

AESTHETICS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Medieval Aesthetics

- (400-1400 C.E.)
- With the decline of the Roman empire in the early Middle Ages, art and speculation about it became even more localized in particular institutions.
...
- Neo-Platonism continued to be influential in a Christianized form through the Middle Ages
- A medieval "aesthetic" exists in continuity with its classical roots. It is built on harmony and proportion, a love of color and form, and a deep sense that symbols project significance beyond their individual appearance.

The aesthetics of the European Middle Ages was dominated by a religious approach to aesthetic problems.

- **God** is the highest beauty, and earthly beauty is only a reflection of the divine. Since God, who created this world, is the supreme artist, people's artistic activity has no independent meaning. Secular spectacles as devoid of religious meaning are rejected. Images of religious art are valuable because they act as intermediaries between the **world** and **God**.

The period of the Middle Ages takes a rather long period of time - from the V to the XIV century, i.e. about a millennium. The social and cultural processes that shaped the artistic theory and practice of the Middle Ages are heterogeneous.

Within the framework of medieval aesthetics and medieval consciousness, it is customary to distinguish three large regions.

- The first is Byzantium, the second is the Western European Middle Ages and, finally, the Eastern European region, Ancient Russia.

The Middle Ages is divided into three main periods:

- I. Early Middle Ages (end of V - middle of XI century).
- II. High, or Classical, Middle Ages (mid-XI - late XIV century).
- III. Late Middle Ages or Early New Age (XIV-XVI centuries).

I. Early middle ages- period of European history, which began after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. It lasted about six centuries, from about 476 to 1100. In the early Middle Ages, the Great Migration took place, the Vikings appeared, the Ostrogoths came to Italy and the Visigoths in Aquitaine and the Iberian Peninsula, and the Frankish state was formed, which occupied most of Western Europe in its heyday. North Africa and Spain became part of the Arab Caliphate; there were many small states of Angles, Saxons and Celts on the British Isles, states appeared in Scandinavia, as well as in central and eastern Europe: Great Moravia and the Old Russian state.



Coin with the image of the leader of the Ostrogoths Theoderic. Milan, approx. 491-501.

II. The High Middle Ages - the period of European history, covering approximately the XI-XIV centuries. The era of the High Middle Ages replaced the early Middle Ages and preceded the late Middle Ages. The main characteristic tendency of this period was the rapid increase in the population of Europe, which led to dramatic changes in social, political and other spheres of life.



Captured on the famous tapestry from Bayeux, the Battle of Hastings is a fateful battle for the history of England in which the Normans defeated the Anglo-Saxons.

III. Late Middle Ages - a term used by historians to describe the period of European history in the XIV-XV centuries.

The late Middle Ages were preceded by a mature Middle Ages, and the subsequent period is called the New Age. Historians differ sharply in determining the upper boundary of the late Middle Ages. If in Russian historical science it is customary to define its ending by the English Civil War, in Western European science the end of the Middle Ages is usually associated with the beginning of the church reformation or the era of the Great Geographical Discoveries. The Late Middle Ages is also called the Renaissance.



Dante, fresco by Domenico di Michelino, 1465