SOME SOURCES OF THE PHILOSOPHY
AND SYMBOLISM IN SUGER'S WINDOWS
AT ST.-DENIS

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Metaphysics and the Concordance of the Old and New Testaments</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History and Description of the Windows</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Iconography of the Windows</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosan Artists at St.-Denis</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plates</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

The role of the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and the artistic innovations of the Abbot Suger in the history of medieval art have long been recognized. Earlier scholarship tended to emphasize the authority of Suger's projects, and the chronology of Gothic art in France was seen developing in a straight line, the starting point of which was St.-Denis. The writings of Émile Mâle stress this "revolutionary" quality of Suger's art and its decisive influence on northern European art for the next several centuries.  

1 Mâle was concerned mainly with iconography, but implicit in his thesis of Suger's single-handed invention of Gothic iconography is the assumption that the new symbolism demanded a new language of forms to express these ideas. In the stained glass of the choir, Mâle believed that Suger created the archetype for the typological iconography, the *Concordia Vetris et Novi Testamentum*, which was further developed in the windows of the great cathedrals during the twelfth...

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and thirteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{2}

In more recent scholarship the tendency has been to write of Suger's achievements as "precocious", rather than "revolutionary". According to this view, the early program of St.-Denis is only one aspect of a general "anti-Romanesque" style that was appearing at this time, and the achievements in the Île-de-France at mid-century were only to be thoroughly exploited a generation later.\textsuperscript{3} Like the sculptural program of the west facade, the architecture of the choir, and the precious objects which Suger commissioned, the role of the stained glass of the choir and its influence has been reconsidered.

Louis Grodecki has become the outstanding authority on glass painting in France and his studies have shown the complexity of the development of this medium.\textsuperscript{4}

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\textsuperscript{2} See especially the chapter in \textit{L'Art Religieux du XIIe Siècle en France}, ibid., "Suger et son influence". The writings of Henri Focillon and Marcel Aubert were based on the assumption that Gothic chronology began at St.-Denis, although Aubert later began to modify his views, especially in relation to glass painting.

\textsuperscript{3} The papers presented at the Twentieth International Congress of the History of Art in 1961 focused on the period 1160-1190 and the simultaneous experiments not necessarily dependent on the Île-de-France. See Acts of the Twentieth International Congress of the History of Art, Princeton, 1963, vol.I.

\textsuperscript{4} See his articles in \textit{Le Vitrail Francais}, Paris, 1958, for the most recent survey of the development of glass painting in France.
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The St.-Denis school is shown to have had a rather limited influence in a specifically stylistic sense. The typological aspect of the iconography of the glass was influential, but this was but one part of Suger's program. Erwin Panofsky, in the notes accompanying his translation of Suger's writings, showed the importance of the light metaphysics of Pseudo-Dionysius, its influence on Suger's thought, and the manner in which the art program of the abbey was shaped around this view of the universe. 5 Grodecki follows the lead of Panofsky in emphasizing the "anagogical" nature of the windows, but shows that the subjects of the panels have specific sources in the writings of St. Paul. 6

The stylistic sources of the windows remain an enigma, and Grodecki has only hinted at some affinities with manuscripts from the scriptoria of Marchiennes, St.-Omerm and Anchin. 7 The glass is among the earliest surviving in France and the only window that pre-dates the glass of St.-Denis is the Ascension window of Le

5 Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its Art Treasures, Princeton, 1946.
7 ibid., pg. 19.
Mans, dated around 1140. This window is in the Romanesque tradition of Poitou which was to survive into the thirteenth century at Bourges and in the windows by the "Master of St. Lubin" at Chartres. 8

In this paper I will attempt to show that, in characterizing his windows as "most sacred", Suger is revealing a new aesthetic sensitivity—one that is shaped by a new religious and metaphysical experience. This desire to harmonize the church with a celestial archetype demanded new modes of representation that would show the anagogical relationships between visible structure and invisible reality. Although the specific stylistic qualities in the stained glass and the sculpture of St.-Denis might have been passed over in the projects immediately postdating Suger's, the philosophy governing form and structure which Suger formulated was the first manifestation of something which is particularly "Gothic" and can still be considered as a formative influence. I will also attempt to show that the iconographic program of the abbey existed on several levels of interpretation, and that one of these levels is

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related to Mosan iconography. One of the windows in this program has also been characterized as "Mosan" in style by Grodecki and Voege.\(^9\) Where there are affinities in iconography it would seem sensible to look for stylistic affinities, and I will examine the question of whether there was a Mosan atelier among Suger's glass painters.

Light Metaphysics and the Concordance of the Old and New Testaments

Writing sometime between 1144 and 1147, Suger, Abbot of St.-Denis, described the ceremonies of June 15, 1144, when the relics of the holy martyrs and confessors were transferred to their tombs in the newly completed choir of the abbey church.\(^{10}\) King Louis himself carried the silver chasse of Saint Denis, the patron of the abbey and of France. A procession followed from the crypt, through the cloisters and around the church, to the choir. Celebrating the rites were archbishops and bishops from all districts of France and the Archbishop of Canterbury.\(^{11}\)

A similar procession and ceremony had taken place four years before when the new west facade was consecrated. The decisive importance of the works which these events commemorated has long been recognized. The innovations in design and iconography of the west facade

\(^{10}\) Panofsky, in Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its Art Treasures, op. cit., pp. 144-145, dates the Libellus alter de consecratione ecclesia Sancti Dionysii between the second half of 1144 at the earliest, and in the years 1146-1147 at the latest. This text will hereafter be referred to as De Consecratione.

\(^{11}\) De Consecratione, Panofsky, ibid., pp. 113-119.
(whether the ideas were original with the architects of St.-Denis or represent a synthesis of ideas which were germinating in England and on the continent) are significant within a formal history of architectural and sculptural styles because of their formative influence on the "classic" Gothic facade. The choir, with its proportion, vaulting (and associated mouldings and piers), and stained glass windows is similarly decisive in its formal influence. Implicit in the form of the choir is not only the genesis of a new architectural vocabulary, but the first comprehensive statement of a philosophy governing the relationship of light and structure which was to be perhaps more crucial than the west facade in the development of the Gothic.

The philosophy which Suger formulated exists not only on the physical level of structure and appearance; the concern for the relationship between light and material substance exists simultaneously on several other levels. This attitude and the objects which it produced has been characterized as the first manifestation

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of something which is particularly Gothic.

Suger was particularly proud of the choir and of the effect of the windows on the whole church. He speaks of "...that elegant and praiseworthy extension in the form of a circular string of chapels, by virtue of which the whole church would shine with the wonderful and uninterrupted light of most sacred windows, pervading the interior beauty."\(^{13}\) The inscription commemorating the construction of the new chevet reads, in part: "For bright is that which is brightly coupled with the bright, and bright is the noble edifice which is pervaded by the new light."\(^{14}\) Both of these statements show the recognition of light as a physical phenomenon, but experienced in a very particular way. Frankl remarks that, "What was new in Suger’s choir was the lux continua which affected the whole choir and was visible from the nave so that Suger could speak of the effect for the whole church...It is a specifically Gothic feel-

\(^{13}\) De Consecratione, IV, Panofsky, op. cit., pg. 101.

\(^{14}\) De Administracione, XXVII, ibid., og. 51. This book, the full title of which is Liber de Rebus in Administracione sua Gestis, was conceived by Suger as an account of his general activities as Abbot of St.-Denis. Panofsky (pp. 145-146) dates the composition of this text as sometime shortly after the consecration of the chevet on June 15, 1144. It was not completed until the end of 1148 or early in 1149.
ing for light."\(^{15}\)

A second level of the experience of light is suggested by the inscription accompanying the bronze reliefs of the west doors:

"The dull mind rises to truth through that which is material
And, in seeing this light, is resurrected from its former submersion."\(^{16}\)

This poem states explicitly Suger's thesis that physical brightness will lead the mind to a state of spiritual illumination. The idea that every perceptible thing is a symbol and guide to a higher perceptible truth is called by Suger the "anagogical" (upward-leading) method. Suger describes a quiet mental ecstasy he experienced in contemplating the gems on the cross of St. Eloy:

"Sometimes 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


\[^{16}\] De *Administratione*, XXVII, Panofsky, op. cit., pg. 49.
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 analogical manner."\textsuperscript{17}

The idea of spiritual ascent using light in the sense of both a vehicle and a goal has to do with the doctrines of light metaphysics which Suger appropriated from the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius. Light metaphysics was based ultimately on Plato and held an important position in the systems of the neo-Platonists, and was taken into the Christian tradition.

A metaphorical statement from Book VI of Plato's \textit{Republic} seems to be the original source. The Good is likened to sunlight, "...Not only the author of visibility in all visible things, but generation and nourishment and growth." Neo-Platonism built an entire philosophical system upon this passage. Light became the transcendental principle that animates the universe and illuminates our intellect for the perception of truth. Meanwhile, the early Christian writers used light in their formulation of theology. They drew upon an earlier tradition—that of the account of Creation in \textit{Genesis} in which light symbolizes the creation of order from the chaos of darkness. Perhaps the most lofty statement of the theology of light occurs at the beginning of the \textit{Gospel of

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{De Administratio}, XXXII, Panofsky, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 63-65.
St. John, where light is identified with the *logos*. Light is used symbolically throughout the Bible, as in the descriptions of the Heavenly Jerusalem in *Ezekiel* and *Revelations* where the emphasis is mainly on the properties of the gems which sparkle in the Divine light, though it is not as thoroughly developed nor so loftily stated as in *Genesis* and *John*.

St. Augustine developed the identity of Christ and light, and his epistemology is seen as the result of the divine intellect enlightening the mind through the act of illumination. St. Ambrose says, "The Father is light, the Son is light, and the Holy Spirit is light." The metaphor of light passing through a window became a favorite explanation of the incarnation and the miraculous conception and birth of Christ.

The Pseudo-Dionysius was the first writer to formulate successfully a comprehensive philosophical system based upon neo-Platonic light metaphysics and the Christian experience. From Plotinus, Dionysius borrowed the concept of the hierarchy of being and fused it to the

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Christian theology of light. The resulting system views the creation as an act of illumination. All levels of being are graded according to their capacity to receive the emanations of the one Divine light and to participate in its luminosity. Although there exists a distance between the lowest and highest levels of being, it is not an infinite and unbridgable distance. Hierarchy rather than dichotomy defines the relationship of the Creator to the created. Nothing is considered as a purely material essence, for in some sense, every created thing partakes of God. 21 The mind uses these material objects as stepping stones to rise to a knowledge of the object with its specific properties. According to Dionysius, the Godhead and the celestial virtues could appear even to the prophets only in the guise of some visible form. 22 That which is accessible to the senses, then, is necessary for the ascent to the Father of Lights. This ascent and its means are what Suger meant by the anagogical method.

It is clear that in speaking of the miraculous effect of the light from the choir on the church, and

21 Compare the Parmenides, Socrates' second definition of "participation" in the form.

22 Quoted in Panofsky, "Note on a Controversial Passage", Gazette des Beaux-Arts, xxvi, 1944, pg. 111.
in characterizing the stained glass windows as "most sacred", Suger is revealing a new aesthetic sensitivity—
one that has been shaped by the identity of physical
and divine light in the tradition of light metaphysics
and which allows the fusion of form and subject matter.
This attitude demanded new modes of representation that
would show the anagogical relationships between visible
structure and invisible reality.23 Suger seems to be
conscious of the stylistic differences between his
modern structure (opus modernum) and the old Carolingian
basilica (opus antiquum), and is fully aware of the new
style and its distinctive aesthetic possibilities in
its embodiment of luminosity as a formalistic principle.24
Those aspects of St.-Denis which are considered
"revolutionary" in the development of what might be
called a "Gothic philosophy of form" are those which

23 Von Simson's study of the Gothic cathedral (op. cit.) is based primarily on contemporary ideas of the
structure of the cosmos and the builders' desires to
harmonize their structures with this celestial archetype
through theories of light and proportion. See especially
the chapter "Measure and Light". For a discussion of
John the Scot's translation of Dionysius and a more
detailed discussion of Suger's "Dionysian language", see
the two works by Panofsky previously cited.

24 The west facade functions in an anagogical manner,
also. It is a porta caeli, the gate to a Heavenly
Jerusalem whose interior literally glows in the divine
have been influenced most deeply by the systems of light metaphysics.

By professing the doctrines of Dionysius, Suger felt that he was paying homage to the patron saint of his abbey. In Suger's time, Saint Denis had become identified with three persons. He was first thought to have been the Dionysius who wrote the *De Caelesti Hierarchia*. The abbey owned the Greek manuscript of his writings which was given to Louis the Pious by the Byzantine Emperor, Michael the Stammerer. It was also at the abbey that John the Scot had composed the translations and commentaries of Dionysius at the request of Charles the Bald.25 Dionysius was also identified as Saint Denis, the martyred first Bishop of Paris and the Apostle of Gaul. He was further thought to have been the Dionysius who was described in the *Acts of the Apostles* as a distinguished Athenian who "slave unto St. Paul and believed". This last fact was to have a great influence on another aspect of the iconographic program of the abbey, as we shall see later. Abelard narrowly missed being tried for treason against the crown when as a

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25 At the very beginning of *De Caelesti Hierarchia*, and consequently at the beginning of Eurgena's commentary, the anagogical method is explained.
monk at St.-Denis, he dared to suggest that the Apostle of France was not the same person as the Aeropagite. 26

St. Bernard was a close friend of Suger, and Suger would naturally welcome a metaphysical justification for his own precious tastes. It is significant that immediately following the description of the ecstasy induced by the gems, Suger writes an apology that asks if golden vessels were used to collect the blood of Jewish sacrifices, why should not "...golden vessels, precious stones, and whatever is most valued among all created things, be laid out, with continual reverence and full devotion, for the reception of the blood of Christ!" 27 Although Bernard's charges of extravagance and "idolatry" seem to be directed more at the excesses of Cluny, this apology would seem to be an answer to St. Bernard, as well as being an excellent rationalization. 28

26 On the problem of the identity of Saint Denis, see Sumner Crosby, The Abbey of St.-Denis, 475-1122, New Haven, 1942, chapters I and II.

27 De Administratione, XXXIII, Panofsky, op. cit., pg. 65.

The overall effect of the new parts of the abbey is formed by an interest in light metaphysics, but there is yet another level of thought which dictated Suger's choice of subject matter within the artistic scheme. This is suggested by the use of the phrase "new light" to describe the improved lighting conditions of the church. Lux nova recalls the constant distinction made between the Old Testament and the revelation of the New Testament. That Suger used lux nova in this sense is confirmed by the fact that the concordances between the Old and New Testaments was the "leitmotiv" of the decoration of the abbey. The typological theme, or Suger's version of it, is interpreted in a very particular way, and the method is the result of Suger's study of the writings of St. Paul. That Saint Denis was associated with St. Paul in the Acts of the Apostles has already been mentioned. This may have been the sole motivation for Suger's adoption of a "Pauline" method of interpretation of Old Testament scenes. The method may also have been suggested by Walafrid Strabo's Glossa Ordinaire. Although other glosses were available to Suger by the twelfth century, we should remember that Strabo was the tutor of Charles the Bald. In view of the close ties between the abbey and Charles, it is highly probable that
the abbey had a copy of this text.²⁹

These three concerns of Suger—light metaphysics and the anagogical method, typology, and Pauline exegesis—combine in an iconographic program which is worked out most fully in three works: the three new panels of the main altar "Shining with the radiance of delight-ful allegories"³⁰; the crucifix, whose pillar was adorned with the "...history of the Saviour, with the testi-monies of the allegories of the Old Testament"³¹; and the stained glass windows of the choir.

Suger recorded the verses which would explain the subjects of the rear panel to the "illiterate". Panofsky has reconstructed the possible composition of the scenes on the basis of this text,³² but there is no visual evidence of what the panels may have looked like.³³ A supposed copy of the base of Suger's crucifix

²⁹ This is implied in all of Mâle's writings, but the importance of the Glossa seems to be ignored in recent scholarship. See Mâle's L'Art Religieux du XIII Siècle en France, op. cit., for a history of glosses.

³⁰ De Administratione, XXXIII, Panofsky, op. cit., pg. 63.

³¹ ibid., pg. 59.

³² ibid., pp. 180-181.

³³ An anonymous fifteenth century painting, "The Mass of St. Gilles", shows the front panel (given to the abbey by Charles the Bald) and the top of the crucifix.
is in the Musée de la Ville, St.-Omer. (plate 7) This copy has been the subject of much debate concerning its attribution, its iconographic relationship to the great cross of St.-Denis, and its date. The St.-Bertin cross is often attributed to Godefroid de Claire\textsuperscript{34}, although Mme. Collon-Gevaert says that it was made by a follower because Godefroid was busy at St.-Denis working on Suger's projects, including the great cross.\textsuperscript{35} This evidently led to problems for Abbot Wibald of Stavelot, who was also decorating his abbey church, because the best Mosan goldsmiths were attracted to St.-Denis and were unavailable for his projects.\textsuperscript{36} The cross is now dated around 1160, and it is generally felt that the scenes represented were all included on the cross of

\textsuperscript{34} O. Von Falke and H. Frauberger, Deutsche Schmelzarbeiten des Mittelalters, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1904, pg. 75. Hubert Landais, "Essai de Groupement de Quelques Emaux Autor Godefroid de Huy", in Pierre Francastel, L'Art Mosan, Paris, 1953, pp. 139-145, provisionally attributes the sculptured figures to Godefroid, but not the enamels. Mâle, in L'Art Religieux du XII Siècle en France, op. cit., chapter V, attributes the St.-Bertin cross to Godefroid and says it was made at St.-Denis.

\textsuperscript{35} Suzanne Collon-Gevaert, Jean Lejeune, and Jacques Stiennon, Art Roman dans la Vallée de la Meuse aux XI et XII Siècles, Brussels, 1962, pg. 79.

\textsuperscript{36} ibid., pp. 77-79.
St.-Denis. The cross will be discussed more fully later in connection with the iconography and style of the windows.

The third source for a study of Suger's symbolic program is the windows of the choir. The most important windows (including those described by Suger himself) have largely been restored to their original state (or can be studied from old drawings), their subject matter is not conjectural, and it is here that the most impressive statement of the typological motif occurs. Suger's interest seems fixed most specifically upon the possibilities of the glass to explicate the principles of typology and analogy while also serving to physically illuminate the church.

Suger described the windows as "urging us onward from the material to the immaterial" and has described the lux nova which flowed from them. In Suger's philosophy, the windows would not only symbolize the divine, but would embody it. The iconographic program with the allegories of revelation reinforced this fusion. In

addition to offering the best source for a study of Suger's iconographic program, the extant windows allow us to make some stylistic comments on the "new art" of the abbey.
History and Description of the Windows

Our primary source for an interpretation of the iconographic scheme of the windows is Suger's description of them in the *De Administratione*. The complete text follows:

"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 verses of this subject are these:

'By working the mill, thou, Paul takest the flour out of the bran.
Thou makest known the inmost meaning of the Law of Moses.
From so many grains is made the true bread without bran, our and the angels' perpetual food.'

38 "below" means in the crypt.
39 The first rose window.
Also in the same window, where the veil is taken off the face of Moses:

'What Moses veils the doctrine of Christ unveils. They who bare Moses despoil the Law.'

In the same window, above the Ark of the Covenant:

'On the Ark of the Covenant is established the altar with the Cross of Christ; Here Life wishes to die under a greater covenant.'

Also in the same window, where the Lion and Lamb unseal the Book:

'He who is the great God, the Lion and the Lamb, unseals the Book. The Lamb or Lion becomes the flesh joined to God.'

In another window, where the daughter of Pharaoh finds Moses in the Ark:

'Moses in the ark is that Man-Child Whom the maiden Royal, the Church, fosters with pious mind.'

In the same window, where the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush:

'Just as this bush is seen to burn yet is not burned, so he who is full of fire Divine burns with it yet is not burned.'

Also in the same window, where Pharaoh is submerged in the sea with his horsemen:

'What Baptism does to the good, that does to the soldiery of Pharaoh A like form but an unlike cause.'

Also in the same window, where Moses raises the brazen serpent:
'After the Law has been given to Moses the grace of Christ invigorates it. Grace giveth life, the letter killeth.'

Now, because these windows are very valuable on account of their wonderful execution and the profuse expenditure of painted glass and sapphire glass, we appointed an official master craftsman for their protection and repair, and also a goldsmith skilled in gold and silver ornament, who would receive their allowances and what was adjudged to them in addition, viz., coins from the altar and flour from the common storehouse of the brethren, and who would never neglect their duty to look after these works of art."^40

Suger thus described three windows—the Moses window (plate 2), the "anagogical window"^41 (plate 1), and the Tree of Jesse. From later descriptions of the abbey, we know that each chapel had two windows, so

^40 De Administratione, XXXIV, Panofsky, op. cit., pp. 73-77.

^41 So named by Panofsky because of the panel that "Urges us onward from the material to the immaterial".
that there were fourteen windows in all.\textsuperscript{42} It is assumed that the windows were in place at the time of the consecration of the choir in 1144, but the three windows described by Suger could not be later than the text, 1148. Of the fourteen windows, eight were purely decorative, consisting of grisaille glass with colored griffons on a white background. These windows were in the four chapels at the north and south of the ambulatory, consecrated to SS. Eustache, Osman, Hilary, and Eugene.\textsuperscript{43} Of the remaining six windows, Suger perhaps described only three because the themes were unusual and were of his own invention, and the other three windows were "traditional" in their motifs. The Moses window and the anagogical window were in the chapel of St. Peregrin. Of the five medallions in each window, all were described by Suger except one in the anagogical


window. The Tree of Jesse and an Infancy window were in the chapel of the Virgin. The Tree of Jesse is largely restored, although it contains some original glass.\footnote{44} The Infancy window was reconstructed by Viollet-le-Duc as a life of the Virgin, but the original glass was used and the other fragments exist in various collections. Grodecki has reconstructed the window in what must have been its original state.\footnote{45}

Of the windows in the chapel of Saint Cucuphas, thought to have been windows relative to the Passion with the Biblical types, a single medallion remains—the scene of the "Signum Tau". (plate 3) These latter windows might have been a demonstration of the Vetus Testamentum in Novo, while the windows of the chapel of St. Pérégrin would be the Novum Testamentum in Vetere.\footnote{46}

Sometime before or shortly after Suger's death in 1151, the grisaille windows of the chapel of St. Hilary

\footnote{44} Grodecki, "Fragments de Vitraux provenant de St.-Denis", Bulletin Monumental, 1952, pp. 51-62.


were replaced by two windows showing the Legend of
Charlemagne and the Story of the Crusade. These win-
dows, not part of Suger’s original scheme, have dis-
appeared and are known only through Montfaucon’s
drawings.\textsuperscript{47}

That the windows survive at all is miraculous,
considering their history during and after the French
Revolution. Tombs and windows were being dismantled
everywhere to furnish metal for bullets. In 1794, how-
ever, the “Commission Temporaire des Arts” requested that
the windows be spared because of their “interest for
art, for history, for costumes, and for chronology.” The
intercession of the committee was prompted by Charles
Percier, a member of the committee and an architect-
antiquarian, who had been to St.-Denis and had copied
details of ornamentation from the windows.\textsuperscript{48} Although
the thirteenth century windows of the nave had already
been dismantled, the windows of the choir were given
into the care of Alexandre Lenoir, who had organized
the “Musée des Monuments Français”. Although Lenoir
received permission to remove the windows to the

\textsuperscript{47} Monuments de la Monarchie françoise, \textit{op. cit.},
pp. 384 ff.

\textsuperscript{48} G. Huard, “Percier et l’abbaye de Saint Denis”,
Les Monuments Historiques de France, I, 1936. For
Lenoir, see J. Guiffrey, Archives du Musée des Monuments
français, Papiers de Albert Lenoir, Paris, 1883, vol. I.
museum, and they were thus spared, the trip and their subsequent handling unfortunately was responsible for breaking most of them. The Panels were thus dismantled from their original compositions and displayed as individual medallions. When the museum was dissolved in 1816, the windows, now hopelessly jumbled, were returned to the abbey. The windows underwent a series of bad restorations in the nineteenth century, until Viollet-le-Duc, with reference to Suger's texts and the drawings of Percier, tried to restore the medallions to their original windows.

Thus, the Tree of Jesse is largely a modern work, although faithful to Suger's composition and using what was left of the old glass, but the analogical and Moses windows have been faithfully restored using the old glass. The Infancy window is jumbled, but the original panels exist and its composition can be seen from the older drawings. All that remains of the two Passion windows is the single medallion of the Signum Tau, but it is almost wholly original glass. These assurances and Suger's text make an iconographic study possible, and, with some care, we can comment generally on the style of the glass.
The Iconography of the Windows

Of the five medallions of the analogical window (plate 1), four are described by Suger. The first, the scene in which St. Paul plays the dominant role as a millwright grinding into flour the grain poured by the prophets, is crucial to the interpretation not only of this window, but also of the Moses window, as we shall see. Paul is the only New Testament figure (with the exception of those in the Infancy scenes) shown in the windows. It is significant to recall the association of St. Denis and St. Paul. The iconography of the medallion is explained best by Suger's own lines, which say that the Old Testament would resolve itself into the New if interpreted after the manner of St. Paul, and in the process, it would be purified just as the mill separates the flour from the chaff. The grain and the flour are common metaphors for the Old and New Testaments. Vincent of Beauvais says that "...The new law is enclosed in the old like a grain in a hull; the only difference is that the truths contained implicitly in the Old Testament are here expressed explicitly." 49

The image of the mill (taken from Isaiah 47:2 and Matthew 24:41) is a symbol of exegesis, the process by which the flour is made into bread, a symbol of the church. Male says that the image of Paul shows the respect and value placed on Biblical commentaries, but one should go further and say that the reference is specifically to a Pauline method of symbolic exegesis. The essential role of the "last of the Apostles" in scriptural exegesis had long been recognized in the patristic writings, and Suger is continuing this tradition, much as he went back to the old tradition of light metaphysics. The scene of the mill is not so much an example of the concordance of the Testaments as it is a symbol of the kind of symbolic interpretation which is carried out in the two windows.

The second medallion described by Suger, "Moses Unveiled", also has a direct source in the writings of St. Paul. In II Corinthians, 3:12-16, Paul says,"... and not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that

50 Peter Damien, In Librum Judicium, cited by Grodecki in "Les Vitraux Allegoriques de Saint-Denis", op. cit., pg. 22. Grodecki's study of the iconography of the windows in this article is the most thorough to date. My discussion of the iconography of the windows follows the main points of his article.

the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished; but their minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same veil un-taken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which denotes the dullness of the senses of those not yet illum-inated by Grace."  


53 This particular passage epitomizes the metaphysics and epistomology of illumination in the very language used by St. Paul and in Rupert's gloss. The choice of such words as "unveiling" so that one can be "illuminated by Grace" show the manner in which Suger constructed his Dionysian allegories. The image of the blindfolded synagogue  

54 was thought to have derived from St. Augustine's use of *Vetus Testamentum velatum*, *Novum Testamentum revelatum*, but Augustine himself says that

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52 Cited in von Simson, *op. cit.*, pg. 121.


54 This scene, showing Christ and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, crowning the Church and lifting the blindfold from the Synagogue is the fifth medallion of the anagogical window, (plate 4) Perhaps Suger thought the image was too well known to explain it.
The ultimate source of this symbol is St. Paul.\textsuperscript{55}

The Quadriga of Aminadab is referred to in several short and obscure passages in the \textit{Song of Songs} and \textit{II Kings}. The image in Suger's medallion is, as Grodecki has shown, derived in part from the commentaries of Rupert of Deutz in which he describes the quadriga and the cross carried by God the Father.\textsuperscript{56}

The interpretation, given in the inscription, is specifically from chapter nine of the \textit{Epistle to the Hebrews}:

"For there was a tabernacle made...Which had the ark of the covenant overlaid roundabout with gold, wherein was the golden pot that held manna, And Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat....
The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing."

The medallions of the Moses window are difficult to interpret by the Pauline method. The scenes are mostly from \textit{Exodus}, and are of a typological nature, in the strictest sense of the term. The daughter of Pharaoh is the church who is the protectress of Christ; the burning bush is a symbol of the miraculous conception of Christ or of the soul which burns but is not consumed.

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{In Psalms}, cited by Grodecki, \textit{op. cit.}, pg. 24.

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Ibid.}, pg. 31.
by the love of God; the crossing of the Red Sea and the drowning of Pharaoh are the symbols of baptism,\(^{57}\) and the brazen serpent is a type of the Crucifixion. The last medallion, where Moses receives the law on the mount, is placed at the top of the window, and thus faces the medallion of Christ and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit between the Church and Synagogue, at the top of the anagogical window.

It is Grodecki's thesis that St. Paul's commentary on this event is meant to be applied to the whole window, so that the life of Moses can be read in the Pauline manner.\(^{58}\) In II Corinthians, 3:3-6, before he describes the veil of Moses, Paul says, "...and you show that you are a letter from Christ, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but tablets of human hearts....For the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life."\(^{59}\) The old law is given life by the spirit of the new; it is the synagogue unveiled, converted.

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57 This event as a type of baptism is alluded to by St. Paul in I Corinthians, 10.


59 It is strange that Suger paraphrases this in the inscription in the medallion of the brazen serpent, not in the scene of Moses Receiving the Law, where it belongs.
The Moses window, then, is an illustration of the "enlightening" application of Paul's lessons to the old law. The scenes are not complex symbols, as in the anagogical window, but are simple narratives. When the scenes are viewed in the "new light", the life of Moses signifies the piety of the church, the ardent of faith, the sacrament of Baptism, the victory of Christ in the Resurrection, and the revelation of the new law. Thus, the anagogical window is necessary for the true interpretation of the Moses window.

Most of the images in the windows are probably Suger's inventions, suggested to him by the writings of St. Paul and Rupert of Deutz. The image of the mill was shown on a capital at Vezelay, and the image of God holding the cross with the crucified Christ is shown in miniature from a manuscript of the De Trinitatis et de operibus ejus of Rupert of Deutz.

The idea of the Tree of Jesse also is not Suger's invention, contrary to Mâle's thesis, but it is true

60 Grodecki, throughout "Les Vitraux Allegoriques de Saint-Denis", op. cit., and in Le Vitrail Français, op. cit., pg. 106, gives emphasis to the influence of Rupert of Deutz.

61 Mâle, in L'Art Religieux du XIII Siecle, op. cit., pg. 169, shows the Vezelay capital, and Grodecki, in "Les Vitraux Allegoriques de Saint-Denis", op. cit., pg. 28, illustrates the miniature. Both are earlier than the windows and could be prototypes.
that the traditional image was given its authoritative form in Suger's window. Of the three windows mentioned by Suger, the Tree of Jesse had the most influence and was widely copied. This window has no specific Pauline source, although it is Dionysian in the general sense of the "ascent to the true light which is Christ".

The Infancy window was copied at Chartres. Grodecki notes that there are many compositional changes in the Chartres version, and that the copying was mainly of the decorative borders, the general arrangement and shape of the panels, and the iconography of the St.-Denis window. As in the Tree of Jesse, there is no Pauline or Dionysian symbolism. The window is conceived as a simple narrative. The Chartres window was not done by the St.-Denis atelier, as Grodecki's stylistic analysis of the figures shows.

Of the two Passion windows known from the old drawings and descriptions of the windows of the choir, the only remnant is the single medallion of the Signum Tau. This panel formed a part of a program whose iconography was different from that of the windows inspired

63 Grodecki, "L'Enfance du Christ", op. cit.
by the writings of St. Paul. The iconography of the Passion windows was the same as that of the crucifix, as we shall see, and this iconography survives in the copy of Suger's great crucifix at St.-Omer.
Mosan Artists at St.-Denis

An inventory made of the abbey in 1634 describes the pillar of Suger's crucifix as having 68 enamels, 17 on each face, with "Scenes from the Old Testament, which illustrate allegorically the coming, the Passion, and the death of the Saviour." Suger described the program as the "...History of the Saviour, with the testimonies of the allegories of the Old Testament." The St.-Omer work is generally accepted as a copy of the St.-Denis work that preserves the original iconographic program in a reduced—but not simplified—form. The 1634 description of the cross, although it unfortunately does not enumerate the scenes, does mention that there is a gold figure holding a phylacterie with the inscription "Vere filius erat iste". This last fact also resolves the question of the identity of the four figures at the top of the base. They are not the four elements, as had been

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64 The portion of the inventory relevant to the crucifix is given in Rosalie Green, op. cit., Marcel Laurent, op. cit., and by le Comte Blaise de Montesquiou-Fezensac, "Le Chapiteau du Pied de Croix de Suger à l'Abbaye de Saint-Denis", Art Mosan, op. cit., pp. 147-154.

65 i.e., the iconography is complete but uses fewer typological scenes. See the discussion on pp. 13-14 concerning the St.-Omer (or St.-Bertin) cross.
suggested by Male and others, but are the Earth and the Sea (a Carolingian tradition), and the centurion holding the phylacterie, and Moses holding the brazen serpent. Thus, the centurion symbolizes the new law, the *Ecclesia ex gentibus*, and Moses the *Ecclesia ex circumcisione*, and the symbolism is of a strict typological nature. The four figures at the base and forming the legs are the Evangelists, with their symbols.

There are four enamelled scenes on the curved base and four on the pillar. The eight scenes, all from the Old Testament, are: Moses and the brazen serpent; the spies returning with the grapes; a Jew marking the Tau on a house with the passover blood; Aaron marking the Tau on the tribe of Levi; Moses striking the rock; the sacrifice of Isaac; Jacob blessing Ephraim and Manassah; Ely and the widow of Sarepta.

These scenes form an iconographic which is typically Mosan, as Grodecki, Laurent, and Mme. Collon-Gevaert point out. This Mosan "Redemption" iconography is based on the Passion and the Old Testament types which


prefigure it. The idea of the Crucifixion is central to
the cycle, such a scene is always prominent, and inevit-
ably a crucifix is decorated with typological scenes such
as are found on the St.-Bertin cross. Two other Mosan
works, which can be related to the cross and to each
other, illustrate the consistency of this Redemption or
Passion iconography.

A portable altar from Stavelot, done in the 1160's,
(plate 8) can be related in terms of style and subject
matter to the St.-Bertin cross. The figures of the Evang-
elists which form the feet of the altar bear striking
similarities to the Evangelists of the St.-Bertin cross,
and the enamel work is similar on both works. Mme.
Collon-Gevaert attributes the altar to an anonymous
master, although it is often attributed to Godefroid.68
The altar table is decorated with enamel scenes of the
Passion and its types. (plate 9) The Old Testament
scenes are: Jonah and the whale; Abraham and Isaac;
Moses and the brazen serpent; the sacrifice of Melchisedek;
Samson carrying the gates of Gaza; the sacrifice of Abel;
personifications of Church and Synagogue.

68 Collon-Gevaert, op. cit., pp. 77-79; H. Landais,
op. cit., pg. 141.
The second work is a Passion window from the Cathedral of St. Stephen at Chalons-sur-Marne. (plate 10) Grodecki dates the window around 1147, the year of the cathedral's consecration. The window is attributed to Mosan artists, not only because of the obvious stylistic dependance on enamel work, but also because of the similarities in composition with the Stavelot altar and the Passion iconography. As on the altar table, the typological scenes are placed around the large central quatrefoil (although the Crucifixion takes the place of the consecrated stone of the altar). The window has three Old Testament types in common with the altar: the sacrifice of Abraham, the brazen serpent; and Samson and the gates of Gaza. Of the ten scenes in the window, the following are found on the St.-Bertin cross: A Jew marking the Tau on a house; Aaron marking the Tau on the tribe of Levi; the grapes of Canaan; Abraham and Isaac; the brazen serpent; Ely and the widow of Sarepta. The figures of the centurion and Moses on the cross seem to

perform the same function as the Church and Synagogue in the altar table and window.

As mentioned previously, these scenes are all types of the Passion, and the central theme is redemption through the sacrifice of Christ. This is stated explicitly by the inscription surrounding the quatrefoil of the window of Chalons: *Quod Vetus Non Tulit, Alter Adam Tulit in Cruce Fixus*. "What the old (Adam) did not provide, is given by the new Adam, affixed to the cross."

The theme of the second Adam is one of the oldest fundamentals of typology, and the ultimate source is two epistles of Paul (*Romans*, V, 12-21, and *I Corinthians*, XV, 21-22). Grodecki and Stiennon point out the importance of the commentaries of Rupert of Deutz as the prime inspiration of this typology.\(^70\) Stiennon says that the Mosan artists practiced this repertory of themes "with a predelection approaching a monopoly".\(^71\)

In writing of the Chartres Passion window, Grodecki says that Bishop Geoffrey of Chartres took over the narrative conception of the St.-Denis windows, without


\(^{71}\) *ibid.*, pg. 216.
borrowing the theological demonstrations. "Must one deduce that the Passion of St.-Denis was also of 'narrative' conception, like that of Chartres? We are certain to the contrary. The scene of the Signum Tau can only come from the Passion by a typological commentary, resembling in its iconography the great enamelled cross of Suger, that is to say resembling the iconography of the Passion of Chalons-sur-Marne."\(^{72}\)

The crucifix and the Passion windows of St.-Denis thus differ from the anagogical and Moses windows in that the iconography of the former is of a strict parallelism and juxtaposition of types and antitypes and is rather strictly confined to an exegesis of the idea of Redemption. Unlike the windows which Suger described and whose subjects he no doubt invented, this second cycle does not have the specific Dionysian qualities. The imagery is of a less sophisticated and complex kind and does not reflect the interest in light metaphysics which is typical of the projects in which Suger took a personal interest.

The strict Mosan parallelism was to be developed in the programs of the windows of the next century. Male thus seems to be vindicated on this point.

\(^{72}\) "L'Enfance du Christ", \textit{op. cit.}, pg. 97.
Gredecki says, "It is true, as Male supposed, that the Passion made at St.-Denis by Suger had been like the prototype of all the "New Alliances" and Passions of the thirteenth century, at Orbais, at Chartres, at Bourges, at Rouen, at Tours, etc." 73

It would thus seem possible to speak of the typical Mosan iconography being developed in the 1140's. Although it is hard to accept Mâle's thesis that the St.-Denis iconography and Mosan iconography had a common source, now lost, it does seem possible to reassert the importance of St.-Denis in the formation of the Mosan Redemption iconography which was to appear approximately three years later (1147) in the windows of Chalons-sur-Marne and which became the common stock of the Mosan goldsmiths.

We have tried to show that the iconography of the anagogical and Moses windows is the result of Suger's studies of the writings of St. Paul. The ultimate source of the second iconographic cycle is beyond the scope of this paper, but it does make its earliest appearance at St.-Denis. It would seem likely, in view of the fact

73 ibid., pp. 97-98.
that Suger mentions the "Lotharingian goldsmiths" he invited to St.-Denis, that these artists brought with them the elements of this iconography in some rudimentary form. It might then have then become refined and taken its traditional form in contact with Suger and the general intellectual climate of the abbey. In several articles, Grodecki writes of the influence on the glass of some symbolic themes of Rupert of Deutz,74 whose influence has been shown on later Mosan work.75 The artists could have brought this more conservative, but indigenous, symbolic tradition with them.

We have noted that it is unfruitful to look for the beginnings of the St.-Denis glass style in contemporary stained glass elsewhere in France. The Ascension window of Le Mans, done around 1140, is typical of the ensembles done in the cathedrals of Le Mans, Poitiers, and Angers. The characteristics of this style are explicitly Romanesque and are in the regional tradition of fresco painting, such as at St.-Savin-sur-Gartempe. The style depends on the stylization of gestures and postures, exaggerations of proportion and drapery, and

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74 See note 60, above.
75 See page 33.
is of a more linear quality. It is a regional style of
great vitality that exists into the thirteenth century
in glass at Bourges and Chartres, but does not bear any
resemblance to the St.-Denis style.76 It is not incon-
ceivable that masters from this region were called to
St.-Denis because of their expertise, but their hand
is not recognizable there.

The attempts to identify some masters of the St.-
Denis windows have dealt mainly with the scenes of
Charlemagne and the Crusade. Male saw similarities in
composition with a plaque on an altar from Stavelot,
possibly done by Godefroid de Claire,77 and Loomis
cited resemblances with the "channel school" of illu-
mination.78 These similarities are not crucial to our
study as this panel is now lost and was of a later date
(c. 1150-1154).

The medallion of the Signum Tau, however, has
been characterized as "Mosan" several times by several

76 Grodecki, "Problemes de la peinture en Champagne", op. cit., pp. 132-133. See also the introduction to
this paper.

77 L'Art Religieux du XII Siecle, op. cit., pg. 157.

78 Laura Loomis, "The Oriflamme and the Warcry "Monjoie" in the Twelfth Century", Studies in Art and Literature
for Belle Da Costa Green, Princeton, 1954, pg. 72.
authorities.\textsuperscript{79} The affinities between these windows and Mosan enamel work, in the limpid colors dominated by pale blues, the precision of modelling and drawing, the general composition in medallions, and the decorative motifs have also been cited. Because of the similarities in technique between enamel and glass painting, it would not be difficult for an artist used to working in one medium to transfer his technique to the other.\textsuperscript{80} It is well to remember that the treatise of Theophilus was probably in general circulation at this time.\textsuperscript{81}

The figure style of the Signum Tau medallion (plate 3), however, is reminiscent more of Mosan sculpture than enamel work. The figures in the glass resemble the Evangelists on the base of the St.-Omer cross rather than the enamels on the same work. (plate 7) If we compare the scene of the Signum Tau in the medallion with the same scene on the cross, we can see the differences in approach.

The composition of the group in the medallion is simpler and there is a greater feeling of space among the figures, while the figures on the cross are overlapped

\textsuperscript{79} See note 9, above.

\textsuperscript{80} Stiennon, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 216, also comments on the similarities in technique.

\textsuperscript{81} Dodwell dates the composition of the \textit{Divers Arts} as sometime around the second quarter of the twelfth century, and attributes it to a German monk, although it has been attributed to the Mosan region.
are compressed and there is less the feeling that the figures can move easily within their space. While the figures in both works are conceived in a very plastic or sculptural sense, the medallion figures are more carefully modelled with a greater precision of drawing. The enamel figures depend on a heavy, sudden contour, and the more elongated bodies seem to have a harder, more brittle surface. The effect is almost "pneumatic" in that the figures are rather tube-like with hard planes of clearly defined areas of color and highlighting.

The sculptured figures of the Evangelists on the cross are less contorted and their proportions are more like those of the medallion figures. There are also greater similarities in the free and easy postures and the smoother articulation of the parts of the body in these figures. In short, there is a distinction between the style of the enamels and the sculptured figures on the St.-Omer cross, and it is the latter style which the glass resembles. An examination of the glass at Chalons-sur-Marne (plate 10) will clearly show how an enamel style is copied in glass.

The attempts to distinguish slight differences between the enamels and the sculptured figures on the St.-Bertin cross are not only distinctions between two media.
Our attempts to show that the figures in the glass medallion and the sculptured figures of the cross exhibit more of the advanced "anti-Romanesque" qualities than the enamels of the cross can be expanded to cover the artistic situation in France at the time as a whole. I am using the term "classicizing" in much the same way as Swarzenski uses it in Monuments of Romanesque Art, to indicate that the Mosan artists never quite succumbed to the more extreme stylizations of Romanesque art, and always remained in touch with older, more "classical" ways of rendering figures and space. We have referred to the situation of glass painting in France around the time of Suger's windows and indicated that there were no apparent connections. The works of the Mosan region, however, are closer to the St.-Denis works in terms of overall quality and advanced "anti-Romanesque" style, and, at this point, seem to be the most likely candidate.
I have tried to present evidence to show that there were Mosan artists at St.-Denis, and that they were exploiting with ease the repertory of prefigures and allegories which was to become increasingly influential in the following centuries. This was not confined to the rather isolated Mosan region or to St.-Denis. That it was adopted in the windows of the great cathedrals throughout France has been pointed out, but one should also keep in mind its dissemination throughout the Rhineland and Austria by Nicholas of Verdun and his followers; the Klosterneuberg altar (1181) is in a direct line of descent from Suger's crucifix and the cross of St.-Bertin. 83

We must keep in mind the distinction that was made between the various levels of symbolism which Suger developed and their resulting artistic programs. This typical Mosan repertory was but the most influential of these in the strictest terms of subject matter and typological method. The typological procedure of the following centuries was to confront Biblical types and antitypes, figures and prefigures in a strict parallelism which was constant in its method. The only unifying

83 Collon-Gevaert, op. cit., pg. 79.
principle of the various subjects in the Moses and analogical windows, however, is the analogical approach and the Pauline method of symbolic exegesis. Suger has not relied totally on a gloss for his types, as was the later practice, but has interpreted the subjects in a very personal way. Because of the complexity of this imagery, the windows with an analogical or Pauline approach would be hard to stereotype.

Stylistically, we have attempted to analyze one of the many hands that are to be found in the stained glass of the abbey. I have attempted to show that contact with Mosan art seems to be responsible for the individual style of the single medallion of the Signum Tau. This medallion exhibits those traits of the advanced style, that, in terms of the history of Gothic art, are characteristics of all of Suger's projects, including the windows of the choir and the sculpture of the west facade. As was pointed out in the introduction, these advanced characteristics were not immediately influential in a specific stylistic sense and were not always embodied in projects immediately following St.-Denis—at Chartres, for example.
What was perhaps most influential on the following history of medieval art was Suger's concern with light metaphysics and its expression as a philosophy governing the relationship of light and structure. The quest for luminosity and the associated Dionysian ideas concerning light and material substance form the basis for Suger's subsequent interests in anagogy and typology. Thus the levels of symbolism that we have distinguished in the windows: their ability to transform the architecture by their luminosity, the identification of this light as Divine and using it anagogically to come to knowledge of the Divine; and seeing it as a lux nova, at once an allegory of revelation and a medium of transmitting the doctrines of revelation. Stained glass was not new, nor was typology or light metaphysics an innovation at St.-Denis. It was Suger's discovery, that all these could be combined in an architectural setting, that sets aside St.-Denis from everything that had come before.
Plate 1: The Analogical Window
Plate 3: The "Signum Tau" Medallion
Plate 4: Christ Crowned the Church and Unveiling the Synagogue
Plate 5: The Quadriga of Aminadab
Plate 6: Moses and the Brazen Serpent
Plate 7: The Base of the Cross from St.-Bertin in the Musée de la Ville, Saint-Omer
Plate 8: A Portable Altar from Stavelot
Plate 9: Table of the Portable Altar from Stavelot
Plate 10: The Central Portion of the Passion Window of Chalons-sur-Marne
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