

THE CHARTRES PROJECT

And the lord did grin. . .

Don't let the word "Chartres" make you nervous. We are not (let me just repeat this, in the way that long-time society members are prone to do) We are not – going to reconstruct the Cathedral of Chartres. We are, however, going to try to capture the ambience, the "sacred space," if you will, of that place, by borrowing key elements and pooling our resources.

We face serious limitations, of course. We have a limited space to work with (the barn at Cooper's Lake Campground.) We have limited finances (whatever we can scrape up) and we have to be able to transport everything to the event site, then set it up in two hours.

Fear not. We now have a network of 150 guild members, along with a few dozen willing choir members to help.

I have been working with Lord Aelfric and Lord Richard, two fine artisans in my area, to develop sketches and a "plan" for the project. All of the items are taken from research on the site. What follows is a preliminary list of the objects, props and assistance we will need. If you think you would like to lend a hand in any of these elements, please write me as soon as possible. Tell me your experience (none is really necessary) and I'll try to divide the work up fairly. After I get your letters, I will send out individual plans and instructions to each person, so that (this is critical) all the pieces look like they came from the same universe.

Incidentally, anything you make for the "set" remains your property, unless you want to donate it to the guild. Unfortunately, that won't do much good unless we intend to store the whole set somewhere in Pennsylvania.

Let me just say one last thing. **Please don't commit to building something unless you're sure you can finish it, and get it to the Pennsic war by Thursday evening at 5:00, when we will have a meeting,** and do an inventory of all of the assembled pieces. If you're unsure, send cash to help the rest of us poor sods pay for all of this construction.

Stained Glass Windows

These are really the heart of the matter. We will need at least 10 windows measuring approximately 2 by 8-ft, made using a "simulation" technique similar to



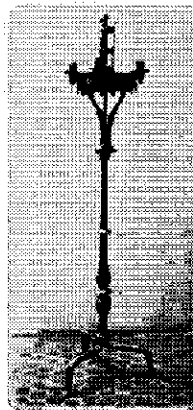
One of many stone figures from Chartres

the one described in this issue. Building the windows will require minor woodworking ability to make the frame, but the rest should be relatively easy.

I also need someone (i.e. a calligrapher or artist type) to convert photos of stained glass windows from Chartres into line drawings that can be used as templates for each window. We want them all to be different. I suspect that each window will cost about \$25 to make. That's a very rough, very preliminary guess.

Iron Chandeliers/Candelabras

We just finished the prototype for one of the candelabras, and will be printing the article in the summer issue. We need at least seven more. To build these beauties, you need basic metalwork tools: a vice, hammers, an anvil or steel block, a grinder, some hand files and a decent welder. A buzzbox like I have won't do it. I suggest that each person willing to try builds two candelabras. We also need two hanging chandeliers based on the same design. I suspect that each candelabra will cost about \$25, but if you can scrounge the metal, they might be built for much less. Write for plans.



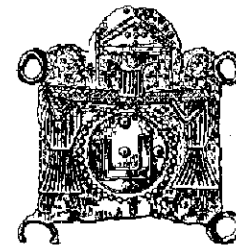
Shrine of the Virgin/Shrine boxes

The most famous relic of Chartres was a piece of cloth said to be from the Virgin's veil. We need one – a shrine that is, that can be carried by two bearers. It is most often depicted as a gabled reliquary on a litter. This will require some woodworking skill – to create the gothic cornices.

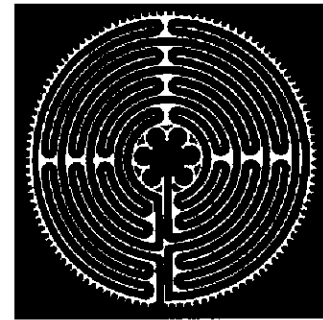
Along similar lines, we need two other shrine-shaped boxes to hold 5-ft. figures. The boxes will be shaped similar to that of the Virgin's shrine, and will serve as portal guardians at the entrance to our space.

Pilgrim's tokens

Here's a real detail element. We need someone to create a model, make a mold and cast about 100 pilgrim's tokens (or more, if they're easy). They should be made of lead, as the originals were. The pattern shown is from the 13th century, and shows two relic bearers carrying the shrine of the virgin's veil. The tokens will be sold prior to and after the performance (for about 50 cents) as they were in the 13th century. I suggest that whoever makes them take out his or her expenses, and donate the rest to a deserving charity, such as the *Known World Architectural Guild*.



Pilgrim's token



The Labyrinth

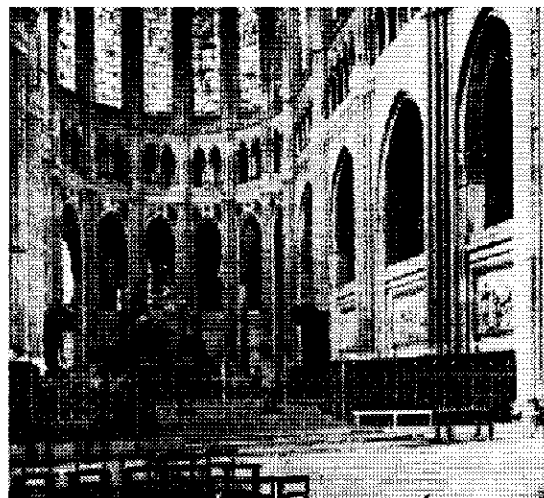
Floor Treatment: The Labyrinth

This pattern of stones lies in the nave of Chartres, and has great religious significance. It has 11 rings that define one path to the center, and the inner self (God, if you will). We need someone to recreate this sacred ground, perhaps by painting a canvas floorcloth of about 16-ft. diameter. I suggest that we recreate this using a heavy painted canvas, with texturing effects.

of papier mache, plaster, and other such goodies. Anyone with any sculpting abilities could really help out by taking on a couple (or a few) of these meticulous items. They promise to be among the most visually stunning effects in the whole project.

The Choir Gate

We want a trellised gate to put in front of the altar area. At least part of the gate should be iron, to make sure we get the right sound when we open and close the two swinging doors. The rest could be done theatrically to look like iron – or if you have access to cheap metal, we could do the whole thing of metal. It won't be nearly as ornate as the one shown in the photo, but it should look sturdy and "gothic."



Miscellaneous

For the evening of the performance, we also need several volunteers to serve as ushers/performers. And we need someone (or several someones) to research and sew about a dozen monk costumes from 13th century France. We also need people to help hang lights, and to strike the set late Friday night. In addition, we're looking for a cheap source for tons of black fabric to use as masking. Anybody know a local source? The list goes on. If you want to help, write me a letter and we'll find something you can do. Any of you actively working on

the project will get regular updates this summer.

Human Figures

We need six human figures of about 3-ft height, and two others of about 5-ft. height. These will be replicas of stone figures at Chartres, and will likely be made

Keep the faith
MATTHEW POWER
Arlof, Count of Aranmor