

Toledo, the city of the three cultures



Toledo is **one of the most beautiful cities in Spain**, it is the **capital** of our region, **Castilla y La Mancha**.

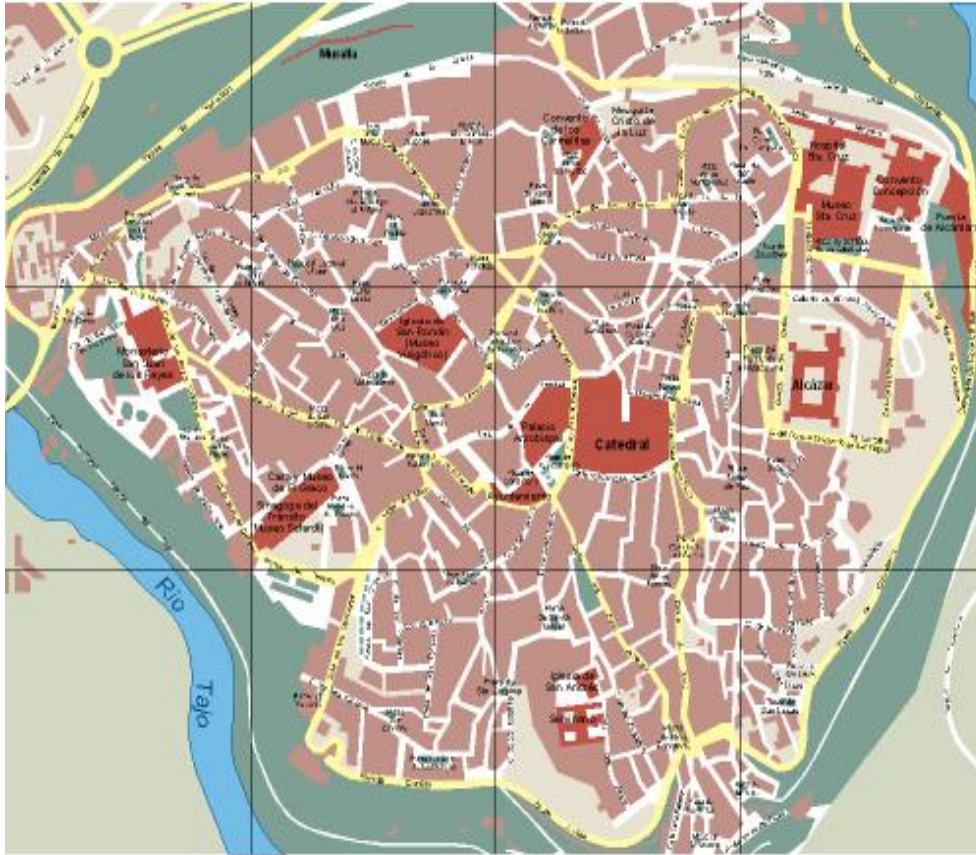
Toledo is located **close to Tajo river**, on a little hill. It was an **strategic place**, very easy to defend from the enemies, for this reason, Toledo was a very important city in different times of the Spanish History.

It was the **capital in the visigothic period** (507-711). The visigothic people came from Germany like other gothic people who lived in Europe in the Middle Ages.

Toledo was also an important city in **Al-Andalus** (it is the Spanish Muslim name). It was conquered in 1085 by Alfonso VI, the Castilla's king.

Toledo was also the capital during the kingdom of **Charles I**. This emperor was also king of **Germany**, where is known by the name of **Charles V**. You can see in the “Bisagra Gate” the **symbol** of the Habsburgo Royal Family, **the eagle with two heads**.

Toledo is called “**The city of the three cultures**”, because Christians, Jews and Muslims lived and worked together during the XII and XIII century. But, unfortunately this period of pacific coexistence, **finished during the kingdom of the Catholic Kings**. In fact, in 1492, Jews and Muslims were expelled from Spain.



This is Toledo's map. As you can see, it is like the **muslims' cities plane**, with irregular, narrow and small streets .

You can find a lot of **labyrinth streets** in Toledo.



This is another view of Toledo's plane, as you can see, the city is **absolutely protected** by the river.

The **“Judería”** neighbourhood was the place where the Jews lived during the Middle Ages.



Ancient “Bisagra” Gate

It was also called the gate of Alfonso VI because it is said that the king went into the city by this gate when it was conquered. The gate was built in the **IX century**.

It is an example of **muslim art**, one of the most important characteristics are the horseshoe arch and the califal arch.

The Gate was a part of the **ancient wall** and it was the place where people went into the city.



The Bisagra Gate

It was built during the **Carlos I** kingdom (XVI century). The **eagle** with two heads is in the top of the gate. It was the symbol of the German Empire.

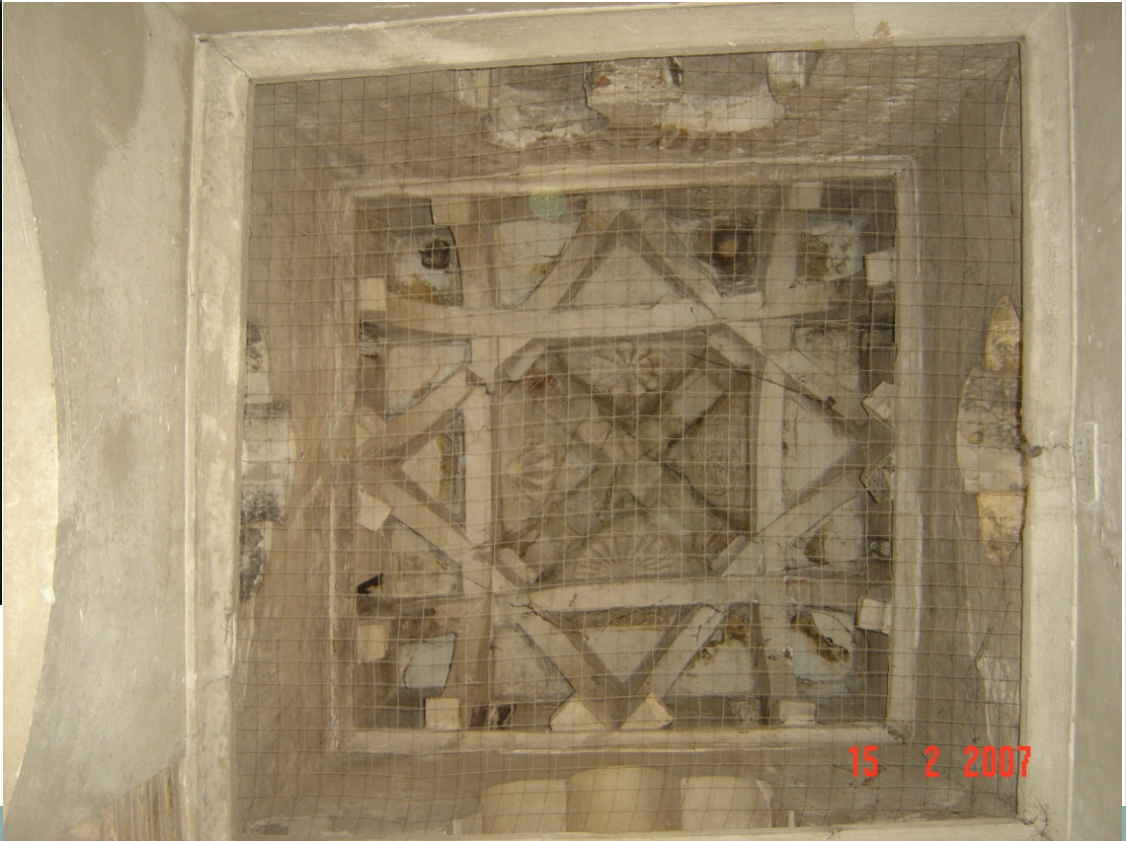
This gate is close to the ancient gate.



It is the only mosque you can see in Toledo it is called “**Cristo de la Luz**” mosque, or **Bab al Mardum mosque**. I was built in 999.

The muslim art uses **horseshoe arch**, and **lattice** built in brick material, it is a poor and soft material so the artists could work easily with it.

These are different indoor views of the mosque, you can see the columns and the typical muslim dome.





Here you can see another typical muslim arch, it is like a clover, the bricks are painted in two different colours.

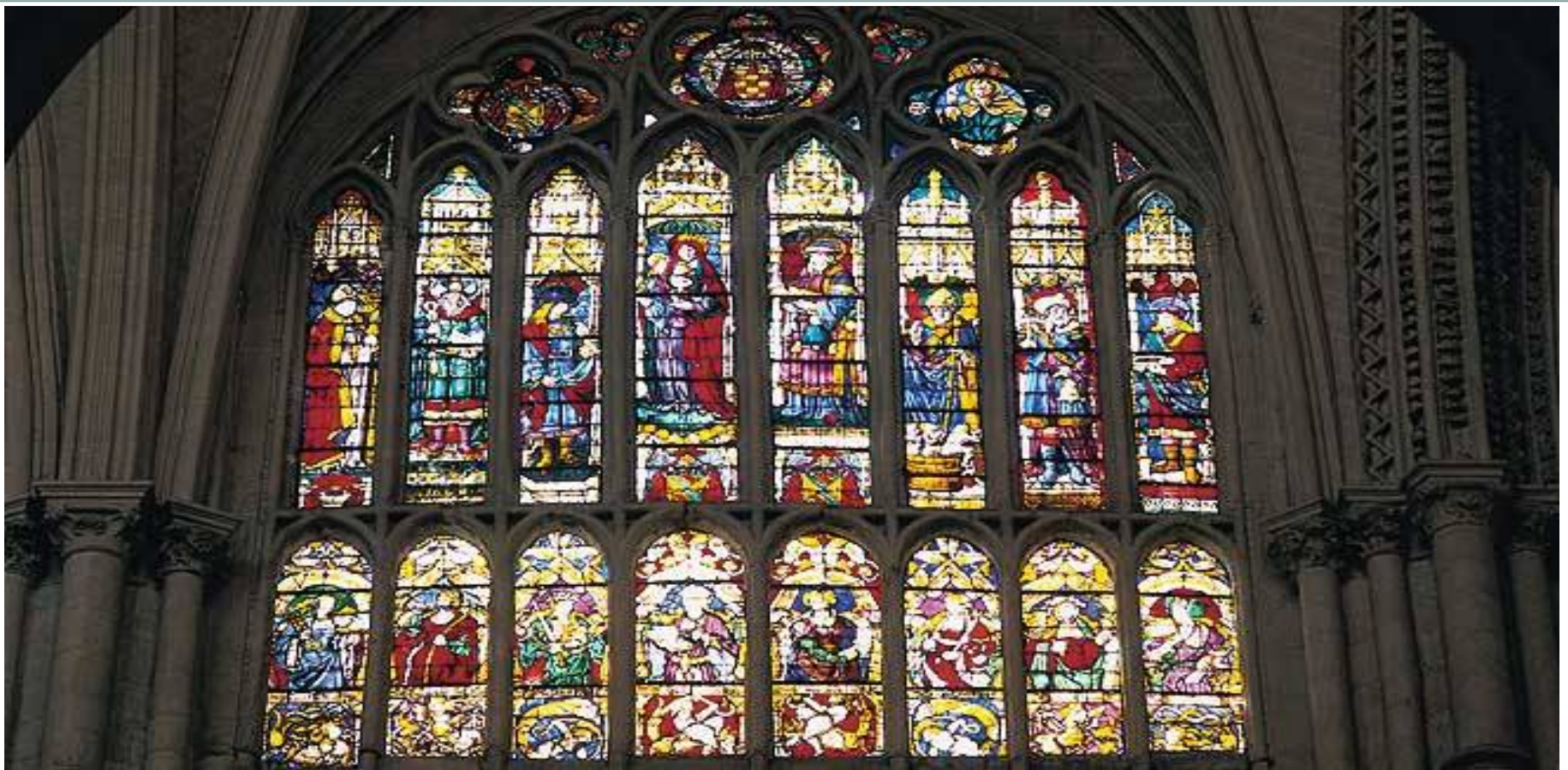


This is the cathedral, it is a good example of **Spanish Gothic style**. It was built in the **XIII century**. One of the most important characteristics of this art is the **height** of the buildings. They **looked for God**, so that, the buildings should be too tall.

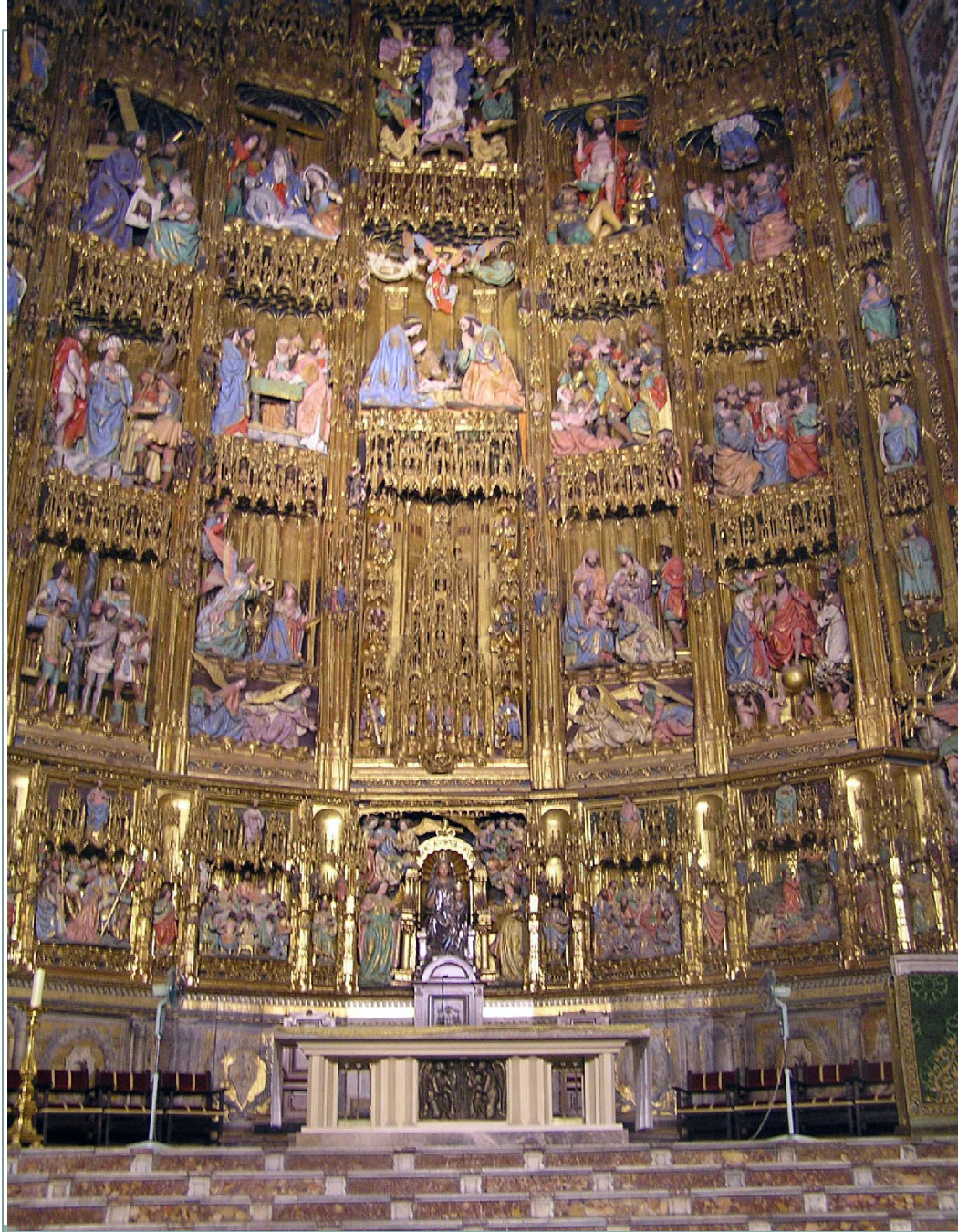
The archs are pointed, because these archs are going to see the sky.



<http://quierounafoto.blogspot.com>



Another important thing in the Gothic art is **light**. The Gothic Cathedrals have a big **stained glass windows**, they are decorated with **Bible scenes**, in the Middle Age people didn't know how to read, so, the stained glass windows were like a book, like the Bible.



. This is the “**altar piece**” which is very common in Spanish churches. It is divided in different parts decorated with sculptures. It is made of **wood and decorated by gold coated.**

The scenes are also about the Bible and the objective is the same that in the last one, to “**teach**” the **Bible** to people who didn’t know how to read.



This is the
“**Transparente**” of
Toledo’s Cathedral. This is
one the best examples of the
Baroque art.

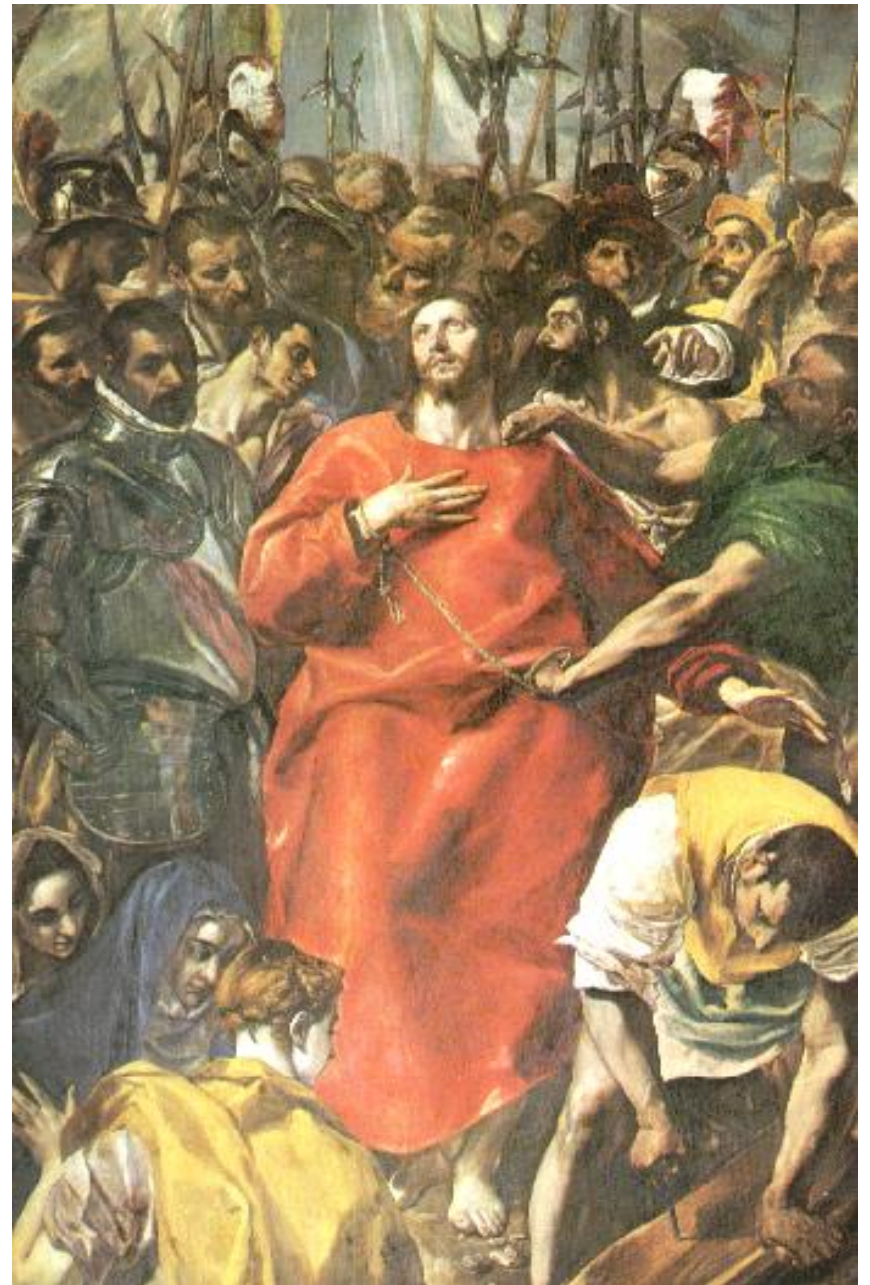
The most important
characteristic is the
decoration and the light that
comes from the window and
gives in front of the
sculptures.

There is a little museum devoted only to paintings in the Cathedral, where you can see one of the most important pictures by **the Greco, The Expolio.**

It is a picture from the XVI century and represents the moment when **Christ is going to be crucified.**

The **red colour is the symbol of the blood.**

Toledo is celebrating this year the fourth centenary of El Greco's death.





“Saint John of the Kings” Monastery. It was built in the XV century, after the conquered of Granada in 1492, during the Catholic Kings Kingdom.

One of the most curious characteristics of this building is the wall, where we can see the **chains used by the christians prisioners** before the conquered of Granada by Catholics Kings .





The monastery is full of the Catholic Kings symbols, like the **eagle**, the arrows, and their initials (I and F) .

The arrows are the symbol of the unity of Spanish people, because an arrow is too weak, but a lot of them are very strong.

Some of this **symbols were used by Franco** because the Fascism wanted to remind the Ancient Spanish Empire times.



Transito Synagogue. It was built in the **XII century** by muslim architects, due to this fact, this building is similar to the Muslim , for instance, the building doesn't have big windows, doesn't have any decoration outside, but there is a lot inside the building.



The synagogues are oriented to **Jerusalem**.

In this wall is the **Tora**, the holy book for Jews.

Like in Muslim buildings, the main material is **plaster**, because it is a very soft material, so that, it is possible to decorate the walls easily



**Thank you very much for your
attention.**

**I hope you'll enjoy a lot your visit
to Toledo!!!!!!**