

ICMA Master Carvers Series

These are drafts for vols. 6 and 7 of *The Ark of God*.

A resource for discussion and information.

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22 Summary of chapters from Laon cathedral gallery

John James

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This is an ongoing summary and will be updates as the Laon series is further developed.

The capitals discussed here may be examined in larger format in vols. 3-5 of *The Ark of God*, and when completed and professionally edited these draft studies will be published in volumes 6 and 7.

This is number 22 of an on-going series describing Early Gothic carving masters for discussion and comment

- 1 Introduction to the carvers.
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in the end, do we care that much about the multitude of individual carvers compared to the conclusions that may be drawn

Summary of chapters on the Laon cathedral gallery

Since I am presenting this in small packets as each part begins to come together it feels necessary to place a potentially confusing group of studies into some coherency. The large number of capitals in the choir gallery at Laon and the more than 60 carvers involved have opened up a number of fascinating issues and questions about these men and the way they were employed.

- The value of maintaining the natural slope in the ground to maintain a tilt across the site during construction. See #20 and #25.
- Why would two carvers at the top of their profession use the template of a more junior carver, do so once and never do so again? See #23.
- When we find the man who trained a carver, and where that carver was very creative, how does that affect future development? See #24.
- How do we understand the way in which a powerful detail was shared among a number of really proficient carvers, as in some of the terminals at Laon. See #24 and Franck in #25.

20 - Laon gallery Part I *Draft 1 complete - already sent to ICMA*

Initial analysis of the whole gallery without discussing individual carvers.

To be uploaded on ICMA site in mid-July

21 - Laon gallery - the Cog Masters *Draft 2 complete*

Four Cog carvers at Laon were Dominique, Denis, Damien, and Marcel. Only two carved cogs in other places. *Recognition* of Dominique. Discussed another not employed at Laon but pertinent to the analysis, Igor the Mad.

22 - Summary of chapters on the Laon cathedral gallery *This piece, ongoing.*

23 - The Recognition: A rite of passage? *Draft 1 complete*

A ritualised process visible in specific groups of contemporary capitals at Aulnay-sous-Bois, Chartres, Meulan, Orbais, Nouvion and Laon. The argument for *Recognition* is set out with references to the evidence in other papers.

To be uploaded on ICMA site at the end of July

24 - Laon gallery - Cyprian and Hugues *Draft 1 complete*

Cyprian's template used by Hugues and perhaps one other. Whereas Cyprian used it over three decades, the others did not. There was a *Recognition* for Cyprian in Meulan before he went to Laon. He may have been trained by Victoire.

25 - Laon gallery - Gamma and the Fabrice team *Draft 1 complete*

Strap designs by Fabrice who controlled a team of four men. His template was unique to Laon and was developed out of Gamma's *Recognition* at Orbais. To properly assess this issue the piece begins with an analysis of Gamma's *œuvre*.

26 - Laon gallery - Laurence, Nazaire and Nicholas *Almost complete*

Three carvers using same template, and continuation of this template elsewhere.

To be uploaded on ICMA site in August

27 - Strapper the Intricate (1135-1179) *Almost complete*

The major strap master who has one capital at Laon. During these years straps became a fashionable motif and was used on occasions by many men.

28 - Strap-X, the original (1086-1127) *Draft 1 complete*

The first, and for most of his life, the only master in the Paris Basin using straps.

29 - Master Victoire, an addendum (1108-1168) *Draft 1 complete*

Extends his work and that of his team into the 1170s. His early work more like that of a contractor than an independent sculptor. He carved one capital in Laon (named as Philippe in #20).

ADDITIONAL STUDIES EMERGING FROM THE LAON GALLERY.

Laon gallery - Marc *Outline*

One capital at Laon - a few others elsewhere.

Laon gallery - Master Abelard *Partly completed*

One pier in the earliest part of the gallery, with a considerable range of works in many places.

Laon gallery - Master Adrien *Partly completed*

Laon gallery - The Rinceau masters, Theodore, Thibaut and Thierry *Outline*

Laon gallery - Auguste and Séverin and the minor strap masters *Outline*

From Laon there was Auguste and Séverin. Will include a description of the growing fashion in the use of straps, especially during the 60s and 70s. One important group of straps by a man from Poitiers I have called The Worm.

Laon gallery part II *Outline*

Remaining individual carvers, being about half. The broadleaf group will require a special study of its own.