

The Chartres Cathedral
Labyrinth in Context:
Placement,
History and Practice

Prepared by
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www.jillgeoffrion.com

Pilgrimage Ritual

Stand.

As we bow our heads,
we remember that the first step
on the path is humility.

The second step, letting go,
is symbolized by
holding two fists out
and opening them downward.

The third step, receiving,
is honored by turning the palms up
in a gesture of openness.

For the fourth step, both hands
are placed over the heart.

Then, all pray,
“May the path lead us Home.”

Created by: Cielle Tewksbury
ciellet9@gmail.com





Our pilgrim's prayer adapted from the medieval *Codex Callixtus* (c. 1140)

"God, You called your servant Abraham from Ur in Chaldea, watching over him in all his wanderings, and guided the Hebrew people as they crossed the desert.

Guard we your children who, for the love of your Name, are making a pilgrimage to [Chartres].

Be our companion on the way, our guide at the crossroads, our strength in weariness, our defense in dangers, our shelter on the path, our shade in the heat, our light in the darkness, our comfort in discouragement, and the firmness of our intentions; that through your guidance, we may arrive safely at the end of our journey and, enriched with grace and virtue, may return to our homes filled with salutary and lasting joy."

An aerial photograph of the Chartres Cathedral labyrinth floor. The labyrinth is a large circular stone floor with a central square hole. It is surrounded by rows of small, lit candles in metal holders. The candles are arranged in a grid pattern, creating a warm, golden glow. The labyrinth's path is marked by dark lines on the stone floor. A few people are visible walking on the labyrinth.

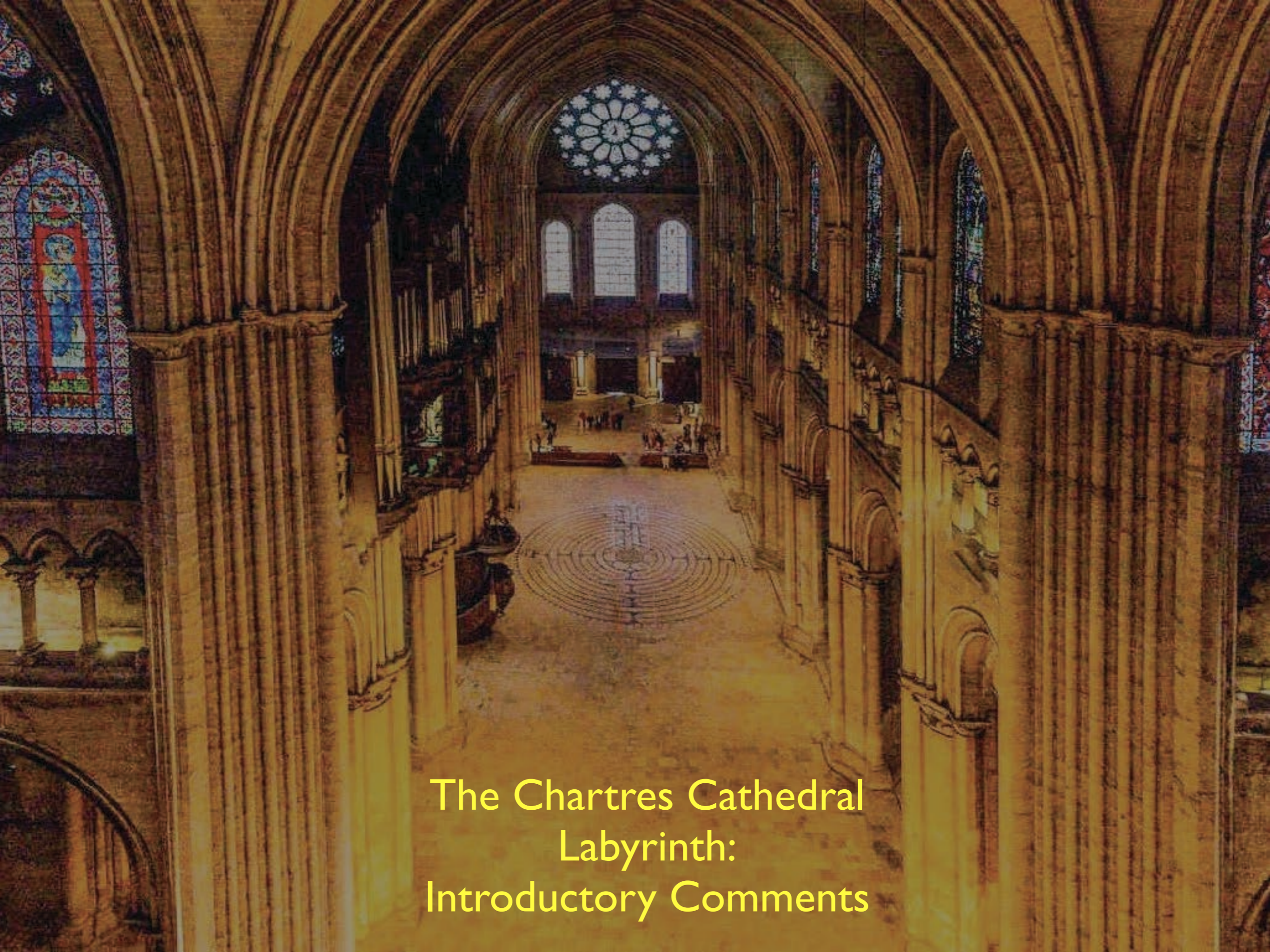
What intrigues me most
about the labyrinth in the Chartres Cathedral?

What questions do I have about it?

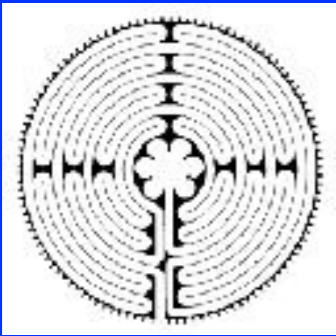
Keep walking, though
there is nowhere
to get to.
Move within,
but don't move
the way fear
makes you move.”

Rumi in Coleman Barks,
The Illuminated Rumi, 31.

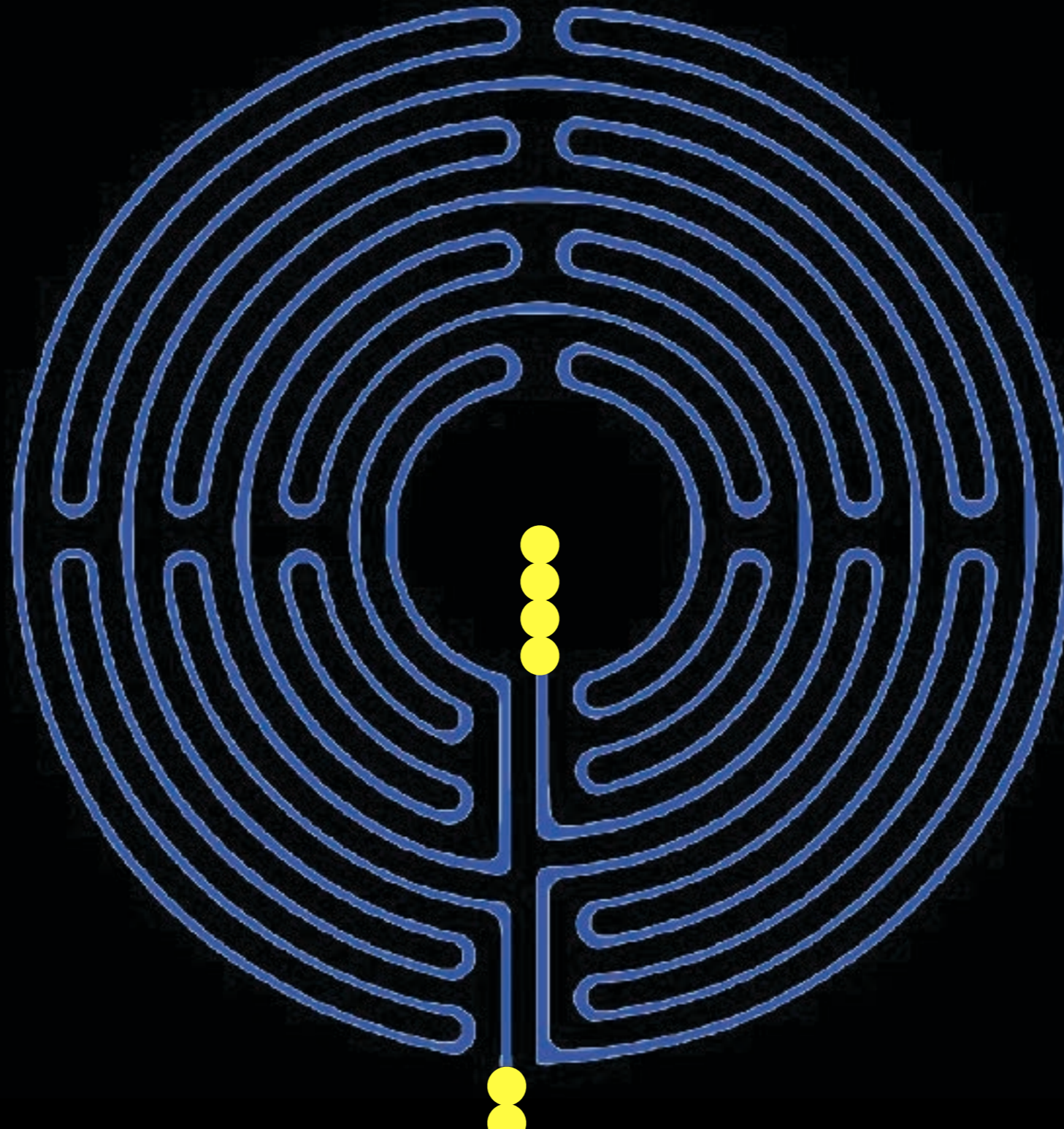
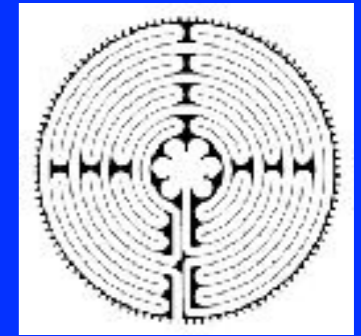




The Chartres Cathedral
Labyrinth:
Introductory Comments



A labyrinth is a pattern with a winding path that leads to a center.



A labyrinth has one--and only one--pathway.
Mazes have many.
There are no tricks or dead ends in a labyrinth.
You can't get lost.

Karen Wingaba Maze
at a Buddhist Temple
Yangon, Myanmar

Historical labyrinths exist all over the world.
The oldest is approximately 4,000 years old.
It is found in Asia, on a rock surface in Goa, India.



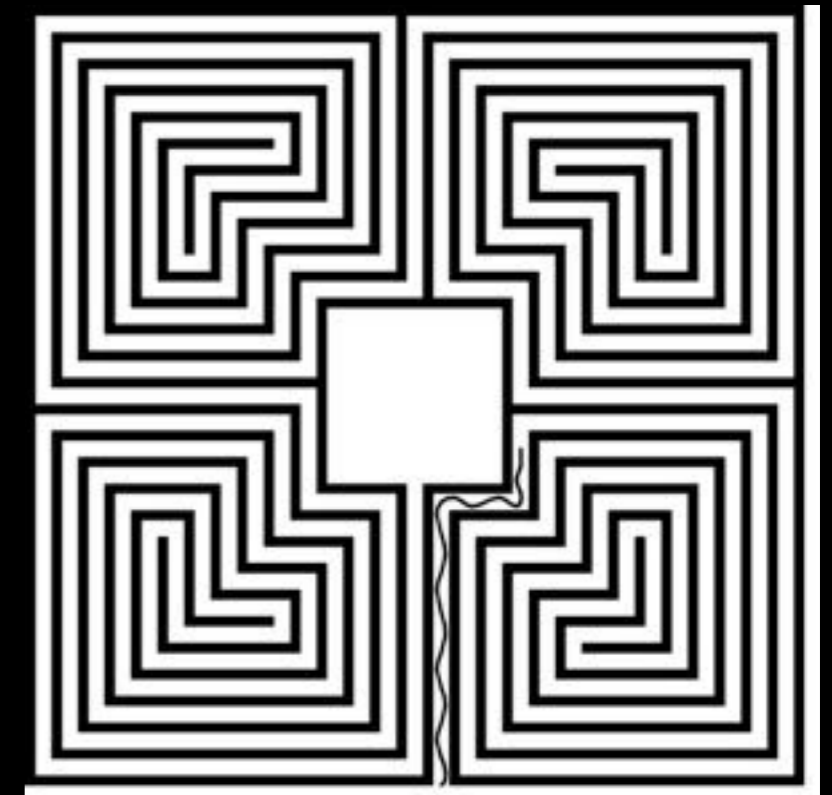
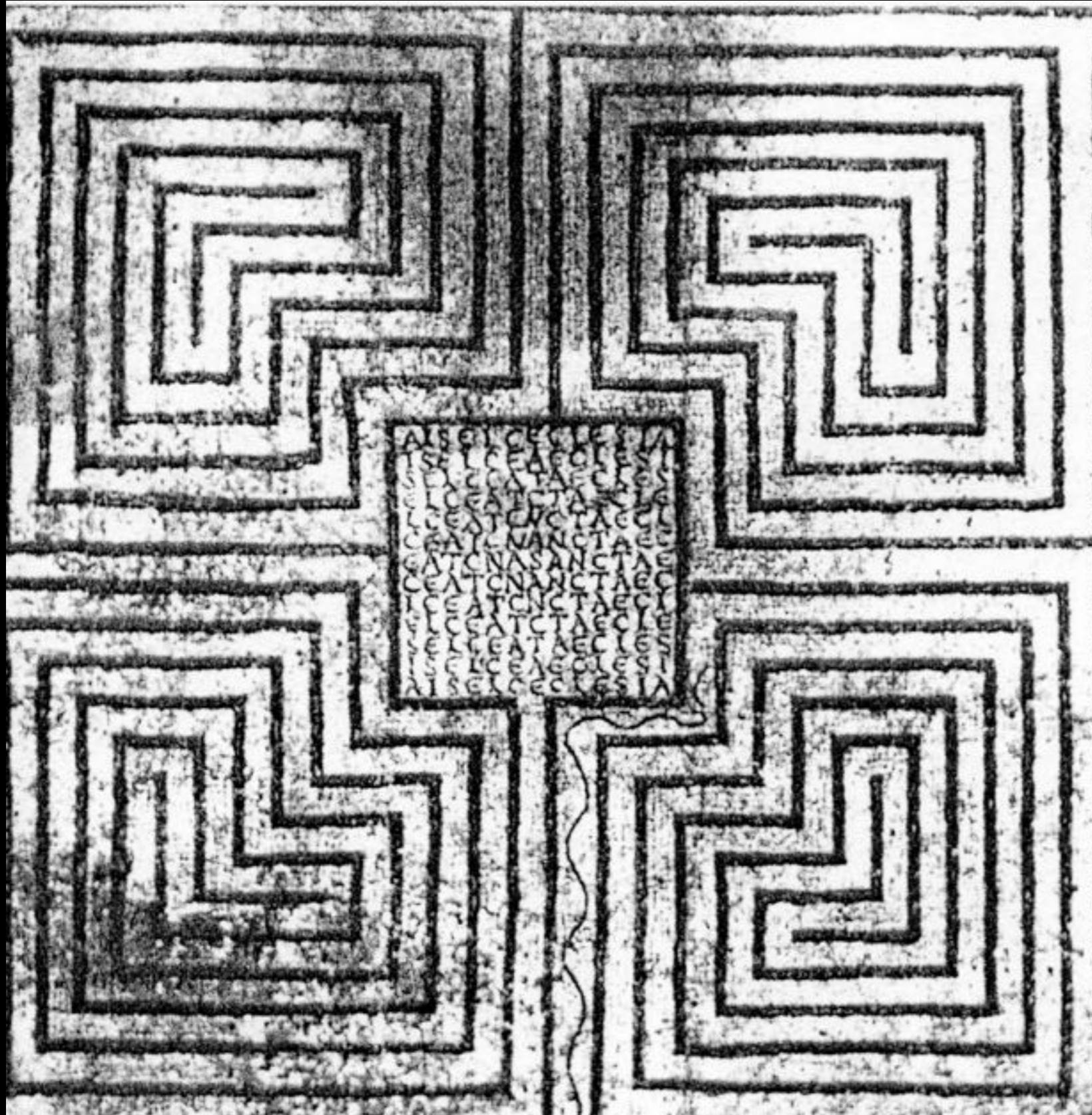
Goa, India 2,000-2500 BCE
Pansaimol Labyrinth

©Jeff Seward see [Labyrinths and Mazes](#) & www.labyrinthos.net



Marin, Spain 1,500 BCE

Christians began using labyrinths as early as 324 A.D.



From a church in Orléansville, Algeria (Africa)

Labyrinths in Christian manuscripts from the Middle Ages



10th century
St. Germain des Prés –
Paris
Manuscript relating to
the Easter cycle

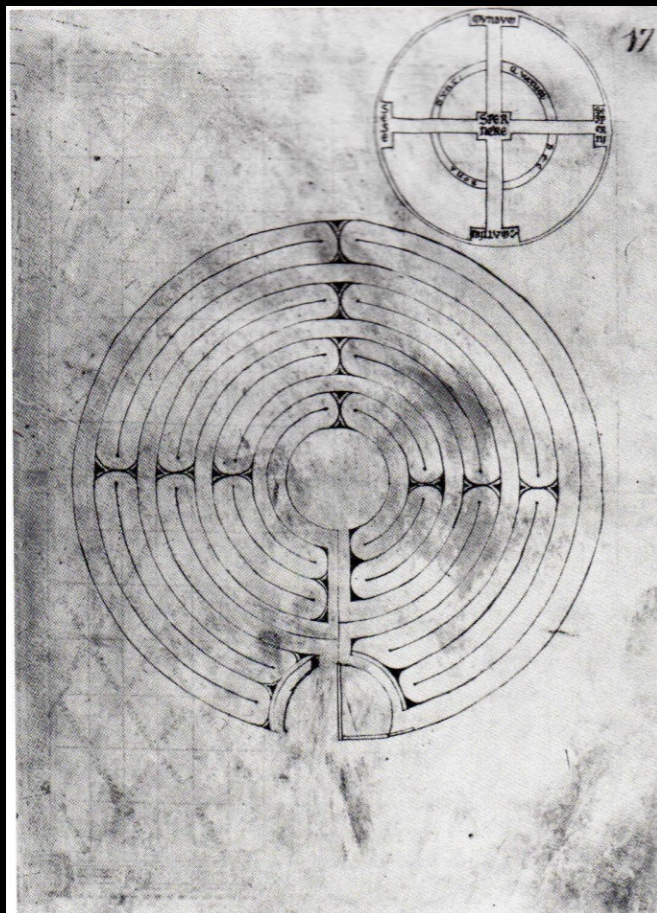
Kern No 181;
page 112



Lambert
St. Omer
entre 1060-1123

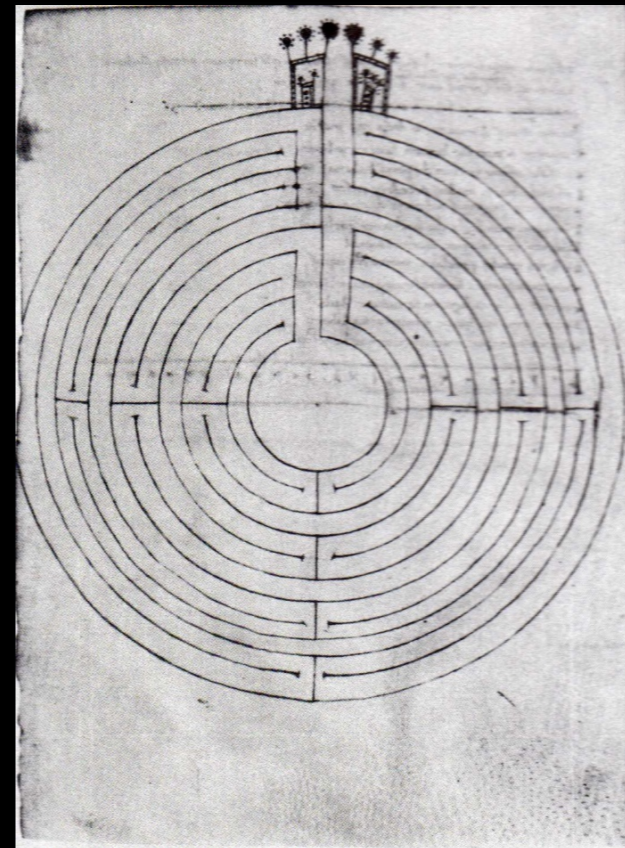
Under the drawing-
the story of Theseus
and the minotaur

Kern No 191;
page 116



Isodore de Séville
1072
Manuscript
concerned with
dating Easter

Kern No 183;
pages 112-113



Martianus Capella
11th century
manuscript which
speaks of the
seven liberal arts

Kern No 187;
page 115

European (non-French) church labyrinths in the Middle Ages

Italy: Rome (St. M. Aquiro) 1189, St. M. Trastevere, 12th

cent.; Pavia 1100; Piacenza 1107; Pontremoli 12th cent.

Spain: Barreure (Graffiti) 12th century on a pillar

Germany: Cologne, Cathedral, end of the 13th cent.



Lucca, Italy (outside cathedral) 12th-13th century



Christ in the center of a labyrinth fresco
Alatri, Italy, 12th century(restored)

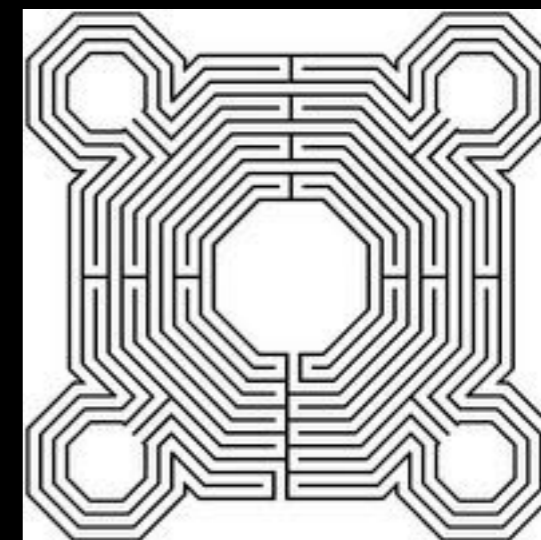
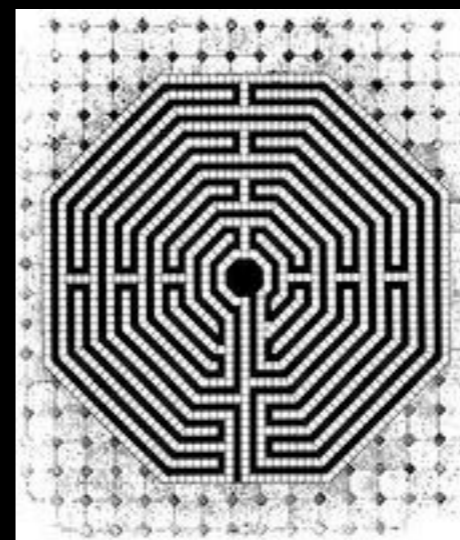
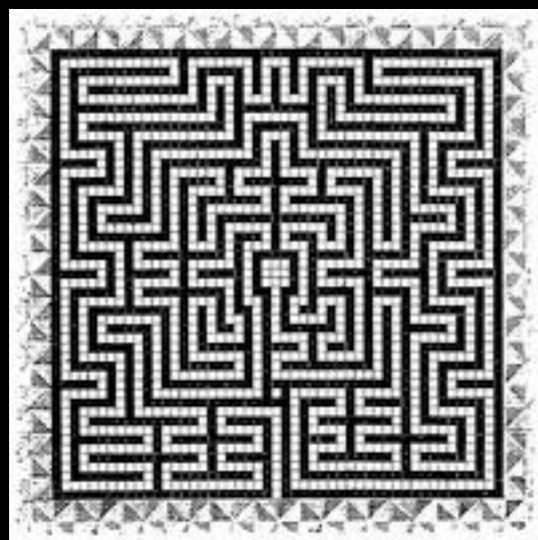




French cathedral labyrinths in the Middle Ages

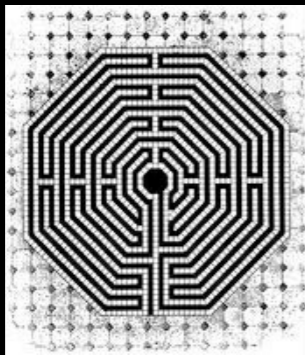


1134/5	Auxerre Cathedral of St. Stephen	1690
1160	Arras Cathedral (in the nave, started 1160)	1793
1160	Poitiers Cathedral graffiti; lab in nave also?	
1179/8	Sens Cathedral nave, finished 1180	1769
1200	St. Quentin church; Cathedral 1495	
1201	Chartres, Cathedral	
1290	Reims Cathedral	1779
1288	Amiens Cathedral	1825
Late 13th?	St. Omer Cathedral	1789



French and Italian medieval labyrinths

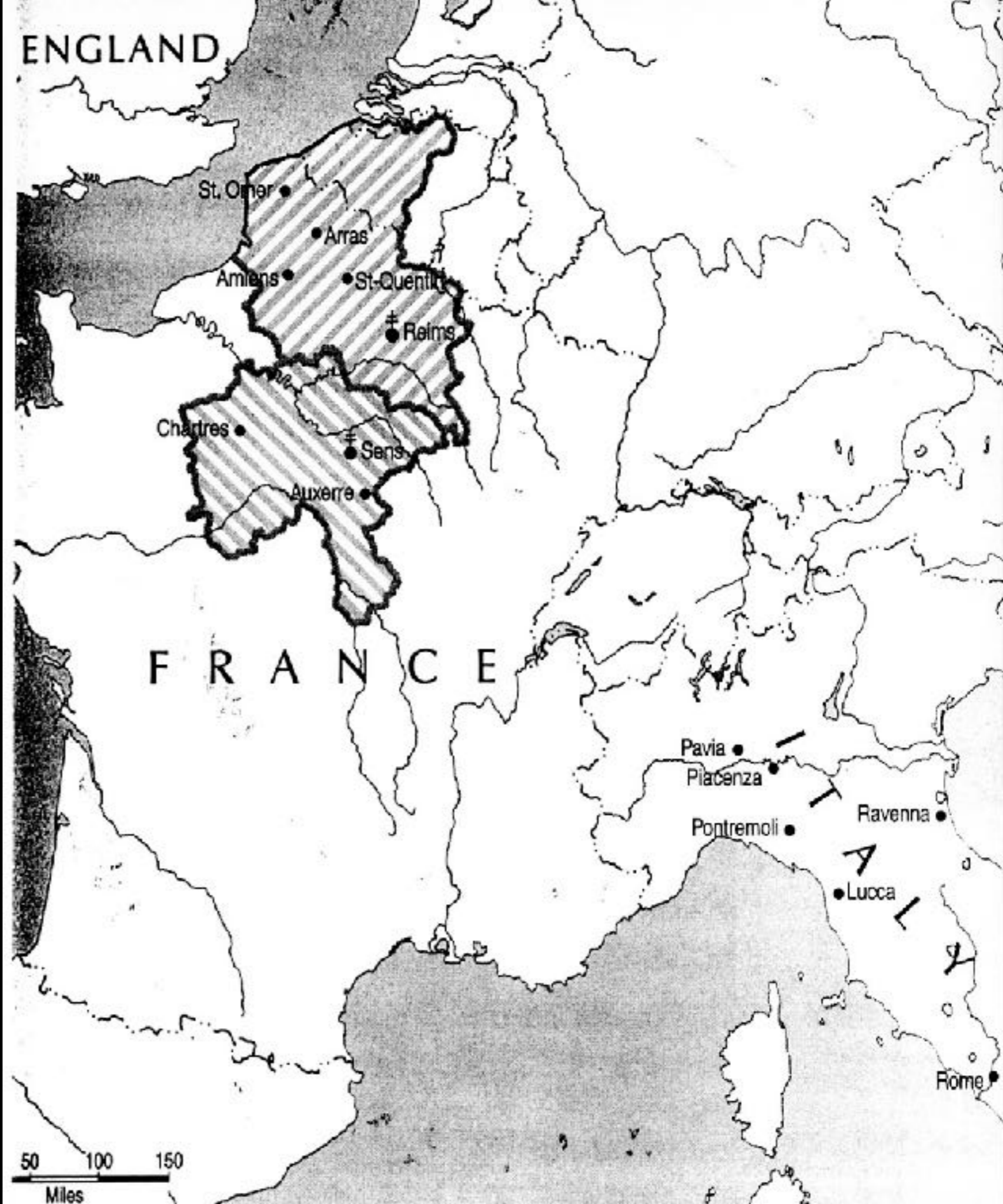
The french labyrinths were found in only two dioceses:



Reims (octagonal)
and Sens (circular)



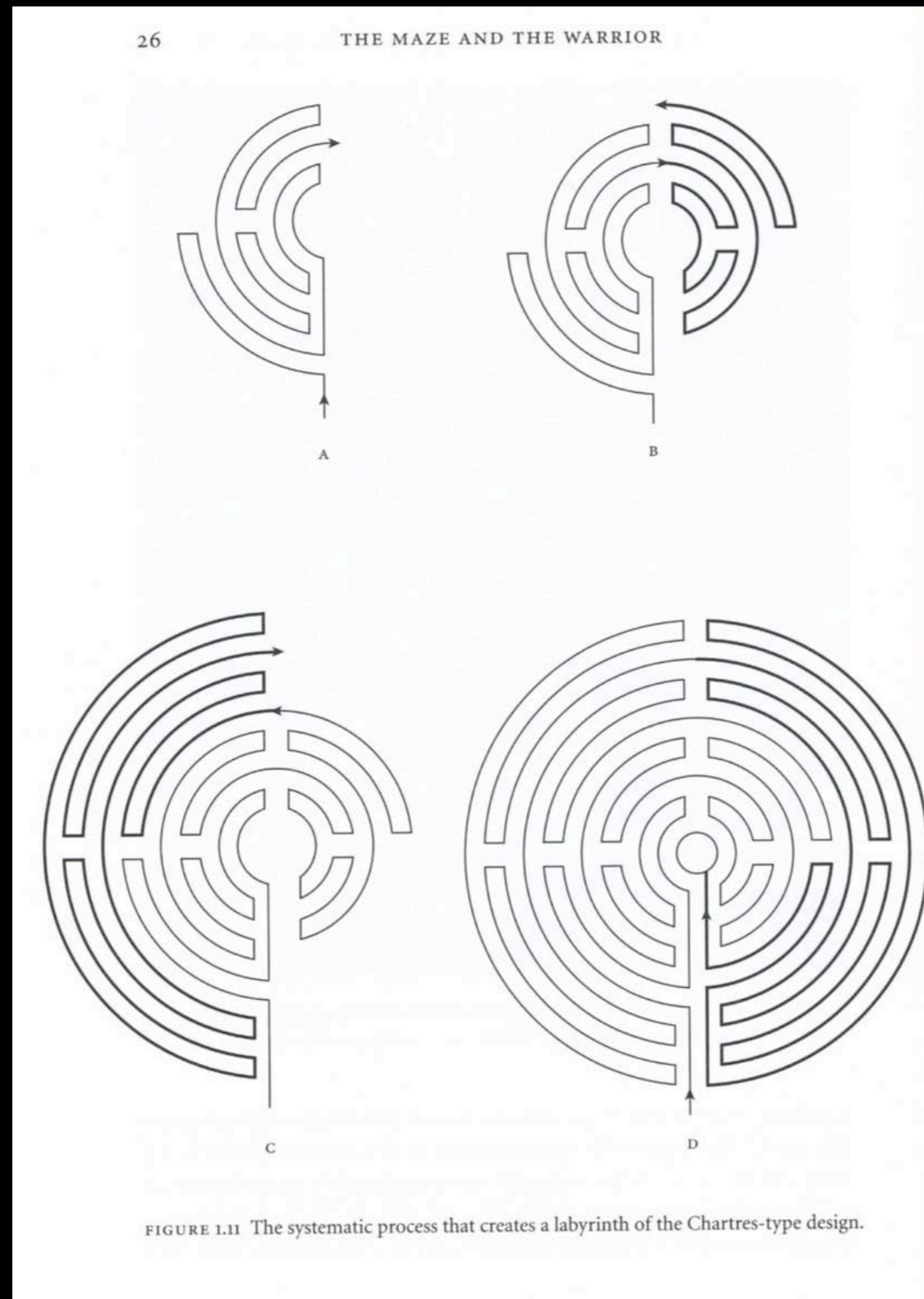
Diagram Caerdroia





Easter Dances at Auxerre, Sens, Chartres and Amiens
Doob, Penelope Reed. *The Idea of the Labyrinth*
from *Classical Antiquity through the Middle Ages*. Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990.

The labyrinth as a place where liturgical dramas of Christ's descent to hell and freeing of the captives could be reenacted.



“...the need for a sizable space within the church to act out Christ's harrowing of hell.”

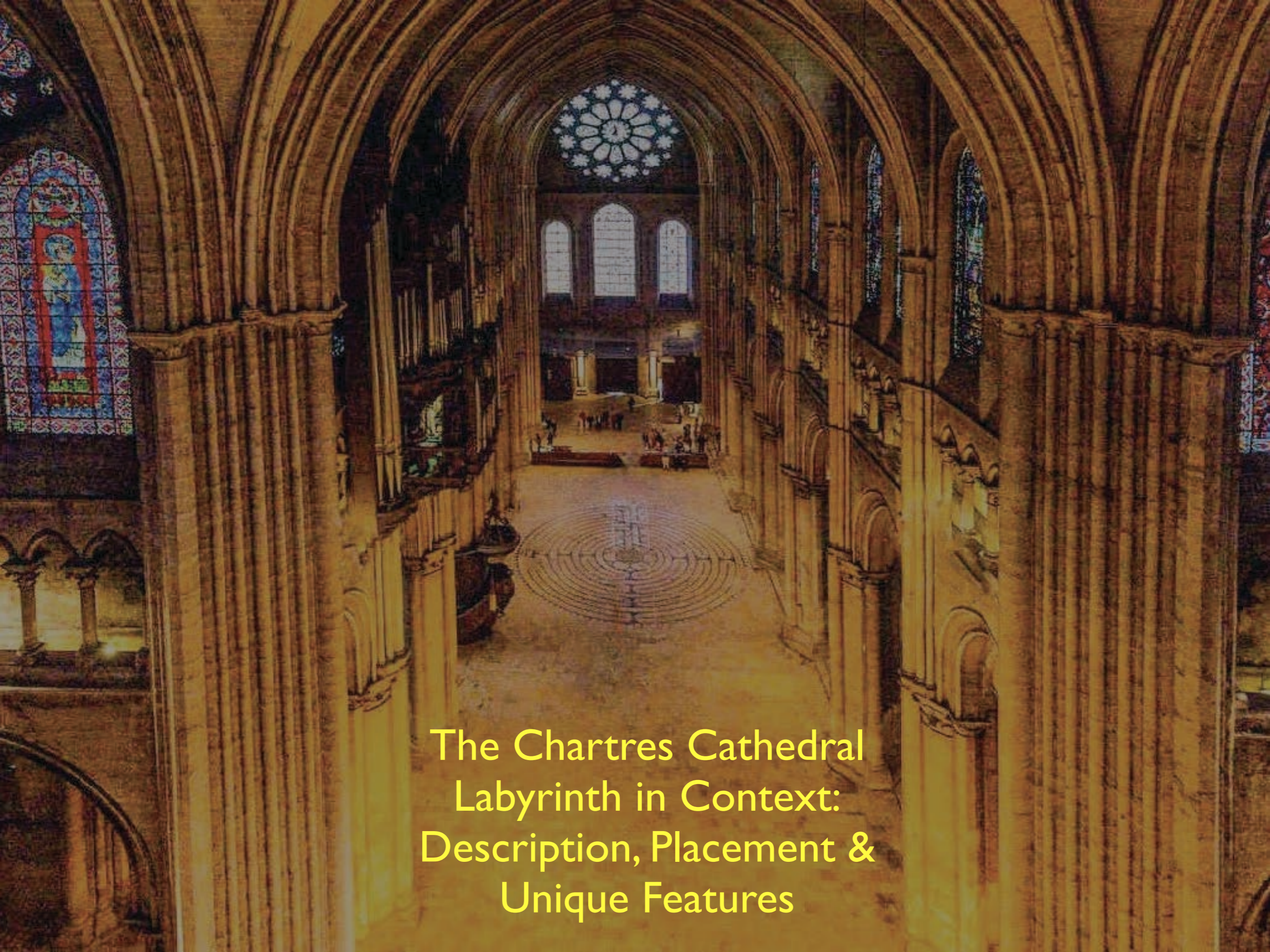
Craig Wright, *The Maze & The Warrior*, 37.

Life is Like a Labyrinth By Hali Chambers

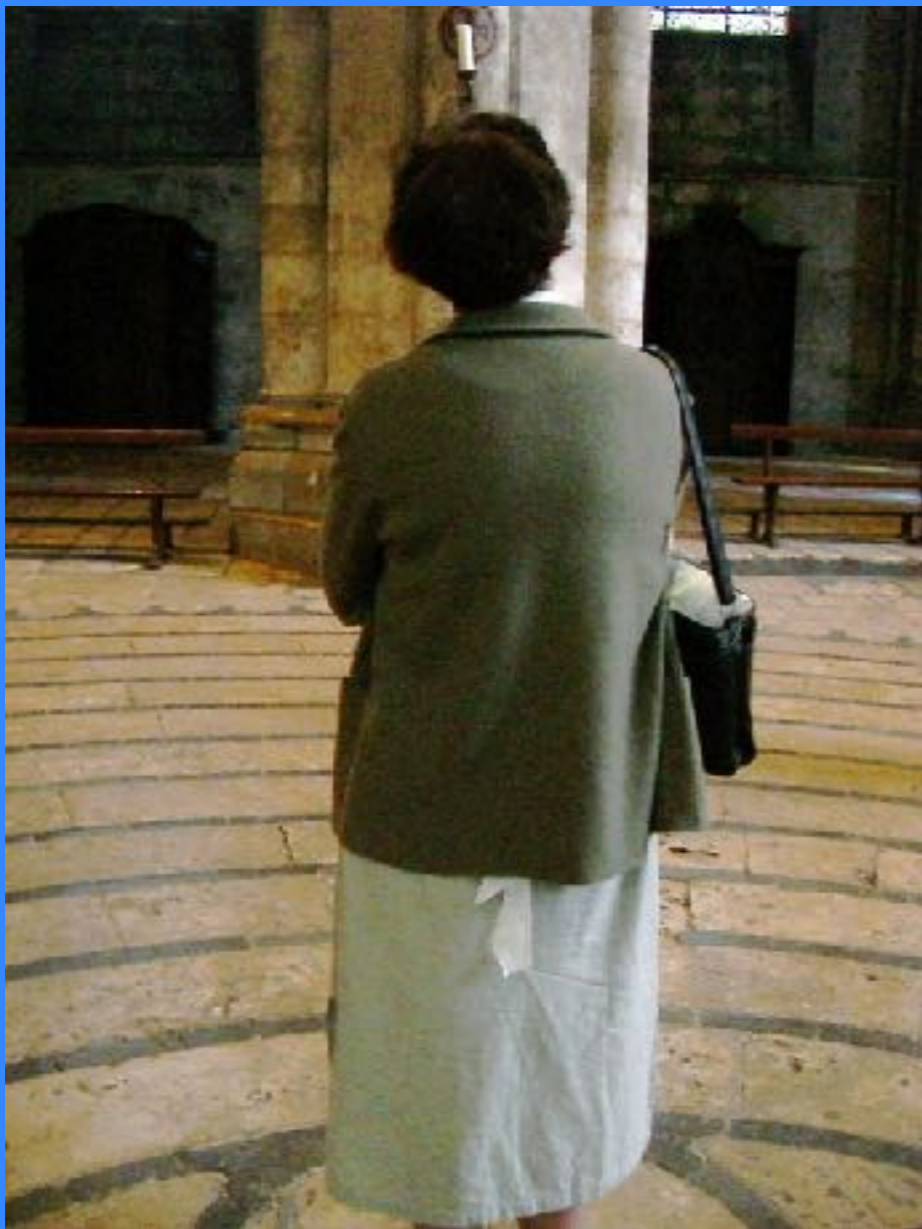
Whatever path you are on, you are on a path.
Sometimes it may feel like you are going in circles,
and then you turn the corner,
and you're closer to your goal.
The journey is just as important as the destination.

In Labyrinth Pathways (5th Edition: September 2011) 6.
healinglabyrinthpath.com





The Chartres Cathedral
Labyrinth in Context:
Description, Placement &
Unique Features



Walking the Labyrinth

To your o-pen mouth we come,
pausing with expectancy.
Posing questions, praying dreams,
gath'ring courage, hope and faith,
Circle, you hold life indeed.
With thanksgiving we proceed.

Stepping in, the way is sure,
Pacing comes in its own time.
Breathing slows, awareness dawns,
Trusting, longing fill our hearts.
Pathway, you hold life indeed.
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Wisdom, insight overflow.
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Weaving, winding in and out.
Moving t'ward the world beyond,
Op'ning hearts to needs perceiv'd.
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Once outside we gaze within,
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Spending moments filled with awe,
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Text: Jill Kimberly Hartwell Geoffrion ©1998
Tune: DIX (For the Beauty of the Earth)
Dedicated with gratitude to Madeleine Sue Martin.

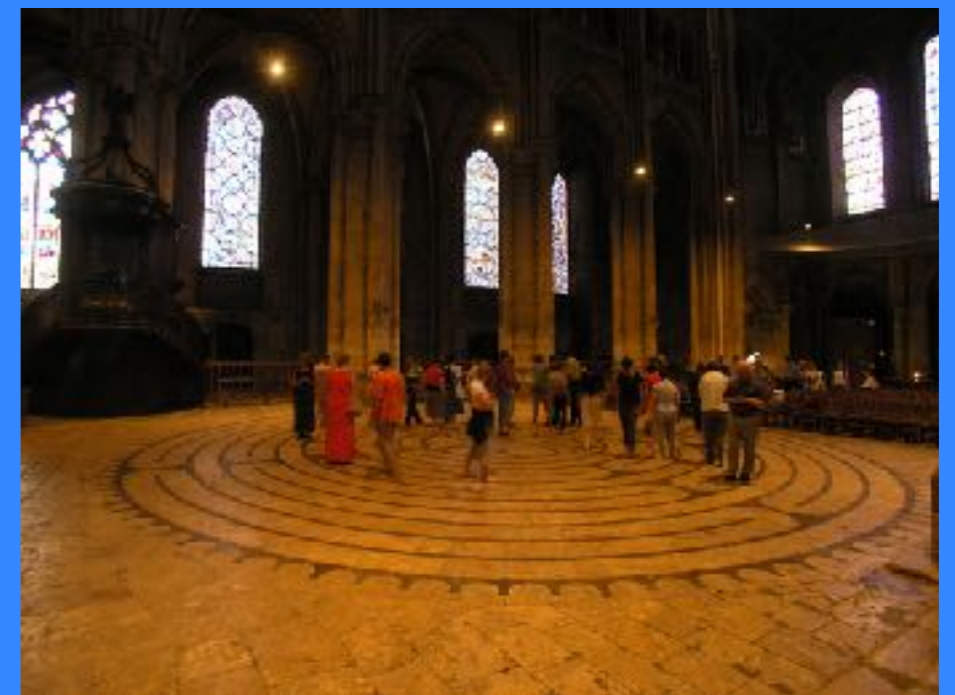
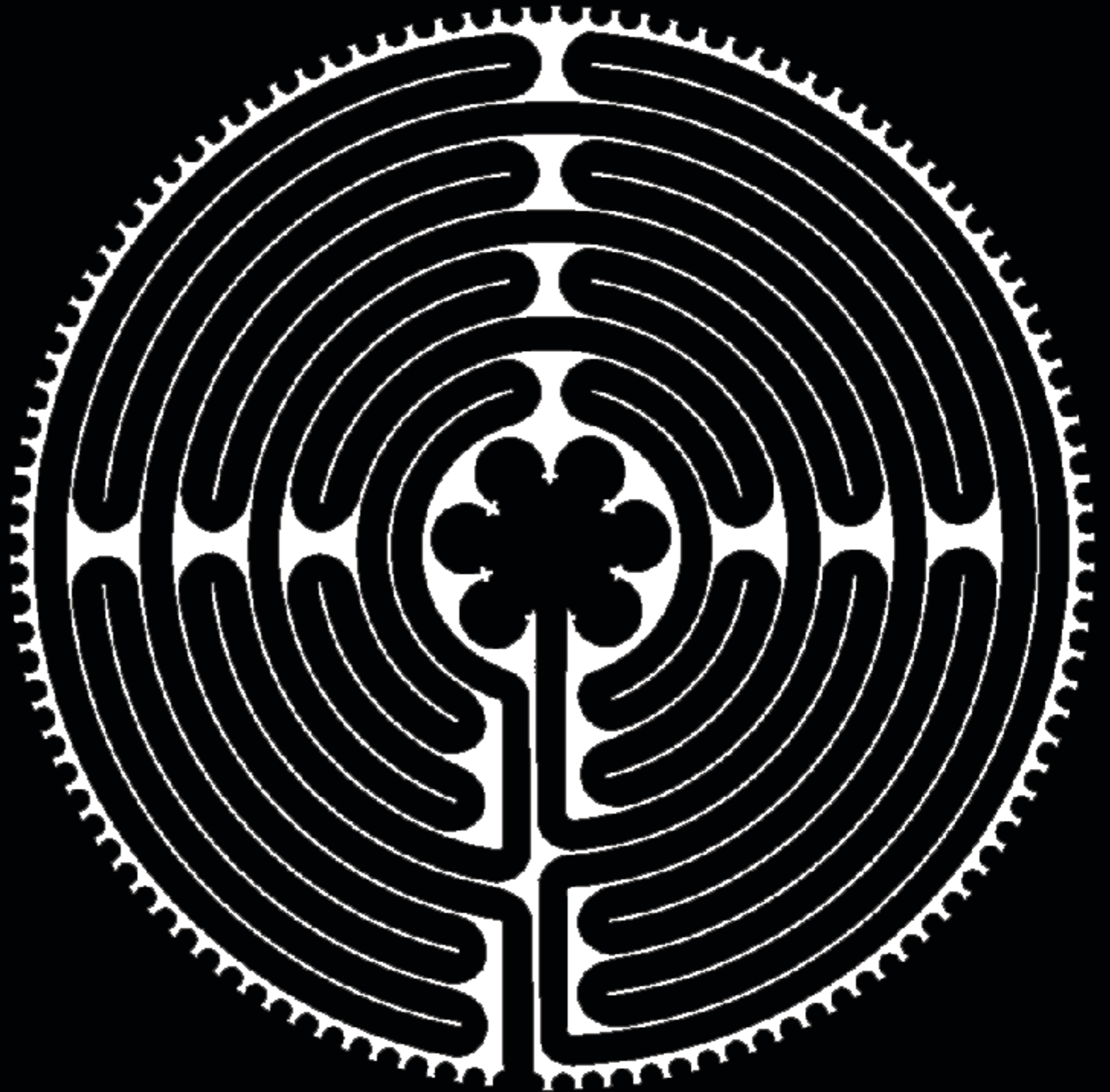
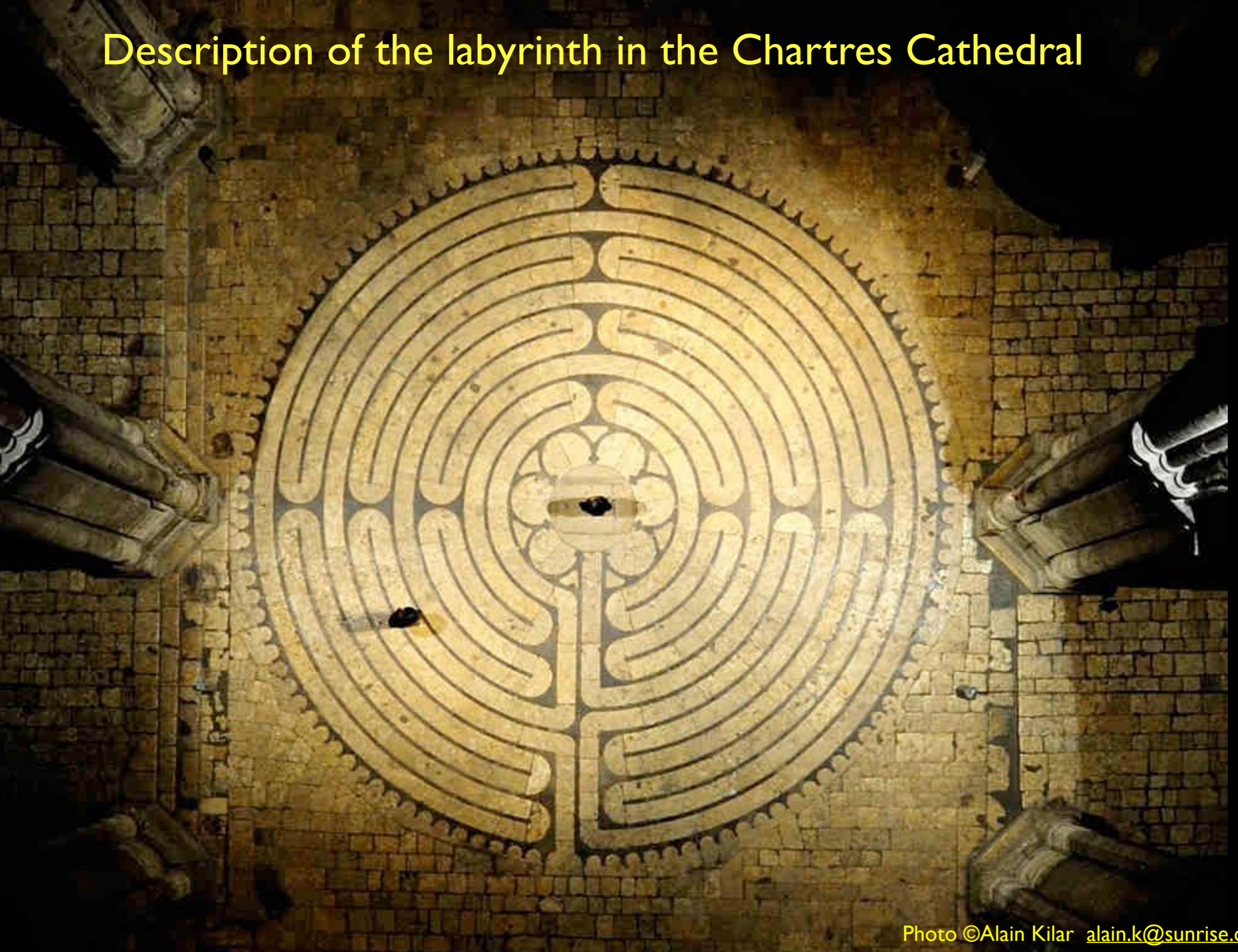


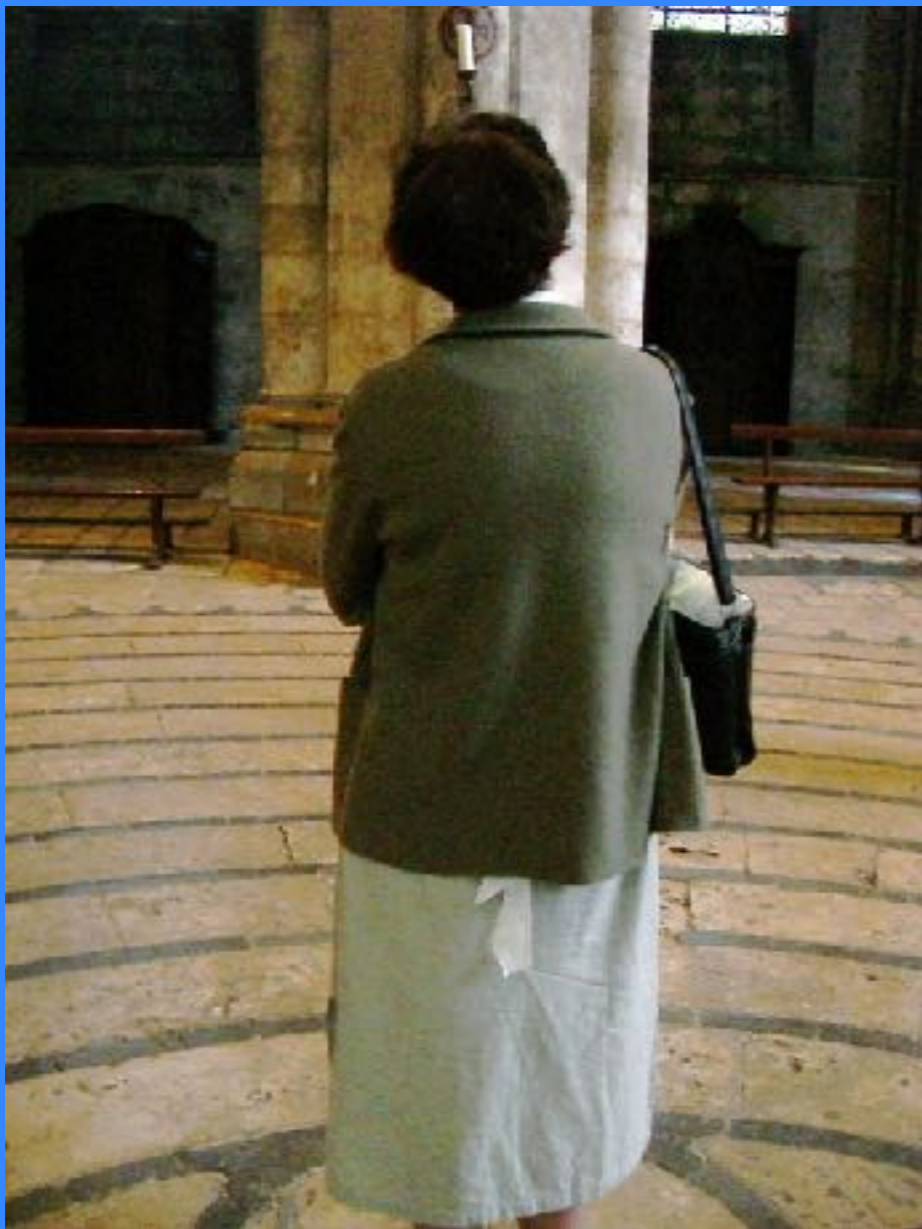
Photo ©Cheryl Felicia Dudley, used with permission

Description
of the Chartres
labyrinth
pattern



Description of the labyrinth in the Chartres Cathedral





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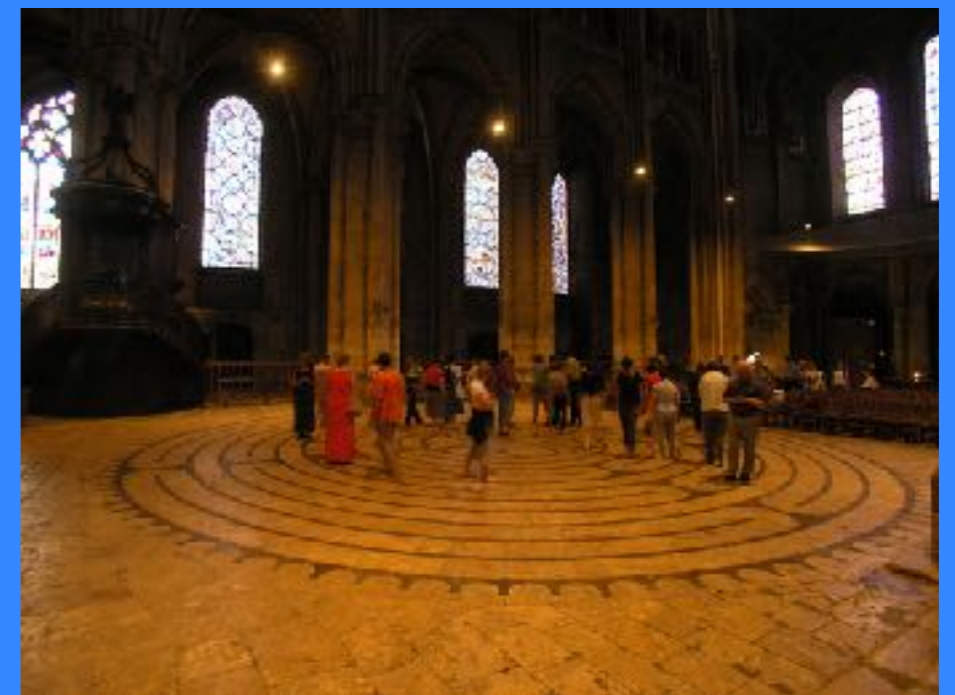
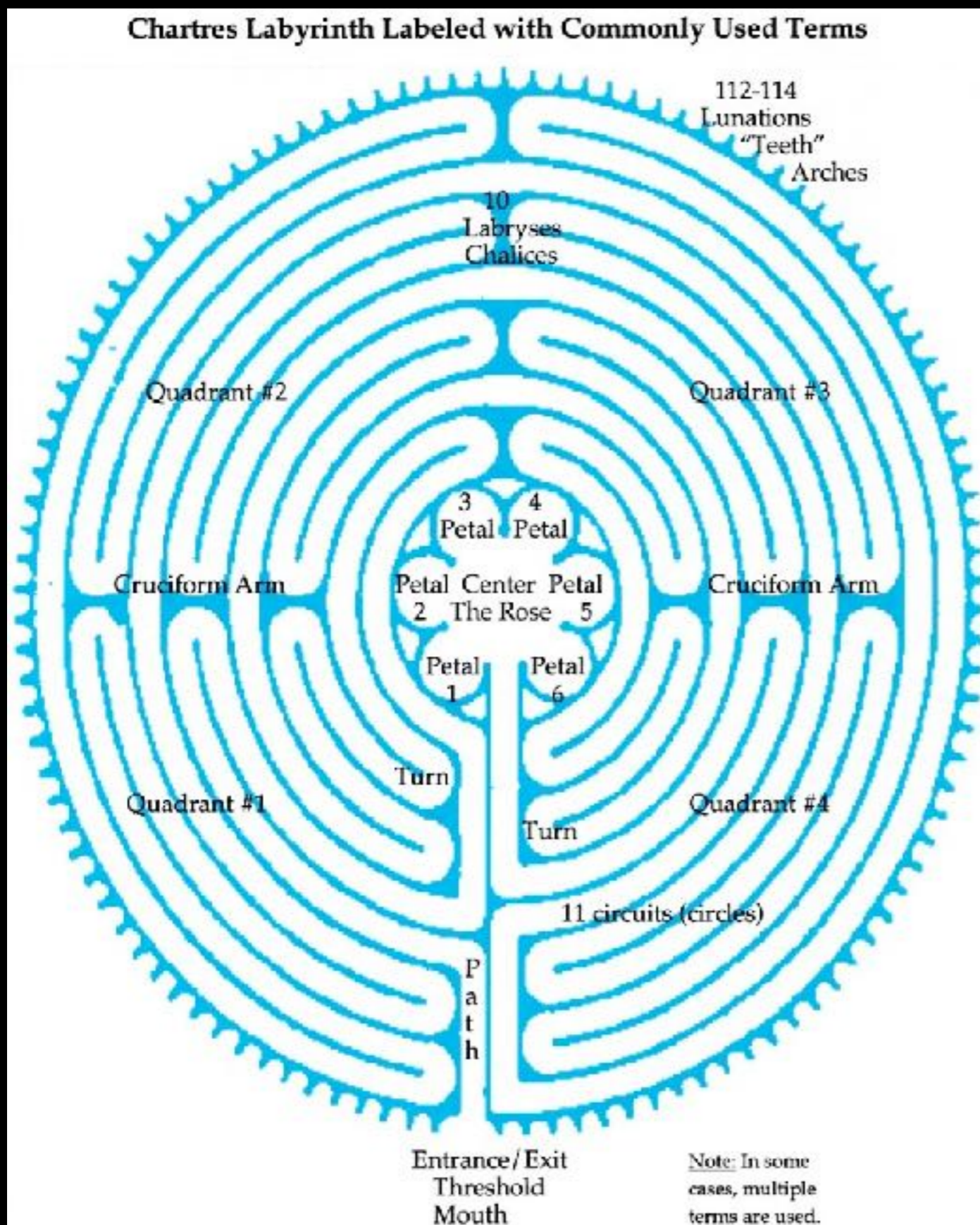


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The Chartres labyrinth: what about terminology?



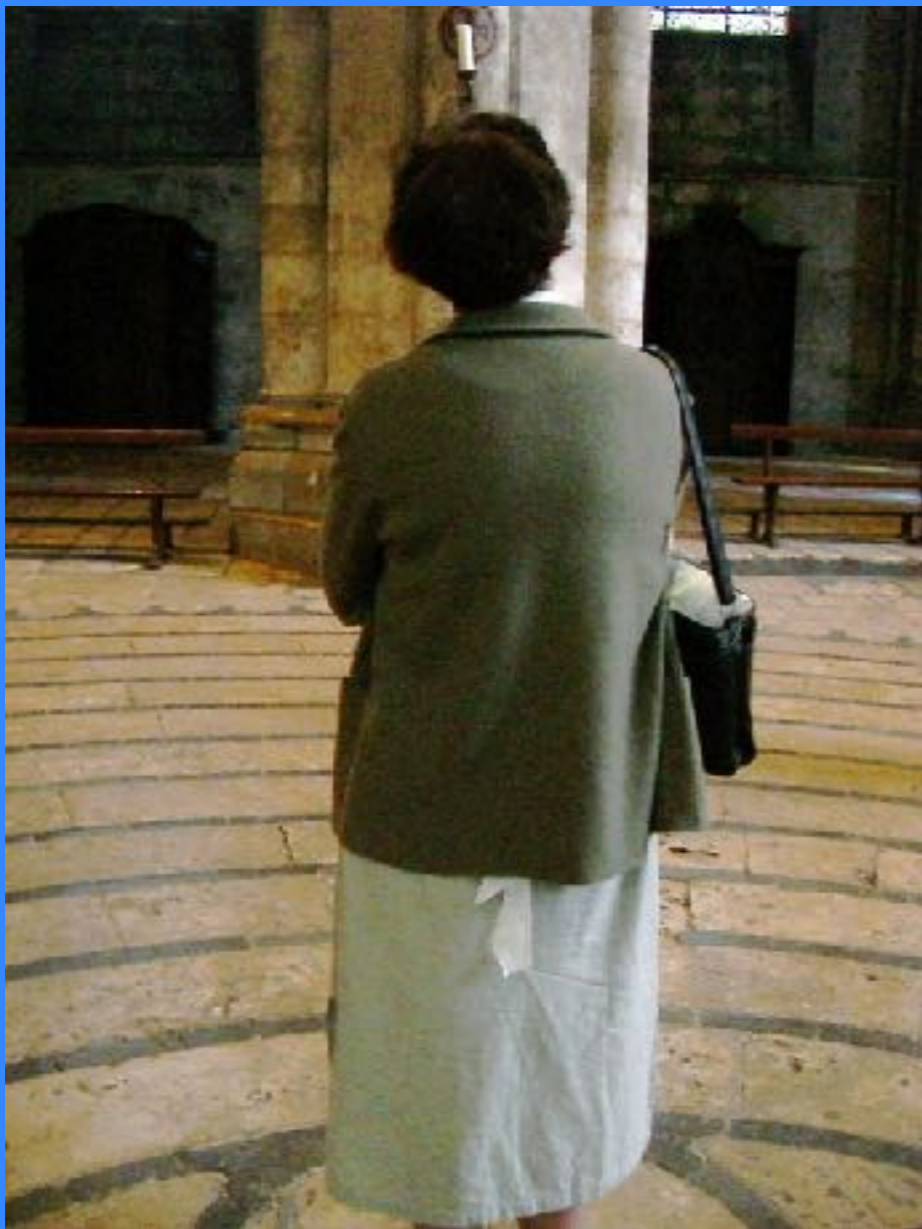
The Chartres labyrinth pattern was designed during medieval times for "use" inside a Christian sanctuary.

Everything in the building was in relationship with the liturgies that were practiced.

Clergy would surely have had input on the biggest design element in the cathedral.

Relevant Christian shapes:

- Cross
- Chalice
- 6/12 Petal flower
- Arches
- Circles



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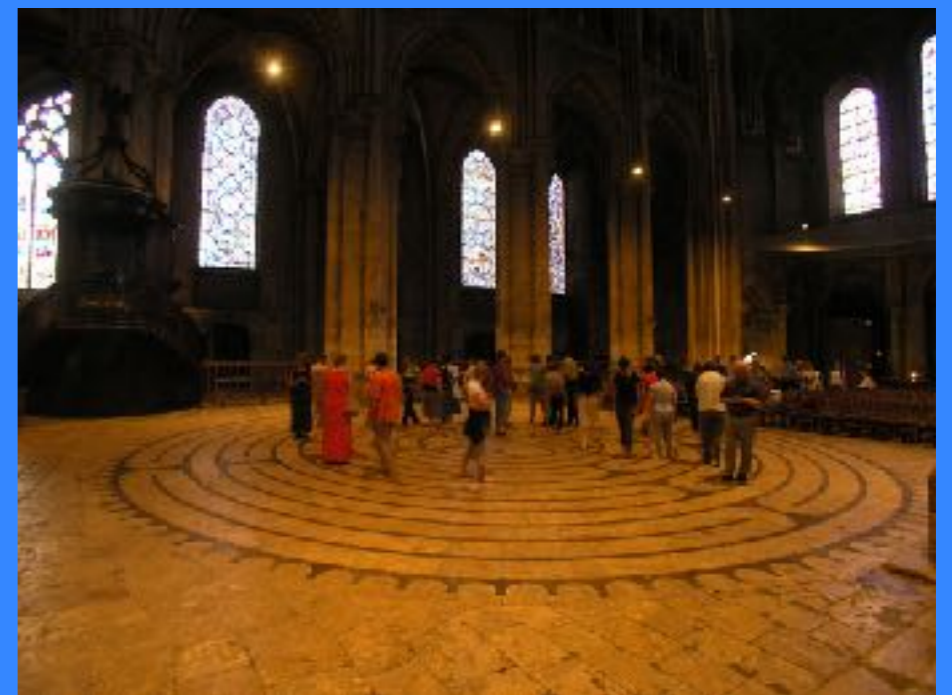


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The Stone of the Chartres Labyrinth



Yellow Limestone from the Quarry at Bechères-les-Pierres (about 7 kilometers from Chartres)

Black Marble probably extracted near Givet, in the Meuse River region, hundreds of kilometers by river and east of Chartres.

See Jean Villette, Labyrinth, 12.



The limestone used for Chartres Cathedral becomes stronger with age.





This circular labyrinth is composed of an extraordinary number of circles.



Center Petals: 6



Circle-based lunations/arches: 112



Circles/Circuits & Center Circle: 12



Half-circle (approximate) turns: 28



Center Center Circle: 1

There are at least
145!



Pathway Features:

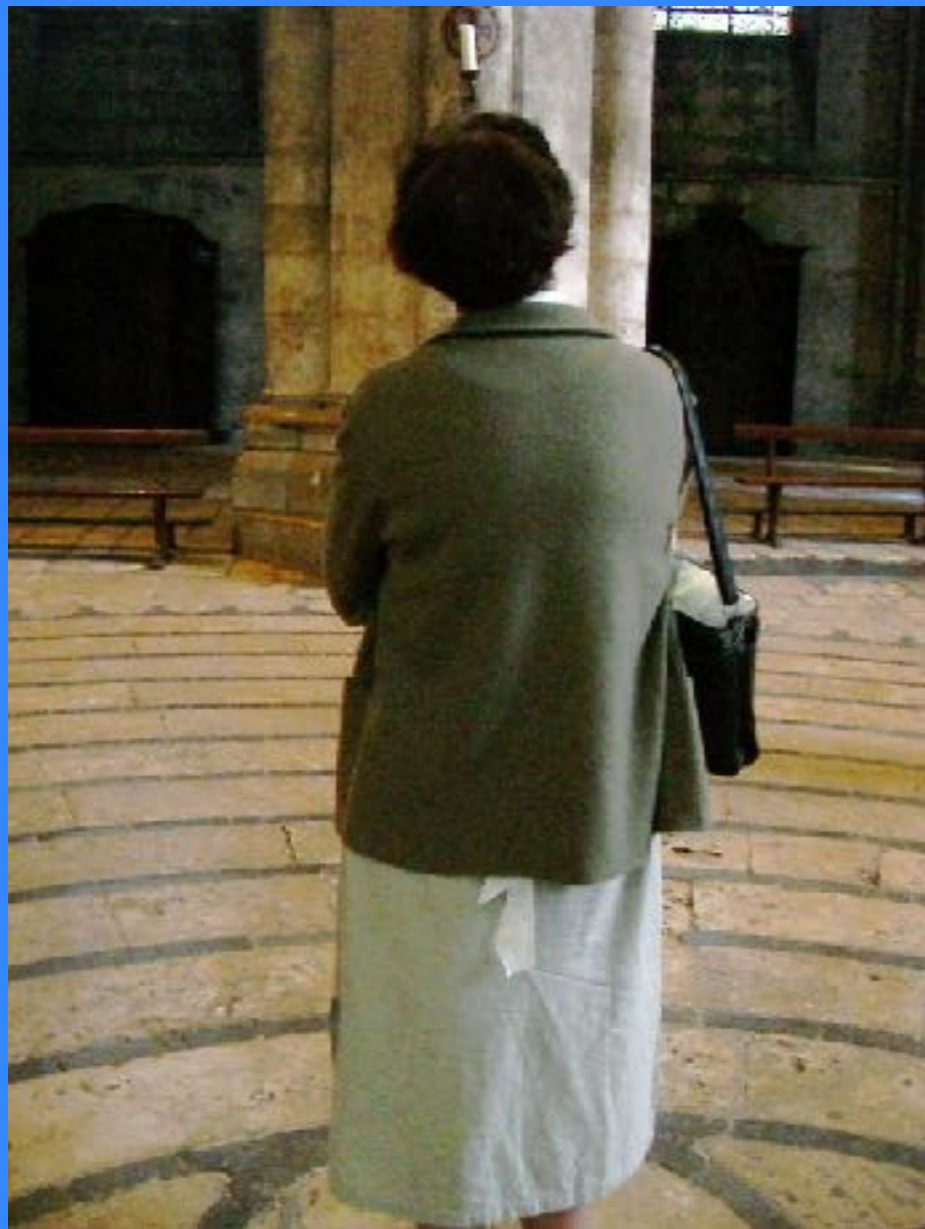
The pathway

**averages 13 1/4 (34 cm)
inches
with a 3 inch (7.5 cm)
“wall” separating each
path. (Sawards, 22.)**

**Length from threshold to
center:**

261.5 meters (858 feet)

*John James Contractors of Chartres
[262.4 meters (860.9 feet) Sawards, 23.]*



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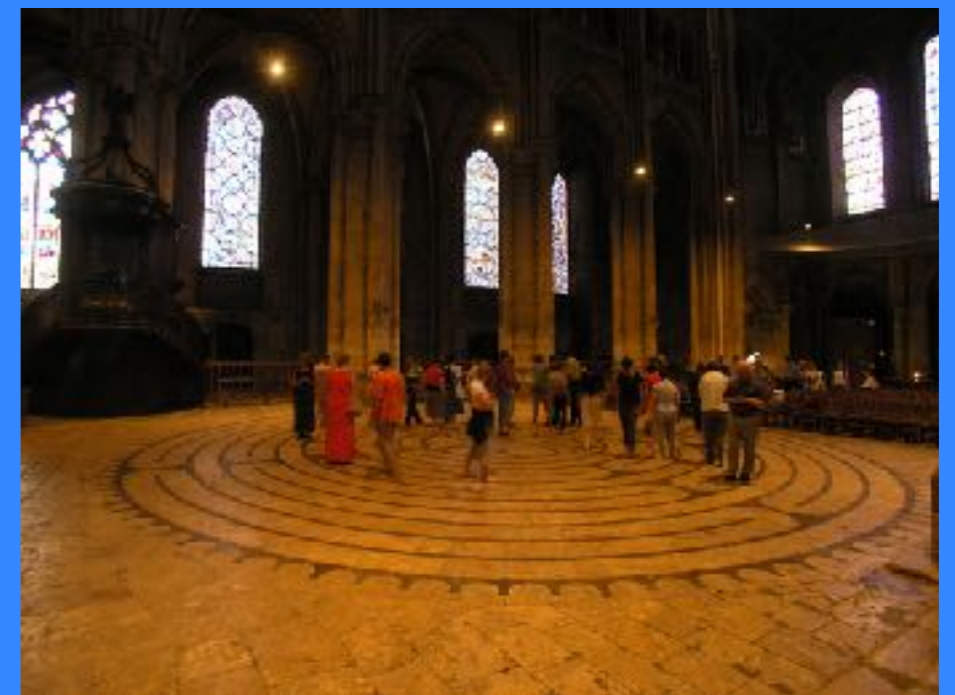


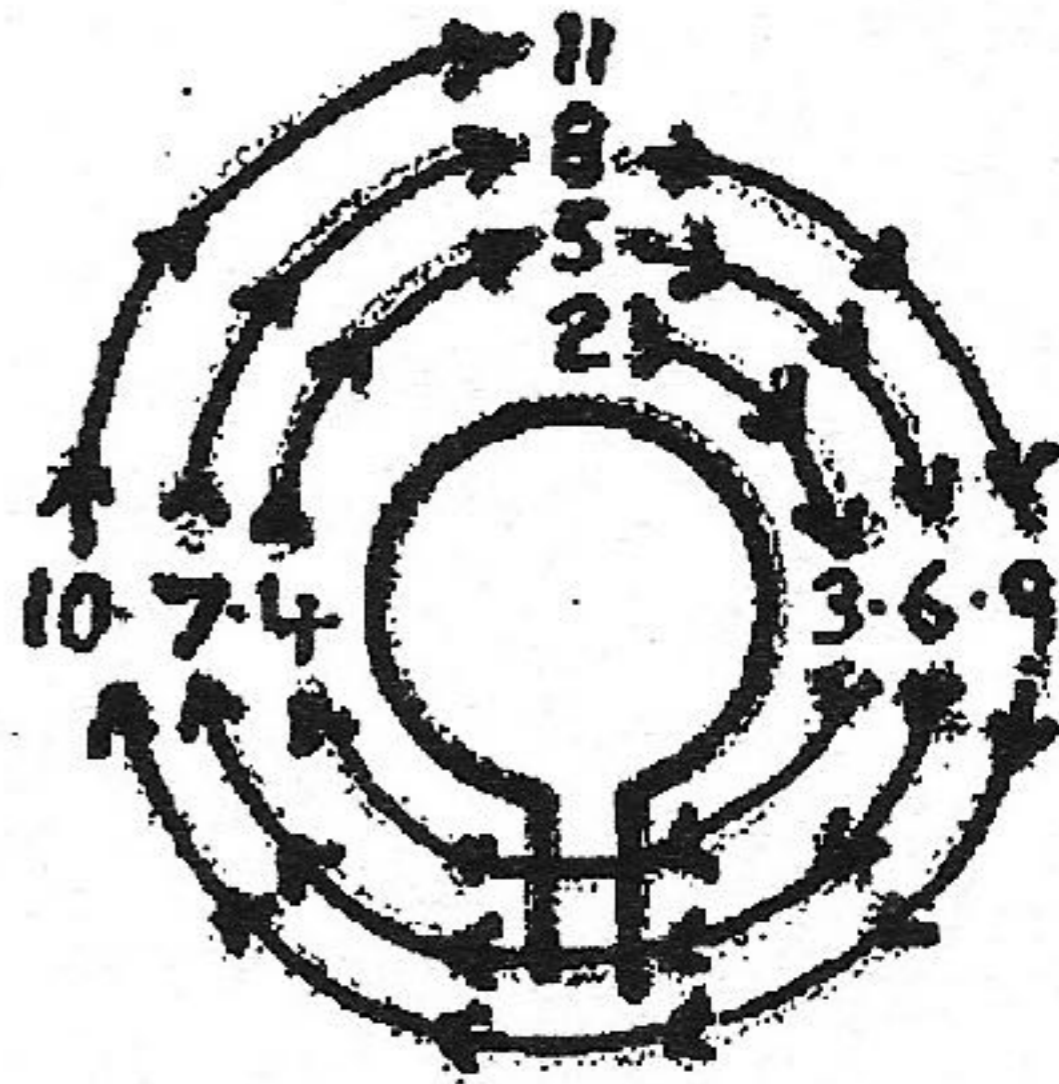
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A cross is
embedded
in the
symbol of
this
labyrinth.



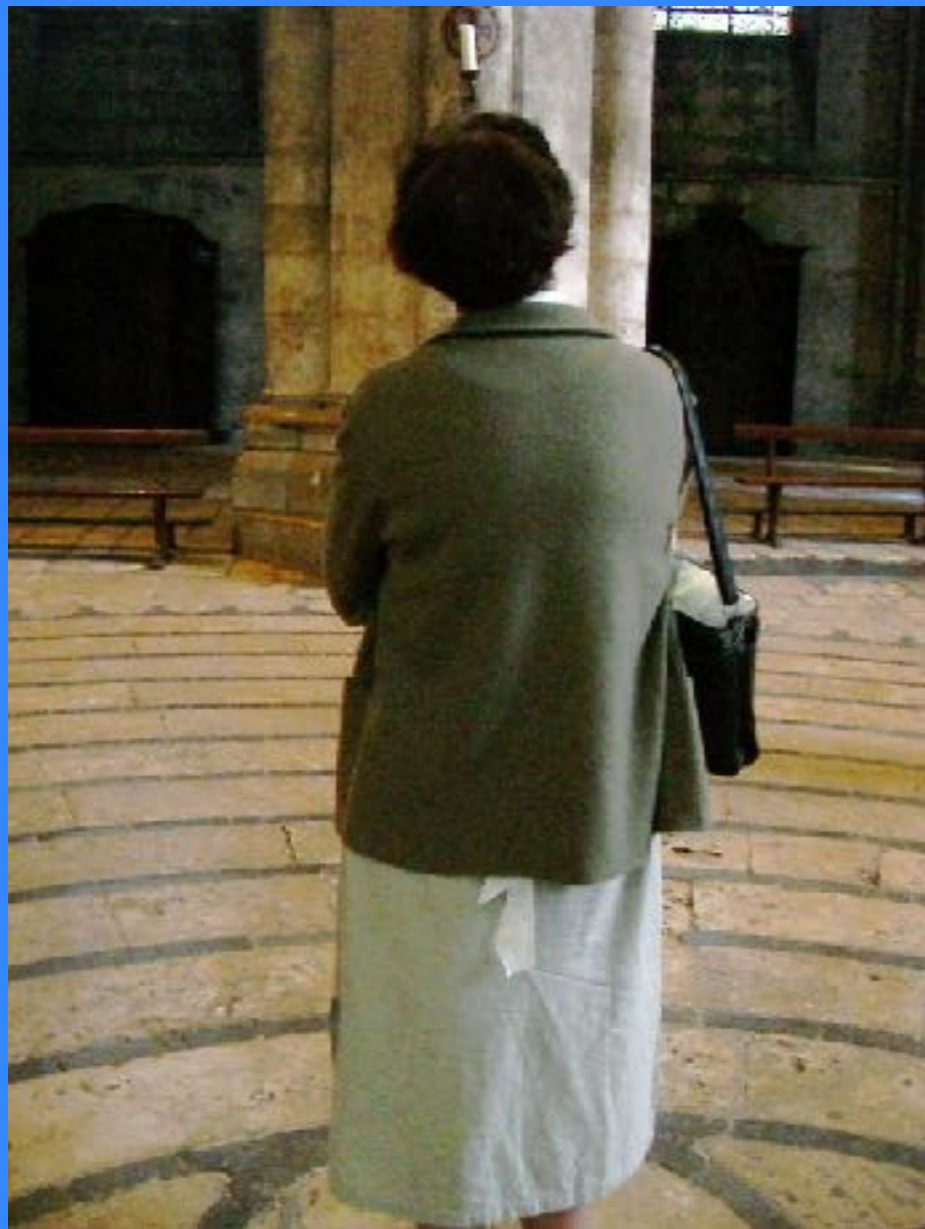


A spiral is also embedded in the Chartres Cathedral labyrinth.



The clockwise spiral formed by the labryses.

Diagram by Robert Ferré, Chartres Labyrinth



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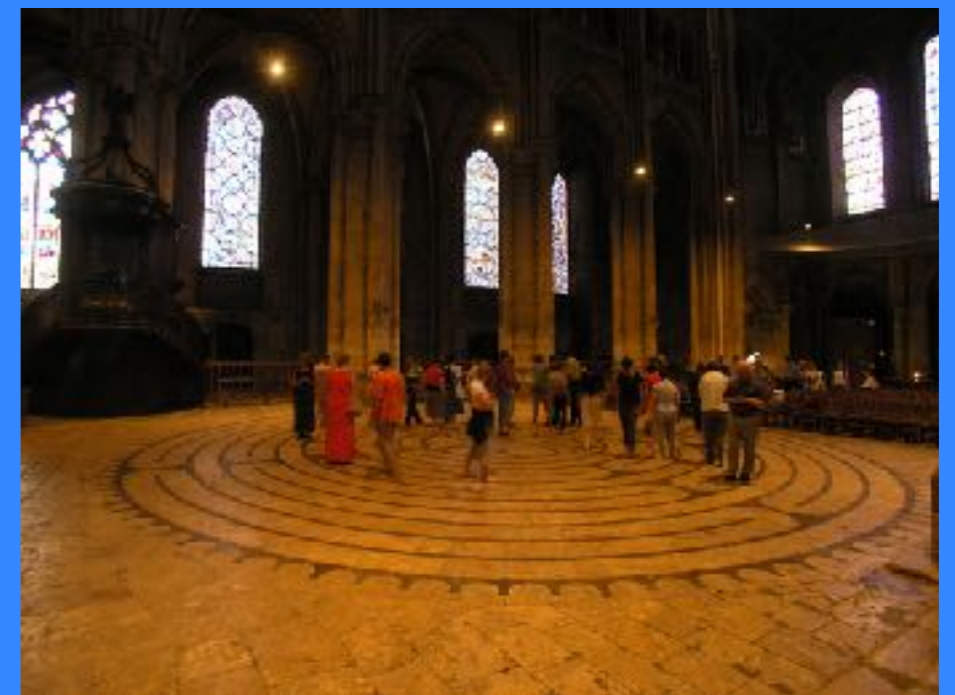
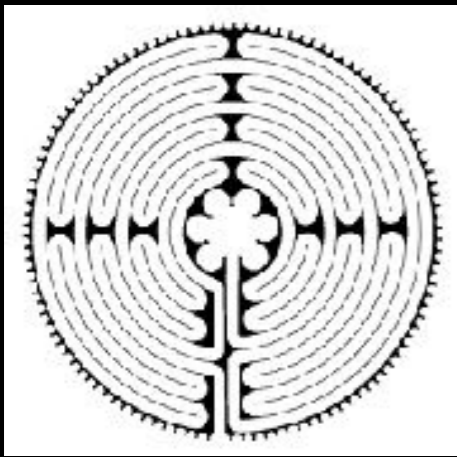


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QQHHQQHQHQHQQQHQHQHQHQHQHQHQHQHQHQHQHHQQ
CENTER

QQHHQQHQHQHQQQHQHQHQHQHQHQHQHQHQHQHQHHQQ

Sequence of 31 mouvements of the Chartres labyrinth

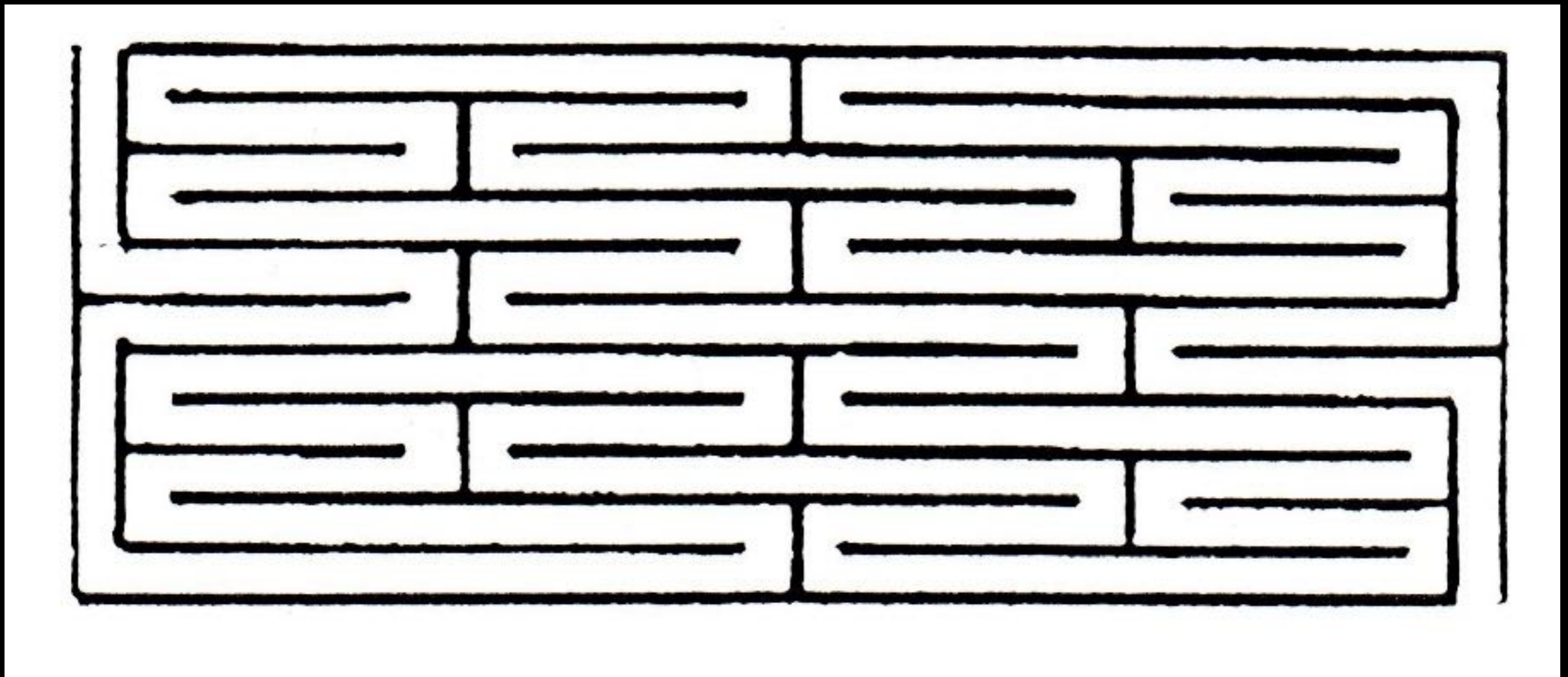
Craig Wright. *The Maze and the Warrior*.

Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001.



...has a symmetry from side to side, and from the outside to the centre.

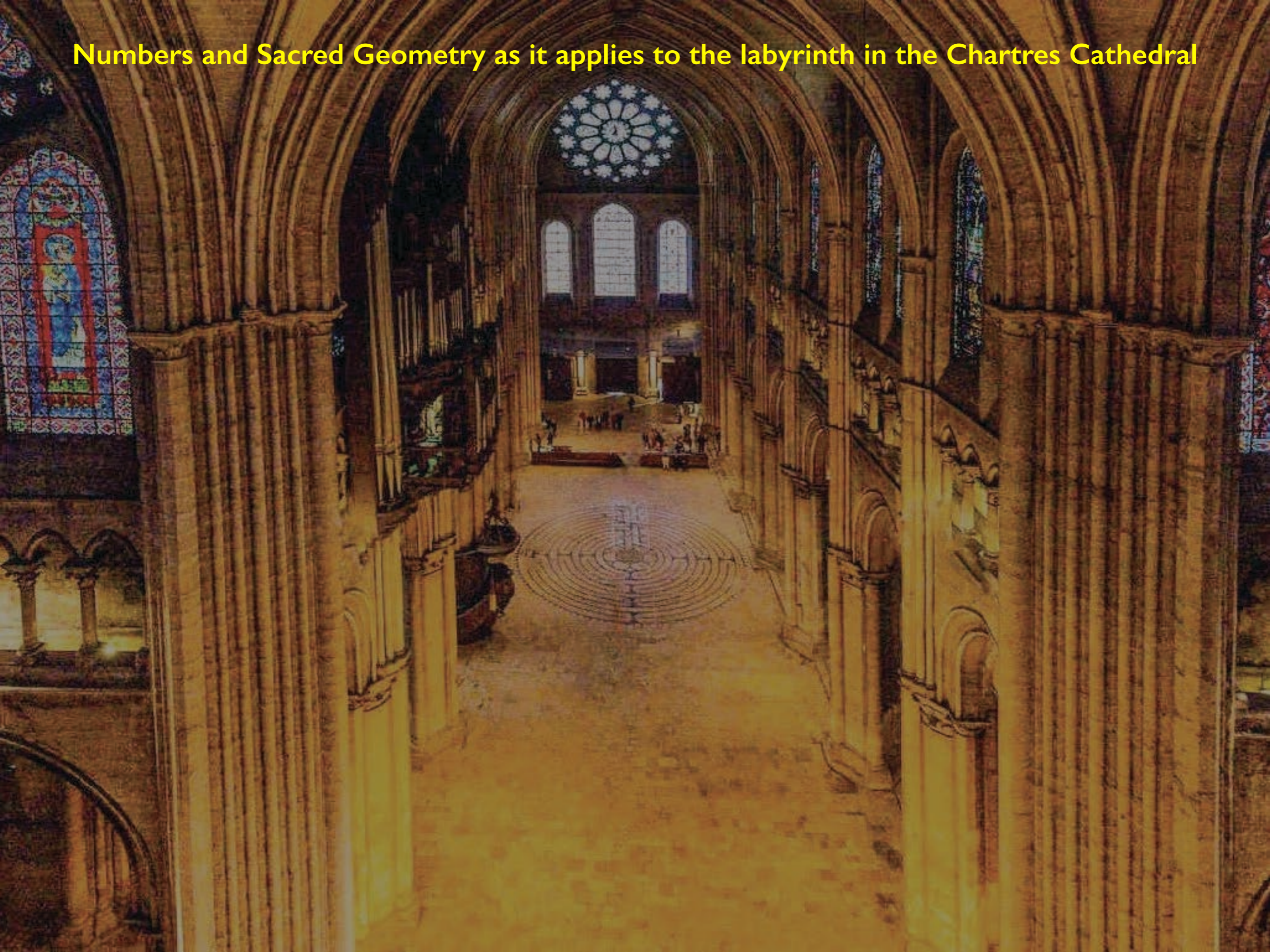
John James, The Mystery of the Great Labyrinth at Chartres, I.



Path of the labyrinth squared off and presented in rectangular form.

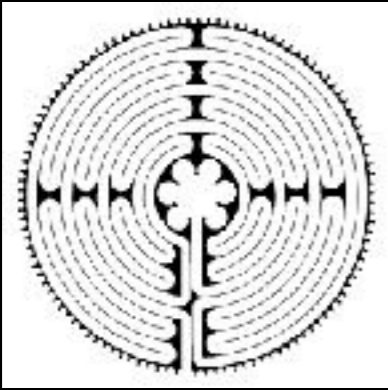
Caerdroia No. 32: 2001 Robert Ferré

Numbers and Sacred Geometry as it applies to the labyrinth in the Chartres Cathedral



Sacred geometry & the labyrinth in the Chartres Cathedral

Center & diameters: significant ratios



1: Unity of all (God)

**3: Trinity, Spirit Stability,
Balance, Heaven**

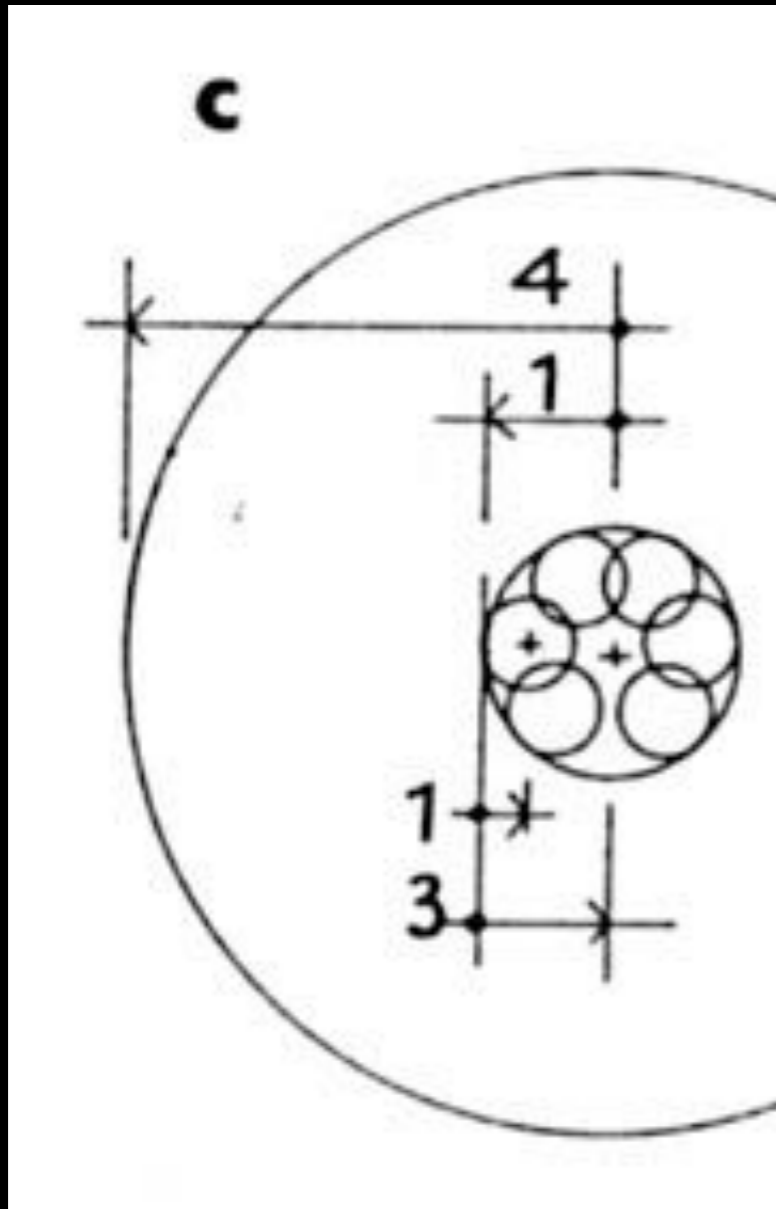
4: Matter, Ground, Earth

The ratio of the diameter of the center to the diameter of the labyrinth is 1:4.
The ratio of the diameter of each "petal" to the diameter of the center is 1:3.

Note also: The ratio of the diameter of the labyrinth is equal to 1/10 the total interior dimension of the cathedral.

The symbolism of 10:
recapitulation of the whole.

John James, Vol. 2, schematics on 190-197.



**Diagram and
Geometry
by John James**

The placement of the labyrinth in the Chartres Cathedral



In the Gothic Cathedral
the placement of the labyrinth
falls at the threshold of
the Romanesque 1020 cathedral
built by Fulbert

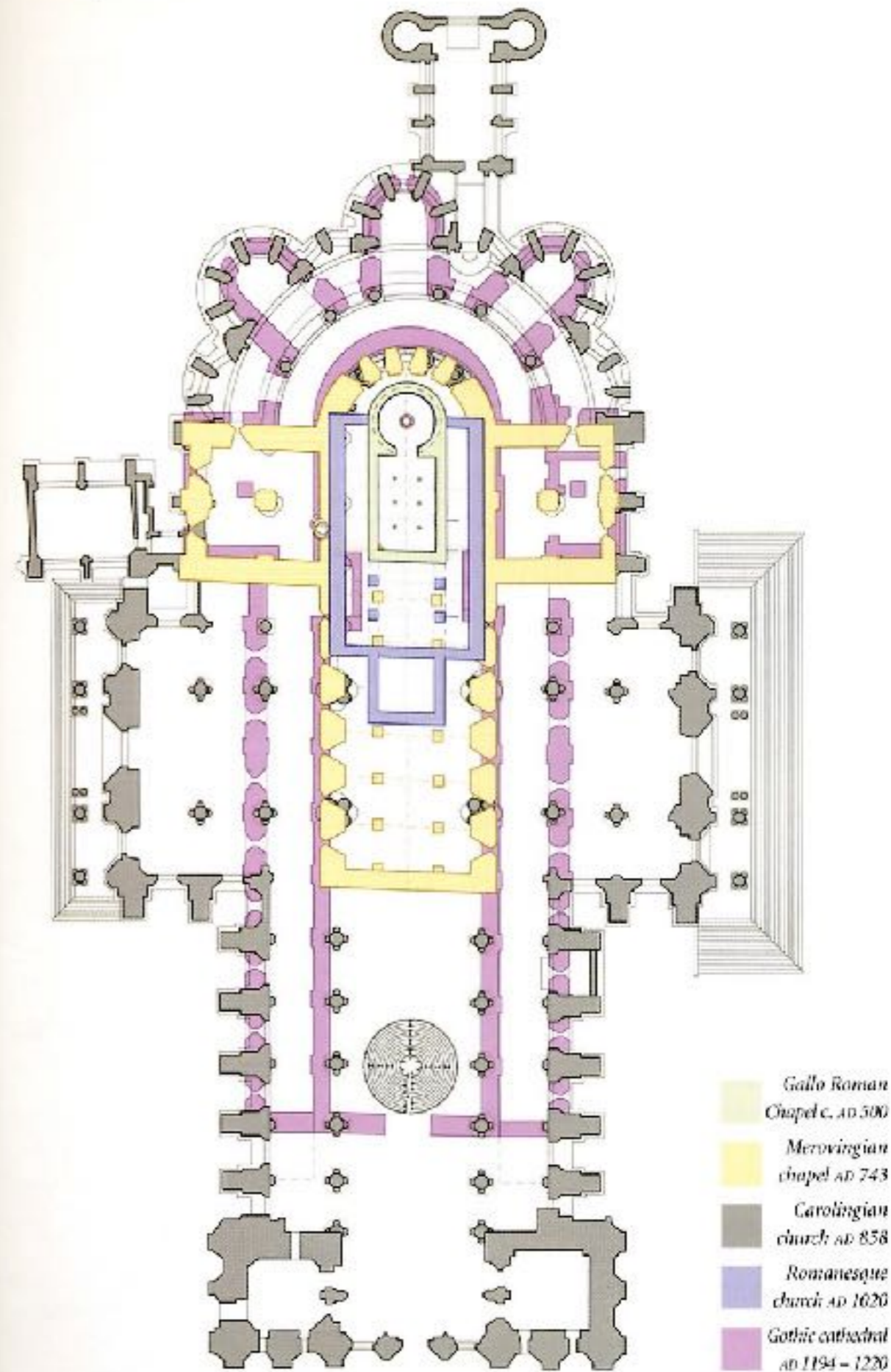
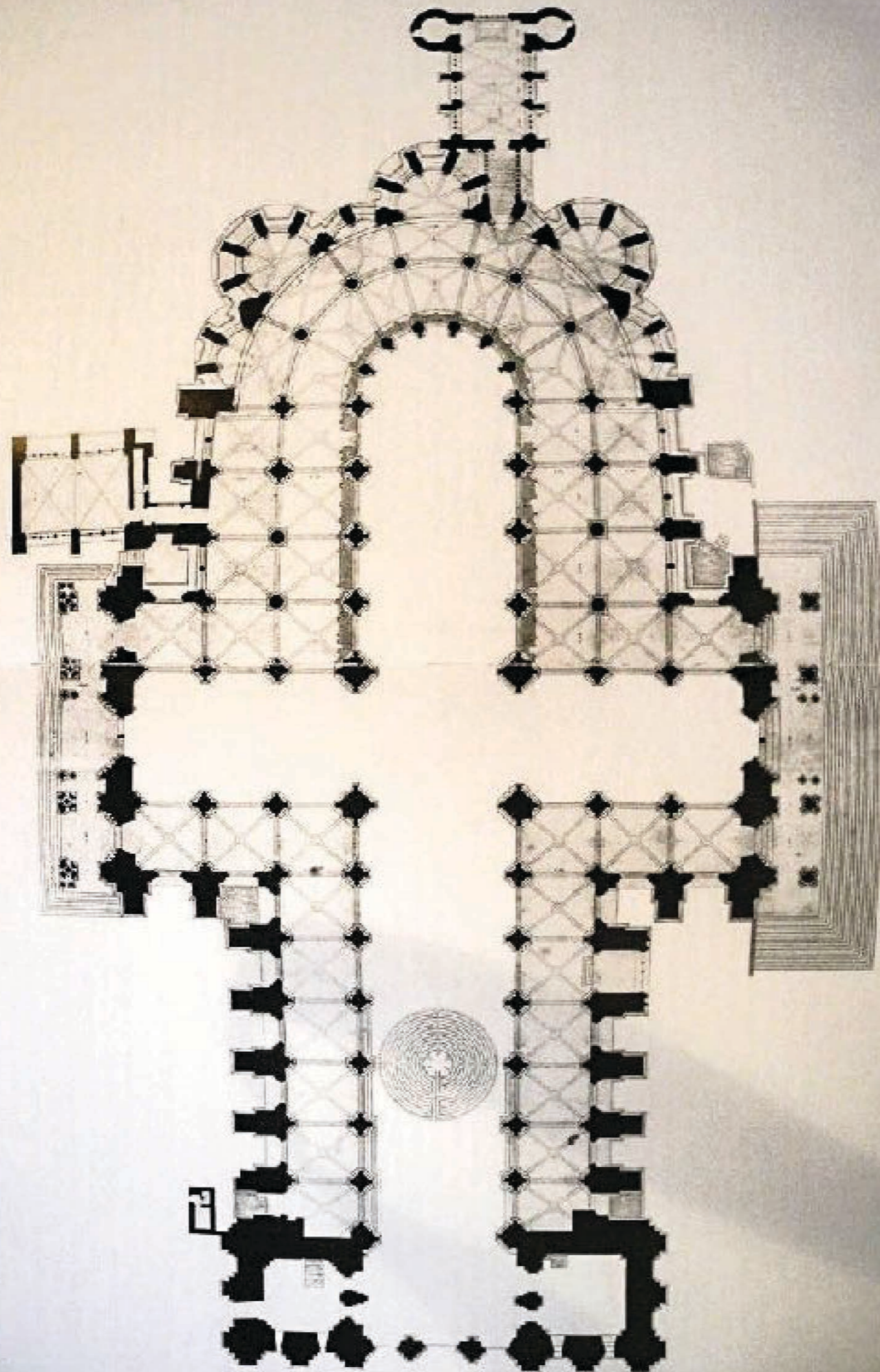
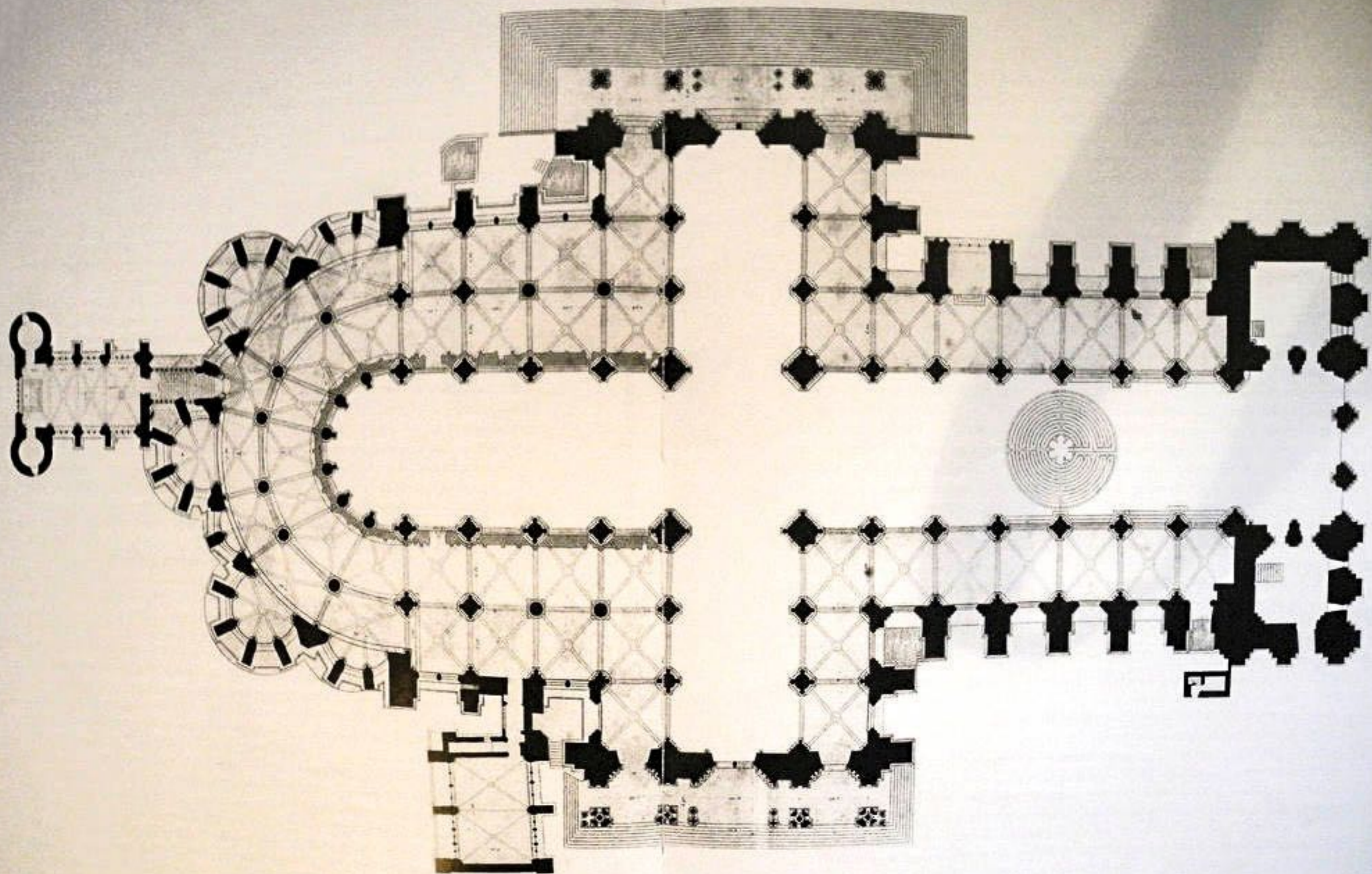


Diagram from Gordon Strachan,
Chartres: Sacred Geometry, Sacred Space. 2003

The labyrinth was placed in the part of the church that served the laity.





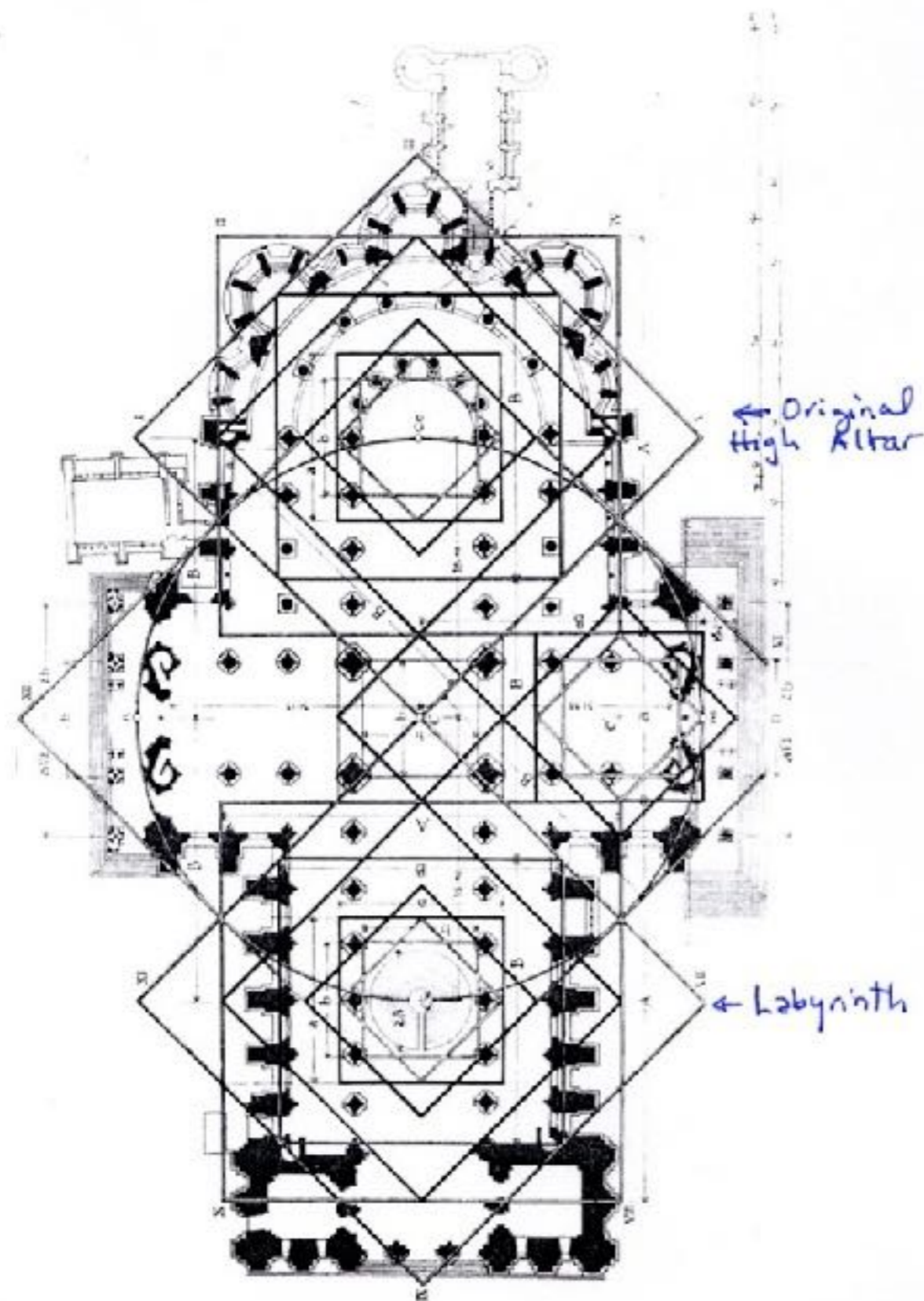
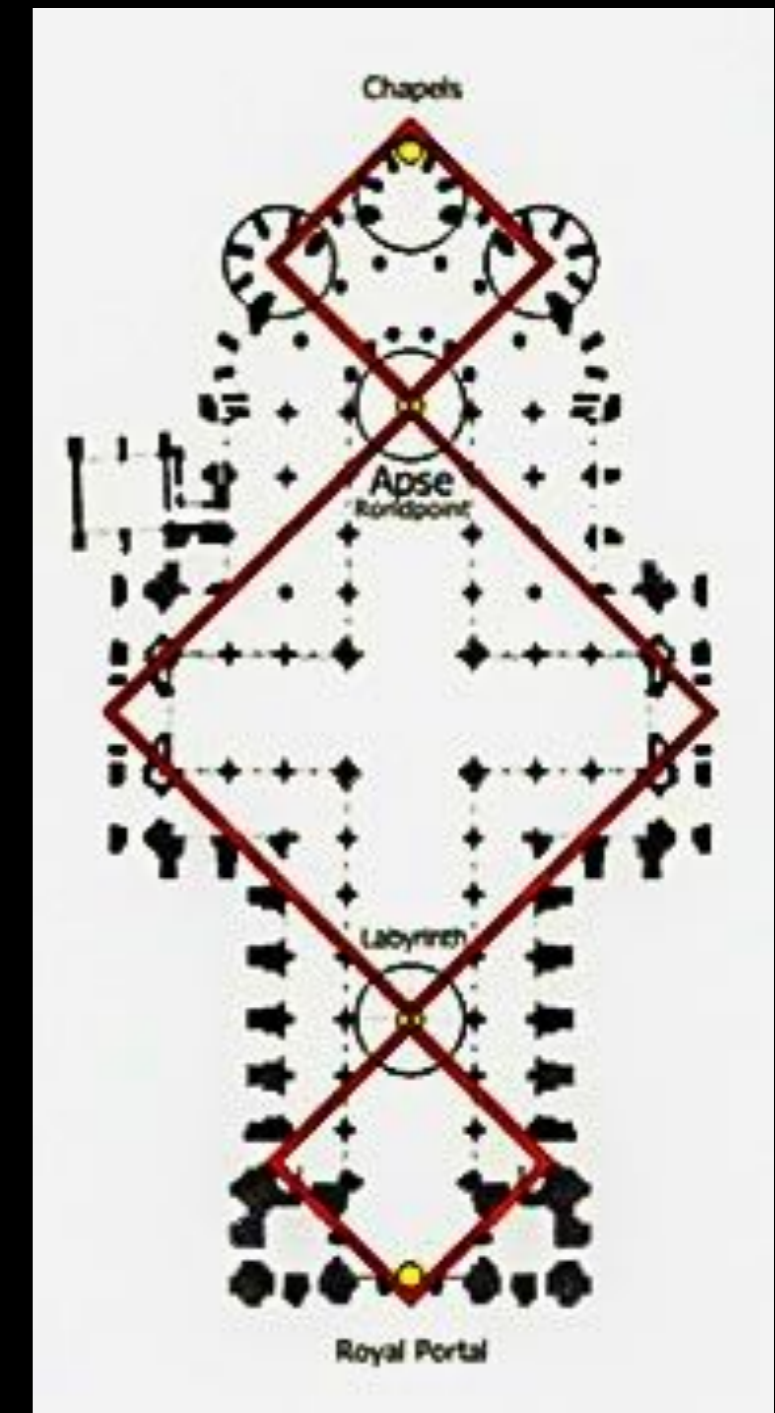


FIGURE 2.5 The floor plan of the cathedral of Chartres, with labyrinth, suggesting how the present Gothic building may have been designed according to a few basic geometric processes. The high altar and the maze serve as complementary epicenters.

The original high altar and the labyrinth are related spatially.

<<<<
 Wright, Craig from
 James. *The Maze
 and the Warrior*.
 Cambridge,
 Massachusetts:
 Harvard University
 Press, 2001.



Placement of the labyrinth in the nave: Bays 3 & 4 of 7

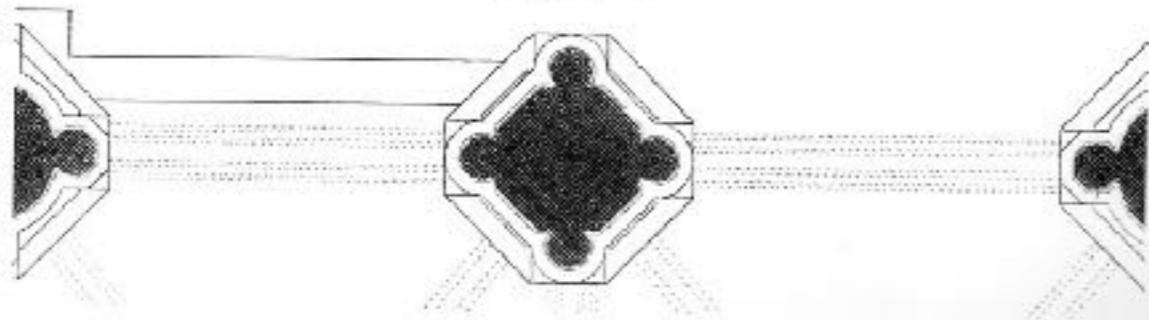
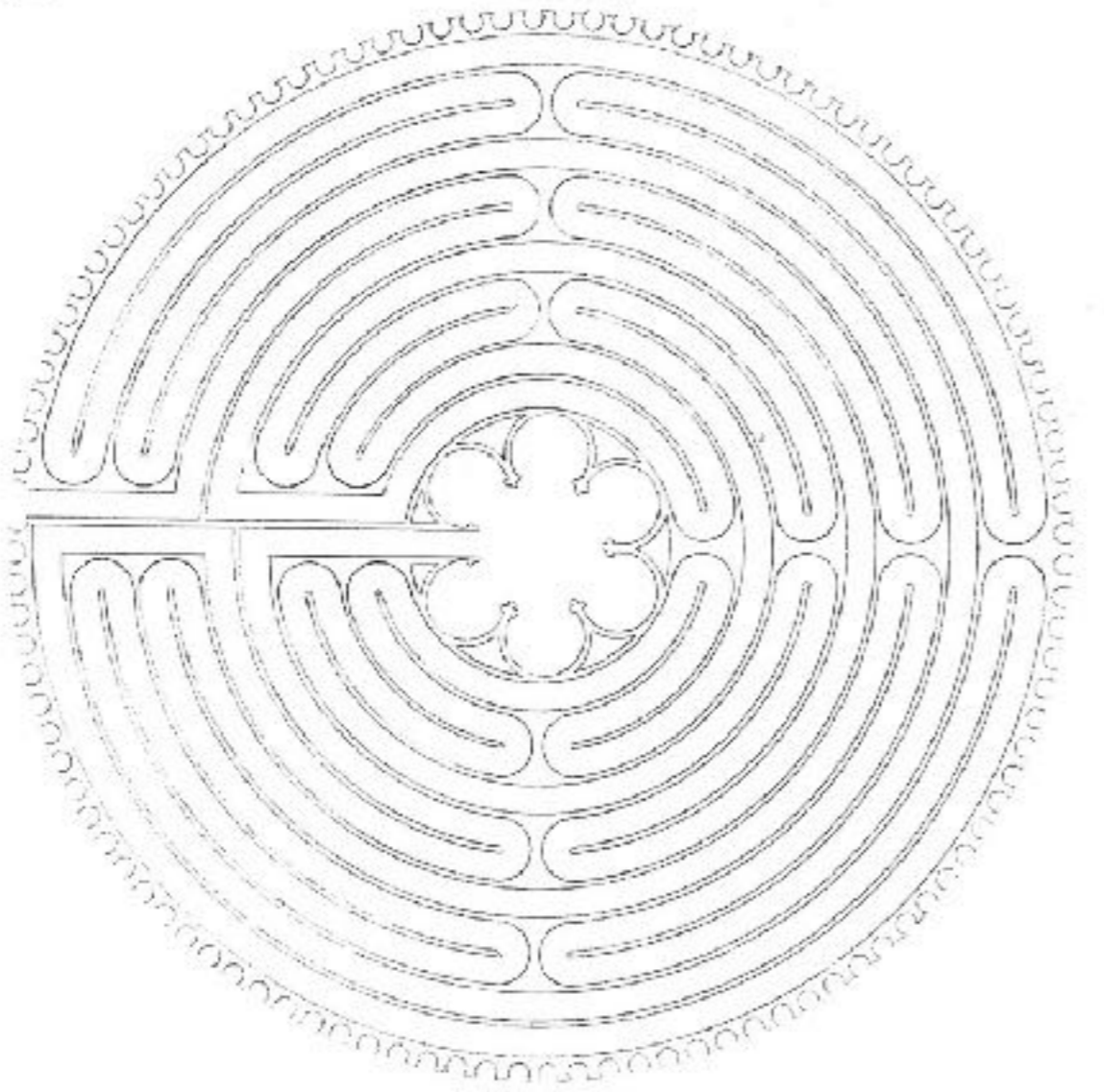
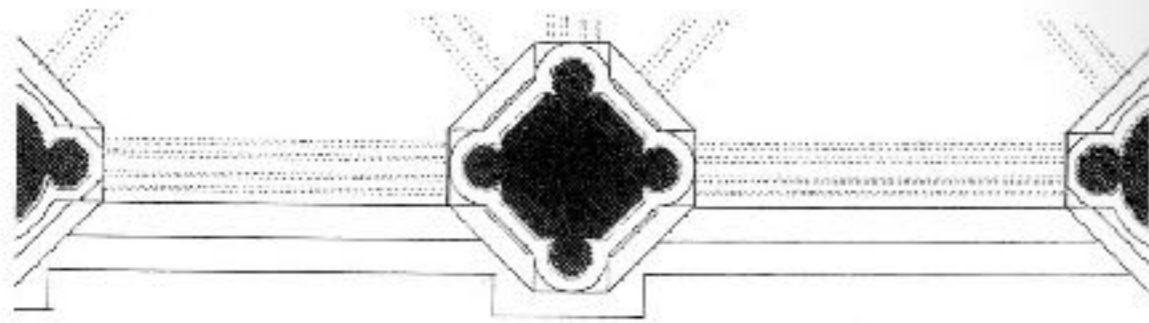


3=Sacred,
spirit

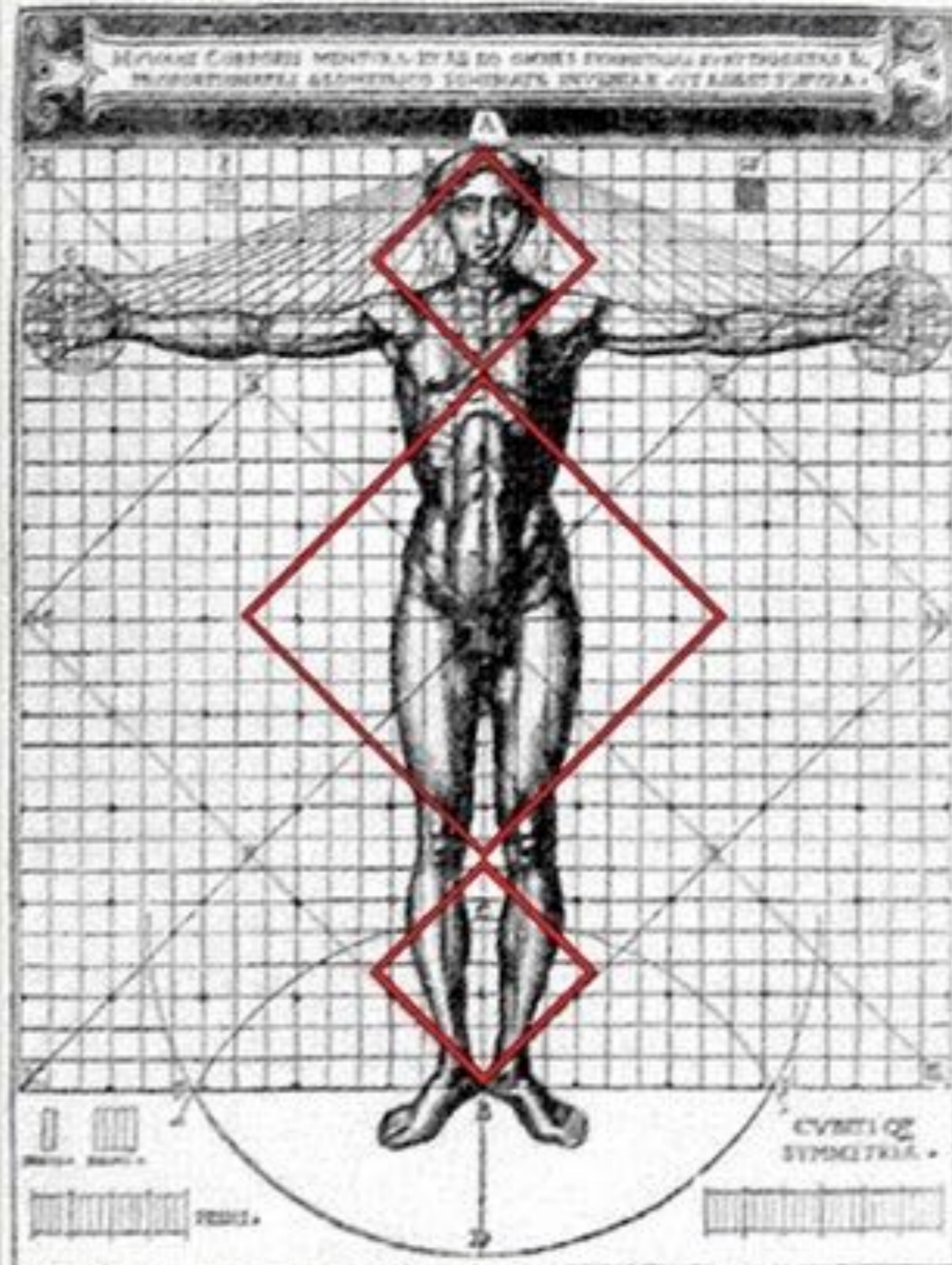
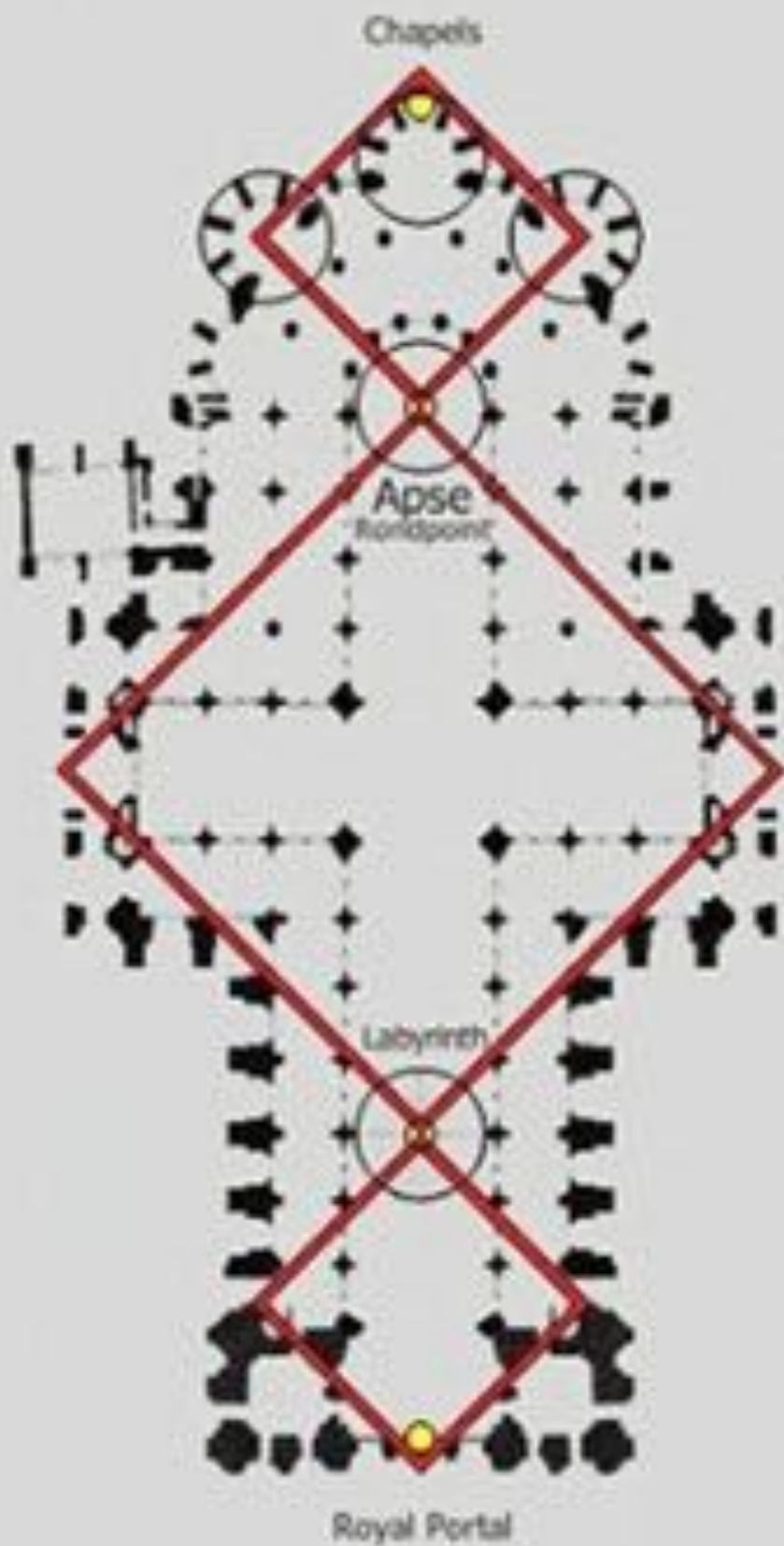
4=Matter,
ground


7:The
meeting of
heaven and
earth

“...we note that the center of the labyrinth faces the axis of the piers that divide the seven bays of the nave--a number with an aura of prestige--in the harmonic of 3 + 4. Three, symbolic of the spirit, and four, that of matter...It is evident that one and the other, spirit and matter, are indispensable in achieving such architecture.”



Détail de la planche précédente.





“All journeys have secret destinations
of which the traveler is unaware.”

Martin Buber (Jewish Philosopher) in Tales of the Baal Shem Tov


Some Special Features of the Chartres Labyrinth



The largest medieval church labyrinth that was ever installed.



42 feet 3 3/8 inches (north to south) by
42 feet 4 inches (west to east)
12.85 meters in diameter.




There is a way to begin,
meaningful movement is the child of stillness.

Alla Bozarth-Campbell, "Dancing the Labyrinth"

lighted labyrinth--
around midnight in February

Chartres Cathedral has the oldest church pavement labyrinth that is still intact.

Notice how worn some of the stones are...
They have been in Chartres since the beginning of the 13th century.



See where you are.
You do not have to be anywhere else
or better than you are.

Alla Bozarth-Campbell, "Dancing the Labyrinth"



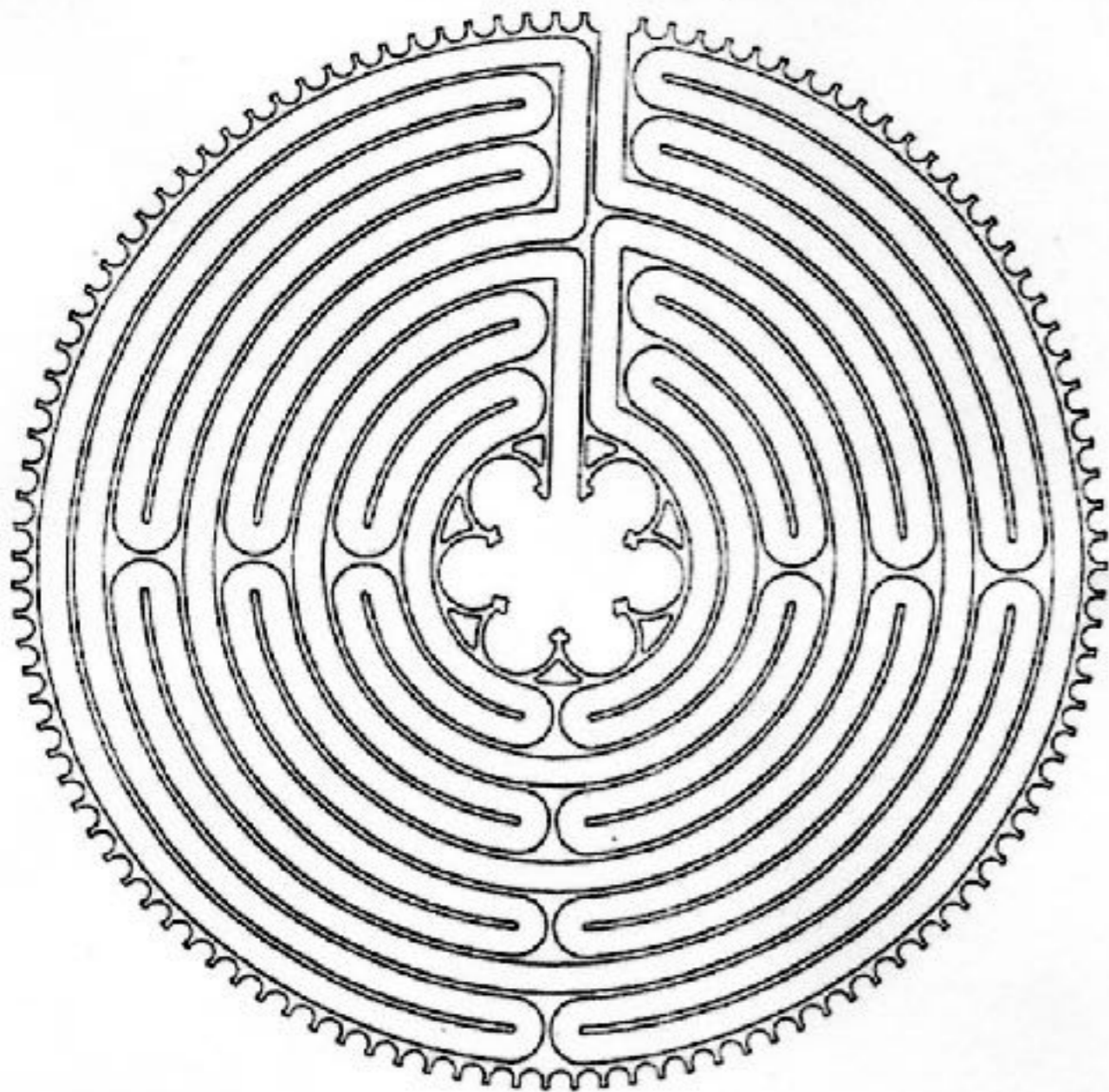
partial-circles (3/4 complete)
around the outside of the labyrinth



Partial Circles Around the Outside of the Labyrinth

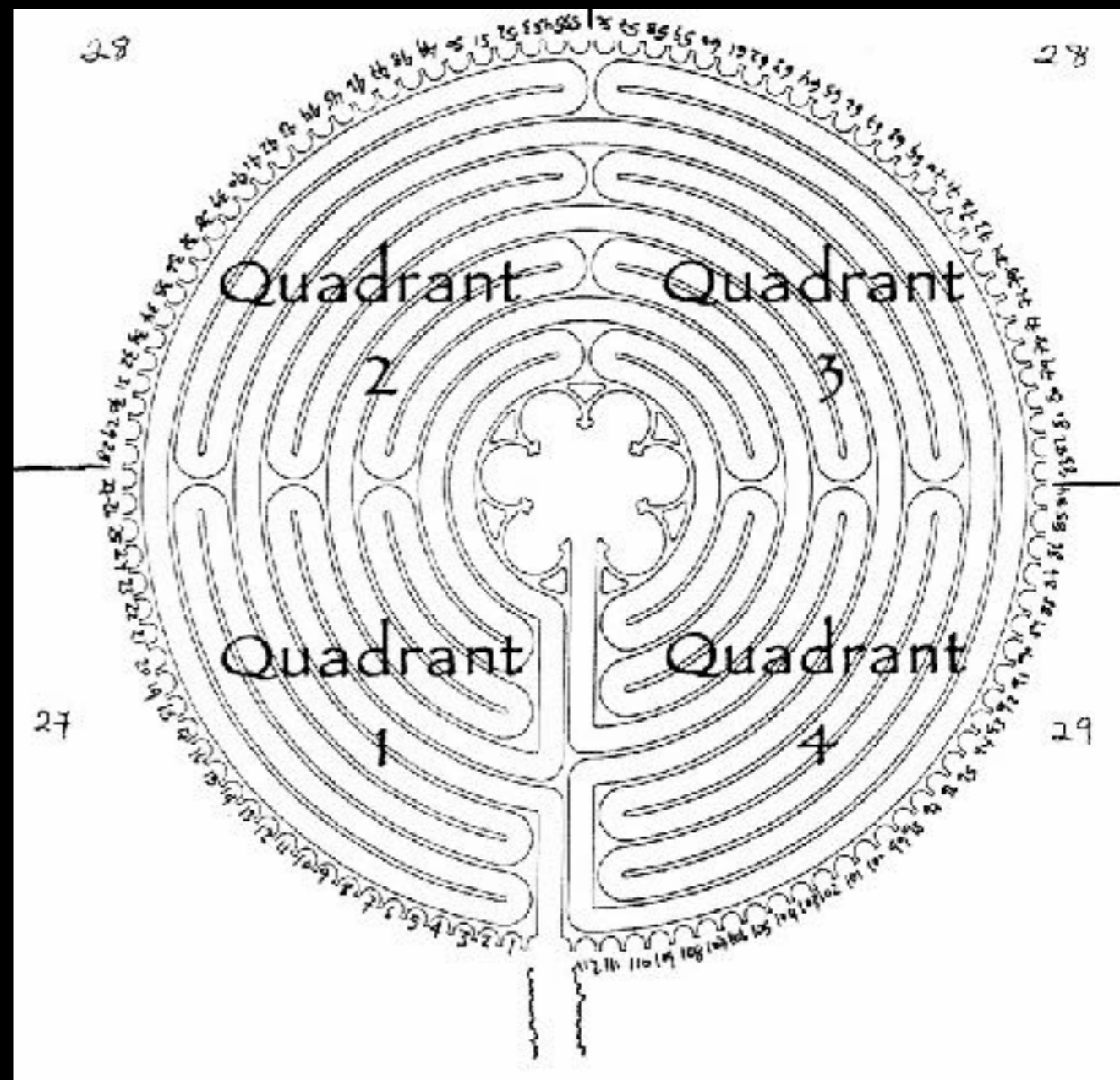
Half-circles Around the Outside of the Chartres Labyrinth
(Lunations, Arches, Teeth, Cogs)

The threshold is equivalent
of two cups and one cusp.



There are 112 cups and 113 cusps around the Chartres Labyrinth

(Drawing of the Chartres Labyrinth is by Robert Ferré)



If you count the threshold, there are 113 arches.

Since the threshold is the width of two, if they went all the way around the circle, there would be 114.

What shall we call the partial-circles around the outside of the labyrinth?

Lunations: Keith Critchlow, Lauren Artress

Cups: Helen Sands

Cogs: John James

Halo (of ornamentation): Jeff Seward

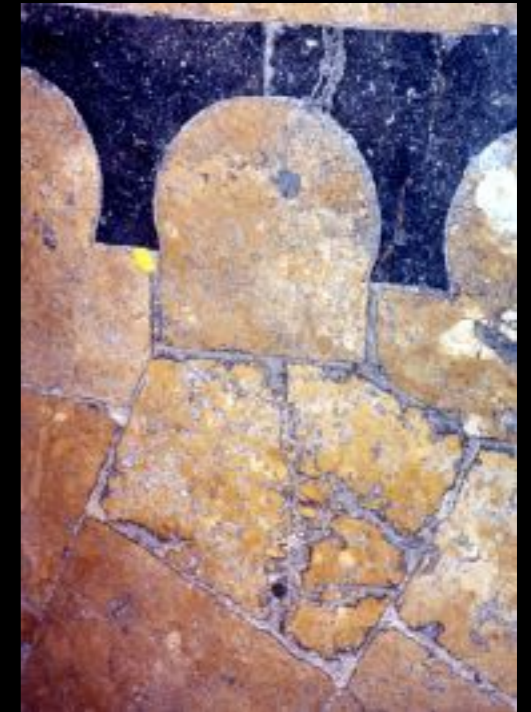
Arches (Cloister): Jill Geoffrion

Teeth: French common usage "Dents"

Ring of Fire Around Paradise (James)

Crown of thorns (CFD)

Other????



Lunar months are 29.5306 days.

Medieval clerics used a lunar calendric system with alternating months of 29 and 30 days along with some other features that kept the cycle on track.

They used these calendars to determine important days of the church year.

For more information: Seward, *Is That A Fact? Caerdroia* 33:2003, 26.

The partial-circles around the outside of the Chartres labyrinth recall the shapes of the arches of monastery cloisters as well as those found in cathedral triforia.



Cloisters were used for exercise, shelter, and reflection. Wells were often placed in the center.

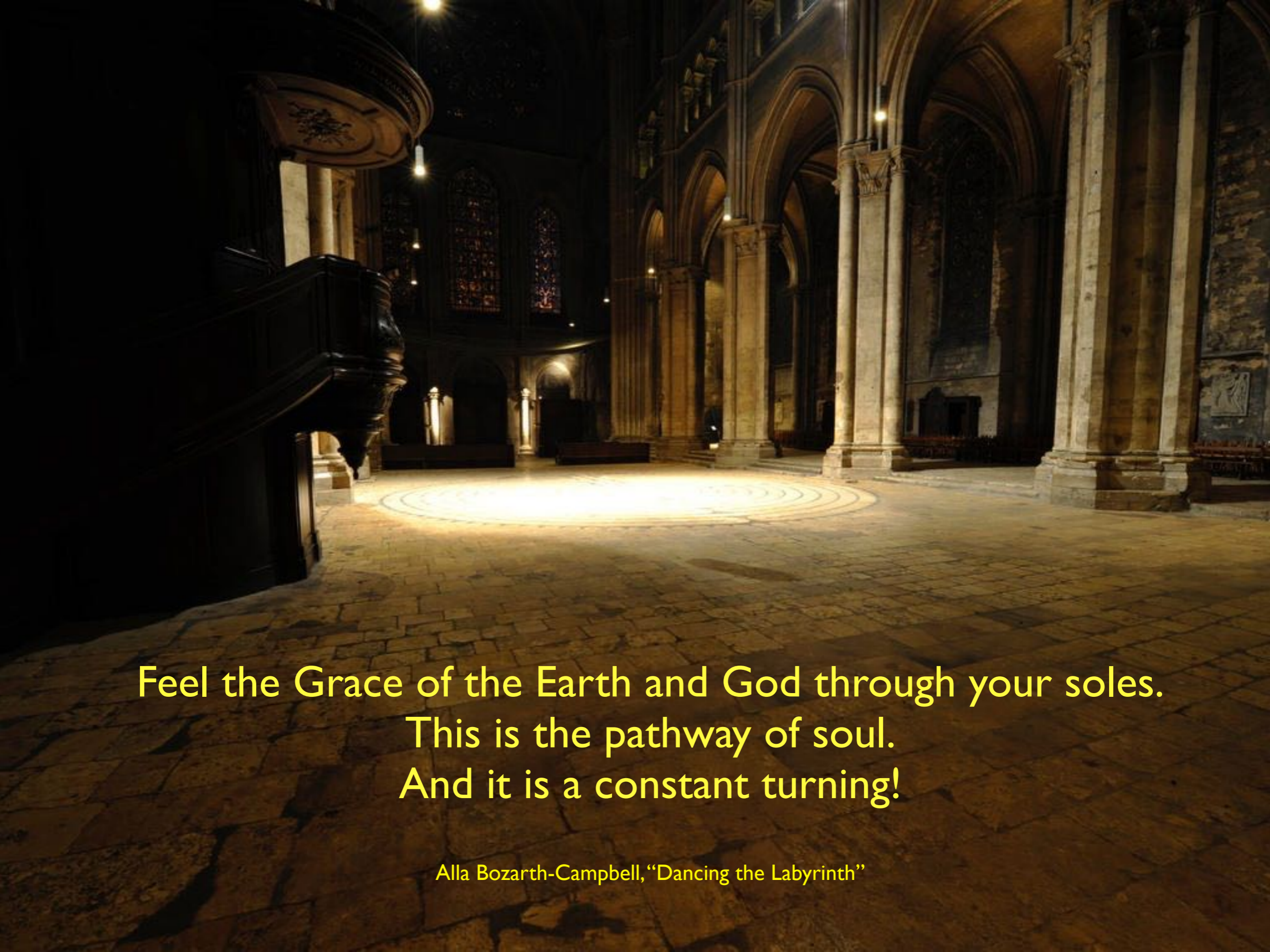
Medicinal gardens were often planted inside the cloisters.

Sainte Anne D'Auray, France

Triforium above labyrinth,
Chartres Cathedral

This area was considered as an in-between-space, touching both the "below" (earth) and "above" (heaven)

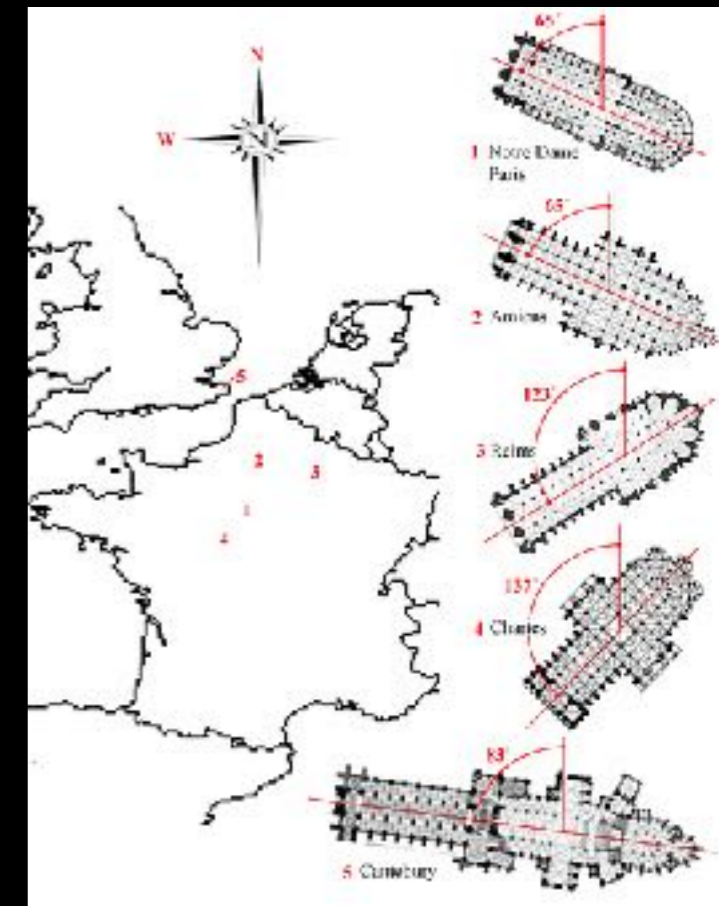
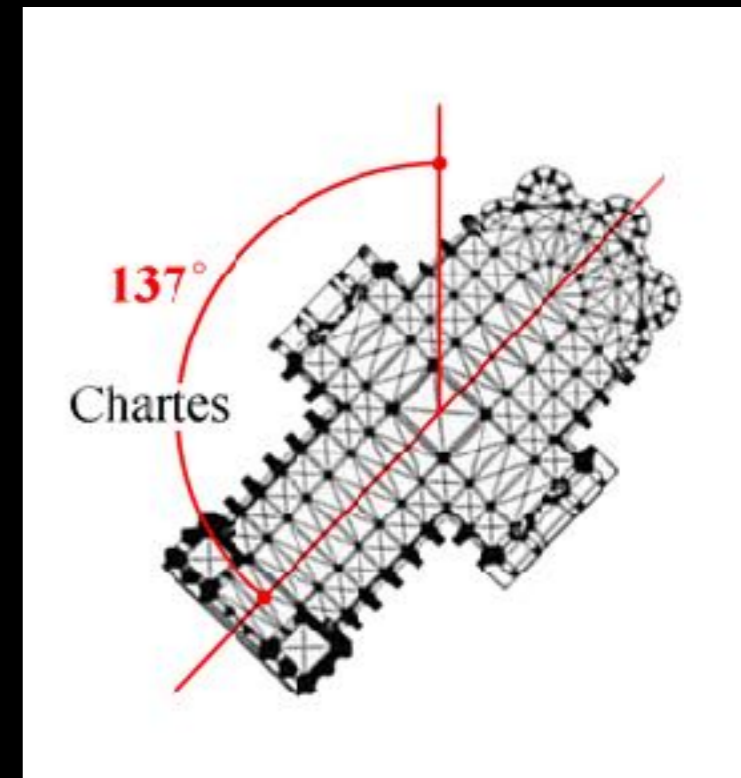
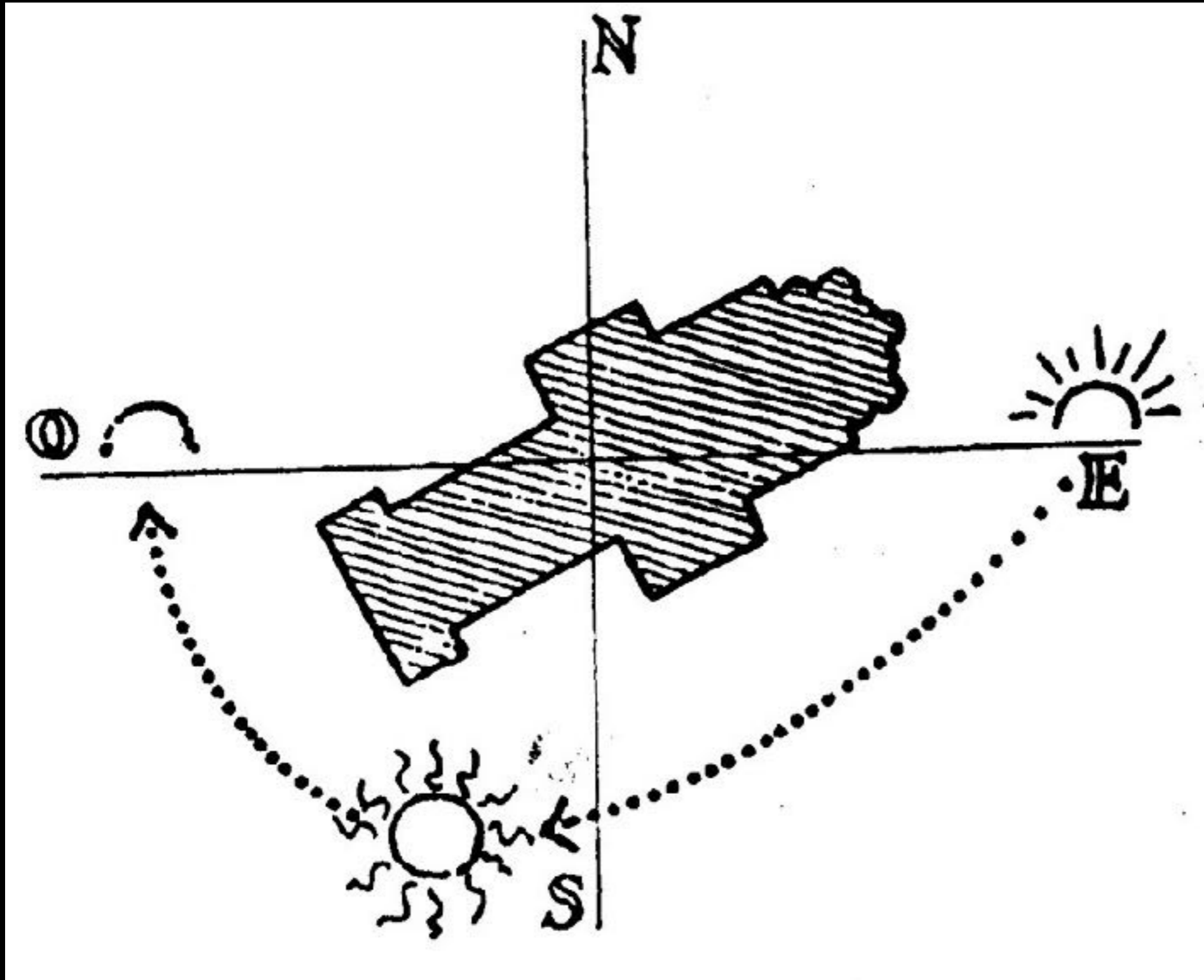


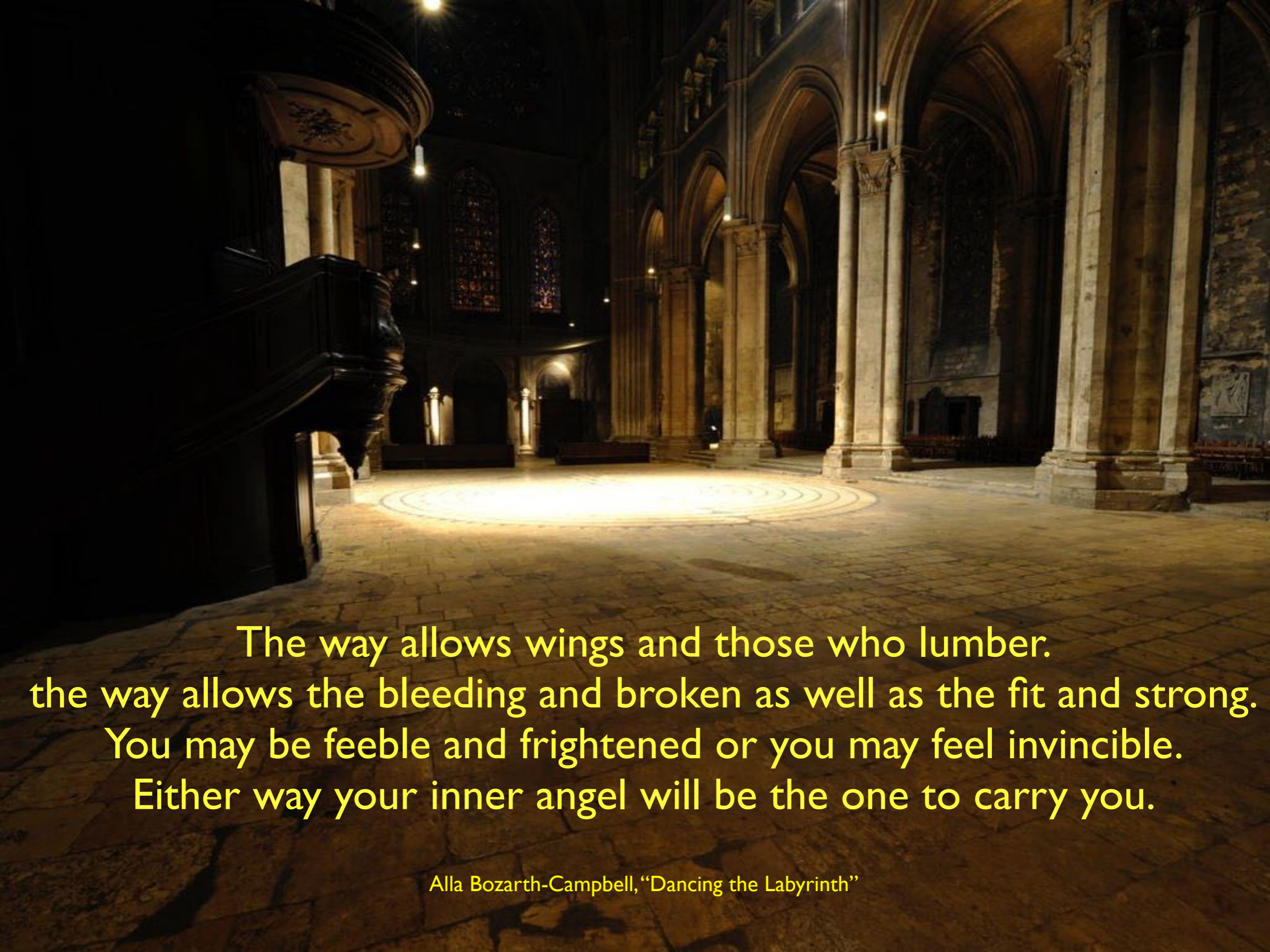


Feel the Grace of the Earth and God through your soles.
This is the pathway of soul.
And it is a constant turning!

Alla Bozarth-Campbell, "Dancing the Labyrinth"

The northeast orientation of the cathedral and labyrinth (Not due East- but symbolically oriented to the East)





The way allows wings and those who lumber.
the way allows the bleeding and broken as well as the fit and strong.
You may be feeble and frightened or you may feel invincible.
Either way your inner angel will be the one to carry you.

Alla Bozarth-Campbell, "Dancing the Labyrinth"

Center Flower



The center of the Chartres labyrinth is 9 feet (2.74 meters).



Because the labyrinth spans the entire nave, its center is exposed even when chairs cover the rest of it.

The Shapes of the Center

flower & stem



6 petals (each divided in 2)

7 triangles



5 fleur de lises
& 2 partial



Center: 6 Petals formed by 7 Circles

7: The meeting of heaven and earth (Number of the Virgin); 6: Stability and balance (Number of Christ)



Diagram by Robert Ferré

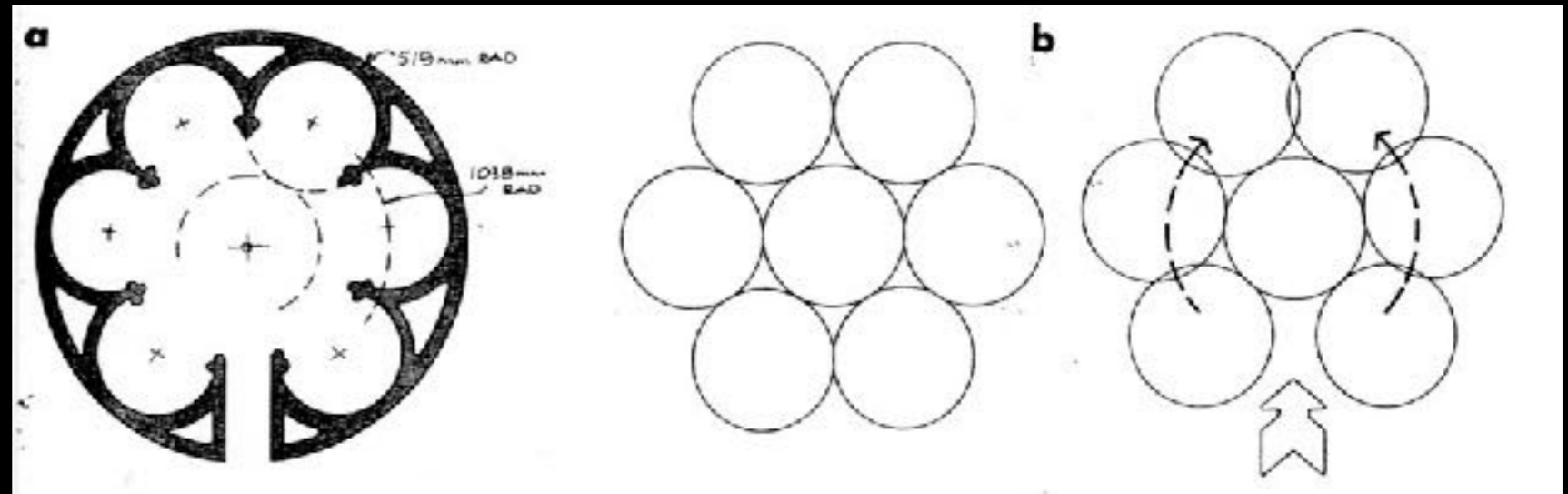


Diagram by John James

Around one central circle, 6 circles of the same size fit perfectly. By moving each circle over a little so that the lines between them overlap, it is possible to create a 6 petal flower with an opening (stem).




In discussing the movement of the circles John James says, "...it represents Christ easing aside the perfection of paradise to let us in."

Note: Each "petal" is subdivided--12 petals around one central circle.

Six/Twelve Petalled Flower





The way is black and white and also living colors—
all suggesting change.

Alla Bozarth-Campbell, "Dancing the Labyrinth"

Center of the Center

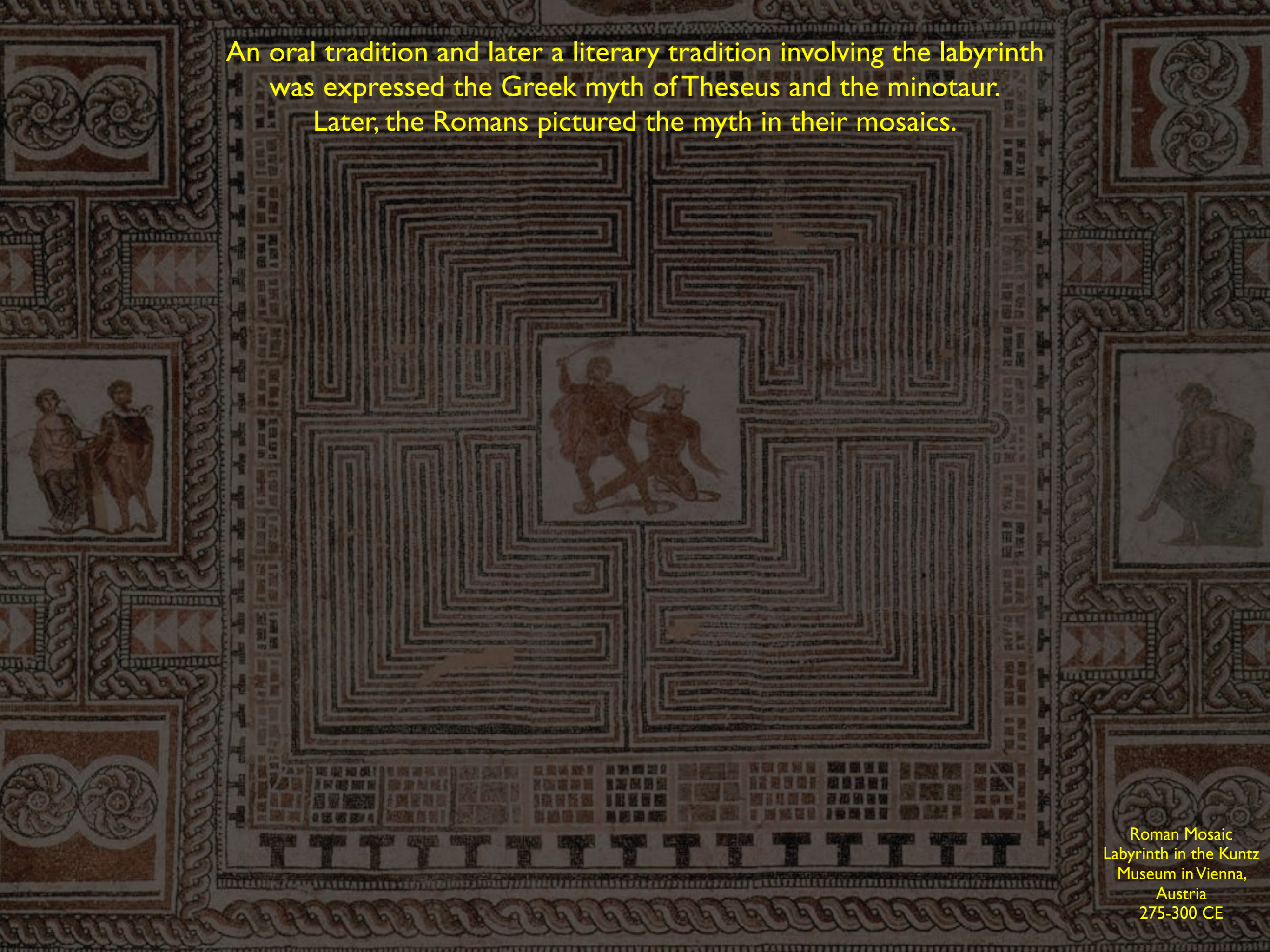
The central plaque was removed around 1792 during the French Revolution.

What do the placement of the rivets suggest about how many plaques there might have been?

“...from a description of the plaque from around 1640...it formerly bore a representation of the combat between Theseus and the Minotaur, we have no plan or diagram of the layout of its design. It would surely have been similar to the depictions of this scene found in contemporary labyrinth manuscripts, or at the centre of the 12th century floor labyrinths in Italian cathedrals.

Sawards, “Is That A Fact?” Page 21.

An oral tradition and later a literary tradition involving the labyrinth was expressed the Greek myth of Theseus and the minotaur. Later, the Romans pictured the myth in their mosaics.

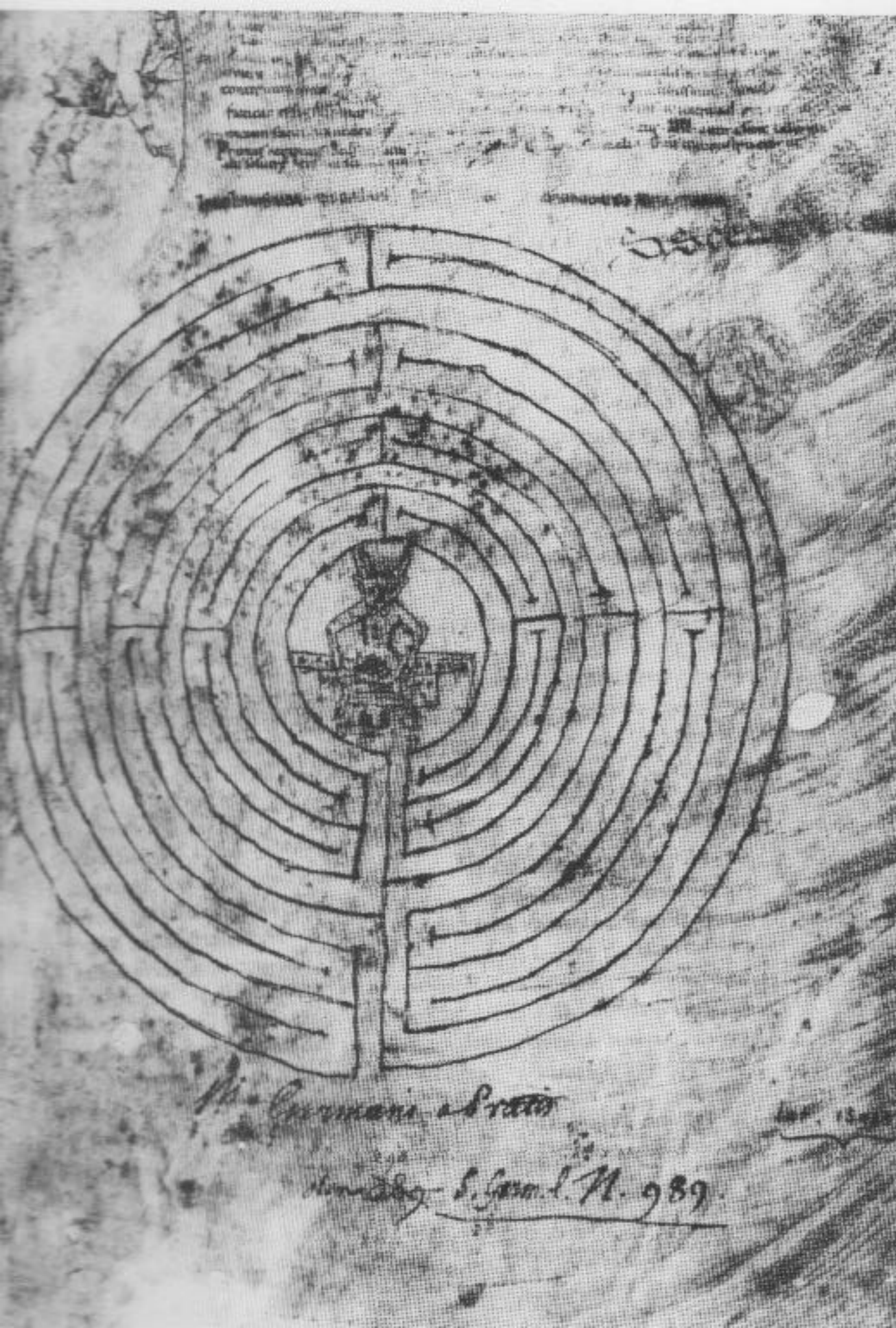


Roman Mosaic
Labyrinth in the Kuntz
Museum in Vienna,
Austria
275-300 CE



9th century
BNF Latin 4416

Earliest
manuscript
with a minotaur



This parchment manuscript, containing a calendar, Easter cycles, annals, etc. written from the ninth to the eleventh century, if from the monastery of St. Germain des Prés, Paris. The tenth-century flyleaf, shown here, bears the oldest surviving depiction of a Chartres-style labyrinth, diam. 17.5 cm.

Kern image 181, page 112.

10th century
BNF Latin 13013



The upper body of the creature at the center (diam approx. 2.5 cm) is that of an armed man; the Minotaur is thus depicted as a pather(?)-centaur. Above the labyrinth is a table for calculating the course of the moon through the zodiac..

Kern, page 112

11th century
Morgan MS925
(NYC USA)

DOMUS DEALI IN QUAM MINOTAURUM POSUIT MYNOS REX

MYNOS REX

DAEDALVS
Archifex

YCARVS
filius eius

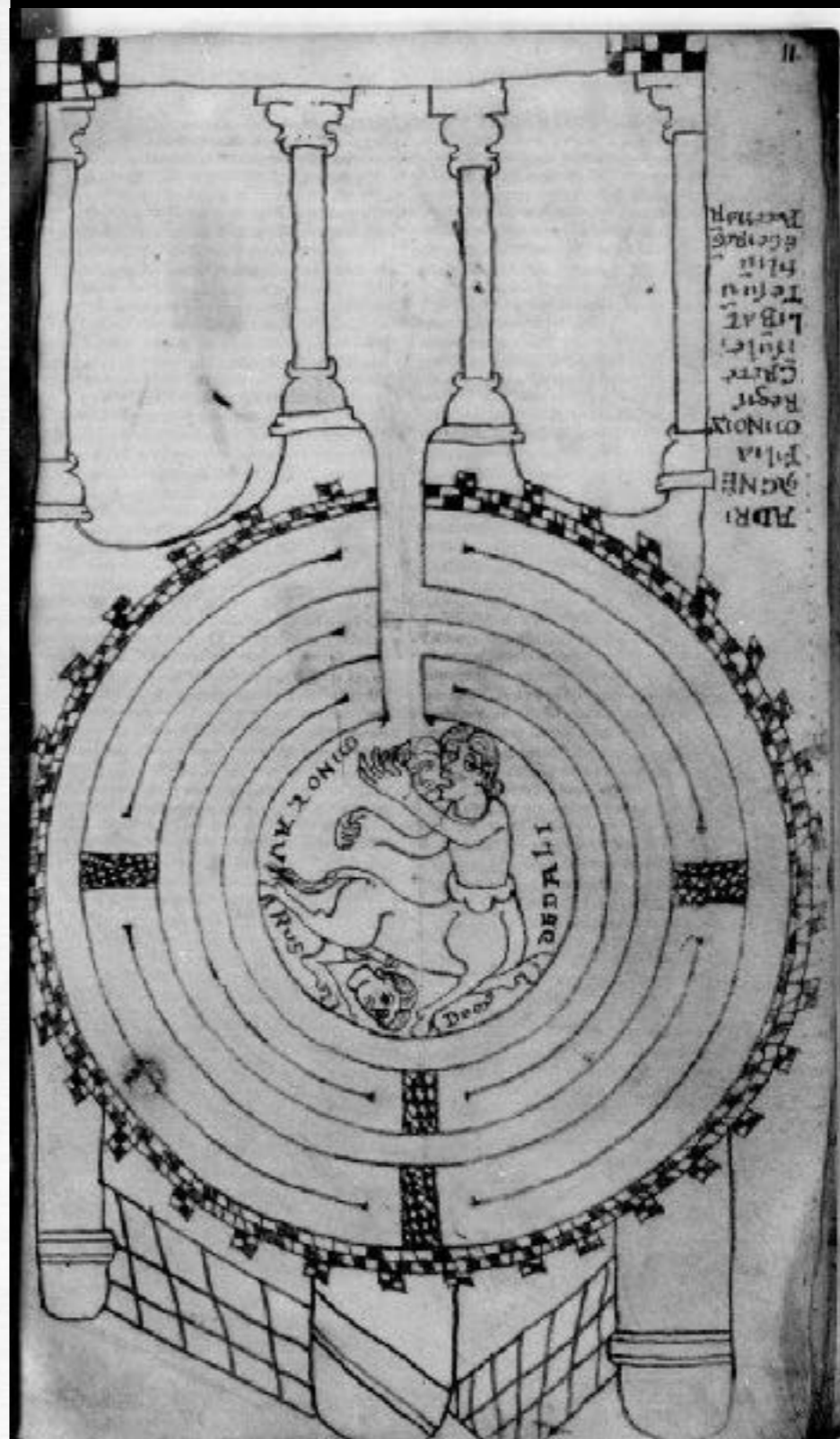
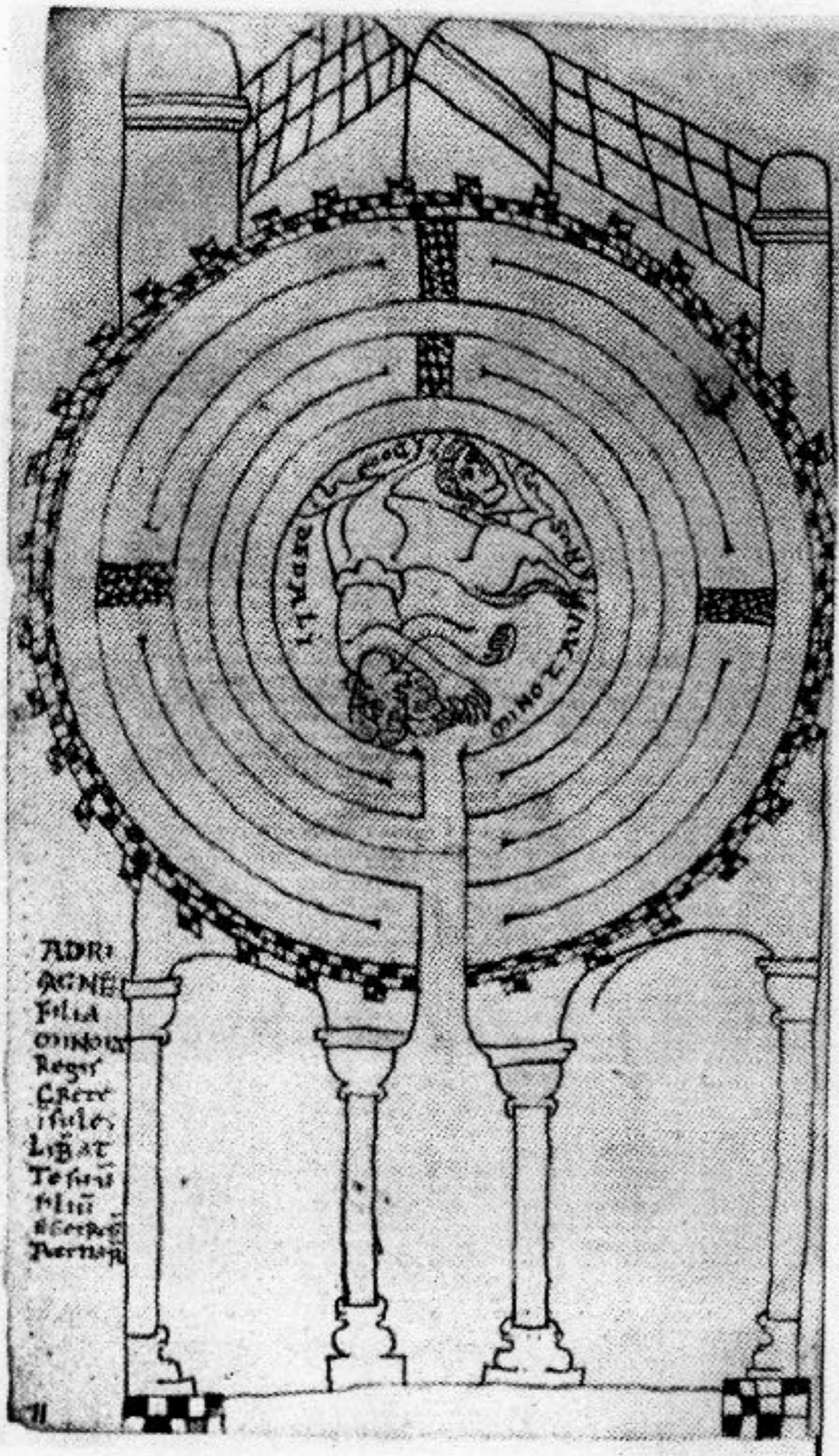


MYNOS
in labyrinthis

Minos rex cretae constituit in quo induit dicos...
Cretae rex...
Dedalus...
Minotaurus...

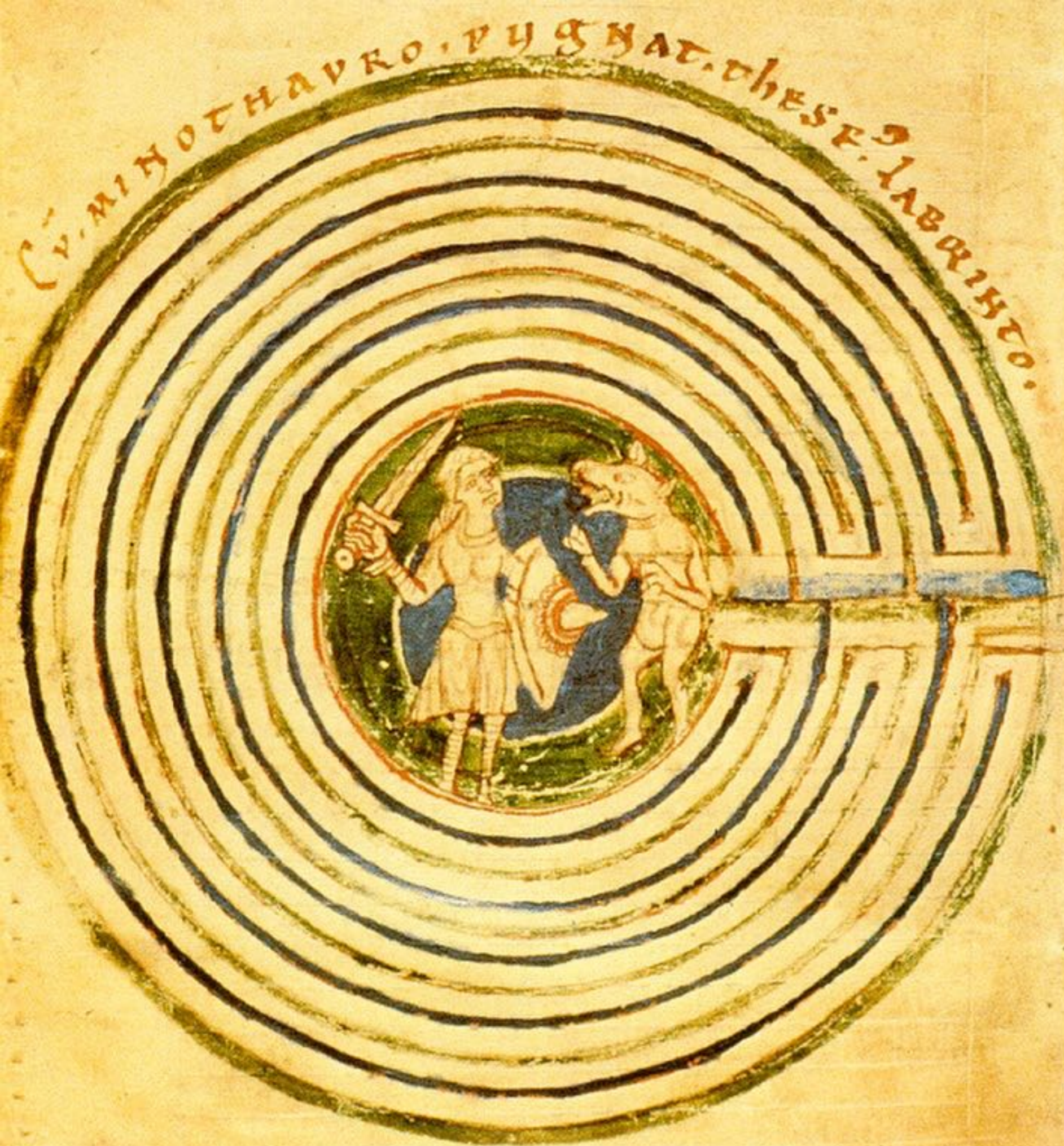
Kern image 191,
page 116
The heading
reads, “Domus
Deali in qu
Minotaurum
posuit Mynos
rex” (The house
of Daedalus, in
which King
Minos
imprisoned the
Minotaur.”

1060-1123
Ghent, University
Library, MS 92, fol.
20r
Belgium



Kern: "it is surrounded by a two course wall fortified with battlements, recalling a Roman mosaic labyrinth. It has merely six circuits and an unusual path layout." 237

12th century
BNF Latin 12999



The text above the maze reads
**CUM MINOTHAURO
PUGNAT THESE
US [IN] LABORINTO. =**
Theseus fights with the
Minotaur in the
Labyrinth.

End of 12th century
Munich Clm 1473 I



12th century

Theseus and the Minotaur

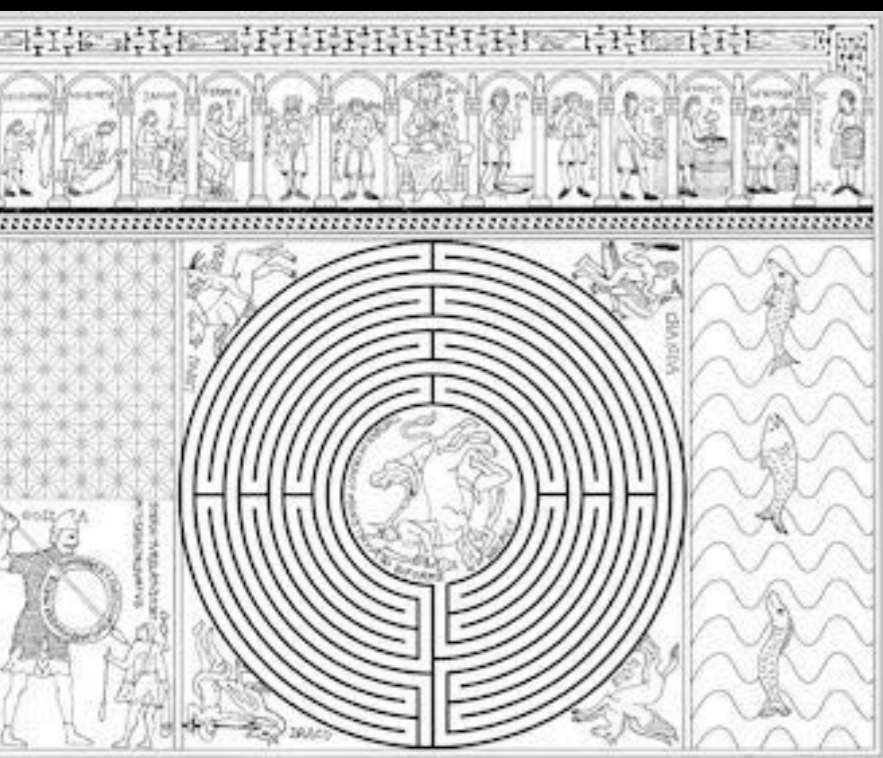
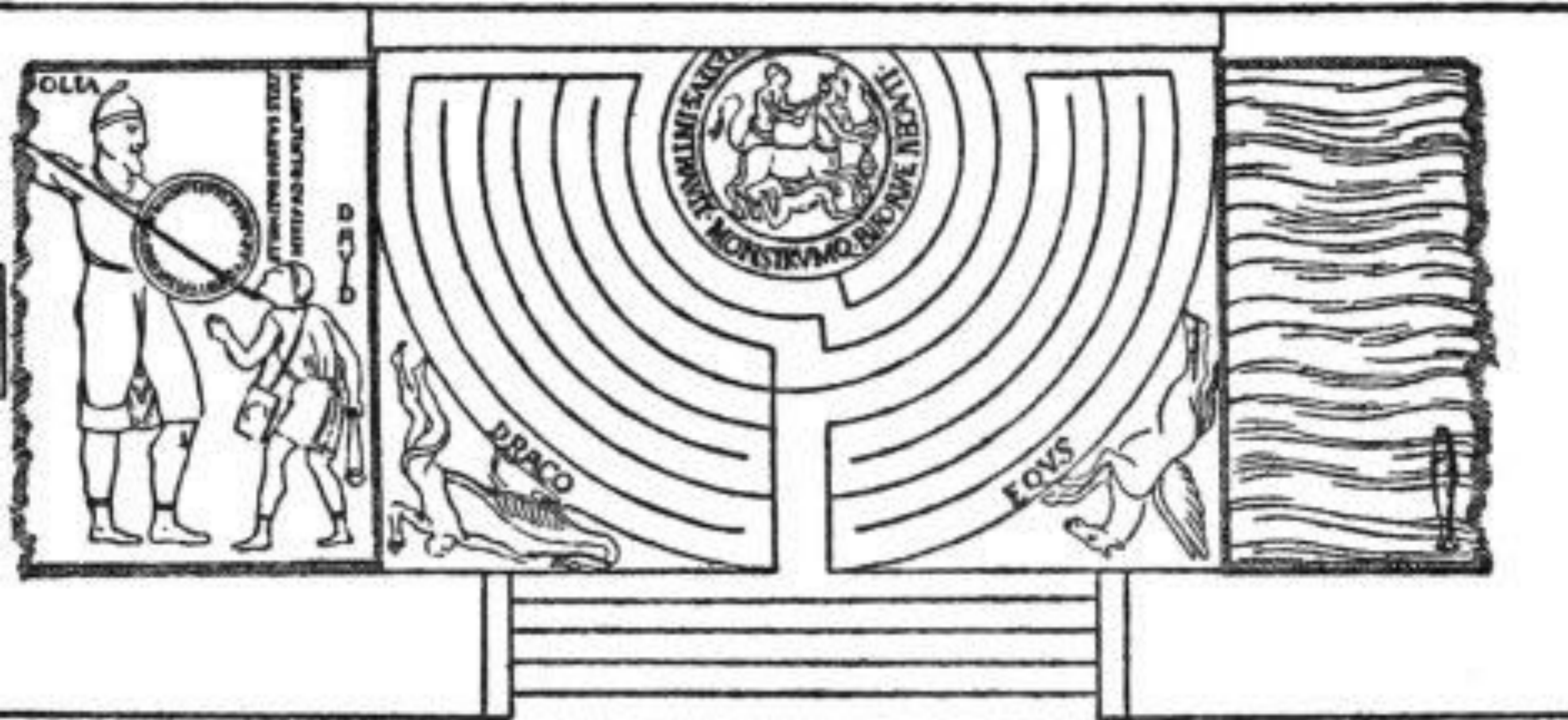
**Central Stone/Marble Slab
(75 cm x 68 cm)**

**Cologne Labyrinth,
St. Severin**

**(now kept in Erzbischöfliches
Diözesanmuseum Köln)**

**It was removed for unknown
reasons in 1840.**

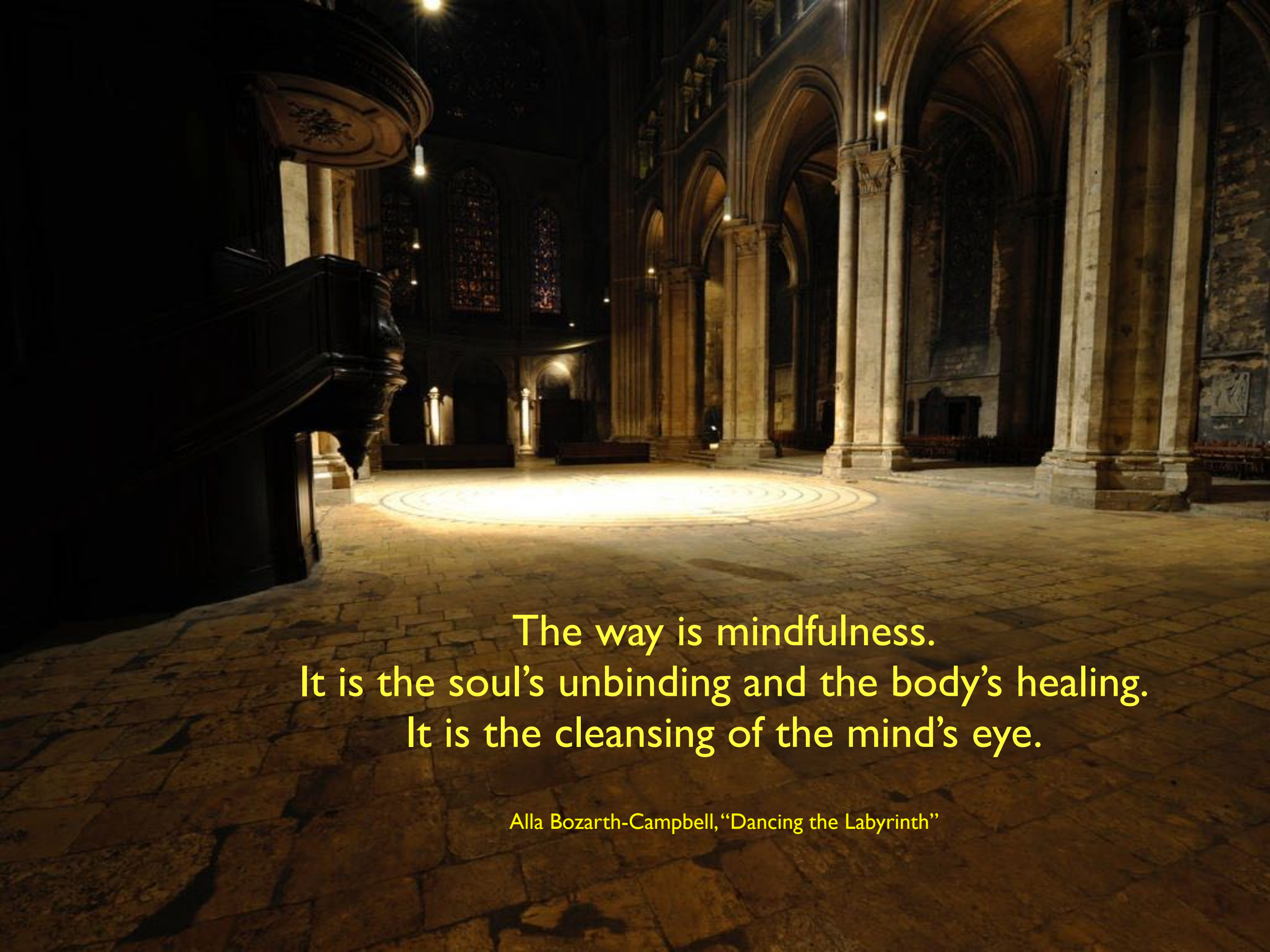
**It is now kept in Erzbischöfliches
Diözesanmuseum Köln)**



The central panel depicts the battle of Theseus and the Minotaur "*Teseus intravit monstrumque biforme necavit*" - Theseus entered and killed the hybrid monster. Jeff Saward, correspondence

12th century (1107)

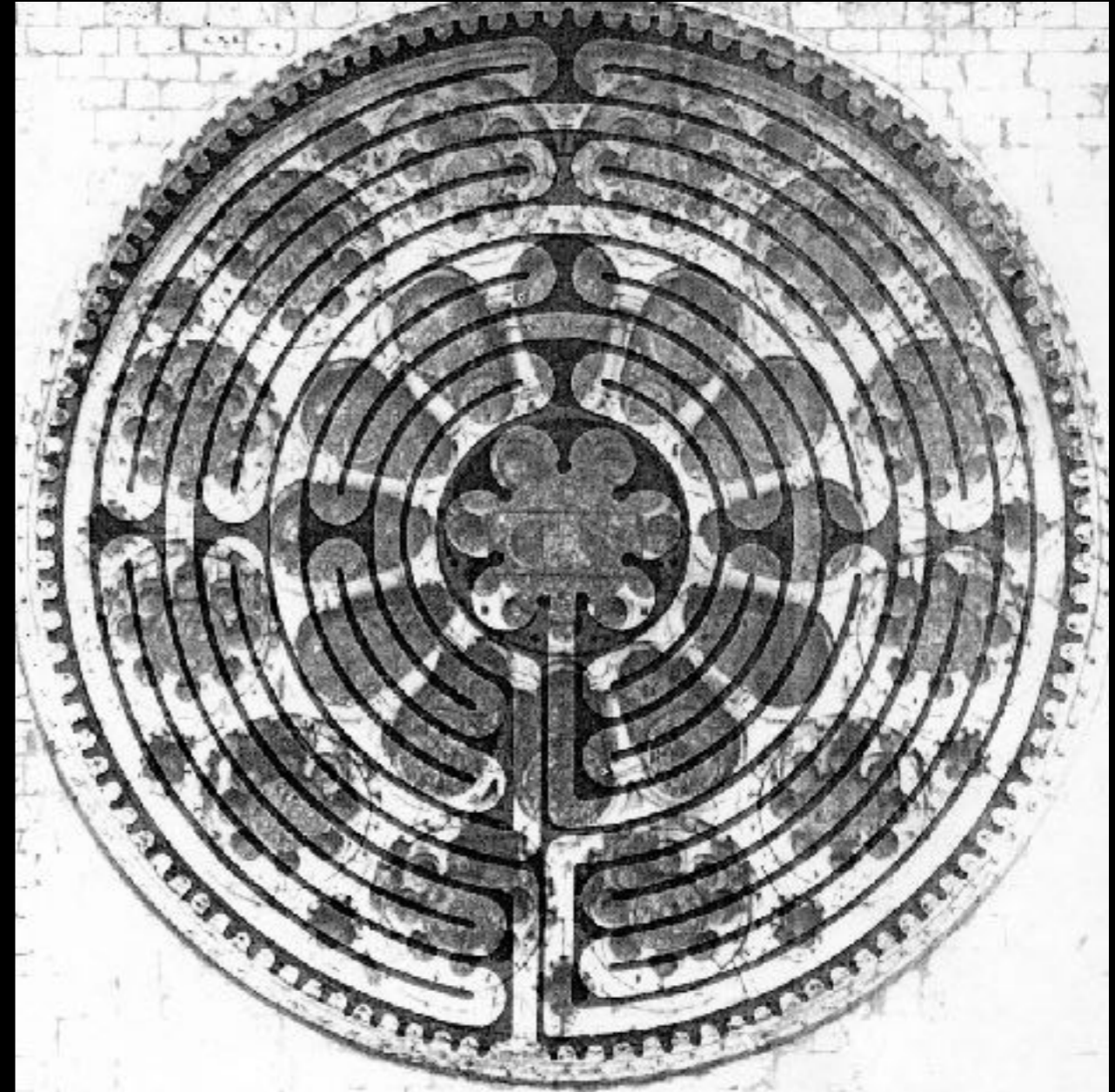
Consecrated on 15 August (Feast day of the Assumption of Mary)
Pavia, Italy Labyrinth Mosaic San Michele Maggiore



The way is mindfulness.
It is the soul's unbinding and the body's healing.
It is the cleansing of the mind's eye.

Alla Bozarth-Campbell, "Dancing the Labyrinth"

Relationship of the Labyrinth and the West Rose: Myths & Truths



There is a deep correspondence between the labyrinth and the west window. However, they are not the same size (rose: 11.9 meters of glazed area, 13.6 meters with moulding, labyrinth: just under 12.9 meters) and they are not the same distance from the west wall (10 feet/3.0m difference).

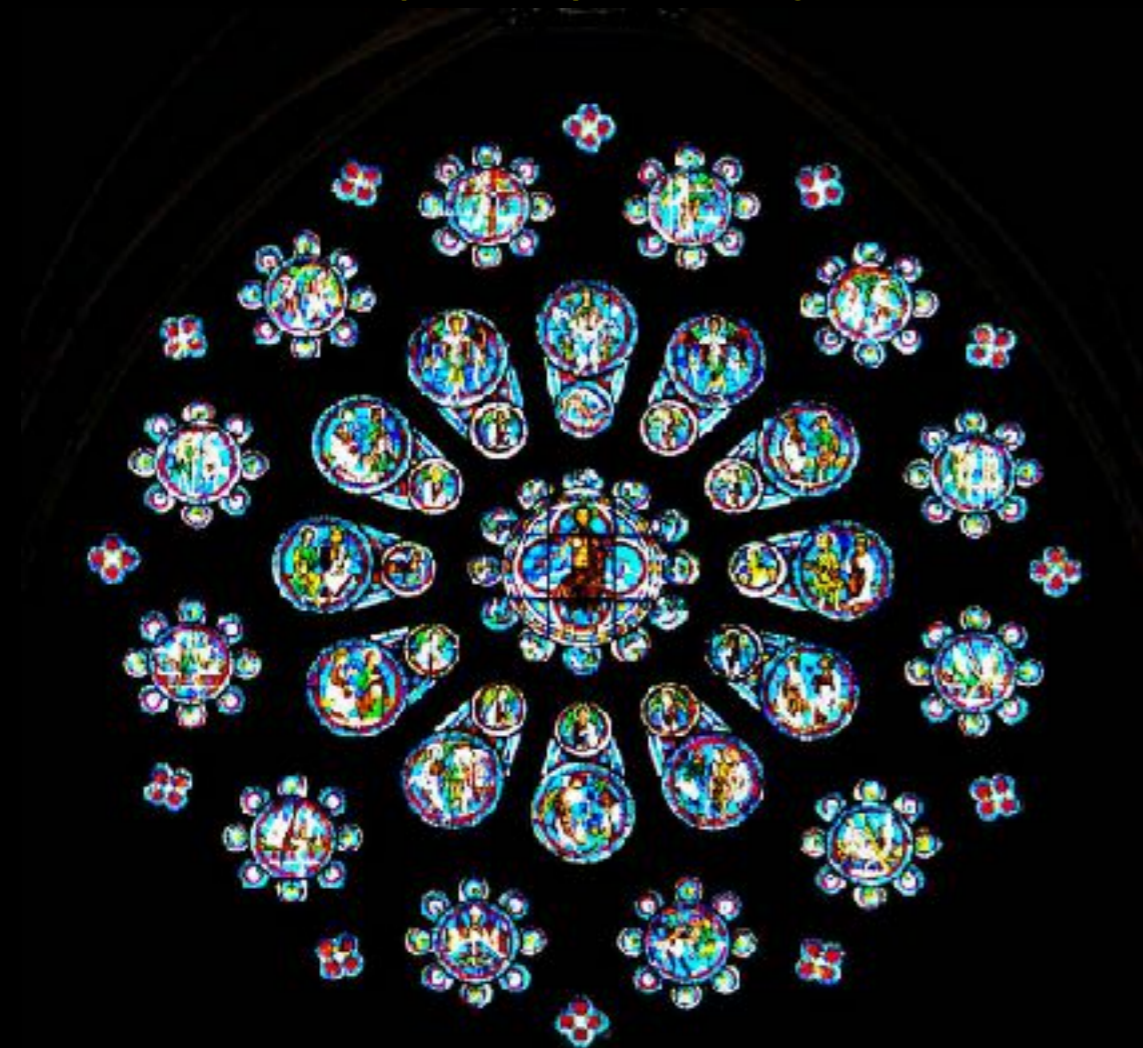
Jeff and Kimberly Saward "Is That A Fact?"
Caerdroia 33:14-27 (2003). Page 24.

Artistically appealing, but **NOT**
accurate!
The west rose
overlaid on the Chartres labyrinth.

Helen Rafael Sands. *The Healing Labyrinth*. NY:
Barrons, 2001.

Six Petalled Flower in the Center of the Chartres Labyrinth Christ in the Center

“The motif [of the six-lobed rosette belongs to an old and widespread family of stellar symbols, the origins of which reach back into antiquity. Eight-or six-lobed rosettes, as symbols of the stellar nature of God, are a common occurrence in Sumerian, Babylonian, Jewish and Roman art. The motif was quickly absorbed into the Christian cult, as a reference to the celestial nature of the new god, and subsequently became so closely associated with the cross of Christ as to be practically interchangeable with it.”



Walter Horn and Ernest Born,
*The Plan of St. Gall, 3 volumes (Berkeley, 1979), I, 131 as
quoted in Craig Wright, The Maze and the Warrior: Symbols
in Architecture, Theology and Music (Harvard University
Press, 2001) 43.*

Relationship between the labyrinth rosette and the west rose window

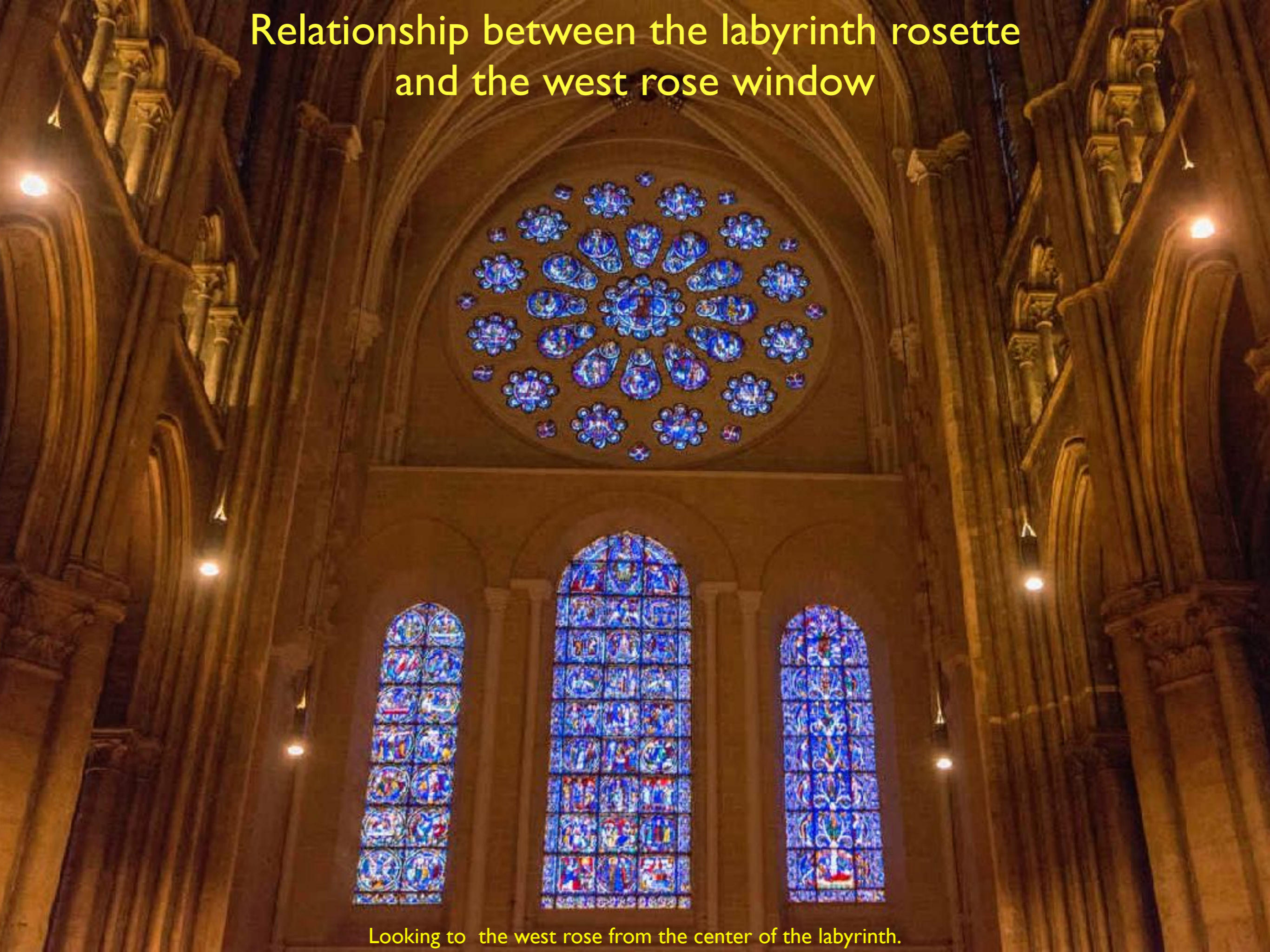


“As Christ is signified by the rosette in the center of the [labyrinth], so too he resides in the west rose.”

Wright, *The Maze and the Warrior*. 43.

Looking to the west rose from the center of the labyrinth.

Relationship between the labyrinth rosette and the west rose window



Looking to the west rose from the center of the labyrinth.

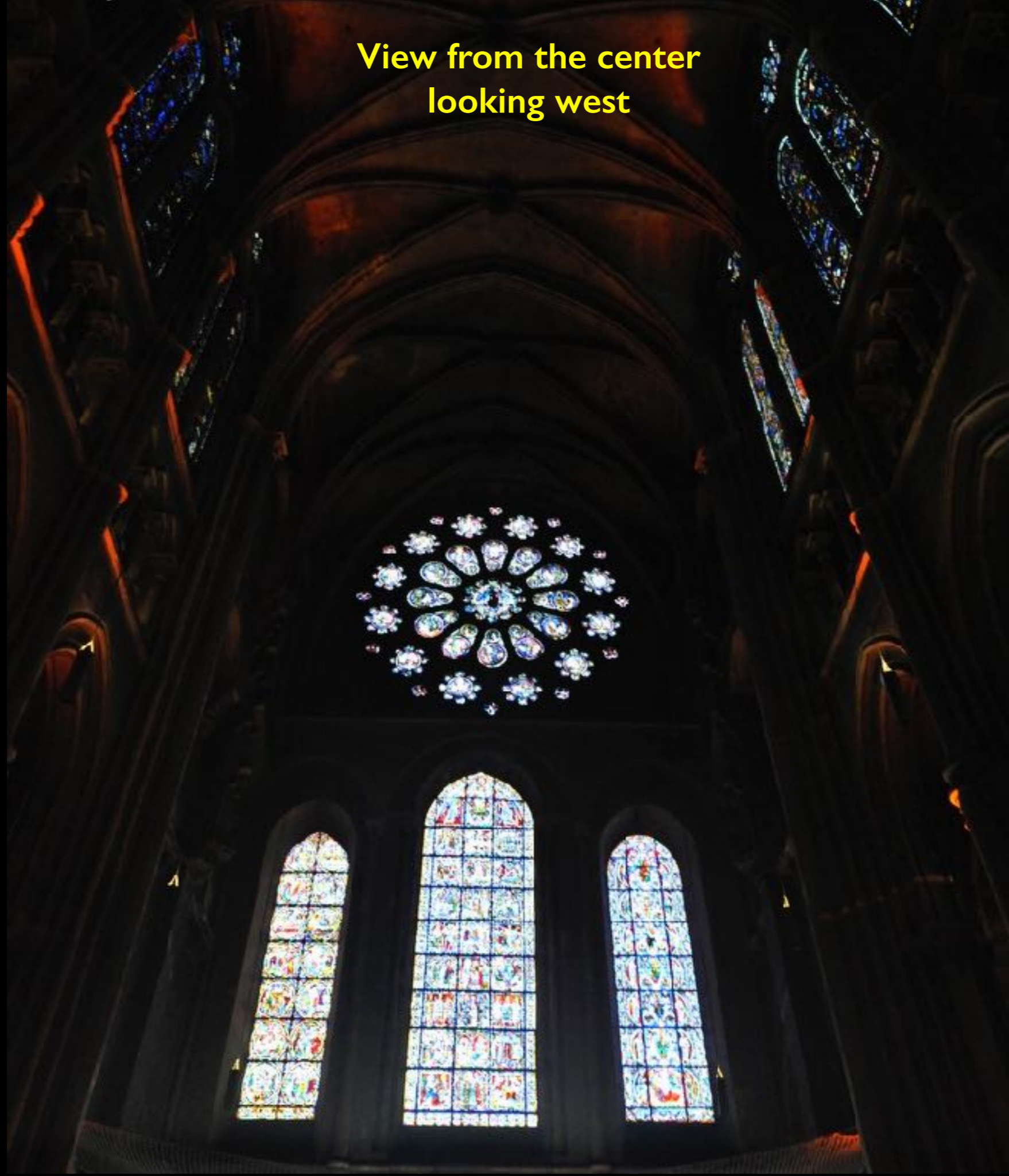
“As Christ is signified by the rosette in the center of the [labyrinth], so too he resides in the west rose.”

Wright, *The Maze and the Warrior*. 43.



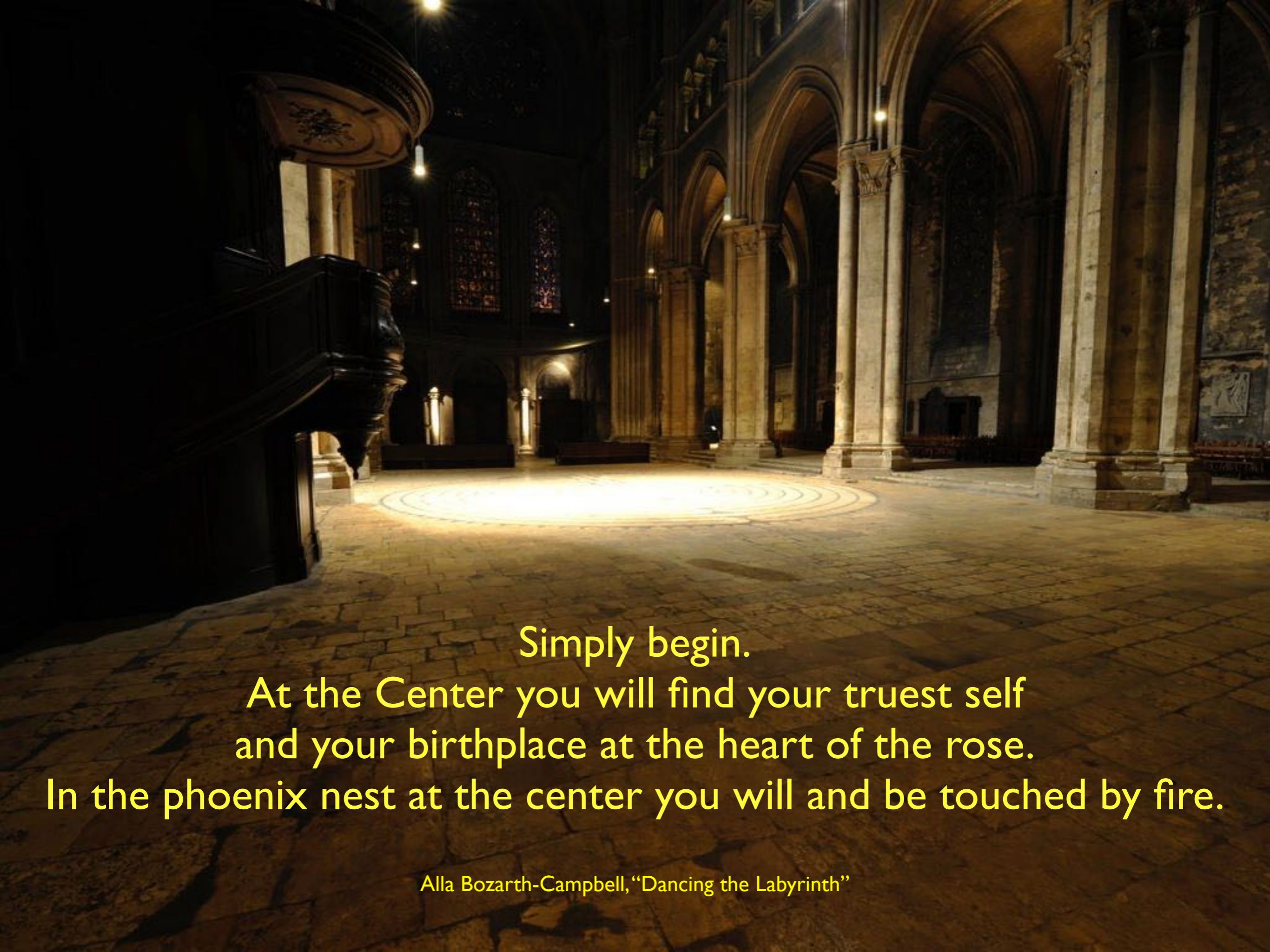
*Center of the West
Rose, Christ in
judgment*

View from the center
looking west





View from the center of the labyrinth looking east.



Simply begin.
At the Center you will find your truest self
and your birthplace at the heart of the rose.
In the phoenix nest at the center you will and be touched by fire.

Alla Bozarth-Campbell, "Dancing the Labyrinth"

The Threshold Stone



Threshold Stone From the Side

Chalice?
Baptismal Font?
Other?




Threshold Stone On Way Out

Threshold Stone & Path In



Semi-Circular Turns



The image shows the interior of a Gothic cathedral. The architecture features tall, slender columns supporting pointed arches. The floor is made of large, irregular stone tiles. In the center of the floor, there is a circular area illuminated by a bright, warm light, creating a glowing effect. To the left, there is a dark, ornate structure, possibly a pulpit or a part of the choir. In the background, there are stained glass windows and more architectural details. The overall atmosphere is solemn and majestic.

When you return we will know you truly for the first time.
We will welcome news you bring from home.
Food you bring will ready us to follow.
Songs you sing will call us into Mystery.

Alla Bozarth-Campbell, "Dancing the Labyrinth"

Uniquely Shaped Turn Dividers



View from south



View from East

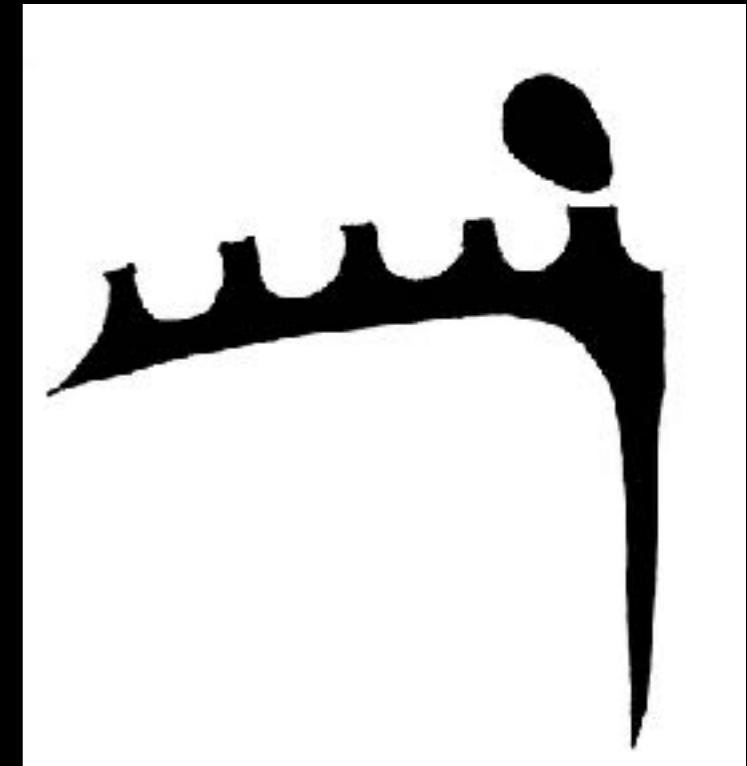
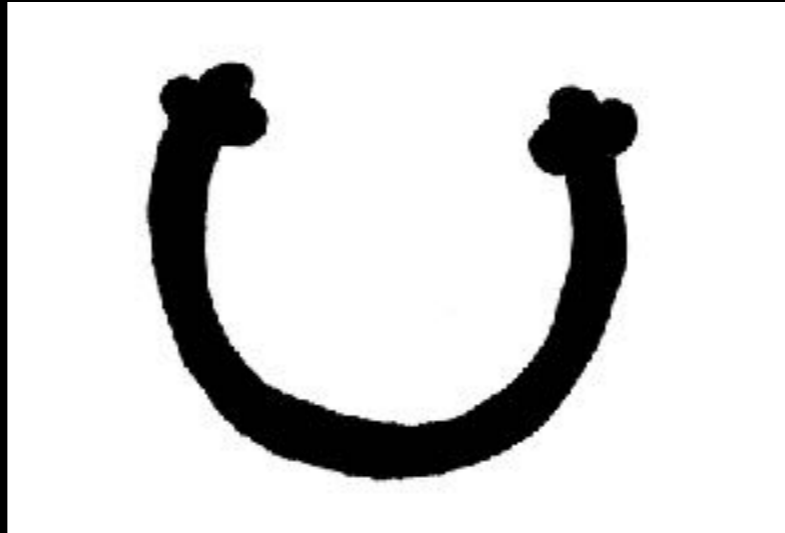


The only reason for going into the open heart of the labyrinth rose
is to let your heart break open
so that you can hear the first cry of creation
when God birthed the universe...

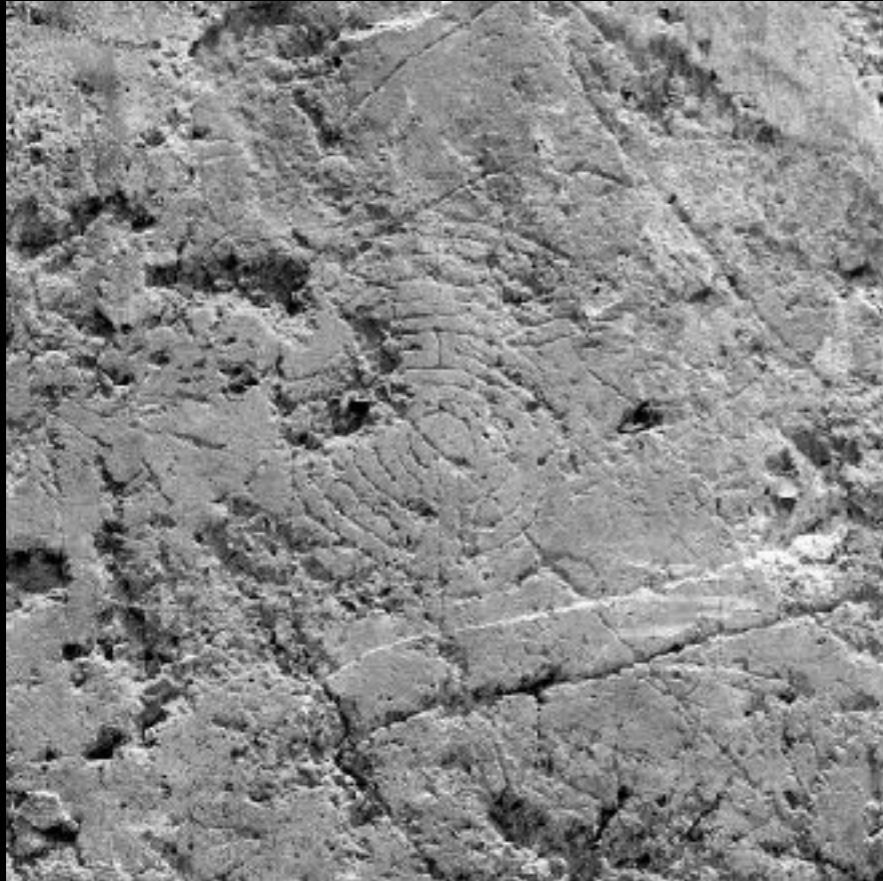
Alla Bozarth-Campbell, "Dancing the Labyrinth"

Unique shapes found in the Chartres Cathedral Labyrinth:

Heads added, drawn by ©Sue Swanson



The "little sister" graffito



The Petit Labyrinth Graffito of Chartres Cathedral

Jill K. H. Geoffrin & Alain P. Louët



Some 800 years after the completion of the thirteenth century pavement labyrinth in nave of Chartres Cathedral, France, a "little sister" labyrinth graffito has been identified in the cathedral.¹ The fact that a second labyrinth has existed in the cathedral, whether since the thirteenth century, or a much more recent time, will come as a surprise to most people.²

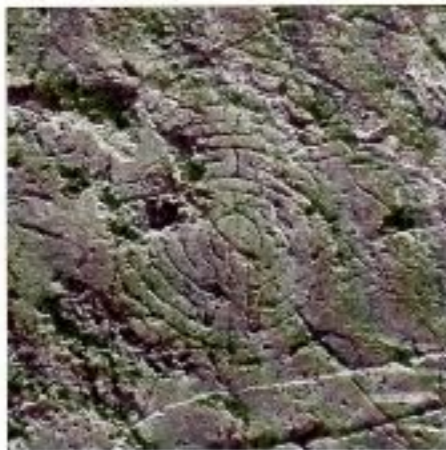
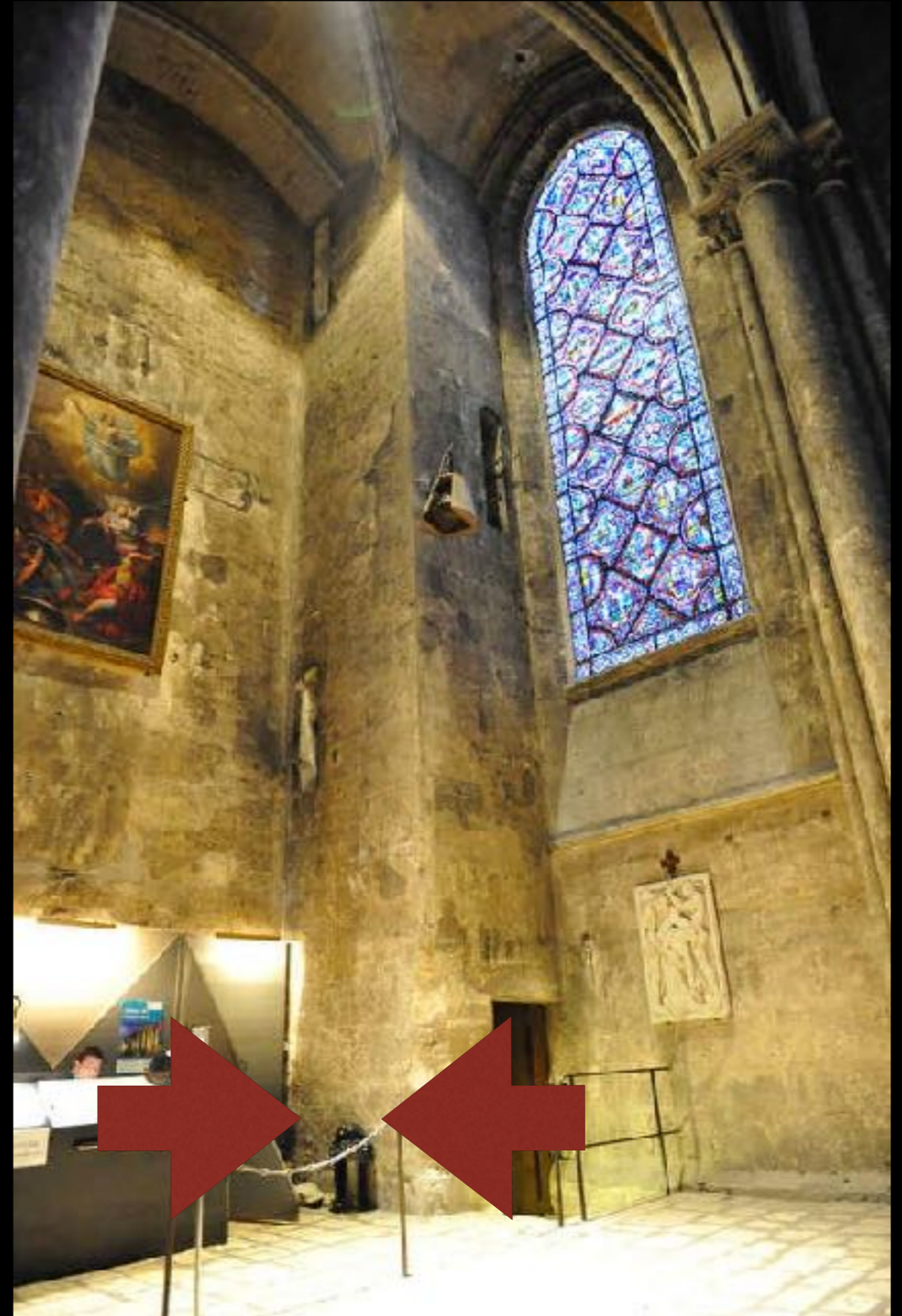
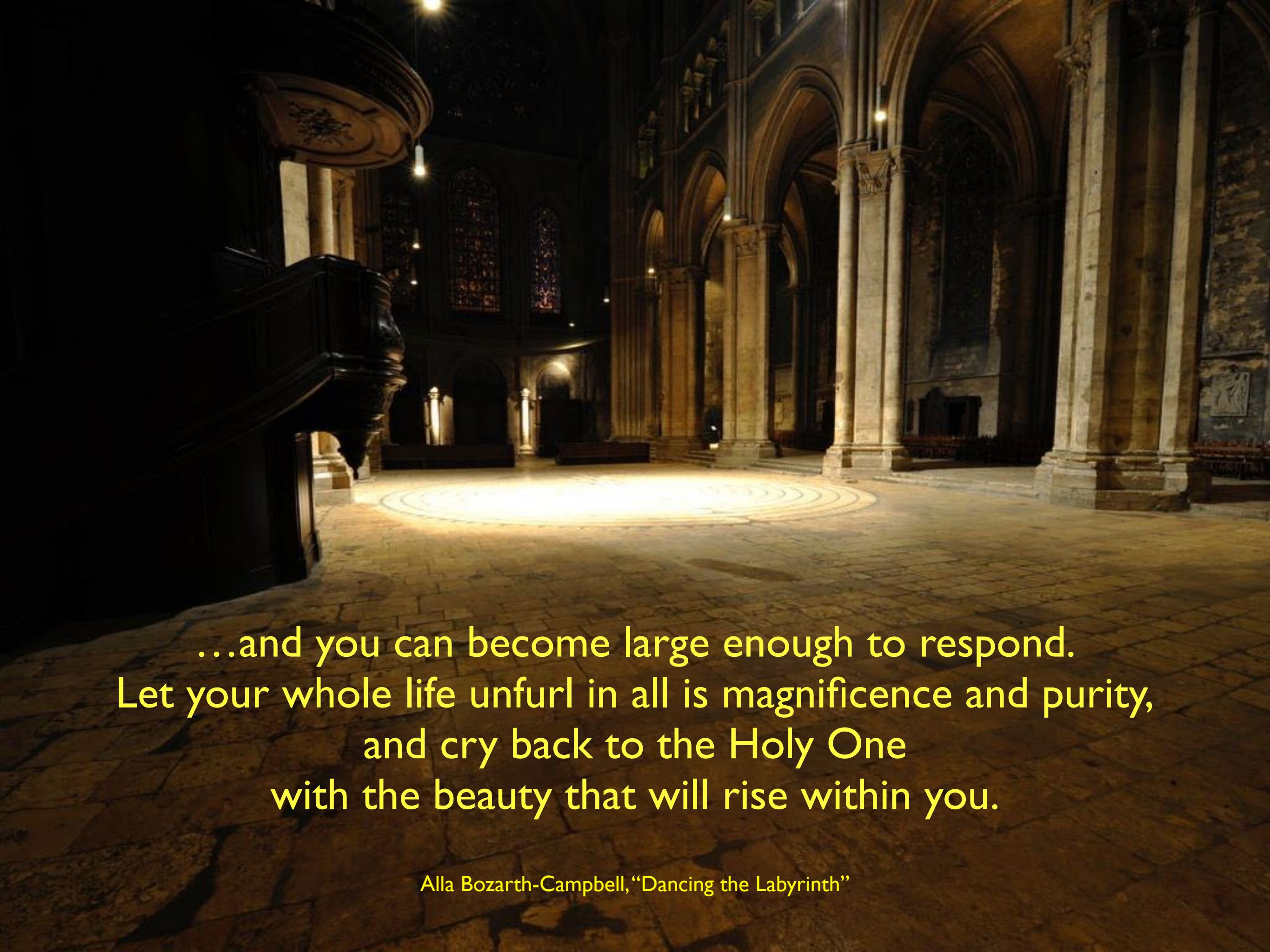


Figure 1: The "Petit Labyrinth" wall graffito, Nave Dome of Chartres, France.
1 Geoffrin, Jill Savant, September 2010

Location and description of the labyrinth graffito

The labyrinth graffito in Chartres Cathedral is found around the corner from the door leading to the north tower, at the end of the north side aisle. It is located in an area that is currently staffed by the French Historical Monuments. Approximately one meter (39 1/8 inches) above the door, it is 85 cm (approximately 33 1/2 inches) from the west end of the tower wall.





...and you can become large enough to respond.
Let your whole life unfurl in all its magnificence and purity,
and cry back to the Holy One
with the beauty that will rise within you.

Alla Bozarth-Campbell, "Dancing the Labyrinth"

Mary & The Chartres Cathedral Labyrinth



**Au milieu du cercle, des chanoines et des invités, dansant et chantant les répons rimés de la
prose :**

Die nobis Maria

Quid vidisti in via.

Sepulcrum Christi viventis.

Et gloriam vidi resurgentis.

The number seven was considered "virgin" by the ancients because no number goes into it (without remainder), and its geometric construction cannot be captured by compass and straightedge.

Michael Schneider A Beginner's Guide To Constructing the Universe. The Mathematic Archetypes of Nature, Art and Science. NY: HarperPerennial, 1994.

7 circles make up center (6 around 1)

7 triangles in center

7 "fleur de lis" shapes (5 total, 2 partial) in center

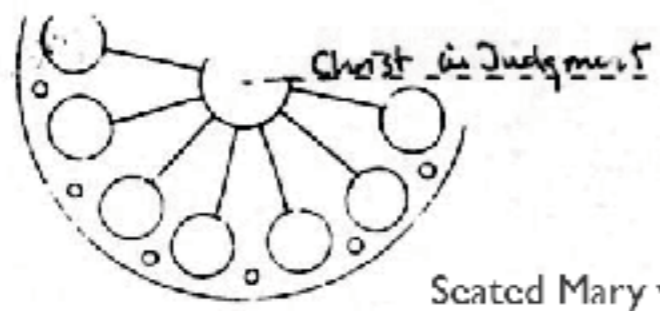
7 turns in each quadrant

relation of number of vertical (4) and horizontal (3 on each side) "chalices"

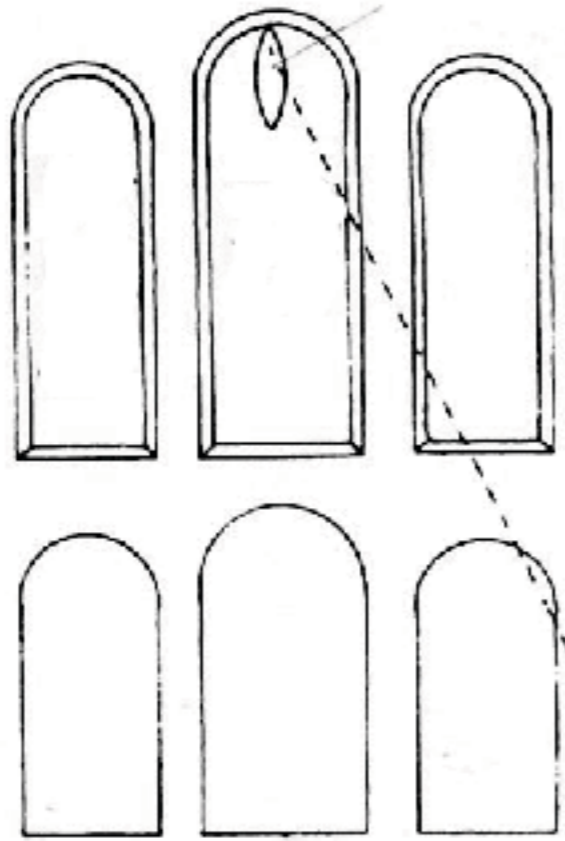
width of 7 paths/lines=width of center

7 180 degree turns in each quadrant

7 ends of lines in each quadrant

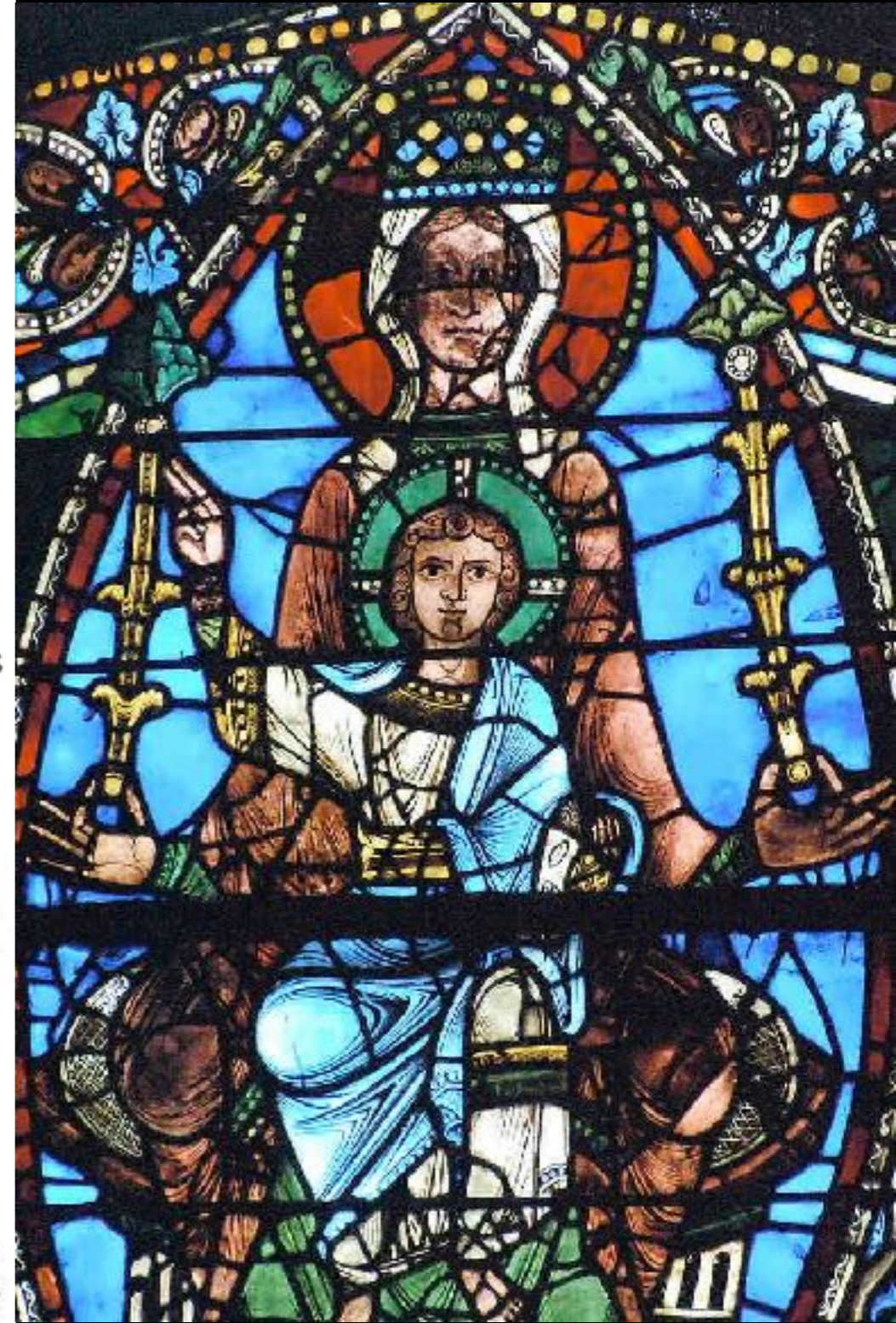


Seated Mary with Jesus

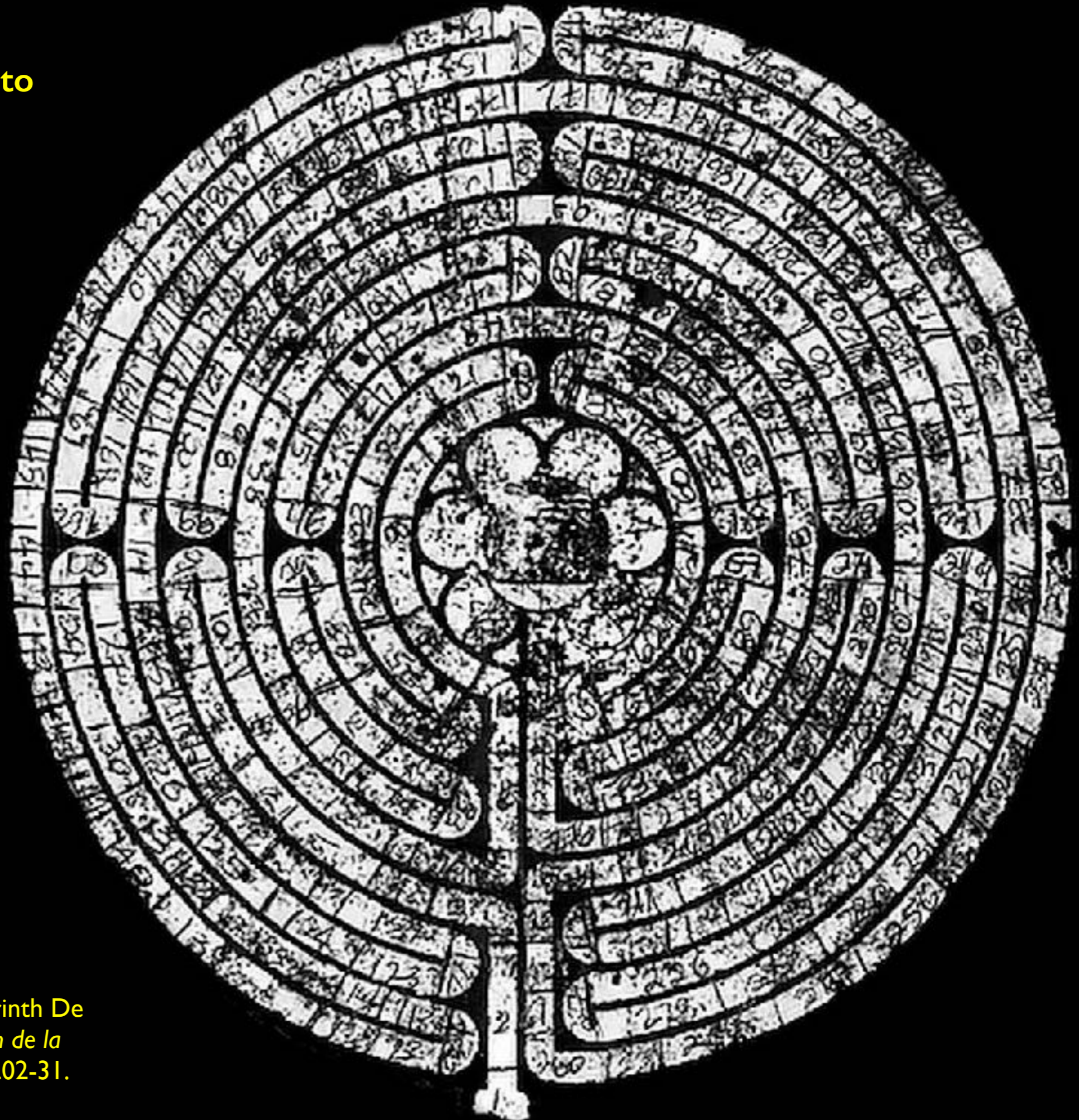


Light falls from the image of the Mary Throne (with Jesus) to the center of the labyrinth on Aug. 22 (which corresponds to August 15 the feast of Mary's Assumption in the Middle Ages).

The window was placed many years before the labyrinth.



The number of stones
(268-274) corresponding to
the days of gestation
for a child
is seen by many
as a pointer to Mary.



Roger Joly (1999),
“Une Nouvelle Lecture Pour Le Labyrinthe De
La Cathédrale De Chartres”, *Bulletin de la
Société d'Archologie d'Eure et Loir* 63: 202-31.
See especially page 220.

There is no documentary evidence of this, but it is not out of sync with the theological messages of birth that can be found in other parts of the cathedral.



Flowers That Symbolized Mary in Medieval times

I am a rose of Sharon,
a lily of the valleys.”
Song 2:1



The rose is a many petalled flower. It often symbolizes love, the feminine, Mary: Rosa Mystica, and spiritual enlightenment.

Other Mary flowers with six petals:
Star of Bethlehem



Lily in Annunciation Window
(South Ambulatory of Chartres Cathedral).



The Madonna Lily has six petals.

“The lily from the Song of Solomon was used as a symbol of Mary’s undivided availability for God.”
Krymow, 27.



The Fleur de lis (iris) has long represented Mary and the annunciation.

For further study:
Mary’s Flowers: Gardens,
Legends & Meditations. Vincenzina Krymow. (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2002).

Iris in the Center: Mary & Fleur-de-lis



North Rose Window with many 3 petaled Fleur-de-lises.

“From ancient times the yellow iris has been considered sacred to the Virgin Mary and was one of the plants used to decorate churches on special days.”
Krymow, 140



The Yellow Flag Iris is also named the Fleur -de-lis. It has a long association with Mary. In earlier times irises were referred to as lilies.

See Krymow 139-141.

Iris in the Center: Mary & Fleur-de-lis



The Yellow Flag Iris is also named the Fleur -de-lis. It has a long association with Mary. In earlier times irises were referred to as lilies.

See Krymow 139-141.

Life of Mary Window (South Ambulatory) 3 petaled Fleur-de-lises.

Iris in the Center: Mary & Fleur-de-lis



S Rose Window: Mary's Scepter: 3 petaled Fleur-de-lises.

12 circles in Mary's
scepter
and 12s found in the
labyrinth

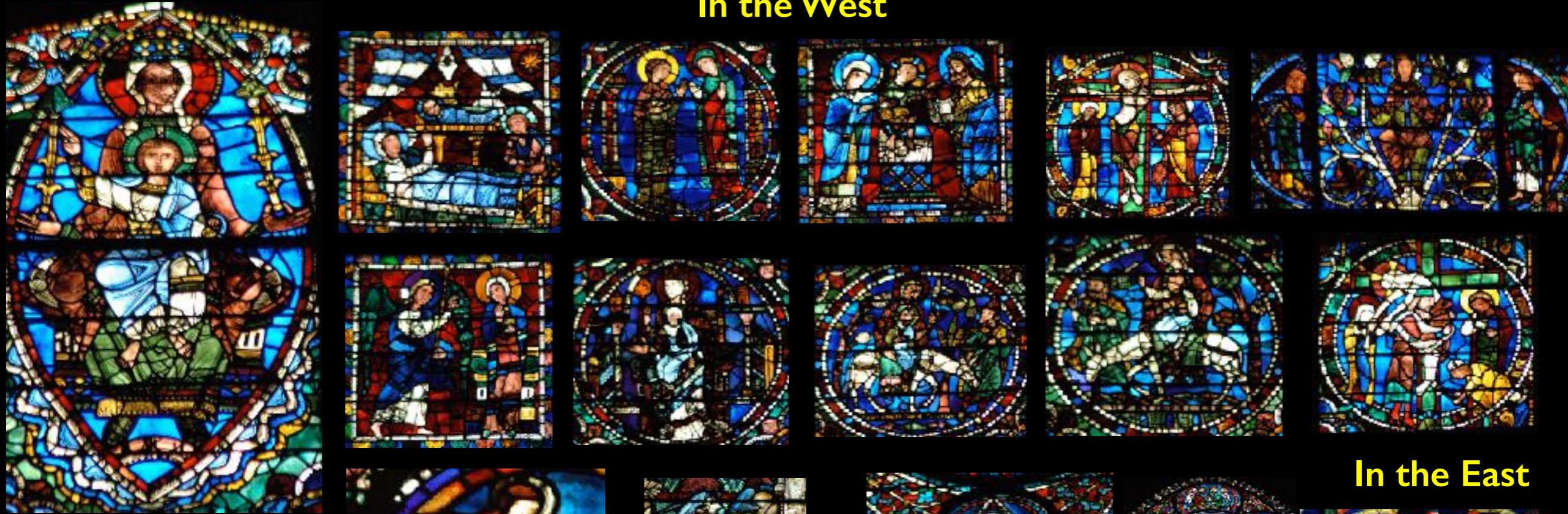
explore this
and get photo of
the scepter



Life of Christ Window (West)

Mary's Presence Seems Very Near: Views of Mary That Can Be Seen From the Labyrinth

In the West



In the East



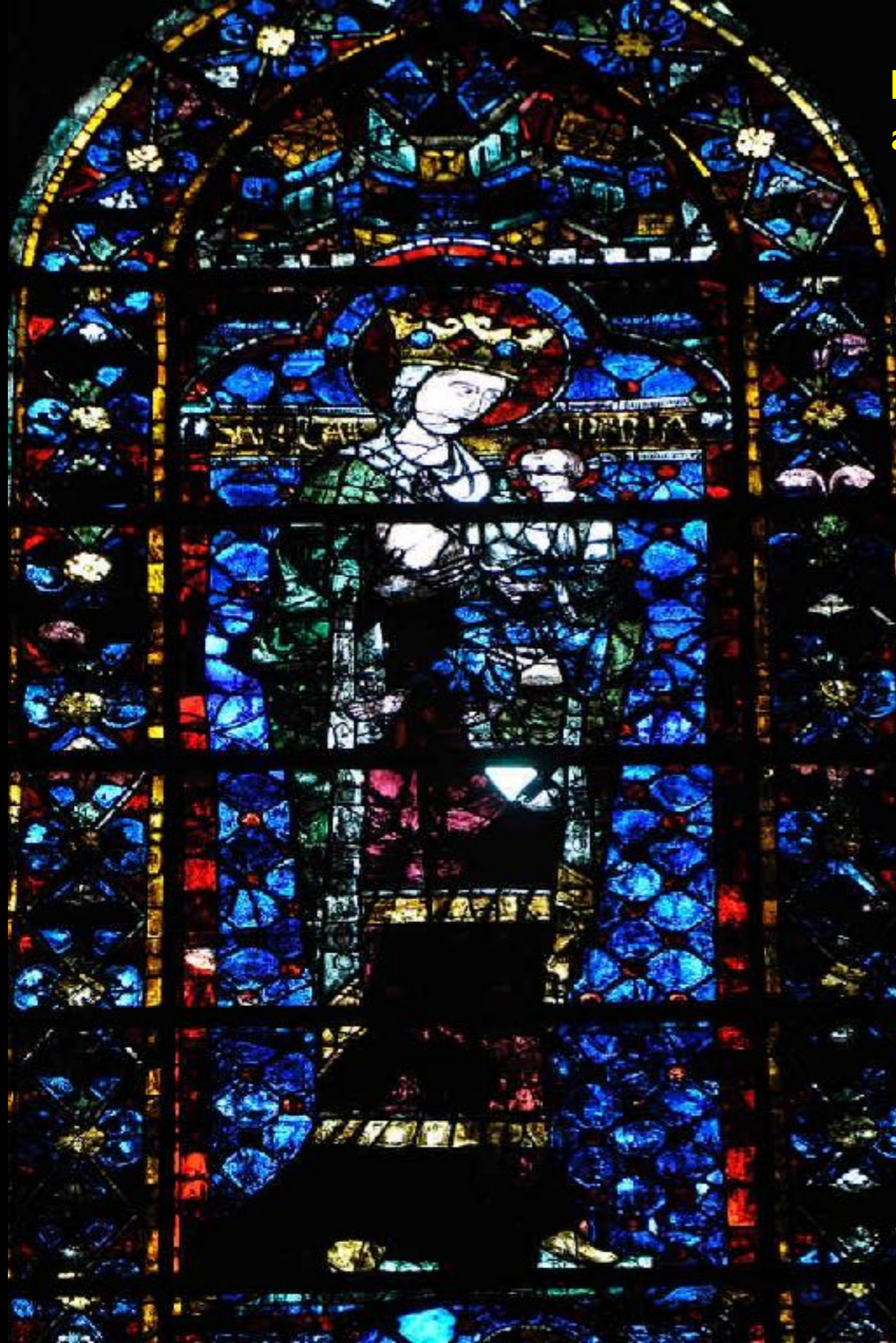
In the South



In the North



Mary's image surrounds the labyrinth on all sides. She stands above the labyrinth, offering nourishment.

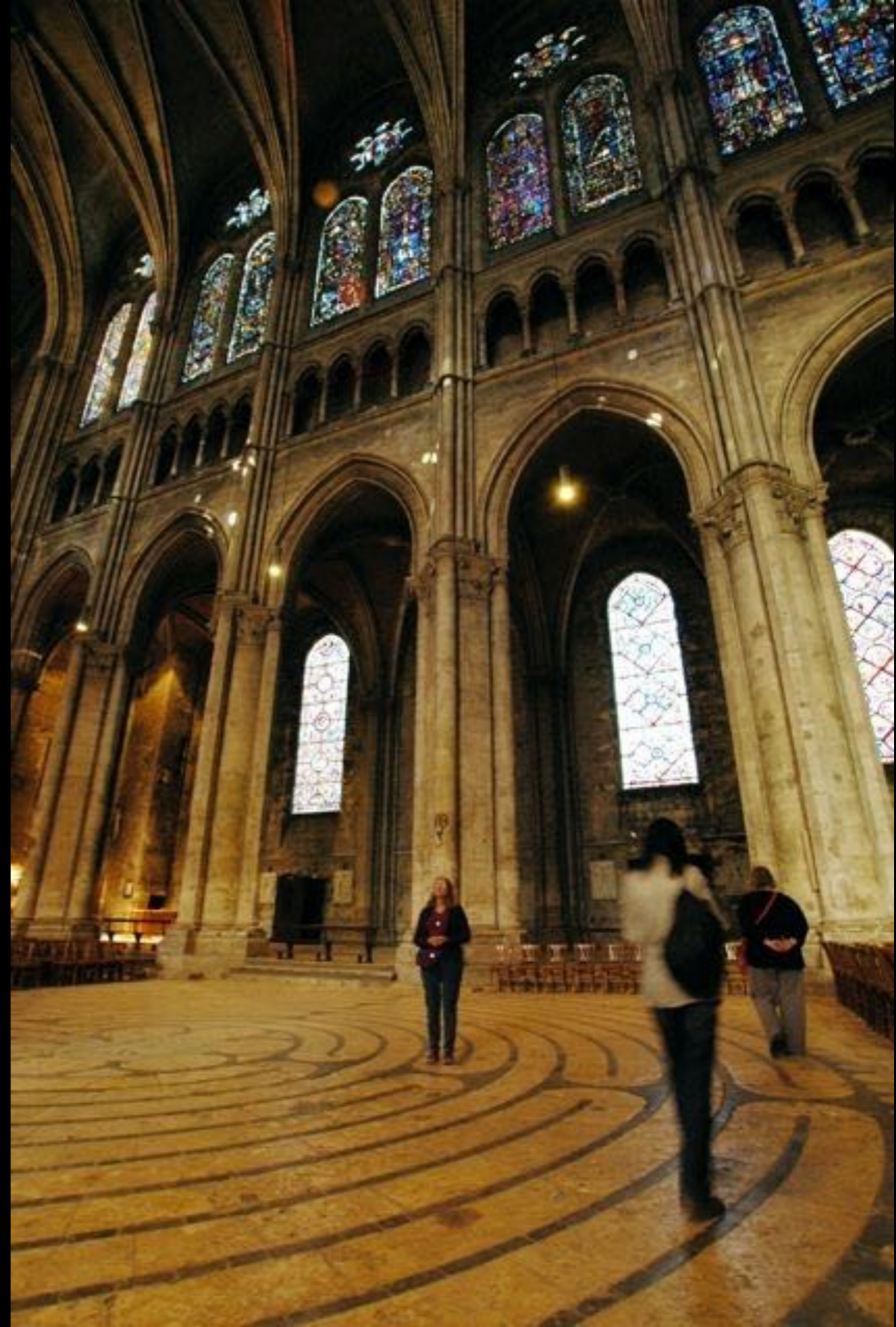


God said to Moses,
“Remove the sandals from your feet.
for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”

Exodus 3:5



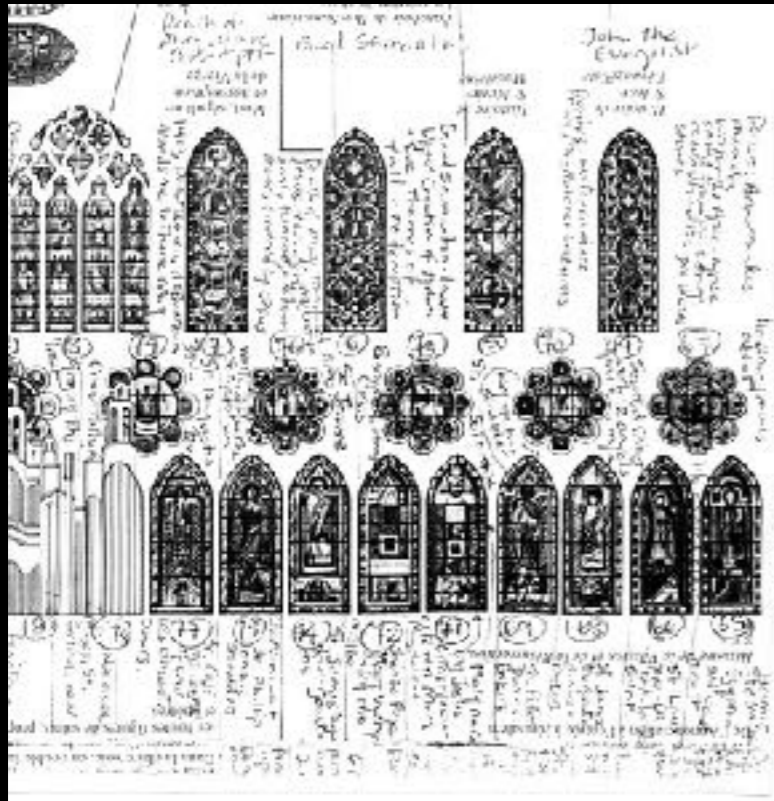
The windows
around the labyrinth



There may be theological resonances with other cathedral features



Chartres Theology Surrounding the Labyrinth as Communicated in Stained Glass

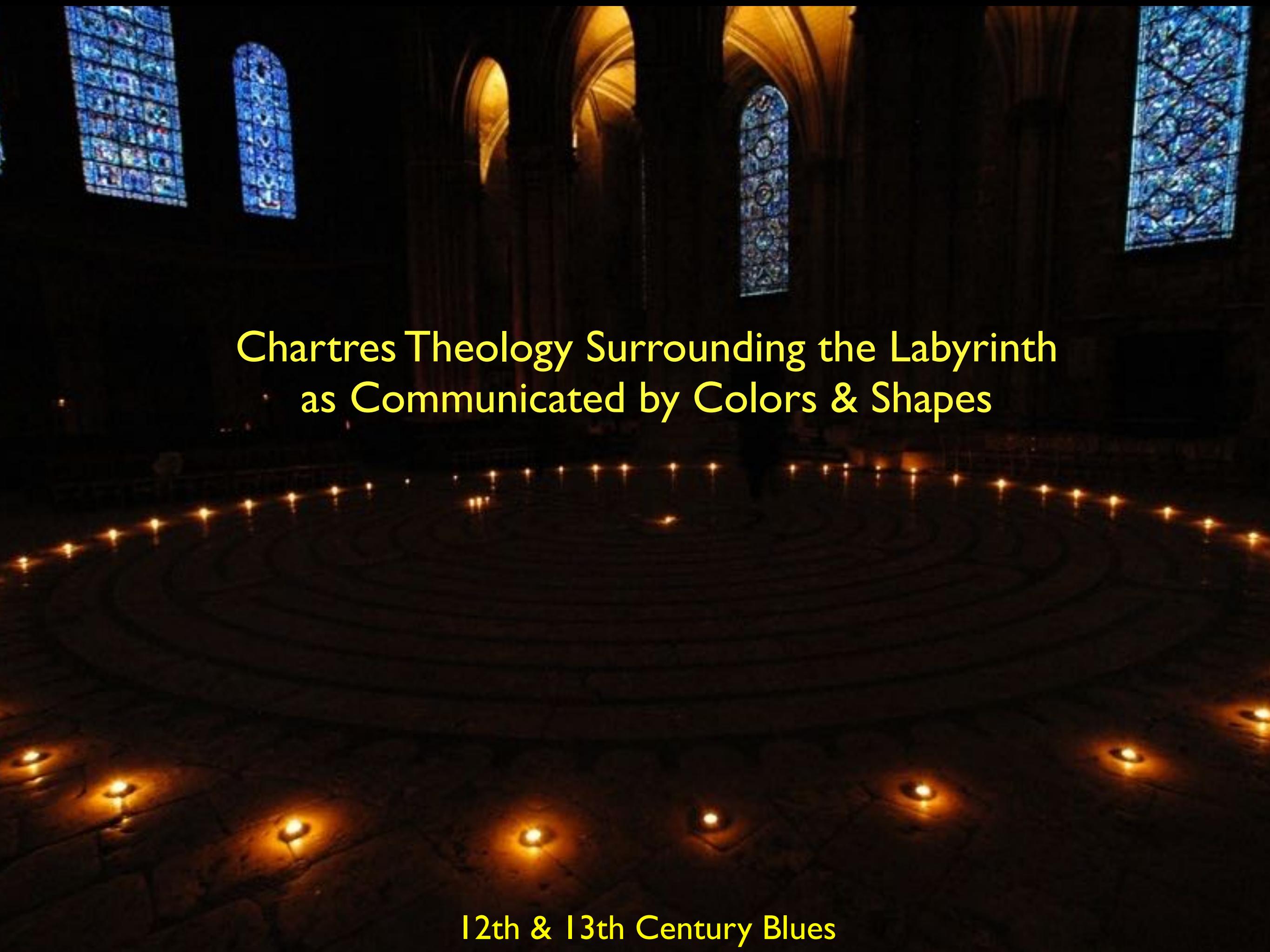


South Side (from W to E)
 St. Marie the Egyptian, St. Martin,
 Anonymous Abbott
 St. James, St. Peter, Seated Christ
 Mary offers breast to Jesus, Saint
 foye, Bishop
 St. James, Jeremiah & Philip, Jerome
 St. Calé, St. Bartholomew, Augustin
 Walled off windows, Gregory the Grat
 Half-hidden, St. Sumphonien, St. Hilaire

North Side (from W to E)
 3 Temptations of Christ, Joseph & David &
 Habbukuk, Anon Bishop
 Laurent, St. Stephen, St. Lubin
 4 Apostles, St. Nicholas, Thomas Beckett
 6 Apostles, Anon Apostle, Virgin with 7 gifts
 of Spirit
 St. Gilles, St. Georges, St. Georges
 Christ blessing, Sacrifice of Isaac, 3 peasants in
 the fields...

Clerstory Windows Above the Labyrinth

Windows To the South of the Labyrinth

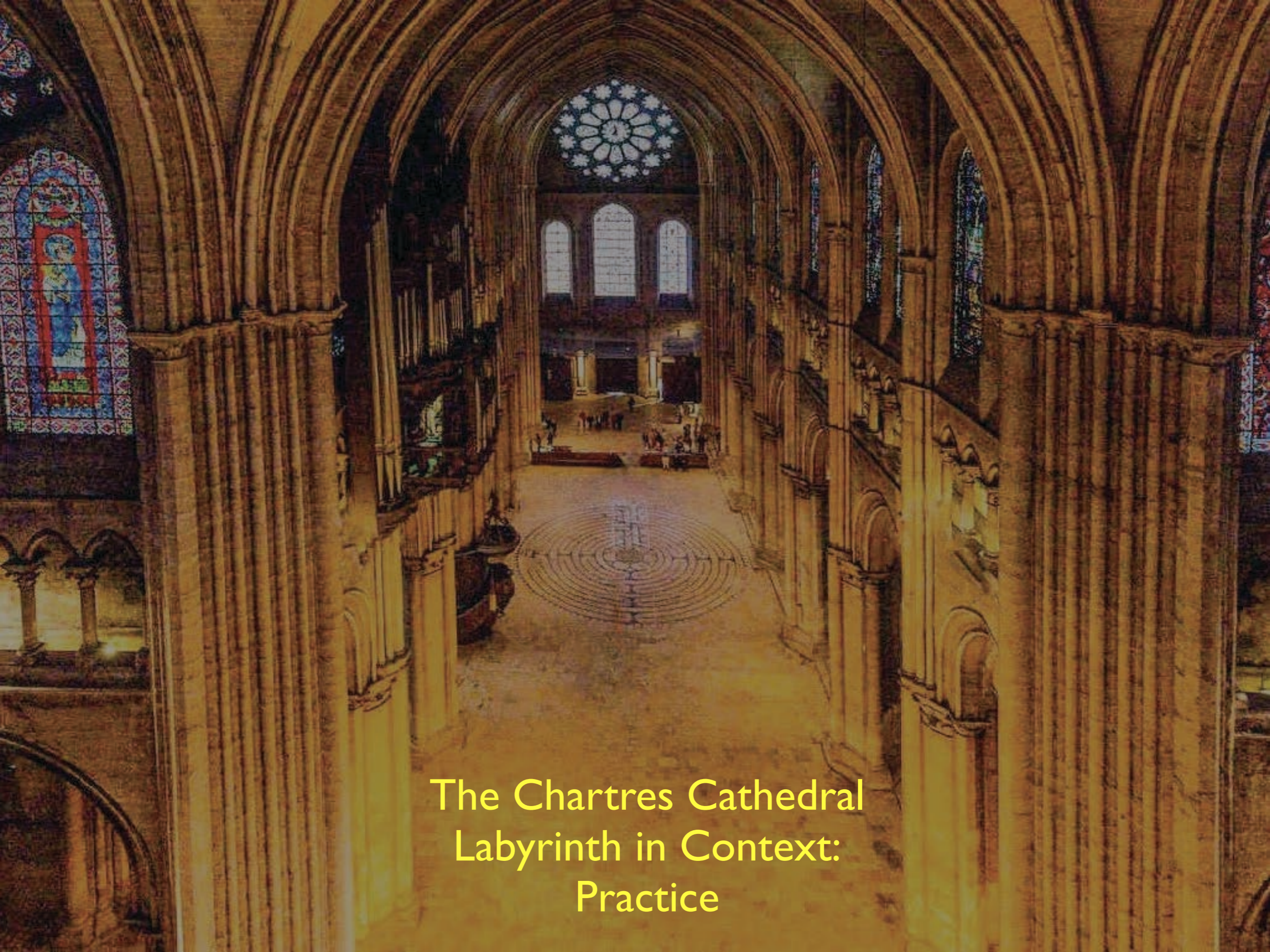
The image shows the interior of Chartres Cathedral, featuring a large circular labyrinth on the floor. The labyrinth is composed of concentric paths, with small, glowing lights placed at various points along the paths. The floor is dark, and the walls are high, with several tall, narrow stained glass windows. The windows are primarily blue, with intricate designs in shades of blue, white, and gold. The lighting is warm and focused on the labyrinth, creating a dramatic atmosphere.

Chartres Theology Surrounding the Labyrinth as Communicated by Colors & Shapes

12th & 13th Century Blues

From the entrance of the labyrinth
you can see the Good Samaritan Window & Pilgrim's Story





The Chartres Cathedral
Labyrinth in Context:
Practice

Our experience today is not the same experience of those who knew the labyrinth and the cathedral in other times.



Etching, 17th century

**Lithograph print >>>>
Drawn by: W.C. Colman, architect.
Engraved by B. Winkles
in Winkles Continental Cathedrals.**



19th century sketch
of clerics moving
through a turf labyrinth
in England



“...the [labyrinth] had been the site of a substitute pilgrimage during the eighteenth century. ...At Arras (France) the pious recited prayers on their knees as they made their way around [the labyrinth], and here the full pilgrimage was said to require an hour.

Craig Wright. *The Maze and the Warrior*.
(Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2001) 210.

Contemporary uses of Chartres Cathedral labyrinth & its design in Chartres





The labyrinth
“in town”



French cathedral guides in modern-day Chartres

Institut Catholique de Paris
Facultés de Théologie et de Sciences Religieuses

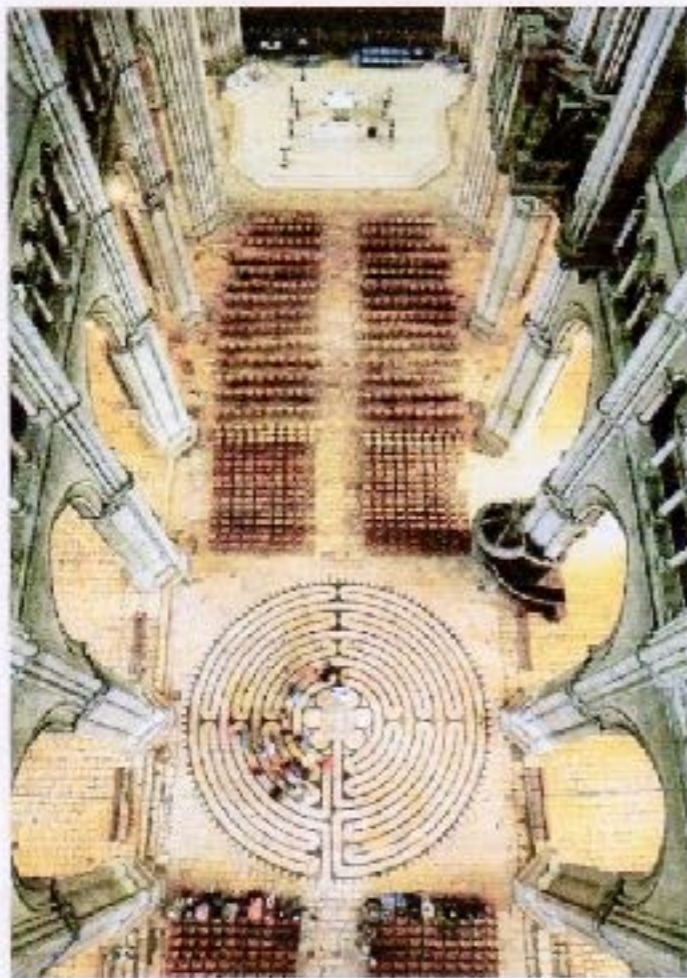
Institut Supérieur de Théologie des Arts

*

DANS LA CATHEDRALE DE CHARTRES,

IL Y A UN LABYRINTHE...

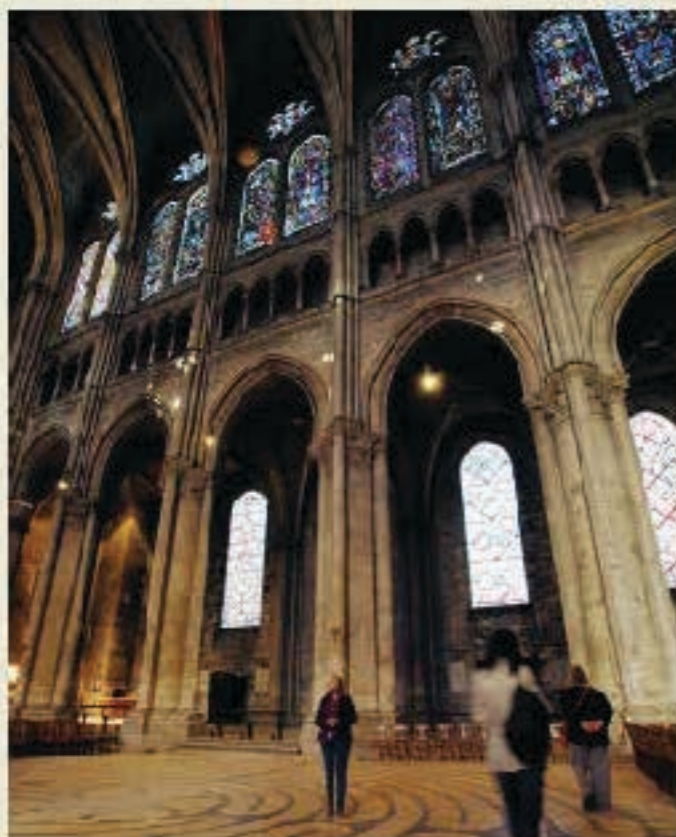
Jacob s'écria : « Yahvé est donc en ce lieu et je ne le savais pas ». Gn 28, 16



Mémoire présenté par Capucine Soupeaux,
Sous la direction de Mme Odile Celier,
Deuxième lecteur : Mr Denis Villepelet
8 Décembre 2010.



Quelques textes à méditer,
à prier, sont à disposition,
comme du bon pain pour la route...



«Tu m'apprends le chemin de la vie.
Devant ta face, plénitude de joie.»
Psaume 15, 11

«Prends soin de ton corps
pour que ton âme ait envie de l'habiter.»
Basile de Césarée

«Voici ce que produit l'Esprit:
l'amour, joie, paix, patience, bonté,
bienveillance, foi, humilité, et maîtrise de
soi. Puisque l'Esprit nous fait vivre,
laissons-nous conduire par l'Esprit.»
Galates 5, 22..25

Le labyrinthe,
dans la grande Tradition Biblique
du chemin,
du pèlerinage...



S.A.V. 2012 texte C Soupeaux, photos ©JKHGeoffrion.

PAR LE CHEMIN,
AVEC LE CHEMIN,
ET EN CHEMIN...



Il n'y a pas une manière «correcte»
de parcourir le labyrinthe,
c'est un chemin avec Dieu,
selon la tradition biblique.
La seule exigence,
le respect de l'autre,
du Tout Autre
qui consacre ce lieu.

Before entering:

Take a deep breath.

Choose to let go of your
preoccupations,
worries,
and all distractions.

Ask for God's blessing.



As you move towards the center:

Cross the threshold.

Follow the pathway
where it leads you.

Pay attention to your experience
without judging it.

It can serve as a mirror
for what you are experiencing
elsewhere.

*"It is solved by walking."
Saint Augustine*



After you walk the labyrinth:

Notice what you are feeling.

Consider your experience.
Take time to journal, draw, or think.

Perhaps a question has emerged,
or you would like to reflect
on something that happened.

In the center:

Rest with God.
Listen.
Receive whatever is given.
Offer thanks.

Don't hurry away!

You can return to the threshold by
following the pathway out.
Some prefer to go directly to the altar,
continuing their prayer there.





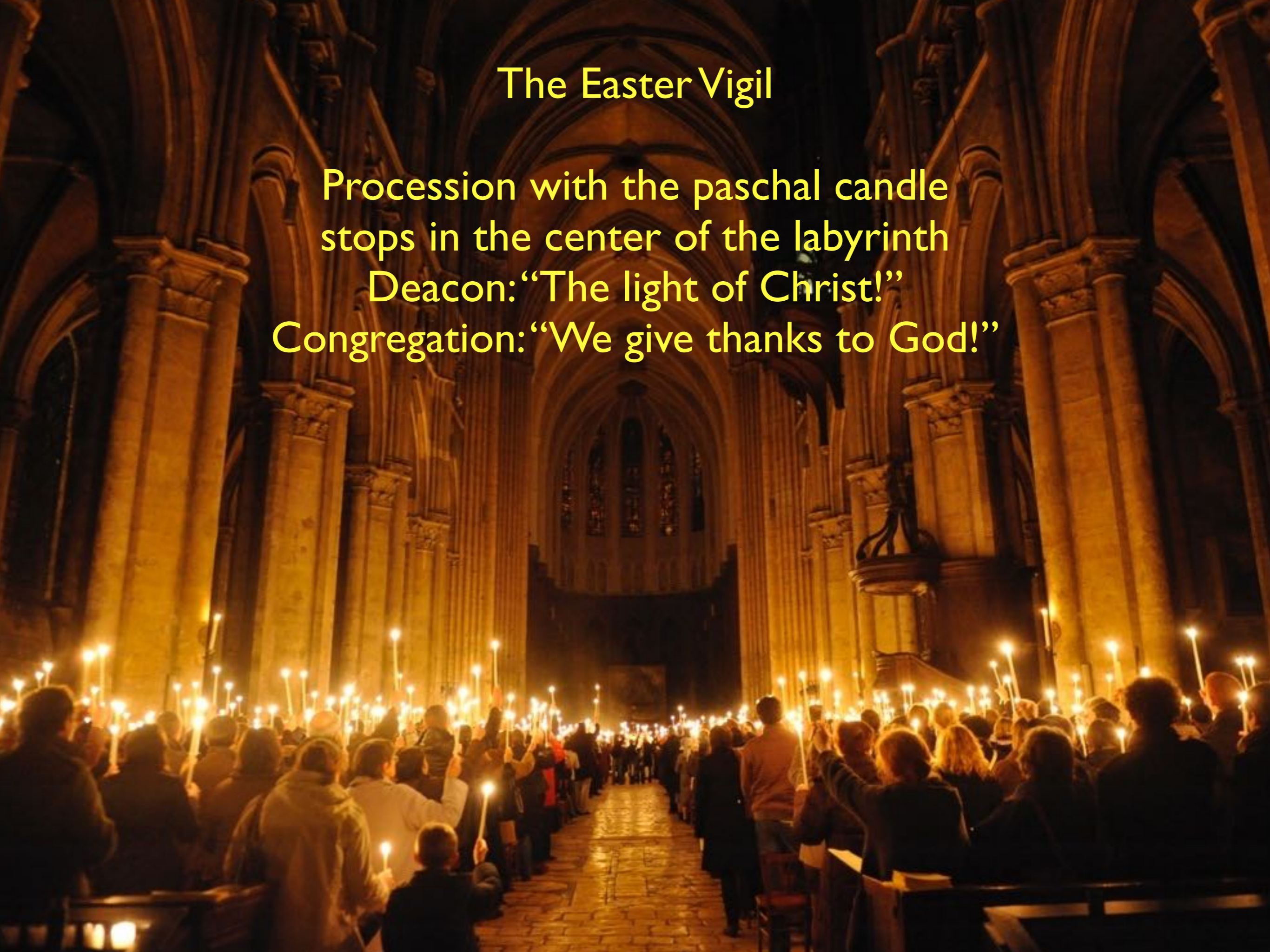
The Community of Chemin Neuf

The Easter Vigil

Procession with the paschal candle
stops in the center of the labyrinth

Deacon: "The light of Christ!"

Congregation: "We give thanks to God!"



The Office of Light: Easter Evening 2013 & 2014





“On the path two great crises await you. The first comes when the magic of the beginning has vanished. The second comes just before the goal.

Both ask the question: Do you really want this?”

Gernot Candolini, *Labyrinths: Walking Towards the Center* (NY: Crossroads Books, 2003) 9.

Walking the Labyrinth in the Cathedral Notre-Dame de Chartres:
The Lived Experience of Middle-aged North Americans while on Pilgrimage

A Grounded Theory Study

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the

Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
with a Concentration in Arts and Sciences
and a Specialization in Mythology and Spirituality of Journey
at the Union Institute & University
Cincinnati, Ohio





Home



Home



Home
HEAL Africa
Goma, D. R. Congo



Home
University of the Great Lakes
Butembo, D. R. Congo



Home
University of the Great Lakes
Goma, D. R. Congo





Home

Myanmar Institute of Theology
Seminary Chapel, Yangon



Home

Youth group of street kids
Goma, D. R. Congo



Home
Women Church Leaders
Goma, D. R. Congo



Home
Northern Rwanda



Home
Pastors
Butembo, D. R. Congo



Home
Professors and Pastors
Judson Research Center
Yangon, Myanmar



Home

Children on the labyrinth in their family garden
Goma, D. R. Congo



Home

Community Center Labyrinth created in Yangon, Myanmar
Ecumenical Event for children from Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, and Hindu families



Home
HEAL Africa
(for women awaiting
fistula surgeries)
Goma, D. R. Congo



Home
Childrens' Orphanage
Goma, D. R. Congo
(taken on one of our student's cell phones)



Home
Uganda, Seminary in Kampala



Home

Myanmar Institute of Theology, Yangon
Master of Divinity Course on Labyrinth Prayer



Home
Deephaven Labyrinth, Minnesota (USA)

Home

Another summer day
has come and gone
in Paris and Rome
But I wanna go home
Mmmmmmmmm

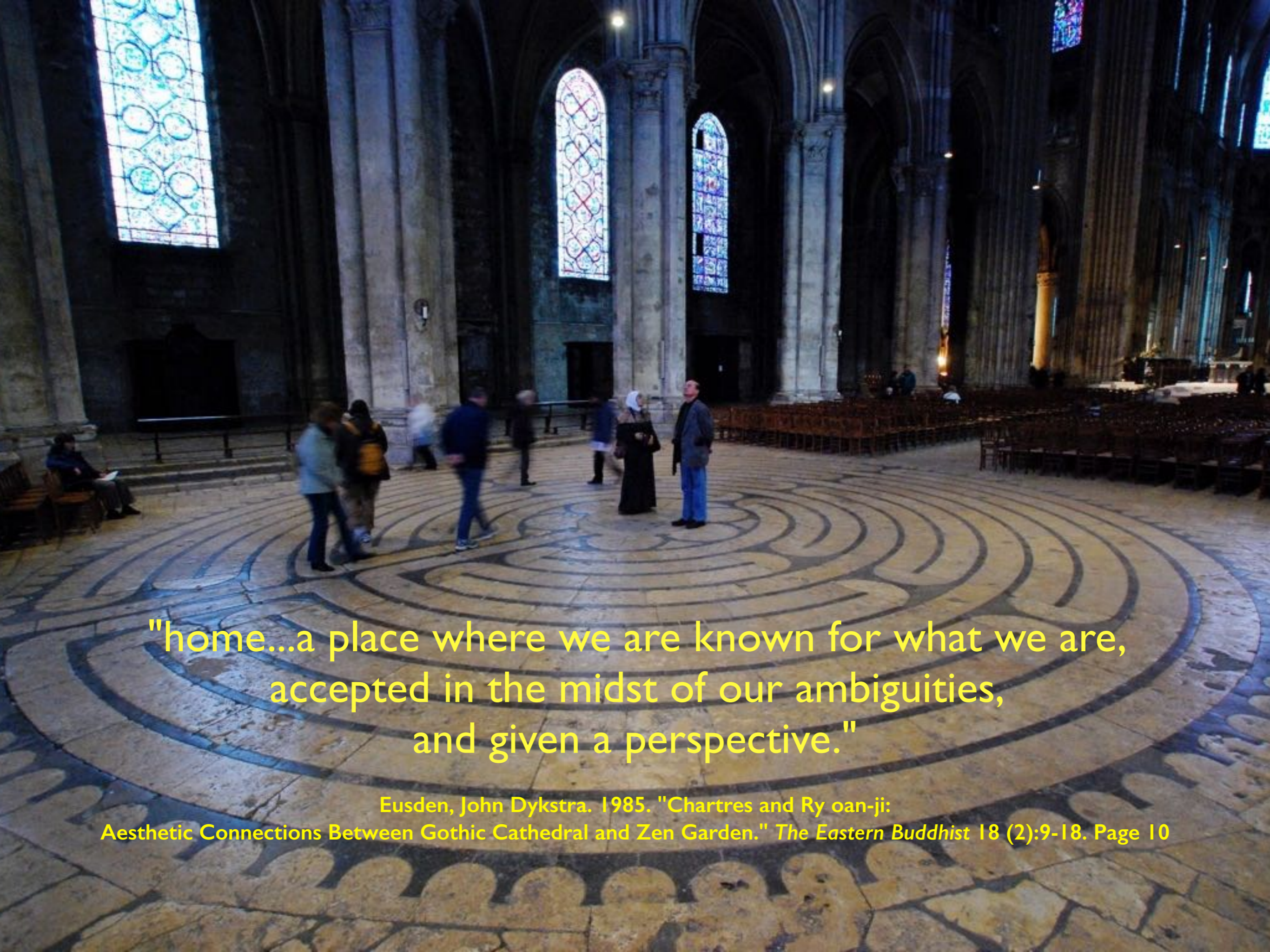
May be surrounded by
a million people I
still feel all alone
I just want to go home

Lyrics by Michael Buble

Pastors, Cambodia



Home
Butembo, D. R. Congo



"home...a place where we are known for what we are,
accepted in the midst of our ambiguities,
and given a perspective."

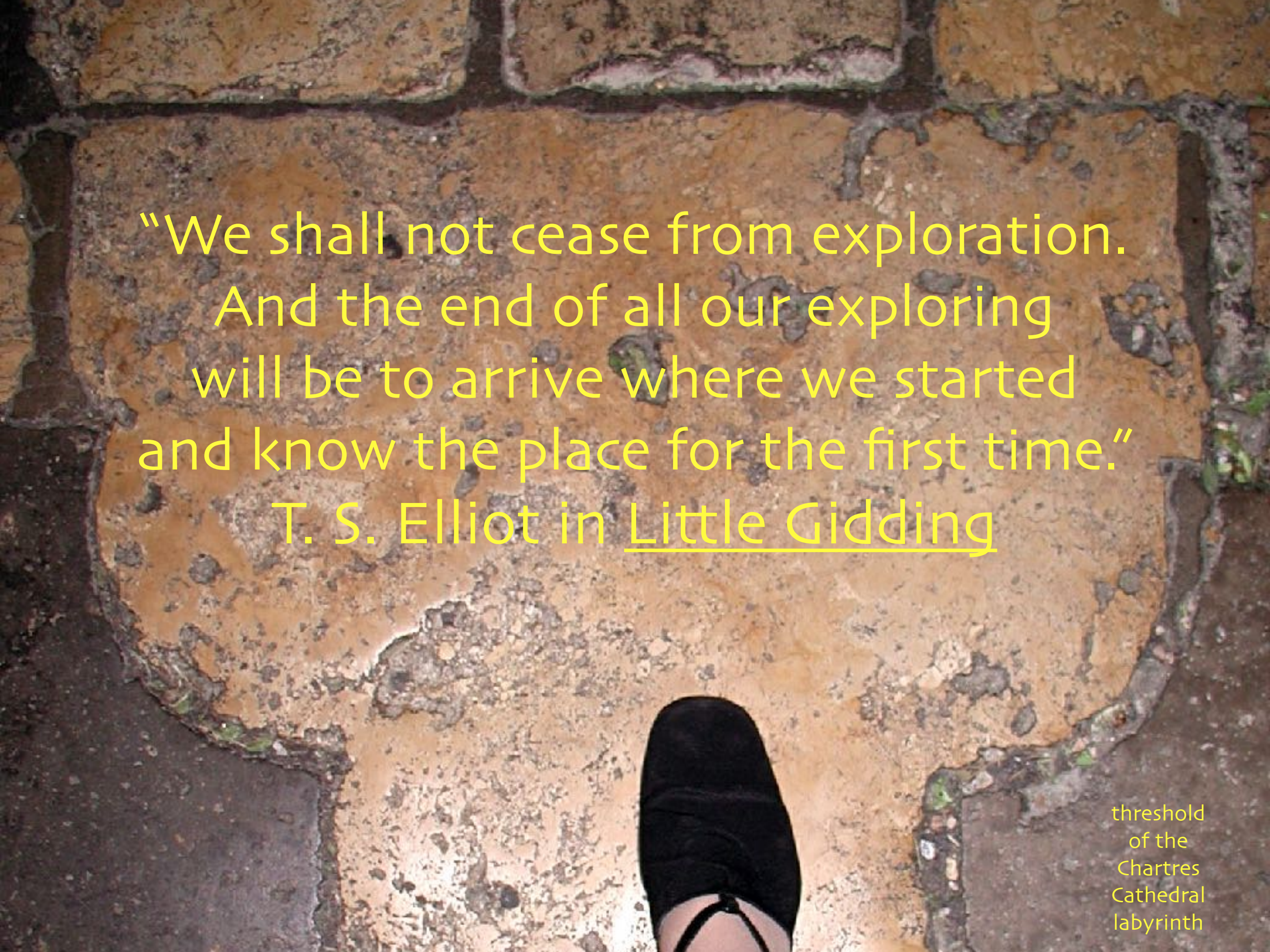
Eusden, John Dykstra. 1985. "Chartres and Ry oan-ji:
Aesthetic Connections Between Gothic Cathedral and Zen Garden." *The Eastern Buddhist* 18 (2):9-18. Page 10



What questions is my heart asking?



What questions is my mind asking?



“We shall not cease from exploration.
And the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started
and know the place for the first time.”
T. S. Elliot in Little Gidding

threshold
of the
Chartres
Cathedral
labyrinth



What do I want most to remember?

Labyrinth resources by jill www.jillgeoffrion.com

Photo travel blog by jill www.throughjillseyes.wordpress.com

Jill's email: jill.geoffrion@gmail.com