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2 *The Middle Ages*

The Romanesque Period, c. 1050–1250

From the raid on Lindisfarne in 793 to the battles of Stamford Bridge and Hastings in 1066, the Norsemen spread their adventures to western Europe and across the Atlantic, leaving buildings in those places where they were able to settle. These first attempts led to permanent settlement in Iceland, whereas in Greenland the Norse colonies were abandoned by the end of the fifteenth century. We have seen how short-lived was the little outpost in Newfoundland. But during the Viking Age the Scandinavian countries were being invaded in their turn by Christian missionaries. These determined churchmen gradually won converts, and as the national states of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway were beginning to form, the Church became established as well.

None of this took place overnight. In 827, early in the Viking period, St. Ansgar of Bremen founded churches in the commercial towns of Hedeby, Ribe, and Birka. No traces of Christian structures remain from this time, but a significant beginning had been made. More than a century elapsed, however, before dioceses were established at Hedeby, Ribe, and Århus in

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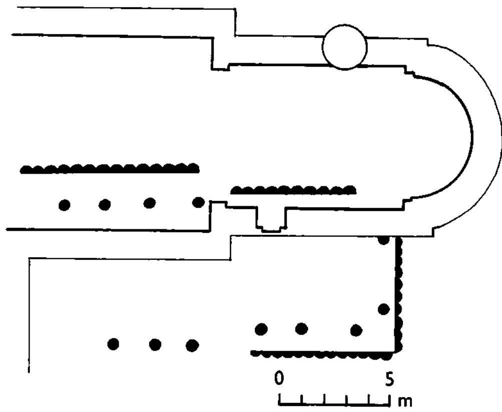

948, under the Archbishop of Bremen. The baptism of King Harald Blue-Tooth at Jelling, c. 965, brought the secular authority in Denmark into the Christian orbit, as the proud boast on the Jelling Stone asserts that Harald "made the Danes Christian." King Olav Slötkuning of Sweden was baptized at Uppsala in 1000, the year in which Iceland allowed Christianity to be adopted along with the worship of the pagan gods. Shortly thereafter another Christian king of Denmark, Knud the Great, became king of England in 1014. The wheel had come full circle. In the late eleventh century the Church was established in Norway under King Olav Kyrre, with dioceses at Bergen, Oslo, and Trondheim, also under the Archbishop of Bremen. Yet it was not until the middle of the twelfth century that the Swedes took the Church to the Finns, nor did the Church become dominant in Iceland until that republic came under the Norwegian King Håkon IV in 1262–1264. By the end of the eleventh century the ecclesiastical system of sees and parishes was in place in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, resulting in the system of tithes and the obligation of the parishes to build churches.[1]

As a result of these conversions the northern countries put on a "robe of churches" like that which cloaked continental Europe after the year 1000, but the northern robe was at first probably more brown with wood than white with stone. From the hundreds of churches that remain from the Romanesque period, only a modest number can be presented here to illustrate the variety possible among the parish churches of wood, stone, or brick, the larger town churches, the abbeys, and the centralized churches. The early eleventh century began a period of intense building activity in the smaller towns, and by the late twelfth century more ambitious programs were being undertaken in the larger towns and cities.

In the preceding chapter it was shown that, largely as the result of excavation, a considerable amount has been learned about housing in the Scandinavian countries in the pre-Christian eras. In spite of the literary traditions concerning the Nordic gods, however, little is known of buildings for worship in pagan times. The new faith brought a new building need. The first chapels built by the missionaries have disappeared, but were probably single cells, furnished with simple altars. The next step would be to differentiate the nave, or place of assembly, from a smaller chancel, or sanctuary, containing the altar, following the axial arrangement characteristic of western European church planning. The remains of S. Maria Minor in Lund show this type of plan, with walls of vertical halved logs and inner rows of posts around nave and chancel (figure 2.1).[2] Built c. 1000–1020, this little church is one of the earliest examples of one kind of "stave" church construction, the uprights set directly into the ground palisade fashion, the posts carrying the roof. The little church from Holtålen in Trøndelag, built in the twelfth century (now in the museum at Sverresborg,

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2.1 Lund. S. Maria Minor. c. 1000–1020. Plan. (After Ekhoff, *Svenska stavkyrkor,* figure 123, p. 150.)

2.2 Holtålen, Trøndelag. Church. c. 1050. (Now in museum at Sverresberg, Trondheim.)

2.3 Hemse, Gotland. Church. c. 1100. Conjectural drawing. (Ekhoff, *Svenska stavkyrkor,* figure 103, p. 125.)

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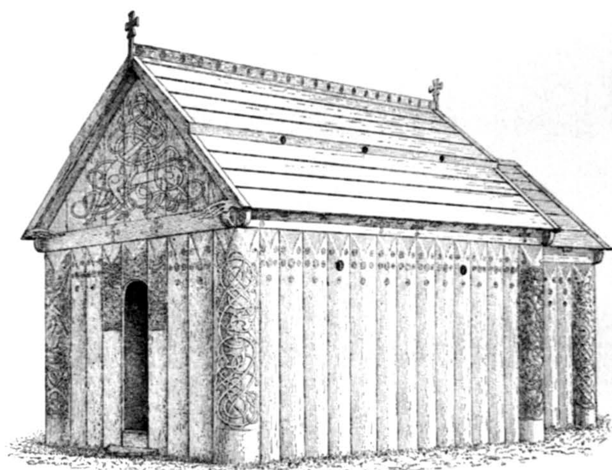

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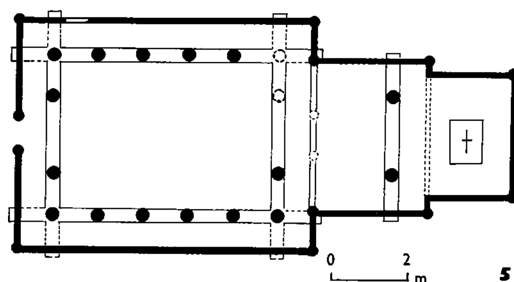

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2.4 Urnes, Sogn. Church. 1125–1140. Drawing by J. C. Dahl, 1844. (Oslo, Riksantikvaren.)

2.5 Urnes, Sogn. Church. Plan. (After Ekhoff, *Svenska stavkyrkor,* figure 7, p. 50.)

2.6 Gol, Hallingdal. Church. Early 13th century. (Now in Norwegian Folk Museum at Bygdøy, Oslo.)

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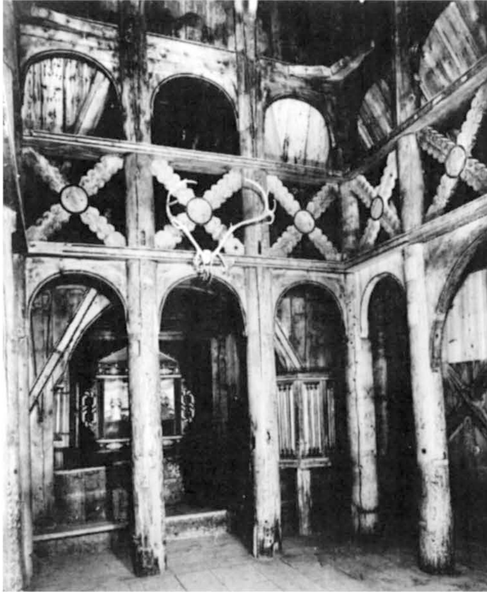

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Trondheim), has heavy posts set on a sill at the corners of the nave and chancel, with the planks of the palisade wall also grooved into the sill. The sill rests on a stone foundation, which helped to protect the timbers from rot and hence gave the church a better chance for survival (figure 2.2).[3] Fragments from the church at Hemse, Gotland (now in the Historical Museum, Stockholm), show how such timbers might be carved with patterns carried over from Viking times (figure 2.3).[4]

Most of the more than seven hundred wooden churches built in Norway in this period are now gone, about thirty remaining. They were mostly of the type just described, as were the wooden churches of Romanesque Denmark and Sweden.[5] Another kind is the "mast" type of stave church. This is a particularly interesting phenomenon in Norwegian architecture, the significance of which has been a subject of controversy for nearly a century.[6]

The church at Urnes in Sogn is considered to be one of the earliest remaining of this kind (figures 2.4 and 2.5).[7] The present building, c. 1130, appears to be the third on the site. It is a small structure, about 28 by 21 feet, resting modestly at the foot of a sheltering hill. The basis for its construction is a "raft" of four timbers, two lengthwise and two crosswise, laid on a bed of stones and crossed with their ends projecting about 4 1/2 feet from the points of crossing. The major upright posts or staves, sometimes called "masts," are tenoned into this raft and joined at the top with horizontal plates. Cross and quadrant braces are used to strengthen the posts. The roof is constructed of rafters and purlins, strengthened by scissors braces and collar beams. Sills for the outer walls are fitted into the projecting ends of the raft to form the basis for an ambulatory. The walls are of vertical planks set into the sills, with a pent roof abutting lower beams between the posts. A short clerestory wall rises above this roof, and the whole assemblage results in the familiar stepped pyramidal appearance of the stave or "mast" church.[8]

To this formula could be added surrounding open porches and turrets or belfries. Two of the grander examples date from the years 1200–1250. The church at Gol was moved from its original location in Hallingdal to King Oscar II's collection of Norwegian antiquities at Bygdøy near Oslo in 1884.[9] It is now a major attraction of the Norwegian Folk Museum (figure 2.6). The Borgund church remains in its original location in Sogn (figures 2.7 and 2.8).[10] Without artificial illumination these churches are dark, having only the smallest of clerestory and chancel openings. The naves rise cavelike, and the orientation remains toward the altars. The few that are left demonstrate the soundness of well-seasoned timber and the ingenuity of the system with which they were built.

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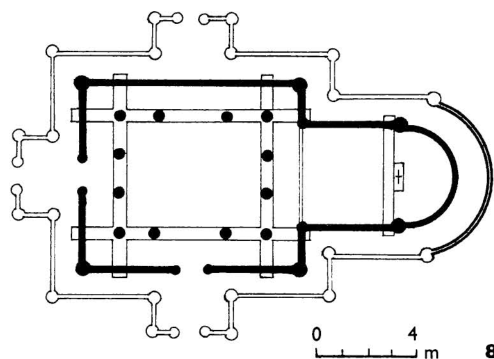
2.7 Borgund, Sogn. Church. Early 13th century. Interior. (Oslo, Riksantikvaren.)

2.8 Borgund, Sogn. Church. Plan. (After Dietrichson, *Norske stavkirker,* figure 2, p. 8.)

2.9 Råsted, Jutland. Church. Early 12th century.



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Probably more would have survived had they not been razed to make way for larger buildings.

After 1814 a wave of enthusiasm for Norway's cultural heritage arose, otherwise the stave churches remaining then might not have survived at all. Our knowledge of them would have been limited to representations in painting or other arts, which would have been enigmatic at best. Much of the credit belongs to the painter Johan Christian Dahl (1788–1857), who in addition to painting the Norwegian landscape took great interest in the preservation of Norwegian architecture. In order to save the stave church at Vang in Valdres, Dahl

2.10 Råsted, Jutland. Church. Interior.

2.11 Volsted, Jutland. Church. 12th century.

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persuaded King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia to buy it, and it was dismantled and reconstructed at Bruckenberg in Silesia (now Biertonice in Poland) in 1842–1844.[11] In 1836 Dahl had written an essay on the wooden architecture of Norway, and the widespread interest now being aroused led to the founding of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments in Norway in 1844. Dahl's view of Urnes has been chosen to illustrate this church as it was in the 1840s.

Since the "mast" type of stave church is so different from the more familiar nave and chancel type that is found also in stone and brick, questions have arisen as to the origins of their design. Opinions range from Lorenz Dietrichson's theory that they are conversions from stone Romanesque basilicas to Kristian Bjerknes's theory that they perpetuated a now-vanished type of pagan temple, and the matter is not yet resolved.[12]

As for ornament for embellishment or didactic purposes, a few fine examples of carved portals have survived from the stave churches, some now in museum collections. Those now seen at Urnes were saved from the previous building and incorporated in the present church. These are of the so-called "Urnes" style, the last of the great Viking ornamental styles. The mingling of pagan and Christian motifs on these portals shows that the adoption of Christianity in the North was by no means immediate and automatic and that the incoming clergy were wise enough to respect and make use of local traditions.

In Denmark and Sweden the church builders turned soon to stone and in the twelfth century to brick. Perhaps the earliest stone church in these countries was that built by King Svend Estridsen at Roskilde on Zealand, c. 1030.[13] Extant foundations indicate that it was a simple nave and chancel structure. It was built of calcareous tufa, which is abundant on Zealand and widely used for these early stone churches in Denmark. Seventeen to eighteen hundred had been built in Denmark alone by c. 1250, many of which still exist, mostly in the smaller communities.

One notable example in Denmark is the little church at Råsted on Jutland, which still has much of its original character. It was probably built sometime before 1150 as a simple nave and chancel church of limestone, to which the south porch and west tower were added in the Gothic period (figure 2.9).[14] The entrance to the parish church in Denmark and Sweden was normally on the south side, for this side got the most sun and shelter from the wind. The porch gave additional protection by keeping the wind, rain, and snow from entering the nave directly. It is called the *våbenhus* or "weapon-house" in Denmark, because weapons were to be left here before their owners entered the church. If a second door was added, it would be on the north side, since the women sat on the north and the men on the south. The tower was a landmark in the countryside and could serve as a watchtower and a stronghold for church or town valuables.

At Råsted the nave and chancel are still covered with flat wooden ceilings, as were so many of the Romanesque parish churches originally. On the east wall of the nave, the arched entrance to the chancel, and the chancel walls there has survived one of the finest remaining cycles of Romanesque wall paintings (figure 2.10).[15] Such paintings, as we shall see, flourished in Denmark, Sweden, and Finland for nearly five hundred years, giving a colorful *Biblia Pauperum* painted *al secco* with mineral pigments.

We have already noted the carvings on the Norwegian stave churches, with their combination of pagan and Christian symbolism. The

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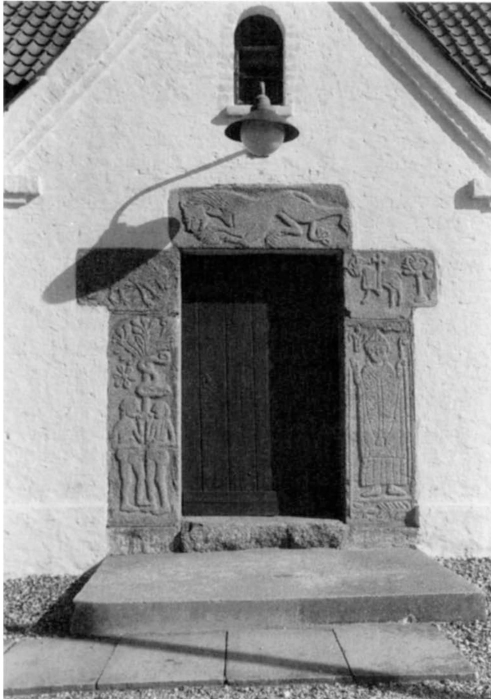

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2.12 Volsted, Jutland. Church. Portal.

2.13 Botkyrka, Söderman-land. Church. 1176.

2.14 Tingelstad, Hadeland. Church. c. 1100. (Oslo, Riksantikvaren.)

portals of stone churches might also receive such carvings, usually in granite. A particularly vigorous tradition developed on the Jutland peninsula, where some of the individual carvers can be identified. One of these was Master Goti, who did the portals for the church at Volsted, built early in the twelfth century (figure 2.11).[16] This is another typical small parish church, set apart from the center of the village in a walled churchyard. Until 1873 the carvings were on the original south portal. Then the *våbenhus* was built and the carvings moved to it (figure 2.12). These are in the typical low relief, depicting an episode from the Creation cycle and here an unusual portrayal of a bishop. Volsted is a simple nave and chancel church, the nave covered still with a timber roof and the chancel now covered with a Gothic half-vault. A similar parish church in Sweden is Botkyrka in Södermanland (figure 2.13).[17]

Although wood predominated for early churches in Norway, some parish churches there were built of stone. The church at Tingelstad in Hadeland as now restored may resemble the first little stone church at Roskilde (figure 2.14).[18] Here is a simple stone building, with nave and rectangular chancel, round-headed doors and windows, covered with a steep wooden roof, which is crowned by an octagonal turret. The east gable is filled with masonry, the west gable with timber.

From this detail of the church at Tingelstad we may turn to a brief mention of the early medieval churches of Iceland and Greenland. Settlement of both places was primarily by the Norse, and it is thought that the earliest churches built in Iceland were probably of wood, similar to the nave and chancel type of stave church.[19] These have disappeared, and the wooden churches and very few turf churches that we see today were built much later. Then in Greenland in the late Viking period Erik the

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Red's wife Thjodhilde became converted to Christianity and built a little church near the farmstead at Brattalid.[20] No trace of this remains, but traces of several parish churches have been found in the Eastern and Western Settlements. By c. 1100 Christianity was more firmly established in Greenland, the first bishop being appointed in 1126. His residence was fixed at Gardar, where the house and the outbuildings of a major estate were built, including a large festival hall.[21] The cathedral church was more elaborate than the parish churches, having north and south chapels. Like other Norse churches in Greenland, it had a timbered west gable. Most of the parish churches that spread over these territories in the twelfth century were, like their contemporaries in Iceland,

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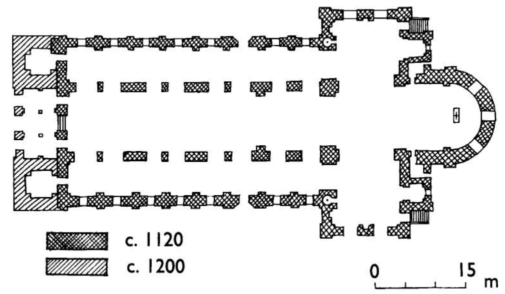

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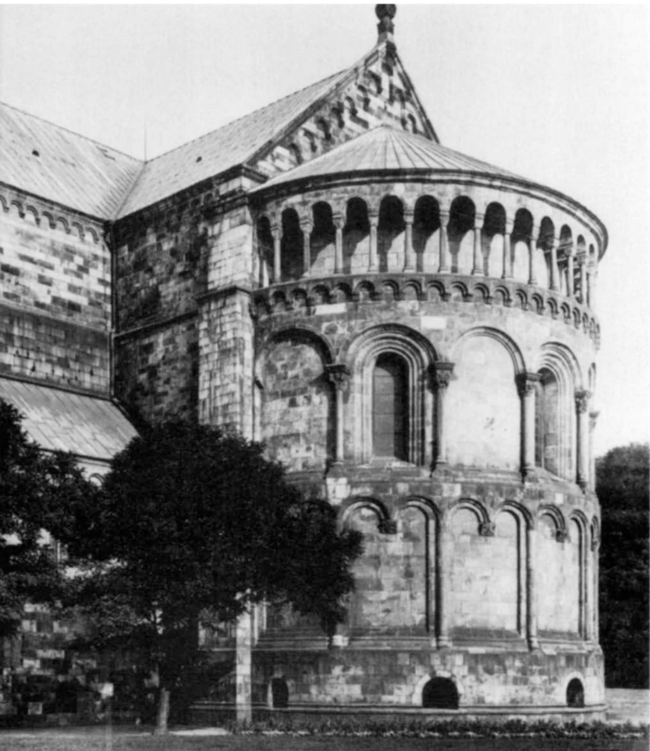

16

2.15 Tveje Merløse, Zealand. Church. c. 1125.

2.16 Lund. Cathedral. Early 12th century. East end. (Copenhagen, National Museum.)

2.17 Lund. Cathedral. Plan. (After Anker and Aron Andersson, *Art of Scandinavia,* volume 2, figure 13, p. 38.)

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hardly more than private chapels by individual farms.

The more ambitious cathedral at Gardar was characteristic of the trend to more splendid churches as the bishops and their royal and noble patrons reinforced their claims and strengthened the position of the Church in the Nordic lands. By the last quarter of the eleventh century Bishop Svend Normand saw King Svend Estridsen's little church at Roskilde as inadequate and on its foundations built a larger three-aisled church of limestone, which is thought to have had western towers, a transept, choir, and perhaps apses.[22] It probably looked very much like the present church at Tveje Merløse, begun c. 1125, which is about 30 kilometers west of Roskilde on the main road to the medieval town of Kalundborg (figure 2.15).[23] Across the Sound in Skåne a new bishopric had been founded at Lund by King Svend Estridsen, who died in 1074, and under one of his sons, King Knud the Holy, a small cathedral was built in the 1080s.[24] It consisted of nave and aisles, transept, choir, and apse, with its remains now forming the crypt of the present building.

Then in 1104 King Erik Ejegod was able to get Lund elevated to an archbishopric, which was intended to serve all of Scandinavia. Although by this event the Church in the Nordic countries was no longer under direct German control, the artistic ties between Denmark and Germany remained strong throughout the Middle Ages and indeed beyond. We shall see that in Norway, on the other hand, strong artistic impulses came from England.

To celebrate the new status of Lund a great cathedral was begun, for which the consecration of the several altars was not completed until 1145 (figures 2.16 and 2.17).[25] An entry in the cathedral death rolls for the period between 1130 and 1140 refers to "Donatus architectus, magister operis hujus obiit," and it is thought that he was an Italian, possibly brought to Lund via Speyer. The original plan of the cathedral consisted of a four-bay nave, separated from the aisles by an alternating system of piers, a transept with projecting chapels and stair towers, choir, and apse, the east end of the building corresponding in part to the predecessor over which it was built. The western tower complex was not part of the original conception but was added under Archbishop Absalon early in the thirteenth century. The aisles were groin-vaulted from the beginning, but the nave had a wooden roof to start, as did probably the transept, and the choir and apse were vaulted. The present vaults were first built over the nave after a fire in 1234 and were rebuilt during restorations in the nineteenth century. So much restoration has been done, in fact, that little of the original surface of the stone is visible.

The exterior of the east end of Lund is justly famous, for apparently here the rich Rheno-Lombardic vocabulary of ornament was introduced into Scandinavia. As extensively restored in the nineteenth century, it has a massive base with round-headed windows opening into the crypt, a story of blind arcades with double arches rising from consoles, a second story of alternating blind panels and round-headed windows, framed by applied colonnettes carrying arches, and a shorter third story of a blind gallery formed by a dwarf arcade. A strong Italian-derived spirit is evident in the portals, with their series of recessed columns and in part classically derived carvings.[26]

Such a magnificent project, unprecedented and the prime ecclesiastical building in Scandinavia until the establishment of an archbishopric in Trondheim in 1152, could hardly fail to have its imitators. The Rheno-Lombardic systems involving applied colonnettes or pilasters, arched

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corbel tables, blind galleries, and the interplay of these elements applied in contrasting scales are to be found on many succeeding Romanesque parish churches. One notable example is the church at Vä in Skåne, begun c. 1140, perhaps under royal patronage, and taken over as a Premonstratensian abbey c. 1160 (figure 2.18).[27] It was begun with a flat east end, but this was changed to a semicircular apse, finished with an arched corbel table and pilaster strips separating the window bays. By 1160 the apse and chancel had been vaulted, and the fine Romanesque paintings on these vaults have survived.

For the western Danish diocese a new cathedral was begun at Ribe on Jutland c. 1130 (figures 2.19 and 2.20).[28] As planned originally it consisted of nave, aisles, transept, and apse. There is no choir, and the transept chapels of Lund are reduced to niches in the east walls. The brick northwest tower was added c. 1250 and rebuilt c. 1620, while the aisles are Gothic and were probably added early in the fifteenth century. The southeast, or Maria, tower was rebuilt in 1896. The Jørgen Roed painting shows how the building once loomed up in the now crowded town. It also shows it in a different stage of color, with the Rheno-Lombardic

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2.18 Vä, Skåne. Church. Begun c. 1140.

2.19 Ribe, Jutland. Cathedral. Begun c. 1130. Painting by J. Roed, 1836. (Copenhagen, State Museum of Art.)

2.20 Ribe, Jutland. Cathedral. Interior. Painting by J. Roed, 1836. (Copenhagen, State Museum of Art.)

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arcading emphasized by white-washing of the flat walls behind. Today the brown-gray stone is seen throughout the exterior, contrasting with the brick additions.

Roed's painting of the interior (actually a study for a painting now in the Hirschsprung Collection, Copenhagen) shows the triforium above the aisles, which was omitted at Lund. The German-inspired domed-up vaults, added after a fire in 1242, were then white-washed, and Roed was evidently fascinated by the effects of light upon them. Today more patterns have been painted on the transverse arches and ribs. The pulpit of 1597 has been moved from its more central location on the north side of the nave to a position nearer the transept on the south. The altarpiece of 1597 seen in Roed's painting has been removed to make way for the tabernacle and altar installed during restorations in 1884–1904. While there is abundant documentation and some visual evidence for the changes that these Romanesque buildings have undergone, these paintings give us an especially effective set of exterior and interior views by an artist who saw the building over one hundred fifty years ago.

In the early large Norwegian stone churches, we can see some of the same German-derived features as those of the Danish churches just described, and also some more clearly coming from England. St. Mary's Church in Bergen, begun c. 1130, is still much as it was originally built (figures 2.21 and 2.22).[29] Bergen was one of Norway's first cathedral cities, and in the twelfth century it was in effect the capital of Norway. The cathedral church in the center of town is Christ Church, also begun in the twelfth century, and St. Mary's appears to have been built to serve the community around the castle at the mouth of the bay. It is a basilical church, with two towers rising on the west, the west door opening into the first bay of the nave. The nave and aisles are separated by cruciform piers, and there is a bifora motif in the triforium that recalls the trifora of Ribe. Also as at Ribe, there is a shallow apse within the wall at the end of the north aisle. The church is vaulted throughout, with groin vaults over the nave. These may have been constructed after a fire in 1198, since they obstruct the clerestory windows of the south wall. The choir was originally only one bay deep, and it was probably lengthened during the rebuilding after another fire in 1248. The builders of St. Mary's may have been brought from Lund or Ribe, but the spiral colonnettes and geometrical patterns on the archivolts suggest that the designers of the south portal may have come from England.

A closer link with English Romanesque architecture can be seen at the cathedral of St. Swithun in Stavanger (figure 2.23).[30] Built under Bishop Reinald, who was brought to Stavanger from Winchester c. 1125, it was damaged in a fire of 1272, after which the present Gothic choir was constructed. The original western

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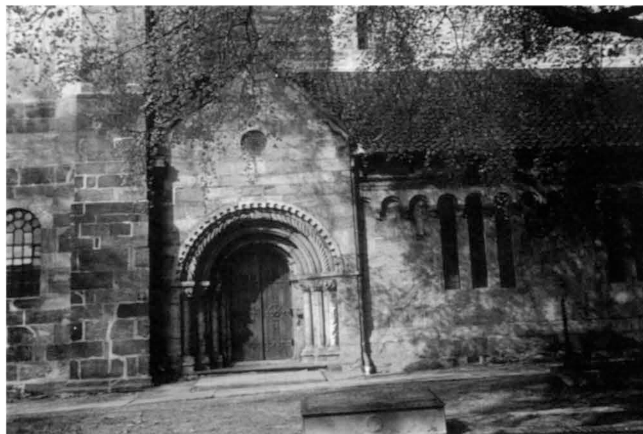
2.21 Bergen. St. Mary. Begun c. 1130. (Oslo, Riksantikvaren.)

2.22 Bergen. St. Mary. Portal.

2.23 Stavanger, Rogaland. Cathedral. Nave. c. 1130. (Oslo, Riksantikvaren.)



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tower was also pulled down and replaced by a broad vestibule. The nave, however, remains separated from the aisles by five sets of cylindrical piers carrying a broad arcade. There is no triforium, and the clerestory consists of simple round-headed windows. The cushion capitals with sharply projecting abacus blocks are close to those remaining in the north transept of Winchester Cathedral, 1079–1093.

By far the most impressive undertaking in twelfth-century Norway was the transformation of the old church at Trondheim, then called Nidaros, upon the founding of the archbishopric there in 1152.[31] The town and its church grew from the residence established there by King Olav Tryggvasson in 997. After the battle of Stiklestad in 1030 St. Olav was buried at the second church, which he had begun c. 1016. This was rebuilt as a cathedral church under King Olav Kyrre and called Christ Church. Under the first archbishop, Eystein Erlandson, this building was pulled down and the present one begun, preserving the shrine of St. Olav (figure 2.24). Only the transept was completed during the Romanesque period, but the lower portions that remain are eloquent of the Norman style, with massive walls decorated with wall arcades, rich use of colonnettes with cubical capitals, and zigzag and billet moldings (figure 2.25). Throughout the Viking period Norsemen had carried their culture to England, and now English ideas were being received in Norway.

In addition to the parish churches and cathedrals there were of course the abbeys, and as the different orders established houses in the Scandinavian countries they built their churches according to their own particular traditions. Early in the twelfth century English Benedictine monks were invited to Odense by King Erik Ejegod, but they did not at first build their own churches. Soon after, however, c. 1125, other English Benedictines built the abbey church at Venge near Skanderborg on Jutland (figure 2.26).[32] It is a small building, with a single nave, transepts with eastern apses, choir, and apse. The semicircular apses are characteristically Benedictine, and the narrow openings into the transepts and choir are in the Anglo-Norman tradition. The church is built of sandstone and originally had wooden roofs over nave and choir. The exterior decoration of the apse is also in the Anglo-Norman manner.

At Venge the rest of the monastic buildings are gone, but from a reconstruction based on foundations remaining at Alvastra in Östergötland we can see the program of the typical monastic establishment (figure 2.27).[33] On the south side of the church there was built a covered passage surrounding a square courtyard. Opening off this on the east side was the meeting room or chapter house, with the dormitory built above. Kitchen and refectory were on the south side, with barns, warehouses, and storage on the west. Alvastra was founded in 1143 by Cistercian rather than Benedictine monks, one of the expressions of this reformed order being the flat east walls of the eastern chapels, as had been established at the original church of the Order at Clairvaux.[34]

While these developments were taking place in stone, a new building material was introduced in the Scandinavian countries, one that was to have a leading role in the architecture of the next several centuries. Earlier, under King Godfred, c. 808, a fortification had been dug across the south end of the Jutland peninsula to protect the Danes from the armies of Charlemagne. In the reign of King Valdemar I (1157–1182) this was further strengthened by a facing of brick, a new manufactured material for which the technology was imported from Lombardy.

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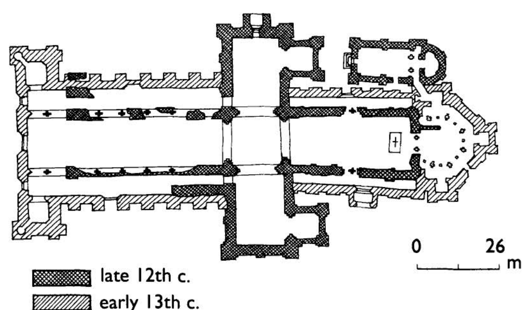

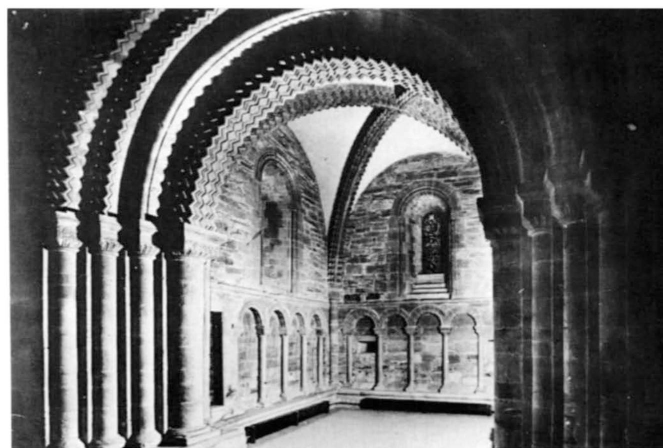

2.24 Trondheim. Cathedral. Begun 1152. Plan. (After Lundberg, *Byggnadskonsten*, p. 200.)

2.25 Trondheim. Cathedral. South transept chapel. (Oslo, Riksantikvaren.)

The Benedictines had built an abbey of tufa at Ringsted in Sorø County on Zealand c. 1080. Here St. Knud Lavard was buried after he was murdered in 1131. A new brick church was begun c. 1160 over the remains of the old, and the nave was nearing completion by the death of Valdemar in 1182.[35] The church has undergone fires and restorations, the fire of 1241 resulting in the Gothic vaulting. In plan it resembles Cluny III, begun 1088, with its broad transept carrying four eastern chapels in addition to the choir and apse (figure 2.28). Although the exterior walls have little surface decoration apart from the arched corbel tables, the plan resulted in a rich complex of masses at the east end. We may well suspect that the builders thought that the application of pilasters, blind arcades, etc., would have created an undesirably busy surface. The interior has breadth of effect, the wide round-headed arches of the nave rising from rectangular piers. There is no triforium gallery, and the nave wall is now punctuated by the corbeled supports for the vaulting ribs.

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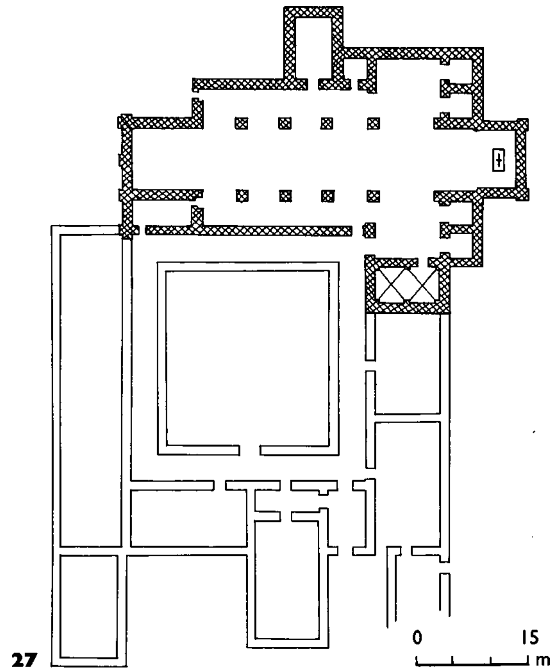
2.26 **Venge, Jutland. Church. c. 1125. (Copenhagen, National Museum.)**

2.27 **Alvastra, Östergötland. Abbey. 1143. Plan. (After Anker and Aron Andersson, *Art of Scandinavia,* volume 2, figure 87, p. 177.)**

2.28 **Ringsted, Zealand. St. Bendt. Begun 1160.**



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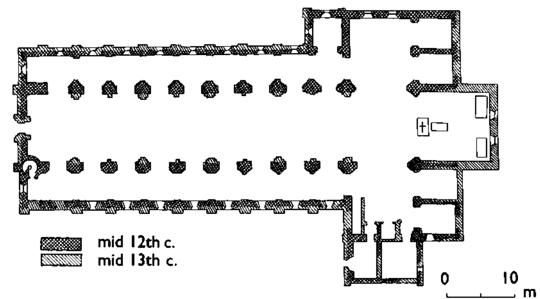
At nearby Sorø a new Cistercian abbey was founded in 1162 as a private church for the powerful Hvide family.[36] In some respects the plan resembles that of Ringsted in having nave and aisles, transept, chapels, and apse (figure 2.29). In the nave, however, the bays are square rather than rectangular, and the bays of the side aisles are also square, the whole system based on the Roman rather than the Greek foot used at Ringsted. The transept chapels and apse have flat east walls in the Cistercian manner. The nave was originally covered with a wooden roof, and the vaults were constructed after a fire in 1247. At both Ringsted and Sorø the colonnettes, capitals, and moldings for the ornaments of door and window openings were executed in specially molded brick rather than stone (figure 2.30).

The parish churches, cathedrals, and abbey churches that we have been considering were all planned longitudinally, whether simply with nave and chancel or with the full basilical complex. While this was the most widely adopted plan in Romanesque Scandinavia, another approach was also occasionally used. This was to construct a church around a central vertical axis, using the circle or the Greek cross as the basic plan. A dozen or so were built in Denmark and Sweden, evidently as defensive structures. The southern and eastern shores were menaced by attacks from across the Baltic, and some of the round churches were fortified after the manner of Continental towers.[37]

The most interesting group is that of the four round churches on Bornholm, Østerlars being the most dramatic (figure 2.31).[38] It is a massive building, three stories high, with the roof resting on thick outer walls and also supported by a central pillar. This pillar is actually hollow, a round room formed by six heavy posts that are the inner supports for the annular vault of the surrounding aisle. This room is



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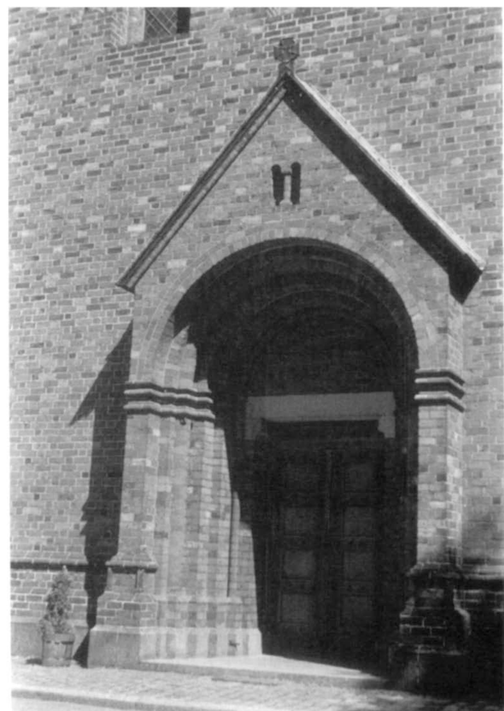

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used as a baptistry, and the choir and apse, also circular, project off the main building. The staircase to the upper levels rises through the wall of the choir. The heavy buttresses that make the exterior so picturesque were added in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Hoardings and machicolations provided the defenses of these churches. Lines drawn on a map of Bornholm will show these churches zigzagging up the island toward the stronghold of Hammershus on the north. The churches are no more than nine miles apart, and signal flares could send quick warning of impending invasion right across the island.

The round churches of Bornholm are all built with a central pier, and there is no conventional nave, only a surrounding corridor. Another approach was to support the vaults of a round church with four central piers, which left comparatively more assembly space at the ground level. The piers rise to five four-part vaults in a Greek cross plan, with triangular vaults to fill out the circle. This system was adopted at Bjernede on Zealand c. 1160 and also at Thorsager on Jutland c. 1200.[39] At Bjernede the church was begun in granite and finished in brick (figure 2.32). The upper portion underwent some changes, and the present pyramidal roof and also the apse date from reconstructions in 1890–1892.

The most spectacular and intriguing of the Romanesque centralized churches is at Kalundborg on Zealand (figure 2.33).[40] It was begun c. 1170 on a Greek cross plan, with an octagonal tower at the end of each arm and a square tower over the crossing. This central tower fell in 1827 and was rebuilt in 1871.[41] The church was probably built by Bishop Esbjørn Snare, brother of the great Bishop Absalon. The massive brick walls and the fortresslike character of the stairs to the towers are appropriate signs of Kalundborg's site on the fjord coming off the

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2.29 Sorø, Zealand. Abbey Church. Begun 1165. Plan. (After Hermansen and Nørlund, *Danmarks Kirker. Sorø Amt,* volume 1, figure 4, p. 24.)

2.30 Ringsted, Zealand. St. Bendt. Portal.

2.31 Østerlars, Bornholm. Church. c. 1150.

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Great Belt. Modern commercial buildings now dominate the view from the water, but in the twelfth century the great church must have been an impressive landmark. Although the plan appears to be centralized in outline, the interior is arranged with the altar on the east wall, opposite the west entrance, creating the effect of a short basilica with chapels projecting on north and south. The piers as rebuilt after a fire in 1314 are more slender than the original, and the first appearance of the interior (figure 2.34) must have been much like that of Bjernede, which was built by Bishop Absalon.

With Kalundborg the great age of Romanesque building in Scandinavia was drawing to a close. A new style was already developing in France, and with the next major building project in the North, Roskilde Cathedral, the Gothic would overtake the earlier style.

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2.32 **Bjernede, Zealand. Church. c. 1160–1180.**

2.33 **Kalundborg, Zealand. Church. Begun 1170.**

2.34 **Kalundborg, Zealand. Church. Interior. (Copenhagen, National Museum.)**

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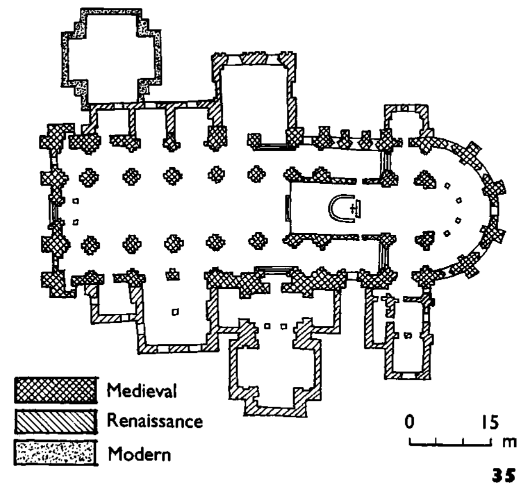

The Gothic Period, c. 1250–1530

By the turn of the thirteenth century the Gothic style in architecture was approaching its maturity in France and England. In the Scandinavian countries the new style was sometimes adopted for new construction and sometimes for alteration to existing buildings. Influences came from Germany as well as from France and England. No clear-cut division into regional or national groups is entirely appropriate, but certain tendencies can be observed. In Denmark and southern Sweden brick was especially popular and also to some extent in Finland, with strong relations to German building. Stone was used more in central Sweden and on the island of Gotland, in a mixture of French, English, and German ideas. In Norway and the Atlantic islands building in stone with strong preferences for English details seems to have predominated.

Before turning to some examples of churches from these groups, we should note the transitional character of one of Denmark's most important churches, the cathedral at Roskilde. A campaign to replace Svend Normand's church with something grander was begun by Bishop Absalon c. 1170.[42] He planned it to be a

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three-aisled basilica of granite, as some fragments in the present church indicate. The work was begun at the east end in the Romanesque style, but fashion changed the plans. Almost at once the examples of the churches at Ringsted and Sorø caused a change from stone to brick. Then when Bishop Absalon was succeeded by Bishop Peder Sunesøn in 1193 the work was continued in the Gothic style which the bishop had encountered in travels in France and the Low Countries. By 1300 the nave was finished as far as the west wall, and from then until 1924 no less than eleven additions were made to the basic plan (figure 2.35). After the court of Denmark moved from Roskilde to Copenhagen in 1416, Roskilde Cathedral continued to be the royal burial place, which accounts for its many chapels. The earlier Romanesque portions are visible at the east end, and in the clerestory the windows are still round-headed. The twin towers that rise at the west end did not receive their slender spires until 1635 (figure 2.36). The Gothic work becomes apparent in the interior, where the nave is separated from the aisles by compound brick piers that rise 78 feet to the domical vaults (figure 2.37). Gothic vaults also cover the aisles and choir. The major furnishings are sumptuous and include the oak gallery or pew of Christian IV (1610), the sandstone and alabaster pulpit (1609), the gilt wood altar (c. 1580), and the organ (1550 and 1654, rebuilt 1957). These fortunately survived the fire that broke out during repairs to the eastern roof in 1968.

We should also note one other great transitional church in Denmark, the Cistercian abbey church of Løgumkloster on Jutland,[43] built on the so-called "Bernardine" plan like that of Alvastra. Only the chancel and eastern chapels were promptly ready for use after the building was begun c. 1200. The remainder of the church was not completed until c. 1350, which

2.35 Roskilde, Zealand. Cathedral. Begun 1190. Plan. (After Moltke and Elna Møller, *Danmarks Kirker. Københavns Amt,* volume 3, figure 26b, p. 1327.)

2.36 Roskilde, Zealand. Cathedral. (Copenhagen, National Museum.)

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accounts for the appearance of pointed arches in the upper portions and the differences in vaulting from one end to the other. According to Cistercian rule a western tower complex like that of Roskilde was omitted. By the time of its completion, however, some of the austerity of the Order was relaxing, and the gable ends were evidently inspired by north German or Netherlandish fashion with their groups of window panels and stepped edges. In contrast the interior is characterized by plain surfaces, with no ribs on the piers and no articulation of the nave wall (figure 2.38). Upon the Reformation in Denmark in 1536 the monastic buildings were largely destroyed and the church itself seldom used until it became a parish church in 1739. Therefore the present altar, pulpit, and font, which the red brick sets off so effectively, are not the original furnishings.

The gables of Løgumkloster bring us to those buildings that may be viewed as belonging to a larger regional group that transcends national boundaries: the "Baltic brick Gothic," which includes the Netherlands, north Germany, and the eastern Baltic countries as well as Denmark and south Sweden.[44] Two cathedrals and two city churches can be noted to demonstrate the vigor of this style in south Scandinavia.

Odense on Funen was the seat of one of the oldest bishoprics in Denmark, founded in 988. In 1086 King Knud the Holy was killed in the small wooden church of St. Alban near the cathedral. He had already begun a new granite cathedral, to which his remains were transferred in 1095 and which was renamed in his honor after his canonization in 1101. This church burned in 1247, some parts now remaining as a crypt, and the present building was begun in the new brick Gothic style.[45] The first five bays of the nave were completed by 1300, then the chancel bays were added, then c. 1450

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2.37 Roskilde, Zealand. Cathedral. Interior. (Copenhagen, National Museum.)

2.38 Løgumkloster, Jutland. Abbey Church. Begun c. 1200. Interior. (Copenhagen, National Museum.)

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the two parts were connected without a conventional transept. The west front was given its single tower under Christian III in 1558, and the building was restored in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Unlike the unpainted walls at Løgumkloster, the brick interior has been whitewashed (figure 2.39). The compound piers of the nave carry an arcade with continuous moldings, and these are echoed in the moldings of the triforium and clerestory openings. Vaulting shafts are carried up across the nave wall to the springing of the vaults. The more steeply pointed arches give a stronger

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vertical emphasis than at Roskilde and Løgumkloster. The whitened brick of the nave provides a setting for the pulpit of 1751–1754 and the royal pew of 1894. The organ in the west end retains its case of 1752, but the most striking furnishing is the great altar by Claus Berg, c. 1520, originally carved for the Gray Friars' Church, and now dominating the raised chancel.

2.39 Odense, Funen. St. Knud. c. 1247–1301. Interior.

2.40 Århus, Jutland. Cathedral. Begun c. 1197. (Copenhagen, National Museum.)

The exterior of St. Knud is comparatively modest, with the plain walls of nave and aisles, simple clerestory windows, and plain salient buttresses. A much grander effect was achieved on the cathedral at Århus on Jutland (figure 2.40).[46] Begun c. 1197, it is the longest church in Denmark, measuring over 300 feet. It started as a late Romanesque church with nave, aisles, a projecting transept with eastern chapels, choir, and apse, similar to Ringsted. The plan as it is now reflects a change at the west front in the fifteenth century, when it was decided to build two chapels flanking a central tower instead of the two towers originally planned. This was followed by raising the nave and changing the vaulting system from three bays to six. The transept was then heightened and the choir rebuilt as a hall church by c. 1482. These changes brought the high stepped gables that give the cathedral its rich exterior. Alterations in the transept included provisions for the religious dramas that were enacted in the cathedral, and the new choir was a fitting stage for the permanent drama of Bernt Notke's great altarpiece of 1498. The building underwent restorations in 1867–1882 and again in 1921–1927.

Copenhagen's old brick Gothic Vor Frue Kirke, or the Church of Our Lady, no longer exists. Under Bishop Absalon a church had been built in Copenhagen c. 1200, probably of limestone.[47] This burned in 1316; a new church was built in brick with granite details.[48] It was a

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three-aisled basilica with eight bays in the nave, no projecting transept, and five chapels surrounding the apse. In plan therefore it resembled Roskilde Cathedral, of which it was then a collegiate dependency. Representations of two coronations give us some idea of the interior. In a print of 1593 commemorating the coronation of Frederik II in 1558, the church was shown in a cutaway view that includes the altar of 1559 and indicates salient buttresses, traceried windows, cylindrical piers, and pilasters on the aisle walls rising to domical vaults (figure 2.41). For the coronation of Christian IV in 1596 the church was shown without the aisle windows and pilasters and with a new altar of 1569, plus the little "swallow's-nest" organ now installed in the southeast corner of the choir (figure 2.42).

Across the Sound in Malmö, Skåne, St. Peter's Church has survived as a fine example of the now fully developed brick Gothic, sometimes called the "Hanseatic" style (figure 2.43).[49] It is basilical in plan, with five chapels ringing the apse and additional chapels on north and south. While the transept does not appear as an independent element on the plan, the exterior view shows it rising to the height of the nave. The original west front with its tower collapsed in 1420, its successor in 1442, and yet another burned in 1560. The present tower and spire were built in 1890, and the gables on the transept and chapels were probably rebuilt at the same time, repeating the medieval features of brick paneling and stepped gables. As at Odense, the brick of the interior is whitewashed. The piers are without capitals, in the late Gothic manner, and the vaulting shafts are corbeled, beginning at the springing of the nave arcade. The white interior is generously lit by the large windows of the nave and choir, so that there is a fine setting for the richly carved pulpit of 1599 and the altar of 1611. While

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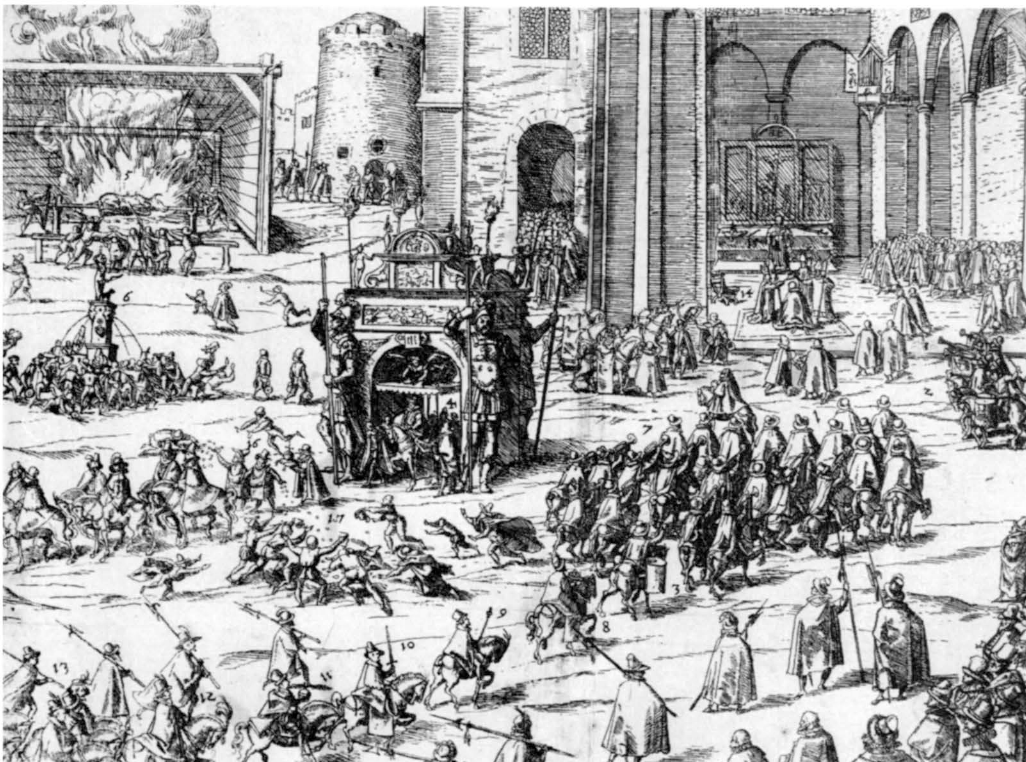
2.41 Copenhagen. Vor Frue Kirke. 1316. Print by Gaspar Ens, 1593. (Copenhagen, Royal Library.)

2.42 Copenhagen. Vor Frue Kirke. Print, 1596. (Copenhagen, National Museum.)

2.43 Malmö, Skåne. St. Peter. 1313–1319.



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nearly all the paintings that once decorated the church were lost in nineteenth-century restorations, those of the present baptistry (originally the Merchants' Chapel) have survived and show the delicacy of the late medieval style of c. 1520.

For a major building in the northern extension of this brick Gothic style we can turn to Turku (the Swedish Åbo) in Finland. The bishop's seat was established here in 1229 and a cathedral begun that was not completed until c. 1290. Not long after, in 1318, it was largely destroyed by the Russians and rebuilt in brick as a hall church. Chapels were added on the north side beginning in the fourteenth century. The nave was heightened and the vaults completed c. 1460. The west tower was damaged by fires in 1681 and 1827, after which it was rebuilt in the neo-Gothic fashion (figure 2.44).[50] After the repairs of 1976–1977 we can now see some of the thirteenth-century stonework in the lower parts, particularly in the base of the tower. The later brickwork has the characteristically Finnish whitened decorative panels. The cathedral's growth by addition is evident from the irregularities of the plan (figure 2.45). When the nave was heightened, it was covered by the then popular "star" vaults, springing from corbels in the otherwise plain nave walls (figure 2.46). Corbels for the earlier vaults remain at the springing of the nave arcade. The light and spacious interior created by the rebuilding has also a sharp intellectual quality, fitting perhaps for the cathedral of Mikael Agricola (1508–1557), who brought the Reformation to Finland and made the first Finnish translation of the Bible.

A more varied response to the Gothic styles is visible at the cathedral church of Sts. Lawrence, Erik, and Olav at Uppsala in Sweden, begun c. 1271 (figure 2.47).[51] This is the third cathedral of the archiepiscopal diocese, the first

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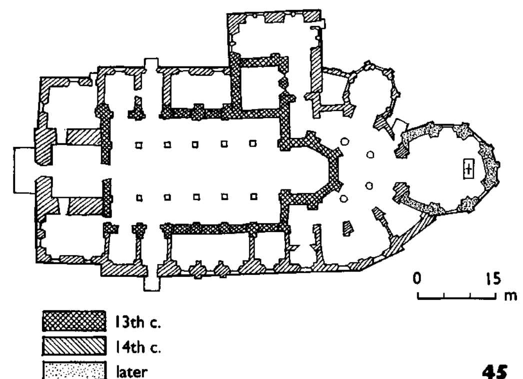
2.44 Turku. Cathedral. Begun mid-13th century. (Helsinki, National Museum of Finland.)

2.45 Turku. Cathedral. Plan. (After Rinne, *Åbo Domkyrka,* figure 2, p. 13.)

2.46 Turku. Cathedral. Interior. (Helsinki, Museum of Finnish Architecture. (Photo: Havas.)

2.47 Uppsala. Cathedral. Begun 1273. (Uppsala, Upplands Museum. Photo: Tommy Arvidson.)

2.48 Uppsala. Cathedral. Plan. (After Boëthius and Romdahl, *Uppsala Domkyrka,* figure 250, p. 203.)



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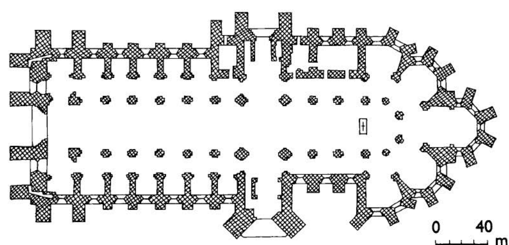

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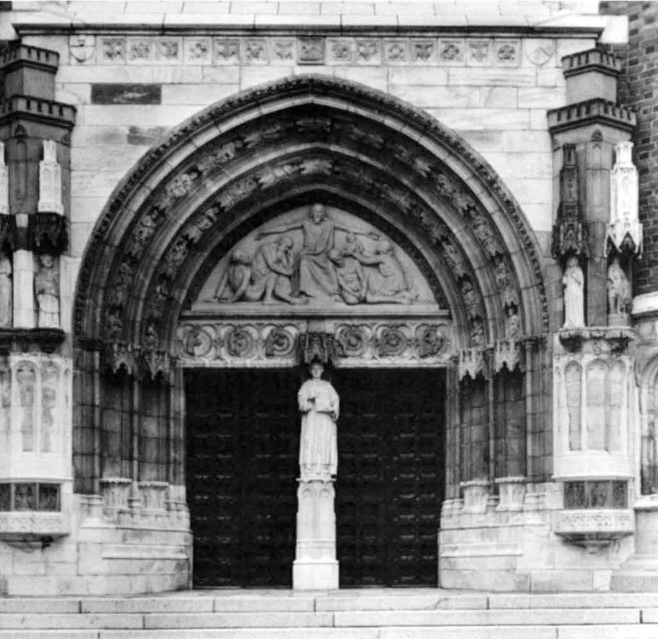

2.49 Uppsala. Cathedral. South portal. (Uppsala, Upplands Museum. Photo: Tommy Arvidson.)

2.50 Stockholm. Storkyrkan. 1468–1496. Interior. (Stockholm, Antikvarisk-Topografiska Arkivet.)

2.51 Visby, Gotland. St. Mary. Begun late 12th century.

having been St. Peter at Sigtuna c. 1100 and the second St. Lawrence at Gamla Uppsala, consecrated 1156. The latter was chosen for the burial place of St. Erik after his martyrdom in 1160. By the middle of the thirteenth century, however, it was thought wise to move the site of the cathedral to the trading center of Östra Aros (now named Uppsala). The foundations for the new building were laid probably in 1271, and enough had been constructed for the relics of St. Erik to be moved there in 1273. As originally planned the church had a nave of seven bays with aisles and chapels, a transept, aisled choir, and five eastern chapels, in the tradition of the French High Gothic (figure 2.48). The nave walls are pierced with small roundels, however, the vaults are slightly domical, and the buttressing system does not allow for a full triforium, all of which suggest influence from German brick Gothic in the actual construction.

For continuation of the work after 1287, a letter of appointment (apparently still extant when published in 1719) named "Estienne de Bonneuill, tailleur de pierre," as master builder at Uppsala Cathedral, hence the strong French character of carving in the choir and on the south portal (figure 2.49).[52] Extensive restorations were needed after a great fire in 1702, and then restoration programs were carried out from 1885 to 1893 and again from 1971 to 1976. The cathedral is the largest in Scandinavia, over 380 feet long, and is the national shrine of Sweden, a pilgrimage and coronation church, and a place of burial for monarchs and honored citizens.

One other great brick cathedral that should be mentioned is that of St. Nicholas, or Storkyrkan, the oldest church in Stockholm.[53] The first church of the early thirteenth century burned in 1303 and was rebuilt. Then a major enlargement took place beginning c. 1468, re-

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sulting in the present plan with western tower, nave, and double aisles, but no transept. The interior is rather dark, since the brick piers of the nave and aisles are not whitewashed, and there is no clerestory (figure 2.50). The domical star vaults of the nave spring from vaulting shafts on the piers, and their ribs are sunk into the nave walls without wall ribs. The aisles are covered with square four-part vaults. The liturgical furnishings are the most elaborate in Scandinavia and include the royal pews by Nicodemus Tessin the Elder, designed in 1684 and built by Burchardt Precht, who also designed and built the pulpit of 1698–1701. The central section of the ebony, silver, and gold altar was made in Hamburg in 1652–1654, while the side sections were built in Stockholm. And then there is Bernt Notke's great sculptural group of St. George and the Dragon and the Maiden, 1489.

In other parts of Scandinavia there was extensive building in stone. As the round churches of Bornholm are a distinctive feature of the Romanesque period, the churches of another principal island, Gotland, occupy a special position among the stone buildings of the Gothic period. Long a center of trade between Europe and Asia, in the thirteenth century its major town, Visby, reached its height of power in association with the Hanseatic League. This came to an end in the fourteenth century, but the time of greatest prosperity left Visby with no less than sixteen churches and nearly one hundred parish churches were spread across the island.

In Visby only the cathedral church of St. Mary remains in use, the rest being in ruins (figure 2.51).[54] It was begun as a three-aisled basilica at the end of the twelfth century. The choir was enlarged c. 1230–1250 and the nave c. 1250–1260, changing the cathedral to a hall church with tall eastern towers, the masons

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coming from Saxony, Westphalia, and the Rhineland. The large south chapel was added c. 1300. Although in disuse for many years after the decline of Gotland's fortunes, the cathedral now again serves the diocese and has recently been carefully restored.[55]

The churches of the countryside fared better. Most have survived to serve their parishes, although changed many times, as for example at Tingstäde (figure 2.52).[56] The church here was begun in the late twelfth century with a wooden roofed nave, a barrel-vaulted choir, and a half-domed apse. Then c. 1230, very likely in imitation of St. Mary in Visby, the nave was divided into four bays by a central pillar and covered with vaults. Having the vaults spring from within the heavy thick walls made buttresses unnecessary, hence the outward simplicity of these churches. Later additions to the church at Tingstäde were the western tower and sacristy, c. 1250–1260. Also characteristic of the parish churches of Gotland are the carved portals, with Biblical scenes and foliage motifs on the capitals.

On the mainland at Linköping in Östergötland the Romanesque cathedral of c. 1130 became outgrown and enlargement was begun c. 1230.[57] The original sanctuary was broadened to form a transept, to which was added a wider choir surrounded by an ambulatory. The slender untraceried windows, shafts banded in the English manner, still rise above the south transept door. Then the nave and aisles were widened and covered with simple four-part ribbed vaults. The work proceeded slowly, resulting in the changing styles of the nave piers (figure 2.53). Viewed from the west end, the clustered piers in the English style are followed by the polygonal piers of the eastern nave bays, and this plainer area forms an introduction to the complex of chapels at the east end. A new ambulatory with three chapels by a German builder, Gerlach von Köln, was begun c. 1410. The fashionable star vaults of c. 1498 were completed with the help of another German builder, Adam von Düren.

If we turn westward to the Norwegian churches, we will find that the history of Trondheim Cathedral from the Gothic period onward is different.[58] Under Archbishop Eystein Erlandson the rebuilding of the choir and the building of the octagon were begun c. 1186. The archbishop had been in England for several years previously and was evidently much impressed with the English Transitional and Early Gothic styles that he encountered at Canterbury and Lincoln. The work at Trondheim was not completed in his lifetime, and later delays, fires, alterations, and neglect led to a sorry state by the mid-nineteenth century (figure 2.54). A major campaign of rebuilding was undertaken by Christian Christie from 1872 to 1906. He attempted to restore details of construction and ornament according to the intentions of the original builders as they drew ideas from Canterbury, Lincoln, and Westminster Abbey (figure 2.55).

Farther south on the Norwegian coast, at Stavanger, a fire in 1272 brought about the rebuilding and enlargement of the choir of the cathedral of St. Swithun (figure 2.56).[59] The new choir is an extension of the remaining Romanesque nave, raised over the crypt, vaulted in five bays, and lit by large windows traceried in the English manner. The east window is flanked on the exterior by niches for statuary, then by massive towers, and surmounted by a traceried gable, these elements combining to produce an effect more like a western façade.

From these examples of major attempts to build large Gothic churches in the Scandinavian countries it is clear that in terms of a "pure" expression of Gothic architecture in the French, German, or English sense the northern

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builders were less than successful. Their enthusiasm for the elements of Gothic structure and ornament, however, was unmistakable and led to buildings with their own distinction. One of the most surprising and least known of these is the unfinished cathedral of St. Magnus at Kirkjubøur in the Faroe Islands.[60]

While this community is now apparently out of the way, it was a center of activity in the Middle Ages when Bishop Erlend began the cathedral c. 1300 (figure 2.57). Rectangular in plan, it was to have been vaulted in six bays, the two easternmost indicated as the choir by a rise in the floor. A small chapel on the north side was evidently once vaulted, but the main body of the church was not, and it may have been at one time covered by a wooden roof. Carved corbels indicate the intention for vaulting. The walls are built of Faroese basalt, bound with shell mortar.[61] Little is known of Bishop Erlend except that he went to the Faroes from

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2.52 Tingstäde, Gotland. Church. Begun late 12th century.

2.53 Linköping, Östergötland. Cathedral. Begun 1130. Interior. (Stockholm, Antikvarisk-Topografiska Arkivet. Photo: Rolf Hintze.)

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Bergen. He must have known the sacristy of St. Mary in Bergen, and possibly also the chapter house at Trondheim Cathedral, which might have served as prototypes for the little north chapel at Kirkjubøur. The ornamental details of St. Magnus recall the English-inspired work at Stavanger and Trondheim, but whether they were carried out by local or Norwegian stoneworkers is not known.

A new church was built at Hvalsey in the Eastern Settlement c. 1300, whose walls are the most substantial remains of Norse building in Greenland (figure 2.58).[62] Slabs of fieldstone were fairly well dressed and laid up with shell mortar, which was rarely used in Greenland. The 13-foot lintel over the west door and the arched window in the east gable suggest considerable ambition and grandeur. Remains of the house, a large festival hall, barns, and storehouses are nearby. In 1261 the settlers in Greenland, who had been assembling to govern themselves at the Thing at Gardar, agreed to go under the rule of King Håkon Håkonsson of Norway. The bishop at Gardar was then responsible to the bishop in Trondheim, whence stoneworkers may have been brought for the work at Hvalsey.

The major Gothic churches just described are cathedrals or large parish churches. In the 1220s three religious orders were founded that followed the Gothic style in their buildings: the Dominicans, Carmelites, and Franciscans. For preaching purposes some of the houses chose to build hall churches. In the next century a new order was founded by St. Birgitta, c. 1345, and confirmed by Pope Urban V in 1370. The rules that she wrote for her Order include instructions for buildings. These stipulate limestone for the material, sections for monks and nuns, and prohibition of ornament throughout. After St. Birgitta's death in Rome in 1373, her body was brought to the abbey of Vadstena in

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2.54 Trondheim. Cathedral. Drawing by A. Mayer, c. 1836. (Oslo, Riksantikvaren.)

2.55 Trondheim. Cathedral. Interior. (Oslo, Riksantikvaren.)

2.56 Stavanger, Rogaland. Cathedral. Choir. 1272. (Oslo, Riksantikvaren.)

2.57 Kirkjubøur, Faroes. Cathedral. Begun c. 1300.

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Östergötland which she had founded in 1368.[63] Some of the convent buildings remain and have been restored, while the high broad roof covering the nave and aisles of the church rises above them. The nuns' cloister was built on the north side of the church, and the monks' dormitory and chapter house were put in a wing to the southwest. The interior was built as a hall church, the nave and aisles separated by four pairs of octagonal piers (figure 2.59). The absence of decorative carving and the severity of proportion are in keeping with the rule of the Order, although there was perhaps some concession to contemporary style in the star vaults. The Order attracted numerous members and by the Reformation had increased to about eighty houses all over Europe, which usually followed the building instructions of its founder.

The merits of the fire-resistant vaults being raised over these large churches and also the new fashionable elegance of their appearance were not lost on those whose stone village churches still had wooden roofs, and some of the later Gothic parish churches were vaulted from the beginning. At Hyllestad on Jutland, for example, the Romanesque church was given simple four-part vaults, which were painted with Biblical scenes by the Brarup Master c. 1400 (figure 2.60).[64] Hundreds of these small churches were provided with such paintings, based on manuscript and woodcut illustrations and serving as a *Biblia Pauperum* for those who could not read the Scriptures. These vaults are not high, but could be easily reached by ladders or scaffolding for painting *al secco* and were close in the view of the spectators. A great many were eventually covered with whitewash, and much cleaning and restoration has been undertaken in recent years.[65]

Several references have been made to the "star" vaults characteristic of the late Gothic period, which were especially popular in Sweden. At Almunge in Uppland these were

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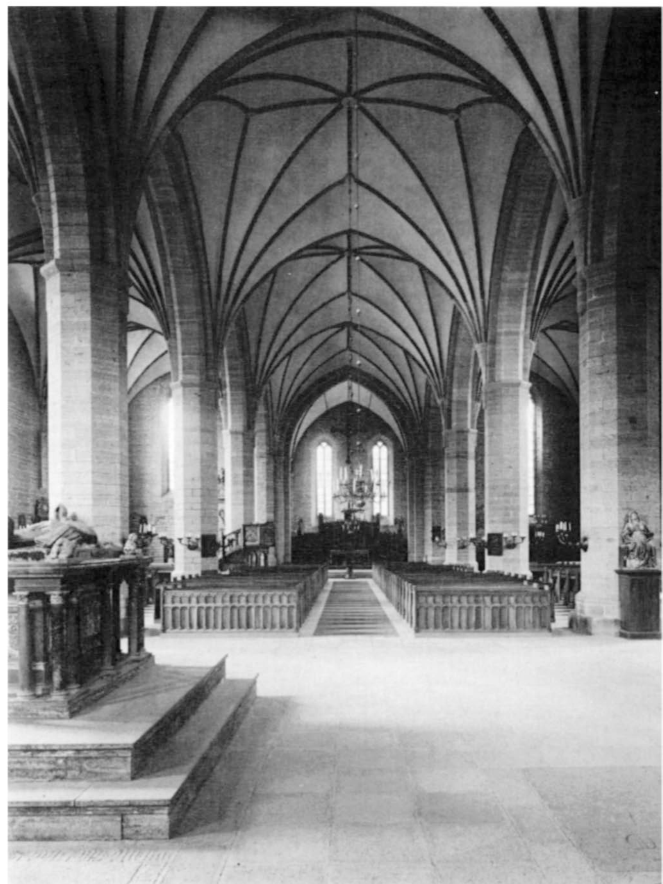
painted by a follower of Albertus Pictor c. 1490 (figure 2.61).[66] The complex shapes and surfaces of these vaults offered both opportunities and obstacles to the painters. The mineral colors have changed over the years so that the appearance of light and color of these interiors is now deceptive, but where the paintings can now be seen in their entirety the sense of drama, reverent and irreverent, remains.

Mention should also be made of the paintings that were done for the Norwegian stave churches c. 1250–1300. The structural system of these churches was not conducive to painting on the buildings themselves. An ingenious solution to the problem of pictorial cycles was found in the baldachins, or canopies, that were built over the sanctuaries and painted with Biblical or other scenes. Few remain, including one at Torpo in Hallingdal and one from Ål in Hallingdal now in the University Museum in Oslo. They are significant, however, for our understanding of the original appearance of the medieval churches. The fresh reds and blues that have survived on the wooden Norwegian panels are unlike the brown and beige hues and present golden appearance of such paintings as those at Hyllestad.[67]

When Christianity was carried from Sweden into Finland in the early thirteenth century, numerous parish churches were built in the Åland Islands and southwestern Finland. Those built of wood have disappeared. The remaining churches, built of the local granite under the direction of clergy coming from the mainland of Sweden and from Gotland, were usually begun as simple rectangular structures, with single naves and sanctuaries with flat east ends. The first roofs might be of wood, with vaults added later, as were sometimes porches and towers.

An example dating from the thirteenth century is the church of St. Mikael at Finström on Åland (figure 2.62).[68] Here the south porch



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2.58 Hvalsey, Greenland. Church. c. 1300.

2.59 Vadstena, Östergötland. Abbey Church. 1365–1420. Interior. (Stockholm, Antikvarisk-Topografiska Arkivet. Photo: Clareus.)

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and the tower with its odd little turrets were added in the fifteenth century. The sacristy on the north side is actually the earliest part, built onto the original wooden church sometime before the beginning of the present building. The walls of the church are laid up with irregular blocks of the local granite, marked by bands of more carefully dressed large blocks.

On the interior heavy piers were added in the fourteenth century to support low vaults, covered with paintings in the fifteenth century (figure 2.63). The arches over the nave are only slightly pointed, while the arch into the tower is more sharply pointed, almost stilted. As in Denmark and Sweden, the Finnish parish churches carry a wealth of carved and painted altars, pulpits, and other liturgical furnishings.

St. Mikael at Finström will be remarked upon again in connection with the Finnish architect Lars Sonck. It also represents another aspect of medieval Scandinavian architecture, the extent to which building practices were not limited by the national boundaries of today. A comprehensive study of the parish churches alone of north Germany, Denmark, south Sweden, including the islands of Öland and Gotland, the Åland Islands, and southwestern Finland has yet to be made.[69]

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2.60 Hyllestad, Jutland. Church. 12th century. Interior.

2.61 Almunge, Uppland. Church. 12th century. Interior. (Stockholm, Antikvarisk-Topografiska Arkivet.)

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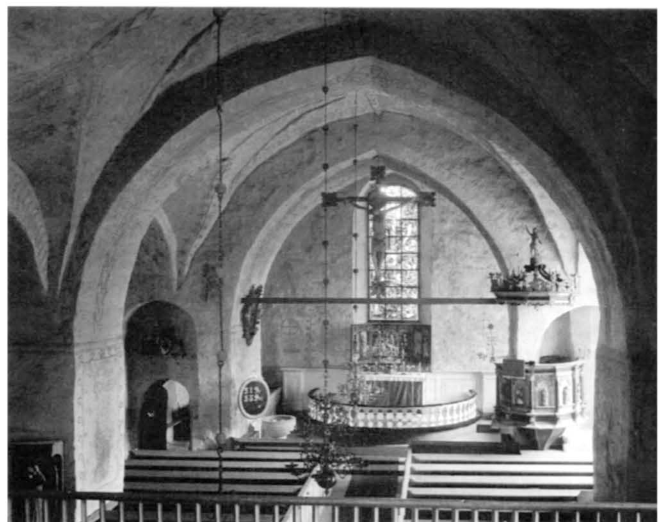
2.62 Finström, Åland. St. Mikael. 13th century. (Helsinki, Museum of Finnish Architecture. Photo: Nils E. Wickberg.)

2.63 Finström, Åland. St. Mikael. Interior. (Helsinki, Museum of Finnish Architecture. Photo: Rista.)



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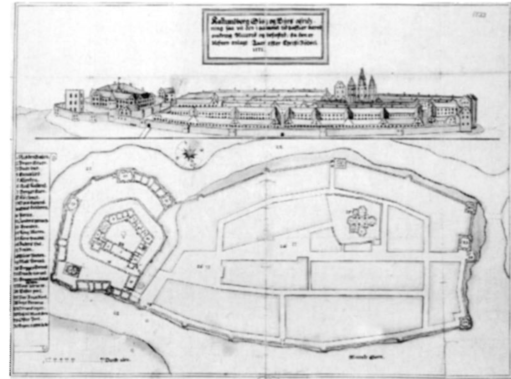

Secular Building in the Middle Ages

2.64 Kalundborg, Zealand. City plan. c. 1170. Drawing, c. 1600. (Copenhagen, National Museum.)

2.65 Visby, Gotland. Walls. 13th century.

2.66 Copenhagen. Castle. Begun 1167. Conjectural drawing. (Ramsing, *Københavns historie*, figure 10, p. 12.)

To turn from religious to secular building, we find that few individual houses, as distinct from castles or palaces, have survived from the medieval period in the Scandinavian countries. The sense of tradition has been strong, and some habits of building from earlier years can probably be seen in housing from the sixteenth century that will be considered in a later chapter. Even a brief glance at the history of these countries from c. 1050 to c. 1530, however, will reveal the frequent wars that made defenses for the cities and strongholds for the kings and nobles imperative. Some of the most notable of these will be described to show how the Nordic builders responded to these needs.

The towns themselves grew as market centers for local or international trade as well as centers of ecclesiastical authority. Studies in urban history and archaeology, especially since World War II, have done much to clarify the development of modern cities in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, even from as early as Viking times.[70] For the towns which that enclosed with walls we may, for example, look briefly at Kalundborg and Copenhagen on Zea-

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land and Visby on Gotland.

We have already considered the unique church at Kalundborg, begun c. 1170 by Bishop Esbjørn Snare. The bishop also built a castle there, and these with the town buildings were surrounded by a curtain wall with towers and bastions (figure 2.64).[71] The whole defense system took advantage of the waters of the fjord on the south and the Munkesø or lake on the north; today the latter is filled in and the walls mostly gone.

At Visby, on the other hand, the walls built from the early twelfth to the mid-thirteenth centuries have survived and are among the most extensive of such defenses remaining in Europe (figure 2.65).[72] By 1229 Visby was one of the member towns of the Society of Germans Traveling to Gotland, the Hanseatic League, which came to include more than thirty Dutch, German, and Baltic cities. Having been the center of German activity on Gotland for more than half a century, the original town not surprisingly somewhat resembled Lübeck, with which its merchants were in close commercial relation. In both cities the cathedrals were not so much on formal central plazas as they were placed toward the ends of the towns, with long streets proceeding from them.

As a third example of how such fortifications could be managed we can look at the walls and castle of Copenhagen, built by Bishop Esbjørn Snare's brother Bishop Absalon in 1167 (figure 2.66).[73] Here he hoped to protect what was then a fishing and trading center from attacks by the Wendish pirates coming from Germany. The castle was built on an island, Slotsholmen, and, although it was torn down in 1369, some ruins are now visible under the present Christiansborg Palace. Some of the old streets of the town itself, notably the present series called Strøget and Købmagergade, lead-

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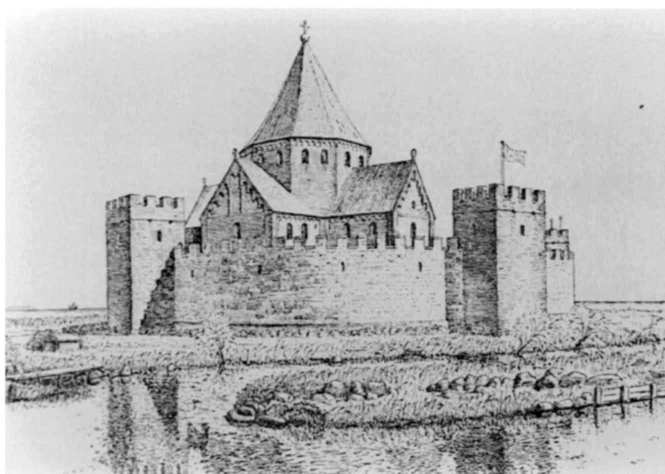

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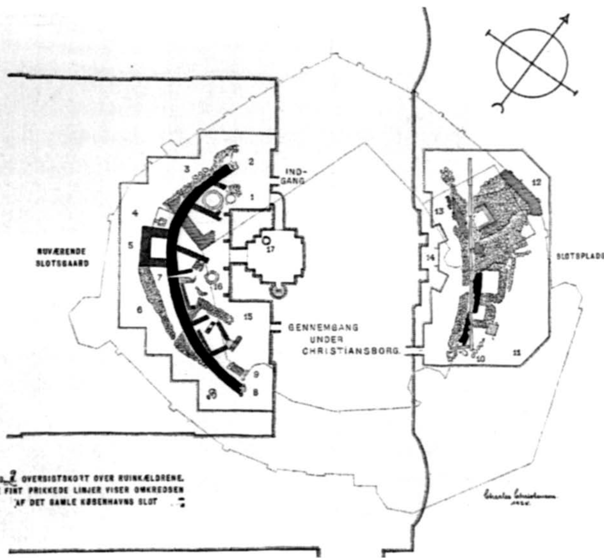

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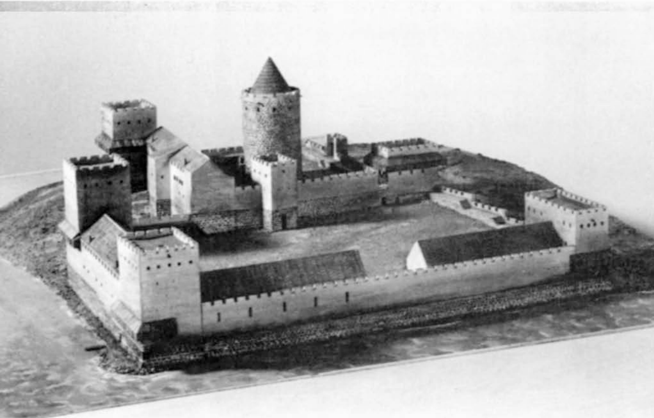

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2.67 Copenhagen. Castle. Plan of ruins. (Christensen, *Gamle bygninger på Slotsholmen,* n.p.)

2.68 Stockholm. Castle. 13th century. Model. (Stockholm, City Museum.)

2.69 *Vädersolstavlan.* Painting, 1535. Stockholm, Storkyrkan. (Stockholm, City Museum.)

ing to the old bridge to the castle island, survive in the modern plan of the city.

This brings us to the castles. For the twelfth century in Denmark, figures 2.64 and 2.66 show the castles at Kalundborg and Copenhagen to have been typical of European fortresses of that time. There were two lines of defense at Kalundborg, and then the castle with its own towers, formed by five wings around a courtyard. At Copenhagen the castle consisted of a ring wall with at least one, possibly two towers, and there were then buildings inside the wall, with the baking oven of one still in place today. The oldest known seal of the city, from 1275, shows a crenelated curtain wall and two towers, with a castle rising inside with a high central tower and projecting wings. It has been proposed that this depiction is substantially accurate and that the castle was a striking parallel to the church at Kalundborg.[74] The ruins that survived the building of the first Christiansborg Palace in 1733 were excavated between 1906 and 1922 during the building of the present Christiansborg and are open to visitors (figure 2.67).

The thick curtain walls, towers, and heavily defended gateways of such castles were by now well developed all over Europe, partly as a result of the lessons in military architecture learned during the Crusades. These elements were continued in use, in various combinations, for several generations until the introduction of gunpowder in European warfare in the fifteenth century made some of these provisions obsolete.

In the thirteenth century Birger Jarl, regent for his son King Valdemar, did for Sweden what Bishop Absalon had done for Denmark, building a fortress at Tavastehus (now Hämeenlinna) in Finland to establish Sweden's overseas empire and also building Stockholm as a major port for the Lübeck trade. Stockholm's site on

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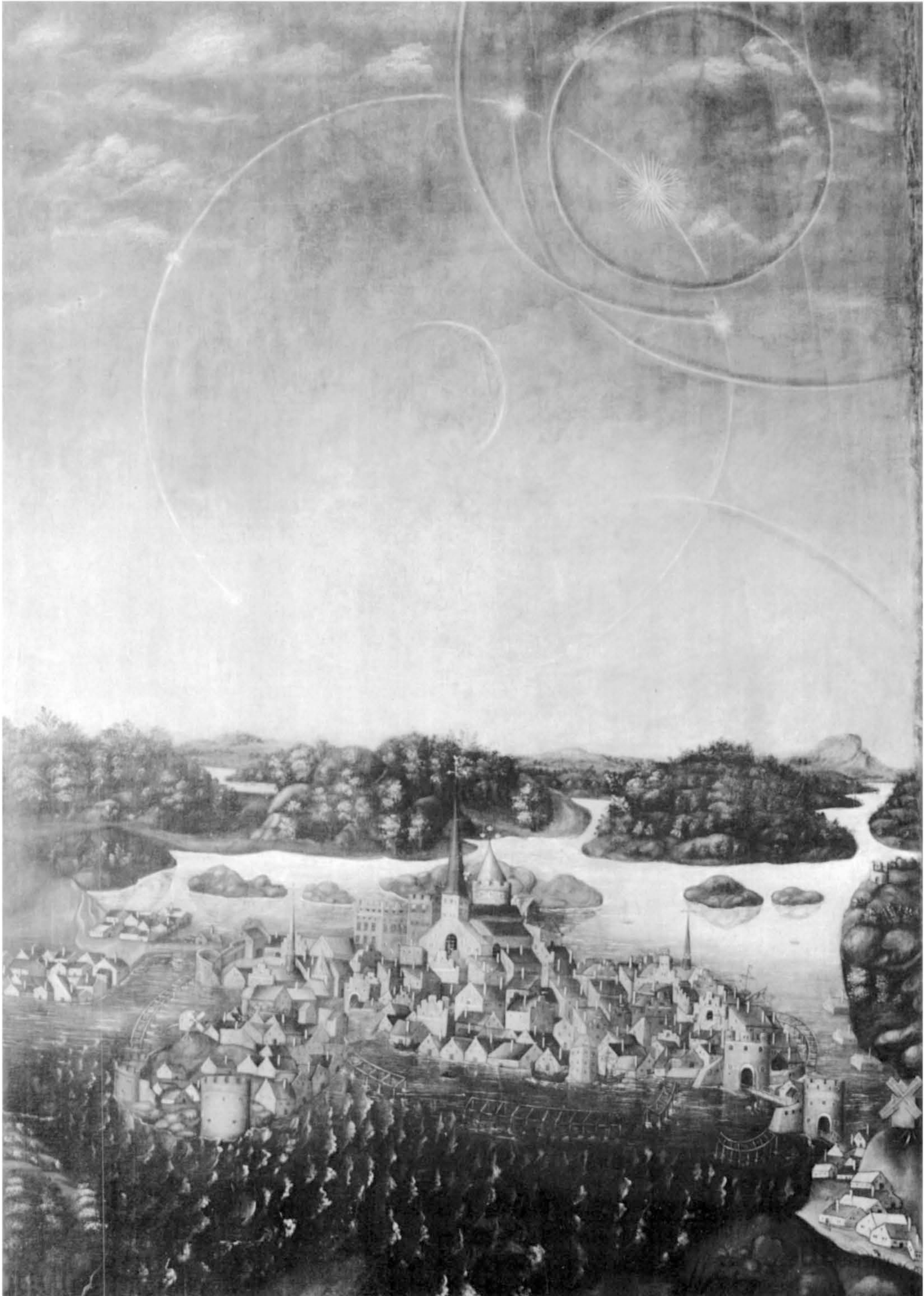

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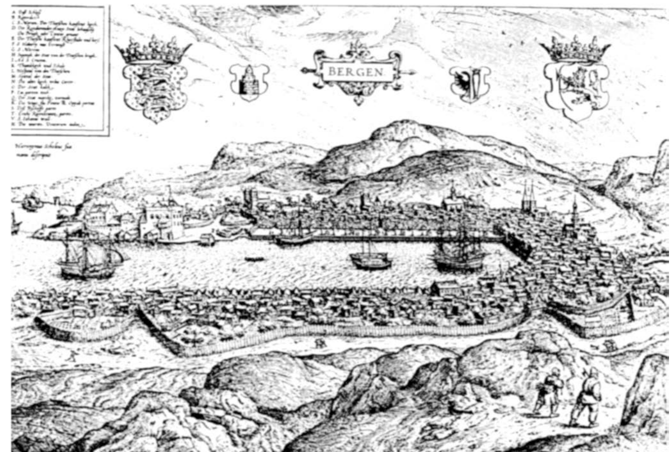
the island of Stadholm was strategic because here Lake Mälar drains into the Saltsjö, coming in forty miles from the open sea. Birger Jarl's castle was dominated by the great Tre Kronor tower, as seen in a modern model and also prominent in early illustrations of the city (figures 2.68 and 2.69).[75] This typical keep, with walls 10 feet thick and a 45-foot diameter, was divided into several stories with a defensive platform on top.

For a more secure royal residence in another great Hanseatic port in the thirteenth century, King Håkon Håkonsson began a new stone castle and walls at the entrance to the harbor of Bergen after the fire of 1248. His own coronation feast in 1225 had been held in a timber boathouse, hardly a royal setting. By 1261, however, when his son Magnus Håkonsson was married to the Danish princess Ingeborg, the new stone hall was ready for the feast (figures 2.70 and 2.71).[76] A seventeenth-century view shows the castle complex at the edge of the water, with the twin towers of St. Mary's church rising just to the right. The hall itself, now called Håkon's Hall, was built much like a German *Kaiserpfalz* such as the famous Romanesque example at Goslar, c. 1040–1050. The ground floor provided storage, the middle story was divided into three parts for council, reception, and private chambers, and the great festival hall was built on the third level. A history of fires and gradual desertion was changed through the efforts of J. C. Dahl, who also rescued the stave church at Vang, but then a tremendous harbor explosion in 1944 brought down all but the walls.

After 1955 a new restoration was begun, and the hall is now made suitable for social gatherings (figure 2.72). The exterior view of the west side shows the normal medieval slit openings on the ground level, larger divided windows in the middle, and much larger tracer-



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2.70 Bergen. Scholeus View, c. 1580. (Oslo, Riksantikvaren.)

2.71 Bergen. Håkon's Hall. 1261. (Oslo, Riksantikvaren.)

2.72 Bergen. Håkon's Hall. Great Hall. (Oslo, Riksantikvaren.)

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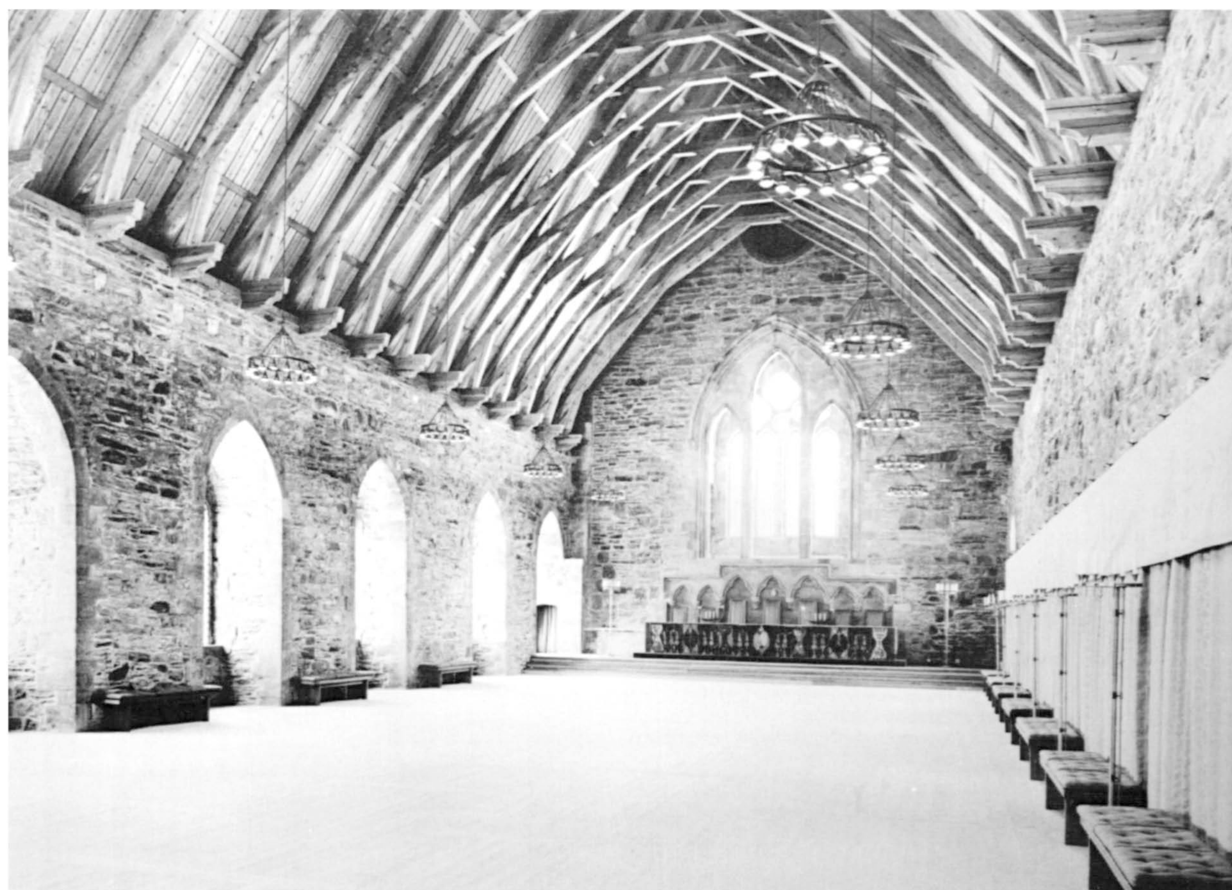
ied windows above; on the interior of the festival hall these window openings come down to the floor, thus providing ample light. The large window in the north wall is built in the English fashion, with three lancets pierced in a thin panel on the inner surface of the wall and four lancets, three quatrefoils, and a roundel in the outer panel. This scheme gave small subdivisions for best support of glass on the exterior and larger openings for better use of light on the interior. A similar double window was built in the east end of St. Mary's church after the fire of 1248, and the same masons may have been employed on both projects.[77]

Magnus Håkonsson built another great stronghold, Akershus, in Oslo. Because of subsequent enlargements, however, we will leave it for later discussion and turn to two important castles of the medieval period in Finland. On high ground overlooking the harbor stands the castle at Turku (figure 2.73).[78] It was begun c. 1280 as two parallel four-story buildings separated by six-story towers at the east and west ends. Among the later additions are the King's Hall built in the top story of the north wing in the fourteenth century, and also the Nuns' Chapel in the east tower, with the first star vaulting in Finland. In the sixteenth century the castle was repaired and embellished to become the center of court life. In later years it housed troops, served as a distillery, was in part a prison, and also housed an embryonic historical



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museum. Modern restorations and a full museum installation have followed upon damage by bombing in 1941. These varied uses help point out that this building, while heavily constructed, did not have the curtain walls, towers, and bastions of the other fortresses but was more a massive residence from the beginning.

Probably more satisfying to the romantic mind is the castle of Olavlinna, founded in 1475 by the Swedish nobleman Erik Axelsen Tott (figure 2.74).[79] It was built as a fortress against the Russians, and, like the old Copenhagen Castle, rises dramatically from a rocky island in the Kyrösalmi Strait. By the fortunes of war it fell twice into Russian hands, and was several times enlarged until finally abandoned after the Napoleonic wars. After some time as a prison it was restored in the 1870s and again since World War II. Originally there were three towers, a

2.73 Turku. Castle. Begun c. 1280.

2.74 Savonlinna. Olavlinna. Begun 1475.

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main building with living quarters and the Knights' Hall, and ramparts to form a triangular enclosure. Changes in the towers and additions of towers, bastions, and outer walls brought it to its present plan. In spite of many changes and additions since 1475, the castle's basic structure has survived well enough, providing excellent opportunity to observe the heavy outer walls, deep window embrasures, thick inner partitions, and narrow, tortuous spiral staircases with steps of uneven width and depth that characterize such late medieval fortresses.

For the ambitious bishop or nobleman in the late Gothic period a fine stone house could be a matter of pride. One of the best preserved is Glimmingehus in Skåne, begun in 1499 by the mason Adam von Düren for Jens Holgersen Ulfstrand (figure 2.75).[80] The simple blocky building rises above wide moats, with small window openings in the first three stories, larger windows in the top story, and a steep high roof embellished with stepped gables. The building of such imposing and fortresslike noble dwellings had been hindered by the ravages of the Black Death, which swept the Nordic countries beginning in 1349, and Queen Margaret I's prohibition against fortified houses during her reign, 1387–1412. By the end of the fifteenth century times had changed, and Glimmingehus was prophetic, not only in its comparative grandeur but also in the balance of private living and ceremonial quarters on either side of a central staircase. It was traditional in the vertical disposition of its facilities, with kitchens and storerooms on the ground level, living quarters next, and a large open hall at the top, recalling the original scheme of Håkon's Hall.

Up to this point we have been considering ecclesiastical and residential buildings in their

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greater or smaller aspects. Growth of towns with their mercantile and civic needs, however, led medieval Europe to the development of the town hall as a separate building.[81] The earliest remaining in Scandinavia is the town hall at Naestved on Zealand (figure 2.76).[82] It now is enclosed with later buildings on either side, and when first built c. 1450 it did not have the steep paneled gable of an enlargement c. 1520. Modest though it is, it too was prophetic, and five centuries later the Nordic countries were to see the construction of some town halls of a much grander nature.

By the time Glimmingehus was built, Alberti had written his treatise on architecture (1452) and Leonardo in the 1490s was making sketches for monumental domed churches in the High Renaissance manner. The Gothic was now outmoded on the Continent. At the same time the voyages of Columbus signaled an immense expansion of geographical knowledge, to be followed by new territorial and commercial rivalries that affected all of Europe. Finally, Savonarola's pleas for religious reform resulted in his death in 1498, less than twenty years before Luther's 95 theses and the beginning of another major religious development. In the next two chapters we shall see how the Scandinavian builders responded to the impact of these events on the ideas of European Renaissance and Baroque designers.

2.75 Glimmingehus, Skåne. Begun 1499. (Copenhagen, National Museum.)

2.76 Naestved, Zealand. Old Town Hall. c. 1450–1500. (Copenhagen, National Museum.)

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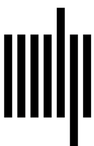

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