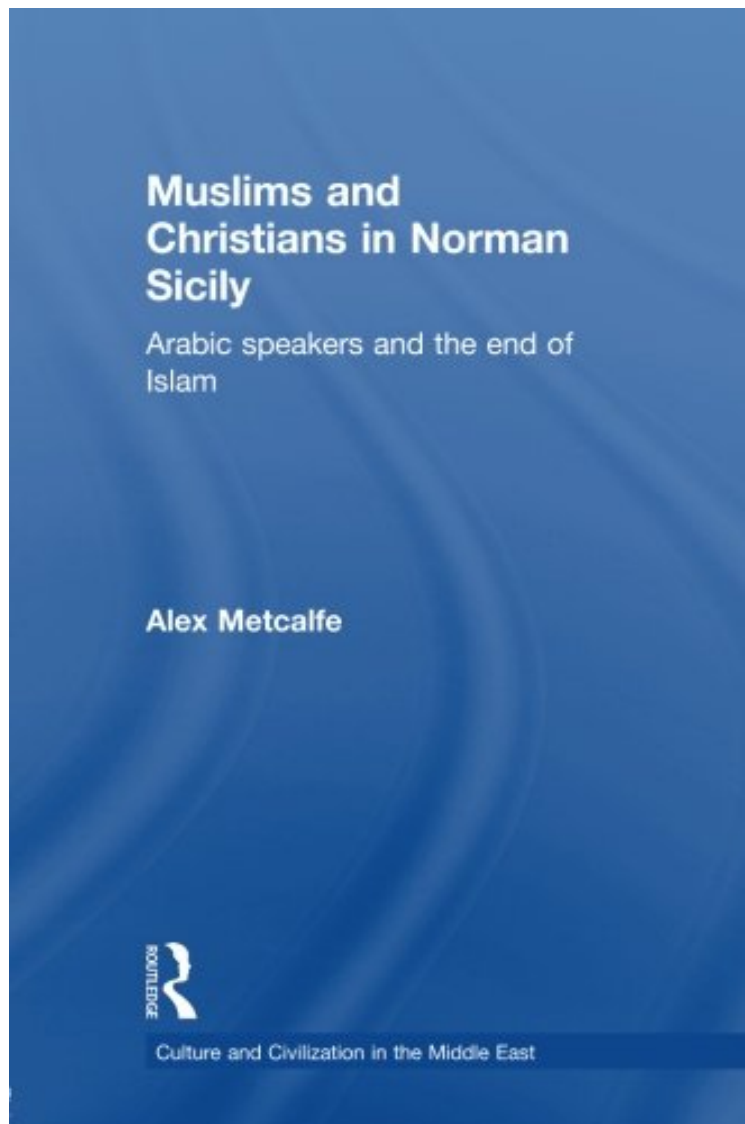


(Download pdf) Muslims and Christians in Norman Sicily: Arabic-Speakers and the End of Islam (Culture and Civilization in the Middle East)

Muslims and Christians in Norman Sicily: Arabic-Speakers and the End of Islam (Culture and Civilization in the Middle East)

Alexander Metcalfe

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Alexander Metcalfe : Muslims and Christians in Norman Sicily: Arabic-Speakers and the End of Islam (Culture and Civilization in the Middle East) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Muslims and Christians in Norman Sicily: Arabic-Speakers and the End of Islam (Culture and Civilization in the Middle East):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Interested In Your Sicilian Heritage And Not Afraid of Heavy Reading? By Ms. Pen Name This was a gift for my father who has always been interested in Sicilian history, dialects and surnames, especially in the sense that they may indicate what bloodlines run through our family. Sicily was a crossroads for and was overrun by many countries so we wonder about our genetic mix. This book did shine some light on the issue--we learned for the first time that Arab influence was heaviest in our ancestors' area of Sicily. If you have similar interests, this book will be of value but be prepared for some heavy reading. My Dad is very literate and can plow through just about anything but, even for him, this was not a light read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Paperback version By Customer Excellent resource material. I got the paperback book due to the high price of a hardcover. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Much needed light on a little known subject By Eric Maroney Metcalf's study examines the linguistic shift in Medieval Sicily from the time of the Muslim invasion in 827, to around 1100, a few generations after the arrival of Norman led Christian armies that recaptured the island from the Muslims. In this time period, the island went from an essentially Greek speaking area, to the end of the 10th century, when the island became (except for some pockets in the east) primarily Arabic speaking, to a Latin speaking (or more properly a Romance, or early Sicilian Italian) speaking island. During the golden age of Norman rule, Greek, Arabic and Latin were the three official languages of the Norman court, and Metcalf impressively surveys court documents, travellers accounts, registries of land transfers to churches and monasteries (that used sur-names of occupants of that land, often Arabic, Greek, or Latin, or hybrids of the three, and geographical markers, again, hybrids of all three languages) to show the linguistic shifts in Sicily, and its progressive Latinization during this time period. All too often, the Muslim influence in areas of Europe recaptured from Muslim peoples is forgotten, erased or downplayed. Metcalf's study is an important book that illustrates the deep debt Sicily owes to its Arab period - and despite the attempts by later scholars to wipe clean the historical record -- the large measure of harmonization (social, political, and economic) that existed between Greek, Muslim and Latin Sicilian communities.

The social and linguistic history of medieval Sicily is both intriguing and complex. Before the Muslim invasion of 827, the islanders spoke dialects of either Greek or Latin or both. On the arrival of the Normans around 1060 Arabic was the dominant language, but by 1250 Sicily was an almost exclusively Christian island, with Romance dialects in evidence everywhere. Of particular importance to the development of Sicily was the formative period of Norman rule (1061-1194), when most of the key transitions from an Arabic-speaking Muslim island to a 'Latin'-speaking Christian one were made. This work sets out the evidence for those changes and provides an authoritative approach that re-defines the conventional thinking on the subject.

About the Author Alex Metcalfe holds degrees in Literae Humaniores from Exeter College, Oxford and Arabic from the University of Leeds. After extensive travel in Europe and the Middle East and employment as a foreign exchange trader, soldier and teacher, he completed a doctorate at Leeds that serves as the basis of this present work.