

Francesco Gandolfo: La scultura normanno-sveva in Campania. Botteghe e modelli (*Centro Europeo di Studi Normanni. Fonti e Studi*, 9); Bari: Giuseppe Laterza 1999; XII, 154 pp., 191 b/w ill.; ISBN 88-420-5923-4; Lire 90.000

For more than twenty-five years, from Modena to Monreale, from Cefalù to Coira, Francesco Gandolfo's discerning eye has illuminated monuments of Italian Romanesque sculpture. He has now turned his attention to Campania. In addition to two lavishly illustrated popularizing works on Amalfi and Ravello¹, he has written the scholarly monograph reviewed here. It is, as the back cover announces, the first history of Campanian medieval sculpture written by an Italian author. In that language, it takes its place alongside *La Campania* written by Mario d'Onofrio and Valentino Pace². Concerned with both architecture and sculpture, that useful volume was first published almost twenty years ago and has subsequently been updated. The only other monograph on the subject was authored, in English, by this reviewer³.

In 128 pages of text divided into sixteen brief chapters (excluding the end notes and the bibliography), Gandolfo addresses Campanian sculpture from the Norman conquest through the era of Frederick II Hohenstaufen in a highly specific – indeed, idiosyncratic – manner. As he notes in the introduction, he intends to consider style, but not iconography. Instead, local workshops and their interrelationships are to be emphasized. Stone sculpture is treated exclusively, because Gandolfo sees only sporadic contact between works in that medium and those in bronze, ivory and wood. Illustrations, the author notes, were chosen specifically to elucidate particular stylistic points and are not intended to be all-encompassing. Thus, in order to follow Gandolfo's meaning, the reader must have a reasonably firm grasp of the material because overall views are often lacking (e.g. the façade of the cathedral at Sessa Aurunca). Similarly, the endnotes are not designed to be comprehensive, but are meant to address only the most significant arguments. Yet, despite the many disclaimers, the extensive bibliography indicates that the knowledgeable author has read widely and is aware of the most recent scholarship⁴.

Inevitably, since stylistic analysis is an imprecise tool and every individual's eyeballs function differently, Gandolfo's attributions to various workshops differ

1 FRANCESCO GANDOLFO: Ravello (*Grand Tour*, 4); Milan: F.M. Ricci 1995); DERS.: Amalfi (*Grand Tour*, 15); Milan: F.M. Ricci 1999.

2 MARIO D'ONOFRIO and VALENTINO PACE: *La Campania (Italia Romanica, 4)*; Milan: Jaca 1981.

3 DOROTHY F. GLASS: *Romanesque Sculpture in Campania. Patrons, Programs and Style*; University Park PA 1991.

4 To the literature on the panels in the Museo Correale di Terranova in Sorrento should be added a publication that appeared at approximately the same time as the volume considered here: WALTHER CAHN (Ed.): *Romanesque Sculpture in American Collections: New York and New Jersey, Middle and South Atlantic States, the Midwest, Western and Pacific States*; Turnhout: Brepols 1999, p. 115.

somewhat from mine, but not so much as to alter radically the non-specialist's view of the sculpture made in Campania between the late eleventh and the late thirteenth century. We also disagree on the extent to which sculptors in medieval Campania relied on ancient Roman models, for Gandolfo sees them as less influential than I do. But, rather than belabor old arguments that cannot be solved unless further documentation is forthcoming, I would instead like to emphasize some of the new material that Gandolfo has introduced into the discussion, material not considered in my monograph of a decade ago.

Of particular interest are two figures embedded in the campanile of the cathedral at Capua: a common northern Romanesque image of an animal playing a zither (fig. 47), and a naked man displaying his genitals (fig. 48), perhaps recarved from an ancient work. Gandolfo compares the two figures to the monkey on the lintel of the *Porta dei Leoni* at the cathedral of Salerno. He thus dates the Capua figures to the third or fourth decade of the twelfth century in keeping with his thesis that the *Porta dei Leoni* was made considerably after the dedication of the cathedral in 1085, a stylistic argument that controverts the evidence provided by the inscription on that very lintel (pp. 20 ff.)⁵. The two images at Capua, highly unusual in the context of medieval Campania, are worthy of further investigation especially in light of the plethora of recent work on images in margins.

Other interesting, though less controversial, material introduced into Gandolfo's analysis includes: a nave capital from Sant'Angelo in Munculanis at Sant'Agata dei Goti (fig. 9); a piece of the architrave from San Bartolomeo at Benevento (fig. 86) now in the Museo del Sannio in that city; a handsome eagle (fig. 139), originally part of a medieval pulpit in the cathedral at Amalfi and now incorporated into a reading desk at the entrance to the presbytery of that building; a young falconer conserved in the museum of the cathedral at Ravello (fig. 172); and, the rather substantial remains of a pulpit in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore at Corpo di Cava (page 104), a few kilometers from the famed abbey at Cava dei Tirreni. The Corpo di Cava sculpture, stylistically related to parts of the pulpits at the cathedral of Caserta Vecchia is, unfortunately, not illustrated⁶. Nonetheless, one cannot but be grateful for this plethora of new material as well as for Gandolfo's perceptive eye and patient looking. He has reminded us of how very much can be learned from the close observation of objects.

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5 Gandolfo previously published the material as: 'Archeologia' contro epigrafia: il caso dei portali della cattedrale di Salerno, in: *Napoli, l'Europa. Ricerche di storia dell'arte in onore di Ferdinando Bologna*; Catanzaro 1995, pp. 17-20.

6 Illustrations may be found in G. FIENGO: *Corpo di Cava e la chiesa di Santa Maria Maggiore*, in: G. FIENGO and F. STRAZZULLO (Eds.): *La Badia di Cava*; 2 vol. Cava dei Tirreni 1990; vol. 2, plate CXXXIX, figs. 1-3.