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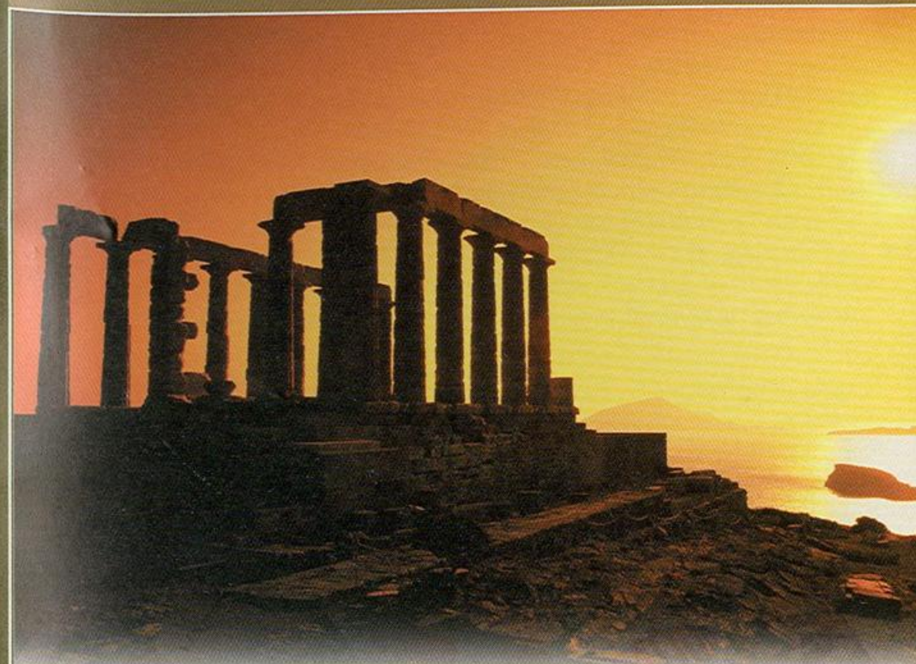

Discovering the Middle Ages

Taught by: Professors William R. Cook and Ronald B. Herzman,
State University of New York, Geneseo

Course Guidebook

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Ronald Herzman, Ph.D.

Professor of English, State University of New York at Geneseo

Ronald Herzman was born in Brooklyn, New York. He attended Brooklyn Prep and Manhattan College, graduating with honor in 1965 and receiving the Devlin Medal for excellence in French. He studied English literature at the University of Delaware as a DuPont Fellow and a New York State Regents Fellow. He received his M.A. in 1967 and his Ph.D. in 1969, writing his dissertation on Geoffrey Chaucer. Professor Herzman has also studied at Princeton University (summer 1973) and as a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow-in-Residence at the University of Chicago during the 1978–1979 academic year. He received the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1976 and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Manhattan College in 1991.

In 1969, Herzman was appointed Assistant Professor of English at the State University of New York at Geneseo. He currently holds the rank of SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of English. He has held a number of concurrent positions. He has been an adjunct Professor at Genesee Community College, teaching in the inmate education program at Attica Correctional Facility (together with Professor Cook); he has been a professorial lecturer at Georgetown University; and a guest tutor at St. John's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico. From 1982–1985, Herzman was on leave from SUNY to work at the National Endowment for the Humanities, where he was the founding Program Officer for the Summer Seminars for School Teachers and the Assistant Director of the Division of Fellowships and Seminars.

Professor Herzman's teaching interests include Dante, Chaucer, Francis of Assisi, Shakespeare, the Bible, and Arthurian literature. With Cook, he has team-taught several courses during the length of their academic careers at Geneseo, including the Age of Dante and the Age of St. Francis of Assisi. Cook and Herzman have also taken students to Europe to study various aspects of the Middle Ages.

In 1983, Cook and Herzman published *The Medieval World View* with Oxford University Press and are currently at work on a second edition. Herzman's other books include *The Apocalyptic Imagination in Medieval Literature* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992, with Richard Emmerson) and *Four Romances of England* (Medieval Institute Publications, edited with Graham Drake and Eve Salisbury). He has written extensively on medieval literature, including fifteen articles and book chapters on Dante, several articles on Francis of Assisi, and work on Chaucer, the *Romance of the Rose*, and the *Song of Roland* (with Cook). His current research interests include a book-length study of Dante's *Paradiso*.

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Professor Herzman has directed nine Seminars for School Teachers for the National Endowment for the Humanities, conducted at Geneseo; at St. John's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico; and in Siena and Assisi, Italy.

William Cook, Ph.D.

Professor of History, State University of New York at Geneseo

William Cook was born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana, and attended public schools there. He is a 1966 graduate of Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana (*cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa). He received Woodrow Wilson and Herbert Lehman fellowships to study medieval history from Cornell University, where he received his Ph.D. in 1971. Cook's dissertation was a study of a Hussite theologian and diplomat named Peter Payne.

In 1970, Professor Cook was appointed Assistant Professor of History at the State University of New York at Geneseo. He has taught there for thirty years and holds the rank of Distinguished Teaching Professor. SUNY Geneseo is an undergraduate college of about 5,000 students located in a village of 8,000 in the western part of New York's Finger Lakes region and about twenty-five miles south of Rochester.

At Geneseo, Cook has taught courses in medieval history and in ancient history, the Renaissance and Reformation periods, and biblical and Christian thought. He has teamed with Professor Herzman to teach several courses, including the Age of Dante and the Age of St. Francis of Assisi.

Beginning in 1974, Cook and Herzman have taken their students from SUNY Geneseo to study in Europe. Recently, Cook has been teaching a course about medieval Italian city-states every other January in Siena, Italy.

After publishing several articles on Hussite theology and monastic thought, Professor Cook has, for more than twenty years, focused his research on Saint Francis of Assisi. In 1989, he published a volume in a series, *The Way of the Christian Mystics*, entitled *Francis of Assisi: The Way of Poverty and Humility* with Michael Glazier (later published by the Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN). For years, Cook sought to find and catalogue all the early paintings of Saint Francis done in Italy. In the 1990s, he published a series of articles in Franciscan and Italian journals on specific images of the saint. In 1998, he published a study entitled *St. Francis in America* (Franciscan Press, Quincy, IL) of early Italian paintings of Francis that are currently in the United States and Canada. These years of research on the images of Francis were brought to a conclusion with the 1999 publication of a comprehensive catalogue: *Images of St. Francis of Assisi in Painting, Stone and Glass from the Earliest Images to ca.1320 in Italy: A Catalogue* (Leo S. Olschki, Florence) in the series *Italian Medieval and Renaissance Studies*.

Cook and Herzman published *The Medieval World View* with Oxford University Press in 1983 and are currently preparing a second edition. They have also written several articles together on such subjects as Dante, the *Song of Roland*, and paintings of the life of Saint Francis in Assisi.

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Discovering the Middle Ages

Scope:

The purpose of this course is to cultivate an understanding and appreciation of the period we now call the Middle Ages. To see something of the richness and variety of the Middle Ages from the inside, we will examine and discuss those images that will best enable us to look at central themes in medieval culture, art, religion, literature, and history.

The first three lectures "situate" the Middle Ages. We begin by giving an overview of the medieval landscape, not simply because establishing a "sense of place" is a good way to begin our explorations, but also because it allows us to see some of the more striking differences between the medieval and modern worlds. In particular, the relationship between urban and rural was much different in the medieval world. A sense of place can also be established by an examination of the most characteristic structures of the Middle Ages, particularly the monastery and the castle. Why were these structures built, and what can they tell us about the period? Bridges, gates, churches, palaces, and even a hospital and a guildhall can also offer us some insight into the world of the Middle Ages. Examining these structures can help us answer the question of how space was used in medieval cities and towns.

From this geographical and architectural introduction to the Middle Ages, we move to a social analysis, presented in Lectures Four and Five. How was medieval society organized, in both social and economic terms? The so-called three estates, consisting of "those who pray," "those who fight," and "those who work," became an ideal for much of the Middle Ages. We talk about each of these categories. We also clarify the various ways in which the church played a much larger role in medieval society than it does in modern, describing its role in the spiritual life of society and in such venues as education and law. By describing images of representative medieval rulers, including Charlemagne and Louis IX, we explain the ideals and the reality of medieval chivalry. "Those who work," to the people of the Middle Ages, meant primarily those who work the land. We explain medieval agricultural techniques by describing relevant images from sculpture and from manuscript illuminations. The theory of the three estates does not leave room for what has come to be known as the middle class. By describing images of various trades, we examine the emergence of middle class activities in the Middle Ages.

Lectures Six through Eight deal with the two most important sources of medieval culture, the classical and biblical heritages of the Western tradition. By discussing images of the classical world that survived into the Middle Ages, we examine the relationship between the classical world and the Middle Ages, showing how the classical heritage was modified and transformed. The architectural examples that we discuss allow us to make our points with respect to such diverse activities as art, architecture, law, and government. From the

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classical heritage we move to the biblical heritage and examine the ways in which people in the Middle Ages read and understood the two parts of the Christian Bible, the Old Testament and the New Testament. From painting, manuscript illumination, stained glass, and sculpture, we will show how the Bible was understood in the Middle Ages and, in particular, how the people of the Middle Ages perceived the relationship between Old and New Testaments, seeing the Old as leading up to the New and the New as fulfilling the Old. These two traditions, classical and biblical, come together in a dynamic synthesis in the Middle Ages, and we will end this part of the course by analyzing examples from stained glass, cathedral sculpture, statuary, and painting to show how the classical world was incorporated into the Christian world.

In the Middle Ages, attitudes toward time and history were different from those of the present. Lecture Nine deals with two significant aspects of this difference: the division of history—both of the world and of individual humans—into seven ages, and the tendency to look at the past primarily as it relates to the present. Lectures Ten and Eleven focus on medieval aesthetics and the tendency to look at the surface reality of an art work as a starting point to examine a deeper reality. The world of the senses in the Middle Ages was often a clue to the world of ideas; as a result and as our examination of several churches shows, the world of the senses could be "reshaped" in the world of art to point toward deeper realities. This tendency to look toward deeper realities also helps explain the persistence of a code of symbolic identifications that remains relatively constant in the art of the Middle Ages. Lecture Eleven deals with important examples of this symbolic code, including the tradition of saints' lives and the catalogues of virtues and vices.

We conclude the course by illustrating the way in which contrasts and oppositions helped define reality in the Middle Ages: the saved and the damned, the sacred and the profane, the serious and the comic. Understanding the aesthetic that emerges from these oppositions also helps explain much of medieval humor. We conclude the course by suggesting that these humorous juxtapositions can help us read some of the masterpieces of medieval culture, such as Dante.

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Lecture One

Medieval and Modern

Scope: This first lecture introduces students to the overall plan of the course. Our lecture discusses why the Middle Ages is worth appreciating and understanding, and how we will go about this dual task of appreciation and understanding. By describing images from the Middle Ages and from now and by using those images to discuss central themes in society, culture, art, religion, literature, and history, we will attempt to examine the Middle Ages as much as possible from the inside. This lecture will consider representative monuments from the Middle Ages and from our own century side-by-side as a way into our discussion.

Outline

I. Despite its remoteness from our own time, the Middle Ages is worth studying, understanding, and appreciating.

- **A.** The Middle Ages has left a rich cultural legacy.
  - **1.** Many of the greatest literary works in the Western canon, including Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and *The Romance of the Rose* are products of the Middle Ages.
  - **2.** Medieval architecture has also left us some extremely impressive buildings, including such churches as Notre Dame in Paris, and a variety of styles.
- **B.** Several continuities exist between the Middle Ages and our own time, and several medieval institutions survive to the present day:
  - **1.** Representative government;
  - **2.** Universities;
  - **3.** The nation-state.
- **C.** However, the Middle Ages can often seem inaccessible to people today because of the discontinuities between the Middle Ages and the present.

II. How can we make the Middle Ages accessible?

- **A.** Using comparative examples, we aim to keep you from being overwhelmed by the strangeness of the medieval past.
- **B.** The Capitol in Washington, D.C., shows the importance of government to our modern society. We're accustomed to the government playing a critical role in our lives from birth to death, but people in the Middle Ages had different priorities.
- **C.** Cefalù Cathedral (Sicily) shows us the importance of the church. The physical prominence of the structure can be read as an analogy to the ways in which the church was prominent.

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1. The church was responsible for looking out for the spiritual welfare of society.
2. In education and in law, the church predominated from cradle to grave.
3. Our contemporary separation between church and state would have been impossible to explain to someone of the medieval world.
4. The overlap between the church and secular authority in the Middle Ages was significant. The murder of Thomas à Becket (1170) happened precisely because of a dispute about the power of the church.

D. San Gimignano, in Tuscany, shows us the medieval city.
1. A painting shows us that it looked much as it does today, surrounded by vineyards, fields of grain, and olive groves. Agriculture measured the rhythms of life.
2. The town has characteristic features of a medieval city. The towers were urban fortresses, places that, as calm as they may seem today, were threatened on occasion by turbulence and military conflict.

E. New York, by contrast, shows us a modern skyline.
1. Nothing in the medieval world compares with the population of modern New York. The difference in scale is crucial.
2. In today's world, space is at a premium—thus, we have the skyscraper.
3. The rate of change in modern society is much more rapid than it was in the Middle Ages.

III. Our overall plan for the course, neither chronological nor geographical, is conceptual.

A. We will examine surviving medieval monuments to help us understand and discuss central themes in medieval society, culture, history, and spirituality. This approach will enable us to look at medieval society, as much as possible, from the inside.

B. We'll move on to consider social structures.

C. Next, we'll examine the traditions of the past.

D. We'll end by considering how people regarded the usefulness of their own lives.

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Readings:

Cook and Herzman, *The Medieval World View*, Introduction and chapters 1–2.

R. W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, early chapters.

Questions to Consider:

1. After this brief introduction to the Middle Ages, which aspects of medieval culture and society seem particularly alien and remote to you? Which aspects seem relevant and "modern" to you?
2. How can studying the monuments and cultural achievements of a society truly reveal what that society was actually like? What are the benefits and limitations of studying a society in this way?

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Lecture Two

Monastery and Castle

Scope: This second lecture presents an introduction to the Middle Ages by looking at the medieval landscape. The lecture begins by giving an overview of a sense of place in the Middle Ages. We discuss the relationship between town and countryside in the Middle Ages, and how that relationship has changed in the modern world. We will begin to discuss what were the most characteristic kinds of structures erected in the Middle Ages, as well as the relationship between those structures and their surrounding environment. We also discuss what those structures tell us about the Middle Ages. In particular, we discuss two characteristic structures: the monastery and the castle.

Outline

I. By examining the medieval landscape, we can gain access into life and society during the Middle Ages:

- **A.** In its relation between rural and urban;
- **B.** In its close connection with the rhythms of nature.

II. Much can also be learned by examining the characteristic structures that were built in the Middle Ages. One of the most interesting structures is the monastery.

- **A.** Anthony, born in 269 A.D. in Egypt, was considered the first monk. Those who chose this radical calling began to come together into communities.
- **B.** What is a monastery?
  1. Monasteries offered a place for a communal life of prayer and work.
  2. Quite literally, thousands of monasteries existed in Europe in the Middle Ages.
  3. In a real sense, they were more characteristic of the Middle Ages than now.
  4. Here are several examples of such monasteries:
     - **a.** San Martin du Canigou, in the French Pyrenees, was founded in 1002. Monasteries such as this were the proving grounds for the ecclesiastical hierarchy.
     - **b.** Mont St. Michel (France) is an amazing architectural accomplishment, a mix of Gothic and Romanesque styles. Monks, as at Saint Michel, were often placed on the margins of society.
     - **c.** Meteora, in Greece, is even more isolated.

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- **C.** Monasteries could also be found in the middle of a busy city:
  1. The Badia is a Benedictine monastery in the heart of Florence. This institution at the "margins" thus permeated even the city.
  2. Their function, however, was the same as in the more remote monasteries.

III. Another characteristic medieval structure is the castle.

- **A.** The castle is perhaps the building that we most associate with the Middle Ages.
- **B.** Castles appear in all shapes and sizes in the Middle Ages. Those that survive, made of stone, are exceptional—most were made of wood.
  1. Saumur, in the Loire Valley (France), and others were, even in the late Middle Ages, defensive outposts. Everyday life in such places would have been more grubby than elegant.
  2. Fenis, in northern Italy, guards a pass to the Alps. Tapestries may be great works of art, but they were also a practical way to keep rooms warm.
  3. Salzburg, in Austria, is a defensive stronghold, illustrating an example of decentralized feudal control.
  4. Caernarvon, in Wales, was a British garrison in occupied territory, an idea imported from the Crusades in the Holy Land. In other words, the castle wasn't necessarily just a place of refuge for locals.
- **C.** Castles tell us something important about an agrarian and feudal society.

Readings:

Jean LeClercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire of God: A Study of Monastic Culture*.

Cook and Herzman, *The Medieval World View*, chapters 3–5.

Questions to Consider:

1. We have learned much about the Middle Ages by studying its characteristic structures. What structures would you consider characteristic of the modern age, and what do these structures tell us about contemporary society as compared with medieval society?
2. What is particularly "medieval" about monasteries and castles? Have they, or their equivalents, survived in modern society?

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Lecture Three

Cities and Towns

Scope: Lecture Three continues describing the sense of place in the Middle Ages, this time by focusing on some other characteristic medieval structures. We will examine the city itself, in its several facets. We will discuss bridges, gates, churches, and palaces, as well as a hospital and a guildhall. We will show how medieval towns and cities made use of open spaces as public forums and marketplaces by discussing the way open spaces are incorporated as part of their design. This lecture will end with a discussion of the many purposes of the medieval city and the medieval church.

Outline

I. In addition to monasteries and castles, the shape of medieval life can be seen by examining the medieval city in greater detail.

II. We will start by examining some examples of medieval cities.

A. Ambrogio Lorenzetti's painting shows us the city in miniature. Cities like this one are an expansion of the castle, because cities, too, were defensive.

B. Dubrovnik (Croatia) shows us an example of a seaport city. Part of it was damaged in the 1990s.

C. Montepulciano shows us an Italian hill town in southern Tuscany. There is land *inside* the walls where animals can be pastured in case of attack.

D. Aigues Mortes shows us a "planned community" in southern France, built as a launching port during the Crusades. It's an early example of urban planning.

E. Rothenburg (Germany) shows how the city is built on nature.

F. Montereggioni, in Italy, shows us the smallest variety, a town that looks like a castle from the outside. There are even vineyards inside the walls of this town.

III. Examining some monuments in cities can show us that in the Middle Ages, the practical and the beautiful were not separate categories.

A. Cahors bridge (France) was built for defense, but it was also built to be beautiful.

B. Nevers's gate (France) was likewise built for defense but is also a beautiful structure. It was important to make an effective first impression.

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IV. In some ways, the most characteristic structure in the Middle Ages is the cathedral.

A. Cathedrals, the central churches of bishops, are located in cities.

B. One of the largest and most impressive Gothic cathedrals is that of Amiens in Picardy, France.

C. The interior of Amiens is equally imposing.

1. One is struck by the impressive gothic vaulting and arching. Gothic cathedrals are defined by light and space.
2. One is struck by the extraordinary size of the cathedral, especially the height from floor to ceiling: 142 feet! Why build so big? The cathedral isn't a place for intimate prayer but for grand processions, for pomp and circumstance.
3. Cities often competed in terms of the cathedrals they built.

V. Civic buildings also form part of the medieval cityscape.

A. The city hall of Gubbio is typical of smaller Italian cities.

B. The Palazzo Vecchio in Florence is one of the best known of these structures.

VI. Cities made use of interior space in interesting ways in the Middle Ages.

A. Prague Old Town (Czech Republic) shows one example: a town hall across the square from a great church.

B. The Piazza del Campo in Siena is one of the most striking examples of civic "space."

1. The piazza had many uses, including providing a space for markets, for mustering troops, and for festivals. It is reputed to be more beautiful than any of its competitors.
2. The piazza was also used for preaching, as this painting of the most famous Sienese preacher, San Bernardino, illustrates. This was a place for "religious business" as well.
3. The Sienese still fill the piazza for civic celebrations.

VII. Other buildings illustrate the combination of useful and beautiful that characterized medieval architecture.

A. A hospital for indigents in Beaune (France) is one such example.

1. The decoration would have been functionally superfluous. The art was a kind of splendor extended to the poor.
2. As an act of charity, then, the building serves a theological purpose.

B. The guildhall at Bruges (Belgium) is another example of the useful combined with the beautiful. Merchants banded together to construct monuments to their trade.

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Readings:

Cook and Herzman, *The Medieval World* View, chapters 6–7.

Lester Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, chapters 1–3.

Questions to Consider:

1. Builders in the Middle Ages clearly thought that structures can be both useful and beautiful. Has this attitude survived into modern times?
2. What effect does the sight of a medieval or modern cathedral have on you? Do you think that this is the effect that the architects intended to convey?

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Lecture Four

The Church and the Clergy

Scope: In this lecture, we begin our discussion of the medieval church and its role in society. Using medieval terminology, we will focus on "those who pray." This lecture will make clear some of the ways in which the church had a much larger role in medieval society than in modern society. By discussing images of a pope, a philosopher, and a monk, we will talk about the institutional structure of the church, its role in education, and its role in the spiritual life of medieval society. We will also describe some of the other ways in which the church played a part in society—in its system of law, for example.

Outline

I. Medieval and modern ways of classifying and dividing society differ.

- **A.** The modern model tends to use economic criteria.
  1. We often speak of upper class, middle class, and lower class, or perhaps, working class.
  2. We talk about the underclass and debate its causes.
- **B.** The medieval model tended to be a functional model. What function is filled by each of the divisions or classes of society?
  1. "Those who pray" were responsible for the spiritual welfare of society.
  2. "Those who fight" were responsible for the defense of society—the physical well-being of people—and for secular rule in society.
  3. "Those who work" were responsible for feeding society.
  4. Where did merchants and traders fit? This issue was never fully decided.
- **C.** Together, these three groups made up the "estates theory" of society. In the medieval model, each estate's responsibility was communal, and thus, society itself was seen as an organic whole.
- **D.** This lecture will focus on the first of these so-called estates, "those who pray."

II. The pope was the institutional head of the church, the chief apostle of the faith.

- **A.** The church was a highly organized hierarchical institution.
  1. The pope was (and is) the bishop of Rome.
  2. The bishops were heads of local communities of Christians, called dioceses.
  3. Priests were subject to the bishop of their diocese.
     - **a.** Their function was to say mass and administer the sacraments.

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b. They also cared for the spiritual needs of their parishioners.

B. The pope's claim to exercise universal authority led to disputes with the Holy Roman Emperor.

C. Boniface VIII (r. 1294–1303), who was pope at the end of the thirteenth century, asserted papal power, not only as head of the church, but as a secular ruler of central Italy as well.

1. Boniface had all the power of a secular ruler, including land and powerful armies at his disposal.
2. The church became extremely wealthy and powerful—which led to clashes with other potentates and arguments over the role of the church.
3. The war between sacred and secular reached a zenith during the High Middle Ages.

III. The church, through many of its institutions, was also responsible for education in the Middle Ages. The creation of the mendicant orders revolutionized its role. The Franciscans and Dominicans took the word of God to Christians and non-Christians alike.

A. This function is well illustrated in the figure of Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), perhaps the most famous Dominican.

1. Thomas was a great thinker, teacher, and writer.
2. He was a teacher at the University of Paris.
3. Universities themselves were under the control of the church.

B. This educational function is also illustrated in the figure of a monk who is a scribe.

1. With the fall of the Roman Empire in the West, knowledge of the classical world was preserved by such monks.
2. Because Latin was the language of the church and of liturgy, studying the best examples of the Latin language was an ordinary part of monastic education.
3. Without the monks' careful transcription of these texts, the books would have been lost to subsequent centuries. Even the bawdy verse of poets like Ovid was preserved by men who devoted their lives to piety.
4. The medieval university could not have been created without the monastic foundation.

IV. The importance of the sacramental system, administered by the clergy, can be inferred from the figure of a priest elevating the host at mass.

A. The sacraments were defined as the outward physical signs of an inward spiritual grace.

B. The sacraments were believed to be the way in which God's saving presence was manifested in time.

C. Thus, under the appearance of the host—bread—the body of Christ was made manifest to the congregation at mass.

D. These sacraments, carried out in countless churches across Christendom, were considered the mileposts of life.

Readings:

Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State, 1050–1300*.

Cook and Herzman, *The Medieval World View*, chapters 8–10.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why do you think medieval and modern social divisions are so essentially different? What do the differences between these divisions tell us about the respective societies?
2. Why do you think that the church's political and social influence was so much greater during the Middle Ages?

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Lecture Five

Knights and Peasants

Scope: This lecture will concentrate on the way society was conceived in social and economic terms in the Middle Ages. To use the medieval terminology once again, we will focus on "those who fight" and "those who work." By describing images of representative medieval rulers, including Charlemagne and Louis IX, we will deal with both the ideals and the reality of medieval monarchy. By describing images from sculpture and manuscript illuminations, we will talk about medieval agriculture. Finally, images of various trades will illustrate the emergence of middle class activities in the Middle Ages, pointing out some of the differences (as well as similarities) in the way these classifications work in the modern world.

Outline

I. The second classification of society was called "those who fight."

A. As the title of the category suggests, the chief "jobs" of a ruler were defense and protection, especially for those who were unable to protect themselves.

B. We can get some idea of the nature of medieval warfare by examining a segment of the Bayeaux tapestry.

1. Armor, horses, spears, stirrups, and swords are hard to juggle all at once.
2. We can see why there was a need for "specialization."
3. Long training was necessary to be a knight.
4. A certain amount of wealth was also required.
5. Out of these requirements, a code of chivalry gradually developed.

C. The image of Saint George and the Dragon well illustrates the chivalric duty of defending the defenseless.

1. The dragon clearly represents the enemy and, perhaps, evil itself.
2. The maiden clearly represents those who cannot defend themselves.
3. After the Crusades, the military class became self-protective, and the chivalric ideal began to fade.

II. The ideal of rule can be observed in representative rulers from the Middle Ages.

A. Charlemagne, the first of the Holy Roman Emperors, is perhaps the most important example of a ruler from the early Middle Ages. He was the titular head of "those who fight."

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1. Crowned emperor in 800, Charlemagne's fame continued for centuries.
2. A warrior who also spread learning, he combined Christian and military principles in his rule.
3. Through him, the ideal of the Roman Empire continued.

B. Louis IX (d. 1270) of France is an important example from the high Middle Ages.

1. He was a crusader and a holy man.
2. This combination is nicely captured in this manuscript illumination, which shows him praying on the way to a crusade, where he died in 1270.

III. The third estate, or classification of society, is "those who work."

A. This estate included those involved in the production of food, estimated to be about ninety percent of society at any given time. Because most of these workers were illiterate, our record of them is limited.

B. Farming itself had many components, revealed in illuminated illustrations from the period.

1. Without intensive plowing, urban centers like Florence would never have developed.
2. Sowing was also an important component of farming.
3. Farming was seasonal, as the illustration from the *Très Riches Heures* demonstrates.
4. Farming included cultivation of the vine. Wine was a staple, not a luxury, in the economy of Europe.

C. Food also included meat, as is illustrated by the slaughter of a pig in an image taken from Chartres Cathedral. Peasants, then, were able to see themselves depicted in the great art of the age.

IV. A middle class and the beginnings of capitalism also developed in the Middle Ages. There was little urban life until the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

A. The Middle Ages had bankers. They neither fought nor "worked," defying traditional categorization.

B. The period also had merchants, who traded internationally and whose exotic dress doesn't fit modern stereotypes.

C. A sculpture shows a group of people who openly displayed their wealth.

D. The Middle Ages had craftsmen, like the stonecutter or leather craftsman, as well as those engaged in less "exalted" enterprises, for example, a butcher, seen as brutal and treated with little respect.

V. There were also those who did not fit into any of the above categories, as the example of a beggar from Montalcino (Italy) demonstrates. A great span

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existed from the banker to the beggar. The crowdedness of urban life created different problems than did dispersed poverty in rural areas.

VI. Several examples can serve to show the communal nature of medieval society.

- **A.** A Florentine procession illustrates the estates coming together, a veritable party for city neighborhoods.
- **B.** A manuscript illumination shows, on its border, an example of a "feast of fools," a celebration that mocks the order in society. Sometimes processions were staged to reveal the history of a community.
- **C.** The Sienese Palio shows the communal nature of celebration.
    1. Although a modern celebration, the Palio is a direct descendent from the Middle Ages, not invented or "rediscovered" for modern tourism.
    2. The connection of the Palio with the *contrade*, or neighborhoods of the city, also shows us an aspect of medieval society. Each *contrada* shows off its particular colors and history.

VII. The ideal of medieval society, of a well-ordered community, can be seen in "Good Government in the City" (from the cycle of *The Allegory of Good Government*) by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, in the Palazzo Publico in Siena.

- **A.** Everyone's vocation contributes to the harmony of the community.
- **B.** City and country, we see, must learn to live together for true harmony.

Readings:

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, General Prologue.

William Langland, *Piers Plowman*, Prologue.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways do medieval ideals of leadership and government differ from modern ideals? Can you account for how these differences arise?
2. Would you consider modern society "communal"? Can you identify aspects of a communal lifestyle that are stronger today than during the Middle Ages?

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Lecture Six

The Classical Heritage

Scope: Lecture Six will discuss the classical origins of medieval society and medieval thought. People in the Middle Ages consciously drew from the legacy of the classical world in shaping their institutions and ideas. Indeed, they did not see any distinct break between themselves and their classical forebears. This lecture examines the relationship between the classical world and the Middle Ages. We will discuss images of the classical world that survived into the Middle Ages. We will then turn to images that show how the classical world was modified and transformed in the Middle Ages. The architectural examples that we discuss in this lecture allow us to make our points with respect to such diverse activities as art, law, and government.

Outline

I. One of the important sources for the Middle Ages was the classical heritage, the heritage of the civilization of Greece and Rome.

- **A.** People in the Middle Ages did not see the same break between themselves and their classical forbears that more modern writers of history have seen.
- **B.** Instead, they saw a great deal of continuity between themselves and their classical past.

II. People in the Middle Ages were able to make direct use of the monuments of antiquity that were available to them.

- **A.** The Church of San Salvatore in Spoleto (Italy) makes direct use of the ruins of classical antiquity. Just as the monks recopied ancient manuscripts, so does the architecture of San Salvatore use the heritage of the ancient world.
    1. This church is one of the first built after the legalization of Christianity in the empire.
    2. The church is literally constructed from bits and pieces of classical architecture.
    3. Its haphazard look allows us to see the point all the more forcefully.
    4. Eventually, we see the development of a Christian culture, fully integrated in its use of styles.
- **B.** The Church of San Biagio, in Agrigento (Sicily), also makes direct use of the ruins of classical antiquity.
    1. It is built on the site of a Greek temple. Why not? The foundations for a large building had already been laid.

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2. It does not cover the whole ground plan of the temple, so both the foundation and the church can be seen.
3. A sense of how the Middle Ages literally built on classical antiquity becomes a useful way of thinking about the relationship between classical and medieval. Even Chartres was built on the site of a temple to a goddess. This is the architectural equivalent of writers like Dante, who built on the example of Virgil's *Aeneid*.

C. A comparison between the city gate of Autun and the interior of the Cathedral of Autun (France) makes the same point.

1. The city gate and wall are part of what remains from the Roman town, originally named after the Emperor Augustus (Augustudiensis).
2. The twelfth-century cathedral interior, with gallery and windows above the aisle, shows a remarkable similarity to the Roman gate.
3. The builders of the cathedral were clearly aware of, and made use of, the Roman model. Thus, we can observe the root definition of the word *Romanesque*, meaning "in the Roman style," in action.
4. We can also see differences between the two structures. Imitation of the past was creative imitation.

III. The classical column is another example of creative imitation as it was transformed during the Middle Ages.

A. The Romans themselves made use of the Greek architectural orders, as we can observe in a column from a Roman temple at Nimes in France.

1. It is an example of a Corinthian capital.
2. Note its exuberant pattern of acanthus leaves.

B. Twelfth-century churches made use of the column and its capital and clearly had classical sources in mind.

C. They did not copy slavishly, however.

1. The patterns were more abstract, as the examples from churches in Mensano (Italy) and Saulieu (France) indicate. The foliage is similar to what is used in Nimes, but we see a movement toward stylization.
2. The patterns may even have symbolic importance, because of the biblical resonance of the design, as in the vine pattern from Saulieu in Burgundy. Here, we see even more abstraction, a different aesthetic from both Roman and Romanesque styles.
3. Capitals were also used to tell stories, as we see the Simon Magus historiated capital from Autun.
   a. The story of Simon Magus has biblical origins. He is the man who asked Peter how much it would cost to have the Holy Spirit and was rebuffed for trying to buy it.
   b. The fall of Simon Magus is an important subject in twelfth-century art.

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D. Thus, we see the transformation of classical sources at work in medieval art and architecture. The Roman work has been transformed into a Christian program.

Readings:

Browse images of medieval art and architecture at http://www.pit.edu/~medart/.

David Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought*, chapters on classical heritage.

Cook and Herzman, *The Medieval World* View, reread chapter 2.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are the chief advantages of "creative imitation"?
2. What past cultures is our modern society based on? Is it reasonable to suggest a chain of influence stretching from the classical world, to the medieval world, to the modern world?

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E. The two B's are parallel so that the viewer sees the similarity between David and Jesus: both of them are shepherds and kings.

F. The decoration is much more elaborate in Christ's clothing than in David's, showing the pattern of type and fulfillment once again.

VI. Another imaginative statement of this perspective comes from the stained-glass windows at Chartres.

A. The four major Old Testament prophets are depicted (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel)

B. Seated on their shoulders are the four evangelists—the authors of the gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

C. The authors of the Old Testament are larger and older.

D. But by being placed on their shoulders, the New Testament authors are "taller" and see farther. This is a variation of the phrase "dwarfs on the shoulders of giants."

VII. A final imaginative statement of this perspective comes from a capital from the Church of St. Mary Magdalen at Vézelay (twelfth century).

A. It shows a stylized but accurate depiction of the process of grinding grain into flour.

B. Grain is put into the mill at the top, and flour is collected at the bottom.

C. The two figures have been identified from written texts as Moses for the top and Saint Paul at the bottom.

1. Thus, Moses puts in the "rough grain" of the Old Testament.
2. Saint Paul collects from the mill the "flour" of the Old Testament.

D. This image is called the "mystic mill." It suggests that what is present in the New Testament is there in rough form in the Old.

Readings:

Bible: Exodus, A Gospel, Paul's Letter to the Romans.

Richard Emmerson and Bernard McGinn, *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, McGinn's chapter on the Apocalypse.

Questions to Consider:

1. As you have seen, the New Testament resonated more strongly with medieval spirituality than the Old. Why do you think this was the case?
2. Does art in the modern world reflect our thoughts, ideas, and beliefs in the same way that medieval art reflected medieval thought? In other words, does art perform the same function in the Middle Ages and in the present?

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Lecture Eight

The Medieval Synthesis

Scope: Lecture Eight examines the way in which the classical tradition and the biblical tradition come together in a real synthesis in the Middle Ages. The tradition that allowed the Old Testament to be seen as a prefiguration of the New also allowed for a similar kind of relationship between classical antiquity and the medieval present. Events in the classical world were seen as fulfilled by Christianity. This lecture will examine examples from stained glass, cathedral sculpture, monumental statuary, and painting to show how the classical world was incorporated into the Christian world. For example, as the Old Testament had prophets, so too did the classical world. The world of nature, as interpreted by classical writers, also was incorporated into a Christian vision of reality.

Outline

I. We have shown how the classical world and the biblical world were central to the Middle Ages. It is important to note that they were not necessarily isolated strands but rather often came together.

A. Several works of art can be used to show examples of how classical and biblical motifs come together.

B. In these, we see something of the medieval urge toward synthesis.

II. The first example is the "Sano di Pietro's Crucifix" (fifteenth century) in Siena.

A. Sano's Crucifix is a large crucifix that can be "read" according to traditional Christian symbols and motifs.

1. The crucified Christ is in the center.
2. Mary and John are at the ends of the horizontal beam.
3. The "skull of Adam" can be seen at the base of the cross, a typological prefiguration.

B. At the top, however, is a motif that is not part of traditional Christian symbolism.

1. A close look at the details reveals a bird pecking at its own breast, with the blood from the wound feeding the chicks below.
2. This is the pelican whose "story" was told by the Roman naturalist Pliny. Thus, by analogy, does the blood of Christ feed his "children."

C. This story from the classical world is "Christianized" by its placement at the top of the cross.

1. It becomes a "type" of the crucifixion of Christ.

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2. The blood flowing from the side wound of Christ reinforces the typological connection.

D. Thus, the natural world, as well as the Old Testament, can be used typologically.

1. This pagan story finds its fulfillment in the figure of Christ.
2. Size helps to illustrate which part of the story is most important.

III. A second example can be seen in the tympanum above the right portal of the west façade of Chartres Cathedral.

A. The tympanum is dominated by the figure of Mary, mother of Jesus, in her role as "Seat of Wisdom."

B. On the archivolts surrounding the tympanum are figures that represent the seven liberal arts.

1. Allegorical figures of the seven liberal arts surround Mary.
2. We also see representative figures who are presented as practitioners of those arts.
   a. These figures are mostly from the classical pagan world—Aristotle and Cicero, for example.
   b. Pythagoras is the representative example of geometry.

C. Once again, the classical and Christian come together.

1. The classical exemplars of wisdom are specific examples of the general concept of wisdom that is on display in this configuration.
2. Classical and Christian are thus brought together and synthesized.

IV. A stained-glass window from LeMans Cathedral (France) is a third example of this synthesizing tendency, showing Christ emerging from the tomb. His figure is surrounded by other stories.

A. We see, for example, the story of Jonah, this time emerging from the whale.

B. This story is there because it was seen as a "type" of the resurrection.

C. Once again, a classical story is used as a type for a Christian story.

V. The synthesis of pagan and Christian can also be seen in the idea of prophecy—in this case, on the façade of Florence cathedral.

A. At the left is the biblical figure David, considered a prophet in the Middle Ages.

B. On the right is the classical figure of a sybil, a character in Virgil's *Aeneid* who prophesied for Aeneas what he had to do to complete his journey. Clearly, the classical tradition also had something to teach.

C. The passage of time has contributed to this synthesis—Dante found it easier to combine the two axes than did Augustine.

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VI. Thomas Aquinas, the Christian theologian, synthesized the two traditions in his work. Although Augustine didn't have much to do with Aristotle, Aquinas believed his works could enrich the Christian one.

A. A painting from Pisa (early fourteenth century), sometimes called *The Triumph of Thomas Aquinas*, by the Sienese Lippo Memmi, illustrates this idea well.

B. Thomas is the central figure.

1. He is surrounded by biblical figures, including the four evangelists, Moses, and Paul, from whom he draws inspiration.
2. He is also flanked by the great classical pagan philosophers Plato and Aristotle.
3. One needs to see all these sources as present in Thomas to understand the synthetic nature of his work.

Readings:

Browse cathedral images in http://www.pit.edu/~medart/.

Study illustrations in Emile Mâle, *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France in the Thirteenth Century* and *Religious Art in France, the Twelfth Century: A Study of the Origins of Medieval Iconography*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Based on what you know of the Middle Ages, what aspects of classical society do you think appealed to the medieval mindset?
2. Why did the Middle Ages "adapt" these elements of classical culture and not others?

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Lecture Nine

The Presentness of the Past

Scope: This lecture examines medieval attitudes toward time. It makes two major points. The first point is that divisions of human history and individual history both come from ways of reading the Bible. According to this biblically derived view, the history of the world and the history of humans were divided into seven ages, seven being the number of completeness. The second point is that the Middle Ages tended to look at the past primarily as it related directly to the present; as a consequence, events of the past were often "dressed" in the costumes and language of the present. Both of these major points will be illustrated by examples from the visual arts. We will discuss the seven ages of history by using the Winchester Bible and the seven ages of man using a stained-glass window. We will discuss the "presentness" of the past by using examples in various media, including manuscript illuminations, sculpture, painting, and tapestry.

Outline

I. Our way of looking at time is not the same as that of the Middle Ages. In many ways, time and history were seen very differently in the Middle Ages than at present.

II. The Bible provided the most important framework for understanding time in the Middle Ages.

   A. The beginning of the Book of Genesis divides creation into seven days.

   B. By analogy, human history was also divided into seven: the so-called seven ages of history.

   C. The Bible was seen as the story of these seven ages, from creation (the first age) to the Last Judgment. History has a beginning and an end; in other words, it has a plan.

   D. The Winchester Bible shows how both of these concepts were connected.

      1. The initial "I" in the Winchester Bible is the first letter of the first phrase of the Bible: *In Principio*…, or "In the Beginning."

      2. The illuminated "I" contains all seven stages of history, through Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Christ, and Judgment. Each figure is the representative of one of the ages of history.

      3. We are living in the sixth age of history, between the birth of Christ and his Second Coming, the latter being the seventh age, which exists outside of time.

         a. Thus, for people of the Middle Ages, the world is old.

         b. Much of "history" had already taken place.

   E. The seven days of creation, or seven ages of history, also provided an analogy for another way of looking at time.

      1. The life of each human can be divided into seven stages as well.

      2. A stained-glass window from Canterbury Cathedral illustrates this point.

III. The Middle Ages tended to dress the past in the clothing of the present, that is, people tended to be interested in the past primarily as it relates to the present.

   A. This view is neither simplistic nor naïve.

   B. People of the Middle Ages wanted the past to speak to them directly.

   C. This perspective can be seen in many examples.

      1. A manuscript illumination shows the Trojan story updated to the present.

      2. A depiction of Mary Magdalen shows a "contemporary scene," dressing the past in the costumes of the present.

      3. Socrates is dressed like a medieval schoolman in a late fourteenth-century English manuscript drawing.

      4. The stories of Christ, such as the carrying of the cross, are likewise dressed up in the clothing of the present, including chain mail, as examples from a church in Issoire (France) and a manuscript illumination by Fouquet illustrate. Thus, Christ is punished for the sins of humanity every day.

      5. A Sienese painting by Bartolo di Fredi now in Montalcino (Italy) shows John the Baptist in the desert.

         a. The desert has become a dark wood.

         b. In Tuscany, wild places were woods rather than deserts. *Desert* comes to have a spiritual rather than a literal meaning.

         c. Similarly, Dante begins his journey in a dark wood—what seems a naïve device is actually very sophisticated.

IV. By extension of the same principle, artists even "dressed up" the future in the clothing of the present.

   A. In the Middle Ages, the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation, was thought to deal with the events at the end of time, the events immediately preceding the Second Coming of Christ. A scene from the Apocalypse from the Angers (France) tapestry shows several fighters against an apocalyptic dragon, in a battle that is to come in the last days.

      1. These fighters are dressed in the garb of contemporary (to the Middle Ages) religious orders.

      2. Ideally, these orders embody the fight against evil in the present; therefore, it makes sense to look at a picture of the future with these same orders fighting against evil.

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B. According to a reading of the Apocalypse, the final victory over the apocalyptic dragon beast will be brought about by the Archangel Michael.

1. A capital from Montceaux (France, twelfth century) shows Saint Michael defeating the dragon.
2. Michael is wearing chain mail, the "costume" of a twelfth-century warrior-knight.

Readings:

Bible: Genesis, Book of Revelation.

Richard Emmerson and Bernard McGinn, *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, chapter 13, "The Apocalypse in Medieval Culture."

Questions to Consider:

1. When we study the past today, do we tend to "dress it up" in the costumes and philosophy of our own time? Consider "historical" films, such as *Braveheart*, or Shakespearean plays staged with contemporary dress and modern settings. Does the past become more accessible and relevant when it is "modernized"?
2. How does our understanding of time fundamentally differ from medieval attitudes toward time? From where do these differences arise?

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Lecture Ten

Surface and Depth: Medieval Aesthetics

Scope: Lecture Ten focuses on medieval aesthetics. We will use examples from medieval architecture and sculpture to suggest that what was most "real" to people in the Middle Ages was rarely limited to the experiences of the senses. What was apparent to the senses was often seen as merely a starting place, the point beyond itself to a deeper reality. The world of the senses was often a clue to a world of ideas; as a result, the world of the senses could be shaped and reshaped in art to best point toward the deeper realities. We will use the examples of two "round" churches and compare a photo and frescoes of the Church of San Damiano in Assisi to make this point.

Outline

I. Just as we see significant differences between medieval and modern concepts of time, so do we find differences in the aesthetic presuppositions of the Middle Ages and our own period.

A. Imitation, as in Einhard's biography of Charlemagne or in Dante, was done using Latin models, even if performed in a creative way.

B. Literal detail isn't the object of such imitation, but the spirit of the model is.

II. The Middle Ages thought of the surface configuration of a work of art as a kind of starting point to move toward deeper realities.

A. The world of the senses provided clues to this reality.

B. The world of the senses needed to be read and interpreted carefully to move toward this reality.

III. The first illustration of this principle comes from an examination of two churches from different parts of Europe.

A. The first is the Church of San Sepolcro in Pisa (Italy).

B. The second is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Cambridge (England).

1. Both churches were modeled on a famous early Christian church, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.
2. Contemporary documents talk about them as being "copies" of this church.
3. But to a modern eye, the differences in surface detail are at least as great as the similarities; that is, from our perspective, they are not copies in any exact sense at all.

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4. To the Middle Ages, they are copies in the sense that they both exemplify the idea of "roundness."
   a. Because circles were associated with infinity, with the divine, and with perfection, round churches were one "standard" design for churches from the beginnings of Christianity.
   b. What makes these churches copies is the fact of their roundness.
   c. Differences of surface detail would not have been seen to change this identity. The fact that each church leads one to contemplate perfection and infinity through its roundness was what mattered.
   d. From a medieval perspective, the churches can be seen to be identical, but we would tend to notice differences in style and decoration.

IV. The second illustration of this principle comes from examining a modern photograph and a medieval fresco (about 1290) of the same church, San Damiano in Assisi.

A. The church in the fresco is far more ornate and elaborate than the one in the photograph.

B. The fresco is from the Upper Basilica of San Francisco in Assisi, scarcely a mile from the actual church of San Damiano.

C. Clearly, the artist who painted the fresco knew what San Damiano looked like but chose to portray it differently.

D. The clue to his intent can be seen from another fresco in the same cycle, which shows Saint Francis receiving a command from the crucifix: Christ tells Francis to rebuild the church.
1. Francis takes the command literally in the beginning and starts to put San Damiano back together brick by brick.
2. Later, he comes to understand that the message had much wider implications: Francis's mission is to rebuild the church—understood not as bricks and mortar but as the body of believers.
3. The artist of the Assisi fresco wishes to show that Francis has succeeded. The ornate and richly decorated San Damiano of the fresco shows that Francis, here brought to the church at his death for Saint Clare to see, has succeeded in repairing the church.
4. The artist of the Assisi fresco wishes us to see that the building stands for the body of believers.
5. One way to describe what he has done is to suggest that to a medieval viewer, the fresco was the more real representation.
6. The painting of San Damiano, in medieval eyes, captures the real truth of the church better than the photograph does.

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V. The third illustration of this principle also comes from a fresco illustration of the life of Saint Francis, also taken from the Upper Basilica of San Francisco in Assisi.

A. The city of Arezzo was being besieged by demons, according to the story being portrayed in the fresco, and Francis was asked to intercede.

B. Francis can be observed at prayer, putting the demons to flight.

C. To make his point as clearly as possible, the artist has divided the composition between city and church; Francis is praying near the Cathedral of Arezzo on one side, and the city with its walls is on the other.
1. In "real life," the cathedral of Arezzo is inside these walls, not outside.
2. The artist takes this liberty partly because the composition is much more forceful this way.
3. He also takes this liberty to show the connection between Francis and the church. He wishes to make the point that Francis is acting with and through the authority of the church.

D. What is most important, what is most real, is the inner idea, not the details of surface reality.

E. A painted cross from 1272 (Perugia, Italy) reveals the feet of Christ on the cross with a miniature depiction of Francis alongside. Their juxtaposition shows that if Francis can be present at the cross, so can we.

Readings:

Bonaventure, *The Life of Saint Francis*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Did the previous lectures prepare you for the medieval idea of the importance of moving from surface to inner reality? Does this idea logically follow from our reading of the Middle Ages up to this point?
2. Do any aspects of this philosophy survive today?

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Lecture Eleven
The Language of Icons

Scope: This lecture continues the discussion of medieval aesthetics by focusing on iconography, that is, a pattern of symbolic identifications that remained constant for centuries and, therefore, helped shape a traditional discourse that could be incorporated into art, liturgy, and literature. To use a common example of this system, Saint Peter is almost invariably seen holding keys, because of a passage in Matthew's Gospel in which Christ gives Peter the keys to the kingdom. This tradition allowed for the ready identification of such saints as Peter, Lucy, Lawrence, and Sebastian. By describing examples of these saints in the visual arts, as well as examples of virtues and vices that remain relatively constant in this system, we will explore the importance of the system to medieval thought.

Outline

I. The medieval impulse to see surface realism as a means to an end rather than an end in itself means that it is much easier to use such details symbolically.

- **A.** During the Middle Ages, a symbolic code developed, in which agreed-upon images became part of a system of meaning that remained constant over a long period of time.
- **B.** The name that we give to this symbolic system is iconography.

II. We can see how such symbols work by looking at the portraits of various Christian saints.

- **A.** Saint Peter can be identified in medieval iconography by his keys.
  1. Invariably, any image of a saint with two keys will be Peter.
  2. This is shorthand for a biblical reference: Christ gives the keys of the kingdom to Peter in chapter 16 of Matthew's Gospel.
  3. Thus, the key becomes shorthand, not only for the identification of Peter but for his significance and importance.
  4. The energy of the whole text finds its way into the image.
  5. Iconography can be viewed as a source of compressed energy.
- **B.** Saint Lucy (fourteenth-century fresco) is often identified by her eyes.
- **C.** Lawrence can be identified by the symbol of his martyrdom, the gridiron.
  1. An early Christian martyr, Lawrence was burned by the Romans during a time of persecution.
  2. As the story goes, he asked to be turned over when one side was done.
  3. The very instrument of his martyrdom becomes his icon.
     - **a.** It is present in both examples we see here, one a mosaic from the fifth century (in Ravenna) and another from a fourteenth-century painting (in Florence), revealing that the system remained constant over a very long period of time.
     - **b.** What was an instrument of torture in fact has become a sign of triumph, as the presence of Lawrence among the heavenly court makes clear.
- **D.** Saint Sebastian is pierced by arrows.
  1. He is shown with his own icon (Florence, fourteenth century).
  2. The placement also shows Sebastian's likeness to Christ, because this is also clearly reminiscent of a crucifixion scene.
  3. Other images of abstract ideas also show us how to read images iconographically.
- **E.** Virtues and vices were portrayed with conventional symbols.
  1. "Pride goeth before a fall," we are told in the book of Proverbs in the Bible. Pride, therefore, is depicted as a knight falling from his horse at Chartres Cathedral.
  2. The virtue of charity is likewise depicted in the Church of Santa Croce in Florence (late fourteenth century).

III. Often, identification of the iconography depends on knowing the biblical text on which the image is based.

- **A.** At Chartres Cathedral, we see a doorjamb statue (thirteenth century) in which the figure of Christ is standing on two beasts.
- **B.** This is a representation of words taken from Psalm 91 and interpreted to apply to Christ: "On the lion and the viper he will tread. He will trample the young lion and the dragon."
- **C.** Christ is seen doing just that in this statue. The statue also suggests the heretical enemies of the church, the Albigensians and Waldensians, again implying the typological notion of time.

IV. The natural world is also brought into this symbolic system.

- **A.** A deposition scene from the cathedral of Parma (Italy) illustrates this nicely.
- **B.** We see a naked Adam and Eve attending the crucifixion. People from different eras exist on the same plane of reality.

Readings:

Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, Lives of Peter, Lucy, Lawrence, and Sebastian.

Questions to Consider:

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1. What are the advantages of a symbolic code that remains constant over a long period of time?
2. Are there any cultural symbols that have remained constant over a long period of time in our own culture?

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Lecture Twelve

Seeing by Opposition

Scope: In the concluding lecture of this course, we will discuss ways in which the art and thought of the Middle Ages can be understood through various kinds of contrasts and oppositions: between sacred and profane, between serious and comic, between the saved and the damned. Our primary focus will be on the Last Judgment tympanum of the monastic church at Conques in France, which contains many of these oppositions. Understanding this aesthetic helps explain aspects of medieval humor, which in its apparent grossness is often misunderstood by modern audiences. We will use some examples of this humor, some of it coarse and grotesque by our standards, to bring the course to its conclusion, suggesting that these examples are clues that help us to read some of the great masterpieces of medieval culture, including, for example, Dante.

Outline

I. In this last lecture, we will emphasize the way various oppositions interacted with each other in the Middle Ages.

II. The first example, a manuscript illumination, shows heaven, presented as the bosom of Abraham, linked to a parallel depiction of hell.

- **A.** We see clear stylistic parallels between each part, which asks the viewer to compare the two.
- **B.** One is clearly an inverted version of the other.
- **C.** The viewer can learn about one from what is seen in the other.

III. Corbels from a church at Arthous (France) show opposition through two couples next to each other.

- **A.** One couple is clearly an example of piety.
- **B.** The other couple is an example of lechery.
  1. The differences can clearly be seen in the clothing (or lack of it) and in the body language of the two couples.
  2. Yet the two couples are situated exactly parallel to each other, so that we learn from them as a set, using one to help interpret and understand the other.

IV. The Last Judgment Tympanum at Conques (twelfth century) is a detailed and comprehensive depiction of the most important of these oppositions, heaven and hell.

- **A.** The figure of Christ in judgment is at the center.
- **B.** On his right are the saved.

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C. On his left are the damned.
1. We see numerous parallel presentations on each side of Christ.
2. Yet the artist has carefully shown the opposition between the saved and the damned by the figures themselves, by their movement, and by their expressions.
a. The exaggeration of the figures on the damned side is one of the characteristics of the Romanesque style.
b. This exaggeration heightens the contrast with the saved side.

D. This presentation also has a uniquely local aspect.
1. In one triangular section among the saved is Saint Foy (Saint Faith), the patron and important local saint of Conques.
2. In the parallel triangle among the damned, we see two animals roasting a man on a spit.
a. He was a local poacher on the monastic lands.
b. As is usually the case in medieval depictions of hell, the punishment fits the crime.
3. In this presentation, the local and the universal are together in the same space.

V. Often, opposition takes the form of a parody of a well-known scene.
A. One of the most famous stories in the life of Saint Francis is his preaching to the birds.
B. A carved misericord (mercy seat) from a church in Beverly (England) shows an interesting parody of this scene: an ass is preaching to the birds.
1. The parody is emphasized by the function of the misericord.
2. It's a place to rest one's backside during the monastic offices.

VI. Opposition is sometimes implied, as when scenes that a modern audience might find obscene or inappropriate are presented as part of a sacred building. For the Middle Ages, the sacred was not diminished by the presence of the profane.
A. A capital from Cunault (France) shows a beast swallowing the column.
B. At Aulnay (France), an acrobat emerges through his own legs.
C. At Semur (France), we see an especially well-endowed man.
D. At Vouvant (France), an animal is licking itself.
E. At San Gimignano, the depiction of hell in a fresco is especially intense.
1. Once again, the punishment fits the crime in the case of a usurer.
2. Avarice and lust received particularly juicy depictions in the Middle Ages.
F. At Bourges (France), crotches have sprouted faces, suggesting the conflict between reason and appetite.
G. At Autun, a waterspout on the facade of the cathedral comes out from the rear end.
H. At Kilpeck (England), a figure spreads her crotch for the viewer.

VII. The sense of opposition between the ideal and the inversion can be seen very starkly by two corbels in the crypt of the Cathedral at Bourges.
A. Corbel number one is a head.
B. Corbel number two is a "tail."
C. The medieval world view is inclusive.

VIII. We hope you will be able to do some "creative imitation" of your own in bringing this course to bear on your understanding of the Middle Ages.

Readings:

Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, Canto 34 *Inferno*, Canto 33 *Paradiso*.

Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France, the Twelfth Century: A Study of the Origins of Medieval Iconography*, view pictures of judgment.

Questions to Consider:

1. What does the apparent freedom of medieval humor tell us about the Middle Ages? What does it tell us about our own time?
2. What are some pedagogical advantages of learning from vulgar images and scatological humor? Is a vulgar image or idea more likely to make an impression on us than a more tasteful expression?

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Timeline

A.D.

14 .... Death of Augustus.

c. 30 .... Crucifixion of Jesus.

64 .... Nero institutes persecution of Christians.

284–305 .... Reign of Diocletian.

312–337 .... Reign of Constantine. Christianity is established as the official religion of the Roman Empire.

410 .... Rome sacked by the Goths.

476 .... The Roman Empire "falls" in the West.

529 .... Publication of the Justinian code.

590–604 .... Pontificate of Gregory I.

c. 725 .... *Beowulf* written.

751 .... Pepin crowned King of the Franks.

768–814 .... Reign of Charlemagne. Granted the title of Roman Emperor in 800.

814–840 .... Reign of Louis the Pious.

999–1003 .... Pontificate of Sylvester II (Gerbert).

1066 .... Norman conquest of England.

1095 .... The calling of the first Crusade.

c. 1125 .... *Song of Roland* written.

1181 or 1182 .... Birth of Saint Francis of Assisi (d. 1226).

1198–1216 .... Pontificate of Innocent III.

1265 .... Dante born (d. 1321).

1274 .... Death of Thomas Aquinas.

c. 1285 .... *Romance of the Rose* written.

1294–1303 .... Pontificate of Boniface VIII.

1337–1453 .... The Hundred Years War.

c. 1340 .... Geoffrey Chaucer born (d. 1400).

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c. 1370 .... *Piers Plowman* written.

c. 1375 .... *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* written.

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Glossary

Archivolt: The inner curve of an arch. This space was often decorated with sculpture on cathedrals in the Middle Ages.

Castle: A structure that we now normally think of as characteristic of the Middle Ages, castles—at least those that have survived—were most frequently large stone dwellings, usually heavily fortified, which symbolized the authority of the local nobility and provided a strong defense for the immediate surroundings. The defensive value of these stone structures dropped following the invention of gunpowder.

Cathedral: The word *cathedral* comes from the Latin word *cathedra*, meaning chair or seat. Literally, a cathedral is a church where a bishop—the head of a Christian community—has his seat. In other words, a cathedral is the seat, or head church, of a local Christian community, called a diocese. In the Middle Ages, cathedrals were usually large and ornate churches, generally built in urban areas. Their art and architecture, among the most impressive accomplishments of the Middle Ages, were intended not only to impress but to educate by visually representing concepts that were key to understanding the Christian story. Cathedrals often hosted schools and, for a time, supplemented or supplanted monasteries as important centers of learning.

Chivalry: A code of conduct that governed the behavior of the nobles ("those who fight") in medieval society. Chivalry was instituted to prevent these powerful elements of society from abusing their authority and was vigorously promoted through literature, particularly through Arthurian romances. It was a way of institutionalizing the ideal that nobles needed to defend those who could not defend themselves.

Classical: A term used to refer to the civilizations of the Greeks and the Romans. In the Middle Ages, elements of these two societies were adapted and integrated into Western European culture, directly from the Romans and indirectly from the Greeks through the Romans. People in the Middle Ages did not necessarily see a break between classical civilization and themselves and looked to the classical heritage for models of law, language, literature, architecture, and art, among other things.

Fresco: A fresco is a wall painting. Not only the interiors of churches but also those of public buildings were frequently decorated with frescoes in the Middle Ages, primarily in Italy. Because the technique of fresco painting (the word itself means "fresh") consisted of applying color to wet plaster, the artists who produced these works were highly skilled craftsmen. Frescoes were often narrative in intent, that is, they told stories in pictures, often stories taken from the Bible or from the lives of saints.

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Gothic: An architectural style that includes such characteristics as flying buttresses, ribbed vaulting, pointed arches, and high roofs. It is the architectural style of the great cathedrals of Europe, such as Chartres, Amiens, and Notre Dame de Paris.

Guild: A guild is a kind of medieval corporation, the purpose of which was to uphold standards and provide protection and power for those in a given trade. Guilds are often seen as precursors of modern trade unions, though this would be only partially accurate. The closest modern equivalent would be a business association or, perhaps, a chamber of commerce.

Holy Roman Empire: A Roman Empire was re-established by Charlemagne in 800 and later became known as the Holy Roman Empire. After the tenth century, it included much of Germany plus northern Italy. By the end of the Middle Ages, it was essentially limited to Germany. It was dissolved in 1806.

Iconography: A term used to describe a system of recognizable symbols that represent important ideas. Icons convey concepts that a society wants to transmit to its members easily and instantly, either visually, through a work of art, or through a written text. Some obvious examples of medieval icons are halos used to identify saints or images used to identify particular saints. For example, Saint Peter is identified through his keys; Saint Lucy is often identified through the icon of eyes.

Monastery: A monastery is a community of monks. In the Middle Ages, monasteries were centers of religious worship and scholarship. Generally, monks wished to live and pray in isolation from society at large, so monasteries were often geographically at the margins of society. The monasteries often housed schools and extensive libraries and were, therefore, important centers of learning and manuscript production. The great majority of monasteries lived under the rule of Saint Benedict.

New Testament: The second part of the Christian Bible, written after the Old Testament and in Greek rather than Hebrew. The New Testament is the account of one particular Hebrew, Jesus Christ, and the effect of his life on his early followers. The New Testament is divided into twenty-seven separate books: four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, twenty-one letters, and the Book of Revelation, or the Apocalypse, as it was called in the Middle Ages. As part of Scripture, the New Testament was considered to be an inspired work, the ultimate author of which was God.

Old Testament: The first part of the Christian Bible, written in Hebrew over the course of many centuries. The story of the Hebrew people and their relationship with God, the Old Testament consists of five books called the Law, or the Torah; the Prophets; and the Writings. Christians in the Middle Ages considered the Old Testament to be part of the Bible and, therefore, inspired by God.

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Palazzo: The Italian word for *palace*, a palazzo can refer to any large stone residence, not simply the residence of a king. The term also can refer to the building that is the seat of public government in a community, as for example, the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena.

Pope: The pope is the bishop of Rome. In Roman Catholic Christianity, the pope is the visible head of the universal church and the successor to Saint Peter.

Prophet: In Hebrew and Christian tradition, a human who receives a message from God and is called on to communicate this message to God's people. Prophets usually appear when times are bad. They are called on to denounce idolatry, to correct misguided forms of worship, or to encourage worship when it is being abandoned altogether. By defying the religious mainstream, prophets often provoked wrath and were characteristically derided or persecuted in their own times.

Romanesque: An architectural style that flourished in the twelfth century, Romanesque (based on Roman models) is characterized by solidity and the use of round arches. Romanesque is associated with monastic architecture.

Seven Ages of History: People in the Middle Ages believed that the course of human history could be divided into seven distinct ages. This view was based on a biblical reading of history, in which the seven ages corresponded to the seven days of creation from the beginning of the book of Genesis. Seven was considered the number of completeness, and at the end of the seventh age, human history would have run its complete course according to God's ultimate plan.

Seven Ages of Man: People in the Middle Ages believed that individual human lives could likewise be divided into seven distinct phases, just as human history as a whole could be divided into seven ages. A person who passed through these seven phases was considered to have lived a complete life. This belief, like the seven ages of history, was derived from an interpretation of the seven days of creation at the beginning of the book of Genesis in the Bible.

Tapestry: A wall hanging that had both aesthetic and practical value. Tapestries were often highly elaborate, richly decorated works of art. They also served to provide warmth in the castles where they were, for the most part, hung.

"Those Who Fight": One of the three divisions of medieval society. Each of the three groups had an essential role to play in the medieval community. "Those who fight" were the nobles and warriors, whose role was to defend those who could not defend themselves: the peasants who worked the land, women, and children.

"Those Who Pray": One of the three divisions of medieval society, representing those responsible for the spiritual welfare of the medieval community. This order was divided in different ways and included much more than what we consider to be the role of the church in our own society. Some members of this order were cloistered, and their function was literally to pray for the spiritual welfare of society. The order also included those who ministered directly to others spiritually, those in education, and even large numbers of those involved with the law.

"Those Who Work": One of the three divisions of medieval society, representing those who provided food for the medieval community by farming the land. During most of the Middle Ages, fully ninety percent of the population worked the land. The growth of trade and technology enabled a predominantly merchant middle class to emerge from this sector of society. This class didn't quite fit into the "three estates" division, and finding a place for them in medieval theory was somewhat problematic.

Tympanum: The arched space above the portals of a medieval cathedral or church. The sculptural program of a tympanum often consisted of a depiction of the Last Judgment.

Winchester Bible: A twelfth-century illuminated Bible, now located in the Winchester Cathedral library; its illuminated initials are of exceptional beauty.

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Biographical Notes

Aristotle (384–322 B.C.). Student of Plato and, along with Plato, one of the two most important and influential figures in Greek philosophy. His moral, scientific, and logical teachings greatly influenced the theologians and philosophers of the High Middle Ages. These philosophers, especially Thomas Aquinas, accepted elements of Aristotelian thought that they believed to be compatible with Christian thought.

Augustine (Saint) (354–430 A.D.). As Bishop of Hippo in Africa and as a theologian of great insight and influence, Augustine, more than any single figure from the late Roman world, helped to shape the development of Christian thought and belief. His most famous work, the *Confessions*, is a spiritual autobiography, the story of his conversion from paganism to Christianity. *On Christian Doctrine* and *The City of God*, as well as many other works, influenced medieval attitudes toward politics, government, and art, as well as religion.

Augustus (63 B.C.–14 A.D.). Roman emperor who ruled at the time of Christ's birth. Augustus rose to power by defeating his rivals Marc Antony and Cleopatra in a naval battle at Actium in 31 B.C. His reign marks the transition from the Roman Republic to the Roman Empire. Virgil wrote the *Aeneid* under his sponsorship.

Bernardino of Siena (Saint) (1380–1444 A.D.). Born in 1380, Bernardino entered the Franciscan Order as a young man and became the most important leader of the movement in the order that called for a stricter observance of the life of Saint Francis among the friars. Bernardino was perhaps the most important preacher of the fifteenth century; his cycles of sermons, especially those preached in the Piazza del Campo of Siena, give us the greatest insight into the preaching of Franciscan values to a lay audience. Bernardino initiated devotion to the Name of Jesus and used a plaque containing the consonants in Jesus's name as a prop when he preached. Bernardino died in 1444 and was canonized six years later.

Boniface VIII (r. 1294–1303 A.D.). Pope whose reign was characterized by heated conflicts between secular and religious authority. Boniface clashed with King Philip IV over the French government's right to tax the French clergy. Boniface published the bull *Unam Sanctam* in 1302, declaring his belief that the pope had both supreme secular and spiritual authority. His resistance to secular authority eventually led to his capture and abuse at the hands of French mercenaries. He is mentioned in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, where he is guaranteed a place among the simoniac popes in the lower regions of hell.

Charlemagne (742–814 A.D.). King of the Franks from 768 to 814 and crowned emperor by Pope Leo III on Christmas day 800, Charlemagne ruled a sizable empire that decayed in the wake of his death. However, his legacy survived, and he served as a model of ideal kingship throughout the Middle Ages. He was

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revered not only for his victories on the battlefield but also for his sponsorship of great cultural and religious advances.

Chaucer, Geoffrey (c. 1340–1400 A.D.). Generally regarded as the greatest English poet of the Middle Ages, Chaucer is best known for his pilgrimage poem, the *Canterbury Tales*. Characteristically bawdy, the *Tales* are nonetheless infused with Christian elements. Like Dante, he was a social critic, and he challenged the church to reform.

Cicero (106–43 B.C.). Roman orator whose mastery of the Latin language was admired by many medieval scholars. He served as a model for writing and oratory, influencing Augustine, Boethius, Erasmus, and many others.

Clare of Assisi (1193–1253 A.D.). Born of noble lineage, Clare joined the young Franciscan movement when she was about nineteen. She lived at San Damiano near Assisi, where a cloistered community based on Franciscan ideals grew up around her. Her spirituality, though inspired by Francis, was unique and influential in its own right. She was canonized shortly after her death.

Constantine (r. 312–337 A.D.). Roman Emperor who, in the wake of his victory at the battle of Milvian Bridge in 312, established Christianity as a legal religion in the empire, crediting Christ with his success. The church began to acquire wealth during this time. He moved the seat of the empire from Rome to Byzantium, which he then renamed Constantinople. This eastern empire lasted until 1453.

Dante Alighieri (1265–1321 A.D.). Poet and political activist whose seminal work, the *Divine Comedy*, brought together classical and biblical traditions in a remarkable synthesis. His great poem is an epic journey to the three parts of the Christian afterlife, one of the most complete and detailed ever recorded, and one that continues to influence the Christian and literary imagination today. Dante was banished from his home city of Florence after his political party, the White Guelfs, fell from power, and he wrote the *Comedy* while in exile.

David: Traditionally regarded as the greatest Hebrew king, David figures prominently in the Old Testament books of Samuel and the first book of Kings. As a youth, he famously challenged and defeated the Philistine giant Goliath. His subsequent popularity threatened the first Hebrew king, Saul. He fled Saul's wrath, but after Saul's death, he returned to the Hebrews and became king. Though David's reign is traditionally seen as one of the high points of Hebrew history, the second book of Samuel also describes his adulterous affair with Bathsheba and his successful scheme to eliminate her husband, Uriah. As punishment, he was plagued with revolts, one of them led by his own son, Absalom. In the Middle Ages, he was not only venerated as a king but also as the author of the biblical book of Psalms and as a prophet.

Francis of Assisi (Saint) (1182–1226 A.D.). Founder of the Franciscan order, Francis transformed medieval spirituality. Francis called for a return to poverty

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and humility, exemplifying these virtues in his own life. He lived simply as he labored to help the poor and to repair rundown churches, gradually coming to understand that his mission was to repair the church in a larger sense—understood as the body of believers. He is particularly famous, today as in his own time, for his love of nature. (He preached to animals to demonstrate the universal truth and goodness of Christ's message.) The climax of his life was his reception of the stigmata, the wounds of Christ, on mount La Verna in 1224. After his death, the Franciscan Order struggled to uphold his rigid and demanding ideals of poverty and simplicity.

Giotto di Bondone (c. 1266–c. 1336 A.D.). Florentine painter who is credited by modern art historians with spearheading an artistic revolution by creating a more naturalistic style that developed in Italy during his time. He was concerned with the problem of representing three-dimensional figures on two-dimensional surfaces in his paintings and frescoes. Among his famous works are the Bardi chapel in Florence and the Arena chapel in Padua.

Gregory I (Saint) (r. 590–604 A.D.). Pope who decisively shaped the development of the church during the transitional period from Roman rule to the Middle Ages, he is known now as Gregory the Great. He was instrumental in the development of the Mass and the biblical commentary tradition. His most famous work, *Pastoral Care*, defines the particular virtues that members of the clergy should possess. In that work, he urged the importance of charity over worldly concerns. He was named one of the four Doctors of the Church by Boniface VIII in 1298.

Innocent III (r. 1198–1216 A.D.). Pope whose reign is characterized by the growth of the papacy's political power and influence. He convened the Fourth Lateran Council to deal with both doctrinal and institutional matters affecting the church. He also sponsored the disastrous Fourth Crusade that resulted in the pillaging of two Christian cities, and he ordered a crusade against the Albigensian heretics in France. He helped Francis of Assisi found an order dedicated to poverty and simplicity.

Jesus Christ (c. 4 B.C.–33 A.D.). Jew whose life and message is proclaimed in the four Gospels of the New Testament. Acknowledged by Christians to be the Messiah and the Son of God, Christ was rejected by the mainstream Jewish community during his own time and executed by Roman authorities. His twelve disciples dispersed to carry his message throughout the world.

Jonah: Old Testament figure whose story is told in the Book of Jonah. He refused God's command to preach to the Gentile Ninevites. He sailed in the opposite direction, but God unleashed a storm against his vessel. The sailors threw Jonah overboard, and he was swallowed by a "large fish" (traditionally, a whale). He was allowed to escape his three-day imprisonment in the belly of the fish, repented, and agreed to do God's will.

Lawrence (Saint) (d. 258 A.D.). A Roman deacon who was killed during Emperor Valerian's reign. According to contemporary accounts of his martyrdom, Lawrence was burned alive after he refused Valerian's command to make sacrifices to the Roman gods. The story of his death was known to Ambrose and Augustine, and his popularity and influence were quick to spread throughout Christendom.

Louis IX (Saint) (1214–1270 A.D.). King of France (r. 1226–1270) who helped to mold his nation into a strong monarchy with the authority to resist papal domination. Nevertheless, he was a religious man, noted for his leadership during the Crusades; he died while crusading in Tunis. Despite the failure of the Crusades, Louis was a well-remembered king. He sponsored the Franciscan order and practiced charity. He was canonized in 1297.

Lucy (Saint) (d. 304 A.D.). Martyred in Syracuse, Sicily, during the reign of Emperor Diocletian, who was responsible for the most systematic persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire. Like many other saints, she inspired a loyal following and became a popular subject for art. Lucy is often depicted holding a dish containing eyes and a palm symbolizing her martyrdom.

Moses: Old Testament figure who led the Hebrews out of slavery, guiding them from Egypt to the Promised Land. On Mount Sinai, he communed with God and received the Ten Commandments that would govern the way Hebrews lived, interacted, and worshipped. In the Christian tradition, he is often viewed as a forerunner of Christ. His story is chronicled in the book of Exodus, as well as three other books of the Torah (the first five books of Hebrew scripture): Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. In the Middle Ages, he was believed to be the author of the entire Torah.

Paul (Saint) (c. 5–c. 67 A.D.). Originally a harsh persecutor of the early church, Paul was converted while journeying to Damascus. Afterward, he traveled throughout the Mediterranean to spread Christ's message. Many of his letters are included in the New Testament, thereby ensuring the continuing influence of his ideas. Paul is considered both the first and the greatest Christian theologian. He maintained that Gentiles could be welcomed into the Christian community, refusing to believe that Christ's revelations were meant only for Hebrews.

Peter (Saint) (d. c. 65 A.D.). Foremost among Christ's twelve disciples, accorded a special place because he was the first to recognize Jesus as the Son of God. Christ called him the "rock" upon which the church would be built (Matt. 16) and because of this tradition, Peter is considered the first pope. His leadership helped to ensure Christianity's survival and its spread to non-Hebrew peoples (he accepted the Roman centurion Cornelius into the church against the wishes of some of the other disciples). He was martyred in the Roman Emperor Nero's circus during one of the earliest persecutions of Christians.

Plato (c. 427–347 B.C.). Athenian philosopher, pupil of Socrates, and mentor to Aristotle. All three rejected philosophical relativism and believed, instead, in

universal truths and universal morality. Plato's doctrine of the "forms" asserted that ultimate truth could be found only beyond the world of the senses. These concepts helped to inspire aspects of Christian theology, and much of Plato's thought was studied and adapted by medieval theologians.

Pliny (23–79 A.D.). Roman writer whose works of natural history were used extensively by writers in the Middle Ages

Sebastian (Saint) (d. c. 303 A.D.). Martyred during the Emperor Diocletian's persecution of Roman Christians, Sebastian was a soldier who came to reject violence to pursue a life of holiness. He was condemned to execution at the hands of his fellow soldiers, who according to tradition, shot him to death with arrows. In paintings, arrows are often used to symbolize his martyrdom.

Simon Magus (first century A.D.). Figure who attempted to buy divine powers from Saint Peter in Acts of the Apostles, chapter 8. Peter insisted that powers come only to those who have faith, not money, and can be used only for universal good instead of personal advancement. A later apocryphal story tells of how Simon Magus learned pagan magic and challenged Peter to a duel in Rome. Simon Magus grew wings and flew over the city, until God's power caused him to crash into the ground headfirst. His name became synonymous with crimes of greed—hence the word "simony," used to describe the buying and selling of church offices. Depictions of the fall of Simon Magus became common in art, especially in the twelfth century and after, and in Dante's *Inferno*, the simoniac popes are planted face down in narrow holes in imitation of their predecessor.

Socrates (d. 399 B.C.). Greek philosopher put to death by the Athenian assembly, Socrates was the teacher of Plato and the main character in most of Plato's dialogues. Although a pagan, Socrates was held to be a model of wisdom for much of the Middle Ages.

Thomas Aquinas (Saint) (c.1225–1274 A.D.). Member of the Dominican order and prominent theologian. His *Summa Theologiae*, an impressive synthesis of Christian belief, was based on Aristotelian principles of logic and argument, though Thomas is equally dependent on Platonic sources. He has been officially recognized by the church hierarchy many times as the preeminent Doctor of Christian theology and is often referred to as the Angelic Doctor.

Virgil (70–19 B.C.). Roman poet who lived during Augustus's reign. His most famous work, the *Aeneid*, is modeled on the epic poems of Homer. One of Virgil's goals in writing the *Aeneid* was to inspire pride in Roman tradition, virtues, and ideals. In the Middle Ages, the *Aeneid* was widely regarded as the ultimate statement of Roman greatness. Virgil heavily influenced Dante, and he is Dante's guide through the afterlife for the first two-thirds of the *Divine Comedy*. Virgil's Fourth Eclogue was believed in the Middle Ages to be a prophecy of the coming of Christ.

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Bibliography

Essential Reading:

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Larry D. Benson. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 2000. *The General Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales* provides a wonderful description of medieval "estates theory," the social divisions of medieval society. The *Prologue* offers brilliant portraits of those who pray, those who fight, and those who work, including both those who till the land and those who, like Chaucer himself, were part of the expanding middle class. The tales themselves, among the great masterpieces of English literature, also deal with many of the issues and ideas referred to in these lectures. This edition is in Middle English, but with enough notes to be worth a try even for readers without any previous experience with this earlier stage of the English language. *The Canterbury Tales in Modern English*, trans. Nevill Coghill. (New York: Penguin USA, 2000), is a readable modern translation in verse.

Cook, William R., and Ronald B. Herzman. *The Medieval World View: An Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983. This book was written to introduce students and general readers to the Middle Ages by integrating selections from primary texts and photographs into a narrative of the medieval world and its foundations. It includes an extensive bibliography to enable readers to go deeper into the topics covered. A second edition, forthcoming in 2001, takes electronic sources, such as Web sites, into account in its bibliographical apparatus.

Dante. *The Divine Comedy*, 3 vols., trans. Mark Musa. New York: Penguin, 1971–1984. One of the world's supreme poetic achievements, the *Comedy* deals explicitly with most of the themes developed in these lectures. It is especially useful for ideas of contrast covered in the last lecture. It is divided into three parts, *Inferno, Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso* (Hell, Heaven, and Purgatory), each one of which gains energy and focus by its relationship to the other parts. There are many translations of Dante from the original Italian, none of which are entirely satisfactory. The Musa translation has the advantage of comprehensive yet clear notes, especially useful to those who are coming to Dante for the first time.

Langland, William. *Piers Plowman*, trans. E. Talbot Donaldson. Edited, introduced, and annotated by Elizabeth D. Kirk and Judith H. Anderson. New York: W.W. Norton, 1990. Along with the *Canterbury Tales*, *Piers Plowman* gives the best literary picture of late medieval society. It provides a good introduction to the idea of the seven deadly sins. The introduction to this edition discusses how the work is representative of English society in the later Middle Ages.

The New Oxford Annotated Bible, eds. Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991. The Bible is the most important text for understanding the Middle Ages. This is a standard modern

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edition, and even though there are some differences between the medieval and modern Bible, it is easier to use a modern edition. Any other good modern translation would do: The New English Bible, the New American Bible, and the Jerusalem Bible are all good. The Bible that was known in the Middle Ages was the Latin version called the Vulgate. The Douay-Rheims version is an English translation of the Latin Bible, and it might be interesting to compare this version with the more modern translations.

Supplementary Reading:

Argos Limited Area Search of the Ancient and Medieval Internet, http://argos.evansville.edu. This search engine scans for Web sites dealing with ancient and medieval topics, screening out all other sites. Also contains a number of links to major medieval-related pages.

Arthurian Resources on the Internet, http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jjd23/arthur/. This site provides extensive lists of texts, links, and critical evaluations of Arthurian material. The page also discusses Arthur's portrayal in pop culture, including film and television. An FAQ (frequently asked questions) section explains elements of the Arthur legend to newcomers.

Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967. Brown's is a standard and readable biography of this seminal figure

The Camelot Project, http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/cphome.stm. Maintained by the University of Rochester, this site contains online texts, image galleries, a bibliography, and general information on Arthur, as well as links to other Arthur-related sites.

The Canterbury Tales Project, http://www.cta.dmu.ac.uk/projects/ctp/. For academics, this page is useful because it contains information about Chaucer e-texts (copies of his works online) and a study of the various manuscript forms of *The Canterbury Tales*. Academics and more casual Web-surfers can also make use of the page's extensive collection of links to Chaucer sites that cover a wide variety of topics and interests.

Chadwick, Henry. *The Early Church*. Baltimore: Penguin, 1967. This book would be of use in tracing some of the themes of Lecture Seven in more detail.

The Crusades, http://history.hanover.edu/medieval/crusades.htm. This page provides links to full texts, primary documents dating from the period that are transcribed online. Many of these texts are the papal calls to action that triggered the Crusades, but other Crusade-related documents are provided as well. Other links point toward related sites. Maintained by the Hanover College history department.

Emmerson, Richard K., and Bernard McGinn, eds. *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992. The essays in this volume deal with the influence of the Apocalypse on all aspects of medieval thought, including art, society, politics, literature, and liturgy.

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Images of Medieval Art and Architecture, http://www.pitt.edu/~medart/. This impressive site contains a glossary of related medieval terminology and extensive galleries of images and floor plans. The site focuses on images of English and French castles and cathedrals, supplemented by detailed maps.

Internet Medieval Sourcebook, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html. This major site contains online texts, including law texts and saints' lives. A variety of historical topics are covered in articles and organized in an easy-to-navigate index. The page also features galleries of maps and images.

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Knowles, David. *The Evolution of Medieval Thought*. New York: Random House, 1962. A fine one-volume study that goes from the ancient world to the end of the Middle Ages; this volume is especially good on the classical heritage of medieval thought.

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———. *Religious Art in France, the Twelfth Century: A Study of the Origins of Medieval Iconography*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978. These two books are pioneering studies in understanding the principles of iconography as they apply to the visual arts.

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Medieval Academic Discussion Group, http://www.towson.edu/~duncan/acalists.html. This site provides the addresses of the most scholarly online discussion groups that focus on the Middle Ages. The discussion groups address a wide variety of topics in a back-and-forth discourse among professors.

The Medieval Feminist Index, http://www.haverford.edu/library/reference/mschaus/mfi/mfi.html. This frequently updated and growing archive is essentially a bibliography of journal articles and multi-author works related to the topic of medieval feminist studies. No full texts are provided, but the bibliography is useful for locating articles on a wide range of topics in the scope of feminist studies. The site also provides links to related Web pages.

Medieval History Homepage, http://historymedren.miningco.com/homework/historymedren/. This extensive index contains a host of online articles on a variety of topics, including medieval African, Asian, and Byzantine history, as well as the Crusades, Arthurian romance, the daily life of the peasantry, archaeology, military history, and more. Easy to navigate and with plenty of links.

The Medieval Science Page, http://members.aol.com/mcnelis/medsci_index.html. This page is a collection of links to other pages that deal with the subject of medieval science. Featured topics are alchemy, astronomy, biology, medicine, and many others. The page is designed for college students and curious adults and contains material on the classical Greek antecedents to medieval science.

The Medtext Database, http://www.mun.ca/mst/medtext/. This is the archive of a major medieval discussion group, containing the complete record of the members' exchanges. Various topics are addressed, generally by professors and educated adults who swap questions and ideas about the Middle Ages.

Moorman, John. *The Franciscans in England*. London: Mowbrays, 1974. This work traces the history of the Franciscan Order in England

Morris, Colin. *The Discovery of the Individual 1050–1200*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972, rpt. 1987. A readable account of changes in all phases of society that have come to be known as the twelfth-century Renaissance.

The Online Catholic Encyclopedia, http://newadvent.org/cathen. This large index is a collection of articles that are intended to tell Web-surfers "all they need to know about the Catholic Church." The articles cover topics up to the present day, but the medieval period is covered with particular thoroughness. The page also contains the text of Aquinas's *Summa*.

The Online Medieval and Classical Library, http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/omacl. This impressive archive contains full online texts of many medieval and classical works, from the famous to the somewhat more obscure.

ORB: Online Reference Book for Medieval Studies, http://orb.rhodes.edu/default.html. This major site boasts extensive links, resources for teaching about the Middle Ages, online textbooks and syllabi, and a massive encyclopedia containing articles that cover various topics and eras of the Middle Ages.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Christian Tradition Vol. 3: The Growth of Medieval Theology (600–1300)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. This standard work, part of a five-volume study, deals with the development of theological ideas throughout the Middle Ages. It includes a running guide to the primary sources used.

Piers Plowman Electronic Archive, http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/piers/archive.goals.html. This site addresses the many problems that arise from reconciling the multiple text versions of *Piers Plowman*. The site features descriptions of original manuscripts and a *Piers Plowman* search engine.

Richards, Jeffrey. *Consul of God: The Life and Times of Gregory the Great*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980. A good biography of one of the most important figures in the history of the papacy and one of the Four Doctors of the Church, as they were seen in the Middle Ages.

Runciman, Steven. *A History of the Crusades*. 3 volumes. New York: Harper and Row, 1951–1954. This is a standard work on a very complicated subject.

Russell, J. B. *A History of Medieval Christianity: Prophecy and Order*. New York: Crowell, 1968. As the title indicates, this work deals with Christianity in its institutional and prophetic dimensions.

Southern, R. W. *The Making of the Middle Ages*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953. This is a standard study of the making of medieval society by one of the great modern historians of the Middle Ages. It is relatively short and readable.

Tierney, Brian. *The Crisis of Church and State, 1050–1300*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964. This is a collection of primary documents and a running commentary by an important church historian on the struggle between church and state in the Middle Ages.

Two Thousand Years of Catholic Writings, http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/misc/mosaic/common/omega/Web/People/spok/catholic/writings.html. This site is similar to the *Online Catholic Encyclopedia* in that it attempts to catalogue the history of the Catholic Church, but instead of using

encyclopedia articles, it provides full-text documents written by the church fathers, saints, and modern Catholic commentators. A vast amount of material is stored here.

Voragine, Jacobus de. *The Golden Legend*, trans. William Granger Ryan. 2 volumes. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. This is a standard collection of saints' lives in a recent and readable translation. Jacobus de Voragine was a thirteenth-century Dominican Friar who compiled this collection from earlier lives. The work was extremely popular, with over a thousand manuscripts surviving. Reading in this volume provides easy access to the Middle Ages.

Waley, Daniel. *The Italian City Republics*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969. A good, well-illustrated introduction to the development of cities and urban institutions beginning in the eleventh century.

White, Lynn, Jr. *Medieval Technology and Social Change*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966. This work shows how technological improvements in the Middle Ages helped create social change.

WWW Medieval Resources, http://ebbs.english.vt.edu/medieval/medieval.ebbs.html. This is mainly a links page, connected to other sites that address medieval history, architecture, literature, science, libraries, and music (with a particular focus on the Gregorian chant).

WWW Virtual Library History Index—Medieval Europe, http://www.msu.edu/~georgeml/history/medieval.htm. This is another links page that is a good jumping-off point for finding image galleries and sites relating to medieval literature, history, and architecture. Also contains links to medieval reference pages.

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