

2. A VERY ANCIENT ORIGIN.



L'amour.

Begin in the morning.

Read this section whilst walking the Jardins de l'Evêché bordering the apse or 'crown' of the cathedral.

It takes a bit of imagination to ignore the houses, chapels, convents, cafes and alleys crowding this once exposed hilltop, and realize how the landscape around the crown of the cathedral was once the centre of the Carnutes, a Celtic tribe who worshiped Isis, and lent their name to this location: Carnut-isis, from which evolved the present name Chartres.

This fragrant spot, with its benches and manicured trees, also served as a focal point for countless menhirs, dolmens and other megalithic structures spread throughout the countryside, few of which remain except in folk memory or commemorated in local place names.

The centre of attention was a large, earth-covered dolmen and passage mound which originally stood where the apse of the cathedral now rises, erected during Neolithic times like so many others throughout this region. Strategically positioned to receive the first

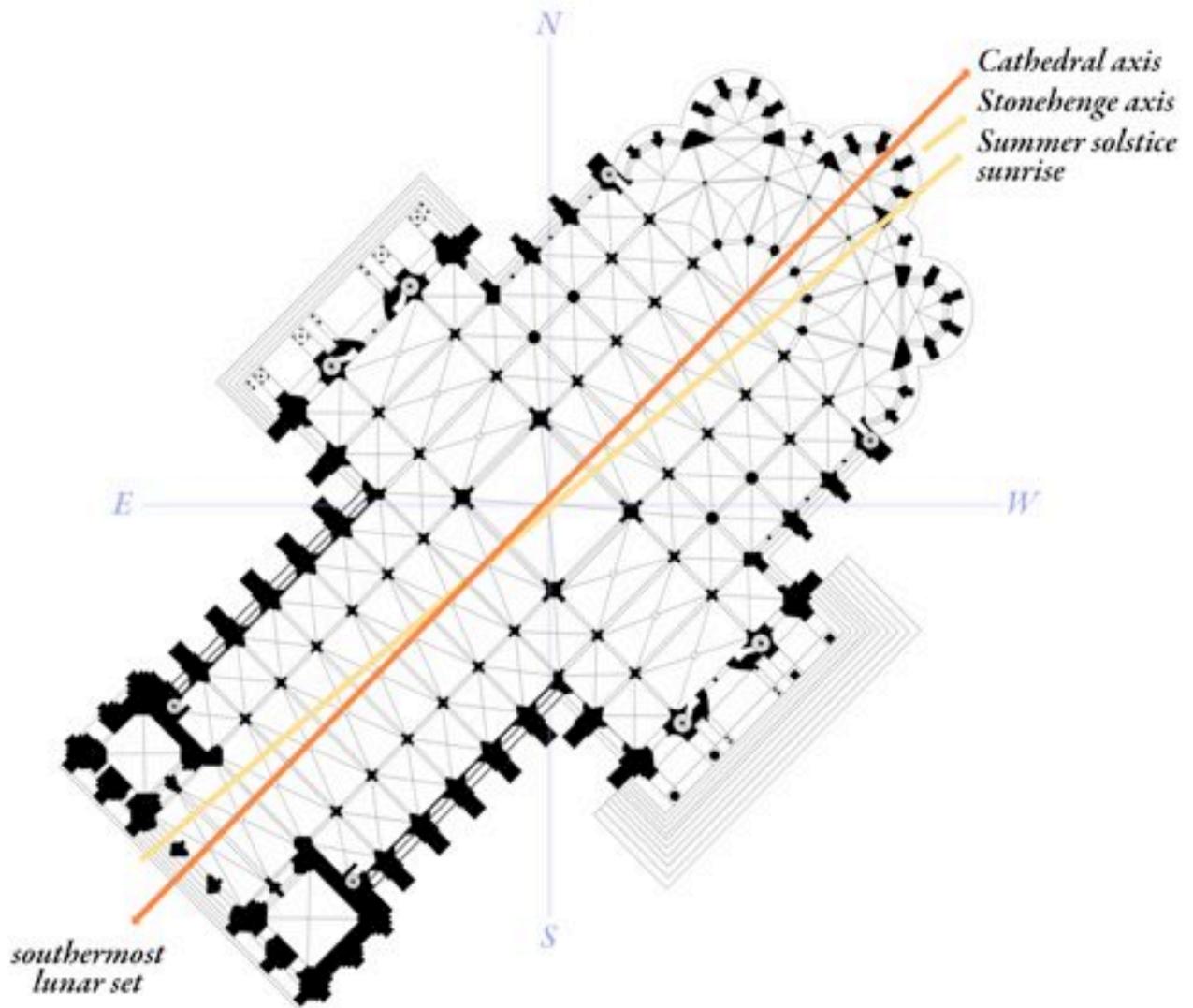
rays of the rising sun, it was often referred to as a Druid cave; however, it is important to remember that the Druids — who in time also made this their main college — did not erect such structures, they were merely one of a long tradition of mystics who venerated and maintained the megalithic sites. After all, *dru-id* is Gaelic for ‘of the oak’, thus Druids worked with trees not stones.

The orientation of the original temple is borne by the axis of the current cathedral. It was common during the rise of Christianity to erect new structures upon pagan sites. This was done for a number of reasons, the predominant being the superimposition of a new order over the old so as to establish a new religious hierarchy. This posed a problem for the Church because the typical alignment of Christian buildings is East-West whereas ancient sites follow specific solar and lunar alignments relative to their latitude; Chartres cathedral is aligned northeast-southwest, revealing the foundation of the original temple as well as the pagan roots of the site.

In esoteric tradition the northeast orientation of a temple aligns it to the summer solstice sunrise. At this moment in the solar calendar the light has reached its highest position. Since everything in esotericism is derived from the observation of nature, temples were designed to correspond to the laws so observed which in turn defined their purpose. Since light is synonymous with wisdom, a north-eastern alignment defines the site as a place where one comes to receive knowledge or specialist information.

The oldest sacred sites on Earth — Stonehenge, Luxor, Baalbek, for example — tend to follow this direction.

The orientation of the present building is 3° to that of Stonehenge, as are four other nearby churches, again demonstrating that they too stand upon very ancient places of veneration, and mark this hill as a site of significant spiritual importance.



Note how the cathedral and summer solstice axes deviate by several degrees. The original Neolithic temple, over which the building stands, would have been perfectly aligned when it was built some 5000 years ago, but since then the Earth's axis has tilted.

With the persecution of the Druids by the Romans, a Gallo-Roman chapel came to abut the original mound. This was later converted, enlarged and superseded by eight successive structures, most notably a Merovingian chapel in the 8th century, which burned down, then a Carolingian cathedral in the 9th century, which also burned down, and finally a Romanesque church in the 11th century. A town fire in 1134 also destroyed much of that building.

In essence, the plans of all these structures fit inside each other like Russian dolls, the outermost being the present cathedral, which was completed in 1220.

Chartres cathedral is no ordinary building but a sermon in stone, it is packed with information known only to practitioners of the magical arts and the masonic schools of old — ironically the kind of information the Church was demonizing around the period in which the cathedral was built.

The first clue lies in the design of the crown of the cathedral: seven bays make up the apse, which from the air gives it the appearance of radiating rays. This is an homage to the Egyptian goddess of sacred buildings, Seshat, who is portrayed with a seven-pointed star above her head.

This feature also reveals the origin of the architects, for they used an identical motif in buildings dedicated to a divine virgin throughout France and Portugal during the same period: the Knights Templar. We'll return to them later.



The apse, as seen from the jardin.

And now we come to the most important part of all nine doors, because the bay in which you are standing was known as the Door of Initiates. The thing to bear in mind is that the one characteristic differentiating an initiate from a lay person is their capacity to venture beyond the accepted, to seek the truth in spite of the difficult journey — ironic, then, that so few venture as far as this door, and fewer still look closely at the right pillar supporting the arch: at eye level, hidden in plain view, is the carving of the Ark of the Covenant in the Temple of Dagon, its open lid revealing a tablet and the Word of God, inscribed with the *fleur de lys* (a symbol of royal bloodline); beside it, a man carries the Word of God, almost concealing it with his robe, flanked by four individuals who, through the application of such celestial knowledge, are ascending skywards.



The Ark of the Covenant.

The Babylonian and Philistine deity Dagon is the personification of the giver of knowledge and initiation Oannes, who in turn is the source of the Latin name Ioannes, or as we know him, John — the archetype portrayed by John the Baptist.

The Latin inscription along the base of this beautiful carving reads: “Here things take their course. You are to work through the Ark.”

No other carving so encapsulates the principles at the core of the Mysteries schools and the building that personifies them: to pursue the wisdom contained in the Ark — the knowledge of God — is to experience the divine in daily life. It is the path to ascension and self-discovery, hence the origin of the word *ascension* — 'raised by Sahyun', the stone of heaven which represents the central knowledge of creation.

The left bay: after such a revelation, the final door almost comes as an anticlimax.

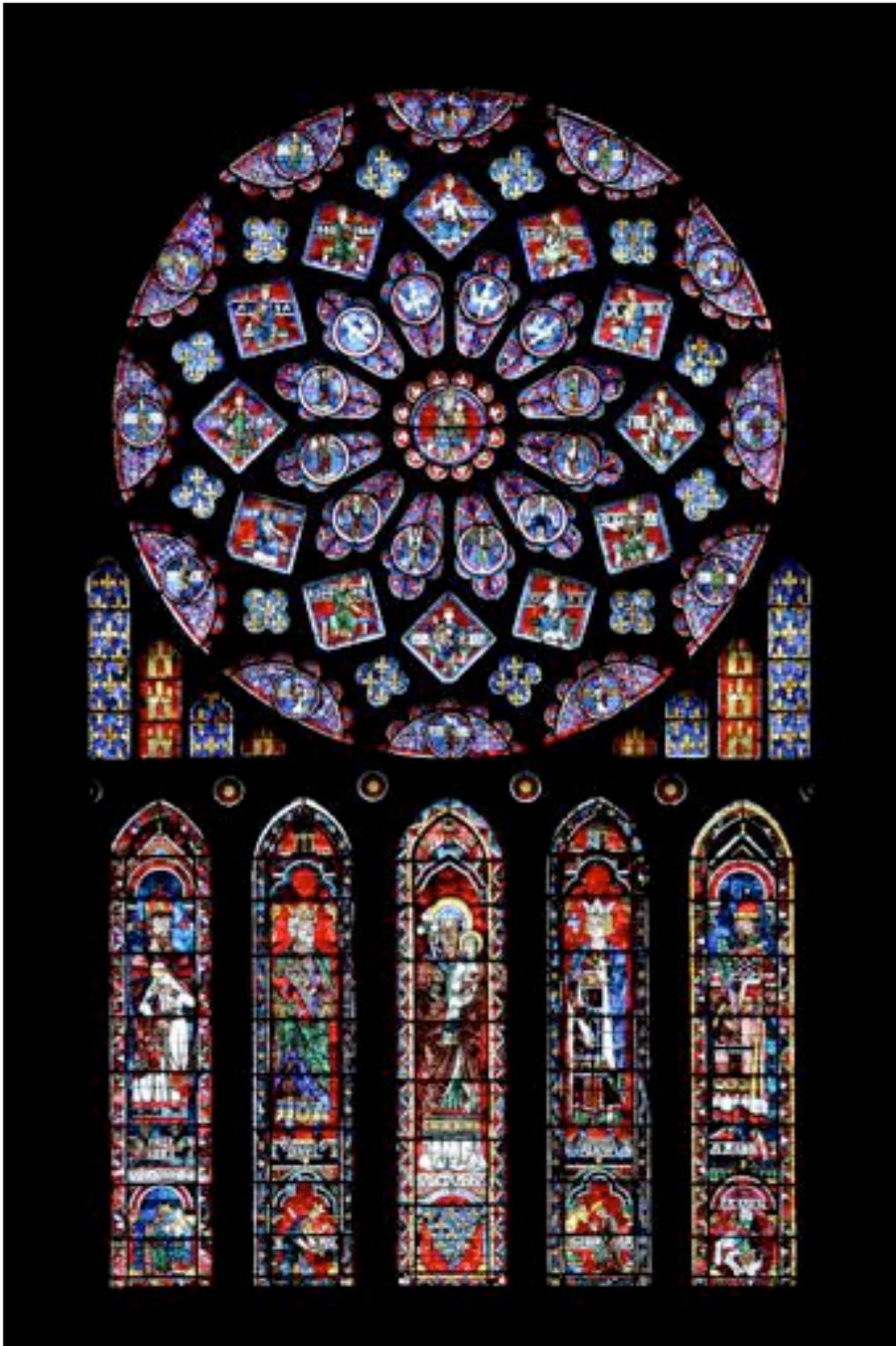
The tympanum features straightforward Biblical themes concerning the adoration of the Magi, the nativity, and the annunciation to the shepherds. Below, Mary as Queen of Heaven, stands appropriately on a friendly serpent.

The bay depicts the peace brought by devotion to true knowledge, if indeed one follows the knowledge portrayed by the Ark: wrapped along the archivault are various personifiers conducting a lifetime of quiet contemplation.



*Let us now focus on another aspect of the cathedral.
Turn around to face the southwest portal.*

STAINED GLASS



The northeast rose window centres on the mother of the gods, Anne, holding Mary. Circa 1235.

Although Chartres cathedral is synonymous with stained glass, evidence suggests that the earliest structure actually contained none.

The Cistercians forsook coloured glass so that nothing detracted from the absolute experience of God, the irony being that by opting for clear glass, these pious monks who

renounced money had to pay five times the going rate for windows, since true glass requires silica free of impurities, something that, back in the day, was hard to source.

So how did all this stained glass get here?

True stained glass is a lost science, last seen in Persia around the 11th century in the school of the alchemist Omar Khayyam. Its creators claimed the ancient recipe imbued glass with certain frequencies of light that represented ‘the cosmic breath of the universe’. It was a secret science that used mono-atomic gold in the manufacturing process, a substance that contains anti-gravitational qualities capable of modifying potentially harmful, ultraviolet frequencies of sunlight into a building. The net effect is that the filtered light allows the skin and the eye to absorb light in a spectrum said to assist the spiritual experience of the individual.

It is conceivable that after Bernard’s death — when the bulk of the cathedral was erected — the Templars or master masons introduced it, having been made aware of its benefits during their interaction with the Mysteries schools of the Near East.

Fragments of this very special glass are featured in the southwest rose window, fragments that survived a fire in 1194, and reveal a radiance that is missing from the rest, particularly the cobalt blue which, under the right conditions (ie. back lit during the winter, after midday) seems to elevate the pineal gland: the very instrument that induces stimulated imagery in the brain.

Similar glass is found in Saint-Chapelle in Paris, and Saint-Gatien in Tours.

What is clear is that never did the original windows feature images of people or idols or biblical stories; that would have been anathema to the builders. All that is seen here was added over the ages with the waxing and waning of fervent religious climates.

There are up to 170 windows, all filled with biblical themes, designed as a visual library to help bring religious stories to life to the illiterate. So I shall focus only on the panels that deviate from normal.

Southwest rose window

The Magdalene Window

Turn to the left and walk towards the wall of the nave. This is the second window along.

Here, someone got away with murder. If you're not familiar with the official story, a demonized Mary Magdalene is cast adrift on the Mediterranean, on a boat with no oar, no sail and no captain.

Cast your eye on the left semi-circle above the middle circle. It shows Mary Magdalene disembarking in Provence — from a boat with an oar, a sail, and yes, a captain.



The uncensored version is even juicier. Mary Magdalene is not a name but a title, *Magdal eder*, ‘watchtower of the flock’, indicating a person who has reached the highest level of esoteric initiation and is now responsible for others in her community who’ve yet to ‘see the light’, so to speak. The phrase coined at the time was “risen from the dead.”

Mery defined the type of teaching a person followed while taking holy orders which in turn was adopted as a first name (ie. sister Mary, sister Helen, sister Margaret). The