It is fitting that Caroline Bruzelius’s *The Stones of Naples: Church Building in Angevin Italy, 1266–1343* was published one hundred years after Emile Bertaux’s magisterial *L’art dans l’Italie méridionale. De la fin de l’Empire romain à la conquête de Charles d’Anjou* (1903). Picking up chronologically where Bertaux left off, Bruzelius’s volume is the first major study published in the intervening century to analyze late medieval buildings throughout the kingdom of Sicily. With its focus on architecture, the book complements Ferdinando Bologna’s groundbreaking *I pittori alla corte angioina di Napoli* (1969) and its successor, Pierluigi Leone de Castris’s *Arte di corte nella Napoli angioina* (1986), works that placed southern Italian painting and sculpture within the matrices of the canon and early humanism. The book also joins a host of recently published studies and exhibitions on the arts of the Angevin period. Its thematic reach extends beyond the boundaries of Italy, however, for it is a fundamental contribution to lively debates about courts in the Latin West and their deliberately eclectic patronage.¹

The *Stones of Naples* follows the contours of Bruzelius’s previously published articles by focusing primarily on the first three Angevin kings, their queens, and major churches associated with them. While placing the monuments within changing stylistic, religious, political, and social contexts, her intent is to probe manifestations of “Frenchness” in a region that is distant geographically from the epicenter of the opus francigenum yet close to it genealogically (Charles I was a brother of Louis IX). In the cases of church buildings of explicitly royal patronage (for example, Santa Maria di Realvalle, Santa Maria Donna Regina, and Santa Chiara), Bruzelius locates antecedents not only in northern France but also in Spain, Provence, and central Italy via royal and monastic webs of patronage and signification. Bruzelius is not concerned only with monarchs, however. She establishes that projects that employed French workmen—a determinant of a building’s “Frenchness”—were often initiated by statesmen, merchants, or other nonroyal elites. She also demonstrates that “Frenchness,” which she generally (but not always) places in quotation marks, was but one of many architectural languages employed in the kingdom, along with early Christian, mendicant, and traditional local idioms.

From the opening pages, it is clear that undertaking such a study in this region is not for the faint of heart. References abound to the endless repairs necessitated by earthquakes, the ubiquity of baroque revetment, the difficulty in accessing some sites, and the absence of written documentation. The first monumen
discussed in detail, Sant’Eligio al Mercato in Naples, illustrates the challenges posed by this terrain: Bruzelius dissects the fabric of the hospital church, which was founded in 1270 by three French merchants on land donated by Charles I, and identifies several phases of construction within its “severely mutilated” form. This is one of the author’s strengths: she is particularly adept at establishing chronologies and reconstructions for buildings that are fragmented, damaged, or (over)restored.

Bruzelius approaches this untidy group of monuments with a clear eye and classic methodology. Analyses of moldings, profiles, and masonry patterns are the building blocks of her research, as the Ruskinian Appendix 5 (on base profiles) indicates; historical contextualization follows, often incorporating helpful discussions of the economics of building. Thus, in dealing with the major Neapolitan churches, Bruzelius examines the complex real estate negotiations that must have marked most urban construction sites during the Middle Ages but were particularly vexing in palimpsest-like Naples. Her work on labor forces and forced labor is compelling (especially Appendix 1, treating construction and labor). Given these and other exigencies of life in southern Italy—war, political instability, economic crises, and poor building materials—construction tended to proceed in fits and starts. With such challenges, one marvels that anything was built at all. Yet, this book presents many treasures, from the lively architectural sculpture found in the Abruzzi region to the polygonal rigor of the chevet of the Cathedral of Rossano.

One of Bruzelius’s more significant and original claims concerns Charles II (ruled 1285 to 1309). Closely involved in the reconstruction of San Domenico Maggiore and the cathedral in Naples, as well as several mendicant foundations scattered across the kingdom, Bruzelius characterizes Charles II as one of the greatest builders of the Middle Ages, “surpassing perhaps even” his uncle...
Louis IX of France (128). Bruzelius later qualifies that “We cannot really think of Charles II as a patron of the arts, but rather as a patron of the devotional and didactic interests of the faith” (201). This clarification serves medievalists well and also distinguishes Charles II from his son Robert the Wise, patron par excellence of culture, artistic and otherwise (and, along with his wife Sancia of Mallorca, of the radical religious fringe). But Bruzelius’s comparison to the founder of the Sainte-Chapelle also raises questions, among them the thorny problem of quality and the somewhat less-contested ones of influence and medium. For better or for worse, we appreciate Louis IX for his sumptuous initiatives in many media and their impact on generations of artists and patrons; Charles II does not come across as a shaper of taste, as fascinating as he is, and given this book’s focus on architecture, we catch only glimpses of his commissions in other media.

Bruzelius describes the reign of Charles II as one that saw fewer episodes of “Frenchness” and the emergence of the local as a political, cultural, and architectural force. Here she characterizes “Frenchness” in a variety of ways. For instance, she distinguishes between first- and second-generation French architects working in the kingdom (103) and sees a “second-hand, or associative Frenchness,” in Franciscan architecture, in which old-fashioned forms were permitted by friar-builders (63). Gothic motifs, which followed “rigid formulae with little or no natural evolution,” were used because their decorative elements “may enhance the idea of the sacred” (94), but they were “secondary to the overall concept of structure and space” (131).

This welcome effort to inject nuance into the elusive and possibly problematic term “Frenchness” yields fruit in many cases, but there are missed opportunities. For instance, no specific comparanda are cited for the mid-fourteenth-century Church of Santa Maria della Consolazione in Altomonte, which she attributes to artisans recruited by its founder Count Filippo Sangineto during his assignments in Provence (194). Given that “Frenchness” at this late date is not seen elsewhere in the kingdom, more concrete connections (however hypothetical) would be helpful. Similarly, one wishes for an analysis of the arcade of the early Christian Basilica of Santa Restituta, to which pointed arches were added during the reconstruction of the new Cathedral of Naples (84, 90). Bruzelius does not explore the implications of this unusual alteration for the basilica’s “Frenchness” nor for the apostolic and Constantinian references within the new episcopal ensemble, which, she argues, were inspired in part by the fourth-century church. Furthermore, it is not clear how other artistic manifestations of the “devotional and didactic interests of the faith” fit within her narrative. To be sure, buildings are Bruzelius’s primary concern; but given the long shadow cast by Louis IX, other media merit some discussion and also illuminate issues at the heart of the book. How does an object like the head reliquary of San Gennaro, commissioned by Charles II in 1304 from three French goldsmiths, relate to conceptualizations of “Frenchness” as defined around architecture or to generalizations about the reemergence of the local? Finally, and most importantly, “Frenchness” is used to discern the functions, meanings, and styles of buildings within a fraught political landscape—the main subject of the book. But what about the problems of identity and nationalism, both medieval and modern, intrinsic to the term “Frenchness”? The author signals her awareness of the term’s complexities with her use of quotation marks and remarks about its medieval meaning (“Frenchness’ itself was a complicated and highly charged concept” [ix]). But the multiethnic and colonized context of the kingdom of Sicily invites a sustained critique of “Frenchness” as discourse since the term has stirring implications for the production, reception, and interpretation of a wide variety of art forms.

Although Bruzelius’s major focus and greatest strength concerns royal patronage, she reveals that many buildings—even the most “French-looking” one, San Lorenzo Maggiore in Naples—had limited or tenuous connections to the monarchs. Archbishops, statesmen, and wealthy laypeople helped shape the “aesthetic agenda” of the kingdom (202). Yet, in contrast to her well-wrought kings and queens, the portraits of these patronal figures are more sketchily drawn. One yearns to learn more about the jurist and protonotary Bartolomeo da Capua, for instance, who commissioned portals at San Lorenzo and San Domenico and supported other building initiatives across the kingdom. Might the architecture of his home town, with its Lombard and Norman churches of simple yet elegant articulation, have affected his austere taste in religious architecture? And might Frederick II’s Capuan Gate have informed Bartolomeo’s interest in spolia, marble ornament, and their ideological power? (It is perhaps not insignificant that Bartolomeo’s first wife was the niece of Taddeo da Suessa, one of the jurists portrayed on the Gate.) Further analyses of such homegrown patrons and their cultural roots might help resolve one of the central tensions in this study: the tension between ideas that are pervasive (for example, mendicant spirituality) and the individual taste or initiative of patrons. In other words, where precisely did agency lie, particularly in the complex negotiations leading to the foundation and construction of new monasteries? In such cases as Bruzelius’s splendid portrait of Santa Chiara in Naples, we have a clear and lively picture. But for the less sharply defined contexts, most of which are found outside the capital, The Stones of Naples will help point research in promising directions. Overall, Bruzelius’s important book is an indispensable source for readers interested in medieval buildings constructed both south and north of the Alps.

To conclude, a note on production format and quality: here, as with other Yale books, footnotes are short and frustratingly abbreviated, and first names are excluded from the bibliography; but in general, the press’s apparently deep coffers serve this enterprise well. The dazzling array of illustrations, many of
which are in color, elucidate monuments that are neither well known nor published in easily accessible volumes. That being said, the author and publisher should consider augmenting the book’s usefulness by creating a website or disk of photographs and drawings, including ones of the buildings listed in Appendix 4 (a checklist of sites), many of which are not discussed in the text. As production costs and reproduction fees soar and compromise our abilities to illustrate points fully, it would be encouraging to see a major press like Yale include digital supplements as a matter of course.

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Notes
2. Made by Etienne Godefroy, Guillaume de Verdeley, and Milet d’Auxerre, the head reliquary of San Gennaro was one of a handful of liturgical objects by French artists, including Verdeley’s procession cross, donated to the cathedral of the newly Christianized Lucera in 1305.

Peter Draper
The Formation of English Gothic: Architecture and Identity

Given the amazing formal diversity of English buildings in the period 1150 to 1250, it is no surprise that Peter Draper avoided a chronological narrative for his book. Two buildings have chapters to themselves, the choir of Canterbury Cathedral and Lincoln Cathedral. The remaining eight chapters are thematic and culminate in the interpretation of the Gothic style in England traditionally known as “Early English” “as a significant manifestation of a wider sense of ‘national’ identity in the thirteenth century” (239). This approach has the disadvantage of fragmenting the discussion of a number of buildings. But Draper does not set out to create a corpus; he is selective so as to present principles and raise significant questions, and in so doing, his text should stimulate research for years to come.

The book opens with a discussion of historiography and problems associated with the traditional labels “Romanesque,” “Transitional,” “Gothic,” “ecclesiastical,” and “secular.” Sage advice is given on interpreting nineteenth-century restoration, especially with regard to some overenthusiastic Ecclesiologists who may have been guilty of not letting evidence in the fabric get in the way of a “correct restoration.”

The overview of the rebuilding of Canterbury Cathedral’s choir (1175–84) is one of the best. Draper presents the building in its historical context with due emphasis on the roles of patrons and masons, the cult of Becket, changes of plan, and aspects of continuity with the old church. The theme of continuity between Anglo-Norman and new work—whether in the same building or just as a matter of constructional or design practice—recurs throughout the book. At Canterbury, it ranges from the retention of the large outer-wall sections of Anselm’s choir (1096–1130) to the use of chevron ornament in the new work and the links with Roman classicism established in England by Henry of Blois, abbot of Glastonbury (1126–71) and bishop of Winchester (1129–71). These elements fuse with the northern French Gothic influence introduced by the master masons William of Sens and William the Englishman. Elsewhere, Draper keenly emphasizes the use of the thick wall of the Anglo-Norman tradition in early Gothic buildings in England. Indeed, the thick wall facilitated the creation of diverse pier forms, complex arch moldings, and syncopated arcading. The latter motif is one of the many exciting details at Lincoln Cathedral, where Draper introduces the idea of rivalry with Canterbury and York as a stimulus for the elaborate form of the church. Its design idiosyncrasies and the differences between the work of the first and second masters are succinctly presented. For the west front, Draper focuses on the lost tracery of the central window; it is a pity he does not devote more attention to the façade as a whole, and the same is true for the former Benedictine abbey, now the cathedral, at Peterborough.

The chapter entitled “Transformation: Evolution or Revolution?” deals with the formal vocabulary of buildings and should be recommended to students who need to grasp the essentials of English architecture of the period. Draper observes that between 1150 and 1250 there was a “transformation of the Anglo-Norman tradition that amounted to a revolution in approach to many features of design” (53). Yet, he sees that “the introduction and absorption of the new [French Gothic] vocabulary can seem like evolutionary progress” (53). He presents the evolution at Ely Cathedral from the Romanesque fabric through the late twelfth-century western transept and the Galilee porch to Bishop Northwold’s presbytery (1234–51). The importance of polychromatic decoration in paint and stained glass is given appropriate emphasis, but something more on sculpture would have helped the visualization of integrated designs. Of course, it would be difficult to present any sort of detailed discussion of sculpture in the parameters of the book, but an appreciation of things such as the figurative elements of Wells Cathedral capitals, corbels, label stops, and paterae, in addition to the stiff leaf, would not have gone amiss.

In the second half of the twelfth century—the “Transitional” period as it is often called—Draper sees “[t]he appearance of French-looking designs or