

Prof. Victor Coonin
412 Clough, x3824

Art 321: Early Christian, Byzantine, and Medieval Art

Fall 2000

TTH 9:40-11:10; 417 Clough

Course Objectives and Description

This course will examine the visual arts in Europe during the period normally known as the Middle Ages. It stretches roughly 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 dawn of the Renaissance). The course will also cover art emanating from the Byzantine Empire. During this era, Europe saw strikingly new and original artistic forms, both in a secular context and in art related to the increasingly influential Christian church. Topics covered will include issues of aesthetics, iconography, style, functionality, and spirituality.

Textbooks:

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

Peter and Linda Murray, The Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture, Oxford, 1996. [Optional, but extremely useful]

Supplemental Texts with Original Documents:

An emphasis of the course is the reading of primary documents in order to understand the art of the period in its original context. Supplemental readings come from the following sources and will be distributed in class:

- Caecilia Davis-Weyer, Early Medieval Art, 300-1150, Toronto, 1986.
- 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 following academic journals devoted to Art History:

- The Art Bulletin leading American journal of Art History
- The Burlington Magazine leading British journal of Art History
- Gesta published by the International Center of Medieval Art
- Dumbarton Oaks Papers studies of Byzantine art and culture
- Simiolus journal of Medieval History

We currently receive each of these journals in Burrow Library. Supplemental readings have been chosen from these sources. They are challenging yet accessible articles and all have been published within the past dozen years.

Computer Resources and the Internet

There are several excellent sites on the Internet that have pertinent information on Medieval art and architecture. Many are available through links on my homepage. The most complete is called Netserf and is maintained by Catholic University. The address is as follows:
www.cua.edu/www/hist/netserf/

Grading

Two Class Presentations
Research Paper on topic of choice
Museum Presentation

Class Presentations

Each student will lead class discussions based on a contemporary scholarly article (or in some cases, a medieval source reading). 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 must be submitted by the discussion leader at the first scheduled class following the presentation. The synopsis should take into account any issues, questions, or interesting comments generated in class. Late papers will be penalized 1/3 letter grade per class period.

Research Paper

For your paper you should explore a timely theme of interest in the study of Medieval Art. Your paper should cover the following four areas: 1) clearly state the issue and/or hypothesis under consideration; 2) review how the subject was treated in the past; 3) explain what new methods, discoveries, or theories, are being applied to your topic; 4) finally, discuss the importance and relevance of the issue today. This is not designed to be an extensive research project nor are you expected to come to definitive new interpretations or solutions. Rather the paper is intended to be a critical review of past and recent scholarship, and a reasoned analysis of your topic. Merely rehashing old ideas will not earn a good grade. I expect analytical and critical thinking.

Sources: You are expected to consult the most recent sources regarding your topic. This will include both books and articles, some of which may not be available in our library. So get started early and I can help you obtain materials. In addition, much information is available on the Internet. While I encourage you to use (and cite) these sources note that the quality and reliability of web sites is radically mixed so be very careful which ones you use. My Homepage will guide you to some reliable research sites.

Nitty Gritty: All topics must be approved by October 12th. Paper length should be 6-8 pages supplemented by illustrations (photocopies) and other relevant supporting material. **Papers are due on November 16th**, the final class before Thanksgiving break.

Museum Presentation

Each student will choose a work of art from the Memphis Brooks Museum that will serve as the basis for a class presentation. The presentation must be clearly organized and the student should be prepared to respond to questions from classmates and the instructor. The following guideline will help your preparation.

- 1-- Describe the **Salient Characteristics** of the work-- its medium, formal elements, and general Baroque characteristics. Identify the style, subject matter, time and place of execution.
- 2-- Establish the **Historical Context** of your piece. What do we know about the artistic and cultural context that is specifically relevant to your work? Is it from a church or a home? Is the subject matter common? How, where, and by whom would the object be seen? Can you compare this to similar works located in books or seen in class? Is your work indicative of the period in which it was produced? Is it anomalous?
- 3-- **Interpretation**-- What are the meanings the work carries? How does one “read” the work in the context in which it was produced as well as today? What does the work teach us?! What are some specific areas that remain enigmatic and could be investigated? You may find that for many of the pieces the dating seems a bit late for the style and you should address that issue.

Presentations should last a minimum of 10-15 minutes; there is no maximum limit. Those listening are expected to respond to the presentations and raise questions. Individual presentation dates will be assigned.

Note:

Below is a list of the most appropriate objects for presentations. There are additional manuscript pages available for students particularly interested in the later Byzantine influences on art from the Russian Orthodox Church. These are particularly difficult objects and students should have the appropriate language skills. If you locate any other appropriate objects in Memphis that you wish to study please let me know so this can be accommodated.

List of Objects at the Brooks museum Available for Class Presentations

Sarcophagus Panels Depicting the Good Shepherd

Roman Sculpture, 4th century

Mocking of Christ

German Stained Glass, 1485-1510

The Annunciation

English Sculpture (Alabaster), 1430-40

Processional Cross

Spanish, Silver & Enamel, ca.1390

Hood of Cope with Ascension

S. Netherlandish, fabric, 15th century

Stained Glass with Catherine and Agnes

English, 1450-60

Candlestick

German, ca.1480

St. Michael Sculpture

German, limewood, 1450-60

Hexagonal Censor on Chain

Byzantine, ca.900-1100

Font Supported by Lions

(This is probably a nineteenth-century object made in the Romanesque style.)

Madonna and Child with Four Saints

Panel painting, ca.1285

Madonna and Child with Saints and the Crucifixion

Follower of Duccio, ca.1300

The Crucifixion with Scenes of Christ and St John the Baptist

Lippo di Benivieni, ca.1315

Leaf from a Book of Hours, Service for the Dead, ca.1450

Leaf from a Book of Hours, October Calendar, ca.1450

Schedule of Classes

I. Late Antique and Early Christian Art

Aug 24: Introduction to Medieval Art and its classical background.

For next class please begin reading the first chapters in your textbook on “The Beginnings of Christian Art.” Handouts will be provided for supplementary readings.

Aug 29: Images, Propaganda, and Spirituality

Snyder: Chapter I, II, III, IV

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

Aug 31: Brooks Museum Visit

The main purpose of this visit is to introduce you to the Medieval works of art in the Memphis Brooks Museum. We will meet at the front doors of the museum at precisely 9:55 a.m. so we can view objects that are not normally on display.

Sept 5: Early Christian Architecture

Snyder: Chapter II, III, IV

The Book of the Popes and Prudentius on St. Peter’s and St. Paul’s (p.11-15)

Eusebius on the Church of Tyre; The Holy Sepulchar; and The ideal church; (Mango: 3-7, 11-14, 24-26)

Sept 7: Early Christian Iconography and the Decoration of Churches

Holt: Theoderich (p.74-79)

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

*J.-M. Spieser, “The Representation of Christ in the Apses of Early Christian Churches,” Gesta, XXXVII, 1, 1998, 63-73.

Sept 12: Early Illuminated Manuscripts

Snyder: Chapter V

D-W: Instructions for a Painter of Miniatures (p.23-25)

*Dorothy Hoogland Verkerk, “Exodus and Easter Vigil in the Ashburnham Pentateuch,” Art Bulletin, LXXVII, 1995, 94-105.

II. Byzantium

Sept 14: The Golden Age of Justinian

Snyder: Chapter VI & VII

Excerpts from Paulus on Hagia Sophia; Mango: Various writers on Hagia Sophia (p.72-102); Holt: Robert of Clari (p. 79-88); Mango: Agnellus on Ravenna (p.104-8).

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

Sept 19: Iconoclasm and Later Byzantine Art

Snyder: Chapter VIII

Mango: Intro & excerpts p.149-177

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

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

Sept 21: Byzantine Art at Home and Abroad

Snyder: Chapter IX, X

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

*Alexander P. Kazhdan, "Women at Home," Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 52, 1998, 1-17.

*Sharon E.J. Gerstel, "Painted Sources for Female Piety in Medieval Byzantium," Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 52, 1998, 89-103.

On this day we will also attend the Moss lecture to be given by Professor Harold Cohen. Time and place TBA.

III. Early Middle Ages

Sept 26: The North

Snyder: Chapter XI

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

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

*Robert D. Stevick, "Shapes of Early Sculptured Crosses of Ireland," Gesta, XXXVIII, 1, 1999, 3-21.

Sept 28: Monasticism and Manuscripts

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 3: Carolingian and Ottonian Art

Snyder: Chapter XIII, XIV

*D-W: Einhard (p.83-4); Two Monasteries (p.92-99); St. Bernward as a Patron (p.122-3)

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

*Elizabeth S. Bolman, "De coloribus: The Meanings of Color in Beatus Manuscripts," Gesta, XXXVIII, 1, 1999, 22-34.

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

IV. Romanesque Art

Note: Prof. Schriber will join us at some point during this section to discuss the Bayeux Tapestry.

Oct 5: The Pilgrimage Roads

Snyder: Chapter XVI

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

*Barbara Abou-El-Haj, "Santiago de Compostela in the Time of Diego Gelmírez," Gesta, XXXVI, 2, 1997, 165-179.

Oct 10: Monasticism Across Europe

Snyder: Chapter XVI, XVII

D-W: Cluny (p.128-132); Holt: St. Bernard (p. 18-22)

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

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

Oct 12: Reliquaries and the Cult of Saints

*Bynum and Gerson, "Body-Part Reliquaries and Body Parts in the Middle Ages," Gesta, XXXVI, 1, 1997, 3-7. AND Barbara Drake Boehm, "Body-Part Reliquaries: The State of Research," Gesta, XXXVI, 1, 1997, 8-19.

*Cynthia Hahn, "The Voices of the Saints: Speaking Reliquaries," Gesta, XXXVI, 1, 1997, 20-31.

Fall Recess

Oct 19: Normandy, England, and Italy

Snyder: Chapter XVIII, XIX

D-W: Eadmer (p.112-114); Gervase (p. 141-6); Leo of Ostia (p. 135-141)

*Amy Neff, "The Pain of *Compassio*: Mary's Labor at the Foot of the Cross," Art Bulletin, LXXX, 1998, 254-273.

V. Gothic Art

Oct 24: Gothic Architecture in France

Snyder: Chapter XXII

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

*Bernard McGinn, from *Admirable Tabernacle to the House of God: Some Theological Reflections on Medieval Architectural Integration*," Artistic Integration in Gothic Buildings, Toronto, 1995, 41-56.

Oct 26: Sculpture, Manuscripts, and the Minor Arts

Snyder: Chapter XXIV

Holt: Theophilus (p. 1-8); Letters on Chartres (p. 49-51); Villard de Honnecourt (p.88-91) and Jean Pucelle (p. 129-134)

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

*Katherine H. Tachau, "God's Compass and *Vana Curiositas*: Scientific Study in the Old French *Bible Moralisee*," Art Bulletin, LXXX, 1998, 7-33.

On this day we will also attend the Moss lecture to be given by Professor Caroline Jones. Time and place TBA.

Oct 31: The Spread of Gothic and the Rayonnant Style

Snyder: Chapter XXII, XXIII

Holt: Letters on Canterbury (p. 52-62); Roriczer (p.95-101)

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

Nov 2: Italian Gothic Architecture

Snyder: Chapter XXV

Holt: Milan Cathedral (p. 107-114)

*Marvin Trachtenberg, "Gothic/Italian 'Gothic': Toward a Redefinition," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, 50, 1991, 22-37.

VI. Late Medieval Art in Italy

Nov. 7: Italian Sculpture

Snyder: Chapter XXV

*Anita F. Moskowitz, "A Late Dugento Male Nude Studied from Life," Source, 16, 1997, 1-8.

Nov 9: Class Rescheduled

I will be at an Italian Sculpture Conference.

Nov 14: Giotto and Duccio

Snyder: Chapter XXV

Holt: Procession (p. 134-6)

*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.

*Phillip J. Earenfight, "Manuscript to Altarpiece: Duccio's Maestà passion cycle and Medieval Illuminations," Source, 13, 1994, 6-13.

Nov 16: Museum Visit-- Medieval Panel painting and the Dawn of the Renaissance

Holt: Cennini (p. 136-150); Excerpts from Boccaccio's Decameron

Thanksgiving Recess

Nov. 21: Museum Presentations

Nov. 28: Museum Presentations

Nov. 30: Museum Presentations

Dec. 5: Museum Presentations