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A COMPARISON OF NORMAN ARCHITECTURE IN THE KINGDOMS OF ENGLAND AND SICILY

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ABSTRACT

This study offers a comparison of the differing architectural styles and forms in the Norman Kingdoms of Sicily and England, exploring what exactly differed, as well as attempting to determine why such differences exist in each area. In the Kingdom of England, the Normans largely imported their own forms from Normandy, incorporating little of the Anglo-Saxon architectural heritage. There are in fact examples of seemingly deliberate attempts to eliminate important Anglo-Saxon buildings and replace them with structures built along Norman lines. By contrast, in the Kingdom of Sicily, buildings erected after the arrival of the Normans feature a mix of styles, incorporating features of the earlier Islamic, Byzantine and local Italian Romanesque, as well as the Normans' own forms.

It is difficult to say why such variance existed, but there are numerous possibilities. Some result from the way each state was formed: England had already existed as a kingdom when the Normans conquered the land and replaced the ruling class, while the Kingdom of Sicily was a creation of the Norman conquerors; furthermore, the length of time taken to complete the conquest contrasted greatly. Another reason is that the pre-conquest cultural situation varied, as England was overwhelmingly Anglo-Saxon, in juxtaposition to the Italian, Byzantine and Arab elements in the Mezzogiorno and Sicily. Additionally, the cultural and trading influence of the Byzantine Empire and Islamic nations may have contributed to the eclectic architecture found in the Kingdom of Sicily. Other forms of cultural and artistic expression in the Kingdom of Sicily likewise show a cultural blend absent in England.

Finally, there will be a brief look at the political and social situation in the two realms, in order to understand if these cultural expressions are representative of dissimilar societies and models of government. In the Kingdom of Sicily, a number of non-Normans rose to prominence, and some families which had held power before continued to do so. In England, the Norman nobility was much larger and held far more high-ranking positions. Architectural differences are therefore somewhat symbolic.
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Introduction

In both Britain and the Italian south, the Normans left behind a still distinguishable linguistic and cultural legacy, one still readily apparent over nine centuries after their initial arrival in both areas. In both locales, their cultural traditions became grafted onto those of the locals. Some of the most visible remnants of their arrival are the buildings they erected in both areas. A study of the architectural remains in each region demonstrates clearly the fact that the Normans brought lessons learned in construction with them to new conquests; however, it also shows a distinct difference in how much the Normans were willing to adopt and adapt to the styles of these lands. Norman architecture in Britain maintains a form much closer to contemporary buildings back in Normandy, while similar structures in the Mezzogiorno, or southern Italy and Sicily, incorporate many features typical to the diverse cultures found there. It is hard to explain why such a difference occurred, but there are many different possibilities.

First is geographical separation. Britain and Normandy were only separated by a short sail across the English Channel, while to travel from either location to the Mezzogiorno required either a long trek through various states in France and Italy or, much more commonly, a sea voyage all the way around Iberia. While communication and trade did occur, this distance must have lessened the bond between Normans in northern Europe and those further south.

Additionally, the political situation may have contributed significantly. After the coronation of William the Conqueror in London, the Norman King of England also remained the Duke of Normandy, meaning that both lands were under the control of the same ruler. By contrast, the Normans at first established distinct political entities in the Mezzogiorno, ultimately uniting the area as the Kingdom of Sicily, ruled by its own kings. Related to this key difference is the fact that the Kingdom of England was
a single political entity which the Normans simply took control of; the Kingdom of Sicily was a creation of the Norman conquerors. Sicily was an Arab emirate, while the mainland consisted of a variety of smaller states and Byzantine holdings. During the process of forging the Kingdom of Sicily, the Normans gradually conquered these lands over the course of more than a century, whereas the Kingdom of England was taken by the Normans in a very short span of time, with the conquest famously decided by a single battle at Hastings in 1066.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the cultural climate in each area was extremely different. England was a largely monocultural land dominated by the Anglo-Saxons, at least in comparison to the Mezzogiorno. Other cultural influences did exist, such as those coming from Celtic and Norse traditions, but the overwhelmingly dominant culture was that of the Anglo-Saxons. The Kingdom of Sicily was made up of lands which had an extremely varied cultural heritage. Unlike England, where the Anglo-Saxon culture had overtaken the Romano-British one (as evidenced by the adoption of English and the development of a different common-law legal system), the influence of Latin culture remained much stronger in Italy, despite the similar arrival and settlement of other cultures, such as the Ostrogoths and the Lombards, groups who were Germanic, just like the Anglo-Saxons. The Ostrogoths and Lombards did, however, leave some mark. Apart from this Germanic impact, the Eastern Roman Empire still held sway over its much-diminished holding, providing a Byzantine influence. Finally, at the time of the Norman conquest of Sicily, the island had been under Islamic control for about two centuries, lending it an Arabic tilt.

All these factors resulted in a very different cultural scenario in each land, which can be identified through the architecture erected under Norman control during the era following the conquest. Unfortunately, there are a number of problems in each area in an examination of their architecture. First is the types of buildings left. Some structures, particularly churches and castles, are rather easy to compare and numerous examples can be found. However, civil architecture is more difficult to identify. For instance, very few individual houses from the time in question exist in England, with civil, non-
ecclesiastical architecture being also problematic. Another issue is the difficulty involved in separating
the Normans' continuation of styles and themes from the cultures already in each area, with their
borrowing of styles from neighbors who were powerful and important for trade. A similar question is
whether the Normans in Italy utilized Islamic and Byzantine styles simply because the locals had already
used these or because the Normans were exposed to these cultures through trade around the
Mediterranean.

Another major issue deals with the restorations done on some of the structures. Luckily, there
seem to have been no restorations to the extreme of those carried out by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc on
medieval French buildings, like the Notre Dame de Paris or Mont Saint-Michel.\(^1\) Nonetheless, a certain
degree of caution must be maintained, as even some early twentieth-century restorers may have sought to
turn a building into what they felt it should have been, rather than what it actually was. Related to this is
another modern problem, that of a lack of historical documentation of many buildings. This sometimes
makes it difficult to determine who ordered the structure built, and when it was erected. Attention must
also be paid to additions, and when these were built on.

One further distinction must be made in an examination of the architecture of the Mezzogiorno
and England. At what point did the Norman era end? For the Mezzogiorno, the end of the House of
Hohenstaufen (taking place between 1266 and 1268), which resulted in the beginning of Angevin, then
Aragonese rule, is commonly used as an end to the period, but a better view is that the Normans gradually
became a part of the local population, much as occurred in England. Therefore, in both the Mezzogiorno
and Britain, the examination will be of the period from the conquest of England in 1066, and a roughly
century-long process beginning in the early eleventh century in Italy, until the late thirteenth century.

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Commentary*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1990, 5. An example is Viollet-leDuc’s complete alteration of
the flying buttresses of the nave of Notre-Dame de Paris, which were invaluable in their original form, as they were
widely considered the first true Gothic buttresses.
Significantly, this means that an interesting phenomenon is included: the introduction of Gothic architecture, which happened after the conquest in each land (this itself introduces a slight problem in the Mezzogiorno, as it is sometimes hard to define whether a broken arch is in a Gothic or Islamic fashion; occasionally, a building appears to have arches in both styles).

It is clear that, while the Normans were keen to import their styles from Normandy to conquered lands, in the Mezzogiorno, they were much more willing to adapt local and foreign styles and themes into their work than they were in England. This is most evident in the churches they built; in England, the churches bear a striking similarity to those found in Normandy, but in the Kingdom of Sicily, they incorporate Islamic, Byzantine, and local Italian styles in a way which highly differentiates their architecture from that in Normandy. Even Norman military architecture in the Mezzogiorno, which was perhaps the most conservative form of their architecture, there is a difference from the structures they built in Northern Europe.
Chapter 1

Norman Architecture in the Kingdom of England

Introduction

1066 marked the last major conquest of England by a force from the European continent. Just as with the two invasions that occurred earlier in the millennium, major cultural changes took place, including the importation of new architectural styles. To this day, many castles and churches erected following the Norman conquest still stand, though often with a number of alterations. These structures give an interesting look at the type of culture that the Normans fostered on the northern side of the English Channel, and provide an interesting contrast with the architecture built by their fellows in Italy. Unfortunately, there are few remaining buildings beyond those used for military and ecclesiastical purposes.

Overall, as shall be seen, the Normans were seemingly more uniform in their approach to construction in Britain than in Italy. The Normans in Italy, as discussed below, erected structures in a variety of styles, mixing Byzantine, Islamic, local Italian, and their own forms, as well as clearly in just one of these categories; the Normans in Britain initially utilized their own imported Romanesque style, and gradually made the transition to Gothic, while incorporating very little of the Anglo-Saxon tradition. Again, as shall be seen, this may well have resulted from the circumstances of the two different conquests. The conquest of England took place in 1066 largely within the span of a few months, in contrast to the decades of conquest and unification of southern Italy. Prior to the Norman invasion, England was dominated by Anglo-Saxon culture. Although there were some regional differences, there was still identifiably one culture. In addition to this, England was already a single unified political entity. Thus, to the Normans, it was important to assert their new dominance and ownership of a land populated
by a people culturally very different. Erecting buildings in their own style and even destroying important Anglo-Saxon monuments showed that the Normans were in power. In Italy, the Normans used a different approach because the Norman state there was freshly formed; therefore the amalgam of styles could be said to be an attempt to create a new national identity. Additionally, Norman England maintained strong cross-cultural connections, as Normandy was under the same ruler until its loss to the French in 1204. One final factor is that, even after the loss of Normandy, England was physically close to France, and was thus influenced by French cultural developments, particularly the rise of Gothic. The Kingdom of Sicily, on the other hand, was in the center of the Mediterranean, resulted in a strong cultural influence from all directions, including the continued influence of the Eastern Roman Empire and the Islamic world.

**Before the Conquest**

There are certainly more surviving testaments to the Norman era architecture in England than to the Anglo-Saxon period. Virtually all the remaining structures from before the Norman conquest are churches. Although the Normans had to leave the basic structure intact, the Anglo-Saxon churches are still usually even more heavily modified than the later Norman buildings.

One clear feature of Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical architecture is the belfry. Typically, these were erected at the ecclesiastical west end of the church, over the entrance. It has been suggested that this was for defensive purposes.² There are some good examples of this, particularly at St. Michael at the North Gate (Figure 1), located in Oxford. The only remaining part of the Anglo-Saxon church, the belfry, was erected in the later part of the Anglo-Saxon era with a somewhat military style. The tower is rather wide, and its stonework has a somewhat rough quality, which was typical of Anglo-Saxon construction. On the upper portion of the tower are some small Romanesque windows, narrow with a semicircle arch at the

top. The windows are grouped in pairs with a carved stone column separating the two windows of each pair. A badly eroded sheela-na-gig (a small carving of a naked woman) is located near one of the windows. Such sheela-na-gigs can be found in some Norman structures, but seem to have been utilized much more elsewhere in the British Isles, particularly in Ireland.

Another example of the Anglo-Saxon belfry can be found at St. Peter's Church, in Barton-upon-Humber (Figure 2). Again, the structure has a square base and is rather wide; the uppermost part of the tower, perhaps a quarter or a fifth of it, was added on at some point after the conquest. However, the structure is interesting due to the presence of unusual windows with a pointed, triangular-shaped top, in addition to the more typical rounded-top Romanesque windows. Windows with triangular-shaped tops are very atypical for Anglo-Saxon architecture. One façade also has blind arcading on the lower three-quarters of the Anglo-Saxon structure, with the lower of two rows of arches being rounded Romanesque arches and the upper row being composed of similar pointed-top arches.

The largest surviving church from before the conquest is located in Brixworth. It is today known as the All Saints' Church (Figure 3), as the saint to whom the church was originally dedicated is now unknown. While much less noticeable than at many spots in pre-Norman Italy, a Roman historical influence can be detected. Some pieces of spolia have been used; more importantly, the church is based around the typical late antique Christian basilica plan. The main nave is separated from the aisles, though instead of by columns, as one would expect, by piers. Today the aisles no longer exist, leaving the piers and arches looking like some sort of arcading visible from the interior and exterior.

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An interesting exercise is to wonder how Anglo-Saxon architecture would have developed had the conquest not occurred or failed. Obviously, any theories along these lines remain pure speculation, but it is interesting to note that Edward the Confessor rebuilt Westminster Abbey from 1050 to 1065, a year before the conquest, in the style of the Romanesque churches of Normandy, in a size and form theretofore unseen in the British isles. William the Conqueror symbolically held his coronation as the new King of England at Westminster on Christmas of 1066. Edward’s structure was replaced by the current church during the thirteenth century, however, it is believed to have been similar to the post-conquest cathedrals built by the Normans in Gloucester and Norwich. Perhaps this indicates that a change in English architecture would have occurred in any case. With only Westminster (and only limited contemporary descriptions at that), there is no way to know the possible impact Norman architecture held during the twilight of Anglo-Saxon rule.

Despite the fact that only a few Anglo-Saxon structures survive today, and few of great importance, some generalizations can be made about what remains. Usually, Anglo-Saxon churches were smaller, both in height and area, compared to some of the massive structures the Normans later erected. The aforementioned Westminster seems to have been the sole example of a large church. In form, Anglo-Saxon churches were closer to the late Roman basilica. Anglo-Saxon structures typically had a much rougher appearance, using stones of varying sizes and types which were not finished off the Normans method. Additionally, bricks and pieces of Roman spolia were utilized. Related to this is a totally different type of sculptural decoration. Anglo-Saxon pieces appear a bit “primitive” and asymmetrical compared to Norman decorations. The Normans also used sculptural decoration more often than and of a greater complexity to the Anglo-Saxons, particularly if one includes columns. The All Saints’ Church in Brixworth’s use of square-based piers, rather than columns, comes to mind as an example of this.

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None of this should be taken to mean that the Anglo-Saxons were in any way inferior in terms of cultural expression to the Normans, particularly since time has erased so many traces of Anglo-Saxon buildings. For instance, perhaps the simple interiors would have been covered in frescoes. Although no trace of frescoes have been found in the examples cited above, this has been advanced as a possibility.\footnote{Reilly, Lisa. “The Emergence of Anglo-Norman Architecture: Durham Cathedral.” ed. Harper-Bill, Christopher. Anglo-Norman Studies XIX: Proceedings of the Battle Conference, 1996. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell & Brewer Ltd., 1997, 337.}

More importantly, the differences between Norman and Anglo-Saxon architecture, both in terms of construction and decoration, may speak to varied cultural values of the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans, which will be explored later. Despite this, arguments have been made that the reason the Normans gave such little thought to Anglo-Saxon architecture instead of their own is specifically because Anglo-Saxon buildings were so much more simply built and unrefined.\footnote{Brown, II, 380.}

\textbf{Wulfstan of Worcester commented on this disregard for the Anglo-Saxons' works, even as he oversaw the total destruction and reconstruction of Worcester Cathedral. He wrote that “we wretches, it is said, destroy the works of the virtuous, as we appear more glorious to ourselves.”\footnote{Brown, II, 380, my translation of: “Nos, inquit, miseri Sanctorum opera destruimus ut nobis laudem comparemus.”}} One of the few possible ways in which the Normans may have adopted Anglo-Saxon building ideas is the aforementioned belfry. At many smaller churches built by the Normans, the method of construction and the overall look differentiate bell-towers from before and after the conquest; however, the placement in relation to the rest of the church reminds one of Anglo-Saxon practice. The Anglo-Saxons usually built their belfries at the liturgical west end of the church, with the entrance passing directly through the tower's base. Although such arrangements were nearly unknown in Normandy before the conquest, they make an appearance at some Norman churches in England. This influence can even be seen at one of the Normans' larger churches, Bury St. Edmunds Abbey (now in
ruins), where St. James's Tower is detached from the church, but is located, at a distance of sixty meters, directly in line with what was the main entryway. A visitor to the Norman church would have entered through a passageway at the base of the tower and then have walked straight to the front doors.  

**After the conquest**

**Ecclesiastical Architecture**

Nonetheless, it is clear that the Normans seemingly wished to ignore nearly any possible influence to be derived from Anglo-Saxon architecture. Even the earliest Norman churches show a distinct move away from the Anglo-Saxon past. One of the best surviving example of Norman ecclesiastical work is the cathedral of Durham (Figure 4). This structure was begun just a couple decades after the conquest and was completed during the early twelfth century. According to an eyewitness, Symeon of Durham, the original Anglo-Saxon church had been “a distinguished and not small work,” but was still replaced by one “greater and of a nobler state.”  

As with just about any medieval church one can think of, alterations were made during succeeding centuries. However, what stands today is still a good representation of what the builders had in mind. There is a clearly defined connection to contemporary churches in Normandy. While the exterior of the church underwent a variety of cosmetic changes from the thirteenth century onward, giving the cathedral a Gothic appearance, the interior remains clearly Romanesque; the central nave is divided from the aisles by a series of thick columns and column clusters, with the arches connecting the columns being of the rounded, Romanesque form. Galleries are located

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11 Brown, II, 382, my translation of “honesto nec parvo opere... nobiliori statis et majori opere.”
above the aisles, and windows looking down from the galleries are grouped in pairs of two round-top arches separated by a column. The vaulting of the aisles (supporting the galleries) and that of the central ceiling over the nave are Romanesque ribbed vaults, though the nave's ceiling is composed of slightly broken arches, which has been called a very early Gothic precursor. This proto-Gothic ceiling is a demonstration of why it is difficult to end a study of Norman architecture before the rise of Gothic. One can find foreshadowing of the movement just decades after the conquest. The galleries also feature quadrant arches which are representative of the movement toward flying buttresses.13

Across the Channel, there are a number of surviving churches which are very similar. The Abbey of St. Lucien in Beauvais is quite comparable to Durham Cathedral in nearly every respect mentioned above. Scholars have come to this conclusion based upon written and drawn descriptions, as well as the scant remains left today (it was closed and largely destroyed during the French Revolution).14 Another example, this time still standing, is the Abbey of St. Étienne (Figure 5), or the Abbaye aux Hommes, in Caen. At this church, the thick walls are particularly reminiscent of Durham Cathedral, though the galleries feel much more open and spacious, with larger windows. All three of these churches had a central crossing tower, though all trace of St. Lucien's is lost, and both St. Étienne and Durham cathedral have lost their original towers, which were replaced by later Gothic structures.15

Other Norman structures in England further illustrate this connection between Normandy and England. For example, Ely Cathedral (Figure 6), despite being radically altered to the point where one could be excused for thinking the entire structure was built during the Gothic period, features a similar construction of the nave. Columns and column clusters support the galleries above the aisles on either side of the nave (though here, a second, smaller gallery is located above the first), Romanesque windows, supported by columns, open from the galleries, and ribbed vaults support the ceiling over the aisles.

13 Gardner, 565-6.
14 Gardner, 564-9
15 Gardner, 566-7.
Additionally, a tower once stood over the crossing.\textsuperscript{16} Much of the same can be said of the older Romanesque elements of Peterborough Cathedral.\textsuperscript{17}

While these structures were often built on the site of important Anglo-Saxon churches, at none of the major cathedrals is there any trace of the older structure. Carrying out such an operation required the razing of the Anglo-Saxon building. This is arguably a specific attempt to wipe away the Anglo-Saxons' architectural legacy.\textsuperscript{18} Not only was there no major attempt to incorporate the traditions of the past, but there was a direct erasure of elements of Anglo-Saxon culture. Only some small Anglo-Saxon churches, overwhelmingly in rural areas, were ultimately able to survive destruction. This was particularly the case at sites of significance to the Anglo-Saxons. For instance, the Normans began construction of a new cathedral at Winchester within a very short time of the conquest.\textsuperscript{19} Winchester's Old Minster was of great importance, signaled by the fact that some Saxon kings had been buried there. Within a few decades of the conquest, a new cathedral was begun. Although the original Norman cathedral was largely replaced over the years, parts of the transepts remain, unlike the Anglo-Saxon structure.\textsuperscript{20} The bones of the Anglo-Saxon kings are still memorialized in the cathedral, but there is nothing else visible to remind one of their people's and culture's presence. The Saxon kings were in effect appropriated by the Normans and the Normans' successors, while at the same time the Normans obliterated Anglo-Saxon culture. Likewise, at Bury St. Edmunds Abbey, the old Anglo-Saxon church—which was a pilgrimage site holding the relics of


\textsuperscript{17} Mcaleer, 88.

\textsuperscript{18} Reilly, 335.

Edmund, the martyred king of the East Angles, and had received a number of renovations from important patrons—was completely replaced by a now-ruined Norman structure begun less than two decades after the conquest.  

The different styles one can see at Winchester cathedral today is a reminder that Norman architecture was not at all static. While the nave dates from the fourteenth century, just beyond the period of this study, the retrochoir was rebuilt, beginning the thirteenth century, in an Early English Gothic form. Winchester Cathedral's retrochoir is among the earliest of a new style of architecture which found its way from across the Channel in the thirteenth century.

**The rise of Gothic**

Many of the great cathedrals and churches of England which one encounters today are Gothic. This style, introduced from France, swept across England, transforming construction. While it had its origins in France, English Gothic ended up developing its own unique peculiarities which distinguishes it from the continental styles. While it is hard to determine when the Norman period ended, and thus where to end a study of Norman architecture, including the introduction of Gothic is beneficial, as it is possible to contrast how both the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Sicily took part in the same stylistic development, and how each created its own themes.

It is hard to say when Gothic architecture made its first appearance. In Italy, for instance, certain elements made their appearance even in Norman structures begun just a couple decades after the conquest. While Durham Cathedral is overall a clearly Romanesque church, the aforementioned proto-Gothic arches attest to the existence of Gothic foreshadowing as early as the eleventh century. Likewise, Gloucester (begun in 1089) and Rochester (1115-1130) both display certain Gothic elements; both

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21 Fernie, Eric, 4.

22 Crook & Kusaba, 294.
predate the famous “first” Gothic church of St.-Denis. Certainly, St.-Denis put together many elements and is a highly original design, but it must be seen as part of an evolution, descended from many earlier examples in Normandy, France, England, and elsewhere. England’s part of this evolution demonstrates again that a strong cross-Channel connection existed during the Norman era. St.-Denis itself demonstrates this, as it is firmly considered a Gothic church, but still contains some Romanesque features and influence, particularly noticeable when one views the façade and the vaulting of the nave. The former has the heavier look of a Romanesque church and also features both Gothic and Romanesque arches, while the latter is shaped in a sort of Romanesque-Gothic hybrid. The same can be said of the ruined Fountains Abbey (Figure 7), near Ripon, roughly contemporaneous to St. Denis (Fountains Abbey was begun while St. Denis was under construction). There, the columns separating the nave from the aisles support Gothic arches (not a sort of transitional arch seen at some sites, but a full Gothic arch), yet the arches over the aisle and the windows high up on the wall of the nave are clearly Romanesque. A few kilometers away, Ripon Cathedral's choir (Figure 8), built during the last two decades of the twelfth century, shows a nearly full transition to Gothic. There, the emphasis is put upon a great height supported by tall, narrow broken arches, with only a few traces of Romanesque, which are mostly some small windows to the outside at ground level.

Lincoln Cathedral is probably the best example of Early English Gothic. If historical reports are to be believed, the spire of the crossing-tower of Lincoln Cathedral took the desire for height to such an extreme that, at one hundred sixty meters, the church was the tallest building in the world from the spire's completion in the early fourteenth century until its collapse in 1548 (it has never been rebuilt). However, Bond, 266. Bond, 101-102. Kendrick, A. F. The Cathedral Church of Lincoln: a History and Description of its Fabric and a List of the Bishops. London: George Bell & Sons, 1902, 60. The actual height is believed to have been shorter than reported in contemporary reports, but there is disagreement over what its actual height would have been.
that particular feature is past the era of interest here by a few decades. Even without it, though, the cathedral is still of an inspiring height, towering over the rest of Lincoln. The choir (Figure 9), begun in 1192, is still of interest for its height, as well as all the marks demonstrating a complete shift to Gothic. Romanesque structures were still being built in rural areas, but their time was limited. Both on the interior and exterior, every arch is bent, the walls, columns, and other pieces of stonework are thinner, with a greater emphasis on height felt, while pointed buttresses support the walls. Yet, importantly, Lincoln Cathedral is decidedly English, not in the sense that there are Anglo-Saxon elements, but in the sense that the structure is filled with small features that have no parallel in Normandy or the rest of France. For instance, the choir's ceiling shows signs of being a very early example of a fan vault, which would become a hallmark of English Gothic. Canterbury Cathedral's choir, predating Lincoln Cathedral, also has a similar feature, though Lincoln's is more readily apparent as a fan vault. No contemporary church in France has such a ceiling. Perhaps this is an indication that the cultural link across the Channel had cooled somewhat during the nearly century following the loss of the Duchy of Normandy. The Normans now only possessed their British holdings, thus they may have no longer desired to have a style so similar to that across the Channel, and they may have desired to forge something new and independent.

Oftentimes, this second later stage of Norman building appears to have taken on a tone similar to the first; grand, important Romanesque buildings were largely torn down to make way for new Gothic edifices, just as the initial Norman builders had torn down Anglo-Saxon churches to make way for Romanesque ones. This development of Gothic indicated a move away from earlier Norman Romanesque structures. As shall be seen below, Gothic was likewise introduced into Italy, but developed very differently. Gothic architecture in England first mixed with Norman Romanesque, then came unto its own, as the Early English Gothic. In all the Gothic examples above, there is really no detectable evidence

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28 Brown, II, 382.
of an Anglo-Saxon legacy. English Gothic had its peculiarities separating it from the Gothic styles of the continent, but these peculiarities are descended from late Norman developments. By contrast, the early development of Gothic in the kingdom of Sicily continued to display a mix of styles. Additionally, it is sometimes hard to determine whether a structure is Gothic, as the Gothic arch is very similar to the Islamic arch. Even early on, some Norman structures featured this arch, which makes it difficult to say if it is an example of a proto-Gothic style, like Durham Cathedral, or if it is simply the result of an Islamic influence. Therefore, the early development of Gothic in both kingdoms displays the same sort of cultural inclusion or lack thereof, as did Norman Romanesque.

Military architecture

Some of the most common reminders today of the Norman era are their castles, with the well-known defining feature being the Norman keep. These towers typically featured a square base with a tower at each corner, were the centerpiece of the castle, being surrounded with at least one ring of walls, and are notable for their height. The most famous example of such a building is the White Tower in London, though its semicircular projection from one wall to incorporate St. John's Chapel renders it rather unique.

However, many Norman castles were at first built in the earlier motte-and-bailey form, such as Launceston Castle and the two castles erected in York: Clifford's Tower (Figure 10), commonly called York Castle, and Baile Hill (Figure 11). Motte-and-bailey castles were centered around an earthen mound surmounted by a structure which was usually built of wood, though these wood structures were commonly replaced by a new incarnation of stone at a later point of time. Around the base of the mound a
wooden palisade and moat were constructed. While the origins of the motte-and-bailey type are under contention, it certainly was under the Normans in Normandy that this form came into its own.29

One of the earliest examples of a motte-and-bailey castle is Langeais Château in the Centre Region of France, south of Normandy, built by Fulk Nerra during the late tenth century. According to tradition, Fulk Nerra was responsible for building about thirty castles during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries as bases from which his military strength could be projected;30 regardless of the veracity of this, castle-building certainly caught on among the Normans and their rivals in northern France. Naturally, when they arrived in England, this style came along as well. William the Conqueror supposedly brought along a prefabricated wooden keep only needing a mound of dirt on which it could be assembled.31 Although England had other forms of fortifications, the castle was truly a Norman import, as seemingly less than a dozen fortifications are known to have been in use in England during Harold Godwinson's reign.32 In fact, four or five of the extant fortifications in England were erected by Frenchmen who had been brought across the Channel by Edward the Confessor.33 Unlike in Southern Italy and Sicily, as shall be seen, the majority of castles visible today are of Norman construction, much as with their larger churches. There are a few exceptions to this, perhaps most notably Portchester Castle (Figure 12), where the ruins of the keep and some surrounding structures are Norman, but the curtain wall is largely Roman.

29 Kaufmann, J. E., & Kaufmann, H. W. The Medieval Fortress: Castles, Forts and Walled Cities of the Middle Ages. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 2001, 109-10. Kaufman also notes here that one possible explanation is that this form of fortification is derived from the simple entrenchments founded by the Norsemen who settled in Normandy, as the Vikings surrounded some settlements with entrenchments, moats, and wooden palisades, but such simple fortifications were commonplace across much of Europe in different cultures.

30 Kaufman, 105-6. The actual number is probably lower, as some castles attributed to Fulk Nerra were likely built by someone else.

31 Kaufman, 110.

32 Kaufman, 111.

having been built during the third century. Portchester Castle is in fact one of the most complete Roman forts in existence, due to the fact that the Normans repaired the Roman fortifications and continued using them.\textsuperscript{34} The usage of old Roman fortifications on the continent was more commonplace, but in Norman England, Portchester Castle stands alone, in regards to the extent to which the Roman fortifications were reused. Another possible example is Dover Castle, where some earthworks have been identified as being partly Anglo-Saxon.\textsuperscript{35} Such examples, though, appear to be rather uncommon. Instead, the general appearance is that the Normans seem to have erected castles from the ground up, and did not utilize any influence from the Anglo-Saxons. It must be noted, however, that unlike the churches, Anglo-Saxon military architecture was not very developed. The construction of motte-and-bailey castles largely ceased during the twelfth century, but some, even with wooden structures remained in use for quite a while. As late as 1210, King John ordered work carried out at Sauvey Castle, in Withcote; the earthworks testify only to the existence of a wooden motte-and-bailey.\textsuperscript{36}

Just as with the rise of Gothic overtaking Romanesque, the motte-and-bailey eventually fell to the wayside, in favor of the aforementioned keep; ultimately, further developments changed the design of both keeps and curtain walls. The keep at Dover Castle (Figure 13) is a large and imposing structure nearly nine hundred square meters in area, with sides approximately twenty-nine meters in length and a height almost rivaling its width. This makes the keep of Dover Castle one of the largest in England. It was built in the late twelfth century, meaning the keep was one of the last of these large square keeps. There had previously been a wooden keep on the location, which, just as with many motte-and-bailey castles, was replaced with a new stone building. The inner bailey is similarly built and gives a good idea of contemporary curtain walls. Along the wall are fourteen square towers, which project out from the wall;

\textsuperscript{36} Pettifer, 141.
the two gates leading out from the castle are guarded by a tower immediately on either side of the gate. The outer walls date from a few decades later and were heavily altered during later periods (in particular, they were shortened to accommodate artillery fire). However, one interesting tower, the Avranches Tower, is polygonal, pointing towards the future shift to rounded towers.37

By the thirteenth century, this trend towards rounded towers and away from the traditional Norman keep had progressed even further. Erected in the 1220s, the ruins of Bolingbroke Castle (Figure 14) offer evidence of this trend. Only the bases of the walls and towers are visible due mostly to destruction suffered during the English Civil War. However, from an aerial view, one can clearly see the layout of the fortifications. The castle is rather small, essentially composed of a single curtain wall with no keep. The imposing keep built during earlier periods was no longer deemed necessary. The wall is hexagonal in shape with a semicircular tower projecting from each corner.38 Both of these features result from the evolution of castle building in England at this time, and show the continued cross-Channel influence, despite the loss of Normandy.

It is noteworthy that the Normans continued taking their castle designs with them when they went further afield than England. A number of Norman castles remain in Ireland as a result of this fact. Trim Castle (Figure 15) was begun in 1172, shortly after the Normans first stepped on the shores of Ireland. It seems that the very first structure, of which nothing is left now, was a motte-and-bailey built in 1172.39 This was replaced with the stone keep around 1220, though rather than being square, the keep is an irregular polygonal shape. Despite this, it is clearly recognizable as Norman, with its square towers and impressive height. The curtain walls date from approximately the same time as the keep, and feature a

37 Gravett, 24-5.
38 Pettifer, 141-2.
mix of rectangular and semicircular towers, fitting the transition seen in Norman castles in Great Britain.\textsuperscript{40}

Just as they had done in 1066, the Normans once again brought their fortification styles with them across the seas, not drawing much from the locals at all.

**Civil Architecture**

As shall be seen, there are some interesting examples of civil architecture in Sicily and Southern Italy, such the mysterious Arabic-inspired structures of La Zisa and La Cuba. In England, however, there are seemingly fewer comparable buildings left. As was true for many Norman castles, many other Norman structures were built of wood. One of the best buildings today is the great hall of Oakham Castle (Figure 16) (the only remaining building at the site), originally wood, but rebuilt during the mid-twelfth century of stone.\textsuperscript{41} The overall structure is somewhat like a church: long, a central “nave” flanked by two aisles. The doorways, including some later walled in, are Romanesque, while the windows (apart from some wooden windows protruding from the ceiling) are very early Gothic. The ground-level windows are paired in groups of two with a column dividing them, as seen in previous and contemporary Norman buildings. The interior is laid out like a church, with a central nave and two side aisles divided by columns. The columns and capitals are well done, and are very similar to work in the Canterbury Cathedral choir, making it possible the work was done by the same stonemasons.\textsuperscript{42}

One further note to consider related to the architecture of the buildings themselves is town-planning. The best-preserved example of this is at Bury St. Edmunds, where part of the layout near the abbey has a grid-pattern (Figure 17); the main street, Churchgate Street, lined up with the axis of the church. One can still walk down this street, closer and closer to St. James's Tower. Prior to the church's

\textsuperscript{40} Sweetman, 128-9.

\textsuperscript{41} Pettifer, 140.

\textsuperscript{42} Pettifer, 140.
destruction, a visitor would then have emerged on the other side of the tower to see the façade perfectly aligned with the street behind. This idea likely came from some locations of Norman town-planning in Normandy, like Rouen. While this presents an interesting possibility of even further Norman construction patterns, Bury St. Edmunds is the only clear example of a town being laid out so carefully and centered on the axial alignment of a building, limiting the ability to give a wider context to this fact, other than that it fits with the general trend of Norman-influenced construction plans during the period.

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43 Fernie, Eric, 12-14.
Chapter 2

Norman Architecture in Southern Italy and Sicily

Introduction

The Normans arrived in the Italian South to find a world completely unlike that which some of their fellows encountered in England. (Figure 34) Apart from finding a land with different flora and fauna and a much warmer climate, they also found that southern Italy was culturally very different from England. England was near the periphery of Europe, whereas the Italian south was in the center of the Mediterranean in a prime position for trade and cultural interaction. Consequently, England was dominated by Anglo-Saxon culture when the Normans arrived, while Southern Italy was a host to Arabic, Byzantine, and “native” Italian cultures. The later itself was derived from a mix of Roman, Greek, Lombard, and other cultural elements. As a result of this mixed heritage, a variety of styles, with three major groupings, were prevalent throughout the region, compared to the comparatively monocultural forms of architecture found in England. The first was Romanesque Italian, a form which gradually developed in the area from the Late Antique era influenced by the arrival of the Lombards. In the areas under the control of the Eastern Roman Empire, there was a strong Byzantine cultural influence. Finally, in the Caliphate of Sicily, under Arabic rule, there was a strong Islamic influence. These styles were not exclusively found in areas under the control of a specific culture; thus, for instance, a Byzantine influence was felt in the southern mainland outside of the areas under the control of the Eastern Roman Empire. However, architectural styles were quite region-specific. One must keep in mind that, besides featuring a cultural mix, southern Italy was divided between entirely different political entities. England, on the other hand, existed as a single kingdom.
After the Normans arrived during the early eleventh century, they gradually consolidated their power and conquered the entire region. While they brought their own architectural ideas from Normandy, they continued in the tradition of mixing their own forms with those which were already present in the area to create a unique style. Moreover, they spread the styles found in the kingdom beyond the borders of the earlier states. Thus, under the Normans, the influence of Arabic architecture was extended to the mainland, and the influence of Byzantine architecture spread throughout the rest of the mainland and into Sicily. In other words, both styles spread throughout the kingdom, beyond their earlier borders. However, much of the Arabic and Byzantine cultural influence may have come not only from the fact that the Normans had replaced such states in Italy, but also from the fact that there was a high degree of trade and interaction between the Norman kingdom and its neighbors.

Before the Conquest

Studying pre-Norman buildings throughout the south is difficult because of the far fewer number of buildings dating to before the arrival of the Normans than after it. However, there is enough evidence to see clearly the great change upon architecture wrought by the Norman conquest, though it is important to remember that the Normans were not the first invaders to find their way into southern Italy, nor would they be the last. The influence of various waves of conquerors was still strong throughout the South.

After the Eastern Roman Empire had seized control of Italy during the sixth century, Byzantine influence in the Italian south waned, as first the Lombards invaded from the north, then the Arabs from the south. Still, when the Normans began carving out a land for themselves during the eleventh century, the Byzantines held most of Apulia and Calabria, as well as parts of Campania. In these areas, the architecture reflected that of the Byzantine rulers. An example of this is the Cattolica (Figure 18), located in Stilo, Calabria, constructed in the tenth to early eleventh centuries.\textsuperscript{44} The Cattolica is built in the

common cross-in-square pattern of Byzantine churches (Figure 19). Four columns serve to divide the roughly square interior into nine approximately equal areas, five of which form the cross. Over the center and corner squares are five domes, each supported by a drum, with the central dome elevated higher than the others. The structure is built primarily of brick, incorporating patterns into the work, like many Byzantine structures elsewhere. The structure is very small overall, another feature common to Byzantine churches. The interior was heavily painted, displaying Byzantine iconography. Some of this came to light following a restoration from 1947 to 1951, though what is left is a small fragment of what once existed.\footnote{About the restoration, Zago, 44. About the remaining frescoes and their iconographic significance, Zago, 47-59.}

Other, less well-preserved examples of Byzantine architecture exist in the southern Italy, such as the church of San Marco in Rossano, Calabria, but the Cattolica is unquestionably the best example of Byzantine architecture in southern Italy.

The Lombards had been instrumental in pushing the Byzantines out of most of Italy, and some further developments of late antique Italian architecture was Lombard. The Lombards seem to have taken an interest in continuing later Roman styles, and some of their early works are quite conservative in form, for example, the Tempietto del Clitunno (Temple of Clitumnus), near Campello sul Clitunno, which is much more reminiscent of earlier pagan temples than contemporary Christian basilicas.\footnote{Personal visit, 06/12.} Benevento is home to some excellent examples of pre-Norman Lombard architecture. Perhaps foremost among them is the church of Santa Sofia (Figure 20). Arechis II (758-787), the Lombard Duke of Benevento, erected the church around 760. Unfortunately, the church was damaged by two earthquakes in 1688 and 1702, after which Cardinal Pietro Orsini (later Pope Benedict XIII) ordered a reconstruction of the structure along Baroque lines. A number of heavy alterations (to be discussed further below) were made during this reconstruction. A major restoration effort was carried out in 1958, which attempted to restore the medieval character of the church, while keeping features of the later reconstruction. Most notably the
façade, which still has a decidedly Baroque appearance, was retained. However, Baroque additions were removed from a medieval arch over the entrance original to the building. Restorations in Italy are a topic which is worth a great deal of discussion. Particularly during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many of the churches remodeled during the Baroque era were stripped of the later additions to reveal the medieval structure, even though their medieval decorations were long gone. In a number of cases, the exterior has been left in its Baroque state, while the rest of the structure has been brought back to its medieval form. An example of such would be the cathedral of Viterbo, where the exterior is very Baroque, but the interior has been stripped of all post-medieval alterations. These restorations essentially require the destruction of the Baroque era decorations and modifications, which is sometimes questionable, especially in the case of Santa Sofia, which required extensive architectural alterations to bring it back to its medieval form. The restored medieval church makes a heavy use of spolia, a feature heavily marking southern Italian architecture when the Normans arrived and a feature which continued well after their arrival. The structure's walls are built of a mix of brick and stone, another feature typical for the area (Figure 21).

Nevertheless, Santa Sofia has a plan which is highly unusual. The current state of the church, meant to represent the layout prior to the Baroque representation, is a strange shape, forming a circle, but with three apses opposite the entrance, and disrupted by two angular projections (perhaps in an attempt to represent the points of a star) along the curve of the wall on either side of the entrance. The roof is supported by two rings of columns, set one inside the other. There is no extant direct parallel for this exact form, inside Italy or out, though some have attempted to draw connections to other structures,

48 Carella, 48. There exists an alternative interpretation of the original structure, which hypothesizes a small apse on both sides of each angular projection, for a total of six additional apses. In this interpretation, each projection is also smaller.
including San Lorenzo in Milan, San Vitale in Ravenna, and the Küçük Ayasofya Camii (Small Hagia Sophia Mosque; former Saints Sergius and Bacchus) in Istanbul. All these structures may have drawn influence from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem; ergo, the same may be true for the Santa Sofia, because of similarities in the overall design.

After the conquest

Ecclesiastical Architecture

The cultural climate that the Normans encountered can clearly be said to be highly diverse, not only in that there was a high degree of variation in areas controlled by different rulers, but that there was already a history of importing and borrowing different styles. Thus, the Normans simply continued to propagate these traditions once they came to power. An excellent example of this practice is the cathedral of Casertavecchia (Figure 22), also spelled Caserta Vecchia. 49 This church was erected by a Bishop Rainulf, about whom nothing else is known (though his name indicates a Norman background), beginning in 1120 and concluding in 1153. 50 Unfortunately, like many southern Italian structures, there is much disagreement and uncertainty over the date of various parts of the building. Some, including Gustav Künstler, argue that the entire building was erected more or less in its current state during this period (apart from some obvious renaissance and baroque alterations), 51 while others contend that the most interesting portions of the structure, the transept and dome over the crossing, date from a later period.

49 Personal visit, 05/12.


given the stylistic differences of these elements (the vaults of the transept appear to be Gothic) and some recent archaeological evidence.\textsuperscript{52} The later interpretation seems to make sense, but is contradicted by patterns found in the walls of the nave which match those in the dome. If the argument is that the patterns on the dome are indicative of a later date, then the same should hold true of the walls of the nave, which is not considered to be of part of any later construction. In any case, the church is a clear demonstration of the Normans' practice of continuing the architectural practices which were prevalent before their arrival and even further developing them. The form of the nave is of the type derived from the late antique basilica, with the aisles separated from the nave by spolia columns. The spolia can be found throughout the church, in another continuing tradition, and it is quite possible that the spolia comes from the site of ancient Capua, modern Santa Maria Capua Vetere, only ten kilometers away. The roof over the nave is build of wooden beams in a common Italian style.

Combined with these features indicative of the region are some highly unusual decorations. Most notable are the Arabic decorations present on many parts of the church. Some interlaced Islamic arches are on the upper portion of the façade. These arches seem to match those found on the campanile and the drum supporting the dome, which, again, seems to be counter to the idea that the transept and dome were erected later. There are similar arches, alluded to earlier, decorating the liturgical southern wall\textsuperscript{53} of the nave, which runs counter to the idea of a separate construction for the transept and dome. Interlacing arches are also present on the campanile, including on the unusual feature at the top of the campanile. This feature, an octagonal structure with four small cylindrical structures around it, is similar to the top of the campanile of Gaeta Cathedral, constructed significantly later during the thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{54} Apart

\textsuperscript{52} D’Onofrio, \textit{Campania}, 181.

\textsuperscript{53} See the glossary for an explanation of liturgical directions.

from this, there is no true parallel in Italy. The usage of Islamic arches on campanili seems to have been rather common in southern and central Italy, including areas outside of Norman control. The cathedral of Terracina is a good example.\(^{55}\) Another, earlier, example is the Martorana, erected around 1200 in Palermo.\(^{56}\) However, the most prominent Islamic-inspired art is on the drum supporting the dome over the crossing (Figure 23). Besides Islamic arches, there are a variety of patterns which are indicative of a clear Islamic influence. Many of the decorations share an almost uncanny similarity to those on another important Norman structure: Monreale Cathedral in Sicily. The decorations on the exterior of the apse and transept of Monreale Cathedral have similar interlacing arches, supported by small, white columns. The arches themselves are decorated in a similar manner; above the arches is a decorated band, and inside the arches are narrow, pointed windows and roundels with star designs. The similarities are truly strong enough that it seems as though one inspired the other, though this cannot be definitively ascertained. Since the age of Casertavecchia Cathedral cannot be fully verified and Monreale Cathedral was begun during the mid-1170s, it is impossible to say which may have inspired the other.\(^{57}\) The placement of the dome itself is unusual, as Norman churches did not normally sport a dome over the crossing. The concept could have been inspired by the Byzantine churches in southern Italy, such as the well-known Cattolica in Stilo, Calabria, San Giovanni del Toro in Ravello, or especially the less famous church of Saint John at the Sea in Gaeta.\(^{58}\) All three featured a cylindrical drum supporting a dome over the transept; the latter even has some decorations not unlike those at Caserta Vecchia, notably the roundels with star-shaped designs. However, while the inspiration may have derived from Byzantine churches, the drums of Byzantine churches were cylindrical, while the one found at Caserta Vecchia is octagonal.

\(^{55}\) Personal visit, 06/12. Also noted by Bertaux, 622.
\(^{58}\) D’Onofrio, *Caserta Vecchia*, 74-5.
The dome itself (Figures 24 & 25) is also a very unique structure which has been identified as similar to a mid-thirteenth-century dome located at the Villa Rufolo in Ravello. A similar, but smaller, dome is located over a small chapel on the liturgical north side of the nave. From the exterior, it appears to have an identical construction to Casertavecchia Cathedral. However, the interior of this dome cannot be examined, as the chapel was remodeled during the baroque era, including the installation of a ceiling below the dome. Unlike the rest of the church, this chapel has been kept in its baroque configuration. A comparison has also been made to the dome over the mihrab at the Cordoba Grand Mosque, but this comparison is questionable, as the ribs of the domes are dissimilar with regards to width and their regularity around the dome. Additionally, the ribs of the Cordoba dome intersect at a point off-center in order to give an appearance like that of a seashell; the ribs of the Casertavecchia dome radiate out of the center. Still, there is certainly an Islamic quality to the Casertavecchia dome. Besides the Islamic features, other architectural elements common with buildings in other areas of Norman control can be found. For instance, in overall form, the sculptural decorations around the windows and the entrances on the façade are reminiscent of those found on the façades of many Norman churches in the Adriatic coastal towns of Apulia.

Despite this total willingness to adapt to local architectural customs, the Normans also brought their own ideas of architecture with them, most notably in their construction of a number of cathedrals scattered throughout the south and in their castle construction program. A number of towns along the Apulian coast have some very well-preserved and excellent examples of Norman military and ecclesiastical architecture. Some excellent examples are Barletta, Trani, Bisceglie, Molfetta, and Bari. The Norman architecture in these towns is remarkably similar. At Trani, the two buildings of greatest importance are the castle and cathedral, both dating from the Norman era. The castle, unfortunately,
underwent a number of alterations throughout the years, finally serving as a prison until the 1970s.

However, the cathedral (Figure 26), located in a superb location only a few meters from the sea and at the northern side of the entrance to the old port, is very well preserved and typical of Norman ecclesiastical construction in that part of Apulia. It is much taller than comparable churches erected before the Norman presence, and features a gallery located above the aisles of the main floor of the church (Figure 27). With respect to these forms, Trani cathedral has much more in common with Norman structures in Normandy than earlier buildings in Italy. Casertavecchia also displays a high ceiling, but this is much less pronounced, and overall the general plan is much more typical to southern Italy. The walls are also constructed uniformly out of white stone, an unusual feature in the Italian south. Saint-Georges Abbey, located in Saint-Martin-de-Boscherville in Normandy, shares these features: construction using regular, white stones, a high nave, and galleries over the aisles. Both churches have thick walls supported by primitive forms of buttressing, composed of simple, square columns at Saint-Georges, and similar columns terminating in arches at the top at Trani.

However, there are differences which give Trani a distinctly southern Italian flair. For instance, while there is a transept, it is much less pronounced than that at Saint-Georges Abbey. This follows from Italian churches which often lack a transept. Additionally, the nave at Trani does not continue past the transept crossing. Trani also makes usage of spolia, though much less than some other Norman sites. Most notably, the columns are ancient, and presumably from a few different structures, which can be detected in the different height and thickness of the columns. The sculptural decorations, particularly on the lower part of the façade, appear to show some Islamic influence. Also, the projection of three apses, a large apse with a smaller apse on each side, from the liturgical east end of the church is very common to Italian churches. Trani cathedral is an unusual structure, because it essentially has two churches inside, one directly above the other, with a crypt underneath the lower. This lower church is closer to what one might expect in Italy, such as sporting a low ceiling and a heavy use of spolia.
Byzantine influence can also be found in a great number of churches, which is interesting, given that the East-West Schism had already taken place, leading to a separation between the Byzantine and Western churches. Particularly in Sicily one can find a large number of churches with Byzantine-inspired decorations. Again, the fact that so many good examples of Byzantine art can be found in Sicily shows how the Normans spread the influence of all the cultures they conquered throughout their kingdom, as the Byzantines had lost their last toehold in Sicily to the Arabs over a century before the Normans, in turn, conquered the island. One of the best examples of Byzantine art in Sicily is the Palatine Chapel (Figure 28), or Cappella Palatina in Italian. The Palatine Chapel is located in the Royal Palace of Palermo, a structure begun during the late eleventh century by Robert Guiscard, the Duke of Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily, on the sight of a castle erected by the Emirs. King Roger II later began construction of the Palatine Chapel in 1129. The chapel is typical Italian in its basic form, with a long nave and an aisle on each side. Also common to Italy is the usage of various spolia columns which do not all match each other. Additionally, the floors and lower parts of the walls are decorated in a Cosmatesque style. However, the upper parts of the walls, as well as the dome and parts of the ceiling, are covered with brilliant Byzantine mosaics. Jesus and the saints are shown in the Byzantine tradition. Some biblical passages are inscribed in Greek, rather than Latin, even though some of the biblical scenes shown are normally only depicted in the west. This further shows the interesting and complex ways in which the Normans intermingled the different traditions. To top it all off, the wooden ceiling is one of the finest decorated Arabic ceilings in existence (Figure 29). Among the stalactite-like protrusions are paintings of flora, fauna, and Arabic life.

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63 The Cosmatesque style is a form of decoration which is most commonly found in the Italian region of Lazio, especially in the city of Rome, but also elsewhere in Italy, with occasional examples elsewhere in western Europe. It was pioneered by the Cosmati, an artisan family based in Rome, and consisted of broken pieces of spolia used to form decorative patterns.
culture, and legends. There are also Kufic inscriptions painted onto the ceiling. Additionally, it seems Roger II commissioned the creation of Arabic silks to further decorate the chapel. One would hardly expect to find such fantastic examples of Byzantine and Arabic art in a twelfth-century Latin church. It is simply incredible how the Normans managed oversee the creation of such diverse projects by workers from vastly different cultural backgrounds.

The ceiling in the Palatine Chapel is unique, but the inclusion of Byzantine mosaic work was actually fairly common during the Norman rule, especially in Sicily. Cefalù Cathedral is another celebrated example, where the apse is decorated with Byzantine mosaics. Monreale Cathedral has fantastic Byzantine mosaics stretching down the length of the nave and aisles, along with a very interesting Arabic exterior above mentioned.

The churches discussed above show that, despite a distinct cultural divide on the eve of the Norman Conquest, the Normans were able to take up these varied cultural styles, infuse them with their own, and made further unique developments in each style. However, churches alone do not tell the entire story.

**Military Architecture**

The most frequently encountered form of Norman architecture in Britain today is certainly the castle. In Italy, they also embarked on a castle construction program, and many cities today have a fortress which has an important Norman period. Some such cities include Bari, Barletta, Melfi, Naples,

64 Norwich, 73-7.
Reggio Calabria, Salerno, and Trani. However, studying these castles is problematic, because military defense is key to any city (particularly ports), all of the above castles were heavily altered during successive centuries and continued to see some sort of use.

Melfi Castle (Figure 30) is one of the best examples. Begun in 1041 to protect Melfi, which, at the time, served as the capital of the County of Apulia, for a time the most powerful of the Norman states in Italy. The castle, as it currently exists, is a maze of additions from later owners centered around the original Norman keep. This first structure was of a common Norman form: a tall, rectangular structure with four square corner towers. In this case, there is no indication of any sort of adaptation to local architectural models. The original keep of Melfi Castle is Norman through and through.

Other fortresses show local adaptations, particularly those which were built on the site of older castles. The Castel d'Arechi, overlooking the city of Salerno, gets its name from its builder, Duke Arechis II, the same who built Santa Sofia in Benevento. After it fell into Norman hands in 1077, it was heavily modified to meet the needs of the new owners. The Normans, however, kept much of the original fortress's plan. The placement was fantastic (commanding Salerno, a highly strategic port), and it made little sense to totally demolish a castle to build a new one; thus, the old structure was merely adapted.

These two castles are typical of Norman military construction in southern Italy and Sicily. The Normans used older fortifications which had been standing for, in some cases, centuries. They strengthened and expanded works which existed earlier. This contrasts with Norman military construction in England, as there, the Normans rarely incorporated any older fortifications into their defensive works. However, this may stem from the fact that castles were already common in southern Italy and Sicily, whereas the Anglo-Saxons rarely built significant military fortifications. The use of a Roman fort at

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68 Personal visits, 07/10, 07/11, & 07/12.
70 Gavett, 2, 56.
71 Personal visit, 07/10.
Portchester Castle indicates that they did not have an aversion to using older fortifications, so likely the reason why the Normans approached castle-building so differently in England is simply the fact that the Anglo-Saxons had so few defensive fortifications. Still, it is interesting to note the differences in military architecture in the two lands.

Civil Architecture

Apart from churches and fortifications, there are a variety of other surviving structures which also illustrate the Normans' attitudes towards architectural styles. A few particularly interesting structures are located in Palermo, in what was once a royal garden. The two largest and most important of these structures are the Cuba and the Zisa. These two structures are remarkable for their Islamic features and attest to the Norman rulers' love of Islamic styles. The Cuba (Figure 31) is a large stone pavilion erected by William II around 1180 in his royal gardens.\(^72\) It is a tall, rectangular structure, an appearance which gave it its name (cuba is Italian for cube). Each of the four façades is decorated with large Islamic arches, a series of blind arcades, and niches, while at the top are Arabic inscriptions. The interior is likewise very Islamic, even featuring multiple muqarnas.\(^73\) Debate over the existence and arrangement of the roof, as well as other features, including a dome, remains unresolved.\(^74\) A short distance away is a little square structure called the Piccola (Small) Cuba. This building has a decorated Islamic arch on each of its façades, with a small dome on top. By its appearance and location, it was meant to accompany the Cuba, and was built at approximately the same time.\(^75\) The other important structure in the royal gardens of Palermo is the Zisa (Figure 32), also completed by William II, but begun a bit earlier by his predecessor,


\(^{73}\) Galdieri, 312.

\(^{74}\) Galdieri, 313-5.

\(^{75}\) Leone, 80-81.
William I. Like the Cuba, the Zisa is somewhat rectangular and tall, and the façades are decorated with Islamic arches, though the Zisa has much more elaborate and larger entranceways on the main façade. Also similar to the Cuba are the Islamic decorations on the interior, including, again, muqarnas. The largest muqarna in the Zisa is quite spectacular and is positioned directly over a marble-clad fountain. Elsewhere can be found more marble mounted on the walls and even some mosaic decorations. These structures were built as part of the royal gardens, meaning that they were intended primarily for the enjoyment of the kings and their courts. Therefore, it seems likely that the ruling class saw this as a favorable style and encouraged its usage.

One of the last of the Norman rulers, Frederick II Hohenstaufen, who was also the Holy Roman Emperor, was responsible for one of the most unique buildings ever erected in southern Italy: the Castel del Monte (Figure 33), located near Andria, Apulia. Construction began in 1240, though it was never completed and the actual intended use for it is a mystery. The name (Italian for Castle of the Mountain) leaves the impression of a castle, as do some defensive features, such as loopholes, a slot for a portcullis to defend the main gate, as well as its corner towers, but on closer examination, it is apparent that the structure is of no real defensive purpose. There are no outer defensive works, nor even a moat, only a small keep. The structure sits atop a hill with a good field of sight, but there is nothing to protect, as it is near no town or resource. The loopholes are unpractical, and there are larger windows in the outer wall. There are also no elements one would expect to find inside a castle to withstand a siege. If anything, the castle appears to have been built purely along artistic geometrical lines, as it is octagonal with an

76 Ungruh, 1.
77 Ungruh, 2-4.
78 Ungruh, 5-7.
80 Personal visit, 08/2012.
octagonal tower at each corner, is two-storied with eight equally-sized and shaped rooms on each floor, and has a large octagonal courtyard. The main entrance is clearly classically inspired, with columns, capitals, and a pediment, while the interior walls have large blind arcade arches, which could either be interpreted as Gothic arches or Islamic arches. Again, there is no clear purpose to the structure; it seems almost to have been designed and built as an artistic expression. Similarly to the Cuba and Zisa in Palermo, this is an unusual structure erected for the use of the royalty. All three demonstrate that the Norman kings not only fostered different architectural styles, but also encouraged innovation. This is particularly true of the Castel del Monte, which is unique in the history of architecture as a whole.

Often, even the simplest public buildings featured design elements adapted from one culture or another. This is the case with the Ponte dell'Ammiraglio (Bridge of the Admiral) in Palermo, built around 1132 by George of Antioch, an ethnic Melkite Greek who served as an admiral under King Roger II. The bridge, which is now disused due to changes in the flow of the Oreto river, has very clear Islamic arches. Again, this is a very public embrace of the Islamic form, since other bridges throughout Italy typically use Romanesque arches.

The Normans arrived in Italy to find a land divided between various factions, with multiple architectural styles present. The Normans continued the traditions of each of these cultures. They also made further interesting developments to them and spreading them further afield than had previously been the case, while simultaneously incorporating their own traditions from Normandy. This amazing cultural variety gave rise to a scenario completely unlike that in England.

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81 Leone, 112-3.
Chapter 3

Architecture and its Relation to Society in the Norman Kingdoms

Other forms of cultural expression

Given how differently Norman architecture progressed in each kingdom, it is well worth looking briefly at some other forms of art to see if architecture is representative of how art in general developed in each kingdom. This can reveal if the Normans in general encouraged and patronized the development of the traditional arts of the locals in the same way that they did architecture.

One form of expression the Anglo-Saxons excelled in was the illuminated manuscript. Surviving pre-conquest manuscripts show a strong similarity to the famed contemporary Irish manuscripts and were considered to contain very high-quality illustrations. However, the number of books produced seems to have been lower prior to the conquest. Before the conquest, the monks of Bury St. Edmunds, a site of considerable importance and size, imported a large portion of the books they needed for their library. Around the time of the conquest, however, this was no longer necessary, as book production dramatically increased to much higher levels, both in Bury and the rest of England. This expansion of book production actually occurred over much of western Europe during the same time. Since the conquest

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84 Webber, 186-7.
occurred at the same time, it is difficult to say if it would have resulted in a change from the traditional Anglo-Saxon style. Regardless, with such a large corpus, it is possible to determine if the Normans encouraged the continued production of Anglo-Saxon style works. During the Middle Ages, books were copied from specific exemplars. To return to Bury St. Edmonds, many books created during the decades after the conquest show clear indications that they were copied from manuscripts brought from France, in particular, Saint-Denis, to which the abbot at the time, Baldwin, had a personal connection.\textsuperscript{85} Other scriptoria in England likewise produced books copied from continental works. During the Norman era, many new manuscripts were brought to England; these were used as exemplars from which to produce new copies. Such exemplars were passed from one place to the next in order that more copies could be had.\textsuperscript{86} That said, Anglo-Saxon manuscripts had long been valued on the European continent, and, even though continental exemplars made their appearance in England after the conquest, Anglo-Saxon manuscript did continue to be made after 1066 to some degree. However, between the influence of the Normans, and the introduction of large numbers of continental exemplars, illustrated manuscripts in the Anglo-Saxon style became increasingly less common.\textsuperscript{87}

The single item most strongly identified with the Norman conquest of England is the Bayeux Tapestry (which is not actually a tapestry, but a piece of embroidery). Despite being a depiction of the Norman triumph during the conquest of England, the Bayeux Tapestry was almost certainly created by Anglo-Saxon workers, and can therefore be looked upon, rather ironically, as a prime example of late Anglo-Saxon artistry.\textsuperscript{88} Sadly, it is the only major piece of Anglo-Saxon embroidery in existence today. Lacking pre-conquest examples means that it is difficult to say how much of a continuation the Bayeux Tapestry is of the Anglo-Saxon tradition. However, literary references do confirm that large embroidered

\textsuperscript{85} Webber, 188.
\textsuperscript{86} Webber, 188-9.
\textsuperscript{87} Brown, \textit{Life}, 34.
\textsuperscript{88} Clanchy, 25.
hangings were commonplace in Anglo-Saxon churches. Like the Bayeux Tapestry, which received its name from the fact that it once hung in Bayeux Cathedral in Normandy, a large number of these embroideries were taken by the Normans back to Normandy and mounted in churches, mainly, it is supposed, as a form of war-booty. Although the Bayeux Tapestry was created by Anglo-Saxons, it is a glorification and justification of the Norman Conquest. Therefore, it can be assumed that a Norman, possibly one who took part in the conquest, commissioned its creation. William the Conqueror also sent a significant amount of plundered Anglo-Saxon art to other continental lands, including a huge number of gold items sent to Pope Alexander II. This is curiously unlike what happened with architecture, in that the Normans used Anglo-Saxon art as a form of decoration for their own churches, not only in England, but also in Normandy. However, they may have done so for portable arts as some sort of display of the spoils of war. In a sense, the Normans were like a colonizing power, pilfering valuables and shipping them back home. It is also known that Anglo-Saxon embroidery, especially vestments, often incorporated gold thread for a spectacular appearance. After the conquest, many of these gold-laden embroideries were burnt in order to obtain the gold in them. While the motivation of this may have been entirely economic in nature, the fact that this was so often carried out demonstrates a lack of interest by the Normans in preserving impressive Anglo-Saxon art, just as occurred in architecture. Apart from this initial pilfering and plundering, it is hard to find examples of the Normans seeking out Anglo-Saxon art. This indicates that beyond ransacking riches, they had little interest in Anglo-Saxon cultural expression. This is exactly what one would expect, given their attitudes toward Anglo-Saxon architecture.


90 Dodwell, 216.

91 Dodwell, 217.

92 Dodwell, 219.

93 Dodwell, 181.
In the Kingdom of Sicily, traditional pre-conquest art was often patronized by the Norman rulers. King Roger II commissioned the creation of a royal mantle which still exists today, as it was used by subsequent Sicilian kings, as well as Holy Roman Emperors, after Frederick II held both titles. The mantle was created by a royal workshop in Palermo. Islamic Sicily had been an important center for silk production in the Mediterranean, and the royal mantle demonstrates that this tradition did not end after the Normans took control. The mantle is semicircular and symmetrical, featuring a lion defeating a camel on either side of a palm tree. The lions are representative of the Normans, while the camels symbolize the Arabs. Thus, just like the Bayeux tapestry, it celebrates the Norman conquest.\(^\text{94}\) Also like the Bayeux Tapestry, the work was created by craftsmen of the conquered culture and is in their style. However, the mantle goes even further at incorporating the local art forms, as along the border is Arabic text written in Kufic characters which even render the date (1133) as the Hijri year (Islamic year) 528.\(^\text{95}\) Roger II also had the workshop produce Arabic silks to decorate the Cappella Palatina, which itself was a unique blend of Norman, Italian, Byzantine, and Arabic styles.\(^\text{96}\)

Norman rulers also patronized Greek and Arab writers, not only to produce copies and translations of important texts and manuscripts, but to create new and important works. For instance, Roger II invited the geographer Muhammad al-Idrisi, a native of Islamic Iberia, to come to Sicily and create a special work: a description of the entire known world. Al-Idrisi wrote a long description in Arabic, which combined ancient Greek knowledge with the newest knowledge of both the Islamic and Arabic worlds. His crowning glory was a massive world map covering seventy sheets of paper, known as

\(^\text{94}\) Metcalfe, 244.
\(^\text{95}\) Metcalfe, 149.
\(^\text{96}\) Metcalfe, 244.
the *Tabula Rogeriana*. This was based on the Ptolemaic model of the world, but again incorporated all the available information from the lands all around the Mediterranean.97

In ways like this, Roger II and other Norman rulers used the traditions of the previous rulers as a means to legitimize themselves and cast themselves as true successors. This can be seen in the coins minted in the Kingdom of Sicily. Some coins minted during Roger’s reign have Christ Pantokrator on the reverse, just like on some Byzantine coinage, while Roger himself is shown on the obverse dressed in the robes of a Byzantine Emperor.98 This is similar to the aforementioned mosaic work in Santa Maria dell’Amiraglio, where Roger is shown in Byzantine imperial garb receiving his crown from Jesus, implying a divine mandate similar to that claimed by the Eastern Roman Emperors.

Therefore, in the Kingdom of England, the Normans can be characterized as having been largely disinterested towards Anglo-Saxon arts. As a result of their influence, some traditional Anglo-Saxon art forms faded away, such as their form of manuscript illumination, which was replaced by more continental styles. The Normans did initially appear to show some interest in certain types of Anglo-Saxon art, like embroidery and goldwork, as they seized many items and sent them back across the channel, but this was really an initial celebration of their newfound wealth. This is evident in their destruction of Anglo-Saxon art to obtain the precious metals used in making them. In the Kingdom of Italy, Norman rulers heavily patronized the creation of various forms of art, particularly those which could serve to benefit the Norman regime. There was a definite attempt to cast the Norman king as a monarch in the tradition of Islamic and Byzantine rulers, as with Roger II's mantle and coinage. Other pieces, like the *Tabula*, demonstrate that the Normans kings wished to have access to the best knowledge that the different worlds could offer.


Norman Society and State

It seems clear, then, that in each kingdom, the way the Normans developed their architecture followed a general trend in how they reacted to the local styles of cultural and artistic expression. In England, the Normans often had little use for any Anglo-Saxon traditions, while in the Kingdom of Sicily, the Normans not only let local traditions stand, but were almost eager to adopt many traditions themselves in order to legitimize their rule. This makes sense in each area when one considers the structure of the state and society in each area.

In England well after the conquest, the Norman rulers were still seen as “French” by the rest of the population. The final parts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, an account of Anglo-Saxon history begun during the ninth century with certain versions continuing well into the twelfth century, refer to the year 1107 as the “forty-first of French rule in this country.” In fact, it is hard to tell if the Normans in England actually saw themselves as “Norman,” since charters issued by the English kings referred to the population as “French and English,” and the Bayeux Tapestry, commissioned by Normans, refers to them as Franks (*Franci*). It should also be noted that some of the “Norman” nobility actually came from other parts of France. Regardless of how the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans themselves viewed Norman identity, there was a large degree of separation between the Normans rulers and their subjects. To the earliest Norman rulers, England may have been merely of secondary importance to Normandy, prior to its loss during the reign of King John. William the Conqueror left the duchy of Normandy to his eldest son, Robert, and the English monarchy to his second son, William Rufus. This implies that William the Conqueror, and Robert, who was satisfied with this arrangement, viewed Normandy as the more important of the two political entities. Later, William Rufus, then Henry I (William the Conqueror's third son), came to rule over both Normandy and England. Both of these monarchs spent most of their time as

99 Clanchy, 3.
100 Clanchy, 25.
rulers in Normandy, again indicating that their priorities were on the southern side of the Channel. Moreover, Kings William the Conqueror, Henry II, Richard the Lionheart, and many other important early members of the royal family were buried in France.

Initially, the divide between Anglo-Saxon and Norman was so great that, rather than viewing the Normans as just some “other,” the Anglo-Saxons saw their overlords as oppressors. Faced with local uprisings, the Normans erected their series of castles, from which they could sally forth to put down any rebellion. Anglo-Saxons responded by conducting ambushes in which they slew Norman soldiers, to which the Normans responded by raising taxes in rebellious districts. The famous tale of Robin Hood is derived from these events. William was forced to put down several revolts by Anglo-Saxon lords, the most serious occurring in 1069-70, when Danish forces backed the Anglo-Saxon rebels supporting an Anglo-Saxon pretender to the throne, Edgar the Ætheling. After this, and many other incidents, William took steps to insure that the ruling class supported Norman interests. While many Anglo-Saxons managed to hold smaller properties, the number of affluent and powerful Anglo-Saxons dwindled to such an extent that, according to the Domesday Book, only four Anglo-Saxons held sizeable properties by 1086. At Winchester Cathedral, the Saxon kings entombed there were memorialized, despite the destruction of the original building in which they were buried. They were appropriated as the predecessors of the Norman kings. In a similar manner, Norman lords who were granted the title and

101 Clanchy, 47-8.
102 Clanchy, 29.
103 Clanchy, 30-1.
104 The Domesday Book is a manuscript recording a survey of the Kingdom of England commissioned by William the Conqueror in 1086 in order to facilitate the collection of taxes.
property of a Saxon lord were treated as the legitimate heirs of their antecessors. Their intention was to usurp positions of power, but cast themselves as the true successors, while at the same time rejecting virtually all of the cultural tendencies of their predecessors.

In the Kingdom of Sicily, the nobility was similarly led by a Norman aristocracy, descended from a small number of Norman conquerors. Just as in England, many contemporary sources initially referred to the Normans as Franks, or sometimes Gauls (Galli), reflective of the fact that at least some of the “Norman” conquerors came from regions of France other than Normandy. However, it should be noted that, due to the manner in which the kingdom was formed, some of the important Norman families were initially displeased. Prior to unification, they had held a greater degree of autonomy. Consequently, several uprisings took place, including three major rebellions during the reign of the first monarch, Roger II, alone. Significantly, the uprisings against Roger, unlike those in Norman England, were instigated and led by rival Norman families, not locals. The conquest of England was led by William the Conqueror and a small number of families, nearly all with connections to William. In Italy, unrelated Norman groups had carved out pieces of territory for themselves before being unified into a single realm.

In some parts of the kingdom, families with local lineages from before the conquest continued to hold sway. In Campania, a number of important families descended from the Lombards retained significance, while prominent Greeks came to hold positions of power, even in areas of the kingdom which had not been under Byzantine control. Beginning with Roger II, the kings tried to exert their power over towns by holding the right to appoint the chief magistrate of each town. However, in order to avoid interference

106 Huscroft, 243.
108 Loud, 234-46.
109 Loud, 91.
with the traditional customs and judicial systems, these royally appointed magistrates took the advice of
the judges and magnates in each area.\footnote{Takayama, Hiroshi. The Administration of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993, 75.}

It could be argued that the Normans even took some inspiration from Islamic law in how they
governed. There are certainly some similarities. Under traditional Islamic law, Jews and Christians were
considered dhimmi, meaning that they had to pay a special tax, the jizya. In return, Jews and Christians
were permitted a degree of internal autonomy, which allowed their communities to follow their traditions
and enforce their own religious laws. The Normans similarly treated the Muslims, Jews, and Greek
Christians almost as dhimmi, granting communities internal autonomy in exchange for tribute similar to
the jizya.\footnote{Metcalfe, 106.} If the Normans did not directly draw inspiration from Islamic law, this solution must come
from finding themselves in a similar position to early Islamic conquerors: a minority force ruling over a
majority population with a different culture and religion. However, unlike dhimmi, who did not serve in
Muslim armies, as they could not be expected to fight for the Islamic faith, the armies of the Kingdom of
Sicily incorporated large numbers of Islamic soldiers.\footnote{Metcalfe, 95.} Frederick II relied heavily on such soldiers;
consequently, both for these soldiers and the large number of Muslims employed at his court, as well as to
reduce unrest in some Muslim communities in Sicily, he founded a Muslim colony at Lucera, in Apulia.
This Muslim outpost managed to subsist until it was destroyed by Charles the Lame, the second Angevin
king, at the end of the twelfth century.\footnote{Metcalfe, 285-94.} This particular action is a bit like William the Conqueror's

Besides the Normans, one other cultural and ethnic group was present in both realms. The Jews
had a long history in the Kingdom of Sicily, but in England, there was no history of Jewish settlement
before the Norman conquest. The first Jews in England came soon after 1066 from Rouen, in Normandy.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{Takayama, Hiroshi. The Administration of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993, 75.}
  \item \footnote{Metcalfe, 106.}
  \item \footnote{Metcalfe, 95.}
  \item \footnote{Metcalfe, 285-94.}
\end{itemize}
They were likely settled there by William the Conqueror because of the financial benefits they were able to provide. Within a century, Jewish communities were located in many cities and towns in England, centered on the trade of usury.\textsuperscript{114} The Jews were ostensibly under the protection of the king, as in many European lands during the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{115} Despite this connection and their introduction by the Normans, the Jews found themselves at odds with the regime. William Rufus forced Jewish leaders to conduct “debates” with Christian clergy members. By the thirteenth century, this turned into a series of expulsions from major English cities, such as in Leicester in 1231-2.\textsuperscript{116} Violence against the Jews also became commonplace. At York in 1190, approximately one hundred fifty Jews were massacred, primarily to wipe out debts owed to them.\textsuperscript{117} Ultimately, Edward Longshanks ordered the Jews to leave all of England in 1290.\textsuperscript{118}

In the Kingdom of Sicily, by comparison, the Jews had a presence dating to Antiquity, meaning that they had a historical presence reaching back further than the Islamic conquest of Sicily. To the Normans there, the Jews were simply one more local ethnic group among the others. In England, the king made money off of the Jews, who were treated as being directly under the protection of the king. In the Kingdom of Sicily, the Normans often gave charge of the Jewry of a particular city to the bishop, a common practice in much of Europe.\textsuperscript{119} Unlike England where Jews were shoehorned into usury, Jews were free to pursue other professions in the Kingdom of Sicily. Prior to the arrival of the Normans, many

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{114} Huscroft, 275. \\
\textsuperscript{115} Clanchy, 286. \\
\textsuperscript{116} Clanchy, 270. \\
\textsuperscript{118} Clanchy, 307. \\
\textsuperscript{119} Loud, 264.
\end{flushright}
had been traders, especially in Islamic Sicily. This continued after the conquest. A number of Jews found employ in the service of the king. Jewish communities largely used a dialect of Arabic, though they wrote using Hebrew letters. Many well-educated Jews were multilingual and able to use these skills to work as interpreters. Frederick II in particular encouraged many Jews to write translations of works written in Arabic.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that despite the tolerance towards the Jews exhibited in the Kingdom of Sicily, unlike the other ethnic groups in the realm, there is no detectable or significant Jewish influence in the architecture of the Norman era. Some synagogues did exist in the kingdom. However, the only examples standing today are two in the Jewish quarter of Trani. Both were built during the thirteenth century. These are very simply constructed and unadorned, and feature a single, small nave, with a few small windows for illumination. There are no clearly distinctive features. If all the synagogues in the kingdom were like this, it is not hard to imagine why the Normans did not draw from the Jewish tradition for architectural inspiration. While there is seemingly no Jewish influence on Norman architecture in either of the two kingdoms, the relations between the Jews and the ruling class is representative of each regime's level of tolerance and inclusion. In England, the monarchy did invite the Jews and gave them “protection,” though this supposed protection was of little benefit, and the monarchy often acted antagonistic towards the Jews. In Sicily, the Normans granted the Jews the same sort of autonomy given to the other ethnic groups within the realm, and even hired Jews to serve the king in bureaucratic and intellectual pursuits. These two different mindsets are reflective of the architecture, where in England, the

120 Metcalfe, 34.
121 Metcalfe, 280.
123 Personal visits, 06/2010 & 07/2012.
architecture is nearly entirely Norman, but in Sicily, the architecture displays a willingness to adopt features foreign to the Normans.

One further difference between the two kingdoms was the status of the church. In England, the church continued operating much as it did before the conquest, though many important ecclesiastical positions were filled by Normans. William the Conqueror had initially been content to allow Anglo-Saxon religious leaders to maintain their posts, but in 1070, he began deposing a significant number of bishops, choosing to replace nearly all of them with Normans. This occurred around the same time William removed from power (and in some cases executed) a number of Anglo-Saxon nobles, following the rebellions of some Anglo-Saxon lords. Within two decades, there remained a single Anglo-Saxon bishop in the entirety of England.\(^{124}\) William ostensibly took these actions to bring needed reform to the church (in fact, one of his justifications to carry out the invasion was to bring the English church back into line with the rest of the continent), but the most noticeable effect was that he was subsequently able to exert more control over the church, and use it as a means to further cement his control.

However, in the Kingdom of Sicily, the conquest resulted in a massive reorganization of churches to a far greater extent than in England, particularly in those regions which had been under Byzantine or Arab control. Even though the Byzantines were Christians, there already existed at this time major differences between Latin and Greek rites, particularly after the formal division of the church in 1054; consequently, tensions rose in some places where the Normans sought to place Greek communities and monasteries under Latin authority, though the Normans were willing, in some places, to leave Greek rites in place. For example, the bishopric of the Apulian town of Gallipoli\(^{125}\) continued to be headed by a clergyman following the Greek rites into the sixteenth century, over two-and-half centuries after the end of Norman rule.\(^{126}\) Furthermore, even in places where the head of the diocese followed Latin rites, the

\(^{124}\) Huscroft, 290.

\(^{125}\) Not to be confused with Gelibolu/Gallipoli in modern Turkey.

\(^{126}\) Loud, 267.
local clergy undoubtedly continued following their communities' deep-seated traditions. In Sicily, there was not even a rival church on which to graft Latin traditions, and an entirely new hierarchy had to be formed. 127 Thus, in England, the Normans had an incentive to erect new churches in their style, as they were simply marking a change in who was in control, whereas in the Mezzogiorno, the Normans were crafting an ecclesiastical network which combined traditions and was, in some places completely new. Fitting for a heterogeneous and original architectural style.

127 Loud, 260.
Conclusion

Ultimately, the Kingdom of Sicily’s cultural diversity began to decline and grow more uniform. Each region today still has a distinct flavor, but all are identifiably “Italian.” A small number of communities are composed of other ethnicities, mostly Albanians and Greeks, do exist, but the cultural influence these communities have is minimal, and the population today is overwhelmingly Italian. After the House of Hohenstaufen fell with the death of the last Norman ruler, Conradin, the kingdom came under the control of the Angevin dynasty, then the Aragonese crown, which in turn became a part of Spain. One of the last major Islamic communities, Lucera (founded by Frederick II), was destroyed by the Angevin ruler, Charles the Lame. The entire community was either killed, expelled or enslaved, while the mosques were torn down and churches erected in their place.  

There was no point at which ethnic Byzantine Greeks were expelled, but their communities largely disappeared. Today, little but historical remnants, most prominently buildings, attest to their presence. Even their languages gradually faded, giving way to Italian dialects. After the beginning of Angevin rule, the Byzantine and Arabic influences were abandoned and southern Italian architecture came to more closely resemble the other European forms of Gothic.

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129 Taylor, 184.

130 There are some linguistic enclaves present in Southern Italy and Sicily today, including a couple of Provençal communities, some Greek towns, and a significant number of Albanian settlements. However, these enclaves mostly date from the centuries following the end of Norman rule.
In England, the language of the Anglo-Saxons, though heavily altered with French vocabulary, remained the dominant language spoken by the people. The English court continued using French for many centuries, but ultimately English became the language of the land at all levels. However, little else is left to remind one of the Anglo-Saxons, apart from a few small churches in rural locations. The Jews were expelled in 1290, removing yet another cultural influence. There are many great monuments of the Norman era, but these are really monuments to the Normans and their culture. Features particular to England are noticeable, especially after the widespread adoption of English Gothic, but these build upon the stylistic themes brought by the Normans.

From these structures which remain in each land, some broad generalizations can be made about how architecture in the two Norman kingdoms differed. In England, the Normans imported their own styles, ignoring the established forms of the Anglo-Saxons. This meant that Norman architecture in England remained quite similar to their buildings in Normandy. The only Anglo-Saxon feature the Normans adopted on a significant scale was the placement of the belfry in front of the entrance to the church, something seen in a number of Norman structures after the conquest. Otherwise, there is no significant inclusion of Anglo-Saxon traits. Furthermore, the Normans obliterated many important Anglo-Saxon churches, erecting their own structures within just a few decades of the conquest, leaving only a sparse collection of small, rural churches. Ultimately, the Normans began a transition to Gothic, which again incorporated no significant Anglo-Saxon developments. From this, it can be inferred that the Normans sought to use architecture as a means to demonstrate, legitimize, and cement their rule over the Anglo-Saxon population. This interpretation fits with how the Normans ruled over England. Prominent Anglo-Saxons were edged from power, and the upper class was dedicated to protecting the interests and control of the Normans through the suppression of the Anglo-Saxons.

In the Kingdom of Sicily, architecture throughout the Norman era shows a blend of the different forms which existed in the region. Features were adopted from the local Italian style, that of the Byzantines, and that of the Arabs, and mixed with concepts the Normans brought to the region. Structures
which incorporate a mix of some or even all of these traditions are plentiful even today. This trend continued throughout the Norman period. Even when Gothic made its appearance in Italy, buildings still contained elements of pre-conquest local architecture. Just as in England, architecture is representative of Norman rule. In the Kingdom of Sicily, the Normans were willing to allow local traditions to remain in place, granting communities a certain degree of autonomy and the right to maintain their religious laws, resulting in a patchwork-like realm composed of differing ethnic groups. The Normans favored Latin Christianity (which ultimately resulted in the re-Christianization of Sicily), but were comparatively tolerant of other religious beliefs. Their architecture suited this style of rule: buildings erected for their own purposes (such as churches or palatial structures), but using distinctive elements of each of the cultures under their rule.

This is what separates Norman architecture in these two lands, for the buildings erected during the Norman era in Southern Italy and Sicily not only glorify the Normans, but also attest to the presence of the different Mediterranean cultures the Normans found there, and the desire of the Normans to cast themselves as the legitimate rulers of a culturally varied landscape, while contemporary buildings in England show the Normans there as the conquerors and rulers of a foreign land, who wished to remind the population of this fact.
Appendix A: Images

Figure 1: The belfry of St. Michael at the North Gate. Notice the quality of the stonework, bulky stature, and simple, small, paired windows.

Sailko, Oxford, st. michael at the north gate torre. 04/06/11.
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Oxford_st_michael_at_the_north_gate_torre.JPG

Figure 2: St. Peter, in Barton on Humber. Notice the blind arcading on the side of the belfry, and the triangular-topped windows in the 3rd register from the ground.

Havercroft, Keith. Church Tower of St Peter Barton on Humber. 02/2006.
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bartononhumberstpeter.jpg
Figure 3: All Saints’ Church, the largest surviving Anglo-Saxon church. What is left today is the nave; an aisle would have been located on either side.


Figure 4: Durham Cathedral. Notice the Romanesque arches, sturdy columns and column clusters, and the thick walls with small windows. See also the proto-Gothic vaulting. The area past the transept dates from later.

Figure 5: The Église Saint-Étienne in Caen, a good example of Norman architecture in Normandy. Compare with Ely Cathedral to see a cross-channel parallel.


Figure 6: The nave is a classic example of Norman Romanesque, though the ceiling and crossing date from later. Note the similarities with the Église Saint-Étienne in Caen.

Figure 7: Fountains Abbey, displaying a mix of Romanesque and Gothic.


Figure 8: Ripon Cathedral choir, a superb example of Early English Gothic.

Figure 9: A view of the choir of Lincoln Cathedral. Note the ceiling’s structure, which hints at the later development of the fan vault.


Figure 10: Launceston Castle is a good example of a motte-and-bailey fortification. The wooden structures were later replaced with stone, as at many important sites.

Figure 11: Clifford’s Tower. The stone keep today dates from a mid-to-late 13th century reconstruction, but the well-preserved earthwork is from the motte-and-bailey structure of the 11th century.


Figure 12: Portchester Castle. The two large, square towers on the left are part of the Norman keep, while the wall and round towers on the right are part of the Roman castrum.

Figure 13: View of Dover Castle. In the left part of the image are the suspected Anglo-Saxon earthworks, while in the center is the Norman castle, with the massive keep at the center.


Figure 14: An aerial view of the ruins of Bolingbroke Castle, early 13th century. Notice the hexagonal shape with round towers at each corner.

Getmapping plc. Untitled. 12/31/2005. Google Earth, 53°09'55"N 0°01'02"E
Figure 15: A view of Trim castle, showing the polygonal-shaped keep and surrounding walls with a mix of square and round towers.


Figure 16: The Great Hall of Oakham Castle, 12th century. Note the Gothic windows.

Figure 17: A view of the modern-day layout of part of Bury St. Edmunds, following closely the Medieval plan. Churchgate St., in the center, leads directly to the ruins of the abbey, in the west part of the picture.

Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky. Untitled. 08/02/2007. Google Earth, 52°14’37”N 0°42’59”E

Figure 18: Cattolica di Stilo, Stilo, Calabria, Italy. Note Brick patterns on dome drums.

Figure 19: Plan of the Cattolica di Stilo, Stilo, Calabria, Italy. Note Greek cross-in-plan.

Wharton, Figure 5.8.

Figure 20: Plan of S. Sofia, Benevento, Campania, Italy. Note reconstructed star-point like projections. Map legend translation: the year 760; 2nd half of the 12th century; demolition of the 12th century; demolition 1697-1698, reconstruction 1953; 2nd half of the 12th century: partially collapsed by the earthquake of 1688 & definitively demolished in 1697; year 1698.

Carella, Figure 44.
Figure 21: Interior of S. Sofia, Benevento, Campania, Italy. Note the layout of the interior space, as well as the usage of spolia columns of different materials and height and various antique capitals. chiesa di santa sofia: interno. 03/26/07. http://www.panoramio.com/photo/1508858.

Figure 22: Facade of Casertavecchia Cathedral, Caserta, Campania, Italy. Note the Apulian style sculptural decorations around the entrances and windows, the Islamic arches on the upper part of the facade and campanile, and the unusual feature atop the campanile. Seen in the left part of the image is the smaller of the two domes.
Figure 23: Drum supporting the dome of Casertavecchia Cathedral, Caserta, Campania, Italy. Not the Islamic arches and various patterns, including some pseudo-Kufic script. Also see the roundels over the windows.

Figure 24: Casertavecchia Cathedral drum & dome exterior, Caserta, Campania, Italy.
Figure 25: Casertavecchia Cathedral dome interior and liturgical south transept vault, Caserta, Campania, Italy. Note that the transept vaulting appears to be of a later date than the original church construction, as it seems rather gothic. See also the ribs on the inside of the dome.

Figure 26: Facade of Trani Cathedral, Trani, Apulia, Italy.

Figure 27: Interior of Trani Cathedral, Trani, Apulia, Italy. Note wooden ceiling and different spolia columns, as one would expect to find in this area, in contrast with the Norman introduction of galleries and height of the nave.

Figure 28: Palatine Chapel, Palermo, Sicily, Italy. Note spolia columns, Greek mosaics, and Arabic ceiling.

Ornelas, Rui. SICÍLIA 2004 163. 04/18/04. https://www.flickr.com/photos/37777824@N00/268151144.
Figure 29: Ceiling of the Palatine Chapel of the Royal Palace of Palermo, Sicily, Italy. Note the exquisite Islamic woodwork and the faded paintings.


Figure 30: Melfi Castle, Melfi, Basilicata, Italy. The location of the castle is excellent, as it commands the town and surrounding land. The original Norman structure is barely visible because of later additions.
Figure 31: The Cuba, Palermo, Sicily, Italy. Note the Islamic arches and windows, as well as the hard-to-see Arabic inscription at the top of the facade.


Figure 32: The Zisa, Palermo, Sicily Italy. Note the slightly pointed arches.

Figure 33: Castel Del Monte, Apulia, Italy. Note shape of structure and towers, as well as windows, decorated entrance, and narrow loopholes.
Figure 34: Italy on the eve of the arrival of the first Normans. The Normans would come to unify Sicily and the entirety of southern Italy below the black line demarcating the border of the Holy Roman Empire.

Appendix B: Glossary

campanile: Italian for belfry; campanili are very often detached from a church, unlike northern European belfries

cosmatesque: a decorative style common in Italy, particularly central Italy, using inlays of various stones; named after the Cosmati family who created such works

Kufic script: the oldest calligraphic form of Arabic script, often used for ceremonial and decorative purposes; often used for decoration in medieval Christian Europe, sometimes as “Pseudo-Kufic,” a nonsensical imitation of Kufic script.

liturgical direction: orientation of a church, with east at the altar and west at the opposite end of the nave; comes from the fact that churches were meant to have their altar facing Jerusalem, which was generally towards the east; liturgical directions do not correspond to the actual directions, and can even be the exact opposite

mihrab: a semicircular niche in the wall of a mosque, pointing the direction towards Mecca

muquarna: decorative corbel commonly utilized in Islamic architecture, composed of a series of small, pointed niches in tiers, each of which project out further than the tier below

nave: the main body of a church running from the entrance to the altar; runs perpendicular to the transept (if present)

spolia: building materials reused in a later construction, often for a purpose different from the original function; sometimes, this includes decorative features from the original structure

transept: a section of the church running perpendicular to the nave; where many churches form a cross in plan, the transept forms the “arms” of the cross
Appendix C: Personal visits

I have been to England on a couple of occasions, but the only Norman structure I have any significant experience with is the Tower of London, which I visited during a short trip to London during the fall of 2010.

By contrast, I have visited many Norman buildings in southern Italy (though I have never been to Sicily). I drew from these experiences quite a lot, as there is very little written about a number of important structures, such as the cathedral of Casertavecchia. I spent much of three summers (in 2010, 2011, and 2012) at an archaeological excavation in Basilicata, and while there was able to travel a great deal. I also lived a while in Rome from 2010 to 2011, making a few trips to Campania during that time.
Appendix D: Notes on the different architectural styles

The following are brief descriptions of some of the general architectural styles which are found in this study, in order to aid a reader unfamiliar with such forms.

Anglo-Saxon: the dominant architectural style of England between the Anglo-Saxon Conquest, which took place in the 5th century, and the Norman Conquest, which occurred in 1066. In general, the style appears to have been rather simple and unadorned. Nothing above ground survives of the vast majority of Anglo-Saxon structures, which were wood with thatch roofs. A number of small, rural churches built in stone do exist; these also are built in an uncomplex way, with rough stone work and a basic design. These also are in the basic shape of the Late Antique Roman church.

Byzantine: the architectural style of the Eastern Roman Empire, the Roman Empire during the Middle Ages. As such, it is descended from Late Antique Roman architecture. At the time of the Norman conquest of southern Italy, it was known for its use of complex brickwork, mosaics, and domes supported by large piers. After the Norman conquest of southern Italy, the Normans used many features of Byzantine architecture, even in areas of their kingdom which had not been under Byzantine rule for centuries.

Gothic: the successor to the Romanesque style, begun in the 12th century in France, then spread across western Europe and parts of eastern Europe, lasting in some areas into the 16th century. It was characterized by the broken or pointed arch, similar to the Islamic arch, ribbed vault, flying buttresses, thinner walls than in Romanesque, large windows, and an emphasis on height. There also a great emphasis decorative features. As with Romanesque, each region added its own character. In the Kingdom of Sicily, the tradition of blending Mediterranean styles was continued through the end of the Norman era.
**Islamic:** a broad term encompassing all of the territories under Islamic rule, including Sicily from the 9th century until the Norman Conquest. Consequently, there are many, very diverse varieties of Islamic architecture. The Normans used features of Islamic architecture not just in Sicily, but also in southern Italy, which had never been under extended Islamic control; besides having Muslims subjects, the Normans had important trade relations with Muslim North Africa and the Levant. The Normans adopted a few features from Islamic architecture, especially the broken arch, which is similar to the Gothic arch, as well as a number of decorative elements, including the muqarna and Kufic script (both faux and real).

**Norman:** a variety of Romanesque brought by the Normans from Normandy to the kingdoms of England and Sicily. In England, the style remained very similar to what it was in Normandy, but in Sicily and southern Italy, it was mixed by the Normans with the local styles (southern Italian Romanesque, Byzantine, and Gothic). Ultimately, it was replaced by Gothic, beginning in the 12th century.

**Romanesque:** an architectural style found across the entirety of western Europe and parts of eastern Europe. Romanesque arose during the Early Middle Ages and was replaced by the Gothic style beginning in the 12th century. As may be judged from its name, it is derived from Roman architecture. Romanesque features thick walls, groin vaults, and the round-topped arch. Romanesque churches often are very symmetrical, feature blind arcading, have a plan based on the Late Roman basilica, and, in the case of cathedrals, are large in size. Decorative elements, especially on capitals, are commonplace. Each region had its own variety, with the Normans introducing theirs into their conquered lands. In the parts of the southern Italian mainland not under Byzantine control, a local variety of Romanesque was already commonplace at the time of the conquest.
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