



Heavenly Discourses: Week 5

Architecture and the Sky



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AIM

Understanding how the sky influences
what we build.

What is the sky?

Observation: Cycles (diurnal and nocturnal).

How is light - sunlight, starlight, moonlight – height and shape being used?

What **clues** can we gain regarding why a building or
monument been constructed in that way and thus
learn what that can tell us about the cosmos and our
interaction with it?





Lysippus, Roman copy of a Greek bronze bust of Aristotle, marble, c.330 BCE, modern alabaster mantle.
Image: Wikimedia Commons.

Aristotle (384 BCE – 322 BCE) *De Caelo*:

For, as the Pythagoreans say, the universe and all that is in it is determined by the number three, **since beginning and middle and end give the number of the universe**, and the number they give is the triad. And so, having taken these three from nature as (so to speak) laws of it, we make further use of it in the worship of the Gods.

This idea of the tripartite division of the world carried through into the medieval world as an interconnected network, a **dependency on order**.

‘Here below, **some pray, others fight, still others work ...**’

Adelbero, Bishop of Laon (died c.1030), *Carmen ad Robertum regem*.



‘From the beginning, mankind has been divided into three parts, among **men of prayer, farmers, and men of war ...**’

Gerard of Cambrai (1025-1051), *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium*.

Left: Margariton d'Arezzo, called Margarito di Magnano Arezzo, *St Francis of Assisi*, c.1240-1260, tempera and gold on wood panel, Vatican Museum. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

Centre: Knight's tomb, St Hilary's Church, Cowbridge, Wales. Photo: D. Gunzburg.

Right: Nicola and Giovanni Pisano, Sagittarius and the month of November-December, c.1278, marble, Fontana Maggiore, Perugia. Photo: D. Gunzburg.





This order rested on two poles of power:

SECULAR:

Power was owned by those who had the land.

THE CHURCH:

Intensely religious society that held to the tenets of Christianity, where buildings needed to be built so that the miraculous events of the Eucharist and transubstantiation could occur.



Chartres Cathedral

Begun 1134.

Rebuilt after the fire 1194-1220.





A cathedral was understood to be an image of the [heavenly Jerusalem](#) (*Revelations 21*). The architecture was a setting for a performance with scripted events and where it was understood that in this space extraordinary and dramatic events could take place. Moving through this architecture allowed one to experience this. It did this through...

Architecture	)	
Sculpture	)	All of these disciplines
Stained glass	)	were interwoven...
Sculpture	)	
Metalwork	)	

Sacred theatre: a setting for a performance where the Eucharist was transformed through the ritual act of mass which included frankincense and thousands of beeswax candles.

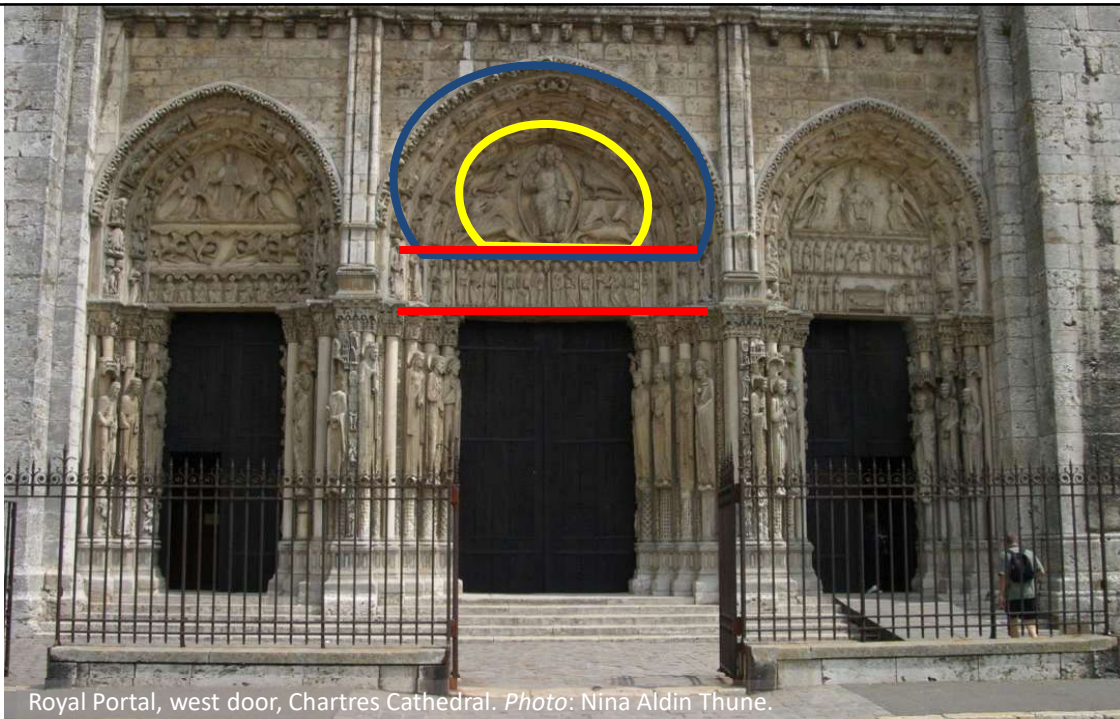
Not about individual expression.



Royal Portal, west door, Chartres Cathedral, France. Photo: Nina Aldin Thune.



Royal Portal, west door, Chartres Cathedral. Photo: Nina Aldin Thune.



Royal Portal, west door, Chartres Cathedral. Photo: Nina Aldin Thune.



Angel with astrolabe, Royal Portal, west door, central bay, left inner archivolt, Chartres Cathedral. *Photo: Guillaume Piolle (Wikimedia Commons).*

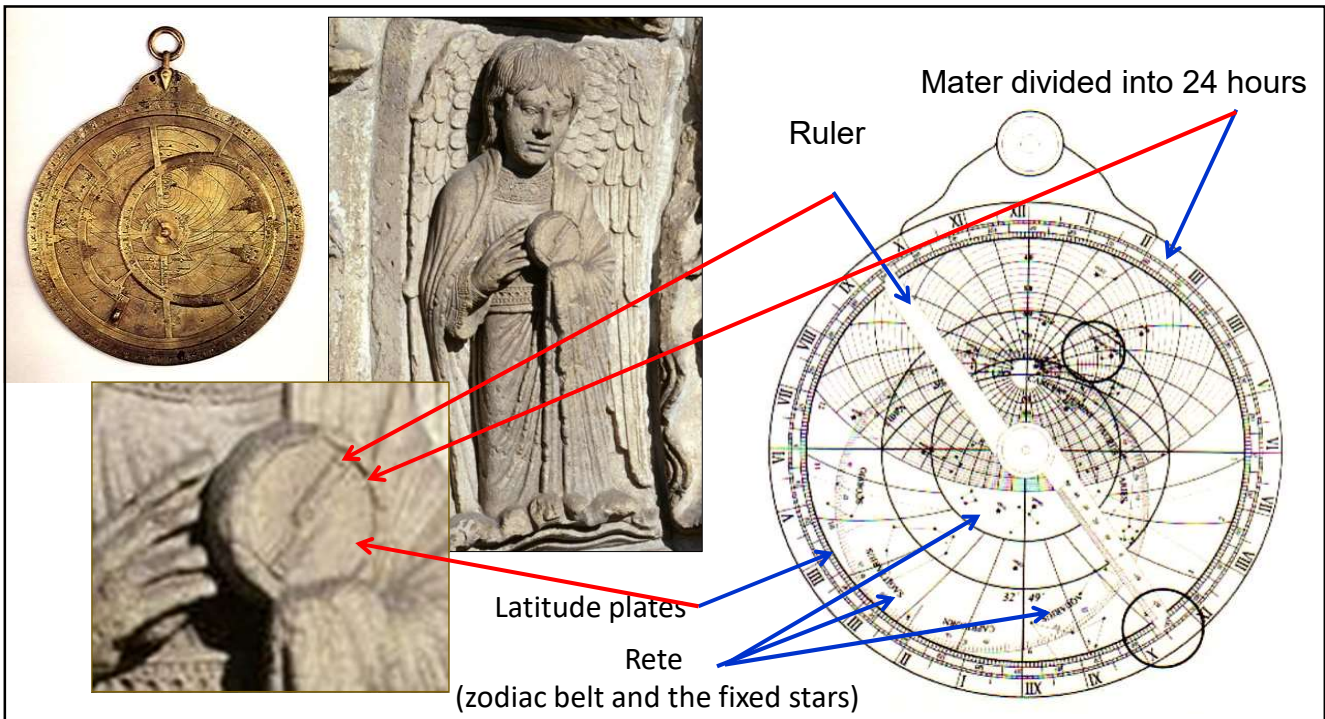
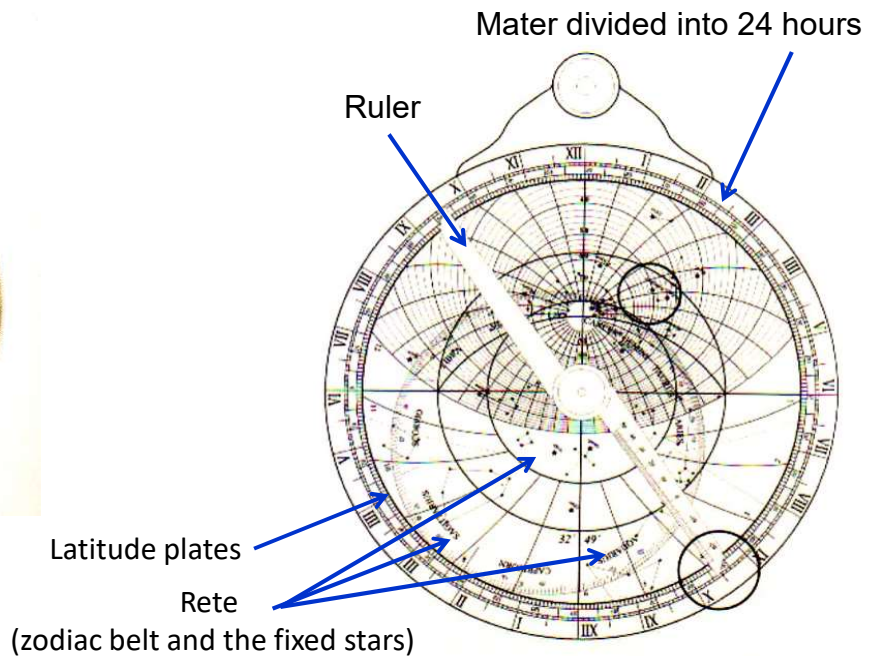


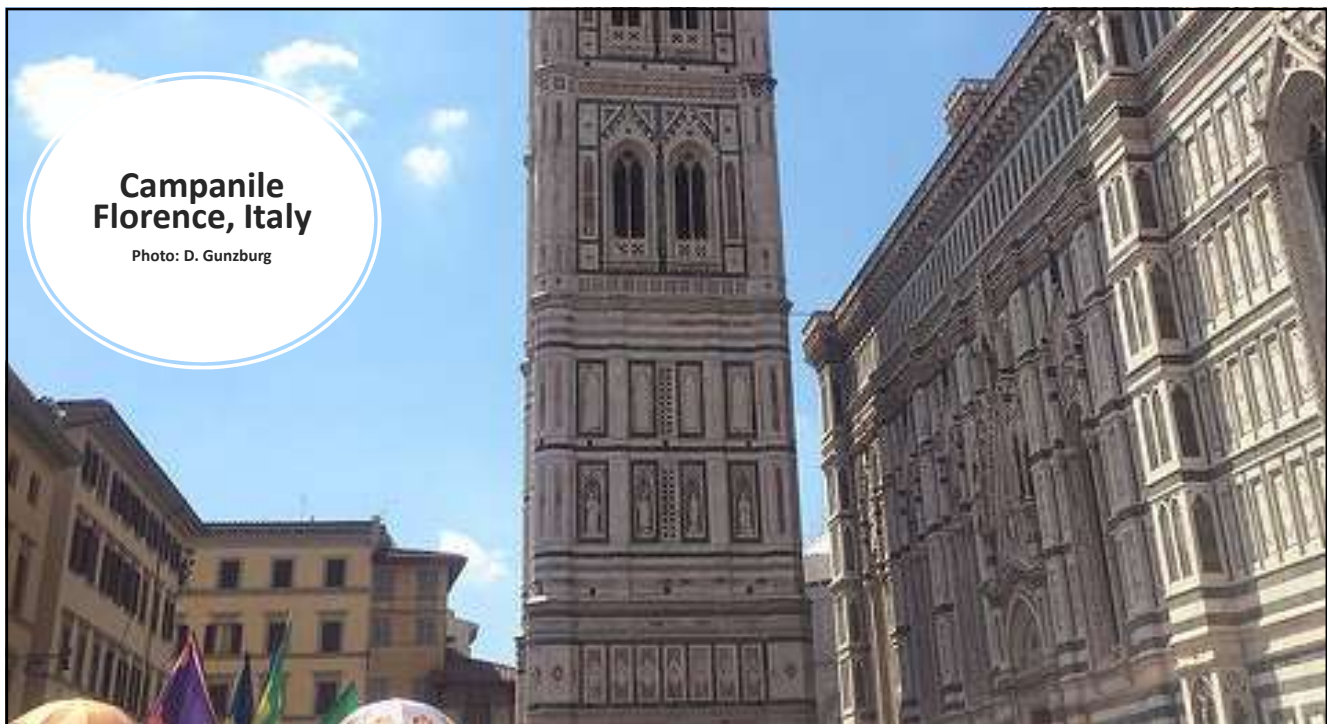
Angels with astrolabes, Royal Portal, central bay, inner archivolt, Chartres Cathedral. *Photos: Nicole Lévis-Godechot; Sonia Halliday; Guillaume Piolle.*



Bronze astrolabe made in Iraq in 927-28 - the earliest known example of a dated astrolabe.

From Atil, Esin, ed. *Islamic Art & Patronage: Treasures from Kuwait*. New York: Rizzoli, 1990.





Campanile Florence, Italy

Photo: D. Gunzburg



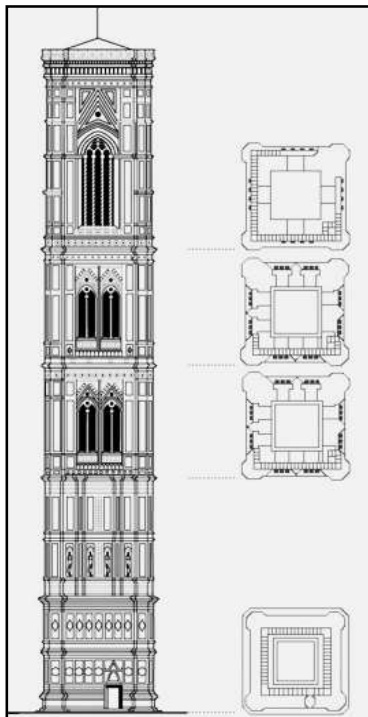
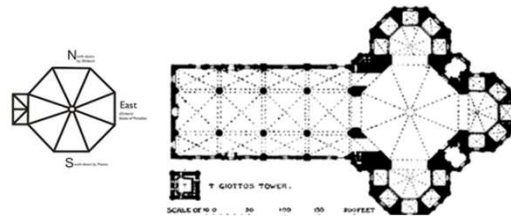
Campanile, Florence, Italy. Photo: D.Gunzburg.

‘... bells operate as more than simply signals, and that in various ways the sound-field of a bell was not straightforwardly coterminous with the landscape to which it was supposed to belong. Moreover, even when signalling is the primary function of bells, they are not merely “marking” the existence of a community, but rather, one might say, *appealing* to their audience to respond to the communal call—rousing, summoning and hailing them in a discursive as well as a practical fashion, whether that summoning is to collective acts of worship or violence.’

Arnold, John H., and Caroline Goodson. 'Resounding Community: The History and Meaning of Medieval Church Bells.' *Viator* 43, no. 1 (2012): 99-130, p.127.



Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore, completed 1434. Photo: Bettina Rohrig.



NORTH

The 7 Sacraments

Sculpture

Painting

[5 fifteenth-century reliefs by Luca della Robbia]

WEST (facing the Baptistry)

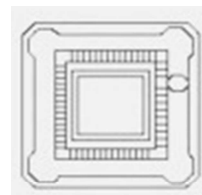
The 7 planets

Creation of Adam
Creation of Eve
First labours
Jabal (first herdsman)
Jubul (first musician)
Tublucaïn (first smith)
Noah (first cultivator of vines)

EAST

Quadrivium and Trivium

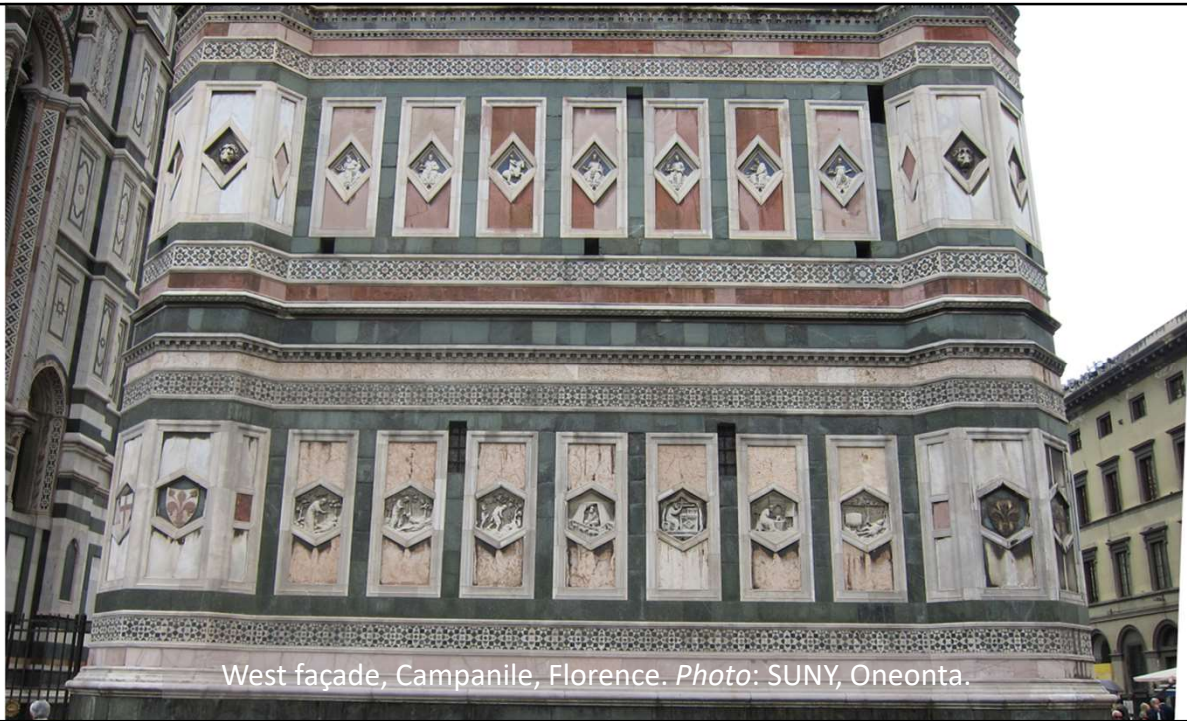
Navigatio
Hercules and Cacus
Agricultura
Theatrica mechanical arts
Architecture



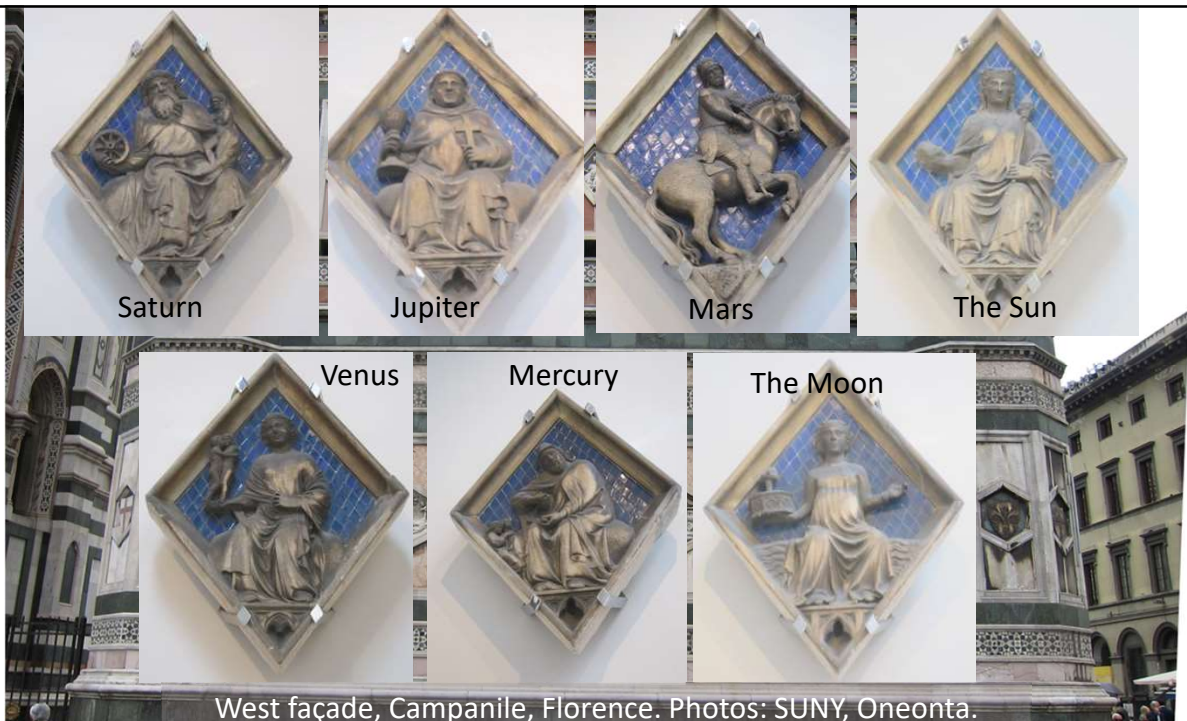
SOUTH

The 7 Theological and Cardinal Virtues

Gionitus (first astronomer)
Armatura (construction)
Medicina (medicine)
Venatio (horsemanship)
Lanificium (weaving)
Phorneus (inventor of law)
Daedalus (patron of artists)



West façade, Campanile, Florence. Photo: SUNY, Oneonta.



West façade, Campanile, Florence. Photos: SUNY, Oneonta.



Saturn



Jupiter



Mars



The Sun



Venus



Mercury



The Moon



Astronomy – one of the Quadrivium, on the east façade, Campanile, Florence. *Photo: SUNY, Oneonta.*



Collaborator of Andrea Pisano (Master of Armor), Gionitus, the inventor of astronomy, 1334-1336, south façade, Campanile, Florence. *Photo: SUNY, Oneonta.*

‘An object has its own autonomy, as in the Classical notion of sculpture, but architecture, despite the intentions of architects, is never autonomous. There is always a link with a place, a moment, a culture, the natural environment.’

Sofia von Ellrichshausen



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