The complexities of Early Medieval civilization reflect its origin in the turbulent centuries following the death of Charlemagne in 814.

Charlemagne’s empire began to crumble internally a decade before his death.

The empire also came under attack from the Muslims from Spain and the Vikings in the North.

In 911, the king of the western Franks granted territorial rights to a Viking band who had settled in the area, now known as Normandy, with their leader given the title of duke and baptized a Christian the next year.

Germany and France began to take shape under their own ruling houses and to develop individual cultures.

Monasticism developed organically acquiring the importance of a supranational force.

Key Terms:
- rune stone
- pilgrimage
- Gothic
- Ottonian
- tympanum
- fresco
- westwork
- Romanesque
- Tres Riches Heures

Learning Objectives:
- The importance of churches and how they changed throughout the Middle Ages.
- The representation of Christ in northern Europe.
- The emergence of churches in Romanesque and Gothic periods.
- The importance of the pilgrimages socially and for the Church.
- The use of art outside the Church.

Cross of Gero (fig. 9.1)
- The early Christians had depicted Christ as healer, teacher, law-giver, or judge.
- For them the cross was a symbol of triumph over death.
- Byzantine artists sometimes depicted the cross after the Iconoclastic period, but always with a restrained and dignified remoteness stressing its sacramental significance.
• This presentation of Christ as a degraded, humiliated, suffering god in human form was something that did not start until the Middle Ages.
• The image here has no precedent as it illustrates Christ exhausted by physical pain and torment, stomach bulging, head slumped forward with eyes closed and mouth very slightly open.
• It is the earliest known artwork preoccupied with Christ’s agony, which originated in northern Europe and became a way to distinguish it from Eastern Orthodox art work.

Rune stone (fig. 9.3)
• This image presented a different Christ from the previous image.
• Christ is shown already absorbed into a Nordic world of elemental gods and magic charms and is bound in toils of interlace of patterns of twisted and knotted ropes and thongs which had been used in manuscripts two centuries earlier.

OTTONIAN ART
• The Holy Roman Empire was consolidated under the rule of Otto I, who was crowned by the Pope in Rome in 962.
• This art period is named after Otto I and his descendants, who ruled Germany and northern Italy until 1056.

St. Pantaleon, Cologne (fig. 9.4)
• This church is considered typically Ottonian with a westwork that remained little altered from later reconstructions.
• Though there is some Carolingian influences, there is also a new boldness in the massing of solids in the westwork.

St. Michael (fig. 9.4; 5)
• There is a new sense of space here that was not found during the Carolingian period.
• The nave consists of three squares with piers at the corners and columns in between, a system of alternating supports for arcades.
• It is a complex plan that breaks away from the Early Christian basilica’s straight path from west door to apse.
Bronze doors with scenes from the Old and New Testaments (fig. 9.8)

- These doors are 15 feet high, each apparently cast in a single piece with figures in bold relief, some heads being almost in the round.
- The door on the left has eight scenes from the Book of Genesis while the door on the right has scenes from the Gospels.
- This arrangement made it possible for believers to confront subjects from the Old and New Testaments.
- These subjects, although previously depicted in manuscripts illustrations, had never been rendered with such common humanity and dramatic expressiveness.
- The nude figures owe nothing to the Classical tradition of heroic representation rather they have a heaviness of the trunk and weakness of the limbs suggesting the frailty of the spirit within the flesh.

Christ washing the Apostles’ Feet (fig. 9.9)

- This page is from the Gospel Book of Otto III and illustrates elements derived from Classical antiquity by way of Byzantium but used out of context.
- Christ is presented without a beard as was seen in Early Christian art and at the same time He and Peter are hierarchically larger than the other figures.
- Christ’s arm is greatly lengthened to emphasize the gesture of benediction.
- The building at the top is from Roman stage scenery and mural paintings but without the sense of perspective.
- All sense of Classical rationalism has been lost and replaced with a vibrant inwardness and an unworldly, visionary quality with sharper attention to surface patterns of flowing lines and rich bright colors.

ROMANESQUE ARCHITECTURE IN ITALY

- By 961-2, Otto I restored relative political stability in Italy which resulted in the rise of the communes or city-republics.
- This was the most important event in Italian history since the fall of the Roman empire.
- Around 1000 there was a surge of church rebuilding throughout France, but it did not lead to any immediate change in style in Italy.
• Instead, Early Christian plans and decorative schemes were revived, especially in Rome where St. Clemente was completely rebuilt after 1084.
• Throughout Italy this adherence to traditional plans continued but with a distinctive Classicizing style for the exterior elevations.
• This type of exterior is often called the Tuscan ‘Proto-Renaissance’.
• The buildings at Pisa and Florence are usually called Romanesque which originally meant ‘debased Roman’ a term invented in the early nineteenth century to categorize medieval architecture before the adoption of the Gothic pointed arch.

**St. Miniato al Monte (fig. 9.10)**
• This church is probably the earliest surviving example of Proto Renaissance.
• The facade emphasizes the basilican form of the interior.
• The lower register, which was probably completed at a later date, is a shallow arcade with Corinthian columns framing three real, and, for symmetry, two false doorways.
• The upper portion was completed in the twelfth century and was designed as a Classical temple front, with the insertion of a simulated arcade between the entablature and the pediment.
• The entire surface is done with white and green marble in geometrical patterns.

**St. Marco (fig. 9.14; 15; 16)**
• This is essentially Byzantine, designed by a Greek architect about 1063.
• It has five domes, one over the center and one over each of the arms.
• It was built as a chapel attached to the palace of the elected leaders of the Venetian republic and functions as a monument to the power of the state.
• Venice was founded in the fifth century and came under the rule of the Byzantine empire.
• By the ninth century, it became a virtually independent state and grew rich from trade between northern Europe and the Near East.
In the late eleventh century France suffered more from the disintegration of Charlemagne’s empire than Germany. Vikings, Muslims, and Magyars had devastated many towns, and recovery was slow. The Church, which held more land than any single lay ruler, was the only unifying institution, touching many parts of the secular structure. Some bishops were great feudal lords and many bishops and abbots were members of the ruling class.

St. Sernin (fig. 9.20; 21; 20)
The Cluniac Order set new standards for religious life, monastic organization, and also for churches. The form of this church is similar in functional needs and spiritual ideals but smaller than the church designed by the Cluniac Order. Proportions were conditioned by the use of stone vaulting, which was a single great vault along the nave instead of the flat timber ceiling with which church naves had been covered since the early Middle Ages. The use of stone lessened the risk of fire and gave a nobler and more solemn effect and also provided better acoustics for the Gregorian chants. Externally the emphasis is placed firmly on the east end which encloses the choir and the high altar. The little apses projecting from the larger apse enclose chapels with altars so that several priests could say mass at the same time. These chapels were also used to display relics. St. Sernin was one of the many ‘pilgrimage churches’ built on the roads leading to the shrine of St. James in Spain. The long nave and wide transepts with galleries above the aisles were intended to accommodate the pilgrims.

The Fleet Sails, detail from the Bayeux Tapestry (fig. 9.24)
Secular art, almost as much as religious art and culture, depended on Church patronage. At the same time French vernacular poetry began to blossom in the love songs for ladies to sing and in the epic recounting of deeds of chivalry. This tapestry is a visual account of the Norman Conquest of England.
• Emphasis is placed on actions and abrupt, stiff-limbed, but expressive gestures and close attention to details of contemporary costume, armour, arms, horse-trappings, carts, and boats.
• The figures in each group are approximately the same size and not scaled according to rank.

Gislebertus, Tympanum (fig. 9.26)
• Large scale carving in stone had not been practiced anywhere in Europe since the fall of the Roman empire.
• Now several local styles developed almost simultaneously in central and southern France.
• These styles were limited almost exclusively to the capitals of columns and to the main exterior entrances to churches.
• The Romanesque portal consisted of a large semicircular tympanum carved in relief and resting on a lintel above the doorway and generally had more carvings on its jambs.
• Christ was almost always shown in the center, larger than the other figures with the favorite subject matter being the Last Judgement.
• This tympanum, from Autun Cathedral, was done by Gislebertus who signed it being one of the few named Romanesque sculptors.
• His work combines sophisticated delicacy of line with great dramatic intensity.

Central portal of La Madeleine, Vézelay (fig. 9.27)
• Christ is seated in majesty in the center sending the apostles on their mission to convert the heathen, heal the sick, and cast out devils from the possessed.
• On the semicircle of the outer archivolt, there are figures of men engaged in the ‘Labours of the Months’ along with the signs of the zodiac.
• The sculptor seemed to have learned much from manuscript illuminations which can be seen in the swirl of drapery on Christ’s left knee and in the way in which Christ is seated.
• Christ’s head breaks the inner archivolt as does St. John the Baptist, who is standing on the trumeau breaks through the lintel.

Christ in Majesty, page from the Starlet Bible (fig. 9.30)
• Christ seems to project beyond the frame, which is filled with symbols of evangelists that partly cover the sharper rectilinear fret of the border.
The lines are more firmly drawn than before but with nervous touches only on the ruffled hem of the robe.

**Innovations in Romanesque Architecture**

- The architectural developments in Germany and France were inspired by similar demands for greater unity of effect.

**Interior of Speyer Cathedral** (fig. 9.31)

- Here at Speyer, groin vaults were first used to span a wide nave.
- In a groin vault the weight is carried by the four corner points instead of by the whole wall.
- Speyer has all the defiance and assurance of German Romanesque.
- The nave is lined with huge piers with alternating engaged shafts forming blind arcades.

**Nave of Durham Cathedral** (fig. 9.33)

- In the nave one can see that the ribs had been intended from the start.
- The introduction of ribbed groin vaults brought the medieval architects’ quest for lofty, well-lit, fire-proof, and aesthetically unified interior spaces close to a solution.
- The rib vault was the most important structural device by which the inert masses of Romanesque architecture were gradually reduced and lightened.

**Gothic Art and Architecture**

- The pointed arches and ribbed vaults though used before are the most obvious characteristics of a Gothic interior.

**Ambulatory of St. Denis** (fig. 9.35)

- The ambulatory of St. Denis is the first major part of any building in the Gothic style.
- The architectural revolution relationships used at St. Denis was one of structural relationships rather than forms.
- What was new here was the way in which well established techniques of construction were combined to create an interior of wholly unprecedented clarity.
- The church had a political as well as a religious role because St. Denis was a royal abbey that enshrined the relics of the patron saint of France and was the burial place of French kings.
High Gothic

• The achievement of French architects in the early twelfth century was the creation of a system in which structure, construction and visually expressive forms became indistinguishable in the Gothic cathedral.
• The Gothic cathedral became the symbol of an all embracing religious faith.

Nave of Amiens Cathedral (fig. 9.43)

• The High Gothic interior reached its apogee here at Amiens.
• All reminders of Romanesque mass and weight have been obliterated in this huge, soaring interior space, three times as high as it is wide.
• The general and compelling momentum is vertical.
• The arches of the arcade are narrower than before and separated from tall clerestory windows only by a low triforium so there is nothing to hinder the eye’s upward flight.
• A sensation of ascent is induced by the rapid succession of aspiring arches.

Stained Glass and Flying Buttresses

• The interior of Amiens Cathedral was made to exemplify the lucidity of Gothic architecture with the use of unearthly light that filtered through stained glass windows and suffusing the whole space with unearthly color.
• As early as the eleventh century the subject matter of the windows sometimes incorporated figures composed like translucent mosaics but made from pieces of variously colored glass over painted in black to indicate detail.
• It was at St. Denis that figurative stained glass windows were first given the importance they were to retain for some four centuries in northern Europe.

Rose window, Chartres Cathedral (fig. 9.45)

• Chartres Cathedral still preserves most of its original stained glass.
• Figures in each window or group of windows are theologically related to one another and to the doctrines illustrated in the whole series.
• Many of the windows are devoted to the cult of the Virgin Mary because Chartres had as its holiest relic the tunic she was believed to have worn when she gave birth.
• It is often said that the windows in the churches were the ‘Bible’ for the poor and illiterate.
• The windows created an atmosphere far removed from that of the everyday world outside
• The colors would flood into the church from every side and diffuses softly an unearthly glow and glimmer.

Chartres Cathedral (fig. 9.48)
• The lofty vaults required external support and this led to another Gothic invention the flying buttresses.
• A similar system was used in Romanesque architecture but was concealed beneath the roofs of the tribune galleries above the aisles.
• Gothic architects did away with the tribune galleries to allow more light in and in doing so exposed the buttresses.
• The architects also had the buttresses carved and topped with little spires so that they contributed to the general upward force of the building.

Economics and Theology
• None of the High Gothic cathedrals has its towers completed as envisioned by the architects.
• Funds were raised from a variety of sources, sometimes by popular appeals.
• Suger set aside annually a proportion of the St. Denis estate income to meet the cost of building.
• Offerings made by pilgrims and the local population contributed probably more than donations from kings and noblemen.
• The Gothic cathedral was at once a symbol and an exposition of Christian faith.

Sculpture and Painting
• A great impetus was given to naturalism in the figurative arts, especially sculpture.

Detail of west portal, Reims Cathedral (fig. 9.54)
• Sculpture began to be seen as separate from the architectural background and were carved with marked individuality.
• These statues are wholly detached from the building and conceived not as reliefs but as in the round.
• The figures come across as being essentially human figures occupying the same space.
Visitation, west portal, Reims (9.55)

• Weight, both physical and moral, is suggested by the substantial gathered folds of their garments.

• The sculptor must have known and studied ancient Roman statues, because the drapery is carved in a technique not known to have been practiced for some 900 years.

• The one bent knee of each figure also goes back to the Classical past.

Abraham and the Three Angels (fig. 9.57)

• The whole page is rendered with the same strong outlines and broad areas of color of a stained glass window.

• The Gothic feature of this piece is that allegorical significance is now secondary to dramatic presentation.

• In the background are pinnacled buttresses, pointed arches and rose windows setting the stage for the scene in the foreground.

English and German Gothic

• In England, before the end of the twelfth century, local variations to the Gothic style were introduced and further developed.

Nave vault, Lincoln Cathedral (fig. 9.58)

• The ribs are multiplied by running one along the center and splaying out subsidiary ribs to join it, creating a pattern of stars which sacrifices logic to decorative effect.

• This ‘Decorative Style’ uses double curved arches and bars of window tracery twisted and turned into intricate networks of stone, and was developed in England in the late thirteenth century.

Ekkehart and Uta (fig. 9.62)

• Germany clung to the Romanesque style until the end of the twelfth century.

• The drapery in these statues illustrates the new approach to naturalism, which combines the use of drapery from the Roman times with thoughtful heads of Gothic sculpture.

Cologne Cathedral (fig. 9.63)

• When Gothic architecture was introduced into Germany, it expanded in both scale and richness.
Cologne was probably inspired by Reims and is the tallest and the longest of all Gothic churches.

**Italian Gothic**

- Gothic architecture was introduced into Italy by the Cistercians, whose abbey church looked just like those found in France.
- In painting the ‘Greek style’ was beginning to lose its hold on Italian arts as early as the twelfth century when the compositions became more complex, figures more dynamic, and drapery more agitated.
- The use of wall paintings to supplement the far more expensive mosaics was probably due to the sharp economic decline during the middle of the thirteenth century.
- During the recovery period a cultural revival resulted in a greater freedom of handling and expressiveness.

**Nave of St. Francesco** (fig. 9.65)

- This church is very different from those in France, having only the rib vaults and pointed traceried windows in common.
- The plan is of rectilinear simplicity: a Latin cross with a five-sided apse.
- Horizontal and verticals are exactly balanced and the interior surfaces are uniformly smooth, emphasizing the massiveness of the walls.
- St. Francesco’s dimensions and form were determined by the size of the congregation.
- The decorations were based on the demand for a direct, non-allegorical exposition of Christian doctrine.

**Berlinghieri, St. Francis** (fig. 9.67)

- This image is not a portrait but is more of an assemblage of remembered characteristics.
- The six scenes on either side offer information about the saint.
- The figures and architectural backgrounds are depicted according to time honored Byzantine conventions.

**Cimabue, Madonna Enthroned with Angels and Prophets** (fig. 9.71)

- This painting marks a great change in style from fig. 9.67.
- Symmetry is marked by the placement of the figures except that it is broken by the Christ Child.
• Depth is indicated by the architecture of the throne rising up in stages surrounded by angels.

Duccio, *Virgin and Child Enthroned in Majesty* (fig. 9.76)
• This painting was done for the high altar of the cathedral in Siena.
• The Virgin Mary towers above the angels and saints who are hierarchically ranked on either side of her.

Giotto
• Our knowledge of Giotto comes from the local patrons of Florence who wrote the first histories of Italian art.
• He is credited with rescuing Italian art from the Byzantine style.

Scrovegni Chapel (fig. 9.79)
• Enric Scrovegni was a private citizen and one of the wealthiest in the republican city state of Padua.
• The honor of his family was also involved, because the chapel was decorated with a lavishness quiet unprecedented for a private foundation and he sought to expiate the sins of his father.
• There are three registers of figurative paintings on the walls representing scenes from the life of the Virgin and of Christ.
• The paintings here are the earliest securely attributed to Giotto.
• Although Giotto borrowed iconographical patterns from earlier art, he revised them almost beyond recognition.

Giotto, *Lamentation* (fig. 9.81)
• Giotto was concerned with inner states of mind as with outward appearances.
• In this panel, the Virgin clasps her dead son and gazes at his closed eyes.

**SECULAR AND INTERNATIONAL GOTHIC**

Martini, *St. Louis of Toulouse crowning Robert of Anjou King of Naples* (fig. 9.82)
• This altarpiece was done to demonstrate the fact that Louis had renounced the Neapolitan kingdom in favor of his brother.
• Secular subject matter was in great demand at the end of the fourteenth century.
• This altarpiece attempts to reconcile religious and political; eternal and temporal.

Lorenzetti, Allegory of Peace (fig. 9.83)
• Emphasis is firmly placed on the here and now in this enormous panoramic view of town and country, which was based on Siena and its surrounding hills.
• It is thought that this was the first convincing cityscape painted and one of the first monumental secular paintings in Western art since antiquity.
• The right side of the painting depicts a well cultivated agricultural landscape.
• On the opposite side, another view of the same city and landscape devastated by war.

The Limbourg Brothers, September (fig. 9.87)
• The brothers drew much inspiration from Italian art and the Tres Riches Heures was their main achievement.
• The Tres Riches Heures opens with 12 calendar pages, one for each month with an appropriate scene and the signs of the zodiac in a semicircle above.
• The perspective in September is anything but scientific and the piece is a highly idealized vision of peace and plenty.
• The Tres Riches Heures is one of the very few great medieval works of art made for a private patron’s delectation.

Sluter, Moses Fountain (fig. 9.89)
• Sculpture was commissioned by Philip the Bold of Burgundy.
• The heads are so sensitively carved that they might well be mistaken for portraits.
• The sense of weight and bulk of their great forms under the swelling drapery that the figures seem to expand into the surrounding space.