

Gothic Cathedrals

ARTH 312

Fall 2019



St. Denis, Burgundy,
France, late 15th
century, limestone with
remains of polychromy
and gilding.

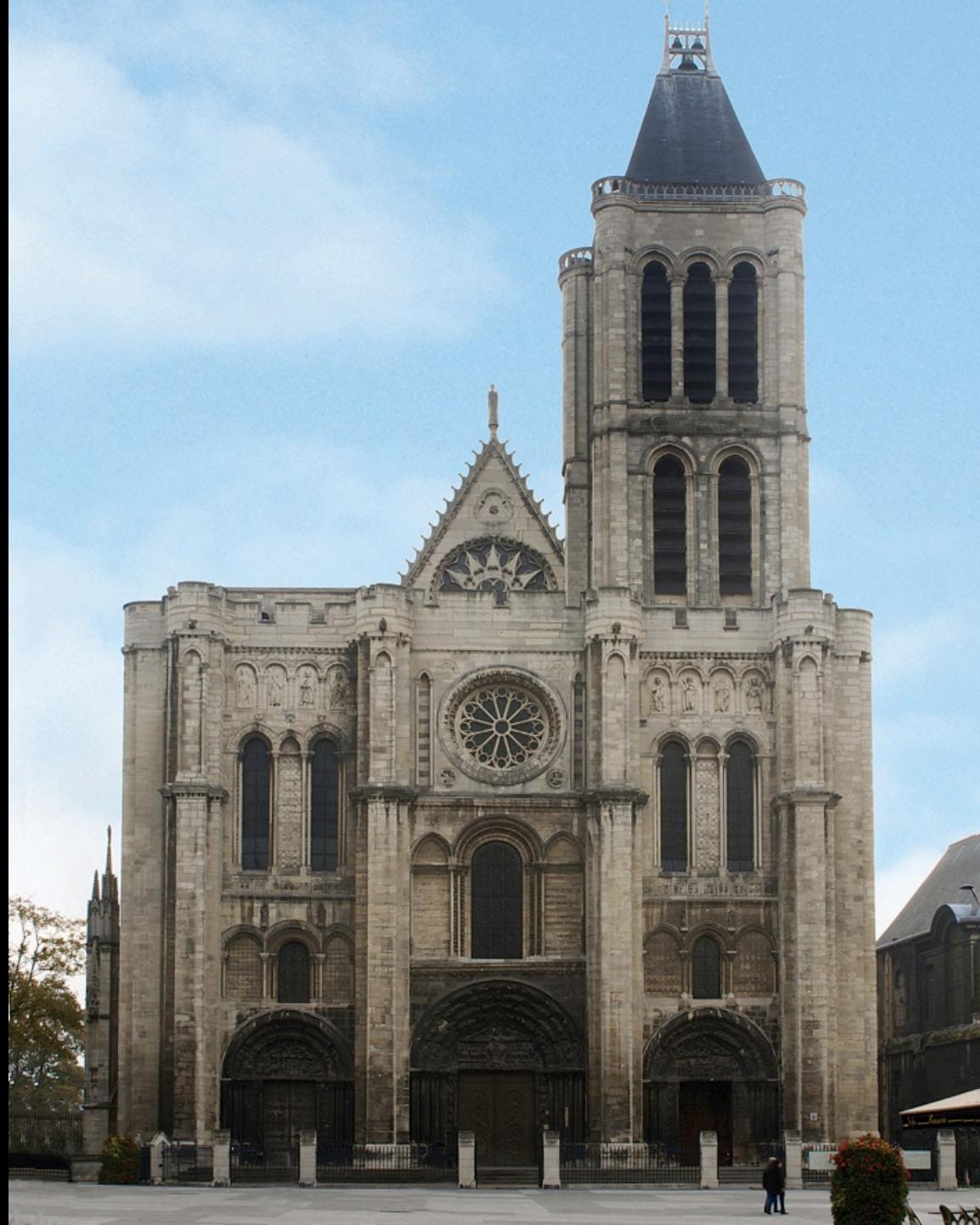


Saint Dionysius (Denis in French) – the missionary who brought Christianity to Gaul and died there in the third century

7th c. – the Benedictine order founded an abbey on the site of the saint's burial and called it Saint-Denis

9th c. – the monks constructed a basilica at Saint-Denis, which housed the saint's tomb and those of nearly all the French kings dating back to the 6th c.

West facade of
the abbey church,
Saint-Denis,
France, 1135-
1140.

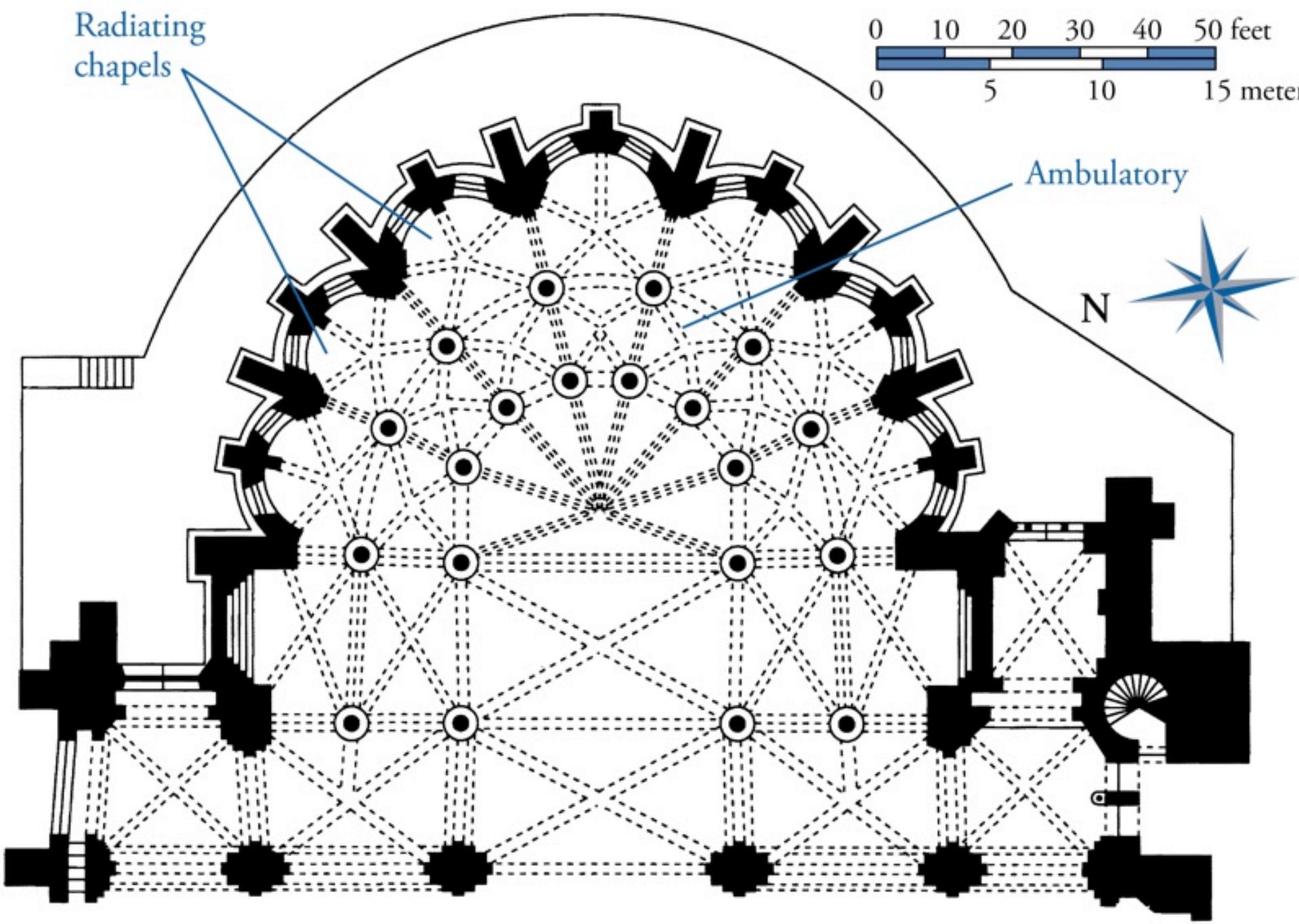


France's royal
church

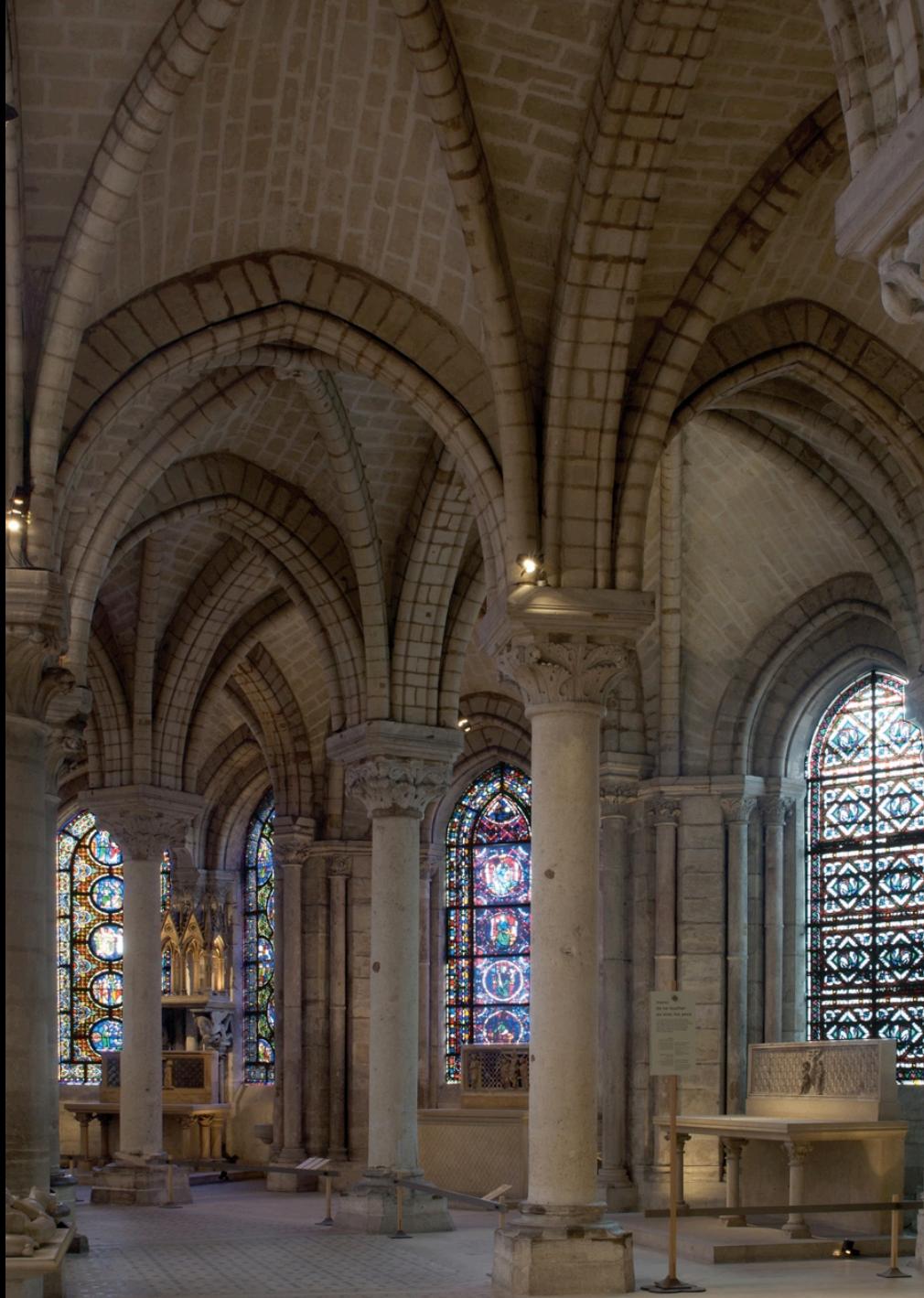
the crimson
military banner
said to have
belonged to
Charlemagne

12th c. – a monk
named Suger (ca.
1081-1151)
became abbot of
Saint-Denis

source document 1



Ambulatory and radiating chapels, abbey church, Saint-Denis, France, 1140-1144.



“delight in the beauty of the house of God”

“called [him] away from external cares”

“dwelling in some strange region of the universe which neither exists entirely in the slime of the earth nor entirely in the purity of Heaven”

“transported [him] from this inferior to that higher world”

Interior of Laon
Cathedral (looking
northeast), Laon,
France, begun ca.
1190.



rib vault*
pointed arch*

pointed arch*

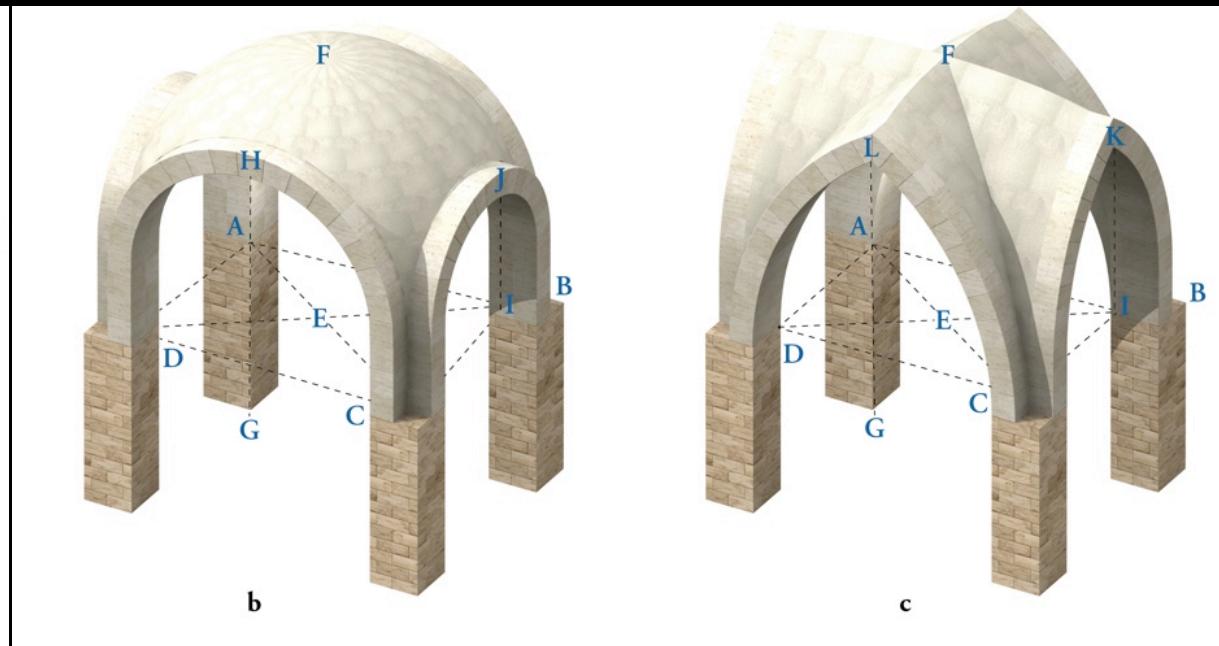
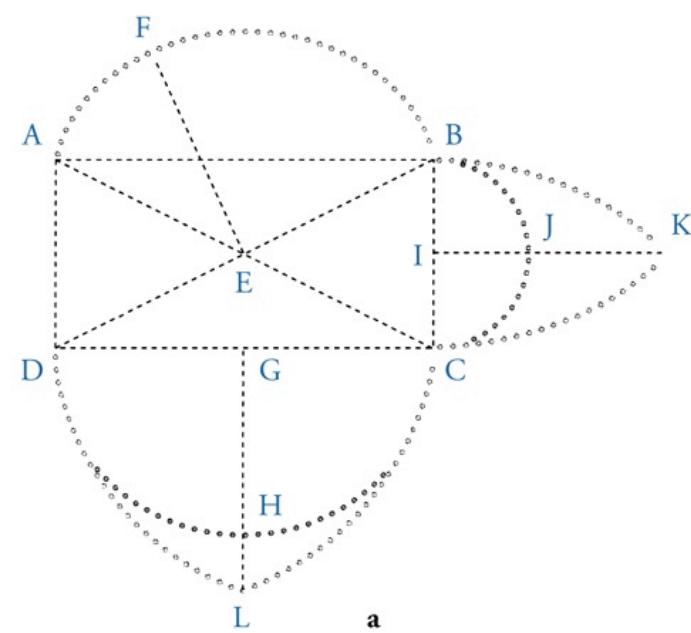
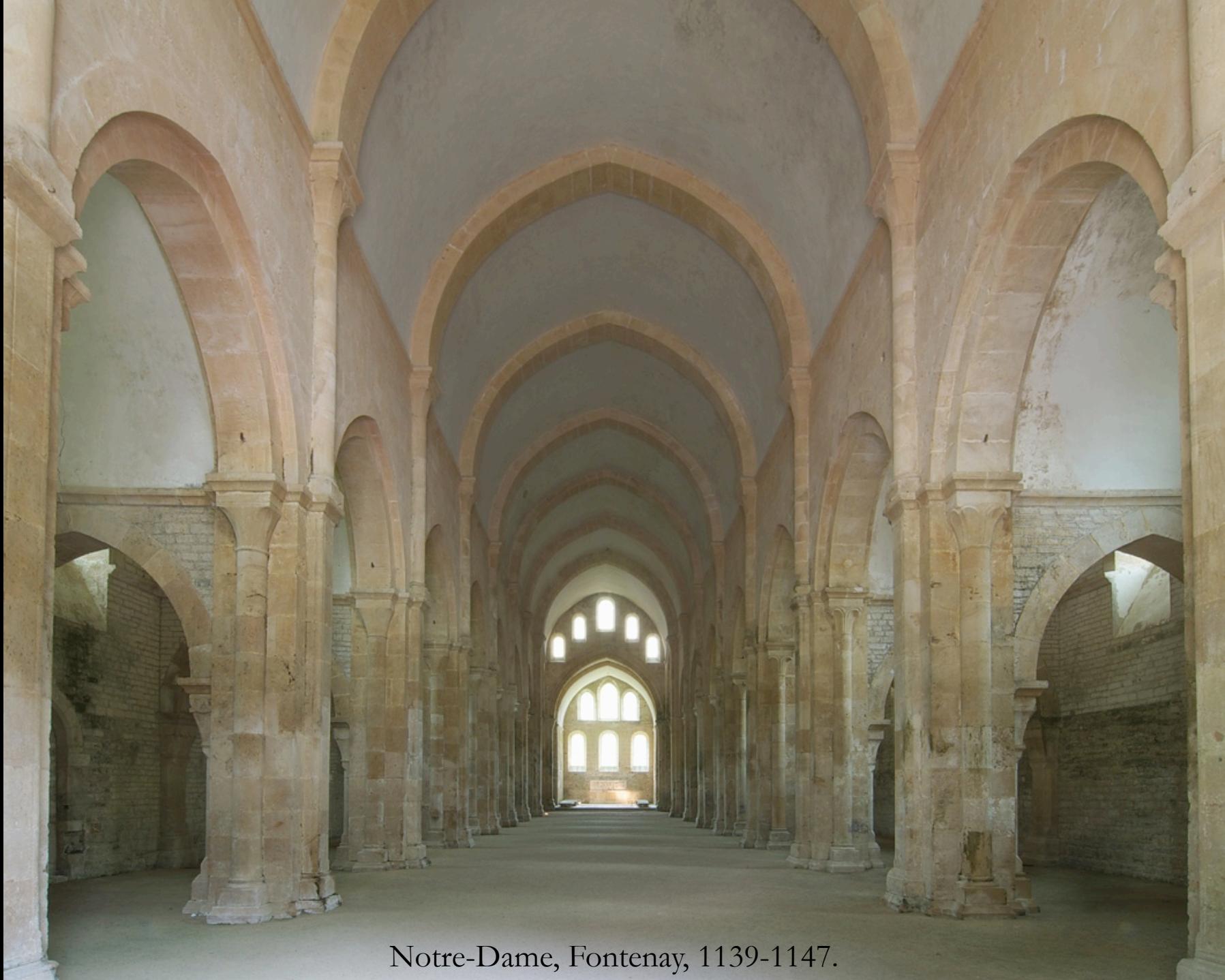


Diagram (a) and drawings of rib vaults with semicircular (b) and pointed (c) arches.

[Physics of Stone Arches](#)

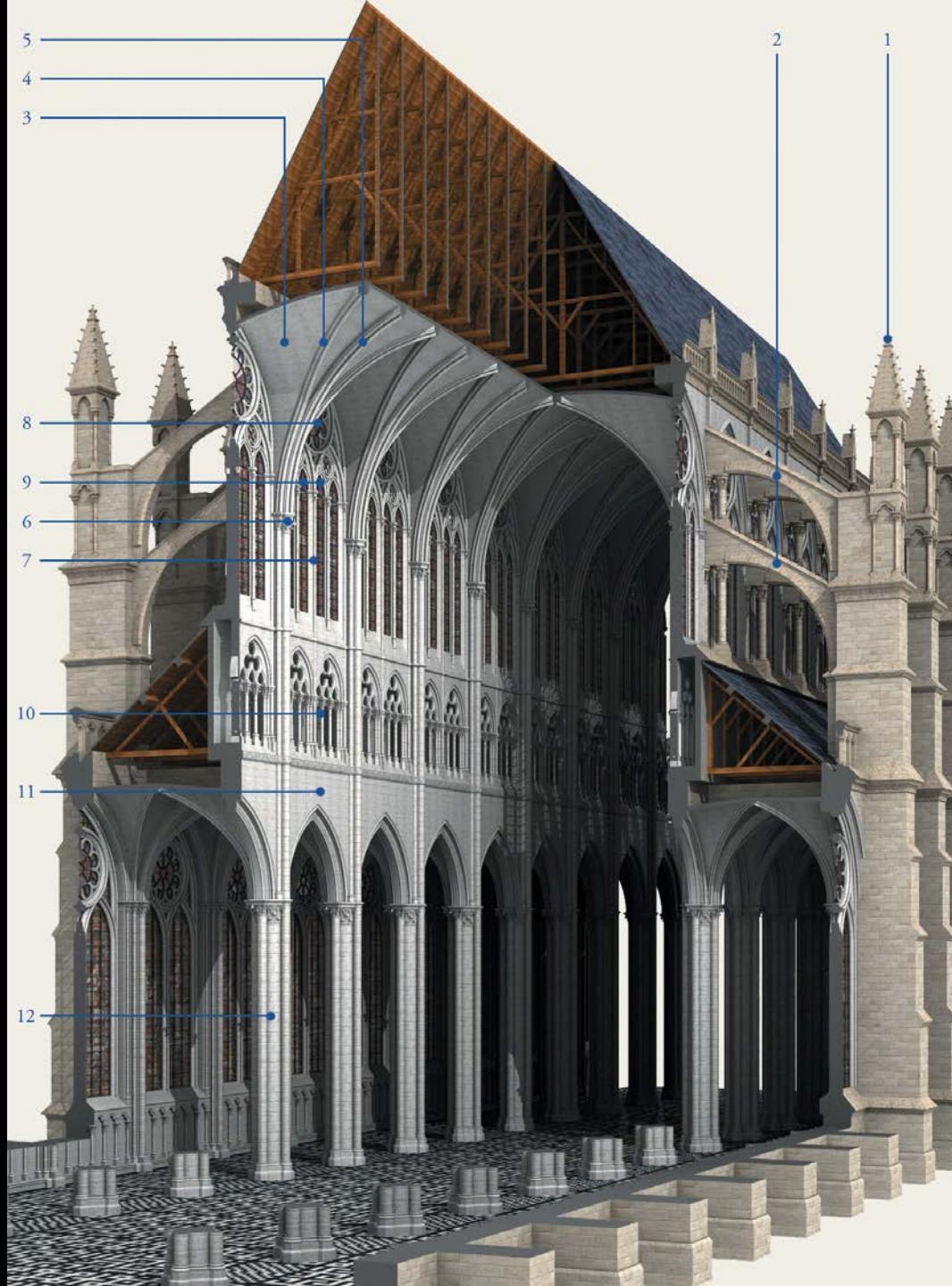


Palace of Shapur I, Ctesiphon, Iraq, ca. 250 CE.



Notre-Dame, Fontenay, 1139-1147.

Cutaway view of a typical French Gothic cathedral (John Burge). (1) pinnacle, (2) flying buttress, (3) vaulting web, (4) diagonal ribs, (5) transverse rib, (6) springing, (7) clerestory, (8) oculus, (9) lancet, (10) triforium, (11) nave arcade, (12) compound pier with responds.





a Laon

height of nave, 80'; width of nave, 37'6"; ratio, 2.13:1



b Paris

height of nave, 115'; width of nave, 40'; ratio, 2.88:1



c Chartres

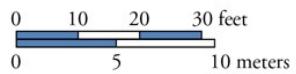
height of nave, 120'; width of nave, 45'6"; ratio, 2.64:1



d Amiens

height of nave, 144'; width of nave, 48'; ratio, 3.00:1

Nave elevations of four French Gothic cathedrals at the same scale.



Beauvais Cathedral, begun 1225.



155 feet high



West facade
of Laon Cathedral,
Laon, France, begun
ca. 1190.



16 oxen



“On the Question of the Participation of the Common People in the Building of Gothic Churches”

West facade
of Laon Cathedral,
Laon, France, begun
ca. 1190.



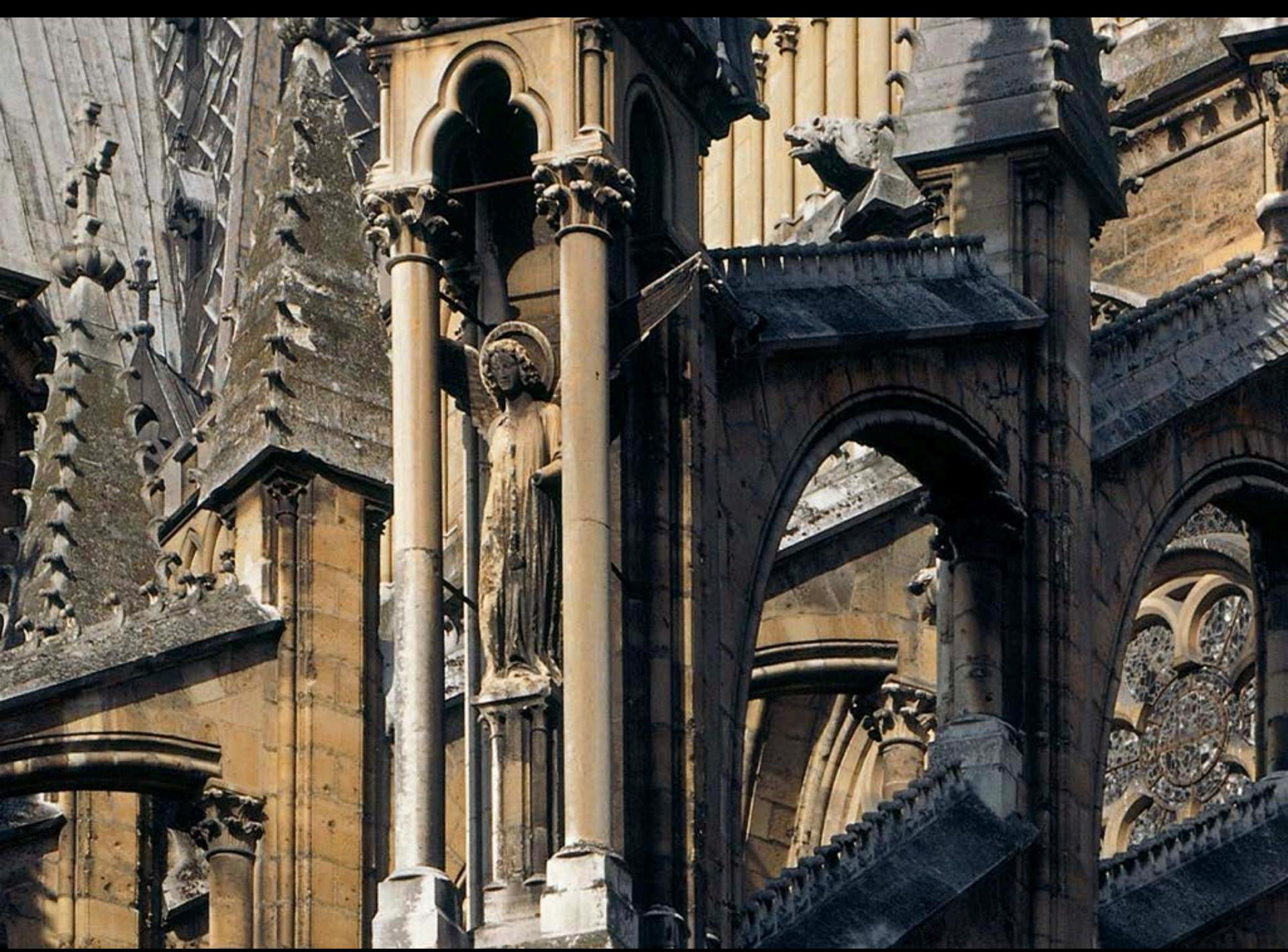
collections and public
contributions

indulgences

unforeseen events

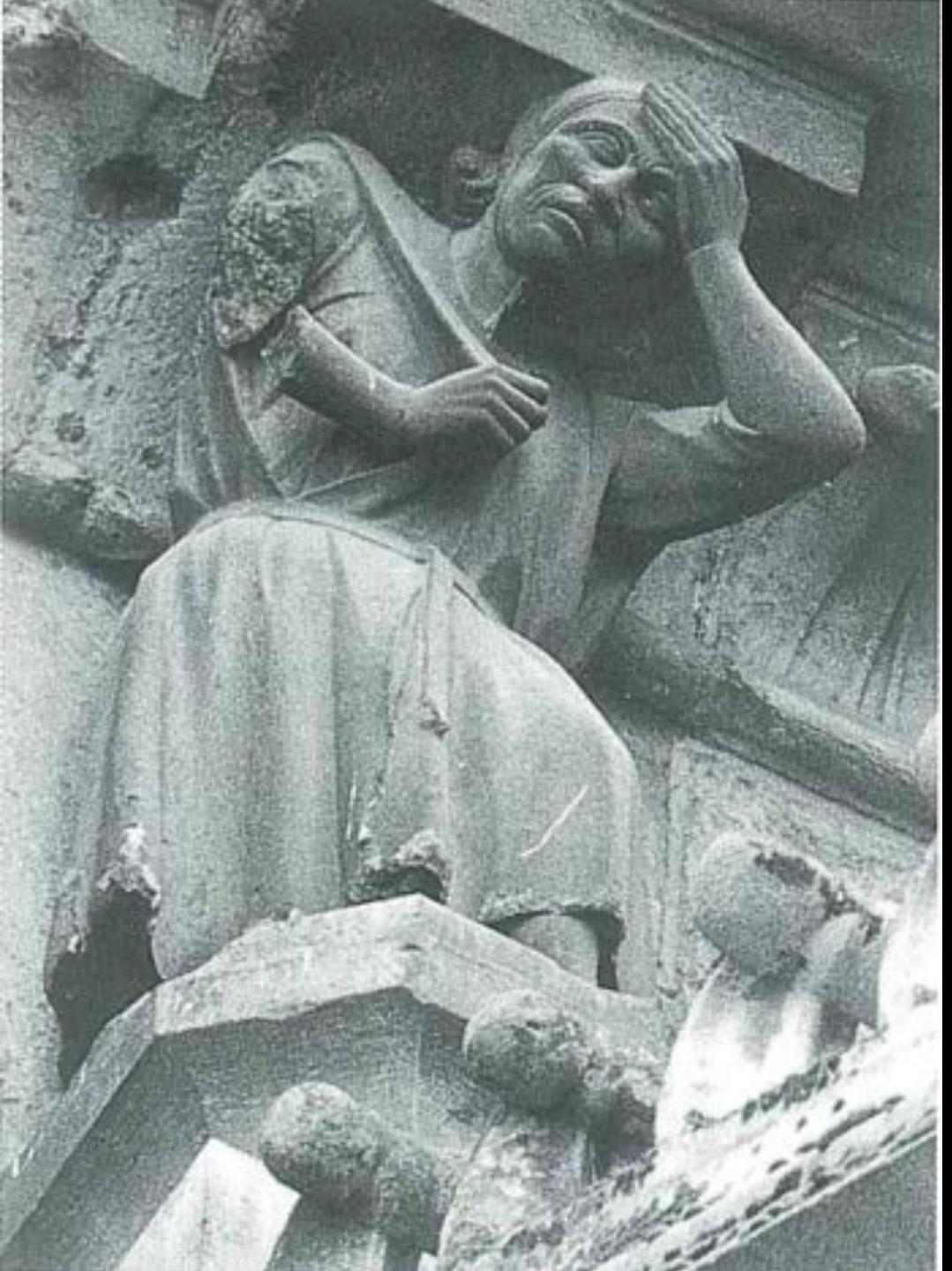


Amiens Cathedral, begun 1220.



Atlas figure, Rheims cathedral (northern clerestory of the choir), before 1233.

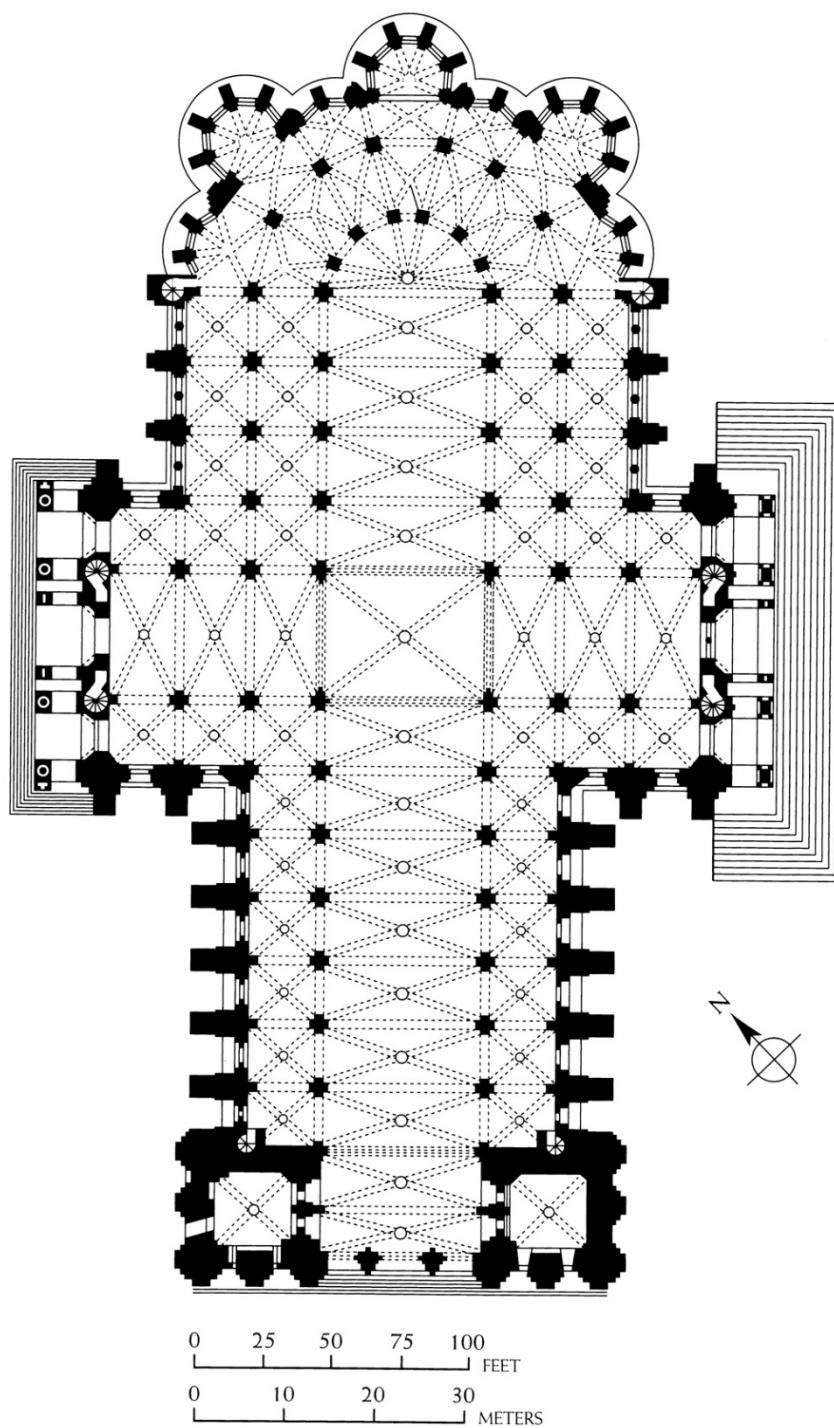






Aerial view of Chartres Cathedral (looking north), Chartres, France, as rebuilt after 1194.

Plan of Chartres
Cathedral, Chartres,
France, as rebuilt after
1194.



the mantle of the Virgin

Interior of
Chartres
Cathedral
(looking
east),
Chartres,
France,
begun 1194.



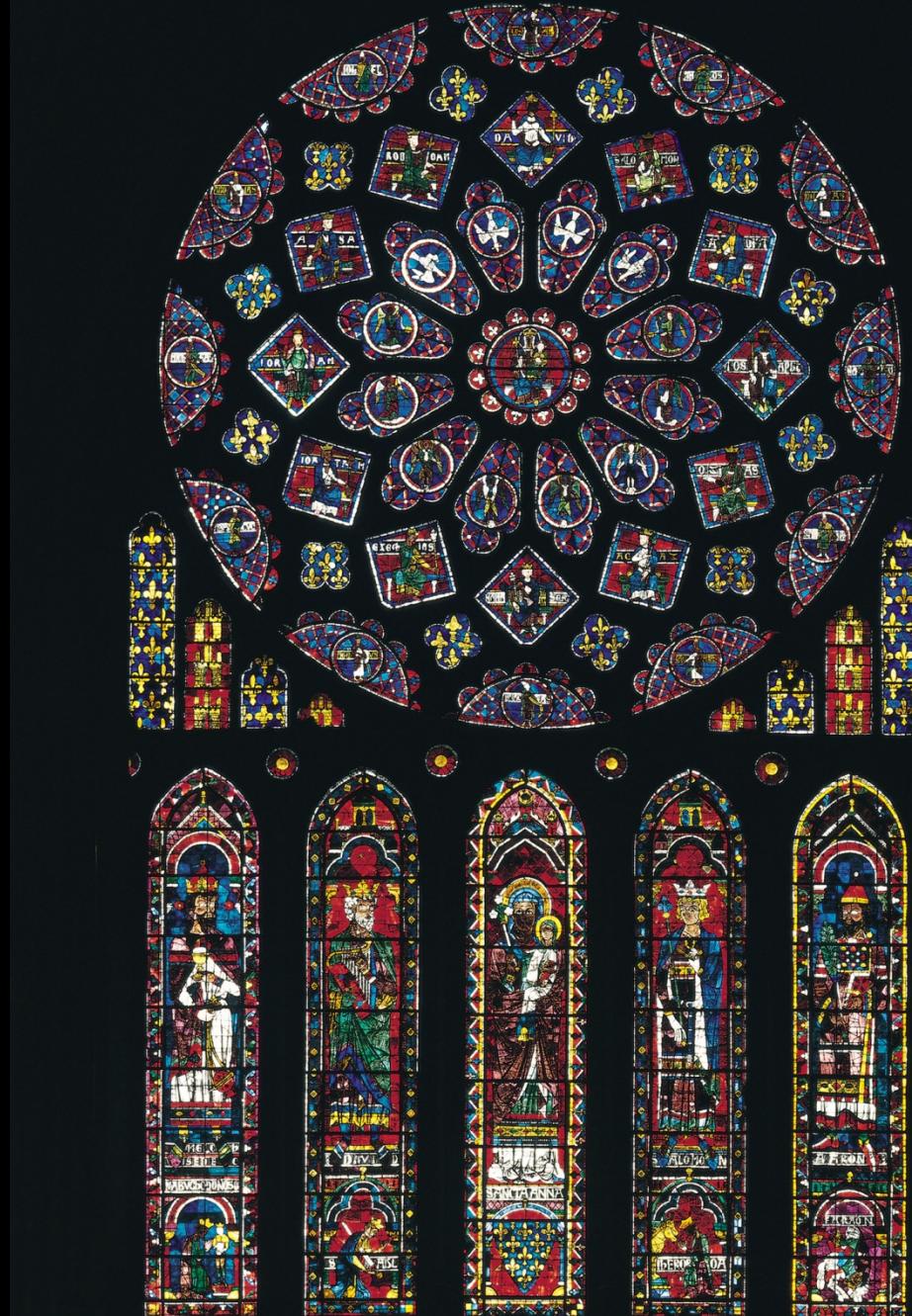
Virgin and Child and angels (*Notre Dame de la Belle Verrière*), detail of a window in the choir of Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France, ca. 1170. Stained glass, 12' 9" high.



Rose window and
lancets, north
transept, Chartres
Cathedral, Chartres,
France, ca. 1220.
Stained glass, rose
window 43' in
diameter.

Queen Blanche of
Castile

*fleurs-de-lis**



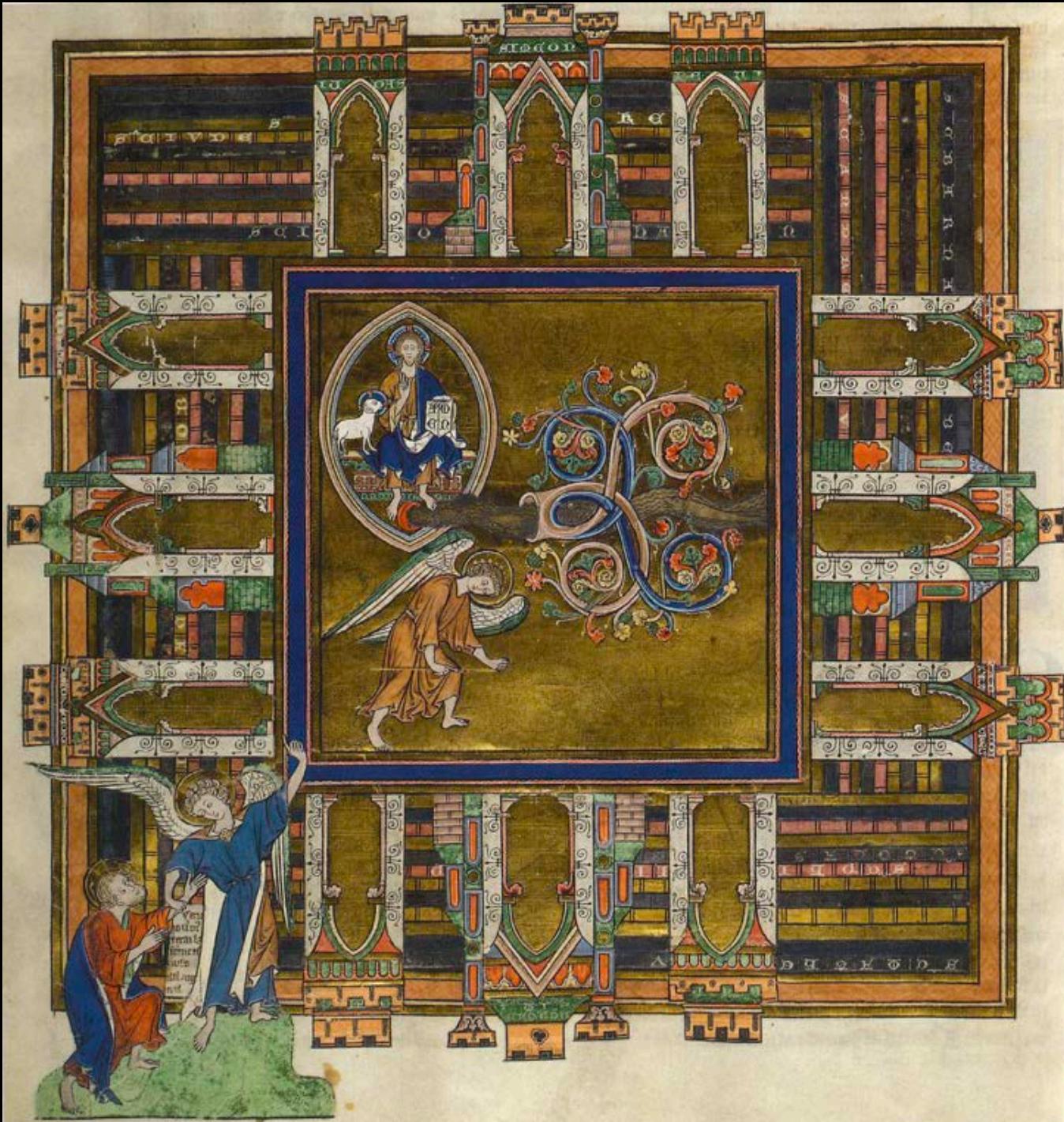
They do not conceal
walls. They replace
them.

transmit rather than
reflect light

*lux nova**

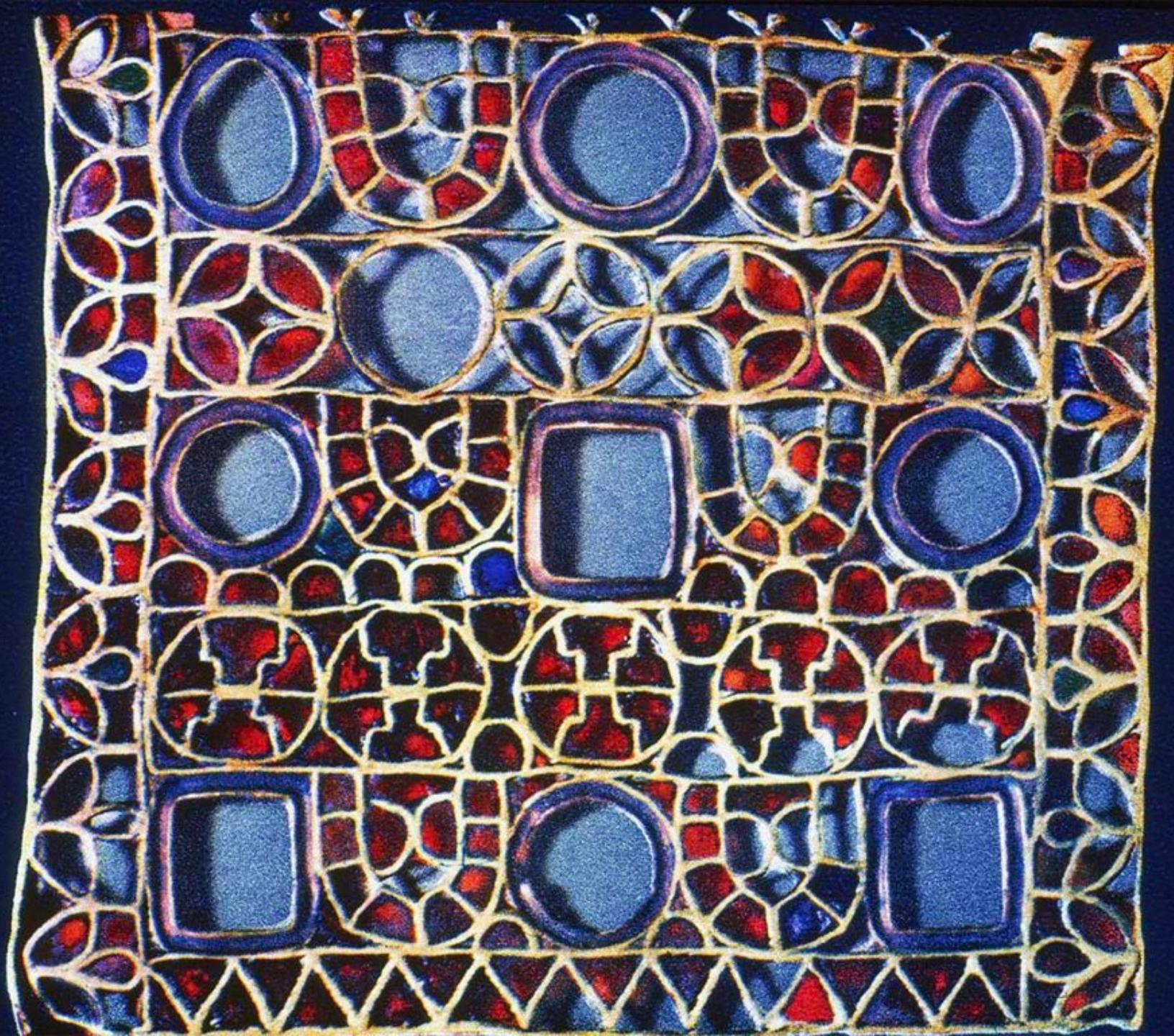
source documents 2 and 3

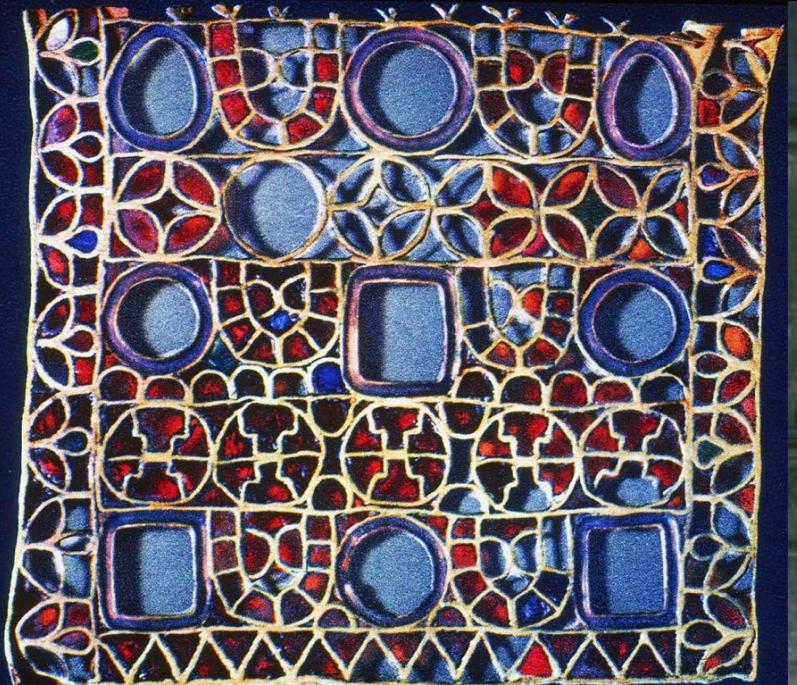


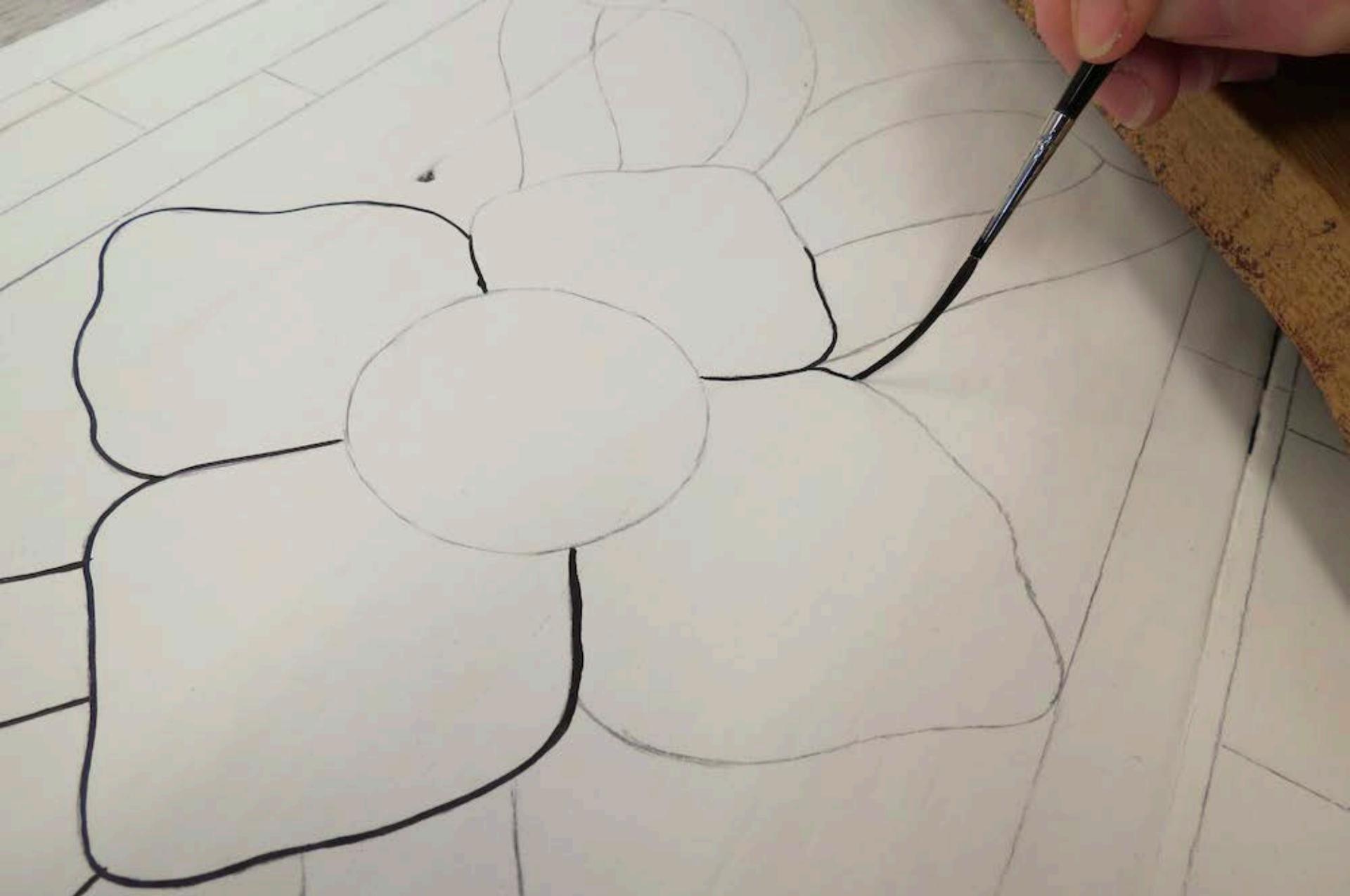


sardonyx, porphyry, rock crystal

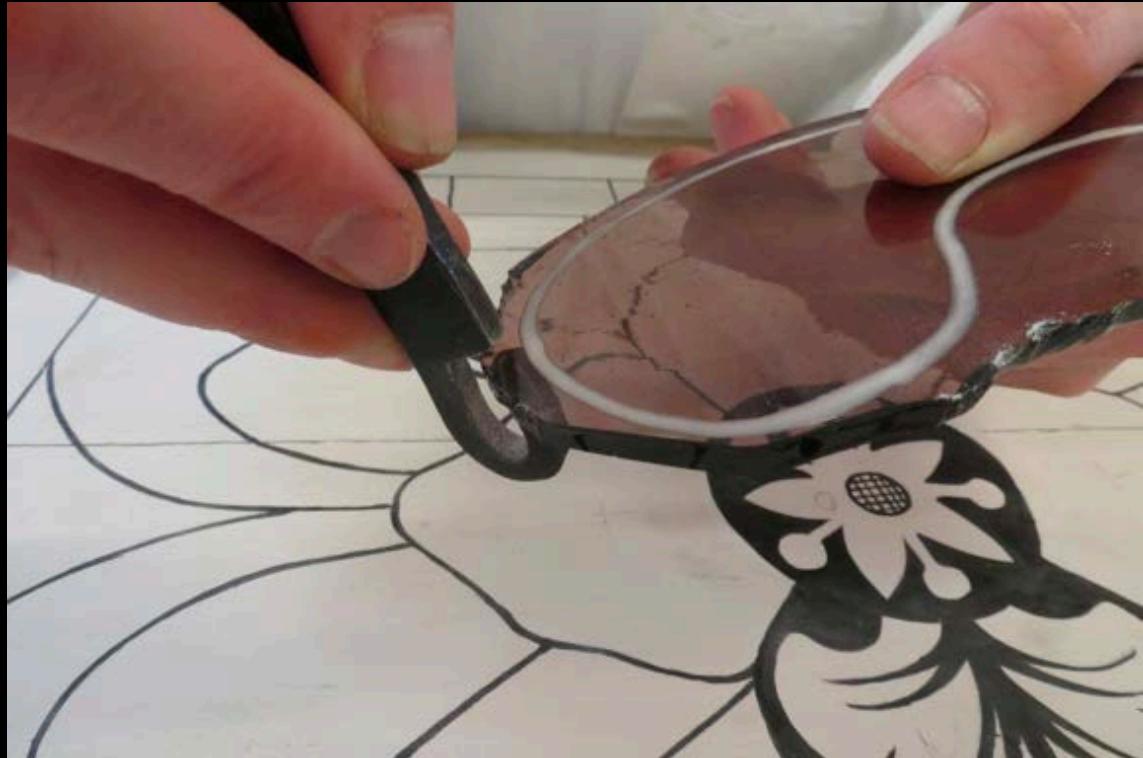








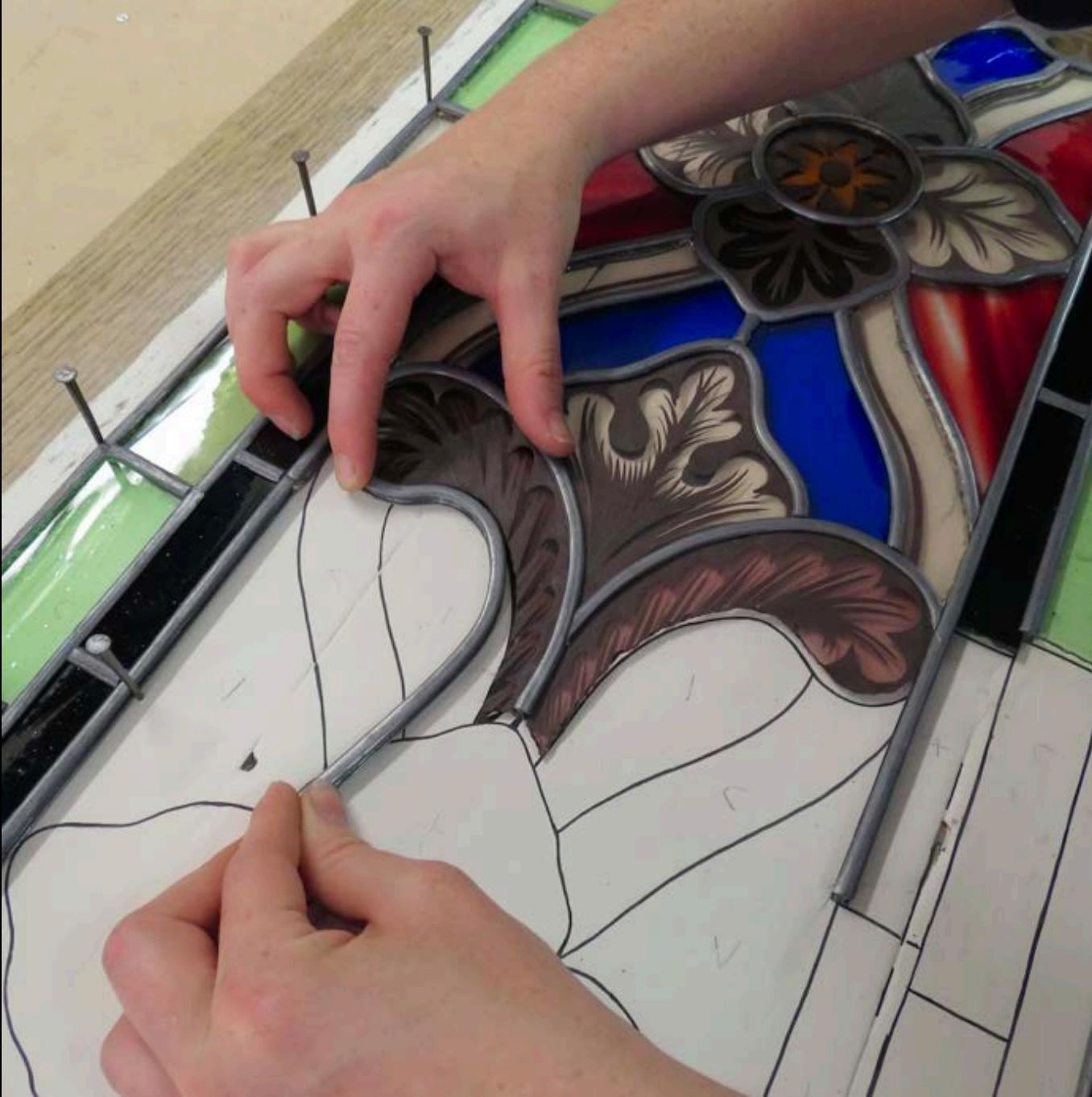
The master designer drew the exact composition of the planned window on a wood panel, indicating all the linear details and noting the colors for each section.



Glassblowers provided flat sheets of glass of different colors to glaziers (glassworkers), who cut the window-panes to the required size and shape with special iron shears.



Painters added details such as faces, hands, hair, and clothing by tracing the master design on the wood panel through the colored glass.



The glaziers “leaded” the various fragments of glass.









Stonemasons and sculptors, detail of a stained-glass window in the northernmost radiating chapel in the ambulatory, Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France, ca. 1200-1220.

West facade, Chartres
Cathedral, Chartres,
France, ca. 1145-1155.



the most complete surviving ensemble of Early Gothic sculpture



Royal Portal, west facade, Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France, ca. 1145-1155.





Second Coming of Christ, tympanum of the south portal of Saint-Pierre, Moissac, France, ca. 1115-1135.



Old Testament kings
and queens, jamb
statues, central
doorway
of Royal Portal,
Chartres Cathedral,
Chartres, France, ca.
1145-1155.



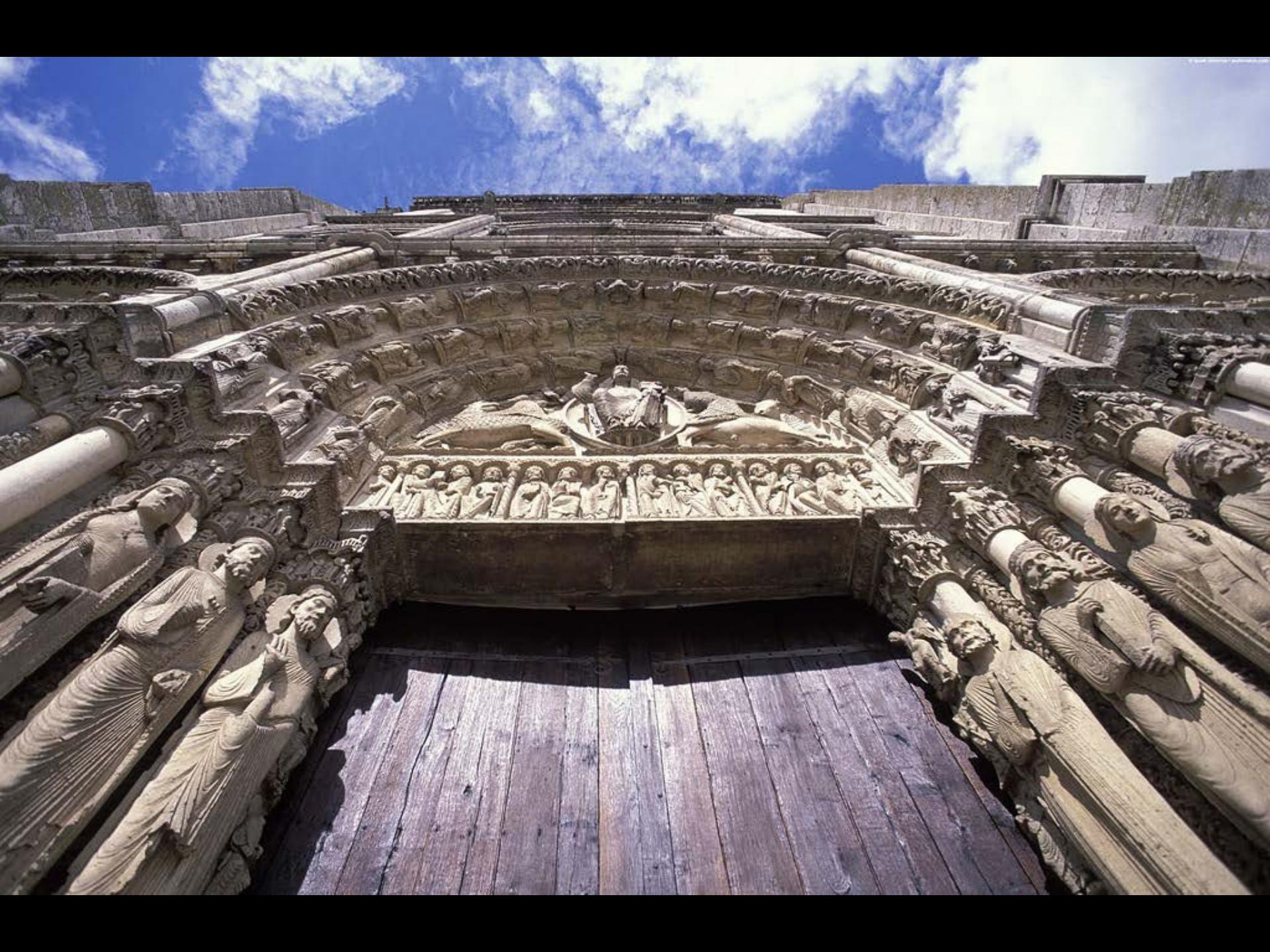
Saint Theodore, jamb statue, Porch of the Martyrs (left doorway), south transept, Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France, ca. 1230.



the cloak and chain-mail armor of
13th-century Crusaders
the ideal Christian knight











grammar,
rhetoric,
logic

arithmetic,
music,
geometry,
astronomy

liberal arts*

Circle of Simone Martini (fl. 1315-47) and Lippo Memmi (c. 1317-47), *The Glorification of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, ca. 1340-45. Tempera on panel.



Thomas Aquinas
(1225-1274)

settled in Paris

Aristotelian philosophy

became an influential teacher at the University of Paris

Summa Theologica
(*Compendium of Theology*)

to prove the existence of God by rational argument

Scholasticism*

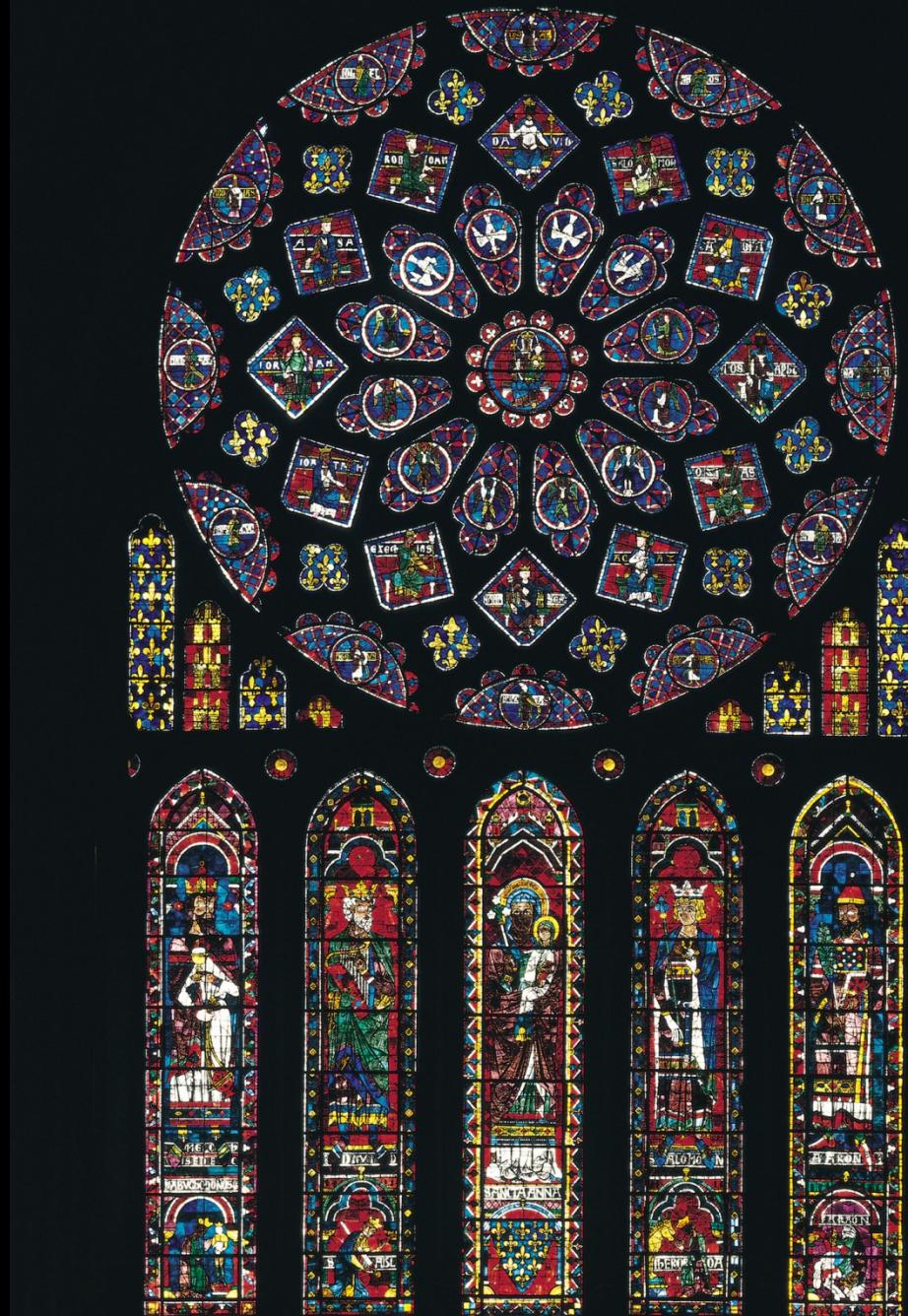
Averroes





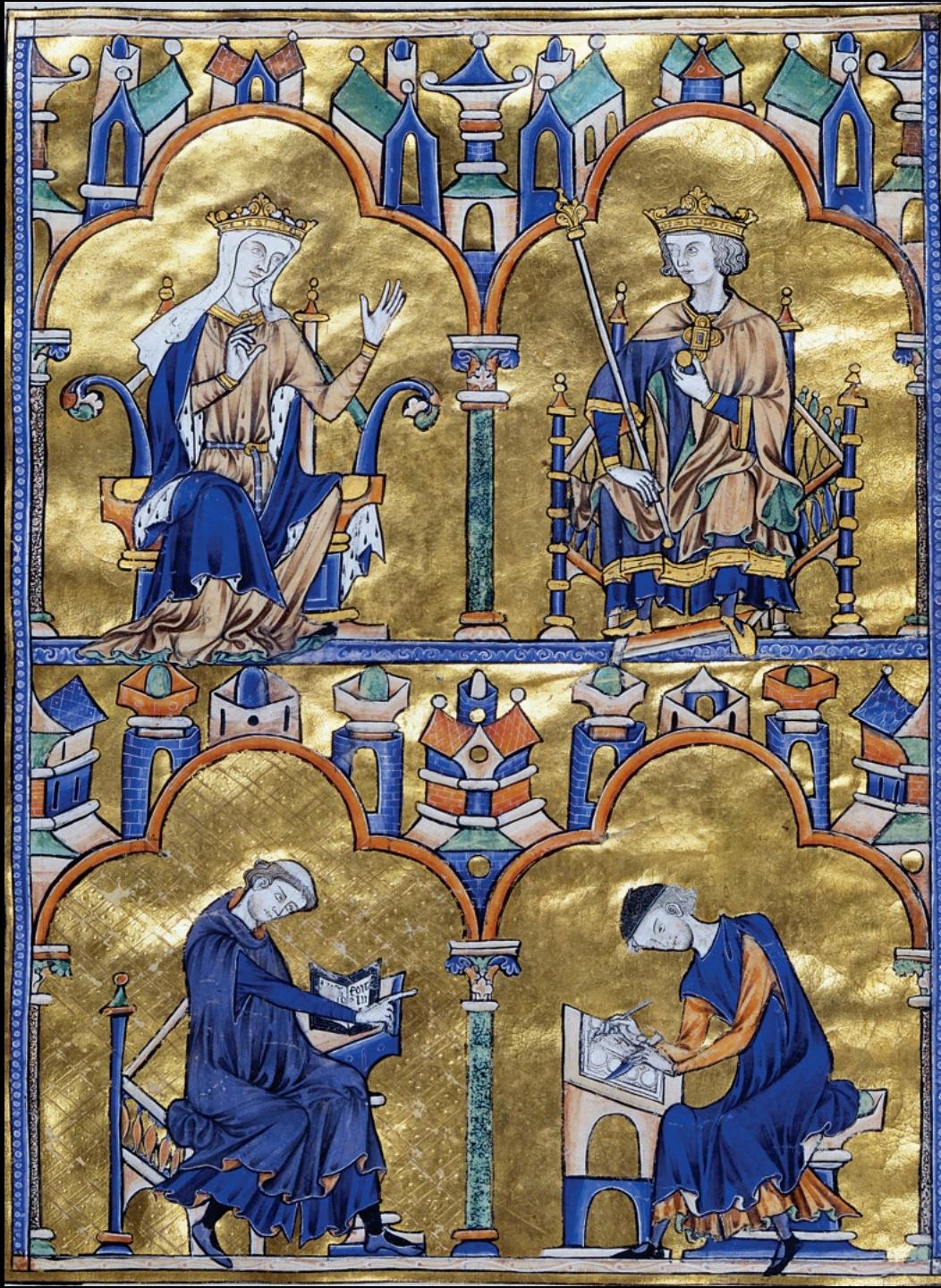


Rose window and
lancets, north
transept, Chartres
Cathedral, Chartres,
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Stained glass, rose
window 43' in
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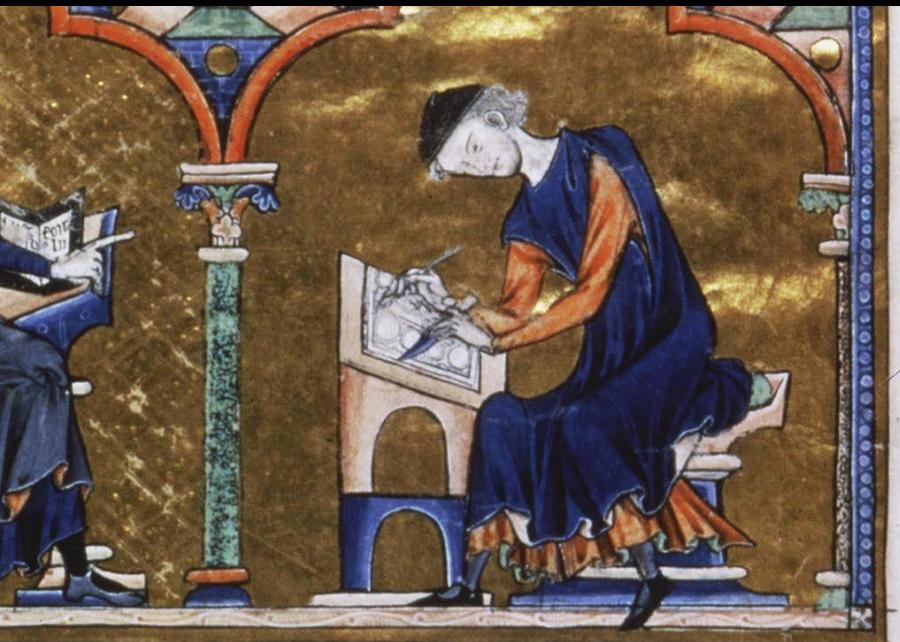
Queen Blanche of
Castile
*fleurs-de-lis**

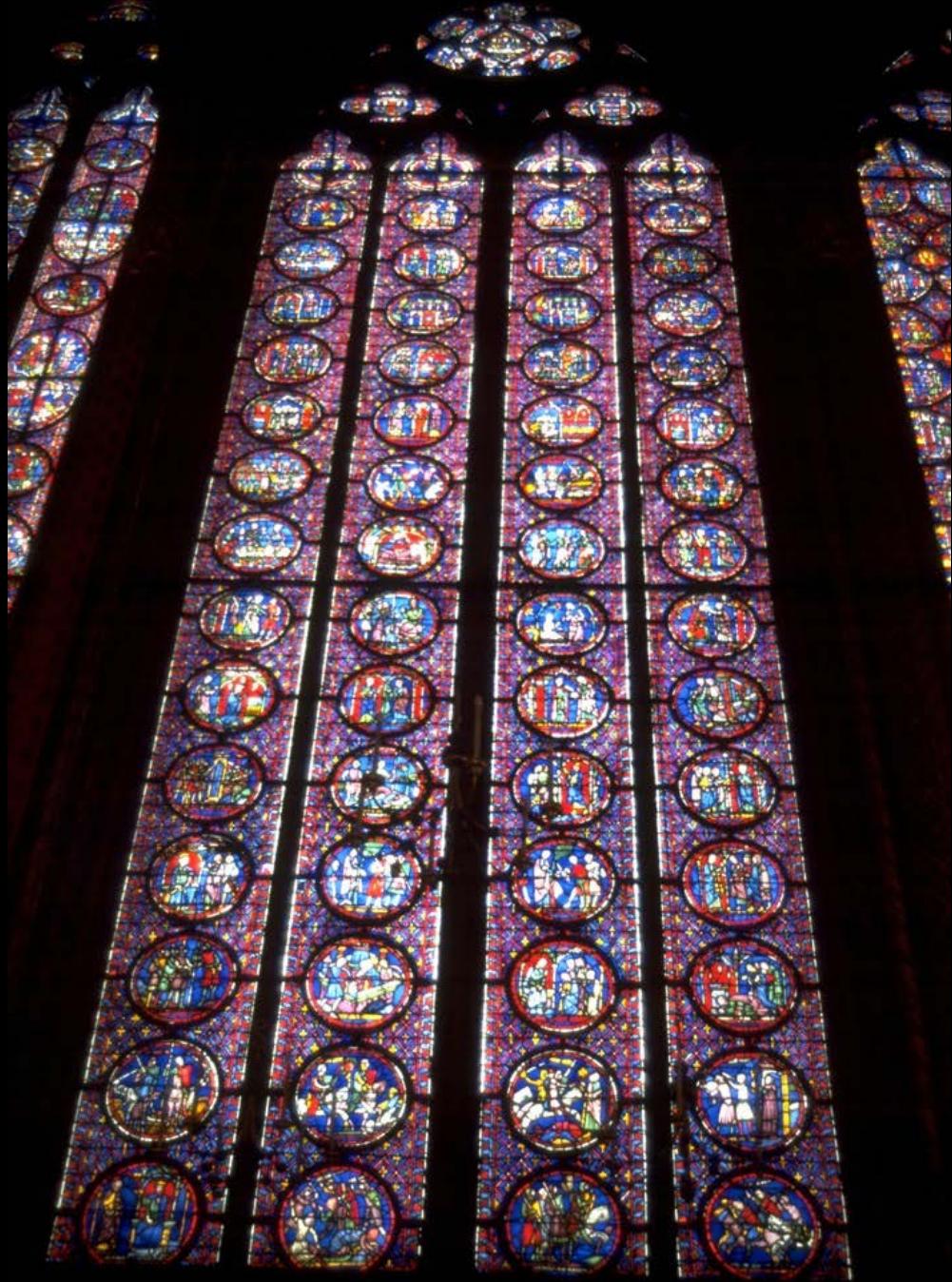
Blanche of Castile,
Louis IX, and two
monks, dedication
page (folio 8 recto)
of a moralized
Bible, from Paris,
France, 1226-1234.
Ink, tempera, and
gold leaf on vellum,
1' 3" x 10 1/2".
Pierpont Morgan
Library, New York.



Saint Louis, his
mother and French
regent Blanche of
Castile, a monk, and
a lay scribe

[source document](#)





Interior of the upper
chapel, Sainte-
Chapelle, Paris,
France, 1243-1248.



6,450 square feet of
stained glass > three-
quarters of the
structure





