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Gerardo Boto Varela and Justin E. A. Kroesen, eds.

Romanesque Cathedrals in Mediterranean Europe: Architecture, Ritual and Urban Context

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Traditionally a Romanesque cathedral (ca. 1000–1200 CE) is distinguished from other Romanesque churches because it includes one extra piece of furniture: the *cathedra*, or bishop's throne. Since today no single cathedral built between the fourth and the twelfth centuries is preserved in its original shape, it is perhaps difficult to refine this definition of Romanesque cathedrals. Even if the exterior shell of the Romanesque cathedral remains intact, very little is known about the original liturgical furnishings or even the interior decoration. This new collection of essays edited by Gerardo Boto Verala and Justin E. A. Kroesen reveals, however, that many distinguishing characteristics of Romanesque cathedrals can be explored by scholars asking the right contextual questions.

Romanesque Cathedrals in Mediterranean Europe consists of seventeen essays by authors who participated in two conferences held at the University of Girona, Spain. Each essay is a case study about a particular Romanesque cathedral or a set of Romanesque cathedrals in a region of Western Europe. The contributions are divided into five thematic sections: "Shaping Cathedrals in the Pre-Romanesque Era"; "Building Romanesque Cathedrals on Older Substrates"; "Romanesque Cathedrals in Urban Contexts"; "Liturgical Layout and Spatial Organization"; and "Visual Discourses and Iconographic Programmes." As the editors suggest on the first page of their introduction, the aim of this book is to "surpass traditional cathedral research which was organized along disciplinary lines . . . which often resulted in either/or answers based on arguments from engineering to stylistic vocabularies and scholastic discourse." Weaving together case studies from widely divergent periods, geographic regions, and disciplinary approaches, the authors challenge the reader to draw his or her own conclusions about the defining characteristics of Romanesque cathedrals.

Considering that many Early Christian basilicas were replaced in the Romanesque period, the first section, on pre-Romanesque cathedrals, helps explain what is known about the development of the cathedral form in the Mediterranean. Admittedly such an endeavor is, as Beat Brenk says in the first essay of this section, "extremely complicated" because more research still needs to take place. Brenk addresses the formulation of cathedrals in Early Medieval Italy around the cult of the saints. Whereas it is a commonplace in the twelfth century that the relics of saints were buried in crypts beneath the high altar of the cathedral, Brenk explains that early cathedrals of the fourth century lacked relics and crypts. Crypts were first invented around 600 around the cult of martyrs, which eventually turned into a cult of bishops at cathedrals as well. In the second essay in this section, Jean-Pierre Caillet surveys French cathedrals around the year 1000, and likewise admits that such a survey is complicated by the fact that Romanesque cathedrals in France were replaced by Gothic cathedrals. Caillet defines French cathedrals as "episcopal groups" of three or more architectural units. Such units generally include the basilica, a baptistery, a secondary church, an episcopal residence or hospital/guest-house, and a cloister for cathedral canons.

The second group of essays describes the practice of constructing Romanesque cathedrals on top of earlier sacred Roman sites. Matthias Untermann discusses large-scale cathedral reconstruction in Germany between 1000 and 1050, most of which involved the transformation of Late Antique double cathedrals into larger church complexes. Mauro Cortelazzo and Renato Perinetti describe how the Aosta Cathedral in northwestern Italy transformed over time from an Early Christian basilica set on an ancient Roman site into a Romanesque church heavily influenced by a kinship-defined cultural

network that spread widely from the Rhine and Rhone basins to the Po River Valley. Gerardo Boto Varela considers the reuse of Roman buildings in the reconstruction of the cathedral of Tarragona in southern Catalonia as the basis for the cathedral's claim to ancient primacy in the region.

Five essays in the third section, on the urban contexts of cathedrals, address how urban topography affected the development of Romanesque cathedrals, and also the ways in which cathedral styles were influenced by regional church networks. Quitterie Cazes writes about the relationship of the town of Toulouse and the cathedral of Saint-Étienne, which was situated near the eastern city gate and separated from the town by the ancient Roman wall. Since the Roman wall limited the space available for cathedral buildings, the chapter buildings (a large refectory, a kitchen, a chapter house, a chapel, and a chapter school) formed a unique two-story complex that adjoined the Roman wall and the walls of the cathedral cloister. Xavier Barral i Altet explores the reasons why the cathedral of San Pietro di Castello in Venice never became the most important church in the city. Since the cathedral was built on the outskirts of Venice on a separate island, it was marginalized by the more prominent palace chapel of Saint Mark's in the heart of the city. Javier Martínez de Aguirre proposes a new graphic reconstruction model for the Romanesque cathedral of Jaca and explores the way in which this cathedral influenced regional styles of cathedrals in Spain. Saverio Lomartire more broadly describes the widespread renovation of Northern Italian cathedrals in the eleventh and twelfth centuries as well as the current state of research in this region. In a similar manner Jorge Rodrigues discusses a group of Portuguese cathedrals and their role in the organization of a kingdom of Portugal.

The fourth thematic group of essays involves the liturgical layout and spatial organization of cathedrals. Michele Bacci writes about the programmatic attempt of the clergy of the Lateran in Rome (the Pope's cathedral) to establish it as a holy site akin to the holiness of St. Peter's in Rome. Though the Lateran had no claim to a crypt with saintly relics, the clergy there incorporated cult objects legendarily held to be from the original Temple in Jerusalem into liturgical furniture in order to claim primacy in Rome. Elisabetta Scirocco considers the original arrangement of the double ambo at the Cathedral of Salerno in Campania, Italy. She suggests that the two ambos were created independently at different times by two powerful patrons, rather than out of a liturgical need. Marc Sureda i Jubany compares the liturgical uses of space and altars at three cathedral complexes in Catalonia: Vic, Girona, and Tarragona. Though the episcopal see of Girona was much larger than that of Vic, the church of St. Mary in Girona shares the same liturgical design of a church with seven altars as that of the church of St. Peter in Vic. This suggests that the same thought processes were at work in both places and that they were "Kirchenfamilie." This liturgical church family also can be extended to include the much later church of St. Thecla in Tarragona. These three essays provide a much needed glimpse into the relatively unknown territory of liturgical church furnishings in the Romanesque cathedral.

In the last thematic section of the book, on iconographic programs, four sculptural programs are reviewed. Francesc Fité i Llevot examines the figurative capitals in the Cathedral of Lleida (Seu Vella) and asserts that although an initial iconographic program had once existed, it was repeatedly altered throughout the long period of successive reconstructions. Peter K. Klein firmly asserts that though certain spatial relationships exist between sculpture in the cloister of Girona Cathedral and the function of the cloister, the functionalist interpretation of Romanesque historiated cloisters is

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problematic because most textual sources about the functions of the cloisters have been lost. By contrast Marta Serrano Coll and Esther Lozano López attempt to make iconographic sense of the cloister sculpture at La Seu d'Urgell in northwestern Catalonia by asserting that the monsters and demons were designed to enhance the daily readings of the Psalms in the cloister. Finally, José Luis Hernando Garrido explores the relationship between the sculptural workshop at Santiago de Compostela and the sculpture produced at the cathedrals of Salamanca and Zamora. Though this last section only addresses the sculpture at cathedrals in Spain and Catalonia, the authors present the most recent research questions about how to understand Romanesque sculptural programs at cathedrals, including the question of whether or not the term "program" even applies to cathedral sculpture.

This collection of essays is an excellent resource for anyone seeking to understand the variety of new approaches to the Romanesque cathedral, but because it focuses specifically on individual case studies, this reviewer would welcome a companion volume. The theme of urban cathedrals and urban context, for example, could be explored more fully in terms of relic processions or other liturgical processions between church and town. Cathedrals on the Iberian Peninsula are heavily addressed in the current book, but of course more could be said about cathedrals in other regions of the Romanesque world. Several political issues were raised by authors in this book, so a second volume might address political themes, such as the Gregorian Reform, the Crusade, pilgrimage, episcopal excommunication, or royal donors. Another theme to consider might be the exchange of ideas between cathedrals in two or more geographically diverse regions. Certainly the diverse scholarly approaches put forth in this study of Romanesque cathedrals will serve as springboards for further research in the years to come.

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