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AP SŁUPSK

OUTLOOK ON THE GOLDEN AGE IN THE HISTORY OF SICILY

Our considerations should be preceded with a brief outline of the ancient and early medieval history of Sicily. The first historically documented people who appeared on the island were the Sicules, who came to Sicily most probably from the territory of Lazio, that is from the region whose centre was Rome. They might have been forced to flee from that region by the Oscans who were using a similar language. While on the Peninsula the Oscan language was supplanted with Latin, in Sicily it was replaced with both Greek and the Phoenician language. The Sicules arrived on the island circa 13th century B.C., or even earlier, partly driving from it the Sicanes who had settled there before¹. According to one of the hypotheses the Sicanes were to come from the west, namely, from the Iberian Peninsula². Those peoples, and possibly also certain ephemeral populaces, maintained contact with Mycenaean Greece, which could be illustrated by the existence of a princely palace (anactoron) in Pantalica, which resembles a Mycenaean megaron.

Archeological finds from circa 9th B.C. prove that already ancient Sicilians (Sicanes and Sicules) participated in transit trade with other regions of the Mediterranean Sea. Written sources indicate that the apogee of trade exchange in the oldest regions of Sicily took place in the period of the Great Greek Colonization. The pace of this process did not slacken in Roman times.

Between 11th and 10th century B.C. Phoenician and Greek invasions of the island began. Both invaders were excellent sailors and it seems that they reached the island almost simultaneously. The character of their presence, however, was differ-

¹ Classical works on the ancient history of Sicily see: A. Holm, *Geschichte Siciliens im Altertum*, vols. I-III, Leipzig 1870-1898; E. Païs, *Storia della Sicilia e della Magna Graecia*, Torino 1894; E.A. Freeman, *Sicily, Phenician, Greek and Roman*, London 1892. Modern works see: M.J. Finley, *A History of Sicily. Ancient to the Arab conquest*, London 1968; *La Sicilia antica*, eds. E. Gabba, G. Vallet, Napoli 1980; *Storia della Sicilia*, vols. I-X, sq. Ed.-in chef R. Romeo, Napoli 1977-1981.

² E. Païs, *Storia della Sicilia...*, pp.13 ff.

ent in several ways. Thus, when the Greeks were founding cities and cultivated land, the Phoenicians were interested rather in the coastline, where they built ports and trading posts (for example in Mosya, Palermo). Permanent presence of Greeks on the island took place in the mid-8th century, when they were established agricultural colonies there. The immigration, which is estimated today to have reached around five hundred people, was caused mainly by the overpopulation of the oldest territories of continental Greece (Attica). When the Carthaginian threat came to an end due to the activities of king Pyrrhus of Epirus in 278-276 B.C., the expansion of Rome was intensified. Sicily was transformed into a Roman province after the final defeat of Carthage, whose vanguards left Sicily permanently only in 201 B.C. At that time the island became the first overseas territory of Rome. Cicero believed that Sicily taught the Romans how "beautiful it is to rule foreign countries"³. After accepting Christianity Sicily came into the scope of interest of the barbaric Germanic peoples from the North. A storm in the Strait of Messina rescued Sicily from the invasion of king Alaric's Visigoths (401 A.D.). However, in 440 A.D. Genseric, the leader of the Vandals, managed to capture Marsala and to besiege Palermo. Also other valiant tribes from the North got to the island, first led by Odoacer and then by Theodoric, the king of the Ostrogoths (491). The invaders only sporadically mixed with the local people, as their activities were limited to piracy and plunder. It was the arrival of Belisarius, emperor Justinian's military leader, who captured the whole Sicily for the Eastern Roman Empire in 535, which was the turning point in the subsequent history of the island. Thus, Constantinople retained control over the island for three following centuries. Sicily experienced a new influx of the Greeks, most of whom were exiled to the island. In effect, Latin was replaced with Greek⁴.

The appearance of Islam as a force taking advantage of Byzantium, makes the first, incidentally, unsuccessful Arab invasion on Sicily, took place in 652⁵. Attacks on their part will be repeated in the first half of the following century. However, it was not until 827, when the Arab flotilla, operating from the coasts of Ifriqiya, landed in Sicily and initiated the systematic conquest of the island. In 831 the Arabs captured Palermo, but the Byzantines still held several strategically relevant centers, especially Syracuse and Taormina. The capture of Messina and Palermo was synonymous with the end of Byzantine supremacy in the Mediterranean Sea basin. In the 11th century Sicily was gradually liberated from the Arab rule due to persistent military operations on the part of the Norman knights from the family of the Hauteville (ital. Altavilla). The island was conquered by two sons of Tancred Hauteville, ie. Robert Guiscard and Roger of Hauteville, the "Great Count", in long period of

³ M. Tullii Ciceronis *Orationes*, London 1862, vol. I, p. 200: «(Sicilia...) docuit majores nostros quam preclarum esset exteris gentibus imperare» [Actione secunda In C. Verrem, Liber Secundus, De jurisdictione Siciliensi].

⁴ J.B. Bury, *The History of the later Roman Empire*, New York 1958, vol. II, p. 202; passim; see also excellent monograph of Polish scientist Mrs. T. Wolińska, *Sycylia w polityce Cesarstwa Bizantyńskiego w VI-IX w.*, Łódź 2005, with good bibliographical apparatus, pp. 277-381.

⁵ A. Aziz, *A History of Islamic Sicily*, Edinburgh 1975, p. 1f. (further: Islamic Sicily).

some 30 years. The conquest of Sicily began in May 1061, after two exploratory raids by Roger the previous year. Palermo, the capital of island, fell in January 1072. The last two mayor Saracen strongholds, Trapani, in the west, was taken in 1077 and Taormina in the east in 1079, Syracuse fell in 1085 and the great mountain fortress of Enna, first in effective attacked in 1061, fell at last in 1087. The fall of Noto in 1091 to decide the completion of Norman domination over the whole island⁶.

It was Roger II, Roger I's younger son, whose rule began in 1105, when his brother Simon died and who in fact assumed power on attaining his majority in 1112, who was the leading figure amongst Roger I's successors. Roger II was crowned in 1130, and in 1137 he incorporated into his state all Norman territories situated in the South of Italy, including Naples. Soon after 1148 he started to gain control over the emirs of Ifriqiya with the help of George of Antioch, the leader of both his army and his fleet⁷. The main branch of the Hauteville family ruled Sicily up to 1189. After the heirless death of William II, the last representative of this branch, favorable conditions appeared for the emperor Frederick I's son, the "Roman" king Henry VI of Hohenstaufen, who married Constance, Roger II's daughter, in 1186, to seize control over the island. After the premature death of emperor Henry VI in 1197, the Kingdom of Sicily was inherited by his son Frederick Roger (as the Roman king and emperor, Frederick II of Hohenstaufen). The position of the Hohenstaufen was gradually strengthened both on the island and in the continental part of the Kingdom of Sicily, which under Frederick II's reign became the most efficiently governed state in Europe (Idealstaat), with flourishing courtly culture, science permeated with influences of the Orient (Islam, Judaism) and with the developing Sicilian school of poetry. These achievements, though of considerable importance in particular disciplines of science, culture and art, did not lead to civilization synthesis⁸.

Focusing for a while on the intercultural dimension of the "Golden Age" of the Norman-Staufen Sicily, two factors stimulating the intercultural rapprochement process should be emphasized. While the first one was the politically calculated religious and racial tolerance the second could be defined as a centralized model of efficiently managed monarchy. The first factor was based on ethnic diversity, while the estimates for particular ethnic groups from the close of the Norman period (c. 1190) determine the number of the Greek and Muslim population as around 50 per cent, descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of Sicily as well as incoming Roman peoples from continental Italy as around 30-35 per cent, Jews as 10 per cent and finally

⁶ F. Chalandon, *Histoire de la domination normande en Italie et en Sicile*, Paris 1907, pp. 195ff.; A. Aziz, *A History of Islamic...*, pp. 49ff.

⁷ D.C. Douglas, *The Norman achievement 1050-1100*, Berkeley University 1969, pp. 55-60, 74-78; D. Abulafia, *The Norman kingdom of Africa and the Norman expeditions to Majorca and the Muslim Mediterranean*, „Anglo-Norman Studies" 1985, VII, pp. 26-49; see also small remarks of A. Aziz, *A History of Islamic...*, p. 56f., who said: "The first attempts of Roger II, between 1118 and 1127, to gain a foothold in North Africa were unsuccessful".

⁸ D. Abulafia, *Kantorowicz and Frederick II*, „History LXXII" 1977, pp. 193-210; idem, *Federico II. Un imperatore medievale*, Torino 1993, p. 366f.

Roman incoming population of the cities as around 5-8 per cent (approximate data based on the assumption that the overall number of the inhabitants of the island equaled 700 thousand people)⁹. In that ethnic mosaic there also appears a small population of the Slavic people, whose traces can be detected in Arabic written sources of the 10th century¹⁰. Apart from the followers of Judaism, there are three components of civilization universum, that is: the universum of Latin civilization, drawing its inspiration from Rome; the universum of Eastern Christendom (Byzantine) and the universum of Islam. The universum of Western Christendom in that time was not very profound, despite the fact that the rulers were forced to support and strengthen church organization of the monarchy as well as to be protectors of numerous monastic houses. Eastern Christendom communities, remaining within Constantinople's jurisdiction, managed to retain their own dynamics and considerable independence. What is more, the monastic movement was based primarily on Basilian monasteries¹¹. Little is known about the organizational shape of Muslim communities, but they seem to have retained independence from religious leaders from outside Sicily, although both in Friday sermons (khutba) and on their coins, they declared submission to Christian rulers¹². As Marchi notices: "Rarely might one encounter in history a more heterogeneous state, a more complex civilization, and a more tolerant rule"¹³.

Autocratic system of government, used by the Normans and the Staufens, had its roots in Byzantine traditions, and it is possible that, to a certain extent, also in Muslim solutions. The system of government did not exclude, as it has been mentioned, the atmosphere of religious freedom, which astonished visitors from Muslim countries (Ibn Jubayr), and which was difficult to accept for Latin observers¹⁴. It was the emperor Frederick II who consolidated this rule by introducing in the Constitutions of Melfi (1231) an article stating that no one can be persecuted for being Islam or Judaism follower provided that they do not infringe on Christians' rights and do not affront their beliefs. He must have made such a stipulation taking into account feelings of the Roman Church¹⁵.

⁹ M. Gallina, *Bizantini, musulmani e altre etnie nell'Italia mediterranea (secoli VI-XI)*, [in:] *L'Italia mediterranea e gli incontri di civiltà*, P. Corrao, M. Gallina, C. Villa, Roma-Bari 2001, pp. 3-94.

¹⁰ T. Lewicki, *Osadnictwo słowiańskie i niewolnicy słowiańscy w krajach muzułmańskich w świetle opisów średniowiecznych pisarzy arabskich*, „Przegląd Historyczny” 1952, 43, p. 481f.; M. Amari, *Storia dei musulmani di Sicilia*, ed. C. Nallino, Catania 1935, vol. II, pp. 68ff.

¹¹ M. Scaduto, *Il monachismo basiliano nella Sicilia medievale. Rinascita e decadenza, secoli XI-XV*, Roma 1947; S. Borsari, *Monacheismo bizantino nell'Italia meridionale e insulare*, [in:] *Bisanzio, Roma e l'Italia nell'Alto Medioevo*, Spoleto [CISAM, vol. 34, 1988] vol. 2, pp. 675-695; J. Hauziński, *Królestwo Sycylii w systemie politycznym Fryderyka II Hohenstaufa*, [in:] *Studia z dziejów średniowiecza polskiego i powszechnego*, ed. W. Korta, Wrocław 1989, p. 109f.

¹² A. Aziz, *A History of Islamic...*, pp. 71-73.

¹³ C. Marchi, *Grandi peccatori, Grandi cattedrali*, Milano 1990, p. 121.

¹⁴ E. Momigliano, *Federico II de Svevia*, Milano 1937, pp. 112ff.

¹⁵ R. Traini, *art. Sikilliya*, [in:] *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition*. Vol. IX: SAN-SZE, Leiden 1997, pp. 583, 585f. (*The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition* = EI NE.).

He did not hesitate, however, to ruthlessly break the resistance of the Muslim population of Sicily. For example, in the face of the Muslim uprising of 1219-1222, the majority of their community was deported from the island. Those who submitted themselves back to the king of Sicily and Roman emperor, settled down in Lucera and in several smaller towns and villages in Calabria and Apulia, where they survived up to the Angevin period¹⁶.

It was Roger I (d. 1101), the first Norman ruler of Sicily, who was the precursor of supporting the Muslim element. Under Roger II's rule, the Arabic-Sicilian culture flourished as it had never before, which was epitomized by the scientific activity of al-Idrisi (1100-1166), who is unquestionably believed to be the greatest Arab geographer of the Middle Ages¹⁷. Autonomous development of Muslim culture in Sicily exerted considerable influence on customs and institutions of the Sicilian state. Those borrowings were adopted to a large extent in the administrative structure of the kingdom of Sicilian Normans. Cadastres, introduced in Sicily in the Norman period, including the description of particular barons' lands and lists of peasants settled in their lands, were based on Arabic-Byzantine patterns¹⁸.

Oriental borrowings are also noticeable in the courtly etiquette of the Norman rulers of Sicily. Thus, the Arab author, Ibn Hammad states that the kings of Sicily took over the custom of using a parasol ('mizalla') from Egyptian Fatimids¹⁹. That parasol was counted by Roger II among the royal insignia, and was under the care of a specially appointed royal clerk ('sahib al-mizalla')²⁰. The influence of Islam could be also detected in the titles of the most famous Norman ruler of Sicily. Roger II used the Arab title 'al-mu tazz billah' (strong through God), which first appeared on the Arab coins of that ruler and after that was used in chancery formulae²¹. Just like Muslim rulers in the West, Roger II used both in his correspondence and in documents a special authenticating sign – 'alama' (signum, emblem). On Sicilian diplomas dating back to that period, there is often the Arab formula: 'al-hamdu lillah wa shukran li'an umihi' (may God and his mercy be praised)²².

¹⁶ A. Aziz, *A History of Islamic...*, p. 105f.; J. Hauziński, *Królestwo Sycylii...*, p. 112f.

¹⁷ T. Lewicki, *Polska i kraje sąsiednie w świetle „Księgi Rogera” geografii arabskiego z XII w. al-Idrisi'ego*. Part I. Kraków 1945, pp. 1-19; R. Traini, *art. Sikilliya...*, p. 587; on the al-Idrisi see G. Oman, *art. in EI NE*. vol. III, 1986, pp. 1032-1035 (contains a full bibliography).

¹⁸ C.A. Garufi, *Sull'ordinamento amministrativo Normanno in Sicilia, Exchigier o diwan*, [in:] *Archivio Storico Italiano*, serie 5, XXVII, 1901, pp. 225-263; J.M. Powell, *Medieval monarchy and trade: the economic policy of Frederick II in the Kingdom of Sicily*, [in:] *Studi Medievali*, ser. 3, III, 1966, pp. 420-524.

¹⁹ In: M. Amari, *Biblioteca arabo-sicula*, vol. I, Leipzig 1857, p. 317 (arab.); *Biblioteca arabo-sicula*, (Ital. transl.), vol. I, Torino-Roma 1881, p. 508f.

²⁰ D. Schack, *Die Araber im Reich Rogers II*, Berlin [BRD] 1972, p. 151.

²¹ F. Gabrieli, *La politique arabe des Normands de Sicile*, "Studia Islamica" 1958, IX, p. 95; D. Schack, *Die Araber im Reich...*, p. 152; G. Crespi, *Die Araber in Europa. Mit einer Einführung von Francesco Gabrieli*, Stuttgart-Zürich 1992, pp. 282-303; C. Brühl, *Diplomi e cancelleria di Ruggero II. Con un contributo sui diplomi arabi di Albrecht Noth*, Palermo 1983; documents of the Arabian chancellery A. Noth, pp. 189-222.

²² S. Cusa, *I diplomi greci ed arabi di Sicilia*, vol. I, Palermo 1860, p. 544; D. Schack, *Die Araber im Reich...*, p. 152; arab. titles of Sicilian kings see A. Noth apud C. Brühl, *Diplomi e cancelleria...*, p. 297.

The word admiral, which was borrowed by many European nations, has its roots in the times of Roger II. He used the Latin derivative of the Arab term 'amir' for the first time when he conferred the title *ammiratus ammiratorum* to the commander-in-chief of the royal fleet. Roger II imitated oriental manners also in other ways. It is known that he copied Muslim fashion in clothes: flowing robes, which he used to wear, were made from precious eastern fabrics and adorned with decorative Arabic writing²³.

It was Palermo Capella Palatina, which turned into a symbol of Roger II's times. It perfectly combined architectural traditions of the East and the West²⁴. Examining oriental reminiscences in the architecture of Rogerian period is not the purpose of this study, as the already existing works referring to this topic have sufficiently illuminated the importance of the issue. One might risk a statement, however, that the material culture of Sicily in Roger II's times, which was most permanently manifested in the field of architecture, was permeated with a Muslim element²⁵.

Arab chancery formulae, oriental borrowings in royal manner, in courtly etiquette and in government organization, along with Roger II's tolerance and his activities promoting culture, made Amari describe the Norman ruler as a baptized sultan of Sicily²⁶.

Regarding the life span of cultural traditions of Muslim Orient in Sicily in the Norman period, it should be emphasized that a significant proportion of Arab population lived in that part of Europe. Diplomas issued by Roger II's chancery suggest that up to the mid 12th century Arabs constituted a significant proportion of Sicily's population. They outnumbered other inhabitants in such towns as Vicari, Corleone, Caltrasi, Platano and in Castrogiovanni. Thus, they were in majority in western parts of the island, although a similar phenomenon could also be observed in eastern regions of Sicily, in: Catania, Aci, Lentini, Syracuse and in Palermo region²⁷. As far as major city centres are concerned, Arab population was in minority only in Caltagirone and in Messina. An interesting note on the Arab population of Sicily was provided by Ibn al-Athir, the Arab polymath who claimed that during the Norman conquest of the island numerous "learned and virtuous men" emigrated from Sicily²⁸. He added, however, that in Roger II's period the Muslim element in Sicily was reinforced by newcomers from northern Africa. In the light of the abovementioned facts, there are sufficient grounds to assess the number of the Muslim population of Sicily in the times of Roger II as fifty per cent of overall population of the island²⁹.

²³ P.K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, London 1960, p. 608.

²⁴ U. Monneret de Villard, *Le pitture musulmane al soffitto della Cappella Palatina in Palermo*, Roma 1950 remain a classic; W. Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom: Roger II and the Capella Palatina in Palermo*, Princeton-New Jersey 1997; R. Traini, *art. Sikilliya...*, p. 588.

²⁵ A. Aziz, *A History of Islamic...*, p. 64: "It would be more accurate to say that in Roger's court there was a symbiosis of Greek, Arab and Latin cultural traditions and influences".

²⁶ M. Amari, *Storia dei musulmani...*, vol. III, p. 365.

²⁷ D. Schack, *Die Araber im Reich...*, p. 21.

²⁸ Apud M. Amari, *Biblioteca arabo-sicula...*, vol. I, pp. 286 and 292 (arab.); *Biblioteca arabo-sicula...* (Ital. transl.), vol. I, pp. 448 and 469.

²⁹ F. Lot, *Les invasions barbares*, Paris 1937, p. 97; L. Villari, *L'ammiraglio Cristodulo e la corte-*

Ibn Jubayr, a traveler from Arab Spain, who was on the island in 1185, was astonished with the size of Muslim population there. During his stay in Palermo the streets were teeming with Muslims and the people on the route from Palermo to Trapani were solely of Arabic descent³⁰. Up to the times of king Tancred (1190-1194) the Muslims constituted a significant proportion of island's inhabitants, which was indicated by the Sicilian author, Hugo Falcandus, and by an earlier note from a Latin sources, concerning the uprising of Sicilian Muslims in 1189. What is important for further history of Islam in Sicily, the mutinous Arab population emigrated in that time to the inaccessible Val di Mazara region³¹.

Therefore, it could be safely stated that, if Arab culture in Sicily did not have the same opportunity to develop as elsewhere, the blame for this belongs to a considerable extent to the eventful history of the Arabs in the island. It must therefore be admitted that various crises within the Arab denomination, in addition to its brevity (two-and-a-half centuries, compared with seven centuries of Andalusian Arabism), strongly affected any cultural activity. So matters stood during the Aghlabid and Fatimid periods, until the turn of the 4th/10th century when, for the first time, the Kalbid amirate succeeded in creating conditions favorable to the arts and the sciences, a state of affairs also achieved by the Rogers and Williams in the 12th century and, after them, in the first half of the following century, by Frederick II. The eminent Italian scholar, Professor Traini accurately states that it is true "the Christian reconquest on the part of the Normans, was responsible for the singular phenomenon of a mass emigration of scholars to the Maghrib, al-Andalus and Egypt"³². This process was contrary to that which formerly had often seen the arrival on the Sicilian scene of various itinerant scholars. The devastating effect which this diaspora of the Arab intelligentsia of Sicily was to have on its cultural patrimony was hardly to be compensated for by the attribute of al-Sikilli which these people continued to attach to their names³³. But if in fact it only survives as an exterior brand, making no contribution to the intellectual life of Sicily, it has proved sufficient, in modern times, to arouse "the patriotic ardour" of contemporary Italian intellectuals and thinkers.

While it is quite natural to compare, from a cultural point of view, in the context

normanna di Sicilia, "Nuova Rivista Storica" 1957, XLI, p. 237; W. Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom...*, p. 13; D. Schack, *Die Araber im Reich...*, p. 23.

³⁰ *The travels of Ibn Jubair*. Second edition revised by M.J. de Goeje, Leiden 1907, p. 334 [text arab. in: Gibb Memorial Series].

³¹ H. Falcandus, *Epistola ad Petrum Panormitanæ ecclesie thesaurarium de calamitate Sicilie*, ed. G.B. Siragusa, [in:] *Fonti per la storia d'Italia*, XXII, Roma 1897, p. 173f.; Anonymi Monachi Cassinensis Breve Chronicon, [in:] *Chronisti e scrittori sincroni napoletani editi e inediti*, ed. G. Del Re, vol. I, Napoli 1845: "*Panormi oritur inter Christianos, et Sarracenos dissensio. Sarraceni multa suorum strage facta, exeunt, et inhabitant montana*", p. 471; Apud anno domini 1190, ed. G. Del Re, *Chronist e scrittori*, vol. II, Napoli 1868, p. 7: "[...] *quinque Sarracenorum regulos, qui ob metu Christianorum ad montana confugerant*"; M. Amari, *Storia dei musulmani...*, vol. III, part 2, Firenze 2003, p. 361f. (new edition).

³² R. Traini, *art. Sikilliya...*, p. 586.

³³ *Ibidem*.

of western Islam, Sicily with Spain, it should not be too surprising to find that the literary and scientific output of the Sicilian Muslims is not comparable in its entirety to that of the scholars and erudite writers of al-Andalus. Culture and science prospered under the Staufen rule and did not remain isolated, but was fortunately revived under Frederick II, who, with his spirit of universal tolerance, made of Palermo incomparable crucible of civilization. His court was a cosmopolitan meeting-place of scholars, Latins and Greeks, Jews and Arabs³⁴. Among these at least two should be mentioned: Michael Scotus, already renowned as a translator at Toledo, who spent his last years, between 1227 and 1235, in the service of Frederick II, translating the zoological section of Avicenna's *Shifa* (*Abbreviatio Avicennae de animalibus*), and composing two books on astrology and one on physiognomy³⁵; Theodore of Antioch, who in 1236 replaced Michael Scotus, in the office of royal astrologer, was entrusted with the composition of official letters in Arabic, and translated, under the title *De scientia venandi per aves*, an Arabic treatise on hunting with falcons³⁶, which Frederick II used in his own *De arte venandi cum avibus*.

During the reign of the Angevin dynasty, but also under the Aragonian rule, Sicily participated in the Mediterranean Sea transit. However, the cultural life of the island did not reach such a level as in the times of the Normans and the Staufen. Architecture of the Sicilian baroque lacks originality, thus indicating all-European borrowings. In contrast, Sicilian literature has native features and slowly develops all-Italian features. Is the island, however, out of the competition between civilizations of the Mediterranean Sea basin?

The Arab rule mitigated for a few centuries, at least in western regions of the island, the development of various forms of total dominance of the latifundia. According to Amari landed aristocracy got impoverished due to confiscations, colonization and the introduction of tenancy (arends) in accordance with shari'a, which, along with the possibility of inheriting the tenanted land, enabled dividing land also among younger sons. In effect, huge plots of land were to a certain extent parceled out³⁷.

Arab rulers introduced the system of monopoly on minerals and natural resources on the island: they had silver, lead, sulphur, mercury, mineral oils and alum

³⁴ F. Gabrieli, *Federico e la cultura musulmana*, „Rivista Storica Italiana” 1952, LXIV, pp. 5-18; J. Hauziński, *Fryderyk II Hohenstauf (1194-1250) a świat kultury muzułmańskiej*, [in:] *Mente et Litteris. O kulturze i społeczeństwie wieków średnich*, Poznań 1984, pp. 153-162; C.H. Haskins, *Science at the court of the emperor Frederick II*, [in:] *Studies in the history of medieval science*, Cambridge Harvard 1924, pp. 242-271.

³⁵ C.H. Haskins, *Michael Scot*, [in:] *Studies...*, pp. 272-297; L. Thorndike, *Michael Scot*, London 1965.

³⁶ C.H. Haskins, *The De arte venandi cum avibus of Frederick II*, [in:] *Studies...*, pp. 298-324.

³⁷ M. Amari, *Storia dei musulmani...*, vol. III, part 2 (new ed.), pp. 509ff.; see other points of view C.A. Garufi, see above n° 18; M. Caravale, *Il regno normanno di Sicilia*, Roma 1966, pp. 103ff.; F. de Stefano, *Storia della Sicilia dal secolo XI al XIX*, Bari 1948, pp. 4-14; C. Cahen, *Le régime féodal de l'Italie normande*, Paris 1940, passim; see actually discussions Bisanzio, *Roma e l'Italia nell'Alto Medioevo: Le ripercussioni della crisi dell'Impero d'Oriente nelle vicende dell'Occidente*, Spoleto 1988, pp. 791-810, [CISAM = Centro Italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo (XXIV Settimane 3-9 aprile 1986)].

mined. Sicilian mined and sea salt was widely known beyond its borders. Booming trade, grain trade in particular, developed strong ties between the island and northern Africa, as well as southern Italy and Spain. Silk, henna, indigo and sugar were exported in large quantities from the island. Foreign merchants had their own spacious warehouses in Palermo, Lentini and Marsala (antiq. Lilibeum)³⁸.

The Norman dynasty shaped forms of land ownership and tenure according to the principles of classic feudalism, following in this matter patterns used in the Western world. The feudal economic and political system established both on the island and in the Italian South was broken neither by the civilizing achievements of the kings from Altavilla dynasty nor by their "Roman" successor, the emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen. On the contrary, the system was additionally strengthened and became petrified. It consolidated for several centuries to come, which found its reflection in the broadly defined civilization of Sicily. Danzuso gives several examples proving that also in the twilight of Sicilian culture, the Sicilians were the forerunners of progressive social conceptions. Furthermore, he states: "Moreover, as the ages passed, creative patterns have been developed, which, however limited, were characterized by their respect for nature and folk culture. In addition, those patterns, which did not disregard any style, developed a common sense of beauty and achieved their utmost expression in the works of Sicilian craftsmen and architects"³⁹. However, for that period, which is considered as the Golden Age of Sicilian culture, according to Braudel it may be concluded that space was the basic element determining human existence and heritage⁴⁰. In this case it was space which determined vectors of increase, fall and existence in Mediterranean civilization.

Streszczenie

Z perspektywy Złotego Wieku historii sycylijskiej

Zatrzymując się na wymiarze Złotego Wieku Sycylii normańsko-staufijskiej w dziejach powszechnych wskazać należy na dwie okoliczności, które stymulowały proces zbliżenia międzykulturowego. Pierwszą z nich stanowiła wykalkulowana politycznie tolerancja religijna i rasowa, zaś drugą – scentralizowany model sprawnie rządzonej monarchii. Bazą pierwszego z czynników było zróżnicowanie etniczne, przy czym szacunki dla poszczególnych grup etnicznych końca epoki normańskiej (ok. 1190 r.) określają procent ludności greckiej i muzułmańskiej na ok. 50%, potomków dawnej rodzimej ludno-

³⁸ On the Sicilian economy of that period M. Gil, *Sicily 827-1072, in light of the Gemiza documents and pararell sources*, [in:] *Italia judaica. Gli Ebrei in Sicilia sino all'espulsione del 1492. Atti de V convegno internazionale Palermo, 15-19 giugno 1992*, Rome 1995, pp. 96-171.

³⁹ G.L. Danzuso, G. Veggì, *Sicilia. Incontro di civiltà mediterranee*, Vercelli 1992. My utility today is Polish translation: *Sycylia. Spotkanie cywilizacji śródziemnomorskich*, Warszawa 1998, p. 20.

⁴⁰ F. Braudel, *Morze Śródziemne i świat śródziemnomorski w czasach Filipa II*, vols. I-II, Gdańsk 1976-1977, especially vol. I, pp. 126-130, vol. II, pp. 209-213; see Index: *Sycylia (Sicile, Sicily)*, vol. II, p. 754; idem, *A history of civilization*, New York 1994 (theoretical principles).

ści Sycylii i napływowych elementów romańskich z Italii kontynentalnej na ok. 30-35%, Pozostałe to Żydzi (ok. 10%) i romańska ludność napływowa w miastach ok. 5-8% (dane szacunkowe przy założeniu ogólnej liczby mieszkańców wyspy na 700 tys.). W tej mozaice etnicznej pojawia się również nieznaczna populacja słowiańska, której ślady napotykamy w arabskich źródłach z X w. Nie licząc wyznawców judaizmu, mamy tu trzy komponenty uniwersum cywilizacyjnego, tj. cywilizacji łacińskiej czerpiące inspirację

z Rzymu, wschodniego chrześcijaństwa (bizantyńskie) i islamskie. Uniwersum zachodniego chrześcijaństwa w wymiarze religijnym w okresie tym nie było zbyt głębokie, chociaż władcy zmuszeni byli popierać i wzmacniać organizację kościelną monarchii oraz być protektorami licznych formacji zakonnych. Gminy wschodniego chrześcijaństwa, pozostające w związku z jurysdykcyjną podległością wobec Konstantynopola, zachowywały tutaj własną dynamikę i znaczną samodzielność, zaś ruch monastyczny opierał się zwłaszcza na klasztorach bazylikańskich. Stosunkowo niewiele wiemy o kształcie organizacyjnym wspólnot muzułmańskich. Wydaje się, że zachowały one niezależność od przywódców religijnych spoza Sycylii, zaś w kazaniach piątkowych (chutba) i na monetach wyrażały poddaństwo wobec chrześcijańskich monarchów. Dlatego stwierdza się z dużą dozą słuszności: „Rzadko w historii można spotkać bardziej niejednorodne państwo, bardziej złożoną cywilizację, bardziej tolerancyjne rządy” (C. Marchi, 1990).

Panowanie Arabów złagodziło, przynajmniej na zachodzie wyspy, na kilka wieków rozwijającą się w zmieniającym się kształcie totalną dominację latyfundiów. Zdaniem Michele Amariego arystokracja ziemską zubożała wskutek konfiskat, kolonizacji i wprowadzenia dzierżawy według szariatu, co wraz z dziedziczeniem dzierżaw pozwalało na podział ziemi również pomiędzy młodszych synów. Następstwem tego było co najmniej częściowe rozparcelowanie wielkich nadziałów ziemi.

Arabscy władcy wprowadzili na wyspie system monopoli na bogactwa naturalne i kopaliny: wydobywali srebro, ołów, siarkę, rtęć, oleje mineralne, alun. Sól kopalniana i morska Sycylii była znana poza jej granicami. Ożywiony handel, zwłaszcza zbożem, związał wyspę z jednej strony z Afryką Północną, a z drugiej z południowymi Włochami i Hiszpanią. Wyspa eksportowała w wielkich ilościach jedwab, len, indygo i cukier. W Palermo, Lentini i Marsali (star. Lilibeum) cudzoziemscy kupcy mieli swoje obszerne składy.

Dynastia normańska stosunkom ziemskim nadała charakter klasycznego feudalizmu, nawiązując w ten sposób do rozwiązań świata zachodniego. Centralizacyjne dzieło królów z dynastii Altavilla i ich „rzymskiego” sukcesora, cesarza Fryderyka II Hohenstaufa, nie złamało feudalnego systemu ekonomicznego i politycznego na wyspie i włoskim Południu, lecz wprost przeciwnie, jeszcze go utrwaliło i spetryfikowało. Tutaj formacja ta ugruntowała się jeszcze na wiele przyszłych wieków, co znalazło odzwierciedlenie w szeroko pojętej cywilizacji wyspy.

