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Suger's Miracles, Branner's Bourges: Reflections on "Gothic Architecture" as Medieval Modernism

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Abstract

When it becomes clear that a given interpretative model (or set of criteria) contains irreducible contradictions and is incapable of resolving certain stubborn problems, it is time for a new paradigm. Recognizing that scholarship on Gothic architecture has long since reached this impasse, this study identifies new terms of understanding in the oppositional pair "modernism" and "historicism." These two transhistorical concepts are found to offer numerous interpretative advantages over such traditional categories as "skeletal form," "diaphaneity," "linearity," "diagonality," "square schematism," and the like, all of which are severely burdened by the well known constrictive problematics of "style," among other difficulties. Properly defined and understood, the modernism/historicism paradigm is shown to offer numerous advantages in studying medieval architecture across a wide range of concerns, from descriptive, componential, and formal analysis to social, intellectual, and contextual integration. The entire apparatus of the great cathedrals is seen in a radically new, comprehensive way, and such intractable historical problems as that of the seemingly oxymoronic "Gothic column" are resolved. The proposed paradigm is further explored and tested regarding both word and image in medieval architecture, in a new reading of the controversial texts of Abbot Suger on Saint-Denis, and in a revised solution to the Bourges "problem."

The great trans-European architectural movement enduring some four centuries called "Gothic" has remained veiled and perplexing despite many generations of solid and often brilliant scholarship. In an earlier essay I proposed a new conceptual framework that I hoped might serve as a point of departure for understanding this enigmatic architecture.¹ This adumbration of my idea, however, occupied only a few introductory pages of an article that was mainly dedicated to revising our conception of Italian architecture during the period. This initiatory statement was thus extremely compressed, and left much undefined, unresolved, and unexplored. The following pages are directed not to Italy but to the essentially French genesis and primary development of the "Gothic." Here I reformulate, interrogate, clarify, and above all extend my argument. I pursue certain necessary considerations regarding the problematics of its terminology as well as its many possible implications, some of which lead toward rather radical historiographic and interpretative positions. Following the study of a number of key theoretical issues, I will test the viability of the new interpretative model through practical analysis of medi-

eval text and image: a highly focused reexamination of Abbot Suger's controversial writings on the abbey of Saint-Denis, and a new look at the great building that launched Robert Branner's career, the cathedral of Bourges.

There is, however, an issue that first needs to be aired. Some readers may wonder why I believe a redefinition necessary at all, for surely, one might imagine, the huge literature on the Gothic somehow provides adequate terms for its understanding. Historiographic analysis, however, tells us otherwise. It is not that readings of the Gothic in the familiar terms of rib vaulting, skeletal structure, diaphaneity, diagonality, linearity, baldachins, geometry, scholasticism and so forth are in themselves uninformative or necessarily wrong. Rather, as Louis Grodecki observed in 1977, none of the existing interpretative models offers "a firm rigorous definition" of the Gothic.² As a group they cannot be assembled into anything more than an unwieldy and finally self-contradictory interpretative *bricolage* of mainly nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century analytic methods and discourse. This unsatisfactory situation has not improved recently, in fact quite the opposite. In the past two decades or so Gothic architectural studies have turned sharply away from the broad questions that preoccupied earlier generations (no matter how limited or irrelevant their methods may now seem) toward the study of the particular: the functions of individual spaces, questions of patronage and liturgy, the specific social, political, material, and representational dimensions of architecture.³ In this recent work (much of it highly laudable on its own terms) the old question, "What is Gothic?" which runs as a central theme through Paul Frankl's exhaustive survey of its long historiography, rarely is explicitly asked, because implicitly it is considered somehow already answered, or conversely, because it is deemed irrelevant and in any case impossible to answer.⁴ I refuse this attitude of semantic innocence or terminological futility, and emphasize that our definition of "Gothic" remains a central point of reference in virtually all discussions of European monumental architecture of the twelfth through fifteenth centuries. The question hangs heavily in the air as soon as the word "Gothic" emerges from our mouths or in our writings, not to mention our explications of the architecture to nonspecialists and the public at large. We function as historians of this architectural zone in a most curious way, constantly speaking of the "Gothic" as if we securely knew what

it was and that it actually existed, knowing all the while that the one thing certain about the subject is our very lack of any such articulated consensus. Whether we like it or not, the “Gothic” question remains with us, rather like an elephant in a room that won’t go away no matter how much we pretend to ignore it.

A new paradigm: Gothic as medieval modernism

Rather than reviewing how problematic are most of the concepts that we currently use to study the period (especially how they almost inevitably are shipwrecked on the rocks and shoals of stubborn exceptions and contradictory manifestations of form), I shall directly interrogate the term “Gothic” itself, by asking why we persist in calling European architecture of the twelfth through fifteenth centuries after a barbarian tribe of late antiquity. Are we here merely being creatures of meaningless, ingrained habit, or might the word “Gothic” not contain a germ of etymological truth? I suggest that the word, despite the dimension of blatant absurdity in its usage, involves a key to understanding the period. Here we must look to the linguistic practice of the Renaissance, which first made the connection between the word “Gothic” and the architecture in question. Essentially the connection is simple. In the eyes of the Renaissance, the Goths were the destroyers of Rome and its architecture. They were, in other words, the literal embodiment of anticlassicism. This belief, of course, was bound closely with the Renaissance view of medieval architecture: its essence (by necessity) was its anticlassicism. But the Renaissance also used another term for the recent post/non-antique architectural phenomenon, “*lavori moderni*.”⁵ If we put this term together with “Gothic”—that is, put together the two earliest descriptive terms for the movement—we have an architecture that is both “modern” and “anticlassical,” or going a step further, “modernist” and “antihistoricist,” which are two ways of saying nearly the same thing.⁶ I submit that these early sources were closer to the heart of the matter than most later, purportedly scientific scholarship preoccupied with rib vaulting, skeletal structure, scholasticism, diaphaneity, geometry, diagonality, and so forth. In fact, I propose that were it possible to give later medieval architecture a name more descriptively accurate and less loaded with misinformative connotations than “Gothic”—while at the same time retaining the historically and conceptually legitimate, hidden meaning of that term—that name would be “medieval modernism.”

This term admittedly will strike many readers as strange and problematic, and much of this paper is dedicated to its clarification and justification. By this notion I refer to something far more concrete and motivated, conscious and indeed self-conscious than any Focillon-esque “spirit of modernism” in the Gothic, an essential differentiation that I will elaborate later. For the moment the idea becomes clearer if we go back another chronological step to the period generally called Romanesque, a term with which “Gothic” usually is oppositionally paired, hence requiring some critical attention here

in any case.⁷ As with Gothic we tend to use this term either unthinkingly or disparagingly, that is, with the idea that it represents, if anything, a rather naive understanding of the pre-Gothic. I propose instead, in a manner somewhat analogous to my etymological reevaluation of “Gothic,” that the original core meaning of the word “Romanesque” also has a certain powerful validity (at least for immediate purposes at this point in the argument). In fact, I would argue that it provides a more accurate assessment of the period it denotes than all later academic analysis in terms of square-schematism, bay systems, radiating chapels and the like, which, like the usual terms for “Gothic,” do not hold up under hard scrutiny in regard to accuracy, compatibility, or comprehensiveness of application to this highly varied architecture. Instead, the early nineteenth-century term Romanesque was on the mark, or nearly so, or at the very least more historically accurate generally than later nineteenth- and early twentieth-century rumination on the architecture in question. Pre-Gothic medieval architecture was, quite simply, Roman-*esque*. It was, in other words, deeply historicizing. That it often embodied “modernist” tendencies as well is also true. In fact, perhaps the fairest characterization of what we call the Romanesque period would be in terms of a conflict, instability, an unresolved tension between the two opposing currents of historicism and modernism, in which the former tended to predominate (although not in any progressive way or with any clear pattern). In this reading, the Gothic turn would amount to a shift in orientation, a move towards the resolution of the contest, away from historicism and in favor of an ascendant, eventually dominant modernism.⁸

The components of historicism and modernism varied widely in usage and strength throughout Romanesque Europe, a stubborn fact that serves to invalidate the usual models of descriptive analysis (which cannot accommodate this complexity) but instead fuels my proposed approach. Some areas were nearly purist (through various chronological spans and in varying density of occurrence) in stressing one tendency over the other. For example, the medieval churches of Rome, such as the nave of San Lorenzo fuori le mura, were so faithful to early Christian models, that is, so immaculately historicist, that to “Romanesque” scholarship they represent intractable exceptions to standard interpretative models, while to the non-specialist, according to the usually received explanation, they are Romanesque only by their date (Fig. 1).⁹ Normandy, on the other hand, was in certain aspects sometimes so strongly modernist that instances such as Saint-Étienne in Caen (Fig. 2) could be reasonably included by Ernst Gall in his admirable book on early Gothic (which, however, implicitly posed the conundrum of premature, anachronistic manifestation).¹⁰ More characteristic of the period, or considered central to it, are works like Autun Cathedral (Fig. 3) or its model, Cluny III, which embody a complex, often tense or conflicted relationship between historicizing elements, such as classicizing columns, pilasters, vaulting, ornament, and “normative” proportions, on the one hand, and on the other modernist tendencies towards the bay system, spatial fragmentation, schematization,

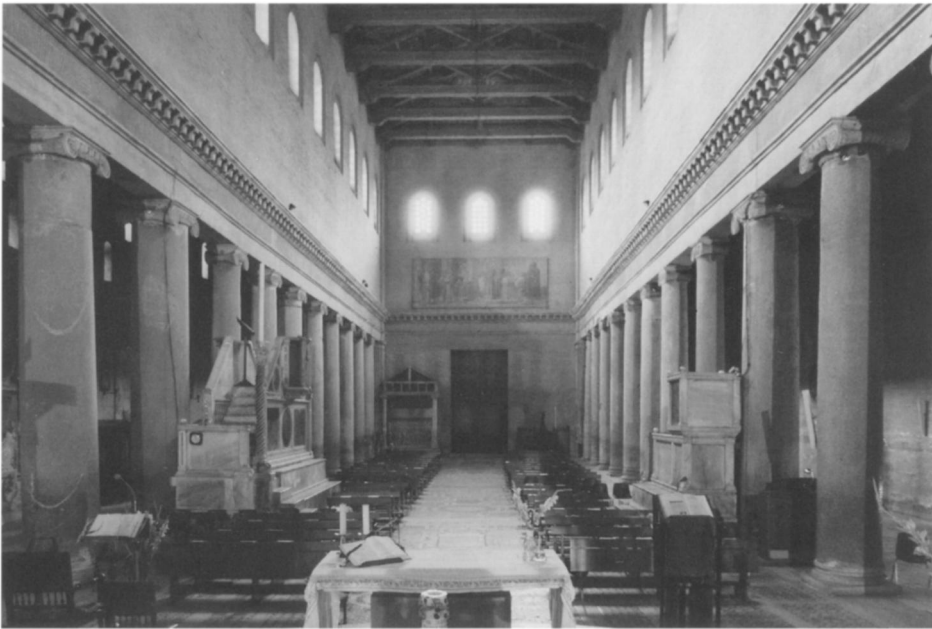


FIGURE 1. Rome, *San Lorenzo fuori-le-mura*, view of nave towards east (photo: author).



FIGURE 2. Caen, *Saint-Étienne*, nave elevation (photo: author).

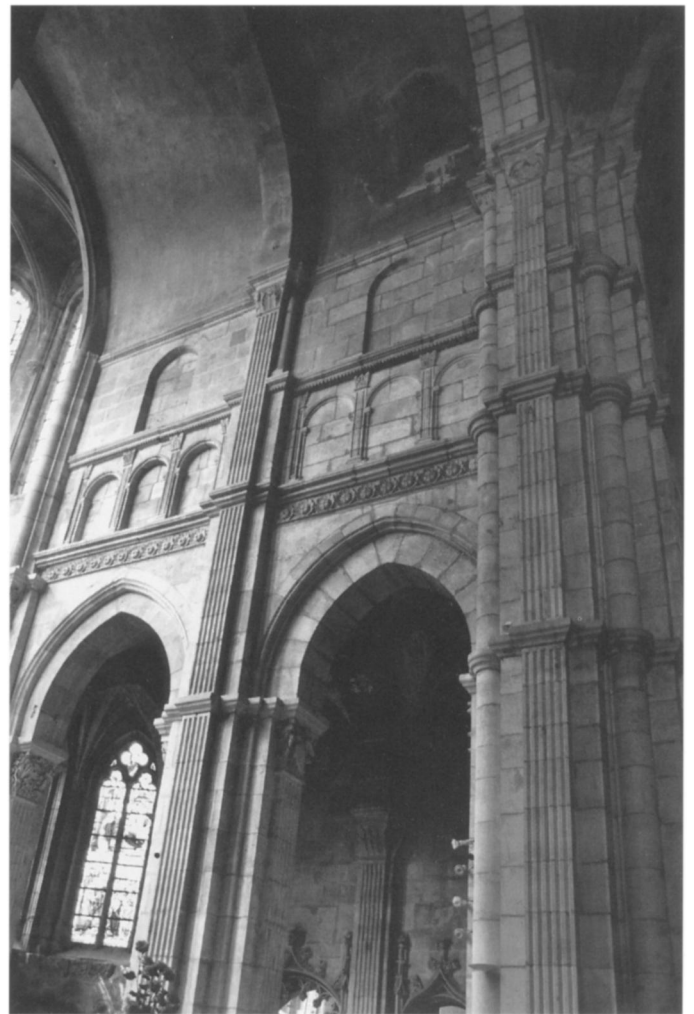


FIGURE 3. Autun, *Saint-Lazare*, forechoir (photo: author).

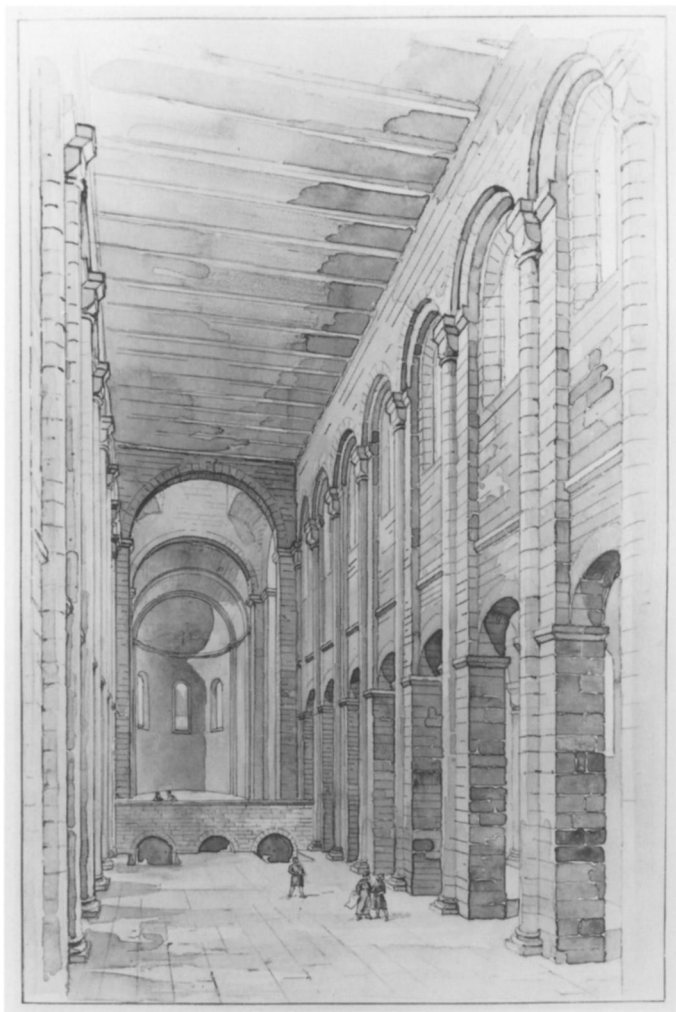


FIGURE 4. *Speyer, cathedral, early version (drawing: Wenzel Hollar).*

FIGURE 5. *Speyer, cathedral, second version, nineteenth-century lithograph.*

structural rationalism, and attenuated proportions, a tension that, of course, was part of the pervasive and continuing ambiguity of the conflicted medieval attitude toward antiquity.¹¹

The great exemplar of this interaction was the imperial cathedral at Speyer. The first Speyer of the early eleventh century took up the nearby fourth-century Constantinian basilica at Trier, turned it outside in, and added an attenuated half-columnar layer of bay-dividing elements (Figs. 4, 6). What is particularly telling is that the second Speyer as rebuilt a half-century later is *more* rather than less historicizing (Fig. 5). Not only were huge Roman-style groin vaults erected, but the main piers received a double order of massive columns that are far more antique in proportions than the original attenuated forms. As a whole the interior of this prodigious cathedral of the Holy Roman Empire thereby recalled still-famous large-scale vaulted ancient interiors such as the imperial *thermae* or the Basilica of Maxentius (true no matter how such buildings were misidentified in the middle ages). Speyer tells us that what we call the Romanesque was never an inexorable

“transitional” movement towards the Gothic, a misinterpretation that never has been quite put to rest.¹² The Romanesque was not driven by any unconscious process of stylistic evolution but rather was guided by a strongly self-conscious view of history, of the present in relationship to the past, in which the latter was not to be relinquished in architecture but instead emphasized (the strength of the historicizing impulse depending on specific circumstances). The Romanesque did not want vainly to be “Gothic” but—not unlike our own recent post-modernist architecture, as well as much of the architecture of the nineteenth century—was both modernist and historicist at the same time.

In the period of medieval modernism—or what we usually call the Gothic—the historicizing elements disappear, or more accurately, are deliberately, self-consciously, and pointedly made either to disappear or to lose, by degrees, their historicist presence and embodiment of historicist desire. The meaning-laden historicist language taken from Rome, the classical apparatus of groin and barrel vaults, columns, pilas-

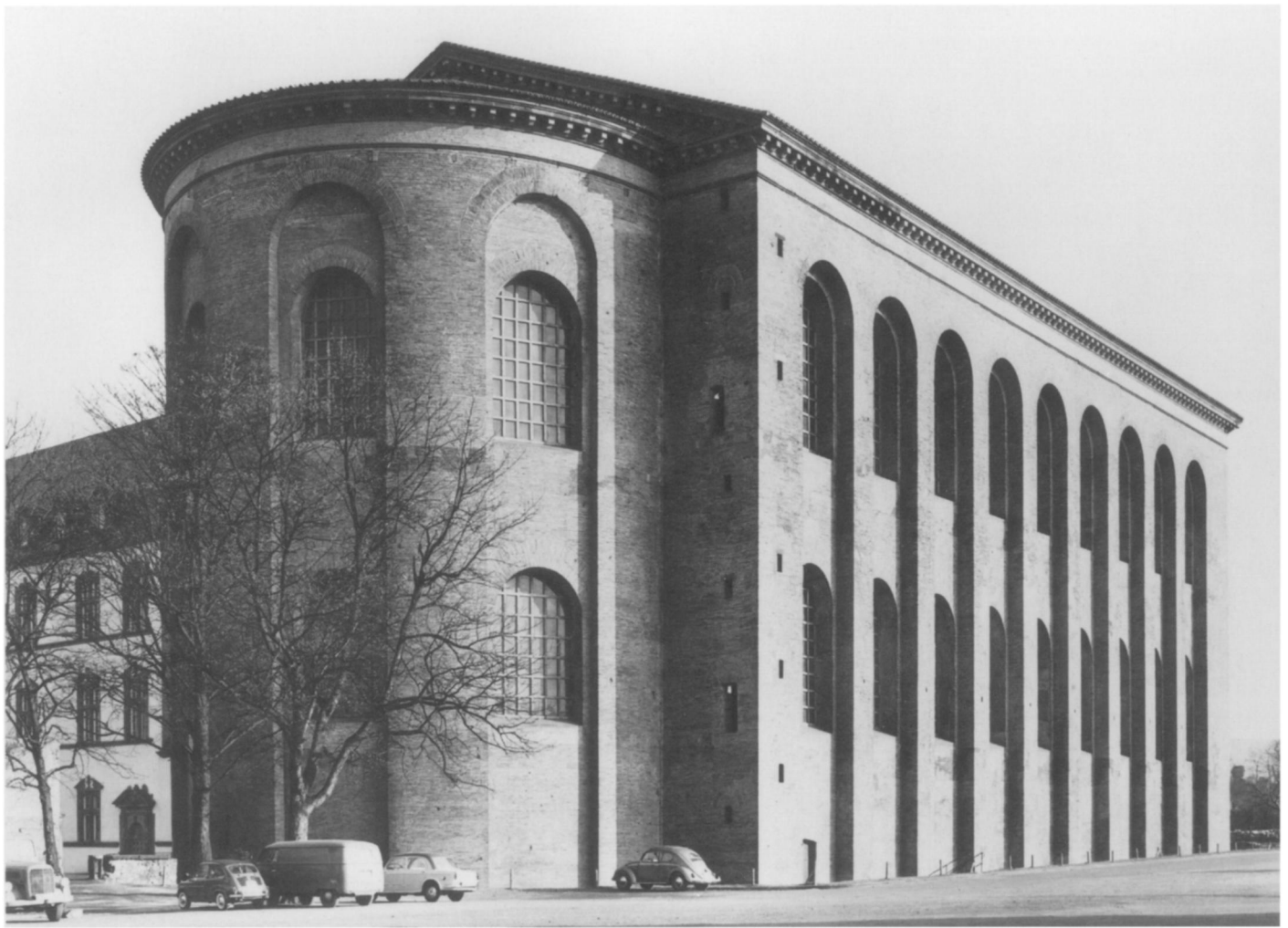


FIGURE 6. *Trier, Basilica* (photo: Foto Marburg).

ters, trabeation, and load-bearing walls is now in diverse ways and to varying degrees, over time, negated through exclusion, suppression, or subversion. In its place a medieval mode of architectural modernism takes hold: not the scattered, episodic, fragmentary, often superficial modernist gestures made previously (for example, at Speyer or Cluny III), but a comprehensive, vital, new deep-rooted system of structure and form, which is inherently both modernist and anticlassical in logic and effect, and I argue, in signification and self-conscious motivation.

The paradigmatic center of this transformative process is the ruthless, powerful and, I maintain, highly self-conscious and knowing critique of the logic, geometry, technique, and appearance of the Roman—and Romanesque—groin vault, which leads not simply to “progress” but, in the rib vault, to a radical mutation and reversal of virtually all of its traits (results that could not possibly have emerged without a high degree of techno-historical knowledge and intellectual motivation). In formal terms, this critique (deeply Euclidian in

much of its logic) worked essentially as follows. Whereas the groin vault was conceived as two interpenetrating barrel vaults, producing groin lines of difficult-to-manage parabolic curvatures and folds, the rib vault instead began conceptually and in construction as an integral framework of discrete arches, each with an independently generated curvature defined not by a mere edge but by strong plastic form. The formerly secondary groin line thus becomes the visually primary rib, with the vaulting surface now appearing as the visually secondary infill, the web, which serves as the ground for the dominant figure of the ribs. All that is left of the historical model is the idea of masonry vaulting with a four-part cross-diagonal division (and even that quadripartite organization is frequently exploded); in its physical realization all else is displayed as dramatically and conversely transformed.

Perhaps even more boldly revealing of the deeply critical, iconoclastic thrust of the rising movement is the closely associated modernist element known as the pointed arch. Although it has been variously interpreted in terms of bent tree

branches, heavenward thrust, Islamic precedent, and so forth, I propose that to the contemporary spectator it would have looked most of all not “pointed” (a post-medieval English term) but like a broken arch (*i.e.*, as in the relatively recent French *arc brisé*). That is, regardless of its key role in resolving geometric and structural problems of the rib vault, the form would have been seen, especially in the early period of its use, as a literal breaking—and reconstitution—of the semi-circular, unbroken arch that through the entire middle ages had been one of the primary historicist elements, a central point of reference to antiquity, whose architectural authority was now being shattered and replaced by a new modernist system. (Technically, the broken arch was realized by a de-centering operation, in which twin centers of curvature replaced a single central point.) One might say that the broken arch was an indexical sign of the revolution.¹³

The full architectural turn to modernism does not happen instantaneously, of course, but in a multi-generational process that sometimes might appear paradoxical in its development (a misleading illusion, we shall find, eventually dispelled by the reading proposed here). Perhaps this was truest of the treatment of the column, that great bearer of antique allusion which (unlike the immediately suppressed trabeation) persisted deep into the period of the turn to modernism (centuries later sowing controversy and confusion among architectural historians working with the usual methodologies).¹⁴ Thus at Suger’s Saint-Denis the conceptually point-like support system of the linear, skeletal rib vaulting takes the form of a revival, or more accurately a reemphasis of classicizing columns (Fig. 17). Such columns become prominent in the main arcades of “early Gothic” cathedrals—in most other respects highly modernist buildings—including Laon and especially Paris (Fig. 7).¹⁵ Highly indicative of the progressive takeover of the building by the modernist vision is the manner in which these conspicuous historicist forms subsequently are gradually subverted, transmuted, and ultimately eliminated (not in linear progress but by a far more complex developmental process). I propose that what tended to be displayed and seen in this process was not so much the column itself (as at Saint-Denis and the main arcade at Paris) but its anticlassical, modernist transformation, its degree of *difference* from a classically authentic column and column-usage (which the evidence of such structures as Speyer, Saint-Denis, Paris, and numerous others suggests was known to architects and clients of the time). The column, or columnar schema, I submit, was now retained, indeed made newly to proliferate densely throughout the church interior, in order to make possible the systematic representation of the critical progress of modernism through its expository self-distancing from authentic historicism, in readable, dramatic (and often hyper-rationalized)¹⁶ architectural language.

A pivotal step in this movement occurs in the High Gothic *pilier cantonné*, which literally imprisons the central column—earlier displayed freestanding and, by comparison, in good classical form at Paris and Laon—in a modernist cage of attenuated colonnettes, turning classicism against itself, as

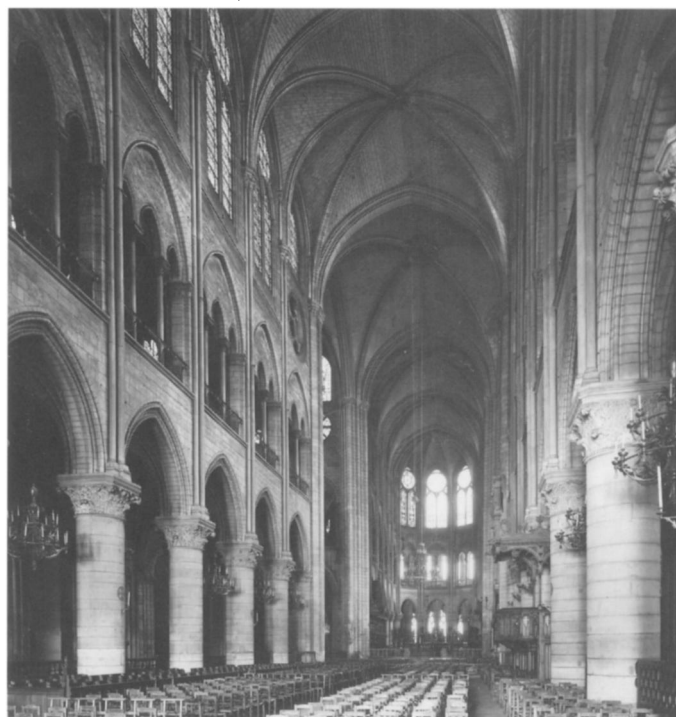


FIGURE 7. Paris, Notre-Dame, nave (photo: author).

it were, incarcerating the key historicist architectural idol according to its own devices (Fig. 8).¹⁷ A generation later, for example at Troyes Cathedral or in the nave of Saint-Denis, bundles of such colonnettes dominate the pier completely: they are now virtually all that we see, or are meant to see of the building’s supports (Fig. 9). All along, these colonnettes are progressively and radically thinned down and stretched out—as if on a rack—to the point that all connection with antique supportive substance and iconic presence is dissolved, all affirmation of their antique columnar origins negated: part of a process in which the classical element itself is physically forced (cumulatively imprisoned, broken, stretched) to represent the anticlassical (Fig. 10). Similarly, the capital, that crucial sign of the classical orders, is abstracted into the crocket type and shrivels to a mere speck in the gigantic elevation (as if burnt to a crisp on a spit), becoming at the higher levels nothing more than a faint sign of the terminal point of the columnar schema. In many cases the capital eventually disappears altogether, as does, in the still more radical late Gothic, the attic base and indeed, the entire independent colonnette, which, having exhausted its possibilities of modernization, finally gives way to a bundle of continuous vertical moldings, at which point the suppression of historicism is finally completed (Figs. 11, 12).¹⁸

Whereas the interior was modernized piecemeal—in a process that from Reims and the nave of Saint-Denis onward came increasingly under the domination of tracery, that most protean of intensely modernist devices (Fig. 13), which I need only mention to conjure its rising omnipresence—the exterior

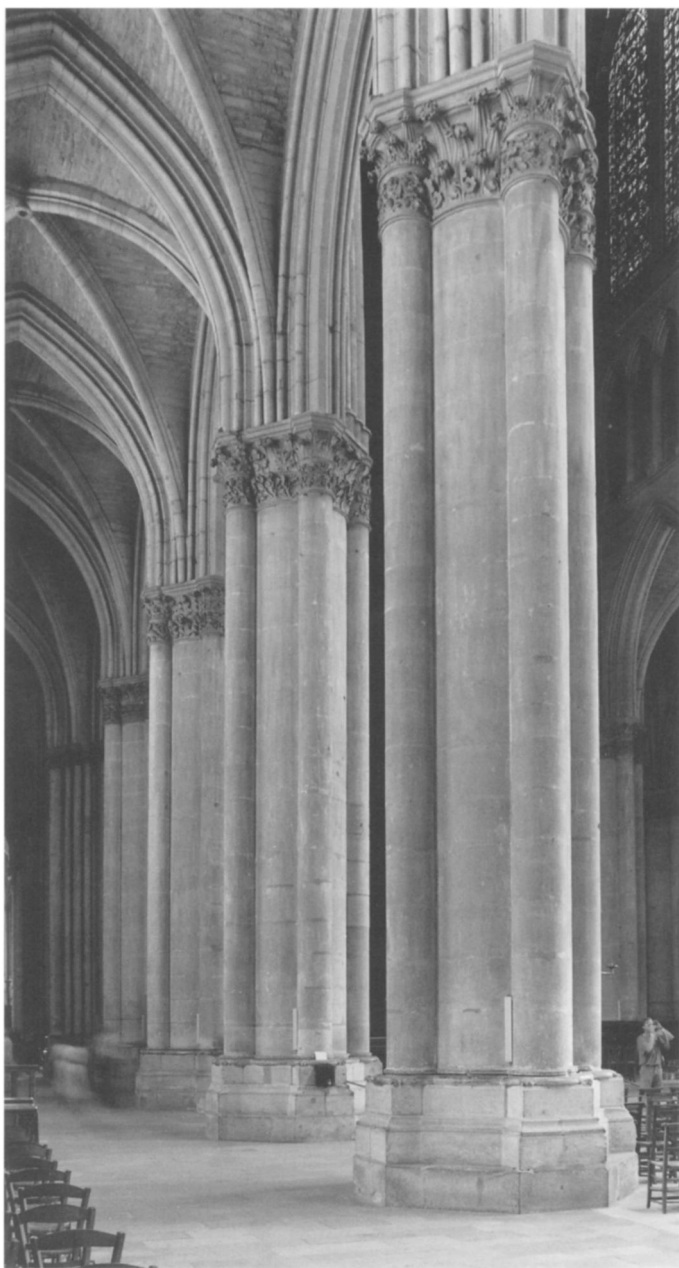


FIGURE 8. Reims, cathedral, pilier cantonné (photo: Anne-Marie Sankovitch).

of the cathedral rapidly, in a swift radical turn, became the most pure and powerful antihistoricist, modernist aspect of the building, in concept as well as detailing. If on the interior the classical language of form was agonistically turned against itself, step by exhilarating step, on the exterior it was exploded and scattered by the winds. The signal event here was, of course, the dramatic appearance of the flying buttress. The main issue is not precisely when or where this occurred but the way in which the brilliant modernist radicalism in a few decades' practice destroyed the classical probity of closed volumes in which buttressing either was entirely contained within the building or closely adhered to it.¹⁹ This largely hidden, inter-

nalized reinforcement system—equally in place at Cluny III, Saint-Étienne in Nevers, the Pantheon, and the Basilica of Maxentius—was now exfoliated, as it were, replaced by the explosive new mode of openwork reinforcement that I would term modernist structural exhibitionism, in opposition to historicist “Roman-esque” structural decorum (Figs. 14, 15, 16). So radically anticlassicist was this new external formatting that columns were not needed to represent the transformative process (as on the interior), and thus tended to be used only as minor, decorative accents, at most, on flying buttresses. This dramatic transformation of the cathedral exterior, as I read it, was made possible not merely by an internal structural logic, compelling though that logic may have seemed, but also by the powerful, iconoclastic antihistoricist urge of the medieval modernist movement, the power of modernist consciousness and desire to follow through in practice the radical direction that rational analysis indicated.

Some further definitions, clarifications, and implications

The above account represents in considerably more developed and autocritical form the core argument of my earlier article (before it turned to the spread of medieval modernism beyond northern France²⁰ and then to a consideration of Italy's place in the medieval scheme of things). The first point I now make concerning the issues raised by my thesis regarding the “Gothic”—and I stress that the following as well as the previous observations are all work in progress, open to revision, and offered in the knowledge that my reading poses many critical-historical problems incompletely addressed here—is that my approach to medieval architecture is derived from a familiar methodology applied to the architecture (and other cultural production) of certain non-medieval fields, in particular the Renaissance and modern periods. These periods are generally understood not in terms of style, as in virtually all current readings of the middle ages, but rather in terms of what, for lack of a more concise term, I would call “modalities of cultural-historical consciousness.” That is, the central factor underlying cultural production and reception in the Renaissance and modern periods is seen as a mode of historical consciousness, the period's sense of the relationship of the self, the institution, the community, or a particular discursive formation to the past. The character of such periods hinges on the dependence of cultural ambition and desire on the past or, conversely, on the sense of independence from the past; in other words, the oppositional pair that we know as historicism and modernism.

In the historicist mode, cultural production is categorically grounded in and legitimated by reference to historical precedent, often though not always classical antiquity. In modernism, this historicist grounding is suppressed—some would say repressed—and cultural production is considered, however self-deceptively, as both self-generating and self-legitimizing, grounded in the present (/future) without recourse to history.²¹ Thus, at least since Burckhardt, the Renaissance has been defined principally not as a style but as a movement driven by

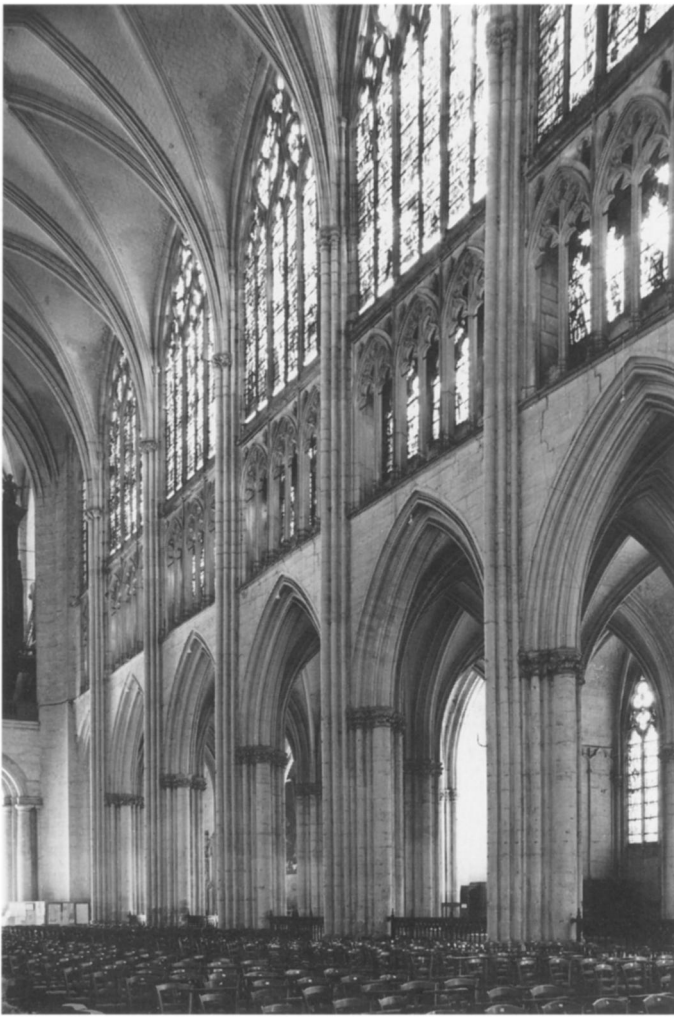


FIGURE 9. *Troyes, cathedral (photo: author).*



FIGURE 10. *Rouen, Saint-Ouen (photo: author).*

a turn in historical self-consciousness and desire, by a deep new historicism seen as pervasive throughout cultural production. But it is the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that provide the more relevant parallel to my reading of the medieval. In Labrouste's *Bibliothèque Ste-Geneviève*, for example, the nineteenth century is seen, much like the Romanesque, as a time committed to exploring both historicism and modernity, a project believed to be compromised in the eyes of the early twentieth century, which turned toward a purist modernism, as in Le Corbusier's *Villa Savoie*.

My second point of commentary will be to address the necessity, evident from observed patterns of misuse, to refine and reinforce certain distinctions (working if not absolute) in the terminology employed here, especially regarding the word "modern/ism." Although one differentiation should be obvious, it is often not kept in mind, and that is the difference between modernism and Modernism: respectively between a transhistorically potential mode of consciousness and experi-

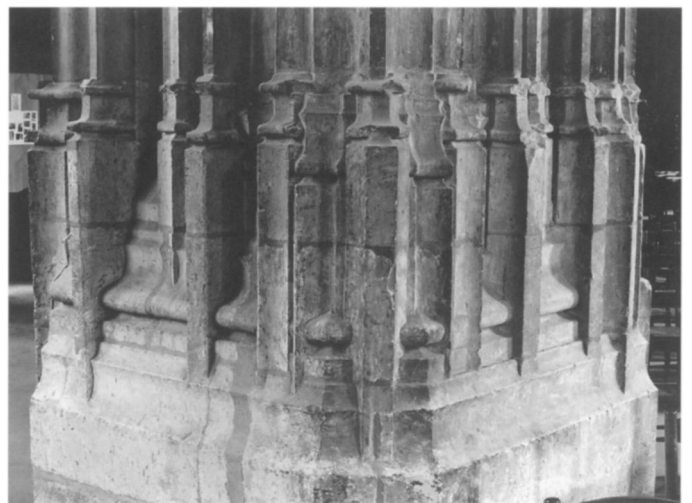


FIGURE 11. *Abbeville, Saint-Wulfram, pier base (photo: Anne-Marie Sankovitch).*

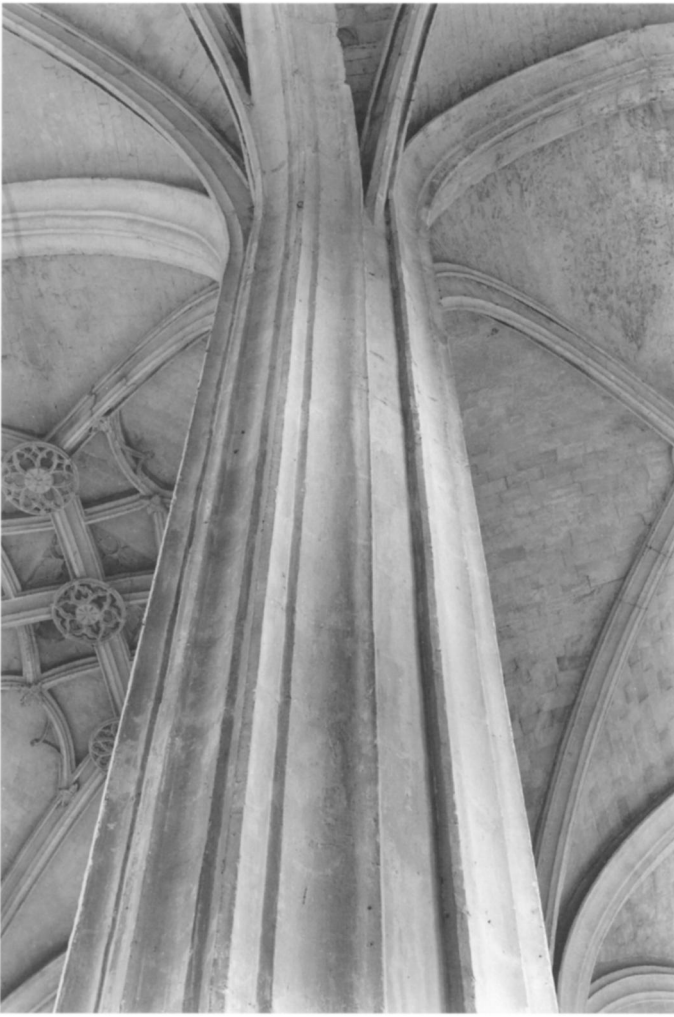


FIGURE 12. *Gisors, Saint-Gervais, nave aisle pier* (photo: Anne-Marie Sankovitch).

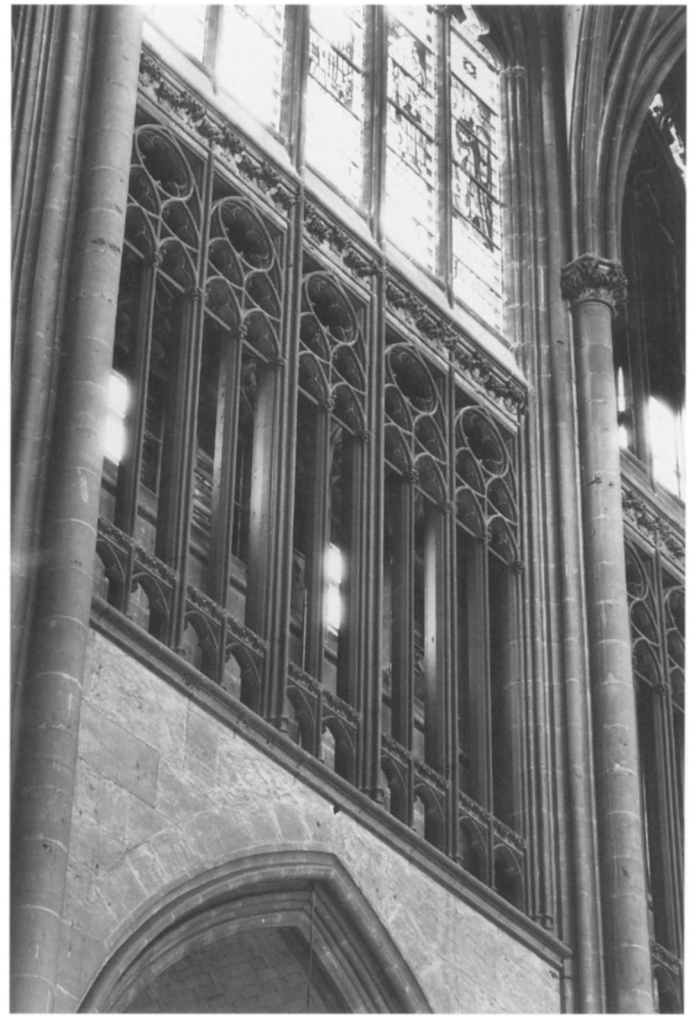


FIGURE 13. *Rouen, Saint-Ouen, nave triforium* (photo: author).

ence and its specific historical realization, *i.e.*, the Modernist movement of the twentieth century (or, indeed, the wider “Modernist” project for civilization formulated by the Enlightenment).²² Medieval Modernism would share with recent Modernism a common antihistoricist grounding in the “present,” an emphasis on the critical power of reason over precedent and authority, and ultimately to some degree an empowering of individual subjectivity, but—and this is a crucial distinction—not *necessarily* any particular formal features of its cultural production.²³ Unlike recent Modernism, which has been so transparent and omnipresent in culture, medieval Modernism experienced a much more problematic, often submerged or disguised existence as a cultural project, especially in terms of the textual record.²⁴

But modernism also entails a third meaning, for “modern” may and commonly does signify, of course, simply what is (or seems) new, recent, current, contemporary, or up-to-date. In this usage historicism can also be “modern,” as in the

Renaissance, when one use of the term modern was not to designate the “Gothic” but rather the “current” classical revival.²⁵ Although in practice both medieval and twentieth-century versions of modernism vitally incorporated such “newness,” this important meaning is not at the core of my redefinition of the medieval passage known as “Gothic.” My usage focuses instead on the evident, underlying shift in historical consciousness, grounding, and desire rather than on the associated formal novelty of the cultural products of the shift, that is, their specific formal difference from immediately preceding works.

Furthermore, I would point out analogously that historicism is to be distinguished from what might be called traditionalism, with which it is sometimes conflated. By traditionalism I mean the sheer continuation of practice.²⁶ Its opposite is not modernism, but simply innovation, or modern-as-newness (on whatever terms of consciousness).

With the above distinctions in mind, it is possible to differentiate my approach from others that it might misleadingly

seem to resemble, for example that of Jean Bony (the brilliant Focillon-esque “Gothicist” who would appear to come closest). When he writes, “The art we call Gothic was the assertion of a spirit of modernity which went on renewing itself for centuries, almost ceaselessly,” what he intends by “modernity” is essentially “a critical dissatisfaction with the immediate past” allied with a ceaseless “power of invention.”²⁷ He means, in other words, modernism as sheer innovation and radical refusal of tradition. But when he moves from such introductory remarks to historical analysis, it soon becomes clear that the architecture is being seen specifically through the eyes of twentieth-century Modernism, with an extreme emphasis on abstract, formalist criteria including space, surface, luminosity, and grids.²⁸ If neither of Bony’s M/modernisms thus resembles what I have outlined, they do understandably recall his great nineteenth-century predecessor, Viollet-le-Duc, who similarly emphasizes a spirit of innovation, although in primarily structural rather than formalist terms.²⁹ Of course these two preeminent interpreters of the Gothic practiced at very different historical moments and with very different agendas: whereas Viollet-le-Duc was a scholarly protoModernist who posited an ideal historical Gothic structure as the inspirational model for a modernist contemporary practice, Bony was an academic scholar practicing within the interpretive paradigm of Modernist formalism, writing primarily about individual medieval buildings almost as if they were Modern ones according to formal criteria. Although I would not assert that my post-Modernist perspective is necessarily postmodernist, I am aware that my interpretation has emerged at the end of the twentieth century in the wake of the historicizing of the Modernist movement, and that it involves a critique virtually unthinkable for Viollet-le-Duc and Bony who wrote from *within* the perspective of that living movement.

Turning from such problematics of definition and meaning, a third point that I would make here concerns certain advantages of the paradigm of cultural-historical consciousness over a style-centered methodology. The paradigm spares us the many well known difficulties associated with “style.”³⁰ Its modalities of modernism and historicism can occur in infinite pure and impure states of existence and coexistence. These modalities are about conscious desire, and consciousness, as we know, is inherently accommodating, expansive, and multilayered rather than intolerant, reductive, or monadic (as “style” tends to be in its globalizing insistence on coherent sets of a limited number of formal traits in individual works, artists, and periods). The paradigm allows for irrationality and exception, for the messy complexity and contradiction of life and of art. Thereby the cultural-historical consciousness paradigm permits and even fosters the explication of conflicted, multilayered works; it encourages us to see works in non-reductive, anti-hegemonic terms, to see the cathedrals formally as the complex and even self-contradictory entities that much contemporary research is proving them to have been in social

terms, and to explain that complexity unburdened by the demands of style, yet within a coherent view of the general formal character of these great works. The paradigm permits the unproblematic interpretation of periods of instability and of tension between historicist and modernist desire, like the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, in much the same way that it allows for the complexity of the period of the turn to medieval Modernism—a.k.a. the Gothic—in which the rising tide of modernist desire is rarely unaccompanied by a strain of historicist consciousness, strongly manifest in certain specific situations and sites. In other words, the paradigm enables us to understand those “problematic” classicizing columns in Saint-Denis or Notre-Dame in Paris (whose presence has so befuddled scholars from the nineteenth century to the present) in the same terms as the predominant modernism of these buildings, without compromising or subordinating either aspect in the manner unavoidable within the old paradigm of Romanesque-vs-Gothic, according to which by definition such classical elements should never appear in the latter style.³¹ It allows us to understand the nave of San Lorenzo in Rome, the Florence Baptistery, Autun and Speyer Cathedrals on compatible, meaningful terms of identity and difference (which otherwise has proven impossible), indeed to understand the Florence Baptistery and Bourges Cathedral on those same congruous terms. It lets us see Saint-Étienne in Caen as unproblematically including an eleventh-century quasi-modernist interior elevation, sparing us the agony of deciding whether the building is proto-Gothic or a Romanesque building with some proto-Gothic features. Similarly, it permits us to read the modernist vaulting of Sant’Ambrogio in Milan and its Lombard contemporaries for what it is, freeing us from the old nationalistic debate between francophile and Italianist scholars about its priority or nonpriority to French “Gothic.”

Ultimately, I feel, the paradigm may even allow us to develop a reading of medieval architecture not as stratified hor-



FIGURE 14. Rome, Pantheon (photo: author).

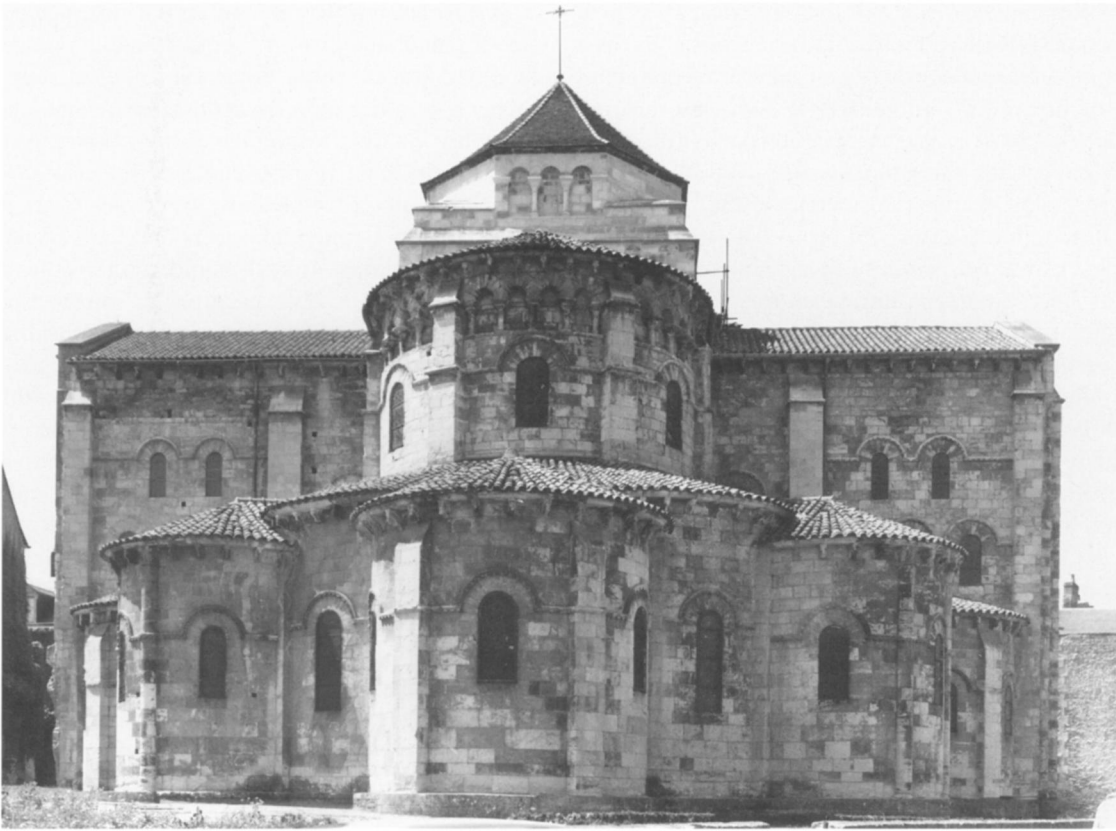


FIGURE 15. *Nevers, Saint-Étienne, choir (photo: author).*



FIGURE 16. *Le Mans, cathedral, choir buttresses (photo: author).*

izontally into “Romanesque” and “Gothic” layers at all (which inevitably solicits stylistic categorization), but vertically, as a continuum of cultural production organized around dominant twin strands of historicist and modernist discourse, distinct yet often entangled in ever-varying relationships. To pursue such a dialectical genetic logic to its conclusion, it implies a certain fundamental reorganization not only of the “medieval” (an archaic, now rather paradoxical term that would necessarily disappear)³² but conceivably of architectural history as a whole (at least within the European-Western sphere): a 90° reorientation of history from horizontal stratification to a consistently vertical dialectical structure, producing a transparency and compatibility between various architectural time zones—those called medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, and Modern—which currently are regarded as incompatible in their terms of interpretation.³³

Moreover, such transparency would result not only diachronically but potentially synchronically as well. As has been recently demonstrated, the social tends to become involved in style-based narratives mainly to explain away aberrations and inconsistencies in stylistic patterns and development, and this precludes meaningful contextual interpretation.³⁴ Just as style-based criticism is inherently asocial in its abstraction, so the paradigm of cultural-historical consciousness by definition is engaged in the social field, for what are consciousness and desire if not those specifically of individuals, groups, institutions, and communities? That is, although historicism and modernism are transhistorical concepts, they nevertheless compel close attention to the historical specificity of the period under study. The cultural products of cultural-historical consciousness are inevitably representations of that consciousness; as representations they bridge the gap between artistic form and desire. This indicates that the center of the paradigm I am suggesting for medieval architecture might be displaced from the matrix of consciousness toward the field of spatio-visual representation, which would shift the methodology toward alignment with many specific forms of current research in the period—and in art history in general.

It is not only academic research that stands in potential benefit of this interpretative paradigm, but also the architectural profession, its pedagogy, and its sense of historical grounding. Currently when premodern architectural history is at all a viable presence in schools of architecture, it tends to be focused on the Renaissance. This highly valorized period provides codified theory and rules to study, esoteric illustrated texts (like the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*) to pretend to understand, splendid ornamental forms to imitate in the Orders, and, perhaps most of all, vivid, heroic human models of legendary status to reinforce the Modernist hypervaluation of the architect as autonomous genius. That the medieval has so little presence in the current program of architectural study may be due largely to its lack of these Renaissance attractions (it has, alas, essentially only its buildings for the most part). But there may be another important obstacle (in addition to a contaminat-

ing spirituality), that of conceptual incompatibility; whereas the Renaissance fits, or seemingly can be made to fit current architectural concerns, the medieval, especially the Gothic, is generally understood according an assemblage of terms—masonry vaulting techniques and geometry, profile diagrams, diaphaneity and linearity, scholasticism, etc.—that are difficult, obscure, and understandably irrelevant to the pressing concerns of most young architects and their mentors in the late twentieth century. Here I would simply point out that these concerns often involve questions of modernism, historicism, and their conflicted and unresolved relationships, which raises an intriguing possibility: that a reformulated understanding of the medieval in terms of the paradigms of historicism and modernism would possibly open up the great epoch to the active interest of today’s architects, who might have as much to gain from an understanding of Saint-Denis and Bourges (and their masters) as from Palladio and the Villa Rotunda. And conversely, the medieval architectural field of scholarship would surely stand to benefit from a renewed interest in it within the field of architectural practice.

These are some of the issues and speculations that I find emerging from my thesis, tentative indications of certain directions of theoretical and practical thinking about medieval architecture in which I am currently engaged, and which I hope to realize eventually in an expansive form that will more fully engage those many critical and historical problems raised by my reading. These would include the core idea, not easily accepted, of attributing aspects of what is regarded as a modernist mode of consciousness to the “pre-Modern” period; the problem of where to situate such a modernist consciousness in that period, whether in the larger community, the workshop, the individual architect, etc.; how to reconcile consummated modernist desire in architecture with the entrenched and resistant authoritarianism and historicism of the period, or with scholasticism, problematic in its modernist strands. One thing already can be suggested here. The terms of the approach I am outlining will seem “anachronistic” to certain readers only because the traditional methodologies to which they subscribe have so naturalized their own terms of analysis that they are falsely and misleadingly seen as resident in the historical period itself. We can of course never meaningfully understand the past strictly on its discursive terms, but only on our own: this is what is meant by the iron law that every generation must rewrite history. The approach outlined in these pages offers, as I have indicated, the possibility of closely describing and accounting for the complexity of architectural phenomena in the “medieval” period of prevailing modernity (as well as in the previous epoch) in a comprehensive, historically grounded, descriptively positive way that does not require, as do all current interpretative models, the neglect, suppression or rationalized distortion of important aspects of this extraordinary architecture, which was surely produced by one of the most powerful and sustained currents of desire and intellectual drive of all time.

Because the above discussion has mostly been so theoretical and generalized, it is useful now to apply my approach in greater detail to two buildings, testing theory, as it were, through the practical analysis of specific medieval texts and images. The first building is Saint-Denis—the new westwork (1130/35–1140) and choir (1141–1144)—and more particularly, the still perplexing problem of how they are treated in Suger's celebrated texts (which all postdate the construction). I already have referred to the complexity of architectural discourse in the choir, that is, the incorporation of historicist monolithic columns in a radically modernist design, a multi-layering of modalities that would also include the historicist crypt. As already noted, however, their coexistence is no longer problematic, as there is no necessity to explain away or rationalize the crypt or the columns in order to make the building "Gothic." Rather, each element becomes a distinct voice in a complex discourse, with modernism, to be sure, playing the dominant, ascendant role, at least in the view of our long historical perspective. But rather than directly pursuing the representational dimensions of these voices, I will offer some commentary on Suger and his writings.

These complex and singular texts are problematic not only in their content but by their very existence. So exceptional are they in a period with so little writing about architecture that scholarship has long puzzled over Suger's agenda.³⁵ Generally and quite fairly, the texts are regarded as an apologia, Suger's defense against real and potential criticisms of the spectacular project. On the one hand, it is argued, there was the impious destruction of the sacred ancient fabric of the abbey to contend with, and on the other what might have been regarded as the architectural and artistic extravagance of the new work as a monastic structure, especially in the context of the ascetic current of monastic thought led in the period by Bernard of Clairvaux, with whom Suger was in close contact. Although internal and external evidence suggests that Suger was probably sensitive to both issues, they do not adequately account for his textual enterprise. Many important medieval projects involved the demolition of highly valued ancient church fabric, and many monastic projects, especially in the Benedictine order, were and continued to be lavish, but none, so far as we know, provoked anything faintly resembling Suger's multi-volume apologia for dismantling what probably was indeed a rather decrepit Carolingian church and replacing it with a new structure adequate to its current role as a major pilgrimage site and royal foundation of great political importance. Thus, in addition to the issues of demolition and decorum another explanatory factor is necessary, and I suggest that it was the dominant, radical, problematic modernity of the project.

It has been argued that Suger may not have invested his project with the Neoplatonic connotations that Panofsky so ardently believed were there, and certainly he was not in any way the architect of the building.³⁶ Nor need he have neces-

sarily thoroughly understood all of its technical and formal refinements. But the evidence certainly indicates that Suger was acutely aware of and in a deep way responsible for, and more importantly, that he *felt* responsible for its specific architectural character.³⁷

Most importantly, I would argue, he felt a need to defend its radical modernity. Although architectural historians often tend to emphasize evolutionist continuity, the derivation of the project's modernist design from post-Romanesque developments of the early twelfth century, these developments, at least in the Ile-de-France, were manifested mostly in modest churches or parts of such churches, such as the choir of Morienval and side aisles of Saint-Étienne in Beauvais. Despite the weight of these fabrics on the pages of our art histories, for Suger and his contemporaries they were but minor features of a vast architectural landscape of hundreds of non-modernist, or slightly modernist churches. Nor, obviously, did these men know of modernism's great future toward which the new church was such a decisive step, and which would vindicate Suger's patronage of the new. In the eyes of contemporaries the modernity of the great Saint-Denis project can only have represented not continuity with the past (or possible future) but sheer discontinuity; it was a definitive break, a radical swerve that *in itself*—quite apart from its replacement of hallowed ancient fabric—needed legitimation at a moment when architectural modernism was just on the cusp of ascendancy and had not yet widely acquired its own sustaining force of self-legitimation. (As Panofsky insightfully put it, "It was as if a President of the United States were to have had the White House rebuilt by Frank Lloyd Wright"—before 1920, I would add.)³⁸

If this is so, then by what means did Suger seek to legitimize the modernism of his enterprise (which he actually calls not merely *opus novum* but *modernum*)?³⁹ The most radically modernist part of the building was, of course, not the westwork but the choir, and it was on this fabric that Suger—knowingly, it would seem—concentrated his literary efforts regarding modernism. Scattered through his text are statements that, when read in context and, as they used to say, between the lines, constitute three lines of defense.⁴⁰ The first of these is the most familiar to us, namely the functionalism of the choir in terms of the circulatory and visual advantages of its new luminous openness to the movement and vision of pilgrims visiting the great display of relics in the chapels (Fig. 17).⁴¹

Suger's second defense is what we might call aesthetic, and it is produced most acutely by the famous line regarding "the circular string of chapels" that cause the church "to shine with the wonderful and uninterrupted light of most sacred windows, pervading the interior beauty" (Fig. 18).⁴² Even if Suger is not referring here specifically to Pseudo-Dionysian light metaphysics, he surely is emphasizing the positive new aesthetic effects that only the open modernist design could have produced, the wonderful luminosity it provides the interior, heightening its beauty, hence its worthiness to be the church of such a prestigious foundation.⁴³

But it is the third line of defense that Suger may have regarded as the most potent. It involved authentication of modernity not by functionalism or aesthetics, but by the approval of God (and the saints), the ultimate source of authority and legitimacy. I refer to one of the miracles that Suger relates in *De consecratione* concerning divine assistance to the fabric, namely the one in which God himself protects the incomplete choir from a violent storm. In reading this passage, please note that the story centers on the key aspect of the structural apparatus of architectural modernism, the independent ribs (Fig. 19)—which Suger of course accurately calls arches—standing free of centering awaiting the construction of the webs, and note how often they are mentioned (in passages that I have italicized).⁴⁴ He writes,

when the work on the new addition with its capitals and upper arches was being carried forward to the peak of its height, but the *main arches—vaulted independently—were not yet held together by the bulk of the webs*, there suddenly arose a terrible and almost unbearable storm with an obfuscation of clouds, an inundation of rain, and a most violent rush of wind. So mighty did this [storm] become that it blew down, not only well-built houses but even stone towers and wooden bulwarks. At this time . . . when the venerable Bishop of Chartres, Geoffroy, was solemnly celebrating at the main altar a conventual Mass . . . such a force of contrary gales hurled itself against *the aforesaid arches, not supported by any scaffolding nor resting on any props*, that they threatened baneful ruin at any moment, miserably trembling and, as it were, swaying hither and thither. The Bishop, alarmed by the strong vibration of these [arches] and the roofing, frequently extended his blessing hand in the direction of that part [and made other gestures] . . . so that he escaped disaster, manifestly not through his own strength of mind but by the grace of God and the merit of the Saints. Thus [the tempest], while it brought calamitous ruin in many places to buildings thought to be firm, was unable to damage *these isolated and newly made arches*, tottering in midair, because it was repulsed by the power of God.⁴⁵

Three times in this extraordinary passage Suger calls our attention to the “isolated,” “unsupported” ribs, threatened by the storm. God himself protects these “newly made” ribs, surely the key componential novelty of Saint-Denis’s modernity in the eyes of a non-architect, from the destruction that older buildings suffer. If we allow that the ribs function synecdochically for the entire modernist structure, Suger is saying that that structure is sanctioned as worthy, granted legitimacy by God himself, with the saints thrown in for good measure. In this manner Suger would appear to reveal that at a certain level and point of reception (if not also production) the self-grounding of modernity as yet provided inadequate legitimation, and some supplementary retrofitting of external authority was still regarded as necessary.

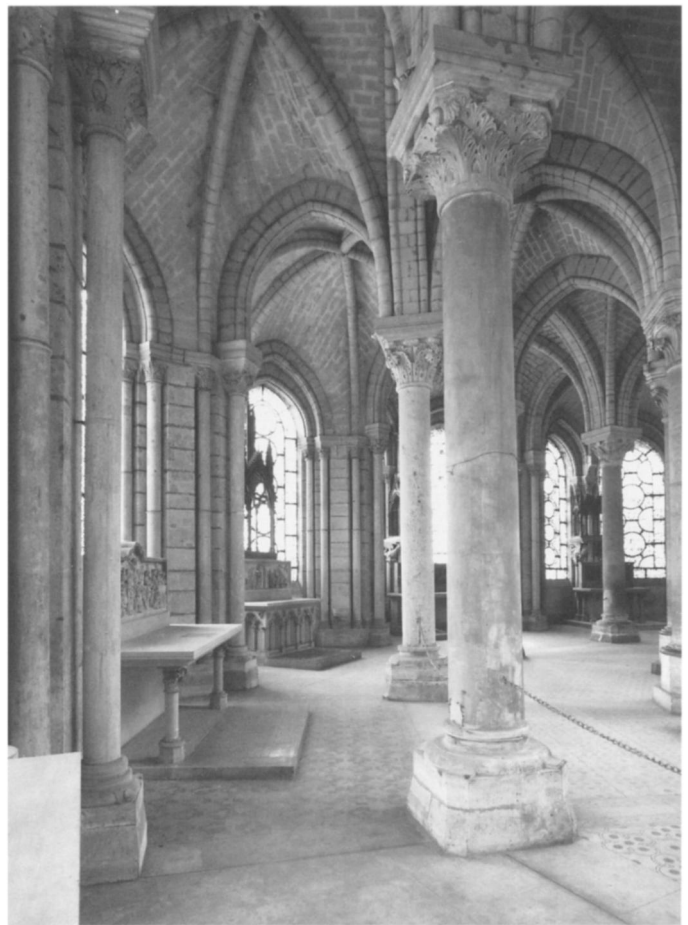


FIGURE 17. *Saint-Denis, ambulatory* (photo: author).

God’s rescue of the modernist choir vaults is the most vivid of Suger’s miracle stories, which are so numerous (at least seven)⁴⁶ as to give the impression, together with other passing remarks, that the entire new fabric, both westwork and choir, advanced only under divine inspiration, guidance, generosity, intervention, protection, or approval. It is almost as if God himself were the builder, and Suger merely his instrument (an inference surely intended: just as miracles made men saints, so Suger’s enterprise might be sanctified).⁴⁷ This impression is justified, for divine assistance to the new fabric is not merely randomly and spontaneously recollected, as one might first think when reading the dense, colorful, agitated text of *De consecratione*, but is effectively depicted as comprehensive. Suger’s string of miracles, far from being casually thrown together, is highly organized narratologically and conceptually. The miracles appear in the actual order of construction, beginning with the discovery of a quarry of exceptional stone and the arrival of accomplished workmen,⁴⁸ continuing with miracles concerning supports, roof, and—here shifting tellingly from westwork to choir—vaulting,⁴⁹ and ending with the provision of sheep for the final consecration feast.⁵⁰ Moreover, the miracles comprise two categories: one (all-purpose



FIGURE 18. *Saint-Denis, panoramic view of ambulatory from hemicycle center, 1970 (photo: author).*



FIGURE 19. *Saint-Denis, ambulatory vaulting (photo: author).*

miracles, as it were) affects the fabric as a whole (stone, workmen, sheep), while the other concerns three specific major building components, *i.e.*, columns, rib vaults, and roofing, which I suggest serve synecdochically to represent the entire

fabric. It is this latter group to which I would draw our attention. What I propose is that the vault miracle, already discussed as a defense of modernism, should be seen in conjunction with the other miracles of this “componential” group, as effectively

forming a coordinated, cross-referential defense of the entire project, reflexively strengthening my reading of the vault miracle as a self-conscious tactic to defend modernism.⁵¹

Suger dedicates two miracles to the historicist, monolithic columns (Fig. 17). Although these two miracles occurred during the construction of the westwork—when columns were needed for the extension of the old columnar nave connecting it with the new facade structure⁵²—they would have provided similar, even more prominent columns also for the new choir a few years later. Given this fact and the way the text seems generally to conjure out of fragmentary miraculous episodes a comprehensive umbrella of divine assistance for the entire fabric, I suggest that it would be difficult not to interpret the two column miracles synecdochically, as applying to all parts of the building where monoliths were used, *i.e.*, including the new choir.⁵³

The second of these miracles is unproblematic: a group of only seventeen workers manages, with God's help, to haul one of the columns up from the bottom of the quarry, a feat normally requiring "a hundred forty or at least one hundred men."⁵⁴

The first column miracle, which concerns the discovery of the quarry itself (evidently a different quarry from the one providing ordinary stone), is the more intriguing and telling. Suger's story is that, unable to find a local source for monolithic columns, he had been hoping, in desperation, to procure them as spoils from Rome, perhaps from the "Palace" (Baths) of Diocletian, when through "Divine mercy" a local quarry sufficient to his needs (having "reserved" its best materials for Saint-Denis) was unexpectedly identified at nearby Pontoise.⁵⁵

The curious thing about the passage is not the (almost anticipated) miracle of the quarry discovery, but Suger's revelation that he seriously considered obtaining the monoliths from Rome, going so far as to describe the arduous sea-and-river route that they would take. It is hard to know exactly what to make of this story.⁵⁶ Some readers might find it difficult to imagine that the great administrator Suger, who took such pride in the rapid construction of his project, believed even for a moment and under duress (as he claims) that he ever could or would procure columns all the way from Rome (as much as he might have liked to), quite apart from the inappropriate scale of Diocletian's shafts for his building or, for that matter, their likely unavailability, points which might be considered giveaways of a certain lack of authorial sincerity. On the other hand, for all its structuring of the miracle narration and other details, Suger's text is full of the unexpected, as might be anticipated from the pen of such a complex, dynamic individual, who was writing something close to a medieval romance, epic, or indeed hagiography (considering the many miracles). It is thus entirely possible, if not in fact more likely that the story was not made up (Suger did incorporate "spoils" from the old nave in the new choir, in the form of six slender marble columns on the outer piers).⁵⁷ What I would emphasize is that in either case, Suger's purpose in telling the Rome/Diocletian story—which is extraneous and quite unnecessary to the mir-

acle itself—would have been the same. Apart from stressing again that nothing was too good for his project and the difficulties of procuring such materials, the story serves to emphasize the historicism of the classical simulacra manufactured from local materials provided by God. It informs us that Suger regarded the columns as classicizing—certainly *ex post facto* and probably also at their manufacture—and, moreover, that while he imagined that others would probably be in agreement, he wanted to make sure. Generic divine blessing of the new columns, and the divine procurement of their material evidently were not enough for Suger. Seeking redundant layers of legitimacy, he seems to have wanted to certify that the new monolithic shafts of his fabric, in the westwork connection and including the supports of his modernist choir,⁵⁸ were explicitly, unavoidably seen—like those of the Carolingian nave, which he evidently regarded as virtually antique⁵⁹—as classically historicist, historicism being in itself a powerful legitimizing agent.

To go a step further, what Suger appears to be saying with his vault and column miracles, I propose, is that his project comprises both modernism and an important, counterbalancing form of historicism, by means of elements that are sanctioned by God not only generically but intrinsically and specifically as historicism. Thus the set of historicist choir monoliths (which he evidently had polychromed, and some capped with strongly classicizing capitals)⁶⁰ would have served as a doubly legitimized and metonymically legitimizing agent of the radical modernist apparatus that it literally and metaphorically supports.

Although the final miracle of this group does not overtly participate in the historicist-modernist dialectic of Suger's church interior, it nevertheless may have been directed toward the problematics of legitimacy as I have construed them. Here, in an associative parallel to the miracle of the quarry discovery, God guides Suger through a supposedly depleted forest to the giant trees needed for the great tie-beams of the church roof. Although the reference here appears to be the roofing of the central narthex area, by extension—as with the columns—the miracle would also apply indirectly to the high choir roof, which required beams of the same exceptionally large dimensions: in other words, the miracle would appear to have pertained to the new roofing as a whole.⁶¹

In modern scholarship nearly all interest in the materials and facture of medieval church architecture is focused on the masons and their "secrets," the roof remaining virtually invisible (except to dendrochronologists and roof specialists); but the medieval observer—especially the patron—knew better, that carpenters and timber were a major and indispensable part of the enterprise, represented by the elaborate scaffolding apparatus, lifting machinery, massive and precise centering, huge doors and other furnishings, and, of great final importance, the roof, comparable in the effort and expense it required to the masonry of columns and vaults.⁶² Similarly, the obvious point needs to be stressed that the functional importance of the roof was hardly nominal. Thus, in providing es-

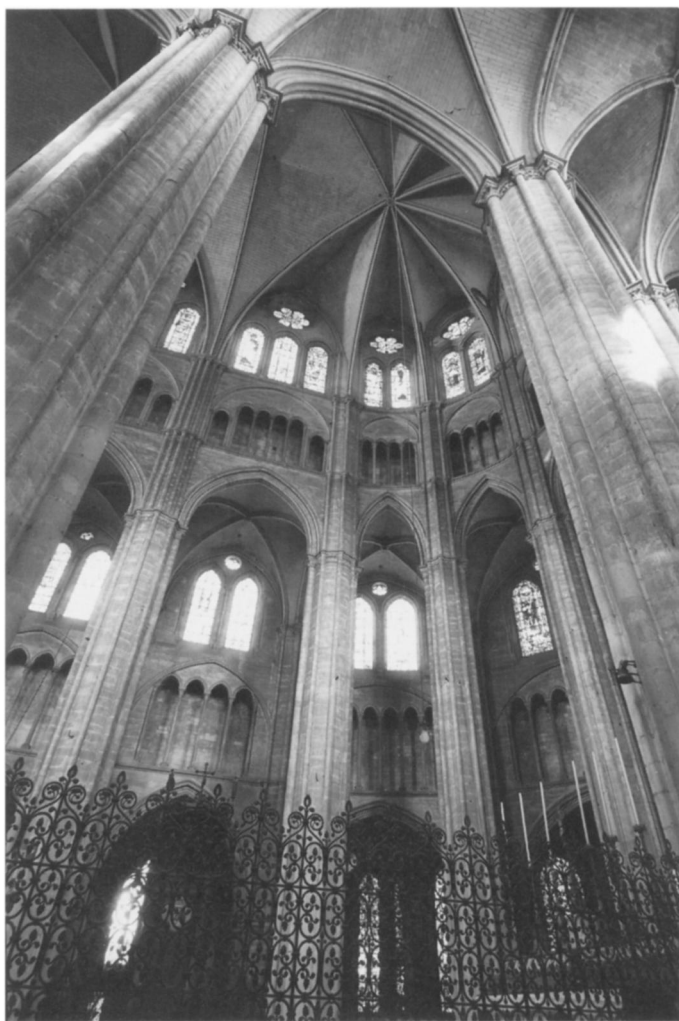


FIGURE 20. Bourges, cathedral, choir area (photo: author).

essential materials for the roof, God was not merely giving generic sanction to the rebuilt church by providing one more random building element. Rather he miraculously provided that very element which protected the entire new enterprise beneath it, modernist and historicist components alike (whether in the narthex or choir areas); and this, I tentatively propose, in the context of the seeming cross-referentiality of the other miracles in question and the synoptic, synecdochic structure of the text, is what Suger may have meant in telling the miracle of the forest. That he firmly understood the interconnectivity of all three components (columns, vault, roof) in miraculous terms that applied to the choir is indicated by the miracle of rapid construction which he had earlier related in *De administratione*:

How much the Hand Divine which operates in such matters has protected this glorious work is also surely proven by the fact that It allowed that the whole magnificent building [would be completed] in three years and three months, from

the crypt below to the summit of the vaults above, elaborated with the variety of so many arches and columns, including even the consummation of the roof.⁶³

The Bourges problem

In conclusion, I turn briefly to Bourges, specifically to what might be called the “Bourges problem”: the question as to why the spectacular building had a relatively meager following, especially compared with Chartres, its exact contemporary (Fig. 20). In other words, in terms of reception and imitation, why was Bourges, which virtually all critics agree is a stunning masterwork of the highest rank in originality and formal power, relatively such a “failure”?⁶⁴ Why was, in Branner’s words, in contrast to Chartres the “model,” Bourges the “outsider”?⁶⁵ The answer commonly given is that essentially it embodied too ambitious and singular a scheme to be easily imitated or adapted; it was too visionary, “a whole that had to be imitated in its totality or not at all” according to Branner, with Bony concurring that it was “a rather exacting prototype to follow.”⁶⁶ True enough, to comprehensively and faithfully reproduce its five-aisled, transeptless plan, staggered cross section, and self-repeating elevation, would certainly have been an “exacting” brief, for the combination, which produced a “church-within-a-church,” was viable only at a scale approximating that of the prototype while requiring, for the complete effect, that the patron forgo a transept and accept, at best, a severely restricted, nominal program of chapels. These practical problems were probably accompanied by important symbolic issues: the lack of a transept meant the absence of cruciform spatial iconography; and together with the continuous five-aisled plan, the missing transept produced an absence of architectural distinction and hierarchy between choir and nave that was achieved in traditional planning and brought to full realization in the Chartrian scheme (with its three-aisled nave, transept, and five-aisled choir). The few followers of Bourges tend to confirm this reading by “normalizing” its scheme to varying degrees; at Le Mans, for example, the new Bourges-type choir includes a full ring of chapels as well as an adjacent transept, with the preexisting three-aisled nave remaining subordinate to the new five-aisled eastern structure.

Yet Le Mans (like the other followers) also tells us something else: Bourges was rather more flexible and open to adaptation than is commonly held; its intractability, in other words, has been exaggerated.⁶⁷ That the “problem” of Bourges must have involved more than simply an inflexible scheme may also be inferred from the reception of its highly original details—or rather, the absence of active reception, for virtually none of these details, including the singular piers and flying buttresses, which might have been employed readily in non-Bourges schemes, were taken up outside the Bourges group. The Bourges “problem,” in other words, runs deeper than typology.

I propose that the real “problem” with Bourges, which informed virtually all of its traits and was central to its meager

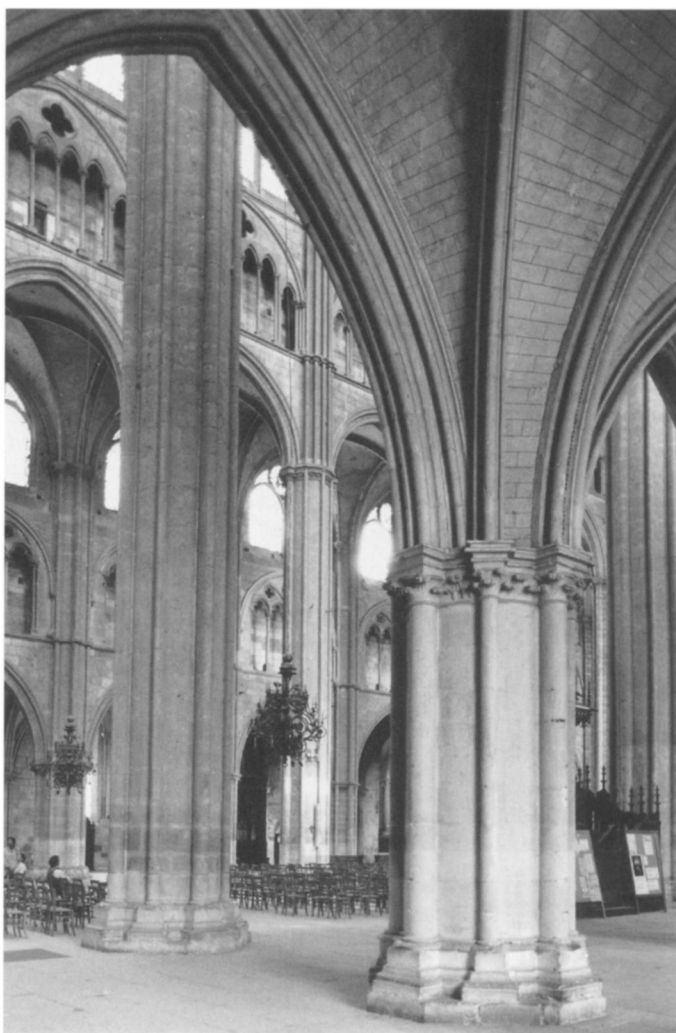


FIGURE 21. Bourges, cathedral, view including main and aisle piers (photo: author).

reception, resided in its exceptional degree of modernity. Bourges was “visionary” not merely in some generalized sense but in a profoundly modernist way. The building, in fact, is to be recognized as unquestionably by far the most uncompromisingly radical and comprehensively advanced modernist design of its time—indeed, in virtually every respect so far ahead of its time that it might be fairly called futurist.⁶⁸

The modernism of Bourges is so thoroughgoing that a full account of it would involve almost a complete description of the building. A few essential observations, however, should make the point. Its combined five-aisled, transeptless plan, staggered cross-section, and self-repeating elevation produces a synthesis generating the spectacular illusion of a church-within-a-church, a sensational effect without historicist reference or grounding (despite partial models at Cluny, Sens, Paris, etc.). The radically modernist, antihistoricist (as well as non-traditional) character of the physical forms in which this visionary scheme is realized becomes clear in a comparison

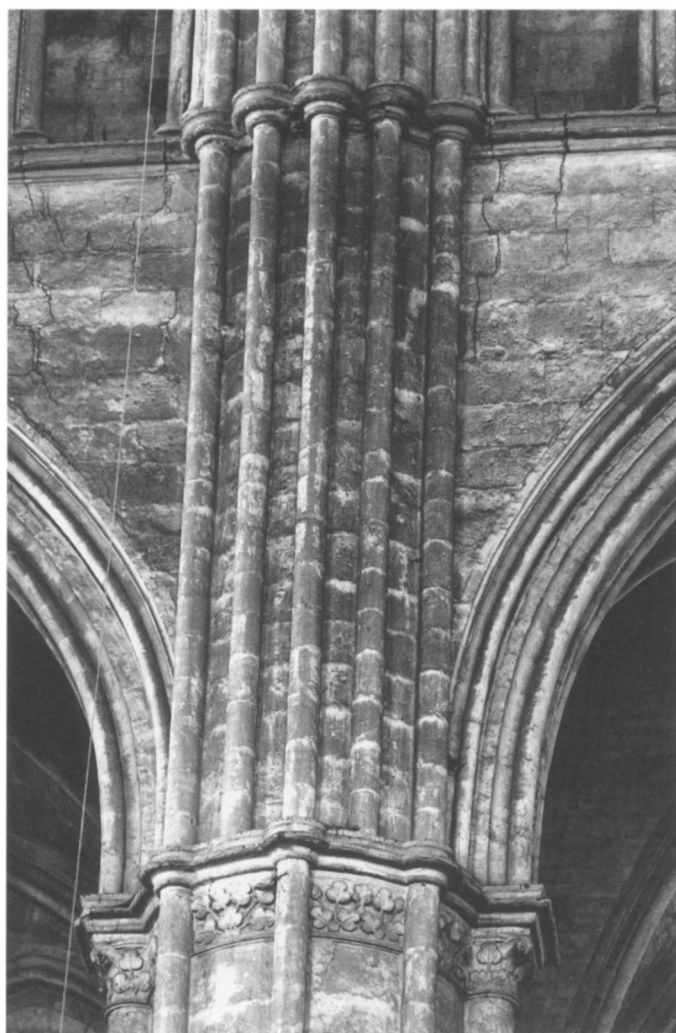


FIGURE 22. Bourges, cathedral, respond system, detail (photo: author).

of its primary elements of pier, vaulting, and buttressing with those of Chartres, whose receptive success was of course as powerful as that of Bourges was wanting. The *pilier cantonné* of Chartres or its immediate follower, Reims, as already noted, placed within a cage of attenuated colonnettes a full central column, amply classical in its proportions, including its capital size (Fig. 8). At Bourges, despite a certain schematic similarity, no such agonistic interaction of column/colonnette occurs, for the central pier element is not the rather accurately classicizing column of Chartres but such a column already transformed, declassicized, modernized, converted into a huge pier-like cylindrical mass with only a vestigial capital. Moreover, taking exaggeratedly aberrant proportions, in an accordionlike movement these supports alternate between extremely squat and highly elongated forms, respectively, in the aisles and main arcade (Fig. 21). On these gargantuan masses, which slither up past their capitals as an undulation in the upper wall, are placed—with an almost vine-like effect—a widely

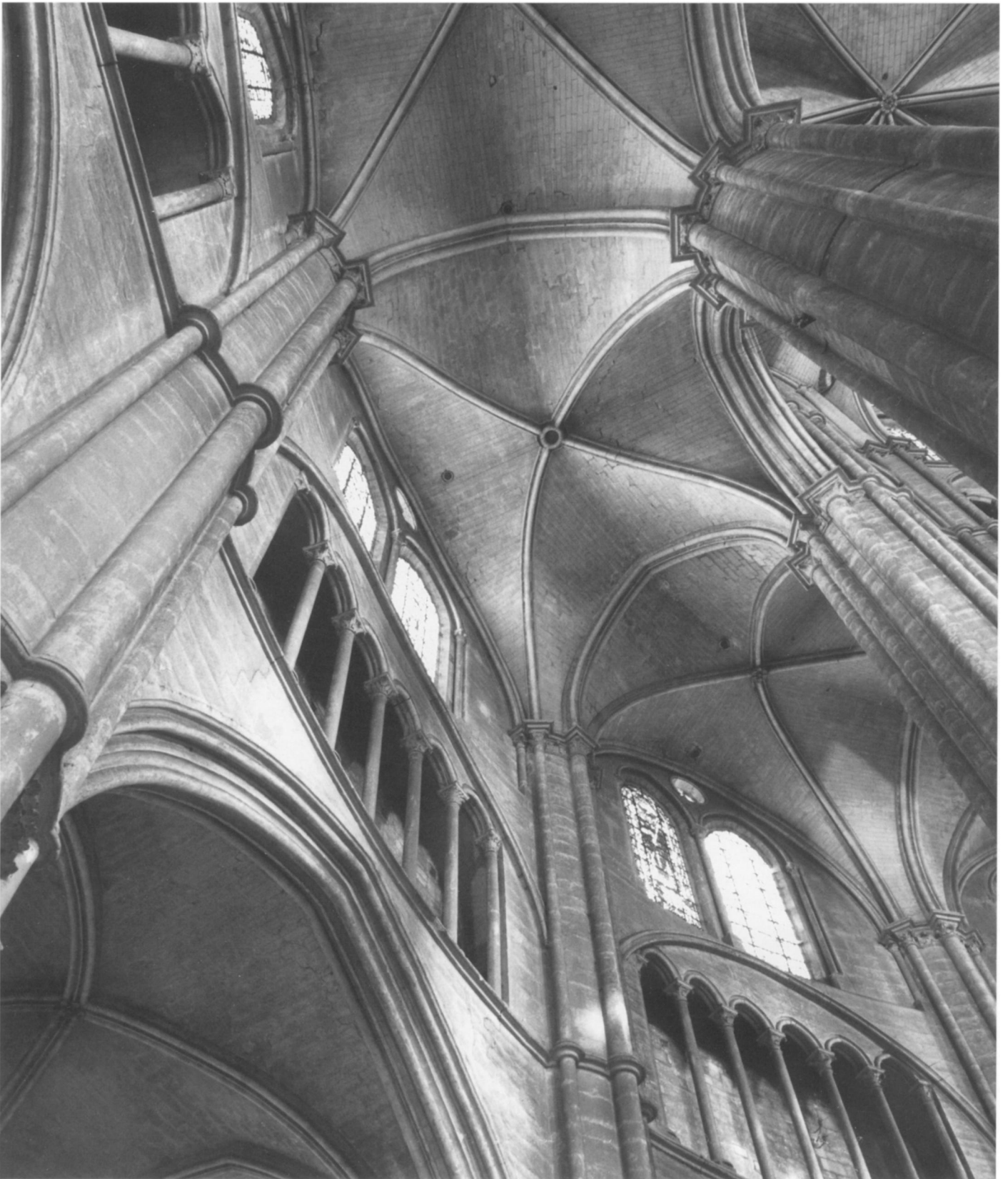


FIGURE 23. *Bourges, cathedral, ambulatory vaulting (photo: author).*

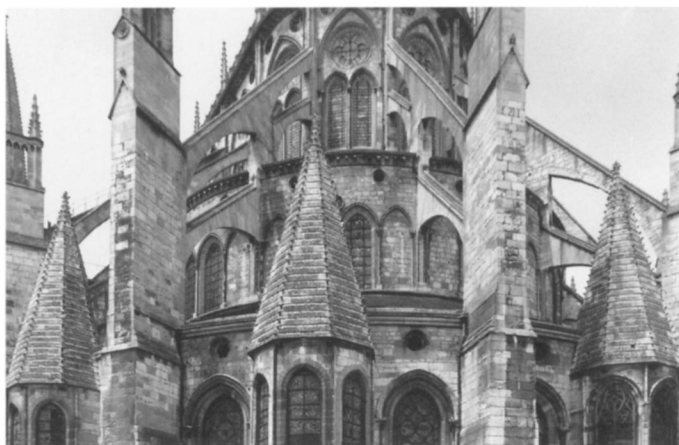


FIGURE 24. Bourges, cathedral, choir buttressing (photo: author).

spaced set of hyperattenuated responds, which at arcade level rather than multiplying outward in the usual pattern are filled-in inwardly with supplementary shafts (Fig. 22). Moreover, at Bourges recognizably classical columns are denied even to the hemicycle (where they are regularly found, as at Chartres), around which the complex anticlassical piers of nave and choir march unaltered.

Turning to vaulting, if we look first to Chartres we find the pointed arch pervasively realized in firm, strong profiles unwaveringly straight in plan. At Bourges, not only are the ribs now extremely thin (more so even than at Paris), approaching true linearity, but in the ambulatory bays they sometimes take a double curvature: the arch, in other words, here is not just broken but twisted three-dimensionally into sinuous lines (Fig. 23).

It is in its buttressing system, particularly in the choir flyers, that Bourges attains perhaps the extreme point of its radical modernism (Fig. 24 and front cover). In sharp contrast to the nave buttressing of Chartres, where pier-towers of Egyptian weight sustain double, massive full-quadrant flyers linked by a wheel-like arcade of semicircular arches, at Bourges tall, emaciated, deep piers launch lean, stripped-down, extremely steep flyers that often take only segmental curves (at the upper levels) and thereby give the impression of almost straight struts rather than arched units. Although the futuristic Bourges choir flyers were structurally the most efficient ever built in the period, like the building's other details they were never imitated, and indeed, were somewhat "normalized" in the nave.⁶⁹ In other words, the futurism of Bourges came under the critical fire even of its own workshop: part of a pattern that should perhaps be entitled "the resistance to Bourges" (which was so much stronger and more widespread than the critical reception of Chartres—clearly a building with many strong historicist traits, not unlike Suger's choir—emphasized by Bony).⁷⁰

What this reading seems finally to tell us is that fifty years after Suger's inspired, yet divided patronage of Saint-

Denis, it was possible to build a work of virtually pure modernity. Yet in a very real sense the strain of resistance to absolute modernism had not vanished but merely moved to a higher level, as it were. Whereas at Saint-Denis (as still at Chartres) patron and architect had crafted a multivoiced work that accommodated competing currents of cultural-historical consciousness and desire, their counterparts at Bourges evidently were single-minded men possessed by an uncompromising modernist vision of architecture, who chose to disregard any such voices of "resistance." Bourges thereby became the first building in which all was sacrificed on the altar of modernity regardless of consequences.⁷¹

NOTES

1. "Gothic/Italian 'Gothic': Toward a Redefinition," *JSAH*, L (1991), 22–37.
2. L. Grodecki, *Gothic Architecture*, trans. I. M. Paris (New York, 1977), 24.
3. E.g., H. Kraus, *Gold Was The Mortar: the Economics of Cathedral Building* (Boston, 1979); B. Abou-el-Haj, "The Urban Setting for Late Medieval Church Building: Reims and its Cathedral between 1210 and 1240," *AH*, XI (1988), 17–41; A. Erlande-Brandenburg, *The Cathedral, the Social and Architectural Dynamics of Construction*, trans. M. Thorn (Cambridge, 1994); many of the articles in *Artistic Integration in Gothic Buildings*, ed. V. Chieffo Raguin, K. Brush, and P. Draper (Toronto, 1995). See also the comments of W. Sauerländer on this displacement, in "'Première architecture gothique' or 'Renaissance of the twelfth century'?" Changing perspectives in the evaluation of architectural history," *Sewanee Medieval Colloquium Occasional Papers*, II (1985), 25–29. The shift in interest is starkly evident in comparing P. Frankl's Pelican textbook, *Gothic Architecture* (Harmondsworth, 1962) with D. Kimpel and R. Suckale, *Die gotische Architektur in Frankreich 1130–1270* (Munich, 1985).
4. P. Frankl, *The Gothic* (Princeton, 1960). Christopher Wilson's insightful recent survey, *The Gothic Cathedral, Architecture of the Great Church, 1130–1530* (London, 1990), despite its title dismisses or avoids the old question, shifting the center of discussion to the issue of the "Great Church" typology. Nor is there in Kimpel's and Suckale's masterful survey of French Gothic (*Die gotische Architektur*) any sustained engagement with the issue (Gothic being implicitly defined as a new, post-classical style or architectural language, without any review of the problematics of definition).
5. E.g., Filarete (cf. Frankl, *The Gothic*, 256–257, 858–859). This should not be confused with the later Renaissance use of the term "modern" for the Renaissance itself (for example, by the Pseudo-Raphael and Vasari). On the phenomenon of Renaissance period-naming, see E. H. Gombrich, "Norm and Form: The Stylistic Categories of Art History and their Origins in Renaissance Ideals," in *Norm and Form* (London, 1966), 81–88.
6. During the Gothic period itself, so far as we know, architecture was qualified only geographically, as "opus francigenum." The phrase was used by Burchard von Hall around 1280 in reference to the German abbey church of St. Peter at Wimpfen im Tal (Frankl, *The Gothic*, 55). As Frankl points out (*ibid.*), Gervase of Canterbury was similarly aware that the Gothic choir of Canterbury Cathedral, which he chronicled, derived from France. In late medieval Italy, there is no reason to believe that the Gothic would not have been seen as something French, although it may have become associated also with Germany already in the trecento (H. Klotz, "Deutsche und italienische Baukunst im Trecento," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz*, XI [1966], 173–206). By

- the cinquecento the geographical locus of the Gothic had completely shifted to Germany in the eyes of the Italians (who often called it the *maniera tedesca*); but for Philibert Delorme, presumably reflecting current French notions, the Gothic remained French, as well as being “modern” (Frankl, *The Gothic*, 297).
7. On the term Romanesque, see Frankl, *The Gothic, passim*; the perceptive analysis of L. Seidel, *Songs of Glory, The Romanesque Facades of Aquitaine* (Chicago, 1981), 4–7; and T. Bizzarro, *Romanesque Architectural Criticism: A Prehistory* (Cambridge, 1992).
 8. Such a *volte-face* would closely parallel developments in literary-intellectual circles centered in France, where a shift occurred around 1150 from a strong proto-humanistic revival of antique material to self-consciously new methods and interests emphasizing novelty, promoted by scholars who sometimes were prone to call themselves “moderns”; see S. C. Ferruolo, “The Twelfth-Century Renaissance,” in *Renaissances Before the Renaissance*, ed. W. Treadgold (Stanford, 1984) 139–140, 144.
 9. I seek to explain this Roman purism in more positive terms in “On Brunelleschi’s Choice: Speculations on Medieval Rome and the Origins of Renaissance Architecture,” in *Architectural Studies in Memory of Richard Krautheimer*, ed. C. L. Striker (Mainz, 1996), 169–174.
 10. E. Gall, *Die gotische Baukunst in Frankreich und Deutschland* (Leipzig, 1925).
 11. On this huge subject, see above all, E. Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renaissance in Western Art* (New York, 1965). I would emphasize that one might think of, for example, the attenuated columns and pilasters of Speyer, Saint-Sernin, Cluny III, and Autun not in the usual terms of confusion and misunderstanding of the classical but more as self-conscious, knowing, modernizing distortions of the very antiquity to which these same buildings are so powerfully attached.
 12. On the problematics of the nineteenth-century concept of the “transitional” in modern architectural discourse, see A. M. Sankovitch, “Structure/Ornament and the Modern Figuration of Architecture,” *AB*, LXXX (1998), 687–717, especially n. 34.
 13. The pointed arch, which first occurs in eighth-century Islamic architecture, appears toward 1100 in Burgundy (for example, Cluny III) and elsewhere (e.g., Durham). Its adoption is generally attributed to structural advantages; see, e.g., J. Bony, *French Gothic Architecture of the 12th and 13th Centuries* (Berkeley, 1983), 17–21. That it appears first in a “Romanesque” context would seem to confirm my reading of that period as one of not infrequent modernist episodes. In any case, resistance to the broken arch can still be seen in the early phases of Ile-de-France modernism, for example, Saint-Étienne at Beauvais (ca. 1120/30), which continues to employ stilted instead of pointing to solve the geometric problem of equivalent arch heights in rib vaults; only in the Saint-Denis choir (apart from the minuscule Morienvall “ambulatory”) does the broken arch first proliferate to near-consistent use.
 14. This disorientation is chronicled by Sauerländer, “Première architecture gothique,” 36–40. The author himself, however, overvalues the columns at Notre-Dame in Paris (and other classicizing episodes), virtually ignoring (as observed by S. Murray, “Notre-Dame of Paris and the Anticipation of Gothic,” *AB*, LXXX [1998], 249 n. 17) the highly modernist forms of the rest of the building (except to criticize—or “smile at”—those who have sought to explain them). He proposes, “There is a strong possibility that the Early Gothic architecture of northern France after St-Denis is just another aspect of the movement which Charles Homer Haskins called ‘The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century’” (p. 37; my emphasis). The discussion below suggests that the considerable importance of the columnar motif in the cathedrals involved more than mere “revival”; see also nn. 8, 15.
 15. On the Saint-Denis columns, J. Bony, “What Possible Sources for the Chevet of Saint-Denis,” in *Abbot Suger and Saint-Denis, A Symposium*, ed. P. L. Gerson (New York, 1986), 136–137. The notion that previous to Saint-Denis “Romanesque” architecture had suppressed the column is advanced in some detail by Sauerländer (“Première architecture gothique;”); but the fact is that the column typically is retained in the apse (“the most sacred part,” as Sauerländer admits) even at Cluny and similar monumentally vaulted churches, and is replaced by piers only in the nave. Moreover, it should be noted that typically these piers employ columnar responds (sometimes pilasters), which, although less authentically antique than free-standing columns, could nevertheless have been considered classicizing elements, which often are even of relatively classical proportions. Furthermore, Sauerländer’s statement that “by the beginning of the twelfth century the column had disappeared from the nave of the Romanesque basilica throughout Europe” is qualified by the author himself to exempt Italy and the Holy Roman Empire—not exactly minor areas (despite Sauerländer’s calling them “backwaters”); and one might add numerous large-scale examples of columnar naves in England and France itself (not just tiny ones as Sauerländer implies), represented by Tournus, Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe, Gloucester, and Durham (the intermediate piers). In this light, the use of the column at Notre-Dame in Paris (which has befuddled so many historians [see n. 14]) or the Saint-Denis ambulatory (where the hemicycle ring, found, e.g., at Cluny, is simply doubled) seems considerably less anomalous or innovative. More innovative, to my mind, is the proliferation of the column throughout the interior, as pointed out below. See also the section below discussing Suger’s writings.
 16. The “scholastic” reasoning of Gothic design emphasized by E. Panofsky (*Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* [Latrobe, PA, 1950]) obviously would have been virtually impossible without the medium of the column.
 17. Of course the *pilier cantonné* was also foreshadowed in both Paris (in the clustered aisle piers) and Laon (the cage-like eastern nave piers). On the theologically problematic medieval status of the column see J. Onians, *Bearers of Meaning, The Classical Orders in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance* (Princeton, 1990), ch. 6. In medieval illustrations idols often stand on columns, and when they fall the columns sometimes break or fall with them: a notable instance occurs in the socle relief on the west facade at Amiens, discussed by M. Camille (*The Gothic Idol* [Cambridge, 1989], 2, Fig. 3): the “columns of the Egyptian temple snap like twigs before the onslaught of the Holy Family . . . as if representing, as part of an elaborate sculptural edifice of images, the total destruction of an alien and competing edifice and its images.”
 18. For a clarification of this final modernist transformation, see A.-M. Sankovitch, “A Reconsideration of French Renaissance Church Architecture,” in *L’église dans l’architecture de la Renaissance*, ed. J. Guillaume (Paris, 1995), 161–180. The transformations of the classical column that I have outlined might be compared with Panofsky’s analysis of contemporary sculpture, in which “the classical element is so completely absorbed as to become invisible,” and his reading of analogous trends in philosophy, historiography, and poetry (*Renaissance and Renaissance*, 102–103).
 19. For a critical review and advancement of the research on early flying buttresses, S. Murray, “Notre-Dame of Paris,” 229–253.
 20. The crucial point in understanding the diffusion of modernism is to distinguish between the main (Chartrian) typology of the northern French cathedral and the modernist orientation with its specific methodologies. In the spread of “Gothic,” it was mostly not the former but the liberation from historicism and the design possibilities of the modernist system that seized the architectural imagination. The French typology could be resisted, but not French modernism, except in Italy.
 21. On the concept and problematics of modernity, see above all J. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. F. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA, 1986); on the medieval use of the term, W. Freund, *Modernus und andere Zeitbegriffe des Mittelalters* (Cologne, 1957); cf. n. 8 above.

22. See Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Compare Terry Eagleton's recent remarks on transhistorical categories constituted, in my terms, by modernism and historicism: "Why should modernity define itself in purely temporal terms, rather than by reference to a cultural style, a mode of production, an intellectual climate . . . All periods are modern, but not all of them live their experience in this mode. Indeed the classical is a way of living one's experience as though it were simply a reprise of the past, so that only those bits of it which bear the legitimating seal of tradition can be regarded as authentic. . . . Modernity, by contrast, sees itself not just as one more phase of time, but as a phase of time which re-evaluates the very notion of temporality. . . . What strikes it as most typical about itself is the dazzling, dismaying experience of time, which no longer comes wrapped in history or habit or custom but is now becoming almost their opposite. The modern is that which reduces everything which happened up to half an hour ago to an oppressive traditionalism; it is less a continuation of history than an abolition of it" ("Newsreel History," review of P. Conrad, *Modern Times, Modern Places* [London, 1998], in *London Review of Books*, 12 November 1998, 8).
23. This distinction evidently has been overlooked by at least one reader of my original article; see n. 28.
24. Cf. n. 8, however.
25. See nn. 5, 6.
26. Such traditionalism is, of course, to be distinguished from "invented" tradition, which is an historicist (or retrohistorical) construct conjured of real and imaginary elements of the past; see E. H. Hobsbawm, "Inventing Tradition," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. E. H. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (Cambridge, 1983), 1–14.
27. Bony, *French Gothic Architecture*, 1.
28. This aspect of Bony's work is clarified by W. Sauerländer's review, "Mod Gothic," *New York Review of Books*, 8 November 1984, 43–44. S. Murray ("Notre-Dame of Paris," 249 n. 17) does not distinguish between my concept of "medieval modernism" and Bony's "Modernist" reading. For a deeply insightful analysis of Modernist criteria in twentieth-century architectural history, see A. Payne, "Rudolf Wittkower and Architectural Principles in the Age of Modernism," *JSAH*, LIII (1994), 322–342.
29. This spirit pervades Viollet's work; see, for example, the article "Construction" in the *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e au XVII^e siècle*, 10 vols. (Paris, 1858–1868). Cf. Sauerländer, "Mod Gothic."
30. On the problematic concept of style, see above all M. Schapiro, "Style" (1955), reedited in *idem, Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist, and Society* (New York, 1994), 51–101, especially 62–65 regarding the critical position taken here.
31. As in the statement, "The only other explanation for the [Gothic] fondness for columns would be a respect for it as an Antique form. But this seems excluded by the very nature of the shift from Romanesque to Gothic, involving as it did the rejection of a Classical vocabulary" (Onians, *Bearers of Meaning*, 90). Cf. nn. 14, 15 above.
32. "Medieval," coined from Latin *medius* and *aevum* to designate a "middle age" between ancient and modern periods, would seem to make the term "medieval modernism" an oxymoron. This problem may be avoided, however, by adhering to the distinctions made above, according to which "medieval" would designate not any inherent qualities (or cultural "style") but only an "intermediate" period of time, while the generic "modern" signifies the particular character of the epoch. Admittedly, this would demand agreement on specific usage, a difficulty perhaps best resolved by avoiding the term "medieval" altogether, with its seemingly ineradicable connotations of cultural subordination to the framing classical-historicist periods.
33. This is offered as pointing to a restructuring of diachronics that is possibly more historically grounded and centered than the approach of G. Kubler in *The Shape of Time* (New Haven, 1962).
34. Sankovitch, "Structure/Ornament," 694, 700–701.
35. E. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St-Denis and its Art Treasures*, 2nd ed. G. Panofsky Soergel (Princeton, 1979) is the central interpretative text, with its extensive bibliography updated to 1978; for more recent literature, see W. W. Clark, "The Recollection of the Past is the Promise of the Future. Continuity and Contextuality: Saint-Denis, Merovingians, Capetians, and Paris," in *Artistic Integration in Gothic Buildings*, 107–113. See also various essays in *Abbot Suger and Saint-Denis*; P. Kidson, "Panofsky, Suger, and St-Denis," *JWCI*, L (1987), 1–17; and C. Rudolph, *Artistic Change at St-Denis* (Princeton, 1990).
36. Kidson, "Panofsky, Suger, and St-Denis." I am in full agreement with Kidson on Suger's status as non-architect, but not necessarily with all items of his rather harsh rejection of Suger as Neoplatonist (in terms that call Panofsky "silly" [p. 8]).
37. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 34–37.
38. *Ibid.*, 27.
39. *Ibid.*, 36–37, 52.
40. My analysis overlaps Panofsky's identification of four lines of defense of the entire project (*ibid.*, 27–28): due deliberation with the brethren; divine approval; preservation of old fabric insofar as possible; functional necessity.
41. Suger does not make the functionalist argument explicitly but indirectly through repeated discussion of the crowding of the "narrow" old choir and his "enlargement" (*ibid.*, 86–89, 134–135).
42. *Ibid.*, 100–101. To set the record straight about the composite/panoramic view of the Saint-Denis ambulatory (Fig. 18): I made the photograph(s) in 1970; in the early 1970s I gave a copy to Sumner Crosby for his monograph on Saint-Denis; it appeared there without proper credit, and subsequently has been republished crediting Crosby.
43. Even Kidson, Panofsky's sharpest critic, accepts the importance for Suger of the great chain of windows in terms of "light" ("Panofsky, Suger, and St-Denis," 10); see also Rudolph (*Artistic Change*, 65–68), who shifts the effect to one of "saturating the church with imagery" in the brilliant stained glass "and the visual effect of that imagery."
44. Panofsky (*Abbot Suger*, 242–243) demonstrates that Suger is referring not just to the transverse arches, but to the open ribwork as a whole in this passage. Because the high vaults to which Suger refers were replaced in the thirteenth-century campaign, I illustrate this passage with Suger's ambulatory vaulting (Fig. 19). The term *ogive* does not appear until the thirteenth century.
45. *Ibid.*, 108–109.
46. To the six specified in *De consecratione* (and discussed below) must be added the miracle of the speed of completion of the choir mentioned in *De administratione* (Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 50–53) and quoted below. Also many passing remarks allude to divine assistance ("the help of God"), to the point that virtually nothing seems possible without it (*e.g.*, *ibid.*, 88–89).
47. The miracle stories take up almost a third of *De consecratione*.
48. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 90–91.
49. *Ibid.*, 90–97, 108–109. Panofsky notes the erection of the roof prior to the vaulting (243–244), which was, of course, the normal procedure.
50. *Ibid.*, 110–111.
51. In "Suger's Literary Style and Vision" (in *Abbot Suger and Saint-Denis*) R. W. Hanning presents strong evidence for "complexities of intention and character underlying the apparently simple strategies of Suger's literary style" at the level of "rhetorical strategies, syntax, juxtaposition

- of sentences" (149) and other literary-conceptual terms in ways suggestive of my reading (*e.g.*, the way in which a "complicated set of temporal relations [is] resolved into a set of focal artifacts," 147). Compare also G. M. Spiegel, "History as Enlightenment: Suger and the *Mos Anagogicus*" (in the same volume, 151–158); she finds in Suger subtle and sophisticated "expressive purposes and modes of elaboration" and, intriguingly, a certain emphasis on triadic structures.
52. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 92–93.
 53. This is implicitly the reading of Bony ("What Possible Sources") and Clark ("The Recollection of the Past"), who associate the column-events discussed below with the choir supports.
 54. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 92–93.
 55. *Ibid.*, 90–93. Although Panofsky (230) argues that the needed monoliths "must have been those between the new narthex and the Carolingian nave," the quarry certainly would have supplied those needed for the new ambulatory as well. Although my reading of Suger's text is directed primarily at the latter columns, it might also apply to the set mentioned by Panofsky.
 56. Panofsky accepts the Rome/Diocletian story at face value, and relates it to two occasions of the transportation of columns which he suggests Suger may have known, without mentioning the disparity of shipping distances involved (*ibid.*, 230–231).
 57. Clark, "The Recollection of the Past," 94–95; the spoils were replaced in the nineteenth century. W. D. Wixom compares Suger's Rome story with his extraordinary production of ancient gems, vases, etc., in new "Christian" settings (*e.g.*, the great chalice in Washington, D.C.), insightfully observing, "If Suger had carried out his idea of transporting the great columns from Diocletian's palace [*sic*] in Rome, he would have succeeded in outdoing the scale of all these antique insertions. Perhaps in his own mind he would have fulfilled his own *renovatio* more completely if he had done so" ("Traditional Forms in Suger's Contributions to the Treasure of Saint-Denis," in *Abbot Suger and Saint-Denis*, 303).
 58. See n. 54.
 59. Bony, "What Possible Sources," 136; Clark, "The Recollection of the Past," 95.
 60. Kimpel and Suckale, *Die gotische Architektur*, 92.
 61. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 94–97. Although Suger at first mentions repairs as the use for the timbers, at the end of the story they are explicitly used for the roof of the "new structure"; cf. *ibid.*, 235–236.
 62. Among the specialized publications on carpentry and roofs see, for example, M. Aubert, "La charpente de Notre-Dame de Paris," *CAF*, Paris (Paris, 1920), 397–406; J.-F. Blondel, *Les Fils de Noé: Les charpentiers du temps passé* (Paris, 1993); L. T. Courtenay, "Timber Roofs and Spires," in *Architectural Technology up to the Scientific Revolution*, ed. R. Mark (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 182–231; and J. Munby, "Cathedral Carpentry," in *The Archaeology of Cathedrals*, ed. T. Tatton-Brown and J. Munby (Oxford, 1996), 165–182.
 63. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 48–51. It may be observed that the vault miracle puts the vault and roof together. Moreover, I cannot resist the temptation to observe that according to William Durandus and other medieval writers (including St. Bernard) the roof of a church represented Charity, which covers a multitude of sins; Gulielmus Durandus, *The Symbolism of Churches and Church Ornaments*, trans. J. M. Neale and B. Webb (1843; rpt. New York, 1973), 25; H. de Lubac, *Éxégèse médiévale: Les quatre sens de l'Écriture*, II (Paris, 1993), 41–60. Alternatively the roof tiles were the soldiers protecting the church against paganism and other enemies; J. Sauer, *Symbolik des Kirchengebäudes* (Münster, 1964), 118.
 64. Whereas the post-Chartres progeny seems numberless, the "school of Bourges" is generally considered to be limited to five (by no means negligible) buildings, all begun in the second quarter of the thirteenth century: Saint-Martin in Tours, Le Mans, Coutances, Burgos, and Toledo.
 65. R. Branner, *The Cathedral of Bourges and Its Place in Gothic Architecture*, ed. S. P. Branner (Cambridge, 1989), 161.
 66. *Ibid.*, 161; Bony, "What Possible Sources," 248.
 67. Branner in fact appears to contradict his own estimate of the Bourges problem in his detailed, insightful analysis of its followers and their variations of the model (*The Cathedral of Bourges*, 177–201).
 68. Branner sees Bourges (although not quite as futurist) as "a significant precursor of the later evolution of Gothic art" (*ibid.*, 203). That, as Branner and others also show, the design of Bourges derives in many details and devices from earlier examples of the movement does not contradict the hypermodernity of its transformations of such models.
 69. R. Mark, *Experiments in Gothic Structure* (Cambridge, MA, 1982), 41–49.
 70. J. Bony, "The Resistance to Chartres in Early 13th-Century Architecture," *JBAA*, XX–XXI (1957/1958), 35–52.
 71. A present-day parallel to Bourges and its critical context of "resistance" to absolute modernism appears as a central theme in R. Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA, 1980): in the twentieth century, Buckminster Fuller was virtually alone (and without much influence) in actually following through in practice the modernist "machine age" doctrines that were compromised by historicist and idealist strains in the work of other architects (Gropius, Le Corbusier, *et al.*). Lest the reader remain unpersuaded that medieval modernism is anything more than a trendy neologism for "Gothic," I recommend a rereading of the Bourges analysis substituting "Gothic" everywhere for modern/ism/ity.