Romanesque Art and Architecture
11th and 12th century
Romanesque in Europe

- 11\textsuperscript{th} and 12\textsuperscript{th} centuries were a period of economic growth and prosperity in Europe.
- Crusades taking place led to opening up trade between East and West
- Worries about the apocalypse at the turn of the new millennium lead to wide spread church building.
- Last Judgment relief sculptures became popular over church portals in a semi circular niche called the tympanum.
- Sculptures were more symbolic than realistic
- Communicated religious beliefs to illiterate population
- Pilgrimages became popular, large churches were built and designed to accommodate pilgrim adopted Roman basilica plan with radiating chapels behind the apse.
- Recipe for cement was lost, so buildings were heavy and low
- Reliquaries were also important to draw crowds to a church
- Virgin Mary became a significant figure inspired by the Byzantine Theotokos figure,
Romanesque Culture

- Romanesque means in the Roman manner, and the term specifically applies to an 11th and 12th century European style.
- The word is a reflection of an architectural style prevalent at the time.
- The style displayed the solid masonry walls, rounded arches, and masonry vaults characteristic of Imperial Roman buildings.
- Eventually the term was applied to all the art work of the period, even though the art work was influenced by many other sources.
  - Including Byzantine, Islamic, Early Medieval, and Animal Art Style
11th and 12th Century Europe (1000’s-1100’s)

• Early in the 11th century, Europe was still divided into many small political and economic units ruled by powerful families.
  – The nations we know today like, Italy, France and Germany did not exist.
  – The king of France only ruled a small area around Paris, the Duke of Normandy controlled the northwest coast and the Duke of Burgundy ruled the lands south of Paris.

• However, by the end of the 12th century……..
  – The lands around Paris were beginning to emerge as a national state, and after the Norman conquest of Britain in 1066, the Duke of Normandy became the King of England.
  – The lands of the Holy Roman Empire, Italy and Germany remained fragmented, controlled by local leaders.
Life in 11th and 12th Century Europe

• Europe remained an agricultural society, with land the primary source of wealth and power.

• The feudal system remained in place in many parts of Europe, governing social and political relations.

• The manor, an agricultural estate in which peasants worked in exchange for a place to live and food, was the economic foundation of the society.
Classical Revival during the Romanesque Period

• In the Middle Ages, Western scholars rediscovered many classical Greek and Roman texts that had been preserved for centuries in Islamic Spain and the eastern Mediterranean.

• The combination of this intellectual renewal and economic prosperity enabled the arts to flourish.

• In the 11th century, the first university was established at Bologna in Italy and in the 12th century, universities were established at Paris, Oxford and Cambridge.

• This renewed intellectual and artistic activity has been called the 12th century renaissance, a cultural rebirth.
The Church

- Remember in the early Middle Ages, the Church and state had forged an often fruitful alliance.

- Christian leaders helped support the spread of Christianity across Europe.

- The Church, in return, provided rulers with social and spiritual support, and it supplied them with educated officials.

- As a result secular and religious officials became closely intertwined.

- In the 11th and 12th centuries, Christian Europe formerly on the defensive against the spread of Islam, went on the offensive.

- In 1095, Pope Urban II called for the first crusade to retake Jerusalem and the Holy Land.
The Crusades

- The first Crusade, the only successful one, resulted in the capture of Jerusalem in 1099, and the establishment of a short lived Christian state in Palestine.
- Subsequent Crusades were for the most part military failures.
- Despite their failures on the military level, the crusading movement as a whole had far-reaching cultural and economic consequences.
- The West’s encounters with the more sophisticated material culture of the Islamic world and Byzantine Empire created a demand for goods from the East.
- This in turn stimulated trade, which led to an increasingly urban society.
- Trade promoted the growth of towns, cities, and an urban class of merchants and artisans.
The Age of the Pilgrimage

• During the late Middle Ages, people in western Europe once again began to travel in large numbers as traders, soldiers, and Christians on pilgrimages.

• Pilgrims throughout history have always journeyed to holy sites - the ancient Greeks to Delphi, early Christians to Jerusalem and to Rome, and Muslims to Mecca.

• The journey in the Middle Ages could be dangerous, but pilgrims would stop along the way to venerate local saints through their relics and visit the places where miracles were believed to have taken place.
During Medieval times, Christians made pilgrimages to holy sites to demonstrate their faith. Jerusalem, Rome, and Santiago de Compostela in Spain were the most important pilgrimage sites. The map shows popular pilgrimage routes in France and Spain.
The Romanesque Church

• The new Romanesque towns were centers of *ecclesiastical* influence.
• Bishops and archbishops built towers, gates, and walls, as well as churches.
• The immense building enterprise that raised thousands of churches in western Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was not, however, due solely to the revival of urban life.
• It also reflected the widely felt relief and thanksgiving that the conclusion of the first Christian millennium in the year 1000 did not bring an end to the world as many had feared.
• In the Romanesque age, the construction of churches became almost an obsession.... The new churches had to be covered with cut stone, because the technology of concrete construction had been lost long before.
• The structural problems that arose from this need for a solid masonry were to help determine the "look" of Romanesque architecture throughout most of Europe.

Romanesque Church Design

Basic form follows Early Christian basilica plan.
- Rounded arches
- Thick walls

Several key developments:
- Wide transepts
- Multiple ambulatories and chapels – housed more relics
- Cruciform plan
- Tall towers
- Often built on hills
- Barrel vaulted naves = excellent acoustics (chant, plainsong common)

- Wooden roofs still widespread but stone roofs become popular
  - better for acoustics
  - grandeur attracted pilgrims
  - stone protected against fire

- Ribs vaulting – added flexibility
  - Ribs followed crossing of a groin vault
  - Supportive and decorative
  - Strengthened vault
  - Ribs were constructed first and supported the scaffolding of the vault
Hallmarks of Romanesque Architecture

- **Ambulatory** walkways for pilgrims, so monks would be undisturbed as pilgrims visited relics.
- **Radiating chapels** places for pilgrims to stop and pray while visiting.

- **Stone vaults**, both barrel and groin, like Romans-helped acoustics for Gregorian chants.
- **Groin vaulting** in side bays, often with ribbing.
- **Tympanum** semi circular portals, over entry ways, filled with relief sculpture, at Sainte-Foy there is a large relief of the "Last Judgment".
- **Capitals** on columns had ornate carving.
- **Sculptural jambs** were used along the sides of entries, and usually contained figures carved from stone.
A Romanesque Building Boom

• The 11th and 12th centuries were a period of great building activity in Europe.
• Castles, manor houses, churches, and monasteries arose everywhere.
• Extraordinary that all this building took place at the same time that money was committed to fight the Crusades.
• The buildings that still stand, despite weather, vandalism, neglect and war, testify to the power of religious faith and local pride.
Abbey Church of Saint Foy

- Conques, France
- 1050–1130 C.E.
Abbey Church of Saint Foy Pilgrimage Church
Conques, France

• The church is known as Saint Faith in English.
• It houses the reliquary statue of a martyred girl who appears rigid in appearance and glittering with gold and gems.
• Important church on the pilgrimage route to St. James in Compostela in Spain.
• Also an abbey where monks lived and worked.

"Conques, Aveyron, France"
by Phillip Capper from Wellington, New Zealand
- The plan is a **Latin cross basilica** with **side aisles** extended around the **transept** and the **apse** to form an **ambulatory**.
- This permitted visitors to circulate freely.
- Three smaller apses radiate from the main altar and apse and contained chapels.
- Tall towers were placed over the **crossing**, and on either side of the **narthex**.
Romanesque Church
Architectural Terms

- Church of St. Foy, Interior
- Cruciform
- Ambulatory
- Radiating chapels
- Apse
- Choir
- Crossing
- Transept
- Nave
- Side aisle
- Piers
- Clerestory
- Vaulting
- Ribs
Nave, Abbey Church of St. Foy

- Romanesque builders solved the problem of supporting the extra weight of the stone by constructing a **second story gallery** which diverts the thrust from the side of the wall back to the **piers** or **column** of the nave.
Diagram, Ribbed Barrel Vaulting
Ribbed barrel vaults

Piers with engaged columns and side aisles sharing and distributing weight.
Architectural Sculpture

- Although some Romanesque churches were very austere in appearance, others have a remarkable variety of painting and sculpture decorating both the interior and exterior.

- Stories of Jesus among the people or the lives and miracles of the saints often covered the walls.

- A profusion of monsters, animals, plants, geometric ornament, allegorical figures such as Lust and Greed, surround the major works of sculpture.

- All events seem to take place in a contemporary medieval setting and at times include contemporary individuals.
The Romanesque Carved Portal

- The carved portal is a significant innovation in Romanesque art.
- Complex works of sculpture, which combine biblical narrative, legends, folklore, history and Christian symbolism.
- By the early 12th century, sculpture depicting:
  - Christ in Majesty, (the Second Coming)
  - the Last Judgment
  - the final triumph of good over evil at the Apocalypse, could be seen on the portals of Romanesque churches in France and Spain.
- One reason that they are important is because they represent the first attempt at large-scale architectural sculpture since the end of the Roman Empire, about 600 years earlier.
• Carved portals are an important innovation in Romanesque architecture.
• The portal, or entrance into the church, was meant to impress, humble and terrify the viewer.
• In the Middle Ages, most of the lay people could not read or write, therefore, the portals often told a narrative story.
St Foy, West Portal, Last Judgment
- Christ as judge in center
- On his right is heaven, one his left hell
- Notice the difference in the two compositions
Christ Sitting in Judgment

- Reminder to those entering the church about the joys of heaven and torments of hell.
- On Christ’s right are Mary, Peter and possibly the founder of the monastery as well as an entourage of other saints.
- On his left are angels releasing the dead from their graves.
• Under the pediment are the Blessed (saved) in Paradise with Abraham.
• Above him notice the outstretched hand of God, who reaches out to kneeling Sainte Foy (Saint Faith).
• What’s Roman, what’s not?
• Right under Christ’s feet—you can see the clear division between a large doorway leading to Paradise and a terrifying mouth that leads the way to Hell.
• Hell is a chaotic, disorderly scene—notice how different it looks from the right-hand side of the tympanum.

• There is also a small pediment in the lower register of Hell, where the Devil, just opposite to Abraham, reigns over his terrifying kingdom.
- The devil, like Christ, is also an enthroned judge, deciding punishments for the damned.
- To the devil's left is a hanged man, a reference to Judas, who hanged himself after betraying Christ.
- Each sinners represents a type of sin to avoid, from adultery, to greed to arrogance,
Relics and Reliquaries

- **Relics** - bodies of saints, parts of bodies, or even things owned by saints - were thought to have miraculous powers, and they were kept in richly decorated **reliquaries**.

- Having and displaying relics of saints enhanced the prestige and wealth of a community.

- The Reliquary of St Foy one of the most famous in all of Europe

- The monks at Conques stole it from another church in order to attract more wealth and visitors to their town!

Reliquary statue of Sainte-Foy late 10th to early 11th century gold, silver gilt, jewels, and cameos over a wooden core, 33 ½ “s (Treasury, Sainte-Foy, Conques),
Reliquary of Saint Foy

- She was a young Christian living in Roman-occupied France during the second century.
- Condemned to die at 12 for her refusal to sacrifice to pagan gods
- Making her martyr – someone who dies for their faith.
Idolatry

• Fear that pilgrims would begin to worship the jewel-encrusted reliquary rather than what it represented

• Over time, travelers paid homage to Saint Foy by donating gemstones for the reliquary
Spolia

- Her face is thought to have originally been the head of a Roman statue of a child.
- The reuse of older materials is known as spolia.
- Using spolia was practical and it sometimes enhanced the value of the object because of it associated it with the Roman Empire.
- What do you think?
58. Church of Sainte-Foy. Conques, France. Romanesque Europe. Church: c. 1050–1130 C.E.; Reliquary of Saint Foy: ninth century C.E., with later additions. Stone (architecture); stone and paint (tympanum); gold, silver, gemstones, and enamel over wood (reliquary). (4 images)
Romanesque in Britain and Normandy

William the Conqueror
The Battle of Hastings 1066
and The Bayeux Tapestry
The North Sea

- In the 9th century the North Sea became a Viking waterway, linking Norwegian and Danish sailors to the lands surrounding the sea, similar to the way the Romans used the Mediterranean.
- In the early 10th century a band of Norse raiders seized the peninsula in North West France that came to be known as Normandy.
- Within a little more than a century, Normandy was transformed into one of Europe’s most powerful feudal domains.
- Norman Dukes were astute and skillful administrators, forming close alliances with the Church, supporting it with land and in return gaining the allegiance of the abbots and the bishops.
In 1066, Duke William II of Normandy invaded England, and after the Battle of Hastings, William the Conqueror became the king of England.

After the conquest, Norman nobles replaced the Anglo-Saxon nobility in England.

England became politically and culturally allied to Northern France.
Bayeux Tapestry
• The tapestry on display in the Bayeux Museum
  • SmartHistory Video
• Best known work of Norman art, 1066-82.
• Narrative wall hanging, **230 feet long**, 20 inches high.
• Documents events surrounding the Norman conquest of England in 1066.
• Piece of embroidery, not a tapestry.
• Embroidered in eight colors of wool on eight lengths of undyed linen.
• **Made for William the Conqueror’s half brother, Odo, who was bishop of Bayeux in Normandy and the Earl of Kent in England.**
The Bayeux Tapestry was probably made in Canterbury around 1070.

Because the tapestry was made shortly after the event, it is considered to be a somewhat accurate representation.

Produced by unknown artists.

The high quality of the needlework suggests Anglo-Saxon embroiderers.

- At the time, Anglo-Saxon needlework was prized throughout Europe.
• Skillfully laid out in three registers.
• Middle register contains a continuous narrative, explained by Latin inscriptions.
• Top and bottom registers contain decorative motifs and secondary subjects.
• William sets sail for England.
• The sea is crowded with ships, full of soldiers and horses. William sails in the ship, Mora, bought for him by his wife Matilda.
• After arriving in England, a feast is prepared in the open air:
  - chickens on skewers, a stew cooked over an open fire and food from an outdoor oven.
• William sits down to a feast with his nobles and Bishop Odo says grace.
• William, Odo and Robert meet for a war council.
Calvary Attack, 14th October 1066

- Cavalry could advance quickly and easily retreat scattering an opponent allowing the infantry to invade.
- Strong tactic that was flexible and intimidating.
- Infantry is included in the tapestry, but the cavalry commands the scene,
- Gives the impression that the Normans were a cavalry-dominant army.
• The brutality of war is evident in the battle scenes.
• Figures of mortally wounded men and horses are strewn along the tapestry's lower zone as well as within the main central zone.
The Last Word on the Bayeux Tapestry

- The Bayeux Tapestry provides an excellent example of Anglo-Norman art.
- It serves as a medieval artifact that operates as art, chronicle, political propaganda, and visual evidence of eleventh-century mundane objects, all at a monumental scale.

Dr. Kristine Tanton, Kahn Academy
Image Set 59


Cavalry attack
© Rich Leisman/Arc Resources, NY

First meal
© Rich Leisman/Arc Resources, NY
Night Attack on the Sanjo Palace

A Japanese Military Narrative

c.1250-1300
The Kamakura Period
1185-1333

• First shogunate, officially established in 1192 in Kamakura by the first shogun, Minamoto no Yoritomo.

• The period is known for the emergence of the samurai, the warrior caste, and for the establishment of feudalism in Japan.

• The Kamakura period epic Tale of Heiji is about the exploits of the samurai who participated in the Heiji Rebellion.

• The Burning of the Sanjo Palace was a battle in the Heiji Rebellion.
Night Attack on the Sanjo Palace

- c. 1250–1300 C.E.
- Handscroll (ink and color on paper)
- 1’ 4 ¼” high x 22’ 10” long
- Originally 15 scrolls were created only 3 survived
- Kamakura Period
  - “Tale of the Heiji Rebellion”
  - Now in the MFA, Boston

Bowdoin College Link to the Scroll

-emphasis on arms and armor, but still great visually
Historical narrative
- The Heiji disturbance, which occurred late in 1159, represents a brief armed skirmish in the capital.

Depicts battle from the civil wars at the end of the Heian Period
- Attack in the middle of the night on the Sanjo Palace
- Kidnapped the retired emperor, Goshirakawa
- Bloody, chaotic battle scenes
- Beautifully drawn with lots of energy, lots of diagonals
- Two different points of view, eye level and from above
• Scroll is read from right to left
• Action unfolds temporally, like a movie
• Moving slowly and reading the text
• Images are not meant to be seen at once, but rather in small sections that show a progression of events.
  – The cart that appears before the burning palace represents the same cart that is surrounded by warriors later in the scrolls
This scroll depicts the attack of the Palace that leads to the capture of the Emperor by the Minamoto.
Brutality of War
203. **Night Attack on the Sanjō Palace.** Kamakura Period, Japan. c. 1250–1300 C.E.
Handscroll (ink and color on paper). (2 images)

*Night Attack on the Sanjō Palace*
Photograph © 2013 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Ancient Rome and Romanesque Italy
Romanesque Italy

- The spirit of classical Rome reappeared in the Romanesque art of Pisa, Rome, Modena, and other centers in Italy.
- Pisa, on the west coast of Tuscany, was a great maritime power from the 9th through the 13th century.
- An expansionist republic, it competed with Muslim centers for control of trade in the western Mediterranean.
- In 1063 Pisa won a decisive victory over Muslim forces, and the jubilant city soon began constructing an imposing new cathedral dedicated to the Virgin Mary.
The Complex at Pisa, Italy
Cathedral, Tower and Baptistry
The Bapitistry

- The **Baptistry of Pisa** is part of the church complex, and as with most baptistries, is usually round or octagonal in shape.
- The sacrament of baptism is administered there.
- Inside is a baptismal front, a receptacle of stone or metal, which holds water for the rite.

- This creative reuse of an ancient, classical theme is characteristic of Italian Romanesque art; artists and architects seemed always to have been conscious of their Roman past.
- Lantern on top of the dome was added during the Renaissance.
The Cathedral

- The cathedral was not completed until the late 13th century.
- It is an adaptation on a grand scale of the Cruciform Basilica.
- It has a long nave, double side aisles crossed by a transept, each of which has aisles and an apse.
- A dome covers the crossing.
• Interior of Pisa Cathedral
• Feels very Roman
• Basilica Plan
• Flat Roof inside
The Tower

- The bell tower or **campanile** is the most famous building in the complex.
- The "Leaning tower of Pisa" is 6 stories of arcaded galleries.
- The round arches were a Roman inspiration.
- The foundation lies on **tufu** and is sinking. Efforts have been tried to raise it upright.
- Most of them have been disastrous and nearly destroyed the tower, such as when they flooded the foundation with water to "float" the tower, which only made it lean more. It is 13 feet out of plumb.
The Romanesque Legacy

- Many anonymous men and women of the 11th and 12th centuries, created a new art that - although based on the bible and the lives of the saints - focused on human beings, their stories, and their beliefs.

- The artists worked on a monumental scale in painting, sculpture, and even embroidery, and their art moved from the cloister to the public walls of churches.

- While they emphasized the spiritual and intellectual concerns of the Christian Church, they also began to observe and record what they saw around them.

- In doing so, they laid the groundwork for the art of the Gothic period.
In a superficial way, the monumentality, rounded arches, and heavy walls of Roman architecture are reflected in the Romanesque tradition. However, the liturgical purpose of Romanesque buildings, their use of ambulatories and radiating chapels and their dark interiors give these churches a religious feeling quite different from their Roman predecessors.

Romanesque builders reacted to the increased mobility of Europeans, many of whom were now traveling on pilgrimages, by enlarging the size of their buildings. As Romanesque art progresses increasingly sophisticated vaulting techniques are developed. Hallmarks of the Romanesque style include thick walls and piers that give the buildings a monumentality and massiveness lacking in Early Medieval art.

Most great Romanesque sculpture was done around the main portals of churches, usually on themes related to the Last Judgment and the punishment of the bad alongside the salvation of the good. French sculptors carved energetic and elongated figures that often look flattened against the surface of the stone. Although regional variations are common, most Romanesque sculpture seeks to be content within the frame of the work it is conceived in, and rarely presses against the sides or emerges forward.

Although religious themes dominate Romanesque art, occasionally works of secular interest, like the Bayeux Tapestry were created.
Resources

- Marilyn Stockstad’s *Art History: Fifth Edition* (Volumes one and two)
- Metropolitan Museum of Art’s “Timeline of Art History.” Available online at [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/splash.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/splash.htm)
- Kahn Academy, [https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/ap-art-history](https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/ap-art-history)
- College Board
- Annenberg Learner
  - [http://www.learner.org/courses/globalart/](http://www.learner.org/courses/globalart/)
  - [http://www.bowdoin.edu/~ktravers/projects/heijiscroll/viewer.html](http://www.bowdoin.edu/~ktravers/projects/heijiscroll/viewer.html)