



Jesus in Art

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In the catacombs
Jesus is shown as a
wonderworker and
deliverer - note the
wand.

The miracle of the
loaves and fishes.



The raising of Lazarus



He is also shown as a
Teacher



Sometimes
he is shown
as a
beardless
Roman
youth with
long curly
hair, as in
those images
and in this
4th century
sarcophagus.

Christ before
Pilate.



By this time he had become an authority figure who authorises church leaders, as in the scene known as Traditio legis. Peter receives a scroll, the New Covenant. Paul, representing the old one who was converted, looks on. Below them the symbol of Coelus, heaven. The Bishop of Rome is now a, if not *the*, leading citizen in the city. A number examples from 3rd quarter of 4th century. See Santa Constanza, below.



Hinton St Mary (4th century)



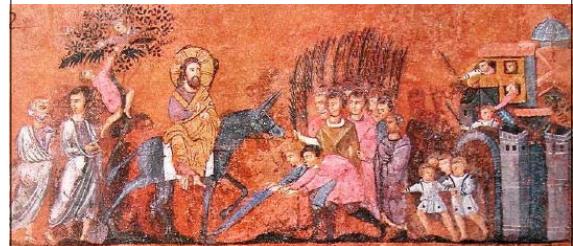
Yet Christ is also depicted with a beard in the catacombs, as a Teacher with disciples



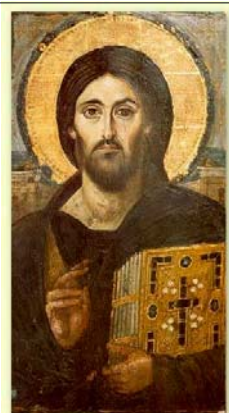
Jupiter figure:
clearly
reflecting the
characteristics
of the Roman
god.



Rossano Gospels:
He is bearded, but dressed as a philosopher, riding side saddle.



The counterpart of
Traditio Clavium,
the giving of the
keys, again indicating
the authority of the
Bishop of Rome.



But by this time the emphasis is on his divine kingly rule,
as in St Pudenzia, 400, which takes up Jupiter imagery
to show Christ ruling Rome.



Close-up of
Christ on
the throne.



Yet Christ can still be depicted in glory as ruler of the world,
but beardless as in this 6th century mosaic in Ravenna.
San Vitale.



Amazingly both images can appear in the same church with no
apparent sense of contradiction to the first viewers, as in the
mausoleum for Constantine's daughter in Rome.

Constanza: beardless.



Constanza:
bearded.



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contains 26 scenes in
upper register, half
beardless and half
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The differences cannot be accounted for simply in terms of choice of patron or artist. Yet this is no convincing dogmatic reason for the difference.

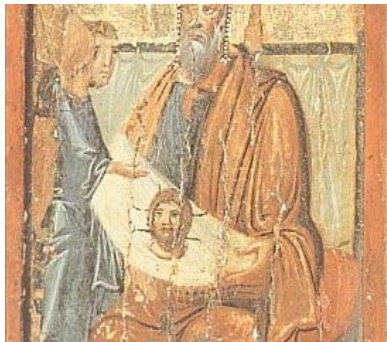
Jupiter and Dionysius represent different aspects of divinity. Other considerations include Constantine who was beardless and set the fashion for most emperors afterwards.

Jews were bearded. There was a strong Jewish community in Rome, but after the split from the synagogue and mutual hostility did the depiction of Christ represent a deliberate attempt to show him as Roman rather than Jewish? Holy men, monks were bearded. Christ after that pattern.

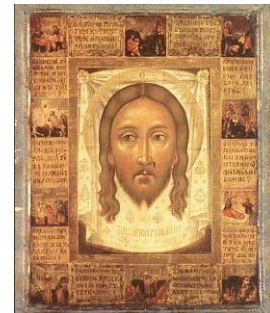
Jesus in tradition. According to Eusebius, King Agbar of Edessa (Urfa in SW Turkey) received a letter from Jesus. By the sixth century it was also believed that he had received a towel with his image miraculously printed on it to cure his illness. This alleged image was very influential

Icon of King Agbar with image of Jesus.

10th century icon in Sinai of face on mandylion.



10th century icon in Sinai of face on mandylion. Until 1914 this image was carried by Orthodox soldiers into battle.



Veronica with image.

Equivalent in the West is the image on Sudarium or cloth with which Veronica wiped the face of Jesus.

The tradition dates from the 4th century and copies from 14th. These are "not made with hands" acheiropaeic.



Best known today is the Turin shroud, carbon dated between 1260 and 1390.

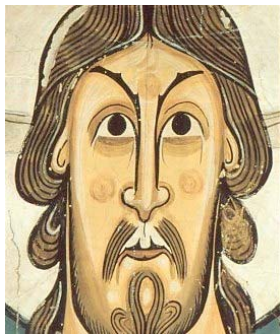


It is important to remember that Jesus has been depicted in a variety of styles.

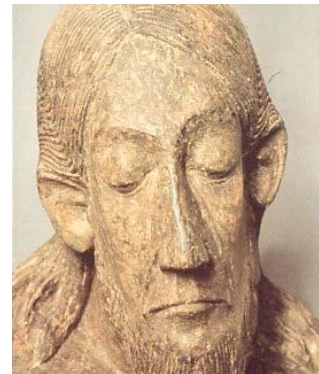
Book of Kells c.800



Catalan Majestas 1200



A German wood carving:
there are many fine ones.

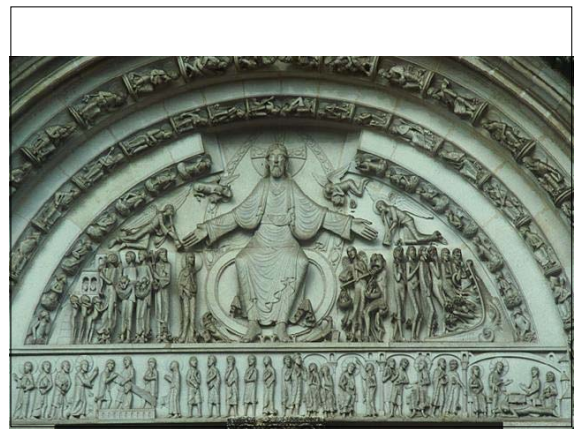
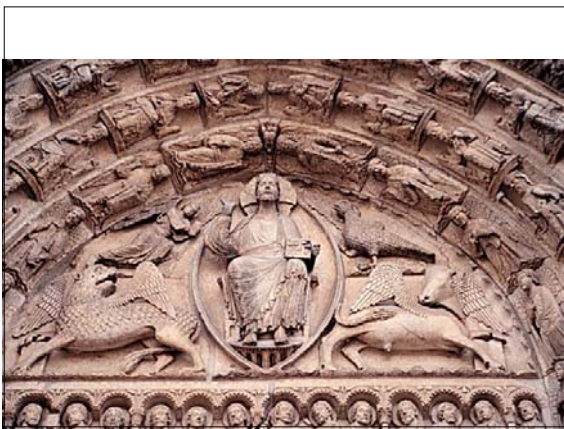
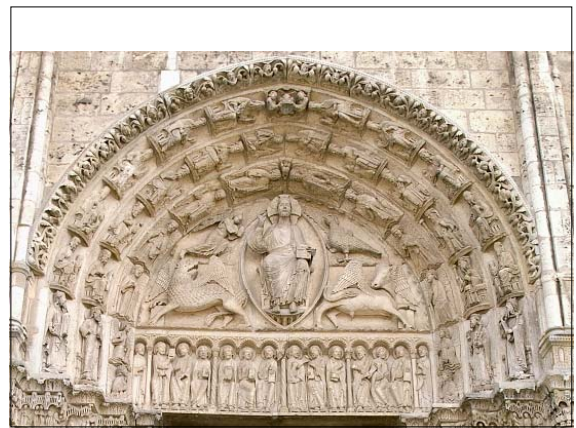
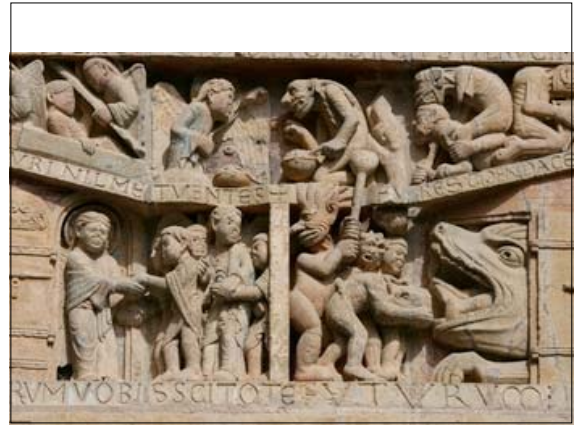
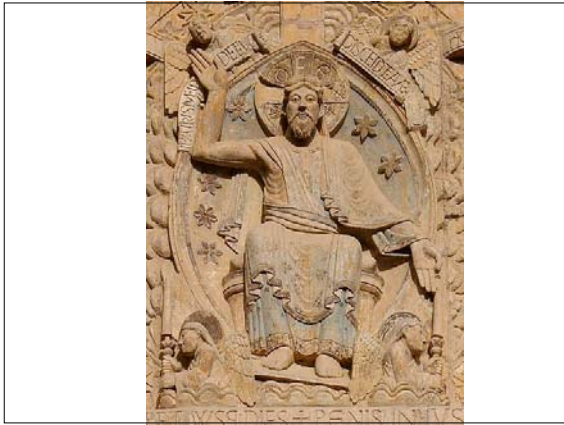


The period of great Cathedral building:
Romanesque and then Gothic.
Powerful images on the Tympanum over the great West door -
early 12th century. Autun, Vezelay, Moissac, Conques, Chartres.



Overleaf:

Conques Tympanum. 1107-25. On pilgrimage route.
Christ as Judge
Heaven and Hell
Greed
Chartres
Christ in Majesty.
Transitional Romanesque Gothic.
Vezelay. 1130. Pentecostal mission associated with the crusades.
Christ as teacher, to go out and convert the world. Unbelievers
shown as physically ugly. Giselbertus worked here and at Autun.

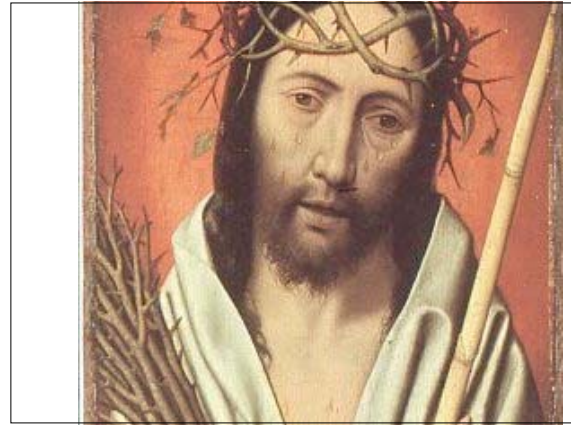


Other developments emphasise the suffering of Christ.

Man of Sorrows:

Small image, to encourage intimacy, for private prayer.
Words of reproach and disappointment. Designed to induce feelings of compassion and repentance-eyes, tears, lips, shoulders.

Workshop of Jan Mostaert, 1520s in the Netherlands.
Influenced by Devotio Moderna, movement to encourage intense emotional engagement with Christ for lay people.



Cold Stone:

Invention of Northern European late-medieval piety. (About 1500). Broke passion into parts to meditate. This not in Bible, but summed up abyss of suffering. Many texts to mind especially, "All ye that pass by, attend, and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow." Lamentations ch1, v12.



The soul contemplating the suffering Christ.

A rare religious painting of Velazquez, late 1620s or early 1630s. Flagellation mentioned in Gospels - subject of meditation.

Earlier picture bore title of "Soul, have pity on me, for you have reduced me to this state."

Exhibited in London in 1884 with odd titles.
No tradition of this in England.



Overleaf:

Early Renaissance - 13th and 14th centuries.

New humanity, gentleness, classicism and perspective. But still with a lingering Byzantine feel, which gives imparts a sense of spirituality.

Duccio (1260-1318). Small panels at the back of his Maesta in Sienna.

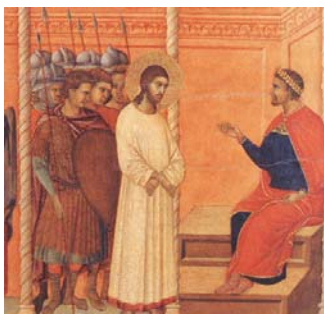
Temptation - now in New York.



Washing of feet



Jesus before Pilate



Giotto (1266-1347): His masterpiece the Scrovegni Chapel in Padu. Naturalistic and dramatic. Betrayal by a kiss.



Lamentation



High Renaissance - 15th and 16th centuries. Powerful perspective; the beauty of the body, emotion and drama.
Mantegna (1431-1506) - Dead body of Jesus.



Michaelangelo (1475-1564)
Pietà



Nicodemus
holding the
dead body of
Jesus.



Jesus and Peter



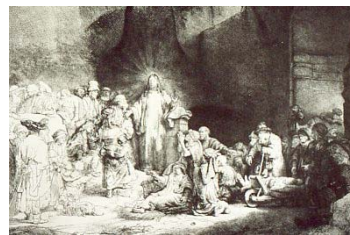
Caravaggio (1571-1610)
Christ at the column



El Greco (1541-1614)
Started as an icon painter, Domenikos Theotokopoulos.
Cleansing of the temple.



Rembrandt (1606-69): 100 guilder print - Called this because
Rembrandt had to pay 100 guilders in order to buy a copy back.
Based on Matthew 19, all the incidents are crammed into one scene:
people wanting to be healed, women their children blessed, the
religious leaders arguing, the rich young man. One of the most
popular of all religious paintings.



The 18th century not a good time for religious painting.
But Blake (1757-1827) has a unique vision: The Ascension.



The 19th century. Holman Hunt (1827-1910). A member of the Pre Raphaelite Brotherhood. Later in life he went to middle east with a view to painting closer to reality. There was outrage at his "realism". *Christ in the carpenter's shop as a child*.



Christ in carpenter's shop with shadow.



The light of the world.

(In St Paul's Cathedral and Keble College, Oxford).

Also a claim to be one of the most iconic of all religious paintings.

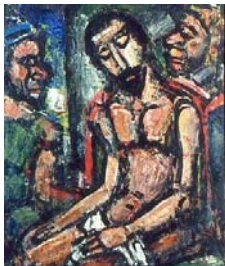
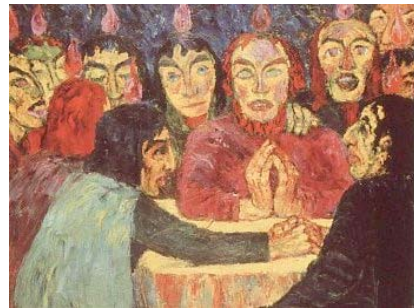
20th century: Modernism. The suffering century.
Modernism -1910 in Paris - Joyce, Stravinsky, Pound, Eliot.
Before World War I with expressionism - break with representational - the expression of intense feeling through colour, line etc; overtones of violence. Began earlier in 19th century - but France and Germany in 1905 - Die Brücke (The Bridge).

Nolde, 1867-1956. Short time a member of group
Brought up on a Danish Farm which had been in his mothers family for nine generations. Parents deeply religious Friesian peasants - religious themes occur, and a visionary sense that all nature was alive and demanded that he paint it. Supporter of Nazis, but did not stop his art, like all expressionism being condemned as degenerate.

Nolde: Christ with children.



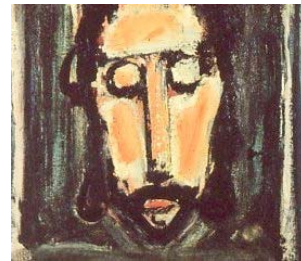
Nolde: Pentecost.



Rouault, 1871-1958: *Jesus*

Began as a stained glass maker; had breakdown. Devout Catholic. Under our spangled garments, we are all clowns. Sense of pity for the suffering soul of everyone. Christ suffers until the end of time. Pascal. Gave this title to a head of Christ.

Rouault: The face.



Chagall (1887-1985): *The crossing of the red sea*. Jewish artist who did a number of powerful paintings depicting Jesus as a Jew. Here God in image of Christ.



Epstein, 1880-1959

Behold the Man

Great sculptor of his day, in tradition of Rodin.

A number of religious images, including his *Christ* of 1919 (highly controversial at the time).





Epstein: Christ in Majesty, 1957, Llandaff Cathedral.

Stanley Spencer, 1891-1959.
Christ in the wilderness, with foxes.



Christ in the wilderness,
the scorpion



Norman Adams, 1927-2005

His stations of the cross in St Mary's,
the hidden gem, in Manchester.

He considered this the greatest work of
his life.

Christ in agony
Station IX



Maggie Hambling, b. 1945.

Head of Christ.

Every Good Friday she
paints a passion scene.

A surprising amount of contemporary art reflects imagery of Jesus even when put to secular use, e.g. some of the videos of Bill Viola.

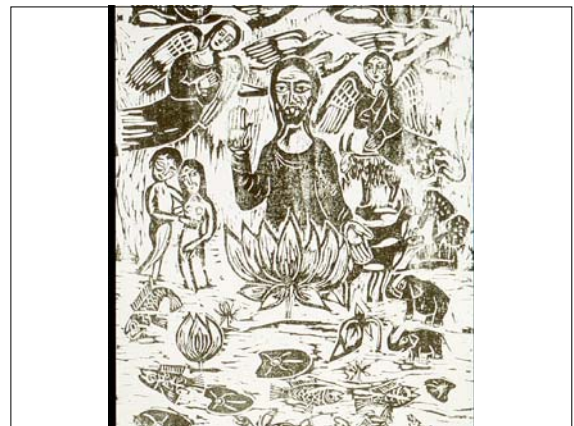
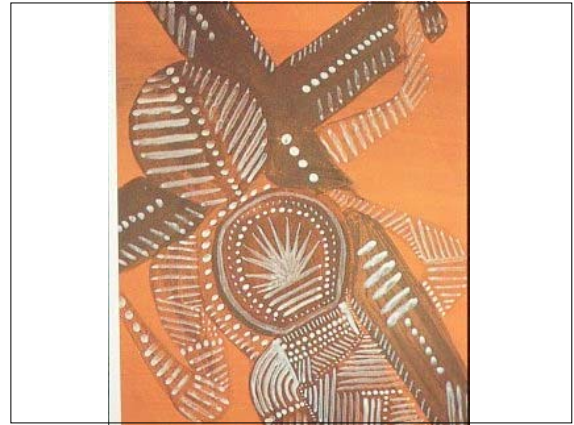
Lowering a body into a tomb.

It is important to remember the vast range of cultures in which Jesus has been depicted, e.g.

Australian aborigine, carrying the cross

China-Jesus teaching on the lake.

India-Christ on the lotus as our true self, but also taking up early Christian Nilotic scenes as a hint of paradise.



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