

Paul Williamson, *Catalogue of Romanesque Sculpture*. London, Victoria and Albert Museum. 1983. 118 pp., 108 illus.

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PAUL WILLIAMSON *Catalogue of Romanesque Sculpture*. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1983, 118 pp., 108 illus.

Williamson's book is a must for all those interested in Romanesque sculpture. Following a short introduction which outlines the history of the Victoria and Albert Museum collection, the catalogue presents the fifty-one pieces grouping them by country: 19 works from France, 20 from Italy, 9 of English origin, 2 from Spain, and 1 from Cyprus. The latter, the tympanum from Larnaca (cat. 51), might well have been included with the Italian sculpture seeing that it is by an Italian hand. The concise entries discuss the relevant literature and offer both a date and provenance for each piece. The publication is beautifully produced, each sculpture being well-illustrated, often with photographs taken from different angles, and for many of the capitals, all four sides are reproduced. Eleven illustrations of key comparisons are included at the end.

In the foreword Williamson writes: 'The majority of the pieces in the collection are unpublished, and the principal aim of the present catalogue has been to introduce these sculptures for the first time into art-historical discussion: in this respect, the author is aware that in many cases his entries will serve only as the *first* word on the sculptures and hopes that they will stimulate further debate.' The following notes are therefore offered as a tribute to Williamson's inspiring work. The two cloister capitals from Sainte-Marie de Lombez (Gers) (cat. 7, 8) are of particular interest to mediaevalists in Canada, since the National Gallery, Ottawa, preserves two capitals of the same provenance (Inv. 16950 and 16954). Unlike the Victoria and Albert Museum capitals, those in Ottawa do not have any figurative decoration, but the details of the foliage motifs are identical.

The attribution of capital 15 to Champagne may be substantiated with reference to the fleshy foliage scrolls on certain capitals in the nave of Notre-Dame-en-Vaux, Châlons-sur-Marne (A. Gardner, *Medieval Sculpture in France*, C.U.P., 1931, fig. 236), while on the outer right capital

of the south portal of this church, a head issues from spiralling foliage in the same manner as the masks on the Victoria and Albert capital. For capital 16, examples from the Châlons cloister provide excellent parallels for the head type of the lions and the foliage scrolls (Sylvia Pressouyre, *Images d'un cloître disparu*, Editions Joel Cuenot, 1976, illus. on pp. 22-23). Given Williamson's convincing comparison of cat. 16 with the tomb of Abbot Odo (d. 1151) at Reims, and the occurrence of tightly coiled foliage similar to cat. 15 on the west doorway of Cernay-les-Reims, about 5 kms east of the city, perhaps this sculpture should be seen in connection with Abbot Samson's cathedral at Reims commenced in 1152.

The suggestion that the Bridlington statuette (cat. 41) may have been a voussoir figure seems unlikely. Williamson records that 'The figure is carved in the round but the back is left plain,' and such detachment from the backing stone of a voussoir is, to my knowledge, without parallel in French Gothic figured voussoirs or in the French-inspired historiated voussoirs from St Mary's Abbey, York, preserved in the Yorkshire Museum. It is therefore more profitable to work with Zarnecki's idea that the statuette was part of a group, an Annunciation or Visitation, which was placed against a background, possibly in a niche. Perhaps we should think of the completely detached figure being placed on a geometrically framed stage like the quatrefoils on the west front of Wells Cathedral, the design of which has long been associated with church furniture; or a partially detached figure as on the relief from Carrières-Saint-Denis, now in the Louvre, on which the Virgin of the Annunciation is stylistically related to the Bridlington statuette (W. Sauerlander, *Gothic Sculpture in France 1140-1270*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1972, pl. 20a). The Byzantine-like drapery style of the statuette should also be seen in connection with a figure preserved in the Abbey Museum at Jedburgh (Roxboroughshire) and the angel of St Matthew reset in the left spandrel inside the main west window of York Minster (M. Thurlby, 'A 12th-century figure from Jedburgh Abbey,' *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 111 [1980-81], 381-387).

The standing Virgin and Child column-figure from Minster-in-Sheppey, Kent (cat. 42), should be related to the statue-column of the Queen of Sheba on the right jamb of the west doorway of Rochester Cathedral, while support for the north French connection postulated by Zarnecki is found by comparing the pose of the Child with the wooden seated Virgin and Child from Saint-Martin-des-Champs, Paris, now in Saint-Denis (Sauerlander, *Gothic Sculpture*, pls. 18-19).

The voussoirs from St Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield, London (cat. 43, 44), are convincingly related to the west portal of Dunstable Priory, Beds, and the west doorway of the Temple Church, London, from which come the three voussoirs and the import block (cat. 45-48). The date of 'about 1170-75' for the Smithfield sculpture is possibly a little late, for it is closely related to work from the chapter house of St Albans Abbey executed by Abbott Robert de Gorham (1151-66) (D. Kahn, 'Recent Discoveries of Romanesque Sculpture at St Albans,' *Studies in Medieval Sculpture*, ed. F.H. Thompson, Occasional Paper, New Series III, London, The Society of Antiquaries, 1983, 71-89, esp. pls. xxivb, xxvii a,b, xxviii b). Furthermore, the Temple Church portal, normally dated with reference to the 1185 consecration of the building, should probably be placed in the 1160s or even the late 1150s, for the Knights Templars moved from their old church to the New Temple in 1161, and an indulgence issued by Archbishop Roger of York between 1169 and 1181 refers to the completed structure (B.A. Lees, 'Records of the Templars in England in the 12th-Century,' *Records of the Social and Economic History of England and Wales*, London, British Academy, 1935, 163-64). In addition to the parallels for the Temple Church sculpture offered by Williamson, the voussoirs with foliage issuing from animal heads (cat. 45, 46) should be compared with a fragment from St Katherine's Chapel, Westminster Abbey, now preserved in the basement of 5 The Little Cloister (W.R. Lethaby, *Westminster Abbey Reexamined*, London, Duckworth, 1925, 31, fig. 12), while the deeply undercut symmetrical foliage of cat. 47 and 48 is akin to that

framing the first order of the west doorway of St Mary's parish church, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. the general form of which is like the Temple and Dunstable portals.

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WILLIAM H. HALEWOOD *Six Subjects of Reformation Art: A Preface to Rembrandt*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1982. 149 pp., 79 illus., \$27.50 (cloth), \$14.95 (paper).

During the last two decades research in the field of Netherlandish art has expanded exponentially in exploring the nature of meaning in depictions of the everyday world. That the study of the imprint of Protestantism on art constitutes a critical corollary has not been sufficiently acknowledged, much less systematically examined.

William Halewood focuses on a central assumption underlying that imprint. In his preface the author declares that he offers:

'simply a pictorial account of an idea. The idea is grace, or more particularly the Protestant paradigm of salvation, in which the saving of human souls is carried out entirely through God's mercy (grace) with no contribution (nor works, nor merit) from weak and wayward man ... That [the power of this idea] produced contradiction and difficulty for artists trained in a humanist tradition is one of my repeated themes. That contradiction and difficulty cease with Rembrandt, who invents a grace style, is my hardest pressed conclusion.'

After initial remarks characterising the state of research, followed by an outline of the 'Protestant' notion of grace, the study is divided into seven further chapters; each devoted to a narrative subject, as the Raising of Lazarus. Works by Lucas Cranach, Jan van Heemessen, Maerten van Heemskerck, Maerten de Vos, Caravaggio, Pieter Lastman and Rembrandt, among others, are illustrated. Artists' interpretations are analysed largely if not exclusively in terms of the progress made in approaching what the author perceives to be the uniquely successful communication of Protestant beliefs found in the late work of Rembrandt, to whom the author's attention gradually shifts.

The initial proposition – to examine the recurrence of certain narrative subjects in religious art, primarily 'Protestant', of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to reveal patterns of adherence to an underlying theme of divine mercy bestowed on unworthy and sinful humans – is not new. The survey approach and, secondly, the stress on the Protestant Reformers' insistence as to the inevitability, even necessity of human sin may, however, spur the reader to query the premises behind many favoured subjects. The author is an English professor who comes to the present study from a related one in his own field. *The Poetry of Grace* (1970). Interdisciplinary contributions are often the vehicle for valuable insights. Here the genuine potential and legitimacy of issues raised are obscured by the author's surprisingly casual and occasionally misleading approach.

Certainly the sprawling question of the art produced under the influence of Protestant beliefs – its themes, the subjects serving as vehicles for those themes, and the relationship of style and approach to content – has not received comprehensive treatment. Nevertheless, Professor Halewood's needlessly deprecating characterisation of what is currently or commonly thought will surprise those in the field. The author's comments do not show sufficient familiarity with the literature or art in question. Consequently, he tends to sidestep difficult issues: for example, the central vexing problem of establishing criteria for what imagery actually is 'Protestant' (cf. essays by C. Tümpel on 'Iconography' in the catalogue of the Sacramento exhibition *The Pre-Rembrandtists*, 1974, and 'Dutch Religious Painting' in the catalogue *Gods, Saints and Heroes, Dutch History Painting in the Age of Rembrandt*, Washington, National Gallery, 1980). The opposition of this knowledgeable Rembrandt scholar and Lutheran minister to the idea of 'protestant' subjects in Dutch art of the seventeenth century beyond the overtly didactic is properly directed first of all to the popularity of many subjects (as the Parable of the Prodigal Son, or the Raising of Lazarus) with both Catholics and Protestants. Though in some respects Tümpel's 'oecumenical' arguments rest on definitions that may be unnecessarily limited, they require a documented response.

Halewood's own propositions are introduced by a short, very lucid discussion of the 'Protestant paradigm of salvation,' grace itself. It is written, as is the entire book, in fluid and compelling prose. He relies on a variety of authors, though chiefly Luther, Calvin and the initial formulation in the letters of Paul. These references are well chosen, but one would prefer more concern with demonstrating the continued currency of these views in seventeenth-century Holland. Halewood outlines the concept of divine justice inherent in the awesome finality of 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy (Romans 9:15)', emphasizing that it is granted utterly without regard for virtue or merit. Singling out these basic tenets with their implications for an assessment of human nature and the importance of this frailty to Christ's (display of) power, to the very definition of His magnificence, is an excellent idea. Nevertheless, an overview of other relevant issues – for instance, the fundamental one of the shifting function and very validity of images upon which the Protestant Reformers were *not* in agreement – would put the present enquiry into better perspective. On this last point, Giuseppe Scavizzi's recent *Arte e architettura sacra: Cronache e documenti sulla controversia tra riformati e cattolici 1500-1550* (1982) is most welcome.

In outlining the notion of grace, the author uses 'Pauline,' 'Reformation,' and 'Protestant' nearly synonymously. This is misleading; they are just not co-extensive terms of reference. Halewood declines to differentiate between the traditional reading of Paul's understanding of the Good News of God's mercy and the disparate associations brought to bear on this understanding by sixteenth-century reformers such as the Catholic St Ignatius of Loyola or the Protestant Luther. The distinctions are not, however, always clear in the standard art historical literature, e.g. W. Friedlaender, *Caravaggio Studies*, which Halewood cites in his discussion of Caravaggio's *Calling of St Matthew*.

As Halewood's real concern is the power of the idea of grace itself, the whole essay might have benefited from reorganisation. The focus could have been placed on the widespread influence of the Pauline-Augustinian (rather than Protes-