


## Home Page

**IMAGES OF MEDIEVAL ART AND ARCHITECTURE**

**MEDIEVAL ARCHITECTURE**  
© Alison Stones



Mont-Saint-Michel (France)


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In collaboration with the [University of Pittsburgh's Digital Research Library](#), we have developed searchable image databases for [Chartres Cathedral](#) and the [Benedictine Abbey Church of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine at Vézelay](#). The Chartres database, which contains over 3,000 images, is coordinated with web pages to allow for a more structured approach to these images.


**THIS SITE IS CONSTANTLY EVOLVING**

The purpose of this site is to promote education and research in Medieval art and architecture. We plan to expand it by adding more monuments, images, various levels of supplementary information, bibliographical references, and different kinds of cross-links including keyword searching.


Please select one of the following options:




England



France



Glossary




**Glossary of Medieval Art and Architecture**

To find a word, click on its first letter in the list below

To see an illustration of a word and hear its pronunciation, click on it in the window to the right.

[A, B, C, D,](#)  
[E, F, G, H,](#)  
[I, J, K, L,](#)  
[M, N, O, P,](#)  
[Q, R, S, T,](#)  
[U, V, W,](#)  
[X, Y, Z](#)

[Return to Medart Home Page](#)



**A**

**abacus or impost block:** The slab at the top of a capital between the capital and the architectural member above.  
See also [column](#), [pier](#).  
Other parts of a column or pier: [capital](#), [shaft](#), [column base](#).

**acanthus:** A Mediterranean plant. The leaves are thick, fleshy, and scalloped. A stylization of the acanthus leaf was often used in ancient decoration, especially the Corinthian capital  
See also [Corinthian capital](#)

**aisle:** Open area of a church parallel to the nave and separated from it by columns or piers.  
See also [nave](#)

**altar** In the Roman Church, a table at which the celebration of the Eucharist takes place. It is placed in a prominent place in the church, usually in the choir facing the main entrance to the church.  
See also [retable](#), [chapel](#), [choir](#)

**alternation of support:** A system of supports for an arcade or colonnade in which there are two different types of support. The alternation may be quite obvious between one pier (strong support) and one column (weak support), or the alternation may exist only in slight differences in the shafting on each pier.  
See also [arcade](#), [colonnade](#), [column](#), [pier](#).

**ambulatory:** A semicircular or polygonal aisle which leads around the east end of the choir, often separating the choir from apses or chapels.

## Logo

Subject to research

## URL

<http://www.medart.pitt.edu/>

## Subject

Architecture – Dictionaries

## Accessibility

Free

## Language

English

## Publisher

University of Pittsburgh's Digital Research Library

## Brief History

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## Scope and Coverage

Glossary of Medieval Art and Architecture covers different art and architecture related terms. All terms are present with suitable architectural diagram.

## Kind of Information

The meaning, description of the art and architecture related terms are found in this dictionary. With each entry hyperlinked see also references are present. Within an entry pronunciation of term and related architectural diagram present. For clear understanding an example for term “Alternation of support” is given below.

**alternation of support:** A system of supports for an arcade or colonnade in which there are two different types of support. The alternation may be quite obvious between one pier (strong support) and one column (weak support), or the alternation may exist only in slight differences in the shafting on each pier.

See also [arcade](#), [colonnade](#), [column](#), [pier](#).

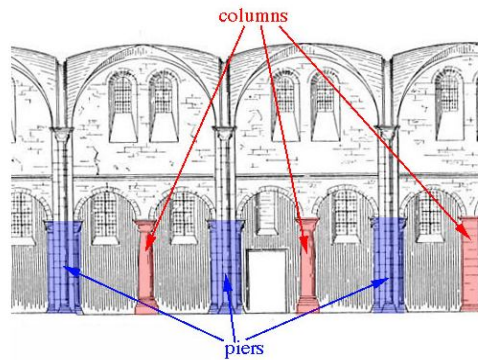
**ambulatory:** A semicircular or polygonal aisle which leads around the east end of the choir; often separating the choir from apses or chapels.

See also [aisle](#), [apse](#), [choir](#), [east end](#), [hemicycle](#)

**alternation of supports:** A system of supports for an arcade or colonnade in which there are two different types of support. The alternation may be quite obvious, between one pier (strong support) and one column (weak support), or it may exist only in slight differences, such as in the shafting on each pier.

See also [arcade](#), [colonnade](#), [column](#), [pier](#)

[Click here for pronunciation.](#)



Elevation of church at Knechtsteden, Germany

Image adapted from Dehio and von Bezold, *Die Kirchliche Baukunst des Abendlands*

“See also” terms are also available with similar kind of information.

## Special Features

- ❖ Links to Image of Medieval Art and Architecture.
- ❖ Maps and architectural diagram of different palaces of England

and France.

***Arrangement Pattern***

Entries are arranged in alphabetic order. For example under the alphabet 'G' the terms Gallery or tribune , Greek cross , Greek key or meander, Groin vault etc. are arranged in alphabetic order.

***Remarks***

The purpose of this site is to promote education and research in Medieval art and architecture.

***Comparable Tools***

- Lighting Design Glossary  
(<http://www.schorsch.com/en/kbase/glossary/>)
- Illustrated Architecture Dictionary  
(<http://www.buffaloah.com/a/DCTNRY/vocab.html>)

***Date of Access***

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