

This is an extract from:

*Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents:*

*A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments*

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## 25. *Fragala*: Testaments of Gregory for the Monastery of St. Philip of Fragala in Sicily

*Date*: 1096/97 (*First Testament*)

May 1105 (*Second and Third Testaments*)

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*Translator*: Timothy Miller

*Editions employed*: Vera von Falkenhausen, “Die Testamente des Abtes Gregor von San Filippo di Fragalà,” in *HUS* 7 (1983), 174–195, with text at 191–94 (*First Testament*); Giuseppe Spata, *Le Pergamene greche esistenti nel Grande Archivio di Palermo* (Palermo, 1861), pp. 197–214, with texts at 197–204 (*Second Testament*) and 211–13 (*Third Testament*).

*Manuscripts*: Original documents, in Catania, Archivio di Stato, Fondo pergamenaceo, Archivio privato Raddusa (photoreproduction by von Falkenhausen, “Testamente,” p. 195) (*First Testament*); Palermo, Archivio di Stato, Ospedale Grande di Palermo, Abbazie di San Filippo di Fragala e Santa Maria di Maniace, no. 8, and Catania, Archivio Provinciale, Fondo Raddusa, no. 22 (*Second Testament*); Palermo, Archivio di Stato, Pergamene varie, no. 73 (*Third Testament*).<sup>1</sup>

*Other translations*: Italian, in Spata, *Le pergamene*, pp. 197–204 (*Second Testament*), 211–13 (*Third Testament*); Latin, by G. Cozza-Luzi, “Del testamento dell’abate fondatore di Demenna,” *ASS* 15 (1890), 35–39, at 37–39 (*Third Testament*).

### *Institutional History*

This monastery, structural remains of which still exist, is located in the region of northeastern Sicily called Val Demone, some twelve miles due south of Capo d’Orlando, on the mountain road beyond the villages of Mirto and Frazzano.

#### A. Early History of the Monastery

##### 1. Origins

Nothing is known about the foundation and early history of the monastery. It existed already during the era of Arab rule over this area of Sicily, since Gregory, the author of our document and the monastery’s first known superior, says in his *Testament* that he began his career as a monk there at that time.<sup>2</sup> This would suggest that Fragala dated back to before the Arab conquest of the Val Demone, one of the last areas of Sicily to come under their control after the fall of Taormina (902) and Rametta (965). It is also possible, however, that the monastery dated from the Byzantine general George Maniakes’ ephemeral recovery of eastern Sicily for the empire in 1038–42, as was likely the case for at least one of the dependent churches later subordinated to the monastery.<sup>3</sup>

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### 2. *Fragala* under Arab Rule

Gregory asserts that the monastery was virtually abandoned [A1], [B1] when he arrived there as a child and that he suffered [A2] personally from the Arab rulers of the island. Although *Fragala* as well as other Greek monasteries in the Val Demone remained inhabited during the era of Arab rule, they retained at least some of their properties perhaps because the Arabs came relatively late to this part of Sicily and seem to have settled there only lightly.<sup>4</sup> Gregory himself [A3], [B3], [B4] and previously his parents [B12] were able to donate property to the monastery.

### 3. Refoundation under Norman Patronage

The Normans under the brothers Robert Guiscard and Roger began their invasion of the island in 1060. They conquered the predominantly Greek Val Demone in less than three years, while the Norman conquest of the rest of Sicily was not concluded until 1091. As Roger I, Count of Sicily (1072–1101), the Norman leader pursued a policy of supporting existing Greek monasteries and assisting in the rebuilding of others. Gregory claims [A2] that his monastery began to benefit from Roger's patronage soon after the reconquest, i.e., in the mid-1060s. With Roger's financial assistance, Gregory built [A2], [A3] the main church, a defensive tower, monastic cells, and another church dedicated to St. Michael.

### 4. Roger I's Foundation Charter of 1090

Roger I granted a charter of privileges to the monastery in June 1090.<sup>5</sup> In this important but textually problematic document Roger I declares that *Fragala* will be exempt from the control of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and also of his own heirs. Like the greater part of the privileges of the early Norman period which were written on paper and needed to be recopied after a few years, Roger I's original diploma has not been preserved. It is known from two Latin translations executed from the Greek original in the mid-fifteenth century. The possibility of later interpolations or even of forgery cannot be excluded in considering documentary evidence of this provenance.<sup>6</sup>

Roger I made a similar series of concessions to other Greek monasteries in Sicily during the period 1090–93.<sup>7</sup> His awards of institutional autonomy, well known as an imperial prerogative in Byzantium, are exceptional for a ruler in the medieval West, and are thought to have been retroactively recognized in a concession of hereditary legatine authority awarded to him by a bull of Pope Urban II (1088–99) in 1098.<sup>8</sup>

### 5. Growth of the Monastery's Dependencies

In his *First Testament* of 1096/97, Gregory mentions [A2] specifically only the aforementioned dependency of St. Michael while alluding to "such others as the principal monastery holds secure in her possession." In his *Second* and *Third Testaments* of 1105, however, we are supplied [B2], [C3] with lists of as many as ten dependencies, many of which were likely founded in the eight-year interval towards the end of Roger I's rule and at the beginning of the regency of his widow Adelaide (1101–12). Several of these are independently attested in other documentary sources, which add information on other dependencies as well.<sup>9</sup>

### 6. Patronage of the Monastery During the Regency of Adelaide

The golden age for the monastery was in the years after Roger I's death, during the regency of Adelaide for her sons Symeon (1101–5) and Roger II (1105–1112). Adelaide moved her late husband's court from Mileto in Calabria to San Marco in the Val Demone, close to *Fragala*, and

granted the monastery many benefits. These benefactions, which Gregory acknowledges generally in [B11] and [C1] below, can be studied in some detail, along with those of her successors and (through confirmations) her predecessors, because the monastery's tabulary has been fairly well preserved.<sup>10</sup> There are thirty-seven documents from the era of Norman rule, from 1090 down to 1192. Twenty-seven of these are comital or royal donations and/or confirmations.<sup>11</sup> In an act of donation of October 1101, one of her first, Adelaide indicates the reason for her devotion to St. Philip of *Fragala*, a cure for an ear illness suffered by her son Roger at the saint's intercession.<sup>12</sup> Gregory also acknowledges [B11], [C3], [C4] benefactions from Greek officials of the Norman court that took place at this time. These are also independently attested by documentary evidence in the tabulary.<sup>13</sup>

#### 7. Gregory's Arrangements for the Succession to the Superiorship

A notice in the author Gregory's hand on the verso of the manuscript of his *Second Testament* published for the first time by von Falkenhausen ("Testamente," pp. 184–85) considerably illuminates the problem of the selection of *Fragala's* next superior that was the most important motivation for the composition of the first two versions of the document. This indicates that Gregory's first choice as successor, the priest Blasios said [A7], cf. [B7] to have "belonged to this monastery from childhood," was in fact Gregory's nephew. In the *Second Testament* of 1105, we learn [B10] of Blasios' planned pilgrimage to Jerusalem, from which Gregory suspected he might not return. In the verso notice, dated to 1107, Gregory, then near death, announces his disappointment at Blasios' failure to return and appoints another nephew, Gregory, as his successor instead. Von Falkenhausen ("Patrimonio," p. 781) suggests, presumably based on the harsh language of the notice, that both of these nephews were imposed on the community against the will of the monks.

### B. Subsequent History of the Monastery

#### 1. *Fragala* under the Later Norman Rulers of Sicily

Even after Gregory's death, the monastery continued to benefit from Norman patronage on a reduced level. Roger II, who was born in 1095, came of age in 1112, serving as Count of Sicily until 1130, and thereafter as King (1130–54). In May 1117, he issued a golden bull that confirmed *Fragala's* privileges as originally granted by his father Roger I in 1090.<sup>14</sup> At this time, donations from members of the Norman feudal aristocracy like Eleazar Mallabret (1116) and the brothers Matthew and Hugo de Craon (1122) replace the benefactions of the earlier Greek officials of the Norman court.<sup>15</sup> The founder's nephew and namesake Gregory (II) was serving as superior of the monastery.

In 1133, however, Roger II decided to carry out a reorganization of the Sicilian kingdom's Greek monasteries under which some thirteen of these foundations, including *Fragala*, were subordinated to the archimandrite of the newly founded monastery of Christ Savior (San Salvatore) at Messina (for which see below, (26) *Luke of Messina*).<sup>16</sup> The subordinated institutions, described as *kephalika* (capital) and *autodespota* (independent), continued to be ruled by their own superiors with a certain degree of independence and thus were not simple dependencies of the archimandral monastery at Messina in the strict sense of the term.

Occasional royal donations and confirmations later in the twelfth century demonstrate *Fragala's* enduring ties to the Norman court (von Falkenhausen, "Testamente," p. 176). In 1145,

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Roger II issued a bull for *Fragala*'s (Latin?) superior Boniface confirming thirteen documents originally issued by himself, his father Roger I, and his mother Adelaide.<sup>17</sup> Later, there are three documents issued by Queen Margaret, acting as regent for her son King William II (1166–89), dated to 1168, 1171, and 1175 or 1176.<sup>18</sup> The bilingual diploma of 1171 was issued in response to a visit to the court at Palermo by *Fragala*'s superior Pankratios and some of his monks to complain of unjust treatment by royal officials ignoring the immunities conceded them in Roger II's golden bull of 1117. The last of Margaret's documents is addressed to the superior Luke. The last two documents issued for *Fragala* by the Norman court are one granted by William II in 1187 for another superior named Pankratios (II?), and another by Tancred of Lecce (1189–94) issued in 1192 for this same Pankratios that confirms all prior liberties and concessions granted by the Norman rulers of Sicily.<sup>19</sup>

### 2. *Fragala* under Angevin and Aragonese Rule<sup>20</sup>

Although as late as 1192 Greek was still being used in chancery documents of the Norman court awarded to *Fragala*, most Greek monasteries began to decline in the middle of the thirteenth century, as the Sicilian administration was latinized under new rulers (von Falkenhausen, "Testamente," p. 176) like Charles of Anjou (1266–82) and Peter of Aragon (1276–85). According to the visitation report drawn up for the archimandrite of San Salvatore, there were only seven monks left in 1329 and *Fragala* controlled just two of its dependencies, yet von Falkenhausen reckons that it was still better off economically at this time than most other Greek Sicilian monasteries. Restorations ordered by the archimandrite were completed three years later in 1332, including a repair of the church roof. A commendatory abbot was appointed in 1417, who had the right to vote in the Sicilian parliament. In 1490, Pope Innocent VIII (1484–92) subordinated the monastery to the Ospedale Grande in Palermo.<sup>21</sup> Seven years later, Pope Alexander VI (1492–1503) allowed Benedictine monks to replace the Greek (Basilian) monks on the grounds that it was impossible to find the latter who were "good, honest, and exemplary in their lives."<sup>22</sup> By 1511, the monastery had four dependencies, two of which, San Talleleo and Sant' Ippolito, dated back to the eleventh century.

### 3. *Fragala* in Modern Times until its Secularization

According to von Falkenhausen ("Testamente," p. 175), the buildings were completely renovated in the eighteenth century, leaving hardly a trace of the medieval structures, but Salinas ("Escursioni," p. 387) reported in 1887 that the church had preserved its original plan despite modern restorations and plasterings. The royal visitor Monsignor J. A. De Ciocchis visited *Fragala* in 1742 while it was still an operating monastery. He described the whitewashed exterior of the church and noted the presence of the foundation's archives, with diplomas, in the library.<sup>23</sup>

The Benedictine monks left the monastery in August 1866 when it was secularized after the fall of the Bourbon Kingdom of Sicily in 1861 and the establishment of the modern Kingdom of Italy. At that time there were twenty-four monasteries in Sicily that could be traced back to Greek origins.<sup>24</sup>

The greater part of the archives of the monastery are found today under the title of "Tabulario dell'Ospedale Grande" in the Archivio di Stato in Palermo, where they were placed after the secularization of 1866.<sup>25</sup> A modern edition of the tabulary would greatly assist our understanding of the history of this foundation, which operated as a monastery for over eight hundred years.

### Analysis

The three *Testaments* attributed to Gregory, superior of the monastery of Saint Philip of *Fragala*, illustrate the life of a monastic foundation in early twelfth-century Sicily that had prospered through royal patronage. In default of comparable documents from pre-reform imperial monasteries in Byzantium proper, these may be used with care to provide some idea of how monastic leaders and their imperial patrons might have worked together before the monastic reform in Byzantium irrevocably altered the terms of that relationship.

#### A. Typology of the Document

The *First Testament* [A], edited only relatively recently, is dated to 1096/97. Along with the *Second Testament* [B] of 1105, it is concerned primarily with arranging the succession to the superiorship, but the latter document also revises some of the terms of the former. The *Third Testament* [C], also dated to 1105, is concerned principally with the foundation's dependencies. The author also composed [A4] a rule (*kanon*) for his monks, now lost, that was not an original work but drew on [B4] the writings of Basil of Caesarea, Theodore the Studite (possibly (4) *Stoudios*), and "all the fathers." Thus this was a foundation that stood outside of the Evergetian tradition that was then so influential in Byzantium itself.

#### B. Lives of the Monks

Unlike contemporary Byzantine institutions such as those governed by (10) *Eleousa*, (23) *Pakourianos*, and (27) *Kecharitomene* in which the performance of the canonical hours dominated the lives of the monks, here psalms and hymns were performed [A5], [B5] only on designated feast days. The monks are exempted [A5], [B5] from the practice of manual labor on feast days, but there is no further discussion. The novitiate of three years [A8], [B8] was a relatively long one by contemporary standards, stricter than in (22) *Evergetis* [37], but equal to that provided for in (27) *Kecharitomene*.

#### C. Constitutional Matters

The author exercises [A7], [B7] his patronal right to designate his successor, the ordained monk Blasios. He took the precaution of securing [C3] from Countess Adelaide her confirmation of his choice. Yet after the latter sought permission to go off on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, the author decided [B10] to reassert his prerogative to choose someone else to lead the community if Blasios fails to return within three years. If the author himself has died by then, the monks are to choose a successor from among themselves. As we learn from a note on the verso of the *Second Testament*, Gregory actually did this himself in 1107. There is no mention of any episcopal role in his successor's consecration, though Luke, bishop of Asyla, served as the scribe for all three testaments.

The author binds [A9] the monks to obedience to his successor, provided that "he is doing a good job of directing the flock" (cf. [A10]). Although this implies the possibility that the superior might be deposed by his fellow monks, the author explicitly declares [B12] that he is to be immune from removal by any external authority. For his part, the successor must preserve [A11] the testament, observe [B10] the author's canons (i.e., the lost *typikon*), and "not make use of secular persons and officials so that he dishonors this dignity."

D. Financial Matters

The foundation was supported both by private donations and royal patronage. The author, who had been dedicated [A1] to the monastery as a child, brought with him from his parents certain landed properties. He made [B4] another donation of landed and movable property at his tonsure. Still later, he donated [A3], [B3] additional vineyards and small farms to support the community as it increased in size. He carefully excludes [B12] any attempt by his lay relatives to reclaim these properties. Count Roger I provided [A2] financial assistance for the construction of the foundation's church and a protective tower. He also was at least partly responsible [B11] for the assignment of dependencies to the foundation, which the author then rebuilt [B2], [C2]. These included a nunnery and also a church likely founded by the Byzantine general George Maniakes († 1042).

After Roger's death, his wife Adelaide, acting in the name of her sons Symeon and Roger II, continued to provide [C3] financial assistance for the reconstruction of the foundation's dependencies. Other officials of the Norman court also provided dedications for the foundation. The royal patrons and other benefactors were to be rewarded [C3] with "unceasing prayers" in the dependencies. The author astutely seeks to associate [C4] the benefactors' interest in the continuance of these prayers with their vigilance to see to it that the foundation is not subsequently deprived of its dependencies.

This external support and the apparent acceptability of entrance gifts help explain both the large increase [B1] in the number of monks at the foundation and the author's expectation [B8] of future growth.

E. Relationship to the Monastic Reform

This was a very different kind of foundation from many reform monasteries, which were limited in size by the financial implications of their ideological scruples and comprehensive liturgical programs. Yet, in his own way, the author has tightened the disciplinary standards expected of his monks. He has reintroduced [B4] the practice of abstinence from meat, which had been disregarded during the period of Arab rule. By 1105, he has also introduced [B9] a prohibition of private property (*pekoulia*) which was absent from the *First Testament*.

*Notes on the Introduction*

1. See von Falkenhausen, "Testamente," pp. 177–78, with n. 20, and p. 183, n. 43.
2. (25) *Fragala* [A1], cf. [A2]; [B1], cf. [B2], [B4].
3. The church of the Mother of God of Maniakes; see (25) *Fragala* [B2] and [C2].
4. M. Amari, *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Catania, 1935), p. 435.
5. Silvestri, *Tabulario* pt. 1, no. 34, pp. 126–31, cf. confirmation by Roger II (1117) in Cusa, *Diplomi*, vol. 1, pt. 1, pp. 383–84, and Spata, *Pergamene greche*, no. 14, pp. 245–54; with discussions in von Falkenhausen, "Testamente," p. 175, Scaduto, *Monachesimo Basiliano*, p. 104, and Siciliano, "Greek Community," pp. 79, 139, n. 55.
6. Von Falkenhausen, "Testamente," p. 175, n. 8.
7. See references in White, *Latin Monasticism*, p. 39, n. 6.
8. See discussion in White, *Latin Monasticism*, pp. 39–40, 44.
9. Scaduto, *Monachesimo Basiliano*, pp. 106–11.
10. See the editions of Cusa, *Diplomi*, vol. 1, pt. 1, pp. 383–467; Silvestri, *Tabulario*, pt. 1, and Spata,

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- Pergamene greche*; Siciliano, "Greek Community," pp. 81–84, provides a brief discussion of each of the documents attributed to Adelaide.
11. Siciliano, "Greek Community," pp. 78–79.
  12. Cusa, *Diplomi*, vol. 1, pt. 1, no. 7, pp. 394–95; Spata, *Pergamene greche*, no. 5, pp. 191–93; with Siciliano, "Greek Community," pp. 81–82.
  13. Cusa, *Diplomi*, vol. 1, pt. 1, pp. 399ff; with von Falkenhausen, "Ceti dirigenti," pp. 352–54, and "Testamente," pp. 175–76.
  14. Cusa, *Diplomi*, vol. 1, pt. 1, no. 1, pp. 383–85, and Spata, *Pergamene greche*, no. 14, pp. 245–49; with Siciliano, "Greek Community," p. 85.
  15. Cusa, *Diplomi*, vol. 1, pt. 1, nos. 15–17, pp. 411–15, and Spata, *Pergamene greche*, nos. 13, 15–16, pp. 241–43, 255–59; with Siciliano, "Greek Community," pp. 89–90.
  16. See discussions in von Falkenhausen, "Patrimonio," pp. 785–86, and "Testamente," p. 176. As von Falkenhausen notes in the former work, p. 786, n. 33, the Greek text of the document ordering the subordination, Codex Vaticanus Latinus 8202, ff. 56–59, 130–32, remains unedited; a fifteenth-century Latin translation has been published by R. Pirri, *Sicilia Sacra*, 3rd ed., vol. 2 (Palermo, 1733), pp. 974–76.
  17. Spata, *Pergamene greche*, no. 41, pp. 379–82, and Silvestri, *Tabulario*, pt. 1, no. 39, pp. 151–55; with Siciliano, "Greek Community," pp. 85–86.
  18. Cusa, *Diplomi*, vol. 1, pt. 1, no. 21, pp. 421–23; Spata, *Pergamene greche*, nos. 19, 21–22, 40, pp. 269–70, 273–76, 373–74; Silvestri, *Tabulario*, pt. 1, no. 30C, G, pp. 106–7, 110–11; with Siciliano, "Greek Community," pp. 86–88.
  19. Cusa, *Diplomi*, vol. 1, pt. 1, no. 27, pp. 438–39; Spata, *Pergamene greche*, nos. 27 and 29, pp. 301–3, 371–72, 305–7; and Silvestri, *Tabulario*, pt. 1, nos. 1 and 30A, pp. 1–3, 102–3; with Siciliano, "Greek Community," pp. 88–89.
  20. For the monastery's later history, see especially Filangeri, *Monasteri basiliani*, p. 36.
  21. Silvestri, *Tabulario*, pt. 1, no. 36, pp. 137–40.
  22. Silvestri, *Tabulario*, pt. 1, no. 38, p. 149.
  23. Salinas, "Escursioni," pp. 386, 392–93.
  24. White, *Latin Monasticism*, p. 46.
  25. Von Falkenhausen, "Testamente," p. 177.

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———, “The Monastery of Saint Philip of Fragala and Norman Monastic Policy in Southern Italy and Sicily,” *BSC* 5 (1979), 56–57.

Silvestri, G., *Tabulario di San Filippo di Fragala e Santa Maria di Maniaci*, pt. 1: *Pergamene latine* (Palermo, 1887).

### *Translation*

Note on the translation of the *Second Testament* [B]: italics indicate borrowings from the *First Testament* [A].

### *First Testament* [A]

+ Gregory, the lowly monk and, however unworthy, superior of the monastery of our holy father Philip at Demenna.

[A1.] I, Gregory, the above signed humble sinner, renounced the world and all things worldly from my earliest childhood and dedicated myself to the monastery of St. Philip, which was completely deserted and unknown, not then packed with crowds of monks as it is today. With the help of God, who provides for our salvation and foreknows what is to come, and through the intercession of the most holy Philip, I persevered in this place and fought hard to bring this obscure place to prominence.

[A2.] Indeed, scarcely had the island of Sicily been freed from all the bloodshed and the taking of prisoners—for I too daily endured many terrors in this monastery from our masters the Ismaelites—when, with the approval of the most noble Count [Roger I (1061–1101)], and through the efforts of my humble self and the obedient [service] of the first brothers in submission to me, this church was erected from its foundations and the tower built, as those whose [p. 192] eyes gaze on it [today] can see. For we were not only engaged in the building of the [main] church, but also with the one [dedicated to] Michael, the commander of the heavenly armies, and such others as the principal monastery holds secure in her possession, safely reckoned with her property.

[A3.] I built the cells, too, for the monks to live in. I gave vines and fields to feed them and all those who stream towards this holy monastery. In a word, I exerted myself to the utmost [to improve] all her resources, in the fear of God and for the good of the brothers.

[A4.] As for the holy monks in it, whom I had tonsured, I governed them and gave them a rule, not of my own devising, but culled from the fathers. I handed on to them the rule of complete abstinence from meat, ordaining strict abstinence. I ruled that they should fast not only in renowned Lent, but also during the [period of] the purification that precedes Christmas and the feast of the Holy Apostles. [Fasting on] Wednesday and Friday is, as aforesaid, the tradition of our holy fathers.

[A5.] I handed on to them [the rule of] observing not Sunday only, but the fourteen holy days [of

the Lord] and the days of the Apostles and major saints. These days I told them to observe, taking care to do no work of any kind on these days, so that they may be spent, free from distraction, in psalms and hymns. I enjoined that, equally with these, be observed the feasts of God's holy Mother, she who is a fortress for all Christianity. For if we have been ordered to observe the feasts of the Apostles, how much more those of our most pure Lady, Mary ever-virgin.

[A6.] Now that I have reached impotent old age, the reasoning power of my mind has recognized that the inexorable cup of death is near, and that it has no respect for grey hair nor pity for youth, and that it comes in turn to all. In the words of the sweet-singing Prophet, "What man is there," says he, "who shall live and not see death? Or who shall deliver his soul from the hand of Hades?" (Ps. 88 [89]: 49).

[A7.] So, because of this unpredictable suddenness of death, taking as advisers the goodly and choice assembly of my brothers and children, in the tradition of our father of blessed memory, Theodore of the Studites,<sup>1</sup> and the holy fathers who have practiced asceticism before us, I selected to take my place the most devout Blasios, my disciple, a priest, who has belonged to this monastery from childhood. Scrupulously observing all a monk should, [he is] to take into his capable hands the helm of this monastery and govern the holy monks abiding there, to drive and administer them, piously and lawfully, according to the Gospel, as a most excellent shepherd promoted by God, and [be] ready to lay down his life for the sheep, as Christ the great shepherd commanded. For "No one," says he, "has greater love than this, that he should lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13), and, "The good [p. 193] shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

[A8.] He must be the support, not only of the sheep entrusted to him by me, but of those who at any time shall join this flock after stringent examination. That is, [he shall] tonsure them after three years probation and . . . to the other . . . through them service is paid to the Divinity, and the church should come to further increase. For if whenever two or three are, God has promised to be in their midst (cf. Matt. 18:20), how much more so where there are [greater] numbers. His efforts should be devoted not only to increasing the flock but also to strengthening the whole tradition of the rules prescribed for this flock of God's elect, so that when he appears before the Savior at his great Second Coming, he may, with the brothers subject to him, receive the prize of the upward call (Phil. 3: 14)<sup>2</sup> and present himself joyfully<sup>3</sup> before that fearful tribunal, shouting, "Here am I and the children God has given me" (Heb. 2:13).

[A9.] If he is doing a good job of directing the flock and steering the souls of the brothers, let there be no murmuring against him. Rather, [show him] the obedience becoming to monks, since a blameless life and untroubled faith shown to the fathers by their children can correct the heart of both. Thus to both the grace of the Holy Spirit often reveals, instead of features the senses apprehend, the inward disposition, establishing them, as the hymn goes, "Gods in their heart."<sup>4</sup> So while they obey him without a qualm, he spends sleepless nights for their souls. In the words of the Apostle, "Obey," says he, "those that have rule over you, and submit to them, for they watch at night for your souls, as being answerable for them; so they may do it with joy and not with grief" (Heb. 13:17).

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[A10.] So he, the shepherd honored by his own sheep, shall not have leave to be irritable with them, but kind and gentle like [God's] servant Moses. For forming letters does less to incline men to obedience than the character of a kind and mild shepherd. So long as the shepherd appointed<sup>5</sup> by me herds the flock properly, and those under him are well guarded, no one has leave to rebel against him or make trouble with factions and disorderly dissensions, under pain of the same curse with the Jews who bartered God.

[A11.] No one shall have leave to set aside this my lawful and genuine testament, which I have drawn up, being sane in mind and with my faculties undiminished. If anyone should attempt not to observe it whole and entire, on him be the curse of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the curse of the Holy Fathers, and a bond from me that cannot be loosed.

[A12.] This [testament is] to stand firm and unshakeable,<sup>6</sup> through the intercession of our Lady, Mother of God above-all-praise, and of the godlike angels, and of all the saints. Amen. +++ [p. 194]

+ Written by the hand of Luke, humble and sinful bishop of Syla,<sup>7</sup> in the presence of all the monks  
+

In the year 6605, indiction 5 [1096/97 A.D.] + Be Saint Nicholas of Kastellon<sup>8</sup> inseparable from the Monastery of St. Philip +

+ In the presence of the [following] trustworthy witnesses: Basil *protopapas*. Constantine priest, witness. Polykarpos priest, witness. Gerasimos priest and monk, witness. Nicholas, deacon. Sergios, priest. Witnessed further by [other] priests and monks.

### *Second Testament* [B]

This testament has been issued and confirmed by me, Gregory, the humble superior of Saint Philip's in Demenna. [p. 197]

[B1.] *I Gregory, the humble sinner who signed above in this document, renounced the world and the vain and dream-filled things of the world and dedicated myself from my earliest childhood to the aforementioned monastery of Saint Philip which was at that time deserted and unknown, not packed with crowds of monks as it appears today. With the help of God, who provides for our salvation and foreknows what is to come and through the intercessions of the most holy Philip, I persevered [p. 198] in this place and fought hard to bring this obscure place to prominence.*

[B2.] *Indeed, scarcely had the island of Sicily been freed from all the bloodshed and the taking of prisoners perpetrated by the godless Saracens—for I, too, the humble one endured many terrors in this most holy monastery—when with the understanding of the late most noble Count Roger [I] and through the efforts of my humble self and the obedience and submission of those brothers and*

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fathers *who first came to this monastery, this church was erected from its foundations and the tower built, as those whose eyes gaze on it [today] can see. I, the unworthy, was not only engaged in the building of this great monastery but also in the nearby church of the archangel Michael and [the churches] of Saint John the Forerunner, the Mother of God, the Apostle Peter, the Holy Philadelphoi, Saint Thallelaios, our holy father and bishop Nicholas, and the other church of the Apostle Peter and [the church] of the Mother of God [founded] by the late most noble Maniakes<sup>9</sup> and the church of Saint Mark most recently constructed in this city, which has been entrusted to holy women for the glory of God who is greatly praised in song.<sup>10</sup> [I have also labored on many other properties such as this greatest of monasteries holds secure in her possession, safely reckoned with her property.*

[B3.] Along with the tower, *I built cells [p. 199] ,too, and upper stories where the monks sleep and take their necessary nourishment. I gave to this monastery out of my own diligence the revenues of vines and fields to feed the monks persevering there and those who stream towards this holy and divine monastery. In a word, [I exerted myself] to the utmost [to improve] all her resources, in the fear of God and for the good of the monks thereafter.*

[B4.] In addition, when I first was tonsured and was numbered in the chorus of the monks, I dedicated to the monastery both the movable and immovable property which belonged to me from my family. *As for the holy monks whom I had tonsured, I gave them a rule from the holy fathers, I mean that of Basil the Great, of the holy Theodore the Studite and of all the fathers, [the rule] of complete abstinence from meat,<sup>11</sup> [a rule] which was not observed on the island of Sicily because it had been plundered by the descendants of Agar and fallen into disorder. In the same way I ruled that they should fast not only in renowned Lent but also during [the period of] purification that precedes Christmas (beginning on the feast of the Apostle Philip) and also before the feast of the Apostles. [Fasting] throughout the year on the weekdays, Wednesday and Friday—except for the feasts of major saints and those who are sick in body—is as aforesaid, the tradition of the holy fathers.*

[B5.] *I handed on to them [the rule] [p. 200] of doing no work on the holy days of the twelve Apostles and major saints together with the holy days of the Resurrection; to sing to God his canticles without distraction and never cease to carry his praises in their throats. I also enjoined them to give greater effort to their care for the holy Scriptures so that Christ will be kind with regard to our sins and will look upon his people and revoke their evil deeds.*

[B6.] *Now that I have reached impotent old age through many evils, the reasoning power of my mind recognized that the inexorable obligation of death is near and that it has no respect for grey hair nor pity for youth and that it comes in turn to all, according to the divine and sweet-singing prophet [who says] that “there is no man who shall live and not see death and that” no one shall deliver his soul from the hand of Hades” (Ps. 88 [89]: 49).*

[B7.] *Because of this unpredictable suddenness of death, making use of the good counsel of my*

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sons *and brothers*, I explained to them my benevolent intention to dispose of my affairs as I wish, *in the tradition of our holy father Theodore of the Studites and the other holy fathers who practiced asceticism before [us]*.<sup>12</sup> Having [their instructions] above all in my heart, *I selected* by my own choice and that of the brothers *my disciple, the most devout Blasios, to take my place*. He has been raised in this most pious *monastery from childhood and is learned* [p. 201] *and observes scrupulously all a monk should*. I established him as the superior *to take into his capable hands the helm of this monastery and steer the holy monks abiding there into serene harbors and lead them to the heavenly sheepfold; to drive and administer them piously and lawfully, according to the word of the Lord “laying down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). For “greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15: 13).*

[B8.] *He must be the support not only of the sheep entrusted to him by me but of those who at any time shall join this flock after stringent examination, that is, after they have completed three years probation and have been numbered with those who have already been laboring so that service is paid to the Divinity and the Church should come to further increase. For if “where two or three [are gathered] ,” God promised, “to be in their midst” (Matt. 18: 20), how much more so when there are [greater] numbers? His efforts should be devoted not only to increasing the flock but also to preserving intact the whole tradition of the rules prescribed for this flock so that when he appears before the Savior at his great Second Coming, he may with the brothers subject to him “receive the prize of the upward call” (Phil. 3: 14). With confidence he will proudly say “Here am I and the children God has given me” (Heb. 2: 13).*

[B9.] *If he is doing a good job of directing the flock and steering the souls of the brothers, let there be no murmuring* [p. 202] *against him, but fitting obedience*. I command that the superior and his whole congregation are to avoid any private property.<sup>13</sup> Everything should be held in common and with similar rights, according to the passage in the Acts of the Apostles, “they had all things in common” (Acts, 2: 44). [I ordain obedience] *because a pure and sincere life shown by the sons to their own fathers can correct the heart of both. Thus to both the grace of the Holy Spirit often reveals, instead of features the senses apprehend, the inward disposition, establishing them “Gods in their heart,”*<sup>14</sup> *in accordance with the saying “I said you are Gods” (John 10: 34) and “sons of the most High” (Luke 6: 35).*

[B10.] If this superior whom I have promoted should journey to Jerusalem as he desires and concerning which he has many times made requests of my lowliness, the monks have permission to wait three years in accordance with the declarations of the superior before me and the brothers. If he should return in the manner he has said, he should retain his pastoral rank. If he should not return, and if I, a poor sinner, am still alive, I will promote another to the service of the flock.<sup>15</sup> If, on the other hand, I have departed from this transient life before he should arrive back after the stipulated time, let one from among the brothers be selected by the decision and discretion of the brothers, one whom the grace of the Holy Spirit shall reveal, a suitable person who has knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. He shall shepherd the flock in holiness and justice according to the canons which I have handed down. He should not [p. 203] make use of secular persons and officials so

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that he dishonors this dignity, but [he should rule] by the discretion of the brothers as has been said, and as the divine plan orders because God knows those who are with him.

[B11.] The aforementioned churches, together with this great monastery, were built by me with the help of the count of blessed memory [Roger I] who was led by the Holy Spirit, and similarly with the help of the honored officials, that is to say, with the help of Nicholas, the most glorious *kaprilingas*, and of Leo the *logothetes*.<sup>16</sup> These men and the most gentle Eugenios of gentle birth,<sup>17</sup> together with the sovereign and the sovereign's wife, Adelaide, made great efforts to construct these churches. Moreover, they dedicated other things for the priests and [gave] other treasures for the forgiveness of their sins and for their eternal life. For them the prayers of this monastery will be unceasing unto the ages of ages.

[B12.] If anyone, seized by demonic deception, should attempt to block the valid testament I have made, to detach the aforementioned dependencies from the great monastery of Saint Philip, to seek from members of my household and from my heirs the properties dedicated by my parents to this same monastery, to expel the superior whom I promoted over this monastery or to dissolve the canon set forth by the Holy Fathers, he will have the curse of the God-inspired fathers as well as the anathema, even the [p. 204] added anathema and the total anathema, and my own malediction. Would that my testament were acceptable and would be confirmed and remain pure and sound, the testament which has been written by the hand of Luke, the sinner, bishop and scribe, in the month of May, thirteenth indiction, in the year 6613 [= 1105 A.D.].

The mark of Gregory, the superior of Saint Philip of Argiro<sup>18</sup> in Demenna.

### *Third Testament [C]*

The testament issued and confirmed by Gregory, superior of Saint Philip's in Demenna. [p. 211]

[C1.] I, the aforementioned Gregory, have placed first in the text the holy cross. Fearing the end of death lest it somehow catch me without a testament and send me empty and without provisions to those on the other side as has often happened and befallen many, I have thus made provision before all else for the monastery of Saint Philip and its dependencies. I, a sinner, have been the builder of these [institutions] with the assistance and cooperation of that great Count Roger and his wife, our sovereign [p. 212] and Lady Adelaide, who remains behind the count of blessed memory together with her son, the new count and our sovereign, Symeon [(1101–1105)], and his brother, the little Roger [II, Count (1105–1130), King (1130–1154)]. These people have watched over and guarded the flock together with its dependencies, just as the blessed and great count has.

[C2.] These are the dependencies of Saint Philip's monastery. First is the nearby church of the Holy Archangel, then of Saint Nicholas', Saint Peter's, the martyr Thallelaios', the Apostle Mark's, the church of the Mother of God [built by] Maniakes, the other Saint Peter's, and the Holy Philadelphoi.

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[C3.] As I stated, these buildings were constructed out of the personal expense of the blessed count and of the Lady Adelaide and their children; and also of the lord Nicholas, the notary of the blessed count and his son, the new sovereign Symeon, who together with his mother helped with these churches in his father's place. For these people unceasing prayers will be said in these churches as well as for all those officials who have made dedications to these monasteries. Thus, I settle matters just as I did in the other large testament<sup>19</sup> so that the aforementioned dependencies will remain unshaken in the possession of the great monastery of Saint Philip and so that the superior [will also remain] whom I have established in my place as the sovereign countess and her son, the young count, have ordained.

[C4.] If anyone should be discovered doing anything against these dependencies so that they should not belong to the great monastery, [p. 213] or if anyone should put a stop to the prayers on behalf of the blessed count and the Lady Adelaide and her sons as well as on behalf of the lord Nicholas and all those who love these churches, let him receive the curse of the Holy Fathers and a malediction from me a sinner. To the contrary, let [the monks] pray for these people as long as the churches exist since they erected these churches so that prayers [may be offered for] them and the prosperity of their fortune. God have mercy on them and give them guidance.

[C5.] [I hope] also that the sovereign count, still a little one, and the lady, his mother [Adelaide], will love the superior who has taken my place as they have loved me. I refer to the superior I have left for the church. May [these rulers] not permit these churches to be abandoned.

This testament has been written by Luke, the bishop of Asyla, in the month of May, in the thirtieth indiction, in the year 6613 [= 1105 A.D.]

### *Notes on the Translation*

*Editors' note:* The assistance of one of our translators, Patricia Karlin-Hayter [PKH], is gratefully acknowledged for the notes to this document.

1. An allusion to (3) *Theodore Studites*; see also [B7] below.
2. Athanasius, *Epistola ad Dracontium* 8, PG 25, col. 532C. [PKH]
3. For *parousias* read *parresias*. [PKH]
4. E. Follieri, *I calendari in metro innografico de Cristoforo Mitilineo*, vol. 2 (= *Subsidia Hagiographica* 63) (Brussels, 1980), p. 431. [PKH]
5. For *prostatheis* read *protatheis*. [PKH]
6. For *aparasalyton* read *aparasaleuton*. [PKH]
7. Luke signs as bishop of Syla here after [A12] and as bishop of Asyla after [C5]. Von Falkenhausen, "Testamente," p. 181 suggests that Syla may be a scribal error for Asyla which is attested in contemporary sources as the name of Luke's diocese. Luke is also known to have been a scribe (*grammatikos*); see below [B12].
8. Evidently a dependency of the monastery; see Scaduto, *Monachesimo Basiliano*, p. 109, and [B2], [C3] below.
9. This church was perhaps founded by George Maniakes during his temporary reconquest (1038–1042) of eastern Sicily; see also [C2] below.

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10. For identifications and discussions of these dependencies, see Scaduto, *Monachesimo Basiliano*, pp. 106–10.
11. Cf. Pseudo-Basil, *Canones* 28, 85 (R&P 4.164, 257), which permit the use of meat.
12. An apparent reference to (3) *Theodore Studites*; see also [A7] above.
13. *Peculia*; cf. (26) *Luke of Messina* [3].
14. Reading *theous tas kardias* as in [A9], ed. von Falkenhausen, “Testamente,” p. 193, line 35. See also n. 4 above.
15. Gregory actually exercised this option according to the note on the verso of the *Second Testament* (ed. von Falkenhausen, p. 184), appointing his namesake and other nephew Gregory to replace the absent Blasios.
16. For benefactions from these officials, see Cusa, *Diplomi*, vol. 1, pt. 1, pp. 399 ff.; for Nicholas, see also [C3] and [C4] below.
17. “Gentle Eugenios of gentle birth,” a possible pun: *eugeneias*, *Eugenios*; for this Greek official at the Norman court, see von Falkenhausen, “Ceti dirigenti,” p. 354.
18. For this local saint to whom, according to some sources, the monastery was dedicated, see von Falkenhausen, “Testamente,” p. 174.
19. An allusion to [B12].

### Document Notes

#### 1. *First Testament* [A]

- [A1] Founder’s personal association with the monastery. See similar treatment in [B1] below; [B12] informs us that his parents donated properties at the time of his entrance into the monastery.
- [A2] Refoundation under patronage of Roger I. See similar but longer treatment in [B2] below, which lists all the dependencies acquired by 1105.
- [A3] Founder’s personal contribution. See similar treatment in [B3] below, with more details.
- [A4] Source of the rule; regulation of fasting. See similar treatment in [B4] below, with its specific identification of sources. For similar regulations of fasting in contemporary documents, see (20) *Black Mountain* [38], [38R], [54], [56]; (22) *Evergetis* [10]; (23) *Pakourianos* [10]; (27) *Kecharitomene* [47], [48]; and (30) *Phoberos* [27], [28], [29], [30].
- [A5] Feasts to be observed. [B5] below has a different focus. For similar regulations in contemporary documents on celebration of feasts of the Lord, see (20) *Black Mountain* [48], [52], [53]; (22) *Evergetis* [11]; and (30) *Phoberos* [32].
- [A6] Meditation on death. See similar treatment in [B6] below and in (5) *Euthymios* [3]; (6) *Rila* [2]; (7) *Latros* Introduction; (10) *Eleousa* [1]; (24) *Christodoulos* [B1]; (30) *Phoberos* [1]; (41) *Docheiariou* [1]; (44) *Karyes* [1]; (45) *Neophytos* [2]; (48) *Prodromos* [1]; (49) *Geromeri* [2] ff.; and (50) *Gerasimos* [1]; (51) *Koutloumoussi* [A1], [C1].
- [A7] Designation of Blasios as his successor. See similar treatment in [B7] below.
- [A8] Length of novitiate; mandate to increase number of resident monks. See similar treatment in [B8] below, and contemporary discussions of the novitiate in (22) *Evergetis* [37]; (24) *Christodoulos* [A26]; (23) *Pakourianos* [25]; (27) *Kecharitomene* [30]; and (30) *Phoberos* [51].
- [A9] Obligation of obedience to the new superior. See similar treatment in [B9] below, and contemporary treatments in (22) *Evergetis* [16]; (27) *Kecharitomene* [12]; (30) *Phoberos* [36]; and (24) *Christodoulos* [A28].
- [A10] Superior to show kindness to monks. There is no equivalent in [B] below, but see contemporary treatments in (10) *Eleousa* [12]; (22) *Evergetis* [17]; (24) *Christodoulos* [A19]; (27) *Kecharitomene* [12]; and (30) *Phoberos* [36].
- [A11] Preservation of the *Testament*. See similar treatment in [B12] below, and contemporary provisions in (10) *Eleousa* [22]; (23) *Pakourianos* [33]; (22) *Evergetis* [40]; and (24) *Christodoulos* [A27].

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[A12] Appeal for heavenly assistance. See also treatments in (19) *Attaleiates* [7], cf. [15], and (24) *Christodoulos* [A28].

### 2. *Second Testament* [B]

[B1] Founder's personal association with the monastery. See similar treatment in [A1] above.

[B2] Description of the foundation; list of dependencies. See similar but much briefer treatment in [A2] above; for another briefer list of dependencies, see [C2] below.

[B3] Founder's personal contribution. See similar treatment in [A3] above. The upper stories "in which the monks sleep and take their necessary nourishment" are also found in the present structure on the site.

[B4] Earlier contributions of the founder; sources of the rule; real and movable property; regulation of fasting. See similar treatment in [A4] above, with cross-references to other documents. The sources of the monastery's rule are specifically identified here. For the requirement to abstain from meat, see also (26) *Luke of Messina* [3].

[B5] Exemption from work on feast days; study of holy scripture. [A5] above is different.

[B6] Meditation on death. See similar treatment in [A6] above, with cross-references to other documents.

[B7] Designation of Blasios as his successor. See similar treatment in [A7] above. This provision is effectively cancelled by the note on the verso of this *Testament* (for which see von Falkenhausen, "Testamente," p. 184), which appoints the founder's namesake and other nephew Gregory instead.

[B8] Length of novitiate; mandate to increase number of resident monks. See similar treatment in [A8] above, with cross-references to other documents.

[B9] Obligation of obedience to the new superior; ban on private property. See similar treatment on obedience in [A9] above (but without the ban on property), with cross-references to other documents. In the same spirit, the note on the verso of this *Testament* (von Falkenhausen, "Testamente," p. 184) commands the expulsion of monks who refuse to accept the leadership of the founder's designated successor. For similar bans on private property in contemporary documents, see (10) *Eleousa* [5]; (22) *Evergetis* [22]; (23) *Pakourianos* [4]; (24) *Christodoulos* [A22]; (26) *Luke of Messina* [3]; (27) *Kecharitomene* [50]; and (30) *Phoberos* [41].

[B10] Alternative arrangements for the succession. This is a new chapter, with no equivalent in [A], prompted by Blasios' planned pilgrimage to Jerusalem. As the note on the verso of this *Testament* (von Falkenhausen, "Testamente," p. 184) indicates, Gregory exercised the option reserved here of designating an alternate successor, his namesake nephew Gregory (II). The enigmatic command "not to make use of secular persons and officials so that he dishonors this dignity" may be an allusion to the *charistike* or some other external management program.

[B11] Acknowledgement of patrons. See also [C1] and [C3] below.

[B12] Preservation of the *Testament*. See similar treatment in [A11] above, with cross-references to other documents.

### 3. *Third Testament* [C]

[C1] Acknowledgement of patrons. See also [B11] above and [C3] below.

[C2] List of dependencies. Eight dependencies are listed here; see also the longer list in [B2] above.

[C3] Acknowledgement of patronage of the dependencies; prayers for benefactors. See also [B11] and [C1] above.

[C4] Curse against anyone harming the dependencies or halting prayers for benefactors.

[C5] Commendation of the superior to the count.