

MOSES IN MIEVEAL STAINED GLASS¹

Stained glass provides an important resource for the study of the history of biblical interpretation. It is for that reason that I as a student of the Hebrew Bible – I am no Art historian² – have been interested in the portrayal of Moses in medieval stained glass.

A fine example, showing Moses at the Burning Bush, is to be found in the cathedral at Sens (fig. 1) and is dated c1210. Sens, on the Yonne, a tributary of the Seine, in northern Burgundy, is nowadays a relatively sequestered provincial city, but in the medieval period it lay at the centre of an archiepiscopal province known as Campont (from the acronym of its constituent dioceses: Chartres, Auxerre, Meaux, Paris, Orleans, Nevers, and Troyes).³ It was the French equivalent of Canterbury,⁴ or, in Scottish terms, St Andrews.

In this portrayal of Moses at the Burning Bush (Exodus 3:1-4:17) there are at least two surprising features. Standard debate on the interpretation of the Burning Bush depends on two possible meanings of the Hebrew preposition *bē* in Exodus 3:2: whether God appeared *as* fire in the bush, or *in* the fire. The second interpretation fits the immediate context in Exodus more fully: the bush stands for Israel; fire represents the affliction of Egyptian slavery; God appears in the midst of the fire of persecution to save his people who are therefore not consumed by it.⁵

This portrayal at Sens reflects a third, a rabbinical, understanding:⁶ the bush represents not Israel but Moses. The experience of the Burning Bush was for Moses alone: only he saw the bush burn. The first surprising feature in the portrayal is, therefore, the sheep and the goats which graze unconcernedly around the bush, even on its foliage – to Moses it seems to be ablaze; to them it remains green and succulent.⁷ There are similar portrayals elsewhere, e.g., in Cologne Cathedral, in the 'Bible window' in the Stephanuskapelle, dated c1280, where there are an even more audacious goat and sheep (fig. 2). At Sens and Cologne, Moses himself is represented by the lowly thorn bush: like the bush, he, in his humbleness, may yet be ablaze with divine indwelling power to bring deliverance to his people, while his human nature remains intact. That the sign is intended for Moses is confirmed by the Cologne window where



fig. 1: Sens: Moses at the Burning Bush



fig. 2: Cologne: Moses at the Burning Bush

Moses' shepherd's staff is already changing into a snake, the second sign given to him of his vocation (Exodus 4:1-4).

In Cologne, there is a second surprising feature in the iconography of the Burning Bush: the figure emerging from the bush is explicitly labelled 'Jesus Christ'. Presumably that was intended also at Sens, to judge from the cross in the nimbus surrounding the figure's head. In medieval Christian art, the Burning Bush becomes a symbol for Mary.⁸ As Moses on this rabbinical understanding is inspired by the indwelling 'angel of the LORD' without losing his human frailty, so Mary conceives by the Holy Ghost but does not lose her virginity. Thus, at Sens and Cologne, it is Jesus Christ who emerges from the flaming but still verdant Burning Bush.

How were medieval Christian interpreters able to read such overtly Christian interpretations into the Old Testament text? Henri de Lubac in his magisterial study, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*,⁹ explains: to arrive at a Christological exegesis of the Old Testament, Christian interpreters used typology. What follows is, so to speak, a visual illustration of de Lubac's 'four senses of Scripture'.

We shall return to the window at Sens at the end of this paper to see how it is set within that wider framework of Christian typological interpretation. But to understand the iconography of that wider framework we have first to visit Vienna and then Paris.

The most exhaustive reference work on medieval stained glass is the *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi* (CVMA). The *Corpus* now stands at more than eighty imposing volumes; it embraces a dozen countries in Europe and covers scores of centres from York to Vienna, from Stockholm to Lisbon;¹⁰ it spans essentially four centuries, the twelfth to the sixteenth, from the emergence of Gothic through the Renaissance to, roughly, 1560.

In consulting the *Corpus*, it is not long before one comes across references¹¹ to what is recognized to be the greatest presentation of biblical typology in art in our period: the Verduner Altar (fig. 3) in the monastery of Klosterneuburg, about ten kilometres northwest of the centre of Vienna.¹² Somewhat perversely for our purposes, that presentation is in enamel, not in stained glass (or only



fig. 3: Klosterneuburg: Verduner Altar, left wing

derivatively and very partially so in copies of five panels in adjacent windows,¹³ installed after a great fire one hundred and fifty years after the altarpiece was originally finished).

At the end of the inscription which runs through the altarpiece, we are told when the work was made and by whom: it was completed in 1181 by Nicholas of Verdun¹⁴ (hence its conventional name, the 'Verduner Altar'). Nicholas's place of origin, Verdun, shows that we have not in fact come so very far from Sens, in northern France, where we started, and Cologne, in the Rhine valley: Verdun is on the Meuse, which flows north from France through Belgium into Holland to become the Maas. It is not then surprising that Nicholas of Verdun's other known masterpiece is the Shrine of Mary in the cathedral at Tournai in Belgium, completed in 1205, and that he had a hand in the Three Kings' Shrine in Cologne, completed in 1215.

The last half of the bottom line of the inscription tells, however, that the so-called Verduner Altar was not in fact originally an altarpiece at all. It was part

of the ambo,¹⁵ or lectern, surmounting the screen at the crossing, designed for the reading of Scripture. Its original function brings us still nearer to the significance of this great work of art: it was designed to be nothing less than the visual expression of the whole Gospel as proclaimed in Scriptural reading and exposition and in liturgical celebration. As it has been put, it is a *summa theologica* in pictures.¹⁶

In this altarpiece, we have a demonstration of what typology is all about. Its fifty-one panels are laid out in three horizontal rows, four columns on each wing, nine in the centre. The panels are intended to be read from left to right; the horizontal rows tell the history of salvation; the columns disclose the typological interrelationship of scenes within that history. The top and the bottom rows show Old Testament scenes (except for the last two columns at the extreme right); the middle row, New Testament scenes. Each of the three rows has a title down the side (on both the left and the right): the top row title reads *ante legem*, 'before the Law', i.e., anything in the Old Testament before Exodus 19 (at least in principle); the bottom row title, *sub lege*, 'under the Law', i.e., anything in the Old Testament from Exodus 19 onwards, from when the Law began to be revealed to Moses; the middle row, *sub gracia*, 'under grace', i.e., scenes from the New Testament, especially the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation.¹⁷ The way in which these three rows are to be read in parallel together is explained in the long horizontal inscription that runs right through the altarpiece. This inscription begins with a key phrase: *qualiter etatum sacra consona sint*: 'how the sacred things¹⁸ of the ages [the three biblical ages portrayed] are in agreement with one another'.¹⁹

The means whereby this agreement of the sacred things in the three ages of humankind can be demonstrated is typology. The idea that there is correspondence between Old Testament type and answering New Testament antitype is, of course, already to be found in the New Testament: e.g., Matthew 12:40, 'As Jonah was three days and nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of Man be three days and nights in the heart of the earth'; John 3:14, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up' (in these two examples, the markers of correspondence, 'As...so', are explicitly used; compare 'As Moses...so Mary' above). The New Testament even uses the word 'antitype' in this sense (Hebrews 9:24; 1 Peter 3:21).

To do justice to the typology of all fifty-one panels of the Verduner Altar would require a monograph-length study.²⁰ For our present purpose, we take the figure of Moses as an example of the typological associations between Old and New Testaments that it proposes. Moses, or the Mosaic age, figures in seven panels in six of the columns:

- Column 5: the Crossing of the Red Sea (above; fig. 4) and the Brazen Sea in Solomon's Temple (below; fig. 5) as types of Christ's baptism (centre);
- Column 6: Moses' Return to Egypt (above; fig. 6) and the Selection of the Passover Lamb (below; fig. 7) as types of Christ's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (centre);
- Column 7: Melchizedek's Offering of Bread and Wine (above) and the Deposit of Manna in the Ark (below) as types of the Last Supper (centre);
- Column 9 (the central column in the whole composition): the Offering of Isaac (above) and the Spies bearing Grapes from the Valley of Eshcol (below) as types of the Crucifixion (centre);
- Column 12: the Slaying of the Firstborn of Egypt (above; fig. 8) and Samson Slaying the Lion (below) as types of Christ's descent into Hell (centre);
- Column 15: Noah's Ark (above) and Revelation of the Law on Sinai (below; fig. 9) as types of the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (centre).²¹

A brief comment on some of these panels is in order.

Column I/5.²² The Crossing of Red Sea (Exodus 14; fig. 4). A helpful feature of the Klosterneuburg panels is the titles and associated inscriptions. The title of this panel begins with the straightforward narrative: *transitus maris rubri*, 'the crossing of the Red Sea'.

That already makes an important point about typology: first you've got to know your Bible stories in their plain sense (and the detailed knowledge of the Bible at Klosterneuburg is impressive); only then can you make your typological applications. The motto round the panel introduces a Christian typological interpretation: *unda rubens mundam | baptismi misticat undam*: 'the red wave mystically signifies the pure wave of baptism'.



fig. 4: Verduner Altar I/5: Crossing of the Red Sea



fig. 5: Verduner Altar III/5: The Brazen Sea

The panel itself shows the Israelites walking on dry ground between the walls of water of the Red Sea appropriately coloured red; the waters close up behind them; the transverse shafts are probably the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night (or the strong east wind?); Moses precedes with both raised hand and raised staff; the little dog is an addition to the biblical narrative; Classical antecedents have been identified for the iconography of the naked children in the tender family group. 1 Corinthians 10:1-2, 6, 11-12 has already taken the crossing of the Red Sea as a type for baptism.

But what else does washing with water stand for in the Old Testament? *Sub lege* we have, **Column III/5**, *mare super boves duodecim*, 'the sea upon the twelve bulls', the brazen sea which Solomon constructed in the forecourt of the Temple (1 Kings 7:23-29; fig. 5). The inscription surrounding the panel reads: *forma fuit sacri | maris umbra bovumque lavacri*: 'the form of the sea and of the bulls was a shadow of the sacred bath [of baptism]'.

The language is strongly typological: 'form' implies 'substance'; 'shadow' implies 'reality'. The brazen sea for washing the sacrificial animals and for priestly ablutions prefigures the baptism of Christ in whom victim and priest are one. The cosmic significance of the basin is signalled by the bulls facing in threes to each of the four corners of the earth and by the planet-like concentric circles within the bowl. The great deep is marked by the fish swimming in the bottom of the bowl. The cosmic significance of baptism is thus prefigured: the whole round earth waits to receive baptism; the bulls are the apostles and their successors as evangelists reaching to the four quarters of the globe;²³ fish, of course, contain a concealed confession through the acronym *ΙΧΘΥΣ* of Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour.

Column I/6. Moses' Return to Egypt (Exodus 4:18-26; fig. 6). The title and motto are both straightforward narrative: *Moyses it egiptum*, 'Moses goes into Egypt'; *ut²⁴ redimat gentem | dux sub Pfaraone gementem*, 'that the leader may redeem the people groaning under Pharaoh'.

Moses returns to Egypt with his wife, Zipporah, and his two sons, Gershom, the older sitting with his father on front of the donkey, and Eliezer, the babe in his mother's arms as she trudges along behind. Again, there is a surprising detail. In Exodus 4:20, 'Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey'. This portrayal is typologically controlled: Moses here riding on the donkey himself



fig. 6: Verduner Altar I/6:
Moses' Return to Egypt



fig. 7: Verduner Altar III/6:
The Passover Lamb



fig. 8: Verduner Altar I/12:
The Smiting of the First born



fig. 9: Verduner Altar III/15:
Revelation of the Law

foreshadows Christ riding the donkey into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The sequence of columns 5 and 6 is also typologically controlled: because Christ's baptism precedes his entry into Jerusalem, the deliverance at the Red Sea has, in defiance of the Old Testament sequence, to precede Moses' return to Egypt. The motif of Gershom eating a date is borrowed from an apocryphal tradition of the flight into Egypt, during which a palm bent over to supply the hungry Christ-child.²⁵

Column III/6. The Passover Lamb, *agnus pascalis* (fig. 7). In Exodus 12:3, the head of the household is instructed to select a lamb or kid for the Passover sacrifice. This selection of the victim for the slaughter takes place on the tenth of the month; thus the moon is indicated here in its second quarter. The inscription round the panel brings out the typology: *Christi mactandus | in formam clauditur agnus*, 'the lamb that must be slaughtered is to be understood as the form of Christ'.

Column II/6. One might have thought that parallel to Moses' return into Egypt might have been the Flight into Egypt/Return from Egypt, Matthew 2:19-21. But the Entry into Jerusalem has been chosen: *dies palmarum*, Palm Sunday. Jesus riding 'on an ass and on the foal of the ass' is seen underneath; Peter with the tonsure behind; a child at the top of the palm-tree breaking off a palm branch with a diminutive male figure, presumably Zacchaeus, beneath (brought in from Luke 19:1-10; the Lucan narrative of Palm Sunday occurs later in the same chapter, Luke 19:28-44); the people from the gateway of Jerusalem spread their garments; Jesus blesses with his right hand and bears in his left a scroll inscribed, *Dicite filie Syon*, 'say to the daughter of Zion' (cf. Matthew 21:5; Isaiah 62:11; Zechariah 9:9).

The point of the typology becomes evident: Moses, the deliverer of his people, enters Egypt at risk of his life – from God at the lodging-place for the night, from Pharaoh, and from his own disbelieving people. Jesus is crucified at the same time on Good Friday as the slaughter of the Paschal lamb in the Temple. The typological relation of the Paschal lamb to Jesus is already to be found in 1 Corinthians 5:7 and 1 Peter 1:19.

The vivid scene in **Column I/12** (fig. 8) should also be mentioned: *percussio Egypti*, 'the smiting of [the firstborn of] Egypt'. In Exodus 12, the Israelites daub their lintels and doorposts with the blood of the Paschal lamb, portrayed

in this panel in the doorway with its blood being collected in a chalice. Here the mark of blood on the lintel is the sign of the cross. The 'T' form of the sign is derived from Ezekiel 9:4: 'The LORD said to him [the man clothed in linen with the writing case at his side], "Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark ['T a letter T'] upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it.'" The angel of the Lord passes over Israel but enters the houses of the Egyptians and slays with the sword (not mentioned in Exodus 12:29, but see Exodus 5:3; 22:23 [EVV 24]) all the firstborn of Egypt from Pharaoh's firstborn, seen here with the crown on his head; the building is the royal palace overthrown by the force of the angel's irruption.

Column III/15. Revelation of the Law on Sinai (fig. 9). Here the Law is summated in one sentence: *deus tuus deus unus est*, 'Your God is one God', echoing the *shema* of Deuteronomy 6:4; but the Trinitarian aspect of that One God is indicated by the three angels sounding trumpets to announce the coming of God and by the three kilns with which the mountain smokes (cf. Exodus 19:16-19). The Revelation of the Law took place at Pentecost: here there is very accurate linking of the two Pentecosts, Old Testament and New Testament (Exodus 19, not Genesis 11:1-9, provides the essential background to Acts 2).

Before we leave Klosterneuburg, having looked at these examples of typology, there are some further points about the theory of typology which we should make with its help.

Typology, if I understand de Lubac aright, essentially affirms that there are two varieties of sense in scripture: the literal and the mystical (or spiritual). We have seen above examples of the literal narrative sense of Scripture ('Moses goes into Egypt', etc.). But as soon as you ask the existential question, 'What's that got to do with me?', you're into the mystical or spiritual sense. Thus, the Verduner Altar moves in two axes, the horizontal and the vertical: the horizontal axis provides the historical sense (though even here the sequence is sometimes controlled by the New Testament against the Old Testament); the vertical axis the mystical sense. The crucifixion in II/9, a slightly larger panel than the rest, stands at the middle of the middle row, the mid-point both horizontally and vertically of the whole composition. It marks the pivot of both directions: it is the central point of the history of salvation; it is the key to its interpretation.

The mystical sense is, in turn, subdivided into three senses: the allegorical, the tropological, and the anagogical. These terms are somewhat elusive; but they do in fact relate to things with which we are familiar. Take the prayer attributed to Erasmus: 'Teach us what to believe, what to do, and wherein to find our rest'.²⁶ These three petitions cover the three mystical senses of biblical typology: 'teach us what to believe' – that is the allegorical sense; 'teach us what to do' – that is the tropological sense; 'teach us wherein to find our rest' – that is the anagogical sense. De Lubac warns that the meanings attached to these terms are conventional and are not to be taken too strictly in their etymological sense,²⁷ but I think there is some help to be gained from the etymology of at least a couple of them.

The Klosterneuburg Altar is designed to help us to understand these three spiritual senses of Scripture.

As for the allegorical sense ('teach us what to believe'), the three horizontal bands in the Klosterneuburg Altar in their parallels lay out the analogy between the three epochs in the Biblical narrative (*'qualiter etatum sacra consona sint'*); in their interplay, the suggestiveness of their reciprocal interaction, they help us to grasp something of the full depth of meaning in Scripture, of the inexpressible realities behind, beneath and beyond those Scriptures.

In relation to this integrated allegorical sense of Scripture, we have to note yet a further feature of the Klosterneuburg Altar: the use of prophecy and fulfilment. Between each of the scenes from the New Testament in the middle band there is a prophet (see, e.g., the tiny figures between the trefoil arches above the middle band in fig. 3; these are entitled 'David', 'Jeremiah', 'Moses', 'Isaiah', and 'Jonah', respectively); the sacred events in the three ages do not happen haphazardly but are related analogically to one another in accordance with a divine plan. David in the Psalms is the 'prophet' most frequently cited, seven times; Isaiah, four; Solomon, twice (in Proverbs and Song of Songs); the rest, once each, Moses, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Zephaniah, Daniel, and, interestingly, Paul (why, we'll come back to in a moment).

The tropological sense ('teach us what to do') is also fully represented in the Klosterneuburg Altar. Faith, if it is not pushing the etymology too far, has to be *turned* into action. Thus, as prophets preside over the New Testament

scenes, so twenty virtues preside over the Old Testament scenes in the bottom row (see, again, the tiny figures between the trefoil arches above the lower band in fig.3): virtue as such, followed by joy, obedience, pity, fear, peace, temperance (see, for these two, fig. 5), charity, piety, generosity, prudence, sobriety, concord, fortitude, justice, faith, humility, patience, chastity, and truth.

It is interesting that virtue as such comes first. As in the *sacra*, the local manifestations of the divine in different periods are reflections of the divine itself, so behind all manifestations of virtue lies *virtus*, virtue, as such in its ideal form (Neoplatonism is in evidence in the Verduner Altar, as we will see in a moment).

So to the anagogical sense ('teach us wherein to find our rest'). The anagogical, according to its etymology, is that which *leads* us *upwards*. What is the final goal and destiny to which we all tend, where we shall find our ultimate rest? The last two columns of the Klosterneuburg altarpiece are, accordingly, about the last things:

I/16 the second coming; II/16 angel with trumpet (who links both scenes); III/16 resurrection of the dead;

I/17 the heavenly Jerusalem; II/17 Christ as judge; III/17 Hell (into which even princes and prelates are portrayed as descending).

In these last two columns the division between the three ages, *ante legem*, *sub lege*, and *sub gracia*, is abandoned (despite the right hand margin). These final columns are about the fourth age, the final age of human existence, the last things, characterized by Augustine as *in pace*, 'in peace' (hence St. Paul can now be included among the prophets). The anagogical sense leads us upward in promise – and warning – to our eternal rest.

This anagogical purpose – 'leading upwards' – lies at the foundation of the whole Gothic enterprise. For that enterprise, we have now to return to northern France, specifically to Paris, to the Abbey Church of St-Denis (fig. 10 shows one of the apses in St-Denis, the 'Moses window' on the left, and 'Anagogical window' on the right).

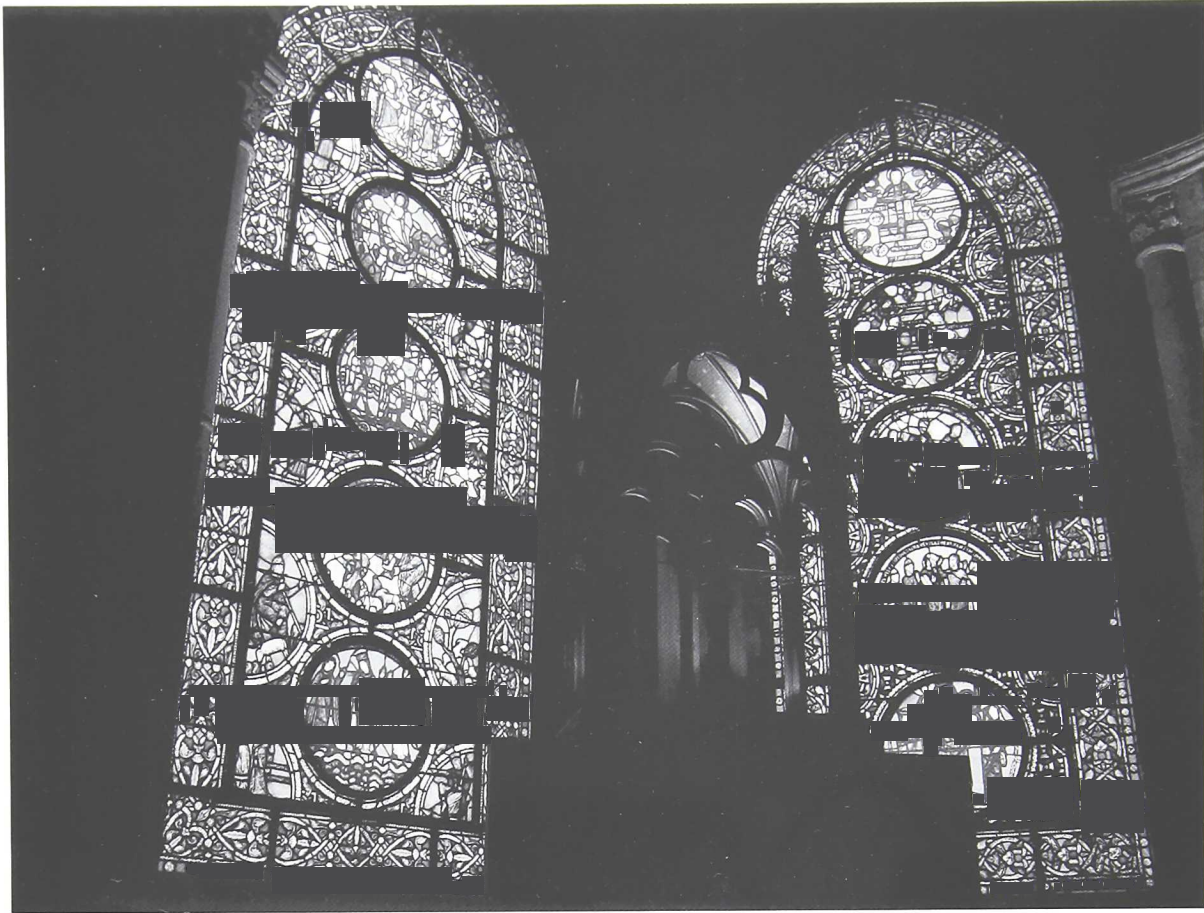


fig. 10: St-Denis, Paris: Moses Window (l.); Anagogical Window (r.)

St-Denis is now stranded somewhat forlornly in an unprepossessing northern suburb of Paris. Its date is c1141. St-Denis is credited with being the earliest Gothic basilica; it is here that for the first time the ideas associated with Gothic architecture were worked out. Light is basic to the vocabulary of the Gothic cathedral: in contrast to the heavy load-bearing walls of the Romanesque cathedral with its small windows (as, say, in Durham), the new pointed Gothic arch and the ribbed vault now enable the pillars to become the load-bearing structural element, leaving the walls free to be pierced by huge windows that allow light to flood into the interior of the building. *Lux continua* is the decisive principle.²⁸

We are fortunate that at least some of the thinking behind the reconstruction of St-Denis as a Gothic building is available to us in the writings of Suger (1081-1151), Abbot of St-Denis from 1122 and genius behind its transformation.²⁹ For Suger, his building as a whole and in its detail, its gem-encrusted furnishings and above all its stained glass windows, had an anagogical purpose. 'We had... painted, by the very expert hand of many masters from different nations, a splendid variety of new windows...urging us onward from material things to those that are immaterial'.³⁰ What better medium could there be than glass in its translucency to transport us from the material to the immaterial? Glass, etched with the narrative of God's own saving acts, leads us, by God's own medium of light, through the veil of sense to a vision of the ultimate.³¹ Through light we see light.

This matches concepts from beginning to end of the Bible: in Genesis 1, light is the first act of creation; in Revelation, the new Jerusalem is of pure gold as clear as glass and God's glory is its light (Revelation 21:18-23 [21]); God is light (1 John 1:5), the Father of lights (James 1:17), dwelling in light inaccessible (1 Timothy 6:16); Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12), and many other texts.³²

Light was the subject of metaphysical speculation in the mediaeval period: 'To the Neoplatonists of the twelfth century truth or reality consisted of a series of forms in the mind of God seen and known by mankind only as reflections. Light was the most noble of these reflections since it being the least material of natural phenomena was the closest approximation to pure form.'³³

These metaphysical speculations create a link between St-Denis and Klosterneuburg, the connection being the Augustinian abbey of St-Victor in Paris. Hugh of St-Victor (d. 1141) is recognized as the inspiration not only of the Klosterneuburg Altar³⁴ but also of Suger's ideas of *anagoge*. An important source for Hugh of St-Victor's thought is the commentary he wrote, dated 1125, on the *Hierarchia coelestis* of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. (In French tradition three figures are overlaid: Dionysius the Areopagite, Paul's convert in Athens in Acts 17:34; Dionysius the patron saint of France beheaded on Montmartre, the hill of the martyrs, c250, whose relics were preserved in St-Denis, hence, of course, the name 'St-Denis'; and a fifth century Neoplatonist known as Pseudo-Dionysius, whose work was acquired in 827 by the king of France from the Byzantine Emperor.)³⁵ The decisive Neoplatonic idea that Hugh of St-Victor borrowed from Pseudo-Dionysius is that the history of salvation advances in hierarchic stages; grace descends to man by degrees through the angels (*mediatores Dei*, 'the mediators of God').³⁶ That is why – to return to Klosterneuburg yet once again – the whole of the top band of the altarpiece is surmounted by a row of angels (see the tiny figures between the trefoil arches above the top band in fig. 3; cf. Galatians 3:19, 'the law ordained through angels'; Acts 7:53; Hebrews 2:2). It is this Neoplatonic idea of a hierarchy of emanations that Suger was exploiting at the same time at St-Denis in terms of light.

On the Moses window in St-Denis itself, the most venerable presentation of Moses in medieval stained glass, there is space for only a couple of comments. The hazards that stained glass is subject to are well illustrated by this window: the destructive zeal of the Huguenots in 1567 and of the Revolutionaries post-1789, in particular. I was very pleased to find here representations of uncommon subjects, the two Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah (Exodus 1:15-21; fig. 10, Moses window, bottom panel left), and the plague of frogs (Exodus 7:28-8:11 [EVV 8:1-15]; fig. 10, Moses window, middle panel right): alas, these are nineteenth century restorations criticised as inept for turning a typological window into a narrative one (an important point about changing fashions in stained glass windows).³⁷ Very little of Abbot Suger's glass remains: such as there is in the central medallions, backed by protective glass which gives it an odd bluish tone. Suger gives these scenes, through the mottos which he composed for them, mostly an allegorical sense.

The lowest medallion, the most damaged and most restored, portrays the rescue of Moses from the water (Exodus 2:5-10; fig. 10, Moses window, bottom medallion). Pharaoh's daughter becomes a type of the Gentile church: purified by bathing, i.e., baptism, she receives the infant Moses and adopts him as her son.

In the second medallion up, the Burning Bush is given a portrayal similar to that at Sens, with the same unabashed sheep and goats (but the figure emerging from the bush is God, not Jesus Christ). The mystical sense is applied not in allegorical terms, as at Sens, but in tropological, for personal application by the viewer:

*Sicut conspicitur rubus hic ardere, nec ardet,
Sic divo plenus hoc ardet ab igno*
'As this bush appears to burn, yet does not burn,
so one who is full of divine fire burns [yet does not burn]'.
'

In the remaining medallions, the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14) is interpreted as type of Baptism; the giving of the law at the summit of Sinai while the worship of the golden calf goes on at its foot (Exodus 32) is interpreted in terms of the letter of the law which kills in contrast to the grace of Christ which gives life; the brazen serpent (Numbers 21:4-9) is taken, following John 3:14, as type of Christ raised on the cross.

After this excursion to Klosterneuburg and to St-Denis, we are in a position to return to Sens to appreciate something of the typological significance of the window with which we began.

That portrayal of Moses at the Burning Bush is part of a Good Samaritan Window³⁸ (Luke 10:25-37). This window at Sens (fig. 11) is acknowledged to be the best of a group of three Good Samaritan windows, the others being at Chartres³⁹ and Bourges.⁴⁰

Only a few mottos are included in the panels; but the argument of the window is beautifully clear.

The straightforward, literal, story is read in the prominent vertical row of middle

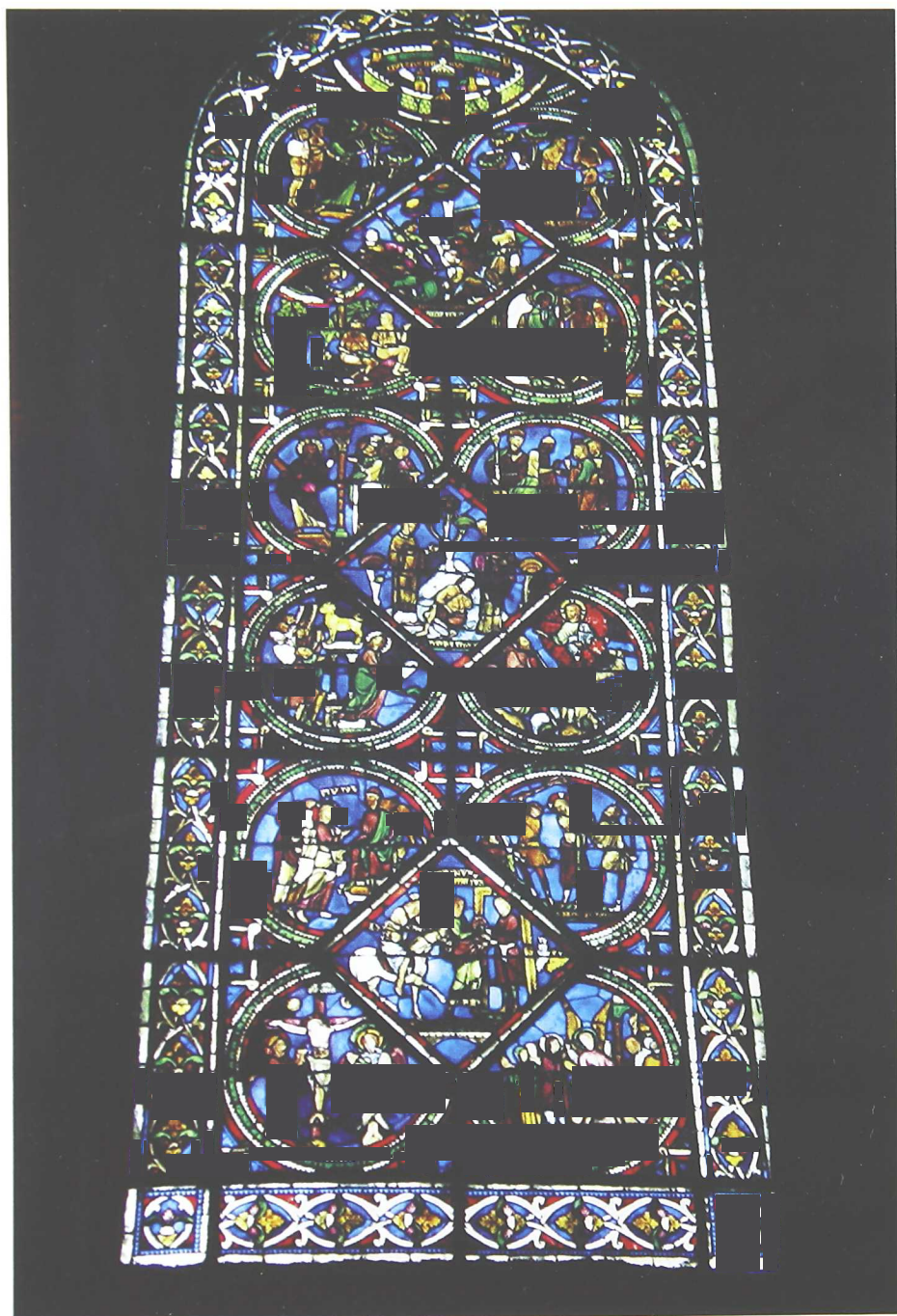


fig. 11: Sens: Good Samaritan Window

panels: 'a certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho' (medieval windows are usually read anagogically, *upwards*, from bottom to top as at St-Denis; but because this man 'went down from Jerusalem to Jericho' this window is to be read from top to bottom). So here, in the semicircular panel at the top, we see Jerusalem, inscribed *civitas iherusalem*; below, in the top diamond, the man falling among thieves who stripped him of his raiment, leaving him half dead; in the middle diamond, the priest and the Levite coming upon him and passing by; in the bottom diamond, the good Samaritan delivering him on his donkey to the inn-keeper, paying the money for his restoration to health in advance.

But we know very well that this is not just a story; the literal sense is only the beginning of the matter; it is told as a parable and we are meant to ask, 'What has this to do with me?', or in the words of the lawyer Jesus was addressing, 'Who is my neighbour?' There are deeper senses here than the literal, and the medieval painter goes straight to the typological interpretation.

The three central diamond panels are each surrounded by four circular background panels, giving a three-dimensional effect. Each of the top two diamonds is surrounded by four Old Testament panels; the bottom one by four from the Gospels:

The top panel, 'a certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves' (so motto: *hic incidit in [latrones]*), is surrounded by scenes from the Garden of Eden (reading from the top: left → right; left → right):

God showing Adam and Eve the tree of good and evil;
Eve giving Adam the apple [*comede fructum??*];
God speaking to the self-consciously naked Adam and Eve;
the expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

The second panel, the priest and the Levite passing by, is surrounded by scenes from the life of Moses (reading bottom right → top right; bottom left → top left):

Burning Bush (the scene with which we began);
Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh;
the worship of the golden calf;
the brazen serpent.

The bottom panel, the Good Samaritan delivering the wounded man to the inn, is surrounded by scenes from the life of Jesus (from the top: left → right, left → right):

Jesus condemned by Pilate, identified by the legend, with the devil
whispering in his ear;
the scourging of Jesus;
the crucifixion [inscription on the cross *Iesus Nazar rex iudeorum*];
the resurrection.

The typological connection is made at once clear: the sequence of these three central panels and their surrounding background Old Testament types and New Testament fulfilments corresponds to the three ages of human history, as overtly at Klosterneuburg: *ante legem*, *sub lege*, *sub gracia*; here the Garden of Eden, *ante legem*; the scenes from the life of Moses, *sub lege*; the scenes from the passion of Jesus, *sub gracia*.

There is correspondence between the first and third groups of background scenes: the angel expelling Adam and Eve with his fiery sword sheaths his sword at the crucifixion; the women at the cross are counterposed to Eve. There is correspondence between the second and third groups of background scenes: Moses before Pharaoh, and Jesus before Pilate; the brazen serpent on the pillar, and the pillar to which Jesus is tied for the scourging.⁴¹

The typology goes still further: 'the certain man who went down' is not just any man but humankind as a whole. The title of the middle panel is '*homo*', 'man', not just an individual, but humanity. It is humanity that goes down, descends from Jerusalem in the Fall, falls among thieves, the perils of life deadly to body and soul; the priest and the Levite passing by represent the powerlessness of the Old Testament Law to bring salvation to fallen humanity (the priest and Levite are clothed in the contemporary garb of priest and deacon, just as at Klosterneuburg prince and bishop are consigned to hell); it is left to the Samaritan to bring humanity to the sanctuary of the inn. The Samaritan is taken to represent Jesus by a clever piece of intertextuality – in John 8:48, Jesus is disparagingly called a Samaritan by his Jewish opponents. The Good Samaritan is none other than the Redeemer paying to the innkeeper, God, the price of redemption. The ox and the ass representing Jew and Gentile⁴² are already safely gathered into the inn, the church.

The anagogical dimension is not lacking. At the top of the window is the *civitas iherusalem*, Jerusalem, the city of God,⁴³ whence we came and whither we are destined to return *in pace* to our eternal rest.

The Good Samaritan window at Sens, not least its four Moses panels, provides a fine illustration for de Lubac's account of the typological interpretation of the Bible and of the conviction underlying it: 'Everything in it [Scripture] is related to him [Christ]. In the end he is its sole object. Consequently, he is, so to speak, its whole exegesis.'⁴⁴

William Johnstone

1 A version of this article was read at the Aberdeenshire Theological Club Open Meeting, 20th February 2006. I thank Dr Ruth B. Edwards, Honorary Secretary, and the members of the Club for their kindness in inviting me back to deliver that paper and James Stewart, member of the Club and editor of *The Record*, for suggesting that I publish it in this journal.

With a keen sense of personal indebtedness I dedicate this article to the memory of Professor J.K.S. Reid. It is his generous bequest to the Society that enables this my last paper to the Club to be published with illustrations, just as it was his encouragement to me as junior colleague forty or so years ago that led him to publish my first two papers to the Club in the *Scottish Journal of Theology* in 1967 and 1971.

The photographs in this article were taken by myself with the kind permission of the authorities on site.

2 As it happens, my only other essay along this line was my previous paper to the Aberdeenshire Theological Club, published under the title, 'Interpictoriality: The Lives of Moses and Jesus in the Murals of the Sistine Chapel', in A.G. Hunter, P.R. Davies, eds., *Sense and Sensitivity. Essays on Reading the Bible in Memory of Robert Carroll*, JSOT SS, 348, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002, pp. 416-455.

3 Eugène Chartraire, *The Cathedral of Sens: Sens and Canterbury*, tr. Mme Monthaye-Brémond, Paris: H. Laurens, 1926, p. 6.

4 There is, indeed, a close connection: William of Sens began the reconstruction of the Choir of Canterbury after the fire in 1174.

5 Hence its use as symbol in some Protestant churches, perhaps under Huguenot influence; see G.D. Henderson, *The Burning Bush: Essays in Scottish Church History*, Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1957, pp. 1-22, especially p. 13.

6 Etan Levine, *The Burning Bush: Jewish Symbolism and Mysticism*, New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1981, pp. 18-27. Jewish influence on Christian interpretation is probable: Rashi (1040-1105), for instance, one of the greatest of the medieval Jewish exegetes, came from Troyes, one of the 'Campont' dioceses.

7 Cf. Levine p. 24: 'according to one view, not only was the Burning Bush not being consumed, but it was actually sprouting new leaves in the very midst of the flames'.

8 Conspicuously in the altarpiece of the Burning Bush by Nicolas Froment (ca. 1475) in the cathedral at Aix-en-Provence.

9 Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, tr. Mark Sebanc, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, Vol. 1, 1998; Vol. 2, 2000.

10 A rough computation from COPAC (<http://copac.ac.uk>) suggests that the volumes so far in the series comprise: from England [Scotland does not feature!] 15; Holland 3; Belgium 4; France 17; Germany 20; Switzerland 4; Austria 3; Italy 4; Spain 9; Scandinavia, Czech Republic, and Portugal 1 each.

11 E.g., in the volumes on Lincoln and Saint-Denis.

12 Klosterneuburg commands an important crossing of the Danube. It stands on the site of the first century Roman 'alte Burg' at this frontier of the empire. The site was reoccupied in the 11th century – hence 'Neuburg'; the abbey, the Kloster in the Neuburg, was founded in 1114. The enduring strategic importance of the location is illustrated in the present church's baroque ceiling fresco which commemorates deliverance from the Turkish invasion in 1683.

13 It is not inappropriate to see stained glass as a copy of enamel work (Branislav Brankovic, *Les vitraux de la cathédrale de Saint-Denis*, Boulogne: Castelet, 1992, p. 30: stained glass was long influenced by the older crafts of enamel, goldwork and miniatures; cf. its broad decorative borders). It is possible that the son of the craftsman of the Verduner Altar was a glass painter (Helmut Buschhausen, *Der Verduner Altar*, Vienna: Edition Tusch, 1980, a sumptuous volume published to mark the 800th anniversary of the completion of the original panels, p. 89).

14 Buschhausen 1980, p. 97, calculates that there are 944 separate parts making up the altarpiece and suggests that it must have taken Nicholas eight to ten years to make.

15 It was moved from the ambo to become an altarpiece in 1331. At that time to the original 45 panels, arranged in columns 4-7-4 on three sides of the ambo, six scenes, three on each side of the central panel showing the Crucifixion, were added.

16 Flondus Röhrig, *Der Verduner Altar*, Klosterneuburg: Mayer & Comp., 8th ed., 2004, p. 54, who begins: 'Beyond question the Verduner Altar with its comprehensive and subtle programme marks the high point of the typology of the Middle Ages.' I am grateful to my former colleague Dr Iain L. Marr, Research Fellow in the Technical University of Vienna, for obtaining me a copy of this publication.

17 Buschhausen 1980, pp. 117-18, finds the single immediate source of inspiration for the altarpiece to be a work by Hugh of St-Victor, the 'alter Augustinus', entitled, *De sacramentis christianae fidei*, dated 1130-35. There is a copy of this work in the Klosterneuburg library (MS 311). Buschhausen terms Hugh's work, 'the first early scholastic *Summa*', and cites and expounds it as follows: 'tria...sunt tempora per quae praesentis saeculi spatium decurrit. Primum est tempus naturalis legis; secundum tempus scriptae legis; tertium tempus gratiae'; heathens, Jews, and Christians correspond to the three ages; alternatively put, reason, law, and Holy Spirit.

18 Röhrig and Buschhausen both translate 'sacred events' but that seems to me to be too narrow a conception of 'sacra': sacral rites and institutions are also included. The point seems more to be how all the particular manifestations of the sacred down the ages are shadows of the eternal truth which comes to full light in the Gospel (cf. comments on Neoplatonism below).

19 The first lines of the full inscription run as follows (text and translation laid out in parallel showing the metre and the caesura; the inscriptions are composed mainly in 'Leonine hexameters', six-foot lines in which the word at the caesura rhymes with the word at the end of the line; to get the rhyme the construction is often tortuous):

qualiter etatum † sacra consona sint peraratum
cernis in hoc opere † mundi primordia quere
limite sub primo † sunt umbrae legis in imo

How the sacred things of the ages are in consonance, portrayed
you will discern in this work; the beginnings of the world look for
in the upper row; the shadows of the law are in the lower;

inter utrumque situm † dat tempus gracia tritum
situated between the two grace gives the prevailing time.
que prius obscura † vates cecinere figura

What earlier the prophets sang in obscure figure,
esse dedit pura † nova factoris genitura

the new generation of the Creator has made to be clear

vim per divinam † *veniens reparare ruinam*

through divine power coming to heal the Fall

que per serpentem † *deiecit utrumque parentem*

which through the serpent threw down both parents.

si pensas iuste † *legis mandata vetuste*

If you ponder correctly the commandments of the old Law

ostentata foris † *retinent nil pene decoris*

in their outward form, they retain almost nothing of comeliness;

unde patet vere † *quia legis forma fuere*

whence it is clear that they were the form of the true Law

quam tribuit mundo † *pietas divina secundo*

which divine love has imparted to the second creation.

The key ideas may be summarized: the sacred things of the ages are in consonance, doubly so in the case of the Old Testament, whether before the Law or under the Law; but the old Law is but an obscure figure, shadows, forms, containing almost nothing of the splendour of the new Law, the new creation in Christ.

20 As has been done by Röhrig 2004 (1st ed. 1955) and Buschhausen 1980.

21 There is no known precise source for these sequences. The *Biblia pauperum* is too late: the first examples in Bavaria and Austria date from c1300. *Pictor in carmine*, English, end 12th century, is merely a list of 138 scenes from annunciation to last judgement with types from Old Testament, Christian legends, and the natural world (Ulrike Brinkmann, *Das jüngere Bibelfenster* (Meisterwerke des Kölner Domes 1), Cologne: Verlag Kölner Dom, 1984, p. 8). For 'The Mirror of Salvation', see Albert C. Labriola, John W. Schulz, *The Mirror of Salvation, Speculum humanae salvationis: An Edition of British Library Blockbook G. 11784*, Cambridge: James Clarke, 2002, p.31 (c1470).

22 Using Röhrig's system of reference where Roman numerals refer to the three horizontal rows (I, ante legem; II, sub gracia; III, sub lege), Arabic numerals to the seventeen vertical columns.

23 Röhrig 2004, p. 65.

24 Emending it to *ut*, from the inscription in the matching adjoining window.

25 Röhrig 2004, p. 67.

26 The wording as used in Glasgow University Chapel. I am grateful to the Revd Kay Stiven for reminding me of its source.

27 De Lubac, II, 2000, pp. 39, 129.

28 Paul Frankl, *The Gothic: Literary Sources and Interpretations Through Eight Centuries*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960, pp. 11, 27.

29 Suger is a vastly important figure not just in ecclesiastical terms: St-Denis had been the burial place of the French kings since 638 (Frankl 1960, p. 3); Suger was intimate with the monarchy, indeed during the absence of Louis VII on the ill-fated Second Crusade, 1145-47, was Regent of France. See, e.g., Giles Constable, 'The Second Crusade as Seen by Contemporaries', *Traditio* 9, 1953, 213-79; Buschhausen 1980, pp. 89; 119.

30 Erwin Panofsky, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St-Denis and its Art Treasures*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946, pp. 75-77; Louis Grodecki, *CVMA St-Denis*, p. 144.

31 One is reminded of George Herbert's lines: 'A man that looks on glass,/On it may stay his eye [the modern aesthetic of glass as artefact in its own right?]/Or if he pleaseth, through it pass./And then the heaven espy' [cf. Suger's anagogical function].

32 The anagogical effect of light that Suger was trying to achieve is now not so clear in St-Denis itself and is better realized elsewhere, e.g., at Auxerre. Cf. Patrice Wahlen, *Cathédral Saint-Etienne d'Auxerre: Les Vitraux du Chœur*, Auxerre: Helium, n.d. [c2001], p. 5: 'Gothic is the art of light.' The cathedral is a humble prefiguration on earth of the city of God, the walls of which are as clear as glass. The clerestory windows are, by definition, mostly in clear glass and suffuse the choir with light. So in similar terms Gerhard Ruf, *Die Glasmalerei von San Francesco in Assisi* (Schnell Kunstführer, 2001), Munich/Zürich: Schnell & Steiner, 1992, p. 3: for the Franciscan theorists, Roger Bacon and John Peckham, 'light was the visible revelation of God in our world. In transparent pictures in glass the connection between God and light found its comprehensible expression.'

- 33 Jane Hayward, 'Stained Glass Windows', in Florens Deuchler, ed., *The Year 1200*, II, New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1970, p. 67.
- 34 Helmut Buschhausen, 'The Klosterneuburg Altar of Nicholas of Verdun: Art, Theology and Politics', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 37, 1974, pp. 1-29 (p. 20). See n. 17 above.
- 35 Panofsky p. 17.
- 36 Buschhausen 1974, p. 23
- 37 Brankovic p. 18: the additions in the nineteenth century by Viollet-le-Duc of complementary scenes of the life of Moses were an error; the scenes conceived by Suger are not narratives telling the life of Moses but a series of allegories.
- 38 Cathédral de Sens, *Le vitrail du bon samaritain*, Sens: Maison de la Cathédral, 1999.
- 39 At Chartres the Old Testament types are not closely interrelated as at Sens and Bourges; the general Fall is shown above and the Good Samaritan below as 'parallel stories of sin, suffering and redemption through Christ' (Malcolm Miller, *Chartres Cathedral: Medieval Masterpieces in Stained Glass and Sculpture*, Andover: Pitkin, repr. 2000).
- 40 The window at Sens, in comparison to both Bourges and Chartres, is extolled by Charles Cahier and Arthur Martin, the nineteenth century experts on Bourges: 'un chef-d'œuvre entre des chefs-d'œuvres' (*Monographie de la cathédral de Bourges*, Pt. 1: Vitraux du XIII^e siècle (text vol.), Paris: Poussielgue-Rusand, 1841-1844, p. 192). There once was a very similar window in Canterbury in the SE transept now lost but its close similarity to Sens is confirmed from manuscript evidence in Oxford, Cambridge and Canterbury itself (Caviness, CVMA, *Canterbury*).
- 41 The chalice for the reception of the water and blood from the side of Christ by the figure of Ecclesia (so Caviness) reflects the medieval quest for the holy grail (Chrétien de Troyes, author of *Le Conte du Graal*, wrote between 1160 and 1185).
- 42 Brinkmann p. 13.
- 43 With Augustinian overtones; Caviness adds, among others, Bede, *Glossa Ordinaria*, and Hugh of St-Victor. E. Mâle, *L'Art religieux de XIII^e siècle*, Paris: 1931, pp. 197-8, adds the reference to Hugh: *Allegor. in NT*, IV xii.
- 44 De Lubac 1998, p. 237.