

Medieval Art
in
Focus

FIVE

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St John

From a Calvary Group

Royal Domain (Île de France?)
c. 1226-46

‘And I wept much’
Revelation 5:4



Description

Oak with polychromy
134,6cm high

Condition

See Appendix A

Provenance

With Charles Dikran Kelekian to 1951.
Sotheby's New York 30-09-2004, lot 8.¹
Collection New York to 2013.

Originally part of a Calvary or Crucifixion group, often simply called a 'Crucifix'², but which already in the 12th century included Mary and John either side of Christ on the Cross often towering above them. From the early 13th century on, these tended to be placed on top of newly constructed choir screens or *jubés* rather than behind the altar.

Introduction

There are a number of factors that point to the likelihood that this unpublished figure can be considered a new addition to the corpus of (northern) French wood sculpture of the first half of the 13th century, surviving examples of which can be counted on two hands. It takes its place between the group from Cerisiers of around 1200, now in Sens cathedral, and the figures in the Detroit Institute of Art (Inv. 29.333), ex Michael Manzi collection, of c. 1250 or later and the Schnütgen museum of c. 1250-75. To this list one can add an equally companionless Mary from a Calvary now in Reims (Museum) which is slightly taller at 151cm and described as walnut rather than oak. Dated to 1240 at the earliest, it shares a similar vertical emphasis of long straight lines, but in contrast the sharper angle of the turned right foot, the more freely breaking folds on the ground and the mantle open at the front recall the second half of the century. Preceding it are the oak Calvary figures of similar size in the Louvre from Hainaut of c. 1220-30 (RF 3337 and 3338), who are themselves preceded by the figure of Mary in the church at Verneuil (Eure) of c. 1210-20.

At the same time, however, it stands out from them in a number of specific ways that indicate, as I hope to show, that it might represent the only surviving wood sculpture deriving from the - perhaps Parisian - milieu that had produced the figural sculpture of the central or Judgment doorway of the West front of Notre Dame Paris and the West front of Notre Dame Amiens, as both Cerisiers and Ramousies belong to a different tradition from that of Île de France, while the Virgin at Verneuil, though related, is derived from the sculpture of a decade earlier as well as being more provincial in execution³.

The smaller oak figure of St John in Detroit dated to the mid 13th century certainly offers some analogies, - e.g. the well-defined nostrils and thin lips, (disregarding the hollow back and evidence of a dowel hole at the top of the head, presumably left over from a workbench attachment, that are common to most medieval carving and also present on the Ramousies figure), - but the angel-like curls, the lack of breaking folds and softer drapery patterns, and especially the absence of what has been called 'idealism', or conversely, the presence of conventional signs of woe such as furrowed brow in the expression of the Manzi figure (also present on the Schnütgen figure), are marked differences which seem to place it a little later. It seems to be close in this and overall conception to the St John of the Honoratius doorway tympanum Crucifixion at Amiens usually dated soon after the west façade sculpture (Suckale and Kimpel, 1973) and has been compared to the French-inspired figures surviving in Barcelona, Museo Mares, nos 1026 and 1074 (See Gillerman 2001).

It does, however, share one other noteworthy characteristic with the present figure, and with at least one other close contemporary surviving figure *in situ* in the church in Freiburg, Saxony, namely that the head remains relatively straight or upright, whereas Sens, Verneuil and Ramousies show the head inclined towards the supporting hand, while the body remains relatively straight. Instead, in this figure, it is the whole body including the head that forms a slight curve, rightwards, balancing the curve Mary would have made in the opposite direction on the true right side of Christ on the cross.

Another surviving oak figure is the St John from Heggen Church, Norway, now in the Drammen museum, given to 1240-50 and presumed made under English influence. The movement of its drapery is, however, closer to Ramousies in

spirit and it remains too unique a figure stylistically to be useful here.

What most sets this figure apart, besides characteristics of the tunic and mantle to be examined later, is less that the hair style does not exactly follow the more common and traditional (12th century) pattern of straight and flat strands radiating from the crown and terminating in a (sideways) curl, as seen in Ramousies and all Southern (Catalan) examples, so much as a measure of individualization, namely, through the way the eyes and mouth are carved in an otherwise classical or idealized face. With the upper eye lids lowered, as if the eyes are half-closed, and the lower ones almost flush with the eye, the effect hinted seems to be that of tears. If so, it would make it one of the earliest surviving representations in (western) art of this emotional state, anticipating the similar approach of the recently re-found small ivory St John of the Louvre Deposition (OA3935), the *nec plus ultra* in sculpture depicting this subject.

In sum, rather than in the style we know from generally later, especially northern Spanish, examples of St John beneath the Cross, most of which share enough characteristics to deserve the term generic, it seems to be closer to the style of the West facade of Amiens, built under Robert de Luzarches or his successor Thomas de Cormont, itself an interpretation of a new vision developed in Île-de-France in the 1st quarter of the 13th century, even before the reign of Saint-Louis, through the Coronation portal of Notre Dame.



Style

The historical context of the first half of the 13th century in the kingdom of France or 'Royal Domain', as bounded by duchies (such as Flanders and Burgundy), empires (Holy Roman empire) and other kingdoms, such as the lands under control of the English king, is one of great territorial expansion under Phillippe Auguste (e.g. the battle of Bouvines 1214), great administrative consolidation under his grandson Saint-Louis (from 1226 on), and, most notably, the great building and re-building programs of so many cathedrals, including the best known: Chartres, Notre Dame of Paris, Amiens, Strasbourg and Reims. It is no surprise that Gothic architecture and its art not only coincides with the rise of the Capetian dynasty but has been seen as a product of it. For the argument in question here, the key date is probably 1226, the accession of Saint Louis and the death of Saint Francis since both these figures came to loom large in the course of the 13th century.

It is, however, also precisely the period that a Jean Wirth (2004), in his searching little book devoted to this very question, has identified as particularly problematic from the point of view of secure dating, both in France (particularly Amiens and Reims) and elsewhere, e.g. the Braunschweig tomb sculptures of Henry the Lion.



The dating of Gothic sculpture in the first half of the 13th century.

As the surviving documents only tell us more or less accurately when (exterior) work on a Cathedral such as Notre Dame Paris or Amiens started (c.1205 and 1220 respectively) and by when it might have ended (1260s and 1283), the actual dating of each doorway or section remains undocumented and stylistic criteria have always been indispensable. Wilhelm Vöge, one of the earliest and most perceptive scholars in the field of French Gothic, had already articulated some of the key issues and analytic tools that still engage scholars to this day, over and above the dominant characteristic of medieval art when compared to antiquity and focus of its unique beauty: the absence of the nude and the reliance on drapery to express both volume and movement. Thus, firstly the difference in stance with respect to both or only one weight-bearing leg, following antique models, and its influence on 'sway'; secondly, the stylistic differences contiguous at Notre Dame, including questions as to the origins in Paris of a 'hard' style and a 'High Gothic' or second flowering, seen in work such as the Sainte Chapelle apostles; thirdly, the dating of Amiens West façade sculpture; and finally, the direction of influence of all these and other workshops on each other and work further afield, e.g. Strasbourg and Germany, while not forgetting his regret at the greater difficulty in answering these very questions because of the loss of a number of key early 13th century works, especially the trumeau figures at Paris: the Beau Dieu and the Virgin and Child.

That is without mentioning the elephants in the room which are the ones who are no longer in the room: e.g. major monuments such as the abbeys of Anchin and Saint-Bertin, churches such as Noyon and the cathedrals of Arras and Cambrai near Amiens, the latter referenced by Villard de

Honnecourt (c. 1235), whose lengthy (re-)construction from 1148 to 1251 spanned those of Senlis, Laon, as well as Chartres and Amiens, becoming one of the largest and most admired in Northern Europe, and of whose sculptural program not a fragment remains but which would have undoubtedly shed more light on workshops and styles⁴. Reconstructing the history of gothic from remains is thus to some extent like designing a camel from bones not knowing it had humps. A further point of the most direct relevance to the present figure is made by Sauerländer (1970): 'Our view of French sculpture is distorted by the fact that only the architectural sculpture survives in any quantity'.

There is certainly broad agreement concerning the 'evolution' of Gothic, from its inception at Saint Denis and the Chartres Royal portal, via e.g. Senlis and Chalons-sur-Marne, to Sens and Laon, which all remain within the dominance of the 'line' or 'curve'. This was true whether the drapery was largely loose or more clinging ('dampfald'), as in the 'antiquisant' style of around c. 1200 so evident in these last. Of this rediscovery of a classical 'naturalism', also facially, a single surviving Apostle head (Sens, Palais Synodal) is a good example.

However, at the same time the picture was complicated by a very different current that involved a more Byzantine hieratism, a 'harder' (Sauerländer 1959), straighter but also more voluminous style of drapery seen in the Coronation portal at Paris and the Amiens West front, some examples of which are called 'Block style' following an article by Monroe (1978). Again, this opposition between the rounder folds and harsher, angular folds is independent of the degree of 'voluminosity' of the drapery, even though another crucial distinction overlaps all of these considerations, namely between drapery that reveals the body, inherited from the

above-mentioned 'dampfold' style, and a bulkier style that encases and hides body, as seen in the ivory relief sculpture of the diptychs or triptychs brought in from the East already in the late 12th century.

The last stage, the one that became dominant, the 'mature gothic' (Williamson 1995), is agreed to be one that allied various qualities to achieve greater presence and naturalism, with an emphasis on the stance or movement, including greater latitude and movement of draperies. One of the continuing controversies around dating of French Gothic sculpture is precisely whether this perceived change in style between 1220 and 1240 was abrupt (Erlande-Brandenburg) or evolutionary (Gnudi). It is a question whether this transitional stage is reflected in the style here, for, on the one hand this figure seems to participate in this renewal with its longer drapery, while, on the other, it does not yet display the contrapposto, the emphasizing of the weight-bearing leg. Not only does it still seem planted on both feet, as Vöge remarked of the figures at Amiens, notwithstanding that the right foot is turned outwards, the lower drapery either side also reveals a strong symmetry or parallelism while not venturing far from the vertical axis.

A similar question is in play in the controversy about the great differences in style of two of the central or Last Judgment portal tympanum figures at Notre Dame, Paris, Christ and the nail-bearing angel, compared to the other three figures, and whether therefore to date the former two to after 1240 (Gnudi, Erlande-Brandenburg, and others) or invoke simultaneity (Sauerländer and others), which in turn highlights the difficulties in pinpointing stylistic changes to an exact source. Material evidence shows individual placement of these different sculptures, - the outer two of which are relief sculptures and central three fully three-dimensional, - into the

tympanum though all were also placed at the same time, according to Viollet-le-Duc, Erlande-Brandenburg, Taralon. At the same time the fragments from the Resurrection lintel below it (Musée du Moyen Age) show a similar division, one with more advanced drapery forms and heads, another with the standard facial types of the 1220s (see appendix B for a further discussion of this particular problematic). For now, one should say that it is in describing the other angel, with the Cross, which he brings in relation with the Sainte Genevieve now in the Louvre, that Paul Vitry (1929) could speak of the ‘robust and elegant art that opens the reign of Saint Louis’ and of which we would claim the present figure partakes or inherits.

It is a difficulty further echoed in the controversy regarding the dating of the Sainte Chapelle apostles, generally given through documentary evidence to 1243-48, which, because they seem to survive in two or more different styles, reflected in two ways of treating the drapery, especially at ground level, either showing the feet fully or letting the drapery largely cover them, recently led Annette Weber, though not to everyone’s agreement, not only to suggest a different hand but even a different campaign (post 1250).

Even if one posits a later date than in the 1240s for the apostles *in situ* at the Sainte Chapelle that appear larger and with longer, more voluminous and breaking drapery (Gnudi’s ‘precious’ style), those on the 4th and 5th pillar on the north side for example, - the apostles on the west portal of Notre Dame de la Couture in Le Mans of around 1248 and Semur-en-Auxois Notre Dame Church of 1249 (including John), followed by the Bordeaux apostles of probably the 1250s, show that more elaborate breaking folds for apostles had gained currency by that time, perhaps because of Sainte Chapelle work.

Kurmann (2001) and others, in contrast, emphasized the coexistence of different styles at the same time, especially around 1230, for example in the *jubé* of Chartres where there are still echoes of the antique drapery style of the end of the 12th century (Nativity and kings before Herod) with its fine and harmonious lines, and a style new to that decade, which he calls revolutionary, of heavier drapery falling naturally and of expressive faces and gestures (Annunciation to the Shepherds and Dream of the Magi). In other words, both the *Muldenfalten* and a more natural version of the 'block style', either revealing or hiding the body underneath are present. In fact, he claims that in the *jubé* fragments there is also a third style in between these (represented by the Adoration of the Magi and Presentation in the Temple), characterized by stiffer drapery and larger faces that stare rather than contemplate as in the first group. This 'hard style' also hails from Paris but there is no disagreement that it was most developed on the Amiens West facade.

Besides this problematic raised by Kurmann, Wirth has also summarized the debate around the correct interpretation of one of the surviving documents, the charter of 1236, used to date (and re-date) this West façade of Amiens, led by the studies of Erlande-Brandenburg (1997) and Stephen Murray (1976, 1996), by suggesting that the fact that the 'block' style, in its very simplicity, answered to the new demands for faster and more economical building techniques, need not exclude the quality time spent on important figures. He shows through the work of John Lowden on the moralized Bibles of the time how both styles were in use by 1234-5⁵. The main questions posed by Amiens, however, namely what is due to Robert de Luzarches and what to his successor Thomas de Cormont (this latter's son Roger having finished it) on the one hand,

and the specific date of the erection of the West front on the other, remain open (See appendix B).

Since this figure does not fit exclusively in either the *Muldenfalten* or the block camp, - indeed, one could argue it has echoes of the earlier, rhythmic and tightly-drawn Senlis style of 1170 more than the classicizing dampfold one of Sens of 1190, - and being well aware of the dangers of circular reasoning, we would say that one reason for going into some detail on these issues is that the combination of stylistic analysis with a carbon dating whose statistical peaks puts it between 1226-1246, the second quarter of the 13th century, allowing for the generally admitted drying interval between felling and sculpting of anything between 6 months to 5 years⁶ - i.e. possibly in the vanguard of the new currents of the 1230s, - might provide an additional and reasonably straightforward point of reference. However, the calibration falls on a part of the curve with two peaks, representing some twenty years between them, meaning that dating, as always, has after all to rely on style-historical considerations pertinent to both the 1230s and 1240s and it is therefore still partly dependent on the debate as to the more precise dating of the West front sculpture of Amiens, before or after 1236.

Antecedents

One way of framing the stylistic context of sculpture in the first half of the 13th century and any changes across the decades is to compare the treatment of the same subject. The one actually closest to the present figure in overall position and dress, remembering that the mantle likely would have crossed over the left arm behind the book, is actually that of the Virgin and Child.

Of this group, which is or was always present on the trumeau of at least one of the portals dedicated to the Virgin, four examples are generally dated sequentially and three are still *in situ*. These four are of interest because they all predate and are differentiated from the iconic Notre Dame of Paris North doorway figure of c.1250 that helped inaugurate the mature-gothic sway, by standing more frontally, without the marked distinction between weight-bearing and free leg and so without displaying the bend at the hip or S-curve of this latter. Though their right foot is differentiated from the left, by stepping on an asp, for example, it only imparts minimal variation to an essential frontality. Likewise, though John's right foot is turned outwards (towards the Cross), and this twist is reflected in the diagonals of the drapery throughout, his stance is still essentially frontal, unlike the similarly stanced nail-bearing angel at Notre Dame. This is further emphasized by their mantles being drawn tight under the left elbow, across the front to end over the upper left arm, as this St John's was.

The earliest and likely prototype of this series is the lost trumeau Virgin of the Coronation doorway of the West facade at Notre Dame, assumed to stem from the very first decade of the 13th century. It survives in a sketch published by

Alexandre Lenoir (Musée des Monuments Français, 1821).
(Fig 2.)



Fig. 2 sketch of trumeau Virgin by Dupuis

The other three surviving figures, all regarded as stylistically within the ambit of this lost Notre Dame sculpture, are the trumeau Virgin of the West doorway of Amiens cathedral (usually dated to 1225-35) (Fig. 3), the Virgin on the Church at Longpont-sur-Orge, of similar date, and the one at

Villeneuve l'Archevêque (Yonne) (Fig. 4) given to no later than 1240 by Sauerländer. Though Sauerländer rightly saw the Amiens figure as directly inspired by the lost Paris one, Kasarska (2002) has shown that Longpont is even closer: their mantles drawn tight under the elbow, both Paris and Longpont still sport rectangular clasps, and crucially, the Child in each still wears the toga rather than tunic.



Fig. 3 Amiens Cathedral South doorway Trumeau



Fig. 4 Villeneuve l'Archevêque Trumeau Virgin and Child

Draperies

Turning now to what remains of the cloak of the present figure either side, while remembering that the aforementioned trumeau virgins likely give the best idea of what the front and drop over the arm would have looked like⁷, it is pulled tight creating flat and sharp v-folds on the right while falling dead straight on the left. This, as well as the smooth way it falls over the shoulders, is still in the idiom of the first half of the 13th century. Likewise, the billowing S-fold of the very straight left drop of the cloak is still narrow and slightly squared (Fig. 5), variations of which can be seen in both the lost Notre Dame Virgin from before 1210 and the Villeneuve l'Archevêque one of 1240, whereas the figure of King Childebert of similar date, made as a trumeau figure for the refectory of the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-prés and now in the Louvre (ml. 93-N15001), already shows the more voluminous and more tubular vertical folds. In this vertical and restrained treatment it is thus closer to the various Notre Dame torso fragments of c. 1210 in the Musée du Moyen Age or the Sainte-Geneviève of the 1220s in the Louvre (RF 1187) than to the Virgin and Child of the Notre Dame North portal of c. 1250.

Close comparison with the sheer vertical mantle drops of Sheba and Solomon of the Amiens West facade, as well as one of the three Kings there whom Sauerländer already compared with a figure on the early Byzantine Harbaville ivory triptych (Louvre OA 3247), clearly show the debt of all of these and the present figure to this Byzantine style. Together with the stiffer parallelism of folds, it is a feature usually given to the 1220-30s, a last example being the Clovis effigy now in Saint Denis.

In any case, if one compares what is left of the mantle folds on the figure's right with the same on the Ramousies John in the Louvre one can get some idea of the difference between the older, softer, and rounder approach of this latter and the 'harder', more angular style of the former. It also shows that this Byzantine-inspired 'Style dur', that is, the more frontal and solemn compared to the supple and more lively forms of the 'style 1200', a key feature of Amiens as of Longpont, but filtered through the Notre Dame Coronation portal, developed alongside the persistence of the older forms.

Lastly, it is worth noting that it does not seem as if the mantle would have made the 'dish-like' v-folds on this right side that the Paris North portal Virgin of c. 1250 has, and all figures after her. Nor is there any need to see the nick in the drapery in the angle made by the elbow of the left arm, present at Amiens in the Mary figures and others, as evidence of a single artist, as Medding (1930) did: its occurrence here shows merely that the style is consistent with these figures.



Fig. 5 Curve of cloak edge

Breaking folds

The main focus of comparison is, however, what happens around the feet because the style-historical question, to introduce a Germanicism, raised by this sculpture is that of the introduction of the crumpled fold, specifically on the ground.

For not only does it no longer show only the shallower, thinner and sharply parallel folds ‘clinging’, in the classical manner, to the contours of the body, as still seen in the Virgin of Cerisiers of c. 1200, - giving more emphasis instead to the v-folds of the drawn mantle on the one hand, while still preserving much of the thinner parallel folds, e.g. the ridges of the upper part of the tunic on the chest, as at Laon around 1200 or the resurrection fragments from the Notre Dame central doorway (Musée du Moyen Age – Cl. 18643 c), - the truly novel feature is the introduction of somewhat thicker and deeper folds, some with abrupt angles, especially where the drapery breaks over the feet and on the ground, even if the form these angles take at the sides still follows a model reminiscent of the zig-zag folds of the previous century.

Most prominent is a variant of a particularly recent stylistic conceit that was to continue to the end of the Middle ages, of the tunic breaking into two down the leg to form a triangular indent of some depth over the foot. Seen by Vöge as a Parisian trait, it is indeed common on especially the seated archivolt figures of the Judgment doorway, but equally the Sainte-Geneviève, the figures from Saint-Germain l’Auxerrois, not forgetting various Chartres north porch vault figures, derived from this Parisian style of the 1220s.



1. Angular folds

In contrast to the curves of these breaking drapery folds in Paris, however, is the nature of the break here: of drapery sharply folding over itself near the ground sideways or backwards, in this case on the outer sides of the feet, - the other trait being a central fold breaking forwards and folding on itself between the feet (here partly eroded) in a 'crinkly' or 'crumpled' manner, - adding the important proviso that in the present figure these folds are rational rather than fanciful.

This type of angular break is precisely also present, if less symmetrically interpreted, in the three surviving standing trumeau Virgins mentioned above, that of Amiens being the most clear. One could further argue that the lost Paris one already shows a very new and more angular manner of resolving the break of the fold parting at the foot, especially when compared with the perhaps contemporaneous St Anne on the trumeau at Chartres, given by Sauerländer to c. 1205, a year after the relic of her skull was brought back from Constantinople.

This has to be distinguished to some extent from the style already described by Sauerländer (1970) for the Creation scenes of the Chartres North porch (inferred as being done somewhere 1225-30) as 'harshly broken-up, wrinkled', insofar as he refers there to a general body drapery pattern rather than the breaks on the ground and, more importantly, not necessarily following a rationale. Vöge's description of these porches shows there is some degree of connection when he writes (1904): 'The figures in the outer bands of the middle vault of the north porch also show increasing pleasure in angular breaks, heavier folds between knees and sharply turned edges of drapery breaking on the ground. This goes beyond the Parisian level of the Mary portal, and something

similar is only found with the West facade of Amiens.’ This is an interesting observation because, for Sauerländer in 1970, Robert de Luzarches must have taken inspiration as much from this Chartres North portal and porch as from Paris, e.g. ‘putting outside figures on buttresses, using a continuous leaf motif and applying quatrefoils or rosettes to areas between’, whereas before, in 1959, he thought that certain figures with broken folds in the North porch at Chartres were in the wake of the advanced Amiens style. In any case a link between the sculpture styles in both Amiens and the Chartres North porch cannot therefore be ruled out either.

Since sharply-angled breaking folds are *de rigueur* by the time of the North Transept portal of Notre Dame planned by Jean de Chelles c. 1250 on, of which the trumeau ‘contrapposto’ Virgin is the only surviving monumental figure, but allied with both greater volume and deeper folds, post ‘block’ style, as seen in the Sainte Chapelle apostles, and also derivative sculpture such as the apostles of the Porte Royale of the Cathedral of Bordeaux of around 1250 (taken in turn as models for the recreations at Paris approved by Viollet-le-Duc) the mid-century can hypothetically be taken as constituting a *terminus ante quem*. This broadly crosschecks with e.g. the drapery of the Reims apocalypse archivolt angels (given to 1240-55) already more ‘billowing’, i.e. deeper, wider and more angled, and some figures of the south transept portal at Saint Denis usually given to the 1240s, which do exhibit the flatly turned drapery as a motif but already as part of the more voluminous style of the ‘precious’ Sainte Chapelle apostles. One could make the same observation by comparing the Amiens archivolt angels and their Bourges counterparts: it is the same idiom but the latter’s folds are deeper and more voluminous.

It is not a new observation. Sauerländer (1959), following A. Michel (1906) and others, when describing the far-reaching effect of the incorporation after 1200 of a new Byzantine hieratism in Parisian sculpture following the availability of Byzantine treasures in northern France after the sack of Constantinople in 1204, not least the 'block style' this made possible, quoted Vöge as one who had already singled out '...those masters..., who sculpted the west portal of Amiens cathedral, resolutely rejecting the elements associated with the antique representation of the human form, an abstractly delineated garment taking precedence over it, were also the first to show its broken folds on the ground over the feet.' [my translation].

For if the drapery, hair and poses of figures of the Paris Coronation doorway do indeed closely correspond, and even the angels there have straight tunics, what is not found on the early (10th century) ivory triptychs is the use of breaking folds. This seems to confirm Michel's observation with respect to the freedom with which French artists interpreted new models, as generally Byzantine work of around 1200 does not have it either⁸. For our purposes, it certainly suggests that the dating of the present sculpture is to a large degree dependent on the dating of Amiens West facade sculpture, to be discussed further below, which, though itself dependent on the first fully finished doorway of the 13th century work at Notre Dame just invoked, was also fundamentally innovatory.



2. Knee-length folds

At the same time, the ridges of folds can themselves have a more shallow depression and show greater variation, - or less parallelism, - in their angles, as for example, in the Ss Theodore and George on the left doorway of the South Transept at Chartres, the only two figures there that are dated to c. 1230-35 rather than 1210-20. Once more Vöge had already shown that such a change in drapery style cannot be dissociated from the stance and we do indeed find that this goes together with an attempt to differentiate a weight-bearing leg, which in turn brings to the fore one of the knees behind the drapery. Thus also, the folds in the present figure already part higher up, at knee level on one side, and also form a deeper depression, while having greater variation in angles, in line with this approach. Williamson (1995) emphasized the link between the classical style introduced by Nicholas of Verdun and the deeper folds on the chasubles of the other two outermost saints on the right doorway of the same transept, Ss Laudomarus and Avitus. These are differentiated from the other saints of c. 1220 for our purposes precisely by this motif of the deeper depression towards the feet and is one reason Sauerländer also placed them around 1235.

The question remains, however, whether such a purely chronological reading is sufficient because in fact all these motifs had already found a greater variety of expression by 1230, if one agrees with Sauerländer's dating of the chevet angels at Reims. Likewise, the Presentation in the Temple there is agreed to postdate that of Amiens by some years yet its use of broken folds is slight, almost gingerly, compared to this latter.



3. Amiens

It is precisely at Amiens that diachronic variety can be confirmed and it is the very place where the motifs of cloth parting over the feet by means of crumpled folds, as well as the use of sharply-angled breaking folds, occurs freely.

It is worth quoting Sauerländer (1970, p. 456) with respect, first to the Parisian work at Notre Dame, and that at Amiens following on from it, in the earlier part of the 13th century. He typifies the style of the earliest new work, the Coronation of the Virgin portal of the West facade of Notre Dame, as already a mixture of the advanced forms of the 1240s and an archaic style reflecting the currents of the early 13th. 'The sculptures of the Coronation Portal occupy an intermediate position. Here for the first time we see evidence of the stylistic revolution which made Paris the leading centre of French sculpture [...]. Characteristic of the handling of relief is the way cleanly outlined figures stand out from neutral backgrounds. The draperies solidify. The folds form straight lines or sharp angles instead of curves. The contours of the heads are most angular, the foreheads vertical, the countenances flawless, with no play of facial features. The beauty of these sculptures resides not least in the clarity, the metallic precision of their forms. At the same time the individual form is often delicate, indeed quite finely articulated'⁹.

Then, with respect to Amiens: 'Here we have workshops cutting loose from the graphical methods which 12th century sculptors had appropriated from painting and goldsmith's work. [...] A similar trend towards a more rationalized, more schematic working, can be seen in the architecture and glass painting of the period. In this stylistic upheaval, which

determined the later course of Gothic sculpture, the Amiens workshops of the decade 1225-35 played a decisive role. Yet within the Amiens facade itself sculptures showing older linear tendencies can still be found alongside more advanced work.’

The West front figures at Amiens thus evidence great contrasts. The abundant broken folds of an Ezechiel, and to a lesser extent James the less, stand out from the more schematic, block-like treatment of the other prophets with their straight tubular folds, or the other apostles, with their flatter and finer folds stopping at the ankles. At the same time, the Annunciation, Visitation and Presentation figures on the right jamb of the West portal best show the characteristic 180-degree turn of the drapery backwards over itself or sideways at a 45-degree angle (Fig. 6). Though it occurs on e.g. the interceding John of the Paris Judgement portal in the earlier Parisian style of c. 1220 (Fig. 11), and later on in the kneeling figures of the St Ursinus tympanum at Bourges, it is so typical as a stylistic trait that from the start most scholars have seen the Mary and Simeon of the Presentation on the left jamb of the central doorway of the West portal at Reims as the work of an Amiens master¹⁰. First described as c.1230-33, Kurmann (1987) went on to date these ‘*Amienois*’ sculptures at Reims to the early 1240s¹¹.



Fig. 6 Amiens Cathedral South doorway Annunciation, Visitation, Presentation.

Another contrast is that the virtues and vices roundels on the true left of the central jamb show more linear forms where those on the true right are broader and more crumpled. The same is true of the wise and foolish virgins on the centre doorpost. It is, however, precisely in this smaller-scale relief sculpture, including also on the trumeau base (God creating Eve), that, together with some of the angels of the two innermost archivolts, we find the closest equivalents to the crumpled folds of the present figure, the drapery bunching

into four folds or so below the waist or knee and tracing zigzag breaks around the feet (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7 Amiens Cathedral central doorway archivolt true left.

Though the folds at Amiens are diverse, haphazard almost, there are certain recurring patterns. Compare, for example, the central fold of Archangel Michael in the centre of the tympanum of the Judgement portal (Fig. 8). Specifically, the crumpled pattern of this middle fold of tunic to the right of the left leg¹² occurs in various places at Amiens, on standing praying archivolt angels left and right of the central doorway and the Libra and Virgo figures of the zodiac roundels on the

Firmin portal (Fig. 9). It is interesting that some of the greatest diversity in such folds is found on the central doorjamb depicting the wise and foolish virgins, which, given their structural position, must be reckoned some of the earliest work of the Amiens West facade (Fig. 10).



Fig. 8 Amiens Cathedral central doorway tympanum Michael



Fig. 9 Amiens Cathedral North doorway Libra and Virgo roundels



Fig. 10 Amiens Cathedral Central doorway right jamb wise virgin

There is consensus that the prototype for Notre Dame work, and also the central doorjamb virgins, was Sens (now mutilated), but what might the lost Paris ones have looked

like? Comparing the lithograph of the lost drawing owned by Gilbert that Viollet-le-Duc used as a frontispiece to his proposed restoration with the arrangement at Amiens shows that, like the trumeau Christs, they correspond much more than they differ (2nd foolish virgin from bottom on true left, for example, and bottom left on drawing), starting with their placement (given that at Chartres the wise ones are on the true left¹³). If one now compares some of the Chartres North portal archivolt virgins with the Amiens portal ones, the differences are very clear, especially given that the stance (hand on breast or clutching garment) and dress (tunic and cape) are otherwise as identical as they are with the Paris drawing. While both also have mostly straight thin parallel folds, Chartres still follows Sens in having ‘softly’ curving heaps of drapery over the feet while Amiens has the ‘hard’ or angular, larger, curtain-like breaks of the drapery. The question can therefore be asked whether Paris already had similar breaks. Insofar as one can interpret the lithograph the answer is probably not, for they seem more curving and rounded, as at Sens and Chartres, befitting their earlier date. Amiens thus seems a new departure and another way of describing it is that the drapery of the Paris Judgment portal archivolt figures creates valleys, whereas the Amiens equivalents create ridges.

The occurrence of ‘hard’ rather than ‘soft’ folds at Notre Dame remains the exception but the one instance mentioned above (Fig. 11), deserves closer inspection also because it differentiates it from the curvilinear treatment of the same figure at Chartres: the double triangular fold, in defiance of gravity, in front of the foot of the kneeling, interceding St John, is similar in conception to the double fold of the present figure (Fig. 11). At the same time, this makes the Amiens experiment all the more interesting, always assuming that it was the first to do so and not dated far beyond 1236 at the latest.



Fig. 11 Paris Cathédrale Notre Dame Central doorway St John



Fig. 12

After all, similar principles, if in a rounder and ‘heavier’ way, are at work in some of the drapery falls of the figures (Christ and Judas) of the *jubé* of Bourges cathedral, traditionally dated after 1240 and even after 1250 but potentially already in use by 1237, if a document of that date analyzed by Jean-Yves Ribault (1995) talking about the *pulpitum* does indeed refer to the surviving *jubé*, as he (and Jean Wirth) believe. Of interest here is that the St John of this *jubé* also has the folds breaking over the feet, but in a more rounded way.

Furthermore, sharper angularity in folds, and a greater abundance of them, was also a feature of the contemporaneous *Zackenstil* across the Rhine. A more literally Byzantine-inspired version of these angular folds can indeed be seen in the Saint John of the Goslar Gospels¹⁴, date unknown but taken as c. 1240.

The figure of Eve at Reims, and the trumeau Virgin at Villeneuve l'Archevêque, - the Church to which Saint Louis in 1239 proceeded barefoot and where he first got to open the

casket containing the most precious and expensive relic ever traded, the Crown of Thorns, - with their thicker and broader angled folds, show that this style was well-established by 1240. They also demonstrate the distance covered when compared with the Virgin from Ramousies, dated to 1220-30, whose folds are bunched between the feet and altogether less angular and abrupt, still following a perhaps Mosan curvilinear idiom from the 12th century.

Finally, this specific motif of a central zigzag fold, because a version of it is unavoidable in tunic-wearing figures that have to break around the feet, and which finds such dramatic expression in the mature Gothic of the angels of the 1270s, must also still incorporate a fold framing the laying of drapery flat over the foot, revealing the toes, a required iconographical feature of angels, and Christ and His apostles. This aim is probably common to a number of different sculptors as it is found widely. The particular way of realizing this aim here, with a double zigzag of varying length starting from the left knee and ending turned left to frame the left foot from the true right, is not quite as common. One sculpture that shows a very accomplished and rounded version of it is Cluny Cl. 18668, one of the Sainte-Chapelle apostles and most interesting, as Dectot has shown (2016), for being the only one preserving its base (see also appendix B). Since folds breaking over and around the feet were a central trait in the recent (differential) dating of these Sainte Chapelle apostles it is interesting to observe that, like the torso, a key figure of the 'classical' group, the 'melancholy' one (CL 18665), clearly shows even without its foot the intention of the drapery around the true right leg to break over it.

Rather than just date, therefore, the issue of breaking folds is as much an iconographical one for throughout the 12th and 13th centuries the general rule followed in dress is that only a

woman's and an angel's tunic falls over the feet, at least for standing figures, since seated ones, such as in the archivolt of the central Judgment portal at Notre Dame of 1220-30, generally show a variety of folds breaking on the ground regardless of gender and seemingly in defiance of sartorial logic.

Once again, apart from the unidentified 'priest' of c. 1220-30 on the North porch at Chartres, it is precisely at Amiens, preceding both the Reims Joseph and the Sainte Chapelle apostles of the 1240s, that men's dress is shown not to always stop at the ankles. Thus, even if in a restrained way, the Beau Christ Himself has a longer tunic massing over and besides His feet, and on His right, besides the famous Ezechiel, James the Less is a perfect illustration of this style. The Zodiac and Calendar quatrefoils underneath also give a very graphical illustration of both the rule, e.g. the male and female figures of Gemini, and the exception, such as the figure of the Lord searching Jerusalem with lanterns and the Lord slaying Ethiopians in the quatrefoils beneath the figure of Zephaniah, or the quatrefoil of Aaron with his staff, and even the presence of alternation for the same person, since Zachariah has breaking folds in the quatrefoil below the Annunciation but not in the quatrefoil beneath Elisabeth.

Similarly, at Bourges, on the St Ursinus portion of the West facade dated to c. 1240, the scene of the bishop consecrating a church assisted by four clerics shows that two wear an alb and mantle and two a dalmatic, yet the bottom parts of the garments are different in all four with at least two having the familiar breaking folds. Apart from questions of date, it raises the question whether this variety was deployed for purely aesthetic reasons. Moreover, the Franciscan monk sculpted on the earlier North porch, now mostly lost but preserved in the cast made for the Trocadero Museum, already shows the

drapery principles of deeper and more crumpled folds at work here. Lastly, the St John and saints on the right jambs of the left doorway of the West portal at Reims, given to 1245-55, show a more mature version of breaking folds, as standard and irrespective of gender, which gives grounds for imagining an evolution¹⁵.

Though it is hard to find a comparable male figure of similar date, excepting a small ivory Calvary virgin of the 2nd quarter of the 13th century (Louvre OA 7882), what allows the verification of most traits mentioned above is their liberal use around the feet of the angels flanking the arcades of the tomb commissioned by Saint Louis for his brother, Philippe Dagobert, relatively precisely dateable to around 1235 and generally ascribed to a Parisian atelier, whose fragments are today mainly conserved in the Louvre (RF 522, 523, 1066 and 3622).







Head type and Hair

By good fortune, the head of this St John is mostly very well preserved, allowing for the surface wear across the top, the face especially having conserved its integrity with even the nose being original. Neither round nor square nor elongated the shape is distinctly ovoid in type, one associated precisely with youthful, beardless figures such as John (see Ramousies), the young deacon martyr saints Stephen (see trumeau at Sens c. 1200), Lawrence and Vincent, or ageless ones (angels). One of the earliest such types in stone is the head of an angel from the Paris Coronation portal of the 1st quarter of the 13th century (Cluny Cl. 22969), found in 1977, and rightly compared by Sauerländer and Sandron to an angel in the middle of the first archivolt of the Judgment portal on the true right (second from bottom).

Of interest, firstly, is that despite the different head shape, mainly because the cheeks are less full, both the flattened forehead and the curving of hair over it are again reminiscent of the Paris Judgment portal interceding John (Fig. 9), and secondly that the light asymmetry of the open mouth (see below) is more reminiscent of the central figure in the Notre Dame Resurrection fragment (Cl. 18643 c), or even the fragmentary prelate head (mouth and chin) found in 1839 and also attributed to the Coronation portal (Cl. 16602), than any work at Amiens.

This shorter hair-type, forward combed with ends curved inwards towards the head, thus framing it as if with a cap, without, however, terminating in a sideways curl, - a style the opposite of the standard wavy strands flowing outwards, - is very specific for the first decades of the 13th century and used mostly for ecclesiastics. Thus, the majority of the young seated deacons of the archivolt of the Notre Dame Last

Judgment portal have this type, including with largish ears there completely uncovered. Likewise at Chartres the archivolt abbots on the right in the South portal, the St John interceding on the Last Judgment tympanum of the South Portal of c. 1210-15, and one of the young deacon martyrs in the archivolt above left, all have a generically similar pattern. Sauerländer ties some work on the right jamb of the left doorway of the North Portal (c. 1220) to the same workshop, and indeed, the Prophet next to the Visitation echoes this hair-style of forward-falling parallel ridges grouped by a few regular deeper valleys.

Indeed, it is the masterly portraits of Church heroes on the right doorway of the South Transept of c. 1220, (SS Martin, Jerome and especially Gregory the Great), so outstanding in their level of detail and characterization that Sauerländer assigned them to a possible Sens workshop, which best show the same technique and style. One of the earliest instances of it is the remains of the back of the hair of the trumeau saint Stephen at Meaux cathedral (Fig. 12), the Paris Coronation portal prelate fragment of 1210-20 (Cl. 16602) is in the same vein, and it still persist as a type in the later northern French figure in the Schnütgen Museum¹⁶.



Fig. 12 Meaux Cathedral Trumeau St Stephen

Another trait found at that time and very clear in the present work are the sharp rounded incisions to mark the wings of the nose. These are also found on the oak cavalry figures from Cerisiers, to a lesser extent on the Ramousies figures, and again more clearly on both the Sainte-Geneviève and the Touret-wearing fragment of a damned lady (CL. 18643 d) from Notre Dame. A similar approach to the nose wings is also found on an oak Madonna and Child now in the Schnütgen museum (Inv. Nr. A 15), called the Aachen Madonna for arbitrary reasons, which is dated to around 1230.

The particular shape of the ear, partly obscured by hair, as an irregularly outlined half oval (rounded crescent), where the bottom lobe curves back up into the jawline rather than hanging free, is a type that can be seen most clearly in contemporary stained glass painting. At Chartres, for example, there is especially bay 38, the furrier's window, and the figure of Chancellor Robert de Berou (bay 113), as well as the drapers window depicting the life of St James the Greater. It is less often found on sculpture, though many of the younger saint figures in the archivolt of Notre Dame Judgment portal have the larger ear type.

Wirth (2004), in the context of stylistic development, speaks of the facial treatment of the first 3rd of the 13th century: eyes rather flat, in an oblique plane towards the brow sticking out and with hollow cheeks so the figure could look down on the faithful. From the 1230s eyes then became more slanted and progressively lids, especially lower lids, swelled up more (e.g. the Reims angel). The first part of this observation seems to be eminently applicable to the present figure, with the additional fact that the eyes are not wide open, since the very shallow lower lids end high while the upper lids appear slightly swollen as if to indicate the effect of weeping. The

slanted carving of the top of the book is further proof that this figure would have been seen from below and was likely placed on a *poutre de gloire* or *jubé*. It is also seen from below that the specific hair-fall forwards from the crown fully frames the face (fig. 13).

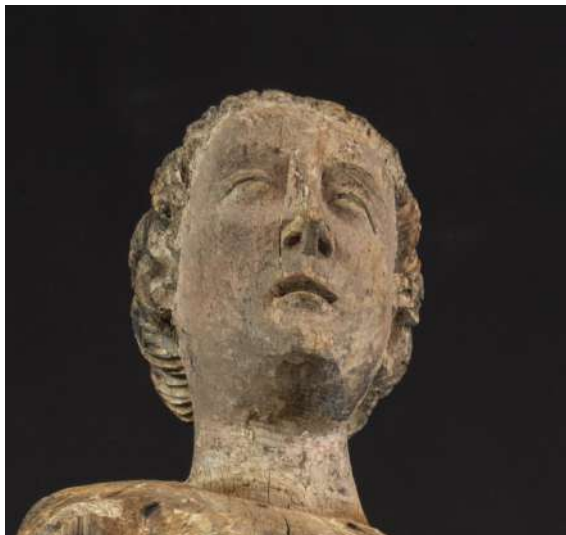


Fig. 13

Like the head, the remaining hand is largely intact, idealized and expertly carved, and consistent with many others from the second quarter of the 13th century.

Erlande-Brandenburg (1975) spoke of the rules of proportion in the 1230s tending towards one to six for the head before lengthening to one seventh or more in the following decade, closer to the Greek manner. This would be another argument for placing the figure in the 1230s. Durand had already shown this principle for Amiens, with only the larger trumeau figures such as the Beau Dieu and Saint-Firmin passing beyond one in seven.

Of especial force is the mouth (Fig. 14), slightly open, like various of the resurrected figures at Notre Dame, but here carved inwards in a restrained manner, expressing grief rather than a smile yet without in any way turning into the down-turned grimace or howl of the damned, as also seen at Notre Dame¹⁷. Let us not forget that when Vöge, in his pioneering study (1914), traces his Kings Heads master's work at Chartres, one signature element is precisely such an 'expressive' use of the opened mouth. In this case one could point out that its technique seems to be closest to that used for the Kings of Judah from Notre Dame found again in 1977 (now Musée du Moyen age, Cl. 22991 or Cl. 22988, for example).



Fig. 14

At the same time, it is only this expression of pain or grief, appropriate to his position (see below) that separates John here from the monumental apostle series such as those at Amiens, perhaps close copies of what was lost at Paris, and whose countenances, as Sauerländer observed, are idealized,

tending towards the flawless and the chastened. What they share, however, is a certain immediacy. Though few things can be as remote to a modern viewer as the colossal figures of Amiens taking one step forward out of their niches, their gaze leaves us in no doubt that they do not hide what they have on their minds: they move us by the 'urgency' (Sauerländer) and seriousness of their mission. Despite the many straight and oblique lines, the loftiness and purposefulness, sometimes giving an impression of a mere interval between the swirl of 12th century Senlis and the increasing sway and sinuosity of the later 13th century, the unique stamp of Amiens was not just an otherworldly style incapable of either humanity or subtlety. One has but to look at the faintest smile with which the Virgin shows off her pregnancy, itself effectively conveyed by the absence of any line at all around the abdomen, to the older woman in the Visitation, or the highly individualized expressions of Ezechiel and the confessor saint Warlus, given to the same artist by Medding, while the even more individualized cleric next to this latter was already described as possibly the first portrait in French art by Durand.

In conclusion, if neither drapery style nor physiognomy can indicate a specific decade either way, all the above-mentioned traits show a simpler, even archaic rather than advanced, or mannered treatment, which is perhaps more consistent with the 1230s. Against this, it can be argued that, if not the construction, at least the sculptural programme of the new Choir screens which might have borne this figure, certainly for the larger cathedrals such as Chartres, Notre Dame Paris and Bourges, might still have been ongoing during the 1240s.

Iconography

Some scholars (e.g. Medding) have also tried to establish the exact nature of the perceived connection between the influence of the antique models in sculpture since around 1200 and the classical interests, - both the ideational neo-platonism of the 5th/6th century Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and the formal realism of Aristotle, - of the leading 13th century scholastics, especially St Thomas. It would be hard to verify whether an emphasis on *integritas*, *consonantia*, *claritas*, - proportion, harmony and clarity, - was the combination leading to the luminous, indeed, numinous, ideal of the human figure, but it seems assured that this latter was believed to be epitomized by Christ and shown in the perfection of His very human body. The 'Beau Dieu' who blesses or teaches as man is not the terrifying Judge higher up in the tympana, Amiens being the best-known surviving figure of this ideal type and from which a Parisian prototype might possibly be deduced (See appendix B).

In the great scholastic debate between Aristotelianism and Platonism, overtaken by realism vs nominalism, the latter believing ideas are but words, we can say the former holds sway in the period under investigation: words, and thus ideas are also real over and above the instances or manifestations of them that nature offers to investigation. The 13th century excelled in giving the boundless variety of this nature its due, nowhere more so than on the cathedrals with their thousands of carvings. Naturalism in sculpture is therefore not at all a denial of the idea or ideal, on the contrary, nature itself might be said, through the mechanisms studied as evolution, to perpetually pursue its own ideals.

André Michel (1906), invoked by both Vöge and Sauerländer, was one of first to describe the characteristics of this 'high

gothic' style: 'tout au service d'un ideal qui le domine'. Since 13th century gothic sculpture has been seen as idealized, as opposed to individualized, and as there can be no ideal without idea, it might be apposite to recall that emotions too can be classed as ideas insofar as they oblige the one in their grip to express both their reason or motivation and their consequence. Whether love, hate or sorrow, it is the fact that its cause, usually another living being, is not in doubt that distinguishes emotion from a feeling which is as fleeting as a sensation. This is also why art seeking to depict emotion naturally turns to its ideal type as fixed in the physiognomy of the human face, of which the masks of Greek comedy are an early instance. In other words, one experiences emotion not only when there is a clear idea of who 'moves' one to which state: love, anger, sorrow, and the like, but when the feeling that moves one is completely subsumed in, or equal to, the language articulating it. As such, it is the opposite of treating, say, love and hate as merely the passions they very much can be, insofar as these latter imply the helpless suffering of feelings, even unbidden ones, that cannot always be articulated let alone acted on purposefully. In other words, the point of what seem a very scholastic distinction is that ideation, the business of representing or picturing the things that matter to us or move us, is very much part of any individual's 'psychology', and certainly of (medieval) art, and that this very act of ideation is at the same time a resolution of the problem that the challenge of emotion poses to the psychic equilibrium or 'well-being' of the person affected by it.

Various scholars have, however, remarked on this as a novel feature, introduced from the third decade of the 13th century: greater variety in the depiction of emotion. Sauerländer, again, - in an introduction to a Metropolitan Museum exhibition on this very subject (2006), as captured by the face, - pointed out both the remarkable absence of individual

likeness from medieval art and the first systematic introduction of smiles and other expressions of subjective states in the series of heads, called 'masks', at Reims from the early 1230s.

Yet the beatific expression of the angels contemplating the elect at Notre Dame of c. 1220, at the same time utterly indifferent to the pain of the damned right underneath them, while not smiling as widely as the famous annunciate angel at Reims, can be said to show emotion, albeit one, beatitude, that is defined by a theological idea if not ideal. Like the notion of saints laughing at the damned it is not one that western romantic sensibility and its modern, or 'post-modern', variants can gauge, even if perfectly rational within the moral system of salvation.

Even more difficult to understand, perhaps, is how an actual human being could know and express great joy even surrounded by sorrow. Yet such was Saint Louis and as such, perhaps the emblem of his time. Matthew Paris, in his *Chronica Majora*, makes mention of Saint Louis' propensity to tears in moments of joy or sorrow¹⁸. According to Joinville, he was often given to showing emotion unrestrainedly, laughter or tears or both, and certainly not someone spared the horrors of life. He had, after all to witness his own comrades, fellow prisoners in Egypt in 1250, being martyred for not renouncing Christ just moments after having been promised freedom, - and perhaps, as harrowing, others capitulating to the coercion and renouncing their faith. Yet, he was also someone who could weep tears of joy before the holiest of relics money could buy and buy dearly: the Crown of Thorns.

Nowhere has emotion been more justly celebrated than in the work of Strasbourg cathedral whose tympanum of the death of the Virgin of c. 1230 shows all the apostles in a state of

grief and shock, all the more striking for being in such contrast with the 'flawless', more impassive and more 'idealized' countenances of the figures at Amiens. The question one could ask of the former is whether any one of them shows tears. Not the bitter tears, the tears of remorse or regret (Biblical hell is indeed a place or time of 'weeping and gnashing of teeth') that are usually reserved for the damned, including the foolish virgins, such as the one wiping an eye at Magdeburg of probably the 1240s, and which are expressed with some measure of grimacing distortion of the features, but tears of grief or mourning. For tears were not unknown to Saint Louis' subjects. The chronicler Guillaume de Nangis¹⁹ writes that in 1232, when the Holy Nail given by Charles the Bald to Saint-Denis was lost during a service at the end of February, causing its monks to cry inconsolably, Saint Louis pleaded throughout Paris for its return, with the result that many people, including students, cried in the streets and Churches and, he writes, 'ce n'est pas seulement Paris qui pleurait, mais tous ceux qui dans le royaume de France apprirent la perte du saint et precieux clou pleuraient.' In the event, it was returned on the 1st of April.

Even without the polychromy providing confirmation, this Saint John presents himself as in sorrow because of the way eyes and mouth have been carved and one could make a case for saying there is an intention to present eyes half shut and slightly swollen from weeping and a mouth open to articulate grief, both of which are achieved without sacrificing beauty, in other words while staying within the idealized humanity of the gothic canon, rather than resorting to the exaggerated traits of the mask. One can further argue that the only slightly later John of the *jubé* at Naumburg (1240-50), whose face, sculpted with tears, is doing exactly that, is evidence of a different approach to the handling of emotion on the other side of the Rhine.

The ideals or ideas that dominate the decorated doorways or portals of the great cathedrals are in any case probably of a different kind from that embodied in this particular figure destined for the interior. Marking the transition between a profane and sacred space, they address a wider audience than just the faithful who made it as far as the choir screen on top of which John could be contemplated in his sorrow and who, next to the mystery of the Cross (Incarnation), embodied the pain of being merely human. Many of these screens, further separating those allowed to participate in the mysteries of faith by celebrating the Eucharistic communion in the sanctuary on its other side, a space where an awful death and its sorrow is transmuted into a sublime sacrifice that brings joy, were very new. Though the Eucharist, and its role in the rite of memoration always entailed a degree of veiling since earliest Christian practice, usually by means of curtains around the altar, the Lateran Council of 1215's exhortation to protect the host now elevated as the very essence of 'transubstantiation' meant the *pulpitum* had a new place and function: to keep the uninitiated milling about in the nave out of the chancel/choir in which the *sanctum sanctorum* was kept. It also meant the Crucifix could move from hanging above or behind the altar to a place on top of the screen.

John 19:25-27

The Calvary, John assisting Mary in her darkest hour, designating himself in the Gospel that does most to detail and dramatize Christ's ineluctable encounter with His final hour, yet without naming himself other than as 'beloved disciple', as the one who also at that last hour is accorded the place of Jesus Himself, as Mary's son, has served as a focus of Christian 'rememoration' (in accordance with Christ's wish at the Last Supper preceding it) to such an extent as to have

become as close a western equivalent of the eastern 'Icon' as any: an image so engraved in consciousness and liturgy that it can only be repeated more or less identically, the eastern version differing only in the fact that John is not present as Evangelist, i.e. he never holds the book. Put another way, in terms of the emotion embodied by this figure through traits such as the opened mouth, if one imagines the right hand under the chin, a comparison with the most famous expression of emotion in art, Munch's 'scream', might impose itself, and immediately make clear that rather than anguish²⁰, the emotion expressed here is the pain, not just of bereavement, but bereavement following on seeing a loved one die in agony. John is a witness and the only disciple to witness this most terrible moment. John in sorrow thus invariably represents, on the one hand, an intimation of the desolation of a world from which Christ has just departed, and on the other, the necessity of constituting with his newly given 'Mother', and others such as Joseph, Nicodemus, the Maries Magdalene and Cleophas, the fellow apostles, the first and archetypal 'Christian community'²¹, made up of those faithful to His memory²². Not by chance, Mary and John, the two witnesses, are precisely the ones who are able to intercede on behalf of humanity with the Christ who is judge, the last judge.

What this sculpture shows is that there can be intense grief without resorting to despair. The tears here are not the *Lacrimae rerum* of Virgil, the sheer pain involved in having life at all, which is still implied in the 11th century 'vale of tears' from the Salve Regina, but closer to the 'vale of tears' of Psalm 84 which can turn into a well that nurtures growth. In the case of the Crucifixion, literally, because it is none other than John who described that the gift Christ poured out on the Cross was the Spirit, the well-spring of life eternal.

The Book is, however, the best reason for identifying John with the 'favourite disciple', e.g. the one who 'got' the message more than anyone: he is far and away the most 'theological' of the Evangelists. John not only has the greatest opening lines of the New testament, given that the meditation on the 'Logos' is second only to the ten commandments in forever changing mankind's relation to the divine, he also inspired the most sublime opening movement ever written in music: the first notes of the passion by Bach's eponymous Passion create a whirlwind that lift us off our feet and do not let us fall back to earth, after a good eight minutes, before we have experienced something of the matchless power of the 'spirit' that Christ left us with.

Whether or not the John(s) who wrote the Book of Revelation was the same person, the brother of James, present at the Transfiguration, the Agony in the Garden, as well as the Crucifixion, the fact that he was taken to be such had its part to play in medieval art. Such a 'fact' only equaled 'good authority', which in this case was Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon writing in AD 180, having heard it from Polycarp of Smyrna, who had been a disciple of the actual John in Ephesus, but it was enough to establish identity of authorship (from which *auctoritas* derived), not only that the disciple wrote the Gospel which does not explicitly bear his name but that one John equals another, preaching in Ephesus and for a time exiled to Patmos, writing a very different text²³. The place of the Apocalypse in Scripture is still contested to this day but no one contests that it has provided the material for the greatest and most colourful art of the early Middle Ages, from the Beatus Mss, to the sculptures of Moissac and Chartres through to the Angers tapestries, no doubt because of its vividly visual even oneiric style.

Conclusion

But it is also in this specific period of high gothic, between 1235 and 1270, that the more human John of the Gospel, - and precisely because he embodied the 'emotion' provoked by his Lord at the last hour, - was responsible for the greatest masterpieces of their time, the small-scale ivory St John of the Deposition group in the Louvre (OA 3935), who also conveys tears subtly by more swollen eyelids, himself preceded on a larger scale by a figure such as the 'melancholy' apostle from Saint Louis' own Sainte Chapelle²⁴. As stated earlier, melancholy, being associated with a failure of mourning, with a loss that is too profound to overcome or relinquish, is not associated with John who is always depicted in the very process of mourning. At the same time, it is hard to think of another apostle among those surviving characterized by such 'interiority', especially when it is at the same time so reminiscent of depictions of Christ Himself (who, it must be remembered, did experience a moment of profound weariness in the hours before His end).

There is thus no difficulty in agreeing that with figures such as these from the reign of Saint Louis, the 'study of nature', and specifically, human nature as characterized by an 'emotion' that since antiquity has been seen as being betrayed by the expression of the face, has achieved something of its own ideal, one free from any hint of caricature, sentimentality or excess, and that compared to Amiens, this unstoppable emotion is now allowed to dominate any ideal of 'virtue' rather than vice versa. The success of this experiment, unique in history, is confirmed by the fact that the Louvre ivory Deposition just mentioned is not only among the very greatest works of the Middle Ages but of all time, marrying consummate technical skill with the most emotional moment in the Christian drama that has shaped western civilization.

Though probably only viewed from afar, and on a more modest scale, this St John can be seen as having played his part in this new 'humanity'.

Select Bibliography

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Appendix A

Condition.

A conservation report from Colin Bowles Ltd is available on request.

Presence of various old nails and nail holes.

It was perhaps at an early (16th century) date that the main wear and loss, to the right arm from the elbow and the central transverse section of the mantle, were consolidated by removing remains of the mantle at the front to blend with the tunic, while straightening the bottom as a horizontal hem line across the front, two-thirds down, suggesting three garments rather than just the tunic and mantle in the process. Both the reshaping of the sleeve of the left arm where the mantle's overhang was missing with a 'ruff' and the covering of the whole work in a grey wash, now removed, are consistent with this date. If so, this figure constitutes an interesting example of the vagaries to which medieval sculptures such as this have been subject in their very long history.

Conservation has taken two forms: stabilizing losses from woodworm to the base around the feet, and manually removing the grey wash applied to the mantle where possible. Recent restoration (reversible) includes three fills: a hole near the true left knee, the break in the line of drapery folds below that knee and replacing a bottom fragment of the mantle at the front true right to convey the curving outline it likely would have had.

Polychromy

Interestingly, the remaining dark green and dark red layers, this latter directly on the wood, are consistent with those on

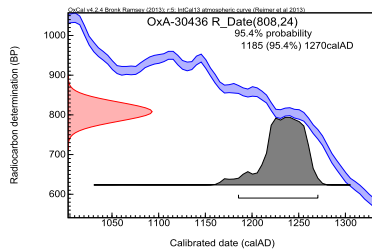
the Beau Dieu at Amiens (Fig. 1) and on some figures of the Resurrection lintel fragment of Notre Dame Paris, now Musée du Moyen Age (CL. 18643 c), whereas the orange remains on the mantle and book are consistent with base layers used at the time, being a red-lead based paint. There are traces of what would have been important sections of gilding around the border of the cloak and the bottom of the tunic. The flesh tones are unlikely to be original despite containing lead white.



Fig. 1 Amiens Cathedral, central doorway, trumeau: Beau Dieu, polychromy.



C-14 Report
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AND THE HISTORY OF ART
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3QY



OxA Sample	Material (species)	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$	Date
Paris, France			
OxA-30436	wood	-23.65	808 ± 24



Appendix B Dating

I. Amiens

The very few certainties in the debates of recent decades around the west front of Amiens are that the charter of 1236 cannot be made to confirm any date for any part of the building and that dendrochronology of the surviving beams (Prache 1995) confirms the traditional start date of works given in the labyrinth as 1220 or slightly earlier. For Kimpel and Suckale (1973), one could add that archivolts, sculpted offsite, are part of the construction of facades and are unlikely to postdate jamb or tympanum sculpture, which, though also sculpted in advance, could be erected at any time.

Specifically, they attempted to show that Saint-Honoré portal (jambs and archivolts) must have been in place by 1234, when the lower part of the choir was finished, even if a tympanum and its sculptures could have been added any time after.

Because its sculptural style is more developed than the West front sculpture, this implied a date before 1233 for this latter. However, Erlande-Brandenburg (1978) has implied the archivolt sculpture blocks can be posed independently (hence later) from the arch behind them. Kurmann (1987) had indeed shown this to be the case for some Amiens facade work, in which sculpture seems mounted against a pre-existing wall.

Another reference point for Amiens is the representation of Saint Francis (or at least a Franciscan) in the tympanum. Canonized in 1228, for many it gives the earliest possible date, and this is indeed very likely not just because the order, - which had already been supported by the Pope since 1210 and quickly became popular, also in the France so cherished by Francis (whose mother was French), with a convent set up in

Paris already by 1219, - only established a convent in Amiens in 1232, as Joubert (2006) has pointed out, - while in Bourges, which also shows Francis and had the honour of a Council in 1225 which brought along his closest disciple Antony of Padua, by 1237, - but because it is unlikely a lesser person than a saint assured of a place in heaven would be allowed representation on a tympanum.

Lastly Vöge (1901), amongst others, has pointed out that even if the whole facade was not erected before 1236, its sculpture, being the work of many years, might easily have been executed up to a decade before then.

II Sainte Chapelle

The apostles of the Sainte Chapelle are taken as a highpoint of the mature gothic style and their extraordinary vicissitudes are emblematic of the very problematic relation of the French people to their own history. Art-historically, they have provoked argumentation around style and dating recently summarized by Xavier Dectot (2016), in which the apostles are now classified into three rather than two stylistic groups or ateliers, but in any case as all completed by 1248 according to the wishes of Saint Louis.

The problems of dating the Sainte-Chapelle apostles echo the problems at Notre Dame (see below) with respect to the material difficulty of examining actual works and insofar as important conclusions have to be drawn from surviving drawings. As an example, take the 4th apostle on the south side, called James the Less by Erlande-Brandenburg in 1971 when reviewing Gnudi's seminal study (1969), disagreeing with him only on the latter's opinion that the head of this figure was a modern copy by adducing a lithograph circulated among churches by Duban in 1841, before any restoration

work had started, with the aim of finding the last two missing ones, and which shows the head as it is today. Sauerländer just before (1970) had not included it at all among the possible original works and named no. 4 on the opposite, north side as James the Less. Twenty years later the same problem reappeared when Annette Weber (1998) quoted as proof that the heads of both 3 and 4 on the south side were copies, first a drawing from the Ecole des Beaux Arts (Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Arts Graphiques RF 1270, 5281) reproduced by Salet in 1954 (not seen) that shows the deteriorated and headless state of various figures in 1797 and second because so different in style from the “precious” two (4 and 5) on the north side taken as ‘assuredly original’. At the same time, she quoted the other drawing, from Alexandre Lenoir’s Musée des Monuments Français, disbanded by 1816, which shows no. 4 and all five others on it as fully intact... The last opinion by Erlande-Brandenburg from 2007 still has no. 4 as original.

III. Notre Dame de Paris

Paris, chiefly the cathedral of Notre Dame, remains central to any discussion of ‘Gothic’ architecture and sculpture, not only because it is known to have had extensive influence on other building sites, especially Amiens, Longpont and Bourges, or because of the date range of its styles from the 1160s (St Anne portal) to the 1260s (St Stephen’s or South portal), but precisely because it is at the same time also the most altered, while missing some of its key and most influential work, that of the first decades of the 13th century. This is true especially of the central portal of the West facade, depicting the Last Judgment. Partly destroyed on the orders of the clergy by the architect Soufflot in 1771 to make a higher arched doorway to facilitate processions, even before the removal of the jamb apostles and other work during the revolution some decades

later, and finally ambitiously restored to a semblance of the original by Viollet-le-Duc and Lassus from the 1840s on, there is also evidence of very early (13th century) alteration to part of the tympanum. The central portal is therefore emblematic of everything that is problematic in the study of (French) Gothic art.

The pioneering studies of Erlande-Brandenburg show one has to be both archeologist, - sifting through shards and accommodating new evidence, such as the discoveries of many heads from the kings gallery in 1977, - as well as architect, au fait with building principles, to attempt a faithful reconstruction of the history of Notre Dame. Failing that, at least a lively imagination might help since never in the history of art has a greater amount of knowledge/information rested on a more flimsy/less substantial documentation: the lithograph of a now lost drawing from the Gilbert collection, assumed to have been made before Soufflot's intervention, published by Viollet-le-Duc and Lassus as the frontispiece to their restoration proposal (1843) and their main source of inspiration (henceforth Gilbert). Though daguerrotypes from the 1840s and other documentation post-1771 exist, there seem to date to survive only three other documents that could shed light on the West facade pre-1771: a few sketches of apostles by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin in the margins of his copy of canon Guillot de Montjoye's description of Paris; some engravings, such as after Marot (1626) and that of a drawing by Antier of 1699 (henceforth Antier) showing the whole facade and parvis though limited as to real detail (Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Estampes, n° VA 419); and, finally, a painting by the Master of Saint Giles (henceforth Saint Giles) of the late 15th century (Now Washington National Gallery of Art).

At the same time, two fragmentary stone figures, likely apostles, survive at the Musées du Moyen Age and Carnavalet respectively, executed in the shallow ridges or *muldenfalten* drapery style of the very beginning of the 13th century, which, having been found in the vicinity, are presumed to be from the central portal jambs.

If art history were detective work the west facade of Notre Dame would thus be one of the hardest cases and *le mystère de Notre Dame* might even be more compelling than *les mystères de Paris*. To illustrate something of this complexity, we will look at one aspect from one among the various linked problems, e.g. the missing apostles, the missing trumeau Christ, the problem of Viollet-le-Duc's testimony regarding found fragments and the former presence of a colossal unused and unidentified trumeau figure on the square called Le Jeuneur.

This is the problem of the clear stylistic differences that exist between, on the one hand most of the existing original work in the archivolts and tympanum, such as the interceding Mary and John and the Resurrection lintel fragments from the true left (Musée du Moyen Age Cl. 18643 c) and, on the other, a select number of pieces, which, besides the Christ-Judge and the nail- and lance-bearing angel, consist of the Resurrection lintel fragments true right (Musée du Moyen Age Cl. 18643 a), the second angel on the inner archivolt right, and all the hell and Apocalypse scenes at the base of the archivolts true left.

In particular, our focus here is on the Christ-Judge and consists of raising a few questions, regardless of whether they may have a clear answer. Very specifically, and at the risk of playing devil's advocate, I will suggest that it may not represent the same style as the angel next to it, with which it

is always automatically linked, and that its use for dating other sculpture, e.g. at the Sainte Chapelle or Amiens, cannot be regarded as self-evident either.

The material facts regarding the upper tympanum sculpture, and disregarding for our purposes the complex but compelling evidence for a refashioning of the whole arch of the archivolt, are well-known (see Joubert 2008 for a summary and also the work of Devillard and Lenormand, presented by Taralon 1991) and consist of the fact that Mary and John are sculpted in high relief while the other three, including the angel with the Cross, are sculpted in the round and cemented back into the wall. This is a technique also used at Amiens.

The first oddity of this is that the reliefs of Mary and John as well as this three-dimensional Cross-bearing angel in the same style as them, have also been re-tilted to fit into what was supposedly a new arch and there is evidence that the Cross was broken in the process of repointing it towards the Christ-Judge to prevent it clashing with His arm. The conclusion of Taralon's examination of this and many other indices (including previous research), one with which there has been as yet no reason to disagree, is that the whole tympanum was re-organized at some point in function of this centrally positioned Christ-Judge, probably already in the 13th century.

One aspect of his argumentation that merits further discussion concerns an article by D. Reiff²⁵ (1971) concerned with rehabilitating Viollet-le-Duc's judgment and achievement, in which the accuracy of the Gilbert drawing is questioned to the point of deeming it only an attempt to reconstruct, post-1771, what had been, rather than a copy of what was, a hypothesis endorsed by Taralon. Since this lithograph also has some bearing on Amiens work it might be fruitful to also posit and

argue the opposite view: that it is not so much surprising that the engraving does not correspond exactly (it is neither a scale drawing nor a complete literal rendering) as the fact that so much of it does, that the drapery outlines are quite faithful for the larger surviving figures, whose positions are accurately rendered, that the apostles correctly stand directly on their 'arrogant kings' consoles, as confirmed by the surviving fragment (Musée du Moyen Age Cl. 22927), that it further shows two of the Evangelist symbols we know from Montjoye's description to have been present, as well as lucifer in a position with his head perhaps in front of the bottom of the upper lintel, also hinted at in Antier, and that the posture and drapery of various upper lintel figures, including the right demon, is recognisable. Indeed, the position of the legs of this latter is more accurate than in Antier.

Let us first dismiss the assumption that any image can perfectly render reality, especially one so rich as the central portal: not even a great camera lens can resolve every detail; or that it sets out to do so: the drawing of the zodiac figures of the Virgin portal after La Galaisière of 1783 actually states it has no intention of being a faithful copy yet correctly reproduces the archivolts. This is why representing only 6 of the 10 Last Judgment figures and 3 rather than 5 doorpost wise and foolish virgins actually aids clarity. In other words, one needs to distinguish aspects of composition from actual detail. More liberties can be taken with the former (and perhaps this accounts for the question of why some of the Resurrected are more supine rather than half upright), reduced to an idea that has to fit the confines of the print, than with details of dress where some verisimilitude and accuracy is possible to a point. In this context it is not as strange that the archivolt angel busts are only sketchily indicated, as that they are also shown in the place of the, omitted, standing angel of the entrance to Paradise at the base of the first archivolt true

right²⁶. Though it is impossible to guess the reason for this sketchy depiction of the angel busts the fact that in Gilbert they go down almost all the way to the bottom of the arch is at least consistent with the row of busts in the second archivolt²⁷.

Second, the fact that it is an engraving of a (lost) drawing allows room for errors of interpretation too; witness the discrepancies of jamb figures of Saint Denis such as Moses in Dom Montfaucon's great work. This is perhaps how we should view the most glaring of the disparities between what survives and the lithograph: the upright tomb slab on the Resurrection lintel on the right, substituting for the angel's wing and another part of a slab below, seemingly pushed over the bottom frame of the lintel, *trompe-l'oeuil* fashion. Thus, according to Taralon, Reiff thought that depicting what was never there, with the original still being in place, showed the drawing was done post-Soufflot from memory. However, that very section of the bottom lintel remained in place also after Soufflot (now in the Musée du Moyen Age), and the disparity therefore might prove that the engraver worked from the drawing more than that the artist only worked from memory. It is further possible to imagine that (the drawing of) a near-vertical section of wing seamlessly continued by straight drapery lines was misinterpreted as a long slab but clearly more difficult to account for the protruding bottom slab, all the more so because Antier shows an uninterrupted lintel at that point, and despite the mitigating circumstance that the drapery edge of the angel's raised right leg standing at right angles to the wall parallel to the head of the lower resurrected figure is as straight and flat as a slab.

The drawing also seems to indicate that the drapery of the angel's left leg may have extended beyond the lintel but, like many aspects of this facade, it is something we are unlikely to ever know, as Soufflot already cut into the bottom of the lintel

in order to place his moulding and a further bottom section was lost from both surviving lintel fragments when Viollet-le-Duc removed them. Lastly, as Amiens and Bourges show, such slabs were the rule, so if it was a fantasy of the engraver, it was not one sucked out of thin air.

Finally, another observed discrepancy is perhaps hardest to explain away: though the central trumeau canopy, which was removed by Soufflot, is consistent in style with what remains above the main jambs either side, these latter canopies are shown as crocketed in Gilbert and are more reminiscent of a building of c. 1240 e.g. Villeneuve l'Archevêque.

However, if one now looks at the other material similar problems appear. Antier, for example, where one can distinguish detail at all, does not seem to show the Christ-Judge with both arms raised in parallel, and the legs of the demon true left are not as accurate as they could have been.

Most interesting is the Saint Giles painting, which, because it shows two of the lost apostles, has been used to try and identify existing fragments (Greenhill 1967). Seen in perspective from the true right, it correctly shows the Virgin portal, with the documented figures of Sainte Genevieve and a Bishop (Saint Germain), the corresponding canopies, while the archivolt also show the correct pattern of full and half-length figures. The only difference lies in the outer arch showing rosettes²⁸ rather than swirling stems. Again, the main figures of Church and Synagogue, as also the dado carvings of the central portal are shown as they are, but in that same Judgment portal we are considering there is a sudden discrepancy: in place of the hell and Apocalypse scenes²⁹ we would expect above the apostles there are ... saints, followed by standing rather than the actual seated figures. Given that the apostles might be accurate, insofar as they are not

contradicted by what is shown of the drapery by Antier, far from it, and also by the fact that the canopies, though more schematic, correctly indicate the smaller interstitial canopies, this is a puzzling discrepancy still in search of an explanation.

The second difficult question to answer is why the Saint Giles apostles do not appear to carry any attributes, given that it is less likely than not that these would have been lost at this stage, or if lost, not replaced. Nor do they depict the larger sleeves characteristic of most work of the time.

The two stone apostle torsos, for their part, do show the marks of lost attributes as well as the larger sleeves, and if they correspond with Saint Giles, not so much in their general antique organization of drapery around waist and shoulder, which is generic enough to be shared by Gilbert and surviving work at Amiens or Longpont, as in the way it stays close to the body and dispenses with tubular folds, the painting clearly does not render the particular *muldenfalten* style, while including broader nested v-folds not present on the torsos.

It is therefore perhaps too harsh of Taralon to condemn Gilbert for not resembling either the marginal sketch of Saint-Aubin (very sparse and from a different angle) or Saint Giles without specifying that neither of these strictly resembles the found torsos either. Without suggesting that the 'harder' and more tubular style evident in the trumeau Christ and the apostles in Gilbert is due to the nature of the medium, it is possible to state that as regards spacing of folds, position of hands and nature of diagonals, there is greater homology between Saint Giles and Gilbert, and both of these with some Amiens apostles likely to have been modelled on Paris, than either of them with the two torsos.

Again, one would have to explain why there is a fairly close correspondence between, say, the St James the Greater on the inner true left in the drawing and the corresponding figure of

St James at Amiens, always taken to derive directly from Paris, and of both to the St Peter figures at both Longpont and Amiens. This is not just a correspondence in posture and drapery scheme but also details of drapery such as size and depth of folds. It is, finally, well-known that this correspondence is nowhere greater than between Gilbert's "Beau Dieu" and the one at Amiens, and this alone justifies Viollet-le-Duc taking it as a model for his recreation at Paris.

The Beau Dieu is, however, a very different Christ from the one sitting higher up on His Judgment seat.

If there is a point to the long preamble above it is this: more than this difference between two types of Christ, - though it is greater than that between the corresponding Christ-Judge and the Beau Dieu at Amiens, - it is the difference between the existing Christ-Judge and the one in Gilbert that is striking. And this is because where the actual tympanum figure seems later than the trumeau Beau Dieu, the figure in Gilbert seems earlier. Specifically, and even though this can only be an impression, Gilbert's figure is completely consistent with a Romanesque type: squarer head with wavy parted hair, high cheekbones, quite possibly showing prominent ears and a more forked beard. Indeed, though still used at Chartres early in the 13th century but abandoned by the one at Amiens, the drapery over the left shoulder is more reminiscent of the 12th-century seated Christ figures and forms an odd contrast with the otherwise more modern features. At the same time, this accords better with the halo, which seems an older 12th-century type with its circle decoration. This last has in fact been confirmed by Sandron in 2000 through close inspection, in addition showing that the halo is separate from the present figure and part of the masonry block³⁰.

Furthermore, the Gilbert rendering, not only of the head shape but of the drapery of, for example, the nail-bearing angel, is remarkably faithful yet for the Christ there are discrepancies: the left arm is more uncovered in Gilbert, the left bottom folds less tubular and, most unexpectedly, the frontal diagonal sweep of the folds between the knees is more detailed, when one would expect a drawing to simplify rather than complicate its subject. Naturally there are more correspondences in overall composition, also with the Amiens Deesis, than not. The inconsistencies are, however, arresting enough to merit a closer look at this Christ-Judge, whose uncertain place and date in Parisian Gothic sculpture has already exercised the ingenuity of the greatest scholars.

Before doing so, it might be interesting to complete the brief comparative survey of surviving pictorial evidence by pointing out further differences. These are chiefly that Antier shows the whole tympanum as pointier or narrower, with figures placed lower, than Gilbert or later records. Though this could be a function of his less than frontal point of view it is noteworthy that he does not seem to show both arms of Christ raised³¹. Both Antier and Gilbert show an unbroken upper lintel line, which Soufflot cut through to insert a smaller moulded arch right beneath Christ's feet (visible in the various daguerrotypes from 1840 on), which was in turn readapted by Viollet-le-Duc into a version of Jerusalem as still shown by Gilbert. Though difficult to see in Antier, Gilbert further clearly shows that each side figure has its own distinctive plinth even if that of the nail-bearing angel seems embedded in the general edge of the lintel. More importantly, and for what it is worth, neither Antier nor Gilbert remotely show the very characteristic 'tilt' of the Cross-bearing angel visible on the 1840 daguerrotypes and still today and the Cross of Gilbert also tucks more neatly, unbroken, under Christ's left arm. Indeed, the inclination of the Cross away

from Christ, in Antier seems to support the supposition that this angel was re-tilted towards Christ at some point, though this point would be later rather than earlier. In addition, Gilbert shows the figures as positioned further outwards from the supporting block since all four of them seem to have a part, such as the halo in the case of John and Mary, that overlaps the 'baguette' that forms the join between the tympanum and the innermost archivolt³². This has to be put in relation with the oft-repeated fact that all figures, both relief and rounded, have been cemented deeply into their blocks, as if this was not always or originally intended, even if practiced at Amiens. Lastly, Taralon shows that Deville and Normand decisively confirmed that both Mary and John have also been inclined inwards a little at some point but without otherwise having shifted position.

Returning now to the existing Christ-Judge, the first point to make is that, unlike the nail-bearing angel with which it is mostly automatically associated, it is stylistically as good as unique, especially with respect to the combination of traits found in it, and as applied to a figure of Christ.

A first 'unique' feature is the exceedingly simplified treatment of the diagonal of the drape between the knees³³, which is perhaps the main feature that imparts a stiff impression, as if a neo-classical vision had been applied to a medieval rather than 'classical' sculpture. This impression is reinforced by the bunch of tubular folds true left and the whole treatment can be described as competent at best. When put next to its closest equivalent, the Amiens Deesis, this latter shows much greater appreciation of the delicacy and weight and real fall of actual fabric, as well as, surprisingly, more archaic features, as if earlier in style. Yet unlike Amiens, where the drapery envelops the elbow from the outside instead of falling across the chest, the present Christ's

drapery over the shoulder largely follows the more archaic Gilbert or the manner of the earlier Chartres South Portal, except round the arm, which remains fully bare in these latter.

The facial type of Christ is still reminiscent of some of the Byzantine-inspired apostles of Coronation portal of 1210-20, especially in the deeper carving of the small almond eyes and the hair type, but the distinctly narrower forehead together with round cheekbones and fuller cheeks is as good as unique. Again, though the hair in overlapping strands is common on the Coronation portal and also used at Amiens, this particular treatment of it is hard to imagine before the Sainte Chapelle apostles of c. 1243-48 at the earliest. If one imagined dating it later, in the 50s or 60s, one would have expected Jean de Chelles or Pierre de Montreuil to have undertaken the work but it does not seem to derive from either and the search for truly close comparisons remains surprising elusive. In the end, the hair type of the apostle of the 2nd pillar south³⁴, or the St James, 4th pillar north, as well as aspects of the 'melancholy' apostle now in Musée du Moyen Age (3rd pillar north), remain the only counterparts. But where one has no hesitation putting the angel with nails next to the 'philosopher head' apostle (2nd pillar north, original in Musée du Moyen Age), or even next to the Childebert (Louvre)³⁵, when comparing treatment of hair, because they are equals, it is not so straightforward for the Christ and this melancholy apostle, - despite Medding and Erlande-Brandenburg rightly pointing out similarities, - because they are not.

To the similarities they noted - such as the Byzantine-derived small curls at the top of the hairline, the small locks on the temple, the shape of moustache and beard, the furrowed brow, - one can add the fall and fold of the drapery over the left shoulder and its treatment around the raised arm. Important differences include, for the actual Christ-Judge, the lack of

clear demarcation between cheek and beard line, a slight asymmetry in the treatment of beard strands, and the fact that the strands of hair are closer to other apostles (e.g. the 2nd pillar south side or a simplified version of the James, 4th pillar north) but leaving the top and back of the head worked rather summarily. Given the sheer number of correspondences one is tempted to conclude that one might indeed have taken the other as inspiration, with the apostle being the masterpiece of consequentially rendered emotion serving as point of reference.

One key difference with the Christ-Judge in this respect is also one that could raise an eyebrow. For might what Sauerländer called its 'mondain' aspect, reminiscent of the refinement of the treatment of the Childebert with its courtly features, - e.g. stylish curls, modish elegance, - not result from a hint of a smile in the treatment of the mouth, intended or not, thereby setting up a quite inappropriate contrast with His furrowed brow, let alone the seriousness of the theme? This too seems unique, and when added to the last factor detailed next, makes one wish for a closer material re-examination of this figure, regardless of whether one believes Gilbert to be accurate or not.

This clear difference with all of the apostles of the Sainte Chapelle is not the fact that the back of the hair is less profoundly worked, for which there are other examples; or that the ears are not attempted and hidden by hair or sideburns, ditto (the surviving Bourges Jube Christ head, for example), nor even the fact that this seems the case for such a central sculpture and not for the others on the tympanum; much more problematic is the fact that to my knowledge the detail of a lock of hair sprouting out from where the ear should be, rather than above or behind it³⁶, is precisely the kind of mannered detail more commonly associated with

work later in the century or the next, typical examples of which can be found in some of the choir enclosure figures inside the cathedral.

Put another way, taking the lithograph more seriously would lead to the question of how seriously one can take the Christ-Judge, or at least to posing the question of whether the reason for what Sauerländer (1959) referred to as its “astonishing modernity” has to be sought in the possibility that it might indeed be such. Since the three-dimensional original may not have been cemented fully into the block, while at the same time Soufflot had to cut to right between the feet, one can at least envisage a scenario in which the original came crashing down and had to be replaced³⁷, highly speculative as this must remain. For now, the conclusion must be that Notre Dame has not yet yielded all its mysteries.

Notes

¹ Sold as a St Stephen, 13th century. It is only lack of sideways inclination of the head and the arm supporting it that prevents us from identifying this figure immediately as John rather than Stephen, since all three early French surviving examples of the former in wood (Cerisiers, Verneuil, Hainaut) have heads inclined towards the hand while all surviving examples of Stephen in stone (e.g. Sens, Meaux) are straight; but as the figure has no trace of the deacon's stole and he is always depicted holding the book with both hands in front of him rather than in one hand as an apostle, we are definitely dealing with John. Not only is there a faint trace of indent on the right cheek where the hand would have touched, the decisive factor here is also the bare feet which, besides Christ and angels, only His closest disciples were considered worthy of.

² A typical example is Saint-Martin-des-Champs in Paris, whose cloister was rebuilt between 1225-35, according to the archives analyzed by Philippe Plagnieux, under the prior Baudouin (1224-34), who then had himself laid to rest in it, 'in front of the Crucifix'.

³ There is also a St John at Verneuil, which belongs to the local parish association listed in 1959. It is 120cm high (without socle). The Virgin, listed in 1929, belongs to municipality and is 133 cm high. Though both have a similar broad-edged mantle, the St John seems later and more rustic in style. It is also not listed in the inventory made by Abbé P. L. Dubois, a priest at Verneuil, in 1891. On the other hand, the Church was already pillaged in 1792.

⁴ It was also one of the many institutions Saint Louis had endowed early on, in this case with an ex-voto statue of John the Baptist made of gold and thus unsurprisingly already stolen in 1527.

⁵ Thus, the Toledo Bible (Morgan Library ms 240) has *muldenfalten* and London BL Harley 1527 has the block style.

⁶ See Anne Prache 1997.

⁷ The mantles of some of the wise virgins of the central doorposts at Amiens are another possible clue as to how John's mantle would have been draped across but it is not possible to establish the length of the drop.

⁸ Where drapery does touch the ground, the kind of upturned hem forming a horizontal band, even with a triangular raise above the feet, as in the Cefalu mosaics, bears little relation to the breaking folds described here.

⁹ In other words, it is as if this sculpture, anticipates the ‘claritas’ of Thomas Aquinas’ near contemporary commentary on Aristotle.

¹⁰ Vöge (1904) was also the first to note certain differences: the Amiens Visitation Virgin has a squarer forehead than Reims, which is more semi-circular.

¹¹ Since his dating for Reims was dependent on the dating of Amiens and other work it has itself not been free from contention and revision.

¹² The central fold breaking between the feet of St John would have projected forward more and likely shown both sides of the cloth, as in the second praying angel from the bottom on the inner arch of the true left archivolt (the projecting ridge of whose central fold is lost higher up).

¹³ Medding already correctly saw that the Chartres virgins were transposed, from probably the Last Judgment portal in the South transept, to their present position in the west portal of the North transept, sitting with the story of Judith in the archivolt. It would explain both why they are positioned 4 in a vertical row with the 5th side by side and why the foolish ones are on the true right.

¹⁴ Stadtarchiv Goslar, Ms. B 4387, f. 105r.

¹⁵ Always remembering that evolutions are not exclusively linear – see, for example, the ivory annunciate angel (Louvre OA 7507), made at a time (last third of the 13th century) when every angel has even more elaborate breaking folds (Saudemont, Poissy, etc), who has a version of tubular folds stopping at the ankles worthy of the block style, like the Childebert of c. 1240, the key being that both of these also effect a clear and subtle modelling of the limbs underneath in accord with a very sophisticated understanding of weight distribution dictated by the pose, something not generally found before the 2nd quarter of the 13th century. Likewise, the oak St John in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs of the end of the 13th century has a tunic in the ‘block’ style worthy of the 1230s.

¹⁶ It is a pity that damage to the hair of John from Cerisiers at Sens prevents any comparison as indications are that it might have been more similar to this one than the curled ends of Ramousies, that both Mosan and Catalan

works carried over from the preceding century, even if the overall head shape with hair like a cap is otherwise similar. Likewise, though Amiens is on the one hand the least damaged and most unified of surviving cathedrals, one of the most criticized and ignorant restorers of all time, Caudron, got started on both the Central and Firmin portals, provoking alarm bells for his counterpart in conservation, Didron and a public outcry. Besides mostly smaller details such as attributes, and figures such as tyrannous kings under the feet of the apostles, he also unfortunately for the present discussion got to change the hairstyle of St John.

¹⁷ On a personal note, emerging from an indistinct photograph it was this eloquent mouth most of all that first ‘spoke’ to me.

¹⁸ Quoted by LeGoff (1996)

¹⁹ *Gesta Ludovici IX; Gesta Philippi III, sive Audacis; Chronicon abbreviatum regum Francorum.* And idem.

²⁰ Anguish, anxiety, depression, foreboding - these symptoms, and no doubt other expressions of ‘states of mind’ close to, or expressions of, mental illness, more fashionable since the 20th century, are not strictly emotions in the sense given earlier.

²¹ Perhaps one can say with hindsight that the Church has functioned best as such a collection of communities, flocks of faithful united by their Shepherd. That, at any rate, is the state to which they are now asked to return, in the present-day Rome called Brussels, one community amongst other ‘communities’.

²² As the core of Church doctrine is after all only an interpretation of what this ‘act of memory’ consists of, transubstantiation or symbolism, and interpretations can vary, it is hard to imagine the sheer number of losses inflicted on medieval art in the 16th century as a result of these differences in interpretation, though of course not as hard as to forgive the blood spilt at the same time.

²³ It has, however, a decent grounding since both texts are the most theological of those in the NT, Revelation being a unique example of its kind, indeed, an extreme example of the prophetic ‘genre’. The Gospel stresses the ‘Word’; Revelation takes this Word as a medicine to be swallowed: bitter in the belly even if as honey in the mouth, after which one can ‘prophesy’. There is therefore also a minimum of justification in representing John as weeping at the foot of the Cross since his tears at the

seeming impossibility of finding a single human being worthy of opening the last Word is paralleled by the appalling incomprehension on the part of His fellow men suffered by the One on the Cross, who, as Lamb, is again the only one who can break the seal.

²⁴ It is interesting that the emotional force of this work is such that it has wholly suggested its 'moniker', more than the 'philosopher's head' apostle, its counterpart, which refers in part to its echoes of the antique style of portraiture.

²⁵ It has not been possible to obtain a copy of this work and Taralon's summary is hopefully accurate.

²⁶ Though to let an angel usurp the role always reserved for St Peter, the figure used at Amiens and Bourges which both follow Paris, is theologically unusual.

²⁷ It is unfortunate that Antier seems thus far the only possible record before 1840 of the hell scenes at the bottom of the archivolts.

²⁸ As found at Amiens rather than Paris.

²⁹ Sauerländer (1959) noted the uniqueness of mixing these sources.

³⁰ This also raises the question as to the validity of a key supposition of both Erlande-Brandenburg and Taralon, following Viollet-le-Duc, namely that the whole tympanum had to be dismantled to replace the Christ-Judge: perhaps the figure could have been replaced without removing the old block with its surviving halo if it was not initially cemented in.

³¹ Indeed, because of its angled point of view from the right, Antier almost gives the impression of a Christ with knees sideways in a zigzag, as in Vézelay; its suggestion of quite full drapery, however, is more consistent with Gilbert than with the present figure.

³² Again, for what it is worth, a recent photograph shows a curious semi-circular indent in the baguette to the left of John's head. (Fig. 11).

³³ Medding pointed out the similarity of this lower half to the figure of the Montfaucon king Dagobert of Saint Denis, also with respect to the type of seat and moulding, and especially the true right knee and leg.

³⁴ This apostle too poses the problem of the originality of its head. The original body (now Musée du Moyen Age Cl. 18664) was one of the four mutilated as late as 1830 at Mont-Valérien, then dug up and copied, inclusive of heads, in around 1850. Of the four original heads kept by the restorers, only three found their way to the Musée du Moyen Age many years later (by 1900). Because the restorers had already put the wrong heads on (swapping the Philosopher's head with the St John, for example), except for the melancholy apostle, the museum did so too, until the intervention of F. Salet in 1951. The latest theory (2007) is that this fourth missing head may actually be on the copied body at the Sainte Chapelle. The heads of the other two more fragmentary torsos given to the Musée du Moyen Age at the same time have never been found. These are the remains of the very first two to be mutilated and buried (1797) and only dug up last by Duban in 1842. The larger fragment Cl. 18669 was copied by restorers for the 1st pillar south, whereas the smaller fragment Cl. 18668 was copied in the restoration or recreation of the St Paul on the 6th pillar south.

³⁵ This figure is one of the most securely dated because made for the trumeau of the refectory door at the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-prés, documented as constructed between 1239-44, so that even if the figure was prepared earlier or later, a range of 1238-1245 would likely cover its manufacture and explain why the median of 1241 is generally adopted.

³⁶ Difficult to verify *in situ* but certainly the case for the plaster cast.

³⁷ It is not necessary to presuppose a link at this point, if there had indeed been an earlier Christ-Judge, between it and Viollet-le-Duc's double entry in his *Dictionnaire*, mentioning his finding of the relatively unweathered remains of a colossal 12th c. Christ with Tetramorph tympanum, which has never been seen or mentioned since.