

Prof. Victor Coonin
412 Clough, x3824

Art 321: Early Christian, Byzantine, and Medieval Art

Fall 1998

M W F, 10:20-11:20; 417 Clough

Course Objectives and Description

This course will examine the visual arts in Europe during the period normally known as the Middle Ages (or Medieval period). It stretches from the reign of Constantine in the 4th century to the outbreak of the Black Death in 1348 (or from the end of the classical period to the beginning of the Renaissance). The course will also focus on the art emanating from the Byzantine east. During this era, Europe saw strikingly new and original artistic forms, both in a secular context and art related to the increasingly influential Christian church. Topics covered will include issues of aesthetics, iconography, style, functionality, and spirituality.

Texts

We will use Snyder's Medieval Art as our principal textbook. It is a wonderful source of information and images, and we will follow his general division of the subject matter. An emphasis of the course is the reading of primary documents in order to understand the art of the period in its original context. For this reason passages from supplemental texts have been assigned. In addition, students will also be encouraged to consult information available through various Internet sites whose addresses will be provided.

Textbook:

*James Snyder, Medieval Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture 4th-14th Century, New Jersey, 1989.

Optional Supplemental Texts with Original Documents:

*Caecilia Davis-Weyer, Early Medieval Art, 300-1150, Toronto, 1986. [Recommended]

Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, A Documentary History of Art, Vol. I, Princeton, 1981.

Cyril Mango, The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453, Toronto, 1986.

Theresa G. Frisch, Gothic Art, 1140-ca.1450, Toronto, 1986.

Readings from Scholarly Journals:

Students should be familiar with the leading academic journal devoted to Medieval art. The title is Gesta, and it is published by the International Center of Medieval Art. Recent issues are located in Burrow library. Students should also consult the Art Bulletin, which is the leading art history journal in the U.S. Supplemental readings have been culled from these sources. Supplemental readings have been chosen from these sources. They are challenging yet accessible and all have been published within the past dozen years.

Grading

The class is divided into 6 sections and there will be a required grade involved for five of the six. Students must take 4 tests and lead 1 class discussion. Students may choose on which sections they wish to be tested and for which they would like to lead a class discussion, however, all students must take the first test. Grading proportions are as follows:

1 class discussion (20%)= 20%

4 tests (20% each)= 80%

Tests: Tests will be in-class essays based on questions provided.

Class Discussions: Each student will lead a class discussion based either on an original text from the period or based on a contemporary scholarly article. Each student must establish the context for the reading, discuss its significance, and offer an insightful critique of the issue involved. A written synopsis of class discussion will be submitted by the discussion leader at the class following the presentation. The synopsis should take into account any issues, questions, or interesting comments generated in class.

Computer Resources

During the course of the semester we will be building an image bank as a web page on the Internet. It will have more color images than those in the book and will be especially useful when studying for tests. This site is for study purposes only and available solely to members of the class. Do not share the password, download, copy, or otherwise manipulate the images. Breaking these rules is not only illegal but a violation of the honor code which will result in disciplinary action.

Web Sites

There are several excellent sites on the Internet that have pertinent information on Medieval art and architecture. The addresses of these sites will be made available through my homepage and we will consult the information both in class and through outside assignments. The most complete is called Netserf and is maintained by Catholic University. The address is as follows: www.cua.edu/www/hist/netserf/

Schedule of Classes

*Reading assignments marked with an asterix are most appropriate for leading a class discussion.

I. Late Antique and Early Christian Art

Aug 26: Introduction to the medieval period and its classical background.

Reading assignments for next class:

Snyder: Chapter I

D-W: Tertullian, Minucius Felix, and Paulinus of Nola on the decoration of churches (p.3-7 and 17-19).

Aug 28: Images, Propaganda, and Spirituality

Snyder: Chapter I

D-W: Tertullian, Minucius Felix, and Paulinus of Nola on the decoration of churches (p.3-7 and 17-19).

Aug 31: Architectural Form and Meaning

Basilican Plans

Snyder: Chapters II & IV

Mango Excerpts: Eusebius on the Church of Tyre (p.3-7); The Holy Sepulchar (p.11-14); and The ideal church (p.24-6)

D-W: The Book of the Popes and Prudentius on St. Peter's and St. Paul's (p.11-15)

Sept 2: Architecture (cont.)

Centralized Plans

Snyder: Chapters II & IV

Holt: Theoderich (p.74-79)

Sept 4: Early Christian Decoration and Iconography

Snyder: Chapter III

D-W: Prudentius on Inscriptions (p.25)

*Article: Marc Michael Epstein, "The Elephant and the Law: The Medieval Jewish Minority Adapts a Christian Motif," Art Bulletin, LXXVI, 1994, 465-478.

Sept 9: Illuminated Manuscripts

Snyder: Chapter V

D-W: Instructions for a Painter of Miniatures

*Article: John Lowden, "Concerning the Cotton Genesis and Other Illustrated Manuscripts of Genesis," Gesta, XXX/1, 1992, 40-53.

Sept 11: Catch-up and Review for first Test

(Founder's Day)

Snyder: Chapter V

Sept 14: First Test

II. Byzantium

Sept 16: Constantinople

Snyder: Chapter VI

Excerpts from Paulus on Hagia Sophia

*Mango: Various writers on Hagia Sophia (p.72-102)

Holt: Robert of Clari (p. 79-88)

Sept 18: Ravenna

Snyder: Chapter VII

Mango: Agnellus on Ravenna (p.104-8)

*Article: Irina Andreescu-Treadgold and Warren Treadgold, "Procopius and the Imperial Panels of S. Vitale," Art Bulletin, LXXIX, 1997, 708-723.

Sept 21: Iconoclastic Controversies, 726-842

Snyder: Chapter VIII

*Mango: Intro & excerpts p.149-177

*Article: Charles Barber, "From Image into Art: Art after Byzantine Iconoclasm," Gesta, XXXIV/1, 1995, 5-10.

Sept 23: Later Byzantine art

Snyder: Chapter IX

*Mango on miracle-working images (p.210-214)

Sept 25: Byzantine art in Italy

Snyder: Chapter X

*Article: Robert Ousterhout, "An Apologia for Byzantine Architecture," Gesta, XXXV/1, 1996, 21-33.

Sept 28: Second Test

Sept 30: No Class-- Yom Kippur

III. Early Middle Ages

Oct 2: The North

Snyder: Chapter XI

Excerpts from Beowulf

D-W: Treatise of Bishop Desiderius; and St. Eloy of Noyen (p.66-70)

*Article: Martin Werner, "On the Origin of the Form of the Irish High Cross," Gesta, XXIX/1, 1990, 98-110.

Oct 5: Hiberno-Saxon Art

Snyder: Chapter XII

D-W: How to Paint the Apostles (p.78-9)

*Peter Meyvaert, "The Book of Kells and Iona," Art Bulletin, LXXI, 1989, 6-19.

Oct 7: Carolingian Architecture

Snyder: Chapter XIII

*D-W: Einhard (p.83-4); Two Monasteries (p.92-99)

Oct 9: Carolingian Manuscripts

Snyder: Chapter XIII

*Article: William J. Diebold, "The Ruler Portrait of Charles the Bald in the S. Paolo Bible," Art Bulletin, LXXVI, 1994, 6-18. Carolingian

Oct 12: Ottonian Empire

Snyder: Chapter XIV

D-W: St. Bernward as a Patron (p.122-3)

*Article: Barbara Zeitler, "Cross-Cultural Interpretations of Imagery in the Middle Ages," Art Bulletin, LXXVI, 1994, 680-694.

Oct 14: Third Test

IV. Romanesque Art

Oct 16: The Pilgrimage Route to Spain

Snyder: Chapter XVI

*D-W: Glaber (p.124-5) and Santiago di Compostela (p.147-156)

Oct 23: Pilgrimage Churches in France

Snyder: Chapter XVI

*Article: Barbara Abou-EI-Haj, "The Audiences for the Medieval Cult of Saints," Gesta, XXX/1, 1991, 3-15.

Oct 25: Cluny and Burgundy

Snyder: Chapter XVII

D-W: Cluny (p.128-132)

Holt: St. Bernard (p. 18-22)

*Article: O.K. Werkmeister, "Cluny III and the Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela," Gesta, XXVII, 1988, 103-112.

Oct 28: The Bayeux Tapestry

Snyder: Chapter XVIII

Oct 30: Normandy and England

Snyder: Chapter XVIII

D-W: Eadmer (p.112-114) and Gervase (p. 141-6)

Nov 1: Italian Architecture

Snyder: Chapter XIX

*D-W: Leo of Ostia (p. 135-141)

Nov 4: Italian Painting and Sculpture

Snyder: Chapter XIX

Nov 6: Fourth Test

V. Gothic Art

Nov 8: Gothic Art in France

Snyder: Chapter XXII

*Holt: Abbot Suger excerpts (p. 22-48)

Nov 11: The Gothic Cathedral in France (cont.)

Snyder: Chapter XXII

Holt: Theophilus (p. 1-8); and Letters on Chartres (p. 49-51)

*Caroline Bruzelius, "The Construction of Notre-Dame in Paris," Art Bulletin, LXIX, 1987, 541-569.

Nov 13: England

Snyder: Chapter XXIII

*Holt: Letters on Canterbury (p. 52-62)

Nov 15: Germany

Snyder: Chapter XXIII

Holt: Roriczer (p.95-101)

Nov 18: Painting and Minor Arts

Snyder: Chapter XXIV

Holt: Villard de Honnecourt (p.88-91) and Jean Pucelle (p. 129-134)

*Article: Pamela Sheingorn, "'The Wise Mother'": The Image of St. Anne Teaching the Virgin Mary," Gesta, XXXII/1, 1993, 69-80.

Nov 20: St. Chappelle and The Rayonnant Style

Snyder: Chapter XXII

*Article: Daniel H. Weiss, "Architectural Symbolism and the Decoration of Ste. Chappelle," Art Bulletin, LXXVII, 1995, 308-320.

Nov 22: Fifth Test

VI. Gothic Art in Italy

Nov 25: Italian Gothic Architecture

Snyder: Chapter XXV

Holt: Milan Cathedral (p. 107-114)

Dec 2: Giotto and Duccio

Snyder: Chapter XXV

Holt: Procession (p. 134-6)

*Article: Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona, "Barren Metal and the Fruitful Womb: The Program of Giotto's Arena Chapel in Padua," Art Bulletin, LXXX/2, 1998, 274-291.

Dec 4: Museum Visit-- Medieval Panel painting

Holt: Cennini (p. 136-150)

Dec 6: Italian Gothic Sculpture

Snyder: Chapter XXV

*Herbert L. Kessler, "On the State of Medieval Art History," Art Bulletin, LXX, 1988, 166-187.

Dec 9: Italy and the Black Death

Excerpts from Boccaccio's Decameron

Dec 11: Sixth Test