**Early Christian Art**

A fundamental transformation in the field of thinking and artistic expression. The Orient overshadowed Rome. The celebration of the spiritual won over the celebration of the form.

Before the 6th century, the Roman Empire did not convert to Christianity as a whole. Coptic art will join them, as the Roman Empire also occupied northern Egypt. Later, the influence of Islam was asserted here under Muslim rule.

Calculus

Decoration of sarcophagi (Ravenna)

Painting

Development since the catacombs

Mostly artless, impressive with its sincerity

Unlike the pagan ones, these frescoes contain many symbols

- anchor, fish (ichthys), dove, good shepherd

- sometimes combining symbols with pagan motifs

after 313 - Edict of Milan - officialization of Christianity, they didn't have to hide, great development in the East, large Christian community

Glass

mainly for liturgical purposes, blue glass, a special kind of vessels - cups with a blue bottom, which were used as christening or wedding gifts and at funeral feasts.

Some glasses are engraved.

Metals

Especially bronzes,

Wood and ivory

ivory was rare, it was used on a wider scale until the victory of the Christian Church.

Fabrics:

In the time before 5th century are the oldest in Egypt - Coptic. They have a pagan or profane decor, the subjects are different - from Greek fables and legends or from the Old Testament to plants, hunting scenes, they were made using the tapestry technique and woven on a linen warp, lively style and rich colors, shading of individual tones. In the 6th and 7th centuries, stylization is abundantly applied to them. Already Christian themes: orant, Daneil, Nativity, Jesus with the apostles. A frequent representation of the saint on horseback. Coptic fabrics were produced even after the conquest of the territory by the Arabs.

**Pre-Romanesque art of Western Europe**

The Germans who took over the Roman Empire adopted Christianity - first in the Arian form, while the general population was Catholic. The situation only changed when the Frankish King Clovis accepted Western baptism at the hands of Saint Remigius.

The effort to continue the Roman cultural heritage was initially futile, there were frequent wars. Most monarchs tried to follow Rome, their results in the form of basilicas modeled after St. Petra, however, lacked stylistic sophistication and monumentality.

• San Ambrogio in Milan – 5th century, mosaic of St. Ambrose - the conception of the head according to the traditions of the Roman portrait, the overall flatness and the absence of weight indicate an Eastern influence.

• Sarcophagus of Abbess Teodechilda, Notre Dame in Jouarre – 662, the sarcophagus is based on antique types, the decor is made of antiquing shells, which create an ornament by repetition.

• Reliquary statue of Saint Foi, treasury of the Conques monastery – wooden core, gold and silver-gilt foil, filigree, cameo, enamel = typical technology for these reliquaries. As a whole, it was created around 985.

• Reliquary of Theuderich - 7th century, Saint Maurice. One of the first reliquaries of the so-called house type. Along with precious stones, one ancient gem was also used. Filigree decor.

• Processional cross – 7th century, also Desiderio's cross. The decoration of such objects often depended on chance, what was available at the moment was fitted. Attached in the lower part is a medallion, probably depicting Galla Placidia and her children.

• Visigothic votive crown - 7th century, votive crowns were a typical gift of rich people to churches - a segmental ring with pendants and a suspended cross.

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**Iroscote monastic art**

Ireland - straight from the Lateny period - Celts to Christianity. It escaped the raids of Roman troops.

The Celtic spirit created a special art here: a fondness for abstract lines, exceptionally with realistic animal forms. Spirals, spirals, the Christianization of this island of St. Patrick in the 5th century. At first the great influences of Egypt and Syria - given the contacts of some monks with this area. In the 8th and 9th centuries, large stone crosses and other masterpieces of goldsmithing and book painting.

The most interesting cultural product of this period are the manuscripts of the Iroscot monks founded on the British islands of St. Columbus. The monasteries were different from ordinary ones, they were more like groups of hermit huts. The oldest are in Derry and Durrow. Columba's example was followed by other monks and they founded monasteries in uninhabited parts of the British Isles. The monk Columbanus sailed to the mainland in 590, where he founded a monastery in the Vosges and became one of the Christianists of Europe. He eventually settled in Bobbio in northern Italy.

• Gospel from Durrow - 7th century, Celtic traditions - spiral motifs

• Lindisfarne Gospel Book - around 700, intricate interwoven spirals.

• Gospel of Kells – 8th or early 9th century. human figures are completely geometrized and form part of the ornament and initials. The surroundings of the initials are formed by a system of swirling and spiral formations.

Irish monks met missionaries sent from Rome. These were led by the priest Augustine, who settled in Canterbury together with Theodore of Tarsus. This mission was the spreader of Mediterranean culture, which still emanated from Attica.

• Codex Amiatinus – early 8th century, example of Roman mission illuminations. A three-dimensional concept of space, but perspective, light and shadow are copied without a real understanding of their nature.

The end of the Irish monastic culture is connected with the raids of the Vikings, who began to ravage the British Isles from the middle of the 8th century. At the end of the century, the monks had to leave the monasteries in Lindisfarne and Iona, then they remained only in Kells, until they disappeared completely.

• Reconciliation Cross from Castledermot - 9th century, Kildare - crosses with decoratively depicted scenes from the life of Christ on the obverse.

• Chalice from Ardagh - 8th century, bronze cup, partially gilded and inlaid with enamels. Ribbon ornament as on manuscripts.

• Reliquary from the bell of St. Patrick - col. 1000, band interlaced ornament from manuscripts, silver bands are attached to a wooden base with which they contrast.

**Pre-Romanesque architecture**

The context of the time

When the Roman Empire falls, the central government no longer functions. The fourteen-year-old emperor Romulus Augustus handed over the rule of the Empire to the barbarian ruler Odoacer. He renounced the rule of Rome and sent the relics and jewels of the Roman emperors to Constantinople, which became the center of the Byzantine Empire.

The barbaric Germans gradually adopted the external signs of Roman culture and founded more and less powerful, permanently warring kingdoms. But the rulers documented their wealth and status by building large basilicas on the Roman model. In 499, King Clovis of the Franks was baptized in Rome, thereby establishing a connection between European rulers and the Roman religion. A coup d'état later occurred at the Frankish court, when the Merovingians were overthrown by their butler, who founded the Karlovci dynasty.

Practically only the remains of large basilicas and small baptisteries have survived from this time. The intricate stonework details were imported from the still functioning Roman stoneworks in the Pyrenees.

Pre-Romanesque art is closely related to the historical development in Central and Western Europe in the period after the migration of peoples. From the 5th century onwards, barbaric Germanic states gradually expanded into the territory of the Western Roman Empire. The most important are the Franks - over time, the Frankish empire covered today's Germany, France and Belgium. The kings from the Merovingian family expanded the empire both to Central Europe and to the west. In the 8th century, however, their influence began to decline and the butlers, the administrators of the royal house, came to the fore.

In the beginning, we mainly encounter small precious objects made of gold and precious stones, during the 7th and 8th centuries book painting developed in Merovingian monasteries and in Ireland. This is characterized by the decoration of the initial letter with a geometric ornament with rosettes of stylized animals and human figures. The domestic influences of the Scythian Celtic tradition, but also the Christian Syro-Coptic influences were manifested here. The most important works are the books The Book of Durrow and The Book of Kells. Architecture did not remain in the background either. For example, baptisteries in Poitiers and Aix have survived from that time.

With the growing influence of the butlers in the Frankish Empire, we encounter names such as Charles Martell (defeat of the Arabs in 732 at Poitiers) or Charlemagne (768–814). The population took refuge under the protection of feudal lords, a number of fortified settlements were created, and feudalism spread. Charlemagne, the grandson of Charles Martell, received the imperial crown from the Pope in 800 and thus established the de facto Holy Roman Empire, which lasted for the next thousand years. Charlemagne felt himself to be the successor of the Roman emperors, his empire prospered and thus supported culture in his courts. With his death, however, the Frankish Empire split in two and thus also the end of the Carolingian Renaissance. In 843, the East Franconian Empire and the West Franconian Empire were established - both administered by Karlovci. The invasions of Hungarians, Vikings and Saracens also completed the disintegration.

Entrance to Lorsch Monastery in western Germany. A church building whose nave is terminated by an apse in the east and west. In both apses there are crypts, around which you can walk freely. This type of building is a typical representative of the Carolingian Renaissance.

Many representatives of culture came to the court of Charlemagne, mainly from the Anglo-Saxon world, from Ireland and Italy.[1] The revival of art found new interpretations of ancient designs. The architecture stood out the most, where, in contrast to the existing choir directed to the east according to the Roman liturgy, another one is connected to the west. This creates a building with a nave terminated to the east and west by an apse in which the crypt is located. A fortress entrance between two towers is also typical for churches. From that time, for example, the chapel in Aachen or in Saint-Germain-des-Prés has been preserved. Castles and palaces were built in Aachen, Ingelheim and Nijmegen, among which Karel traveled. In addition to architecture, sculpture also largely copied antiquity, e.g. by adopting various ancient columns, however, its own art was also preserved, as evidenced by the bronze equestrian statue of Charlemagne stored in the Louvre. Carolingian miniatures decorated with Irish braids, which were made in Aachen, Trier, Reims or Tours, are also notable. However, the art of that time is closely associated with Charlemagne as a donor.

In 987, Ludvík V., the last Karlovci, died. The Carolingian Renaissance also disappears with him. In the West Franconian Empire, the Capetians took over the government, and in the East Franconian Empire, Henry I. Ptáčník, the founder of the Ottonian dynasty, ascended the throne in 919. The Capetians are divided into a number of dynasties and basically rule in Western Europe until today (Spanish kings from the Bourbon-Anjou family). Already in the course of the Carolingian Renaissance, at the beginning of the 11th century, the Romanesque style was born in the culturally rich environment of the West Franconian Empire, after a decline associated with the fear of the end of the world in 1000.

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**Carolingian Renaissance**

The Frankish king Charlemagne understood all the signs of Christian life and wanted to create a Christian empire comparable to Byzantium (but he did not want to disrupt its hegemony). His father Pippin the Short was anointed in Rome by the Pope, Charlemagne was then crowned emperor in 800 (without his intention, the crown was given to him by the Pope, but Charles perceived it as a humiliation of his power), which became the principle for the future - who wanted to be emperor of the West, had to be crowned in Rome by the Pope.

Church of S. Pierre in Vienne – presbytery and perimeter masonry from the 5th century, interior rebuilt in the 9th century.

Baptistery of St. John in Poitiers, 7th century – simple polygonal building, in the interior columns of two sizes with Corinthian capitals.

**Carolingian architecture**

2nd half 8th century – 3rd quarter of the 6th century

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the large Roman cities were gradually abandoned, the population could not maintain the cities, therefore the Middle Ages begins in the countryside. The Church was in the thrall of secular power, priests and bishops were some kind of chaplains of secular rulers who owned all the land, feudalization had not yet taken place, the fragmentation of land to private owners.

Rulers had to rule in constant motion to maintain the obedience of local administrators. The whole court traveled with them. Christian culture was maintained by the Benedictine order, monasteries combined with imperial castles, the so-called falcons, formed the strongholds of the emperor's empire, the largest falcon being Aachen.

Charlemagne's father, Pippin, was the first anointed, i.e. de jure god-chosen ruler. Then, at Christmas 800, Charles had himself crowned by the Roman emperor (even though he didn't plan it and the emperor had said it before) and made it a tradition. Later, therefore, a king was elected in the Holy Roman Empire, who was only crowned emperor in Rome. Charlemagne did not want to compete with the Byzantine Empire, he only wanted to create its western counterbalance. In addition, both empires had a close relationship with each other, Byzantium greatly influenced the Frankish Empire culturally.

The emperor and lower rulers had a donor relationship with the church – the rulers paid the church and sponsored the construction of new churches, in which they then wanted to be buried. It was true that the bigger the donor, the bigger the sinner :-)

At this time, customs were born that functioned throughout the Middle Ages, for example, the cult of worldly remains, which were believed to radiate spiritual power, followed by the tradition of Christian pilgrimages to important relics. The most important was, of course, the pilgrimage to the Holy Land, which, however, required several crusades due to the surrounding Islam.

For a long time, churches were also the only buildings made of stone, apart from imperial palaces and walls, ordinary secular buildings were made of wood.

Aachen - Charlemagne's largest palatinate, imperial palace and stone chapel - diagonal floor plan arched by a polygonal dome built by architects without much experience, so it is irregular and has to lean on a side walk. The so-called vestverk, a tower-like structure with an entrance, was attached to the chapel. There are two rows of arcades in the interior of the chapel, while two more rows of arcades are built into the upper one. On the arcades there is a gallery from where the monarch watched the mass. There are also spas and outbuildings in the valley.

Palatinate in Ingelheim - similar to Aachen, only smaller.

The gate of the monastery in Lorsch - an antique triumphal arch transformed into a decorative building and transplanted into a fortification. Three arches of the same height, the wall above them tectonized with Corinthian half-columns and a cornice above which stand simplified pilasters bearing a kind of pointed roofs. The wall covering imitates the paving in churches – red and white tiles (squares, hexagons, triangles).

Chapel of Bishop Theodulf in Germigny-des-Prés - early 9th century - Byzantine spatial design, antiquing columns, geometric mosaics.

Chapel in Ottmarsheim - imitation of the Cás Chapel (only composition and appearance, much smaller size).

The western part of the westwerk of the cathedral in Essen - an imitation of half of the Cás chapel.

Charles's empire was rather a loose conglomerate of subordinate territories and the monarch was forced to personally maintain obedience everywhere, therefore the core of the state was formed by the imperial palaces (fortified courts), the most important of which was Aachen (Aachen), where the main seat of the court was.

• Gotšalk's Gospel, col. 781 – a combination of Iroscoti (braided motifs in the border), Byzantine (drapes) and Roman (concept of the figure) influences.

• Gospel of St. Medarda te Soisson – beginning of the 9th century, a typical work, the basis of the depiction is based on Byzantine manuscripts (drapes, capture of movement), interpretation in details (border, arcade, heads of figures) are of Western origin.

• Ebbon's Evangelist - before the year 823, written for Bishop Ebbon of Reims, dependent on late antique designs, but executed with a distinctive style (very ruffled drapery gives the impression of movement, the evangelist Matthew has a focused spiritual expression, the landscape with trees and buildings has a modern handwriting) .

• Gospel from Lorsch - around 810, monumental manuscript, stylistic features visible on Gotšalk's Gospel, in addition deep blue.

• Utrecht Psalter – 820 Reims, a flowing narrative system as in early Christian manuscripts – psalms are written below, illustrations above the text. A black-and-white uncombed drawing, a demonstrated effort for a completely unique style. The psalm reached England, where it became a model for others in the 10th century.

• First Bible of Karl the Lysé – 851, showing the handover of the manuscript to Karl the Lysé, the grandson of Charlemagne. Antique architecture and priests' clothes.

• Ark of the Covenant, mosaic in the apse of the bishop's chapel – Germiny des Prés, 799 – 818, the rest of the decoration is non-figurative according to the pattern of Byzantine iconoclasm (iconoclasm).

• The Way to Bethlehem - Church of S. Maria Castelserpio, 7th - 8th century, paintings with completely Byzantine handwriting, created by Constantinopolitan painters.

• St. Stephen before the high priest - frescoes from the crypt of the church of S. Germain in Auxerre. According to the late Roman type of painting, similar to other productions of the period.

• The Christological cycle of frescoes in the monastery in Müstair - beginning of the 9th century, probably the largest medieval fresco cycle, stylistically reminiscent of the court illuminator workshops of the time.

• Bronze Equestrian Statuette of Charlemagne - 10th century (long after the death of Charlemagne), based on ancient designs but greatly simplifying the details.

• Statue of Charlemagne – Müstair, from 1160 – 1170 (although according to local tradition it was created during the emperor's lifetime), stucco statue.

• The figures of the martyrs in the palatial chapel of Santa Maria in Valle in Cividale, 8th century, resemble the figures in the Ravenna mosaics, which seem to float.

• Ascension of Christ - beginning of the 9th table, carving in ivory, fragment of a triptych; nakupéé figures with P. Mary in the middle, turning upwards, where we sense the disappearance of Christ in the heavens. The Byzantine scheme is reimagined with emphasis on the depiction of movement and graceful sculptural execution.

• Altar of the church of S. Ambrogio in Milan - the so-called Paliotto, col. 835; antependium – plate with gold friezes.

• Pippin's reliquary – 820 – 830, a small box decorated with gold sheet with bands of filigree. The decorative effect is complemented by precious stones and compartmental enamel. The front side shows the Crucifixion, the back side is dominated by two eagles with translucent enamel wings. The influence of Byzantium is slight, it falls fully into the sphere of Western art.

• Kettle from Sainte Maurice Abbey

• Reliquary of St. Morticia from the Abbey of Saint Maurice, unknown origin, probably a work from ca. 1230 created from earlier Carolingian work.

• Duke Tassila Cup - c. 770, made of cast and gilded copper for a Bavarian duke. Both the cupa (upper part) and the pedes (lower part) [the middle part is the nodus] are figurative representations on the body. Very fine metal work.

• Chalice from Old Cologne - second half of the 9th century, locally gilded silver, only the cup and nodus have survived. Probably created in Cologne.

**Ottonian Renaissance**

**Ottonian style**

Related information can also be found in the Ottonian Renaissance article.

In 962, he was crowned Emperor Otto I the Great, thereby consolidating the Holy Roman Empire. The Ottonian emperors strengthened relations with the Vatican - they founded church buildings. Like Charlemagne, they supported education and the arts. Thus the Ottonian renaissance was born, which also developed during the reign of Ota II, Ota III. and Henry II..

Ottonian art was again concentrated in the courts of the emperors and its aim was the glorification of the emperor's image. It was inspired by the Carolingian Renaissance, but also adopted Byzantine influences. A typical example of the Carolingian Renaissance can be the church of Saint Cyriak in Olpa with apses, crypts and a fortified part between the towers, which already foreshadows the onset of the Romanesque style both in layout and decoration. Gradually, more and more churches with two choirs were built, which in the 9th century grew to the size that we can find in the church of St. Michael in Hildesheim. The frescoes in the church of St. George in Oberzell on the island of Reichenau on Lake Constance are preserved from the painting, characterized by a linear abstract drawing with colored figures emphasizing the shape. Numerous illuminations also come from the same place. Sculpture is also notable, which is particularly represented by relief work. This is, for example, the Basel antependium consisting of a wooden relief in gold depicting Jesus Christ and Henry II. with his wife, or the door of the Hildesheim house with scenes from the Bible. Byzantine influences were then manifested especially in the field of artistic craftsmanship by the refinement of the line.

Charlemagne divided his empire between his three sons, who then divided it further until only individual duchies remained. At the beginning of the 10th century the power center of the West moved to the territory of Saxony, Henry Ptáčník received the title of King of Germany and at the same time became the founder of the Ottonian dynasty. Otto I received the imperial title in Rome and became the restorer of the Western Roman Empire, as he created the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation. The period of the Ottonian dynasty is sometimes called the Ottonian dynasty - similar to the Carolingian Renaissance. Through the marriage of Otto II. with the Byzantine princess Teofana, moreover, central Europe received the direct influence of Byzantium.

**​ Ottonian architecture**

The Frankish Empire gradually disintegrated after Charles's death, Charles' son Louis the Pious handed over the government to his three sons, and by gradually repeating this process, the empire disintegrated into basic duchies and the center of gravity of the empire gradually shifted to the east until it ended up in Saxony. Jindřich I Ptáčník founded the Ottonian dynasty (a total of three Ottos in a row) and with the accession of Otto I, the Holy Roman Empire was created, which only came to an end during the Napoleonic Wars. It was a conglomerate of small duchies and kingdoms held together by the person of the emperor.

The so-called Ottonian Renaissance took place, when Byzantine church objects and art entered the empire thanks to the marriage with Theofana. Large churches associated with monasteries etc. are being built, a special type of church with two presbyteries - eastern and western - is developing, which is created by connecting the main nave with the chapel of the westwerk. There are also often two transepts, and emporiums (ceiling elevations) above them. Ceilings are flat or flat with trusses. Columns and pillars regularly alternate in the arcades, the eastern presbytery is usually raised above the floor of the main nave, and half-recessed crypts are created below it. The church often also has a staircase tower with a belfry or just a bell tower. An important element of the church is the triumphal arch, incorporated into the layout usually as a department of the presbytery and as a supporting element.

Church of St. Cyriacus in Gernrod

Church of St. Michael in Hildesheim – elevated presbytery in the west, above the crossing of the naves, a tower extension, a flat sickle covered with preserved paintings

Imperial Cathedral of Our Lady and St. St. Stephen's Cathedral in Špýr - the imperial cathedral (emperors were buried here, the Italian model of the church - a vaulted ceiling with a cross vault over square floor plans, the vault is supported by half-pillars running along the entire height of the wall, so there are recessed niches between them. There are grouped windows on the towers and outside under through the roof of the presbytery, the so-called dwarf gallery – a small arcade at the top of the wall.To the west is a large westwerk.

Imperial Palatinate in Goslar – 1024 – 1056 under Konrad II. and Henry III., reconstruction from the 19th century.

• Bronze door of the church of St. Michael in Hildesheim, col. 1015, based on the door of the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome. A timeless original concept that was also a model for modern artists. The extremely mobile characters create positions at the limits of human body mechanics (falls, etc.) and capture strong expressions; in contrast, a very simple, only indicated background from which individual elements grow - trees, grass.

• Bernward's column - col. 1020. bronze imitation of Roman triumphal columns, scenes from the life of Christ are arranged in a spiral. Probably the same author as the door.

• Geron's crucifix – a life-size monumental statue on a golden cross; the torso of Christ reveals knowledge of anatomy, the sculpture represents the first level of Romanesque art.

• Zlatá madna – late 9th century cult representation of the Madonna conceived as a free sculpture, otherwise in the spirit of period production. The stiffness of the whole, but the surprising detail of the gestures. Wooden core covered with gold sheet.

• Madonna of Bishop Bernward – 1010 – 1015, stiffer

• Ascension of Christ - 10th century, Bamberg Cathedral, ivory relief, the Byzantine theme is treated in a Western way with an emphasis on movements and expression, the figures have different proportions than was usual in Byzantium - they have large hands and heads.

• Gold altarpiece from Basel - before 1018, gold antependium, five figures placed under the arches of the arcades (antiquing style). Specificity and style of stylization close to Romanesque art.

• Kropenka - col. 1000, most likely part of Teofana's dowry; ivory, decorated with figures of the Pope, the Emperor, and various ecclesiastical dignitaries. Jeweled belts added later.

• Crown of the Roman emperors – 962 or 967 (either for Otto I or Otto II), frontal cross from the beginning of the 11th century, kamara (upper arch) from the time of Konrad II. (1024 – 1039). Inspired by the crowns of Byzantine emperors - composed of segments decorated with filigree, gems, pearls and enamel scenes from the Old Testament. Complex symbolism of gems, numbers and symbols from the Old Testament.

• The Apple of the Imperial Crown Jewels, around 1200 – the globe or sphere represents the world, the cross of victory of Christianity – refers to Christ the Kosmokrator (ruler of the world).

• Reliquary cross of the Roman emperors – 1024/25, it contains imperial relics – the spear of St. Longinus with the nail with which Christ was nailed to the cross and part of the wood of Christ's cross.

• Lothar's cross – 10th century, the carefully laid out composition includes, in addition to precious stones, the seal of Lothar II. and a cameo with a bust of the young emperor Augustus. The plastic ends of the arms give the cross a classic character.

• Reliquary with the leg of St. Andrew – 977 – 993, leg-shaped reliquary (the tradition originates in Ireland).

**Manuscripts**

• Plates of the Echernašské Evangeliar - col. 990, sumptuous plates of illuminated manuscript; side field of hammered gold sheet, center ivory plaque with Crucifixion, between individual panels decorative bands with jewels.

• Binding of Gauzelin's Evangelist from Toul - late 10th century, enamels, filigree and precious stones predominate.

• Codex Aureus manuscript plates St. Jimrama - col. 870, reliefs on Christological themes.

• Plates of the Strahov Evangelist – 9th century.

• Registrum Gregorii manuscript - col. 983, depicting the emperor under the Baldachín

• The Strahov Evangelist – the figures are in the frames, not in the architecture; byzantizing character.

• Bamber sacramentary – 1002 – 114, symbolic coronation of the emperor – the emperor as a servant of God