

# CHAPTER 14

## EARLY MEDIEVAL AND ROMANESQUE ART

**W**hat do you know about knights and medieval times? Have you ever seen an illuminated manuscript in a museum? Have you ever heard the term *Romanesque*? The Byzantine Empire, with its power, wealth, and culture, thrived for about 100 years. Western Europe, however, struggled through a period of change that began with the fall of the Roman Empire and continued to the beginning of the modern era in the fifteenth century. This period, from A.D. 500 to 1500, is known as the Middle Ages, or the Medieval period.

### FOCUS ON READING

**Read to Find Out** As you read this chapter, learn how the monasteries were built and about the creation of manuscript illuminations. Continue to read to find out about Romanesque churches and the revival of relief sculpture and wall painting.

**Focus Activity** Relate the details and characteristics you find in the artworks in this chapter with what you are learning about the Early Medieval and Romanesque periods. Look at the illustration from a prayer book in Figure 14.1. What does it suggest about religious devotion during the Middle Ages? Where are the figures directing their eyes? Life after the fall of the Roman Empire was uncertain. People concentrated on the joys awaiting them in eternal life. As you go through this chapter, make a list of the artworks that are inspired by religious themes and a list of those that are not. Which list is longer?

**Using the Time Line** Locate on the Time Line about when the prayer book illustration in Figure 14.1 was created. The Time Line also introduces you to some of the other artworks in this chapter.



**c. 800s**  
Feudalism  
develops

**800**  
The pope crowns Charlemagne  
as the first Holy Roman Emperor



**c. 860**  
Medieval manuscripts are  
decorated with illuminations



**c. 1080–1120**  
Saint Sernin facade  
shows Romanesque  
style

**500**

c. 475–1050  
Early Medieval Period

**1000**

c. 1050–1300  
Romanesque Period



■ **FIGURE 14.1** Pentecost from a Sacramentary. 11th century. Psalter from Getty Center, Los Angeles, California.



**c. 1100s**  
The stone castle evolves and becomes the symbol of authority



**c. 1100**  
*Christ in Majesty* painted in the church at San Clemente in Tahull, Spain



**c. 1200**  
Relief sculpture of *The Last Judgment* appears on the tympanum of the Church of Santa Maria

**TIME & PLACE**  
CONNECTIONS

Refer to the Time Line on page H11 in your *Art Handbook* for more about this period.

1100

1500

c. 1150–1500  
Gothic Period

# The Early Medieval Period

## Vocabulary

- feudalism
- monasticism
- serfs
- cloister
- transept
- illuminations

## Discover

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Identify the three periods of the Middle Ages.
- Explain the contributions Charlemagne made to learning and the arts during the Early Medieval period.
- Discuss the importance of monasticism and the contributions of monks to the art and architecture of the Early Medieval period.

At one time the Middle Ages were known as the “Dark Ages,” a label suggesting that they represented many blank pages in the history of Western civilization. However, a closer look has helped to fill in those pages with an impressive list of accomplishments.

During this period, many of the important features of our modern world were born, including parliamentary government, common law, present-day languages, and modern nation states. In art, the Middle Ages were anything but dark. It was the most splendid of all periods for bookmaking, a time of a great architectural revival, and an era of important developments in sculpture.

## The Age of Faith

Perhaps a more accurate label for this period would be the Age of Faith. The hearts and minds of Medieval people were fixed on one all-important goal—preparation for eternal life after death. The Church, which had grown in power and influence since the collapse of the Roman Empire, guided the people in this quest.

The Church influenced the lives of kings and peasants alike throughout western Europe. Virtually everyone was born into the faith, and all were expected to place loyalty to the Church above everything else.

## Three Periods of the Middle Ages

Because of its length, it is helpful to divide the Middle Ages into three overlapping periods. They are the *Early Medieval*, which dates from about the last quarter of the fifth century to the middle of the eleventh; the *Romanesque*, which, in most areas, took place during the eleventh and twelfth centuries; and the *Gothic*, which



## MAP SKILLS

■ **FIGURE 14.2** Notice the various kingdoms into which Europe was divided during the Middle Ages. **How is Europe during this period different from Europe during the height of the Roman Empire? How do you imagine these changes might have affected the art and architecture of Europe?**

overlapped the Romanesque and continued in some areas into the sixteenth century. This chapter deals with the Early Medieval and Romanesque periods.

## From Charlemagne to Feudalism

The fall of Rome is considered the start of the Early Medieval period. This was a time of great uncertainty because the strong central government that had assured law and order to all Roman subjects was gone. The period was marked by conflicts, open warfare, and mass migrations of foreigners into and across lands formerly controlled by the Romans. Under these trying conditions, the Carolingian dynasty was founded. Although it survived less than 150 years, this dynasty managed to bring about the revival of a strong, efficient government. Furthermore, it stimulated a renewed interest in learning and the arts.

### The Role of Charlemagne

One man was largely responsible for the many accomplishments of the Carolingian dynasty. He was Charles the Great, more commonly known as Charlemagne (**Figure 14.3**). Already King of the Franks, Charlemagne was crowned emperor by the pope on Christmas Day in the year 800 and became the first of the Holy Roman Emperors.

Charlemagne's domain grew until it included all of the Western part of the old Roman Empire except Britain, Spain, southern Italy, and Africa. His subjects enjoyed an efficient government and a remarkable level of law and order.

Beyond creating a great empire, Charlemagne encouraged learning and the arts. He ordered every monastery and abbey to establish a school where students could learn arithmetic, grammar, and the psalms. His most important achievement, however, may have been the preservation of ancient manuscripts. He invited scholars from England and Ireland to his court to rewrite old texts and prepare new ones. It is to



■ **FIGURE 14.3** Charlemagne was King of the Franks until Pope Leo III crowned him the first Holy Roman Emperor. Under Charlemagne's rule, people throughout western Europe were united by his style of government and by a set of common ideas. **How do you imagine this stability and unity influenced artists and their work?**

Equestrian Statuette of Charlemagne. c. 800. Bronze. Carolingian sculpture. 24 × 17.5 × 9.5 cm (9½ × 6¾ × 3¾"). Louvre, Paris, France.

Charlemagne's credit that many of the ancient documents we have today were copied by scholars working under his command.

The center and capital of Charlemagne's empire was Aix-la-Chapelle, now the German town of Aachen. (See map, **Figure 14.2**.) Here he set up his court and tried to restore the splendors of ancient Rome. Statues were brought from Italy, baths were constructed,

and a chapel was built (**Figure 14.4**) that closely resembled the famous Roman church at Ravenna (**Figure 13.12**, page 295).

Unfortunately, Charlemagne's empire with its strong central government ended shortly after his death in 814. By the close of the ninth century, civilization in western Europe was in a shambles once again. Weak central government and the need for protection led to the formation of a governmental system known as feudalism.

### The 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. The lord allowed the former owner to remain on the land as his administrator. The administrator was the servant,

or vassal, to the lord. The vassal pledged his loyalty and military assistance to the lord.

Most of the people, however, were **serfs**, or *poor peasants who did not have land* to give in return for protection. These people worked the land and were handed over with it when the land passed from one nobleman to another.

## Churches and Monasteries

Like their early Christian ancestors, Medieval church builders used Roman models. The Roman civic basilica continued to be the most popular type of structure for religious services.

The basilica featured a rectangular plan, which was divided on the inside to form a nave, or central aisle, and two or more side



■ **FIGURE 14.4, 14.4a** Little of what Charlemagne built at Aix-la-Chapelle is still standing. Fortunately, the chapel of his palace is preserved. The chapel is modeled after San Vitale at Ravenna, a church that Charlemagne must have admired. **What do you think Rome represented for Charlemagne and the rest of Medieval Europe?**

Palatine Chapel of Charlemagne. Aachen, Germany. 792–805.

aisles. Light from windows in the walls of the nave above the side aisles lit the interior of the building. As in early Christian churches, at one end of the nave was the main entrance, and at the opposite end was a semicircular area known as the apse. An altar was placed in the apse in plain view of the people who assembled in the nave.

## Changes in Basilica Design

During Charlemagne's time, a few changes were made in the basic plan of the basilica. Some churches were built with a **transept**, *another aisle that cut directly across the nave and the side aisles*. This aisle was placed in front of the apse and extended beyond the side aisles. Seen from above, the addition of this aisle gave the church the shape of a cross.

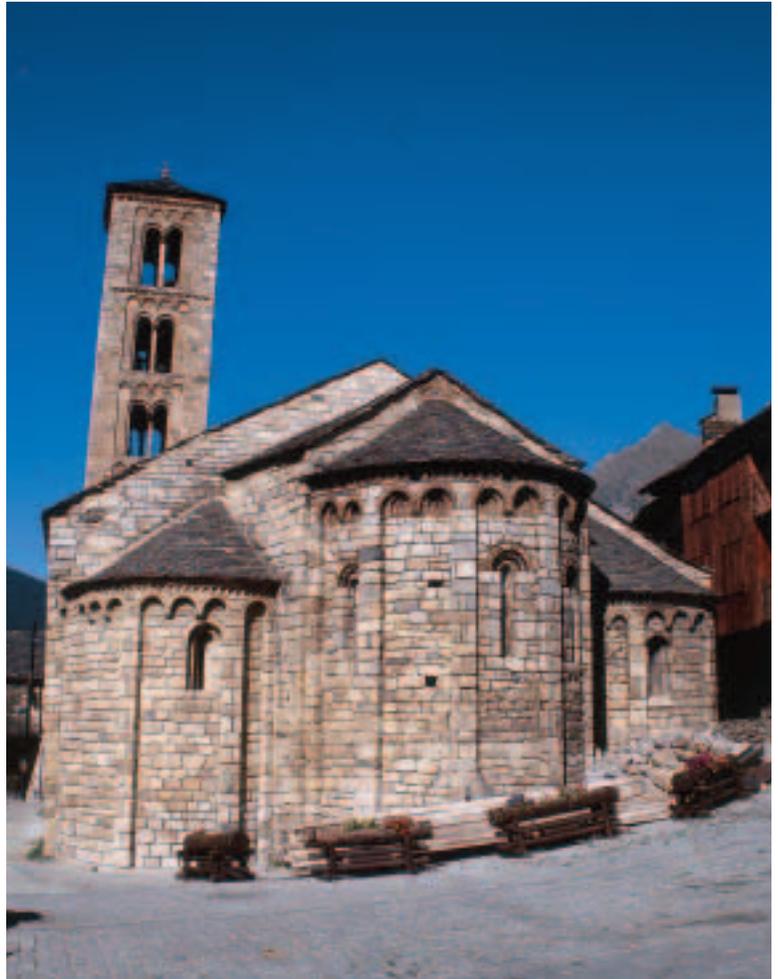
The transept not only increased the space inside the building but also added to its symbolic appearance. Occasionally, towers were also added to the exteriors of the churches (**Figure 14.5**). These towers were to influence church construction in western Europe for centuries.

Unfortunately, most of the churches erected during the Early Medieval period were made of timber. Warfare during the ninth and tenth centuries and accidental fires destroyed most of these. Today only a few heavily restored buildings remain.

## The Spread of Monasticism

Throughout the long Medieval period, people labored in the service of learning and art. Many were monks, devoted religious men who lived under a strict set of rules in remote communities called monasteries.

**Monasticism** refers to *a way of life in which individuals gathered together to spend their days in prayer and self-denial*. It had its roots in the Near East as early as the third and fourth centuries A.D. At that time, some people began to feel that the Church had become too worldly. Eventually, groups of men with the same spiritual goals banded together. They formed religious communities far removed from the rest of society where they spent their lives in quiet contemplation and prayer.



■ **FIGURE 14.5** This Romanesque church can be spotted from a distance because of its campanile, or bell tower. **What does the existence of this church, and another almost like it, in a small remote village tell you?**

Church of San Clemente, Tahull, Spain. 1123.

## The Monastery of San Juan de la Peña

■ **FIGURE 14.6**

Monks built their monasteries in remote places, often in deep forests or on the rocky slopes of mountains. Most of the earliest Medieval monasteries have long since crumbled away, but in northern Spain, deep in the forests covering the foothills of the Pyrenees, you can still visit the ruins of the Monastery of San Juan de la Peña (**Figure 14.6**, page 314).

## Characteristics of the Monastery Structure

The history of San Juan de la Peña is shrouded in legend, but no legend is more interesting than the building itself. From the



■ **FIGURE 14.6** The ruins of this monastery—now more than 1,000 years old—are isolated and difficult to find. **What does the isolated location of this monastery tell you about the lives and activities of Medieval monks?**

Monastery of San Juan de la Peña. Near Jaca, Spain. c. 922.



■ **FIGURE 14.7** Cloister. Monastery of San Juan de la Peña. Near Jaca, Spain. Cloister completed in twelfth century.

outside, the thick stone walls and small windows give it the look of a fortress. Inside it is dark and damp. The walls are marked by dark smoke stains from the torches that were once used to light the interior.

A flight of stairs leads to an upper story, where an arched doorway marks the entrance to an open court with the massive, projecting wall of the cliff overhead. This was the **cloister**, *an open court or garden and the covered walkway surrounding it (Figure 14.7)*. It is as quiet and peaceful now as it was

centuries ago when the monks came here to contemplate and pray.

Much emphasis was placed on private prayer and contemplation in the monastery. Typically, this was done in the cloister, where the monks spent several hours each day. In general, the cloister was attached to one side of the church, linking it to the other important buildings of the monastery. Here, in all kinds of weather, the monks came to pray, meditate, and read from books they received from an adjoining library.

# Art of the Early Medieval Period

A Medieval monastic library bore little resemblance to our modern public libraries. It usually was little more than an alcove located off the cloister, and the number of books on its shelves was modest—probably no more than 20.

## Manuscript Illumination

■ FIGURE 14.8

Perhaps no other art form captures the spirit of the Early Medieval period better than the illuminated manuscript. Until the development of the printing press in the fifteenth century, all books had to be copied by hand. This usually was done by monks working in the monasteries.

■ FIGURE 14.8 Manuscripts decorated with illuminations like these preserve precious ideas from the past. **What do you think motivated the monks who worked so hard to copy and illuminate Medieval manuscripts?**

*St. John*, from the Gospels (in Latin). c. 860. The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, New York.



## TIME & PLACE CONNECTIONS

c. A.D. 500

1500

### Medieval Period

See more Time & Place events on the Time Line, page H11 in your *Art Handbook*

**ARMOR.** Knights and warriors during the middle ages were required to wear protective metal suiting during attacks and battles. Sheets of metal attached with moveable joints for flexibility and full-face helmets sometimes weighed 80 pounds or more.



**COAT OF ARMS.** The coat of arms of a family or royal household contained symbols representing events or strengths of individual families. Often a shield was included, sometimes with animals and decorated with plumes, feathers, and ribbon flourishes. Coats of arms were displayed on shields and flags for identification during battle.



### ACTIVITY Illuminated Manuscript.

Choose from these objects and create a manuscript page for each in the style of early Medieval manuscript illumination. Use the beginning letter of the name of the object in the upper left corner of the page, and describe each of the objects pictured.

Monks often decorated manuscript pages with delicate miniature paintings done in silver, gold, and rich colors. For nearly 1,000 years, these **illuminations**, or *manuscript paintings*, were the most important paintings produced in western Europe. (See **Figure 14.1**, page 308.) Illuminated manuscripts were created by dedicated men who worked anonymously to record and illustrate history.

Writing painstakingly in Latin, Medieval monks passed on the ideas of classical writers and church fathers. Often they phrased these ideas in beautiful and complex ways. Like painters, sculptors, and architects, they brought inspiration and skill to their work.

Throughout the Medieval period, manuscripts of the Gospels were illustrated with small paintings of the four Evangelists. A symbol was usually used to help the reader identify each of these Gospel writers. Matthew was symbolized

by an angel; Mark, by a lion; Luke, by a bull; and John, by an eagle (**Figure 14.8**, page 315).

## St. Matthew

### ■ FIGURE 14.9

A painting of Matthew (**Figure 14.9**) from a ninth-century Gospel book created in Reims, France, shows the Evangelist seated before a small writing table. His left hand holds an ink container shaped like a horn, while a quill pen is clutched in the right. This is not a picture of a scholar calmly recording his thoughts and ideas, however. It is a painting of an inspired man frantically writing down the words of God.

## The Importance of Illuminations and Other Religious Art

The Church was the center for art and learning as well as religion during the Medieval period. It favored art that could



■ **FIGURE 14.9** *St. Matthew*, from the *Gospel Book of Archbishop Ebbo of Reims*. Carolingian Manuscript. c. 830. Approx. 25.4 × 20.3 cm (10 × 8"). Epernay, France.

## LOOKING Closely ↓

### CREATING THE ILLUSION OF MOVEMENT

Motion, not form, is the focus in this work. The drapery swirls around the figure, while sketchy lines behind seem to push upward. This motion underscores Matthew's excitement as he works furiously at the moment of inspiration to record the sacred message.

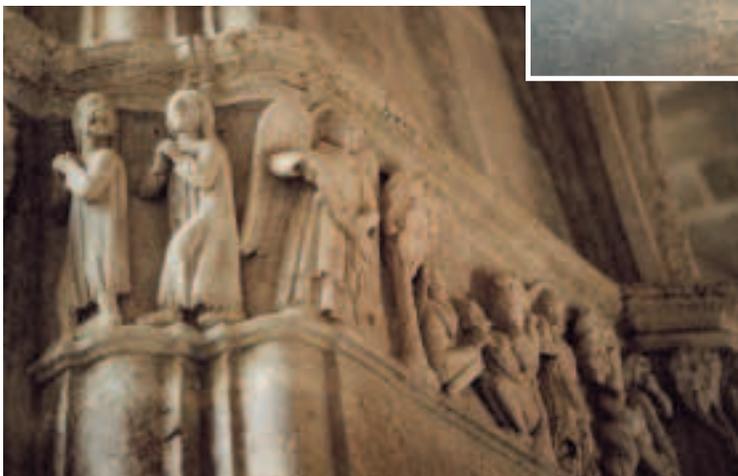
- **Identify.** The wide-open eyes, furrowed brow, and rumpled hair indicate Matthew's intense concentration. His huge, clumsy hand guides the pen rapidly across the pages of his book.
- **Interpret.** An angel, Matthew's symbol, reads the sacred text from a scroll. It is Matthew's responsibility to pass these words on to the world. His expression and actions show that he is painfully aware of this responsibility.

■ **FIGURES 14.10 and 14.11** These are two scenes from the story of Adam and Eve. In the first scene, God is looking for Adam and Eve, who cover their ears and try to hide from him. In the second, an angel drives them from the garden of paradise. Adam and Eve clasp their hands and look heavenward for forgiveness.

**Did you find the story illustrated by these relief carvings easy to understand? What expressive qualities do the works possess?**



■ **FIGURE 14.10** *Adam and Eve Eating the Forbidden Fruit.* Relief carving on a capital from the cloister, Santes Creus Monastery. Near Tarragona, Spain. Twelfth century.



■ **FIGURE 14.11** *Adam and Eve Banished from the Garden of Eden.* Santes Creus Monastery. Near Tarragona, Spain. Twelfth century.

teach and inspire the people in their faith. The written portions of manuscripts were meant for the few people who could read, whereas the illustrations were intended for those who could not. The messages presented in the illustrations had to be simple and familiar so

everyone could understand them. The pictures often told the same Scripture stories that the people heard every Sunday in church sermons. These stories were also expressed in carvings and reliefs (**Figures 14.10** and **14.11**).

## LESSON ONE REVIEW

### Reviewing Art Facts

1. **Define** What is monasticism? Where and when did it originate?
2. **Describe** Name and describe the decorations used on early medieval manuscript pages.
3. **Identify** Give examples of symbolism used by manuscript illustrators.
4. **Explain** What type of art did the Church favor during the Medieval period?

### Visual Arts Journal

**Communicating Ideas** The art of the Early Medieval period is defined by works that could teach and inspire the faithful. The creation of illuminated manuscripts was a very important part of this tradition. The illuminations could enhance and reinforce the teachings of the church in a simple way that everyone could understand.

**Activity** Examine the illuminations in your text (Figures 14.8, 14.9) and in other resources. Choose a page in your journal and create an illumination about you, your interests, or your family. Display your illumination along with a written explanation.

# The Romanesque Period

## Vocabulary

- tapestries
- pilgrimage
- ambulatory
- tympanum

## Discover

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- Discuss the effects of feudalism on Romanesque architecture.
- Describe the structural changes made in churches during the Romanesque period.
- Explain the importance of the revival of sculpture during the Romanesque period.

The art of the Early Medieval period began to take on new features and abandon others until a new artistic style known as Romanesque emerged. This new style was especially apparent in architecture. Churches began to dot the countryside in greater numbers, and most of these had many features in common.

By the eleventh century, the Romanesque style appears to have been accepted throughout most of western Europe. It continued to thrive until the middle of the twelfth century, when another style, Gothic, appeared on the scene.

## The Effects of Feudalism

The feudal system, which had developed in the ninth century, reached its peak during the Romanesque period. It contributed to the constant disputes and open conflict that continued to mar the Medieval period.

Under the feudal system, land was the only source of wealth and power, but the supply was limited. Nobles, lords, and kings fought constantly to protect or add to the land under their control.

## Castles

### ■ FIGURE 14.12

With warfare unchecked, nobles found it wise to further fortify their dwellings. Towers of stone were built by the late eleventh century, and by the twelfth century the now-familiar stone castle (**Figure 14.12**) had evolved. With its tower, walls, moat, and drawbridge, the castle became the symbol of authority during the Romanesque period.

- **FIGURE 14.12** Notice the thick walls of this castle, without windows that might provide light and ventilation for the inhabitants. **What do you imagine life was like for the people who lived in this kind of castle?**

Castle of Manzanares el Real. c. thirteenth century. Province of Madrid, Spain.





■ **FIGURE 14.13** Walls like this were built to provide protection for the inhabitants of cities during the Romanesque period. **How has this old city wall been incorporated into the modern community?**

City Wall, overlooking River Adaja. Avila, Spain. Eleventh century.



■ **FIGURE 14.14** Narrow, dark street in Viana, Spain.

## Life in the Castles

A noble's castle could hardly have been a comfortable place. Its main purpose was defense, and this eliminated the possibility of windows. The thick outer walls were pierced only by narrow slots through which archers could fire on attackers. Stairs were steep and passageways dark and narrow.

The drafty rooms were usually sparsely furnished and lacked decoration. Occasionally **tapestries**, *textile wall hangings that were woven, painted, or embroidered with colorful scenes*, were hung to keep the dampness out. In cold weather, the only warmth came from fireplaces; the largest fireplace was in the great hall, where family members gathered and meals were served.

## The Growth of Cities

Castles remained important as long as the feudal system flourished, but the growth of trade and industry in the thirteenth century brought about an economy based on money rather than land. Cities sprang up, and castles became more and more obsolete.

The still unsettled times made it necessary to erect barricades around the towns. Wooden walls were used at first, but these were replaced during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by

more sturdy stone barricades. An early example of such a stone wall surrounds the historic city of Avila in Spain (**Figure 14.13**). Often referred to as one of the most ambitious military constructions of the Middle Ages, it measures more than 1.5 miles and includes 88 towers and nine gates.

Town walls succeeded in keeping out intruders, but they created problems as well. As more people moved into a town, space ran out and overcrowding resulted. To solve this problem, buildings were built higher, sometimes reaching seven stories or more. The space inside was increased by projecting each story out over the street. Of course, this method of construction made the narrow streets below very dark (**Figure 14.14**).

## Romanesque Churches

All the towns had one thing in common: In the center of each stood a church. During the Romanesque period, the Church increased its influence on the daily lives of the people. It offered comfort in this life and, more importantly, it provided the means to salvation in the next. The richly decorated stone churches of the eleventh and twelfth centuries are a testimony to the power of the Church, the faith of the people, and the skill of the builders.



■ **FIGURE 14.15** This famous cathedral was the destination of many pilgrimages. **Why did so many people undertake pilgrimages during the Romanesque period? How do you think the experience affected them?**

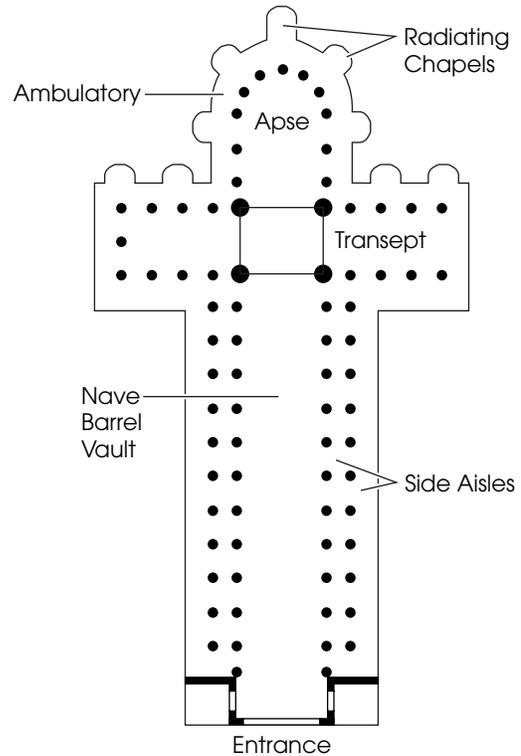
Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, Spain. Eleventh to thirteenth centuries.

## Pilgrimage Churches

■ **FIGURE 14.15**

The Church at this time placed great importance on piety and encouraged people to take part in pilgrimages. A **pilgrimage** is a *journey to a holy place*. These journeys were a visible sign of religious devotion. People banded together and traveled to pay homage to saints and relics in far-off churches.

Worshippers 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.



■ **FIGURE 14.16** Plan of a Romanesque Church.

The Holy Land and Rome were the destinations of many early pilgrimages. The long journey to the Holy Land was dangerous, however. A pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (**Figure 14.15**) in northwest Spain became an acceptable substitute, and churches and shelters were soon being built along this pilgrimage route in southern France and northern Spain. Builders continued to use the Roman basilica plan, but the churches were made larger to hold the great number of pilgrims that visited them.

## Modifications to Church Design

■ **FIGURE 14.16**

To increase the size of a Romanesque church, builders extended both the nave and transept and added two more aisles, one on each side (**Figure 14.16**). They often added an **ambulatory**, an *aisle curving around behind the main altar*, which made it easier for religious processions and groups of pilgrims to move about inside the building.

To accommodate the many priests who were required to say Mass every day along the pilgrimage routes, additional altars were placed in small curved chapels built along the transept and the ambulatory. The chapels, projecting out from the building, became a familiar part of Romanesque churches (**Figure 14.17**).

Building stone roofs for these huge Romanesque churches posed a serious problem. The Roman technique of using a series of round arches to construct a barrel vault (Figure 9.8, page 197) provided a solution. Thick, solid walls and huge pillars were needed to support the heavy stone roofs.

## The Church of Saint Sernin in Toulouse

### ■ FIGURE 14.18

It was in France that the Romanesque style reached its peak in architecture. Perhaps no structure better illustrates this style than the Church of Saint Sernin in Toulouse (**Figure 14.18**). Outside, this church appears large and solid. It is no wonder that churches like this came to be known as fortresses of God.

Inside, the church is spacious but dark and gloomy. A few steps lead down into the wide nave; on either side are two other aisles. Massive, closely spaced piers line the nave and separate it from the aisles on either side. These form a majestic arcade of arches leading from the main entrance to the altar at the far end of the church (**Figure 14.19**, page 322). Above, barely visible in the dim light, is the rounded ceiling of the barrel vault. The nave, side aisles, transept, apse, and ambulatory are easily identified. A sketch of the building would reveal that the church is laid out in the form of a huge cross.

Many feel that the overall impression of Saint Sernin is one of quiet strength and dignity. The church is simple and direct. With its massive walls, small windows, and durable tower, it has the look and feel of a stone castle.



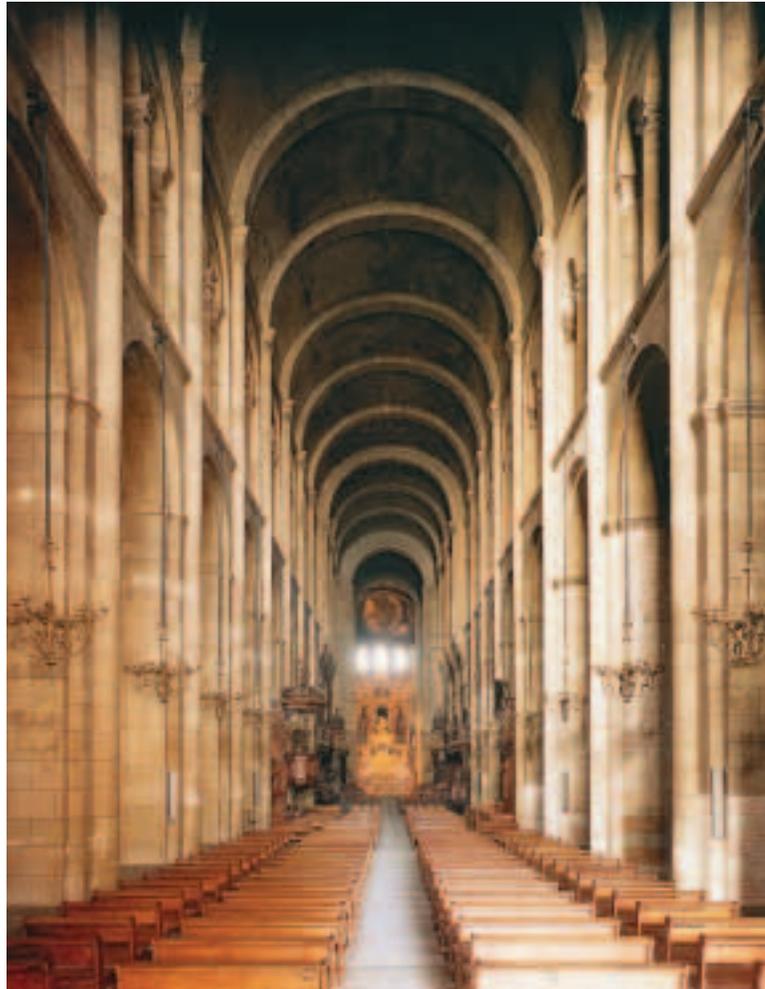
■ **FIGURE 14.17** Chapels projecting outward from churches were a familiar feature of Romanesque architecture. **What practical requirements made this architectural feature a necessity?**

Santillana del Mar Collegiate Church, apse exterior. Spain. c. Twelfth century.



■ **FIGURE 14.18** The solid exterior of this church may remind visitors of a castle. **Based on this exterior, what kind of interior would you expect?**

Saint Sernin. Facade. Toulouse, France. c. 1080–1120.



■ **FIGURE 14.19** The simple interior of the church was lit only by small, high windows and rows of flickering candles. **How well do you feel this interior matches the exterior of the church (Figure 14.18)? How is the viewer's eye directed to the apse? What is placed there?**

View of central nave, interior of Saint Sernin, Toulouse, France.

■ **FIGURE 14.20** Stories and scenes carved in the tympanum would be seen by everyone who entered the church. **What do you imagine was the main motivation of artists who carved relief sculptures on a church tympanum? What type of balance is used in this tympanum design?**

West portal and tympanum, Leyre Monastery, Province of Navarra, Spain. Twelfth century.



## The Revival of Sculpture and Painting

The revival of the sculptor's craft was one of the important achievements of the Romanesque period. Many of the churches along the pilgrimage routes used relief sculptures as another way to teach the faith to people, many of whom were illiterate. Like manuscript illustrations, these stone carvings reminded people of the familiar stories from Scripture.

Two architectural features were found to be ideal places for relief carvings: the **tympanum**, the *half-round panel that fills the space between the lintel and the arch over the doorway of the church* (**Figure 14.20**) and the capitals of columns inside.

The tympanum on the exterior of the church was an area to which people naturally lifted their eyes as they entered the building. It was a perfect location for relief sculpture. The shape of the tympanum seemed to demand a large figure in the center, which became the focus of attention. Smaller figures were placed on either side of this central figure. A subject such as the *Last Judgment* (**Figure 14.21**) was especially well suited for this arrangement.

## Styles Influencing Styles

**ROMAN TO ROMANESQUE** Just as Roman artists used relief sculpture on the triumphal arch to honor important and victorious personalities, Romanesque carvers filled the tympanum with sculptures representing important figures.

The Arch of Constantine (**Figure 14.21a**) depicts the victories of Constantine I. Relief carvings that appear on the arch show the emperor as the largest and most important of the figures.

Emphasis is used in the Romanesque tympanum (**Figure 14.21b**) to show the important figures. The large figure in the center represents God the Father. Angels trumpet the news that the final judgment has arrived. He welcomes the chosen on his right, but his left arm points down, condemning the sinners on his left. The chosen stand upright. The sinners fall—or are pulled—to their doom.

The row of figures below includes Mary with the Christ Child in the center. The 12 apostles stand on either side. St. Michael weighs souls to determine who is worthy to enter heaven.



■ **FIGURE 14.21a** Arch of Constantine, Rome, Italy. A.D. 312–15.



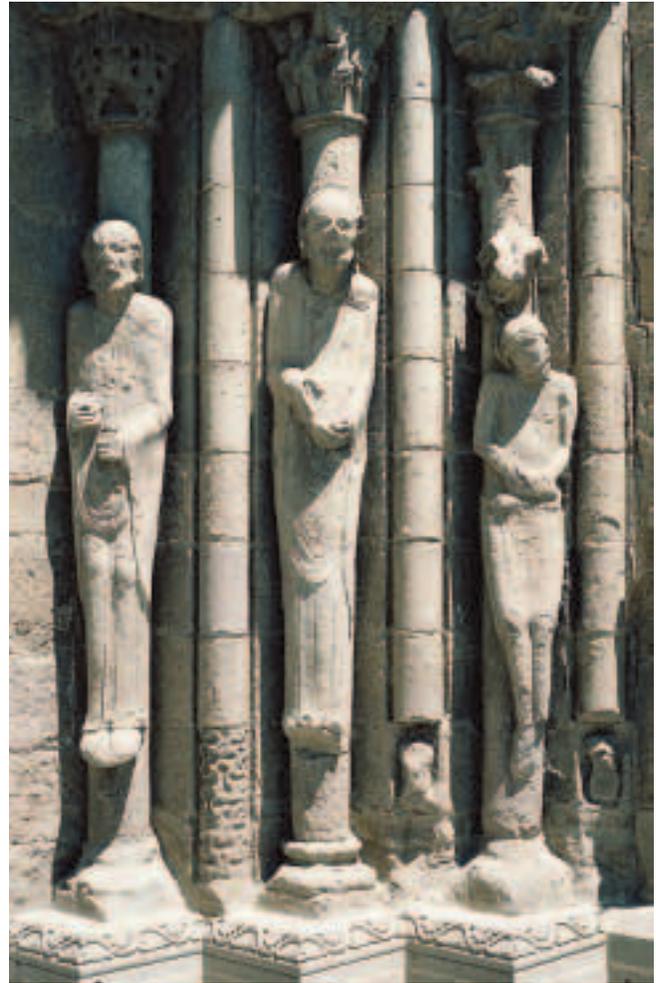
■ **FIGURE 14.21b**

*Last Judgment.* Tympanum, Church of Santa Maria. Sangüesa, Spain. Twelfth to thirteenth centuries.



■ **FIGURE 14.22** Romanesque church façades like this one were known as Bibles in Stone. **How can you explain that term? What made this kind of Bible in Stone necessary?**

Santa Maria façade. Sangüesa, Spain. Twelfth to thirteenth centuries.



■ **FIGURE 14.23** Notice how the figures have been elongated to fit into the spaces between the columns. **What messages do you think these figures were intended to convey to worshippers?**

Portal sculpture. Santa Maria façade. Detail, Judas. Sangüesa, Spain. Twelfth to thirteenth centuries.

## Church of Santa Maria

### ■ FIGURES 14.22 and 14.23

Efforts were made to fit as many stories as possible into the space available on the front of Romanesque churches. This was the case at Santa Maria in Sangüesa (**Figure 14.22**). There you even find one of the few carvings of the hanged Judas, as shown in **Figure 14.23**. Judas is the figure to the far right in the bottom row of figures that flank the door on either side.

Most of the carvings on Romanesque churches illustrated scenes from the lives of saints. A relief from the façade of San Miguel in Estella, Spain (**Figure 14.24**), illustrates the biblical story of the three Marys at the tomb

of Christ. An angel informs them that Christ has risen, while his companion offers proof by pointing to the empty tomb. The figures project only slightly from the wall, giving the work a flat appearance.

## Capital Decoration

Inside churches and in cloisters, the capitals of columns were another excellent place for carvings. Here, where the weight of the ceiling was met by the upward thrust of columns, the roving eyes of the faithful came to rest. Many Medieval sculptors served their apprenticeships by carving these capitals with biblical scenes, human figures, birds, and



■ **FIGURE 14.24**  
 Notice that one of the angels has raised his hand. This gesture was often used in medieval art to portray a figure speaking. What do you think he is saying? **Do the figures in this work look solid and three-dimensional or flat and decorative?**

*The Three Marys at the Tomb.*  
 Relief carving from the north portal, San Miguel. Twelfth century. Estella, Spain.

animals. Once they had developed their skills, they moved on to carving larger scenes.

Romanesque capitals are often a curious mixture of skilled craftwork and quaint storytelling. For example, in a capital relief carving in the cloister of the cathedral at Tarragona, Spain (**Figures 14.25 and 14.26**), rats carry a “dead” cat to its grave. The wily cat, however, is only pretending to be dead as it is carried

on the litter. In the next panel, it jumps up to claim its careless victims. Some claim this carving is a rare example of Medieval humor. Others suggest it was inspired by an old Spanish proverb: The mouse is wise, but the cat is wiser. Then again, it may be a reference to the resurrection, indicating that Christ’s return from the dead will result in the destruction of his enemies.



■ **FIGURE 14.25 and FIGURE 14.26** There are two scenes to the story being told here. **Reading from left to right, what is happening in each scene?**

Left and right views of capital relief carvings from the cloister, Cathedral at Tarragona, Spain. Twelfth to thirteenth centuries.

■ **FIGURE 14.27** This painting shows Christ with his right hand raised in blessing, while his left holds an open book proclaiming his title as Supreme Ruler. He is surrounded by the four Evangelists. **Do you think this is a successful work? Would you support your decision by referring to the literal, design, or expressive qualities?**

*Christ in Majesty.* Wall painting from San Clemente. Romanesque Catalan fresco. Tahull, Spain. Twelfth century. Museo de Arte de Cataluna, Barcelona, Spain.



## Church Wall Paintings

Large paintings decorating the inside walls of churches were also done during this period. Artists often were required to fit their paintings into a specific area. At San Clemente in Tahull, Spain, the painter took a familiar Byzantine theme and tailored it to fit within the apse of the church (**Figure 14.27**).

As Ruler of the Universe, Christ is seated on an arch representing the sphere of the universe with his feet resting on a semicircular shape. A bold use of line, brilliant colors, and a sensitive feeling for pattern are reminders of the manuscript illuminations produced during the same time. It is likely that many works like this one were painted by artists who also decorated the pages of Medieval manuscripts.

## Illuminations in Religious Manuscripts

Illuminations in religious manuscripts continued to be an important form of painting throughout the Romanesque period. The flattened look seen in figures carved in stone is even more obvious in these paintings. There are no shadows and no suggestion of depth.

## Common Features of Romanesque Paintings

Certainly Romanesque painters possessed the skill to reproduce more accurately what they saw, but they chose not to do so. They were concerned primarily with the presentation of easy-to-understand religious symbols, not with the imitation of reality. This flattened quality is evident in an illumination from a gospel produced around the middle of the twelfth century in Swabia, a small territory in southwest Germany (**Figure 14.28**). Here an angel appears before a woman who raises her hands in surprise.

Followers of the Christian religion had no difficulty recognizing this scene as the Annunciation. The angel, with his hand raised to show that he is speaking, has just announced to Mary that she is to be the mother of the Savior. The easy-to-read message, flat, colorful shapes, and bold use of line are common features in this and all other Romanesque paintings.



**FIGURE 14.28** This illumination tells a familiar Bible story clearly and completely. **How is this work similar to the carved reliefs created during the same period?**

*The Annunciation.* Leaf from a Psalter. German. Twelfth century. Tempera and gold and silver leaf on parchment. 15.2 × 12 cm (6 × 4¾"). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York. Fletcher Fund, 1925. (25.204.1).

## LESSON TWO REVIEW

### Reviewing Art Facts

1. **Describe** What was the primary purpose of a Romanesque castle?
2. **Explain** Why was it necessary to increase the size of Romanesque churches?
3. **Recall** What part of the church building is the tympanum? Where is it located? Why was this feature added?
4. **Identify** Name two architectural features found to be ideal places for relief carvings.

### Beyond the Classroom

**Identifying Social and Political Functions** The Romanesque period brought architectural changes that spread throughout western Europe. Each town and village had its own church that was the center of life for the people. Many towns had castles nearby to provide protection.

**Activity** Find examples of castles, churches, and cathedrals in books and other resources. Pay attention to where they are located and what purpose they serve. Locate buildings in your community that serve special functions such as meeting places or places of protection. Draw a diagram of your community indicating locations and purposes of these buildings.

# Stepping Back in Time

**A medieval monastery in New York City is a peaceful oasis.**

**T**he Middle Ages lives in New York City! Visitors to Fort Tryon Park can find a medieval monastery overlooking the Hudson River. This structure is called The Cloisters—a museum run by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Cloisters is made up of parts of real medieval cloisters from five monasteries in Europe, and it houses many medieval art treasures.

The man most responsible for The Cloisters is sculptor George Grey Barnard. In the early 1900s, Barnard collected medieval artworks, as well as parts of ruins from French monasteries. The Metropolitan Museum of Art bought his collection in 1920. By 1938, the building to house these medieval treasures was completed.

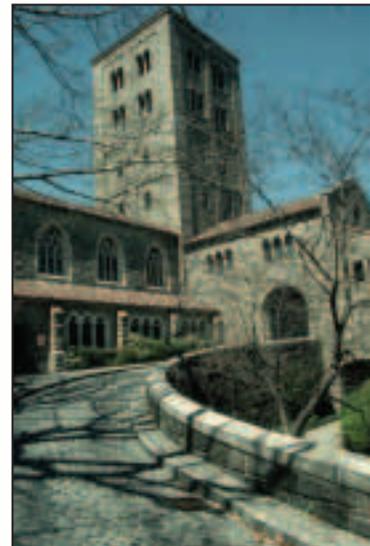
The Cloisters was built in a typical Romanesque style. To make it more authentic, granite was cut and assembled using Roman techniques. Within the walls are a series of rooms that display chalices, paintings, rare tapestries, and other precious objects.

There are actually four cloisters—rectangular courtyards with arcaded walks on four sides. In the center of each cloister is a garden, where strollers can see 250 types of plants that grew in medieval times. Walking through the peaceful cloisters and gardens, visitors feel they have been transported back in time.



CORBIS

The Cloisters' gardens feature plants grown during the Middle Ages. One garden has herbal, medicinal, and cooking plants. Another grows plants with medieval symbolism, such as roses (the Virgin Mary).



CORBIS

Visitors seeking escape from the city can relax at The Cloisters.

## TIME to Connect

Pretend a time machine can take you back to the Middle Ages. Where would you go? A castle in Spain? Aix-la-Chapelle in the time of Charlemagne? A abbey in France? Use your school media center or the Internet to research what medieval life was like in a country in Europe.

- Why did you choose that particular country?
- Describe the architecture of the region you have chosen. Be sure to include illustrated examples. What was life like back then? How did the buildings reflect how people lived?

# CHAPTER 14 REVIEW

## Reviewing the Facts

### Lesson One

1. What years are considered the Middle Ages, or the Medieval period?
2. What event in history marks the start of the Early Medieval period?
3. Name the main features that would be identified in a plan of a Romanesque church.
4. List several ways the Christian Church taught illiterate people stories from the Bible.

### Lesson Two

5. During the Medieval period, when land was the only source of wealth and power, how could a nobleman increase his wealth?
6. Who originated barrel vault construction? How was it used during the Romanesque period?
7. Why did sculpture regain importance during the Romanesque period? What purpose did sculpture serve?
8. What was the subject matter of the sculpture that was produced during the Medieval period?

## Thinking Critically

1. **ANALYZE.** Look closely at each of the illustrations of paintings in Chapter 14. What can you say about Medieval artists' interest in creating a sense of deep space and pattern in their paintings?
2. **EVALUATE.** Refer to *Christ in Majesty*, Figure 14.27, page 326. Consider the elements of color, value, line, and shape. How did the artist use art principles of balance, emphasis, harmony, and variety to arrange each of the elements mentioned?

### YOUR DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

Prepare an artwork made from a collection of unusual found objects. Search for unique objects that could be used in a design. In small groups, design a piece of art using some or all of the objects. Brainstorm several possibilities for using your found objects. What media will you use? Arrange the found objects in a pleasing way and make a rough sketch of the final design. Store your artwork or a digital image of it in your portfolio.

## Standardized Test Practice

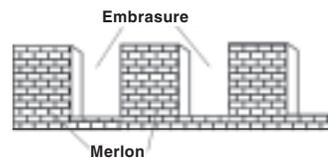
### Reading & Writing

Read the paragraph below, and then answer the questions.

A main function of castles was to provide a defense against invaders. This was achieved by several devices, including water-filled moats and *barbicans*, high stone walls surrounding the castle. Another such device was *battlements* (or *crenellations*). These were alternating sections of wall, called *merlons*, and openings, called *embrasures*. The embrasures were used for firing arrows. They also permitted boulders to be dropped on attackers attempting to scale the castle walls.

1. Another name for *battlements* is

- A barbicans.
- B merlons.
- C crenellations.
- D embrasures.



2. If you were going to write an alternate caption for Figure 14.12 (page 318), you might note that this castle was equipped with

- E a barbican and a moat.
- F merlons but not embrasures.
- G a moat and crenellations.
- H a barbican and battlements.