

SAINT-QWENTIN





HERTAGE DEPARTMENT

EDITORIAL

Since 2006, when the city was given the label City of Art and History by the Ministry of Culture and Communication, the City of Saint-Quentin had been ensuring the daily protection, enhancement and influence of our heritage. Thus enabling us to share our story and reveal our treasures in France and abroad.

This heritage is rooted in the history of the city but also in our hearts. It unites all the inhabitants around a common past, a heritage that we use to build the future. It is, for us, a source of pride for all Saint-Quentin.

The Heritage Department of the City of Saint-Quentin has been involved for a number of years in publishing historical documents and technical books. In this way, it takes a role as a source of knowledge and research, and disseminates its work to all audiences, making the link between the past and the future.

This edition of the «Focus» Collection, the fruit of scientific work, will reveal the story of a must-see monument in Saint-Quentin: the Basilica.

Visible from afar, the Basilica's huge stone silhouette dominates the city. Built to house the relics of Saint Quentin, it welcomed many pilgrimages. A Royal Collegiate Church, it received the title of Basilique in 1875. Having become the emblematic building of Saint-Quentin, it has shared the destiny of the town, and remains the prestigious testimony to a fervent and richly textured time. Today, the Basilica is the subject of special attention through the many restoration and safeguarding campaigns that are conducted on the outside of the building and for the heritage it houses. We invite you to travel through the centuries to rediscover our local history and heritage.

From yesterday to today, let's be proud of our heritage ... a heritage to live and build together!

Bernard DELAIRE Councillor for Cultural and Historical Heritage **Frédérique MACAREZ** Mayor of Saint-Quentin



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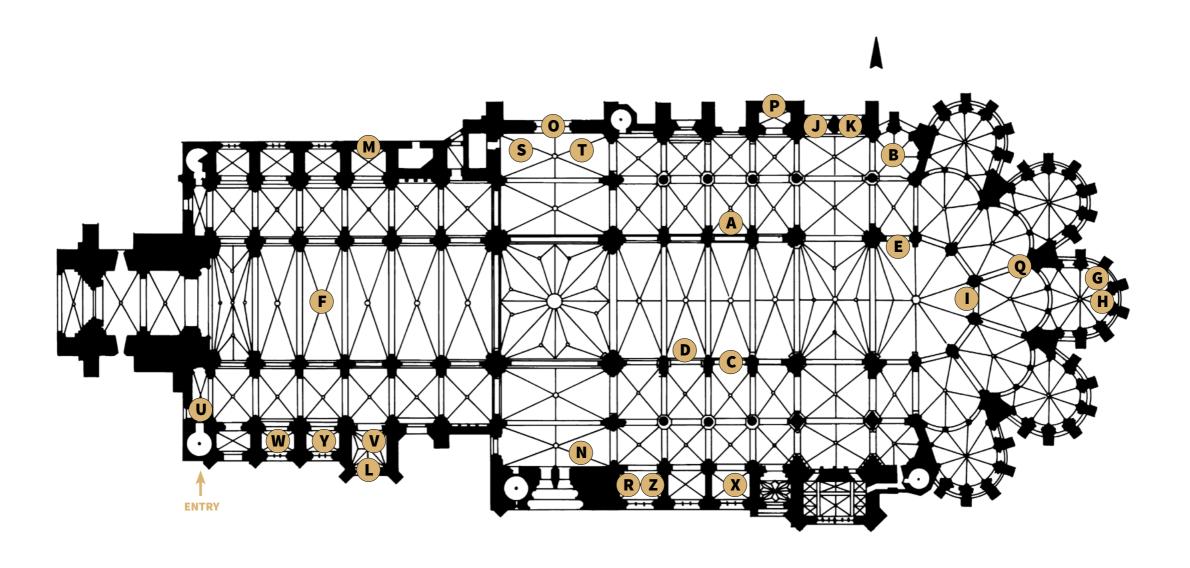
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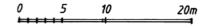
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MAP OF BASILICA

Take a tour through the Basilica with this booklet highlighting its main architectural and artistic treasures.





RELICS AND PILGRIMS

Founded in the 2nd century AD, the ancient Augusta Viromanduorum, and a crossroads of Roman roads, had only a short existence. The town was abandoned by its inhabitants, during the terrible barbarian invasions of the end of the third century, in favour of the nearby oppidum of Vermand. It was only in the 9th century that the city was reborn around the devotion of the relics of Saint Quentin, from which it took its name.

At the end of the third century, Quintinus, an evangelizer to the people of Picardy, was martyred by Rictiovare at the top of the hill of Augusta, and his beheaded remains were thrown into the marshes of the Somme. It was in the middle of the fourth century that Eusebie found the body of Saint Quentin at the top of the hill, the place of his martyrdom. In 651, St. Eloi opened the sarcophagus and divided it into numerous relics. From this period, veneration for the saint grew continuously, and a community of clerics was established around the Merovingian church, constituting a monastery.

It is the Carolingians who will definitively establish devotion around the saint's relics. In 814 Father Fulrad built an imposing church. In 835 the Count Abbé Hugues, natural son of Charlemagne, who added a western turris (tower) to the origin of the current tower.

In the 9th century, protected by a wall built by Count Abbé Thierry, the Vicus Sancti Quintini became the original nucleus of the town which then took the name of Saint-Quentin. It is probably also at this time that the community of monks evolved into a college of canons.

At the end of the 12th century, in order to welcome the many pilgrims who came flocking from all directions, the canons decided to build an imposing collegiate church. This would become part of the epic of cathedral constructions.



Martyrdom of Saint Quentin.

Manuscript authentic twelfth century.

Municipal Library of Saint-Quentin

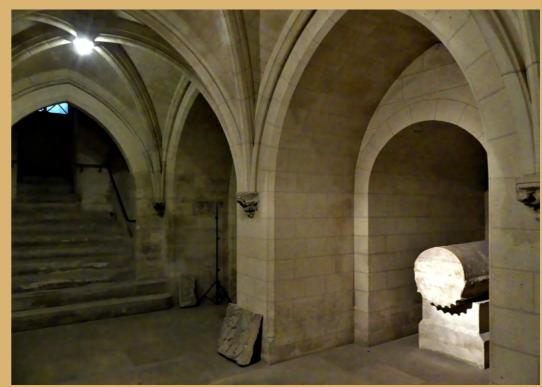


THECMYPT

The basilica has a crypt located under the choir, accessible to the public during guided tours.

There are 3 vaults whose origin dates back to the 9th century in the Carolingian era. In the central vault is the IVth century sarcophagus of Saint Quentin which is in fact a column of re-used Gallo-Roman marble. The sarcophagus was emptied by Saint Eloi in 651, and the tomb no longer contains the relics of the saint. However, it can still be venerated having once contained the holy relics.

The crypt was enlarged in the thirteenth century to facilitate the movement of pilgrims.



The crypt built in the 13th century. Rebuilt identically after its destruction in 1917 during the First World War. Photography, Bernard Delaire collection

A

THE CONSTRUCTION



Construction began around 1195 when the cathedral of Chartres, destroyed by fire, began to be rebuilt. More than three centuries were needed to complete the construction of the college. The many construction campaigns, constantly interrupted by wars and funding difficulties, explain the exceptional duration of the project.

This construction was long and dangerous. An important cant of the pillars appeared from the beginning of the 14th century, threatening the balance of the choir. It was not until 1400 that Gilles Largent put an end to this instability, but at the cost of important consolidation work.

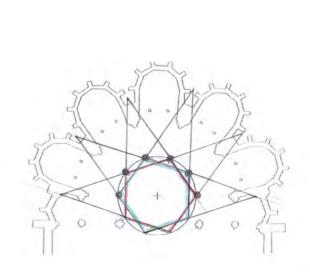
During the construction of the nave, in 1477, the south transept of the small transept collapsed. King Louis XI financed the reconstruction, to take place under the direction of Colard Noël. However the lack of funding, prevented the completion of the building; the facade was never built, the nave is attached to the old tower-porch and it was only in 1495 that the tiling of the nave was placed.

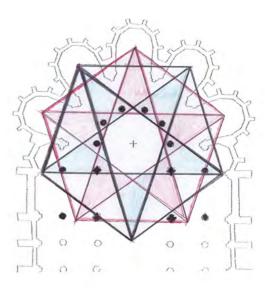
The harmony between the large arches and the high windows, the exceptional distribution of light, the audacity demonstrated by the Master of Saint-Quentin in the elevation of the choir make the basilica a major work of Gothic architecture.

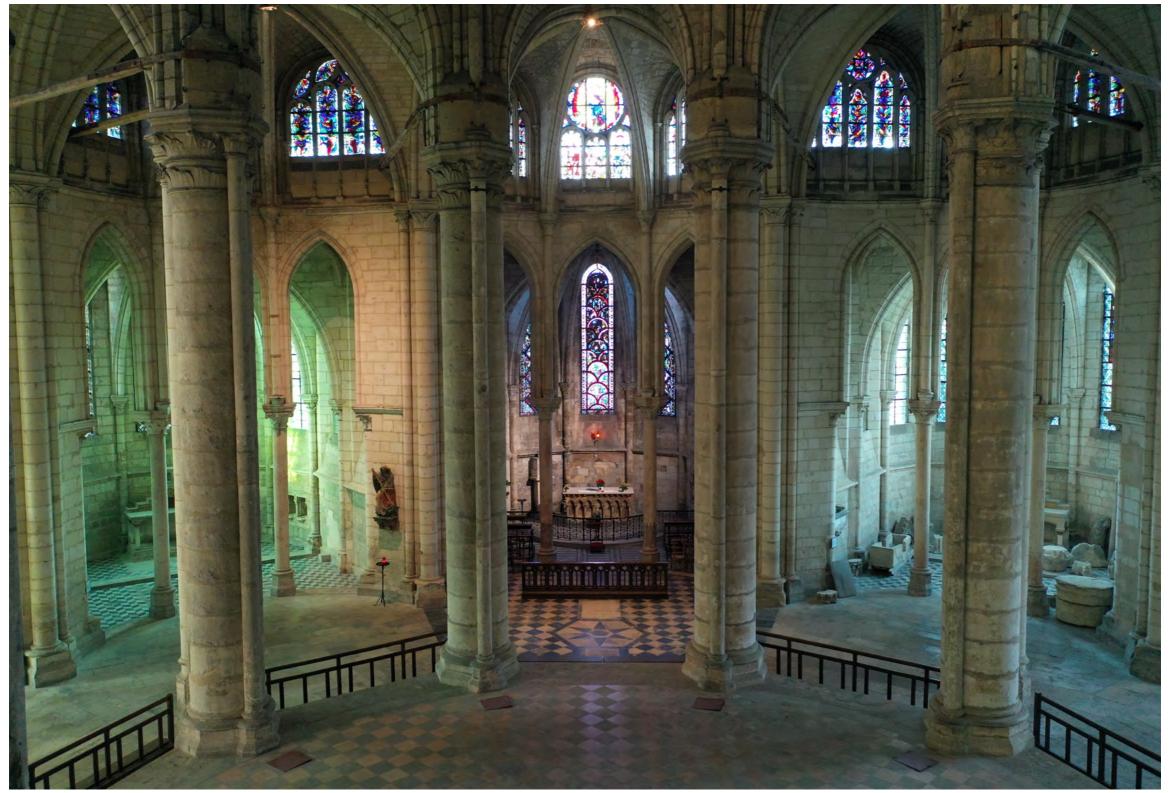
THE CHOIM AND THE MADIANT CHAPELS

The basilica of Saint-Quentin reflects the gigantism of the 13th century buildings. If the number of canons explains the plan of the choir with four straight spans, the will to compete with contemporary cathedrals remains nonetheless obvious.

The exclusive use of the circle in the plan set out an original and exceptional style in the choir of the Basilica. This conception takes and amplifies the plan of the choir of the cathedral of Soissons. The works of the American scholar Ellen Shortell, especially on the sketches left on the walls, highlight the master plan of the choir. The roundabout, the ambulatory and the chapels are part of a plane generated by two pentagrams, giving the whole an exceptional relationship with the golden ratio. The use of the pentagram in architecture and symbolism can be found in the 13th century album of Villard de Honnecourt, preserved today at the National Library of France.







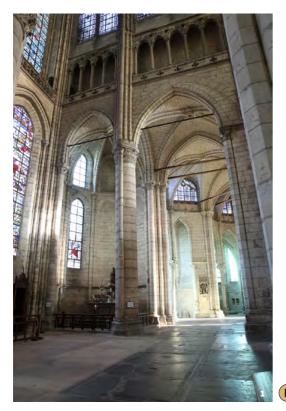
The chapels, built around 1190, open on the ambulatory through three arches resting on two monolithic columns. Unlike the adopted at Saint-Rémi de Reims and later at Notre-Dame-en-Vaux in Châlons-en-Champagne, these supports are arranged in a semi-circumferential pattern that penetrates inside the chapels. These, very bright, After a period of relatively long interruption, are served by an ambulatory of five bays pierced with 15 windows. This highlighting is innovative, and allows for better light distribution. It should also be noted that the ambulatory is articulated on the double collateral with a 45 ° chapel. Extremely rare in Gothic architecture.

The roundabout of the choir, whose construction was probably completed in 1220 consists of circular pillars embellished with an axial column, an arrangement adopted in the cathedral of Soissons. The contemporary sites of Saint-Quentin and Soissons certainly explain the striking similarities between the two buildings.

The harmonious style of the chapels around the succession of circles of the ambulatory confer on the choir of the basilica of Saint Quentin an exceptional «fusion» effect which makes it a unique example of Gothic architecture.

work resumed the construction of the 'light floor'. Consisting of seven windows with lancets and rosettes, it illustrates the change to a more ambitious project, perhaps inspired by the cathedral of Reims; the vaults rose to 34 m.

The construction of the choir was long, and was obviously not finished when in 1257 when Saint Louis came to perform, in great ceremony, the moving of the relics of the old church into the choir of the collegiate church.







1. Chapel at 45° allowing the articulation of the aisles with the 13th century ambulatory.

Photography, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée

2. Roundabout of the choir where the successive circles constituting the ambulatory and the chapels are grafted. Photography, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée





Instability in the choir

The pillars of the choir began to lean mightily, causing the fall of the vaults during the 14th century. It is to mitigate this alarming situation that the canons undertook successive campaigns of consolidation. In 1342, they built two massive walls intended to contain the base of the pillars, in which one can see stones used from the old church. These form part of the fence of the choir. The canons added backs to their stalls and, faithful to the musical tradition of the collegiate church, inscribed musical scores.

The pillars were then doubled in size with massive masonry, requiring, once again, vaults by creating

new arches. Eventually, some arches were filled, and metal tie rods were installed in the aisles. These very visible reinforcement works lasted throughout

the 14th century and would only be completed with the renovation of the vaults in 1398 by Gilles Largent. The presence of a rood screen in the fifteenth century completed the closing of the choir.

Outside the choir, in the low sides along the south and north wall, runs a bas relief made in the nineteenth century depicting the legend of Saint Ouentin.



3. 4. Legend of Saint Quentin. Bas-relief on edge of the choir. Photographs, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée

5. Musical works are on the walls of the fifteenth century choir. Photography, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée

THE SMALL TRANSEPT

The presence in Saint-Quentin of two transepts is probably due to the preservation of the ancient liturgy, inherited from the Carolingian era. It is a unique layout for French Gothic, and only a few large English cathedrals adopted it.

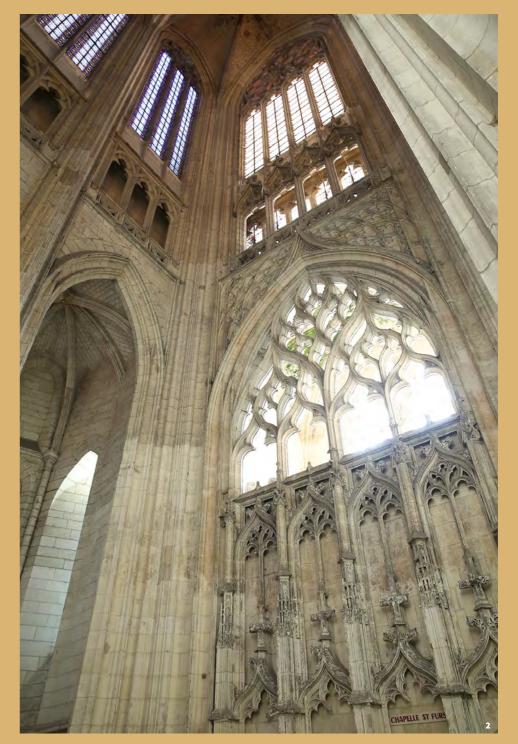
The entire southern part of the small transept was in grave danger from 1460 and was threatening to collapse. Thanks to the help of Louis XI this part of the church was rebuilt in 1487 by Colard Noel.

Between two huge buttresses, placed a closed chapel, now disused, dedicated to Saint Fursy, and a room upstairs with two large windows.

Difficult to access, this room was for a time assigned to the Treasury then abandoned and replaced by a sacrarium or cabinet with relics built in the choir in the fifteenth century.

The illuminated triforium, and four lancets surmounted by a large rose, makes this facade very luminous. The use of the sharp-edged pillars contrasts with the exuberance of the wall decoration consisting of snaffles and bellows. The arches are highlighted in «basket handle» shapes above the doors and the broken arc against the curves of the window. This is a perfect example of a flamboyant Gothic style in use at the time.

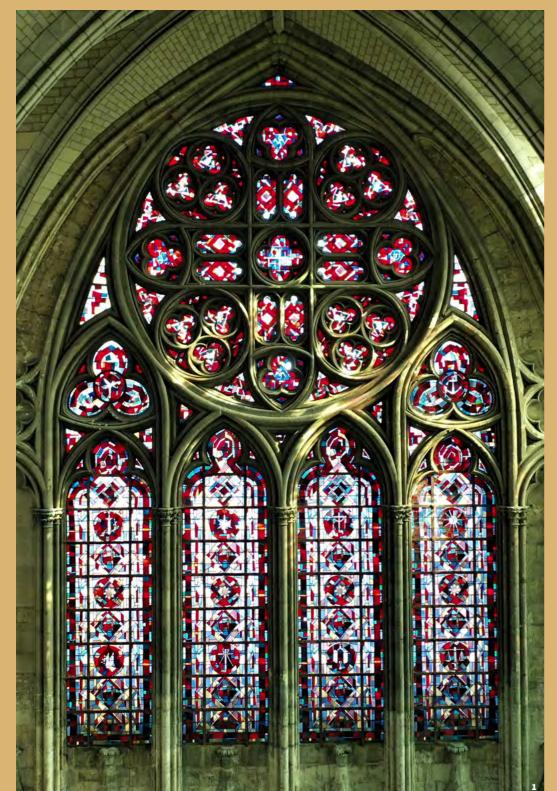




1. Sacrarium or wardrobe with relics. The metal doors were sliding to expose the relics for the contemplation of the pilgrims.

Photography, Bernard Delaire collection

2. South facade of the small transept. Flamboyant Gothic, fifteenth century.
Photography, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée



THE GREAT TRANSEPT



- 1. South facade of the great transept. Late thirteenth century/ early fourteenth century. Beautiful example of the radiant style.
- 2. Polychrome statues depicting the parishes of the nineteenth century city. Here Saint Pécinne and Saint Nicaise.
- 3. North facade of the great transept built in 1400. The large rose containing the five-pointed star supported by the eight lancets. Stone lacework.

Photographs, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée



Built in the 14th century, the great transept breaks with the aesthetics of the choir in favour of a radiant style. The break is clearly visible in the structure of the supports: monolithic in the choir, fascicles (columns) in the transept and the nave.

The facade of the southern arm, built in the late thirteenth century, has a network of thin ribs that dress a blind wall. Note the importance given to the triforium whose arches are surmounted by gables. The statues, made in the nineteenth century, represent the saints of the parishes of the city. The walled gate allowed access to the cloister, still partly in existence before the revolution.

This facade is closer to the facade of the North Arm in the cathedral of Soissons, probably built at the same time. The facade of the north arm, built by Gilles Largent in 1400, delivers an original

conception of light distribution. A unique window, housed between two walls, highlights the modern stained glass window. The triforium does not mimic this style in an attempt at fusion, since it is treated like a space in its own right. A huge window occupies the whole upper part, it incorporates the lancets and the big rose composed of a five-pointed star. The elemental pentagram often present in cathedrals, is always exposed to the north as in Amiens, Sens or the St Ouen Abbey of Rouen. The original style of this facade offers a subtle transition between the radiant and the flamboyant of which it adopts some discreet elements in the windows.

THE TOWE NORCH AND SAINT MICHEL CHAPEL



The western tower.

A porch was pierced in the second half of the twelfth century.

This tower is now a facade at the Basilica.

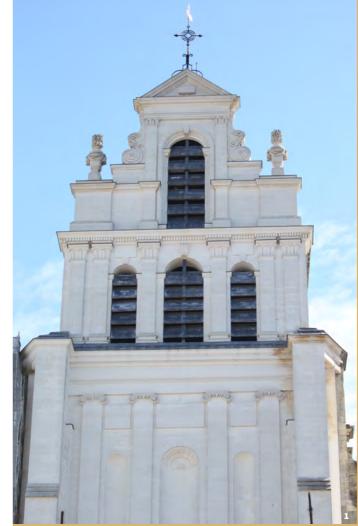
Photography City of Saint Questin Lye Courée.

Inherited from the old church, the bell tower represents the western massif present in all the Carolingian churches. On the floor is an archangelic chapel dedicated to Saint Michael. Weekly processions were still carried out in the seventeenth century by the canons, using the two staircases accessible on both sides of the porch. This practice was a reminder of the Carolingian liturgy. Accessible to the public during guided tours, one can see exceptional terracotta tiles from the twelfth century. Note that these tiles are in the Villard de Honnecourt album.

The tower was extensively redesigned in the 12th century, with the construction of a large porch with a trumeau and a tympanum becoming the main door of the church.

This door was modified in the eighteenth century which meant the tympanum and trumeau disappeared. In 1509, the canons laid the foundation stone of a new facade to replace the current towerporch, but probably for lack of funding this project remained unfulfilled.

In 1669, a fire destroyed the rooves, as well as the belfry including the bells. The top of the tower collapsed. Thanks to the help of Louis XIV, the canons were able to rebuild the upper parts of the tower, using the Baroque style.





 Upper part of the western tower, rebuilt in the 18th century after the fire of 1669, in the Baroque style, with two fire pots.

Photography, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée

2. St Michael's chapel, 19th century paintings, 12th century terracotta pavement.

Photography, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée

3. St Michael's chapel, detail of the exceptional 12th century polychrome pavings.

Photography, Bernard Delaire collection



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1. The labyrinth was laid in 1495 at the same time as the pavings of the nave.

Photography, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée

2. Quadripartite vault of the nave and flamboyant arches with ivy and terceron vaults at the crossing of the transept.

THELABYMINTH

Like the cathedrals of Chartres, Amiens and Reims, the paving of the basilica was marked with a labyrinth; this was an initiation tool linked to the symbols of the builders.

These masters often inscribed their names. The tortuous path made of a black stones that leads to the centre represents the path of a past life. In the centre, only death could allow a rebirth. One can see a complex introspective journey to the centre where the octagon refers to the octave dies, the eighth day, the day of the resurrection.

The octagonal shape is not due to chance, it is reminiscent of the baptismal, where we are witness to the symbolic death of the little child in the world of pagans and its rebirth in the world of Christians. The octagon, far from being chosen by chance, reminds us that the number eight is the number of the passage.

From the end of the eighteenth century we see a spiritual journey that evokes a pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem. Sometimes it can be used in a penitential process, the steps being made on knees.

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THE NAVE

Constructed during most of the 15th century, the nave retains the characteristics of the radiant style with its strong fasciculated pillars. Illuminated by the huge high windows that reach almost half its height, an exceptional size, the nave contributes to the sense of gigantism felt when entering the church.

Photography, Heritage Department, F. Pillet

STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

The collegiate church has lost many of its original windows. In addition to some large panels in the high windows, in the chapel we can admire stained glass windows of the late twelfth century that illustrate episodes of the Life of the Virgin and the martyrdom of St. Stephen. In them he hand of the Master Saint-Eustache who had worked at the cathedral of Chartres. In the high windows, the 13th century panes, badly damaged during the first world war, were magnificently restored after the war by Hector de Pétigny.

Two large panes, from Master Mathieu Bléville, dating from the sixteenth century, are visible in the north facade of the small transept. They represent the martyrdom of Saint Catherine on the left and that of Saint Barbara on the right.

In the chapel of Saint Quentin, Jean Jacques Grüber has created a contemporary stained glass window evoking the legend of Saint Quentin. Inspired by medieval glass windows, the master glassmaker was able to restore the light of the twelfth century by using a deep blue. Master Grüber made six of the glass windows in the aisles on both sides of a 16th century stained glass window.

Other stained glass windows were made in the 20th century:

The windows of the south facade of the great transept are made by Auguste Labouret and those of the north facade by Pierre Choutet with four figures from left to right, Saint Catherine, Saint Margaret, Saint Pécinne, The Blessed Virgin.

Two art deco windows facing each other in the nave were made by Georges Bougeot in 1931and 1932

To the south: Holy Communion, to the north St. Teresa.

The stained glass windows on either side of the large porch are by Anne Le Chevalier.



- 1. Stained glass window from the end of the 12th century located in the Marian chapel representing the life of the Virgin. Photography, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée
- 2. Stained glass window from the end of the 12th century located in the Marian chapel, depicting the life and martyrdom of Saint Stephen. Photography, Heritage Department, F. Pillet
- 3. Stained glass panes in the high windows of the choir representing Saint Quentin and the apostles, among others. Stained glass windows of the 13th century magnificently restored by Hector de Pétigny after the first world war. Photography, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée

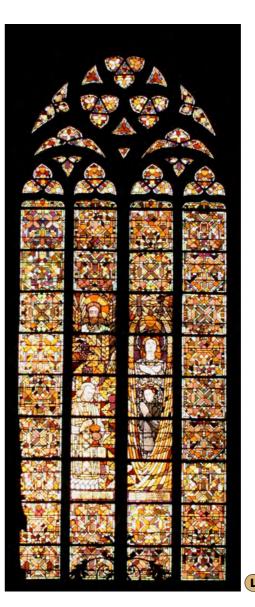




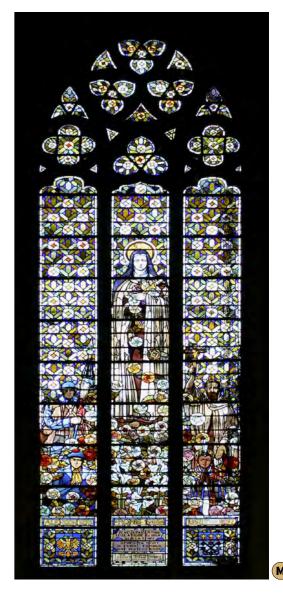






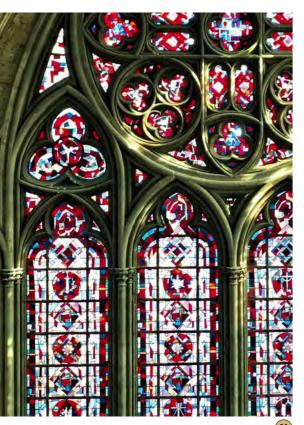


Art Deco stained glass window depicting the Holy Communion. Georges Bougeot, 1931.
Photography, Heritage Department, F. Pillet

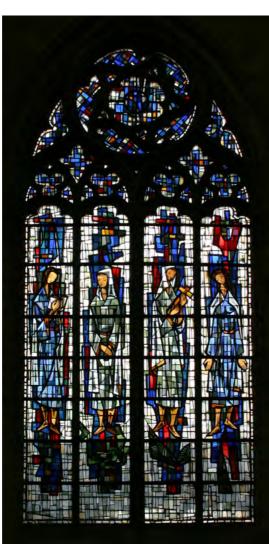


Art Deco stained glass window depicting Saint Therese. Georges Bougeot, 1932.

Photography, Heritage Department, F. Pillet

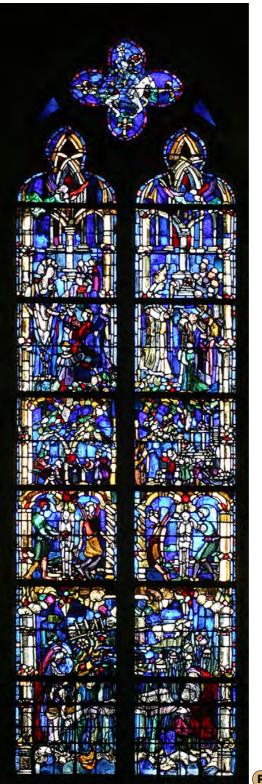


Stained glass windows occupying the south facade of the great transept. Auguste Labouret, 1930s.
Photography, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée



Stained glass windows by Pierre Choutet occupying the entire north facade. Here in the low window, four figures representing from left to right: Saint Catherine, Saint Margaret, Saint Pécinne and the Virgin. Twentieth century.

Photography, Heritage Department, F. Pillet





Stained glass window by Jacques Grüber. Twentieth century, depicting the martyrdom of Saint Quentin.
Photography, Heritage Department, F. Pillet



1. Roofs of the Basilica, made of a reinforced concrete frame in 1934.

Photography, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée

2. The baroque lead-covered oak tree spire was rebuilt in 1976. The terminal cross reaches 82m.

Photography, Bernard Delaire collection

3. The spire, detail of the terrace and its volutes.

Photography, Bernard Delaire collection

THE **MESTOMATIONS**

After the First World War, the state of the basilica, like the cathedrals of Soissons, Noyon and Reims was catastrophic. The roofs had been blown, the vaults of the choir and the transept had collapsed. It is to the architect of the Historical Monuments E. Brunet that was entrusted the restoration of the building from 1919, to succeed J. Trouvelot and M. Berry.

In 1934 the basilica will acquire a reinforced concrete frame soon imitated by the cathedrals of Noyon and Soissons.

After a long reconstruction, the church will be returned to worship in 1956.

THESTEPLE

Repeated fires in 1545 and 1669 led to the destruction of successive steeples.

After the fire of 1669 which saw the complete destruction of the roof as well as the belfry, a new pupil was built in the Baroque style, identical to the people built in the seventeenth century. This was destroyed again by the shelling of 1917, as was a large part of the Basilica. Its reconstruction would not be completed until 1976.





REMARKABLE SCALPTED WOMMS

Saint Michel

15th century polychrome statue located in the ambulatory. We see the archangel Saint Michael slaying the dragon (Satan) with a spear.

Our lady the good

14th century polychrome statue located in a chapel of the south aisle, depicting the Madonna and Child. The mannerism with the characteristic swaying of the time contributes to the striking realism of the work. The face with fine features and serene beauty is fascinating.



1. Polychrome statue representing the Archangel Saint Michael slaying the dragon. XVIth century. Photography, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée











- 3. Marble statue representing Saint-Quentin attributed to Edmée Bouchardon, eighteenth century.
- 4. Marble statue representing the Virgin and child attributed to Edmée Bouchardon, eighteenth century.
- 5. Tree of Jesse. 15th century polychrome carved ensemble representing the genealogy of Christ.
- 6. Crucifixion located in the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre. Nineteenth century restitution. Canopy fifteenth century.

Saint Quentin and the Virgin

18th century marble statues located against the north facade of the great transept. On the left, Saint Quentin. On the right, the Virgin with child. These two works attributed to Bouchardon reflect the baroque style.

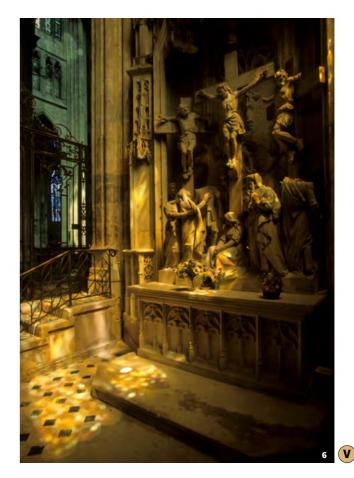
The tree of Jesse

Carved above the door giving access to St. Michael's Chapel is an imposing Jesse tree from the late fifteenth

It illustrates a prophecy of Isaiah representing the family tree of Christ. We can see Jesse asleep and a tree where the kings of Judea appear, in busts and with the help of phylacteries (parchments) with the crowned Virgin and the Christ on the cross at the top.

The Crucifixion

In the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre a crucifixion of the nineteenth century replaced a fifteenth century burial scene which was lost to the revolution.



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Photography, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée

MEMANKABLE PAINTINGS

The paintings are mainly concentrated in the chapels of the south side.

1st chapel Saint Pierre, Saint Paul W

Monumental paintings of the 19th century by Désiré Laugée.

Chapel of St. Mary Magdalene

Set of paintings of the early sixteenth century evoking the life and legend of Mary Magdalene.

Chapel Notre Dame la Bonne

A set of paintings from the seventeenth century is visible in this chapel.

Beneath the window are two paintings depicting the adoration of the shepherds and the three wise men.

On either side of the chapel are monumental paintings illustrating Pentecost, the Last Judgment, the ascension to Calvary, the lamentation and resurrection of Christ.

Saint Eloi Chapel

16th century tableau from Gregory Guérard. Depiction of the lamentation of Christ.









- 1. 16th century tableau, by Grégoire Guérard, a painter of the Renaissance. A Representing the lamentation of Christ. Photography, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée
- 2. Paintings representing Saint Mary Magdalene arriving in Provence located in the eponymous chapel. XVIth century. Photography, Bernard Delaire collection

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3 Paintings representing the nativity. The adoration of shepherds and magi. Seventeenth century. Photography, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée

Photography, City of Saint-Quentin, Luc Couvée



THE GREAT ORGAN

Of the great organ donated by Louis XIV in 1703, only the immense Baroque buffet designed by Jean Berain remains today. In 1917 the pipes were melted and the instrument was destroyed. It was not until 1967 that another great organ was found. Built by Haepfer Erman, it is one of the most important north of Paris. It has 6,430 pipes including 90 in front and 75 stops. It is a versatile organ that can perform the full scope of the repertoire for organ.



1. The Great Organ: Buffet by Jean Berain 1703, instrument designed by Haepfer Erman in 1967. Photography, Bernard Delaire collection

2. At the heart of the instrument, organ pipes among the **6,430** in existence. Photography, Heritage Department, F. Pillet

« AS A WHOLE, THE BASILICA OFFERS US A COMPLETE EXAMPLE OF THE CLASSICAL GOTHIC OF SPIRIT, IN BOTH ITS RECENT PARTS AS WELL AS THE OLDEST ONES; FROM THE WEIGHTY GOTHIC WHERE THE STRICTLY-DISCIPLINED DECORATION IS INCORPORATED IN THE STRUCTURE WITHOUT FULFILLING ANY OTHER MISSION TO HIGHLIGHT THE ARCHITECTURAL STYLE. THE CHOIR DOES NOT REVEAL ITS LOFTY VIRTUES AT FIRST SIGHT. INSTEAD, IT ASKS FOR ATTENTION. IT CALLS FOR ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON IN A LOW VOICE; AND AT THE COST OF A LITTLE CONTEMPLATION, IT REVEALS ALL ITS BEAUTIES ONE BY ONE; ALL THE TALENTS OF THE ARTISTS WHO BUILT IT ».

La basilique de Saint-Quentin et l'architecture du Moyen-Âge, Pierre HELIOT. Paris, Picard, 1967.

Saint-Quentin belongs to the national network of Cities and Countries of Art and History.

The Ministry of Culture and Communication, through its Directorate General of Heritage, awards the label 'City or Area of Art and History' to local authorities which implement activities to promote and enhance their architecture and heritage. supports these actionstechnically and financially. It guarantees the competence of the 'Animator of Architecture and Heritage', guides/speakers and the quality of their actions. And so, from prehistoric remains to 21st century architecture, Cities and Areas can show their heritage across its full diversity. Today, a network of 184 cities and countries show off their knowledge and know-how throughout

Nearby...

Amiens, Beauvais, Boulogne-sur-Mer, Cambrai, Chantilly, Laon, Lille, Noyon, Roubaix, Saint-Omer, Soissons benefit from the label City of Art and History. Lens-Liévin, Senlis, Ernemonville benefit from the name Area of Art and History.

The Heritage Department

This department coordinates all the actions of valorising and raising awareness of the heritage, in a wide context, of Saint-Quentin, City of Art and History: architecturally and historically important buildings (public and private), archaeological, written, natural, cultural, memorial and intangible. It offers year-round discovery tours, exhibitions, lectures and heritage workshops for all the public: Saint-Quentinois, tourists and young people, in and out of school time.

Direction du Patrimoine

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saint-quentin.fr







