

# Romanesque Art

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## INTRODUCTION

Romanesque architecture was the first distinctive style to spread across [Europe](#) since the [Roman Empire](#). Despite the impression of 19th century Art Historians that Romanesque architecture was a continuation of the Roman, in fact, [Roman building techniques](#) in brick and stone were largely lost in most parts of Europe, and in the more northern countries had never been adopted except for official buildings, while in Scandinavia they were unknown. There was little continuity, even in Rome, where several great [Constantinian basilicas](#) continued to stand as an inspiration to later builders. It was not the buildings of ancient Rome, but the 6th century octagonal Byzantine [Basilica of San Vitale](#) in [Ravenna](#) which was to inspire the greatest building of the [Dark Ages](#) in [Western Europe](#), the [Emperor Charlemagne's Palatine Chapel in Aachen, Germany](#), built around the year AD 800.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. Why is Romanesque art called "Romanesque"?
2. In what ways did pilgrimages affect art?
3. What are the differences between the Cluniac view and Cistercian view regarding art and Christianity?
4. Why was the interest in Apocalyptic imagery so prevalent in Romanesque art?
5. How did Romanesque figural sculpture reflect the time period?
6. How did the figures in manuscript illuminations reflect and differ from the Greco-Roman styles of antiquity?
7. What are the major tenets of scholasticism? How is it similar to earlier philosophies we have studied?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# VOCABULARY

ambulatory, apse, arcade, apocalyptic, axial plan (basilican plan), baptistery, bay, campanile, cathedral, Cluniac, Cistercian, pilgrimage, clerestory, embroidery, jamb, historiated, narthex, nave, portal, reliquary, rib vault, tapestry, transept, triforium, tympanum

---

---

---

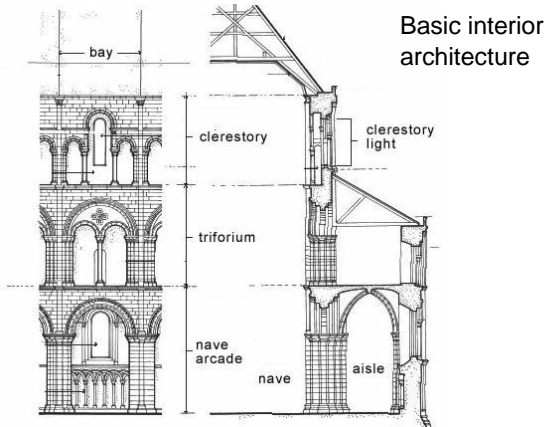
---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

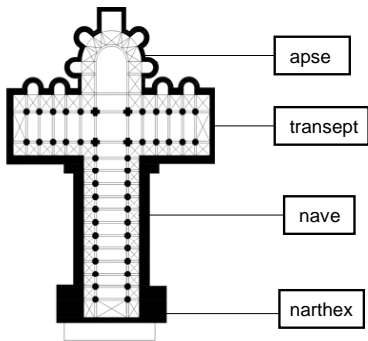
---

---

---

---

Basic exterior architecture I



---

---

---

---

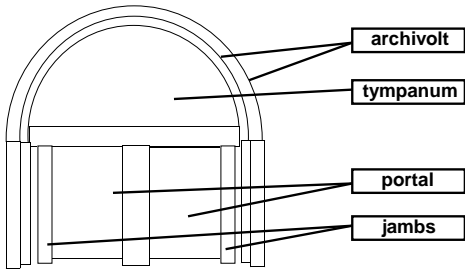
---

---

---

---

Basic exterior architecture II



---

---

---

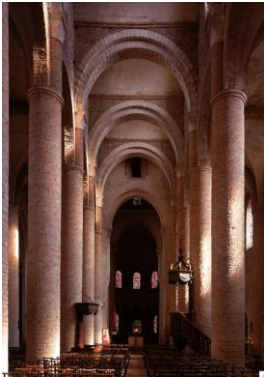
---

---

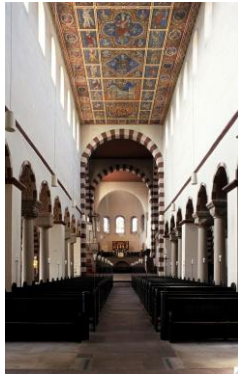
---

---

---



A.



B.

Compare these two works using architectural vocabulary.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

AP Art History

- Prompt: In your textbook, look at the plan of Saint Sernin: page 452. Read the section on the building. Compare this work to the Parthenon or another building from Greco-Roman times. (10 mins.)

---

---

---

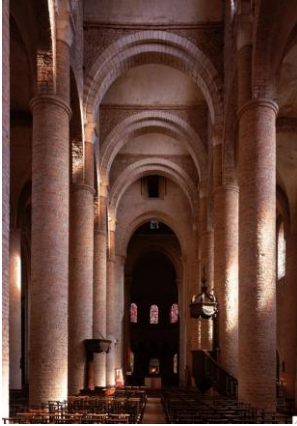
---

---

---

---

---



**Interior of Saint-Philibert**

Tournus, FR  
ca. 1060 CE

- Define: *barrel vaulted, nave*
- Why would this space be considered "Romanesque"?
- What aspects of this building reveal additional evolutionary steps in architecture?
- In what ways have the *transverse arches* opened up the space in the church, and why was this necessary?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Aerial view of Saint-Sernin (from the southeast)  
Toulouse, FR; ca. 1070 - 1120 CE



- How was this church designed to accommodate pilgrims?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Saint-Sernin (view of façade)



- What clues does the façade of the building provide about the interior of the church?
- Does the buttressing of this façade seem overbuilt?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Saint-Sernin  
(view of apse  
radiating chapels)

- What was the purpose of the radiating chapels?
- How do the radiating chapels fit into the overall plan of Saint-Sernin?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Saint-Sernin (interior view)

- Define: *bay*
- What new challenges has the heightened nave presented, and how did the architects address these new problems?

---

---

---

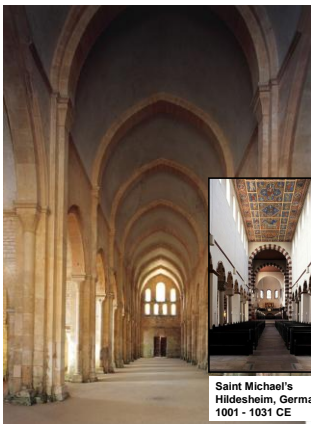
---

---

---

---

---



Interior of abbey church  
of Notre-Dame

Fontenay, FR

1139 - 1147 CE

- Define: *Cluniac, Cistercian, White Monks, Bernard of Clairvaux*
- How are the Cistercian beliefs represented in the structure of this church interior?
- What architectural element allowed for less buttressing and why?

Saint Michael's  
Hildesheim, Germany  
1001 - 1031 CE

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



West façade Saint- Étienne  
Caen, FR  
begun 1067 CE

- How does the facade of the church reflect the design of the interior of the church?
- Which cultures' building traditions that you have studied are reflected in this building and how are they reflected in the building?

---

---

---

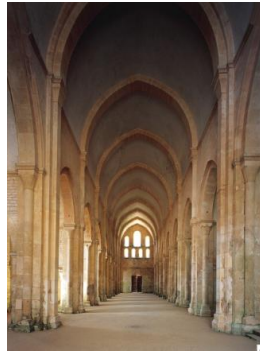
---

---

---

---

---



- Compare these two buildings. Which appears more "advanced" and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Saint-Étienne (interior view)

- What building elements seem "heavy" in this space? Which ones seem "light"?
- What was the reason for the development of the *quadrant arch* or *quadrant vault*?
- How does the *sexpartite vault* open up the nave space of Saint-Étienne?

---

---

---

---

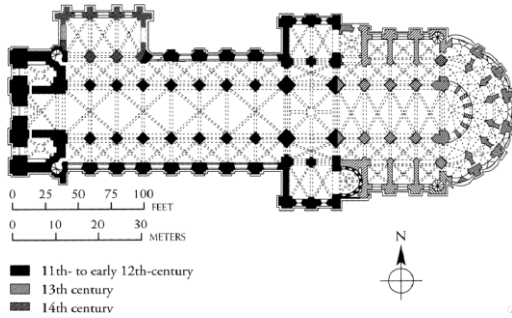
---

---

---

---

Saint-Étienne (plan)



- Is Saint-Étienne considered a “modular” building? Why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Interior of Durham Cathedral  
Durham, England  
begun ca. 1093 CE

- Define: *alternating support system, pointed arch, ribs, ribbed vault, quadrant arches, chevrons*
- Why is Durham Cathedral considered a transitional structure towards the Gothic style?
- What new shapes are repeated throughout the space?
- What ways does the cathedral seem “lighter” than previous Romanesque structures?

---

---

---

---

---

---

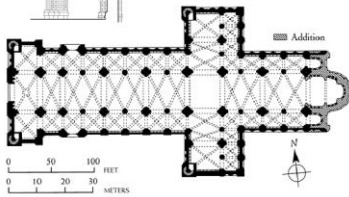
---

---

Lateral section (*top*) and plan (*bottom*) of Durham Cathedral



The present cathedral replaces the 10th century “White Church” built as part of a monastic foundation to house the [shrine](#) of Saint [Cuthbert of Lindisfarne](#). The treasures of Durham Cathedral include [relics](#) of St Cuthbert, the head of St [Oswald of Northumbria](#) and the remains of the [Venerable Bede](#).



- Note: The section (top) has good views of the *quadrant vault* and nave and side aisle constructions.
- From this plan, how can you tell that this building is English?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Pisa Cathedral complex  
Pisa, Italy



cathedral begun 1063 CE

- Define: *campinale*
- How do the structures represent an Italian Romanesque building style?
- How are the buildings of the Pisa complex unified?

cathedral begun 1063 CE;  
baptistery begun 1153 CE;  
*campinale* begun 1174 CE

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Baptistery of San Giovanni  
Florence, Italy  
dedicated 1059 CE

[View](#) the interior of the Baptistery

- What are the “Romanesque” elements of the Florence Baptistery?
- What building materials distinguish this structure from other Romanesque buildings?
- The Italians value their baptisteries differently from the French. How do the Italians value their baptisteries?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Cloister of Saint-Pierre  
Moissac, France  
ca. 1100 - 1115 CE  
limestone with  
marble relief panels  
piers approx. 6' high

- Define: *cloister*, *historiated*.
- What purpose did the cloister serve in the daily lives of the clergy?
- What purpose did the sculptural elements of the cloister serve in their daily lives?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

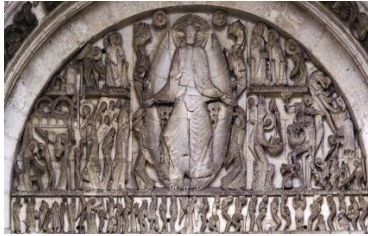
---

---

---



- Compare the style and structure of these two works.
- Create a hypothesis of their content.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Creation and Temptation of Adam and Eve, frieze  
 On the west façade, Modena Cathedral; *Wiligelmo*  
 ca. 1110 CE; marble; Modena, Italy



- Why is this relief significant in Romanesque art?
- How do the portrayals of the figures differ from traditional Roman verism?
- The last panel in the narrative contains, simultaneously, three parts of the temptation story. What are they?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



South portal of Saint-Pierre  
 Moissac, France  
 Ca. 1115 - 1135 CE

- Define: *tympanum*, *vousoir*, *trumeau*, *jamb*
- What story was usually told in the sculptural program of Romanesque churches?
- How do late medieval figures occupy space in ways that are different from, say, Roman figures?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



- Sketch out this image
- Label the *tympanum*, *archivolt*, *trumeau*, *jamb*, *portal*

---

---

---

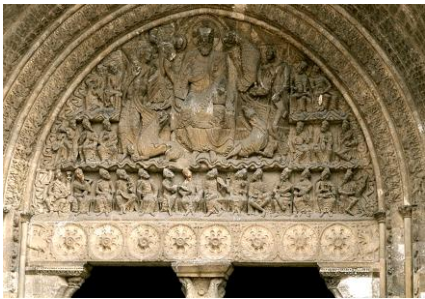
---

---

---

---

---



Detail of south portal of Saint-Pierre

- Name the figures who surround Christ in this tympanum.
- Who are the figures below Christ with their craned necks?
- Describe how the artist used scale to emphasize ecclesiastical importance.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Detail of Last Judgment, west tympanum of Saint-Lazare  
*Gislebertus*

- How does *Gislebertus* stylize figures to make them more threatening to his audience?
- Looking closely at *Gislebertus*' work, what do the different postures of the judged suggest?
- What are the defining characteristics of this tympanum?




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



King David, statue in a niche on the west façade of Fidenza Cathedral  
 Fidenza, Italy  
 Benedetto Antelami  
 ca. 1180 - 1190 CE  
 marble  
 approx. life-size

- Define: *niche*
- How does King David occupy space? How does this differ from the Greco-Roman tradition?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Virgin and Child (*Morgan Madonna*)  
 Auvergne, France  
 second half of the 12th c. CE  
 painted wood  
 2' 7" high  
 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

- What is unusual about the portrayal of Christ in this sculpture?
- What role does Mary play in this sculpture?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Head reliquary of St. Alexander  
 Stavelot Abbey, Belgium  
 1145 CE  
 silver repoussé (partly gilt), gilt bronze, gems, pearls, and enamel  
 approx. 1' 5 1/2" high  
 Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels, BG

- Define: *reliquary*, *repoussé*, Bernard of Clairvaux

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Key Concepts

- [Romanesque](#) is a term that defines a style that is neither indigenous nor strictly regional. Romanesque, literally "**in the Roman style**," was a sensibility that informed building techniques and decorating styles.
- The **original Roman roads** throughout Germany, France, Spain, and Italy provided **pilgrimage routes** for devout pilgrims wanting to travel to venerate before the **important relics** throughout Europe. Attached to each relic was a major pilgrimage church capable of holding thousands of pilgrims at a time.
- Romanesque **sculpture** is typically found **at the portals** of these pilgrimage churches, and there a pilgrim would encounter an apocalyptic vision of Christ saving and damning human souls. This didactic style served to provide a mostly illiterate population with the important Biblical stories in an effort **to teach them Christian values and, perhaps, control them**.
- There were, however, departures from this new artistic flourishing. The Cistercians with their severe views about art and imagery provided a foil for the rest of western Europe as it began to embrace the arts with more vigor than it had in 700 years.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---