

The Twelfth-Century Architecture of Aquitaine and the Cosmopolitan Character of Occitan Culture*

In an article published in 1953 Alexander J. Denomy attempted to demonstrate, relying on art historical evidence, the accessibility of Arabic influences to the earliest Provençal troubadours.¹ His skillful and intelligent use of the research of some of the best twentieth-century scholars of medieval art, such as Mâle, Porter, Puig, Cadafalch and Gaillard, cannot but be applauded by an art historian. Yet a student of medieval art may feel inclined to raise the following issue: the architectural and sculptural elements Denomy listed—and he himself was fully aware of the fact—are charming but essentially minor decorative elements which do not fundamentally affect the structure of a building.² Such elements, e. g., trilobed and polylobed arches, striped masonry and »modillons-a-copeaux«, travel very easily. One does not have to be a trained architect to recognize their decorative appeal and to bring about their transmission. The sources of inspiration are easy to identify: the buildings of Moslem Spain, such as the Mosque at Cordoba, and the northern Spanish Mozarabic churches which acted as transmitters.³

However, when discussing in the second part of his article the accessibility of Arabic literary influences, Denomy concentrates on one of the basic concepts of the troubadour poetry, that of courtly love, influenced in his opinion by Arabic sources, most particularly,

the ideas of Avicenna.⁴ My goal in this paper is to show that the Occitan twelfth century produced artists able, on the basis of foreign influence, to go beyond the mere adoption of certain decorative motifs and to restructure thoroughly the traditional local model. It seems only fair to leave it to my colleagues in literature to decide whether the material and interpretation I am about to present lend greater weight to Denomy's position and whether they can be of use for literary studies.

Around the year 1100 there came into being, simultaneously in various parts of the western world, an architectural model characterized by rational correspondence between interior spaces and exterior masses and between internal and external supports, by an additive principle of organization of both space and mass, and by consistent orientation of mass and space toward the crossing tower and apsidal section respectively. This model is represented most frequently by an aisled building with a transept, often with a westwork and, in the east, an ambulatory with radiating chapels. The church of Cluny and the great »pilgrimage churches« (e. g., St. Sernin at Toulouse or Santiago de Compostela, — all under construction around 1100 — are good examples of this model known as Romanesque. The area between the Loire and the Pyrenees, however, shows a striking scarcity of the typical twelfth-century model, with about fifty examples opposed to some six hundred aisleless churches, about eighty of them covered by a series of domes.⁵ These »domed churches of Aquitaine« are the object of our study.

* I am grateful to the editors of the *Zodiaque* series (Sainte-Marie de la Pierre-qui-Vire) for permission to reproduce the groundplans of the Cathedral at Cahors (*Quercy Roman*), the Cathedral at Angoulême (*Angoumois Roman*), St. Etienne at Périgueux, and the Church at Cherval (*Périgord Roman*); to Dr. Sena Gvozdanovic-Sekulic for supplying the drawings; to Mr. René Immelé of the University of Michigan who drew my attention to Denomy's article (n. 1, below) and helped me understand the literary historian's view of the Occitan twelfth century; and to Dr. Anne F. Parks of the University of Michigan at Dearborn for editing the manuscript.

Illustration credits: 1–6 author; 7–10 *Zodiaque*; 11 — Sena Gvozdanovic-Sekulic

¹ Alexander J. Denomy, »Concerning the Accessibility of Arabic Influence to the Earliest Troubadours«, *Medieval Studies*, 15 (1953), 146–158.

² *Ibid.*, p. 150.

³ On Mozarabic architecture and its role, with excellent illustrations, see Jose Fernandez Arenas, *Mozarabic Architecture* (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1972).

⁴ Denomy, pp. 153 ff.

⁵ Eugène Lefèvre-Pontalis, »L'école du Périgord n'existe pas«, *Bulletin Monumental*, 82 (1923), 7–35, especially 25–35; Marcel Aubert, »Les églises romanes du Périgord«, *Congrès Archéologique*, 90 (1927), 392–401; Louis Bréhier, »Les églises d'Aquitaine à coupole et l'origine de leur architecture«, *Journal des Savants* (1927), 241–251. There is no definitive list of the »domed churches«; that compiled by Brutails and used by Rey and Aubert was corrected and expanded by Crozet, Secret, Daras, and Eygun. See J.-A. Brutails, »La survie de la coupole dans l'architecture gothiques«, *Bulletin Monumental*, 85 (1926), 249–260; Raymond Rey, *La Cathédrale de Cahors et les origines de l'architecture à coupoles d'Aquitaine* (Paris: Henri Laurens, 1925); Robert de Lasteyrie, *L'architecture religieuse en France à l'époque romane*, 2nd ed., ed. Marcel Aubert, (Paris: Picard, 1929), pp. 788 ff.; René Crozet, »L'église abbatiale de Fontevraud«, *Les Annales du Midi*, 48 (1936), 113–150, and »Remarques sur la répartition des églises à file de coupoles«, *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, 4 (1961), 175–178; Jean Secret, *Périgord Roman* (La Pierre-qui-Vire: Zodiaque, 1968); Charles Daras, *Angoumois Roman* (La Pierre-qui-Vire: Zodiaque, 1961); »Les églises à file de couples dérivées de la Cathédrale d'Angoulême en Aquitaine«, *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, 6 (1963), 55–60; François Eygun, *Saintonge Roman* (La Pierre-qui-Vire: Zodiaque, 1970).

The most complete list has been compiled by René Chappuis, »Églises romanes français comportant plusieurs coupoles«, *Mémoires de la Société Archéologique et Historique de la Charente* (1968), 109–138. Of the 111 listed churches with more than one dome regardless the position of the domes within the building (column A), 84 (column K) have a series of domes.



1 PERIGUEUX, St. Front — Exterior
(from the South)

Space does not allow extensive discussion of the various theories forwarded to explain the introduction of this strange type of building into the French South-West.⁶ However, the majority of scholars studying the

problem recognize a degree of »Oriental« influence, naturally leading to attempts to discover eastern models for the Aquitanian churches.⁷ Very often the models have been sought in provincial Byzantine (Cyprus) or



2 CAHORS, Cathedral — Interior
(toward the East)

⁶ Chappuis (pp. 109—112) classifies possible causes for the adoption of domed churches as 1) a local predilection for aisleless buildings, main advocates being Lefèvre-Pontalis; Bréhier; and M. R. Michel-Dansac, »*Simple remarques à propos de l'emploi des coupoles sur la nef dans le Sud-Ouest Aquitain*,« *Congrès Archéologique*, 79 (1912) II, 165—180; 2) geographic and geological influences: Rey; François Anus, »*Etude sur la structure des églises à file de coupoles du Sud-Ouest de la France*,« *Monuments*

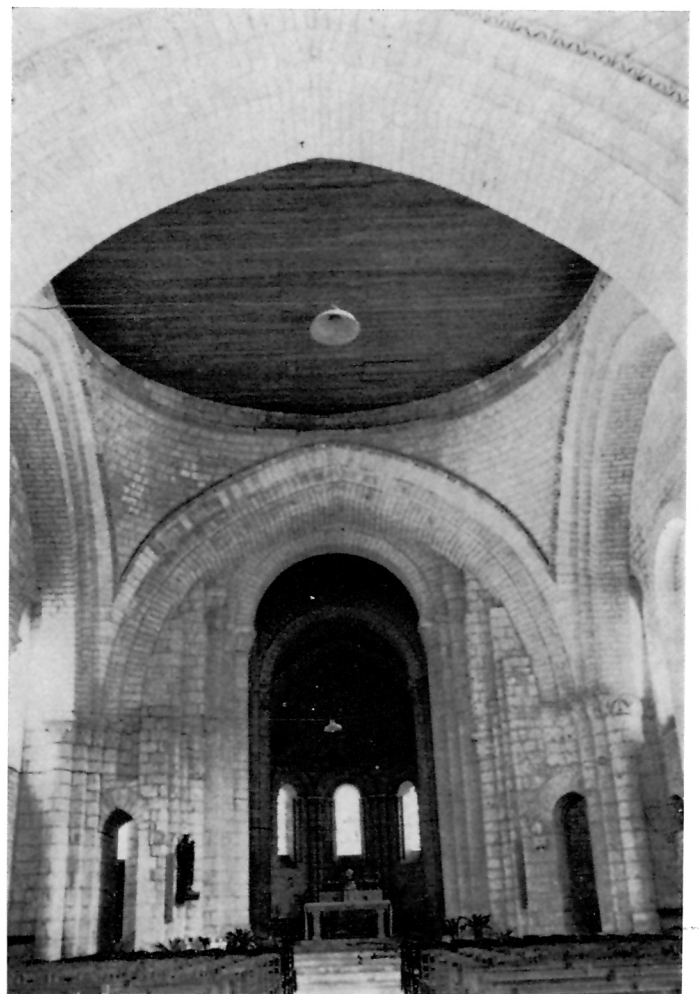
Historiques de la France (1937), 172—191; 3) esthetic reasons: Brutails; 4) human contacts: Crozet.

⁷ The scholars least willing to accept an Oriental influence include J-A. Brutails, Phéné Spiers, and Robert de Lasteyrie. See J-A. Brutails, »*La question de Saint-Front*,« *Bulletin Monumental*, 60 (1895), 87—137, and »*Les coupoles de Sud-Ouest*,« *ibid.*, 62 (1897), 514—517; Phéné Spiers, »*Saint-Front de Périgueux et les églises à coupoles du Périgord et de l'Angoumois*,« *ibid.*, pp. 175—231; R. de Lasteyrie, pp. 469 ff.

para-Byzantine zones (Armenia), although some authors such as Félix de Verneilh, Marcel Aubert and Louis Bréhier suggest Byzantine metropolitan sources, primarily for St. Front at Périgueux (under construction in 1120, Fig. 1), a cruciform church with five domes whose Byzantine antecedents are easy to identify.⁸ Buildings of very similar form stood, or still stand, in Constantinople (Holy Apostles, sixth century), Ephesos (St. John Evangelist, sixth century) and Venice (St. Mark, eleventh century). All these buildings have the function of enshrining the relics of apostles, the first propagators of Christian faith in a certain city or region. In this sense, St. Front, allegedly a disciple to St. Peter himself, was the apostle of Périgord and therefore, under the influence of eastern models, the church bearing his name received the Oriental »apostoleon« form, otherwise unknown in western architecture.⁹

The Oriental sources of St. Front cannot be denied, but it is more difficult to explain the Oriental contribution to the genesis of the more frequent Aquitanian form: the aisleless church covered by a series of domes (Figs. 7–10). Such buildings are found between the Loire and the Gironde, the highest density being in Périgord, then in Angoumois, Saintonge, and Quercy,¹⁰ with only a few isolated examples outside these four provinces. Attempts to identify Oriental buildings of corresponding form which might be possible models for Aquitanian aisleless domed churches have failed. The closest analogy is a series of churches on Cyprus, either cruciform and five-domed (Hieroskypos, Peristeroma) or else aisled buildings with the nave covered by a series of two or three domes (Stavro Vouni, St. Lazar at Larnaca).¹¹

The first problem with the Cypriote building is that they are not precisely dated. Next, these rather crude buildings recall the domed churches of Aquitaine only somewhat superficially, primarily in terms of plans. The fundamental difference is that the interiors are dark, whereas in Aquitaine the introduction of the dome leads toward a new treatment of the walls, which, since the thrust of the vaults is assumed by four corner piers in each bay, could be dissolved into a series of windows (Figs. 2, 3). The result is an interior receiving more light than is usual in standard Romanes-



3 SAINTES, Novre-Dame — Interior (toward the East)

que buildings. This new esthetic effect is not even hinted at in the Cypriote churches studied by Enlart.¹²

Also, it seems unlikely that Occitan visitors to the eastern Mediterranean, such as Géraud de Cardillac, Renaud de Thiviers or Duke William IX of Aquitaine, would have been inspired by rather crude, provincial

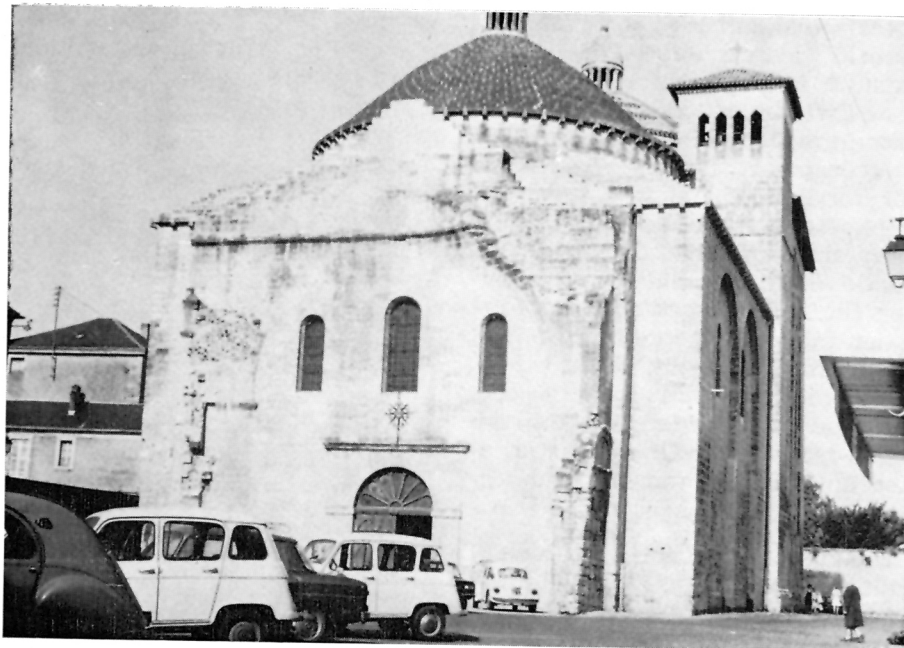
⁸ Félix de Verneilh, *L'architecture byzantine en France* (Paris: Didron, 1851), especially pp. 5–18, 293–302; Aubert, pp. 394–400; Bréhier, p. 245; Pierre Francastel, *L'humanisme roman* (Rodez: Carrère, 1944), p. 179. The date of St. Front has been hotly debated. Verneilh (pp. 115 ff.) and Joseph Roux, *La Basilique de St. Front de Périgueux* (Périgueux: L'auter, 1919), p. 91 propose consecration in 1047 and definite completion by 1077 at the latest. However, Brutails, Spiers, and De Lasteyrie maintain that the five-domed St. Front was constructed after the fire of 1120. The greatest living expert on the architecture of Périgord, Jean Secret, holds that the church was under construction at the time of the fire (pp. 27–28).

⁹ Richard Krautheimer, *Early Cristian and Byzantine Architecture* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), pp. 174–177, 287–290; Bréhier, p. 245.

¹⁰ These four provinces account for 64 of 84 buildings on Chapuis' list.

¹¹ Camille Enlart, »Les églises à coupoles d'Aquitaine et de Chypre,« *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 68 (1926), 129–152.

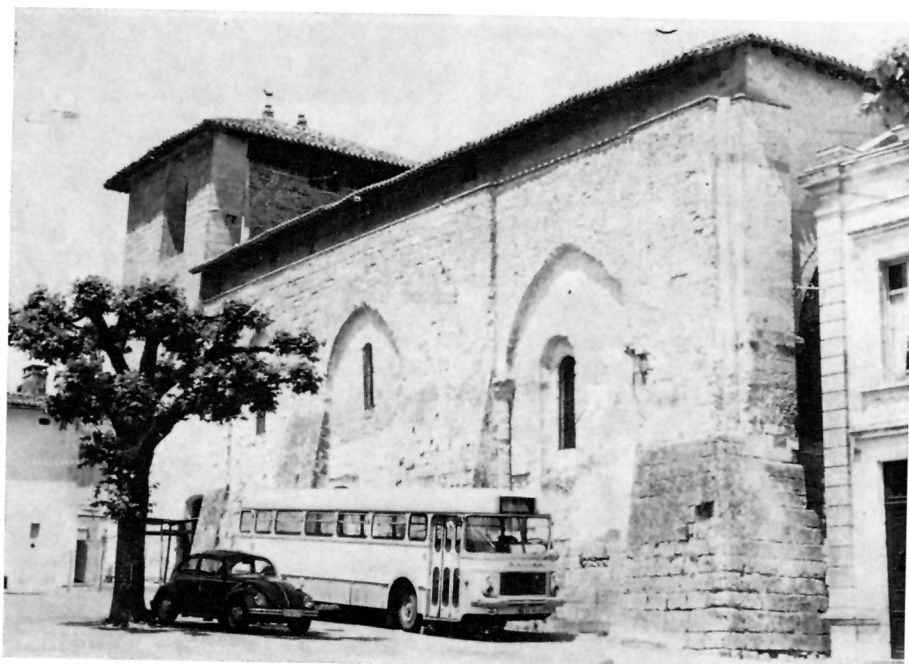
¹² Another group of domed churches, in Apulia, seems to have more in common with Cypriote buildings and the forms of provincial Byzantine architecture. In our opinion they should be seen as somewhat related to, but different from, the domed churches of Aquitaine, since the major Aquitanian monuments show influence from Byzantine *metropolitan*, not *provincial*, art. On Apulian churches: Guglielmo de Angelis d'Ossat, *Le influenze bizantine nell'architettura romanica* (Rome: Fratelli Palombi, 1942), pp. 35, 39–40, 69 ff.; Pina Belli d'Elia, ed., *Alle sorgenti del Romanico: Puglia XI secolo* (Bari: Pinacoteca Provinciale, 1975), pp. 195 ff.; Francastel, p. 178.



4 PERIGUEUX, St Etienne (Cathedral) — Exterior (from the West)

works.¹³ One would expect them to be captivated by the art of major centers such as Constantinople, Salonica, and Ephesos, in the same way as the modern

European visitor to the United States receives an indelible impression of the tip of Manhattan or the Chicago Lake Shore. After all, the Crusaders had ample



5 CHERVAL, Parish Church — Exterior (from the South)

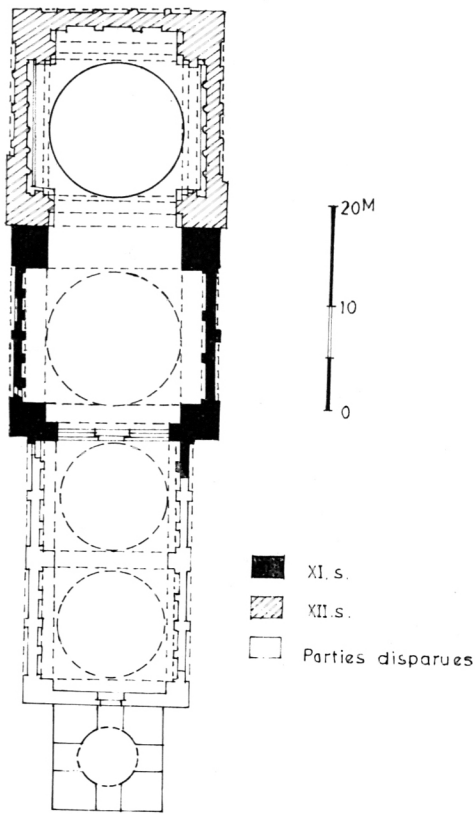
¹³ On Géraud de Cardaillac, Bishop of Cahors, who visited Constantinople and the Holy Land (1109—1112), see Rey, p. 9, and Enlart, pp. 132—133, 136—140 (Géraud went to the East with Count Bertrand de Saint-Gilles). On Renaud de Thiviers,

Bishop of Périgueux, in the East during the First Crusade, see Roux, pp. 28—29. On the participation of Duke William IX of Aquitaine in the Crusade of 1101, see Kenneth M. Setton et al., *A History of the Crusades* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955), I, 348 ff.



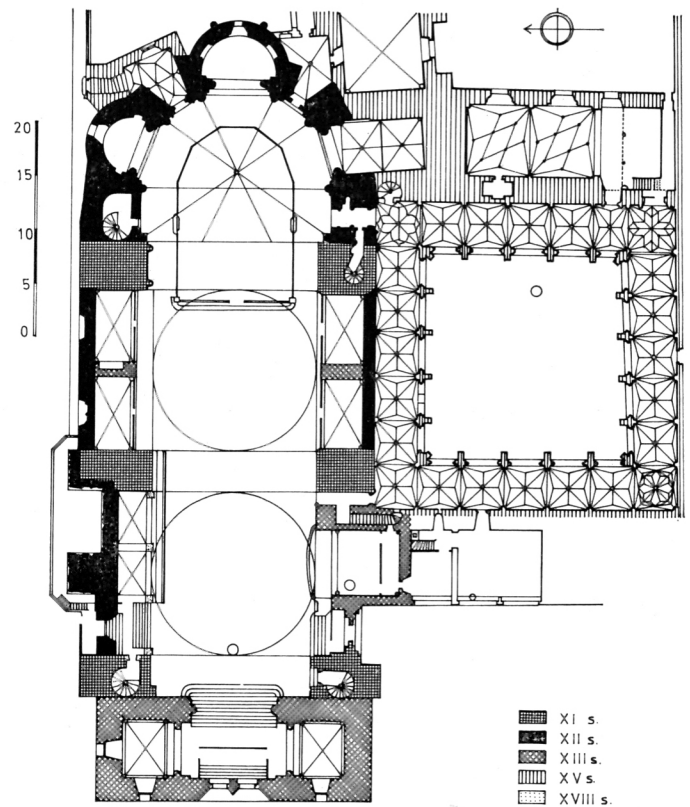
6 ANGOULEME, Cathedral — Exterior (from the South)

7 PERIGUEUX, St. Etienne (Cathedral) — Groundplan

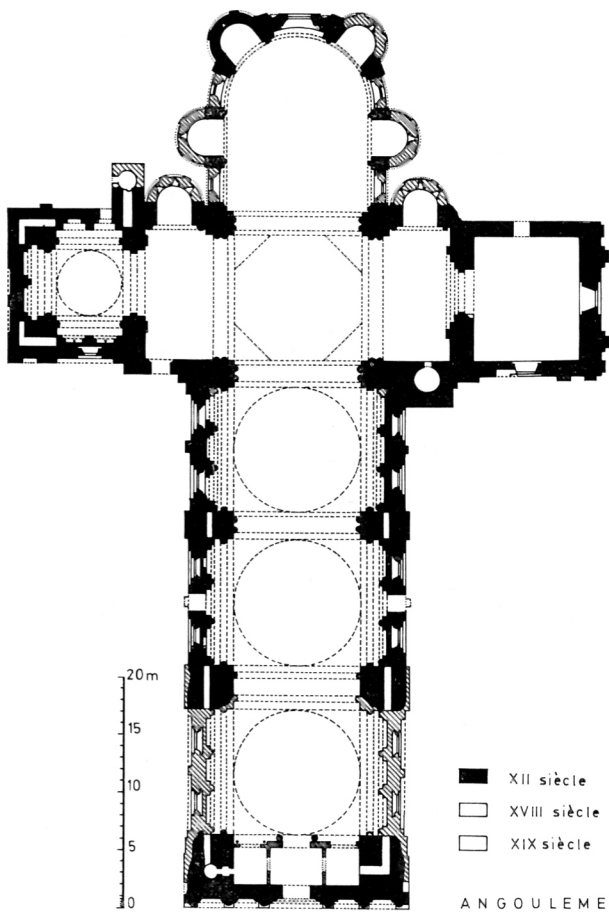


PERIGUEUX
SAINT-ETIENNE DE LA CITE

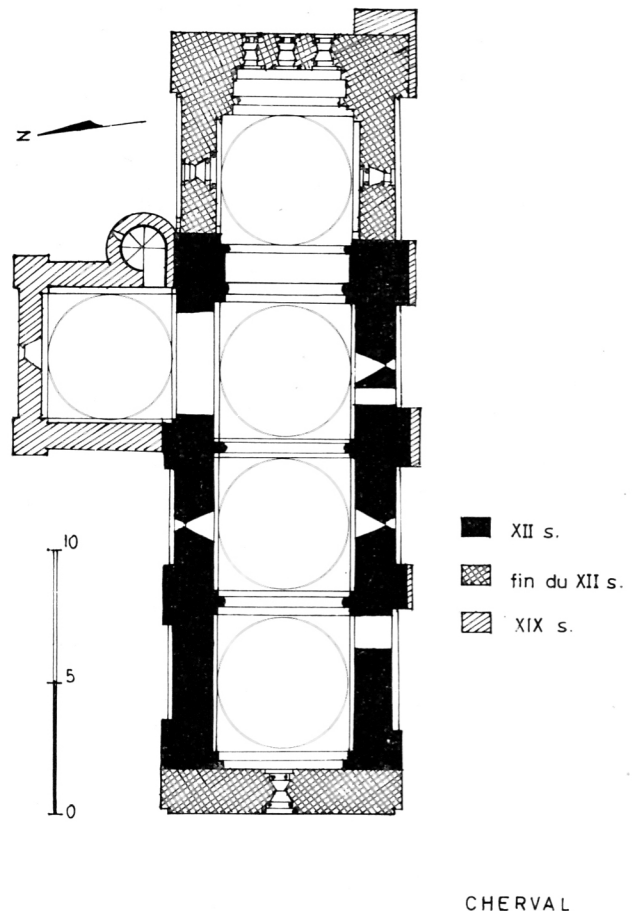
8 CAHORS, Cathedral — Groundplan



CAHORS



9 ANGOULEME, Cathedral — Groundplan



10 CHERVAL, Parish Church — Groundplan

opportunity to familiarize themselves with the Byzantine capital.¹⁴ Abbot Suger, who never went to the East, is witness to western admiration for Hagia Sophia.¹⁵ What, then, in the architecture of Constantinople might have appealed to the Occitans, who joined the First Crusade in large masses?¹⁶

Causes of the Aquitanian predilection for aisleless buildings are not at all clear. Up to c. 1100, and often after this, these buildings are covered by heavy barrel vaults and are consequently rather low, heavy, and poorly lighted, usually with not more than one small window on each side wall of a bay. Examples are found all over the Midi, in the South-West as well as in Provence.¹⁷

¹⁴ Setton, pp. 280 ff.

¹⁵ Suger, *De Administratione*, in *Oeuvres Complètes de Suger*, ed. A. Lecoy de la Marche (Paris: Renouard, 1867), pp. 198—199. Also, Erwin Panofsky, *Abbot Suger* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 65.

¹⁶ The largest army on the First Crusade was that of Count Raymond of Toulouse, accompanied by the papal legate Adhemar, Bishop of Le Puy (Setton, p. 272). William IX followed suit in 1101.

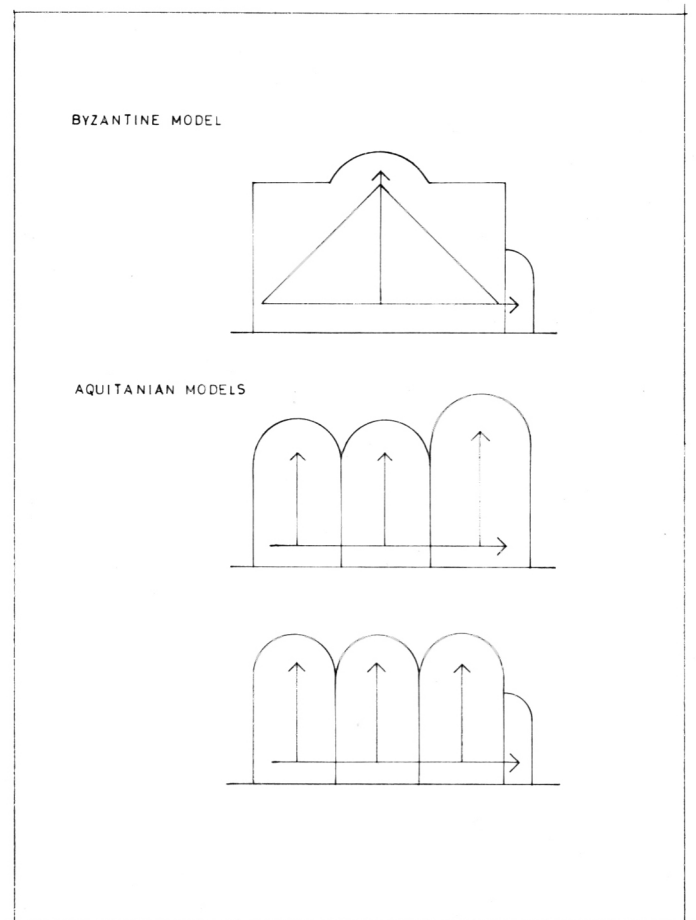
¹⁷ For example, La Chapelle St. Robert in Périgord (Secret, pp. 105 ff); Puyperoux, La Couronne and Plassac in Angoumois (Daras, *Angoumois Roman*, pp. 59—65, 91—94, 135—142); Thaims, Geay, Rioux in Saintonge (Eygun, pp. 101—104, 309—310, 315—316); cathedrals in Provence at Avignon, Cavaillon, Carpentras (Lasteurie, pp. 415—416).

Around 1100, in a number of aisleless churches, domes were introduced as the means of covering the nave. There is a striking similarity between a typical domed-church bay and the dome of Hagia Sophia or Hagia Eirene (Figs. 2, 3, 7—10): the dome hangs on four corner piers, and the walls in between, not being structural, could be opened into a series of windows. Although at first glance there is little further similarity between the Aquitanian type and Hagia Sophia, the nave of the latter is covered by a series of domical elements, a dome and two semidomes; and Hagia Eirene can be seen as a building covered by a series of two domes. The main bays of Hagia Sophia and Hagia Eirene greatly resemble the individual domed bays of Aquitanian churches; and the similarity in esthetic goal — sufficient illumination of the interior — grows as the Aquitanian model becomes more refined and as the architects acquire more skill and self-confidence.¹⁸

¹⁸ On Hagia Sophia (532—536) and Hagia Eirene (c. 532, rebuilt with two domes c. 564 and again c. 740), see Krautheimer, pp. 153—161, 180—181. The similarity between the Aquitanian dome bay units and the domed bays in Byzantine architecture has been lucidly but very briefly suggested by Meyer Schapiro, »The Sculptures at Souillac,« in *Medieval Studies in Memory of A. Kingsley Porter*, ed. Wilhelm R. W. Koehler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), II, 386. Abbot Suger is an eloquent witness to the twelfth-century interest in light (Suger, pp. 189 ff. Panofsky, p. 47).

The twelfth-century Aquitanian architect followed a well-established tradition of aisleless buildings. The introduction of the dome enabled him to build higher, larger, more monumental buildings, such as the Cathedral of Cahors (16 meters wide, Figs. 2, 8), under construction c. 1100–1125, with the largest western medieval domes.¹⁹ He gradually learned to eliminate more and more wall surface and to allow more light into the interior.²⁰ Yet he could not follow line by line his great Constantinopolitan models. Byzantine space and mass grow clearly toward the central accent, the dome (although the space is also directed eastwards, toward the altar area), while western tradition emphasizes the eastern end and directs the space toward the altar area, the main focus of interest (Fig. 11). The architects of the domed churches achieved this orientation by constructing an apse at the eastern end (Cahors, Angoulême, Figs. 2, & 6), by increasing the size of the easternmost bay (St. Étienne at Périgueux, Figs. 4, 7), or, in some rural churches (Cherval, Figs. 5, 10), at least by raising the floor of the »sanctuary« and being more lavish in architectural decoration to give some prominence to the altar area.

The Aquitanian architect of the twelfth century thus restructured a metropolitan Byzantine model and made it comply with the requirements of his own tradition. One may say that he decomposed the Byzantine model and created a new one by linking up a series of »Byzantine« dome bays. If this interpretation is correct I would like to see it as an homage to Félix de Verneilh, the first serious student of the domed churches and the initiator of the idea, often vigorously criticized, of »l'architecture Byzantine en France.«²¹ This does not mean I maintain that the domed churches of Aquitaine are Byzantine buildings, but that without Byzantine models and their creative restructuring they would not have been possible. Once the new model was established by such major monuments as the cathedrals at Cahors (c. 1100–1125, Figs. 2, 8), Périgueux (c. 1100, Figs. 4, 7), and Angoulême (c. 1110–1130, Figs. 6, 9), and Notre-Dame at Saintes rebuilt as a domed church possibly around the middle of the twelfth century, Fig. 3), it was imitated by a host of smaller, rural buildings (Figs. 5, 10), which in most cases do not take advantage of the dome's esthetic potentials,²² having usually only one narrow window per bay and dark interiors. It is



11 Schematic drawing of Byzantine and Aquitaine models (Ill.: Sena Gvozdanović-Sekulić)

also interesting that whereas in Périgord and Quercy (Périgueux, Cahors, Souillac, Figs. 1, 4) the major monuments proudly display their domes and their exotic, un-Romanesque silhouette, in Angoumois and Saintonge (Fig. 6) the domes have been covered with gable roofs (Angoulême, Roulet, Gensac-la-Pallue, Saintes). Again, it was Félix de Verneilh who noted this phenomenon and called those buildings »Romano-Byzantine,« indicating that these churches cannot be considered properly »Romanesque.«²³ and indeed whereas the exotic silhouette has been eliminated, buildings such as the Cathedral of Angoulême »offend« against »Romanesque standards« by refusing to relate interior and exterior, although bringing the silhouette in line with the »normal« Western practices in a compromise which makes use of the esthetic and structural advantages of the dome bay while deviating less obviously from the established order.

¹⁹ On the Cathedral of Cahors: Rey; Marguerite Vidal, *Quercy Roman* (La Pierre-qui-Vire: Zodiaque, 1959), pp. 194–232.

²⁰ An instructive comparison can be made between the first (originally third) bay of St. Étienne at Périgueux, dating from the end of the eleventh century, illuminated by two fairly large windows and an oculus but still rather dark, and the second bay, dating from the mid twelfth century, the upper portions of whose walls completely open into a series of windows (Secret, pp. 37–42).

²¹ Verneilh, pp. 293–302; for Verneilh's most outspoken critics see n. 7 above.

²² Vidal, p. 199; Secret, p. 37; Daras *Angoumois Roman*, p. 78; Eygun, p. 90. On rural buildings in general: Chappuis, pp. 128 ff.

²³ Verneilh, p. 248; Francastel, p. 139.

Ultimately, only a literary historian can judge whether this material could be pertinent in considering twelfth-century literature. I would, however, like to re-emphasize that one apparently finds twelfth-century Aquitanian artists capable of understanding and restructuring sophisticated foreign models and turning those models into sophisticated new creations. We are, in another area of human creativity, close to what Denomy attempted to demonstrate for the troubadours. And finally, I believe that certain aspects of twelfth-century

architecture in Aquitaine, such as the domed churches, can be seen as further eloquent testimony to the openness, cosmopolitan character, and creativity of the Occitan twelfth century.²⁴

²⁴ As a conclusion to his work on the sculptures at Souillac, Schapiro (pp. 385—387) has briefly but successfully related architecture and sculpture to the cosmopolitan character of Occitan culture.

S a ž e t a k

ARHITEKTURA I KOZMOPOLITSKI KARAKTER AKVITANSKE KULTURE DVANAESTOG STOLJEĆA*

Alexander I. Demony je 1953. upozorio na arapski utjecaj u provansalskom trubadurskom pjesništvu, uspoređujući rad literarnih historičara s poznatim istraživačima umjetnosti dvanaestog stoljeća kao što su Mâle, Porter, Puig, i Cadafalch, te Gaillard. No arhitektonski i skulptorski elementi, na koje se poziva, u biti su dekorativni i nisu bitno utjecali na konstrukciju. Cilj je autora da dokaže kako je akvitansko dvanaesto stoljeće posjedovalo umjetnike i arhitekta, koji su, na bazi stranog utjecaja potpuno obnovili tradicionalne lokalne uzore.

Studirajući problem »orijentalnog« utjecaja, većina je znanstvenika nastojala otkriti istočnjačke modele za akvitanske sakralne objekte. Tražili su ih u bizantskim provincijama (Cipar) ili para-bizantskim zonama (Armenija), a neki su (Verneilh, Aubert i Brehier) sugerirali i carigradske uzore, osobito za St. Front u Périgueuxu (1120). Bila je funkcija tih nestalih ili još postojećih objekata (Apostoli, 6. st., Sv. Ivan u Efezu, 6. st., Sv. Marko u Veneciji, 11. st.) da čuvaju relikvije apostola, a sv. Front je kao navodni učenik sâmog sv. Petra bio apostol Périgorda, pa je i crkva s njegovim imenom preuzela oblik orijentalnog »apostoleona«, koji je inače malo poznat u zapadnjačkoj arhitekturi.

St. Frontu se ne može odreći istočnjački utjecaj, ali ga je teže objasniti u genezi čestog akvitanskog oblika: jednobrodnih crkava sa nizom kupola, koje se nalaze između Loire i Gironde, a najčešće u Perigordu, pa u Angoumois, Saintongeu i Quercy u i tek nekoliko primjera izvan tih pokrajina. Ne postoje identične orijentalne gradnje, koje bi odgovarale tim primjerima, kako autor analizira u poredbi s najprihvatljivijim analogijama. Teško da bi križare inspirirala donekle sirova provincijska djela (npr. na Cipru), njih je zarobila umjetnost centara (Carigrad, Efez, Solun). Opat Suger bio je svjedokom udivljenja za carigradsku sv. Sofiju. Što se, dakle, u arhitekturi Carigrada sv. Sofije odrazilo na zapadnjake, koji su se pridružili križarskom pohodu?

Uzrok akvitanskoj sklonosti jednobrodnim zgradama nije jasan. Do 1100, a često i kasnije, zgrade su presvođene teškim bačvastim svodovima, pa su bile niske teške i slabo osvijetljene. Oko 1100. se gradi stanovit broj jednobrodnih crkava, s nizom kupola.

Kako kupola leži na četiri uglovna stupca, među njima se nenosivi zid može otvoriti nizom prozora. Glavna polja Sv. Sofije i Sv. Irene u Carigradu liče individualnim travajima akvitanskih crkava, a takav je i estetski cilj — uspješno osvjetljavanje interijera. Akvitanski je arhitekt slijedio tradiciju, ali ga je prihvaćanje kupole osposobilo za veće i monumentalnije gradnje (na primjer katedrala Cahorsa 1100—1125, s najvećom srednjovjekovnom zapadnjačkom kupolom). Ipak nije posve slijedio carigradske modele. Bizantski prostor i masa jasno rastu prema centralnom akcentu, dok zapadnjačka tradicija naglašava smjer prema istočnom fokusu. Arhitekti su kupolastih crkava postigli tu orijentaciju izgrađujući apsidu na istočnom kraju (Cahors, Angoulême), povećanjem mjerila najistočnijeg traveja (St. Étienne, Périgueux) ili u nekim ruralnim primjerima (Cherval) barem povisujući pod »sanktuarija« i bogatijim dekorom oltarskog područja.

Arhitekti dvanaestog stoljeća tako su restrukturirali metropolitanski bizantski model, ali su ga podvrgli zahtjevima vlastite tradicije. Dekomponirali su ga i tako kreirali nov model, povezujući niz »bizantskih« kupolnih traveja. Akvitanske crkve dakle nisu bizantske gradnje, ali bez tog uzora ne bi bila moguća njihova kreativna reorganizacija. Pa dok istaknuti spomenici (Périgueux, Cahors, Souillac) otkrivaju kupole i egzotičnu neromaničku siluetu, drugima su kupole pokrivene zabatnim krovovima. Objekti poput katedrale Angoulêmea »bore« se protiv »romaničkih standarda«. Odbacuju povezani odnos vanjštine i unutrašnjosti. I premda im je silueta tipično zapadnjačka, iznenaduju posjetioaca interijerom, koji upotrebljava konstruktivne i estetske prednosti kupolastih traveja. Literarni će historičar prosuditi prikladnost tog materijala pri razmatranju literature dvanaestog stoljeća. Autor tek naglašava da su akvitanski umjetnici shvatili i preoblikovali profinjen strani uzor i preveli ga u profinjeno novo stvaralaštvo. Približili smo se na drugom području ljudskog stvaranja — u likovnoj umjetnosti — onome što Denomy objašnjava u trubaduru.

Izraz akvitanske arhitekture dvanaestog stoljeća kao što su kupolaste crkve, dalji je uvjerljiv dokaz otvorenosti, kozmopolitkog karaktera i kreativnosti akvitanskog dvanaestog stoljeća.

* Occitan — južno francuski

Occitania — Akvitanija zemlja u kojoj se govori »oc«