

Romanesque art



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There were many new ideas and techniques used in the Romanesque style of architecture. The great advancement that the Romanesque period had on architecture was the development of stone vaulted buildings. Stone vaulting was needed to replace the wooden vaulting previously used, which were highly flammable. The most frequently used vault was the barrel vault, which are a series of round arches that are placed one after the other. Barrel vaults were also used to form what is known as a groin vault (when two barrel vaults were crossed with each other). Also during the Romanesque period domes were widely being used. Domes were formed by taking numerous round arches and placing them on different axes but with the same apex. To support vaults and domes, the walls were made very thick and had buttresses which helped to bear the weight of the heavy stones. The massive stones that were used to construct buildings during the Romanesque period were another characteristic of this style of architecture. Due to the massive stone vaults, walls, and piers, most of the buildings/structures were also composed of many small units called bays that helped to complete the design. Many bays placed in a long row down the center of a building/structure is known as a nave. The naves during the Romanesque period were much higher and narrower than of any other periods before it. The high and narrow naves allowed for larger clerestory windows, but they were still relatively small and did not contain glass. Most of the doors and windows of were capped with round arches. Right after the Romanesque period came the Gothic period. The greatest element that came from the Gothic period was the ribbed vault. The buildings/structures that were built during the Gothic period were made of stones and because the stones were heavy, the building could only be constructed so high. The development of

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the pointed arch and ribbed vault, however, allowed for the buildings to be built even higher. The pointed arch is very similar to the round arch because they were both used to distribute the weight of the walls, but the difference is that instead of being round at the top, it has a slight point. This point allowed for the arch to be built higher and also to distribute the weight evenly to both sides of the arch. Ribbed vaults were designed so that it had small arches of smaller stones running diagonally across a barrel or groin vault to hold up the ceilings. During this period, the fan vault was also developed. A fan vault is where the ribs of the ribbed vault are multiplied and grouped in the shape of an open fan, allowing for even more support. Flying buttresses were created to help to counteract the weight of a building to help avoid the weight of the building from being placed on the ribs of the vaults resulting in it pushing outward on the walls. This allowed for the walls to be thinner and higher, which made room for more glass windows (mostly stained glass) to let in more natural light. Romanesque and Gothic architecture were very similar in design. Gothic architecture was just more involved and a bit more complex than that of Romanesque. These two architecture styles were the first that were made to the interior of a building. Both styles used forms of arches: the Romanesque style used the round arch and the Gothic style used the pointed arch. They both used forms of vaults: the Romanesque style used the barrel vault and the Gothic style used the ribbed vault. They both used forms of buttresses: the Romanesque style used just normal buttresses while the Gothic style used flying buttresses. Even though there are many similarities between the two styles, there were also many differences. The Romanesque style was the first style to use mainly all stone and to build thick heavy walls in buildings/structures. The

Gothic style used thinner walls that could reach much higher levels and made room for huge stained glass windows.