



# Cistercian Abbeys: History and Architecture

*Jean-Francois Leroux-Dhuys, Henri Gaud*

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Thanks to their spirituality, asceticism, technical skills, and craftsmanship, the Cistercians became one of the most influential monastic orders of the high Middle Ages. Nine centuries ago, when the dynamic energy of the Benedictine order was threatening to ossify into mere grandeur and formalism, the Cistercians returned to the original "holy rules" of Benedict of Nursia and working with their hands. The stone witnesses of this era include majestic monastic buildings. With their austere dignity and sublime absence of decoration, Cistercian ecclesiastical buildings came to stand for awe-inspiring spiritual clarity and purity. This book presents masterpieces of Cistercian architecture in France, Great Britain, Germany, Austria, Portugal, Spain, and Italy. A selection of original texts, pictures, and chronological tables offers information on the artistic and cultural-historical characteristics of the individual monasteries and their inhabitants. An impressive and inspiring oeuvre!

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