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Greek-Latin deeds in the Norman Calabria and the question of the reality of multilingualism

Annick Peters-Custot

1. Introduction

Nowadays Norman Southern Italy, and particularly Calabria, enjoys a reputation of being a ‘contact zone’ and of multilingualism due to the peaceful co-presence of a Greek-speaking population living there since the Byzantine period, and of a Latin-speaking immigration caused by the Norman conquest of the region during the eleventh century. This slow Latin settlement is multifaceted: a western territorial rule embodied by the Norman castles built by the Lords,¹ the introduction of Benedictine monasticism that Southern Calabria had, until then, no experience of,² modifications of territorial and Episcopal jurisdictions,³ new modes of social relationships (feudalism) and of production, etc.⁴ Moreover, for Southern Calabria, which had remained under Byzantine rule since the reign of Justinian in the sixth century and which was Greek-speaking since the ninth century at least, if not the eighth century, this invasion also caused a language to be reintroduced – one that was then rarely written, and we do not know to what extent it was still spoken: Latin. The peaceful coexistence of populations that were linguistically very different created the conditions of a minimal bilingualism, at least orally.

The Calabrian native substratum, of Byzantine origin, which will remain quantitatively the majority until the end of the twelfth century, consists of Greek-speaking communities, of oriental rite and under Byzantine law, which are, during the byzantine period, attached to the emperor but critical of his local agents, who are mostly sent out from Constantinople.⁵ The culture of these provincial Byzantines was a Byzantine culture which hardly experienced any Latin influence before the Norman Conquest. In particular, the Greek language of Southern Calabria remains attached to the Greek lexicon, unlike the Greek deeds of Southern Basilicata which are already influenced by Latin.⁶ Therefore, Calabrians, for the most part Greek-speaking and apparently with no preserved usage of written Latin (but again, documentation is scarce for the Byzantine period), experienced the arrival of Latin-speaking invaders, among whom we can be sure that nobody knew Greek. This therefore becomes a situation of pure linguistic division within a population that is politically united as subjects of the Norman count and then of the king.

¹ Pesez and Noyé, ‘Archéologie normande’.

² Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs*, pp. 268–275.

³ Peters-Custot, ‘Les remaniements’; Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs*, pp. 234–265.

⁴ The same speech is valuable for Islamic Sicily. Let us just remark that, if bilingual acts are not rare (as they are frequent also in Sicily, with Arabic-Greek deeds, or Arabic-Latin deeds), on the contrary, trilingual documents issued by public authorities are exceptional.

⁵ Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs*, pp. 85–221; Peters-Custot, ‘L’identité’.

⁶ Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs*, pp. 145–154; Peters-Custot, ‘Convivencia between Christians’.

However, it is unwise to link the linguistic situation which existed among the population and prevailed in their relationships with the Norman authority, and the documentation, especially the production of multilingual deeds. Notarial acts are not any kind of written documentary type. The way language is used is bound to be directed, politically directed (in the broadest sense of the term of politics); and this use of language itself results from negotiations between the author and the notary who are almost never one and the same person. The author chooses the language (and therefore the writer) or, else, it is the opposite (the author chooses the scribe, and thus the language), as we shall see. The author chooses the content and he also chooses his titles and his subscription, signature; he chooses his witnesses. As to the scribe, he chooses the rest: the diplomatic forms and the technical terms. But the latter chooses them according to his capacities and skills, which is not necessarily a choice if these are limited. The lexicon used then largely depends on the writer, but the choice of the writer and of the language depends on the context. The interest of a Greek-speaking scribe working for a 'Norman' author lies precisely in the way Western realities unknown to Byzantium are adapted in the Greek language. The Italo-Greek notary, professional or not, thus plays the role of a prism, of a linguistic go-between, and the choice he makes to 'translate' notions and words unknown to Byzantine Greek language and society will reflect the tendencies of his background and his vision of the diplomatic language (which obviously should be distinguished from the literary language, as well as from the common language used for oral or written everyday life).

Thus, although governing essential aspects of the daily individual and social life (wills, marriages, sales and donations), the language of notarial deeds is not a language of everyday life; it is, yet, a juridical language, but also a political one, which is constantly transformed, fashioned and selected. The language of notarial acts is a choice, and not an inherited knowledge –it is a language to be learnt. It thus gives a unique outline of what the political manipulation of language can be (without broaching the touchy subject of 'cultural identities').

Moreover, the political determination is all the more important considering the multilingual deeds produced in and for the Greek-speaking Norman Calabria. Before addressing this theme, it is necessary to define rigorously what we mean by multilingual Greek-Latin deeds, and to point out the peculiarities of notarial multilingualism in Norman Southern Italy.

2. Norman Greek-Latin deeds in Calabria: some initial remarks

By Greek-Latin deed, we infer a document structured in two parts written in different languages, for example, a deed written in Latin, which includes a significant part written in Greek (or the contrary). The difficulty relies on the sense to give to 'significant', since it cannot be a purely quantitative evaluation. Besides, both parts are not necessarily similar, that is to say that each part is not necessarily the translation of the other one. However, this definition excludes some specific categories from the topic here: first, we won't address the deeds which contain some lexical adaptations created by the

importation of unknown institutions or notions. The ‘Normans’⁷ arrived in Byzantine Southern Calabria not only with their monks, their warriors and their families, but also with some practices, manners, concepts, that were unknown in the Byzantine Empire: the feudal system for example.⁸ This important event created significant lexical evolutions which can be seen in the Italo-Greek deeds written in or for the Norman Calabria.⁹ However, we assume that these lexical adaptations, that have been already carefully analysed,¹⁰ are out of our subject. Secondly, we won’t take into account the deeds in which only the subscriptions are in another language.¹¹ Lastly, we won’t consider the documentation in which some words or names are written in Latin but with Greek scripts, a very common practise in Naples during the tenth century, which reflects a cultural and social position within the Neapolitan Latin-speaking *élites*.¹² Nevertheless, unlike Naples, no such thing is seen in Norman Southern Italy.

What remains represents a corpus, whose extent and precise description are not to be given here. One may just point out two elements. Firstly, it cannot be a coincidence that all the Latin-Greek documents that meet these criteria are public deeds, written by the kings, dukes, the counts and the bishops and given to institutions or persons of high social level, not to modest private individuals: the circulation of these texts remained strictly limited to an important socio-political circle, and to the sovereigns’ *entourage*. We will go back to this interesting point later on, but we shall assume that this restriction gives the studied deeds, and the linguistic facts that are present, an important political value.

Secondly, there are two different types of such Latin-Greek deeds (as described here) written in the Norman period:¹³ either both Latin and Greek parts have the same content (without being necessarily the

⁷ We keep this large terminology, knowing however that a lot of participants to the Norman Conquest were not coming from Normandy: see Ménager, ‘Pesanteur et étimologie’. The Italo-Greek sources called them *Frankoi*, the Franks.

⁸ Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs*, pp. 307–315.

⁹ Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs*, pp. 315–318. The social and political innovations that drastically change the social basis of a human group require lexical revolutions, either by introducing foreign words transliterated into the original language, or by creating new words derived from roots that were specific to the original language. Some examples: the creation of new words by transliteration from Latin into Greek: *phion*, or *phaidon* (‘fief’) *koultoura*, *kaballarios* (‘knight’), *phoresta*, *libereuein*, *sergentes* (these are actually transliterations from the French), *bellanos* (‘villein’)... The modification of the meaning of Byzantine words: *anthropos*, when not used with an adjective (like *kalos*, *chresimos*...) means ‘villein’, an equivalent to the Latin *homo*; *kratein* now means ‘to hold’ (as a fief); *douleia* is the ‘feudal service’, etc.

¹⁰ Von Falkenhausen, ‘L’incidenza’; von Falkenhausen, ‘Zur Sprache’, pp. 614–615.

¹¹ The examples are too numerous to be listed, every publication of this type of documentation includes some testimonies.

¹² About this common practice among the Neapolitan *élites*, see J.-M. Martin, ‘Hellénisme politique’; and T. Granier, ‘Les moines ‘grecs’ de Saints-Serge-et-Bacchus et Saints-Théodore-et-Sébastien’.

¹³ There is only one Latin-Greek document of the empress Constance, wife of Henry VI: D Ks nr. 4, 8 October 1195, for the Greek monastery of S. Elia di Carbone (Southern Basilicata).

exact translation of each other); either each part has its own content, and completes the other one. In the first category we find the famous deed written ~~for~~ on the request of the Greek bishop of Squillace (Southern Calabria), Theodoros Mesimerios, dated December 1091, in which the author obeys the order of Count Roger I to give a land to Bruno and his companions, to establish a hermitage;¹⁴ in the same category, during Roger I's reign, a very exceptional bilingual donation is given to Bruno also (February 1097), but we will have to discuss its authenticity;¹⁵ let us mention also a deed from Duke Roger Borsa, dated February 1099, and giving some men to the same beneficiaries;¹⁶ a deed from King William I, dated December 1154, for the monastery of S. Stefano del Bosco, which was founded by Bruno's successors, in Southern Calabria;¹⁷ a confirmation, by King Tancred, granting the privileges that had been given to the Greek monastery of S. Filippo di Fragalà (Sicily)¹⁸ and a deed from Empress Constance to the Greek monastery of S. Elia di Carbone (Southern Basilicata).¹⁹

In the second category of bilingual deeds, in which both parts' contents are different, we find the most part of the donations, made by the Norman sovereigns, of lands or men in Calabria. Examples exist especially from Count Roger I's reign:²⁰ the donation deed may be written in Latin (not always, however: an important part of these donations are written in Greek only), but the boundaries of the lands, and the names of the men are mostly written in Greek.²¹

These two categories of bilingual documents do not answer the same questions about bilingualism, and we should address them separately. In fact, a deed in which the Greek part is the most important one, because it contains the practical characteristics of a donation, is not the same bilingual act as the one in which the Latin part contains the same elements as the Greek one.

Let us begin with the documents in which both different parts do not have the same content, and complete each other. As previously stated, these are mostly donations made by the public authority, and most of them benefit a 'Latin' institution, such as a Latin monastery, a Latin episcopal see or a Latin bishop, etc. We must assume that the

¹⁴ Trinchera, *Syllabus*, nr. 53. Bruno is the famous monk who previously founded the monastery of 'la Grande Chartreuse', in the episcopal see of Grenoble (France).

¹⁵ I will mention Roger I's deeds from Julia Becker's edition, which has been published very recently. I am therefore very grateful to Julia Becker for having given me access to all the documentary material even before this publication. Roger I's deed is an exceptional bilingual *plateia* (list of named men, in case of the donation of them by public authority) in which the list itself is not only in Greek, but also in Latin: Becker, *Documenti*, nr. 57.

¹⁶ Tromby, *Storia*, II, Appendice, p. 82, nr. XVIII (only the Latin part); Trinchera, *Syllabus*, nr. 68. Ménager, 'Lanfranco', pp 31–33. The deed disappeared in 1943 but a photography, made at the beginning of the twentieth century, exists: Salomonsammlung (Deutsches Historisches Institut Rome) 5, 21–24.

¹⁷ Enzensberger, *Guillelmi*, nr. 3 pp. 9–11.

¹⁸ Ta D, nr. 30 pp. 72–75, 26 Decembre 1192.

¹⁹ D Ks, nr. 4, 8 October 1195.

²⁰ As Julia Becker deals with this documentation in this volume, I won't list all the remained testimonies.

²¹ This type of bilingual document exists with the same structure for Sicily, but the two languages used here are Greek and Arabic.

majority of the Latin-speaking beneficiaries of these bilingual deeds hardly understood the precise contents of the documents which guaranteed the transfers of properties, of privileges or of persons to their advantage. We will come back to the subject later on, especially on the reasons why the important details of these public donations have been written in Greek, but let us briefly remark that this category of bilingual deeds has nothing to do with any will to make them understandable, which might seem indeed disturbing. In fact, the most important purpose of a written deed is to furnish a valuable instrument of protection and defence in case of contestation, to justify a property, a right, and to defend it in front of a tribunal for example. Without understanding the content, the legal value of the deed is preserved, but the practical use for the beneficiaries may be all but easy. Even if these deeds use two languages, it is obvious that, in reality, for the Latin owner of them, they are like monolingual documents, for they were impossible to understand, as if they had been integrally written in Greek. Indeed, public donations written in Greek for Calabrian Latin-speaking beneficiaries are all but rare, as we will see later on. Another remark may complete these initial comments: most of the bilingual documents of this sort have been written under Roger I and Roger II. The use of them seems to have disappeared after them.

On the other hand, the real bilingual Latin-Greek deeds (as we ought to call them) do not seem to belong to the same documentary group since each text provides the same content. The diplomatic model may be different, and it is indeed the case for most of these bilingual deeds up to the end of the twelfth century,²² but the content being exactly the same, there is no problem of comprehension for the beneficiaries, either Latin-speaking or Greek-speaking. While we previously pointed out that the deeds including lists of men or land descriptions were more or less the monopoly of the first two Norman sovereigns, let us remark, conversely, that these real bilingual deeds are written rather from the twelfth century on. In this case, the question is: which is the part of public documentation written for the Norman Calabria, that was really bilingual? Which allowed all beneficiaries, whether they were Latin- or Greek-speaking, to understand the content? Was there an evolution in the use of bilingual deeds by Norman power in Calabria from Count Roger I to Empress Constance?

3. Monolingualism and multilingualism within the Norman public notarial production

Studies on the subject attest that the part of bilingual Greek-Latin deeds in the public production of notarial deeds is very low, even if we only take into account the acts written for a Calabrian beneficiary. Moreover, this proportion may be an overestimate if we choose to consider only the bilingual deeds for which both parts have the same content, and so are understandable by all readers. Let us add that a relevant part of these real bilingual texts are known from a late copy

²² For example, in the bilingual donation from Duke Roger Borsa to Bruno (February 1099, cf *supra* note 16), the Greek part follows exactly the Byzantine model of the *sigillion*, while the Latin one is completely independent from this particular form. The same for William I's unique Greek-Latin deed (20 Decembre 1154, cf note 17): the difference is less visible, but the Greek part is influenced by the Byzantine *prostagma*.

of them, and we don't know if they were originally bilingual:²³ for example, the Greek-Latin donation of land from the Greek bishop of Squillace to Bruno (7 December 1091)²⁴ or a Greek-Latin deed of Roger II.²⁵ The only real bilingual Greek-Latin deed from Roger I's reign, a *plateia* in which, exceptionally, the list of named men is also in Latin, seems a quite dubious case.²⁶ For one of the rare original bilingual documents that we have, from Duke Roger Borsa (1099), the Latin text has been surely added two or three years after the Greek deed, a *sigillion*, had been written down.²⁷ A confirmation document of king Roger II for the Calabrian monastery of S. Stefano del Bosco (1144)²⁸ mentions four bilingual deeds written at the time of his father, Count Roger I, but these four documents were not necessarily bilingual at the time of the redaction,²⁹ and the king's privilege is itself dubious.³⁰ Consequently, no real bilingual deed exists from the time of

²³ It would have been very interesting to link to this study of multilingual notarial production, an analysis of multigraphism, but unfortunately such a work is beyond my competence. Nevertheless, the fact that the most important part of these public deeds, especially those written on Roger I's command, are known only by late copies or modern editions, probably let presume poor results to such a study.

²⁴ Trinchera, *Syllabus*, nr. 53, 7 December 1091. I discussed this point in Peters-Custot, *Bruno en Calabre*, pp. 65-69.

²⁵ Brühl, *Rogerii II.*, nr. 57, pp. 156-162, July 1143. The king answers a complaint of Messina's *electus*, *Gerardus*.

²⁶ Trinchera, *Syllabus* nr. 60; Becker, *Documenti*, nr. 57, February 1097. I have discussed this document in Peters-Custot, *Bruno en Calabre*, p. 352. In short, the document doesn't exist anymore, and the photography we have is from a twelfth century-copy. The document attests, in the Latin part, a curious anachronism on the well-known Roger I's chaplain, *Fulco*. Besides, some little differences between Greek and Latin text seem to reflect a late manipulation in the Latin text, aiming at highlighting Bruno's personal role. Nevertheless, Julia Becker assumes this deed is to be considered as authentic, and I do agree, but I think the Latin part is late, and that the original deed was written only in Greek.

²⁷ Tromby, *Storia*, II, Appendice, p. 82, nr. XVIII; Trinchera, *Syllabus* nr. 68, February 1099 and Ménager, 'Lanfranco', pp. 31-33. Photography: Salomonsammlung (Deutsches Historisches Institut Rome), 5, 21-24. I address this document in Peters-Custot, *Bruno en Calabre* pp. 377-380. As noticed by Ménager, the Greek *sigillion* is certainly contemporaneous to the action, while the Latin part has been written after Bruno's death (6 October 1101). I have also found, in the Latin document, a substantial re-writing part, introducing elements from *The Life of S. Martin* by Sulpicius Severus. This document, yet original, as established by Ménager, was not originally a bilingual document, but a Greek one.

²⁸ Brühl, *Rogerii II.*, nr. 67 pp. 193-197.

²⁹ These four Greek-Latin documents are: a bilingual donation of men, identified with the exceptional Greek-Latin *plateia* (February 1097) about which I have expressed some doubts (see above n. 26); a non-identified document (Becker, *Documenti*, Deperdita 18), dated July ninth indiction (1086 or 1101): but Bruno is in France at the first date, and at the second, Count Roger I is dead, since June 1101); a very dubious concession which is known only by a late and Latin edition (Tromby, *Storia*, vol. II, Appendice, p. 75, nr. X and Becker, *Documenti*, nr. 65) and that gives public rights to Bruno, what I discuss in Peters-Custot, *Bruno en Calabre*; last, the document from Roger Borsa, which was not originally bilingual (see note 27).

³⁰ Tromby, *Storia*, II, Appendice, p. 75 nr. X and Becker, *Documenti*, nr. 65.

Roger I and Roger II, except that of the Greek bishop of Squillace (whose bilingualism is perhaps late, as in the case of Roger Borsa's Greek-Latin deed).³¹

For all these reasons, we must assume that the production of real bilingual Greek-Latin deeds (that is to say understandable by all readers), in the Norman period, was probably more exceptional than usual and, above all, emerged only in the second half of the twelfth century. Therefore, the analysis of both categories of Greek-Latin public deeds leads us to the same conclusion: the most part of Norman public notarial production in Calabria was monolingual: either the sovereign had Greek or (especially from William I's reign on) Latin deeds made by his writers; or he demanded these highly distinctive and frequent bilingual donations, in which the Greek part puts forward all the practical details inside a Latin framework. In any case, one has to abandon the postulate according to which bilingual documents aimed at offering comprehension for all the linguistic groups of the Calabrian (or Sicilian) population to which these documents were written: the quantitative part of such bilingual deeds is too poor to be significant.³²

If the real bilingual deeds are rare, their production however demands an analysis, which has to be linked with the production of Greek deeds and of bilingual donations. It is obvious that the conditions of the public documentary production have to be evaluated as a whole, in order to address these peculiar questions: why did public bilingual deeds in Norman Calabria have to be written down? And why, considering the multilingual society of Norman Calabria, were the real bilingual acts so rarely written down? In order to answer these questions, we have to go off at a tangent for a while, and to address the problem of Norman public Greek deeds written for Calabrian institutions or individuals.

4. Greek supremacy in Norman public deeds for Calabria

4.1. The quantitative issue

What is striking when considering the notarial production in Southern Calabria is the quantitative and qualitative supremacy of Greek as a language of written public and private deeds up to the second third of the twelfth century. Count Roger I, who was born in Normandy, has most of the acts he issues for Calabria written in Greek. His son Roger II, brought up in Southern Italy in a very pro-Greek environment, signs all his acts in Greek, including Latin documents. In the case of notarial acts issued by the small Lords or private individuals, the domination of Greek lasted even longer than

³¹ Let us mention a Greek-Latin deed of donation, written in Count Roger I's last days, by which the count gives men to Bruno and his companions: Tromby, *Storia*, II, Appendice, p. 92 nr. 24; Trinchera, *Syllabus* nr. 69, Becker, *Documenti*, nr. 72. This document, an original one according to Julia Becker, is a real bilingual donation; however, the *plateia* associated, that is to say the list of named men, was a Greek document, known by a late translation (Tromby, *Storia*, II, Appendice, p. 92 nr. 25, and Becker, *Documenti*, nr. 75). So this document is to be considered as being part of the other category of Greek-Latin texts.

³² Nef, *Conquérir et gouverner*, pp. 80–84: the Author presents the same conclusions about the Sicilian documentation in the Norman period: 'Notons (...) que la traduction n'est que rarement complète et systématique (six documents sur trente-deux)'.

for the acts of the sovereign chanceries or the barons: local populations needed more time to create a Latin written culture.³³ Even in these zones, where contacts between the linguistic communities took place as early as the Byzantine period, like Southern Basilicata, and central Calabria, three quarters of the acts issued during the Norman period are written down in Greek and, between 1070 and 1130, this percentage rises to 90 %. Those who write therefore, write in Greek, with occasional exceptions. In Southern Calabria, finally, Latin-speaking people turn to writing in Latin very late: this only becomes common during the Hohenstaufen period. The Greek-speaking populations of this area remain faithful to the Greek language in notarial matters until the reform of the Kingdom under Frederick II, after 1230, which imposes deep changes in the recruitment of the local notaries and, indirectly and involuntarily, suppresses the practices of written Greek.³⁴ In this particular area, it is therefore not the demographic balance between linguistic communities that imposes a fast evolution in the written practices, but royal legislation.

Why is there such supremacy of Greek in Norman Southern Calabria, until, at least, the middle of the twelfth century? The demographic factor is essential: Latin-speaking people remained a minority within the Calabrian population. This demographic imbalance, widely compensated by Norman political and military domination, and by the rapid ties of the native population to the new territorial lords,³⁵ does not explain everything. In other words, demography can matter in the writing of private acts and in everyday life, but not in the writing of public acts, those of sovereigns. If the Greek-speaking majority of Calabria explains the resorting to Greek in the case of private acts ordered by illiterate and uneducated people who cannot afford the services of a professional Latin-speaking notary, for the public acts of the counts and dukes of the powerful Hauteville dynasty on the other hand, the demographic influence does not explain much. As the recipient's language is not a relevant criterion either (counts and kings issue Greek acts for Latin-speaking beneficiaries: Norman bishops or Benedictine monasteries), we must assume there were other explanations.

Therefore, choosing Greek for acts issued by a public authority cannot merely be interpreted as a consequence of a constraint. There was indeed constraint: at the time when the Normans settled in Southern Italy, they didn't have minimal knowledge of the notarial art.³⁶ This is why they were at first open to borrow the traditions of conquered lands, and they massively adopted the use of Greek in Byzantine Greek-speaking zones. But as soon as Italo-Greek *élites* appear in the Count's *entourage*, that is to say from the very beginning of the 1090's,³⁷ and perhaps as early as the 1080's, at the very moment of the first Norman public deeds were written in Greek, this argument is not tenable anymore.

³³ Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs*, pp. 387–396.

³⁴ Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs*, pp. 492–499.

³⁵ Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs*, pp. 228–230.

³⁶ Chalandon, 'La diplomatie des Normands'.

³⁷ Becker, *Graf Roger I.*, pp. 110–121; Nef, *Conquérir et gouverner*, p. 308.

4.2. The question of ideological and political reasons and aims of the Greek linguistic choice

When taking into account the Greek deeds written down by the Norman public agents for Calabrian beneficiaries, and the low number of bilingual deeds that could offer an equal understanding for Latin and Greek-speaking readers, it is obvious that most of the Latin Calabrian beneficiaries didn't understand a single word written down in the act they received, containing public donations, privileges or confirmations. So it seems necessary to return now to the political significance of the diplomatic language. It has been said that the language used in every deed was the fruit of a choice, and a political one, and that it is all the more certain for public deeds. Therefore, it must be assumed that the choice of Greek language to write deeds for Latin monasteries or bishops, unable to understand what was written down, was a conscious political choice. What were the criteria for this choice? Why did the sovereign have diploma written sometimes (most frequently) in Greek, sometimes in Latin, sometimes in both languages, either for the same content (exceptionally), or with a division of the functions for each language in the document (most frequently)?

Concerning the Norman public production of Greek deeds in Calabria, we should first consider the weight of diplomatic imitation bound to the larger question of political inheritance during and after the Norman conquest of Southern Italy (and Sicily): in other words, the fact that the Norman chiefs seized the inheritance left by previous forms of power in Southern Italy, which could offer political and ideological models for the new Norman power. This fact may have an importance in the diplomatic field. It is well known that language is not only the bearer of a system of communication, but also of an ideology, and, in the case of deeds, it also carries a diplomatic aspect bound to political ideology: by adopting Greek, the Hauteville dynasty (and other lords) adopted the Byzantine *sigillion* used by the *strategoï*, the *katepanoi* and the *basileis*. This borrowing has a political sense: the *sigillion* represents the developed model of the administrative act as established by the public State authority.³⁸ By adopting this formal model, the Norman counts, dukes and kings, even coming from a Norman feudal background, adopted the Byzantine form of public authority. In the real Greek-Latin diploma written until the end of the twelfth century, each part of the text preserved the diplomatic form linked to the languages used and, for their Greek part, followed sometimes the Byzantine *sigillion*.³⁹ The political interpretation of the

³⁸ The *sigillion*, that we can easily deal with since we preserve numerous copies of it, in particular from Byzantine Italy, is a public act of donation, unknown to the West, and characterized by intrinsic and extrinsic criteria of its own. The Italo-Greek *sigillia* dating back to Byzantine times show the accuracy of the Italian *sigillion* with respect to the model practised in the rest of the Empire, in particular in Constantinople. *Sigillia* were produced without interruption from the Byzantine period into the Norman period, and were often written by the same people. Norman *sigillia* are not imitations, but survivals. The imitation differs from the prototype by variations which define a distance from the original model. In the case of Norman *sigillia*, however, there is no distance. About these questions, see Breccia, 'Il *sigillion*'; and Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs*, pp. 329–331.

³⁹ For example Roger Borsa's deed for Bruno, dated February 1099: see above note 27.

diplomatic imitation holds therefore also for this category of Greek-Latin texts. Moreover, one could suggest (a hypothesis that, as far as I know, has not been made yet) that the Norman bilingual deed should have been written according to the model of the Byzantine Latin-Greek documentation written by the Italian *catepans* for the monastery of Montecassino.⁴⁰

There again, it is the appropriation, by a Norman authority, of a Byzantine diplomatic tradition precisely linked to the *publica potestas* and its monopolies, as it can be seen in other matters.⁴¹ Imitation is not only a practical response to the lack of diplomatic tradition; it is also a political strategy. The use of the Byzantine diplomatic model, that is of the *sigillion*, and the appropriation of the Italo-Byzantine bilingual diploma, could not have been made without using the Greek language but, in return, was valuable for Greek and Latin beneficiaries, and above all for Latin institutions, which had to be convinced of the political modifications induced by the Norman chiefs in Calabria, by the Hauteville dynasty in Sicilia, and by the Norman local lords in Basilicata or Apulia.⁴² And for all the population, even the most illiterate people, out of the circle of the *élites*, demonstrating the ability to use three languages was useful to express the majesty of the sovereign, who had just emerged from his past of conqueror and adventurer.⁴³

However, the survival of the Byzantine *sigillia* in the royal court does not reflect a pragmatic re-use linked to the skills of the Italo-Greek notaries, or the influence of the Greek-speaking population, but a political use of language: this continuity in written Greek includes a meaning connected to the political role of the written language in medieval society. Annliese Nef demonstrated how the Norman kings, whose administrative departments were becoming more specialized, aimed also to specialize the use of languages by the chancery and to

⁴⁰ Trinchera, *Syllabus* nr. 12, February 1000, pp. 10–12 and nr. 23, 1032, pp. 24–25.

⁴¹ The importance of Byzantine inheritance has been put forward, again in the diplomatic field, considering some forms of Norman deeds that can be bound to precedent Byzantine texts, as for the *plateae*, these lists of named men established by the public authority, and which have been linked to the Byzantine fiscal instruments known as *praktika*. In fact, the historical debate is not closed nowadays, since it is very difficult to get certitudes in a poor documentary context, over all for the Byzantine period of Southern Italy. For the Byzantine fiscal context in Italy, see Falkenhausen, 'Amministrazione fiscale'. About the question of Byzantine inheritance, in the form of the documentation, as well as in the fiscal question or social status of villeins, see Martin, 'Le plate calabresi'; Carocci, 'Angararii e Franci'; Peters-Custot, 'Gli elenchi di uomini'; Peters-Custot, 'Brébion, kodex et plateae'. Soon to be published, these two essays: Peters-Custot, 'Les plateae calabraises' and Peters-Custot, 'Plateae et anthrôpoi'. The same questions are raised concerning the Sicilian *jarā'id* in the Norman period and the relation to the (quite unknown) islamic past and inheritance in Sicily: see Nef, 'Anthroponymie'; Nef, 'Conquêtes et reconquêtes médiévales' and Nef, *Conquérir et gouverner*, pp. 479–549.

⁴² In these regions the local power was split up between a higher number of Norman lords, as a result for a more anarchical conquest. However, these lords used the Byzantine *sigillion* as well as the Count of Calabria and Sicily: see Breccia, 'Il sigillion'.

⁴³ Nef, *Conquérir et gouverner*, p. 85.

establish a compartmentalizing linguistic culture.⁴⁴ Nef deals especially with the use of Arabic, but her demonstration holds also for the use of Greek. In the religious field, the count or the king may have acts written in Greek for Latin-speaking addressees, because Greek was the language for religious matters.⁴⁵ Greek was the language of the original Christian liturgy, and the language of a State, the Byzantine Empire, in which the sovereign was also the ruler of the church, a domination that Norman rulers were prone to adapt for themselves (as we can see in the famous Martorana mosaic at Palermo, where it is impossible not to see a Byzantine influence).⁴⁶

The issue is less religious than ecclesiastical and must be linked to the Norman sovereign's image, who had to act as the chief of his church, that is to say, independently from the papacy. At the end of the eleventh century, when, on the contrary, the papacy began its struggle for *libertas Ecclesiae* and the control of monasteries and bishoprics against the ecclesiastical power of the laymen, the most practical way to escape this demand was to resort to imperial ideology. One of these imperial models was the Byzantine one, for which the king is directly elected by Christ (while the Germanic imperial model implied and imposed, more or less, the papal coronation). The Norman political and ecclesiastical purpose explains the iconographic use of the Byzantine image of the *basileus christostephanitzos*, as well as the writing, at king Roger II's court in Palermo, of a Byzantine description of episcopal sees by the Byzantine exiled Neilos Doxopatres, in which, in accordance with the Byzantine tradition, the Calabrian and Sicilian sees are bound to the Byzantine patriarchate, and not to Rome.

Generally, the whole production of the royal chancery, in the three major languages of the Norman realm of Sicily, reflects a technical selection of languages according to the subjects of each text, and not a real multilingualism, which was made impossible by the differences in the concepts conveyed by each language, and which, above all, was opposed to the Norman political construction and ideology.⁴⁷ There is actually no translation in order not to misrepresent. Translation is anti-polyglot.⁴⁸

4.2. Socio-cultural interpretation of the Greek production of the Norman Chancery

The use of Greek in public deeds prevailed up to the reign of Roger II.⁴⁹ It has already been said that there was no Latin chancery in Palermo before 1128. Under the reign of William I, this was no longer

⁴⁴ Nef, *Conquérir et gouverner*, pp. 83–87.

⁴⁵ Nef, *Conquérir et gouverner*, pp. 198–202, observes that most of the literary production in Greek, at the court of Palermo, addressed religious matters, but she awkwardly considers this production as a theological one, while it was pure matter of ecclesiology (that is to say, in other words, of royal ecclesiastical policy, since the Hauteville king was the master of the kingdom Church).

⁴⁶ For the comparison of this iconography with a tenth-century ivory representing Constantine VII's coronation by Christ, see Kitzinger, *The mosaics*.

⁴⁷ Nef, *Conquérir et gouverner*, pp. 93–94.

⁴⁸ Nef, *Conquérir et gouverner*, p. 86.

⁴⁹ See Falkenhausen, 'I documenti dei re normanni in lingua greca'.

the case: by that time, only a small proportion of the acts known to have been written by the royal chancery are in Greek;⁵⁰ under William II, the analysis is difficult, since we do not have a systematic inventory of the documentation, but it seems probable that the quantitative decline accelerates. Latin dominates and Arabic remains stable. For Tancred and Constance, in the 1190's, no deed written in Greek has been found.⁵¹

The decline of the Greek language in the royal chancery stems from several causes. The essential break comes with the conquest of the Apulian dukedom and the principality of Capua in the 1130s. With the conquest of the northern regions, mainly Latin-speaking and populated with Lombards, Amalfitans and Neapolitans, the Latin-speaking element becomes dominant, and the Latin language becomes that of the kingdom. Thereafter, Greek is just a provincial language.⁵² It seems clear that William I was the first to have taken into consideration the evolution of the Kingdom.

Obviously, the relative influence of every linguistic community lobbying within the structures of the central authority is also responsible for this evolution. Although Italo-Greek *élites* were open to collaborate with the Norman power, they do not form part of the Norman cultural project. Studies carried out by historians underline the presence of a whole group of Greek-speaking personalities in the royal court of Palermo, to whom significant political and cultural projects were entrusted: George of Antioch, Neilos Doxopates, Henricus Aristippus. Nevertheless, his list shows that Italo-Greeks were under-represented in the major Norman political projects, where the Greek-speaking people of oriental culture dominated – Melkites (Greeks coming from the arabized East like George of Antioch), Greeks from Constantinople (Neilos Doxopates), and even (rare) Greek-speaking Normans (Henricus Aristippus).⁵³ Greek-speaking *élites* who came from the South Italian mainland provided technicians to the court above all – notaries, translators – and much less high-status carriers of the royal policy. Their status is more the result of their personal linguistic proficiency and of the use that kings made of these skills, than of their belonging to a political pressure group. The recognition of their technical specialization confines them to subordinate posts, while the diplomatic latinization and the probable arabization of the political culture pushed them aside from important executive functions. The Greeks from Sicily or from the peninsula are increasingly recruited for positions at the local level in the service of the king, while only a few remains at the top of the administration. If the court needs Greeks, it is for their knowledge of the Byzantine imperial model: for this, any member of the oriental Greek-speaking *élite* will do, and the choice applies also to Melkites. However, if it was a positive element to be Greek in Roger I's or Roger II's reign, thereafter it was certainly an inconvenient.

⁵⁰ That is to say one single document, that for the Greek monastery of S. Giorgio dei Kratteri in Sicily: Enzensberger, *Guillelmi*, nr. 9 pp. 26–28.

⁵¹ According to Peter of Eboli, King Tancred would have sent her wife a secret letter written in Greek: Ta D, *Deperdita* nr. 15 p. 120. This tradition reflects the knowledge of Greek language within the royal Norman family. Let us remind that Tancred lived in a quite Greek-speaking city, Lecce.

⁵² This conclusion seems to be confirmed by the evolution of the court's *élites*; see Nef, *Conquérir et gouverner*, pp. 349–351.

⁵³ Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs* pp. 340–343.

Unlike the Latin-speaking Lombard and Arab-Moslem *élites* who were integrated into the higher realms of the court of Palermo, the Italo-Greek *élites* do not represent a cultural group which was dangerous for Norman power: they were not part of the feudal system or of the class of the great barons whom the royal power distrusted; and they did not belong to the non-Christian population of Sicily that was prone to revolts and possibly supported by external Arab powers either. They quickly submitted to the Roman jurisdiction and to the Norman rule, without being concerned about re-establishing political links with the Byzantine Empire, even when Manuel I Komnenos, the Byzantine emperor, supported a rebellion of Apulian barons in the 1150's. The docility of Italo-Greek people earned them indifference from the central authority, and the ensuing tranquillity was a major element in the evident continuity of the conditions of their cultural survival.

5. Return to Greek-Latin Norman deeds: the interpretations

5.1 Bilingual donations of land and men: a pragmatic bilingualism

Concerning the donations of land or peasants made by the public authority (the count, the king) to monasteries or bishops, general arrangements can be written either in Greek or in Latin, depending on the beneficiary. But practical measures (description of borders, lists of men donated...) will be written in a separate document: either in Greek in Greek-speaking regions or in Arabic in Sicily. As regards to these frequent public bilingual documents, the question of this mysterious Greek part has been subject to interpretations, as well as the Arabic part of the Sicilian *jarâ'id* or donations of named men:⁵⁴ in fact, this Greek-written part is the most important one in the document, since it contains all the names of the men, and all the boundaries of the lands. As for the Greek documents given to Latin-speaking persons or institutions, it is precisely this part which remains absolutely impossible to understand by the beneficiaries.⁵⁵ The interpretations of this are multiple and don't exclude each other.

First, we can assume that this Greek – or Arabic – part reflects the practical settlements of property transfers, which can only be made if local *boni homines* (*chresimoi anthropoi*) are associated with the transaction (because they will be the ones who will testify in case of a dispute, and because they are the ones who know the land boundaries and the name of the peasants). The king's agents need the help of these *boni homines*, who are the living memory for the community, his members and his lands, and the necessary go-between between the royal administration and the people. In fact, regarding the lists of men, the modalities of naming the men speak in favour of the rural *élite's* collaboration in the composition of these lists.⁵⁶ Besides, technical terms have to be understood very precisely by the local people when

⁵⁴ Falkenhausen, 'I documenti dei re normanni in lingua greca' and Nef, 'Peut-on parler'.

⁵⁵ This is not purely the question of understanding; but the problem is, for the Latin-speaking beneficiary, that he won't be able to read the names of people or land, and that he won't be able to answer a juridical dispute, without the help of someone able to read the Greek language.

⁵⁶ Nef, 'Anthroponymie'; Peters-Custot, 'L'anthroponymie italo-grecque'.

the document is read. Thus in Southern Calabria, these technical details, as well as the men's names, will be written in Greek, which quite evidently means that the *chresimoi anthropoi* are not bilingual, or, if they are, are poor at it. Many clues regarding the thirteenth century may strengthen this assertion.⁵⁷

But I would add another interpretation of this situation, an interpretation that Annliese Nef made clear for royal documents written in Arabic for Sicily: Greek and Arabic are the languages of written deeds concerning taxation, tenure and control over peasants, in other words the languages of the public monopolies, impossible to understand for the Latin-speaking Barons: the latter had to go through an Arabic or Greek-speaking royal agent to resolve conflicts or complaints⁵⁸ and these agents then communicated the terms of the dispute to local communities, in support of the royal administration. The Norman royal power may have entrusted these two languages with a mission: the use of these languages as coded languages weakened the power of Latin-speaking Barons. In fact, the knowledge of written Greek is not the monopoly of a class, based on social origin, but a coded, encrypted language, not socially, but politically restricted.

Who was able to write in Greek among the 'Normans' of the twelfth century? Not many people, except for Henricus Aristippus, King Roger II and, maybe, King Tancred (1189-1193) who arguably wrote a letter to his wife in Greek so that *she* alone would understand it.⁵⁹ I want to stress this example, which demonstrates how the royal power can use written Greek: as a coded, encrypted language. So, even at the top of the Norman *élite*, after decades of presence in Southern Italy and in Sicily, true polyglots of western origin are rare – which raises the question of language teaching: why do they not teach Greek to the kingdom's *élite*? Because they assumed that it was of no use. From the outset, Greek is not an influential language. Norman power did not promote bilingualism to keep control at understanding the privileges it gave to Latin-speaking landlords, and royal

⁵⁷ Very often, even in the thirteenth century, in order to have a Latin act written in Calabria, the local lord had to appeal to a Latin monk, and he had first to request the agreement of the local notary, who was the only person to have the *manus publica*, and who often could speak and write only Greek. So, in 1217, the Lord of Mesoraca in Calabria, Andrea of Pagliara, not having his own Latin notary, had to appeal to a monk living in the new Cistercian abbey of S. Angelo of Frigilo. Andrea of Pagliara specified that he had received the agreement of the tabellion of Mesoraca, a Greek *protopapas* called *Peregrinos*. The latter did not affix his own subscription, probably because he did not know enough Latin to do it (Pratesi, *Carte latine*, nr. 110 pp. 265–267: ... *quam, quia Latinum non habebamus notarium, rogatu nostro et voluntate dicti protopape tabellionis Musurace, frater Guillelmus de Ydronto monachus Sancti Angeli de Frigilo scripsit anno, indictione, mense pretitulatis*. *Peregrinos'* subscription in Greek is to be read in a deed dated 1219, Pratesi, *Carte latine*, nr. 117 pp. 279–282). Later on, Brother William of S. Angelo of Frigilo would write all the acts emitted in Mesoraca until 1219, often with the agreement of the official notary, either the *protopapas Peregrinus*, or a certain Basil. In Mesoraca, still in 1222, a monk of S. Angelo wrote an act in Latin on the authority of the public notary, the Greek priest Richard: Pratesi, *Carte latine*, nr. 129 pp. 303–305.

⁵⁸ Nef, 'Peut-on parler', pp. 48–50.

⁵⁹ See note 51.

monopolies, the *regalia*: taxes, control over the land,⁶⁰ etc. Of course, this political interpretation should not mask the fact that the notarial deeds have above all, and so to say, essentially, a juridical dimension, even more than a political one; the political use of the linguistic plurality is nevertheless an efficient instrument to protect the public authority against the contesting of privileged *élites*. The massive translations of the Greek deeds in the thirteenth century confirm the fact that the documents originally written in Greek had to be translated, on the beneficiaries' command, to be understood, and above all that the stakes were high enough to be worth this effort.

The use of Greek in the deeds written under the Norman administration had another practical advantage: it was certainly difficult to write forgeries, since they had to be done in Greek. When considering the recurrent policy of Norman authority aiming at controlling the claimed landlords' and institutions' privileges given by the count or the king, it must be assumed that the fight of the royal power against forgeries was verging on obsession. In this context, the possibility of using a sort of cabalistic language mastered only by a very restrictive circle of writers assured more security in this field.

In short, everything indicates that the multilingualism of the public notarial deeds is a *de facto* consequence of the populations' written monolingualism. In Sicily as well as in Calabria, where the royal power directly controlled people and territory, to issue deeds in Greek and Arabic meant not to be understood by a potentially dangerous, but monolingual political class, the Latin-speaking one and also to maintain the Norman lords in ignorance of their own privileges' material facts.

5.2. Real Norman Greek-Latin deeds: the signification of an evolution

It would appear that the practice of writing bilingual acts of chancery, a quasi-permanent phenomenon under the Normans and even at the beginning of the Staufer period, shows a significant evolution: up to Roger II's reign, the Greek-Latin public deeds concerning Calabria present two different parts regarding the content. Later on, under William I's and William II's reign, both parts present the same content, but it appears that the formal presentation of the Greek act differs from that of the Latin one, and each follows its own diplomatic pattern: a Byzantine model in the Greek part of the text, a Western model in the Latin part. In the later royal privileges, from Tancred at the end of the twelfth century, the Greek part is simply a word for word translation of the Latin text, such a translation being made because the addressee was a Greek monastery.⁶¹

⁶⁰ See Nef, *Conquérir et gouverner*, p. 85, about the use of Arabic: 'Utiliser l'arabe est en effet aussi un moyen efficace pour tenir le pouvoir à distance des sujets latins en lui conservant une autorité forte dans les domaines qui relèvent des prérogatives essentielles de l'Etat: distribution des terres et de revenus variés, fiscalité et contrôle du commerce. Ce choix oblige en revanche à recourir à des agents de l'administration royale arabophones en cas de conflit et influe ainsi sur les rapports entre le pouvoir et les grands de l'île. Il introduit donc une distance, maintenue à dessein, entre le gouvernement royal et les grands, qui vise à renforcer l'efficacité de l'administration'.

⁶¹ See Vera von Falkenhausen's comments upon King Tancred's unique Greek-Latin deed Ta D, p. 73, nr. 30, 26 December 1192.

So, under the reigns of both Williams, bilingual acts are based on the juxtaposition of the diplomatic and linguistic practices specific to each language, that is, to each culture. Above all, these bilingual acts are based on the refusal to translate and on separate compartments according to diplomatic styles as well as languages. This is no true bilingualism since there is no single written use of two languages by the same person – two different scribes write in their own languages and with different practices.⁶²

Conversely, the phenomenon of translation in Tancred's reign shows, on the one hand, that the evolution of the kingdom, in which the Greek influence has become weaker, is taken into account and that, on the other hand, Greek diplomatic culture is abandoned. Greek is no longer a political language. From the middle of the twelfth century, the structures and the terms inherited from Byzantium, some of which had been recycled in the Norman administration (*strategoï*, *katepanoi*) are misunderstood and therefore wrongly translated by the agents of the royal chancery.⁶³ The middle of the twelfth century is the momento when true latinization of the whole political society of the kingdom is really undertaken. The phenomenon is visible in the thirteenth century, when Latin prelates began to claim the translation into Latin of the Greek acts they do not understand.⁶⁴

6. The *dénouement*: the translation

In the Norman twelfth century, diplomatic multilingual documents as well as the absence of translation of the Greek deeds suggest that the Latin-speaking beneficiaries themselves refused translations – a quite strange auto-restriction perhaps explained by the absence of serious bilingual writers out of the restrictive circle of the public agents. The Norman *élite* who could understand and write in Latin and in Greek was, as said, systematically in the king's *entourage*. Yet, at a lower social level, we can assume that people lived a linguistic schizophrenia, using a mixed oral language, or knowing enough about the language of the other to be able to communicate at a basic level, but being ignorant of the written language. All in all, this dichotomy usually prevails in a situation of massive illiteracy (everybody knows how to speak, but nobody knows how to read and write), especially with the invasion of the vernacular language in the oral, which widens the gap between written and oral languages. The difference is that, among these bilingual 'illiterate', there are people who master writing and reading in their own mother tongue but ignore how to read and write in the other language. In the thirteenth century, this mutual ignorance increased the number of translations, ~~as we will see later~~. In

⁶² We may wonder about the question of the practical modalities of this kind of composition: a Latin-speaking author, a Latin-speaking scribe, a bilingual scribe of Greek origin? Yes, indeed. But with Roger II, the author is probably bilingual himself.

⁶³ Enzensberger, *Guillelmi*, nr. 5 pp. 14–16, January 1155: the royal Chancery translates a deed issued by Robert Guiscard in 1066, in favour of the bishop of Tropea: '... *rogans et supplicans, ut predictum privilegium non tam innovari quam de greca in latinam literam transferri nostroque region sigillo confirmare curaremus*' (p. 15). See p. 16 l. 4–5: *prosopis* (for *ek prosopou*) and above all *gromarhiis* (for *tourmarkoi*).

⁶⁴ Peters-Custot, *Les Grecs*, pp. 499–503. One of the firsts testimonies is Robert Guiscard's deed for the bishop of Tropea, translated by the royal Chancery in 1155 (see the previous note).

the eleventh and twelfth centuries, they do not seem necessary yet. Accordingly, the absence of translation is less an actual linguistic situation in the mastering of writing, than a coherent act regarding the value of the written document. The written document was incomprehensible and even cabbalistic for many people, even if it was written in their own mother tongue, simply because it is written. And even if cabbalistic, it was preserved, handled and shown as proof. One can see in this fact the proof that the validity of the parchment in itself is an act of faith or of confidence at least. The signs of legal validity guarantee that this belief is just and reasonable. They do not understand it, but they believe in it. It seems that this belief is no longer sufficient in the thirteenth century. In order to defend one's goods and rights, it is now necessary to understand. And as the Greek language is declining, translations into Latin become more necessary.

From the second half of the thirteenth century onwards, there was a trend to translate the Greek acts kept in the monastic and ecclesiastical archives: these were either documents issued mostly by Roger I and Roger II, whose chancery worked essentially in this language, or Greek private acts issued in Norman Calabria. In order to estimate the value of this novelty, we should evaluate the single cases and actors. Let us examine an example coming from a monastic context: in 1223, a Greek document issued by Roger I is translated into Latin. It is an inventory of people given by the count to Bruno, founder of the *Grande Chartreuse*. The translator is likely to be a monk from the Cistercian abbey where the document was kept.⁶⁵ *Cognomina* are transcribed in a random way, without any diplomatic transformation. Apparently, the monk knew how to read Greek letters, and even knew some Greek, but some translations points to misunderstandings from a Calabro-Greek environment.⁶⁶ A parallel case is the translation of a private deed: in August, 1277, in order to review the clauses of a Greek will dated 1193, the royal judge of Rossano had it translated. This translation is faithful to the Byzantine diplomatic pattern of the original act; there is no reformulation.⁶⁷ Quite different is the case of a translation within the royal chancery in 1252: Frederick II had these Greek deeds confirmed in 1224, without any translation, but in 1252 both documents are translated into Latin, suggesting the joint work of two people, one to translate, another to write down in *publicam formam*.⁶⁸ In this case, the linguistic knowledge of *magister Nicandros*, undoubtedly a Greek knowing also Latin, and the chancery skills of a Latin native complemented one another.

This phenomenon can be interpreted from two different points of view, depending on the modalities of translation. From the point of view of populations, the Greek language gradually disappears, as the consequence of a spontaneous acculturation. From the royal point of view, in the middle of the thirteenth century, the royal chancery did not have a Greek-speaking branch anymore; the Greek language was

⁶⁵ Becker, *Documenti*, nr. 75, 1101. This document is known only by the edition made by Tromby, and has been certainly much modified from the lost original, probably written in Greek, and some elements have been added after king William II's death in 1189.

⁶⁶ The passage from the *cognomen Calogeritzes* to *Monachel* is symptomatic of a cultural misunderstanding.

⁶⁷ The deed, from the Archives of the Abbey of Cava, has not been published (LVII-45).

⁶⁸ Huillard-Bréholles, *Historia diplomatica*, II, 1, pp. 438-446.

no longer a written language of public deeds and, therefore, not a political language at the royal level either. Frederick II's own linguistic knowledge is still disputed.⁶⁹

While Roger II was able to confirm Greek acts without translating them (because he was himself Greek-speaking, and, more important, had a real Greek chancery at his disposal), this is no longer the case under Frederick II, although he is considered the champion of Sicilian multiculturalism. However, is it really a problem of language? Frederick II needed to understand the document in order to confirm it, but he wanted more: he wanted the document to be put under the political control of his administration; therefore, he wanted above all the document to be re-written. Thus, language determines policy less than itself is framed by a policy of written and centralized control.

Written bilingualism should not be confused with ~~one~~ the spoken linguistic context. Indeed, it has nothing to do with the linguistic oral uses, because it is not part of an exchange or of communication strategies. In this sense, it does not require a mutual understanding of both sides, but it is a political instrument that relies on faith in a mysterious written object, and on a written law.

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