13 Palermo / Italy
Appropriations. The Canonization of the City in Early Travel Literature

Panormus conca aurea suos devorat alienos nutrit
Palermo the golden dell, devours her own and feeds the foreigners
(inscription on the "Genius of the City" in the Palazzo Pretorio)[1]

The history of modern Palermo was long characterized by corruption and destruction: after the city suffered worse devastation than any other Italian city in the Second World War, the mafia-dominated construction industry brought about a second wave of destruction, referred to within the city as the "sacco" (sack) or "scempio" (massacre).[2] In the meantime, however, Arab-Norman Palermo has been canonized as UNESCO World Heritage (fig. 1): "Located on the northern coast of Sicily, Arab-Norman Palermo includes a series of nine civil and religious structures dating from the era of the Norman kingdom of Sicily (1130–1194): two palaces, three churches, a cathedral, a bridge, as well as the cathedrals of Cefalú and Monreale. Collectively, they are an example of a social-cultural syncretism between Western, Islamic and Byzantine cultures on the island which gave rise to new concepts of space, structure and decoration.

They also bear testimony to the fruitful coexistence of people of different origins and religions (Muslim, Byzantine, Latin, Jewish, Lombard and French)".[3] Looking back, this award, for all that it may appear justified today, was far from inevitable. Early travellers

1 Unless stated to the contrary, all translations from German, French, Latin and Italian sources are by Graeme Currie.

2 Schneider/Schneider, Reversible Destiny, 2003, 14.

3 Website UNESCO, Arab-Norman Palermo, where we also find the following: "The monuments that comprise this 6.235-ha serial property include the Royal Palace and Palatine Chapel; Zisa Palace; Palermo Cathedral; Monreale Cathedral; Cefalù Cathedral; Church of San Giovanni degli Eremiti; Church of Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio; Church of San Cataldo; and Admiral's Bridge."

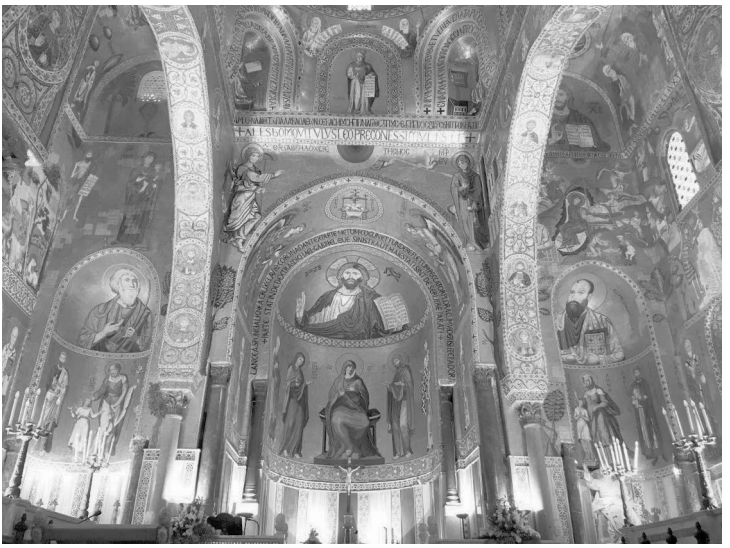

Figure 1: Arab-Norman heritage. Mosaics in the Capella Palatina (Photo: G. Vinken 2019)

to Sicily were interested largely in Classical antiquity, while the Arab-Norman monuments (and those from the period of Hohenstaufen rule) were long neglected. One of the pioneer travellers, for instance, Baron von Riedesel, recording his visit to Monreale Cathedral, "passes over the Gothic mosaic work, about which the Sicilians make such a fuss".[4] In contrast to mainland Italy, which, as far south as Naples, had been the goal and the climax of the Grand Tour, Sicily was not 'discovered' until the advent of Neoclassicism, when Johann Joachim Winckelmann encouraged a new perspective on the ancient world. For German travellers in particular, Sicily was not simply an extension of the journey through Italy. At a time when the 'motherland' was an inaccessible part of the Ottoman Empire, they looked towards places such as Syracuse, Agrigento, Selinunte and Segesta for authentic contact with 'the Greek world'.[5] Only with the Historicism of the 19th century do we see a revaluation of the monumental landscape, one that established the Middle Ages as a key point of reference for the narratives of national heritage that emerged in countries such as England, France and Germany.[6] The shift in taste and significance that this brought about is vividly obvious in the criticisms that later travellers made of their predecessors. Even the sainted Goethe, who visited Sicily as early as 1787 and documented his impressions in the widely read *Italian Journey*[7] was not immune to the criticisms of a later, more historically aware generation. In 1854, for

4 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 23. On the discovery and reception of Sicily's Arab-Norman architecture, see Meier, Die normannischen Königspaläste, 1994, 6–11.

5 See Osterkamp, Geschichte der deutschen Sizilienwahrnehmung, 1987, 146. It was architects in particular who took up Winckelmann's mission "to go to the source": Schinkel visited the island in 1804, von Klenze in 1823–24, as did Hittdorf and others.

6 Osterkamp, Geschichte der deutschen Sizilienwahrnehmung, 1987, 150.

7 Goethe, Italian Journey, 1982 (1816/17).

instance, the author and historian Adolf Stahr called "Goethe's description of Palermo and its environs […] very unsatisfactory". He noted that when Goethe travelled to Monreale, he mentioned the "foolish rococo fountains" but not the "marvel of the majestic cathedral with its colossal splendid columns, its giant mosaics, its grand arches, elaborate bronze doors, and finally, could not even say that he had seen the fabulous beauty of the marvellous cloister, in whose columned halls an entire world of Christian art lives".[8] While, according to Stahr, Goethe describes in full detail even "monumental extravagances" such as the "daring" fountain (Fontana Pretori) or the monstrous Villa Palagonia, "wonderful buildings" such as the Martorana, the Cappella Palatina (see above, fig. 1) or the cathedral with its mosaic artworks go unmentioned.[9] In fact, Goethe's itinerary during his visit to the island was entirely conventional for the time.[10] What is surprising about Stahr's description, however, is that he himself does not mention the cathedral's monumental porphyry sarcophagus, constructed for the Norman Roger II for his burial site in Cefalú and brought to Palermo by Frederick II.[11] This Hohenstaufen emperor's tomb was to become a place of pilgrimage at the high water mark of German patriotism that followed the defeat of Napoleon, as it allowed the Germans in Sicily to "dream of both: of the spiritual beauty of Greek humanity and of the power of mediaeval imperiality".[12] This was how Cosima Wagner recorded her visit: "Sublime impression, 'What kind of people are they, who build such a thing?' R[ichard] calls out. The cloister is charming."[13]

In the 18th century, visitors were less prone to speculate about the Normans and the Staufer than they were to consider ancient heroes and gods with Homer and Virgil. Nevertheless, especially in the early years, the expectations and interests of visitors varied significantly. The first modern traveller to Sicily, Karl Graf von Zinzendorf, visited the island in 1764–65 with a political and economic agenda as Councillor of Commerce (*Kommerzienrat*), in which capacity he was expected to gather concrete facts about economic, political, military and geographical matters.[14] In 1767, another pioneer, Winckelmann's pupil Baron von Riedesel, eagerly sought out traces of the Greeks, undertaking archaeological explorations and surveys in emulation of his teacher and role model.[15] Patrick Brydone, whose widely read travelogue was to influence the expectations of early travellers, journeyed as the mentor and companion of two aristocrats in the tradition of the Grand Tour;[16] this physicist's side-trip to Sicily was encouraged by Hamilton, the English ambassador in Naples, who was also a famous volcanologist, and it offered

8 Stahr, Tage in Palermo, 1986 (1845), 158–159.

9 Osterkamp, Sizilien Reisebilder, 1986, 158–159. Elsewhere, Osterkamp notes correctly that by the time of its publication – in 1817, almost three decades after his time in Sicily – Goethe's *Italian Journey* already represented a contrasting standpoint to the patriotic Mediaevalism of the Romantics. Osterkamp, Geschichte der deutschen Sizilienwahrnehmung, 1987, 149–150.

10 Osterkamp, Geschichte der deutschen Sizilienwahrnehmung, 1987, 148–149.

11 Rader, Die Kraft des Porphyrs, 2009, 43.

12 Osterkamp, Geschichte der deutschen Sizilienwahrnehmung, 1987, 150, 152.

13 Quoted in: Osterkamp, Sizilien Reisebilder, 1986, 174–175.

14 Zinzendorf, Mémoire, 1773 (1766).

15 Details below.

16 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), I:137.

the further prospect of an ascent of Etna.[17] Brydone's approach to antiquity still drew largely on antiquarian (book) learning.

An examination of the genesis of Palermo's heritage-figurations is also particularly interesting because the city offered the classically educated travellers of the late Enlightenment relatively little of relevance. The anecdote handed down by one such visitor, Johann Gottfried Seume, in this regard is revealing. Seume, who, in contrast to his wealthy contemporaries, made the journey from Leipzig to Syracuse on foot, used a mule (with muleteer) to travel around the island's interior. On an adventurous ride from Palermo to Agrigento, he met muleteers from "all parts of the island" who easily guessed that the foreigner wanted "to visit their antiquities". "Then a quarrel arose […] concerning the advantages of their home towns in matters of antiquity. The muleteer from Agrigento listed the temple and other marvels and the antiquity of his town; the muleteer from Syracuse mentioned the theatre, the quarries and the ear [of Dionysius, author's note]; the muleteer from Alcamo named Segesta." Seume's muleteer, meanwhile, who was from Palermo, "listened with regal patience and said – nothing".[18]

Part 1: Knowledge Transfer: The Learned Sicilians and the Foreigners

If Palermo didn't offer any Greek heritage – then what did it have? How and in what form did the city's heritage come into view? If earlier literature largely focused on reconstructing 18th-century Palermo from historical descriptions or examining questions of intertextuality,[19] the focus of research today has shifted considerably under the influence of post-colonial theory. The history of travel, on which so much has been published that it is barely possible to gain a complete overview, has also taken on board themes such as race, class and gender.[20] The field now questions the experience of alienness and the "situation of the other" as a key aspect of travel[21] and has turned its attention to the circulation of knowledge and to questions of agency.[22] Particularly when it comes to heritage formations, the question "who has the right to speak?" or "whose heritage is it?" is central.[23] The power imbalance in relation to questions of interpretation in the early phases of the appropriation of heritage in Palermo is evident: the insertion of Sicily's heritage into the European context was carried out in line with the cultural knowledge and aesthetic standards of (northern) European elites. In a certain regard, the focus of contemporary research still reflects this power imbalance by continuing to give a central role to the writings of travellers and their reception, particularly Goethe's *Italian Jour-*

17 Smecca, Three travel writers, 2009, for Brydone 47–101, here 47.

18 Seume, Spaziergang, 2003 (1802), 124–125.

19 On the travel literature of the 18th century: Tuzet, La Sicile au XVIIIe siècle, 1955. Cf. also Wuthenow, Die erfahrene Welt, 1980.

20 E.g. Maurer, Neue Impulse, 1999.

21 Möller, Situationen des Fremden, 2016.

22 Mackenthun/Nicolas/Wodianka, Circulation of Knowledge, 2017.

23 Ashworth/Graham/Tunbridge, Pluralising Pasts, 2007; Rampley, Identity in Central and Eastern Europe, 2012; Vinken, Das Erbe der Anderen, 2015.

ney, which has been scrutinized in the most exhaustive detail.[24] While this focus does grant a place to local elites, on whose information and work the knowledge of the early travellers' very much depended, the local knowledge communities are nonetheless only revealed in outline.[25] There is also a lack of detailed examinations of the earlier topographic and historical literature, something that this chapter can at best only attempt to patch up in places.

This contribution to understanding the genesis of Palermo's heritage-figurations therefore follows a twofold plan. It examines the appropriation of the city by foreigners, while inquiring at the same time into processes of evaluation and meaning-making. In a city that has little to offer the expectations of the cultural canon, there will be a particular focus on evaluating the monumental landscape via the questions of what can be seen, described, praised and criticized. The emphasis here will be less on intertextual questions ('What did Bartels adopt from Brydone?") or matters of cultural difference ("How do the English, the Germans travel?") than the attempt to analyse early travelogues against the background of local interpretative frameworks. Furthermore, a more precise look at contemporary topographic and historical works of Sicilian authorship provides an opportunity to work out what the state of knowledge was in the late 18th century and what explicit or immanent categories of evaluation were dominant in the discourse of local knowledge elites with regard to heritage-figurations. To gain an insight into local voices and sentiments, it is necessary to re-read familiar texts in view of the guiding questions: What sources, what contacts are mentioned? How are local elites and the inhabitants of the city viewed with regard to heritage? What dissonances can be detected between local evaluations and those of the visitors? Is it maybe even possible to discern a variety of heritage communities?

Topography and Cityscape

If Palermo offered little in the way of ancient sites, the city was by no means without interest (fig. 2). On the contrary, many early travellers made liberal use of superlatives. Goethe, for instance, enthuses about "the contours of Monte Pellegrino […], the most beautiful promontory in the world", the purity of the contours of the city and the landscape, the harmony of sky, earth and sea.[26] Because of its location, but also its layout and amenities, Palermo is considered one of the "first cities of Europe"; it has been called "one of the most beautiful cities" in the world.[27] Travellers who say this are adopting a topos that is deeply rooted in the local literature, where Palermo is referred to as "Paradiso della Sicilia […,] Conca di Oro, […], Città […] Felice" (Sicily's paradise, Golden dell, happy City).[28]

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24 On Goethe in Sicily, cf. Cometa, Il romanzo dell'architettura, 1999; Meier, Ein unsäglich schönes Land, 1987; cf. also Osterloh, Versammelte Menschenkraft, 2016; Zilcosky, Learning How to Get Lost, 2017; Spelsberg, I patrimonio culturale, 2011; Hirdt/Tappert, Goethe und Italien, 2001.

25 This is discussed, for instance, in Faber/Garms-Cornides, Entdeckung Siziliens, 2005. Cf. Pahnke, Spaziergang durchs papierne Jahrhundert, 2018.

26 Goethe, Italienische Reise, 1988 (1816/17), 230–231 (3 April 1787).

27 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792.

28 Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 15, 22, 30. Cf. Leanti, Lo stato presente della Sicilia, 1761, I:65.

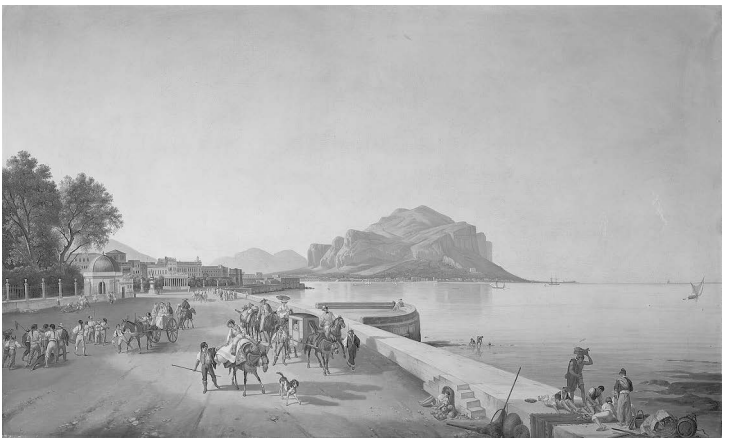

Figure 2: "Spaziergang in Palermo" (A stroll in Palermo), Franz Ludwig Catel, oil on canvas, 1846

Palermo, by far the largest and most important city on the island, which, since the loss of its independence, was ruled by viceroys from 1412 until 1816, was also the island's ecclesiastical capital and seat of its archbishop.[29] With 100,000–200,000 inhabitants – numbers vary[30] – Palermo was, alongside Naples (ca. 300,000) and Rome (ca. 160,000) one of the largest Italian cities.[31] Reached from Naples by means of a short – though not entirely easy – sea journey, Palermo was where most travellers began their visits to Sicily. With its streetlights, promenades and numerous cafés, it did not need to shirk comparison with the city of Vesuvius. Yet the contrast to the rest of Sicily came as a shock. On the one hand, the urban "hothouse", with an abundance of everything, a confusing "labyrinth", full of "heterogeneous things",[32] on the other, the impassable and impoverished countryside, exploited to enable the luxury of the capital: "It is hard to believe that one is in the same country, where the condition of the nation is closer to a state of barbarism than one of culture."[33] It is telling that outside the city the only streets that were firm and fit for traffic were those to nearby Monreale. Travelling any further was correspondingly difficult – on horseback for the privileged, but for most, by mule on narrow paths. Wealthy travellers such as Zinzendorf or Brydone reached their goals mostly by ship and restricted their overland travel on the island to a minimum.

29 Since 1734, the Kingdom of Sicily had been ruled in a personal union with the Kingdom of Naples by a subsidiary line of the Spanish Bourbons; the king resided in Naples.

30 Leanti gives a figure of 102,105 inhabitants (Leanti, Lo stato presente della Sicilia, 1761, I:52), Gaetani 140,000 (Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 18); Riedesel mentions "supposedly 150,000, but more like 120,000" (Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 22), Bartels 200,000 (Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 540).

31 Zern, Die Entdeckung Siziliens, 2014, 90.

32 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 476, 521–522, 540, 550. Cf. also Goethe, Italienische Reise, 1988 (1816/17), 229–230 (3 April 1787).

33 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 475–477.

Zinzendorf's Mémoire and the Topographic and Historical Literature

From the 16th century, the Spanish had built Palermo into a splendid princely seat; the mediaeval city walls had been expanded to create regular bastions, adorned with magnificent gates. The urban plan, organized by two grand main thoroughfares intersecting in a cross, was striking in its regularity; an additional accent was lent by the new harbour with its long *molo*, completed in 1590. As evidenced by numerous extant *vedute*, Palermo had already assumed its iconic cruciform layout by 1700 (fig. 3).[34]

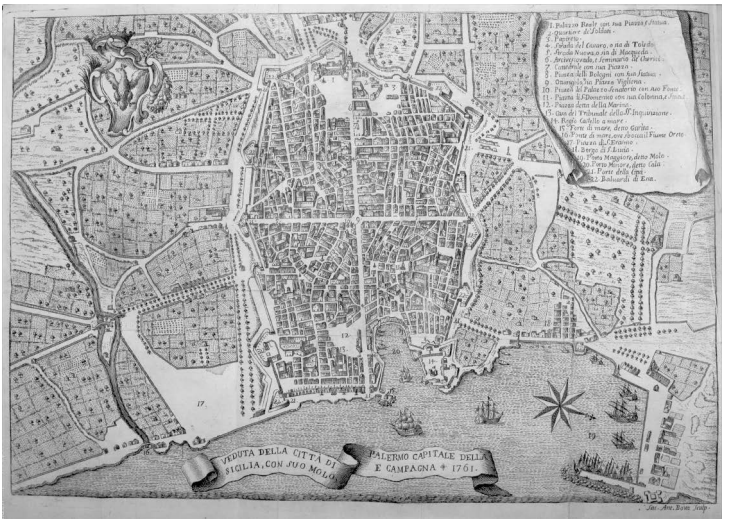

Figure 3: Inscription of a cross. Plan of Palermo, engraving by Antonio Bova, 1761

A concise description of the city was given by the first of the modern travellers, Karl Graf von Zinzendorf, scion of a landed family from Lower Austria who journeyed throughout Europe and the Habsburg monarchy in 1763–76 in his function as Counsellor of Commerce – one of his objectives being to strengthen the Habsburg presence in the Mediterranean.[35] First published in French in 1766, his *Mémoire sur le Royaume de Sicile*[36] is rather unique, as already mentioned, in that it is the result of a narrowly interpreted political mandate, namely to gather detailed information on finances and trade, political structures and other matters for his superior Kaunitz, the Austrian State Chancellor. In the *Mémoire*, Zinzendorf devotes some 30 pages to Palermo, where he spent eleven days.[37] We will find the key elements of his description of the city echoed in the writings of most travellers: the beautiful location on a small gulf surrounded by high mountains; the two well-planned main streets that "adorn the city so beautifully": Along

34 A good overview is provided by Cesare, Raffigurazioni, 2008.

35 For details of Zinzendorf's trip to Sicily, see Faber/Garms-Cornides, Entdeckung Siziliens, 2005, 346. On his biography ibid., 343–345.

36 Zinzendorf, Mémoire, 1773 (1766). Cited after the edition from Lausanne of 1773, which also contains a French translation of Riedesel's travel journals as well as Hamilton's description of Etna.

37 Faber/Garms-Cornides, Entdeckung Siziliens, 2005, 347.

the main axis, the Via Cassaro or Toledo (today's Corso Vittorio Emanuele), grandly rebuilt in 1564; along the short axis, the Via Nuova or Maqueda, laid out in 1609, and the point where they meet, inspired by the Quattro Fontane in Rome, an octagonal square decorated with fountains and called Ottangolo or Quattro Canti.[38]

Figure 4: Poorer than Rome? Palermo, Fontana Pretoria (Photo: G. Vinken 2019)

Zinzendorf goes on to detail the following sites – in this order: many fountains, including the one in front of the Senatorial Palace (Fontana Pretoria), which is remarkable for its beauty and architecture, fig. 4); more squares, including the one in front of the Royal Palace with the statue of Philip IV, and the Piazza Bologni with the statue of Charles V; the promenades, said to be far better than those of Naples, especially the seafront (*La Marina*). The cathedral is described as "very richly decorated, with beautiful columns of oriental granite, a tabernacle of lapis lazuli, columns of jasper and porphyry; the sepulchres of Emperors Henry VI & Frederick II, both of porphyry".[39] The Jesuit and Theatine churches are also "très riches", and an additional 13 churches (meaning parishes) are mentioned, eight monasteries for men and five for women, 71 convents, 18 schools (*conservatoires*) "for poor girls and two for poor boys", eight hostels, etc.[40] The old harbour, he notes, is now only for boats (*barques*), while the new harbour lies outside the city and has the beautiful mole from 1590 and a lighthouse. The description closes by mentioning that many noble residences may be found outside the city, at Monte Pellegrino and in La Bagaria. Details are also given of the city government, trade, customs, etc.

38 Zinzendorf, Mémoire, 1773 (1766), 301.

39 All from Zinzendorf, Mémoire, 1773 (1766), 301–302.

40 Zinzendorf, Mémoire, 1773 (1766), 302–303.

At first glance, this deliberately dry text, which seeks to assemble relevant 'facts', appears to be of little relevance to the matter of our inquiry. This report, which lies somewhere between information-gathering and economic and military espionage, mostly refrains from making evaluations.[41] In her overview, Hélène Tuzet calls the *Mémoire* "barely travel writing", and not without cause.[42] Yet the normative character of the text reveals clearly what was really important to the author. He may not have been interested in tourist attractions in the conventional sense, but he was looking for anything worth reporting, for "curiosities" in a literal sense. What is clear is that Zinzendorf could not have put together his *Mémoire* in such a short time without a significant amount of preliminary work. Very little concrete and up-to-date information about Sicily was available in northern Europe at the time – which may have been one of the reasons for this journey of discovery. Winckelmann, for instance, advised Riedesel to prepare by reading an older text, the *Siciliae Antiquae libri duo* by the German geographer and historian Philipp Clüver from 1619. In view of Zinzendorf's working methods, which appear to have involved composing his reports at least in part before setting off,[43] relevant sources of information may have included not just the local network of educated people, who served travellers to Sicily as contacts and expert guides (of which we shall have more to say below), but above all recent historiographic and topographic studies. In his *Mémoire*, Zinzendorf names, alongside two older printed volumes,[44] two further Sicilian authors, namely Vito Maria Amico and the Marquise de Villabiancha.[45] In addition, there are, as we shall see, clear reasons to suppose that Zinzendorf also consulted the volume *Lo stato presente della Sicilia* by Arcangiolo Leanti, which was published in Palermo in 1761, close to the time of his visit to Sicily.[46] A comparison of the *Mémoire* with the contemporary local authors mentioned above is revealing, particularly with respect to the choice of objects and their evaluation. When analysing Zinzendorf's work in terms of the contemporary Sicilian topographic and historical authors, we are not concerned with precisely accounting for the internal links between these texts, which are largely compilatory in character. The aim is rather to grasp how Palermo's monumental landscape is portrayed, and whether a more or less established canon of curiosities had already become established, in relation to which the observations of Zinzendorf and the other early travellers could then be placed.

The three texts to be compared are very different in terms of their aims and scope. It is all the more remarkable that one can answer the question of whether there was

41 Faber/Garms-Cornides, Entdeckung Siziliens, 2005, 346. On determining the text's genre, also 348–349.

42 Tuzet's verdict is harsh; in her view, the report has "rien d'un récit de voyage" (Tuzet, La Sicile au XVIIIe siècle, 1955, 8). Zinzendorf's journals and correspondence, which, however, remain unpublished to this day, could give a different picture.

43 Faber/Garms-Cornides, Entdeckung Siziliens, 2005, 349, Note 38.

44 Faber/Garms-Cornides, Entdeckung Siziliens, 2005, 34, Note 64, with reference to Fazello, Baruta, Monitore, Caruso. Source for this indications is the manuscript of Zinzendorf's *Mémoire* in the State Archives of the City of Vienna/Hofkammerarchiv (HKA Vienna, Hs. 302), 347–419, here 383–384.

45 Cf. the manuscript of Zinzendorf's *Mémoire* (as in note 44), 360, 383–384.

46 Leanti, Lo stato presente della Sicilia, 1761. Also noted without further explanation by Faber/Garms-Cornides, Entdeckung Siziliens, 2005, 354, Note 64.

an established canon in the affirmative simply on this narrow basis, also noting that Zinzendorf, as we shall see, reproduced this canon to a very large extent. Francesco Maria Emanuele e Gaetani, from whom Zinzendorf borrowed his entire section on organs of government and administration, was a senator and a historian. His Magnum Opus *Della Sicilia Nobile* was an attempt to compile a comprehensive overview of the Sicilian nobility.[47] His account is preceded by general historical and geographical information gathered from older sources, which in structure and style resemble those given by Zinzendorf. Then, following a typographical-historical overview, he introduces the capital city and a selection of major sites. Palermo is dealt with relatively briefly, and here too there are many points of agreement with Zinzendorf, including a nearly identical ordering of the sites of interest and monuments.[48] Both authors list historical monuments and items of modern infrastructure and technological achievements together, including the molo with its lighthouse and the extensive streetlighting, which in Gaetani's eyes, is comparable with that of the most distinguished cities in Europe, such as Paris, London, Vienna and Venice – a formula that is repeated almost word forward in Leanti.[49] Occasional deviations in detail and variations in numbers show that Gaetani was not Zinzendorf's only source.[50] Some passages of Zinzendorf's report read like a straightforward response to Gaetani. Where the latter, full of local patriotism, describes the Fontane Pretoria (see above, fig. 4) as "one of the most distinguished in Europe", Zinzendorf plays the well-travelled connoisseur, noting that Palermo possessed neither the money nor the artists to create such beautiful fountains as those in Rome.[51]

There are far fewer points of agreement in the description of Palermo with the *Lexicon topographicum Siculum* of Vito Maria Amico, which Zinzendorf also names as a source. By far the best known work of this Benedictine monk of noble heritage, who studied at the University of Catania,[52] the body of this text consists of an alphabetical gazetteer of Sicily; In terms of Palermo, Amico does name broadly similar aspects as Gaetani and later Zinzendorf, yet he places them in a different, less rigid order.[53] Far more significant for our purposes is the publication by the Benedictine Abbot Arcangiolo Leanti (fig. 5) of *Lo stato presente della Sicilia*,[54] which is elaborately illustrated with some 40 large etchings by Antonio Bova.[55]

47 Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775. The 1st and 2nd volumes deal with Palermo.

48 Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 14–31.

49 Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 20; Leanti, Lo stato presente della Sicilia, 1761, I:65.

50 Cf., for instance, the unsystematic list of parishes and religious institutions. Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 18–19.

51 Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 17; Zinzendorf, Mémoire, 1773 (1766), 302.

52 On his biography, cf. Zapperi, Vito Maria Amico, 1960.

53 Amico, Lexicon topographicum siculum, 1855/1856 (1757–1760).

54 Leanti, Lo stato presente della Sicilia, 1761.

55 On Bova cf. Augello, La Sicilia, 1983.

Figure 5: Local knowledge elite. Abbot Arcangiolo Leanti, engraving by Antonio Bova, 1761

Much of Zinzendorf's description of the city reads like a shortened version of this book, published by the historiographer and co-founder of the palermitan Accademia degli Ereini, which is far more detailed and includes some astonishingly precise figures on history and architectural history, presented in the same broad plan and order.[56] Comparing the arrangement of the etchings in Leanti's publication with the order of Zinzendorf's description reveals even more striking similarities. Zinzendorf's description appears to be based on the book's 16 *vedute* of Palermo. Even his description of the plan of the city, as I have already mentioned, can be read as a verbal description of the cityscape by Bova that is found in Leanti's book (fig. 2). The highly distinctive view of the Quattro Canti should also be mentioned here, where the artist has chosen a point of view from which, in an apparently forced perspective, both city gates are visible at the end of the two grand streets (fig. 6) – and this detail is stressed in the Councillor of Commerce's otherwise sober report: "[…] where towards the four gates, we have the most beautiful view in the world".[57] Zinzendorf's praise of the city's beautiful promenades (including specifically the *Marina*), which he claims are far superior to those of

56 Here, too, the figures occasionally vary. Leanti names 13 parishes, including one that follows the *rito greco*, 46 convents, six hostels, twelve *Compagnie et Confraterie*, including three noble convents, 23 nunneries, including 18 conservatori di Fanculle (Leanti, Lo stato presente della Sicilia, 1761, I:52); by contrast Zinzendorf lists 13 churches (meaning parishes), eight monasteries and five nunneries, 71 convents, 18 "conservatoire pour les pauvres filles & deux pour les garcons pauvres", and eight hostels, one of which is brand new. Zinzendorf, Mémoire, 1773 (1766), 302–303.

57 Zinzendorf, Mémoire, 1773 (1766), 301.

Naples,[58] can also be understood as reflecting Leanti's publication, whose first image of Palermo is of the coastal promenade, the *Marina* that later travellers sought out with so much enthusiasm (fig. 7).

Figure 6: "Le plus beaux coup d'oeil du monde". Palermo's "Quattro Canti", engraving by Antonio Bova, 1761

Figure 7: The centre of Palermo's social life. Marina and Porta Felice, engraving by Antonio Bova, 1761

58 Zinzendorf, Mémoire, 1773 (1766), 302.

Contrasting Evaluations: The Sicilian Authors

Though brief, the sketch given here of the texts by Sicilian authors as they relate to Palermo gives a clear initial impression of the way in which the monumental landscape of the city was perceived by the local intellectual elite, at a time before travelers began to exert an appreciable effect on the canon through their own writings. Zinzendorf's *Mémoire* assumed the body of knowledge and – with respect to Palermo's monumental landscape – evaluative categories of the authors named here. The Sicilian texts also cover a range of topics taken up by many later travellers, even if they did not find their way into the Austrian Councillor of Commerce's brief *Mémoire*. The Feast of Santa Rosalia, which after Brydone was to become one of the main attractions for travellers to Sicily, is also highlighted by local authors: Gaetani, for instance, describes the festival of several days' duration "with such sublime pomp that perhaps there is no greater in the Catholic Church".[59] Zinzendorf's occasional comments on everyday life, such as the dense population of the city, the magnificent coaches (*équipages*) of the nobles or the numerous social gatherings (*assemblées*)[60] are apparently too obvious for the local authors to mention, but are reproduced in subsequent travelogues.[61]

Although local authors of this period focus on a widely varying range of topics, if we examine their evaluation of monuments and historical architecture in detail we can speak of a broad consensus. In general, the learned Sicilians place great emphasis on material artefacts. The monuments and their history, which are generally associated with specific events, dynasties and dates, are significant to the extent that they demonstrate the great antiquity and importance of Palermo and Sicily as a whole. Gaetini, for instance, begins his description of the capital with a detailed account of the (few) ancient remains within and outside the walls, as they demonstrated that Palermo could be counted "among the most ancient and principle cities of Sicily".[62] In this, however, the various historical epochs are given significantly different evaluations. According to Gaetani, the Romans granted Palermo civic immunity (*immunità*), Vandals and Goths confirmed this and the Saracens consolidated it; the Normans made Palermo into their capital and held coronations there – from the Ruggieri to the Bourbon Charles III – and the Staufer do not even make an appearance in this context.[63]

It is not surprising that Greek antiquity is also an important point of reference for these Sicilian authors, even if their ranking is somewhat unusual. The city with the strongest connotations of 'Greekness' is certainly Syracuse, once "one of the most important cities in Europe",[64] the largest and most powerful city of the ancient Greek world with – according to Amico – over a million inhabitants.[65] Not only is the history of the city expanded upon in appropriately extensive detail (it being described as,

59 Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 22. Zinzendorf, who did not witness the event, also omits to mention it.

60 Zinzendorf, Mémoire, 1773 (1766), 303.

61 The *équipages*, for instance, are a major theme for several authors, including Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), II:238–242, 318–320.

62 Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 16.

63 Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 22.

64 Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 60.

65 Amico, Lexicon topographicum siculum, 1855/1856 (1757–1760), II/1856: 504.

among other things, the "home of Archimedes" and "flower of the Greeks"), the "most precious ancient monuments" (*memorie*) are also depicted.[66] Many of the "remarkable structures" and anecdotes that later circulated among the travellers are found in an earlier form in the local literature (often drawing on even earlier sources). For instance, in describing the Ear of Dionysius, Gaetani mentions the cave's famous echo and the experiment with the pistol shot, which no later traveller would think to leave out.[67] The authors are certain that there is a large and international interest in 'Greek' Syracuse: Both Gaetani and Leanti name as their source a local "eruditissimo letterato",[68] Conte Cesare Gaetani, on whom the "oltramontani" travellers would rely: "He is responsible for the number of oltramontani visiting Syracuse to admire the very precious ancient monuments that remain there".[69] Gaetani's description of the temple of Agrigento is also full of local pride. He claims that visitors from all the world visit it "with surprise and amazement". Its size is said to exceed every other comparable site "[…] that he had seen in Greece before or after".[70] By contrast, Leanti's description of Agrigento is very brief and fails entirely to mention the Greeks by name.[71] He lists the most important ancient cult sites of the island – cursorily – only in the second volume of his monograph, tellingly in connection with an overview of religious institutions, specifically the pagan cults.[72] The local authors provide nothing like an overview of the Greek remains and demonstrate no ambition to explore remote ruins or gather archaeological observations. The Sicilian authors are concerned with significant towns and their histories, not with archaeological sites.

Nonetheless, the fields of interest and knowledge of the Sicilian experts are significantly broader than those of the travellers. They are familiar with the basic outline of the Arab history of the island and value it.[73] In Palermo, they are wrongly believed to have built the Palazzo di Maredolce, the summer palaces La Zisa and La Cuba (and sometimes even the Palatine Chapel), which formerly stood before the city, all of which were in fact not built until the Norman period. The Norman monuments are themselves often called magnificent, beautiful etc., and sometimes described in great detail. In Palermo, it is the Palatine Chapel with its "intarsia floors of finest marbles and design", its "dome with various figures from ancient mosaics", that evokes admiration: "In sum, this court chapel (Regia capella) deserves, in good faith, to be counted among the best which are

66 Leanti pays particularly thorough attention to Syracuse (Leanti, Lo stato presente della Sicilia, 1761, I:125–133); cf. Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 59–62.

67 Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 60.

68 Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 60.

69 Leanti, Lo stato presente della Sicilia, 1761, I:128–129. For more on Cesare Gaetani della Torre (who should not be confused with Francesco Maria Emanuele Gaetani whom we have cited above) and his importance for travellers and local authors including Swinburne, Comte de Borch, Torremuzza, Villabianca, Schiavo, Amico and Hamilton cf. Cannarella, Profili di siracusani illustri, 1958.

70 Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 31. Cf. Amico, Lexicon topographicum siculum, 1855/1856 (1757–1760), II/1856: 513–515.

71 Leanti, Lo stato presente della Sicilia, 1761, I:79–80.

72 "Culto in tempo de Gentili", Leanti, Lo stato presente della Sicilia, 1761, II:365–369.

73 Cf. Amico, Lexicon topographicum siculum, 1855/1856 (1757–1760), II/1856: 261.

in Italy, and perhaps outside of it."[74] But Leanti also considers the mediaeval cathedral – behind its elaborate Baroque enclosure – to merit an engraving (fig. 8). It is therefore hardly surprising that he also mentions the Cathedral of Monreale, which he calls one of the most beautiful churches in all of Europe, whose "eccellenti architetture" with its marble pillars, mosaics and bronze doors arouses "the wonder of strangers".[75] In his extensive account, Amico even describes the cloister (*patio*), with "216 colonette".[76]

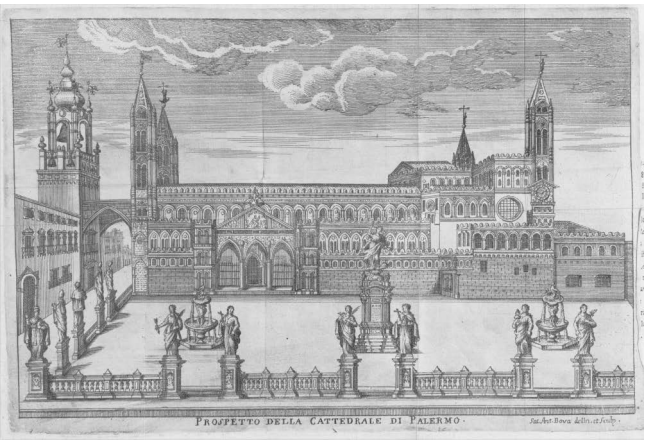

Figure 8: Mediaeval majesty. View of Palermo Cathedral, engraving by Antonio Bova, 1761

The Staufer and their remains, which have been part of the standard tourist itinerary since the 19th century, are less evident in the descriptions of the early travellers. In 18th century Palermo, Friedrich II was at least associated with the expansion of the city walls[77] and efforts to create an "erudie Accademie".[78] Gaetani, who goes through all the Kings of Sicily in chronological order, does not spend much time on this member of the Staufer dynasty, yet he does know to report that the emperor was laid to rest in a "tumulo di porfiro" in Palermo.[79] In his description of the cathedral, Gaetani is able to give an accurate account of many members of the Norman and Staufer dynasties who are buried here.[80] Amico and Leanti also mention "the gorgeous porphyry tombs of kings

74 Leanti, Lo stato presente della Sicilia, 1761, I:58; Amico calls it "excellent for its mosaics" (Amico, Lexicon topographicum siculum, 1855/1856 (1757–1760), II/1856: 250, 259), Gaetani knows that the mosaic works were commissioned by King Roger (Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 17).

75 For full details, see, for instance, Leanti, Lo stato presente della Sicilia, 1761, I:71–72, here 72.

76 Amico, Lexicon topographicum siculum, 1855/1856 (1757–1760), II/1856: 169–173, here 171.

77 Amico, Lexicon topographicum siculum, 1855/1856 (1757–1760), II/1856: 262.

78 Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 25.

79 Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 325–326.

80 Roger I (instead of II) and many relatives, Henry VI and Constance Frederick II, and Constance of Aragorn, and others (Gaetani, Della Sicilia Nobile, 1754–1775, I/1754: 17–18). It had been known for a long time that many Normans and Staufer were buried here. The graves were identified and

and princes",[81] "the four famous royal porphyry urns"[82] as sites of interest. Zinzendorf, by contrast, did not personally visit the site; nonetheless he knew of the two porphyry tombs of the emperors Henry VI and Frederick II.[83] Later travellers generally had other interests. Riedesel (see below) did not think the tombs were worth mentioning, and even Goethe ignored the cathedral and the imperial graves, while Brydone did at least mention the tombs of the Norman Kings "some of them near 700 years old, and yet of very tolerable workmanship".[84]

Naturally, these differences also depend in part on the intended readerships of the texts. The aim of the learned Sicilians, whose books were generally dedicated to the ruling (Spanish) Viceroy, was to emphasize Sicily's age, power and importance.[85] Leanti's splendid volume is illustrated largely with *vedute* and the most impressive (mostly recent) palaces, churches and statues from the period of Spanish rule. In chapter IV, Economy and Trade, he presents a panel showing, alongside salt production and oyster farming, the complex equipment involved in tuna fishing, which was to become an enthusiastic topic for travellers' accounts.[86] Antiquity is of marginal importance here. It is no coincidence that in Agrigento only the (modern) harbour is pictured; in Catania, alongside the Basilica della Collegiata, the university and the Palazzo Senatorio, the cathedral, whose – quite obviously – ancient origins as a temple of Minerva are indeed, however, noted with pride. Only two of the many Greek monuments are honoured with illustrations, the amphitheatre in Syracuse and the well-preserved temple at Segesta (fig. 9).[87]

With regard to the Middle Ages, whose monuments were highly regarded within Sicily, we can also observe significant differences in how they are evaluated by local people and by visitors. Travelling on his political mission, Zinzendorf assumes the position of a kind of intermediary. In his – rather tentative and conventional – judgments, he generally goes along with his Sicilian authors and considers it self-evident that the large Arab-Norman monuments as well as the cathedral of Monreale – "remarkable for its age & for its richness of marble, porphyry & ancient mosaics"[88] – are worth highlighting as "curiosities" (*Merkwürdigkeiten*) – evaluations that later 18th century travellers would not share. The contrast is even greater with respect to Baroque and Late Baroque forms,

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labelled as early as the 16th century by canon Roger Paruta, cf. The present state of Sicily and Malta, modern travellers, 1788, 137. But only since the porphyry sarcophagi were opened in 1771/72 during a thoroughgoing Classicist renovation of the church has it been possible to assign the tombs with any certainty to individual rulers, who include, in Henry VI and Frederick II, two emperors that the Germans would later revere so highly. For full details: Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 691–692.

81 Leanti, Lo stato presente della Sicilia, 1761, I:60.

82 Amico, Lexicon topographicum siculum, 1855/1856 (1757–1760), II/1856: 252.

83 Zinzendorf, Mémoire, 1773 (1766), 301–302.

84 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), II:256.

85 As with many books published abroad, these were also subject to censorship; a number of authors avoided this by publishing in more liberal jurisdictions such as the Netherlands or Switzerland.

86 Saline, Pescagione de' Coralli, e de' Tonni in Trapani. Leanti, Lo stato presente della Sicilia, 1761, I: pl. 33 on 165.

87 Leanti, Lo stato presente della Sicilia, 1761, I: pl. 31 and II: pl. 34, pl. 35.

88 Zinzendorf, Mémoire, 1773 (1766), 292.

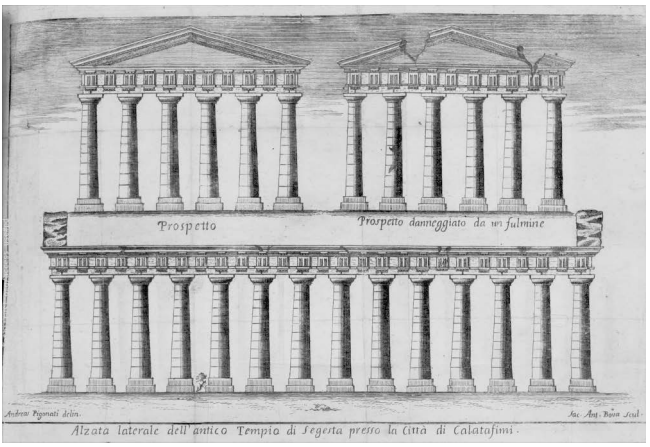

Figure 9: A pagan place. Temple of Segesta, engraving by Antonio Bova, 1761

which, without exception, gave foreign travellers cause to engage in extended mockery of the Sicilians' "bad taste". As we shall see, alongside the standards of taste of northern Neoclassicism, a powerful narrative was also set up that contrasted ancient greatness with the decline and corruption of the present, a point of view that was naturally alien to the Sicilian authors.

Part 2: Appropriations: The Pioneer Travellers

From the 1760s, international travellers became increasingly aware of Sicily. Following the publication – belatedly and via a roundabout route – of Zinzendorf's *Mémoire*,[89] there followed in short order many travelogues, mostly by English, German and French authors, more than 20 In the 18th century alone.[90] There were shifts in emphasis: texts by local authors, which had a limited reach and were only of interest to a specialist readership were joined by new travel writing that targeted an educated international public and described the new destination with increasing accuracy and detail. How the view of Palermo subsequently changed is the topic of the following section, which sketches out the process by which a new canon of appraisal and taste was generated.

Baron von Riedesel, or the Greek

The Pioneers of modern travel to Sicily are the archaeologist Johann Hermann von Riedesel (1767) and the physicist Patrick Brydone (1770). The volume that Baron von Riedesel published in 1771 in the form of a series of letters, *Reise durch Sicilien und Großgriechenland* (A Journey through Sicily and Magna Grecia),[91] is the very first piece of

89 For details, see Faber/Garms-Cornides, Entdeckung Siziliens, 2005, 348–351.

90 There is an overview in Tuzet, La Sicile au XVIIIe siècle, 1955, 9–16.

91 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771).

travel writing on Sicily in the narrow sense.[92] The book was quite well known for a while in Germany, not least because Goethe recommended it several times in connection with his travels to Italy,[93] but internationally, Riedesel's report was soon overshadowed by the extraordinarily successful book *A Tour through Sicily and Malta* by Brydone (printed in 1773), which would soon be translated into several languages.[94]

Riedesel's mission to Sicily had a single purpose: he was largely concerned with documenting the island's Greek remains for his mentor Winckelmann.[95] Winckelmann himself gave a concrete impulse by publishing previously unseen material on Agrigento, based on a survey by the Scottish architect Robert Mylne.[96] Riedesel, scion of a much branched Hessian noble family, had joined Winckelmann in Rome in 1762 while the latter was employed as the Papal antiquary, and had received a very thorough year-long education in classical antiquity. Following the rediscovery of Paestum in 1746, Winckelmann (who was likely the first German to visit the temples on the site) had become convinced that it was vital to carry out a systematic survey of Magna Graecia – the ancient Greek colonies in southern Italy – and Riedesel was happy to fulfill this wish using the means at his disposal. He had in fact planned to undertake the journey to Sicily together with Winckelmann, who also wanted to write a foreword to the book on the island that his pupil intended to publish, but these plans had fallen through. From 1765, Riedesel undertook a highly unusual six-year journey of discovery through the Mediterranean on his own, which took him to Italy and Sicily, Greece and Asia Minor as well as Constantinople, Spain and Portugal.[97] His subsequent book *Reise durch Sicilien und Großgriechenland*, which was published anonymously in Switzerland in 1771, is dedicated to Winckelmann, who had died three years earlier and who often seems to be the fictive addressee of the text.[98]

Riedesel's route was indeed based on the location of ancient sites. His report is certainly at its most detailed and liveliest when he is listing and describing Greek antiquities with the greatest possible precision. As an empiricist, who – as did Winckelmann – believed in archaeological research as the basis of knowledge production, Riedesel focused on the remains of ancient buildings in their materiality, while precise knowledge of the relevant written sources is also assumed.[99] From Segesta, Riedesel reported

92 Osterkamp, Riedesels Sizilienreise, 1992; Tuzet, La Sicile au XVIIIe siècle, 1955, 28–33, though this is now obsolete.

93 Though Goethe also still read Homer's Odyssey, cf. for full details Osterkamp, Riedesels Sizilienreise, 1992, 105–106.

94 Tuzet, La Sicile au XVIIIe siècle, 1955, 10.

95 For details of Riedesel: Osterkamp, Riedesels Sizilienreise, 1992, 93–106; cf. also Osterkamp, Geschichte der deutschen Sizilienwahrnehmung, 1987 and, for a general overview, Arthur Schulz's foreword to his edition of Riedesel 1965: Schulz, Riedesels Reise, 1965, 7–18.

96 Winckelmann, Anmerkungen über die Baukunst, 1968 (1759). Cf. Osterkamp, Riedesels Sizilienreise, 1992, 96, Note 4.

97 Thereafter also to England, Scotland and Ireland, Osterkamp, Riedesels Sizilienreise, 1992, 94–95. On Riedesel's life, see also Faber/Garms-Cornides, Entdeckung Siziliens, 2005, 345.

98 Osterkamp has examined the extent to which Winckelmann's expectations and commission influenced the travelogue. Osterkamp, Geschichte der deutschen Sizilienwahrnehmung, 1987 as well as Osterkamp, Riedesels Sizilienreise, 1992.

99 Osterkamp, Riedesels Sizilienreise, 1992, 99. Cf. also Bernauer, Von Griechen, 2006, 22–23.

enthusiastically on "one of the best preserved temples of the older Doric type, like the temples of Pest (Paestum), which you have visited".[100] His report contains precise archaeological descriptions complete with measurements and detailed comparisons with other temples, given together with chronological considerations.[101] The cities of Catania and Girgenti/Agrigento are described in particular detail – including brief observations of the remains of the ancient walls and the use of antique spolia in newer buildings, the ancient street surface with traces of ancient ruts, etc.[102] In Agrigento, which was already enjoying the attention of the international community,[103] Riedesel encouraged 100 scudi to be spent annually for the upkeep of the temple.[104] The various collections of vases, coins, etc. are also described in fairly great detail. In Syracuse, the archaeologist visited all the important sites, such as the famous and much discussed Ear of Dionysius (complete with echo), and the so-called well under the Church of Saint Phillip the Apostle (actually a mikveh, whose classical origins Riedesel rightly calls into question).[105] Ingeniously drawing together textual criticism and archaeological observations, he reconsiders the assessment of many sites, for instance when he declares correctly – here revising Pancrazi – that the so-called Tomb of Theron in Agrigento is in fact not Greek but Roman.[106]

For the circle around Winckelmann, the 'discovery' of Sicily was a consequence of a reassessment of Greek antiquity. Riedesel's goal was to document the little-researched remains of the ancient Greek world, to classify them and to assign them their place in history. Yet Riedesel did not write a specifically archaeological treatment of Sicily but rather something that was very much a travelogue:

> "since you allow me, my dearest friend, to share with you my remarks on the journey I have completed in Sicily and the Kingdom of Naples, so be prepared to hear a variety of things, and not only concerning antiquity but rather all manner of objects. You know […] that I have a number of bees in my bonnet, [and] […] so this is how I wish to share with you all my observations."[107]

The fact that this book was translated so quickly into English and French bears witness to the broad interest that existed in Riedesel's account of Sicily.[108] His interest was by no means focused only on antiquity but also quite naturally on the architecture, painting and sculpture of more recent periods. Furthermore, the text is full of short

100 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 24.
101 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 24–25; he followed the same procedure, for instance, in Selinus/Selinunte, which he describes as "entirely torn down" (ibid., 28).
102 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 29–40.
103 Riedesel reports, among other things, that an Englishman had had himself interred in one of the temples. Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, (1771), 34.
104 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 37.
105 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 48.
106 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 35.
107 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 21.
108 Tuzet, La Sicile au XVIIIe siècle, 1955, 28. Schulz noted that the later travelogues from Greece and Turkey, when he was no longer in Wickelmann's service, have all the character of "modern" travel writing and give less space to antiquity. Schulz, Riedesels Reise, 1965, 16.

historical anecdotes and, with the sharpened eye of the experienced traveller and would-be diplomat for essential matters, including social and economic affairs. From Palermo, Riedesel reported among other things that the price of bread was fixed and that most of the city's income came from the trade in corn or the taxation of the same,[109] but he also noted the "great liberty" of the "Dames" whose men had started "to become ashamed of their natural jealousy".[110] Remarks on the fertility and beauty of the landscape and the meanness of the monks was soon to become a permanent feature of the literature on Sicily: "if a good government could establish order, equality and justice here, this would be the happiest corner of the earth".[111] Just like so many of his successors, ascending Etna gave Riedesel cause to philosophize about creation and the meaning of life.[112] The description of the country and its population provided as an appendix draws on Winckelmann's climate theory and also shows a strong interest in the possible ongoing influence of the heritage of Greece in terms of physiognomy, customs and cuisine.[113] Compared to this idealized image of antiquity, the modern world appears unfree and weak: "In short, the climate, the soil of the country, and the fruit of the same are as abundant as they ever were; but the golden liberty of Greece, the people, the power, the glory and the good taste are no longer to be found in them as they once were".[114] Syracuse in particular is frozen in an image that will soon be established as the topos of ancient greatness and current misery.[115]

On 17 March 1767, Riedesel reached Palermo by ship. On 30 March, he departed for Segesta. In keeping with his class, he travelled on horseback, in the company of soldiers "inflicted" upon him by the King to protect against bandits.[116] What did Winckelmann's pupil see in these two weeks? What did he consider worth reporting from the capital? In the first place: there are only a few pages, and although he concedes that one can "spend one's time well in Palermo",[117] it is also telling that Riedesel avoids the round-about return journey to Palermo along the north coast from Messina, as "there is nothing particularly remarkable on this side of Sicily" and sails straight for Reggio.[118]

Immediately upon arrival in Palermo, he finds it small but populous and less attractive than he expected. The city is crossed by two "beautiful" main streets and the only city "in all Italy to be illuminated at night at public cost".[119] Apart from that, he finds the museum collections – of the Jesuits or at Saint Martin's Convent outside the city – relatively unremarkable. The young German considers the four porphyry sarcophagi in the

109 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 23.
110 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 74.
111 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 39.
112 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 61–62. While dismissing the observation, ascribed to Fazellus, that the inhabitants there are particularly savage and wild, which Brydone will continually cite: Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), I:63.
113 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 72–75.
114 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 74.
115 E.g. Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 52.
116 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 24.
117 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 74.
118 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 72.
119 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 22.

cathedral to be Roman spolia since they are "not quite in the Greek style but too beautiful for the age of the Kings that lie buried in them" – whose names he remarkably omits to give. Riedesel reports with the self-confident attitude of a connoisseur and an explorer: a painting of the Angelo Custode in San Francesco d'Assisi that is "falsely claimed to be by Rafael", he calls "a beautiful piece, with good draughtsmanship and colouring"; in "San Francesco di Paolo, before the city, are two wonderful paintings which no man sees or values" and which he ascribes to Veronese. He considers the local people and the local elite to be no help at all in this regard: "all knowledge of painting appears to have entirely vanished in Palermo: I found no-one who was in a position to provide me with information about the best paintings".[120]

In view of the shortness of the text, the accumulation of expressions that bear witness to an elite desire to create distance is striking. Not only does the existing body of knowledge fail to live up to the expectations of Winckelmann's pupil, he also comes across evaluative categories that he cannot comprehend and considers to be uneducated and emotional: Of the statues in the cathedral by Ghagini, considered the "Sicilian Michel Angelo", "much fuss" is made; in the cathedral at Monreale, which is "worth visiting because of two porphyry caskets", he "passes over", as already noted, "the Gothic mosaic work, about which the Sicilians make such a fuss";[121] the "description of all the special churches and palaces" he leaves to "others who might possess more patience to write".[122]

Here we should note Riedesel's self-imposed restriction to "essential things" and to say nothing of popular destinations: "Just as I remained silent on Saint Rosalia of Palermo, so will I do the same with the Madonna di Trapani and other miracle-working Saints in all Sicily".[123] In Monreale, Riedesel asked (with regard to the supposedly ancient porphyry sarcophagi) "that I be forgiven for pausing here a moment"; none of the other Arab-Norman monuments are worthy of a line from the elite art connoisseur. This attitude can only be ascribed to some extent to a conscious narrowness – his dedication to Winckelmann's project.[124] It is far more an articulation of an aesthetic judgement that is highly aware of a sense of distinction regarding the "fuss" and "bother", the "terrible taste" of the uninitiated, at the very forefront of which Riedesel places the native population. In the rejection of the lavishly decorative Sicilian Baroque, assessments of taste can also be heard that would soon become fixed elements in the repertoire of travellers to Sicily.

It is interesting to note that Riedesel apparently consulted a completely different set of sources from someone like Zinzendorf. Winckelmann's protégé refers to ancient sources (Diodorus Siculus, Virgil, etc) with particular frequency. He also regularly cites the literature recommended by his teacher – now often somewhat dated – including the *Siciliae Antiquae libri duo* by the German geographer and historian Philipp Clüver

120 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 22.

121 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 23.

122 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 22.

123 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 26.

124 Osterkamp ascribes the neglect of monuments such as Castel del Monte to "Winckelmann's instructions", Osterkamp, Riedesels Sizilienreise, 1992, 96.

(1619),[125] the work of the Dutch classical philologist Jean Philippe d'Orville,[126] and the two volumes by the Theatine Guiseppe Maria Pancrazi on antiquities in Agrigento.[127] Riedesel appears to have had no interest in the contemporary historiographical authors that were Zinzendorf's main source. The situation was quite different regarding the local experts, with whom Riedesel had occasional intensive exchanges. In the manner of noble travellers of the time, Riedesel set off on his travels with appropriate recommendations and contacts. Most of the time, he was the guest of local members of his class, preferring those who shared his research interests. Catania was the unexpected highlight of the young German's journey, as a friendship developed between him and his host, Ignazio Paternò Castello, Prince of Biscari (fig. 10).

Figure 10: Patron and archaeologist. Ignazio Paterno, Prince of Biscari, engraving ca. 1789

The Prince, a prominent patron of the arts and an archaeologist, proved a highly knowledgeable guide for Riedesel, and had himself undertaken minor excavations. According to Riedesel, he was at the time preparing an exhaustive publication on all

125 E.g. at Agrigento, Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 35–36.

126 D'Orville, Jacobi Philippi D'Orville Sicula, 1764. The Journey to Sicily upon which this book was based had already taken place in 1726/28; published posthumously.

127 Pancrazi, Antichità siciliane, 1751/1752; cf. Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 30–31.

the ancient monuments of the city, with numerous engravings.[128] Above all, however, the Prince put together the first significant collection of antiquities on the island, for Riedesel, "one of the most complete and most beautiful that exists in Italy and perhaps (without exaggeration) the world".[129] Riedesel also found support in Agrigento, visiting the sites in the company of a Roman scholar who had made his home there, Ettore Barone di St. Anna.[130]

The first contrasts to Zinzendorf become clear at this point. The latter is interested in gathering positive knowledge about the island. When it comes to the question of what is remarkable, worth seeing or of significance he remains relatively conventional in the sense that he largely follows local standards. His brief *Mémoire* has been little appreciated as a text but frequently used as a concise source of information.[131] Riedesel not only marks the beginning of an age of specialization, whose audience is an international group of elite connoisseurs with an interest in archaeology. The standard of knowledge and taste invoked here explicitly distances itself from a traditional canon of knowledge and values. Idolizing Greece, banishing the Middle Ages and condemning the Late Baroque establishes new standards. In the process, a set of profoundly differing heritage communities emerges more clearly – communities that barely refer to a common heritage and that reveal irreconcilable constructs of identity: on the one hand, an international elite of specialists with a background in classical and Enlightenment thought, in search of the origins of Western culture; and on the other, diverse local cultures of memory that are bound up in various ways with complex, long-lasting processes of regional identity-formation and self-narration.

Patrick Brydone: "Gay and Buffy" Palermo

The most successful book on Sicily, however, was written by another: the Scot Patrick Brydon, whose *A Tour through Sicily and Malta* (1773) is considered a milestone of modern travel literature and was responsible for Sicily's popularity.[132] The success of this travelogue, published in epistolary form, can be seen in the speed at which it was reprinted (seven times in England alone) and translated into various languages.[133] Brydone, who had enjoyed an excellent education and was a trained physicist, travelled in the tradition of the Grand Tour as a tutor to young English gentlemen. Accordingly, in Sicily he moved in noble circles and saw little of the island's interior since he reached his destinations (Palermo, Catania and Etna, Messina, Syracuse, Agrigento, etc) by boat. His

128 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 54, 56. For details of Riedesel's biography and his meetings with other travellers: Guzzetta, Per la gloria, 2001, the publication project is mentioned on page 18. Ignazio Paternos book, which is however largely without illustrations, was not published until 1781: Paterno, Viaggio per tutte le antichità della Sicilia, 1781.

129 Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 56; Riedesel reports that the antique epigraphs in the collection were being published by Prince Torremuzza in Palermo (ibid., 57–58). In Catania, he had contact with other scholars at the university, including Leonardo Gambino (ibid., 64).

130 According to Riedesel, the Barone had "produced the drawings and most of the descriptions in Pater Pancrazi's study", cf. Riedesel, Reise durch Sicilien, 1965 (1771), 33.

131 On the reception of the text, Faber/Garms-Cornides, Entdeckung Siziliens, 2005, 354, Note 65.

132 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773); cf. Tuzet, La Sicile au XVIIIe siècle, 1955, 33–34.

133 Smecca, Three travel writers, 2009, 49.

account of the ascent of Mount Etna (possibly fictional) and of the sunrise as viewed from the crater would exert a strong influence on the narratives of later writers; he also gave a detailed report of weather phenomena and air pressure.

The strength and 'modernity' of Brydone's writing lie in the fact that he does not compose his accounts from a specific perspective – as does Zinzendorf – or in pursuit of a specific interest – like Riedesel – but rather reports on sites of interest and curiosities in a way that is both learned and entertaining. Many other guides have followed his lead in providing lively accounts of Sicily's history, climate, character and customs.[134] It is nonetheless surprising that even recent commentators on his work such as Joseph Farrell still want to see him as an Enlightenment figure who rejected absolutism and tyranny and united within himself a scientifically informed scepticism towards Catholic religion with a critical and irreverent knowledge of antiquity.[135] Nevertheless, the interest in "living people"[136] that Farrell invokes is limited – entirely encompassed within the colonial viewpoint – to picturesque, rustic or mocking anecdotes. When Brydone talks about the Sicilians, he refers, of course, to people of standing.[137] Brydone's main interest, particularly in Palermo, is in the aesthetic world, the *beau monde sicilien*, whose life he describes with glee and a strong sense of caricature, exaggeration and gossip. The ordinary folk are here a mixture of savages, apes, beasts – amusing yet dangerous. In this way, Brydone makes the figure of the brigand as a noble and chivalrous desperado into a fixture of the island's folklore. He is well aware of cultural differences and propagates them out of a feeling of superiority: For instance, with regard to a 17th century author (Borelli) who expressed his regret that so many of Catania's antique monuments had been destroyed in the 1669 eruption of Etna, Brydone commented that contemporary Sicilians in contrast "do not value their island half so much for having given birth to Archimedes or Empedocles, as to St Agatha and St Rosalia".[138]

Brydone is no archaeologist, but he is always interested in making connections between visible monuments and relevant ancient sources, thereby "allowing the ruins to speak". He is aware of Diodorus Siculus, Pliny and Strabo, Homer and Virgil, as well as Milton and Pope. For him, "philosophical" is an insult, a synonym for speculative – and stupid.[139] In Agrigento, for instance, where he largely relied on information from the Prince of Torremuzza, he demonstrated not only a healthy scepticism with regard to local traditions but also great ignorance at the possibilities of the burgeoning field of archaeological building research: "We have seen a great many old walls and vaults that little or nothing can be made of. They give them names, and pretend to tell you what they were, but as they bear not the least resemblance of these things now, it would be no

134 For the historical and statistical details, he drew upon older Italian authors such as Massa, Guarneri, Carrera and above all – as did e.g. Zinzendorf – on Tommaso Fazello's*De Rebus Siculis Decades Duae*, Palermo 1558.

135 Farrell, Enlightenment traveller, 1991, 294–297.

136 Farrell, Enlightenment traveller, 1991, 294.

137 Tuzet, La Sicile au XVIIIe siècle, 1955, 36, 46.

138 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), I:127.

139 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), I:185.

less idle to believe them than to trouble you with their nonsense."[140] Brydone's reception among those of his contemporaries who were schooled in Winckelmann's methods was correspondingly negative.[141]

Indeed, the Palermo one encounters in Brydone's report is remarkably different, a city, shimmering in its wealth and its splendour, full of gallant adventurers, colourful social gatherings and festive events. We hear about the Viceroy's elegant court and his beautiful porcelain services, their dining habits, entertainment rituals and *conversaziones*,[142] the Anglomania of the young nobles, and the taboo they placed on moving through the city on foot.[143] The opera is described in one very long letter, complete with knowledgeable critiques of various singers and much juicy gossip.[144] According to Brydone, Palermo's 'must-see' destinations are the Feast of Santa Rosalia,[145] the Capuchin Catacombs,[146] the spectacularly "ugly" and "senseless" Villa Palagonia in Bagheria,[147] and the *Marina's* gallant hustle.[148] At Monte Pellegrino – "to pay our respects to St. Rosalie, and thank her for the variety of entertainments she has afforded us, it is one of the most fatiguing expeditions I ever made in my life" – he is not content with descriptions of coin collections but enthuses in the grotto – as Goethe also will later – about the statue of Rosalia "of most exquisite workmanship […]. I never in my life saw one that affected me so much".[149] The view of Palermo from the mountain is commended extensively and the region is praised, echoing the ancient literature, as Garden of Eden, Conca d'Oro, Aurea Valle, Hortis Siciliae, etc.[150] By contrast, the monuments in the city are touched upon astonishingly briefly and almost in passing, comparable perhaps to how our travel guides, after giving us hotel, shopping and party tips, add a brief run-down of sites considered "unmissable". Brydone calls the cathedral "a very venerable Gothic building",[151] the Palace Chapel "is entirely encrusted over with an-

140 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), I:189. Cf. also Letter XXIX: "We have now had time to enquire a little into some of the antiquities of the island, and have found several people, particularly the prince of Toremuzzo, who have made this the great project of their study. However, I find we must wade through oceans of fiction, before we can arrive at any thing certain or satisfactory." Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), II:289.

141 On Johann Heinrich Bartels' critique of Brydone, for instance, see below.

142 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), II:213. He describes the city's nobles as better educated than their neighbours; the conversation was often about politics and history, but most of all about poetry, because, as he states, knowledge of other matters remained at a basic level.

143 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), II:238–242, 318–320; for more on the Anglomania, see Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 539.

144 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), II:325–323.

145 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), II:258–260.

146 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), II:228–230.

147 In great detail in Letter XXII (Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), II:221–226). Later travellers established this narrative of the Villa Palagonia as a "temple of folly […] of whimsical taste" (nonetheless wort visiting). Cf. The present state of Sicily and Malta, modern travellers, 1788, 151–152.

148 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), II:212–213.

149 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), II:297.

150 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), II:298–299.

151 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), II:256.

cient mosaic"[152] – that is more or less all that is described of Palermo's monuments, entirely conventionally, with little interest in historical details, and often remarkably uninformed. With regard to Monreale, Brydone mentions, as one might well expect, the main street with its magnificent fountains, the mosaics in the cathedral, and the porphyry sarcophagi "of Sicily's first kings".[153]

Brydone's success rests upon a colonial gaze that he casts – with virtuosic choreography – on a strange, exciting, amusing and challenging environment, and the promise of variety and amusement mixed with class- and gender-specific doses of adventurous thrill and cultural pedagogy. In contrast to most of his contemporaries, this 'mentor' is cautious about passing judgement himself on the quality of the architecture and art he sees. This is revealed by the comparison with an English bestseller in the field of travel literature, a book that aimed to combine Brydone's account with those of other travellers to create a comprehensive travel guide.[154] In this work, one notes that a general judgement regarding the 'bad style' and 'bad taste' of Sicilian art had become established. Palermo's many statues are "in general executed in a very bad style", the cathedral is large but "defective in elegance" (the same is said word for word of the Royal Palace); the ornamentation of the city's churches is "disposed in the worst taste imaginable".[155] The mediaeval monuments are also almost universally condemned on grounds of taste; Monreale "is built in the Gothic stile in an extremely bad taste […]", etc.[156]

Houël's Voyage pittoresque: Images of "Good Taste"

In the pioneering phase of Sicilian tourism, in particular, we can therefore see that the canon of the island's built heritage was very much in a state of flux. Nevertheless, regardless of how strongly they were guided by their – very different – special interests, Zinzendorf's and Riedesel's descriptions are each – though again in very different ways – embedded in local traditions and discourses. With Brydone, however, we see the island becoming largely incorporated in the colonial discourse of the Grand Tour. While Brydone was himself not a man of the arts (or the burgeoning field of empirical archaeology) and largely refrained from passing personal aesthetic judgements on the monuments, those who came after him would settle firmly on a transmontane-Classicist consensus of "bad taste" with regard not just to the Sicilian Baroque but to all of the island's creations. Furthermore, the Arab-Norman (and Staufer) monuments that the Sicilian authors had unambivalently accepted as heritage increasingly fell under aesthetic suspicion.

The entry of Sicily into the canon of travellers and ultramontane connoisseurs is eminently visible in the "picturesque" travel books that began to appear. The two most elaborate were published as richly illustrated folio volumes in Paris, namely the four-

152 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), II:257.

153 Brydone, A Tour through Sicily and Malta, 1774 (1773), II:257.

154 The present state of Sicily and Malta, modern travellers, 1788.

155 The present state of Sicily and Malta, modern travellers, 1788, 134, 138, 140.

156 The present state of Sicily and Malta, modern travellers, 1788, 159; one exception is the supposedly 'Saracen' Zisa Palace (ibid., 164).

volume *Voyage Pittoresque des Isles de Sicile, de Malthe et de Lipari*[157] by Jean-Pierre Houël from 1782 and the five-volume *Voyage pittoresque ou Description des royaumes de Naples et de Sicile* that was edited by Jean-Claude Richard de Saint-Non and published in 1785/86.[158] The more homogeneous of the two monumental publications that determined the expectations of travellers is the one published by the draughtsman, painter and engraver Jean-Pierre Houël, who created all the illustrations – 264 large-format etchings based on his own drawings – following a long stay on the island.[159] The complete title, *Voyage Pittoresque des Isles de Sicile, de Malthe et de Lipari, où l'on traite des Antiquités qui s'y trouvent encore; des principaux Phénomènes que la nature y offre; du Costume des habitants, & de quelques usages*,[160] outlines the undertaking quite precisely: the book displays scenic ruins and heroic or bucolic landscapes, coins and statues, but also activities and customs such as haymaking and anchovy preparation, local people in costume and armed brigands, famous places like the Ear of Dionysius complete with a gunshot/echo test (Plate CLXXXIII): an image cycle that confirmed and canonized the writings of Brydone and others. Numerous plates with detailed plans, sections, views and details of ancient monuments bear witness to the travellers' archaeological interest (fig. 11).

Most of the city views and street scenes are of Messina, often showing a procession or the feast day celebration of a saint (procession for the Feast of the Assumption in Messina; procession in front of the cathedral in Syracuse; Feast of St Agatha in the Cathedral of Catania); in Palermo, which is otherwise treated quite shabbily, naturally the Feast of St Rosalia is portrayed. The text is compiled from older books, Houël mentions Riedesel and Brydone by name. A fixed canon of places to be visited can now be observed, together with an increasingly fixed set of aesthetic judgements. The comments on Palermo[161] follow the well-trodden path and visit the well-known sites. Relatively detailed descriptions are given of the Capuchin Convent with its famous Catacombs, "at the same time hideous & ridiculous, appalling & disgusting",[162] and above all the Feast of St Rosalia, which lasts for several days and to which people stream from all of Sicily and the Kingdom of Naples, including "every" tourist: "a delightful spectacle[…] the public joy makes one happy".[163] There is also an engraving of the banana tree in the Archbishop's palace – the Archbishop, described as having an artistic temperament and well educated, is also an enthusiastic gardener – a fixed item on the itinerary of nearly every visitor to Palermo.

157 Houël, Voyage Pittoresque, 1782–1787.

158 Saint Non, Voyage pittoresque, 1781–1786. Sicily is the subject of the last two half volumes, which were published in 1785/86. Lit.: Lamers, Il viaggio nel Sud, 1995; Bernauer, Die Voyage pittoresque des Abbé de Saint-Non, 2004.

159 On his life and journey to Sicily: Pinault, Voyage en Sicile, 1990, 12–18; Pantano, Jean Hoüel, 2003, 17–56. For a general overview, cf. also Tuzet, La Sicile au XVIIIe siècle, 1955, 93–111.

160 "Picturesque journey to the Isles of Sicily, Malta and Lipari, where we discuss the Antiquities that can still be found there; the main phenomena that nature offers; the Costume of the inhabitants, & some of their customs".

161 Houël, Voyage Pittoresque, 1782–1787, I/1782: 62–78.

162 Houël, Voyage Pittoresque, 1782–1787, I/1782: 71.

163 Houël, Voyage Pittoresque, 1782–1787, I/1782: 75.

Figure 11: The canonizing gaze. Ancient capital and sarcophagus in Monreale Cathedral, engraving by Jean Houël, 1782

If we compare this production of images with the work of the Palermitan Leanti of only a few years earlier, the shift in evaluation is tangible. Assessments of significance are now usually accompanied by aesthetic evaluation. The Arab-Norman monuments are excluded from the aesthetico-ethical exemplary function of the monumental. Houël justifies their blanket exclusion in terms of his intention "to search for ancient beauties which can serve as a model for the progress of the arts, & not to collect crude objects, which are only sad proofs of their decadence, & which can only satisfy a sterile curiosity".[164] Some of the mediaeval monuments are at least mentioned as sites worth seeing, including the Palace Chapel and the Martorana.[165] Whereas the cathedral, which was quite neglected at the time, appeared to Houël "as of a strong and heavy Gothic taste [...;] the whole ridiculous",[166] by contrast, the painter was excited by the cloister in Monreale: "one of the finest of its kind that has ever been built".[167] The verdict *mauvais goût* cannot always be predicted: the Renaissance fountain in front of the Senatorial Palace (fig. 4), which in Houël's mind causes "confusion" as a result of its disparate proportions, is yet

164 Houël, Voyage Pittoresque, 1782–1787, I/1782: 60. Tuzet notes that Saint Non (op. cit.) came to a far more positive evaluation of mediaeval buildings, such as the Palace Chapel of Palermo or the cathedral of Monreale and also includes numerous images of these structures, cf. Tuzet, La Sicile au XVIIIe siècle, 1955, 285–286.

165 Houël, Voyage Pittoresque, 1782–1787, I/1782: 63, 66.

166 Houël, Voyage Pittoresque, 1782–1787, I/1782: 64.

167 Houël, Voyage Pittoresque, 1782–1787, I/1782: 60.

an "ingenious ensemble […] whose conception is unique and felicitous";[168] the porphyry sarcophagi in Monreale (which were considered to belong to classical antiquity) exhibit, by contrast, "bad taste";[169] for Houël, the Baroque fountains on the road to Monreale are even worth an engraving (Plate 37).[170] But Palermo's major buildings, on this all travellers now agree, were not built in eras that demonstrated "good taste", and the Sicilian Baroque is considered particularly tasteless, or, put in a friendlier way, an expression of the love of a backward people for the decorative.[171] The colonial arrogance of the Grand Tour is now linked to the aesthetic and moral arrogance of Classicism and the Enlightenment: Sicily's entry into the canon of heritage of the enlightened world took place under the aegis of an aggressive and elitist assessment and the disenfranchisement of the local heritage culture.

Bartel's Letters – Paternalistic Protestant Interpretative Hegemony

This thesis can be demonstrated with reference to one of the most extensive pieces of Sicilian travel writing by a German during this period, the three-volume *Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien* (Letters on Calabria and Sicily) that Johann Heinrich Bartels published in Göttingen after a lengthy stay in Sicily starting in 1787.[172] Bartels, who was later to rise to prominence as a Senator in Hamburg and eventually the city's Mayor, travelled to Italy after completing his degree in Theology and Oriental Languages at Göttingen.[173] His expressly stated goal was to gather "strict truths" without prejudice.[174] Alongside his own observations, he relied upon "information from knowledgeable men". He singled out two of his informants for particular praise: though his book does not contain many engravings, he did find space for portraits of Ignazio Paterno, Prince of Biscari (fig. 10),[175] and Landolina Nava from Syracuse, two important contacts for nearly all travellers to Sicily at the time.[176] Yet Bartels' extensive bibliography tells a different story, also revealing vividly just how rapidly the body of available knowledge was growing.[177] He begins by reviewing all the existing travelogues – and is particularly critical of Brydone for his "old wives' tales" and incorrect details, while praising writers including Riedesel, Houël and Swineburne.[178] The two Sicilian authors he names, however, are not particularly suitable for use by travellers, according to Bartels. While Ignazio

168 Houël, Voyage Pittoresque, 1782–1787, I/1782: 65.

169 Houël, Voyage Pittoresque, 1782–1787, I/1782: 60.

170 Leanti also gives the fountain a plate (Leanti, Lo stato presente della Sicilia, 1761, I: pl. 8) and even gives a bibliographical reference for its interpretation (ibid., 55–56).

171 As does Zinzendorf (Zinzendorf, Mémoire 1773 (1766), 302). Houël also considers the Oratorio di San Filippo Neri to be "moderne, de bon gout" (Houël, Voyage Pittoresque, 1782–1787, I/1782: 67).

172 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792. Sicily is dealt with in volumes 2 and 3. For details of Bartels cf. Bernauer, Von Griechen, 2006.

173 Martelli, Oltre la capitale, 2012.

174 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, II/1789, XII; III/1792 and passim.

175 Engraving after Antonius Zacco, 1781.

176 Both are in the endpapers; in some editions, the portrait of Paterno is bound at page 240.

177 A comprehensive overview of the literature is included in volume 2 before the letters from Sicily (Roman numerals: III–XXIII); supplemented in volume 3 with a list of everything published in the meantime. Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 13–36.

178 Cf. also Bernauer, Von Griechen, 2006, 18–19, 23–24.

Paterno[179] does provide a useful overview sites of interest, his endless, meandering descriptions are, in Bartels' view, only helpful to people who have already seen the objects in person;[180] and though Domenico Sestini,[181] a Florentine by birth, who was for time the librarian of the Prince of Biscari in Catania, provides reports that Bartels considers to be thorough and extensive, the German author states that one looks in vain for "information of ancient remains, the character, way of life, customs, manufacturers, arts, trade, and industry of the Sicilians."[182]

Naturally, Bartels produces a wealth of new observations, details and clarifications. For instance, he reports comprehensively on Sicily's publishing houses and educational institutions. However, reading his letters on Palermo, it becomes clear that, despite their considerable length at over 250 pages, he largely recapitulates the conventional form of description, visit the well-known sites, repeats standard evaluations or his own variations thereupon – in short, reproduces the view of the foreigner with increasing canonicity, as do all the travellers in this phase in greater or lesser detail: the overall situation, the cityscape is described as generally magnificent; the two main streets, as so often before, as "two of the most beautiful thoroughfares that perhaps any city can offer".[183] The *Marina*, where "the Palermitan dispenses with his status and his class ends the evening under extinguished torches without strife or envy in a spirit of light playfulness",[184] the Capuchin Catacombs, where the dead are decked out like "puppets of wire and plaster",[185] and the country seat of the Princes of Palagonia, a grotesque "monument to disorientation"[186] are established attractions for all travellers.

Sites that are actually worth seeing, and this is already a topos, are limited in number;[187] the "material is quite infertile", cataloguing it "unnecessary micrology".[188] Bartels' aesthetic standards come as no surprise, "Roger's dark chapel" (the Capella Palatina) (fig. 1) is large and imposing, "yet one looks for beauty in vain";[189] "of the cathedral [in Monreale, author's note] I will say nothing; I saw it in the twilight […]there was effort in its construction but in an age when Oriental taste had permeated the rules of Greek simplicity."[190] Naturally, the Baroque comes off particularly badly: The Quattro Canto (fig. 6) is a testament to bad taste, shows a lack of feeling for large beautiful forms,

179 Paterno, Viaggio per tutte le antichità della Sicilia, 1781.

180 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, II/1789, XIX–XX. In another section of this volume, Bartels gives a detailed description of the mourning rituals held for the prince, who had died shortly before his arrival n Catania in 1786 (ibid., 238–258).

181 Cf. Lettere Del Signor Abate Domenico Sestini, 1779–1784.

182 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, II/1789, XIX.

183 Together with the observation that these are the backdrops for social life and that clergymen, when they make themselves seen at all, appear out of place, though in the narrow alleyways, where the people live, the church is in charge. Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 548–549.

184 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 552.

185 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 629.

186 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 718–720.

187 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 607–608.

188 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 677.

189 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 678.

190 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 671–672.

and, instead, a childish love of whittling.[191] Bartels includes among the "lifeless memorabilia" many churches: "tasteless pomp, which even when it abounds with gold, silver and gemstones always remains boring, boring to regard, with no nourishment for the soul and the heart, and boring to describe", "far from the key principles of simplicity" "playful" architecture "without truth", without naturalness (fig. 12).[192]

Figure 12: "Tasteless pomp, with no nourishment for the soul and the heart"? Palermo, Santa Caterina (Photo: G. Vinken 2019)

Here the critique of Sicilian Baroque fuses with the topos of the superficial decoration-obsessed Sicilian: he "[…] loves the gaudy, […] loves the caricature, the exaggeration […]", "appropriate simplicity and scale, those are things that do not harmonize with his character".[193] The Sicilian "national character" is located in the enthusiasm for the exuberant and exaggerated, the brightly coloured, outwardness, superficiality and inconstancy.[194] And the yardstick for the "cultural level" of a nation is its "artistic taste"; aesthetics and ethics are conflated: "Artistic taste and a real feeling for the good, the true, and the beautiful always progress at the same tempo as learning and cultures". The cultural level of a nation is thus easy to determine, and Sicily is still at the stage of "the Bremen Roland", in other words it is a place where the uncouth Middle Ages has never been killed off.[195]

191 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 534.

192 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 689 (given as 896 as a result of a typesetting error).

193 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 513.

194 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 536–538.

195 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 708.

Nevertheless, Bartels' view of Sicily and the Sicilians is far from entirely negative.[196] In his final letter from the island, he writes that he had spent "a happy time" among the "noblest people" in the "most blessed country of Europe".[197] Under the heading of "character", his first thoughts are of the Sicilians' honesty and gregariousness (such as that of the local bankers) and their ability to retain dignity even in the deepest misery. And the traveller from Hamburg praises the beggars and workers of Palermo for their fire, insight into human nature, sense of liberty and decency – only then, in almost the same breath, to condemn their deep immorality, intemperate debaucheries, quarrelsomeness and love of play, bigotry and propensity for prostitution and pimping.[198] The "vainglorious and grandiose" "natives" need, according to the missionary-minded Freemason, a "proper education" and "knowledge of what is decent" if "they are to grow into a nation".[199] For this, it should not come as a surprise, Bartels considers that the best sources of help and orientation are external: the best of the Sicilian artists, such as Ignazio Marabitti, had studied in Rome;[200] Bartels praises Palermo's public library (located in the former Jesuit College), which had been established and was still run by the German Theatine monk Pater Sterzinger, and where there was also a school and a museum: the whole thing "bundled together by tasteless clerics with no knowledge of art".[201]

Although Bartels also reports on many reform efforts and initiatives being undertaken by the learned of Sicily, his verdict of a lack of culture and backwardness also applies to the Palermitan elites. Nevertheless, he describes them as easy-going and welcoming; the nobles include "educated people", some of whom had spent considerable time abroad; French manners and language were however the exception; French was spoken rarely and then only when strangers were present. Bartels repeatedly complains at the boastfulness and pomposity of the people he talks with;[202] learned conversations are rare and restricted to the topic of Sicily; foreign authors are largely unknown; even members of the most elite circles had little knowledge of geography or history; one encountered much wealth exhibited without a trace of artistic taste: here and there small collections, paintings, antiquities, but nothing to compare with Rome: "There are only a few Biscaris in Sicily, though many would claim to be what he is".[203] In particular, Bartels thought there was a lack of intellectual exchange.[204] Nor, in his view, were learned circle particularly well educated;[205] learned Palermitans might be perceptive and have

196 Bernauer goes so far as to call Bartels "one of the first to attempt to travel through the Mezzogiorno without presuppositions". Bernauer, Von Griechen, 2006, 29.
197 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 833.
198 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 578–583.
199 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 627.
200 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 709–710.
201 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 617.
202 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 596–597.
203 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 603–604.
204 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 612.
205 On the learned people of the island in detail Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 694–704.

excellent deductive powers and good memories,[206] yet – with a few exceptions, such as the Prince of Torremuzza – they were generally deficient in scholarship.[207] For Bartels, the academies were insignificant;[208] there was a lack of political support, infrastructure,[209] international contacts: the "frenzy of the passions keeps the spirit shackled here".[210]

In this Protestant-paternalistic and self-satisfied Enlightenment worldview, interpretive hegemony lies entirely with the educated traveller from the North: in Agrigento, Bartels found people who "in gazing on the proud monuments of former greatness are not filled with new courage – but rather look upon them, yawn and fall asleep".[211] He considers the local experts, stuck in their own traditions and interpretative standards, to be "ignorant". The elitist Bartels would dearly like to overlook this and explain that the figures on the *Marina* are "exaggerated, tasteless, and far removed from pure Greek simplicity" by means of the "degeneracy of taste of the masses"; "but it provokes real displeasure when one is led by men who are generally considered knowledgeable in the arts to similar caricatures and forced to listen to hours of the most detailed praise and constant admiring exclamations. Unfortunately, this was often my fate, and I would therefore like to declare in general that, of all Italians, the Palermitans are those with the least correct artistic taste and whose eyes may only be captivated by caricatures. Individual exceptions do not contradict this general remark!"[212]

If, with Elizabeth Bronfen, we understand the Enlightenment to be an "invention of the night", this is a vivid example.[213] Only with the establishment of aesthetic and moral norms, could 'the Greek' become an international cultural standard to aspire to – and Sicily a 'developing country'. Goethe, too, whose itinerary in Palermo during his visit to Sicily appears to have been largely conventional, may also be included in this development without further ado.[214] In terms of the various heritage communities, this development, which reached a kind of conclusion in Bartels' generation, is ambivalent. On the one side, an increasingly homogeneous class of connoisseurs emerged as a new heritage community, establishing an ever more rigid and codified canon of heritage according to the norms of taste, understanding of history and evaluative categories of the "enlightened" world; they heavily filtered local traditions and interpretations and

206 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 694.

207 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 705. The Prince of Torremuzza (actually Gabriele Lancillotto Castello) appears not to have received him. Nonetheless, Bartels did get to know many scholars and poets personally (ibid., 699).

208 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 704–708.

209 The island's only university was in Catania; the institutions in Palermo and Messina were closer in level to superior high schools, and did not have the right to award doctorates (Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, II/1789: 271); according to Bartels, book printing and publishing were also underdeveloped (ibid., 261–262).

210 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 70.

211 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 549.

212 Bartels, Briefe über Kalabrien und Sizilien, 1787–1792, III/1792: 555.

213 Bronfen, Tiefer als der Tag, 2008.

214 Goethe, who has already been more than exhaustively researched (Goethe, Italian Journey, 1982 (1816/17)) was not considered here and is not particularly useful in considering this question.

treated them with scepticism. Sicily was no different, and 'northern'-influenced evaluative categories and traditional local meanings increasingly drifted apart. Parts of the elite joined the internationalized heritage community, which weakened their connections to local categories of evaluation; the mediators who were aware of local tradition were looked down upon by the international *connoisseurs*. The cultural heritage of the 'ordinary people' was increasingly unarticulated. Similar developments may also be seen, for example, in the countries of the Maghreb, where the society became divided into entirely separate heritage communities that are barely able to communicate with each other, for instance with respect to the heritage of the Classical Mediterranean world or of Islam.[215]

In any case, the value judgements of 'ordinary people' in the 18th century are hard to grasp, as they rarely achieved written form. One of the few extensive sources in this regard is Johann Gottfried Seume, mentioned at the start of the chapter, who, in contrast to his wealthier contemporaries, travelled on foot and by mule, and thus had extensive contact with all kinds of people.[216] The debate around the claim that the small room in the Ear of Dionysius was originally built as a "eavesdropping spot" (*Lauscheplätzchen*) is revealing in this regard, a belief that Seume claims that the "philistines of Syracuse" shared. Almost admiringly, he notes that the ordinary citizens do not want to let archaeologists and other experts take away "their pretty romance", conceding that "for a citizen of Syracuse" their reasoning is "not terrible".[217] Even the Sicilian muleteers, Seume calls, half in jest, "very strong antiquarians, though they do not always grasp the matter very exactly".[218] His muleteer regularly offered his services as a guide: "'I know everything, my lord, I know all the wonders' he told me with an apodictic urgency that one could no more argue against than the infallibility of the Pope. Since I knew quite well most of what I wanted to see, I had nothing against the kind-heartedness of the lad, a boy of about 19 years of age."[219] In another passage, Seume also makes fun of the 'knowledge' of his muleteer, who tells him "with utter conviction" – and in this passages Seume artfully mocks the Sicilian dialect: "'this is the temple of St. Gregory; that Madonna is ancient', and to the non-believers *anathema sit*. […] He preferred above all to show me carefully all the monasteries and to tell me how rich they are" – to which the Protestant and arch anti-Catholic Seume commented that he wished "they were pigsties".[220] Here everything collides vividly: mentalities, forms of knowledge, and heritage concepts. The anecdote about the muleteers who get into a quarrel "concerning the advantages of their home towns in matters of antiquity" has already been mentioned, whereby the one from Palermo had to remain silent, owing to his home town's lack of such monuments. This passage is also revealing in terms of the local evaluations.[221] The significance of the Temple of Agrigento, the theatre, quar-

215 Vinken, Das Erbe der Anderen, 2015.

216 Seume, Spaziergang, 2003 (1802), e.g. 135–136, 138–139.

217 Seume, Spaziergang, 2003 (1802), 150–151.

218 Seume, Spaziergang, 2003 (1802), 125.

219 Seume, Spaziergang, 2003 (1802), 128.

220 "Kischt' è il tempio di san – Gregoli; Kischta Madonna è antica'", Seume, Spaziergang, 2003 (1802), 132. Italics in the original.

221 Seume, Spaziergang, 2003 (1802), 124–125.

ries and the "Ear" in Syracuse, the theatre – where Alcibiades was said to have spoken – and the university of Catania seemed indisputable to the muleteers. Yet the muleteer from Alcamo, who brought up the temple in Segesta, is subject to derision: "You swell with pride", says the muleteer from Catania to the one from Alcamo, "with your miniature Margarethe temple, which isn't even really yours".[222] According to Seume, this mockery was not only a reference to the fact that Segesta did not belong to the municipality of Alcamo, but above all that the temple is dedicated to an unchaste goddess (Venus/Aphrodite). "You must know, for the Sicilians, Margarethe is a name of an easy, venal woman; that was no special incense for the mother of the honourable hero of the Aeneid."[223] Here, the voice of the muleteer introduces a contemporary morality to the story, one that passes judgement on an 'immoral' monument: a *ressentiment* that, in contrast to those of the learned travellers, is by no means rooted in aesthetics.

222 Seume, Spaziergang, 2003 (1802), 124–125.

223 Seume connects the mocking name *Margaretentempelchen* with the Goddess Venus/Aphrodite, the mother of Aeneis, to whom, according to local tradition, the temple in Segesta was supposedly dedicated. The negative connotations of the name Margaret(h)e are also recorded elsewhere. Cf. Heckscher, Anadyomene in the Mediaeval Tradition, 1956, 9–10. According to tradition – later disproved by coins that were found – Segesta was originally *Acesta* (= unchaste woman), cf. Roscher, Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie, 1884, 143.