

2020-08-24 - Lecture 04

9.2 The Great Gothic Cathedrals and the urban settings for them, c. 1150-1350

- 1) *Great cities* begin to develop: Paris, Bruges, Cologne, e.g.
 - Population booms - better farming means and methods - higher life expectancies
 - Commerce develops in cities
 - Cities offered more freedom. People shifted from being serfs of feudal lords to being taxpaying citizens of cities
 - Resurgence of civic architecture: cathedrals, hospitals, markets
 - **Faubourg** - French word meaning settlement area
 - City walls expanded
- 2) Bruges examples of **architectural urban fabric**
 - **Belfry** (tall tower used as a civic building and watchtower), **Cloth Hall** (covered market), **Waterhalle** (covered port-like area of the canal where goods could be unloaded directly into merchants' stalls) About **1280**.
- 3) **St. Urbain** in Troyes (**1262**)
 - Cleric from here was elected **Pope Urban IV**
 - Cathedral built in **Gothic** style - increasing height, reducing wall-to-window ratio, switching round-arched windows and barrel vaults to pointed arch windows and ribbed vaults. Switch from buttresses to flying-buttresses, and other changes.
- 4) **Carcassonne** in southern France (**1240**)
 - Walled city captured by King Louis IX (Saint Louis) in 1240 from the Cathars, who were renegade Christians.
 - Louis IX rebuilt Carcassonne as a fortified bastion, extending French rule into the south
 - Planned town
 - Drawbridge to the **donjon** (known as a **castle keep** in English castles). The *donjon* was the last refuge and the fortified domicile within the castle.
- 5) **bastides** - the word for new towns built all over Gascony in the south of France (**1250-1300**)
 - *French* and *English* competed to gain control of Gascony by building new towns
 - Towns based on a grid survey and urban lots of 16' x 32' based on the length of timber.
 - Called **Gothic Lots** and selected by lottery
 - Market near the center of town, and a space nearby for a church.
 - **New towns increased freedom of movement of people, accessibility to markets, and a greater social order. Freer towns decreased intimidating control of feudal lords over people.**
- 6) The **Gothic Cathedral** is the crown of the city
 - The building boom across Europe nurtured church building in the new **Gothic Style**
 - Gothic marked by increasingly taller, thinner structure to emphasize **heavenly light** in the interior. The *heavenly light* called **lux nova**.
 - Key features: **ribbed vaulting, bigger clerestories, flying buttresses, pointed arches**
 - Structure a direct response to the purpose of the building - a sense of greater spirituality
- 7) **Abbot Suger** (su-GAY) **1081-1151** and **St. Denis of Paris** (san-DAY-knee)
 - Rebuilt portions of **St. Denis** (SAN-de-knee) to achieve **lux nova (the new light)**
 - Suger added round window (**1130**) between towers of the **westworks** symbolizing either the **wheel of fortune**, or, later thought to be the **rose** of the Virgin Mary (Rose Window)
 - Call it a **wheel window** or **rose window**
 - Suger added a **chevet** of seven chapels at St Denis
 - Suger's works influenced later French cathedrals to a great degree
 - Because of Abbot Suger's close connection with crusaders **Louis VI** (1108-1137) and **Louis VII** (1137-1180), Suger rules as regent while Louis VII is away in Palestine on Second Crusade. *Henceforth, St. Denis becomes the burial church of most of the subsequent Kings of France.*

- 8) Gothic becomes a **French national style** - other Cathedrals following **St. Denis**
- *Spiritual effect increases with height, verticality, lightness*
 - **Amiens - Rouen - Troyes - Reims - Chartres - Laon - Notre Dame of Paris**
 - Kings of France crowned at *Reims*
 - **Notre Dame at Laon** - example of early Gothic finished **1215**
 - *Chartres* - clear progression from heavier to lighter
 - More work on *St Denis* by *Jean de Chelles* and *Pierre de Montreuil*
- 9) **Notre Dame of Paris** complete about **1260**
- a very clear **tripartite construction** of three horizontal and three vertical ranges
 - towers disintegrated with deep carvings and fenestration
 - tall spire at **crossing**
 - gargoyles, crockets, flying buttresses
 - a near-perfect textbook example of a *Gothic Cathedral*
 - When Victor Hugo wrote about the church in **Notre Dame of Paris (1830)**, it created interest in the building and its poor state of repair - **it led to a national preservation movement in France** - the first national scale preservation movement