

Sainte-Chapelle

- Built between: 1239-1248 CE
- Architectural style: French Gothic; Rayonnant
- Built to house the Crown of Thorns– a symbol of Christ’s divine rule
- 42.5 meters high; 20.5 meter chapel vaults
- Design:
 - Double-level porch vaults
 - West façade:
 - Large porch
 - Sculpted portals
 - Rose window
 - High gables
 - Vaulting:
 - Closely spaced
 - Large buttressing for support
 - 7-part apse
 - Layout:
 - Like a small episcopal chapel
 - May be a reference to Old Testament descriptions of chapels
- Decoration:
 - Stained glass– images from the Old and New Testament
 - Fresco (painting on fresh plaster)
 - Painted enamel
 - Sculptures
 - Metalwork

Meredith Cohen: “An Indulgence for the Visitor: The Public at the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris”

- Hypothesis: Sainte-Chapelle was designed as a pilgrimage site for all types of people to bolster support for the monarchy and divine rule
 - The relics located in France as: “A sign that God favored Louis IX and the kingdom of France”
 - Imagery shows the monarchy juxtaposed against religious themes\
- Sainte-Chapelle within the city:
 - Large structure that could be seen from far away
 - Visitors had to pass through the city to reach the relics at the chapel
 - Structure was large enough to hold many more people
- Visitors:
 - Many pilgrims given special rewards (feasts, redemption) for visiting and returning

- Bolstered attendance, brought in more donations and fostered publicity
- Processions of the relics:
 - Brought from Sainte-Chapelle to other churches around Easter
 - King was involved, tying him (government) to religion
- Religion and the Cult of Kings
 - Visual imagery promoted the king and France
 - Promoted the monarchy to visitors

Daniel Weiss: “Architectural Symbolism and the Decoration of the Ste.-Chapelle”

- Goal: to examine the architecture of the tribune screen (stage/apse decoration) and baldachin (canopy) in the upper chapel, where relics were housed
 - Hypothesis: the design and decoration of the *grande châsse* (where relics were kept) represents the throne of Solomon and promotes the king’s political ideology
- Restoration of the *grande châsse*
 - Accurate to original design
 - But– gabled roof of the baldachin has been altered
 - Used to be straight
 - Led to by steps
 - Surrounded by three steeples on either side
- In comparison to the throne of Solomon:
 - Similar to description of the throne in 2 Chronicles (9:17-19)
 - Was a throne to the Old Testament king
 - Design:
 - Triple arcades along a central canopy
 - *Grande-châsse* in the center
 - At Sainte-Chapelle:
 - Lacks: imagery of lions, prophets and personification of virtues
 - Connects the Old and New Testament– Solomon is equated to Christ
 - Tribune and Baldachin = the throne of Solomon
- Importance of these parallels:
 - Used to legitimize secular authority- justifies divine power
 - Louis IX called: “another Solomon”
 - Solomon and Louis IX are represented next to each other in the stained glass

References

- Cohen, Meredith. "An Indulgence for the Visitor: The Public at the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris." *Speculum* 83, no. 4 (2008): 840-883, accessed December 27, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20466372>
- Weiss, Daniel H. "Architectural Symbolism and the Decoration of the Ste.-Chapelle." *Art Bulletin* 77, no. 2 (1995): 308-320, accessed December 27, 2017, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3046103>