

INTRODUCTION

The first volume of *Danmarks Kirker* describing the churches of a Danish county (Præstø, 1933) contains a foreword which outlines the study of Danish church architecture, as well as the aims and background of this monumental inventory. The intention has never been to render further studies of individual churches – or details in them – superfluous. On the contrary, it is intended to act as a tool for all those whose interests, whether professional or amateur, bring them into contact with churches which, to a greater degree than any other group of monuments, reflect the history of Denmark through one thousand years.

The above-mentioned foreword is followed by a guide to the underlying principles for the description of each church. The system is the same today, and its object is to maintain a standard of homogeneity that will enable anyone looking for information about a certain subject or theme always to find it referred to in the same position within the textual sequence of the church description.

Each church description commences with a historical introduction followed by the four main sections: architecture, wall-paintings, fittings, monuments; it concludes with notes and references. Although the aim is a plainly written text, technical terms cannot be entirely omitted from concise descriptions, and to explain the meaning of these special words and terms, a glossary of technical terms has been prepared since the publication of Tisted county in 1940, as well as illustrations (figs. 6–8) showing how a Romanesque church would often be wholly transformed in the Gothic period. The glossary (i.e. *Fagordbog*, p. 25) has since been expanding by degrees, and on many points it has replaced the lengthy explanations of the original introduction. In order to keep church descriptions reasonably concise the absence of customary details is not specially noted, e.g. if a vault is without over ribs. Unnecessary repetition is likewise avoided by not

always describing conditions or details which are the norm for the period in question, whereas every deviation from the norm is enumerated. Examples are given below in the description of the main sections which, together with the glossary, provide the key to the description of the rural parish churches. The same principles apply to urban churches, but because their architecture is often fairly complicated, the system usually has to be adapted.

Estimated datings, for example c. 1500, allow a margin of twenty-five years to each side. An *asterisk* * beside a head-word denotes objects which are now either in museum collections or no longer kept in the church, whereas objects, buildings, or parts thereof, now lost but known through records etc., are signified by a cross †. The signs * and † also denote dates of birth and death.

In *Danmarks Kirker* the churches of each county are arranged in the same sequence as that in the fifth edition of *Traps Danmarksbeskrivelse* (*Trap*), and in accordance with the principles laid down from the beginning. Because of the volumes already published county by county it has not been considered practicable to adopt the changes in the administrative divisions of Danish counties introduced in 1970 and later.

In order to make the contents of *Danmarks Kirker* more accessible to foreign readers, the introduction and picture captions are translated into English. Summaries in English are included.

THE HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

This introduction gives an account, where possible, of the foundation of each church, and provides information on its administrative and economic history as well as its *ownership*. What is meant by ownership, as evidenced by the possession of the patronage or advowson (i.e. the right to grant the benefice) and (sometimes) the right to the tithes, requires a brief explanatory account.

Medieval churches were normally built by local landowners, who provided a site, construction materials and land for the priest, and in return regarded themselves as in a sense the owners of the church. With the introduction of tithes at the beginning of the 1100s, parishes were established, whose residents generally shared the responsibility for the erection and maintenance of the buildings, inasmuch as this new, general tax was not only for the priest and bishop but also for the church building as such. As late as the period of the Valdemars (c. 1150–c. 1250) the founders and their heirs must still have claimed this third of the tithes (*the fabric tithe*). But with the advent of the new canon law the Popes restricted the authority of secular land-owners who built churches to a *right of patronage*. This was not based on ownership but gave the patron (apart from purely honorary rights) only the *right of nomination*, i.e. the right, when a vacant post as priest occurred, to present a candidate to the bishop of the diocese. In the course of the 1200s ever-wider contributions to the building of churches helped in practice to emancipate the fabric tithe from the patrons. From c. 1300 it went into an independent *building fund (fabrica)*, administered by two churchwardens who were elected by the parish and were subject to the supervision of the *sysselsprovst* (archdeacon). The patrons were not only under pressure from the building administration. Divided inheritance often led to the splitting-up of ownership rights and thus the weakening of the nomination right. In some parishes attempts were made to exercise the right collectively as a *parish advowson*.

In the Late Middle Ages several *sysselsprovst* offices were abolished and the supervision of the church building and the annual audit of the churches' accounts was transferred to *herredsprovster* (district provosts or deans) appointed by the bishops. The great majority of church advowsons had also passed to the diocesan bishops. However, a few were associated with noblemen's estates; many churches (for example most town churches) were in the gift of the Crown, and finally many had come under the patronage of clerical institutions such as monastic houses and cathedral chapters. These almost always had their advowson rights expanded with an *appropriation* or *incorporation* of the church or rather of its benefice (*præstebørdet*), resulting in the service of the church being left to a low-paid 'vicar' or *locum tenens* (sometimes a monk), with the remainder going to the institution. In special cases the appropriation might also include the church's fabric fund and its tithes. In that case the institution had to take over responsibility for the maintenance and furnishing of the parish church.

With the Reformation the rights and powers of the bishops were taken over by the Crown, which thus acquired the patronage of almost all the churches in the kingdom. However, following Luther's ideas about congregational influence, the kings refrained from appointing priests until the period of Absolutism. The overall supervision of the church buildings was kept more or less unchanged, as the king respected the existing rights and duties of the *sysselsprovster*. In the other

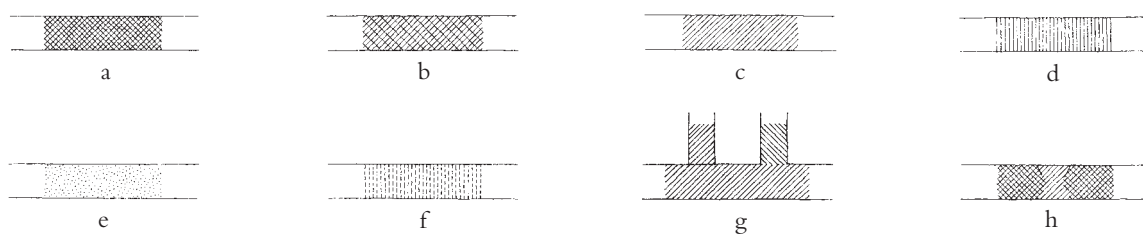


Fig. 5. Key to ground-plans. a. Romanesque period, c. 1050–1250. b. Romanesque additions. c. Gothic period, c. 1250–1550. d. Renaissance period, c. 1550–1630. e. After 1630. f. Probably Renaissance period. g. If two adjacent walls with the same signature are not in fact contemporary the older wall course is indicated either by continuing it through the join or by reversing the hatching. h. If the shape of a blocked opening is not certain, no dividing line separates the signatures. Breaks in walls of the same period indicate a halt in building activity.

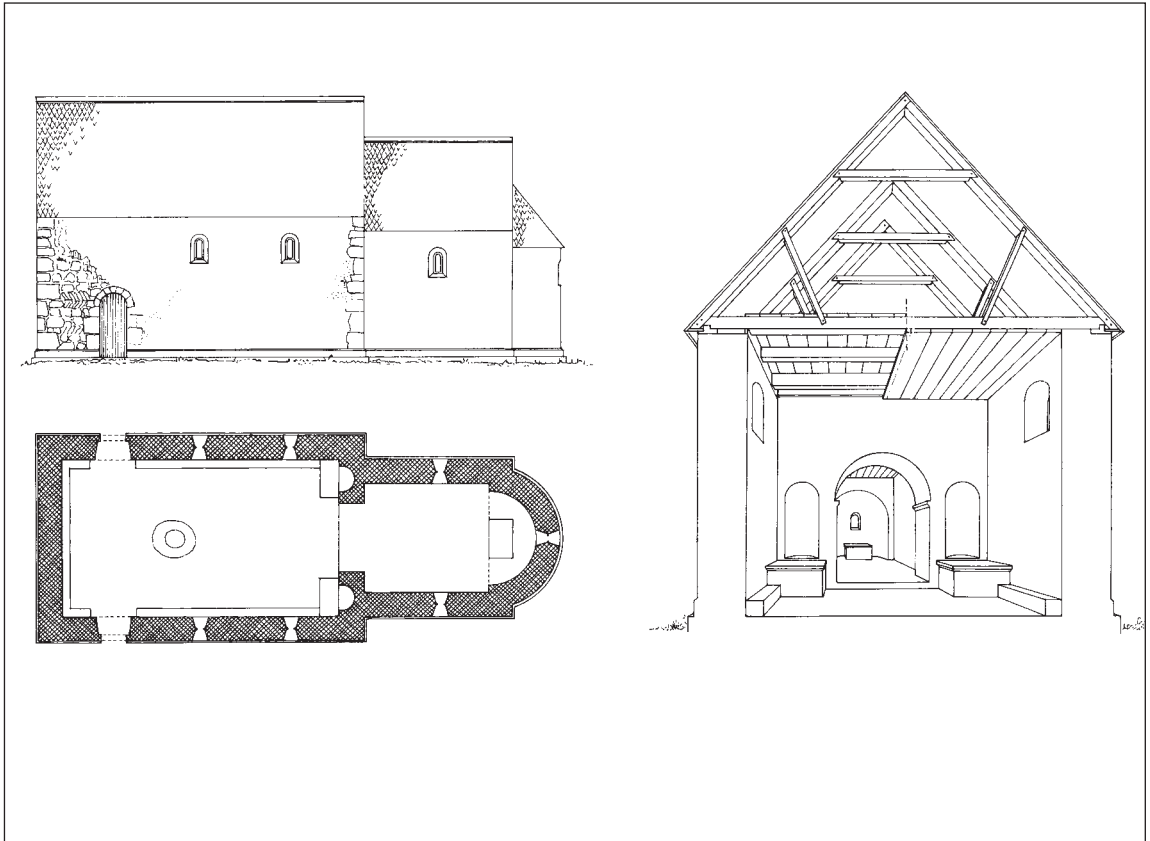


Fig. 6. Schematic drawings of a Romanesque parish church in its original state, built of rubble and dressed stone. The building – comprising apse, chancel and nave – rests on two projecting base-courses, the lower course rectangular, the uppermost chamfered. The walls are plastered and beneath the plaster are ashlars (limestone and calcareous tufa) of varying shapes and sizes for the quoins and round-arched wall openings. The masonry of the walls is otherwise granite – boulders or split rubble – laid in fairly even courses. Sometimes narrow chips of stone are used for herring-bone work, *opus spicatum*. The high narrow windows are double-splayed, their oak frames built into the recesses. The round-arched doorway has voussoirs. Inside, the altar stands beneath the half-cupola of the apse. The chancel arch with chamfered imposts is flanked by two altar niches, each with its side altar. Stone benches are built-in parallel with the longitudinal walls of the nave. The flat wooden ceiling over the nave and chancel is of planks, either nailed to the underside of the beams or laid over them. A characteristic of the roof construction is that the rafters, strengthened by collar beams, are braced to the tie beams by means of struts. Fascia boards below the ends of the tie beams beneath the eaves are let into a groove in the wall plate. The other joints are either scarfed or partially mortised. Shingles or the earliest type of narrow tiles cover the roof.

parts of the country the supervision was transferred to specially appointed diocesan officers (*stiftslensmænd*) whose work in this area was however delegated out as early as c. 1580 to the ordinary *lensmand* or sheriff's administration. During the reign of Christian IV (1588–1648) this was typically signified by the presence of the King's and the local sheriff's arms on newly-acquired church inventory.

The few noble patrons now had their rights and powers extended to a true *advowson* (the right to appoint a vicar), just as they were granted the disposal of the building tithes – in return for maintaining the church – and thus emerged as actual *church-owners*. Their number was modest until the age of Absolutism, when the King attempted to solve the financial problems of the kingdom by realizing a number of assets. The cathedral chap-

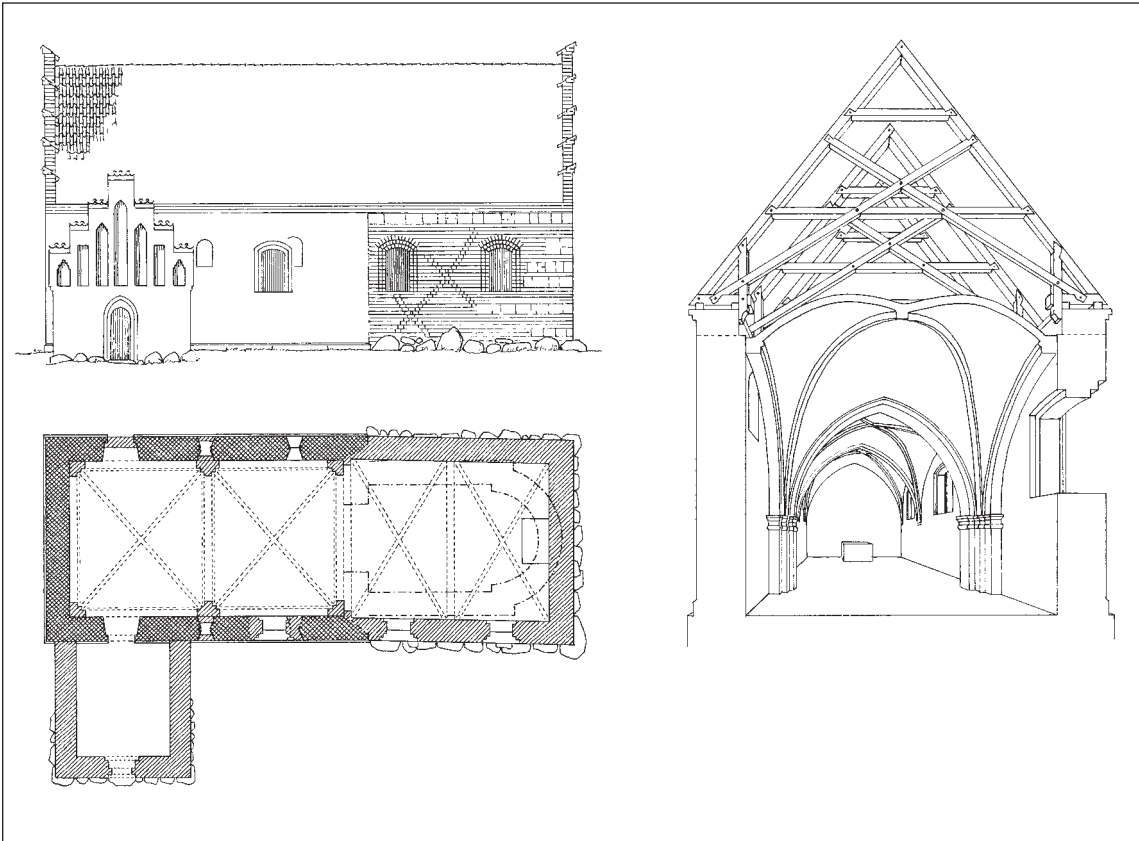


Fig. 7. The same church at the close of the Middle Ages. After several alterations it has a marked Gothic appearance. Between c. 1350–1450 two bays of brick vaulting were installed in the Romanesque nave. The vaults spring from recessed wall-piers with moulded imposts (chamfered above roll, separated by a plain course). The pointed wall ribs and transverse ribs are one brick in width and have rolls marking the springing lines of the half-brick cells. The half-brick ribs have no moulding. The two Romanesque west windows of the nave were blocked by the piers of the vaults and were therefore bricked up, only the two eastern ones let in the light. In c. 1500 the church was transformed into a late Gothic structure when the apse and chancel were pulled down and the nave was extended by two bays to the east. There are no base courses and the extension rests on a solid groundsill of boulders. The walls are built of unfaced bricks interspersed with Romanesque ashlar (limestone and calcareous tufa) irregularly re-used in horizontal bands. The bricks are laid in monk's bond (2 stretchers, 1 header), dark bricks are used as headers – sometimes in a kind of lozenge pattern. To the south each of the two bays has a large recessed window with a segmental arch, a similar window has replaced the south-eastern window of the Romanesque nave. Inside, the contemporary vaults are built into the walls which explains the absence of piers and wall ribs. Where the new vaulting meets the old an additional transverse rib, springing from a slender wall pier, is necessary. The vaults are otherwise of the same type as the earlier vaulting but without rolls marking the springing lines of the cells. The altar stands in front of the east wall. The walls of the Romanesque nave are heightened and the entire building has a cornice of two stepped (brick) courses. The roof and gables are likewise renewed. The roof construction with two sets of collar beams is of the cross-brace type. Each cross-brace is mortised below to a short horizontal piece, then to a strut, and higher up to a collar beam, and finally to the upper end of the rafter opposite. The gables have corbie-steps with a tile coping, and the roof is tiled with red medieval tiles. A porch added to the south entrance is decorated by seven recesses terminating in a variety of ways: corbie-stepped, horizontal, triangular-headed and pointed. Corbie-steps correspond with the number of recesses, and they finish with a slightly projecting horizontal course and a tile coping. Unlike the Romanesque church there is no structural division between chancel and nave, instead the east bay serves as the chancel; it is separated from the rest of the church by a wooden lattice. Side altars would possibly flank this lattice or the nave side.

ters, and thus the last offices of the *sysselevprovster*, were closed down, and in the course of some years almost all the churches in the country were sold to private owners. The churches were often bought by the local manor or included in a barony or county. But prosperous citizens, cattle dealers and innkeepers also bought and speculated in churches, and it could happen that a church was acquired by a group of parishioners or by the parish as a collectivity (a new kind of parish advowson). The last of these possibilities mainly arose after c. 1800, when church ownership was subjected to criticism and in 1809 was modified by a reduction of the advowson to a *right of proposition* (*jus proponendi*). It was abolished by the Constitution of 1849, and the church-owners were henceforth called *church tithe owners*. Finally, the tithe was abolished in 1903 by an act that also provided the incitement for the churches to pass into *self-ownership*. Before 1915 over half of the churches in the country were self-owned, and now this applies to virtually all churches.

The historical introductions do not provide complete lists of patrons and church-owners, especially when churches were closely associated with estates or large farms, since the owners of these can easily be found in *Trap Danmark*. As a minimum we attempt to establish the time of the church's transfer from public to private ownership and for the transition to self-ownership according to the act of 1903.

The introductions further list information on Catholic *patron saints* as well as *saints' names* associated with *side altars/chapels*. *Holy wells* in the immediate vicinity of the church are mentioned here, as well as vanished *churches* and *chapels* in the parish if their exact location and the building are not described. *Legends* associated with the church are briefly outlined. Of the history of the benefice, we mainly say when the parish in question has been an *annexe* or had other parishes annexed.

CHURCHYARD AND ARCHITECTURE

The position of the church is described first; its location in relation to neighbouring buildings is

shown on a historic map of the vicinity. Maps are usually reproduced from original maps in the land registry.

Manor-houses, earthworks and barrows are also mentioned if they are in the vicinity of the church.

Old churchyard boundaries are more or less accurately represented in early maps, but later extensions and annexes to urban churchyards almost all date from the 19th and 20th centuries. Detached buildings in/or adjoining a churchyard, such as a charnel-house, tithe barn, stables, bell tower or mortuary, are all mentioned in context with churchyards, and likewise instruments of punishment – if any – viz. pillory and iron collar.

Each description of a church is accompanied by a ground-plan, and often a cross-section of the building. *Ground-plans* are drawn to a scale of 1:100 and reproduced to a scale of 1:300. Different building phases and periods are shaded according to a chronological key (fig. 5). When not otherwise indicated on a drawing or plan, north is uppermost. Drawings and plans are architectural and, with the exception of medieval stone altars, font bases and benches, fittings are usually excluded. Neither wooden ceilings nor roof constructions are shown, but vault ribs and arches are denoted by dotted lines, and ribs with moulding by triple lines. Windows with iron frames are denoted by a single line, wooden frames by two. Doors are treated as openings, and their component parts are given by dotted lines. Structural alterations to the fabric are shown by changing to the appropriate chronological key; if the contours are known of openings later walled up they are drawn in, otherwise a change of sign is used. If two openings, e.g. door and window, occur one above the other and they are shown on the same ground-plan, the uppermost is denoted by a dotted outline without hatching. If part of a building has more than one storey only the first is denoted on the ground-plan. *Cross-sections* are drawn to a scale of 1:50 and reproduced to a scale of 1:150; they are usually from the easternmost bay of the nave looking east, so that the east wall and the chancel arch are elevations. What can be glimpsed through the arch leading into the chan-

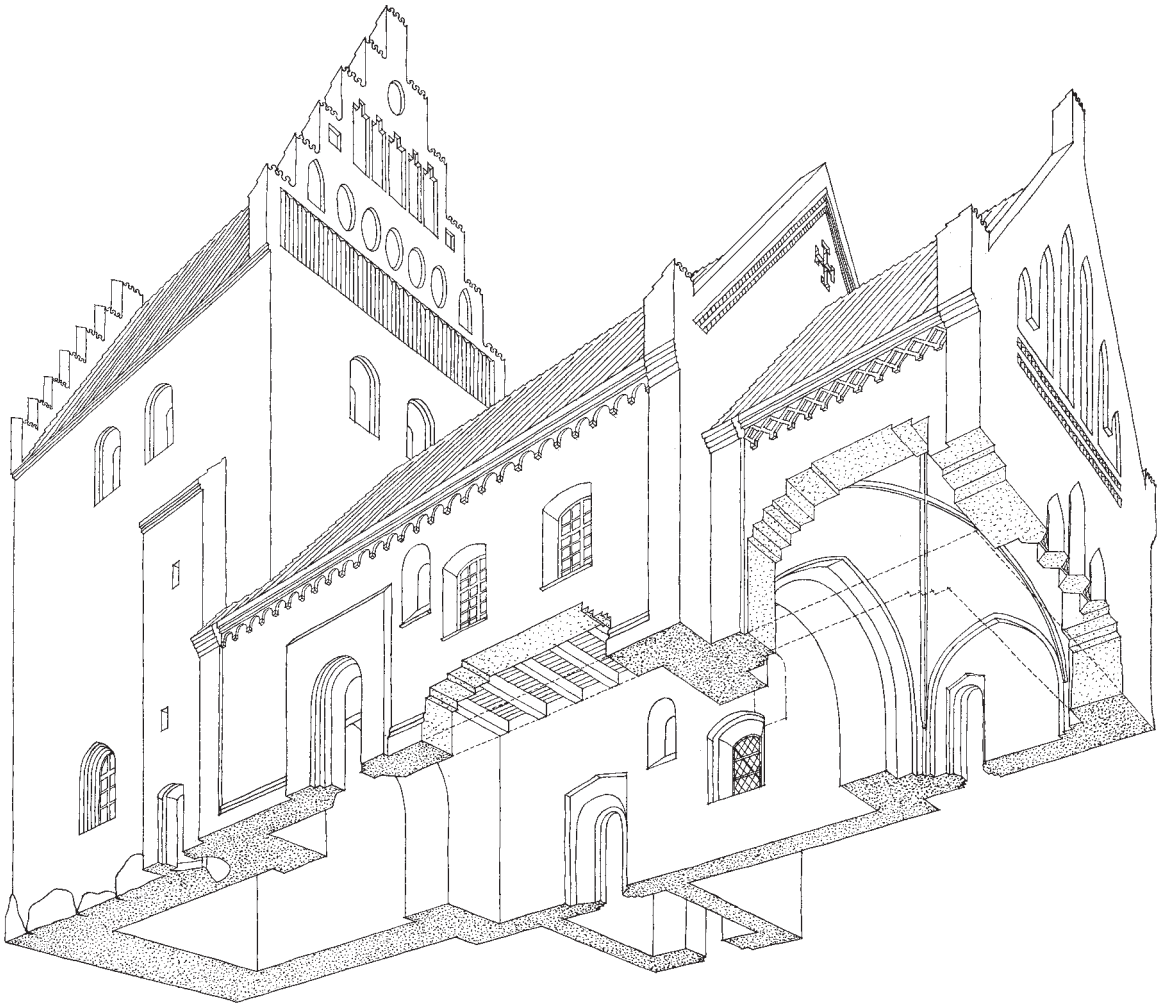


Fig. 8. Schematic representation of a typical Danish village church. The original church would have consisted of a chancel and nave built of red brick. The long sides would have a solid base section, often with several elements, demarcated at the corners by pilaster strips rising to gable-corbels, usually with five rounded projections. The base would moreover be intersected by projections for portals, accommodating the multiple mouldings around the door-openings on both sides of the nave, and by a little 'priest's door' in the chancel. The portals often had three-quarter-round pillar-shafts with capitals and bases carved in brick. The chancel rarely had an apse, but in the east gable there was often a triple window with slightly pointed arches and with splays and rebates. The windows of the long sides were of Romanesque type: rounded arches possibly surrounded by stretchers and saw-tooth courses. The cornices could have arched friezes on profiled corbels, lozenge-friezes or the like; the gables, including the old west gable of the nave, which is often to be found preserved in the tower, would have ornamentation in the form of blind arcading and very often zigzag-patterned masonry. In more recent times the original windows have often been bricked up and new larger ones have been cut out. The original roof construction is rarely preserved, but occasionally impressions can be found in the gables of the old roof structure – with tie-beams and struts from rafters to beams – or there may be single re-used old pieces of timber in a roof construction that has been renovated in the late Middle Ages or later. Towards the end of the Middle Ages a tower was often built onto the west gable, with the heavy walls resting on an irregular foundation of large boulders. On the outside of the tower there would be an enclosed stairway – a spiral staircase leading to the upper storeys. The tower gables would have corbie steps and blind recesses frequently arranged in horizontal bands. In the same period a porch was often built in front of one of the doors of the nave, and sometimes a vestry would be added against the chancel wall. In the interior sometimes built-in vaults from the late Middle Ages can be seen, and the tower room, which opens towards the nave with a broad arch, may have had its vaults built at the same time that the tower was added, but in many cases flat beam-ceilings are still preserved.

cel is not drawn in, and fittings are excluded as in the ground-plans. Roofing, tiling battens and new roof structures are not shown with great exactitude. Windows and significant details are projected into the drawing when deemed necessary.

The *architectural description* begins with the earliest structure and concludes with the latest. Extensive alterations are given in chronological order. However, alterations are mentioned in context with the primary description when the original materials have been re-used in the same part of the building (viz. apse, chancel, etc.). If the fabric of a church is of one period, or if the sequence of alterations is uncertain, the description usually runs from east to west, from the ground upwards, and the exterior is taken before the interior. The ground floor tower chamber is described before the turret stairs and the upper storeys.

Therefore, when referring to Romanesque architecture only existing fabric from this early period is described. Similarly in Gothic or later structures, details are only described when contemporary with the walls. For example, the addition of cornices or corbie-stepped gables to a Romanesque church in late medieval times falls under the heading of Gothic alterations. Post-medieval changes and additions are likewise usually recorded separately. Buildings and extensions which no longer exist are generally mentioned after the existing fabric except when traces of a *wooden church* have been detected. After the building phases of the church follows an account of post-medieval repairs and upkeep as well as any large-scale restoration. All roof constructions are then described, and sometimes a general description of flooring, windows and heating arrangements is called for. The architectural description concludes with a brief survey of the present condition of the church. In conclusion sundials and weathervanes are recorded.

It is understood when an ordinary (late) Gothic vault is mentioned, that the vault cells are half a brick thick, and that ribs a half or quarter brick wide are right-angled without moulding.

The height measurements of Romanesque walls are only approximate because of rising ground levels and changes or rebuilding along the upper

courses of wall. Most measurements are shown on the plans and drawings rather than given in the text. Brick measurements are recorded when possible if these are considered of interest. The most important types of bond, and details such as windows, doors, vaults, gables, recesses, turret stairs, etc. are given in the glossary (pp. 25-58) with illustrative drawings.

STAINED GLASS, PAINTED CEILINGS AND WALL-PAINTINGS

Generally stained glass, painted ceilings and wall-paintings are treated separately, and the paintings of each group are described in chronological order. If little is known, what information there is may simply be added to the end of the architectural description.

Descriptions of wall-paintings are usually preceded by an account of their discovery and restoration. The motifs are taken from east to west in accordance with the general principles, but obviously an iconographical sequence is described in the correct order. If obliterated wall-paintings once formed a sequence with those still intact, either below or above the vaults, they are recorded together.

FITTINGS

The description of fittings is given from east to west, from altar to bells, but with some exceptions as shown below:

- altars (with reliquaries), side altars (with reliquaries), frontals, panels, altar cloths
- altar-pieces and side altars, separate effigies of saints and smaller crucifixes
- altar plate (chalice, paten, wafer box, wine jug), including sacramental vessels (chalices for the sick, etc.)
- altar candlesticks and small altar furnishings such as service-books, altar crosses, monstrances, censers, ewers, aquamaniles, water receptacles, processional staffs and crosses, chasubles, crosiers, seals, confessional boards, sacring-bells, bridal silver (crown, crucifix, etc.)
- altar rails (and kneelers)
- lecterns
- saints' banners
- fonts, baptismal dishes and ewers, font covers, font canopies, christening robes, font rails, aspersoria

holy rood crucifixes
 chancel screens
 pulpits, hour glasses
 pews, also choir stalls, confessionals, priests' chairs,
 chairs for parish clerks, manorial pews
 chests, cupboards, including monstrance tabernacles
 alms posts, collecting-boxes, collection trays and bags
 longcase clocks
 doors
 pew galleries
 organs
 psalm and hymn boards, boards listing the incumbents,
 other boards
 paintings (not part of other fittings or monuments)
 chandeliers and candle brackets
 ships and other hanging items or fixtures (including
 hat pegs except those affixed to pews)
 biers, shrouds, hearses, spades for earth sprinkling on
 coffins, and other funerary items
 tower clocks (sundials are described with the archi-
 tecture)
 bells, bell frames

When not otherwise indicated, all early *wooden fittings* are oak. Later painted furniture – 18th and 19th centuries – is usually pine, 18th century wood sculpture is often in limewood.

When describing painted wood carving and joinery, the woodwork is taken first, and the paintwork and paintings afterwards. From this it follows whether an inscription is carved or painted.

Painting materials are always specified: whether oils or tempera on wood, stone, copper or canvas.

Altars. A large number of altars are medieval, built either of stone or brick, usually white-washed, and either wholly or partly concealed by woodwork which cannot be removed. Consequently, it is sometimes difficult, even impossible, to ascertain their measurements and building materials. The measurements of the top – length and breadth – are given first, and then the height. The Roman Catholic custom of depositing reliquaries in altars is only mentioned if the reliquaries are or have been accessible.

Altar plate. Silver gilt is only mentioned in special circumstances. Goldsmiths' and silversmiths' marks are usually recorded in Chr. A. Bøje, *Danske guld og sølv smedemærker for 1870. Revideret og udvidet udgave.* I-III, Kbh. 1979–82 (*Bøje*) and reference numbers to these are then given, but if a mark is unlisted, the source referring to the sil-

versmith is recorded; special liners and insets are not mentioned.

Candlesticks and chandeliers. When not otherwise stipulated, candlesticks and chandeliers are cast in brass, an alloy composed chiefly of copper and zinc. In early records the terms 'copper' and 'brass' are used at random, evidently based entirely on the colour of the alloy. Old specimens usually appear to be cast in a darker alloy than later ones.

Descriptions of *fonts* include the measurement of their upper diameter and, when possible, their full height.

Baptismal dishes described as South German craftsmanship were probably made in Nuremberg in the 1500s. They are of heavy brass with embossed reliefs (*stanzer*). Baptismal dishes from the Netherlands or of Danish origin date from the 1600s and are usually of sheet brass.

Tower clocks. The works of tower clocks are always of iron. Sundials are recorded in the architectural section.

Bells. The letters *tvm.* indicate the diameter of the mouth of the bell.

Bell frames, if not otherwise specified, are for two bells.

GRAVES AND MONUMENTS

Graves and monuments usually fall into the following categories:

medieval graves
 grave finds (including fragments of clothing)
 wall monuments and memorial tablets
 tombstones, floor slabs, etc.
 post-medieval chapels with sarcophagi or coffins and coffin plates
 post-medieval crypts with sarcophagi or coffins and coffin plates
 sarcophagi and coffins not in chapels or crypts
 loose coffin plates
 funeral trappings (armour, weapons, escutcheons, banners etc.)
 churchyard monuments
 runestones (if not medieval tombstones) in or near churches

If a church contains numerous graves and monuments belonging to one noble family, these are

grouped together regardless of type. The sequence within each of the categories listed above is according to age. If known the date of origin is given first; the criterion is otherwise the year of death or the type represented. Ancestral coats of arms commonly found on 16th and 17th century sepulchral monuments and memorials are not described, nor are ancestral names listed; only the number of coats of arms is given (8, 16, 32).

Measurements are given with height first followed by breadth. In the case of trapeziform tombstones both the maximum and minimum breadths are given. If monuments have been moved, earlier records are quoted which give details of their former position. When a tombstone is still in its original position the orientation corresponds to the grave, viz. the deceased has been interred with head to the west and feet to the east.

Runestones standing in the churchyard or in the church (porch) are briefly recorded. Their inscriptions are given from E. Moltke, *Runerne i Danmark og deres oprindelse*, Kbh. 1976 (*Moltke, Runerne*). English edition: *Runes and Their Origin in Denmark and Elsewhere*, Copenhagen 1985.

INSCRIPTIONS

Inscriptions with a historical content on fittings are copied verbatim. The script is not typographically reproduced, but the type of script is recorded (cf. glossary: *skrift*).

Only in exceptional cases are inscriptions with a religious content quoted in full, otherwise a biblical reference is given.

Inscriptions on tombstones and memorial tablets are often very long, and space restrictions prevent full quotations. Biographical inscriptions are only quoted word for word if they are before 1550. Details of biographical interest from later inscriptions are recorded together with date of origin. Set expressions such as 'Here lies' and terms of esteem linked with title and rank are normally excluded, as well as the flowery titular phrases current during the Absolute Monarchy. In memoriam verses and

other poetry are only quoted if the identity of the poet or the poem deserves special attention. The excerpts are printed in Danish, proper names and place names are spelt verbatim, but Latin names are declined in the nominative with the Danish form added if this is known from other sources, or if there is no doubt (Johannes, Jens, Hans).

Latin inscriptions quoted in full are accompanied by a Danish translation with the exception of frequently occurring set phrases.

The following symbols are adopted when transcribing inscriptions:

- [!] Exclamation mark – after incorrectly spelt words.
- () Round brackets – expanded abbreviations and additions.
- [] Square brackets – editorial addition of missing letters evident from the context or from earlier transcriptions.
- < > Pointed brackets – later additions, frequently made to epitaphs carved or painted before the death of the subject.
- Rectangle – empty space, especially in the case of dates of death.

If an inscription has been published the fact is usually mentioned in the notes. Full transcriptions are usually filed in the archives of the National Museum, Copenhagen.

RECORDS

For practical reasons archival sources (accounts, visitations, appraisals, correspondence, etc.) are divided as follows: documents with references to numerous churches are given below, pp. 59–60; documents referring to one or very few churches are given in the notes and references to the churches in question.