



Etampes, ND N(c+)

1147

Palmier, master and carver (1123-1164)

Capitals carved with palm-tree motifs are rare in northern Europe. Twenty-seven are remarkably similar: two at Chartres, eleven at Notre-Dame-du-Fort in Etampes and one (maybe two) in the narthex of Saint-Denis. Others are found in Châteaudun, Saint-Martin in Etampes, Saint-Ayoul in Provins, Oulchy and possibly Aulnay. All have branched ferns resting on a trunk in the upper half and a row of leaves underneath [r1]. All were carved before 1150.

As they follow a similar template with the same characteristics in the details, I have ascribed the whole series to one master. The detailing is so personal he can be recognised even in obliterated capitals.

There are three other palm-tree capitals in the Paris Basin that have little in common and bear no resemblance to Palmier [r2].

I take no credit for having ‘discovered’ this group of palms: they have been noticed by other scholars and mentioned at conferences and on sites. What I have done is broaden the scope of attributions by adding palm-capitals not hitherto mentioned, extending the scope of Palmier’s work to include foliate capitals, and making forays into possible sculpture and his later role as a master mason. This shows a man of enormous output and aesthetic skill, but little variety. The broad scope of his contributions, often with more than one site per year, suggests that this *oeuvre* was more than the product of a single man but of a small team. From time to time I will separate some of the more obvious hands.

Characteristics

The layout of these palm-capitals is two-dimensional, arranged in two layers [r1,3]. The original shape of the block is only slightly disturbed and the decoration laid onto it so that all lies within two flat planes that do not overlap. The upper layer has twin sprays of foliage with one central leaf between them. To give depth the spines are split open. Leaves are fractured into parts with long lozenge-like divisions between each, so they seem more like a bouquet than a leaf. The spaces between the leaves are deeply incised, but with almost no undercutting.

The three palm-like capitals in the Paris Basin that are not by Palmier are Blois, Saint-Laumer A4(a) Bruyères-et-Montbérault ES2w(c) Châteaudun, la Madeleine n6(a)



Etampes, Notre-Dame N3-n1

1135

Where the outer tips of the sprays from adjacent palms meet they form a common terminal that turns over and hangs. The space underneath may be hollowed out to form a cave-like recess. The fronds are usually sharply pointed, with clean-cut edges set true to the plane of the capital. The junction between the trunk and the fronds is covered by a collar that is usually carved in two layers, a lower that hugs the trunk, and an upper in the shape of a three-lobed lip [r1]. The sprays spring from this collar.

Some trunks have spiral bark and some vertical. Only in later capitals after 1150 are the spirals drilled for emphasis. A star placed under the impost accentuates the centre above the trunk. Some have volutes in the upper corners. Neither volutes nor terminals ever project beyond the abacus.

In one imaginative stroke of genius in mature designs the bottom central leaf was sundered so that the full length of the trunk could be exposed and seen to be supported directly on the astragal: A rather perverse move that denied the nature of the leaf (arrow).

Of thousands of capitals from the Paris Basin less than fifty have leaves sundered in this way, whereas most have a spine down the centre as in real life. The outline is formed from two arcs from two centres that are then shifted sideways to expose the trunk. The device was a brave departure from tradition, and was to remain an element in Palmier's dossier for many years.

Some of his earliest palms in the Paris Basin are in Etampes. There are eleven. The two carved next to the north door and on the frieze over the left embrasure of the south portal are typical [r3,4].

I realised I would not have a chronology for any of the Palmier capitals until I had sorted out the construction order of the entire building. The gradual changes to his carving style in this church held the key to understanding where other buildings would fit into his *œuvre*, and to do this I had to analyse the construction history of the whole church. Etampes is one of the most difficult to understand, and a number of scholars have been stumped by the problems offered by its disconnected spaciousness. Also, the considerable discussion on whether the Etampes column figures were earlier or later than those on the left embrasure at Chartres requires a temporary digression in order to clarify the construction history.

The chronology of Etampes, Notre-Dame

As we shall see, Palmier had a long and prolific relationship with the site, carving many capitals on all levels and responsible for much of the work on the south portal, and possibly for the design itself. It was largely from his work that I realised that the lateral and eastern bays of the choir would have to be dated earlier than some would have it, so that the commencement of Etampes should be placed some 4 or 5 years before the fire at Chartres.

I will proceed in three stages - a first approximation, a more accurate assessment using the detailing in the vaults, followed by an examination of the capitals and the junctions between the south-west corner and the portal.

Firstly, relying on the range of carvers of capitals at each level as well as the discontinuities of stonework around the walls, I concluded that the north was rising a little ahead of the south because the ground was highest in the north-west corner, and that the lower eastern capitals and their vaults were earlier than the higher western ones of the transepts.

This provided a fairly stately timetable of about eighteen or so years for these campaigns. It takes account of the delays needed with ten groups of vaulting over seven levels and for raising the walls and piers at a median rate of six to seven courses per year, which is about average for a large and complex building involving a considerable amount of scaffolding



Etampes, Notre-Dame EN4+w(c) 1136



Etampes, Notre-Dame N3-n1 1135



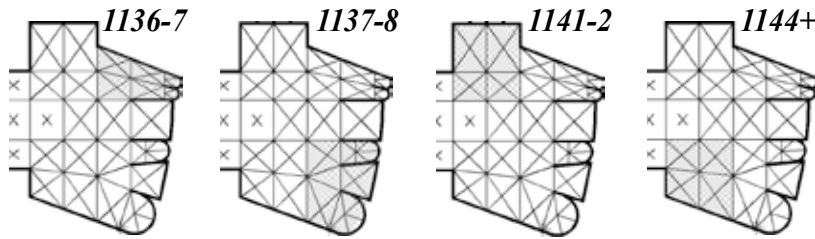
Etampes, Notre-Dame W-s L-w 1135

The eleven palm capitals in Etampes are

- | | | |
|----|-------|--------------------------|
| 1 | 1135 | north door N3-nL1 |
| 2 | 1135 | north door N3-nR1 |
| 3 | 1135 | south portal S,L-w1 |
| 4 | 1135 | south portal S,L-w2 |
| 5 | 1136 | north aisle EN4w(c) |
| 6 | 1139 | south aisle ES3n(c) |
| 7 | 1139 | south aisle ES2e(c) |
| 8 | 1141 | north transept EN+1e(c+) |
| 9 | 1141 | north transept EN+1w(c+) |
| 10 | 1141 | north transept EN1w(c+) |
| 11 | 1145? | south transept ES1n(c+) |

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[v.6:ch.12]. The approximate dates for the four major levels of vaults and the capitals under them is shown in this simplistic version [b].

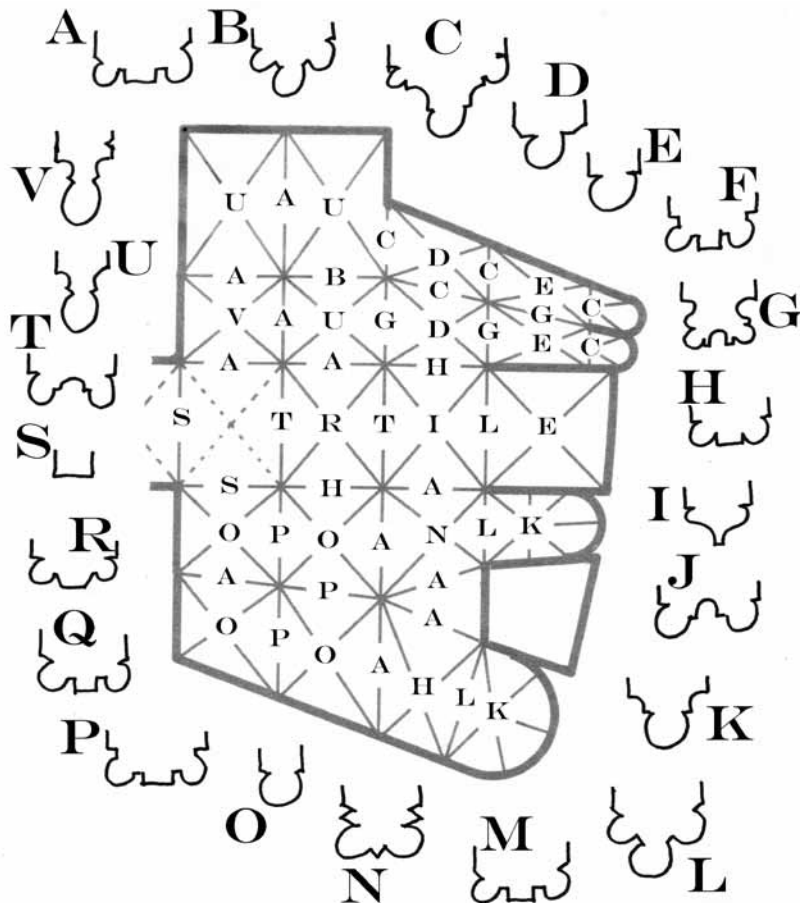


Etampes, Notre-Dame, approximate dates for shaded campaigns with capitals 1136 to 1145 or later.

However, to make sense of the subtle changes in the detailing of Palmier’s work we need to be more accurate than this. It is important as the growth in his style at Etampes can be dovetailed into the chronology at Chartres and Saint-Denis, and together they can indicate the dates of other monuments where Palmier worked.

Secondly, I examined the profiles for the vault arches and ribs [b]. Twenty-two different profiles may indicate chaos, but as with other buildings constructed over many campaigns (Saint-Martin-des-Champs springs to mind) they indicate a slow construction, prolonged over many campaigns and involving many different template-makers. When you study the process on site you perceive a sequence. It is not bay by bay or vault by vault, but pier by pier.

The lowest courses of an arch determined the profile for all the other voussoirs of that arch. Because the lowest stones were laid up on the pier, this is where I looked. Even in the most complex situation you can work out which were designed to complete the profile of an arch already started on another pier, and which were new profiles for arches yet to come.



Etampes, Notre-Dame vaulting arch and rib profiles

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The spaces of Etampes appear confusing and the number of profiles even more so, but from above, from the level of the completed vaults, a solution was forthcoming. There were occasions when there were additional complications where the transverse arches were set up first and the ribs poked into the spaces between at a later date, but the erection order could usually be sorted out on site with a good pair of binoculars.

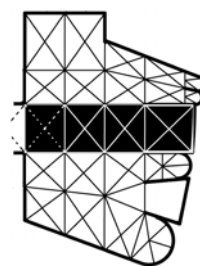


Etampes, Notre-Dame view from north transept on the left into one of the south chapels and the southern wall on the right

In the central vessel of the choir the misalignments between nearly every capital and their imposts show that (with the possible exception of the junction with the nave) there was a break above the capitals between the campaign of the 1120s and those in the 40s [r1,b1]. The capitals had been erected some twenty years before, and work must have stopped at or before the imposts, so that the piers and walls of the choir had been built to the capitals but no higher.

This early campaign may have included the beginning of the groin vaults over the crossing [b2]. But the capitals, imposts and arches on the NE corner (arrow) show it could not have been erected until all surrounding arches had been completed [b3]. This groin was therefore completed in the 40s though it may have been begun a lot earlier on the west side.

The break at the level of the imposts meant that when the eastern bays and the chapels were built their vaults could be set up at the same time as the higher ones over the choir.



Etampes 1120s campaign



Etampes central choir misaligned impost



Etampes crossing with nave on the left

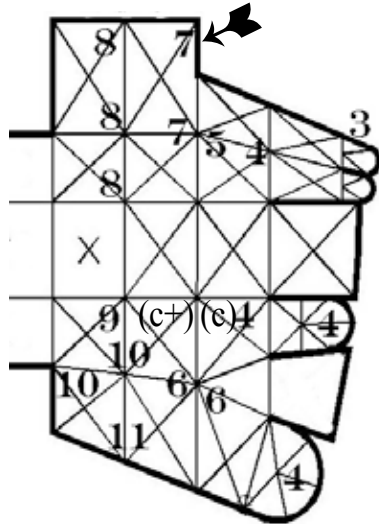


Etampes NE1 crossing pier, arrowed above

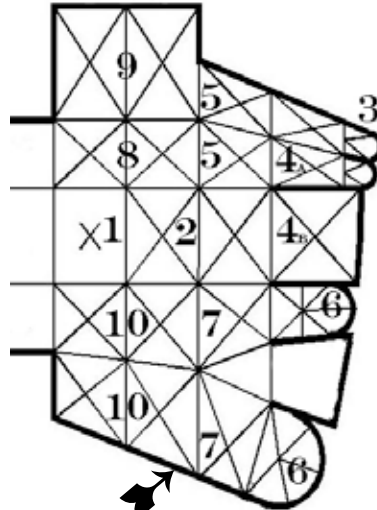
The steps in the construction may be complicated to visualise, but can be summarised in an approximate manner that will still be sufficient for our purposes, which is to determine the dates for the capitals. The first plan of the imposts on the next page shows there was a flow of work from the north-east chapels to the junction with the transepts (to be called steps 3-5), with the south-east chapels a little behind that (steps 4-6). The north transept impost followed (7-8), and then the south. Similarly the laying up of the

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arches, though far more complex, could be set out in a simplified way in the adjoining plan [b]. For example, when the step 7 impost were being laid on the east side of the north transept the vaults on the western side of the south aisle were being built (arrowed). There were additional complications that we need not go in to here, for the general picture is clear enough.



Etampes ND, steps in impost erection



Etampes ND, steps in erection of vault arches

Using the above order established in the vaults I then worked downwards by counting the number of courses to determine the probable construction schedule for the lower parts of the building. This method of determining the time needed to lay courses and erect vaults is explored across 23 buildings in chapter 12, and is founded on the probable construction rates of the Chartres nave, and the Reims and Saint-Denis choirs, being an average of six to seven courses per year.

There are 16 courses to the northern window sills and a further 19+ to the window capitals and 16± to complete the wall supporting the vaults. I estimate it took some 18 years altogether to build and vault a bay, and in addition probably another year for the foundations. From this I estimated a possible schedule for the construction of the north external wall [r1].

The toichological evidence suggests a rolling construction that began with the north-east chapels and step by step moved west and south. The dates for each section of the building that I will be using for the Palmier capitals is summarised [b]. The chart of courses on the right refers to the second bay (left box). I hope to give the coursing breaks a more thorough analysis on my visit to Etampes this year.

Etampes Notre-Dame-du-Fort choir construction schedule, steps marked =

	NE chapel	NE-n wall	SE chapel	SE-s wall	N transept	SW corner	
1146						top wall ??	1146
1145					top wall		1145
1144						vlt (c+)=10	1144
1143					top wall	window sill	1143
1142						vlt =9	1142
1141					top wall	vlt (c+)=8	1141
1140		top wall				vlt (c)=7 (aw)=7	1140
1139						(aw)=6	1139
1138	top wall	vlt (c)=5 (aw)=4	vlt (c)=5 (aw)=4			plinth	1139
1137						footings	1138
1136	(aw) (c)=3	string, sill					1137
1135		N-n door				S-s upper	1136
1134	string, sills		sill	string	plinths	S-s lower	1135
1133		plinths	string		footings		1134
1132	plinths	footings		footings			1133
1131	footings		footings				1132
							1131

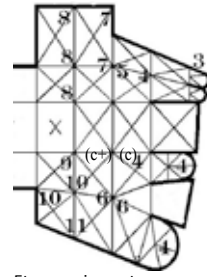
Timing by courses for the N2 bay

1140	53	top of vault wall arch
1140	52	
1140	51	
1140	50	
1140	49	
1139	48	
1139	47	
1139	46	
1139	45	
1139	44	
1139	43	
1139	42	
1138	41	
1138	40	
1138	39	
1138	38	
1138	37	window caps = order 4
1138	36	
1138	35	
1137	34	
1137	33	
1137	32	
1137	31	
1137	30	
1137	29	
1136	28	
1136	27	
1136	26	
1136	25	
1136	24	
1136	23	
1136	22	
1135	21	
1135	20	
1135	19	
1135	18	
1135	17	
1135	16	window sills
1135	15	
1134	14	
1134	13	drip mould
1134	12	
1134	11	
1134	10	
1134	9	
1133	8	
1133	7	
1133	6	
1133	5	
1133	4	
1133	3	
1133	2	torus moulds
1132	1	plinths
1132	0	
1132	-1	
1132	-2	
1132	-3	
1132	-4	
1132	-??	footings

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Thirdly, we need to see how this information could be used to date the south portal. The right embrasure of the portal was partly covered by the adjacent west wall of the south transept right up to the cornice under its little roof [b1]. Its lower courses were built around and over the carved bases of the portal [b2]. Above the drip mould that lies above the archivolts the transept wall was recessed with an arch to avoid covering the great angel that hovers over the portal [arrow b3]. The coursing of the portal wall inside this recess shows that the portal was wider, and may have had a corner column with a figure, as on the west side. This tells us that the entire portal had been completed before the transept had been begun

From the earlier plan showing steps in laying the imposts, the capitals in step 10 in the south transept would have been carved in or somewhat later than 1144 [r1]. One is in Palmier’s foliate style. Working downwards from here I counted 48+ courses between the internal high vault capitals and the ground. These capitals align with the window sill marked with an arrow [b1]. From this the date for the footings of the south-west corner would have been 1138 or, most probably, later.



Etampes imposts



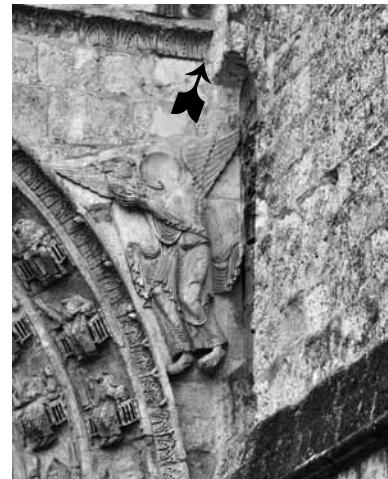
Etampes south portal

1135-1136



Etampes south portal, lower right

1135/1138+



Etampes south portal, upper right

1136/1144

The carving of the south porch would have had to have been completed sufficiently before 1138 to allow for the change in heart that provoked the covering of the portal. I will show below why I prefer the date of 1135 for the start of the portal and its sculpture. It was therefore carved some three years before the north embrasure column-statues at Chartres.

Amongst others, Stoddard recognised that Etampes was before Chartres. Stoddard 1987, 31 Sauerländer also appears to agree: “Whether Etampes precedes the Chartres Royal Portal in time, or is merely a provincial imitation of the famous exemplar, is almost impossible to decide. It is a striking fact that the figure style nowhere betrays the influence of the Chartres Head Master, evident in all other portals of the Chartres circle. This portal may executed c. 1140, shortly before Chartres.” Sauerländer, 1972, 39 This becomes more reasonable if one dates the others of the ‘Chartres circle’ like Bourges, Le Mans, Saint-Loup and Ivry, before Chartres. Since I am using the capitals as the principal evidence in approaching this whole vexed issue I have set aside the often circular arguments of the past century. Personally, I find this liberating.

Considering that the portal consists of more than thirty courses, and the care needed to erect the archivolts and the gigantic flanking angels, it could have taken two years to carve and erect. The portal was small in size, but there were still natural limits to the erection of stonework in a site constricted by the adjacent market of a busy town.

1135

The details suggest that Palmier had a great deal to do with the portal, though he would not have been the only sculptor working on it. This can be seen in the Palmier capital on the left flank [r1]. The details of split spines, sundered leaves, sharp edges and parallel veins are found in all his works from this time.

On both embrasures there are gaps between the historiated capitals that were filled with triangular stones decorated with the same foliage used alongside the palms [b1]. In the next course the impost moulding carries the same detailing around the entire portal [b2]. The same was used without change around the arch surrounding the archivolts and in the cornice under the roof above the great angels [b3]. In them notice the long gap between fronds that fractures the leaf into parts (arrow).

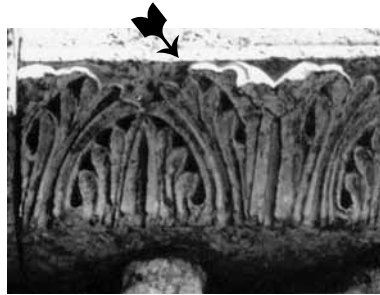
It is most unusual to have the same detailing being used at every level. It is more normal to find that the many different mouldings are used in each section and level, as in Le Mans, Saint-Loup and Chartres. The unity achieved here suggests that the template-maker for these designs was not only present the whole time it was being constructed, but had sufficient seniority to impose one unifying arrangement on the whole portal.



Etampes, Notre-Dame W-s L-w 1135



Etampes Notre-Dame filler between portal caps



Etampes, Notre-Dame impost over portal capitals



Etampes, Notre-Dame portal cornice detail 1136

If we are prepared to credit Palmier with responsibility for the portal layout, then he would have designed the plinths [r2]. They consist of a base course, tall socles with lozenges, and above that a projecting table which directly supports the torus moulds under the columns.

It is generally recognised that the Master of Etampes may have been involved in some of the larger sculpture on the left Chartres embrasure. Logically he could also have been responsible for the layout of the lowest courses of the portal that have the same design as Etampes, only richer in decorative niceties [b1]. I have estimated that the Chartres bases were carved in 1138 and that those under the left embrasure were placed in the same year, but incorrectly.^{Gesta***} The rest of the plinths were not put in place until the next campaign when the error was discovered.



Etampes, Notre-Dame portal plinths 1135

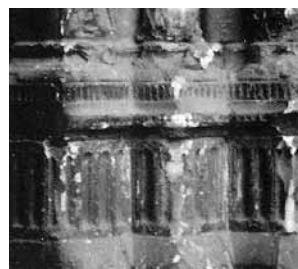
The only other plinths like these are two later porches at Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Notre-Dame-en-Vaux in Châlons-en-Champagne, where the detailing is handled a little differently and the lozenges are scooped [b2,3]. The even later plinths on the left of the Mantes central portal also have scooped lozenges, but with a second row of panels above that [b4].



Chartres west portal plinths 1138



Saint-Germain porch plinths 1143



Châlons N-D south porch plinths 1144



Mantes-la-Jolie W.c.l plinths 1150+

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Palm-trees at Etampes

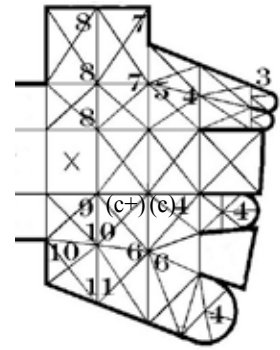
There are eleven palm-tree capitals in Etampes, and three of the same style in nearby Saint-Martin. From the construction sequence discussed above I would place the capitals in the following order ('=3' refers to steps for imposts and (2) refers to the number of palm-trees):

- W-s portal 1135-36 (2) [r2]
- N-n(a) north entry door 1135 (2) [r3]
- N(c) lower northern piers 1136-38 = steps 3 and 4 (1) [b1]
- S(aw) chapel window 1137 = step 4 (1) [b2]
- S(c) lower southern piers 1138-39 = steps 5 and 6 (1) [r4]
- N(c+) two in the upper north piers 1141 = step 8 (3) [p.9 b1,2]
- S(c+) upper southern wall 1145+ = step 11 (1) [p.9 r2].

The trunk is clearly presented as the lateral leaves have been moved aside in the south portal and the north door [r1,2]. Though the central lower leaf has been sundered, they are still firmly attached to their neighbour. It is as if he was a little uncertain about treating a leaf in such an unusual, even heretical, manner and could not at first bring himself to display it fully in its own right. As the two in the north door are carved onto narrower blocks, less of the trunk is visible, yet the principles in the design are the same.

On the inside he carved one in the north-east in step 3 and another in the south in step 4. They all expose the trunk [b1,2]. As the exposure of the trunk has been presented in the same way as in the south portal, I would place all four capitals into a similar period.

They were carved from a tougher, less tractable *lucastre*, like most of the earlier capitals and most of those in the nearby Abbey of Saint-Martin. The edges are not refined and the forms are somewhat elementary as the stone does not allow for undercutting or subtleties. The gashes were chiselled into a 'v' rather than a square-sided groove. The leaves are fractured into deeply-separated fronds.



Etampes ND, steps in imposts



Etampes, Notre-Dame W-s L-w 1135



Etampes, Notre-Dame N-n:1,2 1135



Etampes, ND EN4+w(c) =3 1136



Etampes ND, ES3n(c) =4 1137

There is one possible palm-tree among the southern chapels, but the upper part with the fronds has been knocked off. You can just see the collar and the base of the trunk peeping out on the corner [r4]. It is unique to find the palm being placed on the corner, possibly because he realised the inherent design weakness that opened it to being damaged. Arranging the lower leaves around the corner seems to have proved difficult as the lower leaf was not sundered.

The next phase is very apparent in two in the north transept at the (c+) level in step 8 [next page b]. They were carved in a finer *calcaire* and are more delicate and detailed in the fronds than before. Both have the same empty cave-like hollow between the sprays under the corner of the abacus. The fronds are more waisted where they join the main leaf and the projecting foliage appears to push out further because the curves on the underside have been accentuated. The cave-like openings under the sprays



Etampes Notre-Dame ES2e(c) =6 1139

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have been made wider and deeper. The terminals are small and hang, and all have volutes. The outcome is more dramatic.

The trend over these seven or so years has been for his work to become more open, more undercut and more impressive. In other respects the forms and arrangements have remained substantially unchanged.

1141



Etampes, ND EN+1e(c+)=8

1141



Etampes, ND EN+1w(c+)=8

1141

In the last palm-tree on the south wall at the (c+) level in step 11 there is more openness, more leaves on the palm sprays and a new style of collarette around the trunk [r1]. The spirals on the trunk have been drilled, as has the edge of the cone just visible above the palm sprays. These details have connections with post-1150 designs that will be discussed in a moment.

The south-west corner was the last part to be vaulted. The south wall contains one ten- and one twelve-part rose window with octagonal shafts [r2]. Both arrangements and the details are in the manner of the 1160s. Was Etampes left incomplete after the king's decision to go on the Crusade in 1145, and like so many other buildings was this corner consequently left under scaffolding for ten or more years?^{see ICMA report 06.}

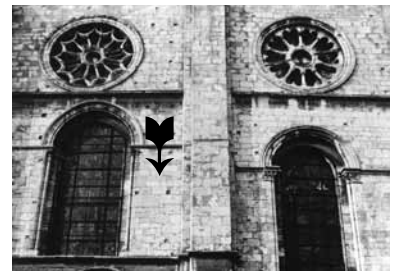
To reinforce this idea one can discern the almost vertical break in the construction some two stones to the left of the buttress, emphasising the later start to the whole south-west corner [arrow r2].

Such a scenario seems likely. The data reflects this, and were we to adopt 1145 for the clerestory capitals next to the tall windows of the south-west corner, then this moment in history helps consolidate the earlier dating in the rest of the building.



Etampes, Notre-Dame Es1n(c+)=11

1144+



Etampes, rose windows south wall

1160s

A companion at Etampes

1135

The north door has three capitals over each jamb [r3]. The pair nearest the door opening are palm-tree from step 3 [b]. The outer pair are purely foliate, and have the same fronds and gashed spines as the inner pair. Considering the stars at the top, the similar detailing and the hanging tips I would say that both pairs were by Palmier. The details of the curves of the foliage, the scooped fronds and the tips, as well as the gashes along the spines, point to one carver [next page b1,2]. I will discuss this and Palmier's other non-palm capitals on the next page.



Etampes, ND

1135



Etampes, Notre-Dame N-nL3-1

1135



Etampes, Notre-Dame N-nR1-3

1135

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It is the middle capital that raises questions [b3]. It is not two-dimensional but three, as the central leaf lies over those to the sides which pass under it [arrow b3]. The end fronds turn back at the tips and are much heavier, and the tips are longer and thinner. The curves, especially at the arrow and over the central hanging frond, are fuller, more sumptuous. Yet the spine has flat edges as in the palm capital.

I think this is by a co-worker who handled his details in a somewhat Palmier-like manner, but maintained his own preferences for a more fruity arrangement of leaves and for greater depth. I call him Lapwing. These qualities turn up over the next six or so years in the same jobs as Palmier. He was independent on layouts but in harmony with Palmier in detailing. They worked together on may jobs including Saint-Denis and Chartres.



Etampes, Notre-Dame EN-nR1 detail 1135



Etampes, Notre-Dame N-nR3 detail 1135



Etampes, Notre-Dame N-nR2 1135



Etampes, Notre-Dame star at top of a capital



Etampes, Notre-Dame En3s(c)=4 1135

Palmier without palm trees at Etampes (1135-1145)

The foliate characteristics on the palm-tree capitals by Palmier are also found in capitals without palm-trees, as indicated in the north doorway: two-dimensional flat setout, sharp fronds, split spines and compact terminals. There are gashes up the spines of nearly every unit that spring from the astragal. The tips of the leaves are small and overhang with a distinctive curve. The split leaf appears along the bottom row. The underside of the sprays are not hollowed out in the earlier work. Where there are stars they are the same as those in the palm-tree capitals, even to the way in which the curves of the star are sinuously rounded into one another [r2].

Some of the capitals he carved in the bays fronting the north-east chapels are clustered on this and the next page [b]. One is a classic Palmier in form and in detailing [r3]. Others are illustrated in volume 4.



Etampes Notre-Dame NNC-eR1-2(aw)=3 1135



Etampes Notre-Dame NNC-eL1-2(aw)=3 1135



Etampes, Notre-Dame En2sw(c)=3 1135



Etampes Notre-Dame En3L(aw)=3 1135



Etampes Notre-Dame Ew4(c)

1135

DRAFT

1135



Etampes, Notre-Dame CN2nL(aw) =3 1135



Etampes, Notre-Dame EN4(c) =4 1135



Etampes Notre-Dame AN-e(c+) external 1138

Lapwing also carved or designed numerous three-dimensional layouts around the north chapels in steps 3 and 4 [b]. In these campaigns he carved almost as much as Palmier. I will show that they may have met carving the lowest courses of the Saint-Denis narthex before coming to Etampes, around 1134/35. Notice that he cut a wide groove up the spine rather than splitting it, and did not fracture nor sunder the leaves.



Etampes, Notre-Dame EN3se(c) by Lapwing

1135



Etampes, Notre-Dame EN4w+(c)



Etampes, Notre-Dame NSC(c) =3 1135



Etampes, Notre-Dame EN2nw(c) by Lapwing

1135



Etampes, Notre-Dame EN3w(c) by Lapwing

1135



Etampes, Notre-Dame EN3e(c) by Lapwing 1135



Etampes, ND EN2n(c) =5

1136



Etampes, Notre-Dame EN3ne(c) by Lapwing 1135

1136



EtampesNotre-Dame EN2ne,n(c) =5

1136



Etampes NC(aw) =3 1135

DRAFT

When construction progressed from the northern to the southern chapels less was carved by either of these men, perhaps because, having finished the south portal, they had moved off-site to work at Chartres as well as Saint-Denis. Around 1139 Palmier may perhaps have returned to carve three capitals at Etampes [r1,b]. In them the terminals have been emphasised.



Etampes Notre-Dame Es2n2(c) =6 1139

1139



Etampes Notre-Dame ES2n(c) =6 1139



Etampes Notre-Dame Es2n(c) =6 1139

A couple of years later he certainly did return to Etampes for the higher vaults on the north. His foliate arrangements had evolved. He carved two with palms and eight without [b]. These designs are more open, more thrusting and dynamic. The foliage still lies within the one curved plane, but the sculptural qualities - one might say the three-dimensional potential - has been released. They lie in a defining moment of transition for Palmier, and much other work can be dated as being before or after. The development came after being with the considerable team of expert sculptors engaged on the Chartres west portal.

1141



Etampes Notre-Dame EN1n(c+) =8 1141



Etampes Notre-Dame EN2ws(c+) =8 1141



Etampes Ntre-Dame EN1n(c+) =8 1141



Etampes Notre-Dame EN1+sw(c+) =8 1141



Etampes Notre-Dame Nw2e(c+) =8 1141



Etampes Notre-Dame En3(c+) =8 1141



Etampes Notre-Dame EN2w(c+) =8 1141



Etampes Notre-Dame EN3(c+) =8

DRAFT

In one with palms the trunk is visible between the divided half-fronds, and in all details this is a recognisable capital by Palmier [r1]. There is another against the wall in which he squeezed a double palm into the width normally reserved for a single tree [r2]. He had carved double trees some years before at Saint-Denis and at Chartres. The trunk is so hidden by the leaves that no trace of it is visible from below. Sundering has disappeared in this one, though not in the other.

Foliage now has a more mechanical sense of perfection than before, the curves of the corner leaves have become larger, the out-thrust of the terminals greatly emphasised by using a more parabolic curve, and the hollow corners made bolder.

There is a possibility he carved a large capital with pairs of birds turned to peck either each other or a head [b1]. I have enlarged the foliage to show the split and sundered leaves, the curl of the tips, the lozenge at the join between fronds and the sense of another layer (in this case a leaf) emerging between these leaves [b2]. I have not been able to use this information to identify any sculpture, nor of the colonnettes at any of the portals he worked on.



Etampes Notre-Dame EN+1w(c+) =8 and detail of lower foliage



1141



Etampes, ND EN+1w(c+) =8 [as on p.8] 1141



Etampes Notre-Dame EN1w(c+) =8 1141

In the final stage in the corner of the south transept against the nave, in 1144 or later, he carved a small capital with two tiny stars [r2]. This was about the time the Second Crusade was called and may have been his last work before the Recession.

Altogether on all four levels of Etampes Palmier carved 29 small two-sided capitals and four that are three-sided, and 15 large ones. This was an enormous body of work to design and carve, and even if he was supported by assistants he may have been creating nothing but capitals for much of his time. Using the carving times set out in chapter 7 and adjusting for the particularly hard nature of the stone, I calculate he would have spent more than 160 days on this work if he did it all himself. Since the average working year has been calculated at about 250 days," this would have taken him eight months or more over the many campaigns that he worked on this site. Since most of his capitals were carved in the first couple of years when he was also occupied with the south portal, he would have had assistants to support him so that he could concentrate on the sculpture, and would have had little time for plain walling or elements.

This master was constantly being innovative in small things. He experimented with patterns on the trunks, which at Chartres are spiralled in opposite directions on each side of the capital, and are plain in Saint-Denis, Etampes and Châteaudun. In Chartres and on the Etampes porch the stars have six points, whereas the north door at Etampes has eight on the right jamb and six on the left. He varied the foliage and terminals, undercutting deeply under the sprays or covering that space with a larger leaf. Where there are terminals they are invariably small, but many have none at all, especially in the earlier non-palm capitals.



Etampes S1cs(+)

1144/5

Palmier at the nearby abbey of Saint-Martin

Two capitals on the interior of the Saint-Martin apse are by Palmier, though somewhat simplified, and there is one on the outside apse cornice [b1,2]. They could not have been carved at the same time. The interior capitals were erected before the aisle vaults whereas the exterior came with the completion of these vaults, a difference of perhaps three years. The stone the monks used was hard, possibly harder than any used at Notre-Dame, which may be why Palmier chiselled the ambulatory capitals without deep cutting or embellishments

From the stylistic connections with Notre-Dame I would date the first to around 1136 and the second to nearer 1140. In the latter notice that a gap has been opened up on the underside of the palm-fronds, forming a dark cave that is not present in earlier work. This detail parallels step 8 from around 1141.



Etampes, Saint-Martin apsidal chapel 1132-40

1136



Etampes, Saint-Martin apse

1136



Etampes, Saint-Martin apse external

1139

1140

There is another capital in the abbey clerestory that exhibits the basic form of a palm-tree, though of a very simple kind [b1]. It is Palmier in manner, but reduced to its essentials. There are other similarly simplified forms at Saint-Martin at both the aisle and clerestory levels of the choir. Indeed, one could say that austerity was a characteristic of many of the *lucastre* capitals at Saint-Martin, and suggests an intriguing possibility.

From their bareness I have the impression that many of the capitals in the abbey were carved by the monks and that Palmier and others from the Notre-Dame workshop worked with them from time to time teaching them how to set out. I can imagine them setting out the stones and leaving it to the monks to finish them off. Had the monks instructed their masons to keep to a remarkable and common simplicity? This is apparent when leafing through the pages of *The Ark*, vol. 4.

One of these simpler palm-like designs is on the outside of the eastern chapel [b3]. It forms a pair with the one by Palmier mentioned above. The presence of these two men on the only two capitals on the exterior, and flanking each side of the apse of the leading chapel, suggests they were the masons in charge, one a monk, the other a major worker at Notre-Dame.

The fact that this carver, as well as a couple of his coworkers, also did a number of capitals in the last campaigns of Etampes, suggests this may have been a reciprocal exchange between friends or perhaps a recognition between colleagues [b2]. It may also mean that there was at that time a



Etampes Saint-Martin WS1(c)

1140



Etampes Notre-Dame ES+1w(c+)

1141



Etampes Saint-Martin apse exterior E-eN(ar) 1139

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pause in the work at Saint-Martin so that some of these men were free to help out on the larger building.

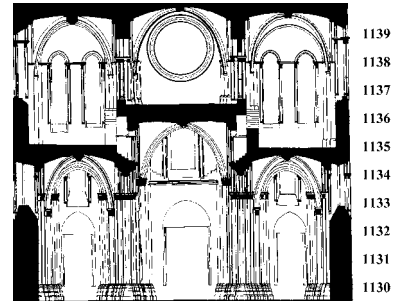
Another 'explanation' would be that because funding stopped for the Crusade there was no money to pay the masons so the only men available to complete a particularly urgent pice of work were the 'freebies' from the local abbey. This latter scenario may have happened in many places. If this were so, then step 10 would have coincided with the start of the Crusade in 1145/46.

Three campaigns at Saint-Denis (1134-1137 onwards)

Before being engaged at Etampes for the first time, Palmier appears to have worked at the Saint-Denis narthex at the level of the aisle windows [r1]. He is not present in any of the lower levels of capitals under the aisle vault ribs, nor in the portal. This places his arrival in the Paris Basin to before 1133/34. He was already a trained carver.

The chronology at Saint-Denis may be surmised by working backwards from the completion of the upper narthex chapel in 1140 and estimating the time needed to construct the work underneath. This is set out in the cross-section [r1].^{v.6:***, summary v.5:1173-} The building chronology has been based on the time needed for mortar to set on eight levels of arches and vaults, and the delays involved in the complex carving and erection of the portals plus the time needed to lay the unusually thick ashlar walls. On this basis I would hazard that the foundations were dug into the alluvial soil around 1129.

In Palmier's carving at Saint-Denis the foliage does not overlap. Projections are moderate and with three-dimensionality more in the tips than the leaves, though this was to change [r1,b]. The flatter surface on [b2] suggests he had an assistant working to his template but not entirely in his manner.



Saint-Denis section through narthex to the west



Saint-Denis narthex XS1-s(aw) 1134

1134



Saint-Denis XN2sw(a)

1134



Saint-Denis XN1wn(a-)

1134



Saint-Denis XN1-nR(aw)

1134

Over the next few months, perhaps inching into the next year, he carved a couple of capitals in the next level under the aisle transverse arches [b1]. One in particular shows enormous promise for the future [b2]. It is almost a palm-tree with a split leaf under where the trunk would be if it had been exposed, and deeply hollowed-out sections under the upper fronds. The small adjacent capital is more typically his. It is on the same stone and shares the upper leaf [b3].

1135



Saint-Denis narthex XS2e-s(a)



Saint-Denis narthex XS2e,ne(a)

1135



Saint-Denis narthex XS2ne(a)

1135

I shall check this capital more carefully when I am in Paris May 24-25

It may have been here that he met Lapwing, who was carving on the same level, and had arrived on the site the year before. His work is more rumbustious and fuller, with powerful curves to the veins. A large central leaf spreads across the taller corner leaves [b]. I have the impression that he influenced Palmier by getting him to add pizzazz to the large capital above. At the same time Lapwing was influenced by Palmier into becoming more disciplined, less free-form.

From Saint-Denis Palmier went to Etampes to contribute to the portal, perhaps with Lapwing. When we compare their work here with the modifications they each made to their designs at Etampes we sense the mutual inspiration that came from their time together [b4]. Lapwing toned himself down a bit while Palmier took on some of his emphaticness.

1135



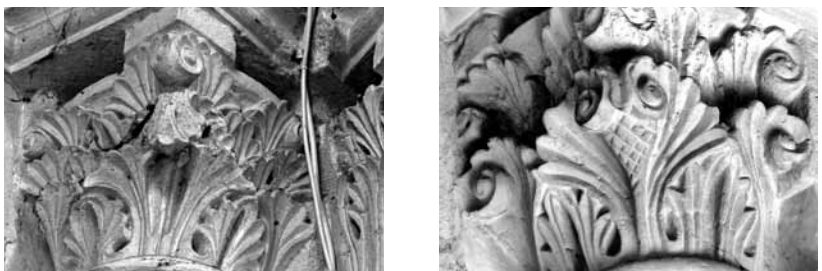
Saint-Denis narthex, Xs1nw(a-) and Xs3(a-) by Lapwing in 1133, and Xs1nw(a) in 1135



Etampes, Notre-Dame N-nL3-1 1135

After Etampes they returned to Saint-Denis for a very short stint before returning again to Etampes. This produced two small capitals in the upper level [b], and two large ones that I will discuss in a moment.

1136



Saint-Denis XN2wsw(a+)

1136

Saint-Denis XS1nee(a+)

1136

Before I do I need to return to the south portal at Etampes. I could not discuss this earlier as I had to first bring Saint-Denis into focus. The carving and erection of the portal can be divided into stages by the number of courses and the complexity of the erection [r2].

I did a few trials and in the end, as much for the sake of convenience as anything else, settled on two courses being carved and placed in a month. Arbitrary, I know, but my builder's sense told me a portal of this complexity would have needed up to a couple of years, and that is about what we get.

In the chart I have numbered the courses, and allowed for the four-month delay caused while the archivolt was being erected. One could not erect the first in the second row until the second in the previous row had been placed, and these were all dependent, of course, on the lintel and tympanum. Taken across the whole portal the bases under the outer corner columns could not be placed until after the second course in the drip mould.

This left a space of time for carving 8 column figures, two giant flanking angels, the lintel and the tympanum and 36 identikit seated figures in the archivolt, plus of course the decorative mouldings in the Palmier manner. I estimate that this would have required the work of 6 or 7 senior men working for a year. Most of this carving would have to have been completed in the

Etampes portal erection timetable with estimates for date, courses and erection of the sculpture.

December	32	row of heads			
	31	Palmier cornice			
November	30			AVAILABLE	
	29				
October	28	angel		FOR	
	27	angel			
September	26	angel		SAINT-DENIS	
	25	angel			
August	24	angel			
	23	angel			
July	22				drip 7
	21				drip 6
June	20		arch b6		arch c7
	19	bases	arch b5		arch c6
May			arch a5		arch c5
			arch a4		arch c4
April			arch a3		arch c3
			arch a2		arch c2
March			arch a1		arch c1
			tympanum		
February		scaffolding!	lintel		
	18	Palmier imposts			
January	17	capitals			
	16				
December	15				
	14			CARVING TIME FOR	
November	13			6 OR 7 SENIOR MEN	
	12			FOR TWELVE MONTHS	
October	11				
	10				
September	9				
	8	torus			
August	7	socle			
	6	plinth			
July	5				
	4				
June	3	floor			
	2				
May	1				
	0	ground			
April	-1				
	1135				
March	-2				
	-3	footings			

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early period so it was ready to be erected as soon as the capitals and their imposts had been placed.

In other words, if Palmier was in charge he could not have left Etampes during this time to do any work in Saint-Denis. The only time he would have had the time for four capitals in the abbey would have been in the last couple of months when all the creative and exacting work on the portal had been completed [arrow r1]. Arbitrary perhaps, considering the state of our knowledge, but it works. It places this event in the autumn of 1136, and (perhaps with a short trip back to check on the cornice) he could have stayed on at Saint-Denis to complete the great west window in the next year.

In other words it makes sense to allocate both these major works to Palmier in both buildings during what threatened to be the same slot of time. It also means that Palmier could have assembled a team to carve the portal early in 1135, and that this band of good carvers were doing his bidding on the portal mouldings and ready to do so again on the designs he issued for the capitals on the interior of the church.

In Saint-Denis there is a well-known palm-tree in the western end of the narthex carved late in 1136, from the previous order of construction. This and its neighbour were his two most important capitals in the narthex. In them we may revisit the relationship between Palmier's capitals with palms and those without, and the influence any assistants.

Superficially the two capitals are not similar, yet the details show that one carver did them both, or most of them if not all [b]. Neither are dissimilar to those at Etampes, especially in the deep gashes in the spines and the lower central leaves. The gash is invariably wider at the bottom and leans in to the top meeting at the tips (lower two arrows).

Along the upper edges of the main leaves there is a particular junction between the fronds (upper two arrows). Just to the left note how the upper tripartite leaf folds over the one underneath gently massaging at the tips.

The cut between the fronds is elongated, the tips are not particularly sharp, and the spines are rectangular in section. The incisions into the stone are cut very deeply. Both have an *énchancre* over the cone that is curved in from the corners, but cut plumb to the block in the centre.

However, the details in the upper half of the palm-capital have not been handled in the way Palmier would have done: the collar at the top of the trunk is an unadorned ring, the trunk a plain cylinder, and the volutes sharp-edged. It would seem that the palm-tree was made to his template but was not carved entirely by him. He would have carved the lower leaves and then left the completion of some of the upper parts to another. Perhaps he had to leave suddenly after being called for an urgent discussion on the portal at Etampes.

Cornice, roof by Palmier

Erect wall with angels

Assemble portal

Capitals, impost by Palmier

Embrasures

Bases, plinths

Footings

Carve tympanum, archivolts

Carve column figures

December

November

October

September

August

July

June

May

April

March

February

January 1136

December

November

October

September

August

July

June

May

April

March 1135

Etampes south portal carving and construction

1136



Saint-Denis narthex XN3se(a+)

1136



Saint-Denis narthex XN2sw(a+)

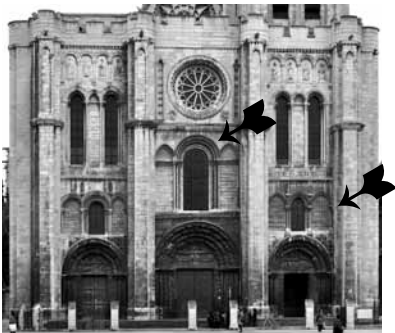
1136

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There are three highly decorated windows on the exterior west wall of Saint-Denis. The two on the side are on the level of the aisle vaults and their capitals would have been carved with the setting up of the cells over the aisle vaulting around 1135. The window is marked by the lower arrow in the elevation [b1].

The central window is not physically engaged with the upper chapel wall until above the bottom of the rose window, but everything points to it having been erected up to and maybe including the rose by the time the chapel was consecrated. The capitals over this window are marked by the upper arrow in the elevation [b1]. The capitals to the adjacent tower windows are of the same period, and as many were carved by the same men who worked in the chapel vaults, they were probably built together.

Whether this campaign included the rose and the *bas-relief* statues over the tower windows remains uncertain. The present bar-tracery rose is a recent creation, for the 1815± drawing by Cellérier and Legrand shows the rose as plate tracery like those from the Laonnais in the 1160s. ^{Blum, 1986, 208.}



Saint-Denis narthex west elevation 1130-40



Saint-Denis interior section to west 1130-40



Saint-Denis north aisle cornice by Lapwing 1135

1135

In late 1135 both Palmier and his mate Lapwing worked on the lower aisle windows. Lapwing carved the decorative horizontal moulding [lower arrow and r1]. Some of the other carvers working at the aisle window level were Félix [r2], Willow and Griller, as well as various others still being identified.

In 1137 Palmier carved the capitals alongside the central window, and the horizontal moulding that ran from it in each direction [b]. Many stones in the latter have been replaced, though enough are original to show that the renovators followed them with care.

On the inside Palmier also carved the capital on the south side of the opening into the passage inside the west window [r3]. This has been marked with an arrow in the section above, though it is hidden behind the rib arch. Lapwing carved the capital on the opposite north side, which offers a perfect place to compare their styles and motifs [r4]. They were probably partners in charge of this campaign.



Saint-Denis window XS-wR2(aw) by Félix 1135



Saint-Denis X-wS(c+) by Palmier 1137

1137



Saint-Denis W-wCR(cw) west window at the upper arrow in the elevation above 1137



Saint-Denis X-wN(c+) by Lapwing 1137

DRAFT

The Chartres portal program (1138+)

In the next year Palmier and Lapwing joined a large team of carvers working on the Chartres west portal. It would have been his first contribution to the rebuilding of the cathedral. Because of his work at Etampes four years earlier he may have been engaged to design and carve the plinths, which involved making or refining decisions about the number of column-statues, the use of colonnettes and the width of the doors and the piers between them.

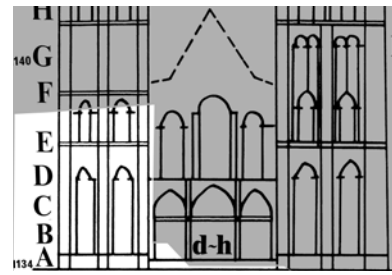
This does not mean that Palmier necessarily had any direct input into any other part of the portal. The height of the doors was determined later, as we can see from the confused heights of the first group of colonnettes.¹¹ It is thought that he was involved to some degree with the three column-figures on the left embrasure, and some consider he also carved the western historiated capitals. There are links with Etampes in these areas, though I could find no trace of him on the archivolts. He may have carved the first left hand jamb figure, more from the castellated hood than anything else [r1].

However, if he did carve these, he did so either in the shed or in a later stint, because he did not erect them in '38. Erection had to wait until the south tower rose above the footings which was not until a year or so later, at which time they discovered the error in the erection of the left jamb [r2].
 Gesta When the height for the capitals was decided many months later, the remaining colonnettes between the column-figures were cut to exactly fit the final height, which were those to the central and southern doors.^[v.6:ch.**]

One support to this dating for Palmier comes from four capitals on the first level on the outside of the north tower that can be fairly precisely dated to campaign E in 1138 [r2]. One has a palm-tree [b1]. One is Lapwing [b2]. Another has the overlapping leaves of Lapwing with the flattish surface, the gash and curled-over tips of Palmier, while the fourth is Palmier-like but thick-edged and coarsely detailed [b3,4]. Both the latter could have been by men who had imbibed the Palmier manner while working for them.



Chartres jamb figure W.nL1 1138



Chartres cathedral after campaign E 1138

1138



Chartres WN-wRsR(1), WN-nLeR(1), WN-wRnL(1) and WN-wLSR(1) from campaign E in 1138

1140

There is a matching capital on the inside eastern face of the portal, which was the largest stone Palmier ever worked on [r3]. He took the unusual step of filling the hollowed-out sections between the ferns with leaves.

There are two trees to each face as in Saint-Denis from a few years before. The upper edge was divided into four equal parts so that all four sprays are equal. But because the square abacus projects beyond the circular astragal, the trunks have to be aligned a little to the side, and some ingenuity was needed to adjust the width of the lower leaves to keep the trunk vertical. This created an imbalance that was resolved by adjusting the lower leaves and thus altering the amount of sundering, which is different underneath each trunk.

The way this was done suggests he had a template that included the foliage of the large leaf and one half of the smaller one on each side of the trunk, and that he slipped that entire template to one side or the other to fit between the abacus and the astragal, and to sit snugly against the wall on the sides. Moving the template altered the amount of sundering on the leaf.



Chartres interior Xs1(a-) front face 1140

This capital highlights certain key characteristics of Palmier’s *œuvre* at this time: the gash along the spine culminating in joined turned-over tips at the top [b1], the sundered leaf to display the trunk [b2] and the sharp-pointed outline of the leaves with the long scooped divisions between the fronds that appears to fracture the leaf [b3].



Chartres inside of narthex Xs1(a-) 1140



Chartres inside of narthex Xs1(a-) 1140



Chartres inside of narthex Xs1(a-) 1140

The historiated capitals and the impostos over them were probably carved at the same time as this capital, in 1140. Earlier I had shown at Etampes that all the portal impostos had been carved from the one template [r1]. The foliate details can be compared with the enlargements above for their similarities.

At Chartres, on the other hand, the designs for every section of impostos were derived from different templates. All six types are set out below from the left embrasure of the north portal to the right embrasure on the south [b].

The one that most closely matches the Palmier impostos at Etampes is on the left side of the central doorway [b3]. It is the only one with a split leaf where the gap joins at the top, a long groove between fronds that are fractured from the main leaf, and grooves between the tips that are ‘v’ cut and parallel. No fronds overlap on any stone, probably under direction from the master in charge, as placing one leaf over another was the most common arrangement and it would have been unlikely not to find it here.

If this was the case, then the W.nL cornice could have been by Lapwing [b1], for except for the overlaps the design of this impost is like the one he carved five years earlier at Saint-Denis [r2]. The identities of the other carvers still elude me.

Palmier came twice to Chartres, in 1138 and 1140, and in between returned to Etampes for the south chapel vaults and to Saint-Denis for the narthex chapel.



Etampes, Notre-Dame impost over portal capitals



Saint-Denis north aisle cornice by Lapwing 1135



Chartres west portal impost W.nL by Lapwing?



Chartres west portal impost W.nR 1140



Chartres west portal impost W.cL by Palmier?



Chartres west portal impost W.cR 1140



Chartres west portal impost W.sL 1140



Chartres west portal impost W.sR 1140

1140

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The last Saint-Denis campaigns (1139 and 1142)

Between the two Chartres campaigns Palmier returned to Saint-Denis to help complete the chapel over the narthex, ready for the consecration in the following year [b]. These were fairly straightforward designs, with spines and leaves split in the usual way. The junctions between the fronds are elongated and cut quite deeply into the stone. One has two layers of leaves and the other has a single leaf up the corner.

1139



Saint-Denis narthex upper chapel

1139



Saint-Denis narthex upper chapel

1139

And in 1142 he and/or his men carved some small capitals in the ambulatory, each the work of a few days. Lapwing may have been one of them [r1]. The general design principles have not changed.

1142



Saint-Denis ambulatory An2sw(a)

1142



Saint-Denis ambulatory En3C-Rd(a)

1142



Saint-Denis ambulatory An1se(a)

1142



Saint-Denis ambulatory Acc-L1,r(a)

1142

To make some of these multiple journeys a little easier to follow, I list the campaigns we have discussed in these three great buildings [r1]. Accuracy depends entirely on integrating the number of campaigns within a given time. Here there are eighteen over ten years. Fitting them all in to a reasonable pattern that suits the changes in the style of the carvers and the construction sequence of the buildings does not leave many choices. It may appear surprising at first, but this methodology when applied to enough sites produces really firm dates.

In this list we can estimate the timing for Saint-Denis by working backwards from the consecration of the upper chapel in 1140, and for Chartres by working forwards from the fire of 1134. We have no dates for Etampes, but having worked out the construction sequence and the evolution of Palmier's style, and dovetailing Etampes into his work in Saint-Denis and Chartres, all the campaigns can be slotted into each other.

He seems typical of most carvers in being highly itinerant, which raises interesting questions about his social life, his family and children, whether he had a permanent home or lived out of digs, did he have land that he tilled in his spare time or in off-seasons, and (really important if only we knew) what were his pleasures?

I presume that when not engaged on capitals he would have been working on those elements that required careful cutting, such as window frames and sills, column plinths and shafts. Yet here is a man who had carved major sculpture and been associated with some of the best craftsmen in the land. Can we easily associate him with 'ordinary' masonry, no matter how exacting?

Palmier campaigns discussed so far

1134	Saint-Denis	narthex aisle, windows
1135	Etampes, Notre-Dame	south door
1135	Etampes, Notre-Dame	north door
1136	Etampes Saint-Martin	choir (a)
1136	Etampes, Notre-Dame	north (c-) chapels
1137	Etampes, Notre-Dame	north (c) vault caps
1137	Saint-Denis	narthex upper west (c+)
1138	Chartres campaign E	WN(1)
1138	Chartres	W.n column statues
1139	Etampes, Saint-Martin	choir (rc)
1139	Etampes, Notre-Dame	south (c), n aisle vaults
1139	Saint-Denis	narthex chapel
1140	Chartres campaign G	XS(a-) capital, imposts
1140	Saint-Denis	window and towers (1)
1141	Etampes, Notre-Dame	north (c+) caps
1142	Chartres campaign I	WS(a)
1142	Saint-Denis	ambulatory wall caps
1144	Etampes, Notre-Dame	south (c+), n upper vault

Before following the later phase of Palmier’s work we should examine the other jobs where I have recognised his manner. Some are palm-tree in form, some are purely foliate. Their time frames fit quite snugly into the matrix provided by Etampes, Chartres and Saint-Denis.

Other carving during the 1133-1145 period

It seems most likely that his first work in the Paris Basin was the ambulatory at Pontoise, perched high on the bluff overlooking the Seine [r1]. The tips at the end of the fronds are the same, the central leaf has a gash, though the spine on the corner is decorated with drill-holes rather than being opened up [b]. One has a simplistic ‘palm’ with volutes instead of ferns [b3]. There is a considerable difference in time between Pontoise and the Saint-Denis ambulatory, nine years perhaps, yet the underlying design parameters have not changed in all that time.



Pontoise An1sw(a) 1133

1133



Pontoise An2(a) 1133



Pontoise An1se(a) 1133



Pontoise As1ne(a) 1133

1134

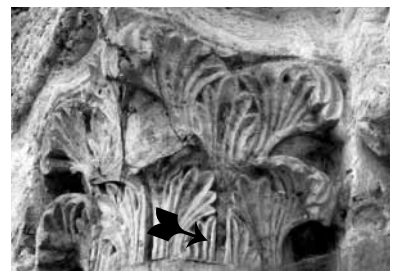
Poissy may have been his next work, being one small capital in the nave clerestory [r2]. He was a new man in the area, his skills not yet known and he had to find his way. He may have talked about his palm-tree ideas but found they fell on unreceptive ears. He would have to wait a few years until he could squirrel one away on the north door at Etampes before they would be appreciated.

Palmier had worked at Saint-Denis and on the south portal of Etampes by the time he arrived at La Madeleine at Châteaudun to work on the nave. There are two large capitals and two smaller ones with palms [r3,4]. Both have Sundered leaves (marked with arrows), spaces under the ferns, stars and so on that lead to Palmier. We should come to expect subtle differences from this master: for example in these seemingly identical capitals note the different heights of the two layers, the lower leaves ornamented with five tips or seven, the additional fronds on the larger leaves on the left, and so on.

I have dated this close to 1135 because the design is closest to the earlier ones at Etampes, carved like them from the harder *lucastre* stone, and thus close to 1135.



Poissy S3n (c) 1134



Châteaudun, Madeleine WN7(a) 1135

1135



Châteaudun, Madeleine WN6+s(a) 1135



Châteaudun, Madeleine WN6+e(a) 1135



Châteaudun, Madeleine WN6wn(a) 1135

Montmartre was the next small building to call him. There had been an earlier building that included the little barrel-vaulted transept chapel.

DRAFT

The crossing and first bays of the nave were renovated from 1134. His capitals in the aisle of the WN1 pier would be a couple of years later [b]. These have his foliage with a split down the spine, and with volutes and a central star. The fancy terminals formed from three leaves may have been by one of his many associates.

1136



Montmartre Ws4(a)

1136



Montmartre WN1(a)

1136



Montmartre WN1(a)

1136

Once Palmier had established a manner, his assistants would have taken it up and used it elsewhere. Considering the number of sculptors who worked under his rule on the Etampes south portal, for example, many men may have taken on aspects of his templates for themselves. There are capitals all over the Paris Basin with his details, but set out in different ways, such as Boutigny [r1]. It has the Palmier fan-shape, deeply split spines and fronds but lacks the fractured quality in the foliage.

I would say that the same thing happened at Montchauvet, a small town to the west of Paris. About the time that Palmier was engaged in carving a large number of capitals in the Etampes north transept, someone (possibly a pupil) shipped off on his own to help build the apse. It is one of the few with a document that states it was constructed in 1137.

The capitals are different in a number of ways. On the interior one capital has a small flat panel bouquet filling the top space [b1]. Another could have had a putative palm not unlike Poissy [b2]. The capital carved for the outside of the apse (in the same location as Palmier's at Saint-Martin in Etampes) has volutes and a central cartouche [r3,4].

The overall flatness and the lack of articulation compared to Palmier's work at this time suggests these were by a pupil or assistant who went to this remote town on Palmier's behalf. There are no *énchancre*, no palms and no curled ends to the leaves.



Boutigny crossing WN1e

1137



Montchauvet exterior of the apse

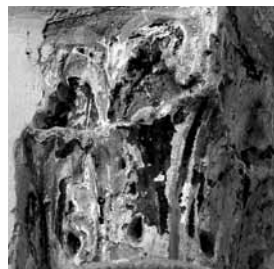
1137

1137



Montchauvet EN2(a)

1137



Montchauvet AS1(a)

1137



Montchauvet exterior AS1(rc)

1137

1138

At Aulnay-sur-Bois there is a capital that has been totally replaced in the inimitable nineteenth-century reconstructive manner, and looks as if it was based on one that may have had a double palm tree like Saint-Denis [r4]. However, it has a distinctly non-Palmier look about it, there are odd-looking volutes and a 'star,' and the leaves have turned-over tips with a gap under the join between the ferns.



Aulnay-sur-Bois WN2n(c) replaced

1138

DRAFT

1138

Nearby there are three foliates in his manner [b]. One of these has the enlarged gash found in the Saint-Denis west window [b1]. I suspect that Palmier had worked here and that it was his palm capital that was recarved. As many of the capitals at Aulnay were by men from Saint-Denis I would suggest the date of 1138.



Aulnay-sur-Bois EN1sw(a)

1138



Aulnay-sur-Bois ES1nw(a)

1138

1139

About this time Palmier personally worked on the little country church of Noël-Saint-Martin where the foliage has the deep and long gash along the spines and in the lower central leaf, very like the upper work in the Saint-Denis narthex. Also the upper edge of the cone has been drilled and there are volutes like those in the Chartres portal: all indicative of work from before 1140 [r1,b].



Noël-Saint-Martin apse EN2s

1139



Noël-Saint-Martin apse ES1n, WN1s, EN2se and ES1ne



1139

One capital at Noël has a pair of snarling lions with heads turned back from the body and thin forearms [r2]. They rest on foliage that is unmistakably Palmier's. There are seven very similar lions in the Paris Basin. They are in the Oulchy crossing and the Lierval and Nouvion choir on the same pier as one of Palmier's, and, without any adjacent connection with Palmier, in the clerestories of Voulton and Saint-Quirace in Provins, and the Nouvion south chapel.

I therefore think that the carver was an assistant who liked lions in a posture that was more popular in the more southern regions of France.

In the same vein there is one that at Oulchy with a similar arrangement, though the plaster covering at Noël makes it hard to compare the details [b1]. He joined with Palmier at Aulnay around 1138 and stayed with him on the next few jobs before wandering off on his own [b2]. Just before coming to Noël he could easily have carved the two lions holding up a pair of goats in the Sens ambulatory before moving north [b3].



Noël-Saint-Martin apse EN1ws

1139



Oulchy WS1n(a)

1153

1138



Aulnay-sur-Bois WS3ne(a)

1138



Sens cathedral En4s(a)

1137

DRAFT

1141

In the south chapel of La Ferté-Alais there is one that could have come straight from the north transept of Etampes [r1]. For this reason I have dated it to the same time, 1141. The sundered leaf is in the corner under the split spine of the major leaf instead of being in the centre of the block. The upper part of the cone is visible and he used the *énchancre* as in Noël.

1144

Afterwards he was called east to Saint-Ayoul in Provins. In the portal there are a number of palm-tree capitals with sundered leaves, sharp-pointed tips and square-cut edges to the gash along the spine [r2]. The sharpness of the foliage seems to have been developed from the later capitals at Saint-Denis and Etampes, which is why I would date it close to the mid-40s.

In one capital most of the two palm trunks has been chiselled off, but one fern and both spiral trunks are still recognisable [r3]. The leaf is sundered and has vertical veins, sharp tips and fractured fronds.

One other has the palm-tree layout, but without the central sundered leaf or the collar, and the edges to the fronds are slightly flattened and the tips are rounded, not pointed [b1]. Though a Palmier template and probably carved under his direction, Palmier himself would not have done that, so I suspect an assistant. Similarly I suspect an assistant with another where there are palm ferns but neither collar nor sundered leaf, and though the spine is split the foliage has a different quality [b2]. This applies even more to a third capital [r4]. The latter has the broad simplified detailing also found in one of the Palmier-gang capitals from the Chartres north tower from a few years before [page 19]. I presume this was a member of the team who did not like to over-finish his work, but preferred a measured understatement. There is another in a similar vein on Oulchy [page 27].

We will see in a moment why I believe Palmier played a major role on this portal, and may have been the senior master in charge.



La Ferté-Alais south chapel 1141



Provins, Saint-Ayoul WnR1 phase I 1144



Provins, Saint-Ayoul W.cL6 phase I 1144



Provins, Saint-Ayoul WnL1 phase I 1144



Provins, Saint-Ayoul WsR1 phase I 1144



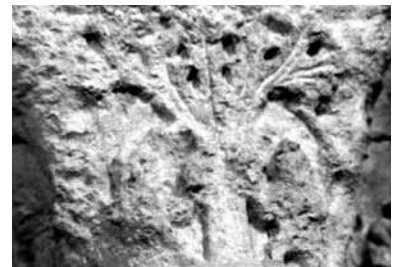
Provins, Saint-Ayoul WsL1 phase I 1144

1152

From the expectation that the Crusader Recession would have limited his work for some years, I am inclined to place the next job after 1150. This was the apse of the little church of May-en-Multien. Saint-Ayoul could also have been carved during this period, and considering the two stages of its construction, the post-recession style of the second stage capitals and other factors, this could well have been the case [v5:1121-28; v6:***]

May has one very worn capital with a palm-tree [r5]. It is almost the image of the earlier one at Provins, at least in the foliage [r2]. The one at May may have had a pair of little animals on each side, but we cannot be sure. There is another capital, simpler than usual, that could have been by one of his men from its flat form, splits and so on [r6].

This was a very small job for a major sculptor, and the smallness puts me in mind of the reduced building work elsewhere at this time. It shows how depressed things had become. It looks as if this were built at the tail-end of the Crusader Recession, in the early 1150s.



May-en-Multien S3n 1152



May-en-Multien s5n 1152

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Arranging the dates

The attached list may help to bring the many jobs of this complex period into perspective [r1]. The campaigns in Notre-Dame at Etampes that define the changes to his style of working are indented and in italics.

It is time to be aware of the number of campaigns that Palmier worked on in each year and of the many capitals he carved. Not that the absolute number of carvings was great, but it is noticeable that he had to travel to many places each year.^{Yvele.}

For the five years after 1135 he worked on three to four sites a year, plus of course all those other buildings that have been torn down or replaced. Was he by then a specialist carver, called in to do the more delicate work, and on completion of defined tasks went on his way while others erected the walls or laid up the arches? This makes sense when we consider the amount of detailed carving needed not only to build churches, but other works such as tombs, structures for entertainment, royal screens and fountains, as well as individual votive figures.

Palmier as master mason working in the east

At some stage Palmier seems to have become master mason, and though he may have continued to prepare the design templates for the capitals he left the execution to others. The signal that his role had changed lies in the massive redesign of his palm-types. After May-en-Multien and Oulchy-le-Château no site has capitals of his mark, suggesting he spent most of his time on other tasks. Palmier could easily find himself elevated from sculptor to master mason, perhaps a welcome moment if his eyesight were deteriorating or hands were becoming arthritic.

As master he would lead a team, more as a *capo-maister* and director of the works. He was no longer a carver in his own right as he does not seem to have personally carved any capitals after Oulchy. I would think he would have been in his 50s by then,

The architectural considerations, the discussion of profiles and the affect on Palmier's creativity having to continue to use templates for elements that were already in place whenever he took command of a job, are not pertinent to this discussion of him as a carver, and will have to wait for another time.

I pick Oulchy for this transformation from carver to master as there are two palm tree capitals on either side of the crossing. The one on the south side is recognisably Palmier [r1]. The one on the north breaks new ground and sets the tone for all those that were to follow. The lower row of leaves has been replaced by a second row of palms [b1,2]. Since both capitals appear in the one campaign I would think this was the where Palmier handed over his hammer and chisel to take up rod and compass.

It was a huge change. The use of the drill, just apparent in the last Etampes capital, was now applied to the foliage as well as to the trunk. The junction between the leaves was also drilled, and the hole left round rather than being extended into a tear-drop. He added buds and cones, and formed some terminals around balls.



Oulchy-le-Château crossing EN2w

1153



Oulchy-le-Château crossing EN2w

1153

All Palmier campaigns in Paris Basin before 1150

1133	Poissy	nave clerestory
1134	Pontoise	ambulatory walls
1134	Saint-Denis	narthex aisle, windows
1135	<i>Etampes Notre-Dame</i>	<i>south door</i>
1135	<i>Etampes Notre-Dame</i>	<i>north door</i>
1135	Châteaudun Madeleine	north nave
1136	<i>Etampes Notre-Dame</i>	<i>north (c) chapels</i>
1136	Montchauvet	apse [student]
1136	Montmartre	west crossing piers
1136	Etampes Saint-Martin	choir (a)
1137	Aulnay-sur-Bois	east
1137	<i>Etampes Notre-Dame</i>	<i>north (c) vault caps</i>
1137	Saint-Denis	narthex upper west
1137	Boutigny	crossing [student]
1138	Chartres campaign D	WN(1)
1138	Chartres	W.n column statues
1139	<i>Etampes Notre-Dame</i>	<i>south (c) caps, n vaults</i>
1139	Etampes Saint-Martin	choir (c+)
1139	Noël-Saint-Martin	apse
1139	Saint-Denis	narthex chapel
1140	Chartres portal erected	X(a-) capitals and impost
1140	Saint-Denis	towers (1)
1141	<i>Etampes Notre-Dame</i>	<i>north (c+) caps</i>
1141	Ferté-Alais	south chapel
1142	Chartres campaign I	WS(a)
1142	Saint-Denis	choir walls
1143	Rully	tower level 2
1144	Provins, Saint-Ayoul	porches stage I
1144	<i>Etampes Notre-Dame</i>	<i>south (c+) caps, n vault</i>
1145	Chartres campaign L	WS(1)



Oulchy-le-Château crossing ES1nw

1153

I would concur with the natural aesthetic questions: why would a sculptor who could so beautifully fill the face of the capital in earlier years with leaves, and develop their tips into space so confidently in a complex resolution of the directional difficulties, then settle on a treatment that left raw spaces between the trunks and turn the palms themselves into two-dimension crude counterfeits? His was pure refinement compared to a more obvious simulacrum. Would the latter have been carved by an assistant rather than Palmier, who was in love with the drill, enjoyed using pine cones and was not a patch on his predecessor? I think he was using the Palmier schema as, one might say, a signature or totem for his master.

The differences in approach are affirmed in a capital in the north chapel carved before those over the crossing pier [r1]. It has Palmier foliage with this new man’s berry on a stalk and rounded tips. It was possibly carved by the man I will, towards the end of this article, designate as S [page 35]. Could he have been the assistant working in his manner but with a berry at Saint-Denis some sixteen years earlier [r2]? At this stage I don’t know.

My interpretation is that the contractual relationship between the members of the team had changed, for Palmier was no longer the senior carver, as he had been at Etampes and Provins, but had risen to become the master mason himself. In this role the leafless two-level palm may have turned into his signature, a heraldic emblem to be placed on every site where he was in charge. As he would have been busy on other tasks these tokens were carved by other men.

I prefer this scenario to an alternative where he simply disappeared out of the workforce. The palms were singularly his concept and for another to use them to signify his presence as master mason on the job would be totally appropriate. We may obtain some assurance when all the building decisions that were under his control are analysed, including any he amy have made at Etampes, and as I said earlier this is beyond my present scope.

Thus Oulchy has the last stones carved personally by Palmier. There are two large stones by assistants with recognisable elements of Palmier. On one it would be difficult not to suspect Palmier’s involvement with his flattish manner, with split spines and curled tips, with fractured leaves and volutes [r3]. The other has almost exactly the same arrangement, but the decorative finishing is missing [r4]. Was this by an untried assistant or was it also by the man who carved the other but was left unfinished?

These same considerations are present in three small capitals where the design was Palmier’s while the finishing details were by other men [b].



Oulchy-le-Château chapel NCeL(a)



Saint-Denis XS1nee(a+) 1136



Oulchy-le-Château crossing ES1nw 1153



Oulchy-le-Château crossing ES1nw 1153



Oulchy-le-Château crossing



Oulchy-le-Château crossing



Oulchy-le-Château crossing



Oulchy-le-Château crossing ES1nw 1153

There is also one lion capital among this group. His head is twisted backwards, and with forepaws raised, which recalls earlier examples such as Noël-Saint-Martin and Aulnay [r5]. Like them, the head supports the corner, the lion snarls and the legs are quite small and rigidly placed.

ID R A F T

The rest of the post-Oulchy post-1150 palm-tree capitals were carved by others. Palmier had personally carved 27 before then, or that is what we have left. The next 25 stones, carved in some cases to cover an entire pier rather than as individual stones, were the work of his men [b].

The individuality shown by the assistants who carved the master's palms after 1150 shows they were not constrained, but allowed (even encouraged) to drill, leave open spaces and in other ways tamper with the details of the original template. The signature stones were repeated in the following buildings in this order:

- 1155 Laon, Saint-Martin choir clerestory
- 1156 Binson abbey porch (largely rebuilt)
- 1157 Nouvion external window in the apse
- 1158 Val-Crétien choir
- 1161 Laon cathedral choir aisles (replaced)
- 1163 Vailly east
- 1164 Noyon cathedral ambulatory

The dates depend on the work of other masons as the palm-trees offer few keys to chronology. They indicate only that Palmier was present as master mason, nothing more.

All of this later work was in the north-east, in the Soissonaise and the Laonnais. Was Paris still suffering from the Recession, was there more creative work to the east, was he taken up by one of the great lords from that area? Where his natural home in the early years would have been Etampes where he kept on returning, where might he have moved it to while he was working in the east? Many unanswerable personal questions.

1155
to
1164



Laon, Saint-Martin EN1s(c)

1155



Laon, Saint-Martin EN1s(c)

1155



Binson Abbey porch

1156



Nouvion apse window

1157



Val-Cretien S3(c)

1158



Laon cathedral, Ne3(a)

1161



Vailly EN2(a)

1163



Vailly ES2(a)

1163



Noyon cathedral Es2(a)

1164

DRAFT

Possible earliest work in the Paris Basin (1123-1125)

When Palmier arrived in the Paris Basin around 1133 he was already formed and trained, so his antecedents should exist and may be traceable. There are a few traces and indications of where he may have worked over the previous ten years. I suspected his apprenticeship lay in northern France and then he travelled widely until he could bring back what he had learned. This section is naturally more uncertain than what has gone before, and is based on what we have already discovered about him. I will deal first with possible first jobs as an apprentice and then the tour as a journeyman.

Foliage very like his earliest work in Etampes and Saint-Denis can be found in the Vernouillet south doorway, and the Seraincourt and Gaillon crossings. These sites are all fairly close to each other to the west of Paris. The forms are flat and follow the shape of the cone, two have gashes up the corner spines and all have similar fractured foliage and gouged fronds.

If he passed his childhood in the Vexin on the north side of the Seine it may be significant that when he returned from his tour of the south in 1133 his first appointments were at Pontoise and Poissy nearby.

1123



Vernouillet south door S-sl

1124



Seraincourt ??

1123



Gaillon crossing EN1s

1123

1124

In addition two portals were being carved at this time, and the young Palmier may have been involved with each of them: at Ivry-la-Bataille not far from his presumed childhood home, and Saint-Loup-de-Naud [r1,b], probably carved in that order just before leaving for the grand tour.

In both buildings the designs are simple and straightforward. They have large leaves under the corners flanking a smaller central leaf with long fanning veins, with drilling and deeply cut spines. One has a star and though there are no volutes they contain the elements to be found in later work.

One needs to realise how few buildings were being erected at that time, and the small range of foliated capitals from which these have been set aside. There were no more than a dozen types and arrangements of foliage from which I made this selection. It was a relatively uncomplicated task.

The other capitals in the Saint-Loup nave are more archaic in design, more typical of work from a decade or so earlier. In his foliage Palmier looks more to the future than the other carvers, except of course those working on the west portal that was being erected at the same time. The latter were of a very different artistic calibre to those employed on the nave.

As in Etampes, this portal would have taken more than a year to erect, placing the date for the capitals in the room over the porch at 1126.



Ivry-la-Bataille portal W.cR1

1124

1125



Saint-Loup-de-Naud nave WS8(a)

1125



Saint-Loup-de-Naud room over porch WS7(c)1126

Though there is a gulf between the undercut work of the Saint-Denis narthex and the wrap-around form of Saint-Loup, it is not as great when we compare them with Palmier's first work in the Paris Basin on his return. His greatest changes came during his time with Lapwing and others in the 30s. Seen through enough examples the development of his craft seems entirely reasonable.

Palmier on tour to the south (1127-1132)

Palmier was already a well-polished master when he worked at Saint-Denis, but alone in carving palms. None grew in the Paris Basin, while Italian churches are full of them, of every variety and arrangement. I thought he may have been inspired in Italy, and set out to see if that were possible.

There is a long tradition of Italian work that is not that dissimilar to Palmier's. I have assembled a few after a search through the north to show the connections. They reinforce the idea that Palmier may have worked in Tuscany as there are a few places with similarities in the fronds, volutes, exposure of the trunk and the turned tips, the opening between the leaves and the use of collars at the top of the trunks (though without splits). All these examples appear better crafted than Palmier's were at that time.

Pisa and Lucca offer the closest examples of possible sources for his teachers, though none are fully convincing [r1-3].



Pisa cathedral S-e door



Pisa baptistry, lower range, replaced



Lucca San Martino



Pistoia San Bartolemeo W-w



Lucca San Martino lower west arcade.

On the border between France and Italy lies the mountain abbey of the Sacra di San Michele [b]. In the undercroft the left inside capital of the Zodiac Portal has the full Palmier dossier: his formality, central star, volutes along the top, palm fronds with central leaf, collar, projecting lower leaves sharply pointed foliage, and softly curved terminals [b2]. The trunk sits over



Sacra di San Michele from south-east



Sacra di San Michele 1127



Sacra di San Michele 1127

a projecting leaf and is not exposed, as the leaf is singular rather than twin.

This could have been by an Italian carver, one of many variations of the ancient formula, except for the particular grouping of qualities that characterise the designs of Palmier. Also, at the Sacra there is an adjacent capital which has sundered leaves, curled tips, projecting prows and a two-dimensional approach [r4]. It was carved from marble and has retained its sharp edges. The forms look familiar [r5].

There is evidence for three other northern French masters working on



Etampes, Notre-Dame N-nR1 1132

the same portal, Félix, Grégoire and Héron. But for these men working there at the same time I would be less eager to assert Palmier's presence. I will try to publish at least two of these men's work before revisiting the Sacra and trying for better photos around June 16.

I suggest he travelled to Italy in the later 1120s, was intrigued by the palm-tree motif to be found everywhere and used it at the Sacra. If this is where his journey took him, then we should expect to find him in other sites on the way.

The south door at Aix-en-Provence has a capital with twin palms and unequal sprays, a central cartouche, volutes, and the trunk has spiral markings [r1]. Grégoire may have been working in the cloister at the same time. High up in the western gallery at Saint-Sernin in Toulouse there is another, also with double palms, twisted trunks and curled-over tips to the leaves [r2].

There are of course many capitals with double palms which may have come from the same source with well-attested classical antecedents, and may not necessarily have been by Palmier. It may have been his, though being this undercut and crystalline were qualities that did not come into his work until the 1140s. Equally he could have been inspired to use palms by being with these carvers.

Further north I have followed the palm-style capital in portals which grew in significance the more I examined them. Anzy-le-Duc has two palm capitals with figures, both very badly mutilated [b]. There is no lower band of foliage, but the collar is distinctive with little fronds along the top, the volutes are simple and the remnants of the leaves along the ferns is divided up as in Palmier capitals. The tympanum has a row of figures along the bottom who gaze upwards and two angels supporting a central Christ [b].

1120s

1129



Aix-en-Provence south door 1126?



Toulouse Saint Etienne WN12(g) 1128?



Anzy-le-Duc portal left capital 1129?



Anzy-le-Duc portal right capital 1129?



Anzy-le-Duc portal tympanum 1129?

1129

Further north he may have worked on the inner capitals of the south door at Saint-Philibert in Dijon: there are sharp outlines, small terminals and prows, clearly visible trunks and two-layered collars. The multiple palms and their fronds are carved in a similar manner with vertical grooves up the trunk and sharp-edged foliage [r3].

I am uncertain whether Palmier was involved here or not, and I include it just in case. The outer capitals and arches over them were part of a later campaign.

In the damaged portal at Vermenton there is no trace of the original tympanum, but one capital on the left was almost definitely by Palmier, and next to him on the adjacent capital is one by Félix [b]. A lower archivolt has a figure with drawn-up drapery, and a particular way of holding the folds over the left arm and elbow while holding something that we will compare with Monceaux-l'Etoile that is a short distance away.



Dijon, Philibert, south door, inner capitals and arch 1129?

1131



Vermenton W.cL2 Palmier next to Félix

1131



Vermenton portal

1131

At Montceaux the two flanking capitals on the west door may also be ascribed to Palmier [b]. It is not very clear in the photo, but the lower leaf of the left capital has been sundered, possibly being his first use of this device. On the left the collar is like Anzy, and on the right it is a little calyx for a bud. The capitals support a tympanum with a line of figures along the bottom carved by the man Edson Armi called the Avenas Master.ⁿ

1132



Monceaux-l'Etoile W.sL1 and W.sR1

1132



DRAFT



Monceaux-l'Etoile portal

1132



Monceaux-l'Etoile tympanum

There is extensive miniscule drilling on the figures on the capitals [b1]. This is not unlike some figures in the tympanum, especially [b2]. Compare the billowing cloth, feet well carved, folds of heavy drapery and the manner of holding either the cloth or the book with his left hand. They also compare with one in the archivolt of Vermenton that forms the same particular and unusual stance [b3]. All three may well have been carved by Palmier.



Monceaux-l'Etoile W.cR1 figure



Monceaux-l'Etoile tympanum



Vermenton W-sR^1

With these two tympani at Anzy and Monceaux sitting over capitals by Palmier, we have to ask whether he had anything to do with the designs for the portal sculpture, and if he did, did he carry the idea with him to Etampes? There are similarities in the arrangement, being a row of spectators looking up at a figure of Christ flanked by two angels. There is no barrier between the two as at Monceaux, though the vibrant ecstasy is missing. At Anzy Christ sits, while in the other two he stands. In the earlier two Christ rests within a mandorla, but at Etampes this is missing.

What then of Saint-Ayoul in Provins? This Christ sits and is encased within the mandorla. Two of the Evangelists are fairly original and stand on platforms like those at Anzy. There was a row of figures underneath.



Etampes, Notre-Dame south portal tympanum 1135

1145

I am raising the possibility that Palmier may have brought this schema with him to the north when he came home, and incorporated some of those ideas into the design for both later tympani. I would expect the story to be much more complex than this for, as in Chartres, there was input from a large number of carvers during the many months of carving. Designs were no doubt changed all the way along, depending on the client's brief, the patron's own input and that of the skilled men who had been associated with this sort of work for years.

I am not making any assertions about the sculpture, but am raising the possibility for future investigation that this carver may have had influence on northern portal designs because he brought with him the concept of flanking Christ with a pair of angels. The concept was repeated by another in the Chartres Incarnation tympanum..

Assistants

I have distinguished a few different carvers supporting Palmier in the earlier jobs carved during the 1130s and 40s. But as he moved into the 60s the designs were still being assembled from the same ingredients but the detailing became increasingly varied. As master mason and head of his own gang others did the carving on his behalf and under his direction. So his templates were blended with details from other men. The basic structure was Palmier's, showing he remained intimately involved.

Though it is far from easy to separate some of the men from each other, I have tentatively distinguished six assistants that, for this stage of the investigation, I will call Q to X. All used the flat surface with a long corner leaf and (for a while) the split spine from Palmier's template.

The study of the Laon gallery illustrates a method for determining whether a carver was under the authority of another or was he his own independent man [v.6:ch10]. I have taken the stance that Palmier's authority ruled when another man used his arrangements and foliate details with only small modifications.

S and T worked with Palmier at Oulchy and remained steadfastly his companions, perhaps partners, over a dozen years. Ties of mateship or family may have held them together.

All the others I am about to describe worked with Palmier for a while and then went off on their own. I have identified them all in other buildings where they joined with different teams. U quickly went off on his own. V worked with Palmier once in Saint-Martin, and Q three times including Laon. They may have been apprentices trained in the Palmier team, and then after one major work peeled off to run their own independent lives, or they may have joined the team for a specific task and then left to seek another job.

X first appeared in the team in the Vailly choir and remained until the last palm was carved in the Noyon ambulatory. He may have been an apprentice who rose through the craft as he became more skilled.

1152: In May-en-Multien Palmier could have carved the palm or another may have as the signature stone. Though badly worn, it could also have been by T and there is another capital a bit further down the nave by U.

When carver U left he went on to work at Plailly, the Domont clerestory, the narthex at Trie-Château and twice in the Gournay choir.



Provins, Saint-Ayoul central tympanum (largely restored).

1152	May-en-Multien	apse, nave	palm		T	U
1153	Oulchy-le-Château	crossing	palm	S	T	U
1154	Crugny	apse	palm?			
1155	Laon Saint-Martin	east	palm	Q	T	V
1156	Binson	porch	palm	S	T	
1157	Nouvion	apse	palm	S		
1158	Val-Crétien	east	palm	Q	S	
1161	Laon cathedral	choir aisles	palm	Q	S	?
1163	Vailly	east	palm	S	T	X
1164	Noyon cathedral	ambulatory	palm	S		X



May-en-Multien S3n

1153



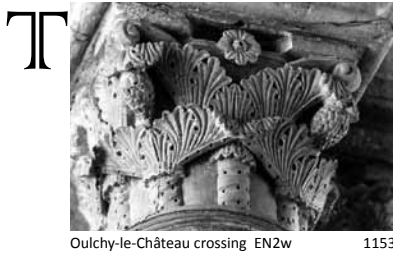
May-en-Multien s5n

1153

DRAFT

1153: In Oulchy the palm-tree by Palmier himself would appear to have been his last, and the other was by the palm-signature master I refer to as T. Carvers S and U carved at least one capital each. T is the only one who worked in every building with palm-caps after 1150, and carved the palm-tree capitals at some of them. His work tends to be even flatter than Palmier's, with small spaces left between the tips, and large fan-like leaves. He incised lightly, as can be seen along the ribs, drilled at the junction between leaves and, of course, along the trunks of the palms. Terminals are small and droop with only three tips, and rounded ends.

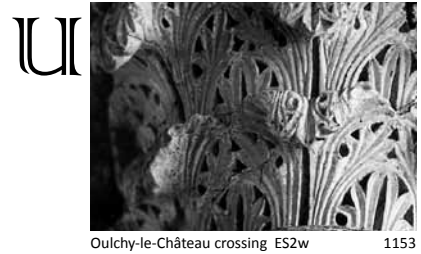
Master S carved flat fronds, their tips are rounded and the feeling is altogether softer. He loved to drill the junction between the leaves. They are not as deeply nor as sharply incised. He continued to work in this team until the end, which was presumably when the last palm-signature was carved at Noyon in 1164. He was one of the major carvers in the Gervais gang in the Laon gallery in the next year [v.6:ch. 10].



Oulchy-le-Château crossing EN2w 1153



Oulchy-le-Château crossing WN1e 1153



Oulchy-le-Château crossing ES2w 1153

1155: T is readily recognisable in the upper choir of Saint-Martin in Laon [b1]. He drilled the junction between leaves, and then did nothing to turn the drill-hole into a more organic shape, just leaving it as a circle with the upper frond turned back down into the side of its neighbour. This same foliage is on the fronds of the palm-tree capitals, so I presume he carved those stones too. There is drilling between the leaves in the palm-tree capital that emphasises the ferns. The collarettes are made from a double layer of tips over a ring. Carver Q went off on his own for a while to Lierval and Nouvion and Nanteuil-Notre-Dame before rejoining the team on the Laon aisles.



Laon Saint-Martin EN2s(c) 1155



Laon Saint-Martin EN1s(c) 1155



Laon Saint-Martin EN2s(c) 1155

1156: Impossible to be certain who carved the restored palm-tree capitals at Binson, but I would guess S from the drilling, volutes and tightly-organised fronds and collars. They are narrow in format, not unlike the work by S at Nouvion and Val-Crétien.



Binson Abbey porch 1156



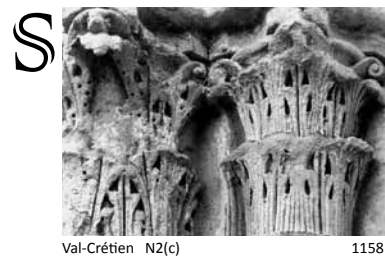
Binson Abbey porch detail 1156

DRAFT

1157: One pier of capitals in the apse of Nouvion was carved by S. The small window capital with the palm-tree with thin members in the S manner, though badly worn, looks like it could also have been his.



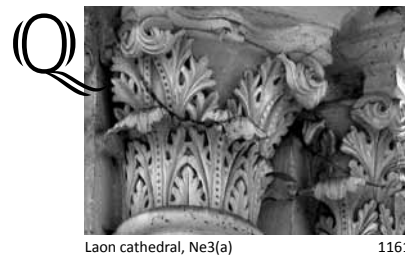
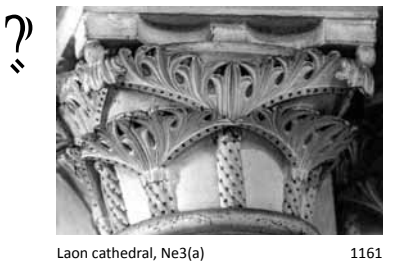
1158: The palm-tree in the ruins of the choir of Val-Crétien also looks like S. The ribs are deeply cut in and the edges of the fronds are so small they appear irregular. There is a Q capital next to it [b2].



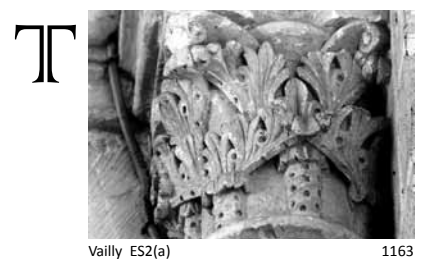
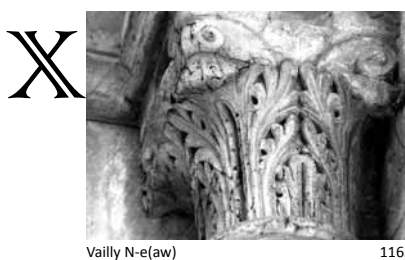
1162: The capitals in the choir aisle of Laon cathedral were replaced and the original is untraceable. All we have is a restored group of Palmier signature capitals in the north transept aisle. This looks like it may have been a large campaign.

As this capital was in the transept he may have taken over from an earlier master responsible for the capitals and vaults in the main vessel of the choir. If so, then the vaults profiles had been set up by another, and Palmier would have been expected to follow what had been begun by another.

A nearby pier has capitals by Q. He was working in a similar manner except he took the split leaf a natural step further, and opened the upper corner. It is a little like the junction between adjacent palm fronds. The gap became larger with time. A few years later he worked in the Laon gallery [noted as O6b in v.6:ch. 10] and the SW pier at Nouvion.



1163: The square-ended apse Vailly, not unlike Saint-Martin in many ways, contains carving by S, T and X and an unknown carver who turned his tips into little scrolls [b1]. Compare the ends of the tips with those from



the '40s: The arrangement of the sprays and leaves, the gash up the centre, the volute and the trunk are all Palmier's model, but the way the details are handled differs. Where one leaf touches another there is more space between the tips, and a greater depth of undercutting. There is a softer outline to the fronds. They are less precise, and at times almost floppy.

1164: Lastly, the Noyon ambulatory with capitals by S and X. It is after this that S contributed in a major way to the Laon gallery where he was on his own and there was no sign of Palmier. Q was also at Laon in the same team. This may have been just after his boss retired. There is no indication that Palmier was present in the gallery, and his absence suggests that he had stopped working at this time.

S



Vailly EN1

1163

S



Noyon cathedral Es2(a)

1164

X



Noyon cathedral Es2(a)

1164

Chronology

Altogether there are almost a hundred and twenty capitals still remaining that I believe were carved by Palmier and the assistants under his direct control between 1123 and 1164. His are to be found scattered over 52 campaigns in 36 buildings. The 12 or so years between his return to France around 1133 and Saint-Ayoul in Provins was the densest period for his carved work. With 28 campaigns over only a dozen years some success at precision in the chronology is inevitable. The reasonably certain dating for the stages in Chartres and Saint-Denis leave reliable spaces for inserting the work of Etampes, Châteaudun and the others.

Clearly he did a lot of travelling, as did other masters at this time. Measuring his travels by the minimal distances provided by straight lines, he moved over five thousand kilometres in his life. Much of it in his later years would have been by horse. He had at least one partner, Lapwing, and perhaps others like S in the last dozen years, and also number of assistants. As master and carver he would have been held in high esteem.

If he was 17 on his first job at Gaillon in 1123, then he would have been about 60 when he retired after Noyon.

Chronology for Palmier, 1123-1164

1123	Gaillon	crossing
1124	Ivry-la-Bataille	portal
1124	Vernouillet	south porch
1125	Saint-Loup-de-Naud	nave (a)
1126	Saint-Loup-de-Naud	upper porch
1126	travel in Italy??	
1126	Aix-en-Provence ?	cloister
1127	Sacra di San Michele	undercroft
1128	Toulouse, Etienne ?	nave (g)
1129	Anzy-le-Duc	nave, west door
1130	Dijon, Philibert ?	south door
1131	Montceaux-l'Etoile	west door
1132	Vermenton	west portal
1133	Pontoise	ambulatory walls
1134	Poissy	nave clerestory
1134	Saint-Denis	narthex aisle, windows
1135	Etampes, Notre-Dame	south door
1135	Etampes, Notre-Dame	north door
1135	Châteaudun, Madeleine	north nave
1136	Montmartre	east nave aisle
1136	Etampes, Saint-Martin	apse (a)
1136	Etampes, Notre-Dame	north (c-) chapels, step 3
1137	Etampes, Notre-Dame	north (c) vault caps
1137	Saint-Denis	narthex upper west
1137	Saint-Denis	W-w(cw)
1138	Aulnay-sur-Bois	east
1138	Chartres campaign E	WN(1)
1138	Chartres	portal bases, left embrasure
1139	Noël-Saint-Martin	apse
1139	Etampes, Saint-Martin	apse (rc)
1139	Etampes, Notre-Dame	south (c) caps, n vaults
1139	Saint-Denis	narthex upper chapel
1140	Chartres campaign G	X(a-) capital
1140	Chartres	portal imposts
1140	Saint-Denis	towers (1)
1141	Etampes, Notre-Dame	north (c+) caps
1141	La Ferté-Alais	south chapel
1142	Chartres campaign I	WS(a)
1142	Saint-Denis	ambulatory walls
1143	Saint-Germain-des-Prés	west portal bases
1144	Provins, Saint-Ayoul	porches stage I
1144	Etampes, Notre-Dame	south (c+) caps, n vault
1145	Chartres campaign L	WS(1)
1152	May-en-Multien	nave n3-4
1153	Oulchy-le-Château	crossing
1154	Crugny	apse
1155	Laon, Saint-Martin	east
1156	Binson	porch
1157	Nouvion	apse
1158	Val-Cretien	east
1161	Laon cathedral	choir aisles
1163	Vailly	east
1164	Noyon cathedral	ambulatory