Romanesque Architecture
Centered in Western Europe: Britain, France, Germany, Spain

End of the 9th Century to the Rise of the Gothic: 12th Century

Influenced by Roman, Byzantine, Carolingian and Ottonian (German), Viking, Celtic and Saracenic (Moslem)
Romanesque Life During this Time:
Political Turbulence

Spain still controlled by the Moors

Widespread Illiteracy, Small & Scattered Population, Poor Communication

Constant threat of warfare

Monks held the Intellectual and Artistic Materials

Greatest Patron was the Christian Church – Language: Latin

Religious Pilgrimages were very popular

Romansque Pilgrimage Routes:
Romanesque: Common Traits

Thick Stone Walls, Small Windows – Fortresslike Appearance, 
*Impression of Great Solidity and Heaviness*.

Articulation of Every Structural Division to Give Impression of 
Unity: Modular System of Construction with Interiors Divided in 

Fat Piers supporting Round Arches and Barrel Vaults

Diversity throughout Countries and even within a Country 
because of Climate, Traditions, Materials and Communication

Who Built the Churches?

1st Half of the 11th Century Church Building gained Momentum

Monks – Ivory Carvings, Embroidery, Arts of the Cloister

Architecture was one of the Mechanical Arts, not Liberal Arts

Architects had an Inferior Social Status

Erected by Stone Masons, ordinary workmen, hired by the Monks
Romanesque Churches

Cruciform Plan

Churches were Built along the Pilgrimage Route –
Churches must accommodate many Pilgrims:
- so they provided a loop for circulation around the nave: side aisles

- At East End, a large semicircular apse behind was supplied with an Ambulatory (walkway around the Perimeter) and radiating Chapels displaying treasures

Romanesque Churches

Long narrow Naves
Twin Towers at Entrance
Tower over the Crossing

Large Triforiums
(Upper Gallery over side aisles)

Clerestories

Clustered Piers supporting Roof

Geometric ornament on Columns and Capitals
France: 1050 - 1150
France is split into a number of independent Domains

Pilgrimages / Blind Faith made it possible to erect a large Building to House Relics

Pilgrims offerings gave financial sources

Between 1050-1350: 80 Cathedrals, 500 large Churches and Tens of Thousands of Parish Churches were erected

Sainte Madeleine Vezelay, France: 1089 - 1206
Pilgrimage Church
200' Nave w/ Unusual high Vaulting

Pink & Gray bands on the Nave Arches: Divide Groin Vaults=Bays
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[Images of the cathedral interior and exterior]
Sainte Madeleine Vezelay, France: 1089 - 1206
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Church of Sainte Foy, Conques, France:

1050 - 1130
Pilgrimage Church
Large Windows and a tall spacious Nave & Sanctuary
Constructed of Stone (Fear of Fire)
Designed with Continuous Aisles around the Nave and transept
Chevet: Combination of the Aisles that encircle the Apse, small Chapels and Ambulatory
Church of Sainte Foy, Conques, France
Peterborough Cathedral England:
Pilgrimage Church Began in 1177, Nave started 28 years later
211’ long and 33’ wide Nave w/ Wooden ceiling 81’ high
Built on the site of a Benedictine Abbey Church
White Barnack stone juxtaposed to a painted wooden ceiling

Church of Sainte Foy, Conques, France
Peterborough Cathedral England: 1089 - 1206
Cathedral of Durham England: Begun 1093
Pilgrimage Church built mainly in the 12th Century
470' long – 1st Church to have ribbed vaults
Earliest Church to use Pointed Transverse Arches to divide the Nave into Bays
Cathedral of Durham England: Begun 1093
Cathedral, Baptistry and Tower Pisa, Italy
Construction lasted 1063 – 1350
Site = Grassy Piazza sets stage for the White Marble exterior
Peak of Italian Romanesque Architecture
Set of Buildings link with light open arcades and inlaid marble
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