

The restoration of the Martinikerk, Groningen, 1955–1975

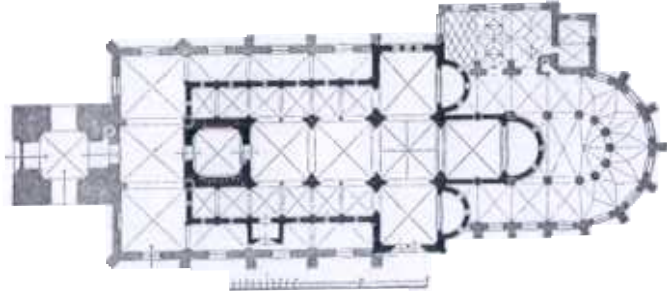
PIETER LAUWRENS DE VRIEZE*



* *Pieter Lauwrens de Vrieze*, until his retirement in 1984, was chief consultant to the Dutch Reformed Church, Groningen, on monumental historic architecture.

FIG. 1. The Martinikerk on the Haubois map (c.1640).

FIG. 2. Scale diagram.
Black areas: Romanesque-
Gothic church (c.1225).



The magnificent and historic churches of Groningen are undoubtedly among the glories of the city's medieval heritage. Those with a flair for investigation can read the whole story of the city's growth and attainment of prosperity from its architectural development.

In the thirteenth century Groningen boasted three great churches—the St Walburgskerk, the Martinikerk and the St Nicolaaskerk, later known as Onze Lieve Vrouwe ter Aakerk—indicating that the city was already an important centre for the whole of the north of the country. The 'villa Gruoninga' referred to in Emperor Henry III's deed of gift to the See of Utrecht, traditionally occupied a strategic position in the north. Its situation was particularly favourable both for defensive purposes and for trade and communications.

Archaeological research, and in particular the discovery of the remains of perfectly preserved (or conserved) pointed oak stakes, has established that the current Martinikerk had at least one wooden predecessor. Around the year 1000 the wooden church was replaced by a small church built of tufa, with a single nave, a semicircular apse at the east end and a tower in the west which was, itself, replaced between about 1180 and 1225 by a brick basilica-type church in Romanesque-Gothic style (Figs 2, 3).

Although the church was altered and extended over the centuries, reaching a total length of 90 m (including the tower) and a width of 27 m, significant parts of the thirteenth-century brick structure have been preserved, namely the transept and the two nave bays, all of which are covered by a domical vault. The remains of a dwarf gallery and pottery acoustic vases built into the masonry of the north transept indicate North Italian influence.



FIG. 3. Seal dating from c.1250 showing the south facade of the Martinikerk of c.1225. Actual size 6 cm in diameter.

Gothic alterations (c 1400–1460)

In the fifteenth century it became necessary to extend the church. Groningen was the only major town in the northern Netherlands to prosper as a trading centre, becoming a member of the Hanseatic League.

Many stone houses were built, some of which are still standing, and three great churches and a number of religious foundations, hospitals and chapels were founded. Following the Church's sanctioning of the doctrine of transubstantiation, and perhaps because the number of chantries had increased greatly in the fourteenth century, the Martinikerk authorities wished to build a new and more spacious choir with a higher roof. The external dimensions of the choir are 24 by 32 m; the vault reaches a height of 25 m and the roof ridge stands 34 m above the floor of the church.

The choir displays a number of distinctive features: the architect chose to use an uneven number of pillars—thirteen instead of the usual even

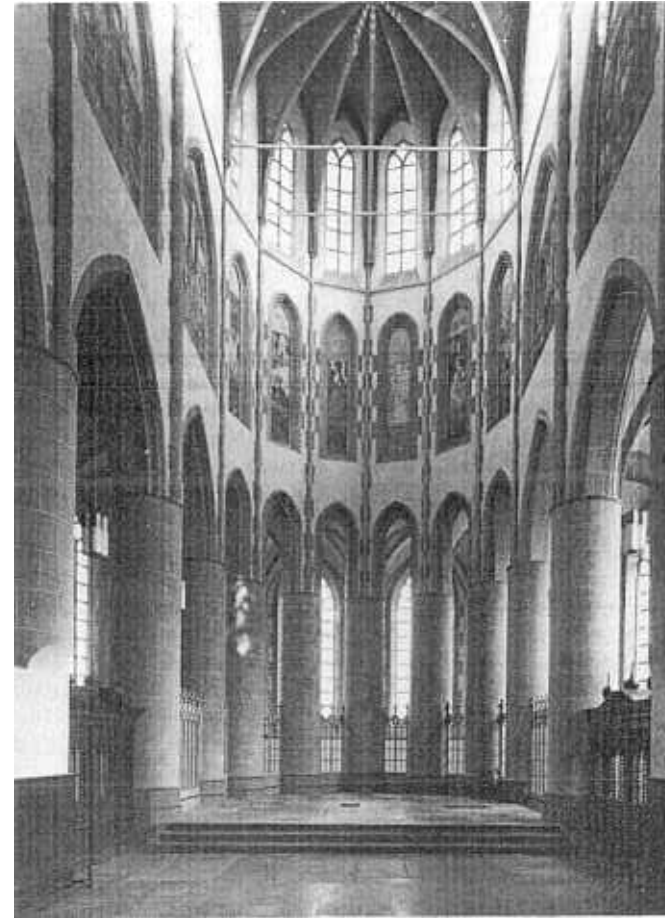


FIG. 4. View of the choir after restoration (1968) showing the pillar in the central axis. (Photograph: P. Boonstra, Groningen)

number, to separate the chancel from the ambulatory; as a result the church's longitudinal axis ends in a pillar and a buttress instead of an opening, with behind it a window in the ambulatory wall. Considering the importance of religious symbolism to architecture at that time—the pillars represent the twelve apostles—the architect must have been a very obstinate man. He also made the east wall of the choir hexagonal rather than pentagonal (*Fig. 4*). The choir was given stone vaulting which imposes a massive load and exerts immense outward thrust on the walls. Despite this, the architect chose to risk dispensing with flying buttresses. He did however install heavy iron tie-rods (5 × 5 cm) at the level where the vaulting begins. It is clear that over the years there were fears that such a daring structure would not withstand the test of time, since an attempt was made in 1774 to reinforce it with a kind of corset composed of iron bars welded together in a semi-circle just below the guttering and above the vaulting. This was removed during the most recent restoration work and replaced by pre-stressed steel rods cemented into the masonry just below the clerestory windowsills. As the oak tiebeams above the vault at the level of the gutters were also renewed the walls are now once again properly braced.

Another interesting feature is that the three 'storeys' of the walls used to be completely open: first, the fourteen intercolumniations at ground level; above them, fourteen pointed arches opening on to the ambulatory roof;¹ lastly, on the third 'storey', just below the brick vaulting, there is a series of fourteen pointed windows originally incorporating simple sandstone tracery which was replaced in the mid-nineteenth century by cast-iron work and again in 1964 by tracery of Krenzheimer limestone. Despite the somewhat squat proportions of the pillars, this 'transparent' wall must have made a very light and airy impression in its original openwork form (*Fig. 4*).

A number of other choirs have been found to have the same characteristics, i.e., a hexagonal east choir wall, circular columns set close together, and similarly moulded arches, capitals and window tracery. These are the church of St Liudger in Norden (near Emden in East Friesland), the church of St Nicholas in Halmstad (on the west coast of Sweden, north of Hälsingborg) and the church at Tartu in Estonia. These similarities lead us to consider the possibility that the men who built the choir of the Martinikerk gradually worked their way northwards and built or altered the other three churches. Such a hypothesis is not contradicted by the dates.

The most recent studies of an exposed keystone in the choir vault, which carries the Groningen city arms featuring a single-headed eagle as opposed to the more familiar double-headed one, led Schuitema Meyer and Van der Veen to conclude that the choir must have been completed before 1443. It has been established that the construction of the choir at Norden, which bears a striking resemblance to that of the Martinikerk

¹ This conclusion seems plausible in view of the tracery moulding and the ambulatory's remarkable roof structure featuring kingposts; early in the sixteenth century these arches were bricked up and covered by a series of wall paintings in a fine state of preservation depicting the life and death of Christ.

both in its overall appearance and in individual details, was begun in 1445. The church of St Nicholas at Halmstad was built in the second half of the fifteenth century, i.e., after 1450. The choir of the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul in Tartu dates from approximately 1473–1485.

Considering that most churches in the Netherlands were based on older examples elsewhere, it would seem appropriate to try to trace a model for the Gothic choir of the Martinikerk. It seems that this may be found in the church of San Francesco in Piacenza in northern Italy, a cruciform basilica which was completed in about 1278. Although the choir is much shorter than the one in Groningen, the similarities between various details are nonetheless striking. Whereas the end wall of the choir of the Martinikerk is hexagonal, that of San Francesco has four sides. The choirs of both churches are equally broad, but the seven columns in Groningen are far closer together than the five in Piacenza: so much so, indeed, that the space between the columns is less than the diameter of the columns themselves. The longitudinal axis in San Francesco thus also incorporates a thick round pillar, which, like its neighbours on both sides, is made of red brick and topped by a thin circular moulded cap of stone, a rudimentary capital. The pillars support high pointed brick arches covered in red plaster with the joints picked out in white, corresponding exactly with the original design of the Martinikerk. In Piacenza, the walls above these arches are flat and consist of white plaster, with colonnettes rising from the top of the heavy columns to the springings of the vaults, at which point they in turn are capped by small stone capitals with simple mouldings (*Fig. 5*). The plasterwork of the colonnettes is red with the joints painted white. In the Martinikerk the area above the arches consists of a further series of pointed arches, originally containing windows which looked out onto the roof construction of the ambulatory. Otherwise its design follows the Italian example. The church of San Francesco features lancet windows above each of which is a small window in the shape of a hexafoil. Finally the choir with its four-sided end wall is covered by groin vaults plastered in white and decorated with big and small red painted stars. The ribs, which converge in a multi-coloured rosette, are also red with the joints picked out in white.

In 1425 the Martinikerk was built and painted in virtually the same style except for the circular hexafoil windows and the red stars on the vault. Since the original layer of plaster was removed during restoration in 1923–1924 it is no longer possible to ascertain if the arches of the topmost lancet windows in Groningen were also covered in red plaster with the joints picked out in white.

Although other examples of choirs with equilateral end walls exist, the possibility that the architect of the Martinikerk had studied San Francesco in Piacenza cannot be ruled out. Once the choir was completed, in about 1425, it was decided to start work on altering the nave. By that time attitudes to Gothic architecture had changed and the



FIG. 5. Piacenza: interior of church of San Francesco (c.1278) showing the pillar in the central axis. (Photograph: Bromofoto, Milan)

influence of humanist and Renaissance ideas was being felt in the northern Netherlands as elsewhere. Neither written record nor oral tradition reveals why the original plan for a nave with a high central aisle was dropped. In the end it was decided to preserve the Romanesque-Gothic transept and the two western bays in the nave dating from c. 1225 with their old heavy brick vaulting and to replace the narrow side aisles with aisles as broad as the nave with late Gothic cross vaults above them. This created the 'hall church'. During the alterations the old tower collapsed (1468) probably partly because part of the east wall had been removed to incorporate the tower area into the interior of the nave. The collapse destroyed a number of aisle vaults which had just been completed and enabled the church to be extended westwards by adding another bay and a new tower beyond the bay (1449–1578). This completed the present building which measures 90 m (including the tower), by 32 m in the nave.

There may have been several reasons why the building was extended in the same style (as was the thirteenth-century church of Our Lady of the A or Onze Lieve Vrouwekerk ter A at the same time). These were as follows:

- a. an increase in the population coupled with a lack of space for the rapidly growing number of altars;
- b. lack of funds to pay for the church to be radically rebuilt in the Gothic style;
- c. a change in architectural views on space and design: from soaring heights to a more earthbound concept, characterised by greater width and more floor space.

Be that as it may, the result is a remarkable combination of three disparate elements: the very tall slender tower, faced with sandstone; the wide low nave and the choir and ambulatory rising 10 m higher above it (Fig. 1). Together they form a structure which may not be elegant, harmonious or balanced but which nevertheless dominates the city centre of Groningen with its distinctive silhouette.

Restoration 1961–1975

Although much of the medieval market place and surrounding streets were destroyed in April 1945 during fighting between Canadian liberation troops and the German occupying forces, the Martinikerk and the tower were untouched. Once restoration of the tower had been completed (1936–1948), it was natural that, in the period of post-war reconstruction, the church should be next in line for restoration. In 1955 the author was the architect responsible for supervision and maintenance of the city's churches, which included three major listed buildings. With another architect, Philip Bolt of The Hague, he was commissioned to draw up a plan and a budget for restoring the Martinikerk. The terms of reference allowed a great deal of scope without restrictive conditions or a prescribed programme. At that time it was assumed that the church would remain in use for Reformed Protestant worship for many years to come.

The following list of principles and objectives was drawn up:

A. Liturgical objectives

- a. to restore the east-west axis; the 'Holy Line';
- b. to maintain the 1837 partition between the choir and the nave;
- c. to arrange the nave to allow sermons to be preached there;
- d. to replace the semi-circular benches, placed transversely, by individual chairs facing east, so that the church could be used for other purposes;
- e. to move the pulpit from the central south pillar to the south-west pillar in the crossing;
- f. to arrange the choir for the possibility of communion during special services and for exhibitions;
- g. to raise the sanctuary, which was lowered in 1930, by three steps and to install a moveable communion table.

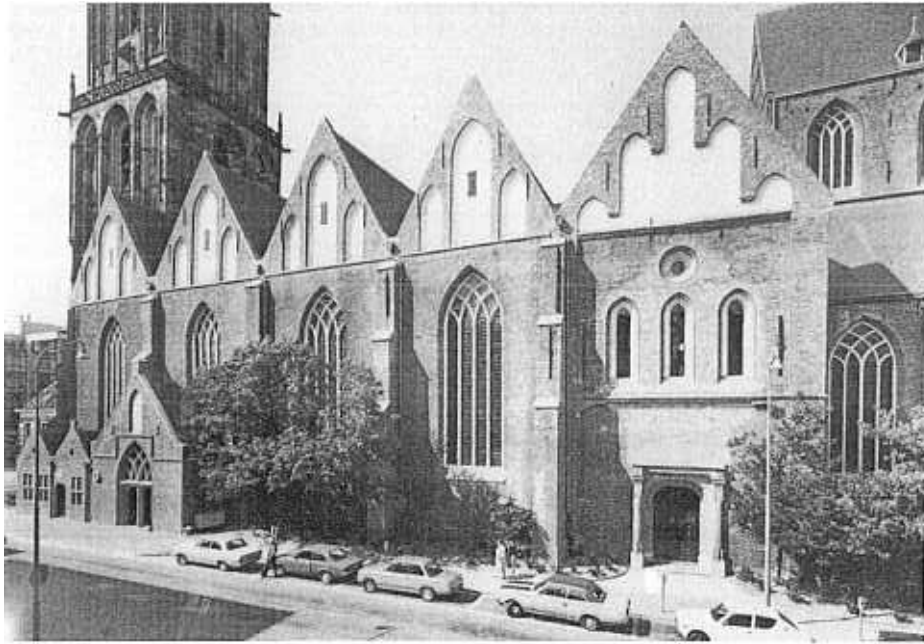


FIG. 6. The Martinikerk, showing the restored facade, 1976. (Photograph: University of Groningen)

B. Architectural and structural objectives

- a. Restoration of the 1480 roofs, i.e. five transverse roofs with shaped gables, for structural and historical reasons and for reasons of art history and aesthetics (Fig. 6).
- b. Restoration of the gothic windows under the four west gables by lowering the window sill (raised in the nineteenth century), removing the wooden frames and restoring the old stone tracery and panes of leaded glass (Fig. 7).
- c. Reconstruction of the south portal with the 'bread and butter house' (where food was distributed to the needy by the deacons), for practical, historical, aesthetic and financial reasons.
- d. Closing off the choir using the three existing nineteenth-century wooden screens. The central screen (beneath the chancel arch) is the only one which contains mostly glass. This improves the acoustics in the nave and permits the choir and nave to be used separately. It is also necessary because the choir will not be heated.
- e. Preservation of both wooden galleries in the north, dating from 1628 and 1664. The students' stalls (dating from 1843) directly in front of the

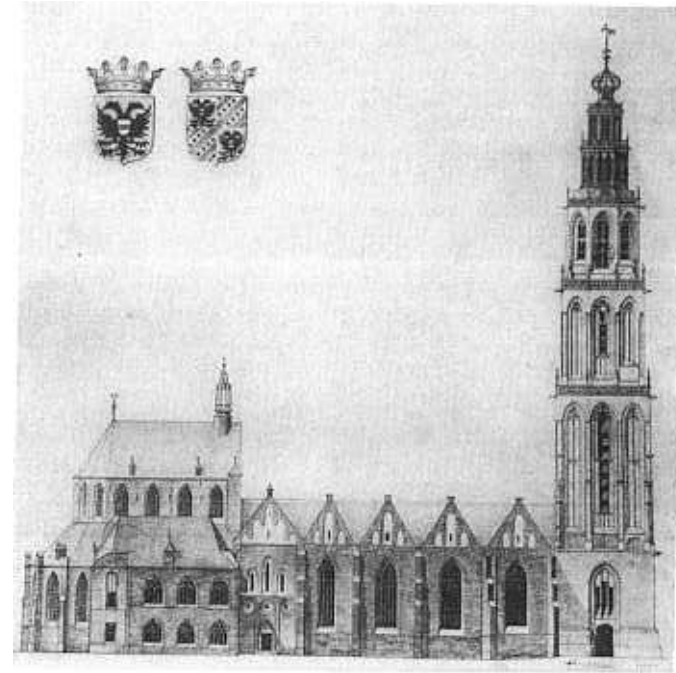


FIG. 7. Design for the restoration of the north facade 1963.

- organ will be removed, as will the women's stalls (1833) directly in front of the choir.
- f. Moving the pulpit to the south-west crossing pillar, i.e. shifting it one bay eastwards.
- g. Resurfacing the floor in hard pine to improve the acoustics for both speaking and making music. When the wooden floor from 1854 was taken up it was found that most of the gravestones which had originally paved the church had been removed. Most of them were sold in the nineteenth century. The remaining gravestones will be laid only in the transept. A raised wooden platform will be placed in front of the organ for performances.
- h. Most of the furniture will have to be moveable to allow it to be used in a variety of ways in future. The nave will no longer be used exclusively by the Reformed Church but by other groups and organisations as well. A new administrative body will be formed to organise this.
- i. Central heating in the nave (but not the choir), the sexton's house, the south portal, the 'bread and butter house', the sacristy and the north chapel and its first storey.

C. Possible uses

From the very beginning of the project the architects considered the possibility of the church being put to other uses, as a result of such factors as falling church attendance, the depopulation of the city centre and a shift in church activities from the city centre where they have traditionally been concentrated to the new residential areas already constructed or still at the planning stage. They had to plan for a changing and, to Protestant eyes a richer, liturgy, a congregation that was less sedentary, and new and multi-purpose uses, all of which called for moveable furniture rather than fixed pews (*Fig. 8*).

This old and venerable church and outstanding national monument should once again assume a place in the spiritual, socio-economic and cultural life of our contemporary community, always bearing in mind that it is better to put it to a use for which it was not originally intended than not to use it at all. Good lighting, heating and acoustics are thus essential, as are modern facilities such as a kitchen, toilets, cloakroom, rooms for meetings and storerooms for furniture. None of these amenities is subsidised in the Netherlands; they must be financed by the Reformed Church itself over and above its share of the cost of the restoration work (which is 99% subsidised). Unfortunately a shortage of funds has made it impossible to provide some of these facilities.

Results

1. General

The restoration of the church combined reconstruction and conservation work. Nineteenth-century alterations which were technically and often architecturally unsatisfactory have been replaced by alternatives which were more suitable in terms both of building materials and design. One example of this is the cast-iron windows which were very susceptible to rust and were spoiling the brick walls. The cast-iron windows in the ambulatory were replaced by stone-framed windows as long ago as 1923/4. At the same time a number of fine wall paintings (seccos) dating from c.1530 were uncovered in the choir under the plaster, and by 1955 these were in urgent need of restoration (*Fig. 9*). Other alterations included places where the walls had been pierced, entrances which had been moved, niches that had been covered up, badly constructed buttresses of hard nineteenth-century brick, leaking cast-iron guttering, etc.

2. Aesthetic and architectural results

After a great deal of research and discussion with colleagues, art historians and the architects of the Department for the Preservation of Monuments and Historic Buildings in the Netherlands the large, heavy roof constructions which were added in 1688 as an emergency measure

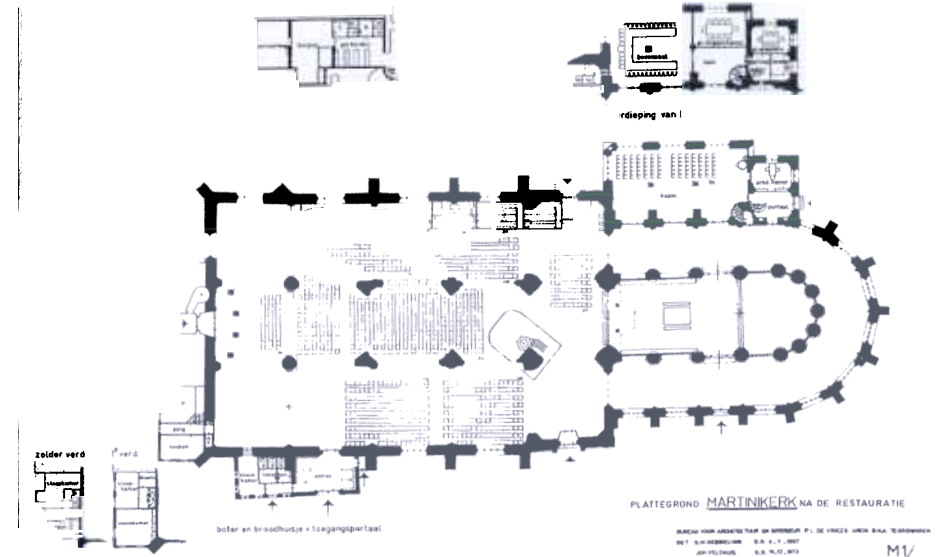


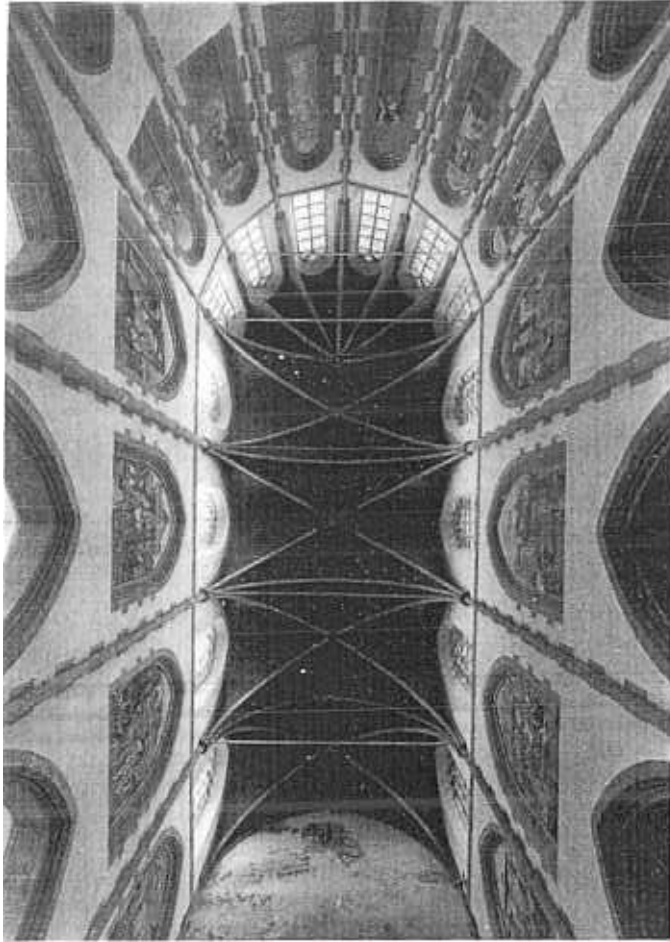
FIG. 8. Diagram: layout following restoration (197

after a storm were once again replaced by five shaped gables with transverse roofs modelled on old illustrations. Because of the heavy lateral pressure and the fact that the 1.10 m thick gables were giving way, a heavy weight had to be exerted on them to bring the line of thrust back within the masonry.

An additional consideration was that the burgomaster, town councillors and local residents also favoured this solution. 'This reflected a strong desire on the part of the citizens to see their city and its church returned to their former state' (Gutschow, 1948).

While the restoration of the gables involved partial reconstruction, the south portal and the 'bread and butter house' (where food was distributed to the needy by the deacons), knocked down in 1853, had to be completely rebuilt. The original plan included all the stone ornamentation but when the work was carried out in 1972 on behalf of the Department for the Preservation of Monuments and Historic Buildings it was done in a simplified form. This piece of construction was considered necessary and desirable for the following reasons: as a useful and necessary service/administration area; as an element in city planning, to narrow the entrance to the street once more (this had been widened when

FIG. 9. Vaulting in the choir (1425) and seccos (c.1530).



the east wall of the Grote Markt was rebuilt); and as an aesthetic feature to help counterbalance the great physical bulk of the nave.

3. Nave

Two architectural styles have been preserved in the nave (Figs 9, 10), together with their characteristic colours, i.e. the Romanesque-Gothic (c.1250) and the late Gothic (c.1450). The former style is evident in the vaults with coloured ribs and tendrils painted on the panels; the acoustic vases with coloured decoration in the vault of the northern transept; and

FIG. 10. Interior of the nave looking westwards, with the Schnitger organ. (Photograph: Agtmaal, 1933)



the imitation stone pillars (dark grey), carved foliated sandstone capitals and several two-dimensional capitals painted onto the plaster. It was decided to restore the Romanesque windows in the north and south transepts as a reminder that the Martinikerk is the Romanesque-Gothic mother church in the province of Groningen where there are still about forty smaller thirteenth-century village churches.

The rest of the church is late Gothic (1450–80) with columns and vaults with coloured trim dating from c.1480 (imitation sandstone with some imitation brick). A pinewood floor was laid because the gravestones on the floor had been sold in 1854 and there was a high level of reverberation which was undesirable in a protestant church used for preaching. The

FIG. 11. Interior of the nave, with chairs. In the centre the north wall of the transept, with Romanesque-Gothic windows which have been partly reconstructed and partly restored. (Photograph: *Publicam*, 1976)



glass screen (c.1840) between the choir and the nave was reinstated for historical and practical reasons. The gentry's pews in the crossing and in front of the organ were removed to re-emphasise the east-west axis but both of the seventeenth-century pews along the north wall have been left in place. The seventeenth-century pulpit was moved from the southern centre pillar (1854) to its original location at the southwest crossing pillar.

The large Schnitger organ (originally built in the fourteenth century) with 54 stops, was left in the same place although the pipes had temporarily to be removed. The restoration work is being carried out by the north German organ builder Jürgen Ahrend from Leer (East Friesland) and will be completed in 1984. A simple convector heater system has been installed in the floor and under the large windows of the church.

4. Choir

The choir was restored in 1923/4 at which time the seccos dating from c.1530 were uncovered and restored. The most recent restoration took place between 1961 and 1969 and involved the following work: the floor of the sanctuary, lowered in 1930, was raised again by three steps; the exposed brick of the ambulatory walls was re-stuccoed, having been stripped of plaster in 1930; the seccos were restored again (series of 15 paintings depicting the birth, life and death of Christ); the coloured trim from c.1530 was restored, i.e. imitation sandstone blocks and a blue sky with golden stars (in 1425 the church was white-washed with red ribs and pillars; the north chapel which had been divided up in the nineteenth century was once again converted into a single area with two pillars and three tier rib vaults; the sacristy has been given a new outside entrance and divided into the minister's vestry and an entrance hall with a wooden spiral staircase; the new cellar created under the north chapel now houses the central heating boilers, a cloakroom, toilets and creche; the first floor of the chapel accommodates a small kitchen and three meeting rooms; and, finally, the Jugendstil (Art Nouveau) paintings from 1901 which were painted over in 1950 have been uncovered again and restored.

Conclusions

The changes in opinions on restoration work over the last twenty-five years can be clearly seen in the Martinikerk in Groningen and thus, according to contemporary opinion, themselves form part of the most recent architectural history of the church which deserves to be preserved.

It is an illusion to think that when working on major churches and cathedrals one can have a comprehensive, unified restoration plan, free from any time-specific subjectivity, before restoration work begins. This would be like preparing the report on the restoration project (which is sometimes required) before the work has been completed rather than afterwards.

Since about 1974 this sort of total restoration plan has been demanded in all new schemes in the Netherlands. The client, architect and users have to leave more or less everything unchanged, with the result that they are sometimes not allowed to improve on shoddy repair work and bad nineteenth-century alterations to old surviving structures. This requirement, moreover, is often made without any extensive preliminary research into historical, architectural or technical data and circumstances being carried out.

The theoretical blueprint thus begins to take on a life of its own, divorced from the real-world discoveries being made on the site. Architects, their clients and officials from the monuments and historic buildings department all suffer because of such plans, which are impracticable and place undesirable constraints on the development of a restoration project.

Art historians and architectural theorists who imagine themselves to be objective exert far too much influence on this aspect of preservation work. Unfortunately there is a serious shortage of practical experience and expertise in technical, financial and organisational matters.

The professionals directly concerned, such as preservation experts (including curators and administrators) and art historians and theorists are not the only people involved. The owners, users, local citizens and architects and indeed everybody who regularly sees the building also all have their own views, ideas and opinions and, more importantly, their affection for a historic monument such as a medieval church which can be of such importance to them and which often serves as a landmark for a whole region. Their opinions should be taken into account very seriously when a restoration plan is being formulated. It is not right for official bodies to adopt a superior and omniscient attitude or to protect themselves from criticism by arranging that discussions can only be conducted with faceless committees or government departments, along the lines of the saying: 'You don't talk to the government you only correspond with it'.

One particular problem in the Netherlands is that of putting many of the restored churches to use once again. With the advance of modern culture and technical progress, many old churches in the city centres are losing their congregations. In an affluent and wasteful society it becomes almost impossible to find God, and the Gospel no longer exerts any power, however much we may pay lip service to its fundamental ideas as guidelines, principles or sources of inspiration.

Perhaps religious rituals and speech must die out completely if they are ever to emerge in some new form as a thriving and salutary force.

The author has set up an association of trustees of major historic churches in the Netherlands which, since 1981, has been collecting together information on experiences with management, maintenance and the use of churches for different religious and secular purposes. This association is trying to promote a policy of active use and with its 100 members, responsible for some 150 old churches, it is trying to influence administrators and politicians so as to ensure that more attention is paid not only to restoring historic buildings but also to the survival of churches and their reintegration in contemporary cultural life, and that funds are made available for maintenance and running costs. In this way they seek to preserve these restored (mainly protestant) churches and pass them on to future generations.

Résumé

Les recherches archéologiques ont montré qu'une église actuelle avait été précédée par au moins une autre église en bois, reconstruite une première fois vers l'an mille puis à nouveau vers 1180 et 1225 sous forme de basilique en briques de style romano-gothique. Au

XV^e siècle l'église dut être agrandie aussi un nouveau chœur plus spacieux fut-il construit. Ce chœur a une voûte de pierre qui exerce une forte charge et une immense poussée sur les murs qui tendent à s'écarter. En 1774 cette structure hardie fut

consolidée par une sorte de corset qui fut enlevé/lors des derniers travaux de restauration et remplacé par des tiges d'acier pré-contraint. Les trois niveaux des murs du chœur étaient à l'origine complètement ajoutés mais au début du XVI^e siècle les arches du niveau intermédiaire furent remplies et cachées par des peintures murales; finalement, au milieu du XIX^e siècle, des éléments de fonte furent insérés à la place des nervures de grès originales, eux-mêmes remplacés en 1964 par des nervures de pierre tendre.

Lorsque le chœur fut achevé vers 1425, la nef fut modifiée à son tour: le transept romano-gothique et les deux baies ouest de la nef furent préservés mais les bas-côtés furent élargis à la mesure de la nef centrale. La vieille tour s'écroula au cours de ces travaux et à l'occasion de sa reconstruction, l'église fut agrandie vers l'ouest pour donner le bâtiment actuel.

La place du marché et les rues avoisinantes du Moyen Âge furent détruites en 1945 mais l'église fut épargnée. Aussi lorsque la tour fut achevée (1936-48), il sembla naturel de restaurer l'église. L'auteur parle des objectifs dans le domaine de la liturgie, de l'architecture et de la structure et envisage plusieurs utilisations possibles pour le bâtiment. Il note qu'il est préférable d'utiliser une telle construction selon son usage original que de ne pas l'utiliser du tout.

La restauration de l'église allia reconstruction et conservation. Les altérations du XIX^e siècle qui étaient techniquement et souvent architecturalement peu satisfaisantes furent remplacées avec des matériaux et un style plus acceptables. Après de nombreuses recherches et de discussions, les pesantes constructions soutenant le toit qui avaient été ajoutées en 1688 furent remplacées par cinq arcs avec couverture transversale suivant le modèle d'illustrations anciennes. Le portail sud et 'la maison du gagne-pain' démolis en 1853 furent totalement reconstruits parce que qu'ils fournissent un espace utile et aussi pour des raisons esthétiques.

L'auteur examine en détail les choix quant à la restauration de la nef et du chœur et il ajoute ses propres commentaires sur l'ouvrage accompli: les travaux entrepris depuis vingt-cinq ans font eux-mêmes partie de l'histoire architecturale de l'église et il est vain de penser que l'on peut établir d'avance un plan unifié et compréhensif de restauration quand il s'agit d'une grande église. Aux Pays-Bas c'est pourtant ce qui est demandé depuis 1974, ce que l'auteur critique car c'est ne pas tenir compte des découvertes continuelles qui se font en cours de travaux. Il critique également certains historiens d'art et théoriciens de l'architecture qui se croient objectifs et qui exercent une influence démesurée sur cet aspect de la conservation. Selon lui, non seulement les gens de la profession

devraient être impliqués mais aussi les propriétaires, les utilisateurs, le public, bref tous ceux que regardent souvent le bâtiment; qui ont leurs idées sur lui et qui lui portent une affection qui peut être importante pour eux.

Resumen

Las investigaciones arqueológicas han dejado sentado que la actual iglesia tuvo por lo menos una precursora de madera, que fue reemplazada primero cerca del año 1000 y luego entre cerca de 1180 y 1225 por una iglesia tipo basilica, de ladrillo, en estilo románico-gótico. En el siglo XV se hizo necesario ampliar la iglesia y se construyó un coro nuevo y más espacioso. Se le dotó de una bóveda de piedra que impone una carga masiva y ejerce un inmenso empuje exterior sobre los muros. En 1774, esta atrevida estructura fue reforzada con una especie de corsé, el cual se quitó durante la más reciente restauración y fue reemplazado por barras de acero pretensado. Los tres niveles de los muros del coro estaban completamente abiertos, pero a principios del siglo XVI los arcos del elemento central fueron tapiados con ladrillo y cubiertos por una serie de pinturas murales; y a mediados del siglo XIX, se insertaron recambios de hierro de forja en lugar de la tracería original de piedra arenisca. A su vez, éstos se vieron reemplazados en 1964 por tracería de piedra caliza.

Una vez completado el coro, cerca de 1425, se decidió empezar obras para cambiar la nave central. El crucero románico-gótico y los dos intercolumnios de poniente de la nave fueron conservados, pero las estrechas naves laterales fueron reemplazadas por otras tan amplias como la central. Durante estas obras se hundió la antigua torre y, al reconstruirla, se extendió la iglesia hacia poniente, completando así el edificio actual.

A pesar de que gran parte del mercado medieval y calles adyacentes quedó destruida en abril de 1945, la iglesia quedó incólume. Al finalizar la restauración de la torre (1936-48), era natural que le tocara a la iglesia el turno de ser restaurada. En este artículo, el autor incluye los objetivos litúrgicos, los objetivos arquitectónicos y estructurales, y la consideración de usos posibles del edificio. Indica que es mejor destinar un edificio tal al uso para el cual fue originalmente destinado que no emplearlo para nada.

La restauración de la iglesia combinó obras de reconstrucción y de conservación. Las alteraciones del siglo XIX que técnicamente y a menudo arquitectónicamente eran insatisfactorias han sido reemplazadas por alternativas más adecuadas por lo que se refiere a material de construcción y diseño. Después de

diversas investigaciones y largos debates, las grandes y pesadas edificaciones añadidas al tejado en 1688 fueron reemplazadas por cinco gabletes de cubierta transversal según ilustraciones antiguas. El portal sur y el 'comedor de pobres', demolidos en 1853, tuvieron que ser reconstruidos totalmente, en parte porque proporciona alojamiento útil y en parte por motivos visuales.

El autor especifica las decisiones tomadas respecto a la restauración de la nave y del coro, y añade sus conclusiones sobre las obras. Comenta que las obras emprendidas durante los últimos veinticinco años forman parte de la historia arquitectónica de la iglesia, y que es una ilusión suponer que, en el caso de iglesias importantes, puede disponerse de planes completos e integrales para la restauración antes de que empiecen

las obras. Desde 1974, esta clase de planes son los que se han exigido en Holanda, lo cual critica el autor puesto que no se tiene en consideración los descubrimientos hechos continuamente a medida que avanzan las obras. Critica también algunos historiadores del arte y teóricos de la arquitectura que se creen objetivos y que podrían ejercer excesiva influencia sobre este aspecto de las obras de conservación. Cree que los profesionales directamente implicados no son los únicos que cuentan. Los propietarios, usuarios, ciudadanos y todos cuantos ven el edificio con regularidad tienen también sus propias ideas y opiniones, así como el afecto hacia un monumento histórico que para ellos puede ser importante.