and not material because it can grasp the eternal forms. However, the soul, he held, is not eternal, as Plato thought, but created separately in each individual, and immortal.

Two classic problems emerge well-defined in Augustine. First, there is the problem of free will versus determinism-predestination. The problem is to reconcile the predestination of individuals to salvation or damnation by the will of God with human free will and responsibility. It involves the problem of reconciling the claim that God, being perfect, must foreknow the fall of mankind and which individuals will be foreordained to be damned or saved with the belief in the love of God.

The second problem is related to the first. The question is: Does God will what is right because it is right, so that his will is limited by what is right independent of his willing it, or is anything right because God wills it and for no other reason, so that if God wills some to be damned and some to be saved, it is right just because God wills it and thus demonstrates his divine justice? Put in an oversimplified, straightforward question, it involves the issue of all ethics: What makes an act right? It is faintly reflected in our own day in the issue between those who say that there is some good that is determinable by objective facts and sound reasoning and others who say, "If I think anything is right for me, it is right for me because I think so."

In the period between Augustine (c. 400) and Anselm (to whom we shall soon turn) in the elventh century, only one really great mind emerges--John Scotus Eriugena (c. 810-877). John Scotus was a Neo-Platonist, as was Augustine, but he joined in the attack on Augustine's doctrine of double predestination. He taught that when we hear that God created the world, we should understand that God is in all things and is the eternal contemporary ground of their being, who creates them and sustains them from moment to moment from within, not in a time sequence--God first, the world next--but in an eternal relation, so that God's being and his creative activity are eternally coincidental. This should not sound so strange to us if we remember that in our experience of our own existence, our feelings and our thoughts are also simultaneous and inseparable from our existence, and not the one first and the other afterwards.

Thus, according to John Scotus, all things express the divine nature. This essential being of all things--God--creates, but itself is uncreated. It is beyond all categories of our understanding. It is not even conscious of itself. Yet in itself it contains all possibilities of existing things which it proceeds to create. In this creative activity it becomes a divine mind which constitutes the intelligible structure of the universe, i.e., the Son, who is both created and creates. As the Son proceeded from the Father, so the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son, and the Ideal forms are made actual in the material world. In this process, said John Scotus, "God makes himself," for all things are of the same substance as God himself. Once all possibilities of existence have been realized, reality returns to God; i.e., God returns to himself. Therefore, as human beings are part of the process and come forth from God, so they may return to God in the mystic experience of oneness with God, and in this lies their

salvation. The incarnation of the Father in Christ as Son is the manifestation of this process in time and space for the enlightenment of people, for the demonstration of their way back to God.

The views of John Scotus were a bit too much for the orthodox and were condemned in 855. We cannot follow all the details, but the chief difficulty with John's teachings was that they were too pantheistic (everything is God) and so failed to make suitable distinctions between God and mankind, and so either made sin an illusion or involved God in the sinning.

An issue which emerged early in this period and continued throughout the whole medieval period was the issue of realism versus nominalism, and involved the status of universals in the language (such as *mankind, insect, horse, oak,* and so on). The question was whether these terms are only "nominals" (names) for characteristics shared by individual things and conceptualized by the mind in the names and correspond to no objective realities, or whether the terms correspond to objective realities so that there is a universal form which is *the* reality as Plato had said.

This was important for theology. If the realists (those who believed that the universals are themselves real) were right, then this gave strength to the view that when Adam sinned, *mankind*--the universal reality, human nature *en toto*--sinned, and thus all individuals are caught in it because all individuals are mankind because they participate in the universal nature. It also gave strength to the idea of the Trinity. If God is one substance, a universal, then just as many individuals can participate in the one human-nature so three "persons" can participate in one God-nature. John Scotus was of this opinion, and while orthodoxy seemed to favor this view, it also seemed to have failed to see how it led strongly toward the pantheism of John, for which he was condemned.

There was in fact danger in the view. If the view were correct, then the value of the individual is dependent on his participation in the universal form and not in himself. This is contrary to Christian belief, for it is the individual that is ultimate in the scheme of salvation. Individual persons are not saved automatically because universal mankind--the form mankind--has been saved in Jesus. Individuals are saved one by one. Each person has a private worth and dignity of his own and an individual relation to God, which is superior to his obligation to any institution, even the church, and which provides the basis for his defying the claims of the church and state alike if those claims seem to run counter to his obligation to God.

But if the nominalists were right and universals are only names of human mental concepts and the realities are individuals, then such doctrines as original sin and the fall and the Trinity were in trouble. On this theory Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three individual Gods and Adam's sin is individual and not the sin of mankind. Roscellinus held such a view and was summoned before a church council and forced to recant.

Both the church and the state in this view had no substantial reality either. In such a case their reality and their authority rest on the

sovereign value of the individual, and this was equally unsatisfactory. Their status and their authority had been built on the idea that they were the earthly embodiment of the universal substantial reality of God. If this view failed in favor of the nominalist view, then kings and popes would be just more individuals with no more value, status, reality, or authority than anyone else, and the institutions of governments and the church would be artificial creations at the mercy of individuals.

This whole debate was, of course, nothing but a revival of the issue between Plato and Aristotle over form and matter, the one and the many. Unfortuntely, the medievalists had only very small fragments of the works of these ancients and only the logic of Aristotle, and had to think it all out again for themselves.

The other problem of the period had its roots in Augustine, who had held "I believe in order to know." Yet, he said, it is also true that "I know [understand] in order to believe." This two-handed argument persisted throughout the intervening years to become an important issue for the Scholastics of medieval times. Its intention was to establish the priority of faith in the Christian "revelation" and at the same time to leave the intellect free for philosophical speculation on the content of the revelation. It was argued--and commonly agreed--that the mind is the creation of God as an instrument for understanding and cannot, therefore, be in conflict with the truth of the revelation. The truth of the revelation, it was held, does indeed lie beyond reason but cannot be in conflict with reason. Thus if by faith we first accept the revelation, the truth of it can then be grasped by the understanding as supported by rational argument.

The two great problems for medieval thought then were set. Philosophy must save the individual and his worth while not unduly exalting him so as to reduce the church and state to a mere convenience, and so maintain the authority of the church and the state as substantial realities without reducing individuals to accidental and valueless moments of the universals; and philosophy must also reconcile the demands of both reason and revelation.

The idea we have just introduced--the belief in the rationality of the revelation and the use of logic to prove that rationality--was embodied in what is known as Scholasticism. Anselm (1033-1109), the first really great Scholastic, held that divine truth and the human mind cannot be in any essential conflict because they are both the gifts of God. His most famous works are the *Monologium* (*A Soliloquy*), the *Proslogium* (*A Discourse*) and *Cur Deus Homo* (*Why God-man*).

In the *Monologium* he argued:

1. That as something obviously exists, there must exist some being which is the best and the greatest of all existing beings;

2. That as all existing things known by the senses are not self-existing, they must exist by virtue of something which is self-existing,

i.e., which exists eternally by its own nature without depending on anything else for its existence;

3. That thus this greatest of all beings which exists must be a self-existing being, a self-existing nature, a Supreme Being;

4. That this Supreme Being, therefore, must be the creator of all derived and dependent existence, such as the material world and people, which he must create out of his own creative thought.

On these premises he proceeds to argue the proceeding of the Son and the Holy Spirit from the Father.

In the *Proslogium* he set forward this same truth in what has become a famous argument for the existence of God known as the ontological argument. God, he said, must be, by the very meaning of the concept, that actual being greater than whom no being exists. He must be the greatest being that can be conceived because the concept of a being with existence is greater than the concept of a being without existence. Therefore, God must exist.

This argument has been criticized on the grounds that Anselm only added the idea of existence to the idea of God and so proved nothing about the reality of God. All he wound up with, it is claimed, was two ideas, and it must be admitted that if the argument is confined to the ideas involved, then the criticism is sound. But if it is considered in the light of the propositions set forward in the *Monologium* to the effect that something which actually exists must be self-existing and that that existing being must be the greatest of all existing beings and that that is what is meant by the term *God*, then the argument seems to be sound.

In the *Cur Deus Homo* Anselm dealt with the ideas of the incarnation and the atonement. Since human beings rebelled against the will of God who governed the universe, God could not disregard or even simply forgive the sin of mankind without himself violating the moral order of the creation, and so himself be guilty of sin. To maintain the integrity of the moral order and his own integrity (if there is any difference), justice must be done, and the satisfaction must be at least equal to the offense and not simply a token satisfaction.

Since sin is humanity's sin, satisfaction of the demands of justice must be given by human beings. But human beings are incapable of doing just that because they are guilty, and anything they offer would be marred. Furthermore, even if this were not so, human beings can never offer any more than they owe God at any moment--their complete fulfilling of the will of God--and so they can never have anything left over to make good their past offenses.

However, if human beings are then not to be redeemed, the will of God will be frustrated, which will is that human beings shall choose and enjoy the supreme good, i.e., fellowship with God himself. God himself then is the only one who can make amends, and so he must do so, so that

the satisfaction will be both sufficient, requiring God's act, and yet done in such a way as to be done by a human being, requiring a human act. God, then, must become incarnate in man. Thus God's justice will be satisfied and the moral order preserved, and God's love satisfied and mankind redeemed.

It has been argued that all Anselm did was to give the feudal order of justice a theological interpretation and so justify the status quo. In feudal society a serf's offense, no matter how trivial, against a lord was heinous, simply because the one was of low estate and the other of high estate, and therefore no punishment was unjust, no matter how severe. Conversely, a lord's offense against a serf, no matter how great, was trivial because the one was a lord and the other a serf. The corollary of all this was that no matter how great the act of the serf, it was of no value because he was a serf, and no matter how small the act of a lord, it was of ultimate value because he was a lord. There does, in fact, seem to be some relation between the two theories, and whether or not Anselm so understood his own view is hard to say, but it would seem fairer to Anselm and truer to the spirit of philosophy to judge Anselm's idea on its own merits and in its own terms.

The central problem arises out of the question of the nature of sin. When people sin, do they really sin against being itself (God), or do they sin only against themselves, or their neighbors, or perhaps other individual creatures (their horses or their dogs) or perhaps against nature, against natural resources in their prostitution or contamination? In the latter case do they not sin against all that is human when they sin against humanity in themselves or in any other individual? Do they not sin against the whole of nature when they act against it in any particular instance? And so in any and all of this, do they not sin against being? These questions look very strange and sound remote from the realities of life when we see them in a medieval philosophical-theological setting and terminology, but they remain eternally relevant when transferred to the modern scene and translated into modern terms. The issue always remains the same for any age.

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## FOR FURTHER READING

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# ART

## ART OF THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

During the two centuries of disintegration preceding the official collapse of the Roman Empire (A.D. 476) and for nearly five hundred years after its demise, a situation of great confusion existed in the Western world. It has not truly been unraveled to this day as scholars continue to argue about causes and effects. The dissolution of central power left the West in a state of instability and confusion during which time few records were kept--and records are the key to accurate history. Architecture is more or less permanent, at least by comparison with sculpture, painting, and the minor arts. In the case of the less permanent arts, terrible economic as well as political conditions caused the disappearance of large-scale, and therefore more enduring, arts. Portable arts of small scale can be moved, and the fact that they were transported all over Europe only adds to the confusion as to where they were made, how sources were received, and how styles were nurtured and developed.

The dramatic rise of Christianity, a source of hope in a seemingly hopeless world, did provide at least a loose frame of unity in both subject and style by around the fifth century.

In the East, after Constantine established his base of power at Byzantium, conditions were much more stable, and the empire founded by him flourished until the Ottoman conquest in the year 1453. A fantastic quantity of high quality art was produced under the patronage of the theocracy of the Byzantine Empire, only to be destroyed during the Iconoclast Controversy in the eighth century. Fortunately, elements of it survived in the West. But to heighten the confusion, the impossible occurred--Greek elements fused with Oriental styles. It is difficult to imagine this happening with such diametrically opposite rationales, but it did happen.

Then there is the barbarian far west and the confusion which surrounds it. It does seem that the barbarians (non-Romans to the Romans) did infuse some creative energy into the decadence of the old Roman world, but it is not clear what their role in terms of art really was.

Until around 900 these three areas--the Roman area (with its early Christian art), the Byzantine Empire, and the medieval west of the barbarians--provide natural divisions in which the developments in art can be presented with some feeling for system and cohesiveness. However, it

must be remembered that there is considerable overlapping among the three because all the art was predominantly Christian and because there was mobility, primarily among the priesthood through the missionary and monastic system.

## Early Christian Art of the Roman Area

Some Christian art existed prior to the legalization of the religion in 313. There are, for example, paintings in the catacombs of Rome and other Roman cities. The catacombs were burial tombs which had been in use for centuries prior to Christianity and by the third century had been taken over as sanctuaries by outlaws of all kinds, including bands of Christians. In the years prior to the Edict of Milan, there were no churches as such. Separate bands of Christians, often with sectarian differences, met in private homes ("meeting houses"). Although the rituals are not clearly understood, early examples of paintings and small carved ivories indicate that such standard aspects of ritual as prayer, the reenactment of the Last Supper, and the recitation of some sort of creed had been established.

Very early examples of Christian art show that artists made use of allegory and symbolism, sometimes superimposed on historical narrative and sometimes employed cryptically. Traditionally, the belief that cryptic symbols were used to escape detection by Roman authorities has prevailed. This is very naive, and it is quite unlikely the Roman police were so stupid. After all, Christianity was only one of the many mystical Oriental religions that found root in the declining days of Rome. All of them made use of symbols, some of which had their origin in the tombs of Egypt. Mysticism became a strong reaction to the concrete and, as we would say today, was "in" and had great appeal among the disillusioned populace. (There are interesting parallels in our own time.)

Among the many cryptographic symbols, the best known and most often used is the so-called Christ medallion: The Greek letters *X* (*chi*) and *P* (*rho*)--the *Chr* of *Christ*--are combined with the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, *A* (*alpha*) and Ω (*omega*) on a circular shield. It means "Christos, the Alpha and Omega" ("Christ, the beginning and the end"). Its form is thought to have come from the fact that Constantine in some way associated God with the sun, an obvious carry-over from pagan beliefs. The halo evolved as a symbol for the protection of the sun (from the sun disk of Egypt?). The Greek letters for "fish"--*ICHTHYS* (or *ICHTHUS*)--became another example of cryptic symbolism. These letters constitute the initials of the words *Iesous CHristos, THeou HYios, Soter* ("Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior"). Sometimes *ICHTHYS* was used in conjunction with the depiction of a fish (either realistic or abstract). Whether or not its origin was in the miracle of the loaves of bread and fishes is not clear.

All symbols are not cryptic. Others used, especially on sarcophagi, include the grapevine, associated with wine-making and hence with the blood (sacrifice) of Jesus, and the peacock, which deep in pagan history

was symbolic of immortality and whose periodic renewal of plummage symbolized the resurrection. Historically, the peacock has also been the emblem of Persia and refers to the everlasting power of the Persian throne; however, an extension of this symbolism to Christian usage is debatable. Perhaps the most important and earliest of all symbols are those having to do with the shepherd and his sheep. Jesus is the Good Shepherd and Christians are the sheep. One of the earliest sculptures, about thirty-six inches in height and dating near the end of the third century (prior to the legalization of Christianity), is the *Good Shepherd of the Lateran* (its location). The piece is a good example of ways in which artists, using Hellenistic sources, translated pagan examples to fit new purposes. The genre was widely used in pagan times to depict Hermes carrying either a sheep or a calf for sacrificial slaughter. Christian artists made use of the idiom as allegory and symbolism in reference to the Twenty-third Psalm and other references to Christ as shepherd. In terms of style, there is no question that it is Greek. Christ is depicted as a handsome Greek youth, unbearded and short-haired, attired as a Greek shepherd. The technique is not as sure and polished as in antiquity and the scale is diminished from Hellenistic times.[1]

The question of technique in early Western Christian carving and painting is always certain to generate an argument. Apart from the fact that important artists of the time were not always Christians, there is evidence that craftsmanship declined--if technique and craftsmanship are to be considered in isolation, apart from art's purpose and iconography and in terms of the ultra-realistic work of the immediate Roman past. However, this view overlooks something of great importance in dealing with the art of the period--that it served a very different kind of clientele and purpose and that it sprang from a very different philosophical base than either Hellenistic Greek or Roman art. Christian art did not deal with the concrete in the visual sense. Moreover, it was expressionistic, and its emotional content, however crudely developed at times, was much more important to both artist and patron than realism or technical virtuosity. The lack of technique in the traditional sense is even more obvious in painting, where the figures take on a vaporous, weightless, almost ethereal relationship to the physical world. Early Christian art does not deal with the reality of the physical world but only with the spiritual world beyond. In this time there were obvious reasons why the unpleasantness of the real world was ignored for the sanctuary of the spiritual realm, the heart of the Christian promise.

Relief work on burial sarcophagi and on diptychs (carved ivory panels about six inches by eleven inches which were hinged together in pairs) bear the symbols and allegories of the Christian message, reflecting Hellenistic style even when poorly integrated scale and unreal human proportions are present. Some examples exhibit the curious mixture of Hellenistic

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[1]Refer to *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* by George Ferguson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959) for a more detailed discussion of this subject.

and Oriental motifs which were to flower in the East in the Byzantine style in the sixth century.

Needless to say, although certain pagan art forms could easily be altered to contain Christian purposes, a vast amount of pagan art was immediately at odds with Christian principles. This included the depiction of the nude figure (particularly the more senuous examples). In rejecting naturalism in favor of expressionism in technique, Christian artists also rejected idealized classical beauty and the physical loveliness of the human body. It is true that the more entrenched and secure the Greek tradition was in any given area, the less this was so, but in general the idea of classical beauty was replaced by a cult of asceticism which grew out of the writings of the early hermits with regard to the corporeal body (Augustine, for example) and from the examples of austere self-denial by the early martyrs. Renunciation of the world, material things, and above all contempt for the flesh itself results in a human appearance quite unlike that of the Greek ideal of perfect beauty. People began to read intense spiritual significance into ravaged and wasted bodies, and artists consciously depicted people in such ways to underscore their spiritualism. The cult of asceticism retained a strong foothold in monastaries on Crete and in Greece. Icons produced in these locations still show elongated, emaciated figures; and in the seventeenth century the painter El Greco, trained in a monastary on Crete in his youth, exploited the ascetic figure to make some of the most expressive religious pictures ever painted.

Hermitages became common, and when a martyr's example attracted followers, a monastic order resulted. The earliest organized monastic orders began either in Coptic Egypt (which included part of Ethiopia) or near Damascus, where the Church had become strong while the Roman branch was still underground. Bookmaking on vellum (veal skin)--with texts written first in Greek and later in Latin, when that language became the official language of the Christian Church, and with illustrations by monk-artists--became very important. Some scholars insist that the art of painting itself was preserved on the pages of monastic books during the darkest days preceding the Gothic flowering. The favorite method of decorating Christian churches became the mosaic (borrowed from the Romans) rather than wall painting.

By the time Christianity became not only legal but also sanctioned by the state itself, the rudiments of ritual and practice had already been established. As they expanded and became more formal with imperial sanction, the necessity grew for suitable buildings to replace the meeting houses of small groups. Several different features of traditional Roman buildings were combined to meet the requirements of a church and community center. In addition to the fact that now all previously separated brethren needed to become unified into one congregation of communicants, there must also have been a triumphant spirit which needed to be fulfilled by building a large and visible edifice. A place of worship--imposing, dominating the skyline, especially enriched--had been an important fact in every culture up to this point. The development of important churches within the period of no more than fifty years also attests to the fact

that it did not take very long to establish a rather complex religious hierarchy. It was this early hierarchial organization that hammered out approved doctrine from the variations of beliefs and practices that had existed in individual sects, and established ritual to fit the new, expanded houses of God.

It was, of course, appropriate that the first Christian church of the new age be St. Peter's, dedicated in 333 and named after the founder of the Roman Church who had himself died on the cross as a martyr in the first century. Its plan was an adaptation of the Roman basilica (courthouse and seat of Roman government throughout the empire). To the basilica was added an atrium (open courtyard), which was a feature of both Etruscan and Roman villas. The atrium was also a feature of Greek villas and some public buildings and had probably been originally an idea that the Minoans had borrowed from the Egyptians. Its earliest purpose was similar to that of the Egyptian temple--to provide a place for those not initiated into the ritual. Potential converts gathered there to listen to the persuasions of missionaries. From the atrium the converts would proceed to the lateral hall (narthex), which separated the atrium from the main aisle (nave), for baptism into the faith. At the opposite end of the nave was the altar at the front of a half-round protrusion (the apse), which in the Roman basilica had contained the throne of the emperor. The other lateral adjacent to the apse and at right angles to the nave was known as the transcept. In St. Peter's, and in many other churches, the transcept extended out from the sides. The extensions contained rooms for storage of religious articles and vestments. The nave had two parallel side aisles and was itself raised above the roof line of the side aisles to allow for a clerestory, a device which also dates back to Egyptian New Kingdom temples. The entire building complex rested on a raised platform with stairway access in the manner of Etruscan and Roman temples.

Old St. Peter's was torn down near the end of the fifteenth century to make way for the present Church of St. Peter on the same site in the Vatican. After a couple of disastrous starts by other architects, the magnificent plan of Michelangelo was approved for the final construction.

Old St. Peter's and, as a matter of fact, most churches built prior to the fifth century were not planned in true cross form. In later churches the transcept was moved farther down along the nave to form a true cross, and a new section between the crossing and the apse was developed. It was called the choir in Romanesque and Gothic churches. The cross itself did not become a symbol in general use until nearly the fifth century; in Roman times it was never referred to. Most likely this was because death by crucifixion was reserved for the lowest kind of criminals. It remained for later theologians to develop the significance of Christ's death (rather than dwell on the physical event itself) in the fabric of faith and ritual.

By the fifth century churches were built with the apse to the east and the atrium, which had now shrunk to the form of a porch, to the west. Although many new churches, using the basilica form with only slight changes,

were constructed from 333 on, several congregations simply took over empty buildings, no matter what form they took, and fixed them up with columns and all kinds of second-hand pieces. Some of these churches have columns with capitals that are different, indicating that they came from different buildings, many of them pagan shrines. Often the pagan art work was simply ignored or lightly defaced so as not to destroy the strength of the capital.

Old St. Peter's was not a vaulted building, although it was constructed on the arcade principle. It had a wooden roof with rafters and tie-stringers. In 350 one of the great vaulted and domed churches, Santa Costanza, was begun. It was planned as a polygon structure, the other major plan utilized by Christian architects. The central, or polygon, plan was not used extensively in the West until the seventeenth century, but it was far and away the most popular in the Byzantine areas of the East. The same plan was later used for Moslem mosques of the region. The multi-windowed dome rests on a drum supported by a thick arcade, with imposts delivering the downward thrust to double Corinthian-type columns. Side aisles result from the circular buttress vaults which support the outward spring of the dome.

The surfaces of the spandrels and triforium were usually covered with Christian narrative from both the Old and New Testaments. A few were painted, but most were mosaic. The purpose of the mosaics and paintings was to decorate and to inspire, not, as popular legend would have it, to instruct the illiterate (a sort of Bible-for-the-ignorant theory). This idea is the product of nineteenth century romanticism. In the first place, Christian art is too complicated and erudite in its use of symbolism to be useful for this purpose. In the second place, since the earliest civilizations all important buildings had been profusely decorated and would continue to be so until the austere functionalism of the Bauhaus school of the second decade of the twentieth century.

Other important early basilica churches in the Roman West include Santa Maria Maggiore, Santa Pudenziana, and San Paolo de Mura. All in all, the Christian basilica is an outstanding example of form and function eloquently conceived. All architectural elements and orientation of spaces converge at the altar and, psychologically, the movement from the entrance to the altar becomes a real as well as symbolic journey. The thinness of the interior arcades and lightness of the vaults make it an architecture of voids rather than of masses. Although the exterior is often clumsy because of the support units, the interior, with its space and rhythmic cascade of arches, is not.

## Byzantine Art Through the Second Flowering

The tendency to combine Oriental elements with Hellenistic, traces of which began to emerge in the West in the ornamentation of sarcophagi and in mosaics, was even more pronounced in Byzantium. As the Hellenistic centers of Alexandria, Damascus, Antioch, and the Turkish peninsula began to lose influence as units of Western culture, more and more Oriental