

The Cathedral: Art and Power

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Dear Colleagues,

Arts is an international, peer-reviewed, open access journal promoting significant research on all aspects of the visual and performing arts, published bimonthly online by MDPI.

The Special Issue that we propose aims to analyze medieval European cathedrals that, as a case study, are particularly unique as spaces of power. Within a broad chronological arc that runs from the IVth to the XVIth century and in an extensive geographical framework that goes from north to south and from east to west, our intention is to leave aside some of the well-known cathedrals (the top ten) and focus on others that, from the perspective of art and power, we also claim to be very illustrative.

To this end, we have selected a group of buildings that will be studied by leading specialists in terms of their construction processes, their spatial morphogenesis and their possible dialogues with antiquity; their semantics in relation to hierotopy and exotopy; and their relations, in short, with the secular and religious elites who used their commissions with devotional intentions, but also political ones for their own benefit or that of their collective, be it family, dynastic or institutional. We have chosen the buildings also taking into consideration their role as exponents of secular power (considering gender issues, which still today must be vindicated), of religious power although with political overtones (the use of holy bishops or holy kings, for example), or of individual or collective memory, among other aspects.

We will focus our analysis on these powerful and emblematic buildings:

1. Roma: San Giovanni in Laterano (IV–), Omnia urbis et orbis ecclesiarum mater et caput. The oldest basilica in Rome and of the highest rank since Sylvester I; scene and scenography of important events in the time of Leo III, such as the coronation of Charlemagne as emperor.
2. Trier: Dom St. Peter (IV–), which incorporates the remains of the Roman brick construction placed under the direction of St. Helena.
3. Magdeburg: Dom St. Mauritius un Katharina (X) and his relationship with Otto I and Edith of England.
4. Norway: Nidaros domkirke (XII–), which houses the tomb of St. Olaf, a king who succeeded in imposing Christianity in Norway, deposed by Canute II of Denmark and who died when he wanted to regain power. He became the main saint of Norway and turned Nidaros, where his body was buried, into a major pilgrimage center, elevating it to the category of archdiocese.
5. Modena: Duomo di San Geminiano (XII), and its links with Matilda of Canossa, supporter of the Gregorian Reform and who, according to tradition, founded a hundred churches.

6. Poitiers: Cathédrale de Saint Pierre (XII), raised on the initiative of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Henry II Plantagenet, whose promotion is visible in one of the most important stained-glass windows of the cathedral.
7. Lausanne: Cathédrale Notre-Dame (XII), built when the region, except for the city that depended on the bishopric, joined the county of Savoy.
8. Famagusta: Cathedral of St. Nicholas (XIII), with which we will delve into the export of the formal language of French Gothic architecture on Cyprus and its link with the house of Lusignan that ruled the island from 1192 to 1489. We will wonder how and with what consequences the great centers of Eastern Christianity ceased to be cathedrals.
9. Canterbury: Cathedral and Metropolitical Church of Christ (XIV), a building that underwent several constructions and destructions until the 13th century and that today is closely related to the martyrdom of St. Thomas Becket, which took place in the northeast corner of the cathedral complex on December 29th, 1170 at the hands of the knights of King Henry II.
10. Praha: Chrám svatého Víta (XIV), culmination of the demands of the Bohemian kings, who wished to convert the Prague diocese into an archbishopric. In addition to the social and political context, the dialogue between this building and the past will be analyzed, in particular with the so-called St. Vitus rotunda.
11. Sevilla: catedral de Santa María (XV), built over the Almohad mosque, whose minaret and sahn are preserved integrated into the building. In addition to the usual process followed by the mosques of Muslim cities once they were conquered by the Christians, the use of its space as a place of memory by the monarchy will also be studied.

In order to balance the content of this Special Issue, we have discarded, among others, emblematic ensembles such as Aachen, which were studied by Wolfgang Schmid. This proposal is not the definitive one, but it is an initial starting point. From May 1st, we will have outlined and adjusted all aspects of the descriptor; also, among the scholars of each cathedral ensemble, we would like to balance the participants in terms of gender (men and women), but also in terms of professional quality (senior and junior).

Dr. Marta Serrano-Coll

Dr. Gerardo Boto-Varela

Guest Editors

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Reference:

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<<https://arthist.net/archive/37997>>.