

Unit 7 • Western Christian (Latin) Iconography Art in the Middle Ages



*Romanesque figure of prophet Jeremiah,
Moissac St. Peter church*

Various iconography, unbound forms

- **Main periods**
- Pre-Romanesque (6-10th c.) Early Middle Ages
- Romanesque (11-12th c.) High Middle Ages
- Gothic (13-14th c.) High Middle Ages

Medieval Western image-doctrine

- Pope St. Gregory the Great late 6th c.
- Libri Carolini, Carolingian court, 790
- Umberto Eco: 'pure visibility' 'an aesthetics of the autonomy of the figural arts' *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*. Yale Univ. P. 1986. p. 210
- St. Thomas Aquinas *Scriptum super sententiis* 13th c. (6th HANDOUT)



Archivolt motifs, Romanesque church of Kliepeck



Visitation, Gothic sculptures, Cathedral of Reims

Handwritten book with **miniatures, initials**
(decorated capital letter) **ornaments**

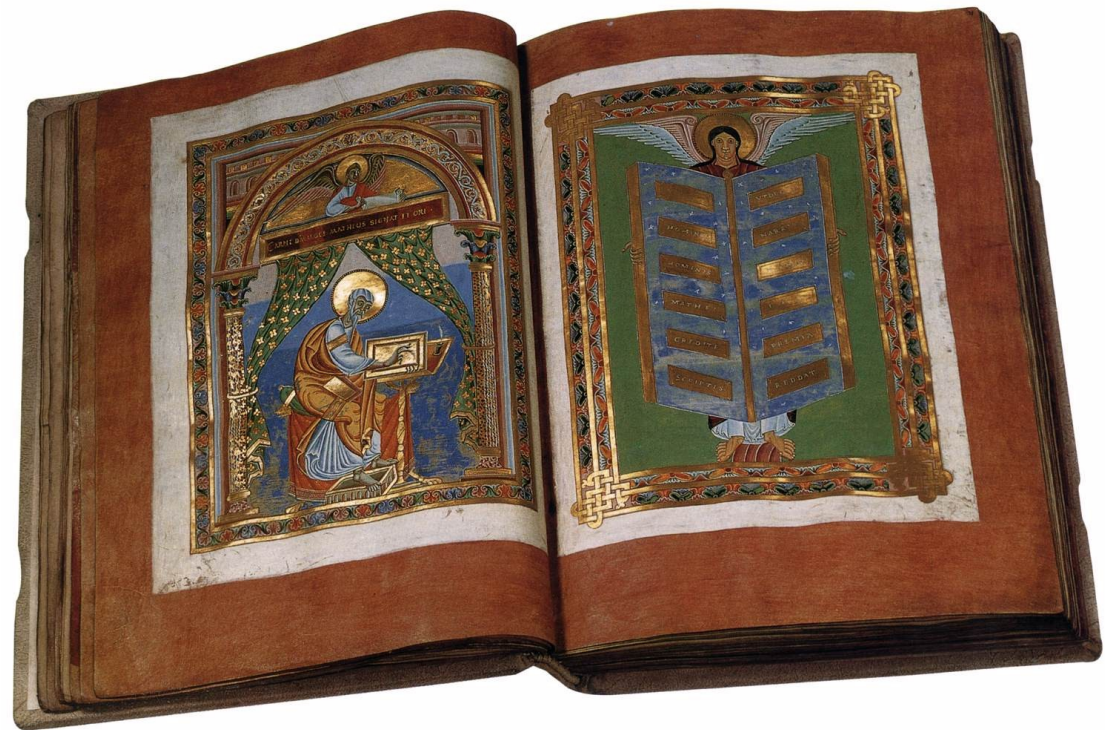
Illuminated manuscripts

- important role in the development of Western Christian art and iconography in the Medieval period
- transmission of ideas and iconographic motifs and themes



Codex Aureus of Echternach

c. 1030 Manuscript 446 x 310 mm
Germanisches Nationalmuseum,
Nuremberg



Codex Aureus of Echternach

folios 20v and 21r

Pre-Romanesque period (6-10th c.) Early Middle Ages

- Historical background
- Fall of the Western Roman Empire (476)
- German kingdoms (tribal cultures and Christianity)



Langobard relief from the 7th c.
Pisa, Museo Nazionale



Europe in the Early Middle Ages (7-8th c.)

Pre-Romanesque iconography

Merovingian art

Frankish Kingdom, in Gaul

- mixture of the Roman and Byzantine style with native Germanic-Frankish artistic traditions
- abstraction and geometric patterning.



Christ in Majesty, Sarcophagus of Agilbert, Jouarre, France.

- Germanic style: artists were concerned primarily with the surface design
- rich decorative vocabulary



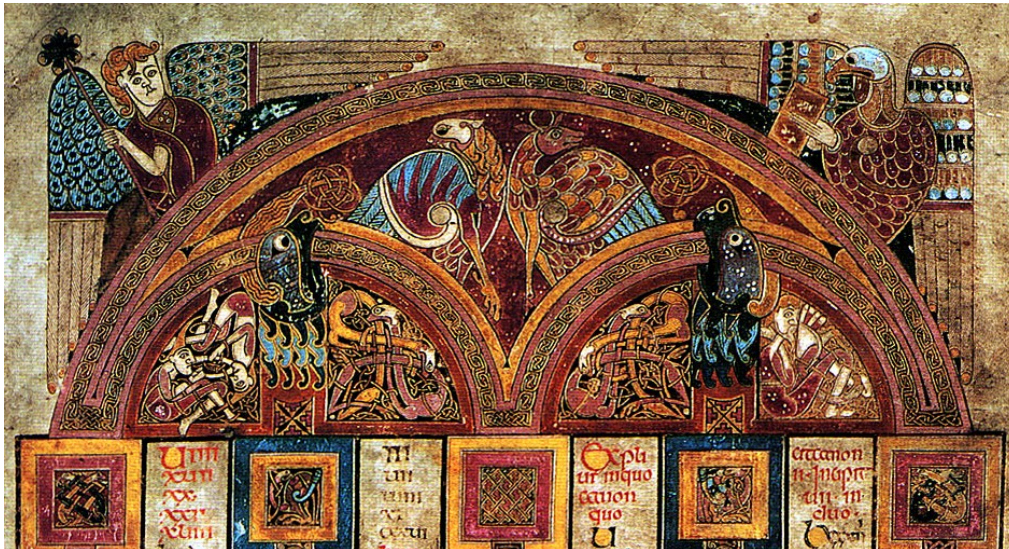
Gellone Sacramentary, 8th c.
(Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

Pre-Romanesque iconography Insular illuminations



- Book of Kell's 9th century
- combines traditional Christian iconography with the ornate swirling Celtic motifs

- Celtic style: variety of knots, spirals, stylized raphical representations of knots
- Figures of humans, animals and mythical beasts, together with Celtic motifs



Christ in Majesty

Symbols of Evangelists Matthew and John

Romanesque iconography

- late 10th century and flourished in the 11-12th
- **the first pan-European style**
- relative political stability
- End of the barbarian invasion
- **renewal of artistic activity**--Roman Catholic Church and monastic orders
- The Benedictine Abbey of Cluny (founded in 910)



- **monumental sculpture was revived**
- depict biblical history and church doctrine
- on the facade of churches, portal and tympanum, **large sculpted images**
- both a synthesis of Christian doctrine and the Church's conception of the world order
- **the great iconographic triumph** of the Romanesque period

St. Trophime Church, Arles, France
second half of the 12th c.

Cathedral of Saint-Lazare, Autun, Burgundy (France)

- The Romanesque Cathedral of Autun
- One of the most perfect Cluniac churches, c.1120



The architectural parts of the main portal on the western facade of the church

- **Tympanum:** a semi-circular decorative wall surface over an entrance, frequently carved with relief sculptures
 - **Archivolt:** is a decorative molding carried around an arched wall opening
 - **Lintel or architrave:** is a horizontal beam spanning a portal, under the tympanum
 - **Trumeau:** is pillar dividing the large doorway and supporting lintel.
 - **Jamb:** is the side of a doorway or window frame.
- Voussoirs:* are parts of the archivolt

Saint-Lazare, the **Last Judgement** tympanon



split into **RIGHT** and **LEFT** sides of the Christ

signs of the Zodiac are and labours of the months (on the archivolt)

GISLEBERTUS HOC FECIT "Gislebertus made this"

a morality lesson—**establish a sort of religious iconography of good and evil**



Weighing of the Souls

Tympanum of the west portal, Cathedral of St. Lazare, Autun, 1120-1145.



Dream of Magi (Matth 2:12)
Capital of St. Lazare, Autun

St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)

Apologia to William, abbot of St. Thierry (c. 1130)

<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/bernard1.asp>



syrens, centaurs, mermaides, monsters

Capitals of Romanesque art

(Abbey St. Michel de Cuxa, Church of Saint-Pierre in Chauvigny, St. Peter Cath. in Moissac)

St. Bernard of Clairvaux „...what is the point of these ridiculous monsters, this shapely misshapeness, this misshapen shapeliness?”



Unit 8 • Gothic art and iconography

- Gothic art and iconography evolved from Romanesque art in the second half of the 12th century; **13-15th c.**
- the term was coined by classicizing Italian writers of the Renaissance.
- originated in the northern France (Île-de-France)
- **new engineering innovations:** pointed arches, vaulted ribs, flying buttresses
- **Gothic iconography:** sculpture and stained-glass window



Cathedral of Reims, west facade, left door



Scenes from the Gospel of Luke, Chartres, detail of the west lancet window. 12th c.

Notre Dame Cathedral, Chartres, 12-13th c. France

St. Bernard of Clairvaux: *12th sermon on the Song of Songs*
(c. 1140)

Unknown Franciscan author: *Meditations on the Life of Christ* (c. 1300)

to contemplate events from the Bible, as if they were present

- **Features of Gothic iconography**
- more naturalistic and humanistic sculpture
- expressive, emotional, living gestures
- Then-contemporary clothes



Enthroned Virgin with Child, ivory, France, 13th c. Metropolitan Museum, New York



Christ before Pilate
c. 1250 Cathedral, Naumburg



Dormition of the Virgin, Tympanum, Notre Dame Cathedral, Strasbourg, first half of the 13th c.

Chartres, Notre Dame cathedral

1136–1150; rebuilt in Gothic style 1194–1235



Malcolm Miller: **"...an encyclopedia of medieval life and faith"**
(*Chartres Cathedral* 1980, London, P.P.Ltd. p. 2)

Chartres became a pilgrimage center from 876 – a relic of the Virgin Mary was kept there

Gothic—cult and iconography of the Virgin Mary



“Notre Dame de la Belle Verriere” (‘Our Lady of the Beautiful Window’, “The Blue Virgin”) **The throne of the Wisdom iconographic type**, lancet window, South Ambulatory, 12th c.



Coronation of the Virgin, tympanum of the north portal

Omnis vallis implebitur
("Every valley shall be filled")
Isaiah 40:4
Luke 3:5



The shrine of the **Sancta Camisia**, (shroud, veil or tunic of the Virgin Mary)

Chartres, Notre Dame cathedral

late Romanesque style 1136–1150;
rebuilding in Gothic style 1194–1220



The south facade of the cathedral, 13th c.



The west facade of the cathedral, 12th c.

„Royal portal” on west facade, Chartres, Notre Dame cathedral, 1145-1150



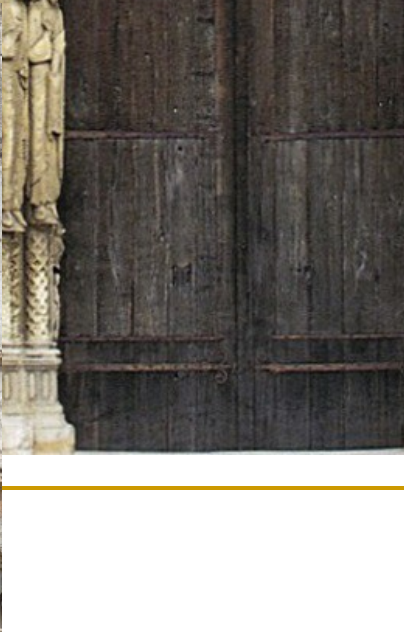
Christ's
Ascent



Christ in
Majesty

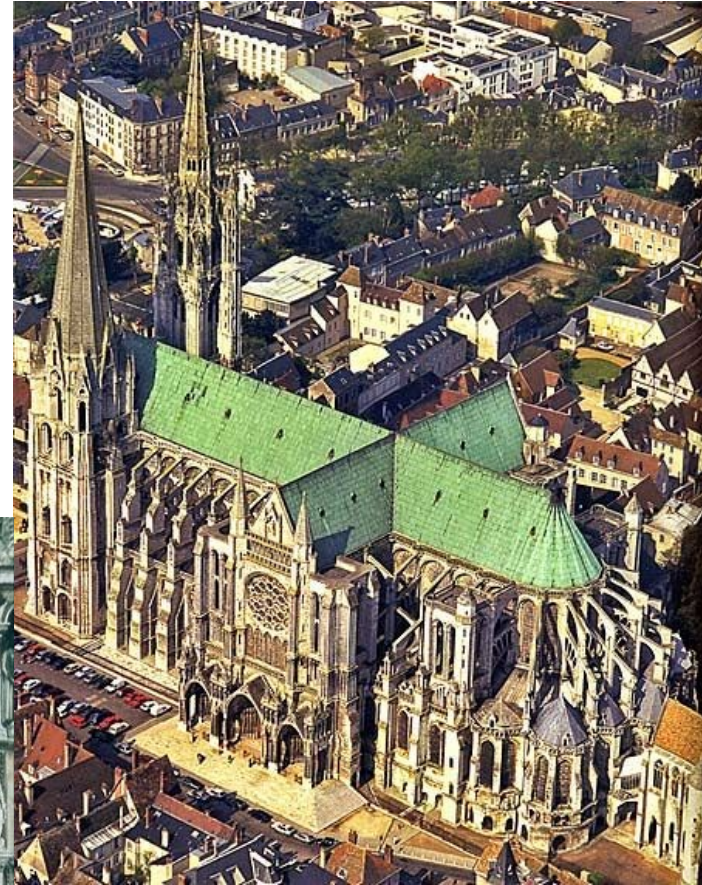


Christ's
Incarnation



Portals of south transept, Chartres, Notre Dame cathedral, the first half of the 13th c.

- mature Gothic style and iconographic programme
- central portal: the **Last Judgement, Teaching Christ with apostles**
- left portal: **Martyrs** (protomartyr St. Stephen)
- right portal: **Confessors** (St. Martin, St. Nicholas)



Teaching Christ in the central portal Chartres, south facade

- Typical gothic iconographic theme
- **more human figure**
- Jesus as **teacher** and a **spiritual leader**



Christ on the trumeau of central portal of South Transept of Chartres, c. 1210-1215.



Teaching Christ ('Beau Dieu'), trumeau statue of central portal, west facade, cathedral, Amiens, 13th c.



Christian symbolism of light and the art of stained-glass window

Abbey of St. Denis, dedicated to the
patron saint of France

*Book of Suger Abbot of St. Denis on What
Was Done During his Administration (c.
1145)*

Influence of byzantine Pseudo-Dionysios' writings

Inscription of the church by abbot Suger

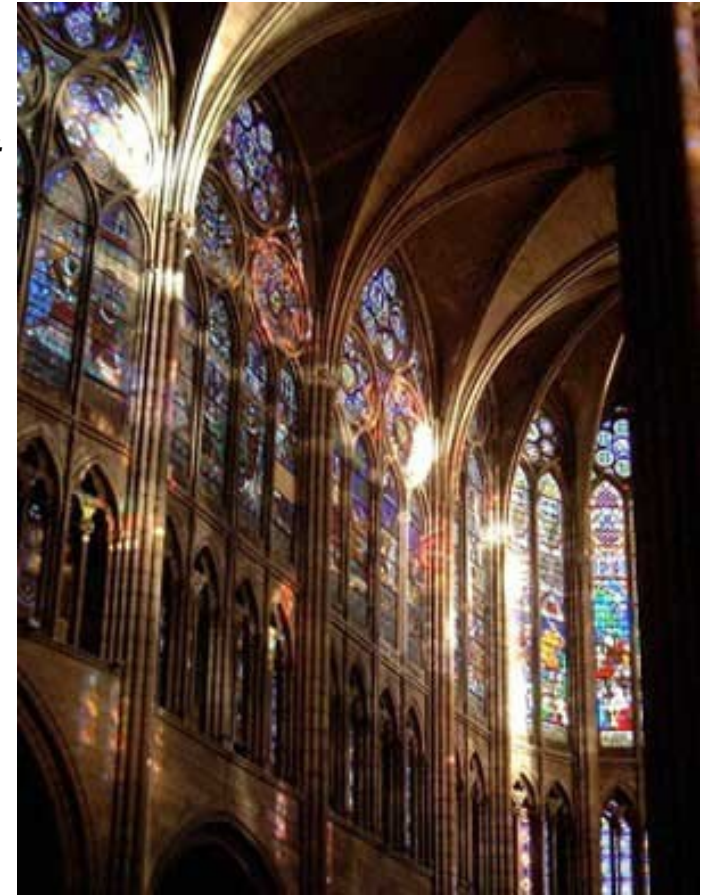
"To these verses of the inscription we decided to add
the following:

*When the new rear part is joined to that in front,
The church **shines, brightened** in its middle.
For **bright** is that which is **brightly** coupled with the
bright*

*And which the new **light** pervades,
Bright is the noble work Enlarged in our time
I, who was Suger, having been leader
While it was accomplished." (XXVIII)*

Andrew Louth: "...unmistakably **reminiscent of Pseudo-Dionysius' theology.**"

(In *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism*, ed. A.Hollywood and P. Beckman, New York:
Cambridge U.Press p. 143)

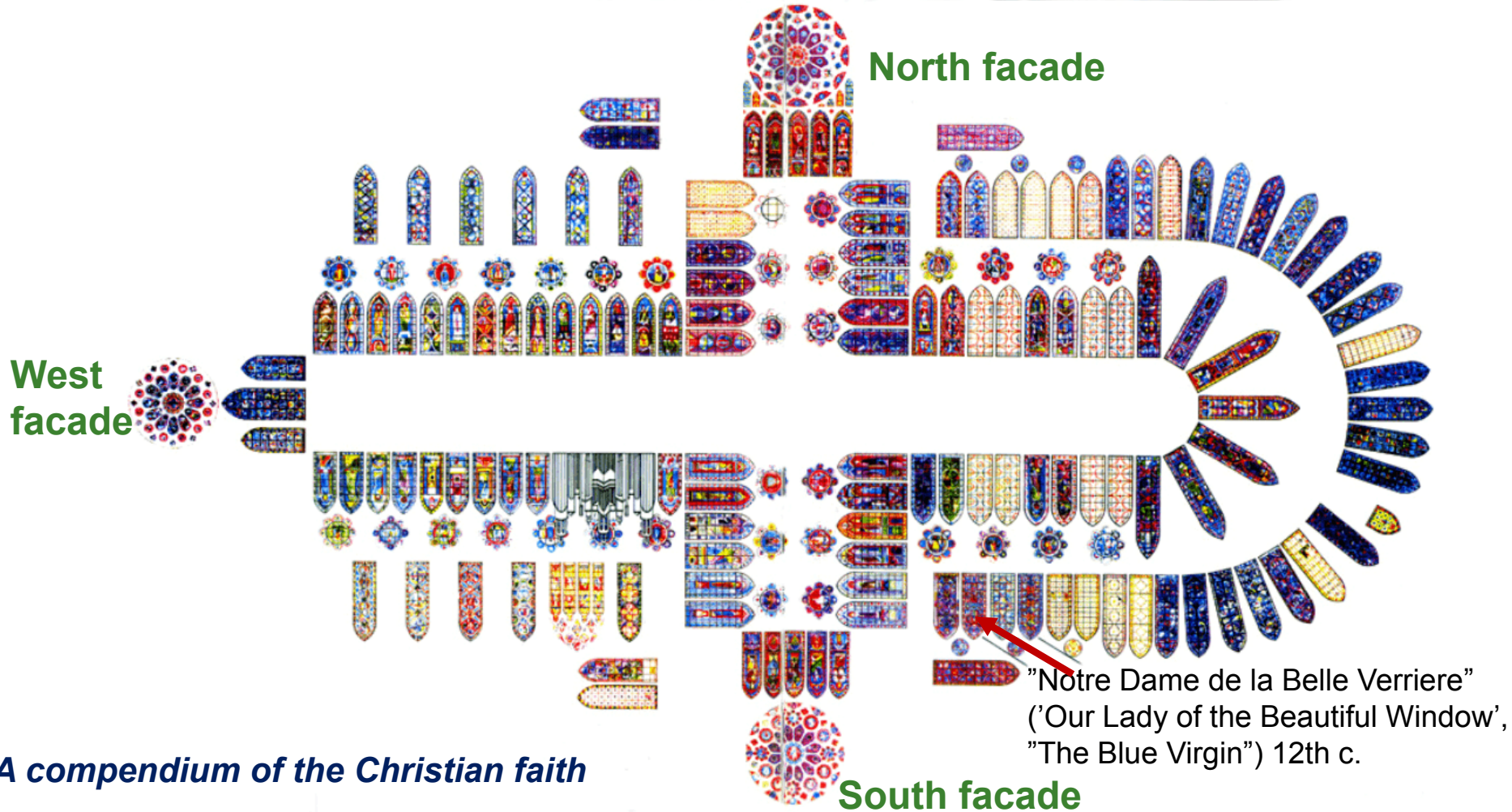


Abbey of St. Denis, middle of 12th c.

Chartres, Notre Dame cathedral, map of the windows

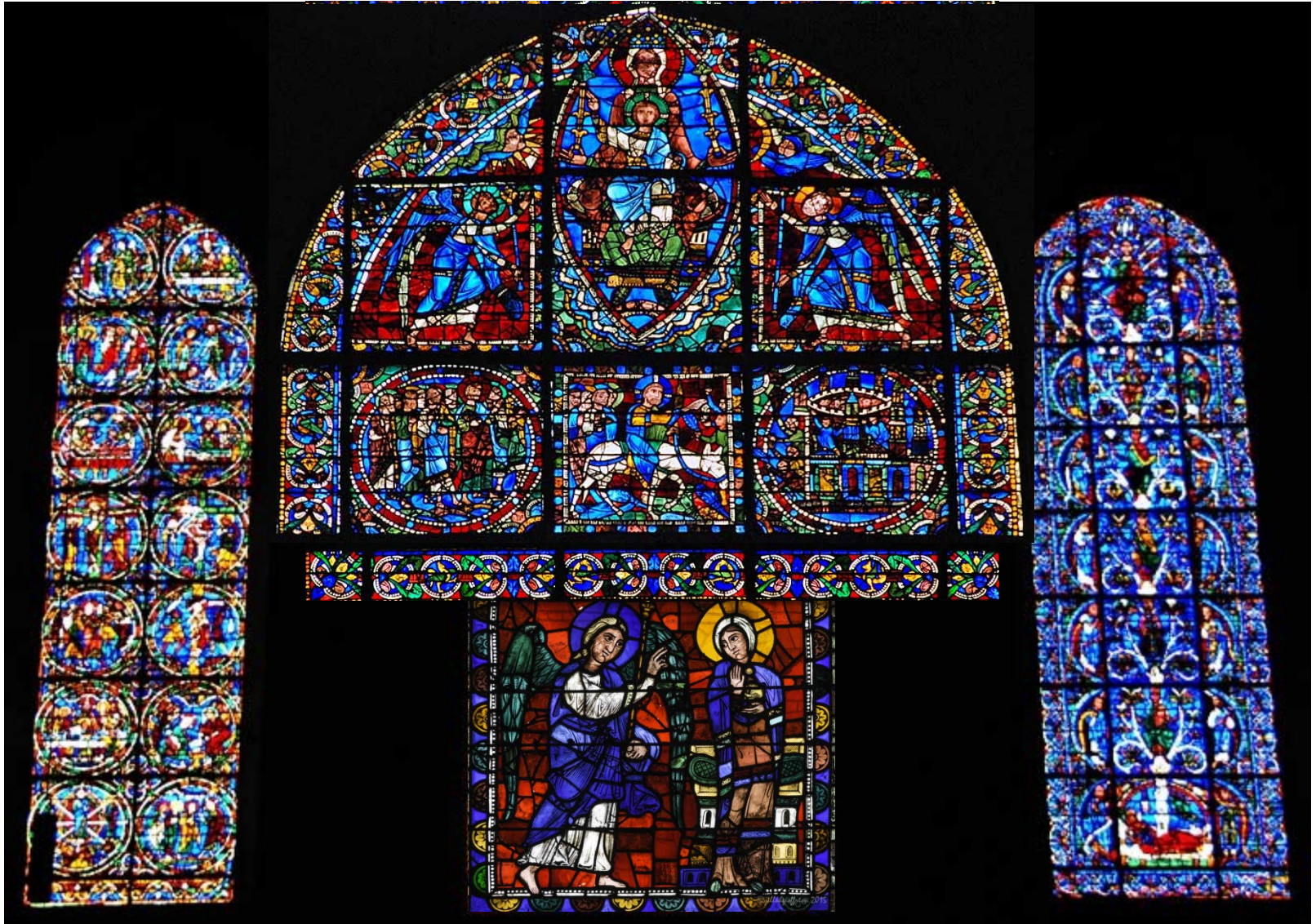
There are nearly 180 medieval stained glass windows in Chartres Cathedral, several preserved from the 12th c., most dating from the 13th c.

Picture database: http://www.medievalart.org.uk/chartres/Chartres_default.htm



<https://classconnection.s3.amazonaws.com/68/flashcards/985068/jpg/-0431326615864785.jpg>

<http://www.medart.pitt.edu/image/France/Chartres/Chartres-Cathedral/Windows/Large-Roses/Roses-main.html>



Three lancet windows of the west facade, Chartres cathedral, middle of the 12th century

Passion and Resurrection

Life of Christ (Incarnation)

Tree of Jesse

detail: Annunciation (Lk 1:26–38)

Calendar window--Zodiac and Labours of the Month

south ambulatory, Chartres, cathedral, 13th c. (height 7.50 meters)

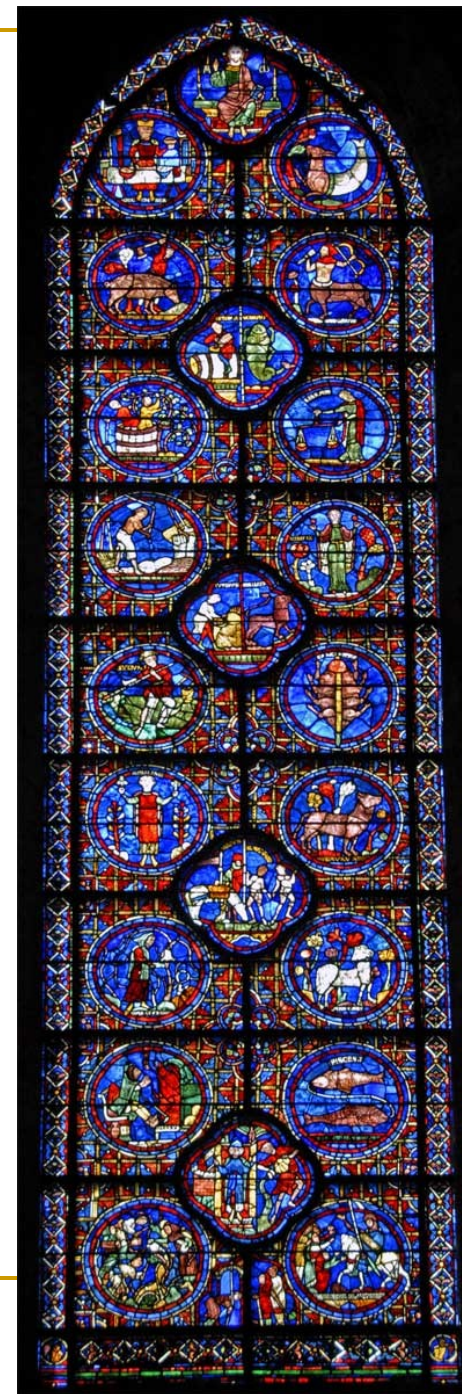
Signs of the zodiac and the labours of the months--symbolise cosmic and earthly order of the creation.



Lord of the Time (Rev 22:13)



Details of the calendar lancet window



Guilds (shoemakers, furriers, bakers etc.) as donators of windows



The Good Samaritan Window was donated by the Shoemakers' Guild



The Story of Noah Window was presented by the Wheelwrights' Guild



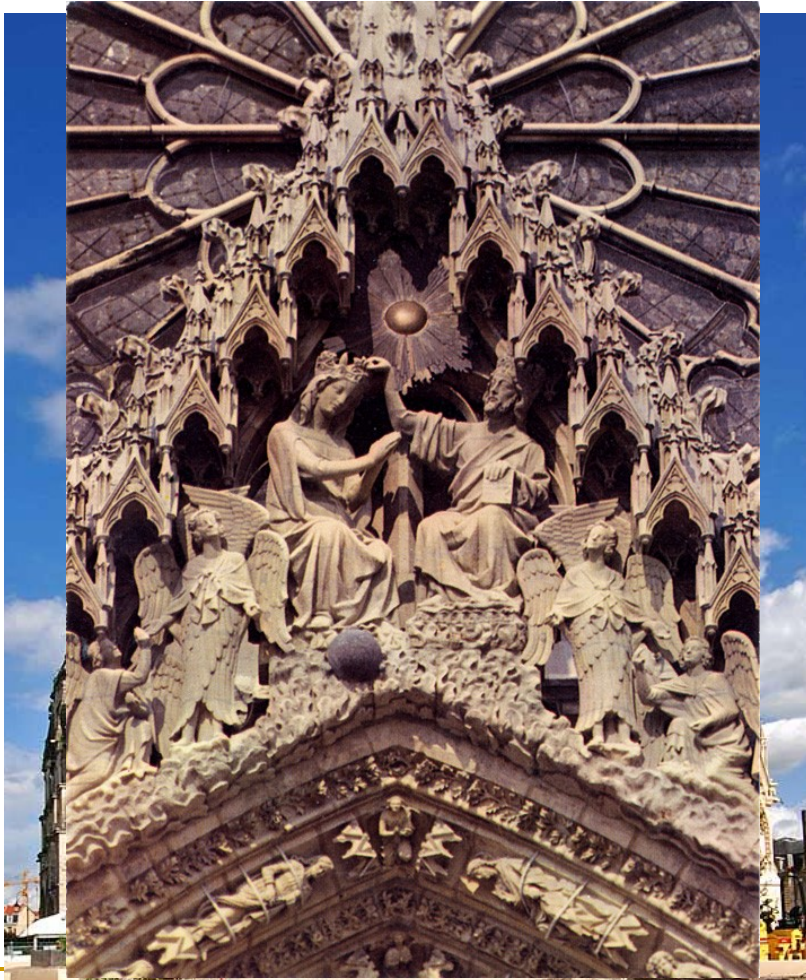
Furriers' and Drapers' Guild donors of the St. James Window



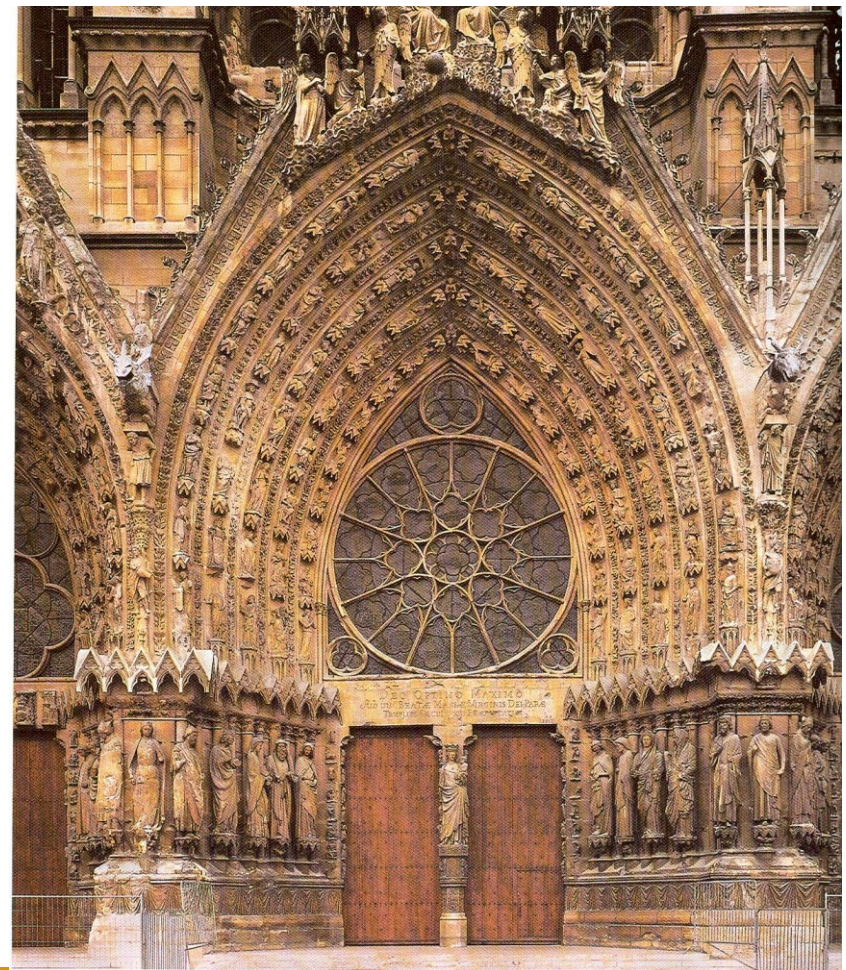
Masons, Stonecutters and Sculptors - construction of Cathedrals

Iconography of the cult of the Virgin Mary Notre Dame Cathedral, Reims 13th c.

- **St. Bernard of Clairvaux** *Sermons on the Blessed Virgin*
- *"prime Intercessor, mediatrix"* between the heaven and the earth
- link between the natural and the supernatural



West facade, central portal:
Coronation of the Virgin Mary c. 1230



West facade, central portal:
Portal of the Virgin Mary c. 1230

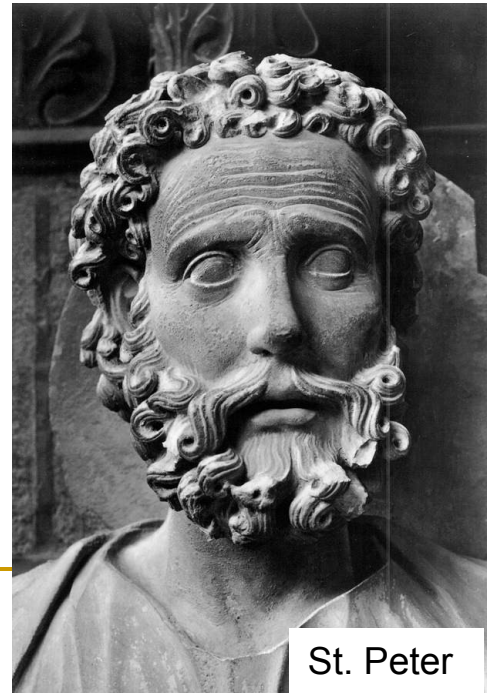
Reims, Notre Dame cathedral, middle of the 13th c.

- retaining the dignity and monumentality
- individualized faces and figures
- flowing draperies and natural poses and gestures, and they display a classical poise
- **Influence of antique Roman models**



Annunciation Lk 1:28-38

Visitation Lk 1:39-45



St. Peter