

The Twelfth-Century Church at Ourscamp

By Caroline A. Bruzelius

For many years it has been traditional to view the Cistercians as the disseminators of the Gothic style.¹ Yet, although the order adopted the pointed arch and the rib vault and was instrumental in introducing these elements to remote parts of the continent, the new vaulting systems were combined with a wall structure that remained emphatically Romanesque.² While Early Gothic buildings of the middle of the twelfth century, such as Suger's choir at St.-Denis and the cathedral of Noyon, are characterized by a tendency to penetrate the wall surface with multiple openings, creating a diaphanous, articulated, and complex wall structure, Cistercian architecture in this period consistently rejects these tendencies in favor of massive mural effects. The persistence of unarticulated wall surfaces in Cistercian building can be seen nowhere more clearly than in the surviving abbey churches in southern, western, and central France.

It has often been argued that Cistercian architecture is only an extreme simplification of local building types,³ which would in itself lead towards a simplicity and conservatism of structure antithetical to the new approach to the surface of the wall in Early Gothic. It is also possible that the apparent archaic quality of Cistercian architecture reflects the fact that the surviving twelfth-century churches are located not in the Ile-de-France but rather in provincial areas that clung to more conservative preferences in the face of new developments taking place in Paris and the Northeast. Unfortunately, the accidents of history have led to the virtually complete obliteration of all twelfth-century Cistercian church architecture in the area to the northeast of Paris, either through the ambitious reconstructions by the monks themselves in the thirteenth century, the damage inflicted by the successive wars that

¹ See, for example, Marcel Aubert, *L'architecture cistercienne en France* (Paris, 1947), 1:248, who describes the Cistercians as the "missionaries of Gothic," and Robert Branner, *Gothic Architecture* (New York, 1967), p. 31.

² Robert Branner has stressed this deliberate archaism in Cistercian architecture and characterized it as "rib-vaulted Romanesque": *Burgundian Gothic Architecture* (London, 1960), p. 14. The church at Varnhem in Sweden is an excellent example of this sensibility.

³ The foremost authorities on Cistercian architecture have expressed this opinion. See, for example, Anselme Dimier, *Les moines bâtisseurs* (Paris, 1964), pp. 106-8; and Marcel Aubert, "Existe-t-il une architecture cistercienne?" *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 1 (1958), 153-58. Also Hildegard Beuer, "Evolution du plan des églises cisterciennes en France," *Cîteaux in de Nederlanden* 8 (1957), 269-89, especially p. 270; and Hanno Hahn, *Die frühe Kirchenbaukunst der Zisterzienser* (Berlin, 1957), p. 97.

have ravaged the area, or the mercenary destruction of the abbeys as quarries in the decades following the French Revolution.⁴ Excavations have permitted reconstruction of the plans of these churches, but too little remains of the walls above the foundations to allow reconstruction of the elevations. It is clear that the plans of the Cistercian churches in northeastern France adhere to the type found at Clairvaux, Cîteaux, and Fontenay, but lack of information about the elevations has left unresolved questions such as the nature of the vaulting systems and the degree of austerity of the interiors.

Overlooked in these discussions are the remains of the abbey church at Ourscamp, located only six kilometers to the west of Noyon.⁵ The ruins permit a fairly complete and accurate reconstruction of a Cistercian elevation erected in the heart of the Ile-de-France in the third quarter of the twelfth century. Most of the abbey was pulled down in the first decades of the nineteenth century to provide stone for the housing of workers employed in the thread factory installed in the conventual buildings, and at the same time the Rayonnant choir was transformed into a "picturesque" ruin by the removal of the webbing of the vaults. Two important parts of the twelfth-century church still survive, however, and these provide much of the information essential to a reconstruction of the interior elevation: the inner face of the west wall, incorporated into the eighteenth-century facade, and the outer bays of the east wall of the transepts (Plates 1 and 2). Although mutilated, these remains nonetheless provide clear indications of the original disposition of the elevation.

Founded in 1129 by Simon of Vermandois, bishop of Noyon, Ourscamp is among the eldest daughters of Clairvaux.⁶ The first small church was dedicated in 1134.⁷ The abbey apparently prospered and soon became well known and much admired. Within twelve years of its foundation, Ourscamp had established two daughter houses — Beaupré in 1135 and Froidmont in

⁴ Such reconstructions were especially frequent in northeastern France, for example at Longpont, Vauclair, Clairmarais, and of course the choir of Ourscamp itself. In each of the abbeys listed here, most of the subsequent damage took place when they were exploited as quarries, though in many cases the surviving ruins suffered considerable further destruction in the shelling of World War I.

⁵ The most recent published study on Ourscamp is by Pierre Héliot, "Le choeur gothique de l'abbatiale d'Ourscamp et le groupe de Longpont dans l'architecture cistercienne," *Bulletin de la société nationale des antiquaires de France* (1957), pp. 146–62. The only previous study of the architecture is by Eugène Lefèvre-Pontalis, "Ourscamp," *Congrès archéologique* (1905), pp. 165–68. The cartulary was published by Achille Peigné-Delacourt, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye Notre-Dame d'Ourscamp* (Amiens, 1865), who also wrote a history of the abbey: *Histoire de l'abbaye Notre-Dame d'Ourscamp* (Amiens, 1876). Louis Paul Collette also discusses the history of the abbey in some detail in the *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique, civile, et militaire de la province du Vermandois* (Cambrai, 1771–1772), 2:181–84 and 260–61, and publishes some of the more important charters.

⁶ *Gallia christiana*, 9:1129. Ourscamp is the seventh daughter house of Clairvaux.

⁷ *Ibid.*, and Collette, *Mémoires*, 2:182.

1141 — and had accepted a third, Mortemer, as a daughter within its filiation.⁸ The early foundation of daughter houses is usually a reliable index of the prosperity of an abbey; by statute, expansion was permitted only when the population of the mother house exceeded sixty monks.⁹

In 1154 a donation by Ode de Roye, wife of the Châtelain de Roye, initiated the construction of a vast new church, the scale of which reflects the success of the abbey and the number of monks.¹⁰ According to *Gallia christiana*, this church was dedicated in 1201,¹¹ but, as we shall see below, the architectural details strongly suggest a much earlier date of completion. In c. 1232, work began on the reconstruction of the chevet, which was expanded with an apse, ambulatory, and radiating chapels. This new choir, an interesting example of the persistence of Cistercian architectural values well into the thirteenth century, will be discussed briefly at the end of this paper.

Of the original plan, only the outer bays of either transept are still in place, the inner two having been demolished to make room for the new choir (Plate 3). The remains of the twelfth-century transept correspond closely to the surviving portions of wall at the west end of the church, however, and indicate that the elevation and general dimensions of the nave were identical to those of the east wall of the transept.

The plan of Ourscamp has been published in the *Congrès archéologique* of 1905 and in the *Recueil* of Father Dimier,¹² and its general disposition can be reconstructed today even by the casual visitor to the ruins (Plate 3). The long nave consisted of nine rectangular bays flanked by square bays in the side aisles, while the transept was composed of two bays on either side of the crossing. In the east wall of the south transept there were three chapels and a piscina, although only the south bay survives (Plate 5). In the north transept there were four chapels to the east as well as two small bays attached to the north transept terminal, and an additional chapel tucked into the northeast corner (Plates 3 and 4). The additions to the north transept terminal were perhaps designed to form the junction between the large church of 1154 and the first small oratory of 1134, preserved and possibly serving as a funerary chapel.¹³

⁸ Ibid. Both Beaupré and Froidmont were in the diocese of Beauvais, and nothing remains of either. Mortemer requested affiliation with Ourscamp in 1137; it had formerly been a Benedictine priory affiliated with Le Pin.

⁹ See B. Lucet, "Les ordinations chez les cisterciens," *Analecta sacri ordinis cisterciensis* 10 (1954), 276, n. 4. The published statutes are in the *Statuta capitulorum generalium ordinis cisterciensis*, ed. Josephus Canivez (Louvain, 1933), 1, 1134 (38, n. 1).

¹⁰ *Gallia christiana*, 9:1130: "... incoepum anno 1154, majus monasterii templum, opem ferente Oda, Raugae castellana. . ." The original charter does not survive. See also Jacques Le Vasseur, *Annales de l'église cathédrale de Noyon, jadis dite de Vermand* (Paris, 1633-1634), 3:829.

¹¹ Ibid. This date is not entirely certain, however. See below, note 26.

¹² Lefèvre-Pontalis, "Ourscamp," and Anselme Dimier, *Recueil de plans d'églises cisterciennes* (Grignan, 1949), 2, plate 219.

¹³ The plan of the first church is published in Dimier, *Recueil*, 2, plate 218, although it is not clear whether it is conjectural or based on excavations. This chapel is described in a *procès-verbal*

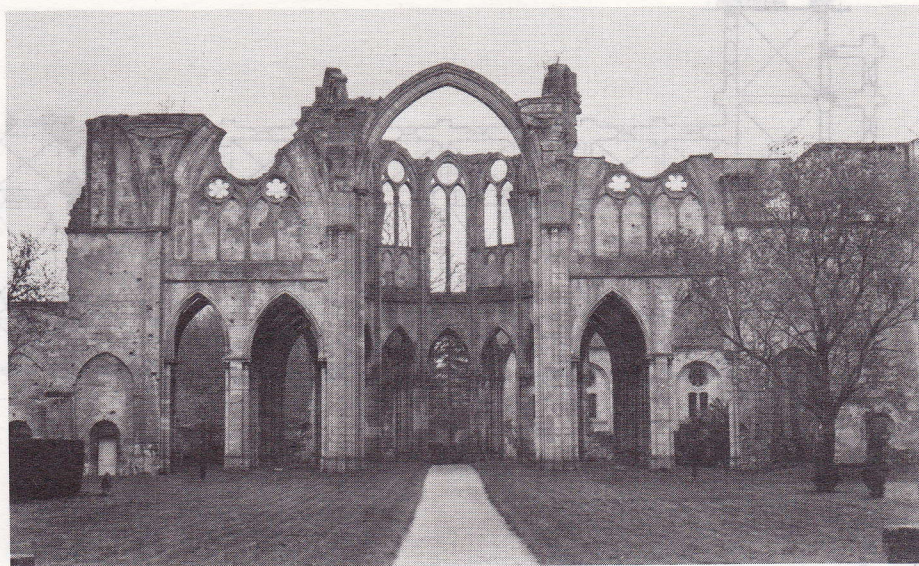
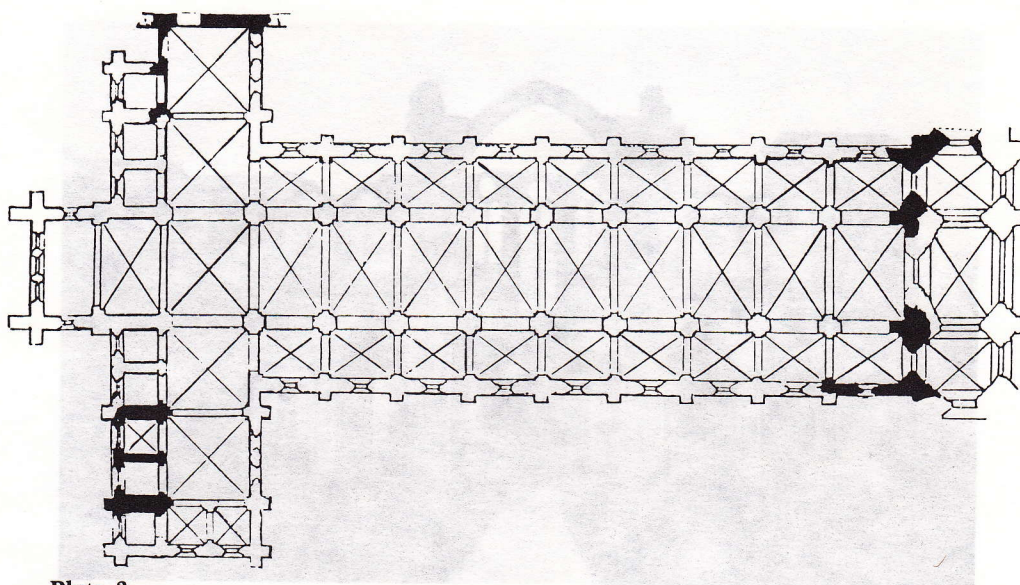


Plate 1
Ourscamp, view of
the transepts and choir
from the west



Plate 2
Ourscamp, interiors
of the west
facade

**Plate 3**

Ourscamp, plan of
the abbey church
begun in 1154
(after Lefèvre-Pontalis)

**Plate 4**

Ourscamp,
north transept,
east wall



Plate 5
Ourscamp,
south transept,
southeast corner



Plate 6
Ourscamp, north transept,
juncture of the twelfth-
century church and the
reconstructed choir.

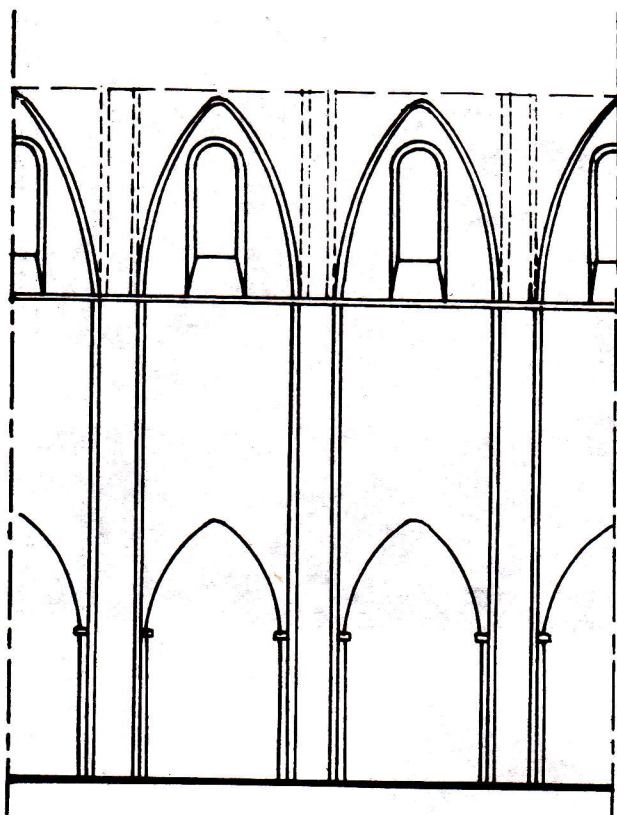
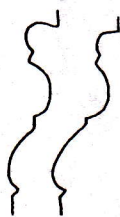


Plate 7
Ourscamp, reconstruction
of the nave elevation
(Françoise Fromonot)



a. west portals

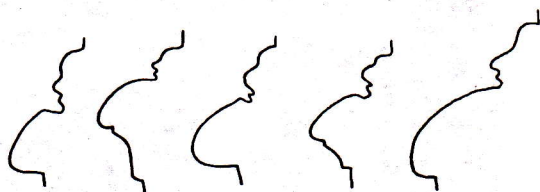


Plate 8
Ourscamp,
base profiles

b. choir

Plans of the abbey church published hitherto have neglected to include the large porch that formerly existed to the west of the church, even though the south bay is still preserved in part, buried within the massive and unfinished facade added to the church in 1748.¹⁴ This porch, an integral feature of Cistercian church design, is also described in a *procès-verbal* of 1667, which states that it contained chapels used by laymen, who were formerly denied admittance to the church.¹⁵

The plan of Ourscamp is thus close to that of other Cistercian churches, as a rule characterized by a flat-ended chevet and chapels, a long nave, and a western porch. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the plan at Ourscamp was the length of the church, which from east to west may have extended to as much as 95 or 100 meters. The total width of the nave inside the wall was 19.74 meters, with the main vessel 8.72 meters wide and the aisles 4.21 meters wide. It is interesting to note that the total width of the nave and the aisles corresponded almost exactly to the height of the vaults, which were approximately 19.40 meters above the ground at their crown.¹⁶

Although the inner two bays of the transept and the original chevet were pulled down in the late 1220s or early 1230s to make way for the Rayonnant choir, the pattern of chapels would have been the same as in the two surviving outer bays (Plates 4 and 5). The chevet would have been as wide as the nave, and it probably consisted of two bays, the first vaulted as high as the nave. This is evident from the surviving eastern transverse arch of the crossing, which was preserved in the thirteenth-century reconstruction of the choir. The moldings on the eastern side of this arch indicate that the first bay of the choir was rib-vaulted and that it was the same as the rest of the main vaults. Indeed, the eastern crossing piers of the twelfth-century program were preserved in the thirteenth-century reconstruction of the choir

of 1678, published by Peigné-Delacourt, *Histoire*, p. 34, who in his plan of the abbey places it flanking the north transept. As Peigné-Delacourt's plan seems to be largely based on the seventeenth-century description of the abbey, which is very ambiguous on the actual location of this chapel, it would be best to reserve judgment on its plan and location until excavations can be undertaken. It was not unusual for the Cistercians to preserve an earlier church and to use it as a chapel; this occurred at Cîteaux, Clairvaux, and Pontigny (see Aubert, *Architecture cistercienne*, 1:152-53).

¹⁴ The surviving parts of this porch indicate that this was the most elaborate part of the church, with *en délit* columns flanking the doorways (the only ones in the entire twelfth-century program). It is interesting to note that through the twelfth and most of the thirteenth century, *en délit* elements appear in Cistercian churches primarily in the context of portals.

¹⁵ "La grande église de la dicte abbaye, en laquelle on entre par un grand porche de treize pas de long sur dix de large, dans lequel il y a deux chapelles, l'une à droicte, l'autre à gauche, servans anciennement pour les estrangers qui n'avoient liberté d'entrer dans l'église." Quoted by Peigné-Delacourt, *Histoire*, pp. 33-34.

¹⁶ These proportions correspond to those observed by François Bucher, "Cistercian Architectural Purism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 3 (1960-1961), 89-105, especially p. 102, where Bucher notes that the total width of the nave usually equals the height of the vaults. At Ourscamp, the height of the nave elevation equals approximately four times the height of the nave arcade piers.

and simply cut back and refaced in order to produce a lighter and more attenuated effect, in keeping with the slender and delicate proportions of the Rayonnant work.¹⁷ This allowed the retention of the eastern transverse arch of the crossing that opened into the choir, the only part of the twelfth-century vaults to survive intact (Plate 1).

The interior elevation preserves a simplicity characteristic of Cistercian design. The nave arcade was supported by simple cruciform piers (Plate 7). A heavy horizontal molding passed along the top of each pier, setting off the springing of the arcade arches but passing behind the responds rising to the main vaults of the nave (Plates 2 and 4). The wall above the nave arcade seems to have extended as a completely flat, uninterrupted surface to the level of the clerestory windows, from which it was separated by a horizontal molding identical in section with that below at the springing of the arches of the arcade level (Plate 2). The molding at the base of the clerestory passed over the responds to make the transition from the rectangular supports to the heavy ribs of the quadripartite vaults. This system obviated the need for capitals, which in fact existed only in the nave and transept terminal walls (Plates 2 and 5). The clerestory windows were simple roundheaded lancets, flanked on either side by flat panels of wall (Plate 7).

Any reader familiar with Cistercian architecture in France will note the close resemblance between the interior of Ourscamp and the nave and transepts of the abbey church of Pontigny, located in northern Burgundy near the city of Auxerre.¹⁸ Although the form of the piers at Pontigny is more complex than at Ourscamp, the rest of the elevation is nearly identical in every respect. Furthermore, the height of the nave elevation is very close in the two churches: Pontigny measures 19.50 meters to the crown of the vaults, and Ourscamp about 19.40.

It seems unlikely that rib vaults were intended as part of the original design at Ourscamp. The outermost of the two surviving chapels in the north transept still preserves a pointed barrel vault, and the rib vaults of the adjacent chapel to the south date to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. If work on the church was indeed begun at the east end, as the surviving pointed barrel vault in the transept chapel suggests, the original flat-ended chevet may also have been barrel-vaulted. If so, it would have consisted of two bays, the easternmost vaulted at a lower level than the preliminary straight bay (Plate 3). Such an arrangement existed for example at Fontenay, Noirlac, and l'Escale-Dieu, to name but a few random exam-

¹⁷ Although relatively little has been published on the problem of reconstructions *en sous-œuvre*, this procedure was by no means uncommon, and appears for example in the west bays of Mantes, throughout the choir of Meaux, and along the entire length of the nave of Notre-Dame in Paris, where chapels were inserted between the buttresses in the thirteenth century.

¹⁸ On Pontigny, the only detailed published study to date is Georges Fontaine, *Pontigny, abbaye cistercienne* (Paris, 1928). See also Robert Branner, *Burgundian Gothic*, pp. 16-17 and 163. The abbey is presently being studied by Miss Terryl Kinder at Indiana University.

ples. A chevet of two straight bays also existed at the church of Froidmont, a daughter house to Ourscamp, as can be seen in an eighteenth-century plan of the abbey in the Bibliothèque Nationale.¹⁹ In any case, the preserved eastern transverse arch of the crossing indicates clearly that a rib vault was constructed at least in the first bay east of the crossing, and that this was as high as the nave and transepts.²⁰

The possibility that the design of Ourscamp was conceived originally without rib vaults, and that these were added to the structure while construction was in progress, is also suggested by the awkward juncture of ribs, wall, and vertical supports (Plates 4 and 6), the absence of wall ribs, and the fact that at the transept terminals and west wall of the nave the ribs rest on a completely undecorated capital supported by a slender shaft that sinks into the wall after a descent of several meters (Plates 2 and 5). These shafts, however, are bonded into the wall, so that if the original program did not include rib vaults, they were added while construction was still in its early stages. It is true, of course, that stopping a shaft before it descends to ground level is almost a rule of thumb in Cistercian elevations, but where such shafts exist in other Cistercian interiors they almost invariably appear consistently throughout the church, not only in the terminal walls. It is possible that shafts of this type may have been applied to the flat responds in the upper walls of the nave at Ourscamp, but as they do not exist in the east wall of the transept, and as the structure is otherwise homogeneous, it seems unlikely that they would have appeared in the nave. The form of the piers at Ourscamp with their shallow responds suggests quite strongly that groin vaults were originally intended, and that the change to rib vaults was made while construction was in progress.²¹ This, of course, also occurred at Pontigny, where the transepts are groin-vaulted and the nave is rib-vaulted. There too the juncture of the rib and responds is awkward, strongly suggesting a change in program.²²

Details of the surviving parts of the church are homogeneous in the transepts and the west wall of the nave. The rounded and heavy profiles of the diagonal and transverse arches (Plates 4 and 6) suggest a date in the third quarter of the twelfth century. They are similar in character to those in

¹⁹ A similar arrangement can be seen in the Premonstratensian church of St.-Martin at Laon. See Lefèvre-Pontalis, "Saint-Martin de Laon," *Congrès archéologique* (1911), 1:225-39.

²⁰ A variety of types of vaults also existed at the abbey of Noirlac, where there is a pointed barrel vault in the chevet, groin vaults in the aisles, and rib vaults in the main vessel. See René Crozet, *L'abbaye de Noirlac et l'architecture cistercienne en Berry* (Paris, 1932), pp. 26-32.

²¹ Groin-vaulted interiors persisted remarkably late in Cistercian interiors. At Les-Vaux-de-Cernay, for example, where work seems to have continued through the 1180s, the nave was entirely groin-vaulted and supported by piers very close in form to those of Ourscamp. See Marcel Aubert, *L'abbaye des Vaux de Cernay* (Paris, 1931).

²² Fontaine, *Pontigny*, pp. 52-54. The rib vaults were a later addition in the nave of St.-Martin at Laon also. But here they were added after construction was completed, whereas at Pontigny and Ourscamp the change seems to have taken place while work was in progress.

the ambulatory and radiating chapels of Noyon Cathedral, which have been dated c. 1150–1165,²³ as well as to those of other programs of the third quarter of the twelfth century.²⁴ The dating suggested by the rib vaults is supported by other details, such as the base profiles of the western portals of the aisles (Plate 8a). As other details of the west wall correspond closely to those of the east wall of the transept, it seems highly probable that the construction of Ourscamp proceeded in one continuous, uninterrupted campaign, either from east to west or in a series of horizontal beds.²⁵

This brings us back to the recorded consecration of the church in 1201. Since all surviving masonry details in the western part of the church are identical with those in the eastern part, and all strongly suggest a date in the 1150s and the 1160s, it seems more than likely that construction was complete within about twenty years of its inception — that is to say, that the church was probably finished by 1175 or perhaps even earlier. The date of consecration recorded in *Gallia christiana* as an established fact is based on Le Vasseur's *Annales de l'église cathédrale de Noyon*, published in 1633, which indicates considerable uncertainty about the reliability of the information.²⁶ It is also possible that consecration was delayed, as was not infrequent.²⁷ In any case, since Ourscamp was a rich foundation, and there was an endowment specifically for the construction of the church, it is unlikely that finances would have posed major difficulties or led to significant delays in construction. Furthermore, Bishop Baldwin II of Noyon was buried in the

²³ Charles Seymour, *Notre-Dame de Noyon in the Twelfth Century* (New York, 1967), pp. 166–67. The surviving flying buttresses that can still be seen at the west end of the nave of Ourscamp are not part of the original structure, and probably date to the last decade of the twelfth century (Plate 2).

²⁴ Marcel Aubert, "Les plus anciennes croisées d'ogives," *Bulletin monumental* 93–94 (1934), 5–67 and 137–237.

²⁵ The latter suggestion would explain the complete homogeneity of the structure and the insertion of rib vaults in the upper parts of the structure. I would like to thank Mary Dean for this observation.

²⁶ Le Vasseur, *Annales*, p. 829: "La grande Eglise plus moderne de 25. ans, renvoye son origine à la devotion de noble Dame Ode, Chastellaine de Roye, qui la fit construire en l'an mil cent cinquante quatre, sous Gilbert, troisième Abbé, & s'en fit la Dedicace l'an mil deus cens & un, sous Baudouin Abbé neusiesme, par Estienne premier, Evesque de Noyon. Au moins telle est la creance de plusieurs, voire mesme de feu Domp Jean Bocquet, naqueres religieux docte & devot de la maison . . . lequel . . . a inseré ces mots, *Il est à croire que la consecration a esté faite par un Evesque de Noyon*" (Le Vasseur's italics).

²⁷ Late dedications are by no means unheard-of within the order; the abbey church of Veruela, where the choir was begun shortly after 1146, was dedicated only in 1248 (Aubert, *Architecture cistercienne*, 1:102, n. 3). Often consecrations were arranged simply in order to take advantage of the presence of the pope in the area. See René Crozet, "Etudes sur les consécrations pontificales," *Bulletin monumental* (1946), pp. 5–46, and Francis Salet, "Cluny III," *Bulletin monumental* (1968), pp. 239–47. The delay of consecration seems to have been a frequent problem in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: see the text of the letter of 1237 read to the clergy of England by Otto, the papal legate, which Matthew Paris includes in his *English History*, trans. and ed. J. A. Giles (London, 1852), 1:75–76.

abbey church at his death in 1167, as were two of his successors in 1174 and 1188.²⁸

Although mutilated and much modified, the ruins of Ourscamp are significant for a number of reasons. In the area northeast of Paris it is the only Cistercian church from the mid-twelfth century of which enough remains to permits a fairly secure reconstruction of the elevation (Plate 7). It is among the first rib-vaulted Cistercian churches.²⁹ And in broader terms, the interior proves conclusively that the architecture of the Cistercians was not simply a reduction and modification of local styles, but rather that the order had its own strong architectural preferences that set Cistercian churches apart from other contemporary monuments. The severe monastic character of Ourscamp is particularly striking if we compare it with the nearby cathedral of Noyon, begun about a decade before the abbey church. Ourscamp comes close to Noyon in its overall length, but the architecture of the abbey church emphatically rejects the developments in plan and elevation at the nearby cathedral. Although Ourscamp is only about six kilometers from Noyon, and although the two shared many of the same patrons (such as Bishop Simon of Vermandois), the interior of Ourscamp, with its flat and massive wall surfaces, restricted clerestory, and relatively low vaults, is dominated by a completely different esthetic. Indeed, elements such as the pointed barrel vaults in the transept chapels suggest the direct importation of Burgundian solutions via the mother houses of the order.³⁰

As a postscript to this discussion of the twelfth-century church, it is interesting to note that the same spirit of restraint and conservatism dominate in the design of the thirteenth-century choir. The new chevet begun in c. 1232 preserves a distinctly monastic tone in spite of various progressive features in the structure.³¹ Both the height of the vaults and the two-story disposition of the earlier church are preserved in the new choir, but now the flat panels of wall have been eliminated in favor of clerestory windows that fill the entire width of each bay and descend to the top of the arcade (Plate 1). However, if the tracery patterns are compared with those of other contemporary monuments, such as Amiens, the restraint and simplicity of the forms at Ourscamp are quite striking. Base profiles indicate that an exterior "envelope" of radiating chapels was constructed first, so that most of

²⁸ The statues of the Cistercian order restricted burials to those of kings, queens, archbishops, and bishops. See Canivez, *Statuta*, 1, 1134 (47); 1152 (10), and 1157 (63), in which founders are also given the right to burial in the church.

²⁹ The rib vaults of the abbey church at Noirlac seem to date to around 1175–1180 (Aubert, *Architecture cistercienne*, 1:246; and Crozet, *Abbaye de Noirlac*, p. 53). Branner states that the first rib vaults of the Yonne valley were used at Pontigny and dates their appearance there to c. 1150 (*Burgundian Gothic*, pp. 16–17).

³⁰ Pointed barrel vaults still survive in occasional churches in the area around Ourscamp, however; for example in the transept of the church of Rieux in the Oise.

³¹ C. Bruzelius, "Cistercian High Gothic: The Abbey Church of Longpont and the Architecture of the Cistercians in the Early Thirteenth Century," *Analecta cisterciensia* 35 (1979), 125.

the new choir could have been constructed around the earlier chevet before it was destroyed (Plate 8b). The actual juncture between the new choir and the older transepts seems to have been somewhat delayed, however; the capitals of the crossing piers of the choir are distinctly different and somewhat later in style than the other capitals in the new program, and the windows inserted in the upper wall of the east side of the transept date only to the early fourteenth century (Plates 1 and 6). Possibly finances were a problem, although Abbot William, in office until 1256 or 1257, is recorded as having established the plan of the new choir and having donated the choir stalls, the latter suggesting that the new structure may have been in use by his demise.³² In any case, the homogeneity of structure which is so striking in the fragments of the transepts and nave is lacking in the thirteenth-century choir, where work may not have been complete until the insertion of the windows in the east wall of the transept in the early fourteenth century. But this delicate Rayonnant choir, with its slender proportions and sympathetic relation to the earlier structure, is an example of the persistence of a Cistercian esthetic into the thirteenth century, and is relevant here only as a confirmation of the importance of this esthetic in the architecture of the order as a whole.

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

³² This has been pointed out by Héliot, "Choeur," p. 158.