

**ROMANESQUE PERIOD:  
Art and Architecture during the Age of Pilgrimages  
Ca. 1000 – 1150**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

**A. Age of Pilgrimages**

1. **Europeans expected the world to end and the Second Coming of Christ to judge humanity.**
2. **Rise in religious devotion**
3. **Europeans went on pilgrimages to prove their devotion to god**
4. **Europeans visited pilgrimage churches that had significant RELICS**

**B. Relics and Reliquaries**

1. **Relic**
  - **A personal memorial of a holy person**
  - **Often relics were parts of a person such as hair, bones, and fingernails**
2. **Reliquary**
  - **Container for a relic which would be viewed by the pilgrim**

**C. Top Pilgrimage Sites**

1. **Jerusalem**
  - **Site of the Last Supper**
  - **Site of the Crucifixion and Resurrection**
  - **Church of the Holy Sepulcher**
2. **Rome**
  - **Papal residence**
  - **Old Saint Peter's basilica**
3. **Canterbury**
  - **Canterbury Cathedral**
  - **St. Thomas Becket's tomb**
4. **Santiago de Compostela in Spain**
  - **Usually the last stop on the pilgrimage route**
  - **Contained the relics of Saint James**

- **James was beheaded by Herod in 42 CE becoming the first of Christ's apostles to be martyred**
- **James' remains were believed to have been miraculously relocated from Judea to Spain**

## **II. Sainte-Foy at Conques: A Case Study of a Romanesque Pilgrimage Church**

### **A. Aerial view**

- 1. CRUCIFORM (shape of a cross) floor plan**
  - **Long nave – central hall**
  - **Transept – cross arms placed perpen**
- 2. CHOIR – special section for clergy to sit, located just past the transept**
- 3. Large APSE – semicircular area projecting from the nave**
- 4. The church has a stone roof**
  - **Early Christian and Early Medieval basilicas had wooden roofs**
  - **New stone roofs lessened the risk of fire and improved the acoustics**
  - **The roof is supported by BARREL VAULTS**
- 5. BELFRY – a bell tower, rises above the roof at a point called the CROSSING – where the nave and the transept intersect, BELFRY was added during the Gothic period**
- 6. Small windows and a heavy appearance, stoutly built**

### **B. Floor plan**

- 1. Had to accommodate large numbers of pilgrims without interrupting the daily services of the clergy**
- 2. AMBULATORY**
  - **Semicircular passageway around the apse**
  - **Permitted lay people (non-clergy) visiting the church to circulate freely while leaving the monks undisturbed access to the main altar in the choir**

- Ambulatory contained **RADIATING CHAPEL** – small semicircular niches in which the **RELIQUARIES** were displayed

### III. Saint Sernin – Case Study #2 in a Romanesque pilgrimage church

#### A. Who is Saint Sernin?

- Saint Saturninus – first bishop of Toulouse. Saint Sernin (French) was martyred in the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.
- Aerial view of Saint-Sernin (Gardner's 452)
- How long is Saint-Sernin's nave – 380 feet long, 105 feet wide

#### B. A fine example of a Romanesque pilgrimage church

- Cruciform shape
- Stone roof
- Large choir and apse
- Ambulatory with 5 radiating chapels
- Barrel vaulted nave

#### C. Geometrically precise modular plan

Take a careful look at the plan of Saint-Sernin on 452 in Gardner's

1. The **CROSSING SQUARE** served as the basic module or mathematical unit for the entire church.
2. Each nave **BAY** – a three-dimensional module of the church is half the size of the crossing square
3. Each side aisle **BAY** – is one fourth the size of the crossing square. The side aisles contain groin vaults

#### D. Inside Saint-Sernin

1. Nave contains **BARREL VAULT** with **TRANVERSE ARCHES** – round arches which separate the nave bays
2. A **TRIBUNE** – a gallery over the inner aisle flanking the nave (Look halfway up the nave wall)
3. A **NAVE ARCADE** – a line of arches that separates the nave from the side aisles
4. The nave arcade also contains **COMPOUND PIERS** – piers (rectangular supports) that have engaged columns or pilasters attached to them. The engaged columns of the compound piers extend all the way up to the springing (the lowest stone of the arch) and continue to the **TRANVERSE ARCHES**

**IV. Other Romanesque churches in Europe**

**A. Model of the third abbey church of Cluny, France – “Cluny III”**

- 1. Home of Cluniac monks who followed the Benedictine Rule**
- 2. Largest church in Europe until the construction of New Saint Peter’s**
- 3. 500 foot long nave and 100 feet high (50 per cent greater than the dimensions of Saint-Sernin)**
- 4. Largely destroyed today – reconstructed on paper and in models**

**B. Speyer Cathedral in Germany**

**C. Saint Ambrogio in Milan, Italy**

**V. A Romanesque Portal**

**A. Portal – doorway to a church including the architectural composition surrounding it**

**B. Importance – it made the first impression on visitors to the church**

**C. Parts of a Romanesque portal (Gardner 463)**

- **TYMPANUM – prominent semicircular lunette above the doorway, comparable to the PEDIMENT of a Greco-Roman temple**
- **VOUSSOIRS – wedge-shaped blocks that together form the ARCHIVOLTS**
- **ARCHIVOLTS – bands of arches over the tympanum**
- **LINTEL – the horizontal beam above the doorway**
- **TRUMEAU – the center post supporting the lintel in the middle of the doorway**
- **JAMBS – the side posts of the doorway**

## VI. ROMANESQUE SCULPTURE

### A. Introduction

1. **The Romanesque period illustrates the return of sculpture on the exterior of the building, which had not been seen since Roman times**
  2. **The exterior decor of Early Christian and early Medieval (Carolingian and Ottonian) churches was relatively simple. See the *westwork* of a Carolingian basilica on G-436.**
  3. **Romanesque architecture marked the revival of stone sculpture on building exteriors. Most of the sculpture was in low or high relief, not in the round.**
  4. **Large sculptures in the round (ex. Archbishop Gero's Crucifix – G-441) were rare; churches did not want to have anything that could be perceived as idols. Small sculptures and reliquaries were acceptable.**
    - **Virgin and Child (*Morgan Madonna*), Auvergne, France, second half of 12<sup>th</sup> century – IN THE MET! – G-468**
    - **Note the strict frontality of presentation. It is similar to Byzantine Theotokos and Child icons.**
    - **These sculptures were common in the Middle Ages. Jesus held a bible in his left hand and blessed people with his right (both hands are missing).**
    - **Jesus “is the embodiment of the divine wisdom contained in the Holy Scriptures. His mother, seated on a wooden chair, is in turn the Throne of Wisdom because her lap is the Christ Child's throne.” (G-468)**
    - **ETS strikes again ! – Identify the art-historical period of the sculpture. What key characteristics support your placement of the work in the period you have identified?**
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- **Head reliquary of Saint Alexander from Stavelot Abbey, Belgium, 1145.**
  - **Idealized portrait of Pope Alexander II (compare to images of Augustus or Constantine (G-6 and G-296)**

- **Box, which is supported by four bronze dragons (popular in Romanesque decoration), contains his relics**
  - **Commissioned by a Bishop Wibald for private devotional purposes**
  - **Beaten (repousse) silver with bronze gilding**
5. **Back to exterior stone sculpture - Why did exterior stone sculpture reemerge during the 11<sup>th</sup> century?**
- a. **During the Early Middle Ages, most of the people who went to churches were literate members of the clergy.**
  - b. **During the Romanesque period, sculpture was a DIDACTIC (teaching) tool used to teach the illiterate masses important biblical stories.**
  - c. **Priests and patrons wanted to beautify the house of the Lord with stone sculptures of biblical characters, Christian symbols, and other exterior ornamentation.**
  - d. **Stone was the most durable medium for these images**
6. **The PORTAL was a major location for sculpture which was part of:**
- **Tympanum**
  - **Lintel**
  - **Trumeau**
  - **Jambs**
  - **Archivolts**

**B. Saint Pierre at Moissac (Gardner's 462)**

**1. TYMPANUM**

- a. **An apocalyptic (end of the world) scene from the book of Revelation in the Bible.**
- b. **The enthroned Christ is at the center**
- c. **Four Evangelists surround Christ**
  - **Winged lion – Mark**
  - **Eagle – John**
  - **Winged man – Matthew**
  - **Winged ox – Luke**

- Collectively these four symbols of the evangelists are known as the **TETRAMORPHS**

**d. Two Attendants**

**On each side of Christ, an attendant holds a scroll to record human deeds for judgment.**

**e. Twenty-four Elders depicted in the archivolt**

- Famous holy figures from the Bible who accompany Christ as kings of this world
- Make music in His praise

**2. Lions and Old Testament prophet (Jeremiah or Isaiah) from trumeau of south portal**

- a. The prophet whether Jeremiah or Isaiah holds a scroll of his prophecy**
- b. Old Testament prophet below Jesus in tympanum – tradition of pairing the Old Testament with the New**
- c. Six roaring interlaced lions on the outer face of the trumeau – lions were symbolic protectors**

**3. Cloister of Saint-Pierre at Moissac**

- a. CLOISTER comes from the Latin word *claustrum*, an enclosed space from where we get the word \_\_\_\_\_**
- b. Cloisters were places for monks to pray, read scripture, and meditate**
- c. Garden in the center of the cloister, a timber roofed walkway for the cloister**
- d. Sculptures of biblical figures on the capitals of the columns alternating with mythical creatures such as griffins, basilisks, and gargoyles.**

**C. TYMPANUM at La Madeleine, Vezelay (The Mission of the Apostles) Gardner 465**

- 1. Biblical text – “And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.”**
- 2. Christ on a throne**

- a. Christ is surrounded by a **MANDORLA** – oval of light
- b. Christ is the messenger of the Father
- c. Gift of the Holy Spirit – symbolized by the rays of light that shoot from his open hands

### 3. The Apostles

- a. Hold the Gospel books
- b. Receive their spiritual assignment to preach the Gospel to all nations

### 4. The world's heathens

- a. the objects of the apostle's mission
- b. appear on the lintel below and in 8 compartments around the tympanum
- c. The portrayals of yet-to-be converted include the legendary giant-eared Panotii of India, Pygmies from Africa (who require ladders to mount horses) and a host of others

### 5. Key Points to Remember

- Facades of Romanesque churches are distinguished from the facades of Early Christian and Medieval churches because of the use of exterior stone sculpture
- The use of stone sculpture to decorate building exteriors had not been seen since the Late Roman Empire
- Notice that the figures in the tympanum have agitated poses, elongated proportions, and abrupt angular forms. The figures are **NOT NATURALISTIC**. The large central figure is Christ.
- The subject of the tympanum is related to La Madaleine at Vezelay's role in the history of the Crusades – it was used as a launching point for one of the Crusades

## D. TYMPANUM OF SAINT-LAZARE, Autun, France (Gardner 464)

1. A Last Judgment scene – Last judgment scenes were popular for the tympanums of Romanesque churches
  - Christ is surrounded by a mandorla



- He separates the good from the bad. The good people go to Christ's right hand and the bad people go to Christ's left hand.
  - Souls progress along the lintel from left to right where hands take the souls up to be weighed on the scales.
  - An angel and demon operate the scales
  - To Christ's right, famous saints and holy figures greet the good people
  - To Christ's left, demons torture the sinners
2. **Inscription – “May this terror terrify those whom earthly error binds, for the horror of these images here in this manner truly depicts what will be.”**
  3. **The sculptor of this tympanum signed his work GISLEBERTUS**
    - Possibly to advertise his work
    - Possibly as a request to his spectators to pray for his salvation on Judgment Day

**E. WILIGELMO'S frieze on the west façade of Modena Cathedral, Italy**

1. **This work is part of a LINTEL**
2. **It resembles Late Roman and Early Christian sarcophagi with its architectural backdrop**
3. **One of the first fully developed narrative friezes in Romanesque art**
  - **Jesus shown in a mandorla**
  - **God creating Adam, God creating Eve, the Original Sin**
  - **WILIGELMO signed it with the inscription “Among sculptors, your work shines forth, Wiligelmo.”**

**VII. The Romanesque Cathedral Complex at Pisa (GARDNER 458)**

**A. Introduction**

1. **Fleet from the Republic of Pisa defeats a Muslim naval force in 1062.**
2. **To celebrate their victory, the Pisans used the booty taken from the enemy boats to start a fund for a new cathedral.**
3. **In 1153, Pisa celebrated another victory at sea by starting construction of a baptistery opposite the cathedral façade.**

**B. The Cathedral Complex**

**1. The Baptistery**

- Place where infants and converts were initiated into the Christian community.
- Look closely at the exterior design of the Baptistery. Is it all the same style?
- The lower portion of the building has rounded arches, small windows with rounded arch shape, and engaged columns. It is ROMANESQUE.
- The upper portion contains tracery (decorative stonework) and pinnacles (pointed stone decorations). The upper portion is GOTHIC.

**2. The Cathedral**

- Very large with a nave and four side aisles.
- Note the transept.
- Also note how the exterior arcaded galleries match the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

**3. The Leaning Tower**

- The “Leaning Tower” is actually a CAMPANILE or bell tower.
- The “Leaning Tower” is 180 feet high and contains 294 steps.
- Unfortunately, the tower is build on a sandy base of water soaked clay.
- The Tower at one point leaned 21 feet from its true perpendicular!
- Extraordinary measures have been taken to prevent the tower from falling. For example, tons of lead have been poured around the base to stabilize the area.
- In 1990, the government suspended visits inside the tower. But visits have resumed.
- What famous scientist dropped weights from the top of the tower? \_\_\_\_\_

**VIII. NORMANDY AND ENGLAND**

**A. Introduction**

1. Look at the region of France labeled Normandy on the map on 448.
2. Note that both England and Normandy are colored green. Is this coincidence?

**B. Normandy**

1. It all starts with the Vikings. Since the Vikings were from the north they were often called “Northmen.”
2. Many Vikings settled along the northern coast of what is today France. So many, that the region was called Normandy or the land of the Northmen or Normans.
3. In 911, the Norman leader Rollo swore an oath of loyalty to the French king.
4. In 1066, the leader of Normandy was Duke William. And now the story becomes complicated.

**C. Three leaders but only one crown**

1. **Edward the Confessor – King of England. Died on January 5, 1066. But Edward was childless. So who would be his successor?**
2. **William of Normandy – Duke of Normandy who was related to Edward. Edward the Confessor was pro-Norman and named William his successor.**
3. **Harold Godwinson – a powerful Saxon earl. His sister was Edward’s wife! Edward sent Harold of Normandy to swear an oath of fealty or loyalty. He did. But when Edward died Harold broke his oath and was crowned King of England. Needless to say, Duke William was furious!**

**D. The Norman Invasion of England, 1066.**

1. **William prepares to invade England.**
2. **The Battle of Hastings: October 14, 1066**
3. **William wins and is now William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy and King of England.**

**E. The Bayeux Tapestry (GARDNER 475)**

1. **How to commemorate this epic story? The Romans would have created a triumphal arch or better yet a column like Trajan’s Column.**
2. **Normans lack the artistic talent to create a monumental column but William’s half-brother Bishop Odo came up with an original idea!**
3. **A TAPESTRY!**
  - **First, it is not really a tapestry. It is an embroidered fabric made of wool sewn on linen.**

- It's really amazing – 230 feet long and 20 inches high.
  - It provides a splendid example of a **NARRATIVE - artwork that tells a story. THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY** tells the Norman's version of what happened.
4. **Gardner's 475 – Top picture – Edward's funeral procession**
    - Note the hand of God pointing the way to the newly built Westminster Abbey.
    - William was crowned King of England inside Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day, 1066. Every English monarch since William has been crowned in Westminster Abbey.
  5. **Gardner's 475 Bottom picture – Detail from the Battle of Hastings**
    - The Norman Cavalry cuts down the English foot soldiers.
    - Note the bodies along the bottom border
    - The figures are flat and not rendered with classical three-dimensional volume.
  6. **WE HAVE MORE SCENES!**