



The Kingdom in the Sun, 1130–1194 (The Normans in Sicily)

John Julius Norwich

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There were two Norman Conquests. John Julius Norwich is the consummate historian of the 'other' one: the conquest of Sicily. When on Christmas Day 1130 Roger de Hauteville was crowned first King of Sicily, the island entered a golden age. Norman and Italian, Greek and Arab, Lombard, Englishman and Jew all contributed to a culture that was as brilliant as it was cosmopolitan; and to an atmosphere of racial and religious toleration unparalleled in Europe. But sixty-four years later, to the day, the sun set on the Sicilian Kingdom. In this second volume of his history (The Normans in the South 1016-1130 is also in Faber Finds) Norwich describes the reigns of the grotesquely misnamed William the Bad and the Good and the bastard Tancred. We read, too, of St Bernard, magnetic but insufferable; of Adrian IV, the only English Pope; of Richard the Lionheart (behaving abominably in Messina); and other notables. This scintillating narrative history is also a superb traveller's guide, listing every Norman building extant on Sicily.

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