



Romanesque Cathedrals in Mediterranean Europe: Architecture, Ritual, and Urban Context (Architectura Medii Aevi)

Gerardo Boto Varela

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During the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries, the exchange of artistic ideas and formulas between regions surrounding the Mediterranean Sea gave rise to the first genuine European art period in medieval Western Europe, which is generally called 'Romanesque'. Crucial to this integrative process was the mobility of artists, architects and patrons, as well as the ability to absorb new artistic formulas and integrate them into already existing patterns. Some especially creative centres produced and exported successful formal and architectural models, whereas others became real melting pots. All these cultural and artistic exchanges took place over the substrate of Roman Antiquity, which was highly valued and regularly reemployed throughout the Mediterranean lands. This volume focuses on Romanesque cathedral complexes as a lens to analyze the complexity and dynamics of the artistic landscape in southern and central Europe during the 10th to 12th centuries.

The architectural characteristics of every single cathedral are the result of an age-old, complex process of morphogenesis which is always defined by local conditions regarding space, building material, etc. The contributions to this volume discuss the factors that have defined architectural configurations of Romanesque cathedrals. A twofold methodology is adopted. First, the question is raised to what extent the architectural forms of specific cathedrals can be ascribed to the preferences of patrons who, hypothetically, would also have imposed the liturgical protocol. Secondly, a wide range of other, rather more 'bottom-up' factors are also taken into account, including specific community practices, liturgical and others. In this analysis, special attention is paid to visual programmes and liturgical furnishings which made up a large part of the visual experience of Romanesque cathedral complexes.

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