



Universe of Stone

Philip Ball

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Chartres Cathedral, south of Paris, is revered as one of the most beautiful and profound works of art in the Western canon. But what did it mean to those who constructed it in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—and why was it built at such immense height and with such glorious play of light, in the soaring manner we now call Gothic?

In this eminently fascinating work, author Philip Ball makes sense of the visual and emotional power of Chartres and brilliantly explores how its construction—and the creation of other Gothic cathedrals—represented a profound and dramatic shift in the way medieval thinkers perceived their relationship with their world. Beautifully illustrated and written, filled with astonishing insight, *Universe of Stone* embeds the magnificent cathedral in the culture of the twelfth century—its schools of philosophy and science, its trades and technologies, its politics and religious debates—enabling us to view this ancient architectural marvel with fresh eyes.

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