ICMA Master Carvers Series

A resource for discussion and information.

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15 Master Victoire (1108-1143)

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The capitals discussed here may be examined in larger format in vols. 3-5 of *The Ark of God*, and his full *œuvre* will be published in volume 7.

This is number 15 of an on-going series describing Early Gothic carving masters for discussion and comments

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Lavilletertre nave WS1w(a)

Master Victoire, and sharing at Saint-Loup-de-Naud (1109-1143)

Pure foliate capitals are much harder to disentangle than rinceau designs. It is a shame, as there are more of them, more even than the broadleaf type. In the chapter on the latter I discussed the basic design formats and pointed out that one of the most common templates was of large leaves on each corner enfolding a smaller one in the centre [r2]. The leaf and the geometry that encloses them are the primary design elements. The arcs of the compass that frame the lateral leaves merge into those that frame the lower central leaf. Victoire used variations of this template throughout his life.

Where the two leaves meet he emphasised the hole or gap in between. In his early years he increased the size, and therefore the emphasis by enlarging the junction to a large circle that draws our attention to the void at the expense of the whole [r3]. All leaves are joined at the bottom, and in some the veins were curved to form sweeping connections across the base.

At the top he pointed the encasing leaves inwards to hold and enfold the middle leaf, rather in the manner of a family where the parents nourish and secure the child. With a few exceptions, the leaves do not overlap, but are spread onto the curved plane of the cone.

The corner leaves are often wide with grooves instead of spines that, for good reason, are in the manner of Palmier. In time much of his imagination was dedicated to exploring the strip under the abacus. Crockets were never used, though occasionally this strip contains a thin frieze or a volute. Rarely a frond hangs down from the corner.

The larger corner leaves usually have one or more side fronds. They are long and top-heavy, with thrusting tips and exceptionally waisted joins to the leaf [r4]. The gaps between the smaller leaves and the flanking were gradually enlarged until, at Lavilletertre, they came to dominate one's first impression [r1]. The veins are grooved and expand towards the tips.

Together these are his major distinguishing characteristics. We can follow a clear evolutionary trend from thin scratchy veins on the even surface of the cone to larger and more voluptuous structures that sustain the strength of the whole. Over time the capitals became more coherent and more detailed, occasionally more flamboyant, while deepening the contrast between the foliage and the spaces between.



Gaillon-sur-Moncient crossing



Théméricourt crossing



Saint-Loup portal

I shall deal first with the most characteristic examples, starting with one of the earliest. This would be the north nave aisle of Montmartre [b]; the south aisle was not constructed until twenty years later. I shall return to a few earlier examples afterwards, including Gaillon where he had been working with Palmier and had taken on a couple of his details, especially a stronger and more open organisation and the split spine.

The capital on the right of [b2] is by the Facet Master that I had earlier dated to around 1110 [b3]. This, and another by the first Strapper Master help to place this work before his major work of the early period, Lavilletertre.

11114



Montmartre WN2(a)



Montmartre WN2e(a)



Montmartre WN2ne(a) by Faceter

11115

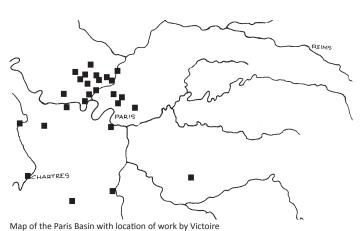
After Montmartre he carved one capital in the apse of Santeuil. There are two towns of this name in the Paris Basin, and this one is in the Vexin, just 40 kilometres north-east of Paris. It is in the heart of the district where he worked all his life, save only on four occasions [b].

The battered remnants of this capital have his framing leaves under the corners, with narrow-waisted lateral fronds, long parallel veins and an énchancré [r]. The surface has been so badly damaged you can see only the general arrangement of lateral fronds, tall corner leaves and a smaller one in the middle.

There is a leaf falling off the upper corner where anyone else would have placed a crocket. There are a couple of examples of this in later work, after which the motif was abandoned in favour of volutes.



Santeuil NW2(a)



From the evolution of his motifs, Auvers-sur-Oise would have been next. The foundation walls of the apse had already been laid at the same time as the north chapel, just before the First Crusade. The rest of the unfinished apse had to wait twenty-five years until funds were available again.

This capital is similar to Santeuil in sharpness, spaciousness and detailing. It can fit into no other stage of his development unless just before Santeuil. The gaps have been opened more. The close attention given to the veins may reflect the influence of the carvers he was meeting on the sites.



Auvers-sur-Oise apse AN2



Lavilletertre, a long stay

He did an extraordinary amount of work at Lavilletertre in the high vaults of the choir and in the two aisle levels in the nave. Those in the choir are more lightly incised, and every of them one may have been carved by Victoire [b]. The smaller ones are simplified versions without the lateral fronds, but with enlarged gaps between the leaves. The flat top in some opens a realm of arrangements, as we shall see [b2]. There are no crockets nor, as yet, any volutes. The designs are two-dimensional.

11117







Lavilletertre choir Es1ne





Lavilletertre choir Es1ne





Lavilletertre choir

However, within the limits of his template there is variety, though not as great as some [b]. We only have to compare Victoire's work with the imagination in Bannière's at Boscherville to see the differences between the men. In a stay of about three years at Lavilletertre there were minimal developments in style, save that the cutting became deeper and the relationship between the edges of the fronds closer and thereby a little more dramatic. In fact, it is the dramatic quality that was developed most strongly over these years.





Lavilletertre nave WS1w(a)



Lavilletertre nave WN5(a-)



Lavilletertre nave WS1nw(a)

There are no *énchancré* anywhere in Lavilletertre though he had used the device in the previous two buildings and would again later.

He carved over 40 capitals in this one stay, and if he had done nothing else it would have been more than six months work. As a young man he was allowed to make the major contribution of any workman. It gave him time and opportunity to try different essays of the one model. Was he someone's favourite nephew? Palmier had been given the same opportunity at Etampes a dozen years later. ICMA "07".



Lavilletertre nave WS1w(a)



Lavilletertre nave WS1w(a)



Lavilletertre nave WS1w(a)



Lavilletertre nave WS1sw(a)



Lavilletertre nave WS1sw(a)



Lavilletertre nave WS1w(a)

Notice one capital in the choir and three in the nave have down-turned fronds in the upper corners [b]. This is the same motif that had been used in Santeuil a year or so before. Aesthetically it frames the capital, for it directs the eye downwards to rest within the block rather than concentrating attention on the point in the corner, thus allowing the flow of attention to spring upwards into the arches and ribs of the architecture.

It is had to know which he preferred, though he may have been experimenting with methods for softening the junction between the weightiness of the arches and the slender columns that absorbed the loads. A few years later at Château-Landun he created a lovely device to resolve this issue, a thin frieze of leaflets inserted straight under the abacus.



Lavilletertre nave Wn3ne(a)



Lavilletertre nave WS1w(a)



Lavilletertre nave WS3w(a)



Lavilletertre nave WS3nw(a)



Lavilletertre nave Wn3s(a)



Lavilletertre nave WN4e(a)



Lavilletertre nave WS1w(a)

There are two over the aisle windows, which are set five courses higher than those in the aisles. They are miniature versions of his larger capitals [b].

11118







Lavilletertre nave window



Lavilletertre nave window

Three are more experimental [b]. The snarling dogs with his leaves above them was not repeated anywhere else, as far as I can ascertain, though some of the blocky figures in the 'narthex' may have been his work.

Another has a small-scale miniature pattern forming a frieze along the upper edge, an idea that came into its own fifteen years later [b2], while the tips that lap over the trunk of a corner leaf on the right involves a much denser geometry than his normal flattened relief [b3].

11119



Lavilletertre nave WS5sw(a-)



Lavilletertre nave WN4se(a



Lavilletertre nave WS1sw(a)

Of these only the frieze had a future. It altered the scale of the capital, reducing the monolithic solidity of the large leaves and leaving a delicacy at the top just where, in fact, the most load was to be found. It is as if the weight of the building had squeezed nature into a thin band, enhancing the power of the foliage underneath. The frieze is like a thin lace embroidery that finishes the neck of a shirt against the naked skin.

In the west portal he carved the imposts on one jamb [b]. They are more attenuated than the others, with thinner leaves, yet still with the connectivity along the bottom and the arching-over effect of the major fronds. The small leaf has been divided into three with a stretched quality that connects to a similar aesthetic in Théméricourt and Saint-Loup.

He was working here with two older carvers who we will meet again at Saint-Loup, Félix and Aviateur. Both were more skilled than Victoire and his next jobs are a testament to what he may have learned from them.



Lavilletertre west portal, impost



Lavilletertre west porta

At Lavilletertre there is a large capital with a similar arrangement, but with a subtly different approach to the veins [r1]. This is by an as-yet unidentified associate, whom we find working again with Victoire on the Saint-Loup-de-Naud nave five or six years further on [r2].



Lavilletertre nave WS3w(a)



Saint-Loup-de-Naud nave WS5e(a)

Later work using the Lavilletertre template

The Théméricourt crossing seems closest to the manner of the portal at Lavilletertre, though with larger 'holes' between the side leaves and altogether finer veins. Extra fronds break up the simplicity of the central leaf [b2], and there is a little overlapping. One has falling leaves at the corners. All his basic arrangements are here, in a more complex manner [b3]. Being closer in style to those in the portal of Lavilletertre than those in the choir, I would place Théméricourt after the larger church.

In two small capitals he tried a new way of handling the uppermost zone, with a pair of plates terminating in crockets [b+]. He used this device only once more, at Château-Landun.





Théméricourt



Théméricourt



Théméricourt interior



Théméricourt

Work on the first stage of the tower may have continued over the next couple of years or may have been delayed for a decade, the more common situation while waiting for additional funding. There is one capital that may have been by Victoire [b]. The vault between them is very domical,

as with many other churches in the area, though encased in pointed arches rather than the peaked arch of Cambronne and others. In all of the buildings Victoire worked on the arches are either pointed or round, never peaked, a technique discussed in Avista ***.



Théméricourt tower



Théméricourt tower

At Ver-sur-Launette the squat base to the tower has two capitals, without crockets or split spines, though in other respects they are almost identical to Théméricourt. Especially in the little fronds that are stretched outwards like hands and lap over the central leaf. Placing the central leaf behind the corner leaves and making it as tall as those on the corners was another attempt to enrich. Yet the large gaps between them at the bottom, the continuation of the veins connecting them and the overall feel of the design show this to have been the work of Victoire.

11121





Ver-sur-Launette south S2nw



Ver-sur-Launette south tower base

There is a change in his approach at this time, probably from being at Château-Landun. Whereas up to now he had been working with men of much the same calibre as himself, he was now thrown into a *chantier* run by exceptional and highly skilled men. Though they sought precision and variety there is a unity of approach in most of the capitals that overrides the personal agendas of their carvers.

I ascribe two, maybe three capitals to him because they lack crockets, have stretched fronds, split spines and an emphasis on the gap between the fronds [b]. The deeply-cut junctions between the leaves, while not as large as before, still retain the assertive presence of earlier work. He developed the design for the upper frieze that should be compared with Saint-Denis on page 21. He may perhaps have carved one that includes crockets [b1].

11122



Château-Landun choir Es2n



Château-Landun choir En1e

I realise we could easily be contentious about the carving at Château-Landun as the style is sharp-edged and less fluid than earlier work. We have to consider the fact that there is no similar collection of carvings anywhere else in the Paris Basin, and there should be some explanation for its uniqueness.

There are capitals that could have been the work of Strapper, Fanny and the SS Master, yet first impressions are that no one we have yet identified could have worked there. I am coming to understand that in this church a single cutting style was imposed on nearly every carver, perhaps by the master mason, perhaps by the master carver, perhaps even by the client.

The same situation exists at Saint-Martin-des-Champs and Saint-Quirace in Provins. We are more accustomed to the highly individualistic carving at Saint-Denis and Chartres where there was no such control over artistic endeavour. Once we accept that it could be done, then even though exceptional. It shows that artists could submit to a common purpose.



Château-Landun choir WN1s



Château-Landun choir En1e frieze

DRAFT

Simpler template without lateral fronds

To avoid complicating the flow of this argument I have placed this group separately [r1]. Uniquely, the corner leaves are pushed up into the abacus. The rest of the details are pretty standard. I believe they were all by Victoire or by one of his men because this is in the midst of his other capitals in the Lavilletertre choir. Without this conjunction I would have been tempted to see if they could be ascribed to someone else.

There are only four with these relatively simple layouts [r2,3,b]. Not a large collection, by any means. The apse at Pithivier, the south door at Vernouillet, the nave windows at Chars, and the nave clerestory in Poissy. There are few changes to provide any basis for relative dating, and so I will be relying on some of the adjacent capitals to determine a chronology.







Chars nave aisle window

At Ivry-la-Bataille one small capital has a central leaf between two large fronds without crockets [b1]. It is not unlike Théméricourt.

He may well have been involved in the carving of the upper section with their tattered archivolts, or of the last remaining column figure, though I have no way of connecting him with any sculpture except the worn dogs at Lavilletertre. From the other capitals with godrons and broadleaf, and the outer archivolt by Félix and Palmier, we can date Victoire's contribution to the early 1120s.

There is a worn capital that looks like Palmier who was a companion on a number of jobs at this time, including Gaillon and Saint-Loup [b2]. As I will discuss in a moment, there seem to have been a number of men who worked with him who used the rudiments of his simpler template, but carved in their own way. Palmier was a younger man at the time, and this may be one by him.



11123



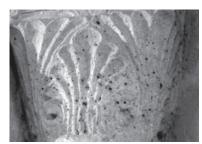
Ivry-la-Bataille west entry by Victoire



Ivry-la-Bataille west entry by Palmier



Lavilletertre choir Es1ne



Pithivier apse ES1-wn



Vernouillet south doo



Ivry-la-Bataille west entry



Théméricourt crossing by Victoire

Saint-Loup-de-Naud, the first 'Chartrain' tympanum

The portal sculpture has usually been dated to some time after the Chartres western sculpture on the unverifiable meme that Chartres had to be first. Clark Maines strongly argued for the 1160s from the arrival of the relics of Saint Loup from the parent abbey in Sens. [Maines, 6]

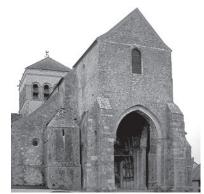
It is substantially the work of one period, without having been damaged or rebuilt in later times. [Maines, 299-] The portal has been exceptionally well-preserved from the centuries of weather as the porch that protects it was built only a few years later. Through my work at Chartres and in the *Template-Makers* I can affirm his observation that in any program (such as a choir or a nave) construction proceeded in layers, and that between each layer there were changes in design and templates.

However, Maines mentioned that some stones in the lintel and in the archivolts were *spolia*, and that "nearly one-half of the portal sculpture ... were designed for a different architectural location". [Maines, 73] These opinions are based on two misunderstandings about the nature of mediaeval construction.

The most important is the fractured nature of the building process. Maines recognised this in describing the architectural history and his comments on other authors, especially in chapter III where he examined the lithic evidence, the sutures and the changes to profiles.

Secondly, the facts that the column figures are squashed together and misplaced on their bases does not mean that they were hauled from some other portal. They could more easily have been carved by different crews to those who carved the bases and embrasures that support them, and that when ready to be placed the statues had to be adjusted to make them fit. We had a similar story in the lateral doorways in the Chartres west portal. Misalignments like these are blessings, because they may be used to disentangle the detailed history. This is much more useful than brushing off all the difficulties into the single basket of "rebuilding". Gesta

It is also reasonable to consider whether the carvers may have visited the quarry, selected the stones, and blocked in the basic shape of what they were to carve before having it transported. Any mismeasurements



Saint-Loup-de-Naud west porch





Saint-Loup-de-Naud west portal upper sculpture

Construction schedule

- 11 triple arcade and high vaults
- 10 outer porch capitals
- 9 start of nave rib vault
- 8 interior clerestory capitals
- 7 outer arch portal
- 6 eastern porch capitals 5 three rows of archivolts
- 4 lintel, tympanum
- 3 portal capitals
- 2 aisle arcade capitals
- 1 bases and figures

between 1125-26.

There are 20 courses to the aisle capitals, which may have taken 2+ years; and 14 to the crown of the porch vault taking, 1+ yeas. Say 4 altogether, 1124-8 with the sculptors here

may therefore have lain in the sizes given to the quarry. See discussion in ICMA "07".

Thus, discrepancies should be analysed as possible signs that the integration of work between different crews was not always successful rather than the more complex answer that the stones had been moved. More complex because movement over distances requires safe packing to avoid damage, sufficient teams of oxen and roadworthy carts, and indeed, the very roads themselves. It is possible that the cost of cartage would have been more expensive than the cost of carving new stones on site.

I am well aware that portals, by their nature, are demountable objects, but surely we need positive evidence for resiting before we assume that removal was more common than the normal irritants found in erecting precut stones.

Thirdly, we need to be cautions in crying *spolia* any time one stone does not fit another, in spite of the arguments of van de Meulan and Deichmann.ⁿ There is a marked difference between the individuals who carved and the teams that erected. Sculptors were paid a great deal more than an erector, who more often than not could have been a labourer rather than a mason. There would have been no value in paying a sculptor after his work was finished to hang around while it was put up, and we should expect that these men would have been released to seek work elsewhere. In a complex operation, as in a portal with many rows of archivolts, the stones may have been carved many months before they were erected. Especially in a case where the surrounding building, with its arches and walling, was being constructed in the same project and the two had to dovetail.

Where erection was under the direction of artisans rather than sculptors, any stone that was not a perfect fit when placed would have been re-shaped, even hacked, to get it into place. What academics have thought were signs of *spolia* brought in from some other unnamed site would most commonly have been the "lets make it fit" actions of the erection crew.

Stylistically Saint-Loup has been seen as the poor and later derivative of Chartres, rather than an earlier essay. In stylistic terms the shortened column-figures, the too-few 'apostles' in the lintel, the rounded rather than elongated forms of most of the figures and the archaic style of the adjacent capitals all connect it with the period before Chartres [r]. The clinching argument from the perspective of these studies lies in the time-lines of the carvers.

These show that Saint-Loup is the first of the iconic Christ in Majesty portals. The fifteen-year 'journey' that started here was followed by Bourges, le Mans, Angers and Chartres, not the other way round. From these studies of the carvers I would date Saint-Loup to 1125, Bourges toward the end of that decade, le Mans and Angers to the middle of the next and the design of the Chartres tympani no later than 1139 or 1140.

The tendency among most authors - Salet, Hearn, Aubert, Branner, Sauerlander *et al* - has been to allocate most of this great sculpture to the 1150s and 60s, thus isolating Saint-Denis to an era all on its own and pushing Senlis into the 80s where its capitals show it does not belong. Under such a weight of scholarly opinion one has to either agree or stand firmly for what one believes. Their dating springs from the meme that Chartres set a standard that all other portals tried (usually with less success) to emulate. The chronology offered here springs from no *a priori* assumption, but is founded on the *œuvres* of many individual carvers that are themselves based on the documented dates for a thousand capitals.

In the nave the capitals on both levels are intricately decorated in the archaic manner [r], and in this they all point to a date well before 1130, as



Saint-Loup-de-Naud nave aisle



Saint-Loup-de-Naud nave aisle



Saint-Loup-de-Naud nave aisle

I described in *The Ark* [v.3:1394-]. We may be able to assign two in the clerestory to Victoire from the hole next to the central leaf, the long parallel veins and the indented spine [b]. They are little different to earlier ones, save in the projecting table in one.

We can now discuss the timetable for the portal and the arrival of this major carving team. So far I have identified Félix, Jérôme and Willow in the sculpture and decoration, and can now add Victoire to this august number.

11126







Integrating the portal with the nave walls and arcades

The stone coursing suggests that the bases of the portal had been erected with the walls of the aisles, and that the embrasures were continued to the level of the capitals in step with the interior. I estimate that the arcade arches could have been started and the springing of the aisle groin vaults. At this point the sculptors arrived on the site. They may have already been to the quarry and selected the stones they needed for their sculpture, and had them delivered. After all, *imagiers* were expensive men and their time was not to be wasted.

If the column figures ordered from the quarry had already been blocked in (a method that now seems increasingly likely), then the discrepancies discussed in detail by Maines between the widths of some figures and

the space available for them could easily be explained by an error in the instructions from sculptor to quarry.

As their carving was proceeding and the stones were being erected, Palmier carved one of the capitals on the inside face of the western wall, at the same height as the more intricately carved capitals to the portal [r, arrow far right].



Saint-Loup-de-Naud nave WS5w(a) Palmier

Above the arcade and over the portal lies a triple-opening arcade. It was not designed as a weatherproof window, but an opening into the upper porch, which was therefore already planned for at this stage [r]. There are two flanking capitals [b]. That on the south is more in the manner of Palmier than Victoire. If it was the latter, he brought his veins closer together in the

Palmier manner and added a Palmier star in an unusual location. If by Palmier then the volute along the upper edge of the leaves is the one Victoire had used previously in the aisle [WS3e(a)]. Both split the spines of the tall corner leaves. The easy way out is to credit it to a student.



Saint-Loup-de-Naud west arcade W-wS(c+)



Saint-Loup-de-Naud nave WS5(c)



Saint-Loup-de-Naud nave WS3w(a)



Saint-Loup-de-Naud west arcade W-wN(c+)

The porch was added later, from the style of the two capitals that support the outer arch. This would have included the awkward upper part of the staircase, the rubble stone walls above the vault, and the groin vault above that. Completing this over a number of campaigns may have extended the construction program into the 1130s, though the geometry of the domical porch ribs suggests an earlier date.

The raised level of the top of the vault made a step between it and the base of the arcade. It was probably not intended when the arcade was built, for the plinth under the shafts has been covered by an infill of mortar creating an inclined surface between the higher vault and the lower base of the arcade.



Saint-Loup-de-Naud nave arcade base



Saint-Loup-de-Naud interior room over portal

It may be argued that the sculptural portal was erected after the nave had been completed. This is a natural conclusion as the styles are so different and the inner spaces command a different scale and level of detail. In order to understand the relationship between the portal sculpture and the interior I have placed a 'ghost' of the sculpture on a photo of the inside to show how dependent each level was on the erectional procedures of the other [r].

If the coursing is continuous from the inside to the outside, as it is here, then the exterior portal capitals would have been placed about the same time as the aisle arcade capitals.

The three rows of archivolt sculpture are supported on the tympanum, and these support the plain arch of the outer fourth row [arrow]. The interior walling butts up against this, and therefore the interior clerestory capitals cannot be placed until the whole of the portal sculpture had been erected.

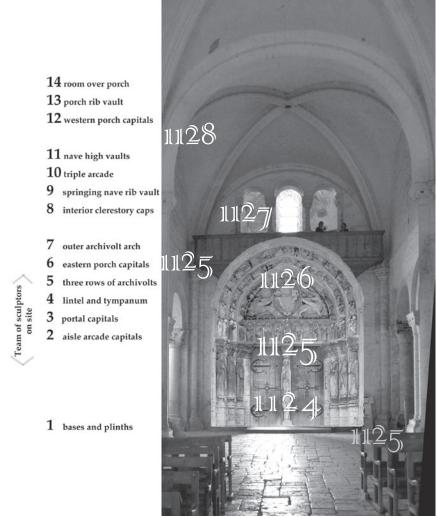
On the exterior the porch rib vault was erected above the sculpture. Two of the porch capitals on the side of the nave are three courses higher than those of the portal [circle]. The junctions in the stonework show they had to be in place before the outer arch of the portal could be erected, and this had to be in place before the clerestory capitals.

The base of the triple opening over the porch with its shafts and bases sits immediately on top of the last-placed portal stones. In a thin-wall construction the arcade could not be constructed until after the whole of the portal sculpture had been erected. The former therefore dates the latter.

Once inside the room over the porch the floor rises over the domical rib vault so it is somewhat higher than the base of the arcade. The walls of this room were built of rubble rather than ashlar, so they and the groin vault over them were by other builders. Order of construction set out next page.



Saint-Loup-de-Naud western nave interior, with the 'ghost' of the portal



Saint-Loup-de-Naud interior, with the 'ghost' of the portal and construction phases

Saint-Loup-de-Naud portal sculpture

The team of expensive sculptors would have been carving on site for less than a year, possibly only a few months, to complete the portal. Meanwhile the nave and porch were being built by separate crews over five or more years. Dates are indicated above. The capitals show that Victoire worked with both crews, the sculptors and the builders.

The design of the capitals and imposts on the right portal embrasure suggests that all these capitals and their imposts were by the one gang. I can identify three sculptors: Félix with a small input from Jérôme and Jeremy on the left, and Victoire with support from Jérôme on the right. It looks like Jérôme was the younger man, but not necessarily by much.

I have not yet worked out at more than a superficial level how to disentangle Victoire from Jérôme, nor do I yet have enough clues on their ages or status within the gang. I believe I will be able to do this, but this stage is just a draft opinion. However, I can show that they worked in harmony, in mutual friendship, and that they influenced each other.

My general impression from all the portals of this period is that the capitals immediately above the door jambs were reserved for the gang masters. The one on the right at Saint-Loup has the Victoire qualities of flat foliage, veins connecting above the astragal, sharp fronds with jagged outlines and waists where they connect to the main leaves [r1]. Yet the flouncy collar is not a Victoire motif, and belongs to Jérôme. ICMA "04":12



Saint-Loup-de-Naud W.cR1 north face of capital

11125

The earlier drafts in the ICMA Master Carvers Series give more information on these three carvers, Félix [b1], Jérôme [b2] and Jeremy [b3]. As these are drafts please bear in mind that though I believe the substance of what I have described accords with the evidence, there are accumulating errors in many minor attributions that have become clearer as the work has proceeded. These will be updated when I have completed the first tranche of investigations, those of the rinceau carvers.









Saint-Loup-de-Naud W.cL1s impost by Jeremy

Above the right jamb capital the impost is pure Victoire [b1]. Compare the foliage details in both with Lavilletertre and Ver-sur-Launette [r2,3]. The former would be dated to around 1117, the latter closer to 1121. The greater intricacy and complexity at Saint-Loup follows a consistent line of development in Victoire's *œuvre* over these early years.

The smaller flanking fronds at Saint-Loup lap over the main central leaf [b]. Overlaps occurred from time to time in his capitals, and was not an idea found in the dossier of either Félix or Jérôme.





Saint-Loup-de-Naud W.cR1 impost



Ver-sur-Launette south S2nw

On the west face of the W.cR1 impost there is no overlapping, but instead all the elements fit snugly against one another [b]. It is more like the earlier capitals in Lavilletertre [r2].

The four capitals to the west of Victoire's over the jamb were by Jérôme, as discussed elsewhere [b2]. The foliage is a little like Victoire's but were equally like that of Jérôme. There is still a small question in my mind about the author of these wonderful sensitive heads, but they fit so well with the other heads by this master that I would link the foliage to him rather than to Victoire - with a little mutual influence, perhaps.



Saint-Loup-de-Naud W.cR2 impost



Saint-Loup-de-Naud W.cR1 impost

The fronds in the corners of the two far right imposts have curled ends [r1]. All the other foliage, volutes, veins and waisting are Victoire's, yet the little tips that turn backwards and just touch each other had not been used by Victoire before Saint-Loup, nor would they be used again [arrow r1,2]. Where the flat leafage and volutes on each face are typically Victoire, these voluptuous and very three-dimensional forms are not. Normally he would have placed a large leaf up the corner and wrapped it around the curve of the bell. In addition he would not have placed an extra leaf above the corner leaves to support the abacus.

However, it is a favourite device of the three other artists involved in the sculpture. I give examples by Jeremy at Saint-Denis, Félix at Sens and Jérôme at Saint-Martin all carved in the 1130s [b].

This instance is not isolated, for there is a similar *mélange* on the imposts on the opposite left embrasure. Sorting out the complexity was a little easier in the first two closest to the door for the four faces of the impost over two shafts were carved onto a single stone by three men. I would imaging that each would have had sole access to the stone while caring his part.

The two on the left were carved in the rinceau-style of Félix with



Saint-Denis portal archivolt W.cR^^2 by Jeremy



Sens cathedral choir An1a(d) detail by Félix

hanging berries and leaves and foliage with complex silhouettes [b1+]. There are no collars. The adjacent face has completely different details we would never ascribe to Félix. They are typical of Jérôme: the large central collar, the curled-up leaves like little fingers and sharply pointed tips [arrows b2+]. The right face over the jamb itself has the berries and curled tips of Jeremy [b3+]. Three carvers on one stone, each inhabiting a discrete space. Each designed his own arrangement, yet integrated his designs with sensitivity to the formats of his confreres.



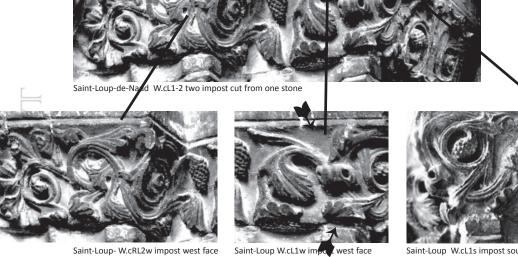
Saint-Loup-de-Naud W.cR1 impost



Saint-Loup-de-Naud W.cR1 impost



Saint-Martin-des-Champs AN2+L(a) by Jérôme



Saint-Loup W.cL1s impost south face

As you can see, this device was not used on the imposts of the left embrasure, which are all rinceau.

The more I ponder this the more profoundly I recognise the extent to which the carvers exchanged ideas while working together. These were creative men and open to new possibilities, as is shown by the changes in each man's œuvre during a lifetime. I imagine them discussing how to best turn the corner of the impost, how to bring a little more vigour into it, and the younger man convincing the older to try this detail.

Alternatively, Jérôme may have been the carver but was still apprenticed or in some other way subject to Victoire's direction, and carved the foliage of the impost to Victoire's template while altering the corner to suit himself, and perhaps also the detailing of the fronds to introduce more three-dimensionality. It shows how a template could be adapted to suit the normal working methods of whichever carver was given the task.

I have found the same in many similarly repetitive elements, such as the jambs of the Bourges south porch and the drip moulds at Angers.ⁿ The jamb figures in the Chartres portals are carved from stones of similar sizes, yet each is a highly individual piece. This fact has an enormous bearing on our capacity to identify individuals, as can be seen in the study of the three colonnettes carved in the Royal Portal by Grégoire and his two men. Each man carved and detailed in his own way but used the master's template. [refs] I have made a similar argument for the SS Master at Aulnay-sur-Bois where three other sculptors used his template, and the SS Master at Chartres. [refs]

Therefore I think that in the capital over the jamb that began this discussion, Victoire and Jérôme cooperated and exchanged design concepts. Indeed, all the stones may have been carved by Jérôme using Victoire's manner. Was he chaffing at the restrictions so that he was given an opportunity to express himself with more freedom in his own space on the opposite impost?

Two of the jamb figures have foliage on their bases a little like Victoire's, save that the spines are decorated with dentils [b]. I see no connections between these figures or their detailing in any of his other buildings that would permit me to ascribe any figurative sculpture to him. Even in the capitals on the right-hand embrasure the style and the heads suit Jérôme's métier in a range of sites, and though an occasional leaf could be ascribed to Victoire, I decided that these capitals were by Jérôme. I therefore do not think (at least at this stage) that Victoire executed any figurative sculpture.



Saint-Loup-de-Naud base of W.cR2 figure



Saint-Loup-de-Naud base of W.cL1 figure

However, I think it possible that Victoire was the senior carver, at least for the contemporary work on the interior of the nave, because a number of other carvers produced variations of his template with large two-dimensional leaves, many veins around large gaps between them and split spines [r1,2]. Instead of volutes one has emphatic geometric decoration along the top with a similar capital in the room above the porch [next page]. See page 12.



Saint-Loup-de-Naud nave WS5w(a)



Saint-Loup-de-Naud nave WS5e(a)

11113



Saint-Loup-de-Naud over porch W-wL(c+)

Earlier commissions

Now that we have achieved a fair understanding of his designs and their development over the middle fifteen years of his life, from 1110 to 1125, we can follow him back in time. The stone coursing in Gaillon-sur-Moncient in the Vexin shows something of its history. The crossing is small, presumably to fit against a small apse, now demolished [r]. The floor of the crossing was raised when the choir was rebuilt around 1218 [v.2:1094]. Though the foundations for the nave were set out after the crossing was begun, from the fifth course the two were built together.

The shafts have heavy bases and were designed for ribs, with plinths for rib shafts set at 45°, while the vault itself is one of the least skilfully built in the area, with misaligned ribs and a twisted boss. I would surmise that, as with so many other buildings, the walls and capitals were built with the start of the ribs, but the vault was completed by another who did not understand how to put them together.

The capitals were carved around the same time. In one case where the designs are the same, those in the nave are less 'finished' than those in the crossing [b1,2]. One in the nave has only been blocked in while all the veins and other detailing on a capital from the same template have been completed in the crossing. On the sides of the corner leaves and immediately above the central leaf there are fronds that thrust outwards with long tips [arrow]. The junction of the frond with the leaf has a thin waist. The outer tip is longer than the others with a pinched junction to the rest of the frond. The corner spines have been formed as deep grooves.



Gaillon-sur-Moncient nave WS2n



Gaillon-sur-Moncient crossing EN1sw

Palmier was also working on the crossing at the same time [r2]. This is the earliest workshop I have found for him, and he too used the slot up the spine. Was the slot his or Victoire's? Palmier continued to use it all his working life, while Victoire dropped it after less than a decade. Their detailing is almost identical at this stage, save the terminals and certain refinements in density and execution. Palmier used terminals under the corners and at the centre where Victoire had none, either here or in any later building. However, one would be hard put to separate these masters



Gaillon-sur-Moncient nave looking east



Gaillon-sur-Moncient crossing ES1n by Palmier

if we had not already defined their styles from the other places where they worked. It suggests that Palmier may have been the pupil, Victoire the master, even though there were not many years between them.

There are two others by Victoire in the crossing [b]. There are no crockets, the fronds are joined above the astragal. The 'hole' between the leaves was gradually being enlarged, though not as emphatically as it would be in Lavilletertre. The additional layer at the top with volutes and the énchancré were embellishments that were gradually enriched over the years so that by the 30s they formed a strip of intricate fronds all along the top of the capital.

11113



Gaillon-sur-Moncient crossing EN1w



Gaillon-sur-Moncient crossing ES1s

The 'schematic' capital in the entry door shows the design elements in their essence [r2], the curved leaves in the corner flanking a smaller one in the centre, the circularity of the enlarged gap between them and the tall waisted fronds.

Following this manner further back in time it is possible that Victoire worked in the Bury nave in campaign 3 [b1]. This is the earliest I have found for him. The form and the flow of veins is his, though the myriad parallel veins that flow across the bottom are crudely handled. Instead of volutes he added additional foliage along the top, and a little head possibly borrowed from Gripple. Foulangues is closer in scale and in detailing [b2].



Gaillon-sur-Moncient from the north-west



Gaillon-sur-Moncient nave entry WN2-nR2

11108

11112



Bury WS1w(a) campaign 3



Foulangues crossing

The next group are small capitals with the same multi-veined connections between the leaves and with scooped lobes [b]. They show how he was experimenting with the arrangements. The presence of the Duke Master, Faceter and others help date these earlier campaigns.



Saintines tower



Bury south portal campaign 2



Catenoy west portal

Multiple carvers on the one template

A recurrent though fortunately not common issue that bedevils identifications is the number of carvers that may use one template. Where they do how does one separate the carver from the master? In the apse in Saint-Vaast-de-Longmont half the capitals follow the Victoire template: a large leaf at the corner, with waisted sharp-pointed fronds overhanging a central leaf, and without crockets [b]. Yet the manner of carving differs





Saint-Vaast-de-Longmont apse (d)



Saint-Vaast-de-Longmont apse (d)



Saint-Vaast-de-Longmont apse



Saint-Vaast-de-Longmont apse (a)



Saint-Vaast-de-Longmont apse (a)



Saint-Vaast-de-Longmont apse (a)



Saint-Vaast-de-Longmont apse (a)



Saint-Vaast-de-Longmont apse (a)

in three respects: the curvature of the elements, the sharpness of the tips and the decoration of the veins and spines. These small personal touches indicate different carvers.

There would seem to have been two using this template in the dado, from the pointed tips, the wider veins and the relative simplicity of one compared to the other. Under the vaults there may have been three or as many as five men using the same template, and only one used the split spine that seems to have been in the process of disappearing.

Under these circumstances which was the template-maker? I have taken the view that only by matching details in many buildings would a common denominator emerge that would isolate the man.

Later commissions and Saint-Denis

Three capitals in the apse of Limay show the possible stages of creation [next page]. The first is broadleaf in its unadorned simplicity. The middle has veins, a split spine and refined edges to the leaves, yet the shape is unchanged. The upper scrolls continue behind the leaves until connected by two small stalks visible at the join between them [b2 arrow]. On the right

DIRAFT

the corner leaves have fronds and the upper scroll was turned into a wider leaf. There is more creativity shown here than in Lavilletertre, and more accuracy in marking the veins, which is why I would place this afterwards.

11128







Limay apse

In the Montchauvet apse there are three capitals with relatively smallscale decoration along the top edges [b]. Two have large circular junctions between the leaves, and two have waisted fronds. One on the exterior of the apse is like those at Limay [r]. The apse is one of the few dated works from this period to the early 1130s, though with some uncertainty [v.3:437].

There was a change from the 20s, towards greater rigidity and greater regularity that seems to reflect a growing confidence. This was also reflected in Saint-Vaast, Chars and Poissy. Then with Aulnay-sous-Bois the designs began to open up.



Montchauvet apse exterio







Montchauvet apse EN2s

Aulnay has two capitals in the post-Saint-Loup Victoire manner [b]. Not as extravagant, the parts were coherently organised without any special attention being given to the way the veins might connect. The time-lines for the many skilled carvers working at Aulnay show it was under way just as work on the Saint-Denis portal were finished, that is around 1132. The two sites were only a few miles apart.

11133





Aulnay-sous-Bois WN1ne

From Aulnay he joined some others from the team and returned for the following campaign as Saint-Denis, and seems to have stayed there for the next seven years with occasional trips elsewhere during this time. As the last of the portal sculpture was being installed at Saint-Denis, Victoire carved one of the larger capital in the aisle. Were I to create another 'ghost' drawing for Saint-Denis as I had for Saint-Loup we would see that the portal capitals were four or five courses below the aisle rib capitals on the inside, which were about the level of the sills of the aisle windows.

The one he carved was on the north wall [r]. His detailing has a acquired a certain flamboyance with the tight curls on the ends of the tips, the exaggerated tips in the small central leaf and the frieze of little decorative posies along the top [b2]. The basic layout is similar to one in the Lavilletertre nave carved over fifteen years earlier [b1], and the delicate leaves in the frieze are like those at Château-Landun ten years before.



Saint-Denis narthex XN2nw(a-)

11133







Saint-Denis narthex XN2nw(a-) decorative frieze

In the next level under the arcade arches he carved a magnificent capital with more decorative elements in the zone behind the major corner leaves [b]. In the same zone he may have carved these three smaller stones [r2-4]. The middle capital is next to one by old friend from over twenty years ago, Palmier. The triple shaft under it pushed him into creating a more three-dimensional form than he would usually have employed and, compared to Montchauvet which was a cheaper job, he seems to have taken full advantage of the greater funding available at Saint-Denis to enrich the detailing.

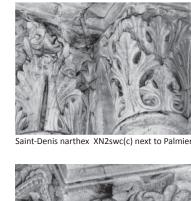


Saint-Denis narthex XS2wnw(a)

11133



Saint-Denis narthex XS2s(a)



Stylistically I would place the re-sited remains of Corbeil-Notre-Dame partway though his tenure at Saint-Denis, possibly around 1137. There is

a classic simplicity in the work of his later years. Except where additional funds made more complex work possible, there is a happy simplicity in his carving manner. The design of the nearby historiated portal capitals are so close to those at Chartres that a similar date is not too improbable.



Corbeil-Notre-Dame portal capital



Saint-Denis narthex XS3ses(a)



Corbeil-Notre-Dame (Musée de Cluny)

There is another simpler carving further up the narthex of Saint-Denis. Were they less complex because there was less money, or because they were more out of sight? Hardly, as the capitals alongside the openings from the central space into the towers are extraordinarily detailed [v.5:1232-33]. Alternatively they may have been by others using his template. As found at Saint-Vaast, we cannot always distinguish the man from his men. The piece on Grégoire at Chartres illustrates this, with a lot more detail available for the analysis than in most cases.[ICMA "11"]

Assistants need not have been working on the same job as the master, for they may have detached yet continued to use the template they had been trained in for a while. As I believe it is the template that defines the man and represents the essence of his creative mark on the world, I have continued to follow the template to find the man. Yet the possibility still remains that the physical carving of the stone was carried out by another.

He remained on site for the following campaign on the crypt in the choir. Many of these capitals have been replaced, especially the larger ones around the ambulatory. The new work has been executed in a very fine-grained limestone capable of taking sharply-edged details. However,



Saint-Denis narthex west bay formaret shafts



Saint-Denis narthex upper windows WS-w(1)





Saint-Denis narthex upper chapel



Saint-Denis narthex upper chapel



Saint-Denis narthex upper chapel

four of them have designs elements that I could ascribe to Victoire. He was by now extremely skilled, and enjoyed the opportunity to embellish to his heart's delight.

In one the veins linking the foliage continue into the splits up the centre of the leaves [r2]. Another has the same veins but the fronds are more 'ecstatic' being energised with sharp tips [r3]. Both have an upper row of decoration. There are neither crockets nor énchancré.

In two others the template is standard for later work, with the veins arising straight from the astragal and with split spines. It is particularly gratifying to see his pleasure in the small-scale sharp-edged decoration along the top of every stone, often in the same large-scale manner as at Château-Landun [r5]. The opportunities for experimentation at a meaningful scale in this campaign were endless.

Considering that these are replacements of what may have been very worn and damaged stones, these similarities are all we should expect as indicators that Victoire may have completed a considerable amount of work in the crypt.



Saint-Denis choir crypt As4w(u)



Saint-Denis choir crypt As4w(u)



Château-Landun choir En1e frieze



Saint-Denis choir crypt As4w(u)



While the groin vaults were being laid up at Saint-Denis it seems that his services were requested in the dado of Saint-Germain-des-Prés on the other side of the river [r1], and during the massive installation program at Chartres where all available skilled men may have been needed [r2,3]. Some of the imposts are in his manner, especially in flowing veins.

When one thinks about the erection of a great portal and the steady accumulation of carved stones laid out on the floor of the shed, one has to marvel at the cumulative achievement. As stones were finished I imagine they would have been put in place on the floor to ensure they all fitted perfectly and were ready to measure for the next. After all, in recent times the whole transept floor was used at Lincoln to set out a replacement for the southern rose.

As more and more of these fine-edged stones were laid out on the floor it would have been increasingly difficult to walk around them to measure for the next or to insert a new one. Yet this had to be done if the whole was to fit together on erection and months of labour not be ruined by having to hack out parts to make them fit when erected. Indeed, we know so many examples where sculpture has been altered that the masters may often have been a little sloppy in laying them out prior to erection.

At Saint-Denis the carving would have begun long before the walls were high enough to receive them, for the walls could be wrapped around the sculpture only when most of it had been carved. Exceptions were the drip moulds and, perhaps the imposts. It would make perfect construction logic to carve them when the column figures and the capitals were in place, for then they could measure the thickness needed so they would fit neatly into the adjacent stonework. Similarly, in attaching the archivolts to the walls, it may have been more efficient to leave the carving of the drip moulds until erection was ready, as was done in the Angers cathedral.ⁿ

Could Victoire have carved any of the drip moulds at Chartres,? Though replacements there are vague connections in some stones above the central door with his detailing [b]. There is no way of knowing whether he carved any of the archivolts while he was there.



Saint-Germain-des-Prés choir dado As2c(ad)



Chartres W.nR-w impost



Chartres W.nR-n impost

11141



Chartres drip mould over central door, right side

Victoire would have returned to Saint-Denis after this, and prepared three capitals in the ambulatory under the Wall-and-Window Master [b].ⁿ In the separate study of these capitals I show that nearly every one of the thirty carvers involved completed three stones. The entire crew was engaged





Saint-Denis apse An2w(a)



Saint-Denis apse As3C-Cm(a)



Saint-Denis apse AcC-L1(a)

to carve at the same time, being when the stones were needed. The time needed for these men to complete their task would have been no more than three weeks. A concentrated effort with, I would imagine, a great sharing of ideas and excitement at what each was capable of producing.

I would place the nave drums at Plailly at about this time [r1,2]. They are classical, rather like the Saint-Denis in their details, and with downcurled tips in one of them. The small differences in carving may indicate different individuals in the one team.

11145







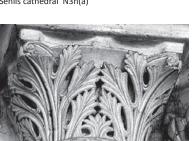
This is the last of Victoire. I guess he retired a couple of years before the Second Crusade was called. The template continued to be used after the Crusade, well into the 1160s. It was possible this was a pupil. They could not have been by Victoire as it would have been too long a working life. After all he would have been about sixty when he stopped around 1143. The later capitals include the Montron portal [r], and the Senlis and Sens cathedrals from the later 50s [b]. Saconin, a church near Soissons, could have been carved before the Crusade, but from the as-yet unnamed carvers of the other capitals I would prefer to place it afterwards.



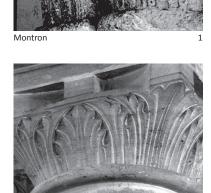
Senlis cathedral An2Cr(aw)



Senlis cathedral N3n(a)



Sens cathedral choir clerestory ES1n(c)



Meulan choir ES3w



Chelles apse (aw)



Vailly east ECs





Vailly east NW2(a)





Courmelles apse

Chronology

The following 38 campaigns contain over 100 capitals that still survive from Victoire's *œuvre*. They are listed in estimated date order. I have set these out in the simplest manner on an annual basis, which works as a first approximation when compare to estimates from other masters. There are inevitable contradictions with dates for some of the latter which, though small, is only natural at this stage. I hope to sort this out as the work proceeds.

1108	Bury	south nave aisle
1109	Saintines	tower level 1
1110	Bury	south door
1111	Catenoy	west portal
1112	Foulangues	crossing
1113	Gaillon-sur-Moncient	nave and crossing
1114	Montmartre	north nave aisle
1115	Santeuil	east
1116	Auvers-sur-Oise	apse
1117	Lavilletertre	apse (c)
1118	Lavilletertre	nave (a)
1119	Lavilletertre	west door
1120	Théméricourt	crossing
1121	Ver-sur-Launette	south 1-2
1122	Château-Landun	choir
1123	Pithivier	apse, crossing
1124	Ivry-la-Bataille	portal
1125	Saint-Loup-de-Naud	nave and porch sculpture
1126	Saint-Loup-de-Naud	nave clerestory
1127	Vernouillet	south porch
1128	Limay	south
1129	Théméricourt	tower
1130	Saint-Vaast-de-Longmont	apse
1131	Chars	nave windows
1132	Montchauvet	apse
1133	Saint-Denis	narthex (a, a-)
1134	Saint-Denis	narthex (c)
1135	Saint-Denis	narthex (cw)
1135	Aulnay-sur-Bois	east
1136	Poissy	nave clerestory
1137	Corbeil-Notre-Dame (Pringy)	portal
1138	Saint-Denis	narthex exterior (c+)
1139	Saint-Denis	upper narthex chapel
1140	Saint-Denis	choir (u)
1141	Chartres	portal imposts
1141	Saint-Germain-des-Prés	choir (d)
1142	Saint-Denis	choir (a) walls
1143	Plailly	nave

All capitals by Victoire in approximate date order

(1108-1143)



Bury WS1w(a) campaign 3



Saintines tower



Bury south portal campaign 2



Catenoy west portal



Foulangues crossing



Gaillon crossing EN1sw



Gaillon crossing ES1s



Gaillon crossing EN1w



Gaillon nave WS2n



Gaillon nave entry WN2-nR2



Santeuil NW2(a)



Montmartre WN2w



Montmartre Ws4n = PALMIER



Auvers-sur-Oise apse AN2



Montmartre WN2e



Lavilletertre choir ES1n



Lavilletertre choir Es1ne







Lavilletertre nave Wn3ne(a)





Lavilletertre nave



Lavilletertre nave



Lavilletertre nave WS1sw(a)



Lavilletertre nave WN4e(a)



Lavilletertre nave



Lavilletertre nave





Lavilletertre nave WS1sw(a)



Lavilletertre nave



Lavilletertre nave



Lavilletertre west portal, impost



Théméricourt crossing



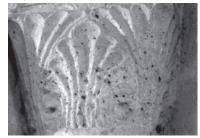
Théméricourt crossing



Théméricourt crossing



Ver-sur-Launette south S2nw



Pithivier ES1-wn



Ivry-la-Bataille west entry



Château-Landun Es2n



Château-Landun En1e



Château-Landun WN1s



Saint-Loup-de-Naud nave WS3nw(c)



Saint-Loup-de-Naud nave WN5(c)



Saint-Loup-de-Naud W.cR1 impost



Saint-Loup-de-Naud W.cR1 impost



Saint-Loup-de-Naud W.cR1 impost



Saint-Loup-de-Naud W.cR1 impost



Saint-Loup-de-Naud base of W.cL1 figure



Saint-Loup-de-Naud base of W.cR2 figure



Vernouillet south dor



Limay apse



Théméricourt tower



Saint-Vaast-de-Longmont apse (a)

Saint-Denis apse (a)



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Saint-Denis narthex WS-w(1)

Saint-Denis narthex upper chapel



Saint-Denis choir crypt As4w(u)



Saint-Denis choir crypt As4w(u)



Saint-Denis choir crypt As4w(u)



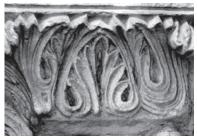
Saint-Denis choir crypt As4w(u)



Saint-Germain-des-Prés choir dado As2c(ad)



Saint-Denis narthex west bay formaret shafts



Chartres W.nR-w impost



Chartres W.nR-nt impost



Chartres W.cL impost



Saint-Denis apse (a)



Saint-Denis tower



Saint-Denis apse (a)



Plailly nave



Plailly nave