Early Medieval and Romanesque
Five Periods of Middle Ages

- **Early Christian Art** - c. 100-300
- **Byzantine Art** - c. 330-1453
- **Early Medieval** - c. 475-1050
- **Romanesque** - c. 1050-1300
- **Gothic** - c. 1150 overlapping Romanesque and continuing into 1500’s
Age of Faith

- Hearts and minds of Medieval people were fixed on one all-important goal—Preparation for eternal life after death.
- **Church**-having grown in power and influence, guided the people in their quest
- Everyone was expected to place loyalty to the Church above everything else—even kings and emperors
In the West.......  

- Fall of Rome is considered the start of Early Medieval period (475 AD)  
  - Law and order was gone  
  - Open warfare, conflicts, mass migrations  
- Carolingian dynasty was founded-Frank Empire  
- Revival of strong, efficient government  
- Stimulation of renewed interest in learning and the arts  
- Art still focused on “teaching religion” instead of honoring a god
Charles the Great

- Known as Charlemagne (Frankish king of Carolingian dynasty lasting 150 years)
- Crowned first Holy Roman Emperor by the pope in 800 A.D. after forcing Christianity on those he ruled
- Carolingian dynasty encouraged learning and the arts
- Ordered monasteries to establish schools teaching arithmetic, grammar, and the psalms
- Preserved ancient manuscripts
- Tried to restore splendors of ancient Rome: built baths, brought statues from Italy. (capitol in Aachen)
- His strong empire crumbled after his death in 814 which lead to feudalism.
Architecture of Early Medieval Period

- Most made of wood and have not survived
- Charlemagne’s Palatine Chapel, Aachen, Germany survives, but the Palace has not
- Round basilica floor plan-modeled after San Vitale
- Built 792-805
Interior of Palatine Chapel modeled after the church in San Vitale
Rise of Feudalism

- Feudalism was a system in which weak noblemen gave up their lands and much of their freedom to more powerful lords in return for protection.
- Lord allowed the former owner to remain on the land as his administrator (servant to the lord).
- Most people were serfs—poor peasants who did not have land to give in return for protection.
Churches and Monasteries

- Used Roman basilica plan for religious structures
- Rectangular floor plan with an apse, nave, side aisles

Church of San Clemente, Spain. 1123
Changes in Basilica Design

- Changes: a transept was added
- Transept *another aisle that cut directly across the nave and the side aisles in front of the apse*
- Added space and added to symbolic appearance: shape of a cross
- Most churches constructed during this time have not survived.
Spread of Monasticism

- Monasticism *a way of life in which individuals gathered together to spend their days in prayer and self-denial.*
- Groups of men banded together
  - far removed from the rest of society
  - spent their lives in quiet contemplation and prayer

San Juan de la Pena, Monastery and cloister. Near Jaca, Spain. c. 922

Cloister—*an open court or garden and the covered walkway surrounding it*
Art of the Early Medieval Period

- **Manuscript Illumination**
  - Copied by hand by monks working in monasteries
  - Decorated pages with miniature paintings—illuminations
  - Written in Latin

- **Monastic library**—probably had at most “20” books
Illuminated manuscripts

Church was center for art and learning as well as religion

Favored art that could teach and inspire the people in their faith

Written words were for the few who could read—the illustrations were for those who could not.
From Scrolls to Books
The Romanesque Period

LESSON TWO
Effects of Feudalism

- Developed in 9th c. and reached its peak during the Romanesque period.
- Land was the only source of wealth and power.
- Castles were built to fortify lord’s dwellings.
- Tower, walls, moat, and drawbridge: the castle became the symbol of authority.
- People wandered for places to live.
- Took “portable” art with them.
Portable art
Belt buckles
Clasps
Books
Coats of armor
Purse covers

Shoulder clasp
books carried by missionaries

Purse cover
coat closure
Castles

Castle of Manzanares el Real

Few windows, solid walls, dark, cold interiors
Life in the Castles

- Main purpose was defense
  - Few windows
  - Thick walls
  - Steep stairs and dark narrow passageways
  - Drafty rooms
  - Little furnishings
  - No decorations so hung tapestries

- Tapestries - textile wall hangings that were woven, painted, or embroidered with colorful scenes
  - Kept dampness out
  - Decorated the walls

Bayeaux Tapestry, 1066
Growth of Cities

- Castles remained important as long as feudal system flourished
- Growth of trade and industry in the 13th c. brought an economy based on money rather than land
- Barricades were built around town.
Romanesque Churches

- All towns had one thing in common: in the center of each stood a church
- Richly decorated stone churches of the 11th and 12th centuries are testimony to power of the Church, the faith of the people and the skill of the builders
- People were encouraged to take part in pilgrimages
- Churches were built along the pilgrimage route
Pilgrimage Churches

- Church at this time placed great importance on piety and encouraged people to take part in pilgrimages
- Pilgrimage: *a journey to a holy place*
- Journey was a visible sign of religious devotion
- Paid homage to saints and relics in far-off churches
- Believed that praying before the sacred remains of a saint could assure a plentiful harvest, cure diseases, solve personal problems and secure the promise of eternal salvation
Church of Sainte-Foy, France

- Pilgrimage church
- Built in 1050-1130
- Reliquary
Reliquary of Sainte-Foy

- Reliquary: container or shrine for a sacred item
- Relic: artifact that is considered sacred
Modifications to Church Design

- Needed to increase size of the church to accommodate groups of pilgrims
- Builders extended nave and transept
- Added an ambulatory
- Ambulatory: *an aisle curving around behind the main altar*
Modifications to Church Design

- To accommodate the many priests who were required to say Mass every day, *radiating chapels* were added along the transept and the ambulatory.

- An altar was placed inside each chapel—often with a relic on display.
Romanesque Church Floor Plan

- Entrance
- Nave
- Second Aisle
- Apse
- Transept
- Ambulatory
- Radiating chapels
Roof

- Roman technique of using a series of round arches to construct a *barrel vault* provided a solution to the heavy stone roof on the church.
- Thick, solid walls and huge pillars were needed to support the heavy stone roofs.
Saint Sernin
Toulouse, France

Notice the ambulatory & radiating chapels
Interior of St. Sernin
Ambulatory of St. Sernin
Revival of Sculpture and Painting

• Revival of sculpture was an important achievement
• Churches along the pilgrimage routes used relief sculptures as another way to teach the faith
• Like manuscript illustrations, stone carvings reminded people of stories from Scripture
Two Ideal places for Sculpture

**Tympanum**

- Found above a door
- Eyes lifted up as entering

**Capital**

- Found above a column
- Eyes follow up column
Tympanum

- Tympanum: *half round panel that fills the space between the lintel and the arch over the doorway of the church*

- *People naturally lift their eyes as they enter the building*
Tympanum characteristics
Sainte-Foy
Tympanum: Saint Sernin
Capital: *the top element of a pillar or column*

- Annunciation and visit
  Saint Sernin
Capitals: Sainte-Foy

- Sacrifice of Isaac
Pisa
Baptistery, Cathedral and Tower
Built 1063-1350
East side of Pisa
Romanesque Painting

Church Wall Paintings
Large paintings decorated the inside walls of churches

Common features:
- not concerned about reality-instead wanted easy to understand religious symbolism,
- Flat, colorful shapes
- Bold use of line
- No shadows

Christ in Majesty, Fresco
San Clemente, Tahull, Spain
Illuminated Manuscripts

- Still an important part of Romanesque time period
- Flattened figures
- No shadows
- No depth
Styles influencing Styles

Arch of Constantine

The Romanesque tympanum of Vézelay Abbey, Burgundy, France, 1130s.

Roman vs. Romanesque