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THE IMAGE OF THE PRIVATE AND THE PUBLIC KING IN NORMAN SICILY

SUMMARY

Research deems it to be an incontrovertible fact that William II, Sicily's last legitimate Norman king, was but a pale epigone of his grandfather Roger II. The downfall of the Norman kingdom was ascribed to external factors. Judging from the sources, however, the two rulers had little in common and their failure had inner causes. The difference can be collated more readily from the style of their self-representation than from the mosaic styles. And this 'signature' comes to the fore firstly in the official documents, the seals and the coins. My contribution will endeavour to trace the development from *idiom* to *imago*, from the written image (that means *idiom*) to the image of Norman "regalità", as Delogu called the self-understanding of the Norman kings.[1]

In the first part I shall confront and compare the inscriptions of some prominent documents, seals and coins of Roger and William. In the second part I shall try to show how these formulas influenced the meaning of pictorial representation and – via the Norman liturgy – even the architecture of the 12th century in Sicily.

1. Intitulatio regis

One of the most famous documents of the reign of Roger II that has come down to us is the donation privilege for the Cappella Palatina of 28 April 1140 (fig. 1). The two red-coloured circles at the bottom of the document, the *rotae*, of Roger II and his son Roger, both drawn in purple ink, use the concept "Dei gratia", "by the grace of God", together with the two names in, respectively, the upper *left*-hand and *right*-hand quadrants.[2] In his own purple *rota*, the second Norman king, William I, then replaced this concept by "clementia", "mildness", though in the small *rota*, drawn in olive-green ink, "Dei gratia" still appeared as the attribute of his uncrowned successor – his first born son, Roger, Duke of Apulia (fig. 2).[3] William II used in his documents the concept 'gratia' which in the *Intitulatio* of the foundation charter for Monreale of 15 August 1176 stood as a kind of reinforcement by the side of "favente" and "clementia", from 1172 onwards.[4] The inscription of his seals like the lost gold seal of the foundation charter for Monreale or the red wax seal of a privilege of William II dating to 1172 (fig. 3) repeated the traditional concept "gratia Dei" of Roger's purple rotae.[5] But the formula no longer corresponded to the customary chancellery style. Unlike the seals, in fact, the *signacula* of William II – as the purple *rotae* of the royal privileges were known at the time – abandoned the idea of grace within three years of William's coronation.[6] Both in the donation privilege drawn up in 1169 on the occasion of the consecration of Gualterius Offamilius as Archbishop of Palermo (fig. 4) and in the foundation charter for Monreale of 1176 "clementia" appears in the purple *rota* in place of "gratia". In the foundation charter the formula referred to the "mild" ruler of the *Intitulatio*, who as *author* of the privilege and as *donor* of the building was thus given a public profile.

1 Paolo Delogu, "Idee sulla regalità: l'eredità normanna", in *Potere, società e popolo tra età normanna ed età sveva (1189–1210). Atti delle quinte giornate normanno-sveve (Bari-Conversano, 26–28 ottobre 1981)*, Bari 1983, pp. 185–214.
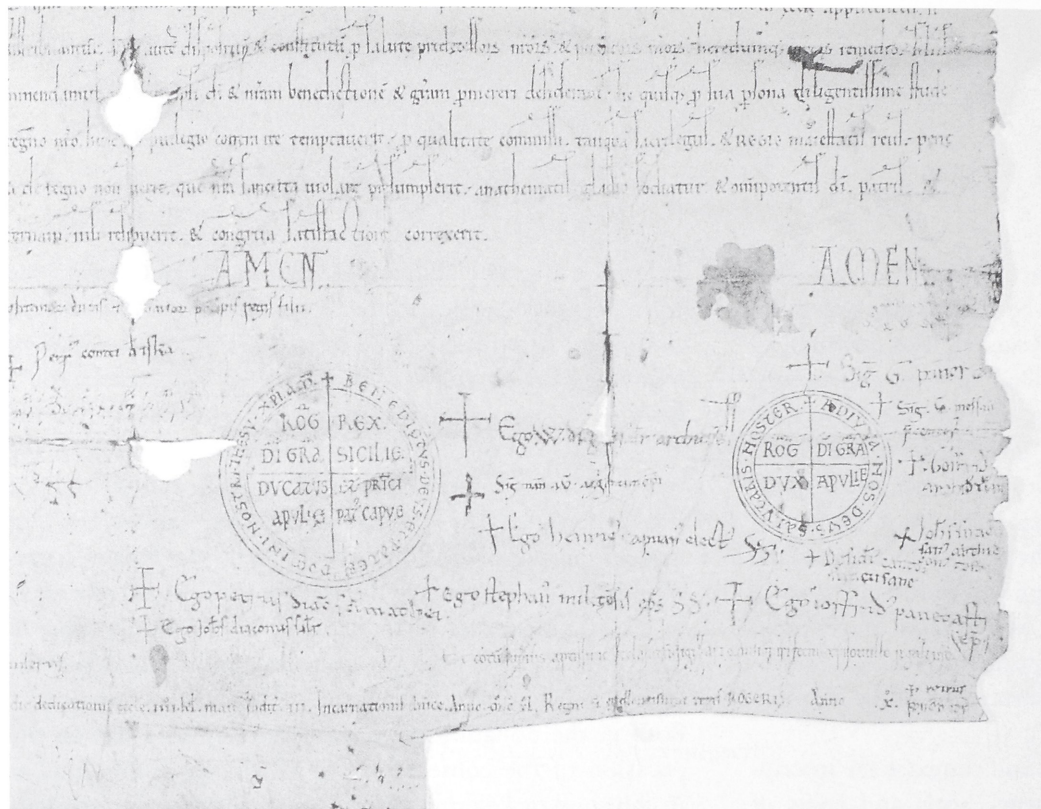
2 Tabulario Cappella Pal., pergam. n. 6. Lat. 1140, April 28, Ind. III, Palermo, 80 cm x 53 cm, in Rosario La Duca, *L'età normanna e sveva in Sicilia. Mostra storico-documentaria e bibliografica* (exhib. cat.), Palermo 1994, No. 9, pp. 44–51.

3 Cf. the parchment of William I of December 1157 (Tabulario Cattedrale Pal., pergam. n. 17. Lat. 1157, December, Ind. VI, Palermo, 62,5 cm×47 cm), in La Duca (see note 2 above), No. 19, p. 72 f.

4 Cf. the parchment of William II of 15 April 1172 (Tabulario Cattedrale Pal., pergam. n. 22. Lat. 1172, April 15, Ind. V, Palermo, 37,5 cm×33 cm), in La Duca (see note 2 above), No. 28, p. 90 f.

5 "W [illelmus] Dei Gratia Rex Sicilie". – The existence of the gold seal is still documented and described by Giovanni Luigi Lello in 1596, Sommario de i privilegi, No. V, pp. 6–8.

6 Cf. Tabulario Cattedrale Pal., pergam. n. 21, 49 cm×44 cm, Lat., in La Duca (see note 2 above), No. 27, p. 88 f. This development in fact appears to have continued into the period of Tancred of Lecce, as the inscription on a seal of William II's illegitimate successor suggests: "+ TANC D GRA REX SICILIE DUCATUS APULIE ET PRINCIPATUS CAPUE". Either the 'D' forms part of the abbreviation of the name 'Tancred', or, rather, it is what remains of the word 'Dei', which on William II's seals had still been written in full. The reduced form of the word could even be taken to suggest that both concepts of grace and of a king crowned by God perhaps seemed no longer appropriate to Tancred. – For a transcription of Tancred's seal, see the engraving in Arthur Engel, *Recherches sur la numismatique et la sigillographie des Normands de Sicile et d'Italie*, Paris 1882, fig. I, 17. – Sigfrid H. Steinberg's suggestion, "I ritratti dei Re Normanni di Sicilia", *La Bibliofilia*, 39 (1937), pp. 29–57, in particular 36, that the overlength of the name 'Tancred' would have been the reason for the abbreviation of 'Dei' must be rejected, since on earlier seals and coins the words 'Principatus' and 'Capue' both appear abbreviated, which on Tancred's seal are written in full.

1. *Privilege of Roger II, parchment with double-rota in crimson red ink, 80×53 cm, 28 April 1140, Ind. III, Palermo. Tabulario Cappella Palatina, Palermo, pergam. n. 6, Latin, detail*
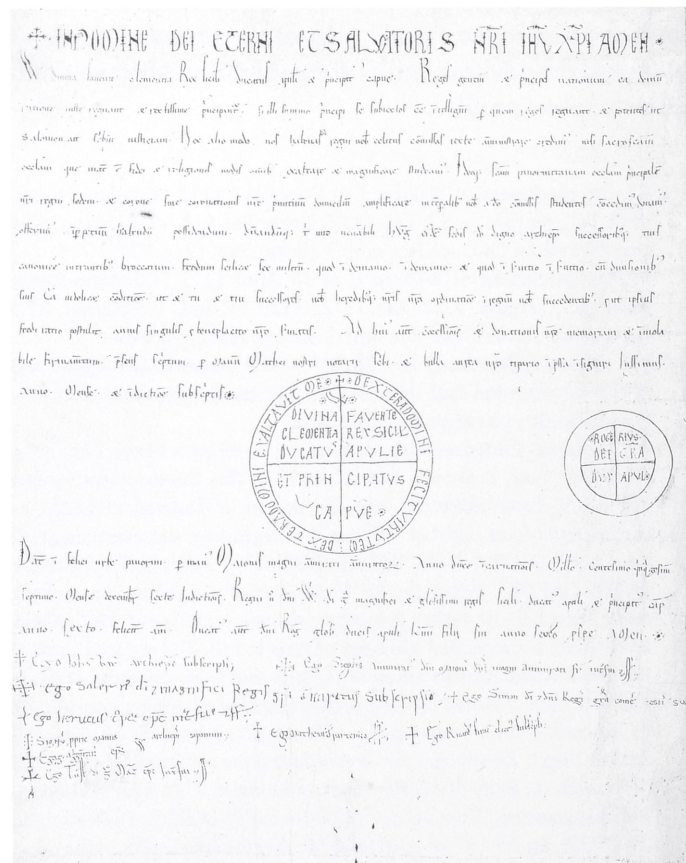

2. *Privilege of William I, parchment with double-rota in crimson red and olive-green ink, 62,5×47 cm, December 1157, Ind. VI, Palermo. Archivio della Cattedrale, Palermo, pergam. n.17, Latin*

3. *Seal of William II, red wax with a wooden frame, diameter 6,5 cm, 15 April 1172, Ind. V, Palermo. Archivio della Cattedrale, Palermo, pergam. n. 22, Latin*

*4. Privilege of William II, parchment with crimson
red rota, 49×44 cm, September 1169, Ind. III,
Palermo. Archivio della Cattedrale, Palermo,
pergam. n. 21, Latin*
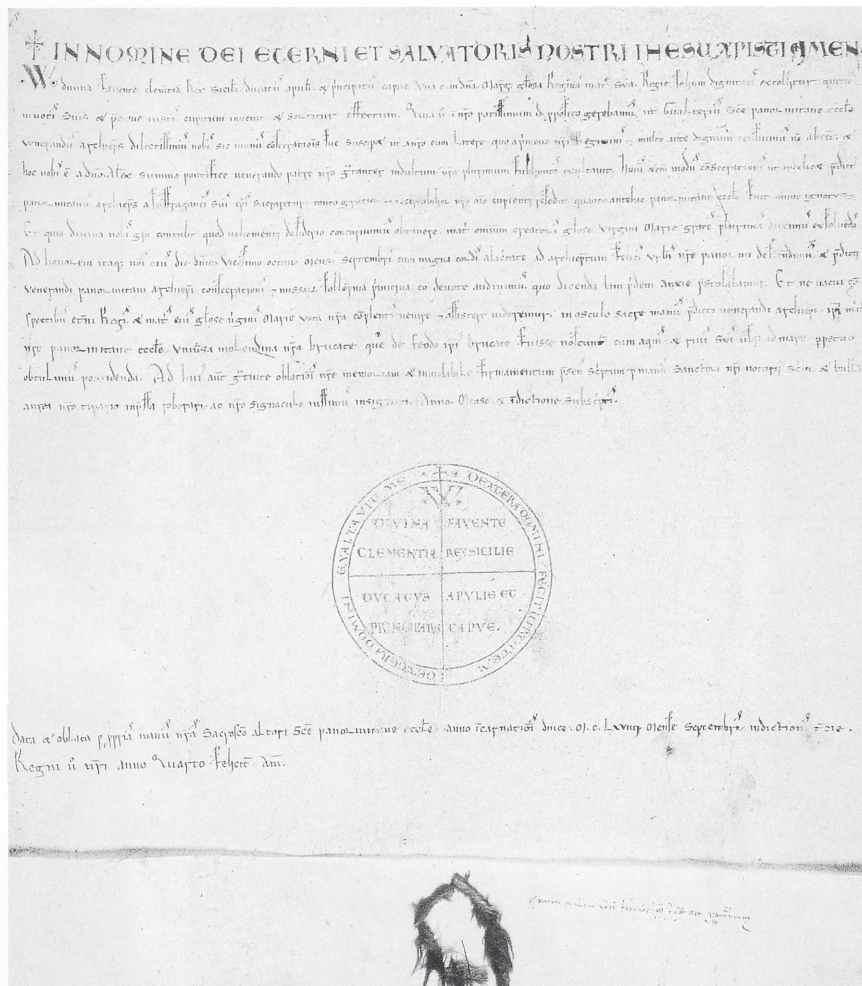
This painstaking conceptuality of the privileges probably followed the intentions of the king, who – just like Roger II – at first signed his purple *rotae* with his own hand, thus fixing in writing and personally authenticating privileges that had been granted orally. The purposeful placing or omission of the *gratia*-concept in the documents of William II permits one to conclude that the idea of the favour and grace of God must have played a controversial part in the ideological concept of the last legitimate Norman ruler. The use of the purple *rota* as a sign of personal authentication had still been considered of such importance under his father William I as to have the *rota* announced in the *Corroboratio*, the concluding phrase at the end of his documents.[7] Under William II, however, the *rota* disappeared completely after 1184.[8] Just like the *gratia*-concept ten years earlier, it evidently contradicted the public self-representation of a god-like king.

2. From idiom to image

The self-understanding of a Norman Count, Duke or Prince in the early 12th century derived from the idiomatic appropriation as sign of authority and from the symbols of power, whose repertory of forms had been handed down through the coins, documents and seals of their predecessors. The golden tarì struck at the behest of Robert Guiscard in 1072 already bore the name and title in Arab characters: "Duke Robert, glorious master of Sicily". The coins thus formulated an effectively realized claim to rule a country that Robert – following the conquest of Palermo in 1072

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[7] Horst Enzensberger, *Beiträge zum Kanzlei- und Urkundenwesen der normannischen Herrscher Unteritaliens und Siziliens*, Kallmünz 1971, p. 78.

[8] Herbert Zielinski, "Zu den Urkunden der beiden letzten Normannenkönige Siziliens, Tankreds und Wilhelms III. (1190–1194)", *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 36 (1980), pp. 433–77, 462 f., 463, n. 178.

6. *Coin of King Roger II, with a Greek cross and "IC XC NIKA" on the reverse, gold, diameter 15 mm, weight 1,015 gr. Biblioteca Comunale, Palermo, Inv. No. 709*

5. *Coin of the Counts Roger I and Roger II with T-shaped sign on the obverse, gold, diameter 13 mm, weight 0,955 gr. Biblioteca Comunale, Palermo, Inv. No. 702*

7. *Coin of King William II, with a Latin cross and "IC XC NIKA" on the reverse, gold, diameter 15 mm, weight 1,71 gr. Biblioteca Comunale, Palermo, Inv. No. 650*

– had passed on to his brother and vassal Roger I as a lien. Rather than an image of the ruler, both the obverse and the reverse of the coins still bore the 'calligraphic', written image of a horizontal line set within the circle of the surrounding legend. Until 1127 under Counts Roger I and Roger II a T-shaped sign appeared on the obverse of the coins (fig. 5). While this *signum* received manifold and meaningful ornamentations right through into the first third of the 12th century, the surrounding legend remained the erstwhile pseudo-kufic image formula *without* meaning.[9] The language of the written signs had become transformed into a language of symbols.

In the diplomas of the Apulian Dukes the personal signature still represented the most important feature of authentication by the ruler in the course of the 12th century.[10] But the cross they personally placed before their name, just like the monogram itself, already paved the way towards an increasingly symbolic language. Somewhat similarly, the acclamation formula "IC (Iésos) XC (Christòs) NIKA", "Jesus Christ wins", deriving from Byzantine and Gallican traditions, developed into a formula of royal authority in Sicily. The earliest Sicilian coins bearing the formula appeared in 1130 on the occasion of the coronation of Roger II. Struck in gold, the sign occupied the reverse of the coins in the

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9 La Duca (as in note 2), pp. 232–55.

10 Enzensberger (as in note 7), pp. 81, 86.

manner of the *rotae*. The letters of the abbreviation, two at a time, were written into the quadrants of a Greek (fig. 6) and, after 1140, a Latin cross that was surrounded by an Arab inscription giving the place where the coins had been struck. On the obverse of the gold tarì there appeared the panegyric praise of the ruler with the name of the king.[11] Under William I and William II the sign became a standard formula, where the praise of the ruler always occupied the front and the *rota* the rear of the coin (fig. 7).[12] But already in 1138 we can recognize an interesting change. The reverse of the silver and copper coins now carried only a bust of Christ with the abbreviations "IC" and "XC" on the two sides of the head.[13] The reverse of the coin that was previously occupied by the symbol of the *rota* was now graced by an image: the *imago Christi*. And it is highly remarkable that the image replaced the phrase "NIKA", "he wins". Gold, silver and copper coins thus passed from hand to hand in the *regnum Siciliae* and documented the similarity of *two* rulers of *one* kingdom of which the victory and durability was already manifested by the material of the ore.

This development can be demonstrated on Siculo-Norman coins. A feature of this development is prefigured on an early lead seal of Roger II (after 1130) that displays on the obverse the bust of Christ enframed by the monograms "IC" and "XC" (fig. 8). It is striking to observe that the bust is surrounded by two concentric circles bearing a Latin *intitulatio* which praises not Christ but the king: "+ ROGERIUZ DEI GRACIA SICILIE CALABRIE APULIE REX".[14] That the old acclamation formula "IC XC NIKA" also found its way into epigraphy under Roger II and thus appeared on a more monumental scale, is demonstrated by the quadrilingual epitaph of Chrysanthos in the Palazzo della Zisa in Palermo, which dates to 1148 (fig. 9).[15] The cross in *opus sectile* – with its identical cross arms that open like the

8. *Seal of King Roger II with bust of Christ, bearing "IC" and "XC" monograms and Latin inscription "ROGERIUZ DEI GRACIA SICILIE CALABRIE APULIE REX" on the obverse, lead, diameter 3,7 cm, thickness 0,4/5 cm. Tabulario Cappella Palatina, Palermo, n. 48*

petals of a chaliced blossom – is framed at the centre of the slab by a ring of white marble. The four flower buds are made up of red porphyry pieces that symbolized the wounds of Christ. However, the porphyry *rota* at the centre of the cross recalls not only the wound on Christ's side, but also provides a pictorial allusion to the foremost *worldly* ruler: Chrysanthos was the priest of Roger, who was the "Lord of Italy, Ankabardia, Calabria, Sicily and Africa", as the Arab and Hebrew inscription of the tombstone would have him. Furthermore he was the priest of a king whose porphyry *rota* was the centre of the body of Christ. In this signification the author of the epitaph followed an age-old formula that associated the *rota* not only with the image of the Emperor, but according to Honorius Augustodunensis also with the host of the Christian liturgy: "Ideo imago Domini cum litteris in hoc pane exprimitur, quia et in denario imago et nomen imperatoris scribitur."[16]

At the beginning of the reign of Roger II the attention of the Norman rulers shifted from the widely circulating and
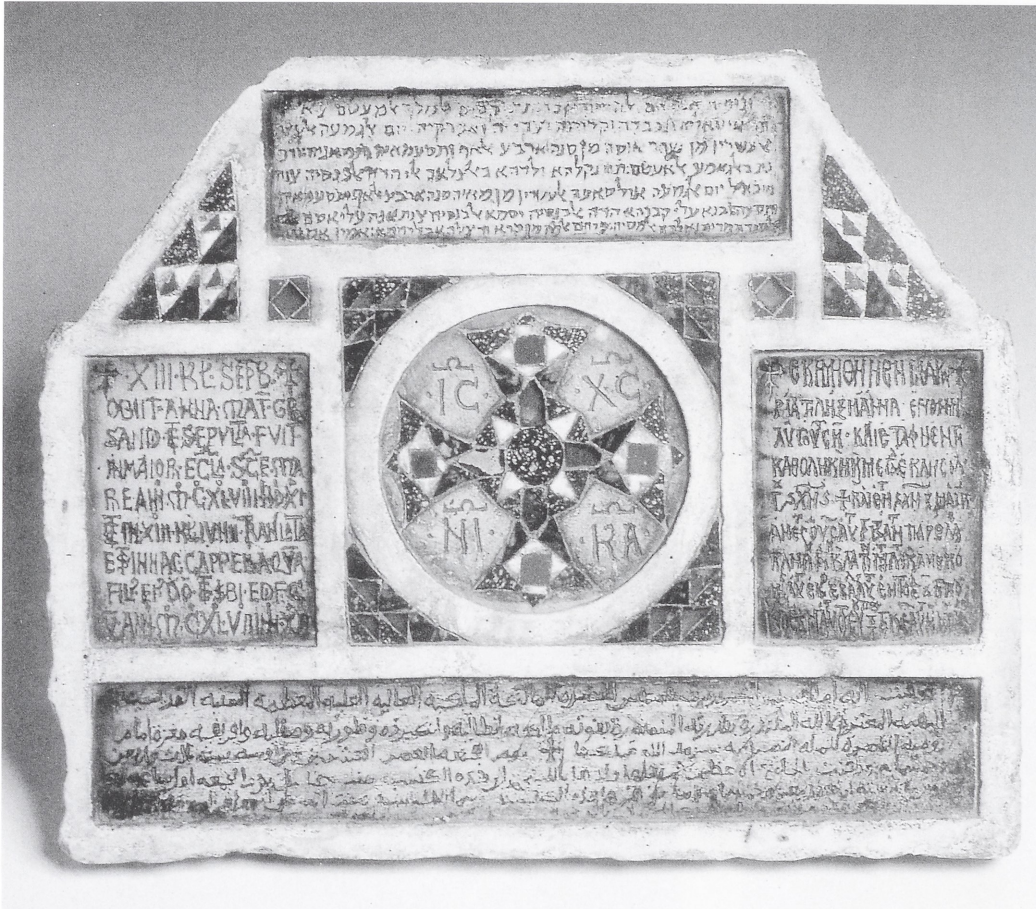
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[11] La Duca (as in note 2), pp. 256–63.

[12] Ibid., pp. 272–75, 282–85.

[13] Ibid., pp. 268–71.

[14] Tabulario Cappella Pal., n. 48, diameter 3,7 cm, thickness 0,4/5 cm, in La Duca (as in note 2), p. 46 f., 50. – The lead seal – discovered 1993 by Francesco Giunta – must be dated before July 1139, when Roger obtained the investiture by Pope Innozenz II. In the new intitulatio of the privilege the king was called now "rex Siciliae, ducatus Apuliae et principatus Capuae". See Paul Kehr, "Die Belehnungen der süditalienischen Normannenfürsten durch die Päpste (1059–1192)", *Abhandlungen der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse*, 1 (1934), pp. 1–52, in particular p. 41. – Thomas Dittelbach, *Rex Imago Christi. Der Dom von Monreale – Bildsprachen und Zeremoniell in Mosaikkunst und Architektur*, Wiesbaden 2003, p. 56 f.

[15] Palermo, Galleria Regionale della Sicilia (Palazzo Abatellis), 40 cm × 32 cm. – Wolfgang Krönig, "Der viersprachige Grabstein von 1148 in Palermo", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 52 (1989), pp. 550–58. – La Duca (as in note 2), pp. 146–49 with colour plates.

[16] Honorius Augustodunensis, "Gemma animae", Liber I, caput XXXV: "De forma panis", in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 172, col. 555 B. – See Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae. A study in liturgical acclamations and mediaeval ruler worship*, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1946, p. 8. – According to Joseph Dölger, *Antike und Christentum*, 1 (1929), pp. 21 ff., the East Roman tradition to stamp the monogram onto the hosts has its roots in the 5th century.

reproducible language of symbols to firmly installed private and public images that were then being produced directly in the court workshops in Palermo. The widely differing self-understanding of Campanian and Apulian usurpers had grown into the centrally steered self-representation of the *rex Siciliae*. This is where the Norman mosaics had their roots.

The written and spoken idiom had long since fixed the *imago* of the ruler in the population's memory, but now the *imago* availed itself to the *idiom*. Rather than to coins and seals, the circulation and reception of which could not be controlled, it now fell to images of the ruler in stone or mosaic to illustrate, comment, reflect and manipulate power and law relationships, and this quite irrespective of whether these relations effectively existed or were some distant goal. Under William II the image came to predominate over the written and spoken word in ever more radical form. The *tituli* of sacred and profane pictorial programmes lost their explanatory and descriptive character and became somewhat disconnected from the image itself.

It now fell to the images and their learned Latin interpreters to sustain the claims of the ruler to *ideal* power and law conditions.[17] But such claims nevertheless presupposed legitimation by the Pope. We know that Roger II, who had been crowned by the Anti-Pope Anacletus II in 1130, was refused legitimation as king for as long as he lived. After the investiture by Innocent II that Roger had forced in 1139, not only Celestine II, but also Lucius II and Eugenius III maintained the unlawful *status quo* and refused Roger the renewal of the investiture that was required every time the Roman See had a new occupant.[18] It was only his son William I who succeeded – after taking Hadrian IV prisoner in 1156 – in converting this unlawful condition into one that was tolerated by both Church and state law. Seen in historical perspective, that was the reason why Roger kept seeking recognition and possibilities of representing a *regalità* that genealogically was devoid of roots. What Roger sought was not imitation and recognition of Roman or Byzantine emperorship, but rather legitimation of *his* own

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[17] Cf. Reinhard Elze, "Zum Königtum Rogers II. von Sizilien", in *Festschrift Percy Ernst Schramm*, vol. 1, Wiesbaden 1964, pp. 102–16, in particular p. 112.

[18] Kehr (as in note 2), p. 10.

rule as autocrat. That was *his* claim. And to this end he opted for two methods of representation: a *private* and a *public* one.

3. The dedication mosaics

When considering the mosaic showing the coronation of Roger at Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio in Palermo (fig. 10), art historians overlooked the fact that the place in which it was situated was a private chapel. That the mosaic was once on public view on the east wall of the former narthex of the church and served as tombstone epitaph of the church's founder, who had died in 1151, is pure speculation and is not supported by any known source.[19] Rather, the 'speaking' petition scroll of the foundation mosaic (fig. 11), which shows Mary, the church's patron, together with the founder, the Grand Admiral and the first Minister, *ammiratus ammiratorum*, George of Antioch, brings out the special status of the church as a private chapel: "George, who built the house for me from the foundations upwards."[20] The ten-line inscription, a jambic twelve-syllable, on the open scroll that Mary holds in her left hand commences with this formula, which documents the founder's personal claim to salvation before Mary and Christ. The formula in question is not just a prayer, but also the 'notarial' self-representation and self-authentication of a lay member of the court. And that is also the reason why the mosaic did not have the status of a public memorial tablet, but rather that of a private votive picture.[21] What is shown is not a state, but an action. Although the *mediatrix* holds the scroll as medium of a future dialogue with Christ, to whom she will transmit the message in the upper right-hand quarter of the scene, but in the mosaic

she has only just received the scroll in her right hand from the founder, who is represented in *proskynesis* in front of her. This is shown by the gesture of her hand, which is not a pointing gesture, but rather a receiving gesture. The initiated beholder becomes the witness of a "concatenation of gestures" (Kitzinger). In Byzantine iconography it had until then been customary to represent the supplicant Mary as an orant with outstretched arms. But the type was changed in Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio. What is represented there is the personal juridical consignment of a document that is awaiting authentication at any moment. That is suggested by the concept "ΔΕΗΣΙΣ" in the *titulus* above the head of the founder, which was understood as a juridical term for a private-law petition.[22] What is taking place here is an intimate conversation between the founder and Mary. The inscription terminated with the confession of the power of the one and only God: "ΘΕΟΣ ΜΟΝΟΣ".

The iconography of the *Haghiosorítissa* as a part of a "Deesis" was known in Palermo. This conclusion is at least strongly suggested by the *typikòn* of a lay confraternity preserved in the treasury of the Cappella Palatina, which was commissioned by the Confraternity of Santa Maria di Lepanto around 1080 and probably reached Palermo after Roger II had sacked Thebes in 1147 (fig. 12).[23]

The Coronation mosaic has to be read in this light. Similarly sized as the Foundation mosaic it must once have been situated in the immediate vicinity of the Foundation mosaic, of which it is a contemporary piece, possibly at the entrance to the choir near the chancel barrier: a propaganda image of the first order and yet hermetically cordoned off behind the doors of the church.[24] Here the extremely significant textual formula of the previously viewed foundation mosaic was re-interpreted with the help of an old image formula. It had to

[19] Ernst Kitzinger, *I mosaici di Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio*, Palermo 1990, p. 209, describes the king even as "co-fondatore" of the church. The narthex-theory was supported by Otto Demus, *The mosaics of Norman Sicily*, London 1949, p. 82, and also by Slobodan Ćurčić, "The Architecture", in *The Mosaics of St. Mary's of the Admiral in Palermo. With a chapter on the architecture of the church by Slobodan Ćurčić*, Ernst Kitzinger (ed.), Washington 1990, pp. 42–44. – In 1877 Giuseppe Patricolo, the restorer of the church, concluded that both mosaic panels had been removed about 1588 in consequence of the demolition of the original façade of the church. On that occasion also the Norman chancel barrier might have been demolished. Cf. – Ćurčić (as in note 19 above), p. 30 f. In Hosios Loukas three different versions of the Deesis composition appear in three areas of the church: in the narthex, in the north and in the south cross-arm of the katholikon.

[20] + ΤΟΝ ΕΚ ΒΑΘΡΩΝ ΔΕΙΜΑΝΤΑ ΤΟΝ ΔΕ ΜΟΙ ΔΟΜΟΝ [...] ΩΣ ΘΣ ΜΟΝΟΣ. – Ćurčić (as in note 19), p. 90, n. 103.

[21] Kitzinger himself describes the dedication mosaic as "tipico esempio d'immagine 'votiva' in quanto diversa da 'funeraria'"; (idem. (as in note 19), p. 213).

[22] Ernst Kitzinger, "La chiesa di Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio a Palermo", *Beni Culturali e Ambientali Sicilia*, 6–8.1 (1985–87), pp. 22–24; idem (as in note 19), p. 200, n. 392, refers to the titulus as a dialogue between the founder and Mary: "vi è un elemento di discorso diretto e che la supplica è rivolta alla Vergine invece che a Dio"; ibid., p. 207: "Nella scena è già l'embrione della 'scena di cancelleria'." Concerning the gesture of Mary, see ibid., p. 207.

[23] Tabulario Cappella Pal., pergam. n. 1, Greek, cm. About 1080, Thebes, Boeotia, 143 cm×42 cm, in La Duca (as in note 2), No. 1, p. 28 f.
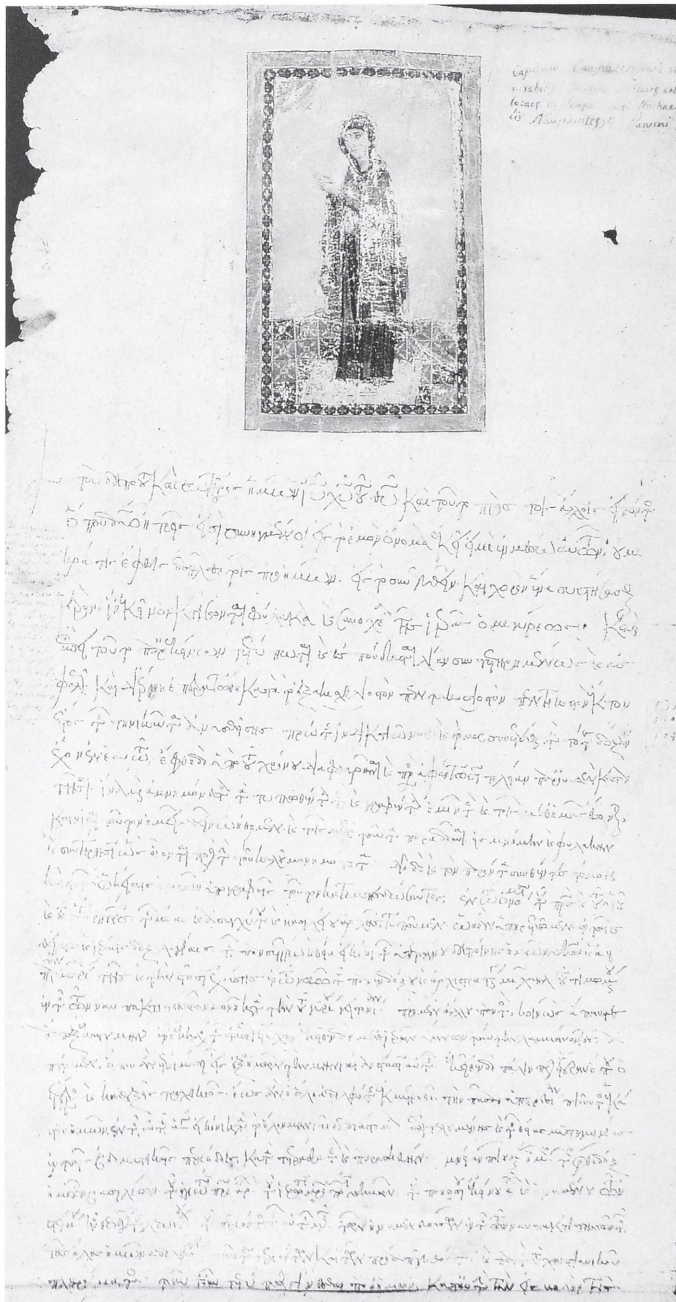
[24] If the two mosaic panels were located near the chancel barrier we have to assume a connection with the Deesis representation which is documented in several other Middle Byzantine churches. After all the titulus of the foundation mosaic demands intercession: ΔΟΥΛΟΥ ΔΕΗΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ. See Ann Wharton Epstein, "The Middle Byzantine Sanctuary Barrier: Templon or Iconostasis?", *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 134 (1981), pp. 1–28, in particular p. 15 f.

10. Coronation mosaic of King Roger II, Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio, Palermo

11. Foundation mosaic of George of Antioch, Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio, Palermo

in Palermo or Constantinople, but rather imitated a Byzantine model that had come into being before 1100 and had enjoyed an uninterrupted tradition.[25]

What seems to me to be rather more important than looking for some model in Byzantium is to note the mutual resemblance in the images of Roger and Christ in the mosaic itself. To contemporaries it was not the *imago Regis* that seemed to be like Christ, but the *imago Christi* that appeared like the king, though the portrait-like nature of the faces was no more than a rhetorical device. The king seemed neither disembodied nor elevated. On account of the golden background, moreover, he was neither overproportioned nor represented as a giant. Rather, Christ seemed to have been brought down to earth and, as God, acts as a reference in his true size. Since the two figures are here seen side by side and facing each other and are represented as being of practically the same size, the *imago Christi* underwent a modification of its significant content. That is why the impact of the mosaic derived not so much from the fact that the ruler "resembled Christ", which was known in the West ever since the end of the 10th century, but in the doubling of *one* theme: the *imago* of the king and the *imago* of the incarnated Christ, whose bodily appearance glorified the king as a *man*.[26] In a picture intended for the private devotion of George of Antioch there thus appeared *one* king in *two* bodies.

4. The porphyry sarcophagi

Just as questionable as the search for a stylistic tradition underlying the Coronation mosaic was the search for a prototype of the two porphyry sarcophagi commissioned by Roger in 1145 (fig. 13). Deér showed very convincingly that the use of porphyry for the sarcophagus of a ruler had no precedents in Comnenian Byzantium, and that Roger's porphyry sarcophagi could not therefore have come into being as an imitation of the Byzantine Emperor, but rather in ri-

12. *Typikòn of the Confraternity of Santa Maria di Lepanto, parchment with a miniature of the Haghiosorítissa, 143×42 cm, about 1080, Thebes, Boeotia (?). Tabulario Cappella Palatina, Palermo, pergam. n.1, Greek.*

be read in a way that required no comment other than just two words: "ΡΟΓΕΡΙΟΣ ΡΗΞ". The representation of the Norman king in Byzantine court dress suggested to researchers that it was intended to sustain the ruler's claim to Byzantium or even that Roger dressed in his own court in the manner of a Byzantine *basileus*. Kitzinger concluded in favour of a consciously anachronistic representation of Roger that did not reflect contemporary dress at the court

25 Ernst Kitzinger, "On the Portrait of Roger II in the Martorana in Palermo", *Proporzioni. Studi di Storia dell'Arte*, 3 (1950), pp. 30–35, in particular p. 30; idem (as in note 19), pp. 193–96. See already Steinberg (as in note 6), p. 44.

26 Kitzinger (as in note 25), p. 31f., emphasizes the theological context of the mosaic. But his concept of "the deified ruler portrait" is confusing. – Hjalmar Torp, "The Twin Virtues of King Roger II of Sicily", in Kairos. Studies in Art History and Literature in Honour of Professor Gunilla Åkerström-Hougen, ed. by Elisabeth Piltz and Paul Åström, Jonsered 1998, pp. 146–67, in particular 155–58, saw the doubling of the subject, 'pietas' and 'virtus' as the fundamental ethical principles of the auctoritas of the Roman emperor: "divine being and emperor are represented shoulder to shoulder, resembling one another like a pair of twins."

13. Sarcophagus of Emperor Frederick II, formerly of Roger II, porphyry, about 1145. Cathedral, Palermo

valry with the Pope in Rome "whose ceremonial was wholly rooted in the late Roman and Byzantine tradition."[27] Deér, however, shifting the causal tradition to Rome, did no more than switch roles. He saw the stimulus for the highly symbolic commission of the Sicilian king in the *translatio* of Hadrian's Roman imperial sarcophagus from Castel Sant' Angelo to San Giovanni in Laterano under Pope Innocent II.

The transfer must have taken place before 24 September 1143, while the Pope was still alive, and two years before Roger decided to have the sarcophagi made for Cefalù. Innocent II was the first Pope and the first cleric who departed from the Western tradition that wanted only saints and martyrs buried in porphyry sarcophagi. Before 1143 no Pope ever dared to have a porphyry tomb created for him.[28] Not

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[27] Josef Deér, *The Dynastic Porphyry Tombs of the Norman Period in Sicily*, transl. from the German by G. A. Gillhoff, Cambridge/Mass. 1959, p. 154, see also pp. 126–36; and Philip Grierson, "The Tombs and Obits of the Byzantine Emperors (337–1042)", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 16 (1962), pp. 1–60.

[28] Richard Delbrueck, *Antike Porphyrwerke*, Berlin 1932, p. 30. – Deér (as in note 27), pp. 149–51. The sarcophagus was destroyed by the fire of 1308. The remains of Innocent II were then transferred to the Church of Santa Maria in Trastevere.

least on account of this absolute, 'imperial' claim, Innocent II became the tragic protagonist in the conflict with the totalitarian claims of his royal rival in Palermo, who vanquished Innocent at Mignano on 22 July 1139 and thus obtained his investiture from him.

5. The inedited Cefalù manuscript

By that time both sovereigns – apostolic and royal – were using the same symbols of power: purple ink, porphyry and the *rotae*. Right from the beginning and in contrast to the pontifical documents, however, the Norman purple *rota*, personally drawn by the king, took the place of the signature: "ad insignem memoriam nostri nominis", as it was written in Roger's privilege for the Cathedral of Cefalù dating to 1145.[29] In this document Roger II was concerned not only with bringing out the symbolic significance of the material of the two sarcophagi ("sarcophagos vero duos porphyriticos"), but also with specifying their location and function within the church ("iuxta canonicorum psallentium chorum"): "Sarcophagos vero duos porphyriticos ad decessus mei signum perpetuum conspicuos in praefata ecclesia stabilimus fore permansuros, in quorum altero iuxta canonicorum psallentium chorum post diei mei obitum conditus requiescam, alterum vero tam ad insignem memoriam mei nominis, quam ad ipsius ecclesiae gloriam stabilimus."[30] The symbolic value of porphyry lay in its hardness, the resistance of its surface, its deep lustre and the vivid purple colour of the rock. The function of the sarcophagi was that of permanently referring the beholder to the death of the king: "ad decessus mei signum perpetuum". But only *one* of the sarcophagi had the character of a cult image, for it was intended as a bodily substitute of its owner. The significance of the second sarcophagus, the cenotaph, was similarly rendered comprehensible only upon the death of the king. The empty tomb assumed the character of a more or less *public* devotional image. Here it was not the *body* of the king that received cult-like adoration, but merely the *name* of the king that was to be remembered: "ad insignem memoriam mei nominis". The first sarcophagus was not
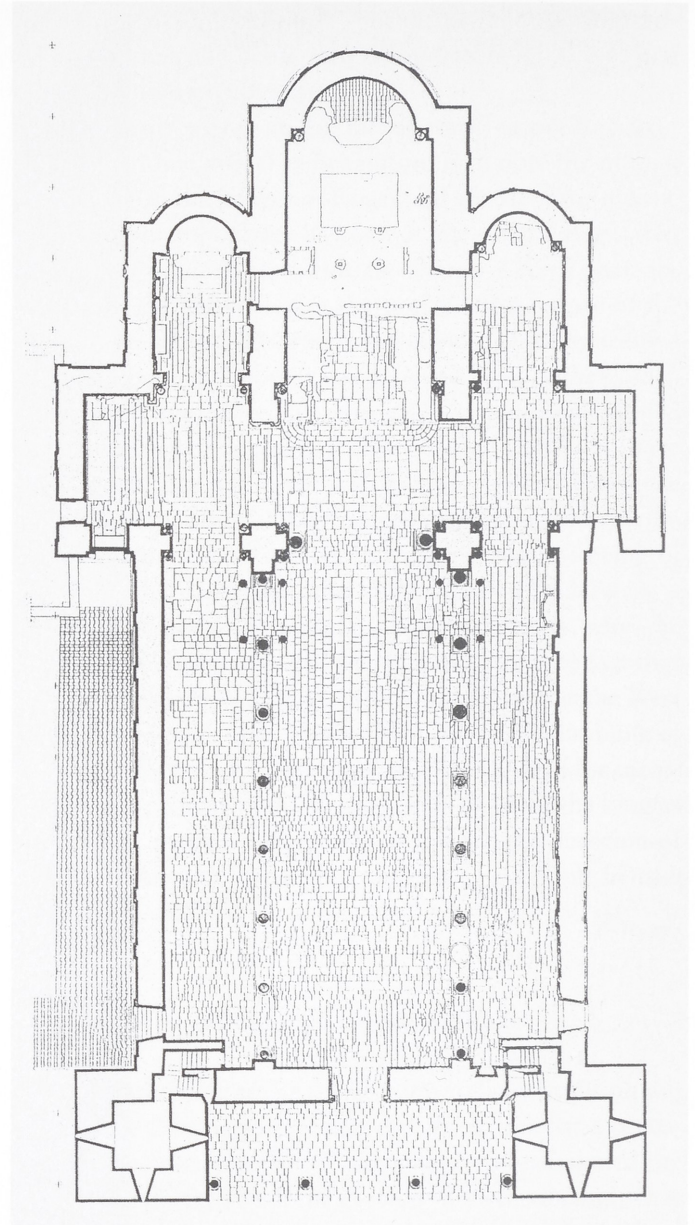
14. *Cefalù, cathedral, planimetry (Arch. V. Brunazzi and Arch. M. La Scalia)*

therefore intended for the private devotion of a broad public, but first and foremost for a privileged group of representatives of the higher clergy and the royal family. The cenotaph, on the other hand, had the task of representing the king as a publicly exhibited sign of authority and, like the insignia of the investiture, to glorify his name, which – just as in the *Intitulatio* of the privilege for Cefalù – consisted of two words: "ΡΟΓΕΡΙΟΣ ΡΗΞ". Indeed, the first sarcophagus could hardly be seen from the area intended for the laity, for it was not set up in the Eastern transept – as researchers have repeatedly maintained – but rather in the 19,70-metre-deep presbytery or, more precisely, in one of the two vaulted bays of the antechoir that led into the apse of the principal choir chapel.

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[29] Enzensberger (as in note 7), p. 83, see also p. 77 f., 87 f. – *Codex Diplomaticus Regni Siciliae. Series prima: Diplomata Regum et Principum e Gente Normannorum*, ed. Carlrichard Brühl, Francesco Giunta, André Guillou. vol. 2.1: *Rogerii II. regis diplomata latina*, Cologne/Vienna 1987, p. 199.

[30] Rocco Pirro, *Sicilia Sacra. Disquisitionibus, et Notitiis Illustrata, ubi libris quatuor [...] auctore abbate netino et regio historiographo Don Roccho Pirro ... Editio Tertia emendata et continuatione aucta cura, et studio S. T. D. D. Antonini Mongitore ... vol. 2 (1st ed. 1733)*, Palermo 1987, p. 800. – Deér (as in note 27), p. 1.

C. Valenziano established a relationship between an in-edited manuscript on parchment from the Capitular Archive in Cefalù and archaeological insights regarding the building. He identified the document as the draft of a petition from Bishop Boso (in office from 1166 to 1172) and the Cathedral Chapter of Cefalù to King William II, who was crowned 1166, but still a minor until 1171.[31] One passage of the text refers to the confirmation of the privileges by Pope Alexander III on 23 November 1169. The draft can therefore be dated to late 1169 or 1170.[32] Excavations carried out in the presbytery in 1971/72 brought to light the foundations of the liturgical set-up in the 12th century. A transverse rectangular wall located at the centre of the eastern antechoir bay of the central apse was recognized as the substructure of an altar (fig. 14). On the eastern sides of the two 2.32 m wide passages of the antechoir bay, from which access could be gained to the side chapels of the choir, there were found the square foundations of two thrones that faced each other and were interpreted as being intended, respectively, for the king and the bishop.[33] In my opinion, however, it is more likely that, just as in Monreale, these are the foundations of a throne and an *ambo*. The excavation map drawn by the architects V. Brunazzi and M. La Scalia also shows four square holes in the floor between the thrones that describe a rectangle.[34] They were interpreted as foundations of a more recent altar.[35] But it could well be that the rectangular altar substructure immediately to the east of these holes – which would likewise have to be dated to post-Norman times – covers two more such holes. In that case these holes could be the foundation of a six-column canopy that covered one of Roger's two porphyry sar-cophagi. On the basis of the measurements taken by Thieme and Beck in 1977 the distance between the four excavated holes is about 2,40 m in length and 2,70 m in width. The length is corresponding to the length of Roger's porphyry sarcophagai in Palermo (Frederick II: 2,36 m, Henry VI: 2,37 m). If we add two other holes serving as the foundations of two other columns in the choir of Cefalù the distance between the corner columns of the supposed canopy would have been about 5,20 m in length. Consequently, the relation between width (2,70 m) and length (5,20 m) would have corresponded to a relation of approximately 1 : 2, comparatively huge dimensions for a Norman canopy – unless the circumscribed area included an altar at the eastern foot end of the sarcophagus.. In the western bay of the presbytery Valenziano thought that he could reconstruct the outline of a deeper-lying solea that commenced within a short distance to the west of the lateral passage arches. Excavations carried out in the 1980s have since confirmed that the two bays of the antechoir have different floor levels (fig. 15). A marble-revetted step situated on the western corners of the two passages and arranged at right angles to the choir separated the two bays from each other. The level of the western bay was raised on two occasions as part of a second and third construction phase that followed the erection of the first Norman floor with only very brief intervals.[36]

The descriptive part of the text, the *Narratio* of the inedited Cefalù manuscript (parchment B recto, line 5 to 11) has to be read in the light of the liturgical inventory. It sounds like a liturgical ordo and a description of what – according to the testimony of the canons – had been ordered by King William I for use after the bones of his father Roger would have been laid to rest in one of the sarcophagi.[37] The text of the instructions given by William I tells us that in the church: "the entire people of the place should walk to the altar to perform the *oblatio*. While the congregation passed on the right-hand side in front of the grave of his father, they should pray for his soul. From the altar they should return to the left-hand side, passing the other grave, and pray in a similar manner for the soul of the person who was to be buried there."[38]

Two points may be noted here in comparison to Roger's privilege for Cefalù dating to 1145. Firstly, that the words

[31] Crispino Valenziano, "La Basilica Cattedrale di Cefalù nel periodo normanno", *Ho Theologos*, 19 (1978), pp. 85–140, in particular p. 137 f. – Cefalù, Archivio Capitolare. Supplica dei canonici, 1170. – Soprintendenza per i Beni Artistici e Storici della Sicilia Occidentale Palermo, *Materiali per la conoscenza storica e il restauro di una cattedrale. Mostra di documenti e testimonianze figurative della Basilica Ruggeriana di Cefalù*, 23, fig. V/1-a, b, c, d.

[32] Maria Valenziano, "La supplica dei canonici di Cefalù per la sepoltura del re Ruggero", *Ho Theologos*, 19 (1978), pp. 141–48, in particular p. 145.

[33] Cf. Mark J. Johnson, "The Episcopal and Royal Views at Cefalù", *Gesta*, 33.2 (1994), pp. 118–31, in particular p. 125.

[34] See Soprintendenza (as in note 31), p. 46 f.: Planimetria generale del Duomo di Cefalù con l'indicazione dei saggi effettuati e delle strutture messe in luce, scala 1 : 250. – A detailed planimetry (Scale of 1 : 400) in Thomas Thieme and Ingamaj Beck, *La cattedrale normanna di Cefalù. Un frammento della civiltà socio-politica della Sicilia medio-vale*, Odense 1977.
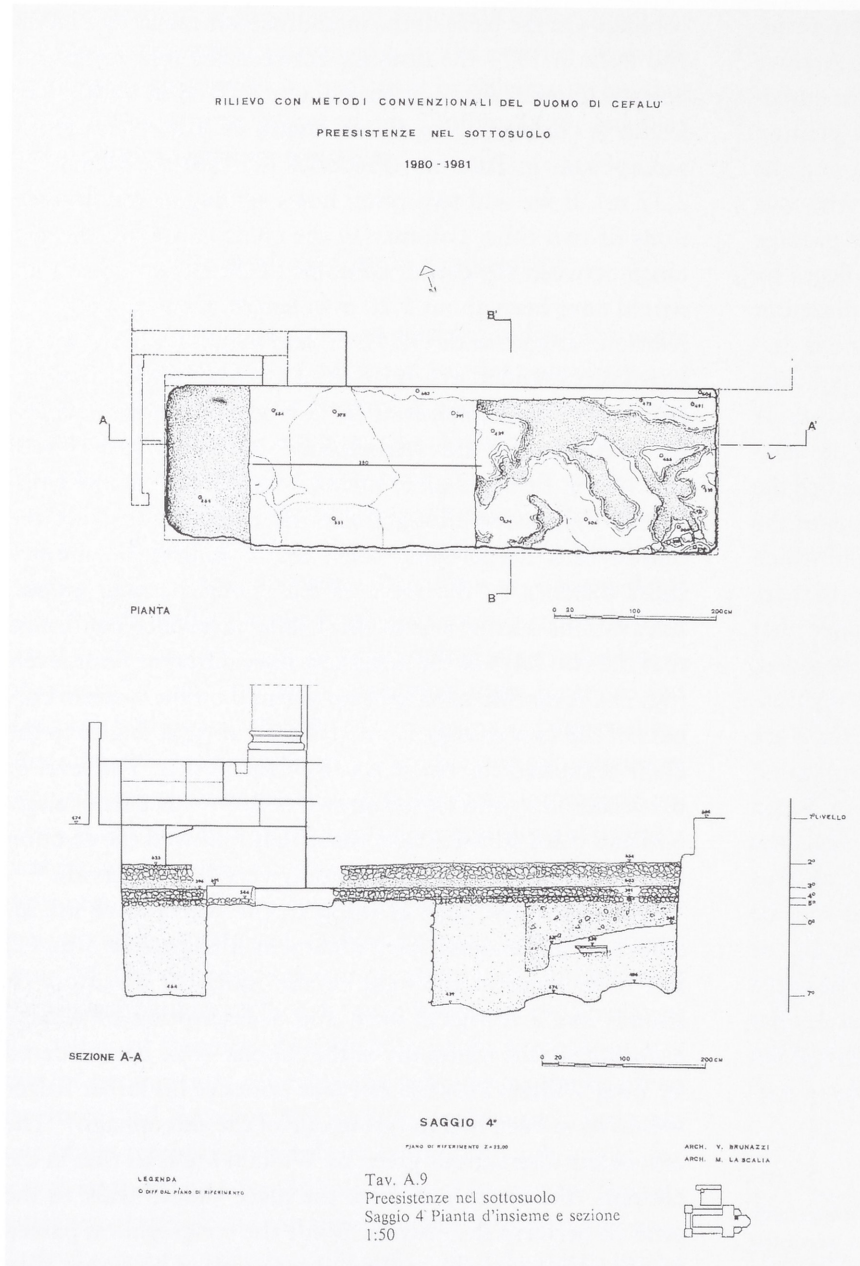
[35] For the results of the restoration see Camillo Filangeri, "Il progetto della cattedrale normanna", in Roberto Calandra, Vincenzo Scuderi and Maria Giulia Aurigemma, *La Basilica Cattedrale di Cefalù. Materiali per la conoscenza storica e il restauro*, vol. 1, Palermo 1989, pp. 39, 56–59.

[36] Amedeo Tullio, "Saggio 4", in ibid., vol. 3, Palermo 1985, pp. 101–104, fig. 139–41. – Soprintendenza (as in note 31), p. 22, fig. IV/10, 6.

[37] Valenziano (as in note 32), p. 147.

[38] Ibid., p. 147, Br 7–10: "omnis populus civitatis cum ad altare causa offerendi accederet, in dextra parte ante sepulchrum patris sui omnes/ tranirent, ut orarent pro anima eius; in redeundo vero ab altari a sinistra parte iuxta alterum sepul-/chrum redirent, ut similiter orarent pro ipsius anima qui in eo sepeliendus erat."

RILIEVO CON METODI CONVENZIONALI DEL DUOMO DI CEFALU'

PREESISTENZE NEL SOTTOSUOLO

1980 - 1981

PIANTA

SEZIONE A-A

SAGGIO 4°

PIANO DI RIFERIMENTO Z=15,00

ARCH. V. BRUNAZZI
ARCH. M. LA SCALIA

LEGENDA
○ DIFF DAL PIANO DI RIFERIMENTO

Tav. A.9
Preesistenze nel sottosuolo
Saggio 4 Pianta d'insieme e sezione
1:50

"left" and "right" are used here, specifications that are unusual for a letter, but altogether customary in a liturgical ordo. However, the author did not relate them to the sides of the building. Presumably he based himself on the orientation of the priest at the altar. Secondly, one is struck by the fact that in the petition King William – at least in the opinion of the canons – is said to have spoken of the second sarcophagus as the future burial place of a third person, though without mentioning the *name* of that person. What makes this all the more peculiar is that there was but *one possible* occupant of this sarcophagus, namely William I himself. Moreover, we have to ask ourselves why the canons so emphatically insisted on complying with Roger's instruction that he should be buried in Cefalù, and yet ignored his will as regards the use of the second sarcophagus: "ad insignem memoriam mei nominis". Even William I, to whom the canons attributed this non-compliance, could hardly have had any interest in once again calling his father's disposition into question. But at the time of the petition William I had himself been dead for four years, and we must therefore assume that the canons of Cefalù purposely falsified the words of William I in order to convince his son William II – to whom the petition of 1170 was addressed – that the future Norman royal dynasty should be buried in Cefalù.

Bishop Boso evidently did not know that William II had already made plans for turning Monreale into his own
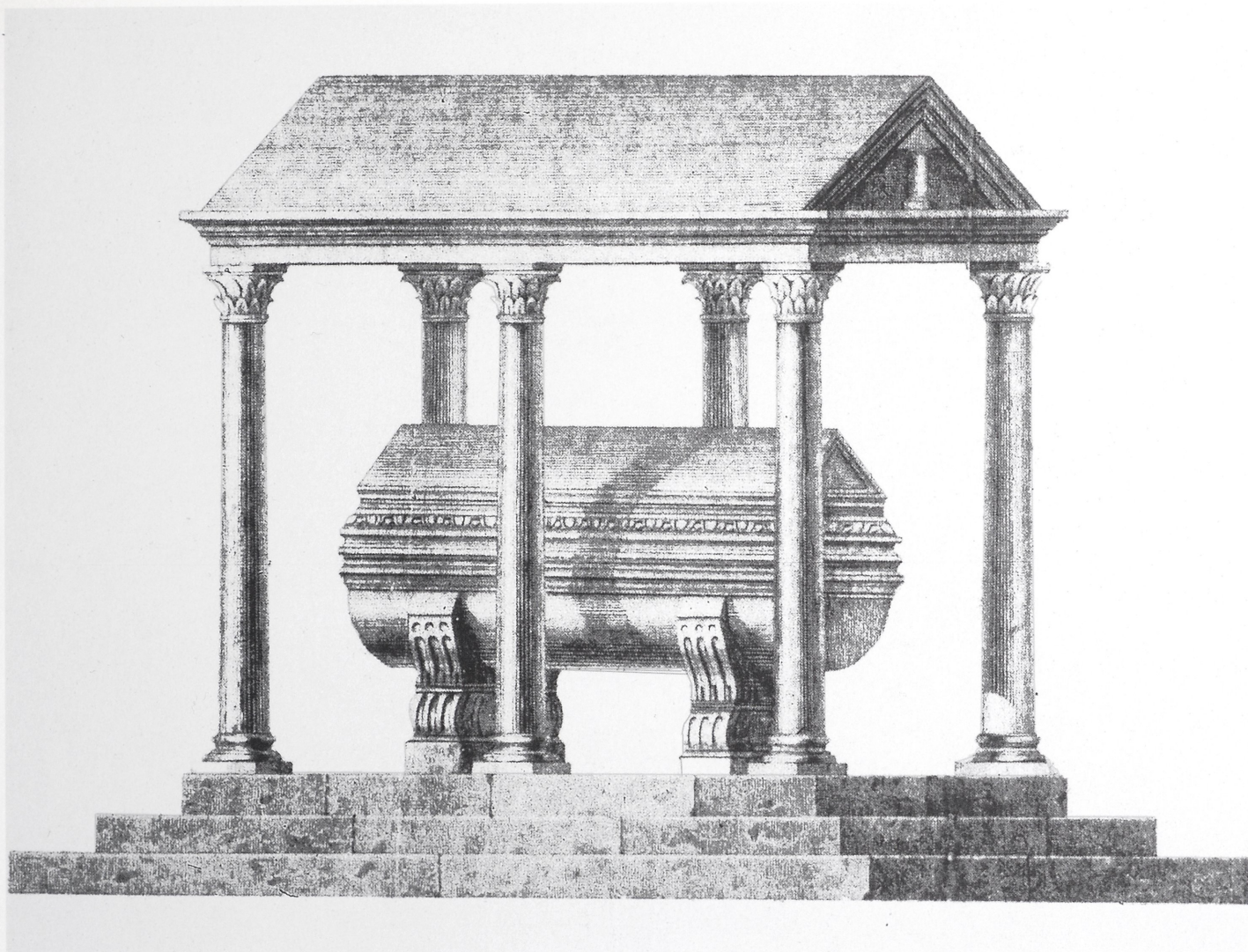
16. Sarcophagus with canopy of King William I in the cathedral of Monreale, about 1174. Lithography, reconstruction by D. B. Gravina, 1859

dynastic burial site and wanted to transfer the bones of William I there in a sarcophagus he had probably commissioned for this purpose. We can therefore regard the Cathedral of Monreale, which was already in the course of construction in 1170, and the execution of the new porphyry sarcophagus (fig. 16) as the reasons why the petition for William II was never sent to its addressee and was therefore preserved as a draft. Vice versa, the date of preparation of the document constitutes a further *terminus ante quem* for the commencement of the construction of Monreale. In any case, we may note that the petition twisted the historical facts and introduced a new variant into the discussion about the porphyry sarcophagi. However that may be, the remains of Roger II were no longer an issue in 1170. It was rather a question whether the sarcophagi should remain in Cefalù as the foundation of a redesigned royal burial site. Accordingly we have to assume that Bishop Boso, who had been in office since 1166, the year in which William I died, also changed the location of the sarcophagi. Both sarcophagi were now to further the *same public* claim. They were to stand at the same level, symmetrically arranged on the left and right, and thus enhance the fame of the Norman royal dynasty *and* the cathedral chapter: "ad ipsius ecclesiae gloriam". It was for this purpose that Boso designed the ordo that was worked into the petition. The kings were to be 'public' while alive and put on view when dead. The loss of the 'private' body of the king became a programme. And thus barely a quarter of a century after it had been drawn up, only a single sen-

17. Cefalù, cathedral, axonometry of the presbytery with the hypothetical reconstruction of the two sarcophagi of Roger II (Arch. B. Viscuso)
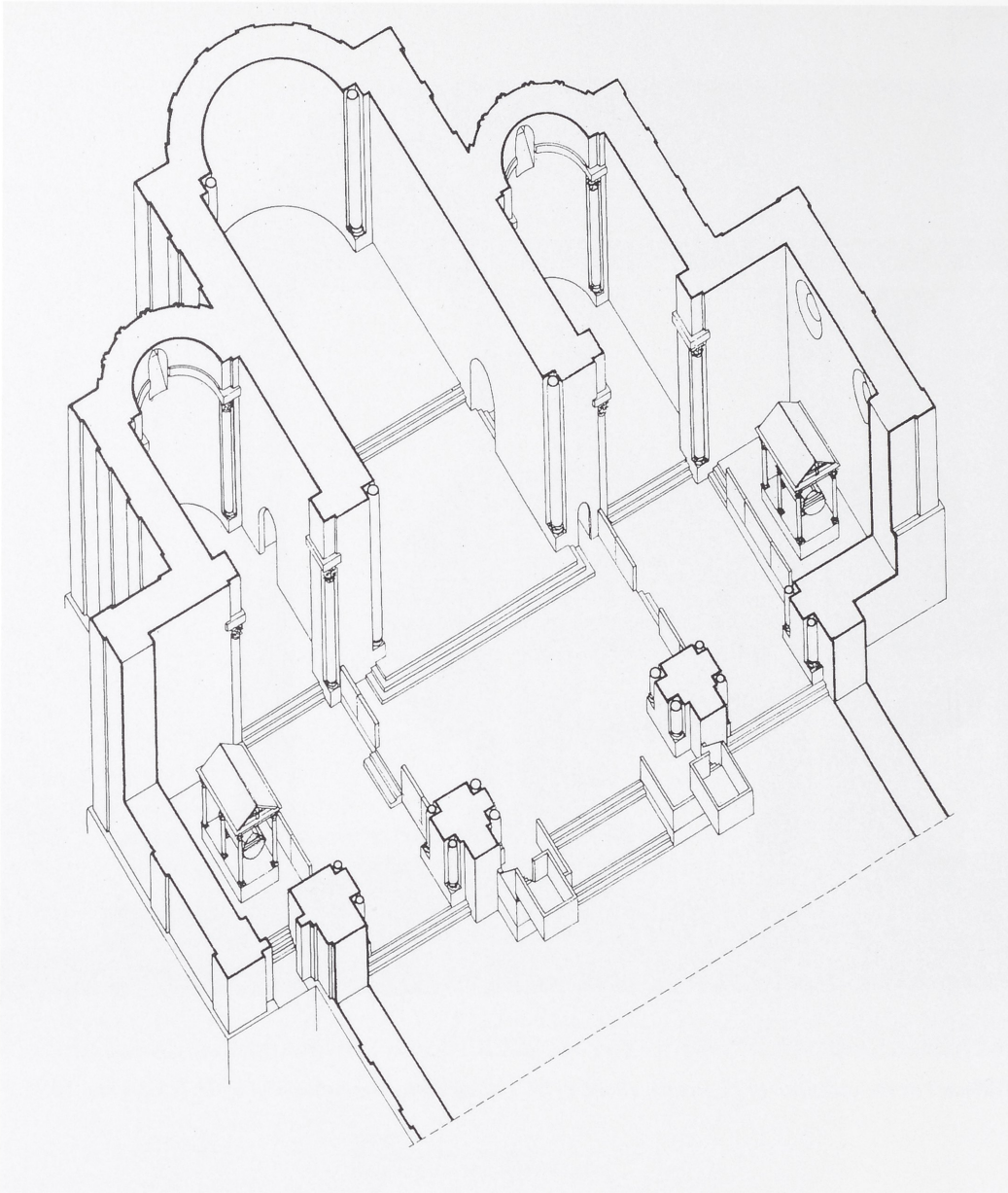
tence survived as remnant of Roger's privilege of 1145, originally concerned with nothing other than the *two*fold self-representation of just *one* king.

According to the new ordo, the supplicant procession of the laity was to move from the northern aisle into the northern transept of the Cathedral of Cefalù and deposit the *offerenda* in front of the altar that stood there. The altar was situated either at the foot end of the sarcophagus or in the northern choir chapel. From there the procession crossed the nave to the west of the choir rail and, after passing through the choir grating in the southern aisle, reached the southern transept, where it moved past the second sarcophagus (fig. 17).

But what was Cefalù's *original* liturgy like? Or, rather, what would the liturgy have been like if the sarcophagi had

still served their original purpose? And, lastly, where were the sarcophagi situated while Roger was still alive? The liturgical sites can only be vaguely deduced from the history of the building and the mosaic programme of the cathedral. In our present connection I shall limit myself to just a few remarks. The foundations of the throne platform and of the reconstructed ambo excavated in the antechoir bay of the presbytery[39] are directly related to the ribbed cross vault above them (fig. 18), which bears the representation of the host of seraphim as described in Isaiah 6, 1–3: "In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted./About him were attendant seraphim./

[39] Filangeri (as in note 35), vol. 1, pp. 39, 58 f.

18. *Host of seraphim, mosaics in the presbytery vault, Cefalù, cathedral*

They were calling: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory'".

The ribbed cross vault, however, was the cause of a change of plan that affected the height of the wall of the central apse, of the presbytery and of the nave (fig. 19).[40] This type of structure was new in Sicily. Since it had not been part of the original concept, the height of the building had to remain at least ten metres below what had been planned (fig. 20).[41] The crypt below the eastern parts of the church, commenced in 1131, was later filled up with crushed stones; it seems probable that this was done at about the same time

of the construction of the ribbed cross vault and that the underlying reasons were not merely structural, but also liturgical.[42] For the relics – and this is where the 'relics' of the royal sarcophagi came into play – were to be publicly exhibited as monuments.[43] That was what Roger's 1145 privilege had envisaged. In my opinion the change of plan must have taken place after the forced investiture by Innocent II, in a phase when the mosaic programme of the apse and the vaulting was also reconceived.

Following the completion of the choir, the southern transept was covered with a similar twin-bay cross vault

[40] Heinrich M. Schwarz, "Die Baukunst Kalabriens und Siziliens im Zeitalter der Normannen. 1. Teil: Die lateinischen Kirchengründungen des 11. Jahrhunderts und der Dom in Cefalù", *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, 6 (1942/1944), pp. 1–112, in particular pp. 62–106.

[41] Ibid., pp. 78–80. – Concerning the cross vault in Cefalù cf. Filangeri (as in note 35), vol. 1, p. 58 f.

[42] Ibid., vol. 1, p. 38 f., 57.

[43] At the same time the relics of St. Donatus must have been transferred from Cefalù to Murano where the new presbytery and main apse of the cathedral Santi Maria e Donato were built between 1125 and 1140. See Erich Hubala, *Venedig*, (3rd ed.), Stuttgart 1985, p. 429.
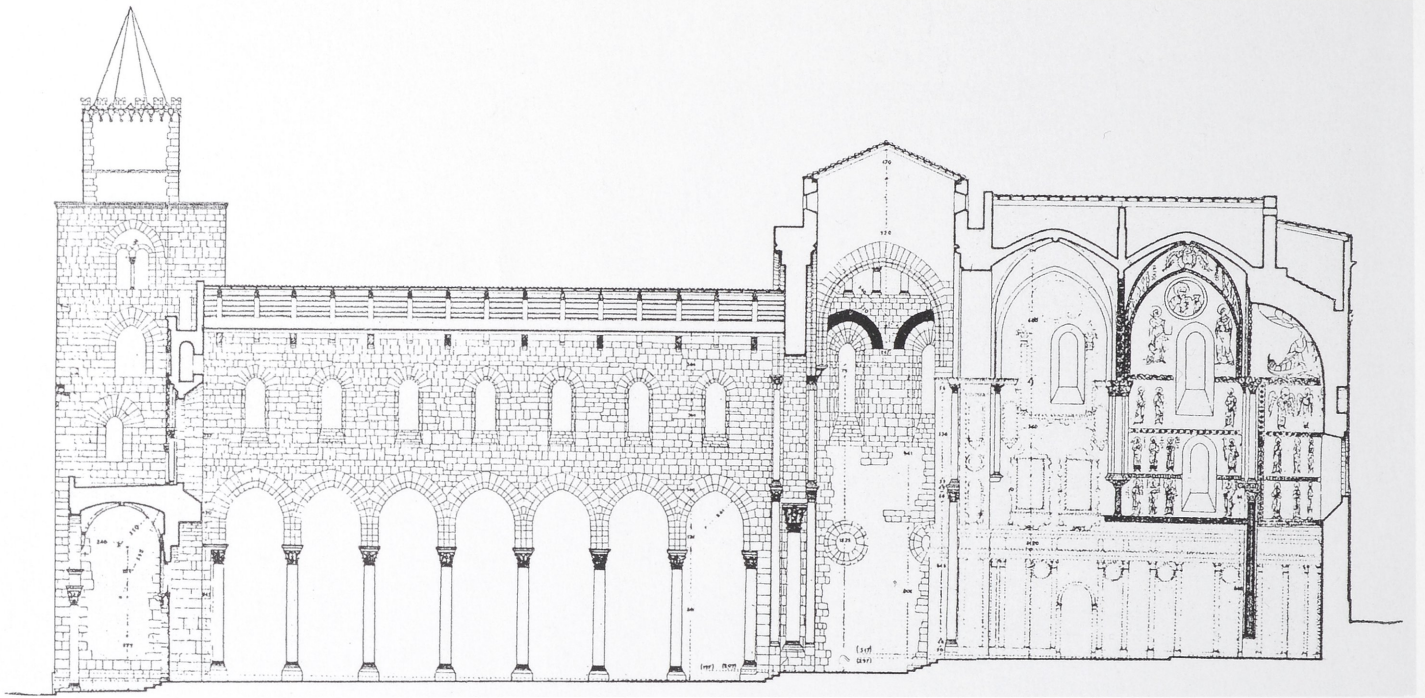
19. *Cefalù, cathedral, longitudinal section looking north*
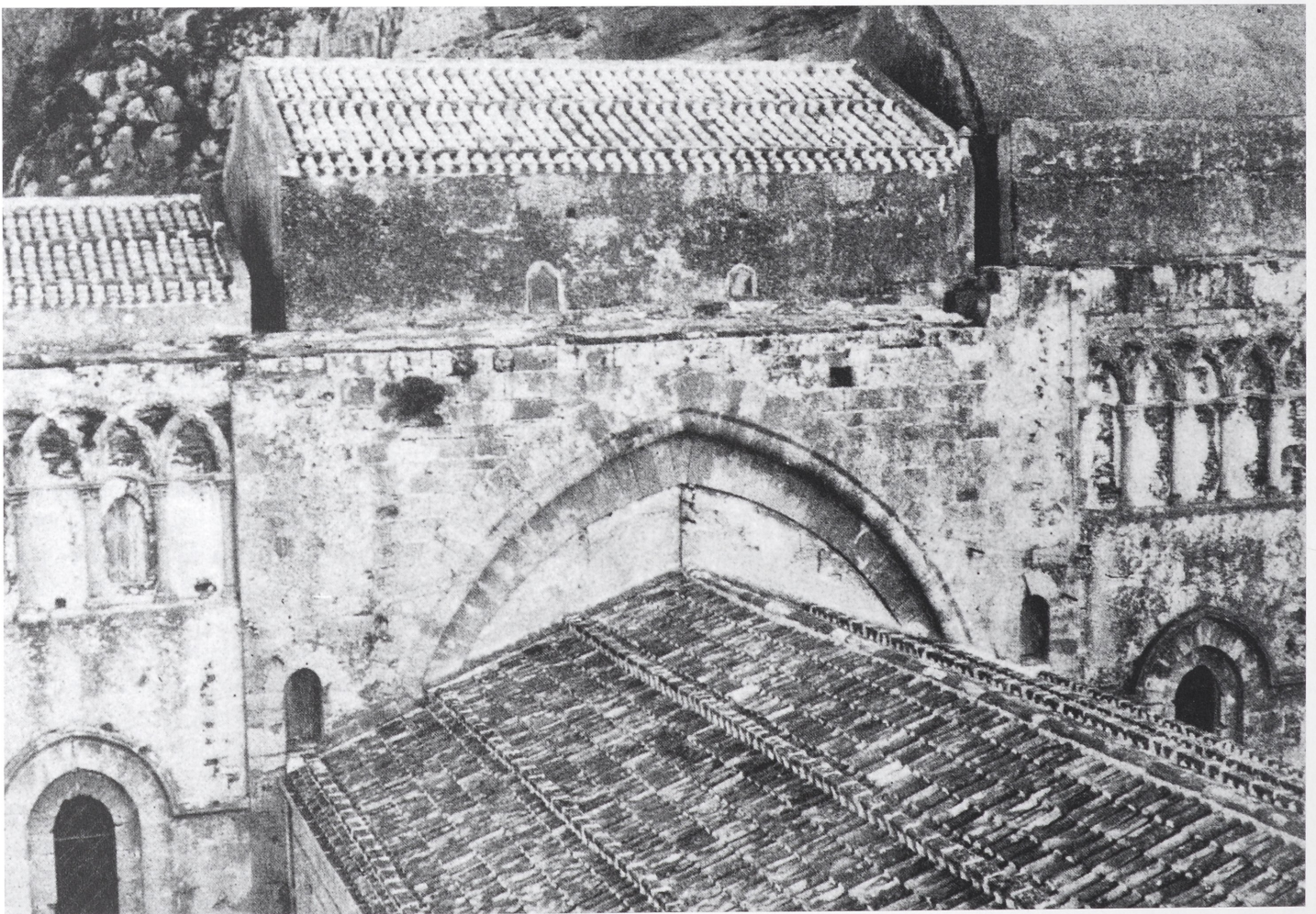
20. *Cefalù, cathedral, nave and transept looking east*

(fig. 21). The northern transept was covered by trusses of a lower open roof. The apse mosaic was completed and consecrated in the year 1148, so that we must assume that the two sarcophagi were likewise placed in position at that time. There are thus four items of evidence that suggest that the first porphyry sarcophagus must have stood in the western bay of the antechoir – "iuxta canonicorum psallentium chorum": 1. the excavated foundations of a six-column substructure that could define the canopy platform of the sarcophagus, 2. the Rogerian, particularly high elevation of the transept by means of the innovative cross vaulting, 3. the iconological incorporation into the Parousie programme of the vault and the apse with the *Pantokrator Iudex* and with *Maria Orans* as supplicant on the Day of Judgment, 4. Roger's unambiguous reference to the private character of a burial site intended only for himself.

Bearing in mind the iconological and archaeological evidence in the choir of Cefalù, we have to conclude that the first sarcophagus could have been set up only in the first or second bay of the southern transept, since – apart from the choir itself – only the southern transept had been highly elevated by the addition of a cross vault or a pointed barrel vault. The present vault ribbing and the keystones with the coat of arms of Bishop Francesco Luna date back to 1494/95.[44] At any rate, the choir was originally to be higher than the transept, so that we here have to think not only of the stepped, lower floor level of the transept as it appears today. The total height of the space had already been considerably lowered when compared to the originally planned choir. Moreover, this location was in line with Bishop Boso's ordo for the erection and adoration of the sarcophagus of William I. The actual tomb of William I was set up only about 1174 in a comparable liturgical position, namely the southern transept of Monreale.

When looking into the southern transept of the Cathedral of Cefalù – a view that opened up when passing the choir rail – the faithful saw Roger's cenotaph just slightly to the right of the axis of the side aisle. Parallel to the southern wall, it stood under the canopy of the vault in the southern transept. But he could not see Roger's sarcophagus in the choir. This makes us think of a 'public' and a 'private' tomb located side by side, but not parallel. What in the petition of the canons was to appear as an everyday event, was in the days of Roger still a solemn liturgical action that was celebrated only once a year and may not have been practised at all while he was still alive. Not least in view of the fact that in 1145 the Arab part of the population was still predominant in Cefalù and the Christian minority had to be obliged

21. Cefalù, cathedral, view into the southern transept with ribbed cross vault

to reside there by the grant of numerous privileges it seems most unlikely that the whole place took part in the ceremony, as Boso's petition suggested: "omnis populus civitatis". This would have required the opening of the choir rails of the aisles, though only a few people were allowed to enter the transept. On the other hand, the cenotaph could be seen by the laity through the grating of the southern *cancelli* even on ordinary liturgical occasions. The empty tomb of the king thus became the focal point of a public devotion: "ad insignem memoriam mei nominis."

Even *in officio*, Roger II, ancestor of the Norman dynasty, still possessed a 'private' body that he caused to be buried separately from its 'public' counterpart. As a king and a mere mortal, Roger could still be imagined in two different worlds: idea and image of the ruler, *figura* and *imago*, still referred to each other. They were present in the material of the porphyry. William I was transferred by his son from the dark rock tomb in the Cappella Palatina to Monreale and there integrated into the furnishing programme of the cathedral in a grand porphyry sarcophagus. Of William

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[44] Bishop Francesco Luna was in office from 1494 to 1495.

22. Coronation mosaic of King William II, about 1177. Monreale, cathedral

II we only know that he was buried in a brick crate at the foot of his father's sarcophagus. William's body had already become transformed into a pure *idea* while he was still alive.

The coronation and dedication mosaics in Monreale show us a 'public' king, who had himself been represented high up on the pillars of his church, visible for both the clergy and the laity, the converted Greeks, Jews and Arabs (fig. 22). What *they* saw was no longer an intimate conversation with Mary or Christ but a public image beyond human imagination (fig. 23). The last residue of the private devotional image

23. Dedication mosaic of King William II, about 1177, detail. Monreale, cathedral

that we could still note in Roger's dedication mosaics in Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio had by then been lost.

The synthesis of the theologically founded idea of a priest king who was at the same time God and King, together with the latter's arbitrary replicability in all the available pictor-

ial media, was eventually to found a new image of the ruler. The *imago Guilielmi* could wholly forgo comparison with a real existing worldly ruler.

Just as in his documents, on his coins and seals the king was present with his name, but had also been banished into

an image that no longer signified him as a man: visible to all, but no longer tangible for anybody. As a man William lacked *in officio* the sole thing that still distinguished him from Christ: *grace*. This loss, the substitution of *gratia* for *clementia*, which could not be theologically justified nor explained, was an important reason for the downfall of the Norman kingdom in Sicily and for the failure of one of the most exciting experiments in the history of art.