The Perpendicular Style:
Gothic Architecture in England, c. 1320-c. 1540

Gothic Cathedrals
AAHVS 225
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The three stylistic divisions of English Gothic architecture

EARLY ENGLISH (c. 1175-c. 1260)
   Canterbury, Wells, and Lincoln

DECORATED (c. 1245-c. 1340) (October 28th)
   Westminster Abbey, Lincoln (Angel Choir), Ely (Octagon & Lady Chapel), and Exeter

PERPENDICULAR (c. 1320- c. 1540) (November 2nd)
   Gloucester Cathedral → The Reformation and the Dissolution
   of the Monasteries (1538-48)

The longest-lasting architectural style in England – very popular for multiple centuries
The reaction against Decorated → curvilinear forms are now passe, tracery is rectilinear
Sculpture is almost non-existent
Remarkable uniformity / after about 1360, few changes or innovations
Why? Lower cost and ease/speed of execution
Perpendicular is invented by one architect (Michael of Canterbury) in one building →
very unusual, somewhat like St-Denis
Gloucester: The invention of the Perpendicular style

Romanesque abbey begun c. 1080 and completed c. 1150

Exterior appearance looks C14 (Romanesque masonry but with insertion of windows & bar tracery)

Inside, the nave is still Romanesque, but shows how the entire building looked before the Perpendicular remodelling began in 1328

Was not made a cathedral until after the Middle Ages, but huge influx of royal money after acquisition of the body of Edward I (d. 1327). The abbey knows this is a golden opportunity
Gloucester Cathedral, nave
Rib vault added in the early C13
Gloucester Cathedral, Tomb of Edward II, c. 1327-8
Portrait of Edward II from his effigy
Gloucester Cathedral, south transept

Michael of Canterbury begins here in 1328 as a “dress rehearsal” for the choir

Romanesque elevation given a “face-lift” with a series of very streamlined Gothic tracery

Bar tracery in the clerestory, still in the Decorated

Bottom of the mullions sweep all the way down as shafts, even going across the front of the gallery → tracery now covers everything

Buttress needed to prop up the unstable crossing tower

Whole elevation now an integrated grid of extremely long, rectangular panels. Whereas Decorated was intricate and full of complexity, everything is now symmetrical and regularized
Gloucester Cathedral, south transept and south window
c. 1328-35

Blank spaces are now filled with blind panelling (in the andrels and to the l. and r. of the windows, again very tall)
No other form of decoration
Gloucester Cathedral, South transept vault

Small vault cells with liernes making “X” patterns

No bosses
No sculpture
Gloucester Cathedral, Choir

Begun c. 1337, likely by Thomas of Canterbury (Michael’s son)
Finished c. 1350
Longer windows in the clerestory
Mullions now longer, thinner, more elegant
Cusping added to the gallery
Romanesque structure underneath now more visible
Supermulions also cross the main arcades

Gloucester Cathedral, S elevation of choir
Gloucester Cathedral, east window

Largest window in medieval Europe

the opposite of Decorated tracery – nothing but panels and grids

Transoms = horizontal stone divisions

Celestial hierarchy placed over the earthly ecclesiastical hierarchy: tiers of priests, kings, bishops, archbishops, Apostles and Popes

Spatial theatrics and illusionism, in the same spirit as the Ely Octagon
Gloucester Cathedral, cloister

Reading desks for monks’ scriptorium

Tracery one side, panelling on the other

Earliest instance of the fan vault
Gloucester Cathedral, cloister

Details of fan vaulting
Gloucester Cathedral, cloister
Lavatorium by the monks’ refectory
Winchester Cathedral, nave

Longest nave in medieval Europe

Romanesque building remodelled in the Perpendicular style under Bishops Edington and William of Wykeham, c. 1360-1400

Elevation divided into two, not three, stories

Vertical articulation now much more important than horizontal

Wooden ceiling replaced with stone vault (tierceron with liernes)

Clerestory wall passage removed

Very little decorative sculpture
Winchester Cathedral, south transept
ELEVATION OF TWO BAYS OF THE NAVE, SHOWING ITS TRANSFORMATION.

[From Willis's "Architectural History of Winchester Cathedral," 1846.]
Winchester Cathedral,
Vault of nave
Canterbury Cathedral, Nave, c. 1378-1401

Architect: Henry Yevele

Romanesque nave viewed as a relic from the days of Becket

Extremely tall, thin arcades to match with the east end

Thin shafts create an upward surge of movement

Large Perp traces in the aisles, small clerestory windows
Canterbury Cathedral, Vault of nave
Canterbury Cathedral,
Vault over crossing tower
*c. 1420-5*
Westminster Abbey
Henry VII’s Lady Chapel, 1503-9

“Accordion” tracery on the ground floor
Perp in the clerestory

Massive pinnacles and perforated flying buttresses

Paneling along the clerestory top

Sacred and secular architecture now becoming very similar in appearance
Westminster Abbey, Henry VII’s Chapel

details of vault, including pendants → a “petrified spider’s web suspended high in the air”