

MEDIEVAL ART

A Resource for Educators

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

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Mr. and Mrs. Frederick P. Rose.

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Plaque with John the Evangelist (image 6)

Foreword

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SCHOLARS AND STUDENTS of art, history, and literature have long identified the centuries between the decline of the Roman Empire and the Renaissance as The Middle Ages. These were times of extraordinary artistic accomplishment—in architecture, manuscript illumination, sculpture, tapestry, stained glass, arms and armor, and work in every medium. The Metropolitan Museum is fortunate indeed to house one of the world's richest collections of medieval art. In fact, we have two collections: at the Main Building on Fifth Avenue, and at The Cloisters, our extraordinary specialized branch museum—much of it constructed from authentic medieval structures—situated high above the Hudson River in northern Manhattan. The Cloisters also enjoys the distinction of having medieval-style gardens harmoniously integrated into its fabric.

This publication celebrates and explains medieval art in all its forms. Its goal is to present reliable and useful information and materials for teachers and students—background, descriptive narratives, teaching strategies, lesson plans, activities, bibliographies, slides, a CD-ROM—so that the wonder of medieval art can be part of teaching and learning in many disciplines. Of course, we urge you to visit the collection in both locations because there can be no adequate substitute for experiencing the art itself.

The collections of medieval art in the Metropolitan and The Cloisters are here because of the generosity of generations of public-spirited citizens. J. Pierpont Morgan built the foundations of the collection a century ago, and it was John D. Rockefeller, Jr. who envisioned The Cloisters as a unique environment for the art of the Middle Ages. As the collection has grown, so also has its importance for students and educators in New York City and across the country. It is therefore with special gratitude that we thank Frederick P. and Sandra P. Rose for the support that made possible this publication. Whether consulted in printed or electronic form (at www.metmuseum.org), *Medieval Art: A Resource for Educators*, distills generations of scholarship and teaching expertise for the benefit of educators and students of this amazing era.

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Medieval Art: A Resource for Educators

Contents

GOALS AND DESIGN OF THIS RESOURCE	6
MAP	8
OVERVIEW OF MEDIEVAL ART AND ITS TIME	10
• Preface, 10	
• The Old World of Rome Changes (ca. 300–ca. 800), 10	
• Borderland Cultures, 12	
• Carolingian Art and Its Time (ca. 800–ca. 900), 12	
• Ottonian Art and Its Time (ca. 900–ca. 1000), 13	
• Byzantium and Its Art (843–1453), 14	
• Romanesque Art and Its Time (ca. 1000–ca. 1150), 14	
• Early Gothic Art and Its Time (ca. 1140–1270), 16	
• Later Gothic Art and Its Time (ca. 1270–early 16th century), 16	
SELECTED THEMES IN MEDIEVAL ART	19
• Knighthood in the West, 19	
• Monasticism, 20	
• Pilgrimage, 21	
• Pleasures and Pastimes, 22	
Courtly Love and Literature, 22	
Hunting and Feasting, 23	
Music, 26	
• General Themes, 27	
QUICK LIST OF IMAGES	28
DESCRIPTIONS OF THE IMAGES	31
MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES	141
• Artists of the West, 141	
• Ivory Carving, 141	
• Manuscript Making, 142	
• Metalwork, 144	
Champlevé Enamel, 144	
Cloisonné Enamel, 146	
• Mosaic, 146	
• Painting, 147	
Fresco, 147	
Panel Painting, 148	
• Sculpture, 149	
Stone, 149	
Wood, 150	
• Stained Glass, 151	
• Tapestry, 152	
LESSON PLANS	155
• Gardens, 155	
• Medieval Beasts and the Bestiary, 161	
• Symbolism in Medieval Art, 165	
• Techniques and Materials, 169	
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM’S TWO COLLECTIONS OF MEDIEVAL ART	177
Peter Barnet, Michel David-Weill Curator in Charge of the Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters	
SELECTED RESOURCES	181
• Selected Bibliography, 181	
• Selected Online Resources, 184	
• Videography, 185	
• Museums with Important Collections of Medieval Art in North America, 185	
GLOSSARY	187

Goals and Design of this Resource

THIS RESOURCE FOR EDUCATORS has three principal goals. First, to introduce teachers and their students to the superb examples of medieval art contained in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum, at its main building on Fifth Avenue and at The Cloisters, its branch museum in northern Manhattan. Second, to inform teachers and students about the culture that engendered these works of art. And third, to provide an educational guide flexible enough to stimulate those who are new to the Middle Ages as well as those already familiar with medieval art.

This resource contains a variety of written and visual materials that contextualize the Museum's collection of medieval art, including a **map**; an **Overview of Medieval Art and Its Time**; sections on **Selected Themes in Medieval Art, Materials and Techniques**, and **The Metropolitan Museum's Two Collections of Medieval Art**; and a **glossary**, which provides definitions of words that are bolded on first mention in the text.

A representative selection of objects from the Museum's medieval art collections is illustrated in thirty-five slides and two posters, accompanied by descriptions of each. In addition, CD-ROMs focus on two masterpieces—*The Unicorn Tapestries* and *The Hours of Jeanne d'Évreux*. Many of the other images in this resource can be printed from the Museum's website (www.metmuseum.org), especially from the Medieval Art and The Cloisters sections of the Permanent Collection area and the medieval pages of the Museum's Timeline of Art History, all under Works of Art.

Teachers may want to show the images in a chronological survey of medieval art, or they may prefer to present the works within a general thematic

framework, a few ideas for which are listed on page 27. Students always find that a subsequent trip to the Museum to see the actual works of art is a rewarding experience. It should be noted, however, that works of art sometimes are temporarily removed from view or moved to other locations in the galleries. A preliminary visit by a teacher to establish that the art in question is available for viewing is a good precaution.

Each image description includes information on the work of art as well as a series of **Questions**, which can be used to guide discussions with students in the classroom or galleries. Some image descriptions also include **Activity** and **Discussion** segments. Activities, for use in the classroom or galleries, offer techniques that shed light on a specific work. The **Discussion** segment is a conceptual exercise based on quotations from medieval authors, and is intended for older, especially high school students in the classroom.

The four **lesson plans** included in this resource may be used to prepare students for a trip to the Museum, to provide follow-up activities for assessing student learning, or as a stand-alone classroom component. Each lesson plan suggests ways of looking at and discussing medieval art, then responding to it through a number of interdisciplinary avenues, such as art making, writing, and role playing. Though age groups are suggested for each lesson plan, each may be adapted to a variety of ages and disciplines through suggested extensions.

Finally, under **Selected Resources** will be found an annotated bibliography, Web resources (the Museum's Timeline of Art History is particularly useful), a videography, and a list of museums in the United States and Canada that have important medieval art collections.

These will be helpful in gathering the additional information you may need to make an exploration of medieval art stimulating and relevant to your curriculum.

THE BENEFITS OF THIS RESOURCE TO STUDENTS STUDYING MEDIEVAL ART

Students will acquire the basic vocabulary, concepts, and criteria for understanding, interpreting, and analyzing medieval art.

Students will be encouraged to use higher-level thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. With this resource, teachers can invite students to pose analytical questions or propose hypotheses, formulate conclusions or generalizations, or raise new questions and issues for further investigation.

Students will encounter significant works of medieval art and will begin to assemble a repertoire of visual references that will serve them well when they study later works influenced by medieval art.

Students will understand and appreciate the role of values, beliefs, and ideas in shaping medieval art.

Students will explore the subject matter and themes of medieval art through a variety of processes, techniques, and materials to gain a better understanding of how and why medieval art was created.



Aquamanile in the form of a rooster
(image 27)

The Medieval World

A.D. 843–1261



Overview of Medieval Art and Its Time

PREFACE

The art of the Middle Ages—a span of 1,200 years, roughly the period between the late Roman era and the fifteenth century—set new standards of technical achievement, particularly in architecture, enamelwork, mosaic, painting, sculpture, stained glass, and tapestry. The dynamism of the age is embodied in its architecture, which provides the context for many of the works of art featured in this resource. Between 1000 and 1300, in France alone, more stone was quarried for construction than had been quarried in ancient Egypt during the 3,000 years of building pyramids and temples. In early medieval Europe, stone went into the solid, powerful structures of **Romanesque** churches, in which round arches, thick walls and pillars, small windows, and—in many cases—rounded stone ceilings gave their interiors a mysterious darkness. Then, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, ever higher **Gothic** churches arose, in which walls were transformed into networks of stained glass through the use of pointed arches and ribbed construction of the ceilings inside and **flying buttresses** outside. Although the corresponding change in the style of medieval art, from Romanesque to Gothic, is often familiar to many teachers, this resource also shows artwork from the full range of the Middle Ages, whether it was intended for the church or for the home of a member of the nobility.

THE OLD WORLD OF ROME CHANGES (CA. 300–CA. 800)

Although there can be no exact date for fixing broad changes in human history, such as that between the **classical** and medieval worlds in Europe, the reign of Roman emperor **Constantine I (the Great)** (r. 312–37)

is a useful starting point. In the Edict of Milan of 313, Constantine formally recognized Christianity as a lawful religion in the Roman empire. From then until the outbreak in 726 of Iconoclasm—the destruction of religious imagery—in the fully Christian Roman empire (known as Byzantium), Christian religious imagery came into its own, often imbued with the **naturalistic** style of Greek and Roman art. During the fourth century, depictions of events in the story of Jesus proliferated in all media, including carved stone coffins known as **sarcophagi** (image 1). The transition from classical to Christian art was not abrupt, however. The Roman empire’s educated elite, though eventually converting to Christianity, continued to rely on Roman law and Greek and Roman culture to maintain a highly organized government centered on its great cities with their diverse populations (fig. 1). Even when Christianity became the empire’s state religion, schools still taught ancient Greek texts such as Homer’s *Iliad* and images of **antiquity** persisted in elaborate works of ivory, gold, and silver.

Beginning with the reign of Constantine, the economic and governmental foundation of the Roman empire gradually shifted to its eastern region, while invasions increasingly disrupted the political and cultural fabric of the West. Constantinople (present-day Istanbul), the empire’s new capital, built by Constantine on the **Bosphorus** as a “new Rome,” transmitted much of its surviving Greek and Roman heritage to Europe during the Middle Ages. By the sixth century, the emperor Justinian (r. 527–65) and his powerful and intelligent wife, Theodora, had unified the empire, quelled the **barbarian** threat, and acquired new territories. Justinian inaugurated a building campaign of magnificent churches, public buildings, city walls, and aqueducts, not only in the capital but also throughout the empire. His greatest achievement was building the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople in just five



Fig. 1 Bowl fragment with menorah (candelabrum), shofar (ram's horn), scrolls, etrog (citron tree), and **Torah** ark, 300–350 Roman, probably from Rome
Glass, gold leaf; $2\frac{11}{16} \times 2\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{1}{4}$ in. (6.9 x 7 x .64 cm)
Incomplete Latin inscription along its border: I BIBAS CVM EVLOGIA COKP (“Drink with praise together”) Originally a banquet scene was below this fragment
Rogers Fund, 1918 (18.145.1a,b)
(Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Fig. 2 Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, 532–37, dome rebuilt 558, exterior



Fig. 3 Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, 532–37, dome rebuilt 558, interior

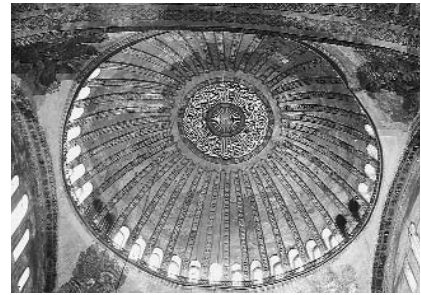


Fig. 4 Two capitals with grape-leaf-and-vine pattern, 500–700 Byzantine; modern restoration; said to be from the monastery of Apa Jeremias, Saqqara, Egypt
Limestone; H. $22\frac{1}{2}$ in. (57.2 cm) (.66); H. 22 in. (55.9 cm) (.76)
Rogers Fund, 1910 (10.175.66,.76)
(Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

years (532–37) (fig. 2). Embellished in every conceivable way, including with mosaics (a sense of which is captured in image 3), the church's chief glory was an enormous central dome “dematerialized” by forty windows along its rim (fig. 3). It led one contemporary to exclaim with wonder that “it seems not to be founded on solid masonry, but to be suspended from Heaven.”

Greek and Roman art—with its naturalistic style—was a major influence on Byzantine art, particularly that created at Constantinople. This influence is eloquently expressed in nine silver plates embossed with episodes of the life of **David**, with the largest showing the battle between David and Goliath (image 5). Were it not for their **control stamps**, which place them in the reign of Emperor Heraclius (r. 610–41), one might think that an artist from antiquity had made these plates. Elsewhere in the Byzantine empire, different regional styles coexisted, some more abstract than others but each reflecting the varied conditions of its area. One of the most distinctive arose in Egypt, which had developed a branch of Christianity that was key to the formation of monasti-

cism and that evolved into what is today called the **Coptic Church**. Essentially decorative in character, with a delight in foliate and geometric patterns, Coptic art (fig. 4) would come to influence Islamic art. The Byzantine era in Egypt ended in 641/2 as the province fell to the advancing forces of the new religion of Islam.

With the spread of Islam in the seventh century, the Byzantine empire entered a time of instability. Islamic forces wrested many territories from Byzantium, permanently transforming the eastern Mediterranean, North Africa, and Spain. In 726, a violent dispute erupted in Byzantium over the legitimacy of creating or owning images of saintly or divine figures. During the ensuing period of Iconoclasm, which lasted until 843, images were officially banned in the empire and early depictions of Jesus, his mother, Mary, and the **saints** were destroyed. Thus, from an artistic point of view, the eighth and ninth centuries represent a period of stagnation for Byzantine religious art.

Fig. 5 Pyxis (box), 10th century (950–75);
Caliphal
Spanish; made in Andalusia
Ivory; H. 4 ⁵/₈ in. (11.8 cm),
Diam. 4 ¹/₈ in. (10.6 cm)
The Cloisters Collection, 1970 (1970.324.5)
(Location: The Cloisters)

BORDERLAND CULTURES

For centuries, the Rhine and Danube rivers defined the borders of the Roman empire in continental Europe, separating the citizens of Rome from the inhabitants of Germania, the Roman name for the area stretching as far north as Scandinavia and as far east as the Vistula River in present-day Poland. The empire had never isolated itself from the Germanic peoples—called barbarians by the Romans: they were adversaries at times, but they were also trading partners, and from the fourth century onward barbarians increasingly joined the Roman army as mercenary soldiers. The Romans also recognized that the empire's best interests were served by developing diplomatic ties with the peoples living just beyond its borders as a defense against hostile barbarians farther afield. Meanwhile, the Germanic peoples had long viewed the Roman empire as an inexhaustible source of wealth and welcomed the gifts offered in exchange for alliance. In time, these barbarians and the Romans intermarried so frequently that by the sixth century it was sometimes difficult to tell one from the other.

The barbarians had little written history or literature, relying instead upon oral tradition. We therefore know about them from the writings of the Romans, from archaeology, and from the objects they left behind. Although they engaged in a variety of arts—woodworking, weaving, and pottery—their metalwork survived in the greatest abundance. Weaponry, jewelry, and belt buckles, valued objects used to display social status, were often elaborately decorated (image 2).

From time to time, new peoples migrated into the West. For instance, according to a Byzantine chronicler, “a totally unknown and strange people came to Constantinople in 565 who were called the Avars.” Living for more than two centuries between the lands of the



Germanic peoples and the frontiers of the Byzantine empire, these Avars, who originally came from Central Asia, acquired great quantities of silver and gold, mostly through tribute paid by Byzantium in exchange for assurances of peace. A celebrated hoard found at Vrap in Albania testifies to the Avars' wealth (image 4).

CAROLINGIAN ART AND ITS TIME (CA. 800–CA. 900)

After Constantine transferred the seat of the Roman government to Constantinople in 330, the church in Rome gradually assumed control of the Roman administrative structures in western Europe. In the mid-fifth century, the Huns, under their leader Attila, rode out from Central Asia and drove the Germanic peoples deep into the old western provinces of the empire. Among them, the Franks established themselves as a lasting political power in Roman Gaul (present-day France) and, during the reign of Clovis I (r. 481–511), converted to Christianity. In 732, at Poitiers, France, the Frankish leader Charles Martel (ca. 688–741) halted the advance of Islamic rule from Spain, although many aspects of the Muslim culture of Spain spread throughout Europe and endured for centuries. In the Museum's collection, this can be seen, first, in a small

ivory box (fig. 5) that perhaps held perfume or some other cosmetic material in Islamic Spain before traveling to the West, and also in the twelfth-century **Beatus manuscript** page (image 20), a Christian creation that shows Muslim influence in some of its colors and architectural forms.

Under the Frankish king Charlemagne (r. 768–814)—who was crowned “King of the Franks and the **Lombards**” in 774, then “Emperor of the Romans” by the pope in 800—Europe was more politically unified than it had been since the end of the Roman empire. Within a realm that included northern Italy, much of Germany, and all of France, Charlemagne initiated ecclesiastical and political reform and laid the foundation for a cultural revival of the Western Roman Empire that spread literacy and sustained Christian culture. The royal court and imperial monasteries of Charlemagne were the main vehicles for this “renewal,” in which the visual arts were one of the greatest achievements.

Charlemagne brought scholars to his court at Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle), which was considered another “new Rome,” to teach and promote his renewal of art and literature. A scriptorium, or copying center, was established there, issuing accurate, legible, and authoritative books of worship, theology, history, grammar, poetry, and law that were sent throughout the empire to be copied. At Aachen, too, book illustration, metalworking, and ivory carving (image 6) were practiced together, creating masterpieces that contributed to Charlemagne’s prestige.

OTTONIAN ART AND ITS TIME (CA. 900–CA. 1000)

The disintegration of the **Carolingian** empire rapidly followed the death in 877 of Charles the Bald, Charlemagne’s grandson. For nearly a century, the Vikings from Scandinavia had made isolated raids on the coast of England and northern Europe, while settling Iceland (860) and establishing the powerful principality of Kiev under Prince Rurik (862). After 877, the Vikings became even more prevalent in Europe. As much of England came under their control in the 880s (and there they created the stirrup seen in image 7), the Carolingian empire broke into five independent and warring kingdoms, giving the Vikings the chance to permanently settle in Normandy in 911. This situation, combined with Muslim attacks in the south and marauding Magyar horsemen from Asia in the east, all but eliminated any artistic production in much of Europe for a time. Yet the rise in Germany of the Saxon dynasty under Otto I (the Great) (r. 936–73), and his victory over the Magyars in 955, inaugurated a conversion to Christianity of many pagan areas, under an imperial monarchy modeled on the emperorship of Otto’s Carolingian predecessors. (This ensuing era in Germany has been termed “Ottonian” after several rulers there named Otto.) Like Charlemagne, Otto was crowned in Rome, and he established his “new Rome” in Magdeburg in present-day Germany. Here he built a church, using Roman columns and capitals, that served as a base to bring nearby pagan lands into the Western cultural and ecclesiastical orbit. An ivory plaque showing Otto I presenting the church (image 8) indicates the importance of this foundation to the emperor. It also demonstrates how artists during the Ottonian reign focused on the message to be conveyed by a work

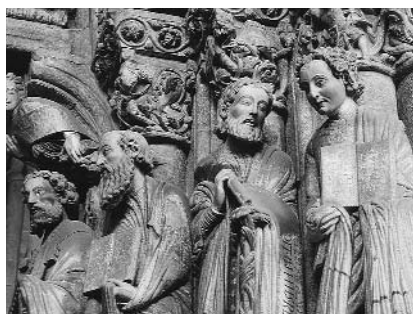


Fig. 6 (top left) Santiago de Compostela, exterior sculpture



Fig. 7 (bottom left) Church of Sainte-Foy, Conques, ca. 1052–1130, exterior

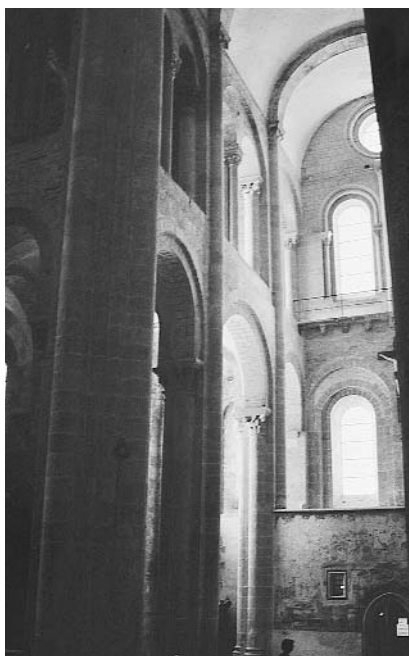


Fig. 8 (right) Church of Sainte-Foy, Conques, ca. 1125–1130, interior, view from the northeast

of art. By removing an event from its natural setting—as the checkerboard pattern does in the ivory—and by rendering the characters more as geometric abstractions than as naturalistic portrayals, the artist created a solemn, timeless memorial.

Major church centers and monasteries, such as those at Cologne, Hildesheim, and Reichenau, became the principal patrons of the arts under Otto and his successors. Among the most important contributions of Ottonian art was the elaboration of pictorial cycles of the life of Jesus. These narratives, based partly on models from the early centuries of Christianity as well as contemporary Byzantine manuscripts, carried a missionary message of salvation and appeared in wall paintings and **gospel** book illustrations.

of the Balkans. The refinement and superb craftsmanship of Byzantine art, often still evoking the style of ancient Greece and Rome, were widely appreciated, and Byzantine artists, especially mosaicists, were at times employed for projects in the West and the Islamic world. The looting of Constantinople in 1204 by Western Crusaders brought a flood of antique and Byzantine art into the West. Though it recovered its capital in 1261, the weakened Byzantine empire was never again able to fully quell internal disorder or to exercise independence from outside powers. Yet Byzantine culture enjoyed a last great flowering in literature, scholarship, theology, and art, which endured beyond the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

BYZANTIUM AND ITS ART (843–1453)

With the restoration of **icon** worship in Byzantium in 843, and under the Macedonian and Comnenian dynasties, the churches and palaces of Constantinople began to be decorated with images of holy figures, producing an astonishing revival of manuscript illumination, ivory carving, and enamelwork (image 10). Greek, not Latin, became the official language of Byzantium, while Christianity spread from Constantinople into the Slavic lands to the north, including Russia and all

ROMANESQUE ART AND ITS TIME (CA. 1000–CA. 1150)

Although the term “Romanesque” was coined in the nineteenth century as an architectural term for the heavy and massive medieval buildings with rounded arches that echoed Roman forms, it now has an additional aesthetic meaning. Romanesque art emphasized a simplification of form, pattern, and a lively linearity and can be seen in the Metropolitan Museum in ivories (images 11, 15); manuscripts (image 20); wood,

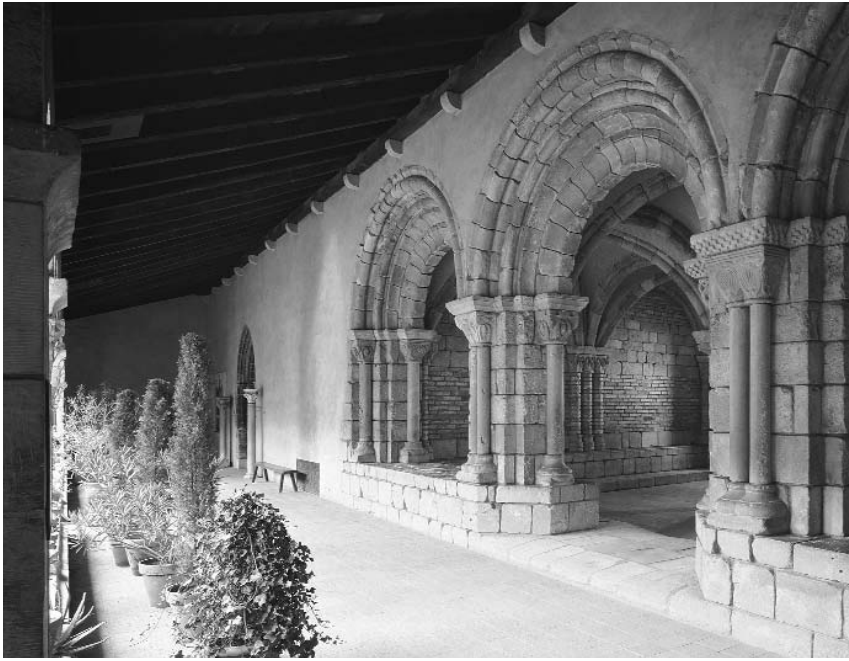


Fig. 9 Pontaut chapter house, 12th century French; made in Pontaut, Gascony (Landes), from the Benedictine abbey of Notre-Dame-de-Pontaut, south of Pontaut Limestone, brick, and plaster; 42 x 33 ft. (1 m 280 cm x 1 m 5 cm)
The Cloisters Collection, 1935 (35.50)
(Location: The Cloisters)

marble, and stone sculpture (images 12–14, 17–19, 21); and wall paintings (image 22). A superb expression is a Spanish ivory (image 11), in which the masklike faces, regular hairstyles, and patterned folds of clothing sharply contrast with the exaggerated poses and gestures of the figures.

Perhaps the most enduring expression of the international character of the Romanesque is the **pilgrimage church**. Motivated by penance or piety, pilgrimages (see p. 21) had been made since Early Christian times to Rome and to the **Holy Land**, especially Jerusalem. (The Crusades [ca. 1095–1291] began during the Romanesque period, as an attempt to bring the Holy Land under Christian control.) By the eleventh century, Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain had also become an important pilgrimage destination (fig. 6), with the tomb of James the **apostle** as its principal attraction. Many churches along the roads to this site had a distinctive cross-shaped floor plan with side aisles providing access to the many **chapels** punctuating the walls (figs. 7–8).

The travel and exchange of ideas that were a result of pilgrimages were central to the spread of Romanesque architecture and sculpture, though regions created their own interpretations of the style.

Romanesque portals could show fanciful creatures (image 14) or patterns in a variety of styles (image 9). Some of the most conspicuous innovations of this period were doorways decorated with rich sculptural programs (image 17), and capitals with a narrative running around their sides, some examples of which can be detected high up in the **apse** from Fuentidueña (image 18). All of this sculpture was part of a building's structure, bearing its share of the building's weight.

The growth of pilgrimage during this period was helped by the rapid expansion of monasticism (see p. 20); some monastic communities actively encouraged pilgrimage, even establishing shelters along the pilgrimage roads. The **rule** of a particular monastic **order** dictated its way of life and worship; this regulated life was revealed in its harmonious art and architecture. Central to the physical framework of a **monastery's** communal life were the chapter house (fig. 9)—where the monks met for prayers, sermons, and the daily business of the monastery—and the **cloister** walk, open only to the monks. The decoration of these important areas was often lavish, as is evident in the capitals from the cloister walk at Cuxa, assembled at The Cloisters (images 12–13).



Fig. 10 Amiens Cathedral
(Cathedral of Notre-Dame), 1220,
north elevation of the choir

Fig. 11 Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Paris,
view of the choir with flying buttresses

EARLY GOTHIC ART AND ITS TIME (CA. 1140–1270)

Around the mid-twelfth century, a new style emerged in France that dominated the artistic landscape of northern Europe for nearly 400 years. Called Gothic—a derogatory label used by later critics to designate all art created between the Roman and **Renaissance** periods—this term now refers to art and architecture created during the “age of the **cathedrals**,” when churches were rebuilt on a massive scale. At Chartres, Paris, Amiens, Bourges, and Reims, structures rose ever higher and had ever expanding fields of stained glass (e.g., fig. 10, image 24), while beautiful objects and decoration complemented the soaring interiors (images 23, 26). Thought to illuminate the church both physically and spiritually, stained-glass windows replaced so much of the walls that the buildings had to be supported by a system of pointed arches, ribbed **vaults**, and flying buttresses outside (fig. 11). The exterior of the churches also featured organized programs of narrative sculpture that together promoted a theme such as the Last Judgment (see p. 103) or a saint’s life. The principal catalyst for this surge of building was the growth of cities, where new wealth was concentrated. In many cities, universities arose—centers of higher learning that influenced the intellectual, political, and social life of Europe. Paris, with its own university, emerged as the center of power, prestige, and artistic creativity during this era.

Western artists used the forms of ancient Greek and Roman art, shorn of its pagan meanings, to inject an element of naturalism into Gothic art, though sometimes they knew of this art only indirectly, such as by a Byzantine artwork based on classical models. Examples of work in this stylistic vein are an enameled

plaque (image 16); the tomb effigy of Jean d’Alluye (image 25); and the Taking of Jesus panel from the altar screen at Amiens (image 26). Still naturalistic, but with abstract elements too, are an **aquamanile** shaped like a rooster (image 27) and a **reliquary** in the form of a bust of Saint Yrieix (image 23).

LATER GOTHIC ART AND ITS TIME (CA. 1270–EARLY 16TH CENTURY)

The death of King **Louis IX** of France (r. 1226–70) marked the close of a reign particularly rich in achievements of Gothic art. Although Louis’ officials had aggressively expanded royal power, it was left to the strong monarchs after him to create a centralized authority. This apparatus spawned the ranks of ministers and professional bureaucrats who ultimately won power from the hereditary interests of the nobility. In ever-growing towns, merchants and tradesmen prospered, giving rise to an urban middle class. Kings were obliged, in turn, to yield to this middle class a measure of power that often took the form of representative assemblies. Meanwhile, the claim by the church that the pope ruled in all matters, temporal as well as spiritual, was successfully challenged by Louis IX’s grandson, King Philip IV (the Fair) (r. 1285–1314).

By the turn of the fourteenth century, Europe was in great ferment. Climate change—the continent was now colder and wetter—drastically altered living conditions and patterns of cultivation. Successive crop failures led to the Great Famine of 1315–22—the worst in European history—in which 10 percent of the population died. Continuing hard conditions generated unrest and occasional open conflict, such as the Flemish peasant rebellion in 1322. Another hardship

was the devastating **Hundred Years' War** between France and England, which began in 1337. Depopulation and demographic shifts brought about a redistribution of wealth, resulting in new centers of intellectual and artistic activity. An enormous increase in trade spurred the development of a standard coinage that became the common vehicle of financial transactions and the foundation of modern banking. Skilled laborers became a distinct economic class as industries expanded. The middle class, including Jewish merchants and moneylenders, brought a new attitude to the patronage of art, while still emulating the luxurious tastes of the upper classes (image 29). In such a tumultuous environment, artistic and intellectual achievement advanced with astonishing inventiveness and expressiveness. The **Black Death** of 1348, which carried off a third of Europe's population, adversely affected this dynamism. In the face of ensuing political strife, warfare, and economic recession, outmoded chivalric fictions enjoyed a new popularity—scenes of romance and courtly love, always popular (see the scenes on the fourteenth-century ivory box of image 28), now abounded in lavish manuscript illuminations, ivory carvings, and tapestries.

By the early fifteenth century, artists from the Lowlands (modern-day Belgium and Holland), coming from a tradition of naturalism in art (see images 30–31), began a radical effort to master the realistic depiction of the visible world. Beginning with the painters Robert Campin (1378/79–1444) and Jan van Eyck (d. 1441), the picture plane was conceived as an illusory window offering depth and space to the viewer. The courtly settings found in paintings of the late

fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries gave way to urban, middle-class interiors, like the one in Campin's **triptych** of the Annunciation (image 32). Not only did these new settings make holy events more tangible to medieval viewers, but medieval theology and literature often gave special symbolic meaning to the commonplace objects depicted within them.

During the same period, tapestries—the murals of the north—were woven in large workshops in Paris, Arras, Tournai, and Brussels (images 33–34). Through the rapid development of the print in the fifteenth century—whether as single-sheet **woodcuts**, book illustrations, or more refined and richly textured prints pressed from engraved metal plates—pictorial imagery of the outstanding artists of the day became widely accessible. Through the dissemination of such designs, leading artists, such as the German painter and printmaker Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), exerted an immediate influence on the quality and variety of workshop production.

Around 1400, the Florentine chronicler Filippo Villani was the first to explicitly classify artists within the more prestigious **liberal** rather than **mechanical** arts. Since artists in Italy now worked as individuals producing art based on rational, scientific principles derived from interpretations of ancient Greek and Roman treatises, Villani's classification also implies the ending of the Middle Ages in Italy. By the early sixteenth century, these artistic principles had gained ground in northern Europe, although the sixteenth-century statue of Saint Roch (image 35), posed in the exaggerated S-shaped curve popular in the late Gothic period, shows that this acceptance was gradual.

Selected Themes in Medieval Art

KNIGHTHOOD IN THE WEST

From the ninth to the early eleventh century, invasions of the Magyars from the east, Muslims from the south, and Vikings from the north struck western Europe. This unrest ultimately spurred greater unity in England and Germany, but in northern France centralized authority broke down and the region split into smaller and smaller political units. There, many nobles held estates, or fiefs, granted by greater lords in return for service, such as providing mounted troops. This feudal system, which spread to other areas in Europe, enabled a cash-poor but land-rich lord to support a military contingent, but forces could also be raised by other means; noble households, for instance, often sheltered landless warriors, their loyalty maintained through kinship, friendship, or wages.

Mounted armored warriors—knights—were the dominant forces of medieval armies. At first, most medieval knights were of humble origin, some of them not even possessing land, but by the later twelfth century many were considered members of the nobility and they followed a system of courteous knightly behavior called chivalry.

By this time, too, many customs were in place to create knights. Normally, only the son of a knight could become a knight. He would first serve as a page in his boyhood, then as a squire in his youth, often in the household of his father's lord. In these capacities he served a kind of apprenticeship—cleaning stables, currying horses, cleaning armor, dressing his lord, serving at table—while he learned to ride a horse and wield a sword and lance. According to one manual, when it came time to be dubbed, or made a knight, the candidate bathed to rid himself symbolically of sin. He then dressed in a white robe—which showed his

determination to defend God's law—and a thin belt, symbolizing his avoidance of sins of the flesh. In the church, he received a gilded spur, for courage to serve God, and a sword to battle enemies and defend the poor against the rich. The climax of the ceremony was a symbolic blow of the hand to the shoulder or head “in remembrance of Him who ordained you and dubbed you knight.”

In the later thirteenth century, the increasing use of the **crossbow** and its high-velocity projectiles encouraged the development of new protection for knights to replace the vulnerable ring armor called **mail** (see depictions of mail armor in the detail of image 25 [below], fig. 12 and accompanying poster, and fig. 31 on p. 103). This culminated in the creation of the knight in shining steel plate armor, with slick and nearly impenetrable curving surfaces. During and after the fourteenth century, new weapons that were particularly effective against horsemen appeared on the battlefield, such as the **longbow**, the **pike**, the **halberd**, the cannon, and handheld



Detail of tomb effigy of Jean II d'Alluye (image 25)



Fig. 12 (see also poster) Aquamanile in the form of a mounted knight, second half of 13th century German; Lower Saxony
Bronze; H. 15 in. (31.8 cm)
Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1964 (64.101.1492)
(Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

firearms. Yet despite the knight's gradual loss of military importance, his social and cultural role remained vital, especially in the increasingly popular tournaments—war games that served originally as training for mounted warriors (see top of image 28).

MONASTICISM

Monasticism is the term for a way of life chosen by men or women who retreat from society to pursue spiritual salvation. Its earliest form in Christianity appeared in the late third to early fourth century in regions around the eastern Mediterranean. Men and women withdrew as hermits into uninhabited areas, such as the Egyptian desert, depriving themselves of food and water as part of their effort to withstand the devil's temptations. Communities were established along the Nile River that offered a daily regimen of work and prayer for **ascetics**. Basil the Great (ca. 329–379) created rules for such communities to live by, which many Eastern Orthodox



Saint Leonard on the portal from the Church of San Leonardo al Frigido (detail of image 17)

monasteries still follow.

In Europe, monasteries were safe havens and spiritual sanctuaries during the unrest of the fifth and sixth centuries. Different monasteries developed different sets of rules to govern the organization, conduct, and dress of their members, but the Rule of Saint Benedict, compiled by **Benedict of Nursia** (ca. 480–ca. 550), became predominant. Benedict's rule, for communities of both men and women, stressed moderation and obedience to the monastery's leader (for the appearance of an **abbot**, see the detail of image 17 above), and it prescribed a program of work, study, and prayer for each person, including the recitation of **psalms** and prayers at fixed hours of the day, a practice known as the **Divine Office**. The **Benedictine** order became one of the most influential in the Middle Ages, involved in transcribing books and preserving the extant learning of ancient Rome, founding new monasteries in pagan areas, and even allowing its members to occupy high church offices and to become scribes and advisers to secular rulers. By the ninth century, a typical monastic plan for a Benedictine community included a church with an adjacent cloister, in the shape of a square courtyard (image 12), surrounded by a chapter house



Cuxa Cloister (see also image 12)

(or gathering hall; see fig. 9), a dormitory, a refectory (eating hall), a kitchen, a cellar (storage area), an infirmary, and other spaces essential to the physical needs of the community.

The founding of the **Cistercian** order in 1098—a reaction to the wealth and worldliness of the Benedictine and other orders—marked one of the most important monastic reforms in history. The Cistercian monks returned to a strict asceticism by reducing all forms of material life to the bare minimum. One of its champions, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), denounced the excesses of contemporary monasticism in a twelfth-century letter criticizing the church because it “clothes its stones in gold” but “leaves its children naked.” By the early thirteenth century, orders of **friars** arose, whose prayerful life was similar to that of monks, but who also participated in the world outside the monastery. Drawn to large cities and their universities, **Franciscans** and **Dominicans** lived and preached among the people, supporting themselves by working and begging for food. Like the monastic orders, both groups had their own communities of women; the one founded by Clare (1194–1253) (fig. 13), a follower of Francis (1181/2–1226) (fig. 14), became renowned for its strict observance of poverty.



Fig. 13 The Bishop of Assisi handing a palm of victory to Clare, who is joining the Franciscan order, with Francis waiting to cut off her hair, ca. 1360

German; Nuremberg, probably from the convent of the Poor Clares
Tempera and gold on oak panel; 13 1/4 x 8 5/8 in. (33.7 x 21.9 cm)
Latin inscription in the book: *eto/m[n]es/fid/eles* (“and all faithful”),
The Cloisters Collection, 1984 (1984.343)
(Location: The Cloisters)

Fig. 14 Scenes from the life of Saint Francis: Leaf from a royal manuscript, ca. 1320–42

Bolognese school for Hungarian use
Tempera and gold leaf on parchment; 8 5/8 x 6 5/8 in. (21.9 x 16.8 cm)
Gift of Mr. Edwin L. Weisl Jr., 1994 (1994.516)
(Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

These scenes are from the story of Francis in *The Golden Legend*. They are (clockwise from top left): Francis addressing birds and animals; the dead Francis with his followers; a dead woman's vision in which the resurrected Francis helps bring her back to life to confess a sin before dying again; and Francis leading a debtor out of prison.

PILGRIMAGE

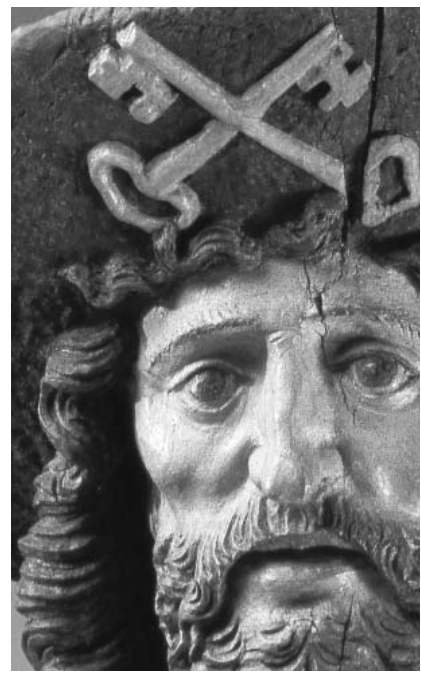
During the Middle Ages, the beliefs that a Christian should travel, as Jesus had, and that journeying to shrines and praying there could contribute to one's well-being, both physically and spiritually, led hundreds of thousands of people to take journeys called pilgrimages, fostering new cultural exchanges along the way. Early destinations for Christian pilgrims included shrines such as Abu Menas in Egypt, dedicated to Saint Menas (d. ca. 303), and Qalat Seman in Syria, which centered on Simeon Stylites (d. 459), a saint who lived on top of a column for thirty-six years. Three places became paramount for pilgrimages: Jerusalem, the site of Jesus' death and, in Christian belief, his resurrection;



Detail of reliquary head of Saint Yrieix (Aredius) (image 23)



Apostle dressed as a pilgrim: Detail of *The Journey to Emmaus* (image 11)



Saint Roch: Detail showing badge of crossed keys (image 35)

Rome, which held the tombs of Peter and Paul and many other **martyrs**; and Santiago de Compostela in Spain, which was the reputed burial site of the apostle James. Much of their attraction for pilgrims had to do with the cult of relics that was widespread in the medieval world. Often placed in special containers called reliquaries (image 23), relics are the physical remains of or the objects associated with a saint. They were believed to provide a connection to a saint, who could intercede with higher powers in heaven on behalf of the praying pilgrim. Relics bestowed honor and privileges upon the possessor, and monasteries, cathedrals, and royalty all sought to own the most prestigious.

With increased stability during the twelfth century in the West, churches housing saintly relics sprang up, and pilgrimage traffic to them spurred widespread economic activity. Roads, bridges, and lodgings were built to help pilgrims reach their destination, and books, such as the twelfth-century *Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago de Compostela*, suggested places to stay and warned of dangers along the way.

Pilgrims wore a distinctive clothing to symbolize their special status. It was usually blessed before their departure and included a staff, a long, coarse tunic, and

a pouch (detail of image 11, above center). While a pilgrim was away, the church attempted to protect his family and property, but it insisted on proof that the journey had been completed. This meant that the pilgrim had to bring back mementos from shrines, such as a palm from Jericho, a cockleshell from Santiago, or, from Rome, a badge shaped like keys (detail of image 35, above right).

PLEASURES AND PASTIMES

Courtly Love and Literature

"Courtly love" is a modern term for a medieval phenomenon that originated in Provence in southern France toward the end of the eleventh century. In music and lyrics performed at court, **troubadours** such as Bernard of Ventador (ca. 1140–1190) sang about the torments of unrequited love and pledged everlasting allegiance to idealized noble ladies. Romances written by Chrétien de Troyes (ca. 1135–1183) and others focused on such themes as the devotion of **Lancelot** to Guinevere, King Arthur's queen, and the adventures of **Tristan and Isolde**. These ro-

The Unicorn Is Found (image 34)

Fig. 15 A Hawking Party, 1500–1530
South Netherlandish

Wool warp, wool wefts; 105 x 148½ in. (266.7 x 377.2 cm)
Gift of George Blumenthal, 1941 (41.100.195)
(Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Plate: David and Goliath (image 5)

mances tended to follow a pattern: a knight falls in love with a married lady, often at first sight, and swears eternal devotion; love for the lady ennobles the knight and inspires him to feats of cleverness and daring; the couple must circumvent obstacles; and often, unable to live apart, they die within hours of each other. Although the clearest evidence for the customs and manners of courtly love can be found in medieval literature, many works of art feature scenes of knights and ladies, some from identifiable romances (image 28).

Hunting and Feasting

All social classes engaged in hunting in the Middle Ages, but the aristocracy in Byzantium and the West made it a sport as well as a source of food, sometimes even maintaining forest and game preserves for their personal hunting pleasures. One form of hunting—the pursuit of an animal with hounds—not only provided training and practice for war (as many types of hunting did), but its rituals of pursuit served as allegories for other aspects of courtly life, especially courtship. As a central focus of aristocratic life, hunting found expression in medieval art (image 34) and literature. While noblewomen are depicted only at the initial gathering for the hunt, or as an audience for the subduing of the quarry, they are sometimes shown actively pursuing falconry with men (fig. 15).

Any celebration, such as the conclusion of a successful hunt, might be the occasion for formal banquets. These were special events arranged not only for sumptuous eating and drinking but also as opportunities for the grandiose display of tableware (see images 5, 27, 29, figs. 17–18), requiring extensive planning and elaborate ceremony. Literature and art provide references for the social conventions associated with



Fig. 16 Three Apes Building a Trestle Table, 1480–1500
German?
Colorless glass, silver stain, and vitreous paint;
10 1/4 x 8 7/8 in. (26 x 22.5 cm)
The Cloisters Collection, 1990 (1990.119.3)
(Location: The Cloisters)



medieval feasting, and etiquette manuals and household documents of the later Middle Ages describe the settings, furnishings, tableware, and menus for these extravagant events.

In the late medieval West, a feast usually took place within a large hall, featuring special furniture called sideboards with shelves for displaying magnificent vessels and plates. The tables for any banquet, covered by at least two layers of white cloth, consisted of long boards set upon sawhorses (fig. 16). Social status dictated the seating arrangements—special guests sat at the dais, or elevated table, set perpendicular to the long tables where everyone else sat. One of the few adornments would be the **saltcellar** (fig. 17): only the most important guests would be positioned near the salt; all others sat “below the salt.” Goblets or double cups called **hanaps** (image 29) might be used for drinking, while beverages were poured from ornate flagons, pitchers, and beakers



Fig. 17 Saltcellar, mid-13th century
French; Paris
Gold, with rock crystal, emeralds, pearls,
and rubies; H. 5 1/2 in. (14 cm), D. of foot 3 1/8 in. (7.9 cm)
The Cloisters Collection, 1983 (1983.434)
(Location: The Cloisters)

(fig. 18). Individual dinner plates were seldom used; people usually ate from pieces of stale bread called trenchers. With the exception of soups and puddings, for which spoons might be used, most foods were eaten with the hands, a custom that prevailed in western Europe until the Renaissance. Guests brought their own knives to cut up and spear food.

Guests washed at the table by pouring fragrant water over their hands from an aquamanile (image 27) into a bowl. At the grandest feasts, entertainment of all sorts was provided, and music announced each course. The presentation and serving of courses began with the guests of honor and proceeded down the table to those of lower rank.



Fig. 18 Covered beaker, ca. 1470
Attributed to Hans Greiff
German; Ingolstadt, Bavaria
Gilded silver; H. 11 1/2 in. (29.2 cm),
D. 5 1/8 in. (13 cm)
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917
(17.190.615a,b)
(Location: Main Building,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Double cup (image 29)

Aquamanile in the form of a rooster
(image 27)





Hunter with a Hunting Horn: Detail of *The Unicorn Is Found* (image 34)

Music

Music penetrated every aspect of medieval life, and representations of its instruments are common in medieval art. In court and country, people sang, danced, and used music to accompany work, lull babies to sleep, tell stories, or pass the time. Trumpets and horns were sounded at tournaments, battles, hunts, feasts, and other ceremonial occasions (see detail of image 34 above). Large bells rang at the hours of prayer for churches and monasteries (fig. 19), and in the churches monks intoned **plainchant**, while pilgrims sang ballads about the miracles associated with holy sites. Troubadours entertained at court with stories of ancient heroes or songs of love. The varieties of musical instruments greatly expanded in the Middle Ages, due largely to the West's contact with Muslim Spain and the Middle East. Traders, pilgrims, and Crusaders introduced instruments that were adapted to European taste, including the stringed lute; a double-reed wood-

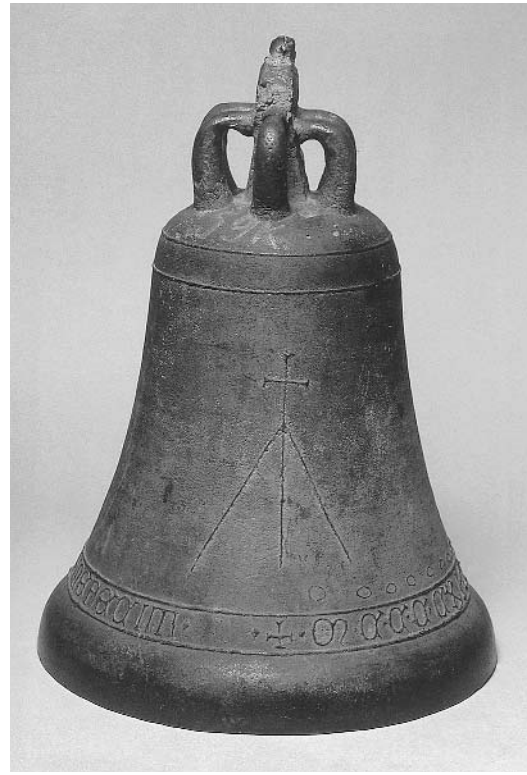


Fig. 19 Church bell
Master Marcus (Italian, Venetian, active 1396–1411)
Northern Italian; Venice
Bronze; H. 22⁷/₈ in. (58.1 cm), D. 14¹/₂ in. (36.8 cm)
Latin inscription: “Master Marcus, son of the late Master Vendramus, made me in 1411”
Gift of Nathaniel Spear, Jr., 1980 (1980.542)
(Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

wind instrument called a shawm; a bowed fiddle shaped like a pear, called a rebec; and the kettledrum set, called nakers. (Later examples of these are in the musical instruments galleries of the Museum.) Two surviving medieval instruments can be found in the Museum's musical instruments galleries: a mandora and a crecelle. The mandora (fig. 20), a small instrument whose strings may have been plucked or bowed, dates from about 1420; its back is ornately carved with Cupid and his bow hovering over a young couple standing by a tree. The imagery, along with the small size, suggest that this instrument was a gift to a young woman, possibly for her wedding. The crecelle (fig. 21), a ratchet-type instrument, was sounded in church to replace the bells rung by attendants to mark important points during a religious service.



Fig. 20 Mandora, ca. 1420
Northern Italian
Wood; L. 14 1/8 in. (36 cm)
Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1964 (64.101.1409)
(Location: Main Building, Musical Instruments Department,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Fig. 21 Crecelle, 15th or 16th century
French
Wood; L. (handle and cog) 10 3/4 in. (27.3 cm);
W. (frame) 9 in. (23 cm); D. (frame) 20 7/8 in. (72.5 cm)
Gift of Blumka Gallery, 1954 (54.160)
(Location: Main Building, Musical Instruments Department,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

GENERAL THEMES

Animals: images 9, 13–14, 17, 20, 22, 27–28, 33–35

Death: images 1, 5, 15, 19, 23–25, 28, 33

The female form: images 3, 10–11, 15, 17–18, 21, 28,
30–32

The male form: images 1, 5–6, 8–11, 13, 15–21,
23–26, 28, 30–35

Narrative: images 1, 5, 11, 15, 17, 20, 24, 26, 28, 32–35

Warfare: images 2, 5, 7, 20, 25, 28, 31, 33

Quick List of Images



1. **Sarcophagus with scenes from the lives of Peter and Jesus (detail)**, scenes of Saint Peter carved early 300s in Rome
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



5. **Plate: David and Goliath**, 628–30, Byzantine
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



9. **Portal from the abbey church of San Nicolò**, carved in 1000s, assembled in 1100s or 1200s, Italian
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



13. **Capital from the Cuxa Cloister with squatting apes between men**, ca. 1130–40, French
Location: The Cloisters



2. **The Vermand Treasure: Three mounts for spear shafts**, ca. 400, Provincial Roman
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



6. **Plaque with John the Evangelist**, ca. 800–810, Lotharingia, Aachen (Germany)
Location: The Cloisters



10. **Nine medallions from an icon frame**, ca. 1100, made in Constantinople
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



14. **The Narbonne Arch**, ca. 1150–75, French
Location: The Cloisters



3. **Fragment of a floor mosaic with a personification of Ktisis (Foundation)**, 500–550 (modern restoration), Byzantine
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



7. **Stirrup**, 900–1100, Viking
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



11. **The Journey to Emmaus (top) and The Lord Speaks to Mary (bottom)**, ca. 1115–20, Spanish
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



15. **Altar cross**, ca. 1150–60, English
Location: The Cloisters



4. **The Vrap Treasure: Vessels**, 600s–700s, Avar or Byzantine
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



8. **Panel depicting Jesus receiving a model of the Cathedral of Magdeburg from Emperor Otto I** (r. 936–73), 962–68, formerly in the Abbey of Seitenstetten, Austria; probably carved in Milan, northern Italy
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



12. **Cuxa Cloister**, ca. 1130–40, French
Location: The Cloisters



16. **Plaque with the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost)**, mid-12th century, South Lowlands
Location: The Cloisters



17. **Portal from the Church of San Leonardo al Frigido**, ca. 1170–80, Italian
Location: The Cloisters



18. **Apse**, ca. 1175–1200, Spanish
Location: The Cloisters



19. **Crucifix**, ca. 1150–1200, Spanish
Location: The Cloisters



20. **The Fifth Angel Opens the Fiery Pit and Releases the Locusts: Commentary on the Apocalypse of John by Beatus of Liébana** (ca. 730–798), ca. 1180, Spanish
Location: This and other Beatus leaves are shown for limited periods both at The Cloisters and in the Medieval Treasury in the Main Building



21. **Mary and Christ Child in Majesty**, late 1100s, French
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



22. **Wyvern from a frieze**, after 1200, Spanish
Location: The Cloisters



23. **Reliquary head of Saint Yrieix (Aredius)**, ca. 1220–40 (grill and angels added later), French
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



24. **Scenes from the Life of Vincent of Saragossa and the History of His Relics**, 1244–47, French
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



25. **Tomb effigy of Jean II d'Alluye**, mid-13th century, French
Location: The Cloisters



26. **Relief showing the Taking of Jesus**, ca. 1260–70, French
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



27. **Aquamanile in the form of a rooster**, second half of the 13th century, German
Location: The Cloisters



28. **Box with scenes of romances: Aristotle and Phyllis, Pyramus and Thisbe**, ca. 1310–30, French
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



29. **Double cup**, 1330–60, German or Bohemian
Location: The Cloisters



30. **Mary and Child**, ca. 1420
Claus de Werve (Franco-Netherlandish, ca. 1380–1439, active in Burgundy, 1396–ca. 1439), French
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



31. **Saint Louis before Damietta (folio 173), from The Belles Heures of Jean of France, Duke of Berry**, 1406–8 or 1409
Limbourg Brothers (Franco-Netherlandish, active in France, by 1399–1416), French
Location: The Cloisters



32. **The Annunciation Triptych**, ca. 1425–30
Robert Campin (South Netherlandish, active by 1406, died 1444) and assistant (possibly Rogier van der Weyden), South Netherlandish
Location: The Cloisters



33. **The Story of the Trojan War: The Battle with the Centaur (Sagittary) and The Conference at Achilles' Tent**, ca. 1470–90, South Netherlandish
Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



34. **The Unicorn Is Found**, ca. 1495–1500, France (the designs), South Lowlands (the weaving)
Location: The Cloisters



35. **Saint Roch**, early 16th century, French
Location: The Cloisters



1. Sarcophagus with scenes from the lives of Peter and Jesus (detail)

Scenes of Saint Peter carved early 300s in Rome (upper portion of the scenes of the life of Jesus restored about 1910)
From Villa Felice (formerly Carpegna), Rome, and Burrwood, Cold Spring Harbor, New York

Marble; 26 x 84 x 23 in. (66 x 213.4 x 58.4 cm)
Gift of Josef and Marsy Mittleman, 1991 (1991.366)

(Location: Main Building,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

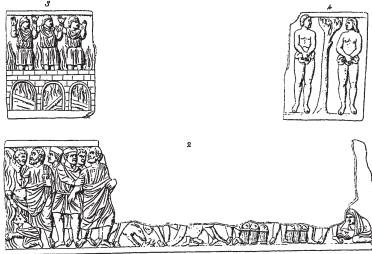


Fig. 22 Sarcophagus with scenes from the lives of Peter and Jesus: engraved views of front and ends, from J. Raffaello Garrucci's *Storia della arte cristiana nei primi otto secoli della chiesa* (Prato, 1879), plate 314

THIS SARCOPHAGUS, which is damaged and missing its lid, shows Christian art at about the time Christianity became the dominant religion of the Roman empire. The surviving original figures, packed in layers and boldly projecting from the surface, display the costume and poses of the classical period; the drilled holes and grooves provide strong contrasts of light and shadow to the details.

The image shows two scenes from the left side of the front, the only ones on the sarcophagus that are completely original. They show episodes from the life of Peter, Jesus' **disciple**, who had preached Christianity in Rome for twenty-five years before being executed by authorities. On the right, Peter is seized by Praetorian Guards in Rome, followed by—on the left—Peter drawing water from the wall of his prison cell before his amazed captors, who are now shown as smaller than Peter.

Also original to the sarcophagus are the ends, bottom, and lower portion of most of its front, which formed part of four scenes from the life of Jesus (fig. 22). The ends show Old Testament scenes often linked to concepts from the New Testament. For instance, **Adam and Eve** covering themselves by the Tree of Knowledge (Genesis 3:6–7) refers not only to the couple's upcoming banishment from **Paradise** but also to the recovery of Paradise promised to Christians, while the story of the three Hebrews standing unharmed in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:21–27), a punishment handed down by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, was thought to foreshadow a person's salvation through Jesus.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

Two scenes are visible in image 1. How did the artist indicate the most important figures in the scenes? Look at relative scale, direction of gaze, and pose. Are the most important figures the same person?

How did the artist dramatize these two scenes? Look at poses, facial expressions, and carving techniques. How does the artist indicate that some figures are Roman?



2. The Vermand Treasure:

Three mounts for spear shafts, ca. 400

Provincial Roman; found in Vermand, northern France

Gilded silver inlaid with niello;
L. 3 ³/₄ in. (9.4 cm) (.144); L. 4 ³/₄ in. (12.2 cm) (.145); L. 1 ¹/₈ in. (3 cm) (.143)
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917
(17.192.143-.145)

(Location: Main Building,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

THESE MOUNTS WERE found in the tomb of a high-ranking barbarian leader in the Roman army, who was stationed in the Roman province of Gaul (roughly, modern France), where more than 75,000 soldiers safeguarded the Rhine border of the Roman empire. Packed in his stone sarcophagus were a gilded silver belt buckle, now at the Metropolitan Museum (17.192.146), an ax, a sword, a quiver containing ten arrows (or small throwing spears), a larger spear, and these mounts. On a wall nearby hung a shield, parts of which are now in the Arms and Armor collection of the Museum (17.192.141 and 17.192.142).

The condition of these three precious mounts indicates that they were never used in a battle, although they are fully functional as parts of weapons. Their decoration, typical of much barbarian art, emphasizes linearity and pattern. First **cast** in silver with scrolls, rosettes, and fantastic animals as details, the mounts were cut and faceted in the **chip-carving** technique, then their surfaces were gilded and inlaid with patterns of dark **niello**. The largest spear mount shown here (center, 17.192.145) was a barbarian invention. With two rings on its back, it would have slid over two metal fingers that protruded down from the socket of a spearhead. Protecting the spearhead from being chopped off in battle, the mount also locked the spearhead in place more firmly on the spear than by simply running a nail through the spearhead socket into the wooden shaft of the weapon. Its ornament includes a rosette at one end, four dragonlike beasts where the two rings join the back, and a cicada at the other end. Its prominent six-pointed interlaced star was not meant to be a Jewish symbol, being simply a decorative motif in both Roman and Germanic art. The rectangular piece on the left (17.192.144) was either mounted on a spear or perhaps was part of a scabbard. The ring mount on the right (17.192.143) was designed to fasten a leather hand strap to the spear.



Detail of spear mount (17.192.145)



DISCUSSION

The Roman historian Tacitus (55–120) wrote the following text about Germanic tribes about 300 years before this treasure was created. Keeping this passage in mind—despite its Roman view of Germans—why, as a German barbarian, would you want to be buried with works of art such as these mounts? What links the three mounts together, suggesting that all came from the same grave?

No business, public or private, is transacted except in arms. But it is the rule that no one shall take up his arms until the State has attested that he is likely to make good. When that time comes, one of the chiefs or the father or a kinsman equips the young warrior with shield and spear in the public council. This with the Germans is the equivalent of our toga [a Roman robe]—the first public distinction of youth. They cease to rank merely as members of the household and are now members of the state. Conspicuous ancestry or great services rendered by their fathers can win the rank of chief for boys still in their teens...

—Tacitus, *Germania*, excerpts from chapter 13, in *Tacitus on Britain and Germany*, translated by H. Mattingly (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1948), p. 112



3. Fragment of a floor mosaic with a personification of Ktisis (Foundation), 500–550

(modern restoration)
Byzantine

Marble and glass; Overall $53\frac{3}{8} \times 33$ in.
(135.6 x 83.8 cm)

Inscriptions in Greek, at top: ΚΤΙ[ΣΙΣ]
("Foundation"); near head of male:
ΚΛΛΟΙ (a variant of kaloi, "good")

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund and Fletcher
Fund, 1998 (1998.69)

Purchase, Dodge Fund, Rogers Fund, and
Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, 1999 (1999.99)

(Location: Main Building,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

THE TRADITION OF PERSONIFYING abstract ideals came from the classical world and continued in many places around the Mediterranean basin.

A haunting example is this representation of Ktisis, who personifies the act of giving generously or of founding a building. Made up of colored stone and glass tiles cemented together—the mosaic technique in which Byzantium excelled during the Middle Ages—she once decorated the floor of a large public building about the time of the Byzantine emperor Justinian. (See the Materials and Techniques section of this resource.)

Runs of smaller tiles lend smoothness, volume, and detail to some areas of the mosaic—such as the flesh—while larger tiles define other areas in broader strokes, such as the flowers on the white background.

To emphasize her role as founding something to be built, Ktisis holds the measuring tool for the Roman foot, its full length the approximate size of a Roman foot—12.2 inches (29.7 centimeters). To symbolize the liberality of the deed she represents, Ktisis appears as a wealthy woman wearing a **diadem**, large pearl earrings, a necklace, and two brooches. In addition, to her right a smaller man offers a horn of plenty and near his head is the Greek masculine plural adjective for "good" (ΚΛΛΟΙ). A similar figure probably appeared to her left, and a further inscription would have completed the legend "good wishes" (ΚΛΛΟΙ ΚΑΙΡΟΙ).



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

How has this image been created? Are all of its four-sided tiles (**tesserae**) the same size? Where are they the smallest? Largest? How has the artist shown the details of the woman's face and the folds of her garments using the cubes?

This image is a personification of the act of generous giving or foundation. Which details of the mosaic indicate this generosity?



ACTIVITY

See the lesson plan called Techniques and Materials.



4. The Vrap Treasure: Vessels, 600s–700s

Avar or Byzantine; found in Vrap,
Albania, in 1901

Gold, silver, and silver with partial gilding;
H. ewer (17.190.1704) 9 1/8 in. (23.2 cm)
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (back, left
to right: 17.190.1707, .1711a, .1710, .1712a, .1704,
.1708; front, left to right: 17.190.1705, .1709)

(Location: Main Building,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Fig. 23 The Vrap Treasure:
A selection of gold belt fittings
L. of longest belt fitting (17.190.1673)
5 in. (12.7 cm)
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (top:
17.190.1686; middle: 17.190.1678, .1673;
bottom: 17.190.1679, .1697, .1683)
(Location: Main Building,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

THIS COLLECTION OF VESSELS from the Vrap Treasure gives a sense of the wealth that some barbarians accumulated as war booty or tribute and how their art was influenced by other cultures. Prominent within the collection are a pitcher, or ewer; an elaborate goblet decorated with female personifications of the four centers of Christianity in the Byzantine world—Cyprus, Rome, Alexandria, and Constantinople; and a sixth-century Byzantine bucket used for drawing water. Although a provincial Byzantine artist may have created these vessels (see image 5 for a comparative example of Byzantine art), it is more likely that most of them were created by barbarian craftsmen inspired by Byzantine works.

The entire treasure—over twelve pounds of gold and three pounds of silver—was discovered within a buried copper cauldron in 1901. It included ten silver or gold vessels; thirty gold belt fittings; parts of a golden candlestick; and several gold bars and strips.

The Vrap Treasure belonged to the Avars, a nomadic tribe of mounted warriors who inhabited the Eurasian steppes before moving into the Balkan area in the sixth century, with the permission of the Byzantine empire. From then until the end of the eighth century—when their power was broken by the Frankish ruler Charlemagne (r. 768–814) and they were absorbed by their neighbors—the Avars maintained a complex relationship with the Byzantines, at times protecting the empire's borders, at times raiding the lands they had agreed to defend. Avar goldsmiths, counted among the tribe's ruling class, transformed the gold and silver they obtained into works of exceptionally high quality. Their mastery of cast-metal technology is evident in the gold belt fittings illustrated here (fig. 23), which functioned as both badges of rank within Avar society and emblems of a particular clan. The griffin shapes and the chip-carved vine scrolls of the fittings borrow from **Scythian** artistic traditions north of the Black Sea.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

Do these vessels appear to belong to the same set or are they separate pieces found together? List the ways they are similar or different.



5. Plate: David and Goliath, 628–30

Byzantine (Constantinople);
found in 1902 at Karavas, Cyprus

Silver, cast, hammered, punched, and
chased; Diam. 10 1/2 in. (26.7 cm)
One of a set of nine plates with scenes from
the life of King David (1 Samuel 16–18)
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917
(17.190.396)

(Location: Main Building,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

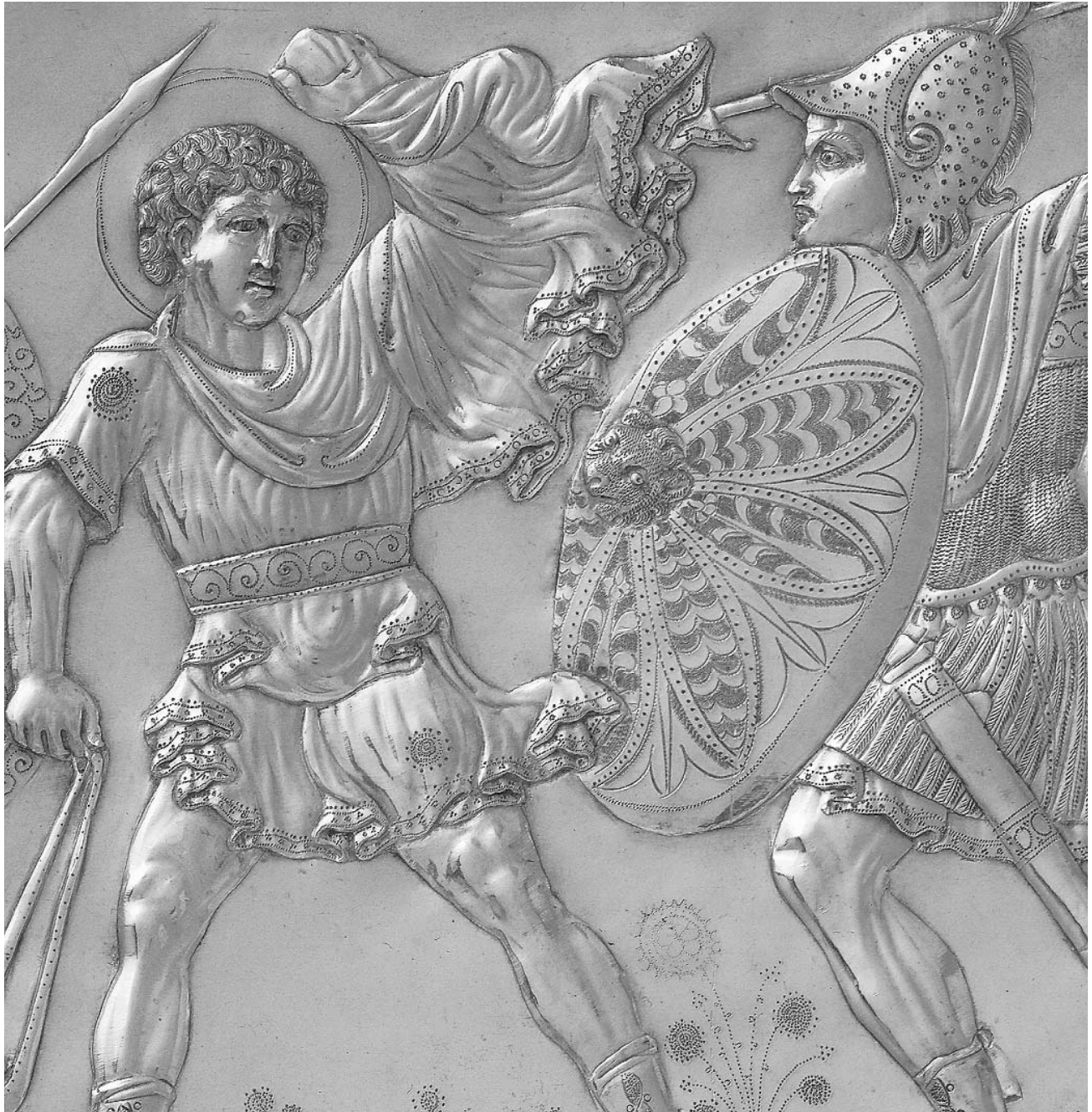


Fig. 24 Suggested arrangement of
the nine David Plates

THIS PLATE IS AN EXAMPLE of the luxurious and technically masterful works that Byzantine artists could produce, and it reflects the taste for the classical that Byzantium retained throughout the Middle Ages. It is the largest display plate in a set of nine that is divided between the Metropolitan Museum and the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia. They can be grouped by size: there are four small plates, four medium-sized plates, and one large plate—this one. With their naturalistically rendered figures performing graceful actions, these plates fall within the classical tradition of elegantly wrought silver for domestic use, which was usually decorated with classical subjects. The nine David Plates, however, have decoration illustrating events early in the life of the Old Testament King David—up to his slaying of Goliath and his marriage to Michal, daughter of King Saul of Israel (1 Samuel 16–18). The eight smaller plates may have been arranged around this David and Goliath plate—in the biblical order of the events depicted on them (fig. 24)—to form a Christogram, an emblem symbolizing Jesus, who was a descendant of David.

The biblical story of David and Goliath appears here in three **registers**. The beginning of the story is at the top, where David confronts Goliath before a personification of the brook in the valley of Elah from which he gathered the stones for his sling. Although Goliath was supposedly over nine feet tall, here he is smaller than David, to show David's importance after being blessed by the hand of God. Two towered cities indicate the places where the Israelites and the Philistines encamped. In the middle of the plate, both contestants are now the same size, with David, protected only by his sling, facing a fully armored Goliath. Though the charging Goliath seems assured of victory, the startled poses of his Philistine comrades behind him and the surge of the Israelites behind David hint that things will turn out differently. At the bottom, David beheads the fallen Goliath, now the proper size for a giant.

The backs of the nine David Plates are marked with control stamps dating from 613 to 629/30, showing that they were created during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (r. 610–41). Since Heraclius ended a long and costly war by beheading the Persian general Razatis in single combat in 628–29, a fight in which the contemporary Frankish chronicler Fredegarius wrote that Heraclius “advanced to the fray like a second David,” the theme of David and Goliath on this plate may refer to the emperor's victory over the powerful Persians.





QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

Which scene on the plate is supposed to be first? What details identify Goliath and David? In the central scene, how does the artist indicate which side will win the fight? Notice the three different size relationships between David and Goliath on the plate. How does your idea of David change in each instance?



ACTIVITY

Have each student choose a well-known story. Ask them to think about the key figures and events in the narrative. Then ask them to draw, paint, or create on a computer a poster, without text, that combines several parts of the story. When they have completed their artwork, have them share their pictures with the rest of the class to see if the other students can guess what the story is. This activity can lead to discussions about how to convey the passage of time through images.

Prior to showing them the image of the Byzantine plate, have your students read the passage from the Bible that describes the famous battle between David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17:42–51). What are the essential elements of this story? Ask your students to draw three scenes that capture these essential elements. Now see what the Byzantine artist has done. Do the scenes created by your students match his in some ways? Based on the image, is it likely the Byzantine artist read the biblical passage?



6. Plaque with John the Evangelist, ca. 800–810

Lotharingia, Aachen (Germany),
court school of Charlemagne

Elephant ivory; $7\frac{3}{16} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ in. (18.3 x 9.5 cm)
Inscribed, at top: MORE VOLANS AQUILE
VERBUM PETIT ASTRA [IOHAN]NI[S]
("Flying like an eagle, the word of John
seeks the stars"), a Latin inscription based
on the fifth-century *Carmen paschale*
(Easter Poem), Book 1, line 358, by Sedulius;
within the book: IN PRINCIPIO ERAT
VERBUM ("In the beginning was the word"),
a Latin inscription from John 1:1
The Cloisters Collection, 1977 (1977.421)
(Location: The Cloisters)

PERHAPS ORIGINALLY ONE element of a three-part screen, this ivory was produced during the reign of Charlemagne (r. 768–814), as part of a campaign to revive Christian culture in his empire. Its scene displays superb balance and symmetry, from the arcs repeated in the two **halos** and the double arch, to the pair of columns wrapped with curtains, to the rosettes in the top corners, which are counterpoints to the sitter's knees. Though the architecture and clothing are based on ancient Greek or Roman forms, the abundant lines, textures, and patterns of the masterly carving show a nonclassical, barbarian artistic tradition. (The decorative patterns of the mounts in image 2 give a sense of this tradition.) It is likely, then, that a Frankish artist created this plaque at Charlemagne's court in Aachen.

In the center of the scene is John the **Evangelist**, sitting on a throne and displaying his gospel, one of the Church's four official accounts of the life of Jesus. The artist has made the figure of John enormous, to indicate his importance; he sits snugly within the framework of an arch resting on columns, their capitals decorated with **acanthus** leaves—the favored ornament of Roman capitals. Floating above him, holding a book, is an eagle, which medieval theologians understood as a symbol for John.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

How does the artist draw your eye to the most important parts of the image? Consider the detail, scale, and balance of the work.



7. Stirrup, 900–1100

Viking; found in England

Iron with copper alloy overlays;

10 x 5½ in. (25.4 x 14 cm)

Fletcher Fund, 1947 (47.100.23)

(Location: Main Building,

The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

STIRRUPS WERE A BREAKTHROUGH in the Middle Ages that enabled warriors to fight from horseback more securely, leading to the appearance of the heavily armored knight. Graceful in form and decorated with intricate whorls, this example has a broken rectangular opening at the top that received a fabric, leather, or metal strap. Stirrups were originally made of ropes or thongs tied to a bar of wood, and the knobs of this metal stirrup may echo the knots of this older type. Probably made by a Viking settler in southern England, it perhaps accompanied one of the Viking war bands that ravaged England during the time of the English king Aethelred II the Unready (r. 978–1016).

First appearing in China, the stirrup is supposed to have arrived in Europe in the seventh century with the migrating Avars of Central Asia (see image 4). But Byzantium, at least, may have learned of it either from the Persians or from the expanding Arab empire on its eastern border. Tradition says that Charles Martel adopted the stirrup within his reorganized Frankish army at about the time he defeated Muslim Berbers at Poitiers in 732. But it wasn't until the ninth century that the Franks widely used the stirrup, which then spread throughout Europe.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

How would this object have helped a warrior fight from horseback? What details indicate that the person creating this stirrup considered it a work of art, as well as a functional piece of equipment?



ACTIVITY

Ask your students to design an object used in daily life that is a work of art as well as a tool, considering form and pattern in the design.



8. Panel depicting Jesus receiving a model of the Cathedral of Magdeburg from Emperor Otto I (r. 936–73), 962–68

Formerly in the Abbey of Seitenstetten, Austria; probably carved in Milan, northern Italy

Ivory; 5 x 4½ in. (12.7 x 11.4 cm)
Gift of George Blumenthal, 1941
(41.100.157)

(Location: Main Building,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

THIS PANEL CONTAINS a contemporary portrayal of Otto I (the Great) (r. 936–73), the Saxon king who created an empire that included modern-day Germany, Belgium, Austria, some of France, and more than half of Italy. It was part of a series of ivories Otto commissioned, probably for the decoration of a reading desk, a door into the altar area, or an **altar frontal** for the Cathedral of Saint Mauritius in Magdeburg, Germany. The plaque's style has features of both the Carolingian artistic tradition—which used simplification to clarify the message of a work of art—and the naturalism that was practiced by many Byzantine artists. The solemn feeling of the scene arises from its stable geometric forms set against a checkerboard background, including the wreath (symbolizing the world), the figures themselves and their groupings, and most of the figures' **lines of sight** meeting at Otto's offering. In such an environment, the least gesture or pose catches and directs the eye. On the left, Mauritius, the military patron saint of the Ottonian empire and of Magdeburg itself, stoops over Otto and presents him to Jesus as a parent might introduce a child. In turn, Otto, his hands covered as a sign of respect, moves to present a symbolic model of Saint Mauritius to Jesus, whose fingers just touch the church in blessing while he displays the New Testament on his knee. Among the attentive saints opposite Otto is Peter holding the keys to heaven (Matthew 16:19).



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

Compare this ivory to the plaque of John the Evangelist (image 6). How is the seated Jesus of this ivory different from the seated John of the other? How has each artist shown the figure's importance?





DISCUSSION

Before showing image 8, read the following passage to your students and have each of them draw an image of Otto based on it. Now, present image 8. How do the images of Otto compare? Focusing now just on image 8, ask how the artist has drawn the viewer's attention to Otto's offering of a church. Note the direction of the gestures and gazes.

...Now the king [Otto I], seeing that the whole weight of the battle was to be opposite him, spoke to his companions in this way to encourage them: "The need for us to be in good spirits in so great an inevitability, my soldiers, you yourselves see, who cannot tolerate an enemy at a distance, but face to face! For so far, having gloriously used your hardworking hands and your weapons—always undefeated—I have conquered everywhere outside of my land and rule—shall I now turn my back on my own country and realm? We are surpassed, I know, in numbers, but not in courage or equipment. Indeed, we have thoroughly determined that, for the most part, those people are completely lacking in all war equipment and—what is of the greatest comfort to us—in the help of God! For them, daring alone is their defense; for us, it is hope and divine protection. Clearly to yield to the enemy now would shame the rulers of almost all of Europe! Better, if the end lies near, my soldiers, that we gloriously die by combat than that, thrown down by the enemy, we lead our lives as slaves or at least die strangled like wicked beasts. More I would say, my soldiers, if I could build up your courage or boldness with words. However, it is better that we begin conversation with swords rather than with tongues!" And with these things said, grabbing his shield and the Holy Lance, the king himself was the first to turn his horse into the enemy, going about his business of being the strongest soldier and the best general. The more daring of the enemy at first resisted, but then, as they saw their companions turn their backs—astounded and mixed in with us, they were destroyed.

—Widukind of the Saxon abbey of Corvey, describing the Battle of the Lechfeld of 955 between the Hungarians and the victorious forces of Otto I, from chapter 46 of the *Res gestae Saxonicae* (*Deeds of the Saxons*), translated by Michael Norris



9. Portal from the abbey church of San Nicolò, carved in 1000s, assembled in 1100s or 1200s

Italian; part of a monastic church
just outside of Sangemini (Central Italy)

Marble; 11 ft. 9 in. x 8 ft. 4 in. (360.4 x 254 cm)
Fletcher Fund, 1947 (47.100.45)

(Location: Main Building,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

THIS PORTAL SHOWS that medieval artists sometimes reused material from other cultures to make their own works of art. Taking stone from the ruins of nearby Roman towns (notice the Latin letters on some parts of the arch), different medieval artists, probably at different times, carved parts of this entrance to a monastic church, which were then assembled later. What unifies its overall decoration is the lavish use of plant forms, particularly the profuse acanthus on the left jamb and the lintel and the grape leaves on the right jamb. In fact, the plants are so abundant that the animals and people among them seem insignificant, although some of them, through religious symbolism, may also help unify the portal. For instance, an eagle on the lintel—perhaps a symbol for Jesus—spreads its wings between two stags, possible references to the soul mentioned in Psalm 42:1. Meanwhile, an angel with a star-shaped object and a man stirring a pot on the left jamb—along with the lions at the portal's bottom—all seem to be part of *Bel and the Dragon*, an **apocryphal** addition to the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament. In this story, Habakkuk was bringing a bowl of stew to some reapers in Judaea when an angel lifted him by his hair and carried him to a lions' den near Babylon. Unjustly imprisoned within the den was Daniel, who ate the stew. Daniel was held captive with hungry lions that later consumed his enemies after King Cyrus of Babylon freed him.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

Although this doorway is made of different parts, can you identify a unifying element? What clues in the decoration indicate that this entrance belonged to a church? Consider images that might symbolize paradise and heaven.



ACTIVITY

Have teams of students choose a type of building that requires a special entrance, perhaps a school, house of worship, or city government building. Have each team create the design of a doorway for the building, using a collage of plant forms cut from magazines, gift wrap, and other material. Compare the doorways, discussing how each building type influenced the design and how each team divided up the decorative work.



10. Nine medallions from an icon frame, ca. 1100

Made in Constantinople; from the Djumati Monastery, Georgia (now Republic of Georgia)

Gold, silver, and enamel worked in cloisonné; D. of each $3\frac{1}{4}$ in. (8.3 cm)
Identification inscribed in Greek on each medallion, clockwise from top left: Mother of God, Jesus Christ, John the Precursor (or Baptist), Saint Paul, Saint Matthew, Saint Luke, Saint George, Saint John the Theologian, and Saint Peter
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.670–678)

(Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Fig. 25 Engraving of an old photograph of an icon containing these enamels (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Department of Medieval Art files). Although this icon of the archangel Gabriel may not be the one originally surrounded by the enamels, this picture shows how they might have been arranged around a central image.

THESE NINE MEDALLIONS DEMONSTRATE the mastery of Byzantine artists in cloisonné enameling during the Middle Ages (see the Materials and Techniques section of this resource). Each features a surprising amount of detail, including richly colored and elaborately patterned clothing; book covers that are different from one another; halos of different colors and patterns; and even identifying names. Icons in their own right, twelve of these medallions once surrounded a larger icon of the archangel Gabriel—Demetrios, Mark, and Theodore, visible in figure 25, are now missing—and all of them were made in Constantinople for the Djumati Monastery in Georgia, a region bordering the Black Sea. Their original arrangement on the frame, following a sequence of Greek Orthodox prayers, might have been the **Deesis** (Mary and John the Baptist appealing to Jesus) across the top; Peter, Paul, and the evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) along the sides; and military saints along the bottom (George, Demetrios, and Theodore).



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

Despite differences in detail, what might lead you to think that the same artist created all nine of these medallions? How has the artist made the figures within each medallion look like individuals?



11. The Journey to Emmaus (top) and The Lord Speaks to Mary (bottom), ca. 1115–20

Spanish; made in León, a region of northern Spain

Ivory; 10 ⁵/₈ x 5 ⁵/₁₆ in. (27 x 13.5 cm)

Inscribed: D(OMI)N(V)S LOQVITVR MARIE
("The Lord Speaks to Mary")

Probably part of a series of panels on a reliquary that showed scenes from the life of Jesus

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.47)

(Location: Main Building,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

THIS IVORY IS A SUPERB EXAMPLE of the Romanesque style, its contrasts creating unforgettable images of Jesus appearing after his death. The flattened figures, impassive faces, and patterned drapery folds create static elements in the scenes. But a boisterous energy also permeates the figures, emanating from their dramatic gestures and poses—including crouches and uplifted feet—and the intricate drapery hems.

In the scene at the top, Jesus joins two of his followers traveling to the town of Emmaus. One of them carries the walking staff, sweat cloth, water gourd, and purse of a medieval pilgrim. The travelers do not recognize Jesus until they gather for dinner that night (Luke 24:13–31). In the bottom scene, Mary Magdalene, another follower, recognizes Jesus outside of his tomb and determinedly runs toward him. In response, Jesus sways away while his hands form powerful gestures of blessing and caution, visually expressing his warning in the biblical passage "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father" (John 20:17).



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

How does the artist express emotion in the figures? Note movement, gesture, and the lines of carving. Describe what is happening in the top scene. What clues indicate that this scene is occurring outside? What will happen next in the bottom scene—will the woman succeed in touching the man?



ACTIVITY

To show some of the challenges of using only hand gestures and body movements to communicate emotions and actions—which this medieval artist faced—ask your students to create a mask out of a paper plate, cardboard, or some other material; use the faces of this ivory as a guide, if you wish. Choose an emotion or a command from a text your students are studying and write it on a slip of paper. Select one of your students and have her/him read the slip in private. Then, ask the student to put on the mask and, facing the class, express the emotion or command without speaking, using just gestures and body movements. Ask your class to guess what the student is trying to convey.



DISCUSSION

Have your class read Luke 24:13–31 and John 20:11–17, the biblical accounts related to these scenes:

Now on that same day two of them [apostles] were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened [e.g., Christ's crucifixion]. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?”

– Luke 24:13–31, in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, New Revised Standard Version, edited by Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994)

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascended to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

– John 20:11–17, in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, New Revised Standard Version, edited by Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994)

After reading the passages, ask your students whether the artist communicated something beyond a literal reading of the texts.



12. Cuxa Cloister, ca. 1130–40
13. Capital from the Cuxa Cloister with
squatting apes between men, ca. 1130–40



12. French; Roussillon (Pyrénées-Orientales), from the Benedictine monastery of Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa, near Perpignan

Marble; 90 ft. x 78 ft. (27.43 x 23.77 m)
The Cloisters Collection, 1925 (25.120)

(Location: The Cloisters)

13. Marble; H. 17½ in. (6.9 cm)
The Cloisters Collection, 1925 (25.120.617)

(Location: The Cloisters)

THIS SUPERB EVOCATION of a medieval cloister provides a good sense of how a four-sided covered walkway, with a garden and fountain at its core, functioned as the center of a monastery, closed off from the outside world. Usually the church, refectory (dining area), dormitory, and chapter house (gathering area) of a monastery opened onto the cloisters so that its passageways provided access from one structure to another. The balance and symmetry of a square symbolized the regulated and harmonious common life sought by the monks. But the cloister was not always tranquil—it was also used for exercise and for reading aloud and it was even the place, during talking periods, for shaving, sharpening knives, and washing clothes and dishes with water from the fountain.

The homogenous appearance of the cloister comes from the pink-and-white stone of which it is made. Even the broad images carved on the thirty-six capitals of the columns harmonize well with the wide white striping of the pink marble. When the Metropolitan Museum decided to create a cloister—using about half of the columns and capitals of the original, thus making it one-quarter its size—some of the same French quarries that had helped build Cuxa's cloister in the Middle Ages were reopened so that the new replacement architectural elements could match the twelfth-century parts.

The capitals on the columns are varied—some are almost blocks; others are carved with acanthus plants; still others are strange blends of dancers, horn players, apes, lions, bears, and eagles. Some of these combinations may have derived from popular fables of the time, but others may have been intended to instruct the monks. For instance, the athletic men who hold back apes on one capital (image 13) may refer to a running race mentioned in monastic writings, in which monks (symbolized by the athletes) are to successfully compete against vices (symbolized by the apes) in the “stadium” of a monastery.

At the center of the Cuxa Cloister is a garden, which, in a monastery, was symbolic of paradise. Few medieval records give details of such enclosed gardens, although it is clear that lawns were often planted in them; their decorative flowers may also have provided ornament for the nearby churches. The modern garden at The Cloisters is divided into quadrants planted with flowering trees and beds of medieval plants such as rue, lavender, betony, lady's mantle, and red valerian, along with modern species that provide flowers from spring through fall. In the middle of the cross-shaped walkways is a small thirteenth-century fountain (26.79), which originally stood in the monastery of Saint-Génis-des-Fontaines, near Cuxa.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

Look at image 12 and imagine yourself in the space. What activities could you do in this structure and in the garden? Would the capital of image 13 attract your gaze if you were walking in the cloister? Discuss the relationship of the overall cloister to this capital.



DISCUSSION

Discuss with your students the apparent contradiction between the capital in image 13 and the regularly organized space of a cloister as seen in image 12. Use the following quotation as a springboard for a discussion of the various roles of a cloister and its decoration.

...in the cloisters, before the eyes of the brothers while they read—what is that ridiculous monstrosity doing, an amazing kind of deformed beauty and yet a beautiful deformity? What are the filthy apes doing there? The fierce lions? The monstrous centaurs? The creature part man and part beast? The striped tigers? The fighting soldiers? The hunters blowing their horns? You see many bodies under one head and conversely many heads on one body. On one side the tail of a serpent is seen on a quadruped, on the other side the head of a quadruped is on the body of a fish. Over there an animal has a horse for the front half and a goat for the back; here a creature which is horned in front is equine behind. In short, everywhere so plentiful and astonishing a variety of contradictory forms is seen that one would rather read in the marble than in books, and spend the whole day wondering at every single one of them than in meditating on the law of God. Good God! If one is not ashamed of the absurdity, why is one not at least troubled at the expense?

—The Cistercian monk Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), from his “Apologia” to William, Abbot of Saint-Thierry, in Conrad Rudolph’s *The “Things of Greater Importance”: Bernard of Clairvaux’s Apologia and the Medieval Attitude Toward Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), pp. 11–12



14. The Narbonne Arch, ca. 1150–75

French; Languedoc (Aude), said to be from a church at Narbonne

Marble; 3 ft. 4 in. x 6 ft. 2 in. (101.6 x 188 cm)
John Stewart Kennedy Fund, 1922 (22.58.1)

(Location: The Cloisters)

THIS DECORATIVE ARCH displays a series of creatures, most of them found within medieval **bestiaries**—popular texts, often illustrated, that recounted stories of animals, frequently with moralizing overtones. A close look reveals that each animal is dramatically carved out, with many displaying a wild energy through their expressive faces, crouching strides—some of them with feet almost slipping out of the frames—and twisting tails and necks. The carving even shows something of the character of each creature. For instance, the crowned lion is foppish in his elegantly styled mane and braided tail, while the manticore on the bottom left is so ferocious that its tail is biting itself. According to one bestiary, this last creature, born in India, had three rows of teeth and was a man-eater. It was also supposed to have had blood-red eyes, a man's head, a lion's body, a scorpion's stinger, and a voice like a shrill flute. It could leap over obstacles of any height. Above the manticore is a pelican pecking its chest. According to the same bestiary, pelicans loved their children, but when their chicks beat them in the face with their wings, the parents struck back and killed them. Three days later, the mother (or in some versions, the father) pierced her breast and her side. Lying across her young, she bathed her chicks in her blood, thus restoring them to life, an act symbolizing Jesus' death and resurrection.

Above the pelican is a racing basilisk, also known as a cockatrice, staring back at its lethal tail. It was said that this half-rooster, half-snake was decorated with white lengthwise stripes six inches wide. Living in desert areas, it could kill by its smell, look, or hiss. Weasels were supposed to be able to destroy basilisks by enticing them into a cave, then killing them with their breath. Above the basilisk is a bird with a woman's head, probably a siren. In descriptions similar to Homer's in the *Odyssey* (Book 12), medieval bestiaries reported that sirens, through the loveliness of their singing, caused sailors to fall asleep, after which they attacked them. To the right is a clawing griffin—a lion with the wings and head of an eagle. Born in the mountains, it supposedly hated horses and tore to pieces any human it met.

Next to the griffin is the writhing amphisbaena, whose Greek name means "one who walks on both sides." With a head at either of its ends, this beast could supposedly make itself into a hoop and roll. It was thought to be the only snake that could tolerate the cold and the first ser-



pent to come out of hibernation. Following the amphisbaena is a centaur with a bow and arrow. According to classical mythology, centaurs lived in Thessaly—an area of northern Greece famous for its horses—where they were a wild tribe, liable to riot when drunk. Although in the Middle Ages the centaur's two natures of horse and man often linked it to the devil, in classical mythology some centaurs were good, such as the gentle and wise Cheiron, who was skilled in music, hunting, and medicine. Completing the arch is a snarling crowned lion with one raised paw. Tales of lions in medieval bestiaries are numerous, including the idea, quite believable in this kingly image, that lions are compassionate—they spared prisoners and those who prostrated themselves before them; they ate men instead of women, and ate children only if they were starved. Although the lion was considered brave—as seems to be the case here—it also feared fire, human hunters, creaking wheels, and white roosters.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

Look at each creature and describe it in detail. Do these details indicate the habits and range of the creature, such as what it might eat and in what kind of environment it might thrive?



ACTIVITY

Ask your students to imagine that they are zookeepers and that the animals on the arch are housed in their zoo. Which creatures would be housed together; which would be kept apart? Which would be in the bird section? Which in the reptile house? What would the animals be fed? What would their signs say? What animals might be added to this zoo?

See the lesson plan called Medieval Beasts and the Bestiary.



15. Altar cross, ca. 1150–60

English; possibly from the abbey of Bury Saint Edmunds

Five interlocking pieces of walrus ivory, with traces of color; 22 ⁵/₈ x 14 ¹/₄ in.

(57.5 x 36.2 cm)

The holes visible on the arms of the cross were used for hanging a figure of Jesus, now missing

The Cloisters Collection, 1963 (63.12)

(Location: The Cloisters)



Fig. 26 Back of the altar cross

IN ITS INSCRIPTIONS AND IMAGERY, including some dazzling displays of **typology**, this ivory cross—symbolizing how Jesus died—carries a theological program as complex as those found on the facades of cathedrals. Ninety-eight inscriptions and ninety-two figures cover the cross. The figures' clothes look as if they were wetly clinging to the underlying bodies (image 15 and fig. 26). This so-called damp-fold style, frequently found in Romanesque manuscripts and wall paintings, was inspired by art of the classical tradition.

The Tree of Life from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:22), said to bear fruit that conferred immortality, forms the cross. Its arms meet at a hive of figures and inscriptions on the front; the chief figure is Moses, striding before a forked pole draped with a serpent and flinging out his scroll so violently it seems to be leaving his hands. This imagery evokes a story to which Jesus referred when he said that his being lifted up on a cross would give eternal life to believers (John 3:14–15). The story was about how Moses, on the instructions of God, set up a brass serpent on a pole that, when seen, healed Israelites bitten by snakes (Numbers 21:5–9).

The plaques at the ends of the cross display important moments in Jesus' life. The left one shows the **Three Women at the Tomb** of Jesus—with its guardian soldiers asleep—and the Resurrection, symbolized by a young man sitting on the empty tomb. On the right is the Deposition—Jesus dead and being taken down from the cross—and the Lamentation, his followers sorrowing over his body, already wrapped for burial. At the top is the Ascension, when Jesus ascended to heaven forty days after the Resurrection. Just below this plaque is a scene of Caiaphas, the high priest of the Jews, and Pilate, the Roman governor of Judaea, disputing the title for the inscription on Jesus' cross (John 19:19–22). Meanwhile, Adam and Eve cling to the base of the cross, since, according to a medieval legend, Adam had been buried where the cross would later stand. Below them would have been a plaque probably showing the Nativity.

The back of this cross (fig. 26) is also decorated, indicating that, when not resting on an altar, it was probably placed on a staff during processions. Seventeen of the eighteen prophets of the Old Testament line the arms—only Jonas is missing at the bottom—and winged symbols of the evangelists appear on the three plaques at the ends of the cross—the lion for Mark, the ox for Luke, and the eagle for John. The winged man for Matthew, now missing, would have been on the bottom plaque.



Detail of front of cross



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

How do Adam and Eve and the plaques at the cross' ends visually connect with the missing figure of Jesus and with the central medallion? Consider the direction of gazes and poses of the figures. Look carefully and describe the activities in different episodes. In each episode, can you also describe how the figures express emotion?



16. Plaque with the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost), mid-12th century

South Lowlands, Valley of the Meuse
(a river beginning in eastern France and
flowing through Belgium)

Champlevé, with cloisonné enamel
appearing in the garments, on gilt copper;
4 1/16 x 4 1/16 in. (10.3 x 10.3 cm)

Inscriptions in Latin, at top, flanking
the arc of heaven: DOM (US) (house); inside
the arc of heaven: PA/TE(R)
(father); center, flanking Peter: SP(IRITU)S
D(OMI)NI (the spirit of the Lord); bottom:
APOSTOLI (apostles)

Part of a series of plaques decorating a
large object, perhaps an altarpiece or pulpit
The Cloisters Collection, 1965 (65.105)

(Location: The Cloisters)

THIS PLAQUE SHOWS the technical mastery of Western artists in the art of enameling, particularly in the champlevé technique (see the Materials and Techniques section of this resource). A delicate and animated engraving has characterized each face, with the pupils of the eyes even showing the direction of each gaze. The colors were created with twelve hues of colored glass placed in cavities within the copper plate, then melted.

The scene occurred during the first Jewish harvest festival of Pentecost celebrated by Jesus' followers after his death (Acts 2:2–4). Inside a house in Jerusalem (represented here by three green arches), they suddenly experienced a strong wind; fire-like tongues above their heads; and, through the **Holy Spirit**, the ability to speak in other languages, a great help when they later went out to preach and convert others to Christianity. From outside the house, the blessing hand of God emits twelve tongues of fire that strike the heads of the seated disciples, six of whom are fairly visible. Peter, their leader, sits in the center of the bench holding a scroll, which perhaps represents the divine law he received from Jesus. His prominent position reflects the importance of Rome to the Western church, a city where Peter preached and died. The only other identifiable disciple in the group is the beardless John, who holds a book that is probably the Gospel of John, which, in the Middle Ages, he was believed to have written later on in his life.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

Where is this scene located? Describe and discuss the outward appearance of each man as he responds to the event, and then discuss how the artist has shown the connection between the men and the divine.

Compare the Pentecost plaque to the Djumati enamels (image 10). Do the different enameling techniques of cloisonné and champlevé create different characteristics in their styles? See the Materials and Techniques section of this resource for details.



ACTIVITY

See the lesson plan called Techniques and Materials.



17. Portal from the Church of San Leonardo al Frigido, ca. 1170–80

Italian; workshop of Master Biduino,
region of Pisa-Lucca, Tuscany
The Church of San Leonardo and its
hospice were located at the Frigido River,
just outside Massa Carrara, Tuscany. It was
close to two major pilgrimage roads, one to
Rome and one to Santiago de Compostela.

Carrara marble, except for the jambs,
which are parts of an antique marble
sarcophagus; 13 ft. 2 in. x 76 in.

(401.3 x 193 cm)

Latin inscription, on the left jamb: H[IC]
E[ST] SALUTATIO MAR[IAE] ("This is the
salutation of Mary")

The Cloisters Collection, 1962 (62.189)

(Location: The Cloisters)

THOUGH THIS DOORWAY from the Church of San Leonardo consists of different materials carved in different styles, many of its images link together into a fairly cohesive visual program.

The lintel shows the Entry into Jerusalem, Jesus' celebrated procession into the city where he died a short time later. In subject and composition, this scene was probably inspired by an early Christian sarcophagus, reflecting the revival of interest in late antique and early Christian art that occurred in Italy during the twelfth century. The presence of children in this composition, though, does not come from biblical accounts, but from the Acts of Pilate (1:3), scripture not recognized by the Church. The subject itself might also have reminded medieval viewers that Crusaders had entered and captured Jerusalem in 1099, especially since every few years Jerusalem and other Christian areas in the Holy Land, beleaguered by Muslim forces, publicly appealed for help from the West. In fact, in 1187, about the time this doorway was erected, the Muslim general Saladin took Jerusalem.

Directly behind Jesus is a **liturgical** procession consisting of Peter with his key, followed by ten more of Jesus' followers—some of them singing—carrying palm fronds, books, a cup, and a round container, perhaps either a **pyxis** for **eucharistic** bread or a **thurible** for incense. At the rear of the parade is a small trudging figure in a monk's habit, marking one of the two appearances of Saint Leonard on this portal.

The left jamb has two framed scenes: the Annunciation on top—when the archangel Gabriel told Mary that she would bear Jesus—and the Visitation below, which shows a pregnant Mary embracing her relative Elizabeth, who was also pregnant, with John the Baptist. The inscription above, "This is the salutation of Mary," may be more than a simple description of the scenes. With the images serving as visual references, the inscription may allude to a devotional salutation to Mary used by Christians since the eleventh century. Its phrases derive from two greetings to Mary, one made by Gabriel in the Annunciation and the other delivered by Anne in the Visitation (Luke 1:28 and 1:42). By the sixteenth century, this salutation had developed into the "Ave Maria," or the "Hail Mary" prayer known to many today.



Detail of the portal showing Saint Leonard

On the right jamb, facing the entranceway and accessible to the touch of anyone entering San Leonardo, stands Leonard (see detail opposite), the patron saint of this church, as well as of the sick, peasants, and especially prisoners. Leonard was a Benedictine monk, which is why his head is partially shaved—monks did this to symbolize the crown of thorns that Jesus was forced to wear before he died—and why he is dressed with the tunic, cowl, stockings, and shoes listed in the sixth-century *Rule of Saint Benedict*. Leonard also bears a crosier, or shepherd's staff, which abbots and high clergy carried to demonstrate their care of dependents, as well as a bearded and chained prisoner, whose small size shows his meager importance compared to that of the saint. According to his legend, Leonard was so favored by Clovis I, king of the Franks (r. 482–511), that he could release any prisoner in the kingdom. While Leonard was alive, it was said that anyone in prison who called out his name would immediately find his chains broken.

Surmounting the two jambs are capitals decorated with plants and four simians. The three with tails wear belts around their middles, but without the attached leashes that might control them. On the right capital is a possible reference to the fall of Adam and Eve—a tailless ape eats fruit, while the nearby monkey is nipped by a small dragonlike creature.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

How do the different parts of this portal link together into a whole, and how have the parts been visually balanced? Note the figures and their positions, details of costume, and the material of the portal. How has the artist indicated the patron saint of this church?

Compare this portal to the earlier one from Sangemini (image 9). How are plants shown in each? How is the human form treated? Despite the differences between the two doorways, were the artists after similar goals?



18. Apse, ca. 1175–1200

Spanish; Castile-León, from the Church of San Martín at Fuentidueña, near Segovia

Sandstone and limestone; H. (to top of barrel vault) 29 ft. 8½ in. (9.05 m); Max. W. (interior) 22 ft. ½ in. (6.72 m)
Exchange loan from the government of Spain, 1958 (L58.86)

(Location: The Cloisters)



Fig. 27 Fresco of the Virgin and Christ Child in Majesty and the Adoration of the Magi, with the archangels Michael and Gabriel at either side, ca. 1100

Attributed to the Master of Pedret (perhaps from northern Italy)
Spanish; Catalunya, Lleida, from the Church of Santo Joan at Tredós
Fresco transferred to canvas;
H. 10.5 ft. (3.2 cm)
The Cloisters Collection, 1950 (50.180a-c)
(Location: The Cloisters)

WITH ITS CUPLIKE SPACE AND WINDOWS offering dramatic lighting within a dim interior, an apse such as this provided a strong visual focus within a medieval building. Not surprisingly, then, apses in churches served as a kind of stage setting for altars and their services. This apse is typical of the Romanesque style of architecture, with its round triumphal arch; thick walls slit by open windows, kept small to keep the heavy walls stable; and its half dome and **barrel vault** made of stone—so useful in shielding a church's interior from roof fires. (The model of the cathedral in image 8 gives a sense of how an apse like this looked from the outside.) Most of the structure is made of the golden limestone from the region, but all of the decorative sculpture was carved in a finer-grained and less yellow limestone. The two largest sculptures, unusual in an apse but rather common on the facades of churches, show the Annunciation on the right—when Gabriel announced to Mary that she would become pregnant with Jesus—and, probably, Saint Martin of Tours (ca. 316–397) trampling evil beasts on the left. Born in Hungary, Martin was a Roman soldier who later became a miracle-working **bishop** of Tours, in France.

Most of the capitals within the apse feature animals or fantastic creatures such as centaurs, harpies, or mermaids, whose symbolism remains uncertain. But at the front of the apse are two capitals with biblical themes—the Adoration of the **Magi** on the left, when the three wise men found the newborn Jesus twelve days after his birth (Matthew 2:10–12); and Daniel in the Lions' Den on the right, where the Jewish prophet Daniel was untouched by hungry lions, a triumph over death (Daniel 6:16–22). The oddly shaped niches in the walls probably held liturgical vessels used in the Christian **mass**; on either side of the front of the apse is a stone bench, seating for those involved in the service. In keeping with the lively decoration inside, the exterior of the apse had figures supporting decorative arches on the wall and, at the roofline, **corbels** alive with such images as musicians, an acrobat, and a castle.

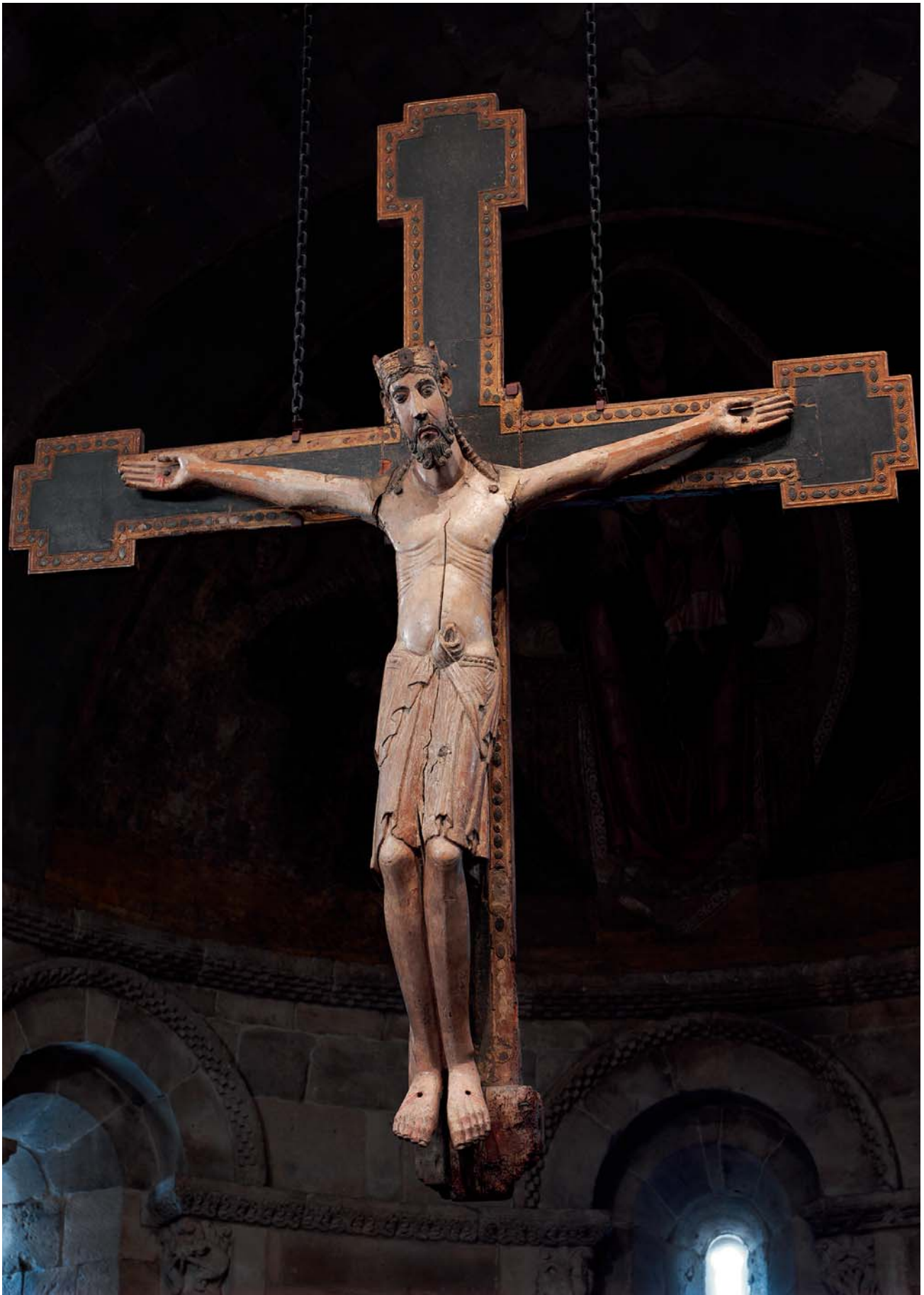


The church from which this apse comes was probably part of a castle complex, built in the late twelfth century. In the 1950s, the Metropolitan Museum obtained permission from the Spanish government to borrow the abandoned and deteriorating apse. Using a system of numbering the structure's 3,300 stones, then disassembling them, the Museum transferred them to The Cloisters, where a careful reconstruction took more than a year to complete. Later, a fresco from a different church—Santo Joan at Tredós—was placed in the half dome of the apse (fig. 27). The thirteenth-century Spanish altar frontal (25.120.256) in the image displays Mary and her child surrounded by eight apostles in raised and painted **gesso**, an inexpensive imitation of more costly metalwork.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

How does this space compare with a stage in a contemporary theater? Consider its decoration as well as its form in your answer. What kind of performances would work well in it? Which would not?



19. Crucifix, ca. 1150–1200

Spanish; Castile-León, from the convent of Santa Clara at Astudillo, near Palencia

Jesus: (repainted five times) white oak, paint over gesso, gilding, and applied stones; cross: red pine with paint over gesso; H. (Jesus) 70 in. (177.8 cm), H. (cross) 102 ³/₈ in. (260 cm)

Back painted with the Lamb of God (Agnus Dei) at the center, scrolls ending in leaves along the arms, and parts of two Evangelists' symbols at the ends of the crossbar

Samuel D. Lee Fund, 1935 (35.36a,b)

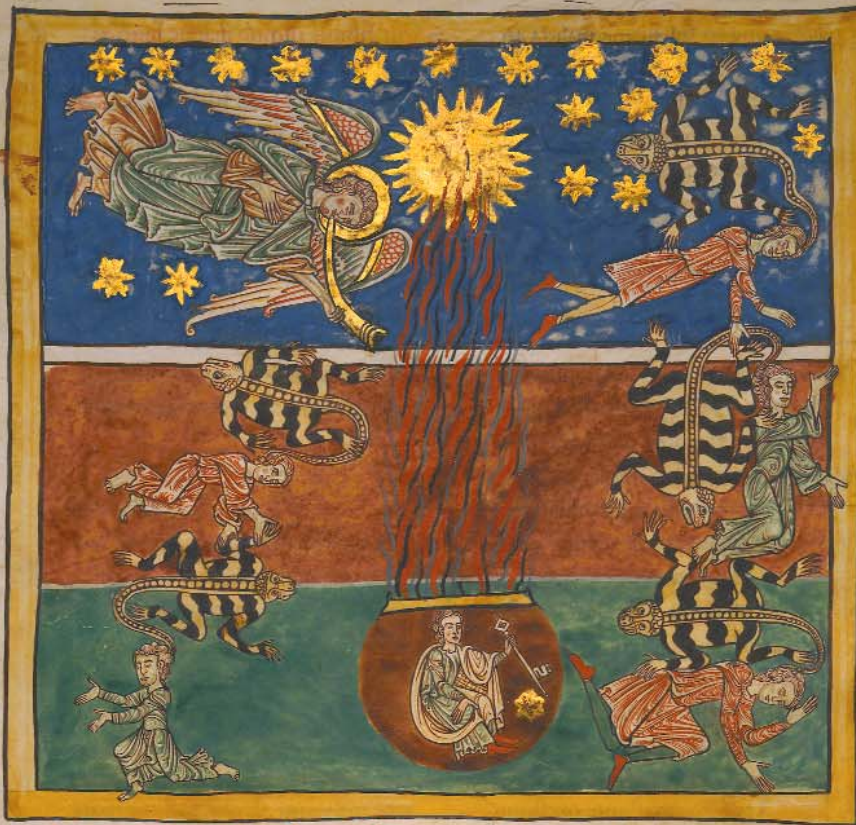
(Location: The Cloisters; currently hanging in the Fuentidueña apse)

THIS LIFESIZE JESUS fixed onto a cross originally hung above the altar of a church. Despite the wounds in his hands, feet, and side, the symmetry of Jesus' face and body suggests calm and offers little evidence of his suffering and death. Instead, his open eyes, gold crown, and jeweled loincloth—once sky-blue in color, with gold stripes and a red lining—imply that he is triumphing over death. This image of Jesus alive on the cross, which appeared by the fifth century, was the first way medieval artists depicted the Crucifixion.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

How has the artist turned the focus of this sculpture from Jesus' suffering to his coming back to life? After discussing this crucifix, have your students look at image 15 and discuss the depiction of Jesus on the right plaque.



Incipit explanatio supra scripte hystorie.

Et quintis anglis tuba cecinit et
Quidi stellam de celo cecidisse m
 tam. Vna stella corpus est multarum
 cadentium p peccata: sic p iob dicitur:
 bbscurentur stelle caligine ei? Stelle
 quippe huius noctis caligine tenebuntur.
 quando et hi qui magis iam virtu
 tibus splendent adhuc de obscuri
 tate culpe. aliquid retinentes sustinent.
 Sicut namque nonnulli qui ante humanos
 oculos uelut magnis opibus lucent.

sed quia nec ipsa opa a mundo corde
 non prodeunt. capti in occultis cogi
 tationibus noctis huius tenebris obscu
 rantur. Et ita sepe ea que mundo cor
 de non faciunt etiam opa amittunt. que
 bona intentione non faciunt. Et per hoc
 magis cecantur ope per quod illuminari po
 tuerant. Quia ergo nox prevalere permittit
 tur quando et inter bona opa cordis in
 tentio minime mundatur. Dicitur recte.
 bbscurentur stelle caligine ei? id est con
 tra eos qui ante humanos oculos quasi

20. The Fifth Angel Opens the Fiery Pit and Releases the Locusts: Commentary on the Apocalypse of John by Beatus of Liébana (ca. 730–798), ca. 1180

Spanish; Castile, probably from the Benedictine monastery of San Pedro de Cardena, near Burgos

Tempera, gold, and ink on parchment;
17½ x 11 13/16 in. (44.4 x 30 cm)
Purchase, The Cloisters Collection, Rogers
and Harris Brisbane Dick Funds, and
Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1991 (1991.232.10a)

(Location: This and other Beatus leaves are shown for limited periods both at The Cloisters and in the Medieval Treasury in the Main Building)

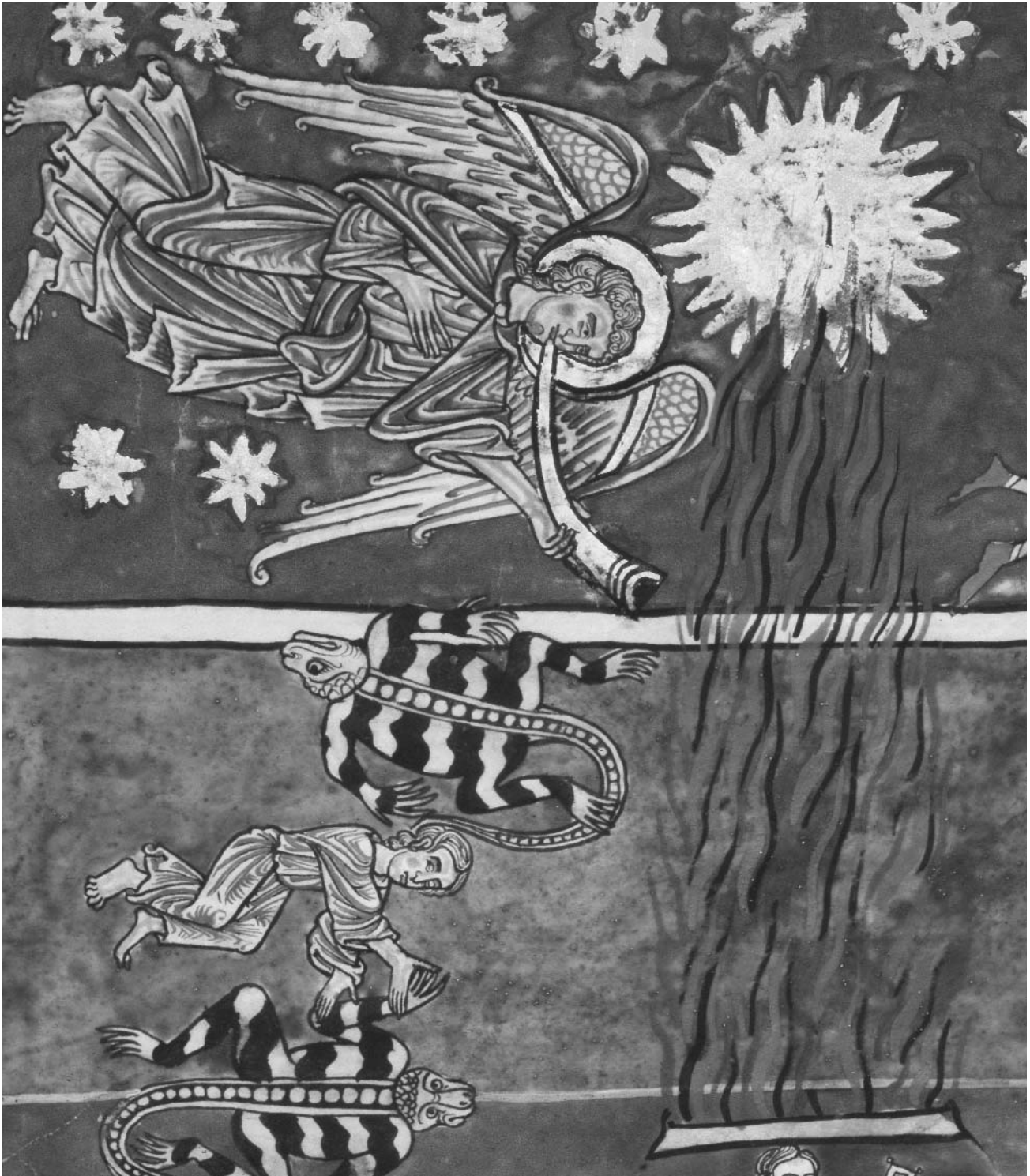
THIS LEAF FROM THE CARDEÑA BEATUS shows how a book artist could be influenced by several stylistic traditions. (For information on how a painted manuscript leaf was made, see the Materials and Techniques section of this resource.) Overall, the illustrations in the book consist of tightly controlled lines and dramatic color contrasts, such as the banded background here, which reflect the earlier manuscript tradition of the Christians of Muslim Spain, called Mozarabs. Yet certain figures also show the rhythmic pattern and line of the Romanesque style, blended with the naturalism of Gothic art—such as in the pose, volume, and facial features of the monumental angel.



DISCUSSION

Read the following text to your students. Have them draw images as they listen, then have them discuss their drawings and compare them to the manuscript painting (image 20). Talk about how the artist captured time and geography in the manuscript, and discuss how closely the artist followed the account in the **Apocalypse**.

And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit; he opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given authority like the authority of scorpions of the earth. They were told not to damage the grass of the earth or any green growth or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. They were allowed to torture them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torture was like the torture of a scorpion when it stings someone. And in those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will flee from them.



In appearance the locusts were like horses equipped for battle. On their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; they had scales like iron breastplates, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. They have tails like scorpions, with stingers, and in their tails is their power to harm people for five months. They have a king over them, the angel of the bottomless pit; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon (Destruction), and in Greek he is called Apollyon.

—Apocalypse (Revelation) 9:1–11, in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, New Revised Standard Version, edited by Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994)



21. Mary and Christ Child in Majesty, late 1100s

French; Auvergne, a region of central France

Twenty-two pieces of walnut, with paint, gesso, and linen; H. 31 ⁵/₁₆ in. (79.6 cm), W. 12 ³/₄ in. (32.4 cm), D. 11 ¹/₂ in. (29.2 cm)
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1916 (16.32.194)

(Location: Main Building,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Fig. 28 Mary and Christ Child in Majesty, late 1100s

French; Auvergne, a region of central France, said to be from the Chapel of Saint-Victor at Montvianeix (Puy-de-Dôme)

Eighteen pieces of walnut with paint, gesso, and linen; H. 27 in. (68.6 cm)
The Cloisters Collection, 1967 (67.153)
(Location: The Cloisters)

This sculpture at The Cloisters is so similar to the one in the Main Building (image 21) that the same artist or workshop may have carved it. Inside, a cylindrical cavity extends from Mary's left shoulder to the middle of the statue.

THIS SCULPTURE, known as the Throne of Wisdom because Mary symbolized the throne of Solomon on which her son sat as Divine Wisdom, was one of the most common portrayals of Mary and Jesus in Romanesque France (see also fig. 28). A later expression of the Romanesque style, the statue has a great solemnity and sense of order that derives from its stable and symmetrical form, the impassive faces, and its rhythmically patterned drapery folds. Elements of naturalism are also present, especially in Mary's beautifully carved head, where her veil falls in sheer and delicate pleats along her forehead and each strand of her hair is individually carved out.

Jesus, the size of a child but in the form of an adult, originally wore a blue tunic under a dark-red cloak. Though his arms are now missing, probably his right hand was giving a blessing gesture while his left held the New Testament. Mary is behind her son, her large hands both presenting and protecting him, but her vacant face, rigid seated pose, and flatness, compared to the roundness of Jesus, diminish her presence. She is seated on a five-sided throne that, with its columns, capitals, and arcades, looks like a miniature chapel. Under her cloak, originally a deep blue, she is dressed as a medieval noblewoman—a white linen undergarment, the *chainse*, can be seen on her wrists and forearms, and the bell-shaped sleeves of her red indoor dress, called a *bliaud*, fall to either side of Jesus.

Though most Thrones of Wisdom did not contain relics—holy remnants, such as a saint's bone or piece of clothing—this one did. Its original relic cavity is lodged within Mary's right shoulder, neatly concealed behind a panel carved with lines of drapery. Within Mary's chest is a shallow rectangular hole under another cover, probably made to receive a later relic. Both covers would have disappeared under layers of linen, gesso, and paint. (See the Materials and Techniques section for details on this process.) This Throne of Wisdom was probably carried in church processions, when it wasn't situated on an altar in a church. Its grandeur and solemn appearance might even have made it a focus for church plays written for the Feast of the Epiphany, when the three magi came to Bethlehem twelve days after Jesus' birth and he was revealed to them. In these dramas, a statue such as this served as the Mary and Jesus, while priests played the other roles.





QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

What is the relationship between the two figures?

Look carefully at this statue and discuss whether the artist was interested in anatomy.

How does the artist draw the viewer's attention to Jesus?

How do the patterns' symmetry, the impassive faces, and the stable geometric forms of the sculpture affect the viewer? Explain.



22. Wyvern from a frieze, after 1200

Spanish; Castile-León, from the chapter house of the monastery of San Pedro de Arlanza, near Burgos

Fresco transferred to canvas; 39 x 132 in. (99.1 x 335.3 cm)
The Cloisters Collection, 1931 (31.38.2a,b)
(Location: The Cloisters)



Fig. 29 Lion from a frieze, after 1200
Spanish; Castile-León, from the chapter house of the monastery of San Pedro de Arlanza, near Burgos
Fresco transferred to canvas; 7 x 11 ft. (226.1 x 335.3 cm)
The Cloisters Collection, 1931 (31.38.1a)
(Location: The Cloisters)

THIS LARGE WALL PAINTING of a two-legged dragon, called a wyvern, is representative of medieval Europe's fascination with the exotic—in fact, this fresco was one of several in a chamber that included lions (fig. 29), a griffin, and an ostrich. Thrusting its tail through a hole in a fruit tree, this wyvern twists above a frieze that shows a pair of arguing women whose lower halves are similar to that of the wyvern; a lyre-playing donkey entertaining a fox and a goat; and two men gesturing above a large, cowering hare. These last scenes defy interpretation, although the image of an ass playing a harp could be a medieval allegory for ignorance.

Stories of the dragon in medieval bestiaries, though, shed light on the wyvern of the fresco. The strange fruit tree and the curious frieze near the creature might be referring to the exotic origin of the dragon, which was said to have come from Ethiopia and India. According to at least one bestiary, when dragons came out of their caves, they flew into the sky, heating the air around them, and flames are certainly spewing from the mouth of this winged wyvern. This bestiary also recounted that a dragon's main strength lay in its tail, which it used as a whip or wound around prey to squeeze it to death. In fact, after lying along the pathway of elephants, dragons sometimes lassoed their legs, then tried to suffocate them in their loops. However, elephants could faint, collapse, and crush the dragon. The large size of the wyvern and the powerful coils of its tail seem to imply any of these tales.



ACTIVITY

Have each of your students create a verbal or written “scientific” report on the creature in this painting, including its possible feeding habits (based on the ways it might obtain food), movements, and approximate length. (Assume the tree is ten feet high.) You might consider having them also supply stories or symbolic meanings for the different parts of the mysterious frieze below the wyvern.



ACTIVITY

See the lesson plan called Medieval Beasts and the Bestiary.



23. Reliquary head of Saint Yrieix (Aredius), ca. 1220–40

(grill and angels added later)
French; from the Church of Saint-Yrieix,
near Limoges

Core: wood; outer cover: silver, parcel gilt
with cabochons and glass; 15 ⁵/₁₆ x 9 ¹/₁₆ x
9 ¹/₄ in. (38.9 x 23 x 23.5 cm)
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.352)

(Location: Main Building, The
Metropolitan Museum of Art)

THIS SUMPTUOUS CONTAINER, which once held the skull of the saint Yrieix (d. 591), demonstrates the medieval reverence and fascination for relics—holy remnants, such as a saint's bone or piece of clothing, which were thought to have spiritual power and an abiding connection to the saint in heaven. The early Christian church kept individual saints' bones together in containers called reliquaries, which were often in the shape of a coffin. One of the great innovations of the Middle Ages was the creation of reliquaries whose form mimicked the part of the saint's remains contained within them, whether it was an arm, a hand, a finger, a thigh, a foot, a heart, or, as here, a head.

The shining metals of this reliquary not only testify to the preciousness of the relic inside it, but also deny the decaying, unsavory nature of the body part itself. Details such as curly hair, tonsure, and beard stubble attempt to create a portrait of Yrieix, while the open eyes imply the saint's immediate presence. But the reliquary's luminous appearance also suggests Yrieix's face at the time of his future resurrection, when his restored body, as described by twelfth-century mystics and monastic writers, will be like a recast vessel or a golden statue forged again from its original metal. Interestingly, a head reliquary is especially apt for the sixth-century aristocrat Yrieix because one event that marked him for special spiritual favor was when, inside the church at Trier in Germany, a dove flew down and landed on his head. This was taken to be a sign that Yrieix was imbued with the Holy Spirit, and the bird went on to follow him for thirty more days.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

How has the artist indicated which relic is inside the container? How has the artist tried to make this a somewhat realistic likeness of a man? What might be the reasons the artist would use precious metals and stones in this work?



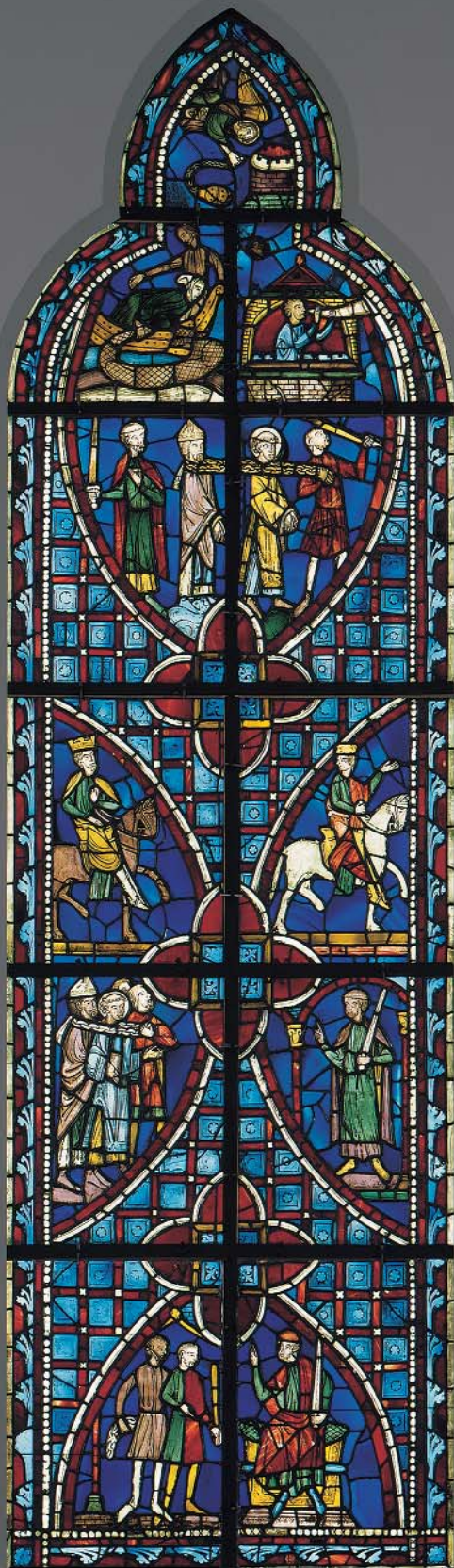
DISCUSSION

Read the following text to your class or have your students read it themselves. Then, showing image 23 as a focal point, discuss Bernard's comments on the ways of honoring a saint's relics.



...Eyes are impressed with the relics covered in gold, and purses are opened. The most beautiful form of a male or female saint is shown and it is believed holy to the extent that it is colored—men run to kiss it and are invited to donate money, and the beautiful is admired more than the sacred is venerated. Then jeweled things are placed in a church—not just crowns, but wheels with lamps shining as much as the encrusted precious stones! And we see some sort of trees set up for candlesticks, great weights of bronze fabricated by the amazing work of a master, their lights glittering no more than their jewels. What is looked for in all of these things, do you think? The pricked consciences of those repenting, or the admiration of viewers? O vanity of vanities, but not more vain than insane! The church shines with her walls and is in need of the poor; her stones she dresses with gold, and her sons she abandons naked.

—The Cistercian monk Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), from his “Apologia” to William, Abbot of Saint-Thierry, translated by Michael Norris



24. Scenes from the Life of Vincent of Saragossa and the History of His Relics, 1244–47

French; Paris, from the Lady Chapel (now destroyed) of the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés

Pot-metal glass with vitreous paint; 147 x 43 1/2 in. (373.4 x 110.5 cm)
Gift of George D. Pratt, 1924 (24.167a-k)

(Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Fig. 30 Scenes from the life of Germain of Paris, 1244–55

French; Paris, from the Lady Chapel (now destroyed) of the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés
Pot-metal glass with vitreous paint; Overall (each) 25 1/8 x 15 3/4 in. (63.8 x 40 cm)
The Cloisters Collection, 1973 (1973.26.2.1,2)
(Location: The Cloisters)

These two panels, from the same church as the window in the Main Building (image 24), show scenes from the life of Germain (496–576), later made a saint. On the right, a serving girl carries two flasks, one filled with poison, the other wine, unaware that Germain's grandmother is trying to kill him so that her other grandson, Stratide, can get his inheritance. The cups are accidentally switched and Stratide dies instead. The left scene supposedly took place centuries after Germain's entombment within Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Two years before a **Norman** onslaught, Germain rose from his coffin to reassure a monk that his relics would be spirited away before the Normans attacked the monastery, and that they would also safely return afterwards—predictions that proved to be true.

THIS lancet window, pieced together from two windows from the same chapel, shows the luminous beauty of images created in stained glass, a medium in which medieval artists excelled. Outlined by the lead sleeves that keep the window together, the elongated figures, with their elegant poses, dramatic gestures, and vivid facial expressions, were created in a Gothic style practiced at the court of King Louis IX of France (r. 1226–70; made Saint Louis in 1297) (see also fig. 30).

The original two lancet windows from which the Museum's window was made were dedicated to Vincent of Saragossa, Spain (d. 304), a **deacon** in the early Christian church who was later made a saint. One of the windows contained episodes of Vincent's suffering and death at the hand of a Roman official, the **proconsul** Dacian. The other depicted stories about the relics of Vincent that were held by the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, including how Vincent's tunic was acquired by the Frankish king Childebert I of Paris (r. 511–58) and his brother Chlotar (d. 561) in their campaign against the city of Saragossa in northeastern Spain.

Three areas of this window illustrate the acquisition of Vincent's tunic by the Frankish rulers. At the top, above a tower that symbolizes Saragossa, an angel swings a **censer** to release fumes of incense. Nearby is a man in a tower frantically blowing a horn, probably to warn the citizens of Saragossa of the Frankish army's approach. Finally, in the center of the window, two horsemen appear—the older and bearded Childebert and his brother Chlotar, the Frankish rulers who led the attack on Saragossa. The bishop and saint Gregory of Tours (ca. 539–594), in his *History of the Franks*, fills in some of the overall story, recording that the inhabitants of Saragossa performed acts of severe piety and lamentation when the Frankish army arrived, including carrying the tunic of Vincent around the walls. This extreme display of devotion so alarmed the Franks that they left the city and attacked other areas of Spain. Though Gregory does not record the Franks returning to Saragossa, Childebert supposedly returned from this campaign with both the tunic of Vincent and a jeweled cross. With the encouragement of Germain (496–576), bishop of Paris, Childebert placed the booty within his newly founded church and monastery, which came to be known as Saint-Germain-des-Prés.



The rest of the window shows the end of Vincent's life. At its very bottom is Dacian, the Roman proconsul, seated with a sword and gesturing to two henchmen. Just above, Dacian meets Valerius, the bishop of Saragossa, and his assistant, the deacon Vincent, dragged forward by a chain. Valerius wears the thirteenth-century costume of a bishop, including the **miter** on his head, while Vincent, with a halo, wears the **dalmatic vestment** and **tonsure** of a thirteenth-century deacon. Moving up two levels, a ruffian with a club pulls Valerius and Vincent out of Dacian's presence. According to the account of Vincent's life in the late thirteenth-century **The Golden Legend**, Valerius was then banished. But Vincent had openly refused to deny his faith, so Dacian ordered various tortures for him,

including stretching him on the rack, ripping him with iron hooks, grilling him alive, and stabbing him with red-hot hooks and spikes. Finally, Vincent was left alone, fastened to a post in a dark dungeon with a floor covered in sharp **potsherds**. A great light shone in, Vincent's shackles fell off, the potsherds changed to flowers, and angels sang. Dacian then had Vincent placed on a soft couch to recover his strength, so that he could be tortured again, but the deacon suddenly died. Thwarted, Dacian ordered that Vincent's body be exposed in a field, but a crow drove off all the animals trying to eat the corpse. The final commands of Dacian can be seen near the top—Vincent's body, weighed down by a millstone, is cast into the sea. Unfortunately for Dacian, the body refused to sink; instead, it sped to shore faster than the boat that had carried it and a devout woman later buried it.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

Which three scenes of image 24 seem linked together? Especially look for recurring figures. In what order would you place these scenes, and why? How has the artist made the figures visible from far away?



25. Tomb effigy of Jean II d'Alluye, mid-13th century

French; Loire Valley (Indre-et-Loire), from
the Cistercian abbey of La Clarté-Dieu,
north of Tours

Limestone; 83 1/2 x 34 1/4 in. (212.1 x 87 cm)
The Cloisters Collection, 1925 (25.120.201)

(Location: The Cloisters)



Fig. 31 Tomb effigy of Jacquelin
de Ferrière, late 13th century
Northern France

Limestone; 71 1/8 x 21 3/8 in. (180.7 x 54.3 cm)
The Bashford Dean Memorial Collection,
1929 (29.158.761)
(Location: Main Building,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

This tomb effigy, once set into a floor, shows a knight equipped in much the same way as Jean d'Alluye. The horseshoes (*fers-de-chevals*) on the shield are a pun on the name Ferrière.

THIS IDEALIZED SCULPTURE of a knight on the cover of a tomb was once painted and located in a monastery. It is carved so masterfully that details of his dress are discernable and realistic, including the effect of mail and cloth falling about him in folds. The fact that a French baron such as Jean d'Alluye is shown here as a knight indicates how much the status of knights had improved during the Crusades, when small groups of pilgrim knights in the Holy Land, such as the Knights Templar, showed not only ferociousness in battle but also the discipline, obedience, and poverty of monks. Earlier, knights were swashbuckling followers of a noble, rather than nobles themselves.

As was the custom of the mid-thirteenth century, the deceased is represented in the bloom of early manhood, irrespective of the age at which he died. Serene and fearless, his gaze fixed on heaven, Jean piously holds his hands together in prayer as he awaits the Last Judgment, when medieval belief dictated that his body would rise, his soul would be judged for his sins, and he would go to either heaven or hell. To symbolize Jean's courage, a small, vigilant lion lies at his feet, but it might also suggest his hoped-for resurrection—according to many medieval bestiaries, a lioness first gave birth to lifeless offspring, then three days later the father roared or breathed upon the cubs and they came to life.

Jean wears the full regalia common to knights before the development of steel-plate armor. His spurs, the straps of which appear on his ankles, were not only practical for a mounted knight but were also a symbol of knighthood. His main protection was a long-sleeved mail shirt, called a hauberk (see fig. 31 for another example in the Museum), which had slits so that he could ride a horse more easily. At Jean's wrists peeks a padded undergarment, usually called the *aketon*, a word ultimately derived from the Arabic word *al-qutum*, "cotton," since it was often stuffed with cotton. Besides insulating Jean from the weather and the chafing of his armor, the *aketon* also helped cushion any blow that landed on him. Over Jean's mail shirt is a surcoat, which was also known as a coat of arms, since the design painted or embroidered on it in strong colors helped identify a knight in battle. Jean's other equipment includes a shield; a girdle, or belt, with its large buckle; and a sword. A knight's shield was made of wooden boards nailed and glued together, then covered on the outside with leather and gesso, which was brightly painted with identifying designs or colors. The

hilt of Jean's unusual sword, with its three-part pommel, handle with braided grip, and sloping hand guards, is similar to some Chinese swords—perhaps Jean acquired it on his journey to the Holy Land (see below).

Records of Jean's life are fairly abundant. He probably participated on the side of the French king in the Battle of Bouvines on July 27, 1214, in what is now Belgium. This battle ended in a victory for King Philip II Augustus of France over the German Emperor Otto IV and King John of England, which enabled France to eventually become the preeminent power in medieval Europe. In 1240, Jean borrowed money from an abbey to meet the expenses of a voyage to the Holy Land, perhaps to join in the campaigns of Earl Richard of Cornwall and other leaders that eventually recovered Ascalon (1239–41). Records show that by 1244 Jean was back in France, where he died in 1248. His son, Hughes VII d'Alluye, later accompanied King Louis IX of France on the Seventh Crusade.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

What does the image of Jean II d'Alluye indicate about the medieval idea of death? How would you want to be remembered in an image? Is there anything from this sculpture of Jean d'Alluye that you might incorporate into your image, and if so, why?



DISCUSSION

Have your students carefully examine the image of Jean d'Alluye. Have them list important aspects of his profession and character that they see in this sculpture. Then have your students read the following text, which dates to a generation or so before Jean d'Alluye. Discuss how the knight of the text compares to the knight depicted in image 25.

But what is the office of the duly ordained soldiery? To defend the Church, to assail infidelity, to venerate the priesthood, to protect the poor from injuries, to pacify the province, to pour out their blood for their brothers (as the formula of their oath instructs them), and, if need be, to lay down their lives. The high praises of God are in their throat, and two-edged swords are in their hands to execute punishment on the nations and rebuke upon the peoples, and to bind their kings in chains and their nobles in links of iron. But to what end? To the end that they may serve madness, vanity, avarice, or their own private self-will? By no means. Rather to the end that they may execute the judgment that is committed to them to execute; wherein each follows not his own will but the deliberate decision of God, the angels and men, in accordance with equity and the public utility. . . . For soldiers that do these things are “saints,” and are the more loyal to their prince in proportion as they more zealously keep the faith of God; and they advance the more successfully the honour of their own valour as they seek the more faithfully in all things the glory of their God.

—From the twelfth-century *Policratus* by John of Salisbury, in *The Portable Medieval Reader*, edited by James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin (London: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 90



26. Relief showing the Taking of Jesus, ca. 1260–70

French; Picardy, believed to be from the central opening of the choir screen of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame at Amiens

Limestone with traces of paint and gilding; 39 x 42 1/2 in. (99.1 x 108 cm)
Bequest of Isaac D. Fletcher, 1917 (17.120.5)

(Location: Main Building,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

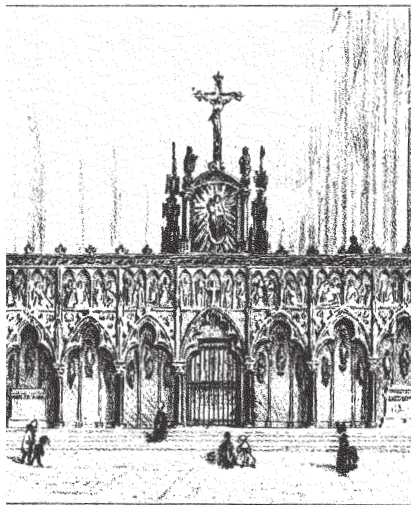


Fig. 32 Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, Reconstruction of a view into the choir of Notre-Dame, Paris, from *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française* (Paris, 1875)

This hypothetical reconstruction of the east end of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame at Paris gives a sense of the appearance of a medieval choir screen, with its own altar and crucifix, such as the one at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame at Amiens.

HERE, WITHIN A SINGLE SCENE, are the New Testament episodes of Peter severing the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant; Jesus healing the servant's wound with his right hand in a gesture that, while hard to see, is still tender; Judas betraying Jesus by the signal of a kiss; and the Taking of Jesus by rough soldiers. In all of these episodes, the figures seem to be drawn from daily medieval life, especially the soldiers clad in medieval armor. The naturalistic, even theatrical, appearance of the figures was meant to attract medieval viewers to the biblical narrative and its underlying message. This was part of a thirteenth-century effort to connect people more closely to the church, which included having livelier, more relevant religious sermons delivered in the vernacular, instead of in Latin.

Choir screens, such as the one from which this relief probably came, formed a barrier between the clergy in the choir area, where the main altar of a church was located, and the congregation in the **nave** (fig. 32). But they also served as stage sets for processions and liturgical plays, and on their upper platforms masses were celebrated, relics and **votive images** were displayed, and church readings, legal pronouncements, and sermons were delivered.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

List all of the actions and emotions that are shown in this relief. If you were a stage director, would you arrange the figures differently to express the narrative threads of the scene?

Compare the figures of this relief, especially the soldiers, with the tomb effigy of Jean II d'Alluye (image 25). How and why are they different? Now compare the group of figures in the relief to groups in the stained glass from Saint-Germain-des-Prés (image 24). How might the narrative threads of the relief have been shown legibly in stained glass?



27. Aquamanile in the form of a rooster, second half of the 13th century

German; lower Saxony

Latten alloy (copper, tin, and zinc);

H. 9¹⁵/₁₆ in. (25.2 cm)

The Cloisters Collection, 1989 (1989.292)

(Location: The Cloisters)

AN AQUAMANILE IS A SPECIAL PITCHER for washing the hands. Priests were probably the first to use them, to clean their hands before dispensing the eucharistic bread at mass. Aquamanilia often took the form of lions, dragons, birds, and griffins. When they later began to be used for hand-washing at the dining tables of princes, aristocrats, and wealthy merchants, they were shaped like horses, equestrian knights (see fig. 12 on page 20, and poster), falconers, dogs, centaurs, and unicorns. Often made from copper, brass, or bronze—metals easily shaped by medieval artists—these vessels often contained warm water that had been boiled with orange peel, sage, chamomile, marjoram, rosemary, or bay leaves.

At first glance, this aquamanile seems to have the swelling form and feathered textures of an actual rooster, but a closer look reveals that the artist has, in fact, skillfully reduced such traits to their essential forms. Other careful details of this pitcher include the red color in the rooster's mouth and around its wattle and the subtle water openings. The container is filled through a lidded opening between the rows of upright tail feathers; water flows out of the beak.

While it is generally difficult to prove that the image of an aquamanile has symbolic significance, sources such as the Bible, bestiaries, and romances might well have inspired an aquamanile's subject matter. In the case of the rooster, the fact that it crows at dawn might be symbolic of a preacher awakening people from sin, an association proposed by the medieval canonist William Durandus the Elder (ca. 1230–1296). The overall popularity of the rooster as a subject during the late Middle Ages is also evident in the engaging story of the vain rooster Chanticleer in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

What was this vessel's function? Which part is the spout? Observe the symmetries and balances within this work of art—are some of these necessary for the vessel to function as a pitcher?





DISCUSSION

Read the following passage aloud or have your students read it themselves. Then, showing image 27, have your students compare the rooster in the text to the rooster shape of the aquamanile.

She [a hard-up widow] had a closed yard that was fenced about
With wooden palings, a dry ditch without,
In which she kept a cock called Chanticleer.
In all the land at crowing he'd no peer.
His voice was mellower than the mellow organ
You hear in church on feast-days, sweetly playing;
And where he lived, his crowing told the hour
Better than the clock in abbey-tower.
He knew by instinct each revolution
Of the equinoctial circle in that town,
For every fifteen degrees, on the hour,
He crowed to perfection with all his power.
His comb was redder than that choicest coral,
And crenellated like a castle wall;
His beak was black, and like jet its gloss;
Like lapis-lazuli his legs and toes,
Each with nails whiter than the lily flower;
And like the burnished gold was his colour.

—Geoffrey Chaucer, from “The Nun’s Priest’s Tale” in *The Canterbury Tales* (begun ca. 1387 and never finished), a verse translation by David Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 203



28. Box with scenes of romances: Aristotle and Phyllis, Pyramus and Thisbe, ca. 1310–30

French; Paris

Elephant ivory (lock and original mounts,
probably of precious metals, now missing);
3¹⁵/₁₆ x 9¹³/₁₆ in. (10 x 24.9 cm)
Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917
(17.190.173a,b)
The Cloisters Collection (1988.1.6)

(Location: Main Building,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The lid shows the assault on the symbolic
fortress of the **Castle of Love**, with knights
catapulting roses at it while holding a tourna-
ment outside.



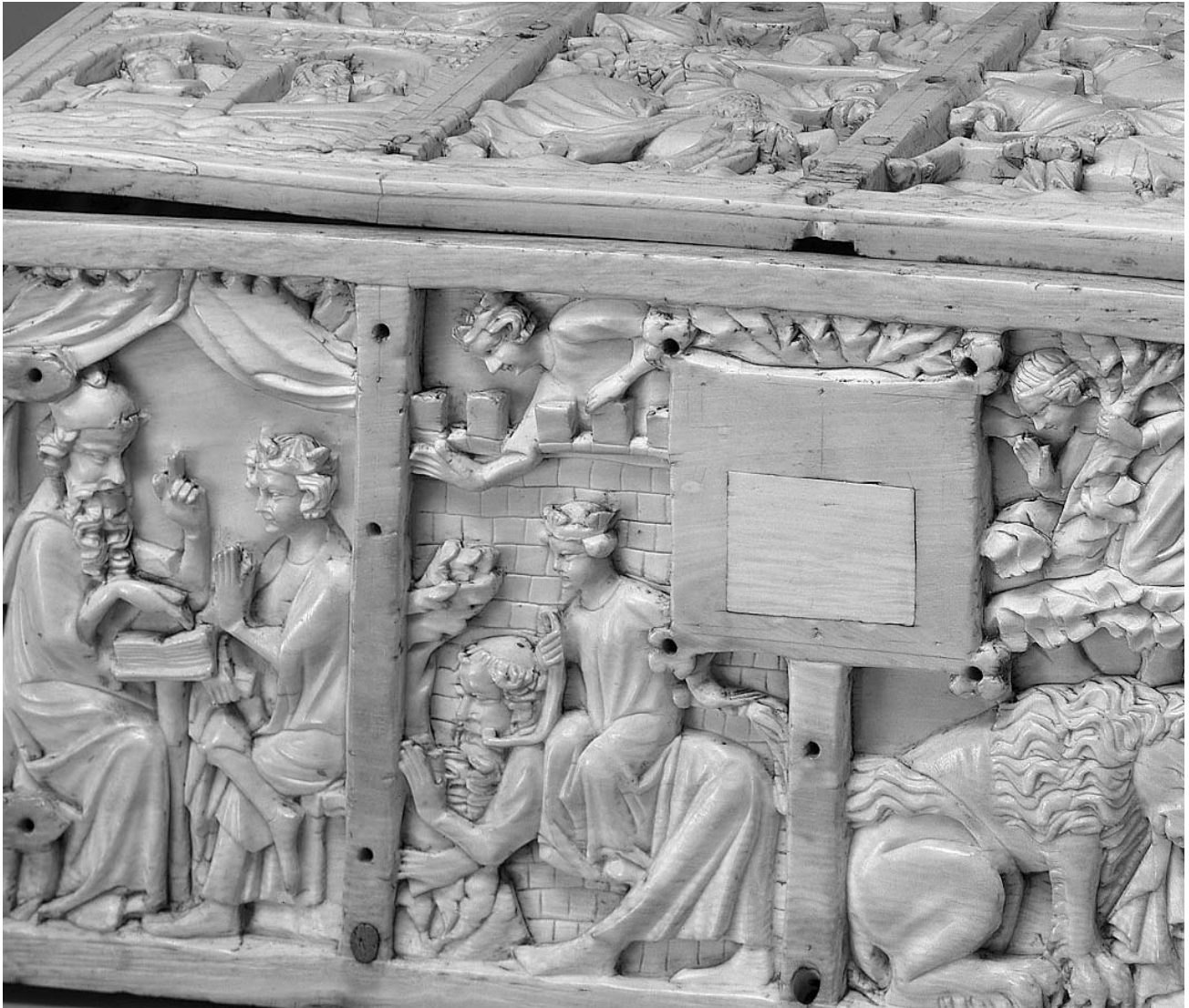
Fig. 33 Box with scenes of romances
(left end): Tristan and Isolde spied upon
by King Mark, and a hunter killing a
unicorn trapped by a virgin

LIKE OTHER IVORIES produced in Paris during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, this superbly carved container shows an interest in themes of romance, combined with the more tragic consequences of love. Despite the limited space on the box, which was quite possibly a present to an aristocratic lady from a suitor, the artist has blended at least a dozen different scenes from several strands of narration into a beautifully coherent and balanced design.

The front of this **casket** (image 28) shows episodes drawn from classical legend and medieval romance. On the far left, Aristotle (384–322 B.C.), one of the greatest philosophers of the ancient Greek world, sits opposite the young Macedonian prince **Alexander III (the Great)** (356–323 B.C.), his pupil. In the next episode, Alexander watches from the wall while Aristotle carries Alexander's mistress Phyllis on his back. According to the story, Phyllis used this means to humiliate Aristotle, who then turned it into a lesson for Alexander: if a woman could overcome so wise and prudent an old man, how much more should a young man fear her wits.

The right-hand scenes are devoted to the tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe, the story of which probably came from the *Metamorphoses* (4:55–166) of the Roman poet Ovid. According to Ovid's poem, Thisbe, who had arranged to meet her lover in a garden near Babylon, fled to a cave in terror when a lioness, her jaws bloody from a kill, appeared to drink at a nearby spring. The lion then tore apart the veil Thisbe had dropped in her flight. The first scene of the ivory captures the essence of this narrative, with Thisbe hiding in a tree while the lioness shreds her garment. In the poem, Pyramus found the ripped, bloody veil and, thinking that Thisbe was dead, stabbed himself with his sword; Thisbe, arriving too late to save him, took the same sword and killed herself. The single scene on the far right combines the two separate suicides into a simple, unforgettable act, both tragic and intimate.

Elsewhere on the casket are scenes from Arthurian and other courtly literature of the Middle Ages (figs. 33–35).



Detail of front of box



Fig. 34 Box with scenes of romances (right end): Knight rescuing a lady from a wildman, and Galahad receiving the key to the castle of maidens



Fig. 35 Box with scenes of romances (back): Lancelot and the lion, Lancelot crossing the sword bridge, Gawain asleep on the magic bed, and the maidens welcoming Gawain, their deliverer



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

On the front of this box are two stories shown in the image. Looking carefully at the details, can you tell what is happening in each scene and can you see how the scenes are linked together? How has the artist balanced the composition of the four scenes so that the front seems to be one work of art, despite the fact that it shows scenes from different stories?

After reading the story of Pyramus and Thisbe in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (4:55–166), does it seem that the artist had read it too? How has the story been changed in its representation in the two panels on the right side of the front of the casket? Is it a meaningful change?



DISCUSSION

Read the following text, with its enduring ideas of courtly love, to your class or have your students read it on their own. Discuss if the ivory box was intended as a gift to a lady from a lover.

The Countess of Champagne was also asked what gifts it was proper for ladies to accept from their lovers. To the man who asked this the Countess replied, “A woman who loves may freely accept from her lover the following: a handkerchief, a fillet for the hair, a wreath of gold or silver, a breast pin, a mirror, a girdle, a purse, a tassel, a comb, sleeves, gloves, a ring, a compact, a picture, a wash basin, little dishes, trays, a flag as a souvenir, and, to speak in general terms, a woman may accept from her lover any little gift which may be useful for the care of the person or pleasing to look at or which may call the lover to her mind, if it is clear that in accepting the gift she is free from all avarice.”

—Andreas Capellanus, from chapter 21 of *The Art of Courtly Love*, late twelfth century, translated by John Jay Parry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 176



29. Double cup, 1330–60

German or Bohemian; Prague?

Silver and silver gilt, with applied opaque enamel; H. 6¼ in. (15.9 cm)

Inscribed, around the body of the upper vessel: + CASPAR +

MELCHIOR + WALTAZAR•

The Cloisters Collection, 1983 (1983.125a,b)

(Location: The Cloisters)

DOUBLE CUPS WERE USED to drink toasts, especially when two might drink from the same vessel, during occasions such as betrothals, pledges of loyalty, farewells, and important religious holidays. This double cup, inscribed with the names of the three kings who came to see the baby Jesus, may have been intended specifically for the religious holiday of Epiphany—the day they arrived at the manger—when, it was thought, special toasts made women fertile and men virile. But the inscription may simply be associating the double cup with the rich vessels into which the three kings supposedly placed their gifts to Jesus, of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The inscription on the cup, then, might be emphasizing its role as a generous present from those who are not Christian.

Inside the lower cup is an enameled roundel decorated with the image of a helmet beneath three up-ended conical Jewish hats, while a shield with three Jewish hats appears on the bottom of the upper cup (fig. 36, p. 118). These Jewish hats, so unexpected on a vessel connected to a Christian holiday, are less surprising when one learns that Epiphany was celebrated outside a Christian context in the Middle Ages. Believed to mark the New Year, Epiphany was considered magical, a time when natural springs became curative, celestial conjunctions in threes made wishes come true, and animals could talk. Special breads were baked and distributed, and prophecies were made from the forms of molten lead dropped into water. Even the names of the three kings themselves were invoked for protection against a host of complaints, diseases, and evils—thus, their names on the covering cup may have been intended to provide protection for the drinkers.

For much of the Middle Ages, Jewish merchants in Europe, through their contacts within Jewish communities to the East, linked the West to Byzantine and Islamic cultures. Generally enjoying a much higher literacy rate than Christians, Jews also made important contributions to medieval medicine, biblical scholarship, and philosophy. At the same time, they were subjected to increasing prejudice and restrictions, such as being forced to wear special badges and the conical hats represented on this cup. Although occasionally protected by the **papacy** and secular authorities from the excesses of anti-Semitism, their condition worsened with the European Crusades against Islam. Some Jews were massacred, and others were expelled so that rulers could expropriate their wealth.



Fig. 36 View of image 29 showing a crest of Jewish hats on the upper cup



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

During the Middle Ages, on what type of occasions might two people have drunk from different parts of the same cup? Although this piece can be used as two cups, do you think it was actually conceived as a single work of art?



30. Mary and Child, ca. 1420

Claus de Werve (Franco-Netherlandish,
ca. 1380–1439, active in Burgundy,
1396–ca. 1439)
French; Burgundy, from the Franciscan
convent of the Poor Clares, Poligny (Jura)

Limestone with paint and gilding;
53 ³/₈ x 41 ¹/₈ in. (135.5 x 104.5 cm)
Latin inscription, painted on the sculpture:
Ab.ini/tio.et/ante./secula/creata/sum+
("From the beginning, and before the
world, was I created"; Ecclesiasticus 24:9)
Rogers Fund, 1933 (33.23)

(Location: Main Building,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

THIS CAREFULLY DESIGNED and naturalistic scene includes meticulous details, such as the dimples marking the knuckles of the plump hands and the undone buttons on Mary's tight sleeves. Arms, hands, and the folds of Mary's cloak guide the viewer to the book Jesus is holding. (The heavy cloak may suggest Mary's role as the Madonna of Mercy, when she spread it out like wings to protect people huddling beneath it.) The sculpture's once vibrant colors, the remnants of which are still visible, added to its naturalism—both figures' hair was originally gold and their eyes were brown, while Mary's veil was white and Jesus' gown was green with a pattern of gold griffins.

Although Mary seems to be meeting the searching gaze of her child, her face actually shows her to be in unseeing contemplation. However, the index finger pressing into the side of her chubby son, and her fingers marking her place in the book Jesus has eagerly commandeered, prove that she is aware of him. Jesus is pointing out writing to his mother. Now gone, it may have been the same text as that on the scroll draped over the bench. In contrast to this tender representation of mother and son, the bold Latin lines on the scroll are part of a solemn speech by Wisdom in the Book of Ecclesiasticus, part of the **Vulgate** Bible: "From the beginning, and before the world, was I created" (24:9). In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, this text became a reference to Mary as she, in her purity, was first compared to Wisdom, and then accepted as its personification by most Christians.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

Have your students discuss what they think is the focus of this statue. How has the artist pulled the viewer into this sculpture while still creating an intimate view of mother and child? How has the artist shown human interaction between the two?

Compare this statue of Mary and her child to the Romanesque *Mary and Christ Child in Majesty* (image 21). Despite their obvious differences in style, what characteristics do they share?



Rex egregie con-
dam rex francie
ludouice pie cum rege glo-
rie triumphans hodie pro

pace requie regni eterne
xp̄m deprecare. **Vñs.**

Quia pro nobis beate
ludouice. **responsoriū.**

31. Saint Louis before Damietta (folio 173), from *The Belles Heures* of Jean of France, Duke of Berry, 1406–8 or 1409

Limbourg Brothers (here perhaps Herman)
(Franco-Netherlandish, active in France,
by 1399–1416)
French; Paris

Ink, tempera, and gold leaf on vellum;
9 ³/₈ x 6 ⁵/₈ in. (23.8 x 16.8 cm)
The Cloisters Collection, 1954 (54.1.1)

(Location: The Cloisters)

THIS PICTURE IS ONE OF NINETY-FOUR full-page illuminations from a magnificently decorated **book of hours** once in the library of Jean, the duke of Berry (1340–1416). It shows a carefully designed and dramatic composition that has a sense of space and realism, despite the lead ship's strangely foreshortened stern and oversized figures impossibly covering the decks. The feeling of three-dimensionality comes from the artist's deft use of colors ranging from the saturated to the very pale, which even shows light playing on the surface of the materials. (Some of the fine lines that indicate folds and outlines were probably painted with a single hair or bristle, perhaps under a magnifying lens.)

In 1249, the fleet of King Louis IX (r. 1226–70) arrived at Damietta, near the mouth of the Nile River, without incident. To heighten tension and drama, the artist shows the ships hurtling toward a pair of dangerous rocks that are too close to avoid while waves dash against the hulls and rocks. Louis displays his famous piety by praying, his crown topped with a **fleur-de-lis**, just as the historians Villehardouin and Joinville had described it (see the Discussion section below). Directly behind him is Eude, a Cistercian monk who was a papal **legate**, and Louis' wife, Queen Marguerite. The artist has not painted the water blue, perhaps to suggest the muddy waters of the Nile delta, or perhaps to indicate the aftermath of a storm that had earlier scattered the king's ships. The Muslim city of Damietta, mysterious in the distance, does not look like an Egyptian city upon close inspection, but a Western medieval one.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

How has the artist indicated the most important figures? How has he balanced this composition? How has he given it a sense of depth? What do you think will happen after this scene?





DISCUSSION

Does the following eyewitness description of Louis IX's expedition to Damietta match the visual record in *The Belles Heures*, painted about 150 years later? Why might the artist, even if he had read the account, keep the painting the way it is?

The king anchored at the head of a hillock which is called the Point of Limassol, and all the other vessels anchored round about him. The king landed on the day of Pentecost [in 1249]. After we had heard mass a fierce and powerful wind, coming from the Egyptian side, arose in such sort that out of two thousand eight hundred knights, whom the king was taking into Egypt, there remained no more than seven hundred whom the wind had not separated from the king's company and carried away to Acre and other strange lands; nor did they afterwards return to the king of a long while.

The day after Pentecost the wind had fallen. The king and such of us as had, according to God's will, remained with him, set sail forthwith, and met the Prince of Morea, and the Duke of Burgundy, who had been sojourning in Morea. On the Thursday after Pentecost the king arrived before Damietta, and we found there, arrayed on the seashore, all the power of the soldan [sultan]—a host fair to look upon, for the soldan's arms [weapons] are of gold, and when the sun struck upon them they were resplendent. The noise they made with their cymbals and horns was fearful to listen to.

—Jean de Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades by Villehardouin & de Joinville*, 13th century, translated by Frank T. Marzials (New York: Dutton, 1958), p. 172



32. The Annunciation Triptych, ca. 1425–30

Robert Campin (South Netherlandish, active by 1406, died 1444) and assistant (possibly Rogier van der Weyden)
South Netherlandish; made in Tournai (modern Belgium)

Oil paint on oak; Central panel:
25¹/₄ x 24 in. (64.1 x 63.2 cm); each wing:
25³/₈ x 10³/₄ in. (64.5 x 27.3 cm)
The Cloisters Collection, 1956 (56.70)

(Location: The Cloisters)



Fig. 37 Left wing of
The Annunciation Triptych

A FASCINATION WITH THE NATURAL world is found throughout this private altarpiece, marking the beginning of a trend that would continue for more than a century in paintings from the Lowlands (modern-day Belgium and Holland). To convey a three-dimensional reality on a two-dimensional plane, Robert Campin laid down thin layers of translucent oil pigments one on top of the other. The resulting luminous, enamel-like surface achieves apparent depth, rich gradations of light, a broad distribution of color intensities, and the ability to express even the smallest details; for instance, in the right panel at least six different types of wood can be distinguished. In a bold stroke of innovation, Campin set the Annunciation within a domestic interior, not a church or portal. This decision, along with the strong naturalism of his style, greatly heightened the ability of the painting to serve as a devotional focus for the donors shown in the left wing (fig. 37), who would have understood the sacred event as taking place in a home similar to theirs.

Although scholars have given complex interpretations for the **iconography** of this triptych—or three-part painting—the significance of the imagery must have been understood by the ordinary educated person of its time. The central panel depicts the moment just before the Annunciation—Mary humbly sits on the floor, immersed in reading, not perceiving the presence of the archangel Gabriel. Realistic objects and actions fill the room as possible focuses of meditation for viewers. Some, such as the lily and the **laver** for washing, symbolize Mary's purity. The flight through a closed round window of a tiny Christ Child, bearing a cross and descending on seven rays of light—standing for the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit—indicates that the primary subject is the Incarnation, since light passing through glass often symbolized the divine insemination of Mary in medieval literature. And the extinguished flame of the candle suggests the presence of the Holy Spirit as the “mystic breath” by which Mary, as a virgin, conceived—described in the thirteenth-century *Golden Legend*—rather than becoming pregnant from human seed. This significant detail is placed in the exact center of the composition. The enclosed garden in the left panel (fig. 37) is a symbol of Mary as a virgin. Even the birds above the garden may not simply be a naturalistic touch. One suggestion has been that each bird represents a character in the central and right-hand panels, when one compares the birds and characters from left to right. The red-breasted



European robin, with the implication of blood and suffering in its coloring, is connected to the tiny figure of Jesus in the central panel; the black-and-white magpie, a talking or “announcing” bird, represents Gabriel; the goldfinch is associated with Mary and her child due to its reputed appetite for thorns, which connected it to the Crown of Thorns and Jesus’ sufferings; and the humble sparrow may symbolize the humble Joseph in the right panel. The depicted weather, too, may have significance beyond the obvious. In the left wing, flowers are blooming in the enclosed garden and, beyond its gate, windows are open and people are busy outdoors; in the central panel, the fireplace is empty and a window is open—further indications of springlike weather. But bundled-up pedestrians and snowflakes occupy the background of the right wing. Perhaps this represents the passage of time from the conception of Jesus, supposedly on March 25, in early spring, to his birth on the winter day of December 25.

The coat of arms depicted in the transom of the left window in the central panel is that of the Ingelbrechts of Malines, who are documented in Tournai in 1427. In fact, the male donor of the left panel has been identified as Peter Ingelbrechts, a merchant whose **canting name** of “angel bringing” seems to refer to the Annunciation of the central panel. The female donor of the left panel and the realistically rendered messenger of the city of Malines in the background—messengers were a kind of early municipal postman-policeman—were added at a later date, presumably after the two donors married.

The subject of the Annunciation—that is, the moment of Jesus’ con-

ception—was particularly suitable for a work of private devotion for a couple that desired to have children. On the left, the donors, who paid for the altarpiece to be created, are represented as childless. We know from tradition and other works of art of this time that if the couple had had children, they would have been represented with them. Children were extremely important in the Middle Ages, because they ensured that a couple would be cared for in old age, and that their lineage would continue.

The presence of Joseph in the right panel can also be explained in the context of the Incarnation. Joseph has made two types of mousetraps whose underlying meaning is made clear by **Augustine of Hippo** (354–430) in his popular sermon on the Ascension of Christ. There he says that the Incarnation was God's means of ensnaring the devil, much as bait entraps a mouse, because the devil rejoiced in what he thought was the end of Jesus at his crucifixion. But Jesus' death, with his subsequent resurrection, vanquished the devil.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

How has Robert Campin tried to visually involve a viewer of his own time with the biblical story of the central panel? Consider such aspects as the realism of the scene and its setting. How does the artist emphasize some parts of the central panel more than others? Why might such a scene be a focus for the prayers of a couple that wanted children? How does the artist visually link the panels together?

Compare this Mary to the one in Claus de Werve's sculpture (image 30); consider the medium, pose, costume, and facial expression of each. What part does each play within its work of art?



33. The Story of the Trojan War: The Battle with the Centaur (Sagittary) and The Conference at Achilles' Tent, ca. 1470–90

South Netherlandish (modern Belgium); probably produced through Pasquier Grenier of Tournai

Wool, silk wefts; 172 x 156 in. (436.9 x 396.2 cm)

French inscription, top (reconstructed): "Achilles came impetuously into battle where he killed a most terrifying giant named Hupon the Great who fought very bravely. The horrible and terrifying Sagittary killed Polixenar in this battle. Brave and powerful Diomedes killed the Sagittary." Latin inscription, bottom (reconstructed): "Achilles defeated Hupon. The Sagittary fought bravely [but] surrendered to death [at the hands of] the warrior Diomedes and overcame the enemy's flank."

Fletcher Fund, 1952 (52.69)

(Location: Main Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

THIS DYNAMIC BATTLE SCENE SHOWS the powerful visual impact achieved by a medieval tapestry, a costly medium in which medieval artists and weavers, working together, excelled. (See the Materials and Techniques section for details on how tapestries were created.) Such giant weavings not only transformed walls into works of art, they also proclaimed the wealth and prestige of their owners. This view of the Trojan War—the legendary ten-year fight between the Greeks and Trojans—has a perspective nearly as flat as the wall it covers. For instance, to give a sense of distance, figures are overlapped and stacked upward, instead of being made progressively smaller. Yet a general sense of naturalism is maintained through the carefully rendered details of the warriors, costumes, horses, and tent, and the viewer is diverted by a maze of actions.

The main scene expresses the confusion of medieval battle, with the combatants clad in gorgeous armor more suitable for a parade than for combat. Names appear on the arms, chests, backs, helmets, or bridles of the fighters. The main action shows a Trojan ally, a centaur, shooting an arrow into the Greek Polixenar. To the centaur's left, Diomedes, the second mightiest Greek hero, closes in to kill him with a sword. Above Diomedes, blond Achilles, the greatest of the Greek heroes, runs his lance into gigantic Hupon, who falls backward toward the Trojan hero Aeneas. The greatest warrior of the Trojans, Hector, is above the centaur and to the right. Wearing a helmet that looks like a feathered bird's head, he slits the throat of King Scedius.

The second scene in the tapestry is set in Achilles' tent. Here, Hector visits under a truce and proposes engaging in single combat with Achilles, with the winner's side being declared the victor in the war. But also in the tent is Agamemnon, the overall chief of the Greek forces, who objects to this proposal, and his brother King Menelaos of Sparta. (It was Menelaos' wife Helen who ran away to Troy with the Trojan prince Paris and thus started the war.) Together the men in the tent, all marked with their names, show two types of male fashion from the late Middle Ages. Older men tended to wear long, dignified robes, as Agamemnon does, while younger men, such as Hector and Achilles, wore doublets and hose, over which plate armor fit more easily.

Much of this tapestry has been repaired, with whole sections of it repositioned. In fact, this tapestry and the one that hangs next to it, called



Fig. 38 The Story of the Trojan War: Andromache and Priam Urging Hector Not to Go to War, ca. 1470–90 South Netherlandish (modern Belgium); probably produced through Pasquier Grenier of Tournai Wool, silk wefts; 190 x 104 in. (482.6 x 264.2 cm) Fletcher Fund, 1939 (39.74) (Location: The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The top scene shows Hector's wife, Andromache, and their two sons pleading with him not to go into battle, since Andromache had dreamed that he would die that day. At the bottom, Hector is mounted and ready for combat, soon to be killed in a fight with Achilles.

Andromache and Priam Urging Hector Not to Go to War (fig. 38), were part of a much larger tapestry, which, in turn, was the sixth of an eleven-tapestry set focused on the Trojan War.

Homer's *Iliad*, completed around 750–700 B.C., captured only fifty days of the fabled ten-year fight in northwestern Turkey between the Greeks and Trojans; scholars now believe that this war occurred in the twelfth century B.C. But during the Middle Ages, Homer's work was considered unreliable. The ultimate sources for this tapestry set seem to be accounts of the war written in the first or second century B.C. by Dictys of Crete, who claimed to be a Greek eyewitness to the war, and Dares of Phrygia, who favored the Trojans. Around 1184, Benoît de Sainte-Maure composed a French poem for Eleanor of Aquitaine using these accounts; then, in 1287, the Sicilian Guido delle Colonne simplified this poem into Latin prose. Though the designer of this tapestry probably based his images on Guido's text, the French and Latin texts along the edges of the tapestry do not come from this work, but from an unknown author.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

Can you figure out who is fighting whom in image 33? How has the artist helped you to identify the different warriors? Can you link some of the figures in the tent to the fighters outside?

ACTIVITY

Show image 33, then have each of your students write a story or poem, choosing one of the many episodes that are visible in the tapestry; the narrative should include not only the names and psychological states of the figures, but also the possible outcome to the episode.

See the lesson plan called Techniques and Materials.



DISCUSSION

This tapestry of the Trojan War was created nearly 2,500 years after the war was fought. After reading the text below, ask your students to discuss whether its designer gave a sense of medieval combat to the scene of the hanging. Are the warriors in the tapestry more interested in killing or in capturing their opponents for ransom, as frequently occurred in the Middle Ages?

The English and Gascons came in such numbers from all sides that they shattered the King's division. The French were so overwhelmed by their enemies that in places there were five men-at-arms attacking a single knight. Sir Geoffroy de Charny was killed, with the banner of France in his hands. Sir Baudouin d'Annequin was captured by Lord Bartholomew Burghersh, and the Count of Dammartin by Sir Reginald Cobham. Round the King of France himself there was a great jostling and turmoil, with everyone struggling to take him prisoner. Those who were near enough to recognize him cried: "Surrender, surrender, or you're a dead man!" There was a knight there from Saint-Omer called Sir Denis de Morbecque who had been with the English for five years because he had been banished from France in his youth after killing a man in a family feud. He had become a paid retainer of the King of England. Fortunately for this knight he found himself near to King John [of France] during the scuffle to capture him. He forced his way through the press, for he was a big, strong man, and said in good French, by which it attracted the King's attention better than the others: "Sire, give yourself up!" Seeing himself in this desperate plight and feeling that resistance was useless, the King looked at him and said: "To whom shall I surrender? To whom? Where is my cousin, the Prince of Wales? If I could see him, then I would speak." "Sire," replied Sir Denis, "he is not here. But surrender to me and I will take you to him."

—Jean Froissart (1337–1410) describing the capture of King John II of France in the Battle of Poitiers of 1356 in his *Chronicles*, translated and edited by Geoffrey Brereton (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), pp. 140–141



34. The Unicorn Is Found, ca. 1495–1500

France, probably Paris (the designs);
South Lowlands, Brabant (in modern
Belgium), probably Brussels (the weaving)

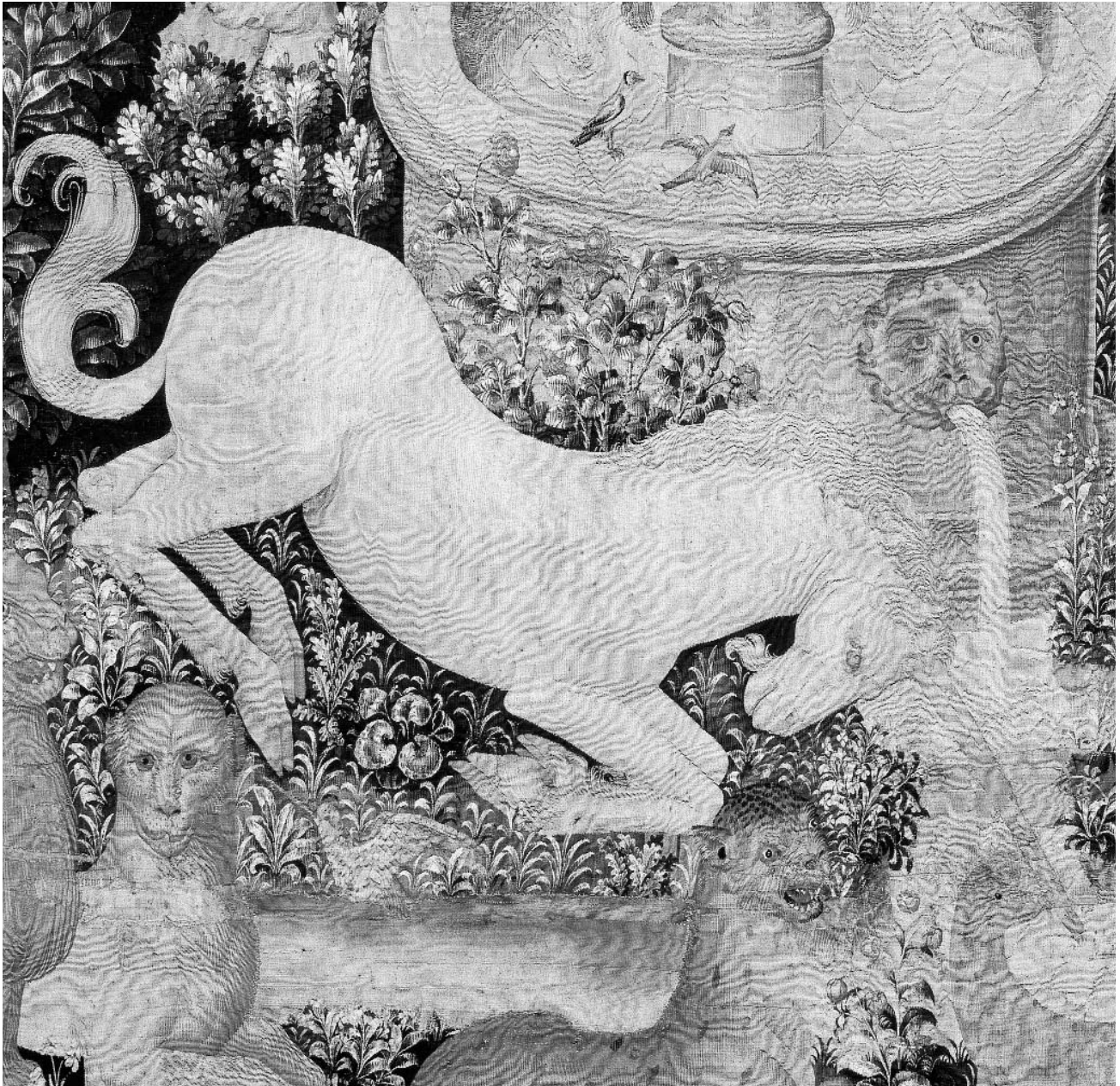
Wool warp; wool, silk, metallic wefts;
145 x 149 in. (368.3 x 378.5 cm)
The “A” tied to a backward “E,”
a configuration that appears on all seven
tapestries, could represent a motto,
a name, or the initials of the first human
couple, Adam and Eve
Gift of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 1937
(37.80.2)

(Location: The Cloisters)

THIS TAPESTRY IS ONE OF THE SEVEN Unicorn Tapestries—one being in just two fragments—hanging at The Cloisters. They make up one of the most accomplished and famous series of hangings still surviving from the Middle Ages. (See the Materials and Techniques section for details on how tapestries such as these were created and see the CD-ROM on the Unicorn Tapestries included in this resource to learn about the entire set.) On one level, the complex iconography of the series recounts the legend of the unicorn, a mythical creature—part goat, part horse—that was believed to have both a magical horn that could purify poisoned water and powers that could be neutralized only by a virgin. Symbolically, though, the unicorn was also understood as a symbol of love and marriage, and as the Incarnation of Jesus, who—like the unicorn—was male, pure, and unique.

In this tapestry, an air of enchantment seems to permeate its carefully arranged hunters, animals, and plants, many of which have symbolic meanings. Curving behind an arc of bushy plants is a company of twelve hunters and their dogs; their focus is a tall fountain at the center of the tapestry and the mystical unicorn. Two goldfinches perch on the fountain, not far from a pair of pheasants, the male of which regards his image in vanity. Other pairs of animals—hounds, rabbits, and deer—mingle among the profuse plants, while a couple of lions sit across the stream. Another pairing (this time not of a male and female animal) consists of a beautiful, spotted panther contrasting with a distorted spotted hyena, an alert genet (a catlike animal) between them.

According to medieval legend, the unicorn cannot be disturbed when performing a magical act. Scholars have suggested that the unicorn kneeling here is in the process of purifying a poisoned stream with his horn, a hypothesis supported by the presence of such plants as pot marigold under the hyena’s chin, the medlar (a type of pear) tree to the left of the fountain, the blue-flowered sage in front of the fountain, and an orange tree in the lower right corner of the tapestry. All of them are known to have been used as antidotes to poison in the Middle Ages. The designer’s careful observation of nature extends to the orange tree, which is flowering and bearing fruit at the same time—unusual, yet botanically accurate. Botanists have identified it as a type of sweet or China orange, introduced



in Europe around 1500. Thanks to such attention to detail on the part of the tapestries' creators, out of a total of 101 species of plants represented in the seven Unicorn Tapestries, botanists have identified more than eighty-five.

The hunting gear also shows a concern for authenticity. Two of the men wear hunting horns slung at their right hip, a position that does not interfere with the hilt of the single-edged sword on the other side (see p. 26, left). The horn was used to signal what species of animal the hunting party found, whether it was sighted, at bay, or being caught and killed. It also could sound an alarm when a hunter was lost or hurt. The sword not only helped huntsmen cut through underbrush, it also offered a last line of defense if a bear or a wolf unexpectedly lunged from the dense forest. Some of the hunters carry spears that have flanges jutting out below the spearhead—a bar to keep a boar from rushing up the shaft and injuring the huntsman. The shaft of these boar spears often came from knobby woods such as the hawthorn, the grip of which was sometimes improved by nicking the bark of the living sapling to produce calluses and thick scar tissue.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

How has the designer of this tapestry indicated the most important action of the scene? How has the artist captured the excitement of finding a unicorn? Consider the different reactions of the hunters. Describe what kind of place this is. How has the artist made it seem magical?



ACTIVITY

See the lesson plan called Techniques and Materials.



35. Saint Roch, early 16th century

French; Normandy (Manche),
said to be from Cherbourg Cathedral

Oak, paint, and gilding;
H. 61½ in. (156.2 cm)
The Cloisters Collection, 1925
(25.120.239a,b)

(Location: The Cloisters)

HERE, THE IMPORTANCE OF SYMBOLISM, the anatomical naturalism in the exposed limbs, and the slightly exaggerated S-curve in the figure's stance are all characteristic of the Late Gothic style of the Middle Ages. Bearing a shade hat, staff, and comfortable footwear, Roch (ca. 1350–1380) is shown here as a pilgrim, with the crossed keys of Saint Peter on his hat signifying that he has just visited the shrines of Rome (see p. 22, right). His wrinkled and elaborately patterned tunic, sized for a plumper, wealthier, and healthier person, hints at his noble origins—according to his legend, Roch was the son of the governor of Montpellier in southern France. With a worried face, Roch lifts his tunic to show the bubo, or “bubble,” of the Black Plague. It discreetly appears on his thigh rather than in his groin, where the lymphatic system often formed that mark. The disease, thought to have been passed initially by flea bites, ravaged Europe during the fourteenth century, decimating almost a third of the population in 1348.

The story of Roch's life, which has several versions, explains further details of this statue, and accounts for his becoming the patron saint of the diseased, the imprisoned, and veterinarians. When Roch left Rome at the age of twenty, he found the rest of Italy plague-stricken, so he devoted himself to the care, and some say miraculous curing, of the afflicted. Eventually he was himself infected and, rather than further tax the caregivers, he dragged himself off to the woods to die. But a dog found him and began to bring him food; then the dog brought his master, who nursed Roch back to health. Roch immediately returned to caring for the sick, now with a greatly enhanced ability to heal.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS

How has the artist indicated that Roch has contracted a terrible disease? Consider such details as his facial expression, ill-fitting tunic, the blister on his thigh, and the dog bearing food. Can you tell from his costume what social class Roch came from and what he was doing when he became sick?

Materials and Techniques

ARTISTS OF THE WEST

Since the Roman empire, some types of artists, such as goldsmiths, had organized themselves into associations beneficial to the social, religious, and economic interests of their members. But for many medieval crafts, such associations, or guilds, appeared only between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, and then only in some cities and towns. Prior to that time, workshops creating art were mainly staffed by members of the same family.

Most medieval guilds performed social functions, such as organizing charitable activities and religious observances that often centered on a guild's patron saint. But their main function was economic. By restricting admission to their crafts and establishing strict rules on prices, wages, standards of quality, and work practices, many guilds sought to maintain a constant level of quality and profitability for their members. In the later Middle Ages, a common pathway to becoming an artist was for a boy's family to pay for him to become an apprentice in the home and workshop of a master craftsman. After years of training—in some cases up to ten—the apprentice might advance to the status of a journeyman, who earned daily wages. In time, some of these journeymen improved their skill sufficiently and saved enough money to become masters themselves.

IVORY CARVING

(images 6, 8, 11, 15, 28)

Ivory carving had been practiced for centuries before being used for small sculptures in the Middle Ages. Ivory itself was considered a precious material, and most commonly came in the form of elephant tusks imported from Africa and India (fig. 39). Artists in Northern Europe also carved the teeth of walruses and narwhals. The tools of the medieval ivory carver included saws, drills, sharp blades, scrapers, and burins—long picks for the hand with a point at one end. In contact with the dense grain of ivory, these tools created sculptures of extraordinary detail. After carving, ivories were often painted and gilded.

Although Byzantine ivory production for the elite was at its height from the tenth to twelfth century, the peak of Western ivory manufacture came during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when a rising merchant class added to the demand for ivory products. By about 1250, the greatest center of Gothic ivory production was Paris, where merchants specializing in luxury goods often sold ivory works. A specialty of this era was portable ivory

shrines for private devotion, but secular objects were also popular. These included caskets, ivory-inlaid musical and astronomical instruments, staffs, mirrors, combs and hair-parters, gaming pieces and ivory-inlaid gaming boards, writing tablets filled with colored wax, ivory-inlaid saddles, knife and whip handles, spectacles, and ear spoons. Their decoration was often inspired by mythology, history, or literature.



Fig. 39 A tusk being carved into a statuette

MANUSCRIPT MAKING

(images 20, 31)

The medieval manuscript was the result of many skills, from the parchment maker to the scribe, rubricator, gilder, painter, and binder. The preparation of a manuscript (Latin: “written by hand”) began with its parchment—that is, animal skin such as calf, sheep, or goat, which had been prepared, through washing and scraping, for writing and painting. The parchment was folded in half, and sometimes again in half numerous times, to form one or more bifolios—two leaves making up four pages. A group of bifolios nested together was called a quire or gathering. In preparation for writing the text, a ruling pattern was transferred to the parchment by pricking holes at the side edges of the pages with a knife or awl. The holes on opposite sides were lined up with a straight edge and ruled lines were then drawn. The page was then treated with pumice or chalk, to clean and smooth out the surface of the page and to permit the ink to adhere better to parchment.

As the scribe created the text in ink along the ruled lines, he could make corrections by scraping off letters and rewriting them (fig. 40);

by placing dots under words that were a mistake or drawing a line through them; and writing missing words neatly in the margins. The scribe might leave a letter indication for the rubricator—who wrote headings for the text, usually in red—either at the location of the first heading, or in the margins, where it would disappear when the page was trimmed for binding. He would sometimes also leave notations for colors, or even a quick design, to guide the artist in the pictures, or miniatures, he was to create.

When it came time to create the decoration for the text, the artist of the miniatures—who might be the same person who painted the borders—used metalpoint or diluted ink to first make the underdrawings for the pictures. Next, a gilder laid a binding medium over the parts of the page that were to be gilded or painted. Often this medium was gesso, a fine white ground of chalk or gypsum mixed with glue or gelatin, and white lead, which the gilder applied to the parchment with a quill pen. The binding medium was followed by thin layers of bole—a clay that had been mixed with a sticky form of beaten egg whites, called glair, forming a mound. Then the gilder polished and wetted the

small mound of bole either with his breath or with water and glair before using a brush to overlap bits of gold leaf on the mound. The gold was then burnished, usually using an agate or the tooth of a carnivorous animal, such as a dog. Sometimes punches and stamps were used to create patterns in the gold leaf. The page was then called “illuminated” because its gold shone with reflected light. Next came the paints, their rich and varied colors derived from minerals, earths, metals, insect bodies, and animal parts and products such as skin, dung, bones, and urine; as well as from roots, stems, leaves, berries, flowers, gums and resins from plants, wine and vinegar, and from the combinations and processing of these materials. The binding medium for these pigments could be glair; gum from trees; a jelly from boiled-down parchment, called *size*; or fish glue, casein, or egg yolk, depending on the pigment. Holding a pot, horn, or shells filled with these paints, the artist used brushes of animal hair and quill pens to apply the colors to the miniature designs (fig. 41). As a last touch, the artist outlined the painted figures, the folds of their clothes, and the edges of the gold leaf in a dark color.

It was then left to the binder to take the gatherings of the finished

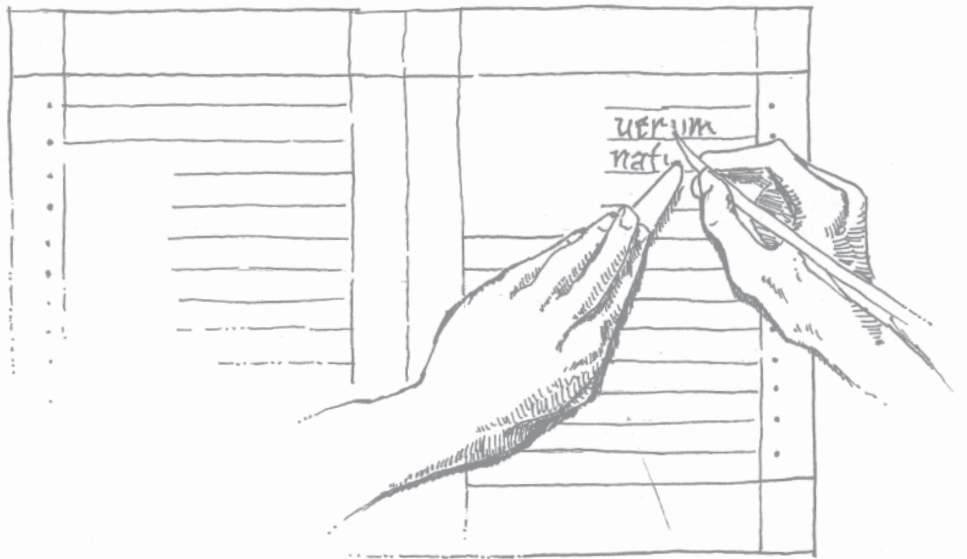


Fig. 40 A scribe could make corrections by scraping off letters and rewriting them

and decorated text and to fasten them together in their correct order. In the twelfth century, the gatherings were sewn onto several horizontal strips of leather, which were



Fig. 41 Painting a miniature, from a fourteenth-century manuscript

then run through holes in the two wooden boards that served as covers, pulled taut, and pegged into place. The boards and spine were then covered with leather, with the title of the text inside sometimes written along the flat spine. Semicircular tabs were often sewn at either end of the spine. This enabled the book to be lifted out fairly easily, if it was stored in a close-fitting chest with its spine up.

METALWORK

(images 2, 4–5, 7, 10, 16, 23, 27, 29)



Double cup (image 29)

Medieval artists worked many metals, from gold to lead. In general, they obtained these metals from three main sources—by recycling metals that had already been produced; by mining them; or, in the case of gold, from alluvial deposits. They frequently embellished their metalwork with many materials, some of them imported, such as precious and semiprecious stones, glass, enamel, and even cameos from ancient Rome. Many works of art were made from copper, which was very malleable, or from copper mixed with tin, zinc, and lead in various combinations, which made harder materials that were also golden. One of our sources for how medieval artists in the West worked with copper, bronze, or brass is Book 3 of *De diversis artibus* (On

Different Arts), an early twelfth-century treatise by Theophilus. It includes descriptions of the furnace, forge, bellows, seating for the workmen, anvils, tongs and hammers, a bead-making tool, a tool to make wires of different diameters, files, engravers, scrapers, punches, chisels, tools to make heads on nails, crucibles, stamps and dies for repeating designs on metal sheets, as well as techniques of casting, soldering, gilding, punching, making openwork, raising up hollow images in the metal (*repoussé*), and making black linear decoration, using niello (an alloy of silver, copper, and lead) or baked linseed oil. The medieval goldsmith—who also worked in silver and probably less precious metals—used similar tools, with the addition of a balance with weights and a touchstone for estimating the purity of the gold being used. This could be assessed by rubbing gold against a black stone and comparing the marking to others made on the same stone by different alloys whose content was already known.

Champlevé Enamel
(image 16)



Plaque with the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost) (image 16)

The usual way to create a champlevé enamel in the Middle Ages (known to barbarian artists from the third century B.C.) was, first, to use a round-nosed graver to scoop out hollows within a clean copper sheet supported on a bowl filled with pitch (fig. 42). Then, with a sharpened quill, the artist filled the cavities with a paste of water mixed with powdered opaque or translucent glass of different colors (fig. 43). The copper sheet was placed on an iron plate, which was warmed slowly to dry up any moisture in the powdered glass. A sieve-like domed iron lid was placed over the sheet before it entered the kiln; its glowing color indicated the temperature within the oven and the progress of the firing. As the powdered glass melted, it shrank in volume.

Therefore, after slowly cooling the enamel after the firing, it was necessary to refill the cells with enamel paste and repeat the firing process, sometimes several times.

Once the enamels had properly filled the spaces and cooled, their surfaces were carefully polished and incised details were added to the surrounding copper with a graver. Then the sheet was scraped to remove the burrs pushed up from engraving as well as any marks left by the polishing. Afterward, the sheet might be gilded, the gold burnished, and a punch might provide stippled patterns on the gilded surfaces.

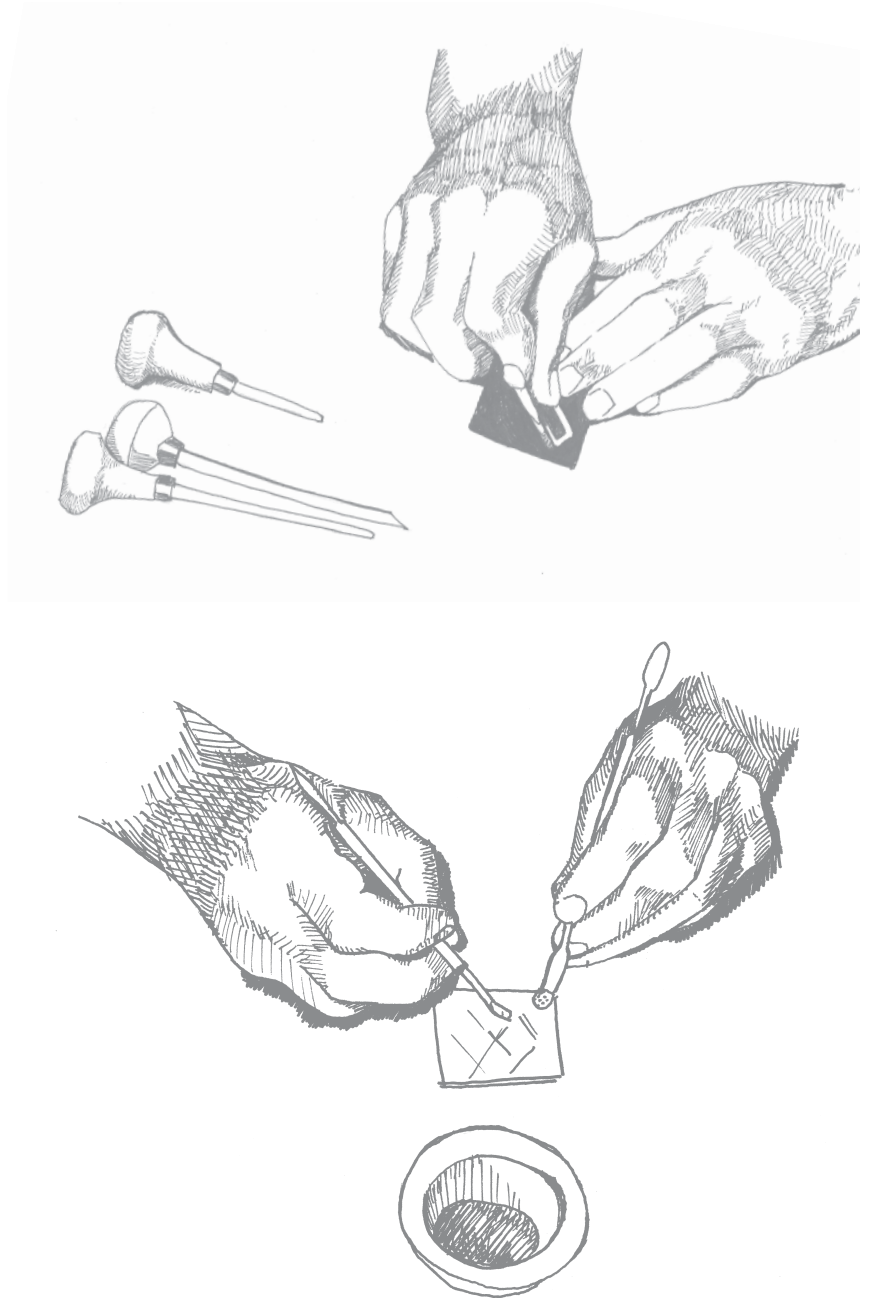


Fig. 42 Digging out the cavities of a champlevé enamel

Fig. 43 Filling the cavities with glass paste

Cloisonné Enamel (image 10)

This technique of creating decoration in melted glass was practiced in various ancient cultures, including Greece, Egypt, and Nubia, and was common to both Byzantium and the West during the Middle Ages. Byzantium in particular became renowned for its cloisonné enamels, many of which were made in Constantinople, a source for many of the most luxurious goods of the time. During the tenth to twelfth centuries, cloisonné enamels appeared on icons, reliquaries, book covers, chalices, and crowns, and were even sewn onto ecclesiastical vestments.

Literally meaning “cell work,” the technique of cloisonné involved the construction of small cells or compartments with wire or thin strips of soft metal that could be easily worked and soldered, such as gold or silver (fig. 44). These were bent to form the outlines of a design, which were then soldered to the surface of a metal plate. The resulting walled-in spaces were filled in with glass paste in various colors and fired. Since the enamel paste shrank as it melted, it was usually necessary to refill the cloisons and

refire the object several times. The final step was grinding and polishing the surface of glass and metal.



Fig. 44 Cells of cloisonné enamel made with wire or strips of metal

MOSAIC (image 3)



Ktisis (image 3)

Mosaic—a surface of assembled pieces of stone, glass, or other material—was the most elaborate and expensive form of decoration for the walls and floors of churches and palaces. Although practiced by the ancient Greeks and Romans, the mosaic technique was perfected in Byzantium during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Its mosaics were so admired that Byzantine mosaicists, sometimes working in teams, traveled to such places as Italy, Spain, and (by the thirteenth century) Kievan Rus’ to practice their art. (Artists in the West, particularly in Italy, sometimes worked as mosaicists before the technique fell out of favor there.)

In making their mosaics, Byzantine artists generally used cubes—called tesserae—of stone and marble to decorate floors and

walls, and of more fragile brick or terracotta, semiprecious gems, and opaque colored glass for wall mosaics. Tesserae were produced in many sizes, the tiniest of which were used to model faces. To create glass tesserae, round “pancakes” of glass paste were baked, melted, and cooled; then they were hammered against a sharp edge to break them into cubes. Gold and silver tesserae were made by sandwiching foil between layers of translucent glass.

Artists created wall mosaics from the top down or from the center outward to the sides. An artist first made a smooth surface for the decoration by covering a wall with one or more layers of a calcite mortar, the final layer being mixed with crushed pottery or brick. On this setting bed the artist often painted guidelines, then pressed mosaic cubes into it while it was still damp, sometimes at different angles to create a glittering effect when light struck them.

PAINTING

Fresco
(images 18, 22)



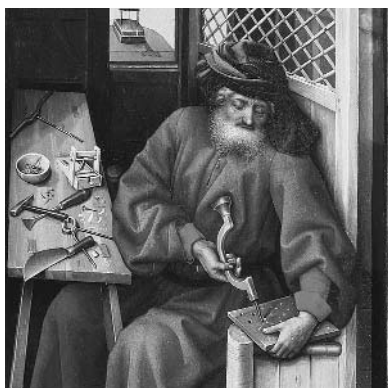
Wyvern (image 22)

Until the thirteenth century, the durable mural painting called fresco—applying colors onto drying plaster—was widespread in Europe. A variant of this technique, painting on dried plaster that was first wetted, evolved in the early twelfth century. Though Italy continued to make true frescoes during the Middle Ages, beginning in the thirteenth century Northern muralists increasingly turned to painting on dried plaster.

When a mural was made in the true fresco technique, a wall was first covered with a rough plaster, usually made of crumbled lime (calcium hydroxide) and an inert material such as sand or straw. A grid was created on this rough ground to

allow the design for the mural to be accurately laid out or more easily enlarged from a smaller design. With this network as a guide, an artist made a preparatory drawing—called the *sinopia*—on the plaster using charcoal, incisions, or colors. A fine wet layer of plaster was then applied over the first coating on the wall, but only on the area to be painted that day. Estimating the design underneath by eyeing the uncovered design, the artist rapidly laid on pigments mixed in lime water. In the process of drying, the calcium hydroxide of the plaster passed through these pigments, coating and locking them into the plaster. After the mural dried, details and colors that might otherwise have changed in the drying process, such as blue mineral pigments, were added. Over time, the plaster’s surface absorbed carbon dioxide from the air, altering its chemical makeup from calcium hydroxide—easily affected by the damp—to the more stable and long-lasting calcium carbonate.

Panel Painting
(image 32)



Detail of *The Annunciation Triptych* (image 32)

A patron usually commissioned a panel painting for a specific purpose, which meant that the patron was often involved in the theme and design of the panel's decoration, especially if it was intended for a domestic setting. The master artist was responsible for the overall design of the work, including the style and quality of the drawing, although frequently his assistants did some of the painting.

Geography and climate dictated the types of wood used in panel paintings. For instance, painted altarpieces in Italy were almost always made from a timber support of poplar wood, glue, and nails, or wooden dowels, reinforced with linen canvas; while in Northern Europe, oak was used for the panels, with parchment or linen used to re-

inforce the timber joints.

To create a smooth white surface for drawing, gilding, and painting, glue was first applied to the wood panel. Then the panel was covered with a warm mixture of animal glue and a powdered white mineral such as gypsum (calcium sulphate), commonly used in Italy, or chalk (calcium carbonate), frequently used north of the Alps. This white ground was applied in many layers, each time carefully smoothed with knives or sanded with skins of dogfish (a small shark with a very rough skin).

The next step was the gilding of some of the panel's surface, done in two primary techniques: water gilding and mordant or oil gilding. In water gilding, gold was applied to a layer of bole (a clay mixed with sticky glair), usually in the form of sheets of gold leaf, which were then polished. Mordant gilding could be ground gold or gold leaf that was applied to a sticky oil medium that held the gold onto the surface of the panel after it hardened. This type of gilding could not be polished.

In early medieval Europe, and throughout the Middle Ages in Italy, tempera paint was used in panel painting. Tempera came from pigments derived from minerals or plants, mixed with egg yolk diluted with a little water. There were ad-

vantages to tempera paint, although it required a painstaking application of thin brushstrokes to build form, and, unlike oil paint, its colors could not be mixed. Tempera went on in layers that dried quickly, could be painted over immediately, and did not discolor over time. When aged a little, tempera paintings were durable and almost waterproof. In fifteenth-century Northern Europe, especially the area of modern-day Holland and Belgium, linseed or walnut oil mixed with a pigment became the usual paint of panel painting. Each of its translucent layers took time to harden over the other layers, but the technique produced rich color and a sense of depth. The glossy, enamel-like surface of oil painting was particularly prized, and many panel paintings from the Lowlands were exported to Italy.

SCULPTURE

Stone

(images 1, 9, 12–14, 17–18, 25–26, 30)

By the twelfth century, sculptors of stone began to be seen as specialists separate from masons and, by about 1300, the carving of full-length figures was considered a distinct subdivision of masonry. The carving of stone capitals, foliage, and figures for buildings was usually done on the ground, each stone block marked with chalk for guidance. But sometimes they were carved in place on the structure, the artist working from scaffolding. The sculptor began his work on a block of stone with an ax or hammer, moving on to chisels and drills for the more detailed work, and finishing the surface of the stone with a claw chisel and file (figs. 45–46). After carving, the sculpture was decorated by painters, usually not by the sculptor. The paint not only provided color to the carving, but it also helped protect the underlying stone from atmospheric deterioration, especially if the sculpture was placed on the outside of a building.

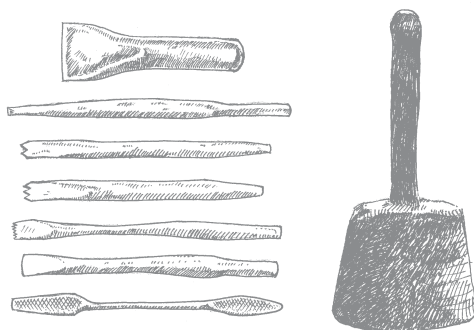
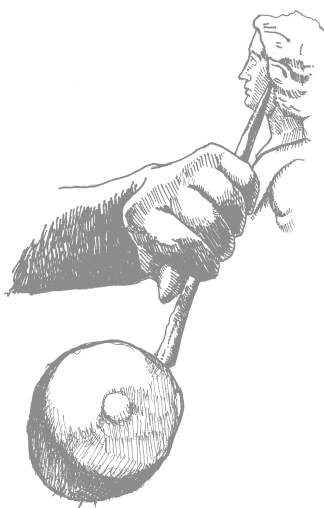


Fig. 45 Stone-carving tools

Fig. 46 Carving the stone



Wood

(images 19, 21, 35)



Mary and Christ Child in Majesty (image 21)

The types of wood used for carving were usually those native to the region in which the sculptor worked. In southern France, for instance, walnut, a particularly even-grained wood, was used; in Northern Europe, birch, oak, and, especially in the late Middle Ages, limewood, another regularly grained wood, were carved. Since the heart of a log reacts differently to heat and humidity

than its outer layers, it was often necessary for the artist to remove the heart to prevent cracks from forming in the sculpture. This was done by hollowing out the back of the figure and, if necessary, closing the area with a back board. Tools included a variety of axes and adzes, chisels, knives, augers, hammers, and wooden mauls. Sometimes artists carved pieces of the sculpture separately (i.e., the head, parts of the body, hands, and feet), and then carefully joined the pieces together, using dowels or joinery techniques so that the grain of each piece alternated with the next. Thus, when the sculpture expanded and contracted in different climatic conditions, cracks were avoided, since there was some “give” in the joints and the strains in the pieces counteracted each other. Other times, particularly with large pieces of wood, the artist first roughly cut the log into a form, hollowing out its back. Then the log was secured at the top and bottom by sharp knives attached to either end of a workbench, suspending it horizontally, and the artist set to work carving it.

After the carving was finished, the sculpture was painted, but not necessarily by the sculptor. Oftentimes, the same artists who made panel paintings also painted

sculptures, and they used the same materials for both. First, glue was applied to the surface, to close the wood’s pores to paint. A woven material such as linen or hemp was sometimes fixed to the wood over joints and cracks. The whole sculpture was then coated with white gesso. The painter layered the areas of the sculpture to be gilded with a mixture of clay and glue, called bole, which were then covered with gold leaf (or some other precious metal) and polished with an agate or dog’s tooth. Finally, the artist applied colors, sometimes in layers, such as red lead, ochers, copper greens, azurite blues, and white lead or chalk. Translucent glazes, made of resins and pigments, were then applied to accent colors and textures and to keep any silver from tarnishing.

STAINED GLASS

(image 24)

By the mid-first century B.C., the ancient Romans had learned how to blow glass, and by the first century A.D., they were creating panes of glass for windows. By at least the sixth century, multicolored glass windows appeared in Europe; by the eighth, glass was being painted. Medieval “stained glass,” much of which is actually painted colored glass, adorned not just churches, but also, as the middle class grew wealthier in the later Middle Ages, secular buildings such as guildhalls and private residences. (The silver-stain technique of truly staining clear glass with a range of golden hues did not appear until the early fourteenth century.)

Though the medieval glazier often designed a window, then cut, painted, and leaded the glass for it, he usually did not make the glass itself. Ready-made glass sheets could be bought from a merchant, who obtained them from glass houses set up in forests near a river, or in other locations where the components of glass and the furnace fuel were plentiful. Medieval glass usually began as a careful mixture of sand and ash from plants, such as the fern or beech (to lower the

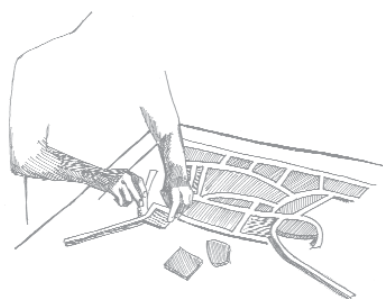
melting point of the sand), melted together in a furnace. Colored glass was made by mixing hot glass in an earthenware pot with metal oxide colors—such as cobalt for blue and copper for red—producing what is termed pot-metal glass. Pot-metal reds were so dark, however, that the molten red had to be mixed with clear glass so that light could shine through, leaving a rubylike, but now streaky, color. The glassblower then made the sheet glass needed for windows (fig. 47).

After procuring a quantity of this sheet glass, the glazier created a decorated window by first drawing a design, and then enlarging it to the size of the finished window on a whitened board or stone table. Shading, colors, outlines, and the lines of the lead sleeves holding the pieces of glass in place—called *came*s—were all marked on this board. Pieces of glass were laid down as they were cut from the sheet. Each piece was shaped by running a hot iron along an intended line to heat the glass, then applying saliva or water to create a thermal shock that broke the glass along the line; a hooklike instrument called a *grozing iron* removed the rough edges of the glass. Next, details in black or dark tones were



Fig. 47 Blowing glass

Fig. 48 Assembling stained glass



brushed onto the pieces of glass, using a dark paint that was a mixture of copper oxide or iron oxide, pulverized glass, and a binding agent, such as a mixture of wine or urine and gum arabic from the acacia tree. Then the pieces were fired at around 600 degrees Celsius, the temperature at which the glass would soften and the paint would fuse with it. Painting both sides of a piece of glass produced even darker shading, and sometimes washes of this paint were lightened with a brush or were etched with a needle or quill. Eventually, lead came were wrapped around the edges of the finished glass pieces (fig. 48) and their joins were soldered. Then the panel was sealed by brushing putty under the edges of the came, and iron saddle bars were attached to the network of came to make the panel rigid. At this point, the panel was moved from the workshop to the building site, where it was inserted into an iron framework, called an armature, in the stone window frame. The came, iron bars, and paint all helped to accent and define the design and colors of the window.

TAPESTRY (images 33–34)

During the Middle Ages, tapestries were an exclusive and expensive art form, the demand for which increased as time went on. In the early period, tapestries with designs of religious subjects were made to cover the walls of churches, but later tapestries with secular subjects decorated the interior of courts and civic buildings. By the fifteenth century, tapestries with popular subjects functioned not only as decoration in the homes of the wealthy, but also as draperies to divide rooms or to insulate doorways from drafts. Ensembles of small tapestries with coordinated designs decorated beds, tables, and chairs.

To create a tapestry, an artist made a small-scale drawing or painting of the design, often based on a narrative text with a series of episodes. The drawing was enlarged into a colored or color-coded line drawing on a sheet of linen or paper that was the full size of the tapestry, but which was the mirror image of the initial design. This was called a cartoon. The yarn that provided the colors in the design was usually made of dyed wool and silk. First, cleaned and carded wool and silk

were spun into yarn, and this yarn was organized into skeins for dyeing. Next, fresh dyestuffs from local plants, or dried ones from distant lands, were soaked and boiled to extract their dyes. In order to firmly bond the dyestuff with the fibers of the skeins, yarn was first soaked in a mordant (or fixer) solution of alum to achieve brighter colors, or a solution of iron to get brown or blackish colors. Then the yarn was soaked in an acid bath with a particular dyestuff. Depending on the specific dye plant, with its own particular chemistry, one of two dozen light to dark shades of a color could come out of a dye bath. Some colors, such as purple and green, were achieved by successively dyeing the fibers in baths of two different dyes.

When it came time to weave, warps of strong, undyed yarn were stretched parallel to each other between the beams of either a vertical or horizontal loom (fig. 49; see also fig. 50). During the weaving process, the dyed weft yarn, wound into small balls or, later, wrapped around small wooden bobbins, passed through the separated warp threads, called a weaving shed. Facing the reverse of the tapestry on a long bench at the loom, the weavers wove the tapestry following the cartoon,

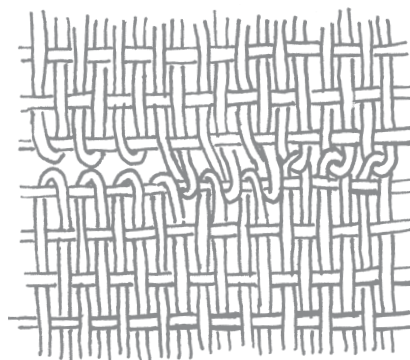
which was either folded or cut into strips before it was placed behind the warps on the loom. A harness, connected to treadles or to an overhead bar, enabled the weavers to change the positions of alternate warps with a shift of their limbs. This formed tunnels called sheds through which the weavers passed the colorful wefts, which were then compacted down with a comblike tool, slowly producing the tapestry.

As the weaving progressed, the woven part of the tapestry was rolled around the beam located close to the weavers, while the unwoven warps were unrolled from the farther beam. When completed, the tapestry was removed from the loom, the beginning and finishing edges at the two sides were stitched, straps to support the tapestry's weight were sewn on the back, as was a lining, and rings or hooks were attached along what would be the top. When hung from a wall, the tapestry was oriented so that the warp threads ran horizontally and the weft threads extended vertically.



Fig. 49 Weaving on a vertical loom

Fig. 50 Detail of a weaving



Lesson Plan: Gardens

GRADE LEVEL: middle school and high school
(global studies, math and science, art)

OBJECTIVES

- Students will discuss the functions of gardens, both practical and aesthetic, in the Middle Ages and today.
- Students will discuss the practical considerations of designing and planning a garden.
- Students will design their own garden, either on paper or by planting an actual garden as a collaborative activity.

MATERIALS

- Tracing paper
- Pencils and eraser
- An architectural scale and/or graph paper
- Compass
- Seed catalogues or gardening guides

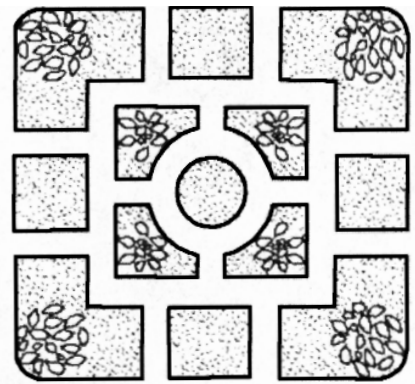


DISCUSSION

Ask students where they have seen gardens—in a park, in a backyard, in a museum, in works of art, etc. Project the two slides of images 12 and 34 and discuss the concept of a real garden and the representation of a garden in a tapestry. What would be the function of a garden to a cloistered community? Why is it laid out in such a regular pattern? What plants might be useful? Why would the garden depicted in *The Unicorn Is Found* be considered a pleasure garden? What makes it an ideal garden rather than a real garden? (For instance, all the plants are flowering at the same time.) How many plants can be identified in the tapestry? Are the students familiar with any of the plants? Are any still used today? Any that might have symbolic meanings?



Cuxa Cloister



Plan of the Bonnefont Cloister

Gardens were important in the Middle Ages, as they are today. They were written about, represented in works of art, and studied—both real gardens like kitchen or cloister gardens, and ideal gardens like the Garden of Earthly Delights and the Garden of Eden. The plants themselves had a variety of purposes—practical, social, ideological, and symbolic.

Medieval garden types were flexible. They could vary greatly in size, and many gardens were designed to serve diverse and overlapping functions. Specific plants were cultivated in gardens with practical functions (providing food, dyes, medicinal remedies, etc.), while individual species were less important in pleasure gardens.

VISUAL RESOURCES



Image 12. Cuxa Cloister



Image 34. The Unicorn Is Found

Kitchen gardens provided sustenance; typical plants might include onions, garlic, leeks, cabbage, parsley, radishes, parsnips, beets, cumin, fennel, spinach, peas, beans, and lentils. Optimum use of space, sun, and ease of care would be some of the issues in planting a kitchen garden.

Medicinal gardens were important because medieval medicine depended heavily on treatments derived from plants. Only the very rich could afford doctors, so medicinal gardens often were incorporated into other types of gardens. Some plants are still in use as medicines, while others have been discredited as ineffective or even dangerous. Typical plants might include foxglove (*digitalis*), poppy (opiates), and licorice, which is a diuretic and eases pain from kidney and bladder ailments. Some plant names indicate their function: speedwell helps to heal wounds and cleanse the blood, feverfew cures fevers, and comfrey, also known as “bone-set,” was used to set broken bones.

Cloister gardens were cultivated in convents and monasteries; their primary function was to serve as a contemplative space. Their layout was based on a regular, geometrical design, with a central lawn quartered by paths covered with sand, gravel, or pebbles. Frequently the paths converged at a central fountain imbued with various symbolic interpretations, but which also served as the essential source of water for the monks and their gardens (see image 12). While the more prosaic kitchen and medicinal gardens would be found in monasteries as well, the monks who tended the cloister gardens likened them to the splendor of Paradise. Louis of Blois, an early sixteenth-century abbot of Liessies, wrote,

May the beauty of flowers and other creatures draw
the heart to love and admire God, their creator.
May the garden's beauty bring to mind the
splendor of paradise.
The birds sing the praise of God in heaven so that
man may learn to praise Him in his heart.

— STATUTA MONASTICA

Pleasure gardens were private, enclosed spaces within estates owned by secular or ecclesiastical lords. Varying in size from a few to hundreds of acres, they might contain entire forests and a menagerie of animals. The pleasure garden also appeared in late medieval art and literature as a luxurious setting of exotic and symbolic flora and fauna, inhabitants both real and imaginary. A literary example may be found in the *Roman de la Rose*, while *The Unicorn Tapestries* (see image 34) provide superb artistic renderings of medieval pleasure gardens.



Have the students think of plants that would be useful in each garden context, or plants that might fall into more than one category. For example, a plant like lavender could be used for flavoring food or water, repelling insects, or as a disinfectant. It might be chosen for a cloister or pleasure garden because of its foliage and sweet smell. It is also a symbol of love and devotion.



ACTIVITY: PLANNING AND DESIGNING A GARDEN

Discuss the idea of planning and its role in a garden design: working with available spaces, choosing plants, deciding what goes where. A field trip to The Cloisters, a park or botanical garden, a nursery, or a private garden might generate ideas for a collaborative class project on gardens.

To design a garden as an exercise or for actual planting, students should discuss the following:

Where is the garden located? This question is both practical and ideological. It asks about proximity to other sites and so may determine the shape of the garden and the arrangement of plant materials. Questions to ask students include: Should the garden be near a building (either real or imagined)? When does the sun shine on the space and how much sun does it receive? Where is its water source?

How large is the garden? Remember to keep in mind the kind of garden you are designing. Who would tend this garden? Think, too, about limitations of space and whether the garden will require paths through it.

When these questions are answered, students can begin to design a basic ground plan for a garden. They may either design individual gardens or work together to plan a garden that they will actually plant. They should first draft the size and shape of the garden, showing adjacent buildings and entrance points. They should identify the areas of light and shade.

What kinds of plants would be chosen for each of these gardens? Use seed catalogues or garden books to prepare a chart of plant materials appropriate for your garden's purpose, size, sun, shade, and other requirements. This list may be derived from plants used in medieval times (see resources below), or students may choose from a list of modern plants. They should make a chart like the one on the next page.

EXAMPLE:

MEDIEVAL CULINARY GARDEN	
PLANT NAME	leek; <i>Allium porrum</i>
PURPOSE	soups and stews
SIZE	18"–24"
SUN/SHADE	sun
SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS	none
PLANT NAME	rosemary; <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>
PURPOSE	seasoning for meats, soups, and vegetables
SIZE	24"–30"
SUN/SHADE	sun
SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS	water frequently may be brought indoors
PLANT NAME	sage; <i>Salvia officinalis</i>
PURPOSE	tea, flavoring meats and baked goods (sage also has medicinal uses)
SIZE	6"–12"
SUN/SHADE	sun
SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS	none

Students should make a planting plan by laying a sheet of tracing paper over the drafted ground plan and outlining it. They can draw beds to accommodate plants according to size, sun/shade requirements, or any other special needs. Students then can establish scale and spacing by using the compass to draw circles representing individual plants.

These planting plans can be colored with pencils, or three-dimensional models can be made using the plan as a guide. If a real garden is to be planted, students can order seeds or buy plants at a nursery, prepare the soil, and tend the growing plants.

ART/ARCHITECTURE CONNECTION

Discuss the relationship between plants and architectural forms, using the images of church portals (images 9, 17). Have students choose a plant to research; they should make detailed renderings of it as well as find out what it might symbolize and where they might find it in works of art. They should design a doorway block, or capital, based on their chosen plant, using stylized motifs drawn from the leaves, flowers, buds, roots, etc. If desired, these doorway blocks can be sculpted in clay and used to decorate a garden border.

LANGUAGE ARTS/SCIENCE/MATH CONNECTION

Students can keep a garden diary, documenting in sequence what they do to prepare and tend the garden, as well as the date that plants germinate, bloom, bear fruit, etc. They can measure the plant or fruit each day to record its growth, and they may wish to record the temperature and weather conditions as well.

SCIENCE CONNECTION

Students can research medicines that had their origin in herbal or plant-based curatives. What is the ingredient that makes the plant useful in a treatment? Is it still used today? Why or why not?

SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION

If students wish to design a garden of plants known in medieval times, they may consult the resources below to guide them. They may wish to cook a dish of flavored vegetables or fruits, using produce from their garden along with herbs and spices, nuts and grains, and other ingredients known in the Middle Ages. There are a number of cookbooks that contain adaptations of medieval recipes. The students can identify a list of foods, including potatoes, tomatoes, corn, coffee, tea, chocolate, etc., that would not have been known in medieval Europe.

For a more modern “pleasure garden,” students may wish to research Central Park in New York City, then report their findings to the class.

RESOURCES

- Cosman, Madeleine Pelner. *Fabulous Feasts: Medieval Cookery and Ceremony*. New York: G. Braziller, 1976.
- Harvey, John H. *Mediaeval Gardens*. London: B. T. Batsford, 1981.
- Landsberg, Sylvia. *The Medieval Garden*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1996.
- Stokstad, Marilyn, and Jerry Stannard. *Gardens of the Middle Ages*. Lawrence: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, 1983.

See also *The Unicorn Tapestries*, a feature on the CD-ROM that accompanies this publication.

BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS: MEDIEVAL GARDENS

Read the entries for the Cuxa Cloister (image 12) and *The Unicorn Is Found* (image 34), as well as the section on Monasticism in this publication (page 20).

Gardens are mentioned in some of the earliest accounts of medieval monasteries. Specific information regarding their design and content is sparse until the ninth century, when the following sources emerge:

- In a decree dating from before the year 812, Charlemagne issued a list of eighty-nine species of plants he wanted grown in the imperial gardens throughout his domain.
- The plan of Saint Gall in Switzerland provides a model for an ideal monastery. Dating from around 816 to 820, its ground plan indicates multiple gardens including orchards, vegetable gardens with labeled, raised planting beds, and a medicinal garden in close proximity to the monastic infirmary.
- Walahfrid Strabo, abbot of Reichenau, wrote the *Hortulus*, a poem describing the twenty-three plants he cultivated as well as the pleasures and hard work of gardening.

Lesson Plan: Medieval Beasts and the Bestiary

GRADE LEVEL: elementary, with extensions
for older students

OBJECTIVES

- Students will look at and discuss examples of animals, both real and imaginary, in medieval art.
- Students will read and discuss portions of the Bestiary.
- Students will create their own fantastic beast or beasts; older students will write about their creation to make a class Bestiary.

MATERIALS

- Drawing paper
- Pencils
- Crayons or markers



DISCUSSION

Discuss with students the ways in which animals are written about today, or portrayed in television and movies, documentaries, cartoons, or children's stories. Students may share stories of their own pets or other animals displaying bravery, jealousy, love, or unusual abilities. Why are we interested in animals? From early times, people depicted animals in works of art for a variety of reasons, including hunting magic, protection, association with gods and goddesses, decorative possibilities, scientific observation, and symbolism.

Look at a selection of slides showing animals in medieval art. As students identify the animals, discuss features and qualities that the artist has observed and emphasized. How does the material determine how the animal is portrayed? Compare the bold, sweeping, curving lines of the wyvern in the fresco (image 22) with the compact body and realistic details of the aquamanile (image 27). Using the publications listed below, discuss the medieval interpretation of each animal, its name as well as characteristics and habits. Some of the animals are real and others are fantastic, some of the associations (for example, the rooster as a symbol of pride) may be familiar, others may need clarification. Conclude with the Narbonne Arch (image 14), which is decorated with eight animals that would have been part of the Bestiary: a mantichore, a pelican, a basilisk, a harpy, a griffin, an amphisbaena, a centaur, and a lion.

Read the image entries in this publication or read or distribute selections from the Bestiary that relate to the works of art. Explain to students that they will be creating their own fantastic beasts and a class Bestiary.



ACTIVITY: CREATE A BEAST

Review some of the characteristics of animals the students have seen in the artworks. List some of the physical features that would be seen on the animals' heads: horns, antlers, ears, teeth, whiskers, noses, manes, wattles, etc. List some of the features of the body and appendages: fur, scales, fins, paws, wings, feathers, etc. Finally, list some of the features of the lower body: tails, feet, toes, fins, etc. Discuss what these features reveal about the habits and life cycle of an animal. For instance, fins tell us that the animal

VISUAL RESOURCES



Image 14. The Narbonne Arch



Image 22. Wyvern from a frieze



Image 27. Aquamanile in the form of a rooster



Image 33. The Story of the Trojan War:
The Battle with the Centaur (Sagittary)
and The Conference at Achilles' Tent

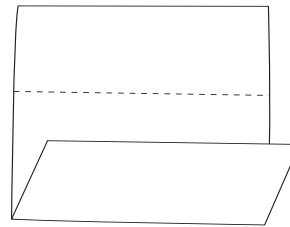


Image 34. The Unicorn Is Found

spends time in the water; tails can be used for defense as well as for balance and movement, etc.

Have the students think of the habits and movements that belong to the animals they know, then have each of them write one of these on a small slip of paper, which is folded and placed with the others in a container. Among the possibilities could be: an animal flies, crawls, swims, or runs; it eats vegetation or meat; it lives in a cold place, or a hot place, or underground; it is huge or small, etc. After you have enough slips of paper, stir them around in the container, and select several of them for the class' new beast.

Distribute sheets of drawing paper and have students fold the sheets into thirds as shown.



Next, have students fold their sheet of paper so that only the top third is visible; this is where they will begin their composite beast by drawing the head, and they should write their initials lightly in a corner of this section. They may draw the head of a real or imaginary animal, keeping in mind the features selected in the exercise above, and adding details and textures in pencil only. They should extend the drawing about 1/4 inch into the middle third of the paper so the next person will know where to begin, fold the top back, and pass the sheet to a neighbor.

The next person should, without looking at the head, draw a body and middle appendages (arms, wings, fins, etc.). Again, they may choose to draw part of a real or imaginary animal. They should initial this section lightly, then extend the body about 1/4 inch into the bottom third, fold the paper to hide the middle and upper sections, and pass the sheet to another neighbor.

The last person will add the legs, lower body, tail, etc., not looking at what has been drawn before, then finish by adding their initials to the page.

At this point, students may open up the papers to see what kinds of animals they have created. They may

keep this sheet to complete, go back to the page on which they drew a head, or the teacher may wish to collect all the sheets, make two copies of each, and give each student an original and copies of the other two animals on which they collaborated.

Using crayons or marking pens, students should add details to finish each animal, providing texture and pattern on the body.

LANGUAGE ARTS CONNECTION

Review the Bestiary and its descriptions of the animals and their habits. Ask students to write about the beast or beasts they have created. They should think of a name for their animal, then decide what it might eat, where it might live, how it would move around, or what kinds of sounds it would make. Would it be a friendly animal or a fierce one? The class can bind their drawings and writings together or display them on the wall. Students may wish to have a contest to match written descriptions with the composite beasts.

SCIENCE CONNECTION

If students are studying animals and their characteristics, habitats, and habits, the teacher may use scientific observation to introduce or follow up this lesson. A trip to the zoo or natural history museum, a discussion of pets and their characteristics, a drawing session of animals, or closely observing and handling things like pelts, horns, antlers, skins, etc., will enrich students' drawings.

EXTENSION FOR OLDER STUDENTS

The use of allegory in the Bestiary can provide the basis for a writing assignment. Discuss the role of observation in the Bestiary and what kinds of assumptions are made about animal behavior. How does the animal relate to the abstract concept that the Bestiary assigns as a correspondence? How does this relate to the use of symbolism? Students may write an allegorical passage about an animal that they are familiar with or have researched, listing some of the animal's actual habits to discuss in an allegorical manner, or they may invent an animal to write about.

BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS: THE BESTIARY

The Bestiary was a collection of descriptions of real and imaginary animals (also plants and stones), including their characteristics and habits, observed through the lens of allegory. Its purpose was didactic, providing correspondences between the natural world and the nature of God for the purpose of religious and moral instruction.

A Greek work called the *Physiologus* (physis = nature; logos = word or reason) formed the basis for the medieval Bestiary. The *Physiologus*, probably written in Alexandria, and in circulation before the fourth century A.D., contained

observations on natural history from works by Aristotle and Pliny combined with oral tradition, classical mythology, and scripture. It was translated into Latin, Ethiopian, Syriac, and Armenian, and expanded with additional chapters. By the twelfth century, the Latin translation had three times as much material, including classifications of beasts, birds, reptiles, and fish, as well as chapters on trees, the creation, the ages of man, and the nature of man.

The Bestiary, as the book was now known, was frequently illustrated, and it became one of the most popular books of the Middle Ages, along with the Psalter and the Apocalypse.

RESOURCES

- Benton, Janetta Rebold. *The Medieval Menagerie: Animals in the Art of the Middle Ages*. New York: Abbeville Press, 1992.
- Hassig, Debra, ed. *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature*. New York: Garland, 1999.
- Randall, Richard H. *A Cloisters Bestiary*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1960.
- Schrader, J. L. "A Medieval Bestiary." *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art* 44, no. 1 (Summer 1986).
- White, T. H. *The Book of Beasts*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1954.

See also *The Unicorn Tapestries*, a feature on the CD-ROM that accompanies this publication.

Lesson Plan: Symbolism in Medieval Art

GRADE LEVEL: secondary

OBJECTIVES

- Students will first discuss visual symbolism of their own time, then learn about its expressions in medieval art, including how medieval artists indicated that an image was a symbol, and how a single image could communicate aspects of the person or thing it represented.
- Students will learn about heraldry, a branch of medieval art particularly rich in symbolism. Students will learn some of the rules of heraldic composition and some of the terminology used in describing a heraldic device.
- Students will create their own heraldic device, following some of the rules of composition.

MATERIALS

- Paper
- Pencils
- Paints or colored marking pencils



DISCUSSION

Discuss with the class what symbols are, how they are used in art, and the reasons why they might be used there. Does a symbol in art have to be a picture, or can words and letters be visual symbols too? Have your students discuss the visual symbols found in their everyday lives and how they affect people. Have them draw the symbols they have encountered, cut them out of magazines or other publications, or print them from Web sites, but without any accompanying text or explanation. Present some of them to the class and ask what each visual symbol tells them.

Show image 32. Ask the class to make a list of things in the central room that seem to be more than what meets the eye. Read the list aloud, then discuss with your students how the artist may have indicated which are symbols. (The description of image 32 provides the probable symbolic meanings for some of these.) Do any of these resemble modern-day symbols?

Image 6 presents a more straightforward example of medieval visual symbolism. Look at the slide with the class. How does the artist connect the writer of the book with his symbol above? What is it about an eagle that might be true for this writer and his writings? To make this point another way, you may want to block the bottom two-thirds of the slide when you show it, so that only the eagle is visible. Ask the class what the eagle tells you about the man below.

The symbolism of medieval heraldry is usually a favorite of students. For background information, read the background on heraldry (page 167) and the section on Knighthood in the West (page 19). Also, note the entries for images 25 and 32 in order to visualize how heraldry was utilized in works of art. If more information on medieval symbolism and heraldry is needed, see the resources section at the end of this lesson plan.



ACTIVITY: A COAT OF ARMS

Have each student think up three symbols that might define her/his family, life history, or character and that would be identifiable to others. One should be a color, one should be a plant or animal, and the last one should be a geometric shape, such as a circle or square, which could be

VISUAL RESOURCES



Image 6. Plaque with John the Evangelist



Image 25. Tomb effigy of Jean II d'Alluye

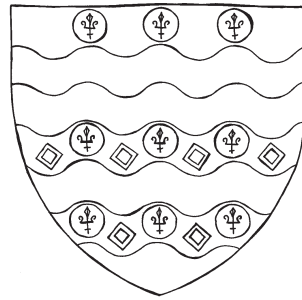


Image 32. The Annunciation Triptych

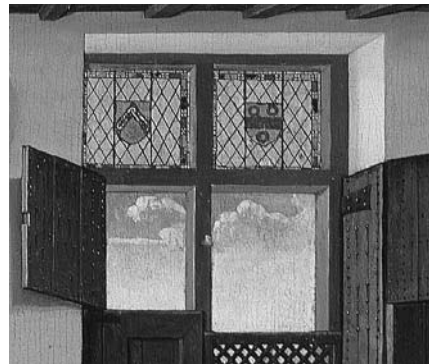
repeated. They should add their first or last name as a fourth element to the list, deciding if and how the name can be represented in a graphic form (Byrd, Black, Keyes, Weaver, etc.). Or, students may wish to incorporate their initial(s). They should experiment with three or four different combinations of these four things, keeping in mind that the design should be pleasing and easy to read.

Show images 25 and 32 and discuss the role of heraldic devices in each one. A close look at the tomb effigy of Jean d'Alluye (image 25), its paint now gone, can lead to a discussion of the regalia of knighthood. For instance, what piece of equipment indicates that he was

a knight? On which of his articles of clothing or piece of equipment might a coat of arms appear? Originally the coat of arms of Jean d'Alluye was painted on the shield covering his left knee, and we know from records that it would have looked something like this:



Besides the clothing, armor, and weapons, the pose of the effigy and the symbolic lion at its feet bring to mind the ideal qualities of the knight. (Read about Jean d'Alluye in the entry for image 25.)



The Annunciation Triptych (image 32, and detail, above) contains a device that would have belonged to the donor. In this case, the coat of arms in the left window of the central panel has been identified as that of the Ingelbrechts of Malines. Why would wealthy merchants adopt a coat of arms? Discuss the rules of heraldic composition described in the background on heraldry (page 167), including contrasting combinations of colors and metals and the charges and their simplification. Students should incorporate some or all of their symbols into a device to fit on a shield. One way to do this is by cutting out the shapes that are symbols and gluing them onto paper cut into the shape of a shield; paints or colored marking pencils

would then create the “metals” and “colors” of the device. Another is drawing a design of the device on paper, then transferring the design onto a large sheet of paper. This can be done by using transfer paper, or rubbing the back of the drawing with charcoal, then tracing over the lines of the drawing onto the large sheet beneath; once again, paint or colored marking pencils could provide “metals” and “colors.”

SOCIAL STUDIES EXTENSION

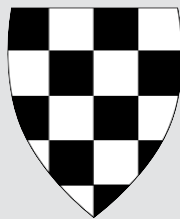
History classes can research the coats of arms and heraldic devices of historical figures, or students may wish to research the derivation of a family name. There are additional rules of heraldic composition that students can research to enrich their personal devices, including marshalling and marks of cadency. The resources section below provides starting points for this research.

RESOURCES

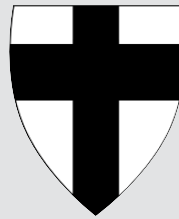
- Ferguson, George. *Signs & Symbols in Christian Art with Illustrations from Paintings of the Renaissance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Fox-Davis, Arthur. *The Complete Guide to Heraldry*. Revised and annotated by J. P. Brooke-Little. New York: Bonanza Books, 1985.
- Neubecker, Ottfried. *Heraldry: Sources, Symbols, and Meaning*. Maidenhead, England: McGraw-Hill, 1976.
- Wagner, Anthony. *Heralds and Heraldry in the Middle Ages*. London: Oxford University Press, 1956.



Bend



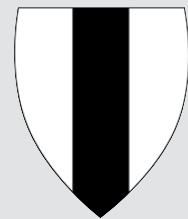
Checky



Cross



Saltine



Pale

BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS: HERALDRY

Strictly speaking, heraldry is the systematic use of hereditary symbols (called devices) that are centered on the shield of a knight. (These designs are also known as coats of arms because they were repeated on a knight’s cloth surcoat.) Invented in the twelfth century in western Europe, heraldry publicized a knight’s status and lineage at a time when family and feudal ties were of great importance. Heraldic designs could also appear on wall paintings and floor tiles, on tapestries, furniture, and funerary monuments, in stained-glass windows, and on rich enamels and ivory carvings. Because they were

so well suited to identification and closely associated with noble knights and the ideals of chivalry, their use soon spread to city dwellers, to merchants and guilds, to monasteries, churches, and the religious. Even figures from literature, such as King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table, were assigned coats of arms.

Since heralds accompanied lords on military campaigns, acted as ambassadors, and proclaimed and officiated at tournaments, they naturally became very familiar with the devices used by knights. As the number of shields multiplied, new knights and nobles who had never had them before would often turn to heralds to devise a

continued

(Heraldry cont.)

unique coat of arms. Because of the hereditary nature of heraldic shields, heralds also became experts in genealogy. Blazon is the specialized vocabulary developed by heralds to describe shields, enabling anyone familiar with the language to create an easily drawn reproduction. At the core of heraldry is the use of bold color and stylized design. Animals or inanimate objects are called “charges” and are drawn in a simplified and conventionalized manner. Heraldic colors are known as “tinctures” and divided between the “metals,” Or (gold) and Argent (silver)—often represented as yellow and white—and the “colors,” Gules (red), Azure (blue), Sable (black), Vert (green), and occasionally Purpure (purple). To provide good visibility at a distance, one fundamental and early

rule was that “color” should not be placed on “color,” or “metal” on “metal.” This means that a red lion should appear on the gold or silver surface of a shield, never on red, blue, black, or green. In linear patterns, such as stripes, “metal” and “color” should alternate.

Colors could represent qualities like courage (red), fidelity (blue), purity (white); shapes might represent stability (triangle), eternity (ring or circle), love (heart); animals or plants symbolized tenacity (thistle), power (lion), rebirth (butterfly). Sometimes a visual pun, called “canting,” was used in the heraldic design to bring a name to mind—for instance, a hog was used in the coat of arms of a knight named Sir Nicholas Bacon.

Lesson Plan: Techniques and Materials

GRADE LEVEL: elementary/secondary

OBJECTIVES

- Students will look at examples of various techniques used to make works of art in the medieval period, including mosaic, weaving, enamel work, and stained glass.
- Students will discuss the materials, processes, and visual characteristics of a selection of these works of art.
- Students will choose one technique to explore through an art-making activity.

This lesson plan provides a number of options for the classroom teacher. A discussion of medieval art and artists can be supplemented by examining a selection of slides from this resource showing a variety of techniques. Each technique involves materials and processes that pose their own particular challenge to the artists. More information about these techniques is provided (pp. 141–153) in the Materials and Techniques section. Questions for discussion can include the function of an object, its size and form, and how these relate to the materials and techniques used. Students can list the materials needed, where they might be found, and the value of the raw materials. They might discuss the steps of the technique process, how many people were needed, and how much time was involved. They should consider the subject matter in the work of art, how it relates to a theme or narrative, and how different techniques need to be manipulated to represent imagery like faces, bodies, cloth, metal, flowers, etc.

At the end of the slide discussion, students may wish to choose a technique to explore through an art project. This can be done individually or collaboratively, depending on class time and resources. A modified project accompanies each exploration, using inexpensive materials generally found in the classroom. Older students may wish to experiment with the actual technique in a studio art class.

VISUAL RESOURCES



Image 3. Fragment of a floor mosaic with a personification of Ktisis



Image 10. Nine medallions from an icon frame



Image 24. The Life of Vincent of Saragossa and the History of His Relics



Image 34. The Unicorn Is Found



Image 16. Plaque with the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost)



Image 33. The Story of the Trojan War: The Battle with the Centaur (Sagittary) and The Conference at Achilles' Tent

Technique: Mosaic



MATERIALS

- Scraps of colored construction and craft papers, including foils
- Large sheets of construction paper, one for each student, or brown kraft paper
- Scissors
- Glue

PREPARATION

Read the section on **mosiacs** in Materials and Techniques (page 146) and the entry for image 3.



DISCUSSION

Show image 3 and discuss the mosaic. Note that the image is made up of small pieces of marble and glass inset into a bed of mortar. The individual pieces are set at angles to each other, following the shape of the face or folds of the clothing. Point out the alternating black and white tesserae that indicate pearls on the diadem and the neckline of the dress. Look at the face inset with smaller tesserae and modeled with a subtle range of colors to provide greater detail and a more lifelike image. Where glass has been used, it will reflect light and give richness to the design. These are some of the considerations that students will want to remember as they plan and execute their own mosaic.

ACTIVITY: CREATING A MOSAIC

Decide if students will work on individual projects or a collaborative mosaic, then identify the subject. This could be scenes from a narrative (a fairy tale, legend, etc.), or it could be a single image of an abstract concept like “foundation.” Students should think of concrete images that embody the subject, then sketch out a design onto a large piece of paper. Their design should fill the page with large areas and shapes, and not contain too much detail. Students may cut a number of long strips from colored construction paper, then cut the strips into smaller “tesserae.” They should arrange the tesserae over the areas and shapes of the design, leaving spaces between, then glue the pieces in place.

EXTENSION

Older students may work with actual ceramic tesserae and/or glass globes, gluing them in place on Masonite or plywood panels, then grouting carefully between the tesserae and wiping the surface clean.

Technique: Weaving



MATERIALS

- Corrugated cardboard for looms
- Yarns in a variety of colors and textures, craft or worsted weight
- Carpet warp
- Cardboard bobbins or plastic big-eyed needles
- Scissors

PREPARATION

Read the section on **tapestries** in Materials and Techniques (page 152) and the entries for images 33 and 34. Prepare looms in advance, if desired.



DISCUSSION

Show images 33 and 34 and discuss the materials and technique of tapestry weaving with students. If possible, bring in examples of unspun and spun wool yarn and plants that would have been used to dye the yarn. Demonstrate the technique of weaving on a loom if one is available. Point out that the large tapestries were woven from the back and side, and that the weavers used different colors of weft yarns to create the images, the impression of water, fur or feathers, shining armor, velvet or brocade fabrics, delicate flowers, faces, and animals.

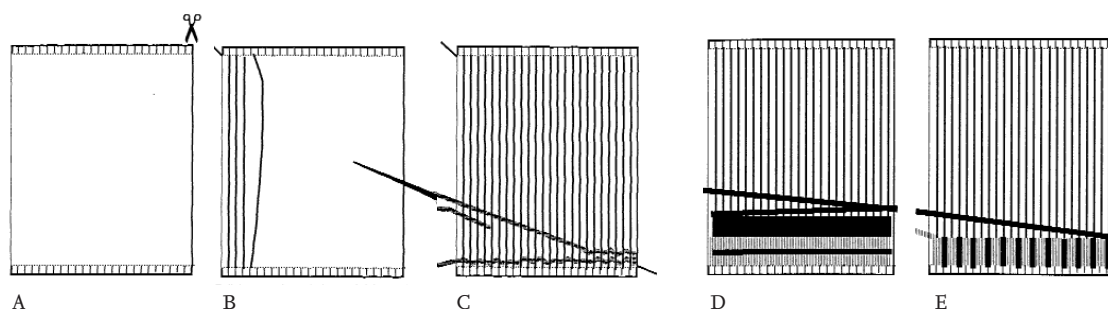
Compare the multiple scenes of the Trojan War tapestry to the more focused scene of the unicorn tapestry. How are space and distance shown? How is pattern incorporated into the design?



ACTIVITY: WEAVING ON A CARDBOARD LOOM

Decide on a simple theme for students to weave, perhaps a design of lines and shapes, a heraldic device, or a flower or fantastic animal if a more complex image is desired.

Cut corrugated cardboard into easily handled pieces, about 7 x 6 inches (diagram A, p. 172). Cut 1/4-inch deep slots 1/4 inch apart across the top and bottom. (B) Tie a knot in the end of a long piece of strong carpet warp or crochet cotton. This will be the warp, or lengthwise threads. Pull the yarn through the top left-hand slot so the knot is at the back. Bring warp yarn down through the lower left-hand slot and around the back to the next top slot. Continue wrapping the warp around the loom, making sure it is even and slightly taut, not too tight or loose.



Students should cut a piece of drawing paper the same size as the loom, then sketch out a simple design with no details. They can insert this drawing under the warp threads on their loom to serve as a cartoon, or guide.

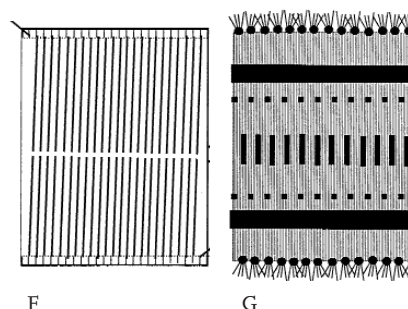
(C) The weft or colored yarns can be threaded through large plastic needles, or students may cut a simple bobbin from cardboard, attaching a workable length of weft yarn to it. (Measure the yarn between the nose and an outstretched hand; yarn cut at this length is easy to manage.)

Leaving a one-inch tail of yarn at the side of the loom, students should insert the bobbin alternately over and under the warp threads, then turn and work back across the warp threads, alternating the over/under pattern. These two rows should be repeated for about an inch so students get used to the technique before starting their design. To keep the finished edges even, the yarn always should be inserted in an arc or diagonal line, then pushed down into place to completely cover the warp.

(D) To change colors, students should prepare another bobbin with a new color and weave across the part of their design that requires that color. When the different yarns meet, students can loop them around the same warp thread, or leave a small open slit. The short tails of yarn should be left until the end, when they can be run back into the finished piece.

For horizontal stripes, have the students weave at least two rows with one color before they change colors. The more rows of each color they weave, the wider the stripes will be. (E) For vertical stripes, they should weave one row with the first color, the second row with a second color, the third row with the first color, fourth row with the second color, and so forth.

Students should work the last inch or so of the piece in plain weave with one color. (F) When they are finished, they should turn the loom over, cut across the warp threads in the middle of the back, then carefully remove the weaving from the cardboard. (G) To finish, they should tie off two or three warp yarns with overhand knots to stabilize the edges of the weaving and provide a fringe. The fringe can be trimmed to a shorter length.



EXTENSION

Large tapestry looms that allow students to work side by side can be purchased from craft supply houses. Older students may wish to work on more complex tapestry designs.

RESOURCE

See *The Unicorn Tapestries*, a feature on the CD-ROM that accompanies this publication.

Technique: Enamel



MATERIALS

- Glitter glue in a squeeze bottle, or fine glitter and white glue to make your own
- Colored glues in squeeze bottles, or small bottles of white glue, tempera paint, or food coloring to make your own colored glues (alternatively, you can use low-temperature hot glitter glue sticks and guns or yellow worsted-weight yarn)
- Heavy paper or cardboard, cut into 4-inch rounds

PREPARATION

Read the sections on **champlevé** and **cloisonné** enamels in the discussion on metalwork in Materials and Techniques (page 144) and the entries for images 10 and 16.

Prepare glitter and colored glues in advance, if necessary. To make glitter glue, mix fine glitter and white glue (one part glitter to two parts glue) and replace in a squeeze bottle, cutting the top opening a little larger to prevent the tip from becoming clogged while using. For colored glues, mix food coloring or tempera paint with white glue to get the desired shades (the glue will darken as it dries) and replace in squeeze bottles.



DISCUSSION

Show images 10 and 16 and compare and contrast the techniques of cloisonné and champlevé enameling. While both use melted glass, the metal chosen and the techniques of working it are different. Both rely on multiple firings and finishing techniques of grinding and polishing. Point out the juxtaposition of brilliant colors outlined by metal, as well as the ways in which shading or detail can be achieved.



ACTIVITY: CREATING CLOISONNÉ PORTRAIT MEDALLIONS

Students can design small portrait medallions using the cloisonné technique. This involves the use of colored glues, glitter glues, or glued pieces of yarn, whichever technique best suits the classroom.

Students may wish to make a preliminary sketch on a 4-inch round of paper, concentrating on outlined shapes like those they have seen in the slides. They should transfer their portrait to the cardboard round, then apply a line of glitter glue (or low-temperature hot glitter glue, with supervision) to outline the shapes. This should be allowed to dry thoroughly.

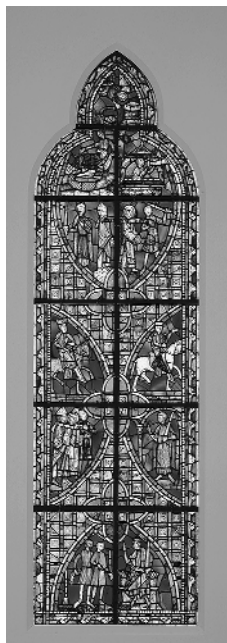
Alternatively, students can use regular glue to outline the shapes, then place lengths of yellow yarn on top of the glued lines, pressing gently to keep the yarn in place.

When the glue is hard, students should use other colors of glue to fill the spaces of the design, then leave the entire medallion to dry and harden.

EXTENSION

Older students may try cloisonné or other enameling techniques in a studio jewelry class.

Technique: Stained Glass



MATERIALS

- Tissue paper or cellophane
- Black construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue

PREPARATION

Read the section on stained glass in Materials and Techniques (page 151) and the entry for image 24.



DISCUSSION

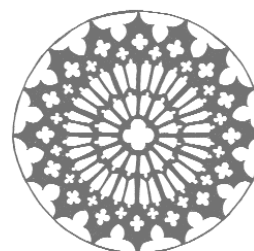
Show image 24 and discuss stained-glass technique with students. They should notice how the composition is organized—the windows are divided into smaller panels that contain portions of the narrative. The individual glass shapes are defined and outlined by sleeves of lead (cames) that hold them together. The finished panel would have been placed in a building. What would be the effect of a row of windows like this

one? Would the primary purpose be to let in light or to tell a story?



ACTIVITY: CREATING A STAINED-GLASS “WINDOW”

Explain that students will have a chance to design and complete a stained-glass window in an arched format (bilateral symmetry; below, left) or a circular format (radial symmetry; below, right).



Discuss the concept of symmetry and where it might appear in nature or art, distinguishing between bilateral symmetry (a butterfly) and radial symmetry (a daisy or sunburst).

Distribute black construction paper and have each student fold a sheet in half, cutting out of it an arched window shape by starting with a high point at the top of the fold and continuing to the bottom. They should then cut shapes out of the inside area of the arched window shape, keeping them symmetrical and leaving a border around each of the holes. Pieces of colored tissue or cellophane should be attached with glue or tape to the back of the cut-out areas. If desired, students can add details to the tissue or cellophane with black marking pen, being careful not to tear the delicate papers. Display in the classroom windows where light can shine through.

Alternatively, have students fold a circle of black paper as if to make a snowflake. They should cut shapes from both sides of the folded piece, then unfold and attach tissue or cellophane to the open areas.

EXTENSION FOR OLDER STUDENTS

Students can experiment with actual stained-glass technique or liquid solder and glass stain on glass or Plexiglas.

ART/LANGUAGE ART EXTENSION

Arrange a visit to the studio of an artist who uses one of these techniques, or invite the artist to visit the classroom. Other techniques represented in the packet can be considered as well, including metalwork, fresco or manuscript painting, wood or stone sculpture carving, etc. Students should be prepared with questions to ask the artist, including:

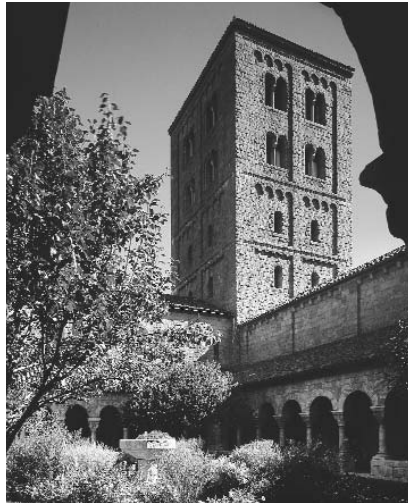
- How has this technique changed since medieval times; how has it not changed?
- Where did the materials come from in the Middle Ages; where do they come from today?
- Has the artist been influenced by medieval art? How? Through techniques or subject matter?
- Does the artist belong to a guild or organization of others who work in the same media? How do the members share ideas and promote their work—through workshops, publications, conferences, or educational programs?

Students may wish to write up the visit or interview as an article for the school newspaper, as a “how-to” guide (sequence), as a short story about a craftsman set in medieval times, or as a journal entry.

The Metropolitan Museum's Two Collections of Medieval Art

PETER BARNET

Michel David-Weill Curator in
Charge of the Department of
Medieval Art and The Cloisters



Cuxa Cloister with tower to
the northeast

THE MEDIEVAL ART COLLECTIONS in the Main Building of the Museum—the Medieval Department—and the collection at The Cloisters have distinct histories and offer different experiences for the visitor. This brief introduction will highlight the personalities and historical circumstances that led to the creation of a single great museum with two remarkable collections of medieval art, a process of history fascinating in its own right, while giving educators an idea of the composition and purpose of each of the Metropolitan's collections of medieval art.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art was created in 1870 as growing and culturally ambitious cities across North America gave rise to major civic institutions such as art museums, museums of natural history, and zoos. With no indigenous Mediterranean antiquities, medieval or Renaissance art, these new art museums with encyclopedic aspirations generally began by displaying plaster casts of great monuments of the distant past. By 1900, the Metropolitan had the largest collection of casts and replicas in the country. Most spectacular among them was a model of the thirteenth-century Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris at a scale of 1:20—resulting in a display that towered over visitors.

The breadth and quality of the collection of medieval art housed in The Metropolitan Museum of Art on Fifth Avenue owes more to J. Pierpont Morgan, born in 1837, than to any other individual. A banker and financier by trade, Morgan was a dedicated philanthropist. Among the areas in which Morgan collected on a vast scale were antiquities, medieval and Renaissance works of art, and old-master paintings. He served as a longtime trustee and president of the young Metropolitan Museum of Art prior to his death, in Rome in 1913. Masterpieces from Morgan's collection went on view at the Museum to record crowds in a special exhibition in 1914. Morgan's will left the disposition of the collection to his son, who gave a portion of the medieval objects to the Museum in 1916; the following year, some 7,000 additional objects came to the Museum. (Of course, J. P. Morgan's large collection of manuscripts, books, drawings, and a few favorite medieval and Renaissance objects from his study are at the Morgan Library in New York.)

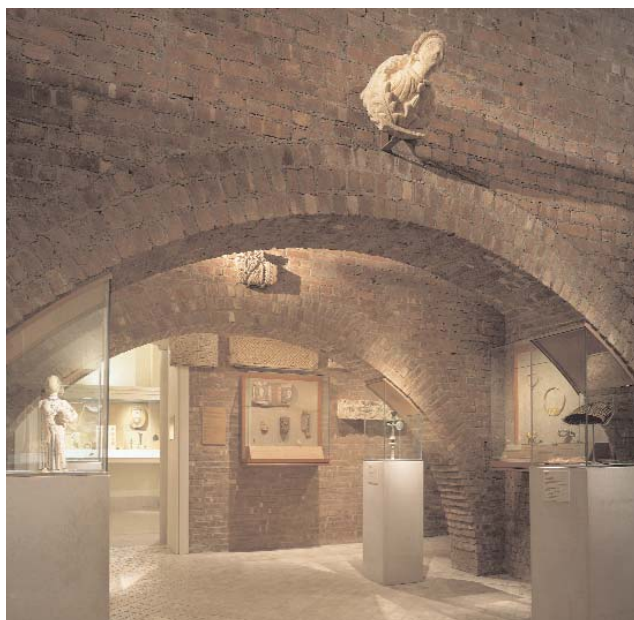
The medieval collection, previously part of European Decorative Arts, was given its own department in 1933. Morgan's collection, along with subsequent acquisitions, was exhibited from that time in the centrally located galleries on the Museum's main level. Writing in *The Metropolitan Museum of*

Art Bulletin of 1954, the curators stated that, “whereas the smaller medieval objects have been grouped by period or material, the sculptures and tapestries have been arranged ... according to the exigencies of the architectural setting.” The Medieval Treasury today houses ivories, goldsmith work, and other small, precious objects organized chronologically and by material, but the large galleries—the so-called Tapestry Hall and the Sculpture Hall—serve to display sculptures, tapestries, and stained glass from the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries much as they have been for over sixty years, “according to the exigencies of the architectural setting.” Didactic labels and, more recently, the audio guide provide information to help the visitor comprehend the collection.

The exception to the relative lack of change in the medieval galleries is the installation of the Mary and Michael Jaharis Galleries for Byzantine Art, which opened to the public in 2000. There, in two long spaces adjacent to the Great Hall and flanking the Great Stair, and in the newly created, crypt-like gallery beneath the stairs (see a view of this gallery opposite), Byzantine objects have been reinstalled chronologically and thematically along with the earliest Western works in the medieval collection. When built in 1902, the galleries were conceived as corridors, but the movement between them that is made possible by the new space under the stairs and by the elimination of walls at the western end has permitted a carefully considered arrangement of the works of art that functions as a survey of Byzantine art and as an introduction to the Western medieval collections.

At the same time that J. P. Morgan was collecting sumptuous treasures on a grand scale, the American sculptor George Grey Barnard found that he could supplement his income by picking up fragments of medieval monuments in the French countryside and reselling them at a profit. The Metropolitan’s medieval branch museum, The Cloisters, opened to the public in 1938, but its origins are in Barnard’s entrepreneurial activities around the turn of the century.

While Barnard’s early ambitions were modest—he bought sculptures (often fragmentary) in the countryside for a few francs and brought them back to Paris, where he sold them to clients for several times his purchase price—he soon found that he could operate on a large scale. The destruction of religious monuments during the wars of religion, during and after the French Revolution, and widespread poverty in much of the French



countryside during Barnard's years in France, created a hospitable environment for his increasingly more elaborate plans. By the end of 1913, he had acquired substantial sections of four major cloisters.

As early as 1906, Barnard had the notion that The Metropolitan Museum of Art might acquire what he called "a period architectural setting for Gothic statues, paintings and other church treasures." He wrote directly to J. Pierpont Morgan, then the president of the Museum, offering a number of works, but by 1910 Barnard gave up his idea of selling his collection of cloisters and other medieval monuments *en bloc*. He announced that he would build his own "Cloister Museum" in New York. Motivated in part by a French law enacted in 1913 that would have prohibited the export of much of what he had acquired, he constructed his museum quickly out of brick in northern Manhattan on Fort Washington Avenue, not far from The Cloisters' current location. The museum opened during the First World War and Barnard charged admission to raise funds to aid families of French artists.

We have seen that at the time Barnard brought his collection to New York, Americans had to rely on travel or on museum collections of plaster casts and models to form a visual impression of the Middle Ages. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., was impressed with Barnard's museum, recognizing that the collection of authentic monuments could provide visitors with a personal experience of medieval monuments, and he agreed to acquire the collection for The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Rockefeller gave to New York City property—now called Fort Tryon Park—in which a new museum was to be built, and he acquired the land on the New Jersey shore of the Hudson River to preserve the unspoiled view opposite the site.

The Barnard collection came to the Museum in 1925, but it was not

View of the cryptlike space under the Great Stairs of the Museum

View from above of Cuxa Cloister

until 1938 that the Metropolitan's new medieval branch opened to the public. Charles Collens, architect of the Riverside Church in New York, which was also a Rockefeller project, was chosen to design it. Collens collaborated with Rockefeller and curators Joseph Breck and, following Breck's death, James Rorimer. Rockefeller's initial vision of the building, sitting on its high perch, was based on a medieval castle, but he came to understand that the religious nature of most of the collection called for a different approach. While The Cloisters was intentionally not modeled on any single medieval building, it takes its essential design from southern French monastic complexes in the region of the Pyrenees.

Photographs taken at the time of the opening of The Cloisters in 1938 show a series of uncluttered galleries with no small-scale works of art on view, understandable given that Barnard's collection had included only monumental architectural elements, sculptures, and frescoes dating from the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries. By 1938, Rockefeller had agreed to contribute his great series of Unicorn Tapestries to the new museum. The collection was originally lit primarily with natural light or candlelight, with electric light used for hallways, stairwells, and general ambient light.

In 1952, Rockefeller provided the Museum with an endowment for The Cloisters that has allowed the collection to grow. Although large-scale works have been added to the collection since its inception, the endowment has also supported the addition of many treasury objects. The Cloisters now rivals the collection in the Main Building in its marvelous ivories, metalwork, manuscripts, and textiles, although Byzantine works are excluded.

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of The Cloisters, in 1988, an expanded Treasury was created on the lower level to properly house these delicate objects in a climate-controlled environment with appropriate lighting. This has allowed the main galleries on the upper level to remain consistent with the original vision of a museum that allows visitors to experience the sense of being in and around medieval monuments, while the more traditional, encyclopedic nature of the medieval art galleries on Fifth Avenue provides visitors with a virtual textbook of medieval art, within a framework of sixteen further collections of art under one roof.

Selected Resources

Background for the Medieval World

- Cavallo, Guglielmo, ed. *The Byzantines*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997. Composite portraits present remarkable and fascinating details of the lives of ordinary Byzantines—peasants, soldiers, teachers, and others; includes index and bibliographies.
- Gies, Joseph, and Frances Gies. *Daily Life in Medieval Times: A Vivid, Detailed Account of Birth, Marriage, and Death; Food, Clothing, and Housing; Love and Labor, in the Middle Ages*. New York: Black Dog & Leventhal, 1999. This very readable book focuses on life in England and France in castle, village, and city from the eleventh to thirteenth century; includes color illustrations, bibliography, and index.
- Hollister, C. Warren, and Judith M. Bennett. *Medieval Europe: A Short History*. 9th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001. This introduction to medieval history presents the years from 500 to 1500 as a time of constant change; includes many timelines, maps, color illustrations, and sources for further information.
- Hopkins, Andrea. *Most Wise & Valiant Ladies: Remarkable Lives, Women of the Middle Ages*. New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 1998. Presents the lives of six women of the Middle Ages: Joan of Arc, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Margery Kempe, Hildegard of Bingen, Christine de Pisan, and Margaret Paston.
- What Life Was Like. *Time-Life Series*. Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life Books, 1998–99.
- Amid Splendor and Intrigue: *Byzantine Empire, A.D. 330–1453*. Focuses on the daily lives of the Byzantine people in Constantinople as well as in the empire's provinces; from contemporary letters, diaries, church and government documents come accounts of commoners and kings; includes a glossary and map.

In the Age of Chivalry: Medieval Europe, A.D. 800–1500. Recounts the lives of commoners and nobles, as well as great events of medieval history. The information is gleaned from contemporary manuscripts, letters, church documents, manorial accounts, and court records, as well as other historical records.

Background for Medieval Art in General

- Nees, Lawrence P. *Early Medieval Art*. Oxford History of Art Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. This book focuses on the visual arts of the early Middle Ages, demonstrating the continuity and tradition of artistic styles as Roman art gradually changed to become the art of European culture.
- Snyder, James. *Medieval Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, 4th–14th Century*. New York: Abrams, 1989. This textbook survey covers the beginnings of Christian art through the Gothic age; includes maps, chronology, bibliography, index, and over 700 illustrations.
- Stokstad, Marilyn. *Medieval Art*. 2d ed. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2004. This well-illustrated survey of more than a thousand years of Western art and architecture discusses the major monuments from the second to the fifteenth century; includes chronology, glossary, and index.

Background for Early Christian and Byzantine Art

- Cormack, Robin. *Byzantine Art*. Oxford History of Art Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. This readable introduction to Byzantine art links historical detail and significant works of art. Includes a glossary, timeline, and index.
- Elsner, Jas. *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph*. Oxford History of Art Series.

- New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. Offers an accessible approach to the arts of the Roman world from 100 to 450 A.D.
- Evans, Helen C. *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)*. Exh. cat. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004.
- Lowden, John. *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*. London: Phaidon, 1997. Equipped with many color photographs, this survey shows how and why Early Christian and Byzantine art was made and used. Includes a glossary, a list of later Roman and Byzantine emperors, key dates, a map, and a bibliography.
- Mathews, Thomas F. *Byzantium: From Antiquity to the Renaissance*. New York: Abrams, 1998. This highly readable survey situates Byzantine art in a broad cultural and historical context.

Background for Art of the West

- Camille, Michael. *Gothic Art: Glorious Visions*. Perspectives Series. New York: Abrams, 1996. This introduction and overview of the Gothic era elucidates the integral part that Gothic art played in the culture and society of the thirteenth and fourteenth century. Includes many illustrations, index, and bibliography.
- Coldstream, Nicola. *Medieval Architecture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. Treats medieval architecture thematically, seeking what all buildings have in common and how they reflect the material and spiritual concerns of the people who built and used them.
- Dodwell, C. R. *Pictorial Art of the West, 800–1200*. Pelican History of Art Series. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993. This illustrated survey includes chapters on mosaics, stained glass, painting, illustration, and embroidery—from Austria to Spain, Scandinavia to Ireland.
- Sekules, Veronica. *Medieval Art*. Oxford History of Art Series. New York: Oxford

University Press, 2001. This book is arranged by themes such as “A Sense of Place,” “Artists,” “Art and Power in the Latin Church from the Eleventh to the Thirteenth Century,” “Design and Devotion 1200–1500,” “Image and Learning,” “Art and War,” and “Pleasures.” It also includes two maps, a timeline, a bibliography, lists of museums and websites, and an index.

Stalley, Roger A. *Early Medieval Architecture*. Oxford History of Art Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. This book has fine chapters on pilgrimage and monasticism, as well as on architecture.

Selected Themes in Medieval Life

Many of the headings below are represented in articles in the *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, cited in the Reference section below.

Courtly Love and Literature

Bumke, Joachim. *Courtly Culture: Literature and Society in the High Middle Ages*. Translated by Thomas Dunlap. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Lacy, Norris J., and Geoffrey Ashe, with Debra N. Mancoff. *The Arthurian Handbook*. 2d ed. New York: Garland, 1997.

Hunting and Feasting

Cosman, Madeleine Pelter. *Fabulous Feasts: Medieval Cookery and Ceremony*. New York: G. Braziller, 1976.

Forsyth, William H. “The Noblest of Sports: Falconry in the Middle Ages.” *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art* 2, no. 9 (May 1944): 253–59.

———. “The Medieval Stag Hunt.” *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art* 10, no. 7 (March 1952): 203–10.

Knighthood in the West

Barber, Richard, and Juliet Barker. *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages*. New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989.

Gies, Frances. *The Knight in History*. New York: Harper & Row, 1984.

See Gies, Joseph, and Frances Gies. *Daily Life in Medieval Times under Background for the Medieval World*.

Monasticism

Meyvaert, Paul. “The Medieval Monastic Claustum.” *Gesta* 12 (1973): 53–59.

St. Benedict’s Rule for Monasteries. Translated by Leonard J. Doyle. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2001. Written around 400 A.D., Benedict’s Rule has been the handbook of the Benedictines, Cistercians, and other monastic orders.

Music

Hanning, Barbara Russano. *Concise History of Western Music*. New York: Norton, 1998.

Hoppin, Richard H. *Medieval Music*. The Norton Introduction to Music History. New York: Norton, 1978.

Yudkin, Jeremy. *Music in Medieval Europe*. New York: Prentice Hall, 1989.

Pilgrimage

Gerson, Paula, general ed. *The Pilgrim’s Guide to Santiago de Compostela: A Critical Edition*. 2 vols. London: Harvey Miller, 1998.

Materials and Techniques

Barnet, Peter, ed. *Images in Ivory: Precious Objects of the Gothic Age*. Exh. cat. Detroit Institute of Arts, 1997.

Cavallo, Adolfo Salvatore. *Medieval Tapestries in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993.

De Hamel, Christopher. *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts*. 2d ed. London: Phaidon, 1994.

Medieval Craftsmen Series. Armourers. Embroiderers. English Tilers. Glass Painters. Goldsmiths. Masons and Sculptors. Painters. Scribes and Illuminators. Buffalo, N.Y.: University of Toronto Press, 1991–92.

Thompson, Daniel Varney. *The Materials and Techniques of Medieval Painting*. New York: Dover, 1956.

Wixom, William D., and Margaret Lawson. “Picturing the Apocalypse: Illustrated Leaves from a Medieval Spanish Manuscript.” *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art* 59, no. 3 (Winter 2002). Includes a section on manuscript creation.

Sources for the Metropolitan Museum’s Medieval Collection

Image numbers follow each citation, where appropriate.

General

Europe in the Middle Ages. The Metropolitan Museum of Art Series, no. 3. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987. (Images 2, 4–6, 8–12, 14, 16–19, 21, 23, 30, 32, 34)

Evans, Helen C., and William D. Wixom, eds. *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261*. Exh. cat. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997. (Image 10)

Evans, Helen C., et al. “The Arts of Byzantium.” *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art* 58, no. 4 (Spring 2001). (Images 1–5, 10)

Frazer, Margaret English. “Medieval Church Treasuries.” *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art* 43, no. 3 (Winter 1985–86). (Images 10, 15)

Morales, Esther M., Michael B. Norris, Alice W. Schwarz, and Edith W. Watts. *A Masterwork of Byzantine Art, The David Plates: The Story of David and Goliath*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001. The David Plates, a set of nine silver plates that tell the story of David and Goliath, are the focus of this teacher resource; includes nine slides, a poster, and activity cards. (Image 5)

Parker, Elizabeth C., and Mary B. Shepard, ed. *The Cloisters: Studies in Honor of the Fiftieth Anniversary*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and International Center of Medieval Art, 1992. (Image 24)

The Secular Spirit: Life and Art at the End of the Middle Ages. Exh. cat. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975. This illustrated catalogue of an exhibition at the Metropolitan presents aspects of everyday life during the late Middle Ages, from feasting and costume to furniture and housing.

Shepard, Mary B. “The Relic Window of St. Vincent of Saragossa at Saint-Germain-des-Prés.” *Gesta* 37, no. 2 (1998): 258–68. (Image 24)

Wixom, William, ed. *Mirror of the Medieval World*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999. This book

provides pictures and valuable information on the hundreds of artworks collected by the Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters from 1979 to 1998. (Images 1, 3, 20, 27–29)

The Cloisters

- Ainsworth, Maryan W., and Keith Christiansen, eds. *From Van Eyck to Bruegel: Early Netherlandish Paintings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. Exh. cat. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998. (Image 32)
- Barnet, Peter, and Nancy Wu. *The Cloisters Handbook: Medieval Art and Architecture*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art (forthcoming).
- Bayard, Tania. *Sweet Herbs and Sundry Flowers: Medieval Gardens and the Gardens of The Cloisters*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997.
- Cavallo, Adolfo Salvatore. *The Unicorn Tapestries*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998. This is a new look at the seven Unicorn tapestries in the Metropolitan Museum. (Image 34)
- Dale, Thomas. "Monsters, Corporeal Deformities, and Phantasms in the Cloister of St-Michel-de-Cuxa." *Art Bulletin* 83, no. 3 (September 2001): 402–36. (Images 12–13)
- Freeman, Margaret. *Herbs for the Mediaeval Household: For Cooking, Healing and Divers Uses*. 2d ed. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997.
- The Hours of Jeanne d'Évreux: Prayer Book for a Queen*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999. This CD-ROM, narrated by Philippe de Montebello and written by Barbara Drake Boehm, includes the calendar, the Hours of the Virgin, the Hours of Saint Louis, Penitential Psalms, and information about this work of Jean Pucelle (54.1.2).
- Parker, Elizabeth C., and Charles T. Little. *The Cloisters Cross: Its Art and Meaning*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994. (Image 15)
- Schrader, J. L. "A Medieval Bestiary." *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art* 44, no. 1 (Summer 1986). (Images 14, 22, 34)
- The Unicorn Tapestries in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998. CD-ROM of the seven tapestries in the Hunt of the Unicorn series. (Image 34)

- Wixom, William D. "Medieval Sculpture at The Cloisters." *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art* 46, no. 3 (Winter 1988–89). (Images 19, 35)
- Young, Bonnie. *A Walk Through The Cloisters*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1990. (Images 12, 14–15, 17–19, 22, 25, 32, 34–35)

Primary Sources

- Beowulf*. A new verse translation by Seamus Heaney. New York: Norton, 2001. The epic poem of the Germanic warrior hero is given new voice by Nobel laureate Heaney. The Old English text is printed on the left-hand pages across from the new translation.
- Hollister, C. Warren, et al., eds. *Medieval Europe: A Short Sourcebook*. 4th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002. Introductory commentaries accompany a number of original documents; readings are followed by study questions.
- Jacobus de Voragine. *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*. 2 vols. Translated by William Granger Ryan. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. A medieval bestseller on the lives of the saints up to 1270.
- Mandeville, John. *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*. New York: Viking Penguin Classics, 1984. Setting off on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1322, Mandeville did not return for more than thirty years. Claiming to have traveled throughout Asia, he asserted that it was possible to sail around the world. The publication of his stories influenced several generations of Renaissance explorers and writers.
- Ross, James Bruce, and Mary Martin McLaughlin, eds. *The Portable Medieval Reader*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1977.
- Theophilus, Presbyter of Antioch. *On Divers Arts: The Foremost Medieval Treatise on Painting, Glassmaking, and Metalwork*. Translated by John G. Hawthorne and Cyril Stanley Smith. New York: Dover, 1979.
- White, T. H. *The Book of Beasts: Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century*. New York: Dover, 1984. This collection of short descriptions about animals and birds, real and imaginary, is accompanied by moralizing explanations.
- Wilhelm, James J., ed. *The Romance of*

Arthur: An Anthology of Medieval Texts in Translation. New York: Garland, 1994. This extensive anthology of medieval Arthurian literature includes many texts on Arthur, Merlin, Lancelot, Tristan, and Gawain.

Reference

- Bowersock, G. W., et al., eds. *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1999. The eleven essays and more than 500 encyclopedic entries in this fascinating book present a comprehensive yet readable guide to late antiquity, the years 250 to 800, a period that led to the formulation of many institutions and ideas that shape our current world. Includes index, bibliographic references, and color illustrations.
- Cantor, Norman F. *The Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*. New York: Viking, 1999.
- Farmer, David Hugh. *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Kazhdan, Alexander P., ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. 3 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Mâle, Émile. *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century*. Translated by Dora Nussey. New York: Harper & Row, 1972. A well-illustrated basic book for the understanding of symbolism in medieval art; includes medieval legends and the lives of many saints.
- Strayer, Joseph Reese, ed. *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*. 14 vols. New York: Scribner, 1982–89.
- Wieck, Roger S. *Painted Prayers: The Book of Hours in Medieval and Renaissance Art*. New York: G. Braziller, 1999. A major source on this most popular type of medieval book.

For Students

- Aliki. *A Medieval Feast*. New York: Crowell, 1983. A picture book appropriate for all ages.
- Barrett, Tracy. *Anna of Byzantium*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, 2000. The eleventh-century teenage princess, Anna Comnena, fights for her birthright to rule the Byzantine empire. Based on Anna's own story, *The Alexiad*. Grade 5 and up.

Brown, Maggie. *My First Book of Questions and Answers, Medieval Times*. Bath, U.K.: Paragon, 2002. Appropriate for all ages.

Caselli, Giovanni. *The Middle Ages. History of Everyday Things Series*. 2d ed. New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1998. Appropriate for all ages.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales*. Selected, translated, and adapted by Barbara Cohen. New York: William Morrow, 1988. Grade 5 and up.

Cushman, Karen. *Catherine, Called Birdy*. New York: Clarion Books, 1994. This novel, in diary format, follows the life of a fourteen-year-old girl growing up in the year 1290. Grade 5 and up.

Gravett, Christopher. *Knight. Eyewitness Books*. New York: Knopf, 1993. Appropriate for all ages.

Konigsburg, E. L. *A Proud Taste for Scarlet and Miniver*. New York: Atheneum, 1973. This historical novel introduces young readers to many twelfth-century personalities, including Eleanor of Aquitaine, Abbot Suger, Thomas à Becket, Henry II, and William Marshal.

Langley, Andrew. *Medieval Life. Eyewitness Books*. New York: Knopf, 1996. Appropriate for all ages.

Macaulay, David. *Castle*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977. Text and detailed drawings follow the planning and construction of a “typical” castle and adjoining town in thirteenth-century Wales. Recommended for all ages. Available in video (58 min.).

_____. *Cathedral: The Story of Its Construction*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973. Recommended for all ages. Available in video (58 min.).

Osborne, Mary Pope, ed. *Favorite Medieval Tales*. New York: Scholastic, 1998. A variety of folk tales from medieval Europe make this book a useful addition to a school library. Appropriate for all ages.

Osborne, Will, and Mary Pope Osborne. *Magic Tree House Research Guide #2: Knights and Castles, a Nonfiction Companion to The Knight at Dawn*. New York: Random House, 2000. Information on knights delivered in a very palatable way for youngsters. Grade 2 and up.

Robertson, Bruce. *Marguerite Makes a Book*. Los Angeles: Getty Museum, 1999. This picture book set in 1400 shows readers of all ages the craftsmanship that goes into making books.

Saint George and the Dragon: A Golden Legend. Adapted by Margaret Hodges from Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queen*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1984. Picture book and the 1985 recipient of the Caldecott Award. Grades K–8.

Temple, Frances. *The Ramsay Scallop*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995. This novel focuses on a young girl and a medieval pilgrimage. Grade 5 and up.

Weatherly, Myra. *William Marshal: Medieval England's Greatest Knight*. Greensboro, N.C.: Morgan Reynolds, 2001. Nonfiction for grades 5–9.

Selected Online Resources

Please be aware that the contents of websites may change without notice. It is also necessary to verify the identity of the supervising authority of the website; this information is usually available on the first page. We urge all teachers to preview Internet sites before assigning them to students. The sites suggested below were reviewed in July 2005.

www.metmuseum.org/toah/splash.htm The Timeline of Art History on The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Web page, which is continually updated and revised, gives a good overview of medieval art history through chronologies, maps, and thematic content. For the Middle Ages, the Timeline includes scores of medieval works of art; cogent historical information, arranged chronologically; and dozens of short essays on the Middle Ages on such themes as “Relics and Reliquaries,” “Icons and Iconoclasm,” “Animals in Medieval Art,” and “Antiquity in the Middle Ages,” all of them accessible via the Special Topics Index of the Timeline.

www.metmuseum.org/Works_Of_Art/departament.asp?dep=17 (Department of Medieval Art) and www.metmuseum.org/Works_Of_Art/departament.asp?dep=7 (The Cloisters) The Museum's website includes areas devoted to the collection of the Department of Medieval Art in the main building and to that of The Cloisters in northern Manhattan. Each includes printable pictures and information on fifty works of art, a map of the galleries, publications on each collection, and other relevant resources, such

as information on the Museum's exhibitions on each collection and Web links.

www.metmuseum.org/explore/byzantium/byzhome.html This online exploration of Byzantium was created in conjunction with the Metropolitan Museum's international loan exhibition *The Glory of Byzantium* (March 11–July 6, 1997), which celebrated the art of the second golden age of Byzantine art (843–1261). It includes examples of art from the first golden age of Byzantine art (324–730) and the late period, which ended with the Turkish conquest in 1453.

www.metmuseum.org/special/Byzantium/byzantium_splash.htm A gallery tour created to complement the major international loan exhibition *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)* (March 23–July 5, 2004). This exhibition, the third in a chronological series devoted to the art and influence of Byzantine civilization, demonstrates the artistic and cultural significance of the last centuries of the state that called itself “the Empire of the Romans.”

www.metmuseum.org/explore/byzantium_III/index.html Created in conjunction with the exhibition *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)* and as a companion to the gallery tour above, this feature presents illustrated essays on Byzantine art, including a visual essay on the Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, Egypt.

www.teamsmedieval.org The Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages offers TEAMS, a site that encompasses many resources for K–12 teachers, including reading lists, syllabi and lesson plans, a list of medieval academic discussion groups, and other links to sites teaching the Middle Ages.

www.the-orb.net ORB, the Online Reference Book for Medieval Studies, hosts articles by medieval scholars that are judged by two peer reviewers to maintain accuracy. Includes links to primary sources, scanned images, and other useful sites. The scholarly, straightforward, easy-to-follow layout makes this site especially useful; select “Medievalia in the Media” under “Teaching” to find medieval studies for the nonspecialist.

www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html The Internet Medieval Sourcebook offers

texts from medieval literature and other resources for teachers; includes French and Spanish texts.

www.netserf.org NetSERF: The Internet Connection for Medieval Resources has links to sites related to the Middle Ages arranged according to categories, from archaeology to music to history. Among its many features are teaching materials and syllabi for college classes, a glossary of medieval terms, and other helpful research tools.

labyrinth.georgetown.edu The Labyrinth has articles and links related to the Middle Ages arranged according to categories, from archaeology to women.

sunsite.berkeley.edu/OMACL The Online Medieval and Classical Library (OMACL) is a collection of some of the most important literary works of classical and medieval civilization; indexed by title, author, genre, and language.

www.s-hamilton.k12.ia.us/antiqua/instrumt.html This website for teachers and students is a guide to medieval and Renaissance musical instruments.

scholar.chem.nyu.edu/tekpages/Technology.html The Medieval Technology Pages is an online dictionary that provides accurate, referenced information on technological innovation and related subjects in western Europe during the Middle Ages. Includes a subject index, timeline, and references.

NTGateway.com/multibib All-in-One Biblical Resources Search provides access to free databases that search the text of different Bible versions and translations.

www.euratlas.com/ Euratlas.com in Switzerland maintains this site, which includes maps for each centennial year 1–1700 A.D., maps of major Roman battles, and links to other atlases and historical websites.

www.pitt.edu/~medart/ Images of Medieval Art and Architecture is a useful source for images of medieval architectural sites in Britain and France. Includes a glossary of architectural terms.

Videography

We advise all educators to preview these videos and films before integrating them into their lessons.

Documentaries

Glories of Medieval Art: The Cloisters. The Metropolitan Museum of Art Office of Film and Television; produced and directed by John Goberman and Marc Bauman; written by Mary B. Shepard and Susan Morris. Chicago: Home Vision, 1989. 27 min. An introduction to The Cloisters, the branch of the Metropolitan Museum devoted to the art of medieval Europe.

The History of Orthodox Christianity. New York: GOTelecom, 1992. 28 min. Part 2: Byzantium. Filmed on location, the program examines the formation of major aspects of the Orthodox Church.

Justinian: The Last of the Romans. A & E Biography Series, 1997. 50 min. The story of Emperor Justinian, who reunited parts of the Roman empire during the sixth century; presented in a clear manner, for general audiences.

Life in the Middle Ages: The Knight. Life in the Middle Ages Series. Schlessinger Media, 2002. 23 min. Other titles in the series are *Social Structure in the Middle Ages*, *A History of the Middle Ages*, *The Doctor*, *The Merchant*, *The Monk*, *The Noble*, *The Serf*.

Medieval Manuscripts. Directed by Maurits Smeyers, 1986. 30 min. Available in either video or DVD from Films for the Humanities and Sciences, P.O. Box 2053, Princeton, NJ 08543-2053, (800) 257-5126. Shows the process of creating a medieval manuscript; most suitable for high school audiences.

The Tournament. Produced and directed by Philip Gittelman; The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Chicago: Home Vision, 1982. 30 min. Curator Helmut Nickel tours the Museum's collection of medieval European arms and armor.

Feature Films

The Adventures of Robin Hood. Directed by William Keighley and Michael Curtiz, 1938. Warner Bros., 102 min. Available on video or DVD in English or Spanish. This top-flight action movie is the essence of Hollywood. While it keeps the

flavor of the medieval lore that developed around Robin Hood, it is more fantasy than reality. There is some good-natured violence. Features Errol Flynn, Basil Rathbone, Claude Rains, and Olivia de Havilland. Suitable for older elementary-age students.

Becket. Directed by Peter Glenville, 1964. Paramount, 145 min. Based on the play by Jean Anouilh. Available in video. Set in twelfth-century England, this conflict between friends, Thomas à Becket (the Archbishop of Canterbury) and King Henry II, leads to Becket's execution and the separation of church and state. Stars Peter O'Toole, Richard Burton, and John Gielgud. Suitable for high school classes.

Ivanhoe. A & E Network Studios, 1997. In 6 parts; each video or DVD 50 min. Sir Walter Scott's classic tale set in England following the return of crusading Richard the Lionhearted. This story follows Wilfred of Ivanhoe as he battles Prince John and the Grand Master of the Templars. Filmed entirely on location, *Ivanhoe* tells of the age of chivalry, romance, and intrigue. Suitable for mature junior high students and older.

The Lion in Winter. Directed by Anthony Harvey, 1968. Santa Monica, Calif.: MGM/UA Home Entertainment, 135 min. Available in video or DVD. During Christmas season jousting tournaments and pageants of 1183, King Henry II of England and his queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine, scheme to determine which of their three sons will succeed Henry as king. Cast includes Peter O'Toole, Katharine Hepburn, Anthony Hopkins, and Timothy Dalton. Suitable for high school students.

The Return of Martin Guerre. Directed by Daniel Vigne, 1982. Los Angeles: Fox Lorber, 123 min. Based on the book *Le Retour de Martin Guerre*. In French with English subtitles. Based on an actual sixteenth-century court case, this is the story of a man claiming to be Martin Guerre (1539–1560) who returns to his wife and family after nine years. Stars Gérard Depardieu and Nathalie Baye. Suitable for mature high school students.

Museums with Important Collections of Medieval Art in North America

Many museums have collections of medieval art. We encourage you to contact museums in your area for information on their holdings. Here are some of the significant collections listed alphabetically by state or province:

California

Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum
Specializes in manuscript illumination
www.getty.edu

District of Columbia (Washington)

Dumbarton Oaks
Specializes in Byzantine Art
www.doaks.org

Maryland

Baltimore: The Walters Art Museum
www.thewalters.org

Massachusetts

Boston: Museum of Fine Arts
www.mfa.org

Michigan

The Detroit Institute of Arts
www.dia.org

New York

New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art Presents medieval art in both the Main Building and at The Cloisters in northern Manhattan
www.metmuseum.org

New York: The Pierpont Morgan Library
Specializes in manuscript illumination
www.morganlibrary.org

Ohio

The Cleveland Museum of Art
www.clemusart.com

Ontario

Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum
www.rom.on.ca

Pennsylvania

Bryn Athyn: Glencairn Museum
www.glencairnmuseum.org

Philadelphia Museum of Art
www.philamuseum.org

Glossary

abbot (Aramaic: “father”): The head of a male monastic community.

acanthus (Greek: “thorn, thistle, spine”): The *Acanthus spinosus* plant is believed to have been the main model for the curling leaf forms on the Corinthian capital. First invented by the ancient Greeks, the Corinthian capital was favored in Roman architecture, becoming the model for many medieval capitals.

Adam (Hebrew: “man”) and **Eve** (Hebrew: “to live”): According to the book of Genesis in the Bible, these are the first man and woman, who briefly occupied the Garden of Eden that had been created by God. After Adam and Eve ate fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, contrary to God’s command, God banished them from Eden so that they could not eat fruit from the Tree of Life, which would have given them immortality (Genesis 3:9–24).

Alexander III (the Great) (356–323 B.C.): Son of King Philip II of Macedon, he conquered the Persian empire. His conquests extended from the eastern Mediterranean to India, before he died at the age of thirty-three.

altar frontal: A decorated panel at the front of an altar, usually the width and height of the altar.

antiquity: The time and culture of the ancient Greeks and Romans, approximately the fifth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D.

Apocalypse (Greek: “revelation”): The last book of the New Testament, also known as the Book of Revelation, which reveals the events that, in Christian belief, will precede the end of the world.

apocryphal (Greek: “hidden things”): referring to apocrypha, written works that in their title, form, and content resemble books of the Old and New Testaments but are not accepted as true biblical books.

apostle (Greek: “the one sent”): An emissary of Jesus and his teachings. The apostles included his twelve original students, or disciples: Peter, who became the leader of the group; Peter’s brother Andrew; James; James’ brother John; Philip; Bartholomew; Matthew; Thomas; James (the Younger); Jude (Thaddeus); Simon Zelotes; and Judas Iscariot. After Judas’s betrayal and suicide, Matthias was chosen as his replacement. Other apostles who were not Jesus’ first disciples included Paul and Barnabas.

apse: A vaulted semicircular or polygonal structure; the focal point in a church, the apse houses the altar and is open at east end. A large church may have additional apses in its transepts, or arms.

aquamanile (Latin: “water of the hands”): A water pitcher, often in the shape of an animal, for washing the hands at the altar or at meals.

ascetics: Those who practice self-denial, especially for spiritual enhancement.

Augustine of Hippo (354–430): A professor of rhetoric who eventually became a priest and the bishop of Hippo. Through his writings, especially the *City of God*, Augustine influenced theology; in medieval times, his influence was particularly notable up to the thirteenth century.

barbarian (Greek: “foreign”): Originally any non-Greek people or culture; the Romans later applied the term to any non-Roman people or culture.

barrel vault: An arched masonry ceiling or roof; a continuous vault that must be buttressed its entire length.

Beatus manuscript: A text by Beatus of Liébana (ca. 730–798), a Spanish theologian and geographer, author of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* (ca. 776). Frequently copied and illuminated, the *Commentary* consisted of passages from the Apocalypse that were accompanied by interpretations cast as Christian allegories.

Benedict of Nursia (Nordia) (ca. 480–ca. 550): Author of the *Rule* (ca. 535–45), governing monastic life and discipline. Schooled in Rome and disturbed by the immorality he witnessed there, Benedict fled to Subiaco, Italy, where he lived in a cave for three years. He eventually created a series of small communities of monks, before founding a monastery at Monte Cassino.

Benedictine order: Persons who live by the *Rule* drawn up by Saint Benedict of Nursia.

bestiary: A collection of stories in which the supposed characteristics of real and imaginary animals, plants, and stones serve as allegories for the purpose of moral and religious instruction.

bishop (Greek: “overseer”): In the early Christian church, the supervisor of a community of Christians. By the medieval period, bishops had evolved into powerful officials who oversaw a number of churches.

Black Death: A plague bacillus (*Yersinia pestis*) carried first by small rodents such as rats, then transmitted to humans through flea bites. The first outbreak in medieval Europe occurred in the sixth century, subsiding by 750. The next outbreak, known as the Black Death, occurred around 1348, followed by other waves in 1362, 1374, 1389, and 1400; smaller outbreaks continued until after 1650. The most common form of the illness was the bubonic plague, so called because of the swellings, or buboes, it caused.

bliaud or bliaut: An eleventh- and twelfth-century overdress with long, wide sleeves that was worn by both men and women. It was often laced up at the side and closed at the neck by a brooch. Girls wore the *bliaud*, without a belt, over a *chainse*, a pleated undergarment usually made of linen and having tight-fitting sleeves.

book of hours: An abbreviated version of the Divine Office used primarily by the laity for private prayer; it included a liturgical calendar, the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, the litany of saints, Penitential Psalms, Office of the Dead, and additional personal prayers. See Divine Office.

Bosphorus: A twenty-mile-long strait between Europe and Asia, joining the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara. Istanbul, formerly Constantinople, lies on both sides of the Bosphorus.

canting name (Latin: “to sing”): In art, either the subject in a work of art or a representation in the work that refers to—or “sings out”—a family name. For instance, the subject on the coat of arms of Sir Nicholas Bacon is a hog.

Carolingian: The historical epoch named after its founder Charlemagne (768–814), which marked an attempt to revive late-classical Christian civilization. It continued under Charlemagne’s successors throughout much of the ninth century.

casket: A small chest or box, often used to hold precious items.

cast: The pouring of a liquid, such as metal or plaster, into a hollow mold, then removing the mold when the liquid hardens.

Castle of Love: A symbolic castle populated by women. In chivalric terms, the knights attacking the castle denoted courtship, and the roses used by the women as “defense” were a symbol of surrender.

cathedral: The church containing the bishop’s *cathedra*, his official chair or throne, thus marking it as his principal church.

censer: An incense burner, also called a thurible, usually attached to chains so that it can be swung, thus releasing the smoke of the burning incense, usually frankincense.

chapel: A small place of worship, often with its own altar, that is usually part of a larger church.

chip carving: A technique of metalworking in which the faceting of its carved design is similar to Germanic woodworking.

Cistercian: A reformed Benedictine monastic order founded in 1098 by Saint Robert of Molesme at Cîteaux in Burgundy, eastern France. It practiced austerity and a rigid adherence to the Rule of Saint Benedict.

classical: Characteristic of ancient Greek and Roman culture.

cloister (Latin: “barrier”): A four-sided covered walkway, with a garden and fountain at its core, that functioned as the physical center of a monastery, closed off from the outside world. Usually the church, dining area (refectory), dormitory, and gathering area (chapter house) of a monastery opened onto the cloister so that its passageways provided access from one structure to another.

Constantine I (the Great) (?274–337): Son of Constantius I and Helena, Constantine eventually emerged from a power struggle as the sole Roman emperor. Although he declared Christianity to be the legal religion of the Roman empire in 335, Constantine himself did not officially become a Christian until he was on his deathbed.

control stamps: In Byzantium, silver stamps that identified state officials, including the emperor, at the time of an object’s creation. Sometimes the stamps also recorded the object’s place of manufacture. Used between the fourth and eighth centuries, these stamps did not certify an object’s metallic purity.

Coptic: The term is a later Arab simplification of the Greek word for Egypt, *Aigypptos*, itself a transformation of its pharaonic name, *Ekepta*. In the Middle Ages, Copts were the native Christians of the independent Egyptian church.

crossbow: A powerful bow mounted transversely at the front of a stock of wood or metal; its string usually had to be pulled to its full drawn position with a mechanical aid. Though the crossbow had a slower rate of fire than the hand bow, it had a greater range and required less skill in its operation. Its ability to penetrate mail armor led to the development of more resistant plate armor.

corbel: An architectural element that supports weight, usually it looks like upside-down steps projecting from a wall.

dalmatic: The traditional liturgical vestment of a deacon. A long-sleeved outer tunic with a long slit at the sides, the dalmatic symbolized joy, salvation, and justice, and its cross shape, when its sleeves are outstretched, referred to the crucifixion of Jesus.

David (ca. 1012–ca. 972 B.C.) (Hebrew: “beloved”): Anointed the future king of Israel by the prophet Samuel, David helped the Israelite army defeat the Philistines by slaying their champion, Goliath. During his thirty-three-year reign as the second king of Israel, he captured Jerusalem and made it the capital of his kingdom. Under David, Jews changed from a loose confederation of tribes into a strong national state.

deacon (Greek: “servant, minister, assistant”): A cleric who assists a priest, acts as reader, leads prayer, distributes communion, receives offerings, and distributes alms. In the Roman Catholic Church, the cleric serving as deacon ranks second after the priest.

Deesis (Greek: “entreaty”): In Byzantine art, the representation of Jesus flanked by the intercessory figures of Mary and John the Baptist.

disciple: In Christian belief, a follower of Jesus and student of his teachings. See apostle.

diadem: A royal crown.

Divine Office: Daily public prayer. Monastic communities usually say prayers eight times over a twenty-four period: Laudes (morning prayers, done on rising), Prime (6:00 A.M.), Terce (9:00 A.M.), Sext (noon), None (3:00 P.M.), Vespers (originally variable but before sunset; now about 4:30 P.M.), Compline (variable, said just before retiring for sleep), and Matins (2:30 A.M.). Mass is celebrated between Terce and Sext.

Dominicans: A mendicant (begging) preaching and teaching order founded at Toulouse, France, in 1206–16 by the Spaniard Domenico Guzmán (ca. 1170–ca. 1221).

eucharistic, Eucharist (Greek: “thanksgiving”): Pertaining to the central act of Christian worship. The ceremony is based upon the Last Supper, the last meal Jesus had with his followers (Matthew 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:17–20). The term *eucharist* comes either from the fact that Jesus “gave thanks” at this last meal or that the institution of the Eucharist is an occasion for Christian thanksgiving. The Eucharist is part of a service called the mass, in which bread and wine are consecrated and distributed.

evangelists: The traditional authors of the four gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The evangelists’ symbols are the winged man or angel for Matthew, the lion for Mark, the bull or ox for Luke, and the eagle for John.

fleur-de-lis: A conventionalized representation of an iris flower, the traditional symbol of French royalty.

flying buttress: An exterior masonry structure that typically consists of a straight inclined bar carried on an arch and a solid pier or buttress against which it abuts and that receives the thrust of a roof or vault.

Franciscans: A mendicant (begging) order founded in 1209 at Assisi, Italy, by Saint Francis (Giovanni di Bernadone, ca. 1182–1226, canonized 1230).

friar: A member of a mendicant (begging) order, such as the Dominicans or Franciscans.

Galahad: The illegitimate son of Lancelot, Galahad became a knight and entered the court of King Arthur of Britain. Eventually he devoted himself to discovering the Holy Grail, the cup Jesus used at the Last Supper (see eucharistic, Eucharist), and died beholding it.

Gawain: The son of King Lot of Lothian and Morgause, the half-sister of King Arthur of Britain. Gawain became a knight in King Arthur’s court, as well as a counselor to him.

gesso: In Italy, gesso was white ground applied on a surface for painting or gilding, which commonly had gypsum (calcium sulphate) as the inert additive; north of the Alps, chalk (calcium carbonate) was the additive. The white ground was applied in many layers, each time carefully smoothed with knives or sanded.

The Golden Legend: A book recounting saints’ lives and stories connected to Christian feasts, written around 1260 by Jacobus de Voragine (ca. 1230–1298), a Dominican friar who became the archbishop of Genoa and was later made a saint.

gospels (Old English: “good news”): The term came to be used for the first four books of the New Testament in which the evangelists record the life of Jesus, starting with Mark around the year 70 A.D.

Gothic: Originally a pejorative term coined during the Renaissance to designate the art and architecture of medieval Europe—and, for the fifteenth century, just Northern Europe—from ca. 1150 to ca. 1500. In architecture, soaring buildings were created with relatively thin walls, ribbed vaults, flying buttresses, and stained glass. In art, the Gothic style was naturalistic, with an emphasis on narrative and organized decorative programs.

halberd: A pole weapon with a metal head consisting of a combined ax blade, stabbing point, and tearing hook.

halo: The representation of light surrounding a figure’s head, indicating sanctity.

hanaps: A cup whose cover was another cup; also called a double cup.

Holy Land: The land on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, including sites holy to Jews, Muslims, and Christians, such as Jerusalem.

Holy Spirit or **Holy Ghost**: According to the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit, sent by God, is the divine principle of activity in the world. For Christians, the Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity—the three aspects of God, consisting of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Able to bestow gifts on individuals, especially that of prophecy, the Holy Spirit is often represented as seven doves, symbolizing the gifts of Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2).

Hundred Years’ War (1337–1453): A series of conflicts between France and England, fought mostly on French soil, that ended with England losing almost all of its possessions in France, except for the coastal town of Calais.

icon (Greek: “image”): In Byzantium, any image of a sacred personage or sacred scene; the term now usually refers to a representation on a portable panel.

iconography: The conventional images or symbols used to depict a religious or legendary subject.

Iliad: One of the Homeric epics, which originated as oral poems and are believed to have been recorded in the form we now know them about 750–700 B.C. The *Iliad*, which had a profound impact on ancient Greek society, art, and literature, is the story of fifty days in the ten-year war between the Greeks and Trojans, which occurred during the twelfth century B.C. in northwestern Turkey.

Lancelot: Lover of Queen Guinevere, the wife of King Arthur of Britain. Lancelot is the central hero in medieval romances and prominent in several other works of literature, such as *Le chevalier de la charrete* (ca. 1150–75), by Chrétien de Troyes. The prose *Lancelot* (ca. 1225) associates him with the Lady of the Lake and tells of how Lancelot’s affair with Guinevere cost him the chance to search for the Holy Grail—the cup Jesus used at the Last Supper. However, his son, Galahad, completed this task.

lancet window: A tall pointed window without internal tracery.

laver: A vessel to hold water for washing, with one or more spouts to pour out the water and often equipped with a suspension chain.

legate: An official representative of a person in power or authority.

liberal arts: The arts devoted to developing general intellectual capabilities. In the Middle Ages, the liberal arts were the basic education of the learned elite. By the Carolingian period, the liberal arts consisted of the Trivium (the three-part road) of grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric, which developed the language skills necessary for careers in both the church and secular government; and the Quadrivium, (the four-part road), which included arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music.

line of sight: An imaginary line that can be drawn from a figure’s eyes to indicate what the figure is looking at.

liturgical: Referring to the public services or rites of worship in the church, the principal one of which is the mass or Eucharist; it also refers to the written texts giving the order of service. In Byzantium this term referred specifically to the eucharistic rite. See eucharistic, Eucharist.

Lombards (Latin: “long axes”): A Germanic people who invaded Italy in 568 and established a kingdom in northern Italy, with Pavia as its capital. Expanding their conquests into most of Italy, they absorbed Latin culture and became Christians. In 774, they were subjugated by the Frankish king Charlemagne.

longbow: A bow made of wood, held vertically, whose string and arrow are pulled back by the hand and then released.

Louis IX (1214–1270; canonized 1297): Son of Louis VIII and Blanche of Castile, King Louis IX of France was renowned for personal piety and impartial justice.

magi (sing. *magus*): The three magi, or wise men, paid homage to Jesus as an infant (Luke 2:10–12). Known as Melchior, Caspar, and Balthasar, they were often depicted with differing ages—one of them young, one middle-aged, one old—and one of them often appeared with dark skin. Their gifts of gold and frankincense were linked to Jesus as king (gold) and as someone divine (frankincense for the incense of the worship service); the myrrh was connected to his suffering and death (myrrh was used to anoint a dead body). The magi were later represented as kings, following passages such as Isaiah 60:3 and Psalms 72:10–11.

mail: Flexible armor fashioned from interlocking rings that was commonly used throughout Europe until it was replaced by plate armor in the fourteenth century.

martyr (Greek: “witness”): One who has suffered death for Christianity; until 1969, a relic of a martyr had to be placed in every consecrated altar in the Catholic church. See saint.

mass (Latin: *Ite, missa est*, the dismissal of the congregation after the service): The central eucharistic rite of the Western church; it includes readings from one gospel and one epistle (a book of the Bible written in the form of a letter), and the liturgy of prayers and ceremonies. See eucharistic, Eucharist; liturgical.

mechanical arts: Vocational or trade crafts, such as metal- and woodworking, enamel working, and making of stained glass.

miter (Greek: “headdress”): A ceremonial headdress worn by the pope, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and, with special permission, some abbots. Originally a raised cap with a band around the edge, the miter was divided into two peaks front and back after the thirteenth century. Two bands of embroidered material hanging down the back of the miter are called *insulae* (islands). Originally tied under the chin to keep the miter firmly on the head, by the thirteenth century the *insulae* had become ornamental.

monastery: A community of monks or nuns, or the buildings housing the community. In addition to the church, a large self-sufficient monastery could have a cloister, chapter house (meeting room), scriptorium (copyist area) and library, dormitory, refectory (dining hall), kitchen, hostelry or guesthouse, infirmary, novitiate (area for those learning to be monks or nuns), and supporting farm buildings, workshops, and storerooms.

naturalistic, naturalism: The imitation of nature in art.

nave: The main part of a church, especially the long central area of a cross-shaped church.

niello: Decoration of metal surfaces in which incised designs are filled with an alloy that includes sulfur, which is then fused by heat to form a dark pattern.

Norman (Anglo Saxon: “northman”): From the area of Normandy, a region in northern France rich in agriculture, shipping, and fishing. The Vikings, also known as Norsemen or Normans, invaded and conquered the region and King Charles III of the Franks made their leader, Rollo, a duke in 911.

order (monastic): A group of people united by a rule or aim, such as a monastic institution. See rule.

papacy (Latin: “papa”): The office or jurisdiction of the pope, the successor of Peter, the first bishop of Rome. With the decline of the Roman empire in the West, the pope became an important political leader.

paradise (Persian: “enclosed park”): In this context, the Garden of Eden made by God for Adam and Eve. Paradise came to be equated with heaven, the place for the blessed to see God face to face.

pike: A pole weapon with a metal stabbing point, most useful in the bristling mass of a square of pikemen.

pilgrimage church: A church visited during the journey to a holy place made as an act of piety or penance.

plainchant: The vocal music of the early Christian church, consisting of biblical texts sung in Latin to modal tunes. (Modes are scale systems based on the note they begin on.) Plainchant was sung in unison, without harmonies or instrumental accompaniment.

potsherds: Broken pieces of pottery.

proconsul: A governor or military commander in ancient Rome.

psalms: (Greek: “song sung with a harp”): A collection of 150 religious poems or praises employed in both Jewish and Christian worship. A book containing only the text of the psalms is called a psalter.

pyxis (Latin: “box”): A small box, in Medieval Europe specifically used to hold eucharistic bread.

register: In art, a horizontal division, separating portions of an image.

reliquary: A container for relics.

Renaissance (French: “rebirth”): A period in which Italy—and in the fifteenth century, Florence above all—was the seat of an artistic, humanistic, technological, and scientific flowering. Based primarily on the rediscovery of classical texts and artifacts, Renaissance culture looked to heroic ideals from antiquity and promoted the study of the liberal arts, centering largely upon the individual’s intellectual potential. The visual arts were characterized by the humanistic treatment of subject matter and an emphasis on rational space, proportion, and perspective. See liberal arts.

Romanesque: A style of European medieval art that dates from ca. 1000 to ca. 1150. In architecture, the rounded arches, thick walls, and roof systems are “Roman-like.” In art, the style is characterized by an emphasis on two-dimensionality and pattern.

roundel: A circular panel or framed portion of a work of art.

rule: Regulations drawn up to govern the life and observances of a community. The author was often the founder of a religious order, such as Benedict of Nursia (ca. 480–ca. 550). See Benedict of Nursia (Norcia).

saint(s) (Latin: “holy”): People with divine supernatural gifts that earn them eternal life in heaven and to whom worshippers direct their prayers. In Christian belief, saints include those who died for their faith—martyrs—and those who led a life of heroic virtue—confessors.

saltcellar: A container for salt at the table.

sarcophagi (sing. *sarcophagus*): A coffin made of stone.

Scythian: Pertaining to a culture of expert horse riders who spoke an Indo-Iranian language. The Scythians occupied much of the north shore of the Black Sea from the ninth to third century B.C., although their area of control was fluid.

tesserae (sing. *tessera*) (Greek: “four”): Cut and smoothed cubes of marble, glass, or other material used in making mosaics.

Three Women at the Tomb: In Christian belief, the event, following Jesus’ death, in which three women, Mary Magdalen, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, came to his tomb with spices to prepare his body and found the tomb empty (Matthew 28:1–4).

thurible: See censer.

tonsure: A shaved circle at the top of the head indicating a monk or cleric.

Torah (Hebrew: “a law”): The first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Also known as the Pentateuch (“five books”).

Tristan and Isolde: A medieval romance featuring Tristan, who was sent to Ireland to bring Isolde back as the bride of King Mark of Cornwall. Tristan drank a love potion with Isolde and their subsequent irresistible passion led to their deaths. Thomas of Britain wrote an Anglo-Norman verse account of them about 1185, and Gottfried von Strassburg wrote a German version about 1210. In the fifteenth century, Sir Thomas Malory included the story in his *Morte d’Arthur*.

triptych (Greek: “three-fold”): Three hinged panels; the narrower outer panels can be folded over the inner panel to protect it.

troubadours (Provençal: “to find, compose verse”): Poets of southern France who both composed and sang their works in the *langue d’oc* dialect of French; these works were mostly aristocratic in tone and often had a theme of romantic love.

typology: The Old Testament prefigurations, or precursors, of events in the New Testament; for example, Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac in the Old Testament was thought to foreshadow the crucifixion of Jesus in the New Testament.

vault: A masonry ceiling built on the principle of the arch; its two simplest forms are the barrel vault, a tunnel-like extension of the arch, and the groin vault, in which two barrel vaults of equal size intersect at right angles. In a ribbed vault, masonry ribs are constructed to concentrate the load and thrust onto just a few reinforced points and to reduce the amount of centering needed for construction.

vestment: The distinctive dress worn by the clergy when performing church rituals.

votive image: An image, often a painting, that served as a focus for prayers asking for aid or of gratitude.

Vulgate: An edition of the Bible commonly used in the Middle Ages. Translated into Latin by Saint Jerome (ca. 341–420), the Vulgate Bible includes apocryphal works from earlier Greek translations.

wildman: First mentioned by Herodotus in the fifth century B.C., stories of wildmen continued into the Middle Ages. Violent and aggressive against wild animals and his own kind, the wildman was also thought to be a skilled hunter, given his instinctual knowledge of the ways of wild beasts. He avoided all human contact, keeping to remote regions. With the collapse of feudal Europe and the rise of an urban middle class in the fifteenth century, the wildman emerged from disfavor into a kind of free spirit who was close to nature.

woodcut: produced by drawing a design on the smooth, flat surface of a block of wood, then cutting away the places that are to be left white in the print, leaving the design standing up in relief. After inking the surface of the block, a sheet of paper is pressed onto the block, thus transferring onto the sheet an image that is the reverse of the original design.