



Visualizing Kingship in the Windows of the Sainte-Chapelle (INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR MEDIEVAL ART : MONOGRAPHS)

By R Furneaux Jordan

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This study of the spectacular ensemble of windows of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris—the first in-depth examination of the glass in nearly half a century—asks the question, "are the scenes depicted in the stained glass comprehensible as story?" Through an exhaustive study of textual and visual restoration records and extant authentic panels, Jordan posits reconstructions of the chapel's large-scale windows as they would have appeared in the 13th century. Jordan's work employs medieval understandings of narrative theory and practice to demonstrate a coherent and intertextual story of kingship in the windows' implicit antiphonal invocation of Biblical heroes and Capetian monarchy. Each chapter examines a formal aspect of the narratives depicted in the windows and elucidates it through comparison with similar techniques employed in medieval literature and articulated in the *ars poetriae*, rhetorical treatises devoted to the theory and practice of medieval storytelling. In the final chapter Jordan draws on both the narrative devices employed in the biblical windows and the evidence of her reconstructions to argue for a new identification of the so-called Relics window as a "Royal" window chronicling the history of the kings of France. Jordan convincingly demonstrates that, far from a cacophonous assemblage of images, the Sainte-Chapelle glass adeptly employs a variety of fashionable narrative devices, and proposes that the chapel's Old Testament windows were "manipulated in such a way as to craft from the biblical narratives a visual essay on kingship that articulates the foremost components of French medieval monarchic rule and the specifically Capetian claims to sacral kingship." In both its theoretical scope and the originality of its reconstructions of the windows, *Visualizing Kingship* provides an important contribution to Art History and intellectual history more generally.

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