

Medieval Art
The Gothic Cathedral
Humanities 214
Dr. Brian Butler

“As the third year that followed the year one thousand drew near, there was to be seen over almost all the earth, but especially in Italy and in Gaul, great renewal of church buildings; each Christian community was driven by a spirit of rivalry to have a more glorious church than the others. It was as if the world had shaken itself, and, casting off its old garments, had dressed itself again in every part in a white robe of churches.”

Raoul Glaber, *Historia* c. 1003

I. Examples - Three Cathedrals

1. Ely Cathedral

In 1083 Simeon, a relative of William the Conqueror, started the building of what is now Ely Cathedral. In 1106 the east end was finished, by 1189 much of the rest of the structure was complete. In 1322 the central tower collapsed. In 1349 the Lady Chapel (the largest of its kind in England) was finished, and in 1392 the central tower was reconstructed in its octagonal form.

2. Lincoln Cathedral

Started 1072 when William the Conqueror ordered Bishop Remigius to build a cathedral in Lincoln. In 1186 Bishop Hugh raised money for a new cathedral built in Gothic style. Hugh died in 1200 with the work unfinished (he is made a saint in 1220). In 1311 the central tower was made higher, and around 1400 the western towers were made taller as well.

3. Notre Dame de Paris

Originally a basilica dedicated to St. Etienne was constructed on the site around 528. In 1163 Maurice de Sully started the current structure with support from King Louis VII. Around 1182 the apse and choir were finished. By 1193 the Nave is done. The Cathedral was largely completed by 1250.

II. Issues: From Economics and Physics to Metaphysics and Semiotics

1. Economics and the Gothic Cathedral (examples of Medieval impurity?)
 - a. Creation and building
 - b. Function of building
 - c. Economics and the artist

2. Physics and Engineering (how does medium effect message?)
 - a. Actual engineering feats
 - b. Why engineer the marvelous

3. Metaphysics and the Real (an example of Medieval purity?)
 - a. Appearance and reality
 - b. Material and truth

4. Semiotics of Medieval Art (how does the message relate to the medium?)
 - a. The illustrated Bible
 - b. Truth, style and substance

III. Images

1. Looking out from Notre Dame de Paris
2. West front of Lincoln Cathedral
3. Closer view of Lincoln Cathedral
4. Side view of Notre Dame de Paris
5. Front view of Notre Dame
6. West front of Ely Cathedral
7. Side of Ely Cathedral with view of Lady Chapel
8. Looking at inside of west end of Ely Cathedral
9. Ely nave looking towards choir and altar
10. Ely Cathedral nave ceiling
11. Ely Cathedral octagon and lantern
12. Ely lantern close-up
13. Lincoln Cathedral nave looking towards choir and altar
14. Lincoln Cathedral south transept with the "Bishop's Eye"
15. Lincoln Cathedral ceiling
16. Transept with stained glass
17. Ely Cathedral, the Lady Chapel interior
18. Lincoln Cathedral choir
19. Ely Cathedral choir
20. Ely Cathedral high altar
21. Stonework detail at Ely Cathedral
22. More detail of stonework
23. Transept with stained glass
24. Stained glass
25. Stained glass
26. Stained glass
27. East window at Lincoln Cathedral
28. Rose window at Notre Dame de Paris