which are in color, elucidate monuments that are neither well known nor published in easily accessible volumes. That being said, the author and publisher should consider augmenting the book’s usefulness by creating a website or disk of photographs and drawings, including ones of the buildings listed in Appendix 4 (a checklist of sites), many of which are not discussed in the text. As production costs and reproduction fees soar and compromise our abilities to illustrate points fully, it would be encouraging to see a major press like Yale include digital supplements as a matter of course.

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Notes

2. Made by Etienne Godfroy, Guillaume de Verde- lay, and Milet d’Auxerre, the head reliquary of San Pancrazio was one of a handful of liturgical objects by French artists, including Verdelay’s processional cross, donated to the cathedral of the newly Christianized Lucera in 1305.

Peter Draper
The Formation of English Gothic: Architecture and Identity

Given the amazing formal diversity of English buildings in the period 1150 to 1250, it is no surprise that Peter Draper avoided a chronological narrative for his book. Two buildings have chapters to themselves, the choir of Canterbury Cathedral and Lincoln Cathedral. The remaining eight chapters are thematic and culminate in the interpretation of the Gothic style in England traditionally known as “Early English” “as a significant manifestation of a wider sense of ‘national’ identity in the thirteenth century” (239). This approach has the disadvantage of fragmenting the discussion of a number of buildings. But Draper does not set out to create a corpus; he is selective as to present principles and raise significant questions, and in so doing, his text should stimulate research for years to come.

The book opens with a discussion of historiography and problems associated with the traditional labels “Romanesque,” “Transitional,” “Gothic,” “ecclesiastical,” and “secular.” Sage advice is given on interpreting nineteenth-century restoration, especially with regard to some overenthusiastic Ecclesiologists who may have been guilty of not letting evidence in the fabric get in the way of a “correct restoration.”

The overview of the rebuilding of Canterbury Cathedral’s choir (1175–84) is one of the best. Draper presents the building in its historical context with due emphasis on the roles of patrons and masons, the cult of Becket, changes of plan, and aspects of continuity with the old church. The theme of continuity between Anglo-Norman and new work—whether in the same building or just as a matter of constructional or design practice—recurs throughout the book. At Canterbury, it ranges from the retention of the large outer-wall sections of Anselm’s choir (1096–1130) to the use of chevron ornament in the new work and the links with Roman classicism established in England by Henry of Blois, abbot of Glastonbury (1126–71) and bishop of Winchester (1129–71). These elements fuse with the northern French Gothic influence introduced by the master masons William of Sens and William the Englishman. Elsewhere, Draper keenly emphasizes the use of the thick wall of the Anglo-Norman tradition in early Gothic buildings in England. Indeed, the thick wall facilitated the creation of diverse pier forms, complex arch moldings, and syncopated arcading.

The latter motif is one of the many exciting details at Lincoln Cathedral, where Draper introduces the idea of rivalry with Canterbury and York as a stimulus for the elaborate form of the church. Its design idiosyncrasies and the differences between the work of the first and second masters are succinctly presented. For the west front, Draper focuses on the lost tracery of the central window; it is a pity he does not devote more attention to the façade as a whole, and the same is true for the former Benedictine abbey, now the cathedral, at Peterborough.

The chapter entitled “Transformation: Evolution or Revolution?” deals with the formal vocabulary of buildings and should be recommended to students who need to grasp the essentials of English architecture of the period. Draper observes that between 1150 and 1250 there was “a transformation of the Anglo-Norman tradition that amounted to a revolution in approach to many features of design” (53). Yet, he sees that “the introduction and absorption of the new [French Gothic] vocabulary can seem like evolutionary progress” (53). He presents the evolution at Ely Cathedral from the Romanesque fabric through the late twelfth-century western transept and the Galilee porch to Bishop Northwold’s presbytery (1234–51). The importance of polychromatic decoration in paint and stained glass is given appropriate emphasis, but something more on sculpture would have helped the visualization of integrated designs. Of course, it would be difficult to present any sort of detailed discussion of sculpture in the parameters of the book, but an appreciation of things such as the figurative elements of Wells Cathedral capitals, corbels, label stops, and paterae, in addition to the stiff leaf, would not have gone amiss.

In the second half of the twelfth century—the “Transitional” period as it is often called—Draper sees “[t]he appearance of French-looking designs or
individual features from different areas in France in widely scattered buildings in England” (101). This is correct, although perhaps more links could be seen with Normandy, not least at St. Mary de Haura, New Shoreham; St. Thomas, Portsmouth; and Boxgrove priory and other buildings in the south of England. Regional variations between the north, south, and west of England continue patterns established in Anglo-Norman times. However, within the text, the divisions are not absolutely rigid. Draper carefully integrates secular buildings and parish churches into the regional equation. This is especially welcome as great churches, castles and halls, and parish churches are so often presented in typological isolation. Of regional expressions, the best known is the so-called West Country School of Masons, named after Sir Harold Brakspear’s famous study.² While distinct Western motifs exist, Draper quite rightly stresses the diversity in the design of individual buildings such as Wells Cathedral, St. David’s Cathedral, and the Lady Chapel and Great Church at Glastonbury Abbey. Once again, there is continuity with earlier buildings in the West Country, a point taken up in the present author’s “The Early Gothic Fabric of Llandaff Cathedral and its Place in the West Country School of Masons.”³ Full publication of the excavations at the Augustinian abbey of Keyston (Somerset) now adds to our understanding of the amazing diversity in this regional school.¹

For the introduction of northern French Gothic features into the north of England, Draper focuses on Archbishop Roger of Pont l’Eveque’s work at York Minster and Ripon Minster (1154–81), as well as the Cistercian abbey churches at Roche and Byland. Discussion of the stained glass and sculpture at York Minster, the sculpture at St. Mary’s Abbey at York, and the fragments from the cloister of the Augustinian priory at Bridlington would improve our understanding of the French associations. For the south, the nave of the Temple Church, London, deserves a more detailed presentation. It was complete by 1161, has close connections with progressive northern French architecture, and presages Canterbury Cathedral choir in its use of Purbeck marble.

The chapters on patronage, liturgy and architecture, and parish churches put the investigation of these topics on a new footing. Draper explores interrelationships between ecclesiastical and secular architecture, relative roles of patrons and masons, similarities and differences between features in major and minor churches, and much more. Examination of liturgical practices is applied to major and minor churches alike. For the latter, Draper equates the construction of nave aisles—so unusual in smaller Anglo-Norman churches—with the need for more altars, while he asserts that large chantries resulted from the desire for a more dignified and solemn setting for the performance of the Mass. The detailed examination of the growth of All Saints, Polebrook (Northamptonshire), serves as a good model for understanding the additive planning of many of the period’s parish churches.

On the matter of national identity, the jury will likely remain out for some time to come. The mode of early Gothic in the north of England is manifest throughout Scotland, as far north as Kirkwall Cathedral (Orkney). The West Country School encompasses Wales with the cathedrals of St. David’s and Llandaff, the nave arcades from the Cistercian abbey of Cwm Hir (rebuilt as the north nave arcade at Llanidloes), and smaller churches like Cheriton-in-Gower (Glamorgan) and Llanaber (Gwynedd). Likewise in Ireland, the cathedrals of Christ Church and St. Patrick’s in Dublin, the Cistercian abbey of Corcomroe, and smaller churches like Gowran (County Kilkenny) all bear West Country traits. While thick-wall construction, compound piers, elaborate arch moldings, and clerestory wall passages may unite the regional variants of early Gothic in England, these features also frequently appear in early Gothic Normandy, as in the choir of Saint-Étienne (Caen) or the choir at Norrey-en-Bessin (Calvados). Draper recognizes that in the rebuilding of Westminster Abbey, commenced in 1245, Henry III sought “to emulate the coronation church of the French kings at Reims” (243). At the same time, he correctly notes that “to a French visitor there would have been some notably unfamiliar features at Westminster, most obviously the prominent use of Purbeck marble” (243), and he plays down Westminster’s influence. That decision is questionable, but on the more general level, there can be no doubt as to the importance of the continuity of the thick-wall tradition for buildings of the Decorated period well into the fourteenth century.

Draper’s book fills the gap in the survey of English medieval architecture between Eric Fernie’s Architecture of Norman England and Jean Bony’s and Nicola Coldstream’s studies of the Decorated style.⁵ It contains a good bibliography and most of the illustrations are of high quality. The Formation of English Gothic will be valuable for both undergraduates and graduates and will be a source of methodological inspiration for investigation into the many facets of early Gothic architecture in England.

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Notes