May Peyron Spangler

Paris in Architecture, Literature, and Art

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Gothic Paris

Notre-Dame and the Île de la Cité

11–12C	Hugues Capet assigns Abbot Morard to rebuild Saint-Germain-des-Prés (1014, fig. 2.15), one of the few Romanesque churches in Paris Napoléon did not tear down. Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre Church (1170, fig. 2.1), also in the Romanesque style and with its square facing Notre-Dame, is the best place to picnic in the shadow of the oldest tree in Paris, a locust tree that crossed the ocean in a basket from young America in 1602.
1132	Pierre Abélard, one of the greatest 12C intellectuals, writes *Historia Calamitatum* (1132), where he describes his love story with sixteen-year-old Héloïse, and his subsequent castration by her uncle Fulbert, canon of Notre-Dame Cathedral.
1144	Abbot Suger rebuilds the Basilica of Saint-Denis, creates the Gothic style, and writes *On What Was Done under his Administration* (1148, figs. 2.5–9).
12–13C	Maurice de Sully, Bishop of Paris, starts the construction of Gothic Notre-Dame (1163–1245, figs. 2.10, 2.13–27).
12–13C	Philippe Auguste (1180–1223) defeats his coalesced enemies in Bouvine in 1214, creates a permanent royal army, reorganizes the

Paris in 1200. He builds the first wall of Paris, the Louvre Fortress (1190–1202, fig. 3.8), and continues the construction of Notre-Dame.

13C Louis IX (1226–70), grandson of Philippe Auguste and canonized as Saint-Louis after his death, buys the Christ relics from the Emperor of Constantinople and gives them a sanctuary in the Sainte-Chapelle (1241–48, figs. 2.29–31).

14C Philippe le Bel (1285–1314), grandson of Saint-Louis, rebuilds the Conciergerie (1313, figs. 2.32–33), the palace of the kings with four towers and now the home of the judicial center of France.

14–15C The Black Plague (1348) and the one hundred years war (1337–1453) bring the Paris population down to 100,000 inhabitants in 1450.

14C During the regency and reign of Charles V (1364–80), called the Wise, Paris knows twenty years of wealth and security. Charles V enlarges the wall of Paris to the north to enclose the Louvre and small isolated cities. He also transforms the Louvre into a royal residence and builds the Bastille at the east.

15C Joan of Arc is burnt in Rouen May 10, 1431. The reign of Louis XI (1461–83) marks the end of the Middle Ages.

15–16C Among other constructions at the end of the Gothic period, the Hôtel de Cluny (1485–98, fig. 2.3) leans against the remnants of the Gallo-Roman Thermes de Cluny (chapter 1), using the frigidarium as a barn. Originally a town house for the abbots of Cluny and now a medieval museum (with the famous "La Dame à la Licorne" tapestries), it features a service courtyard at the front of a main wing, with flamboyant decorations in its ogival arches, balustrade, gargoyles, semi-embedded octagonal tower and dormers. The 52 m high Tour Saint-Jacques (1509–23, fig. 2.4) with its heavily decorated upper parts is a late example of flamboyant style before the Renaissance asserts itself. The tower is all that remains of the Saint-Jacques-la-Boucherie church demolished during the French Revolution, which Haussmann isolated to mark his Grande Croisée (see chapter 6). It stands skinny and clumsy as if on the verge of falling, orphaned from its mother church and adrift as an arcane and delightful dream of conquering the sky.

Fig. 2.1. Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre, 1170.

Fig. 2.2. Hôtel de Cluny, 1485–98.

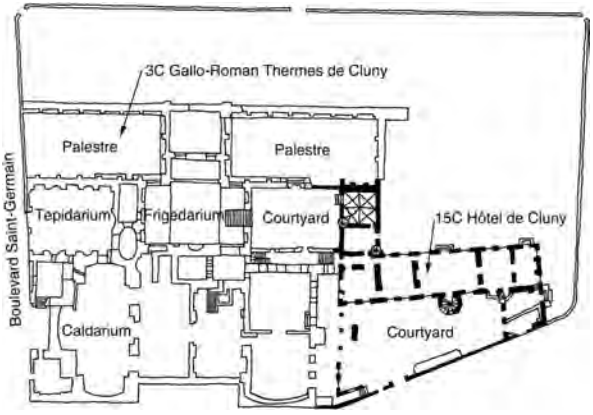

Fig. 2.3. Thermes de Cluny, 3C, and Hôtel de Cluny, 1485–98: plan.

Fig. 2.4. Tour Saint-Jacques, 1523.

By the year 1000 Barbarian Invasions cease, along with their pillaging, killing and burning. Improvement in all aspects of life can be achieved and in architecture Romanesque Abbeys flourish, providing places of meditation within the protective darkness of their thick walls to a mostly itinerant society. In time, rural prosperity brings a movement of urbanization, with the church taking the central place in a city surrounded by walls.

The Saint-Denis Basilica at the north of Paris is the most opulent: started on the burial grounds of Saint Denis by Sainte Geneviève, it becomes the burial place for the kings of France, beginning with Dagobert, and is lavished with generous royal gifts. In 1144, Abbot Suger revolutionizes architecture by transforming the basilica into the very first Gothic structure. In Suger's theology, light serves as a vehicle of spiritual ascension from material to immaterial, which he embodies in the openness and accentuated verticality inside his church. Suger's masons replace the massive Romanesque walls with a lighter structure of piers, ribbed vaulting and pointed arches, and as a result large windows can be opened in the non-structural parts of walls, allowing light to pervade the building through their magnificent painted glass. Stained-glass windows act like a filter, hiding outside reality while letting light pass through, making the experience of the divine more palpable and immediate.

Notre-Dame embodies a perfected mastering of Suger's Gothic verticality, with the flexible pointed arch bringing a unified plan in the image of God as one, and its facade displaying a harmonious tension in its tripartite horizontal and vertical composition, as a way of relating mortal existence to divine creation. In the sculpture of Last Judgment Portal, Archangel Saint Michel weighs the souls of two small people just emerged from the dead. One of them will soon join the damned souls on their way to Hell where he will fuse with monsters in a mass of deformed and rotting flesh. On the other side of the balance, a small woman kneels into an intercessory prayer directed to Christ in the Apex of the tympanum, who holds his hands up and shows that even resurrected he can still hurt along with us from his wounds.

Literary works reflects the same vertical axis emphasizing the need for a mediated communication between Earth and Heaven. In his *Historia Calamitatum*, Pierre Abélard presents himself as a sinful lover who abused the younger Héloïse and asks her to take the role of mediator and intercede for him to the divine world through her prayers. *The Very Rich Hours of the Duke of Berry* (Pol de Limbourg, 1415) presents the western side of the Île de la Cité with the Gothic Conciergerie and its Sainte-Chapelle. While Gothic cathedrals use stones at their upmost, the Sainte-Chapelle appears to be built in spite of stones. The windows take up most of the wall space, and the experience of verticality and light is brought to its apogee.

Finally, Rabelais's *Gargantua* shows the passage from a Gothic to a Renaissance humanist conception of the world that favors individual thinking over religious indoctrination. Standing at the top of the Notre-Dame towers, Gargantua punishes the Parisians' lack of enlightenment by urinating and drowning them in a flow as powerful as the Seine.

2.1 The Gothic Experience of Light

2.1.1 What Is an Esthetic Experience?

For architects such as Alberti (chapter 3) and Le Corbusier (chapter 8), beauty in a building is based on its emotive capability—we think a building beautiful when it has the power to move us. While modern man can often narrow the scope of his life to a visible "reality," Middle Ages man has such a precarious life he cannot ignore the immaterial world beyond. The question for him centers on how to make the invisible visible, and Abbot Suger brings an answer. For him, God is light, and architecture is the medium to make His presence palpable on earth. Suger describes his experience of light and architecture in terms that may not be familiar to us, but many of us had "esthetic experiences" in which the role of light has been instrumental.

Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, 1790
In his 1750 *Aesthetica*, German philosopher Alexander Baumgarten proposes the esthetic value of a work of art can be determined by its ability to produce vivid experiences in its audience. In 1781, Immanuel Kant introduces a third element: for judging something to be "beautiful," sensation gives rise to pleasure by engaging our capacities of reflective contemplation. In this sense, which we use here, judgments of beauty are sensorial, emotional and intellectual all at once.

Note: For Kant, the esthetic experience takes place with something not given in nature and in comparison with which all else is small (for instance, Asterix's reaction when seeing Lutetia and exclaiming, "LUTÈCE! …"). Beauty is not to be looked for in the things themselves, but in our own ideas about them. Finally, esthetic judgments may give a reaction of awe, possibly embodied in our physical reactions—which in turn may be constitutive of our judgment.

Interaction: Experiencing Light

In groups of two, reflect on times where you were touched by light. Share the results with the class, writing answers on the board, and classifying them in the following Kantian categories:

- Physical/sensorial (the experience is based on seeing a work of art—not something given in nature. It can be light on a building, or sunset on a skyline, etc.)
- Emotional (the experience produces a "vivid experience," it "touches" us).

- Intellectual/spiritual (the experience engages a "reflective contemplation" of an intellectual/spiritual nature).

2.1.2 The Anagogical Path to Light: Abbot Suger, *On What Was Done During His Administration*, 1144–48

Abbot Suger bases his Theology of Light on the *Theologia mystica* written by Dionysius the Aeropagite, wrongly thought at the time to be Saint Denis himself. Suger takes from his treaty the idea that God is absolute light, and created the universe in a downward burst of luminosity flowing down into the universe. Each creature receives the divine light, but also reflects it back to the invisible God from which it all proceeds. In that sense, light serves as a vehicle of spiritual ascension from material below to immaterial above.

Suger himself writes two treatises, *On his Administration* and *On Consecration*, explaining the role played by light in esthetics and spirituality. In the excerpts below, he guides the reader in a processional path through his Gothic church, starting at the front door, through the nave and chancel, and up to the high altar, as well as in an "anagogical" path from the material to the immaterial, expressing the correspondence between the physical space of the church and its spiritual aim.

XXVII *Of the Cast and Gilded Doors* (48–49)
[…] The verses on the door, further, are these:
"Whoever thou art, if thou seekest to extol the glory of these doors,
Marvel not at the gold and the expense but at the craftsmanship of the work.
Bright is the noble work; but being nobly bright, the work
Should brighten the minds, so that they may travel, through the true lights,
To the True Light where Christ is the true door.
In what manner it be inherent in this world the golden door defines:
The dull mind rises to truth through that which is material
And, in seeing this light, is resurrected from its former submersion."

XXVIII *Of the Enlargement of the Upper Choir* (51)
[…] To these verses of the inscription we choose the following ones to be added:
"Once the new rear part is joined to the part in front,
The church shines with its middle part brightened.
For bright is that which is brightly coupled with the bright,
And bright is the noble edifice which is pervaded by the new light;
Which stands enlarged in our time,
I, who was Suger, being the leader while it was being accomplished."

XXXIV [On Stained-glass windows] (73–75)
Moreover, we caused to be painted, by the exquisite hands of many masters from different regions, a splendid variety of new windows, both below and above; from that first one

which begins [the series] with the *Tree of Jesse* in the chevet of the church to that which is installed above the principal door in the church's entrance. One of these, urging us onward from the material to the immaterial, represents the Apostle Paul turning a mill, and the Prophets carrying sacks to the mill. The accompanying verse says,
By working the mill, Paul, you take the flour from the bran.
You make known the inner meaning of Moses' law.
From so many grains is made the true bread without bran,
The perpetual food of men and angels.
In the same window, where the veil is removed from Moses' face, it says,
What Moses veils, the doctrine of Christ unveils.
Those who despoil Moses bare the Law.

XXXIII *Concerning the Golden Cross* (63–65)
[…] To those who know the properties of precious stones it becomes evident, to their utter astonishment, that none is absent from the number of these (with the only exception of the carbuncle), but that they abound most copiously. Thus, when—out of my delight in the beauty of the house of God—the loveliness of the many-colored gems has called me away from external cares, and worthy meditation has induced me to reflect, transferring that which is material to that which is immaterial, on the diversity of the sacred virtues: then it seems to me that I see myself dwelling, as it were, in some strange region of the universe which neither exists entirely in the slime of the earth nor entirely in the purity of Heaven; and that, by the grace of God, I can be transported from this inferior to that higher world in an anagogical manner.

Abbot Suger, *On What was Done during his Administration*, ed. and trans. Erwin Panofsky (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1946, 1979), 48–75. First written in 1144–48.

Observation: The Religious Experience of Beauty

XXVII *Of the Cast and Gilded Doors*

The renovation of the Saint-Denis basilica starts with the porch at the west, which, like Notre-Dame, has three portals representing the Trinity. The central portal depicts the Passion and Resurrection of the Christ, emphasizing the Christ of the Gospels rather than the abstract God of the Old Testament (fig. 2.6). This new vision of a humanized God is brought by Crusaders who have seen the actual places of the New Testament, whether the Christ's birthplace in Bethlehem, the mount of Olives, or the sites of his crucifixion and entombment in Jerusalem. Crusades also play a crucial role in Suger's life, as Louis VII makes him regent during his absence.

- What do "bright" and "light" each designate?
- Which aspect of the Trinity is emphasized when the Christ is said to be the "true door"?

XXVIII *Of the Enlargement of the Upper Choir*
The "new rear part" is the part at the west of the Basilica, with the door described above in XXVII. The "part in front" is the double ambulatory at the east side, which has just been renovated to include large stained-glass windows (see figs. 2.5 and 2.7).

- What is the effect of the new light on the church?
- How does the "new light" differ from the "True Light" in XXVI?

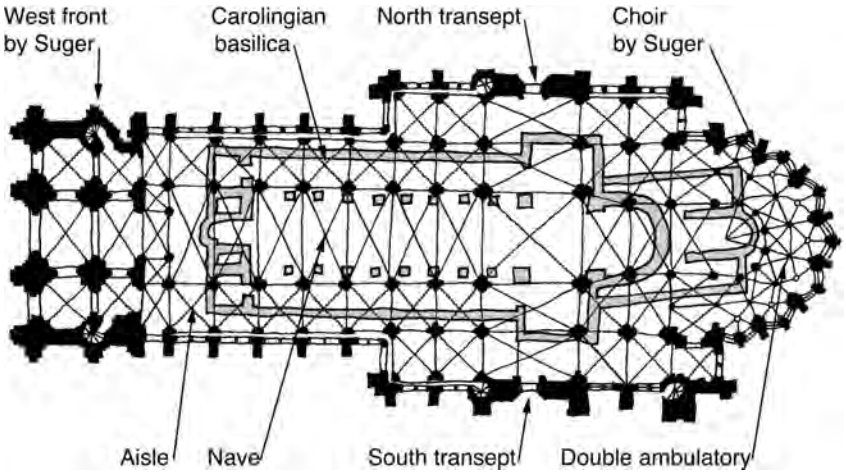

Fig. 2.5. Abbot Suger's partial transformation of the Carolingian Saint-Denis Basilica, 1135–44.

XXXIV [On Stained-glass windows]
The "splendid variety of new windows" are the stained-glass windows Suger uses in an innovative way as they take the whole space in between the stone structure (fig. 2.8).

- How does Paul "unveil" Moses' law (see also fig. 2.9)?
- How may stained-glass windows participate in this process of unveiling? For example, how may they "sift" the outside reality away, and what do they replace it with?

XXXIII *Concerning the Golden Cross*
The processional path ends at the Golden Cross located in the chancel of the new church, and this is where Suger's spiritual experience takes place.

- How is the "worthy meditation" induced?
- What do you make of the "strange region" Suger sees himself dwelling in?
- Describe Suger's "anagogical" transportation, and the role light plays in it.

Fig. 2.6. Doors at the west.

Fig. 2.7. Ribbed vaults in double ambulatory.

Fig. 2.8. Nave and stained-glass windows.

Fig. 2.9. Paul unveils Moses' law.

Figs. 2.6–9. Abbot Suger, Saint-Denis Basilica, 1135–44.

2.1.3 Flexible Gothic Arch: Sir Banister Fletcher, *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method*, 1896

Fletcher's text is by far the most technical of the textbook, yet still one of the best to present the radically innovative Gothic architecture, with its structural skeleton of piers, pointed arches, ribbed vaults and flying buttresses.

> [1] The Gothic of the thirteenth century throughout Europe was slowly evolved from Romanesque architecture and is mainly distinguished by the introduction and general use of the pointed arch, whose original home was Mesopotamia; from Assyria (p. 86) it passed to Sassanian Persia; when the Muslims conquered Persia (c. 641) it became part of their stock-in-trade. The adventurous Normans found it well established when they wrested Sicily from the Muslims (1061–90) and in Syria it was in frequent use at the opening of the Crusades (1096). This feature, in conjunction with buttresses and lofty pinnacles, gives to the style the aspiring tendency, which has been regarded as symbolic of the religious aspirations of the period. Romanesque architects had begun to recognize the differing functions performed by the respective parts of vaulted buildings and to provide for them more economically than the Romans had done. Gothic architects further extended the application of the principles of counterpoise, and by employing small stones laid in shallow courses with thick mortar joints, endeavored to secure the greatest amount of elasticity compatible with stability. The Gothic masons, throwing the rein on the neck of experiment, utilized stone to its utmost capacity. They heaped up stone in towers that, rising above the lofty roofs of nave and transepts, tapered upwards in slender spires embroidered with lace-like tracery. They suspended it overhead in ponderous vaults, ornamented so as to seem mere gossamer webs pierced by cunning pendants, which pleased the fancy of the fifteenth century, and which in reality sustain the very vaults from which they appear to hang. Finally, emboldened by success, they even ventured to cut granular stone as thin as fibrous wood.
>
> [2] The stability of a Gothic cathedral depends upon the proper adjustment of thrust and counter-thrust. The collected pressures of the nave vaulting, which are downward owing to their weight and oblique owing to the arched form of the vault, are counteracted partially by the dead weight of the outer roof loaded upon the upward extension of the clear-story walls, and for the rest by arches carried above the aisle roofs to press against the nave wall, these arches being retained by an outer line of massive buttresses weighted by pinnacles. Whereas in Roman buildings the buttressing system is often an integral part of the enormously thick walls, which rise up to weight the haunches of barrel vaults or domes, in a Gothic building the wall system consists of pieces of wall, or buttresses, at right angles to the building, to take the collected pressures of the ribbed vault. This structural contrivance of transmitting the accumulated pressures to the ground is known as a "flying buttress." The entire structure consists of a skeleton of piers, buttresses, arches, and ribbed vaulting, all held in equilibrium by the combination of oblique and vertical forces neutralizing each other, as is clearly shown by the illustrations which explain the constructive principles. The walls were thus merely required to enclose and not to support

the structure, and indeed they principally consisted of glazed windows with vertical mullions and traceried heads. […]

[3] Gothic architecture, in common with Greek, relies on the evident truthfulness of its structural features, which in both styles are component parts of the artistic scheme. The self-contained Greek temple, however, is reposeful in the repetition of its columns and the severity of its horizontal entablatures, whereas the Gothic cathedral is a complex, virile structure composed of many vertical features, to which unity was given by a due observance of relative proportions. Thus in Gothic architecture the features were not left to mere artistic caprice, but were in the main determined by stern structural utility, as exemplified in the novel shape of a capital specially designed to support a novel superstructure, and in the ribs of vaults which accurately express their function as sinews to support the vaulting panels. Although most of the forms were founded primarily on structural necessity, others were the expression of artistic invention; thus the spire fulfilled no structural requirement, but it served as a symbol and formed an outward and visible expression of the religious aspirations of the time and directed the thoughts of men heavenwards. Compared with Greek or Roman monumental construction in masonry, the Gothic was an architecture of small stones, for easy transport; for fine material was not usually so immediate to the sites as in Greece, nor was there such a well-developed road system as the Roman. […]

[4] As a result of the development of the Gothic system of buttresses, walls became less necessary as supports; but were naturally retained to enclose the building and protect it against the elements. Another step in the evolution of the style was made possible by the invention of painted glass, which was forthwith used to form brilliant transparent pictures in the ever-recurring windows which were enclosed under the pointed vaults, which had, as already explained, been originally adopted for constructive reasons.

Sir Banister Fletcher, *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method* (New York: Scribner's, 1961, first published 1896), 367–71.

Interaction: Gothic Architecture

Divide into groups of two, each working on a different paragraph and filling in the key words in the following extracts of Fletcher's text. Each group then reports to the class, explaining in their own words features of Gothic architecture that strike them as important.

[1] The Gothic of the thirteenth century throughout Europe was slowly evolved from Romanesque architecture and is mainly distinguished by the introduction and general use of the _____ […]. This feature, in conjunction with _____, gives to the style the _____ tendency, which has been regarded as symbolic of the _____ _____ of the period.

- [Gothic architects] by employing _____ laid in shallow courses with thick mortar joints, endeavored to secure the greatest amount of _____. The Gothic masons, throwing the rein on the neck of experiment, _____ _____. They heaped up stone in towers that, rising above the lofty roofs of nave and transepts, tapered upwards in _____ _____.

[2] The stability of a Gothic cathedral depends upon the proper adjustment of _____ _____ […] This structural contrivance of transmitting the accumulated pressures to the ground is known as a "_____." The entire structure consists of a skeleton of _____, all held in equilibrium by the combination of oblique and vertical forces neutralizing each other, as is clearly shown by the illustrations which explain the constructive principles.

[3] Gothic architecture, in common with Greek, relies on the _____ _____, which in both styles are component parts of the artistic scheme.

- Although most of the forms were founded primarily on _____, others were the expression of artistic invention; thus the spire fulfilled no structural requirement, but it served as a symbol and formed an outward and visible expression of the _____ of the time and directed the thoughts of men _____.

[4] As a result of the development of the Gothic system of buttresses, walls became less necessary as _____; but were naturally retained to _____ and _____ _____. Another step in the evolution of the style was made possible by the invention of _____, which was forthwith used to form brilliant transparent pictures in the ever-recurring windows which were enclosed under the pointed vaults, which had, as already explained, been originally adopted for constructive reasons.

Observation: Flying Buttresses at Notre-Dame

While Romanesque churches use massive walls around their periphery to counter the weight of its building, Gothic cathedrals use buttresses perpendicular to the periphery of the building to serve the same purpose in a much more effective way. To provide an even lighter and more cost-effective structure, Gothic cathedrals

also use flying buttresses extending to a massive pier far from the wall. In the section through the nave of Notre-Dame (fig. 2.10):

- Color the structure outside the cathedral: buttress walls (filled with side chapels later on), buttress piers above, flying buttresses in the form of a semi-arch, and the pyramidal-shaped pinnacles on top of the buttress piers, that add weight to counteract the lateral thrust of the vault.
- Circle the eight gargoyles. What is their function?
- Draw a 6ft tall person inside the nave, by the scale.

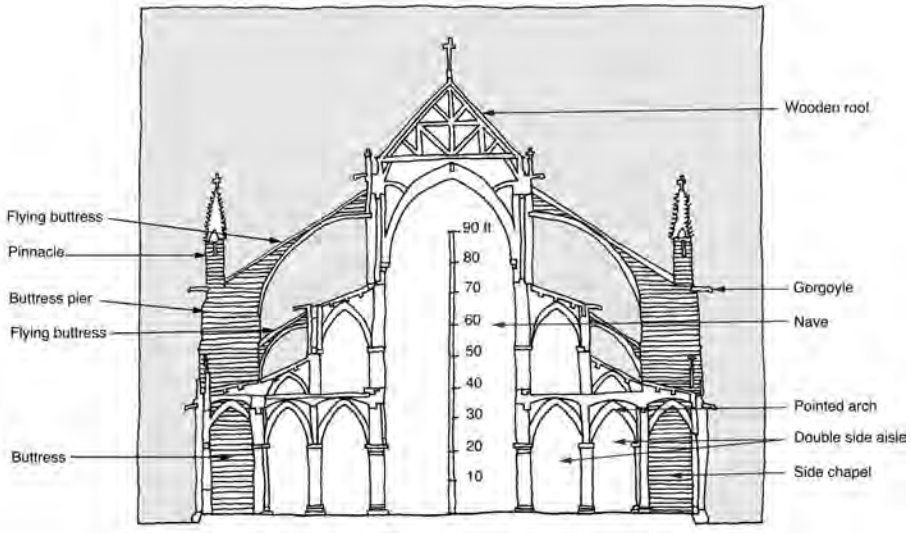

Fig. 2.10. Notre-Dame, section through the nave showing the outside structure of buttresses.

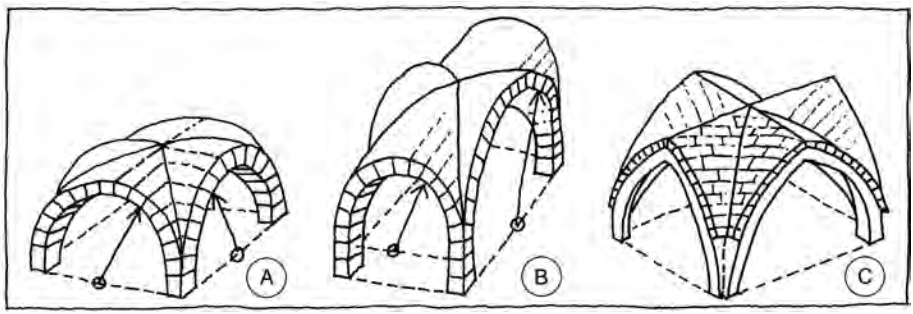

Fig. 2.11. Romanesque and Gothic vaulting systems: (A) A Roman groin vault works well on a square plan as the semi-circular arches match. (B) Romanesque groin vault (on a rectangular plan): the semi-circular arches do not match in height. (C) Gothic rib vault: pointed arches can be made any height, for any span, and are the most flexible to fit any plans.

Observation: Romanesque and Gothic Vaulting Systems

Look at the drawings figure 2.11 to understand the problem of the Romanesque vault and how it was solved with the Gothic arch.

- First, notice that a problem occurs when arches are configured to produce a vault covering a rectangular plan. When the plan is square, like in the first drawing, the semi-circular arches match in height and width. This type of vault, a groin vault, was first employed by Romans to cover halls of great dimensions. But not having rectangular plans posed too much of a constraint when designing a church, and many solutions were found, none of which fully satisfying.
- The second drawing with a rectangular plan shows a solution often used in Romanesque churches: both arches are semi-circular, the crowns of the intersecting vaults are level, but the arches are not the same height and the upper part of the smaller arch is raised in a stilted arch.
- The third drawing shows a Gothic vault over a rectangular plan. The pointed arch can be adjusted in height to fit any span, making the transition from one space to another imperceptible. To appreciate how much more flexible the Gothic structure is, we will compare the plans of Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Notre-Dame, and see how in Notre-Dame all the elements are fused to form one continuous space.

Recap: Principles of Gothic Architecture

Using the main ideas above, describe in your own terms the following principles of Gothic Architecture.

- Materials:
- Structure:
- Relationship between form and structure:
- Walls and windows:
- Esthetic experience:

Underline aspects that strike you as specific to Gothic architecture, and use them to analyze Gothic Notre-Dame, Sainte-Chapelle and Conciergerie below.

2.2 Île de la Cité, East Side: Religious Power

During the 19C Second Empire, the Île de la Cité loses most of its medieval streets, considered prone to foment and sustain Parisian insurrections. Baron Haussmann

turns the central part of the island into a compound of administrative buildings, easily accessible to Napoléon III's horsemen but with little architectural appeal. However, both tips of the island remain untouched to this day. The eastern end privately owned by the church, has kept its religious vocation with Gothic Notre-Dame, along with its urbanism of medieval streets surrounding it. The western end has kept its governmental vocation, with the Gothic Conciergerie still acting as the judicial center of France.

Observation: 14C Île de la Cité

Label the 14C plan figure 2.12 with the following:

- (1) Seine, (2) Right Bank (North) and (3) Left Bank (South).
- The 1C Roman Cardo Maximus that has become (4) Rue Saint-Martin and (5) Rue Saint-Jacques.
- (6) Rue Saint-Denis (right bank).
- Bridges: (7) Pont au Change, (8) Pont Notre-Dame and (9) Petit-Pont.
- (10) Conciergerie (or King's Palace) with (11) Bonbec Tower, (12) Tour d'Argent and Tour de César, (13) Clock Tower and (14) King's garden.
- (15) Gothic Notre-Dame Cathedral and (16) Sainte-Chapelle.
- (17) House of Héloïse's Uncle Fulbert, Canon of Notre-Dame (see Letters of Abélard and Héloïse below).

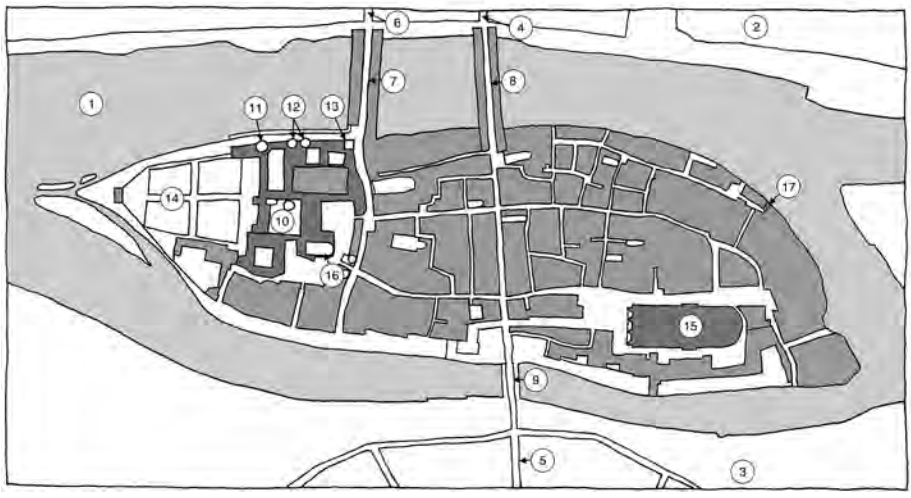

Fig. 2.12. Île de la Cité, 14C.

2.2.1 Gothic Notre-Dame (1163–1245)

Notre-Dame occupies the site of the Temple of Jupiter, built in 1C by Emperor Tibere. The Nautes column, erected outside the temple and now displayed in the Cluny Roman Baths, depicts both Roman and Gallic deities, showing the Romans' religious tolerance for other beliefs. Saint-Étienne takes the place of the Temple of Jupiter in the 6C as the first cathedral of Paris, and in 1163, Bishop Maurice de Sully founds Notre-Dame.

Its construction spans over two centuries (1163–1245), with "change orders" along the way that bring creative solutions such as flying buttresses. While still in construction, Notre-Dame is already the site of major religious and political events. Rarely a place of royal sacraments (except Napoléon's as we will see in chapter 5), or royal marriages (with the exception of the wedding of Marguerite de Valois with Henri de Navarre as we will see in chapter 3), Notre-Dame rather celebrates victories with the Te Deum (such as for the liberation of Paris during World War Two) and houses Requiem messes (such as for the funeral service of de Gaulle and Mitterrand).

Observation: Jean Fouquet, Leaf from the *Hours of Etienne Chevalier, Right Hand of God Driving Out Demons*, ca. 1452–60

Right Hand of God Driving Out Demons shows a view of Paris in spring, with men kneeling in an intercessory prayer, answered by God's hand boring through the sky dome to chase demons away (fig. 2.13).

- Identify the buildings: in the foreground, the gate in the Philippe Auguste Wall and the Tower of Nesle parapet (where the men are kneeling). In the middle ground: the Pont Saint Michel and the Petit Châtelet Fortress behind, the roof of the Hôtel-Dieu, the tower of the Evêché and Notre-Dame. In the background, the Saint-Geneviève Mount. On which bank are the praying men located?
- Describe the scene with men in the front kneeling in an intercessory prayer. What is God's answer? How is His presence made visible?
- Compare with the 1317 illumination of Moine Yves, *Life of Saint Denis* in chapter 1: the view of Paris, the role of the praying people, and the vaulted sky with Heaven and Hell.

Victor Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, 1831

In the 1790s, the French Revolution extensively damages Notre-Dame along with any other buildings that had to do with royalty and religion. Victor Hugo, leader

Fig. 2.13. Jean Fouquet, *Right Hand of God Driving Out Demons*, in *Hours of Étienne Chevalier*, 1452–60. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art / Art Resource, NY.

of the 19C romantic movement (see chapter 5), writes his novel to help inspire a renewed appreciation for pre-Renaissance buildings and promote the urgent need to save them. As a result, an extensive and sometimes controversial restoration takes place in 1845, supervised by Viollet-le-Duc (see chapter 6).

We all know the characters of Quasimodo ("almost made") and Esmeralda, although less their tragic story, which has nothing to do with the happy Hollywood Disney version. In Hugo's novel, Esmeralda is abandoned by Phaebus, hung at the Place de Grève, and left in the vault of Montfaucon where Quasimodo embraces her to his own death. Yet the true heroine of the novel is Notre-Dame herself, with Book 3 dedicated to her description and the view of Paris from her towers. Here is Hugo's description of the main facade and its "vast symphony of stone."

> [1] In the first place, to mention only some of the most important examples, there are assuredly few more beautiful specimens of architecture than that facade, with the three doorways with their pointed arches; the border embroidered and fretted with twenty-eight royal niches; the immense central stained-glass window, flanked by its two lateral windows, like the priest by the deacon and subdeacon; the lofty and light gallery of openwork clover arcades supporting a heavy platform on its slender pillars; last, the two dark and massive towers with their slate porches—harmonious parts of a magnificent whole, placed one above the other in five gigantic stories—present themselves to the eye as a mass yet without confusion, with their innumerable details of statuary, sculpture, and carving powerfully contributing to the tranquil grandeur of the whole—a vast symphony of stone, if we may be allowed the expression. It is the colossal work of a people and one man, like the *Iliad* or the Romanceros, of which it is a sibling. It is the prodigious product of the forces of the age in which the fancy of the workman, chastened by the genius of the artist, is seen surging forth in a hundred ways on every stone. In short, it is a sort of human Creation, powerful and fertile as the Divine Creation, from which it seems to have borrowed its twofold character of variety and eternity.

Victor Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, trans. Catherine Liu (New York: The Modern Library, 2002), 97–98. Written 1831.

Drawing: Notre-Dame West Facade

With the help of the drawing in figure 2.14, sketch the facade of Notre-Dame, starting with a square, adding the towers above, and respecting its tripartite composition. Label it with elements given in Victor Hugo's text:

- "Three doorways with their pointed arches."
- "The border embroidered and fretted with twenty-eight royal niches," which is the Gallery of the Kings. Why does Victor Hugo speak of "niches" instead of statues of kings?

- "The immense central stained-glass window, flanked by its two lateral windows, like the priest by the deacon and subdeacon," which is the west rose window. Look for other circular shapes at that level that tie the rose window with the other pointed windows.
- "The lofty and light gallery of open-work clover arcades supporting a heavy platform on its slender pillars," which is the Great Gallery. Notice how the central part of this gallery is open to the sky, and brings an ambiguous reading of the facade, as a square with towers above, or two equal rectangles.
- "The two dark and massive towers with their slate porches." Notice that those towers have no spires or steeples. How would having those change the facade? Label the twin towers and the spire Viollet-le-Duc placed instead at the transept crossing in the 19C.

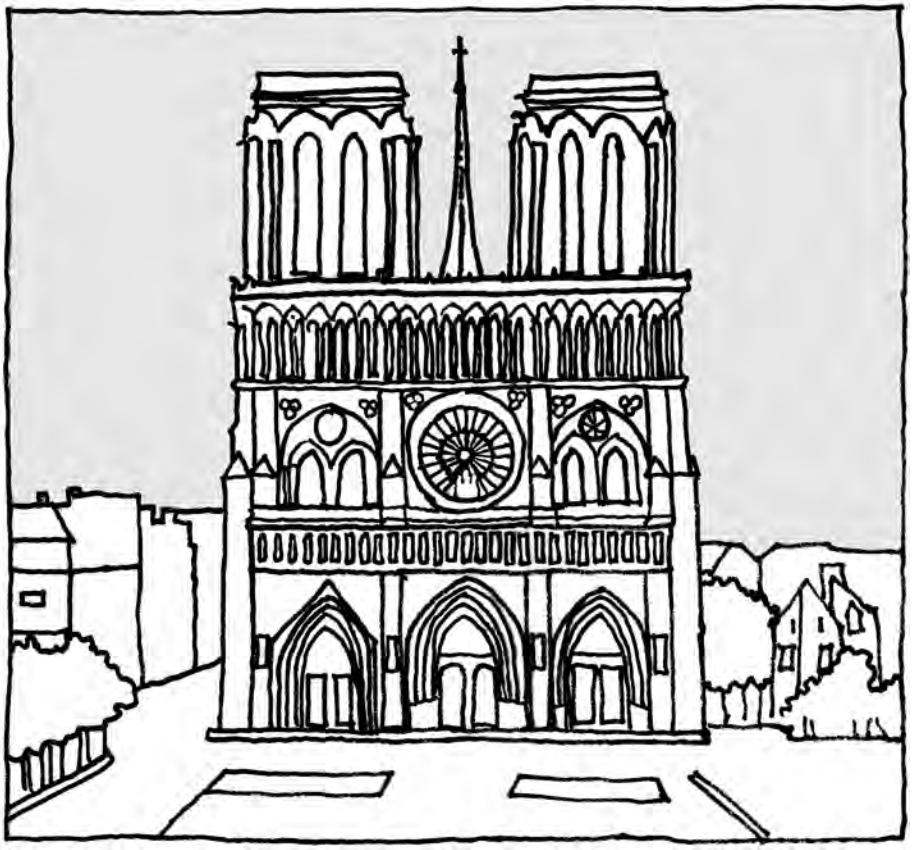

Fig. 2.14. Notre-Dame, west facade, 1200–50.

- "A magnificent whole, placed one above the other in five gigantic stories." How does this emphasis on horizontals create a tension with the verticals of the facade?
- Look at the composition of the facade, and explain in which way it is a "symphony of stone" as expressed by Hugo.

2.2.2 Comparison of Romanesque Saint-Germain-des-Prés, 990–1014, and Gothic Notre-Dame, 1163–1245

Hugues Capet (987–996) founds the Capetian dynasty, at the same time Abbot Morard rebuilds Saint-Germain-des-Prés (990–1014), one of the very few Romanesque churches left in Paris. Napoléon did not care much for these old churches and had them torn down at the beginning of the 19C, causing more damage to the Parisian patrimony than the whole French Revolution.

Observation: Romanesque Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Gothic Notre-Dame

Although the two structures contain the same elements, notice how Notre-Dame is twice the size of Saint-Germain. Label the plans in figure 2.15:

1. Porch
2. Narthex
3. Buttress
4. Side ailes (sometimes double)
5. Nave
6. Transept arm
7. Side chapel
8. Chancel
9. Ambulatory
10. Radiating chapel

Interaction: Comparing Romanesque Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Gothic Notre-Dame

In groups of two or as a class, consider the following:

- Identify the wall systems in each plan (fig. 2.15): massive walls around the periphery of Saint-Germain, buttresses perpendicular to the periphery in Notre-Dame.

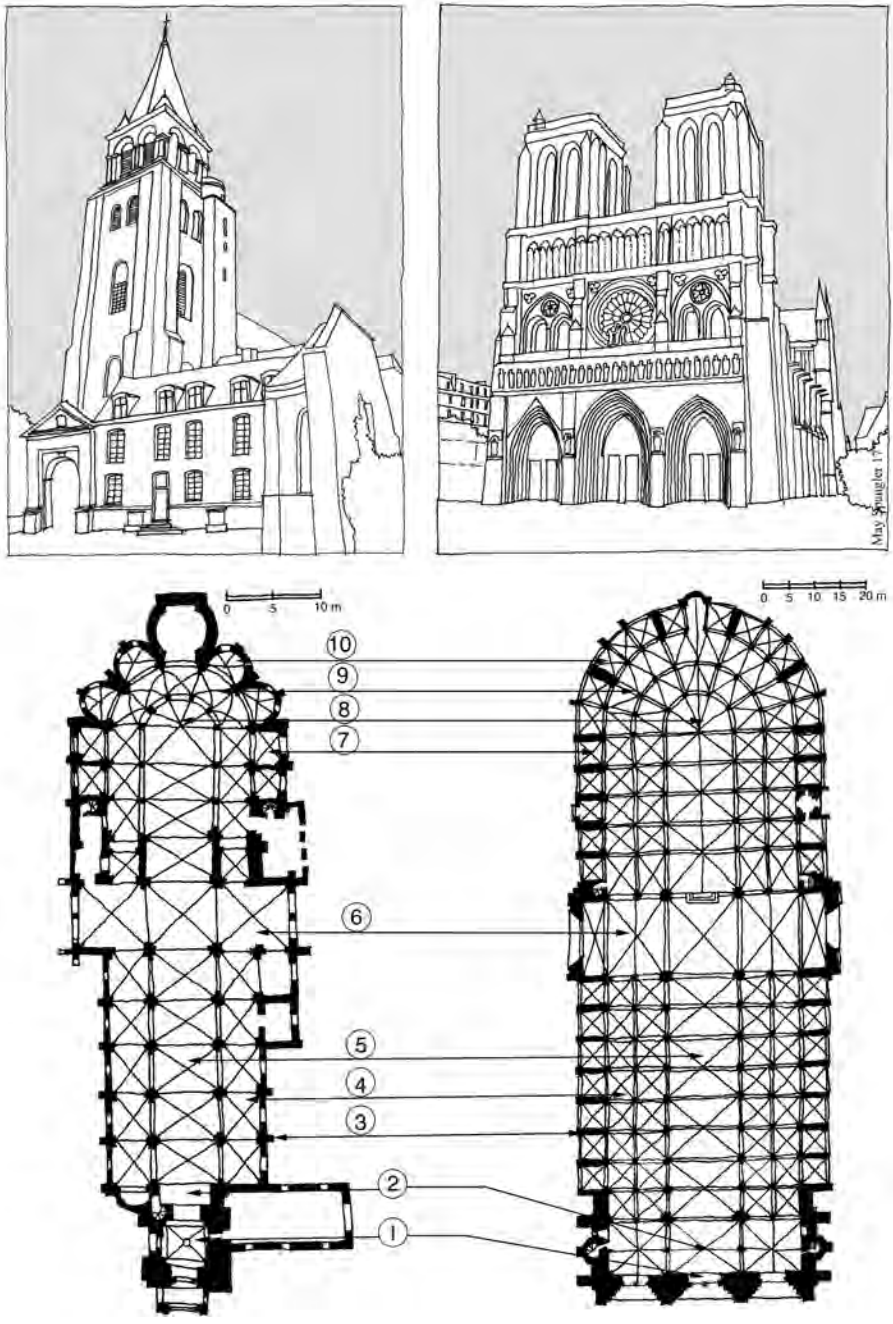

Fig. 2.15. Saint-Germain-des-Prés, 990–1014, and Notre-Dame, 1163–1245.

- Examine how in the Notre-Dame plan, the different components are more connected and integrated with each other, especially the porch, side-aisles and transept crossing.
- Compare the outside aspect of the edifices (fig. 2.15). How unified are the different elements, such as the bell towers and windows?

2.2.3 Notre-Dame's Portal of the Last Judgment: Hoffbauer, *Paris à travers les âges*, 1998

In contrast with the neatly composed west facade, the portals are packed with sculptures of saints and monsters engaged in all sorts of disorderly actions. In the Last Judgment portal, man is brought to trial, and goat-like demons lead the damned to torture in a terrifying vision of Hell.

[1] The Portal of the Judgment, mutilated in the 18C by Soufflot, has been rehabilitated in its original state; the trumeau that divided the door in two parts has been rebuilt; and a handsome Christ blessing and holding a closed book, by de Chaume, has replaced the Christ that Soufflot had removed. The teaching Christ is the very center of this composition, which would be incomprehensible without him. The twelve Apostles are aligned to the right and to the left, and each one of them, with the precision of this age of faith when the priests themselves directed the constructions of churches, carries the attribute that distinguishes him, the sign that gives him a characteristic physiognomy among the saints, and the instruments of his martyrdom.

[2] Two rows, each composed of six bas-reliefs, put in the presence of each other Vices and Virtues, which are going to fight over the human heart: although enlightened by the Revelation of the Gospel held by the Christ, he nevertheless retains through his free will the power of choosing between good and evil. Grave and noble in his representation of sacred characters, the Middle Ages artist has treated these episodes of human life with a natural verve and a realism that make of it as many little tableau de genre. The cathedral, one must not tire of repeating, was a book where each person was to read and meet a teaching; art was to conform to this rule, and while contemplating this portal, the least lettered of our ancestors found the materialized lesson of a scene intelligible to all.

[3] That is how Avarice is represented in the form of a miser, holding a purse and piling up money in a chest; a knight, who struggles on his horse and spurs it, but will be thrown to the ground, personifies Temerity. Cowardice has thrown his swords, and runs away frantic with terror, unaware that only a rabbit purses him. A monk who has left his abbey symbolizes Indiscipline; he turns back one last time to look for the peaceful cell where he has left, along with his robe, his happiness and his honor.

[4] Virtues are sitting down, and their movements although calmer are no less expressed with a rare eloquence. Hope, eyes raised to the sky, waves a standard; Courage, a woman

dressed in a coat of mail, holds a sword in her right hand, and in her left hand an écu on which a lion is distinguishable. Those twelve Virtues and twelve Vices, occupying the superior zone, are adjoined in a witty dispute and look like the two sides of a human medal.

[5] At the same height as the allegorical figures, but outside the embrasures, two square bas-reliefs, alas mutilated, seem to take over the same motif under another form. Abraham, listening to the angel who speaks to him in a cloud, would be the personification of Obedience; Job laying on his manure, would be the Resignation to testing; a warrior, who attempts to throw an arrow to the sun, Nemrod, the Ambition wanting to fight the sky itself.

[6] The first lintel immediately above recalls the terrible scene of the last judgment. At the call of the trumpet, the dead come out of their tomb; in the middle, Saint Michel weighs the souls. To the right of the archangel, the elected souls look at the sky, which will be their sojourn for eternity; to the left, the damned are in the hands of demons. Here again shines forth the freedom that asserts itself in the Middle Ages churches. Among the miserable souls whose faces express despair can be seen more than one of the powerful of the world, more than one of the high personages whom we will meet later in the macabre dances: a bishop, kings, knights. The crowd, while contemplating these gripping images, had a new promise of the equality that was to reign beyond Earth, in the regions of definitive justice, where each one would be judged according to his or her merits.

[7] In the lintel above, the Christ again, judging human beings and condemning those who did not obey to his words. Angels standing by him hold the instruments of Passion; behind the Christ, the Virgin, John the Baptist and angels, appeal to his mercy.

[8] The six archivolts, admirably restored by Toussaint and de Chaume, work to make complete the signification of the composition. On the right, elected souls, patriarchs, prophets, doctors and martyrs complete the assembly of the triumphant Church; on the left, demons offering all varieties of the dreadful, the antichrist whom Death carries and lets fall down—all the reproved are agitated by appalling convulsions in the midst of Hell.

M. F. Hoffbauer, *Paris à travers les âges* (Tours: Bibliothèque de l'Image, 1998), 263–6. Trans. May Spangler.

Observation: Last Judgment Portal

With the help of Hoffbauer's text, label the drawing of the Last Judgment Portal, starting from the bottom (fig. 2.16):

- In the embrasures (side of the doors): bas-relief carvings of allegories of Vices (round medallion) and Virtues (above it).
- Just above the medallions: the Apostles, six on each side of the doors.

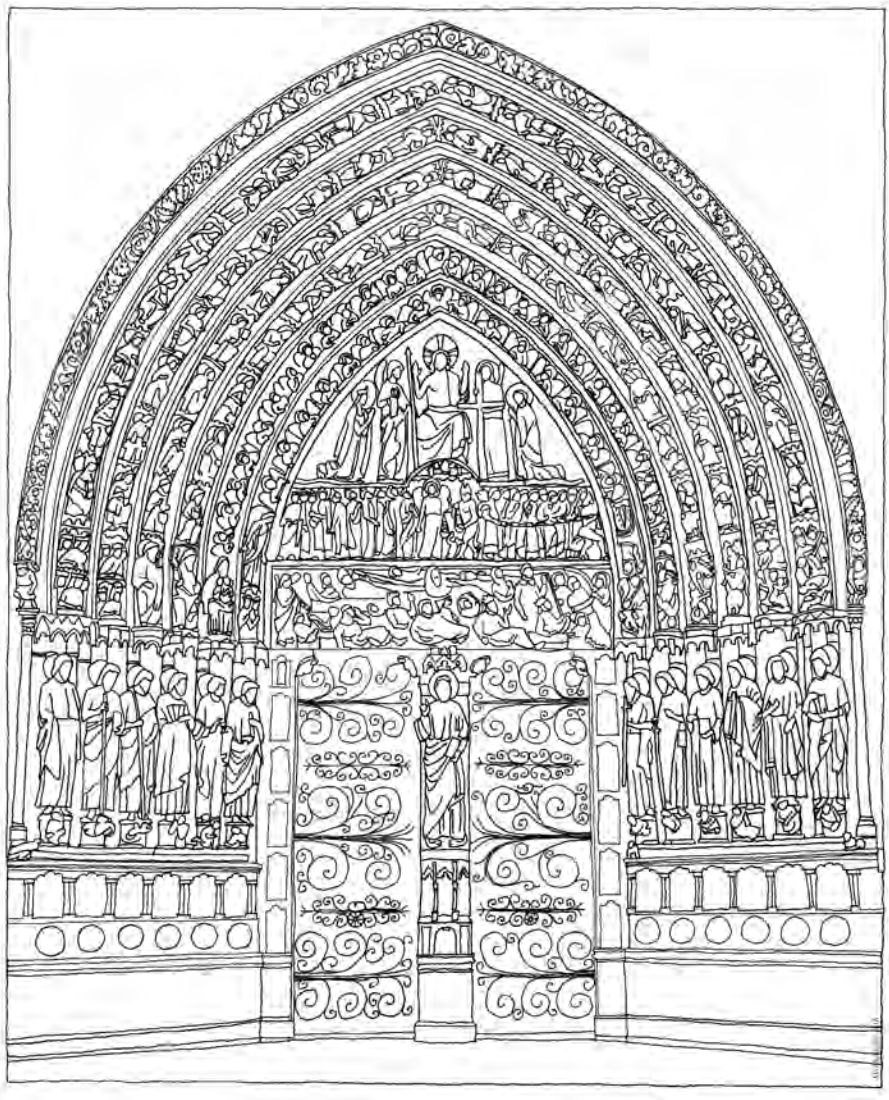

Fig. 2.16. Notre-Dame: central portal of the Last Judgment, west facade, 1225.

- At the same level as his Apostles and as a trumeau figure: the teaching Jesus. The trumeau is the stone mullion between the two doors.
- Above the doors, the tympanum depicts the last judgment. In the lower lintel, the dead emerge from their tomb at the blow of trumpets. Among them, warriors and royalty.
- In the lintel above (still in the tympanum), Saint Michel weighs the souls (on the right, the damned are enchained and lead to Hell; on the left the righteous are sent to Heaven).
- At the Apex of the tympanum: another Christ flanked by his mother and John, who are intervening for the lost souls.
- In the archivolts, on the left side the saved souls in the "lap of Abraham"—a medieval symbol of Heaven, and on the right side the damned in Hell.

Observation: The Way to Salvation

The Last Judgment presents the way to Salvation, showing each step toward that goal. First, man has to be told which actions in his daily life make him a sinner. Look at the level of the embrasures on the two sides of the doors:

- See how Virtues are shown with sitting women holding a medallion of an animal or an object symbolizing a Virtue, and Vices appear in little scenes where a person reenacts a vice in an allegory (fig. 2.17). How does it differentiate men from animals? Compare with the allegories of *The Romance of the Rose*.
- Describe the Teaching Christ, situated between the two doors (fig. 2.18). In which way is he more human than divine? What is the Apostles' role?
- In the archivolts to the left of the call to judgment lintel, identify the patriarchs: Isaac, Jacob and Abraham holding three small souls on their laps (fig. 2.19). Also identify the rewards of Heaven in the new Jerusalem and the way people act.
- Identify terrors of Hell represented in the archivolts to the right of the call to judgment lintel (fig. 2.20): cauldron of boiling oil (Revelation 21:8), Death riding a horse (Revelation 6), demons carrying souls away, black horse rider (Revelation 6)? Can you make out the last two arches, with punishment for sexual perversion and then a fusion between monsters and damned souls? What is the message given to the beholder at this point?

Fig. 2.17. Embrasure: vices and virtues.

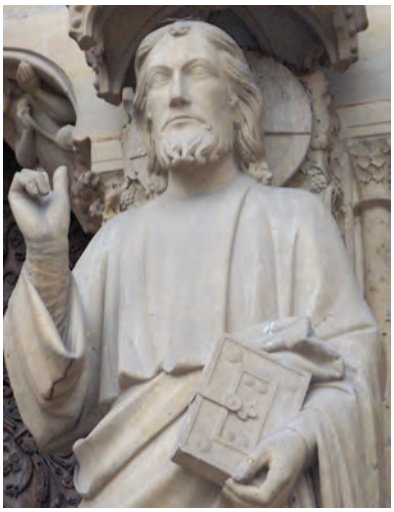

Fig. 2.18. Trumeau: teaching Jesus.

Fig. 2.19. Archivolt to the left: Heaven with the three patriarchs, Isaac, Jacob and Abraham.

Fig. 2.20. Archivolt to the right: Hell with cauldron, blindfolded death, black horse rider, lust.

Figs. 2.17–20. Notre-Dame: central portal of the Last Judgment, 1225.

Then the viewer has to understand that all will be judged, and how the judgment will operate. Look at the lower and top lintels:

- When and how are men called to judgment (fig. 2.23)? Who is called to judgment? Why are there no babies?
- The trial (fig. 2.22): identify and describe Saint Michel weighing souls. What makes the demon to the right of the scale a monster? What about the two small people being judged? Does the trial seem fair? How are the ten elected people acting? What about the ten chained-up damned souls?
- Finally, the viewer is given a message of hope. Examine the sitting Jesus in the apex (fig. 2.21): clothes, hair, expression, hands and halo. What is his role in the last judgment?

Interaction: The Notre-Dame Woman

The word anthropomorphism derives from the Greek ἄνθρωπος (*ánthrōpos*), "human," and μορφή (*morphē*), "shape" or "form." It is generally defined as the attribution of human form (or other human characteristics) to what is non-human (a god, an animal or an object). In this study, we will focus on the attribution of human form to architecture. Such anthropomorphism is famously visible in Leonardo de Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*, whose ideal proportions are to be used by architects in the design of their Renaissance facades (as we will see in chapter 3).

Since the conception of man vastly differs from one time period to another, so does its depiction and its reflection into architecture. We therefore consider depictions of man at different time periods, starting with the Notre-Dame Woman for the Gothic period in this chapter, the Vitruvian Man for the Renaissance and classical period, the Monet Man for the impressionist period, the Modulor for the cubist period, and the Halles Woman for the postmodern period.

However small and humble she may appear to be, the woman in the scale of Saint Michel holds the very unique central position of the tympanum of the central portal of Notre-Dame, on the vertical between the teaching Jesus and the sitting Jesus. She is also at the liminal moment of her judgment: the balance is still in equilibrium between sending her to Hell or Heaven. Finally, she is kneeling in an intercessory prayer, and as such a mediator between Earth and Heaven.

Consider the following in the Notre-Dame Woman (fig. 2.24):

- Describe her body, hair, face and expression. How can you tell it is a woman? What does she do?

Fig. 2.21. Apex of tympanum: Christ in Glory with Mary, John, and angels holding nails and cross.

Fig. 2.22. Middle lintel of tympanum: the trial with Saint Michel weighing souls.

Fig. 2.23. Lower lintel of tympanum: call to judgment.

Figs. 2.21–23. Notre-Dame, Last Judgment Tympanum, 1225.

Fig. 2.24. Detail of the trial: Notre-Dame Woman in the scale.

- Look at the geometrical composition of the balance and Notre-Dame Woman. How many triangles and circles can you find? Why would the top part of her body be emphasized?
- Examine how the Notre-Dame Woman may embody a Gothic esthetic of vertical thrust.

2.2.4 Rose Windows at Notre-Dame

When the grandiose South Rose window of Notre-Dame goes up in 1270, it is such a great event that Saint Louis waits to see it in place before leaving on

his second crusade—and the last one since he dies in Tunis. Thomas Aquinas, professor at the University of Paris and one of the main thinkers of all times, often visits the building site of Notre-Dame. Here he is portrayed in *The Golden Moments of Notre-Dame de Paris* checking out the construction of the South Rose Window.

Interaction: Thomas Aquinas and the South Rose Window

Going through the portal of the Last Judgment is to be reminded that we eventually will be judged for our sins. Monsters are waiting to grab us, chain us, boil us and give us the most possible misery. On the other hand, stained-glass windows bring a radically different message to people: the glorious light triumphs over substance, heightening a spiritual experience that promotes a more direct communication with God. In groups of two, study one panel each of the following aspects of the BD (bande dessinée or comic book) of *The Golden Moments of Notre-Dame de Paris* (fig. 2.25). Then share your results with the class:

- The picture: the location, the people and what they do.
- The text: who is talking to whom, and what they are talking about.
- How do picture and text interact? Which medium gives the most information?
- Which do you look at first, picture or text?
- Do you feel the information to be trustworthy in both cases?
- Which specific values might BDs have over another form of art? Does it deserve the appellation of "ninth art"?

Project: Inside and Outside the West Rose

Until Crusaders bring some roses back from the Middle East, they are unknown in 12C France but for the small version of wild roses. The Notre-Dame 1225 west rose is built at the time Guillaume de Lorris writes *The Romance of the Rose* in 1230 (see chapter 1), and while poets celebrate their ephemeral beauty as a symbol of courtly love, in architecture their round pattern represents God's eternal and perfect nature. Rose windows in architecture also have the particularity of combining two mutually dependent parts, the stone tracery mostly visible from the outside, and the stained glass mostly visible from the inside. On the other hand, stained-glass windows in general do not have an outside stone tracery of particular interest and are conceived to only be seen from inside. This distinction brings a special status to rose windows in our study, as analogical operators between the inside/outside as well as material/immaterial entities.

Fig. 2.25. Serge Saint-Michel, Claude Lacroix, and Nadine Voillat, *The Golden Moments of Notre-Dame de Paris*, 2006. Reprinted by permission of the publisher: Éditions du Signe, 2006.

Divide into three groups and look for images of the Notre-Dame west rose: one group from outside, another from inside, and the last group a detail of the inner quatrefoil showing the month of December (type "west rose segment BAR800" or look at Paradoxplace.com to find this rose segment).

- Describe the outside view of the west rose window (fig. 2.26): the combination of a circle and a square in its composition, the stone tracery with the least possible amount of stone, its division in twelve petals for twelve months, and the way it radiates like the spokes of a wheel. Which feature of the west rose is the most striking from outside? What message does it convey?
- Describe the inside view of the west rose window (fig. 2.27): what happened to the stone tracery and colonnettes? How about the petals: how many, and what may each now represent? Which feature of the west rose window is the most striking from inside?

Fig. 2.26. Notre-Dame west rose window, outside view.

Fig. 2.27. Notre-Dame west rose window, inside view.

- In the inner quatrefoil of the December month, identify a prophet, the vice of Cowardice, the zodiac sign of the Capricorn, the virtue of Fortitude and a footsie game. What is the role of humor in it?
- Report to the class and discuss the following:
  - How inside and outside views offer radically different experiences, one of the material world, the other of the immaterial world.
  - When a small child, Viollet-le-Duc looking at the rose window of Notre-Dame would see it turn—which scared him. How could this happen, and what kind of spiritual experience would it provide?

Observation: "God Help the Outcast," in Walt Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame,* 1996

God Help the Outcasts is a soft ballad written by composer Alan Menken and lyricist Stephen Schwartz, and recorded by American singer and actress Heidi Mollenhauer as the singing voice of Esmeralda. Esmeralda just took refuge in Notre-Dame after coming to help of Quasimodo, maltreated by the crowd of

people for his deformities. Describe Esmeralda's physical and spiritual journey as she walks through the Cathedral:

- Esmeralda starts at the 14C statue of the Virgin and child: how are Mary and Jesus depicted? Which aspect of the Christ does she relate to?
- When Esmeralda walks in the side-aisle, whom does she pray for? Compare the parishioners' prayer with her intercessory prayer.
- She finally gets to the great south rose window in the transept. What is the effect of light on her? Compare with Abbot Suger's "anagogical" transport.
- Which aspect of Esmeralda's journey, from the statue of the Virgin and child to the South Rose window, strikes you the most?

2.3 Abélard and Héloïse: To Teach and Punish

Pierre Abélard (1079–1142), one of the greatest 12C intellectuals, makes an especially important contribution in the field of logic. Middle Ages logicians deconstruct declarative statements to discern flawed reasoning in an opponent, through verbal battles that provide much entertainment to fellow scholars and student audiences. Abélard's wit, memory and arrogance make him unbeatable in debate and earn him much fame and many enemies. His tendency to disputation is demonstrated in his book *Sic et Non*, a list of 158 philosophical and theological questions with opposite sides developed for each and no resolution offered. Although Abélard is repeatedly charged with heresy, his dialectical method becomes an important feature of western education. Héloïse (1101–1164) receives her education at Argenteuil, becoming fluent in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and achieving renown of her own in the fields of grammar and rhetoric, the two other branches of classical philosophy.

When they meet in 1117, sixteen-year-old Héloïse lives in the house of her uncle Fulbert, canon of Notre-Dame Cathedral and a man of influence in their parish neighborhood, and thirty-eight-year-old Abélard is a renowned scholar at the Cloister School of Notre-Dame, attracting students from all over Europe. Their affair results in a son (called Astrolabe, an anagram of "Abélard"), a secret marriage, Abélard's tragic castration by Canon Fulbert, and their retreat to monastic life. Abélard writes *Historia Calamitatum* as a letter to a friend, and supposedly not meant for Héloïse, whom he has not seen or contacted in over ten years.

Héloïse's house on the Île de la Cité has been torn down, but its location is indicated at the Quai aux Fleurs, and the tomb of Abélard and Héloïse can be visited in the Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris.

[1] There was in Paris at the time a young girl named Héloïse, the niece of Fulbert, one of the canons, and so much loved by him that he had done everything in his power to advance her education in letters. In looks she did not rank lowest, while in the extent of her learning she stood supreme. A gift for letters is so rare in women that it added greatly to her charm and had won her renown throughout the realm. I considered all the usual attractions for a lover and decided she was the one to bring to my bed, confident that I should have an easy success; for at that time I had youth and exceptional good looks as well as my great reputation to recommend me, and feared no rebuff from any woman I might choose to honour with my love. Knowing the girl's knowledge and love of letters I thought she would be all the more ready to consent, and that even when separated we could enjoy each other's presence by exchange of written messages in which we could speak more openly than in person, and so need never lack the pleasures of conversation.

[2] All on fire with desire for this girl I sought an opportunity of getting to know her through private daily meetings and so more easily winning her over; and with this end in view I came to an arrangement with her uncle, with the help of some of his friends, whereby he should take me into his house, which was very near my school, for whatever sum he liked to ask. As a pretext I said that my household cares were hindering my studies and the expense was more than I could afford. Fulbert dearly loved money, and was moreover always ambitious to further his niece's education in letters, two weaknesses which made it easy for me to gain his consent and obtain my desire: he was all eagerness for my money and confident that his niece would profit from my teaching. This led him to make an urgent request which furthered my love and fell in with my wishes more than I had dared to hope; he gave me complete charge over the girl, so that I could devote all the leisure time left me by my school to teaching her by day and night, and if I found her idle I was to punish her severely. I was amazed by his simplicity—if he had entrusted a tender lamb to a ravening wolf it would not have surprised me more. In handing her over to me to punish as well as to teach, what else was he doing but giving me complete freedom to realize my desires, and providing an opportunity, even if I did not make use of it, for me to bend her to my will by threats and blows if persuasion failed? But there were two special reasons for his freedom from base suspicion: his love for his niece and my previous reputation for continence.

[3] Need I say more? We were united, first under one roof, then in heart; and so with our lessons as a pretext we abandoned ourselves entirely to love. Her studies allowed us to withdraw in private, as love desired, and then with our books open before us, more words of love than of our reading passed between us, and more kissing than teaching. My hands strayed oftener to her bosom than to the pages; love drew our eyes to look on each other more than reading kept them on our texts. To avert suspicion I sometimes struck her, but these blows were prompted by love and tender feeling rather than anger and irritation, and were sweeter than any balm could be. In short, our desires left no stage of love-making

> untried, and if love could devise something new, we welcomed it. We entered on each joy the more eagerly for our previous inexperience, and were the less easily sated.

Letter 4, Abélard to Héloïse

Héloïse receives Abélard's "Historia Calamitatum," and a correspondence follows between the two that displays their tragic passion as well as their exceptional scholarly talent. Letter 4 is the last of the *Personal Letters* exchanged between them and in response to her complaints of neglect (admirably written and proving her to be a formidable adversary in verbal battles). Abélard points out that instead of resenting him, she should pray for him. Like the woman in the scale of Saint Michel praying for the souls being judged, Abélard asks Héloïse to take the role of mediator, interceding for him in the eyes of God.

> [4] But no crown is waiting for me, because no cause for striving remains. The matter for strife is lacking in him from whom the thorn of desire is pulled out.
>
> Yet I think it is something, even though I may receive no crown, if I can escape further punishment, and by the pain of a single momentary punishment may perhaps be let off much that would be eternal. For it is written of the men, or rather, the beasts of this wretched life, "the beasts have rotten in their dung." Then too, I complain less that my own merit is diminished when I am confident that yours is increasing; for we are one in Christ, one flesh according to the law of matrimony. Whatever is yours cannot, I think, fail to be mine, and Christ is yours because you have become his bride. Now, as I said before, you have as a servant me whom in the past you recognized as your master, more your own now when bound to you by spiritual love than one subjected by fear. And so I have increasing confidence that you will plead for us both before him and, through your prayer, I may be granted what I cannot obtain through my own […].

Pierre Abélard, *The Letters of Abélard and Héloïse*, trans. Betty Radice (London: Penguin Book, 1974), 66–68 and 154. Writtten in 1132.

Observation: Abélard, *Historia Calamitatum,* 1132

- [1] How does Abélard describe Héloïse? How about himself? What does the last sentence of the first paragraph might foresee?
- [2] How does Abélard manipulate Héloïse's uncle? Is it very astute of him when you know her uncle will eventually castrate him?
- "To punish as well as to teach": which aspect of a teacher-student relationship does Abélard emphasize?
- [3] Examine how studying and lovemaking are intertwined, and how Abélard and Héloïse put the same curiosity in love as they would in any intellectual subject.

- [4] Explain why Abélard cannot make up for his sins of the flesh. What does he ask Héloïse to do for him?

Observation: Illumination of Abélard and Héloïse, 14C

After a separation of twelve years, Abélard and Héloïse meet again when she gets expelled with other nuns from the Argenteuil Abbey. He hands the Paraclete over to her, an oratory he has founded near Troyes and where she becomes the Abbess. Little more than a few rough buildings, she turns the Paraclete into one of the most distinguished religious houses of France. Look at the illumination of Héloïse, now an Abbess, meeting and debating with Abélard (fig. 2.28).

- Describe their general aspect, as well as elements of symmetry and dissymmetry in the composition of the illumination.

Fig. 2.28. Abélard and Héloïse, illumination from a 14C manuscript of *Le Roman de la Rose*. © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY.

- Describe the emotions displayed on their face. Why may they differ?
- Examine their hand gestures. What kind of triangle do their two open hands form? What do they both point to? How about their two other hands: what do they each point to? How does this triangle differ from the first one?
- Examine Abélard's crossed leg. Given his castration, what may it stand for? On the other hand, what is he doing with his right foot?

2.4 Île de la Cité, West Side: Political Power

The Conciergerie and Sainte-Chapelle are part of what is today the Palais de Justice, taking up the west side of the Île de la Cité. During the Roman occupation, we saw how the east side of the island is already established as religious with the temple of Mercury. Likewise, the west side already houses the Roman administrative and military headquarters, as well as the governor's residence. In the 5C, Clovis makes it his royal palace, and the early Capetian kings fortify the Palais de la Cité and add a keep. When Charles V moves to the Louvre in the 14C, he installs in the palace the headquarters of the French treasury, the judicial system and the Parliament of Paris, an assembly of nobles.

Observation: Saint-Louis, Gothic Sainte-Chapelle, 1242–48

Louis IX (1226–70), who waited for the Notre-Dame south rose to be set up before leaving for his second crusade, is such a popular king he is canonized Saint-Louis after his death. He is remembered in particular for changing the justice system by forbidding duels (where the loser was considered condemned by God), and by requiring judges to hear the exposition of the event as well as the witnesses' deposition. Saint-Louis himself renders justice in the royal garden of his palace, or under an oak tree in Vincennes as the tradition goes.

During his first crusade, Saint Louis buys the relics of the Christ from the Emperor of Constantinople, which he believes to be the thorn crown and a piece of the cross. Notre-Dame is not finished yet, and he gives them a sanctuary in the Sainte-Chapelle built in the record time of thirty-three months, and for less than a third of the price paid for the relics. During the French Revolution, the shrine is melted down, and some of the saved relics are now in Notre-Dame. The Sainte-Chapelle is the most extravagantly daring piece of Gothic architecture. The stone structure is bared to slender piers, leaving space for the glorious beauty of giant stained-glass windows.

- With the help of the Notre-Dame plan, label the components of the Sainte-Chapelle upper chapel plan (fig. 2.29): porch, narthex, nave, transept, chancel, high altar, buttresses, side aisles, side-chapels, radiating chapels and ambulatory.
- Which elements are missing in the Sainte-Chapelle, and how would it affect the inside appearance of the nave and chancel in comparison with Notre-Dame?
- Looking at the outside view of the Sainte-Chapelle on figure 2.30, how do you explain that the armature of slender piers is not reinforced by flying buttresses, as is the case in Notre-Dame?
- Compare the lower chapel and upper chapel plans (fig. 2.29).

Observation: Philippe le Bel, Gothic Conciergerie, 1313

King Philippe le Bel (English: Philip the Fair), with "bel" being the masculine form of "belle" in old French, has nothing beautiful about him. He is remembered for unjustly fighting the Templars, an order founded in Jerusalem in 1119 to protect the pilgrims traveling to Palestine, torturing and burning them sometimes without a trial. The location is indicated with a sign in the Vert-Galant Square at the west tip of the island, as we will see in André Breton's *Free Rein* in chapter 9.

Philippe le Bel considerably modifies the Palais de la Cité, making it a Gothic Palace with large parts surviving today in the Conciergerie. Designed to embody his power in a magnificent palace, the Palais de la Cité has, however, mostly been used throughout history as a place of imprisonment, torture and death—which seems befitted to Philippe le Bel's ruthless personal style. The Conciergerie is controlled by the concierge, a noble entrusted with an extensive legal and police authority. It serves as a prison from the 14C, and during the French Revolution, there are as many as 1,200 people imprisoned at the same time, with most of them ending up at the guillotine. Identify the following buildings in the 1313 plan of the Palais de la Cité (fig. 2.32):

- (1) The Tour Bonbec, the western-most and oldest of the four medieval towers, built by Saint-Louis along with the Sainte-Chapelle. "Bonbec" means "good beak": prisoners were interrogated and tortured until they would talk.
- (2) The twin Tour d'Argent (English: Silver Tower, where the royal treasure was kept) and Tour de César (built on Roman foundation), which flanked

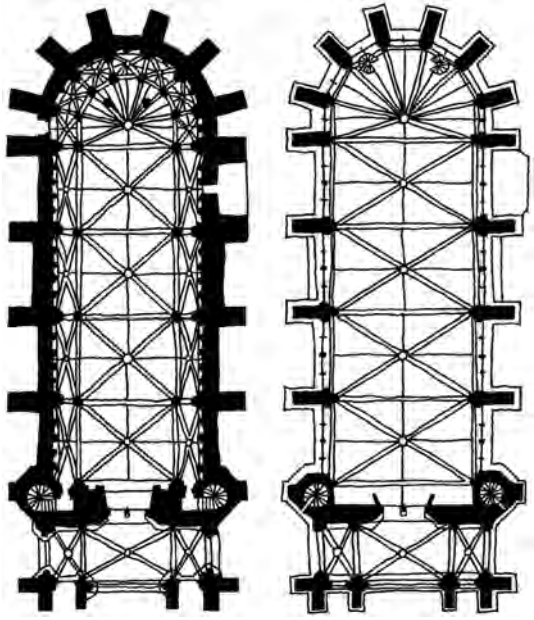

Fig. 2.29. Sainte-Chapelle, 1248: lower and upper chapel plans.

Fig. 2.30. Sainte-Chapelle: outside view.

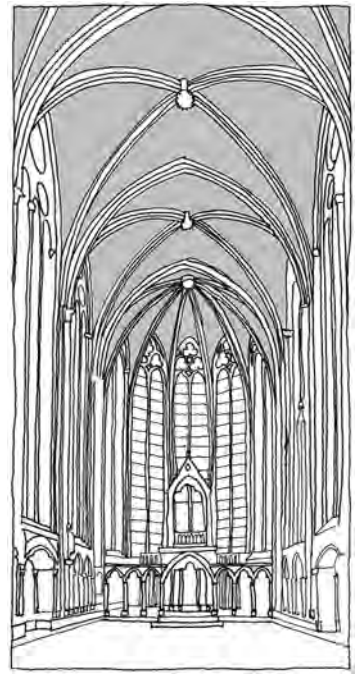

Fig. 2.31. Sainte Chapelle: inside view.

the entrance to the Palace until the ground level was raised twenty-three feet higher to accommodate the Quai de l'Horloge.

- (3) The square Tour de l'Horloge (English: Clock Tower) that has housed since 1370 the first public clock and never ceased to work since.
- (4) The Conciergerie courtyard where the concierge kept track of prisoners.
- The three surviving 14C Gothic halls of the Conciergerie: (5) the Salle des Gardes (Hall of the Guards) behind the twin towers entrance, leading to (6) the huge colonnaded Salle des Gens d'Armes (Hall of the Men at Arms), 69 m long and 27 m wide, with a four aisles stone vaulted ceiling supported by 25 round piers. Erected for the soldiers who protected the king as well as a refectory for his household, it was used as a communal jail during the Revolution. (7) The Saint-Louis kitchen with its four corner fireplaces, each large enough to roast an entire ox.
- Other buildings that have been replaced include (8) the Palais de Saint-Louis, (9) the Jardin du Roi (King's Garden) with its arched walkways, (10) the Cour des Comptes with the treasury of the kingdom, and (11) the keep of the Grosse Tour built in the 12C and demolished in 1776.
- (12) The Sainte-Chapelle, built in 1248.

Observation: The Conciergerie Today

Identify the following elements in figure 2.33 of the northern facade of the Palais de Justice today:

- The western-most Tour Bonbec, the twin Tour d'Argent and Tour de César and the square Tour de l'Horloge.
- The buildings between the towers are from the 19C rebuilding of the Palace, with facades dressed-up as medieval. The facade at the west of the Tour Bonbec follows the classical architecture of the Louvre with an avant-corps pavilion in the middle.
- Identify the steeple of the Sainte-Chapelle emerging above the Palais de Justice.

Observation: Limbourg Brothers, *The Very Rich Hours of the Duke of Berry,* 1440

The Duke of Berry, known for taking his swans and bears along while traveling from castle to castle, is a great art collector who commissions *The Very Rich Hours* in 1416. Books of hours contain prayers for specific hours of the day, days of the

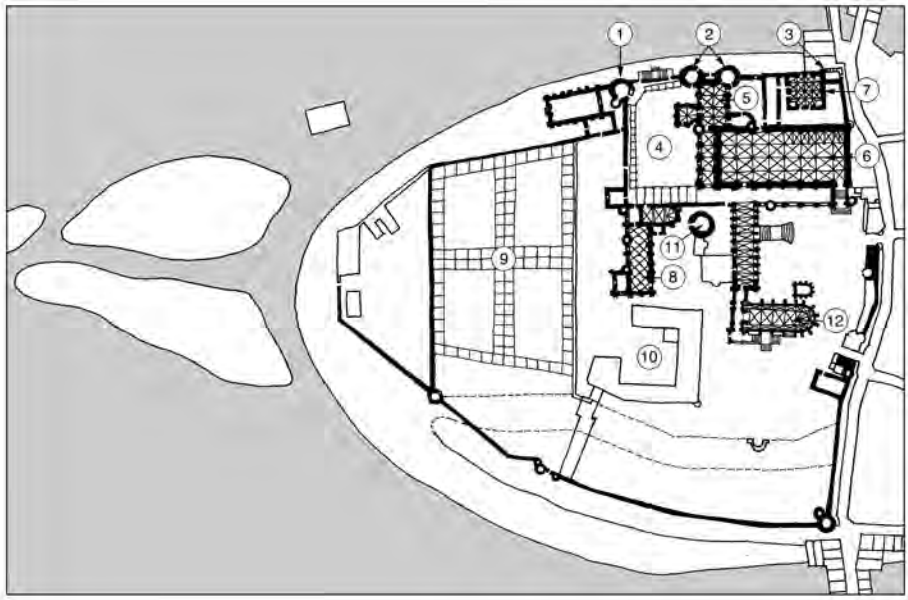

Fig. 2.32. Philippe le Bel, plan of Palais de la Cité in 1313, with the Conciergerie.

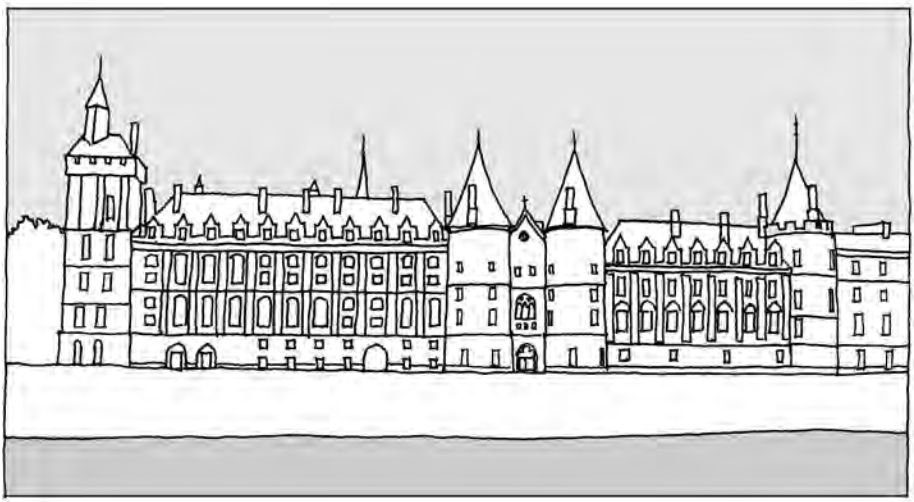

Fig. 2.33. Conciergerie today, with its four towers and the Sainte-Chapelle steeple behind.

week, months and seasons, and are usually beautifully illuminated with some of the finest works of medieval art. Consider the following in figure 2.34:

- Where is the scene located? How does the point of view differ from 1460 Fouquet's *Right Hand of God Driving out Demons*?
- Describe the foreground scene. How is the month of June depicted?
- Identify the royal residence in the middle with the Grosse Tour behind, both destroyed.
- Describe the Conciergerie: name the four towers facing the other branch of the Seine that still remain today. Identify the Grande Salle covered by two parallel pointed wooden barrel vaults, rebuilt as the Salle des Pas Perdus in 1618. The original colonnaded Salle des Gens d'Armes lies underneath.
- Identify the crenelated wall, the garden of the king behind, and the small pavilion on the Seine with stairs leading to a low island where the Templars were burnt.
- Describe the Sainte-Chapelle: piers, pinnacles, rose window and spire. Compare its proportions with Notre-Dame's. What is the effect of its verticality?
- Describe the vaulted sky, with the stars in the greater sphere, the path of the moon, and the path of the sun at the center. How does this cosmic clock differ from the vaulted sky in *Right Hand of God Driving out Demons* and *Life of Saint-Denis*?

2.5 Pissing the Parisians Off: François Rabelais, *Gargantua*, 1534

The 16C is a time of innovation for the French language as it transitions from Latin. The first grammar book is published in 1530, the first dictionary in 1539, and we will see in the next chapter how the Pleiade group in 1549 launches modern poetry. Meanwhile, Rabelais belongs to a period when French is not yet codified, and he enriches the French language through his astoundingly creative use of Greek, Latin, Italian and French dialect—although at times with a crudeness that may shock a modern reader.

Rabelais also writes from a Christian humanist perspective, considering that knowledge and wisdom come from the study of Latin and Greek authors. He eventually leaves the Benedictine order to study medicine, and as a medical doctor, he admires the mechanisms of the human body in all its forms, as we will see below.

Fig. 2.34. Limbourg Brothers, Month of June, in *The Very Rich Hours of the Duke of Berry*, ca. 1440. © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY.

Chapter XVII

How Gargantua paid his welcome to the Parisians, and how he took away the great Bells of our Lady's Church.

[1] Some few days after that they had refreshed themselves, he went to see the city, and was beheld of every body there with great admiration; for the people of Paris are so sottish, so badot, so foolish and fond by nature, that a juggler, a carrier of indulgences, a sumpter-horse, or mule with cymbals, or tinkling bells, a blind fiddler in the middle of a cross lane, shall draw a greater confluence of people together, than an Evangelical preacher. And they pressed so hard upon him, that he was constrained to rest himself upon the towers of Our Lady's Church. At which place, seeing so many about him, he said with a loud voice, "I believe that these buzzards will have me to pay them here my welcome hither, and my Proficiat. It is but good reason. I will now give them their wine, but it shall be only in sport." Then smiling, he untied his fair braguette, and drawing out his mentul into the open air, he so bitterly all-to-be-pissed them, that he drowned two hundred and sixty thousand four hundred and eighteen, besides the women and little children. Some, nevertheless, of the company escaped this piss-flood by mere speed of foot, who, when they were at the higher end of the university, sweating, coughing, spitting and out of breath, they began to swear and curse, some in good earnest, and others in jest. "Carimari, carimara : golynoly, golynolo. By my sweet Sanctesse, we are washed in sport," a sport truly to laugh at; in French, *Par ris*, for which that city hath been ever since called Paris, whose name formerly was Leucotia, as Strabo testifieth, lib. quarto, from the Greek word LEVKORNS, whiteness,—because of the white thighs of the ladies of that place. And forasmuch as, at this imposition of a new name, all the people that were there swore everyone by the Sancts of his parish, the Parisians, which are patched up of all nations, and all pieces of countries, are by nature both good jurors, and good jurists, and somewhat overweening; whereupon Joanninus de Baurrauco, libro de copiositate reverentiarum, thinks that they are called Parisians, from the Greek word PARRNSIA which signifies boldness and liberty of speech.

[2] This done, he considered the great bells, which were in the said towers, and made them sound very harmoniously. Which whilst he was doing, it came into his mind, that they would serve very well for tingling Tantans, and ringing Campanels, to hang about his mare's neck, when she should be sent back to his father, as he intended to do, loaded with Brie cheese, and fresh herring. And indeed he forthwith carried them to his lodging. In the mean while there came a master beggar of the friars of St. Anthony, to demand in his canting way the usual benevolence of some hoggish stuff, who, that he might be heard afar off, and to make the bacon he was in quest of shake in the very chimnies, made account to filch them away privily. Nevertheless, he left them behind very honestly, not for that they were too hot, but that they were somewhat too heavy for his carriage. This was not he of Bourg, for he was too good a friend of mine.

[3] All the city was risen up in sedition, they being, as you know, upon any slight occasion, so ready to uproars and insurrections, that foreign nations wonder at the patience

> of the kings of France, who do not by good justice restrain them from such tumultuous courses, seeing the manifold inconveniences which thence arise from day to day. Would to God, I knew the shop wherein are forged these divisions and factious combinations, that I might bring them to light in the confraternities of my parish! Believe for a truth, that the place wherein the people gathered together, were thus sulphured, hopurymated, moiled, and be-pissed, was called Nesle, where then was, but now is no more, the Oracle of Leucetia. There was the case proposed, and the inconvenience showed of the transporting of the bells. After they had well ergoted pro and con, they concluded in baralipton, that they should send the oldest and most sufficient of the faculty unto Gargantua, to signify unto him the great and horrible prejudice they sustained by the want of those bells. And notwithstanding the good reasons given by some of the university, why this charge was fitter for an orator than a sophister, there was chosen for this purpose our Master Janotus de Bragmardo.

François Rabelais, *The Works of Francis Rabelais*, trans. Sir Thomas Urquhart and Motteux (London: H. G. Bohn, 1854), 153–56. Written in 1534.

Observation: Rabelais Paris

- [1] Describe Rabelais' Paris. What critique does he make of the Catholic Church when writing that a "carrier of indulgences" attracts Parisians more than an "Evangelical" preacher?
- [1] What happens on the towers of Notre-Dame? Analyze the comic aspect of the passage.
- [1] Is the etymological explanation of the name of Paris convincing? Explain.
- [2–3] Look at how Parisians are presented in the episode of the stolen bells.
- What are some particularities of Rabelais' language? Give an example that strikes you.

Interaction: Rabelais' Testament

Rabelais wrote the following one sentence testament: "I have nothing, I owe a great deal, and the rest I leave to the poor." What would your one sentence testament be? Share with the class.

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