

# UNIT 5. **REBIRTH** OF CITIES

*EUROPE BETWEEN THE 13<sup>TH</sup> AND THE 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY*



# INTRODUCTION

Between the 11th and the 13th century,  
Europe **witnessed** the rebirth of cities.

**why?**

There are two main reasons:

1

Prosperity in agriculture and the  
**increase** of the rural population

2

The reactivation of **trade**

In some cases the cities that already existed started to **grow**.  
In other cases **new cities** were founded

# AGRICULTURE AND POPULATION INCREASE

Agricultural production started to increase from the 12th century:

- New land was created by **cutting down** forests and **draining marshes**.
- In some areas, three-year systems of **crop rotation** were established.
- The **plough** ploughed the soil more efficiently.
- **Irrigation** was **spread**
- The use of **water mills** and **windmills** increased



Food production increased:  
there was less **hunger**

As a result there was a  
population increase



# REACTIVATION OF TRADE

- From the 11th Century **onwards** population and production had grown, **wealth** had increased and there were peace and security.
- Thanks to these conditions, trade could reactivate.

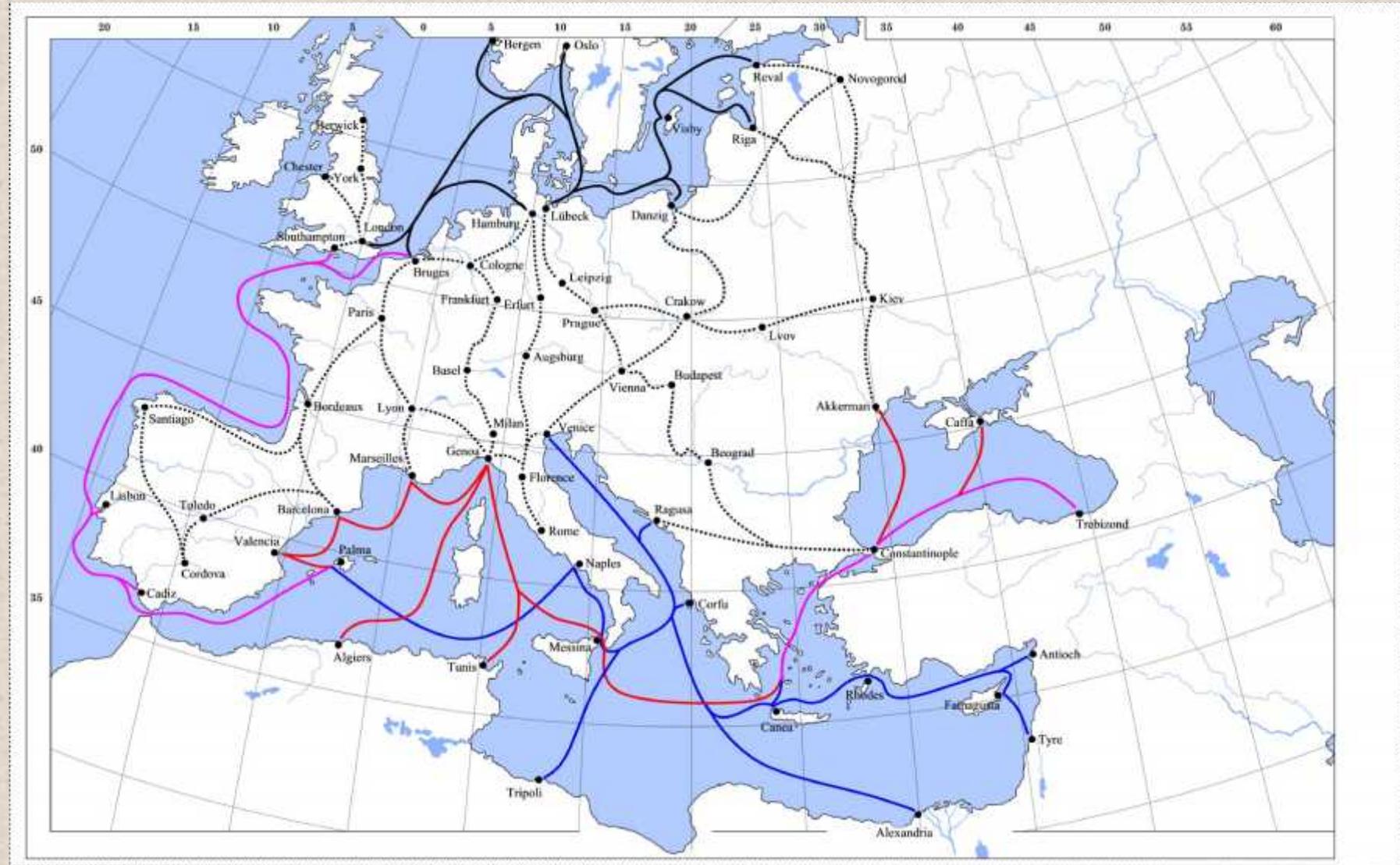
*Two kinds of trade:*

- Regional trade: exchange between cities and the **surrounding** lands.
- Interregional trade: between different regions in Europe, but also with the Muslim world, the Byzantine Empire and the far East



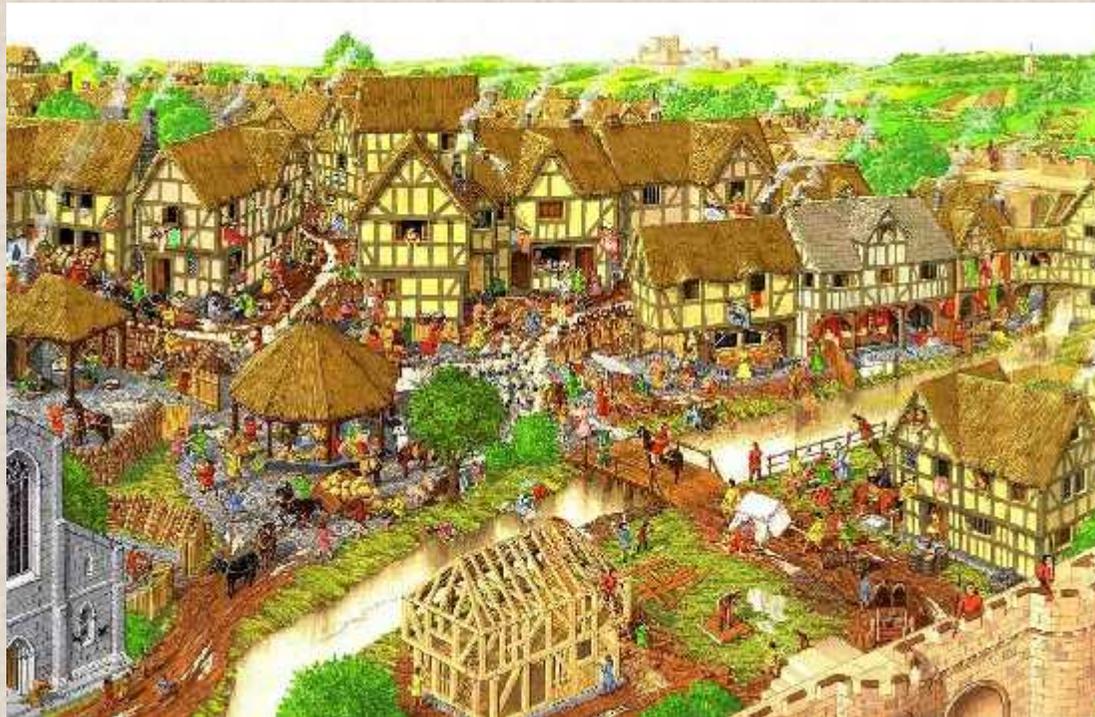
Merchants periodically met at **trade fairs**. There they took products from all regions

# MAP OF THE TRADE ROUTES



# THE URBAN REBIRTH

- Some old cities were revived. But new cities appeared, often near a castle or monastery, at **crossroads** or on a trade route.



1. New farming techniques resulted in less work for people. The peasants had to migrate to cities.
2. Cities offered peasants a better life, far away from the feudal lords. Here they could be free.

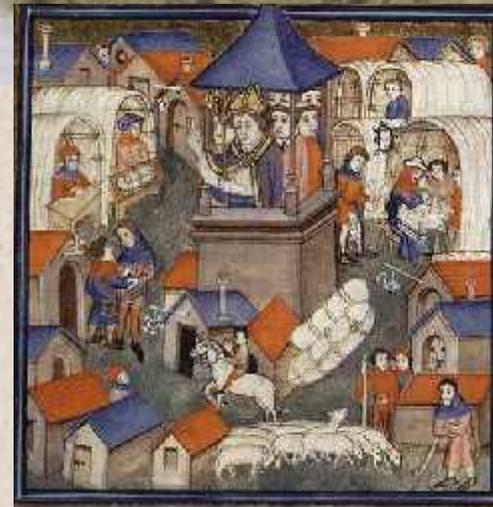
# FUNCTION OF THE CITIES

- Cities had **several** functions:

-**Religious**: the cathedral was the main building

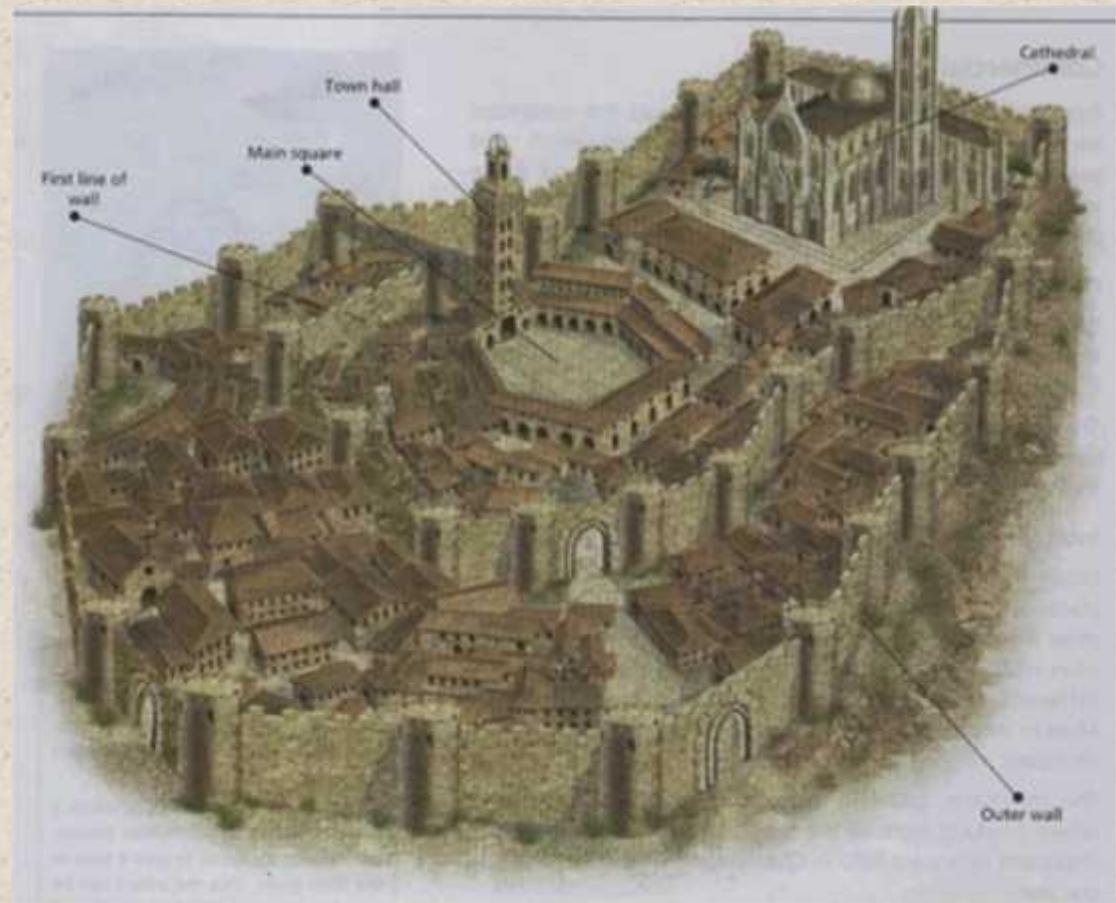
-**Political**: cities were freed from the feudal lords and gained freedom, the **Town Hall** was in charge of the city.

-**Economical**: cities were the centre of commerce, the main point of exchanges was the **Market square**.



# LANDSCAPE OF THE CITIES

Cities were surrounded by walls, the streets were **narrow** and tortuous (**craftsmen** of the same profession often lived in the same street) and most of the houses were made of wood.



# INHABITANTS

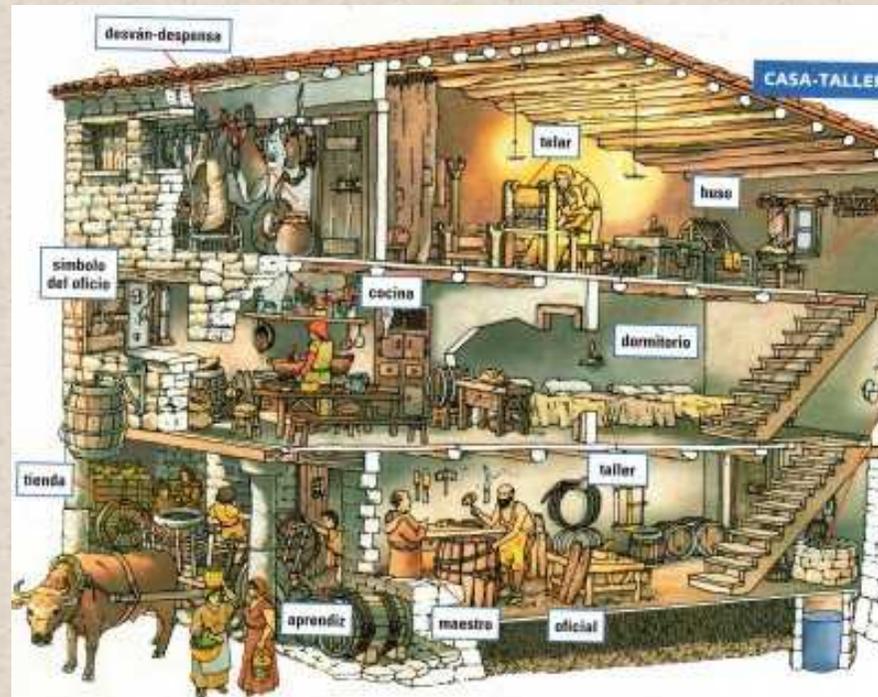


- As a consequence of the rebirth of cities, a new social group emerged: the **BURGHERS**, formed by craftsmen and merchants. The richest **among** them governed the city

Below this group there were **poor** and marginalised people, who did not work and had to **beg in order to** survive.

# CRAFTSMEN

- Because of the growth of the population there was a big demand for clothes and objects, so the number of craftsmen increased.
- They made their products by hand, and worked in small workshops (located in the owner's house)
- Artisans of the same profession joined a guild as an obligation, each one had its own statute ( rights and obligations of the members). Guilds controlled production, prices and workers, but also looked after the members and their families.

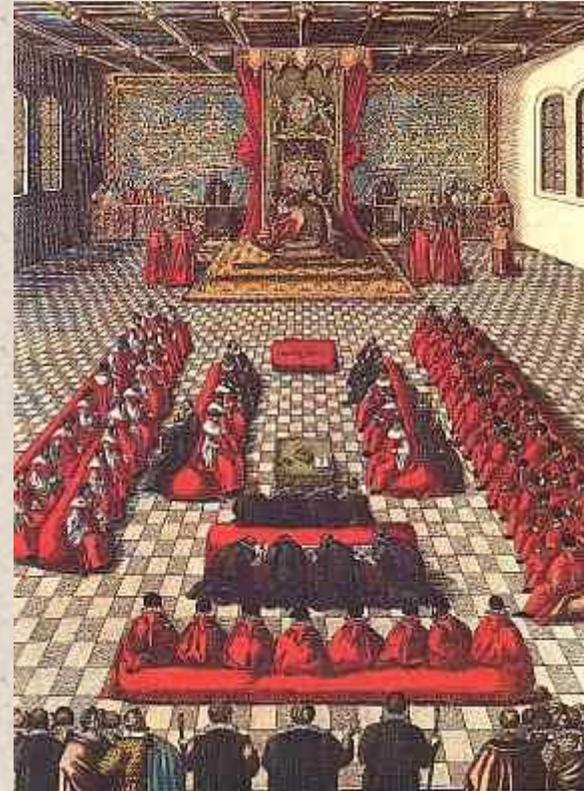


Each trade was divided into three categories of craftsmen:

- Master craftsmen ( owned the workshop)
- Journey men (skilled craftsmen who received wages)
- Apprentices ( they wanted to learn a trade)

# THE POWER OF THE MONARCHIES

- Thanks to the improvement of the economy, the king collected more taxes.
- They strengthened the government by the application of Roman law, they gave the king more power.
- The king began to take power from the nobles, making the cities free from feudal dependence with Charters of liberty. The citizens began to have political power.
- They created parliaments, in which the king, the nobles, the clergy, and the cities mayors were represented. They only met when the king required them.



Medieval parliament

# URBAN CULTURE

- There was a renovation of intellectual life between the 11th and 13th century, part of the urban population gained access to culture: urban schools were created, and later, universities (Salamanca, Cambridge, Bologna).
- Rediscovery of works by ancient philosophers, especially Aristotle.
- Vernacular languages were used in official documents and literature, instead of Latin.
- There were also religious changes: new orders were started by friars who lived in convents in the cities ( Franciscans and Dominicans).



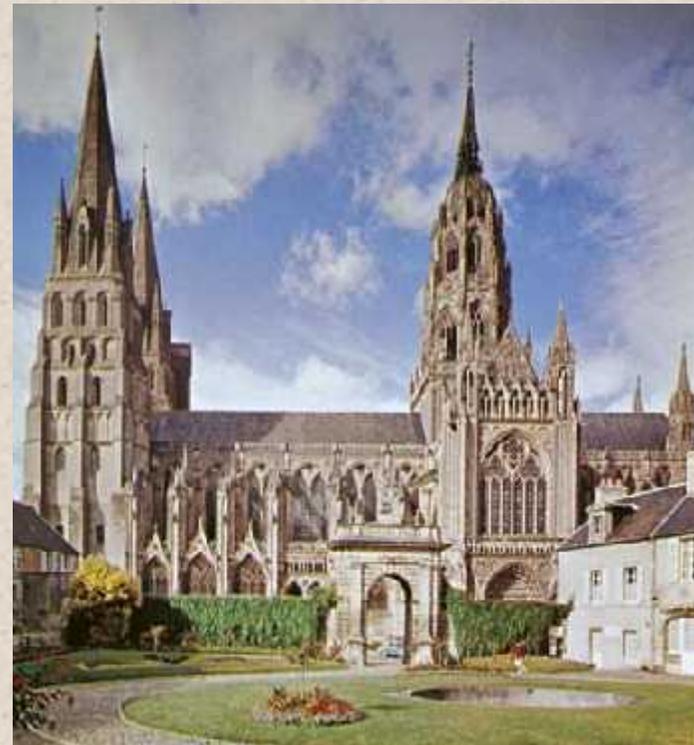
# GOTHIC STYLE

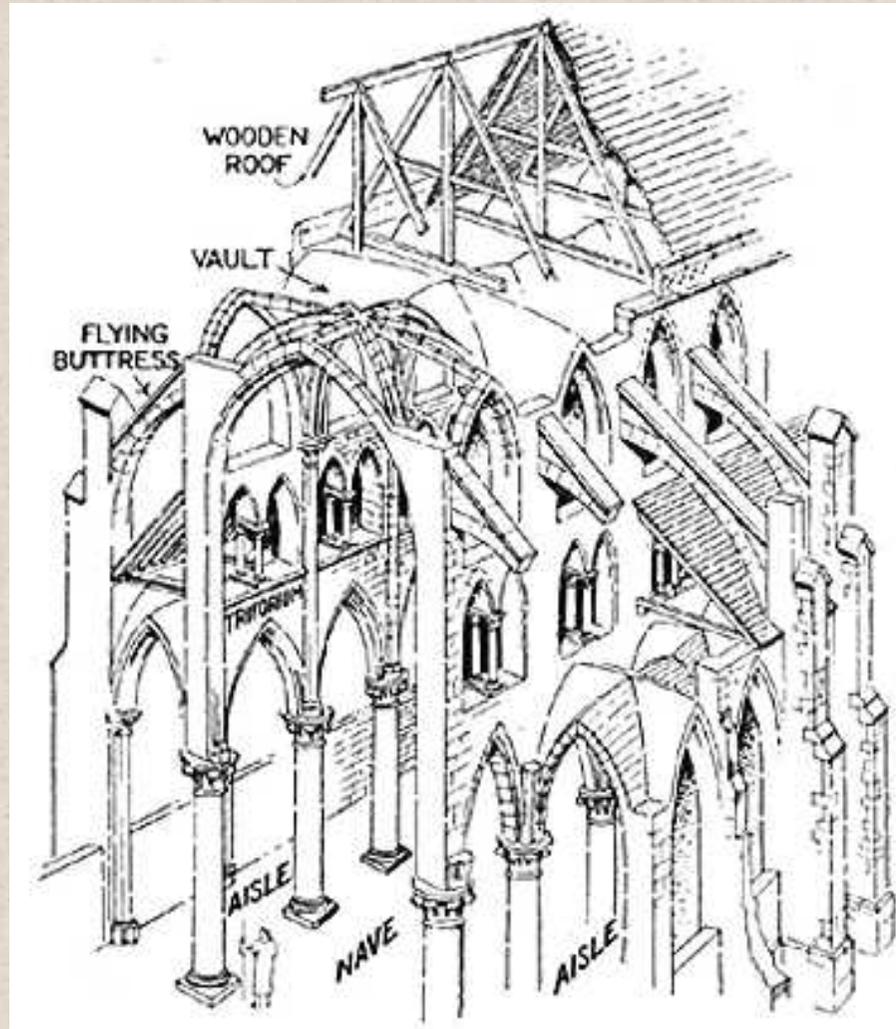
- It appeared in France in the 12th Century and was spread all over Europe.
- Gothic art had a religious purpose, but civil buildings were also built: castles, palaces, town halls, universities, markets, etc. gothic art was mainly urban.

## GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE

The most representative building was the cathedral, that became the centre of the city. Religious services were held there but guilds and municipal councils also met there before town halls were built.

All the corporations of the cities, and the inhabitants too, took part in the construction works and made donations. These took decades.





- There were specialised architects, called “heads of construction”, or “building masters”. They use new techniques that enabled the construction of larger, higher and brighter buildings.
- They used new techniques:
  - 1.- pointed arches and rib vaults
  - 2.- Flying buttresses
  - 3.- Large windows with stained glass and rose windows in bright colours were built
  - 4.- For the ground plan the Latin cross shape continued to be used, but the east end was polygonal not semicircular. The central nave was higher and wider than the side aisles.

# GOTHIC SCULPTURE AND PAINTING

- The sculpture and painting was based on religious topics, but also, sins and virtues, professions and even monsters and imaginary animals.
- They were made according to architecture, to be located in a specific place within a building.
- The representations had a didactic aim, as most of the population was illiterate, images were used to transmit religious knowledge.



- The figures imitated real shapes, they were made in great detail and lost rigidity to become more natural.
- SCULPTURE was based on beliefs and representations of Christ and the virgin with the baby, but the figures started to show human feelings.
- PAINTINGS were no longer placed on walls. Altarpieces ( a work of architecture with carved or painted representations to decorate the altar) using tempera on wood was the most used technique. Paint was used to decorate stained glass windows and miniatures in books.

