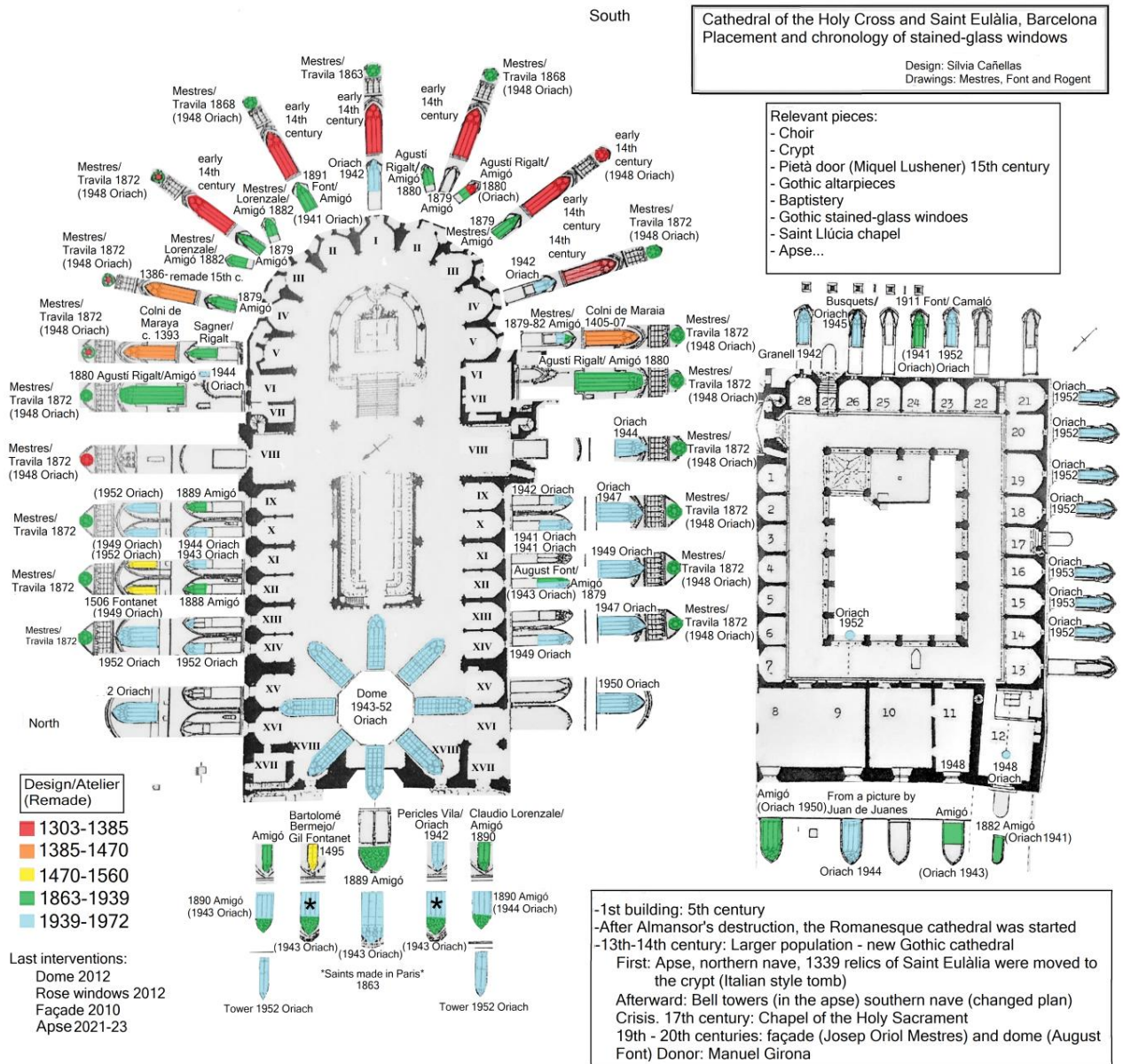


## The Stained-Glass Windows of Barcelona Cathedral

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While the remains of prior buildings exist, the current Barcelona Cathedral is a building begun at the end of 13th century (1298), which – like most of the great religious works of its time – took generations to complete. Gothic works are mixed with others of Renaissance or baroque style and with contributions in the neo-Gothic style. But what we have is, above all, work resulting from the different ideas about Gothic style of later periods. We only need to look at the western façade to understand this: a 19th-century neo-Gothic wall (as in Milan or Cologne) covers the façade that had remained unfinished since the early 15th century, and a dome and side towers reconstructed during the 1940s, replace the ones that were built in the early 20th century, destroyed by a bomb in 1938.

The building is a basilica of three naves, with ambulatory, radiating chapels and false crossing. It also has chapels in the side naves. Two peculiarities must be noted: the dome is near the main façade and the structure (and windows) of the northern and southern tribunes are different.

### The oldest stained-glass windows: the apse

As an antecedent to the Gothic stained-glass windows, for the Romanesque cathedral we have documentary evidence that some of them were placed in the 11th century. Remains of these could be a flat glass fragment with grisaille found in the excavations, which is exhibited at the Museu d'Història de Barcelona (Museum of the History of Barcelona – MUHBA).

The Gothic cathedral was built by using the pre-existing Romanesque construction that was demolished as each sector of it was completed. This must be taken into account to understand what happened with the windows as these were also carried out by sectors.

The stained-glass windows of the Gothic Cathedral began from the centre of the triforium in the apse and continued symmetrically on both sides.

The central stained-glass window (HI or H101) is dedicated, like the whole building, to the *Holy Cross and St Eulàlia*. It seems to be the oldest window of the Cathedral. A beautiful image of St Eulàlia (the old patron saint of the city) presides over the central lancet. Above the saint, there is a Gothic canopy and above it a crucifixion. The geese that Eulàlia led from Sarrià to Barcelona (still reflected by the presence of these animals in the cloister) complete the central lancet. In the side lancets are the coats of arms of Catalonia and of the Bishop Ponç de Gualba, who died in 1334, which delimits the chronology of the stained-glass window. In the traceries there are cathedral crosses. In the central rosette of the tracery we can see, with good binoculars, two wonderful heads made of silver stain from a 16th-century intervention.

On both sides of the centre (NII or N102, SII or S102), there are two stained-glass windows, one dedicated to *St Peter* and the other to *St John the Evangelist*. They correspond, like those of the rest of the apse, to the old dedications of the chapels underneath them. Both saints seem to be the result of the same cartoon, simply reversed and with small changes due to the different dedication. The side lancets of the two pieces are identical, with the coats of arms of the Catalan counts (Crown of Aragon kings) framed by some borders from which some parrots sing. In the central lancets, some panels have been changed from their original place. Here, the rooster of St Peter and the eagle of St John share the space with the saint located under the canopy. The image of St Peter with a red tunic and a green mantle carries the symbolic keys. The face, still whole despite the crack in the glass, is one of the pieces with the best work of the set. St John wears a red tunic and a blue mantle and holds a pen and a book in his hand. The text of the pages in this book is made up of arabic numbers.

The window of *St Stephen* (NIII or N103) is the next one in the north. God in a mystic mandorla is on the canopy above the saint. St Stephen wears a blue dalmatic and is very well preserved. On the decorative lancets, there are coats of arms of Barcelona. With more historical interventions, the stained-glass window of *Bishop St Nicholas* (SIII or S103) also has coats of arms from the city around the central image. Notable in this stained-glass window is the panel featuring sailors whose heads and hands are placed in a single piece of glass fashioned in delicate grisaille.

The stained-glass window of *St Michael* (SIV or S104), a little later, is dominated by blue tones and has angels around it, many of them rebuilt in the last centuries. In the central lancet is St Michael fighting against the demon. The images have lost a lot of grisaille and have many new glass pieces. The canopy, which begins as in the older stained-glass windows, changes in the upper panel, which was rebuilt in the 19th century.

As appears in the books of the Arxiu Capitular de Barcelona, the stained-glass window of *Pope St Sylvester* (NIV or N104) was installed in May 1386, and two months later metal protection was installed. Later, it suffered many problems and might have been rebuilt in the 15th century. Today there is a lot of glass from different periods. The main saint is placed under a canopy very different from the previous ones, more volumetric and based on later Gothic models. In the side lancets, there are heads of bishops and cardinals and St Peter and St Paul are above them, placed on the sides of a Christ in Majesty sitting on a throne that already has some perspective.

The last Gothic stained-glass windows in the apse were made in the early 15th century. The stained-glass window of *St Anthony* (SV or S105), to the south, most damaged, is a documented work by Nicolau de Maraya from 1405 to 1407. It has many non-original pieces of glass and a lot of figuration has been lost: donors, who appear in the lower part, are almost unrecognisable, the temptations of the saint look like sea horses and the knights are a mosaic of strange pieces. On the side lancets, the regularisation of

the lines and the loss of the decorative richness of the original are also clear. However, the window of *St Andrew and St Lawrence* (NV or N105) is better preserved. If the shield that is represented at the feet of St Andrew corresponds to Bishop Joan Ermengol (1389–1408), the two stained-glass windows could have a similar chronology, and also the same maker. It is one of the most accomplished pieces of our stained-glass windows with a rich composition that rises from the central lancet's base to the tracery. Nicolau de Maraya is revealed here as the great master who worked in our lands. The painter from Troyes worked in various Catalan churches and institutional buildings, but all that remains of his work is these stained-glass windows and those of the Church of Santa Maria de Cervera.

Some of the rose windows of the central nave (n203, n204, n205, s203) still have Gothic parts, but most are neo-Gothic works with remains from different historical moments. The central rosette of the apse (h201) dates from the year 1863 and the closest to the door is from 1872. They were made by Ramon Travila following the designs of the architect Josep Oriol Mestres. But all of them have interventions from the 1940s by the Oriach atelier.

Between 1477 and 1580 the Fontanet atelier dominated Catalan stained-glass windows production. Gil Fontanet was the founder of the atelier that his brother Jaume took over, followed by his son, also called Jaume. When the latter died, first his widow and then his daughter, both called Elisabeth, led the atelier. There are remains of his works in Girona Cathedral, in the Church of Sant Just i Pastor and in Santa Maria del Mar in Barcelona. One of his works is conserved in Barcelona Cathedral, the *Noli me tangere* (n018), made in 1495 by Gil Fontanet according to the project by the painter from Cordoba Bartolomé Bermejo. An altarpiece from this Gothic painter of Flemish tendency, *The Pietat Desplà*, is preserved in Barcelona Cathedral, and there are works by him in many museums and churches. The stained-glass window shows the apparition of the resurrected Christ to Mary Magdalene and the evangelical text "*Noli me tangere*". The work has a column with "candelieri" that was introduced in the 16th century.

At the end of the 15th century, work on the façade stopped but continued inside the building. Nevertheless, no stained-glass survives from these times. Only two heraldic windows (N109, N110 with family Foixà coats of arms) conserve the geometric designs made in the 16th century. The last stained-glass window dating from the 16th century, of which there are photographs, disappeared with the explosion of a bomb in 1938. The baroque windows in Barcelona Cathedral, made by the Saladriga atelier, have also disappeared. The problems with sieges and bombs, together with the idea of the recovery of the medieval past that dominated in the 19th century, affected above all the pieces of the 17th and 18th centuries made with more delicate materials and a different aesthetic.

### 19th and 20th century

Amigó, the most important Catalan atelier in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century for the restoration of stained-glass windows, worked in Barcelona Cathedral from 1879, where he made many stained-glass windows. His collaboration with the best painters of the moment has left us works designed by Agustí Rigalt such as the last stained-glass windows in the apse (N106, S106, opened at the end of the 19th century) and *The Evangelists* in the chapel s002. In chapel n003, there are stained-glass windows made by Amigó following a design by the painter Claudi Lorenzale.

In 1909, the Rigalt and Granell atelier made the stained-glass window in chapel n005 following the designs of the architect Enric Sagnier. Rigalt and Granell was the most important atelier of Barcelona during the art nouveau period. The dome's stained-glass windows were made by the same atelier in 1915 but these windows disappeared with the 1938 bomb, and Oriach made new stained-glass windows between 1943 and 1952. The cloister retains a Granell and Company stained-glass window dated 1942.

The images of the saints that the French workshop of Jules Decoin made in 1863 have disappeared and in their place there are new saints installed by the Oriach atelier, which did most repairs after the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939). In 1952 the Eucharistic Congress was held in Barcelona. At that time the electric lighting of the monument was installed and a great deal of renovation was carried out, including many stained-glass windows which were repaired or made new, such as those in the towers and the cloister.

