

MEDIEVAL ART

Part 3: GOTHIC

History in 12th Century France:

1. **"Ile de France":** Paris is at the center of the region about 100 miles around Paris. King Louis of France asserts his power.
2. **Economics:** Paris was the mercantile hub of Europe with trade fairs, European banking, new methods of taxation, and a money economy developed during the 12th century under a strong monarchy (Louis VI and VII)
3. **Scholasticism (Thomas Aquinas):** a new, rational approach to philosophy and theology - School of Chartres (cathedral) and University of Paris (founded around 1150) was intellectual center of Europe (also Oxford, Cambridge, and Padua)
4. **Courtly Love:** Eleanor of Aquitaine established a center of culture in Poitiers - status of courtly women/ cult of the Virgin
5. **History:** Two catastrophic events occur:
Hundred Years War between England + France in 1337 and decimates much of Europe
Black Plague strikes Europe in 1348 and decimates the population of Europe by 40%
6. **Religion:** Cult of the Virgin - new devotion to "Our Lady" - elevation of the Virgin to new status as "Queen of Heaven"
The Great Schism - 1378 the Catholic Church has two popes claiming title - one in Avignon, one in Rome (until 1417)



What is the FUNCTION of this art work?

Gardner's Art through the Ages: A Concise Global History

STOKSTAD, 5th Edition, Chapter 17, pgs 495-529

CONTEXT

Context for development of Gothic style in Sculpture:

1. Re-emergence of the human body as a central subject matter of art - religious character still within the context of architectural decoration/embellishment - still primarily surrounding portals to churches.
2. Growing belief that the Christian "soul" must be manifested within the human body. (Aristotle's writings rediscovered - the human body is the form of the soul - a manifestation of it, and therefore should be beautiful, to represent God's creation.)

ARTWORKS

Gothic Art + Architecture + Sculpture

- 60. Chartres Cathedral**
 - West, North, South Portals
 - Notre Dame de la Bella Verriere
- 61. Dedication Page with Blanche of Castile and King Louis IX of France**
- 62. Röttgen Pietà**

Additional Images:

- * Reim Cathedral – Visitation/jamb statues
- * Strasbourg Cathedral – Death of the Virgin tympanum
- * Naumburg Cathedral – Ekkehard and Uta
- * Visitation, jamb statues, Reim Cathedral
- * The Virgin of Paris
- * The Virgin of Jeanne d'Evreaux reliquary

Structural device:

Function:

Effect or result:

▼
Flying buttress
Ribbed- Groin
Pointed Arch

▼
supports roof vaulting
roof structure
opening of space

=
=
=

▼
more window space and light
flexibility of the shape of the bays + complex geometry of plan
greater verticality (more thrust downward - less thrust outward)

Characteristics of Gothic Style:

1. Choir, ambulatory, radiating chapels become one unified space - interior walls "dissolve"
2. Rib-groin vaulting carries weight of roof structure above down to cluster piers and columns
3. Stain glass windows replace heavy walls of Romanesque style
4. Pointed arch (instead of round headed arch) transfers weight more vertically, reducing outward thrust of vaulting
5. Greater flexibility in spanning spaces using ribbed groin vaulting and pointed arch
6. Flying buttresses transfer weight of walls and roof to exterior of Gothic cathedral
7. Increased verticality is possible using the above building forms - nave and tower become higher
8. Light, through large stained glass windows fills interior space with colored light = divine light

VOCABULARY:

pointed arch	pinnacle	gables
portal	rose window	gargoyles
lancet windows	flying buttress	leading
rib groin vault	cluster pier	
column statues	bosses	
tracery	stained glass	