

THE SAINTE-CHAPELLE AND THE CONSTRUCTION
OF SACRAL MONARCHY

This book offers a novel perspective on one of the most important monuments of French Gothic architecture, the Sainte-Chapelle, constructed in Paris by King Louis IX of France between 1239 and 1248 especially to hold and to celebrate Christ's crown of thorns. Meredith Cohen argues that the chapel's architecture, decoration, and use conveyed the notion of sacral kingship to its audience in Paris and in greater Europe, thereby implicitly elevating the French king to the level of suzerain, and establishing an early visual precedent for the political theory of royal sovereignty. By setting the chapel within its broader urban and royal contexts, this book offers new insight into royal representation and the rise of Paris as a political and cultural capital in the thirteenth century.

Meredith Cohen is assistant professor of art history at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). She specializes in the art, architecture, and urban development of high medieval Europe, particularly in France and England. She has published articles on the Sainte-Chapelle, the Court Style, medieval Paris, nineteenth-century restoration, and the historiography of Gothic architecture. In addition, she has edited a series of interdisciplinary volumes on medieval history and culture. In 2010, she curated an exhibition (with Xavier Dectot) on medieval Paris at the Musée national du Moyen Âge. She has received fellowships and grants from the British Academy, the Châteaubriand Foundation, the Graham Foundation, the Société des Professeurs de Français et Francophones d'Amérique, the Whiting Foundation, and UCLA for her research. In 2003 Cohen founded the International Medieval Society of Paris, an interdisciplinary scholarly society based in Paris, and served as its president until 2013.

THE SAINTE-CHAPELLE
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ROYAL ARCHITECTURE IN
THIRTEENTH-CENTURY
PARIS

MEREDITH COHEN

University of California, Los Angeles



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To Raphaël

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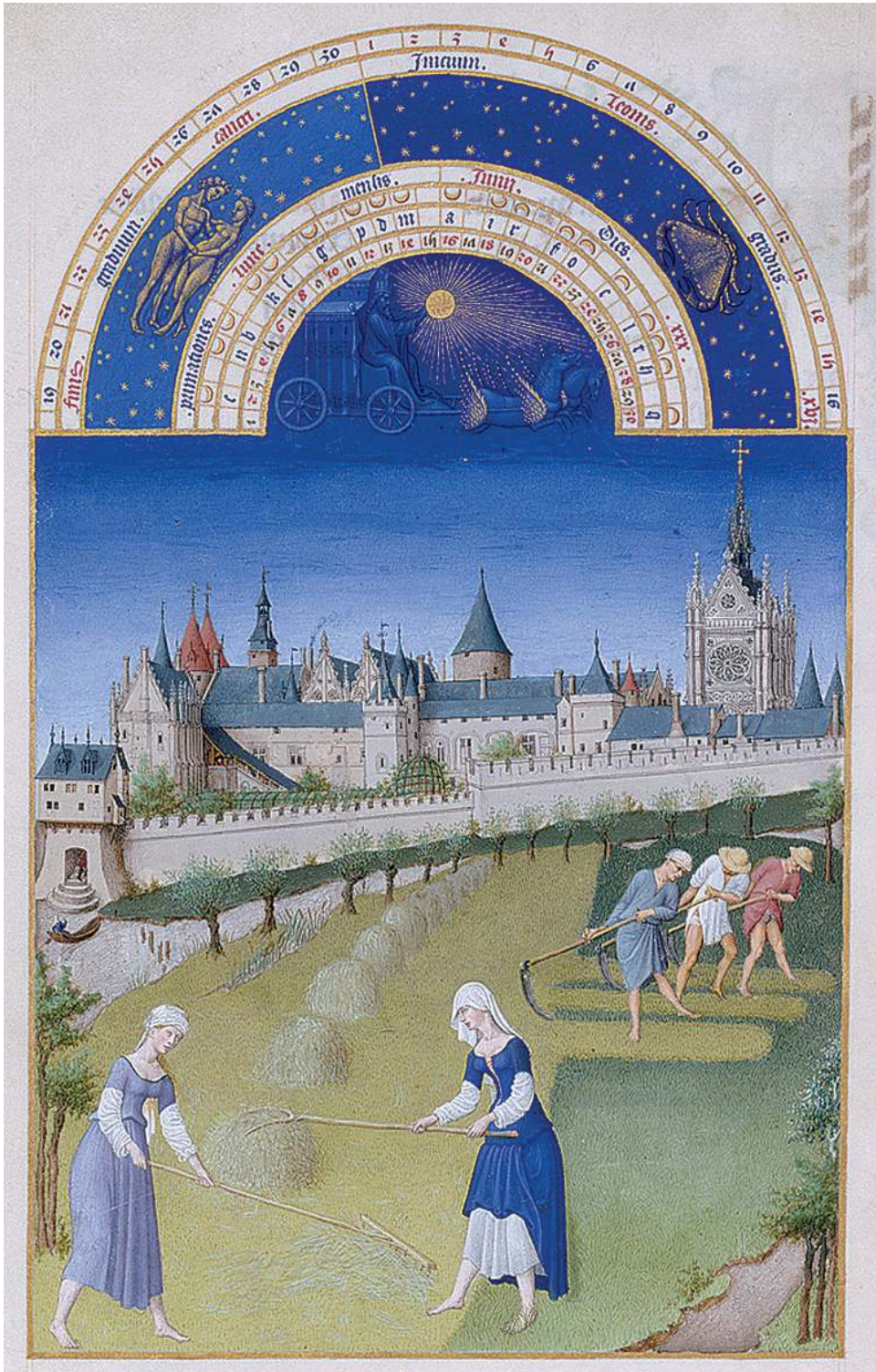


Plate I. Limbourg Brothers, "June," *Très Riches Heures de Jean, Duc de Berry*, ca. 1416.
Musée Condé, Chantilly, MS. 65, fol. 6v. Photo: René Gabriel Ojéda © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY.

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Plate II. Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, exterior from south. Photo: David Bordes © Centre des monuments nationaux, Paris.

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Plate III. Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, exterior from southwest. Photo: Jean Feuillie
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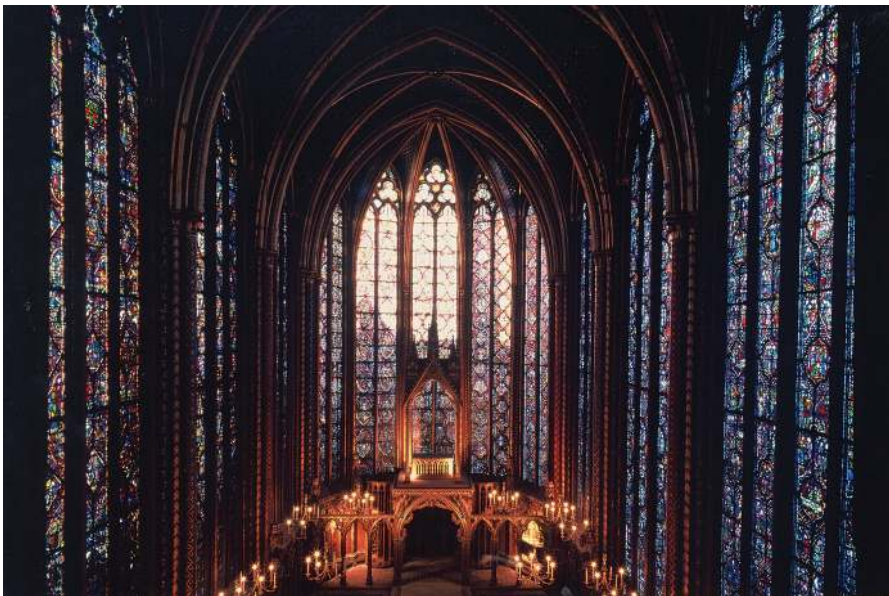


Plate IV. Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, interior of upper chapel. Photo: David Bordes
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Plate V. Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, interior of lower chapel. Photo: Bruno Acloque
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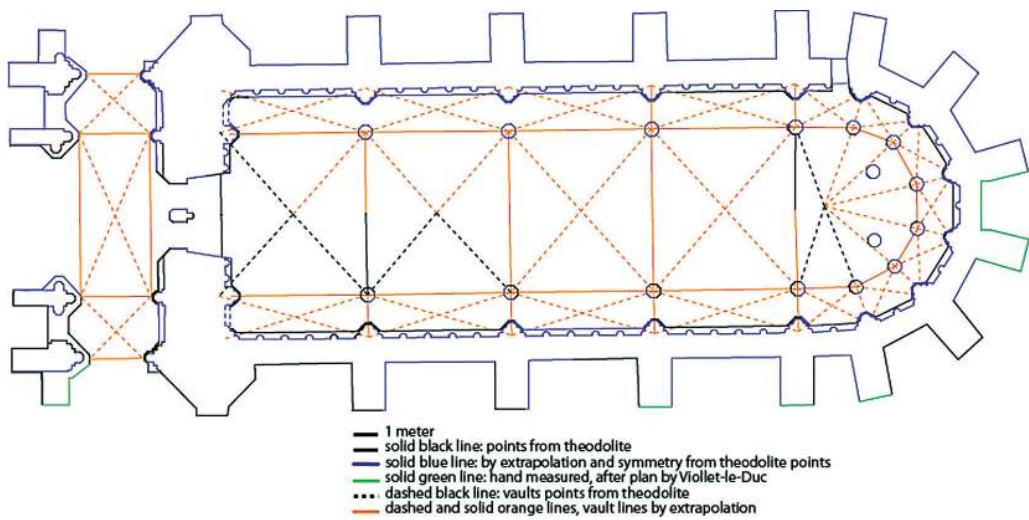


Plate VI. Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, lower chapel, plan by author.

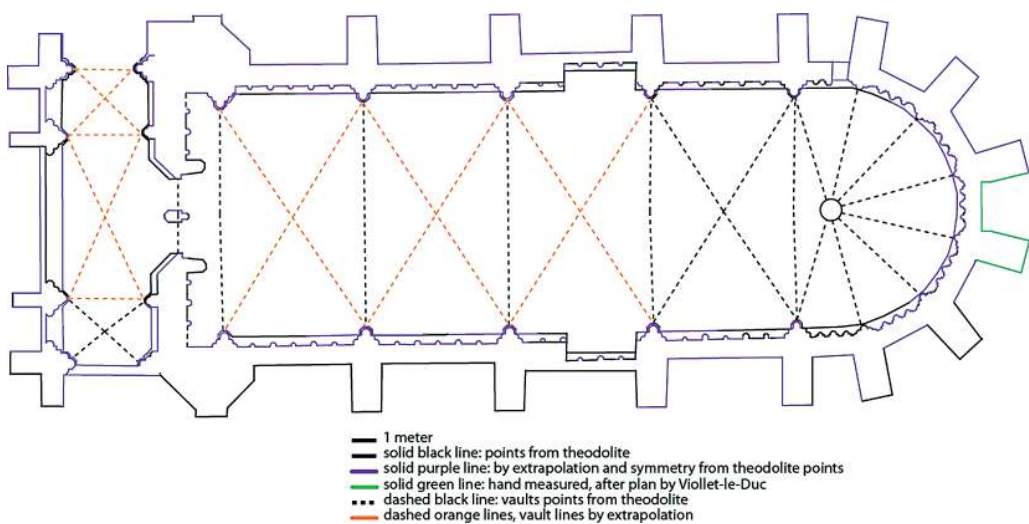


Plate VII. Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, upper chapel, plan by author.



Plate VIII. Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, interior, lower chapel, dado. Photo: Author.



Plate IX. Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, interior, upper chapel, dado. Photo: Bruno Acloque
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Plate X. Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, upper chapel portal. Photo: Jean Feuillie
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Plate XI. Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, lower chapel portal. Photo: Bruno Acloque
© Centre des monuments nationaux, Paris.



Plate XII. Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, upper chapel, Royal window, detail, "Translation of the Relics."

Photo: Bruno Acloque © Centre des monuments nationaux, Paris.

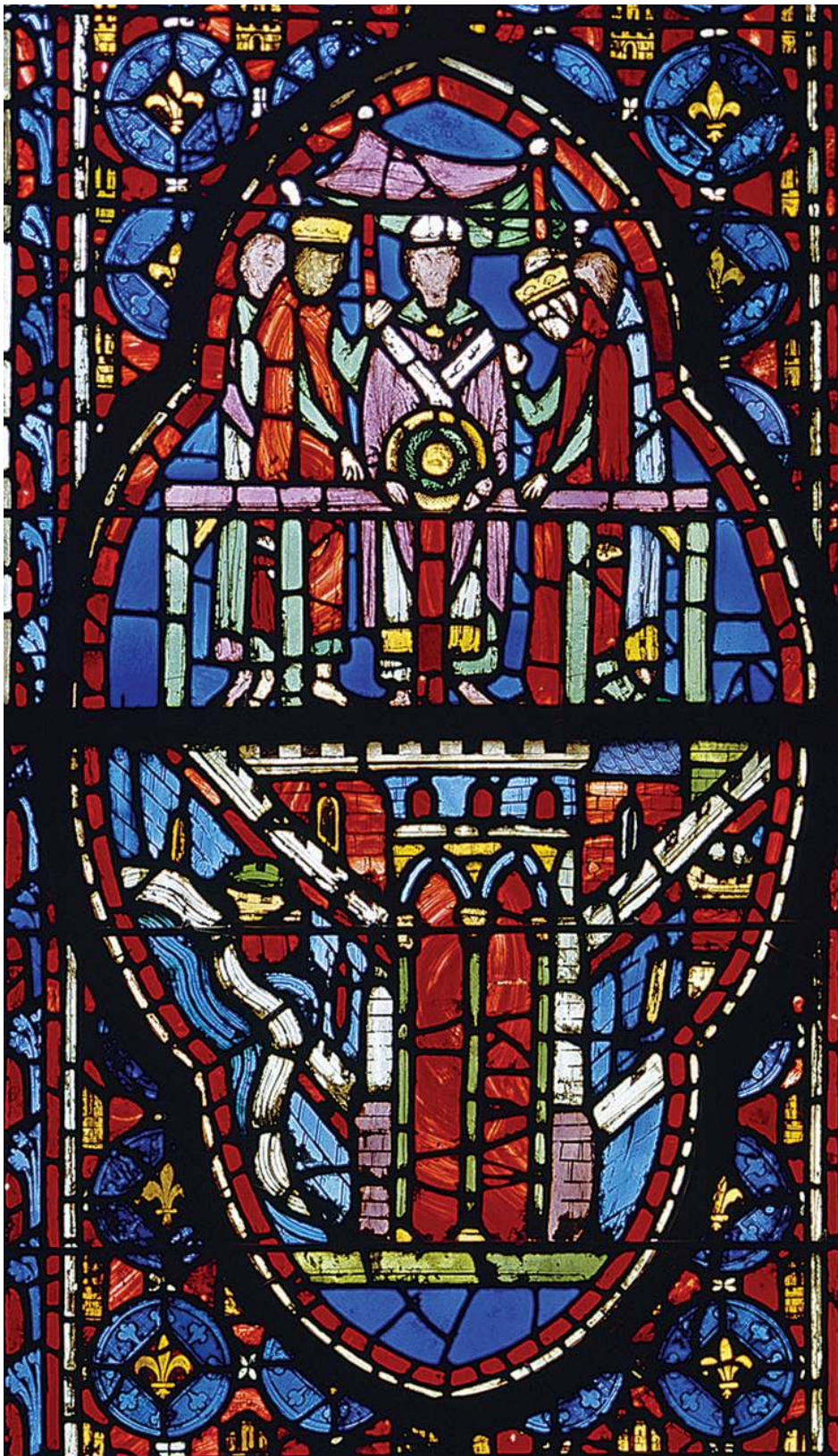


Plate XIII. Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, upper chapel, Royal window, detail, "Ostentation of the Crown of Thorns."
Photo: Bruno Acloque © Centre des monuments nationaux, Paris.

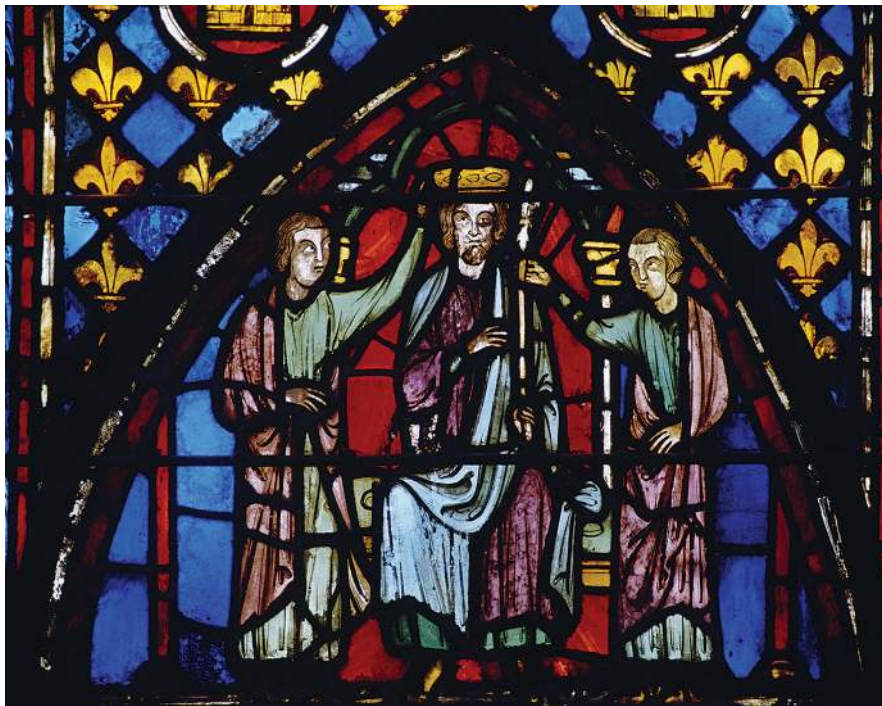


Plate XIV. Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, upper chapel, Numbers window, detail, "Coronation of a King."
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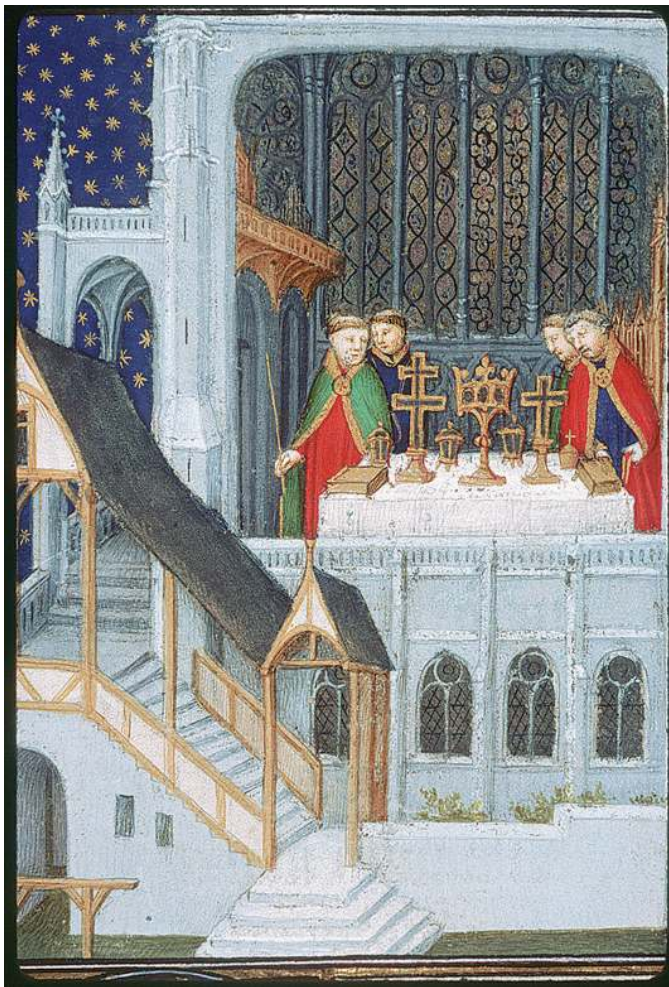


Plate XV. "Doll's house" view of the Sainte-Chapelle showing exterior staircase.

Breviary of Châteauroux, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 2, fol. 350v.

Photo: © IRHT-CNRS, Paris.

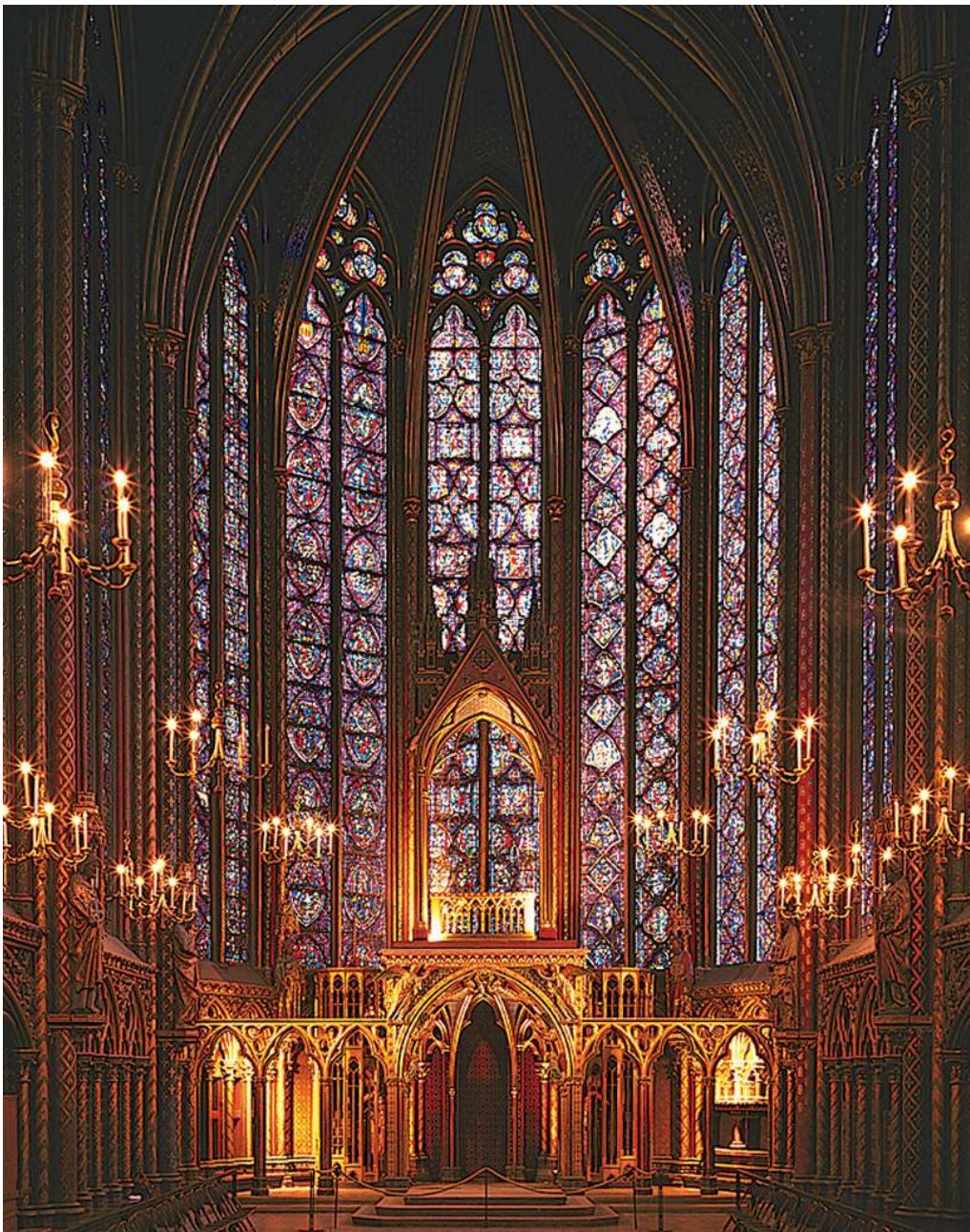


Plate XVI. Paris, Sainte-Chapelle, upper chapel, interior, tribune.
Photo: David Bordes © Centre des monuments nationaux, Paris.

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The mottled image of the Sainte-Chapelle, projected from a gritty, old slide in a seven-hundred-person lecture theater in my first art history course at UC Santa Barbara, did not hinder my immediate captivation by this fantastic monument. That spectacular, unforgettable building only raised questions, questions that I have now spent years pursuing from California, to New York, France, and England, and back again. This book is the product of that long process – one of discovery, learning, hard work, and growth along the way. Over that time, many, many different people and institutions have guided and supported my pursuit.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AN	Archives nationales de France
du Breul	du Breul, Jacques, <i>Le théâtre des antiquitez de Paris</i> (Paris: Société des imprimeurs, 1639 [1612])
<i>Budget</i>	<i>Le premier budget de la monarchie française: le compte général de 1202–3</i> , ed. Ferdinand Lot and Robert Fawtier (Paris: H. Champion, 1932)
<i>Layettes</i>	<i>Layettes du Trésor des Chartes</i> , ed. Alexandre Teulet, Henri-François Delaborde, and Elie Berger, 5 vols. (Paris: Plon, 1863–1909)
Lebeuf	Lebeuf, Henri, <i>Histoire de la ville et tout le diocèse de Paris</i> , 6 vols. (Paris: Féchoz et Letouzey, 1883)
£/£p	livres (tournois)/livres parisis
<i>Ordonnances</i>	<i>Ordonnances des rois de France de la troisième race</i> , ed. Eusèbe-Jacob de Laurière [et al.], 21 vols. (Paris, 1723–1849)
<i>Registres</i>	<i>Les registres de Philippe Auguste</i> , ed. John Baldwin, Françoise Gasparri, Michel Nortier, Elisabeth Lalou, and Robert-Henri Bautier, <i>Recueil des historiens de la France. Documents financiers et administratifs</i> , vol. 7 (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1992)
RHF	<i>Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France</i> , ed. M. Bouquet [et al.], 24 vols. (Paris, 1738–1904)
Sauval	Sauval, Henri, <i>Histoire et recherches des antiquités de la ville de Paris</i> , 3 vols. (Paris: Charles Moette, 1724)