

Romanesque art



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

16. Discuss four characteristics of Romanesque art. Give examples. The Romanesque art period started from approximately 1000 AD to the rise of the Gothic style in the 13th century, or later, depending on region. The preceding period is known as the Pre-Romanesque. The term was invented by 19th century art historians, which retained many basic features of Roman architectural style. Mostly round-headed arches, as well as barrel vaults, apses, and acanthus-leaf decoration but had also developed many very different characteristics. The Romanesque style was the first style to impact the whole of Catholic Europe, from Denmark to Sicily. Romanesque art consisted of sculptures, made out of metal, enamel, and ivory work. Metals were a very high status in this period, much more than the paintings. Metal sculptures included enamel decorations, for example The Shrine of the Three Kings at Cologne Cathedral by Nicholas of Verdun. It is said to contain the bones of the Biblical Magi, also known as the Three Kings or the Three Wise Men. The shrine is a large gilded and decorated triple sarcophagus placed above and behind the high altar of Cologne Cathedral. It is the largest reliquary, which is known as a shrine, in the western world. Another example of Romanesque metal work is the Cloisters Cross. It is an unusually complex 12th century ivory Romanesque altar cross in The Cloisters. The cross is carved from walrus ivory and measures 22 5/8 by 14 1/4 inches. The carvings that are covering both the front and the back contain ninety-two carved figures and ninety-eight inscriptions. The figures, each of which is only about one-half inch tall, illustrate a number of Biblical scenes. Aside from the sculptures Romanesque art was known for its wall paintings. The large wall surfaces and plain, curving vaults of the Romanesque period lent themselves to mural decoration. Many of the early wall paintings have been

destroyed by moisture and some walls have been re plastered and painted over. Majority, if not all, wall paintings were in churches. The Abbey Church of Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe, which is located in Poitou, France, is home to many of these murals. One of these murals is, “ God speaks to Noah”. This mural was done using the Fresco technique. The Fresco technique is a painting done on fresh plaster (calcina), which is done immediately on freshly applied plaster before it dries. Another type of Romanesque art is embroidery. Romanesque embroidery is best known from the Bayeux Tapestry. The Bayeux Tapestry is a 0.5-by-68.38-meter long embroidered cloth, which depicts the events leading up to the Norman Conquest of England as well as the events of the invasion itself. The tapestry is annotated in Latin. Another popular type of embroidery is called the Opus Anglicanum or English work. It is a contemporary term for fine needlework of Medieval England done for ecclesiastical or secular use on clothing, hangings or other textiles, primarily by nuns and then by professionals who had served seven years' apprenticeship in secular workshops. Stained glass is the colored and painted glass of medieval Europe from the 10th to the 16th century. For much of this period stained glass windows were the major pictorial art form, particularly in northern France, Germany and England where windows tended to be larger than in southern areas. Glass was both expensive and fairly flexible meaning it could be added to or re-arranged, seems to mostly be used in churches, but were also found in wealthy domestic settings and public buildings such as town halls. The purpose of stained glass windows in a church was both to enhance the beauty of their setting and to inform the viewer through narrative or symbolism. Most of the magnificent stained glass of France, including the famous windows of Chartres, dates from the 13th

century. Few large windows that date back from the Twelfth century are intact, one of them being the Crucifixion of Poitiers. It is a remarkable composition that rises through three stages. The lowest with a quatrefoil depicting the Martyrdom of St Peter, the largest central stage dominated by the crucifixion and the upper stage showing the Ascension of Christ in a mandorla. The window has been described as, “ a remarkable beauty”. The earliest intact figures are five prophet windows at Augsburg, dating from the late Eleventh century. The figures, though stiff and formalized, demonstrate proficiency in design, both pictorially and in the functional use of the glass. One particular is called, “ The Prophet Daniel”.