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Source: *Gesta*, 1998, Vol. 37, No. 1 (1998), pp. 44-54

Published by: The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the International Center of Medieval Art

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The Bishop's Chapel of Hereford Cathedral and the Question of Architectural Copies in the Middle Ages

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Abstract

The Bishop's Chapel at Hereford is considered an important key to the understanding of architectural iconology in the middle ages since it is reported to have been built in imitation of the Palatine Chapel of Charlemagne at Aachen. At the same time it is linked typologically to a larger number of double-storied chapels on the continent, especially within the Holy Roman Empire, for none of which a similar intent of copying Aachen is recorded. The result of this contradiction was the emergence of an art historical idea that copying in the middle ages was not something to be taken literally. This paper argues that the identification of the Hereford chapel with the chapel that was meant to be a copy of Aachen rests rather on a confusion, and that this particular chapel and its continental counterparts follow a distinct tradition with decidedly Byzantine connotations.

The remnants of the small chapel at Hereford Cathedral that is generally known as the Bishop's Chapel present one of the most puzzling problems in English Romanesque architecture. This results not from the lack of information surviving from the time of its construction, but rather from the explicitness with which a contemporary source imposes an interpretation that seems difficult to reconcile with the visual appearance of the building. The source in question is the *Chronicle of William of Malmesbury*, which records that Bishop Rutbertus de Lozinga, *i.e.*, from Lotharingia (1079–1095), had built “a church of a round scheme that was to copy the basilica in Aachen.”¹ Although some authors have tried to relate this passage to the rebuilding of the cathedral itself,² the church in question is commonly identified with the square two-storied chapel dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene and St. Catharine. The chapel, demolished in 1737 and recorded only by architectural drawings (Figs. 1–3), was situated north of the episcopal palace and attached to the southern range of the cloister; because the chapel was integrated into the enclosing wall of the cloister its northern elevation has there survived.³ The obvious difficulty of reconciling the allusion to a round church in the text with the square monument is usually circumvented by translating the term *feretum* (“round” or “turned around”) in a somewhat forced way as “centrally planned,” or even as “in an elegant form.” Also, the term *ecclesia* that is used to describe Bishop Rutbertus's edifice seems to stand in contradiction to the status of the building as a chapel, for which the term *capella* is consistently used in medieval sources.

Further, the identification of the recorded edifice with the one described in the textual source created some major methodological problems with regard to the medieval attitude towards copying well known models, and thus of the meaning of architectural forms in the middle ages in general. In his seminal article on the “iconography of medieval architecture,” Richard Krautheimer discussed the Bishop's Chapel at Hereford together with the church of Germigny-des-Près, another monument reported to have been modeled after Aachen in Carolingian times. He conceded

that it is hard for a modern beholder to see anything comparable in them. The chapel of Aix with its domical-vaulted octagonal center room surrounded by a sixteen-sided ambulatory and by galleries, seems quite different from the square church of Germigny with its open central tower, its barrel-vaulted cross arms and its domed corner bays; nor does it seem to resemble the square double-storied chapel at Hereford in which of the nine bays the middle one is open in order to connect the two stories and the remaining eight are covered with groin vaults. One might at first be inclined to say that these statements are based simply on mistakes.⁴

Nor can this obvious lack of correspondence between the presumptive Carolingian model and its Romanesque reception be simply explained away by allowing for the specific character of a medieval copy. In his discussion of Germigny-des-Près and its supposed connection to Aachen, Bandmann averred that a medieval copy

never completely replicates the original, but rather only the most important symbolic figures applied to the measure of different parts of a building, and some copied parts suffice to ensure identity of significance. The more incompatible the form of the prototype, the more distant the artistic environment from which it derives, the less should one expect a total copy.⁵

The assumption, apparently based on written evidence, that both Germigny-des-Près and Hereford were intended to represent true copies of the Palatine Chapel at Aachen has thoroughly influenced our understanding of the character of copying in the middle ages. Here we meet the fundamental

questions to what degree the copy of a known monument had to be recognizable as a copy, at least to an informed contemporary visitor, and what degree of freedom was permitted in redesigning the type to the detriment of the recognizability of the model. If we consider other cases of copying, for example the reception of Old St. Peters, the repetition of distinctive features like the double aisles flanking the nave and the transept “more Romano”⁶ seems to have been a prerequisite for establishing a relationship between the model and its copy. Thus comparing the two examples, *i.e.*, Hereford and Germigny-des-Près, used by Krautheimer and Bandmann to support their concept with other documented instances of buildings that copied a prototype, one is tempted either to dismiss the sources that claim a relationship between these two chapels and their supposed model as expressions of literary freedom, or to assume that the documents relate to different monuments than the two either extant or in question.

This is especially true if we consider the known reception of Aachen in medieval architecture. Literal and fairly precise copies of the Aachen chapel existed, especially in the eleventh century, all of them displaying as the major elements of reference the characteristic motif of columns placed within the arched openings.⁷ Thus we cannot but be struck by the fact that the building at Hereford lacks any such referential feature. In consequence, some scholars have been reserved or critical toward the source that identified Aachen as the model for Hereford,⁸ for example, Nikolaus Pevsner, who admitted that the reference to Aachen “has to be taken with more than one pinch of salt.”⁹ Germain Sieffert postulates that the chapel at Hereford, although “inspired by Aachen, but not an imitation of this building, . . . cannot be considered a true copy.”¹⁰ The question is of more general importance because an entire continental group of chapels, for which no medieval source whatsoever suggested any symbolic connection to Charlemagne’s palace chapel at Aachen, has been connected to this prototype on the sole evidence of the chapel at Hereford and the documentary evidence purportedly pertaining to it.¹¹

The system of iconographical interpretation of medieval architecture developed by Krautheimer and Bandmann has since undergone a major revision which, instead of viewing the monument as the concretization of an abstract theological concept, stresses the “dialectic relationship between model and ‘quoted’ forms” and “sees the quoted form as an *Abbild*, but only of other buildings, not of heaven, and interprets those quotations in terms of political meaning and rivalries, not philosophical systems.”¹² Even though this demand for a concrete rather than an abstract model seems to be met by linking the Hereford chapel to Aachen, the question still remains regarding the extent to which the English chapel displayed elements that could be understood as alluding to this specific Carolingian model. If such a reference did not exist merely as a symbolic meaning hidden behind the artistic surface of a monument, but was expected to be read and understood by a clearly defined group of recipients, it must be

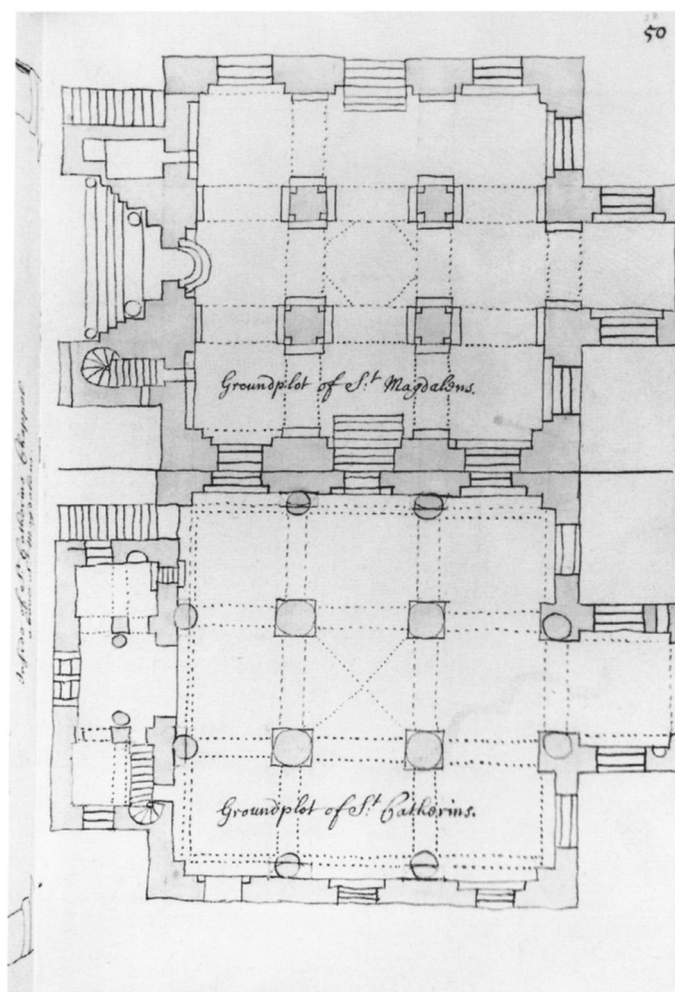


FIGURE 1. Hereford Cathedral, Bishop's Chapel, groundplans of both stories, drawing by William Stukeley, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS top. gen. d. 13 (photo: Bodleian Library, by permission).

asked what associations could have been made by the contemporary viewers for whom the chapel was designed when they visited it.

Even a cursory glance reveals immediately the fundamental differences between the buildings at Aachen and Hereford. With its central octagon surrounded on different levels by galleries that are screened by columns and arcades and form a double-shell structure, Aachen represents a complex spatial system which is based to a large extent on Byzantine prototypes.¹³ In contrast, the chapel at Hereford, with its superposition of two separate spaces and the vaulting originally pierced in the central bay, represents an entirely different architectural concept. Although it has been argued that this octagonal opening in the central bay was meant to be reminiscent of the central octagon at Aachen, no indisputably characteristic feature of Aachen, such as the galleries surrounding the octagonal central space or the motif of columns

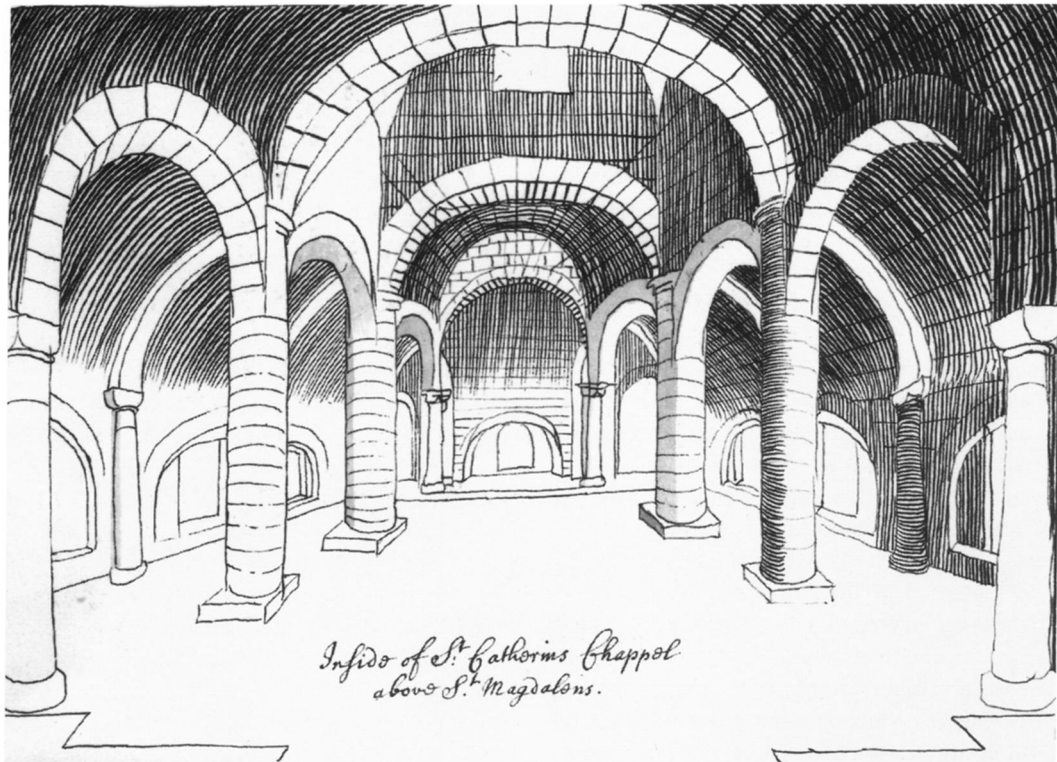


FIGURE 2. Hereford Cathedral, Bishop's Chapel, interior view of upper chapel, drawing by William Stukeley, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS top. gen. d. 13 (photo: Bodleian Library, by permission).

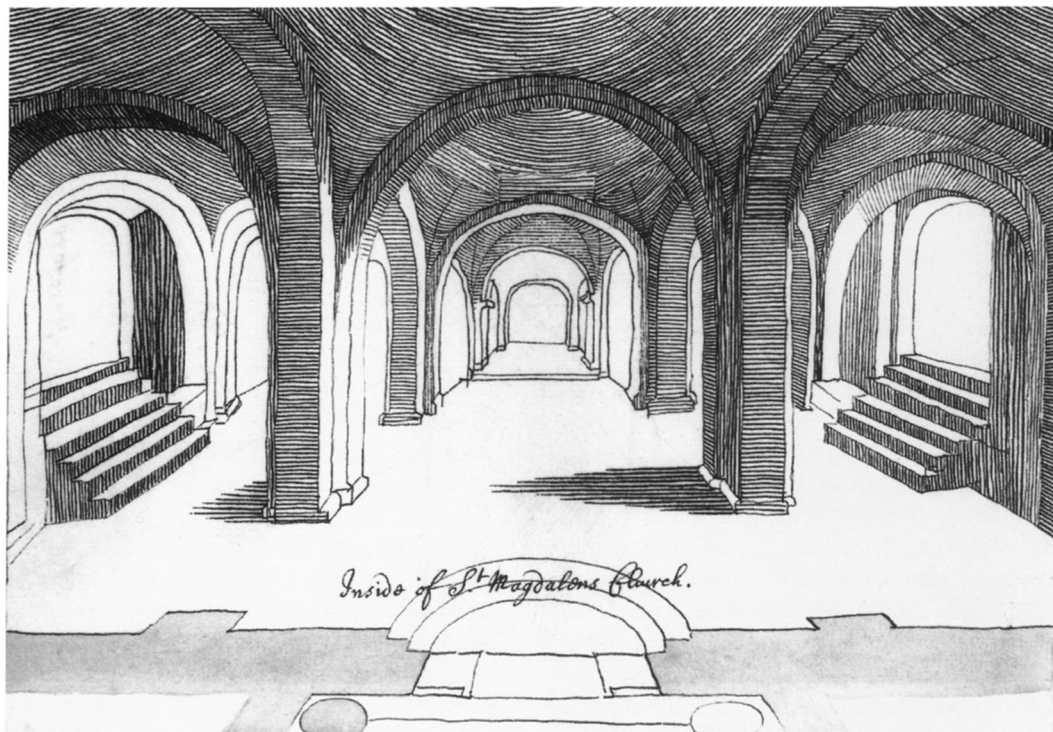


FIGURE 3. Hereford Cathedral, Bishop's Chapel, interior view of lower chapel, drawing by William Stukeley, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS top. gen. d. 13 (photo: Bodleian Library, by permission).

inserted into the arcades, is present at Hereford. Moreover, a most crucial feature of the spatial disposition of Aachen is missing: while in the Carolingian building the hierarchical arrangement of spaces corresponded to a differentiation among users, in the later chapel the narrowness of the central opening would have afforded members of the congregation standing on the ground floor little view of any person sitting on his throne on the second floor, be that person the bishop or a visiting ruler. This central opening, moreover, did not work to unite both spaces, but rather stressed their separateness. The sole line of visual communication through the pierced vault would have been between a person standing in the western part of the upper chapel and the celebrant in front of the altar in the lower one, and not between this first person and any larger group of people on the ground floor, as has been assumed by most scholars writing about this group of chapels. The octagonal opening in the central bay is insufficiently specific to have been recognized by any medieval visitor to the chapel as denoting reminiscence of Aachen.

Since the reference to Aachen was rendered problematic by a lack of direct visual correspondence, alternative explanations have been proposed, which are based primarily on the arrangement of spaces over a square groundplan. This approach has led to the hypothesis that traces the entire group of double-storied chapels, of which Hereford is one, to the westwork of Carolingian and post-Carolingian times.¹⁴ The covering of the lower story with groin vaults over four columns or round pillars seems to reflect the entrance arrangement at Corvey, while the elevated central upper space can easily be taken as an allusion to Corvey's tower-like upper structure. The absence, however, of a larger central area surrounded by galleries, which is a distinctive feature of all westworks and which cannot be related to the central vertical axis of the chapel, precludes this line of filiation. Furthermore, while the westwork was principally a tower-like construction attached to a major abbey church or cathedral that provided a hierarchically differentiated inner structure reflecting the organization of society and allowing the ruler from his privileged place to participate visibly in the service of the church,¹⁵ the chapel at Hereford, located apart from the main church and small in size, exhibits a strictly private character. This applies equally to the other representatives of the type and must lead us to assume a different function for all of them.

In a certain continuation of the westwork theory, and only on the evidence of the vaulting system, with barrel vaults in the central nave and buttressing quadrants in the aisles, and the use of heavy round piers, Jean Bony has tried to connect the Hereford chapel to the double-storied western annex of the abbey church at Tournus in Burgundy.¹⁶ With its longitudinal orientation, the presence of a clerestory and the absence of a central tower, the *avant-nef* of Tournus is distinguished, as Jacques Henriot has demonstrated, from the centrally planned westwork and derives instead from the galilee preceding the nave of the abbey church of Cluny II.¹⁷ Since its basic fea-

tures and its primary function are thus different, the *avant-nef* of Tournus cannot have served as a prototype for the isolated and centrally planned chapel at Hereford, in which the central bay continued as a lantern above the roof and thus created a central vertical axis extending through the entire building.

The proposition, apparently supported by a written source, that the Hereford chapel was to be a "copy" of Aachen or of the Carolingian westwork has influenced the interpretation of its separate features, such as the chapel's western portal. On the premise that "there seems to be little doubt that, in the minds of contemporaries . . . the arched recess of the Hereford chapel was identified with the similar but taller, more shallow and concave recess which is such a conspicuous feature of the Aachen *westwerk*,"¹⁸ McAleer considered the entrance arrangement, with its deeply recessed portal between two newel stairs, "an extremely important monument in explaining the origin and significance of the façade of Tewkesbury Abbey and perhaps others of the triumphal arch group" in western England.¹⁹ Despite their obvious lack of resemblance, he related the façades to Aachen Minster, where a huge niche with straight sides and a curved fond in the tower-like western block forms the entrance. In contrast to this apse-like arrangement that terminates the atrium at Aachen, at Tewkesbury it is a monumentalized portal frame that now encloses both the entrance and window above.

While the façade design at Tewkesbury resembles, at least in its monumentality if not in its architectural formulation, the entrance situation at Aachen, it was more likely inspired by the bold monumental niches of Lincoln Cathedral that date from before 1090,²⁰ which with their apparent allusion to defensive architecture would have provided a more familiar point of reference in the West Country than the court chapel at Aachen. The portal at Hereford, even though it follows the portal-like arrangement of the Tewkesbury west front, should not be included in this type of façade with monumental entrance niches because the window above the entrance was left outside the framework of the portal. Confined to the lower area of the façade and equipped with a multiple order of columns and archivolt, the portal at Hereford rather belongs among those many recessed portals that represent too common a feature of Romanesque buildings to allow for any association with the niche at Aachen. It is, therefore, in the development of these Romanesque façades, including that of Hereford Cathedral itself, that we might search for an indication of the proper typological and chronological context for the Hereford chapel.

Construction of the present Romanesque cathedral at Hereford started much later than the recorded erection of the chapel of Bishop Rutbertus de Lozinga, under Bishop Reinhelm (1107–1115), and it was completed by Bishop Robert de Bethune who was buried in his cathedral in 1148.²¹ It is to this building of the first half of the twelfth century with its round pillars and heavy arches that the architectural forms of the small chapel conform stylistically. Accordingly, a

construction period following the completion of the cathedral, or at least contemporary with it, might be preferred. The accepted date in the last quarter of the eleventh century can be securely excluded when one takes the portal into consideration. Its heavily moulded recesses are not consistent with a date preceding 1100 and the beginning of construction of the Romanesque cathedral.²² The destroyed western façade of the latter presented the same arrangement, with a deeply recessed portal, likewise with five steps in jambs and archivolt, between turrets.²³ Like the one at Tewkesbury with its monumental niche, this façade dates certainly not earlier than 1140.

Other features that seem to point to an early twelfth-century date are the round piers of the upper story, which do not exhibit any sophisticated detailing and from which the arches emerge, just below the capital, without a clear articulation. One is reminded of the heavy pillars of Tewkesbury Abbey, begun after 1087, with their band-like capitals, rather than Gloucester Abbey and Hereford Cathedral, where a more sculptural approach was taken. The emergence of an arch from the round pier, found on a large scale in the easternmost bay of the nave of Romsey Abbey, also has been reconstructed in the choir of Tewkesbury Abbey. The barrel vault over heavy round pillars in the Hereford chapel finds a parallel in the choir and transepts of Tewkesbury Abbey where a similar arrangement has been reconstructed.²⁴ The same type of quadrant vaults, a common feature of English Romanesque architecture around 1100, appears further in the galleries of the choir of Gloucester Abbey, commenced in 1089, and can therefore be regarded as a well established feature in the architecture of the region.

The simplicity of the architectural forms and the heaviness of the pillars and vaults were the main reasons for relating the Hereford chapel to the late-eleventh-century style of Tewkesbury, which stands in marked contrast to the development after 1100 towards increased richness of architectural details. This model of a linear stylistic development, however, does not take into consideration the dialectic reaction to the richly decorated Norman Romanesque that can be observed in the mid-twelfth century. In discussing the façades of Southwell Minster and Worksop Priory, McAleer, for example, noted an “unexpected reassertion of a certain simplicity, even bareness, involving an apparent rejection of most ornamentation.”²⁵ The most prominent representatives of this renewed inclination towards severity that seems to reflect the political conflicts of the mid-century²⁶ are, of course, the churches of the Cistercian order in northern England, beginning with Fountains Abbey in 1135.²⁷

A date of the mid-twelfth century for the Bishop's Chapel seems to find support in documentary evidence. At the close of the twelfth century, Bishop William de Verre confirmed by charter a sequence of donations made by his predecessors to the chapel of St. Mary Magdalene, the lower of the two chapels in the building.²⁸ The list is headed by Bishop Gilbert Foliot (1148–1163), who gave the most substantial contribu-

tion, and who might therefore have been responsible for its foundation or at least for its completion. A second bishop of the same family, Robert Foliot, is listed in this document as having equally contributed to this chapel, and in 1232/33 it was Bishop Hugh Foliot who granted a rent of five marks to St. Catherine, the upper of the two chapels.²⁹ With three bishops of Hereford from the same feudal family contributing to the endowment of the chapel, the building gradually acquired the character of a family foundation connected to the episcopal palace, the construction of which around 1180–1190 is ascribed to either Robert Foliot or William de Verre.³⁰ It is precisely the first of these bishops—Gilbert Foliot, a prominent member of the royal court of Henry II—who might have been, as will be shown, the person who introduced this building type, meaningful in terms of an imperial iconography, into English architecture.

As the chapel at Hereford seems to date to the mid-twelfth rather than the late eleventh century, we can conclude that the circular church erected by Rutbertus de Lozinga before 1095 must have been a different edifice altogether. Since no clear identification is made in the source, it could equally well refer to a hitherto unknown centralized church independent of the cathedral, or to one attached to the previous, pre-Conquest building. One possibility is that it was positioned immediately east of the cathedral, incorporated into its subsequent Romanesque rebuilding and finally destroyed around 1200 to make way for the present early Gothic Lady Chapel. The unusual termination of the Romanesque choir, which gave access through a portal-like opening to an adjoining space of unknown form, seems to have been designed to accommodate such a chapel. Nothing of this sort is known through archaeological evidence,³¹ but the chapel might be speculatively reconstructed as an axial rotunda east of the choir like the one excavated in St. Peter at Louvain in Belgium, whose inner octagon clearly follows the model of Aachen.³² The situation would also resemble that of St. Augustine's Abbey at Canterbury, where Abbot Wulfic II had started in 1049 to replace the apse of the church by a centralized building with an inner circle of eight pillars, in a clear reference to either Aachen or Saint-Benigne in Dijon. Another more likely solution, however, would be to link Bishop Rutbertus's chapel to the foundations of the circular edifice 38 feet in diameter that was uncovered in 1927 under the hospital chapel of St. Giles at Hereford.³³ In any case, the generally accepted identification of the chapel known from the chronicle, for which neither patron saint nor location is given, with the surviving remains of the Bishop's Chapel is questionable, and evidence rather points towards a different, unknown building.

If there were two different chapels at Hereford, one following the prototype of Aachen, and one belonging to the widespread group of double-storied chapels, the situation would have resembled that of Goslar, the favored residence of Emperor Henry II and all subsequent rulers of the Salian

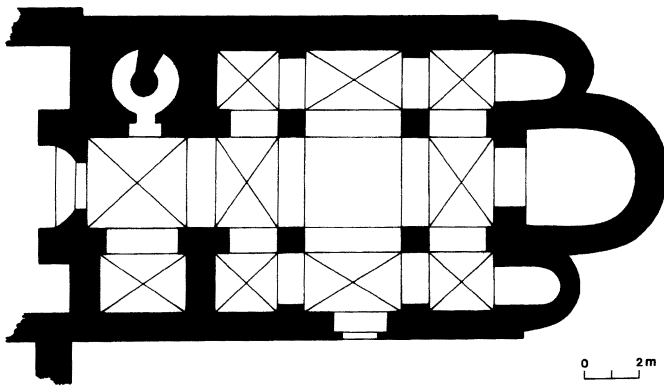


FIGURE 4. Goslar, palatine complex, Our Lady's Chapel, groundplan (Ginette Gauvin and Hans J. Böker).

dynasty, where a similar ensemble with two chapels—one square and one octagonal—existed.³⁴ The surviving imperial palace, built in 1034–1038 under Conrad II, contained at its southern end an earlier palace chapel dedicated to Our Lady and known from archaeological evidence (Fig. 4).³⁵ A square groundplan with foundations for four columns and proof for the existence of a second story clearly mark this building as another example of the same group of two-storied chapels, here linked at right angles to an imperial palace.

For the interpretation of this chapel it is important to know that the palatine complex at Goslar still preserves another chapel at its northern end, and thus opposite Our Lady's chapel. This chapel, now heavily restored, belonged to the second residential wing built under Henry V in the early twelfth century (Figs. 5 and 6);³⁶ it was dedicated to St. Ulric (+ 973), bishop of Augsburg and, in his day, a prominent member of the imperial church system. Once again Aachen has been claimed as the prototype of this centrally planned edifice, although a number of decidedly Byzantine features have not gone unnoticed.³⁷ For example, the ground floor shows a cruciform plan with barrel-vaulted cross arms and shallow niches carved into the substance of the wall, such as one finds often in middle Byzantine architecture. In its present form the octagonal upper story is—as indicated by differences in its system of wall articulation—possibly the result of an afterthought. Its inner arrangement, with four columns around the central square opening that connects the two rather heterogeneous stories, must, however, have been part of the original design.

While both of the chapels attached to the imperial palace have been linked to Aachen, partly because of their resemblance to Hereford where there seemed to exist a written proof of this connection, evidence from Goslar itself precludes any interpretation of the two chapels as copies of Aachen, since a third chapel, *i.e.*, the collegiate church of St. George on the nearby Georgenberg, clearly imitates the octagonal prototype

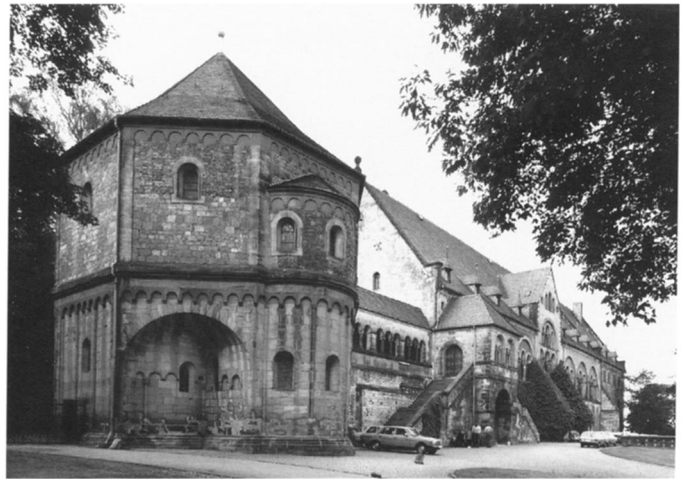


FIGURE 5. Goslar, palatine complex, St. Ulric's Chapel, exterior (photo: Niedersächsisches Landesverwaltungsamt, Institut für Denkmalpflege, by permission).

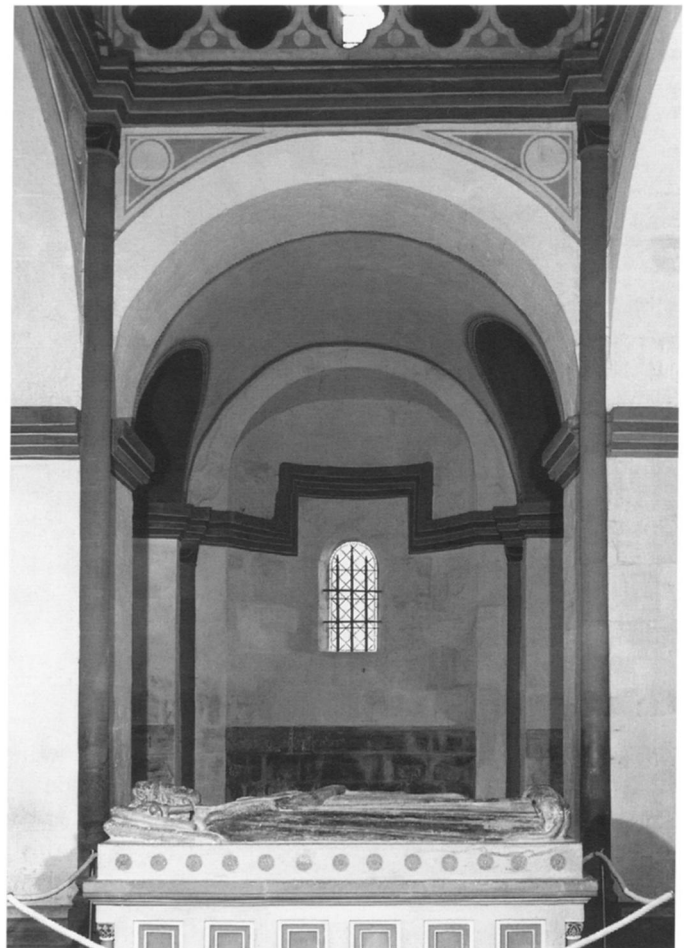


FIGURE 6. Goslar, palatine complex, St. Ulric's Chapel, interior (photo: Niedersächsisches Landesverwaltungsamt, Institut für Denkmalpflege, by permission).



FIGURE 7. Goslar, Georgenberg, foundations of St. George's Chapel (photo: Niedersächsisches Landesverwaltungsamt, Institut für Denkmalpflege, by permission).

by repeating all of its major elements (Fig. 7).³⁸ Here we find two western turrets enclosing a monumental niche in front of the portal and angular piers defining the central space. Of the three chapels at Goslar it is only this third one of which literary evidence from the late middle ages stresses the resemblance to Aachen.³⁹ It is not in the least plausible to posit that three contemporary buildings in the same location—one square, a second cruciform and a third octagonal—all followed the same prototype and yet, at the same time, resembled each other not at all. It seems more likely that the two chapels connected to the imperial palace, those of Our Lady and St. Ulric, may have been intended to recall other prototypes of at least equal significance.

By the twelfth century, the double-storied chapel type as realized at Hereford and Goslar represented an already well established tradition within the German Empire, reaching back into the eleventh century and ranging from specific and often imitated episcopal chapels attached to cathedrals and chapels of imperial residences, to chapels in the castles of the feudal nobility. All of these chapels resemble each other in their main features: they consist of two stories over a square groundplan; both stories are subdivided into nine bays by the insertion of four supports, usually columns; and both levels are spatially interconnected by an opening, usually octagonal, within the vault of the central bay. This model was in continuous use for more than two centuries until it was finally replaced around 1250 by the longitudinal Gothic chapel type following the recently constructed Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, even though this monument is sometimes included in the seemingly long lasting tradition of double-storied chapels established with Aachen and reaching down even to Versailles.⁴⁰

The earliest of this group of chapels which has survived is St. Emmeram's chapel at Speyer Cathedral (Figs. 8 and 9),

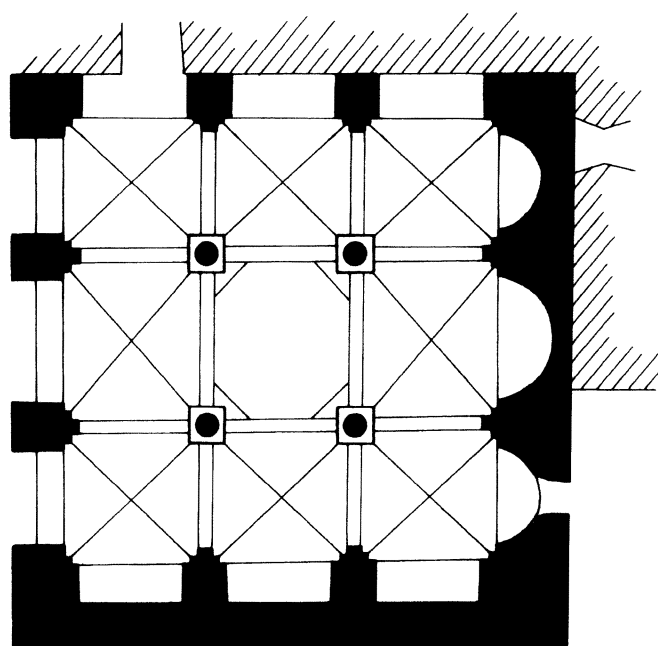


FIGURE 8. Speyer Cathedral, St. Emmeram's Chapel, groundplan (Ginette Gauvin and Hans J. Böker).



FIGURE 9. Speyer Cathedral, St. Emmeram's Chapel, interior (photo: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Rheinland-Pfalz, by permission).

built around 1100 under Emperor Henry IV, followed shortly afterwards by St. Godehard's chapel at Mainz Cathedral.⁴¹ Both are double-storied buildings over square groundplans with four columns surrounding the central opening. A similar chapel, dedicated to St. Stephen, existed until 1806 at Trier

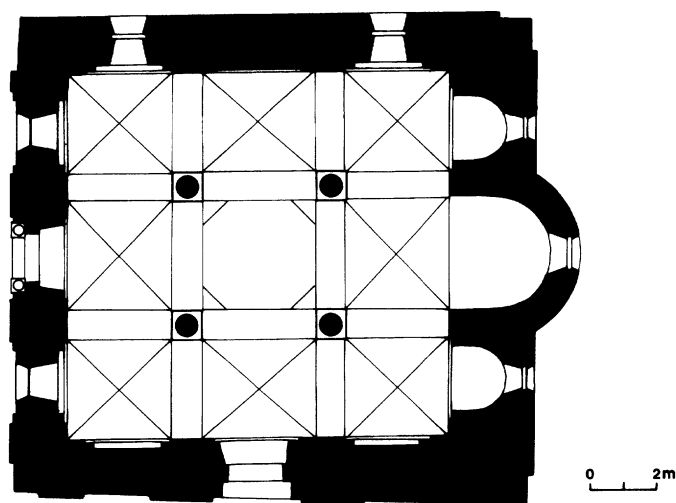


FIGURE 10. *Cologne Cathedral, Bishop's Chapel, St. Johannis in curia, groundplan* (Ginette Gauvin and Hans J. Böker).

Cathedral.⁴² Outside the German Empire, Laon still has in its episcopal palace a double-storied chapel of the same type, constructed during the early reign of Bishop Gauthier de Montagne (1155–1174);⁴³ while the lower space follows the hall church type, the upper chapel has four free-standing columns that support slightly pointed barrel vaults and a domed central bay. As at Hereford, it is interesting to note the stylistic discrepancy between this rather “Romanesque,” even “Byzantine” looking chapel⁴⁴ and the “modernity” of the prestigious cathedral project begun at the same time by the same patron.

The prototype of this group seems to have been the archiepiscopal chapel of *St. Johannis in Curia* revealed by excavations south of Cologne Cathedral and originally connected to the adjoining archbishop's palace (Fig. 10). This building, dating from the reign of Archbishop Heribert (999–1021), had a square groundplan with a projecting eastern apse, while secondary apses remained within the thickness of the eastern wall.⁴⁵ The most distinguishing feature of the interior was, again, a central square formed by four columns and continued into a lantern. In this respect the chapel served as a prototype for a large number of imperial as well as episcopal palatine chapels, all of which follow Cologne in their main architectural elements. Contemporary with the chapel at Cologne, another of the same type was added before 1015 by Bishop Meinwerk to the southern transept of Paderborn Cathedral (Fig. 11).⁴⁶

Since for none of these chapels within the Rhenish group of monuments is any reference made in medieval sources to the Palatine Chapel at Aachen, and since the identification of Aachen as a prototype for the chapel at Hereford is dubious, it is necessary to reconsider the question of which building

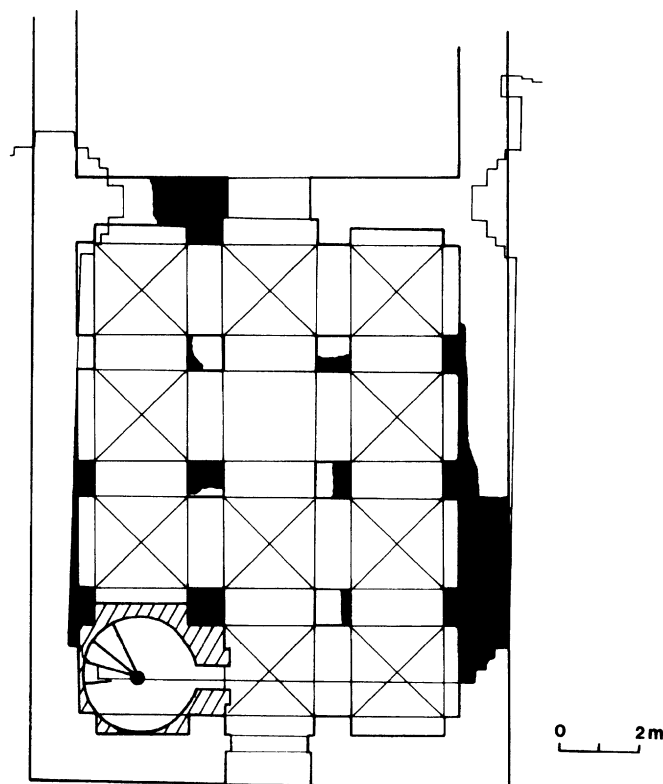


FIGURE 11. *Paderborn Cathedral, Bishop's Chapel, groundplan* (Ginette Gauvin and Hans J. Böker).

the chapel at Hereford was intended to recall. That the chapel under consideration was designed to make a symbolic statement similar to that of the preceding copy of Aachen erected by Bishop Rutbertus seems obvious. The emulation of a building type that was closely linked to the politically leading higher clergy of the Holy Roman Empire was clearly meant as a means of participating in the political prestige of that specific group. The question remains unsettled, however, concerning what associations the group of buildings, as a whole, evoked in the contemporary audience.

If we consider first of all the groundplan and spatial system of the chapels, we are reminded, as at Hereford, of the so-called “cross-in-square” type of church familiar in middle Byzantine architecture. Kautzsch already tried to link the chapel at Mainz to such a precursor.⁴⁷ In these churches a complicated upper structure with a cruciform arrangement of spaces and an octagonal tambour is carried by four piers (or, more often, columns), while both the longitudinal and the transversal axes are covered by barrel vaults forming, according to contemporary interpretation, a symbolic representation of the universe.⁴⁸ One of the early buildings of this type at Constantinople was the Myrelaion (Fig. 12), founded by Romanos I Lekapenos (922–944) next to his palace and built

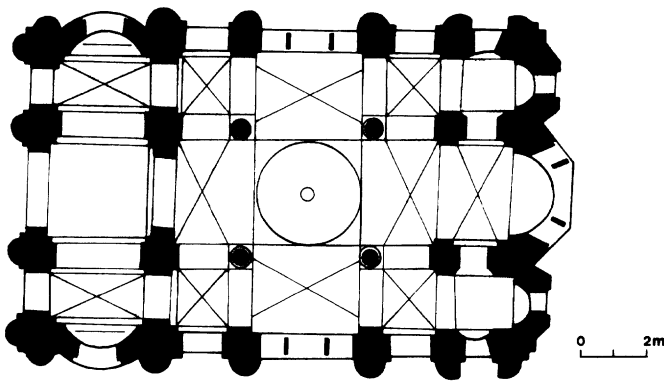


FIGURE 12. Constantinople, Myrelaion, groundplan of upper chapel (Ginette Gauvin and Hans J. Böker).

above a ground story which might have been intended for burial purposes.⁴⁹ Even though the upper chapel at Hereford does not display a distinct cruciform structure, its basic elements of a barrel vault in the main axis, interrupted by an octagonal dome over tambour and squinches, would have sufficed to recall a Byzantine model rather than the Palatine Chapel at Aachen with its different spatial structure. These elements would have given the building a distinctly Byzantine connotation.

In this context it is interesting to note that the second building which supposedly follows Aachen, *i.e.*, the chapel at Germigny-des-Près,⁵⁰ consecrated in 806, also resembles a similar Byzantine prototype. In consequence, Armenian churches have been named as possible sources of inspiration for it.⁵¹ Even the decidedly iconoclastic mosaic decoration of its apse, depicting the Ark of the Covenant instead of an enthroned Christ,⁵² seems to follow contemporary Byzantine practice. Although no example of this building type has survived from as early as the ninth century, and although the reconstruction of the Nea church built by Emperor Basil I (867–886) is considered the earliest example known from literary sources, other evidence indicates that the type must in fact have existed by this time in Constantinople.⁵³

The chapels cited as belonging to the same type which collectively served as models for Hereford have in common a close connection to the imperial house. While some are attached either to an imperial palace (Goslar) or the imperial mausoleum (Speyer Cathedral), others were erected by archbishops who served as imperial chancellors (Mainz and Cologne) or by bishops who were close relatives of the emperor (Paderborn). The construction of these chapels must, therefore, be seen within the framework of the imperial church system (*Reichskirchensystem*) that developed over the eleventh century. Although the existence of a complete system has been the object of a recent dispute, the decisive influence of some rulers on specific bishoprics under imperial control remains unquestioned.⁵⁴ In this system, the emperor had to

depend heavily on the unrestricted loyalty of the high clergy, who were usually chosen from the imperial administration, notably the chancellery. This scheme only appeared to place the clergy in a position like that of the patriarch of Constantinople, subordinated entirely to the imperial will; in reality the immense influence of the ecclesiastical advisors in defining imperial politics should not be underestimated.

For an English bishop like Gilbert Foliot, as exactly contemporaneously at Laon, the reception of this group of buildings represented another opportunity to stress a political connection to the king. Gilbert Foliot's ecclesiastical career coincided with the power struggle between King Stephen (1135–1154) and Henry of Anjou, and the early reign of the latter as Henry II (1154–1189). Henry's power base had been in the west where Earl Roger of Hereford, a kinsman of Gilbert Foliot, was a prominent political figure and a supporter of Henry's claim to the throne. In 1148, Gilbert, previously prior of Cluny and Abbeville and subsequently abbot of Gloucester, had been promoted to the bishopric of Hereford where he became involved in the task of peace keeping and in the defence of his own feudal position (even to the extent of imposing an interdict on Roger's dominions). After his accession to the English throne in 1154, Henry II tried to build on the traditional strength of the Anjou family in the west of England. Here he could depend on the support of Bishop Foliot, who used his diplomatic skills during Roger's rebellion of 1155 to persuade him to submit to the king and finally to withdraw as a monk into the Abbey of Gloucester, where he died the same year.⁵⁵ In recognition of his loyalty, which he further demonstrated in several of his letters to the king, Gilbert Foliot was promoted in 1163 to the prestigious see of London.

When in the following year, in the articles of Clarendon, Henry II attempted to expand his control over the English church, Gilbert Foliot was one of his most outspoken supporters. One of the king's means to reach his goal had been to introduce his chaplain, Thomas Becket, to the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury; this, however, failed to produce the desired effect. In the subsequent controversy Gilbert Foliot, in his correspondence with Thomas Becket and elsewhere,⁵⁶ openly took the side of his patron the king, while Becket in response identified Foliot with the personified antichrist.⁵⁷ For his involvement in politics on the side of the king Foliot even had to allow the city of London to be excommunicated. Since he died in 1169, he was spared beholding the events which led to the murder of Thomas Becket in 1174 and the subsequent period of strife between church and state.

Under the specific circumstances of Henry's attempt to seize power between 1149 and 1153, and again after his accession to the English throne in 1154, the reception of a type of chapel employed by the high clergy of the Holy Roman Empire and thus evoking strong associations of a clergy in royal service, was a means by which Gilbert Foliot could express publicly his loyalty to the future (or new) king. The

introduction of this building type during the reign of King Henry II was the more significant as the king entered into a close collaboration with the German emperor, Frederick I Barbarossa. In 1165, the German chancellor Rainald of Dasel visited the king at his court at Rouen to discuss a political alliance, strengthened by the marriage of Henry's daughter Eleonora to the emperor's son. Under Frederick Barbarossa, who, in the same way as Henry II, was keen to preserve his rights as a sovereign against the claims of the papal curia at Rome,⁵⁸ the same double-storied chapel was erected at the imperial castle at Nuremberg, clearly indicating the connotation of this chapel type for the contemporary public.

Detached from the cathedral and situated in the immediate vicinity of the palace, the Bishop's Chapel at Hereford was intended to be used by the relatively restricted audience of the episcopal court, the cathedral's clergy and prominent visitors from the court of Henry II. Considering the imperial connotation, both western and Byzantine, of the building type for any member of the ruling elite of the twelfth century, the Hereford chapel must have been understood by those admitted to it as a model of a society firmly based on the authority of the ruler. Since it had associations with both Byzantine cesaropapism and the German imperial church system, this model defined, at the same time, the role of the high clergy in relation to the central power of the kingdom.

NOTES

1. "Ibi ecclesiam fereti edificavit scemate, Aquensem basilicam pro modo imitatus suo," *Lateinische Schriftquellen zur Kunst in England vom Jahre 901 bis zum Jahre 1307*, ed. O. Lehmann-Brockhaus, I (Munich, 1955), No. 2074.
2. E.g., R. J. King, *Handbook of the Cathedrals of England, Western Division* (London, 1874), 73.
3. N. Drinkwater, "Hereford Cathedral, the Bishop's chapel of St. Katharine and St. Mary Magdalen," *AJ*, CXI (1954), 129–137; G. Bandmann, "Die Bischofskapelle in Hereford: Zur Nachwirkung der Aachener Pfalzkapelle," in *Festschrift für Herbert von Einem*, ed. G. von der Osten and G. Kauffmann (Berlin, 1965), 9–26; R. Gem, "The Bishop's Chapel at Hereford: The Roles of Patron and Craftsman," in *Art and Patronage in the English Romanesque*, ed. S. Macready and F. H. Thompson (London, 1986), 87–96.
4. R. Krautheimer, "Introduction to an 'Iconography of Medieval Architecture,'" rpt. in his *Studies in Early Christian, Medieval, and Renaissance Art* (London, 1971), 116.
5. G. Bandmann, *Mittelalterliche Architektur als Bedeutungsträger* (Berlin, 1951), 48 (quoted from the unpublished translation by Kendall Wallis).
6. O. Doppelfeld, "'More Romano': Die beiden karolingischen Domgrundrisse von Köln," in *Die Ausgrabungen im Dom zu Köln*, ed. O. Doppelfeld and W. Weyres (Kölner Forschungen, I) (Mainz, 1980), 171–182.
7. W. E. Kleinbauer, "Charlemagne's Palace Chapel at Aachen and its Copies," *Gesta*, IV (1965), 2–11; G. Sieffert, "Les imitations de la chapelle palatine de Charlemagne à Aachen," *Cahiers de l'art médiéval*, V, 2 (1969), 29–70.
8. M. Untermann, *Der Zentralbau im Mittelalter: Form-Funktion-Verbreitung* (Darmstadt, 1989), 140.
9. N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Herefordshire* (Harmondsworth, 1963), 173.
10. "Inspirée par Aix, mais non imitée de cette église, la chapelle de Hereford ne peut par conséquent être considérée comme une véritable copie"; G. Sieffert, "Ottmarsheim," *CAF, Haut-Alsace*, CLXXXVI (1982), 318.
11. A. Verbeek, "Zentralbauten in der Nachfolge der Aachener Pfalzkapelle," in *Das Erste Jahrtausend: Kultur und Kunst im werdenden Abendland an Rhein und Ruhr*, ed. V. H. Elbern, II (Düsseldorf, 1964), 906; *idem*, "Die architektonische Nachfolge der Aachener Pfalzkapelle," in *Das Nachleben*, ed. W. Braunfels and P. E. Schramm (Karl der Große: Lebenswerk und Nachleben, IV) (Düsseldorf, 1965), 137–138; Bandmann, *Mittelalterliche Architektur als Bedeutungsträger*, 208; *idem*, "Doppelkapelle," in *RdK*, IV (Stuttgart, 1958), 196–215; U. Stevens, *Burgkapellen im deutschen Sprachraum* (14. Veröffentlichung der Abteilung Architektur des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Köln) (Cologne, 1978), 159–160.
12. P. Crossley, "Medieval Architecture and Meaning: The Limits of Iconography," *BM*, CXXX (1988), 116–121.
13. G. Bandmann, "Die Vorbilder der Aachener Pfalzkapelle," in *Karolingische Kunst*, ed. W. Braunfels and H. Schnitzler (Karl der Große: Lebenswerk und Nachleben, III) (Düsseldorf, 1965), 424–462. The question to what extent one of the models for Aachen, i.e., the church of SS. Sergios and Bakchos at Constantinople, was instrumental in establishing the building type of an octagonal palace chapel, although disputed, seems of little relevance to the reception of Byzantine architecture for reasons of political iconography, since the recognizability of the Byzantine sources of the Aachen chapel was sufficient for a contemporary visitor to see the intended visual link (C. Mango, "The Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus at Constantinople and the Alleged Tradition of Octagonal Palatine Churches," *JÖB*, XXI [1972], 189–194; R. Krautheimer, "Again Saints Sergius and Bacchus at Constantinople," *ibid.*, XXIII [1974], 251–254; C. Mango, "The Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus once again," *BZ*, LXVIII [1974], 385–392).
14. O. Schürer, *Romanische Doppelkapellen: Eine typengeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Marburg, 1929), 18.
15. Cf. F. Möbius, *Westwerkstudien* (Jena, 1968), 80.
16. J. Bony, "La chapelle épiscopale et les apports lorrains en Angleterre après la conquête," in *Actes du XIXe congrès international d'histoire de l'art* (Paris, 1958), 36–43; see more recently C. Wilson, "Abbot Serlo's Church at Gloucester (1089–1100): Its Place in Romanesque Architecture," in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Gloucester* (BAACT, VII) (Leeds, 1985), 52–83.
17. J. Henriët, "Saint-Philibert de Tournus. L'oeuvre du second maître: La Galilée et la nef," *BM*, CL (1992), 135–136.
18. J. P. McAleer, *The Romanesque Church Façade in Britain* (New York, 1984), 210.
19. *Ibid.*, 556.
20. F. Saxl, "Lincoln Cathedral: The Eleventh-Century Design for the Westfront," *AJ*, CIII (1946), 105–117; J. P. McAleer, "The Eleventh-Century Façade of Lincoln Cathedral: Saxl's Theory of Byzantine Influence Reconsidered," *Architectura*, XIV (1984), 1–19.
21. *Lateinische Schriftquellen*, No. 2054: "sepultus est [Rupertus] in ecclesia sua matrice, quam ipse multa impensa et sollicitudine consumavit." M. Thurlby, "Hereford Cathedral: The Romanesque Fabric," in *Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology at Hereford* (BAACT, XVI) (Leeds, 1992), 15–28.

22. Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Herefordshire*, I (London, 1931), 30.
23. J. P. McAleer, "Southwell, Worksop, and Stylistic Tendencies in English Twelfth-Century Façade Design," in *Medieval Architecture and its Intellectual Context: Studies in Honour of Peter Kidson*, ed. E. Fernie and P. Crossley (London, 1990), 62.
24. *Idem*, "The Romanesque Transept and Choir Elevation of Tewkesbury and Pershore," *AB*, LXIV (1982), 549–563; M. Thurlby, "The Romanesque Elevation of Tewkesbury and Pershore," *JSAH*, XLIV (1985), 16–17.
25. McAleer, "Southwell, Worksop, and Stylistic Tendencies," 66–67.
26. A similar tendency towards severity within an otherwise very elaborate development has been observed in the mid-fifteenth century, when Henry IV ordered the chapel of King's College Cambridge to be built "in large fourme, clene and substantial, wel replenysshed with goodly windowes and voutes leying a parte superfluite of to grete curiose werkes of entaille and besy moldyng." L. F. Salzman, *Building in England down to 1540* (Oxford, 1952), 523.
27. H. Hahn, *Die frühe Kirchenbaukunst der Zisterzienser* (Frankfurter Forschungen zur Architekturgeschichte, I) (Berlin, 1957), 204–205.
28. *Hereford 1070–1234*, ed. J. Barrow (English Episcopal Acta, VII) (New York, 1993), No. 98.
29. *Ibid.*, No. 343.
30. J. Blair, "The 12th-Century Bishop's Palace at Hereford," *MA*, XXXI (1987), 59–72.
31. The apse usually reconstructed at this site is but conjecture, since an excavation in the mid-nineteenth century uncovered only the two lateral apses; cf. *Historical Monuments in Herefordshire*, I, 92.
32. G. Bandmann, "Zur Bestimmung der romanischen Scheitelrotunde an der Peterskirche zu Löwen," in *Beiträge zur rheinischen Kunstgeschichte und Denkmalpflege*, II (Düsseldorf, 1974), 69–79.
33. *Historical Monuments in Herefordshire*, I, 130–131.
34. J. Dahlhaus, "Zu den Anfängen von Pfalz und Stift in Goslar," in *Die Salier und das Reich*, II, *Die Reichskirche in der Salierzeit*, ed. S. Weinfurter (Sigmaringen, 1991), 373–428.
35. U. Hölscher, *Die Kaiserpfalz Goslar* (Die Deutschen Kaiserpfalzen, I) (Berlin, 1927).
36. *Ibid.*, 121–125.
37. H. Reuter, "Studien zur Goslarer Pfalzkapelle St. Ulrich," *Niederdeutsche Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte*, VII (1968), 65–84.
38. G. Borchers, "Die Grabungen und Untersuchungen in der Stiftskirche St. Georg zu Goslar (1963/1964), einem Nachfolgebau der Pfalzkapelle Aachen," in *Bonner Jahrbücher*, CLXVI (1966), 235–252.
39. "ad exemplar imperialis ecclesiae Aquisgranis constructa" or "nach aller Form why zu Achen," as quoted *ibid.*, 236.
40. I. Hacker-Stück, "La Sainte-Chapelle de Paris et les chapelles palatines du moyen âge en France," *CA*, XIII (1962), 217–257.
41. H. E. Kubach, "Zu den romanischen Kapellen an den Domen von Mainz und Speyer," *Mainzer Zeitschrift*, LXVII–LXVIII (1972/1973), 118–121.
42. T. K. Kempf, "Neue Funde im Trierer Dombereich," *Das Münster*, III (1950), 52–53. N. Borger-Keveloh, *Die Liebfrauenkirche in Trier: Studien zur Baugeschichte* (Trierer Zeitschrift, Beiheft VIII) (Trier, 1986), 31–35, suggests rightly a date of the late eleventh instead of the mid-twelfth century.
43. L. Broche, "La date de la chapelle de l'évêché de Laon," *BM*, LXVI (1902), 499–510.
44. T. Crépin-Leblond, "Le Palais épiscopal de Laon," *CAF, Aisne Méridionale*, CLXVIII (1990), 380 refers to "une tradition d'inspiration byzantine largement répandue en Italie."
45. A. Wolff, "S. Johannis in Curia: Die erzbischöfliche Pfalzkapelle auf der Südseite des Kölner Domes und ihre Nachfolgebauten," in *Die Ausgrabungen im Dom zu Köln*, I, 638–639.
46. U. Lobbedey, *Die Ausgrabungen im Dom zu Paderborn 1978–80 und 1983* (Denkmalpflege und Forschung in Westfalen, XI) (Bonn, 1986), 177–180.
47. R. Kautzsch, "Die Gotthardkapelle am Dom zu Mainz und Kasr-Ibn-Wardan," in *Festschrift für E. Neeb* (Mainz, 1936), 41–59.
48. K. E. McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm: Literary Roots of an Architectural Symbol," *DOP*, XXXVII (1983), 91–121.
49. C. L. Striker, *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton, 1981), 6.
50. F. von Reber, "Die byzantinische Frage in der Architekturgeschichte," in *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Classe der königlich-bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München* (Munich, 1902), 495.
51. J. Hubert, "Germigny-des-Près," *CAF, Orléans*, XCIII (1930), 534–568; A. Khatchatrian, "Notes sur l'architecture de l'église de Germigny-des-Près," *CA*, VII (1954), 161–172; C. Heitz, *L'architecture religieuse carolingienne. Les formes et leur fonctions* (Paris, 1980), 82.
52. P. Bloch, "Das Apsismosaik von Germigny-des-Près," in *Karolingische Kunst*, 234–261.
53. D. Lange, "Theorien zur Entstehung der byzantinischen Kreuzkuppelkirche," *Architectura*, XVI (1986), 93–113.
54. T. Reuter, "The 'Imperial Church System' of the Ottonian and Salian Rulers: A Reconsideration," *Journal of European History*, XXXIII (1982), 347–374; J. Fleckenstein, "Problematik und Gestalt der ottonischen Reichskirche," in *Reich und Kirche vor dem Investiturstreit: Gerd Tellenbach zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. K. Schmid (Sigmaringen, 1985), 83–98.
55. E. Amt, *The Accession of Henry II in England: Royal Government Restored 1149–1159* (Woodbridge, 1993), 30–37.
56. Dom A. Morey and C. N. L. Brooke, *Gilbert Foliot and his Letters* (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought) (Cambridge, 1965).
57. E. Türk, *Nugae Curialium: Le règne d'Henri II Plantagenêt (1145–1189) et l'éthique politique* (Hautes études médiévales et modernes, XXVIII) (Geneva, 1977), 22.
58. P. Rassow, *Honor Imperii: Die neue Politik Friedrich Barbarossas 1152–1159* (Darmstadt, 1974), *passim*.