



# The Symbolism of the Christian Temple

*Jean Hani*

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Jean Hani, professor emeritus at the University of Amiens - where he taught Greek civilization and literature - has long labored to recover and illuminate various aspects of Christianity. His findings have been presented in several works: *Divine Craftsmanship*, *The Divine Liturgy*, and *The Black Virgin* (all published by Sophia Perennis), as well as *Aperçus sur la Messe*, *La Royauté*, *Du Pharaon au Roi Très Chrétien*, and a collection of articles entitled *Mythes, Rites et Symboles*. His aim has been to integrate the latest findings in the history of religions with the perennialist spiritual perspective of such writers as René Guénon and Frithjof Schuon. That sacred art no longer exists today is all too clear, despite the intense efforts of some to make us believe in the value, in this respect, of the most questionable productions. We can perhaps speak of a religious but certainly not a sacred art; indeed, between these two notions lies a radical difference rather than a nuance. True sacred art is not of a sentimental or psychological, but of an ontological and cosmological nature. This being so, sacred art will no longer appear to be the result of the feelings, fantasies, or even 'thought' of the artist, as with modern art, but rather the translation of a reality largely surpassing the limits of human individuality. Sacred art is precisely a supra-human art. The temple of former times was an 'instrument' of recollection, joy, sacrifice, and exaltation. First through the harmonious combination of a thousand symbols founded in the total symbol that it itself is, then by offering itself as a receptacle to the symbols of the liturgy, the temple together with the liturgy constitute the most prodigious formula capable of preparing man to become aware of the descent of Grace, of the epiphany of the Spirit in corporeity. It is a matter of urgency, then, to recall what is true sacred art, especially since - praise God - here and there more and more active signs of resistance to the anarchy and subversion manifest themselves, and a pressing call is felt to recover the traditional conceptions that must form the basis and condition of any restoration.

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