SICILY

TRUSTING THE TEXT AS FAR AS WE CAN THROW THE SCRIBE:
FURTHER NOTES ON READING A BILINGUAL *JARĪDAT AL-ḤUDŪD* FROM THE ROYAL *DĪWĀN* OF NORMAN SICILY[1]

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Introduction

The piecemeal Muslim conquest of Byzantine Sicily from the year 827 and the Norman conquest of a politically-fragmented Islamic Sicily from 1061 and their subsequent rule until 1194 pose a number of knotty problems over the issue of change and disjuncture to the administrative structures on the island as authority came to be implemented and articulated by successive ruling groups. In recent years academic attention has come to focus on the administration and languages of Latin Christian or 'Norman' Sicily, in particular the role of Muslims and the use of Arabic in the chancery or *dīwān*. Shortly after his accession to the throne, Roger II (r.1130–54) introduced Arabic as a royal language together with Latin and Greek after a 20-year period of absence as a language of his comital diplomata. Thus, at the height of Norman rule in the mid-twelfth century, Arabic enjoyed a prestigious status and was as fundamentally important to the royal fiscal administration as were its Muslim or ex-Muslim officers. Although the last Arabic document in Sicily was issued under Frederick II as late as 1242, this was somewhat exceptional as it had been the only *dīwānī* output in Arabic of any kind since 1183. Indeed, by the mid-1180s, the Muslim officers associated with the fiscal administration had lost much of the influence they had previously exerted. In addition, important areas of north-eastern Sicily had become quite devoid of both Muslims and Arabic-speakers. In contrast, many of the crown estates in western Sicily continued to be

populated predominantly by Arabic-speaking Muslims. In the late 1170s and 1180s, rights over these lands and men, as well as the responsibility for their administration, were transferred to the church of Santa Maria Nuova at Monreale as part of an exceptionally generous concession made by Roger II's grandson, King William II.

The church at Monreale, ten miles to the south-west of Palermo, had been founded in 1174, and shortly after the grants to the church, three great bilingual confirmations were issued which described the concessions. The first was a list of 1,194 men (*jarīdat al-rijāl*) which was written in Arabic and Greek and issued in May 1178; the second was a series of 50 boundary descriptions (*jarīdat al-ḥudūd*) in Arabic and Latin from May 1182; the third was another *jarīdat al-rijāl* containing the names of 729 household heads written in Arabic and Greek, which was issued in April 1183.[2] The church's effective control over these lands and men would prove to be short-lived as the Muslims rose in revolt on William's II death in 1189, leading to their brief independence followed by their defeat and their deportation to the Italian mainland between 1222 and 1246. The resulting demographic collapse not only marked the end of the Muslims on the island, but also marked a highly significant point in the rapid, final decline of Sicilian Arabic as a spoken and written medium outside the island's Jewish and Arab-Christian minorities. In addition, as cadastral information relating to lands and men was in theory known to scribes and officials in writing, but was in practice affirmed by the oral testimony of local elders, the *en bloc* deportations of the Arabic-speaking Muslims simultaneously represented the loss of much knowledge of where the boundaries of estates actually were. Moreover, by the mid-thirteenth century, management of many of the crown lands once known to Roger and his Arabic fiscal administration had increasingly passed into the hands of local, Latin churches, lords and their Latin notaries. The momentous changes on the former crown lands of western Sicily were to affect the entire area fundamentally and irreversibly since it was not re-populated before the Black Death in the mid-fourteenth century and did not begin to be re-populated at all until the mid-sixteenth century.

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[2] The most appropriate way to refer and cross-refer to Sicilian Arabic documents now is to consult the provisional catalogues in Johns 2002: appendix 1 and 2, where the Monreale *jarā'id* appear as *Dīwānī* 43, 44 and 45 respectively. For an (unsatisfactory) edition of them, see *I diplomi greci ed arabi di Sicilia*: 134–286. Although the boundaries were confirmed in 1182, at least four Monreale estates (Raḥl ibn Sahl, Raḥl al-Wazzān, Ḥajar al-Zanātī and Qurūbnish) were known in writing prior to the confirmation. For these, see Johns 2002: Appendix 1, *Dīwānī* 29, 33, 34 and 40.

As such, the sheer size and scale of these bilingual administrative records of the 1170s and 1180s and the vast amount of information they contain represent the fullest record of crown lands and men, and the best chance of observing the history of the Sicilian Muslims under Christian rule in a fine level of detail. To this debate, the Arabic-Latin boundary description adds the names of several hundred minor localities and offers vital evidence for the thorny question of toponymic change and continuity in western Sicily pre- and post- the Muslim revolt and deportation.

While these events have always received wide-ranging interest, recent works have begun to look more specifically at certain aspects of the island's Arabic administration. Indeed, one of the many triumphs of the recent monograph *Arabic Administration in Norman Sicily* by Jeremy Johns was the way in which painstaking analysis of documentary detail might allow a carefully-inferred reconstruction of the arcane practices and procedures within the royal *dīwān* which were not immediately discernable otherwise. In doing so, Johns highlighted and corrected a number of misapprehensions which have clouded the academic study of twelfth-century Sicily and Calabria over the past 150 years, while putting forward the most comprehensive study to date of the fiscal administration of the once Muslim-held island as it developed under Christian control. While this article, by contrast, forms one strand of a much wider, on-going, collaborative project to publish new and critical editions of the *dīwānī* documents, the approach to the source material is nonetheless similar and offers some further thoughts on the variant readings of place names found across the three languages of the original documentation and the Arabic of the in-house record books.[3] The discussion in this article concentrates particularly on the study of a long *jarīdat al-ḥudūd* or "register of boundaries" issued to the church at Monreale which contained the descriptions of 50 boundaries written in Arabic and Latin, a comparative study of which not only raises important questions about what information the crown actually possessed in its record books but also dimly illuminates the way in which bilingual documents came to be composed while hinting at the relative importance of the royal administrative languages and scribes (both *notarii* and *kuttāb*) during the reign of William II and the foundation of Monreale.

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[3] Editions of both the Arabic and bilingual documents are currently being edited by Jeremy Johns, Nadia Jamil and myself. These new editions are likely to clarify many unresolved issues of Sicilian Arabic diplomatics and palaeography.

Some remarks concerning the in-house records of the royal dīwān

The Arabic-Latin boundary description is unusual in the sense that
we are told the names of both scribes; Alexander, a well-known royal
Latin notary whose career is relatively well-established, and Yūsuf, an
otherwise unknown Arabic *kātib*. While the Latin translation has been
discussed elsewhere,[4] the question of additions, omissions and the
relationship both languages had with the in-house records has received
less attention. On this point, we are told somewhat ambiguously in the
Arabic that "[the estates] were described in Latin from the Arabic by
the hand of the aforesaid scribe Alexander, and in Arabic by the hand
of the aforesaid scribe Yūsuf from the register books (*dafātir*, singular,
daftar) of the *dīwān al-taḥqīq al-maʿmūr*."[5] It is not clear on this evidence
alone whether both versions were taken from the *daftar*s, however, the
Latin is less equivocal and claims that it had indeed been made from
the *dīwān*'s *daftar*s.[6] Although none of the *daftar*s has survived, it can
be inferred from the divergences between the two versions (see below)
that the Latin was not translated word-for-word from the Arabic of
the manuscript. Rather both versions were generally derived from a
common ancestor of the Arabic of the *daftar*s.

On the discrepancies between the Latin and the Arabic version

The relationship between the three written sources (Latin MS, Arabic
MS and *daftar* Arabic) of the 1182 boundaries is not straightforward
since the two versions of the manuscript do not match precisely. How
might this have come about? Clearly, one could argue that if both
scribes were equally careless in an unpredictable way, then there is no
way to discern between the addition of a phrase in one language and an
omission in the other but that one might nevertheless be able to conflate
the two to give the original contents of the *daftar*. This argument might
be acceptable were it not for the fact that some of the extra information
in the Latin seems to come in the form of a qualification at the end
of a particular boundary definition. In addition, the discrepancies are

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[4] Most recently Metcalfe 2001: 43–86 and Johns 2002: 170–92 *passim*.
[5] Line 375 of the Arabic.
[6] *has aut[em] p[re]dictas divisas a deptariis n[os]tris de saracenico in latinu[m] transferri, ip[su]m
q[ue] saracenicu[m], s[e]c[un]d[u]m q[uo]d in eisde[m] deptariis continet[ur]*. Line 213.

unevenly distributed, there being no non-trivial divergences between the versions in the inner boundaries of the district of Iato, for example. Although the divergences are of various types, it should be made clear that they were often very minor and do not help to inform any particular thesis. Nonetheless, a list of them has been given below. The abbreviations L and A refer to Latin and Arabic, while the numbers refer to the lines in the manuscript. The district (*iqlīm*) followed by the estate (*raḥl*) are given in brackets.

L7:A223 (Iato: *al-ḥadd al-kabīr*). *secat viam divisa, & ascendit ad capud cultu[re] filior[um] Phitile, usq[ue] ad petras rubeas*. Here the phrase الى السرج ('to the saddle') is not present after the name *Phitile*.

L12:A227 (Iato: *al-ḥadd al-kabīr*). *usq[ue] ad Rahalbahári quod est de tenim[en]to Iati. habet tam[en] ips[um] d[omi]n[u]s Corilionis*. The final sentence is not included in the Arabic. It may have been erroneously duplicated by the Latin scribe as the same phrase is repeated shortly afterwards in the following line. However, it also serves to qualify the relationship between the estate and the 'lord of Corleone.'

L21–22: A234 (Iato: Maghanuja). *Divisa Maganuge incipit primum divisa dividens int[er] Maganuge, et casale Cumait, a fonte frigido descendens p[er] flum[en]*. The underlined phrase is not apparent in the Arabic, nor is it clear whether it might be best understood as an additional qualification or a simple omission on the part of Yūsuf.

L26: A236 (Iato: Maghanuja). Here, the information that *s[un]t ibi villani septuaginta* does not appear in the Arabic. However, the lands defined were clearly subject to a complex arrangement that may have proved problematic in the past. After the boundary description we are told in both versions that "the boundary can be sown with 1,000 *mudd* of which 30 *mudd* are no use for ploughing. In the land of *Khandaq al-Aḥsan* is a plot of land the people of Jāṭū said is of the lands of al-Qumayṭ. Its sowing (capacity) is 40 *mudd* over and above the 1,000 *mudd*." However, while it was not unusual to read such information about sowing yields in this particular district, the inclusion of villein numbers in a boundary definition without reference to their registration or fiscal category was exceptional. That this should occur in only one of the languages prompts the strong suspicion that the Latin scribe was genuinely offering extra information from a different source.

L29:A238 (Iato: al-Duqqī). *sic[ut] fundit[ur] aqua ab eo orientalit[er] p[er]tinet ad Rahalmie*. It is unclear what has happened here. The Latin scribe left no space between *ad* and *Rahalmie*. However, the Latin had

been written over a lightly scratched area in the MS, which covers only part of this name and is almost certainly the site of an erasure, which accounts for the peculiar spacing. The letters *h* and *l* have not been affected by the damage. However, in the Arabic version, this water is said to go to (and presumably belong to) the estate of Jafla.

L31: A239–40 (Iato: al-Duqqī) *descendit cu[m] aqua usq[ue] ad menáka. scilicet ubi mollificat[ur] linu[m]. & ibi iungunt[ur] duo vallones in unum.* The central phrase *scilicet ubi mollificat[ur] linu[m]* does not appear in the Arabic. In this case, it is tempting to assume that the extra Latin phrase served to clarify the transliteration of *menáka* (from the Arabic *manāqiʿ* meaning "bogs") as a feature of physical geography rather than a toponym.

L130: A309 (Iato: al-Qumayt) *ad petras sel[. . .] ad flum[en] magnu[m].* Here there is a lacuna of 12 mm after this seemingly incomplete transliteration of the Arabic name *Sālim.*

L137–8: A315 (Iato: Raḥl al-Jawz) *usq[ue] ad mo[n]ticul[u]m [. . .].* Here there is a lacuna of 19 mm in the Latin text. *Al-thāniyya* (the second) appears in the Arabic.

L140–1 & 142: A316 (Iato: Raḥl al-Wazzān). *Divise t[er]rar[um] laboratoriar[um] que date s[un]t regio p[re]cepto monast[er]io s[an]c[t]i Nicolai de Churchuro & sunt ad quattuor pariccla, scilic[et] ad seminatura[m] centum viginti salmar[um], & sunt in tenim[en]to Iati . . .* (142). *Et est de terris casal[is] H u z e n.* In 1149, the monks of the small church of S. Nicolò 'de Churchuro' had received an Arabic copy of a grant which included the boundaries of the estate of Raḥl al-Wazzān. However, when the copy was renewed at the monks' request in 1154, a quite different set of boundaries were defined. The description was again written only in Arabic. Thus, potential for confusion had been generated by 1154 over which estate the monks had been granted.[7] In the 1182 confirmation to Monreale, the sowing yield and name of the estate was included in the lesser detail of the Arabic which reads "the boundary of the land in the hands of the monks of the church of Chùrchuro . . . and they are the lands of al-Wazzān. They can be sown with 120 *mudd.*" However, the Arabic version crucially failed to re-iterate the moot point that it was the estate of al-Wazzān which was in the monks' hands, that this estate was to be found in the district of Iato, and that this arrangement (which continued to be a source of confusion and dispute until the modern period) had been determined "by royal command" (*regio precepto*) as

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[7] For a detailed discussion of this, see Johns & Metcalfe 1999: 226–59, and Johns 2002: esp. 175–80.

opposed to being determined by some local or ancient tradition, in-house forgery or otherwise false claim.

L163: A332 (Corleone: Ḥajar al-**Zanātī**). *descendit ad favaria*[*m*], *&* *claudit*[*ur*] *divisa. Et h*[*ec*] *divisa iter*[*um*] *est int*[*er*] *divisas Corilionis.* The final sentence is not present in the Arabic. This appears to be an additional clarification by the Latin scribe. However, the estates which bordered on Corleone often contained such snippets of information given equally in both languages.

L166: A335 (Corleone: Jāliṣū). *descendit ad vadu*[*m*] *quod est sup*[*ra*] *Cástane, & ascendit usq*[*ue*] *ad porta*[*m*]. After the name of the estate, the Latin does not include وهو في محجة قرلون ويرجع من هنالك طالعا الى الحارك الذى فوق قسطنة. ("which is on the Corleone road and returns from here rising to the hill which is above Qasṭana")

L169: A338 (Corleone: Fattāsina). *Transit vallone*[*m*] *p*[*re*]*dictu*[*m*]. The Arabic reads يعدى الخندق الخندق. ("it traverses right across the ditch") This seems to be a straight difference of translation, where the better rendition might be suggested by the Latin, given that noun duplication in both languages expressed a measure of distance and did not usually refer to short distances. Intriguingly then, it is possible that the sense of the Arabic recorded in the *daftar* could have been at fault in some minor way here.

L188: A354 (Baṭṭallārū) *vertunt*[*ur*] *p*[*er*] *via*[*m*] *publica*[*m*] *magna*[*m*] *quousq*[*ue*] *iungunt*[*ur*] *ad riv*[*um*]. The phrase من الشاقة الى المدينة ("from Sciacca to Palermo") relating to the road is inexplicably absent in the Latin.

L190: A356 (Baṭṭallārū). *ascendunt p[er] serra[m] usq[ue] ad hedificia diruta* where the Arabic reads مع الصلب الصلب ("right along the ridge"). Precisely translated from the Arabic, the Latin should have read *per serram serram.*

Relationship between the bilingual MS versions and the
daftar records of the dīwān

Latin 1182 MS version
(translated from the *daftar* Arabic
probably with additions, omissions, &
clarifications)

Arabic 1182 MS version
(copied from the *daftar* Arabic, probably
omitting the odd phrase)

daftar Arabic of the in-house records
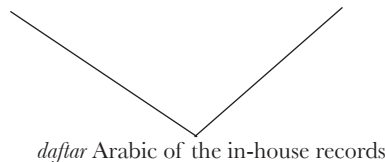
It is well-known that the accompanying Latin translation made of the Arabic manuscript version was often unhelpfully literal and in a large number of cases, the scribe had translated the Arabic names of localities. The best example is that of Jabal al-Maʾaz which was rendered as *mons caprarum* but is still known today as Gibilmesi. In doing so the scribe often rendered many place-names unrecognisable to speakers of any language.[8] Given that the *dīwān* can often be seen to have relied on the oral testimony of trusted locals to confirm the course of the boundaries at inquests, any subsequent confusion caused by the expulsion of the Muslims can come as little surprise. Prima facie, this would appear all the more reason to give priority to the Arabic copy over the Latin transliteration to resolve cases where a reading is ambiguous. However, even such a simple approach is problematic and many of the difficulties of establishing the reading of a place-name can be illustrated in the following examples.

On the reading of the estate of Q(a?)ṭ(ṭ?)ās(i?)na, also known as Fantasine

One of the internal boundaries within the *magna divisa* of Corleone (*Qurullūn* in Arabic)[9] is given in Latin as *Fantasine*.[10] In contrast, the boundary heading of the Arabic clearly reads قطاسنة (=Q(a?)ṭ(ṭ?)ās(i?)na), where the initial *qāf* is carefully pointed with two separate dots. The *nūn* is also pointed. In the Arabic text, the headings of the boundary names, such as this one, were written in much larger and more clearly-written script throughout. Typically, they carried diacritical marks, pointing and even vocalisation, giving some of the clearest indications of short vowels as well as consonants. For this toponym, the only indication of

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[8] On this, see Metcalfe 2001.

[9] For the proposed reading of *Qurullūn* for Corleone, see the introduction to the 1178 Monreale *jarīdat al-rijāl* where the *lām* is clearly marked with a *shadda* and a *ḍamma*. Thus, the double *lām* must have been preceded directly by a short vowel and most likely followed directly by the long vowel *wāw*. Had it been followed by a *kasra*, this might at some point have come to affect the orthography and produce the forms *Qurulliyūn*, *Qurliyūn* etc. Although these variants were the forms preferred by the Arab geographers such as al-Muqaddasī (4th/10th) and al-Idrīsī (d. 560/1165), they were not the reading of choice for the Arabic scribes of the *dīwān*. The advantage of proposing a *ḍamma* for the second short vowel is that this would harmonise with the *wāw* as well as with the standard Greek rendition of the same name from which it was derived. In addition, in at least one other instance of this name (Monreale 1183, rubric of 81F), the first short vowel is attested as a *ḍamma*.

[10] MS line 166.

what the short vowels in the Arabic might be come from the Greek and Latin. Unfortunately, between them they have covered all three possibilities (see examples cited below). The nasalisation in the Latin rendition supports the idea that the Arabic emphatic stop /ṭ/ might have had a *shadda*.[11] Further support comes from the geminated *tau* in the two Greek versions of the name (cited below). If so, then the name might have fallen into the Arabic pattern of *faʿʿāl* with the addition of a Latinate diminutive suffix *-ina*. This reasoning is, at best, tentative and anyway does not establish the value of the initial consonant, which in the Arabic was given as *Q*, while in the Latin it was *F*.

If the divergent readings are problematic, the location of this estate is only slightly less so. In 1448 the "lands of Tontasina or of Mole" were mentioned as the subject of a purchase agreement. On the grounds that 'Tontasina' is a version of 'Fontasina,' a view confirmed to some degree by citations from the later medieval period, the estate has come to be associated with the more enduring toponym of Cozzo Moli to the west of Campofiorito.[12] Although this identification has been broadly, and probably rightly, accepted by modern scholarship, doubts remain as to whether the estate was within the district of Baṭṭallārū (Battellaro) or Qurullūn (Corleone) in the Norman period.

In a royal Greek-Arabic register of men issued in May 1151, some 20 men were recorded as being from a village called Fouttavsinh said specifically in both languages to be in the district (*iqlīm*) of Corleone. They were confirmed as pertaining to the monastery of S. Maria Maddalena in Corleone.[13] In the 1182 *jarīdat al-ḥudūd* the boundaries of this same estate were then defined as an internal estate of Corleone. The problem arises in the 1183 *jarīdat al-rijāl*, where men of Faṭṭāsina were also mentioned. Here, the rubric first read *wa-min al-muls bi-Baṭṭallārū wa-raḥāʾilihā* or "and among the unregistered men at Baṭṭallārū and its estates are . . ."[14] Then, under the Arabic heading *Faṭṭāsina bi-Baṭṭallārū*,

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[11] This phenomenon of nasalisation before geminated stops (especially when followed by a long vowel) was occasionally reproduced in similar phonetic environments in Sicilian Greek and Arabic dialects too. See Metcalfe 2003: 171–2 for some brief observations on this. It is also possible that the Arabic scribe had somehow become confused with the estate of Qaṣṭana, also within the district of Corleone. Neither of the scribes showed any sense of familiarity with the places they were describing.

[12] Schirò 1894: 38. For the development of this argument, see Nania 1995: 154–5; Johns 2002: 152 note 27, and Vaggioli 2003: 1262–3, and especially 1310 note 107 for a helpful bibliography.

[13] *I diplomi greci ed arabi*: 130–4. Johns 2002: *Dīwānī* 30.

[14] *I diplomi greci ed arabi*: 262. MS line 78.

we find the name of a single household head registered in the category
of the *muls* (i.e. those who were being registered for the first time).[15]
Curiously, the Greek reads only ὁ τοῦ χω(ριοῦ) φιττάσινε, although
this does at least give some indications of the vowels. That the estate
was not listed under the generic heading of "Baṭṭallārū and its estates"
implies that Faṭṭāsina was not an estate of Baṭṭallārū. Moreover, it was
not unprecedented to find villeins from one estate listed as being under
the administrative orbit of another. For example, in the 1178 *jarīda* we
find under the villeins of Sūq al-Mirā' a list of 22 men under the rubric
"and from Qasṭana they have . . ."[16]

In a recent article, Adelaide Vaggioli followed Cusa by understanding
Faṭṭāsina bi-Baṭṭallārū to mean "in Rahal Fettàsine ch'è in Batallaro"[17]
Based on this idea, and after some careful hypothesising, she concluded
that "the *Divisa Fantasine* appears to be located within the district of
Battellaro" while acknowledging that its boundaries were defined in full
as one of the internal estates of Corleone. Given that its boundaries
were specifically described as an estate within the district of Corleone,
not Baṭṭallārū, in the 1182 *ḥudūd*, then the rubric *Faṭṭāsina bi-Baṭṭallārū* in
the villein register of the 1183 might be better understood as meaning
that there was a newly-registered family of villeins from there who were
now at Baṭṭallārū, not that the estate was itself located in the district
of Baṭṭallārū. So, if the generally-accepted identification of Faṭṭāsina
with Cozzo Moli is correct, then the estate should lie on the Corleone
side of the boundary contiguous with the boundary of Baṭṭallārū. We
should also note that elsewhere the *dīwān* was unusually precise about
property rights in this district which was an ex-barony and had been re-
commended into the crown's lands after 1162. For instance, in the 1182
ḥudūd we learn that the boundary of Baṭṭallārū ran to "the two mills
which are in al-Qaṣaba.[18] Al-Qaṣaba, with all its boundaries, is within
the Qurullūn boundary, but they [*wa-hum* (sic) = the mills?] are among
the property of the lord of Baṭṭallārū."[19]

A year later, in March 1184, the estate in question (*casale quod dicitur
Fantasina*) was defined as part of a royal concession from William II

   [15] *I diplomi greci ed arabi*: 263. MS line 81.
   [16] From the Monreale 1178 *jarīda* (*Dīwānī* 43). See *I diplomi greci ed arabi*: 154–55. MS
line 65. NB Cusa misreads the estate as 'Qasṭana' rather than 'Qasṭana.'
   [17] Vaggioli 2003: 1263, 1309, and *I diplomi greci ed arabi*: 733.
   [18] Immediately prior to this toponym, the word 'Baṭṭallārū' had been struck
through.
   [19] Lines 347–48.

to Monreale of the estate of Ṭurrus (*Terrusio* in the Latin) which had previously been granted to the church of S. Maria Maddalena in Corleone (see above).[20] The concession was composed in Latin only and said to have been "written by the hand of the scribe Alexander" and the boundary description which was appended had clearly been copied from the same scribe's Latin translation of the *daftar* Arabic.[21] Not only are the two versions almost identical bar trivial differences, but both refer to a bizarrely-named locality given as *densitudinem porcorum* in the 1182 version, then as *densitudo porcorum* in that of 1184. Although Cusa's reading of *ʿuqdat al-khinzīr*, (literally "knot of the pig") may have been influenced by the translation of the Latin scribe, both the readings and translations can be called into question.[22] The manuscript Arabic is indeed problematic, but only one dot is apparent over the *fā'* while the *dāl* might be construed as a *rā'*. The reading is thus more likely to be عفرة الخنزير and not عقدة الخنزير and as such this might be translated as "the bristles of the boar's neck" rather than "the knot of the pig."[23]

Nonetheless, it is quite clear to see the replication of the Latin version very shortly after the Latin translation from the *daftar* Arabic had been made. That is to say, the later Latin, as a copy of the previous Latin version, was considered sufficiently authentic and accurate so as to dispense with the need to refer back either to the manuscript Arabic or to the *daftar* Arabic. At this point, as early as 1184, one might argue that the Latin had become detached and independent from the original, base language of the Arabic.

During the twelfth century then, the estate in question had been mentioned a total of seven times across three languages, and once more in the mid-fifteenth century. Thus:

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[20] Garufi 1902: no. 51, 28.

[21] For a comparison of the two Latin descriptions, see Nania 1995: 155.

[22] *I diplomi greci ed arabi*: 234. Latin line 166 and Arabic line 335.

[23] For *ʿufra* referring to 'the hair of the back of the neck' (of either a man, bird or beast), a term which seems to gain its meaning from that which might stand up when frightened, see Lane 1863–93: 5, 2090. In most areas where there are wild boar, the bristles from the neck and along the spine have traditionally been used by shoemakers to stitch leather or alternatively to make bristle brushes. In the context of a boundary description, the name of this locality presumably carried a figurative meaning. The translation in Italian could be rendered precisely as 'le setole del maiale.'

Date	Arabic	Greek	Latin
1151	F.(ṭ)ṭās(i)na[24]	Φουττάσινη	
1182	Q.(ṭ)ṭās(i)na[25]		Fantasine
1183	F.(ṭ)ṭās(i)na[26]	Φιττάσινε	
1184			Fantasine
1448			Tontasina (*sic*)/ Mole

Clearly, this raises an important point about the route of transmission of this obscure place name and whether it had been conveyed 'bottom-up' or 'top-down.' That is to say, had it been transmitted into the later medieval period orally by echoing the tones of the local Arabic or Greek-speaking population or was the form in which it had survived due to the written version carried by the Latin documentation?

With regard to the initial consonant, the weight of evidence would suggest that the correct reading of the Arabic manuscript version should begin with a *fā'*. Evidently, this also serves to undermine the notion that the more 'original' Arabic version should always be given priority over the Latin in similar cases of ambiguity, even though the Latin with all its quirks, appears to have achieved some degree of primacy over the Arabic by, and from, this period.

On the reading of the Raḥl al-Thawr, also known as Casale Helbur

Doubts over the reading and location of estate can at least be discussed in a relative amount of detail as the estate is attested elsewhere in other documents. However, other examples are more elusive but again call into question the reliability of the original languages, their relative status, and the in-house draft from which both versions were made. For example, an estate repeatedly mentioned as being within the boundaries of Baṭṭallārū is given as follows in the parallel text:[27]

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[24] *I diplomi greci ed arabi*: 131 also reads *F.(ṭ)ṭāsina*.

[25] *I diplomi greci ed arabi*: 197 and 234 reads *F.(ṭ)ṭāsina*.

[26] Line 81A in the MS. *I diplomi greci ed arabi*: 263 reads *Q.(ṭ)ṭāsina* which is clearly wrong in this case.

[27] At different places in line 348 in the 1182 MS, both the *lām* and *ṭā'* of Baṭṭallārū carry a *shadda*.

Line Transcription	Arabic	Latin	Line
320 *Raḥl al-Thawr*[28]	رحل الثور	*Rahaltor*	144
320 *Raḥl al-Thawr*	رحل الثور	*rahaltauri*	145
348 *Raḥl al-Būr/al-Thawr*	رحل الثور	*de casali helbur*	180

In the last Latin example, one might be forgiven for thinking that while *Rahaltor* and *Rahaltauri* referred to the same village this was clearly different from the estate called *Casale Helbur*.[29] The Arabic scribe was not so sure, and pointed the disputed letter as both a *bāʾ* and a *thāʾ* with three dots above *and* a single dot below the same consonant. This telling uncertainty about the correct form suggests that the *daftar* Arabic itself was probably ambiguous, being either unpointed or perhaps pointed in the last example as a *bāʾ* which the Arabic scribe Yūsuf suspected was wrong since it was inconsistent with the previous readings. Either way, neither Yūsuf nor Alexander seemed to know for certain what the proper form should have been, and consequently nor do we. Here, the weight of evidence argument will not do, since the same error may have been propagated via the copying and translation/transliteration process from the *daftar*s to the final manuscript in the first place. The suggestion that the *daftar* Arabic may have been either unpointed or unclearly pointed and that the scribes themselves were from time to time demonstrably confused by their own in-house documents may also account for the following ambiguity which also occurred in the 1182 *jarīdat al-ḥudūd.*

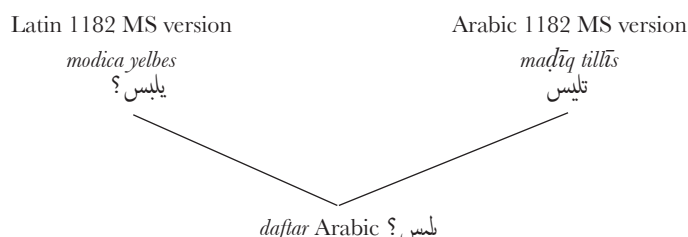### *Tillīs, yelbes and the question of pointing in the daftars*

An unidentified minor locality cited in the description of the *magna divisa* or *al-ḥadd al-kabīr* of Corleone was given in the clearly-pointed Arabic as *maḍīq tillīs*. Although we might have expected to see the definite article before *tillīs*, the meaning may be rendered literally as 'wheatsack rift.'[30]

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[28] This is not vocalised in the text, but the proposed vowels are based on the Latin and the limited possibilities in Arabic.

[29] Whatever the correct form of this place name, it is not to be confused with the Arabic for Caltavuturo, which was also al-Thawr.

[30] The Latin appears at line 150 in the manuscript, the Arabic at line 324; henceforth (150/324). Cf. *I diplomi greci ed arabi*: 231. As often, Cusa based his interpretation of the

However, the Latin translation reads *ad modica(m) yelbes* the meaning of
sense of which is difficult to imagine (cf. Arabic *yalbas*[u] 'he dresses'?).
An explanation for these divergent readings may be that the both the
Latin and the Arabic scribes were working from an unpointed original
version. Thus:

Latin 1182 MS version   Arabic 1182 MS version

modica yelbes   *maḍīq tillīs*

يلبس؟   تليس

daftar Arabic لمس ؟

How many times might absence of pointing have caused a problem
which we cannot now detect? And how legible were the *dīwān's* in-house
records? There are a couple of rare examples from Norman Sicily
which indicate how note-hand *dīwānī* scripts might have appeared when
scribes were writing Arabic to themselves and which shed a little light
on the question of clarity and pointing.

Some remarks about the use of pointing in noteform hands

On the verso of a royal *jarīdat al-rijāl* issued to Walter Forestal in 1145,
we find three separate notes in Arabic. Note one, on the verso at the
top left reads *Gh.rtīl F.rstāl*, an Arabicised version of 'Walter Forestal' in
which only the *yāʾ* was left unpointed.[31] Note two, written by the hand of
another *dīwānī* scribe, appears towards the bottom right above the fold

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manuscript Arabic on the Latin, thus reading *maḍīq y.lb.s.* On the particular connotations
of *tillīs* in Sicily, see the helpful discussion in Johns 2002, appendix 3: 326–28 inspired by
the observation in Maqrīzī's (d. 845/1442) *al-Mawāʿiz wa-'l-iʿtibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-'l-
athīr* that King Roger II's *kunya* was Abū Tillīs. A minor addition to this discussion is the
observation that the term *tillīs* is attested figuratively in a modern Egyptian expression
qāʿid zayy al-tillīs where the implication is again that the sack is a full one. See Badawi
and Hinds 1986: 135. Other attested occurrences of *maḍīq*s in the *jarīda* are mainly
named after people and places: *maḍīq Manzil Lulu* (in the estate of Qurūbnish al-Suflī)
= strictum menzelleuleu (68/264); *maḍīq Ibn Rizq Allāh* (in Raḥl al-Waṭā) = strictum
rescalla (71/266); *al-maḍīq alladhī fīhi al-sayyālī* (in Raḥl Ibn B.r.ka) = mudíca ubi stillat
aqua (80/273); *maḍīq al-Ṣaqāliba* (in the *magna divisa* of Corleone) = mudica sicalbe (147/
321); *maḍīq ʿIyād* (also in *magna divisa* of Corleone) = mudíca yad (151/324). Also of note
is the estate of *al-Maḍīq* attested in the 1183 *jarīdat al-rijāl* at line 129.

غرتل فرستال ³¹

of the plica and reads *jarīda li-Gh.rtīl F.rst.l* where the *ghayn* is unpointed.[32] Most, but not all, of the remaining consonants are pointed, with the *fā'* being in the 'Maghribi' style below the line.[33] The third verso note serves as a pair of authentication marks written across the seam and as such are not strictly in-house notes but rather can be counted as having a more formal role in *dīwānī* diplomatics. Although none of the notes is long enough to allow links to be made with certainty between any of the hands used on the verso and the main body of unpointed Arabic text on the recto, a comparison of the renditions of the name Walter Forestal points to a different hand in each case, coupled with incomplete pointing.

Light from a slightly different direction comes from an unpublished paper fragment measuring 10.4cm × 8.3cm. which was discovered in the Cappella Palatina over ten years ago by Monsignor Benedetto Rocco and which appears to be a draft inventory of books written in Sicilian Arabic.[34] The titles were mainly Latin but had been roughly transliterated into Arabic and included works on Christian prayer, poetry, genealogy, calendars (of unknown type), and a copy of the Canticum Canticorum. The pair of calendars faintly suggests a 'library' collection rather than a personal one. The works do not appear to have been arranged in any obvious order, and the reference to a "book about poetry in two parts" (or "in two chapters") suggests that this fragment was part of a stock-taking exercise using only cursory notes, rather than being part of an attempt to construct a detailed catalogue. In support of this, the writing on recto is set at a 180 degree angle (i.e. upside down) relative to the writing on the verso, again typical of a draft version.

The fragment bears no date and cannot be dated with certainty from the information it contains. However, there is some evidence to suggest

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[32] حريده لعرتيل ڢرستل

[33] 'Maghribi' or subscripted pointing on the letters *fā'* or *qāf* commonly appeared as a feature of private Sicilian documents of this period and less frequently in *dīwānī* documents, see Johns 2002: 275–7. Among others, unambiguous examples can be seen on a copy from 1149 made by a royal scribe called 'Uthmān published by Johns and Metcalfe 1999: 244–5 (= *Dīwānī* 29). There was also at least one example of subscripted pointing in Yūsuf's Arabic of the Monreale 1182 *jarīdat al-ḥudūd*; on *al-shārif* at line 238.

[34] Photographs of the fragment were reproduced without detailed comments, translation or transcription in *L'età normanna e sveva in Sicilia: mostro storico-documentaria e bibliografica*: Assemblea Regionale Siciliana, (Palazzo dei Normanni, 18 novembre–15 dicembre 1994) Palermo, 1994: 220–21. Note also that a loose piece has been reversed in the published photographs.

an association with Maio of Bari who is first attested in the chancery
as *scriniarius* (archivist) in 1144 but who had held the office of *amīr* of
*amīr*s during the reign of William I (r. 1154–66) when he was murdered
in November 1160. For instance, the fragment mentions a book of the
ancestors of Māyū as well as a commentary on the Lord's Prayer. Maio
himself is known to have written a similar commentary for his son, and
his lineage was a topic of discussion for his detractors, suggesting that if
these works are to be linked with him, then they may have been among
those kept in the palace after the mid-1140s.[35] A further indication of
the date is provided by the titles themselves since many of them were
said to be in poor condition perhaps due to natural ageing or, more
likely, because they had been damaged during the ransack of the palace
in March 1161, when the *dafātir al-ḥudūd* were also reported to have
gone missing—indeed, at least some of them might have. Four titles on
the fragment are struck through with a single stroke, indicating that the
list had been checked. Alternatively, given the peculiar context of this
list with so many works in poor condition together with the proposed
historical context that the list was made after the sacking of the palace, it
is possible that these could no longer be found or had been thrown away.
Publication of this fragment with a full commentary will, of course,
greatly enhance its value and allow a wider discussion to take place.
However, as far as this article is concerned there is sufficient evidence
to believe that the script in which it was written was not intended to be
seen in the same light as that of a 'public' *dīwānī* document. Rather, it
represents the longest example of the style in which Arabic scribes in the
royal palace wrote for their own purposes. In the case of the Cappella
Palatina fragment, pointing was infrequent and there are no signs of
vocalisation, although a *rā'* appears to be marked as such with a caret.
Such reading aids would have been all the more important in this case
given that the scribe was transcribing from a non-Arabic source in many
instances. These observations seem to me not inconsistent with the
inference that the *daftar* Arabic may have been composed along similar
lines with limited pointing. The evidence such as it is suggests that when
dīwānī scribes wrote to themselves the diacritical apparatus they used
did not exceed that of the finalised texts to be issued as confirmations

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[35] Despite being the son of a well-established royal judge from Bari, Maio was twice
derided for his 'lowly' origins in the *History* of 'Hugo Falcandus' where he was described
as *humili ortum genere* and that *pater oleum Bari vendere consueverat*. See *La Historia o Liber de
Regno Sicilie di Ugo Falcando*: 7, 17. Translation and notes, Loud & Wiedemann 1998: 16–
19, 60 and 69. For his commentary on the Lord's prayer, see Matthew 1992: 119–44.

of grants. Minor features which were not apparent in note-form hands were the occasional use of subscripted minuscule letters or superscript marks added for clarification of the relevant consonant.[36]

Concluding remarks

Variously inferred conclusions with different degrees of caution might be proposed. The Arabic of the *daftar*s may not always have been pointed or clearly pointed. The Arabic of the manuscript, while copied from those *daftar*s, was not always copied carefully or confidently. The Latin, on the other hand, had been translated and transliterated in a quirky and not always accurate fashion from the *daftar*s but most likely with extra clarifications and minor qualifications which were not contained in the same *daftar* source. This then served as the primary version for future reference rather than the *daftar* Arabic or the manuscript Arabic of the original confirmation. While these conclusions may appear somewhat underwhelming and not entirely unexpected, being able to the demonstrate them is a different matter. That said, such observations may in future come to play a part in a much wider debate about the transmission of toponyms from the twelfth century to later periods when the Muslims had gone from Sicily, few if any could decipher the *dīwānī* Arabic script properly, and no one recognised all the names of the Latin localities as they appeared in the documents which served to confirm rights and privileges over the places mentioned.

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[36] In addition to the examples cited, there exists a bilingual (Greek-Arabic) boundary definition from 1141 which confirmed the lands held by the church of S. Giorgio di Triocalà. Although this has been described tentatively as a 'working draft' (see Johns, appendix 1, *Dīwānī* 15), it was clearly written in a finished *dīwānī* script and not in a note-form hand.

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