

The area between chancel and nave in Norway's medieval parish churches

An outline of the subject's research status, with a survey of selected Scandinavian literature*

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1. Introduction

In many churches, the area where chancel and nave meet has, due to liturgical and other changes during the centuries, been subject to frequent rebuilding. We also observe this focus today, as an oft-repeated request from local parish councils is for permission to remove what remains of 19th century chancel rails. Only very rarely has the original medieval situation in a church survived up to the present day. In Norway there are some interesting exceptions where we can obtain glimpses of the medieval interiors, with Hopperstad stave church in Sogn as perhaps the most remarkable.

As in many churches elsewhere, the chancel in Norwegian parish churches is more or less identical with the presbytery, reserved for the clergy and for celebration of the Mass at the high altar. The nave was the place of the congregation. How strictly this segregation was practised probably varied from place to place. The arrangement of the area between chancel and nave – from now on referred to (with the reader's indulgence) as the 'antesanctum', to coin a word meaning the area immediately at the entrance to the sanctuary – must have varied accordingly, and would also have depended on the kind of communication that was to take place between the two parts of the church.

Many of the earliest known churches have had a marked architectural division between chancel and nave. The chancel was smaller, shorter and narrower than the nave, its roof was lower than that of the nave, and it was connected to the nave through an opening in the nave's eastern wall. The importance formerly attached to this division is revealed by 17th century church accounts, where we find that the chancel is referred to as the choir (*Chorit*), while the nave is called the church (*Kirchen*)! The connection between these two parts can be visualised as, at one extreme, a full opening of the chancel's western wall, and at the other extreme as a narrow arched opening in the middle of an otherwise solid wall. There are many possible variations between these two. In churches with wide chancel arches, the space may have been either open or occupied by various kinds of church furniture.

* Grateful thanks to Rory Dunlop, NIKU, for vetting the English.

Also present in the early Norwegian material are churches with rectangular ground-plans, where the chancel has the same width and height as the nave. However, it would seem that the division between chancel and nave was marked in one way or another in such churches too.

The main questions to be addressed are as follows. In what manner was the antesacrum arranged in Norwegian churches during the Middle Ages? What liturgical functions took place in this area? And what changes occurred in the centuries between the erection of the first churches in the 11th–12th centuries and the Reformation in 1537?

Ca 185 of the existing Norwegian churches date back to the Middle Ages. Of these, 28 are wooden buildings (stave churches), with the rest of stone. Archaeological excavations have been carried out in and around various existing medieval churches and at a number of medieval church sites, and some of the demolished churches are also known from 19th century drawings. This makes up – in addition to a rather sparse corpus of medieval documents, and accounts and descriptions from the 17th and early 18th centuries – the primary sources for historical, art-historical and archaeological information about liturgical planning and the arrangement of the antesacrum in Norwegian churches in the Middle Ages.

With the early antiquarian journeys as a starting-point, this paper will present a chronological survey of mainly Norwegian works in this area of research, and both stone churches and stave churches will be discussed. The table (appendix 1) provides a survey of the known Norwegian chancel screens, ciboria and rood-lofts. The bibliography (appendix 2) includes, in addition to the Norwegian works, some central research contributions from the other Scandinavian countries.

2. Early antiquarian itineraries

A number of 16th-century documents contain short descriptions of old buildings and their architecture, where unusual forms are commented on. From the 17th century on, we find that churches gradually became a goal for journeys of discovery for their own sake. Admittedly, when Jonas Anderson Skonvig started his tour in 1626, churches do not seem to have been his main point of interest, but among his drawings and descriptions of grave mounds and standing stones we at least find two churches.¹

From the 18th century there exist several historical/topographical surveys. As regards the study of churches, the records made by Gerhard Schöning (1722–1780) are important. The purpose of his travels was to document material

¹ A. STEINNES (ed.): *Jonas Andersson fra Skånepik om fornminne i Bergen Bispedomme 1626*. Facsimile (Oslo 1972).

remains that could deepen understanding of Norway's history. His antiquarian journeys covered most of the inner parts of Eastern Norway, Trøndelag and the northern part of Western Norway.²

The activities and itineraries of these early travellers were important. They contributed to putting the monuments on the map, and many followed in their footsteps later.

3. The Middle Ages emerge from darkness

In the 19th century the cultural legacy of Norway's early Christian period, and then principally the architecture, became a focal point of antiquarian interest. One person must be singled out for special mention in this connection, as he played a central role in initiating this interest. This was the Norwegian artist Johan Christian Dahl (1788-1857). Born in Bergen, he spent most of his adult life (from 1818) in Dresden. Dahl visited Norway several times in order to make sketches for his paintings, and he was strongly engaged in the foundation of art galleries and not least in initiating a Norwegian conservation movement. Regarding the latter, his engagement seems to have been decisive in bringing about the foundation of the Norwegian Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments in 1844. Dahl's patriotic delight in his motherland's architectural heritage included buildings of stone as well as those of wood, but the stave churches in particular must have been very dear to his heart. With the publication of his large illustrated work *Denkmale einer sehr ausgebildeten Holzbaukunst aus den frühesten Jahrhunderten in den inneren Landschaften Norwegens*, he also managed to spread this passion outside the country's borders.³

In the latter part of the 19th century, an extensive registration of medieval churches took place (initiated by the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments). One of the most important features in this work were the survey drawings made by two men, Georg Andreas Bull and Christian Christie.⁴ Bull made drawings of all the stave churches, many of which were demolished at the end of the century, and our knowledge of the lost churches therefore derives largely from these drawings. Christie surveyed a selection of the medieval stone churches. The drawings are now in the Directorate of cultural heritage's antiquarian archive, and they provide important information about the antesacrum in several churches.

² A. BERG & E. SINDING-LARSEN (eds.): *Tegninger samlet eller utført av Gerhard Schoning i forbindelse med hans reiser i 1770-årene og hans arbeider med historie og topografi* (Oslo 1968).

³ J.C. DAHL: *Denkmale einer sehr ausgebildeten Holzbaukunst aus den frühesten Jahrhunderten in den inneren Landschaften Norwegens* (Dresden 1837).

⁴ G.A. BULL: Survey drawings, stave churches (1852–56) and C. CHRISTIE: Survey drawings, medieval stone churches, in *Det antikvariske arkiv, Riksantikvaren* (The directorate of cultural heritage's antiquarian archive).

Among Bull's drawings, the ones of greatest interest in the present context are Reinli stave church (fig. 1) and the demolished stave churches at Vangsnes (fig. 2) and Rinde. The first two show the chancel screens, though the one in Reinli church is Bull's reconstruction based on vestiges and on structural traces left in the woodwork. Rinde, which like Reinli had a rectangular plan, seems to have had a chancel screen similar to the one in Reinli. Vangsnes and Rinde churches are situated by the Sognefjord, not far from Hopperstad stave church, and the screens of all three churches seem to be of basically the same kind, with a narrow gateway flanked by smaller arches piercing an otherwise unbroken surface.

Nicolay Nicolaysen (1817-1911) became the most central person in the Preservation Society at this time. As Norway's foremost antiquary from 1860 on, he travelled widely and documented all the known pre-Reformation monuments; his findings were published in *Norske Fornlevninger*,⁵ later on regularly supplemented in the 'Antiquarian Notices' in the Society's yearbooks. Among his registrations we find many of those churches where traces of the medieval interior in the antesanctum area remained, and several of the buildings described by Nicolaysen – such as Hopperstad, Tingvoll, Kinn, Rygge, Bamble, Ås, Trondenes, and Torpo – have subsequently become central study-objects in this particular area of research.

4. The gathering of knowledge

After this period with extensive fieldwork, the late 19th century shows a growing tendency towards synthesis of the available information.

During his professorship at the University in Kristiania (now Oslo) from 1875 on, the author, theologian, and finally art historian Lorentz Dietrichson (1834-1917) laid the foundations for the study of art history in Norway. His treatise *De norske stavkirker* is the standard work for all studies concerning stave churches.⁶ It includes notes about the connection between chancel and nave, as in the case of Hopperstad stave church, concerning which he comments on the chancel screen as well as the altar ciborium, and he also has things to say about Torpo church and others.

Headmaster Bendix Edvard Bendixen examined all the churches in the counties of Hordaland and Sogn og Fjordane in the period around 1900. The churches in Hordaland County were published in *Kirkerne i Søndre Bergenhus Amt*,⁷ whereas *Kirkerne i Nordre Bergenhus Amt* (*The churches in Sogn og Fjordane*

⁵ N. NICOLAYSEN: *Norske fornlevninger* (Kristiania 1862–66).

⁶ L. DIETRICHSON: *De norske stavkirker* (Kristiania/ Copenhagen 1892).

⁷ B.E. BENDIXEN: *Kirkerne i Søndre Bergenhus Amt* (Bergen 1904–1913).

County) only exists as a manuscript.⁸ His information about several churches – for instance Kinsarvik, where he tells of now-lost fragments of altar ciboria – has considerable bearing on our field of study.

Art historian Harry Fett (1875-1962, Chief Antiquary 1913-1946) produced a great many publications, the most important in this connection being two general surveys of the Norwegian churches, *Norges kirker i middelalderen*⁹ and *Norges kirker i det 16. og 17. aarhundrede*,¹⁰ where he discusses the antesacrum area – in both medieval and post-medieval churches – and lists known examples of chancel screens, chancel-screen crests, openings in the chancel-arch wall, rood-lofts, which he maintains have not been uncommon in Norway, and altars and side altars with ciboria and niches.¹¹ Rood-lofts will be referred to as such throughout the remainder of this article, despite there being some uncertainty about how many were ever actually surmounted by a rood.

Fett reports chancel screens in Reinli, Vangsnes and Hopperstad churches (fig. 3), along with chancel-screen crests in the churches of Vangsnes, Øyefjell, Opdal, Torpo, Hurum, Hegge, and Lomen (fig. 9). He mentions openings in the chancel-arch walls – openings from the nave side that connected with stairs enclosed in the walls – in Tingvoll, Rygge, and Ås churches, along with an opening in the inner end of the southern chancel-arch wall in Bamble church, which he believes may have led up to an early form of pulpit. In harmony with later research, he interprets vestiges of the gallery in Kinn church as a rood-loft, and he also believes that Eidfjord church had a rood-loft. He holds, furthermore, that there is evidence for westward extension of rood-lofts in the Late Middle Ages in order to provide more space for the chancels – as in St. Mary's church in Oslo, and in Torpo and Ål stave churches. Baldachins and ciboria over altars were common in the Romanesque period, Fett contends, but he believes that these features partly disappeared during the Gothic period. In addition to the ciborium in Hopperstad stave church, he mentions a baldachin from Årdal stave church (now in Bergen Museum) and notes that the side altars in Kinsarvik church had apparently been covered with ciboria. Fett further comments upon altar niches and side chapels built into the walls of a number of churches.

As for the medieval churches, Fett was occupied – inspired by Prof. A. Taranger – with the influence of the Anglo-Saxon church on the form of the early Norwegian church. He purposes to show that the ground-plan of Moster church – “with its square chancel, somewhat smaller and lower (than the

⁸ B.E. BLENDIXEN: *Kirkerne i Nordre Bergenhus Amt*, Det antikvariske arkiv, Riksantikvaren (*The directorate of cultural heritage's antiquarian archive*) (unpublished manuscript, ca 1900).

⁹ H. FETT: *Norges kirker i middelalderen* (Kristiania 1909).

¹⁰ H. FETT: *Norges kirker i det 16. og 17. aarhundrede* (Kristiania 1911).

¹¹ FETT: *Norges kirker i middelalderen* 40-45.

nave)¹² – is an Anglo-Saxon form, which he believes to have been the commonest type. Nonetheless, Fett maintains that the rectangular ground-plan is the oldest, and ‘typically Irish’, and that these two forms were used concurrently into the Gothic period. He believes that many of the first stave churches had rectangular plans, and mentions Rinde church as an example.¹³ (fig. 4)

Other authors from the first half of the 20th century who might have worthwhile contributions to this area of research are Johan Meyer, Anders Bugge and Gerhard Fischer.¹⁴

5. New surveys and perspectives – from 1950 onwards

In Sweden a church inventory, *Sveriges kyrkor*, was started as early as 1912, initiated by Curman and Roosval and modelled on the major European inventories. Denmark got its counterpart, *Danmarks Kirker*, in 1933, with Macheprang playing a central role in the process.

The corresponding Norwegian programme – *Norges Kirker* (NK) – was launched in 1950, the initiative coming from Chief Antiquary Arne Nygård-Nilssen.¹⁵ The work was started by art historian Sigrid Christie and architect Håkon Christie, largely on the basis of surveys of churches in Østfold County by Anders Bugge and in close collaboration with the Directorate of Cultural Heritage’s Antiquarian Archive. Behind this major fieldwork and research endeavour we find a positivistic hope that the recording of every item in every church will lead to new insight and knowledge, not excluding the antesanctum area. The results so far must be said to confirm this optimism, and it is to be regretted that the work’s progress is slowed by lack of funds.

Pertaining to important churches described in *Norges Kirker* by Christie and Christie are the chancel arches in Rygge¹⁶ and Ås¹⁷ churches, along with further

¹² H. FETT: *Norges kirker i middelalderen* 9.

¹³ *Ibidem* 11.

¹⁴ J. MEYER: Tingvoll fylkeskirke paa Nordmøre, in *Foreningen til norske fortidsminnesmerkers bevaring* (The Norwegian society for the preservation of ancient monuments) *Årbok* 1909 (Kristiania 1910); IDEM: *Kirker og klostre i Middelalderen* (Oslo 1925); A. BUGGE: Kirkebygninger og deres utstyr. Norge, in *Nordisk Kultur XXIII* (Oslo 1934); G. FISCHER: *Domkirken i Trondheim I-II* (Oslo 1966).

¹⁵ *Norges Kirker, Østfold* (I–II, S. CHRISTIE & H. CHRISTIE) (Oslo 1959), *Akershus* (I–II, S. CHRISTIE & H. CHRISTIE) (Oslo 1969), *Buskerud* (I–III, S. CHRISTIE & H. CHRISTIE) (Oslo 1981 (I), 1986 (II) and 1993 (III)), *Bergen* (I–III, H.-E. LIDÉN & E.M. MAGERØY) (Oslo 1980 (I), 1983 (II) and 1990 (III)), *Hordaland* (I–III, A.M. HOFF, H.-E. LIDÉN, O. STORSLETTEN & V. TRÆDAL) (Oslo 2000 (I, II) and 2003 (III)).

¹⁶ CHRISTIE & CHRISTIE: *Norges Kirker, Østfold* 2, 275s.

¹⁷ CHRISTIE & CHRISTIE: *Norges Kirker, Akershus* 2, 33s.

possible rood-lofts in Nore¹⁸ and Uvdal¹⁹ stave churches. The building history of the stave church at Torpo²⁰ is of especial interest in this discussion, where the secondary rood-loft (probably 13th century) over the eastern part of the nave – where only the original barrel vault remains – is of particular importance.

Håkon Christie has elsewhere shown great interest in the antesanctum area. In the article 'Kinsarvik kirke og dens restaurering', he describes the restoration work carried out in Kinsarvik church, a stone building dating from the second half of the 12th century but with a chancel added some decades later.²¹ In the section headed *Treppbygg foran skibets østmur* (Wooden structures in front of the nave's eastern wall), he comments upon the demolished medieval ciboria – covered side-altars in the corners at the nave's east end. Based on results from the excavations in 1959-1961, surviving items of the church's furniture, and Bendixen's observations from 1880, he offers a theoretical reconstruction of the situation in the nave's eastern part at the time of the chancel's construction. At the same juncture, he proposes a similar reconstruction for the neighbouring church at Eidfjord, a stone church built ca 1300. (fig. 5)

In the article *Stavkirkene – arkitektur*, Christie discusses the subject more generally.²² For the interior, as well as for the church building as a whole, his main approach seems to be to look for tendencies of evolution. Contrary to Fett, Christie thinks that churches with a narrower and lower chancel preceded those with rectangular ground-plans in Norway. He points to the fact that of the latter group we know of only two stave churches: Reinli, and Rinde. Neither of these has directly been dated by Christie, and in the article he connects them with rectangular stone churches erected ca 1300. Christie contends (largely based on examination of Bull's drawings) that the chancel screen in churches with a rectangular ground-plan differs from the screen in other churches by forming a partition wall that divides the church's interior into two parts, the screen being placed so that the chancel was a constant proportion of the building's entire length. Like Fett, he finds that rood-lofts – and thereby the presbyteries – have developed and extended westwards. This suggestion is based on the presence of relatively large chapels or galleries such as the one found in Torpo stave church.

In the lexical article *Korbue*, Christie points out how common the narrow, portal-like chancel arch has been in the Norwegian parish churches, whereas

¹⁸ CHRISTIE & CHRISTIE: *Norges Kirker*, Buskerud 1, 376s.

¹⁹ *Ibidem* 397s.

²⁰ *Ibidem* 116s.

²¹ H. CHRISTIE: Kinsarvik kirke og dens restaurering, in *Foreningen til norske fortidsminnesmerkers bevaring* (The Norwegian society for the preservation of ancient monuments) *Årbok* 1961 (Oslo 1962).

²² H. CHRISTIE: Stavkirkene – arkitektur, in *Norsk Kunsthistorie* 1 (Oslo 1981).

wider chancel arches first became numerous in larger churches in the 13th century.²³

The stave church at Urnes, Sogn og Fjordane County, has been at the heart of Christie's work for the last 50 years, and we look forward to a more comprehensive publication of this material. For one thing, Urnes contains traces of covered side-altars, and it will be interesting to see what the painstaking investigations of the church may reveal about this and other aspects.

Indisputably the most extensive investigation concerning Norwegian rood-lofts is the Magister-degree thesis by Astrid Schetlein Johannesen.²⁴ In addition to providing in-depth knowledge of the well preserved, but reconstructed, rood-loft in the small stone church on the island of Kinn off Norway's west coast (fig. 6), it presents a survey of all the churches where earlier research has indicated the possible presence of medieval rood-lofts. Unfortunately it has not been possible to get hold of the catalogue accompanying the thesis, where Schetlein Johannesen considers each church in turn, presenting arguments for or against the presence of a rood-loft, and discussing the form and dating of those rood-lofts she finds evidence for. However, the main conclusions are set out in the thesis itself, which in addition to the published version of 1962 exists as a manuscript from 1960.

Based on her investigations, Schetlein Johannesen contends that the known rood-lofts can largely be dated to the period before 1300, some as early as the 12th century (Rygge: 1150; St. Olav's in Trondheim: end of the 12th century), while more common in the 13th century (Tingvoll: early 13th century; Kinn 1250-55; Voss 1261; Stavanger cathedral: after 1272, but with Romanesque roots). One exception to this is the rood-loft in Trondenes church, which she dates to 1465.

Schetlein Johannesen finds possible rood-lofts in 9-10 parish churches, and she does not believe that rood-lofts have been as common in parish churches as previously supposed. Taking a diffusionist point of view, she asserts that rood-lofts were confined to a few churches influenced by the nearest cathedral, and that it is possible to find local variations depending on which cathedral was closest. Rood-lofts are documented in the cathedrals of Trondheim and Stavanger, there is documentary evidence for one in Bergen's cathedral, and she believes there must have been an early rood-loft in Hamar cathedral too. She has problems in explaining the pillar-borne rood-loft in such an early church as St. Olav's in Trondheim, which seems to precede the corresponding rood-loft in the cathedral there. The rood-lofts in Voss and Kinn churches are explained as originating due to influence from the cathedral in Stavanger, which –

²³ H. CHRISTIE: Korbue, in *Kulturbistoriske leksikon for nordiske middelalder* (Viborg Denmark 1980).

²⁴ A. SCHETLEIN JOHANNESSEN: Kinn kirkes lektorium og dess plass blant norske middelalderlektorier, in *Bergen Universitets Årbok Humanistisk Serie* 1961,6 (1962).

considering the distances involved – does not seem to be very likely. Underlining the deficient knowledge of rood-lofts in the Norwegian cathedrals, she suggests this as an area for further research.

Part of her thesis deals with the function of the rood-loft. The Norwegian written sources seem to contain little in the way of useful information: there are some references to the preaching of sermons, saying of prayers, and reading of certain proclamations (such as excommunications) from the rood-loft. One of its primary functions, she maintains, was to separate the chancel from the nave, to hide the inner mystery of the chancel. She believes that, in many churches, the chancel was more or less closed to the congregation, and that several liturgical functions were consequently moved westward to rood-loft and lay altar in order to enable the ordinary people to participate – a line of argument that seems difficult to follow. Another functional aspect mentioned by Schetlein Johannesen is that the rood-loft's floor may have served as a canopy over side altars in the nave's eastern part. And she goes on to mention that the rood-loft had a connection westwards as well as eastwards, but without elaborating this statement.

Schetlein Johannesen has also written the lexical article *Lectorium*.²⁵ She starts by giving a survey over the development of the rood-loft in Europe, with reference to the works of Erica Kirchner-Doberer²⁶ and Aymer Vallance.²⁷ She concludes that the rood-loft was most prevalent in the 15th century, and that with the Reformation it lost much of its meaning, so that many rood-lofts were demolished during the 17th and 18th centuries. Regarding the situation in Norway, she refers to the conclusions in her 1960/62 thesis. She comments briefly on the actual rood-lofts, including minor corrections of the thesis' results. As for St. Olav's in Trondheim, she now concludes that the rood-loft must have been erected sometime after the church's completion, and not much before 1200 at the very earliest; cf. Ekroll, who confirms this.²⁸ As for Voss, she changes the dating from 1261 to 1271. She expresses astonishment at finding so few traces of rood-lofts in the Norwegian material from the 15th century – precisely the period when the European material seems to show the strongest activity. This question has later been extensively addressed by the Swedish art historian Anna Nilsén.²⁹

Of considerable importance for understanding the antesacrum area are the great roods, their positioning and function. In Norway, many of the medieval

²⁵ A. SCHETLEIN JOHANNESSEN: *Lectorium*, in *Kulturbistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder* (Viborg Denmark 1980).

²⁶ E. KIRCHNER-DOBERER: *Die deutschen Lettner bis 1300* (Vienna 1946 = Diss).

²⁷ A. VALLANCE: *English Church Screens* (London 1936) and *Greater English church screens* (London 1947).

²⁸ O. EKROLL: *Olavskyrkja. 8 fragment blir monument, Arkeologiske undersøkelser i Trondheim 3* (Trondheim 1989).

²⁹ A. NILSÉN: *Kyrkorummets brännpunkt* (Stockholm 1991).

roods have managed to survive to the present day. While questions of the history of style and technique have dominated, some authors have indeed commented on aspects such as placing and function as well. Among them is art historian Martin Blindheim, for instance in the article *Triumfkrusifiks fra middelalderen i Bjørgvin bispedømme*.³⁰ He supports the traditional hypothesis, going back to the Swedish scholar Johnny Roosval, that the rood was placed upon a beam crossing the upper part of the chancel opening (often, the beam was at the same level as the start of the actual arch). But the Danish art historian Ebbe Nyborg, who has also considered this problem, maintains that the placement of roods upon such beams is a secondary arrangement.³¹ Otto Norn, another Dane, emphasises that the rood was always connected with an altar in the church.³²

The art historian Erla Bergendahl Hohler has worked with some of the monuments mentioned, mainly based on her interest in medieval wood-carving. In her article 'Stavkirken – Den dekorative skrud', she comments upon chancel screens and ciboria, among others in Hopperstad stave church.³³ Further, she mentions the rood-loft in Kinn church. In her doctoral thesis, *Norwegian stave church sculpture*, she gives a presentation of the ciborium and chancel screen in Hopperstad stave church, the remains of the ciborium from Kaupanger stave church, and various chancel-screen crests, all with carvings.³⁴

Some building archaeologists have contributed to this area of research in the past few decades. Alf Tore Hommedal has demonstrated, by his excavations in Ognå church in Rogaland County, that there must have been a wall separating chancel and nave in the church.³⁵ And Øystein Ekroll, in his work on St. Olav's in Trondheim, has revealed the situation before and after the erection of the post-borne rood-loft.³⁶

In addition to those mentioned here, many other examples of relevant fieldwork could have been included. To find these, the best course of action would probably be to search for the names of specific churches in the Preservation Society's yearbooks.

³⁰ M. BLINDHEIM: Triumfkrusifiks fra middelalderen i Bjørgvin Bispedømme, in P. JUHKAM (ed.): *Bjørgvin bispestol – Byen og bispedømmet* (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø 1970).

³¹ E. NYBORG: Korbue, krucifiks og bueretablet, in *Hikuin* 14 (Højbjerg 1988) 136.

³² O. NORN: Det gotiske krucifix og den gotiske messe, in U. HAASTRUP (ed.): *Kristus-fremstillinger. Fuglesangsymposiet 1976* (Copenhagen 1980).

³³ E.B. HOHLER: Stavkirken – Den dekorative skrud, *Norsk Kunsthistorie* 1 (Oslo 1981).

³⁴ E.B. HOHLER: *Norwegian Stave Church Sculpture I–II* (Oslo/Stockholm/Copenhagen/Oxford/Boston 1999).

³⁵ A.T. HOMMEDAL: Ognå kyrkje etter brannen..., in *frå haug ok heidni* 1 (Stavanger 1992).

³⁶ EKROLL: *Olavskyrkja. 8 fragment blir monument*.

6. Works by the author, and proposals for further research

In connection with my Master's thesis – *The chancel screen in Eidfjord church* – I have examined the chancel screen in the 700-year-old church at Eidfjord and placed it in a Scandinavian and European context and proposed a theoretical reconstruction.³⁷ (fig. 7) The latter is based on survey drawings and on analyses of the surviving parts of the chancel screen, and it differs in many ways from previous reconstructions. The church – of rectangular form – would originally have had a transverse wooden screen, taller than the present one, with wooden side-altar ciboria at the northern and southern ends on the screen's western side. The ciboria would have been covered by steeped roofs over rounded inner roofs, with open sides towards the nave; the upper part of these openings would have consisted of halved quatrefoils. The rear and the outer side walls would have been unbroken surfaces, while the inward-facing walls would probably have been pierced. Between the chancel entrance and the ciboria, there would have been solid panels in the screen's upper and lower halves, while the openings in between would have been filled with lattice-work. There is nothing left now to indicate the original form of the upper part of the actual opening in the chancel screen, and there are no traces of doors in the wooden pillars flanking the opening.

I have found reasons to include the antesacrum area in the stone church at Dale in Sogn in the field of study,³⁸ this mainly on the basis of traces of mural painting on the nave's eastern wall. A wooden construction seems to have been erected in front of the wall with side-altar ciboria on the northern and southern sides, and wooden pillars would have flanked the chancel arch and probably supported a canopy over this. There is good reason to continue work on this hypothesis, for example by examining the murals in greater detail, and by supplementing survey drawings with a reconstruction of the church's medieval rood. (fig. 8)

Another church that seems to be worthy of further examination of the vanished rood-loft is the stone church at Voss, Hordaland County, which is included in Schetlein Johannesen's work. In this church, where we know that work was under way by 1270 at the latest, we find high, wide arches between chancel and nave as well as between nave and the foot of the tower. The connection between these two arches seems interesting. In the chancel entrance and probably extending along the whole width of the nave's eastern wall, there must have been a wooden construction including a rood-loft. Arne Berg has

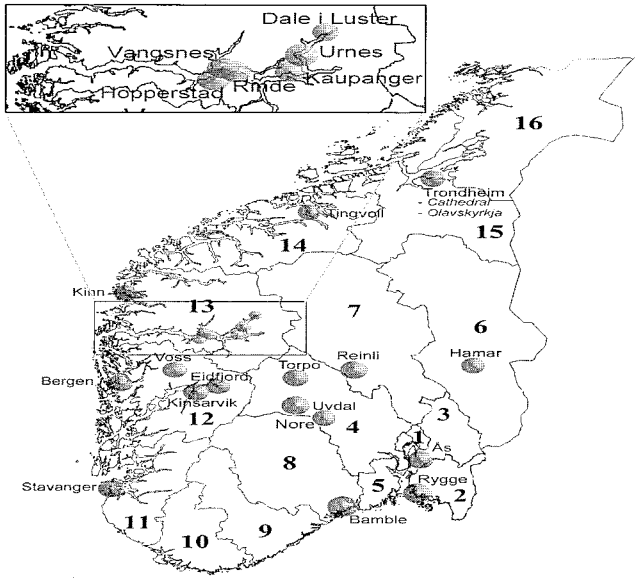
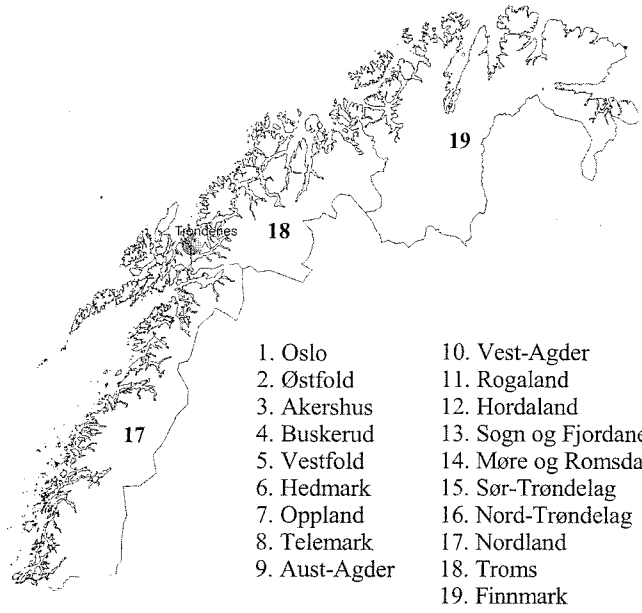
³⁷ A.M. HOFF: *Korskillet i Eidfjord* (Bergen 1991 = Master's thesis MS). Published in a condensed version: A.M. HOFF: Korskiljet i Eidfjord, in *Hikuin* 22 (Højbjerg 1993).

³⁸ A.M. HOFF: Dale kyrkje, in *Dale kyrkje i Luster 750 år* (Bergen/Luster 2000).

produced a theoretical model in which the rood-loft is shown as reaching two stories high³⁹ – a reconstruction there is cause to question.

On the basis of the survey in this article, there seems to be grounds for optimism that the information potential of Norway's medieval churches is by no means exhausted. Examination of a sample of the churches will very likely result in the acquisition of new knowledge. One important side to this investigation will be to include current knowledge of liturgical history. This will be a challenge but, if successful, it would ensure a more reliable outcome to the investigation, seen from an art-historical point of view as well as from that of liturgical history.

³⁹ A. BERG: *Voss kyrkje, Vangskyrkje på Voss* (Oslo 1977).



Map showing the most important churches

Appendix 1: Table

Church	Chancel screens and related parts	Ciboria	Rood lofts
Årdal (†)		Altar baldachin in BM	
Ås			Staircase in the wall flanking the chancel arch with opening into the chancel arch (NK Akershus 2)
Bamble			Staircase built into the wall flanking the chancel arch and with opening into the chancel arch (for pulpit or rood-loft?) (SCHETLEIN JOHANNESSEN 1962) (NYGAARD 1996)
Bergen, cathedral (†)			Information from 1261, probably concerning a rood-loft (FRITZNER 1954)
Dale in Luster	Probable wooden construction in front of the nave's east wall (HOFF 2000)	Probable side-altar ciboria in the corners in front of the nave's east wall (HOFF 2000)	
Eidfjord	Remains of medieval chancel screen (H. CHRISTIE 1961) (HOFF 1993)	Remains of altar ciboria for side-altars (H. CHRISTIE 1961) (HOFF 1993)	
Hamar, cathedral (ruin)			Possible rood-loft (SCHETLEIN JOHANNESSEN 1962)
Hegge	Chancel-screen crest (HOHLER 1999, cat. no. 86)		
Hopperstad	Existing chancel screen (H. CHRISTIE 1981)	Existing side-altar ciborium, probably constructed from two mediaeval ciboria. (HOHLER 1999, cat. no. 102)	
Hurum (Hore)	Chancel-screen crest		

	(HOHLER 1999, cat. no. 112)		
Kaupanger		Remains of altar ciborium, now in BM (BJERKNES & LIDÉN 1975) (HOHLER 1999, cat. no. 122)	
Kinn			Reconstructed rood-loft (BERNER 1913) (SCHETLEIN JOHANNESSEN 1962)
Kinsarvik	Possible chancel screen (H. CHRISTIE 1961)	Demolished side-altar ciboria (BENDIXEN 1904–13) (H. CHRISTIE 1961)	
Lomen	Chancel-screen crest (HOHLER 1999, cat. no. 143)		
Ogna	Traces of chancel screen (HOMMEDAL 1992)		
Reinli	Chancel screen (Reconstruction drawing by BULL) (H. CHRISTIE 1981)		
Rinde (†)	Chancel screen (Known from BULL's drawing)		
Rygge			Staircase in the wall flanking the chancel arch with opening towards an opening in the wall over the chancel arch (NK Østfold II) (SCHETLEIN JOHANNESSEN 1962)
Stavanger, cathedral			Traces of rood-loft (SCHETLEIN JOHANNESSEN 1962)

Tingvoll			Remains of rood-loft (MEYER 1909) (LIDÉN 1981)
Torpo			Remains of rood-loft (NK Buskerud I)
Trondenes			Remains of rood-loft (SCHETLEIN JOHANNESSEN 1962) (GJONE 1981)
Trondheim, cathedral			Earlier rood-loft (FISCHER 1966 I)
Trondheim, Olavskyrkja (ruin)			Remains of rood-loft (SCHETLEIN JOHANNESSEN 1962) (EKROLL 1989)
Urnes		Traces after side altar baldachins or ciboria (Author's observations)	
Uvdal			Secondary used rail, probably from rood-loft Traces of elements of construction, probably from rood-loft (NK Buskerud I)
Vangsnes (†)	Chancel screen (BULL's drawing)		
Voss			Remains of rood-loft (SCHETLEIN JOHANNESSEN 1962) (BERG 1977)
Øyefjell (†)	Chancel-screen crest (HOHLER 1999, cat. no. 265)		

† means that the church does not exist anymore

Appendix 2: Norwegian literature and drawings

Abbreviations

BM	Bergen Museum
BUÅ	Bergen Universitets årbok
FNFB	Foreningen til norske fortidsminnesmerkers bevaring (The Norwegian Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments)
KLNM	<i>Kulturbistoriske leksikon for nordisk middelalder</i>
MS	Manuscript
NF	Nicolaysen: <i>Norske Fornlevninger</i>
NK	<i>Norges Kirker</i>
NKH	<i>Norsk kunsthistorie</i> 1-7 (Oslo 1981)
AA Ra	Det antikvariske arkiv, Riksantikvaren (The Directorate of Cultural Heritage's Antiquarian Archive)

B.E. BENDIXEN: Kirkerne i Nordre Bergenhus Amt, MS, AA Ra.

B.E. BENDIXEN: *Kirkerne i Søndre Bergenhus Amt* (Bergen 1904-1913).

A. BERG: *Voss kyrkje, Vangskyrkje på Voss* (Oslo 1977).

A. BERG & E. SINDING-LARSEN (eds.): *Tegninger samlet eller utført av Gerhard Schøning i forbindelse med hans reiser i 1770-årene og hans arbeider med historie og topografi* (Oslo 1968).

C. BERNER: Kinn kirke, in FNFB *Årbok* 1913.

K. BJERKNES & H.-E. LIDÉN: *The stave churches of Kaupanger* (Oslo 1975).

M. BLINDHEIM: Triumfkrsulfiks fra middelalderen i Bjørgvin Bispedømme, in P. Juvkam (ed.): *Bjørgvin bispestol – Byen og bispedømmet* (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø 1970).

A. BUGGE: Kirkebygninger og deres utstyr. Norge, in *Nordisk Kultur* XXIII (Oslo 1934).

G.A. BULL: Survey drawings, stave churches (1852-56), AA Ra.

C. CHRISTIE: Survey drawings, medieval stone churches, AA Ra.

H. CHRISTIE: Kinsarvik kirke og dens restaurering, in FNFB *Årbok* 1961.

H. CHRISTIE: Korbue, in KLNM (Viborg DK 1980).

H. CHRISTIE: Stavkirkene – arkitektur, in NKH 1 (Oslo 1981).

J.C. DAHL: *Denkmale einer sehr ausgebildeten Holzbaukunst aus den frühesten Jahrhunderten in den inneren Landschaften Norwegens* (Dresden 1837).

L. DIETRICHSON: *De norske stavkirker* (Kra. – Kbh. 1892).

Ø. EKROLL: *Olavskyrkja. 8 fragment blir monument, Arkeologiske undersøkelser i Trondheim* nr. 3 (Trondheim 1989).

H. FETT: *Norges kirker i det 16. og 17. aarhundrede* (Kra. 1911).

H. FETT: *Norges kirker i middelalderen* (Kra. 1909).

G. FISCHER: *Domkirken i Trondheim* I-II (Oslo 1966).

J. FRITZNER: *Ordbog over det gamle norske Sprog*, II (Oslo 1954) ('Korr.' 2).

E. GJONE: Trondenes kirke – et ombygningsarbeid i 1400-årene, in FNFB *Årbok* 1981.

- A.M. HOFF: Dale kyrkje, in *Dale kyrkje i Luster 750 år* (Bergen/Luster 2000).
- A.M. HOFF: Korskiljet i Eidfjord, in *Hikuin* 22 (Høbjerg 1993).
- A.M. HOFF: Korskiljet i Eidfjord, Master's thesis, MS (Bergen 1991).
- E.B. HOHLER: Stavkirkene – Den dekorative skrud, NKH 1 (Oslo 1981).
- E.B. HOHLER: *Norwegian Stave Church Sculpture I-II* (Oslo/Stockholm/Copenhagen/Oxford/Boston 1999).
- A.T. HOMMEDAL: Ogn kyrkje etter brannen..., in *frå haug ok beidni* Nr. 1 (1992).
- H.-E. LIDÉN: *Fra antikkvit til kulturminne* (Oslo 1991).
- H.-E. LIDÉN: Middelalderens steinarkitektur i Norge, in NKH 2 (Oslo 1981).
- J. MEYER: *Kirker og klostre i Middelalderen* (Oslo 1925).
- J. MEYER: Tingvoll fylkeskirke paa Nordmøre, in FNFB (1909).
- N. NICOLAISEN: *Norske fornlevninger* (Kra. 1862-66).
- E.M. NYGAARD: De romanske steinkirkene i Telemark, MS (1996).
- Norges Kirker, Østfold* (I-II, S. CHRISTIE & H. CHRISTIE), *Akershus* (I-II, S. CHRISTIE & H. CHRISTIE), *Buskerud* (I-III, S. CHRISTIE & H. CHRISTIE), *Bergen* (I-III, H.-E. LIDÉN & E.M. MAGERØY), *Hordaland* (I-III, A.M. HOFF, H.-E. LIDÉN, O. STORSLETTEN & V. TRÆDAL).
- A. SCHETLEIN JOHANNESSEN: Kinn kirkes lektorium og dess plass blant norske middelalderlektorier, in *BUÁ Human. Ser.* 1961 No. 6 (1962).
- A. SCHETLEIN JOHANNESSEN: Lektorium, in KLNLM (Viborg DK 1980).
- A. STEINNES (ed.): *Jonas Andersson fra Skånevik om fornminne i Bergen Bispedømme 1626*. Facsimile (Oslo 1972).
- F. TYBRING: Resultat af en del undersøgelser i Eidfjord kirke, in FNFB *Aarsberetning* 1903.
- L. ØSTBYE: *Norges kunsthistorie* (Oslo 1977).

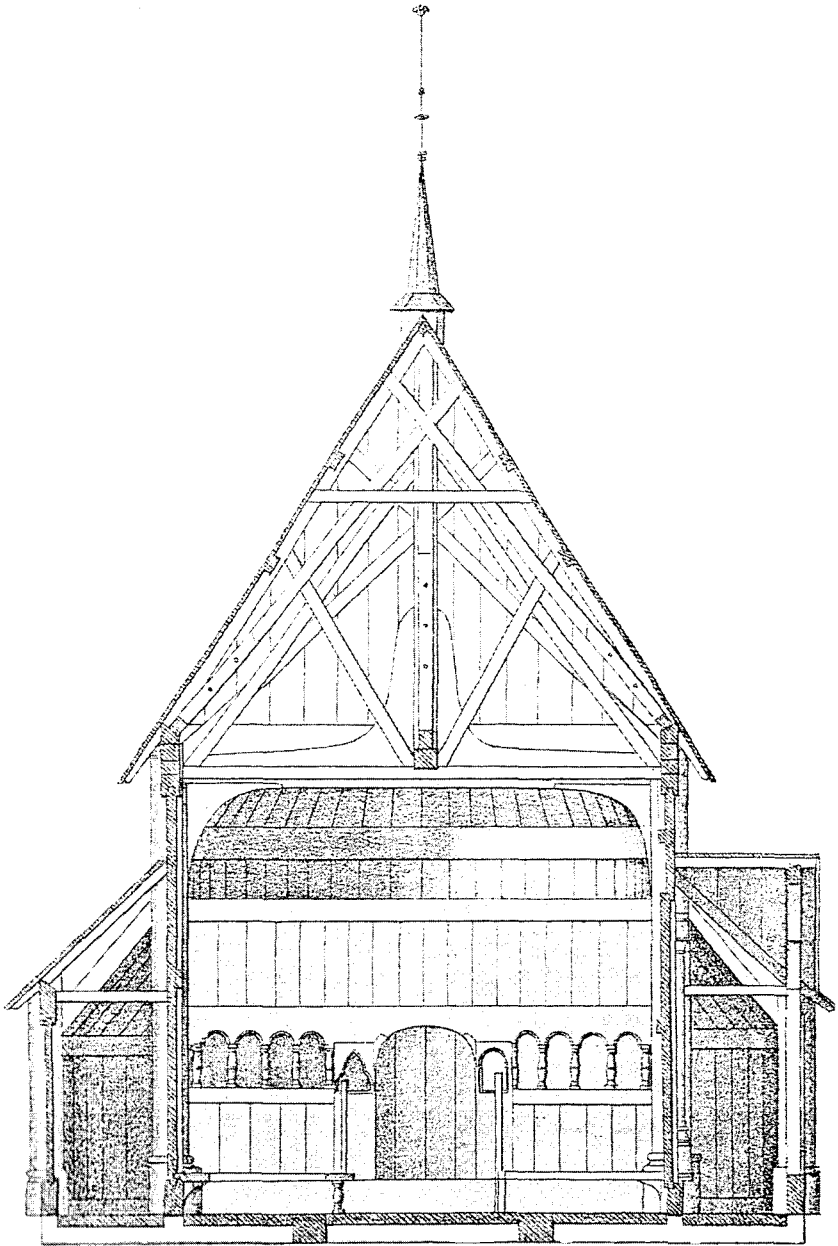
Other literature

Danmarks Kirker

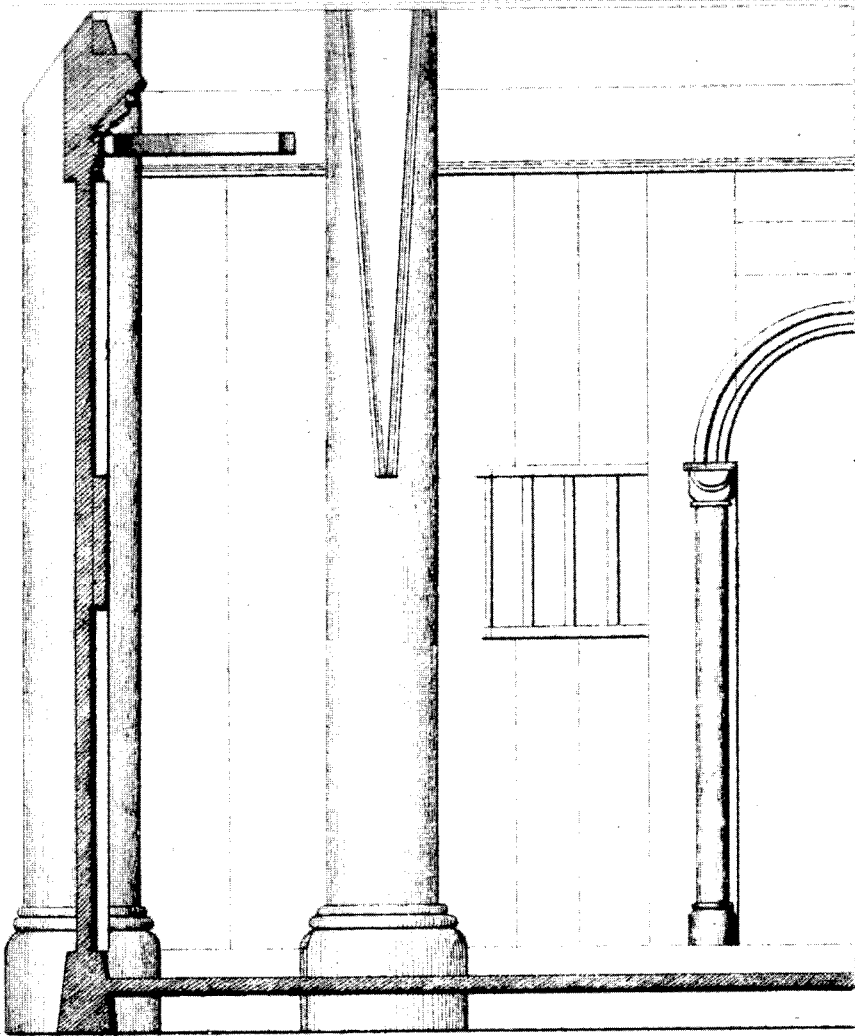
- C.A. JENSEN: Alterstolper fra Jydske landsbykirker – bidrag til kirkeudstyrets og tømmerhåndværkets historie i middelalderen, in *Aarbøger for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie* 1911.
- C.A. JENSEN: Katolsk kirkeinventars skæbne efter reformationen, in *Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie* 1921.
- E. KIRCHNER-DOBERER: *Die deutschen Lettner bis 1300*, Diss. (Wien 1946).
- E. MØLLER: Om danske lektorier, in *Fra Nationalmuseets arbejdsmark* 1949/50.
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- O. NORN: Det gotiske krucifix og den gotiske messe, in U. HAASTRUP (ed.): *Kristusfremstillinger. Fuglesangsymposiet 1976* (Copenhagen 1980).
- E. NYBORG: Korbue, krucifiks og bueretabel, in *Hikuin* 14 (Høbjerg 1988).
- O. OLSEN: Rumindretningen i romanske landsbykirker, in *Kirkehistoriske samlinger, syvende række* (Copenhagen 1965-68).
- J. ROOSVAL: Om Triumfkrucifix, in *Utställningen af äldre kyrklig konst i Strängnäs 1910 I* (Stockholm 1913).

- O. RYDBECK: Trabes och Lectorium i skånska Kyrkor, in O. RYDBECK & E. WRANGEL (eds.): *Äldre kyrklig konst i Skåne: Studier utgivna med anledning av kyrkliga utställningen i Malmö 1914* (Lund 1921).
- A. VALLANCE: *English Church Screens* (London 1936).
- A. VALLANCE: *Greater English Church Screens* (London 1947).

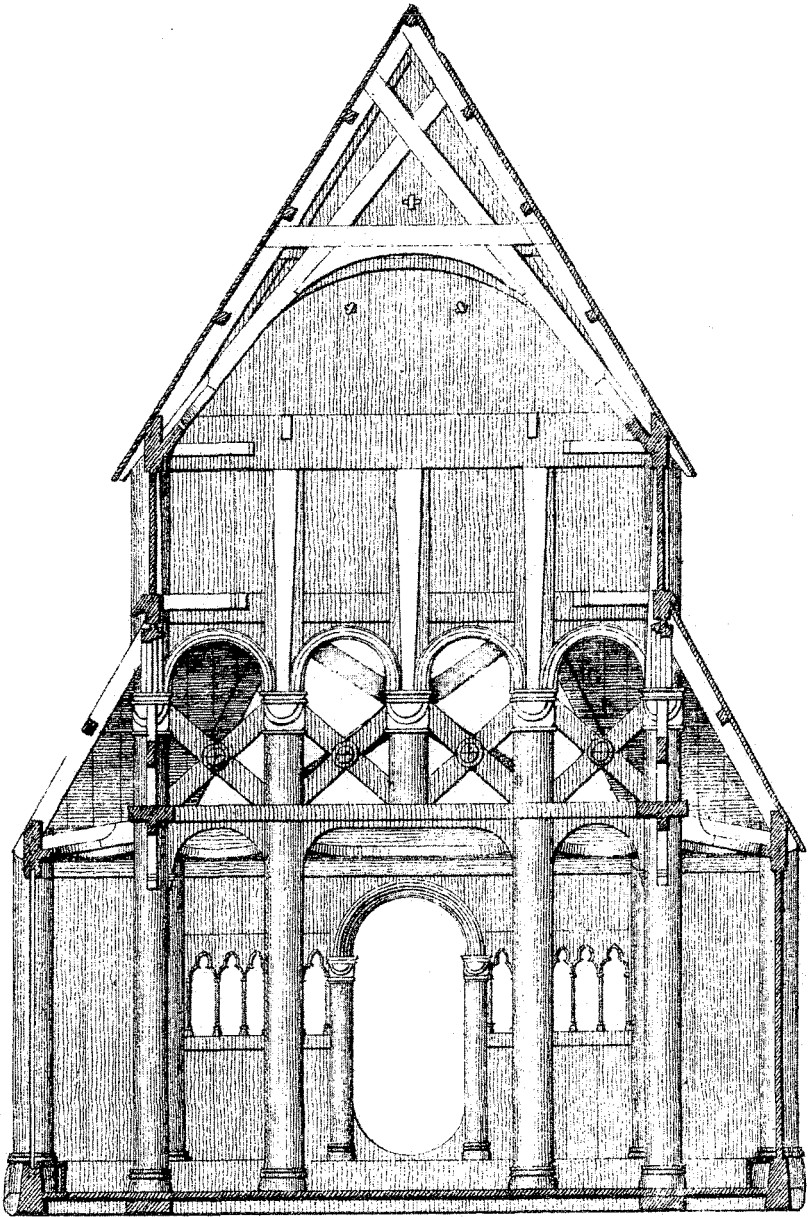
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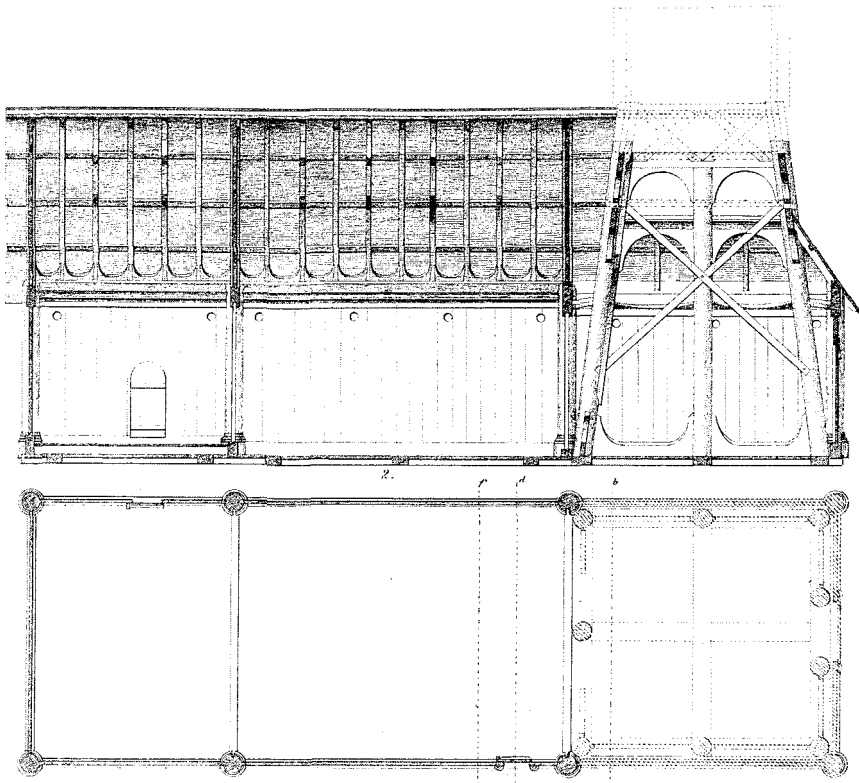
1 Reinli church, rood screen. AA Ra.



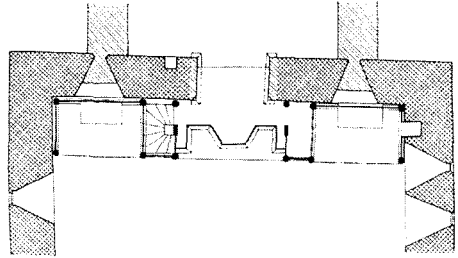
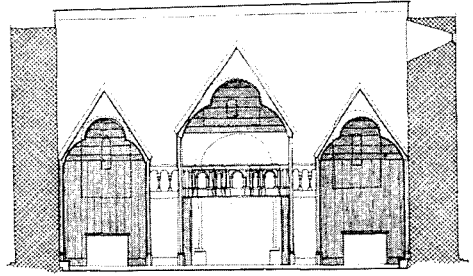
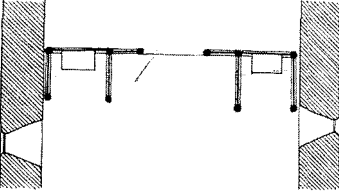
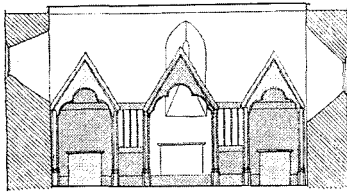
2 Vangsnes church, rood screen. AA Ra



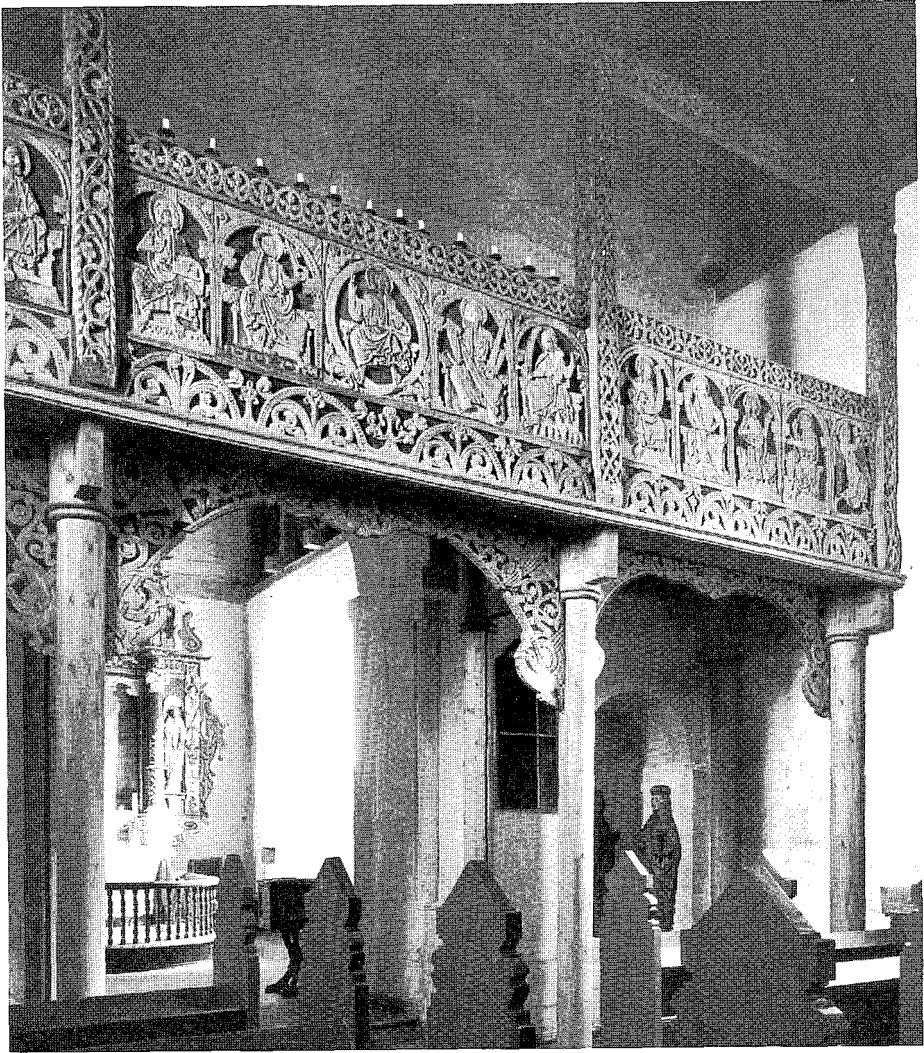
3 Hopperstad church, the nave's eastern wall with rood screen. AA Ra.



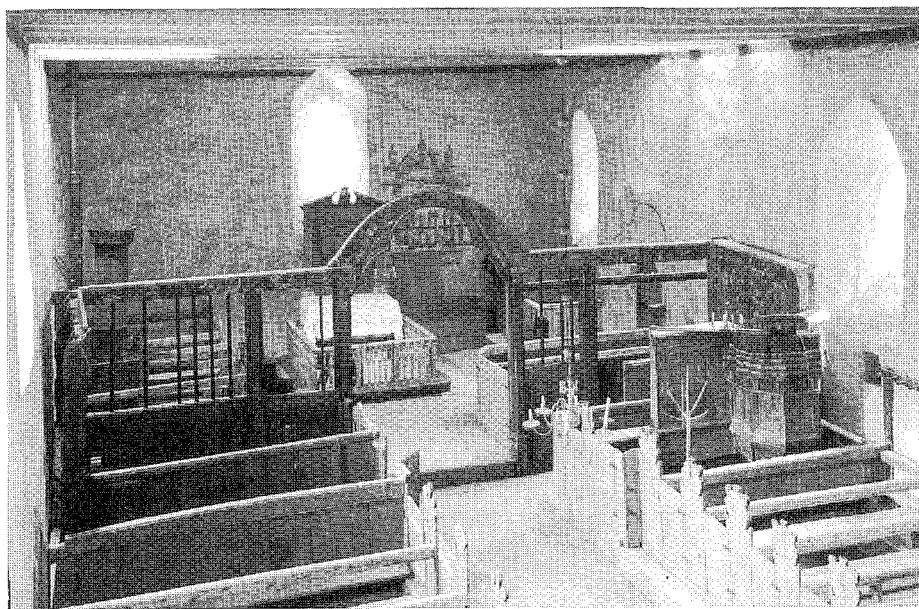
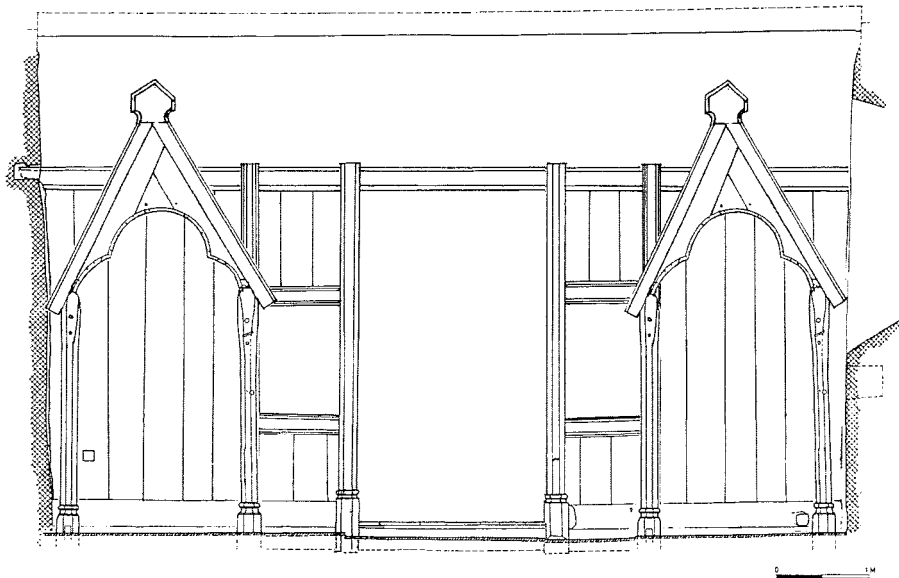
4 Rinde church, rood screen. AA Ra.



5 **Eidfjord church** (left) and **Kinsarvik church** (right). Theoretical reconstructions. From Christie 1961.

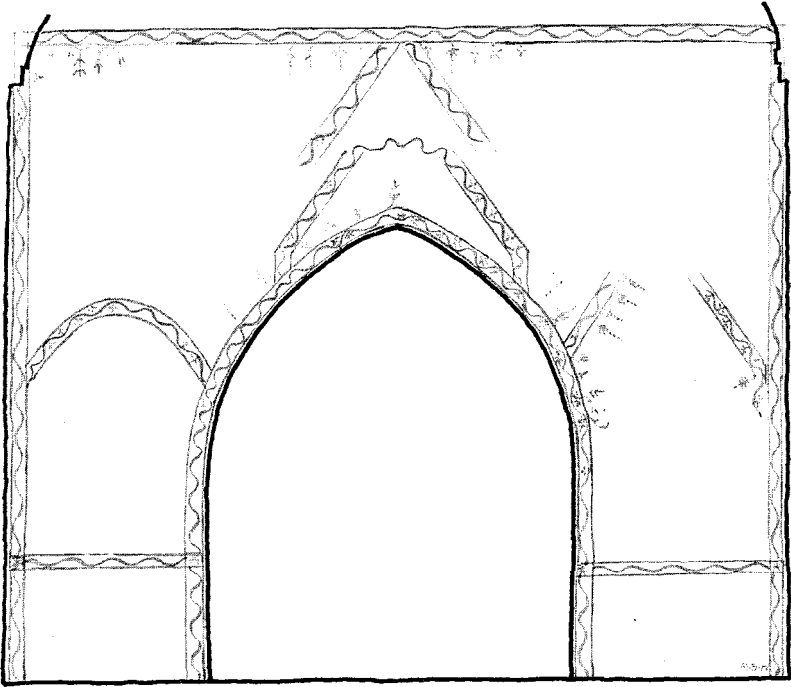


6 Kinn church, rood-loft. AA Ra.

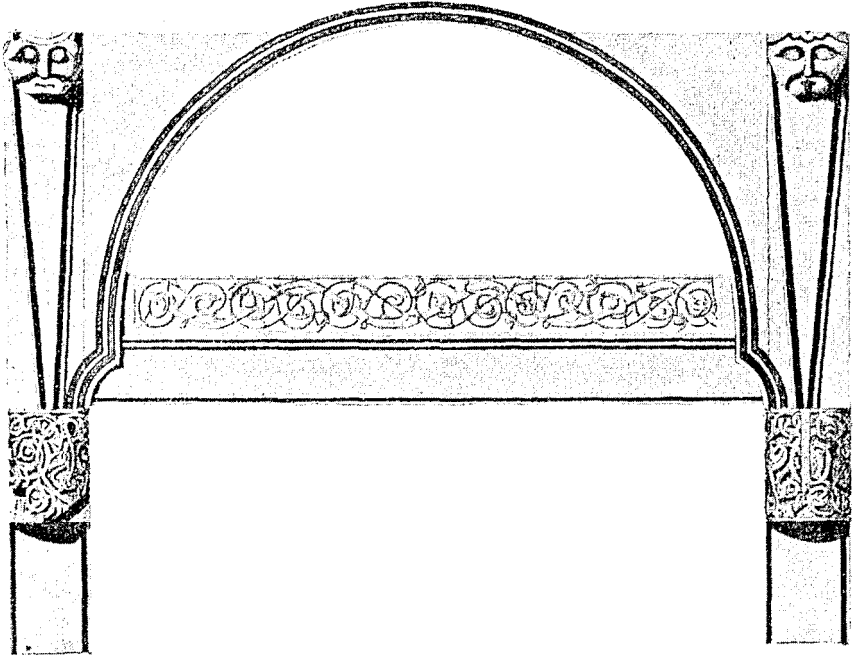


7a **Eidfjord church.** Theoretical reconstruction. From Hoff 1991

7b **Eidfjord church.** Remains of medieval rood screen. AA Ra.



8 Dale church, Sogn. The murals on the nave's eastern wall. Drawing by M. Brochmann.



9 Lomen church, chancel arch with chancel-screen crest. From Fett 1909.