how far this concept may be extended to express the realities in the Sicilian countryside, characterized by territorial enclaves cultivated by Muslim enserfed labourers, such as the famous estates of Monreale Abbey, stretching across more than 1,200 square kilometres of land in the Val di Mazara. It may plausibly be objected that the stark exercise of Christian feudal hegemony, and the dynamics of a colonial economy, were at play here, rather than the intricate reciprocity of *conveniencia*.

It is also clear that Sicilian *conveniencia* was delicately delimited where practised. The point made by Ibn Jubayr that the Muslims of Palermo did not "mix with their brethren under infidel patronage", and his remarkable anecdote concerning the fear of secret Muslims at court are indications of strict social boundaries. Contradicting his earlier information about the open practice of Islam in Sicily, Ibn Jubayr also stresses the plight of Muslims living under non-Muslim rule. This occurs in his account of a meeting with a notable Muslim in Messina called ᶜAbd al-Massih, who welcomed the author and his companions to his home, and revealed to them his "close-guarded secrets", is poignant testimony. The Sicilian notable asked the pilgrims about the sacred centres of Islam, exclaiming to them:

You can boldly display your faith in Islam, and are successful in your enterprises and thrive, by God's will in your commerce. But we must conceal our faith, and, fearful of our lives, must adhere to the worship of God and the discharge of our religious duties in secret. We are bound in the possession of an infidel who has placed on our necks the noose of bondage[24].

The reference to bondage is remarkable, in particular because it comes from the mouth of an affluent Muslim townsman, not a serf of Monreale. In general, Muslims were admonished to avoid at all costs having this 'noose of bondage' placed on their necks; for it was expressly forbidden for Muslims, wherever it proved possible for them to leave, to postpone their departure, opting to stay in formerly Muslim territories and live on under the authority of non-Muslim rulers[25].

This sentiment was echoed in Ibn Jubayr's detailed account of a leading member of the Muslim community in Sicily, the Qaʿid Abu l-Qasim Ibn Hammud, who had been deprived of his considerable wealth and placed for a period of time under house arrest after being accused, among other charges, of conspiring with the Almohad enemies of the Norman kingdom. King William had recently granted his rehabilitation, allowing him to travel and offering him a government post. According to Ibn Jubayr, who was moved to tears during the meeting with the Muslim leader at Trapani, Ibn Hammud bitterly confessed to the Muslim visitors: "I have wished to be sold [as a slave], I and my family, that perhaps the sale would free us from the state we are in and lead to our dwelling in Muslim lands"[26]. The Christians, for their part, hoped that Ibn Hammud would convert to Christianity, setting an example for his fellow Muslims; for they were convinced "that if he turned Christian, not a Muslim in the island but would follow him and imitate his act"[27].

In contrast to Trapani, a town where "the Muslims and the Christians have each their mosques and their churches", Muslims were not allowed to climb to the fortified settlement atop Jabal Hamid, that is Monte San Giuliano. Ibn Jubayr must have therefore been relying on hearsay when he stated that the women of that town were "the fairest of all the island", expressing the desire that "they be made captives of the Muslims". This strategic fortress was a key defensive site ("through it Sicily may be conquered"), which may partly account for the exclusion of Muslims. According to Ibn Jubayr:

in no case will [the people of Monte San Giuliano] allow a Muslim to ascend to it, and for this reason they have prepared this strong fortress. Should they apprehend aught, they would collect their women inside it and cut the bridge, leaving a great ditch between them and those on the heights of the adjacent mountain[28].

Since the 1160s, the fate of Islam in Sicily seemed to be written on the wall; at the risk of reading history with hindsight, one could say that the end of Islam was only a question of time. The surfacing of systematic Christian violence against the Muslim communities was a major factor in the breakdown of the composite multicultural society which had been allowed to develop under the Norman aegis.

With the collapse of Norman overlordship in Ifrîqiya[29], and the factional violence culminating in the assassination of William I's chief minister Maio of Bari in November 1160, whole areas of Sicily suddenly became unsafe for Muslims. The signal for large-scale attacks against Muslims was given by a group of noblemen who rebelled against the Crown, attacking the royal palace in Palermo and massacring William's Muslim eunuchs in 1161. The anti-Muslim revolt spread around the capital, and those Muslims who were lucky enough not to be numbered amongst the casualties were forced to flee the city[30]. The anti-Muslim revolt led to large-scale pogroms carried out against the Muslims by citizens of the Lombard towns in the extensive estates of the Aleramici lords, and in the county of Butera where the attackers were reportedly led by Roger Sclavo, Tancred of Lecce (who was to take control of the kingdom in 1189) and other Latin barons. Numerous Muslims deserted their villages and fled to remote safe havens in the interior of western Sicily protected by mountain-top castles, including Cinisi and Corleone, Platani and Jato, Calatrasi and Entella. William II's determined reprisals against the rebel forces besieged at Butera crushed the uprising, but did not destroy the religious and ethnic hatred which had taken hold of the population.

It is recorded in several medieval contexts that power vacuums, such as vacant thrones, invited liminal violence. With the premature death of William II in 1189, four years after Ibn Jubayr's visit, a fresh wave of anti-Muslim attacks was unleashed in Palermo. The pogrom of 1189-1190 marked a decisive turning point. The survivors fled to the mountain strongholds and consolidated their armed rebellion, reportedly refusing to acknowledge a man like Tancred of Lecce as their overlord. The Muslim-held mountain strongholds of western Sicily organized themselves into a makeshift emirate, refusing to acknowledge Christian overlordship, and proclaiming allegiance instead to a Muslim nobleman who had migrated to Sicily from al-Mahdîya, Muhammad ibn ᶜAbbâd, claiming the title of *amîr al-muslimîn bi-Siqillîya*. Under ibn ᶜAbbâd, the Mirabettus of the Latin accounts, the Muslim "emirate" made efforts to be recognized as a legitimate entity; it formed alliances, coined its own money, made diplomatic contacts, and was able to survive in a state of quasi-autonomy up to 1221.

A short-lived window of opportunity for Muslim rehabilitation was opened in 1206, when Innocent III as guardian of the young Frederick II tried to convince them to restore their allegiance to the young king. Defiantly, Muhammad ibn ᶜAbbâd redoubled the effort to consolidate his polity, widening its belligerent ambitions. Gradually the Muslim raiders who ventured out of their mountain strongholds moved across longer distances. They became a regular thorn in the Christian's side, ranging boldly across a large part of western Sicily. Muslim forces sacked the abbey of Monreale more than once, pillaged the towns and devastated the countryside, and went so far as to attack the capital city. They also captured some notable individuals, including the bishop of Agrigento.

Frederick II's military campaigns against the Muslim strongholds, from 1221 to 1225, encircled the rebel communities and practically isolated them from the rest of the

world. The death of the leader ibn ʿAbbâd was not enough to convince the Muslims to request terms of surrender; according to a colourful account, al-Himyarî, a daughter of the late leader took her father's place and defied Frederick's conciliatory moves, as well as his reported amatory messages, preferring instead to take her own life. By 1225 Frederick had managed to undermine the Muslim resistance in a substantial way, and the systematic deportation of many of the Muslims of Sicily to the Apulian town of Lucera was well under way. Amongst the severely reduced Muslim villagers, the last embers of revolt flared up again from 1239 to be finally quenched in 1246 when the strongholds of Jato and Entella were completely abandoned[31]. The "ethnic cleansing" of Sicily, to use a modern phrase, had been accomplished.

On the heights of Monte Jato, amidst the ruins of ancient Greek Ietas, there survives an amazing testimony to the resistance offered by one of the last Muslim rebel communities in Sicily during the final years of Frederick II's reign. The excavations of the ancient settlement at Monte Jato led by Hans Peter Isler over the past four decades have also unearthed the remains of a makeshift mountaintop village naturally protected by the difficult environment, which had been the final refuge of Muslims who rose up against the authority of the Christian ruler in Sicily. Straddling the foundations of the main buildings of the ancient Greek city, including a large amphitheatre which could seat 3000 persons, the Muslim village was the scene of an intense and prolonged drama which unfolded across the commanding heights of the strategic channel of Jato Valley. The remains of the Muslim fortified village which had sprung up amidst the ancient ruins of Ietas testify to the presence of the Muslim rebels who for decades defied the authority of an emperor until their surrender in 1246. Frederick's forces destroyed the settlement and deported the population to Lucera[32]. The Crown's resettlement of Muslim subjects at Lucera from 1223 onwards created, in a relatively artificial manner, a Muslim citadel which, until its dismantling in 1300, in a sense represented an epilogue to the long Muslim chapter in Sicilian history, with the notable exception of the survival of the Muslim community on the Sicilian island dependency of Pantelleria[33].

The violent collapse of the composite society of Norman Sicily showed that the big pieces of the kingdom's social, ethnic and cultural mosaic had not been glued to each other firmly enough to permit the emergence of unity within diversity. The kingdom was multicultural only in part and to the extent that it benefited its rulers to press ahead with the programme of a *populus trilinguis*. Kept together more as a result of reciprocal *conveniencia*, under the stabilizing presence of the Norman regime, the survival strategies adopted by Muslim subjects under Latin Christian rule were exhausted in the wake of systematic violence against them. Coming shortly after Ibn Jubayr's eloquent final testimony to the Muslim way of life in the island's chief urban centres, the revolutionary upheaval of 1190 led to the complete withdrawal of the Muslims from the structures of Latin Christian life. The end of Islam in Sicily was accelerated by obdurate rebellion which justified Frederick's policy of *exterminatio* or ethnic cleansing.

Convivencia

Notes

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10. *Ibid.*, p. 340.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 348-349.

12. Translation in A. Metcalfe, *Muslims and Christians* cit., p. 16.

13. Ibn Jubayr, *The travels* cit., p. 359.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 349-350.

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