058. Tympanum from Church of Sainte-Foy
C. 1050-1130, Romanesque
Conques, France

1. Identification: (artist, title, date, size, country of origin, period/style)

2. Form: (use of design elements/principles: color, shape, value, texture, line, space; balance, contrast, emphasis, movement, etc.)
   Originally polychrome, work is contained in the space, lively composition filled with figures, emphasis on center Christ, three registers

3. Materials and Technique: (art making processes)
   Stone and paint

4. Content: (subject & genre: iconography, symbolism, the story)
   Matthew 25: 31-46 (explanation of the separation of the blessed and the damned and their fates)
   Christ is the most important, so he is the largest and in the center
   Virtuous souls shown going through a Romanesque entrance to Heaven (angel awaits them, saints, “joy in heaven”), while sinful ones face the terrors through the post-and-lintel door of Hell (demon, mallet, monster, punishment...)

5. Original context/site/intended function of the work: (Overlap to #6)
   On portal at the west facade of Sainte-Foy
   Pilgrims would come to this entrance first, making the sculpture here the most important as a first impression

6. Intended purpose & motivation (why was it made?); patron/audience (who was it made for?); artist’s decision making:
   Conveys a visual message about Heaven and Hell to a mostly illiterate audience and reinforces their faith and reason for making the pilgrimage to the church
   Reminder that sin can lead you to Hell but being pious and going to church can help

7. Innovation/change(s):
   Revival of monumental sculpture, but with different subject
   Convention/tradition(s):
   Use of Christian imagery that began in early Christian period

8. Theme(s):
   Religious (biblical imagery, place of worship)
   Compare to another work:
   Like Santa Sabina’s decorated door, this tympanum uses the fact that churchgoers go to the portal first to deliver the most powerful imagery.