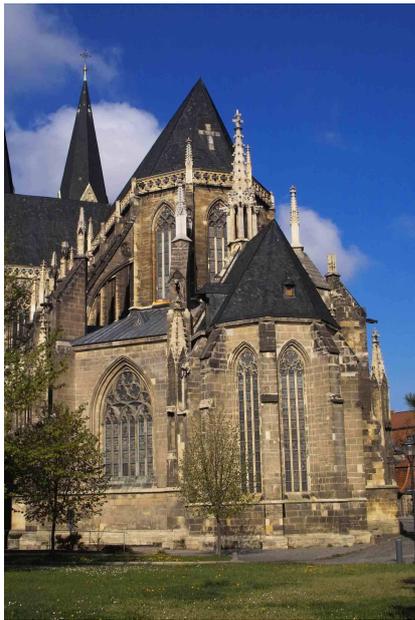


Background

The churches were the hearts of the settlements or increased the importance of already existing smaller centres. It was a pre-rational world where the unexpected, unexplainable, even something that we would hardly notice nowadays, was explained by miracles.



There were no objects, no "things" in the familiar scientific sense. All objects were part of the omnipresent Christian system of purposes and values and, above all, they were also symbolic. In this way, the world became a conglomerate of symbolic coherence, created and directed by God. The eyes did not look in the direction of the depths of space but to the highs. On the horizon, the earth ended and passed into the divine, finiteness and infinity merged into one another. The monumental Romanesque cathedrals symbolised this way of thinking just as the subsequent Gothic ones did. The monastic and parish churches, however, extended to the wide countryside and set up cultural islands there, which were of great importance. The Romanesque Occident was a world of belief.

From the 11th/12th century arose huge stone castles in rapid succession and large density, an impressive demonstration of power of noble self-image and knightly propensity to violence. Up to the 13th century, the density of the castle network doubled and tripled.



The castles were towns on a small scale and found their counterpart in the great, fortified cathedrals and monastery complexes of this era. In each of these castles lived knights, mounted warriors, experts of the ultimate war. They wanted tribute in the form of natural produce for the protection which they guaranteed the unarmed citizens of the wide country. And they demanded this with swords in their

hands. The knights of the Occident lived from and at the expense of the working people. The entire so-called feudal system was supported by the farmers as the Occident was an agrarian country. The entire social order of this time was based divinely-ordained on the nobility. The few privileged, the few families had all the power in their hands.



Cathedrals, churches and monasteries were at the centre of life. The oratores, the men of prayer, the warriors against the extra-worldly evil were the source of the Romanesque world. They created the one, unimpeachable, as divine system of earthly and heavenly sphere. Only thanks to their indoctrination did the occidental social order become a part of the divinely-ordained, cosmic whole and thus unchangeable by the people.

Man was fully incorporated in the ordo-system from which he could not escape and, as it was divinely-ordained, did not want to escape. Religio as religious attitude, as "way of life" dominated everything. The great Romanesque cultural monuments prove it: it was an "enchanted world" (Max Weber). Religio was divine service. In the continuous fight against evil, God needed the people. And they were anxious to be sure of his goodwill by means of generous donations, offerings of a material nature or by means of pilgrimage.