

Medieval Architecture

“Romanesque”

February 28 2002

a Monasticism

b “First Romanesque”

c Pilgrimage

d Regional groupings

Art History and Archaeology Department
Open House
Wednesday March 6
4.00-6.00pm
832 Schermerhorn

Readings on Pilgrimage

R. Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, 147-165

K. Conant *Carolingian and Romanesque* 157-175

Website www.learn.columbia.edu/medmil

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The meaning of the word “Romanesque”

- a) suggests a particular “look” Vaulted interiors; intense articulation of surfaces and spaces; new architectural forms: the ambulatory and radiating chapels
- b) a period with distinguishing characteristics
 - demographic
 - institutional
 - political
- c) The problem of linear chronological sequences”
“First Romanesque” “Mature Romanesque”
- c) Regional “low” art as opposed to elite court art

Pilgrimage

Has been a hot topic in recent scholarship

It allows us to involve a)ordinary folk; b)affective response and c)anthropological thinking.

Arnold van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*

Victor Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*

The power of passage and liminality: transformative experience--based in “primitive” societies, based in the Scriptures

Pilgrimage a universal religious phenomenon associated with sacred sites. Such sacred sites might be associated with the life of Abraham; the place where the Ark of the Covenant was kept--Jerusalem

For Islam--the city of the Prophet, Mecca

For Christians--Places associated with the life of Christ--Bethlehem; Jerusalem. When these became inaccessible, the place where martyrs were buried, Rome. SS Peter & Paul

The Pilgrimage associated with the routes to Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain. Why Santiago?

Discovery (“invention”) in the early ninth century of the tomb of Saint James. By 12th C Santiago was the principal site for pilgrims

Pilgrimage with small “p” existed because of presence of relics in churches. Crypts. Visceral response. Annular crypts

Establishment of various mechanisms of Church control.

- A) Physical control of the routes to Santiago which were studded with great churches and pilgrim hospices. Pilgrims normally brought some kind of offering to the site. Look-alike churches
- B) Psychological control of individuals through new emphasis upon penance

Pilgrimage has been a hot topic in Art History over the last 20 years. Why? The anthropological approach to Art History. The work of Arnold van Gennep. The concept of liminality. The existence of a written source, the *Pilgrims' Guide* (c.1130) that allows us to begin to address audience response

The Story of Saint James Santiago de Compostela

After the Ascension of Christ his disciples took Christianity out into the world. James evangelized Spain, returning to Jerusalem where he was martyred in 44AD (CE). His body was retrieved by his disciples and brought back to Spain. As the ship neared shore a bolting horse dashed into the sea but instead of drowning the rider was carried to the surface covered with scallop shells. This miracle led the group to land where the local noblewoman, Lupa, directed them to a mountain with a cave guarded by a dragon who was defeated by the disciples. The tomb was lost

Rediscovered in 813 when a star of great magnitude led a shepherd to a curious ruin. Bishop Teodomiro identified the ruin as James's tomb. The field of the star.

The “Pilgrimage Churches”:

Tours, Saint-Martin

Limoges, Saint-Martial

Conques, Saint-Foi

Toulouse, Saint-Sernin

Santiago de Compostela

The Pilgrim's Guide (c.1130s) (Davis-Weyer p 147)

Now the basilica of Saint James is in length fifty three times a man's stature, measuring between the western doorway to the altar of the Saviour, its width thirty nine times, measuring from the door of the Franks to the south portal. The interior height is fourteen times a man's stature.

It is not worth anyone's while to know what the external length and height are.

In the church there is indeed not a single crack, nor any damage to be found; it is wonderfully built, large, spacious, well-lighted; of fitting size, harmonious in width, length and height; held to be admirable in execution. And furthermore it is built with two stories like a regal palace.

For he who visits the galleries, if sad when he ascends, once he has seen the preeminent beauty of this temple, is rejoiced and filled with gladness.

Description of the south portal:

.... Nor ought one to forget the female figure set near the Temptation of Our Lord: she holds in her hands the rotting head of her lover, cut off by her husband, who forces her to kiss it twice each day. What a great and admirable judgement upon an adulterous woman, which should be recounted to everyone!