

ARCHAEOLOGIA:
OR,
MISCELLANEOUS TRACTS,
&c.

I. *Medieval Architecture in Aquitaine ; in continuation of previous Papers. A Letter addressed to the VISCOUNT MAHON, President, by JOHN HENRY PARKER, Esq., F.S.A.*

Read June 1st, 1854.

MY LORD,

Oxford, June 1, 1854.

IN my last letter I carried the account of my architectural Tour in the English provinces of France as far as Bordeaux ; the following year I made this my starting point, and traversed the length of the ancient province of Guienne, which it is hardly necessary to observe is a long and rather narrow strip across the south of France, extending from Bordeaux in the west, nearly to Lyons in the east, leaving Gascony and Languedoc in the south, and other smaller provinces to the north. I have paid no attention to the modern division of the country into departments, it not being material to my purpose ; and my rapid passage from one department to another would have caused great confusion in describing my route.

As I could not learn that there are any buildings of importance for my purpose in the immediate neighbourhood of Bordeaux in this direction, I took advantage of the steamboat on the Garonne as far as LANGON, where the road to the Pyrenees branches off. The church here is modern, but in good imitation of Gothic work ; the tower is of the end of the twelfth century, with a belfry story added in the sixteenth. At a short distance, it bears some resemblance to our Anglo-Saxon towers, but on a closer inspection the resemblance is not borne out ; nor have I ever been able to find in France any tower of that character ; and, as my observations have extended over a large part of France, and I have also made frequent inquiries of the best informed French antiquaries on the subject, I think I may safely aver that there are no towers of that type in France, which is strong pre-

sumptive evidence that they are really Saxon. On the opposite side of the river, which is here passed by a suspension bridge, is the ruined town of ST. MACAIRE, in which is a fine Church of mixed styles, but chiefly of the twelfth century. It is said to have been founded in the year 1048, but no part of the present structure appears to be so early. The plan is a latin cross with the east end and the two transepts rounded, forming three apses, each with a semi-dome vault, and the central compartment is vaulted by a cupola; the first bay of the nave is of the same character, the other three bays are successively later, the first of the thirteenth, the second of the fourteenth, and the third of the fifteenth century; but the west end, with a fine doorway, is of the thirteenth, and the whole of the lower parts of the walls belong to the early work: attached to the first bay on the north side is a tower of the fourteenth century, hexagonal in plan. The walls have been raised throughout, but not all at the same period. The exterior of the east end with its three apses is a fine specimen of the Romanesque style with a semi-Byzantine character. The northern apse is different from the other two, and shews a change of plan during the progress of the work, this apse having the walls originally four feet higher than the other two, which have been raised to correspond with it: the work is also richer than in the earlier part. The corbel table and cornice are very good and effective, the latter enriched with a triple row of the billet ornament; the buttresses are rounded into half pillars, and in the upper part have shafts added on, with good bases and sculptured capitals. In the face, near the tower, a square-headed window of the fourteenth century has been inserted, with good mouldings in the head and jambs.

In the interior the walls are covered with arcades, and vaulting shafts, which have good capitals, and bases of a style resembling our Norman; these shafts, being arranged in groups of five, afford scope for a fine series of bases; the ribs of the vaults are enriched with a row of balls resembling our ball-flower, though here occurring in works of the transitional period. The vaults are covered with paintings of the fourteenth century, very curious; they have been restored, but carefully.

The western doorway is good Early French work, with a trefoil opening in the head; this and the arch are filled with sculptures, but much mutilated. The wooden door and its ironwork are original.

The town is in a very decayed state. The market-place is irregular in plan, almost oblong; the houses are for the most part in ruins, but the arcade or piazza on which they are built, is nearly entire; some of the arches are pointed, others are round, but they are nearly all of the Flamboyant or Renaissance styles. There are

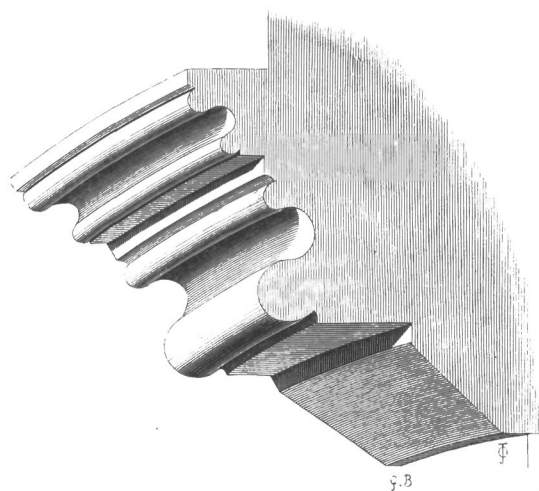
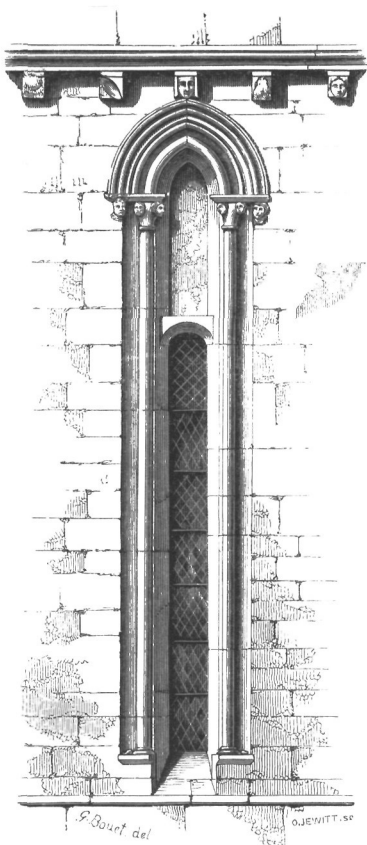
several old houses in other parts of the town, one of which appears to be of the fourteenth century, with a good window of that period.

A few miles from Langon is the town of BAZAS, the cathedral of which is deserving of more attention than it has received. It is of mixed styles, but chiefly of the thirteenth century. The plan is oblong, with aisles and an apse, no distinction between the nave and choir, but the apse is surrounded by an aisle and chapels, and there are low chapels between the buttresses of the nave. The work seems to have been carried on for a long period; part is late in the thirteenth, and another part early in the fourteenth century; but it has been a good deal modernized in the seventeenth, and the date of 1675 is painted on a base at the east end. The west front is very fine and rich, the arches and tympanums fitted with sculpture, among which are the signs of the zodiac, with the operations of each month corresponding.^a But four large paneled buttresses have been introduced in the seventeenth century, and two of the months are destroyed.

The nave has the pillars chiefly rebuilt or refaced after the mutilation by the Huguenots, and the vault is also modern, but the side walls with the shafts attached, and the vaults of the aisles are original, with some of the windows. In the north aisle is a tomb of the end of the twelfth century, with a canopy, on which are some curious incipient crockets, the earliest that I remember to have met with. The rest of the work is chiefly of the Flamboyant style. The tower which stands on the north side of the west front is a fine specimen of that style, with a rich crocketed spire, and there is a good Flamboyant round window in the west front. The upper part of the front is, however, modernized.

At the opposite end of the market-place is the shell of a good small church in the early French style, with a series of very long lancet windows, having fine mouldings, and a corbel table. It is called the church of the Mercadel, or little market. The windows have very tall shafts, with good capitals of foliage and the square abacus. Nothing certain appears to be known about the history of the church, or of the structure of the cathedral, which was founded at a very early period, and was formerly much more important than it is at present, the bishopric being now united to that of Bordeaux. The market-place of Bazas is of an irregular form, arising from the nature of the ground on the top of a hill; the houses are built on an arcade or piazza, some of the arches of which appear to be early, but none of the houses are earlier than Flamboyant. One corner house is a good specimen of the French houses in towns of the fifteenth or sixteenth cen-

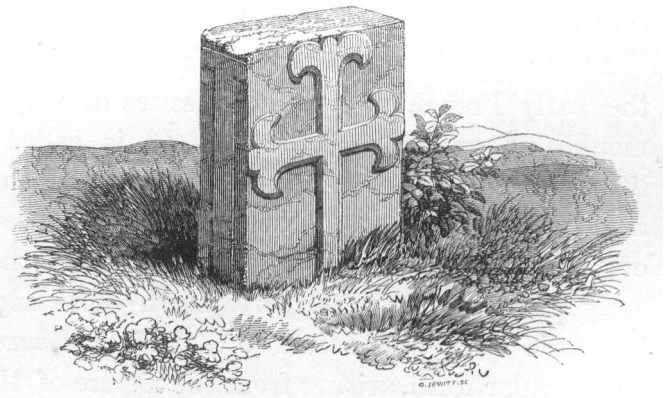
^a This Calendar of the Seasons has attracted a good deal of attention among the French antiquaries, and engravings of it have been published.



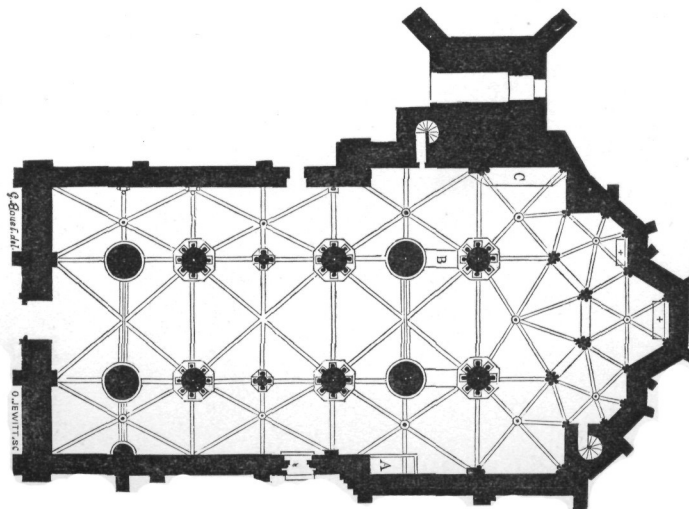
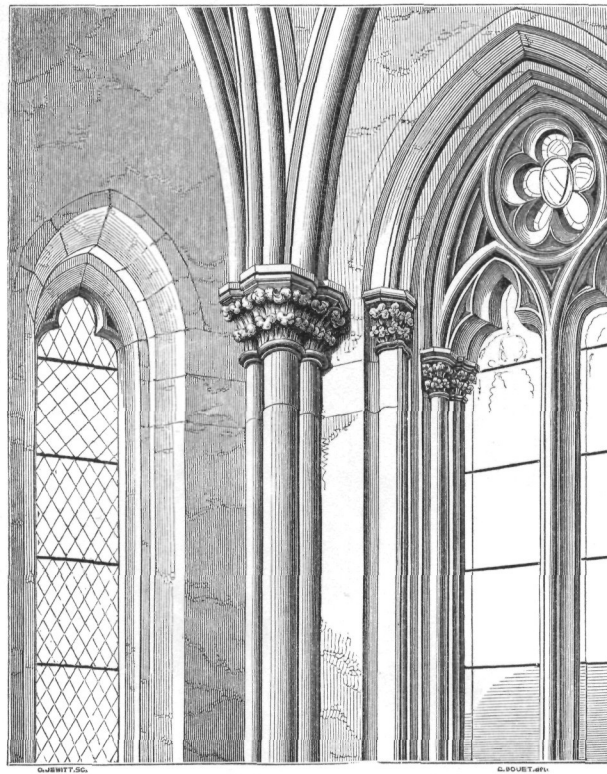
WINDOW FROM THE CHURCH OF THE MERCADEL AT BAZAS
WITH THE ARCH-MOULDINGS.

tury in this part of France; the lower windows have canopies over them with crockets, finials, and pinnacles; the upper windows are enriched with paneling. Portions of the old walls of the town remain, but they are not very early nor remarkable.

A few miles from Langon, in another direction, is the pretty little church of UZESTE, chiefly remarkable as the burial place of Pope Clement the Fifth, whose tomb still stands in the south aisle; the effigy is of white marble, placed upon an altar tomb of black marble, with an inscription round the edge, in which he is called the Founder of the Church, although it is evident that he only partially rebuilt it. The choir with its apse and aisles is his work, and as he died in 1314, this gives us a valuable dated example of the early Decorated style. The style of the work is almost identical with that of the Sainte Chapelle in Paris, although its date is fifty years later. It is evident, indeed, that the style of that chapel was considerably in advance of other buildings in France of the same period, and that style usually belongs to quite the end of the thirteenth, or the beginning of the fourteenth century, the highest period of Gothic architecture. The plan of Uzeste is rather peculiar, the choir being wider than the nave, but it is also considerably higher, and it is evident that the intention was to have rebuilt the nave also. The arms of the Pope are cut in the stone of parts of the work which he built. The style of the work, especially the windows, with foliated circles in the head, is similar to what was in use in England about 1260, as in the chapter-house at Salisbury. In the north-east chapel is a good sepulchral arch, with a tall pyramid over it, well moulded and crocketed, with a trefoil in the head, and capitals of Decorated foliage. This appears to have been the Easter sepulchre or Calvaire; near it is a small altar of solid stone, which appears to be original. The tower stands at the north side of the choir, and is good Flamboyant work, with a rich crocketed spire; the parapets and other parts are ornamented in the manner usual in that style. The choir has fine flying buttresses, resembling the Early French style, but the open parapet round the apse is quite Decorated. In the churchyard is a good Decorated headstone with a cross.



HEADSTONE IN THE CHURCHYARD, UZESTE.

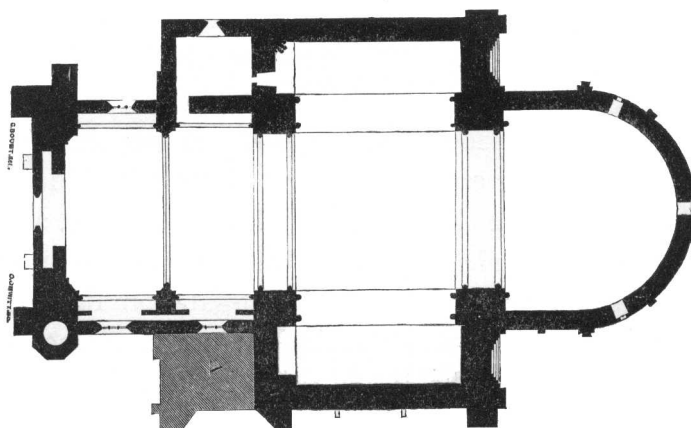


PART OF THE CHOIR AND PLAN OF THE CHURCH AT UZESTE, A.D. 1314.

Near Uzeste are the remains of the castle of VILLANDRAUT, the residence of Pope Clement the Fifth, who also built it. The walls are nearly perfect, and it is a fine military fortress and a dwelling house combined. The plan is very regular; a square with buildings on all sides of it, and a large round tower at each angle; also two other round towers to protect the entrance, which is on the south side. The buildings are all three stories high, with two external staircases, one in the south-east angle, the other in the north-east, both opening from the court-yard. The towers all have vaulted chambers in the lower part, and round staircases. On a boss of one of the vaults a small group of figures is carved, representing the consecration of the Pope; two bishops are putting the tiara on his head. But the work in general is extremely plain. There is scarcely a vestige of ornament of any kind; the roofs are all destroyed. The moat is perfect and deep, and there are the grooves of two portcullises, and marks of the drawbridge. It is remarkable that all the palaces of the Popes in France are very strongly fortified, as is the case at Avignon, even though it is within the walls of a strongly fortified town.

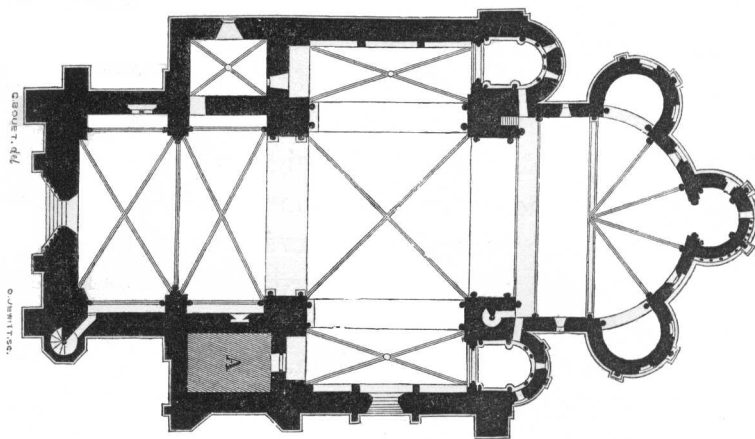
AGEN.—*Aginnum*.

My next stopping place on the Garonne was at the curious and interesting old town of Agen. The cathedral here was destroyed in the great Revolution; its place is now supplied by the fine Romanesque church of St. Caprais, which has been carefully repaired, but the original plan, and a great deal of the old work, has been preserved. The character of the work partakes a good deal of the Byzantine style, as I have had occasion to observe in several instances in this district. The ground plan is remarkable: it is almost a Greek cross, with an apse and apsidal chapels; these are low, and are lost in the plan of the upper story. The four main arches are pointed but plain, and carried on very massive piers, which



PLAN OF UPPER STORY, S. CAPRAIS.

reminded me very much of St. Front at Perigueux, and might well have carried a similar cupola, but the central compartment is vaulted over with a domical vault at the same height as the rest of the church. The attached shafts have capitals and bases of transitional character.



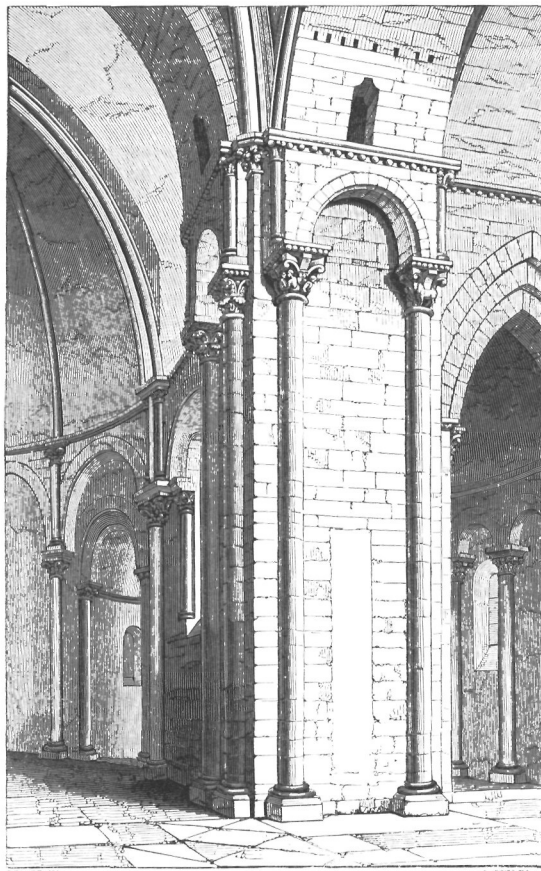
GROUND PLAN, S. CAPRAIS, AGEN. A, THE TOWER.

The arches of the triforium are enriched with early crockets, and the corbels of the vaulting-shafts are fine specimens of early French work. The mouldings shew the transitional character of the original parts of the work, the date of which must be near the end of the twelfth century.^a The windows are filled with modern painted glass, of glaring colours and in bad taste; there is also modern painting on the walls of the chapels.

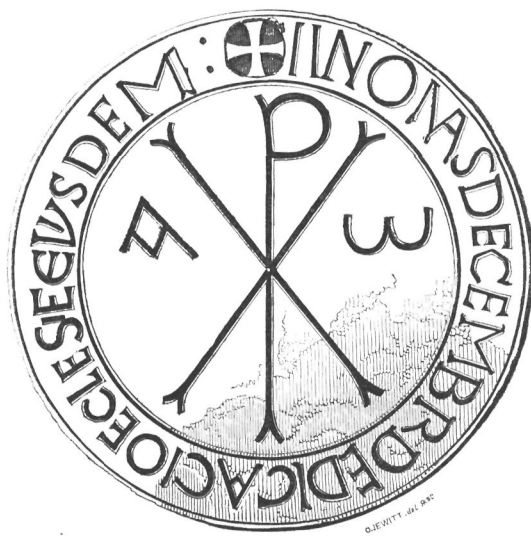
The church of St. Foi is a plain, brick building, partly of the twelfth century, with additions of the sixteenth; it has a clerestory of small round-headed windows. The small church or chapel of Notre Dame la Bonne is also of brick, of the thirteenth century, with lancet-shaped windows; the original church was a simple oblong, with a square east end, and a plain early French vault, but a Flamboyant aisle has been added. At the west end is a brick bell-cot, or gable, pierced for five bells, a singular and picturesque structure. Under this is a good early French doorway, having shafts with capitals of foliage, and the arch well moulded. This doorway, and indeed the whole chapel, has rather an English look about it. There is, or was, a somewhat similar bell-gable at Radipole, near Weymouth; it is not a very common feature either in England or France.

The church of the Jacobins is a plain brick building of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, on the plan usual with that order of monks, consisting of a double

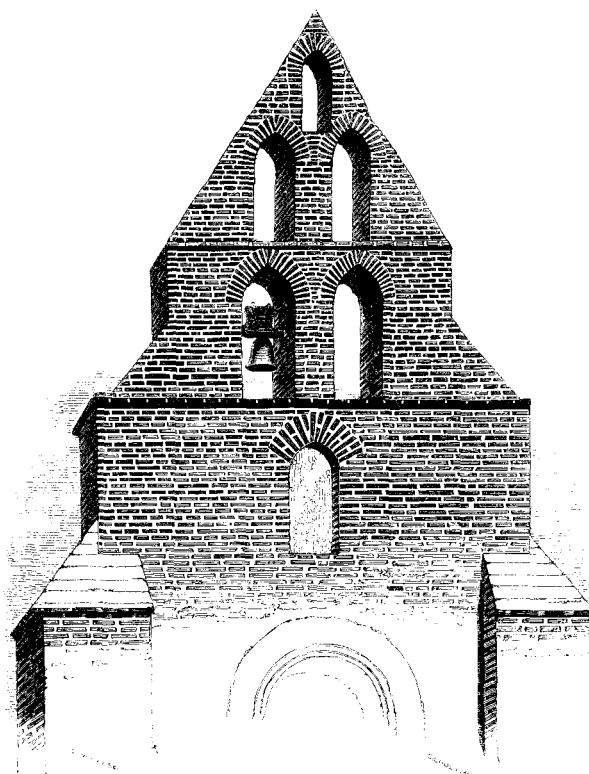
^a There is an inscription in the choir, surrounding the sacred monogram, recording the day of dedication but not the year, II. NONAS DECEMBRIS DEDICATIO ECCLESIE EJUSDEM, in characters of the twelfth century.



PART OF THE CHOIR AND TRANSEPT, S. CAPRAIS, AGEN.



INSCRIPTION IN THE CHOIR, S. CAPRAIS, AGEN.



BELL GABLE, NOTRE DAME LA BONNE, AGEN.

nave only, divided by a row of arches down the centre, and no chancel. We have a few churches on the same plan in England, which probably belonged to the same order, though this has escaped observation. The two divisions of the nave have each four bays with simply early French vaults; the east end is square, with two windows in it, corresponding with the west end; these windows are of two lights trefoiled, with a quatrefoil in the head, and appear to be rather later than the walls. The ends are very wide and flat, and give the building a heavy appearance and a bad outline; at the north-east angle is an octagonal bell turret.

There are several old timber houses, the lower stories vaulted with stone, in the town of Agen. In this town the Roman fashion of building walls with layers of tiles at regular intervals, and thick beds of mortar between the tiles, and pounded brick or tile mixed with the mortar, is still continued, and appears never to have been lost, as it may be seen in the walls of the churches of different periods. The building stone of the country is very bad and scarce, which may probably account

for the continuance of the fashion in a country which the Romans so long inhabited, and which is known to have retained many of their customs, until a much later period than most other parts of Europe. The continuance of the Roman fashion of building may however be observed in many other districts, where good building materials are scarce, as at Colchester, and other parts of the eastern counties of England.

Several Roman pavements have been found in Agen and the neighbourhood. The archives of the town have been preserved, and contain some curious and interesting documents; the earliest is a licence to build a bridge, granted by Richard the First, and dated from London in 1189. Another deed of 1308 relates also to the bridge, which was of wood. There are also several treaties of alliance for mutual defence between Agen and other neighbouring towns in the thirteenth century.

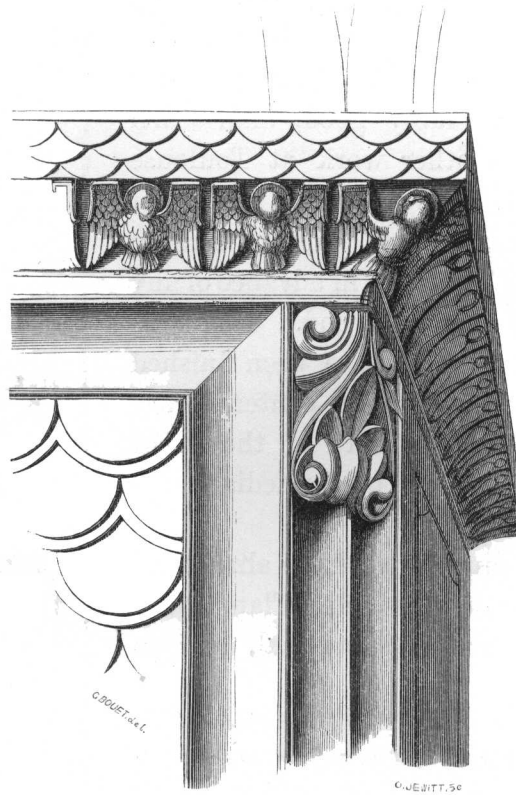
MOISSAC.

Between Agen and Montauban is Moissac, with its celebrated Benedictine abbey, founded in 630, destroyed by the Saracens in the eighth century, and rebuilt with great splendour in the eleventh by the abbé Durand de Bredon, and the church consecrated with great pomp in 1063, as recorded by a subsequent abbot, Aimery de Peyrac, in his chronicle, and confirmed by the Cartularies, of which five volumes are preserved in the National Library at Paris. The cloister is probably the richest and finest of its period in existence. It has no less than eighty pillars or shafts with sculptured capitals, chiefly small groups of figures, the subjects from the Old and New Testament, the Apocalypse, and some from the legends of saints, arranged in two distinct series, one a repetition of the other, each occupying two sides of the quadrangle. They include three of the events in the legend of St. Martin, and one of Gog and Magog. Each group of figures has the name in an inscription on the abacus, or on the capitals themselves; these inscriptions are in the character of the eleventh century, with small letters introduced within the larger ones.^b At each angle and at regular intervals are square piers, ornamented

^a I am indebted to my friend M. de Caumont for the information respecting these documents, which was supplied to him by M. Marellot, an inhabitant of the town. Full particulars will be found in the "*Histoire des Departements de Lot et Garonne, par M. de St. Amans*," 2 vols. 8vo. 1836.

^b These capitals are now well known in England, from the plaster casts of them in the Architectural Museum at Westminster, and in the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, copied from those in the Museum of Toulouse.

with a kind of scale-work, with figures of the Apostles, and one is the figure of



PIER IN THE CLOISTER AT MOISSAC.

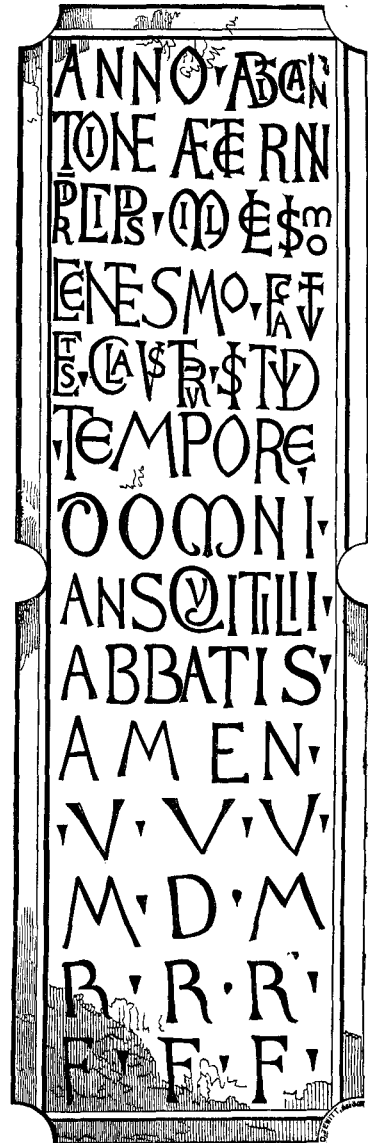
St. Durand de Bredon, abbot of Moissac and bishop of Toulouse, called the second founder of the abbey, already mentioned. On one of these piers is an inscription recording the date of the cloister as built in the year 1100; yet the arches are pointed, and the whole character of the work is what with us would be transitional. If this had been an isolated case we might suppose that the arches had been rebuilt, or the inscription preserved from an earlier building, but the pointed arch occurs in many other buildings in this part of France at the end of the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth, and it appears to be clearly established that the art had attained to this point at least half a century before it had done so in the North. But here it remained stationary for a century, and made no progress until the movement was communicated from the North.

Whether this can be accounted for by the history of the country, which became attached to the English crown early in the twelfth century, or whatever the cause may have been, the fact seems to be clearly established. The sculpture of these capitals is remarkably good, and, when taken in connection with other work at Toulouse and the neighbourhood, shows that a school of sculpture was established in this part of France in the eleventh century, very much in advance of any other part of Europe at the same period. The cloister, however, does not appear to have been finished at the date of the inscription, as the contemporary documents mention it as the work of the abbot Aquilin, from 1100^a to 1108, and his immediate successor, Roger.

The church has been much altered, or almost rebuilt, in the fifteenth century, in a fine Flamboyant style, but parts of the walls are original, and an

^a The engraving is carefully reduced from a rubbing of the inscription, and exhibits the peculiar form and arrangement of letters which was prevalent at the period, so that there is little doubt that it is almost contemporary with the date inscribed upon it. The greater part is most clear, and runs thus:—"ANNO AB INCARNATIONE ÆTERNI PRINCIPIS MILESIMO CENTESIMO, FACTUM EST CLAUSTRUM ISTUD TEMPORE ANSQUITILI ABBATIS, AMEN. V.V.V.—M.D.M.—R R R.—F F F." Of these last initial letters it is difficult to determine the meaning. They have probably nothing to do with the former part of the inscription. One gentleman has interpreted them as "Venerabiles—Monachi Domus Religiosi—Fratres." Another, "Venerabili Virgini Virginum—Maria Dei Matri—Reverendissimi—Fratres." I am inclined to consider the latter as the more probable interpretation, and I think still further, as most probable, that they are the alliterations of some lines with which the monks were familiar, such as—

Virgo Virginum Veneranda (*or*—rabilis)
Mater Dei Miranda (*or*—rabilis)
Regina Regia Reginarum,
Femina Felix Feminarum (S. Luke i. 28.)



INSCRIPTION ON A PIER IN THE CLOISTER,
MOISSAC.



CAPITALS FROM THE CLOISTER AT MOISSAC, A.D. 1100.

inscription * is built into the wall of the choir, recording the consecration in 1063.



INSCRIPTION, ON THE WALL OF THE CHOIR, MOISSAC.

* This inscription, of which an engraving is given above, partakes of much the same character in the formation and arrangement of its letters, with that of the cloister. Whether put up at the same time or not, we have no means of ascertaining. They certainly must have been written before the middle of the twelfth century, as the fashion of inserting one letter within another then ceased. The words, so far as we can make them out, and there is little difficulty, are as follows:—

“ Idbus octonis domus ista dicata Novembris

Gaudet Pontifices hos convenisse celebres:

- (1) Auxius Ostindum, (2) Lactora dedit Raimundum,
- (3) Convena Wilelmum, (4) direxit Aginna Wilelmum,
- (5) Jussit et Heraclium, non deesse Beorra benignum,
- (6) Elloreus Stephanum concessit, (7) et Adura Petrum,
- (8) Te Duranne suum nostrumque Tolosa patronum,
- (9) Respuitur Fulco Sîmōnis dans jura Cadurco,
- Myriades lustris apponens tres duodenis
- Virgineum partum dabat orbi tunc venerandum,
- Hanc tibi, Christe Deus, rex instituit Clodoveus,
- Auxit magnificus post hunc donis Ludovicus.”

Having given the time of the year when the dedication took place, the inscription proceeds to give a list of those renowned elders of the church who assembled together on the occasion. I have placed them below, in a tabular form; at the same time, the years during which they held their respective sees:—

1.	From Auch,	came	S. Austende,	1050-1068.
2.	„	Lectoure	„	Raymond 1060-1083.
3.	„	Comminges	„	William 1053-1063.
4.	„	Agen	„	William 1061-1068.
5.	„	Bigorre	„	Heraclius 1056-1069.
6.	„	Oleron	„	Stephen 1055-1069.
7.	„	Ayre	„	Peter 1060-1095.
8.	„	Toulouse	„	Durand 1060-1068 (and probably later).
9.	Of Cahors	absent	Foulques	1060-1065.

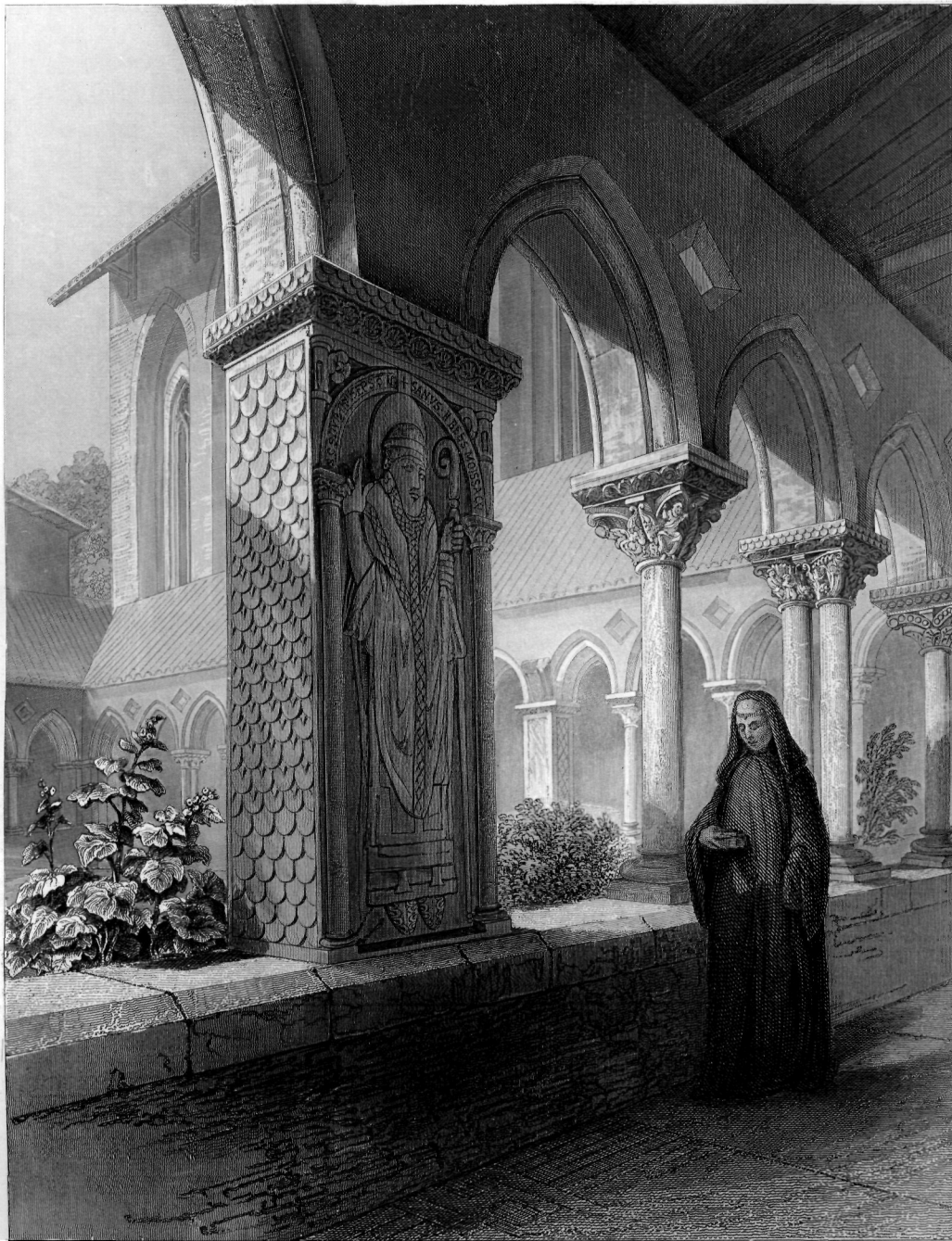
The expression used with this last person named is harsh, but curious;—the word “ respuitur ” shows

There is some tolerably good painting on the wall, modern, but in imitation of old patterns. By far the most perfect and most important part of the church is the tower at the west end, which is original, with the porch or narthex, which forms the lower part of it; the outer doorway is celebrated as one of the richest in France, being filled with symbolical sculptures, of a semi-Byzantine character: a great deal has been written on the subject of these sculptures, and the explanation of them, but, as my object is the architectural history, I have purposely avoided the tempting subject of symbolism.^a The character of the sculpture of the outer doorway is late, or at least would be so in most parts of France, and it appeared to me later than that of the cloister. The doorway is slightly pointed, and the character is what with us would be transition Norman. The arch is doubly recessed, with shafts in the nooks, having capitals of stiff foliage, but these have no abacus, and the edges of the arch are not chamfered. The porch is vaulted with a peculiar kind of early vaulting, constructed of small cut stone, with massive square ribs, crossing in the centre, quite plain, but resting on capitals which are richly carved. Over the porch is another vaulted chamber, the vault of which is more domical. Altogether the original part of the tower is in a rather advanced style of art. The

evident tokens of disgust or hatred, but it is easily accounted for when we call to mind the continual feuds which existed between the two abbeys of Moissac and Cahors.

At first sight it would seem unnecessary to enter so minutely into the names of those who were present at the dedication, but it is a singular instance of how often these minor details, if they do not of themselves fix, will often confirm in a most satisfactory manner, the date of a building. A glance at the above list of years of office, shows that the dedication cannot have taken place earlier than (4) 1061, or later than (3) 1063. Although the Inscription gives us the date, "Since the birth of Christ, one thousand (Myriades for Mille) and sixty (tres duodenis—three twenty's)," this discrepancy I think must be accounted for, not by an error in the date of William's accession to the see of Agen, but by a blunder of the Monk's, either in the making of his verse, or else, as was more probably the case, from the inscription having been composed some years afterwards, the precise date had been forgotten. We are led to the conclusion that 1063 is the correct date, as it is given elsewhere. The two last lines refer to the supposed original foundation of the abbey by Clovis, and the addition afterwards by Louis (according to M. Dumege, Louis le Debonnaire, King of Aquitaine).

^a I may, however, mention, that on each side of the porch are three rows of sculpture, covering the whole of the wall from the ground to the vault; the lower range consists of an arcade of round arches, with a single figure or statue under each arch, a little smaller than life, divided by shafts with capitals, inscribed with small groups of sculpture. The two upper ranges are in niches and bas-reliefs. On one side are the four Cardinal Virtues, with their reward, and opposite to them the four principal Sins, with their punishment. In the bas-reliefs are represented the chief events in the life of Christ, some of which are represented in a very curious manner, particularly the arrival of the Holy Family at the gates of a fortified town. Most of these sculptures, which are chiefly in marble, are sadly mutilated. Full details respecting them will be found in the *Bulletin Monumental*, tome 18, p. 473-483. The sculptures on the tympanum of the corner doorway are much more flat, and of earlier character than those of the porch.



E. Bouet del.

J.H. Le Roux sc.

CLOISTER OF THE ABBEY OF MOISSAC.

exterior is also ornamented with shafts, but these are partly concealed by the parapet of a fortification, which has evidently been added *after* the tower was built. This fortification is of Anglo-Norman character, and of much more rude work than the earlier tower to which it is attached, and seems to afford strong evidence that architecture was in a considerably more advanced state in the South than in the North, and that its progress was suspended for a long period: in fact for nearly a century there appears to have been no change, whether the stagnation was caused by political events, such as civil wars and the union with England, or was merely the natural reaction after the violent stimulus which had been given to the art about the end of the eleventh century.*

The upper part of the tower and the walls of the abbey are of brick, and surrounded by a kind of battlement; the bricks are flat, after the Roman fashion. At a short distance from the abbey is a brick house of the twelfth century, with some moulded brick, and some good windows, some of which have stone dressings and shafts. There is a good ring-knocker on the door.

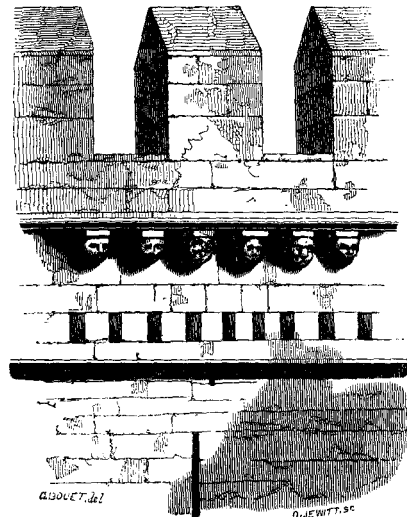
MONTAUBAN is chiefly a modern town. The market-place is surrounded by a piazza of the sixteenth century, but in the style of an earlier period; there is also a fine brick tower of early work. The bridge is of the thirteenth century, and a remarkably fine specimen of brick work; unfortunately the parapet is modern, which gives a modern look to the whole. The arches are pointed, but wide; the piers very massive, with small arches, pierced to lighten them, and a passage in the thickness of the wall.

It was my intention to have completed this series of papers on the present occasion, but I find that the number of interesting buildings of which I have notes and drawings, is still so great, that I must again trespass on your patience at some future time.

I remain, my Lord, Your very obedient Servant,

J. H. PARKER.

The Right Hon. Lord Viscount MAHON, F.R.S. President.



ANGLO-NORMAN BATTLEMENT ON THE TOWER OF MOISSAC.

* Moissac was besieged by Richard the First, and taken from Raymond the Fifth, Count of Toulouse, who was then in possession of it. A few years afterwards it was given up to his son, Raymond the Sixth, and was again attacked and taken by Simon de Montfort in the beginning of the thirteenth century (1212).