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“In loco qui dicitur Galca”. New Observations and Hypotheses on the Norman Palace in Palermo

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Abstract: This paper presents the results of an intensive study of both historical sources and literature concerning the Royal Palace in Palermo. The study of this architectural palimpsest deals with the intrinsic difficulty in distinguishing continuity and discontinuity across a stratified overlap of medieval phases, here defined as a mimetic phase of transition. The paper aims to trace the development of the building from the Norman conquest to the establishment of the kingdom, also taking into account a possible pre-Norman phase and the transformations which occurred in the Early Modern period. Issues concerning the construction of the first Palatine Chapel are also addressed, which leads to the individuation of hidden layers of the Palace. The final part of the paper focuses on one of the most important Norman portions of the Palace: the Torre Pisana. The analysis of its medieval structure reveals its Islamic features and opens new hypotheses on its original function and configuration.

Keywords: Siculo-Norman architecture in medieval Palermo, Norman Palace, Galca, Cappella Palatina, Torre Pisana

‘One day he went by the citadel, and he saw the great palaces of the Saracens, in the midst of which he saw the church of St. Mary, which looked like an oven.’¹

1 Preamble

About twenty years ago, Umberto Scerrato summarized the core issue concerning Islamic Sicily as follows:

¹ *Ystoire de li Normant* VI xxiii: “Et un jour ala par tote la roche, et vit grandissime pala^{is} de li Sarrazin; entre liquel vit l’eglize de Sainte Marie à la maniere d’un four”, AIMÉ DE MONT-CASSIN *Ystoire de li Normant* 1935, p.285, English translation AIMÉ DE MONT-CASSIN *Ystoire de li Normant* 2004, p.160.

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It is intriguing and paradoxical that this period of two centuries ... remains virtually without any indubitable monumental testimony, nor ... has any incontrovertible archaeological evidence been brought to light until now that may be confidently assigned to the time of Muslim domination.²

Scerrato's essay, published in 1994, ends with the wish that eventually medieval archaeological research will provide new data for the knowledge of the material and artistic culture of Islamic Sicily.³ The historical and archaeological research carried out in the last twenty years seems to move in this direction, showing a considerable interest growing around this subject, and disclosing concrete data and new archaeological evidence of material culture and Islamic presence in Sicily.⁴

The so-called palace of Maredolce, also known as Favara, is a case in point.

Among the "solacia" or pavilions in the "viridarium genoard",⁵ the royal park of Roger II located in the Southern country of Norman Palermo, the Favara was mentioned in the twelfth century by the court poet 'Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Iṭrābanišī, and by the historians Hugo Falcandus and Romuald of Salerno.⁶

Michele Amari identified this monument with the castle called "Qaṣr Ġa'far" by the Andalusī traveller Ibn Ġubayr, who passed thereabout in 1184.⁷ Consequently, the Sicilian scholar argued that this royal palace was originally

2 "Quello che è intrigante e paradossale è che di questo periodo di due secoli ... non resti praticamente nessuna indubitabile testimonianza monumentale, neppure sono state portate in luce fino a ora ... incontrovertibili testimonianze archeologiche che, con confidenza, possano essere assegnate ai tempi del dominio dei Musulmani", SCERRATO 1994, p. 339 following other archaeologists and scholars like Biagio Pace and Illuminato Peri. The same issue with regard to Southern Italy was introduced by SCERRATO/VENTRONE 1992, p. 513.

3 SCERRATO 1994, p. 348.

4 Among the most recent references on history and archaeology of Islamic Sicily see NEF 2011; SÉNAC 2012, especially ARCIFA e. a. 2012; NEF/ARDIZZONE 2014.

5 Peter of Eboli, *Liber ad honorem Augusti sive de rebus Siculis* III, PETRUS DE EBULO *Liber*, p. 47 (fol. 98r).

6 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Abī 'l-'Abbās al-Iṭrābanišī, *Qaṣīda*, in AL-IṢFAHĀNĪ *Ḥarīdat* 1988, p. 708–710, Italian translation AL-IṢFAHĀNĪ *Ḥarīdat* 1998, p. 762 sq.; Hugo Falcandus, *Liber de regno Siciliae* XXV, HUGO FALCANDUS *Liber* 1897, p. 87, English translation HUGO FALCANDUS *Liber* 1998, p. 136; Romuald of Salerno, *Chronicon* ad a. 1153, ROMUALDUS SALERNITANUS *Chronicon*, p. 232. On the so-called Hugo Falcandus see TRAMONTANA 2006; D'ANGELO 2009. Main references on the Favara are GOLDSCHMIDT 1895; DI GIOVANNI 1897; GOLDSCHMIDT 1898, col. 553–563; BRAIDA SANTAMAURA 1965; DI STEFANO 1979, p. 95–97; MEIER 1994, p. 54–62; TULLIO 2009; PRESCIA 2012; DI LIBERTO 2013, p. 159–161.

7 IBN ĠUBAYR *Riḥlat* 1988, p. 91, English translation IBN ĠUBAYR *Riḥlat* 1952, p. 346. On Ibn Ġubayr and his travel account see MALLETT 2012.

an Islamic castle founded by the emir Ğa‘far II (998–1019).⁸ Even though controversial, this attribution had been proposed again by almost all the successive scholars, including Scerrato himself, who also suggested the Kalbid foundation of the castle.⁹ Nevertheless, Vladimir Zorić ascribed it to the Norman period, relying on the analysis of the masonries which, according to him, are always characterized by larger blocks at the base of the building,¹⁰ as it is the case at the Favara.

Recent archaeological excavations carried on by the Superintendence of Palermo have detected an Hellenistic level in the area where the Favara lies, and finally have attributed to the Islamic period the large blocks portions of masonry at the base of the building,¹¹ so that the archaeologist Stefano Vassallo proposed to equate its original structure and function to an early tenth-century “ribāt”.¹²

The uninterrupted stratifications and overlapping of layers, well represented by the case of Maredolce, introduces the question concerning continuity and discontinuity in terms of both materials and cultures between Islamic and Norman Sicily, a constant leitmotif in the medieval Sicily issue. Shifting the question from the archaeological to the architectural point of view, I would like to introduce a different interpretation of these continuities and discontinuities. Indeed, beside the tangible lack of Islamic monuments, it is possible to think of continuity as a transmission of forms and techniques. This transfer of knowledge could have produced a mimetic overlapping of structures, with the consequent and inevitable impossibility of identifying the Islamic layers beneath Islamicizing structures of the Norman period.¹³

8 AMARI 1933–1939, 2, p. 391 with n. 5 and p. 407 with n. 1; AMARI 1933–1939, 3, 1, p. 121 n. 3; AMARI 1933–1939, 3, 3, p. 844 n. 1.

9 SCERRATO 1994, p. 340.

10 ZORIĆ 1989a, p. 583–586; ZORIĆ 2002, p. 144 sq. See also below with n. 97.

11 CANZONIERI/VASSALLO 2014.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 272 and 275–277. Apart from the proposal concerning the original function of the monument, the archaeologists based their chronological assumption on the pottery recovering attributable to the early tenth century (*ibid.*, p. 275 sq.), but also on Ibn Ğubayr’s account that refers to the castle as “Qaṣr Ğa‘far” (“qaṣr” = “castrum”, ‘camp’ [!], *ibid.*, p. 271 and 277). In fact, as already suggested by AMARI 1933–1939, 2, p. 407 n. 1, Ğa‘far was probably the emir Ğa‘far II (998–1019), the son of Abū ‘l-Futūḥ Yūsuf (989–998), and not Ğa‘far I (983–985). The acknowledgement of the relation between the building and the patron, either the first or the second Ğa‘far, would bring nonetheless a reconsidering of the early tenth century foundation of the monument. See also JOHNS/SAVAGE-SMITH 2003, p. 16; JOHNS 2006, p. 16.

13 On the general lack of Islamic monuments in Sicily see also GALDIERI 2000, where the scholar proposed new approaches to solve the question.

So, while some buildings in Palermo, like the Zisa Palace or the Cuba,¹⁴ clearly show their Arabo-Norman disposition even in their Islamicizing appearance, other monuments, behind the same disposition and appearance, could hide a more ancient origin, like the case of Maredolce, which was often considered a Norman foundation.¹⁵

With this assumption in mind, this paper will make some observations on the Royal Palace in Palermo, concerning the stratification and overlapping of layers originating in different periods, from the Middle to the Modern Ages (Figure 1). This overview will thus serve as a base for the analysis of one of the medieval structures of the palace, the Torre Pisana, to reveal its Islamic features and propose a new hypothesis about its original form and function.

The aim of the paper is not to solve issues; rather it raises old and new open questions from a different perspective, questioning the traditional methodologies and approaches. It will also afford the opportunity to clarify a number of misunderstandings frequently assumed by the scholars who studied the Royal Palace and the Cappella Palatina.

The monumental complex of the Royal Palace in Palermo is the most significant architectural palimpsest of the city.¹⁶ The irrefutable importance of this site became clear between 1984 and 1986, when certain sections of Punic and Hellenistic city walls were discovered there together with one of the most ancient city gates (Figure 2).¹⁷

The reconfigurations of the Palace made in the sixteenth century and the additions of early modern structures partially concealed its medieval layer.¹⁸

14 The Zisa Palace was founded by William I in 1165, while the Cuba was founded by William II in 1180, as also stated by the related inscriptions on the façades of the monuments, see AMARI 1933–1939, 3, 3, p. 841 sq. For the Zisa Palace see GOLDSCHMIDT 1898, col. 569–579; BELLAFFIORE 1978; DI STEFANO 1979, p. 103–108; CARONIA 1982; STAACKE 1991; MEIER 1994, p. 68–79; DI LIBERTO 2013, p. 161–163. For the Cuba see GOLDSCHMIDT 1898, col. 579–585; LOJACONO 1953; DI STEFANO 1979, p. 108–110; BELLAFFIORE 1984; CARONIA/NOTO 1988; MEIER 1994, p. 79–85; DI LIBERTO 2013, p. 163–165.

15 Although the archaeological results were presented in 2012 by Stefano Vassallo during the International Conference “Le processus d’islamisation en Sicile et en Méditerranée centrale” in Palermo, some scholars still reject the idea that even such few portions of Maredolce would belong to the Islamic period. See for instance DI LIBERTO 2013, p. 159 sq.

16 On the Royal Palace in general see CALANDRA e. a. 1991; LA DUCA 1997; ANDALORO 2011; LONGO 2011a; DI FEDE 2012. On the Norman Palace see GOLDSCHMIDT 1898, col. 541–553; ZORIĆ 2002, p. 85–106; TRONZO 2006b; LONGO 2011b.

17 The walls and the city gate have been discovered during the archaeological excavation conducted beneath the Montalto’s Hall in 1986, see CAMERATA SCOVAZZO 1990; DI STEFANO 1999, p. 171. On the ancient city gate see LONGO 2014a.

18 LA DUCA 1997, p. 11–17; LONGO 2011a, p. 131 sq.; LONGO 2011b, p. 53–55.

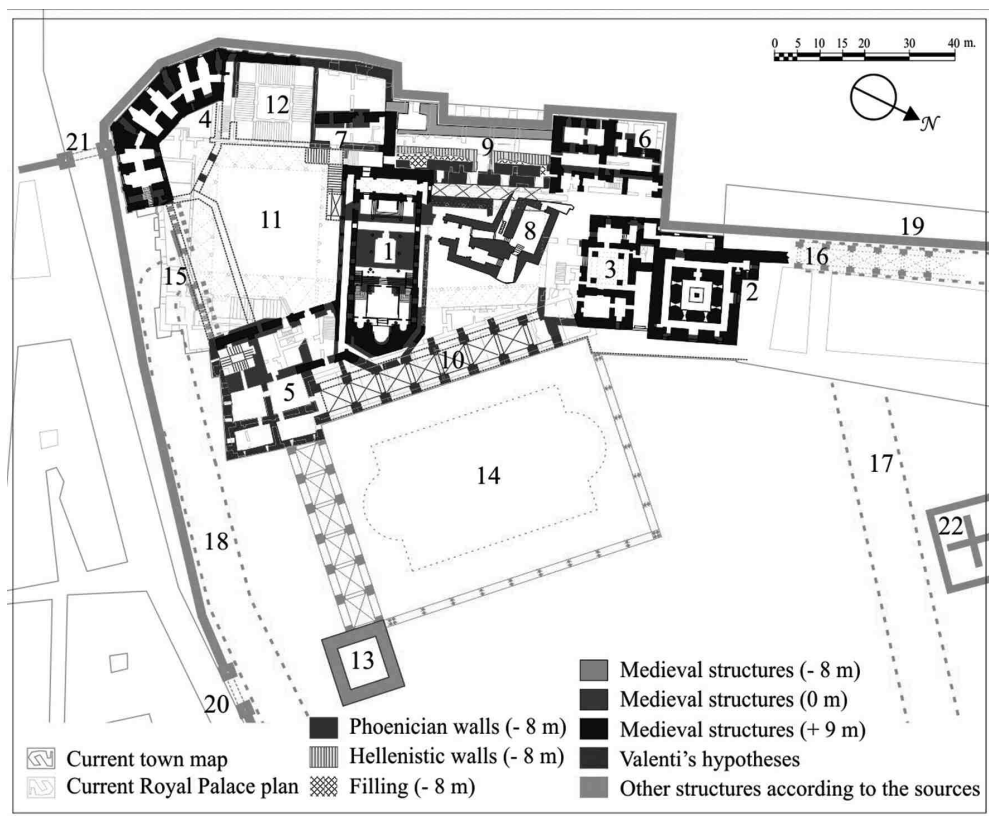


Figure 1: Palermo, Royal Palace, map with indication of surviving medieval buildings (grey) and hypothesized structures (red), according to archaeological essays and the historical sources: (1) Cappella Palatina; (2) Torre Pisana; (3) Joharia; (4) Dungeons; (5) Torre Greca; (6) Royal apartments; (7) Cappella Palatina Treasury; (8) “Segrete” (beneath Cortile della Fontana); (9) Punic and Hellenistic walls (beneath Montalto’s Hall); (10) Maqueda wing with the early modern façade; (11) Maqueda courtyard; (12) Monumental staircase; (13) Red tower; (14) “Aula regia”; (15) Medieval gate; (16) “Via cooperta”; (17) “Simāṭ” or “vicus Marmoreus”; (18) “Vicinus ab aula regia”; (19) City walls; (20) Gate of Galca; (21) “Bāb al-Abnā” or “Porta Palatii”; (22) Santa Maria della Pinta Church (Graphic © Ruggero Longo).

This layer would have remained completely hidden if the Superintendent Francesco Valenti between the 1920s and 1940s had not carried out the gradual process of dismantling partition walls, plasters and early modern stucco vaults, bringing to light – or better to the naked stone – the Norman Palace.¹⁹ Despite the scraping and the loss of plaster, materials and information about the early modern layers, this process made feasible the individuation and the

¹⁹ On the works of restoration see VALENTI 1924a; VALENTI 1924b; VALENTI 1949; GENOVESE 2010, p. 37–47.



Figure 2: Palermo, Royal Palace, portion of Punic walls (fifth century BC) with service door discovered under the floor of the Montalto's Hall in 1986 (DI STEFANO 1999, p. 171 fig. 5).

analysis of the medieval structures, including some decorations from the Norman period.²⁰ Obviously, it was easy for Valenti to detect the discontinuity and to distinguish between the early modern plasters and the medieval phases, the latter being identified tout court as Norman. Now the question is: what do we really know of the medieval palace before the Norman establishment?

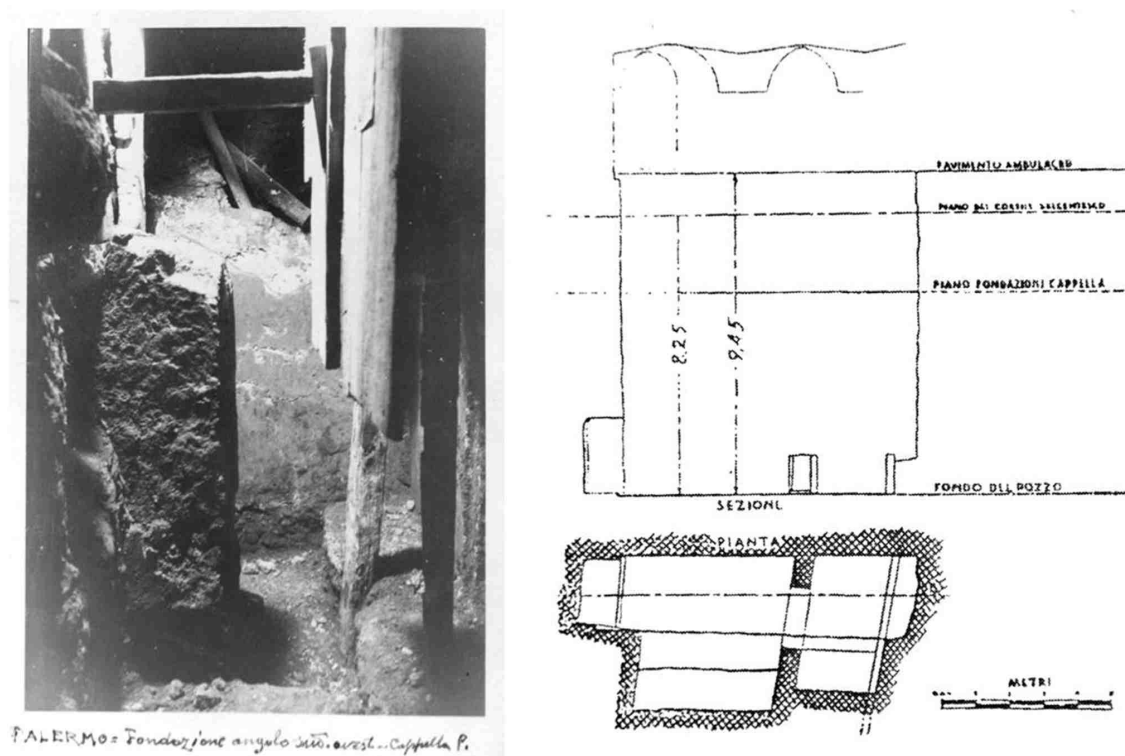
Valenti's successor, Mario Guiotto,²¹ in 1947/1948 performed the first excavation carried out in the building. According to him, walls and pavements of the Roman period were found under the Southern foundations of the Cappella Palatina, eight meters lower than the Maqueda courtyard,²² at the same depth as the Punic and Hellenistic levels were found forty years later (Figure 3). These excavations carried out at the Royal Palace, albeit inadequate to know the complexity of the architectural layers of the site, allow us to establish that the 'very high place' found by the Normans at the time of the conquest of the city²³

²⁰ This brings to mind the discovery of fragments of Norman mosaics in the Torre Pisana's Great Hall, to which we will return on the last pages of this article, see KITZINGER 1983; KITZINGER 1993–2000, 6, p. 19–21.

²¹ SCATURRO 2005, p. 33–52 and 100–105.

²² GUIOTTO 1947, p. 5–7.

²³ *Ystoire de li Normant* VI XXIII: "un lieu molt haut", AIMÉ DE MONT-CASSIN *Ystoire de li Normant* 1935, p. 285, English translation AIMÉ DE MONT-CASSIN *Ystoire de li Normant* 2004, p. 159 sq.; AL-IDRĪSĪ *Kitāb nuzhat* 1970–1978, 5, p. 590–592, Italian translation AL-IDRĪSĪ *Kitāb nuzhat* 1997, p. 58–60.



PALERMO: Fondazione angolo S. S. S. Cappella P.

Figure 3: Palermo, Royal Palace, left: wall under the Cappella Palatina (Guiotto's Archive); right: survey of Guiotto's excavation (GUIOTTO 1947, p. 6 fig. 2).

did not consist of a natural hill, but is rather made of a pile of unstudied materials.²⁴ This becomes clear if we look at the sections of the Royal Palace (Figure 4): the whole palace lies at an altitude eight meters higher than the Punic and Hellenistic levels, which in turn lie on a natural sub-layer of rock. This stratigraphy has also been observed through geological prospecting carried out by Pietro Todaro on the underground of this area.²⁵ The geologist interpreted the layer of anthropic sediment as a 'tell',²⁶ and through his section it is easy to detect that this 'tell' is a sort of artificial plateau right beneath the Royal Palace (Figure 5).

Since a Punic and Hellenistic level lies more than eight meters beneath the medieval structures, it is very likely that this gap is filled with stratified layers belonging to pre-Norman phases. This is even more impressive if we look at the

²⁴ CALANDRA 1991, p. 15–17. The same observation was already made by Francesco Valenti and Pietro Lojacono in 1937: as n. 107.

²⁵ TODARO 1995, p. 19 sq. fig. 6.

²⁶ TODARO 1988, p. 13. A new phase of investigation on the underground levels of the Palace has been recently carried out as part of the project aimed at the knowledge of the Palace: as n. 28.

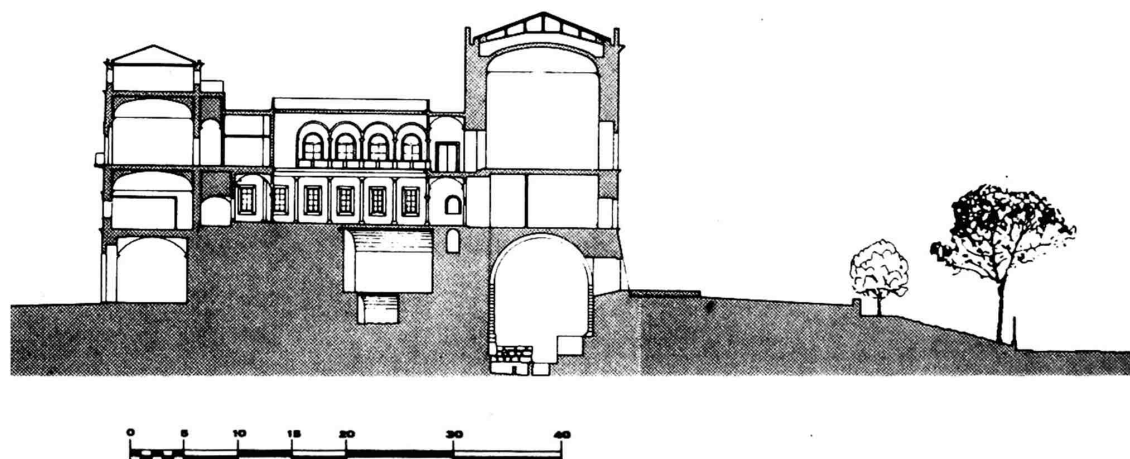


Figure 4: Palermo, Royal Palace, cross-section (CALANDRA 1991, p. 55 pl. IV, detail).

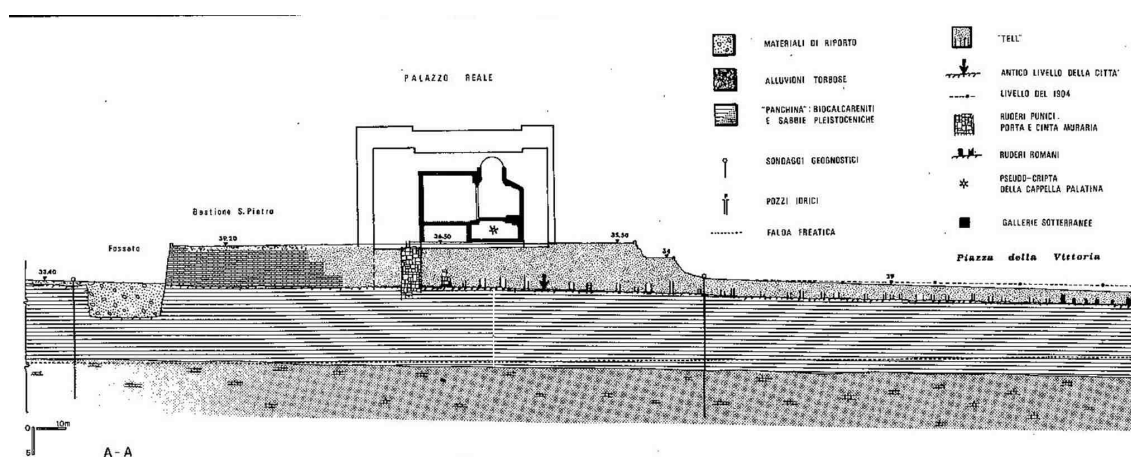


Figure 5: Palermo, Royal Palace, geological stratigraphy of the underground (TODARO 1995, p. 20 fig. 6, detail).

Torre Pisana, the main tower of the Norman Palace.²⁷ Its base, or at least its lower level known today, lies about 15 meters above the Phoenician level.

The general lack of knowledge regarding Islamic monuments in Palermo matches with this heap of earth filling a blank space within the Palace: material filling a knowledge gap. Hence the larger issues regarding Islamic Sicily seem to correspond with the main issue of the Royal Palace in Palermo. In order to resolve core questions on both a macro as well as a micro scale, there is a need

²⁷ KNIPP 2006; DI LIBERTO 2013, p. 165 sq.; ZORIĆ 2014b.

for a new phase of historical, archaeological and archaeometric investigations tailored to the entire monumental complex.²⁸

As we already noted, the first question arising in relation to the Royal Palace issue concerns the possible identification of a pre-Norman phase. A late antique fortress in Palermo was supposed to be built by the will of Theoderic the Great during the Gothic domination of Italy and then conquered by Belisarius, as attested by Procopius, but we do not know anything about its possible location.²⁹ The analysis of the main Arabic sources related to Islamic Sicily does not allow us to identify a fortress or “qaṣr” in the area of the Norman Palace. Nonetheless, these sources were all written after the establishment of “al-Ḥālīṣa”, the new emir citadel built in 937/938 by the Fāṭimid rulers in the quarter called today Kalsa.³⁰ Therefore, they refer in general to “Qaṣr al-qadīm” to indicate the inner old city of “Balarm” (from “Panormus”), or otherwise they refer to “al-Ḥālīṣa”. In the *Kitāb ḡarā’ib al-funūn wa-mulaḥ al-‘uyūn*, known as the *Book of Curiosities*, a thirteenth-century copy of an original mid-eleventh-century manuscript,³¹ there is a map of Palermo³² which shows the emir’s citadel “al-Ḥālīṣa” outside the old wall of “Balarm”, yet there is no indication of “Qaṣr” within the old city. This map is just a thirteenth-century creation, but it is executed on the base of Ibn Ḥawqal’s account. Furthermore, following the information included in the original text, it shows a number of substantial

28 This is one of the main objectives of the “Fabbriceria del Palazzo Reale”, a new institution coordinated by Professor Maria Andaloro and created by and for the Assemblea Regionale Siciliana, i. e. the Sicilian Parliament, the owner and occupant of the Royal Palace. The rationale of the “Fabbriceria” is basically to enhance the knowledge, the preservation and the cultural promotion of the Royal Palace. Among other activities, it has encouraged the project ‘Valorizzazione e fruizione del Palazzo Reale di Palermo’, supported by the Sicilian Parliament, directed by William Tronzo and coordinated by myself. This project includes a three-dimensional survey of the entire monument, the cataloguing of historical sources, the analysis of masonry materials, as well as the masonry mapping to identify each layer of the building. The “Fabbriceria” has already carried out a previous project of archaeometrical investigations of the so-called Rampa San Michele, a passageway leading up to the Cortile della Fontana within the Palace. The results of this research will be published soon. On the “Fabbriceria del Palazzo Reale” see TOMASELLO 2014.

29 Ὑπὲρ τῶν πολέμων λόγοι V 5, ΠΡΟΚΟΠΙΟΣ Ο ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΥΣ Ὑπὲρ τῶν πολέμων λόγοι 1905, 1, p.27. DI GIOVANNI 1889–1890, 1, p.373 and 392, quoting an elusive ‘Procopius, ‘De Bello Gothico’, L. III’, wrote that Theoderic “Panormi arcem quoque sibi erexit”, presumably following some Latin history of Sicily derived from Procopius. Indeed, in GOLTZ 1576, p. 9, we find the same sentence: “... occupataque Italia Theodericus Siciliam, quam praesidijs nudam videbat, affectat ... atque vt Siciliam praesidio contra vim externam muniret; Panormi arcem sibi quoque erexit”. About the suspected “castrum Theodorici” see also MAURICI 2000, p. 25 sq.

30 PEZZINI 1998; DE SIMONE 2000; BAGNERA 2013, p. 85–88; SPATAFORA/CANZONIERI 2014.

31 JOHNS/SAVAGE-SMITH 2003, p. 16.

32 RAPOPORT/SAVAGE-SMITH 2014, facsimile of fol. 32B/33A.

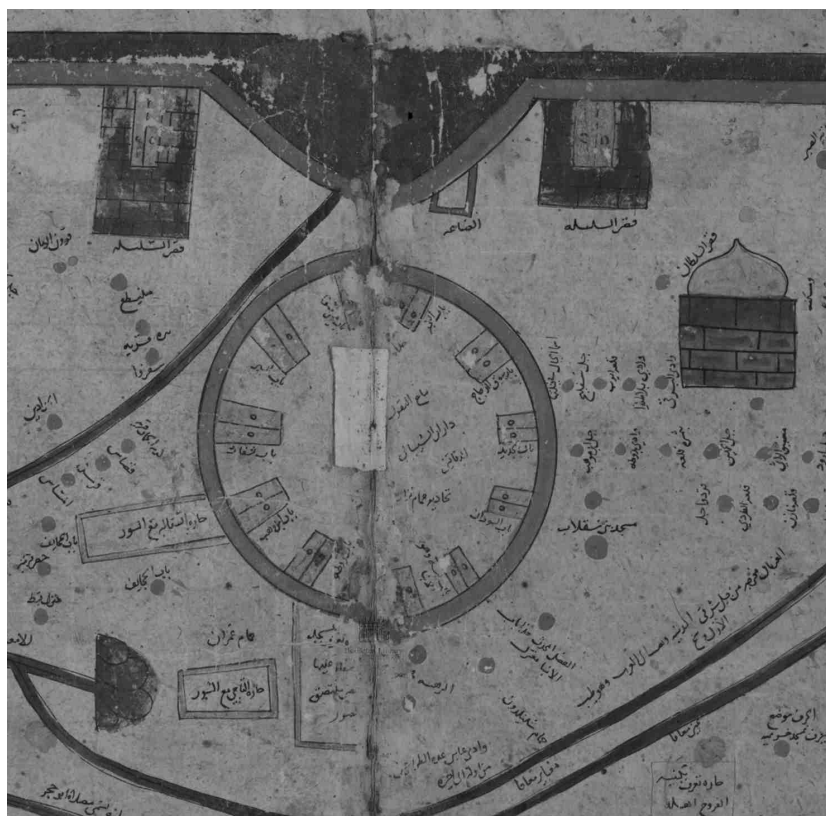


Figure 6: *Kitāb ġarā'ib al-funūn wa-mulaḥ al-'uyūn*, Anonymous, mid-eleventh century CE, map of Sicily, copy of the thirteenth century, detail (RAPOPORT/SAVAGE-SMITH 2014, facsimile of fol. 32B/33A).

additions,³³ among which are two towers outside the old town, on both sides of the harbor (Figure 6). Since one of these, “Qaṣr as-silsila” or “Tower of the Chain”, stands approximately where the ruins of the Castellammare are located today,³⁴ the map clearly indicates that this stronghold was likely built upon or may have englobed an Islamic pre-existence. Yet, according to the contemporary Latin sources, the “castrum maris” was founded by Robert Guiscard – together with the first Norman keep or Galka – after the conquest of Palermo,³⁵ and it

³³ JOHNS/SAVAGE-SMITH 2003, p. 15–17.

³⁴ On the Castellammare in Palermo see SCIORTINO 2007; VESCO 2014.

³⁵ Anonymus Vaticanus, *Historia Sicula*: “... duo fortissima Castra, alterum juxta mare, alterum in loco, qui dicitur Galea, brevi tempore constituerunt”, ANONYMUS VATICANUS *Historia Sicula*, p. 846, English translation from STANTON 2012, p. 82; Anonyme, *La chronique* I xxii: “... firent faire. ij. chasteaux moult fors, l’un après de la mer, et l’autre en un lieu qui se clame Galga, et les firent faire en brief temps”, ANONYME *La chronique*, p. 295 sq.; Gaufredus Malaterra, *De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae Comitis et Roberti Guiscardi Ducis fratris eius* II XLV: “... castello firmato ...”, GAUFREDUS MALATERRA *De rebus gestis* 1927–1928, p. 53; William of Apulia, *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi* III v. 337: “Munia castrorum fecit robusta parari”, GUILLELMUS APULIENSIS *Gesta*, p. 182.

was called the ‘old castle’ in the twelfth century, after the reconfiguration of Roger II’s new Norman Palace within the Galka itself.³⁶ Hence, the Norman sources state that both the “castrum maris” and the “castrum superius” were founded by the Normans, while the aforementioned Arabic source calls for reconsidering these attributions, at least for the “castrum maris”, enhancing the idea of continuity in terms of architectural overlapping and stratifications, as suggested above in the case of the Favara.³⁷ Indeed, from an archaeological point of view, most of the chronological attributions made through excavations and stratigraphic methodology demand reconsideration, as the archaeological and chronological indicators are now questioned by recent studies and analyses.³⁸ Furthermore, also the sources merit to be reconsidered, since many accounts celebrate the respective ruler as the founder of a given monument, even when he was simply the patron of certain successive renovations.³⁹

2 Amatus, the *Historia Sicula* and the Conquest and Fortification of the Norman Palermo

In this context, two sources deserve particular attention, namely the *Historia Normannorum* by Amatus of Montecassino and the *Historia Sicula* by the Anonymus Vaticanus. Amatus of Montecassino’s *Historia Normannorum* represents one of the most important sources for the history of Norman Southern Italy. The original manuscript, however, is unfortunately lost. Its vernacular French translation, titled *Ystoire de li Normant*, was discovered in the Bibliothèque Royale in Paris (Ms. 7135, now Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. fr. 688) and was published

³⁶ AL-IDRĪSĪ *Kitāb nuzhat* 1970–1978, 5, p. 590, Italian translation AL-IDRĪSĪ *Kitāb nuzhat* 1997, p. 59 sq.; HUGO FALCANDUS *Epistola* 1897, p. 177 sq.

³⁷ The Islamic foundation of the Castellamare has been proposed also by ZORIĆ 2002, p. 89 sq.

³⁸ On the general issues concerning the archaeological indicators see ARCIFA e. a. 2012, p. 245–256, especially p. 252. According to a recent archaeological study, the Castellamare’s Mastio has been attributed to the first Norman period, see SCIORTINO 2007, p. 287–289. In fact, the masonries attributed to the Norman period cut off a level where some Islamic tombs were found, and therefore prevent us from individuating a more precise terminus post quem for its building, which could have occurred even in the first half of the eleventh century. Moreover, the chronology of the pottery recovered in that area demands a reconsideration.

³⁹ On this issue see LONGO 2011b, p. 86–92.

by Jacques-Joseph Champollion-Figeac in 1835.⁴⁰ Beside the *Ystoire de li Normant*, the manuscript also contains the *Chronica* by Isidore of Seville, the *Historia Romana* and *Historia Langobardorum* by Paulus Diaconus and the French version of the so-called *Historia Sicula* by the Anonymus Vaticanus (Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 6206). Indeed, the *Ystoire de li Normant* ends in the year 1078, which corresponds to the death of Richard,⁴¹ but it is soon followed by another text titled *Chronique de Robert Viscart et de ses frères* that is quite faithful to the *Historia Sicula*, continuing the narrative up to the middle of the twelfth century. The entire French text was likely commissioned by the count of Mileto, Ruggiero Sanseverino, and was edited in Southern Italy soon after 1343.⁴²

Though aware of the existence of the *Historia Sicula*, Champollion-Figeac was encouraged to argue that Amatus was the same author of both the original texts of the *Ystoire de li Normant* and of the *Chronique de Robert Viscart et de ses frères*.⁴³ In fact, the successive scholars retained the *Chronique* as a mere copy of the Anonymus Vaticanus, which was in turn considered ‘nothing more than a paltry excerpt’ from Geoffrey Malaterra’s *De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae comitis et Roberti Guiscardi ducis fratris eius*, written in 1098/1099.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, it has been convincingly demonstrated that the French translator did not use the Anonymus Vaticanus.⁴⁵ Rather, it is reasonable to state that both the anonymous author of the Vatican manuscript and the French translator independently used another earlier text for their accounts.⁴⁶ In other words, it is plausible that the original text of the *Chronique* or *Historia Sicula* was written in an

40 AIMÉ DE MONT-CASSIN *Ystoire de li Normant* 1835; AIMÉ DE MONT-CASSIN *Ystoire de li Normant* 1935; English translation: AIMÉ DE MONT-CASSIN *Ystoire de li Normant* 2004. Recently, new studies on the subject have been published by KUJAWIŃSKI 2010; KUJAWIŃSKI 2012; KUJAWIŃSKI 2013.

41 The original text, the *Historia Normannorum*, was written around the 1080s (before 1086) and dedicated by Amatus to Robert Guiscard and Richard of Capua, see DUNBAR/LOUD 2004, p. 18–23, especially p. 20.

42 KUJAWIŃSKI 2010, p. 110 and 116. DUNBAR/LOUD 2004, p. 18; STANTON 2012, p. 89 dated the French manuscript to around 1305–1310.

43 CHAMPOLLION-FIGEAC 1835, p. LXXII–LXXVII.

44 WILMANS 1851, p. 126–128. The quotation is from STANTON 2012, p. 82. Also AMARI 1933–1939, 3, 1, p. 27 n. 1 rejected the hypothesis of identification with Amatus. On Malaterra’s chronicle see PONTIERI 1927–1928; WOLF 2005.

45 KUJAWIŃSKI 2010, p. 129 sq. Taking into account this assumption, we have to reconsider the idea – expressed by STANTON 2012, p. 90 – that the French translator used the *Historia Sicula* by the Anonymus Vaticanus ‘to fill the gaps in the narrative left by Amatus’ and ‘to annotate the ‘Historia Normannorum’.

46 As already argued by KUJAWIŃSKI 2010, p. 121.

uncertain year between the eleventh and twelfth century, and it was copied and updated in the middle of the twelfth century together with the *Historia Normannorum*.⁴⁷ This last edition or codex x is now lost together with the original *Historia Normannorum* by Amatus, and was probably used in turn as the prototype from which both the French translation and the Anonymus Vaticanus independently derived.⁴⁸ Furthermore, Charles D. Stanton also demonstrated that the Anonymus Vaticanus is not derived from Malaterra: in fact, the anonymous text includes more information, as though its author had at disposal other sources.⁴⁹ Among the evidence displayed by Stanton, one concerns the fact that the Anonymus enjoyed supplemental data on how the Hauteville fortified Palermo after the city's conquest in 1072. Malaterra merely mentioned ‘a castle was strengthened’,⁵⁰ while the Anonymus attests that ‘they constructed in a short time two very strong fortresses, one near the sea, and the other in a place called ‘Galea’.⁵¹ Moreover, while the word used in the Anonymus is “Galea”, in the French translation we find the more correct word “Galga”.⁵² This slight difference, even if it can be attributed to an error in transcription, supports the hypothesis that the French manuscript derived from another text than that offered by Vat. lat. 6206, as Kujawiński stated. As our final point, we can also note that the account by Malaterra, written in 1098/1099, ends with the most important acknowledgment for the Normans in the South and especially for count Roger: Pope Urban II's decree of the “apostolica legatia”, issued in 1098.⁵³ Although the *Historia Sicula*, as well as the *Chronique*, continue up to the middle of the twelfth century, they do

47 Thus, it is possible that an extension of the *Historia Sicula*, which added the latter three chapters to cover the years until the middle of the twelfth century, was commissioned by Roger II himself, see STANTON 2012, p. 84 and 91.

48 Soon after the *Historia Sicula*, the same Vat. lat. 6206 contains another copy of the text known as *Appendix ad Malaterram*, or *Annales Siculi*, which also covers the following years until the end of the thirteenth century, permitting us to date the manuscript to the beginning of the fourteenth century, see CARUSO 1723, 1, p. 249–255; STANTON 2012, p. 91.

49 STANTON 2012, p. 82–88 and 92. This hypothesis was already formulated by AMARI 1933–1939, 3, 1, p. 103 n. 1.

50 Gaufredus Malaterra, *De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae Comitis et Roberti Guiscardi Ducis fratris eius* II XLV: “... castello firmato et urbe pro velle suo disposita ...”, GAUFREDUS MALATERRA *De rebus gestis* 1927–1928, p. 53.

51 As n. 35.

52 As n. 35. According to the Arabic etymology of the word and its meaning, “galga” is closer to “galka” than “galea”: as n. 80 sq.

53 Gaufredus Malaterra, *De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae Comitis et Roberti Guiscardi Ducis fratris eius* IV XXIX, GAUFREDUS MALATERRA *De rebus gestis* 1927–1928, p. 108. Basically, this decree allowed the Norman rulers in Sicily to create bishops. On this topic see TRAMONTANA 1980, p. 206–209.

not mention this event at all in their narratives, as if their original text had been written before 1098.

These insights allow us to deduce two points: the first concerns the real value of the *Historia Sicula* and the *Chronique*; the second concerns the reliability of the French translation of the *Historia Normannorum*.⁵⁴ Both of these sources, in their combination of Latin and French texts, give us important clues on how the Normans conquered and fortified Palermo.

Following Amatus in his book VI chapter 19 concerning the conquest of Palermo (1071/1072), one can deduce that the duke Robert Guiscard – arrived by sea to help his younger brother count Roger – ordered to raise wooden staircases against the city-walls to enter the town. Once Roger's forces attacked one side of the city-walls, Robert was able to enter the town from the other side. But, according to Amatus, it seems that there were two different towns, an old one surrounded by the new one. Then, the French translation of Amatus says: 'Thus, the Normans started to fight against the citizens that were inside the ancient Palermo'.⁵⁵ In fact, William of Apulia tells us: 'once the new town was conquered, they (the citizens) shut themselves into the old town'.⁵⁶ Also Malaterra speaks about an external town conquered through the staircases raised against the city-wall, and an internal town, where the citizens took shelter.⁵⁷ Cross-referencing these data, it is clear that the Normans conquered first the external town and then faced the old inner town or "Qaşr", called 'ancient Palermo'. This external town was not the "al-Ḥāliṣa", as often stated, but a bigger town including the new Fāṭimid citadel. Indeed, through the *Book of Curiosities*, we know that the new quarters of the town – expanded outside the old city-walls in Islamic period – were already surrounded by new walls in the middle of the eleventh century.⁵⁸ Therefore, the Normans encountered two towns, the old

⁵⁴ KUJAWIŃSKI 2012; KUJAWIŃSKI 2013. On the skepticism among scholars in considering these sources see MAURICI 2003, p. 69 sq.; SCARLATA 2003, p. 150 n. 95; SCIORTINO 2007, p. 288.

⁵⁵ *Ystoire de li Normant* VI XIX: "Més pource que Palerme estoit faite plus grant qu'elle non fu commencié premèremment, dont de celle part estoit plus forte dont premèremment avoit esté commencié, la cité se clamoit la antique Palerme. Il commencèrent contre celle antique Palerme contrestre cil de la cité", AIMÉ DE MONT-CASSIN *Ystoire de li Normant* 1935, p. 282, English translation AIMÉ DE MONT-CASSIN *Ystoire de li Normant* 2004, p. 154.

⁵⁶ William of Apulia, *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi* III v. 320: "Urbe nova capta, veteri clauduntur in urbe", GUILLELMUS APULIENSIS *Gesta*, p. 181.

⁵⁷ Gaufredus Malaterra, *De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae Comitis et Roberti Guiscardi Ducis fratris eius* II XLV: "... a Guiscardensibus, scalis appositis, murus transcenditur. Urbs exterior capitur; portae ferro sociis ad ingrediendum aperiuntur ... Panormitani delusi ... in interiori urbe refugium petendo, sese recipiunt", GAUFREDUS MALATERRA *De rebus gestis* 1927–1928, p. 53. A similar suggestion was already forwarded by MAURICI 1992, p. 59–61.

⁵⁸ JOHNS/SAVAGE-SMITH 2003, p. 16; JOHNS 2006, p. 16.

Palermo and the new town surrounding the old one and also incorporating the Fāṭimid “al-Ḥāliṣa”. Thus, the Normans seized and conquered the external town; finally, also the old inner town surrendered. Four days later, Robert converted again into a Christian basilica the cathedral in the old “Qaşr” which was in fact transformed by the Muslims into a mosque, thus thanking God for the victory and bringing again the bishop (Nicodemus) in this church of Saint Mary.⁵⁹ With this scenario in mind, one can better understand the following chapters by Amatus.

In book VI chapter 23, Amatus gives an account of the establishment of the Normans in Palermo after the conquest and the initiatives taken by duke Robert Guiscard to arrange matters in the city as he wished and to manage and control the town over the Muslims. The text says:

And the duke took thought for the key places in these towns [probably referring to both the old town – or ‘Qaşr’/Cassaro – and the newer external town – including ‘al-Ḥāliṣa’]. He chose a very high place upon which he constructed a strong citadel [‘roche’], and he had it well garrisoned and stocked with a great quantity of provisions, sufficient to last for a long time. One day he went by the citadel [‘roche’], and he saw the great palaces of the Saracens, in the midst of which he saw the church of St. Mary, which looked like an oven.⁶⁰

Hence, Robert saw the ‘palaces of the Saracens’ within the citadel, ‘in the midst of which he saw the church of St Mary’. The individuation of the citadel (“roche”) and the identification of the church are definitely related to each other. These identifications are in turn substantial for the interpretation of these ‘palaces of the Saracens’. With respect to the citadel (“roche”), Amatus, or better yet, his translator used this word twice in this passage, the first time to indicate the stronghold he built (or rather reinforced?) in the high portion of the town. The reference to the Norman castle is clear. Moreover, cross-referencing the data with the Anonymus Vaticanus,⁶¹ it is also clear that we are dealing with the Galga or Galka, which in fact was a sort of citadel. Then, Amatus’ translator

59 *Ystoire de li Normant* VI XIX, AIMÉ DE MONT-CASSIN *Ystoire de li Normant* 1935, p.282, English translation AIMÉ DE MONT-CASSIN *Ystoire de li Normant* 2004, p.154. William of Apulia, *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi* III v. 331–336, GUILLELMUS APULIENSIS *Gesta*, p.182; Gaufredus Malaterra, *De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae Comitis et Roberti Guiscardi Ducis fratris eius* II XLV, GAUFREDUS MALATERRA *De rebus gestis* 1927–1928, p. 53.

60 *Ystoire de li Normant* VI XXIII: “Et pensa lo Duc les liez especials des cités. Il eslut un lieu molt haut là où il fist une forte roche, et la fist molt bien garder, et la forni de choses de vivre, pour lonc temps et à grant abondance. Et un jour ala par tote la roche, et vit grandissime pala-*is* de li Sarrazin; entre liquel vit l’eglize de Sainte Marie à la maniere d’un four”, AIMÉ DE MONT-CASSIN *Ystoire de li Normant* 1935, p.285, English translation AIMÉ DE MONT-CASSIN *Ystoire de li Normant* 2004, p.159 sq.

61 As n. 35.

used the same word, referring maybe to the same newly made citadel or Galka, as the scholars have always interpreted?

If so, the presence of ‘the great palaces of the Saracens’ within the Galka would be substantial for our discussion, providing evidence of an Islamic pre-existence, namely the proof that some Saracen palaces of the Islamic period were standing there before the Normans arranged their palace in the same place.

According to this interpretation, we should also individuate a church of St. Mary within the Galka, as Amari, Di Giovanni and other scholars have already done.⁶² In fact, it has been recently argued that the church that lies beneath the Cappella Palatina, often described as a ‘crypt’ and called in the Early Modern period Santa Maria delle Grazie, can be identified with the first Palatine Chapel inside the Norman Palace, also known in the sources as “Santa Maria Hierusalem”.⁶³ This church was the same one attested by two documents of 1113,⁶⁴ in which the archbishop Gualterius (1111–1122), “in dedicatione templi Sanctae Mariae”, quitclaimed his authority on this church. The documents also state that the church was erected by the admiral Christodoulos and was finally donated by Christodoulos himself to count Roger II.⁶⁵

Likewise, behind this compelling specification, there is no reason to believe, as Zorić argues,⁶⁶ that the document compiled in 1132 – expressly related to a church dedicated to St. Peter – could be referred to this lower church of St. Mary and not to the upper church, or Cappella Palatina, founded by king Roger in 1130.⁶⁷

62 DI GIOVANNI 1889–1890, 1, p. 430 with n. 1; AMARI 1933–1939, 3, 1, p. 138–141.

63 ZORIĆ 2002, p. 114–116, 122–126, 130–133 and 165.

64 These documents were published by PIRRI 1733, 1, p. 81; GARUFI 1899, p. 9–11; GARUFI 1927, p. 135.

65 ZORIĆ 2002, p. 114. BRENK 2010b, p. 31 rejected this relation between the lower church and Christodoulos’ chapel.

66 ZORIĆ 2002, p. 108 sq.

67 Also BRENK 2010b, p. 31 agreed with this hypothesis. In fact, there is no other source which refers to the lower church as St. Peter. The upper Palatine Chapel is proven to be dedicated to St. Peter not only by the same document of 1132, undoubtedly referring to it, but also by the document of dedication dated to 1140, and by the Homily of Philagatus of Cerami. On these documents see GAROFALO 1835, p. 7 and 11–13; LAVAGNINI 1992. On the other hand, the lower chapel was dedicated to St. Mary, albeit with different attributes. St. Peter is never mentioned in the documents related to the lower church: therefore, the document of 1132 has to be necessarily referred to the upper Palatine Chapel. Moreover, the exemption from the archbishop’s jurisdiction had already been accomplished for St. Mary in the document of 1113. Therefore, it is very likely that the document of 1132 reiterated the same privilege for the upper new church. DITTELBACH 2010, p. 283 draws the same conclusion.

Zorić finally concluded that the lower ‘primitive’ palatine chapel was likely built just before the investiture’s ceremonial for the majority of Roger II (1112), which probably took place within the Norman castle, “in thalamo superioris castris nostri”,⁶⁸ probably in the same chapel.⁶⁹ Anyway, he excluded that the church mentioned by Amatus was the lower and ‘primitive’ Palatine Chapel, since it was reliably built by Christodoulos, who was in charge after 1093. Hence, we should exclude that Amatus mentioned this church, although it may also have formerly been built by Robert and then renewed by Christodoulos.⁷⁰

Yet, Marina Scarlata took into account Zorić’s assumption in conjunction with Amatus’ church of St. Mary in the “roche”/citadel, thus arguing that Zorić’s primitive palatine chapel was the same church noticed and finally rebuilt by Robert Guiscard inside Galka.⁷¹ She went even further: since the church would have been already there when the Normans arrived, she supposed it was originally a Byzantine church, its construction under the Islamic patronage being impossible. According to her, its shape in form of an oven (“à la maniere d’un four”) could even be explained as if it was a central square plan Byzantine church surmounted by a dome, as an oven would have appeared in the Middle Ages. Following this conjecture, some Saracen palaces of the Islamic period would have been there before the Normans arranged their palace within the Galka.

Anyway, all these assumptions are just conjectures. In truth, a different and simpler interpretation seems to be the right one: Amatus’ translator used twice the same word “roche” to refer the second time to the entire old city of Palermo, the inner town or “Qaşr”/Cassaro⁷² and not to the citadel/stronghold or “Ḥalqa”/Galka. In fact, Amatus’ church of St. Mary is just the Cathedral,

68 PIRRI 1733, 1, p. 81; ZORIĆ 2002, p. 112 sq.

69 ZORIĆ 2002, p. 113, 116 and 165.

70 This hypothesis should not be undervalued when one considers the idea expressed by Michele Amari that Robert Guiscard provided both the castles “castrum maris” and “castrum superius” with a church (respectively St. Peter “de Balnearia” and St. Mary “de Jerusalem”) in order to protect them. AMARI 1933–1939, 3, 1, p. 141 n. 2 says: “Ecco dunque le due cappelle destinate a’ presidii delle due fortezze”. On St. Peter “de Balnearia” see PEZZINI 2013, p. 204.

71 SCARLATA 2003, p. 173.

72 Basically a citadel in itself, called “qaşr”, which in turn means ‘stronghold’, ‘citadel’, a term closer to the Arabic word “qal’a” (‘fort’, ‘citadel’) than to “ḥiṣn” (‘castle’, ‘stronghold’, ‘keep’). Arguably, the Latin word of the original Amatus’ manuscript could have been “castrum” in both cases.

dedicated to the Virgin Mary already mentioned in chapter 19 and located outside the Galka in the oldest inner city of Palermo.⁷³ Therefore, the hypothesis of Saracen palaces within the Galka collapses.

In any case, the *Historia Sicula* and *Chronique* respectively represent the oldest sources and the only chronicles where we find the word “galea” or “galga” referring to the Galka. The first document attesting these words, with the same etymology and referring to the same area, is a Greek document of 1153,⁷⁴ where we find the word “galkas”,⁷⁵ while the first Latin document, where the form “chalca” of this etymon appears, dates to 1167.⁷⁶ The word also appears in other Latin documents in the form “galca” or “galke”,⁷⁷ always to indicate the quarter of “Panormus”, corresponding more or less to the old “paleapolis”,⁷⁸ the area on the top of which the Norman fortress stood. Only a Latin document of 1236 attests the word “galga”.⁷⁹ Although there are no corresponding Arabic words included in the sources, Amari was the first to attribute the term to the Arabic word “ḥalqa”, which means ‘circle’ or ‘ring’.⁸⁰ Following Girolamo Caracausi, Adalgisa De Simone proposed ‘enclosure’ as alternative possible meaning, also similar to the Maltese word “ghalqa”.⁸¹ Indeed, we find the word “yhalca”, with its meaning and its localization, in the sixteenth-century volume *De rebus Siculis* by Tommaso Fazello: ‘Between this courtyard and private houses of the city, there was indeed another large space, surrounded by a wide wall, called by the Saracens with the Arabic word ‘Yhalca’, which in Latin language means ‘enclosed place’ ...’.⁸² Indeed, also Falcando mentioned this space in his *Liber de regno Siciliae*, referring to it with the term “galcula”

73 I am currently conducting research on the interpretation of Amatus’ account and its relation with the Cathedral of Palermo.

74 CUSA 1868–1882, 1, 1, p. 31.

75 This is followed by three other Greek documents dated to 1160, 1166 and 1236, see *ibid.*, p. 74 and 92.

76 GAROFALO 1835, p. 24.

77 CARACAUSI 1983, p. 234–237 n° 124.

78 SCARLATA 2007, p. 217–221. See also DI GIOVANNI 1889–1890, 1, p. 281 sq., 373 sq. and especially 421–437; COLUMBA 1910, p. 414–426; AMARI 1933–1939, 3, 1, p. 138–141; BELLAFFIORE 1976, p. 302–314.

79 CARACAUSI 1983, p. 235.

80 AMARI 1933–1939, 3, 1, p. 140.

81 DE SIMONE 2000, p. 85 n. 24. Indeed, the Maltese word “ghalqa” is documented only in the beginning of the thirteenth century, while in the Greek language, the Arabic letters and the corresponding sounds of /ḥ/ and /ḡ/ were always given by <k> instead of <g>, see CARACAUSI 1983, p. 236 sq.

82 FAZELLO 1558, p. 173.

(‘little galka’?) which included an (unknown) number of doors.⁸³ Likewise, the most significant source is the aforementioned document of 1153, which refers to an area ‘located in the old city of Palermo, into the alley called ‘misit sipene’, in the external part of the door ‘galka’, near the city wall towards South’.⁸⁴ Beside and beyond the issue of localizing and circumscribing this area,⁸⁵ it is reasonable to state that the Galka was founded by Robert Guiscard. It is in fact not mentioned in Arabic pre-Norman sources, including the *Kitāb ġarā’ib al-funūn wa-mulaḥ al-‘uyūn*.⁸⁶ Indeed, also William of Apulia mentions the ‘strong walls’ (“munia robusta”) made by Robert to arm the castles, probably referring to the Galka’s walls.⁸⁷ By the way, also other sources seem to refer to the castle as it was already there,⁸⁸ while we cannot exclude that Robert ordered to strengthen an already existing enclosure.⁸⁹ Perhaps the reinforcement of an earlier wall

83 Hugo Falcandus, *Liber de regno Siciliae* XIV and XXI, HUGO FALCANDUS *Liber* 1897, p. 49 and 71, English translation HUGO FALCANDUS *Liber* 1998, p. 103 and 123.

84 CUSA 1868–1882, 1, 1, p. 31–33 n° XI, here p. 31. MORSO 1827, p. 342 transcribed the vernacular version of this document or “transumptum istius instrumenti”, of which the corresponding sentence gives us a slightly different interpretation and more detailed information: “... li nostri possessioni, li quali sonno siti et positi a la Citati Vecha a Palermo a la Riminj menzo de Ximbenj di la parti di fora di la porta de ‘Xalcas’ chi comfina cum lu muro de la parti de menzo jorno ...”. DI GIOVANNI 1889–1890, 2, p. 54 n. 3 located the referenced area near the Sclafani Palace, in the South-Western part of the old city or “Cassaro”. Another document of 1167 places “intus in chalca” the church “Sanctae Mariae quae dicitur Pinta”, while a document of 1258 mentions a property “situm intus Galcam Panormi prope Palacium Casseri”, *ibid.*, p. 56, 58 and 191–209.

85 SCARLATA 2003, p. 171–181; SCARLATA 2007.

86 BRESC 1996, p. 11 sq.; PEZZINI 2013, p. 206–209.

87 Referring to the conquest of Palermo, he wrote that Robert made the castles armed with heavy walls, *Gesta Roberti Wiscardii* III v. 337: as n. 35. The verb “parare” here means to arrange more than to build, and it could be also referred to the reinforcement of an already existing wall.

88 As we have already seen, Gaufredus Malaterra refers to “castello firmato et urbe pro velle suo disposita”: as n. 50. The verb “firmare” literally means strengthen, make something stronger, reinforce, otherwise restore, fix, while for other foundations the chronicler uses the verb “aedificare” or simply “facere”. On this insight see also LONGO 2011b, p. 89 with n. 106.

89 The French translator used the form “firent faire” – ‘ordered to make’, while the Anonymus Vaticanus used the verb “constituere”, which literally means ‘build’, ‘raise’ but also ‘arrange’, ‘settle’, and in fact it is quite different from “aedificare” or “erigere”. The Galka was considered a pre-existing Islamic enclosure by DI GIOVANNI 1889–1890, 1, p. 425–427; COLUMBA 1910, p. 420–426; BELLAFIORE 1976, p. 306 and 310. According to COLUMBA 1910, p. 420–422, a wall separating the Western part of the “Qaşr” (“Paleapolis”) from the Eastern part of the same “Qaşr” (“Neapolis”) was probably there since Antiquity. ZORIĆ 2002, p. 89 sq., without references, argued that the castle near the sea was a Muslim foundation strengthened after the Norman conquest, while the “Galea” or “Galga” citadel, with its wide fortified enclosure, was built *ex novo* by the will of Robert Guiscard, acquiring an Arabic name. BRESC 1996, p. 12 also proposed the Norman foundation of the Galka.

would have been sufficient ground for medieval historians to have announced the construction of a new wall or even the foundation of a new castle?

In the end, as already stated, the sources are not sufficiently clear on this point. However, it is interesting that, according to the *Book of Curiosities*, in the first half of the eleventh century a new “barbican” – basically a watchtower to control a fortress or a citadel’s gate – was erected in front of “Bāb al-Abnā”, an ancient door placed at the South-Western corner of “Qaşr”/Cassaro, where the Norman Palace stands.⁹⁰ Furthermore, also the admiral citadel of the Aġlabid period could have been thereby, until the Fāṭimid citadel “al-Ḥāliṣa” was built in 937/938.⁹¹ In any case, it is highly likely that some pre-existence of the Islamic period was in the place where the Norman fortress was built, although no material evidence for that has been found so far.

3 The First Palatine Chapel and Its Archaeological Implications

The construction and chronology of the Palatine Chapel bears important implications, especially when contextualized within the spaces and structures among which the Normans built this church. Indeed, the stratigraphic analysis of this area could be useful to better understand the possible pre-Norman phases of the Royal Palace.

This challenging analysis was first made by Mario Guiotto, the superintendent who worked with Francesco Valenti and succeeded him from 1943 to 1949. Valenti had already individuated a stair linking the modern hanging Cortile della Fontana (1571–1610) with some medieval rooms upon which the floor of the courtyard was built,⁹² thus bringing to light these forgotten

⁹⁰ JOHNS 2006, p. 20. On “Barbican” as defensive system see DI LIBERTO 2010, p. 246 sq. with n. 40, albeit the author is inclined to believe that this kind of structures of medieval Sicily was established in the Norman period. On “Bāb al-Abnā” see LONGO 2014a.

⁹¹ The same consideration was already advanced by DI GIOVANNI 1889–1890, 1, p. 425 sq. In fact, the location of the government palace during the Aġlabid period is wholly unknown, see ARCIFA e. a. 2012, p. 257 with n. 120; BAGNERA 2013, p. 65.

⁹² This ancient staircase was discovered by Francesco Valenti in 1933 and documented by some photographs preserved in the Archivio Fotografico della Sovrintendenza, ex Gabinetto Fotografico della Regia Soprintendenza Arte Medioevale e Moderna della Sicilia Palermo, photos 26 and 27. The stair is accessible from those rooms beneath the courtyard, but its way out is now walled up. On the courtyard see GIUFFRIDA 1980; DI FEDE 2012, p. 22–27. On these medieval rooms see PURPURA 1981; LONGO 2011b, p. 77.

medieval spaces today called “Segrete”. Guiotto went further. During the restorations he carried out in the lower church, he discovered the original passage between the lower chapel and this not yet identified medieval ambient.⁹³ Guiotto found a monumental ogival-arched passage between the Northern corridor around the lower church and the “Segrete” rooms, precisely on the Western side of the Northern wall of that corridor (Figure 7). The analysis of masonry carried out by Guiotto in that area led him to attribute the ogival arch and the related unidentified structures beneath the courtyard to a building raised up before the construction of the Cappella Palatina in 1130, the latter being defined by Guiotto as ‘the first work made by the will of king Roger’. Indeed, in the upper Western zone of the Northern wall, Guiotto found a surviving portion of a monumental decorative frame frieze, a ledge profiled with grooves and eave bars that run around an opening, presumably related to a façade, which would not have had any reason to be built in front of another structure, no more than just 1.2 meter away. Therefore, the superintendent identified these structures as belonging to a lower part of an Islamic tower.⁹⁴

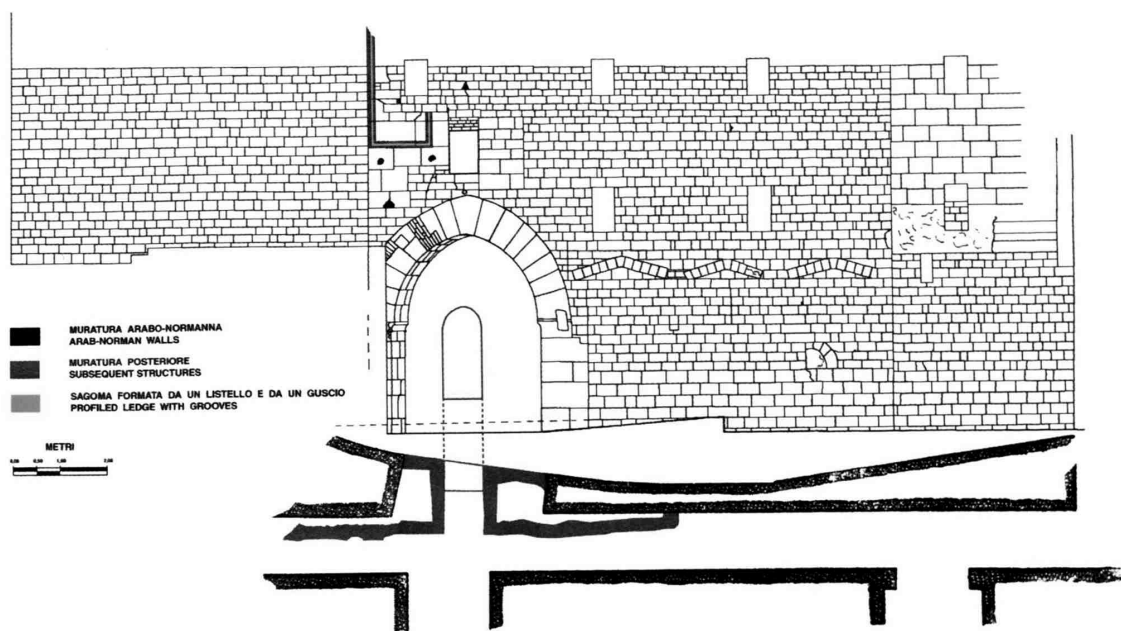


Figure 7: Guiotto’s masonry mapping of the Northern wall with the ogival arch passage between the lower church and the so-called “Segrete” (DITTELBACH/SACK 2005, p. 41).

⁹³ GUIOTTO 1947, p. 25–36.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

The hypothesis of an Islamic pre-existence, however, had no fortune. Rather, since it has been pointed out that no historical source ever verified the existence of a fortress or a palace in this area in the Islamic period, the presence of Islamic structures in the Royal Palace has thus been rejected so far.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, Guiotto's hypothesis could acquire a new value if one takes into account the analysis made by Vladimir Zorić and the assumption according to which the lower church lying below the Cappella Palatina was the primitive chapel, Santa Maria Hierusalem, built before the upper church. If the relative chronology proposed by Guiotto would prove to be correct, the ogival-arched access and the related structures lying below the courtyard would likely be pre-existent with respect to one of the first foundations of Norman Palermo.

In fact, after his detailed analysis, Zorić assumed that the lower church, with its original central square shape, was the primitive palatine chapel, formerly standing free on the Southern and Eastern sides.⁹⁶ A corridor on the Northern side separated the church from the buildings of the Norman court.⁹⁷ The church would have been later transformed by the construction of the upper chapel, thus enlarging the Western pillar to support the over-imposed columns, reconstructing lower vaults with smaller masonry in order to make way for the pavement of the new upper sanctuary. A massive barrel-vaulted chamber – often identified as a sepulchral chamber (“camera sepolcrale”) – was also built to support the nave and the weight of its columns. In a successive phase, probably related to the construction of the Southern portico of the upper church, a portico on the lower level was built too, thus surrounding the sanctuaries of both the lower and the upper churches with barrel-vaulted deambulatories. The most important evidence for Zorić's assumption was provided by the analysis of the two Southern windows of the lower church, modified in order to move the openings above the pavement of the newly made Southern portico of the upper church.⁹⁸

Zorić finally concluded that the only structure placed against the original, lower church could have been a small courtyard to the West, constituted by the extension of the Northern and Southern walls of the same church.⁹⁹ According to this analysis, the Northern wall of the Northern corridor, with its ogival arch

⁹⁵ MAURICI 2003, p. 69. A different interpretation of the sources has recently been proposed by Thomas Dittelbach: as n. 107.

⁹⁶ ZORIĆ 2002, p. 154–156, 165–167 and fig. 40.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 155 fig. 31–33. The scholar promises to come back once more to this controversial point, see ZORIĆ 2014a, p. 287–292.

⁹⁹ ZORIĆ 2002, p. 165.

and its framed opening, would have pre-existed the construction of the first lower chapel, thus opening the hypothesis of pre-Norman structures facing the Northern part of the church.

Dorothee Sack and Thomas Dittelbach ultimately agreed with Zorić's assumption concerning the first Palatine Chapel.¹⁰⁰ These scholars also assumed that the Northern corridor was an open-ceiling space, presuming the existence of a more ancient, probably Islamic structure on its Northern side.¹⁰¹

A more detailed archaeological analysis carried out by Dorothee Sack was published in 2011.¹⁰² Beside the controversial method of investigation based also on a supposed difference in size between Islamic and Norman blocks and bricks,¹⁰³ the scholar developed useful surveys and drawings with plans and sections, including the mapping of masonries and the individuation of layers and phases of construction. The mapping of the Northern deambulatory clearly assumes that some structures were pre-existent beyond the Northern wall (Figure 8). In particular, Sack identified a pre-Norman/Islamic phase, including some portions of walls and the base of the ogival arch in the Northern corridor. The successive phase would have been the construction of the first lower church (1072–1130), a basilica church with the Northern and Southern wall of the sanctuary proceeding to the West and an original access on the Northern aisle (Figure 9).¹⁰⁴ According to this configuration, the Northern structures would predate the lower church.¹⁰⁵ Thomas Dittelbach anticipated the chronology proposed by Sack in a slightly preceding article that appeared in Beat Brenk's monumental four-volume edition on the Cappella Palatina.¹⁰⁶ In addition, Dittelbach announced the detection of reused blocks in the

100 DITTELBACH/SACK 2005, p. 32, 34, 66 and 70.

101 *Ibid.*, p. 20, 41 sq. and 64.

102 SACK 2011.

103 *Ibid.* p. 97. On this controversial approach see for instance ZORIĆ 2002, p. 144. See also SCIORTINO 2007, p. 288 with n. 84. ZORIĆ 2014b, p. 99 with n. 26 rejected the analyses made by VALENTI 1924b, p. 517, who in turn referred all the portions of the Palace built with this kind of masonry to the Islamic period.

104 SACK 2011, p. 98 sq.

105 In fact, also ZORIĆ 2011, p. 119 sq. suspected that these structures, parallel to the church, predated at least the upper Palatine Chapel.

106 DITTELBACH 2010. He rejected *ibid.*, p. 285–287 and p. 289 with n. 21 and 43 the hypothesis by ZORIĆ 2002, p. 156–161, according to whom the staircases between the upper and the lower churches were made in the late sixteenth century, and suggested instead of this that the function of the lower church probably changed during the kingdom of William I, when the two pillars reused as supports under the upper ambo and surmounted by two capitals of William's period were likely transferred from the iconostasis screen of the lower church.

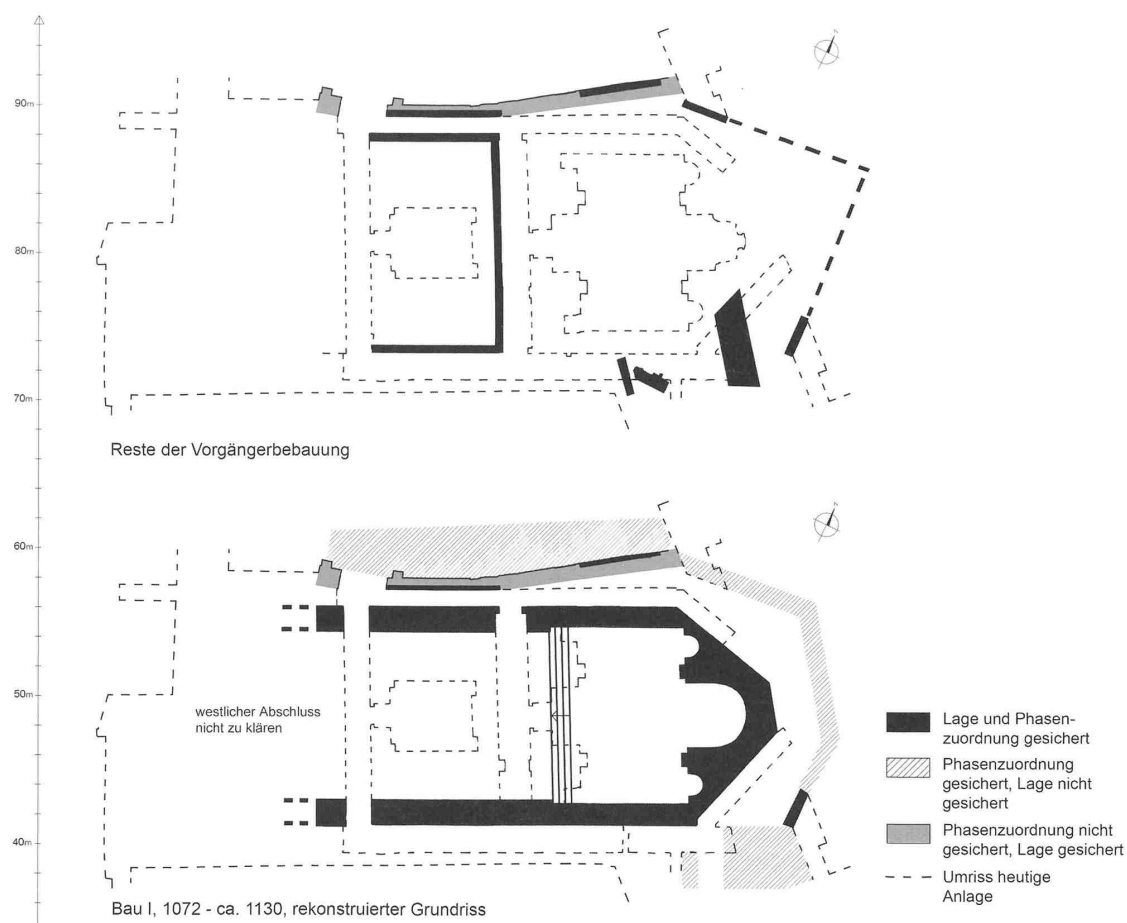


Figure 8: Sack's masonry mapping of the Northern corridor with the ogival arch passage between the lower church and the so-called "Segrete" (SACK 2011, p. 91 pl. 4).

foundations of the lower church, probably pertaining to Islamic structures embodied within the church. Therefore, the scholar reinforced the assumption made in 1936 by Francesco Valenti, who stated that the Cappella Palatina was built upon an artificial basement, which he defined as a 'plateau', constituted by the dismantled structures of the eleventh century.¹⁰⁷

Yet, a new, recently initiated phase of archaeological studies definitively proves that the lower church that lies underneath has been entirely constructed together with the same upper Cappella Palatina of Roger II in 1130. In fact, there

107 DITTELBACH 2010, p. 288 n. 37. See also Francesco Valenti, Palermo, Biblioteca comunale, Fondo Valenti, Ms. 5 Qq E.146 n. 44, 14. For the same reasons Pietro Lojacono, a pupil of Francesco Valenti, already stated in 1937 that 'the Chapel's underground, as well as that of the whole palace, is an artificial hill', see Palermo, Biblioteca comunale, Fondo Valenti, Ms. 5 Qq E. 146 n. 44, i. CALANDRA 1991, p. 15–17 uttered the same assumption after the discovery of the Punic city wall beneath the Montalto's Hall: as n. 24.

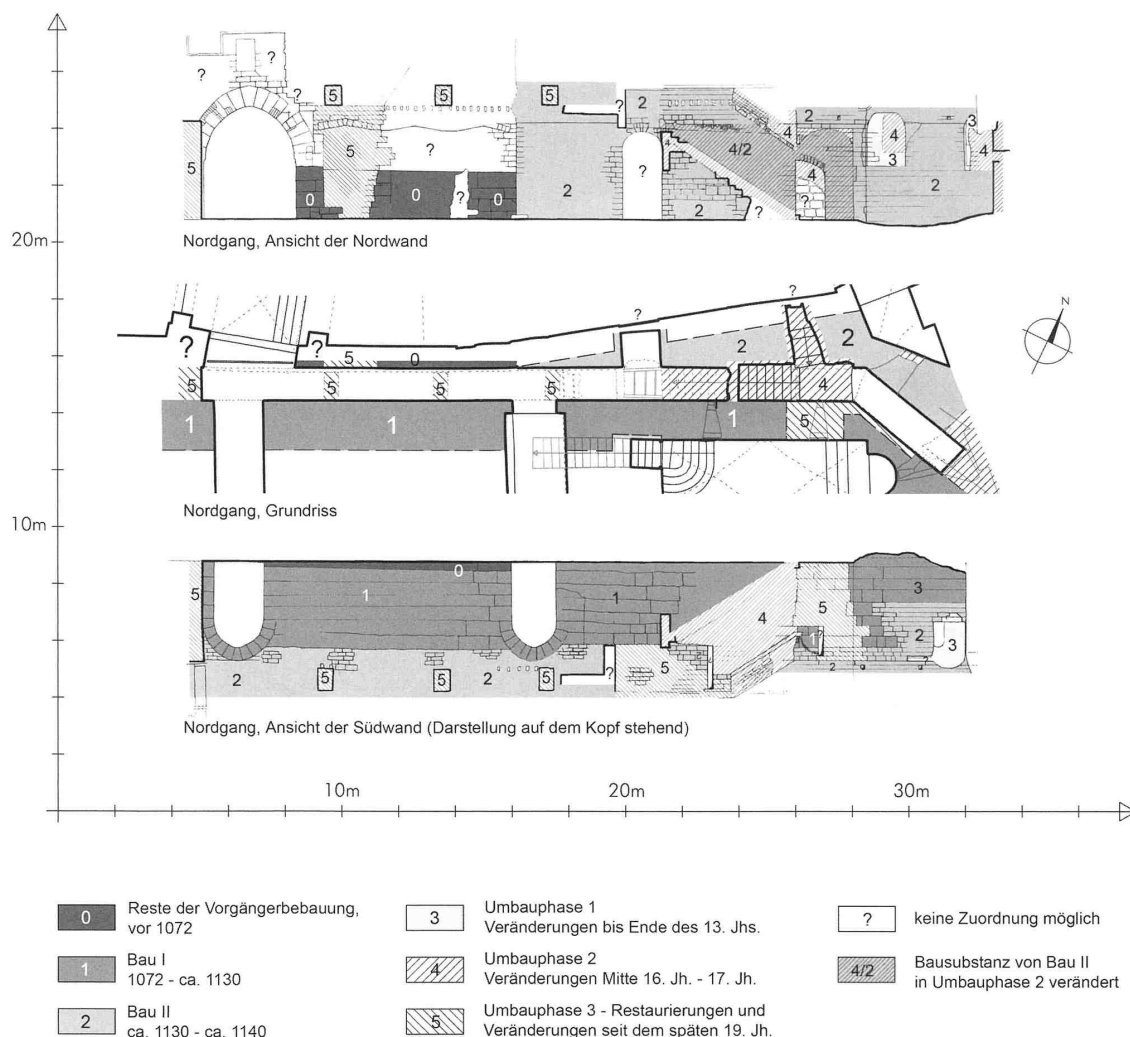


Figure 9: Sack’s hypothetical reconstruction of the earlier building phases of the lower church (SACK 2011, p.105 fig. 5, details).

isn’t any archaeological evidence for a different phase of construction between the two structures. With regard to the documentary sources that attest the presence of a primitive chapel in the area of the Norman Palace, the truth is that we do not know where it was, nor can we state that it was beneath the Cappella Palatina.

This new chronology is one of the most important results of an archaeological investigation which is analyzing the wall’s stratigraphy and the masonry’s typology. This pivotal work is still in progress and its results will be published in the next future.¹⁰⁸

108 The investigation has been carried out by the medieval archaeologist Giuseppe Romagnoli between July and September 2015 as part of a new larger research project on the Royal Palace: as n. 28.

Yet, the analysis of the lower church made together with the analysis of the structures called “Segrete” on its Northern side, confirms the fact that the latter were built before the church which reveals their early-Norman chronology, i. e. their existence before the 1130s.

Thus, Guiotto’s hypothesis deserves to be better evaluated, while it does not appear to be inconceivable that an Islamic portion of the palace would be still there, under the vaults that support the Fontana’s courtyard floor. In any case, it is an opportune moment now to clarify some misunderstandings which were produced through a wrong interpretation of the sources.

Dittelbach and Sack stated that the building found by count Roger around 1105 was ‘not an Islamic palace complex but a fortified and undecorated barracks of soldiers’, the so-called “Mu’askar”, some portions of which would be on the Northern side of the lower church.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the authors identified the new Norman barriers or Galka with the medieval wall discovered under the Montalto’s Hall,¹¹⁰ being erected – according to them – by Robert Guiscard in front of an ancient city door, used until the Islamic period and called “Bāb ar-Riyāḍ” (‘Gate of the Gardens’).¹¹¹ These attributions need to be re-examined.

First, the pre-existing structures in the place of the Norman Palace cannot be the “Mu’askar”, which already Di Giovanni in the nineteenth century has proven to have been outside the “Qaşr”/Cassaro.¹¹² Indeed, Ibn Ḥawqal says that the people of “Mu’askar” were drinking the water of the spring called “al-Ġirbāl”, while another spring within the “Mu’askar” was the “Ayn Abī Sa’īd”.¹¹³ It is known that the first spring corresponds to the Gabriele River, while the second spring was where today is the quarter Danisinni, both – river and quarter – being outside the “Qaşr”.¹¹⁴

109 DITTELBACH/SACK 2005, p. 14; DITTELBACH 2010, p. 288. The authors stated this attribution without argumentation or references. Probably they were encouraged by Amari’s first interpretation, who then changed his argumentation, followed by Di Giovanni, on the localization of the “Mu’askar”, near the Oreto river (“wāḍī ‘Abbās”) in the country outside the city walls, see IBN ḤAWQAL *Kitāb šūrat al-arḍ* 1938–1939, 1, p. 120, French translation IBN ḤAWQAL *Kitāb šūrat al-arḍ* 1964, 1, p. 119; see DI GIOVANNI 1889–1890, 1, p. 151–166; AMARI 1933–1939, 3, 1, p. 138. SACK 2011, p. 97 also quoted MEIER 1994, p. 37 and 143, who in turn did not give reasons for this attribution.

110 As n. 17.

111 DITTELBACH/SACK 2005, p. 48–50.

112 DI GIOVANNI 1889–1890, 1, p. 151–166, especially p. 156 sq., and 427.

113 IBN ḤAWQAL *Kitāb šūrat al-arḍ* 1938–1939, 1, p. 123, French translation IBN ḤAWQAL *Kitāb šūrat al-arḍ* 1964, 1, p. 122; see AMARI 1933–1939, 2, p. 341.

114 DI GIOVANNI 1889–1890, 1, p. 165. Although the “Mu’askar” is not indicated in the aforementioned map of Sicily in the *Kitāb ġarā’ib al-funūn* (as n. 31 sq.), the spring “al-

Likewise, “Bāb ar-Riyāḍ” cannot be the gate discovered beneath the Montalto’s Hall, simply because this entryway corresponds to one of the most ancient city gates of Palermo, dating back to the fifth century BC, while Ibn Ḥawqal attested that “Bāb ar-Riyāḍ” was a new door built by the will of the Kalbid emir Abū ’l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Abī ’l-Ḥusayn (954–969).¹¹⁵ In fact, the archaeologist who carried out the excavation of the site identified this gate with another door cited by Ibn Ḥawqal, i. e. the “Bāb al-Abnā”,¹¹⁶ but it has been recently demonstrated that that door was not there either, since this “Bāb al-Abnā” was attested in twelfth-century documents as being near the medieval church Sant’Andrea on the Southern side of the palace.¹¹⁷ Rather, it is more likely that the door beneath the Montalto’s Hall was the “Bāb Ibn Qarhab”, a door probably titled to the governor ‘Uṭmān Ibn Qarhab, who conquered Palermo in 831¹¹⁸ or, more plausibly, to Abū ‘Īsā [Ziyādat Allāh] ibn Muḥammad Ibn Qarhab, the great conqueror of Syracuse in 878.¹¹⁹ Ibn Ḥawqal specifically states that “Bāb Ibn Qarhab” was between “Bāb al-Abnā” and “Bāb Rūṭa”, near the “Bāb ar-Riyāḍ” and, since it was in a little defensible place, the emir Abū ’l-Ḥusayn commissioned to close that door in order to replace it with the new “Bāb ar-Riyāḍ”.¹²⁰ Probably this accomplishment followed the disposition for the refurbishment of walls and fortifications of Palermo, ordered by the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mu‘izz in 966/967.¹²¹ Therefore, it is possible to argue that the door beneath the Montalto’s Hall was the “Bāb Ibn Qarhab”, while the section of wall in it was probably erected by the time of Abū ’l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Abī ’l-Ḥusayn, namely between 966 and 969. This insight would bring a number of

Ġirbāl” is clearly indicated far from the old town or “Qaṣr”. Moreover, a document dated to 1237 mentions a garden in a place called “Mahassar”, near “Gerbiae”, where “Gerbiae” could be referred again to “al-Ġirbāl”/Gabriele, in the country outside old Palermo or “Qaṣr”, see GAROFALO 1835, p. 54 n° 40; DI GIOVANNI 1889–1890, 1, p. 163; JOHNS 2006, p. 22. On this issue see also DE SIMONE 2000, p. 99; DE SIMONE 2005, p. 203; BAGNERA 2013, p. 73 sq.

115 IBN ḤAWQAL *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 1938–1939, 1, p. 122, French translation IBN ḤAWQAL *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 1964, 1, p. 120 sq.; JOHNS 2006, p. 19 sq. On the hypotheses of localization of “Bāb ar-Riyāḍ” see D’ANGELO 2012; BAGNERA 2013, p. 76; PEZZINI 2013, p. 202.

116 CAMERATA SCOVAZZO 1990, p. 99.

117 LONGO 2014a.

118 JOHNS 2004, p. 419; JOHNS 2006, p. 20.

119 On the right transcription of “Bāb Ibn Qarhab” instead of “Bāb Ibn Qurhub” and on its attribution to the conqueror of Syracuse see MANDALÀ 2012, p. 351 sq. and 365 sq. On the position of this door beneath the Montalto’s Hall see also D’ANGELO 2012; LONGO 2014a, p. 94.

120 IBN ḤAWQAL *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 1938–1939, 1, p. 122, French translation IBN ḤAWQAL *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 1964, 1, p. 120 sq.; MANDALÀ 2012, p. 365.

121 AMARI 1933–1939, 2, p. 314; SCIORTINO 2007, p. 285; MANDALÀ 2012, p. 365.

implications, although only new archaeological investigations could confirm this hypothesis.¹²² Anyway, the small medieval masonry walls in that area cannot be referred to the “Mu‘askar”, which Di Giovanni already proved to be outside the “Qaşr”/Cassaro, while they are very likely to be identified with Robert Guiscard’s Galka.¹²³

In the end, the only hypothesis is that, as the entire Palace, the Cappella Palatina was built to replace some pre-existing structures, some portions of which would be still there, on the Northern side of the lower church, beneath the Cortile della Fontana. Unfortunately these portions of the Norman Palace were almost completely dismantled during the second half of the sixteenth century, for the construction of the Sicilian Parliament Hall (ca. 1560) and the creation of the Cortile della Fontana itself (1571–1585).¹²⁴ Anyway, it is worthwhile to look more precisely at these portions beneath the courtyard. Although an extensive topographical survey is still missing, it is interesting to note that this area is constituted by two floors: the lower level is mostly made up of the medieval portions beyond the ogival-arched access, known as “Segrete”, while the framed opening above the arch lead to an upper medieval level, surviving as a mezzanine ambient that remains between the lower level and the floor of the courtyard above, more or less at the same level of the Cappella Palatina. The topographical orientation of the lower level is quite different if compared to that of the Palatine churches or even to the Joharia and the Torre Pisana. Instead, the orientation of the mezzanine ambient is surprisingly different from that of the level beneath, while it is consistent with that of the Palatine churches and of the other Norman buildings. We could hence advance the hypothesis that the mezzanine ambient pertains to a successive building phase, probably related to some transformations during or even after the construction of the upper Palatine Chapel. In this view, it is tempting to identify this mezzanine ambient with a surviving portion of the medieval palace called Chirimbi.

4 Chirimbi. Meanings and Functions

In his *De rebus Siculis*, Fazello mentions the “Tyrimbris” as a portion of the palace which he attributes to William I, and states that it is even more lavish

¹²² For a different point of view see SCIORTINO 2007, p. 286 with n. 78.

¹²³ As n. 112. See IBN ḤAWQAL *Kitāb šūrat al-arḍ* 1938–1939, 1, p. 120, French translation IBN ḤAWQAL *Kitāb šūrat al-arḍ* 1964, 1, p. 119; see AMARI 1933–1939, 2, p. 341.

¹²⁴ DI FEDE 2012, p. 22–27.

than any other parts built by king Roger. Moreover the author added that, after the sudden death of king William I, the “Tyrimbris” was completed by the king’s son William II.¹²⁵ An antecedent witness of the word “Tyrimbris”, unfortunately not attested in contemporary sources, can be found in Claudio Mario Arezzo’s chronicle, *De situ insulae Siciliae*, published in 1537, where the portion built by William I is referred to with the slightly different word “Chirimbrim”.¹²⁶ Going backward, we also find a fourteenth-century anonymous chronicle translated in the Sicilian language in the eighteenth century, where the word is transcribed as “Chiri”, and the translator also interpreted this word as indicating the very centre of the Palace, or its ‘heart’.¹²⁷ In fact, this is just a Sicilian tradition derived from the Latin *Chronicon Siculum* or *Cronica Siciliae* (Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 3972), written soon after 1343 by the so-called Anonymus Palermitanus, copied several times from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries¹²⁸ and finally edited by Rosario Gregorio in 1792.¹²⁹ The original Latin text reports that William I made the second part of the Palace, called “Quirinbi”.¹³⁰ This is the oldest tradition of the so-called Chirimbi, never mentioned as a tower. It has already been noted the consistency between this part of the Norman Palace, reported by Fazello¹³¹ as marvellous for its architecture, and the description of small palaces (“palatiola”) made by Falcandus: soon after mentioning the Joharia, placed in the middle of the Palace and dedicated to quiet rest and leisure, Falcandus refers to these beautiful and adorned buildings, clearly separated from the Joharia, in which the king could secretly speak about the government of his reign with his court, or

125 FAZELLO 1558, p.172.

126 AREZZO 1537 (1723), p.7.

127 *Cronichi di quisto regno di Sichilia*, ANONYMUS *Cronichi*, p.175. DI GIOVANNI 1865, p.190 sq. n. 4 assumed that “Chiri” was the portion in the middle of the palace corresponding to “Joharia” mentioned by Falcandus, and that the word could have been a corruption of the Greek word “ker”, meaning ‘heart’.

128 DI GIOVANNI 1865, p.189 n. 2 dated the original Latin manuscript to 1359. The Sicilian copy published by Gregorio is dated to the early sixteenth century (Palermo, Biblioteca comunale, Ms. Qq D. 47). The Sicilian transcription edited by Di Giovanni was accomplished in the eighteenth century (Palermo, Biblioteca comunale, Ms. Qq F. 4 n. 1).

129 ANONYMUS PALERMITANUS *Cronica*, see COLLETTA 2005, p.567 sq. with n. 1 and 8. In this compelling article, Colletta also identified another tradition, still unpublished, called *De acquisitione insule Sicilie*, which intermediates between the original *Cronica Siciliae* and the other Sicilian versions.

130 *Cronica Siciliae* XIII, ANONYMUS PALERMITANUS *Cronica*, p.126.

131 As n. 125.

where he could receive notables and discuss important matters relating to the kingdom.¹³² According to this description, it is evident that these buildings were designated to the government of the kingdom by the time of William II or even earlier. Therefore, it is tempting to refer this area to the “Quirinbi” or “Chirimbrim”, arguing that the first part of this word, “quiri-” or “chiri-” could derive from the Greek-Byzantine word “kyrios” in its meaning of ‘lord’, ‘governor’,¹³³ so that those buildings could have been the ‘palaces of the governor’ or ‘palaces of the government’. The Greek derivation, however, remains controversial, while the second part of the word “Quirinbi” or “Chirimbrim” would remain uncertain. In this regard, Adalgisa De Simone suggested another possible origin of the word from the Arabic “ḥayr al-abniya” – “abniya” being the plural of “binā” (‘building’) – meaning ‘the best among the buildings’, perhaps referring to the attributes related to Chirimbi and reported in Falcandus and Fazello.¹³⁴ Although the Arabic words would be far from its possible Latinized form,¹³⁵ this hypothesis seems to be convincing. The issue, however, remains open.

Nevertheless, according to the sources, it seems probable that the Chirimbi was made during the kingdom of William I, likely in the midst of the Norman Palace.¹³⁶ Taking into account this information, one could argue that the Chirimbi was built after the construction of the upper Palatine Chapel and perhaps corresponded to the upper building phase on the Northern side of the church, above the “Segrete”.

132 HUGO FALCANDUS *Epistola* 1897, p.177 sq. See also LONGO 2011b, p.77.

133 The Greek-Byzantine word “kyrios”, meaning ‘governor’, ‘lord’, also referred to the Christian Lord or God, etymologically derives from “kyros” meaning ‘force’, ‘power’, with its variation in “kyris”. The presence of the letters “qu-” or “ch-” could derive from the necessity to transliterate the Greek voiceless consonant “k”. I wish to thank my colleague and friend Chiara Bordino for her precious and reliable advice and suggestions.

134 I am grateful to Adalgisa De Simone for forwarding her hypotheses and suggestions, formulated during a conference held at the Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici ‘Bruno Lavagnini’.

135 The rule usually implies that the open diphthong “-ay-”, used in the Arabic word “ḥayr al-abniya”, becomes the closer single vocal “-i-” that we found in the word “Chirimbrim” or “Quirinbi” or “Tyrimbris”. At the same time, in the Arabic locution there is no trace of the consonantal group “-mbr”.

136 FAZELLO 1558, p.172 attributed “Tyrimbrim” to William I, while he attributed the Joharia to Roger II. Indeed, the Joharia is attested as already existent under William I by Hugo Falcandus, *Liber de regno Siciliae* XVI, HUGO FALCANDUS *Liber* 1897, p.60, English translation HUGO FALCANDUS *Liber* 1998, p.112.

In the famous plan of Palermo edited by Franz Hogenberg and Georg Braun,¹³⁷ frequently taken into account to show the configuration of the Norman Palace in the late fifteenth century,¹³⁸ the Sicilian Parliament Hall and the Cortile della Fontana are already present, therefore the Chirimbi is not visible, probably dismantled together with other medieval buildings and towers for the construction of the early modern structures (Figure 10). The Torre Pisana is easily recognizable on the right side of the drawing, with a small portion of the Joharia on its left side, while on the other side of the courtyard, the Cappella Palatina is visible and still unobstructed on its East side, simply covered by its “fodera”. However, the first prototype for the successive maps of Palermo was Bonifazio’s plan, dated to 1580, from which also Hogenberg and Braun’s map derived.¹³⁹ In the cartouche on the left side, the editor Claude Duchet dedicated the sheet to Marcantonio Colonna, who was appointed Sicilian viceroy in 1577 by Philip II of Spain. Since the Cortile della Fontana, started in 1571, was modified and completed by Marcantonio Colonna himself in 1578,¹⁴⁰ it is clear that Duchet wanted to emphasize this feature – at the expense of Joharia – with a celebrative purpose, thus conditioning all the successive plans of Palermo (Figure 11). For the same reason we never find traces of the Chirimbi in the early modern views of Palermo. However, Hogenberg and Braun’s *Civitates orbis terrarum* contain another image of Palermo, a bird’s eye view with a different representation of the Royal Palace. This was published in the first volume, printed in 1572, only one year after the construction of the portico of the Cortile della Fontana was started. Although already Adolph Goldschmidt and more recently Hans Meier published this detail, previous authors have failed to realize that this image describes the Royal Palace before the dismantling of the medieval towers and the construction of the Cortile della Fontana in the middle of the palace.¹⁴¹

137 BRAUN/HOGENBERG 1572–1617, 4, pl. 56. See also LA DUCA 1975, 1, p. 6; DE SETA/DI MAURO 1980, p. 36 fig. 18 and p. 69 fig. 35; DI MATTEO 1992, p. 80 n° 41; BARBERA AZZARELLO 2008, p. 59 pl. 15.

138 From CALANDRA e. a. 1991 to DI FEDE 2012.

139 TOOLEY 1939, p. 39 n° 431. The former map of Palermo, drawn by Orazio Majocchi, engraved by Natale Bonifazio and printed by Claude Duchet in 1580, was published in LAFRÉRY/DUCHET 1592, pl. 254; see BENEVOLO 1969, p. 87–89 pl. 18; DE SETA/DI MAURO 1980, p. 66 fig. 32. The same map was printed again by Giovanni Orlandi in 1602. Hogenberg and Braun’s map, drawn after Cartaro’s map dated to 1581, which in turn derived from Bonifazio’s map, appears in the fourth volume of *Civitates orbis terrarum*, published for the first time by Gottfried Von Kempen in 1588: as n. 137; see SKELTON/VIETOR 1966, 1, p. VII–XLVI, especially p. XXVII and XLI; DE SETA/DI MAURO 1980, p. 65 and p. 69–71 fig. 35–37.

140 DI FEDE 2012, p. 25–27.

141 GOLDSCHMIDT 1898, col. 545 fig. 2; MEIER 1994, fig. 7. See also LA DUCA 1975, 1, p. 58 sq.; DI MATTEO 1992, p. 72 n° 35; BARBERA AZZARELLO 2008, p. 54 pl. 10.

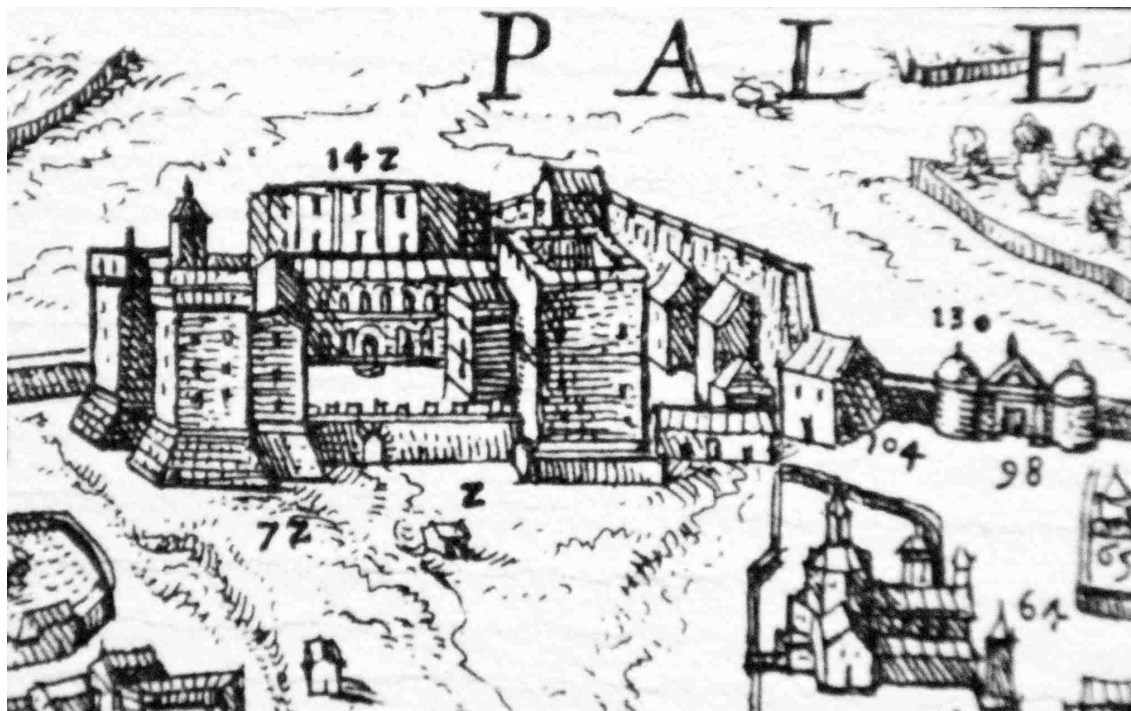


Figure 10: Braun and Hogenberg's map of Palermo, detail with the Royal Palace (*Civitates orbis terrarum* 4, Köln 1588, pl. 56; SKELTON/VIETOR 1966, 2, pl. 56).

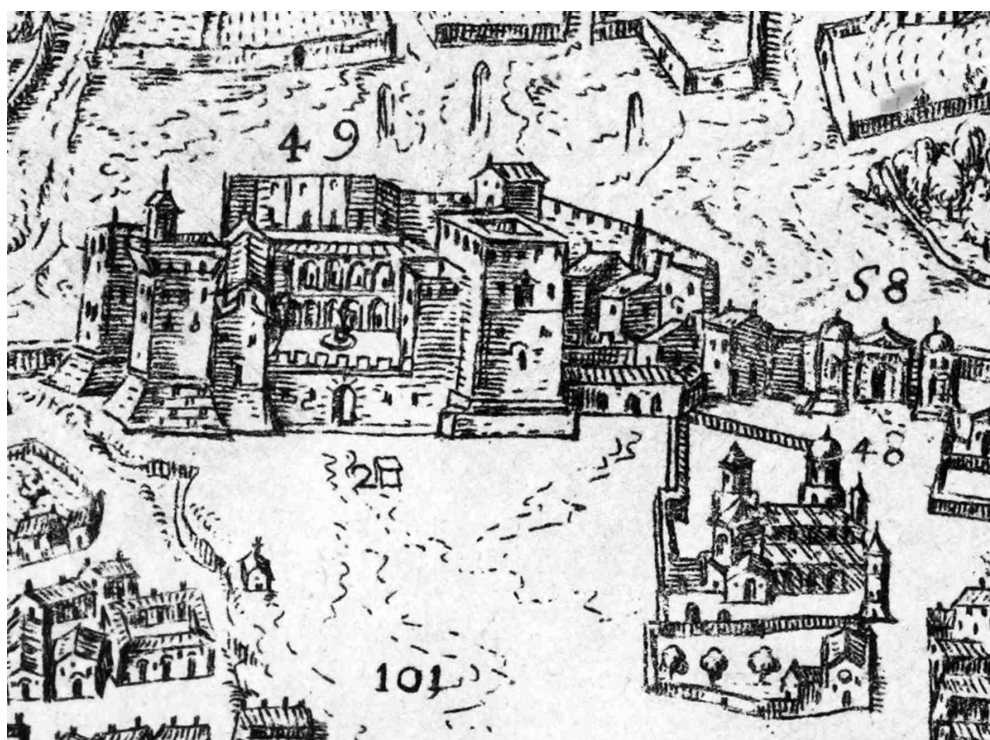


Figure 11: Bonifazio's map of Palermo printed by Claude Duchet in 1580, detail with the Royal Palace (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, GED-1568; © Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France).



Figure 12: Braun and Hogenberg’s view of Palermo, detail with the Royal Palace (*Civitates orbis terrarum* 1, Köln 1572, pl. 48; SKELTON/VIETOR 1966, 1, pl. 48).

In fact, this bird’s eye view of Palermo allows viewers to identify a structure in the middle of the palace, between the Joharia on the right side and the Cappella Palatina on the mid-left side: a structure likely attributable to the Chirimbi (Figure 12).

The author of this engraving has not been identified yet. Surely, it was not Joris Hoefnagel, whose style is much more precise and distinct from this representation.¹⁴² The engraving seems to be made after the dismantling of the red tower, which occurred between 1549 and 1553/1554,¹⁴³ but before the construction of the Parliament Hall, begun in the 1560’s¹⁴⁴ and absent in this representation, like the strongholds along the city walls. If one compares the representations of the palace published in 1572 with that published in 1588, the bird’s eye view appears more precise and reliable, showing more lingering

142 Many scholars attributed both the views of Palermo published by Hogenberg and Braun to Joris Hoefnagel. According to Stijn Alstens, curator of the Department of Drawings and Prints at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, who extensively studied Hoefnagel and its massive production, neither this nor the other plan of Palermo published in 1588 were made by the Belgian artist. I am grateful to Stijn Alstens for his help in studying the Hogenberg and Braun’s facsimile by my side and for his precious suggestions.

143 LA DUCA 1996b; LA DUCA 1997, p. 107; DI FEDE 2012, p. 22. In the same years also the so-called “Aula viridis” or “Aula regia”, mentioned by Hugo Falcandus and placed on the Eastern side in front of the Royal Palace, was demolished, see DI GIOVANNI 1889–1890, 1, p. 371–420; LA DUCA 1996a; LA DUCA 1997, p. 120–126.

144 LA DUCA 1969, p. 3; DI FEDE 2012, p. 22–27.

details, like the blind arches of the Pisana and Joharia. The map also shows the Pisana not in its original medieval appearance but in its altered configuration. In fact, it is the only tower without crenellation. Indeed, the viceroy Ferrante Gonzaga assigned the engineer Antonio Ferramolino to design the defensive system of Palermo,¹⁴⁵ who already in 1536 had conceived a new arrangement of the upper level of the tower in order to receive heavy artillery.¹⁴⁶

Through the observations we made so far, we are now capable to postulate the following assumptions:

- 1) Robert Guiscard founded the “roche”/citadel or Galka, probably by reinforcing a pre-existing structure and by building new structures upon and inside of it.
- 2) The first palatine chapel witnessed in the sources cannot be identified with the lower church of the Royal Palace, the latter being probably built together with Roger II’s Cappella Palatina in the 1130s.
- 3) Guiotto’s hypothesis seems to be valid, the portion called “Segrete” being presumably built before the Cappella Palatina.
- 4) The Chirimbi was probably built after the Cappella Palatina on its Northern side above the spaces called today “Segrete”.
- 5) The Chirimbi is somehow still visible on the bird’s eye view of Palermo published in 1572 by Hogenberg and Braun.

With this information in mind, the overlapping of phases and the stratification of layers, even across the elevation of the same structure, should be evident. In fact, we find Norman buildings founded upon some pre-Norman, probably Islamic structures in the same area. Moreover, the same Norman buildings are then divided in different phases of construction, the latter of which was eventually concealed by early modern interventions, such as the construction of the hanging courtyard. In this puzzling, continuous overlapping of layers, it is very difficult to distinguish discontinuities, while an intensive mapping of masonries and a systematic analysis of materials are the only tools needed.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, continuity could also mean transmission of forms and techniques, which in turn would produce a mimetic overlapping of structures, also identifiable as a mimetic phase of transition.

The second part of this paper will explore the transmission of forms and techniques in the Torre Pisana. Its analysis will reveal its Islamic features and propose a new hypothesis about its original form and function.

145 DI FEDE 2012, p. 43.

146 FERRAMOLINO 1536, p. 60 sq.; LA DUCA 1997, p. 74–76; DI FEDE 2012, p. 32. See also below n. 159–161.

147 A similar methodology has been in fact suggested by GALDIERI 2000, p. 56 sq.

5 The Torre Pisana

Albeit always considered as a Norman foundation, the Torre Pisana (Figure 13) has nothing to do with the Northern European “donjon”.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, the ichnographic

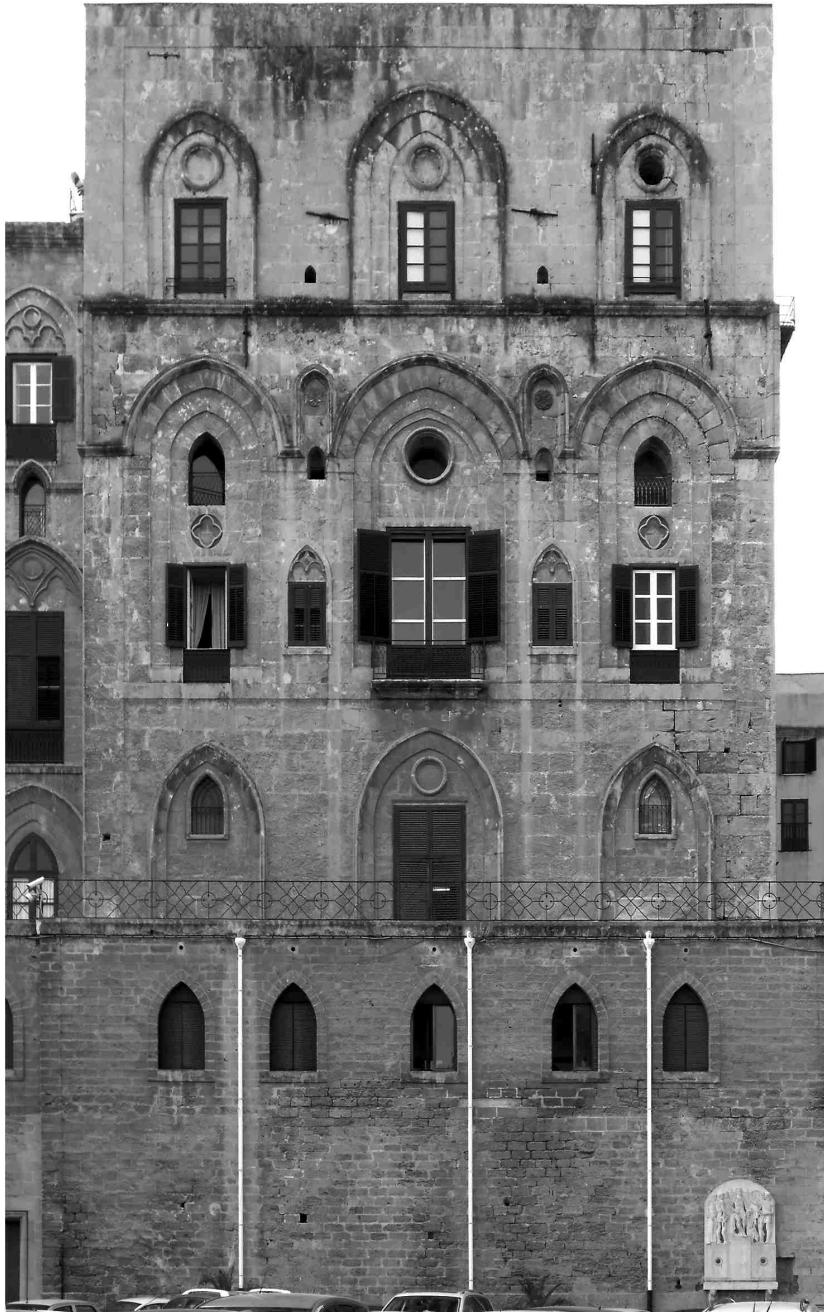


Figure 13: Palermo, Royal Palace, Torre Pisana, Eastern façade (Photograph © Ruggero Longo).

148 A different opinion is expressed by DI LIBERTO 2013, p. 165.

configuration of the Pisana has always been referred to Islamic – especially Maġribī – patterns, among which the eleventh-century Ḥammādid tower of Qaşr al-Manār is often taken into account.¹⁴⁹ The only Sicilian example sharing the same configuration of the Pisana is the Southern tower from the façade of Cefalù Cathedral (Figure 14). According to a long-lasting historiographical tradition, this kind of structure, characterized by a ‘double jacket’-configuration, does not



Figure 14: Cefalù, Cathedral, Western façade (Photograph © Ruggero Longo).

149 Qaşr al-Manār was in fact taken into account as prototype for the Torre Pisana by MONNERET DE VILLARD 1950, p. 20; MARÇAIS 1954, p. 120; BELLAFFIORE 1990, p. 142. Qaşr al-Manār was a bulwark in Qal‘at Banī Ḥammād (founded ca. 1007/1008), likely built in the second half of the eleventh century by an-Nāşir ibn ‘Alennās (1062–1088) or by his son al-Manşūr ibn an-Nāşir (1088–1104). According to Ibn Ḥaldūn, *Kitāb al-‘ibar*, Qaşr al-Manār, with its tower, was likely built between 1088 and 1090 by the will of al-Manşūr, see MARÇAIS 1926–1927, 1, p. 103–106 und 120–129; MARÇAIS 1954, p. 81–89; GOLVIN 1957, p. 100–104, 129 and 183–192; GOLVIN 1965, p. 12–25. Since al-Manşūr moved to Béjaïa, the newly founded Ḥammādid capital (1062/1063), it seems more convincing to refer the palaces in Qal‘at Banī Ḥammād to his father, an-Nāşir ibn ‘Alennās. However, Qal‘at Banī Ḥammād was not necessarily abandoned in 1090, but finally conquered by the Almohads in 1152, see GOLVIN 1974, p. 65 sq.

originate from Northern European defensive towers or “donjons”, but clearly derives from Islamic towers or minarets of Ifrīqiya and Mağrib.¹⁵⁰ David Knipp dedicated an article on the Mağribī concept of the Pisana, finding a good number of Islamic examples comparable with the planimetric configuration of the Norman tower (Figure 15).¹⁵¹ Moreover, he attributed its foundation to Roger II, taking into account the contacts between Ifrīqiya and Sicily after the occupation of al-Mahdiyya in 1147.¹⁵²

The comparison between the Mağribī towers and the contemporary Norman “donjons” in France, England and Wales, reveals a completely different pattern: the “donjons” are always characterized by a fair simple plan of rectangular or square shape, the elevation of which is usually reinforced by buttresses that emphasize verticality (Figure 16).¹⁵³ In these exemplars, we never find the smaller ending of the towers featured in Cefalù Cathedral. Nor have we found the double wall treatment forming deambulatories around a central space.¹⁵⁴

150 In his exhaustive study on the “ecclesia munita” of Cefalù, Zorić assumed the Mağribī derivation of the bell towers and described their configuration as a “doppia camicia” (‘double jacket’), see ZORIĆ 1989b, p. 171–182 and 199–202. The Mağribī origin of the bell tower in Cefalù was already hypothesized by SAMONÀ 1940, p. 25. Also MONNERET DE VILLARD 1950, p. 20 described the double-wall structure of the Pisana and compared it with the tower of Qaṣr al-Manār, but also with the minaret of the Kutubiyya Mosque in Marrakesh (1196) or with that of the Ḥassān Mosque in Rabāṭ (1196). DI STEFANO 1960, p. 32 n. 19 compared the towers in Cefalù with the minarets in Kairouan and Sfax. Albeit referring the double towers system to Northern European religious constructions, also KRÖNIG 1963, p. 13–16 suggested an Islamic influence in conceiving the defensive structures of these towers. BELLAFIORE 1966, p. 290 underscored the link between Norman Sicily and Islamic North Africa, as testified by these kinds of towers.

151 KNIPP 2006, p. 759–767 mentioned the same monuments quoted by Monneret de Villard, adding some other later Andalusī examples, such as the Almohad configuration of the minaret of the Great Mosque in Seville (La Giralda).

152 *Ibid.*, p. 765–773. Although FAZELLO 1558, p. 172 attributed the Pisana to Roger II, there is no single contemporary document on the Pisana’s foundation. The oldest source is Romuald of Salerno’s chronicle, where the “turris Pisana” is mentioned twice during the description of the uprising of 1160/1161, ROMUALDUS SALERNITANUS *Chronicon*, p. 246 sq.

153 Among the most characteristic examples, it is worth quoting the English castles in Chepstow (1071), Rochester (ca. 1125), Newcastle (eleventh to twelfth centuries), and the French castles in Bonnes (twelfth century), Chambois (eleventh to twelfth centuries) and Chateau-Chervix (twelfth century). The studies consulted for this comparison are WARNER 1971; SALCH 1979; PLATT 1982; CAIRNS 1987; HEINLE/LEONHARDT 1988; KING 1988; POISSON 1992; GROSSMANN 2005; IMPEY 2008; CREIGHTON 2012; DE VRIES/SMITH 2012. Likewise, ZORIĆ 2014b, p. 99 states that we cannot find anything similar to the Pisana in North-European architecture.

154 The only examples with deambulatories we can mention here are Chateaudun (late twelfth century), Chinon (late twelfth to early thirteenth centuries) and Coucy-le-Chateau (ca. 1220–1230), but these castles actually offer later examples of circular towers with defensive corridors obtained within the thickness of the walls themselves.

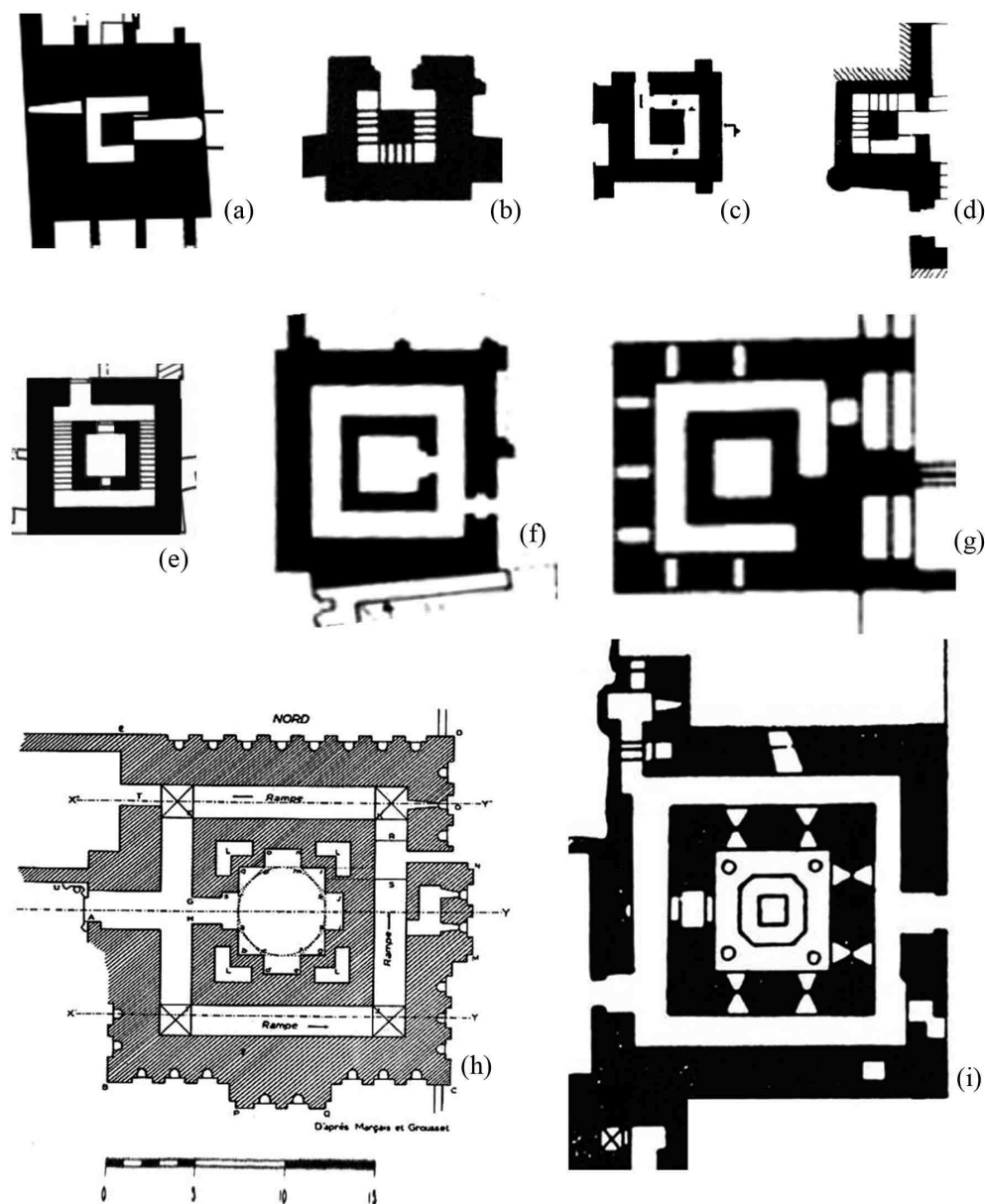


Figure 15: Ichnographic comparanda among different Mağribī minaret towers, the tower of Qaṣr al-Manār and the Torre Pisana: (a) Kairouan (Bloom 2013, p. 123 fig. 6.6); (b) Qal‘at Banī Ḥammād (ibid., p. 159 fig. 7.18); (c) Fez, Qarawiyyīn Mosque (ibid., p. 152 fig. 7.11); (d) Nedroma (ibid., p. 163 fig. 7.21); (e) Tunis, Congregational Mosque (ibid., p. 128 fig. 6.11); (f) Marrakesh, Kutubiyya Mosque (ibid., p. 168 fig. 7.28); (g) Seville, Congregational Mosque (“La Giralda”) (ibid., p. 175 fig. 7.36); (h) Qaṣr al-Manār (Qal‘at Banī Ḥammād) (KNIPP 2006, p. 755 fig. 8); (i) Torre Pisana (BELLAFIORE 1990, p. 142). All plans are represented at the same scale (Graphic © Ruggero Longo).

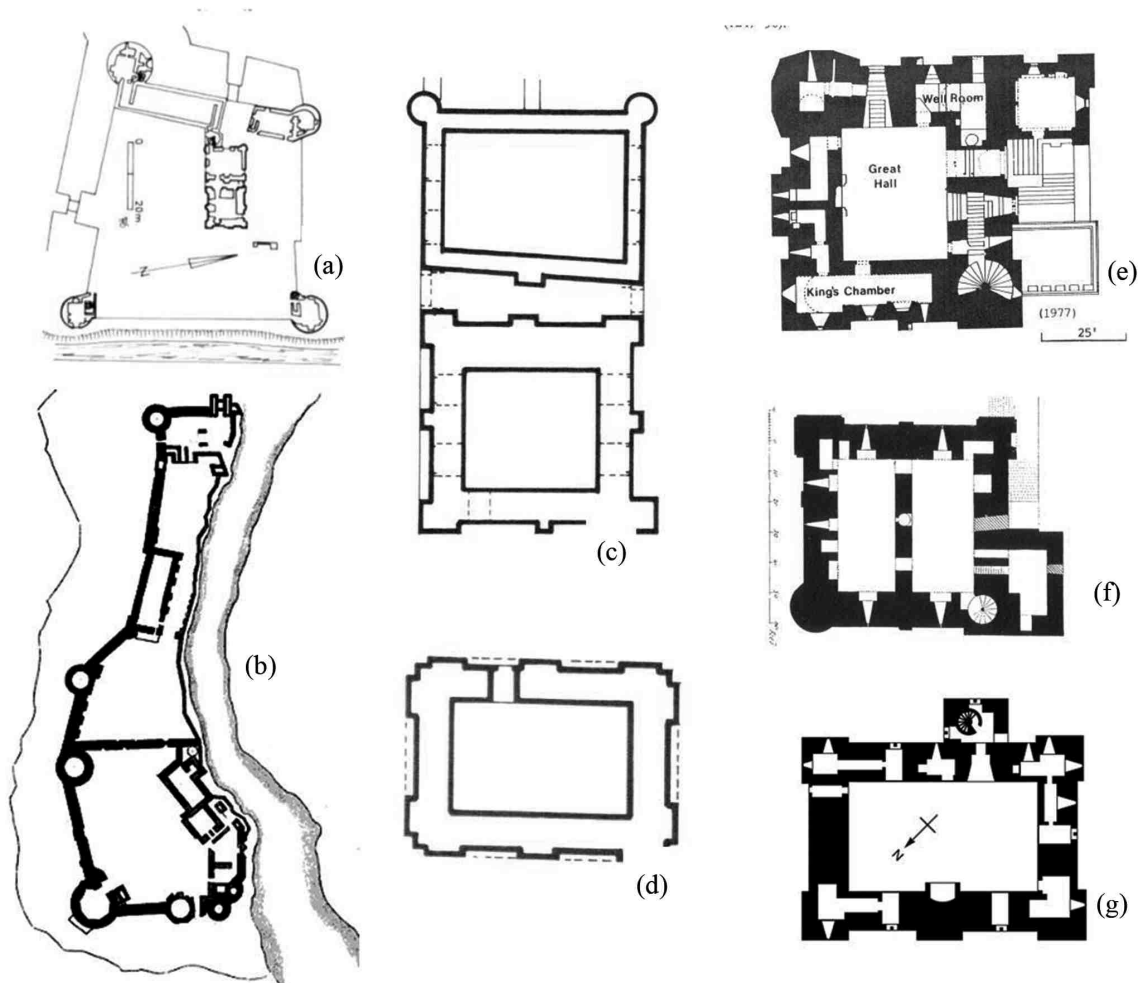


Figure 16: Ichnographic configuration of some Norman strongholds and “donjons”: (a) Bonnes, Touffou Castle (SALCH 1979, p. 169); (b) Chepstow Castle (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chepstow_Castle); (c) Bonnes, Touffou donjons (SALCH 1979, p. 169); (d) Château-Chervix (*ibid.*, p. 296); (e) Newcastle (PETTIFER 1995, p. 191); (f) Rochester (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rochester_Castle); (g) Chambois (<http://www.swroble.com/Castles/Projects/Castles/Chambois/Frame2.htm>) (Graphic © Ruggero Longo).

More recently, Vladimir Zorić assessed once again the Ifriqī design adopted for the original configuration of the Pisana.¹⁵⁵ He first had the fruitful prerogative to take into account not only the ichnographic implications of this proposed parentage, but also to consider its consequences in terms of the original shape in elevation of the Torre Pisana, thus coming to important conclusions which

¹⁵⁵ ZORIĆ 2014b, p.100. Although overlooking the important aforementioned study accomplished by David Knipp, he basically mentioned the same Islamic constructions quoted in previous studies.

deserve to be supported. Indeed, the scholar makes clear the origin of this tower characterized by the ‘double jacket’, a structure in which the inner building rises over the roof of the upper level, thus forming a kind of little lantern or “al-‘azrī”.¹⁵⁶ Cefalù shows a further example of this specific Islamic contribution, while its Southern tower suggests the architectural function of the ‘double jacket’, which allows better sustaining of the upper smaller level on the roof.¹⁵⁷ Taking into account the transformations that occurred in the Modern period and revealing the several alterations made on the upper levels, Zorić finally related the Pisana to this kind of Mağribī tower (Figure 17).¹⁵⁸ Since his interpretation is reliable and quite probable, it is also worth taking more carefully into account its implications, adding some further considerations.

The main alteration of the Torre Pisana occurred in the sixteenth century during Antonio Ferramolino’s interventions that sought to transform the Palace into a fortress, as attested by Fazello.¹⁵⁹ The importance of Ferramolino’s project does not necessarily lie in what effectively was accomplished, but rather in its description of the building destined for renewal, as it provides substantial clues for the reconstruction of earlier configurations of the palace.

With regard to the Pisana, Ferramolino’s document states that the upper tower rising above the palace’s main tower would have to be broken down to the slightly greater width of the tower’s vault level.

The aim of this modification was to create a raised, wide square that could host heavy artillery.¹⁶⁰ The first part of the document fits perfectly with Zorić’s hypothesis, leading us to think that there was a single little tower over the main tower. Yet, the document also states that the blocks dismantled from the aforementioned demolished upper tower must be reused to raise the portion of the tower facing the city (East), being lower than the

156 *Ibid.*, p. 99 sq.

157 Among the number of examples displaying the same system, it is worth mentioning here also the minarets of the following mosques: Tunis (864/865), Córdoba (configuration of ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān III’s minaret in the late tenth century), Qal‘at Banī Ḥammād (eleventh century), Qarawiyyīn Mosque and Andalusīyyīn Mosque in Fez (tenth century), Nedroma (1086), Algiers (1096), Tlemcen (1136), Taza (1142). Finally, also the Torre del Oro (1162–1168) in Sevilla should be taken into account, see BLOOM 1989, p. 86–124; GONZÁLEZ JIMÉNEZ/FALCÓN MÁRQUEZ 2007; BLOOM 2013, p. 115–188.

158 ZORIĆ 2014b, p. 104 sq.

159 FAZELLO 1558, p. 173. The accomplishment of this project was attested by Filippo Paruta already in 1537, see LA DUCA 1997, p. 74–76; DI FEDE 2012, p. 43 sq.

160 The project exactly indicates the measurements of the walls and also the position of the holes for crenellations along the perimeter of the upper level of the tower.

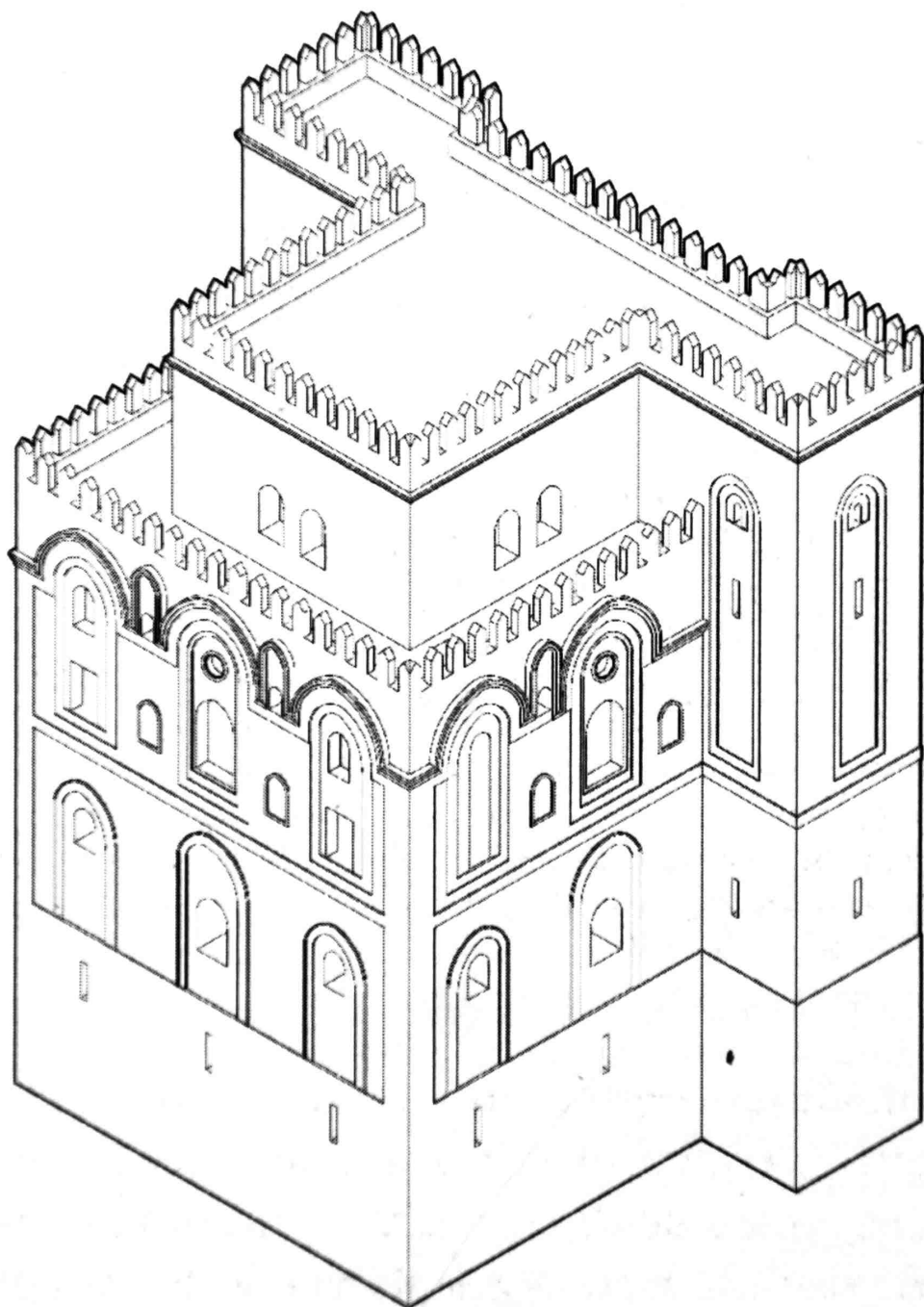


Figure 17: Possible original configuration of the Torre Pisana, axonometric view. Zorić's hypothesis (ZORIĆ 2014b, p. 105 fig. 6).

portion towards Monreale (West).¹⁶¹ Therefore, it seems that even after the demolition of the small upper storey, there was still an empty space on the lower level or a gap that could be filled in order to create a regular parallelepiped surmounted by a roof. Thus, it is possible to assume that another smaller storey – the real “al-‘azrī”-shape coronation – was displayed over the original hypothetical tower proposed by Zorić. The blocks dismantled from this level on the top would have been those probably reused to enlarge the upper level of the tower. This latter alteration was achieved through the construction of three walls aligned with the external walls of the lower level, thus embodying the central elevation on top of the tower and outlining the upper storey, with the Renaissance windows, as represented in contemporary prints.¹⁶²

The existence of a third level – at least in the Modern period – is suggested by the presence of a little building looking to the North-West, towering above the Pisana’s upper Renaissance style level. This building is still visible in some available iconographic documents, such as the pictures in the *Teatro Geografico Antiguo y Moderno del Reyno de Sicilia* (1686) (Figure 18), an engraving by Antonino Grano showing viceroy Uceda’s parade in front of the Palace (1689) (Figure 19) and a painting preserved in Trapani, Museo Pepoli (late seventeenth to early eighteenth century) (Figure 20).¹⁶³ These pictures demonstrate that Ferramolino’s raised square was at a certain point covered by a ceiling which was finally dismantled in the early eighteenth century.¹⁶⁴

161 “In lo palazzo si havira di abattiri quilla ultima turri chi naxi in chima di la turri mastra di dicto palazo sino a lo plano di lo dampmuso undi veni ad allargarisi la dicta turri mastra, et di la propria petra di la dicta turri chi si ha di abattiri et ruynari si alzira quilla parti di dicta turri verso la chitati chi è più baxa di la parti chi è verso monreali et equalirannosi li mura di dicta turri alti supra lo plano di lo dampmuso palmi sei di la grossiza di tutto lo muro cun quillo andito per undi al presenti sichi cammina di supra chi verra ad essiri grosso lo dicto muro chi verra a fari lo merguluni di dicta turri supra lo dampmuso circa palmi chinco. Et quisto si farra quanto a li tri fachati di dicta turri zoe, a quilla chi guarda verso lo pipirito et a quilla chi guarda verso monreali et laltra chi guarda verso la porta di mazara perchi a quillaltra chi guarda verso la chitati non è necessario farisi tanta grossa ne tanto alta ma solamenti sichi farra uno parapecto alto tri palmi et menzo supra lo plano di lo dampmuso in la quali turri si verra a fari supra lo ditto dampmuso una plaza ...”, FERRAMOLINO 1536, p. 60 sq.

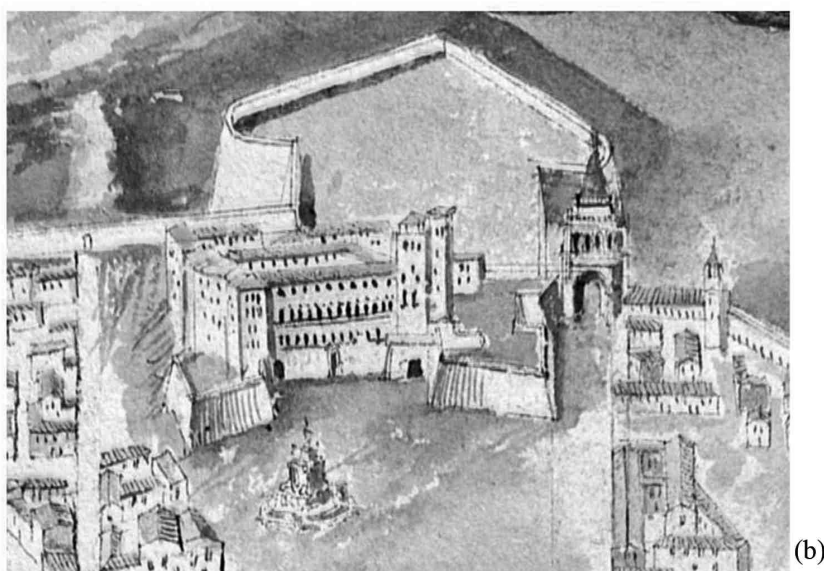
162 As below n. 163 and 167.

163 CARLO CASTIGLIA: *Teatro Geografico Antiguo y Moderno del Reyno de Sicilia*, 1686 (Madrid, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación, Archivo General y Biblioteca, Ms. 3), CONSOLO/DE SETA 1990, p. 264 fig. 51 and p. 249 fig. 37; DI MATTEO 1992, p. 104–107 n° 66, 63 and 65. See also LA DUCA 1997, p. 87–91; MANFRÈ 2013, p. 90–94.

164 Also the map of Palermo edited by Duchet shows a small structure towering behind and above the Pisana, likely belonging to it.



(a)



(b)

Figure 18: Carlo Castiglia, *Teatro Geografico Antigo y Moderno del Reyno de Sicilia*, 1686: (a) Palermo, view of the Royal Palace; (b) Palermo, map of the town, detail with the Royal Palace (Madrid, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación, Archivo General y Biblioteca, Ms. 3: CONSOLO/DE SETA 1990, p. 264 fig. 51 and p. 249 fig. 37).

Although conflicting with the need to align the cannons, the prominent towering elevation could be explained as a stairway by which it was possible to reach the covered roof.

In later years, the Pisana underwent further transformations for the creation of the Royal Astronomic Observatory in 1790, which was installed on the top of the tower. This last alteration finally led to the restoration of the



Figure 19: Antonino Grano, *Parata del vicerè Uceda davanti al Palazzo Reale di Palermo*, Palermo, 1689 (DI MATTEO 1992, p. 106 n° 65).

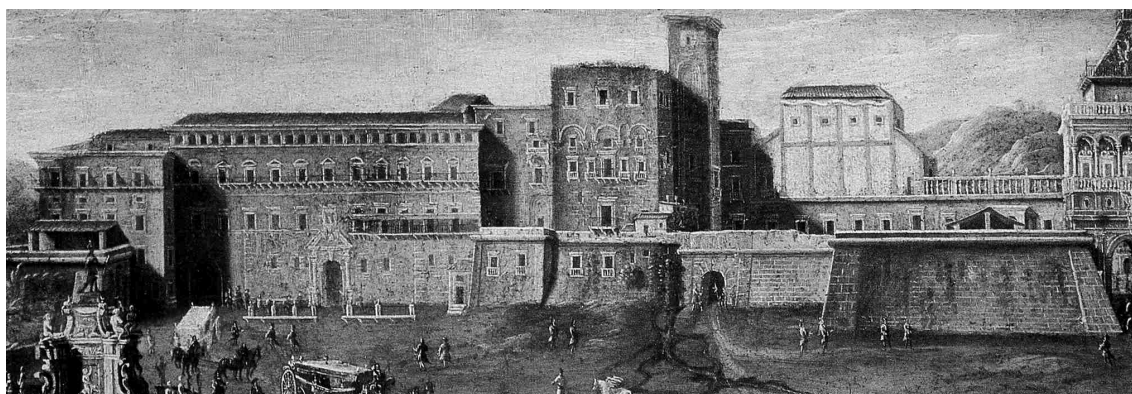


Figure 20: Anonymous, *The Royal Palace in Palermo*, late seventeenth to early eighteenth century, Trapani, Museo Pepoli (DI MATTEO 1992, p. 107 n° 66).

tower – essentially its ‘Normanization’¹⁶⁵ in 1835 – which gave the Pisana its current appearance.¹⁶⁶ The configuration of the tower before its ‘Normanization’ is well represented by Nicola Anito’s surveys (1801) and also by another print published later in 1829,¹⁶⁷ both depicting the Palace after the creation of the Royal Astronomic Observatory and the installation of the big clock on the façade (1793) (Figures 21 sq.). In addition, it is worth mentioning a good drawing by the German traveller Friedrich Maximilian Hessemer, who visited Palermo in 1829 (Figure 23). Also the drawing published in 1835 by Hittorf and Zanth shows the Pisana before the restoration, but the recent portion of the building pertaining to the Observatory is not documented (Figure 24).¹⁶⁸ However, the little structure towering to the North is still shown as the architects were interested in conveying medieval structures.¹⁶⁹ The

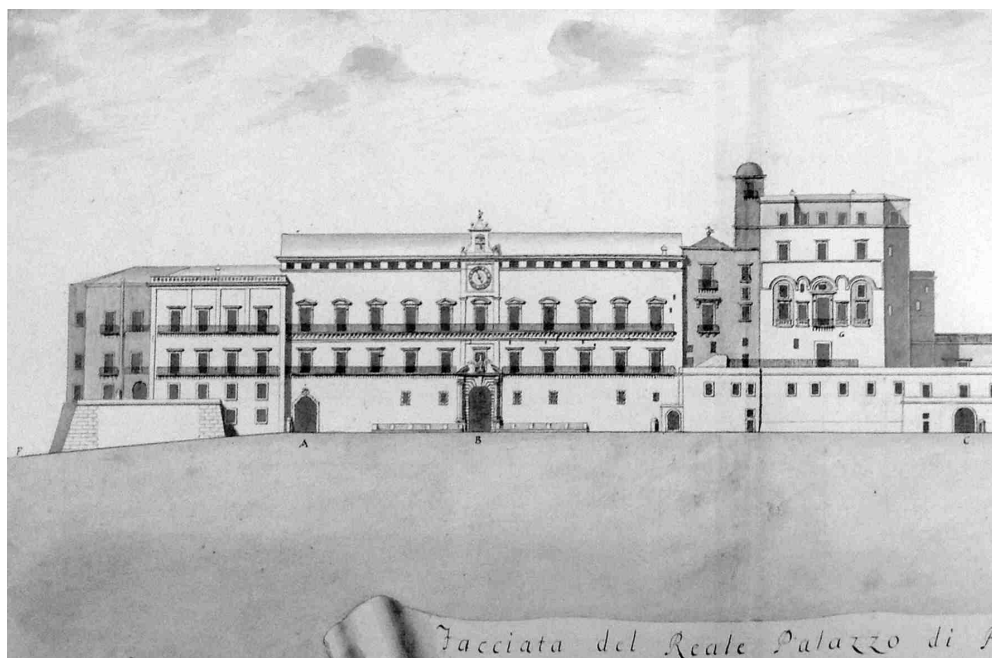


Figure 21: Nicola Anito, *Facciata del Reale Palazzo di Palermo*, Palermo, 1801 (Napoli, Biblioteca di Società Storia Patria, segn. 6. H. 1. 4: DI FEDE 2004, p. 123 pl. 6).

¹⁶⁵ ZORIĆ 2014b, p. 104.

¹⁶⁶ PALAZZOTTO 2004, p. 226 sq. See also DI PAOLA 2010, p. 493–495; ZORIĆ 2014b, p. 104.

¹⁶⁷ *Piazza del R. Palazzo di Palermo*, in CUCINIELLO/BIANCHI 1829–1833, 2, pl. 12. The same print was published again in ZUCCAGNI ORLANDINI 1844–1845, 2, pl. 4. The print also shows the Northern small observatory dome accomplished in 1803, see DI PAOLA 2010, p. 495. All these pictures of the Palace always show the two strongholds towards the town, built in 1648 and dismantled in 1848.

¹⁶⁸ HITTORF/ZANTH 1835, pl. 75.



Figure 22: *Piazza del R. Palazzo di Palermo, Napoli, first half of the nineteenth century* (ZUCCAGNI ORLANDINI 1844–1845, 2, pl. 4).

project of restoration is documented by a drawing showing the Pisana without the little towers on the top (Figure 25).¹⁷⁰ According to Zorić, the upper level with the Observatory would not have been included in this project since its aim was the ‘Normanization’ of the tower.¹⁷¹ The drawing has been published and attributed to Nicolò Puglia by Pierfrancesco Palazzotto,¹⁷² who also indicated other items belonging to the same collection; among them the most important illustrates the status quo of the Pisana before the restoration, the drawing of which being also attributed to Nicolò Puglia (Figure 26).¹⁷³ It is likely for the same reason that in this picture again the little tower looking to the North is missing, while it is shown in Hittorf and Zanth’s print.

169 The aim of HITTORF/ZANTH 1835 was the iconographical representation of medieval buildings, thus they often made clear the modern additions of the monuments.

170 Palermo, Galleria Regionale della Sicilia, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, n. inv. 1129, PALAZZOTTO 2000, p. 48 n° 27.2. The same drawing was already published by ABBADESSA 1999, p. 101 fig. 23.

171 ZORIĆ 2014b, p. 104. Moreover, the scholar assumes that the aim of the Bourbon court was then to remove the astronomic institute from the tower.

172 PALAZZOTTO 2000, p. 47.

173 Palermo, Galleria Regionale della Sicilia, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, n. inv. 1170, *ibid.*, p. 47 n° 27.1. PALAZZOTTO 2004, p. 226 sq. also attributed to Nicolò Puglia the drawings for the restoration of the Western façade which – relying on the contest statement published in 1845 – was effectively accomplished around that year.

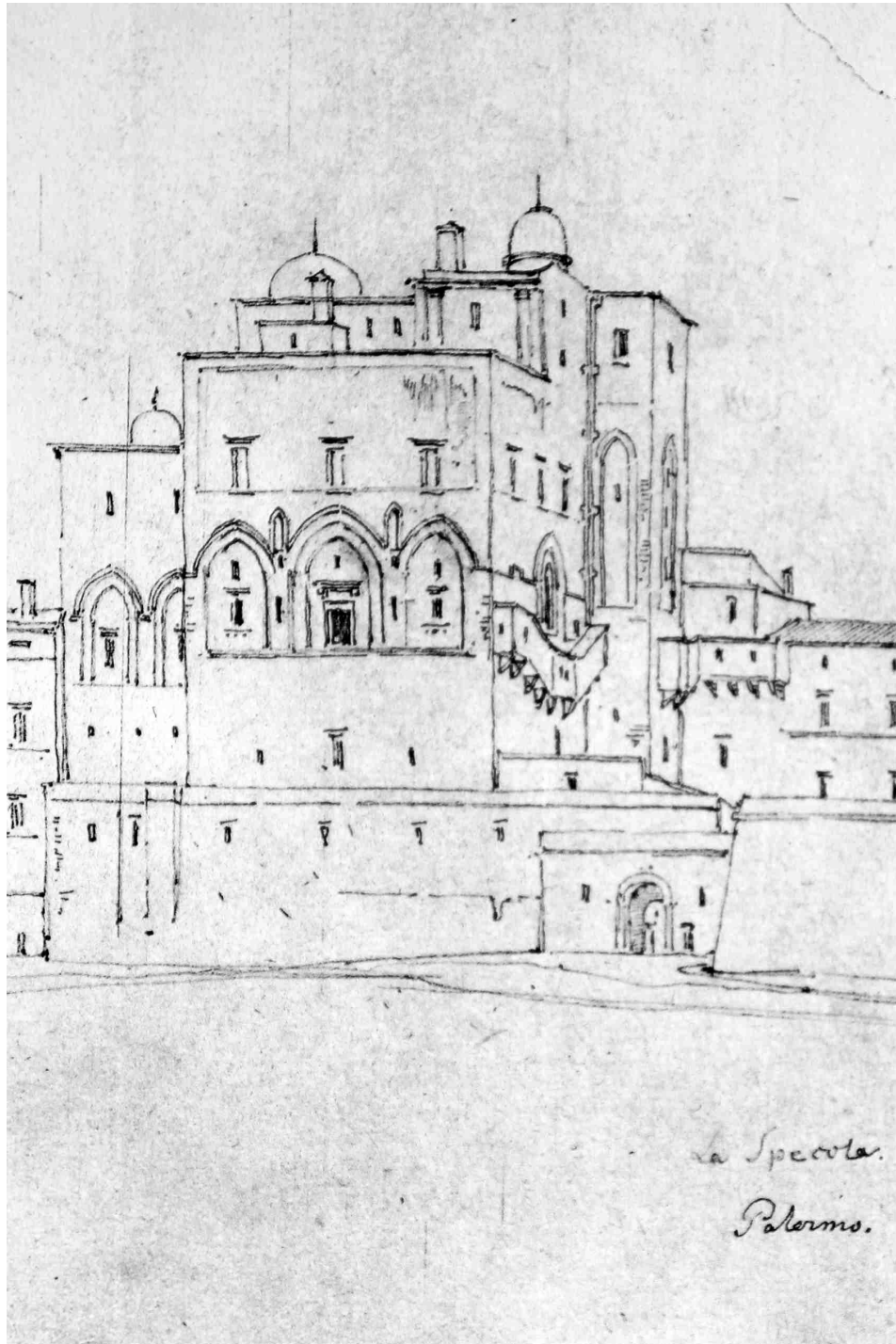


Figure 23: Friedrich Maximilian Hessemer, *La Specola*, Palermo, 1829 (MORREALE 1992, p. 123 fig. 17).

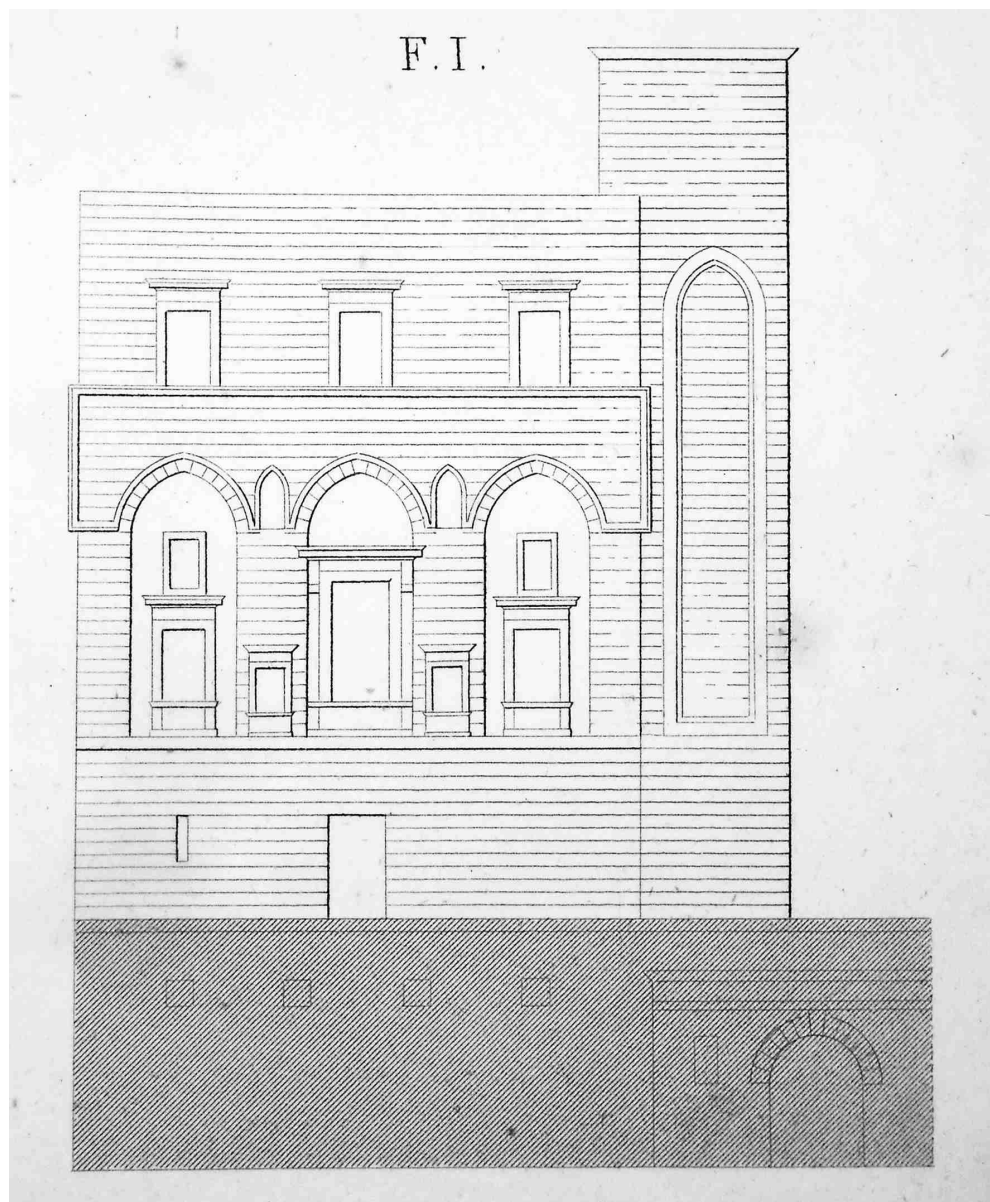


Figure 24: Representation of the Torre Pisana, Paris, before 1835 (HITTORF/ZANTH 1835, pl. 75).

In conclusion, through the analysis of the available data and thanks to Ferramolino's statement, it is possible to figure out the Norman configuration of the Pisana. Among a number of Mağribī examples, the Aġlabid minaret in Kairouan (Figure 27) and that in Sfax (ninth to twelfth centuries), with their shapes characterized by three stories decreasing in size, allow us to better guess its original shape.¹⁷⁴ Likewise, since the Mağribī towers, as well as that of Qaşr

¹⁷⁴ In my view, the minaret tower in Kairouan, built in 836, 31 m high, provides with its massive structure a fruitful object of comparison. According to the historian al-Bakrī, who wrote

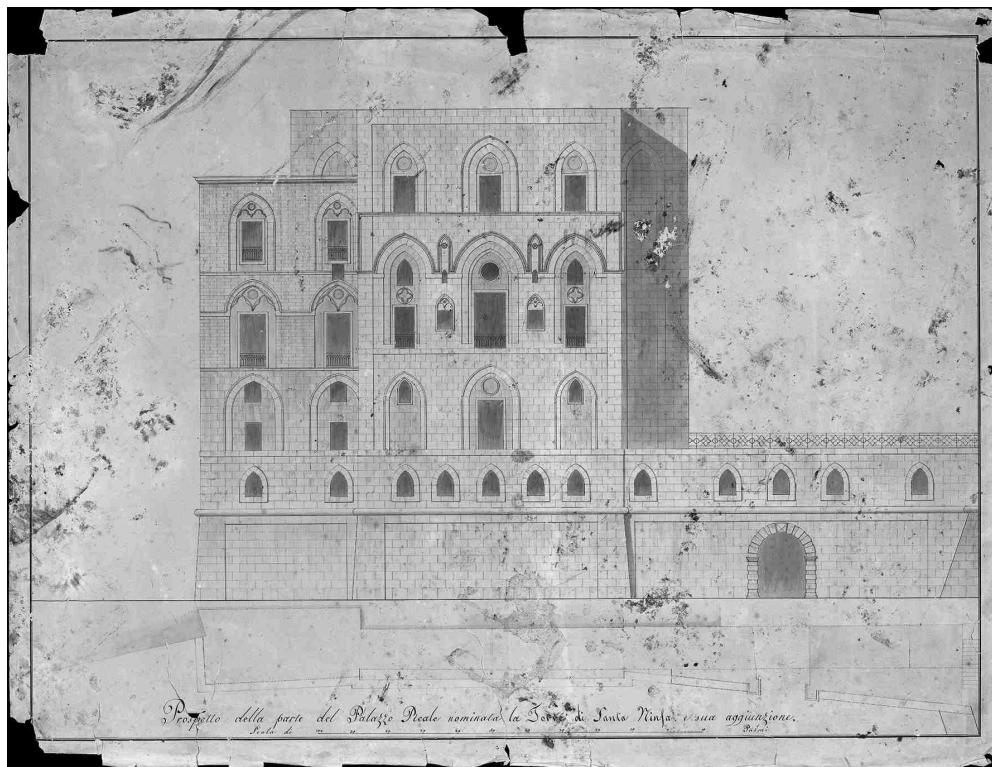


Figure 25: Nicolò Puglia (attr.), *Prospetto della parte del Palazzo Reale nominata la Torre di Santa Ninfa e sua aggiunta*, Palermo, ca. 1835 (Palermo, Galleria Regionale della Sicilia, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, n. inv. 1129; © Galleria Regionale della Sicilia).

al-Manār, were surmounted by domes, we can even surmise that the coronation of the “al-‘azrī” of the Torre Pisana would have been a dome too (Figure 28).¹⁷⁵ This does not mean that these Ifrīqī minarets would represent a direct model of inspiration for the Sicilian towers. Rather it suggests the traditional Ifrīqī habit to build these kinds of towers, especially taking into account that the

in the middle of the eleventh century, the tower was 60 cubits high and 25 wide, corresponding more or less to the size of the tower without the third storey (ca. 25.1 x 10.7 m). The third storey could have been added in the Fāṭimid-Zirid period – as was the case in Sfax – and eventually restored in the Ḥafṣid period (thirteenth to sixteenth centuries), see GOLVIN 1970–1979, 3, p. 194; BLOOM 1989, p. 58 and 87 sq.; BLOOM 2013, p. 117–123. It is worth noting that the tower of Kairouan reuses large stone blocks for the battered, 3.5 m thick walls at the base. This base is built of seven 47 cm high courses of blocks, 3.5 m high and surmounted by smaller courses of brick-sized stones. This is basically the same technique later adopted in some Siculo-Norman constructions.

175 The reconstructed configuration of the tower of Qaṣr al-Manār is based on scant archaeological remains, even taking into account a poem by Ibn Ḥammād (d. 1230) who attested to the probable presence of domes as coronations of the Ḥammādid palaces, see MARÇAIS 1926–1927, 1, p. 121–123.

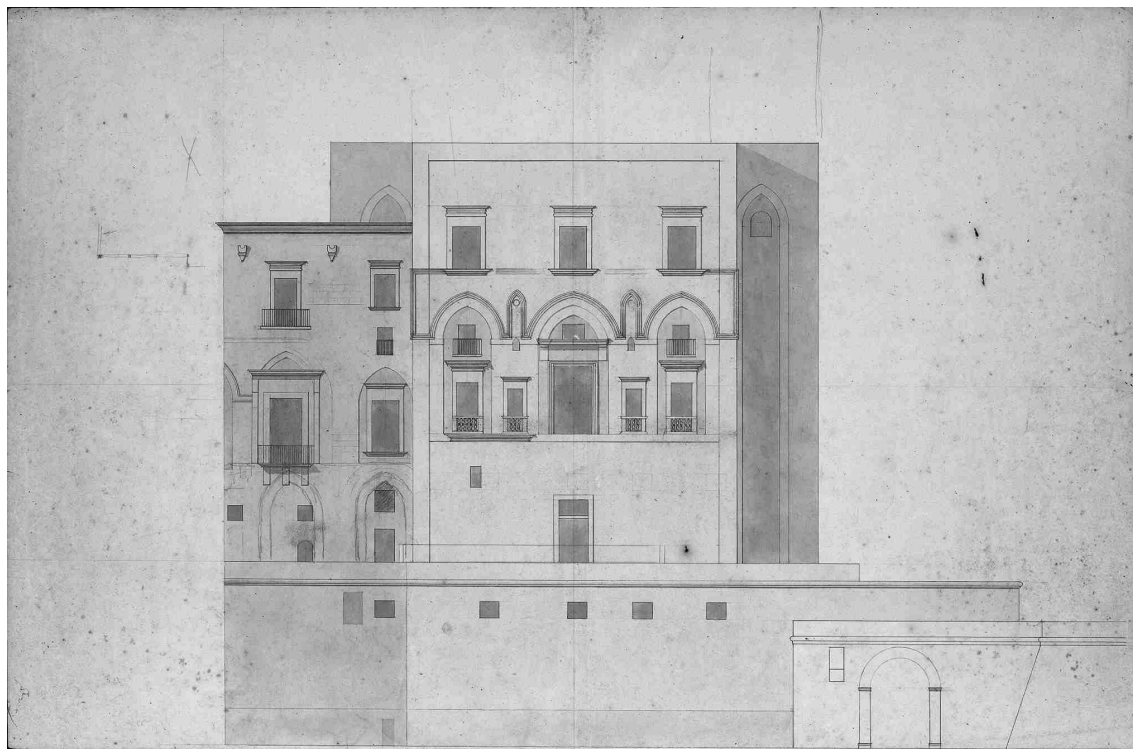


Figure 26: Nicolò Puglia (attr.), *Stato di fatto della Torre Pisana prima del Restauro*, Palermo, ca. 1835 (Palermo, Galleria Regionale della Sicilia, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, n. inv. 1170; © Galleria Regionale della Sicilia).

aforementioned towers have probably acquired their final three stories' configuration during the Fāṭimid period, between the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Even the Muslim function of the minaret towers could be easily converted for the functions of Christian bell towers, as was probably the case for Cefalù, while the same tower of Qaṣr al-Manār also attests to the Ifrīqī attitude to transfer and employ the same ichnographic arrangement for the construction of defensive towers. Finally, towers of this kind in Norman Sicily would demonstrate the employment of architects, either of local origin or coming from outside, who were familiar with these kinds of building methods, thus proving in any case a strong relationship with Ifrīqiya, especially in Western Sicily.

However, it seems possible that the shape of Torre Pisana was not far from that of the minaret in Kairouan. From this perspective, it is tempting to take into account the representation of the Norman Palace depicted in Peter of Eboli's *Liber ad honorem Augusti sive de rebus Siculis*, compiled between 1195 and 1197.¹⁷⁶ Although the miniatures of this iconographic source do not provide a

¹⁷⁶ OROFINO 2010, p. 476 sq. For Peter of Eboli see DELLE DONNE 2015.

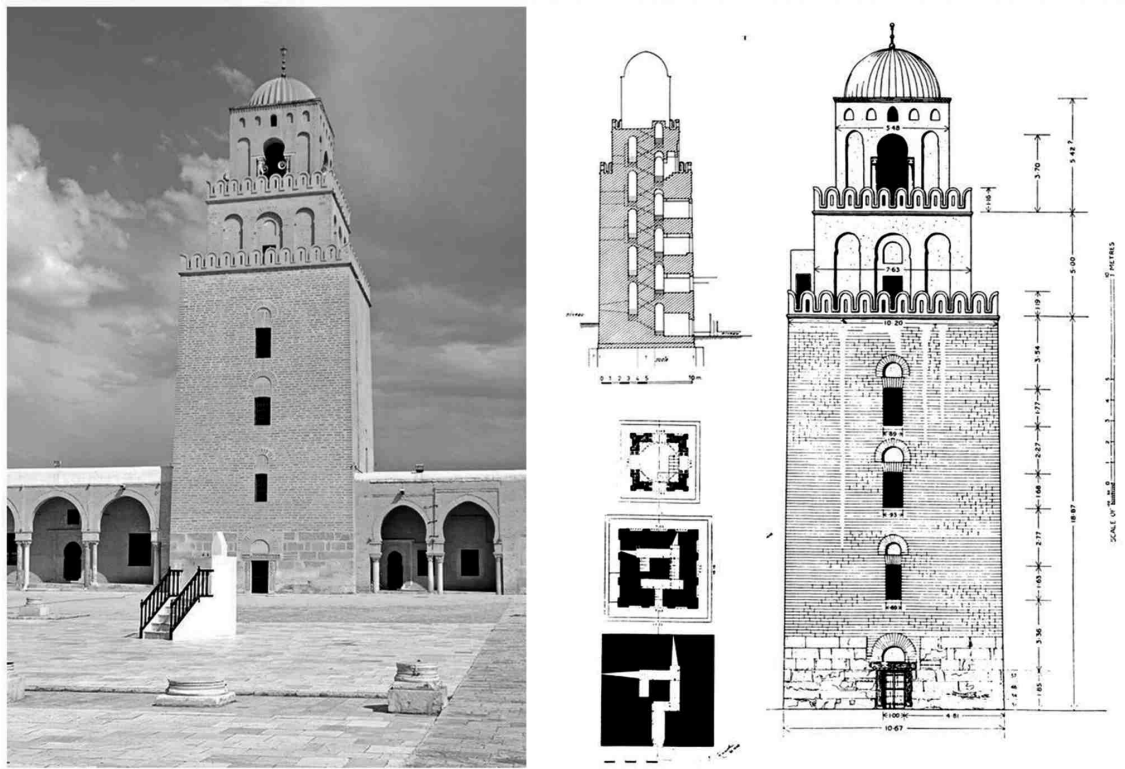


Figure 27: Left: Kairouan, Congregational Mosque (begun 836), minaret (Photograph © Ruggero Longo); right: elevation, plans and section of the Kairouan minaret (BLOOM 2013, p. 120 fig. 6.2; BLOOM 1989, p. 90 fig. 35, here modified).

reliable historical representation,¹⁷⁷ it is intriguing to look at the scene illustrating the arrival of Constance Hauteville in Palermo. The Norman Palace and its profile are well shown there; the buildings are reliably depicted looking to the South-East, with the Cappella Palatina and its bell tower on the left side, towards South, and, on the opposite Northern side, the main tower, presumably the Pisana, characterized by three stories decreasing in size (Figure 29).¹⁷⁸ In a slightly more reliable document, there is a bird’s eye view of Mazara published by Giovanni Giacomo Adria in 1516,¹⁷⁹ which represents another

¹⁷⁷ We are not sure whether the poet or rather the illuminator who painted the manuscript really visited the places he described.

¹⁷⁸ SCARLATA 2003, p.167 n. 204 suggested that the tower depicted on the right end of the picture was the Torre Greca. Likewise, her interpretation was based on an unreliable assumption, according to which the access to the Palace was originally located on its Western side. Rather, since this is the only three-storey tower in Peter of Eboli’s manuscript, it is possible to argue that the tower’s image really impressed the chronicler, who wanted to represent this peculiar feature.

¹⁷⁹ ADRIA 1516, pl. 2.

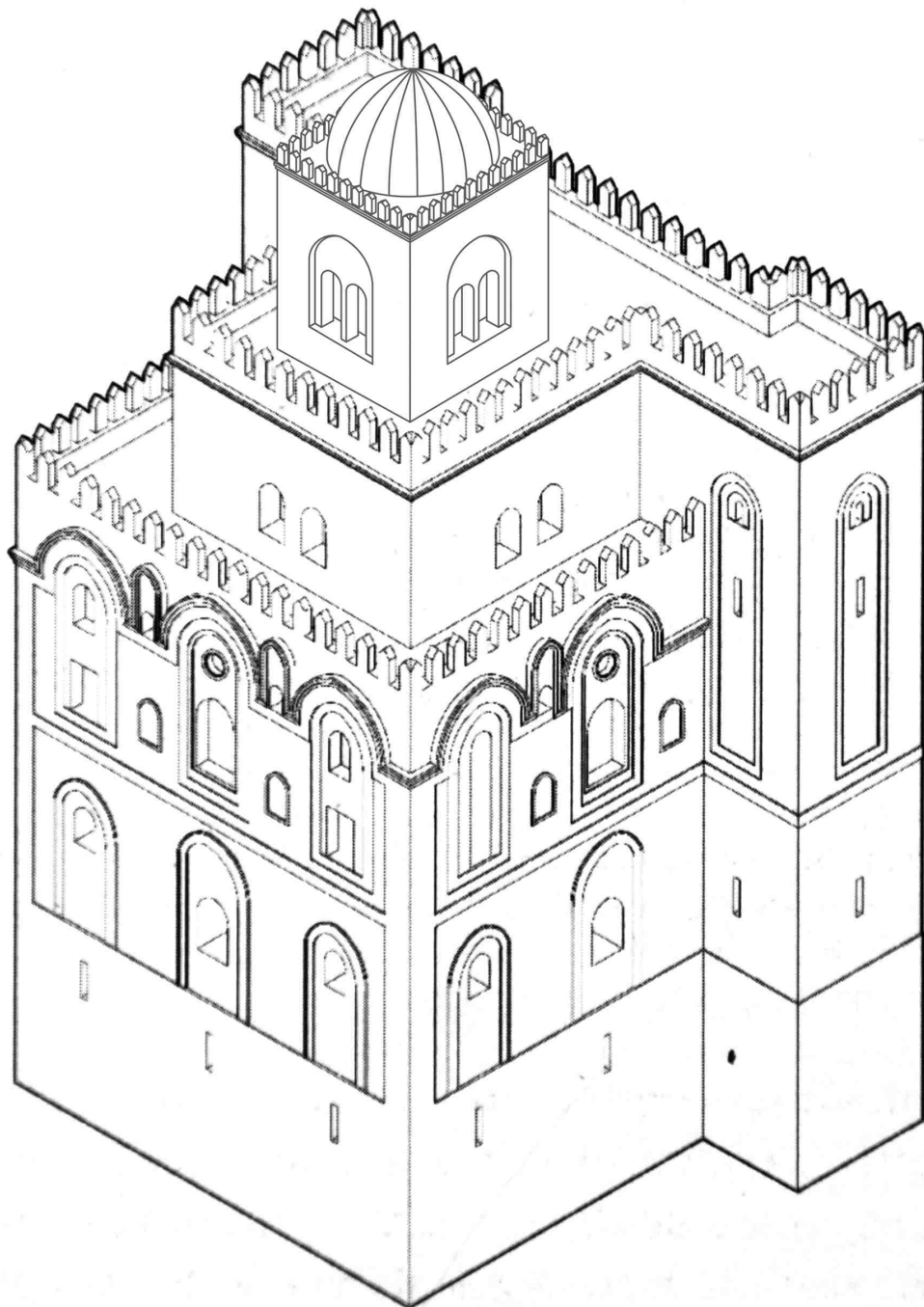


Figure 28: Possible original configuration of the Torre Pisana, axonometric view. Zorić and Longo's hypothesis (Graphic © Ruggero Longo).

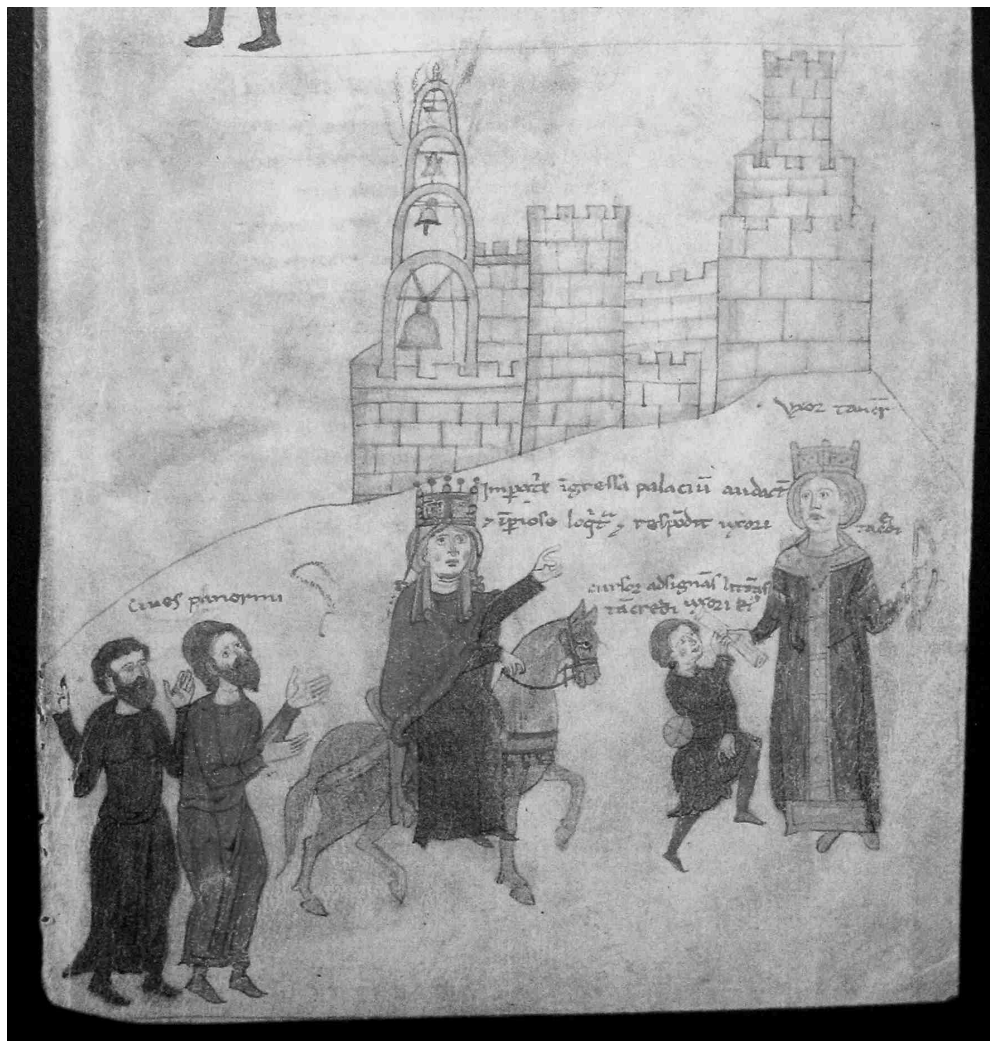


Figure 29: Peter of Eboli, *Liber ad honorem Augusti sive de rebus Siculis*, Southern Italy, ca. 1195–1197: Constance Hauteville’s arrival in Palermo, detail (Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Ms. 120, II, fol. 124r: KÖLZER e. a. 1994, p. 151).

“al-‘azrī”-shaped Siculo-Norman tower (Figure 30). Mazara’s castle no longer exists, but in Adria’s view, this stronghold features a tower resembling those in Cefalù. It was founded by count Roger in 1072 and resisted the uprising of Ifrīqī Muslims in 1075.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, this tower probably represented an earlier Sicilian

180 Gaufredus Malaterra, *De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae Comitis et Roberti Guiscardi Ducis fratris eius* III I and III IX, GAUFREDUS MALATERRA *De rebus gestis* 1927–1928, p. 57 and 61. In III I, the historian uses the Latin verb “firmavit”, which gives rise to the presumption that also in Mazara some pre-existent structures were strengthened. Mazara is also mentioned by al-Idrīsī, who reports that it was equipped with high and strong city walls, AL-IDRĪSĪ *Kitāb nuzhat* 1970–1978, 5, p. 600 sq., Italian translation AL-IDRĪSĪ *Kitāb nuzhat* 1997, p. 71.



Figure 30: Giovanni Giacomo Adria, *View of Mazara*, Palermo, 1516 (ADRIA 1516, pl. 2).

example of its kind and can be attributed to the first period of the Norman settlement in Sicily, when available craftsmen were mainly local workers whose relationship with *Ifriqiya* was rather strong, and when it would have been possible for the Islamic tradition to have been alive, especially in Western Sicily.¹⁸¹ Likewise, taking into account both the sources and more recent studies, the Normans built the first phase of the Royal Palace in Palermo soon after their conquest of the city. Therefore, the *Pisana*, although mentioned for the first time by Romuald of Salerno, could also pertain to this early phase. On the other hand, the peculiar distinctiveness of this building could also be explained with

¹⁸¹ In this perspective, it could also be taken into account that a less strong Islamic contribution could have determined the more traditional “donjon”-shape configuration which characterizes the Eastern Sicilian examples, like the towers in Adrano, Motta Sant’Anastasia and Paternò, see MILITELLO/SANTORO 2006, p. 126–129, 144–146 and 147–151.

the circumstance according to which the Pisana was erected as the main tower of the castle – that soon became the centre of Norman power in the Sicilian capital and the headquarters of the ruler. In this view, its construction could be assigned not necessarily to the period of the kingdom, i. e. after 1130, but to an even earlier period, when the court moved to Palermo and established the government there, i. e. after 1103.¹⁸² Yet, it cannot be excluded that an earlier building phase of the tower occurred in the pre-Norman period, maybe as a defensive tower to protect the Western access to the town. Indeed, as already noted, the “Bāb ar-Riyāḍ”, was built by the Kalbid emir Abū ’l-Ḥusayn (954–969) to replace the not well defended “Bāb Ibn Qarhab”, and should have been thereby, at the Western end of the main road or “simāt”, which crossed the town from East to West.¹⁸³ In the Norman period the “Bāb ar-Riyāḍ” disappeared, but Falcandus states that the “simāt”, then called “vicus Marmoreus”, started more or less from the Pisana.¹⁸⁴ Beside these speculations, the question remains open, while new archaeological investigations are needed, especially on the hidden and unknown levels of the foundation of the tower. In any case, if the portion of the Palace called Joharia was probably founded by William I or even earlier by Roger II, as stated by Fazello,¹⁸⁵ recent findings have exposed a hidden section that shows the interface between the Joharia and the Pisana, the analyses of which have revealed that the Pisana was already standing there when the Joharia beside it was built.¹⁸⁶

Whatever its chronology might have been, the Pisana displays peculiar features that make it unique among the Siculo-Norman buildings. It is a case

182 ZORIĆ 2002, p. 94. In this view, the consistence in using large blocks to build both the lower church and the Torre Pisana is striking. Also the so-called “Prigioni”, the massive buildings at the South-Western corner of the Palace, where the same kind of masonry is applied for vertical walls, could pertain to an early Norman phase of construction. Interestingly, the lower portions of the Joharia, standing by the Pisana, are characterized by regular rows of smaller brick-stones.

183 On the “simāt”: as below n. 217. On the original orientation of the “vicus Marmoreus” before the sixteenth century see CASAMENTO 2000.

184 HUGO FALCANDUS *Epistola* 1897, p. 181.

185 FAZELLO 1558, p. 171 sq. The Joharia is mentioned as already existent in 1161 by Hugo Falcandus *Liber de regno Siciliae* XVI: as n. 136.

186 The discovery has been accomplished in 2012 at an underground level placed between the Sala del Tesoro (Pisana) and the Sala degli Armigeri (Joharia), along the so-called Rampa San Michele. Indeed, the large block masonries constituting the Southern wing at the base of the Pisana proceed to the East without interruption, while the masonry with smaller rows of brick-stones, belonging to the lowest North-Western portion of Joharia, ends towards the North against the large block masonries. This area underwent preliminary investigations coordinated by myself and supported by the “Fabbrica del Palazzo Reale” (as n. 28), the results of which will be published soon.

in point for studying the so-called Arabo-Norman architecture, completely different from other Sicilian examples like Favara, Zisa or Cuba. Indeed, the syncretic nature of Siculo-Norman architecture should not prevent us from individuating the origin of each cultural contribution in order to avoid mistaking this visual language for a muddle of influences.¹⁸⁷ Despite the consistency of this syncretic process, the patterns involved can change, increase variety and produce unexpected solutions; thus, they provide various additional information and insights.¹⁸⁸ Bellafiore and Scerrato already proposed a Fāṭimid origin for the eloquent architecture which characterizes the Zisa Palace, Cuba or even the Sala dei Venti of Joharia.¹⁸⁹ The Maḡribī origin of the “al-‘azrī”-shaped Siculo-Norman towers seems to be proven as well and thus reinforces the relationship between Sicily and Fāṭimid Ifrīqiya.

In my view, also the relics of mosaics found by Francesco Valenti on the walls of the high Great Hall on the second floor belong to the period of king Roger.¹⁹⁰ Indeed, al-Idrīsī reported that the castle, newly built by this king within the higher portion of the “Qaṣr”, was made by big and fine squared blocks and ‘little cut stones of mosaic’,¹⁹¹ so that it would be hard to refer these

187 In my view, to figure out the pattern means to recognize its origin. Likewise, to deal with the Siculo-Norman syncretism means to extend physically and chronologically the frame of this phenomenon in a wider medieval Mediterranean context. A different interpretation is given by DI LIBERTO 2010, 248 sq. and 252; DI LIBERTO 2013, p. 166.

188 ZORIĆ 2014b, p. 105 pointed out the variegated uniformity as the natural consequence of a multiethnic and multilingual civilization in which craftsmen and workers operated.

189 Beside the ichnographic similarities between the Zīrid Palace of Aṣīr (Algeria) and the Zisa Palace, already individuated by Golvin and Bellafiore, other elements, such as the “durq‘a” (‘inner courtyard’), would demonstrate a contingent relationship with the architectural culture of Fāṭimid and Zīrid Ifrīqiya, see MARÇAIS 1926–1927, 1, p. 181–198; BELLAFFIORE 1978, p. 65–89; BELLAFFIORE 1990, p. 55–68 and 149–155; SCERRATO 1994, p. 343; MAZOT 1999; PEZZINI 2013, p. 224. This relationship seems to be better demonstrated through the recent archaeological excavations carried out at Ṣabra/al-Manṣūriyya, where the first palace attributable with confidence to the Fāṭimid period (eleventh century) revealed ichnographic solutions characterized by a central squared pavilion, similar to some specific features of Siculo-Norman royal palaces, see CRESSIER/RAMMAH 2006; CRESSIER 2012, p. 128–131, especially p. 130; BAGNERA 2013, p. 80. On the relationship between Norman Sicily and the Fāṭimids see CANARD 1955; ABULAFIA 1985; JOHNS 1987; JOHNS 2002, p. 265–269; HUNT 2011, p. 186–188. On the same issue see RE/ROGNONI 2009. On the relation between Sicily and Maḡrib see BRESO 2012.

190 Among the works of restoration performed, Valenti dismantled the modern plasters of the Great Hall, thus, discovering fragments of mosaics and bringing to light, once again, Norman masonry, see KITZINGER 1983; KITZINGER 1993–2000, 6, p. 16 and 19–21.

191 AL-IDRĪSĪ *Kitāb nuzhat* 1970–1978, 5, p. 591, Italian translation AL-IDRĪSĪ *Kitāb nuzhat* 1997, p. 59.

‘little cut stones’ only to the tesserae of the Cappella Palatina, since such few words are consecrated to illustrate the whole Palace, including its defensive system.¹⁹² Nevertheless, the mosaic, now lost except for some fragments, has been dated by Ernst Kitzinger and David Knipp to the period of William II (ca. 1170).¹⁹³ This attribution was essentially based on the formal observation of a detail: the peculiar ‘Sasanian palmettes’ applied in the frieze motif and consistent – according to the scholars – with the same kind of scrolls visible in the Norman Stanza and the Zisa Palace.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, the same type of ‘Sasanian palmettes’ appears also in the Sanctuary of the Cappella Palatina and in the apse of Cefalù Cathedral, namely in the frieze which surrounds the Pantokrator’s head, which proves that the artisans employed by Roger II already knew this motif.¹⁹⁵ Also Vladimir Zorić attributed the mosaics of the Great Hall of the Pisana to Roger II. Moreover, the alert scholar, relying on a piece of information deductible from some payroll documents, definitively referred the original scene of this mosaic to a victorious battle – probably the celebration of Palermo’s conquest.¹⁹⁶ In fact, during some works of restoration, the Great Hall was called “stanza della battaglia” in 1585 and finally in 1607, when the ultimate dismantling of this mosaic occurred.¹⁹⁷

David Knipp attributed the mosaics to William II, even presuming the patron’s attempt to ‘byzantinize’ the Mağribī tower.¹⁹⁸ In fact, the Byzantine Chalke could have provided the prototype for the Byzantinization of the Torre Pisana. In Procopius’ account, the vestibule of the Great Palace of Constantinople strongly recalls the Great Hall of Pisana. Over all, it is striking

192 Since al-Idrisī could also refer to some “opus sectile” decorations within the Palace, it is important to note that this kind of marble revetment originally was also displayed in the Great Hall of the Pisana, on the wall surface beneath the mosaics, see KITZINGER 1983, p.240; KITZINGER 1993–2000, 6, p.19; DI FEDE 2012, p.97; ZORIĆ 2014b, p.102 with n. 40.

193 KITZINGER 1983; KITZINGER 1993–2000, 6, p.16 and 19; KNIPP 2006, p.751–755.

194 DEMUS 1950, p.40–43; KITZINGER 1983, p.241 sq.; KNIPP 2006, p.750 sq. See also KNIPP 2005b, p.192–195.

195 LONGO 2014b, p.333–335 and 339 sq. Relying on the same analysis, I also proposed the identification of two different phases of decoration in the Norman Stanza. This hypothesis still deserves to be verified.

196 ZORIĆ 2014b, p.102. In fact, the same subject for this scene was already supposed by KITZINGER 1983, p.240–243; KITZINGER 1993–2000, 6, p.20, relying on the portions of buildings and the horse hooves still visible in some details of the remaining fragments.

197 DI FEDE 2012, p.113–115.

198 KNIPP 2006, p.753 sq. and 773 sq.

that Procopius also described the battle scenes depicted with mosaics and celebrating the emperor's conquests. Although the design adopted for the Pisana probably originated from Maġribī architectural patterns,¹⁹⁹ this interesting comparison suggests also a possible Byzantine functional model for the Great Hall, which could have been intended as a sort of Siculo-Norman great vestibule or Chalke.²⁰⁰ Indeed, even the mosaic's theme celebrating the conquest of Palermo would perfectly fit with this hypothesis. However, there is no way to believe that this tendency of melting together different cultural and artistic components had not yet been accomplished before William II's times. The Cappella Palatina of king Roger represents the culmination of this syncretic process. Within the Chapel, the Byzantine and Islamic artistic traditions are majestically blended together with tens of other, more circumscribed but equally elusive, cultural traditions. Finally, the vicinity with Byzantium was very well established and displayed during the kingdom of Roger II.²⁰¹ Likewise, there is no reason to attribute the 'Byzantinization' to William II, as it was perfectly appropriate to Roger II. Moreover, the mosaic's theme, probably celebrating the rulers' conquest of Palermo, would be more appropriate to celebrate the first Siculo-Norman king Roger than his grandson William II.

Finally, another noteworthy feature of the Siculo-Norman tower is its name, which may suggest the original function of the building. In fact, it has been proposed that the word "Pisana" comes from the Persian word "pīšhāne", which exactly would mean 'portico', 'vestibule', 'entrance hall'.²⁰² Although the etymological derivation of the word needs more accurate philological verification and clarification,²⁰³ their possible meanings related to Torre Pisana would be perfectly fitting.

The assumption that the Norman rulers conceived the Torre Pisana as a Chalke or a great vestibule with a great hall would require the clarification of the original access system within the tower and of the possible routes for court

199 Knipp, following Marçais and Golvin, compared the tower of Qaṣr al-Manār to a reception hall or vestibule, similar in its function to the Byzantine Chalke, and thus corroborating the affiliations between the Siculo-Norman and the Ḥammādid towers in their functions and configurations.

200 KNIPP 2006, p. 751–759. SCARLATA 2003, p. 171–181; SCARLATA 2007 had already advanced a similar consideration, extending her comparison to the whole area corresponding to the Galka, the word of which – according to her – would be derived from the Greek word "Chalke".

201 VON FALKENHAUSEN 1994, p. 352 sq. and 355; TRONZO 1993, p. 266; TRONZO 1997, p. 134–152.

202 CUNEO/MARAZZI 1989, p. 74; ZORIĆ 2014b, p. 99.

203 The first question would concern the reason why a Persian word, instead of a Latin, Greek or even Arabic word, was used to name a Siculo-Norman tower.

ceremonies. Since the latter topic would deserve a paper of its own, the following discussion will limit itself to issues regarding the structure of the Torre Pisana and a hypothetical original configuration of its internal spaces. In particular, the so-called ‘Treasury Hall’ and the lower stories of the tower will be considered, also in relation to the Ḥammādid tower of Qaṣr al-Manār in Qal‘at Banī Ḥammād.

6 A Siculo-Norman Chalke?

Beside the dismantling of the modern plasters and the consequent discovery of the aforementioned mosaic fragments, Francesco Valenti carried out some excavations on the lower level beneath the Great Hall, finding four jars buried in the corner of the central room. During this excavation, he also found a big square stone in the middle of the room that he interpreted as the expository system of a treasury hall (Figure 31).²⁰⁴ This supposition would be consistent with Hugo Falcandus’ *Epistola*, according to which the Pisana was assigned to guard the treasury.²⁰⁵ This hypothesis is also supported by the presence of embrasures pointing towards the external deambulatory and by the well-guarded system of access, so that this room is still known as the ‘Treasury Hall’.²⁰⁶ Hugo Falcandus also reports that, beside the palace, a textile workshop was active, certainly the “ergasterion” or “ṭirāz” – which he called “nobiles illas officinas palatio adherentes” – where Roger II’s mantle was produced and embroidered, and where gold, precious stones and pearls were available. Hence, it would be reasonable to link the treasury with these “officinae”.²⁰⁷ A number of considerations can be advanced around this room, making way for new hypotheses. The first consideration concerns its access system.

204 VALENTI 1924b, p. 523 sq.; VALENTI 1932, p. 218 and pl. XLIII sq. fig. 86 sq.; VALENTI 1949, p. 302. The photographs preserved in the archives of the Soprintendenza of Palermo and partially published by Valenti show only three of the four referenced jars.

205 HUGO FALCANDUS *Epistola* 1897, p. 177.

206 BELLAFFIORE 1990, p. 142–144; LONGO 2011b, p. 75; ZORIĆ 2014b, p. 101. The room is often related even to the mint of Norman Palermo. Since it is highly unlikely that a mint was working just beneath the Great Hall, implying also pollution and noise, it seems more reliable to take into account the Treasury Hall hypothesis. Valenti, however, never hypothesized the presence of a mint.

207 HUGO FALCANDUS *Epistola* 1897, p. 178–180. On the “nobiles officinae” see ANDALORO 2006. On Roger II’s mantle see TRONZO 2006a; BOLOGNA 2014.

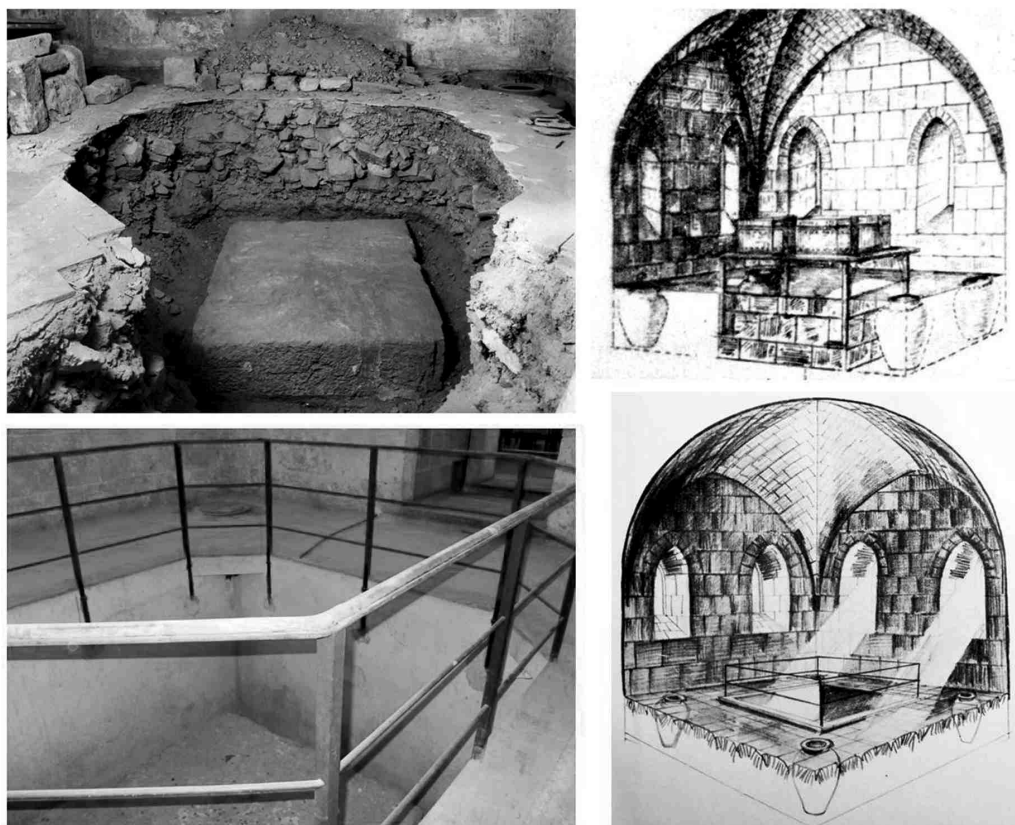


Figure 31: The so-called Treasury Hall in the Torre Pisana, top left: Valenti's excavation: Palermo, Palazzo Reale, Torre Pisana – pilastro della tavola del forziere nella stanza del Tesoro (Palermo, Archivio Fotografico della Soprintendenza ai Monumenti della Sicilia Occidentale, neg. n. 597; pos. n. 510; © Soprintendenza ai Monumenti della Sicilia Occidentale); bottom left: Treasury Hall, current situation; top right: Valenti's hypothesis of the expository system (VALENTI 1932, pl. XLIII fig. 86); bottom right: Valenti's hypothesis of the expository system (GIACOMAZZI 1959, p. 43 fig. 14).

The access to the central room was originally assured by the presence of a door in the midst of the Western wall.²⁰⁸ Another door exists on the Southern side of

208 During the aforementioned early modern interventions accomplished in the tower, the Treasury Hall underwent some alteration, including the opening towards the deambulatories of two other doors, one on the Northern side, one on the Eastern side. These openings are still visible in old surveys. Francesco Valenti found original traces of the embrasures already in 1921, thus he was able to re-establish the original configuration since 1922, a work accomplished later by his successor Guiotto. Although restored, the original door mostly maintains its original shape, see *Terzo verbale della Commissione tecnica nominata dal Ministero della P. I. allo scopo di accertare le condizioni di stabilità di talune parti dell'antica costruzione della reggia normanna in prossimità della Torre Pisana* (29 giugno 1922) (Roma, Archivio Centrale di Stato, DGABA, Div. I, 1920–24, BN. 1168, 6 Soprintendenze, Palermo); VALENTI 1924b, p. 524; GUIOTTO 1947, p. 45; GENOVESE 2010, p. 39–47.

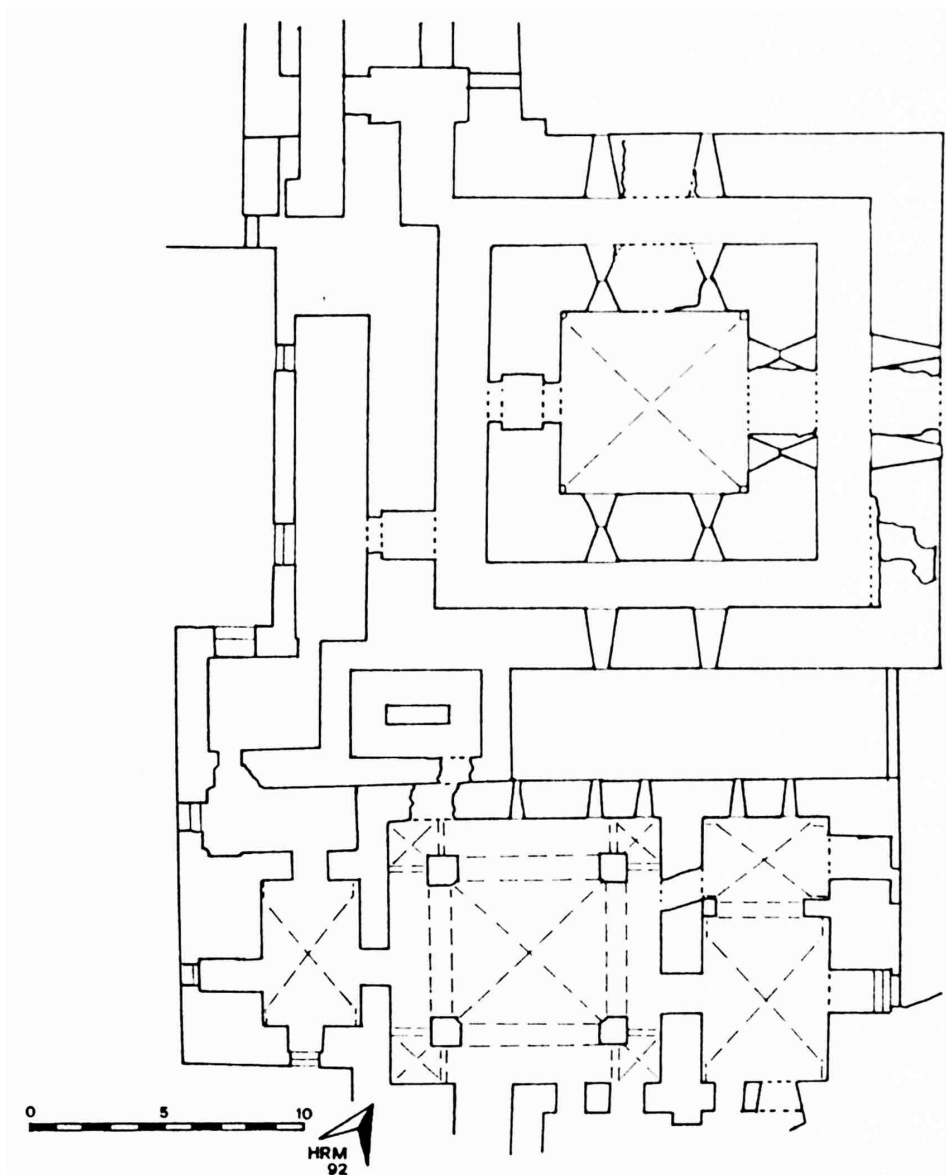


Figure 32: Plan of the Torre Pisana and Joharia at the Treasury hall level (MEIER 1994, p. 42 fig. 10, here modified).

the Western deambulatory (Figure 32). The closing system of both doors was guaranteed by a bolt, likely a wooden plank, to bar the doors. The bar does not exist anymore, but the deep holes to host the bar are still there.²⁰⁹ A closer examination inside these holes reveals that they are not dug out from the blocks, but were originally designed as empty spaces or gaps intentionally left and shaped during the construction of the wall (Figure 33). Hence, these holes

²⁰⁹ Likewise, Valenti found and preserved lintel and doorposts bearing holes for the door leaves, still visible in situ.



Figure 33: Left: deep hole to host the bolt locking the door of the Treasury Hall; right: the double-door inside the Treasury Hall (Photographs © Ruggero Longo).

demonstrate the authenticity of the doors,²¹⁰ and verify that the original ground level of the room has been left unaltered. The South-Western door was obviously designed in order to be locked from inside the tower. On the other hand, the doorway of the central room surprisingly doubles the closing system on both sides. This arrangement was thus designed as a system that allowed the room's external door to be locked from the inside – thus cutting off the access from the deambulatories – or the internal door to be locked from the corridor outside – thus preventing the exit from the central room towards the deambulatories. Curiously, it was possible to lock both doors only from the narrow internal space of the doorway between the two doors. Taking into account the possibility of locking the door from outside the room, one could hypothesize the room being used as a prison, opening the hypothesis of a dungeon as an alternative to the theory of a treasury room.²¹¹ Vice versa, the chance to lock the door from inside the room would not make too much sense for both treasury and prison.²¹² Yet, in this latter case, whatever the reasons may have been for the additional

210 Although Valenti restored the first layer of these portions by using newly cut blocks of the same kind of sandstone, it is easy to detect that the holes, designed to receive the bar, proceed more than 2 m within the wall.

211 In this case, instead of precluding someone from entering the room, the narrow windows would have prevented someone from escaping from the dungeon.

212 Unless we assume the presence of a permanent security service which was responsible for guarding the treasury room and keeping the door locked from inside.

possibility of locking the door from outside, this option would have been lost if the external door of the central room had already been locked from inside.²¹³ Albeit the real sense of the double safe closing system is not yet clear, at a first glance this puzzling configuration seems to be consistent with the hypothesis of an 'enviable 'caveau''.²¹⁴

If we look now at the other South-Western passage, it seems that it was originally open to the outside. Nevertheless, it is hard to assume that an entrance to the tower was located at the same height as the level of the Treasury Hall, especially if one takes into account that the original ground level on the Western side of the Palace has been lifted up to a higher altitude after the construction of the San Pietro stronghold during the sixteenth century. Indeed, the aforementioned discovery of an interface space between Joharia and Pisana also demonstrates that the medieval ground level on this side of the Palace was lower than today. The medieval ground level outside the tower must have been much lower, thus suggesting a lower position for its original access. Otherwise we should imagine an external staircase at that level, as often happens in Norman "donjons".²¹⁵ The presence of another level below the Treasury Hall is demonstrated by the existence of corridors beneath the deambulatories, still visible in the oldest maps of the Palace, such as those published by Nicola Anito (1801) and Adolph Goldschmidt (1898). These portions have partially disappeared from more recent maps of the Palace, where the central portion of this level is shown as filled or walled up (Figure 34). In other words, nobody knows exactly the planimetric configuration of this level today. Furthermore, the Treasury Hall pavement rises almost 14 meters above the Punic level, while the storey under the Treasury Hall is actually more than seven meters high, enough to include in its elevation not one but even two distinct levels, the lowest of which finally would be the real ground level (Figure 13). Although this ground floor rests almost seven meters upon the Punic level, one could not exclude that this lowest layer was once conceived as a walled buttress, a feature also frequent in Norman "donjons".

213 Indeed, the locked external door would have prevented the internal door from being managed outside, if the latter could not be locked from inside, unless we assume the presence of a bar-system also inside the room, working in association with iron rings fixed on the jambs of the door.

214 ZORIĆ 2014b, p. 101.

215 The accesses to "donjons" were usually located on the second floor, preceded by a staircase or a drawbridge. See for instance the Siculo-Norman examples in Adrano, Paternò and Motta Sant'Anastasia. Also the maps published by Duchet and Hogenberg/Braun show the lower base of the Torre Pisana as a tapering buttress.

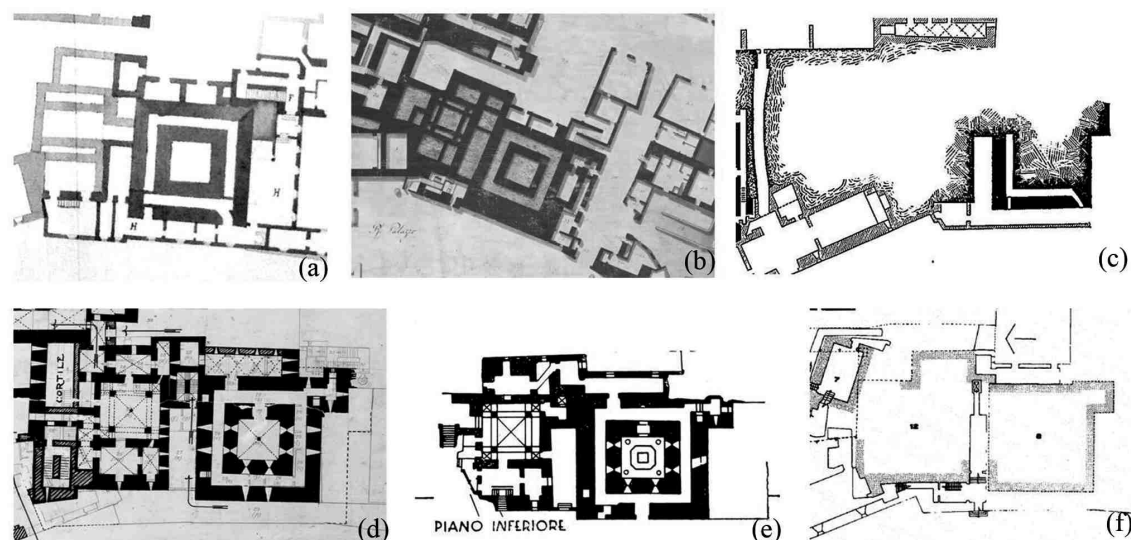


Figure 34: Plans of the Torre Pisana at the lower levels: (a) Level beneath the Treasury Hall (Nicola Anito 1801: DI FEDE 2004, p. 119 pl. 2, detail); (b) Level beneath the Treasury Hall (Bourbon plan, first half of the nineteenth century: CALANDRA 1991, p. 46 fig. I.30, detail); (c) Level beneath the Treasury Hall (GOLDSCHMIDT 1898, col. 547 sq. fig. 4, detail); (d) Treasury Hall level (Palermo, Biblioteca comunale, Fondo Valenti, 5 Qq. E. 188 n. 17, pl. 5; © Palermo, Biblioteca comunale); (e) Treasury Hall level (BELLAFIORE 1990, p. 142); (f) Level beneath the Treasury Hall (CALANDRA 1991, p. 52 pl. I, detail).

In this case, an access with a staircase would have been positioned on the second floor, below the Treasury Hall. Nonetheless, this hypothesis implies a Norman (i. e. Northern European) contribution for the arrangement of the basement of the tower, while the tower and its planimetric configuration suggest a stronger relationship with Ifrīqī patterns. Indeed, the analysis of the tower of Qaṣr al-Manār, based on the reconstructions made by Georges Marçais, could suggest another hypothesis for the Torre Pisana.

The ichnographic configuration of the tower of Qaṣr al-Manār, as well as that of the Siculo-Norman case, shows the presence of deambulatories around a central room for both levels of the tower. But its elevation reveals that the corridors were actually ramps leading from the ground to the roof level (Figure 35). Furthermore, the ground level with its central chamber, probably a warehouse or a dungeon,²¹⁶ stands underground, lower than the citadel itself, while the Reception Hall was reachable by the main entrance on the same level or by the ramps from the ground level.

²¹⁶ MARÇAIS 1926–1927, 1, p. 121.

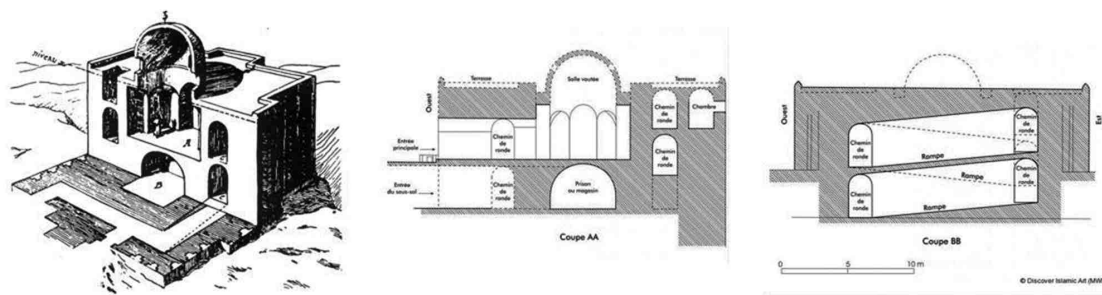


Figure 35: Qal‘at Banī Ḥammād (Algeria), tower of Qaṣr al-Manār, axonometric view (MARÇAIS 1954, p. 81 fig. 41) and cross-sections (www.discoverislamicart.org).

Hence, instead of a buttress, it would be possible to imagine the lowest level of the Pisana with the same configuration of Qaṣr al-Manār, characterized by ramps leading from the ground level to the second floor, beneath the Treasury Hall.

A substantial element in favour of this alternative idea would be the so-called “via cooperta”, a preferential pathway covered with porticoes that led the Norman king from the Palace to the Cathedral.²¹⁷ In Hugo Falcandus’ *Epistola ad Petrum*, we discover that this lane began at the Torre Pisana.²¹⁸ According to recent investigations, some portions of a portico have been found on the North-Western side of the tower, along the ancient perimetral city wall, extending towards the North almost at the same height of the current ground level outside.²¹⁹ Therefore, an access from the “via cooperta” should be located on the ground level. At the same time, we can also postulate the presence of a

²¹⁷ DI GIOVANNI 1889–1890, 1, p. 371–420; LONGO 2011b, p. 79–81. Indeed, this “via cooperta”, as described by the sources, can be compared with the street called “sābāt” within the Islamic world: a privileged path linking the ruler’s palace with the mosque. The main street was instead called “simāt”, in which the market was usually set. Ibn Ḥawqal, who visited Palermo in 972/973, did not mention the “sābāt” in his account, while he reports that the market crossing the old town from the West to the East was called “simāt”, and was paved with stone slabs, IBN ḤAWQAL *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 1938–1939, 1, p. 122, French translation IBN ḤAWQAL *Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ* 1964, 1, p. 12. This is the street called later “vicus Marmoreus” in HUGO FALCANDUS *Epistola* 1897, p. 181, see DE SIMONE 2000, p. 87–90; SCARLATA 2003, p. 168–170; BAGNERA 2013, p. 76; PEZZINI 2013, p. 202. The Andalusī traveller Ibn Ḡubayr, after his reception at the palace, passed through this “via cooperta” to reach the Cathedral, IBN ḠUBAYR *Riḥlat* 1988, p. 92, English translation IBN ḠUBAYR *Riḥlat* 1952, p. 347. Hugo Falcandus mentions the “via cooperta” three times, *Liber de regno Siciliae* XIII, XIV and LV, HUGO FALCANDUS *Liber* 1897, p. 41, 49 and 156, English translation HUGO FALCANDUS *Liber* 1998, p. 96, 103 and 209.

²¹⁸ HUGO FALCANDUS *Epistola* 1897, p. 181 sq.

²¹⁹ CIPRIANO 1998–1999, p. 99 sq.; SCARLATA 2003, p. 170.

rised way proceeding on the roof above the “via cooperta”, so that another access could be also located on the second floor of the tower. Apart from the big impact towards the Norman city, a system of porticoes along the city wall, starting from the Western side of the Pisana to the North,²²⁰ would have constituted a magnificent open gallery, well sheltered under the flanking wall and directly linked with the upper levels of the tower through a risen access on its Western façade.²²¹

Vladimir Zorić distinguished the Ḥammādid ramp systems from the Siculo-Norman stairway systems, the latter being comparable to those in Cefalù Cathedral.²²² Staircases of this kind existed also in the Torre Pisana: one flight of them – and only this flight – is still surviving in the South-Western turret, on the second floor, beneath the Treasury Hall (Figure 36).²²³ The stairwell is now occupied by an elevator. It has been proven that this staircase originally started from this level, just below the Treasury Hall.²²⁴ The well-defined portal facing the staircase – originally open to an external roof – also attests this configuration. In this view, we cannot exclude that the lowest layer of the tower has hosted the hypothetical internal ramps leading from the ground level to the second floor, characterized by the configuration of the tower of Qaṣr al-Manār – while the same second floor would have been also reachable through a raised way

220 Likely towards “Bāb Rūṭa”. See also FAZELLO 1558, p. 173 sq.

221 Indeed, it is by now certain that a Norman city wall encircled the whole town, thus providing a safe support for the portico, see SCIORTINO 2007, p. 288–290. On the impact of the Palace towards the city see TRONZO 2006b.

222 ZORIĆ 2014b, p. 100 sq.

223 This staircase was discovered by Valenti in 1921: *Progetto di lavori occorrenti per il ripristino di alcune rampe della scala antica della Torre Pisana nell'ex Palazzo Reale di Palermo, per creare un nuovo accesso all'osservatorio astronomico allo oggetto di demolire la scala che deturpa il fianco nord della Cappella Palatina, nonché di talune opera necessarie per porre in evidenza le condizioni statiche delle parti monumentali presso la detta torre e per separare gli ambienti da assegnare ai vari enti* (1 giugno 1921); *Perizia dei lavori urgenti necessari per porre in evidenza le condizioni statiche di alcune strutture normanne del Palazzo Reale di Palermo, compromesse da tagli vandalici e da adattamenti moderni che ne hanno alterato l'equilibrio* (9 novembre 1921) (Roma, Archivio Centrale di Stato, DGABA, Div. I, 1920–24, BN. 1168, 6 Soprintendenze, Palermo). This staircase also appears in the axonometric representation of the tower published by Valenti and Guiotto and used by Zorić in his hypothetical reconfiguration (Figure 17), see VALENTI 1932, pl. XLIV fig. 88; GUIOTTO 1947, p. 45 sq. fig. 25 sq. Valenti also supposed that a similar staircase was in the Torre Greca.

224 GUIOTTO 1947, p. 44. The superintendent gave an account on some investigations carried out beneath the staircase in order to verify the presence of another flight of stairs going downstairs, on the ground level. Instead, Guiotto found a massive wall right between the Torre Pisana and Joharia, thus arguing that this small courtyard was rather a buttress.

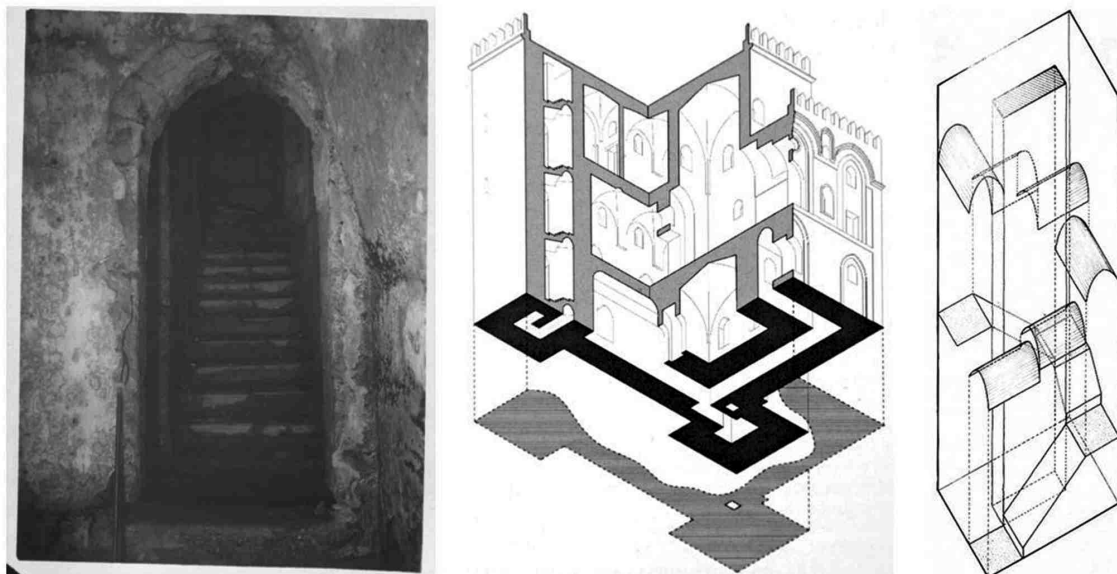


Figure 36: Siculo-Norman stairway systems, left: The staircases discovered by Valenti in the South-Western turret of the Pisana Tower (Palermo, Biblioteca comunale, Fondo Valenti, 5 Qq. E. 187 n. 18, 158; © Palermo, Biblioteca comunale); centre: axonometric view of the Torre Pisana with the South-Western staircase turret (ZORIĆ 2014b, p. 105 fig. 5); right: stairway system of Cefalù Cathedral (ZORIĆ 1989b, p. 201 fig. 106).

proceeding above the “via cooperta”. The Mağribī concept of Torre Pisana would suggest this hypothesis, while the possible presence of a raised pathway above the “via cooperta” also suggests that there could have been a raised access on the second floor of the Western façade.

Whatever the ground level arrangement might have been – ramps or buttress – once the second floor beneath the Treasury Hall was reached, it would then have been possible to reach the staircase on the Southern side, accessible by the front entrance on the roof adjoining the tower. Although the passages through which the Southern turret was once linked with the different floors still need to be investigated, the Treasury Hall, as well as the Great Hall, would have been likely reachable by this staircase on the Southern side.²²⁵ Nonetheless, the analysis of the Treasury Hall could suggest a further configuration, and even the necessity to reconsider the existence of the treasury at this level.

A closer analysis of the central stone of the room revealed that it was built by rows of stone blocks arranged with mortar. Francesco Valenti was

²²⁵ Traces of the original passages to the Southern turret can be found in the old maps. A Northern staircase turret cannot be excluded, but we do not know enough about its original configuration so far. ZORIĆ 2014b, p. 103 proposed that the Northern turret would have hosted services such as latrines and a wardrobe.

presumably surprised to find these big square stones during his excavations, since he was formerly expecting to discover another vaulted room, as attested by a sketch drawn before the investigations (Figure 37). This is perhaps the



Figure 37: Francesco Valenti, sketch of the Torre Pisana, Palermo, ca. 1920 (Palermo, Biblioteca comunale, Fondo Valenti, 5Qq. E.180 n. 3 (6); © Palermo, Biblioteca comunale).

reason why he finally supposed the presence of a treasury.²²⁶ In fact, it seems that these half-buried blocks, more than a system to display the treasure, could be better explained as the upper portion of a pillar, perhaps a sort of support to sustain the ceiling of the lower level, composed by cross and barrel vaults.²²⁷ Nevertheless, an in-depth analysis of the embrasures could suggest another arrangement, especially supported in conjunction with the well-guarded system of access to the Treasury Hall.

Though restored by Francesco Valenti, the six embrasures of the central hall – two per side on the three sides – are all originally designed and shaped. The deambulatories were also equipped with outward-looking embrasures, which are now walled up but still identifiable. These were aligned with the corresponding six embrasures displayed along the wall of the internal chamber (Figure 32). The external embrasures had a usual shape, splayed towards the inner space of the tower, with the narrow arrow slit towards the outside. The embrasures of the central room have a peculiar form: the narrow opening is splayed on both sides. In addition, inside the room the opening is steeply splayed towards the floor, while the openings remain high from the ground along the corridors (Figure 38). The first explanation for such a peculiar configuration would be the simple need to let more light enter into the room. But this system actually does not let much light enter through the narrow embrasures on the external deambulatories. At any rate, an iron grid would have provided a system safe enough, also letting more light enter. Therefore, the configuration of the embrasures could be related with the possible presence of a treasure within the room: the narrow slit would prevent a stranger – thief, robber or enemy – to enter from the windows, and would also create a perfect guard-system. Moreover, it is reasonable to assume that the security system was specifically designed for ballistic weapons. In fact, it seems that a ballistic weapon, like a bow, would have perfectly worked from outside rather than from inside the room (Figure 39).²²⁸ This makes sense only if one assumes the

226 A configuration with a lower storey was already hypothesized and illustrated by Valenti, see Palermo, Biblioteca comunale, Fondo Valenti, Ms. 5 Qq E. 180 n. 3 (6). Therefore, it seems that the disposition of the room as a treasury hall was just a supposition assumed and achieved by Valenti in order to emphasize his discovery.

227 The top of this sort of pillar is about 1.3 m beneath the ground level of the room. This space would have been enough for the vault to rise.

228 The embrasures inside the room are steeply splayed towards the pavement, so that the height of the opening reaches about 3 m. The arrow slits are about 1.9 m high, while the external side opening towards the deambulatories is about 2.7 m with landings for a guard to stay, see MILITELLO/SANTORO 2006, p. 37 (for the case in Castello di Castelbuono).

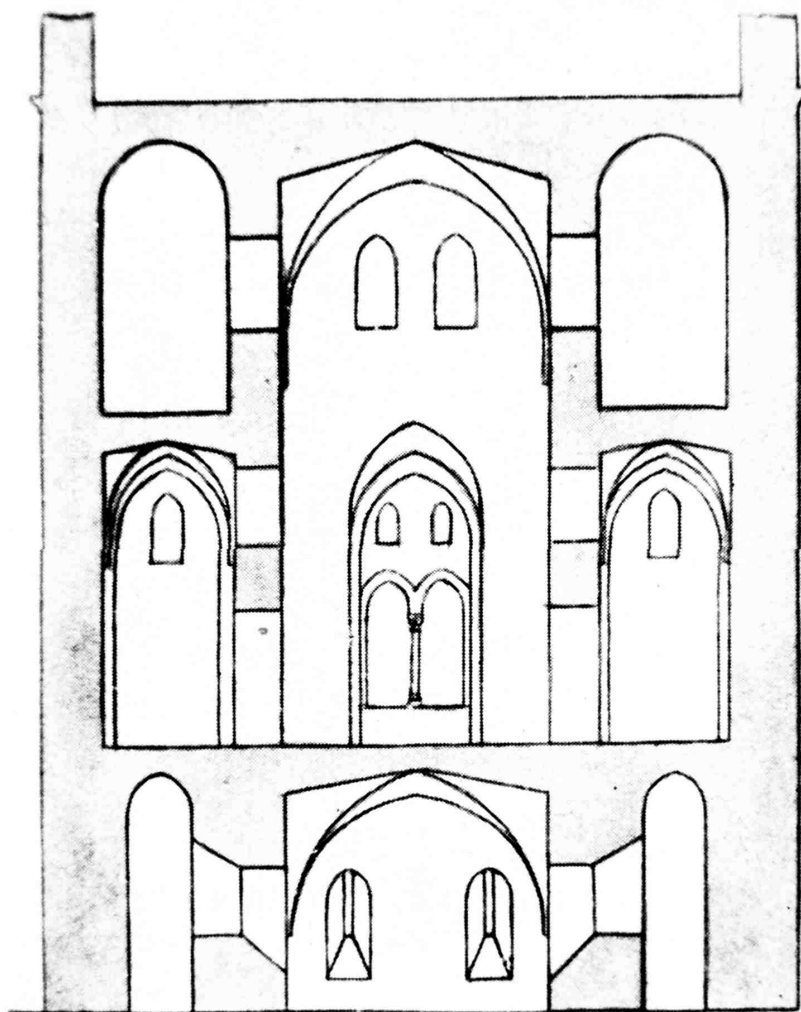


Figure 38: Francesco Valenti, cross-section of the Torre Pisana, Treasury Hall and Great Hall levels, Palermo, ca. 1932 (VALENTI 1932, pl. XLV fig. 89).

need to protect the room and to defeat whomever had eventually entered into the room, trying to steal the treasure. Anyway, it is clear that the whole system was originally designed in order to create a privileged space.

Once the ballistic nature of the slits system has been postulated, the configuration of both the doorway and the embrasures could get a different meaning if we finally assume the existence, within the room, of another way out. This way out might be well represented by a stairwell in the middle of the room, with the pillar as its central spine. Although this structure would not be far from Cefalù Cathedral,²²⁹ this system of staircase rising around a central square

²²⁹ Staircases of this kind are in the bell towers of both Cefalù and Monreale Cathedrals, see KRÖNIG 1965, p. 33; ZORIĆ 1989b, p. 200 sq. fig. 105 sq.

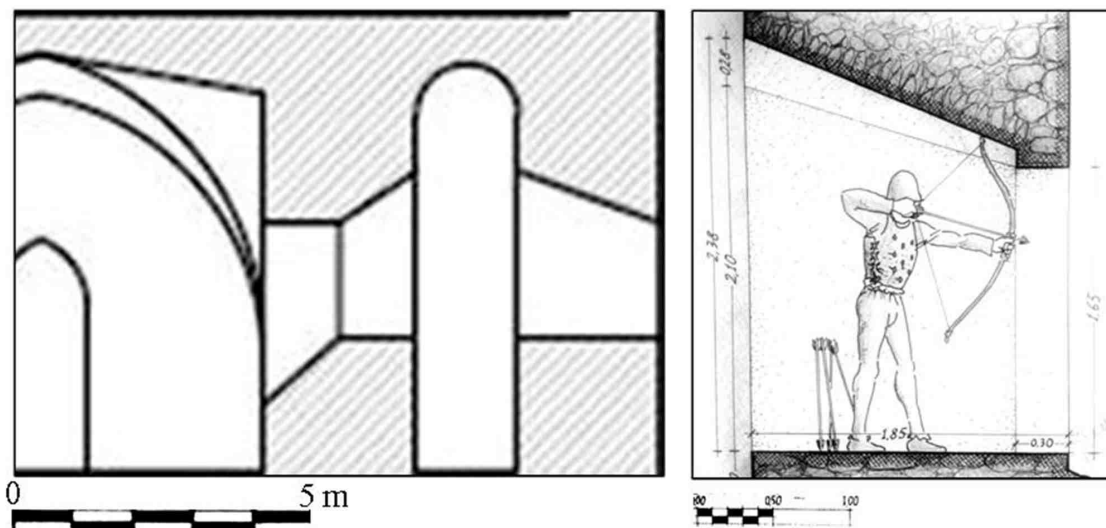


Figure 39: System of embrasures for ballistic weapons, left: cross-section of the embrasure of the Torre Pisana, Treasury Hall level (VALENTI 1932, pl. XLV fig. 89, here modified); right: embrasure with bowman (MILITELLO/SANTORO 2006, p. 37, here modified).

would also coincide with the stairway system of some Mağribī minarets (Figures 15 and 27). In this light, since the external embrasures were located in line with the internal ones, it would have been possible to control at the same time the outside and the inside of the tower through a wooden footbridge between two facing embrasures. Thus, instead of a Treasury Hall, the lower level of the tower, with its special door and its narrow embrasures, could also represent an efficient defensive system, even convertible into a cul-de-sac or, if necessary, into an escape route to the outside (Figure 40).²³⁰ In this circumstance, a treasure would have been better placed in some higher room of the upper levels, well guarded and far from any entrance which – nonetheless – should have been placed somewhere at the lower levels of the tower, especially taking into account the probable interface with the “via cooperta”. Finally, the jars found by Francesco Valenti could pertain to Ferramolino’s modifications of the tower which occurred in the sixteenth century: once the hazardous system of access eventually collapsed or was intentionally dismantled for security reasons, the buried jars would have represented the most common way to store a reservoir of water or oil within a bulwark, especially helpful in the case of a siege.²³¹

230 The double door was usually adopted in many medieval defensive systems, among which it is worth mentioning here the monumental double access system of Aleppo Citadel, see TABBAA 1997, p. 81–93.

231 Indeed, no analysis has been done on the pottery of these jars until today: the shape of the jars does not seem to be consistent with the medieval production.

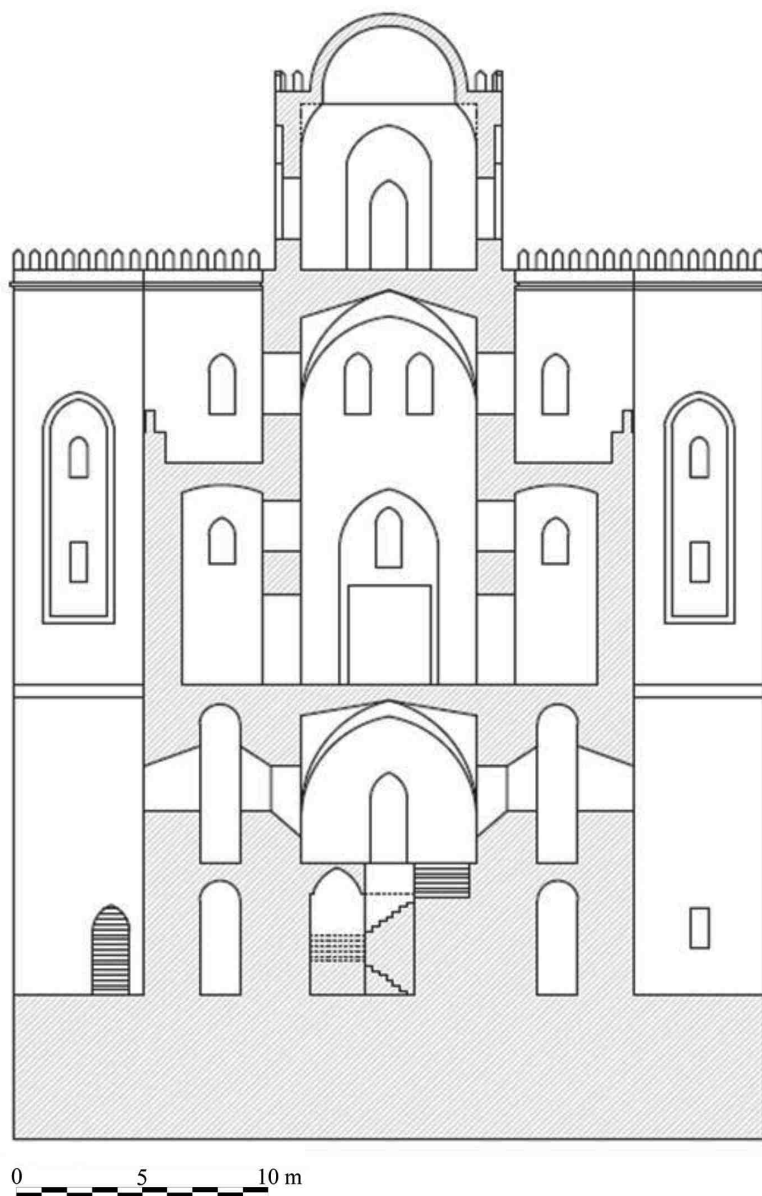


Figure 40: Cross-section of the Torre Pisana. Longo’s hypothesis of the original configuration (Graphic © Ruggero Longo).

In this hypothetical configuration, after having reached the first level via an internal ramp system or by an external passage, like the elevated pathway above the “via cooperta”, it would have been feasible to get to the staircase on the South-Western side of the tower; otherwise, it would also have been possible to get to a staircase in the middle of the tower. Thus, enemies attempting to approach the external access of the staircase, on the South-Western side of the tower, would have been necessarily and hazardedly standing on an external roof between the Torre Pisana and Joharia, a space well defended by crossfire

(Figures 32 and 40);²³² otherwise, they would have tried to climb the internal staircase, thus falling into a mortal trap, a highly efficient cul-de-sac. Likewise, the lower levels of the Torre Pisana would have provided a monumental and well-guarded access to the court and a dignified staircase for the sovereign, linked also with the “via cooperta”.

This hypothesis would need to be verified or even refuted. An updated and much awaited topographical survey of the tower is essential to ascertain the real internal structures and functions.²³³ Furthermore, an archaeological investigation and a methodical study of defensive systems should be carried out, together with the analysis of the medieval context of the Palace and the understanding of the Norman court’s ceremonials in Palermo. Although both the Treasury Hall and the central staircase still remain a field of hypotheses, the lower levels under the Treasury Hall may have hosted the original access system of the Torre Pisana, which acted as a majestic Entrance Hall with a royal vestibule to receive embassies, linked with the “via cooperta”, a privileged path for the king. This peculiar configuration, resembling the Ifrīqī minarets even in their functional relationship with the porticoes of the “saḥn” (Figure 27), could be attributed to the Norman county or perhaps even to a pre-Norman period. In this context, as suggested above, we cannot exclude that the two lower levels of the tower were pertaining to an original defensive tower erected in the Kalbid period to protect the newly made “Bāb ar-Riyād”, similar in its configuration and function to the tower of Qaṣr al-Manār. Without any doubt, Roger, after having been crowned king, would have finally accomplished the Byzantinization of the Maḡribī model of this tower, eventually adding mosaics inspired by the Chalke in Constantinople.

To conclude, the Torre Pisana remains a unicum among the Siculo-Norman constructions, and probably represents Roger II’s first contribution to the fortress established by his uncle Robert Guiscard. It was inspired by Maḡribī models, as well as other Siculo-Norman buildings were characterized by the presence of an internal courtyard (“durq’a”) which probably originated from an updated Ifrīqī Fāṭimid model.²³⁴ Then, the king likely commissioned the mosaic

232 Indeed, in the surveys by Di Stefano/Krönig (Figure 32), embrasures on the other side are also pointing from the Joharia towards the roof.

233 A tridimensional survey of the tower has been carried out in view of the new project of its restoration, issued by the “Protezione Civile” of Palermo. This survey has not been published yet.

234 As n. 189.

of the Great Hall, since Byzantine craftsmen were already available within the workshop.²³⁵ In this perspective, the Torre Pisana would represent the very first experimentation of architectural and artistic mixture, in line with the process of syncretism firmly adopted by the king in his political strategies²³⁶ and perfectly achieved in his Royal Palace through the insertion of Byzantine mosaics decorating a Mağribī tower.²³⁷

Understanding and critically evaluating this conglomerate process goes hand in hand with the need to distinguish each of its components. Recognizing the contributions of different, even melted cultures means identifying every facet of Siculo-Norman art and architecture, which allows us to frame this phenomenon in a wider, medieval Mediterranean perspective.²³⁸ From an architectural point of view, the identification of the mechanisms of this syncretic process could represent the only way to detect different chronological layers, though compressed within the narrow space of the Norman period.²³⁹ Likewise, to disregard the Islamic components would inevitably corrupt the real meaning of the Arabic features that distinguish the Siculo-Norman architecture.²⁴⁰

Abbreviation

FSI Fonti per la Storia d'Italia, Roma 1887–1993

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235 From this point of view, even the hypothesis according to which the wall mosaics in the Norman Stanza were accomplished in the period of Roger II can be taken into account, see LONGO 2014b, p. 332 sq.

236 On this concept see now BONGIANINO 2012.

237 Apart from the chronological divergence, the interpretation by Knipp in my opinion deserves to be supported.

238 As n. 187.

239 See for instance the outcome of this approach in LONGO 2014b.

240 On this issue see LONGO 2013.

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