

Medieval Architecture

III

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1 The Period of the Monasteries

About the end of the fourth Century AD there began that strange movement in Northern Europe known as the Migration of the Peoples from Eastern Europe, from the valley of the Danube, from Germany & Scandinavia tribes of Goths, Vandals, Germans & Franks ^{Saxons} pressed in an irresistible flood to the West. They met and overwhelmed the Western Roman Empire and, mingling with the Celtic & Gaulish inhabitants, they produced the races to which we ourselves belong and which still inhabit Europe ^{in later times} & have even pressed still further west to populate this great continent of America.

These wandering tribes were, as compared to the Romans, simply barbarians but they were sufficiently civilized to appreciate the Roman Civilization. Now we must remember that, at this time France, Spain & England were quite Roman. The Educated people of Western Europe spoke Latin, wore Roman dress & were proud to call themselves Roman Citizens, so the Gothic tribes who swept down upon them, though they undoubtedly did much damage, yet presently, as they settled down in their new Kingdoms, found themselves adopting the Roman Civilization & the Roman Religion, ~~and~~ ^{the} Christianity. Yet, being a new people with new ideas they changed this civilization even as they adopted it. So, from about the 8th Century there arose a new architecture, founded on old Rome but very much changed from the Architecture of Classic Times.

It is always very difficult to define the peculiar spirit of a nation. But, if we are to attempt to distinguish the quality peculiar to these Northern Peoples I think we would be safe to say "Imagination" and with imagination a restless spirit and a love of mystery.

The Greeks hated mystery. They liked everything to be simple clear and perfect. The Romans too disliked mystery, it was untidy & the Roman desired order in all things, but we Northern Europeans love a vague ideal, something quite unattainable but about which we can weave a web of Imagination. So, in Medieval Europe, the greatest art was religious, full of mystery & full of Imagination.

Aulun Gate Copy. 2 Autun Cathedral. 1090. note preproof stone roof.
Autun Gate. Porte S Andre!

Autun Cathedral

do another vault.

Autun Capital

3 Round arches, Roman Pilasters. but, where convenient pointed arches too.

A Autun Capitals. Roman Corinthian changed.

This Tendency to copy the old Roman remains was naturally strongest in those parts of Europe where the Roman Civilization ~~was~~ had been strongest. So in Provence and in the south of France generally we find many churches which show the Roman influence very clearly

- x 6 S. Trophime. ^{Arles} Frank - XII c not at all Roman excepting in detail
- 4 detail of door Roman influence
- 7 S Gilles Arles. very Roman detail

On account of this derivation from the Roman work all this Early Architecture of Europe, up to about the XII c is called Romanesque.

As the Romanesque schools developed they ~~became~~ copied the Roman work less and less & many very splendid churches were built. These have Round arches and are very simple often almost without ornament save in the great doorways & piers.

- 8 Santiago Cathedral in Spain. a copy of the church of O Sernin at Toulouse XII c.

View in ~~the~~ Transept

- 9 View in Nave.

In the North of Europe progress was not so rapid. The country was more unsettled & it was not until the XII century that much building was done. Here too there were very few old Roman Remains so the architects had to depend more on themselves and less on the old remains. They were very ambitious and the Norman Cathedrals which were built, as monasteries, in England during the XII century still remain amongst the most important buildings of Europe like all Romanesque buildings they are very solidly and heavily built, with round arches and very little detail

The nave of Peterborough Cathedral 1117

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Large simple work. Note Zigzag moulding.

Clearstorey lighting

No vault. builders unable. wood roof.

The greatest Romanesque Ch of Europe.

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Durham nave finished 1128. first great rib vault in Europe.

Zigzags. cubical capitals.

12

Durham transept.

13

Hereford Cath nave.

Ornament.

14

Canterbury Corinthian Capital.

15

Hereford Zigzag + interlacing Capital

16

Kelwick. The Northern Imagination

17

Lincoln Ornament. Grotesque

Now presently, towards the end of the XII c it was felt that the pointed arch was both easier to build than the round arch and that it was very much easier to use in vaulting. It was felt too that this very extravagant ornament was not suited to churches of monks who were vowed to poverty. So a reaction set in which resulted in very simple buildings almost without carving, but in which the pointed arch was used throughout. The use of the pointed arch first arose near Paris but spread very rapidly and in England the Cistercian monks, who were a very severe order, built a number of monasteries of this new type. But though the Cistercians regarded all ornament as a useless extravagance yet the feeling for beauty natural to Englishmen at the time was too strong for them & the Cistercian abbeys gain in delicacy & refinement far more than they lose ^{by} ~~the~~ simplicity.

Dundrennan in South of Scotland

Ornament not necessary to fine architecture

18
Dundrennan
S transept

19
do do
N transept

From now onwards this style of architecture is called Gothic & may be recognised by the use of the pointed arch & by the delicacy & lightness of the buildings.

This Gothic school grew rapidly in England, ~~at first~~ The buildings were Romanesque, or Norman buildings had been mainly Monasteries but, as the country became more settled, Monasteries ceased to be so necessary & were replaced by Cathedrals, ruled over by Bishops. The great Cathedral building period in both France & England was the XIII century & during it some of the most wonderful buildings of the world were erected. Man has never attained in Architecture to greater beauty than in the glorious Gothic Cathedrals of Northern France or the smaller but not less beautiful Cathedrals of England. It is very interesting to note that in this, the greatest period of Architecture in Europe France and England stand side by side each with its own national Architecture, similar & closely allied each to the other yet separate & each expressive of the character of the builders.

The French Cathedral is supreme in its daring construction, the vault of Beauvais Cathedral is 150 feet from the floor, the walls a sheet of glass from which the wall almost seems to have disappeared. It is a miracle of artistic engineering, fragile though it looks it has stood in safety for 6 centuries.

- 20 Bourges Cath. simple vault.
- 21 Amiens W end. set in midst of town
- 22 Amiens Transept
- 23 Leon in Spain.
- 24 Beauvais.
- Detail.
- 25 Paris. Detail of N. Dame.

The English Cathedral is smaller, more homely, & externally often more beautiful. with its towers spires & richly broken skyline. set in the

- 26 Salisbury
- 27 Durham Ely seen close.
- 28 Ely
- 29 Wells
- 30 Lincoln nave
- 31 Lincoln Angel Chorr.

Detail. Torthache Cap wells.
Detail. caps of.

6

This is the ~~first~~ great period of Northern European art. ~~It~~
~~ranks greater than Rome~~ + Comparisons of greatness are
not possible between the arts of different peoples but
this XIII c art of Northern Europe is one of the very
greatest products of the human mind. ~~It~~ ~~greek~~
~~art shows high refined intellectual~~

Greek art is the art of the highly trained intellect
Roman - is the art of Power + dominion
Gothic the art of imagination and vivid life.