

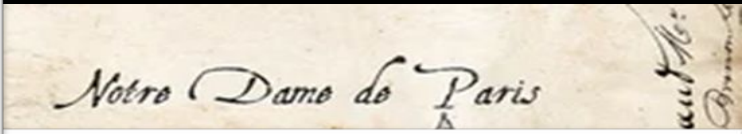


NOTRE-DAME DE PARIS.





Notre-Dame-de-Paris is one of the masterpieces of Gothic architecture in the world, towering over the island of Cité like an enormous ship anchored by powerful buttresses. The Cathedral of Notre-Dame-de-Paris is a massive structure, the result of an elaborate architectural design which implements to some extent the traditions of the Romanesque style.



Notre Dame de Paris was built on the site of the old Cathedral of Saint-Etienne, which in turn was built on the site of a Gallo-Roman temple dedicated to Jupiter.

Construction of this cathedral began as early as 1160, under the patronage of the archbishop of Paris, Maurice de Sully, and was completed around 1345.





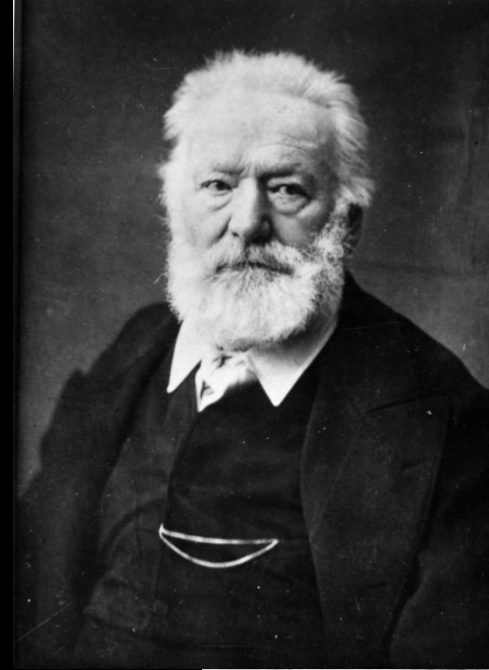
As the centuries passed, however, the cathedral gradually fell into disrepair. It suffered a lot of damage during the French Revolution, when the most furious adherents of the revolutionary idea began to destroy the statues of Jewish kings on the cathedral's western facade, mistaking them for French monarchs out of ignorance and uneducation.

The significance of the cathedral slightly increased after Napoleon Bonaparte was crowned here as emperor in 1804, but by this time the walls of the cathedral were so dilapidated that they even had to be draped to create a majestic coronation setting.

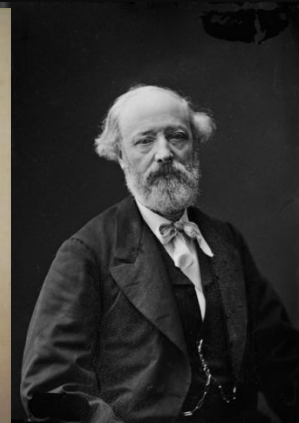
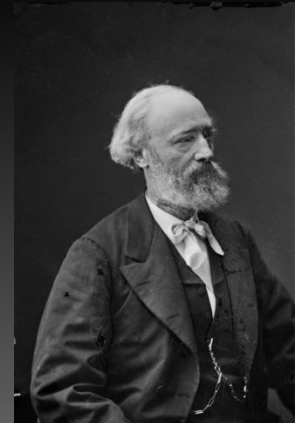


The long-awaited restoration of Notre Dame de Paris began only in the 1920s, largely thanks to the petition of Victor Hugo, who drew public attention to the problem in his novel «Notre Dame de Paris», in which he described the cathedral in detail.

Victor Hugo, like other Romantic authors, was reverent of Gothic architecture, believing that the lofty aisles of great cathedrals provided the best refuge for 'tormented souls'.



The restoration of the cathedral was entrusted to the architect Viollet-le-Duc, who carried out a very extensive and meticulous restoration, according to some specialists, even too meticulous.





Notre Dame is the symbolic centre not only of Paris but also of the whole country: here, on the porch near the cathedral there is a sign (marked with a bronze star) of the so-called 'kilometre zero' point, from which the length of all major roads in France are counted.



Opposite the cathedral, at the end of the square, there are steps that lead to the daylit Crypt of Notre Dame Cathedral, which is worth a visit if you are interested in the history of the island.

This large space beneath the cathedral's porch, the result of archaeological excavations, shows the remains of the old cathedral and the streets and houses that once surrounded Notre-Dame-de-Paris.





On 15 April 2019, at 18:20 CET, a fire alarm went off in the cathedral. The temple administration began evacuating visitors who had gathered for a scheduled Mass, before going off on their own to search for the source of the fire.

Staff speculated that the alarm might have been false, as they did not see the source of the fire. Firefighters arrived on the scene fifteen minutes after the call, but they were unable to stop the fire quickly. It took 14 hours to fight the fire. A total of 400 firefighters were involved in extinguishing the fire. At the moment restoration works are being carried out.



Interesting Facts



It is said that medieval alchemists encoded the secret of the Philosopher's Stone in the geometry of Notre Dame.

The chimeras, gargoyles and other figures of Notre Dame convey to us the psychological ideas of its builders, mainly the idea of the complex nature of the soul.



Another legend is of the devil smith. The gates of Notre Dame are decorated with a remarkable pattern of wrought iron with equally remarkable iron locks. They were forged by a blacksmith called Biscornet. When the smith heard that he would have to forge the locks and patterns for the gates of Paris' most beautiful cathedral, he got cold feet. Thinking that he would never be able to cope with it, he tried to get the devil to help him. The next day, when the canon of Notre Dame came to see the work, he found the blacksmith unconscious, but in the forge he saw a real masterpiece: shaped locks, applied wrought patterns, which were openwork intertwined leaves – in a word, the canon was satisfied. The day the gate was finished and the locks were inserted, it was impossible to open it! We had to sprinkle them with holy water.



The 6-tonne bell hanging in the right tower of the cathedral has an extraordinary sound. It is said that it owes its pure and expressive sound to gold and silver. When the bell was cast in bronze as a gift to the cathedral in 1400, Parisian women threw their precious jewellery into the molten mass. This bell, according to legend, was struck by Quasimodo. However, legend has it that no strongman could swing it on his own.

Thank you for your attention

