

Romanesque Architecture

European Churches
1000-1200

Romanesque Architecture

The term "Romanesque" means "like Roman". It refers to the architecture of the 11th and 12th centuries in medieval Europe to Roman Architecture, based on similarities of forms and materials.

Romanesque style is characterized by:

General Appearance:

1. Dark, solemn spaces
2. Exterior is simple, severe
3. Modest Height
4. Horizontal lines
5. Multiple Units

Architectural Elements:

1. Round arches
2. Barrel Vaults
3. Piers supporting vaults
4. Groin vaults

Romanesque Architecture

The Roman basilica, the building in which judicial, commercial, and governmental activities took place, became the primary architectural model for Christian churches in the early Middle Ages. Medieval Italian churches generally imitated its basic design.



Such buildings usually contained a center nave with colonnades along an aisle at each side and an apse at one end: on this raised platform sat the bishop and priests.



Romanesque was the first style since the end of Roman imperial architecture (300 CE) to be built in all of Europe. Examples are found in every part of the continent.

Romanesque Architecture- General Appearance

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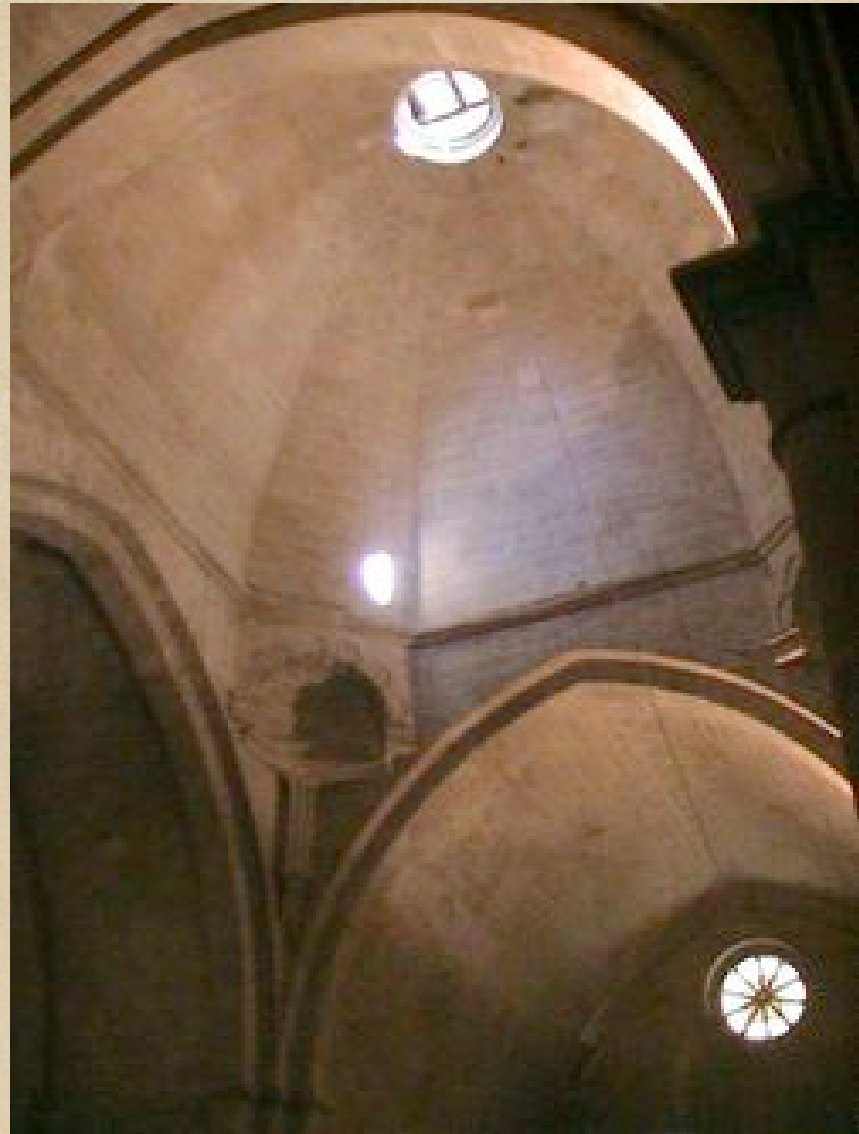
Romanesque churches were heavily influenced by the Roman Basilica, but they had a few important differences. The roof was made of stone vaults, which were much heavier and needed more supports. The solution was thicker walls and piers, rather than columns alone, to support the interior spaces. This made the space inside dark, rather gloomy, and kept the height rather low. The exteriors were very simple, and several geometric forms often made up the building, rather than one large space.

Dark, solemn spaces

Romanesque churches and castles were dark, with few openings.

Wars and invasions were commonplace, so windows and doors were kept to a minimum.

With stone and masonry buildings, buildings were safe from fire and invaders, but required large supports for the weight of walls and vaults.



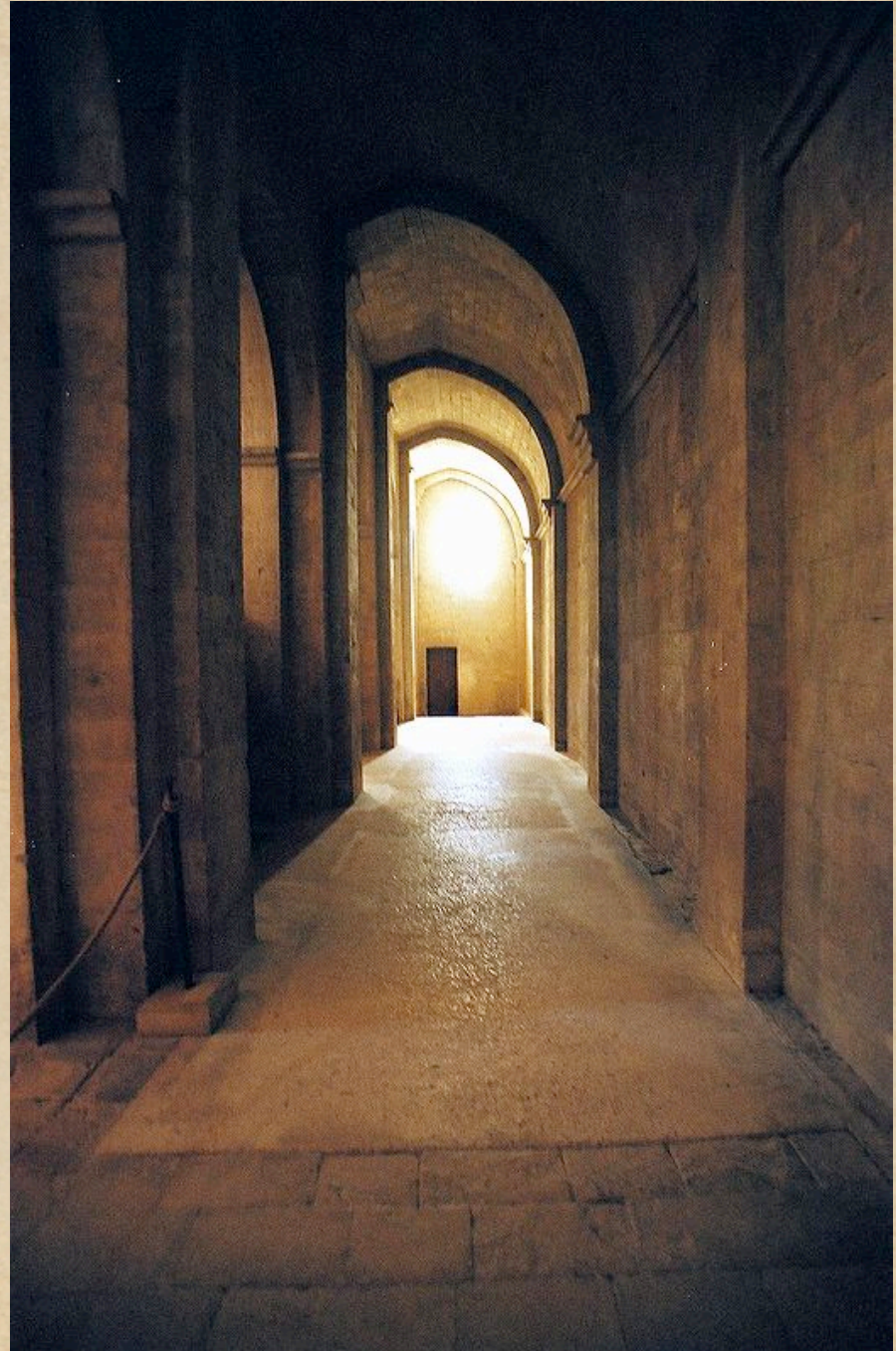
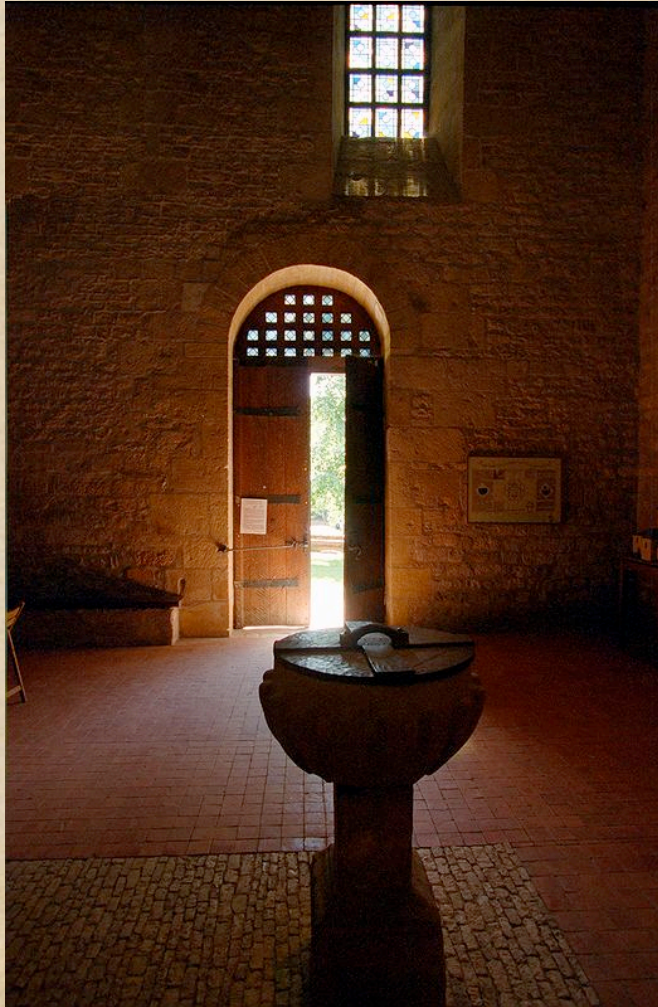


The new concept of stone vaulting required stronger walls for support. Because of the lack of knowledge of the building statics, it was necessary to build strong, thick walls with narrow openings.

Dark, solemn spaces



Dark,
solemn spaces



Exterior is simple, severe



A combination of masonry, arches and piers are the basis of the Romanesque style. The main concept for buildings was the addition of pure geometrical forms.

Modest Height, Horizontal lines

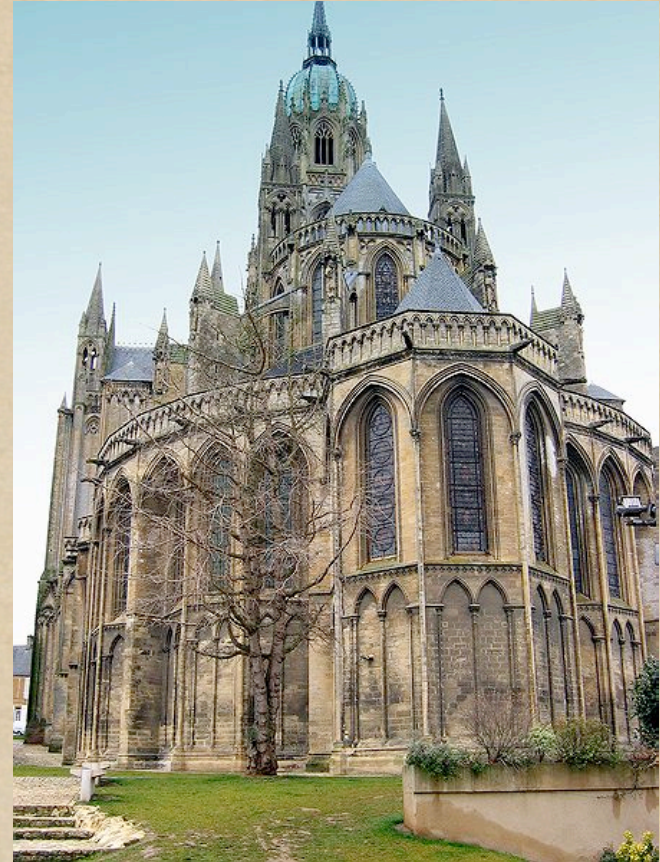


Romanesque churches have an emphasis on horizontal lines, similar to those of Greek & Roman public buildings.

Modest Height,
Horizontal lines



Horizontal lines
Romanesque Church
1000-1200

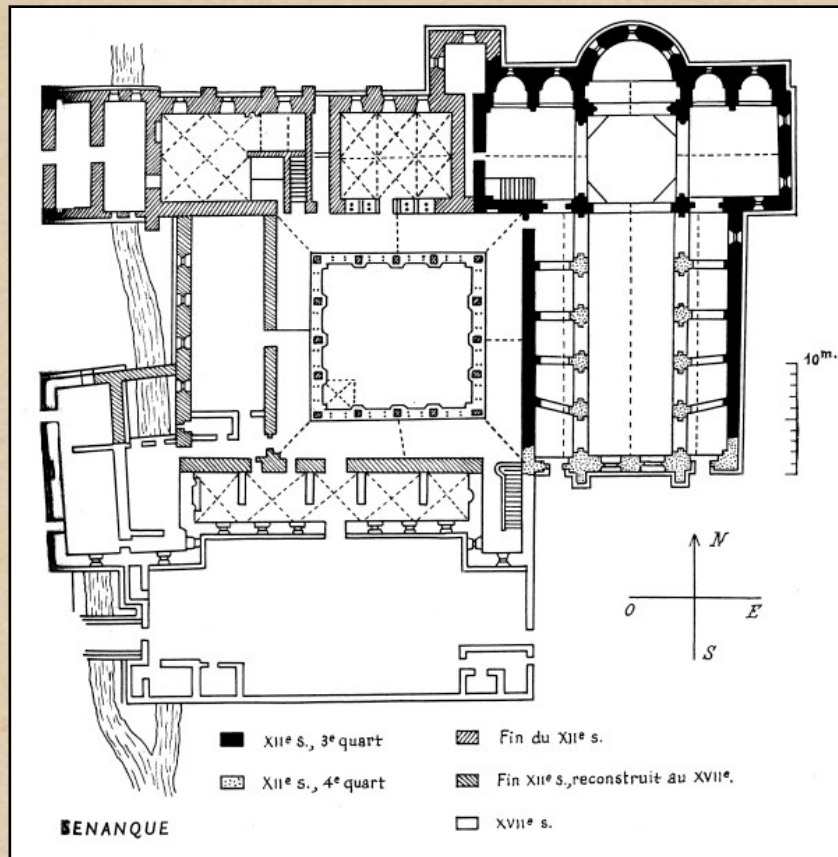


Vertical lines
Gothic Church
1200-1500

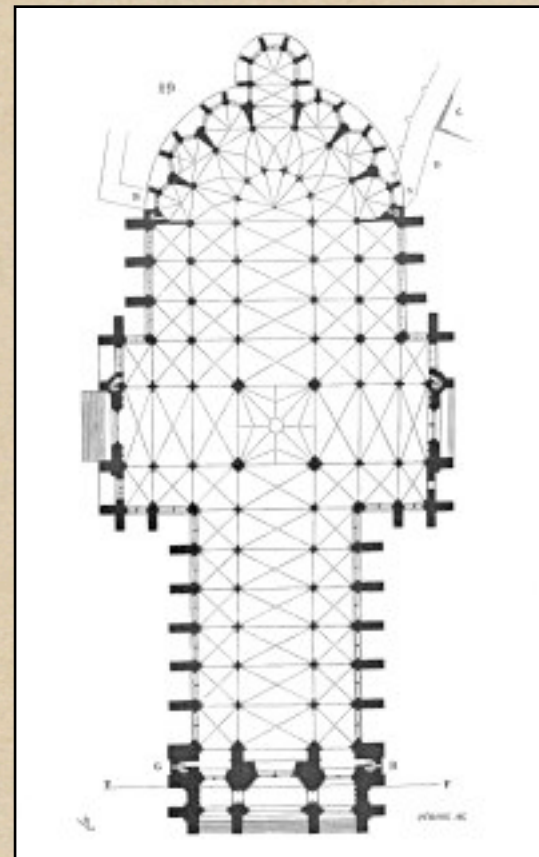
Multiple Units



Several geometric forms make up the building, rather than one shape. This changes in the Gothic era to one large cross shape.



Romanesque style
 Multiple units
 Several shapes



Gothic style
 one large space

Romanesque Architecture

Architectural Elements:

1. Round arches
2. Barrel Vaults
3. Piers supporting vaults
4. Groin vaults

Round Arches



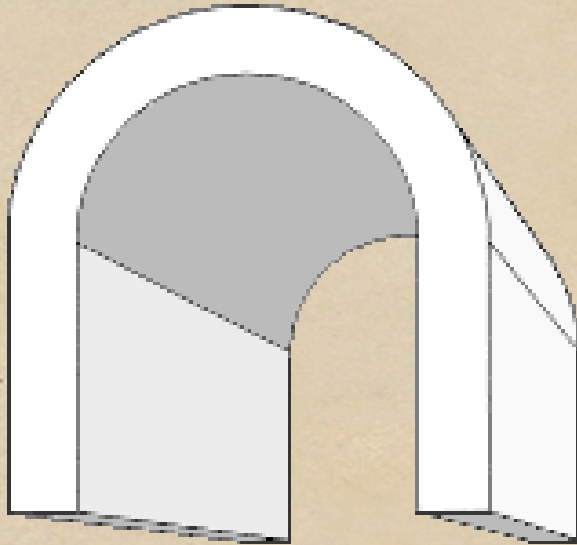
Round arches are similar to those of the Romans.

Round Arches



Notice the piers between the arches.

Barrel Vaults



Also called Tunnel Vaults, Barrel Vaults replace the flat roofs commonly used in Roman architecture. This is the simplest vault, created by combining a series of round or Roman arches.



The Barrel vault creates a higher ceiling, but needs large supports under it, so columns are combined with piers.

Piers supporting Vaults



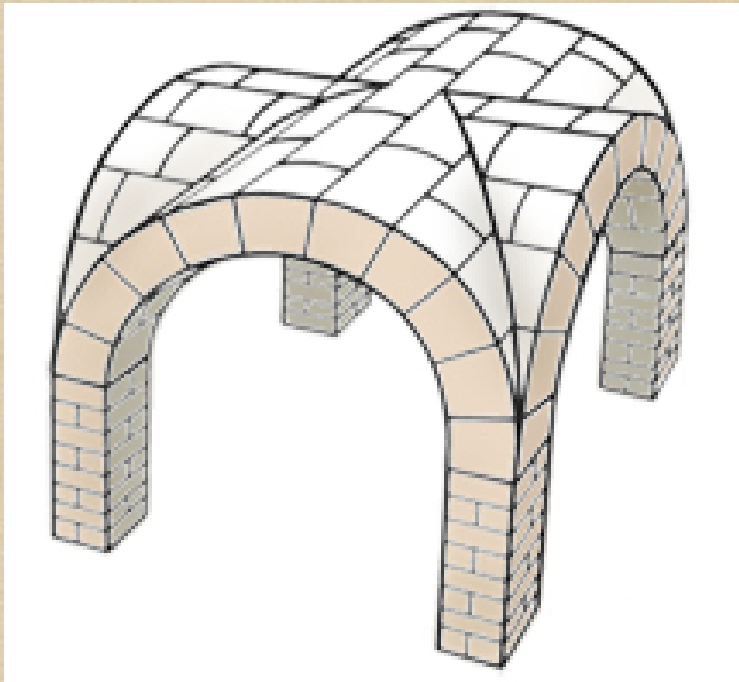
The Pier (an upright support generally square or rectangular in plan) is a better solution for heavy masonry walls than the column.

Piers supporting Vaults



In the picture on the left, Piers interspaced with columns support a Barrel Vault. On the right, columns on the pier are decorative, rather than main supports.

Groin Vaults



The diagonal intersections are called groins. The advantage of the groin vault is that its weight and thrusts are concentrated at the four corners.

Groin Vaults



A Groin, or Cross vault is a combination of two barrel vaults at intersecting angles. It provided a more aesthetically pleasing appearance for intersecting vaults. Notice the piers, right.

Name two
key features
of this
Romanesque
building.



rectangular
piers
holding up
groin,
or cross
vaults



Romanesque or Gothic?



Romanesque

multiple geometric units



Gothic

vertical lines



Romanesque - dark, with piers



Gothic - high, light & airy



Romanesque Architecture

European Churches
1000-1200

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