

# Early Medieval Europe



# Overview

- 410-768 Merovingian and Anglo Saxon
  - After the fall of Rome, Merovingian and Anglo Saxon artists produce costly portable items of personal adornment featuring cloisonne ornamentation and intertwined animal and interlace patterns.
  - Anglo Saxon kings are laid to rest in treasure laden ship burials, a tradition reflected in the Beowulf saga
- 768-919 Hiberno Saxon and Carolingian
  - Christian missionaries commissioned sumptuous illuminated manuscripts featuring full pages devoted to embellishing the word of God
  - Charlemagne and his Carolingian successors initiate a conscious revival of the art and culture of early christian rome
  - Carolingian architects introduce the twin tower westwork and modular plans for basilican churches
- 919-1024 Ottonian
  - Ottonian painters and sculptors produce illuminated manuscripts and ivory reliefs inspired by late antique and byzantine sources
  - Bishop Bernward adorns his church at Hildesheim with bronze doors and a freestanding bronze column covered with figural reliefs
  - Ottonian architecture introduce the alternate support system and galleries into the naves of churches.



THE MEDITERRANEAN, AD 840

# Merovingian Dynasty

Merovingians ruled the Franks for 300 years

- As Rome's power collapsed, armed conflict by factions for political authority became heated. Huns, Vandals, Merovingians, Franks, Goths vied for rule in smaller regions once ruled by the Roman empire.
- This period of time was characterized as based around a system of localized rulers that could provide better protection than large scale governmental structures like the Roman Empire.
- Art historians do not know the full range of cultural artifacts produced during this time period. What survived is not fully representative and consists of small scale status symbols of wealth.



# Merovingian Dynasty

Merovingians ruled the Franks for 300 years

- Early scholars ignored these minor arts because of their small scale, utilitarian nature, and that these artists ignored naturalistic representation.
- Early scholars adhered to the Hellenistic tradition of arts out of its aggrandizement of Greek and Roman civilization. Forming the basis of the Renaissance.
- There was considerable cultural and literary work during this time. The Anglo-Saxon epic Beowulf was written.



# Merovingian, Anglo Saxon

Pair of Merovingian looped fibulae,  
France 500's.

- Fibula, decorative pins favored by romans and etruscans, fastening garments.
- Incorporated inlaid precious stones.
- Merovingian fibulae referred to the style of pin prevalent during the time of Merovech ruler of parts of france.
- These pins incorporate a fish in their design, an example of Cloisonne.
- Opposite of islamic art where zoological elements are rendered in designs



# Sutton Hoo

<https://youtu.be/dWxcQZBM3eQ>

Purse cover, Sutton Hoo Burial,  
Suffolk, England 625

- Cloisonne, a technique that built up segments of an object with wire, where the negative spaces would be filled with molten enamel.
- Opposite of Islamic art, animals and people are represented.
- It is believed this ship burial was associated with East Anglian king Raedwald, was baptized Christian before his death
- Leather was rotten away, coins were found inside the purse.



# Sutton Hoo

<https://youtu.be/-dAPgFW9Qi4>

Belt buckle, Sutton Hoo, 625

Notable items in ship Burial

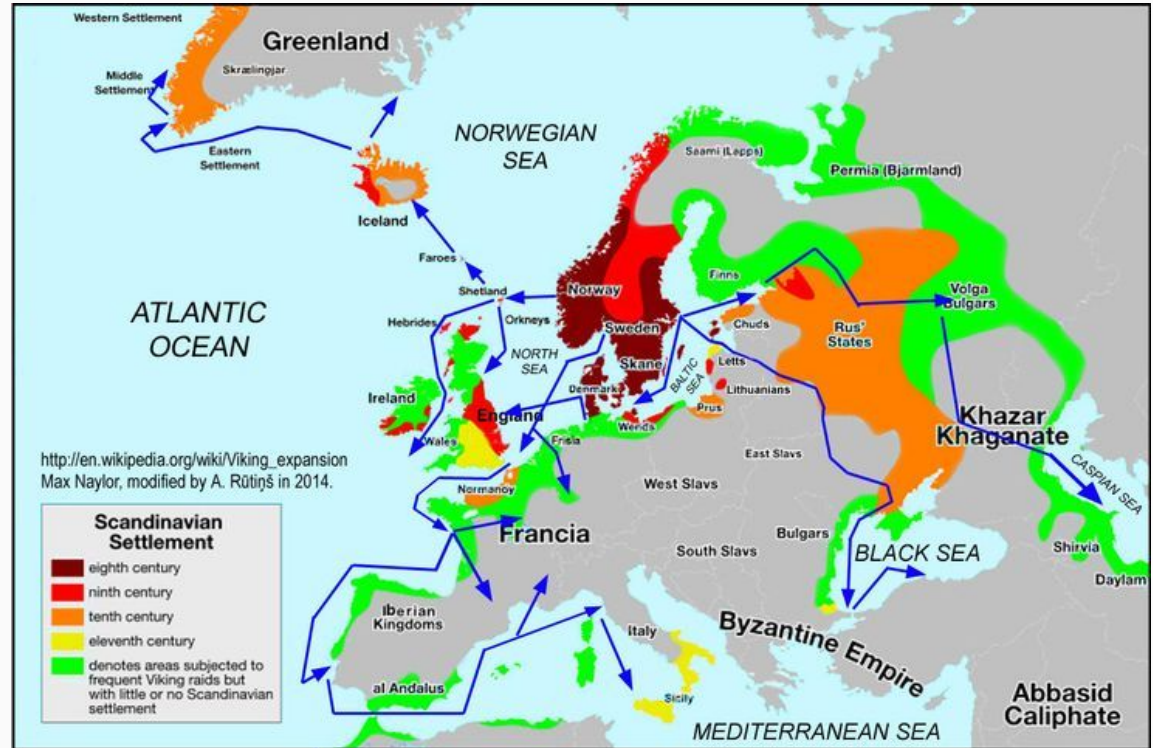
- Purse cover
- Belt Buckle
- 10 silver bowls
- A silver plate with imperial stamp of the Byzantine emperor Anastasius.
- 40 gold coins
- Helmet
- Purely linear patterns in this work, celtic knot patterns/interlace patterns. This type of line work is characteristic of works of the time in both christian and islamic world.



# Vikings

## Scandinavian Pre Christian Traders.

- <https://youtu.be/Wc5zUK2MKNY>
- Vikings set up trading posts and traveled vast distances, Italy to Canada.
- Pre Christian, Pagan culture.
- They employed raiding and extortion strategies to get wealth, but also were a settlement agricultural based culture.
- Administration and war skills led them to govern large lands in Ireland, England, France, Russia, the Baltic, Iceland, and Greenland.



# Vikings

Scandanavian Pre Christian Traders.

- Oseberg Ship Burial
- Viking ship Burial, Oseberg, Norway 815-820
- Much of the preserved art of the Vikings were found in the decoration of their ships
- Oseberg was a ship burial containing the remains of two women
- Robbers carried away many of the precious objects long before its modern discovery.



# VIKING/SCANDINAVIA

Wood portal of the stave church at  
Urnes, Norway 1050-1070

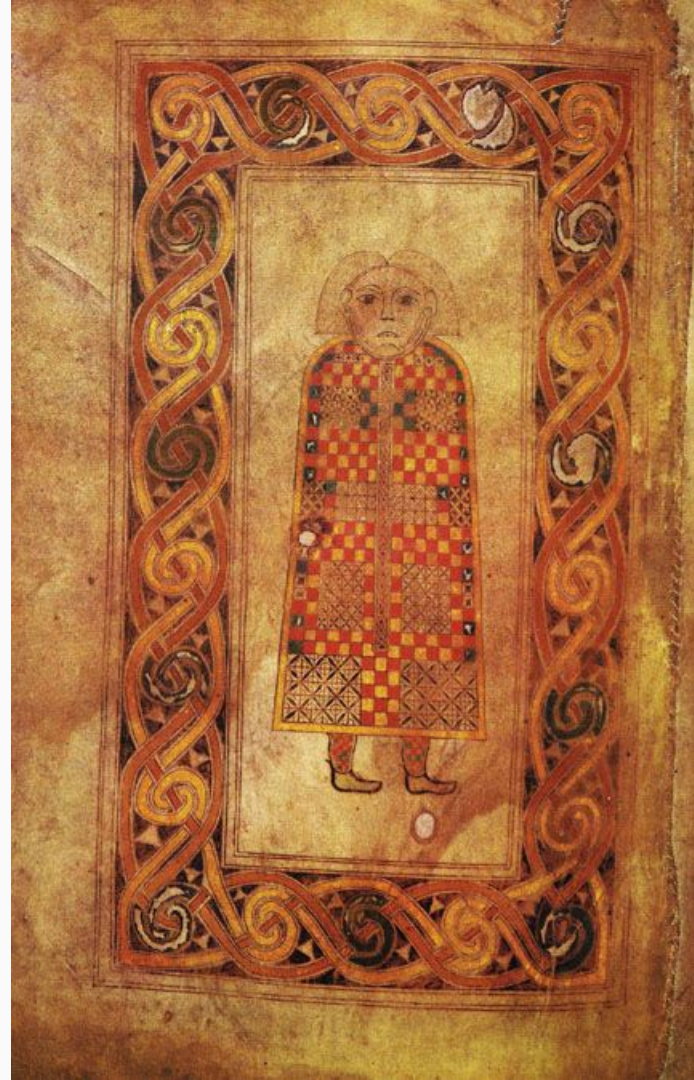
- Scandinavia had become Christian by the 11th century
- Viking artistic traditions persisted
- Decoration of the wood portal of the stave church
- Staves are wedge shaped timbers placed vertically
- Interwoven patterns persist with animal forms



# Hiberno Saxon Monasteries

Hiberno (Relates to Ireland)

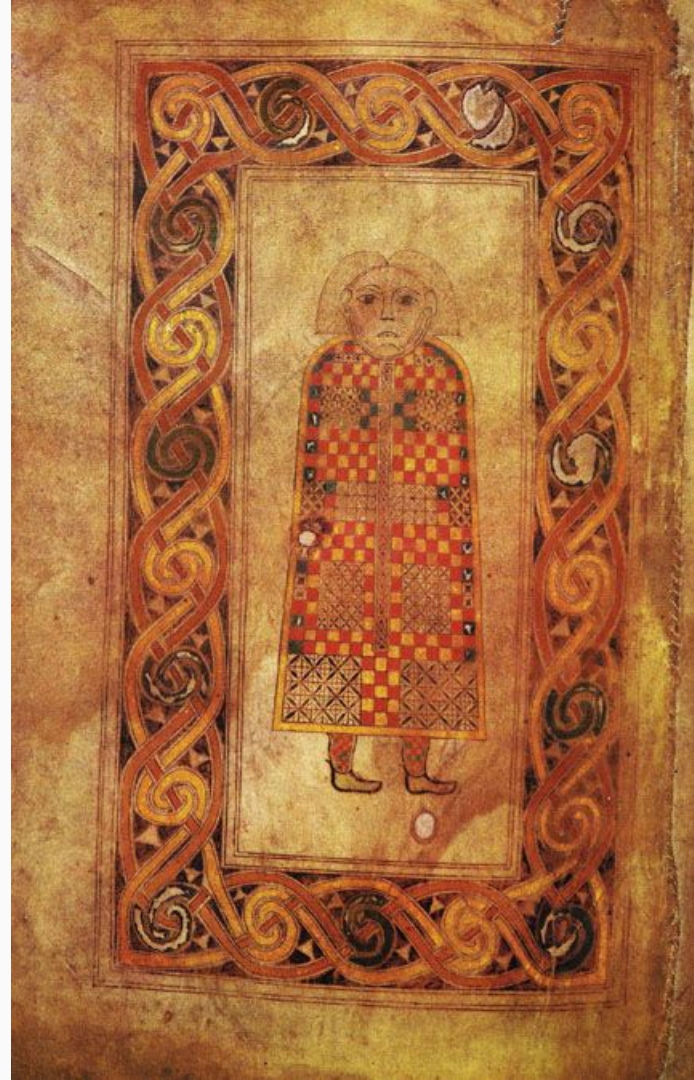
- Man symbol of Saint Matthew, folio 21 verso of the book of Durro Iona Scotland 660-680
- At this time monasteries were established throughout northern Europe.
- This artwork differed greatly from work produced in Italy and the Byzantine empire.
- Iona becomes one of seven major monasteries and center of artistic creation in the middle ages
- The prevalent product of these monasteries were the manuscript that traveled ideas of Christianity around, bringing the word of God to the region
- Books were scarce and were highly valued by libraries, scriptoria monasteries and churches



# Hiberno Saxon Monasteries

Hiberno (Relates to Ireland)

- Man symbol of Saint Matthew, folio 21 verso of the book of Durro Iona Scotland 660-680
- Was written and decorated in the monastic scriptorium (a writing studio) at Iona
- Full pages devoted neither to text nor to illustration but to pure decoration
- Similar to ornamental jewelry with interlacing patterns
- No precedents in Greco Roman books to these, showing this part of the world's insular nature and independence to come up with new styles



# Hiberno Saxon Monasteries

Cross inscribed carpet page, Lindisfarne Gospels, England 628-721

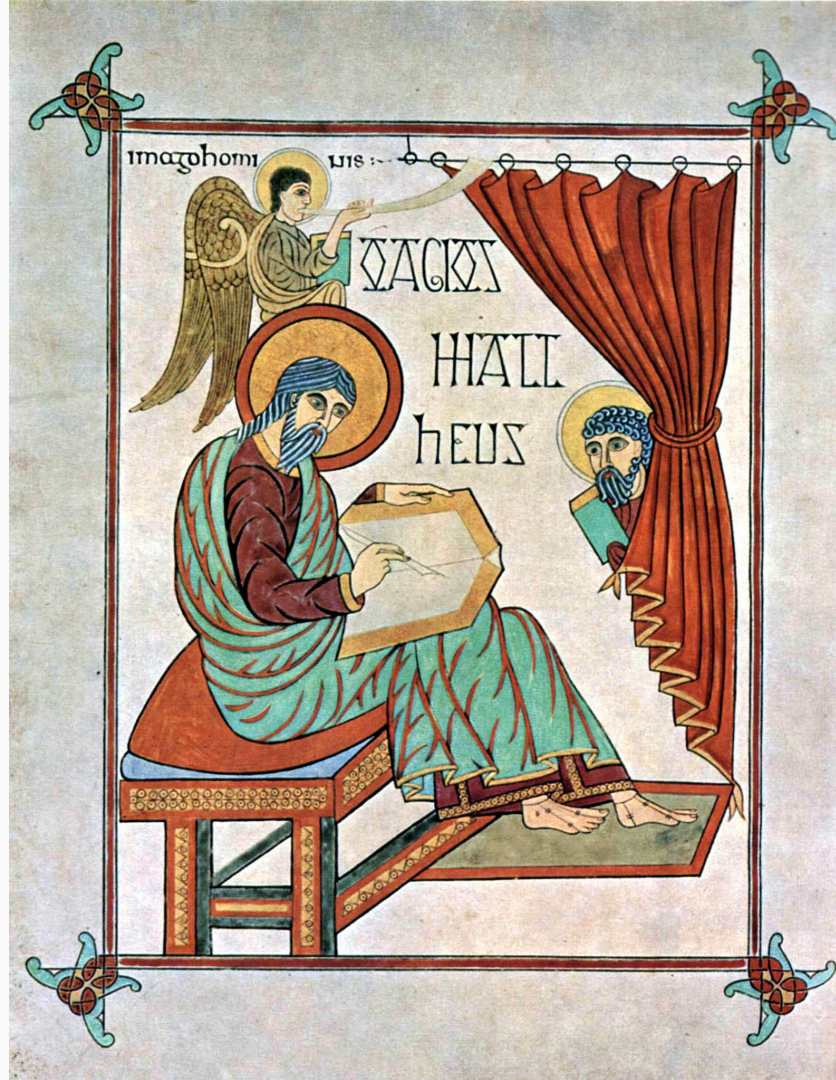
- Carpet page were pages that resembled textiles, carpets etc
- Northern european style of the marriage of christian imagery with the animal and interlace patterns are a common motif of this region and time
- <https://youtu.be/zdhLuW70wPs>
- 



# Hiberno Saxon Monasteries

## Saint Matthew Lindisfarne Gospels, England

- Insular manuscripts based some of their compositions on classical pictures from imported Mediterranean books
- Portrait of Saint Matthew, this was probably copied from a book brought with the illuminator from Italy
- This employs a Mediterranean model employing classical perspective.
- Script is a combination of Greek and Latin
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# Hiberno Saxon Monasteries

Book of Kells Iona Scotland 8th or 9th century

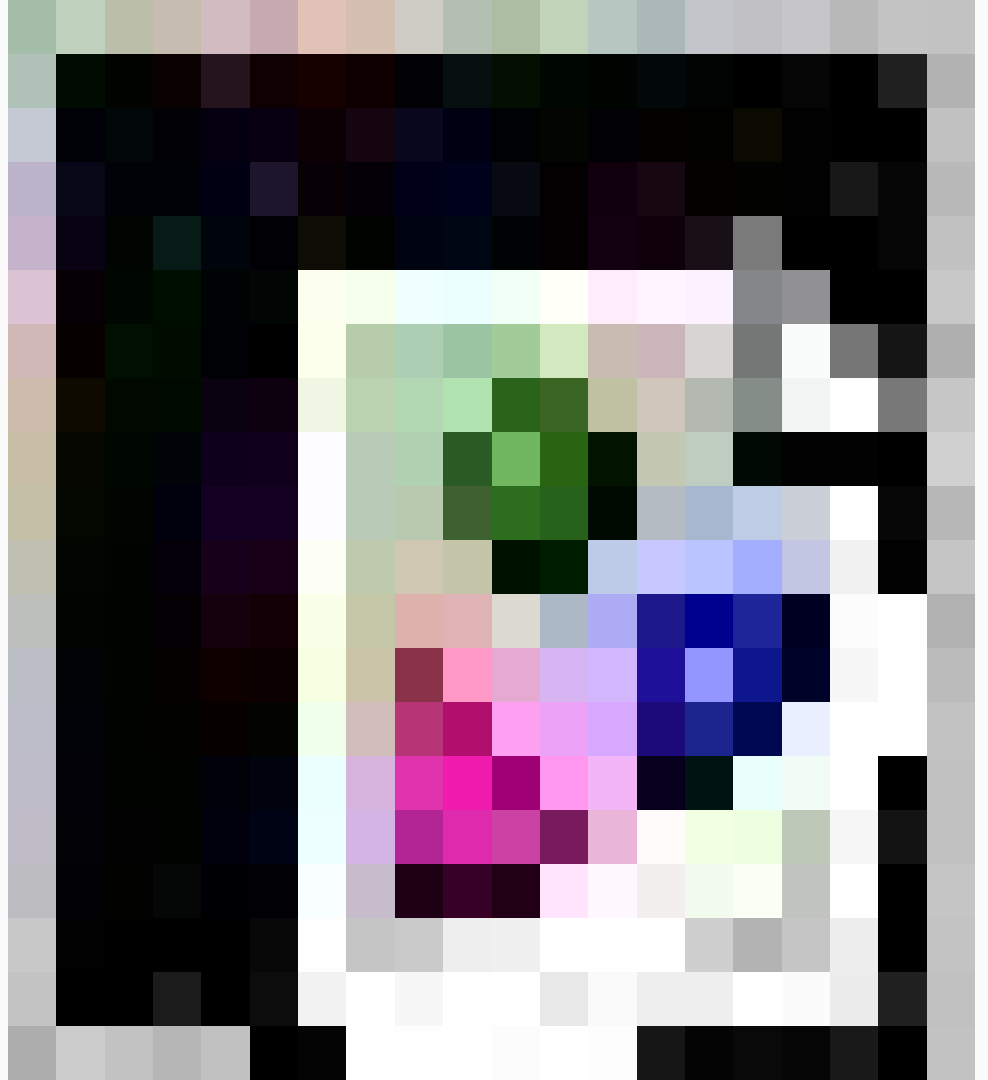
- Larger in scale, richness, the book of Kells boasts an unprecedented number of illuminations, carpet pages, evangelist symbols.
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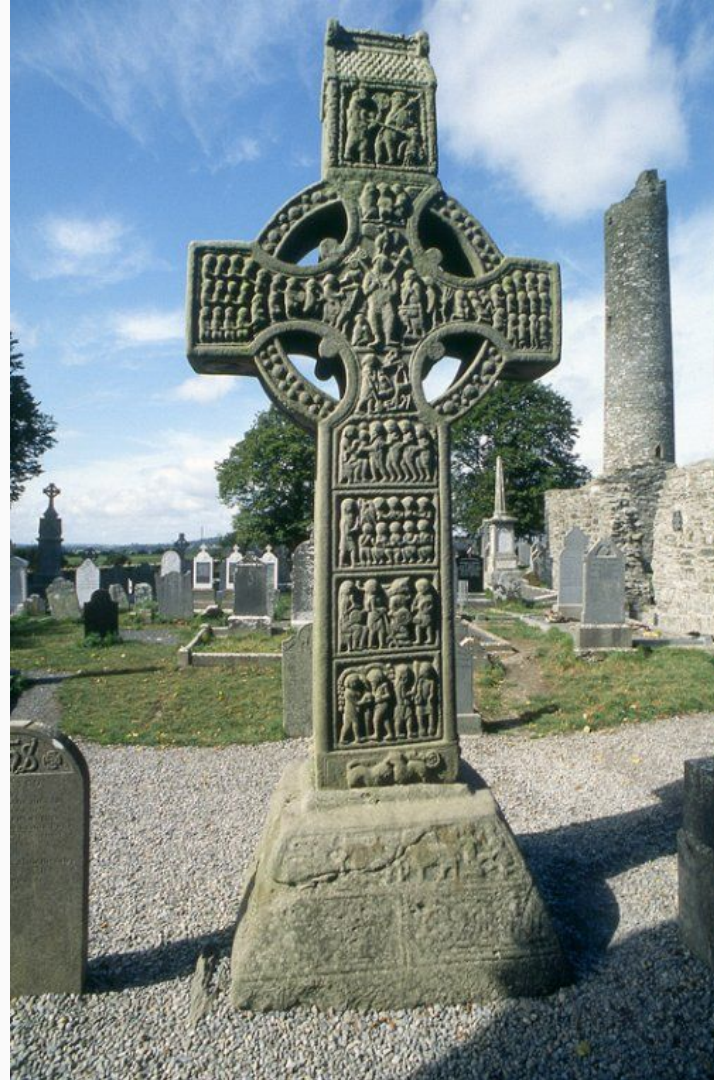


# Hiberno Saxon Monasteries

## High Crosses

### High Cross of Muiredach, Monasterboice Ireland 923

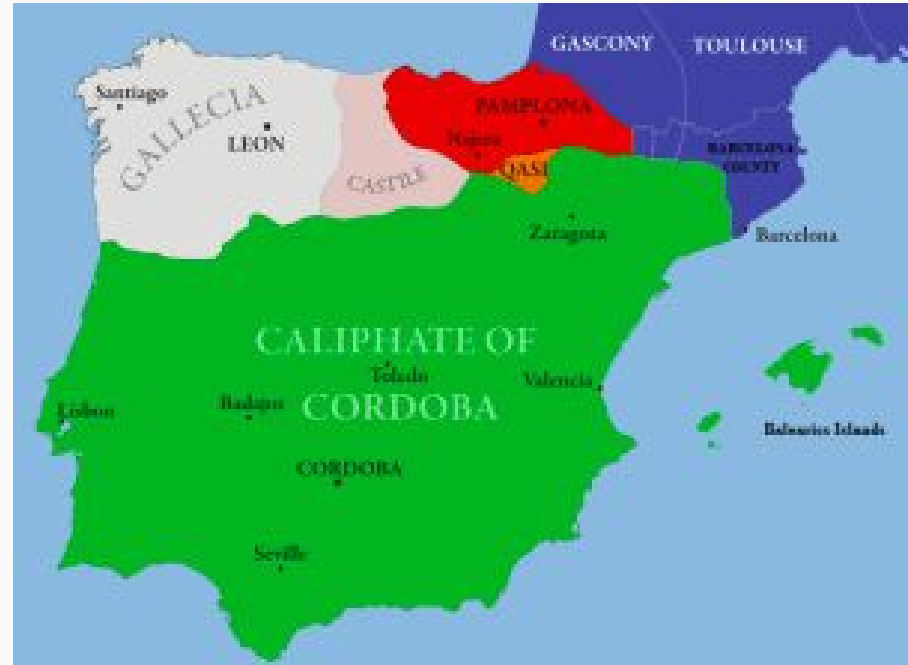
- Books and small luxury arts were mainly what was around of this time period. High crosses of Northern England were notable in their scale and material.. 20 ft tall, many tons of stone.
- Most had extensive relief decoration
- An inscription at the bottom of the cross asks a prayer for Muiredach, identified as an Irish cleric who was abbot of Monasterboice and died in 923
- The cross most likely marked the abbot's grave.
- 4 arcs formed a circle connecting the concave arms, this is known as a Celtic cross.



## Visigothic/Mozarabic

Emeterius(artist), tower and scriptorium of san salvador de Tabara, colophon, from the Commentary on the Apocalypse. Tabara Spain 970

- Islamic caliphs swept thru Spain and ruled much of it, the northernmost parts of the peninsula known as the kingdom of Asturias
- (Mozarabic culture: Christians living in Arab Territories)
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- (Mozarabic culture: Christians living in Arab Territories)
- Tabara was a large Christian City in the Iberian peninsula and had a monastery
- The earliest known depiction of a scriptorium
- 



## Visigothic/Mozarabic

### San Juan Bauista (Banos de Cerrato, Spain 661.)

A three aisled basilican plan church dedicated to San Juan (Saint John the Baptist)

- Visigoth king Recceswinth Constructed the church in 661 in thanksgiving for a cure after bathing in the waters there
- Mixing of roman and islamic influences, Horse shoe arches were implemented in this construction.



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- Spanish have unique influences between Carolingian Roman and Islamic cultures in proximity to them



# Carolingian Europe

- Carolingian Empire, Referring to King Charlemagne 748-814(Charles I) expanding the Frankish state from Charles Martel.
- Anglo Saxon/Hiberno Saxons were never subject to Roman rule, but the Franks and Visigoths were and have more Roman influences.
- Christmas day 800 Pope Leo III crowned Charles the Great king of the Franks, the emperor of Rome, seen as the first emperor of the HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE
- Charles I defeated the Lombards in Italy expanding the territory and laid claim to reviving the glory of Rome. Calling this time the Carolingian Period

## Carolingian Empire



# Carolingian Period

Equestrian portrait of Charlemagne,  
France 9th century.

- Charlemagne's official seal bore the phrase (renewal of the roman empire)
- Charlemagne had projects that were designed to restore the glory of rome thru cultivating the liberal arts, restoring knowledge of greek and latin.
- One of his dearest projects was to restore the true text of the Bible which thru centuries of errors in copying had become corrupted.
- Charlemagne developed a new more compact version of latin Caroline minuscule.



# Carolingian Period

Equestrian portrait of Charlemagne,  
France 9th century.

- The ultimate sculpture of Roman rule at this time was the equestrian sculpture of Marcus Aurelius, because people mistaked it for Constantine, the emperor who brought christianity to the roman empire. This became a convention of rendering roman looking kings
- He wears imperial robe, philosopher's beard, and carries the sphere of power, similar to Jesus
- 



# Carolingian Period

## Saint Matthew Coronation Gospels, Aachen Germany 800-810

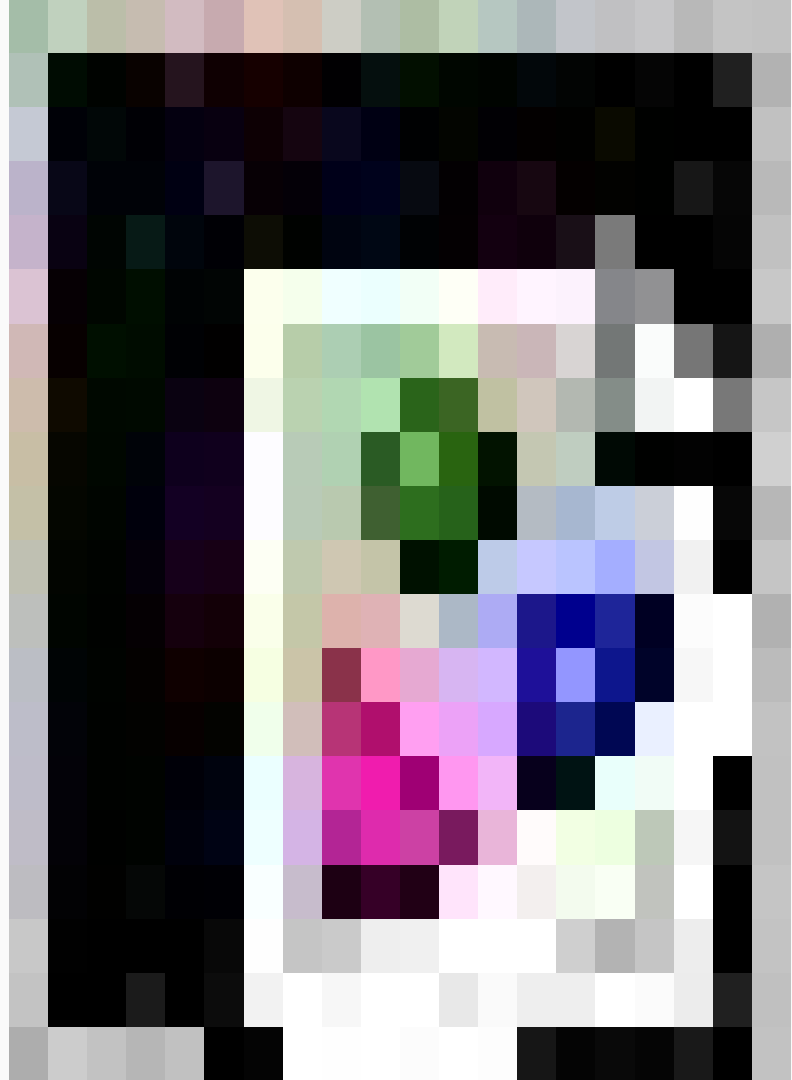
- Charlemagne was a sincere admirer of learning, the arts, and classical culture.
- He placed high value on books both secular and religious
- Different from Hiberno Saxon illuminations, and show a geographic difference in style, Hiberno Saxon, lines, geometric patterns, Carolingian manuscripts used modeling of color to render form.
- Investigated greco roman classical figurative themes.



# Carolingian Period

Saint Matthew Ebbo Gospels.  
Hautvillers France 816-835.

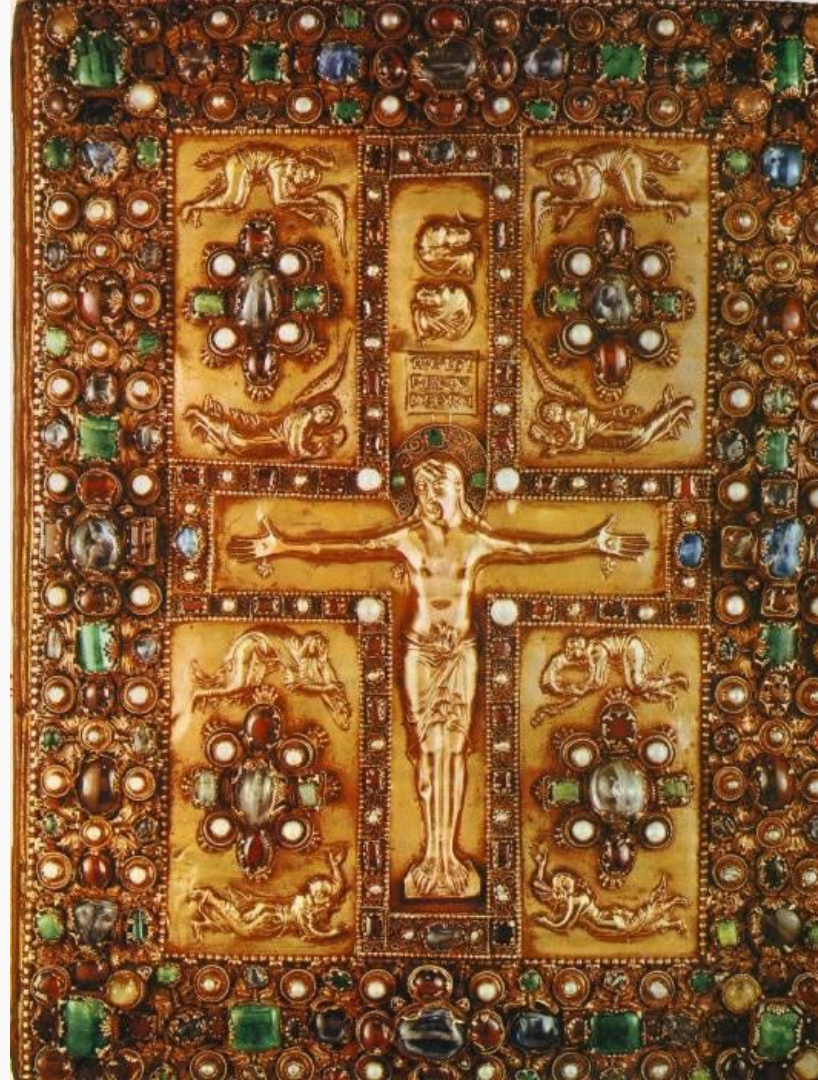
- Similar in style to the Coronations Gospels, Saint Matthew is in a very similar pose and composition
- Schools of monastic illumination were around teaching a wide variety of styles in their scriptoria
- This illuminator employed a more energetic technique.
- The Ebbo Gospels took the Coronation Gospels classical style and translated the visual component into a characteristic carolingian style, something that is synonymous with northern european art as time goes on.



# Carolingian Period

## Crucifixion, front cover of the Lindau Gospels, Saint Gall Switzerland 870

- Taste for costly portable objects are a hallmark of art in the medieval period
- Carolingians commissioned numerous works employing luxurious materials like book covers made of gold, jewels, ivory, and pearls.
- Lindau Gospels are an extravagant example of the time
- Gold Repousse (hammered positive relief)
- With set gems in flower patterns around the crucifixion of christ.
- This composition was most likely copied from crucifixion examples from 5th century Italy



# Carolingian Period

West facade, Palatine Chapel of  
Charlemagne, Aachen, Germany,  
792-805

<https://youtu.be/pwIKmKxu614>

- Charlemagne encouraged Roman building techniques
- He wanted to renew the splendor of the empire and looked to two former Roman cities, the 2nd capital Ravenna, and the western outpost of the Byzantine Empire, Aachen.
- Charlemagne imported columns from Ravenna to adorn the Chapel
- The plan of the Chapel resembles San Vitale, a Central Plan church

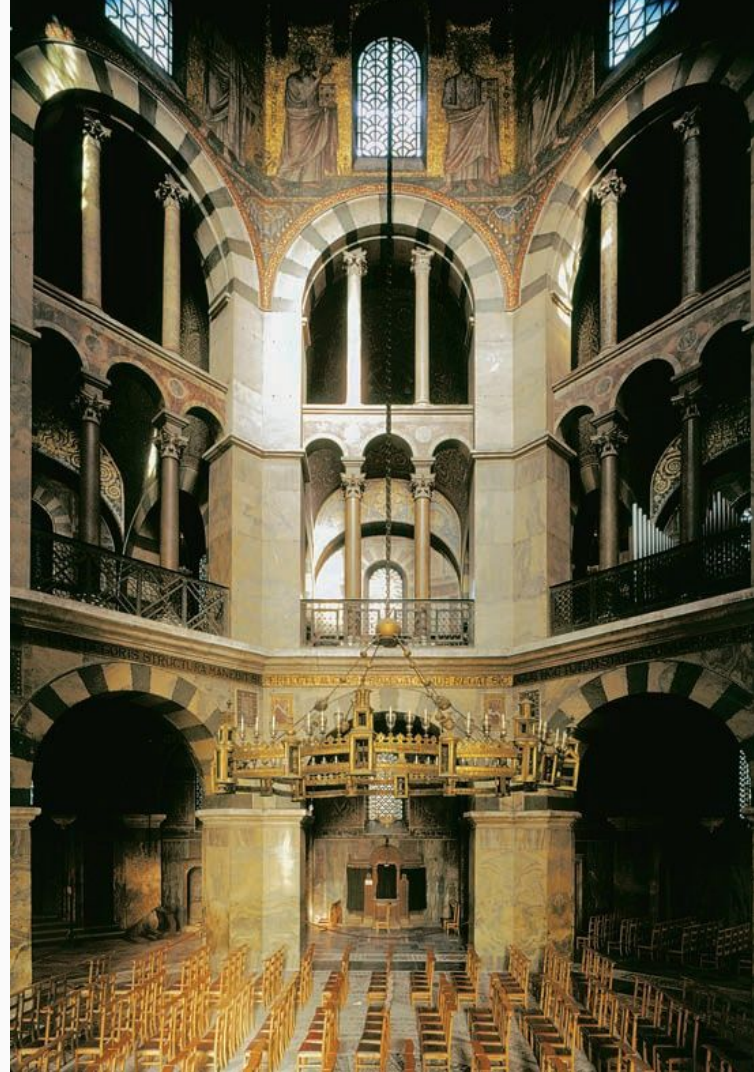


# Carolingian Period

Interior, Palatine Chapel of  
Charlemagne, Aachen, Germany,  
792-805

<https://youtu.be/pwIKmKxu614>

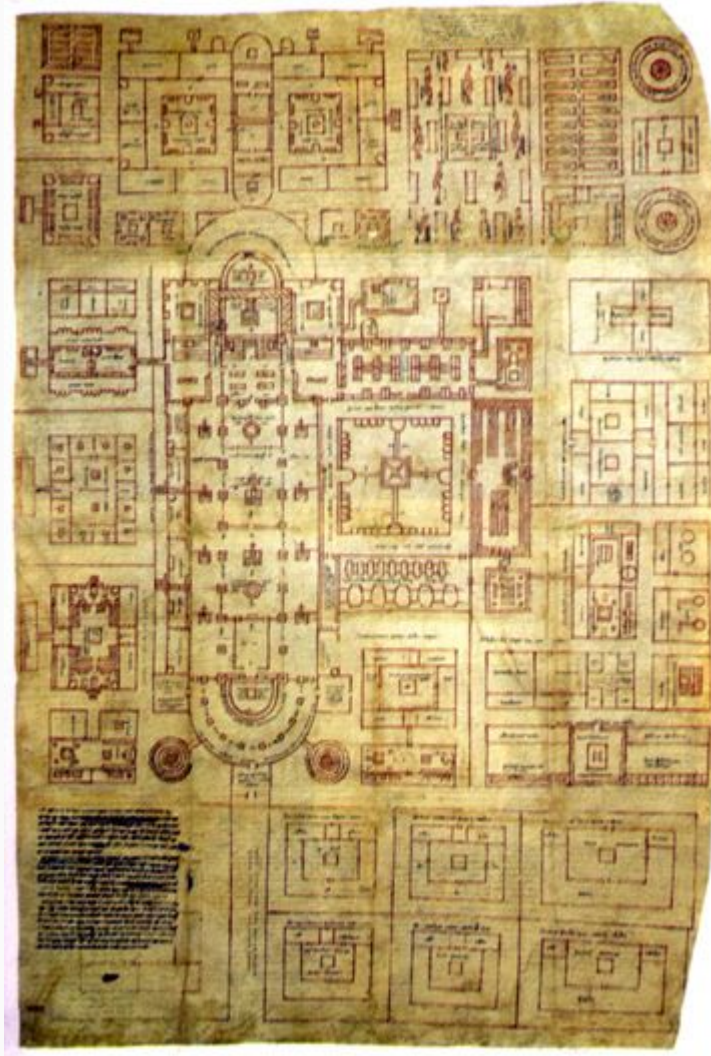
- Charlemagne appears in large arch mosaics
- This chapel was a royal chapel, his son and successor as king, Louis the Pious took place in this chapel



# Carolingian Period

## Schematic plan for a new monastery from Saint Gall Switzerland 819

- This became an ideal plan for a benedictine monastery, (referring to Saint Benedict)
- Benedict Order, which ordered monks to have strict time placed to study, reading so that idleness would not corrupt the mind
- "Idleness is the enemy of the soul. Therefore the brothers should have specified periods for manual labor as well as for prayerful reading.
- This became a copied manuscript and spread thru the Christian world as the fundamental design
- A master plan for the ideal carolingian monastery school environment



# Carolingian Period

Westwork of the abbey church, Corvey  
Germany, 873-885

- Carolinian basilica had towers incorporated in the fabric of the west end of the building.. Known as a westwork, western entrance structure
- Other than this modification, this was laid out as a normal basilica plan



# Ottonian Empire

Referring to Otto the Great (OTTO I) a german king of the Holy Roman Empire. 912-973

- Otto the great emerged after a bloody civil war starting from the death of Charlemagne's son, Louis the Pious in 840
- 3 sons, Charles the Bald, Lothair, and Louis the German fought a civil war stopped by the Treaty of Verdun 843.
- These divisions began the rough formations of the modern nations Germany, France, and Netherlands
- Mid 10th century a new line of emperors consolidated control Saxons.
- Ottonian family, 3 leaders, known as Ottonian empire



# Ottonian Empire

Westwork, church of Saint Cyriacus,  
Gernrode, Germany 961-973

- A large apse replaced the entrance in the westwork, with two cylindrical towers rather than rectangular
- The church had a transept that became the entrance
- Modifications to the typical basilican plan start to happen during this time and vary from church to church



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# Ottonian Empire

Saint Michaels, Hildesheim Germany,  
1001-1031

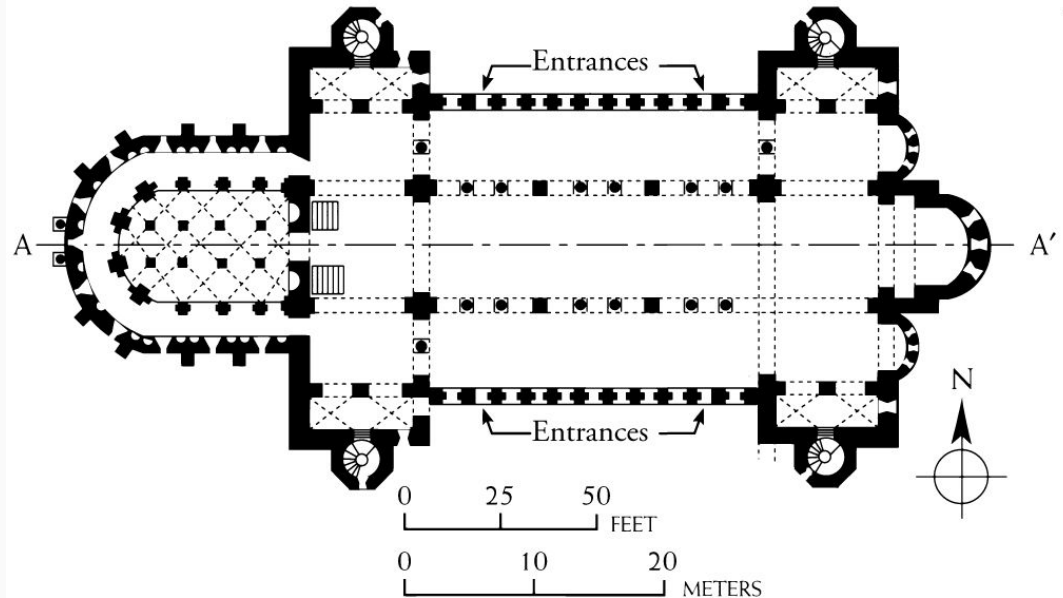
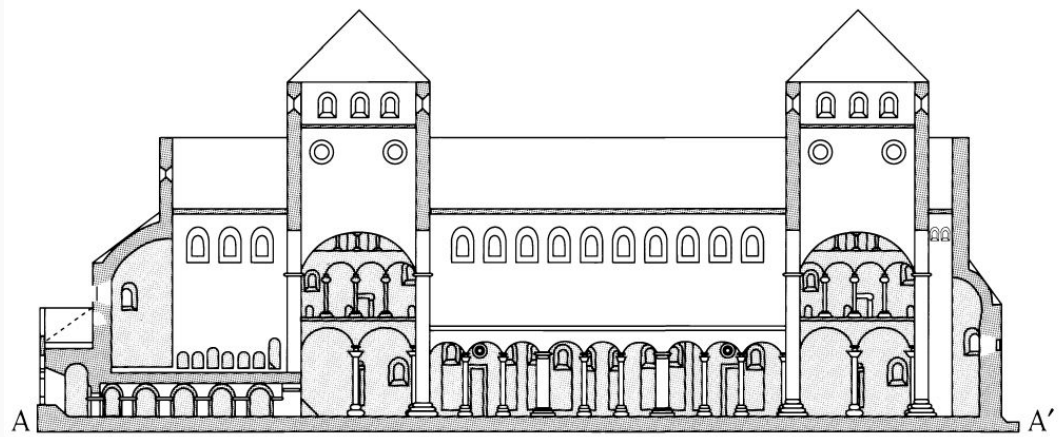
- Bishop Bernward was the Tutor of Otto III, a patron of Ottonian Art and architecture, and the builder of Saint Michaels.
- Saint Michaels has a double transept plan, six towers, and a westwork.
- Entrances are along the lateral axis of the church rather than the ends.



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# Ottonian Empire

Doors with relief panels, showing bible scenes from Genesis, to Jesus. Saint Michaels, Hildesheim Germany 1015

- Doors are bronze 15ft tall
- Ottonian metalwork cast each door in a single piece with the figural sculpture.. All scenes are on the slabs.
- This is a first example of work that originated in manuscript form make its appearance in large scale sculpture, and public to church goers.
- [https://youtu.be/\\_pl88N09Jw](https://youtu.be/_pl88N09Jw)



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God accusing adam and eve, Doors with relief panels, showing bible scenes from Genesis, to Jesus. Saint Michaels, Hildesheim Germany 1015

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# Ottonian Empire

Otto I presenting Magdeburg Cathedral to Christ, Magdeburg Germany 962-968

- Ivory small scale relief panels made for display in an Ottonian church.
- 16 plaques remain from a set of maybe 50 that once decorated the altar of the church, or the important furniture.
- Most of the panels depict scenes of christ life
- This one depicts otto ! presenting the church to Christ who is sitting on a circular ring, (circles divine, Squares secular)



# Ottonian Empire

Gero Crucifix, Cologne Cathedral,  
Cologne Germany 970

- Freestanding statuary was revived after a 500 year absence
- This cross was over 6ft tall
- Carved in oak, then painted and gilded in gold leaf
- The cross was both a statue and a reliquary (a container of holy relics), the cross had a compartment that held bread for the eucharist
- A tale had a crack in the wood miraculously heal
- This christ is akin to Byzantine representation of a full grown, bearded christ, the suffering Jesus, but with heightened emotional effect.



# Ottonian Empire

Otto III enthroned, Gospel Book of Otto III, 997-1000

- Otto III personal Gospel Book, which would mostly be copies from other Gospels except for one page, the commemoration page
- He is enthroned, like Jesus with scepter and a cross inscribed orb that signifies universal authority,
- Christian imperial iconographic tradition that began with constantine.
- Flanking Otto are clergy and barons aligning in his support
- The last Otto dreamed of a revived Roman Christian empire
- He never realized it, dying early at 21 and being buried next to Charlemagne in Aachen.



# Ottonian Empire

Annunciation to the shepherds,  
Lectionary of Henry II Reichenau  
Germany 1002-1014

- Henry II was Otto III successor,
- Was the last Ottonian emperor
- This illuminated manuscript was the most notable work produced in his reign
- Refinement of the Carolingian style of rendered color rather than the linework of hiberno saxon manuscripts,
- Golden background fuses a Byzantine look to a carolingian look.

